



City of Belvidere **Comprehensive Plan**

Adopted May 7th, 2024
Prepared by Houseal Lavigne

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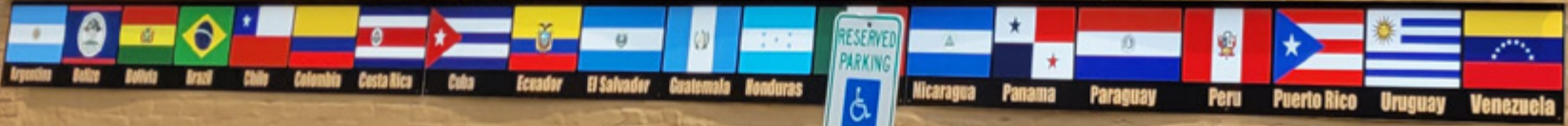
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HONORARE UNITAS SPIRITUS



"UNITY"
 This mural was designed and painted by artist R. R. Valadrez, AIA. Funding provided by grants from the City of San Antonio, the San Antonio Hispanic Community Foundation, the San Antonio Hispanic Community Foundation, the San Antonio Hispanic Community Foundation, and the San Antonio Hispanic Community Foundation. Painted by The San Antonio Hispanic Community Foundation. Painted by The San Antonio Hispanic Community Foundation. Painted by The San Antonio Hispanic Community Foundation.

r. r. Valadrez + c.



01 Plan Context

About the Plan

This document presents the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Belvidere, Illinois. It sets forth a long-range guide for the maintenance and enhancement of the City's existing areas and for improvement and development within the City and its planning area.

The **Belvidere Comprehensive Plan** is a detailed policy document that guides land use, development, community investment, growth, and overall quality of life for 20 years. The Plan is comprehensive both in scale and scope, with recommendations for the entire City and its planning area. It will be the City's primary document to assist with planning-related decision-making and direct official policy in the community. The Plan is a policy document that provides the framework for regulatory tools like the City's zoning code, subdivision regulations, annexations, and other City policies.

The Plan promotes the community's vision, goals, objectives, and policies; establishes a process for orderly growth and development; addresses both current and long-term needs; and provides for a balance between the natural and built environment.

Plan Process

The **Belvidere Comprehensive Plan** is a product of subsequent community input and represents the culmination of a 9-month planning process. The Belvidere Comprehensive Plan was developed using the following three-step process:

Step 1 - Project Kickoff and Existing Conditions

The project kicked-off with meetings with City staff, officials, and the Joint Committee (Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council) to discuss the overall direction of the Comprehensive Plan and any policy issues facing the City. Using data gathered from the City, department heads, local agencies, and on-the-ground reconnaissance, Belvidere's conditions were reviewed and analyzed as they existed at the time of the planning process. The results were presented in an Existing Conditions Memorandum produced in November 2023.

Step 2 - Community Vision, Goals, and Future Land Uses

This step included a "hands-on" planning workshop where community residents crafted their own long-term vision for Belvidere. The results of the workshop provided focus and direction for subsequent planning activities, including the Plan's Vision Statement, Goals, and Future Land Use Plan.

Step 3 - Plan Documents and Adoption

This step included the preparation of the Plan document and an implementation program utilizing recommendations reflecting the collective community vision for the City. Upon revisions from staff, elected officials, and public input the final Comprehensive Plan was presented to the Joint Committee for consideration and adoption.



Regional Setting

Belvidere is situated in Northern Illinois within Boone County. In the heart of the Rock River Valley region, the City of Belvidere maintains a blend of well-preserved historic structures and plenty of natural scenic open space. The City provides access to major transportation routes through Interstate 90 and US Highway 20. Drivers can reach Rockford in approximately 25 minutes, Madison in 75 minutes, and Chicago in 75 minutes, putting numerous amenities and attractions within reach. Belvidere is connected to the larger region and the rest of the country via the Chicago Rockford International Airport, an approximate 30-minute drive from Downtown Belvidere.

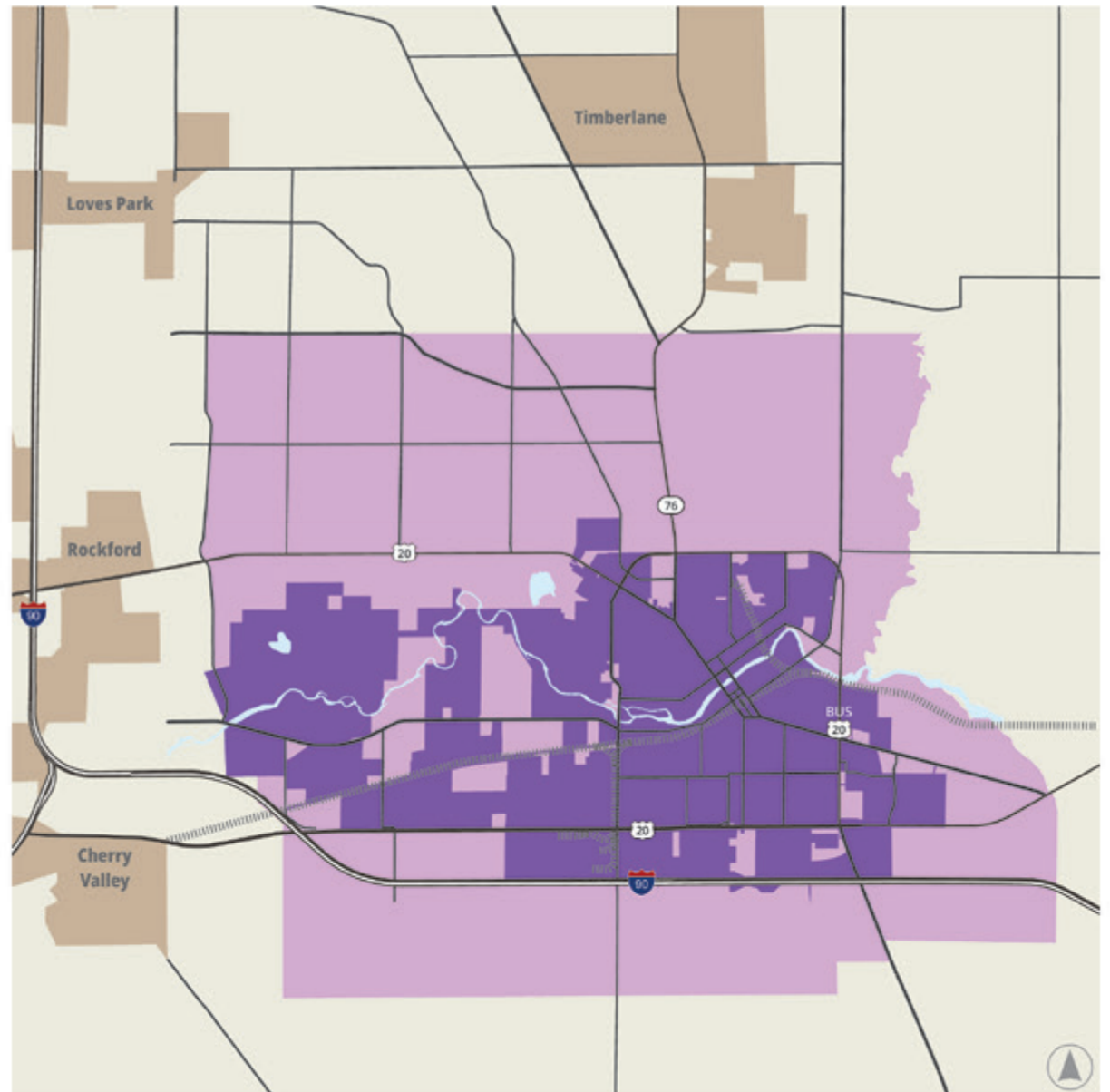
Belvidere neighbors several municipalities in Boone County. The villages of Poplar Grove and Timberlane lie to the north, while the Village of Cherry Valley is situated west between Belvidere and Rockford. There are many unincorporated areas surrounding Belvidere, including the townships of Flora, Spring, and Bonus to the south and east.



Planning Area

Under Illinois state statute, Belvidere has the authority to plan for areas within its municipal boundaries, as well as land within its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The ETJ refers to a 1.5 mile area extending from the municipal boundary. The ETJ excludes other incorporated communities, non-contiguous areas, and land claimed by other communities through a formal boundary agreement.

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Planning Area



Existing Land Use

The existing land uses in the City provide insight into determining the type of development that will be appropriate in the future. The Existing Land Use section offers an inventory of existing land uses and development patterns. This inventory is based on field reconnaissance conducted in September of 2023. It identifies the current land uses on each parcel within the City. All parcels within the Belvidere Planning Area have been classified according to one of eleven land use classifications, as described below, and indicated on the adjacent map.

Agriculture

Agriculture uses include land actively used to produce crops, raise livestock, and conduct farming-related activities. Farms devoted wholly or partially to agritourism are included. Low-density single-family detached homes within the same parcel utilized for agricultural production are also included in this land use.

Single-Family Detached

Single-family detached refers to individual residences situated on separate parcels. Single-family detached housing varies in size and architectural style throughout Belvidere. Single-family detached include older established neighborhoods in traditional neighborhood patterns and newer planned subdivisions primarily east of Appleton Road.

Single-Family Attached

Single-family attached includes residential units that share an exterior wall while maintaining distinct separate entrances. Single-family attached may be connected horizontally or vertically and may often be referred to as duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes. Examples of this land use include the Logan Square Townhomes, Southtowne Condos and Cline's Ford duplexes.

Multi-Family Residential

Multi-family residential includes structures with multiple dwelling units with a designated main entrance. Examples of multi-family uses include the Coachlite Apartments and Shadley Apartments.

Mixed Use

Mixed use refers to an individual building or development that includes multiple distinct uses. Uses are typically stacked vertically with first floor commercial retail or restaurants and residential or office spaces occupying the upper floors. Most of the mixed use designations are located Downtown along State Street.

Commercial

Commercial uses include retail and other service-based businesses such as shops, restaurants, gas stations, as well as professional businesses, operations, and administrative activities. This classification is generally located along major corridors including Logan Avenue and State Street.

Industrial

Industrial uses include both heavy and light industrial businesses such as manufacturing, warehousing, and the distribution of goods and materials. While some pockets of industrial uses are in the west, the majority of this classification is operated and planned along the Interstate 90 and US Route 20 corridors.

Mineral Extraction

Mineral extraction uses include the extraction, crushing, washing, and sorting of mined construction materials such as stone, rock, gravel, sand, clay, and topsoil. These uses are typically located on the outskirts of urban areas in the county. Mineral extraction areas are generally characterized by large open-pit mines, heavy machinery, and facilities to recover, process, and transport mined materials.

