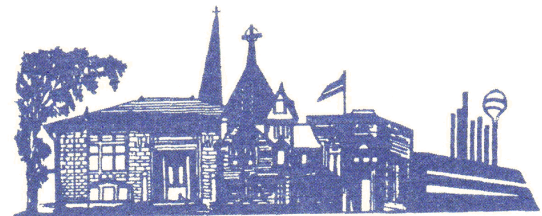


Belvidere Planning Department

FY 2019 Annual Report



BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS

Established 1881

Gina DelRose, Community Development Planner

Cathy Crawford, Administrative Assistant

CITY OF BELVIDERE

Planning and Zoning Commission

Alissa Maher, Chairman
Daniel Arevalo, Vice-Chair
Art Hyland
Robert Cantrell
Andy Racz
Rich Weigel
Anthony R. Phelps

City Council

Mayor Mike Chamberlain
Alderman Tom Porter 1st Ward
Alderman Clayton Stevens 1st Ward
Alderman Mike Borowicz 2nd Ward
Alderman Dan Snow 2nd Ward
Alderman Thomas F. Ratcliffe 3rd Ward
Alderman Wendy Frank 3rd Ward
Alderman George Crawford 4th Ward
Alderman Ron Brooks 4th Ward
Alderman Marsha Freeman 5th Ward
Alderman Mark Sanderson 5th Ward

Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission

David Kummerow, Chairman
Lisa Kummerow, Vice-Chair
Anna Pivoras
Filitsa Platopoulos
Becky Tobin
Kris Bryan
Alexandra Omiotek

VILLAGE OF POPLAR GROVE

Planning and Zoning Commission

Jake Dykstra, Chairman

Nate Skora

Jesi Ellwanger

Don Sattler

Ed Wethington

Keith Richard

George Waddell

Village Board

Owen Costanza, Village President

Erin Walsh

Neely Erickson

Jeff Goings

Ron Quimby

Eric Miller

Sophia Ramdass

Planning Department Overview

The Belvidere Community Development Department includes the Planning and Building Departments. The Planning Department provides professional municipal planning services pertaining to land use and comprehensive planning for the City of Belvidere and the Village of Poplar Grove. The planning staff serves as liaison to the Planning and Zoning Commissions for both entities and the Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission. The planning department is a member of the technical committee of the Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP) which is not part of Region 1 Planning Council (R1PC). Additionally, the planning department advocates and coordinates the implementation of the region's established planning goals and objectives as expressed through various plans, policies and ordinances.

Planning and Zoning Commissions

The Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) is made up of seven members appointed by the Mayor with the consent of City Council; the members meet once a month on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm. The PZC functions as both the City of Belvidere's Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals. In addition to making recommendations on matters based on their consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, the PZC functions as the public hearing body for planning and zoning applications related to map amendments, text amendments and special use permits. The PZC holds the public hearings, adopts findings-of-fact and makes recommendations to the City Council based on standards set forth within the City of Belvidere Zoning Ordinance and guidance from the Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the PZC hears variance requests and appeals to the City of Belvidere Zoning Ordinance.

The Village of Poplar Grove Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) is made up of seven members appointed by the Village President with the consent of the Village Board; the PZC convenes once a month on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm. The Poplar Grove PZC functions the same as the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission. The Planning and Zoning Commission makes recommendations to the Committee of the Whole and ultimately to the Village Board.

Belvidere Building, Planning and Zoning Committee of the Whole

The City of Belvidere has the Committee of the Whole (Building, Planning and Zoning Committee) consisting of each member of the City Council to discuss and focus on the issues regarding planning and zoning matters. To reduce review time of city planning cases, the cases go directly to the City Council for review on the third Monday of the month. If the City Council has questions or concerns regarding a planning case, the case is referred to the Committee of the Whole on the fourth Monday at 6:00pm. The Committee of the Whole reviews the case and forwards their recommendation to the City Council for final action.

Belvidere City Council

The City Council consists of eleven elected officials, including the mayor; two aldermen are elected from each of the five Belvidere wards. The City Council determines the final decisions on all planning cases other than variances and appeals. The types of planning cases that the City Council rules on include: annexations and pre-annexation agreements; map amendments; special use requests; text amendments; and subdivisions. The City Council members formulate their decisions based on the recommendations from the planning staff and of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the outcome of the public hearing, the standards set forth in the City of Belvidere Zoning Ordinance and the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Poplar Grove Village Board

The Village Board of Poplar Grove consists of six members and a village president elected at large; Poplar Grove also has a village administrator. Similar to the City of Belvidere, the role of the Village Board is to make the final decisions on all cases other than variances and appeals. The Poplar Grove Village Board reviews annexations and pre-annexation agreements, map amendments, special use requests, text amendments and subdivisions. The Village Board members make their decisions based on the recommendations of the planning staff and of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the outcome of the public hearing, the standards set forth in the Village of Poplar Grove Zoning Ordinance and the Poplar Grove Comprehensive Plan.

Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission

The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) consists of seven members appointed by the Mayor with the consent of City Council; the members meet once a month on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 5:30pm. The (HPC) is tasked with reviewing certificates of appropriateness, conducting surveys, performing community and educational outreach regarding historic preservation, and other preservation-related matters.

Growth Dimensions and R1PC

The planning staff collaborates with Growth Dimensions, a non-for-profit economic development agency funded in part by the City of Belvidere and Boone County and the Region 1 Planning Council (R1PC) on various projects. When requested, staff will attend Growth Dimensions' committee meetings such as their community group and R1PC's committee meetings. The planning staff is expected to provide assistance to Growth Dimensions on future projects by providing data for RFPs and directing development inquiries to them.

The Belvidere Planning Department Year End Summary

The Belvidere Planning Department began the 2019 fiscal year with an ambitious attitude after a busy 2017 fiscal year and a steady 2018 fiscal year. The Planning Department consists of the Community Development Planner and an Administrative Assistant that is shared with the Building Department as the Community Development Administrative Assistant and Transcriber.

Funding for the department is provided by the City of Belvidere; revenue is also contributed by the Village of Poplar Grove for contractual services. The department receives revenue through application fees for zoning petitions and subdivision reviews, the creation of zoning verification letters and any printed maps, scanned plats or copies of ordinances purchased by the general public.

The projected revenue for the department for the 2019 fiscal year was \$14,500; \$13,500 in application fees and \$1,000 in miscellaneous fees (letters, contractual services, etc.). The actual revenue for the 2019 fiscal year was \$21,290.00; \$18,175.00 in application fees and \$3,115.00 in miscellaneous fees (this does not reflect a refund of \$700.00 from application fees collected in the 2018 fiscal year). In addition to the department's revenues exceeding the projection, the department's actual expenses were below projections as well.

The planning department processes the various zoning applications for the City of Belvidere and the Village of Poplar Grove; the department is responsible for the preparation of agendas and minutes for two commissions in addition to participating in five other boards, commissions and committees. The planning staff works closely with the public to answer questions regarding zoning, development, setbacks, addressing, etc. The planning staff continues to work with the 911-board to update the addresses for the city and coordinates with other municipal staff and governmental agencies regarding planning, zoning and technical issues.

Land Development Cases

The planning department processed forty seven Belvidere and Poplar Grove planning cases during 2019 fiscal year (May 1st to April 30th); thirty seven cases were reviewed for the city; and ten cases were reviewed for Poplar Grove. Staff generally has in-depth phone conversations or meetings with applicants before they submit a zoning petition. Planning and Zoning Commission (both entities) meetings and Belvidere City Council meetings occur after regular business hours. Staff is not required to attend Poplar Grove's Committee of the Whole or Village Board meetings but is accessible via telephone if needed.

Application fees pay for the newspaper publication, Commissioner's meeting per diems and staff time involved in processing the request.

Map Amendments

Map amendments rezone a property from one district to another. The Comprehensive Plan is a guiding tool when determining map amendments.

Belvidere map amendments require a public hearing before the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission prior to city council. Notifications for map amendments are done by posting a sign on the property, notifying property owners within 250 feet and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2019 fiscal year, staff processed two map amendments, a 60 percent decrease from the previous year.

Poplar Grove map amendments are very similar. They require a public hearing before the Poplar Grove

Planning and Zoning Commission prior to being heard by the Committee of the Whole and the Village Board. Notifications for map amendments are done by notifying adjacent property owners and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2019 fiscal year, staff processed one map amendment, a 100 percent increase from the previous year.

VariANCES

VariANCES are deviations from specific bulk regulations of the Zoning Ordinance such as the square –footage of a sign, setback of a building or paved area, height of a structure, etcetera. A hardship must be proven to allow a variance.

Belvidere variANCES require a public hearing before the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission. They are not decided by the city council. Notifications for variANCES are done by posting a sign on the property, notifying property owners within 250 feet and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2019 fiscal year, staff processed four variANCES, a 33.3 percent increase from the previous year.

Poplar Grove variANCES are very similar. They require a public hearing before the Poplar Grove Planning and Zoning Commission. They are not decided by the Committee of the Whole or the Village Board. Notifications for variANCES are done by notifying adjacent property owners and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2019 fiscal year, staff processed no variANCES, a 100 percent decrease from the previous year.

