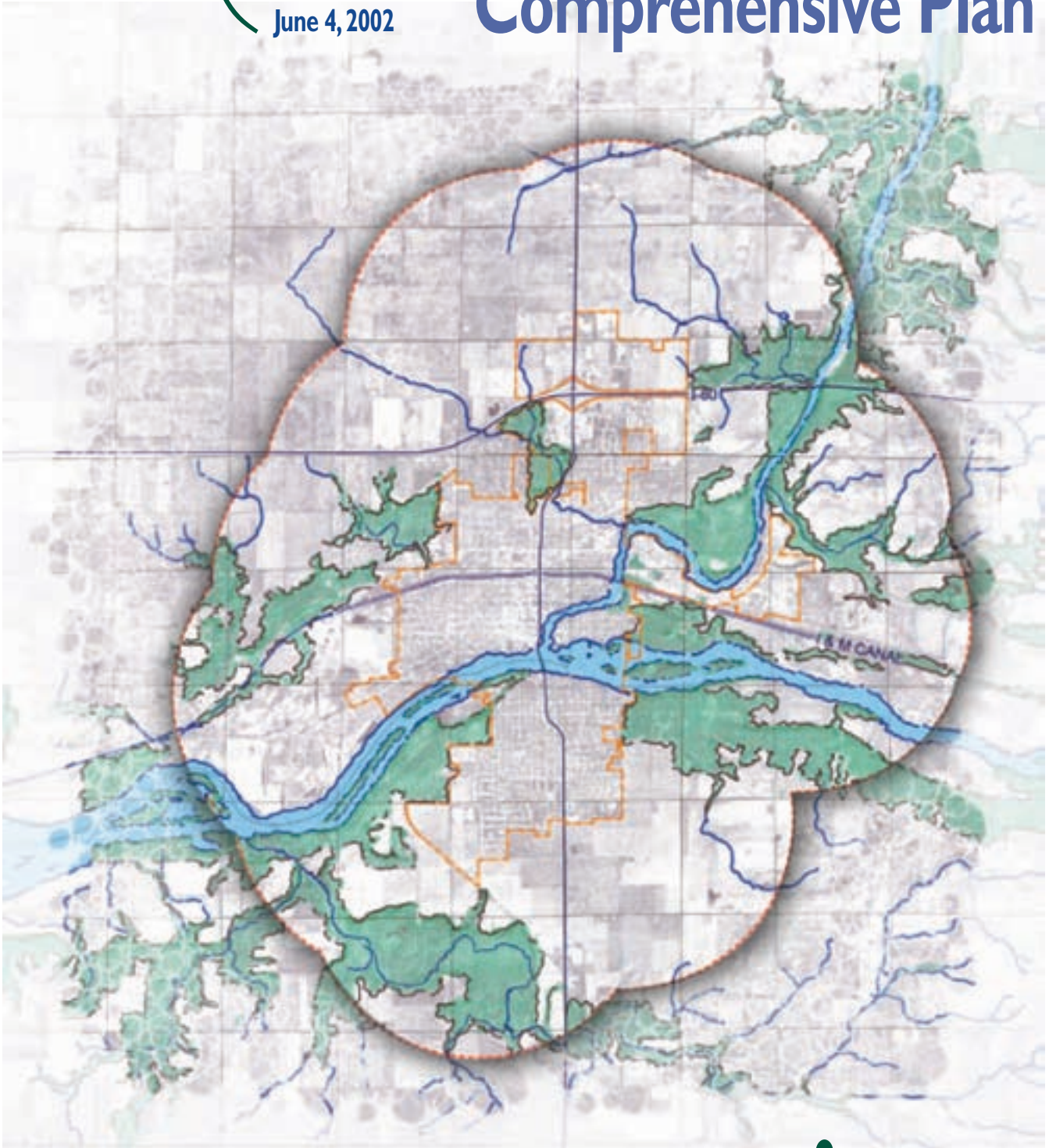


# *Ottawa Illinois*

June 4, 2002

## Comprehensive Plan



Volume I

the city of  
**two rivers**



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# Chapter • 1

## Introduction

The intent of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide direction for decisions related to the future growth and development of the City of Ottawa. The Plan provides the basis for rational decision-making, but does not replace the decision-making process nor does it take the place of the City's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and other ordinances regulating the use and development of land in Ottawa. It establishes a vision for development within the community and describes policies, programs and projects that will enable the vision to be realized. The Comprehensive Plan helps local officials coordinate their decisions so they can anticipate how one decision may impact another. The Plan is also a key reference point and basis for establishing, amending and interpreting regulatory tools.

The Ottawa Comprehensive Plan encompasses not only the geographic area included within the corporate limits, but unincorporated areas within the City's one and one-half mile extra-territorial zoning jurisdiction.

The Plan is also specific in that it refers to land use patterns and development policies and strategies which will serve the community's future needs. After the concepts set forth in the Plan are approved, the City will need to take steps to begin implementing the Plan. Specific regulations and programs will need to be developed and adopted to achieve the vision.

As do most communities, Ottawa has its own strengths and areas for improvement. Among the strengths that define the City of Ottawa are its rich history, its location in LaSalle County, and specifically the downtown area located at the confluence of the Illinois and Fox Rivers, which provide scenic views and recreational opportunities. Additional strengths of Ottawa are found in the existing central business district which includes a very intact inventory of Victorian era architecture with a diverse mixture of retail and office space, numerous financial institutions, city, county, state and federal governmental institutions, as well as a number of churches, civic clubs and several schools adjacent to the downtown area.

A truly unique dynamic of the location of this diverse downtown area is the fact that the south and east boundaries are defined by the confluence of the Illinois and Fox Rivers. This not only has created a physical boundary which continues to keep the historic central business district intact, but has created an opportunity for downtown businesses to remain immediately adjacent to not one, but two substantial recreation and scenic corridors. A second volume, "Volume II, is dedicated to the downtown and is part of the Comprehensive Plan. Volume II, Downtown Ottawa, describes Sub-Area number five in greater detail.

Throughout Ottawa there is a rich and diverse housing inventory with a mixture of old and modern developments. The more dominant historic neighborhoods are located immediately adjacent to the downtown, on the east side of the downtown and also across the Fox River on the east side south of Illinois Route 71 in the area of the Ottawa High School. There is also a large historic neighborhood on the south bluffs of the Illinois River. In each of these neighborhoods there are a large variety of styles that represent the history of Ottawa. There are also modern neighborhoods that have their own unique characteristics scattered around Ottawa. The homes in these modern neighborhoods vary in size and style.

Many opportunities exist to enhance and restore historic residential structures, provide new and diverse housing within the general boundaries of the downtown area, and to create new neighborhoods that will build on the existing community. One such neighborhood is proposed for the southeast corner of Ottawa south of the Illinois River. More details of this area are found in Chapter 6 “Sub-Areas”, Sub-Area Illinois Route 23 and Proposed Fosse Road extension.

As a foundation for planning, goals for the community were formulated to guide the preparation of the Plan. Community goals are general statements that indicate the type of community that is desired. The development of goals and the implementation of policies are the keys to the success of the Comprehensive Plan.

Goals and objectives were formulated using recommendations for the future and information gathered from the community. These objectives and recommendations for future actions have been used to form each element of the plan.

It should be mentioned that in order to achieve some of the goals specified in the Comprehensive Plan, more detailed studies will be needed. These additional studies will provide the necessary detail and direction needed to meet those goals and should be adopted as amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

Goals have been formulated to guide the preparation of this comprehensive planning document as follows on the next page.



**Provide** direction for decisions related to the future growth and development of the City of Ottawa

**Capitalize** on Ottawa's location of the confluence of the Illinois and Fox Rivers for preservation, recreation and scenic opportunities

**Revitalize and preserve** Ottawa's downtown architectural heritage and traditional downtown atmosphere

**Capitalize** on geographic location within the Northeastern Illinois area and along the I-80 corridor for development and growth of corporate business opportunities

**Look** for opportunities to improve on or expand multi-modal transportation including automobile, commuter rail service, pedestrian / bicycle circulation

**Maintain and enhance** existing residential neighborhoods

**Model** new residential development after existing Ottawa traditional neighborhoods

**Evaluate** existing open space, park / recreational facilities and provide for enhancement of existing facilities and plan for new facilities

**Identify and preserve** existing natural features

**Preserve** agricultural cropland and agribusiness surrounding Ottawa

**Goals and objectives** are defined and explained in greater detail in the following chapter.

**The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map** supplements the text of this plan. This map is designed to reflect the intent of the written policies by graphically identifying appropriate neighborhood development patterns. It should be used as a guide for land development and infrastructure decisions in the City.

**The Sub-Area Plans** are detailed illustrations of how various neighborhoods in the planning area could take shape.



## The City of Ottawa Plan Commission

The Plan Commission consists of nine members who are appointed by the City Council of the City of Ottawa. The Plan Commission is an advisory committee that gives written recommendations to the City Council on issues including amendments and applications to the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances. The City Council makes all final decisions.

The Ottawa Plan Commission has been given the responsibility to lead the city through the process of creating a Comprehensive Plan. City of Ottawa Comprehensive Plans have been created in past years. Other than a miniplan for the one and one half mile extra territorial jurisdictional area, no plan was ever adopted by the city as an official planning document. The current City Council formally adopted Volume I of the Comprehensive Plan on June 4, 2002, and is expected to adopt Volume II in the fall of 2002. The preparation of this document is the result of much time and effort by the Planning Commission and City staff during the planning process. Special recognition is given to the following Plan Commission members:

### Plan Commission

Scott Anderson	Fred Gray
Dan Aussem	Alan Howarter
Brent Barron	Mike Pubentz
John Blossy	Debby Reagan, Chair
Debbie Burns	

### Special thanks are also given to past Plan Commission members:

Bill Quigley, Rev. Gerald Meyer, and the late Pat O'Brien.

### City Council

Mayor Robert M. Eschbach  
Commissioner Randy Constantine  
Commissioner Wayne Eichelkraut  
Commissioner Daphne Mitchell  
Commissioner Ed Whitney  
Gary Pike, P.E., City Engineer  
Doug Carroll, City Planner  
Kim Czyz, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor

The hundreds of citizens and others who participated in numerous meetings and assisted in the development of this document are also commended for their hard work.



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## Planning Team

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### **Land Vision, Inc.**

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*Project Management, Public Participation, Land Use and Urban Design*

Land Vision is a land planning firm providing town planning, zoning, visioning programs, streetscape design and design guidelines services. The firm is an advocate of traditional neighborhood development principles and its work reflects this passion. Land Vision views planning as a collaborative effort between the consultant, elected officials, citizens and merchants. Land Vision believes that involving people is the key to better community planning and implementation of plans and encourages hands-on involvement by all participants. Land Vision served as the project manager, in addition to playing a key role in the public participation process and urban design issues.

## SmithGroup JJR

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### **Smith Group/JJR (JJR)**

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*Streetscape and Urban Design, Implementation Strategies*

Smith Group JJR (formerly JJR, Inc.), is an international urban design firm responsible for designing a number of noteworthy projects across the country. The firm has received numerous awards and recognition for its design work, which is characterized by its high quality, comprehensiveness, and innovation. JJR is widely recognized for their ability to create vital and livable downtowns, urban neighborhoods, and integrating natural landscapes into parks and public spaces for people in cities and communities of all sizes.



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### **Gruen Gruen + Associates (GG+A)**

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*Market Evaluations and Implementation Strategies*

Gruen Gruen + Associates (GG+A), is a firm of urban economists, financial, fiscal and market analysts, and other professionals dedicated to helping clients make the best possible use of land. The firm has been describing and forecasting the market and real estate economic realities of specific areas in order to identify implementable programs, plans, and policies that will achieve the redevelopment objectives of cities, neighborhoods, and the communities that adjoin them since 1970. GG+A has conducted feasibility studies, due diligence analyses, and assisted in the implementation of many real estate projects both by private developers and joint public and private partnerships.





# Chapter • 2

## Goals & Objectives

### Goal 1

To provide direction for decisions related to the future growth and development of the City of Ottawa.

#### Objectives

- To direct future development in a positive direction
- Help enforce the decisions made by the City of Ottawa
- Prepare for future growth
- Review and update the Zoning Ordinance

### Goal 2

Capitalize on recreation, tourism and redevelopment opportunities of the Illinois and Fox Rivers and on regional attractions such as the I&M Canal State Trail, Starved Rock, Buffalo Rock, Matthiessen, and Illini State Parks.

#### Objectives

- Maintain existing viewsheds looking into the river commons, as well as looking towards key architectural features of the downtown
- Expand on existing parks and recreational opportunities along the Fox and Illinois Rivers as well as the I&M Canal Corridor
- Identify and create opportunities to strengthen and increase linkage between the downtown area and adjacent residential neighborhoods to the Fox and Illinois Rivers, the I&M Canal and the Lateral Canal
- Continue to promote regional parks near Ottawa and multi-modal accessibility
- Promote and utilize the trail systems around Ottawa, for example the I&M Canal State Trail, the Grand Illinois Trail, and the American Discovery Trail.



I-80 & Rt. 23 Interchange



Well Maintained Parks



I&M Canal Trail



Green Parkway Opportunities

### Goal 3

Preserve, restore and revitalize Ottawa's downtown. A healthy downtown is vital to Ottawa's character, image and economy. The downtown should be the central focal point for the community including entertainment, shopping, recreation and historic interests for residents and visitors alike. Revitalize Ottawa's downtown by promoting existing and new businesses and improving upon what already exists.

#### Objectives

- Support and promote existing business
- Recruit new business into the central business district
- Promote façade and signage improvements to existing buildings with historic architectural integrity
- Develop strategies for infill development
- Reclaim primary downtown streets to calm traffic and create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere
- Introduce mixed-use residential housing into the core area

### Goal 4

Capitalize on geographic location within the Northeastern Illinois area and along the I-80 corridor for development and growth of corporate business opportunities.

#### Objectives

- Create opportunities for the growth of corporate and industrial business development along the I-80 corridor
- Increase quality standards for potential corporate and industrial development
- Balance housing needs with expected employee base of new business

### Goal 5

Look for opportunities to improve on or expand multi-modal transportation including automobile, commuter rail service, pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

#### Objectives

- Modify vehicular traffic circulation in Ottawa's Central Business District to improve the pedestrian oriented atmosphere
- Create additional access to I-80 where feasible to allow for improved automobile and truck routing onto appropriate arterial roadways
- Improve vehicular circulation from arterials into neighborhoods, where possible, by realignments and / or new vehicular connections
- Provide increased opportunities for non-automobile means of transportation such as restoring commuter rail service, improving pedestrian and bicycle ways and creating or enhancing linkages to various modes of transportation



Aerial View

## Goal 6

Maintain the high quality of existing residential neighborhoods.

### Objectives

- Promote enhancement of the existing housing stock in older neighborhoods through building and streetscape improvements
- Promote greater use of the downtown business district by nearby residents with improved walkways and pedestrian linkages
- Promote quality infill redevelopment of appropriate scale and relationship to existing surrounding uses and structures

## Goal 7

Encourage high quality housing in new residential areas. New residential development should be modeled after the existing neighborhoods, including architecture, materials, scale, pedestrian features, the relationships of residential to non-residential uses, and relationships between buildings and the street.

### Objectives

- Model new development after existing traditional neighborhood development patterns in Ottawa including the use of an interconnected street system and a variety of housing typologies
- Create new neighborhoods following traditional neighborhood design principals



Open Space Treasures to be Protected to Create Green Image for Ottawa

## Goal 8

Evaluate existing open space, park and recreational facilities, provide for the enhancement of these facilities and also plan for new facilities.

### Objectives

- Identify opportunities to create local and regional trails and greenways
- Evaluate, maintain, and upgrade existing parks and facilities
- Provide usable parks in future neighborhoods
- Provide open space links to the Illinois and Fox Rivers where possible



Existing Creeks Could Connect Neighborhoods to the Rivers

## Goal 9

Preserve wetlands, woodlands, tributaries and other natural features of the Illinois and Fox River Valleys. Covel Creek, Goose Creek and other drainage ways provide natural beauty, recreational opportunities and important wildlife habitat.