Institutional

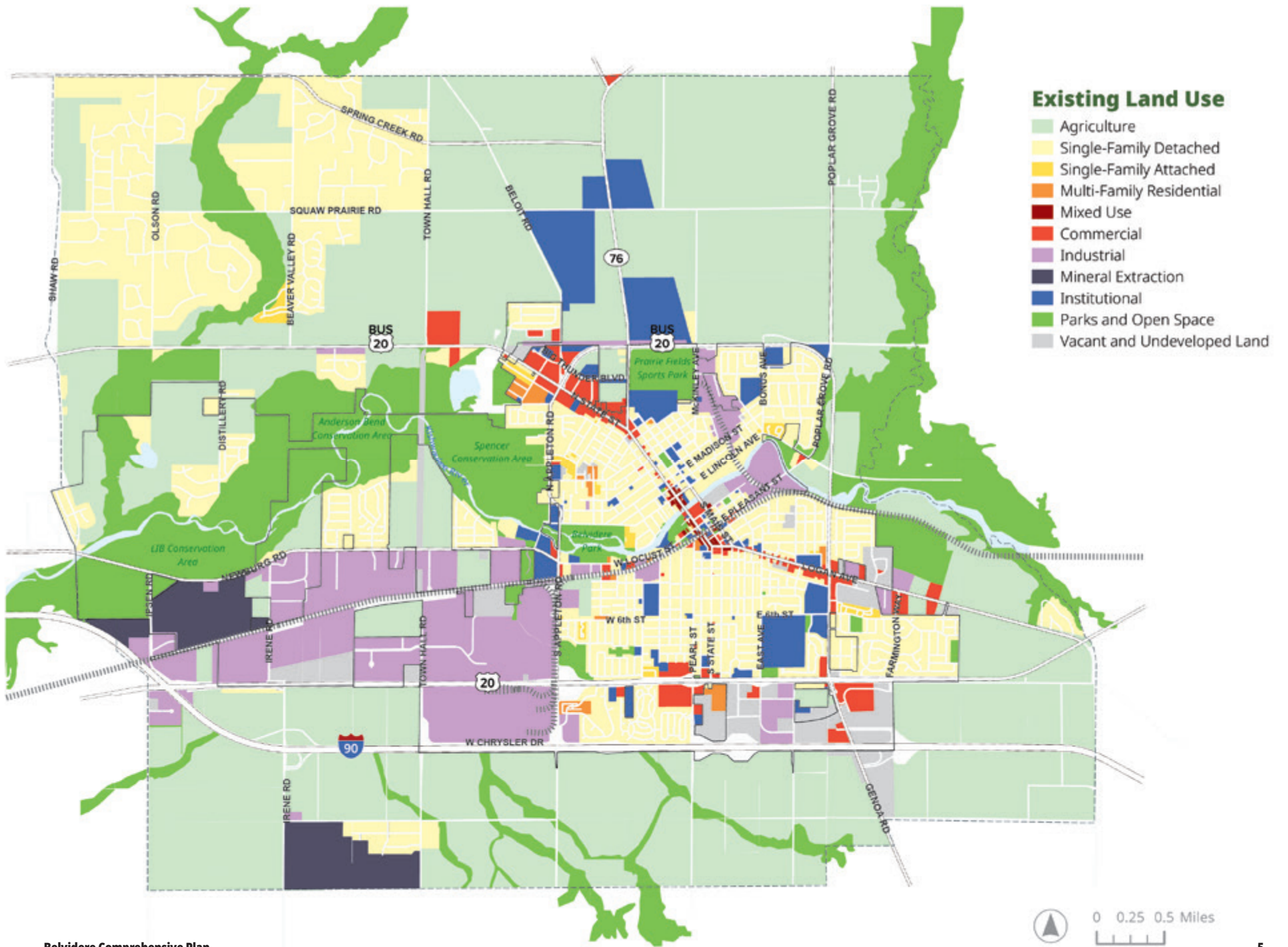
Institutional uses include local government uses, municipal facilities, community service providers, schools, and places of worship and assembly. Belvidere City Hall, Boone County Courthouse, Ida Public Library, and fire and police stations are examples of institutional uses.

Parks and Open Space

Parks and open space include land uses that provide active and passive recreation options and open space areas. A majority of this land use is located along the Kishwaukee River on the west side of the City. Typically, the Belvidere Township Park District provides active recreation opportunities, and the Boone County Conservation District provides passive recreation.

Vacant and Undeveloped Land

Vacant and undeveloped land consists of properties that are eligible for redevelopment, but which currently contain no occupied physical improvement, structures, or facilities. These lands are not actively used for any purpose and present opportunities for new development.



Current Zoning

This section provides an overview of current zoning districts. There are 17 zoning districts in Belvidere, including seven residential districts, two office districts, four business districts, three industrial districts and one institutional district.

Rural Holding – (RH)

Rural Holding Districts maintain very low-density residential land uses as well as agricultural areas until infrastructure services are available. This district allows one dwelling per 40 acres along with a variety of agricultural and agricultural support land uses. Rural holding districts help preserve agricultural land uses and intend to support rural community character. All properties annexed to the City default to rural holding district and are then rezoned to their appropriate district.

Single-Family Residential-3 – (SR-3)

Single-Family Residential-3 Districts promote low-density, suburban development. These designations maintains the suburban character with three dwelling units per acre and provides more housing options for residents that desire larger lots.

Single-Family Residential-4 – (SR-4)

Single-Family Residential-4 Districts provide moderate density housing with four dwelling units per acre. These districts provides a similar suburban lifestyle with smaller lots than Single-Family Residential-3.

Single-Family Residential-6 – (SR-6)

Single-Family Residential-6 Districts promote more moderate density housing with six dwelling units per acre.

Two-Family Residential-7 – (TR-7)

The Two-Family Residential-7 Districts provide moderate density community character through permitting both single-family detached residential development and twin house/duplex residential.

Multi-Family Residential-8S – (MR-8S)

Multi-Family Residential-8S Districts provide higher density residential development up to eight dwelling units per acre. These districts allow single-family homes, duplexes, town-homes, and multiplexes with typically smaller unit sizes.

Multi-Family Residential-8L – (MR-8L)

Multi-Family Residential-8L Districts provide higher density residential development up to eight dwelling units per acre. These districts allow single-family homes, duplexes, town-homes, and apartments with typically larger unit sizes.

Neighborhood Office – (NO)

Neighborhood Office Districts provide high-quality office land uses compatible with mobility and access in a neighborhood setting. These districts aims to ensure a minimum disruption in transitioning to adjacent residential development.

Planned Office – (PO)

Planned Office Districts are intended to provide high-quality office land uses compatible with the overall community character of the City.

Neighborhood Business – (NB)

Neighborhood Business Districts provide small-scale commercial development compatible with the neighborhood scale and community character.

Planned Business – (PB)

Planned Business Districts are intended to provide large and small-scale commercial development compatible with the overall community character of the City.

General Business – (GB)

General Business Districts provide both large and small-scale commercial development geared toward infill development and spurring economic viability of existing development.

Central Business – (CB)

Central Business Districts provide both large and small-scale commercial development Downtown. These districts are strictly limited to the central city locations. Central business districts are the City's only true mixed use district.

Planned Industrial – (PI)

Planned Industrial Districts are intended to provide large and small-scale industrial and office development compatible with Belvidere's suburban community character. This district is intended to provide a location for suburban intensity light industrial land uses.

General Industrial – (GI)

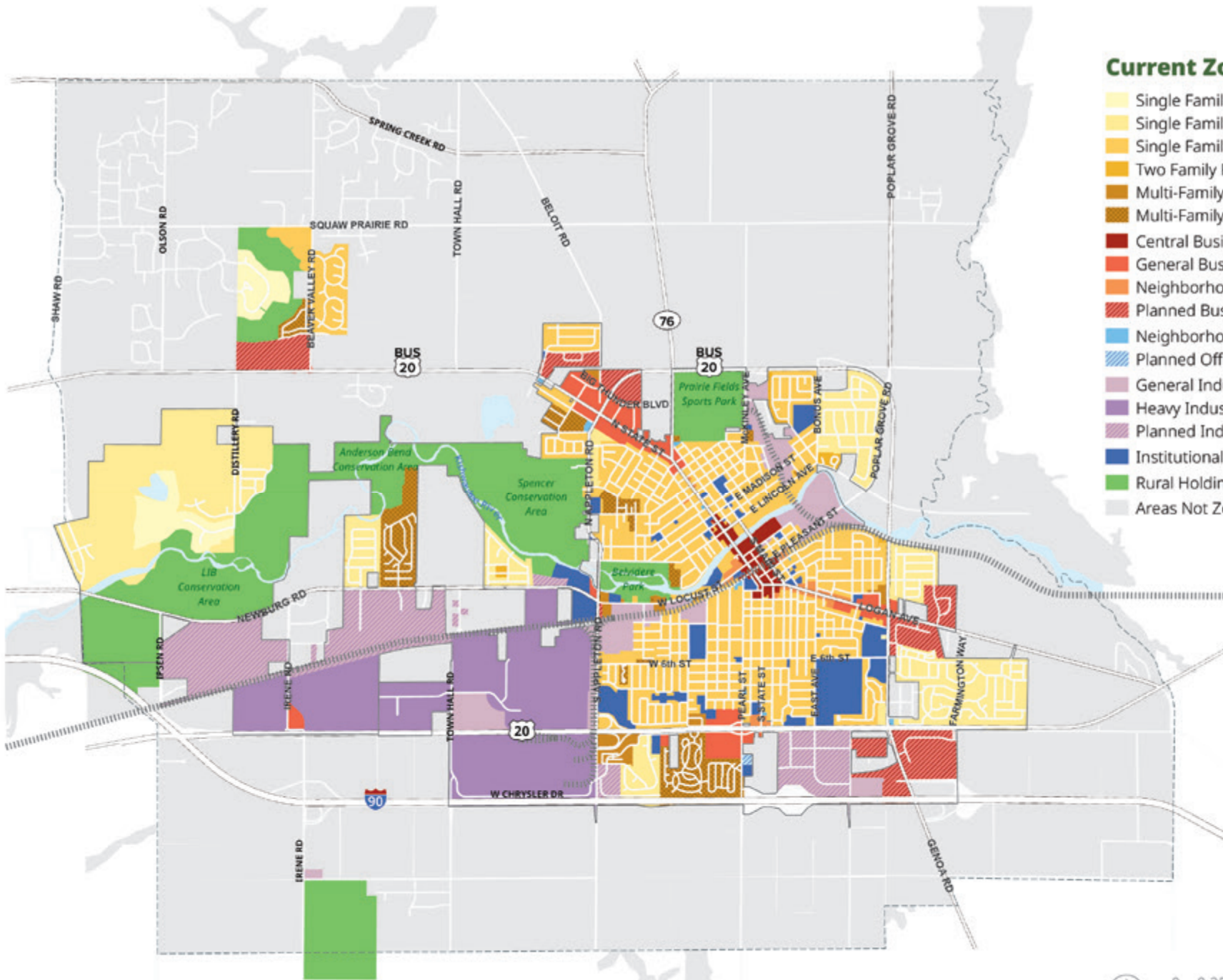
General Industrial Districts provide large and small scale industrial and office development compatible with existing transition and urban density development. This district is intended to provide a location for urban intensity light industrial land uses.

Heavy Industrial – (HI)

Heavy Industrial Districts provide large and small scale industrial and office development that has the potential to create nuisances to adjacent properties.

Institutional – (I)

Institutional Districts provide development suited for uses including government and educational facilities, day care centers, religious institutions, institutional residential uses, parks, and similar uses. This district is located as clusters of institutional uses, such as a campus, or individual sites within other zoning districts.