Special Uses

Special Use are land uses that are generally acceptable in a zoning district but at times may need conditions put in place to make them appropriate. The Zoning Ordinance decides what uses are permitted, what are allowed by special use and what ones are prohibited.

Belvidere special uses require a public hearing before the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission prior to city council. Notifications for special uses are done by posting a sign on the property, notifying property owners within 250 feet and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2019 fiscal year, staff processed eighteen special uses, a 80 percent increase from the previous year.

Poplar Grove special uses are very similar. They require a public hearing before the Poplar Grove Planning and Zoning Commission prior to being heard by the Committee of the Whole and the Village Board. Notifications for special uses are done by notifying adjacent property owners and publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2019 fiscal year, staff processed six special uses, a 100 percent increase from the previous year.

Text Amendments

Text Amendments are changes to the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance and/or the Comprehensive Plan. Text amendments can be requested by staff or the public.

Belvidere text amendments require a public hearing before the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission prior to city council. Notifications for text amendments are done by publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2019 fiscal year, staff processed seven text amendments, a 250 percent increase from the previous year.

Poplar Grove text amendments are very similar. They require a public hearing before the Poplar Grove Planning and Zoning Commission prior to being heard by the Committee of the Whole and the Village Board. Notifications for text amendments are done by publishing the public hearing in a local paper. During the 2019 fiscal year, staff processed one text amendment, the same number as in the previous year.

Subdivisions

Subdivisions create new lot lines and right-of-ways. There are three kinds of subdivisions; a preliminary plat is the approved draft of a development; a final draft which can occur in phases makes the preliminary plat official; a replat alters properties that have already been final platted.

Belvidere subdivisions do not require a public hearing but are reviewed by the Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission prior to going before the city council. Since there is no public hearing, notices are not required. During the 2019 fiscal year, staff processed two subdivisions, the same number as in the previous year.

Poplar Grove subdivisions are very similar. They do not require a public hearing but are reviewed by the Poplar Grove Planning and Zoning Commission prior to being heard by the Committee of the Whole and the Village Board. Since there is no public hearing, notices are not required. During the 2019 fiscal year, staff processed two subdivisions, a 100 percent increase from the previous year.

Annexations

Annexations occur when land is incorporated into the limits of the annexing municipality. This can occur for multiple reasons such as needing municipal services or wanting to develop under the municipality's zoning ordinance.

Annexation requests do not go before a Planning and Zoning Commission. Their public hearings and determinations are conducted by the City Council/Village Board. The State Statutes outline notification requirements which are not handled by planning staff.

During the 2019 fiscal year, staff processed four annexation requests for the City of Belvidere, a 100 percent increase from the previous year but did not process any annexation request for the Village of Poplar Grove, the same amount from the previous year.

Site Plan Review

The planning department is responsible for site, landscaping and lighting plan review for construction projects that are commercial or industrial within the City of Belvidere, and the Village of Poplar Grove. The Belvidere Building Department purchased a computer program (WebQA) to manage comments generated during the permitting process. Once a construction project is completed, the planning staff inspects the site to insure that the site is improved according to the submitted and approved plans. In the 2019 fiscal year, the planning department reviewed 44 site, landscaping and lighting plans for 21 projects in the City of Belvidere and none in the Village of Poplar Grove. In the 2018 fiscal year, the planning department reviewed 35 site, landscaping and lighting plans for 20 projects in the City of Belvidere and none for the Village of Poplar Grove.

Some of the larger projects reviewed in the 2019 fiscal year include new businesses RP Lumber and Coach's Corner; and renovations for businesses such as McDonald's and the Z-Mart.

Downtown Overlay Review

The planning department is responsible for the administration of the Downtown Overlay District according to the requirements of the Belvidere Zoning Ordinance. The intent of the Downtown Overlay is to preserve the character of the historic downtown while encouraging additional development in harmony with existing buildings. Any building façade improvements or signage in the Downtown Overlay District require plan review and approval by the planning department prior to the issuance of a building permit. The planning department discontinued using the multi-part application process in order to make the submittal

and review process easier for downtown business owners. In the 2019 fiscal year, the planning department reviewed 15 downtown projects for signage and façade improvements compared to 9 in the 2018 fiscal year. The majority of the fiscal year 2019 projects were for façade renovations. The planning department has a photographic record of the downtown buildings from 2009 and 2013.