### Objectives

- Identify and protect ecologically significant areas
- Create conservation easements to protect sensitive areas
- Preserve beautiful sites in existing and new developments as open space to ensure public access and enjoyment for all Ottawa residents

## Goal 10

Preserve agricultural lands surrounding Ottawa. Agriculture is a component of the local economy and therefore should be maintained and protected. Keeping cropland in production will also help maintain the existing feel of openness around Ottawa and the prevailing rural atmosphere.

### Objectives

- Growth in Ottawa should be adjacent to and within existing corporate boundaries served by public municipal utilities
- Discourage inappropriate developments under county jurisdiction which compromise the preservation of agricultural lands



Aerial of South of the Illinois River





# Chapter • 3

## History



Starved Rock from the West (1893)



Appellate Court Building (1893)



LaSalle St. South from Jefferson St. (1893)



LaSalle St. North from Madison St. (1893)

Historically, the attraction of Ottawa was its location. The confluence of the Fox and Illinois Rivers ensured that travelers and traders would pass by this land. The beautiful prairies and valleys encouraged people to stop and consider this area. What they found was rich soil for agriculture and mining, and the convenience of the rivers for transporting goods east to Chicago and West to the Mississippi.

The name Ottawa comes from an Indian tribe that dominated the area. Other tribes were the Illinois, Iroquois, Sac, Fox, Kickapoo and Pottawattomie. These Native Americans linked trading routes from the Illinois Valley to Cahokia, Illinois near St. Louis where some Native American remains have been dated back to twelve thousand years. Battles were fought between many of these Native American tribes. One such battle was with the Ottawa and Pottawattomie Indians who “starved” the Illinois Indians in revenge for the slaughter of Chief Pontiac at the location of what is now known as Starved Rock. These Indians found that Starved Rock was also a perfect lookout over the valleys below where they hunted bison and deer. They later traded goods with early settlers in the region.

Louis Joliet and Fr. Jacques Marquette were two of the first explorers to visit the Illinois Valley. Another explorer, Robert Sieur Cavalier de LaSalle, established a fur trading post called Fort St. Louis on top of Starved Rock. The first American settlers in the region were migrants from New York and the New England States. They became farmers, merchants and miners. The soil was perfect for growing a variety of grain crops and vegetables. Farm animals such as cattle and horses grazed the prairies. The soil was also rich in minerals which could be mined for glass sand, aluminum and clay. The clay for example, was used to make bricks, pottery and a variety of other useful products. These products could then be easily transported on the rivers.



Aerial Photo of the I&M Canal

Another significant feature in the development of Ottawa was the construction and operation of the Illinois and Michigan (I&M) Canal. The City of Ottawa was platted by the Illinois and Michigan Canal Commission and recorded in the county seat of Peoria County on December 5, 1830, and established in 1839. The City was first surveyed by James Thompson, a surveyor and engineer for the Canal Commission. Mr. Thompson's original plat showed a total of 216 lots with 99 being on the north side of the Illinois River, 64 lots on the south side and 53 lots east of the Fox River. Each lot varied in size from 80 feet wide and 150 feet deep on the north to 80 feet wide by 135 to 400 feet deep on the south. Most of the rights-of-way were 80 feet wide. Once Thompson's platting of Ottawa was finished, he moved up the river to Chicago and platted a similar layout.

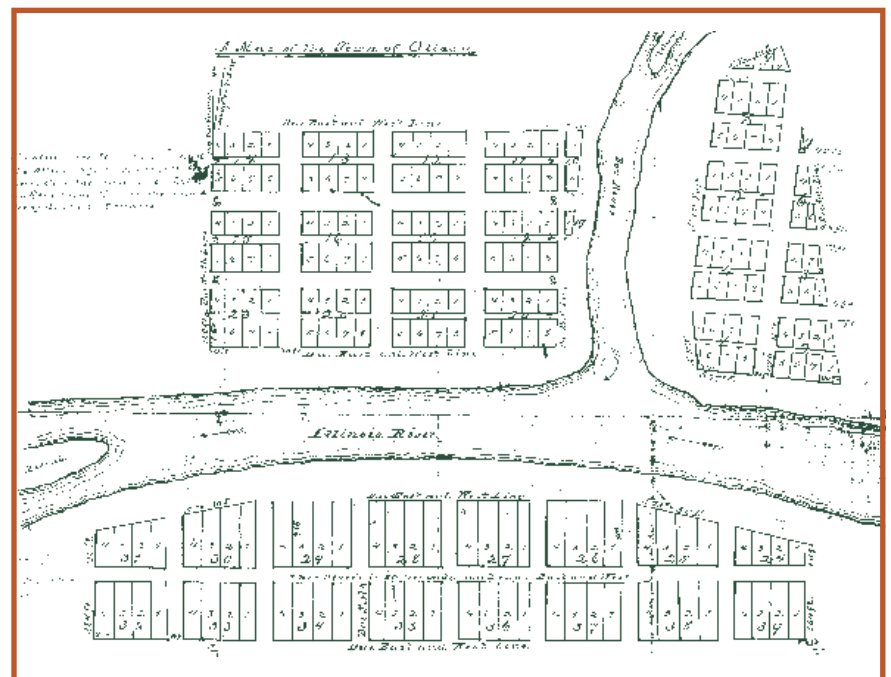
James Thompson also surveyed and platted the Canal which originally, was to end in Ottawa but was extended to LaSalle sixteen miles west of Ottawa. It was determined that the extension was necessary to bypass portions of the Illinois River west of Ottawa that were too shallow to navigate.

The construction of the ninety-six mile I&M Canal began in 1836 and was completed in 1848 at a cost of \$6.1 million. It was the last major canal constructed in the United States. After the first year of operation, the Canal helped Chicago become the nation's largest inland port. With the construction of the canal came the influx of Irish workers. That group provided the majority of manual labor needed to construct the canal. A vast majority of those laborers and their families stayed in the community following the completion of the canal.

Another feature attributed to the I&M Canal in Ottawa is the Fox River Aqueduct. It was the largest of four aqueducts along the Canal and was built to carry the Canal over the Fox River. The Aqueduct was considered an engineering wonder due to its size. The aqueduct is being used as part of the I&M Canal trail system as it crosses the Fox River.



The Aqueduct



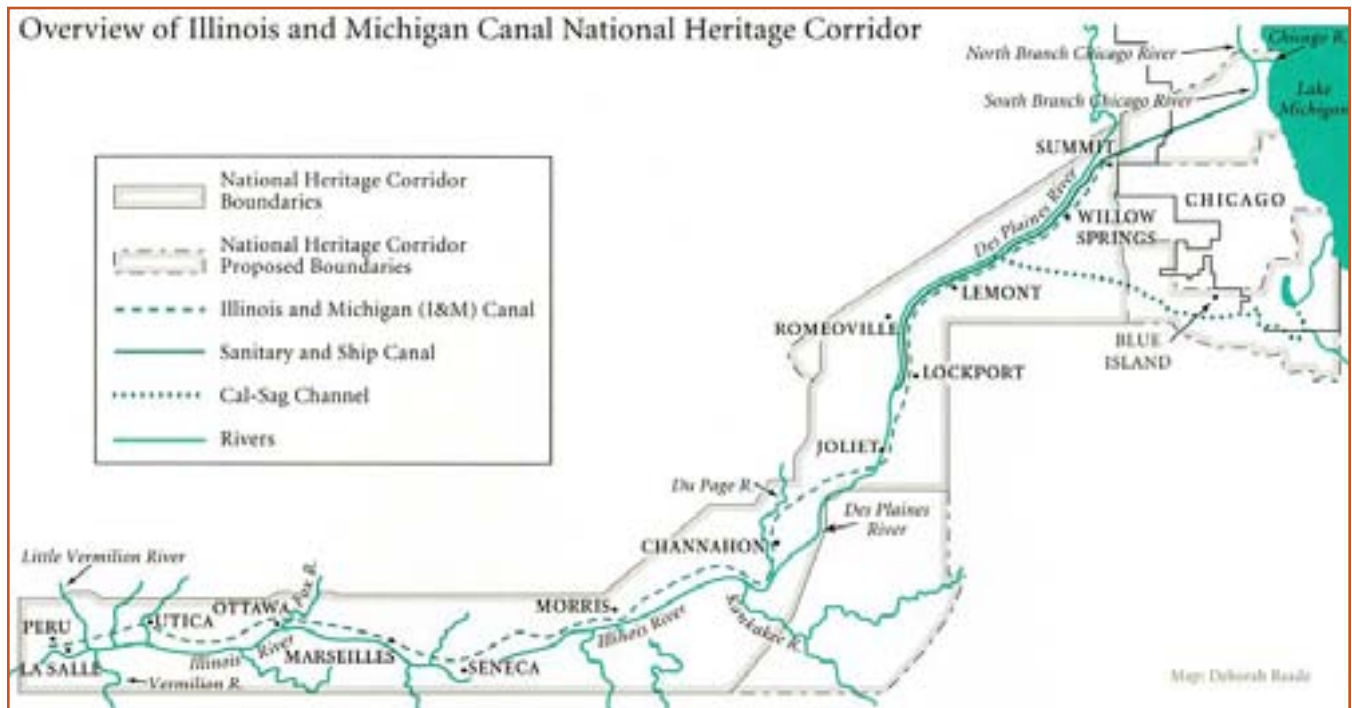
First Plat of Ottawa by Thompson (Canal Town)





I&M Canal State Trail Sign

The I&M Canal was supplied with water by the Fox River feeder canal located north of the Fox River Dam at Dayton. The Lateral Canal that connected the canal to a hydraulic basin was located along what is now Canal Street. The Lateral Canal was used to regulate the water levels in the mainline Canal and also used for hydraulic power. The hydraulic basin was located near what is now the Woodward parking lot. The City of Ottawa purchased the Lateral Canal from the State of Illinois in 1970 and converted most of the area to parking lots, public housing, the public library, and recreational uses.



I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor Map

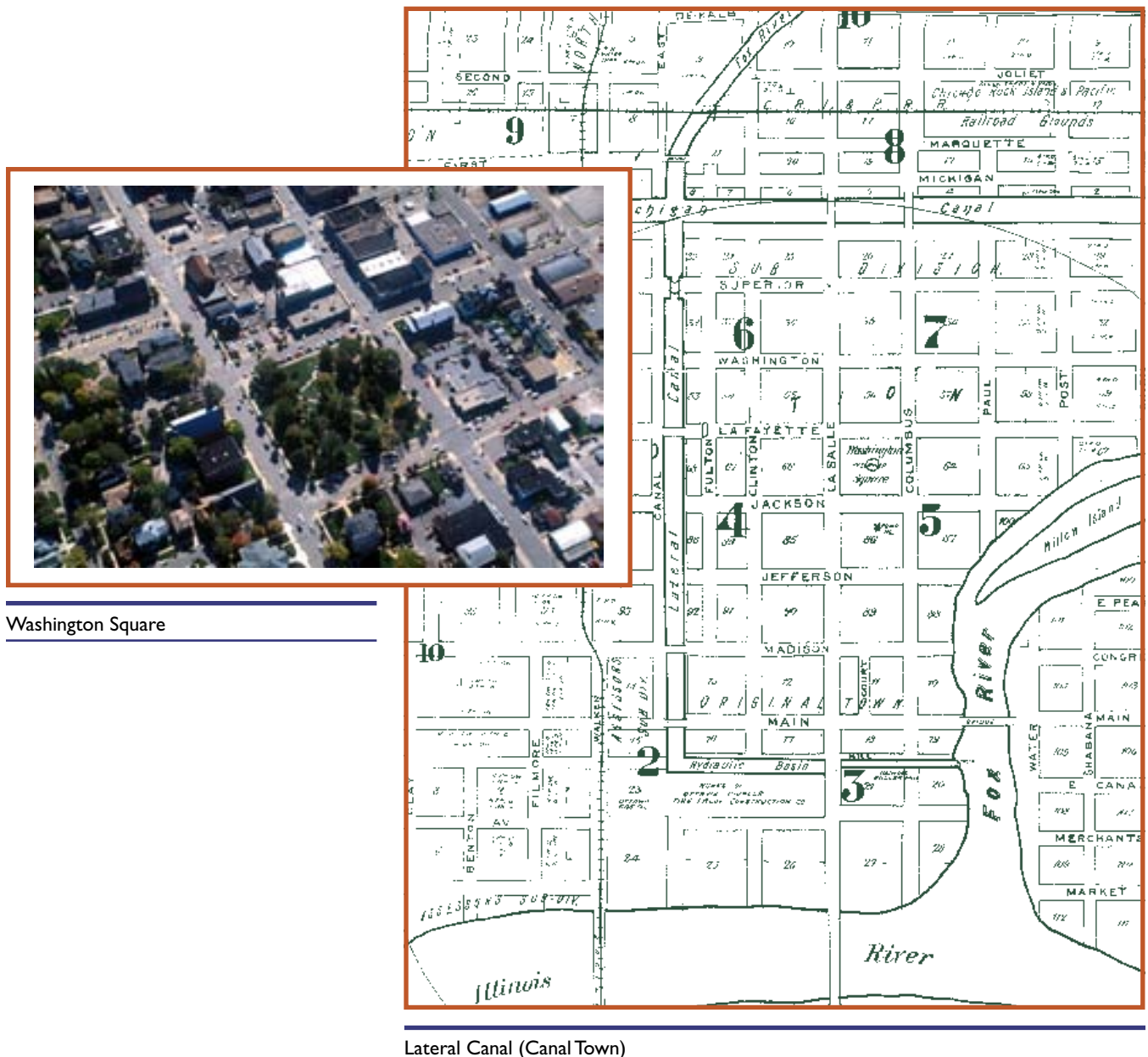
In 1853, several years after the completion of the Canal, the Rock Island and LaSalle Railroad was built parallel to the Canal. This rail line created a connection between the Mississippi River and Chicago and soon became the dominant means of transportation. The I&M Canal slowly deteriorated and was closed to traffic in 1914 after 66 years of use. Over the years, the abandoned Canal was thought to be undesirable. In the 1930s, the City's administration conducted projects to fill it. The Canal is now becoming a main feature in the redevelopment of Ottawa and other communities due to its historic and recreational value. Many areas are rediscovering the importance that the Canal had in the development of their community and are trying to preserve the heritage associated with it.



I&M Canal Trail

On August 21, 1858 over 10,000 people attended the first senatorial debate in Ottawa between candidates Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas. These series of debates on the issue of slavery brought Lincoln the national spotlight that would later carry him to the presidency. The debate was held in Washington Square with a platform located on the east side of the square. There is a boulder and plaque to mark the site of this historic debate. The city is currently working on placing large statues of Lincoln and Douglas in Washington Square.

Another famous individual from Ottawa's past was William Dickson Boyce. He founded the Boy Scouts of America in 1910. Today, the W.D. Boyce Memorial is located in the Ottawa Avenue Cemetery overlooking the Illinois River.



Washington Square

Lateral Canal (Canal Town)

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## Ottawa Today

Today, Ottawa remains an important and ideally situated city in the context of the regional area and along a major transportation corridor. Ottawa's unique setting at the confluence of the Fox and Illinois Rivers, as previously described, continues to impress visitors and residents with an abundance of scenic vistas and natural areas extending through the established neighborhoods and central business district. These natural corridors link Ottawa to several significant regional and state parks, adding to this unique environment, and giving Ottawa the name of "The City of Two Rivers."



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Aerial Photograph of Ottawa Today

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Ottawa's geographical setting in LaSalle County allows the city to physically function as a self contained community. Ottawa borders are nearly four miles to another significant municipality's borders, allowing Ottawa to remain today as a community with an established center and clearly defined edges. These factors are important components in maintaining a strong community character and identity.

The locational and physical qualities described above, and Ottawa's ability to draw on its rich heritage at the

turn of a new century, will increase interest in Ottawa as a place to live and work. Ottawa is in a position to attract new business and expand existing businesses. Ottawa's present population of 18,307 residents is expected to increase in the next decade for all of the reasons described above. Ottawa is on the verge of being rediscovered as a truly unique environment in which to live and conduct commerce.

The downtown is undergoing revitalization with many completed and ongoing building and façade renovations. There is also ongoing interest in creating new residential neighborhoods with current development interest in nearly all quadrants of the community.