Current Zoning

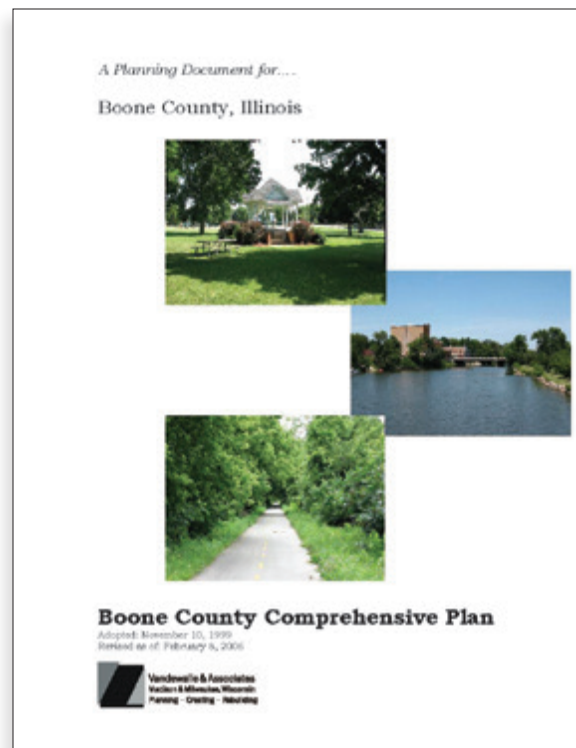
- Single Family Residential-3 District
- Single Family Residential-4 District
- Single Family Residential-6 District
- Two Family Residential-7 District
- Multi-Family Residential-8 Small
- Multi-Family Residential-8 Large
- Central Business District
- General Business District
- Neighborhood Business District
- Planned Business District
- Neighborhood Office District
- Planned Office District
- General Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Planned Industrial District
- Institutional District
- Rural Holding District
- Areas Not Zoned within Belvidere





Past Plans, Studies, and Reports

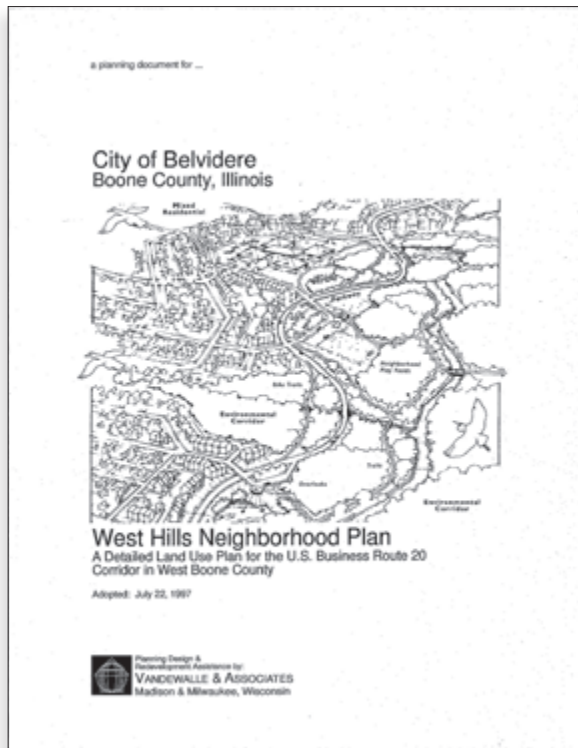
The existing conditions analysis included a comprehensive review of all of the community's past plans and studies. The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the values of these previous planning efforts and builds upon them where applicable as a part of the community's new vision.



Boone County Comprehensive Plan (1999)

The *Boone County Comprehensive Plan* update is a community-led planning endeavor that sets forth initiatives, shapes decision-making, and charts a path for the county's success for the next 50 years. The *Boone County Comprehensive Plan* emphasizes coordination between regional entities, equity, and inclusion of all residents, retaining youth and supporting aging populations, and balancing agricultural heritage with economic growth. It envisions a community that values its rural heritage, promotes economic development, provides diverse housing, provides efficient government, and offers family-friendly recreation.

In 2006, there was an amendment to the *Boone County Comprehensive Plan* known as the Flora Neighborhood Plan Amendment. This amendment intended to spur development along Interstate 90 utilizing mixed use land uses and other specific land uses.

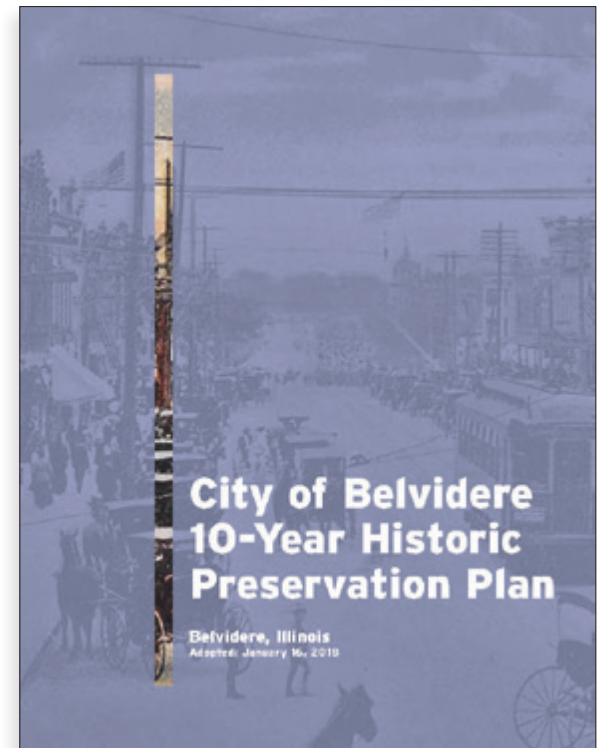


West Hills Neighborhood Plan (1997)

The *West Hills Neighborhood Plan* aims to enhance the neighborhood's integration with the broader communities of Belvidere and Boone County. Detailed recommendations were provided regarding environmental protection, land use, transportation, recreation, economic development, and community character. This planning area covers a 10.625 square mile area, extending from Squaw Prairie Road to Illinois Route 76 in the north to the Kishwaukee River in the south.

10-Year Historic Preservation Plan (2018)

The *10-year Historic Preservation Plan* outlines a collaborative vision and policy framework to advance local historic preservation, promoting a vibrant community with a revitalized downtown, attractive historic neighborhoods, and increased economic vitality through strategic preservation efforts and public-private partnerships.



Demographic Snapshot

An analysis of Belvidere's demographics was conducted to guide the planning process and policy recommendations. Data used in this snapshot is from the American Community Survey.

Population

Belvidere's population has gradually increased from 1950 to 2010 and decreased in the last decade. The population of Belvidere was 25,179 as of 2021. Belvidere's population has gradually increased from 1950 to 2010 and experienced a slight decrease of 0.5% from 2010 to 2021. In the decade between 2010 and 2021, all comparable communities experienced population growth, with Channahon experiencing the most significant increase at 66.3%.

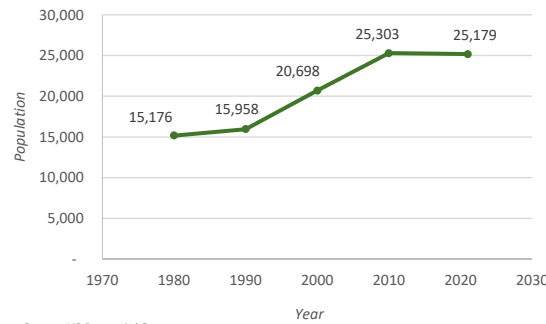
Age

A growing share of Belvidere's population is over 55, with the median age rising. Over the past two decades, the median age of the residents has increased. Although the median age remained stable from 2000 to 2010, it increased by 4.9 years from 2010 to 2021, and is currently 36.9 years of age. The most significant growth occurred in the 55-64 age group (65.1%) and the 65+ category (40.4%). The decrease in younger age groups from 2010 to 2021 may impact the total population and Belvidere's home rule unit status over the next 20 years.

Race and Ethnicity

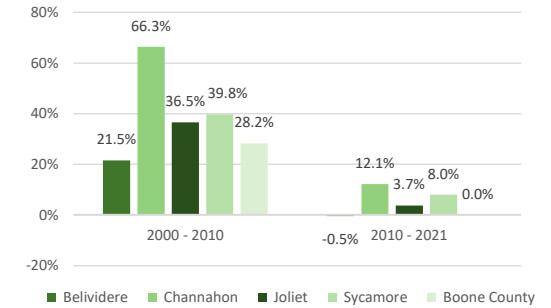
Belvidere's population continues to be a predominant mix of White and Hispanic or Latino population. A majority of Belvidere residents are white, comprising 56.4% of the population, while 35.9% are Hispanic or Latino. This is consistent with Boone County and comparable communities, where the majority is white, followed by the Hispanic and Latino population.

Population Over Time
Belvidere (1920-2021)



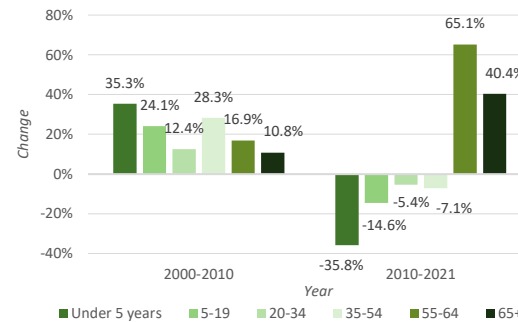
Source: US Decennial Census

10-Year Population Growth Rates



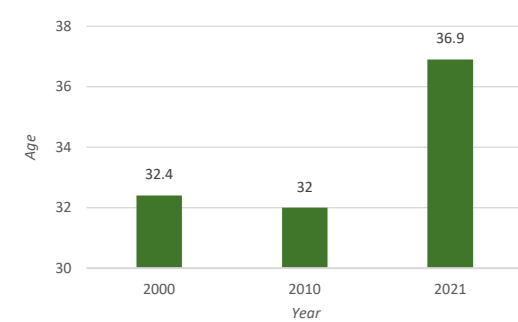
Source: 2010 and 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Population Change by Age Group
Belvidere



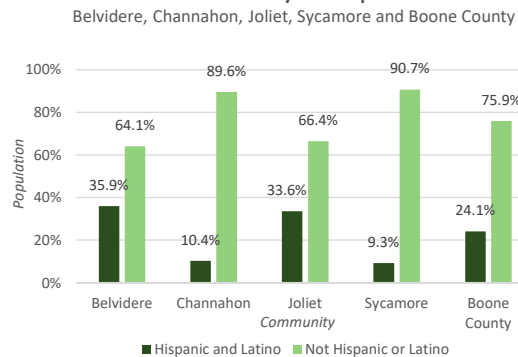
Source: 2000 Census, 2010 and 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Median Age Over Time
Belvidere



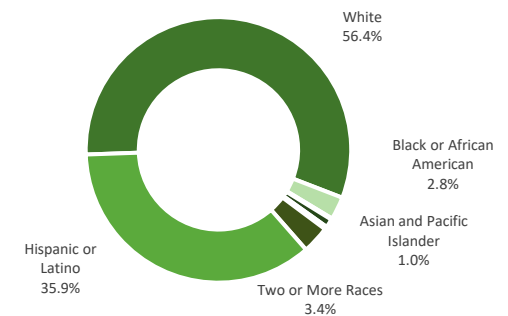
Source: 2000, 2010, and 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Ethnicity Makeup



Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Racial and Ethnic Composition
Belvidere (2021)



Source: Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Income

Belvidere's household income has steadily increased over the past few decades.

Employment

In 2021, 68.1% of Belvidere residents aged 16 and over were employed, indicating a consistent labor force. The participation rate has increased slightly from 64.4% in 2010. Moreover, Belvidere's unemployment rate has decreased substantially over the past decade, from 11.6% in 2010 to 5% in 2021.

Employment Sectors. The job market in Belvidere has changed significantly between 2010 and 2020. Manufacturing, Educational Services, Construction, Retail Trade, and Transportation and Warehousing are the top employment sectors in Belvidere.

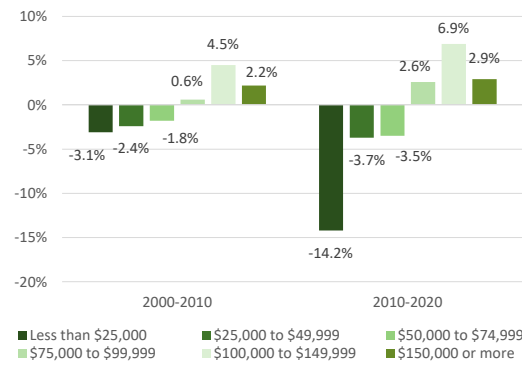
Top Industries. Manufacturing, Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and Administration and Support, and Waste Management and Remediation employ most Belvidere residents.

Inflow/ Outflow. The top three locations for employed residents to work were Belvidere (21.7%), Rockford (19.6%), and Chicago (4.6%). Approximately 84% of individuals employed in Belvidere lived outside the area, while 78.30% of Belvidere residents worked outside the city. 2,031 residents both lived and worked within Belvidere.

Education

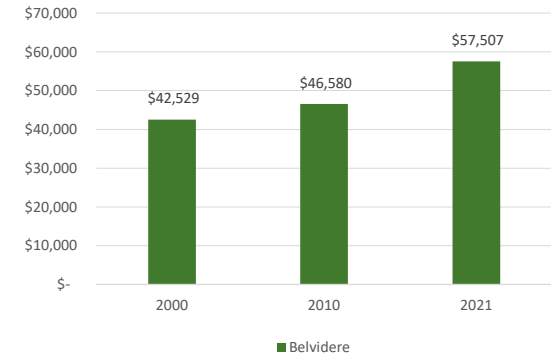
The level of education attainment in Belvidere varies considerably. In 2021, 14.73 % of the population had a bachelor's degree or higher, 21.04 % had not completed high school, and significant percentages in other categories. Belvidere's education attainment aligns closely with Boone County.