Grant Administration

Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Courthouse Square Area (Phase III)

A Certified Local Government application for an intensive survey of the Court House Square Area (Phase III) was submitted in April 2019. The third phase includes the blocks East of North State Street, north of Menomonie Street and west of Blaine Street as suggested by the Belvidere Historic Preservation 10 Year Plan. The Phase III area contains about 90 acres and approximately 282 lots. There are no identified local landmarks or National Register properties in the Phase III area. Most of the structures were constructed between the 1850s and the 1950s.

Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission

During the 2018 fiscal year, the Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission adopted a work plan for the year focusing on preservation education, promotion and recognition, this plan extended into the 2019 fiscal year. The Commission held its seventh annual awards program to recognize organizations and individuals that had completed outstanding renovation projects. The program was held at the Community Building Complex of Boone County on May 17, 2018 (in recognition of preservation month). A booklet was designed highlighting the projects with advertising sponsorship received from local businesses and supporters of the preservation efforts. The event was well attended and appreciated by the recipients and the community.

The Commission designed a 50/50 matching grant program with the funds raised from the various fundraising events held each year (dinners, tours, ad space) and royalties from the Images of America book sales as an incentive for restoration projects. Landmark property owners are eligible to apply for project reimbursement for up to \$1000 each year that funds are available. In the 2019 fiscal year, a grant for \$1,000.00 was awarded to 200 S. State Street for window replacement and façade renovations, a grant for \$425.00 was awarded to 704 N. State Street for the repainting of a porch, a grant for \$750.00 was awarded to 311 W. Hurlbut Avenue for concrete porch repair and a grant for \$600.00 was awarded to 228 W. Hurlbut Avenue for tuckpointing. Due to the success of the Commission's fundraising efforts, grants for the 2020 fiscal year were increased from up to \$1000 to up to \$2500.

Fundraisers in the 2019 fiscal year included a 1950s themed murder mystery (2 nights), tours of the Swift House during Hometown Christmas and the sale and creation of ad space in the awards program.

Four certificates of appropriateness were approved for 333 W. Hurlbut Avenue, 429 W. Hurlbut Avenue, 400 W. Hurlbut Avenue and 207 N. State Street. Two local landmarks were approved at 527 Pearl Street and 401 East Lincoln. There were no National Register Districts designated during the fiscal year; however discussions regarding the Leath Warehouse continue to take place.

The commission continued its community outreach programs. The commission set up its annual display at the Boone County Museum of History during Belvidere's Hometown Christmas and sponsored live music. The Commission had a booth at the Ida Public Library's Kick-Off to Summer Reading Party where coloring sheets depicting Victorian homes and carriage houses were handed out. Two issues of The History

Keeper newsletter were distributed. The Commission also joined the US Historic Route 20 Association and hosted a presentation by the president of the association to local stakeholders.

Comprehensive Plan Review

There was no work by the planning staff on updating the Belvidere Comprehensive Plan or finishing the Poplar Grove Comprehensive Plan during the 2019 fiscal year. The Department intends to work with the Region 1 Planning Council (R1PC) to rewrite the City of Belvidere's Comprehensive Plan and the Village of Poplar Grove's Comprehensive Plan.

Other Activities

Aside from meetings, land development cases and historic preservation, the planning department has other job duties. One on-going project has been the digitization of all case files and linking them to GIS. This makes researching the history of a parcel or the popularity of a land use much easier. Planning staff continues to assist the Boone County Recorder's office by digitizing their plats so that they can be searchable by the general public. Scanning and printing of plats and large plans is available to the public as well for a minor fee. The Department was able to purchase a used large format scanner and printer in fiscal year 2018 to replace the one that stopped working in January 2016. In the 2019 fiscal year, the department scanned 26 plats for the Recorder's office, 5 plats for the general public and 30 plats for other departments.

The planning staff issues two kinds of letters, zoning verification letters and addressing letters. Zoning verification letters are often-times requested by financial institutions representing a buyer. The letters state whether a property is conforming, legal non-conforming or non-conforming. The status of a property can impact its value. Buyers will also request the letters in order to confirm that their intentions for the property are allowable. Staff issued forty zoning verification letters for the City of Belvidere and four for the Village of Poplar Grove. Staff charges a minimal fee for this service. Address letters are issued when there is new construction or an existing structure needs an additional address or corrected address. Staff works closely with 911 and the fire department regarding addressing matters and will issue an official address and notify all utilities and governmental agencies so they can update their records. Staff issued three letters for the City of Belvidere and two letters for the Village of Poplar Grove. There is no cost for this service.