Ottawa retains its important role as home to the Third District Appellate Court for Illinois as well as the county seat for LaSalle County with the historic County Courthouse located in the central business district. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Regional Headquarters for District 3, which covers eleven counties, is located in Ottawa.



## Ottawa Today





# Chapter • 4

## Existing Land Use

The existing land uses are general in nature to illustrate existing locations of housing, commercial, civic, industrial parks, agricultural and natural feature areas. These areas were determined by reviewing the current Ottawa zoning map, aeriels and site visits. *See Exhibit 1.*

The Facilities Planning Area (FPA) is the territory that has been designated by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, to be served with sanitary sewer service by the City of Ottawa. Properties to be served by the Ottawa sanitary sewer system outside of the FPA boundary will require an expansion of the FPA boundary. *See Exhibit 2.*

School Districts are territories that have been designated to provide educational services to residents within that district. *See Exhibit 3.*

**Residential.** This land use is shown in yellow. The map does not designate the type of residential zoning but rather indicates that the area is used for dwelling units. The smaller areas of yellow are farmsteads or larger lot developments.

**Commercial.** This land use is shown primarily in red. The map does not distinguish between commercial types but shows commercial use areas. Most of the existing commercial is found along I-80, Route 23, Route 71 and within downtown Ottawa.

**Civic.** The civic land use is shown in blue. This use includes schools, City, County and State Government Buildings.

**Industrial.** This land use is shown primarily in purple. This land use includes warehouses, storage, manufacturing and light manufacturing. Industrial land use is found north of I-80 and a large amount on the west side of Ottawa.

**Parks.** This land use is shown in dark green. Parks and open space are publicly owned or controlled for the purpose of recreation and open space for public use. There are smaller neighborhood parks that might not be shown at this scale.

**Agriculture.** Agriculture and agribusiness are shown in light green. Agriculture is the largest land use in the Ottawa area.

**Natural Features.** Natural feature areas are shown in a hatch pattern. Natural features are found along most of the Illinois and Fox Rivers and the major creeks.

## Location

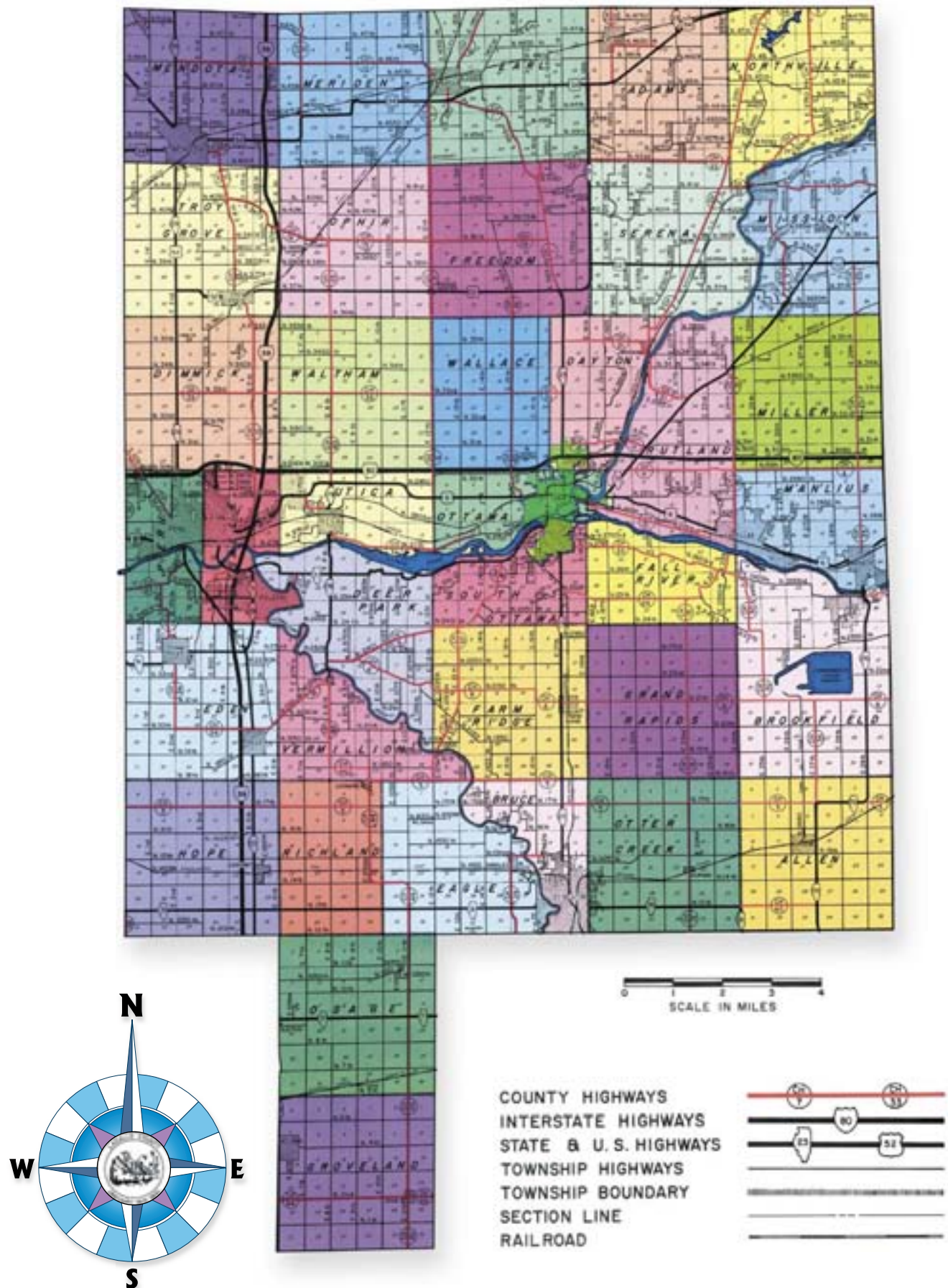
The City of Ottawa is located in LaSalle County, Illinois and is the county seat. Ottawa is approximately 75 miles southwest of Chicago, 80 miles southeast of Rockford, 90 miles east of the quad cities, and 76 miles northeast of Peoria.

The Illinois and Fox Rivers converge in Ottawa, meaning convenient transportation of people and goods. These rivers, combined with their tributaries, also make the region aesthetically attractive. People looking for outdoor beauty find it here in the rolling hills, the winding rivers, the sandstone bluffs and the peaceful valleys.





# LaSalle County, Illinois Official Road Map







I-80 & Rt. 23 Interchange



Norris Drive



LaSalle Street, Downtown Ottawa



Commercial on Norris Drive

## Transportation

A safe, convenient, and efficient circulation system is vital to the economic well being and quality of life in Ottawa. An effective system must not only be capable of accommodating present and future traffic volumes, but it should also serve the people by connecting living areas with employment, shopping, medical and recreational facilities. The transportation system must meet the needs of business and industry by linking those activities with essential services and distant markets. The total transportation system should encompass multi-modal transportation including local and transient vehicular traffic, pedestrian ways and bicycle circulation, rail service for transport of goods as well as the potential to restore commuter rail service to Ottawa.

Several federal and state highways run through Ottawa. I-80 is located in the northern portion of the City, and Illinois Routes 23 and 71 transect the City. Illinois Route 23 runs north-south while Illinois Route 71 runs from the northeast to the southwest. Illinois Routes 23 and 71 travel directly through the downtown bringing a large amount of traffic through the center of Ottawa. Illinois Routes 23 and 71 in the downtown area from the river to the Canal is one way going north on Columbus Street and one way going south using LaSalle Street. U.S. Highway 6 is slightly north of the downtown and travels directly east-west. The development of these major roadways combined with the earlier means of transportation and the Illinois and Fox Rivers, helped Ottawa gain importance in the region as a transportation hub.

Today, the Illinois River is still a vital part of the transportation system. Barges pass through this area carrying goods to and from the Chicago area. The Illinois River is not only a means for transporting goods but, along with the Fox River, it is used for recreational purposes by thousands of people each year.

Another means of transportation used by bicyclists, hikers, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers is the I&M Canal Trail. The trail uses the historic I&M Canal tow path, and is part of the Grand Illinois Trail.



Aerial of I&M Canal



Ottawa Train Station

The airport at Dayton is located on the far northeastern edge of the mile-and-one-half jurisdictional limit. The airport is used by locally owned aircraft and by Skydive Chicago, a very popular recreational sporting company.

With the amount of traffic that moves in and out of Ottawa on Illinois Routes 23 and 71, and with the potential growth possibilities on the southeast, Ottawa should plan for another route for increased transient traffic to bypass around the City. This proposed bypass would connect with Illinois Route 71 near the I-80 interchange and go directly south, crossing perpendicular to the I&M Canal and the Illinois River. After the bypass crosses the Illinois River, it could connect with an existing road roughly three-quarters of a mile south of the corporate limits, which connects to Illinois Route 23.

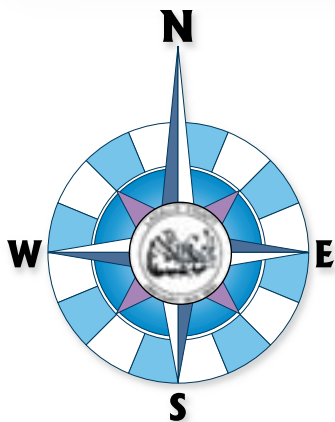
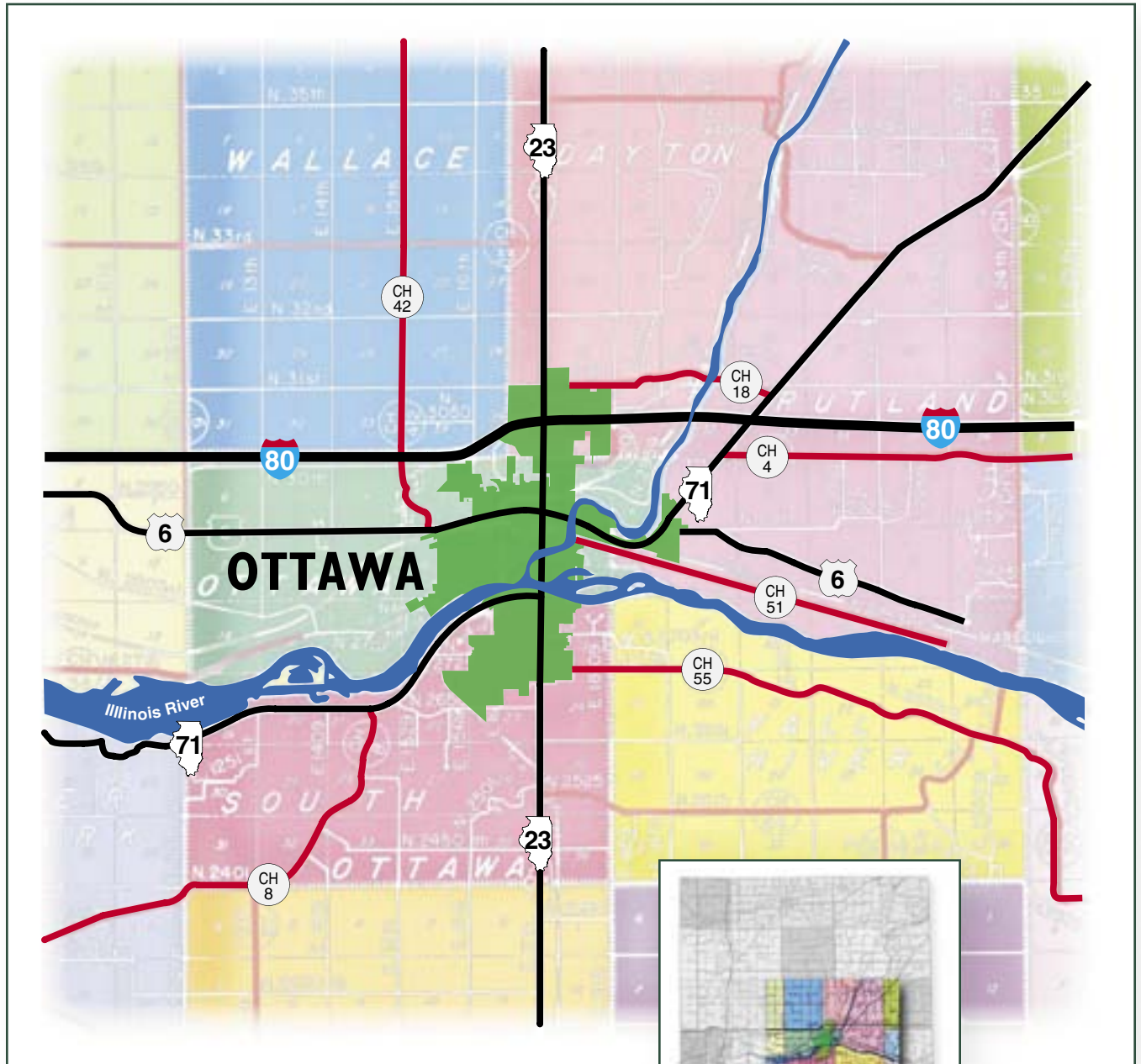
Another transportation change that the City is considering is moving one-way traffic from Illinois Route 23 on LaSalle Street to Clinton Street. This change would facilitate the movement of transient traffic onto Clinton Street with local business traffic utilizing LaSalle Street. These changes will allow for parking and streetscape improvements to take place along LaSalle Street. This item will be discussed in more detail in the Downtown Plan, Volume 2 of this overall Comprehensive Plan.

The City of Ottawa is currently working on several projects dealing with transportation in and around Ottawa. The first is the potential for a commuter rail line that would utilize the existing train station and CSX line. A feasibility study is being done to determine the potential need for commuter rail service. The counties involved are Will, Grundy and LaSalle. The proposed commuter rail service would run 59 miles from Joliet Union Station to a terminal station in the LaSalle-Peru area, passing through Minooka, Channahon, Morris, Seneca, Marseilles, Ottawa and Utica.

Proposed vehicular transportation improvements include the realignments of Boyce Memorial Drive and Green Street to eliminate two at-grade crossings with the CSX rail line. These two realignments are in the preliminary planning stages and will require additional traffic studies and design, but are being included in this plan so they may be considered if new potential development is proposed in those areas.