Change in Households by Income
Belvidere



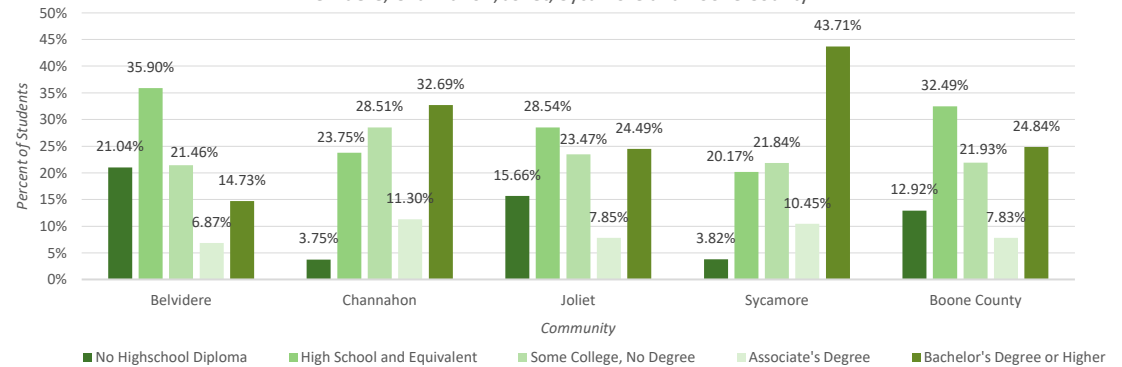
Source: 2000, 2010, and 2021 ACS 5-Year

Median Household Income
Belvidere



Source: 2000, 2010, and 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Level of Education Attainment
Belvidere, Channahon, Joliet, Sycamore and Boone County



Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates



Community Engagement

The **Belvidere Comprehensive Plan** is primarily focused on addressing land use and development. The outreach process helped to identify Belvidere's issues, opportunities, potential projects, and other assets. The community's feedback shaped the vision statement, goals, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Department Heads Workshop

A group of department heads from the City were invited to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities within the community. A total of **6** participants attended the workshop. The workshop allowed department heads to exchange ideas and provide valuable input for the plan recommendations.

Joint Committee Workshop

The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) and City Council participated in the workshop to discuss issues, opportunities, and assets in the community. A total of **11** participants attended the workshop.

Community Facilities Survey

Several key themes emerged throughout the workshops, focus groups, and key stakeholder interviews. Although a wide range of community-identified issues, opportunities, concerns, and priority projects create the foundation of the Plan, these themes are immediately recognizable and most important to Belvidere's stakeholders.

The following are the major themes that emerged from the the Department Heads Workshop, Joint Committee Workshop, and Community Facilities Survey:

Housing and Neighborhoods

The most common issues identified in residential areas were addressing blighted and vacant properties through revitalization efforts and providing more diverse housing options.

Economic Development

Economic development was an engaging topic, including redevelopment of downtown buildings and catalyzing investment in key opportunity sites. Additionally, participants suggested developing a festival grounds or events programming space separate from the Boone County Fairgrounds.

Transportation

Improving access and mobility were top transportation topics during outreach. The participants noted that major roads, such as US Route 20, will need to be widened to accommodate more traffic. A dedicated bicycle infrastructure was also discussed during outreach.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Community facilities and infrastructure concerns highlighted growing demands on public services as the City expands and updates to an aging sewer and water system to support future growth.

Open Space

Participants identified the riverfront as an opportunity to develop recreational amenities and provide access to Belvidere's attractive environmental features.



Key Stakeholder Interviews

Key stakeholder interviews were conducted with a total of **23** individuals to gain first-hand insight into the community from a diverse array of specialized perspectives. The project team worked with City staff to identify which stakeholders to be interviewed. Interviews were framed around a sequence of questions regarding the community and conducted in a conversational style.

Downtown Development

Interviewees identified developments related to Belvidere's downtown and riverfront as key opportunities for infill development and embracing the Kishwaukee River.

Transportation

Participants expressed interest in more options in transportation including public transit, an alternative route to Rockford, and a secondary route for industrial uses such as trucking and distribution.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Interviewees expressed the need for better coordination between the City, County, and School District as Belvidere prepares for future growth. Infrastructure improvements that affect everyone such as wastewater treatment, water protection ordinances, and extension of utilities were points of interest during these discussions.

Housing

Housing and neighborhoods were a popular topic with interviewees expressing a great need for more housing options including missing middle housing as well as condos, apartments, multi-family buildings, and townhomes.

Community Visioning Workshop

The City hosted a Community Visioning Workshop on November 2, 2023. The workshop allowed residents and stakeholders to discuss ideas and provide visioning input before the plan and recommendations are crafted. The workshop included a brief presentation introducing the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan and planning process, as well as a group mapping exercise. Attendees were asked to participate in a group mapping exercise to identify areas of strengths, assets, issues, and concerns.

Housing and Residential

One group suggested updating sidewalks and implementing a program to maintain property facades to beautify the neighborhood. Some groups recommended increasing housing density near schools and education facilities, creating more Downtown housing options near the river, and encouraging residential development mirrored across Interstate 90.

Commercial and Retail

Groups suggested exploring opportunities for more commercial development along US Route 20 and Interstate 90 as well as other corridors throughout the City.

Industrial and Manufacturing

Groups mentioned expanding existing industrial areas near the Stellantis Plant and Interstate 90 to foster economic growth.

Transportation

One group proposed establishing a truck stop area with easy access to essential amenities along Interstate 90 and US Route 20. Groups also suggested various roadway extensions and expansions for Pearl Street, State Street, Town Hall Road, and US Route 20.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Groups mentioned creating better connections and extending trails to create better access to recreational opportunities. The implementation of a bike lane along Newburg Road and US Route 20 was also discussed.

Community Facilities and Services

Groups discussed expanding riverfront access along the Kishwaukee and maintaining existing parks and trails. Groups also explored improving the bus system to increase public transportation access in high traffic areas and expanding essential services such as police and fire stations.

02 Community Vision and Goals



Driven by community and stakeholder input, this chapter details the Comprehensive Plan's vision and goals, which provide the framework for planning recommendations, policies, and actions expressed within the Belvidere Comprehensive Plan.

The Vision Statement is an aspirational narrative that paints a picture of what the City can achieve following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The narrative depicts the community's collective desires and serves as the foundation for the Plan's goals, recommendations, and actions.

The Goals describe desired results towards which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an ambition to be sought and require incremental actions to be fully achieved. The goals are organized by planning categories, and each are of equal importance.

VISION STATEMENT

Over the next twenty years, the City of Belvidere will be known as one of the most welcoming and prosperous places in Northern Illinois – a desirable and safe community where people want to live, work, and visit. Future growth and development will be carefully guided by partnerships between the City, property owners, residents, developers, and investors ensuring the community's aspirations and infrastructure capabilities are aligned.

Belvidere will continue to balance regional economic development initiatives with local business efforts. The City's policies will provide productive development of industrial and commercial areas that value efficiency and sustainability. The City's mix of corporate success and homegrown businesses will provide employment opportunities and increase the tax base to further fund quality public services. Downtown Belvidere will be revitalized as a bustling historic center filled with local shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Redevelopment of the Downtown will coincide with the expansion of the Metra line and station connecting the City further to Rockford and the broader region.

Downtown's lively pedestrian areas, mixed-use buildings, and charming historic architecture will offer an attractive environment for residents and visitors to experience Belvidere's unique small-town beauty. The City will embrace the Kishwaukee River encouraging a mixed of uses along the waterfront including outdoor recreation, residential, commercial and other mixed-uses. Beyond the urban core, the Kishwaukee River and network of parks and trails will give people of all age's opportunity for recreation and activities.

Belvidere's neighborhoods will retain their unique appeal through a variety of housing options, safe streets, and strong ties in the community. Well-designed connections between subdivisions, schools, shops, parks, and civic amenities will promote a high quality of life. New neighborhood developments promote increased density, accessibility, and integrates a mix of uses along major connecting roadways.

As the community grows, Belvidere's parks and open spaces will continue to provide beloved recreational opportunities and natural environments for residents of all ages. The Belvidere School District remains a key asset in the community supporting activities and programs for students, families, and visitors. Residents will benefit from modern, efficient, and sustainable community facilities and infrastructure.

The City will ensure that roadways support efficient and safe mobility through the community for all users including cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The transportation system will support a balanced, comprehensive, and well-connected network of trails and pathways that integrate seamlessly between the Downtown, neighborhoods, economic cores, and natural areas.

Belvidere will retain its rural identity as it continues to grow into a regional center of employment. Community events and festivals will continue to bring the City together, fostering a diverse, considerate, and welcoming environment. Belvidere will continue to paint itself as the City of Murals, serving as an inclusive small-town place to live, work, and visit for future generations.



Goals

Growth and Development

Goal 1: Ensure a balance of residential, commercial, and industrial uses as growth and annexation occur, in alignment with the future land use map.

Goal 2: Support the historic downtown and underutilized properties along the riverfront to promote walkability, connectivity, and quality of life in core of the City.

Goal 3: Attract new companies and employment opportunities in the City's growing manufacturing and technology sectors, in alignment with the future land use map and the City Council's strategic goals.

Land Use

Goal 1: Encourage compact, mixed-use development in and around the Downtown, and strategically in the City's future growth areas.

Goal 2: Encourage transitional land uses such as commercial, mixed use, and open space between residential and employment areas of the City.

Goal 3: Promote Business Flex land uses to support workforce development areas and other commercial land uses.

Goal 4: Encourage smart land use and growth in areas that are highly productive in ground water recharge.

Housing

Goal 1: Promote, maintain, and improve existing neighborhoods and revitalization efforts for the City's current housing stock.

Goal 2: Provide high-quality new housing and neighborhoods, maintaining and expanding the City's reputation as an attractive place to live.



Community Facilities

Goal 1: Support existing public services and designate potential future locations for new facilities as the City grows.

Goal 2: Coordinate with City departments, community organizations, and other stakeholder organizations to ensure development aligns with current service capacity and future demands.

Transportation

Goal 1: Maintain, improve, and strategically expand the City's network of roadways to support growth and safe, efficient travel.

Goal 2: Expand the sidewalk and bicycling network in the City to promote safe and sustainable transportation alternatives, so that all have the option to walk or bike for recreation and transportation as desired.

Community Character

Goal 1: Preserve the rural and historic character of Belvidere when considering future development, ensuring the community maintains its reputation as an attractive and desirable place to live, work, and visit.

Goal 2: Engage those who know the community best – residents, business owners, and representatives from key organizations – to promote active community participation as part of the City's future development.

03 Land Use and Development

The Land Use and Development chapter identifies desired future land uses for all areas within the City of Belvidere and establishes a strategy to accommodate future growth. Land use and development patterns have significant implications on the appearance, character, form, and function of the community.

Building on the community's existing land use and development pattern, the Land Use and Development chapter seeks to make Belvidere a more livable, affordable, and sustainable community by maximizing employment locations, maintaining and revitalizing neighborhoods, guiding future investment, and establishing a sense of place.

The Land Use and Development chapter identifies areas where the City's character is strong and should be maintained, where its image needs to be strengthened, where conditions call for complete transformation, and where new growth has the potential to flourish.

Growth Area Strategy

The growth area strategy establishes long-term priorities for future growth in the planning area with an emphasis on leveraging existing infrastructure within City limits. It encourages infill development and promotes policies to avoid leap-frog development. For example, vacant properties throughout the City should be developed to take advantage of existing utilities and infrastructure while complementing existing development patterns.

Urban Core

The intent of the Urban Core growth area is to highlight infill development, redevelopment opportunities, and development contiguous to the municipal boundary. The City should encourage the development of vacant and underutilized properties within the Urban Core as a first priority for growth.