In fiscal year 2018, planning staff along with the Boone County GIS Department began preparing for the 2020 Census. Every year staff has to submit BAS (Boundary and Survey) Maps to the Census Bureau so that they can update their municipal boundaries and road systems. For the decennial census, staff must participate in the LUCA (Local Update of Census Addresses) program which verifies every single address and housing unit in Belvidere. Since the Census Bureau is gradually becoming paperless, the GIS Department has been extremely helpful in submitting the data in an acceptable mapping format. Preparation for the 2020 Census continued into the 2019 fiscal year.

The department is active in Heritage Days, the Chamber Chili Cook-off and Hometown Christmas. For Heritage Days, staff is part of the organizing committee, assists with fundraising, administers the Facebook page, participates in creating the City Hall float, walks in the parade and is present during the entire festival to monitor events and assist where needed. Planning for the festival is a year-round responsibility. This year, staff took a more active role in the Belvidere Area Chamber of Commerce's Hometown Christmas. In addition to handing out hot chocolate to those in attendance, staff participated in the organizing of the event and secured vendors and new activities. The Chamber Chili Cook-off is a good community outreach event and staff participates in creating the booth space and serving chili to the public.

Another community outreach event that staff participates in is the Boone County Fair; a booth is manned by Belvidere staff as well as many others.

The Summer Food Service Program, is a USDA program organized locally by the Community Action Agency. Planning staff assists the City Clerk with handing out free lunches and monitoring the lunch site once a week from June to August. Moving the summer lunch program from City Hall to the park at the corner of High Line and Lakeshore Drives to coincide with the City's Police and Fire Department outreach efforts proved to be successful. In fiscal 2019, a playground was constructed and in fiscal year 2020, a pavilion will be completed. These improvements aid in serving the large increase in children coming for lunch and the additional programs offered by the Belvidere Family YMCA.

Appendix Tables

- I. Population Estimates

- II. Case Comparisons
 - A. FY 2017-2019 Belvidere Case Comparisons
 - B. FY 2017-2019 Poplar Grove Case Comparisons

- III. Case Load Summaries
 - A. FY 2019 Belvidere Case Load Summary
 - B. FY 2019 Poplar Grove Case Load Summary

- IV. City of Belvidere Zoning Petition Flow Chart

Estimated Population

	2010	*2011	*2012	*2013	*2014	*2015	*2016	*2017	*2018	*2019 to date
Belvidere:	25,585	25,603	25,666	25,701	25,716	25,734	25,755	25,773	25,791	25,797
Poplar Grove:	5,023	5,029	5,034	5,037	5,037	5,037	5,043	5,043	50,093	20,096

* The estimated population numbers were based solely on the amount of building permits granted for single family residential structures and multi-family units and did not take into account fluctuating vacancy rates.