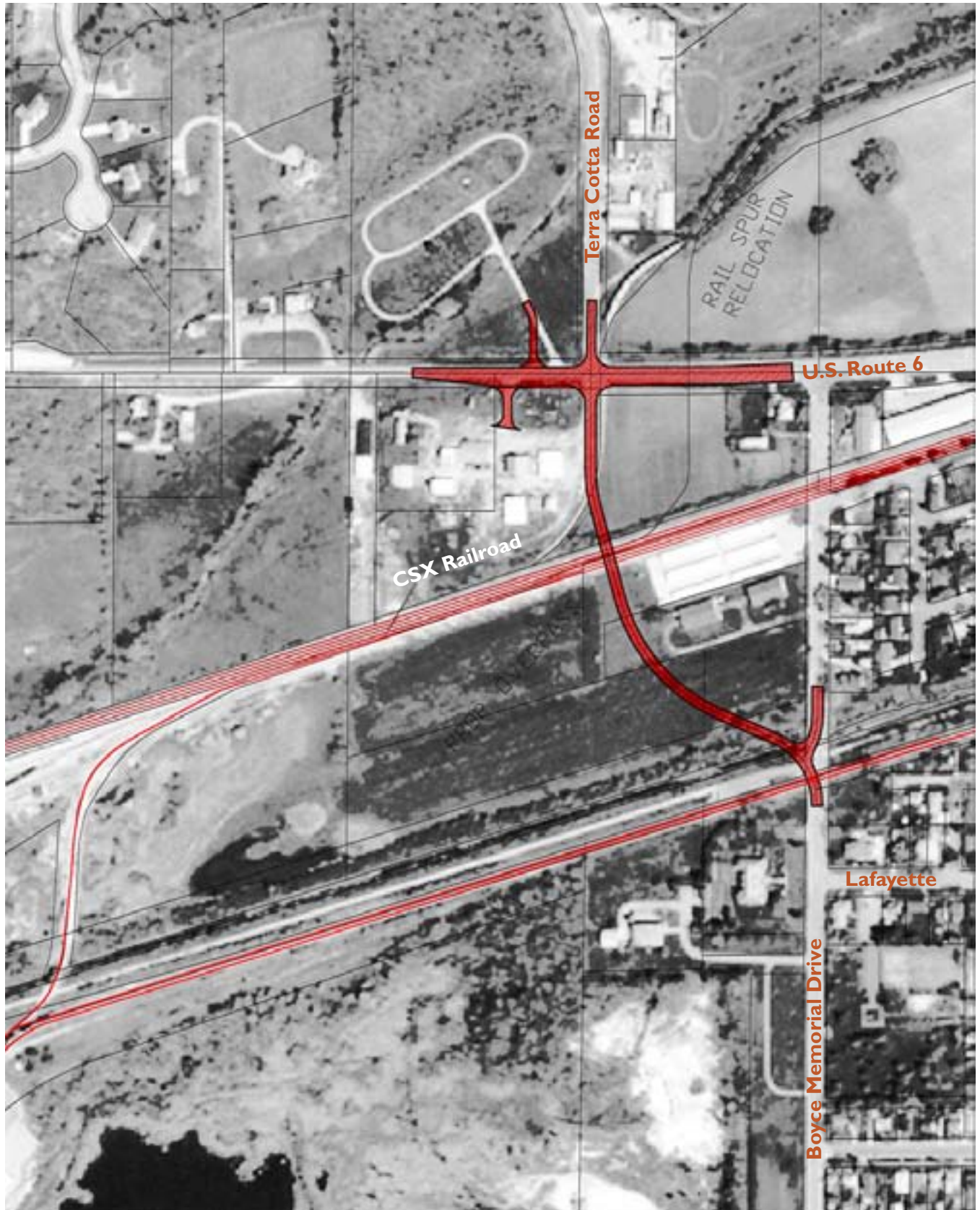
In addition to the two proposed realignments and moving traffic off of LaSalle Street to Clinton Street, the City is proposing a full interchange onto Interstate 80. This proposed full interchange would be located just outside of the existing mile-and-one-half jurisdictional limit, three miles west of the Interstate 80 and Illinois Route 23 interchange on E 14<sup>th</sup>.

# LaSalle County Road Map Detail

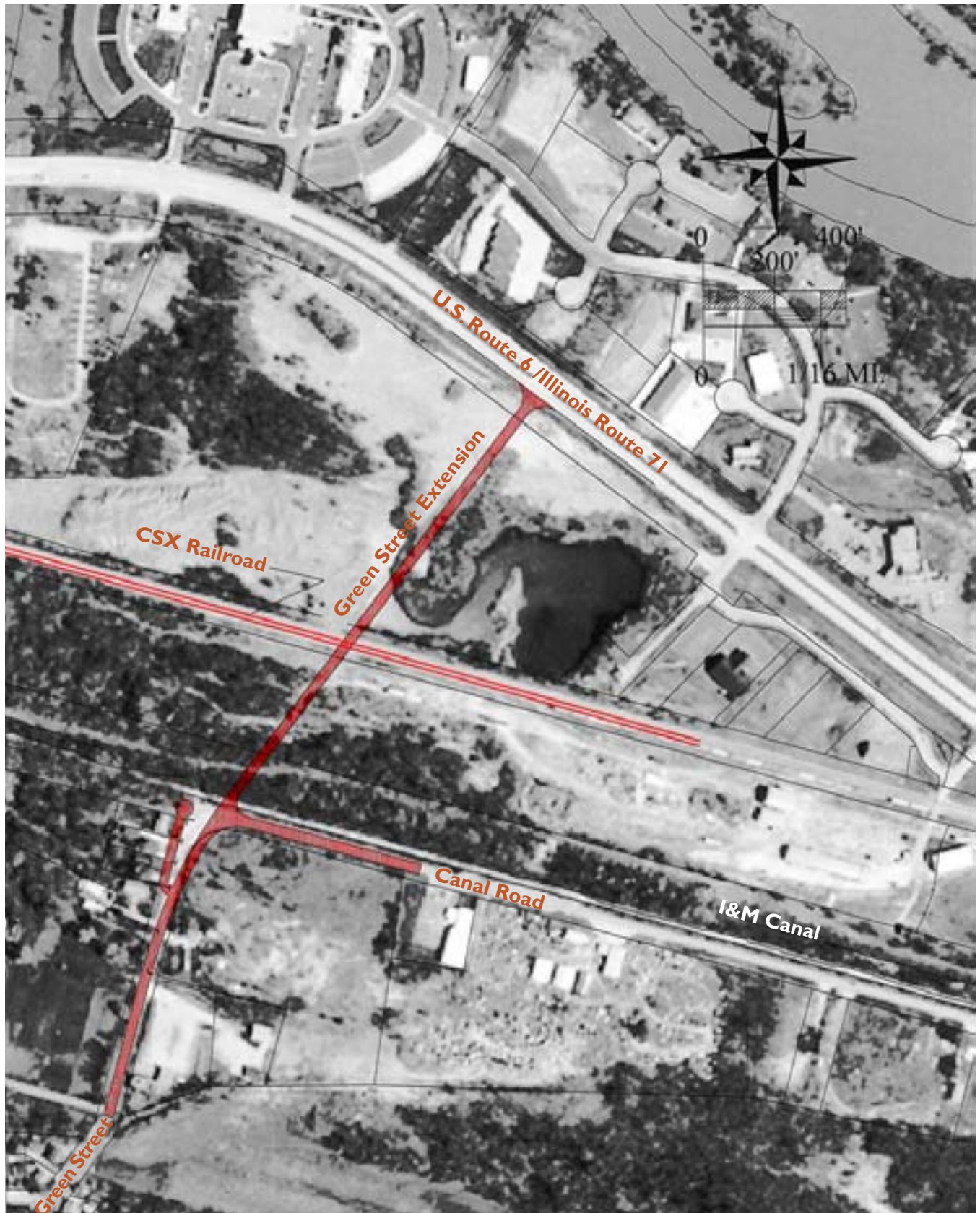




# Boyce Memorial Drive Realignment



## Green Street Extension







Existing Drainage Ways



Confluence of the Fox & Illinois Rivers



I&M Canal State Trail Sign



County Road

## Parks and Open Space

Ottawa is a community that has an historic link with its parks and open space. From the natural links to the Illinois and Fox Rivers to the historic links to Washington Square and the I&M Canal, one quickly recognizes the symbiotic relationship between city residents and their parks and open spaces. They realize that improvements to Ottawa's parks, recreational programming and park facilities will result in quality of life improvements at a city-wide scale, at the neighborhood level and to individual residents.

Ottawa features providing regional benefits include:

- Convergence of Illinois & Fox Rivers in the heart of Ottawa
- I&M Canal State trail system connecting to numerous communities along its path
- Numerous state parks including Starved Rock, Buffalo Rock, Matthiessen and Illini State Parks within short driving distance

It is clear that Ottawa improvements will provide many regional benefits ranging from regional trail links on land and water to improved water quality in downstream communities.

The timing of this Comprehensive Plan is ideal in addressing past and current needs as well as future aspirations of the community. Despite its dense downtown development, Ottawa has maintained the majority of its extensive creek and river tributary system in an open condition. Covel Creek is an excellent example of this. This system, which is connected to some of Ottawa's existing neighborhoods, has the potential to permeate future development areas. This river and creek tributary system also has the added potential to connect existing and new neighborhoods with a regional greenway and trail network.

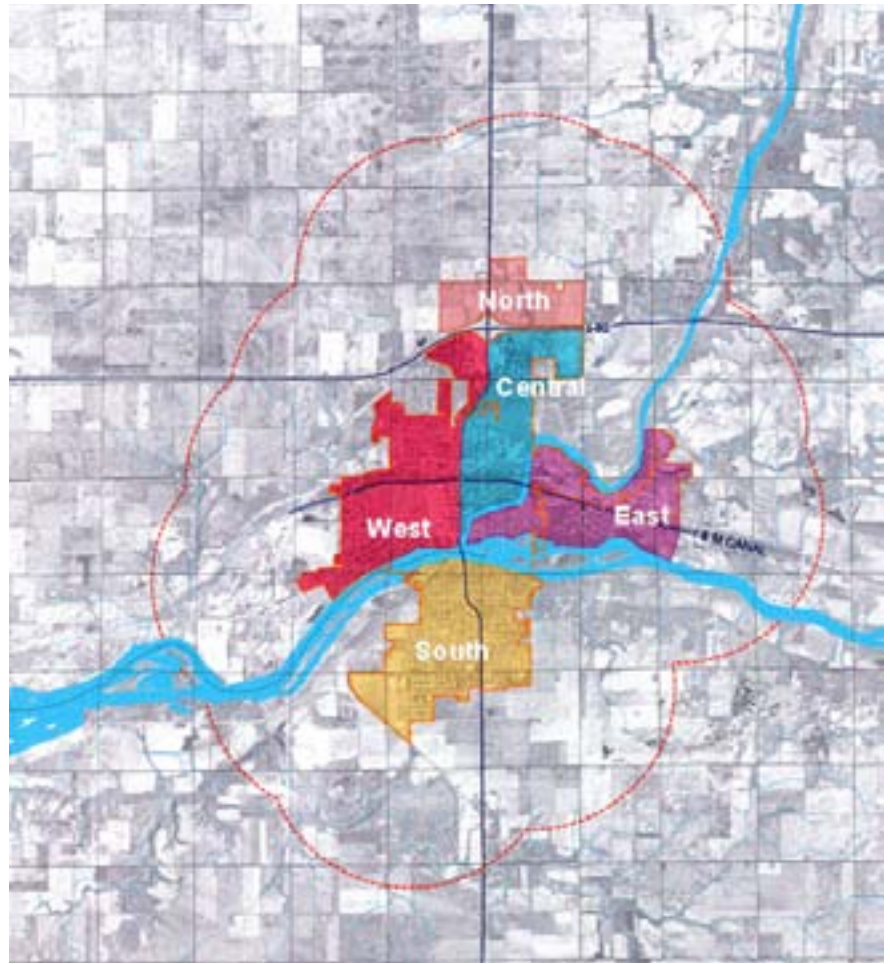
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## Organizational Format

Ottawa's parks are currently grouped into the following five geographic districts (see map below):

- North
- Central
- West
- East
- South

The boundaries of these districts correspond to major land features such as the Fox and Illinois Rivers or roadways such as U.S. Highway 6 or Illinois Route 23. Because of this, these districts are useful in determining local level of service that takes into account the walking distance and general accessibility to parks from a particular neighborhood or service area.



Ottawa's Geographic Park Districts

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Well Maintained Parks



Limited Public Access to Water



Potential Regional Open Space Links

This section is set up to give the reader an overall view of the system as well as a park-specific summary of improvements, grouped by district. It is organized into the following sections:

- General Observations
- Service Area Summary
- General Principles
- System-Wide Opportunities
- Park-Specific Recommendations
- District Summaries
- General Opportunities

## General Observations

The following general observations were compiled during the assessment period of the project. They represent potential opportunities, as well as current issues, facing Ottawa's parks, recreational programming and facilities.

In general:

- Most parks appear to be well maintained and very few parks require complete redesign. All parks need updated equipment and accessibility improvements to meet ADA requirements. Many just need basic improvements such as new signage, enhanced site furnishings, sidewalk replacement, plantings, etc.
- Some districts, such as West and East, are relatively well served by neighborhood and community parks while others, such as the North, Central and South are underserved.
- Ottawa's parks are made up of a series of pleasant parks and open spaces but the system does not connect or read as a unified system.
- Despite Ottawa's river setting, residents have limited public access to area waterways, including visual access to river bluffs. Much of this land is in private holdings. In addition, much of the land that is most desirable for open space preservation is zoned for other uses because no park or open space zoning classification exists.
- There are opportunities to connect Ottawa's park system to adjacent open space systems and communities. The I&M Canal State Trail and the developing Fox riverwalk are good examples of this potential.
- There are opportunities to add significant quantities of high quality open space to the existing system, both for public use and natural habitat through rezoning, land acquisition, annexation, conservation easements and other appropriate methods.





New Open Space Opportunities



Expanded Partnerships (IDNR)



Labor-Intensive Management Practices



Green Parkway Opportunities

- There are opportunities to continue the partnership that has historically existed between the City and Ottawa's schools in order to utilize school open space and facilities for general public uses, including neighborhood parks. This would be an alternative to expensive land acquisitions for new parks.
- Due to Ottawa's abundance of accessible natural areas, there is excellent opportunity for the introduction of nature facilities. The river and creek systems allow for the opportunity to create a connected system for access to these facilities, which would be in harmony with their sensitive surroundings.
- There are opportunities to expand operational partnerships with adjacent communities, LaSalle County, state agencies such as Illinois Department of Natural Resources, regional planning entities such as Prairie Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D) and federal entities such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Bureau of Fish and Wildlife. These entities could be potential financial partners and help share the costs of land acquisition, improvement and operation, especially in riparian and natural habitat areas.
- Opportunities exist to significantly reduce the amount of mowing and high-energy maintenance in some parks and focus these efforts in more appropriate locations and/or new parks if they are created. Spaces along the Fox River and steep slopes along hillsides such as those in Allen Park are good examples of this. An opportunity also exists to partner this approach with creation of more naturalized areas, increased use of native plantings and more ecologically sound maintenance practices.
- Because of the lower density development along Ottawa's perimeter where most visitors enter the city, there is potential for major green parkways from I-80 to Downtown and along both sides of the Illinois River, where visitors to nearby state parks often travel. This would portray a green image to city residents and visitors to area attractions.



Potential Connected System Through Regional Partnerships and Cooperation



Existing Barriers Affect Service Areas



Fox and Illinois River Confluence



Potential Rail-Trail Opportunities



Potential Mining Re-Use Opportunities

- Major automobile thoroughfares such as U.S. Highway 6 and Illinois Routes 23 and 71, present formidable barriers for residents in accessing community and neighborhood parks. Service areas must take these factors into account when determining the adequacy of parks at the district level.
- The projected population growth areas on the south side will ultimately require new parks and open space to serve residents, address stormwater issues and to maintain a good quality of life for residents. This population increase will also require additional schools that could address some of these park needs if developed as “school parks”.
- The City of Ottawa lacks a multitude of recreational facilities, programming and service facilities such as indoor park field houses, and public meeting rooms. Opportunity exists to develop indoor recreation facilities, either as new facilities or through partnerships with public and private entities such as the YMCA and local schools.
- Two regional water systems, the Illinois and Fox Rivers, converge in the center of town. Ottawa has begun to successfully take advantage of this occurrence as witnessed in recent plans for the Downtown riverfront and Fox River riverwalk. However, this effort could be expanded further north on the Fox River, further east and west on the Illinois River and at the confluence itself where preserved open space would celebrate the ecologically significant merging of these regional rivers.
- Ottawa’s railroad heritage now offers the potential for a series of new trails through rails-to-trails conversion. A new Illinois River crossing and trails along the Fox River are possible by-products of this.
- Ottawa’s mining heritage offers outstanding potential for major park and open space developments in the future as these facilities reach maturity. This could provide large-scale regional park space not currently available in Ottawa while increasing public linkages to and enjoyment of the Illinois River. It is critical that Ottawa takes a proactive approach to these lands to ensure their availability for public use in the future.



Typical Community Park (Peck Park)



Special Facilities (Riverfront Park)



Potential for New South Parks



Waterfront Recreation (Allen Park)

## Service Area Summary

The planning team assessed the service area coverage using industry standards such as National Recreation and Parks Association Level of Service. Ottawa's parks were classified as either a community park, a neighborhood park, a school park or regional park based on "*Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*" developed in 1996 by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Figures 1 and 2 and Exhibit 4 analyze each park's features and recommended improvements. The following summarizes the team's conclusions:

- Ottawa is generally well served by community parks but lacking in neighborhood parks (under 5 acres) that should typically be located within a ½ mile, barrier free walk of residents. This is particularly evident in the North and Central districts. Because of this, Ottawa residents who are willing to drive enjoy quality recreational amenities such as baseball, soccer, outdoor performances, swimming and picnicking. Conversely, neighborhood residents and families are challenged to find close to home amenities such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, walking trails and other basic family needs without driving or crossing busy thoroughfares. The highest priority should be given to strengthening the park system's foundation of neighborhood parks by creating new ones and providing neighborhood amenities at school properties.
- This plan recognizes the need to serve the future population south of the city limits by recommending that high priority be given to establishing the preferred locations for parks at all levels (community, neighborhood, school and regional). These parks should also be linked into the existing park network by greenways and trails wherever possible.