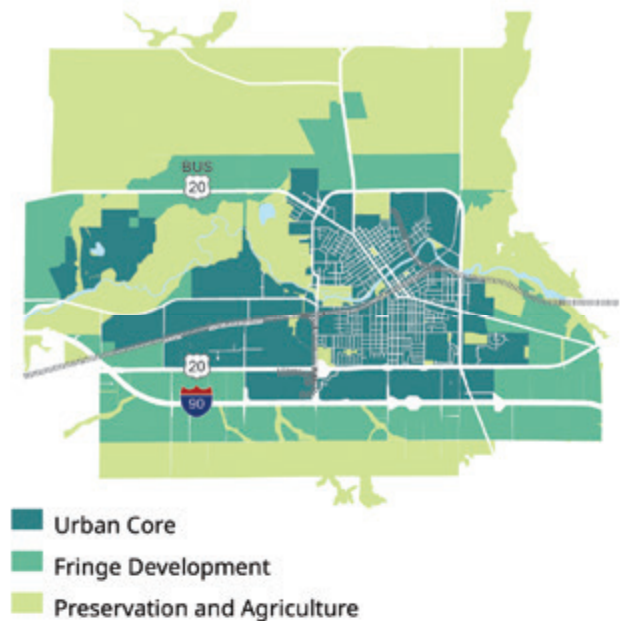
Fringe Development

The Fringe Development growth area includes land adjacent to the Urban Core that is already serviced by infrastructure and City services, presents the opportunity to be annexed, or has seen considerable development. This growth area presents significant opportunities and should be considered for development strategically as a second priority.

Preservation and Agriculture

The Preservation and Agriculture growth areas are less suitable for development and should not be prioritized for annexation to reduce unnecessary outward expansion. This growth area is intended to preserve the rural character of the surrounding landscape and plan for essential infrastructure needs and capacities.

Growth Area Framework



Planning Considerations

Preservation and Agriculture

While properties in the preservation and agriculture growth area are not prioritized for development the City may consider annexation if any land uses require water/sewer utilities or an area is being considered for substantial growth and development.

Land Use Plan

Parcels within the City have been assigned one of 13 land use designations. These land use designations cover the full range of Belvidere's land use types and should serve as the basis for development review and approval which may be needed to realize the full implementation of the Plan's recommendations. The future land use categories are described below.

Agriculture/Rural *(1-3 Dwelling Units Per Acre)*

Agriculture/rural land uses include properties and land used for agricultural production, raising livestock, and structures used for agriculture production. The agriculture/rural land use is typically located on large parcels for crop cultivation, pastures, and also includes farmsteads and low density residential homes. Agriculture/rural land uses should be preserved and maintained, balancing rural preservation on the community's edges with future development in the City's core.

Low Density Residential *(3-6 Dwelling Units Per Acre)*

Low density residential land uses include single-family detached, single-family attached, duplexes, triplexes, and accessory dwelling units. While each of these uses have distinct qualities, they are grouped because they function similarly and seamlessly blend to create cohesive mixed residential areas. Low density residential uses will continue to provide most of Belvidere's housing stock in the eastern portion of the City. The City should continue to monitor infill residential development to ensure that changes are reflective of existing neighborhood character and support affordable housing. Low density residential surrounding commercial corridors and districts should gradually densify into medium density residential to accommodate more housing options.

Medium Density Residential *(7-8 Dwelling Units Per Acre)*

Medium density residential land uses consist of multiple housing types including single-family residential as well as place-specific small apartments, and condominiums. The medium density residential designation should encourage a greater variety of housing stock in Belvidere and allow for more flexibility to build denser residential development in proximity to the City's major roadways and municipal boundary. Areas designated for mixed residential should accommodate a variety of dwelling types, including senior, workforce, young professionals, and affordable housing. Medium density residential uses should be located along the fringe of the urban service area and at major infill development areas where there is an opportunity to create connections between neighborhoods.

Commercial

Commercial land uses include service businesses, restaurants, entertainment, office buildings, healthcare facilities, and other similar uses. Smaller scale commercial uses provide the community with a variety of everyday goods and services at convenient locations, typically along the City's major roads such as Logan Avenue and State Street. Currently, larger-format commercial land uses are located along major roadways such as US Route 20.

Additional commercial areas include mixed-use land uses consisting of commercial/retail on the ground floor and/or office/residential uses located on the upper floor. Belvidere's Downtown includes this traditional form of mixed-use development and historic commercial buildings supporting a variety of land use types in a strong urban setting. Commercial areas should follow appropriate scales and intensities dependent on adjacent parcels and surrounding community character. Commercial uses will continue to be present along major roadways and the Downtown providing a range of services and needs for consumers.

Business Flex

Business flex uses include buildings that maintain a combination of office/retail space with a warehouse or storage area. Business flex buildings are typically single-story structures but can materialize in a variety of architectural styles and layouts. Business flex should be supported within the City's fringe growth areas and development along Business Route 20 and Interstate 90 in alignment with the Growth Area Framework supporting existing industry and businesses as well as attracting new development. Additionally, business flex uses should allow for flexible office and warehouse spaces that give tenants the ability to scale their businesses as needed.



Light Industrial

Light industrial land uses include low-intensity manufacturing, processing, storage, and distribution of goods and materials. Light industrial facilities can also include research and development land uses. Operations within light industrial uses typically have minimal noise and waste issues that require mitigation. Examples of existing light industrial land use include General Mills along Pleasant Street and warehouses along Newburg Road. Light industrial uses adjacent to non-industrial uses should provide buffering and screening to minimize potential nuisances. Commercial and business flex uses are included in light industrial areas as a special use.

Heavy Industrial

Heavy industrial land use refers to more intensive industrial activities including distribution, fabrication, processing, and production. The heavy industrial designation is typically characterized by heavy traffic use, intense environmental impacts and need for robust energy, water, wastewater, and stormwater management. Heavy industrial land uses are primarily located along U.S. Route 20. Heavy industrial land uses should ensure that intensive manufacturing and production uses contribute to the City's economic health. Non-industrial uses adjacent to heavy industrial land uses should be minimal. Additionally, some heavy industrial uses are permitted in light industrial areas as a special use.

Quarry

Quarry land uses include extraction, crushing, washing, and sorting of mined construction materials such as stone, rock, gravel, sand, clay, and topsoil. Quarry land uses are typically characterized by large open-pit mines, heavy machinery, and facilities to recover, process, and transport mined materials. Following the completion of mining and extraction operations, quarry land uses should transition to alternative long-term uses through environmental restoration, reclamation, or redevelopment. The Future Land Use Map does not anticipate additional areas within the community for quarry expansion.

Public/Semi-Public

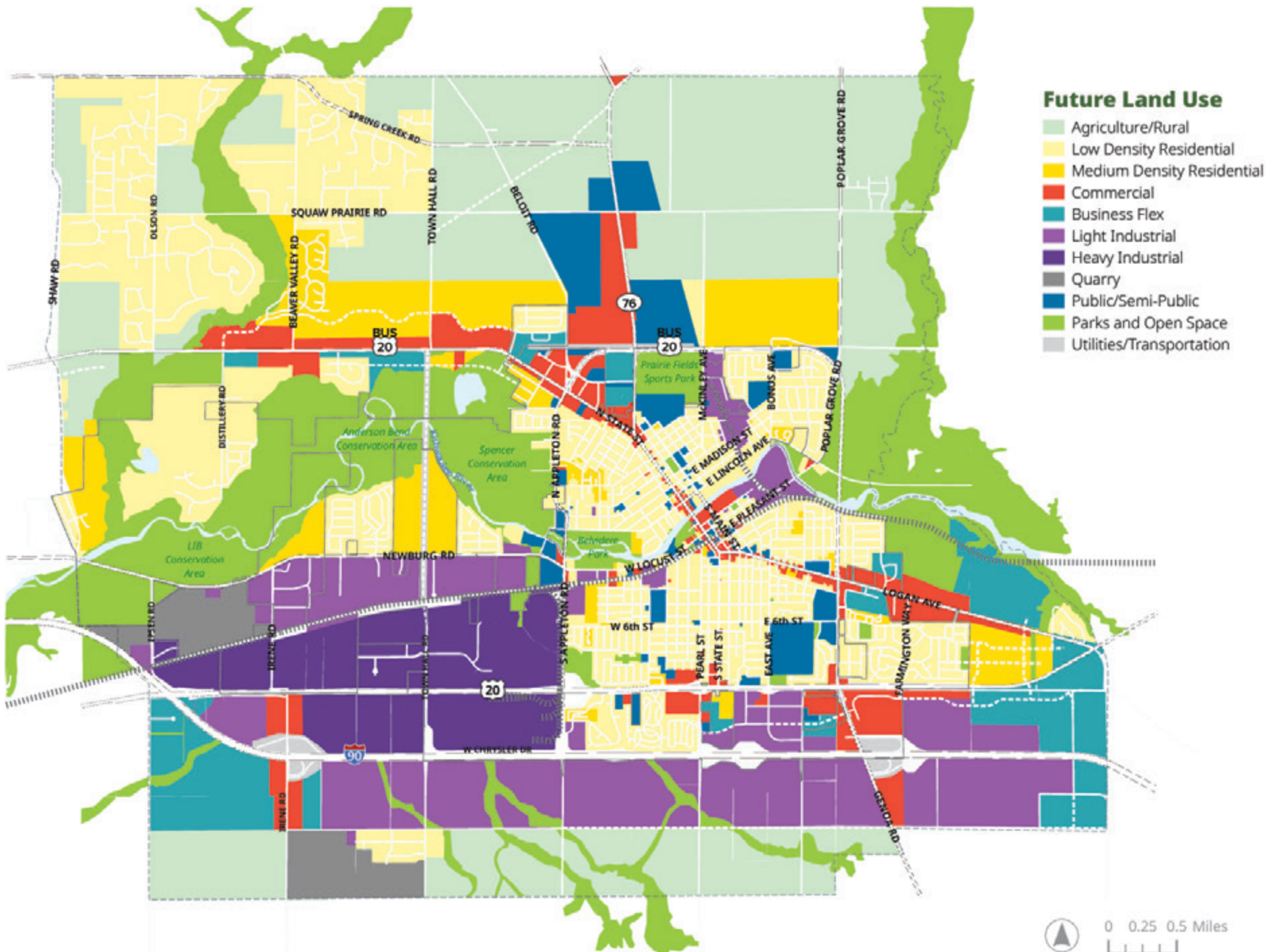
Public/semi-public land uses include local government uses, municipal facilities, community service providers, schools, and places of worship and assembly. Belvidere City Hall, Public Works Department, Boone County Courthouse, police stations, fire stations, libraries, churches, and public schools are established public/semi-public land uses. These land uses provide essential facilities and services to the community and are dispersed throughout the City, specifically in and around Downtown and supporting residential areas. Public/semi-public land uses are challenging to map in future land use as new uses are typically located inter-mixed within neighborhoods and where facilities would be best utilized. Often, public/semi-public uses are compatible with residential areas, but some areas may provide an opportunity to redevelop with adjacent commercial, mixed-use, or industrial uses.

Parks and Open Space

Parks and open space include public and private recreational facilities, active and passive parks, and important environmental features, such as woodlands, rivers, creeks, and prairies. Belvidere's open spaces and natural features heavily contribute to its rural character and resident's quality of life. The current parks and open space land uses are found in small parks near residential areas around Belvidere and the large parks and conservation areas around the Kishwaukee River area. The parks and open space land use locations should remain. New park locations should be considered as part of future residential growth and development. While the City maintains a handful of parks themselves, they should continue their partnership with the Belvidere Township Park District and the Boone County Conservation District who maintain a majority of parks and open space land throughout the community.

Utility/Transportation

The utility/transportation land use includes sites and facilities that accommodate critical infrastructure services such as water, sewer, electricity, broadband, and transportation right-of-way. These land uses provide essential facilities and services to the community and are dispersed throughout the City. Utility/transportation land uses should be considered and located as needed throughout the City, so essential services and community safety are not disrupted or endangered.



