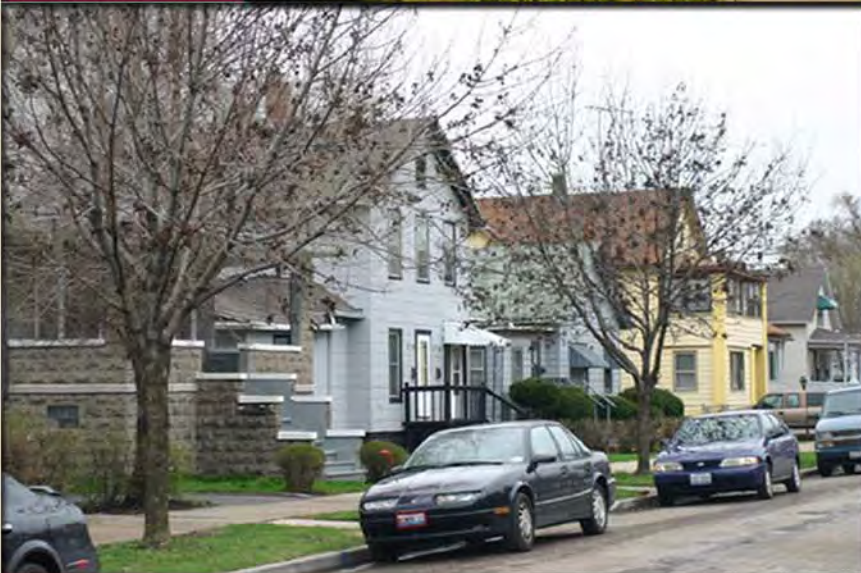




JOLIET

QUALITY OF LIFE PLAN

FOR THE 4TH AND 5TH COUNCIL DISTRICTS



November 5, 2007

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In cooperation with
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I. Executive Summary

Introduction

The Planning Area's Past

This summary presents key points of an action plan for improving residents' quality of life in the Fourth and Fifth City Council Districts of the City of Joliet (the Planning Area). The Planning Area is the historic core of Joliet. It saw the arrival of French voyagers in the 17th Century, the first mills and kilns in the 1840s, and the construction of downtown Joliet with many of the city's historic buildings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From the 1940s to the 1970s industrial businesses with well paid labor made the Planning Area boom. Industrial salaries built the solid housing stock and vital residential neighborhoods that still make up most of the Planning Area. Industrial jobs also attracted waves of immigrants from Europe, the American South, and Latin America, contributing to the rich ethnic mix among the Planning Area's current 80,000 residents. But in the 1970s and 1980s the Planning Area was caught up in the contraction of heavy industry that devastated so many Midwestern American communities; unemployment rose to 26% and left social problems in its wake. For the last 20 years determined actions by City Government, community institutions and organizations, and individual families have steadily improved conditions in the Planning Area. The results of this process are an interlocking pattern of assets and challenges that affect residents' quality of life.

Assets and Problems

Assets: The Planning Area is the home of approximately 80,000 residents and contains assets that should provide the basis of a prosperous way of life: median home values that rose nearly 45% from 2002 to 2005, aggregate annual buying power in excess of \$3.4 billion, surrounding industrial corridors that have added some 8 million square feet of plant space per year since 2002. The Planning Area also enjoys a rich base of social capital that includes: a junior college and the presence of two universities, the offices of municipal and county government, and cooperative networks of business managers, social service agencies and community organizations.

Challenges: Yet the Planning Area is still recovering from the loss of thousands of well-paid industrial jobs during the 1980s. The area's current unemployment rate of 8.5% is more than 50% higher than the overall rates of Joliet or Will County, and jobs that do not pay a living wage are growing faster than jobs that do, leading to rising numbers of working poor families reported by more than 20 Planning Area social service agencies. More than 15 years ago major retailers followed jobs away from the Planning Area, leaving heavily trafficked commercial streets with ample space for development, and \$250 million per year in lost buying power as residents are forced to leave the neighborhood to find convenient or discounted shopping options for a variety of important goods and services. Social problems also followed job losses, and while problems in school performance, drug dependency, and crime have been declining for more than ten years, these problems remain prevalent in some Planning Area neighborhoods.

The Quality of Life Plan

Charge: In 2006 Planning Area community leaders, eager to increase the pace of neighborhood improvement, formed the Quality of Life (QOL) Task Force. The QOL Task Force and the City of Joliet administration agreed to carry out a community-based planning process with a team of consultants in order to create a holistic plan for improving the lives of Planning Area residents. The Plan would take an integrated approach to quality of life improvements in regard to housing, recreation, transportation, retail development, industrial development and employment, public infrastructure and land use, education, and human capital issues that encompassed health care, crime prevention, and the needs of youth and the elderly. The Plan would lay out a strategy for leveraging the Planning Area's assets to overcome its problems through a series of proposals for action, on three-year and ten-year time horizons.

Consulting Team: In the autumn of 2006 the City and the QOL Task Force engaged a consulting team of four organizations with complementary sets of expertise:

- *The Center for Neighborhood (CNT)*, a not-for-profit organization that conducts research and demonstration projects to help communities realize the full value of their assets, the coordinator of the consulting team;
- *The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC)*, a civic organization that draws on the expertise of the Chicago area business community to aid local governments in achieving their development objectives;
- *Teska Associates*, a planning and design firm with a national award winning track record for helping communities plan their redevelopment;
- and the *Partec Consulting Group*, a firm that specializes in advising community service organizations and public agencies as they plan and fund their programs.

Research and Community Engagement: Starting in November 2006 the consulting team met regularly with the QOL Task Force, which served as the Plan's steering committee, and with staff of the City of Joliet and:

- Conducted 115 interviews with Joliet area stakeholders including elected officials; directors of public agencies, educational institutions, professional associations, and social service agencies; business owners and managers; clergy and community leaders
- Conducted a paper survey in regard to perceived housing and market conditions that was completed by more than 500 community residents, including a statistically significant sample of the Planning Area population (8% returned)
- Conducted a survey on resident participation in human services programs that was completed by more than 28 human services agencies active in the Planning Area
- Reviewed the professional literature relevant to the topics of the Plan along with more than 12 studies or plans commissioned by Joliet or Will County institutions
- Conducted four community workshops, attended by more than 500 Planning Area residents (many of whom attended more than one workshop, so that total attendance exceeded 700), to solicit resident input on the topics of the Plan
- Convened an Advisory Group of 31 interviewed stakeholders for a preliminary discussion of the Plan's findings
- Made a draft version of the Plan available for further comment in electronic form and in paper copies at 5 public locations with the Planning Area:

- City of Joliet – Clerk’s Office, 150 W Jefferson St
- Joliet Public Library, 150 N Ottawa St
- Our Lade of Mount Carmel Church, 407 E Irving St
- Warren Sharpe Community Center, 454 S Joliet St
- Sacred Heart Church, 329 S Ottawa St

and provided a phone number to City staff who could answer questions about the Plan.

With the information gathered from comments on the draft plan, the consulting team made recommendations for revisions, which were approved by the QOL Task Force and Joliet City staff. Per the date of this summary, the Plan is being submitted to the City Council which may make final revisions before establishing it as the principal guide to public policy and civic action for improving the quality of life in the Planning Area.

Key Findings and Proposals

Housing

Key Findings: The housing market of the Planning Area and the entire City is unique and complex, showing strong appreciation yet still providing affordably priced options in comparison to the rest of Will County. Planning area residents value home ownership, which they see as crucial to the maintenance of property, commitment to neighborhood improvement, and the economic advancement of individual families. Today about 62% of Planning area residents own their own homes. But the community’s hopes of increasing home ownership are challenged by a combination of trends (despite the City’s strong commitments to its “Local Homestead Program” and “ASSIST-ance Program”).

- Between 2000 and 2005, Joliet’s median household income rose 3.5% per year while city properties appreciated at 8.9% per year. Consequently more households are priced out of home ownership.
- Between the 1990 and 2000 censuses, 12 out of 18 Planning Area census tracts experienced a net loss owner households.
- The rate of property abandonment in the Planning Area (1.4% of properties) is much higher than the overall rate for Joliet (.9%) or Will County (.5%).
- More than 40% of households moving into the Planning Area rent, rather than buy a home.
- The Planning Area housing market is imbalanced, with the demand for housing priced for households earning less than \$50,000 per year being met by rental housing and a deficit of homes for households earning above \$50,000, particularly those earning between \$50,000 and \$125,000 (homes priced between \$132,500 and \$331,249). Consequently, some households are “under housed,” meaning they do not have options to step up to a higher-priced product and therefore would need to move out of the Planning Area as they become more prosperous.

Proposals: Stimulate the market for diverse housing, and help home owners buy wisely and maintain their properties through actions that include these steps:

- Attract new development by assembling and marketing land for mixed housing types, sizes, prices.

- Renew rehabilitation loan programs and focus rehabilitation efforts in mixed “Target Redevelopment Areas”.
- Sustain efforts to increase residential development in Downtown Joliet.
- Allow for and attract higher residential densities in selected areas, e.g. commercial corridors and around the Metra station. Similar activities have already been advocated in the City of Joliet’s Near West Side Neighborhood Plan.
- Engage local employers in employer-assisted housing programs.
- Supplement the City’s “ASSIST-ance” program with matching funds for investment in the Planning Area and home buyer counseling.
- Expand the Joliet Rental Housing Ordinance to regulate the rent or lease of single-family homes and duplexes.
- Accomplish housing objectives through a close working partnership between the City and the Planning Area community. The community’s role in this partnership may be carried out by a community development corporation (CDC) that would work with the City in assembling and marketing land for diverse housing development, providing home ownership counseling & financing assistance for residents, and securing state/ federal/ philanthropic funds to help support these activities.

Recreation

Key Findings: The analysis of recreational facilities and their utilization for this section of the Plan includes a review of Planning Area park facilities with reference to current and former guidelines offered by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). This analysis demonstrates that:

- There is a very low level of participation by Planning Area residents in Park District programs and facilities located outside of the Planning Area.
- The network of mini parks and neighborhood parks owned by the Park District and the City does not provide as much play space as former NRPA guidelines recommend or as the City requires in new housing development projects. However, existing playground equipment for young children (ages 0-11) is generally in good condition, and additional play space owned by other government agencies or not-for-profit organizations could compensate for much of the deficit of play space.
- Pilcher Park provides extensive community park space for quiet adult recreational activities, but does not meet needs for active sports areas or facilities.
- Neighborhood and community level parks are not well developed with ball fields, courts, swimming pools, or other desired recreational facilities. The most significant recreational issue expressed by residents and community leaders is the lack of a pool and recreational center within the Planning Area, and former NRPA guidelines suggest that additional pool facilities may be needed. A phone survey regarding swimming pools in northeastern Illinois cities of comparable size indicates that Joliet is in the middle of the range in regard to pool facilities per thousands of residents in the population. In light of community concerns and issues regarding access to facilities and anticipated population growth, a proposal to build a pool and recreation center in the Planning Area should be thoroughly considered in a master plan for recreation in the Planning Area.
- Newer developing areas are better served with park facilities because the City’s subdivision approval process requires developers to provide or pay for such facilities.

- The redevelopment of the USX and Prison properties offer significant potential sites for new recreation facilities, including new playfields, a Par 3 golf course, or a community pool and recreation center.

Proposals: Proposals to improve recreational opportunities in the Planning Area must recognize that the current funding of the Park District does not permit significant new capital investments or the maintenance of facilities with high upkeep requirements, unless these are supported by user fees. So recreation system improvements will require some choice or combination of: increased Park District funding, partnership with other governmental bodies or not-for-profit organizations, or corporate sponsorships. Improvements should also be planned and executed in the context of a Master Recreation System Plan for Districts 4 and 5 that should consider the following measures:

- Target capital improvement program expenditures to areas of most need.
- Subsidize the cost of recreation programs for low-income citizens.
- Acquire more park land in underserved areas, or partner with other organizations to use existing spaces more efficiently.
- Build and maintain a recreation center with a full range of facilities, including a swimming pool, possibly at Nowell Park.
- Expand the trail system to enhance access to civic, cultural, recreation, employment and commercial centers and add recreation options.
- Develop partnerships with other providers of recreational services, including schools, and develop school/park joint use facilities where additional park land is needed.
- Create a greenway system along flood prone areas.
- Engage community residents to support local recreation programs through means such as building playgrounds, developing community gardens, and organizing park clean-up days.

Transportation

Key Findings: The Planning Area is a community with major geographic and transportation assets that can be leveraged to enhance residents' quality of life. However, challenges are entailed in utilizing these assets to their full potential:

- The Planning Area is surrounded by job sites, shopping centers, recreational and educational opportunities, but residents need efficient transportation access to these assets in order to use them. This access is problematic for households that do not own a car for every adult.
- The Planning Area enjoys public transportation services including Metra and Amtrak rail lines to Chicago and ten Pace bus routes. However, these services need to be enhanced and supplemented with non-conventional transportation alternatives in order to provide practical options to car travel.
- The Planning Area and adjoining districts of Joliet contain many destinations that youngsters and adults could reach by walking or biking, to the benefit of the travelers and the community. But the pedestrian and bicycle routes need to be studied and improved to ensure safe and frequent use.

Proposals: The City and the community, which might be appropriately represented by a community development corporation (CDC), need to work together with transit providers

and other regional institutions to create viable transportation options in the Planning Area. This collaborative effort should:

- Support bus service improvements for the Joliet area proposed by Pace and funding for these improvements that is pending before the Illinois State Legislature.
- Institute a circulator bus service to supplement and connect Pace bus routes.
- Multiply & coordinate van pools, primarily to connect Planning Area workers to job sites.
- Establish a Joliet chapter of the IGO car sharing cooperative (a successful cooperative operating in Chicago).
- Improve conditions for pedestrian and bicycle travel within the Planning Area, beginning with the implementation of a “Safe Routes to School Program”.
- Support transportation proposals of regional significance: Metra extension to Elwood, Metra Star Line, Transportation Blue Print for Will County, if these proposals include public transportation connections for Planning Area residents.

Retail Market Assessment and Development

Key Findings: Proposals for retail development are based on three key points:

- *There is considerable unmet retail demand in the Planning area*, estimated at more than \$400 million per year, for a number of key consumer categories. Several distinct retail shortages are apparent – particularly a large grocery store, a produce market, coffee shop, sit-down restaurants, and general house wares – as well as banking and medical services.
- *Many sites with substantial retail potential could be developed to capture retail opportunities:* These include sites currently vacant, occupied by extraneous industrial uses, or not yet annexed by the city. An assessment of these properties shows that there are ample opportunities for small-scale, mixed-use, infill development on major corridors and at major intersections throughout the Planning Area, as well as several areas where large-scale retail development could occur once the land was made suitable for development.
- *Neither City programs nor business organizations are focused on the economic development of the Planning Area as a primary mission.* This lack of focused support impairs business retention and business attraction in the Planning Area. Furthermore, many interview respondents, particularly those that own their own businesses, felt there was a shortage of small business assistance available in the Planning Area. Barriers are even higher for would-be entrepreneurs for whom English is not their first language.

Proposals: In order to capitalize on the Planning Area’s potential for retail development, the City and its economic development partners should:

- *Structure and stimulate development* through measures that include these steps:
 - *Achieve the retail objectives of the QOL Plan through a City-community partnership*, in which the community’s role may be performed by a Planning Area community development corporation (CDC) that would work with the City in garnering regional/state/federal and philanthropic support and performing the work of land assembly, site marketing, and supporting small business owners.
 - *Establish specific geographies for development*, i.e., areas and/or corridors within which special districts such as a Tax Increment Financing district (TIF) or Special Service Area (SSA) will be established.

- *Jump start the market in the Planning Area* by extending incentive programs that Joliet now uses in the City Center area, establishing a revolving loan fund for business development, providing a package of incentives particularly for infill development, and assembling land to resell for desired development projects.
- Use the development structure outlined above to stimulate the development of businesses that will meet the retail shortages experienced by Planning Area residents, notably the supermarket desired by District 5 residents for which market demand and potentially feasible sites have been demonstrated.
- Provide assistance for Planning Area entrepreneurs, through the creation of a small business development center focused on their needs, preferably developed as a collaborative effort with Joliet Junior College and the Chamber of Commerce.

Industrial Development & Employment

Key Findings: The protection and growth of well-paid industrial jobs has long been a prime concern of Joliet residents and public officials. Stakeholders are properly concerned that during the last ten years the greatest job growth in Will County has occurred in sectors with the lowest paid jobs and that virtually all social service agencies in the Planning Area report a need to serve increasing numbers of working poor households. However, research by County institutions has identified steady job growth in four fields that pay salaries above the County's mean household income: medical services, construction, some segments of manufacturing, and logistics.

The growth of the logistics (freight movement) industry is particularly significant because logistics is the basis of the world's new industrial economy structured around supply chains, because Will County has a uniquely advantageous location for logistics operations, and because logistics careers lead to well-paid employment. The City is positioning Joliet and the Planning Area to reap major benefits from the new logistics-based industrial economy through its proposed development of more than 12,000 acres of industrial parks per the *South Side Comprehensive Plan*. An extensive system of employment training and placement services, coordinated by the Workforce Investment Board of Will County, is serving thousands of Planning Area residents annually. Yet, the workforce of the lower-income neighborhoods in the Planning Area will require further targeted assistance to benefit from planned development and existing services because significant percentages of workers in these neighborhoods have deficits in regard to education, income, transportation, and criminal background.

Proposals: To achieve optimum benefits for the Planning Area population from logistics-based industrial development in the I-80 corridor, the City should work with the community, which might be appropriately represented by a Planning Area CDC, in order to:

- Plan industrial development with a team of professional advisors that will ensure: 1) use of Foreign Trade Zones as a development incentive; 2) selection of logistics and industrial businesses that will produce quality employment; 3) adoption of environmentally sensitive and sustainable standards for industrial development consistent with standards that have been recommended in the City's *South Side Comprehensive Plan* and the nationally recognized LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards for sustainable industrial development.

- Establish a task force of Will County institutions led by the Workforce Investment Board to consider refinements in the workforce training and placement system that would make well-paid employment more accessible to lower-income residents. The issues to be examined by this task force include:
 - Ensuring optimum outreach to employers for training/placement programs
 - Establishing community-based rosters of qualified workers
 - Mitigating the cost of job training for lower-income trainees
 - Expanding the number of on-the-job training programs that qualify for state tax credit reimbursement
 - Establishing a constructive role for temporary labor contractors in the workforce development system
 - Establishing more flexible procedures for “Worker Certification”
 - Smoothing out gaps in supportive services for residents in job training and placement programs
 - Enhancing existing programs to secure employment for ex-offenders
 - Engaging the community and workforce agencies in a system of information exchange and referral tracking

Land Use

Key Findings: A basically sound pattern of major commercial streets and residential neighborhoods exists in the Planning Area, and most major infrastructure improvements to support existing land use patterns have been made by the City’s *Neighborhood Improvement Plan (NIP)*. However, some existing land use land uses and infrastructure conditions need to change to facilitate the housing, recreation, transportation, retail, and industrial proposals of the QOL Plan, principally:

- Vacant, obsolete, or low-intensity industrial properties are located in proposed commercial corridors where they impede the assembly of land for desirable new retail and mixed use development.
- Extensive land areas coming into new use or soon to be annexed to the city (including the USX and prison sites) provide opportunities for well-planned developments that should meet some of the Planning Area’s needs.
- The management of Silver Cross Hospital has proposed the relocation of that institution outside of the city limits. This relocation would have major impacts on opportunities and property values within the Planning Area.
- Modest investments in street design, trails, and public art could enhance distinctive neighborhood and commercial district identities.

Proposals:

A *Land Use Policy Framework* supports:

- Infill development in residential neighborhoods and relatively larger scale and mixed use housing in selected locations: Downtown, proposed commercial corridors, possibly current USX or prison sites
- Thorough analysis of alternatives for the proposed relocation of Silver Cross Hospital including: (1) Development in the community that would make retention of the current hospital campus or a location within the Planning Area an optimal alternative for Silver

Cross; and (2) Optional plans for the redevelopment of the current Silver Cross property for other desirable uses

- Replacement of incompatible land uses and the design of districts with coherent, pedestrian oriented retail and mixed use identity along commercial corridors
- Large scale industrial development with the extension of some retail and residential corridors south of I-80 in agreement with the City's *South Side Comprehensive Plan*

A *Neighborhood Character and Improvement Plan* calls for the enhancement of attractive identities for the Planning Area's neighborhoods through:

- Delineation of design standards for several types of commercial corridors
- Creation of gateway elements as transition points between neighborhoods and to provide individual identity for Planning Area neighborhoods
- Investment in infrastructure upgrades to alleviate problems in the Ridgewood neighborhood, in conjunction with investments of County, State, and Federal agencies
- Establishment of an interconnected system of pedestrian and bicycle trails providing access to major points of destination and highlighted by public art
- Restoration of two-way street patterns in Downtown Joliet

Human Capital

Key Findings: More than 80 community and faith-based organizations and public agencies offer a range of human service programs for Planning Area residents. These organizations strive to integrate their work through collaborative efforts coordinated by the United Way of Will County, the Social Services Council, and other networks that focus on more particular areas of service. Most human services agencies report increased needs for their help in recent years, attributed in part to the stresses experienced by households in which the adults work for less than adequate wages.

Representatives of approximately half of the human service organizations that responded to a survey for the Plan felt that their programs were not well-known in the community. This impression of limited awareness was confirmed in community meetings in which dozens of residents cited community needs for services that are provided through existing agencies. Levels of awareness may also be related to limited leadership by Planning Area residents in human services organizations. Some 40% of the agencies that responded to the Plan's survey reported that 35% to 90% of their clients were Planning Area residents, but only a few responding organizations drew as many 15% of their Board Directors from the Planning Area, and a quarter or respondents had no Directors from the Planning Area. Despite the coordinated work of some 80 agencies, interviewed directors of human service agencies as well as residents in community meetings repeatedly identified several gaps in service, which were services related to domestic violence, youth development, and mental health.

Proposals: Proposals for housing, retail, and industrial development, and for improved transportation, employment, and education services are the primary ways in which the QOL Plan seeks to reduce the need for human service programs. However, the Plan also proposes that the organized Planning Area community (possibly led by community development corporation

(CDC) should help to address the need for community engagement with human service organizations by maintaining a Human Services Committee that would assign members to:

- Continue to support the various collaborations and consortiums of service providers working in the Planning Area and encourage new opportunities to connect with residents.
- Establish a resident leadership initiative to increase the number of residents actively engaged and accountable in the revitalization of the community.
- Increase capacity building assistance to local nonprofits including community and faith-based organizations, utilizing the federal Compassion Capital Fund.
- Expand programs to develop leadership among Planning Area youth.
- Explore the feasibility of modifying existing programs or establishing a new program to develop the technical and life skills of out-of-school young adults interested in securing living wage employment, utilizing specific Department of Labor funding programs.

Education

Key Findings: The performance of Planning Area schools gives cause for concern:

- Both Joliet high schools, 4 junior high schools, and 4 elementary schools are on the federally established “Academic Early Warning List (AEWL)” or “Academic Warning List (AWL)”
- Elementary schools collectively have rates of mobility (moving in or out of school enrollment) and chronic truancy approximately 50% higher than the state average.
- High school graduation rates at Joliet’s Central High School campus declined for African American and Hispanic students between 2003 and 2006.
- Percentages of minority (particularly Hispanic) students have been growing while school faculties have remained largely White.

At the same time Planning Area school districts have been taking vigorous and effective action to improve the quality of education:

- Since 2003 Planning Area schools have successfully tapped the full range of funding programs available from public and private sources to improve school performance, and they have instituted a gamut of academic enrichment programs.
- From 2005 to 2006 all Planning Area elementary schools improved their performance on standardized tests, and two were removed from the AEWL or AWL.
- Unfortunately Central High School did not improve its standardized test scores in 2006. However, Central High School is engaging students in its “Career Academies” programs, which offer a challenging curriculum and career tracks that lead either to college entrance or to technical training and well-paid employment.

Proposals: Improve student performance through initiatives that will build parental and community engagement in education:

- Reduce high mobility and chronic truancy through a campaign of community education, linked to housing and workforce development programs.
- Through community and faith-based organizations, deliver a message to encourage parental involvement in children’s education.
- Create a community technology plan to increase the use of technology, with informed parental guidance, to help bridge the digital divide.

- In community events and news media discuss the challenges and celebrate the progress of educational improvements.
- Increase opportunities for young minority role models to interact with high school students.
- Expand programs to increase the number of minority teachers in the Joliet school system including: a pilot program for the long-term development of current high school students as local teachers; partnerships with Joliet area universities and with Historically Black Colleges and Hispanic Institutions; and linkages to other programs proposed in the QOL Plan such as home ownership programs.

School administrators and Boards could work with the City and an Education Committee of the organized Planning Area community (possibly coordinated by a community development corporation (CDC)) to carry out these initiatives.

Interlocking Issues

In the preceding summary several issues recur because they are necessary considerations in the proposals for multiple topic areas. These issues include:

- Formation of a Community Development Corporation (CDC) for the Planning Area
- Development of Downtown Joliet
- Development of unincorporated lands adjacent to the Planning Area

Planning Area CDC: This plan identifies a community development corporation (CDC) as a type of institution that the organized Planning Area community may create to perform many specific functions that are outlined in the preceding discussions of the Plan's topic areas. But the core function that the organized community (and the CDC if that is the community's chosen instrument) needs to perform is to work with the City in implementing the QOL Plan as a whole. The organized community (possibly represented by a CDC) should act as the City's partner in the tasks of detailed planning, land assembly and marketing for housing and retail development. It should partner with other agencies and the City to improve small business, transportation and workforce development services. It should deepen community support for education and human service programs. In all these functions the organized Planning Area community should bring in resources from other levels of government, from foundations, and from fees charged for some of its services, as well as the energy, commitment and insight of community residents, and a CDC would be a particularly appropriate mechanism for the community to use in delivering these benefits. In all these functions too, the organized community (and the CDC if that is its embodiment) should maintain a holistic perspective and a long-term strategy on the implementation of the QOL Plan. Along with the City, the community's designated organization should be the guardian of the Plan and responsible for its periodic updating.

Downtown Joliet: Downtown Joliet is the center of the Planning Area as well as the center of Joliet and Will County. Proposals for the redevelopment of Planning Area neighborhoods will only succeed if Downtown is thriving, and the quality of life in the neighborhoods surrounding Downtown has a powerful impact on its viability. Accordingly, the housing proposals for the Planning Area include a commitment to achieving relatively intensive, transit oriented and mixed use housing and retail development Downtown. Retail development proposals for the Planning Area would essentially establish vital commercial corridors connecting Downtown to the I-80

expressway and include proposals for Downtown anchor businesses such as major bookstores and cinemas that require a broader base than neighborhood shopping centers. Land use and infrastructure proposals for the Planning Area include the restoration of two-way street patterns to Downtown's commercial streets.

Another important proposal now under consideration by Joliet's institutions of higher education, which this plan supports, is the creation of a shared Downtown campus. Through this shared property JJC would replace its currently inadequate Downtown building and provide a broader curriculum Downtown. St. Francis, Lewis, and Governor State Universities would offer a variety of classes for adult students. Thousands of upwardly mobile residents of the surrounding region would be drawn to Downtown each day and evening, providing a catalyst to establish viable housing and retail development in the Downtown area. Planning Area residents would gain convenient access to a valuable new resource.

Settled and Unincorporated Neighborhoods Bordering the Planning Area: The City of Joliet has demonstrated expertise in the acquisition and development of bordering territories for the benefit of the city and the annexed areas. However, the presence of settled, generally low-income and unincorporated neighborhoods on the eastern borders of the Planning Area represents particular challenges. Frequently infrastructure for these neighborhoods is inadequate and would require thousands of dollars per standard residential lot to upgrade to Joliet City standards. Property owners in these neighborhoods often feel that they could not afford the charges for upgrading their infrastructure and might not want their land annexed to the City for other reasons. Yet disinvested areas depress property values and discourage development in adjacent city neighborhoods.

The City is now addressing this set of problems in the Ridgewood neighborhood where it is working with County, Township, and State governments to share the costs of infrastructure improvements and bring conditions to a level that will not impede development. These efforts have been given new impetus by the proposal of Silver Cross Hospital to relocate its principal campus outside of the city of Joliet. The implementation of the City's *South Side Comprehensive Plan* and this plan's proposals for the development of commercial corridors, which include the development of land now outside the city's boundaries, could demonstrate an approach to problematic annexation situations. Commercial and relatively dense residential development, or in some cases industrial development, in planned projects will create substantial increments in property value. Existing housing units that fall within the project areas of such developments and have their infrastructure improved will also increase in value, from their proximity to new development and from infrastructure improvements. Besides sharing all possible costs with other units of government, the City could leverage the increments in property values for entire project areas to finance infrastructure improvements for the properties within these projects. This process repeated in a series of projects over a decade could go far toward eliminating conditions of disinvestment in neighborhoods bordering the Planning Area.

Implementation Steps and Schedule

Strategic Integration

Although the QOL Plan entails more than 75 specific action proposals covering a wide range of topic areas, its proposals have a similar strategic orientation, and they are interdependent. All of the proposals of the Plan are based on the principle of leveraging existing assets to solve community problems:

- Housing proposals build on Joliet’s generally strong housing market and programs that the City has in place.
- Recreation proposals begin with the base of existing facilities.
- Transportation proposals involve a close partnership with Pace as a flexible public transit agency.
- Retail proposals are founded on the two legs of large pent up retail demand and corridor locations with adequate traffic counts and sufficient land to assemble for development.
- Industrial Development and Employment proposals would capitalize on the extraordinary opportunities provided by the regional logistics industry, the City’s south side land development plans, and the service capacities of the existing workforce development system.
- Land Use proposals would augment the strengths of the existing built and natural environment.
- Education proposals would give community support for effective plans that the school districts have put in motion.
- Human Capital proposals would open avenues for greater community contributions to and engagement with the extensive service provider network.

The Plan has a “bias” that quality of life improvements in the Planning Area will generally flow from economic development and that the creation of living wage jobs and wealth in the community is the foundation for improvements in service systems. However, this orientation is tempered with the recognition of many prerequisites for economic development and ways in which the conditions of a desirable community generate wealth. So the Plan considers, for example, that:

- Meeting the Planning Area’s needs for a more diverse housing stock and retail amenities entails large scale business opportunities in which local residents may participate as consumers, workers, and business and property owners.
- Lack of education and training is the primary factor that bars Planning Area residents from well-paid jobs.
- Social problems related to household stability, health, addiction and crime often interrupt educations and narrow job opportunities.
- Communities that are attractively designed and provided with convenient recreation, transportation, and retail amenities uphold property values and attract economically diverse residents.

It was with appreciation of these types of interrelationships that the effort leading to this document and going forward to its implementation is designed as a quality of life project, rather than a specialized economic development plan.

Short Term and Long Term Proposals

The QOL Plan is too broad in scope – and so involves too many sets of decision makers and contingencies – for the accomplishment of its proposals to be scheduled tightly at this time. However, in the full Plan, proposals are listed and prioritized at the end of each topic section. .

Proposals are assigned a high priority if they are necessary first steps in laying the ground work for other proposals or if they can be accomplished quickly and will have an encouraging impact through the demonstration of achieved results. Proposals are assigned a low priority if they must follow the establishment of prerequisites or if they describe actions that must be made repeatedly, as part of an ongoing effort, to have effect. Generally the Plan calls for the accomplishment of high priority tasks within a three-year time frame and the accomplishment of lower priority tasks within a ten-year horizon. Every second year the City and the Planning Area community should revise this Quality of Life Plan. In these revisions allowance can be made for the results of development efforts and unforeseen events. Different initiatives can be moved up to short-term implementation status. Through this process the Quality of Life Plan will continue to be a vital guide for the Planning Area's improvement efforts.

Financial Considerations

By far the largest dollar figures involved in the implementation of the Quality of Life Plan will be private investments to create the housing and commercial development that the Plan aims to generate. These investments will be project specific, and they cannot be usefully estimated at this time, but if the Plan is realized they will certainly involve tens of millions of dollars and generate thousands of jobs. To set this development process in motion and guide it toward desired outcomes, this Plan offers 56 specific proposals for action within the next three years. Staffing or direct expenses to implement all of these proposals would require a total of approximately \$5,141,000 to \$8,745,000 over 3 years. The large bulk of funding to carry out these proposals would be regional, state, or federal agencies of government or private foundations. Funds may also be secured from fees earned for services or from the creation of special districts within the Planning Area (such as tax increment finance [TIF] or special assessment [SA] districts.) Specific sources of funding to be approached for each proposal are noted with the summary of proposals at the end of each section of the Plan. These funds would be supplemented by the considerable in-kind contributions of community volunteers and the time of staff in partner organizations or agencies which would see cooperation with specific proposals of the Plan as activities within their basic mission.

In order to perform, manage and fund the implementation of action proposals, the core implementers of the Plan, the City and the organized Planning Area community (possibly represented by a CDC), will need to sustain staff effort. In this effort City and CDC staff will constantly be refining plans for specific projects, applying to sources of funding, marketing development opportunities, assisting home owners and small business owners, coordinating community engagement in education and human service programs and all of the other activities entailed in the Plan's proposals. The staff work and direct expense of this ongoing effort will require a budget of approximately \$500,000 per year divided between City and the CDC, which is included in the estimated range of total expenses to implement the Plan over the next three years. How this budget might be allocated among the staff of the City and a CDC will need to be determined at a future level of detailed planning.

II. Introduction

The Planning Area

This plan presents an action program for improving residents' quality of life in the Fourth and Fifth City Council Districts of the City of Joliet. These districts are the Planning Area for this project, and the area's boundaries are shown in the map on the following page.

The Planning Area is the historic core of Joliet, and its geography and built environment reflect the city's history. The Planning Area lies along both banks of the Des Plaines River, the original artery of exploration and commerce that brought French voyagers here as early as the 17th Century and the first mills and kilns in the 1840s. From the mid 19th Century on the Rock Island Railroad, paralleling the river, provided a powerful industrial artery into Chicago and helped fuel Joliet's growth. The Planning Area contains Joliet's traditional downtown, City Hall, the Will County Seat, and a number of graceful historic buildings including Union Station, the Joliet Public Library, Joliet Township Central High School, and a number of restored commercial properties and private homes.

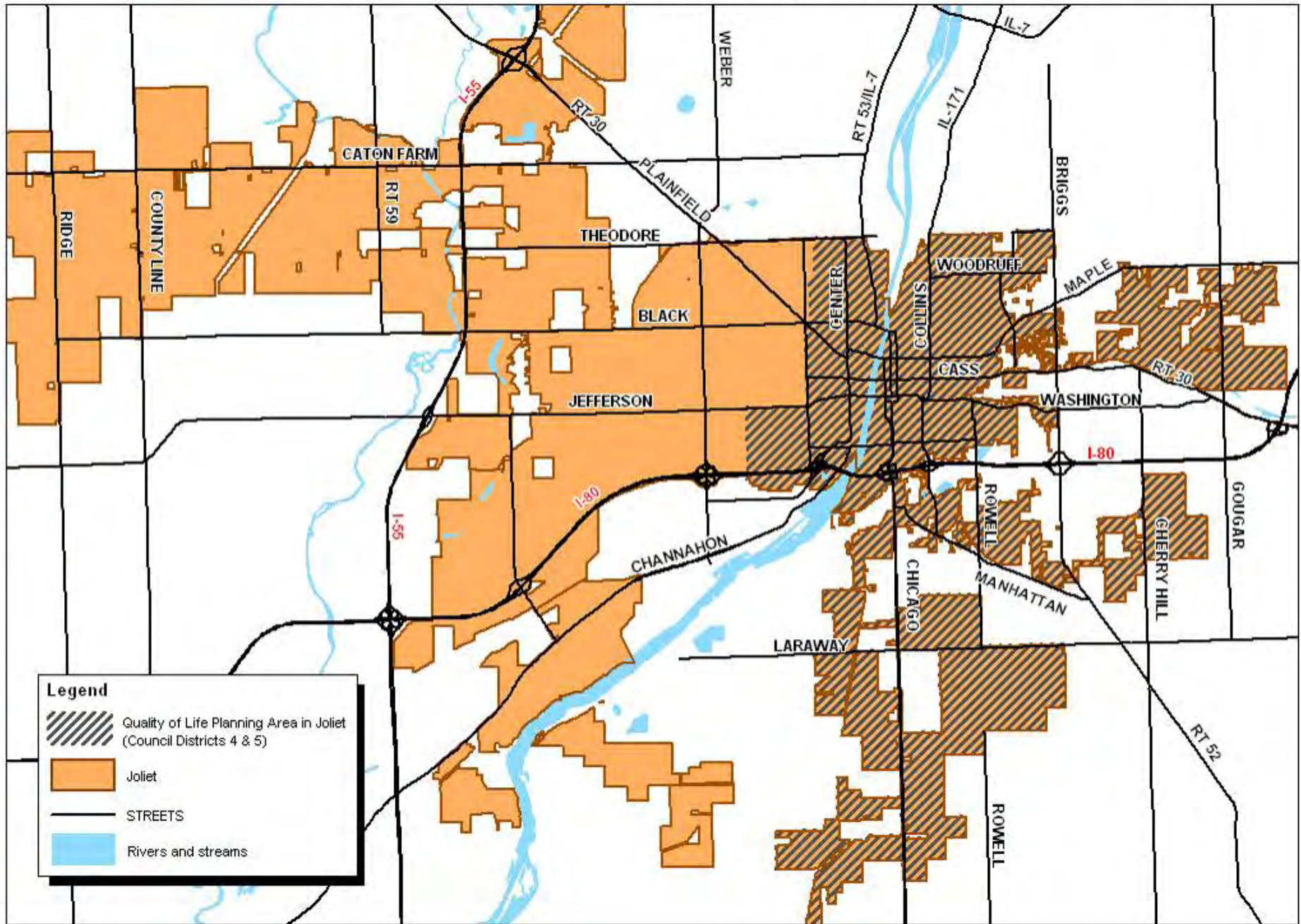
The Planning Area's landscape encompasses the large vacant site of the US Steel works and a district of obsolete industrial buildings and vacant industrial properties. From the 1940s to the 1970s industrial businesses with well paid labor made the Planning Area boom. Industrial salaries built the solid housing stock and vital residential neighborhoods that still make up most of the Planning Area.

Beginning in the 1940s industrial jobs attracted waves of African American immigrants to the Planning Area from the Deep South. By the 1950s African Americans were becoming the predominant ethnic group in the Forest Park neighborhood in the northeast portion of the Planning Area and in the southeast neighborhoods of District Five. African Americans were also beginning to move from the factory floors to populate the professions, with the first African American doctors, attorneys, and judges practicing in Joliet. By the 1970s Latino immigrants pursuing jobs were settling east and north of Downtown. By the 1990s Latinos had become the Planning Area's fastest growing ethnic group, and Latino entrepreneurs were beginning to establish a successful new commercial district along Collins Street. By 2000 the ethnic composition of the Planning Area's population of 71,436 included: 45% non-Latino Whites, 27% African Americans, and 26% Latino residents.

But in the 1970s and 1980s the contraction of heavy industry that devastated so many Midwestern American communities took a heavy toll on the Planning Area. By the mid 1980s unemployment in Joliet topped 26%. In the wake of joblessness drug addiction and crime spread in some neighborhoods of the Planning Area. At the same time, customers were beginning to abandon stores in Downtown Joliet for new shopping centers to the west. Many Joliet area residents began to regard Downtown and large parts of the Planning Area as unattractive, even dangerous places.

Since the early 1990s conditions in the Planning Area have been improving as a consequence of some favorable economic trends, determined actions by City Government, and individual and institutional decisions. The expansion of population and industrial\logistics businesses from Cook County has stimulated the Will County economy, particularly along rail and expressway routes. The location of two riverboat casinos has given the City of Joliet resources to address its redevelopment challenges. The City has carried out an aggressive program of expansion west past the I-55 Expressway, incorporating locations for large scale commercial development and prosperous new neighborhoods, and using its expanded resources to support Downtown revitalization efforts, infrastructure improvements, and social service programs in the Planning Area. Important institutions including the University of St. Francis, Joliet Junior College, and Silver Cross Hospital decided to remain and grow in the Planning Area. Local residents including minority entrepreneurs have built successful businesses in the Planning Area. Human service and faith-based organizations have secured local support and created programs to assist Planning Area neighborhoods and residents. Capable residents have committed themselves to their neighborhoods and assumed positions of leadership in local organizations.

Figure 1. Joliet Quality of Life Planning Area



Assets & Challenges

The heritage of the Planning Area's rich history is a complex fabric of assets and challenges that characterizes the community's current situation.

Assets: The Planning Area possesses an array of assets that should provide the basis of a prosperous way of life:

- The area consists mainly of residential neighborhoods, primarily single family homes with some small multi-unit buildings. Residents have a strong home ownership ethic, and properties are generally in well-maintained condition. Median home values rose approximately 50% during the last 7 years, although home values may be expected to dip in response to current national market conditions.
- Aggregate annual buying power of the Planning Area exceeds \$3.4 billion, and after a generation of being by-passed by commercial development patterns the area is drastically under retail, which creates large, current retail development opportunities. Successful internally developed shopping districts such as Collins Street and Ruby Street are meeting some of the area's needs, but developments of larger scale will be required to capture most of the Planning Area's latent buying power.
- Continuing its historic tradition, the Planning Area has transportation assets that can be the basis for redevelopment. These include exits on the I-80 Expressway just before its intersection with I-55 and a rail corridor that can stimulate both transit-oriented development in the center of the area and logistics-based new industrial development at its fringe.
- The Planning Area is flanked by industrial corridors that have added approximately 8 million square feet of plant space per year since 2002. Will County, Joliet, and the Planning Area are extraordinarily well-positioned to take part in the new industrial\logistics economy based on international supply chains.
- The Planning Area also enjoys a rich base of social capital that includes: a junior college and the presence of two universities, the offices of municipal and county government, and cooperative networks of business managers, social service agencies and community organizations.

Challenges: Yet the Planning Area is still recovering from the loss of thousands of well-paid industrial jobs during the 1980s:

- The Planning Area's current unemployment rate of 8.5% is more than 50% higher than the overall rates of Joliet or Will County, and jobs that do not pay a living wage are growing faster than jobs that do.
- More than 20 Planning Area social service organizations need to care for rising numbers of working poor families.
- Commercial disinvestment in the Planning Area for more than 20 years has left heavily trafficked commercial streets with extensive vacant lots and residents purchasing more than \$250 million per year in goods that include groceries, hardware, and clothing outside of the neighborhood – a major long-term opportunity and an immediate challenge for local consumers and potential developers.

Social problems have persisted after the economic downturn of the 1980s, and while rates for youngsters dropping out of high school, drug dependency, and crime have generally been

declining for more than ten years, these problems remain prevalent in some Planning Area neighborhoods.

The Quality of Life Plan

Charge: In 2006 Planning Area community leaders, eager to increase the pace of neighborhood improvement, formed the Quality of Life (QOL) Task Force. The QOL Task Force and the City of Joliet administration agreed to carry out a community-based planning process with a team of consultants in order to create a holistic plan for improving the lives of Planning Area residents. The Plan would take an integrated approach to quality of life improvements in regard to housing, recreation, transportation, retail development, industrial development and employment, public infrastructure and land use, education, and human capital issues that encompassed health care, crime prevention, and the needs of youth and the elderly. The Plan would lay out a strategy for leveraging the Planning Area's assets to meet its challenges through a series of proposals for action, on three-year and ten-year time horizons.

Consulting Team: In the autumn of 2006 the City and the QOL Task Force engaged a consulting team of four organizations with complementary sets of expertise:

- *The Center for Neighborhood (CNT)*, a not-for-profit organization that conducts research and demonstration projects to help communities realize the full value of their assets, the coordinator of the consulting team;
- *The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC)*, a civic organization that draws on the expertise of the Chicago area business community to aid local governments in achieving their development objectives;
- *Teska Associates*, a planning and design firm with a national award winning track record for helping communities plan their redevelopment;
- and the *Partec Consulting Group*, a firm that specializes in advising community service organizations and public agencies as they plan and fund their programs.

Research and Community Engagement: Since November 2006 the consulting met regularly with the QOL Task Force, which served as the Plan's steering committee, and with members of the Joliet City staff and:

- Conducted 115 interviews with Joliet area stakeholders including elected officials; directors of public agencies, educational institutions, professional associations, and social service agencies; business owners and managers; clergy and community leaders
- Conducted a paper survey in regard to housing and market conditions that was completed by more than 500 community residents, including a statistically significant sample of the Planning Area population
- Conducted a survey on resident participation in human services programs that was completed by more than 25 human services agencies active in the Planning Area
- Reviewed the professional literature relevant to the topics of the Plan along with more than 12 studies or plans commissioned by Joliet or Will County institutions
- Conducted four community workshops, attended by more than 500 Planning Area residents (many of whom attended more than one workshop, so that total attendance exceeded 700), to solicit resident input on the topics of the Plan

- Convened an Advisory Group of 31 interviewed stakeholders for a preliminary discussion of the Plan's findings
- Made this draft version of the Plan available for further comment in electronic form via the following link [enter link] and in paper copies at the following locations: [list locations]

The period of public comment on this draft of the Plan will extend until September 1, 2007. Then with the information gathered from comments on this draft, the consulting team, the QOL Task Force, and Joliet City staff will make further revisions. The Plan will then be submitted to the City Council which may make final revisions before establishing it as the principal guide to public policy and civic action for improving the quality of life in the Planning Area.

Acknowledgements

The City of Joliet, the Quality of Life Task Force, and the consulting team are grateful to Planning Area Community Leaders who have contributed their time and insights to the development of this plan.

The Quality of Life Task Force served as a steering committee during the creation and drafting of the Plan. Its members are:

Councilwoman Susie A. Barber	Bettye Gavin, National Hook-up of Black Women
Councilman Warren Dorris	
Former Councilman Alex Ledesma	Charles Jones, Lewis University
Councilwoman-at-Large Jan Hallums	Kathy Kaiser, JACOB
Quillman	Alicia Morales, University of St. Francis
David Evans, Rainbow-PUSH	Betty Washington, NAACP

Advisory Group members who have provided informational interviews, participated in a preliminary discussion of findings, and will provide comments on this draft include:

Tempe Bates, Harvey Brooks Foundation	Steve Randich, Harris Bank
Ray Bolden	James Roolf, First Midwest Bank
Rev. Hector Edwards, Mt. Olive Church	Rev. Isaac Singleton, Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Kathleen Farrell, Friends of Community Public Art	Russ Slinkard, Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Juan Gloria	Michael Steward, Joliet Park District
John Grueling, Will Co. Center for Economic Development	Geoffrey Tryon, Silver Cross Hospital
Michael Hanrahan, Midwest Generation Joliet Generating Station	Sister Juanita Ujcik, Center for Correctional Concerns
Michael Hennessey, United Way of Will Co.	Larry Walsh, Will County Executive
Fr. Ray Lescher, Sacred Heart Church	Paula Waxweiller, Joliet Township High School
Patrick McGuire, Will County Treasurer	Senator A.J. Wilhelmi
Henry Morris, Housing Authority of Joliet	Dr. Phyllis Wilson, Joliet Grade School Dist. 86
Lois Nelson, Spanish Center	
Thomas Price, Joliet Junior College	Denise Winfrey, Joliet Township

In addition to Advisory Group members, the following community leaders and stakeholders provided helpful informational interviews and in many cases provided follow-up information:

Cory Adams, Joliet Job Corps
Arlene Albert, Joliet Township High School Board
James Allen, Project Pride
Joseph Belman, Will Co. Democratic Organization
Ralph Bias, Sacred Heart Church
Susan Bornhofen, Jacob Henry Mansion
Jada Boston, Jr. Chapter of the National Hook-up of Black Women
Rev. Herbert Brooks, St. John Baptist Church
Laura Brumfiel, Hartman Recreation Center
Jaime Cain, Joliet Times Weekly
Steve Carrao, Boys and Girls Club
Fr. Ray Corkey, Mt. Carmel Church
Ron Cornelius, Joliet Library Board
Deb Darzinskis, Day Break
Mary Degroot, Will County Health Dept.
Rev. Stephen Deloney, St. Mark's CME Church
Dominic Egizio, Joliet Park District
Dale Evans, Housing Authority of Joliet
Marilyn Farmer, Morning Star Mission
Maurice Fears, YMCA/Joliet Alliance for Youth
Pat Fera, Workforce Development Council
Marge Franchini, Imperial Roofing
Brother James Gaffney, Lewis University
Mattie Hargrow, Zeta Phi Beta
Fred Hayes, City of Joliet Police
Terry Irby, Joliet Junior College
Wynter Jackson, NAACP
Jim Johnston, Joliet Public Library
James Keck, Joliet Equipment
Lewis Kemble, 21st Century
Rev. George Kimbrough, True Tabernacle CFC
Michael Kordik, Mike's Furniture
Barbara Ladner, Pace Suburban Bus
Robert Lapinski, Harris Bank
Rev. Lishers Mahone Jr., Brown Chapel Church
Jennifer Long, 21st Century
Major Gary Lowder, Salvation Army
Dick Manly, American Federation of Teachers
Mary Maragos, Joliet Community Health & Awareness Center
Alma Martinez, Latino Business Association
Nata Martinez, Mt. Carmel Church
Jeff May, Premier Academy
Rep. Jack McGuire
Kennedy Milsap, Housing Authority of Joliet
Ozzie Mitchell, Peter Claver Center
Vanessa Newsome, Will County Health Department
Lorna Paisley
Mike Pasteras, Will County Forest Preserve
Kamlesh Patel
Rev. Eddie Pierce, Saving Power Missionary Baptist Church
Gabrielle Poe, Jr. Chapter of the National Hook-up of Black Women
Rev. Lonnie Posley, New Canaanland Christian Church
Dr. Gena Proulx, Joliet Junior College
Ronald Pullman, Will Co. Community Development
Rev. Craig Purchase, Mt. Zion Full Gospel Tabernacle
Louise Ray, Forest Park Community Center
J.D. Ross, Will-Grundy Medical Clinic
Shelia Schmidt, Guardian Angel Community Services
Willie Sellers, S & S Beauty Supply
James Shaw, Beacon Club
Juanda Sims, Talent Zone
Yvonne Smith, Warren Sharpe Community Center
Karen Isburg Sorbero, Sunny Hill Nursing Home
Joe Strong, Plumbers and Fitters Union
David Sullivan, East Side Realty
Dr. Paul Swanstrom, Joliet Township High School
Artis Thompson, Easter Seals
Rev. Larry Tyler, Second Baptist Church
George Tyus, G.L. Tyus & Associates, Inc.
David Velasquez, Merchants & Manufacturers Bank
Daniel Vera, Joliet Township
Michael Vinciguerra, University of St. Francis
Robert Virgo, Karges Real Estate
Evelyna Washington, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Kathy Wells, All Nations Church of God in Christ
Christine White, Will Co. Center for Community Concerns
Gretta Whitted, Sojourner Truth
Gary Williams, Friendship Baptist Church of Joliet

The City, the QOL Task Force and the consulting team are particularly grateful to the more than 400 community residents who attended one of the two community workshops held in March to gather input for the Plan. We look forward to further input from the Advisory Group and from residents who review the draft, which will allow us to complete the Quality of Life Plan.

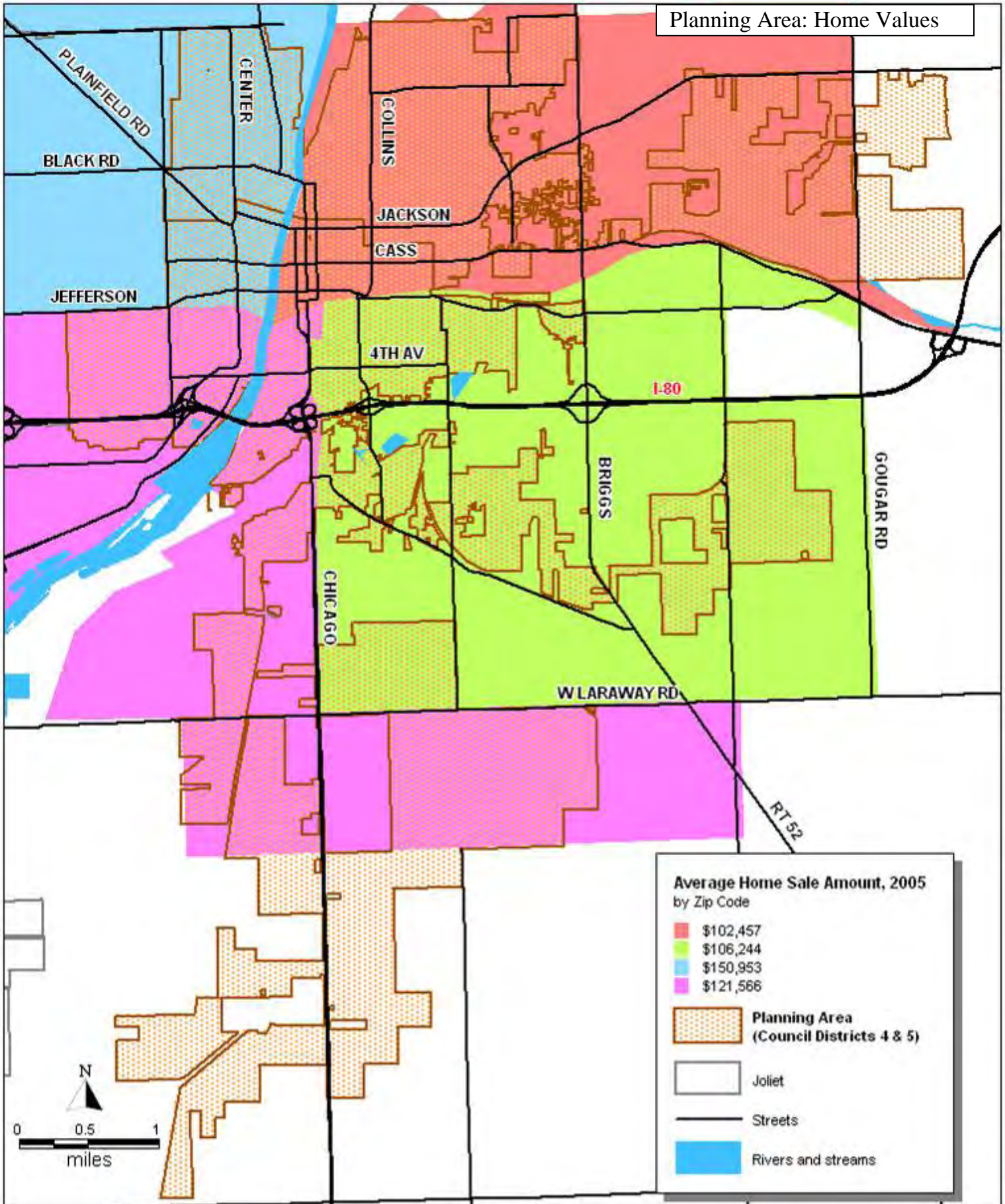
III. Key Findings and Proposals

A. Housing

Improving the housing market in Joliet's 4th and 5th District (the Planning Area for this project) is entirely dependent on increasing residential investment in the area. This entails improving the conditions of existing properties, attracting new development, and increasing access to homeownership. A sound housing strategy can build on the Planning Area's strengths and create a greater variety of price points that serve both existing residents and higher-income earners. For many years, the 4th and 5th District's housing market has struggled to keep pace with the rest of the city. At the same time, this area holds several assets that can and should be used to leverage new residential reinvestment and a stronger housing market: a strong homeownership ethic; outstanding historic structures (particularly in the Planning Area Historic District around Eastern Avenue); an advantageous location - positioned between an improving central business district and the new I-355 extension, along I-80, and near a growing industrial jobs corridor; the redevelopment of the Joliet Housing Authority's Briggs-Rosalind Homes into Liberty Meadows Estates - a vibrant mixed income development; and, a strong industrial market nearby. These assets can serve as the building blocks to the revitalization of the Planning Area's housing market and ultimately support the reinvestment and economic revitalization of the community as a whole.

Recent indicators show that Joliet's housing market has strengthened overall and within the 4th and 5th Districts, with increases in appreciation rates, more home and property improvements, and higher-rates of infill housing development. Several proposals that are put forth in this section build off of many of the programs and efforts that are currently underway in the city such as the ASSIST-ance Program, a home purchase loan pool that the City contributes to yearly, the Local Homestead Program that builds and rehabilitates homes for moderate and low-income families, the use of Low-Income Tax Credits, and the development of mixed-use and mixed-income housing. The continuation and expansion of these programs, along with complimentary recommendations, are put forward as an effort to stimulate the Planning Area housing market and better integrate housing revitalization into the overall economic growth of Joliet's 4th and 5th Council Districts.

Planning Area: Home Values



A housing and commercial market survey was conducted through the mail, with statistically significant results. Other responses were received from participants who submitted surveys at two community meetings and by Internet. While 72% of mail survey respondents and 52% of community meeting respondents live within the 4th and 5th Districts, most (74%) of the Internet survey respondents live either elsewhere in Joliet or outside of the City limits. Most survey respondents are homeowners (89% of mail respondents, 86% of Internet survey respondents and 84% of community meeting respondents.) The survey asked a number of questions about the overall quality of life in the Planning Area, as well as the housing and commercial markets. Responses about the housing market are as follows:

- **General perceptions of the Planning Area:** The vast majority of survey respondents (70%-mail, 83%-Internet, and 85%-community meeting) feel that the Planning Area in general is worse than the rest of Joliet.
- **Planning Area housing quality:** Most survey respondents perceive the housing stock in the 4th and 5th Districts to be of good – or better – quality. Many (49%) of the mail survey respondents feel that the quality of homes in the Planning Area is either excellent (9%) or good (40%) and 42% feel that the housing quality is fair. In contrast, Internet survey respondents tend to think that the housing quality in the Planning Area is either good (43%) or excellent (15%) and similarly, most of the community meeting respondents feel that the 4th and 5th District housing stock is either good (45%) or excellent (13%).
- **Incoming residents:** Responses vary with respect to perceptions about “newcomers” to the Planning Area. Many respondents (42%-mail, 64%-Internet, 49%-community meetings) feel that new 4th and 5th District residents earn less income than current residents. Results show that 46% of Internet respondents, many who live outside of the Planning Area, feel that newcomers maintain their property worse than current residents, while many mail (47%) and community meeting (53%) respondents (most of who live in the Planning Area) feel that newcomers maintain their property as well or better than current residents. Analysis of income levels of new residents in the Planning Area presented below challenge some of these perceptions.

In addition to the surveys, the Quality of Life Task Force hosted two large public meetings. Input from the community meetings resulted in the following top-five priorities for the 4th and 5th District housing market:

- Homeownership education programs & assistance, including rent-to-own programs
- Beautification of neighborhoods, including stricter code enforcement
- Rental options
- Housing for the aging population, including assisted living
- Housing diversity in communities –mixed income housing

This feedback from residents and stakeholders indicates a strong desire to expand homeownership opportunities in the Planning Area and increase new investment, while ensuring that existing residents can continue to live and thrive in the 4th and 5th districts. The key to revitalizing this community vision is attracting new home investment by upgrading the physical conditions and, in turn, the overall image of the Planning Area and incorporating market-based tools to attract housing development and investment in the current housing stock.

Key Findings

An analysis of Joliet's housing market was conducted for the Metropolitan Planning Council by czb, LLC, a national housing and community development consultant in Alexandria, Virginia. This analysis is based on U.S. Census data and housing sales data from the Multiple Listing Service and Will County Assessors data.

Key points that are worth noting about trends in the Joliet and Planning Area housing markets are as follows:

- Population growth in Will County and Joliet is outpacing the 4th and 5th Districts. Seven out of 19 Planning Area census tracts actually lost residents.
- Among households moving into to the Planning Area, just over half (55%) are owners compared to 79% in Will County and 63% in Joliet. In some Planning Area census tracts (like 8819 and 8820), just one out of every six movers was an owner.
- Housing supply is not meeting the demand in Joliet as a whole for households earning above \$125,000 and in the Planning Area, the supply of housing is not meeting the demand for households earning between \$50,000 and \$125,000.
- Median incomes in Joliet increased 33% from 1990 to 2000 and another 18% by 2006. In the Planning Area, the median household income increased by 27% from 1990 to 2000 and another 12% by 2006, a marked improvement over the declines in median income that the Planning Area experienced in the 1980s. .

Population Growth

While population growth in Will County and the city of Joliet¹ as a whole boomed (41% and 38% respectively) from 1990 to 2000, this trend seems to be tapering off. For Joliet, the population grew 28% from 2000 to 2006 and is expected to grow by roughly 18% from 2006 to 2011. In comparison, population growth has not been as rapid in the 4th and 5th Districts, yet has been consistent, increasing by 13% from 2000 to 2006 and is expected to grow by 9% from 2006 to 2011. It should be noted that this population increase in the Planning Area is occurring in particular Census Tracts and that some (7 out of 19) actually lost residents from 1990 to 2000. The estimated 2006 population of the 19 Census tract areas is 80,978, with 26,698 total households (2.99 people per household overall). Household size in the newer expanding areas to the south and east of the core Planning Area has grown from 2.85 in 1990 to 3.22 in 2005. As the city expands its boundaries, new households in these areas tend to be larger than households in the more established areas of the 4th and 5th Districts, which could be attributed to the type of housing being built in these newer areas or to demographic shifts.

Table A-1. Joliet and Planning Area Population Demographics

Joliet Population Demographics	2000 Census	2006 Estimate	2011 Projection	Percent Change 2000 to 2006	Percent Change 2006 to 2011
Total Population	106,205	136,001	160,114	28.1%	17.7%
Total Households	36,180	45,885	52,244	26.8%	13.9%

¹ Population projections are calculated using US Census tracts and therefore include some areas outside the Joliet city boundaries.

4 th and 5 th District Population Demographics	2000 Census	2006 Estimate	2011 Projection	Percent Change 2000 to 2006	Percent Change 2006 to 2011
Total Population	71,436	80,978	88,448	13.4%	9.2%
Total Households	23,362	26,698	28,506	14.3%	6.8%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

While there are likely numerous causes for why population growth in this area has not kept pace with the rest of the city and county, this trend alone must be addressed to revitalize the community. A consequence of slower population growth is stagnant commercial and residential investment. Creating opportunities to attract new residents is key to revitalizing this community. A strong growing population is essential to support broader economic growth, as well as enhance the equity and savings of homeowners and owners of property in the Planning Area.

Income

In 2006, households earning between \$75,000 and \$90,000 annually were one of the fastest growing populations in Joliet and the Planning Area, growing 205% from 1990-2000 in Joliet and 155% during that same time period in the 4th and 5th Districts. Households moving into Joliet and the 4th and 5th Districts in particular, tend to have lower incomes than Will County as a whole, yet are either equivalent to or more than current incomes, contrary to the perceptions of survey respondents. From 1990 to 2000, Joliet’s median household income increased by almost 33% and another 18% in 2006. In the Planning Area, the median household income increased by 27% from 1990 to 2000 and another 12% by 2006. On average in 2000, new and moving households and new and moving owners in Will County earned \$74,356 and \$83,714 respectively; in Joliet they earned \$55,763 and \$67,974 respectively, more than the city median of \$48,000. New households in the 4th and 5th Districts earned roughly \$45,000; a closer look shows that new and moving owners in 2000 earned \$55,000 and new and moving renters earned \$37,000 compared to the 2000 Planning Area median income of \$40,200. In 2006, the **Planning Area median income grew to \$45,485.**

Homeownership

Between 1990 and 2000, homeownership rates substantially increased in both the county (from 77% to 83%) and the city (from 63% to 70%.) Homeownership rates in 2000 in the 4th and 5th Districts overall were at a strong level of 62%; yet during this same period, while Will County gained nearly 50,000 owner-occupied households and Joliet added roughly 8,500, 12 out of 18 Planning Area Census Tracts actually lost owner households. Abandonment rates – properties that the Census determined to be vacant, but not “on the market” - were approximately twice as high in Joliet (0.9%) and three times as high in the Planning Area (1.4%) than in the county as a whole (0.5%) in 2000.

Housing Stock

Compared to the county, Joliet’s and the 4th and 5th Districts’ housing stock have a smaller share of single-family detached housing and a larger share of small (2-4 units) multifamily housing.