The location of each of Ottawa's existing parks is illustrated on the map "Existing Parks and Natural Areas". *See Exhibit 4.*





Connected System Provides Local and Regional Benefits



Open Space Treasures to be Protected to Create Green Image for Ottawa



Existing Creeks Could Connect Neighborhoods to the Rivers

## General Principles

Based upon the analysis of existing conditions, the following general principles were developed to guide future park and recreation improvements.

- Establish 100% neighborhood and community park and facilities (as applicable) service area coverage for Ottawa residents based on NRPA standards.
- Create a green image for Ottawa, both visually and environmentally, by purchasing and/or rezoning all difficult to develop properties along creeks, rivers, railway corridors and major roadways and convert to open space. Conservation easements should also be considered as a tool to protect these properties. These spaces can serve as public use spaces or natural habitat. Special priority should be given to parcels at highly visible intersections such as community gateways at I-80, highly sensitive environmental settings such as water system confluences and other sites that would create green gateways for city residents and visitors. Coordinate this plan with ongoing city entry and beautification planning.
- Create a connected open space and natural habitat system that connects areas within the city limits together, to the Illinois and Fox Rivers and to adjacent communities and regional open space systems.
- Provide each neighborhood resident with access to a neighborhood park and its pertinent facilities, located within a ½ mile, barrier-free walking distance from any home in the neighborhood. These parks should be a minimum of three acres and all contain the following recreational amenities: shelters, children's playlot, general active recreation areas, athletic fields, ancillary facilities that coincide with all program types, benches, trash receptacles and other site amenities.
- Provide each neighborhood with an open space connection to the Illinois and Fox Rivers, either through park or creek/riparian properties, located within walking distance from any home in the neighborhood.
- Enhance Ottawa's park system with a citywide bike trail system and provide additional links to major regional trails such as the I&M Canal. Provide additional links across the Fox and Illinois Rivers where possible through new bridges and improved existing vehicular bridges.
- Consider existing school district property (open space, playgrounds or facility program space) when master planning new parks, facilities and amenities.
- Consider development of a Park Impact Ordinance that requires all residential developers to provide a neighborhood park and to allow for its required program facilities in their new developments, with a minimum land size of no less than three acres of reasonably flat, developable land and with typical amenities to include a children's playlot, general active recreation areas and athletic field, passive recreation areas, shelter, benches, trash receptacles and other site amenities.



Enhance Trail Connections



Integrate Park and School Programs



Preserve Significant Open Space



Encourage Use of Native Plantings

- Ensure public involvement in all significant changes to existing parks and in the planning of new ones. This is of particular importance at the neighborhood park level.
- Preserve the most beautiful sites in existing and new developments as open space to ensure public access and enjoyment for all Ottawa residents. Particular attention should be given to properties adjacent to natural areas (woodlands, wetlands, stream corridors), trails and street frontage for public access. Significant usable areas with relatively flat topography should be protected on these sites for general active recreation and athletic use. These areas should be zoned as Parks or Open Space to ensure this principle.
- Wherever possible and appropriate, increase the use of native plantings and more ecologically sound maintenance practices to reduce maintenance cost and to maintain biodiversity and scenic beauty. High priority should be given to areas along Ottawa's water bodies, including the Illinois and Fox Rivers, their creek tributaries, lakes and wetlands.



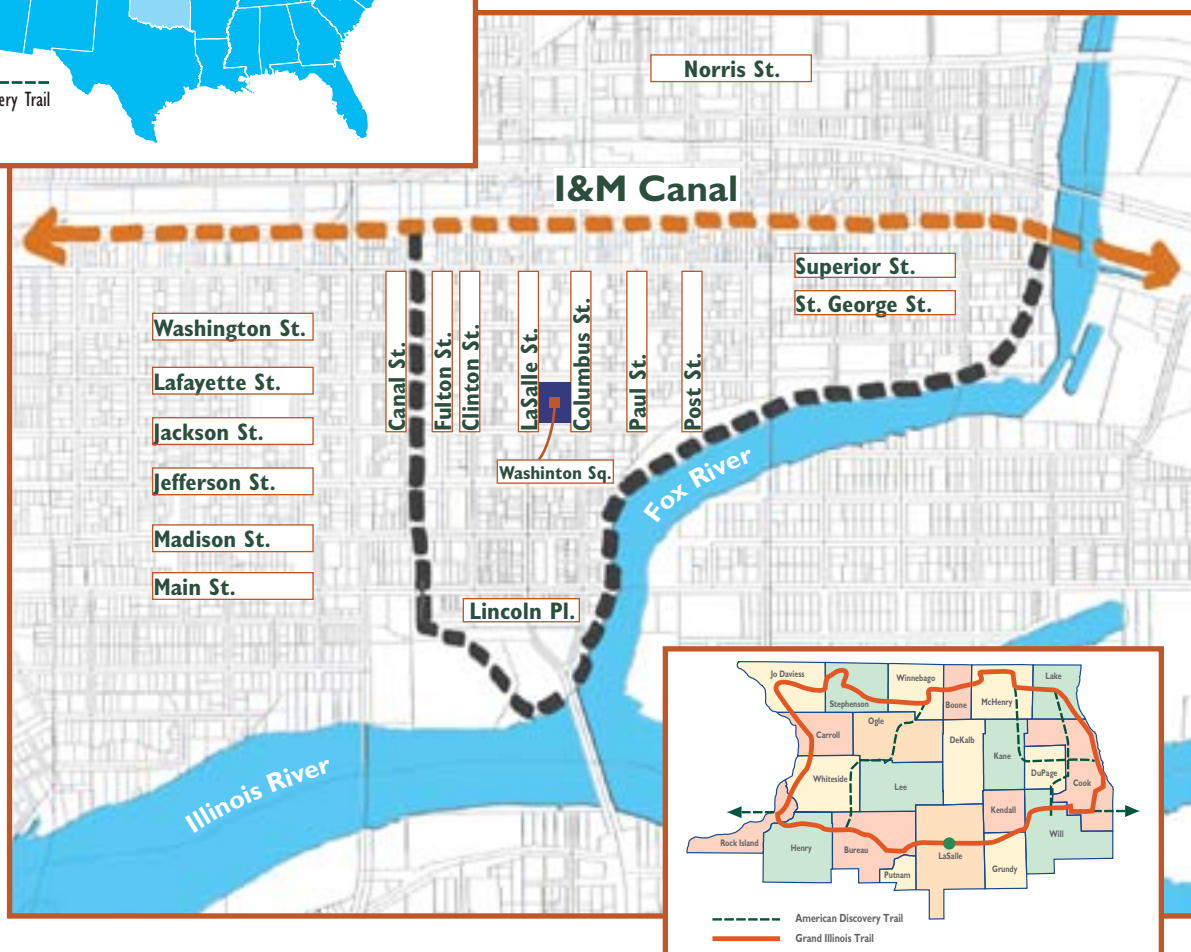
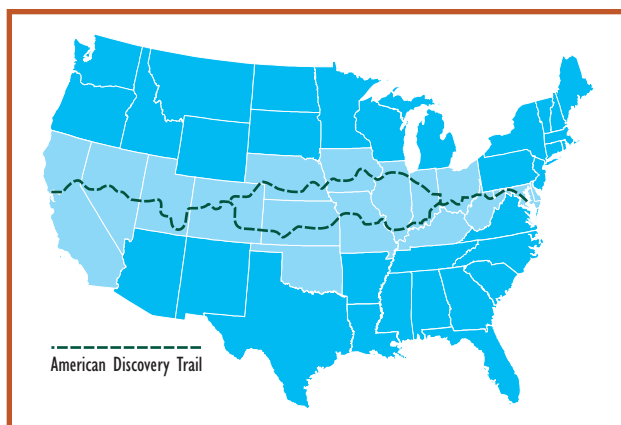
Aerial of East Ottawa and I&M Canal

## System-wide Opportunities

As mentioned previously in this document, the planning team has identified a number of system-wide open space opportunities in Ottawa, including city-wide trail links, greenways to and along the Illinois and Fox River and the numerous creeks and water features that comprise their tributary systems, new park sites and links to adjacent communities. The maps “Target Parks and Proposed Trail Network”, “Open Space Conservation Practices Plan” and “Comprehensive Green Space Plan” illustrate these potential improvements.

*See Exhibits 5, 6 & 7.*

One opportunity would link Ottawa to San Francisco, California and Washington DC through the American Discovery Trail. It is the nations first coast-to-coast, non-motorized recreation trail. The American Discovery Trail connects to the Grand Illinois Trail and then to the I&M Canal State Trail. Ottawa proposes to connect the I&M Canal State Trail with downtown by constructing the Ottawa Riverwalk Trail. The Ottawa Riverwalk Trail would connect to the I&M Canal State Trail in two different locations. One would be located at the connection of the Lateral Canal near the Ottawa Public Library. The other connection would be located at the I&M Canal Aqueduct over the Fox River. Some phases have been completed for the Ottawa Riverwalk Trail while others are still being proposed.





Boat Docks at Allen Park

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## Park-Specific Recommendations

During the course of this study, a list of existing parks was compiled that identified each park's size, classification (community, neighborhood, regional, school or linear), location/district (North, Central, West, East or South), and amenities available to the public. This data, along with proposed recommendations for existing park and open space, is summarized in matrix form. *See Figures 1 & 2.*



# District Summaries

The following tables summarize the planning team’s findings and recommendations for each of the five service area districts. Recommendations for each of Ottawa’s existing parks, as well as target park properties, will be outlined later in this section.

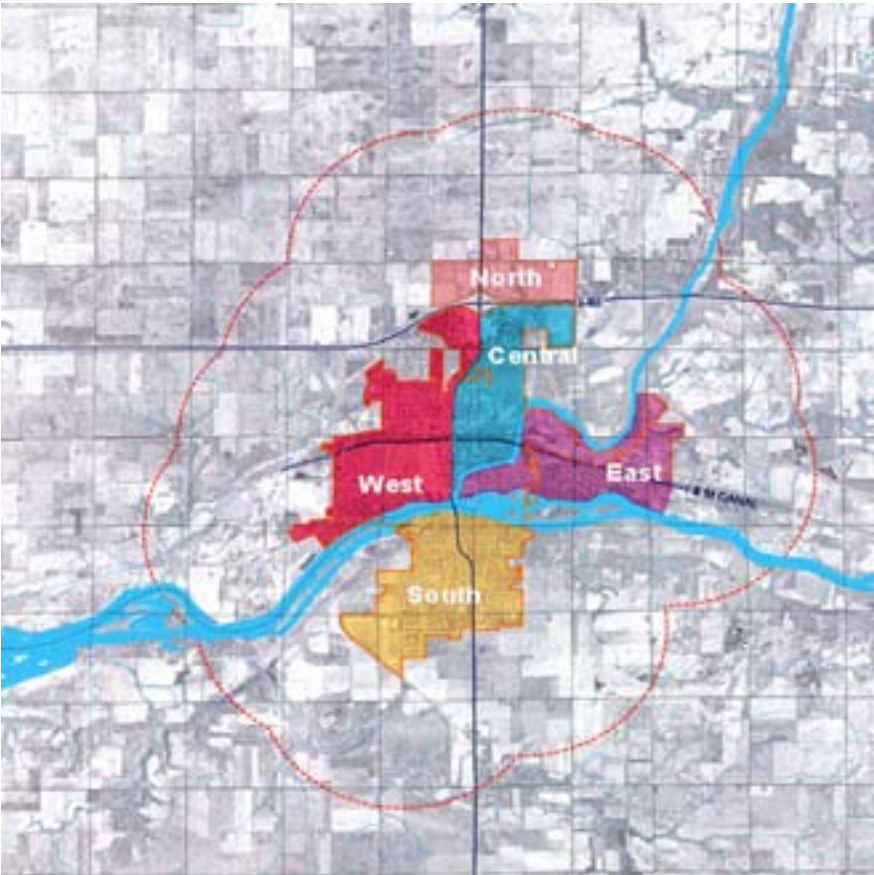
## North

The general goal should be to serve future growth. There are currently no parks in this district besides the private golf course, Dayton Ridge, that functions as a regional facility. This plan recommends one new target park of nearly 30 acres to serve future needs and to buffer proposed industrial development north of I-80.

### North District Summary

<b>Existing District Acreage</b>	<b>60.1 acres</b>
Community Parks	0.0 acres
Neighborhood Parks	0.0 acres
Regional Parks	60.1 acres
School Park	0.0 acres
<b>Proposed Target Parks</b>	
North Airport Park	35.2 acres
<b>Total Proposed District Acreage</b>	<b>95.3 acres</b>

Five Service Area Districts



## Central

The general goal should be to serve the existing community. There are currently six parks totaling approximately forty-five acres in this district. The I&M Canal also travels through this district and could be better utilized as a community resource. This plan recommends one additional target park totaling approximately eighteen acres.

### Central District Summary

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<b>Existing District Acreage</b>	<b>45.2 acres</b>
Community Parks	32.3 acres
Neighborhood Parks	12.9 acres
Regional Parks	0.0 acres
School Park	0.0 acres
<b>Proposed Target Parks</b>	
One New Park	15.7 acres
<b>Total Proposed District Acreage</b>	<b>60.9 acres</b>

## West

The general goal should be to serve the existing community. There are currently ten parks totaling nearly fifty acres. The I&M Canal also travels through this district and could be better utilized as a community resource. This plan recommends an additional five parks, one being the approximately one thousand acre U.S. Silica strip mining site that is targeted for park development as it reaches maturity. This property would be targeted for a new regional riverfront park. Total target park acreage for this district totals 1,190.7 acres, the majority of it being the U.S. Silica site. This plan also recognizes the potential for park improvements along the former Lateral Canal that links downtown with the I&M Canal.

### West District Summary

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<b>Existing District Acreage</b>	<b>44.9 acres</b>
Community Parks	24.0 acres
Neighborhood Parks	2.2 acres
Regional Parks	0.0 acres
School Park	18.7 acres
<b>Proposed Target Parks</b>	
Six New Parks	1,190.7 acres
<b>Total Proposed District Acreage</b>	<b>1,235.6 acres</b>

## East

The general goal should be to serve the existing community while capitalizing on existing opportunities for new amenities. There are currently four parks in this district totaling approximately thirty-five acres. The majority of this acreage is at Ottawa Township High School that has been classified as a school park. The I&M Canal also travels through this district and could be better utilized as a community resource. This plan recommends two new community or regional parks totaling nearly 315 acres. It also recommends an extensive trail system along the Fox and Illinois River.

### East District Summary

<b>Existing District Acreage</b>	<b>34.7 acres</b>
Community Parks	3.1 acres
Neighborhood Parks	1.0 acres
Regional Parks	0.0 acres
School Park	30.6 acres
<b>Proposed Target Parks</b>	
Two New Parks	314.3 acres
<b>Total Proposed District Acreage</b>	<b>349.0 acres</b>

## South

The general goal should be to serve the projected future growth in this district. There are currently eight parks in this district totaling approximately sixty acres. This plan recommends nine new target parks totaling 361.6 acres. Some of this could come in the form of school parks as new schools are developed to serve future populations.

### South District Summary

<b>Existing District Acreage</b>	<b>61.9 acres</b>
Community Parks	41.7 acres
Neighborhood Parks	2.0 acres
Regional Parks	0.0 acres
School Park	18.2 acres
<b>Proposed Target Parks</b>	
Nine New Parks	361.6
<b>Total Proposed District Acreage</b>	<b>423.5 acres</b>

### Acreage Summary — Total System

<b>Total Existing Park Acreage</b>	<b>252.9 acres *</b>
<b>Total Proposed Target Park Acreage</b>	<b>1,917.5 acres</b>
<b>Total Proposed Park Acreage</b>	<b>2,164.3 acres</b>

*\*(The total Existing Park Acreage includes 6.1 acres of the I & M Canal Tow Path which is in several Districts. The Canal has not be broken down by Districts.)*

## General Opportunities

The following recommendations are broad in nature and are therefore not included in the park-specific recommendations in the previous sections.