Residential Areas Plan

The Residential Areas Plan highlights specific areas of the City where investment in new housing and the maintenance of existing neighborhoods can ensure that the community meets growing demands. The Residential Areas Plan recognizes the neighborhoods developing throughout Belvidere. As the community continues to grow and become more diverse, the demand for a variety of neighborhoods and housing types will increase. Belvidere should make efforts to accommodate aging in place, growing workforce, young professionals, and new families, and meet the community's housing needs at all socioeconomic levels.

Neighborhood Amenities

Overall, the existing neighborhoods in Belvidere are in good condition. Neighborhoods west of Appleton Road are fully developed with some locations available for redevelopment or infill development. Some issues within these neighborhoods present challenges for the future and lower the overall quality. Neighborhoods and subdivisions lacking amenities such as sidewalks and other pedestrian connections, street trees, and multiple entry/exit points inhibit connectivity between communities and throughout the community. New residential development in existing neighborhoods should include well-designed connections and meet accessibility needs.

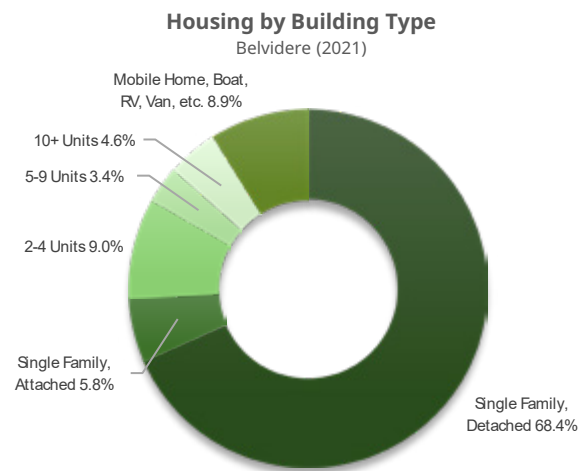
Neighborhood Character

Neighborhood character makes a place unique and sets it apart from its adjacent communities. Character is a combination of architectural design, size, scale, landscaping, street layout, street furniture, sidewalks, setbacks, and other elements that contribute to the appearance and feel of a neighborhood. The City should consider strategies to maintain the housing stock in existing neighborhoods and a support framework to revitalize properties that have fallen into disrepair.

Diversity in Housing Stock

Belvidere's housing stock predominantly consists of owner-occupied, single-family detached homes. As the community continues to grow, Belvidere should actively seek to diversify housing options to increase accessibility to a variety of residents. While it can be expected that most of Belvidere's future households will still desire a single-family detached unit, it is important to have a mix of housing types not only to provide options but to support the market and ensure affordability.

Housing cost burden refers to households paying more than 30% of income on housing. According to the US Census, approximately 19% of owners and 12% of renters are cost burdened, which puts a financial strain on households' ability to pay for other basic needs such as food, healthcare, childcare, and transportation. With nearly 1 in 5 households in Belvidere struggling to afford a home, it is important to increase housing options and affordability for all income groups, stages of life, and backgrounds, especially near employment centers and within existing neighborhoods.

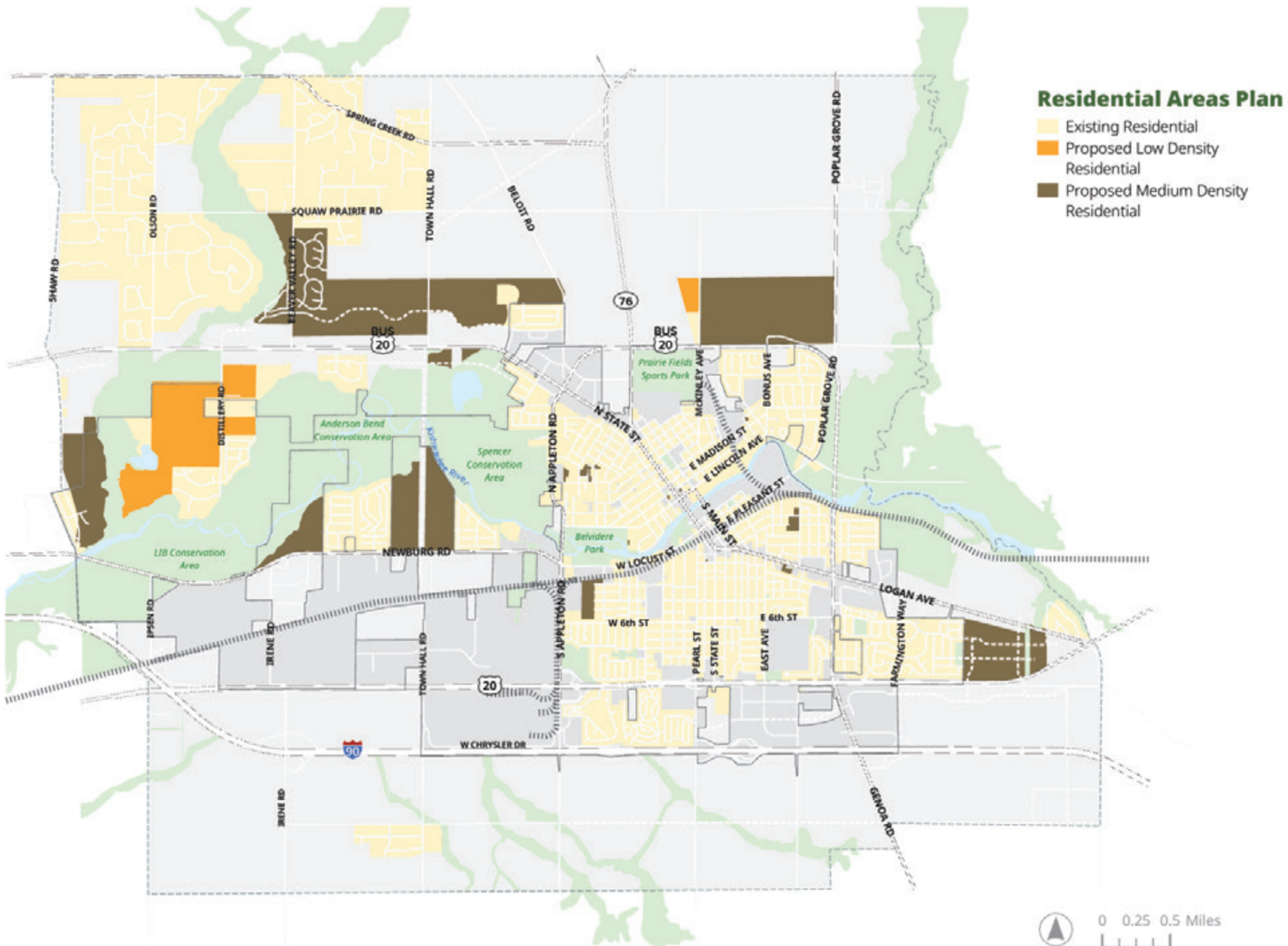


Medium Density Infill

The lack of medium density housing, typically including place-specific small apartments, townhomes, and condos, has been a key topic in conversations during outreach. Medium density housing does not necessarily mean tall structures but can consist of a diverse range of housing types and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). The City should encourage denser context sensitive housing options as part of infill or targeted redevelopment areas in existing neighborhoods and around Downtown.

Residential Areas Plan Recommendations:

- The City should be proactive in code enforcement, properly budgeting to maintain enforcement operations and citing visible violations before complaints occur.
- The City should support property owners, residents, neighborhood associations, and non-profit organizations to bring properties into compliance with City codes.
- The City should promote and further support residents in the upkeep of their property recognized based on priorities through different programs and incentives such as permit waiver fees, grants, low-interest loans, or tax credits.
- Encourage residential development to better accommodate aging in place, attract young professionals, and new families to meet the needs of the community at all socioeconomic levels.
- Work to increase density in key areas to reduce land cost per unit for development and address affordability.
- Consider medium density residential land uses in all residential land uses on a case-by-case basis, with the condition that the design and character is compatible with the existing neighborhood.
- Update multi-family design standards to ensure well-designed and varied building frontages are incorporated.



Commercial and Employment Areas Plan

The Commercial and Employment Areas Plan identifies opportunities to maintain and strengthen Belvidere's growing commercial, employment, and industrial areas. The Plan aims to build up local businesses, grow job opportunities, and create a sustainable resilient economy. Prioritizing the activation of vacant businesses and redevelopment opportunities before greenfield development and outward growth will ensure the City's commercial and industrial areas develop sustainably. The Commercial and Employment Areas Plan highlights access and mobility between Belvidere's commercial and employment centers to ensure residents safe and reliable access to their destinations.

Image and Character

Commercial areas are frequently the most visible part of a community or neighborhood. The City should strive to foster an attractive image and sense of local pride through ensuring inviting property maintenance, encouraging high-quality building materials, and incorporating public realm amenities such as benches, banners, and decorative lights.

Planning Considerations

Inflow/Outflow

The top three locations for employed residents to work were Belvidere (21.7%), Rockford (19.6%), and Chicago (4.6%). In Belvidere, there was a significant flow of workers, as evidenced by the data. Approximately 10,625 (84%) individuals employed in Belvidere lived outside the area, while 7,329 (78.3%) Belvidere residents worked outside the City. About 2,031 residents both lived and worked within Belvidere.

Access and Mobility

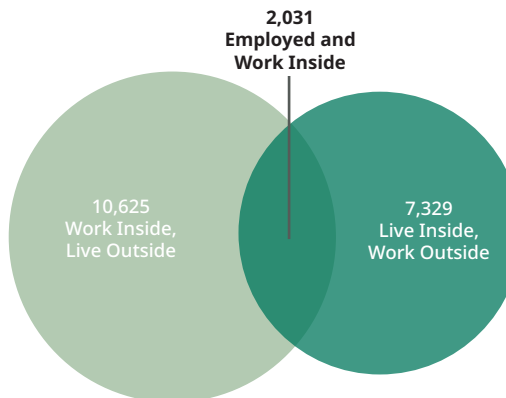
Commercial and retail areas require reliable access and visibility to support businesses and services. The City should consider investing in roadway and pedestrian infrastructure improvements to expand access to existing and planned commercial and employment areas.

Marketing

The City should consider implementing a branding and community design strategy in the public realm to establish distinct identities for Belvidere's commercial and employment areas. As identified in the Future Land Use Plan, new industrial and business flex uses need to be elevated in the regional marketplace to capture businesses that are major employers and contribute to the local economy.