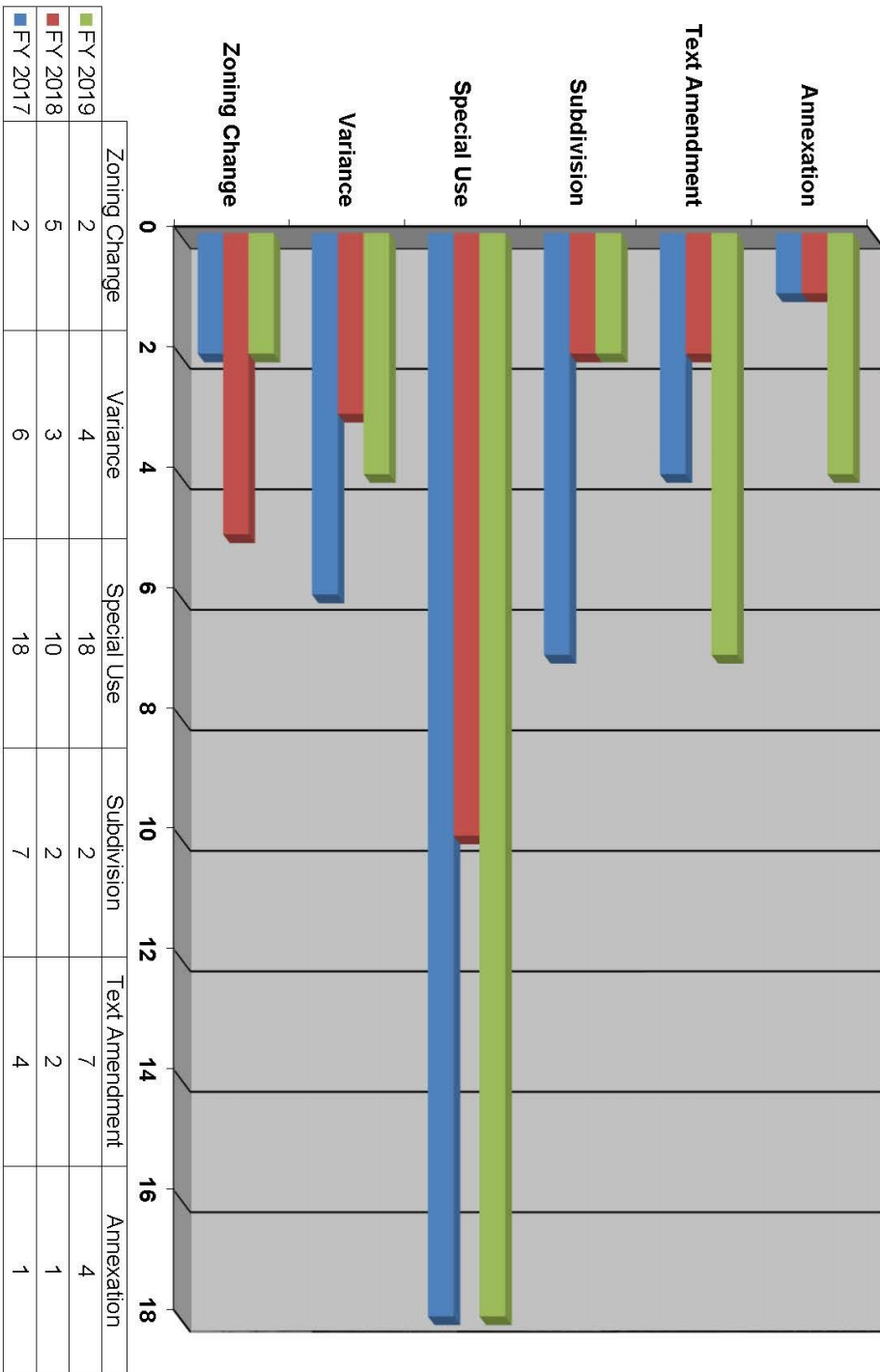
Census Estimates

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Belvidere:	25,588	25,680	25,371	25,339	25,282	25,092	25,070	25,181	n/a	n/a
Poplar Grove:	5,023	5,087	5,096	5,115	5,169	5,056	5,054	5,093	n/a	n/a