Table A-2. Housing Stock Composition

Geography	% Single-family Detached	% Single-family Attached	% Multifamily (2-4 Units)	% Multifamily (5-9 Units)	% Multifamily (10-49 Units)	% Multifamily (50+ Units)	% Mobile Homes
Will County	76%	9%	6%	2%	4%	2%	2%
Joliet	65%	6%	13%	3%	7%	5%	0%
4 th & 5 th Districts	65%	4%	21%	3%	2%	4%	1%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

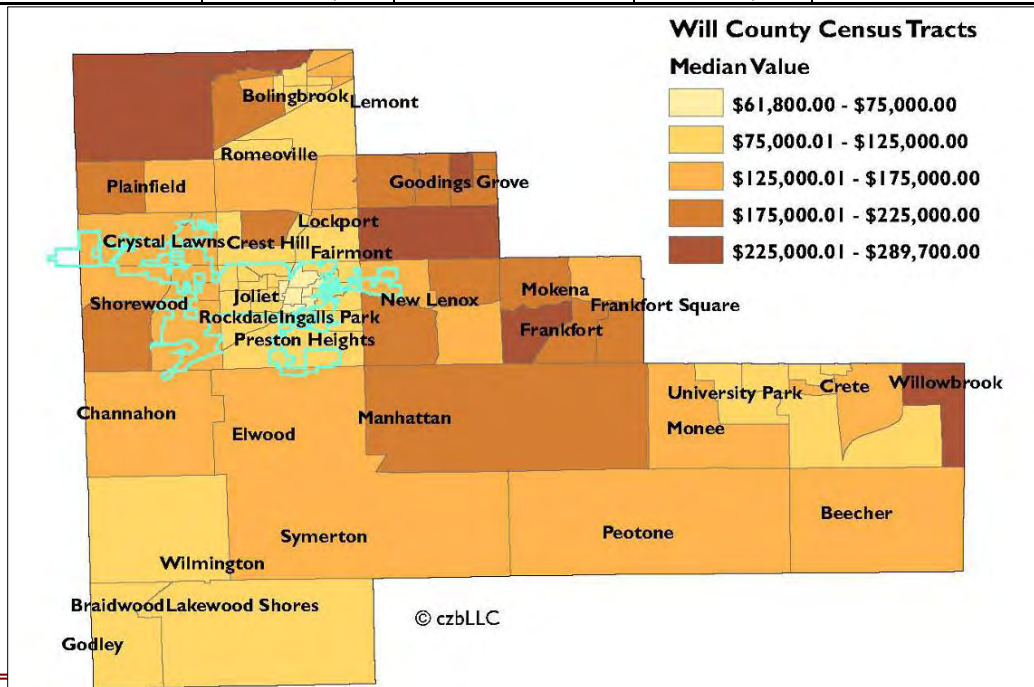
The Planning Area has an older housing stock in comparison to Will County and the rest of Joliet. 8,082 of 24,390, or 33%, of Planning Area homes were built in 1939 or earlier. In comparison, only 10% of the homes in Will County (16,925 of 175,524) and 20% (7,784 of 38,182) in Joliet were built over 68 years ago. At the other end of the spectrum, while 34% of Will County homes (59,283 of 175,524) and 25% of homes in Joliet (9,686 of 38,182) were built between 1990 and 2000, just 6% of homes in the Planning Area (1,579 of 24,390) are 17 years old or newer.

Home Values and Rents

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Planning Area’s median gross rent (\$576) actually exceeded the city’s (\$549), but trailed the county’s median rent (\$630.) Housing values are not as strong in Joliet as in Will County as a whole or in Joliet’s neighboring communities, and home values are still lower in the Planning Area. Just 6% of owner-occupied units in the Planning Area were valued at \$200,000 or higher – a portion similar to that for the city as a whole, but well below that for the county where 28% of owner-occupied units were valued at \$200,000 or higher. The median value in Joliet census tracts substantially trails medians in nearby tracts.

Table A-3. Median Home Values

Year	Planning Area	City of Joliet	Joliet % Increase	Will County	Will County % Increase
2000	85,822	119,900		154,300	
2005	---	173,400	44.60%	223,500	44.80%

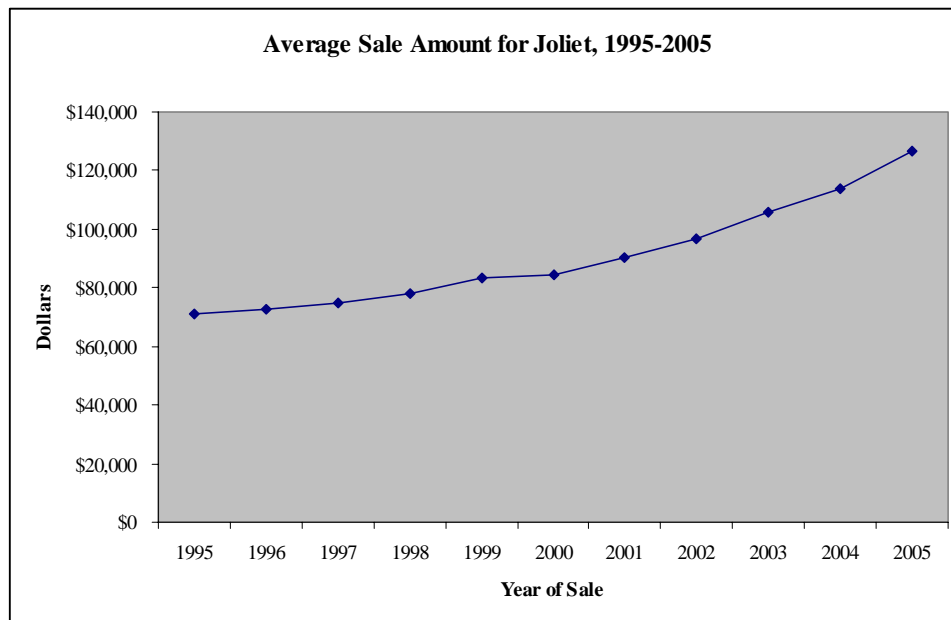


Czb, LLC also analyzed Will County Assessors and Multiple Listing Service data to get a more current view of sales trends in Joliet. According to this data, Joliet's average sale price rose above \$100,000 in 2003 and exceeded \$125,000 by 2005. **While the average sale price in Joliet typically increased by 2-4% in the late 1990s, it rose at least 8% annually between 2002 and 2005 (appreciating 11% between 2004 and 2005).**

Rising home values are important to build confidence for private investment. The large percentage increases are, to some extent, due to the initial low values relative to the county and region. But, these increases also indicate that home seekers are willing to pay higher values than in the past to purchase in the city.

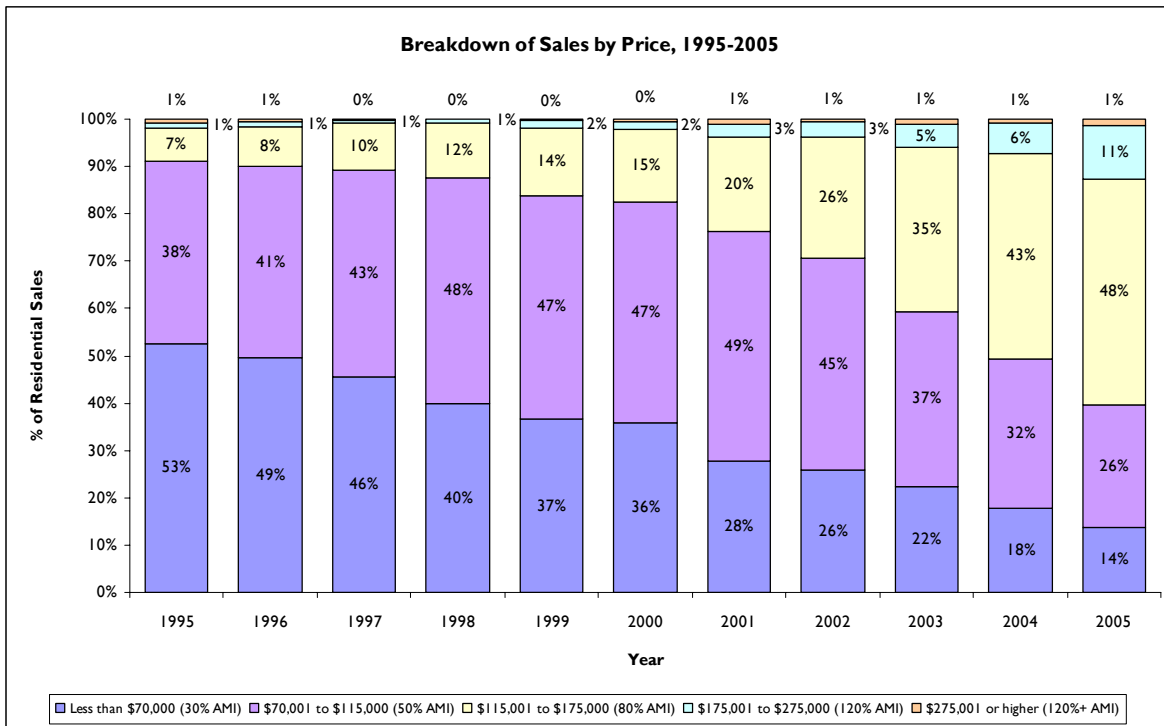
Rising values do have a downside as well. As a result of fast appreciation, a smaller share of Joliet for-sale housing was affordable to lower-income households in 2005 than in 2000. In 2000, 83% of the city's for-sale housing was affordable to households earning less than 50% of the area median income (\$37,700 for a family of four); by 2005, just 40% was affordable to these households. Still, in 2005, some 88% of moderate-income households (those earning below 80% of AMI or \$59,600 for a family of four) can still afford to live in Joliet.

Figure A-3. Average Sale Amount for Joliet, 1995-2005



Source: Will County Assessor's Data

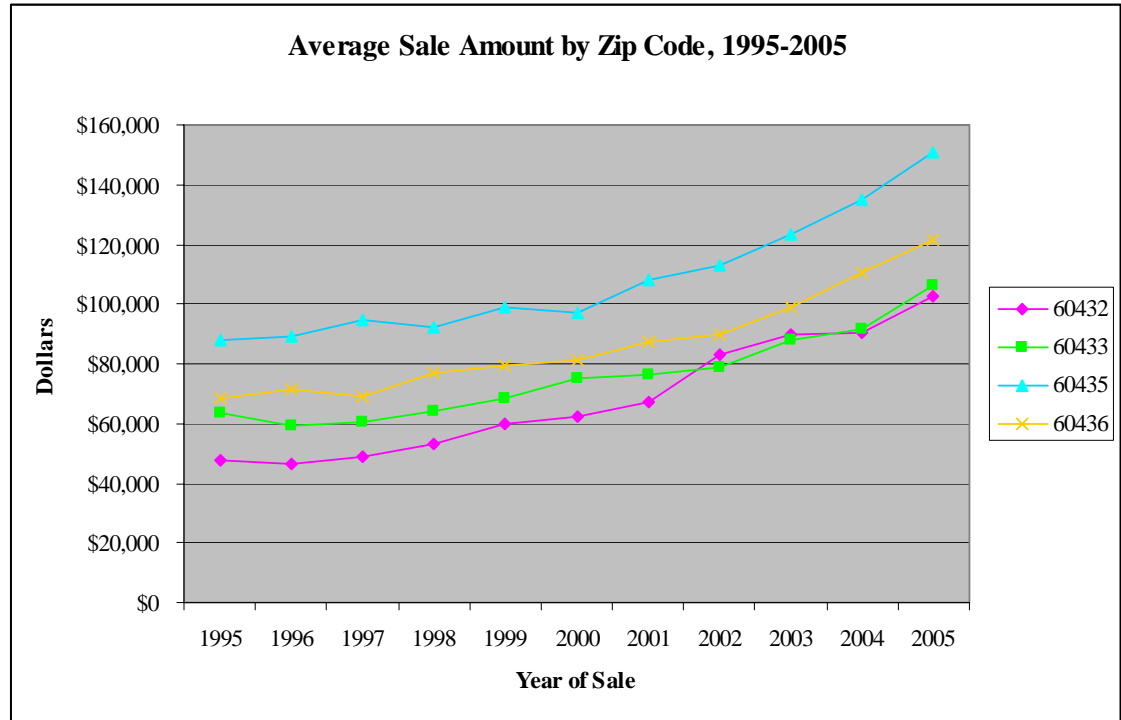
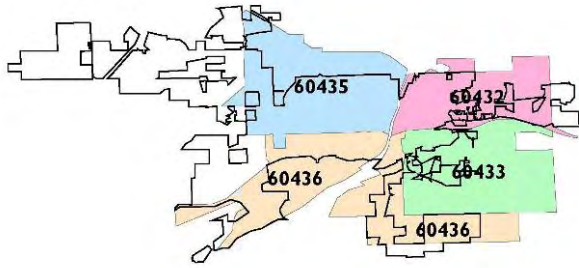
Figure A-4. Breakdown of Joliet Sales by Price, 1995-2005



Source: Will County Assessor's Office

According to Will County Assessor data, values differ dramatically between Joliet neighborhoods. On average, values were highest in zip code 60435, comprising the western portion of the 4th District (see map below) – with the average sale price exceeding \$150,000 by 2005. Sale amounts remained significantly lower in zip codes 60432 and 60433 (areas east of the river) – roughly \$100,000 in 2005. One year later, in 2006, information from the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) shows the average sale price of both single-family homes and smaller multifamily properties around \$115,000 and \$150,000 respectively in the Planning Area. While home values in the Planning Area trail those west of the City Center, home values within specific areas of the 4th and 5th Districts are notably appreciating: in zip code 60432, homes are appreciating at an average rate of 8%; in 60436 they are appreciating at an average of 6% annually; and at 5% in 60435 and 60433.

Figure A-5. Average Sale Amount by Zip Code, 1995-2005



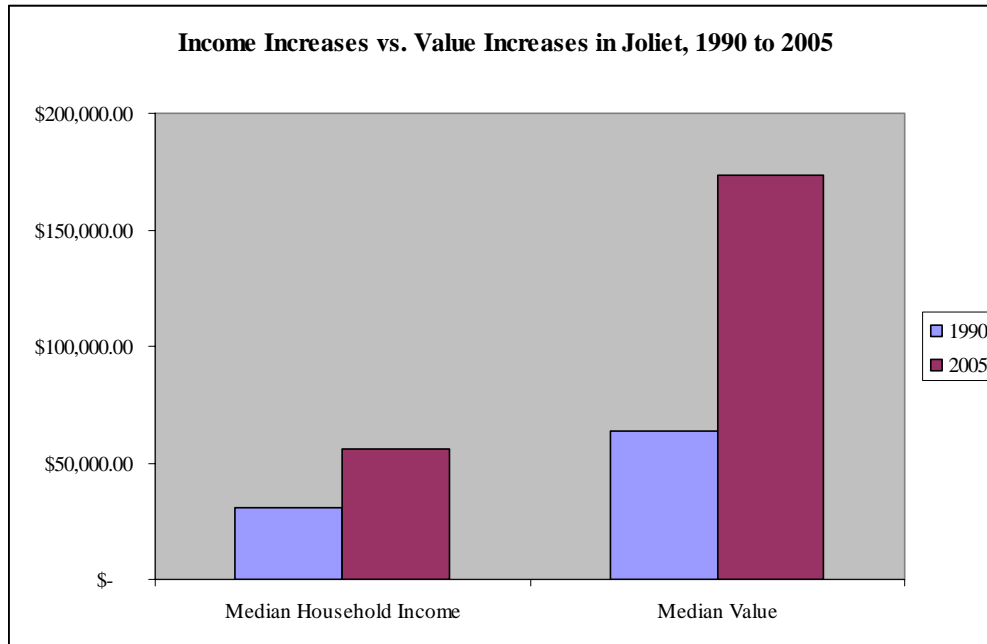
Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average Annual Appreciation
60432	\$47,804	\$46,151	\$49,031	\$53,371	\$60,005	\$62,564	\$66,953	\$82,850	\$89,510	\$90,160	\$102,457	8%
Annual Appreciation		-3%	6%	9%	12%	4%	7%	24%	8%	1%	14%	8%
60433	\$63,549	\$59,135	\$60,253	\$63,936	\$68,563	\$75,292	\$76,222	\$78,989	\$88,101	\$91,456	\$106,244	5%
Annual Appreciation		-7%	2%	6%	7%	10%	1%	4%	12%	4%	16%	5%
60435	\$88,203	\$89,334	\$94,763	\$92,144	\$98,930	\$97,020	\$107,849	\$113,060	\$123,264	\$134,876	\$150,953	5%
Annual Appreciation		1%	6%	-3%	7%	-2%	10%	5%	8%	9%	11%	5%
60436	\$68,336	\$71,248	\$69,050	\$76,869	\$79,549	\$81,503	\$87,192	\$89,889	\$99,071	\$110,287	\$121,566	6%
Annual Appreciation		4%	-3%	10%	3%	2%	7%	3%	9%	10%	9%	6%

Source: Will County Assessor

Future Demand Projections

By 2005, the median value of Joliet's owner-occupied homes was \$173,400 and the city's median income was \$56,175. Between 2000 and 2005, while household incomes increased by 3.5% annually, city properties appreciated by 8.9% annually.

Figure A-6. Income Increases vs. Value Increases in Joliet, 1990-2005



Sources: U.S. Census, 1990; American Community Survey, 2005

Supply and demand trends in Joliet in 2005 reveal opportunities for development for households earning above \$125,000 per year; the market is undersupplying homes priced above \$331,250. The demand for homes priced for households earning from \$50,000 to \$74,999 is being met mostly by the rental market. As such, while all of these families are not necessarily in the position to purchase, this income group does present an area of opportunity for the development of some for-sale housing priced between \$132,500 and \$198,749.

The opportunity to provide for-sale housing in the \$132,500 to \$198,749 price category and higher ranges may be met in a number of ways that are appropriate for a community with largely developed land and older housing stock, as well as numerous moderate to lower-income households, such as the Planning Area. Higher value homes may be added by rehabilitating existing housing, by building in-fill housing on vacant land, by building mixed-income residential developments on land that is being converted from other use (such as obsolete industrial areas), or by building mixed-use housing in commercial corridors that are now far below their development potential (as discussed in the Plan's section on Retail Development). A combination of these strategies would advance the QOL goals of providing home ownership and neighborhood improvement opportunities for current and future Planning Area residents.

Table A-3. Supply and Demand in Joliet (2005)

Household Income Range	# of Households	Mortgage ²	Monthly Payment/Rent (30% of income)	Existing Owner Units	Existing Renter Units	Total Difference
Less than \$50,000	18755	Less than \$132,500	Less than \$1,250	8199	10360 ³	-196
\$50,000 to \$74,999	8897	\$132,500 to \$198,749	\$1,250 to \$1,874	11056	313	2472
\$75,000 to \$124,999	10696	\$198,750 to \$331,249	\$1,875 to \$3,124	10468	104	-124
\$125,000 to \$149,999	1441	\$331,250 to \$397,499	\$3,125 to \$3,749	945	0	-496
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1071	\$397,500 to \$529,999	\$3,750 to \$4,999	251	0	-820
\$200,000 or more	904	\$530,000 or more	\$5,000 or more	68	0	-836
Total	41764			30987	10777	0

Source: 2005 American Community Survey; czb LLC

Information for the table above is obtained from the 2005 American Community Survey. This 2005 data is only available for the city of Joliet and is not available for individual Census tracts. As such, to provide a general idea of the housing supply and demand for the Planning Area, the table below offers information from the 2000 U.S. Census, which is not as timely, but provides a closer look at the Planning Area's housing market. As of 2000, there was an oversupply of homes priced to meet the needs of families earning below \$50,000 and a noticeable undersupply of homes for families earning between \$50,000 and \$124,999. Due to the unmet demand for households earning above \$50,000, there may be a number of Planning Area families that are "under housed" - living in homes that have less value than their purchasing ability.

Table A-4. Supply and Demand in Planning Area (2000)

Household Income Range	# of Households	Mortgage	Monthly Payment/Rent (30% of income)	Existing Owner Units	Existing Renter Units	Total Difference
Less than \$50,000	14171	Less than \$132,500	Less than \$1,250	11451	8509	5789
\$50,000 to \$74,999	4645	\$132,500 to \$198,749	\$1,250 to \$1,874	1801	58	-2786
\$75,000 to \$124,999	3148	\$198,750 to \$331,249	\$1,875 to \$3,124	765	3	-2380
\$125,000 to \$149,999	391	\$331,250 to \$397,499	\$3,125 to \$3,749	56	0	-335
\$150,000 to \$199,999	287	\$397,500 to \$529,999	\$3,750 to \$4,999	39	0	-248
\$200,000 or more	158	\$530,000 or more	\$5,000 or more	53	0	-105
Total	22800			14165	8570	0

Source: 2000 Census; czb LLC

² Lending institutions use an annual household income-to-mortgage size ratio to help calculate purchasing power. Ratios tend to fluctuate between 2.3 and 3.1 depending on the lending institution. Czb, LLC used a 2.65 ratio, which represents the middle of this range.

³ Any rental units that are occupied without the payment of cash rent are identified as "No cash rent" by the US Census. Typically these "No cash rent" units are those that are subsidized, therefore, the assumption is made that "No cash rent" units are occupied by households earning below \$50,000 and added in to the total count for rental units serving that income category. For example, 425 rental units in Joliet were deemed to have "No cash rent," another 9,935 had rents low enough to be affordable to households earning less than \$50,000. Combining these two rental categories, there are a total of 10,360 rental units affordable to households earning below \$50,000.

Proposals

The following proposals all focus on stimulating housing investment in the Planning Area through four strategies:

1. Create and encourage a diversity of housing types in the Planning Area to insure a growing and healthy housing market and serve a broader constituency.
2. Spur new investment in the 4th and 5th Districts through incremental measures, starting with incentives and leveraged financing to attract developers to the Planning Area. This should involve city incentives and state and federal housing resources that will help a developer bear the initial risk – be it real or perceived – of entering this market.
3. Improve residents’ access to homeownership, increasing the savings and equity of families in the 4th and 5th Districts.
4. Provide financial tools to improve property conditions, creating the momentum for property owners to upgrade their buildings.

Many respondents identified seniors as a population in need of additional housing opportunities. Some residents also cited ex-offenders as a population in need of supportive housing. In response to the lack of ex-offender transitional housing, the Will County Health & Justice Coalition has been working on a “one church, one house” initiative, where individual churches would each help fund a transitional home for a few ex-offenders. Some churches already provide some housing assistance but there is a lack of coordination. The Health & Justice Coalition proposes to fill this gap, as well as expand the program. Below is a chart summarizing the specialized housing available in the Joliet community:

Table A-5. Senior Housing Developments in Joliet

Essington Place	85 units	
Joshua Arms	186 units	
Marycrest Village Apartments	66 units	
Victory Centre	59 Senior units	32 Supportive Living units
John O. Holmes	45 units	

Table A-6. Transitional Housing in Joliet

Agape Mission	7 units	
Catholic Charities Daybreak Center	50 beds	
Lamb's Fold Women's Center	43 beds	
MorningStar Mission Ministries	20 beds	
MorningStar Mission Ministries Hope House	8 beds	
MorningStar Mission Ministries Advance Transitional Housing	12 beds	
MorningStar Mission Women & Children's Recovery Center	72 units	
Stepping Stones	66 units	

While the central theme to the following proposals is to better balance Joliet’s housing stock by creating a diversity of housing types and prices throughout the city, many can aid in the development of housing for seniors and other specific populations. There are proposals, such as accessing federal and state funding resources to spur new mixed-income housing development or

providing incentives for mixed-use development where housing and commercial uses are paired, that may in some instances lend themselves more to serving aging residents than other proposals.

Stimulate Market Demand

Stimulating the housing market is an important component of improving the quality of life in the 4th and 5th Districts. While it is important to ensure that 4th and 5th District residents can continue to afford to live in this community, new investment must be attracted to the area to break the cycle of poverty and disinvestment that persists in some Planning Area neighborhoods. Because Joliet as a whole has remained relatively affordable, the Planning Area is essentially competing with other Joliet neighborhoods and surrounding communities to attract residents. Currently, those potential residents can sometimes simply find more for their money and a new product elsewhere in the city and region. This is at the core the Planning Area's challenge. Accordingly, the following recommendations focus on stimulating new housing market activity that is unique to the Planning Area and builds on the advantages of the 4th and 5th Districts; the I-355 extension, proximity to two downtown Metra stations and central business district, and a strong historic character.

Zone for More Housing through Mixed-use Development

While residents take pride in the single-family character of 4th and 5th District neighborhoods, commercial corridors and other areas that benefit from increased foot traffic present opportunities for mixed-use development where retail and housing is either built in close proximity (i.e. townhomes next to businesses) or is one in the same (i.e. retail on the first floor and housing above). The city can encourage this type of development in several ways: rezoning areas specifically for mixed-use development, creating overlay zones in targeted areas, or simply marketing the sites to encourage mixed-use and making the plan review process simple for these priority developments. The City should and has been very careful about allowing mixed-use development "by right" through rezoning because it takes away some City ability to negotiate with builders to ensure that a development fits with local character and meets city goals.

Demonstrating local demand is necessary for retail and business attraction efforts. Demand is measured by local buying power - a combination of household income and the number of households in a given area. In order to increase buying power, a community should look at both adding residents and increasing incomes. One strategy is not independent of the other. For example, there are high-wealth communities that, because of their limited number of households, do not have the buying power necessary to attract desired retailers. There are also communities that have low household incomes, but because of a higher concentration of households, they actually have strong buying power and are therefore more attractive to retailers and retail developers. While the *Retail Market Development and Assessment* section in this plan does demonstrate a significant demand, residential growth will make the Planning Area even more attractive to desired retailers and businesses.

Through Joliet's Planned Unit Development (PUD) process, the City has negotiated with developers to create mixed-use buildings. By affirmatively marketing these sites as mixed-use opportunities to developers experienced in building mixed-use properties, the Planning Area will not only see more housing options for new and existing residents, it will also support new retail

development. This plan specifies several appropriate areas for mixed-use development and increased density in the *Land Use & Neighborhood Character/Infrastructure* section, including some Planning Area commercial corridors, such as Collins, Chicago, Jefferson and Cass, as well as sites around the Metra station.

Land Assembly

One of the most effective ways that a city can “set the stage” for redevelopment, both housing and commercial, is by purchasing and donating or discounting land to encourage preferred types of development. The City of Joliet has already been acquiring parcels for the past nine years using the County Delinquent Tax Sales program. In order to catalyze reinvestment in the Planning Area, the City could use a combination of Community Development Block Grant funds, casino revenues, and general operating funds to acquire additional parcels, issue a Request for Proposals that outlines key priorities and design requirements for redevelopment, and then donate or sell properties at a discounted price to qualified investor(s) that commit to achieve desired outcomes. While RFP goals should be site specific, some general guidelines for Planning Area redevelopment include:

- **Housing diversity:** Creating a variety of housing types and sizes, including condominiums, townhomes, smaller single-family homes, larger single-family homes, and accessory homes.
- **Mixed-income:** Providing a range of price points. This is accomplished by developing market-rate housing with a range of price points made possible through a variety of housing types and sizes. A broader price range can also be accomplished by securing subsidies to write down the cost of some units. While the Planning Area’s median income in 2006 was \$45,485, there are public resources that can be used to create mixed-income housing if the development offers some homes at prices that serve families earning from \$37,700 (50% Area Median Income for a family of four) up to \$90,480 (120% Area Median Income for a family of four). These price points – even if confined to just a percentage of the development, are comparable to or higher than Planning Area incomes.
- **Mixed-use:** Along commercial corridors and near the Metra station, encourage homes above or next to commercial space. This may include apartments or condominiums above the first floor or townhomes and single-family homes adjacent to retail, whichever is appropriate for the size, configuration, and location of the site.

Improve Public Infrastructure

City public improvements to streets, sidewalks, and sewer and water systems are costly yet will affect housing and economic development opportunity in the 4th and 5th Districts. While Joliet has invested a significant amount in infrastructure improvements within the Planning Area, problems within some of the unincorporated areas that intermingle with 4th and 5th District homes have far reaching impacts. The unincorporated areas’ current lack of infrastructure has negatively impacted some Planning Area neighborhoods, and will continue to be one of the main obstacles to the revitalization of the community. In addition, there are other incorporated portions of the Planning Area that are in need of improvements such as sidewalks and gutters, particularly the more isolated residential neighborhoods south of I-80 and east and west of the river, between Rowell Avenue and Raynor Avenue and north of Mills Road. A multi-year

approach to bring streets, sidewalks, lighting, sewer and water systems up to modern standards will help to improve the appearance and increase the values of some Planning Area neighborhoods, and will build the confidence of homeowners to invest their own private funds in their homes.

The City has a process by which a group of homeowners can work together with the City pay for infrastructure upgrades. The projects for street improvements are handled on a petition basis. When neighbors work together, they can approach the City and their councilperson to get on the project list. Projects are handled on a first-come-first-serve basis. City street improvement assistance is capped at \$300 per single-family home and is higher for rental and commercial properties; however, there is a total cap of \$1,500 per project, excluding sidewalk repairs. For sidewalk repairs, the city offers a matching program where property owners pay for half of the costs and the City pays the other half. When property owners residing in areas in need of repair are not be able to afford the match for these repairs, the City has a policy of working out terms through which a property owner may pay his or her matching contributions in installments. The City may also consider working with lending institutions to establish a low-interest loan pool to assist residents in financing their infrastructure matching contributions. Such a pool would give residents an alternative to relying on the City for credit and help to stretch the City's resources. Helping promote these options among residents may also be an appropriate role for a Community Development Corporation (CDC). (See the CDC discussions in the concluding paragraphs of this section and more extensively in the *Interlocking Issues* section of the Plan).

Homeownership Investment

Much of the resident feedback focused on increasing homeownership in the community. Of the small number of survey respondents who are renters, 55% plan to purchase within the next three years. 50% cited the inability to qualify for a loan as being the main reason they have not yet purchased a home. Providing purchase assistance in the form of loans, grants, and homeownership counseling is one tool to increase homeownership in Districts 4 and 5. Currently, the City provides assistance through two programs:

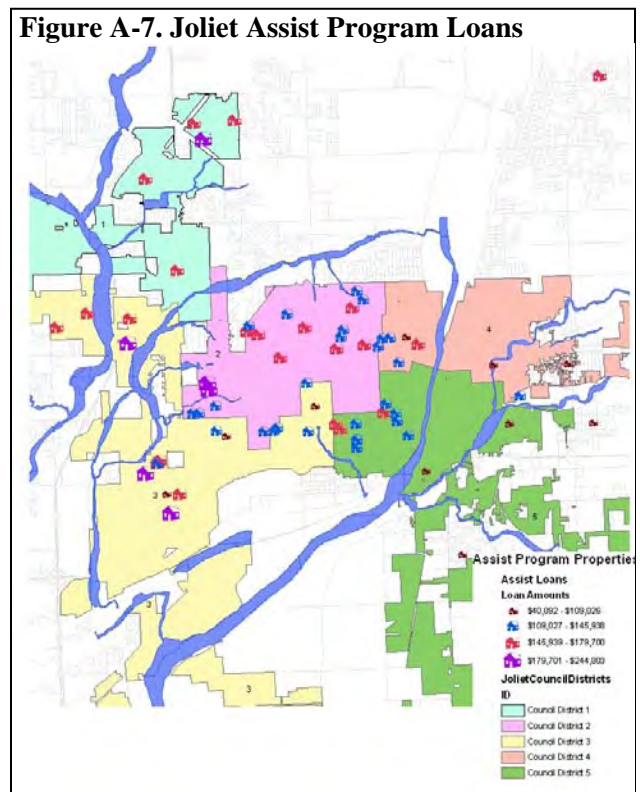
- **Local Homestead Program.** The City of Joliet administers down payment assistance in the form of a mortgage subsidy that is forgivable over five years as part of the Local Homestead Program. This assistance is tied to the purchase of renovated or newly built Local Homestead Program homes and is available for families earning 80% or below the Area Median Income (AMI) - \$59,600 for a family of four in 2007. Since 1996, the City has contributed an average of \$140,000 annually to this program, which has in turn leveraged approximately \$771,300 annually from the state and private financial institutions. As of 2006, over \$9 million have been allocated to the Local Homestead Program, assisting over 100 low and moderate-income families. The City also uses funding from the Illinois Housing Development Authority's (IHDA) housing trust fund to provide a partial zero-interest loan and down payment grant to low and moderate-income families.
- **ASSIST-ance Program:** Every year, the City cedes its unused volume bond cap to a loan pool that offers down payment and closing cost assistance through the ASSIST-ance program, which can be accessed through several participating financial institutions. The program offers 4.25% of the purchase price for down payment assistance or closing

costs. The revenue from these bonds is combined with that of other participating communities. In 2006, Joliet ceded over \$10 million to this program, which helped 72 families access \$10,324,983 in mortgage loans, with an average loan of \$143,402.

There are two areas for potential expansion of current efforts.

- **Use home purchase assistance to direct investment⁴.** Currently, the City does not directly administer the ASSIST-ance program. A private third party manages the funds and works directly with local financial institutions to provide loans to homebuyers. As shown in the map below, while ASSIST-ance has helped 72 families, most of the properties purchased were located outside of the 4th and 5th Districts. Because the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development defines most Planning Area Census Tracts as “Difficult Development” areas, ASSIST-ance income limits are increased to 120% of the AMI for homebuyers who purchase in these areas. In all other areas of Joliet and Will County, a household would have to earn below 80% AMI to qualify for the program.

The City of Joliet can work with local lenders to better market the program and the benefits of purchasing in the 4th and 5th Districts. Because families earning 120% of AMI (\$90,480 for a family of four) earn more than the median income of the Planning Area (\$48,485 in 2006), by offering these low-interest loans and down payment assistance for a broader range of incomes, the City would essentially accomplish the dual goals of assisting existing residents and providing an incentive for higher-earning households to move to the Planning Area, thus stimulating investment from homebuyers that may not otherwise consider the 4th and 5th Districts. The City may also consider offering a local match to the ASSIST-ance program for home purchases in the Planning Area by working with participating lenders. All applicants to ASSIST-ance are required to go through home purchase counseling. The City and Quality of Life Task



⁴ Chicago’s City Mortgage program is an example of a targeted homeownership assistance program designed to attract home purchase investment in neighborhoods in need of investment. The City Mortgage program offers qualified first-time homebuyers 30-year, fixed-interest mortgages at competitive interest rates and a gift of 4% of the mortgage amount to cover down payment and closing costs. While the program is offered to applicants purchasing anywhere in the city, homebuyers are allowed higher income limits and higher purchase amounts in targeted areas of Chicago, where the City is trying to spur investment.

Force should work to ensure that this counseling is being offered and marketed in Spanish and can help with the general marketing of the program to Planning Area residents.

- **Involve employers in housing programs.** Employer-assisted housing (EAH)⁵ is a program where employers invest directly in their employees' ability to purchase or rent. This program is growing in popularity in Illinois particularly due to a state tax credit that provides \$.50 for every \$1 that an employer invests. IHDA provides tax credits to employers who are assisting employees earning up to 120% AMI. The Metropolitan Planning Council can assist the City and Quality of Life Task Force to engage employers in this program. Hospitals, municipalities, and financial and educational institutions in Illinois have been the most eager to create these programs for employee recruitment and retention purposes and may be the first employers to engage. Employers located in the Planning Area or invested in this community's growth may consider providing added incentives to employees who purchase in the 4th and 5th Districts. The Joliet School District may consider this benefit as a tool to attract and retain teachers and the City of Joliet, given its requirement that employees live within the city boundaries, may also consider this employee benefit. First Midwest Bank provides assistance for its employees and may be a good partner in marketing to business peers in Joliet.

Diversify the Housing Market

The housing stock in the Planning Area tends to be older and more affordable. Building new and high-quality housing that serves a wide spectrum of income groups will help to meet the needs of existing Planning Area residents, accommodate different life stages, and attract a higher-income buyer. Given current Planning Area housing market conditions and a slowing housing market overall in the region and across the nation, building a range of housing types and offering a wide variety of prices will help sell the homes and will allow a developer to tap federal and state resources. Many experienced developers can attest to the value of building mixed-income housing when developing in challenging markets. The lower-priced units sell much quicker, helping with up-front and carrying costs and supporting the construction of future units.

Adaptive Reuse

The City of Joliet has already been exploring ways to convert non-residential properties to residential uses. The Richards Grove development is an example of current city efforts to redevelop existing properties. The City and community should continue to pursue these opportunities for the adaptive reuse of abandoned or underutilized property for condominium or rental housing. Properties along Maple Street, just north of Cass Street and some along Chicago Street, such as properties on Chicago and Marion streets, pose opportunities in this area. In addition, the prison site can leverage national Historic Preservation Tax Credits to help convert the property into mixed-income housing.

⁵ For more information on Employer-Assisted Housing, go to <http://www.reachillinois.org/>

Market to Niche Builders

As the City considers further annexations in the Planning Area, marketing a large piece of land to a developer that specializes in building neighborhoods that provide a broad array of housing types can help to attract new residents to the 4th and 5th Districts and provide new options for existing residents. This might require changes or flexibility in current zoning and planned development practices to allow for increased housing options and new housing types, such as accessory units. Creating communities where homebuyers can purchase condominiums, townhomes, accessory homes or “granny flats,” small single-family homes and large-single family homes all in one neighborhood will help attract residents of all life stages and various income levels. Found in other parts of the Chicago region, this model has proven effective in meeting the needs of residents as they move through different life stages, increasing residential stability and creating a stronger sense of community. These communities have also shown significant savings – and sometimes even earnings - to local school districts because the housing types do not cater exclusively to families with children.

Access Federal and State Housing Resources

While the development of market-rate property will be the cornerstone of any revitalization strategy for the Planning Area, tapping resources such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)⁶ and Illinois Housing Trust Fund will help developers bear the risk of building in a developing market such as this, yet will still allow for the creation of market-rate housing in tandem with more moderately-priced homes. While the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) resources are used to support the creation of affordable housing, this source of funding can be used to spur mixed-income development that provides housing that serves the income levels of existing Planning Area residents (with a median household income of \$45,485) as well as higher-income earners. IHDA standards for allocating such assistance are noted in the following tables.

Table A-7. Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) Rent Limits

(Cook, DuPage, Lake, Kane, McHenry & Will)	Studio	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3-Bedroom	4-Bedroom	5-Bedroom
(120%)	\$643	\$689	\$827	\$955	\$1,066	\$1,175
(80%)	\$515	\$551	\$662	\$764	\$853	\$940
(60%)	\$386	\$413	\$496	\$573	\$639	\$705

Table A-8. IHDA Owner-Occupied Affordability Chart for Chicago Metro Area

	1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person
2007 Income Limits (80% AMI)	\$139,000	\$159,000	\$178,883	\$198,667	\$214,500	\$230,333

This strategy of utilizing state and federal housing assistance programs is not new to Joliet. LIHTC are part of the financing of the Louis Joliet Apartments in downtown Joliet and the Senior Suites on the corner of Ottawa and Webster (photo on the right). This form of financing

⁶ For more information on Low Income Housing Tax Credits, go to <http://www.ihda.org>

can be and has been used in Joliet to integrate market-rate for-sale homes with market-rate and affordable apartments, as well as provide rent-to-own housing similar to that being built as a part of the Joliet Housing Authority's Liberty Meadow Estates redevelopment. LIHTC can also be used to develop senior housing, which was cited by residents as an important and growing need in the Planning Area. Facilitating a partnership between an experienced tax credit developer and a local organization, where the partnering community organization or church could assist with management, outreach and screening, and ensuring the design fits local character, can add to the success of this type of project.



Residential Development in Downtown Joliet

The continued revitalization of the commercial and housing markets in downtown Joliet provides a significant opportunity for a broader resurgence of the Planning Area. The City should continue to pursue residential development in the downtown area. As with the rest of the 4th and 5th Districts, this may require short-term subsidies to activate the market. Downtown housing should incorporate both market rate and mixed-income development. Residential development and property redevelopment should be focused within walking distance (1/4 to 1/2 mile) of the Joliet Metra station. With the historic nature of the city center, densities of mixed-use developments can support condominiums and apartments at a level high enough to in turn support retail development and retention in the area.

Stabilize Existing Residents and Properties

Many interview respondents and Quality of Life public meeting participants felt that while there are affordable housing options in the 4th and 5th Districts, property conditions continue to be a challenge, and many homeowners can not afford to adequately maintain their homes. Respondents also felt that while there have been some improvements in property conditions, they are not keeping pace with increased housing values – essentially, respondents do not think that current values are warranted given property conditions. Slightly contrary to this view, most of the survey respondents who are homeowners stated that they have remodeled or improved their homes in the last two years (68% mail, 62% Internet, 73% community meetings). There was a wider variety of answers regarding near-term investment with 47% of mail, 26% of Internet, and 63% of community meeting respondents planning to remodel or improve their home by 2009.

A concern voiced by many interview respondents and meeting respondents is that when residents increase their income, instead of staying in the 4th and 5th Districts and investing in their property, they tend to move out where they can find “more for their money.” In addition, many residents voiced concern about upkeep to rental housing and felt that investor-owned single-family homes and multi-family rental housing are often the properties that have the most deteriorated property conditions. The general sentiment was that increased code enforcement needs to occur in the Planning Area coupled with rehabilitation assistance in the forms of grants and loans. Until recently, the City offered both an Emergency Loan and Housing Preservation Loan program, both of which were discontinued due to a combination of low participation and decreased federal funding.

Emergency Loan Program

Given that residents seem to be aware of the Will County Center for Community Concerns services like the weatherization program, the City may consider providing additional or matching funds for emergency housing assistance to Joliet residents accessing the county’s program.

Targeted Rehabilitation Areas

The Local Homestead Program has been a key driver in property improvements in the Planning Area. While the Local Homestead Program is effective, it is also a costly and time consuming program. The City at one time provided a 10-year forgivable rehabilitation loan. By reinstating a similar rehabilitation loan program, the City can work in the “Target Redevelopment Areas” as identified in the *Land Use & Neighborhood Character/Infrastructure* section to mobilize existing owner occupants to increase their level of investment and maintenance. This program can work in tandem with the Local Homestead Program and the City’s land assembly efforts noted above. By pairing rehabilitation assistance for property owners and developing block strategies that identify key adjacent properties to acquire and rehabilitate under the Local Homestead Program, the City and residents will have the most impact for their investment, improving entire blocks at a time.⁷ Once more owners begin taking advantage of the rehabilitation program or begin investing in their homes on their own, the City may consider gradually moving from the more costly Local Homestead Program to a less intensive rehabilitation loan or grant program.

The City has already been focusing Local Homestead Program resources in targeted areas such as Richards Street and Mississippi Avenue, acquiring and rehabilitating five homes in 2001, another nine in 2003, and now working on five more homes near the intersection of Second and Mississippi avenues. By pairing these efforts with assistance for current owners, the City will create more opportunities for existing residents to benefit from neighborhood improvements and help residents understand their vested interest in participating in those improvements.

⁷ Elgin provides similar rehabilitation programs for rehabilitation efforts in the city’s historic districts. Elgin provides two programs, the 50/50 and 75/25 programs. The 50/50, a 50% matching grant, targets all residents and is used primarily for “visual benefits” projects whereas the 75/25 grant, which provides 75% of the costs up to \$10,000, is geared towards maintenance-related projects and gives priority to low- and moderate-income households.

Code Enforcement and Compliance

From site tours and community feedback, building code non-compliance and illegal uses are a concern in the Planning Area. Similar to the Elgin program cited below, the City can pair matching funds or rehabilitation loans with code enforcement so that income qualified property owners can access assistance to bring their properties up to code. This type of “carrot and stick” approach to code enforcement should be structured differently than a standard rehabilitation loan pool to prevent abuse of the program by property owners with a history of not maintaining their properties. This could be addressed by offering incentives exclusively to owner-occupied households. As a last resort, a local housing organization can act as a receiver of these troubled properties and redevelop them for resale. By pairing incentives with enforcement, the City can be more diligent with code enforcement as long as it continues to comply with fair housing guidelines.

Strengthen Rental Housing Ordinance

Currently, the City of Joliet requires all non-owner occupied rental properties of two units and above and owner-occupied rental properties of above three units to get a certificate from the city to rent their property. This certificate also subjects the properties to a regular inspection process. A voluntary landlord training that includes a crime prevention component is offered to all landlords. Property owners or landlords that are in the building code enforcement process are required to attend. Because there have been concerns raised during community meetings and stakeholder interviews about the condition of single-family and duplex investor-owned properties, the City may consider broadening this ordinance to require that all properties get licensed to rent and subsequently require all units to receive regular inspections. As part of this licensing, the City can make landlord trainings mandatory. Current Joliet rental licensing fees would not support the added inspection costs, so it is suggested that the City consider increasing licensing costs.⁸

Role of a Community Organization

Community development organizations can be instrumental to a housing revitalization strategy because they offer a comprehensive set of program and services and are able to leverage a multitude of resources. Organizations such as Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago and Joseph Corporation (mentioned in the *Interlocking Issues* section) can create housing loan pools; provide housing counseling; work with local lending institutions; purchase, rehabilitate, and sell properties; help with foreclosure prevention; and, develop new housing. Having a one-stop-shop of this kind for housing services that is focused on 4th and 5th District redevelopment will add significantly to the revitalization of Planning Area homes. For example, the organization can apply to become a member of NeighborWorks America, a national nonprofit organization created by Congress to provide financial support, technical assistance, and training for

⁸ The City of Schaumburg’s Rental Licensing ordinance applies to all rental units in the city. The ordinance requires all property owners to complete an 8-hour Crime Free Multi-Housing Seminar, a Crime Free Lease Addendum added to the body of the lease that specifies criminal activity as a lease violation, and creates a definition for a nuisance property that allows the city to suspend the rental license. Schaumburg’s licensing fees range from \$295 for 1-50 unit buildings to \$1,783 for units between 401-500 units.

community-based revitalization efforts.⁹ Currently, the City allocates a portion of its HOME funding to four local Community Housing Development Organizations: Cornerstone Services, Inc., Will County Habitat for Humanity, Inc., Community Concerns for Families and Youth Freedom, Inc., and Forest Park Community Center, Inc. Each of these organizations helps to fill very specific niches in the housing market. Establishing an organization focused on community revitalization will begin to address housing and economic markets more comprehensively.

This organization would likely partner with existing organizations on specific projects. There are also opportunities for a newly established Joliet community organization to partner with a more established group like Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago to help build the capacity of the local organization. Any opportunities to partner with existing service organizations would enhance the marketing of these various and essential housing services. An organization that would perform these housing development and service functions on behalf of the community might well be organized as a community development corporation (CDC) in keeping with the proposals for a CDC presented in the *Interlocking Issues* section of this plan.

Proposals Summary					
Short Term (0-3 years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
1) Leverage strong market area activity to create mixed-income housing throughout the city	City of Joliet Developer participation	1		N/A	N/A
2) Establish Planning Area community-based organization (possibly a community development corporation (CDC) tasked with administering housing programming, development and rehabilitation.	QOL Task Force City of Joliet	1			
3) Expand or reinstate housing rehabilitation programs and concentrate these programs in “Target Redevelopment Areas”	City of Joliet CDC	1		\$100,000 - \$200,000 annually	Local financial institutions, IHDA, City of Joliet –CDBG, HOME, Casino revenues, Housing Trust Fund (if established)
4) Expand residential	City of Joliet	1		N/A	Historic Tax

⁹ For more information on NeighborWorks America, go to <http://www.nw.org>

development in Downtown Joliet by working to attract interested developers and allowing for increased density in appropriate locations, particularly around the Metra station	Neighborhood Organization				Credits...
5) Zone for additional housing that allows for higher density around commercial corridors and other “Target Redevelopment Areas”	City of Joliet	2		N/A	N/A
6) Engage local employers in Employer-Assisted Housing programs to invest in purchase assistance for their employees	Neighborhood Organization Metropolitan Planning Council City of Joliet	2		N/A	Employer Investment – minimal cost to do outreach
7) Supplement Assist program to provide matching funds for investment in the Planning Area and provide homebuyer counseling	City of Joliet Local Banks CDC	2		Matching funds: \$20,000- \$30,000 annually Counseling \$ 40,000- \$50,000 annually	Local financial institutions, IHDA, City of Joliet –CDBG, HOME, Housing Trust Fund (if established)
8) Pair code enforcement with rehabilitation assistance	City of Joliet Local Banks CDC	2		***See #3, \$100,000 - \$200,000 annually	Local financial institutions, City of Joliet – CDBG, Housing Trust Fund (if established)
9) Expand Rental Housing Inspection and Licensing to include all rental units	City of Joliet	3			Inspection fee paid by property owner
10) Develop emergency loan program to pool resources with Will County Center for Community Concerns	City of Joliet Local Banks Will County CCC	3		\$50,000 - \$75,000 annually	City of Joliet – CDBG, HOME

Long Term (3+ years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
11) Assemble land and issue RFP for mixed-income and mixed-use development in the 4 th and 5 th Districts	City of Joliet	1		Varies based on City resources	City of Joliet – CDBG, HOME, Casino, General Fund
12) Develop strategies to improve infrastructure in unincorporated areas in the 4 th and 5 th Districts, specifically in the Ridgewood area and in “Target Redevelopment Areas” and some of the more isolated areas south of I-80 near the river	City of Joliet Will County Joliet Township	1			
13) Pursue adaptive reuse of vacant and historic structure, converting them to residential	City of Joliet Private Developers	2		N/A	Historic Tax Credits, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, State Housing Trust Fund, Joliet Housing Trust Fund (if established)....
14) Continually market available sites to builders interested in developing housing that incorporates a diversity of types and sizes	City of Joliet CDC	2		N/A	N/A
15) Pursue affordable housing development that will incorporate federal and state resources to mitigate initial risk of developing in the Planning Area	City of Joliet CDC Private Developers (non-profit & for-profit) Local churches	2			Historic Tax Credits, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, State Housing Trust Fund, HOME, CDBG, Joliet Housing Trust Fund (if established)....

B. Recreation

Like all sections of the Joliet Quality Of Life (QOL) Plan, this Recreation section of the Plan focuses on the 4th and 5th City Council districts of Joliet, the Planning Area for the project. The Recreation section is a tool to assist Planning Area neighborhood organizations, the City and Park District in planning to address existing and future park and recreation needs. This section presents the process undertaken to evaluate recreation needs and identify potential solutions and action steps necessary to achieve the Plan's objectives and to implement its proposals in regard to recreation. This section of the Plan should be viewed as the framework for establishing policies that should direct a comprehensive master planning process for recreation in the Planning Area; it provides the foundation for further planning and specific studies to address needed programs and facilities.

Key Findings

Recreation Analysis and Planning Process

The QOL consulting team began this analysis by reviewing the current recreational resources within the Planning Area in relation to guidelines that many communities have used to help plan recreational space and facilities. For this purpose the team drew on classifications (regarding types of parks and facilities) and recommendations (regarding the size of the areas appropriately served by these sorts of parks and facilities) that are currently provided by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The team also used ratios that NRPA recommended until the mid 1990s regarding desirable numbers of acres of various types of parks per thousand residents and desirable numbers of major facilities (such as ball parks or swimming pools) to be placed per so many thousands of residents. Although NRPA no longer recommends particular quantitative ratios of park acreage or facilities in relation to population, planning consultants commonly use the old NRPA ratios as a rule of thumb or starting point when they begin to assess the needs of a community in relation to its existing recreation assets.

NRPA recommends that its guidelines should be used only as a starting point in a master planning process through which a community can consider its unique features in determining the mix of different types of parks and recreation facilities that will best serve its residents. The primary proposal of this section of the QOL Plan is that Joliet should work through the type of master planning process recommended by NRPA to plan an optimal base of park and recreation facilities for the Planning Area. This section of the QOL Plan lays a ground work for the master planning process by using current and former NRPA guidelines to assess the park and recreation facilities currently available to Planning Area residents in relation to their needs.

The decision on where to locate a park is closely tied to the development patterns of a community. Certain types of parks, such as mini parks/tot lots and neighborhood parks are only appropriate in proximity to residential areas. Community parks, although they do not necessarily have to be in residential areas, should be close enough to residents to be easily accessible. The Open Space and Parks Classification Map classifies all the parks within the Planning Area neighborhood areas according to generally accepted guidelines developed by the NRPA. The service radius for each park is illustrated to indicate the level of service provided to residents.

The neighborhood planning area has been divided into six planning districts for the purpose of analyzing the adequacy of park space and facilities for the various neighborhoods within the Planning Area. The planning district boundaries have been determined by established neighborhood districts, as identified in the Land Use section of this plan, and both man-made and natural features.

All parks and related facilities have been inventoried by the consultant team, with assistance provided by interns retained by the QOL Task Force, and identified according to the planning district they serve. Each park is described and evaluated with a basic description of needed improvements. This inventory is provided in Appendix B to this plan. Total population by planning district and number of children in two age groups (0-5 years and 6-18 years) were examined to understand adequacy of space and facilities in proximity to areas served. According to the former NRPA guidelines, each community should strive to provide park space in accordance with the following ratios:

Table B-1. Park Service Ratios

<i>Park Type</i>	Acres Per 1,000 Population			
	Mini Parks/ Tot Lots ^a	Neighborhood Park Acres ^b	Community Park Acres ^c	Total Park Acres
<i>NRPA Standards</i>	0.5 ac	1.5 ac	8.0 ac	6.5 to 10.0 ac

^a Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group, such as young children. Located within neighborhoods and in close proximity to higher density developments or housing for the elderly.

^b Areas for intense recreational activities. Sites should be well suited for intense development and easily accessible to neighborhood population – geographically centered within safe walking and bike access. May be developed as a school-park facility.

^c Area of diverse environmental quality. Includes areas suited for intense recreational facilities, and natural areas for outdoor recreation, such as walking, viewing, or other more passive activities. Should be easily accessible to neighborhood served.¹⁰

NRPA has recognized that different guidelines for total park acreage may be appropriate for different communities. For example, mature communities in which most space is built up often find difficulty in meeting a 10 acre per thousand ratio and use a lower standard. In setting requirements for the development of new residential areas, the City of Joliet has sometimes used a standard of 7.5 acres of public open space per thousand residents, which falls within the former NRPA guidelines. While recognizing that this standard may be difficult to meet in older neighborhoods, it is used in the following analyses.

¹⁰ NRPA Definitions

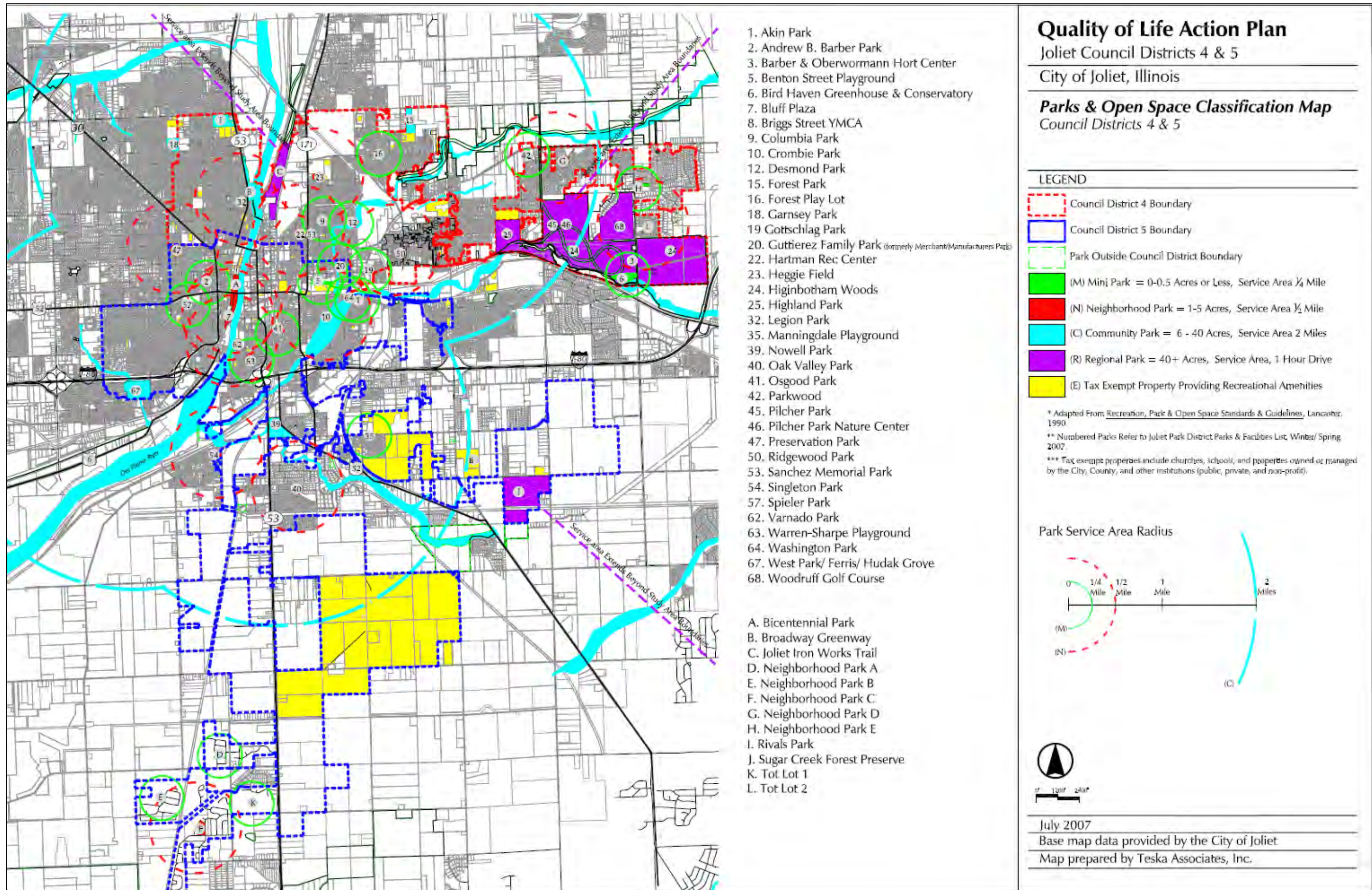
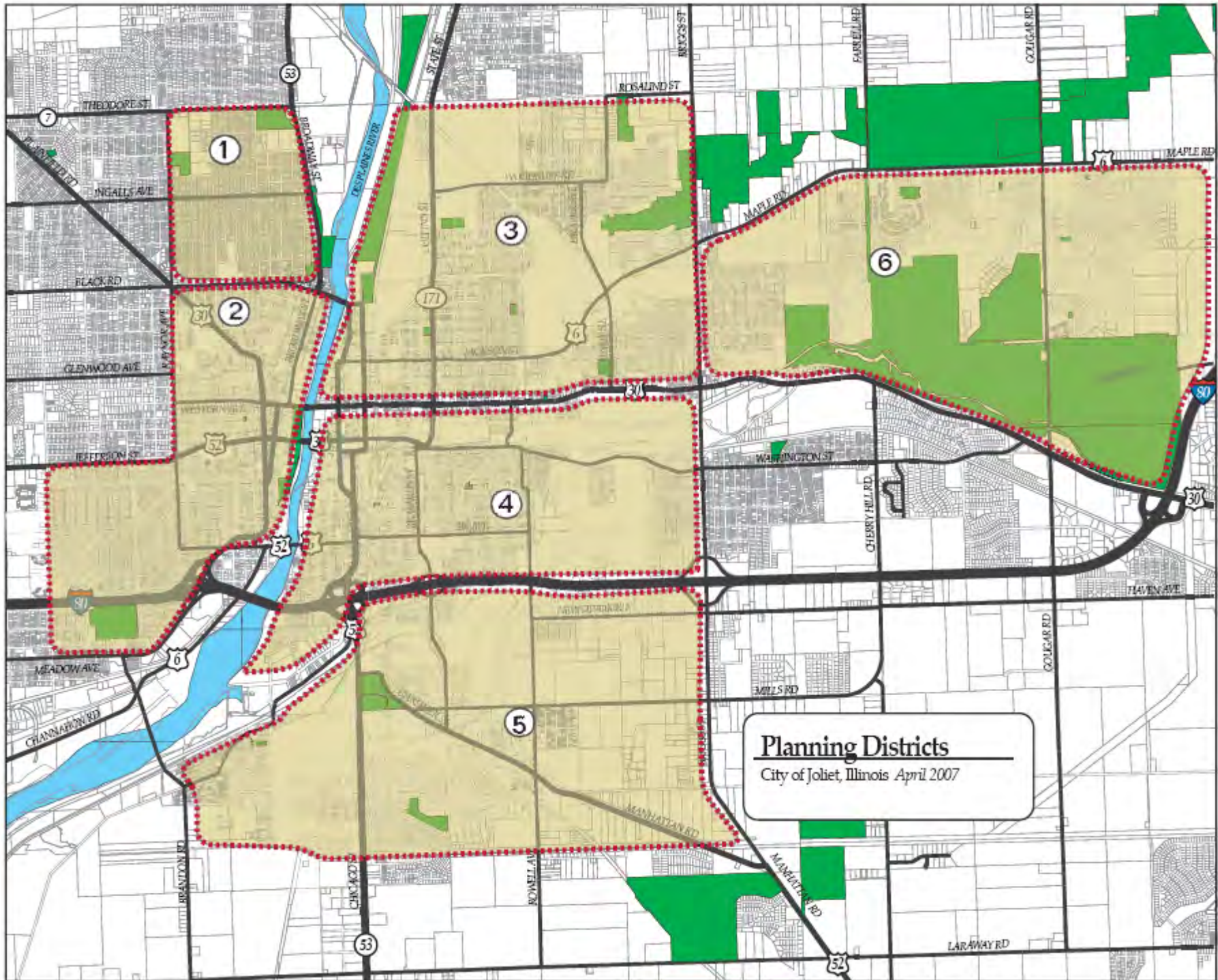


Figure B-1. Parks & Open Space Classification Map



One of the issues that must be considered in the master planning process for recreation is the extent to which spaces and facilities other than those owned by the Park District or the City of Joliet might be used to meet public recreation needs. The City has compiled a substantial inventory of properties owned by various public institutions or not-for-profit organizations that might be used for public recreation. For convenience these properties are referred to collectively in the following tables as “Potential Tax Exempt Recreation Space”, and the inventory of these properties is included in Appendix B.

Provided below are four tables that summarize existing park space and park space needs by planning district:

- Table B-2-a shows the population of each recreation planning district, the total existing park acreage (excluding potential tax exempt recreation space) in that district, and the net overall demand for park space, which has not been differentiated into needs for various types of parks.
- Table B-2-b shows the extent to which needs for several types of park space are met by existing facilities, considering only land owned by the Park District or the City.
- Table B-2-c provides the same information as B-2-a, except that the column for “Total Existing Parks (Acres)” includes potential tax exempt recreation space and the net demand for overall park acreage if all of potential tax exempt recreation space is considered.
- Table B-2-d shows how the needs for several types of park space are met if all of the potential tax exempt recreation space is considered.