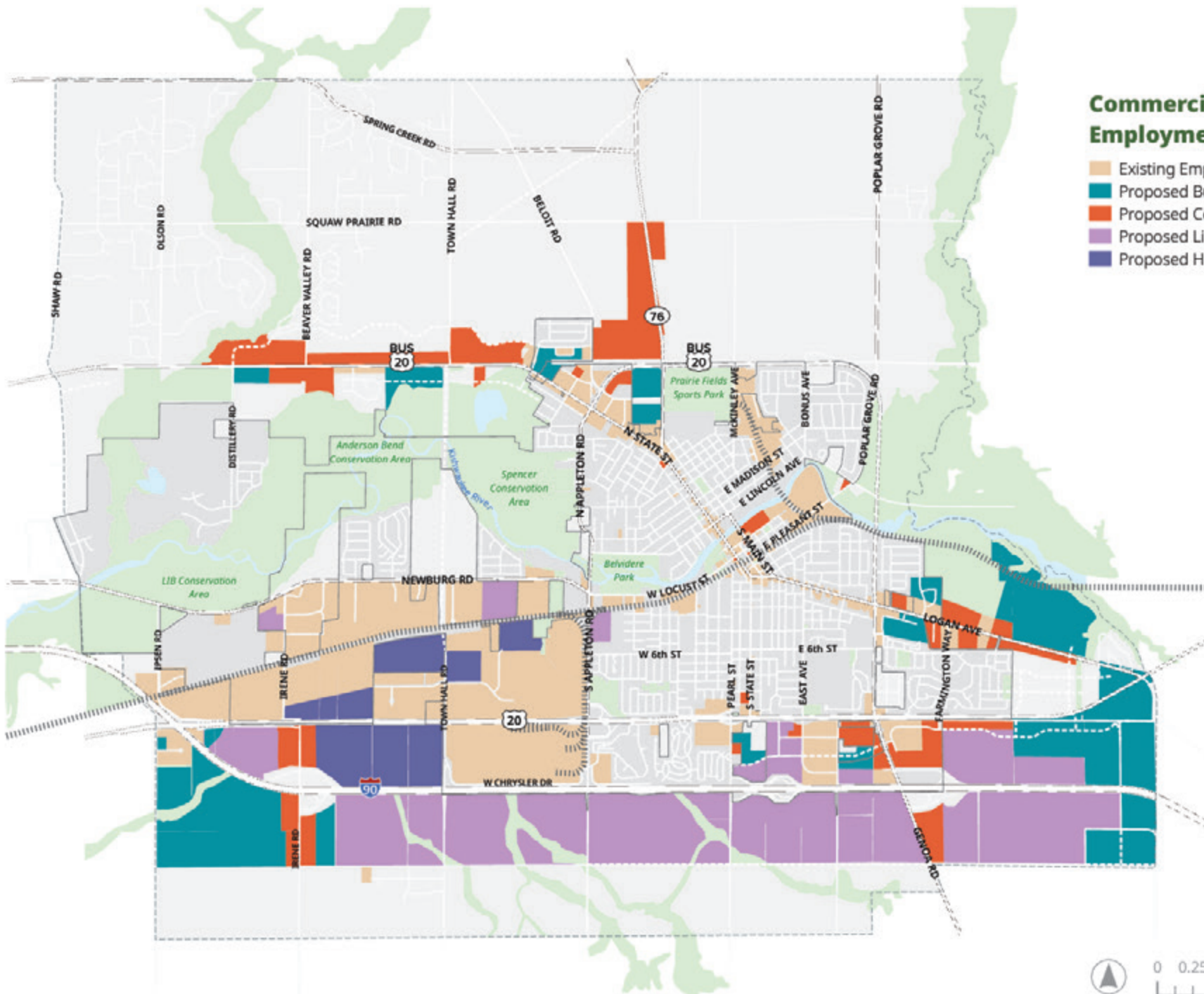
Workforce Development

A skilled workforce is an important factor for employers looking to locate in a community. The City can work to ensure that residents have skills and education to appeal to new employers. Partnering with local businesses, Belvidere Chamber of Commerce, Rock Valley College Advanced Technology Center (ATC), and Growth Dimensions can help the City understand workforce needs and support programs such as on-the-job training and incumbent worker training to produce skilled workers who live and work in the region.



Commercial and Employment Areas Plan Recommendations:

- The City should have an open dialogue with employers to identify workforce gaps that can guide educational and training needs.
- Identify strategies to incentivize adaptive reuse and redevelopment of existing businesses over new greenfield development.
- Update and enforce commercial building design standards to allow for flexibility while promoting quality design.
- Establish commercial and industrial uses along US Route 20 to promote employment opportunities. Ensure it is well buffered and screened from adjacent non-complementary uses.
- Develop a more detailed corridor plan based on planning priorities to address land use and development, access and mobility, and design character of major roadways such as US Route 20 and Interstate 90.
- Establish the Downtown as a focal point for pedestrian activity and community events. Encourage mixed use development and uses with restaurants, local shops, smaller offices, and residential units.
- Align future infrastructure investment with the needs of existing and planned industrial and business flex development to ensure adequate access for freight trucks and water usage.
- Establish regular communication with existing and future businesses to identify issues and solutions to local problems.



Commercial and Employment Areas Plan

- Existing Employment Areas
- Proposed Business Flex
- Proposed Commercial
- Proposed Light Industrial
- Proposed Heavy Industrial



04 Transportation

The Transportation chapter focuses on strategic improvements to the transportation system that capitalize on reducing congestion on the City's major through routes, enhancing its public transit assets to increase ridership and maintain service. It also focuses on expanding the bicycle network to all key community and recreational areas and prioritizing pedestrian safety improvements.

Roadway Network

The roadway network in Belvidere consists of a variety of street types that serve varying function. The functional classification describes the character of service intended for the roadway and degrees of travel mobility. Overall, a roadway system should include a balance of mobility and access. Belvidere's roadway system is classified as defined by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

Principal Arterial. Principal arterials accommodate large volumes of traffic and provide limited land access to adjacent parcels. Principal arterials include minimal traffic controls and typically maintain higher travel speeds across longer distances.

Minor Arterial. Minor arterials accommodate high volumes of quick moving traffic with more access to adjacent land uses. Minor arterials are typically continuous throughout a community and connect to other communities.

Major Collector. Major collectors accommodate an even distribution of mobility and access. Major collectors can run continuously through a community and serve to connect arterials to local roads. Travel speeds are typically lower and travel distances are shorter than arterials.

Minor Collector. Minor collectors accommodate an even distribution of mobility and access to areas not served by higher classified routes. Minor collectors typically prioritize access to properties over mobility service.

Local Road. Local roads accommodate direct access to land uses and typically do not run continuously through a community. Local roads maintain low travel speeds and limited access to arterials or through traffic.

Safe and Efficient Travel

The roadway network in the core of Belvidere generally follows a traditional grid pattern of north-south and east-west streets, allowing for effective transportation. In terms of traffic flow, Interstate 90 and US Route 20 are the two principal arterials carrying most of the east-west traffic in the City, while Business Route 20 and Appleton Road carry most of the north-south traffic. Downtown Belvidere mainly consists of Main Street and State Street, both having the potential to be converted to complete streets (see Page 28 for a definition of complete streets).

With Belvidere on the point of becoming a key employment center and the anticipation of upcoming projects, a significant increase in traffic flow is expected. This growth brings to the forefront the need for improved public transit, enhance electric vehicle infrastructure, redevelop streets to ease traffic congestion, and improved intersection management. There has also been community concern about railway connectivity, particularly the lack of a railway station despite the train's route through the area. Considering the built-out nature of the City and the near completion of the existing street grid, strategic improvements to the City's street network are necessary.

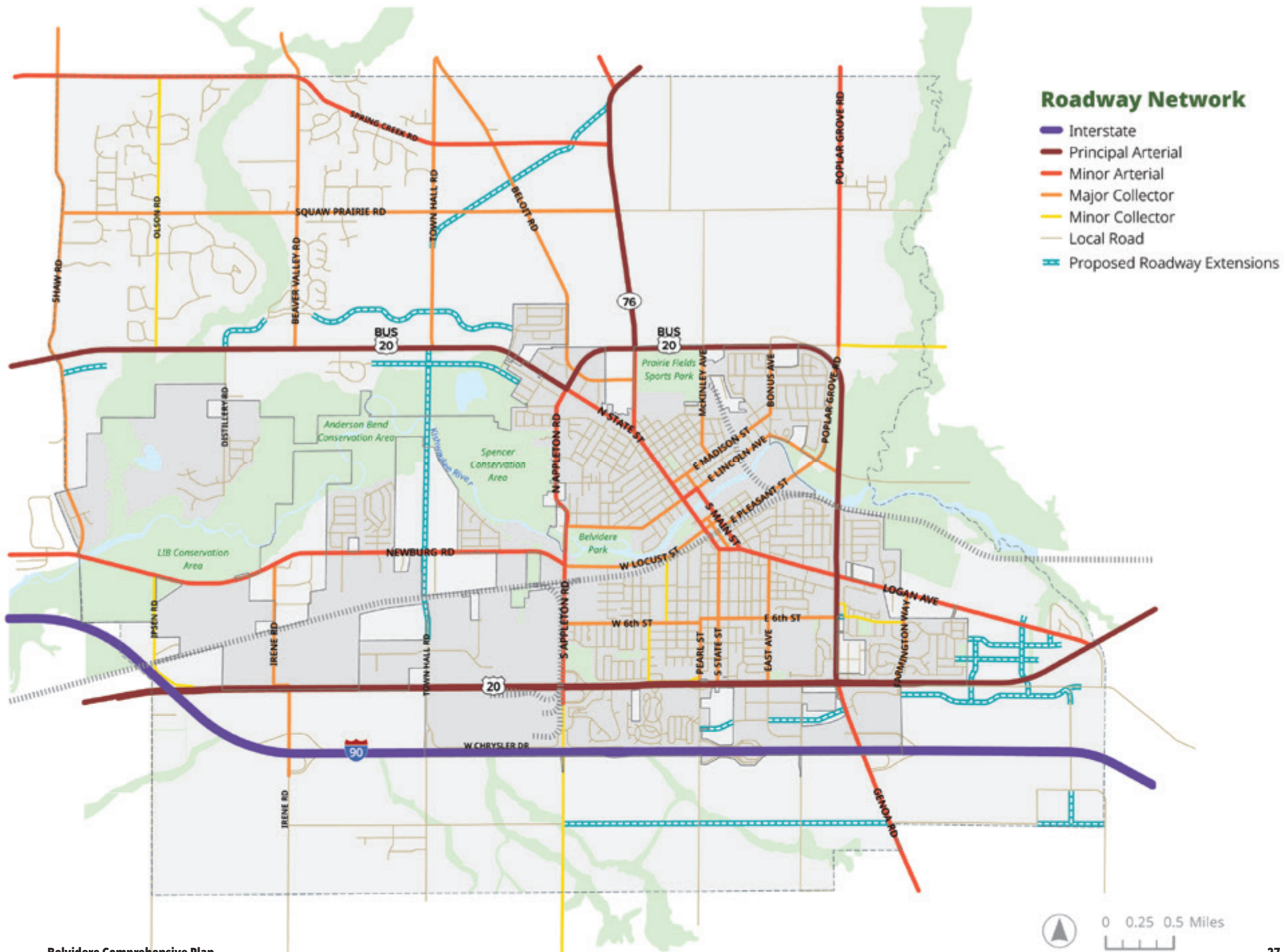
Design Considerations

Curb Cut Consolidation

Curb cuts connect local land uses with the public street network. Mobility, safety, and circulation on-site are negatively affected by excessive curb cuts. It is possible to consolidate curb cuts without compromising access to a site. Having a continuous sidewalk network can reduce conflict points along busy streets, increase parking capacity, and enhance circulation on-site. The City should work with property owners to identify opportunities to implement curb cut consolidation such as along State Street near the Business Route 20 intersection.

Transportation Plan Recommendations:

- Work with Boone County Public transit to improve and expand public transportation services to provide more efficient, eco-friendly alternatives to personal vehicle use, connecting the industrial corridor and employment centers.
- Improve truck route infrastructure to accommodate larger vehicles and consider implementing time restrictions to reduce peak hour congestion.
- Invest in adaptive signals and real-time traffic monitoring, to optimize traffic flow and reduce congestion.
- Continue to partner with IDOT and Boone County and maintain close communication to ensure appropriate maintenance and improvement of the roadways, supporting future development and multimodal connectivity.
- Prioritize upgrading and redesigning key intersections to improve traffic flow and safety.
- Introduce traffic calming strategies on key streets, particularly around residential and school zones, to enhance pedestrian safety and reduce vehicle speeds.
- Collaborate with businesses and property owners to expand the inventory of charging stations to increase convenience for electric vehicles and encourage greater use of these no-emissions vehicles.
- Assess the feasibility of constructing a railway station in an accessible location, to promote the potential Metra extension connecting Belvidere to Rockford and Chicago.



Active Transportation

Active transportation consists of alternative modes of transportation like bicycles, walking, and running. Active transportation offers a healthy lifestyle and provides different environmental benefits.

Belvidere has a robust trail network along the Kishwaukee River for recreation. There have been suggestions to connect trails with bikeways and sidewalks to provide residents with better access to neighborhoods. The City should provide infrastructure that allows active transportation, including sidewalks, bike lanes, and designated trails.

Complete Streets

Complete streets policies require that, as roadways are planned and new streets are constructed, all modes of transportation should be considered, including safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for everyone. Complete streets ensure all members of the community, regardless of age, ability, or preferred mode of transportation, can travel safely to and from local destinations.