**Regional Trails and Greenways** – There are a number of opportunities to create a greenway system that will provide a new regional trail and open space links throughout Ottawa. There are also opportunities to utilize Ottawa's potential new greenway system to provide much-needed neighborhood park space. Many of the greenway opportunities exist along the Illinois and Fox River and its tributary system including Covell Creek. In all cases, more detailed studies are needed to verify the potential for these corridors, both for human circulation and for wildlife corridors. Bridge clearances, slopes, soils, adjacent land uses and a number of other factors must all be studied more closely before any project moves forward. A comprehensive greenway and watershed master plan may be the most effective method to compile this data in a usable form to guide future decisions.

**U.S. Route 6 and Illinois Routes 23 and 71** – Opportunity exists to expand linear parkway improvements along Illinois Routes 23 and 71 from I-80 on the north to downtown on the south by limiting development on currently open, scenic parcels. This opportunity also exists on roadways traveling west from downtown towards Starved Rock State Park including U.S. Routes 6 and Illinois Route 71. In summary, these actions could create a major green parkway system for Ottawa residents and their visitors.

Gateway Map







Covel Creek Opportunities

**Covel Creek** – The City of Ottawa should take advantage of all opportunities to provide open space and trail connections along Covel Creek. A major opportunity exists to create a major open space and habitat system along the flood-prone flood plain, including the confluence with the Illinois River.

**Rezoning, Acquisition and Annexation** – This plan recommends numerous target properties that should be considered for rezoning, acquisition and/or annexation in order to provide appropriate levels of service to Ottawa's neighborhoods and to create a connected regional system. As a next course of action, the City of Ottawa should establish a formal strategy to facilitate these property transactions and to establish necessary funding to complete them. In this process, the city would compile and evaluate a comprehensive list of suitable properties, prioritize them for rezoning, acquisition, annexation and conservation easements and develop a budget for implementation.



Need for General Upgrades

**General Upgrades** – Many of the parks may require minor improvements such as new signs, new playground equipment, ADA compliance, repaired sidewalks, improved drainage, additional site furnishings and improved lighting. Where possible, these conditions have been noted in the park-specific recommendations that follow.



Changing Maintenance Requirements



Potential Conservation Areas

**Maintenance Requirements** – It is important to recognize that resourceful use of park maintenance budgets must be considered in all future park improvements. Therefore, maximum effort must be given to finding the most efficient ways to maintain the acreage of Ottawa’s parks and to avoid new conditions that require high levels of maintenance, unless supported by maintenance endowments to offset the city’s costs. Each project should be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine the best management methods for that location. In addition, this master plan stresses the importance of Ottawa’s natural systems, including the Illinois and Fox River, its creek tributaries, lakes, wetlands, savannas and woodlands. In order to provide a level of maintenance appropriate for these natural systems, a change in current maintenance practices will be necessary. In order to implement more ecologically sound maintenance practices, consider updating Parks and Recreation’s operations and maintenance manuals and training existing and new staff to facilitate this effort. This effort should be coordinated with training efforts relating to the use of native vegetation. This training could also be extended to interested and qualified members of the public.

**Conservation** – Ottawa contains a number of ecologically-significant open spaces, typically associated with the Illinois and Fox Rivers and the landforms they have created. This includes the area where the two rivers converge near downtown as well as their confluences with area creeks, backwater areas, islands and bluffs. These properties offer great potential for public education to Ottawa’s residents, including school children. These properties are also fragile and highly vulnerable to degradation from new development. The City of Ottawa should aggressively protect these sites from new and existing development and support capital and programmatic improvements at these locations.

**Master Plans** – This report contains an extensive list of recommendations that span from regional connections to Target Parks to park-specific improvements. Target Parks will require master planning and professional services for their implementation. A strategy and budget should be established to complete these plans.

In addition, it is recommended that Ottawa undertake a more detailed Comprehensive Parks Master Plan to fully explore the needs and opportunities associated with its parks, open spaces, programming and operations. Such a document would prove useful in future decision-making and will aid in acquiring funding for park-related improvements.

# Operational Opportunities

**Base Information** – There is generally a lack of base information for the existing parks in Ottawa’s system. This includes topographic surveys, utility information, tree locations and other base material that is necessary to make informed decisions on a park-by-park and system-wide basis. It is therefore recommended that the City of Ottawa obtain legal and topographic surveys of all existing parks. This process should be coordinated with other city agencies to provide accurate underground utility locations and other infrastructure-related elements and to keep this data up to date for future use.

**As-Built Drawings** – It is anticipated that changes will occur to the existing Ottawa system, both in the short and long-term. This includes minor modifications such as path relocations and scattered tree plantings, major elements such as new roads or buildings and new parks or open spaces. In recognition of this, it is recommended that the City of Ottawa obtain accurate as-built drawings to record these changes.

**Tree Inventory** – There is a great heritage and diversity of existing vegetation in Ottawa. It is, however, anticipated that changes will occur to this vegetation through selective removals, attrition and through new plantings and reforestation efforts. In recognition of this, it is recommended that the City of Ottawa consider undertaking a comprehensive tree inventory of the entire community that records at a minimum tree location, size and condition. This inventory will form a basis for future operations and budgeting, including tree maintenance, removal and planting. This survey should be updated regularly to track tree removal, new plantings and other related changes. At a minimum, this effort should be undertaken for all new construction projects and renovations as part of the as-built drawings.

**GIS** – Communities across the country are recognizing the effectiveness of graphic information systems or GIS in managing elements such as underground utilities and infrastructure, tree inventories, architectural historic data and other situations where both graphic and data representation of existing conditions are needed. GIS has also proven to be a helpful budgeting tool, allowing a user to search for a specific element (i.e. existing sewers) and, based on data regarding age and maintenance needs, assign a dollar value and schedule to those improvements. An opportunity exists to utilize GIS in Ottawa’s park system to track the age of infrastructure and associated maintenance needs, tree inventory data, land acquisition status, building information such as size and operational needs as well as the status of proposed master plan improvements. This information could then be incorporated into a citywide system to tie park needs together with those of their surroundings. It is recommended that Ottawa explore the feasibility of implementing such a system for its parks.

**Web Site** – The City of Ottawa should consider adding parks and recreation material to the city’s website. This site would include pertinent information on park programs, locations as well as the contents of this plan and the status of its implementation on a web site.



**Regional Dialogue** – In order to capitalize on regional opportunities and avoid irreversible loss of potential open space, trail linkages and other desirable land uses along Ottawa’s periphery, the City of Ottawa should establish regular dialogue with open space, planning, water resource and transportation officials from the State of Illinois, LaSalle County, Ecosystem Partnerships and adjacent municipalities. This is particularly crucial during the formulation and updating of comprehensive plans that address zoning, long-term transportation and land use recommendations and guidelines.

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## Potential Funding Strategies

The recommendations contained in this plan are diverse and extensive and will require an equally diverse funding strategy. It was not the objective of this master plan to define a precise list of funding alternatives for recommendations contained in this document, however, the following funding avenues should be explored as the city begins to implement the master plan’s recommendations:

- A. Open Space Grants including Open Space Land Acquisition Development (OSLAD), Boat Access Area Development (BAAD), Illinois Trails Grant Programs, Illinois Bicycle Path Program and others through Illinois Department of Natural Resources.
- B. State matching funds through the Illinois First program.
- C. Transportation-related funding such as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21).
- D. Sale of Bonds.
- E. Developer & Park Impact Requirements/Fees.
- F. LaSalle County grant money through Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
- G. Federal funding for water resource, ecology and habitat improvements through United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- H. Volunteers and in-kind labor for small-scale improvement such as neighborhood parks and gateways and, where appropriate, maintenance of certain parks and open spaces.
- I. Funding and operational partnerships with local, regional and national entities such as Prairie Rivers RC&D, Rails to Trails Conservancy, the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program and Trust for Public Lands.



# Chapter • 5

## Future Land Use *See Exhibit 8.*



Aerial of Drainage Ways and Agricultural Land

### Agricultural Preservation

Land that has been designated for Agricultural Preservation currently exists as cropland and other related agriculture uses. There is a large amount of prime farmland around Ottawa that need to be preserved and maintained and sometimes restored to natural prairie grasses. By designating Agricultural Preservation as a land use category, the Comprehensive Plan is setting aside the land for continued agricultural use. Croplands are intended to remain in private ownership; however, ownership by the City, private conservation organization, or other agencies is possible.

### Conservation

This land use is a combination of areas that have unique and or physical natural features that require preservation. The land that has been designated for conservation include areas that are wooded, most drainage ways, significant slopes, areas along the rivers and a few other special locations. The Conservation Area is being developed to help preserve the beauty and ecological functions that these natural features possess. This classification overlays other land uses, allowing for desired development patterns while preserving connections to the major natural features in the area, creating natural buffers between development and wildlife.



Fox Mill Park

### Parks

A park is land that is set aside specifically for active and passive public recreation and typically includes a variety of recreational programming and leisure activities such as playgrounds, trails, sports fields, picnic shelters, field houses and other general-use public areas. Park land may include storm water management, conservation lands and school sites. Ottawa currently has twenty-four parks on the small neighborhood scale that serve residential areas. Ottawa is in proximity to state parks to the east and west, providing regional open space amenities for Ottawa residents. Existing parks, as well as target properties for park expansion or new park locations, are identified in this category. When combined as a comprehensive park system, these properties would diversify the mix of park types and serve future growth areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan.



Aerial Looking West

## Highway Greenbelt Corridors

Because Ottawa has historically maintained a dense development pattern that preserved open, rural landscapes around its perimeter, the City's major entryways should provide drivers with a green parkway experience as they enter the City. U.S. Highway 6, along with Illinois Routes 71 and 23, are in this category. In addition, these roadways connect with I-80 and with the numerous state parks that surround Ottawa, making the city a portal to these regional attractions.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends the preservation and expansion of this "greenbelt" experience, focusing attention on major points of entry and connections to the state parks that surround Ottawa to the east and west. The plan also recommends creation of generous green buffers along potential new highways. The greenbelt concept preserves these corridors for adjacent trails and creates buffers between the roadway and development. The buffers or setbacks should be anywhere from 100 to 200 feet in depth and landscaped in a manner to keep the natural appearance of open space along these gateways. Where development occurs along these roadways, buildings should try to front onto these roadways with parking located in the back.



Aerial of the Fox River Corridor

## Open Space Conservation Areas

Open Space Conservation Areas are typically the natural areas associated with the Illinois and Fox Rivers and their tributaries. These include the deep wooded ravines and cascades along Covell Creek, the wetlands and backwaters along the rivers, and upland wooded and savanna areas. These open spaces are ideal for wildlife habitat and passive recreation such as trails, bird watching and nature interpretation. They are also well situated to provide connections between neighborhoods and the city's parks, schools, commercial areas and other attractions such as the Illinois River. Finally, these spaces are essential to the ecological health of Ottawa's watershed, providing natural buffers and stormwater storage and filters for urban runoff, before it enters creeks and ultimately the Illinois and Fox Rivers.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends expansive Open Space Conservation Areas within Ottawa's planning jurisdiction and suggests additional corridors for protection outside the area where they are associated with regional natural features such as the Illinois and Fox Rivers. These external areas will require significant dialogue and coordination between Ottawa and neighboring communities, LaSalle County, state agencies such as Illinois DOT and Illinois Department of Natural Resources, regional planning entities such as Prairie Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D), and federal agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Bureau of Fish and Wildlife. These agencies could be potential financial partners and help share the costs or secure grants to assist with maintenance and protection of these lands.





### **Mixed-Use Corridor / Neighborhood Center District**

Mixed-Use designates land suitable for development at higher densities consisting of buildings with retail and/or office uses on the ground floor and offices and/or residential dwellings on the upper floors in one or more buildings.



### **Industrial / Warehouse / Light Manufacturing**

This land use is a mixture of light manufacturing research facilities, office and warehouse combinations, industrial and storage facilities as well as packaging and sales of already prepared materials. Airports, self storage, factories, and grain elevators would be appropriate in this land use.



### **Civic Uses**

Civic uses include public and private land uses that have civic and/or cultural purposes. Examples include government buildings, churches, schools, libraries, convention facilities, hospitals, post offices, museums, community buildings, day care centers, courthouses, and significant landmark buildings.



### **Highway Business Commercial**

Businesses located along highway routes include larger footprint retail uses and ancillary structures grouped to form a shopping district and automobile related uses. This land use would not include those uses described above in the Industrial / Warehouse / Light Manufacturing.

## Non-Traditional Neighborhood Residential

These areas consist of developments and sub-divisions that were constructed generally following the Second World War and are still a current model for new and recent developments in Ottawa. While there may be limited areas to complete existing planned developments and/or low limited infill development which may follow the non-traditional design format, most of the new residential development in Ottawa will be developed following the traditional neighborhood residential development pattern and/or the Hamlet Neighborhood Residential development pattern.

### Non-Traditional Neighborhood



**Plan by Tom Low of DPZ,**  
*New Urbanism: Comprehensive  
Report & Best Practices Guide*

*The Next American Metropolis by Peter Calthorpe*

## Traditional Neighborhood Residential

The Traditional Neighborhood Residential land use areas incorporate the principles that are used in the mature historic residential sections of Ottawa. These areas are intended to have a mix of land uses and mixed-use buildings woven together but predominantly residential in use and character. They include reduced building setbacks, alleys, a variety of street designs, more public open spaces, squares and greens, civic, and commercial uses in prominent locations.

### Traditional Neighborhood



**Plan by Tom Low of DPZ,**  
*New Urbanism: Comprehensive  
Report & Best Practices Guide*

*The Next American Metropolis by Peter Calthorpe*

## Hamlet Neighborhood Residential

The purpose of this land use is to provide a neighborhood design and development form that is different from the traditional neighborhoods and also the larger rural residential developments. This land use is designed to use the cluster technique to help maintain and preserve the existing drainage ways. A conservation land use may also be included with some areas of the Hamlet Neighborhoods.



## Rural Residential

The Rural Residential land use is intended to accommodate larger lots that can be served by individual wells and septic systems. If available, and depending on the location of the development, larger lots can be served by municipal water and sewer systems.