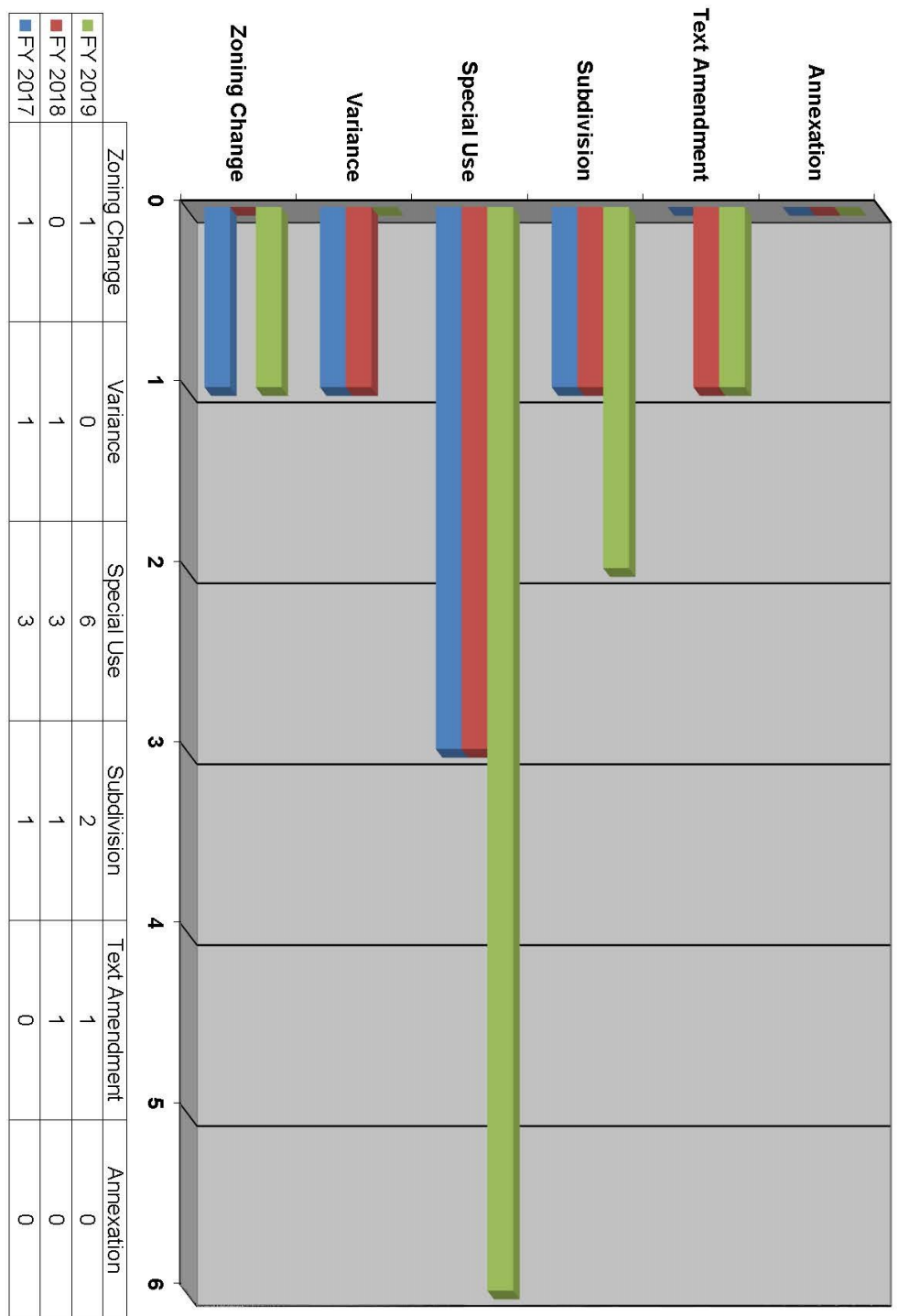
***Percentage of Growth**

	2000	2004	2010	2015	2020
Belvidere:	0	13	8.7	0.6	n/a
Poplar Grove:	0	114.9	70.8	0.3	n/a

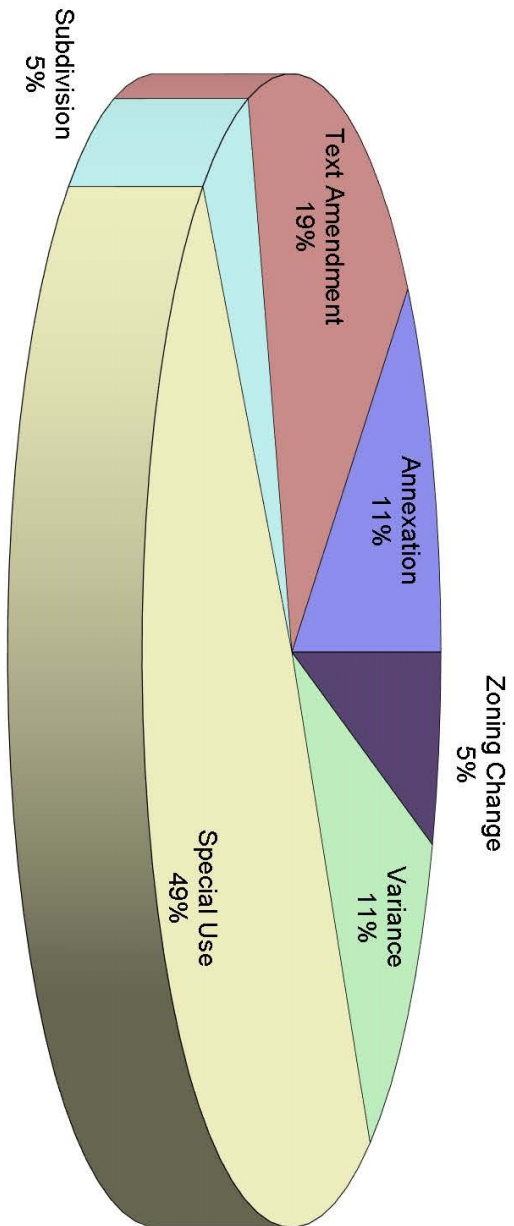
II-A FY 2017-2019 Belvidere Case Comparisons



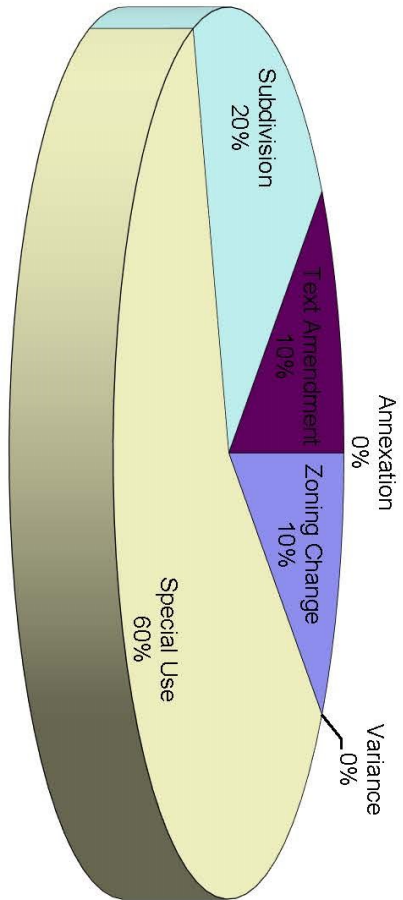
II-B FY 2017-2019 Poplar Grove Case Comparisons