Table B-2-a. Park Space Excluding Potential Tax Exempt Recreation Space

	Children (Under 5)	Children (5-17)	Total Population, Yr 2000	Total Existing Parks (Acres)	Park Demand (7.5 Acres/ 1,000 Persons)	(Over)/Under Park Demand (Acres)
<i>Planning Area 1</i>	362	753	4,379	59.4	32.8	(26.6)
<i>Planning Area 2</i>	1,287	2,453	13,488	241.5	101.2	(140.3)
<i>Planning Area 3</i>	1,437	3,380	15,114	79.7	113.4	33.7
<i>Planning Area 4</i>	1,134	2,944	11,661	265.7	87.5	(178.2)
<i>Planning Area 5</i>	457	1,417	6,979	10.5	52.3	41.8
<i>Planning Area 6</i>	525	1,190	5,367	553.2	40.3	(512.9)
Total	5,202	12,137	56,988	1,210.0	427.41	(782.6)

Table B-2-b. Park Demand by Park Type – Excluding Potential Tax Exempt Recreation Space

	Mini Parks/Tot Lots		Neighborhood Parks		Community Parks	
	Existing	Net Area (Over)/Needed	Existing	Net Area (Over)/Needed	Existing	Net Area (Over)/Needed
<i>Planning Area 1</i>	0.0	2.2	10.7	(6.3)	48.7	(22.4)
<i>Planning Area 2</i>	1.2	5.5	10.3	3.2	69.0	11.9
<i>Planning Area 3</i>	2.1	5.5	11.8	3.3	65.8	24.9
<i>Planning Area 4</i>	1.3	4.5	3.0	8.7	261.4	(191.4)
<i>Planning Area 5</i>	0.4	3.1	10.1	(3.1)	0.0	41.9
<i>Planning Area 6</i>	1.1	1.6	12.1	(6.7)	540.0	(507.8)
Total	6.1	22.4	58.0	(1.0)	984.9	(643.0)

Table B-2-c. Total Existing Park Space Including Potential Tax Exempt Recreation Space

	Children (Under 5)	Children (5-17)	Total Population, Yr 2000	Total Existing Parks (Acres)	Park Demand (7.5 Acres/ 1,000 Persons)	(Over)/Under Park Demand (Acres)
<i>Planning Area 1</i>	362	753	4,379	85.0	32.8	(52.2)
<i>Planning Area 2</i>	1,287	2,453	13,488	254.1	101.2	(152.9)
<i>Planning Area 3</i>	1,437	3,380	15,114	133.1	113.4	(19.7)
<i>Planning Area 4</i>	1,134	2,944	11,661	283.5	87.5	(196.0)
<i>Planning Area 5</i>	457	1,417	6,979	249.1	52.3	(196.8)
<i>Planning Area 6</i>	525	1,190	5,367	584.5	40.3	(544.2)
Total	5,202	12,137	56,988	1,589.3	427.4	(1,161.9)

Table B-2-d. Park Demand by Park Type - Including Potential Tax Exempt Recreation Space

	Mini Parks/Tot Lots		Neighborhood Parks		Community Parks	
	Existing	Net Area (Over)/Needed	Existing	Net Area (Over)/Needed	Existing	Net Area (Over)/Needed
<i>Planning Area 1</i>	1.1	1.1	12.9	(8.5)	71.0	(44.7)
<i>Planning Area 2</i>	3.1	3.6	21.0	(7.5)	69.0	11.9
<i>Planning Area 3</i>	4.2	3.4	21.4	(6.3)	107.5	(16.8)
<i>Planning Area 4</i>	4.4	1.4	11.2	0.5	267.9	(197.9)
<i>Planning Area 5</i>	0.4	3.1	15.1	(8.1)	71.2	(29.3)
<i>Planning Area 6</i>	1.1	1.6	14.3	(8.9)	569.1	(536.9)
Total	14.3	14.2	95.9	(38.9)	1,155.7	(813.8)

The preceding charts and maps indicate the following points about needs for recreation space in the Planning Area:

- Per Table B-2-b, if we consider only Park District and City owned land, we find needs for most types of parks in most of the neighborhoods in the Planning Area. The notable exception to this pattern is District 6 for Community Parks, which includes 420-acre Pilcher Park. Pilcher might be regarded as a regional park; it provides areas of natural growth preservation and bird sanctuaries and fewer facilities for the active play of young people than would be typical of a community park. But counting Pilcher Park, the need for Community Park space is exceeded in District 6 and for the Planning Area as a whole.
- Per Table B-2-d, if all of the non-Park District land in the hands of public entities or not-for-profit organizations that could be used for public recreation were put to this use:
 - The overall need for Mini Parks/Tot Lots is reduced by a third;
 - Needs for Neighborhood Parks in most districts of the Planning Area are exceeded;
 - Needs for Community Park lands in several districts are met, even without considering Pilcher Park.

The most accurate and useful assessment of recreational space needs in the Planning Area is probably not reflected in Table B-2-b or B-2-d per se but in an estimate between these tables that would present a more studied assessment of the land potentially available for recreation that is not owned by the Park District. This middle figure should emerge during the master planning process, when one of the planning activities will be assessing the land potentially available for

recreational use to see how available and appropriate for public recreation use the land actually is. This assessment should involve: a systematic consideration of the condition and accessibility of the potentially available land; the property owner's willingness to sign agreements to let the land be used for public recreational space, according to some standard of accessibility; and an evaluation of the land's potential to serve public recreation functions after some investments are made in it.

Even if Pilcher Park and all of the potentially available recreation space in non-Park District hands is considered, a need for additional Community Park space would be indicated for several districts of the Planning Area. The Planning Area contains opportunities for significant additions to the park system to address these open space needs. Redevelopment of the USX and prison properties, redevelopment of obsolete industrial areas east of Maple Street along Cass Street, use of vacant land east of the City's sewer treatment plant, and expansion of playfields in Nowell Park should be pursued for expansion of the park system where feasible. Where significant need exists in densely developed areas, new park acquisitions may not be feasible. In these instances, the Planning Area community (possibly represented by a Community Development Corporation (CDC) as discussed in other sections of the Plan) should work with the Park District, City and School Districts to explore the types of non-Park District lands considered in Tables B-2-c and B-2-d above.

For growing areas in the eastern and southern parts of the Planning Area sufficient open spaces either exist or can be provided through the City's subdivision process. As required by City codes, each new residential development must either set aside park land or provide a monetary contribution for the acquisition of future park facilities to serve new residents.

Recreational Programs and Facilities

Subject to the same considerations noted above in regard to park space, the NRPA provides a general set of guidelines that may be used in evaluating facilities in each type of park (i.e. play equipment, ball fields, etc.) to see if they serve the needs of residents. The recommended facility list provided in Appendix B identifies the desired level of improvements. The Parks Analysis report (see Appendix B-5) identifies current conditions and provides preliminary recommendations for improvements to local parks. Further planning and need analysis, in the context of a master plan for recreation, is necessary to determine the type and size of facilities that should be provided. However, at this stage of the QOL planning project, we should consider information that bears on policy and strategy in recreation facility planning.

The most significant Planning Area recreational issue expressed by residents and community leaders is the lack of a pool and recreational center in their neighborhood. Some residents hold strong feelings about the absence of such a facility because they resent the closure of three Park District swimming pools in the Planning Area, the last of these being the closure of a pool in Nowell Park two years ago. Park District officials have cited low participation rates at the Nowell Park pool as one of the reasons for its closing. However, residents noted that poor maintenance, inconvenient hours of operation, an outdoor facility, and safety concerns may be reasons for lower participation. The closing of the Nowell Park pool has resulted in a gap in recreation options relative to the guideline ratios formerly endorsed by NRPA, which suggest

that one pool should be provided for every 20,000 people. The provision of community pools is often accomplished by the coordinated services of several public agencies or not-for-profit organizations besides the Park District or City. For example, the Boys and Girls clubs currently provides a pool in Joliet and the YMCA provides two pools, one in an unincorporated area that is about to be annexed into the city. Data in the following tables was collected through a phone survey of Park District officials and not-for-profit organization managers conducted by the consulting team. The data shows the approximate number of public pools in northeast Illinois cities similar in size to Joliet (see table below). This data indicates that Joliet is in the middle of the range among comparably sized, nearby cities in regard to the ratio of public pools to the population. This data should be considered in light of Joliet’s expansion and population growth since 2005 and anticipated rapid growth in the future.

Table B-3. Public Pools in Comparable Communities

Community	Population	Public pools	Other pools	Total Pools	Residents per pool
Arlington Heights	77,000	6	0	6	12,833
Aurora	170,000	3	1	4	42,500
Elgin	102,000	3	2	5	20,400
Joliet	146,000	2*	3	5	29,200
Naperville	142,000	1	3	4	35,500
Rockford	153,000	4*	1	5	30,600
Schaumburg	73,000	5	1	6	12,167

*public waterpark included in pool count

*Data: Phone survey by Center for Neighborhood Technology, July 2007;
2005 Census Community Estimate (population)*

In addition to providing and maintaining parks and facilities, the Park District, the City, and other local organizations offer residents a wide variety of entertainment and recreation programs throughout the year. Entertainments include concerts in Bicentennial Park, seasonal holiday events, and of course audience and spectator opportunities with some of Joliet’s landmark institutions, the Rialto Theater and the Jackhammers baseball stadium. Private organizations working with the City and the community also provide instruction in artistic skills and opportunities to participate in the creation of public art. In feedback to community workshops, some residents have expressed a desire to expand community gardening as a means of recreation and growing food needed by households with poorly paid employment and for charitable distribution.

The majority of Park District recreation programs are held at the Inwood regional park facility, with only limited programs offered at the Hartman Recreation Center. This concentration of programs and facilities follows the Park District’s policy of consolidating its assets in order to provide services efficiently and fund the development of a quality facility with limited resources. A related Park District policy is to recover a high percentage of operating costs from user fees, and a quality centralized facility serves this policy by drawing patrons from a large area to support it. In the Inwood facility, the Park District’s policies appear to have achieved their objectives.



Hartman Recreation Center

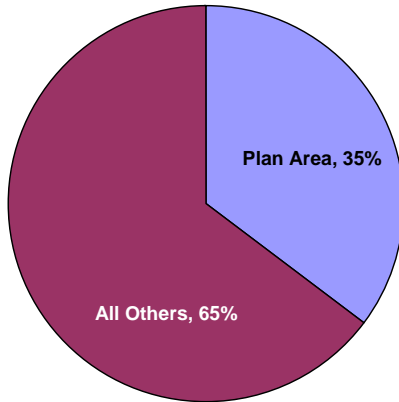
However, the Park District's centralization and user fee policies also have the unfortunate consequence of making a major recreation facility inconvenient or even inaccessible to some community residents. To some extent any Joliet residents who happen to live some distance from Inwood or find difficulty in paying user fees are relatively disadvantaged by these policies. However, there are reasons to think that residents who are relatively disadvantaged by centralization and user fee policies are concentrated in some neighborhoods of the Planning Area. In stakeholder interviews

at least 7 community leaders expressed the opinion that Planning Area residents had disproportionately low access to recreation facilities compared to residents in other parts of Joliet, and at community meetings at least 45 participating residents expressed similar views.

Community opinions are supported by data which records discount card holders and usage at the Inwood facility by the zip codes of the card holders and users. Zip codes are not a desirable basis for analysis of the Planning Area because the boundaries of zip codes and Joliet City Council districts do not coincide. However, the two zip codes for which data is highlighted in the following chart lie predominantly in the Planning Area, while only a small part or no part of the other zip codes falls within the Planning Area. If residents from all neighborhoods of the Park District used the Inwood facility about equally, we would expect residents of the predominantly Planning Area zip codes to comprise about 33% of users. In fact we see that only 3% to 5% of users come from the predominantly Planning Area zip codes, as the accompanying pie charts indicate. Similarly, if approximately equal percentages of residents from all Park District neighborhoods used Inwood, about the same percentages of residents from all zip codes would be discount card holders. Instead we see that residents of zip codes that lie predominantly outside of the Planning area are 3 to 4 times as likely to be card holders at Inwood.

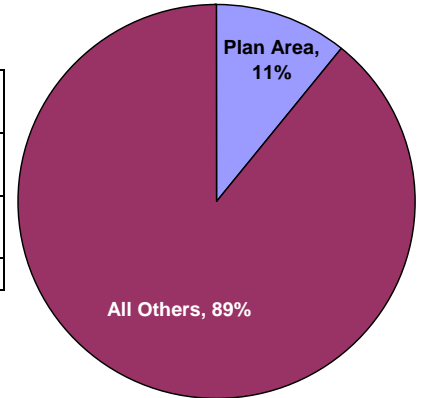
Figure B-3. Inwood Facilities Usage by Zip Code

Population of Zip Codes as a Percent of Total Population

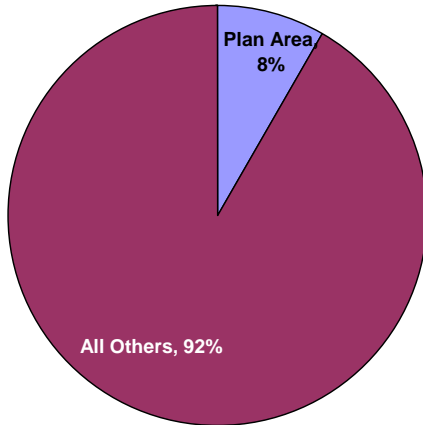


Zip Codes	Estimated Population	% Total	Card Holders	% Card Holders
Plan Area	43,477	35%	1,329	11%
All Others	80,056	65%	10,849	89%
Total	123,533	100%	12,178	100%

Card Holders by Zip Code

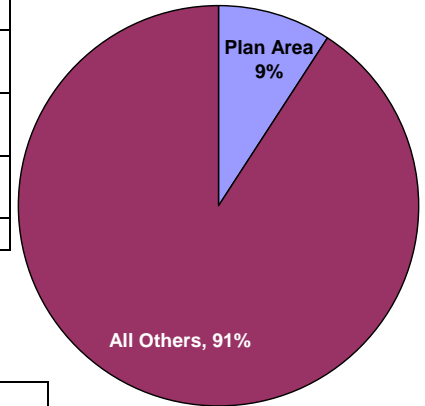


Inwood Athletic Club Usage

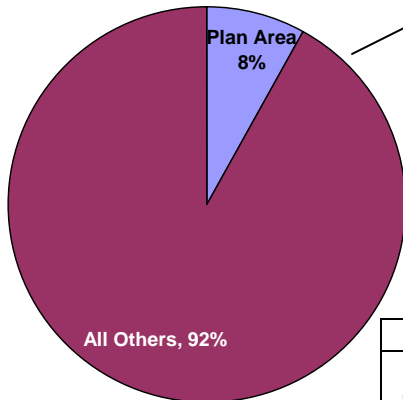


Inwood Athletic Club 2007YTD				
Zip Codes	Usage	%	Individuals	%
Plan Area	1,124	8%	573	9%
All Others	12,398	92%	5,667	91%
Total	13,522	100%	6,240	100%

Inwood Athletic Club Discrete Individual Users

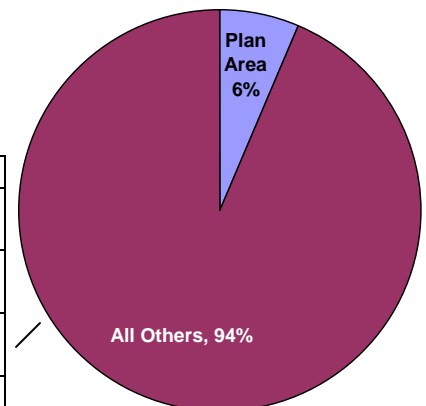


Inwood Ice Arena Usage by Zip Code



Inwood Ice Arena 2007YTD				
Zip Codes	Usage	%	Individuals	%
Plan Area	207	8%	117	9%
All Others	2,372	92%	1,192	91%
Total	2,579	100%	1,309	100%

Inwood Multi-Purpose Center Usage



Inwood Multi-Purpose Center 2007YTD				
Zip Codes	Usage	%	Individuals	%
Plan Area	168	6%	91	8%
All Others	2,470	94%	1,048	92%
Total	2,638	100%	1,139	100%

Residents and stakeholders of the Planning Area have suggested several reasons why the participation of Planning Area residents in the Inwood facility is so low.

- 1) *Lower car ownership* – As discussed in the Plan’s Transportation segment, in the last census 2,286 Planning Area households (10.0%) did not own a car, compared to 4.4% for Joliet outside of the Planning Area and 3.0% for Will County outside of the Planning Area. Two thirds of Joliet households that do not own a car lived within the Planning area. Similarly, 8,892 Planning Area households (39.0%) owned only 1 car, compared to 28.7% for Joliet outside of the Planning Area and 23.7% for Will County outside of the Planning Area. And half of Joliet households with a single car lived within the Planning Area.
- 2) *Higher single parent households* – One out of every four families in the Planning Area (24%) are headed by single parent households. This rate is nearly 1.5 times the City’s rate (18%), and fully double that of the County (11%);
- 3) *Lower household incomes* – Planning Area residents earn less than two-thirds (63%) of the countywide, and 82% of the citywide median income;
- 4) *More poverty* – Some 16% of Planning Area households live below the poverty level, which is three times the level of impoverished households in the County (5%) and 1.5 times that of the City (11%).

The lower car ownership rates, the difficulties of single parent families transporting children, and lower incomes are conditions that may well limit access to central facilities and programs.¹¹

At least eight other community organizations and several churches in the Planning Area are helping to fill the need for recreation services by providing a range of programs and facilities (See Recreation Program Analysis table in Appendix B). Due to limited capacity and funding, these organizations serve a very small percentage of the younger population of the Planning Area. Many of these organizational programs are also oriented to younger children, leaving limited opportunities for older junior high school and high school aged residents. Some of these programs receive some assistance from the City of Joliet. However, it would be surprising if these organizations that are largely funded by private donations could fully compensate for shortages of Park District programs in Planning Area neighborhoods.

Summary of Key Findings

Based on information gathered from stakeholder interviews, meetings with the community and City staff, land use surveys and data analysis, the Planning Area is characterized by the following traits:

- Most Planning Area neighborhoods are underserved with Park District spaces and facilities, although the large facility of Pilcher Park gives the area an overall surplus for community park space. Spaces made available by other public agencies



Former pool site at Nowell Park

¹¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *American FactFinder*. Decennial Census, 2000, <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

and not-for-profit organizations may help to alleviate these needs but not to meet them entirely.

- A comparison of park equipment and facilities with current and former NRPA guidelines indicate that neighborhood and community level parks are not well developed with play equipment and play fields. Several neighborhood and community level parks either lack or do not have adequate ball fields, courts, or other desired recreational uses. The recreational facility for which community residents have expressed the strongest desire is for a swimming pool. Reference to former NRPA guidelines and a survey of pool facilities in comparable communities indicate that the need for a public pool in the Planning Area should be studied in a master planning process. Although a deficit of space for Mini Parks and Totlots is found throughout the Planning Area, existing parks of this scale are well developed with play equipment in good condition. As a result, younger children (0-11 years) are generally well served if they live near a Mini Park.



Columbia St Park

- The redevelopment of the USX and Prison properties offer significant recreation benefits, particularly for brownfield sites that may not have any other viable use. Several long term ideas have emerged for the future reuse of these sites, including new playfields and a 9-hole, Par-3 golf course oriented to younger and inexperienced players. Long term plans should also consider opportunities for a pool and recreation center that may be secured through a development agreement with the developer of the sites.
- Newer developing areas outside of the Planning Area are generally better served with park facilities and can better respond to needs as new development occurs. Each new development must provide park space or payment to the Park District for the acquisition of additional parks as required by the City's subdivision approval process. These developer contributions, however, are to be used principally in new growth areas.
- The level of participation by Planning Area residents in the Park District's centralized Inwood facility is very low. The Park District's policy of centralizing facilities and programs outside of the Planning Area has limited use by Planning Area residents primarily because of difficulties traveling to facilities and affording program fees. This issue impacts younger residents more than older residents as they are more restricted in terms of available transportation options and family incomes. Hence, very limited programs are available in Planning Area facilities. Other organizations have attempted to fill in the gaps, providing a broad range of recreation services. However, these organizations that are primarily funded by private donations cannot be expected to make up for the deficiencies of publicly funded agencies.

Proposals

Objectives

Based on the findings resulting from the planning process used to evaluate needs and opportunities for recreation services, the following proposals are recommended to guide the next phase of the planning process for recreation space and facilities. The proposals begin with the establishment of “objectives” or broad policy guidelines that should provide direction for the more specific recommendations contained in the implementation section.

- Provide sufficient park space for all residents consistent with current and formerly recommended NRPA guidelines.
- Provide full level of recreation facilities for all ages.
- Develop a mix of health and fitness facilities that provide for year-around activity.
- Ensure that programs meet the interests and needs of persons of all ages and abilities by providing and sponsoring programs independently or in conjunction with other organizations or agencies.
- Ensure parks and recreation facilities and programs are affordable and accessible to all people.
 - Provide mini-parks and neighborhood level parks within walking distance of all residents (1/4 mile = 10 minute walk).
 - Pursue revenues from public and private sources.
- Maintain and update park equipment for each population group served.
- Enhance and improve access to natural resources.
- Meet neighborhood needs for parks and recreational facilities through property acquisitions, exchange, sale, or other options when appropriate and within available resources.
- Expand the trail and bikeway system to link all major community destinations.
- Strive to inform residents of programs, activities and facilities offered by the Park District and other not-for-profit organizations.
- Target capital improvement program expenditures to areas of most need.

Proposals

The proposals below are designed to address the issues described in the findings section and to implement the objectives defined above. These proposals are also contained in the Implementation Action Plan section of this report.

- Develop a Planning Area Parks Master Plan.
- Acquire more park space in underserved areas either by purchase and development, or partnerships with other organizations, such as school districts, to use existing spaces more efficiently.
- Prepare a study to explore the feasibility of providing an additional recreation center with a full range of facilities, including a pool at Nowell Park, and other alternative uses to serve residents.
- Upgrade and improve play structures and playfields in mini and neighborhood parks.
- Expand recreation facilities and programs for adults.

- Expand the trail system to enhance accessibility to civic, cultural, recreation, employment and commercial centers, and to create additional recreation options.
- Identify and implement programs to subsidize the cost of recreation programs for low income citizens.
- Explore creating flexible van-pooling or similar transit service to centralized park facilities.
- Explore partnerships with other providers of recreational services, including schools, to enhance coordination and availability.
- Develop school/park joint use facilities where additional park land is needed.
- Assist neighborhood associations or other not-for-profit organizations to create and provide programs where the cost for additional services is deemed prohibitive.
- Target capital improvement program expenditures to areas of most need.
- Explore alternative funding, including corporate sponsors.
- Create a greenway system along flood prone areas to minimize flooding, create opportunities for recreational use, and provide habitats for wildlife.
- Explore initiatives that engage community residents in providing and supporting locally based recreation programs, including building playgrounds, developing community gardens, and organizing park clean-up days.

Implementation Action Plan: Recreation

To accomplish the objectives above, numerous actions will be required by the Park District working in partnership with the City and Planning Area community. Some efforts will require direct capital expenditure, while other efforts will require planning and cooperation with other organizations. As noted in the planning process section, demand for park improvements varies depending on the location and type of park and facilities. The following priority list is an outline of key park improvements to be pursued over the next ten years. This priority list is intended to be a working document. It should be updated annually based on current needs and available funds and resources. The City and Park District have successfully received State assistance through the OSLAD (Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development) and bike grant programs. However, these traditional funding sources will need to be augmented with other private, not-for-profit and governmental sources. In addition to the primary sources identified in the table below, a comprehensive list of potential sources for funding, acquisition and other assistance is provided in the appendix.

Implementation Action Plan: Recreation Proposals

Proposals Summary					
Short Term (0-3 years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
1) Develop a Planning Area Parks Master Plan, and tie recommended improvements to multi-year Capital Improvement	Park District	1		\$50,000 - \$75,000	Park District, City of Joliet

Plan (CIP).					
2) Prepare a study to explore the feasibility of providing an additional recreation center with a full range of facilities, including pool, and other alternative uses to serve residents.	Park District	1		Other Recreation costs should be estimated through carrying out the proposed Master Plan	Park District, IL Dept. of Natural Resources (IDNR), City of Joliet, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), IL Dept of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)
3) Continue to upgrade and improve play structures and playfields in mini and neighborhood parks. (prioritize and implement recommended improvements in Parks Analysis report in Appendix B)	Park District City of Joliet	2			Park District, IDNR, CDBG
4) Expand programs beyond the First Tee program to subsidize the cost of recreation programs for low income citizens. a) Assist neighborhood associations or other not-for-profit organizations to provide programs where the cost for additional services is deemed prohibitive.	Park District, City of Joliet, Organized Planning Area possibly led by a Community Development Corporation (CDC)	2			City of Joliet, Park District, CDBG
5) Explore creating vanpool or similar transit service to west side facilities	City of Joliet, CDC, Local non-profit organizations	3			Park District, City of Joliet, Pace/Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
6) Explore partnerships with other providers of recreational services, including schools to	Park District, CDC	1			Park District, IDNR

enhance coordination and availability. a) Develop school/park joint use facilities					
7) Explore alternative funding, including governmental, not-for-profit and corporate sponsors	Park District, CDC	1			Foundations, Open Lands, US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)

Long Term (3+ years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
8) Acquire more park space in underserved areas either by purchase and development, or partner with other organization, such as school districts, to use existing spaces more efficiently	Park District, City of Joliet	1			Park District, IDNR, Open Lands, CDBG
9) Expand the trail system to enhance accessibility to civic, cultural, recreation, employment and commercial center, and to create additional recreation options	Park District, City of Joliet	2			Federal Transportation Grants, IDNR, City of Joliet, State Bicycle Grant
10) Create a greenway system along flood prone areas to minimize flooding, to create opportunities for recreational use, and provide habitats for wildlife.	City of Joliet, Will County	3			Open Lands, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), USEPA
11) Explore initiatives to engage community residents in providing and supporting locally based recreation programs, including building playgrounds, community gardens and park clean-up days.	CDC	1			City of Joliet, Non-profit agencies, Private corporations

C. Transportation

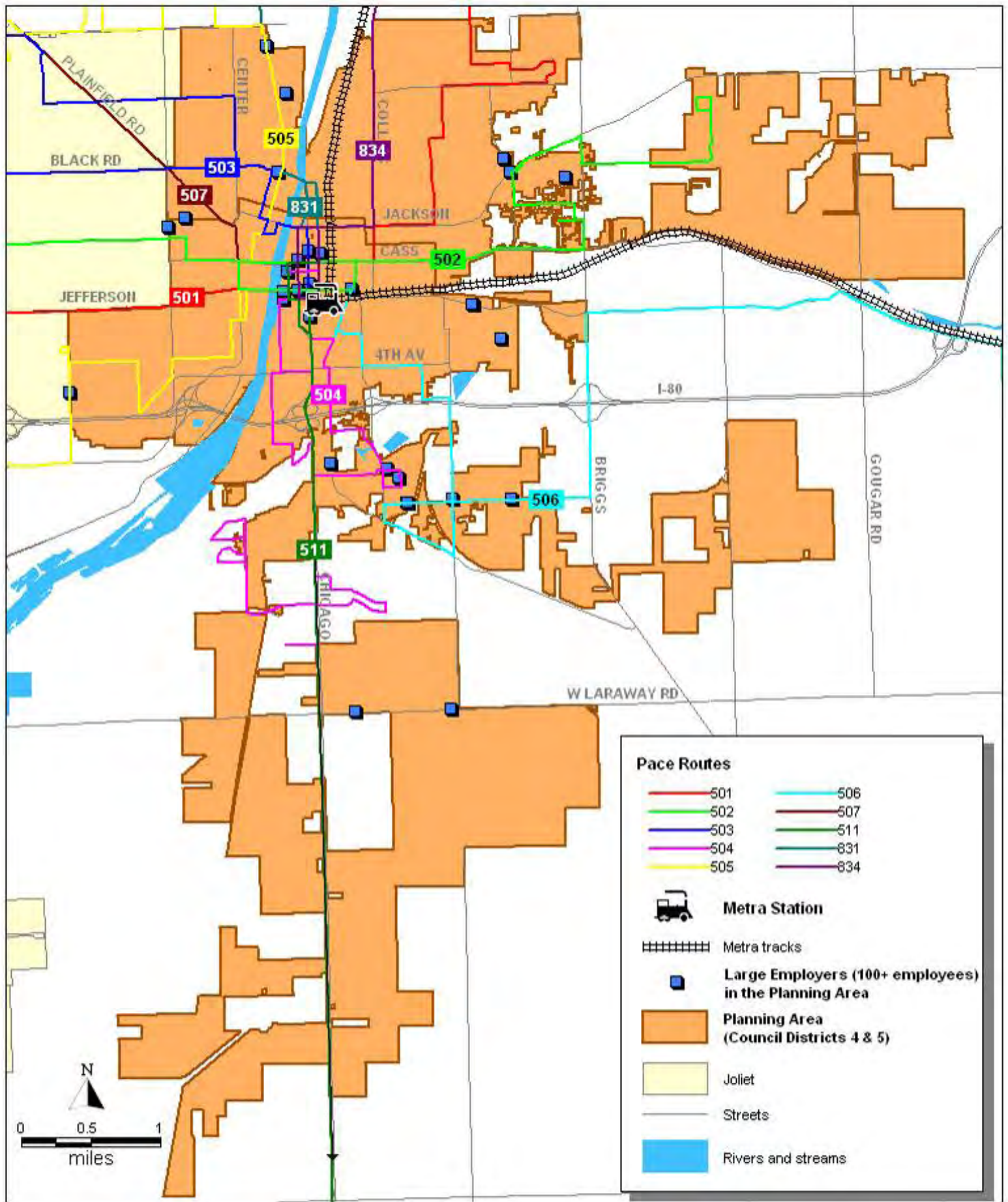
Key Findings

Overview

As in other sections of the Quality of Life (QOL) Plan, this section on transportation focuses on Joliet City Council Districts 4 and 5, the Planning Area for this project. The Planning Area is a community with major geographic and transportation assets that can be leveraged to enhance residents' quality of life. However, challenges are entailed in utilizing these assets to their full potential:

- The Planning Area is surrounded by job sites, shopping centers, recreational and educational opportunities, but residents need efficient transportation access to these assets in order to use them. Furthermore, the Planning Area today contains few industrial job sites, large retail stores, or several other types of destinations that many residents need to reach on a regular basis, so that ready access to sites outside of the area is not only desirable but necessary. This access is problematic for households that do not own a car for every adult.
- The Planning Area itself is extensive and residents often need to travel several miles to reach destinations within it. When destinations do not lie on a direct bus route from a resident's home, car travel becomes necessary and problematic for households that do not own a car for every adult.
- The Planning Area enjoys public transportation services including Metra and Amtrak rail lines to Chicago and ten Pace bus routes. However, these services need to be enhanced and supplemented with non-conventional transportation alternatives in order to provide practical options to car travel.
- The Planning Area and adjoining districts of Joliet contain many worthwhile destinations that youngsters and adults could reach by walking or biking, to the benefit the travelers and the community. But the pedestrian and bicycle routes need to be studied and improved to ensure safe and frequent use.

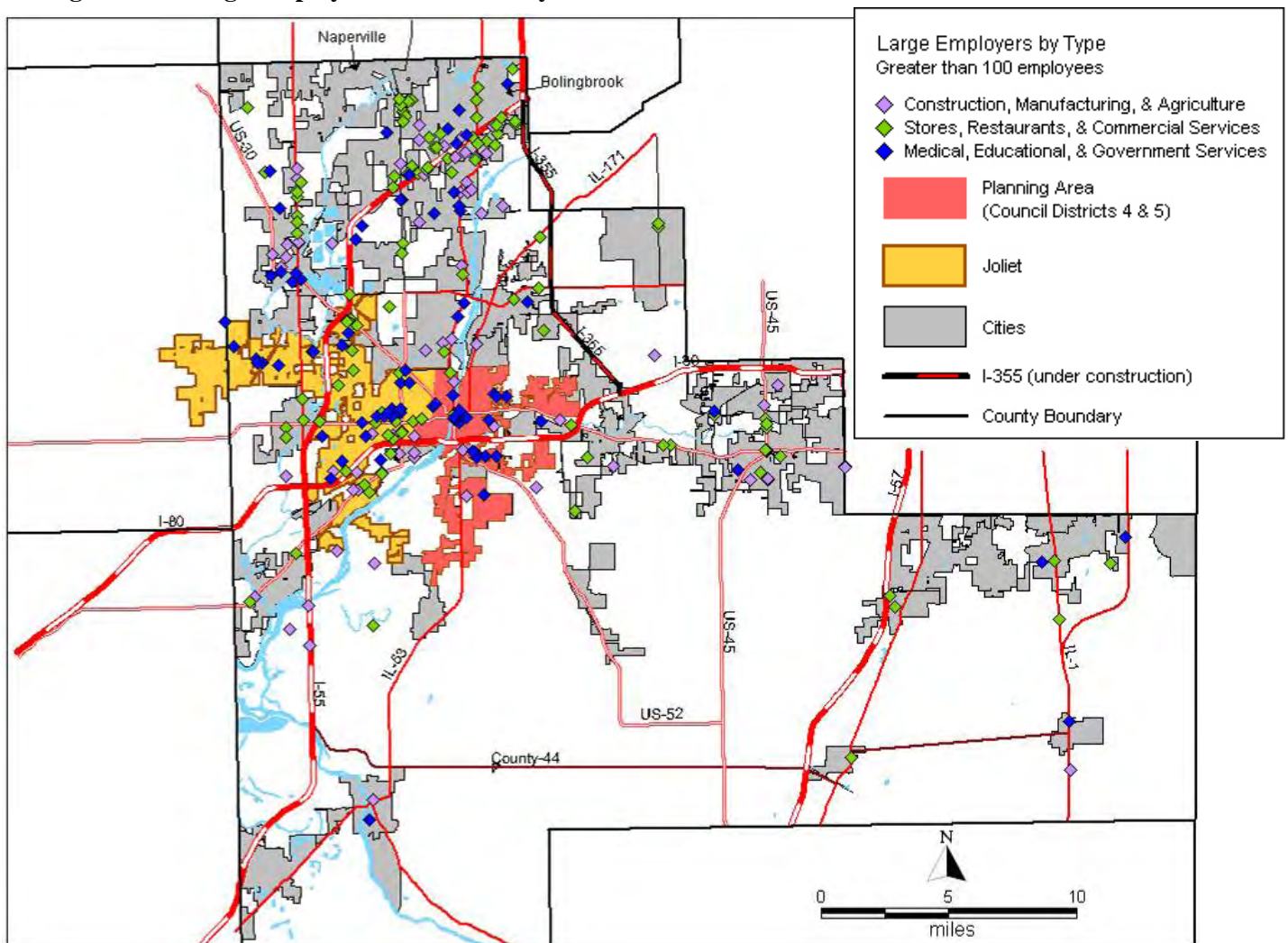
In the following pages these points are developed as the background for action proposals.



Nearby Opportunities

Large sections of the Planning Area contain fewer employment centers, large shopping complexes, and recreational facilities, or adult education institutions than neighboring areas along the I-55 and I-80 corridors. For example, the accompanying map (Figure C-2) shows how the 308 Will County employers with more than 100 workers are clustered along the expressways and in Joliet outside of the Planning Area. Similarly, large retail businesses (including supermarkets and name brand discount stores) are absent from Planning Area neighborhoods but abundant just beyond the Planning Area and along expressways. The opening of I-355 will generate another corridor of desirable destinations that will be close to, though not in the Planning Area. These assets of the surrounding area are potentially valuable to Planning Area residents, to the extent that residents have convenient and reliable transportation to reach them.

Figure C-2. Large Employers in Will County



Source: Reference USA Business database, 2007

Households with No Car or a Single Car

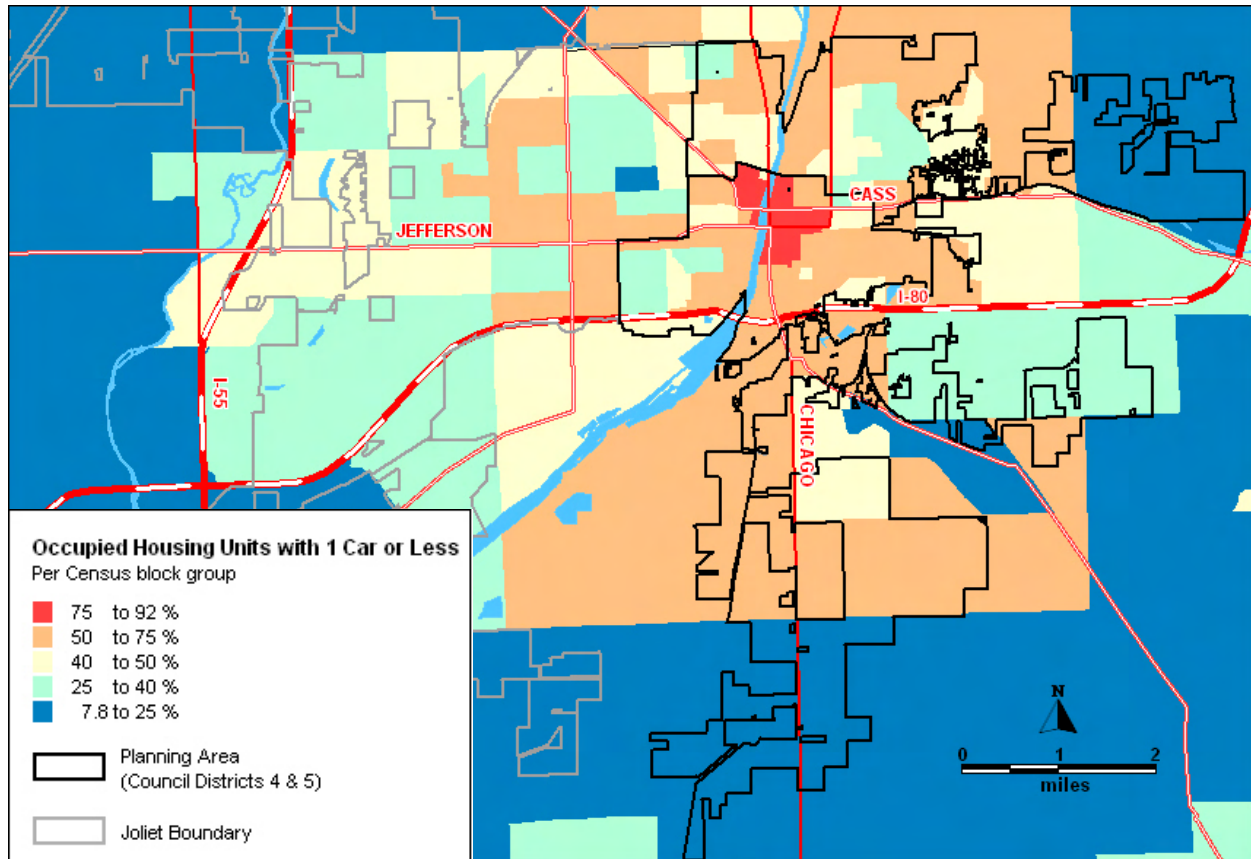
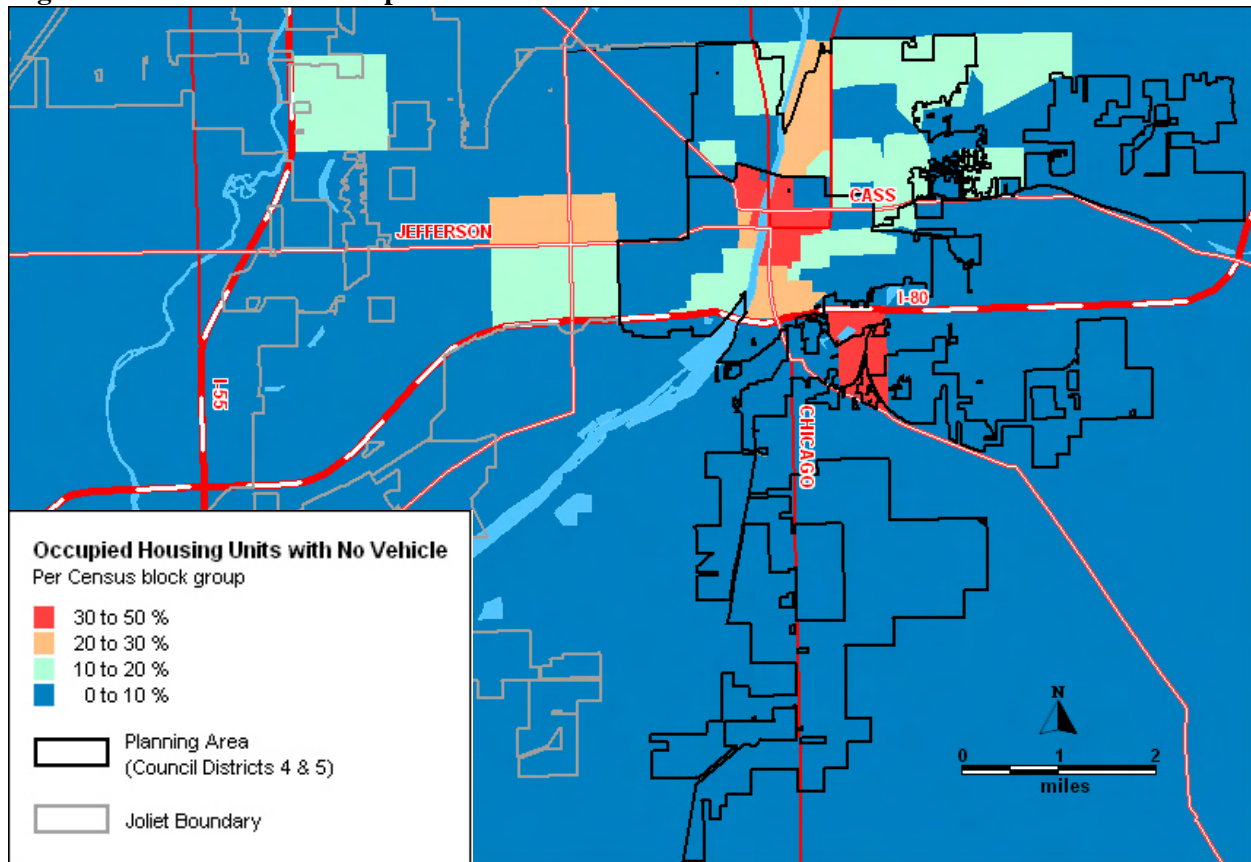
Some Planning Area residents who face difficulty in reaching the assets of surrounding areas are those that do not own a car or do not own a car for every adult in the household. Per the following chart, in the most recent census, 2,297 Planning Area households (10.2% of all Area households) did not own a car. This compares with 4.4% of households in Joliet outside of the Planning Area that do not own a car, and 3.0% of households in Will County outside of the Planning Area that do not own a car. Also, approximately 8,892 Planning Area households (39.0% of all Area households) owned only one car during the last census. This compares with 28.7% of households in Joliet, outside of the Planning Area that owned just one car and 23.7% of households in Will County outside of the Planning Area that owned only one car.

Table C-1. Households with No Car or Single Car

	Total Population	Total housing units	No vehicle available	% of total housing units	1 vehicle or less	% of total housing units
Planning Area:	70,036	22,427	2,293	10.2%	11,178	49.8%
Joliet:	106,157	36,199	3,069	8.5%	15,634	43.2%
Will County:	502,266	175,524	6,673	3.8%	49,834	28.4%

Housing units in which the residents do not own a car or own just one car are geographically concentrated. Of the 3,069 housing units in which the residents do not own cars in Joliet, more than two thirds are located in the Planning Area; and of the 6,673 housing units in which the residents do not have cars in Will County, one third lived in the Planning Area. Similarly, of the 15,634 households in Joliet in which the residents own one car or less, approximately half are located in the Planning Area; and of the 34,269 housing units in which the residents own a single car or less in Will County over a quarter live in the Planning Area. Also, as the accompanying maps (Figure C-3) illustrate, households without cars or with one car are concentrated in the Planning Area, in Downtown Joliet and in some neighborhoods. In most neighborhoods that line the east side of the River, more than 20% of households have no car, and in extensive areas of the Planning Area more than 10% of households own no car. In the Planning Area as a whole approximately half of the households own one car or none.

Figure C-3. Vehicle Ownership



Source: US Census, 2000

Lack of car ownership is a problem because the dispersed development patterns in Joliet and Will County impose serious limitations in the range of job locations, educational institutions, stores, medical services, and recreational programs that residents can reach regularly, reliably, and with reasonable efficiency if they do not have a car. The level of difficulty that ownership of just one car imposes on residents is of course influenced by household size. Ownership of just one car is only problematic if a household has more than one adult. However, if a household has more than one adult and a single car, the second or third worker will probably need to find another means of commuting. Also, if a primary worker is using the household's only car to commute, the household will find difficulty in making the numerous trips to such necessary destinations as school, shopping, medical appointments, or childcare. Unfortunately public data does not tell us the composition of households by car ownership. However, Census data does inform us that single person households are only slightly more common in the Planning Area than in Will County as a whole, while median household size is just as large in the Planning Area as in Will County as a whole. So lack of car ownership is certainly a problem for thousands of Planning Area residents who own a single car as it is for those who do not own a car.¹²

Public Transportation Can Make a Difference

The Joliet area's public transportation system could mitigate many of the problems of limited car ownership for Planning Area residents. When a transit system provides frequent and reliable service to numerous attractive points of destination it can do more that compensate for car ownership; it can become the transportation mode of choice. For example, the Chicago Transportation Authority (CTA) has many problems as an operating system, but it performs well

¹² Household size and car ownership in the Planning Area and Will County:

	Planning Area	Will County
Total Population	70,036	502,266
Average household size	3.02	2.94
Households	22,797	167,542
% 1 person households	23.9%	17.8%
Total housing units	22,427	175,524
% of housing units with no vehicles available	10.2%	3.8%
% of housing units with 1 vehicle or less available	49.8%	28.4%

Car ownership figures are from 2000 Census block group data. Census data report cars owned per the residents of a housing unit. In some cases multiple households reside in one housing unit. To the extent that multiple household occupancy exists, the number of households without cars will be larger than the number of housing units in which the residents do not own cars. As a convention to streamline the text, this section generally refers to housing units in which the residents do not own a car as households without a car. These figures are always a slight understatement of the number of households without cars, because of multiple household occupancy of housing units.

Also in regard to households with one car, we note that the number of single person households in the Planning Area is not significantly different than in Joliet as a whole. In the Recreation section of the Plan, regarding ease of access to recreation facilities, we note that the number of single parent households is considerably higher in the Planning Area than in Joliet as a whole. It should be noted that the number of single person households and single parent households are entirely different figures.

enough that 70% of its riders are passengers of choice.¹³ These transit riders own cars or have sufficient wealth that they could readily become car owners; yet they find the transit system more convenient, or economical, or predictable, or socially responsible, or see some combination of these reasons for taking public transportation. Because the public transportation system in Chicago attracts such riders, it provides 26% of the commuter trips in the city and levels as high as 49% for some neighborhoods. So public transportation in Chicago significantly mitigates traffic congestion, air pollution, and parking problems. In some of Chicago's most prosperous neighborhoods, the percentages of households with no car or a single car are higher than in the Planning Area, as a result of relatively compact development patterns coupled with effective public transportation service.¹⁴ Does public transportation in Joliet (operating in a low-density development environment compared to Chicago) provide service that effectively compensates for some households' lack of car ownership and give an option of choice to a significant number of residents? The information in the following paragraphs addresses this question.

On an average weekday, 2,000 passengers board or exit Metra trains in Joliet, most traveling to or from Chicago. On an average weekday 4,000 passengers ride one of 10 Pace bus routes that pass through the Planning Area (taking the paths shown in the Figure C-4 and providing the frequency of service shown in Table C-2).¹⁵ Pace in cooperation with local townships provides scheduled individual public transportation for seniors and individuals with special needs, a program that served an average of 14 people per day in Joliet Township in 2006. Pace also coordinates van/car pools for commuters, although no formal van pools currently operate with Pace facilitation in the Planning Area. Overall, in the Planning Area, 3% of workers commute by public transportation: 2 % by rail, 1 % by bus, as well as 14 % by van or car pool (which are informally organized by local residents).

Table C-2. Pace Route Frequencies

Weekday				
Route	Name	Number/day	Frequency	Hours
501	West Jefferson	25	1/2 hourly	6am-7pm
	Forest Park	17	Hourly	6:30am-7:30pm
502	Marquette Gardens	12	Hourly	6am-5pm
	Cass Street	12	Hourly	6am-5pm
503	Black Road-Raynor Park	13	Hourly	5:30am-5:30pm
504	South Joliet	13	Hourly	5:30am-5:30pm
505	Lidice	12	Hourly	6am-5pm
	Rockdale	12	Hourly	6am-5pm
Route	Name	Number/day	Frequency	Hours
506	E Washington/New Lenox	12	Hourly	6am-5pm
507	Plainfield	13	Hourly	6am-6pm
511	Elwood-Centerpoint Intermodal Center	2	-	6am and 3pm
831	Joliet-Midway	6	Every 3 hours	rush hours
	Joliet-Midway -- Lemont/Willow Springs	3	-	rush hours

¹³ Statement of CTA President Ronald Huberman, addressing the organization Business Leaders for Transportation on June 8, 2007.

¹⁴ US Census 2000 data.

¹⁵ Metra data from 2002, Pace data is for the 2nd quarter of 2007.

834	Joliet-Yorktown	12	Hourly	5am-6pm
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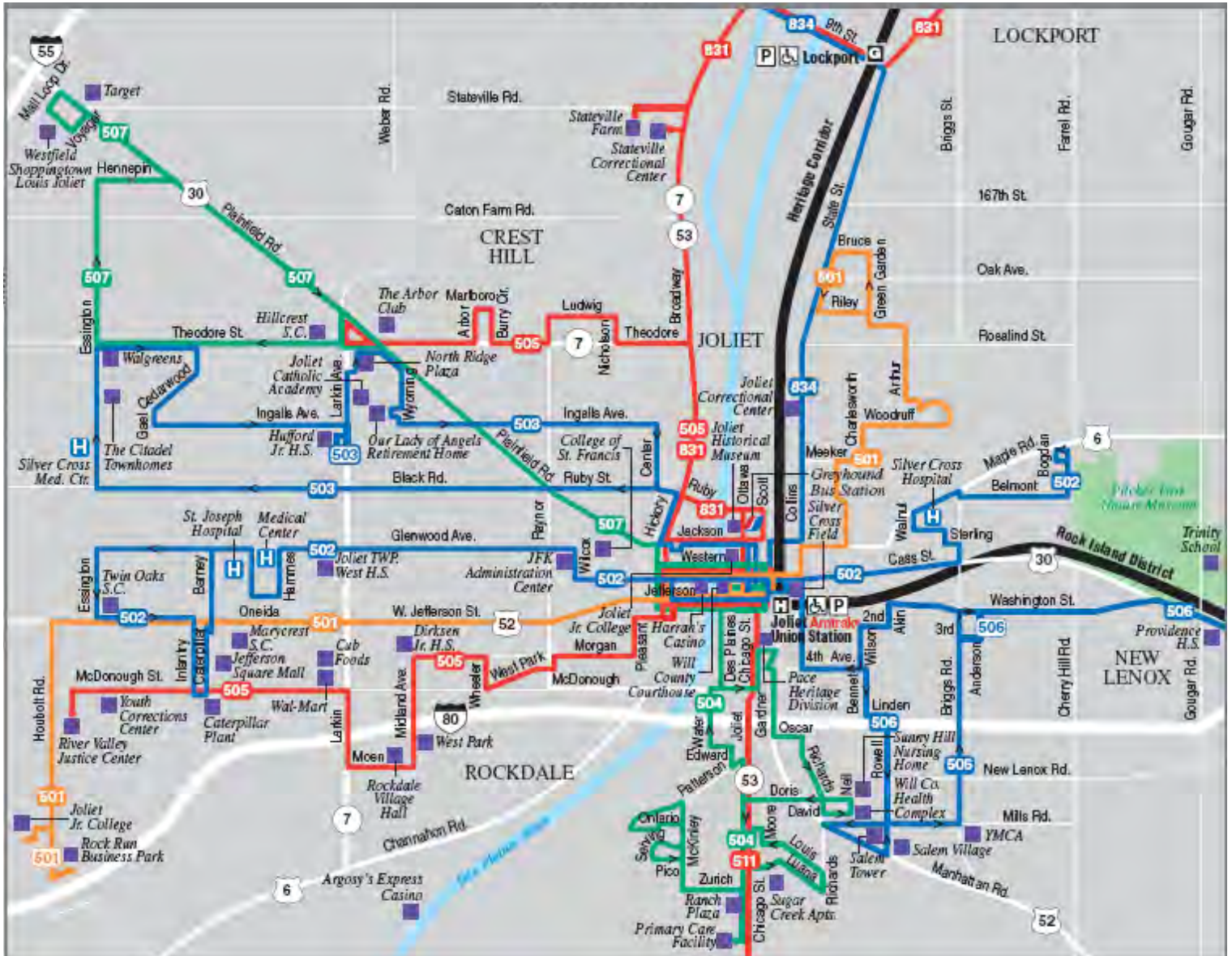
Saturday				
Route	Name	Number/day	Frequency	Hours
501	West Jefferson	9	Hourly	9am-5pm
	Forest Park	10	Hourly	10am-7pm
502	Marquette Gardens	7	Hourly	10am-4pm
	Cass Street	8	Hourly	8:30am-4:30pm
505	Lidice	8	Hourly	10am-5pm
505	Rockdale	8	Hourly	10am-5pm
507	Plainfield	10	Hourly	9am-6pm
831	Joliet-Midway	4	-	2 morning to, 2 afternoon return
834	Joliet-Yorktown	7	Hourly	9am-4pm

These low levels of public transit use in a community with low levels of car ownership and major employment centers that exist within ten miles but not in the community indicate that the public transit system is not providing an adequate or desirable alternative for many residents. This is not surprising in light of the implications of an intra-county public transit system that consists largely of fixed bus routes running on hourly schedules that end at 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. For example, a worker who wanted to commute from a neighborhood east of the river to an industrial job in the I-55 corridor would need to catch the hourly bus closest to his or her home and transfer to another bus Downtown. With walking time to and from bus stops and margins for not missing the hourly bus or connection, the commute might take 1 to 2 hours each way and fit within the limits of an ordinary working life, provided that buses and connections were rarely missed and that work never extended into the evening. Low levels of Pace commuter ridership indicate that this is not a series of contingencies many workers want to accept. The relatively high levels of commuting by informal van or car pools indicate that many residents are solving their transportation problems as well as they can by working out deals with their neighbors who have cars.

Public data do not tell us the extent to which Planning Area residents' actual ability to reach important destinations regularly is limited by the service limitations in the public transit system, however, Planning Area stakeholders and residents have consistently explained that public transit use is limited because current services do not permit many residents to reach jobs, necessary shopping, or education, recreation, or medical services on a regular basis. In interviews with individual stakeholders from a wide range of fields, at least 20 interviewees identified inadequate public transportation as a significant reason why Planning Area residents could not find or retain jobs, purchase nutritional food or other necessary goods within limited household budgets, complete work training or other education courses, or access recreation facilities. In community meeting break out sessions, needs for public transportation improvements were cited as critical community problems 8 times, and 78 meeting participants "voted" to list these identified needs for public transportation improvements among the three most important points raised in their sessions. The large majority of community stakeholders and residents commented on Pace bus services, the usual means of public transportation within the Joliet area. Frequently, bus services along fixed routes were described as reliable during their scheduled hours of operation. Commonly perceived deficiencies included:

- Short hours of operation along fixed bus routes, not extending into early morning or evening periods
- Infrequent service on fixed routes making connections to other public transportation very difficult
- Long walks from some neighborhoods to any route service
- Lack of bus shelters
- Unsafe conditions for pedestrians accessing bus stops

Figure C-4. Pace Bus Routes in Joliet



From RTA System Map, January 2007

Agency Proposals for Bus Service Improvements

When Pace officials were interviewed to provide information for this plan, they were not surprised by nor did they disagree with any of the needs for improved service noted by community stakeholders and residents. Since 2004 Pace has been conducting research in Will County in order to plan service improvements, and Pace has verified all of the perceived service problems noted above.

Within the limitations of its resources, Pace proposes to improve its service along the lines indicated by community comments. Proposed Pace service improvements are summarized in the following chart (Table C-3), and in the detailed in Appendix C. In general these improvements will provide increased access from Downtown Joliet and some Planning Area neighborhoods to employment centers, longer hours of operation for some major routes, and increased access to hospitals from Planning Area neighborhoods. Pace also proposes to maintain some service (such as the 504 Bus that serves the extreme southern end of the Planning Area) even though ridership is extremely low, because residents would have no public transit alternative without this service. For Route 504 in particular, Pace proposes to convert the portion of the route south of I-80 into a dial-a-ride type service. Buses would run a fixed route until a certain point, then pick up and drop off people as requested (via calling an operator or speaking to the driver) before returning to the fixed route north of I-80.

In the view of this plan’s consultants, Pace’s proposed improvements will either improve service or modify routes in ways that will reduce costs while having minimal impact on the quality of service. So these changes are generally positive, but they will need to be supplemented with other measures to provide Planning Area residents with desirable alternatives to car travel.

Pace’s planned service improvements are grouped according to the agency’s resources. Along with other transit agencies in Northeastern Illinois and their civic supporters, Pace is now seeking funding through the State Legislature to sustain and improve service.

It is notable that Pace is a relatively flexible public transit agency, open to non-traditional modes of service with a demonstrated interest in working with its constituent communities. In various parts of the Chicago region Pace has partnered with communities to provide circulator services with small busses or vans that connect points of service, provide dedicated service to particular major job sites, and work with a range of local entities to support car and van pool services.¹⁶

Table C-3. Proposed Changes to Joliet Routes¹⁷

Route	Name	Proposed Changes: Early 2008	Proposed Changes: Future date
501	Forest Park/West Jefferson	Adjust routing south of Joliet Jr. College, extend evening hours of service	

¹⁶ Pace Bus website: <http://pacebus.com>

¹⁷ Changes to be made in early 2008 are within the current funding capabilities of Pace, though delayed due to the current transit funding crisis. Changes proposed for some future date, as yet undetermined, will only be implemented should Pace receive additional funds from the State Legislature.

502	Cass/Marquette Gardens	Restructure Marquette Gardens branch to serve high-ridership sites along it and Rtes. 503 and 505 Lidice, discontinue Cass St. branch (see Rt. 506)	Add a 6:10pm weekday trip
503	Black Road/Raynor Park	Discontinue route (see Rt. 502, West Joliet Dial-a-Ride)	
504	South Joliet	Operate fixed route between Joliet City Center and Will Co. Health Complex, operate on-demand service each trip in Preston Heights and South Joliet similar to dial-a-ride service	Add a 6:10pm weekday trip
505	Rockdale/Lidice	Discontinue Lidice branch (see Rt. 502), streamline Rockdale branch and end route at Provena St. Joseph Hospital	Add a 6:10pm weekday trip
506	E Washington - New Lenox	Restructure route to serve high-ridership sites along it and Rt. 502 Cass Street	Add a 6:10pm weekday trip
507	Plainfield	Operate on Plainfield Rd. in both directions (see West Joliet Dial-a-Ride for service on Theodore and Essington), increase rush-hour and evening service	Increase service during midday periods
511	Joliet-Elwood-Centerpoint Intermodal Center	Extend route to northeast Joliet, add weekday and weekend round-trips	
831	Joliet-Midway	Operate between Joliet and Orland Square only via 159th St., discontinue service via Lemont (no alternate service in area) and north of Orland Square (see Rtes. 384 and 386)	More convenient connection to Midway CTA Station via Rt. 379
834	Joliet-Yorktown	Serve Bolingbrook Park & Ride during rush hours to connect with new Rt. 837, discontinue Greenleaf/Innsbruck Apartments loop, discontinue one weekday afternoon southbound trip and add an evening round-trip	
NEW	Channahon Dial-a-Ride		Operate dial-a-ride service open to general public in Channahon area with connections to Joliet transfer points
NEW	Shorewood Dial-a-Ride		Operate dial-a-ride service open to general public in Shorewood area with connections to Joliet transfer points
NEW	West Joliet Dial-a-Ride	Operate dial-a-ride service open to general public in west/northwest areas of Joliet during midday hours (replaces portions of Rtes. 502, 503, 505, 507)	Add rush-hour service

Source: Pace Website - http://www.pacebus.com/sub/initiatives/south_cook_will/proposed_changes.asp

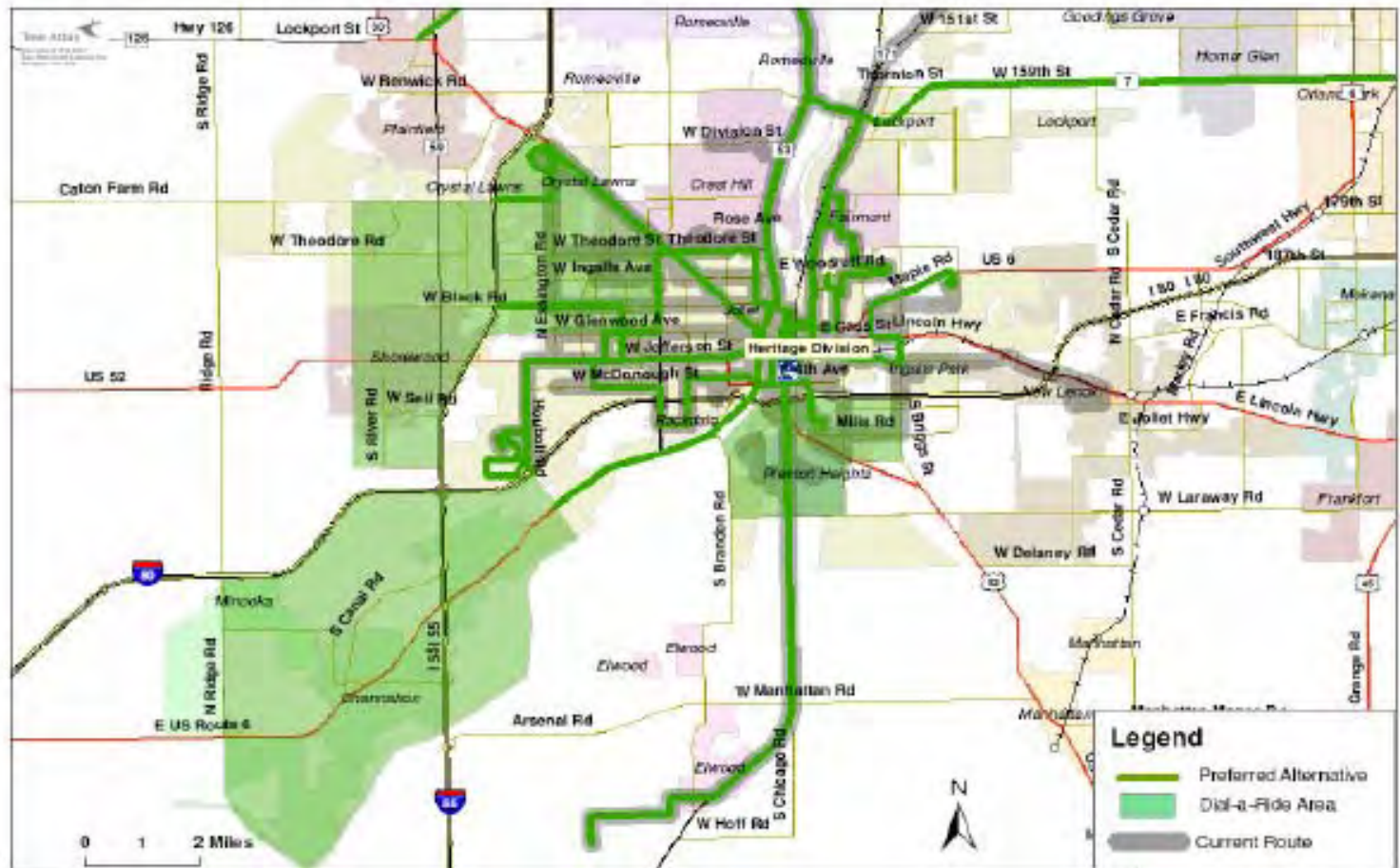
Joliet Area: Proposed Late 2007 Service Coverage*



* As of July 2007, these changes have been postponed to early 2008 due to funding limitations.



Joliet Area: Proposed Early 2008 Service Coverage*



* As of July 2007, these changes have been postponed indefinitely, until further funding is secured.

Major Rail and Highway Developments

The imminent completion of the I-355 expressway is already establishing another corridor of new communities and businesses flanking the Planning Area. It offers opportunities comparable to those now available to the west and north of the Planning Area and further highlights the need for effective transportation from the Planning Area.

Metra has proposed an extension of its rail service that now terminates in Downtown Joliet to Elwood. This extension would provide improved regular access to the important regional job center of Logistics Park, provided that the extension is complimented by circulator bus service that would provide “last mile” connections to job sites.

On a larger and more long-term scale, Metra in cooperation with a regional civic and business coalition has proposed the construction of the “Star Line,” a new passenger rail line that would provide suburb-to-suburb connections along a route that circles the center of the Chicago Metropolitan area.¹⁸ A Strategic Commission, established by the Will County Center for Economic Development (WCED) has introduced “Blue Print for Transportation” in Will County.¹⁹ The “Blue Print” features large highway and expressway projects, including the creation of an expressway link of I-55 to I-57; it also calls for enhancing public transportation services “that support economic development.” If executed, these plans will change the built environment and landscape of Will County for the next generation. They will further enrich the opportunities for employment, economical shopping, commercial and professional services that surround the Planning Area and to which the community will need to be connected by convenient and reliable public transportation services.

Proposals

Establish a Community Organization (possibly a Community Development Corporation (CDC)) to Share the Responsibility for Implementing Transportation Proposals as One of Its Functions

To effectively implement the transportation proposals of this Plan the Planning Area community will need to act through an organization that represents its neighborhoods and has the capacity to plan and execute programs. Other sections of the Plan discuss and propose the formation of a Planning Area community development corporation (CDC) that would succeed the Quality of Life Task Force in representing the community and share responsibility for implementing the overall Plan and many of its critical proposals. This CDC (or another representative and capable community organization) should work with Pace, the City, and other development partners in implementing the following proposals.