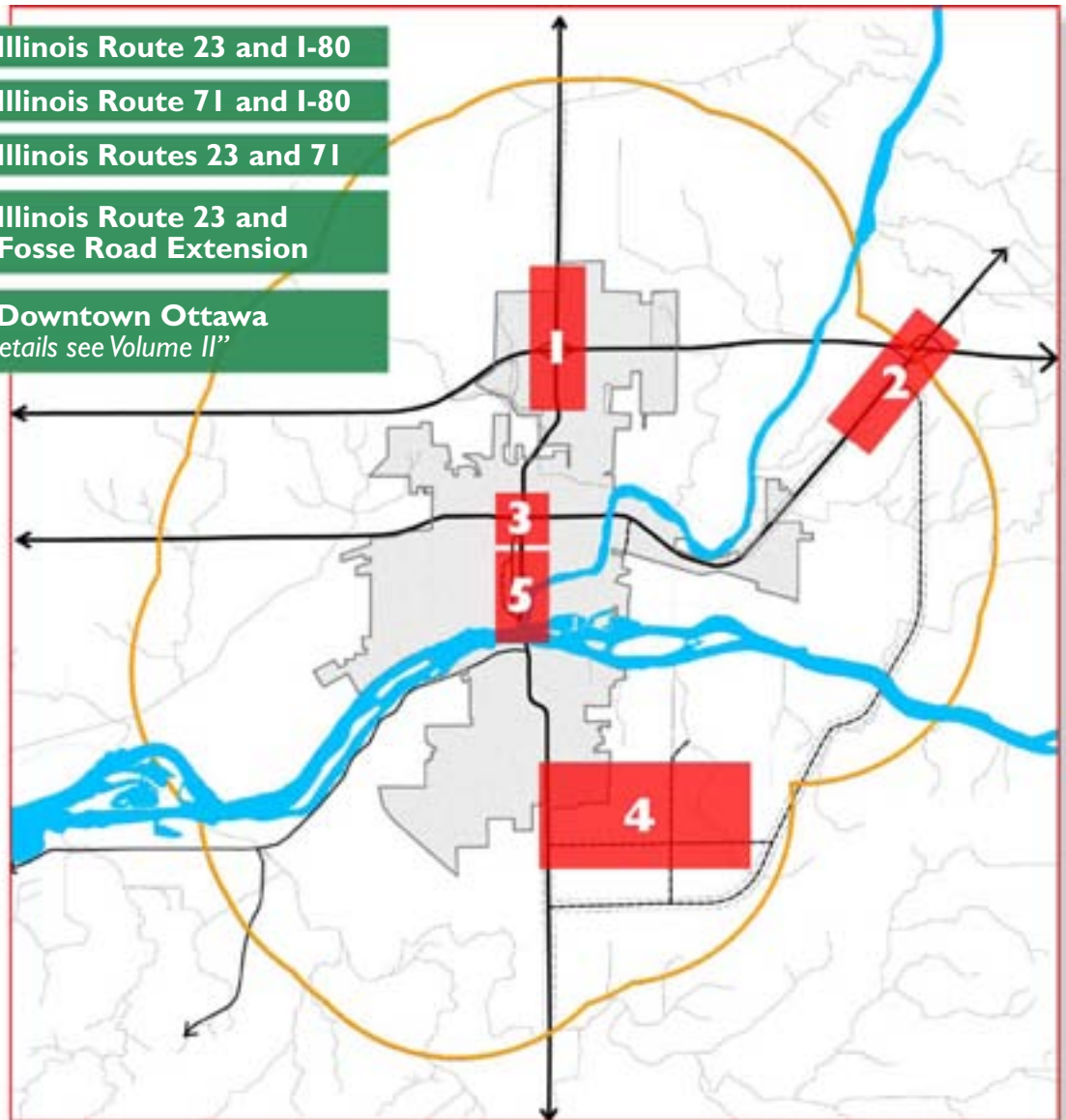


# Chapter • 6

## Sub-Areas

The Sub-Areas were chosen because of their special or unique community development issues and their importance to the City of Ottawa. Four of the five Sub-Areas are described in Volume I. Number 5, Sub-Area Downtown Ottawa, can be found in Volume II. Volume II is written specifically for the Downtown Sub-Area and goes into more detail about existing and future development, districts, land uses and traffic movement. The Sub-Areas include:

- 1 Sub-Area Illinois Route 23 and I-80
- 2 Sub-Area Illinois Route 71 and I-80
- 3 Sub-Area Illinois Routes 23 and 71
- 4 Sub-Area Illinois Route 23 and Proposed Fosse Road Extension
- 5 Sub-Area Downtown Ottawa  
*"For More Details see Volume II"*







Aerial of Illinois Rt. 23 North of I-80



Aerial of North Ottawa



Example of a Monument Sign



Aerial of Illinois Rt. 23 North of I-80

## I: Sub-Area Illinois Route 23 and I-80

As the sub-area of I-80 and Illinois Route 71, the sub-area of I-80 and Illinois Route 23 Corridor also has access to I-80. The access to I-80 in this sub-area, unlike Illinois Route 71, has created more development. Much of the area within this corridor has been developed with retail uses oriented to automobile access. Assuming that there may not be significant redevelopment, there exists the opportunity for aesthetic improvements to enhance the Illinois Route 23 corridor near I-80.

In order to achieve improved aesthetics throughout this corridor, landscaping and other improvements can be added to screen parking areas and enhance the appearance of the available open space that currently exists. In addition to landscaping, improved signage, decorative lighting, and limited ornamental fencing may be utilized to enhance the appearance through the sub area. Adding or improving pedestrian ways where feasible will improve the functional qualities as well. A unified approach should be taken in this effort in terms of design, materials, and colors. Standards can be adopted to be implemented in phases over time to achieve a coordinated approach to these improvements.

The signs should be lower and smaller in square footage. This can be done through changing the sign requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Knowing that this commercial area is different than most in Ottawa, a different category should be established to accommodate commercial businesses along I-80 for both Illinois Routes 71 and 23.

Another improvement would be to add a boulevard along Route 23 where possible. A boulevard could help break up the wide road. The boulevard can also be landscaped to help improve the overall appearance of the area.

*See Exhibit 9.*

## 2: Sub-Area Illinois Route 71 and I-80

Having access to I-80 is very important and is a major gateway into Ottawa. What happens to the area surrounding the ramps and the stretch of Illinois Route 71 that leads into Ottawa is a concern to the City of Ottawa.

The land use that has been designated for this area is mainly Hamlet Residential with a few pockets of Commercial and Civic uses located along Illinois Route 71. An area along both sides of Illinois Route 71 has been designated as a highway greenbelt. As mentioned earlier, this area should have a significant buffer or setback from Illinois Route 71. The purpose of the highway Greenbelt is to create some openness to the busy roadway.

Another important feature for this sub-area is the potential development of a bypass. The bypass will connect to Illinois Route 71 about a quarter mile south of I-80 and run directly south and cross the Illinois River connecting to Illinois Route 23 south of the city limits. The placement of the bypass will create a new intersection on Illinois Route 71 that will be of some importance and will have to be studied in more detail.

Along the edges of the sub-area are the Fox River and several drainage ways that are heavily vegetated. The plan for the Fox River and the drainage ways is to keep these areas open for conservation and potential trails along the Fox.

*See Exhibit 10.*



Example of a Buffer



Example of a Boulevard



Example of a Setback Off of a Roadway



Example of Screening

### 3: Sub-Area Illinois Routes 23 and 71 (Norris Drive)

This sub-area is the smallest in size but is just as important as the others because of the location. This intersection, where two major roadways converge and lead into the Downtown area, is considered to be the busiest intersection in LaSalle County. Like the Corridor of I-80 and Illinois Route 23, the area is already developed but these developments need some improvements. As the gateway into the downtown area, this intersection should be improved upon to show its importance to Ottawa.

Some suggestions are landscaping, redevelopment of single-family homes, a park and cleaning up some of the existing businesses at the intersection. Landscaping along Illinois Routes 71 and 23 would improve the look of the area, but landscaping does not solve all of the problems. Landscaping should be done in a way as to screen or improve the businesses and homes at the intersection along with blocks further South on LaSalle and Columbus Streets. A well designed walkway should be developed from this intersection to the train station and continued to the downtown area for access to the future rail station. Along with landscaping, there should also be better streetlights along the roadways, which will also help with the overall look.

Redevelopment parcels should meet a minimum area requirement which would cause existing individual lots to be combined. The minimum redevelopment parcel should be sized to accommodate proposed new buildings, adequate landscaping along Routes 23 and 71, parking needs, and adequate screening adjacent to existing residential properties.

A green space or entry feature should be located on the southwest corner. In this green space or feature could be benches, some type of gateway sign, landscaping, an attractive building facade and other items that would make the intersection more pleasing.

Creating more green space between the two roadways will help improve the look of the existing businesses.

A new sign ordinance should also be implemented to promote aesthetically pleasing signs by reducing the maximum size and the height of signs. Similar to what is recommended for the Illinois Route 23 and I-80 Corridor Sub-Area, this area should have a required size and height for signage.

*See Exhibit 11.*

### 4: Sub-Area Illinois Route 23 and Proposed Fosse Road Extension

The Illinois Route 23 and Fosse Road sub-area illustrates the framework of a new traditional neighborhood design. The quadrant of land comprises approximately 1,150 acres lying south of McKinley Road, east of Illinois Route 23, and is defined on the south and east by the proposed by-pass route. A portion of this land comprises approximately 850 acres and has been designed as a schematic representation of a new traditional neighborhood with the proposed east extension of Fosse Road. This will serve as a central axial boulevard connecting Illinois Route 23 on the west, to a proposed neighborhood center in the eastern portion of the plan. *See Exhibits 12 & 13.*



# Chapter • 7

## Implementation of the Plan

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan does not mark the end of the comprehensive planning process. Rather, it should be viewed as the beginning of the real effort to achieve the community vision. This document has identified numerous implementation strategies in each of the various plan elements needing to be initiated and completed. Many of these implementation strategies will be ongoing activities. All of the implementation strategies will require the City to commit various resources to the effort.

The intent of this Chapter is to describe a series of initiatives the City can undertake to help achieve the community vision. Achieving this vision requires the effort of all segments of the community. The City government is but only one small part of this effort. Other participants in the effort to achieve the community vision must include the business community, local developers, other local governments, local institutions, community and service organizations, and Ottawa residents themselves.

Implementation of the *Ottawa Comprehensive Plan* will require a blend of proactive and reactive activities and approaches. Proactive measures would be those in which the City initiates the action or change such as through public initiative, code change, or some public improvement. Reactive measures are those in which the City is presented a proposal by other parties requiring action or a decision by the City. The City's development review process is one example of a reactive measure. This Chapter identifies only the proactive measures since it is only these the City can control.

The Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic document and requires ongoing maintenance in order to remain an effective policy tool. Periodic review and appraisal of the Plan is recommended to protect the Plan from becoming obsolete and unused. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Plan and various maps be reviewed approximately every five years. Monitoring can identify when the assumptions used in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan appear to be at odds with reality. It can also identify whether external or market pressures suggesting change should be responded to. When a problem is identified the Comprehensive Plan must be adjusted, amended or revised. Too many communities begin to diverge from their plan without identifying the problem and, in so doing, discredit the plan.

The Plan should not be revised on a whim. Nor should the Plan be considered the absolute final word. It is difficult and, sometimes, bewildering for communities to engage in a large number of plan implementation initiatives. The ability to sustain numerous ongoing implementation measures is difficult for most communities. The recommended approach to plan implementation is to establish priorities in order to focus the City's resources and energy on accomplishing the most important initiatives first. Five of the highest priority initiatives identified by the Plan Commission are described below.

- 1. Revise Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.** The City will need to revise the City Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance in order to make them consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Map. New development standards should be performance-based to provide the flexibility and incentive to encourage landowners to (re)develop their property according to the principles and policies described in the Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Zoning Ordinance**

- Nomenclature for zoning districts needs to be revised
- Zoning map needs to be corrected and updated
- Residential zoning standards: review lot area, setbacks, building types, bulk regulations and building height
- Business districts: review building types, parking area requirements, opportunities for mixed-use buildings, review permitted and conditional uses
- Sign ordinance: review size and height standards

- 2. Create And Maintain City's Capital Improvement**

**Program (CIP).** Because the capital improvement plan, or program, is intended to guide the City's investments in infrastructure and capital outlays over the foreseeable future, this budgeting tool should be maintained and updated regularly. The capital improvement plan usually contains a detailed estimate of facilities costs and a prioritizing of the most critical needs over an extended period of time, usually five or six years. The City Council and administration consults the capital improvement plan during preparation of the City's annual operating budget in order to fund the highest priority projects.

This approach allows the City to determine its long-term capital investment needs and budget accordingly. This planning process also allows the City to identify and evaluate the best sources or methods of funding specific projects. Many of the implementation strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan are directly related to the capital improvement program.

- 3. Adopt Open Space Preservation Techniques.** The City will need to explore the adoption of open space preservation techniques to achieve many of the community character and open lands objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Agricultural easements, conservation easements, transfer of development rights (TDR), land acquisition, and other techniques can be used to remove or relocate development potential from critical parcels in the planning area. One advantage of employing these techniques is the City need not annex the property. By purchasing the development rights, or permitting land owners



to transfer development rights from one parcel to another, the development opportunity for the property is removed and the property owner is entitled to continue ownership and can continue to use the property for its agricultural or open space purposes.

- 4. Annexation Policies.** It is not recommended the City annex territory unless and until the territory is ripe for development. To do otherwise may bring about premature development, inflate landowners' expectations, increase the pace of development, diminish the character of the community, misdirect infrastructure investment, or all of the above. From a bargaining point of view, in many cases, the City possesses the greatest leverage when it is approached for annexation. The City loses this advantage when it is the party soliciting annexation. Additionally, Ottawa's physical expansion historically has occurred in small incremental steps and contributed to the community character.
- 5. Amendments.** Although the Comprehensive Plan is a final document, changing conditions and community values will make it necessary to re-examine the various goals and objectives and implementation strategies included in it. Technical data will be updated as new information becomes available. It is good practice to review and update the Comprehensive Plan periodically, and the Plan Commission should make it its mission to review the Plan every year and report to the City Council whether changes or amendments should be considered.
- 6. Design Review Process.** The City established a development design review process on March 5, 2002. Ordinance number 09-2002 created a design review committee and provided procedures for the operation. The Design Review Committee was established with a Building Department Official, Director of Community Development, City Engineer, City Planner, Water Department Assistant Superintendent, Sewer Department Assistant Superintendent, Street Department Assistant Superintendent, Police Chief, Fire Chief, a member of the Plan Commission, a member of the Tree Board, and an architect appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Council for two years. The purpose of the Design Review Committee is to encourage high quality design of new residential, commercial and industrial developments for the advancement of aesthetic values and the general health, safety and welfare of the citizens of, and visitors to, the City of Ottawa. The Planning Commission and City Board should evaluate this Committee and review standards to maintain the quality the City is trying to achieve.
- 7. Planning and Development Department.** The City has hired a full time City Planner to be a member of the staff. The Planner is required to handle a variety of assignments in this department including code enforcement, preparing and implementing planning programs, and assisting the City Council and Planning Commission on issues related to proposed developments and applications. The Planner will also write staff reviews on projects and applications dealing with zoning to help guide the City Council and Planning Commission in making recommendations.

It is possible that a proposal could be made to the City which is not consistent with the Plan, but which is viewed as desirable and appropriate by the City Council and community. In such a case, if it is obvious that the Plan does not accurately reflect a new goal or objective, it may be necessary to amend the Plan. To the extent that the City Council adopts other policies affecting land use or the City's goals and priorities change, the Plan should be amended.



# Appendix • A

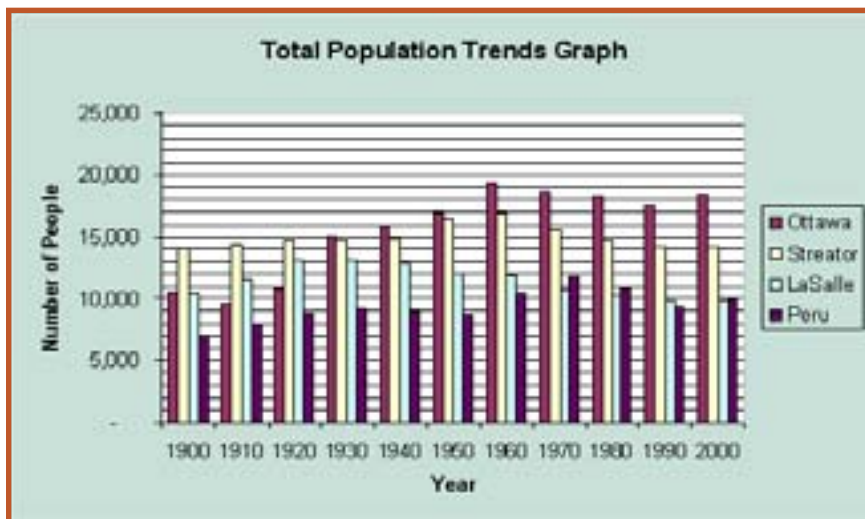
## Demographics



	LaSalle County	Ottawa	Streator	LaSalle	Peru
1900	87,776	10,588	14,079	10,446	6,863
1910	90,132	9,535	14,253	11,537	7,984
1920	92,925	10,816	14,779	13,050	8,869
1930	97,695	15,094	14,728	13,149	9,121
1940	97,801	16,005	14,930	12,812	8,983
1950	100,610	16,957	16,469	12,083	8,653
1960	110,800	19,408	16,868	11,897	10,460
1970	111,409	18,716	15,600	10,736	11,772
1980	112,033	18,166	14,791	10,347	10,886
1990	106,913	17,451	14,121	9,717	9,302
2000	111,509	18,307	14,190	9,796	9,835

Source: U.S. Census

Table I. Total population trends. **Ottawa, Illinois and surrounding areas.**



The population in Ottawa has been relatively unchanged since 1960 when the population was 19,408. By 2000, it dropped to 18,307. The lowest it has dropped since 1950 was in 1990 when the population was 17,451. This has been the trend for most of the surrounding communities. Census figures do not include residents of nearby unincorporated subdivisions.