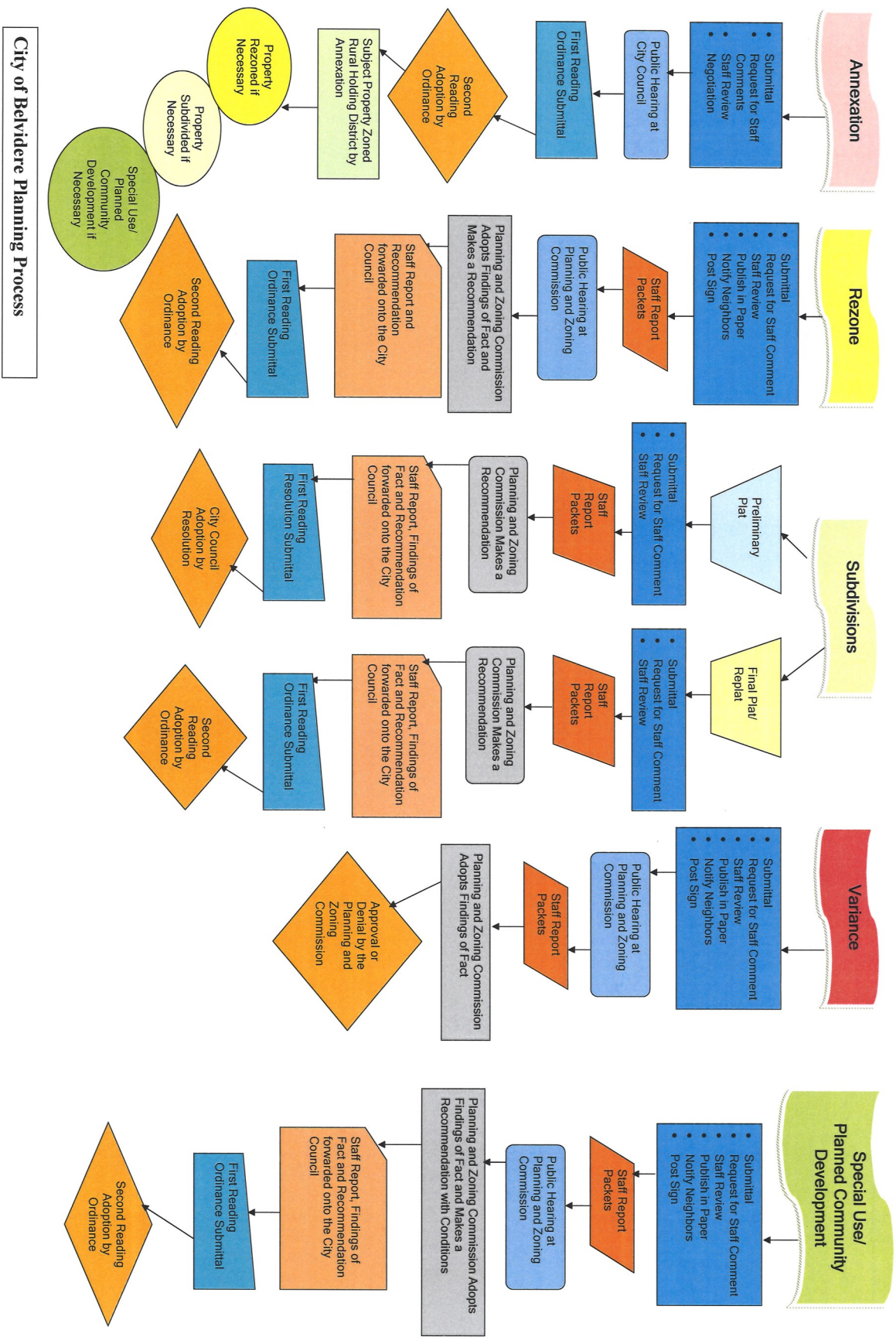


III-A
FY 2019 Belvidere Case Load Summary



III-B FY 2019 Poplar Grove Case Load Summary





City of Belvidere Planning Process