¹⁸ Star Line information on *Metra Connects: Proposed New Starts* website:
<http://metraconnects.metrarail.com/star.php>

¹⁹ Will County Transportation Blueprint, Will County Center for Economic Development, adopted March 16, 2007, available online: <http://www.willcountyced.com/CED-blueprint.pdf>.

Support Pace Bus Service Improvement Proposals at Fully Funded Levels

Pace proposals will consistently improve the mobility of Planning Area residents, ameliorating some of the major needs expressed by community residents and other stakeholders, especially for extended hours of service and improved connections to employment centers and other critical destinations. Support for these improvements should begin with communications to representatives in the Illinois legislature and should be expressed by the City, the County, Joliet Township, the Quality of Life Task Force, and other organizations that are partnering with the City and the community in the implementation of the QOL Plan.

Supplement Pace Proposals with a Planning Area Circulator Service

This proposed service might be provided by minibus vehicles. It would begin and end each loop at the Downtown pulse point, making cycles approximately every 20 to 30 minutes. The circulator would stop along each of 3 or 4 main bus routes through the Planning Area. Given coordination of timing and communication with moving Pace vehicles, it would drop passengers 5 to 10 minutes before the arrival of the hourly bus for each route and pick up passengers around the midpoint between the passages of hourly buses on each route. In this way the circulator would effectively convert hourly service to half hour service in the core of the Planning Area.

Suggested points of service for the circulator were identified through an analysis that considers: population density, clustering of retail businesses and public service program sites, and densities of households that do not own a car or own only one car, and existing bus routes. The methodology of this analysis is described in Appendix C-3. By connecting these points, the circulator would give Planning Area residents a way to move within their community as well as outside of it. This analysis and the underlying data have been conveyed to Pace for the agency's immediate consideration, while its service improvements are under consideration.

Pace should use its expertise to design alternatives for an optimum circulator route. But Pace should plan the circulator service cooperatively with the City and with a Transportation Committee of the Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC) or other representative community organization proposed in this Plan. Planning for this service should also be coordinated with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), which directs the use of federal transportation funds in the Chicago region and may be able to contribute to the funding of the service from one of several federal programs. The service might be funded, managed, and performed as a Pace service carried out under its general charter or as a collaborative effort with the planning partners, i.e., the City and the CDC.

Multiply and Coordinate Van Pools

Given the disbursement of employment centers in Will County, it is unlikely that any combination of fixed route bus services will ever provide the level of mobility required to effectively connect all Planning Area residents to available job opportunities. However, an extensive network of van pools could provide the level of flexibility necessary for effective transportation to jobs. Perhaps no other community in America has such a rich and interlocking combination of assets that can help to make a van pool program successful:

- A large population of potential workers eager to find employment
- A rapidly growing base of jobs, including jobs for skilled and less skilled workers, and jobs that potentially offer career ladders
- A short distance, by motor vehicle, between willing workers and job sites
- Residents who already conduct van and car pools informally on a significant scale
- Social capital in the form of a strong network of community and faith-based organizations with deep outreach into communities of prospective workers who need transportation
- Social capital in the form a strong network of business organizations that may be galvanized to provide openings for workers connected by van
- A flexible and service-oriented transit agency with a mission to coordinate van pools

These assets should be utilized in a program that overcomes the inherent problems of van pools including the inconveniences of cooperation among van pool participants and the turn over of pool participants.

A Planning Area van pool program might serve needs besides commuting to work. For example, access to educational, medical, or recreational opportunities could be provided through van pools. However, transportation to work should be the primary focus of a van pool program.

A Planning Area van pool program should be planned and coordinated by a partnership of the City, a Transportation Committee and an Employment Committee of the Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC) recommended in this Plan, and Pace. The service might be funded, managed, and performed by Pace under its general charter or as a collaborative effort of the planning partners. Federal funds available through the Job Access Reverse Commute program are particularly appropriate for the support of the van pool program. In its planning and operation the van pool program should also involve the network of community and faith-based organizations that has relationships among prospective workers and the network of business organizations that can provide helpful employer cooperation.

Establish an IGO Car Sharing Service Cooperative

Car sharing services have been popular in Europe for a generation and have been expanding rapidly in the US for the last decade. In metropolitan Chicago the Center for Neighborhood Technology established the IGO car sharing service as a not-for-profit cooperative in 2002. IGO has rapidly grown to serve more than 3,000 Chicago area households.

In the IGO cooperative members may use a computer or a phone call to reserve a car for an hour or for any period up to several days. Members pay a modest fee to enroll and then pay monthly bills proportional to their use of the IGO cars. IGO members often use public transportation, bicycles, or walking to commute to work and rely on IGO cars for shopping or other errands that involve carrying loads and for appointments at locations that are not well-served by public transportation. IGO members are often households that do not own a car or only one car. Because a typical monthly car sharing expense for an IGO member family is \$100 to \$200 per month compared to the \$500 to \$700 per month required to amortize the purchase of a car and insure, maintain, and fuel it, IGO households realize substantial ongoing savings through their

membership. Frequently, IGO members could afford to own more than one car, but choose car sharing for a combination of economic and philosophical reasons. Corporations, public agencies, or not-for-profit organizations may also be IGO members. IGO could play a valuable role in expanding the transportation alternatives of Planning Area residents.

Planning and outreach to implement a Joliet chapter of the IGO cooperative should be undertaken by a partnership of the IGO organization, the City, and a Transportation Committee of the Planning Area CDC. The network of community and faith-based organizations that has relationships among prospective IGO members should also be involved in this effort. Public funding from federal, state, or local municipal sources has been used in other communities to help IGO quickly reach a critical mass of members. For its ongoing operations the IGO service can be self-sustaining. The IGO organization should manage day-to-day service operations with oversight from member representatives and input from the Planning Area CDC and any funding partner, such as the City or a contributing state or federal agency.

Establish Safe and Common Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes

The Recreation and the Land Use sections of this plan propose (and map) a network of interconnected trails for pedestrians and cyclists that would mesh with the sidewalk network and provide access to major points of destination within the Planning Area. This trail network would directly and indirectly enhance residents' quality of life in a number of ways. It would give older children, adults, and families together safe and healthy ways of traveling through the city as alternatives to driving. It would give Planning Area neighborhoods a distinctive advantage in the housing market. It would encourage transit-oriented development and provide more pleasant if not more convenient ways to reach public transit. Following proposals made in the Industrial Development and Employment section of this plan, the trail system could also give Planning Area residents alternative means to commute to intra-city workplaces, including hospitals, Downtown offices, or industrial parks that will be developed south of I-80. In all these ways the trail and sidewalk network would reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality.

A proposed action step that dovetails with the creation of the trail and sidewalk network is the establishment of safe and monitored routes for children to walk or bike to all schools in the Planning Area, following the guidelines of the "Safe Routes to School" legislation recently enacted at the state and federal levels. A committee of the Planning Area CDC should work with Joliet public school districts, parochial schools, the City, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and sustainable transportation advocates (including CNT) to establish a network of safe routes to school. State funds should be available for safety and traffic calming measures to implement these routes.

Support Transportation Projects of Regional Significance that Also Directly Serve the Transportation Needs of Planning Area Residents

The review of key observations and findings for this section of the Quality of Life (QOL) Plan noted proposed major rail and highway programs. Like all other Will County residents, residents of the Planning Area could benefit from these projects, which would draw and retain economic opportunities. However, without improved public transportation, many Planning Area residents

will not benefit from the opportunities in surrounding corridors. Accordingly the City and organizations of the Planning Area should support the Metra extension to Elwood, the Star Line, and the Transportation Blue Print for Will County, but only to the extent that sponsors make effective public transportation for Planning Area residents an integral part of the projects.

Proposals Summary					
Short Term (0-3 years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
1) Support Pace bus service proposals at fully funded levels	City of Joliet, Organized Planning Area possibly led by a Community Development Corporation (CDC), Other units of government, Business & Civic organizations	1			Pace, Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), State of Illinois
2) Introduce Planning Area Circulator Service	PACE, City of Joliet, CDC	1		\$100,000 - \$200,000 annually	Pace, Federal transportation funds via the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
3) Multiply & coordinate van pools	PACE, City of Joliet, CDC, Business organizations	1		\$25,000 - \$75,000 annually	
4) Establish an IGO car sharing cooperative	Center for Neighborhood Technology, CDC, City of Joliet	2		Possible \$50,000 - \$100,000 fast start infusion	CMAP, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Foundations
5) Establish "Safe Routes to School Program"	CDC, School Districts, City of Joliet, IDOT	1		\$25,000 to \$250,000	Federal funds via IDOT, Foundations

Long Term (3+ years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
6) Establish safe & common pedestrian & bicycle routes	City of Joliet, CDC, Regional bike & pedestrian organizations	2		\$10,000 to \$100,000	IDOT, Foundations, bicycle federations
7) Support Will County Transportation Blue Print, given business support for improved public transportation	City of Joliet, CDC, Business organizations	3			
8) Support Elwood & STAR Line Metra expansions	City of Joliet, CDC, Business organizations	3			
9) Support Downtown Transit-Oriented Development	City of Joliet, CDC, Business organizations	2			

D. Retail Market Assessment and Development

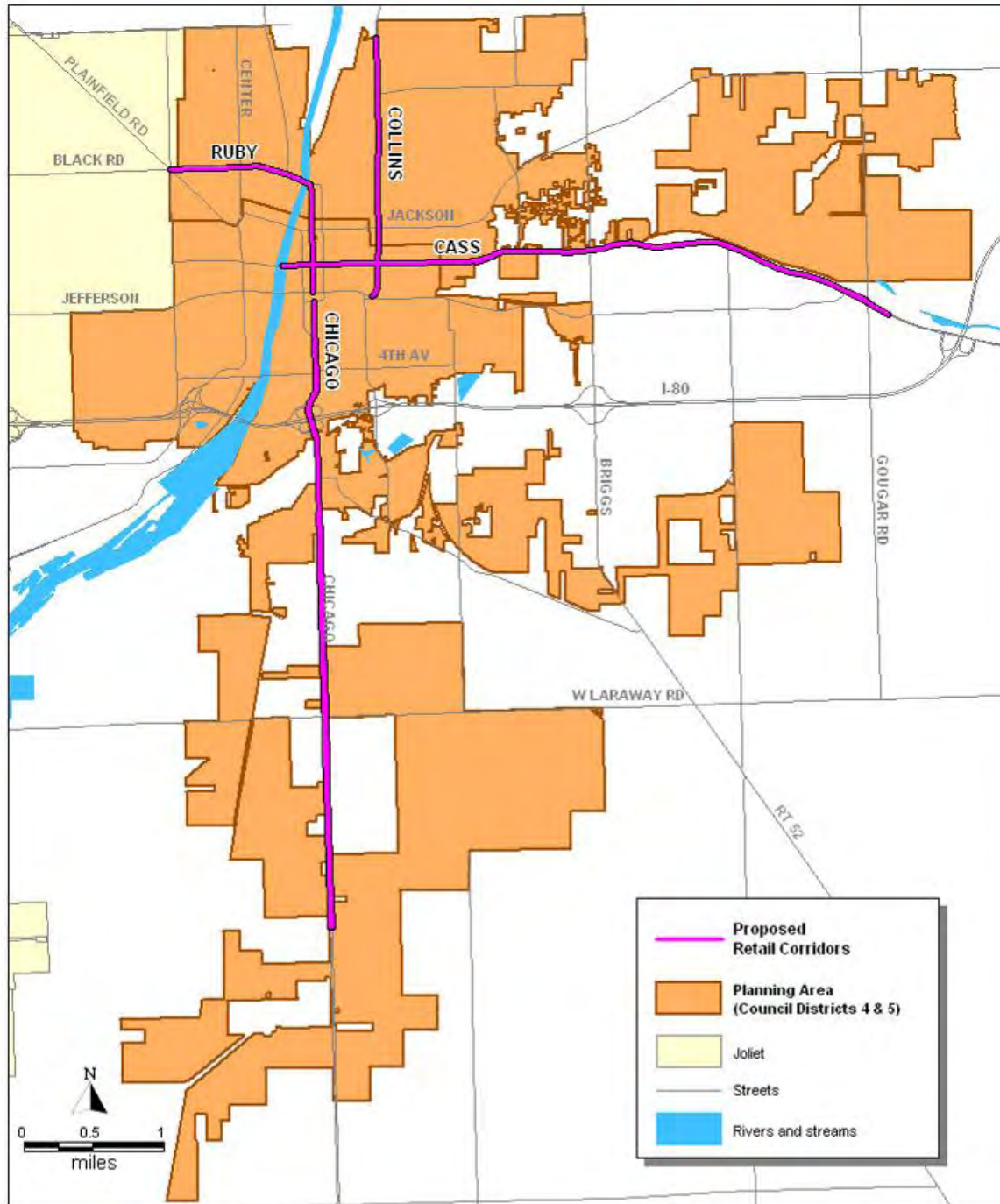
Like other sections of the Quality of Life (QOL) Plan, this section on the retail market focuses on the Fourth and Fifth City Council Districts of the City of Joliet, the Planning Area for this project. This analysis gives an overview of the market – current demographic and socioeconomic trends, retail categories with strong growth potential, and an examination of prime sites in the Planning Area for commercial development. Furthermore, this analysis also examines existing government and civic retail development programs and makes recommendations for amending or improving these services.

The proposals based on this analysis address four key points:

- **There is considerable unmet demand for a number of key consumer categories:** The Planning Area has several distinct retail shortages – particularly a large grocery store, a produce market, coffee shop, sit-down restaurants, and general house wares – as well as banking and medical services.
- **Many sites with substantial retail potential are currently operating far below their potential:** This includes sites currently vacant, occupied by extraneous industrial uses, or not yet annexed by the city. An assessment of these properties shows that there are ample opportunities for small-scale, mixed-use, infill development on major corridors and at major intersections throughout the Planning Area, and that there are several areas where large-scale retail development could occur once the land was assembled and made suitable for development.
- **Neither the City’s business support programs nor business organizations are focused on the economic development of the Planning Area as a primary mission.** This lack of focused business support impairs business retention and business attraction in the Planning Area. Furthermore, many interview respondents, particularly business owners, felt there was a shortage of small business assistance available. Barriers are even higher for would-be entrepreneurs for whom English is not their first language.
- **The City and its development partners will need to take an aggressive, proactive approach to land assembly and development incentives to attract major retail developments to the Planning Area.** The Planning Area’s market opportunities will only draw large scale developments if the problems of incompatible land uses and fragmented land ownership can be minimized by the City and its community partners. Land assembly and incentives – public infrastructure upgrades, grants, low-interest loans, fee waivers, tax abatements, etc. – are an investment strategy and need to be viewed as such. In the competitive regional environment for attracting retail development, other cities and community development organizations have effectively assembled large blocks of land and offer substantial incentives in order to attract new jobs, revitalize communities, and stimulate revenue growth. City and community efforts in the Planning Area will need to meet this standard in order to attract quality developments.

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) identified retail development and market opportunities through interviews with key neighborhood stakeholders, community meetings, and continuous discussion with city staff and other local organizations. In addition, MPC surveyed hundreds of other residents in a statistically valid survey, reviewed existing studies, and analyzed data on pertinent facets of life, and researched comparable community improvement efforts. In order to examine current estimates (2006) and projected estimates (2011) of crucial data, MPC used services provided by SRC, LLC. The leakage analysis was provided by Claritas, Inc.

Figure D-1. Planning Area: Retail Corridors



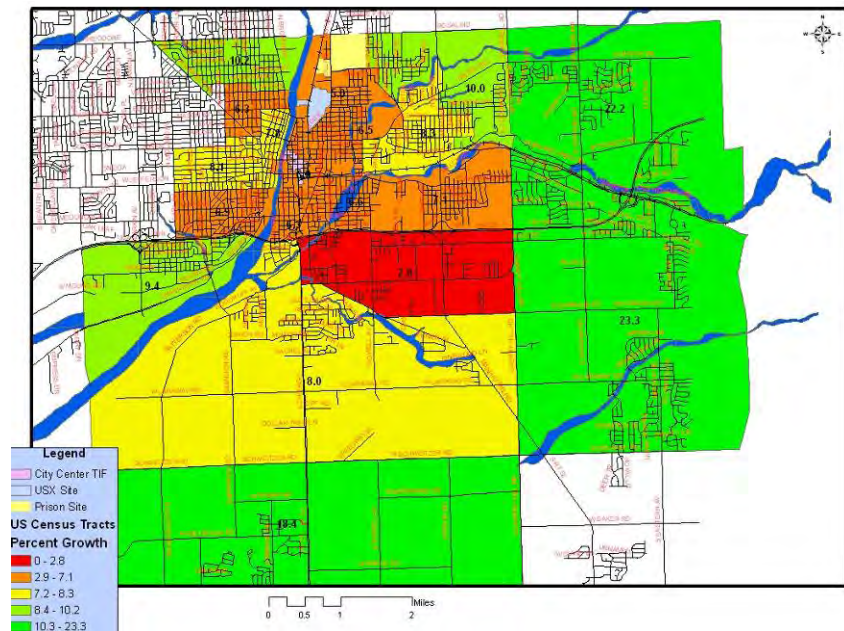
When analyzing markets, it is important to remember that consumer markets rarely stop at municipal borders. This analysis includes data on population growth, consumer expenditure, and other key indicators for a trade area that expands beyond Joliet’s formal boundaries. For the purpose of this analysis, two separate geographies were used. The bulk of this element considers the Planning Area to be the 19 US Census Tract areas consistent with the remainder of Quality of Life (QOL) Plan.²⁰ A different geography was used for the leakage analysis, incorporating market trade areas. In order to capture the amount of consumer dollars being spent outside the study area, MPC examined three concentric circles, with a center point at the intersection of South Briggs Street and East Washington Avenue. These circles had radii of one, three, and five miles (see Appendix D-2 for a map of this area and the complete results of the leakage analysis). This geography was chosen because it enabled the eastern portions of Joliet to be analyzed without influence on the data by retail options in the other portions of Joliet.

Key Findings

Population Growth

As demonstrated in the housing section of this plan, projections indicate overall population growth from 2000 to 2011, when the Planning Area will grown from 88,341 residents to a projected 114,352. While there is currently substantial unmet consumer demand (see below), a growing market could support a larger and more prosperous retail environment, including both large-scale businesses and neighborhood oriented businesses in mixed-use developments at key intersections.

Figure D-2. Percent Growth in Population, 2006-2011



However, as Figure D-3 indicates, the Census tracts closer to the core of the city are expected to grow less quickly than those on the periphery. So if retail development in the Planning Area is

²⁰ 881103, 881104, 881200, 881300, 881400, 881800, 881900, 882000, 882100, 882200, 882300, 882400, 882500, 882600, 882700, 882900, 883000, 881000, 883302. See Appendix A for a map of this area.

to be sustainable over the long-term, residents in these faster growing areas will need to be assured of easy access, particularly to large-scale developments.

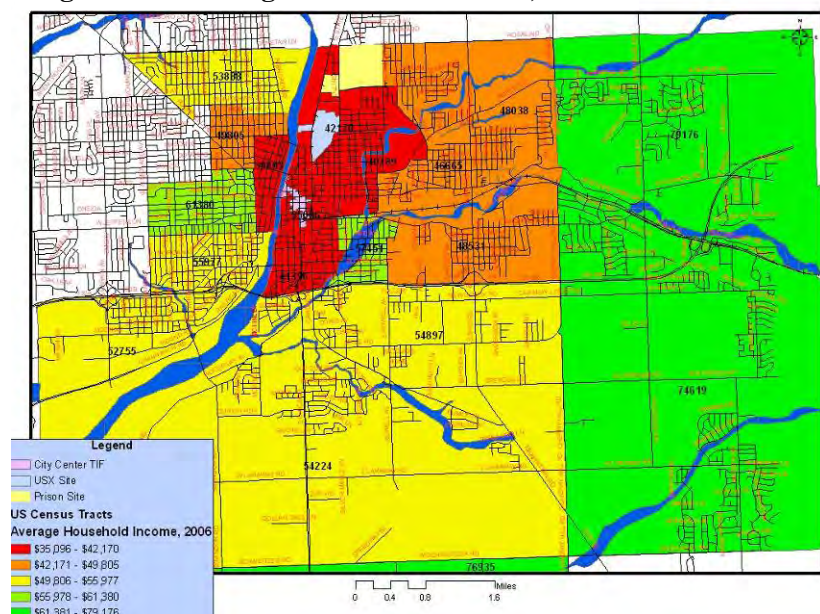
Income

The average household income in the Planning Area has increased rapidly since 1990, though this is not the result of a general ‘rising tide’ of incomes, but rather an influx of higher-earning households moving into some of the peripheral Census tracts. The general trend from 2006 to 2011 will be stagnant growth in households earning \$75,000 or less, and rapid growth in households earning \$75,000 or more (see Appendix D-3).

There are substantial differences in average household income from Census tract to Census tract. The estimated 2006 average household income for the entire 19 Census tracts was \$53,959, but the average household income was above this figure in only 4 of the individual Census tracts. As Figure D-3 indicates, the core of the Planning Area is generally lower earning, with higher incomes found on the periphery.

Retail growth, particularly large-format developments, will need to be accessible to households on the periphery of the Planning Area, in order to tap their higher buying power, but also to the more densely populated areas closer to the city center, where the aggregate buying power is substantial despite lower individual and household earnings.

Figure D-3. Average Household Income, 2006



Consumer Expenditures

In general, as incomes rise throughout the Planning Area, average consumer expenditure is expected to rise as well. However, the lower a household’s average income, the higher its percentage of income spent. This may reflect several things – lower earning households earn just enough to support themselves (perhaps resulting in lower rates of savings), unreported earnings that supplement formal wages, goods sold in the core areas are sold at inflated prices, or households in the core Census tracts spend a greater percentage of income on housing than those on the periphery. Any of these issues merit further investigation.

Table D-1 shows the substantial buying power of the Planning Area, outlining the top 15 expenditure items. Some categories such as shelter and health care encompass a range of goods, including taxes, rents, and insurance. Based on these figures, there is significant (and growing) demand for food and beverages, entertainment, vehicles, and gasoline. Health care options beyond those provided at local hospitals are also in demand: dental care, rehabilitation services, mental health care, optometrists, etc. Such services may not earn sales taxes, but they attract potential consumers to retail corridors or neighborhoods. Currently, these needs are largely unmet by existing options in the Planning Area.

Table D-1. Top 15 Consumer Expenditure Detail For the Planning Area (Average Household Annual Expenditures)

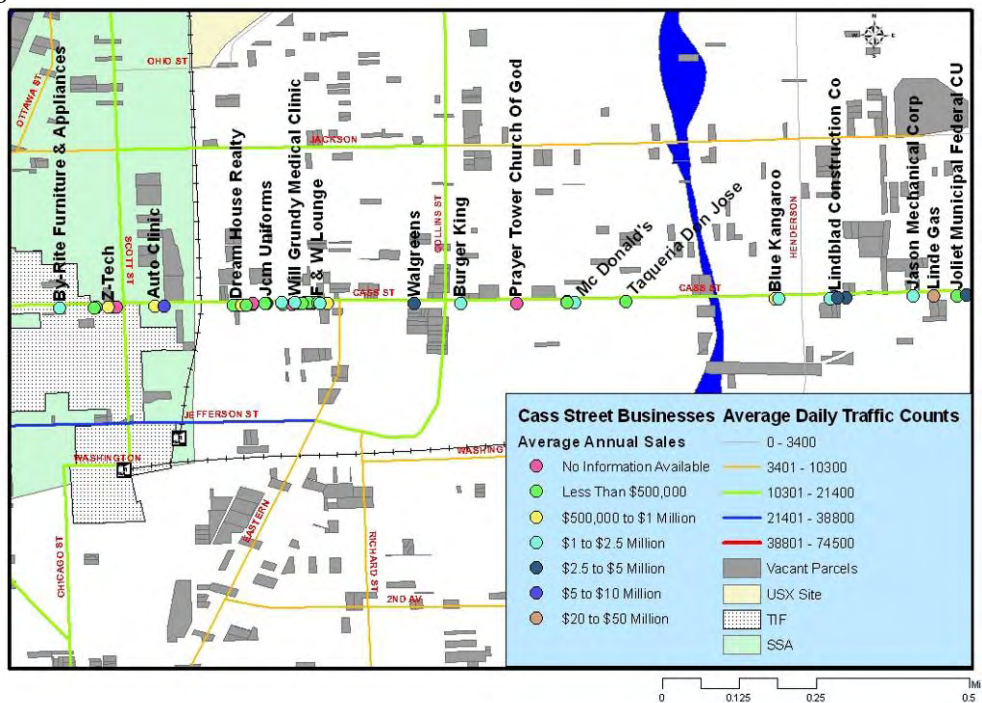
	% of Total Expenses	2006 Estimated Household Expenditure	# of Households	Aggregate Expenditure	2011 Projected Household Expenditure	# of Households	Aggregate Expenditure	% Change 06-11
Shelter	19.9%	\$9,521.54	34,397	\$327,512,414.82	\$9,902.77	37,392	\$370,284,379.58	4.0%
Food & Beverages	16.1%	\$7,711.70	34,397	\$265,259,348.34	\$7,931.20	37,392	\$296,563,434.14	2.8%
Health Care	6.4%	\$3,065.30	34,397	\$105,437,127.54	\$3,134.52	37,392	\$117,205,975.58	2.3%
Entertainment	5.8%	\$2,758.09	34,397	\$94,870,025.17	\$2,869.11	37,392	\$107,281,764.86	4.0%
New Vehicle Purchase	5.3%	\$2,548.02	34,397	\$87,644,247.38	\$2,663.24	37,392	\$99,583,873.82	4.5%
Gasoline & Oil	4.8%	\$2,277.66	34,397	\$78,344,674.46	\$2,332.59	37,392	\$87,220,209.02	2.4%
Contributions	3.6%	\$1,730.64	34,397	\$59,528,827.52	\$1,839.74	37,392	\$68,791,561.82	6.3%
Used Vehicle Purchase	3.5%	\$1,668.34	34,397	\$57,385,894.42	\$1,698.81	37,392	\$63,521,907.26	1.8%
Gifts	2.6%	\$1,254.46	34,397	\$43,149,664.06	\$1,325.87	37,392	\$49,576,934.78	5.7%
Vehicle Insurance	2.4%	\$1,144.83	34,397	\$39,378,720.95	\$1,174.89	37,392	\$43,931,490.62	2.6%
Education	2.4%	\$1,129.57	34,397	\$38,853,822.73	\$1,205.96	37,392	\$45,093,260.06	6.8%
Recreational Equip & Supplies	2.3%	\$1,099.59	34,397	\$37,822,600.67	\$1,137.90	37,392	\$42,548,360.54	3.5%
House Wares & Small App	2.3%	\$1,085.72	34,397	\$37,345,514.28	\$1,136.85	37,392	\$42,509,098.94	4.7%
Tuition	2.0%	\$971.40	34,397	\$33,413,249.24	\$1,036.82	37,392	\$38,768,777.18	6.7%
Video & Audio Equipment	2.0%	\$969.88	34,397	\$33,360,965.80	\$998.65	37,392	\$37,341,524.54	3.0%
Top 15				\$1,339,307,097.38			\$1,510,222,552.74	
Total				\$3,041,424,636.55			\$3,424,311,413.50	

Retail Market Overview

The Planning Area has a handful of retail corridors – primarily Cass, Chicago, Collins, and Ruby Streets – in addition to the downtown area. Of these corridors, Chicago is the least developed, with substantial amounts of land that are vacant or put to uses that are far below their development potential. In order to develop retail or mixed-use properties along Chicago, a policy of land assembly, incentives, and likely some brownfield remediation will be necessary. As new commercial development is attracted to the Planning Area, it is highly likely traffic counts and property values will increase. The same can be said of the effects of population growth and higher population density as a result of mixed-use development at key sites. Increased traffic will benefit existing businesses, while more expensive property may become a challenge. The City and other organizations will need to be prepared to work with existing businesses to develop strategies and resources to remain competitive.

Cass Street runs east from the river, all the way out of town. It is a primarily auto-oriented retail strip, with several fast-food restaurants, two small grocers, and a handful of larger retailers (Mike’s Furniture, Roanoke Motors, Linde Gas). All but four of the businesses on Cass Street generate less than \$5 million in annual sales. According to Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) figures, the section of Cass Street with the densest concentration of development has **average daily traffic between 10,300 and 15,200** (see the Ideal Requirements of Development table in the Leakage Analysis section for a contextualization of traffic counts).

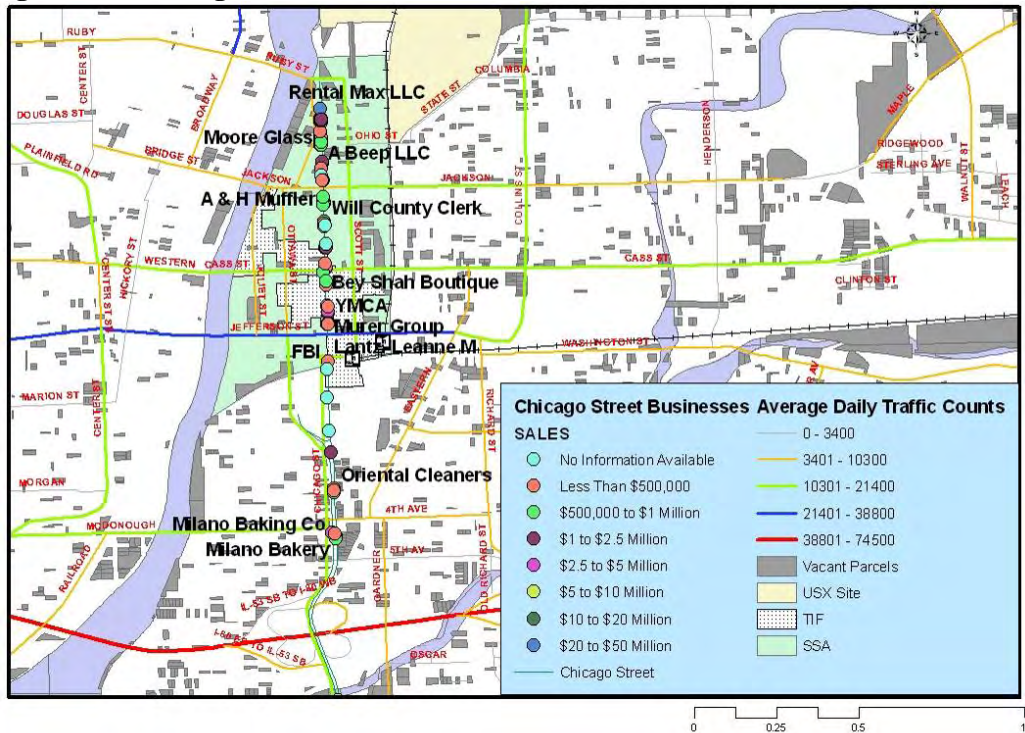
Figure D-4. Cass Street Businesses



Chicago Street runs south from the river, through downtown, intersects I-80, and continues south out of the city. While Chicago Street (from Cass Street south) receives high amounts of **daily traffic –approximately 17,900 a day** according to IDOT – there is relatively little commercial development, particularly close to the downtown. The intersection of 4th and Chicago hosts some convenience uses, but generally speaking, the property along Chicago is underutilized. McDonough, which runs from Chicago west to the river, is also underutilized, as it receives substantial daily traffic (**approx. 10,600 a day**) but has little to no substantial retail. Several older industrial facilities (scrap metal storage) and current government facilities (correctional facility, commuter bus facility), occupy large amounts of developable land. The vast majority of Chicago Street businesses generate very little revenue; only 9 of 216 businesses earn more than \$5 million per year. Chicago Street has potential for both large-scale development and for neighborhood oriented mixed-use development combining residential, retail, and office uses, particularly between Washington St. and 4th. However, given lot sizes and current usage, substantial investment by the City and its development partners will be necessary to make Chicago Street a valid development opportunity.

Furthermore, Chicago Street connects directly to I-80, providing easy access to the Planning Area and the downtown. Despite this, Chicago is not currently considered as a main route for entering and exiting the community. When approaching the Chicago Street exit on I-80 there is no signage indicating that Downtown Joliet, Harrah’s Casino, the Rialto Theater, Silver Cross Field, or the Metra station are all easily accessed via Chicago. As a result, traffic counts are much lower than they should be, unnecessarily deadening potential commercial activity. Improved signage, as well beautification and infrastructure improvements along Chicago, could make this a vital and vibrant access corridor and spark retail and mixed-use development.

Figure D-5. Chicago Street Businesses



The southern stretches of Chicago Street also have high amounts of daily traffic (**approx. 15,400 a day**) and are close to I-80, but far from Joliet's population centers and downtown. Large-scale, auto-oriented uses, including a mix of retail, office, and light industrial would likely be supported by existing traffic counts.

Collins Street is regarded by many interview respondents as a success story of the Planning Area. Several new businesses have opened in the past decades, many either owned by Hispanic entrepreneurs or consciously catering to Hispanic customers. However, the street lacks any substantial earners – only three out of 92 retailers earn \$5 million or more in annual sales – and parts of the street are heavily auto-oriented and unwelcoming to pedestrians. Many chain locations have parking lots in front of the stores, impairing a neighborhood feel. Collins Street receives approximately **11,600 cars a day**, which is sufficient to support more retail development, particularly mixed-use and infill, but probably not large-scale development under current land use conditions. Of particular note with Collins Street is its proximity to the former USX Steel Mill and Joliet Correctional Center, both of which will be redeveloped in the near future. Depending on the outcomes of those planning exercises, the face of Collins Street could change dramatically.

Figure D-6. South Chicago Street Businesses

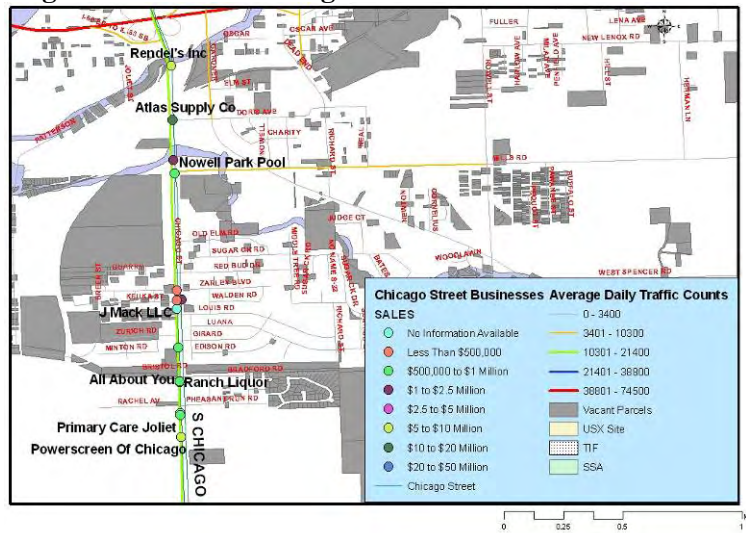
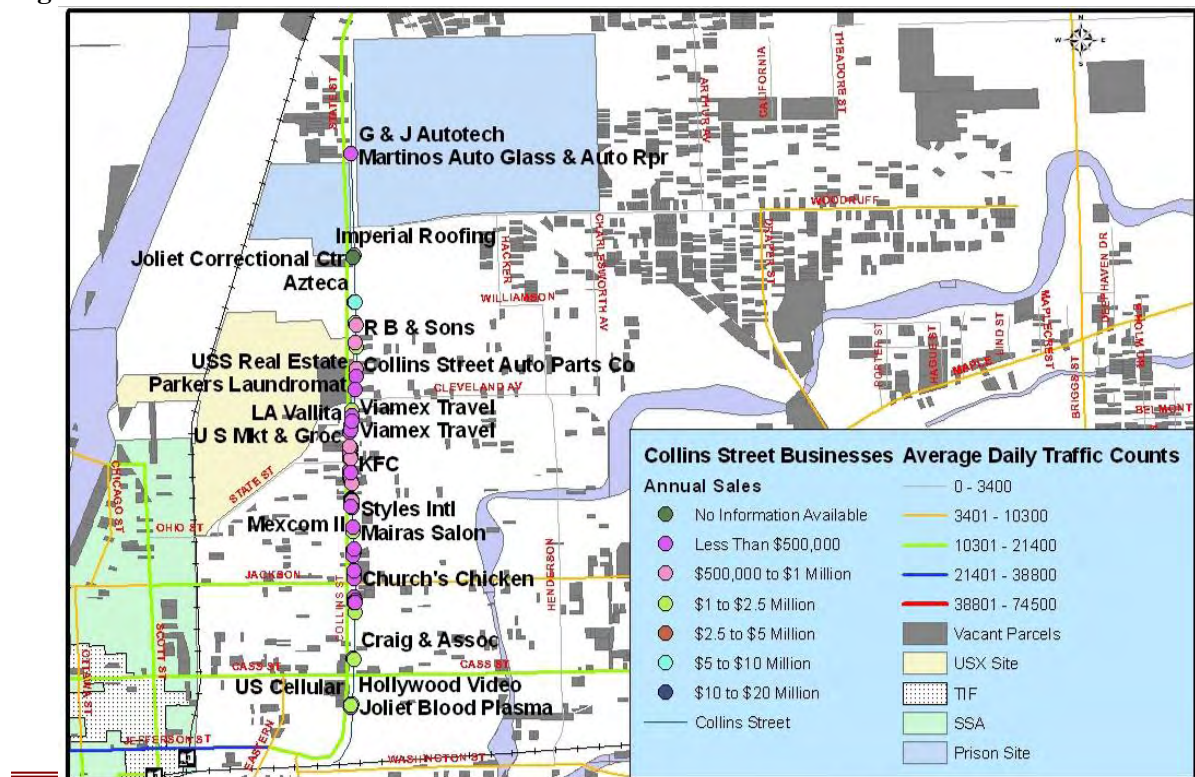
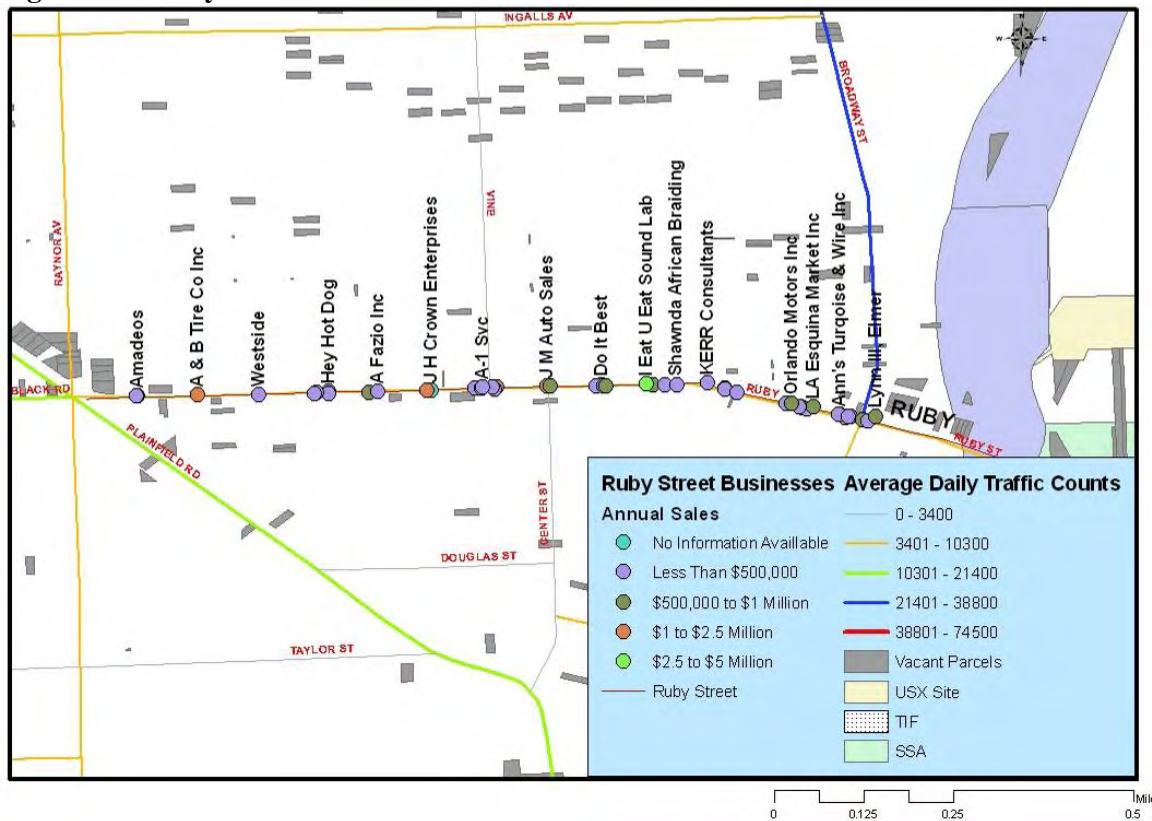


Figure D-7. Collins Street Businesses



Ruby Street, the only corridor discussed here that lies west of the river, has **daily traffic of approximately 8,300**, and a more cohesive neighborhood feel. Buildings are close to the street, streets are well lit, and signage is informative and attractive. Given the proximity to larger corridors such as Plainfield Road and Broadway Street, Ruby is a potential target for increased infill and mixed-use development. There are insufficient lots and traffic counts for larger-scale development.

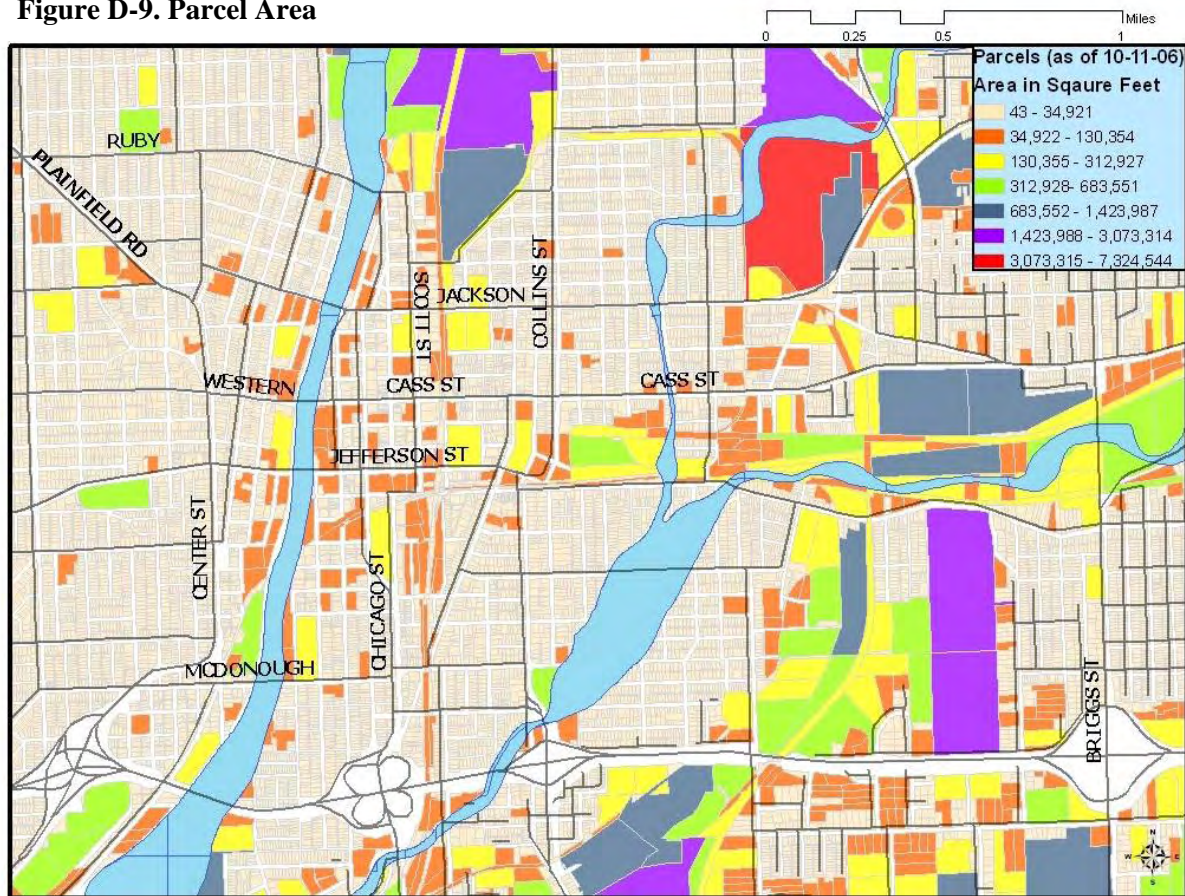
Figure D-8. Ruby Street Businesses



Land Assembly Challenges: Perhaps the largest challenge to substantial retail development in the Planning Area is the assembly of sufficiently large aggregations of land. While market demand and traffic exists, aggregations of vacant land ready for development do not. The difficulty of land assembly, which may require the acquisition of many real estate parcels from different owners, removing incompatible land uses, and variances from current zoning, is a time-consuming, expensive, and high risk process. The difficulties of land assembly are one of the primary factors that drive investors to locate new businesses on green field sites on the urban periphery. If Joliet or any other city hopes to attract substantial retail development it must smooth the way by minimizing the problems of land assembly. In the commercial corridor streets of the Planning Area the difficulties of land assembly are formidable. Figure D-10 gives one very rough indication of the difficulty of this task by showing the distribution of relatively large individual real estate parcels. Parcels of more than 1 acre (43,560 sq ft) on commercial streets stand out; parcels of more than 5 acres are rare; the Planning Area has only a few parcels of more than 10 acres (older industrial or prison sites). Considering that a supermarket development will require more than 5 acres, the need to assemble parcels becomes immediately apparent.

Other communities have had success by assembling priority parcels of land and then deeding those properties to developers for free, writing down the cost of that land entirely in order to stimulate development. This may prove to be an effective strategy in Joliet as well.

Figure D-9. Parcel Area



Key Survey Results

Of the 479 respondents to the mail survey, over 75 percent of the sample grossed less than \$75,000 per year; the median household income was between \$50,000 and \$75,000 per year. This is consistent with income findings above. Key results included:

- 33 percent felt the economy in the Planning Area is changing for the better (versus 58 percent for Joliet’s overall economy). 68 percent felt that the Planning Area, relative to the rest of Joliet, continues to be somewhat or much worse.
- 86 percent responded that they could not satisfy the majority of their shopping needs in the Planning Area. This propensity was further demonstrated when respondents were asked how far they normally have to go for good and services (see table).

Table D-2. Distance traveled to meet shopping needs

How far do you normally have to go for the following goods and services?	
Consumption Category	Percentage Responding They Must Leave the Planning Area
Groceries	70%
Restaurants	84%
Footwear	96%
Apparel	95%
Gas	67%
Auto Care	73%
Furniture	84%
Banking	62%
Legal Services	64%
Laundry	44%
Dry Cleaning	53%
Child Care	60%
Salon/Barber	63%
Movies	96%

- When asked to cite the top five retail or services they would like to see in the Planning Area, respondents identified coffee shops, house wares, sit-down restaurants, movie theaters, grocery stores, shoes and clothing, and book stores as priorities.

Retail Leakage Analysis

A leakage analysis compares expenditure potential to actual retail sales within a defined trade area. This determines whether that defined trade area is “leaking” dollars to surrounding communities or attracting dollars and in turn, generating a surplus. “Leakage” can also be understood as “opportunity” or “potential retail growth” within the given trade area.

For the Planning Area, the leakage analysis performed here confirmed that people living within one, three, and five miles of the intersection of S. Briggs St. and E. Washington St., are, by and large, spending their money outside of those radii. Thus there is substantial opportunity for retail growth within the defined trade area. Given the low annual earnings of retailers on the main commercial corridors examined above, this is hardly surprising.

The table below shows the largest or most notable areas of leakage/opportunity for the defined trade area (only the difference between potential expenditure and actual retail sales is shown here). These figures illustrate the unmet demand for these consumption categories within the defined area, and thus within the Planning Area. **Bold text** indicates the largest leakage, *text in italics* indicates surplus. The only notable surpluses are for Liquor Stores in every defined trade area, and for Electronics and Appliance Stores in the Five-Mile area.

According to this leakage analysis, there is considerable opportunity for retail growth in many of the categories most desired by interview respondents – including full service restaurants, gas stations, household goods, and most notably, supermarkets and grocery stores. This means that retailers within the Planning Area are not meeting current consumer demand of Planning Area residents. Money leaves the Planning Area because there is a shortage of retail options, as well as a perceived lack of retail quality.

Table D-3. Planning Area Retail Leakage and Surplus

Consumption Category	Leakage or <i>Surplus</i> (for given radius around the intersection of E. Washington St. and S. Briggs St)		
	1 Mile	3 Miles	5 Miles
Total Retail Sales, Incl. Eating and Drinking	\$89,752,964	\$406,260,133	\$654,946,306
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	\$21,024,881	\$100,406,202	\$72,911,912
Supermarkets/Grocery (excl. Convenience stores)	\$11,381,466	\$58,275,018	\$21,324,054
Gas Stations	\$7,788,287	\$40,063,693	\$101,057,680
Drugstores	\$3,076,011	\$25,039,840	\$4,015,138
Limited-Service Restaurants	\$4,235,861	\$6,427,713	\$19,185,352
Full-Service Restaurants	\$3,764,833	\$20,625,897	\$43,711,980
Clothing and Clothing Accessories	\$5,146,140	\$33,713,183	\$87,463,304
General Merchandise Stores	\$13,569,786	\$67,910,173	\$102,835,304
Furniture and Home Furnishing	\$1,525,746	\$7,881,633	\$23,886,803
Building Material, Gardening Equip.	\$6,457,222	\$13,256,157	\$51,899,870
Convenience Stores	<i>\$505,872</i>	\$1,960,906	\$2,688,135
Electronics and Appliance Stores	\$109,526	\$6,401,352	<i>\$7,105,275</i>
Specialty Food Stores	\$491,006	\$1,834,157	\$3,011,862
Sports, Hobby, Book, Music	\$1,935,342	\$6,464,880	\$10,882,491
Beer, Wine, and Liquor	<i>\$2,045,812</i>	<i>\$5,770,987</i>	<i>\$6,626,497</i>

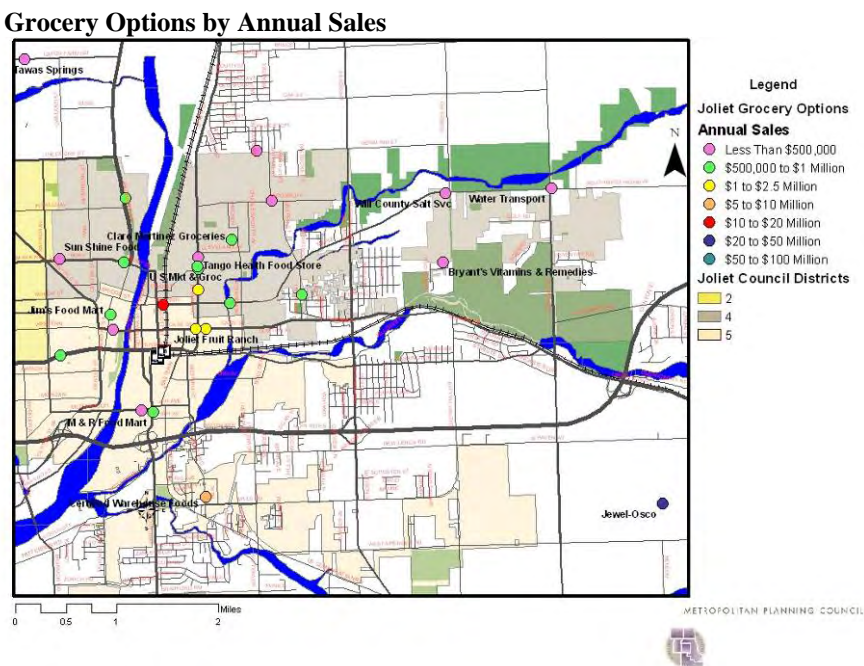
However, simply because substantial demand exists does not necessarily mean that the demand can be met. Different categories of stores have different expectations for particular sites (see table below). The key to developing successful retail properties in the Planning Area will be matching unmet demand with appropriate sites. Location requirements must be met. For instance, a large grocery store requires average daily traffic of 25,000 persons/automobiles, as well as 250,000 ft² of developable space (considering a ratio of more than 2:1 for parking and access to store area).

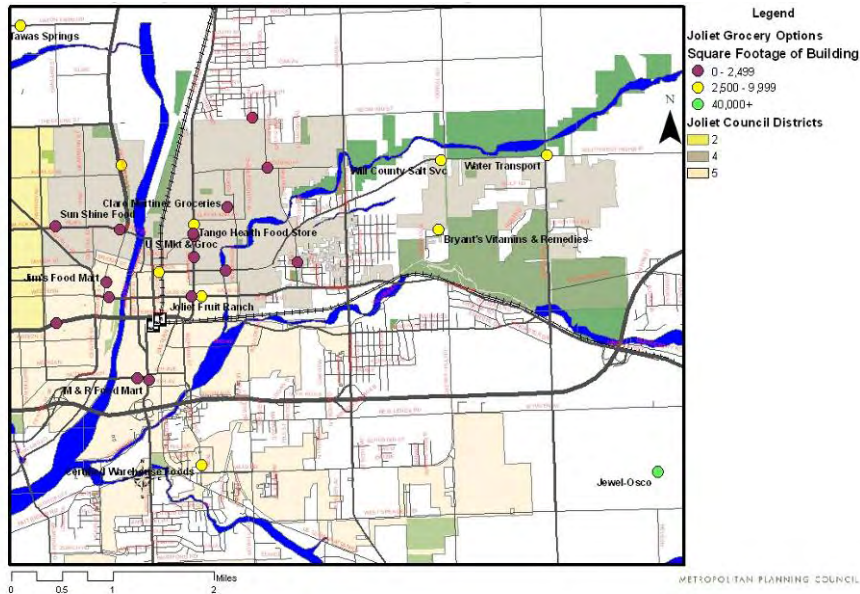
Table D-4. Ideal Requirements of Development						
Consumption Category	Height (ft)	Area (ft ²) (floor area)	Parking (per 1,000 ft ²)	Daily Traffic	Estimated Annual Sales	Sales Tax Revenue
Large Grocer	25-30	75,000	5-6	25,000	\$25,000,000	\$375,000
Automotive Dealer	20	100,000	1	30,000	\$25,000,000	\$473,500
Drugstore	20	10,000	5, plus a drive-thru	15,000	\$6,000,000	\$90,000
Limited-Service Restaurant	15	2,000-3,000	6, plus a drive-thru	20,000	\$1,000,000	\$35,000
Gasoline Station	20	2,000	3, plus a corner location	15,000	\$700,000	\$24,500

Unmet consumer demand is not always the result of a lack of retail options. It can often be the result of lack of quality options, or of options that do not fully meet consumer demands. For instance, given the choice of meeting all of one's grocery needs at one location versus traveling to multiple locations, many consumers will prefer the efficiency of the former. In the Planning Area, it is often not possible to meet all of one's needs at any given location. This is often the result of store size, particularly in the case of grocery options, and offerings. The maps below illustrate this situation.

This pair of maps (Figure D-9) demonstrates grocery options in the Planning Area, their annual sales, and their square footage. Only five of the grocery options in the area earn more than \$1 million annually, which is not a large figure. At the same time, none of the grocery options in the Planning Area exceeded 10,000 ft², which is also not large.

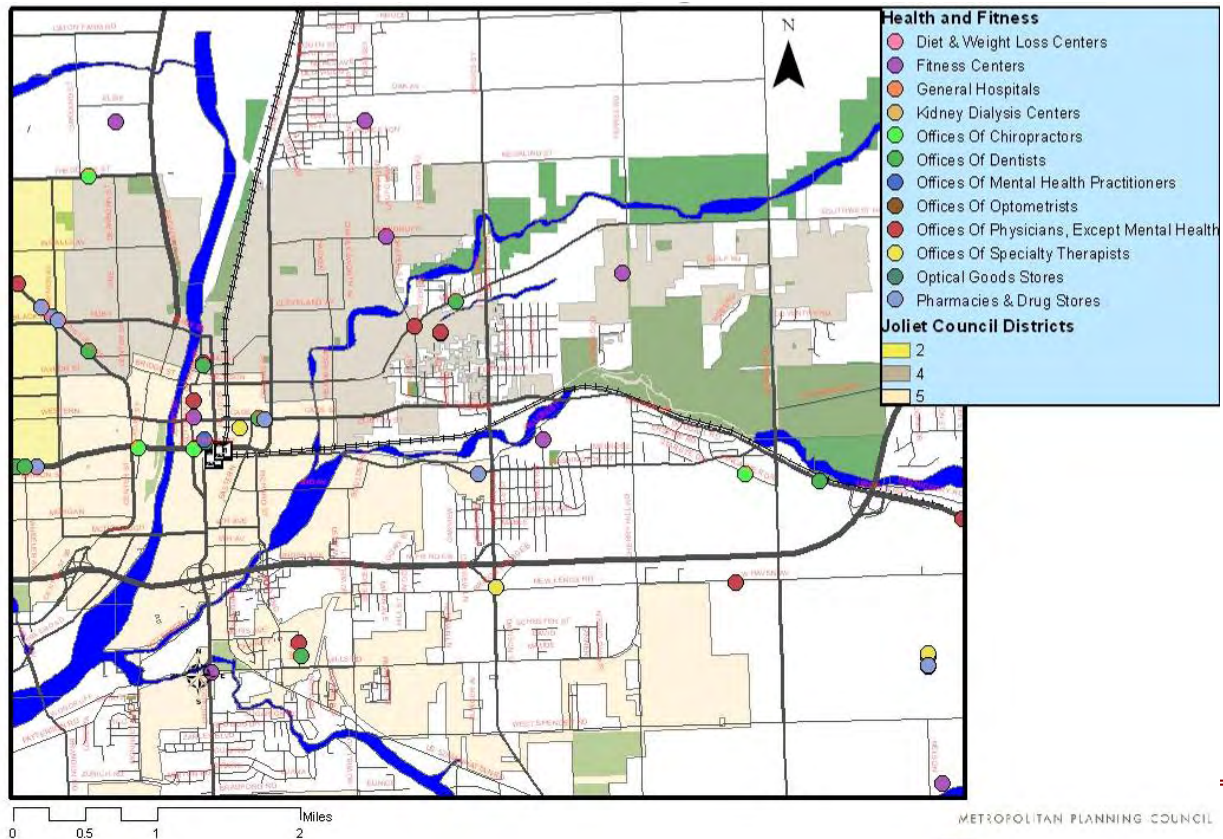
Figure D-10. Grocery Options in the Planning Area





The map below shows the locations and types of health and fitness options in the Planning Area. The map reveals that despite the large population, outside of main medical facilities such as Silver Cross Hospital, there are few options for medical care – only a handful of dentists, mental health specialists, chiropractors, and eye doctors have offices in the Planning Area. None of the fitness options is a gym with professional trainers, and there is no kidney dialysis center. Again, while many of these services are not necessarily “retail,” they do generate traffic and pedestrian activities, and are good neighbors for more traditional retailers.

Figure D-11. Health and Fitness in the Planning Area



Site Opportunities

Throughout the Planning Area there are large amounts of individual vacant parcels and vacant buildings, but few that are large enough for major retail development. In order to spark the kind of large-scale development that would bring a grocery store or general merchandise store, land assembly by the city will likely be necessary. This does not need to become regular practice, but can be done on selective occasions to jumpstart development. Assembling and preparing one or two large, prominently located parcels, and then making them available to developers at discounted rates (provided that construction, use, and design mesh with the recommendations of this Plan) might be a necessary step. Ideally this should be done through purchase or land swaps, with eminent domain as a last resort. Smaller scale development of mixed-use properties, particularly infill development on existing retail corridors, should also be a priority. However, at present there are no city programs that provide incentives to spur infill development.

Another option would be for the city to deed city-owned vacant parcels to the new neighborhood organization discussed below. This organization would then be responsible for marketing these sites, seeking out development proposals, and ensuring that any proposals be in line with the content of this plan.

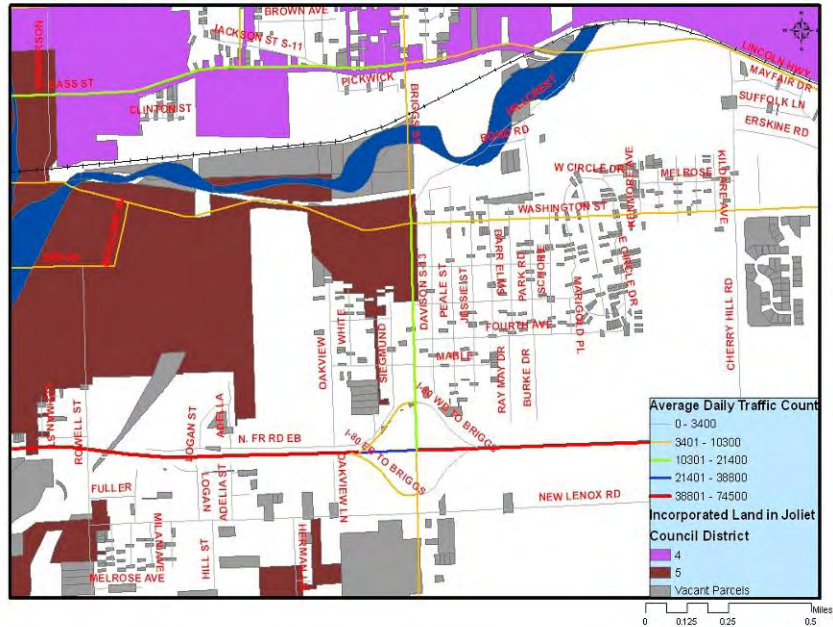
Additionally, a standard packet of regularly updated marketing materials would help developers learn crucial information about sites, incentive policies, and community demographics. If this package included access to a web site through which current information on land use, zoning, vacancy, and ownership information on the parcel level was readily available, potential investors would be encouraged to think seriously about development opportunities in Joliet and the Planning Area. Creation of such a marketing portfolio and information system should be priority in the near term, even as the city pursues larger scale land assemblage.

There are several areas along major corridors such as Chicago, Cass, and Collins in particular, which are currently being used/underused for industrial or government purposes. These facilities would likely operate just as well, if not better, at other sites, and open up large parcels for retail/mixed-use development. Specifically:

- the scrap processing/warehouse/Pace garage on Chicago Street just north of 4th avenue
- the road maintenance facility at (approx.) 800 East Cass Street
- the concentration of warehouses along N. Maple Street, just north of Cass Street

In addition, the unincorporated land around Briggs Street, particularly at the intersection of Cass Street and at the I-80 interchange, presents further opportunities for retail development. High daily traffic counts, proximity to I-80, vacant or underutilized properties, and growing populations in the vicinity all make this area a valuable asset that could likely sustain a mix of homes, commercial properties, entertainment venues, and office spaces. Annexation will be necessary, as will supportive government programs such as a TIF district to generate funds for investment and infrastructure improvements.

Figure D-12. Briggs Street and Environs



Proposals

Expanding on the themes noted above, during the course of research and the interview process for this plan, several issues came up repeatedly:

- **There are market opportunities for a several retail categories.** 86 percent of survey respondents said they could not satisfy the majority of their shopping needs in the Planning Area. As shown above, the Planning Area has several distinct retail shortages – particularly a large grocery store, a produce market, coffee shop, sit-down restaurants, and general house wares – as well as banking and medical services.
- **There are many sites with substantial retail potential.** This includes sites currently vacant, occupied by extraneous industrial uses, or not yet annexed by the city. An assessment of these properties shows that there are ample opportunities for small-scale, mixed-use, infill development on major corridors and at major intersections throughout the Planning Area, and that there are several areas where large-scale retail development could occur once the land was made suitable for development. Yet there is no public plan and no incentives to address these sites. Chicago Street, which is a logical access corridor for the Planning Area and downtown from I-80, is now developed far below its potential.
- **Additional programs are needed to support land assembly and development.** Development in the Planning Area often requires parcel assembly, infrastructure changes, or land remediation. Neither the city, county, nor civic organizations offer incentives or assistance programs to offset these costs, making both local entrepreneurship and

development by outside players difficult. By offering incentives and assistance programs in the Planning Area the City could make infill development more financially feasible.