Graph I. Total population trends. **Ottawa, Illinois and surrounding areas.**

Table 2. Age Distributions, Ottawa, Illinois

Year	1970		1980		1990		2000	
Total Population	18,716		18,166		17,451		18,307	
0 – 4 Years	7.5%	1,399	6.5%	1,188	7.0%	1,222	6.4%	1,180
5 – 17 Years	26.8%	5,012	20.6%	3,745	17.0%	2,967	18.6%	3,396
18 – 24 Years	8.8%	1,656	12.7%	2,307	7.9%	1,379	8.1%	1,483
25 – 44 Years	22.0%	4,110	24.1%	4,377	29.7%	5,183	28.2%	5,163
45 – 64 Years	22.1%	4,140	22.0%	3,994	19.6%	3,420	20.8%	3,808
65 & Over	12.8%	2,399	15.9%	2,886	8.9%	3,298	17.9%	3,277
Median Age	31.9		32.9		36.2		38.2	

Table 3. Median Age of Ottawa, Illinois and Surrounding Areas

	Illinois	LaSalle Cty	Ottawa	Streator	LaSalle	Peru
1970	31.0	31.4	31.9	37.7	32.2	***
1980	29.9	32.2	32.9	33.9	35.0	34.4
1990	32.8	35.5	36.2	36.1	37.1	38.4
2000	34.7	38.1	38.2	38.1	38.1	40.9

Table 4. Total Number of Housing Units for Ottawa, Illinois

Year	Units
1990	7,148
2000	8,030

Table 5. Total Number of Households for Ottawa, Illinois and Surrounding Areas

	LaSalle Cty	Ottawa	Streator	LaSalle	Peru	
1990	41,284	7,148	5,665	4,201	3,787	
2000	43,417	7,510	5,746	4,161	4,143	

Source: U.S. Census



# Appendix • B

## Public Involvement

The process for developing a comprehensive plan should include the community's needs and expectations.

An Image Preference Survey and a Visioning Questionnaire were conducted as part of the public involvement process at the outset of the planning process. The Image Preference Survey is a tool used to help the community to identify preferred forms and appearances of development. The Questionnaire was made up of questions asking community preferences for the future of Ottawa.

The purpose of the Image Preference Survey and Visioning Questionnaire are to forge a consensus about choices affecting the future. The images (and their associated scores) are indications of core community values and the vision citizens have for Ottawa for the future. From this vision, principles to guide future growth and (re)development strategies and decisions can be derived.

Two Charrettes or design workshops were also conducted. The purpose of the Charrettes are to involve everyone in intensive, collaborative workshops with the intention of getting community direction concerning the shape, form, location and appearance of development.





Image No. 101 +4.23



Image No. 16 +3.85



Image No. 69 +3.61



Image No. 18 +3.32

## Image Preference Survey

The Image Preference Survey was administered on four separate occasions in the fall of 2000. Two were administered in the high schools with the participation of about 160 students. The third was administered to the Ottawa Golden K Club and the fourth at a public meeting. Overall there were about 270 participants in the Survey.

The participants were shown images or photos of development designs found in and around Ottawa. These images were added to images from other regions around the country to provide a greater variety of choices. These images showed alternatives and solutions used elsewhere. The images were intended to cover a broad range of development applications and to represent good and bad examples. The images were grouped into the following categories: Commercial, Parks and Open Space, Streets and Alleys, Single Family and Multi-Family. The participants were instructed to rate each image on a scale with -5 representing complete disapproval and +5 representing complete approval. Zero indicated a neutral response.

All positive scores are considered positive or desirable. All negative scores are considered negative or undesirable. The values represent varying degrees of approval or disapproval of the images. The most positive images, in effect, are the building blocks for the Plan.

None of the ten most desirable images or photos were taken in Ottawa. These ten photos show three major items: some type of water feature, parks, and inviting and pedestrian-friendly downtown areas. Image No. 101 (+4.23) and Image No. 16 (+3.85) were the two highest scores. The other favorable images dealt with vibrant downtowns with landscaping, and people as shown in Image No. 69 (+3.61) and Image No. 18 (+3.32).

Images that scored the lowest were photos showing empty stores, storefronts, and streetscapes that lacked landscaping. Also included were commercial parking lots that also lacked landscaping and variety, busy intersections, and signs. Images that incorporated pedestrian friendly designs and landscaping scored higher than those that did not. The higher rated images included a variety of new and old designs. The use of land or buildings did not influence scores as much as the appearance of the pedestrian or public realm.



Image No. 101 +4.23



Image No. 39 -1.77



Image No. 76 +3.15



Image No. 40 +3.13

## Commercial

The first set of images that was shown represented commercial scenes, commercial strips, parking lots, public uses, and streetscapes. Scores ranged from Image No. 101(+4.23) to Image No. 39 (-1.77). The highest rated images indicated a very strong preference for pedestrian-friendly environments. For example, Image No. 76 (+3.15), Image No. 40 (+3.13), Image No. 30 (+3.05) and Image No. 26 (+2.96) included the presence of pedestrians and some type of landscaping. Features contributing to a positive score included shade trees along the streets, open space, pedestrian friendly sidewalks, some type of water feature, streets that were not busy, easy parking and architectural features, or details on store fronts.

The features contributing to the negative scores in this section included a lack of landscaping, busy streets, empty storefronts, and large signs. Image No. 80 (-1.61), Image No. 58 (-1.23), Image No. 37 (-1.50), Image No. 39 (-1.77) represent negative features for the commercial section of the survey.



Image No. 26 +2.96



Image No. 80 -1.61



Image No. 80 -1.61



Image No. 37 -1.50



Image No. 58 -1.23



Image No. 113 +3.56



Image No. 111 -1.07



Image No. 138 +3.51



Image No. 114 +3.43

## Parks and Open Space

The scores for the parks and open space images ranged from Image No. 113 (+3.56) to Image No. 111 (-1.07). Many of the highest rated images featured water.

Festival areas and walkways rated high as depicted in Image No. 138 (+3.51), Image No. 114 (+3.43), Image No. 137 (+3.51), and Image No. 130 (+3.14). The reasons that participants cited for giving certain images high scores was that they could see Ottawa with the same type of features. These participants would like to create a festival area and riverwalk to bring people back to the river.

Images of open farm fields, Image No. 116 (-0.91), Image No. 112 (-0.20) were rated lower. This is interesting due to some comments indicating a wish to preserve the agriculture landscape around Ottawa.



Image No. 130 +3.14



Image No. 116 -0.91

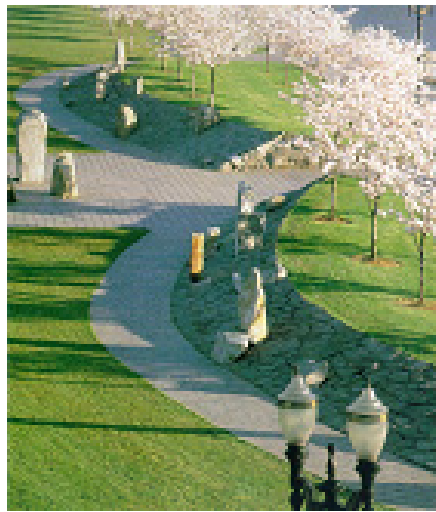


Image No. 137 +3.51



Image No. 112 -0.20





Image No. 161 +3.20



Image No. 217 -1.22



Image No. 199 -1.06



Image No. 173 -0.01

## Streets, Alleys and Streetscapes

Images of different types of uses and treatments for streets, alleys and streetscapes were also part of the survey. The scores for these images ranged from Image No. 161 (+3.20) to Image No. 217 (-1.22). Landscaping and pedestrian friendly features were common in the higher rated images. The following two images each have a large amount of landscaping along the streets.



Image No. 192 +2.54



Image No. 170 +2.65

The less than desirable images included a lack of landscaping and an unfriendly atmosphere. Street trees are either not required or had not been placed at the time of the photos. Some participants stated that street trees create the feeling of safety when placed between streets and the sidewalks. Another comment was that trees break up the continuous rows of buildings.



Image No. 158 -0.11



Image No. 178 -0.40



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**Would you use a train if service were available, or more convenient?**

- 1. Yes – 68%**
- 2. No – 18%**
- 3. Don't Know – 14%**

---

## **Visioning Questionnaire**

The Visioning Questionnaire was administered on four separate occasions in the fall of 2000. Fifty-one high school students participated in the questionnaire along with the Image Preference Survey. The questionnaire was also administered to the general public, Ottawa Golden K, and at a public meeting. Of the general public there was just over 100 participants that filled out a complete questionnaire. The average age of the general public was 57.8 years and their average length of residency in Ottawa was 34.1 years.

The participants of the questionnaire were given forty questions. The first set of questions was demographic in nature including age, area they live in, income per household, and the number of vehicles per household. It was found that 47 people lived in Single Family Housing on a lot having more than 10,000 square feet. The largest number of people (22) had a household income from \$50,000 to \$74,999, the next largest group was \$100,000 to 150,000 (14). Of the responses from the general public, 60 people worked within Ottawa and 34 people work outside Ottawa.

The next group of questions dealt with what items the citizens believe are Ottawa's strengths. The highest rated strength of downtown Ottawa was the rivers, followed by the beautiful buildings and the architecture. 102 people from the general public indicated that they thought that community opinion was important in determining the future visual appearance and character of Ottawa. Regarding areas that the public would improve upon or like about Ottawa were another set of questions, 61 people responded that they would improve the visual appearance and design.

Questions were asked in the questionnaire about the types of uses the people would like to see for the downtown area. Specialty shops were rated the highest followed by clothing, retail and upscale restaurants. A question was asked about how often you shop in downtown Ottawa, 33 people responded with "occasionally."

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## Questionnaire Results

What would be your first priority for new land use or development in Ottawa?

1. Single family homes – **8%**
2. Multi-family homes – **4%**
3. Mixed-use buildings, e.g., retail or offices on the ground level with housing or other uses above – **18%**
4. Single use retail buildings – **6%**
5. Restaurants – **7%**
6. More open space and parks – **18%**
7. More industry – **38%**
8. Downtown, Kid Places, a Combination, Tourism, Zoned Property, Access to Chicago

It is important that Ottawa control the location and design character of all new buildings and rehabilitated buildings.

1. Strongly agree – **32%**
2. Agree – **42%**
3. Neutral – **21%**
4. Disagree – **4%**
5. Strongly disagree – **2%**

Good neighborhoods include a mixture of housing types, shops, open spaces, places of worship, civic institutions, places to work, schools, transit stops, and public gathering places such as a local park or community center. All of these neighborhood elements should be within a short walking or bicycling distance of every home in the neighborhood.

1. Strongly agree – **33%**
2. Agree – **39%**
3. Neutral – **18%**
4. Disagree – **9%**
5. Strongly disagree – **1%**

Do you think that community opinion is important for determining the future visual appearance and character of Ottawa?

1. Yes – **92%**
2. No – **3%**
3. Don't Know – **4%**

What would you improve upon the most in Ottawa?

1. Road system – **21%**
2. Parks – **6%**
3. Schools – **6%**
4. Transit – **6%**
5. Visual appearance and design – **61%**

The strengths of Downtown Ottawa are (the top five)...

- 5% Access from E-W to South
- 13% Beautiful buildings/architecture
- 8% Parks /Washington Park
- 18% River
- 11% Historical character

I would spend more time in Downtown Ottawa with the following improvements...

- 5% Easier parking
- 8% Good restaurants
- 7% Landscaping
- 12% Specialty shops (Naperville)
- 18% More retail

During the past few years, Ottawa as a whole...

- 1...has continued to be the type of community in which I want to live. – **41%**
- 2...has changed to be less of the community if which I want to live. – **13%**
- 3...has remained pretty much the same. – **46%**

Bike paths and lanes should be provided in neighborhoods...

- 1. Strongly agree – **29%**
- 2. Agree – **35%**
- 3. Neutral – **26%**
- 4. Disagree – **7%**
- 5. Strongly disagree – **3%**

I shop in Downtown Ottawa...

- 1. Daily – **11%**
- 2. Weekly – **18%**
- 3. Once a Month – **14%**
- 4. Occasionally – **49%**
- 5. Never – **9%**

Ottawa's greatest assets are ...

- 11% Church
- 8% People
- 12% History / Character
- 23% River
- 7% Location

The primary reason I go to Downtown Ottawa is for...

- Work 16%
- Dining 26%
- Shopping 22%
- Church 14%
- Municipal 12%
- Services 10%
- Post Office 10%

Other\_\_\_\_\_ **Walking, Business, Banks, Medical Services, Work & Live There, Theater, Entertainment**



## Charrette

The design workshop or *charrette* is a process in which residents are given the opportunity to develop their own plans and recommendations for Ottawa. The *charrette* is designed to encourage freethinking and creativity. This not only helps the community to get involved but it also produces wonderful ideas and recommendations.

This exercise was intended to determine what residents wanted the City of Ottawa to become in the future.

There were two *charrettes* conducted on two different Saturdays. The first *charrette* addressed the design of the entire planning area outside the corporate limits. The Ottawa planning area was broken into three different planning areas; north, central, and south. Along with the three planning areas, there was a table for open space and parks. The second *charrette* focused on the downtown area of Ottawa.



For each *charrette*, groups were formed for the various planning areas and one for the downtown *charrette*. Each group came up with their own plan, presented their recommendations to the entire group, and responded to questions and comments after everyone was finished.

Afterward, a consensus plan was prepared by the consultants using the recommendations from all the *charrette* plans. The consensus plan attempts to clarify ideas and concepts, and expand upon recommendations that were common among the various *charrette* plans, and to focus on particularly intriguing suggestions. The consensus plan was presented to the public several weeks following the *charrette* for input and direction. These comments and suggestions were considered along with other information collected during the planning process in the preparation of the final Comprehensive Plan.





For the downtown charrette, each group discussed what they would like to create, preserve, enhance, what the threats of the downtown are, opportunities, and what the downtown is known for. Below are the results of the discussion.

## Preserve

Parks and Open Space	The Row Houses
The Courthouse	Historical Values and Nature
City Hall and other Govt Buildings	Historical Architectural Character
Canal	Traditional Downtown Feel
Riverfront	Existing Businesses
View to the Courthouse from the Bridge	



## Create

Soften Street Design	Ornamental Lighting
Pedestrian Friendly Environment	Riverfront Magnets
2nd Fox River Bridge	Railroad Overpass (Norris to Clinton)
Place to Socialize	Thriving, diverse Business Community
24 Hour Neighborhood (hotel)	Widen Sidewalks
Second Floor Rehab Interest	
Brick Stamped Streets around Courthouse	



## Opportunities

Literature Distribution	Encourage Absentee Landlords to sell
Downtown Residential	Store to Store Openings
Improve Street around Marquette	Riverfront and Bike Path
Washington Park	Interurban Renewal
Canal, Tourism	Empty Buildings
Businesses for Ottawa Residents	
Relationship between owners and Planning Commission	

## Threats

Uninterested Property Owners	Lack of Cooperation
Traffic – Route 23 – Speed	Business Owners Independency
Lack of Parking	Stores Closing Early
No Change	Over Valued Property & Rental Rates
General Deterioration of Buildings	Lack of Diversity of Businesses
No Incentives for Property Improvements	



## Enhancements

Small Town Image	Facades/ Storefronts
Consumer Spending	Canal
Library Growth	Riverfront
Streetscapes	Signage
Parking	Walkways
Develop Commercial Properties on Columbus to the Fox river	
An Overall Theme for the Community to Unify	

## What is the Downtown Known For

Riverfront	Lincoln - Douglas Debate
Historic Buildings	County Seat
Canal Town	Appellate Court
Friendly City	Quaint Town
Place to Spend Money	Good Restaurants with Diverse Menus
Attractive Beautiful Downtown	Activities Sponsored by the City
Destination for Boaters	