- **No single organization holds the economic development in the Planning Area as its primary mission.** This lack of focus is reflected in the unplanned character of development along the principal retail corridors of the Planning Area. In these corridors currently auto-oriented businesses develop beside pedestrian-oriented ones; industrial uses such as recycling stations operate beside restaurants, some parking faces the street, some is hidden, etc. Existing business organizations offer programs that help the Planning Area, but do not specifically target it. While the City of Joliet, the Joliet Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Will County Center for Economic Development are active in recruiting businesses to Joliet, supporting existing businesses, and advocating for infrastructure improvements, the fact remains that development in the Planning Area is lagging. An organization with a specific focus on ensuring that development in the Planning Area occurs in line with this plan, recruiting new businesses, and acting as an ombudsperson for existing businesses, would expedite reinvestment.
- **Business attraction and retention programs need to be targeted at the Planning Area.** There is no one-stop-shopping for guidance on permitting, incentives, and regulations that entrepreneurs need. There is also no clear strategy for marketing potential sites to developers. Also, many interview respondents who currently own or operate businesses in the Planning Area stressed that more needs to be done to retain existing businesses.
- **The vast majority of existing retail in the Planning Area is single-use and auto-oriented.** Not only does this impair the development of neighborhoods, but it fails to capitalize on the full value of developed sites by not including upper floor offices or residential space. Mixed-use development, particularly in infill situations, maximizes possible venue potential, increases the consumer base, and is conducive to creating neighborhoods.

The underlying objective behind each of the following proposals is to make the Planning Area more attractive for development. The rest of Joliet, as well as many of Joliet's neighbors, is less built-out than the Planning Area, making development of large sites easier, faster, and less expensive. For large-scale development to occur in the Planning Area, the city will need to absorb some of the costs of development, which it can do through land assembly, environmental remediation, and providing a variety of incentives (tax abatements, loans, grants, etc.). Furthermore, information about vacant sites needs to be more readily available to the public – this is a service in which the City, the Chamber, and a new economic development organization could cooperate. The other issue that impairs business development in the Planning Area is its lingering stigma as a crime- and poverty-ridden area. Improved streetscaping, commitment to infill, and a stronger retail presence can help erase this increasingly fallacious stereotype.

Also, many interview respondents were concerned that many business owners were not Planning Area residents (nor even Joliet residents), and thus all the earnings from Planning Area businesses were leaving the Planning Area. The city and civic organizations need to respond to this by enabling Joliet residents to open and maintain businesses throughout the city, but particularly in the Planning Area. This can be done through a low-interest loan program,

expanding the activities of Joliet Junior College's Business and Industry Training program, and other programs.

The following recommendations address the issue areas listed above. Many of the recommended programs or strategies should be cross-cutting, addressing multiple goals. In the interest of space, they will only be discussed where most immediately pertinent.

Structure and Stimulate Development

The Joliet City Center Partnership currently offers several incentive programs – grants for retail and entertainment development, a façade improvement grant, and Tax Increment Financing (TIF). There is also a posted list of available properties within the defined area of the City Center. These programs lower start-up costs and enable infrastructure and other improvements, and are self-supporting, funded by a Special Service Area (SSA) and TIF money, which redirect tax revenue for the specific purpose of improving the downtown retail environment. However, these programs exist only in a small geographic area at the core of Joliet. Furthermore, there is no person or organization currently charged with economic development in the Planning Area. The City of Joliet must focus on the whole city, while the Will County Center for Economic Development tends to focus on larger industrial projects, infrastructure development, and projects outside of Joliet. The Chamber of Commerce offers valuable networking opportunities, but the Chamber serves a broad area and is not charged with recruiting new businesses, coordinating site developments, or serving as an advocate for existing businesses in a particular part of the city.

Role of a Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC)

One way to get the maximum possible benefit of a city-community partnership would be to create an organization mandated with carrying out the recommendations of this Plan and economic development in the Planning Area more generally. This could be an existing organization that takes on this focused mission, or the creation of a new non-profit or city-sponsored organization. A new organization could take the shape and structure of a Community Development Corporation, and could be instrumental to advancing commercial revitalization in the area.

An organization focused on the Planning Area would use local, state, and federal incentive programs to attract, improve, and retain businesses in the Planning Area only. This organization could be funded through federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, a local SSA, TIF revenue, foundation grants, and City revenues. This organization would pursue both corridor and neighborhood development consistent with Land Use and Neighborhood/Infrastructure element of this plan, seeking to develop both large-scale and neighborhood oriented retail, mixed-use properties, and resolving the industrial legacy of the Planning Area by pursuing infill and site assembly.

This organization should be advised by a commission of city and county officials, Planning Area business owners, and Planning Area residents. This group should meet regularly to weigh in on development proposals, hear reports from the city on SSA or TIF funds, and make

recommendations. These meetings should be open to the public and well publicized, encouraging community involvement. The intent of this group is not to create another layer of bureaucracy, but instead to create a single group to coordinate business development and represent existing businesses. This group would work with existing organizations to expedite Planning Area development and ensure that development is in line with the recommendations of this report.

Establish Specific Geographies for Development

Akin to the established City Center geography, a defined space for development in the Planning Area would signal a commitment to development, as well as give transparency and intuitiveness to any city-community activities therein. This would be the domain of the economic development organization discussed above, and could be either a broad Planning Area district, or corridors that include Chicago St. from the I-80 interchange to the Will County Courthouse, Cass St. from Scott to Briggs, and Collins St. from Cass to Woodruff. The funding structure of the existing City Center program could be adapted as necessary; a Special Service Area would generate funds via a small property tax increase, which would be collected and managed by the City. TIF financing is another option. Funding these programs with an SSA or TIF would enable substantial local improvements at little cost to the broader city. Additionally, some portion of annual City revenue could be set aside for specific economic development purposes. Further study of the viability of these funding streams would be necessary.

Land Assembly

In order to lower development costs and spur development at key sites or intersections, the City and its development partners should consider land assembly and discounted sales. The City can assemble a portfolio of vacant properties, and then offer these properties at below-market rates to prospective developers. By making the land available at below-market rates, or even free, the city can tap growth elsewhere to spur community renewal.

Level the Playing Field

By offering a range of incentive programs in the Planning Area, the city and a new economic development organization could offset the costs of infill, spur mixed-use development, and ultimately generate increased revenue for the city while improving the quality of life in the Planning Area. Programs that should be offered include:

- **Retail Grant Program:** Similar to the existing City Center program.
- **Façade Incentive Grant Program:** Similar to the existing City Center program.
- **Enterprise Zone Funds:** Better utilize the Enterprise Zones funds.
- **Revolving Loan Program:** A low-interest loan program could support business start-up, rehabilitation, technology upgrades, expansion, or relocation (within or into the target areas), and would earn interest for the city.
 - Incentive program aimed at attracting new businesses and encouraging existing businesses to expand. Loans available from 25 percent of the project cost, up to \$400,000 per project. Discounted interest rates offered at approximately half of the current prime interest rate. Loans offered are for permanent financing, and

can be applied to fixed assets: land acquisition, infrastructure improvements, construction, and equipment. Stipulations may be added to the loan in order to advance other workforce or neighborhood development goals.

- The Will County Center for Community Concerns has a loan program for small business start up or expansion. The business owner must be working with a bank or other financial organization and be willing to employ low-income individuals. This program is funded by Community Service Block Grants. However, it is not focused in the Planning Area, and it is not listed on the City's economic development Website.
- **Infill Development Program:** The City can expedite infill development by offering a package of incentives to developers/business owners. Infill provides mixed-income and workforce housing near jobs and transit, preserves open space, capitalizes on existing community assets, creates new assets, and reduces blight.
 - Reduce impact fees for infill projects
 - Fast track and streamline permitting
 - Reduce lot sizes, setbacks, and parking requirements
 - Zone for mixed-use development, and encourage mixed-use patterns in establishing Planned Unit Developments (PUD)
 - Increase density allowances
 - *Apply property tax abatement* for infill multi-family housing
 - *Secure grants or loans* (tapping state and federal government sources, including brownfield funds)
- **Building permit discounts:** Provide discounts on a sliding scale, based on the type of development most desired in the community.
- **Market sites:** Provide updated, easily accessible information on available properties, including: available sites, vacant buildings, zoning, ownership, community profile, neighboring assets.
 - Some information is currently available for the City Center, but not for the greater Planning Area or target site opportunities in the Planning Area.

Chicago Street Gateway to Downtown

As discussed above, Chicago Street has the potential to be a main gateway into downtown Joliet and the Planning Area, but is currently an afterthought. There is no signage either on I-80 or on Chicago Street to inform drivers that many of Joliet's key assets are best reached via Chicago Street. As a result traffic counts are far lower than they should be, and development has stalled as a result. Furthermore, Chicago Street itself would require beautification and infrastructure improvements to make it viable for the kind of auto-oriented retail and other uses that one might expect from a main access corridor.

- **Improve signage on I-80 and on Chicago Street:** There should be signs on both roads indicating how to reach the major assets of the Planning Area and Downtown Joliet.
- **Beautification and infrastructure improvements:** Improved sidewalks, streetscaping, and landscaping would make Chicago Street a more attractive gateway. Public art would also serve this end. Because Chicago is a divided street, more turn outs will be necessary

so that traffic flows in both directions have the same access to potential development sites.

- **Land assembly:** Chicago hosts an array of vacant properties and extraneous industrial facilities, as well as some retail and residential that does not fully maximize the potential of the street. A strategy of land assembly and remediation would facilitate development, particularly if done in hand with the recommendations above.

Address Specific Retail Shortages

The #1 complaint of most Planning Area residents, particularly those from the 5th District, was the lack of a quality grocery store. As the leakage analysis above demonstrates, there is sufficient demand to support a medium-to-large grocery store. There are also sites that might prove attractive to a well-respected grocer, but they are currently occupied by industrial or government uses, or, in the case of areas along Briggs Street, unincorporated. Other retail shortages indicated by the leakage analysis and surveys, such as general merchandise, full-service restaurants, apparel, and coffee shops could be accommodated with existing sites through a concerted program of infill and mixed-use development.

Issue Requests for Proposals (RFP) or Requests for Quotations (RFQ)

Once properties are City-owned and ready for development, issue RFPs and/or RFQs for large-scale development of a grocery store, full-service restaurants, and other desired uses. This will spark interest from multiple developers, but also provide options and lower costs. Then the City and its development partners can enter into negotiations with the best fit regarding purchase price, incentives, style considerations, etc. Furthermore, convene a group of developers and retail representatives to tour the sites with city officials. The Chamber of Commerce could be a partner in this recruitment effort. Offer the land at no charge, and offer tax incentives to spur interest.

- **Incentives:** Tax abatements and other incentives for this kind of development need only be a one-time affair, to get the ball rolling on Planning Area redevelopment.
- **Readying the Land:** By clearing multiple sites first, developers and retailers will have a choice, rather than face a this-or-nothing situation. Furthermore, they will get a sense of city commitment to reinvestment.

Provide Assistance for Joliet Entrepreneurs

Many interview respondents, particularly those that own their own businesses, felt there was a shortage of small business assistance available. Many asked, “What programs are available to educate and assist would-be entrepreneurs in Joliet?” There is currently no single conduit for would-be entrepreneurs to access critical information on permitting, financing, zoning, city plans, etc. Entrepreneurship is a daunting task; barriers are even higher for non-native English speakers.

Create a Small Business Development Center Focused on the Planning Area

This could be a collaborative effort between the City, County, Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Latino Business Association, and Joliet Junior College. This program could be funded by state, federal, and local employer dollars and would provide counseling and consulting services to Joliet businesses at no or low cost, offering step-by-step support for would-be entrepreneurs. This would include the development of business plans, assistance in loan and grant application, training in finances and equity building, and other programs geared toward sound, sustainable business practices.

These types of services are commonly offered through a small business development center (SBDC) established within a community college. Joliet Junior College (JJC) serves a broad area that extends beyond Will County. It offers valuable programs on workforce development and skills training, and the programs of its SBDC appear to specialize in support for manufacturing businesses. This service emphasis is appropriate for the overall area served by the JJC SBDC, but the need of Planning Area entrepreneurs is for a distinct small business center geared to city retail and service businesses. JJC would be an invaluable partner in establishing an SBDC with this specialization. Also the Chamber serves a broad area and business constituency, but the Chamber's mandate includes advice and support for small business owners. With its knowledgeable and experienced membership the Chamber would be another major contributor to a collaborative effort to establish a small business service center focused on the needs of Planning Area entrepreneurs.

Address Infrastructure and Land Use Barriers to Retail Development

The recommendations here coincide with the Housing and Land Use and Neighborhood Character/Infrastructure elements of this plan. By emphasizing infill and mixed-use development, a more diverse housing stock can be created, while by engendering the development of cohesive corridors, distinctive neighborhoods, and attractive gateways, the overall retail environment can also be significantly improved.

Continue to Emphasize Mixed-Use and Infill

The proposed incentive programs above already noted the need to ensure that areas, particularly those with heavy concentrations of vacant or underutilized properties along retail corridors, are zoned for mixed-use. The Land Use map indicates potential mixed-use areas, and in general mixed-use should be encouraged at neighborhood intersections, close to transit options, adjacent to public spaces, and throughout the City Center. By zoning for mixed-use, assembling land, making development incentives available explicitly for mixed-use and infill projects, and issuing competitive RFPs and RFQs, the City and the Planning Area economic development organization could maximize the value of Planning Area properties, increase the consumer market, and more effectively create neighborhoods.

Address the Surplus of One-Way Streets

The City Center's complex maze of one-way streets is not only disorienting to drivers, but frustrates retail development. The speed of traffic on one-way streets is generally greater than on

two-way streets, often intimidating or discouraging pedestrians and cars from stopping. One-way streets effectively cut traffic counts in half, possibly ruling out some types of retail development. As discussed elsewhere in this plan, a move back to two-way streets in the City Center would benefit retailers, stimulating the kind of downtown development conducive to Joliet’s goals.

Annex Unincorporated Lands with High Retail Potential

As discussed above, several parcels of land in proximity to the formal Planning Area are prime for retail development, but not technically part of Joliet. A policy of planned annexation would not only benefit residents, but also enable the city to capture more of the potential revenue that is not currently being captured.

Address the Physical Environment

Greater attentiveness to streetscaping, signage, and lighting would make the Planning Area’s potential retail corridors more business friendly, as well as encourage mixed-use development that incorporates residential properties. Consistent with the Land Use and Neighborhood Character/Infrastructure element of this plan, a focus on corridors and gateways would signal to retailers and developers a dedication to providing a healthy retail environment for the long-term.

Timeline and Responsibilities

Proposals Summary					
Short Term (0-3 years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
1) Determine specific geographies for development and create funding/organizational structure (TIF, SSA, BID, etc.)	QOL Task Force, City of Joliet	1		\$150,000	City of Joliet, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
2) Establish Planning Area community-based organization (possibly a community development corporation (CDC) with a mandate including economic development and commercial revitalization in the Planning Area	QOL Task Force, City of Joliet, Will County Center for Economic Development (CED)	1		\$150,000 annually for economic development component	Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Special Service Area (SSA), City of Joliet, Casino, Will County, Foundation grants, CDBG
3) Extend incentive programs to Planning Area development areas	City of Joliet, CDC	1		\$500,000 - \$1,000,000 annually	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, CDBG
4) Market sites to prospective developers, with an eye	City of Joliet,	1		CDC staff	TIF, SSA, City of

toward grocery store development in particular.	CDC, (assistance from MPC/CNT)			time	Joliet, CDBG
5) Zone for mixed-use development around commercial corridors and neighborhood hubs	City of Joliet	1		N/A	N/A
6) Develop land assembly plan and assemble parcels with mixed-use potential	City of Joliet, CDC	1		Cross-cutting, with preceding proposals	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, CDBG
7) Create a Small Business Development Center	City of Joliet, CDC, Will County CED, Civic organizations, Joliet Junior College	2		TBD Under auspices of Proposal 2?	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, Casino, Will County, Foundation grants, CDBG
8) Address surplus of one-way streets	City of Joliet, IDOT, Will County	2		Cross-cutting, with preceding proposals	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, CDBG
9) Develop annexation plan	City of Joliet, CDC	2		Cross-cutting, with preceding proposals	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, CDBG
10) Raise Chicago Street's stature by improving signage on I-80 and Chicago Street	City of Joliet, IDOT	2		\$50,000 - \$100,000	City of Joliet, IDOT, TIF, SSA

Long Term (3+ years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
11) Continue to assemble parcels with retail or mixed-use potential	City of Joliet, CDC	1		Depends on market	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, CDBG
12) Issue RFPs and RFQs for development of specific	City of Joliet, CDC	1		N/A	N/A

retail needs					
13) Annex unincorporated land with high retail potential	City of Joliet	1		Cross-cutting, with preceding proposals	N/A
14) Streetscaping, signage, and lighting improvements on retail corridors	City of Joliet, CDC	2		Cross-cutting, with preceding proposals	City, SSA

E. Industrial Development and Employment

Key Findings

Well Paid Industrial Jobs Are a Fundamental Community Need

Historically Joliet thrived because of employment in heavy industry, where jobs that were frequently unionized paid enough to support a typical family with some surplus. The city's fortunes began to change in the 1970s as global economic pressures that impacted much of industrial America hit Joliet. During the early 1980s Joliet's unemployment rate rose to 26%.

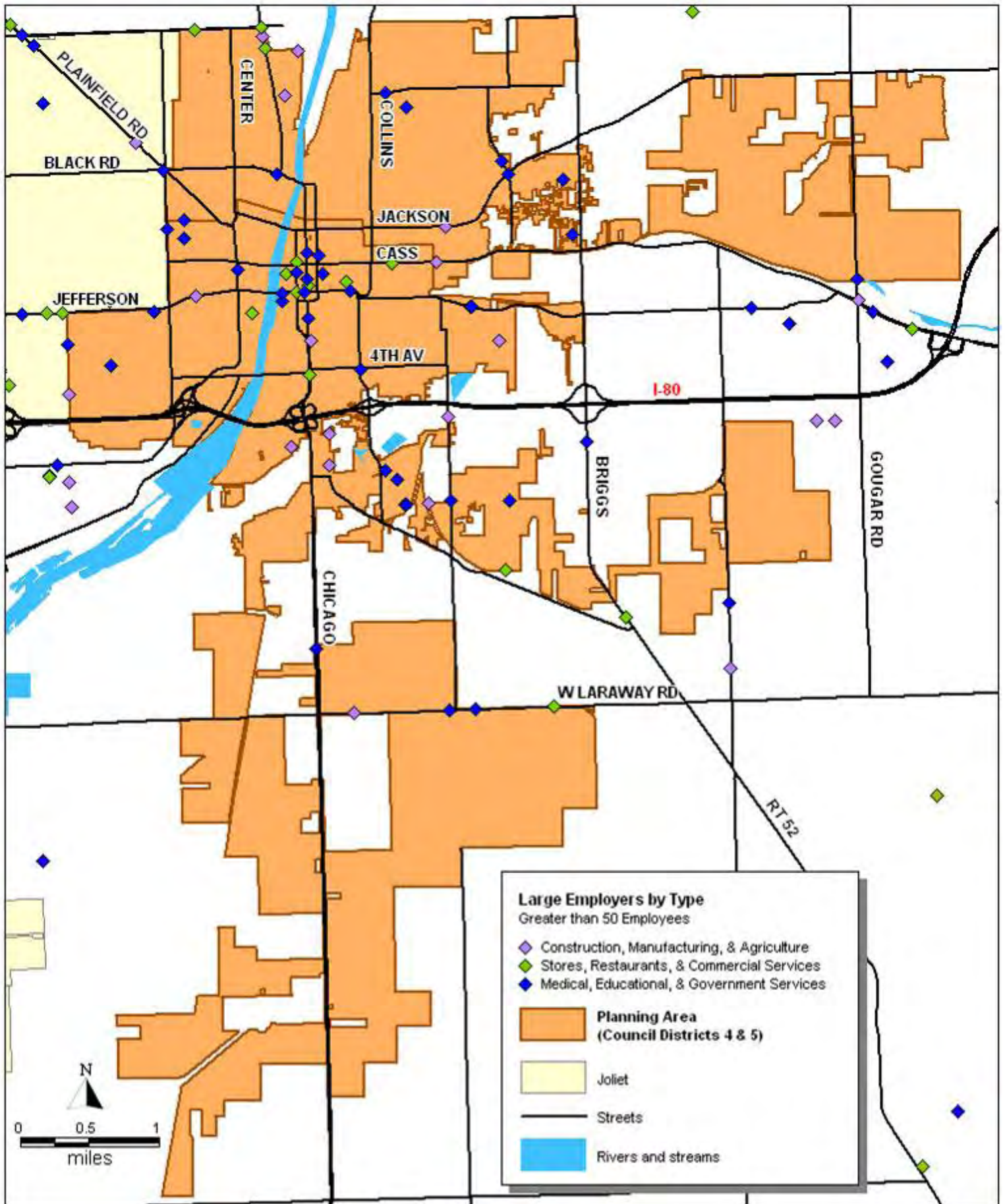
The social consequences of such job losses in many American cities are described by Harvard sociologist William Julius Wilson in his book *When Work Disappears* in passages that mirror some interviewed stakeholders' descriptions of events in the Planning Area's most hard-hit neighborhoods during the 1980s.²¹ On a percentage basis, the most severe job losses occurred among minorities and the young. For young minority men, role models of workers who made good livings as industrial employees became less relevant. As real and perceived options dwindled in some neighborhoods of the Planning Area, drug addiction and crime became common, leading to the devastation of minority communities. A percentage of the population became criminalized, driving a negative cycle of unemployment.

More than thirty community stakeholders interviewed for the Quality of Life (QOL) Plan described such a process jolting through neighborhoods of the Planning Area in the 1980s and early 1990s. Since the mid 1990s the Planning Area has been recovering with the rest of Joliet, though not to the same degree. Employment levels are higher, crime rates lower than in the 1990s. Yet more than thirty community stakeholders have reported that addiction problems and their consequences linger along with an exaggerated perception held by many Joliet area residents that the Planning Area is a dangerous place.

Although employment levels in Joliet have generally been rising for more than ten years, more than twenty ministers or directors of social service agencies interviewed for the QOL Plan identified a shortage of jobs that pay a living wage and benefits as the root cause of problems ranging from inadequate food to lack of access to medical care, to marital stress and mental health problems. Some jobs, they report, are available, but jobs with salaries and benefits that will meet the needs of a household are scarce. This widely held impression is confirmed by the most recent *State of the Workforce* report of the Workforce Investment Board of Will County. This report found that between 1991 and 2001, the County-wide net increase in manufacturing jobs was only 992, while the increase in retail trade jobs over the same period was 8,737. In 2001 Manufacturing accounted for only 16% of all jobs in Will County but approximately 23% of payroll dollars. In contrast, Retail Trade in 2001 made up 22% of jobs in the County but only 12% of payrolls. The report points out as a major concern that "Many of the fastest growing jobs are relatively low wage and low skill."²²

²¹ William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Knopf, 1996).

²² Workforce Investment Board of Will County, *State of the Workforce 2003*, October 2003, 5.



Some Growth Industries in Will County Offer Good Jobs

A somewhat more hopeful view of job growth in Will County is provided if we consider job growth data for the range of industrial categories provided in the *State of the Workforce 2003* cited above and summarized in the following table.

Table E-1. Will County Employment by Standard Industry Code (SIC)

Industry Sector	Numbers of Jobs			Job Growth	% All Jobs	% Wages
	1991	1996	2001	1991- 2001	2001	2001
Agriculture	979	1455	2351	1372	1.98%	1.00%
Mining	294	197	314	20	0.26%	0.50%
Construction	5793	9510	12487	6694	10.49%	13.00%
Manufacturing	18304	19170	19296	992	16.21%	23.00%
Transportation, Communications, Electric	6356	6389	8393	2037	7.05%	10.00%
Wholesale Trade	4062	5329	8697	4635	7.31%	11.00%
Retail Trade	17951	22574	26688	8737	22.42%	12.00%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	3495	4307	4328	833	3.64%	4.00%
Services	20930	29681	36465	15535	30.64%	25.50%
Non-Classifiable Establishments	66	45	0	-66	0.00%	0.00%
Total, All Sectors	78230	98657	119019	40789	100.00%	100.00%

Source: "State of the Workforce Report 2003", Workforce Investment Board of Will County

As this data indicates, job growth has been substantial in the fields of Wholesale Trade, Transportation & Utilities, and Construction, sectors in which contributions to payrolls are proportionately higher than the percentage of jobs in the labor force. This data is consistent with findings of the *Target Industry and Workforce Analysis* prepared by the Workforce Investment Board of Will County and the Will County Center for Economic Development (WCED), which identifies four major fast growth fields with quality jobs:²³

- *Medical Care*: Doctors and nurses were among 15 types of jobs in Will County ranked as "Top Opportunities" by the Workforce Investment Board based on an integrated consideration of the number of jobs in the field, projected growth in job numbers, and average annual wages. Additional positions for other medical professionals (such physical therapists and nutritionists) as well as positions for less highly trained workers such as nursing assistants, medical technicians, medical record clerks, and facility maintenance workers are also certainly available in medical facilities, although the numbers of such positions has not been counted or projected in Will County. National trends toward the aging of the population ensure growing need for medical services for the next generation. Joliet and the Planning Area are particularly rich in medical service employment and training opportunities with two regional hospitals, some 20 other medical facilities that employ more than fifty people, and entry level and advanced training programs for nurses.
- *Construction*: The 15 types of jobs that the Workforce Board ranks as "Top Opportunities" in Will County include: masons, carpenters, extraction workers, and construction managers.

²³ Workforce Investment Board of Will County and Will County Center for Economic Development, *Target Industry and Workforce Analysis*, prepared by Advisory Group, Cushman & Wakefield, Inc., January 2004.

This is not a surprising finding in a county which has experienced 96% population growth since 1985 and added an average of 8 million square feet per year of industrial space between 2002 and 2004. While the pace of growth and construction in the Planning Area is slower than in Will County or Joliet as a whole, the Planning Area is surrounded by construction activity.

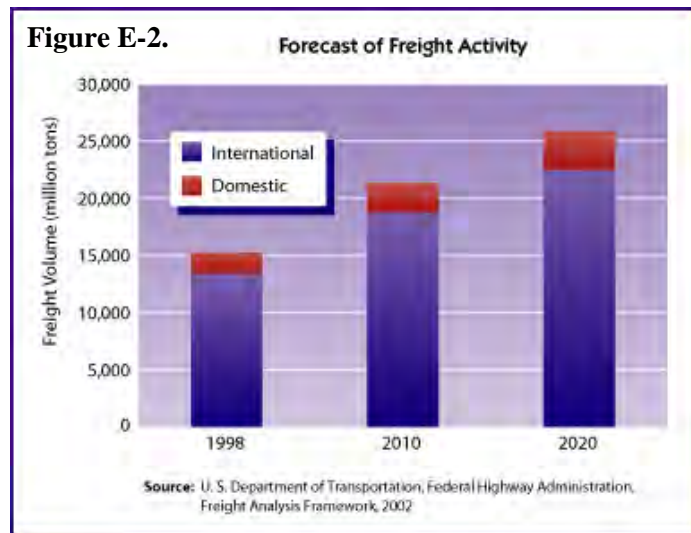
- **Manufacturing:** Although the net number of manufacturing jobs in Will County has been relatively flat, this flat line of total employment masks a pattern of rapid job decline in some industrial sectors and increase in others. The *Wage & Salary Survey* conducted by the Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association and WCED in 2006 shows that manufacturing businesses provide some jobs with wages of \$20 to \$30 per hour for skilled trades people and for technicians with limited but specific training. These businesses also provide jobs for such positions as general production machine operators and assemblers with wages in the range of \$12 to \$18 per hour. Along with growth in some manufacturing businesses, a rising need to replace retiring skilled workers is creating some well paid industrial employment opportunities.²⁴
- **Logistics:** Some of the good job growth that the *State of the Workforce* reported in the fields Wholesale Trade and Transportation reflect the growing phenomena of the logistics industry in Will County, which requires a distinct discussion in the picture of Employment and Industrial Development for the Planning Area.

Logistics Opens a New Industrial Economy

Logistics Growth

Logistics involves all the operations through which goods are sourced, transported, and distributed. The logistics arms of large corporations are frequently becoming more important within their organizations and making new investments. A growing number of companies are competing to perform the logistics functions of other corporations as “third party logistics” providers.

Companies are investing in logistics because there is a large and rapidly growing market to be served in this field. The U.S. Department of Transportation has recorded that the volume of freight moved in America has been rising steadily for the past two decades and is projected to grow by more than 80% between the years 2000 and 2020.²⁵ Besides sheer volume,



²⁴ Three Rivers Manufacturer's Association and Will County Center for Economic Development, *Wage and Salary Survey*, prepared by the Employers' Association, July 2006.

²⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation, *Freight Analysis*, Federal Highway Administration, Freight Management and Operations, 2002. http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight_analysis/index.htm.

demands for efficiency and reliability in logistics movements also continue to rise steadily. These pressures grow from fundamental trends in the world economy as more products are produced thousands of miles away from the places where they are used and as virtually all modern manufacturing and distribution systems adopt just-in-time production and stocking techniques.

Logistics Links to Diverse Industrial Activities

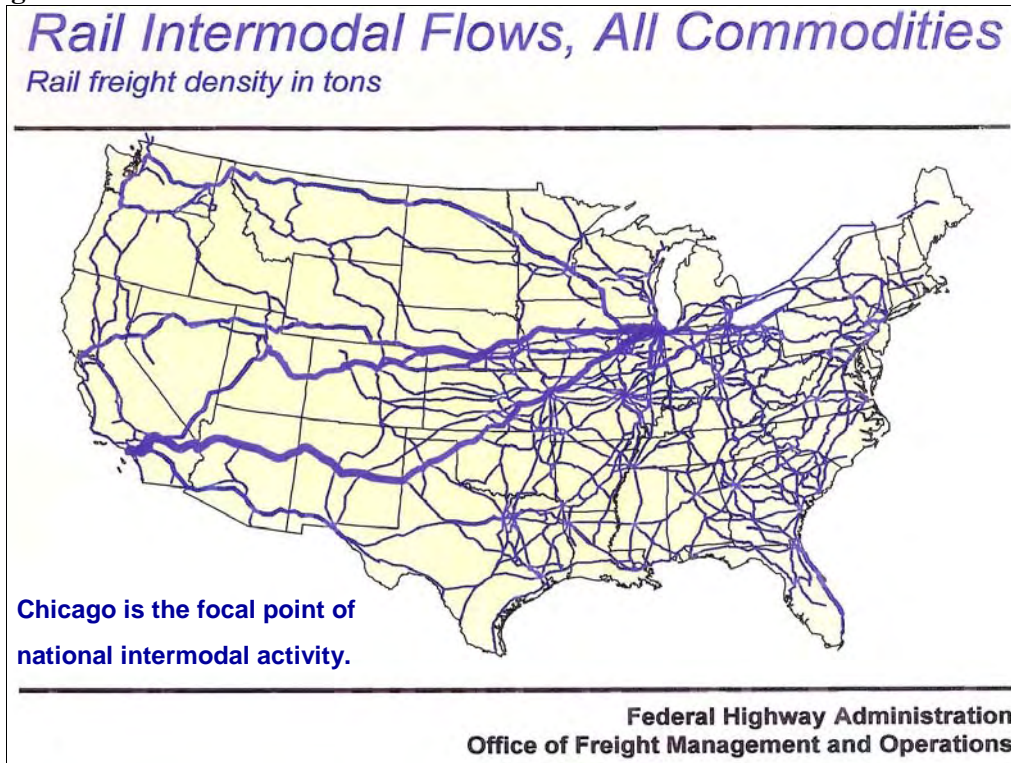
Besides moving products efficiently and reliably logistics businesses perform increasingly broad functions in finishing or assembling goods for final distribution. For example, the Potlatch Paper Company in Elwood takes paper rolls that are compressed for shipping and processes them into household tissue products. The IntraCore company, based in Utah, assembles computer hardware from components and distributes the products to retail outlets and mail order customers. In catalogs of logistics companies today firms are listed by services they provide that include: repackaging, fulfillment, and assembly.

In the new world economy built around international supply chains a growing range of industrial businesses find advantage in locating near intermodal freight terminals and the logistics and other industrial companies that tend to cluster there. For example, Logistics Park was built adjacent to the new intermodal freight terminal of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad in Elwood. Logistics Park opened in 2002, and now approximately 3,000 people work there, performing product distribution and processing functions. In the more mature logistics environment of Chicago, a recent consultant study commissioned by the City government found that intermodal terminals were critical to retaining or adding approximately 15,000 jobs because a broad range of manufacturing, wholesale, and distribution companies wanted to locate near these terminals.

Metropolitan Chicago & Will County as Logistics Centers

These patterns of freight volume growth, logistics industry development, and the attraction of freight centers are important to the Chicago area and Will County particularly because this is the freight hub of North America. Goods that move more than 500 miles (for example to the Midwest from any ocean port) are usually shipped by train and then reloaded onto trucks for local delivery. Metropolitan Chicago is the only place where all six of North America's major railroad networks meet. So Chicago is the primary place in which goods can practically be transferred from one rail system to another or lifted onto trucks for delivery anywhere in the Midwest. In the intermodal movement of freight, metropolitan Chicago is the third busiest port in the world. And Will County is on the busiest of all railroad routes leading into Chicago (the trunk line from the Port of Los Angeles). Will County is also the nexus of the most heavily traveled east-west and north-south expressways running through the middle of the county. Furthermore, because Will County has had more greenfield land than any other county in the Chicago area, it has offered economical sites for the new intermodal terminals, large warehouses and linked industrial parks that the new supply chain economy demands.

Figure E-3.



Wages & Salaries in the Logistics Businesses

So Logistics Park in Elwood is burgeoning and warehouse and distribution centers are springing up along I-55 and I-80 as a consequence of far reaching economic trends that are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The Will County *Wage & Salary Survey*, noted earlier, provides detailed information that describes the types of jobs that the logistics industry brings.

- Basic positions in logistics operations include jobs for skilled fork lift operators, material handlers, and maintenance workers that pay wages in the range of \$12 to \$18 per hour.
- Because logistics businesses are service providers that must cope with seasonal and irregular variations in their clients' shipping volumes, they employ temporary laborers who perform unskilled material handling and are sometimes certified for more skilled tasks such as fork lift operation. These workers are paid in the range \$9 to \$12 per hour.
- Logistics companies also employ salaried workers for functions that include customer service, inventory management, dispatching, and shipping supervision. Their compensation ranges from \$33,000 to \$53,000 per year, with most positions in the middle of this range; warehouse and plant management positions pay more. Staffing patterns indicate that salaried specialist and supervisory positions are staffed more heavily than in some manufacturing operations in order to provide deep knowledge of timing and customer service requirements. Staffing patterns and the comments of logistics managers interviewed for the Plan also indicate that movement between hourly labor and salaried positions is common. Logistics can provide a wide career ladder as well as attracting other industrial businesses to industrial development areas, such as the I-80 Corridor in the Planning Area.

Table E-2. Data on Selected Staff Positions in Will County Logistics Businesses

Position Type	Type of Company	Numer of Companies	Number of Employees	Base Pay						
				Average	Weighted Average	Interquartile Ranges			Average Actuals	
						25th	Median	75th	Lowest	Highest
1 Worker, Maintenance in Logistics and Distribution	Logistics	6	17	\$18.79	\$18.27	\$17.69	\$19.90	\$20.80	\$17.65	\$19.96
2 Clerk, Shipping & Receiving	Logistics	6	40	\$12.55	\$12.92	\$12.35	\$12.95	\$13.76	\$11.74	\$14.27
3 Material Handler - Skilled in Logistics and Distribution	Logistics	10	392	\$13.48	\$13.69	\$11.85	\$13.06	\$16.91	\$12.01	\$14.07
4 Material Handler - Unskilled/Picker/Packer in Logistics and Distribution	Temp	5	231	\$8.77	\$8.63	\$8.25	\$8.50	\$8.58	\$7.90	\$10.25
5 Coordinator, Inventory in Logistics and Distribution	Logistics	9	18	\$37,576	\$36,272	\$28,454	\$39,770	\$41,825	\$36,203	\$39,138
6 Dispatcher/Planner/ Scheduler in Logistics and Distribution	Logistics	10	56	\$41,477	\$40,451	\$25,948	\$45,115	\$46,731	\$37,729	\$46,610
7 Representative, Customer Service in Logistics and Distribution	Logistics	10	82	\$32,465	\$33,649	\$25,542	\$27,963	\$44,287	\$28,386	\$40,652
8 Supervisor, Receiving/Shipping/Warehouse in Logistics	Logistics	9	43	\$49,677	\$48,602	\$43,800	\$48,491	\$53,394	\$45,487	\$56,733

Source: *Economic Development Wage & Salary Survey*, Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association and Will County Center for Economic Development, 2006

(A detailed analysis of information about the logistics industry and its current positions and future in Will County is provided in Appendix E.)

The City of Joliet's *South Side Comprehensive Plan* Could Deliver the Benefits of the New Industrial Economy to the Planning Area

In February 2007 the City of Joliet unveiled its comprehensive plan for the portion of the city south of the I-80 Expressway and Zurich Road, including 4,220 acres that currently lies within Joliet and approximately 16,000 acres of surrounding unincorporated land which the City is prepared to annex.²⁶ The City's plan would preserve land along the waterways of this territory as nature and recreation areas. It would retain and modestly add to existing residential areas and establish a commercial corridor for local convenience shopping. It also sets standards for the orderly and environmentally sustainable development of the area.

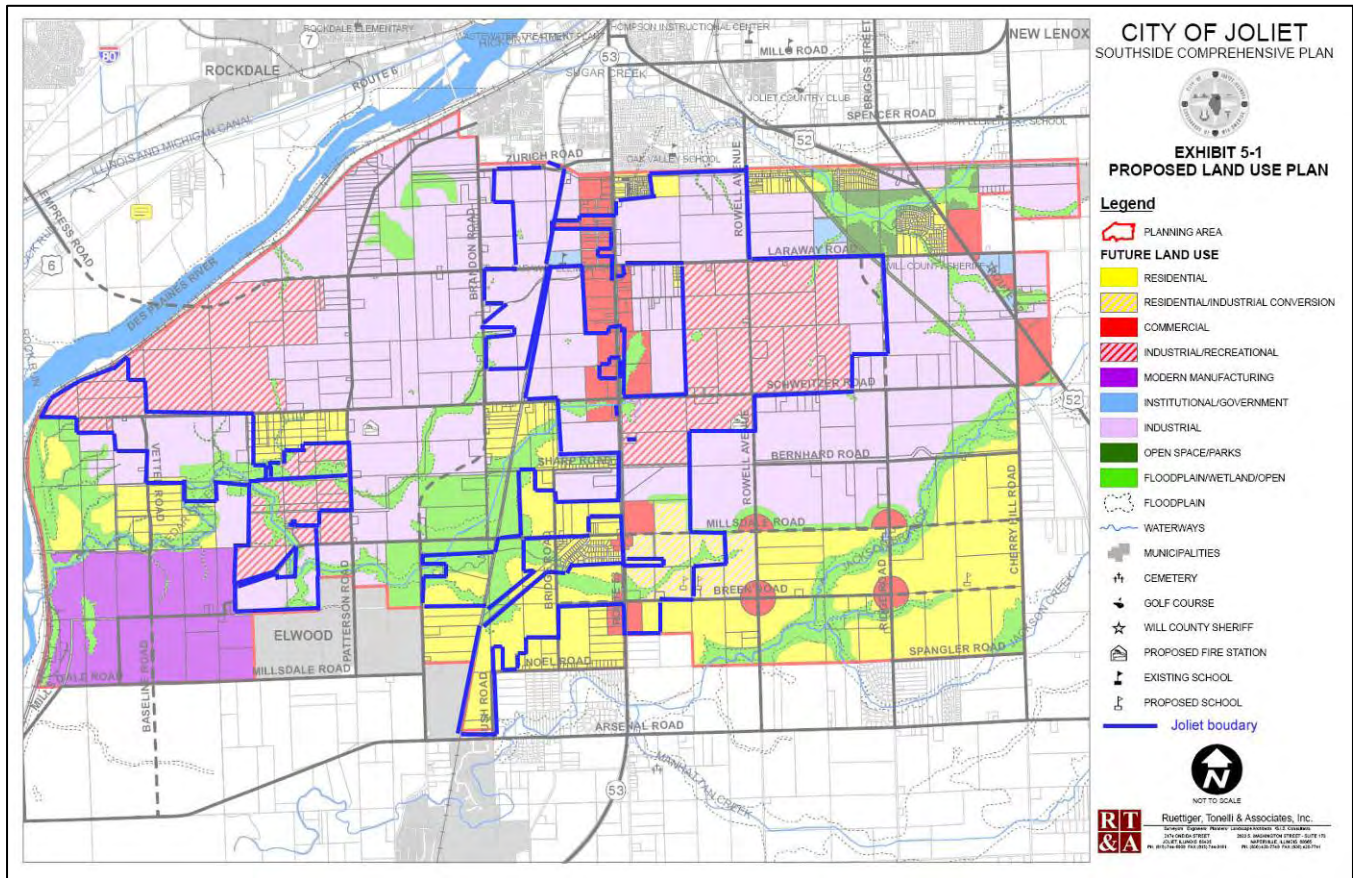
But the essence of the *South Side Comprehensive Plan* is to establish a series of industrial parks on current agricultural land encompassing some 12,000 acres, intended primarily for logistics and related light industrial and distribution uses. As the plan points out, this new area of Joliet is well suited for such use. It would extend to the now burgeoning intermodal logistics center of Elwood. It is effectively at the junction of the I-80 and I-55 Expressways, and it is served by freight rail lines and the Des Plaines River with its barge traffic. Finally, new industrial development here would have immediate access to the large and under-employed labor force of the Planning Area. Given these assets, it is difficult to imagine a location better suited to the development of a new industrial complex based on the fast-growth logistics industry. At full

²⁶ City of Joliet, *South Side Comprehensive Plan*, February 2007.

capacity a logistics-industrial development of the proposed scale would employ over 10,000 workers.

Implementation of the South Side Comprehensive Plan would fundamentally change the strategic position of the Planning Area. The Area would become the working class neighborhood virtually adjacent to one of the region’s largest industrial hubs. If the development is carried out with thoughtful inclusion of the local workforce, it could restore much of the prosperity lost when Joliet’s older industrial base contracted in the 1970s and 80s.

Figure E-4. Southside Comprehensive Plan Proposed Land Uses



*From City of Joliet *Southside Comprehensive Plan*, February 2007 with current Joliet boundary superimposed.

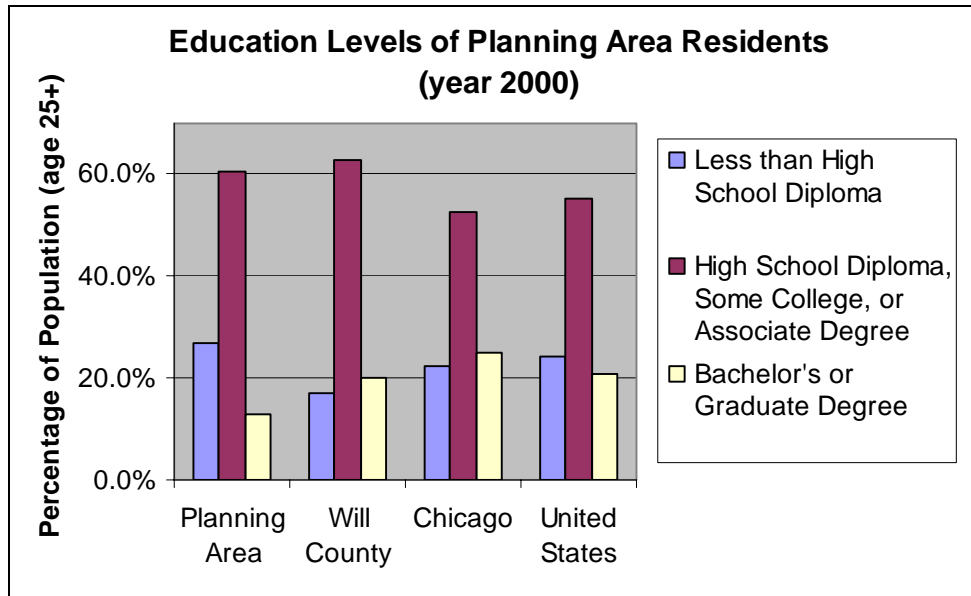
Some Planning Area Neighborhoods Contain High Percentages of Residents Who Face Challenges in the Job Market

It is notable that ordinary positions in three of the four identified growth sectors with good jobs in Joliet fall into the classification of “production jobs,” a category that includes craft, repair, operator, fabricator, or laborer jobs. In 2003, production jobs accounted for 29% of all jobs in Will County compared to just 24% in the Chicago region and 26% in the U.S. So in the immediate future as in the present, Will County will have a disproportionately large number of production jobs, as opposed to professional, administrative, or service jobs. Production jobs usually do not require a college degree, but to obtain skills and certifications that can make such

jobs relatively secure and well-paid, high school educations or associate degrees are often required.

The educational requirements of production jobs match well with the educational levels of the Will County Workforce. Per the accompanying chart, Will County workers are more likely than workers in all of metropolitan Chicago or in the U.S. to have high school, some college, or an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. Will County workers are less likely to be college graduates or high school drop outs. This pattern helps to explain why the overall unemployment rate in Will County is a moderately low 5.3% and why Will County is an attractive location for many industrial businesses.

Figure E-5.

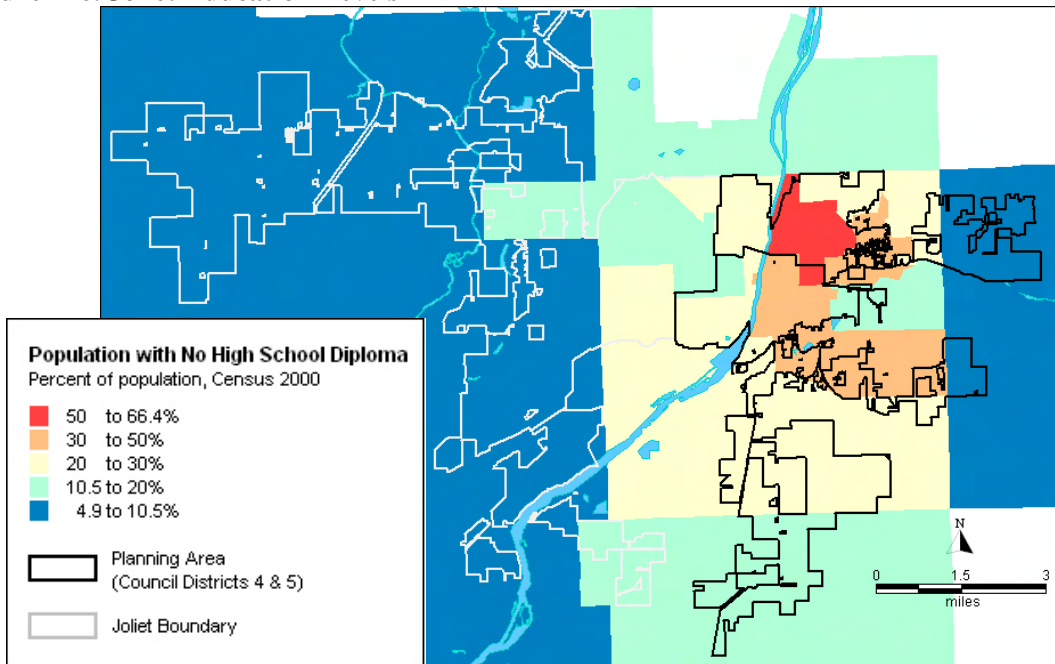


* Source: Data for Will County, Chicago metropolitan area, and the United States are 2002 projections done by Claritas from 2000 data. Planning area data is from the 2000 Census, aggregated for tracts that intersect the planning area.

However, the workforce of the Planning Area, and particularly the population of some Planning Area neighborhoods, has a higher high school drop out rate and lower levels of high school diploma or associate degree holders than the county norm. Given this level of educational attainment, it is not surprising that the current unemployment rate of the Planning Area at 8.5%, more than 50% higher than the overall rate for the city of Joliet (5.5%) or of Will County (4.3%).²⁷ As the accompanying maps indicate, those Planning Area residents who have lower levels of education and those who are unemployed are concentrated in some Planning Area neighborhoods. African-American or Hispanic ethnic minorities are the majority populations in these neighborhoods.

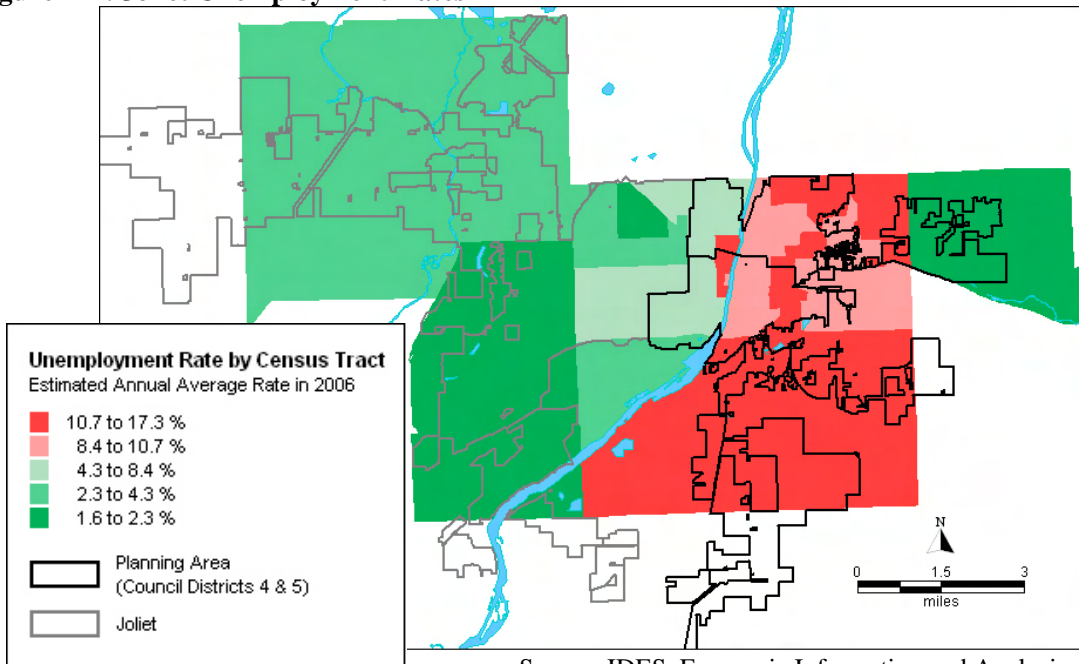
²⁷ Planning Area and Joliet numbers are 2006 projected unemployment rates from Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Economic Information and Analysis, 2007; data for the Planning Area is the average for the Census tracts covering the area. Will County data is from the 2006 Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) published by IDES, <http://lmi.ides.state.il.us/laus/lausmenu.htm>.

Figure E-6. Joliet Education Levels



Source: Census 2000

Figure E-7. Joliet Unemployment Rates

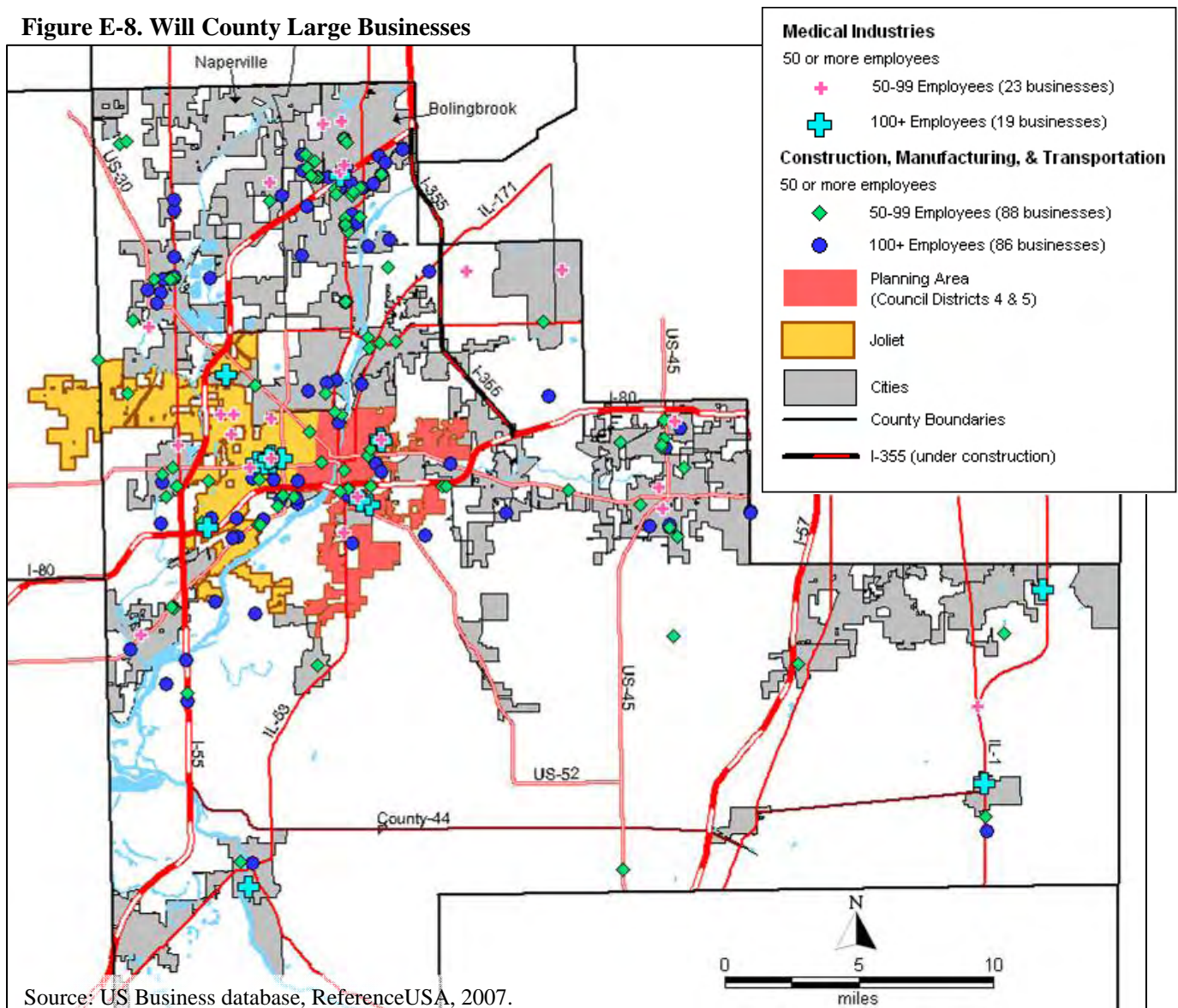


Source: IDES, Economic Information and Analysis

In the Transportation section of this plan, when neighborhoods with low car ownership were mapped, generally the same neighborhoods were identified. As the Transportation section of this plan notes, the Planning Area does not contain many large employers other than public agencies and educational institutions. The Planning Area is a predominantly residential community from which workers must commute. This reality is also illustrated in the accompanying map, which shows employers of fifty or more workers in the growth industries discussed above: medical

care, construction, manufacturing, and logistics. While significant medical care employers and a scattering of construction and logistics employers are found in the Planning Area, opportunities for production work are concentrated along the I-55 expressway corridor and in more developed portions of the I-80 corridor. Even to reach jobs in Joliet along I-80, many workers in the Planning Area need to use public transportation.

Figure E-8. Will County Large Businesses



Another factor that impedes job readiness is simple poverty. If residents are unemployed or working at minimum wage positions they may have no resources to train for, find, or support themselves during the start of a new job. Job training programs with even modest fees may be inaccessible to impoverished residents. The lack of a car in a community with limited public transportation service is one example of an impediment to work created by poverty.

Earlier we noted that more than 30 interviewed community stakeholders described patterns of drug addiction and crime that rose in the wake of high unemployment in the 1980s and linger

today; these stakeholders were speaking primarily of the same neighborhoods that face high levels of unemployment. Neither the Department of Corrections nor any health agency maintains public records that would allow us to determine the concentrations of ex-offenders or persons suffering from drug addiction in specific neighborhoods. However, nationally criminal backgrounds and drug addiction are highly correlated with conditions of low educational attainment, unemployment and poverty. So it is likely that Joliet stakeholders are correct in thinking that residents with criminal records and/or drug addiction problems are concentrated in Planning Area neighborhoods where unemployment and high school drop out rates are disproportionately high.

When community leaders speak of the enormous road blocks to employment that drug addiction or a criminal record constitute they are not exaggerating. A 2006 national survey of employers found that 84% of employers use drug testing to screen job applicants; 39% randomly test current employees, and over 50% test employees that they have any reason to suspect may be taking drugs. Researchers estimate that 70% of the national population that take illicit drugs are employed, but the probability that a person can have a stable work life and take drugs appears to be small and shrinking.²⁸

Ex-offenders also face long odds in securing employment. National research finds that 60% of ex-offenders are unemployed one year after release. And a survey of employers in 5 major cities found that 65% of employers maintain a blanket policy of never hiring ex-offenders. State and Federal programs, including substantial tax credits, exist to encourage employers to hire ex-offenders, and several not-for-profit and faith-based organizations in Joliet join the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) in seeking links to employment for ex-offenders, but they face an uphill struggle.²⁹

A Network of Institutions Is Striving to Link Workers with Well-Paid Industrial Jobs in the Joliet Area

In addition to industrial conditions and the needs of neighborhoods, an important aspect of employment and industrial development in the Planning Area is the work being done to establish more quality jobs in the Joliet region and give residents access to these jobs through education, counseling, and referrals.

The **Will County Center for Economic Development (WCED)** is a not-for-profit organization that has been widely recognized for its effectiveness in performing its core mission of attracting and retaining jobs in Will County. The WCED's general strategy of establishing teams to build on the county's areas of strength is reflected in two corporate membership organizations that it has established:

- The *Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association (TRMA)* provides manufacturers with a channel through which they may contribute to public policies and programs. The "Workforce

²⁸ 2006 survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, reported in "Job Applicant? Expect a Drug Test," *The Ledger* (Lakeland, Florida) 6 February 2007.

²⁹ Joan Petasilia, "When Prisoner Return to the Community: Political, Economic and Social Consequences," paper from Executive Sessions on Sentencing and Corrections, National Institute of Justice, November 2000.

Education Committee” of TRMA seeks to improve K-12 education throughout Will County and to facilitate connections between the county’s workforce and employers.

- The *Transportation & Logistics Council* is an association that helps to plan and execute WCED’s aggressive agenda for capitalizing on Will County’s freight transportation assets. This agenda includes:
 - “Branding” Will County as a “Global Trans Center” in the WCED’s systematic promotions
 - Championing adoption of a high-investment, long-term transportation plan that features expressway extensions and enhancements designed to preserve Will County’s relatively low traffic congestion (a key logistics advantage) for another generation
 - Proactively tackling problem issues for the logistics industry, such as the storage of empty cargo containers, through model ordinances

A new Recruitment Committee of the Transportation and Logistics Council is seeking to form relationships with Will County educators to inform them of job opportunities in this industry.

The WCED works closely with the City of Joliet in its economic development efforts including the redevelopment of downtown Joliet and the location of industrial businesses. WCED’s support will be valuable to the City as it works to implement the South Side Comprehensive Plan, creating new jobs in the I-80 Corridor and the southern portion of Planning Area.

The **Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry** is the primary network of retail, service, and smaller business owners in the Joliet area. Through its small business development services the Chamber stimulates job creation in a large segment of the Joliet area’s economy and helps to provide a career ladder into small business ownership.

The **Three Rivers Education for Employment System (TREES)** operates in keeping with the “Education and Employment Systems” program established by the Illinois State Board of Education to coordinate technical education in an extensive area under local leadership. In the Will County area, TREES operates through the joint agreement of 18 High Schools, 2 Area Career Centers, and Joliet Junior College. TREES maintains mutual knowledge and agreements on coverage over a broad swath of programs, including several that are critical to readiness for employment in the Planning Area.

- *Education to Careers* and the *21st Century Kids Club*: “Education to Careers” is a federally funded initiative in which local organizations cultivate work readiness in youngsters beginning in grammar school. The “21st Century Kids Club” is the popular embodiment of Education to Careers in Joliet. In the Kids Club, third to eighth grade children receive daily after school tutoring and exposure to a variety of careers. Through several sites in the Planning Area (each of which has a waiting list) Kids Club serves approximately 450 children per year and has served over 2,000 children during the last 8 years, the large majority of whom have been Planning Area residents.
- *Joliet Township High School (JTHS) Central Campus Career Academies*: As discussed in the Education section of this Plan, the career academies offer high school students the opportunity to build their math, reading, and problem solving skills in the context of programs that prepare them directly for careers as skilled trades people or technicians. Ironically, JTHS’s status as a school under “Academic Warning List” restrict some under-

performing students from enrolling in career academy courses until they demonstrate basic math and reading competencies, with the effect that these students are barred from learning experiences that would be more engaging for them, leading them to sometimes drop out of school in frustration. Despite these problems, the JTHS career academies provide a broad road to well-paid employment that is open to the majority of young people in the Planning Area.

- *Union Trades Program:* JTHS offers another program in collaboration with several unions, through which students spend the summer working as assistants to active union members. This is a rewarding program for the 6 to 12 carefully selected students who are allowed to participate each summer, but unless the program is expanded it will have little impact on the employment picture of the Planning Area.

Joliet Junior College (JJC) is the primary institution for preparing Will County area residents to enter well-paid employment through skilled labor. JJC works with adults at all levels of their preparation for employment.

- JJC's *Adult and Family Services Division* offers adults an opportunity to make up for basic educational deficits through its Adult Basic Education (ABE) program. JJC also provides classroom and on-line instruction to complete a high school education through the General Education Development (GED) program. English as Second Language (ESL) instruction is available in community centers as well as JJC's downtown campus, giving immigrants an important tool in their efforts to find alternatives to very low paid labor.
- *Technical Education:* JJC confers associate degrees or certificates in over 40 technical specializations including each of the four fields identified by research as sectors in which good jobs are being created in Will County: nursing and medical service technologies, building construction specializations, industrial production and industrial maintenance, and more recently truck driving and warehouse operations.
- The *Business and Industry Training Program* of JJC designs and conducts training programs under contract to companies that need to hire workers for these jobs or augment the training of current workers. During the last several years this program has earned \$1 - \$2 million/year in training fees (of which approximately 50% was reimbursed by the State of Illinois per the State's standard practice for qualified worker training programs). For the last several years JJC's Business & Industry Training Program has also trained approximately 150 to 200 new workers per year, placing them in jobs that pay \$40,000 to \$60,000 per year. The program is promoted by the Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association and other business networks, and all of the corporate members of these networks receive quarterly mailings on the Business & Industry Training Program. The question about this valuable program is how it could be expanded to connect more Planning Area residents to good jobs.

Workforce Investment Board of Will County: As the institution responsible for the allocation of federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds in Will County, the Workforce Board plays a central role in setting policy and coordinating job training and placement services. The Workforce Board has made policy decisions to support the development of jobs that pay a living wage, rather than all types of employment. It helped fund the research that identified industries with quality job creation potential and supported initiatives to place county residents in these industries. For example, the Workforce Board has striven to create a "One-Stop Workforce

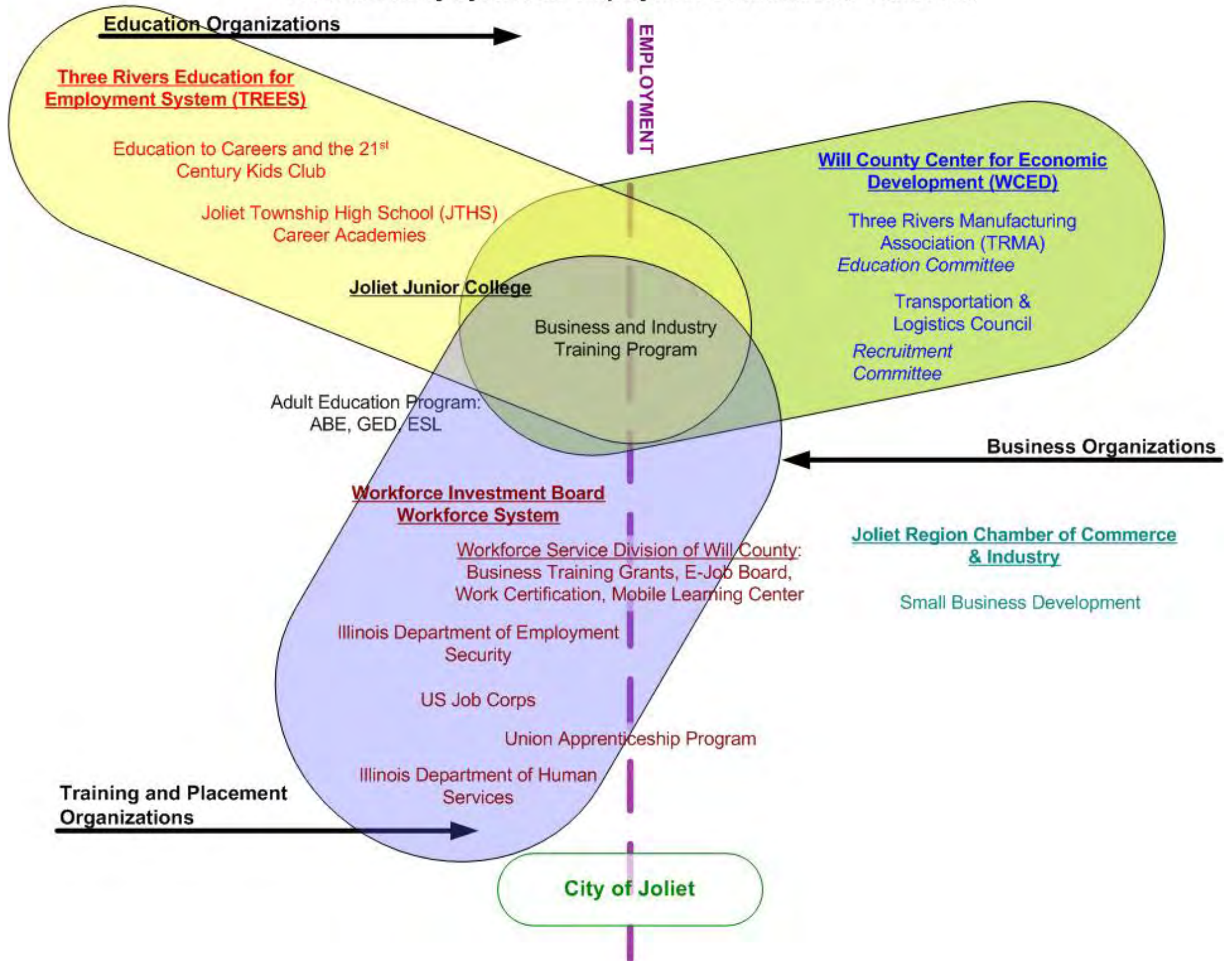
System” in which public agencies working in partnership meet the training and job placement needs of Will County residents in one seamless system. Within this system:

- *JJC* has the primary responsibility to educate workers for productive employment as discussed above.
- *Workforce Service Division of Will County*: This office executes and promotes many of the Workforce Board’s direct services to employers and job seekers including:
 - “Local Business Grants for Employee Training” which supplement public funds for companies to directly train new workers who are paid a living wage.
 - An on-line matching service for area job seekers and employers
 - A Mobile Learning Center, a staffed mobile office with internet access that extends information and counseling into neighborhoods
 - A Worker Certification program that assures employers that all referred job candidates have completed a work readiness course conducted by JJC which covers fundamental issues for all employees such as appropriate dress, timeliness, and consideration of an employer’s perspective.
- *Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)*, besides administering the unemployment compensation program, this agency has a comprehensive responsibility to help all job seekers in the county find employment. IDES performs this function by cultivating relationships with local employers (using the business networks noted above) and providing information, evaluation, and counseling services at IDES’ downtown Joliet office.
- *Federal Job Corps* operates a Joliet office that provides personalized, intensive skill development and work readiness training for 280 young people at any given time. Job Corps members are pursuing a one-to-two year program that will give them certified knowledge and experience in construction, medical service or other specializations.
- *Illinois Department of Human Services* provides tailored services for job seekers with disabilities through its Office of Rehabilitation Services and some economic assistance for those seeking work or newly hired through its program of “Temporary Assistance for Needy Families”.

Union Apprenticeship Programs: Unions in skilled production and construction trades offer apprenticeship programs that are important pathways into well-paid employment. Several unions are represented in the governing structure of the Workforce Board. Unfortunately a number of unions face flat or declining membership, as skilled trade work has been outsourced from the factories of major unionized employers and as cheaper non-union labor has become increasingly competitive. An example of a union that bucks these trends and enjoys growing membership in Will County is the Pipe Fitters Union, whose members generally work in the construction of large buildings.

The overall picture of employment training and placement programs in Will County is a complex network in which business organizations reach out to institutions that provide basic and technical education in an effort to ensure an ample workforce of skilled job applicants and employees. At the same time public and private organizations network with each other in order to provide complimentary services and with business associations in order to understand market needs and build referral relationships. This picture of interlocking organizational efforts is illustrated in the accompanying conceptual map.

The Will County System for Employment Education and Placement



Remaining Challenges and Gaps Remain in Workforce Development: Despite the thoughtful, professional efforts of Will County business organizations, the Workforce Board with its partner organizations, and local governments, serious challenges and gaps remain in systematic efforts to create an effective worker training and placement system in Will County, including the Planning Area. These concerns were raised in discussions with stakeholders who are familiar with at least some aspects of current employment education and placement systems and reinforced by the comments of residents in community meetings. They are discussed most efficiently in regard to proposals by which they can be resolved.

Proposals

Capturing the large potential benefits of industrial development for employment and the overall quality of life in the Planning Area requires two basic proposals regarding (1) Development of new industrial parks and (2) Enhancement of Will County's technical education and workforce systems. Both of these proposals would leverage not only the fixed assets of the Joliet region but the momentum of the region's development institutions.

Proposals for Industrial Development and Employment will be carried out most effectively by a partnership of the City and the organized community working with the Workforce Investment Board of Will County, and other institutional partners. To take part in this partnership the community will need to be represented by an entity that can make plans and carry out programs. Other sections of the Plan discuss and propose the formation of a Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC) as the type of entity that might best act for the organized community. A CDC would be an appropriate type of organization to carry out the community's role in the following proposals.

1. Build New Industrial Parks as Proposed in the City of Joliet's South Side Comprehensive Plan with Optimal Job Growth and Environmental Sustainability for Planning Area Residents.

The City of Joliet should continue to be responsible for the development of the South Side industrial parks and the implementation of this proposal with the support of the WCED and a volunteer committee including members of the Planning Area CDC. The City should establish an Industrial Planning Committee that should include: Staff of the WCED, a liaison member of the Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association, a liaison member of the Transportation and Logistics Council, faculty of the University of St. Francis and Lewis University who have expertise in logistics and related real estate and industrial development, a liaison member of the "Community Employment Task Force" (discussed in regard to this plan's second major proposal for Employment & Industrial Development.) The Industrial Planning Committee should assist the City in carrying out the tasks proposed in the following paragraphs. The Committee should meet monthly during the first year of the project and should meet regularly for the foreseeable future, although meetings after Year 1 may be less frequent. The Committee should not obviate the City's need to engage consultants for specific assignments but may assist the City in identifying and selecting optimal consultants. The City and its advisors should:

- Identify optimal areas for industrial parks which the City may choose to prioritize for annexation, for the creation of Tax Increment Finance or other special districts, or for acquisition to ensure site control.
- While remaining open to entrepreneurial proposals from industrial developers, identify prospective developers who have a record of successful, large scale, environmentally sustainable, and logistics-oriented industrial developments, and issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to these developers. Establish a cadre of qualified developers who may respond to Requests for Proposals (RFP) for specific projects.
- Guide the selection of end users of industrial parks to include logistics companies that follow a business strategy of high capital investment per worker or manufacturing companies that derive particular advantage from locations near freight transportation infrastructure or concentrations of logistics providers. Draft detailed criteria for the selection of end users and list specific companies to approach as prospects for relocation in the new industrial parks.
- Establish industrial parks under development as Foreign Trade Zones (FTZ) in order to provide federal tax incentives for end users that are processors of imported materials/parts/products.
- Capitalize on the City's commitment to develop new industrial parks to the highest environmental standards by adopting standards that are consistent with its *South Side Development Plan* and with the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for industrial developments. By meeting these standards property owners could obtain (LEED) certifications for their projects. Such certification would ensure the long-term value of properties and assure end users and community residents of the high environmental quality of the parks.
- In area industrial park planning give particular consideration to new freight transportation infrastructure that would:
 - Contain truck traffic on highways dedicated to the service of industrial parks, and seek a new entrance & exit on I-80 primarily for truck traffic.
 - Provide bicycle path access from the Planning Area north of I-80 to industrial parks.
- Review potential new developments as they are proposed with the Industrial Planning Committee.

Anticipate a need to spend \$50,000 to \$150,000 over the next two years, for consultants to assist in carrying out the tasks summarized above for Proposal 1. The specific tasks to be performed for these fees cannot be anticipated until the Industrial Planning Committee is convened and the volunteer expertise available from the Committee and the organizations represented on it is known. Other costs entailed in the development of industrial parks are not estimated here although such costs include: allocated time of Planning Department personnel; fees to establish special area designations and public infrastructure improvements at development sites, which may be packaged with project development costs.

2. Increase the number of Planning Area residents who obtain good jobs through existing training and placement programs by implementing the recommendations of a new Community Employment Task Force.

The Workforce Investment Board of Will County maintains strong policies and practices to facilitate client access to its services. The Workforce Board's philosophy of offering a one-stop service through any of its points of access, the clear and user-friendly web sites of the Workforce Board and its partner organizations, and the Workforce System's use of a mobile service unit are all indications of this commitment. The Workforce Board demonstrated a further sensitivity to community access recently when it made a decision to move its operations from Plainfield Road to downtown Joliet, in the QOL Planning Area, where it is close to its densest concentration of clients, partner organizations, and the center of public transportation for the county.

Findings presented in regard to neighborhood conditions in this section of the Plan show how problems linked to unemployment or poorly paid employment reinforce each other and cluster in some Planning Area neighborhoods. Most of the problems with obtaining adequate employment that stakeholders or community residents described to QOL consultants reflected difficulties that residents of lower income neighborhoods are especially likely to suffer. So the QOL Plan proposes that the Workforce Investment Board compliment its other operations with a neighborhood-based approach to meeting the needs of those who currently are not participating successfully in the technical education and workforce development systems of the county.

In this approach the Workforce Investment Board would establish a "Community Employment Task Force" (CETF) charged to develop a set of recommendations for increasing the number of adults who have jobs with livable wages living in census tracts that now suffer Joliet's highest levels of unemployment or employment for wages that do not adequately support a household. The CETF would then monitor the implementation of its recommendations.

The proposed Community Employment Task Force (CETF) should include:

- Two or more members of the Workforce Investment Board;
- Representatives of two or more of the partner organizations of the Workforce System, including Joliet Junior College (JJC) and the Illinois Department of Employment Security;
- At least one liaison member each of the Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association, the Transportation & Logistics Council, and the Social Services Council;
- Representatives of at least two of the institutions that are members of the TREES network including Joliet Township High School and Joliet Junior College (JJC);
- At least one representative each from the governments of Will County and the City of Joliet;
- Faculty of Lewis University, University of St. Francis, and JJC with expertise on technical education and workforce development issues;
- At least two members recommended by the Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC).

Some issues that the CETF should consider were brought to the attention of QOL Plan consultants by stakeholders who are familiar with the technical education or workforce development systems of Will County or by community residents speaking in public meetings. These issues are summarized in the following paragraphs, along with recommendations for the CETF to consider as it frames proposals to the Workforce Investment Board regarding each of the issues:

Quality, Scale, and Accessibility of Workforce-to-Employer Linkages

Issues & Opinions

Virtually all of the job training and placement programs available through the Workforce System are based on expressed employer needs. However, the “freshness” of this employer input and the potential numbers of job placements and levels of salaries connected to different opportunities vary greatly. For example, in some manufacturing and petrochemical industries where companies see looming labor shortages from the imminent retirement of experienced workers, employers that know the Workforce System are prepared to offer attractive salaries and shoulder some of the development and recruitment costs of public agencies. Other programs may have relatively stale demands for workers, and some employers may not be sufficiently connected to the Workforce System to let their needs be known. The Workforce System tracks placement percentages for each training program and employs knowledgeable professionals who network with employers. However, Workforce System stakeholders differ in their opinions as to how thoroughly corporate labor needs are known and met with appropriate training and recruitment program responses. Some stakeholders feel that Will County employers are effectively saturated with information that would lead them to plan with the workforce development system; others think that many more job opportunities could be identified if more resources were invested in marketing and contacts with employers.

Another aspect of the workforce-to-employer connection is knowledge of existing linkage programs in the community. When labor needs\opportunities are identified, preparation to respond with local workers may need to begin years in advance, with the recruitment of candidates for long-term training programs. Besides internet messaging, recruitment may take place through job fairs, schools, community centers, and churches. Community leaders can be valuable assets in recruitment, from the standpoint of the training provider and the employer. And from the perspective of the Planning Area community, leaders may provide a vital service in directing prospective trainees\workers to programs that will bring prosperity to their families and neighborhoods. However, knowledge of existing employer-workforce linkage programs is now thin in the Planning Area. For example, during community workshops participants, including ministers and community organization leaders, repeatedly proposed the formation of programs to link workforce training and placement programs with employers, without being aware of existing programs of this type. If high-opportunity employment and training programs are to have much impact in the Planning Area, regularly refreshed knowledge of the programs will need to be distributed through community leaders.

Union apprenticeship programs provide a related set of concerns. These programs, which can provide excellent career opportunities, are networked with the workforce system. However, a number of these programs have few placement opportunities, and the identity, number, and timing of opportunities to join such programs is not well known in the Planning Area. Opinions of stakeholders differ about the number and accessibility of trainee placement opportunities in union programs.

Recommendations

The CETF should review the networking and outreach mechanisms between institutions that provide technical education for and recruitment of prospective workers and businesses that need workers with specific skills. The CETF should then recommend measures that will ensure: (1) Optimal investment in the effort to identify and predict corporate\union job placement needs and opportunities, and respond to these with appropriate training programs. (2) A system for regularly disseminating information about training and employment opportunities through the Planning Area, including its community leadership network.

Geographically Based Rosters of Qualified Workers

Issues and Opinions

Through its general records and on-line matching services, the Workforce Services Division of Will County maintains retrievable records of workers with skills demonstrated by certification or work history. The Workforce System has the capacity to generate lists of workers with certain skill sets who reside within specified geographies (e.g. within a two-mile radius of a particular work place), and workforce agencies have sometimes called up such lists at request of the Will County Center for Economic Development (WCED). If workforce agencies were ready to routinely generate geographically based lists of prospective workers with certain skills for the information of employers, this capacity would be valuable for the development of the Planning Area and the County as a whole, for several reasons:

- The Planning Area contains the densest concentration of workers seeking employment in Will County. To the extent that these workers are trained in marketable skills and their skills are known to employers, some companies will have a strong incentive to remain or locate near this workforce (e.g. in the industrial areas that the City of Joliet is developing south of the current city (District 5) boundary). Locating businesses close to this workforce will benefit the development of Will County as a whole as well as the Planning Area for several reasons. First, such locations will significantly increase the probability that jobs there will be taken by nearby unemployed or underemployed workers; and each time a job is filled by an unemployed Will County resident, instead of a worker who might drive in or relocate from another location, the County is better off. Second, such locations are efficient from a traffic demand perspective. Each time a worker has the opportunity to work less than three miles from home (possibly commuting by public transportation or biking rather than driving alone) air quality and traffic congestion problems in Will County are reduced.
- If workforce agencies are providing lists of skilled workers as tools for the industrial retention and relocation efforts of a local CDC, the City of Joliet, and WCED, Planning Area residents and community leaders will see another reason to think that the Workforce System will actually benefit them. Then knowledge, use, and support of the Workforce System in the Planning Area will increase.

Recommendations

Through the deliberations of the CETF, the Workforce Board should consider instituting a routine practice of generating geographically based lists of qualified workers as tools to support

industrial retention and relocation efforts. In the establishment of this practice, the CETF would need to consider such issues as the confidentiality of information about individual workers and the quality and age of information drawn from several existing systems.

Time and Costs of Training for the Job Seeker

Issues and Opinions

During the first six months of this year, 3,154 customers (recipients of service) received some type of help from the Will County Workforce System. While a large number of customers use the system exclusively to find a job and are not seeking additional training, only 322 of these customers received training.³⁰ This limited number of trainees is in part because the Workforce Investment Act funds that the Workforce System allocates must be used for people who are either dislocated workers or “economically disadvantaged,” and the definition for economically disadvantaged was an income no higher than \$10,210 for an individual or \$23,510 for a family of four. The percentage of Will County residents who may be grouped in these categories has been declining in recent years. However, social service agency managers interviewed for the QOL Plan consistently reported that charitable need in the Planning Area is rising rapidly because the number of households working for less than a living wage is growing. Under these circumstances, the need for training assistance experienced by individuals who are working for insufficient wages may in some respects exceed that of households that fall below the official poverty line.

Tuition at JJC is now \$73/credit hour, a cost of several hundred dollars per semester for an ambitious worker taking, say, two courses per semester. This seemingly modest cost is heavy for workers who are earning less than the cost of living. Joliet Junior College (JJC) provides a number of financial assistance programs and the Workforce Board reports that a number of scholarship and grant programs are available through its partner organizations. However, residents in community meetings report knowing individuals who were unable to pursue objectives for training and career advancement because they were unable to afford the cost of community college courses on top of living expenses. The experiences of these individuals might be due to:

- Insufficient financial aid for education\training costs available for all households who need and want it;
- A need to support the living expenses, as well as education costs, of people who are working for less than the cost of living and require training to enter true careers;
- A lack of knowledge by residents of the Planning Area of all the financial aid options available to them;
- Some combination of these factors.

Recommendations

The CETF should evaluate all of the possible reasons listed above for the perceived lack of sufficient educational financial aid for Planning Area households. Depending on the results of

³⁰ “Will County Workforce System, Service Analysis, January 2007 through June 2007”, Workforce Investment Board of Will County.

this assessment, the CETF should consider alternative means of reducing the costs of technical education for aspiring workers who cannot realistically meet these costs without serious financial hardship. Alternatives to be considered in this evaluation include: a sliding scale in technical education fees; additional technical education scholarship programs or funds for local residents who meet a means test; the payment of fees with “forgivable loans” that would be repaid when the worker finds employment for which he or she trained; a program through which work training grants and/or tax credits could be transferred to employers when they hire a trained worker; a sustained campaign to disseminate knowledge of existing and new financial aid programs to help working households acquire marketable skills.

Possible Declines in On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs:

Issues and Opinions

Some stakeholders in the Workforce System believe they have observed a decline in the number of employers who provide meaningful OJT, despite training incentives offered by the State and the Workforce Board. The perceived decline in OJT is particularly for positions with compensation in the lower range of jobs that pay livable wages, \$25,000 to \$40,000/year. If this perception is correct, the decline puts more pressure on aspiring workers who must use limited free hours and pay tuition fees for training they might hope to receive on the job.

In contrast to this opinion the WCED has conducted surveys which show that more employers than ever before are investing in training for their current workforce. In addition, the Workforce Investment Board has invested nearly \$450,000 in the last 18 months in incumbent worker training targeting over 800 Will County employees to improve their on-the-job skills. An additional \$350,000 is budgeted for this program in the current year. Furthermore JJC, through its Business and Industry Program, last year conducted customized training programs for employed workers with 67 companies, offering 234 classes attended by 1,786 corporate employees. Client companies contracted with JJC to provide this training, and in the large majority of cases half of the corporate expenditures will be returned to them through matching grants or tax credits provided by State agencies.

In light of these differing informational inputs it is possible that:

- Workforce System stakeholders who think that OJT programs are declining for some salary brackets are simply familiar with atypical cases and mistaken regarding a trend in OJT; Current trends in OJT are positive, and no intervention besides the maintenance of current efforts is required;
- Or WCED surveys may have missed a significant trend in one salary bracket; Substantial public investments to support OJT may be insufficient to compensate for economic pressures that are leading to OJT declines for some salary ranges;
- Or cases of OJT decline in some companies or for some salary brackets, while not representative of a broad trend, require some strategic adjustment in outreach to companies that may be unfamiliar with public benefits for OJT or the nature of public OJT support for some situations.

Recommendations

The CETF should evaluate all of the hypotheses listed above. Depending on the results of this assessment, the CTEF might conduct a survey of employers to determine whether or not the availability of OJT is declining for some types of businesses or salary brackets; and/or review the effectiveness of outreach measures through which employers are informed of State tax credits, Workforce Board grants and other training incentives; and/or consider additional initiatives to consult or provide other contractual services to companies to help them meet their OJT requirements.

Endorsement of Transportation Proposals

Issues and Opinions

The Transportation section of the QOL Plan recognizes that reliable transportation to work is a major obstacle to employment in the Planning Area, particularly in some neighborhoods with high percentages of households that do not own a car or include more than one adult but own only one car. The Plan makes systematic proposals for the improvement of public transportation services that would create viable commuting alternatives for Planning Area workers.

Recommendations

The CETF should review and hopefully endorse the QOL Plan's proposals for transportation including: endorsement of Pace's fully funded proposals for the improvement of fixed route bus services in Will County; the addition of a small bus circulator service linking fixed routes and major destinations within the Planning Area; the creation of an extensive van pool system with robust connections between Planning Area neighborhoods and Will County Job Centers; endorsement of major transportation proposals including the Will County Blue Print for Transportation and the Star Line, provided that these proposals include support for public transportation to job centers.

Use of Temporary Labor

Issues and Opinions

Temporary labor provided by staffing companies fills a necessary function in the Will County economy, allowing companies to adjust to seasonal or irregular surges in activity. Because of the high level of unemployment and underemployment in the Planning Area, its residents are particularly likely to be affected by the temporary labor industry, either as laborers for staffing companies or as independent temporary or entry level workers who staffing companies may replace.

Some stakeholders in the Will County Workforce System and the Joliet business community, as well as residents speaking in community workshops, have perceived a growing use of temporary laborers, supplied through contractors, to perform tasks that were performed by entry level employees. The temporary worker, in this perception, is in a worse position than an entry level

worker because he or she lacks job security and benefits, and may be barred by contract from taking a permanent job at a site where he or she performed well. Some representatives of temporary labor services maintain that steady workers in their systems may receive training that enhances their qualifications (e.g., the certification of workers as forklift operators) and that steady workers may receive wage increases and benefits. Staffing company representatives also report that their workers are not necessarily barred from taking permanent positions at assigned job sites, although contractual agreements blocking permanent employment vary among staffing companies and client situations.

Recommendations

The CETF should establish a dialog that includes companies that regularly contract for temporary labor, temporary service contractors, and temporary workers. As an outcome of this dialog, the CETF should recommend measures through which incentives and/or regulations could be established to make the role of temporary labor in Will County as constructive as possible, i.e., a system that does not replace permanent entry level positions in conventional employment and gives workers a path to increased job security, wages, benefits, and certified skills.

More Flexible Standards for Worker Certification

Issues and Opinions

The Workforce Board requires all job seekers who receive training funds through the Workforce Investment Act to complete a basic work readiness course, taught by JJC staff, which discusses issues such as appropriate dress, timeliness, and an employer's perspective. This program was developed based on focus groups of Will County employers, in which a dire need for such a program was indicated.

Stakeholders and residents who are familiar with this course have suggested that it should be required of a narrower group of applicants, because its instruction is unnecessary for some job seekers (e.g., adults who have been laid off after working for twenty years) and prolongs the job searches of these workers during days when they are living on inadequate workers compensation benefits and savings. Workforce Board management has noted that trainees have an opportunity to waive out of the certification class by taking an examination, although only a very small portion of the trainees pass this waiver exam.

Recommendations

The CETF should review the procedure and examination through which work trainees may secure a waiver from the certification class requirement and make any proposals for adjustment that it feels would be fully consistent with the needs of employers and knowledgeable trainees.

Gaps and Breaks in Financial Support Programs

Issues and Opinions

Stakeholders and residents report that some of the support programs available to prospective workers in training or new workers are incomplete and gapped, like a road that is paved for a block with stretches of rough ground before and after. For example, parents in work training programs may receive child care benefits that do not continue while the newly trained worker seeks employment or establishes him or herself in a job. Besides disappointing aspiring workers, funding programs with such abrupt breaks may be unwise uses of public funds, since they incur expenditures without achieving desired results.

Workforce Board Management has observed that supportive service funds for trainees and new workers are available through a number of programs that have differing eligibility and programmatic requirements, as well as limitations as to how long funds are available.

Recommendations

The CETF should examine the “path” of client experience in programs to support worker training and placement, i.e., what trainees and job seekers experience as they progress through the course of these programs. Along with this examination the CETF should consider requirements of the source programs that provide support funds. After completing this analysis, the CETF may make proposals to Workforce System organizations for administratively smoothing the path of clients. It may also make recommendations to funding sources or legislators for adjustments to program requirements or limitations.

Employment for Ex-Offenders

Issues and Opinions

The findings regarding neighborhood level problems in this section of the QOL Plan summarize how ex-offenders frequently face blanket policies and more subtle biases against their employment. For ex-offenders reentering the Joliet community, a number of programs exist to help them find employment. Prisoner Release Ministries offers job placement services and maintains a list of job seekers with their particular skills. Post-hiring follow ups with both clients and employers help to ensure success and maintain good relationships with the companies that hire their ex-offenders. The Prisoner Release Ministries organization is well-established in Will County, their service area, and many other area workforce programs refer ex-offenders to Prisoner Release Ministries. The Safer Foundation also provides employment services coupled with pre- and post-hiring support, though it serves the broader metropolitan area. In addition to the normal job-seeker support services it provides, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) offers specialized assistance to ex-offenders through its Re-entry Employment Service Program (RESP). IDES also offers fidelity bonding at no cost to ex-offenders whose future employers may require additional insurance given their past life experiences.

Recommendations

The CETF should meet for at least one session with the Will County Health & Justice Coalition and discuss any adjustments in public support and coordination with other agencies that would assist their operations as well as measures to make their work more widely known and appreciated in the Planning Area.

Outreach, Referral, Tracking, and Community Engagement:

Issues and Opinions

Community residents participating in public meetings and professional stakeholders commonly recommended the creation of programs for employment education and job placement that already exist in Will County systems. Also community leaders such as ministers and counselors or administrators of social service programs frequently try to make job referrals of individuals through informal networks or cold calling, without reference to the networks established by the TREES or the Workforce Investment Board. At one level, these suggestions and referral patterns represent a simple lack of awareness, which is not surprising, considering that the existing systems are complex, even when they are represented by attractive public information tools such as the web sites of the JJC or the Workforce Services Division of Will County. Lack of complete understanding of a system may be compounded with a lack of confidence in it. At least five clergy or other community leaders interviewed for the Plan expressed skepticism that residents referred to workforce agencies would receive useful assistance. Only if community leaders and a fair sampling of residents understand and trust the Workforce System agencies will the community consistently refer prospective workers to the services they need and appropriately support individual clients in their efforts to take specific career building steps.

Recommendations

The CETF should consider and recommend a series of steps that the TREES and Workforce System partners should take to instill a deep level of awareness and confidence in their work in the community, particularly in neighborhoods with high levels of unemployment. These measures might include: workshops with leaders of churches, community organizations, and social service programs; events to celebrate the achievements of program graduates and new workers; appointment of an ombudsman who can follow up responses to individual referrals and serve as a regular source of information to community organizations about training and workforce issues and programs.

The CETF should meet monthly, or more frequently, for a year to formulate proposals on all of the issues noted above to the Workforce Investment Board and its partner organizations. (The CETF may well form subcommittees to address a number of these issues that are relatively complex.) In subsequent years the CETF should continue to meet regularly, perhaps quarterly, to monitor progress in the implementation of its proposals. To carry out this ambitious agenda, the CETF will need to be staffed by a professional(s) with strong analytical and communications skills who will devote 50% to 100% of a full-time employee's effort to this work. After the year of recommendation development, the staffing of the CETF should become a secondary

responsibility, probably requiring less than 20% of the time of a qualified professional. Staff responsibilities might be shared between an employee of the Workforce Division of Will County and a Planning Area CDC employee, which could provide a combination of deep experience in the local system and fresh perspective to this work.

An appropriate budget for the CETF would be in the range of \$60,000 to \$90,000, for personnel and direct expenses, in Year 1 followed by subsequent expenses of \$8,000 to \$15,000 per year.

Proposals Summary					
Short term (0-3 years) and Long term (3+ years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
1) Build industrial parks on Joliet’s south side, per the City’s comprehensive plan, with optimal job creation and environmental sustainability: Establish Industrial Planning Committee including St. Francis & Lewis U faculty/ Prioritize development areas/ Establish pool of qualified developers/ Identify optimal end user companies/ Establish park area as a Foreign Trade Zone/ Adopt LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Standard for site design	City of Joliet, Will County Center for Economic Development, Planning Area community organization, possibly a Community Development Corporation (CDC)	1	Area Develop Planning Years 1-2 Project Planning & Execution Years 3 – 20	\$50,000 to \$150,000+ Recovered Project Costs	City of Joliet
2) Increase the number of Planning Area residents who obtain good jobs through existing training & employment programs by implementing recommendations of a new Community Employment Task Force. Recommend and implement programs to: Increase outreach of work training programs to employers/ Create community-based rosters of qualified workers/ Mitigate job training costs	Workforce Investment Board of Will County and partner organizations including: Joliet Junior College and the Illinois Department of Employment Security & Planning Area	1	Year 1: Form Policies Years 2-4 Implement programs	Year 1 \$60,000 to \$90,000 Years 2-4 \$8,000 to \$15,000 annually + Cost to Taskforce recommendations, to be	Workforce Investment Board, federal Workforce Investment Act funds

for workers/ Increase on-the-job training programs/ Define a constructive role for Temporary Labor/ Smooth gaps in financial support for new workers/ Increase Employment of ex-offenders/ Establish outreach, referral tracking & community engagement	CDC			estimated	
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F. Land Use & Neighborhood Character/Infrastructure

Overview

As in other section of this Quality of Life (QOL) Plan, this Land Use & Neighborhood Character/Infrastructure element of the Plan focuses on Joliet City Council Districts 4 and 5, which is the Planning Area for this project. This portion of the Plan is a tool to provide direction to the City and Planning Area neighborhoods in planning to address issues related to land use, neighborhood character, and infrastructure. This section of the Plan summarizes the process undertaken to evaluate existing conditions, identify potential solutions, and outline action steps that are necessary to achieve the Plan's objectives and implement its proposals. As the framework that establishes the policies that should direct a comprehensive master planning process for the Planning Area, this Plan provides the foundation for further planning and specific studies to thoroughly address the issues cited herein.

Land use, neighborhood character, and infrastructure issues were identified through interviews with key neighborhood stakeholders, community meetings, and continuous discussion with City staff and other local organizations. Based on these findings, objectives and proposals were established to address the identified issues. In addition, the objectives and proposals were visually illustrated on two maps (Land Use Policy Framework Plan and Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan) to emphasize the spatial relationship between recommendations, illustrating how they work together to build a cohesive resolution to the issues and opportunities facing the Planning Area.

Key Findings

Based on information gathered from stakeholder interviews, meetings with the community and City staff, and data analysis, the Planning Area is characterized by the following traits:

- Older industrial sites are not well maintained and are often incompatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods. Many older industrial sites are generally characterized by deterioration, vacancies, and overall lack of maintenance. The magnitude of this problem is exacerbated by the fact that many of these old industrial sites are located adjacent to residential neighborhoods, which not only raises incompatible land use issues but also adversely impacts the property values of the adjacent residential properties. While some of the old industrial sites are vacant and abandoned, others are under-utilized and could be relocated to more appropriate locations. Whether the industrial sites are vacant or warrant relocation, these properties present redevelopment opportunities that will enhance property values, create a neighborhood unified by compatible uses, enhance the overall character of the neighborhoods, and attract further reinvestment into the community.
- Planning Area neighborhoods lack a well-established retail center. The City's more well-established retail centers are generally located outside of the Planning Area. Although the

City Center, Collins Street and Cass Street corridors are prominent City destinations offering some retail options in the Planning Area, the other commercial districts are generally characterized by a piecemeal assembly of varying businesses offering limited retail options. Although the commercial districts in the Planning Area lack the attractive and cohesive appearance of their counterparts outside of the Planning Area, they provide opportunities for enhancement through redevelopment or revitalization projects that will improve the character and appeal of the Planning Area commercial districts. In the process, redeveloped or revitalized commercial properties will also generate employment opportunities for the local workforce, provide essential goods and services to residents, and attract further reinvestment into the community.

- Employment centers are in varying states of transition. Many employment centers in the Planning Area are in transition, characterized by vacant or poorly maintained buildings and under-utilized properties. In addition, they are located along major road corridors such as Cass Street and Collins Street, creating a negative impact on the character of the commercial corridors and surrounding neighborhoods. Similar to the enhancement of the Planning Area's commercial districts, vacant and under-utilized properties present opportunities for redevelopment or revitalization projects that will enhance the values of the properties, generate more employment opportunities for the local workforce, provide essential goods and services to residents, and attract further reinvestment into the community.
- Some properties are troubled by flooding problems. Flooding was expressed as a significant issue for residences along the floodplain, particularly those in the Southeast and Northeast Side Neighborhoods. Flood mitigation is needed in these areas to help relieve property owners of water damage. Arthur Avenue on the north side of the Northeast Side Neighborhood is also a target area for flood mitigation.
- The Ridgewood Neighborhood is burdened with water, sewer, and stormwater issues. The Ridgewood Neighborhood, which is generally located along Cass Street and south of the Silver Cross Hospital campus, has long been troubled by water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructures problems. Much of the problem is rooted in the fact that several of the Ridgewood properties are not annexed into Joliet resulting in inadequate municipal water, sewer, and stormwater service. Although steps have been taken to address the specific infrastructure problems burdening the Ridgewood Neighborhood, efforts need to continue, particularly cooperative efforts undertaken by local, County, State, and Federal agencies, to adequately provide infrastructure improvements for the Ridgewood Neighborhood.
- The USX and prison sites provide significant redevelopment opportunities. With their locations near the City Center and Joliet's historic core, the USX and prison sites present redevelopment opportunities for mixed use projects, including open space and recreation uses. Such development should reflect the development patterns and historic character of

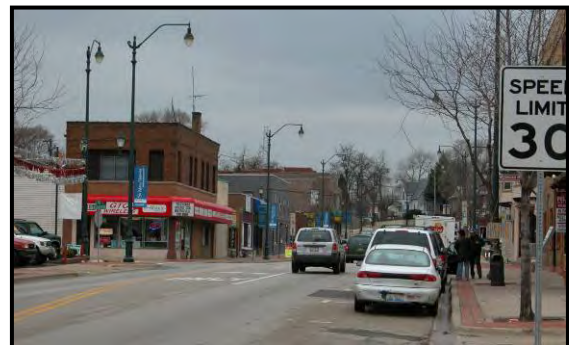


Prison site presents redevelopment opportunity

the City Center. Proximity to the riverfront, combined with new housing and recreation uses in the potential redevelopment projects will create an immediate local walk-in market for existing businesses and new retail centers.

- The proposed relocation of Silver Cross Hospital would have major land use and quality of life impacts. Late in the QOL Planning Process Silver Cross Hospital announced a plan to relocate its campus outside of the city limits of Joliet. If implemented this proposal would powerfully impact medical services, job opportunities, and market conditions in the Planning Area. These impacts include difficulties for patients and staff who are not highly mobile and the depression of surrounding property values and retail markets, which may not have been fully considered to date, as well as opportunities for the tax-generating reuse of the present campus. Accordingly, the alternatives for Planning Area development related to this proposed relocation should be thoroughly studied, per proposals for “Planned Development of Major Land Blocks” presented later in this section of the Plan.
- Most major infrastructure improvements have been addressed by the City through their multi-year Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP). Improvements have consisted of stormwater, street reconstruction, sewer, tree planting, including streetscape improvements on major roads. Most resident concerns and conditions observed indicate that more attention needs to be paid to maintenance of existing facilities, filling in gaps in the sidewalk network, continuation with flooding, stormwater and street improvements.

- Major road corridors in the Planning Area present opportunities to strengthen neighborhood identity through streetscape enhancements and gateway features. The Planning Area is home to many of Joliet’s oldest and historically significant neighborhoods. The other characteristics described above indicate that the lack of maintenance and under-utilization of certain areas in the Planning Area have adverse impacts on the character of the neighborhoods. While some neighborhoods have more positive and distinct characters than others, the Planning Area as a whole has opportunities to strengthen the character of its neighborhoods by enhancing streetscape design, providing gateway features along prominent corridors, and maximizing the value and use of properties to create an attractive community.



St. Mary Nativity Area

- New land uses are proposed for areas south of I-80. Per the City’s *South Side Comprehensive Plan* developments will occur in the southern portion of District 5 and surrounding lands to be annexed by Joliet. The predominant proposed use is for large scale, logistics-based industrial parks with some residential neighborhoods and commercial corridors extending south from the established neighborhoods of the Planning Area.

Proposals

The objectives and proposals outlined below were established to address the issues outlined in the key findings. An Implementation Action Plan is provided to ensure the objectives are met and the proposals are carried out. For each proposal, the Implementation Action Plan specifically outlines responsibility, priority, phasing, and anticipated completion date. The objectives and proposals are also visually illustrated on two maps:

- Land Use Policy Framework Plan. The Land Use Policy Framework Plan is a guide for identifying future development of vacant land or redevelopment/ revitalization of land in the Planning Area that has higher development potential than its current use. .
- Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan. The Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan sets the foundation for the enhancement of the identities of Planning Area neighborhoods by establishing basic organizational design principles and elements that define each neighborhood. The plan is designed to assist the community in evaluating ways to improve the quality of life through the enhancement and protection of the visual appeal of the neighborhood's physical environment by increasing awareness of the importance of neighborhood character and encouraging proper steps to protect, improve, and sensitively add to existing community resources.

The objectives, recommendations are provided first, followed by a summary of basic elements of the Land Use Policy Framework Plan and Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan, and Implementation Action Plan.

Objectives

Land Use Objectives

The objectives for land use are summarized below and incorporated in the description of the Land Use Policy Framework Plan.

- Expand transit oriented development near the Metra Station.
- Expand commercial offerings for the neighborhoods south of the railroad.
- Enhance the image and function of commercial corridors.
- Create more pedestrian-friendly neighborhood commercial and mixed-use areas.
- Remove incompatible land uses.
- Provide high quality community and neighborhood level retail centers.
- Pursue mixed use development on the USX and prison sites.
- Pursue industrial development per the City's *South Side Comprehensive Plan* and the proposals of the QOL Plan.

Neighborhood Character & Infrastructure Objectives

The objectives for neighborhood character and infrastructure are summarized below and incorporated in the description of the Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan.

- Enhance gateways to the City Center and neighborhoods.
- Strengthen neighborhood identity.

- Provide adequate infrastructure improvements, focusing on primary areas of health concern.
- Ensure safe pedestrian access to all education, civic, commercial, and recreational uses.
- Maximize public funding through a unified capital improvements and redevelopment plan.

Proposals

The proposals below are designed to address the issues described in the findings and to implement the objectives defined above. These proposals are also contained in the Implementation Action Plan section of this report.

Land Use Policy Framework Plan

Purpose

The Land Use Policy Framework Plan is a guide for identifying future development of land in the Planning Area that is vacant or has higher potential use. Although the Land Use Policy Framework Plan recommends land use development opportunities for certain properties, it does not recommend wholesale changes to the overall land use composition of the Planning Area. Many of the residential neighborhoods and commercial districts are fairly well established, particularly north of I-80 and west of the river, which suggests that the Planning Area does have community strengths upon which it can build. However, some areas would benefit from redevelopment or revitalization efforts. Also, vacant land presents opportunities for new development that can help shape the establishment of new neighborhoods, commercial districts, and employment opportunities in the Planning Area.

The land use policies defined in the Land Use Policy Framework Plan are meant to establish the appropriate placement of land uses in the Planning Area. However, the land use policies are not meant to provide a direct, immediate indication of the appropriate zoning regulations to apply to a specific parcel of land. Rather, the land use development opportunities are intended to be a guide to subsequent zoning decisions for existing developed areas in the Planning Area and new growth areas, particularly south of I-80.



St. Josephs Area

Overall Land Use Policy Framework Plan

The Land Use Policy Framework Plan is intended to provide general guidelines for managing new development to insure that the character of the community is maintained, while exploring new ways to provide more opportunities for housing, recreation, business and commerce, shopping, and employment in the Planning Area. The primary objectives of the Land Use Policy Framework Plan are to:

- Establish land use policy direction for various vacant and under-utilized parcels within the Planning Area that is consistent with the existing fabric of the community;
- Capitalize on new economic development opportunities; and
- Ensure that the Planning Area remains a vital and attractive place to live, work, and recreate.

The Land Use Policy Framework Plan defines development opportunity areas for four primary land uses:

- Residential Development Opportunities
- Commercial Development Opportunities
- Employment Development Opportunities
- Mixed Use Development Opportunities
- Planned Development of Major Land Blocks

The land use policy for each of the four types is defined below.

Land Use Policy: Residential Development Opportunities

Objective: The objective of the residential component of the Land Use Policy Framework Plan is to protect and foster residential neighborhoods built upon community, safety, attractiveness, and accessibility while maintaining stable property values and a variety of residential housing types.

Strategy: Certain parts of the Planning Area are suitable for new residential development. While the areas north of I-80 are comprised of Joliet’s oldest and most well-established residential neighborhoods, there still are some vacant parcels that have the potential for new residential development. Areas south of I-80 have substantially more vacant land available for development. The major thrust of new residential growth will consist of single family detached homes planned for vacant properties within or adjacent to existing single family neighborhoods and “infill” housing occurring on vacant lots and resulting from redevelopment of existing homes. Some multiple-family, mixed use housing projects are recommended for the Metra station area and commercial corridors, particularly within and north of the downtown area. Such uses should also be considered as an alternative for the



Rivals Neighborhood

development of the USX and prison sites for which a concurrent report is being prepared.

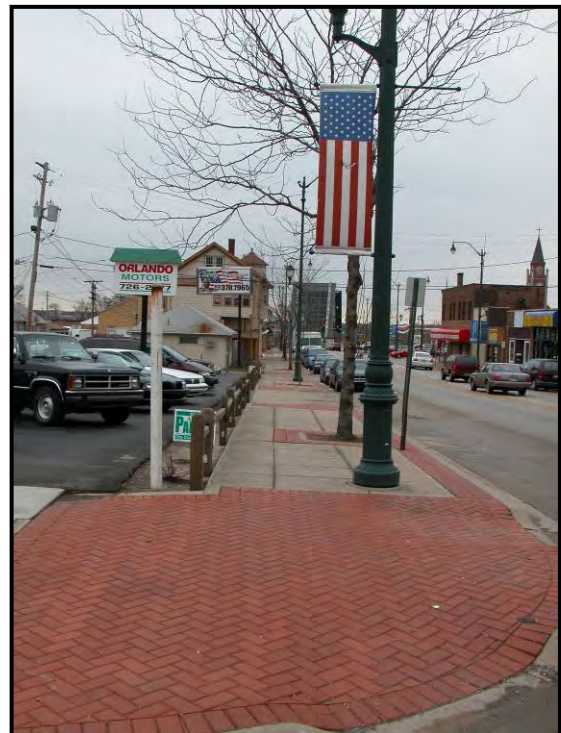
This Plan recognizes the value and importance of many existing, older single family residential neighborhoods in the Planning Area, particularly in terms of their quality, stability, and affordability for starter families. These areas are, and should continue to be, the entry point for young individuals and families who wish to remain residents of the Planning Area and newcomers who move here to live in affordable, established residential neighborhoods.

The Land Use Policy Framework Plan Map illustrates residential development opportunities in areas that are generally vacant and provide ample space for new development. Infill development is also encouraged; however, such opportunities are not labeled on the map given their relatively small size and sporadic distribution. To insure that residential development opportunity areas are maintained as stable residential areas, certain public improvements and programs should be established that will provide necessary public services and infrastructure, including sidewalks, curb and gutter, street trees, open spaces/parks, and other utility improvements, where necessary. The City's building code and property maintenance enforcement programs should recognize the special needs of these areas to insure appropriate levels of maintenance.

Land Use Policy: Commercial Development Opportunities

Objective: The objective of the commercial component of the Land Use Policy Framework Plan is to maintain and expand the range of business and shopping activities to meet the needs of Planning Area residents and to diversify the City's tax base in attractive and convenient locations designed to minimize impact on residential areas.

Strategy: The City Center is Joliet's historic retail and civic core. The City's largest concentration of commercial uses has historically existed in the City Center. In addition to the City Center, the Planning Area also includes other commercial areas. Many of these commercial areas are defined by road corridors, such as the neighborhood retail corridor along Ruby Street, auto-oriented commercial corridors along Cass Street, Collins Street, and Jackson Street, and the small commercial district around the Broadway Street/Theodore Street intersection. While these commercial areas can be readily identified in relation to a specific street, intersection, or neighborhood, most of them do not have a cohesive identity like the City Center. Many of these commercial areas are comprised of businesses brought together in a piecemeal manner, creating a random collection of businesses with little relation to each other in terms of use, site design, pedestrian and vehicular access. There are some



Ruby Street Commercial Corridor

exceptions, though, such as the businesses along the Ruby Street corridor, which have neighborhood-focused businesses with buildings oriented toward the pedestrian. The Land Use plan proposes the development of new commercial uses with common characteristics in site design (building and parking placement, landscaping, and other streetscape elements) and accessibility (road access, cross access, and pedestrian access) to create an attractive and cohesive identity for the Planning Area.

The Land Use Policy Framework Plan Map illustrates commercial development opportunities in areas that are generally vacant and provide ample space for substantial development. Opportunities for redevelopment of under-utilized commercial uses are also identified in limited instances. Commercial uses may also be integrated into the mixed use development opportunities within the City Center, along the commercial development corridors proposed in the Retail Development Section of this plan and as part of the potential redevelopment of the USX and prison sites.

Land Use Policy: Employment Development Opportunities

Objective: The objective of the employment component of the Land Use Policy Framework Plan is to maintain and enhance employment-generating industrial uses, particularly in the growing logistics industry, to not only provide employment opportunities to the community but also diversify the City's tax base.

Strategy: Despite the decline of Joliet's industrial job base in the 1980's, more recent trends identify Joliet and Will County as a whole as leading the Chicago metropolitan area in the retention and addition of the most industrial jobs. In particular, increased employment opportunities are expected to continue in the medical services, financial services, building construction and maintenance, and logistics industries. With its convenient access to I-80 and the future I-355 extension to the east and the availability of vacant and under-utilized land, the Planning Area is poised to play a significant role in providing the access and land needed to attract industrial uses and the employment opportunities they offer to the area.

The Land Use Policy Framework Plan Map illustrates employment development opportunities south of I-80, which generally provides adequate interstate access and ample vacant land for substantial development. Some of the employment development opportunities are located along the railroad as well to encourage truck and rail-served options. Given the impact of truck traffic typically generated by industrial uses, particularly the logistics industry, employment development opportunities are not recommended north of I-80 where the Planning Area's more established residential neighborhoods are located.

Land Use Policy: Mixed Use Development Opportunities

Objective: The objective of the mixed use component of the Land Use Policy Framework Plan is to provide unique development opportunities that incorporate a mix of residential, retail, office, and recreational uses that reflect the mixed use quality of Joliet's older neighborhoods. These areas are intended to create distinct places to live, work, and play in the Planning Area.

Strategy: The Planning Area is a mixed use area, providing a mix of retail, office, recreational, civic, entertainment, and limited industrial uses. Downtowns are typically unique in their mixed use quality given their central location and gradual development over time. Mixed use developments are not exclusive to downtowns, though, and recent development trends indicate the rising prominence of mixed use developments, particularly as a means to provide affordable housing and create districts centered on accessibility, convenience, and a variety of activities.

Mixed use is generally defined as one of the following: (1) “vertical” mixed use which provides retail uses at street level and multiple-family or office uses above; and (2) standard mix of uses which provide opportunities for separate stand-alone retail, office and residential uses in a unified development. While vertical mixed uses help maximize space, the concept of mixed use is generally intended to create a high density of multiple uses that provides convenience goods and services within close proximity to residents, customers, and workers, which helps reduce vehicle trips between separate and scattered land uses.

The Land Use Policy Framework Plan Map illustrates mixed use development opportunities within and north of the City Center. Given their location and considerable amount of land, the USX and prison sites provide prime opportunities for mixed use development. Other mixed use development opportunities are proposed in conjunction with the commercial corridors proposed in the Retail Development section of this plan, e.g., along Chicago, Cass, and Briggs Streets and potentially south of I-80 along Briggs Street and Spencer Road.

Planned Development of Major Land Blocks

As noted earlier, a consultant study was commissioned specifically to examine alternatives for the redevelopment of the former prison and USX sites, and this study has proceeded concurrently with the QOL Planning Process. While awaiting the recommendations of this study, we have suggested that these large areas could be the sites of significant mixed use developments, and we have outlined the preceding land use framework, which we hope will be helpful to the community in considering recommendations for the reuse of these properties.

The proposed relocation of Silver Cross Hospital poses another major redevelopment opportunity and land use challenge for the Planning Area. Certainly, a focused consultant study of alternatives for the optimal development of the Silver Cross campus should be commissioned. This study should begin with the analysis conducted to date by Silver Cross and will hopefully enjoy the full cooperation of the Hospital. As a primary set of alternatives, the study should examine ways in which the optimal development of the Hospital at its current location or at another location within the Planning Area could be facilitated. Construction of new hospital facilities on cleared and vacant land within the Planning Area, including the former prison and USX sites, should be among the alternatives considered in this effort. The study should also consider alternatives for the reuse of the current campus for tax-generating use if Silver Cross does relocate and ways in which the Hospital could appropriately mitigate the negative consequences of its relocation.

Quality of Life Action Plan

Joliet Council Districts 4 & 5

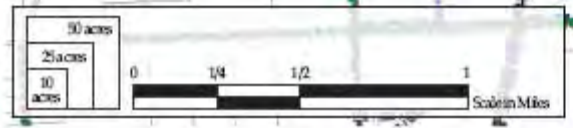
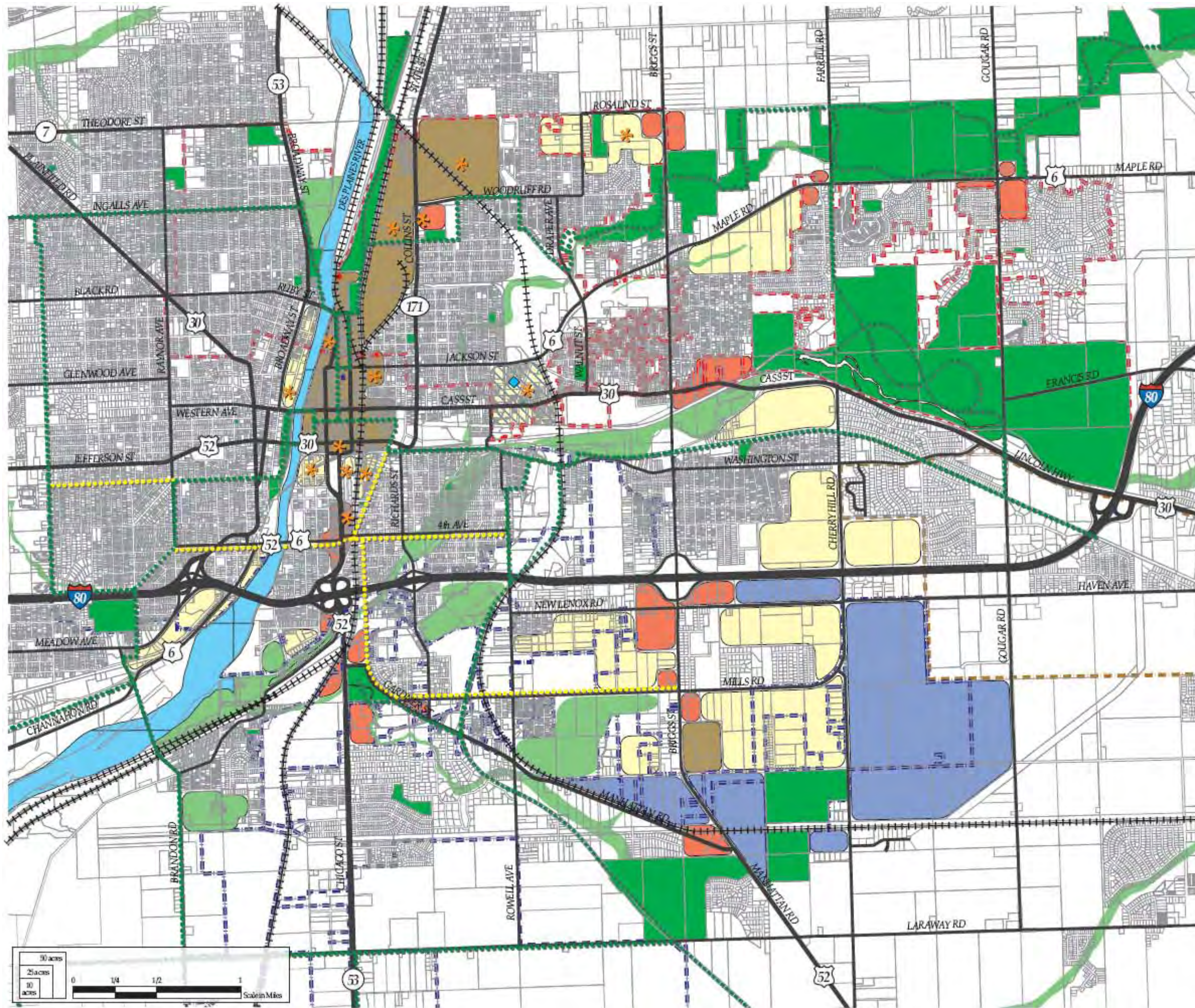
City of Joliet, Illinois

Land Use Policy Framework Plan

DRAFT

LEGEND

-  Council District 4 Boundary
-  Council District 5 Boundary
-  New Lenox Boundary
-  Parks & Forest Preserves
-  Open Space & Floodplain
-  Residential Development Opportunities
-  Commercial Development Opportunities
-  Employment Development Opportunities
-  Mixed Use Development Opportunities
* Residential / Retail / Office Uses
-  Development Opportunities
* Mixed Residential/Commercial -or- Employment
-  Target Redevelopment Area [Priority Projects]
-  Existing Trails
-  Proposed Trails



May 2007

Base map data provided by the City of Joliet

Map prepared by Teska Associates, Inc.

Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan

Purpose

A neighborhood that has an aesthetically pleasing character is generally perceived as being more livable, adding to the neighborhood's overall quality of life. A positive neighborhood character does not happen by itself; it takes the collective efforts of city officials and citizens. The Planning Area is comprised of several distinct neighborhoods each with its own special personality, composed of districts, corridors, and special community places. However, as a neighborhood matures and experiences change through redevelopment, infill and public improvement projects, the character of the neighborhood will also change.

The purpose of the Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan is to begin to lay the foundation for addressing the enhancement of the identities of each of the Planning Area neighborhoods by establishing basic organizational design principles and elements that define each neighborhood. The overlying objective of this plan is to assist the community in evaluating ways to improve the quality of life through the enhancement and protection of the visual appeal of the neighborhood's physical environment. It is aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of neighborhood character and intended to stimulate thinking on the need to protect, improve, and sensitively add to existing community resources.

Neighborhood Character

The identity of each of the Planning Area neighborhoods has primarily been formed over a sequence of periods and stages of development. Each subsequent development phase has generally resulted in the creation of a certain character for each neighborhood. Each major development cycle has associated with it a certain pattern of development that has its own image. A number of factors contribute to the development patterns and resulting character of each neighborhood, including land use, density, open space, private landscape, public streetscape, architecture, infrastructure, site design, and vehicular and pedestrian circulation.



Cathedral Area Neighborhood

Neighborhoods

The Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan Map illustrates various neighborhoods in the Planning Area. It is important to emphasize the conceptual nature of the boundaries for each neighborhood as they delineate the general area of the neighborhood based on one of the following common elements:

- Neighborhood church (e.g. St. Mary's, Cathedral, and St. Pat's),
- Park (e.g. Nowell, Forest Park, and Pilcher),
- Landmark (e.g. Rivals, Silver Cross, and Jacobs Historic District), or
- General location (e.g. Southside, Northeast Side, and Southeast).

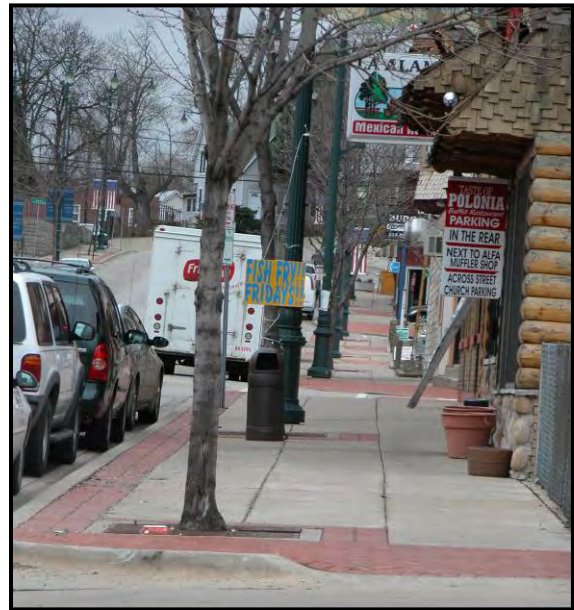
While boundary lines help illustrate the general size and location of neighborhoods, the accuracy of how the boundaries are drawn is not the point of the map. The primary focus of the map is to visually depict the distribution of neighborhoods in the Planning Area and illustrate the significance of neighborhood identity, particularly how residents identify the neighborhood where they live or those that they visit.

Commercial Corridors

Commercial corridors are generally identified by the roadway along which they're located. In particular, the Planning Area is comprised of the following eight commercial corridors, which may be categorized under one of three commercial corridor types:

- Pedestrian Oriented Commercial Corridor.

The Broadway Street, Ruby Street, and Jefferson Street Commercial Corridors are located west of the river and serve as gateways from the west to the City Center and the Planning Area. Although the Ruby Street Commercial Corridor has a more unified character than the Broadway Street and Jefferson Street Commercial Corridors, they all possess similar urban qualities. These corridors consist of buildings set close to the road with access oriented to the pedestrians, two to three story mixed use buildings, and attractive streetscapes.



Pedestrian-oriented commercial corridor

- Highway Oriented Commercial Corridor.

The Chicago Street and Briggs Street Commercial Corridors are located east of the river and south of I-80 and are both accessible from an interchange off of the interstate. Much of the land south of I-80 has tended to develop on larger lots with larger scale commercial uses and residential developments characterized by suburban designs with curvilinear street networks and larger building setbacks rather than the traditional grid street network and shorter building setbacks that define many of the older neighborhoods north of I-80. As the area south of the interstate continues to develop, it is anticipated that commercial development along the southern portion of Chicago Street and Briggs Street will continue to mirror the emerging highway oriented development patterns of this area.

- Transitional Commercial Corridor. The Jackson Street, Cass Street, and Collins Street Commercial Corridors, located east of the river, serve as transitional areas between Joliet's central business district and adjacent neighborhoods. As these three streets move away from the City Center, commercial uses transition from specialty retail uses and smaller businesses in an urban, pedestrian friendly environment to an auto-oriented

business environment. Although these three commercial corridors have historically developed in a hybrid of urban and suburban development patterns, the long term land use strategy should be to re-create the historic, pedestrian oriented neighborhood districts found along other corridors.

Similarly for those portions of Chicago and Briggs Streets that run north from I-80 to Downtown, the redeveloped streets should assume the character of mixed use, pedestrian-oriented corridors as they approach Downtown. These streets should become transitional as they approach the expressway. Also, per the proposals of the Retail Development section of this plan, some of the recommended larger retail uses, such as a supermarket anchoring additional stores, should be located on a transitional street.

Though they are different in character, the general design of the three commercial corridor types should consider similar elements in varying forms and scales:

- Streetscape Elements (Landscaping, Lighting & Signage)
- Entry Features/Signs
- Directional (Wayfinding) Signs
- Pedestrian Circulation
- Vehicular Access to Properties
- Traffic Circulation & Parking (On-Street & Off-Street)
- Building Setbacks & Orientation
- Screening/Buffering/Fencing

Gateways

A gateway identifies the entrance into a special district using visual elements such as signage, landscaping, monuments, and other streetscape elements. Major road corridors or intersections, traffic patterns, and distinctive physical features can often work together to create conditions for a gateway, particularly one that conveys the overall feeling that one is entering a distinct area or passing from one prominent area to another. Gateways also provide opportunities to expand the City's way-finding sign program. Creating conditions that make it easier for residents and visitors to find important tourism, commercial areas and civic uses are essential to the overall improvement of the Planning Area neighborhood. A unified sign plan that both welcomes and directs people to the Planning Area should be established. The sign plan should integrate existing identity signs. There are two types of gateways identified on the Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan Map:

- Primary Gateway Opportunities. Primary gateway opportunities are identified at major entrances into the Planning Area and at major road intersections. Each gateway provides an opportunity to welcome visitors to the Planning Area, no matter if they're arriving from Crest Hill to the north, Manhattan to the south, or anywhere else in the region via the interstate. The other



Gateway to Cathedral Area Neighborhood

primary gateway opportunities identified are treated in much the same manner.

- **Secondary Gateway Opportunities.** Secondary gateway opportunities are also identified at significant road intersections but are generally smaller in scale and may not include a full slate of key design elements as defined below (e.g. entry signs are best located at primary gateways and in limited instances at secondary gateways). A secondary gateway also provides the opportunity to create a transition from one neighborhood to another. Each of the four secondary gateways signifies a transition from one neighborhood to another, such as the transition from the St. Pat’s Neighborhood to the City Center at the river bridge crossing gateway. The Collins Street/Richards Street gateway also has the unique quality that it signifies a transition from three different road corridors in addition to the transition from different neighborhoods. The other secondary gateway opportunities identified are treated in much the same manner.

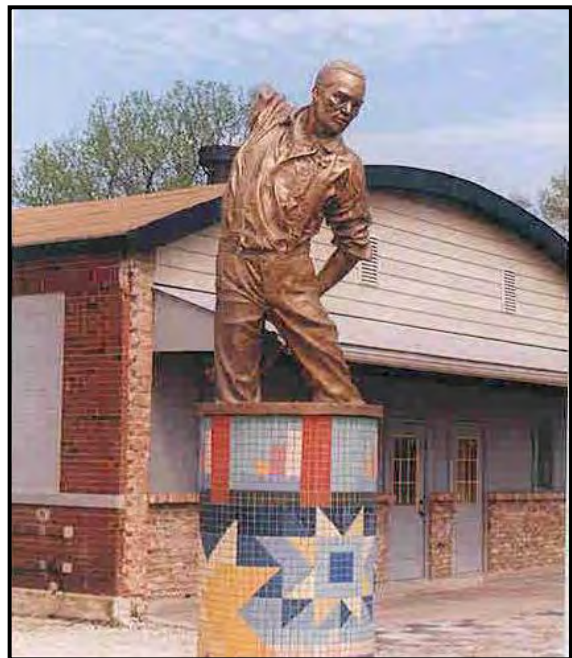
The following is a general description of the key design elements which may be used to define a gateway:

- Landscaping: distinctive accent plantings should be provided at each gateway location
- Medians: where feasible, new landscaped medians could be provided within existing rights-of-way with an approximate length of one block (or more for longer corridors)
- Entry Sign: distinctive identity signs announcing entrance to the City or specific neighborhood
- Lighting: special or unique lighting fixtures could be provided to highlight and accent each gateway feature

Trails

Trails provide alternative routes for non-vehicular transportation throughout an area, typically connecting parks, schools, and other key community elements to each other. The Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan Map depicts both existing and proposed trails for the Planning Area. Proposed trails generally fill in any gaps in the existing trail system to help create a continuous trail network for the Planning Area, and links to the art tour routes.

The City has also worked with the Friends of Community Public Art (FCPA) to establish community public art tours along specified routes to showcase the community’s various murals, sculptures, mosaics, and other pieces of public art. The map illustrates the Route 30 and Route 66 Community Public Art Tour Routes. There is a third tour for the City Center; however, given the



“The Underground Railroad Hero” along the Route 66 Community Public Art Tour Route

scattered nature of the public art in the City Center, no specific route is defined by tour guides published by the FCPA. While there are several pieces of public art located along these routes, the Planning Area neighborhoods provide opportunities for local artists and school arts programs to establish more public art pieces for the community. The gateway opportunities described above present excellent opportunities for the integration of public art.

Potential Infrastructure Improvements

In addition to illustrating conceptual neighborhood areas, commercial corridors, and gateway opportunities, the Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan Map also illustrates the locations of near term infrastructure improvements identified by community residents and leaders, and in the City's Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP). The City has continuously over a twenty year period undertaken various types of infrastructure improvements in each Council District. The City also maintains a comprehensive inventory of long term street improvements, including projects identified as priority projects by residents, that are considered in the yearly NIP. A broad range of infrastructure improvements planned for the Planning Area in 2007 generally includes:

- Sanitary sewer
- Stormwater (curb & gutter)
- Water
- Sidewalk
- Decorative Street lighting
- Hickory Creek Cleaning
- Railroad Crossings
- Turning Lanes and Traffic Signals
- Landscape Restoration
- Flood control
- Street repair/rebuild
- Railroad grade crossing

One-Way Street System

Several community leaders observed that the one-way street system may be out-dated, and may have negative impacts on the ability of visitors to easily navigate local streets to find businesses and other tourism sites. The one-way system originally designed to facilitate movement through the City, may now be counter productive. Traffic data analyzed in the Market Assessment section of this Plan reveals that local businesses may be operating at a disadvantage due to limited traffic volume caused by one-way streets. Retailers depend on visibility and desire location on busy streets. Even though traffic counts in the downtown are high, one-way streets limit the amount of traffic passing by a store front. A comprehensive evaluation of the street system should be undertaken, including the costs of changing the current system, as significant infrastructure changes to intersections and signalization may be required.

Quality of Life Action Plan




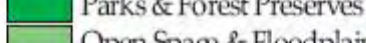
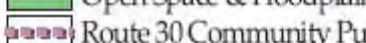
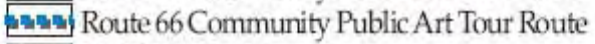
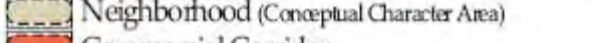
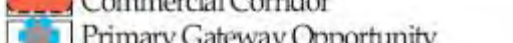
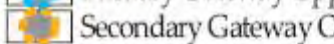

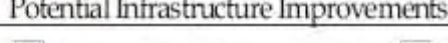
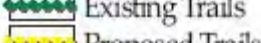
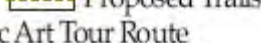
Joliet Council Districts 4 & 5

City of Joliet, Illinois

Neighborhood Character & Improvements Plan









DRAFT

LEGEND


-  Council District 4 Boundary
-  Council District 5 Boundary
-  New Lenox Boundary
-  Parks & Forest Preserves
-  Open Space & Floodplain
-  Route 30 Community Public Art Tour Route
-  Route 66 Community Public Art Tour Route
-  Neighborhood (Conceptual Character Area)
-  Commercial Corridor
-  Primary Gateway Opportunity
-  Secondary Gateway Opportunity
-  Existing Trails
-  Proposed Trails



Potential Infrastructure Improvements

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Sanitary Sewer |  Street Lighting |
|  Stormwater (Curb & Gutter) |  Flood Control |
|  Water |  Street Repair/Rebuild |
|  Sidewalk |  Grade Crossing |

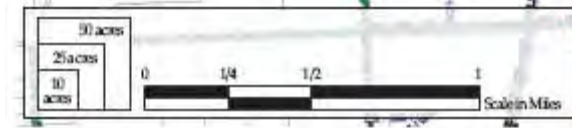
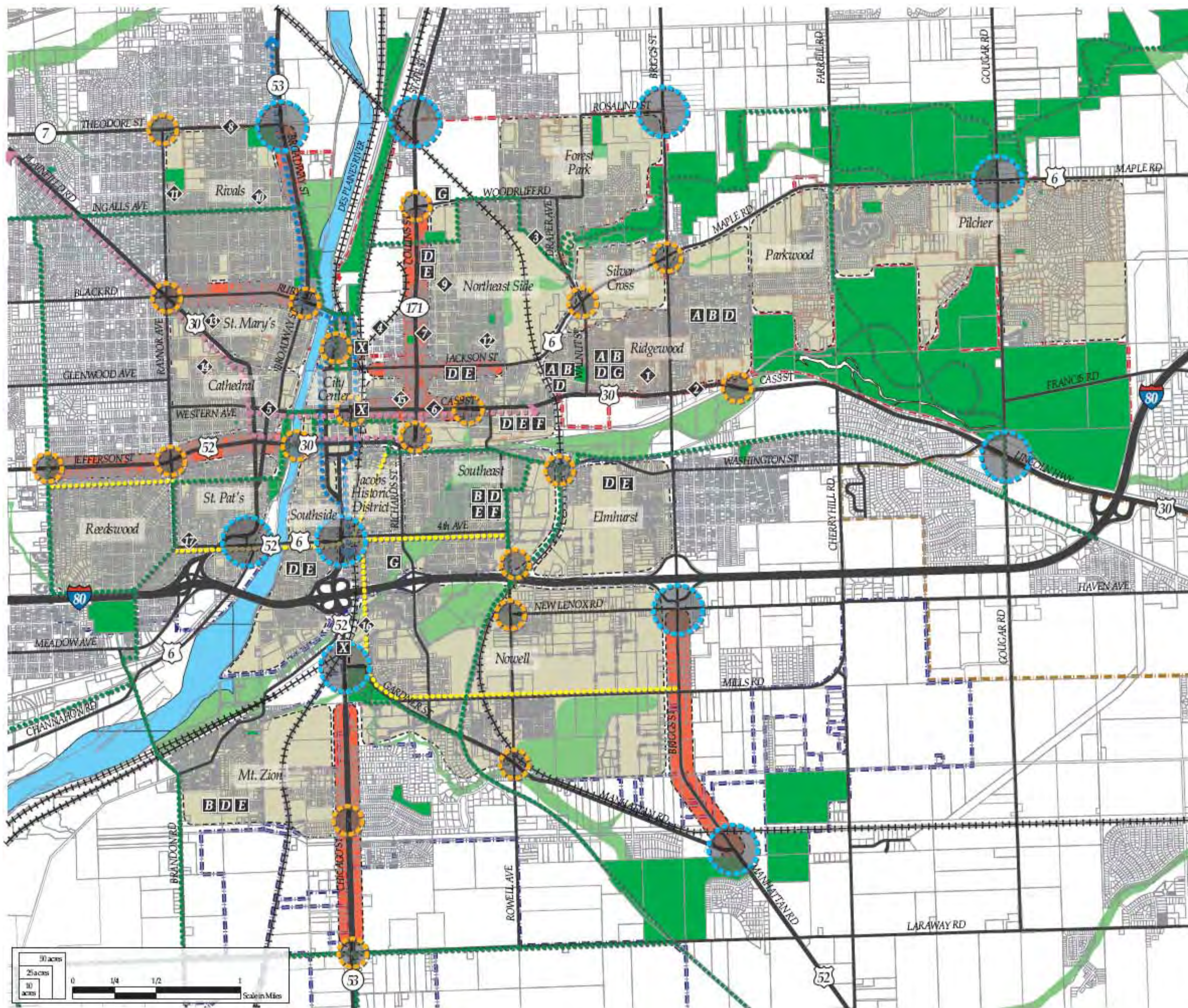
Potential Target Improvement Areas

-  Scribner St: Street Repair
-  Rte 30 (east of Briggs St): Lane Marking Improvements
-  Arther Ave: Flooding
-  State St: Street Repair
-  Summit/Hickory/Broadway: Sidewalk & Alley Improvements
-  Cass St: Decorative Street Lighting
-  Collins St: Decorative Street Lighting
-  Theodore St: Decorative Street Lighting
-  Cleveland/Ward: Railroad Landscaping
-  Cora St: Storm Sewer/Curb & Gutter
-  Curtis Ave: Street Repair
-  Garnsey Ave: Storm Sewer/Curb & Gutter
-  Raub St: Storm Sewer/Curb & Gutter
-  Eastern/Benton: Alley Repair
-  Willow Ave: Storm Sewer/Curb & Gutter
-  Whitney: Alley Repair
-  Gardner: Storm Sewer

May 2007

Base map data provided by the City of Joliet

Map prepared by Teska Associates, Inc.



Implementation Action Plan

Land Use

Proposals Summary					
Short Term (0-3 years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
1) Expand streetscape improvement plans from the City Center along all major road corridors	City of Joliet	2			City of Joliet, Federal Transportation Grants
2) Enhance screening, buffering, and landscaping between industrial and residential areas as an integral element of industrial development	City of Joliet, & Planning Area community, possibly represented by a Community Development Corporation (CDC)	2			City of Joliet, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), IL Dept of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
3) Prepare a specific redevelopment plan, design guidelines, and developer recruitment process for the USX and prison sites	City of Joliet	1			City of Joliet, Will County Center for Economic Development (CED), State/DCEO, USEPA
4) Prepare specific corridor plans for Cass St, Collins St, Chicago St, Briggs St, Jackson St, and Jefferson St	City of Joliet, CDC	1			City of Joliet, IL Dept of Transportation (IDOT)
Long Term (3+ years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
5) Remove incompatible	City of Joliet	2			City of Joliet,

uses, where practical, e.g. along the Chicago Street corridor					TIF, SSA
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Neighborhood Character & Infrastructure

Proposals Summary

Short Term (0-3 years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
1) Provide major gateway improvements along major road corridors into the Planning Area, including way-finding signs, monuments, public art, banners, landscaping, lighting, and other streetscape elements	City of Joliet	2			City of Joliet, Federal Transportation Grants, IDOT
2) Provide identity signs, public art, banners, landscaping, lighting, and other streetscape improvements to each neighborhood (similar to the streetscape design for the Cathedral, St. Pat's, and St. Mary's Neighborhoods)	City of Joliet, Representative Planning Area community organization, possibly a community development corporation (CDC)	3			City of Joliet, Non-Profit foundations
3) Adopt design guidelines that foster more pedestrian-friendly business areas	City of Joliet	1			City of Joliet, Regional Planning Agencies: CMAP and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)

Long Term (3+ years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
4) Expand the City's capital improvements plan by tying to a long-term comprehensive	City of Joliet, CDC	2			City of Joliet, CDC

development plan linking private and public funding to key redevelopment areas					
5) Continue flood mitigation improvements		1			Illinois Department of Natural Resources
6) Continue to work cooperatively with other local, County, State, and Federal agencies to create a funding program for infrastructure improvements for the Ridgewood Neighborhood, and similar settled but unincorporated districts bordering the City	City of Joliet, CDC	1			City of Joliet, Will County, State Grants, USEPA and other Federal Grants
7) Establish a complete sidewalk system to provide safe access to all parks, schools, and other major public destinations	City of Joliet, CDC	3			City of Joliet

G. Human Capital

Overview

As in other sections of the Quality of Life (QOL) Plan, this section on Human Capital focuses on City Council Districts 4 and 5 of the city of Joliet, the Planning Area for this project. Within the city of Joliet, more than 80 community and faith-based organizations and public agencies offer programs and services targeting residents; virtually all of these organizations are active in the Planning Area. Many of these organizations work collaboratively to coordinate services and provide a comprehensive infrastructure of support services.

In the Request for Proposals for the Quality of Life (QOL) Plan, questions and concerns were raised relative to specific programs and services for youth, adults, and seniors. In response to these concerns, an assessment was conducted to examine the current infrastructure of service providers to determine if there may be gaps in services or potential strategies to build on the present infrastructure. In addition to combining the areas focusing on youth, adults, and seniors, the assessment also focused on the potential role of residents. Data collected and analyzed included:

- Interviews with several of the area's service providers;
- Review of the 2006 Needs Assessment conducted by the United Way of Will County;
- Review of other strategic plans and publications related to area service providers;
- Review of the professional literature regarding some of the issues reported by service providers;
- Dissemination of an online survey to approximately 80 organizations with 28 responses received; and
- Feedback from the four community workshops involving 500+ community residents.

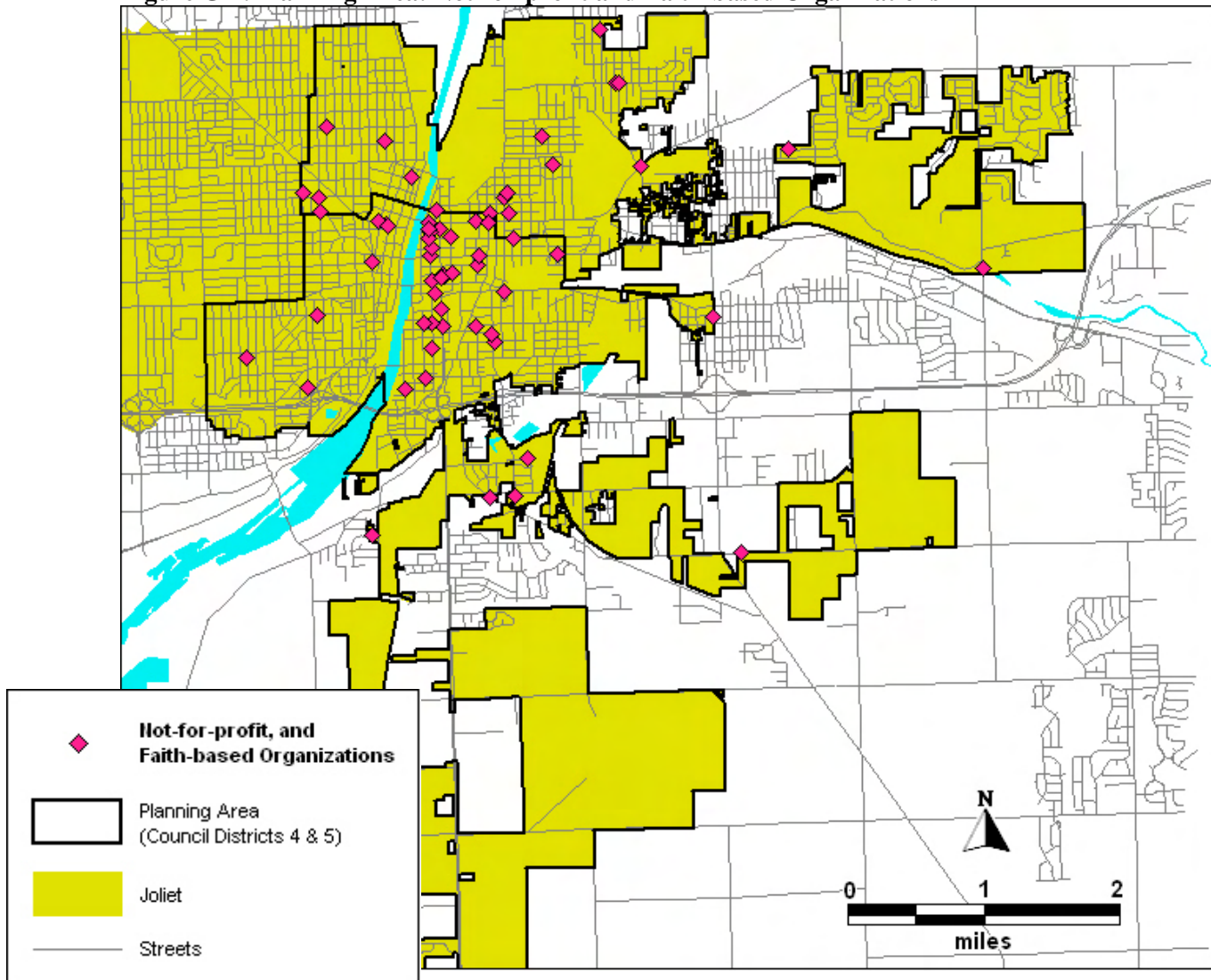
In addition to assessing the range of services available to Planning Area residents and future demand for services, the assessment sought to understand how service providers promote their services, engage Planning Area residents through employment, service on various boards or volunteerism opportunities. The assessment did not evaluate the quality of services provided.

Key Findings

1. The Planning Area is served by multiple networks of nonprofit service providers.

Several stakeholders interviewed described their involvement in one or more networks of nonprofit organizations operating throughout the City and County and the value of collaborating and networking with other service providers. Most of the service providers are located in District 4 or District 5.

Figure G-1. Planning Area: Not-for-profit and Faith-based Organizations



The Continuum of Care, Social Services Council, and United Way of Will County were organizations repeatedly cited by service providers as the leading connectors of human service providers. Smaller networks also exist including Churches United to Fight AIDS (CUFA). Members of the various collaborations and consortiums said that the networks help limit unnecessary competition among organizations and encouraged greater coordination and referrals. Stakeholders also commented that attending collaboration meetings provided critical information regarding trends in the community, challenges, and strategies for improvement without staff members of any one provider feeling as if they are working in a vacuum.

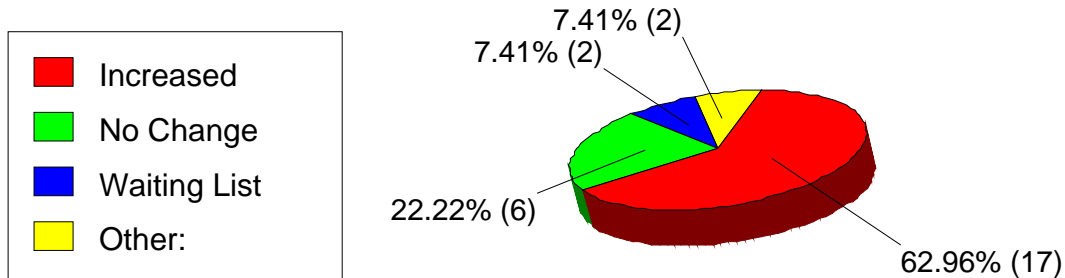
2. Growing demand for services among service providers.

Despite the economic growth experienced in Joliet, service providers in the Planning Area indicate an increase in demand for services by Planning Area residents. A common concern expressed by residents and service providers is that more families may be ‘slipping through the cracks’ and need more assistance from area service providers. It is unclear if economic and social

conditions in the Planning Area or improved outreach efforts by service providers is contributing to the increase in demand for service. Some of the stakeholders interviewed have established waiting lists as service demands continue to outpace their respective organizations' capacities to meet the growing need. Coordination among service providers helps minimize the extent of waiting lists as organizations regularly make referrals to other service providers. In looking at the survey responses that focused on the current and future demand for services, areas service providers responded:

Figure G-2. Demand for Services

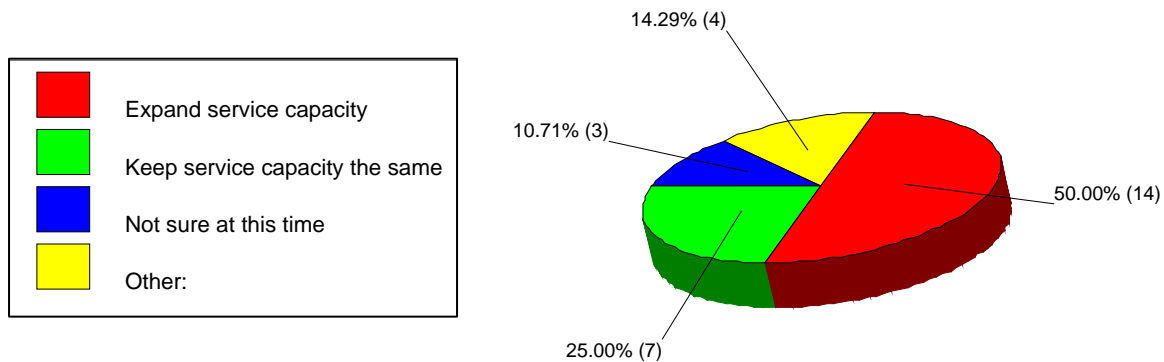
Since 2005, has the demand for your organization's services in the Planning Area:



Interviews and survey results also confirmed that many service providers expect to continue experiencing an increased demand for services in the years ahead.

Figure G-3. Anticipated Changes in Services

What anticipated changes in your organization's service to Planning Area residents do you expect over the next year?



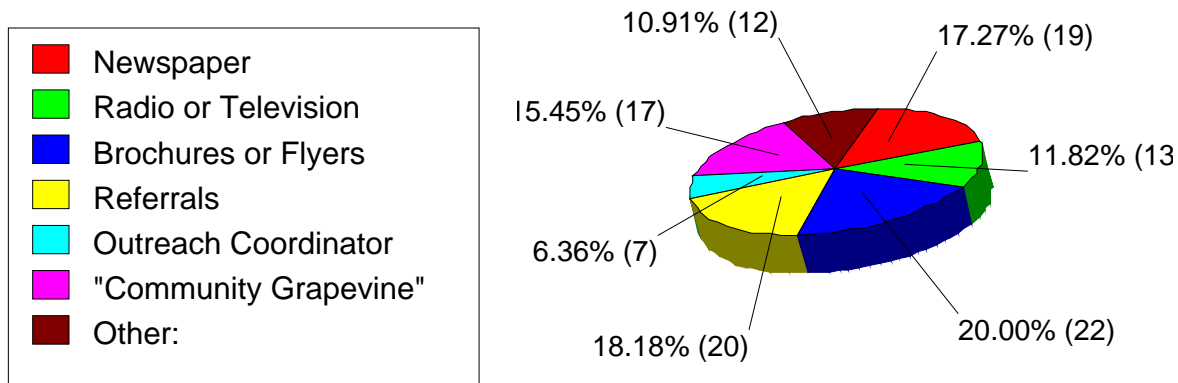
3. Concerns regarding the effectiveness of outreach efforts by service providers in reaching Planning Area residents.

Feedback from residents during the community sessions suggest that while some Planning Area residents are aware of the services available in the community, many others are not. Some service providers also questioned the effectiveness of their outreach efforts as shared through interviews and the online survey. Service providers deploy various methods to promote their

offerings throughout the community. Consistent with feedback from the stakeholder interviews, service providers use the following as their primary outreach methods:

Figure G-4. Outreach Methods

Please indicate the methods used by your organization to inform community residents of the various programs or services offered by the organization.



Some providers responding to the survey question regarding how they promote their services selected “other.” These providers offered examples of additional outreach methods including:

- Church bulletins
- Existing relationships
- Handbook, etc. in jail
- Newsletters
- Listed in the telephone book under government
- United Way
- Volunteer Match
- Website, direct mail, speakers, staff networking, bi-lingual staff
- Word of mouth (repeated several times)

Despite the wide variety of methods used to promote their services, several service providers agree with residents that opportunities exist to improve outreach efforts. A follow-up survey question allowed respondents to rate how well informed Joliet's Planning Area residents are about their organization's services. Almost half of the respondents rated the results of their community awareness efforts as average.

4. Opportunities to engage more residents to work with nonprofit service providers to address community change.

Community transformation requires input from service providers and residents. Service providers have a commitment and responsibility to address the needs of residents; residents also have a responsibility and opportunity to become engaged in the changes in their community. Fortunately, service providers can serve as an important bridge in helping residents connect to the broader community and encourage engagement in community-related efforts. This can include providing employment opportunities, encouraging residents to serve on boards or advisory committees and soliciting volunteers.

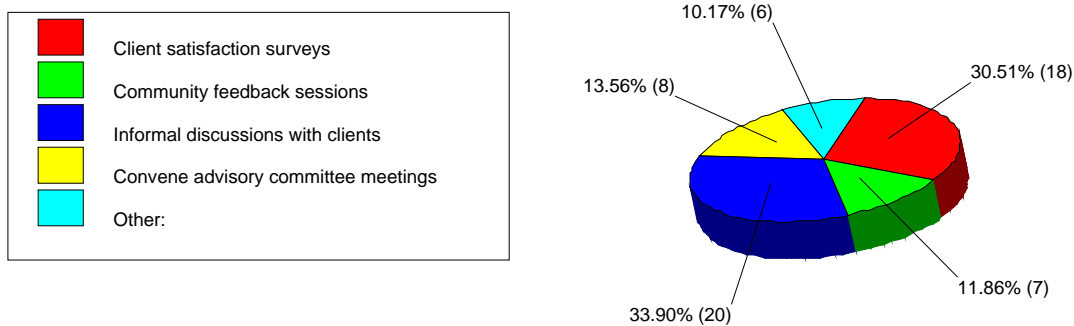
Hiring local residents provides needed employment opportunities and can also affect an organization’s outreach efforts in the community. Another way service providers can help encourage greater resident engagement involves helping to build the leadership capacity of more residents by encouraging them to serve on boards or advisory committees. Using residents as volunteers represents yet another option for engaging local residents – particularly older adults who may have a desire to stay engaged in their fields upon retirement.

In surveying the nonprofits, questions were asked about the percentage of clients, staff, board members, and volunteers who are residents of the Planning Area. Almost 43% of the respondents indicated the percentage of clients drawn from the Planning Area ranged from 35% to more than 90%. In contrast, when asked about the percentage of board members from the Planning Area, only three organizations indicated that 13%-15% of the board included residents from the Planning Area. These were the highest percentages of board participation by area residents as the overwhelming majority of the organizations indicated less than 10% of the board were residents of the Planning Area. Seven out of the 28 respondents indicated that no board members were from the Planning Area.

The existence of service programs and delivery mechanisms that are needed by community residents also demonstrates a level of connection between the service provider and the community. Monitoring the impact of new programs is also important to ensure that the program meets the needs and expectations of residents. When asked how service providers incorporate the feedback of residents into their programs, the responses included:

Figure G-5. Evaluating Service Effectiveness

How does your organization evaluate the effectiveness of its services in meeting the needs of clients?



There are opportunities for service providers to broaden their engagement of residents through their respective missions and integrate more residents into the community transformation process. During the community workshops, some residents indicated that they did not know about certain resources available to them in the community. Other residents did know and offered explanations regarding what each provider offered. These discrepancies in program awareness may alert service providers to a need to expand their outreach strategy; these discrepancies may also reflect an important opportunity to expand the community responsibility table to include residents. Broadening the responsibility of community residents to help share

and communicate with others about available resources is an important task that can be addressed by residents and should be integrated into the overall community plan

5. Potential gaps in service delivery infrastructure affecting youth, domestic violence victims, older youth seeking employment and individuals in need of mental health services.

While a wide network of service providers implements programs and services to Joliet's Planning Area residents, there may be some gaps in services. These gaps were recognized by service providers as well as community residents during the interviews and community sessions. Both service providers and residents acknowledged that some level of services exist in the community, but those levels may be insufficient to meet growing needs.

Domestic Violence

For example, community residents and stakeholders saw a need for more domestic violence shelters throughout the community, as did some of the community service providers. In many cases, becoming homeless for women is a direct result of avoiding a domestic violence environment. In examining the list of domestic violence resources for Will County, seven agencies/organizations were identified within Districts 4 and District 5. Most of the organizations provide temporary housing for victims of domestic violence and their children. Groundwork is the only one identified by the Illinois State's Attorney Office as operating a domestic violence shelter. This particular shelter provides approximately 22 beds. Lambs Folds is another organization that provides temporary shelter to women and their children under the age of eight who are homeless. Not all of the organizations identified as a resource for victims by the Will County State's Attorney's Office may provide shelter; some offer other services including financial or counseling services.

While the actual number of domestic violence victims in Joliet is unknown, both service providers and community residents agree that individuals and family members seeking to leave violent environments have limited options in the Planning Area. Based on a Minnesota study that looked at the ratio of population and number of beds, the ideal ratio for total population in Joliet is 38 beds³¹. This suggests that Joliet may have a sufficient number of beds; however, it does not address the longevity of this form of housing. The first line of support for DV victims may be Groundwork, but after factoring in the number of women who come to the shelter with their children, the bed space can be quickly tapped out. Other facilities in Joliet including Catholic Charities may provide some level of transitional housing, but overall, the availability of housing for DV and others in need is extremely limited. Fortunately, service providers working with this population operate with a strong referral network to provide accommodations for individuals in need. A more in-depth analysis should be conducted to thoroughly investigate other options for providing DV individuals with access to longer-term housing.

³¹ A 2001 evaluation of Minnesota's shelter program suggest that for every 50,000 people, there should be 14 shelter beds. Center for Applied Research and Policy Analysis.

Youth Issues

Interviews with stakeholders and community resident feedback suggest a concern for expanding the number of youth development programs to serve Planning Area residents.

In looking at specific youth development activities, community residents expressed a desire for more youth programming including additional recreational facilities as a strategy to discourage loitering and possible gang involvement. An analysis of the recreational facilities is included in another section of the overall report.

Community residents and other stakeholders acknowledged a void of youth leaders working along with older community residents to address the concerns affecting the overall community. Of the 49 social service organizations listed by the City and United Way as serving youth in Joliet, at least 14 of these organizations offer some type of youth development program. As youth leadership development was acknowledged as an important aspect of various youth-serving organizations, programs such as the Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and 4-H of Will County all have a leadership component within their respective programs. Service providers and residents equally expressed a desire for the creation of a permanent vehicle focused on developing the leadership skills of youth who live in the community. The expansion of the pool of youth leaders serves as an investment for the community in helping to establish more youth role models and expand the voice for youth in the community.

Another concern shared by stakeholders and community residents was the perceived gap in skills necessary for securing meaningful employment opportunities for young adults (18-25). Given the high percentage of high school students who fail to graduate, residents expressed concern that there were limited options for these individuals to move into a career path (union or non-union) without sufficient education and training. The 2004 Will County State of the Youth report, presents a positive outlook for Will County youth in several areas as compared with other counties, but the report expresses concern about employment. In looking at Will County youth, ages 16-19 that were not enrolled in school, 13% were unemployed. Typically, in low-income areas, such as some neighborhoods of Districts 4 and 5, the percentage of unemployed youth is greater.

The report further describes the 29% of the youth in Will County who are not in school and not working suggesting that these youth have become “disconnected from the community.” Young adults who have not completed their high school education and may have entered the criminal justice system will experience even greater hardship in securing living wage employment. The Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board has been formed in part as a direct result of the 2004 State of the Youth report. Through this initiative the Workforce Board has engaged four contractor organizations to provide employment with intensive remedial education and career counseling for youth who fit the description of “disconnected” noted above. The first year of service from these contractors will conclude in the summer of 2007, and an evaluation of their impact should inform future efforts to reach youth at risk of career and life failure. However, it is notable that very few community leaders, including some who manage youth programs, and virtually none of the 500+ residents attending community workshops for the Plan expressed any awareness of the Workforce Investment Board’s Youth Council programs. This lack of

awareness suggests a need for stronger community engagement in workforce development efforts discussed in the Industrial Development and Employment segment of the Plan.

Mental Health Needs

Residents and stakeholders also expressed concerns regarding the level/accessibility of mental health services – especially for youth. Unfortunately, public dollars allocated for mental health services have been insufficient to meet the demand in communities throughout the State including Joliet. Will County’s Department of Mental Health leads the coordination of mental health services in the Planning Area through its Community Health Center that works with local hospitals and service providers to offer residents assistance and referrals.

Proposals

Strategic Considerations

The following series of proposals builds on existing networks of human service providers and focuses on capacity building of nonprofits as well as residents. Given the network of service providers working in and around the community, the creation of new organizations or programs is generally not recommended unless all avenues involving existing providers have been exhausted. In a climate in which increasing numbers of nonprofits are competing for dollars to sustain their operations, establishing new entities without just cause could hamper the work of existing providers.

The proposals also focus on the roles of providers and residents in increasing accessibility to critical services. Residents must have a vested interest in the core proposals presented in the overall Quality of Life Plan and serve as active leaders in guiding the Plan. This may require leading the mobilization of more residents to become involved in the conditions in their community, helping to communicate assistance opportunities to others, increasing resources available within the community, and also working with service providers to identify and address gaps in the service delivery system.

Nonprofits continue to play an important role in the transformation of the community and must remain flexible and adaptable to change. Service providers must take extra steps to promote employment opportunities within their organizations and strive to engage residents beyond the role of “the client.” Given the feedback from the survey of service providers and the apparent anticipation of increased demand for services, there are opportunities to focus on building the capacity of the organizations within these networks – especially community-based or neighborhood-based organizations.

Other concerns identified by the Quality of Life Task Force (QOLTF) and community residents will require more investigation and discussion to determine if there are clear gaps in the system or weaknesses that could be addressed through increased public education and training. The following points reflect a summary of the key human service recommendations prior to a statement of core proposals.

- Joliet has strong networks of local service providers as well as several county agencies that serve residents in the Planning Area. Some members of existing networks of service providers appear to coordinate services and referrals. The overall infrastructure can continue to be strengthened by ensuring that all service providers are actively engaged and sharing information to help assess the effectiveness of the service delivery system.
- Just as service providers work through networks to support the service delivery infrastructure, residents must also be organized and integrated in the community planning and implementation process. A mechanism comparable to the Neighborhood Watch format should be established enabling residents to meet regularly to learn how to interpret relevant data and deploy effective problem-solving techniques. Residents can then propose resident-led solutions that serve to compliment the work of service providers. Ultimately, service providers and residents might collaboratively host a Community Summit, designed to bring residents and service providers together to share and learn from each other.
- If the demand for services continues to grow in the Planning Area, it will be important to help providers increase their operating capacity and seek out diverse funding to support their respective operations. Providers should be encouraged to share their un-duplicated client load to determine if there is truly an increase in demand for services.
- Encourage service providers to maximize relationships with local faith-based institutions and residents to help expand outreach efforts that may include developing a resource directory that is distributed throughout the Planning Area. This might also include expanding the use of public access channels and radio to promote service offerings while continuing to use public events to distribute material.
- With at least 14 different organizations offering youth programs in the Planning Area, the QOLTF, or a successor organization that represents the Planning Area community, should construct an asset map of these service providers to determine the extent of any potential gap in services for youth. Most of the providers appear to focus on critical areas such as academic enrichment and development. A number of these organizations have formed the Joliet Alliance for Youth to coordinate their efforts. As the number of youth in the community continues to grow, it may be critical for the Joliet Alliance for Youth to monitor the capacity of the existing service providers to ensure that its members can adequately meet the growing demand. The entire community should support the Joliet Alliance for Youth's collaboration as they coordinate their current program strategies, build staff capacity, and seek funding opportunities. The work of these organizations should also be coordinated with the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board, which is focused primarily on improving the employment readiness and early career steps of older youth. The priority should remain on growing the capacity of existing organizations before considering creating new entities.
- While the community operates with one domestic violence shelter and a number of organizations that provide transitional housing, the resources of these organizations may not be sufficient to meet the needs in the community. Based on a Minnesota report, Joliet appears to have sufficient beds however, it is important to conduct a more thorough examination of the specific services provided at the transitional housing locations to determine if all victims

of domestic violence receive adequate housing and care throughout the network of shelters and transitional housing.

- Will County recently adopted a new community health plan to address concerns raised about several health issues including limited mental health services for youth and adults. The concerns raised during this assessment process are consistent with those of communities across the State, and include limited state resources and the threat of the Tinely Park hospital closing. While there are a number of mental health service providers in the area including the County, both hospitals and community organizations that offer some degree of mental health services, service providers and residents are concerned that some individuals are not accessing help due to lack of financial resources. Community Organizations should support the delivery of more services through the Will County Mental Health Department and existing organizations, in keeping with the recently completed Community Health Plan, before reaching taking any action to establish new mental health services.
- Other sections of the Plan discuss the need for a Planning Area community organization that would succeed the Quality of Life Task Force in representing the community and share responsibility for implementing the overall Plan and many of its critical proposals. These sections propose the formation of a Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC) as an appropriate entity to act for the community in these ways. Working with the United Way, the Social Service Council, the Continuum of Care and other social service provider networks, A Human Services Committee of the CDC could coordinate the implementation of the Plan's proposals for Human Capital.

Core Proposals

1. Continue to support the various collaborations and consortiums of service providers working in the Planning Area and encourage new opportunities to connect with residents.

Joliet appears to have a strong system of service providers who work collaboratively to address the needs of community residents. As these networks continue to develop in terms of communication, outreach, and referrals, there is an opportunity to increase the engagement of local residents with service providers.

Building this connection through employment, advisory committees, boards, or volunteerism will serve to enhance the effectiveness of the services provided as well as efforts to increase awareness among residents of the array of programs and services available in the community. Through the community workshops, residents acknowledged several programs and services available in their community and the network of service providers appears committed to achieving impact in meeting the needs of residents. As the role of residents in working with service providers is expanded through employment, board service or volunteerism, service providers can benefit from the added outreach. Also, engaging residents to assess current outreach efforts may help service providers streamline outreach efforts to ensure that individuals needing assistance are reached.

In addition to encouraging education and employment opportunities, in cooperation with the Workforce Investment Board, service providers may opt to convene residents annually for a community summit. During the summit, all participants would take part in assessing the progress in providing services and work together to explore new strategies to affect positive change. A combined summit involving all service providers would further demonstrate the strength of the existing networks and allow the network to incorporate community feedback into future service delivery strategies. This summit would also provide residents an opportunity to offer service provider constructive feedback on the effectiveness of the service delivery infrastructure and recommendations for improvements. Connecting residents, other stakeholders, and service providers creates a new team design in seeking to address the social challenges affecting communities and allows all parties to celebrate in positive outcomes.

2. Establish a resident leadership initiative to increase the number of residents actively engaged and accountable in the revitalization of the community.

Expanding the pool of residents to work along side service providers in addressing issues affecting local residents requires another type of capacity building strategy. While the Planning Area of Joliet does have a pool of resident leaders, there is an opportunity to expand this pool to include youth and adults with diverse interests and skills that could help implement positive change for the entire community.

Neighborhoods seeking to implement revitalization plans must also focus on building the skills of resident leaders. Broadening each resident's toolbox in participating in the planning and execution of community plans helps to keep everyone focused and positively engaged. For service providers interested in engaging local residents to serve on their respective boards or advisory committees, it is important to provide interested residents, including youth, with training on topics including governance, strategic thinking, community organizing, and leadership.

The Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC) can help encourage more residents, and youth in particular, to become leaders in their community through a specific initiative designed to help increase the leadership capacity of residents. This could be accomplished through a series of workshops and training. Entities such as NeighborWorks America, located in Washington DC provide a variety of training options for communities. Participants may attend one of the four Training Institutes held across the country and participate in a weeklong series of training classes.³² Communities can also arrange for the training to be brought directly into a neighborhood through Place-based Training. Neighbor Works also offers a Community Leadership Institute, which brings resident leaders from across the country together for a weekend of training. The University of Illinois Extension is another local resource that can design and coordinate training for residents.

The expansion of resident leaders can also focus on growing the pool of leaders by age, ethnicity, and gender. As community residents commented on the need for more mentors, Joliet has the opportunity to build upon the work of existing service providers to find new ways to broaden the pool of African American and Hispanic male mentors. Some of the social and civic

³² For more information on NeighborWorks go to: <http://www.nw.org>

organizations operating throughout Joliet can play an instrumental role in the program design and recruitment of male leaders to participate in this program.

A funding opportunity to help stimulate neighborhood revitalization and resident leadership capacity is the U.S. Department of Justice, Weed and Seed Communities designation. Designed to help communities address crime issues, build partnerships between residents and law enforcement, strengthen service delivery systems and encourage neighborhood restoration, the Weed and Seed Communities grant is a 5-year, one million dollar award for communities experiencing Part I crime with a population over 10,000 and demonstrated collaborations already operating.

3. Increase capacity building assistance to local nonprofits including community and faith-based organizations.

Joliet has the potential to strengthen its existing network of service providers by helping to build the capacity of community centers and other faith-based organizations. For many local residents, the community centers serve as a major resource for after school programming as well as other programs for adults and seniors. Other faith-based institutions were also acknowledged by stakeholders as providing some level of assistance to the community. While Joliet is fortunate to have the range of service providers operating in the City and in most instances, Districts 4 and 5, it is important to ensure these providers maintain their capacity to meet the growing need for assistance. Capacity building assistance also helps to ensure organizations are addressing diversity issues ranging from board and staff composition, resources (individual donors, corporations, foundations, and government grants) as well as communication, evaluation, technology, and service offerings.

Over the past several years, many foundations in Illinois along with public agencies have increased their commitment to support capacity-building efforts of local nonprofits. The federal government allocates millions each year to states in an effort to build the capacity of community and faith-based organizations serving at risk youth, ex-offenders, high-risk adults including the homeless and substance abusers. The Compassion Capital Fund provides up to \$500,000 annually over three years to support the capacity building efforts of nonprofits. City government and large nonprofits are typical recipients of this grant.

In 2006, a new federal grant focused on providing capacity building assistance to youth-serving organizations. In the state of Illinois, four organizations successfully secured these grants. Given the four community centers operating in Joliet, these organizations in conjunction with United Way would be an ideal team to pursue this funding opportunity of \$750,000 over three years.

4. Increase efforts to expand youth leadership programs specifically targeting youth residing in the Planning Area of Joliet.

By all accounts, service providers offer various youth programs that may reflect a leadership component; however, the community has few visible youth leaders in the Planning Area. Both residents and service providers acknowledged that youth as leaders on the Planning Area of Joliet is a void that must be addressed. A key benefit in focusing on developing more youth leaders includes the ability of other community youth to see more role models and peer mentors.

As we develop more youth leaders, these youngsters will also begin to provide more input in the design and delivery of programs that target area youth. Increasing the pool of youth leaders also expands the pool of social capital that can be leveraged as other aspects of the community begin to undergo a positive transformation.

Two strategies for broadening the pool of youth leaders include:

- Build upon existing programs to promote targeted opportunities to develop more local youth as leaders. A specific event could be hosted such as a Youth Leadership Summit.
- Coordinate the development of a new youth leadership initiative that builds on key resources including the community college, faith-based institutions, high schools, and other community-based organizations. While a leadership program for civic leaders in Joliet exists, a youth leadership program could be developed that specifically targets youth residing in the Planning Area. This type of program could be offered during the summer months and provide specific learning objectives achieved through classroom, volunteer, and perhaps outdoor education opportunities.

5. Support the collaborative efforts of local youth serving organizations.

Given the community's high level of concern for youth and the importance of youth for the future, particular efforts should be made by the Human Services Committee of the Planning Area CDC to communicate with and support the collaboratives of youth service providers including the Joliet Alliance for Youth and the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board. In coordination with these collaboratives, the CDC should consider conducting a survey that could be administered to junior and senior high school students to solicit their feedback regarding:

- Accessibility of youth programs
- Areas of interest
- Concerns they believe have not been addressed
- Potential strategies for engaging more youth in the community

The findings of this survey could inform planning for future programming and fund raising, which the Planning Area community should support through the CDC.

6. Explore the feasibility of modifying existing programs or establishing a new program to develop the technical and life skills of out-of-school young adults interested in securing living wage employment.

Working in conjunction with the Workforce Investment Board, explore the feasibility of pursuing a Department of Labor, Youthbuild grant that works to achieve living wage employment and skills training objectives. Another option may be to pursue a Jobs for Low-Income Individuals grant that provides funding for training to prepare individuals for higher skill jobs or micro enterprise.

Proposals Summary

Short Term (0-3 years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
1) Continue to support the various collaborations and consortiums of service providers working in the Planning Area of Joliet and encourage new opportunities to connect with residents.	Existing collaborations	1			
2) Establish a resident leadership initiative to increase the number of residents actively engaged and accountable in the revitalization of the community.	Representative Planning Area community organization, possibly a Community Development Corporation (CDC), United Way, University of St. Francis, Lewis University, Joliet Junior College (JCC), City of Joliet	1		\$35,000 - \$50,000	Area financial institutions, Foundations
3) Increase capacity building assistance to local nonprofits including community and faith-based organizations.	United Way, City of Joliet, JCC, Lewis University, University of St. Francis	1		\$500,000 - \$750,000	US Dept of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Administration for Children and Families Compassion Capital Fund (CCF) and Communities Empowering Youth (CEY) grants
4) Increase efforts to expand youth leadership programs specifically targeting youth	CDC, United Way, JCC, existing youth	1		\$50,000 - \$75,000	Area foundations, Corporations

residing in the Planning Area of Joliet.	serving org.				
5) Support local youth serving organizations and collaboratives, including a survey to determine program needs from a youth perspective and capacity level needs.	CDC, local youth serving organizations. and programs	1		\$15,000	Area foundations, Corporations
6) Explore the feasibility of modifying existing programs or establishing a new program to develop the technical and life skills of out-of-school young adults interested in securing living wage employment.	JCC, Workforce Investment Council	1		\$700,000 over three years	US Department of Labor (DOL) Youthbuild

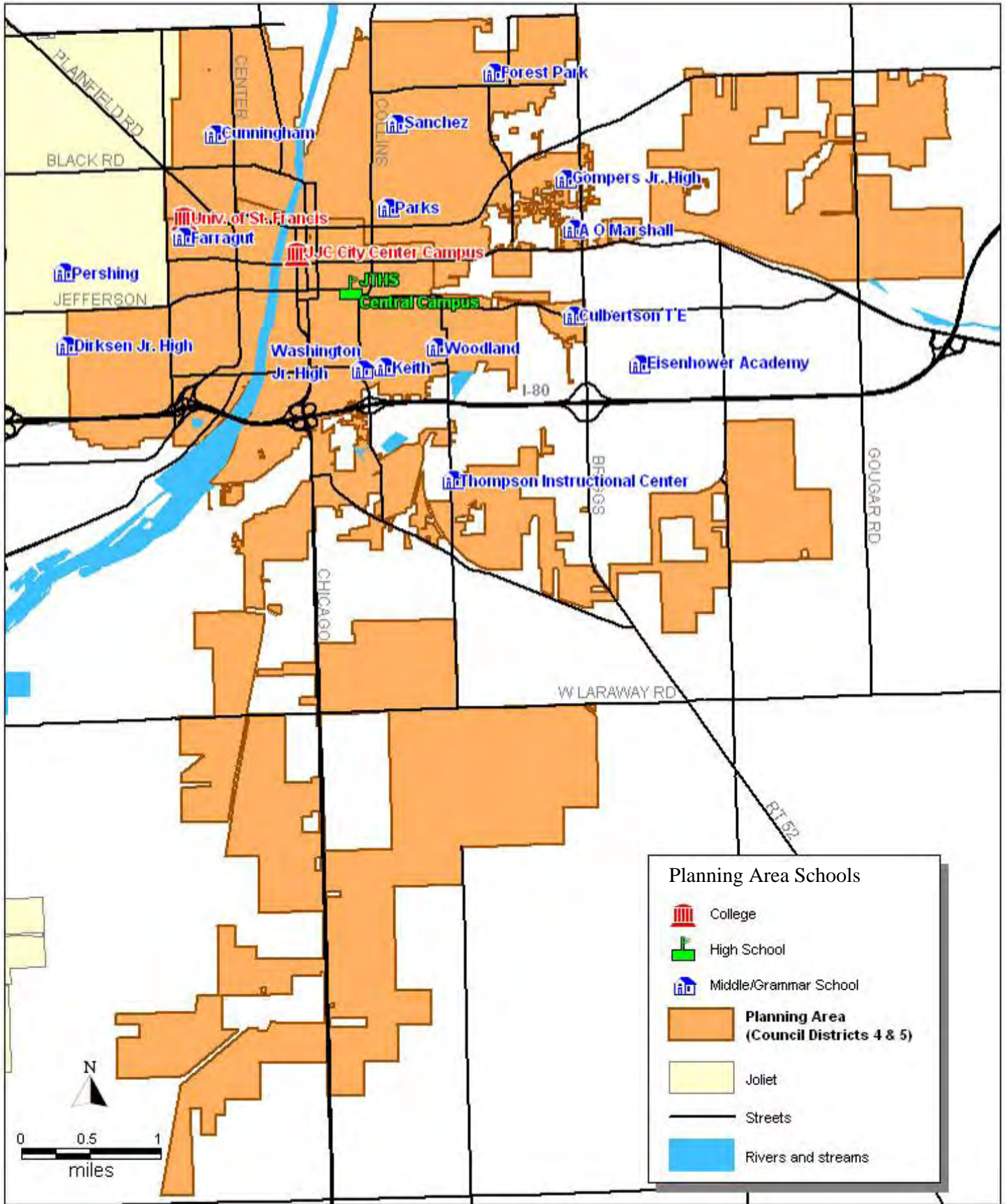
H. Education

Overview

As in other sections of the Quality of Life (QOL) Plan, this section on Education focuses on Council Districts 4 & 5 of the City of Joliet, the Planning Area for this Project. The findings for this section of the Plan provide an objective review of the current education infrastructure that supports children and youth living in the Planning Area. The purpose in conducting this review focused on understanding the current conditions within the various schools and programs serving children and youth. Steps taken as part of the review included interviews with key stakeholders, review of secondary documents including school report cards, strategic plans, and community sessions with residents.

Outcomes from this review yield findings and proposals for supporting the education infrastructure of Planning Area neighborhoods. These proposals serve to ensure that children and youth living in the Planning Area have maximum opportunities to advance academically and prepare to pursue a variety of post secondary education or career opportunities.

While there are various elements to the QOL Plan, education serves as an important foundation for addressing the needs and opportunities of residents in the short term as well as the long term. Continued investment in improving the quality of the entire education system ensures that children and youth will be prepared for the opportunities of tomorrow.



Key Findings

1. Schools on the Academic Warning List (WL) and Academic Early Warning List (AEWL).

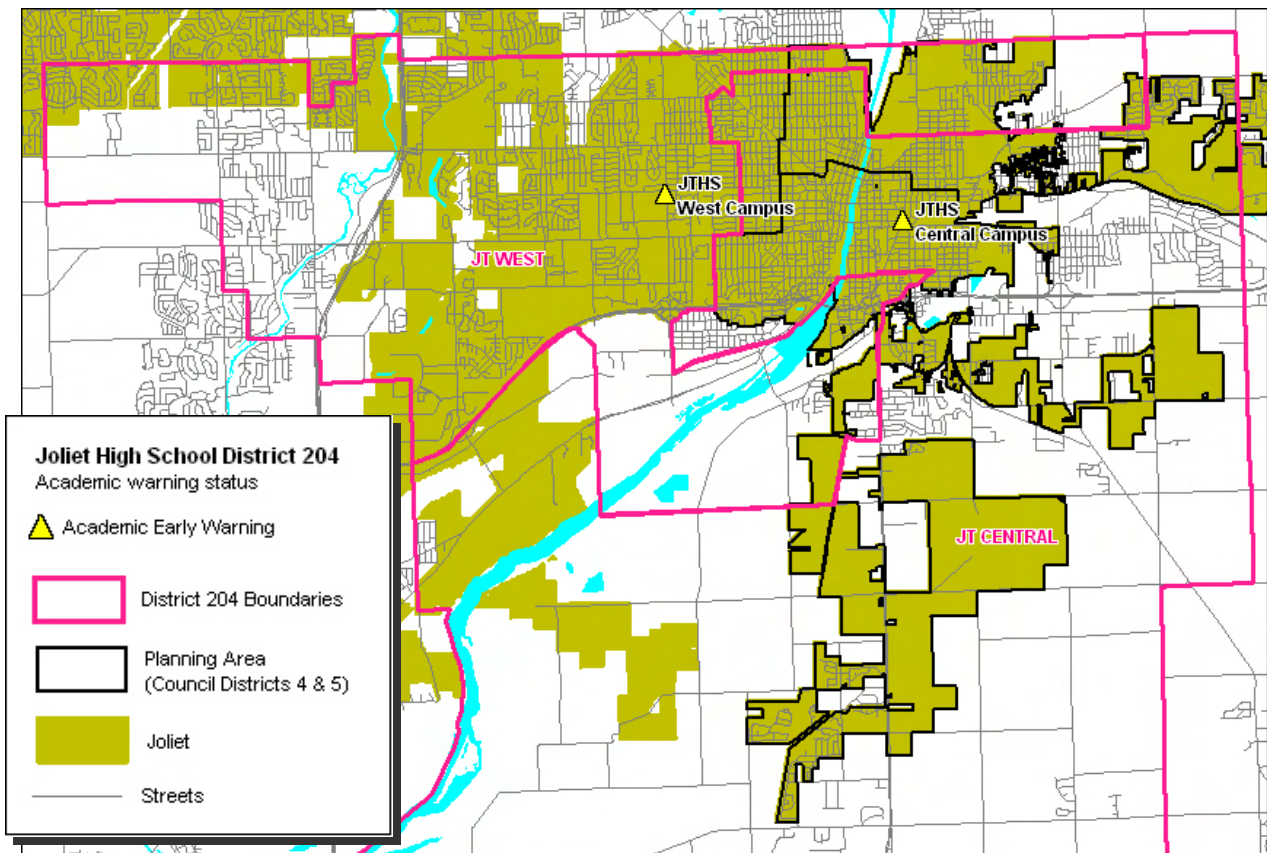
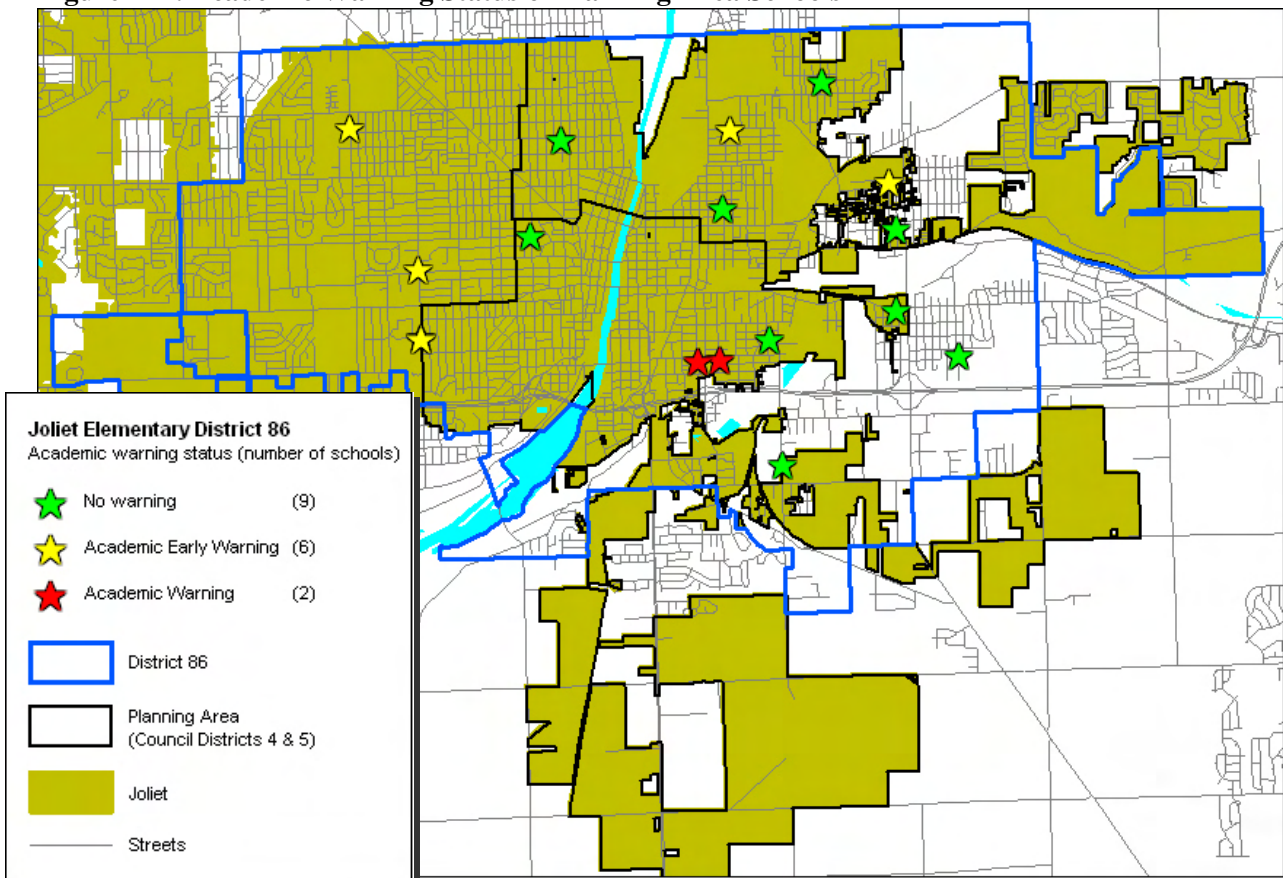
There are 28 private, charter and alternative schools (K-12) serving children and youth in Joliet. The focus of this review centered on the public schools within Districts 86 and 204, which are located in the Planning Area and serve primarily children from Planning Area neighborhoods.

In examining the 2006 School Report Cards for the elementary, junior high and high schools, ten schools were placed on the Illinois Academic Early Warning or Academic Warning List. From the elementary district (District 86) 3 elementary schools and 3 junior high schools were placed on the Early Academic Warning List. Also 1 elementary school and 1 junior high school were placed on the Academic Warning List. No report was available for Park Elementary, and Thompson Instructional Center has not been graded.

Academic challenges not adequately addressed at the elementary or junior high school level are likely to result in continued poor academic performance of students as they move to high school. So it is not surprising that both Joliet High Schools (District 204) have been placed on the Academic Early Warning List.

To provide a clearer picture of where the schools are located throughout the city, two maps depicting all of the schools in School Districts 86 and 204 are provided below. Schools reflecting either the AEWL or AWL status are also reflected in the map.

Figure H-2. Academic Warning Status of Planning Area Schools



To examine some of the commonalities as well as differences among the schools that serve children and youth living in the Planning Area, the following grid reflects all of the schools within Districts 86 and 204. It is understood that children and youth in the area may also attend schools in other school districts.

Table H-1. Planning Area Schools: Scores and Warning Lists

	Located in Planning Area	ISAT math grade 3/8	ISAT reading grade 3/8	PSAE Math Grade 11	PSAE reading Grade 11	AEWL	AWL
Joliet Schools							
A O Marshall Elementary School	*	78%	52%				
Cunningham Elementary School		86%	63%				
Edna Keith Elementary School	*	66%	46%				✓
Eisenhower Academy		98%	87%				
Farragut Elementary School		84%	62%				
Forest Park Individual Ed School	*	90%	69%				
Lynne Thigpen Elementary School		87%	76%			✓	
Pershing Elementary School		88%	64%			✓	
Sator Sanchez Elementary School	*	87%	58%			✓	
T E Culbertson Elementary School	*	67%	46%				
Thompson Instructional Center	*	---	---				
Woodland Elementary School	*	63%	41%				
Dirksen Junior High School		72%	70%			✓	
Gompers Junior High School	*	73%	64%			✓	
Hufford Junior High School		60%	63%			✓	
Washington Junior High School	*	57%	63%				✓
Joliet Central High School	*			28%	39%	✓	
Joliet West High School				39%	51%	✓	
Joliet Township High School - Alternate							

In addition to reviewing the school report cards and conducting interviews with key school officials, an examination was made of various documents including school improvement plans, strategic plans and special initiatives. This review confirms that District 86 is working to implement a variety of programs to help improve the academic performance of students – particularly in the area of reading. Some of the programs underway in the District include: 21st Century, Accelerated Reader, Children for Peace, Guided Reading, Larson Math, Reading Power Tutors, Read 180 and Joliet Reads.

2. Planned response to address academic deficiencies

Joliet District 86, which serves the elementary and junior high schools appears to be working aggressively to address and improve the academic performance of students. In looking at the District's overall and individual school ISAT scores between 2005 and 2006, all of the schools in the District experienced increases in the percentage of the students meeting or exceeding the Illinois Learning Standards. Based on the District's strategic plan, a number of programs and priorities have been established including federally and State funded initiatives to increase the reading levels of children. Only one school within the entire District, Edna Keith is on the Academic Warning List. In looking at a three-year trend of the reading score of third grade students, while the scores are still considerably lower than the District or State, there has been improvement in the scores. The following chart depicts a three-year trend in the Edna Keith elementary school reading scores.

Table H-2. Edna Keith Reading Scores

% Meeting/Exceed ISAE Standards	2004	2005	2006
3rd grade	41.1	45.6	45.6
4th grade	21.5	33.8	53.1
5th grade	35.4	19.8	40.5

District 204 failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress in both reading and math in 2006. Areas of concern include only 27% of the African American students meeting or exceeding standards for reading and 15.1% of the African American students meeting or exceeding standards for math. Students with disabilities and the economically disadvantaged also failed to meet or exceed standards in reading and math. Other indicators of concern include the low graduation rates among African Americans, Hispanics, students with disabilities and the economically disadvantaged.

The District developed a School Improvement Plan beginning in 2003 in an effort to address the deficiencies in reading, writing and math. Based on the plan, various grants have been secured to increase after school learning, while modifications have been made to in-school programming to provide additional assistance. The impact of the various programs deployed to date remains unclear; however, community stakeholders continue to be optimistic.

3. Chronic Truancy and Mobility rates in the elementary schools

Chronic truancy is more of a problem at the elementary school level versus high school. In looking at the 2006 Chronic Truancy rates for the elementary schools located in the Planning Area and comparing these rates with overall rate for District 86 and the State, TE Culbertson reflects one of the highest chronic truancy rates. While the District and State chronic truancy rates were 3.1 and 2.2 respectively, TE Culbertson's rate was 10.9. The remaining schools in the Planning Area maintained truancy rates lower than the District's or consistent with the State's rate.

There are several factors that may contribute to a high truancy rate for a child including lack of parental supervision, problems in the home, high mobility resulting from parent employment,

school factors including relationships with teacher, other students, or even the administrators as well as personal issues. Truancy is considered an early warning sign that a child could be headed towards involvement in other delinquent activities, if not addressed.

In looking at the mobility rates among the elementary, junior high and high schools, several elementary and junior high schools reflect significantly higher rates than the District and State. While the District’s overall rate is higher than the State, Sator Sanchez, AO Marshall and TE Culbertson, all maintained rates near the District’s rates. Edna Keith and Woodland, reflect mobility rates that nearly double the State’s mobility rate. Factors contributing to the high mobility rates may be related to unstable housing or seasonal employment for parents. The following chart depicts the chronic truancy and mobility rates for the elementary schools in the Planning Area as compared with the District and State. It should be noted that at the junior high level, three of the four schools also reflected high mobility rates in excess of the District’s rate.

Table H-3. Chronic Truancy and Mobility

	AO Marshall	Edna Keith	TE Culbertson	Forrest Park	Eisenhower Academy	Woodland	Sator Sanchez	District	State
Chronic Truancy	2.8	2.2	10.9	1.7	0	2.4	0.8	3.1	2.2
Mobility	20.7	30.9	25.5	11.1	5	31.5	24.4	24.4	16

4. Higher Drop Out Rate Among African American High School Students

Completion of high school is a critical benchmark as youth are successful in completing the first hurdle in preparation for the workforce. In looking at the high school drop out rates by race/ethnicity, the graduation rate among white students increased from 2003 to 2006. Hispanic students attending Central High School experienced a drop in the graduation rate for the same time period, but experienced an increase in the graduation rate for West High School. Asian, Pacific Islander and Native American students either achieved a 100% graduation rate or moved from a lower rate in 2003 to a 100% rate in 2006. Between 2003 and 2006, the number of African Americans graduating from both schools in the District declined. There are several factors that may be contributing to the low graduation rate among African American students, which may stem from academic challenges from earlier years.

It is imperative to focus on why the graduation rate among African Americans is actually declining, while other racial/ethnic groups are rising. Again, other risk factors involving family, the environment, the school or the individual student need could be contributing to the decline in high school graduates. Research shows that students experiencing academic challenges are more likely to drop out of school after years of frustration. Failing to see other role models among family and friends in successfully completing school and then moving on to a well-paying vocation or college can also contribute to a student’s decision to drop out.

Table H-4. High School Graduation Rates

Graduation Rates	White Students	Black Students	Hispanic Students	Asian/Pacific Islander Students	Native American Students
Central - 2003	71.8	↓ 69.8	85.8	100	0
Central - 2006	73.9	↓ 67.0	73.5	100	100
West - 2003	93.2	↓ 82.9	79.7	78.6	100
West - 2006	93	↓ 77.1	86.5	100	0
District - 2003	84.3	75.1	84.2	84.2	100
District - 2006	84.9	71.3	76.3	100	25
State - 2003	91	73.3	75.5	92.5	77.8
State - 2006	92.3	78.3	77.1	94.1	80.5

5. Preparation of Youth for Opportunities Beyond High School

District 204 and in particular, Central High School has implemented several in-school programs designed to prepare youth for broader career or education options upon graduation. Seeking to respond to disappointing academic performance, and to better prepare students for a future career and/or college, Central High School has established a series of small learning communities. The “Freshman Academy” helps 9th graders transition to high school and make informed decisions about their high school and post-secondary opportunities. A longer school day for freshman also enables the school to provide more academic support and on-site support from various community service groups. 10-12th graders are then tracked into 5 “Career Academies”: Art/Communications, Business Management and Information Systems, Engineering/Industrial Technology, Health and Sciences and Human Services. The academies provide all students with a college preparation level of instruction, which is made more relevant by the focus areas of the academies. Within the Career Academies there are designated “Career Pathways:” coherent, articulated sequences of academic and career/technical courses which, in partnership with postsecondary education, business and employers, prepare students for postsecondary employment. Through these Career Pathways, the high school offers several articulated courses with Joliet Junior College to allow students to secure college credits while completing high school. The format of the career academies provides an excellent opportunity to encourage youth to explore various career options.

While the Career Academies/small learning communities program is still coming to full implementation it is difficult to assess the full benefits the program may provide in terms of immediate and future academic success (i.e. drop-out rates and college enrollment or career placement). The challenge remains for District 86 and other surrounding elementary/middle school districts to prepare students from the junior high schools to perform at their appropriate academic levels, to ensure they are adequately prepared to take advantage of these high school opportunities.

Joliet Junior College offers 45-50 technical programs including nursing, logistics/warehousing, radiology, business management and truck driving. There is a commitment to add more programs to meet the need of area employers. JJC currently does not track the ethnic breakdown

of the community and there is a desire to expand minority outreach efforts. JJC's relationship with District 204 continues to build a continuum of career programs for students.

6. Growing Diversity of Students and Lack of Diversity among District Teaching Staff

In looking at the student population for Districts 86 and 204 from 2003 to 2006, the number of white students attending public schools in Joliet is declining. In contrast, the number of Hispanic students is rising in both Districts. There has been a slight decline in African American students, an increase at the elementary/junior high level for Asian/Pacific Islanders and a slight decrease at the high school level. Native American students remained constant at both levels.

Table H-5. Student Diversity

	White Students	Black Students	Hispanic Students	Asian/Pacific Islander Students	Native American Students	Total Students
District 86- 2003	23.8	38.5	36.7	0.8	0.2	9,448
District 86 - 2006	19.1	34.2	43.9	1.5	0.2	9,773
District 204 - 2003	41.6	30.6	26.2	1.4	0.3	4,779
Central High	30.5	31.6	36.8	1	0.1	2,633
West High	55.2	29.3	13.1	1.9	0.4	2,146
District 204 -2006	38.3	29.7	30.1	0.8	0.3	5,120
Central High	27.6	30.9	40.5	0.5	0.4	2,702
West High	50.1	28.4	18.5	1.2	0.2	2,418
Aurora District 131- 2006	7.3	9.8	80.8	0.7	0.2	12,316
Aurora District 129 - 2006	37.9	18.5	40.6	2	0.2	12,301

While the number of Hispanic students appears to be growing, the teaching staff within both districts has remained relatively the same. Interviews with stakeholders indicate that both Districts are working to find new ways to recruit Hispanic teachers; however, this appears to be a problem across the State. One District that looks to have made some progress in diversifying its teaching staff is Aurora School District 131. Given the 80.1% Hispanic student population, the District reflects a 22.2% Hispanic teaching staff.

Table H-6. Student and Teacher Diversity Comparison

	White Students	White Teachers	Black Students	Black Teachers	Hispanic Students	Hispanic Teachers	Total Students	Total Teachers
District 86- 2003	23.8	85.3	34.2	8.9	36.7	4.5	9,448	529
District 86 - 2006	19.1	83.3	34.2	7.8	43.9	7.4	9,773	564
District 204 - 2003	41.6	86.9	30.6	8	26.2	4.5	4,779	313
Central High	30.5		31.6		36.8		2,633	

West High	55.2		29.3		13.1		2,146	
District 204 - 2006	38.3	87.3	29.7	6.8	30.1	4.7	5,120	322
Central High	27.6		30.9		40.5		2,702	
West High	50.1		28.4		18.5		2,418	
Aurora 131 2006	7.3	72.7	9.8	4.6	80.8	22.2	12,316	700
Aurora 129 2006	37.9	90.2	18.5	4.1	40.6	5.1	12,301	713

7. Need for Increased Community and Parent Engagement

Through interviews with community stakeholders and review of various District level and school level documents, there are several programs deployed to focus on improving the academic performance of children and youth in school. In looking at the test scores, several of the schools appear to be making progress. A consistent concern expressed relative to improving the reading, science and math levels of area students pertains to the engagement of the overall community and more specifically parents. While the school report cards suggest that parent participation is relatively high, consistent involvement in working with their children resonated repeatedly during interviews and discussion groups. Parent-focused initiatives such as the Premier Academy, which offers Parents University for at-risk youth is just one example of a program focused on parents. Districts 86 and 204 encourage parent involvement and offer different programs and meeting opportunities for parents to become involved in working with the schools. For example, a Hispanic branch of Central High School's Parent Club is large and well-attended. Yet the need still remains for more parents or caregivers to become involved with the development of their children on a consistent basis.

In a survey conducted by a Lansing Michigan-based coalition, the results demonstrated it is imperative that a parent take responsibility in helping their child's teacher understand their child. When parents worked with the teacher to better understand their child, these parents were less likely to feel like outsiders at the school and take a more active role in helping their child learn. While most parents argue that they have limited time to devote to their child's school work, it is important for parents to understand the critical role they play in helping to create a stimulating environment for their child at school and at home.

Parents also need to work with other parents to help address some of the challenges in schools that ultimately affect a child's behavior. The concern for crime in the school is one example of something parents can work to address for the safety of all children in school.

Proposals

Strategic Considerations

While some of the Joliet schools face serious academic challenges, in reviewing multiple years of the report card data, school strategic plans, school improvement plans and comparing this data

with feedback from community stakeholders, progress is being made in most areas. In looking at the various programs offered to focus on learning improvement, Joliet has successfully tapped the full range of funding opportunities available by public and private sources to help improve the academic performance of students. One of the elementary schools, Eisenhower Academy, received the 2006 Academic Excellence award.

District 86, along with community partners should continue implementing diverse programs designed to stimulate learning and overcome risk factors that may affect a child's learning environment. Collaborating with the University of St. Francis to implement the Professional Development Series is another example of how schools are working together to identify and test best practice models to help increase the academic performance of students. Although several of the schools face AWL, AEWL or chronic truancy or high mobility rates, there are some bright notes for the community.

As for the District 204, the focus on career academies and small learning communities seems promising. The deployment of programs at both elementary/junior high and high school levels should continue to be endorsed.

As Districts 86 and 204 continue to implement their respective improvement plans and strategic plans, there are some factors associated with the academic progress of students that should be monitored by the overall community. While it is expected that the collective scores of each school should continue to rise, the community should continue to look at the racial/ethnic, gender, income level breakdown of students to determine if all students are making acceptable progress. For example, while the overall high school graduation rate for District 204 is considered acceptable, the rate for African American students attending Central High School is extremely low as compared with other school districts such as Aurora and the State. This may suggest that while there are programs in place to help the general student population improve academically, other factors may be contributing to the declining graduation rate among African Americans.

Conditions in the home environment, historical high mobility rates, or exposure of the juvenile justice system are some of the factors that could be affecting the graduation rate. The District may need to deploy some type of early warning system to monitor whether a student is at risk of not graduating. Convening human service providers that serve high school youth to discuss potential factors outside the school environment that may be affecting the graduation rates should be conducted on a bi-annual basis. This will help determine if new programs or modifications to existing programs is warranted.

District 204 may also want to look more aggressively at finding ways to expand the pool of role models for its students who are at risk of not graduating. The District is encouraged to provide more opportunities for recent high school graduates who have enrolled in vocational programs or college to return and interact with students on a limited basis (summer or school breaks). Given the low number of minority teachers on staff, increasing exposure of minority students to minority graduates may help more students to realize their dreams beyond high school.

It is also important to examine the progress of the schools from an individual level as well as in comparison with other schools in Joliet and the State. Strategies and programs deployed by both Districts may be achieving some success, but closing the gap in academic performance throughout the Districts will require continued commitment and focus of resources for many years to come.

As is the cases for proposals in other section of this plan, the implementation of Education proposals will require the formation of an organization that can act on behalf of the Planning Area community. Other sections of the Plan discuss and propose the formation of a Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC) that would succeed the Quality of Life Task Force in representing the community and share responsibility for implementing the overall Plan and many of its critical proposals. Working with Districts 86 and 204 and with other organizations involved in providing educations services for Planning Area children and youth, an Education Committee of the CDC could coordinate the implementation of the Plan's proposals for Education.

Proposals

1. Establish mechanisms to monitor the impact of all academic enrichment efforts.

Given the number of programs underway in the community focused on improving the academic performance of children and youth, the opportunity exists to assess the collective impact of these programs and monitor the number and diversity of students accessing these programs. Sharing data relative to attendance, testing, and other environmental factors affecting children and youth will help to assess the progress of children and youth residing in the community. In creating this mechanism, more information can be collected and analyzed to understand what percentage of the students actually receive assistance and what barriers may exist that prevent other students from accessing the various programs and services available in the community. This mechanism is especially important in examining potential efforts to increase the graduation rate of Central High School students and tracking the next steps of graduates to ensure successful transitions into post secondary education or the workforce.

2. Reduce high mobility and chronic truancy rates through community education.

Various studies confirm that mobility along with ethnicity and socioeconomic status are all factors that serve as predictors of poor performance for children and youth in school. In looking at schools with high mobility rates, these schools did perform lower on tests than schools with lower mobility rates. While chronic truancy is a concern in some of the schools, more schools are struggling with high mobility rates. High mobility rates for children in the elementary schools might explain why all of the junior high schools are experiencing academic challenges as students are not receiving consistent educational training in their early years.

While parents may not be moving their children in and out of the District, leading researchers contend constant changes in schools may have a negative impact on the student's performance.

While housing appears to be a top factor in contributing to the frequent moves, the community should be encouraged to examine whether access to safe and affordable housing might contribute to the high mobility rate. It is important to stress that ‘safe and affordable’ are relative terms. If a family has experienced some level of crime in a neighborhood, it may no longer consider the area to be safe. Affordability is tied to income and expenses. If a family experiences swings in the household income, a home considered to be affordable in 2005, may no longer be affordable in 2006. Other factors such as gas, medical bills and food are also factors that influence whether a home remains affordable to the family.

Increased coordination with workforce development agencies may also help identify families that are high risk for moving. Area schools appear to be trying different initiatives to help address this issue internally, but it is imperative that the community receive more information regarding this issue and the long term implications for children and youth.

3. Broaden efforts to increase the level of parental/care giver engagement with area schools

The Planning Area reflects a number of prominent faith-based and community-based organizations. As area schools have implemented various educational campaigns and work to increase the level of parental involvement, faith-based institutions could be instrumental in broadening the dissemination of a unified message to parents about the importance of their involvement with their child’s education. A unified message may also help raise the awareness of what parental involvement means while also identifying other barriers that may prohibit parents from being more engaged.

4. Create a community technology plan to increase the use of technology in Joliet’s Planning Area homes.

While no specific estimates could be determined on the number of computers located in homes in the Planning Area, national research confirms that low-income communities and communities of color are less likely to have computer technology in the home. The proposed Education Committee of the Planning Area Community Development Corporation, discussed above, can help stimulate increased use of computer technology in the homes by supporting the development of a computer technology plan.

Although a number of the community service providers offer computer labs, the proposed CDC – working with the City of Joliet may want explore how to help families gain access to the internet from their homes. In developing a community technology plan including financial feasibility and funding sources, the CDC and City of Joliet may want to investigate establishing a WiFi network. Cities including Aurora have established a WiFi network with some financial support derived from both public and private sector sources.

Recognizing that creating a WiFi network will be useful to only individuals and families with existing computer technology in the home, the community technology plan should focus on exploring more ways to provide families with refurbished computers. The CDC may want to encourage public agencies that regularly purchase new computers and discard older models to donate these computers to the local high school to increase training opportunities for youth to

work on computers that can ultimately be given to families. Public agencies to be tapped for this type of project may also include federal agencies operating in Chicago. Several public and private programs exist around the country providing an outlet for individuals to donate their old computers for refurbishing.

5. Diversify the tools used to celebrate the educational progress in the schools.

Communicate the overall progress of both Districts to the community so that all can celebrate the accomplishments as well as work on common areas of improvement. This may be done through a community wide newspaper or public access channel on television.

6. Convene regular community dialogues to discuss accomplishments and areas of improvement relative to all aspects of the community including education.

Allowing community residents to share in discussions about the overall transformation of their neighborhoods allows them to become active participants in the transformation process versus recipients. Community dialogues provide an excellent forum to share with community residents, what has been accomplished to date, what is currently being implemented and areas for improvement. The goal in hosting this type of dialogue is to help more community residents learn how to become more engaged in issues affecting their community such as education. Community dialogues also provide opportunities for long-term residents to network with new residents and engage in constructive problem solving activities that support the work of the local schools.

7. Increase opportunities for minority role models to help reverse poor graduation rates among African American and Hispanic high school students.

District 204 has the unique opportunity to expand the bridge in the target communities between the African American and Hispanic students who graduated from high school and those that are at risk for not graduating. Allowing more students who moved onto the next phase of their life to come back and share their experiences with high school students can serve as a powerful tool for students and high school graduates. The District is encouraged to work with other community groups, institutions of higher education, and faith-based institutions to explore ways to connect recent high school graduates with high school students. This may include activities over the summer, during school breaks and should not be limited to only those students who are in college to ensure students are exposed to the widest range of career options.

8. Establish a goal to increase the number of minority teachers.

Support of strong education improvement plans must include as a top priority, a focus on increasing the number of minority teachers. While schools districts across the State struggle to identify and retain good minority teachers, it must become a priority for the community and the schools to achieve this goal. Recognizing that over the next five years, many of the current teachers within Districts 86 and 204 will be retiring, it is imperative that both Districts establish plans to focus new hiring opportunities for minority candidates.

To achieve a more diverse workforce, the schools will need additional resources to invest in developing a minority recruitment program. A 2004 report conducted by the National Education Association reinforced the importance of diversifying the teaching pool and the challenges associated with recruiting teachers of color. At least three options exist to support the goal of hiring more minority teachers. While one option might be to recruit from other school districts, Joliet has a number of quality secondary education institutions that could play an important role in helping to groom high school students for these important positions. An early preparation program that begins preparing high school students who might be interested in returning to Joliet to teach could be established. Beyond traditional career academies, this type of initiative will require students to be exposed to younger teachers – some of whom may have graduated from the same high school. These younger teachers can help students understand the requirements and benefits of selecting teaching as a profession. A pilot program already exists in the Future Teachers club at the high school level which partners the University of St. Francis. This program could be expanded as part of this proposal. Support from the corporate sector could also aid in providing scholarships for students who elect to pursue this path.

Educational institutions such as Governors State University have established urban teaching programs to help expand the pool of teacher working in urban schools. This program should be explored by the Education Committee of the CDC. Another avenue is for Joliet to consider is partnering with Historically Black Colleges and Hispanic Institutions to recruit graduating students to move to Joliet. Internship opportunities created for these students could help prepare future teachers to consider employment opportunities in Joliet.

Finally officers in the CDC, the school districts, and City government should take advantage of the broad perspective of the QOL Plan to consider strategies for attracting minority teachers. For example, the Housing section of this Plan proposes implementation of an Employer Assisted Housing program to help more working families become home owners in the Planning Area. This program could provide a strong incentive to teachers to work in Planning Area schools and live in their school neighborhoods.

Plan of Action

Proposals Summary					
Short Term (0-3 years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
1) Establish mechanism to monitor the impact of all academic enrichment efforts.	Planning Area community organization, possibly the Education Committee of a Community Development Corporation	1		\$30,000- \$50,000	City of Joliet, Foundations, IL Dept of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)

	(CDC), Districts 86 and 204, Community service providers				
2) Increase education throughout the community on the affects of high mobility and chronic truancy rates.	CDC, Districts 86 and 204	1		\$50,000- \$75,000	IL State Board of Education (ISBE), Foundations, Dept. of Education
3) Broaden efforts to increase the level of parental/care given engagement with area schools.	CDC	1			IL Dept. of Human Services (DHS), ISBE, Foundations
4) Create community technology plan to increase the use of technology to help bridge the digital divide.	City of Joliet, CDC	2			DCEO, Homeland Security, Foundations
5) Diversify the tools used to celebrate educational progress in the schools.	CDC, Districts 86 and 204 Joliet Junior College (JCC) and area universities	2			Private sector, Foundations
6) Convene regular community dialogues to discuss accomplishments and areas of improvement relative to all aspects of the community including education.	CDC, City of Joliet, Faith and community-based organizations, Districts 86 and 204	1		\$15,000 annually	Small businesses, Foundations, Corporations

Long Term (3+ years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
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7) Increase opportunities for minority role models to help reverse poor graduation rates among African American and Hispanic high school students.	Districts 86 and 204, JCC, University of St. Francis	1			
8) Establish a program to increase the number of minority teachers.	Districts 86 and 204, JCC, CDC, Lewis University, University of St. Francis	1			U.S. Department of Education, Ford Foundation

I. Interlocking Issues

The preceding sections of the Quality of Life Plan summarize critical information and present proposals for action for the individual topic areas that fall within the broad framework of the Plan. Several issues that require action if the Planning Area is to be redeveloped successfully are interlaced with a number of the Plan's topic areas. These interlocking issues are discussed in the following section; they include:

- A Community Development Corporation for the Planning Area
- The development of Downtown Joliet
- The development of unincorporated areas adjacent to the Planning Area

The Proposed Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC)

Most of the individual topic areas of the Plan propose action steps that need be performed by an organization acting on behalf of the community and would desirably be performed by a Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC). So to make the Plan fully understandable and ready for implementation we need to clarify:

- (1) What the proposed CDC would be and do
- (2) How the CDC's role differs from and compliments the roles of existing organizations
- (3) How the CDC may be formed and funded

What the Planning Area CDC Should Be and Do

Good CDCs

A community development corporation (CDC) is a common type of not-for-profit organization that exists to generate commercial business, housing, or job development in a community, in the interests of that community. CDCs commonly play an integrative role – they bring together local government support, funding from a number of public and philanthropic sources, private business investment, and the vision and local knowledge of community residents to make projects happen. The projects might be new businesses, homes, or services (such as job training or transportation) that are needed in the community. What makes a project happen might be the CDC's work in identifying a funding source and writing a successful grant application; or the CDC becoming an equity partner in a development deal; or the CDC becoming a counselor to small businesses or home buyers in a targeted community. As organizations created for the good of the community CDCs also sometimes organize or support community initiatives on issues that are generally not viewed as directly related to development such as programs for neighborhood racial integration, the care of the elderly, and the training of youth in practical skills. The work of CDCs is demonstrated by several effective organizations in the Chicago area:

Greater Southwest Development Corporation (GSDC) has been working since 1974 to build up the commercial, industrial, and housing sinews of an extensive community area, while also

galvanizing community commitment to important social issues including support for seniors and positive race relations. Working closely with the City of Chicago, GSDC has helped to attract over \$500 million in commercial investment to three carefully planned commercial corridors, including a central corridor with a super market-anchored shopping center. GSDC has also been a pioneer with the City of Chicago in the nationally respected “Local Industrial Retention Initiative” in which GSDC staff networking with existing and new industrial business owners has helped to funnel in appropriate public incentive programs, resolve issues with residential neighbors, and match labor needs with institutions that train skilled workers. GSDC also operates a local Special Service Area to help strengthen the 63rd Street commercial district. GSDC’s housing programs have taken the form of counseling and financing assistance for new home purchases, foreclosure prevention, home repair and remodeling, and home retention and independent living for seniors. GSDC’s home ownership counseling programs have played an important role in achieving an ethnic transition from virtually all White to highly diverse neighborhoods while maintaining steadily rising property values.

Joseph Corporation was established in 1991 to address affordable housing through homeownership with a focus primarily in the city of Aurora. Over the years, Joseph Corporation has grown to focus on homeownership, lending, and real estate development to accomplish its mission. Since 1999, Joseph Corporation has been a chartered member of the NeighborWorks® America, formerly Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, which brings together 235 non-profit housing developers serving over 1,400 communities across the nation. The staff of Joseph Corporation offers credit and budget counseling, education about the homeownership process, mortgage counseling, and post-purchase counseling. Joseph Corp also provides information about home buyer financial assistance programs, offers counseling for employer-assisted housing programs, and is a HUD certified homeownership counseling agency. In addition, Joseph Corporation purchases distressed properties, rehabilitates them, and sells them to qualified homebuyers. Through its New Start Program, Joseph works with both acquisition/rehab and new construction on vacant lots.

The Resurrection Project (TRP) was founded in 1990 with a capital investment of \$30,000 pooled together by six local churches. Since that time, TRP has helped to inject over \$146 million in commercial and housing investment into the predominantly Mexican neighborhoods it serves on the near south and southwest sides of Chicago. Affordable housing has been an emphasis for TRP. The organization has built 196 housing units (a mixture of resident-owned and rented homes) on 140 formerly vacant lots; and TRP is working to build an additional 200 resident-owned homes and 150 apartments by 2010. TRP provides counseling for new home buyers, as well as home ownership maintenance and financing, and general financial literacy education for its neighborhood population, which has a very low average attainment in formal education. TRP’s commercial activity has focused on support services for small business owners, projects to build patronage of local businesses, and currently the creation of a pedestrian plaza as a center piece for the community’s primary commercial district. TRP has also been instrumental in establishing two day care centers to help parents work and in the provision of training for building trades.

Quad Communities Development Corporation (QCDC) was established in 2003 to serve four predominantly African-American communities in the middle area of Chicago’s south side. More

than a year of QCDC's initial effort was invested in developing a quality of life plan that identified the primary assets, needs, opportunities and development strategies for its neighborhoods, and the organization has already made notable progress in implementing its plan. Deficits in the local public schools were seen as primary community problems, and QCDC has negotiated partnerships between seven neighborhood schools and universities that are providing substantial expertise and resources for improvements. QCDC established partnerships with a major local bank and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) as well as the City of Chicago to assess the market and plan redevelopment for the major commercial corridor in its community area. Redevelopment of the Cottage Grove corridor has been reliant on QCDC active marketing of the street, which has included attending International Council of Shopping Centers conferences and partnering with a local arts organization to involve youth in developing the slogan, banners, and general design elements to the commercial corridor. The City of Chicago has established a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district as the first major step in implementing this corridor plan. QCDC also recognized a need for improved public transportation from its neighborhoods to nearby employment centers, and the organization has worked with the CTA and other regional transportation agencies to modify bus routes and establish a shuttle bus service to capitalize on the community's proximity to job sites.

General CDC Support and Funding: Each of the CDCs noted in these examples (and most CDCs) are supported by a combination of contributions from residents and stakeholders in the community area, fees for service or other earned income, funding from local or higher levels of government (sometimes in the form of contracts to perform specific services), and philanthropic grants. Younger CDCs tend to be more heavily dependent on philanthropic grants and general support from local government. More mature organizations tend to derive more of their revenue from earned income.

General CDC Mission and Functions: As the preceding examples illustrate, CDCs share a general mission of achieving economic redevelopment for the benefit of their communities, but the specific functions and tasks they take on vary according to local needs and opportunities. In virtually all cases, partnerships and influence are critical, and the value that CDCs bring to their communities lies less in what they do or spend directly than in what they leverage. CDCs work with their partners in government, business, and civic institutions, and they generally perform the tasks that will enable a partner to invest more in the community, or they fill a gap in what the other partners can do so that the community's development plan is implemented.

Mission of the Planning Area CDC

The mission of a Planning Area CDC would be to achieve implementation of the Quality of Life Plan for Joliet Council Districts 4 and 5. The CDC would share direct responsibility for implementing most of the proposals of the Plan, and its members would track progress on those proposals for which the CDC would not have direct implementation responsibility. So the CDC would have a range of functions and many specific tasks, but its core mission would be to serve as the organization that had the trust of the community and the backing of the City to see that the multifaceted QOL Plan is carried out.

Functions of the Planning Area CDC

The possible functions of the CDC are described in regard to each topic area in the preceding section of the Plan. The presentation on each topic area concludes with a chart that summarizes:

- The action proposals for that topic area
- The organization(s) that will have or share responsibility for implementing each proposal
- Potential funding sources for each proposal
- The estimated cost of implementing those proposals when they can be usefully estimated at this stage of the planning and development process

Some 75 specific proposals are described in this way; 49 of the proposals call for a representative community organization, possibly a CDC to be a partner in implementation, and for 47 of these proposals, which involve the CDC, should involve funding sources other than or in addition to the City of Joliet in order to carry out the proposal. In the following table we have selected and summarized some of the Plan's proposals that exemplify the core functions of the CDC.

Table I-1. CDC Core Functions Summary

CDC Function	Responsibility	Potential Funding Sources
Determine locations & create conceptual plans for development corridors and target areas within which integrated retail business and housing will be developed. Ensure market viability and community vision in these planned areas.	City of Joliet & CDC	Regional planning agencies: Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and Chicago Metropolitan Area for Planning (CMAP)/ State of Illinois Agencies: Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (IDCEO) and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)/ Foundations
Extend incentive programs to Planning Area development corridors and target areas. Ensure community input to and support for new/extended designations.	City of Joliet & CDC	Per the designated area plan: Tax Increment Finance (TIF), Special Service Area (SSA), Business Improvement District (BID), applied Community Development Block Grant (CBDG), City of Joliet funds.
Market planned development corridors and target areas to the development community.	City of Joliet & CDC	Foundations/ In-kind support from: Will County Center for Economic Development (WCED)/ Regional sustainable development advocates including Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) and Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT)
Develop and execute land assembly plans (Possibly integrated with the plans of selected developers/ Possibly involving the CDC as an owner of	City of Joliet & CDC	City of Joliet with selected incentive programs (as noted above)/ IDCEO programs including incentives for business

property).		retention and relocation/ Federal Economic Development Administration programs and Treasury programs including access to New Market Tax Credits if the CDC becomes a “Certified Development Entity”/ Revenue from land transactions and CDC service fees
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Implement planned streetscaping, signage, and lighting improvements in retail & housing corridors and target development areas	City of Joliet & CDC	City of Joliet with selected incentive programs (as noted above)/ IDCEO/ IDOT/ Foundations for neighborhood beautification and traffic safety measures
Structure financing pools and matching funds to provide incentives for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small and moderate business development • Home purchase, rehabilitation & maintenance focused on retail & housing corridors and target redevelopment areas	CDC with Local banks & City of Joliet	Local banks/ City of Joliet/ State agencies including Illinois Finance Authority (IFA) / IDCEO/ State Treasurer’s Office/ Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA)/ Fees for service/ Foundations
Establish and manage a service dedicated to helping small businesses in the Planning Area benefit from planned area development by providing: information about business development incentives and loan programs; guidance and assistance in business plan development, in securing financing, in business management and growth.	CDC with Local banks & City of Joliet; also potentially: Joliet Junior College (JJC), existing Small Business Development Center (SBDC); Joliet Regional Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Chamber)	Same funding set as the preceding proposal, less IHDA
Establish and manage a One-Stop-Shop for homeowner services including: information about homeownership incentives and loan products; counseling for new home buyers, home owners who need guidance or financing in making home maintenance	CDC with Local banks and City of Joliet	Same funding set as the preceding proposal, plus IHDA

investments, owners facing foreclosure.		
Multiply and coordinate van pools as an important means of linking Planning Area workers to employment centers. Build network of employers, Workforce System agencies, community organizations, and workers to achieve this result.	CDC, Pace, City of Joliet	Pace/ CMAP/Federal Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and successor funding/ Foundations/ City of Joliet
Connect more Planning Area workers to skilled jobs by coordinating a “Community Employment Task Force” that will recommend new policies on 9 major issues that limit worker access to skilled jobs.	CDC, Will County Workforce Investment Board and its partner organizations	Workforce Investment Board/ Federal Workforce Investment Act funds/ Foundations

The preceding proposals provide a representative, though far from exhaustive, list of the major tasks that a Planning Area community organization, desirably the QOL Planning Area CDC, needs to perform. These tasks may be summarized in terms of six major functions:

Partner in Corridor and Target Area Development: The CDC should be the City of Joliet’s effective partner in carrying out the redevelopment of new retail corridors integrated with supporting residential development. Through this work, the CDC would meet some of the Planning Area’s most urgent needs and capitalize on the community’s strongest opportunities. The CDC should bring value to its partnership with the City by:

- Ensuring that the aspirations, concerns, and insights of the community are woven into the planning and development process;
- Bringing funds and in-kind resources into the development process from other public agencies, philanthropic sources, and earned income;
- Adding a flexible tool, a not-for-profit corporation that can play several different roles, to the tool kit available to the City-community alliance as it works to facilitate major new developments in the Planning Area.

Provider of Small Business Services: The CDC should help to structure financial resources, such as dedicated loan funds, and deliver counseling and technical assistance to small businesses in the Planning Area. As a partner in the development of commercial corridors and large projects the CDC would be working to expand the impact of major developments, so that entire commercial districts with a robust mix of small businesses are established in the new commercial districts.

Provider of Housing Services: The CDC should bring a combination of home ownership and property maintenance financial tools and counseling services to the Planning Area. Through this work, the CDC should foster a variety of housing types and ownership\rental options in the Planning Area. In these ways, the CDC would ensure that many current residents are able to continue living in their neighborhoods and benefit from the area’s rise in property values. To the

extent that such action would serve its mission for housing development, the CDC would also be prepared to directly own, rehabilitate, manage, and sell housing.

Facilitator of Workforce Development Services: As a consequence of the rise of the logistics industry and related manufacturing in Will County, and especially of the large scale industrial development the City will foster through steps outlined in its South Side Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Area can anticipate a surge in the number of well-paid jobs in surrounding industrial corridors. By striving to give Planning Area workers transportation access to job centers and administrative access to Will County's network of technical education and job placement services, the CDC would ensure that these neighborhoods benefit from the new industrial economy in Will County.

Coordinator of Human Services and Education Initiatives: The QOL Plan calls for sustained campaigns to make social service and education work in the Planning Area a partnership between the residential community and networks of dedicated professionals by cultivating local leadership, parental involvement, and knowledge that is widely shared between service providers and residents. As the convener and voice of the united community in these efforts, the CDC would need to play an ongoing role as the coordinator of campaigns.

Keeper of the Quality of Life Plan: The QOL Plan belongs to the City of Joliet and all of the city's residents but especially to the Planning Area that is its subject. As the organization with a mission to implement the QOL Plan, the CDC should also be responsible for initiating periodic updates. At least every other year the CDC should conduct a thorough review of the QOL Plan, including extensive community review, and recommend to the City government revisions that will update the Plan.

The Roles of the Planning Area CDC and Existing Organizations

The functions of the CDC delineated in the preceding paragraphs should help to explain its role vis-à-vis other community institutions. In the usual operating mode of CDCs, the Planning Area CDC would be a partner to other actors in the planning process, helping to leverage their resources and focus them as effectively as possible in its community of primary concern. The distinctive features of the Planning Area CDC in relation to several of its principal partners in development are noted in the following paragraphs.

The City of Joliet should be the CDC's closest partner in community development. Per the CDC functions discussed above, the City should rely on the CDC to:

- Funnel community concerns and insight into the development process;
- Perform time-consuming tasks of research, relationship building, and writing, that will be involved in marketing Planning Area development opportunities, recruiting new businesses, including national retailers, and attracting resources from other units of government and private foundations, some of which would not be accessible to the City without an allied CDC;
- Upon need, act flexibly as an owner of property, a partner in business transactions, and a provider of services for fees, in ways that might present conflicts of interest or otherwise be

inconsistent with the City's role as the primary unit of local government for the entire city of Joliet.

- Provide an intensive and personal interface for small business or property owners that need to use City incentive programs, linked to other resources available from other units of government or the private sector.

The CDC should in turn rely on the City as the source of municipal authority and resources that are necessary to complete many of the actions of community development.

The Will County Center for Economic Development (WCED) is concerned with the economic development of the entire county and projects that have significant county impact. In contrast, the focus area of the CDC is two city council districts within the city of Joliet. The organizations operate on different scales. In some cases, such as the attraction of anchor businesses for retail corridors, concerns of the WCED and the CDC will intersect; and in such cases the two organizations should enjoy a cordial professional partnership. For some of the CDC's initiatives, such as the establishment of van pools to job centers or refinements in the county's technical training and job placement systems, the CDC would ask for the WCED's support through the important business networks that are affiliated with the WCED. The WCED would also have a vested interest in the success of the CDC. Some neighborhoods of the Planning Area are still centers of depressed economic conditions in Will County, and few developments would advance the mission of the WCED more strongly than the CDC's success in redeveloping disinvested neighborhoods of the Planning Area.

The Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry is charged with maintaining a positive business climate and reflecting the views of the business community on civic issues for the entire Joliet region. It operates on a different scale and with a largely different set of functions than the CDC which would work intensively to foster integrated retail and housing development along designated corridors and improve the access of Planning Area workers to industrial jobs. The area in which the roles of the two organizations overlap is in the provision of assistance to small businesses in the Planning Area. The Chamber counsels small businesses that ask for assistance in cooperation with the Joliet Junior College Small Business Development Center (JJC SBDC). In Planning Area neighborhoods, where dozens of new small businesses will be launched in commercial corridors and where existing small businesses will need to adjust to a new level of competition, the need for small business assistance will be intense, leading to the need to operate a small business assistance center as a function of the CDC. Depending on the Chamber's level of interest or view of compatibility with its broader mission, the small business assistance center for the Planning Area might be developed as a joint project of the Chamber and the CDC, or a working relationship might clarify cases in which a small business would receive assistance from the Chamber or the CDC or both. This area of overlap, which must be managed to prevent service duplication, is relatively minor in comparison to the complimentary aspects of the Chamber's and CDC's functions. The CDC would be redeveloping a portion of the Chamber's service area that has lagged the development of most of the region. New areas of economic vitality with dozens of active new Chamber members should emerge from the CDC's work. In turn the CDC would be grateful that an effective regional Chamber exists to provide information, networking, and advocacy services for all Planning Area businesses.

Joliet Junior College (JJC) is a major institution of the Planning Area with which the CDC would interact in several ways. JJC is the sponsor of the Joliet region's only small business development center (SBDC). This SBDC serves an area extending beyond Will County and appears to specialize in services to manufacturing businesses; retail and service business development in the established neighborhoods of the Planning Area may not be a focal point of the JJC SBDC. However, as in the CDC's relationship with the Chamber of Commerce, the CDC should review the proposed functions of its service center for small business with JJC and explore the possibilities of establishing the service center as a joint project or establishing a working relationship that would clarify situations in which small businesses would receive services from the CDC or the JJC SBDC or both. JJC is also the primary provider of adult education including technical training for employment in the Joliet region. Through work in a proposed Community Employment Task Force, the CDC and the institutional partners in the Will County Workforce System should explore several strategies through which JJC's employment training programs would be used by more employers and Planning Area residents.

The Workforce Investment Board of Will County is the primary coordinator of the system through which residents in Will County may be guided through technical training that will prepare them for skilled employment and be matched with local employers that need workers with their skills. The Plan's section on Industrial Development and Employment presents a major proposal through which the CDC would engage with the Workforce Investment Board as its principal partner to form a "Community Employment Task Force" that would examine at least nine issues in regard to the broadest possible access of Planning Area residents to the Workforce System and well-paid employment. The work of this task force and the implementation of its recommendations should lead to a long-term working relationship in which the Workforce Investment Board would use the CDC to help broaden the base of aspiring workers entering its system, and the CDC would depend on the Workforce Board to make considered modifications in the system that would increase the access of workers from the lower-income neighborhoods of the Planning Area and similar neighborhoods.

There are two organizations that the City of Joliet contracts with for federal HOME program funding: **Cornerstone Services**, which services populations with disabilities and **Will County Habitat for Humanity**, which builds and rehabilitates homes throughout Will County. While these two organizations provide much needed housing services, both are very specialized. While a CDC could potentially partner with these two organizations on specific projects, housing functions of the CDC would be focused on the redevelopment and revitalization of the Planning Area's housing stock and providing housing counseling services and loan programs to current and future Planning Area residents.

United Way, Social Service Council, and Planning Area School Boards: The CDC's leaders would be keenly aware that their economic development initiatives will not succeed or be meaningful unless the human service and educational programs coordinated by these community institutions succeed in the Planning Area. Accordingly, the CDC would be committed to galvanizing community awareness of, involvement in, and support for the programs of the United Way, the Social Service Council, and the School Boards. These community institutions should view the CDC as an important resource for disseminating information to and receiving

feedback from the community, and a partner in outreach and local leadership development efforts.

Most of the proposals of the Plan call for the CDC to establish working relationships with different community organizations, businesses, public agencies and civic associations, but the cases noted above are the relationships in which basic functions of the CDC and its partners might seem unclear.

How the CDC May Be Formed and Funded

Institutionalization and Governance of the CDC

The Quality of Life Task Force, which has served as the Steering Committee of the QOL planning process, in cooperation with the City, should incorporate the CDC as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. In the CDC's incorporation, its mission and functions should be those discussed above in this section of the Plan.

To govern the organization, the charter and bylaws of the CDC should establish a Board of Directors selected in a way that will maintain these principles:

- The Board should primarily represent the Planning Area community, and the majority of its members should be selected periodically by the vote of members that will include institutional members (community organizations, churches, business associations) and individual members who are residents or stakeholders of the Planning Area community (i.e., Joliet City Council Districts 4 and 5)
- The Board should include members with expertise in the business of the organization and the range of aspects of community life addressed in the QOL plan, including commercial and housing development, business finance and management, employment and workforce development, education, community recreation, and human services. Elected Board members should be able to appoint a certain (minority) number of additional Board members to ensure that these types of expertise are represented in the decision making body of the CDC.
- The Board should include some provisions for continuity so that no more than half of its members change in a given year.

Until the CDC is formed and its Board established, decisions leading to its formation should be made by the consensus of the QOL Task Force and the City Administration.

Leadership Development

The CDC should establish working committees that will cover the QOL topics considered in the Plan. Committees should be led by CDC members who might or might not be members of the Board of Directors. As many members of the CDC as possible should develop expertise in the topic areas of their committees as well as the dynamics of participation in a community organization and the operations of a CDC.

Accordingly the CDC should plan and fund the training of a gradually broadening spectrum of its membership in leadership skills and in QOL topic areas. As a new CDC the organization

should also have the capacity to engage an experienced CDC as a mentor consultant or a consultant that specializes in strategic planning for CDCs.

Staff, Budget, and Funding Development

The proposed work of the CDC will require an initial professional staff of 2 to 3 members and an administrative assistant, if all of its functions are to be performed. This staffing would entail:

- A manager of commercial development and services
- A manager of housing development and services
- A manager of workforce development (a function possibly covered by other staff)
- An administrative person supporting other staff
- Appointment of one of the managers noted above as the CEO of the CDC

This staffing pattern assumes that the QOL Plan proposals for several areas including: Recreation, Education, and Human Services are pursued by volunteer members of the CDC.

A CDC might be initiated with a smaller staff, but a smaller staff would delay the organization’s ability to perform its core functions. Over time the organization’s staff might expand if it finds needs to perform many services directly or be involved concurrently in a range of development transactions.

The approximate annual budget of a new, fully functioning CDC with the staffing outlined above is in the range of \$275,000 to \$425,000 with the following broad categories of expense:

Fully loaded staff positions	\$210,000	to	\$300,000
Overhead & direct costs	\$ 40,000	to	\$ 75,000
Leadership Training & Consulting	<u>\$ 25,000</u>	to	<u>\$ 50,000</u>
Total	\$ 275,000	to	\$425,000

Per the general discussion of CDC funding presented earlier in this section of the Plan, the following sources might contribute to the CDC’s funding:

- Support from the City of Joliet (possibly in the form of a contract(s) for specified services)
- Membership contributions (probably always a small portion of revenues but valuable in that it is flexible and not contractually obligated to certain functions)
- Support from Joliet area institutions other than the City that are partners in proposed initiatives (including the Workforce Investment Board of Will County or Pace)
- Creation of a Special Service Area (SSA) within the Planning Area (particularly for the support of retail development and small business support services)
- Foundation grants
- Regional/state/federal grants for specific projects
- Income earned from development services/transactions or fees for business or housing counseling

Per the general pattern of CDC funding, the organization will probably need to rely on the support of the City, other partner agencies, and foundations in its early years and gradually derive more of its income from payment for services.

Downtown Joliet Development

Downtown Joliet is the center of the Planning Area as well as the center of Joliet and Will County. Proposals for the redevelopment of Planning Area neighborhoods will only succeed if Downtown is thriving, and the quality of life in the neighborhoods surrounding Downtown has a powerful impact on its viability. Accordingly, the housing proposals for the Planning Area include a commitment to achieving relatively dense, transit oriented and mixed use housing and retail development Downtown. Retail development proposals for the Planning Area would essentially establish vital commercial corridors connecting Downtown to the I-80 expressway and include proposals for Downtown anchor businesses such as major bookstores and cinemas that require a broader base than neighborhood shopping centers. Land use and infrastructure proposals for the Planning Area include the restoration of two-way street patterns to Downtown's commercial streets. Another important proposal now under consideration by Joliet's institutions of higher education, which this plan supports, is the creation of a shared Downtown campus. Through this shared property JJC would replace its currently inadequate Downtown building and provide a broader curriculum Downtown. St. Francis, Lewis, and Governor State Universities would offer a variety of classes for adult students. Thousands of upwardly mobile residents of the surrounding region would be drawn to Downtown each day and evening, providing a catalyst for housing and retail development in the Downtown area. Planning Area residents would gain convenient access to a valuable new resource.

Development of Unincorporated Areas Adjacent to Planning Area

The City of Joliet has demonstrated expertise in the acquisition and development of bordering territories for the benefit of the city and the annexed areas. However, the presence of settled, generally low-income and unincorporated neighborhoods on the eastern borders of the Planning Area represents particular challenges. Frequently infrastructure for these neighborhoods is inadequate and would require thousands of dollars per standard residential lot to upgrade to Joliet City standards. Property owners in these neighborhoods often feel that they could not afford the charges for upgrading their infrastructure and might not want their land annexed to the City for other reasons. Yet disinvested areas depress property values and discourage development in adjacent city neighborhoods.

The City is now addressing this set of problems in the Ridgewood neighborhood where it is working with County, Township, and State governments to share the costs of infrastructure improvements and bring conditions to a level that will not impede development. The implementation of the City's *South Side Comprehensive Plan* and this plan's proposals for the development of commercial corridors, which include the development of land now outside the city's boundaries, could demonstrate an approach to such problematic situations. Commercial and relatively dense residential development, or in some cases industrial development, in planned projects will create substantial increments in property value. Existing housing units that fall within the project areas of such developments and have their infrastructure improved will also increase in value, from their proximity to new development and from infrastructure improvements. Besides sharing all possible costs with other units of government, the City could leverage the increments in property values for entire project areas to finance infrastructure

improvements for the properties within these projects. This process repeated in a series of projects over a decade could go far toward eliminating conditions of disinvestment in neighborhoods bordering the Planning Area.

IV. Implementation Steps

Strategic Integration

Although the QOL Plan entails more than 75 specific action proposals covering a wide range of topic areas, its proposals have a similar strategic orientation, and they are interdependent. All of the proposals of the Plan are based on the principle of leveraging existing assets to solve community problems:

- Housing proposals build on Joliet’s generally strong housing market and programs that the City has in place.
- Recreation proposals begin with the base of existing facilities.
- Transportation proposals involve a close partnership with Pace as a flexible public transit agency.
- Retail proposals are founded on the two legs of large pent up retail demand and corridor locations with adequate traffic counts and sufficient land to assemble for development.
- Industrial Development and Employment proposals would capitalize on the extraordinary opportunities provided by the regional logistics industry, the City’s south side land development plans, and the service capacities of the existing workforce development system.
- Land Use proposals would augment the strengths of the existing built and natural environment.
- Education proposals would give community support for effective plans that the school districts have put in motion.
- Human Capital proposals would open avenues for greater community contributions to and engagement with the extensive service provider network.

The Plan has a “bias” that quality of life improvements in the Planning Area will generally flow from economic development and that the creation of living wage jobs and wealth in the community is the foundation for improvements in service systems. However, this orientation is tempered with the recognition of many prerequisites for economic development and ways in which the conditions of a desirable community generate wealth. So the Plan considers, for example, that:

- Meeting the Planning Area’s needs for a more diverse housing stock and retail amenities entails large scale business opportunities in which local residents may participate as consumers, workers, and business and property owners.
- Lack of education and training is the primary factor that bars Planning Area residents from well-paid jobs.
- Social problems related to household stability, health, addiction and crime often interrupt educations and narrow job opportunities.
- Communities that are attractively designed and provided with convenient recreation, transportation, and retail amenities uphold property values and attract economically diverse residents.

It was with appreciation of these types of interrelationships that the effort leading to this document and going forward to its implementation is designed as a quality of life project, rather than a specialized economic development plan.

Timeframes

The QOL Plan is too broad in scope – and so involves too many sets of decision makers and contingencies – for the accomplishment of its proposals to be scheduled tightly at this time. However, in the listing of proposals at the end of each topic area and at the end of the Plan, each proposal is given a priority as:

- “1” to be implemented as quickly as possible,
- “2” to be implemented soon, though not as a first priority, or
- “3” to be implemented as a follow-up or long-term effort.

Proposals are assigned a low, quick rating if they are necessary first steps in laying the ground work for other proposals or if they can be accomplished quickly and will have an encouraging impact through the demonstration of achieved results. Proposals are assigned a high, slow rating if they must follow the establishment of prerequisites or if they describe actions that must be made repeatedly, as part of an ongoing effort, to have effect. Generally the Plan calls for the accomplishment of tasks rated 1 or 2 within a three-year time frame and the accomplishment of tasks rated 3 within a ten-year horizon.

Every second year the City and the Planning Area community should revise this Quality of Life Plan. In these revisions allowance can be made for the results of development efforts and unforeseen events. Different initiatives can be moved up to short-term implementation status. Through this process the Quality of Life Plan will continue to be vital guide for the Planning Area’s improvement efforts.

Financial Considerations

By far the largest dollar figures involved in the implementation of the Quality of Life Plan will be private investments to create the housing and commercial development that the Plan aims to generate. These investments will be project specific, and they cannot be usefully estimated at this time, but if the Plan is realized they will certainly involve tens of millions of dollars and generate thousands of jobs. To set this development process in motion and guide it toward desired outcomes, this Plan offers 56 specific proposals for action within the next three years. Staffing or direct expenses to implement all of these proposals would require a total of approximately \$5,141,000 to \$8,745,000 over 3 years. The large bulk of funding to carry out these proposals would be regional, state, or federal agencies of government or private foundations. Funds may also be secured from fees earned for services or from the creation of special districts within the Planning Area (such as tax increment finance [TIF] or special assessment [SA] districts.) Specific sources of funding to be approached for each proposal are noted with the summary of proposals at the end of each section of the Plan. Appendix III to the Plan provides a text base of information regarding specific titles and programs of public entities and background on private foundations that are appropriate sources of funding for the proposals of the Plan. These funds would be supplemented by the considerable in-kind contributions of community volunteers and the time of staff in partner organizations or agencies which would see cooperation with specific proposals of the Plan as activities within their basic mission.

In order to perform, manage and fund the implementation of action proposals, the core implementers of the Plan, the City and the Planning Area CDC, will need to maintain a constant staff effort. In this effort City and CDC staff will continually be refining plans for specific projects, applying to sources of funding, marketing development opportunities, assisting home owners and small business owners, coordinating community engagement in education and human service programs and all of the other activities entailed in the Plan's proposals. The staff work and direct expense of this ongoing effort will require a budget of approximately \$500,000 per year divided between City and the CDC, which is included in the estimated range of total expenses to implement the Plan over the next three years.

Summary of Proposals

Proposed Action	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
Housing					
Short Term (0-3 years)					
1) Leverage strong market area activity to create mixed-income housing throughout the city	City of Joliet Developer participation	1		N/A	N/A
2) Establish Planning Area community-based organization (possibly a community development corporation (CDC) tasked with administering housing programming, development and rehabilitation.	QOL Task Force City of Joliet	1			
3) Expand or reinstate housing rehabilitation programs and concentrate these programs in “Target Redevelopment Areas”	City of Joliet CDC	1		\$100,000 - \$200,000 annually	Local financial institutions, IHDA, City of Joliet –CDBG, HOME, Casino revenues, Housing Trust Fund (if established)
4) Expand residential development in Downtown Joliet by working to attract interested developers and allowing for increased density in appropriate locations, particularly around the Metra station	City of Joliet Neighborhood Organization	1		N/A	Historic Tax Credits...
5) Zone for additional housing that allows for higher density around commercial corridors and other “Target Redevelopment Areas”	City of Joliet	2		N/A	N/A

Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
6) Engage local employers in Employer-Assisted Housing programs to invest in purchase assistance for their employees	Neighborhood Organization Metropolitan Planning Council City of Joliet	2		N/A	Employer Investment – minimal cost to do outreach
7) Supplement Assist program to provide matching funds for investment in the Planning Area and provide homebuyer counseling	City of Joliet Local Banks CDC	2		Matching funds: \$20,000-\$30,000 annually Counseling \$ 40,000-\$50,000 annually	Local financial institutions, IHDA, City of Joliet –CDBG, HOME, Housing Trust Fund (if established)
8) Pair code enforcement with rehabilitation assistance	City of Joliet Local Banks CDC	2		***See #3, \$100,000 - \$200,000 annually	Local financial institutions, City of Joliet – CDBG, Housing Trust Fund (if established)
9) Expand Rental Housing Inspection and Licensing to include all rental units	City of Joliet	3			Inspection fee paid by property owner
10) Develop emergency loan program to pool resources with Will County Center for Community Concerns	City of Joliet Local Banks Will County CCC	3		\$50,000 - \$75,000 annually	City of Joliet – CDBG, HOME
Long Term (3+ years)					
11) Assemble land and issue RFP for mixed-income and mixed-use development in the 4 th and 5 th Districts	City of Joliet	1		Varies based on City resources	City of Joliet – CDBG, HOME, Casino, General Fund
12) Develop strategies to improve infrastructure in unincorporated areas in the 4 th and 5 th Districts, specifically in the Ridgewood area and in “Target Redevelopment Areas” and some of the more isolated areas south of I-80 near the river	City of Joliet Will County Joliet Township	1			

Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
13) Pursue adaptive reuse of vacant and historic structure, converting them to residential	City of Joliet Private Developers	2		N/A	Historic Tax Credits, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, State Housing Trust Fund, Joliet Housing Trust Fund (if established)....
14) Continually market available sites to builders interested in developing housing that incorporates a diversity of types and sizes	City of Joliet CDC	2		N/A	N/A
15) Pursue affordable housing development that will incorporate federal and state resources to mitigate initial risk of developing in the Planning Area	City of Joliet CDC Private Developers (non-profit & for-profit) Local churches	2			Historic Tax Credits, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, State Housing Trust Fund, HOME, CDBG, Joliet Housing Trust Fund (if established)....

Recreation

Short Term (0-3 years)

1) Develop a Planning Area Parks Master Plan, and tie recommended improvements to multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).	Park District	1		\$50,000 - \$75,000	Park District, City of Joliet
2) Prepare a study to explore the feasibility of providing an additional recreation center with a full range of facilities, including pool, and other alternative uses to serve residents.	Park District	1		Other Recreation costs should be estimated through carrying out the proposed Master Plan	Park District, IL Dept. of Natural Resources (IDNR), City of Joliet, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), IL Dept of

Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
					Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)
3) Continue to upgrade and improve play structures and playfields in mini and neighborhood parks. (prioritize and implement recommended improvements in Parks Analysis report in Appendix B)	Park District City of Joliet	2			Park District, IDNR, CDBG
4) Expand programs beyond the First Tee program to subsidize the cost of recreation programs for low income citizens. a) Assist neighborhood associations or other not-for-profit organizations to provide programs where the cost for additional services is deemed prohibitive.	Park District, City of Joliet, Organized Planning Area possibly led by a Community Development Corporation (CDC)	2			City of Joliet, Park District, CDBG
5) Explore creating vanpool or similar transit service to west side facilities	City of Joliet, CDC, Local non-profit organizations	3			Park District, City of Joliet, Pace/Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
6) Explore partnerships with other providers of recreational services, including schools to enhance coordination and availability. a) Develop school/park joint use facilities	Park District, CDC	1			Park District, IDNR
7) Explore alternative funding, including governmental, not-for-profit and corporate sponsors	Park District, CDC	1			Foundations, Open Lands, US Environmental Protection

Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
					Agency (USEPA)
Long Term (3+ years)					
8) Acquire more park space in underserved areas either by purchase and development, or partner with other organization, such as school districts, to use existing spaces more efficiently	Park District, City of Joliet	1			Park District, IDNR, Open Lands, CDBG
9) Expand the trail system to enhance accessibility to civic, cultural, recreation, employment and commercial center, and to create additional recreation options	Park District, City of Joliet	2			Federal Transportation Grants, IDNR, City of Joliet, State Bicycle Grant
10) Create a greenway system along flood prone areas to minimize flooding, to create opportunities for recreational use, and provide habitats for wildlife.	City of Joliet, Will County	3			Open Lands, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), USEPA
11) Explore initiatives to engage community residents in providing and supporting locally based recreation programs, including building playgrounds, community gardens and park clean-up days.	CDC	1			City of Joliet, Non-profit agencies, Private corporations

Transportation

Short Term (0-3 years)

1) Support Pace bus service proposals at fully funded levels	City of Joliet, Organized Planning Area possibly led by a Community Development Corporation	1			Pace, Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), State of Illinois
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Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
	(CDC), Other units of government, Business & Civic organizations				
2) Introduce Planning Area Circulator Service	PACE, City of Joliet, CDC	1		\$100,000 - \$200,000 annually	Pace, Federal transportation funds via the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
3) Multiply & coordinate van pools	PACE, City of Joliet, CDC, Business organizations	1		\$25,000 - \$75,000 annually	
4) Establish an IGO car sharing cooperative	Center for Neighborhood Technology, CDC, City of Joliet	2		Possible \$50,000 - \$100,000 fast start infusion	CMAP, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Foundations
5) Establish "Safe Routes to School Program"	CDC, School Districts, City of Joliet, IDOT	1		\$25,000 to \$250,000	Federal funds via IDOT, Foundations
Long Term (3+ years)					
6) Establish safe & common pedestrian & bicycle routes	City of Joliet, CDC, Regional bike & pedestrian organizations	2		\$10,000 to \$100,000	IDOT, Foundations, bicycle federations
7) Support Will County Transportation Blue Print, given business support for improved public transportation	City of Joliet, CDC, Business organizations	3			
8) Support Elwood & STAR Line Metra expansions	City of Joliet, CDC, Business organizations	3			

Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
9) Support Downtown Transit-Oriented Development	City of Joliet, CDC, Business organizations	2			

Retail Development

Short Term (0-3 years)

1) Determine specific geographies for development and create funding/organizational structure (TIF, SSA, BID, etc.)	QOL Task Force, City of Joliet	1		\$150,000	City of Joliet, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
2) Establish Planning Area community-based organization (possibly a community development corporation (CDC) with a mandate including economic development and commercial revitalization in the Planning Area	QOL Task Force, City of Joliet, Will County Center for Economic Development (CED)	1		\$150,000 annually for economic development component	Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Special Service Area (SSA), City of Joliet, Casino, Will County, Foundation grants, CDBG
3) Extend incentive programs to Planning Area development areas	City of Joliet, CDC	1		\$500,000 - \$1,000,000 annually	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, CDBG
4) Market sites to prospective developers, with an eye toward grocery store development in particular.	City of Joliet, CDC, (assistance from MPC/CNT)	1		CDC staff time	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, CDBG
5) Zone for mixed-use development around commercial corridors and neighborhood hubs	City of Joliet	1		N/A	N/A
6) Develop land assembly plan and assemble parcels with mixed-use potential	City of Joliet, CDC	1		Cross-cutting, with preceding proposals	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, CDBG
7) Create a Small Business Development Center	City of Joliet, CDC, Will	2		TBD Under	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, Casino,

Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
	County CED, Civic organizations, Joliet Junior College			auspices of Proposal 2?	Will County, Foundation grants, CDBG
8) Address surplus of one-way streets	City of Joliet, IDOT, Will County	2		Cross-cutting, with preceding proposals	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, CDBG
9) Develop annexation plan	City of Joliet, CDC	2		Cross-cutting, with preceding proposals	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, CDBG
10) Raise Chicago Street's stature by improving signage on I-80 and Chicago Street	City of Joliet, IDOT	2		\$50,000 - \$100,000	City of Joliet, IDOT, TIF, SSA
Long Term (3+ years)					
11) Continue to assemble parcels with retail or mixed-use potential	City of Joliet, CDC	1		Depends on market	TIF, SSA, City of Joliet, CDBG
12) Issue RFPs and RFQs for development of specific retail needs	City of Joliet, CDC	1		N/A	N/A
13) Annex unincorporated land with high retail potential	City of Joliet	1		Cross-cutting, with preceding proposals	N/A
14) Streetscaping, signage, and lighting improvements on retail corridors	City of Joliet, CDC	2		Cross-cutting, with preceding proposals	City, SSA

Industrial Development & Employment

Short term (0-3 years) and Long term (3+ years)

1) Build industrial parks on Joliet's south side, per the	City of Joliet, Will County	1	Area Develop	\$50,000 to \$150,000+	City of Joliet
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Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
City's comprehensive plan, with optimal job creation and environmental sustainability: Establish Industrial Planning Committee including St. Francis & Lewis U faculty/ Prioritize development areas/ Establish pool of qualified developers/ Identify optimal end user companies/ Establish park area as a Foreign Trade Zone/ Adopt LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Standard for site design	Center for Economic Development, Planning Area community organization, possibly a Community Development Corporation (CDC)		Planning Years 1-2 Project Planning & Execution Years 3 – 20	Recovered Project Costs	
2) Increase the number of Planning Area residents who obtain good jobs through existing training & employment programs by implementing recommendations of a new Community Employment Task Force. Recommend and implement programs to: Increase outreach of work training programs to employers/ Create community-based rosters of qualified workers/ Mitigate job training costs for workers/ Increase on-the-job training programs/ Define a constructive role for Temporary Labor/ Smooth gaps in financial support for new workers/ Increase Employment of ex-offenders/ Establish outreach, referral tracking & community engagement	Workforce Investment Board of Will County and partner organizations including: Joliet Junior College and the Illinois Department of Employment Security & Planning Area CDC	1	Year 1: Form Policies Years 2-4 Implement programs	Year 1 \$60,000 to \$90,000 Years 2-4 \$8,000 to \$15,000 annually + Cost to Taskforce recommendations, to be estimated	Workforce Investment Board, federal Workforce Investment Act funds

Land Use

Short Term (0-3 years)

Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
1) Expand streetscape improvement plans from the City Center along all major road corridors	City of Joliet	2			City of Joliet, Federal Transportation Grants
2) Enhance screening, buffering, and landscaping between industrial and residential areas as an integral element of industrial development	City of Joliet, & Planning Area community, possibly represented by a Community Development Corporation (CDC)	2			City of Joliet, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), IL Dept of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
3) Prepare a specific redevelopment plan, design guidelines, and developer recruitment process for the USX and prison sites	City of Joliet	1			City of Joliet, Will County Center for Economic Development (CED), State/DCEO, USEPA
4) Prepare specific corridor plans for Cass St, Collins St, Chicago St, Briggs St, Jackson St, and Jefferson St	City of Joliet, CDC	1			City of Joliet, IL Dept of Transportation (IDOT)
Long Term (3+ years)					
5) Remove incompatible uses, where practical, e.g. along the Chicago Street corridor	City of Joliet	2			City of Joliet, TIF, SSA

Neighborhood Character & Infrastructure

Short Term (0-3 years)

1) Provide major gateway improvements along major road corridors into the Planning Area, including	City of Joliet	2			City of Joliet, Federal Transportation Grants,
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Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
way-finding signs, monuments, public art, banners, landscaping, lighting, and other streetscape elements					IDOT
2) Provide identity signs, public art, banners, landscaping, lighting, and other streetscape improvements to each neighborhood (similar to the streetscape design for the Cathedral, St. Pat's, and St. Mary's Neighborhoods)	City of Joliet, Representative Planning Area community organization, possibly a community development corporation (CDC)	3			City of Joliet, Non-Profit foundations
3) Adopt design guidelines that foster more pedestrian-friendly business areas	City of Joliet	1			City of Joliet, Regional Planning Agencies: CMAP and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
Long Term (3+ years)					
4) Expand the City's capital improvements plan by tying to a long-term comprehensive development plan linking private and public funding to key redevelopment areas	City of Joliet, CDC	2			City of Joliet, CDC
5) Continue flood mitigation improvements		1			Illinois Department of Natural Resources
6) Continue to work cooperatively with other local, County, State, and Federal agencies to create a funding program for infrastructure improvements for the Ridgewood Neighborhood, and similar settled but unincorporated districts bordering the City	City of Joliet, CDC	1			City of Joliet, Will County, State Grants, USEPA and other Federal Grants

Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
7) Establish a complete sidewalk system to provide safe access to all parks, schools, and other major public destinations	City of Joliet, CDC	3			City of Joliet

Human Capital

Short Term (0-3 years)

1) Continue to support the various collaborations and consortiums of service providers working in the Planning Area of Joliet and encourage new opportunities to connect with residents.	Existing collaborations	1			
2) Establish a resident leadership initiative to increase the number of residents actively engaged and accountable in the revitalization of the community.	Representative Planning Area community organization, possibly a Community Development Corporation (CDC), United Way, University of St. Francis, Lewis University, Joliet Junior College (JCC), City of Joliet	1		\$35,000 - \$50,000	Area financial institutions, Foundations
3) Increase capacity building assistance to local nonprofits including community and faith-based organizations.	United Way, City of Joliet, JCC, Lewis University, University of St. Francis	1		\$500,000 - \$750,000	US Dept of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Administration for Children and Families Compassion Capital Fund (CCF) and Communities Empowering

Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
					Youth (CEY) grants
4) Increase efforts to expand youth leadership programs specifically targeting youth residing in the Planning Area of Joliet.	CDC, United Way, JCC, existing youth serving org.	1		\$50,000 - \$75,000	Area foundations, Corporations
5) Support local youth serving organizations and collaboratives, including a survey to determine program needs from a youth perspective and capacity level needs.	CDC, local youth serving organizations and programs	1		\$15,000	Area foundations, Corporations
6) Explore the feasibility of modifying existing programs or establishing a new program to develop the technical and life skills of out-of-school young adults interested in securing living wage employment.	JCC, Workforce Investment Council	1		\$700,000 over three years	US Department of Labor (DOL) Youthbuild

Education

Short Term (0-3 years)

1) Establish mechanism to monitor the impact of all academic enrichment efforts.	Planning Area community organization, possibly the Education Committee of a Community Development Corporation (CDC), Districts 86 and 204, Community service providers	1		\$30,000-\$50,000	City of Joliet, Foundations, IL Dept of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)
2) Increase education throughout the community on the affects of high	CDC, Districts 86 and 204	1		\$50,000-\$75,000	IL State Board of Education (ISBE),

Proposed Actions	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
mobility and chronic truancy rates.					Foundations, Dept. of Education
3) Broaden efforts to increase the level of parental/care given engagement with area schools.	CDC	1			IL Dept. of Human Services (DHS), ISBE, Foundations
4) Create community technology plan to increase the use of technology to help bridge the digital divide.	City of Joliet, CDC	2			DCEO, Homeland Security, Foundations
5) Diversify the tools used to celebrate educational progress in the schools.	CDC, Districts 86 and 204 Joliet Junior College (JCC) and area universities	2			Private sector, Foundations
6) Convene regular community dialogues to discuss accomplishments and areas of improvement relative to all aspects of the community including education.	CDC, City of Joliet, Faith and community-based organizations, Districts 86 and 204	1		\$15,000 annually	Small businesses, Foundations, Corporations
Long Term (3+ years)					
7) Increase opportunities for minority role models to help reverse poor graduation rates among African American and Hispanic high school students.	Districts 86 and 204, JCC, University of St. Francis	1			
8) Establish a program to increase the number of minority teachers.	Districts 86 and 204, JCC, CDC, Lewis University, University of St. Francis	1			U.S. Department of Education, Ford Foundation