In 2007, Illinois adopted a complete street policy requiring all IDOT projects to include safe walking and bicycling facilities in urbanized areas. While this policy only applies to IDOT projects and roads, Belvidere can implement complete street strategies locally and improve streets throughout the community.

Cross Access Easements

Fences or landscaping separate corridor developments, requiring each development to have its own curb cut. Cross-access between adjacent parking areas allows motorists to reach nearby destinations without entering street traffic. As a result, roadway operations are safer and local uses are enhanced. The City should work with property owners and consider requiring or providing incentives for their implementation.

Bikeways, Greenways, and Trails

The network of bikeways, greenways, and trails within Belvidere, especially those along the Kishwaukee River, contributes significantly to the mobility of active transportation in the community. They provide outdoor recreational opportunities and access to local and regional natural amenities. This network is a significant asset to Belvidere and offers the potential to promote exciting tourism opportunities. The City should continue to expand its bikeway, greenway, and trail network across the community and promote it as a tourist attraction around the neighboring communities.

Pedestrian Pathways

Sidewalks and multi-use paths are critical to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and promote community interaction and active lifestyles. They provide safe routes to shopping areas, community facilities, and other destinations. While multi-use paths and sidewalks have grown in recent years, areas in and around the City such as trails along the Kishwaukee River could be improved to make them more walkable and ADA compliant. The City should continue to expand its sidewalk and multi-use path network to provide a comprehensive and accessible system.

Design Considerations

Subdivision Connections

Residential subdivisions are often not connected to one another due to cul-de-sacs and dead-ends. This makes it difficult and inefficient for users to move around and navigate. Although cul-de-sacs reduce thru-traffic and can create attractive vistas, they restrict residents and emergency service providers access in and out of subdivisions. The City should audit dead ends and install simple road connections where street grids are beneficial. Additionally, the City should re-evaluate existing regulations to ensure future developments make logical connections.

Active Transportation Recommendations:

- Prioritize complete streets for areas around schools, parks, recreational/community centers and other facilities as well as roads that logically connect neighborhoods.
- Connect existing bicycle trails and bicycle paths with complete streets.
- Implement green infrastructure within new street designs to enhance environmental sustainability, such as rain gardens and tree-lined streets.
- Upgrade the aging sidewalks or install new sidewalks if none exist whenever possible
- Promote sidewalk, multi-use paths between residential subdivisions and other developments to improve connectivity.
- Encourage multi-use paths to be provided along the main road in developments.
- Ensure multi-family and commercial developments include strong pedestrian networks within and between their buildings and properties.
- Install clear, informative signages along the trails to enhance the user experience.
- Invest in infrastructure improvements, such as better trail connectivity and maintenance, to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for the users.
- Explore opportunities along the greenways to add amenities such as water fountains, seating/ rest areas, pocket parks, and public art.
- Integrate the *2021 Greenway Plan* into the City's infrastructure planning process and develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan.



Planned Trail Network

- Existing Trail
- Planned Trail
- Proposed Trail

Source: Boone and Winnebago Counties Regional Greenways Plan



05 Community Facilities

Community facilities provide the basic services and amenities that contribute to City operations and the quality of life for residents. This chapter outlines general policies and guidelines to ensure Belvidere remains well-served by high quality facilities and services. However, it is not intended to replace the goals and policies of other agencies or substitute for more detailed planning by the City and other providers.

City Services

The City of Belvidere operates through a structured network of departments, focusing on specific aspects of city services. This includes Finance, Police, Fire, Public Works, and Community Development. These departments work together to enhance quality of life of the residents.

Public Safety

Public safety services are provided by the City's own fire and police departments. The Belvidere Police Department is a multi-service law enforcement agency serving the City of Belvidere. The Belvidere Fire Department serves the City of Belvidere providing fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue, education, and disaster management services.

Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreational areas are key components of community identity and quality of life within Belvidere, providing spaces for residents to spend leisure time, gather with friends and neighbors, get active, and enjoy the outdoors. The Belvidere Township Park District is a separate entity from the City of Belvidere that manages a majority of the parks and open spaces throughout the community.

The parks and open spaces throughout the City encompass both passive and active recreational spaces, significantly contributing to the aesthetic appeal and natural beauty of Belvidere.

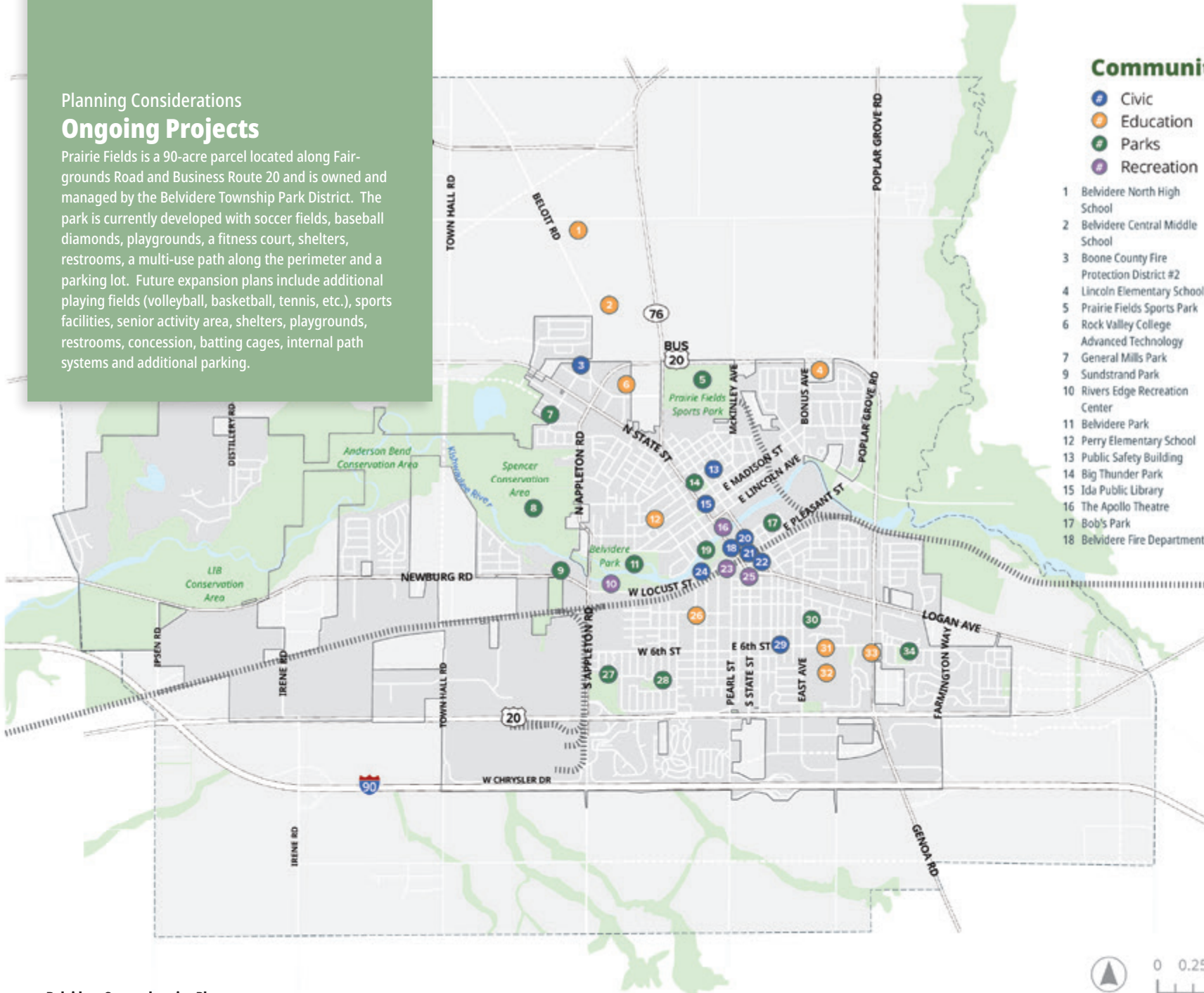
Community Facilities Recommendations:

- Continue to monitor the condition of municipal buildings, facilities, and equipment to identify necessary upgrades, replacements, renovations, and long-term maintenance projects.
- Regularly review the capacity of municipal buildings and facilities to meet community needs and identify necessary expansions or improvement projects.
- Explore public-private partnerships for City projects, which can help leverage additional resources and expertise for public facilities and services.
- Establish regular community engagement programs to gather feedback from residents to better understand and meet the needs of the community.

- Regularly update training programs for both the Police and Fire Departments to include the latest techniques in law enforcement, firefighting, emergency medical response, and disaster management.
- Conduct regular public safety campaigns to make the community aware of safety issues, such as emergency preparedness.
- Invest in modern technology for both departments, such as upgraded communication systems, body cameras for police, and advanced firefighting equipment.
- Support existing public safety services and designate potential future locations for new facilities as the City grows.
- Ensure that recreational facilities and opportunities are available and universally accessible for all age groups.
- Encourage a guide for park and recreational areas activation items such as ample seating, modern playground equipment, and outdoor exercise equipment.
- Encourage regular maintenance and periodic upgrades of park facilities, including landscaping, playground maintenance, and the upkeep of sports facilities.
- Create and improve trails connecting different parks and recreational areas, making them more accessible and encouraging residents to explore multiple parks.

Planning Considerations Ongoing Projects

Prairie Fields is a 90-acre parcel located along Fairgrounds Road and Business Route 20 and is owned and managed by the Belvidere Township Park District. The park is currently developed with soccer fields, baseball diamonds, playgrounds, a fitness court, shelters, restrooms, a multi-use path along the perimeter and a parking lot. Future expansion plans include additional playing fields (volleyball, basketball, tennis, etc.), sports facilities, senior activity area, shelters, playgrounds, restrooms, concession, batting cages, internal path systems and additional parking.



Community Facilities

- Civic
- Education
- Parks
- Recreation

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Belvidere North High School | 19 Doty Park |
| 2 Belvidere Central Middle School | 20 Boone County Museum of History |
| 3 Boone County Fire Protection District #2 | 21 Public Works Department |
| 4 Lincoln Elementary School | 22 City Hall |
| 5 Prairie Fields Sports Park | 23 YMCA of Belvidere |
| 6 Rock Valley College Advanced Technology | 24 Belvidere Street Department |
| 7 General Mills Park | 25 Boone County Community Building |
| 9 Sundstrand Park | 26 Washington Academy |
| 10 Rivers Edge Recreation Center | 27 Fridh Park |
| 11 Belvidere Park | 28 Harkless Park |
| 12 Perry Elementary School | 29 Belvidere Fire Department Station 2 |
| 13 Public Safety Building | 30 Tot Lot Park |
| 14 Big Thunder Park | 31 Belvidere South Middle School |
| 15 Ida Public Library | 32 Belvidere High School |
| 16 The Apollo Theatre | 33 Meehan Elementary School |
| 17 Bob's Park | 34 Winterroth Park |
| 18 Belvidere Fire Department | |



06 Natural Areas

Natural areas and environmental features are essential physical features that contribute to the quality of life and appearance of a community. Protected open spaces support healthy living and offer a way for residents and visitors to enjoy and interact with nature. Additionally, these areas provide natural habitats, support local biodiversity, naturally absorb pollutants, and improve air quality. This chapter provides policies and recommendations for ensuring that these environmental areas are preserved and protected assets that the community can continue to utilize and enjoy.

Belvidere's Natural Areas and Features

The City is surrounded by many natural resources that contribute to its rural character including multiple conservation areas, parks, and the Kishwaukee River. These features help define Belvidere's identity, promote community and environmental health, and support local wildlife. The following recommendations focus maintaining Belvidere's natural resources and protecting environmental integrity.

Planning Considerations

What is a Conservation District?

A conservation district is a special district with specific purposes established under Illinois statutes following a favorable public referendum. Its purpose includes the acquisition of land by purchase, lease, gift, or easement; the preservation and maintenance of wild land, other open land, scenic roadways, and pathways; and the holding of such real property, with or without public access for the education, pleasure, and recreation of the public or for other open space values. Boone County is one of five counties in Illinois that have created such districts alongside McHenry, Macon, Putnam, and Vermillion.

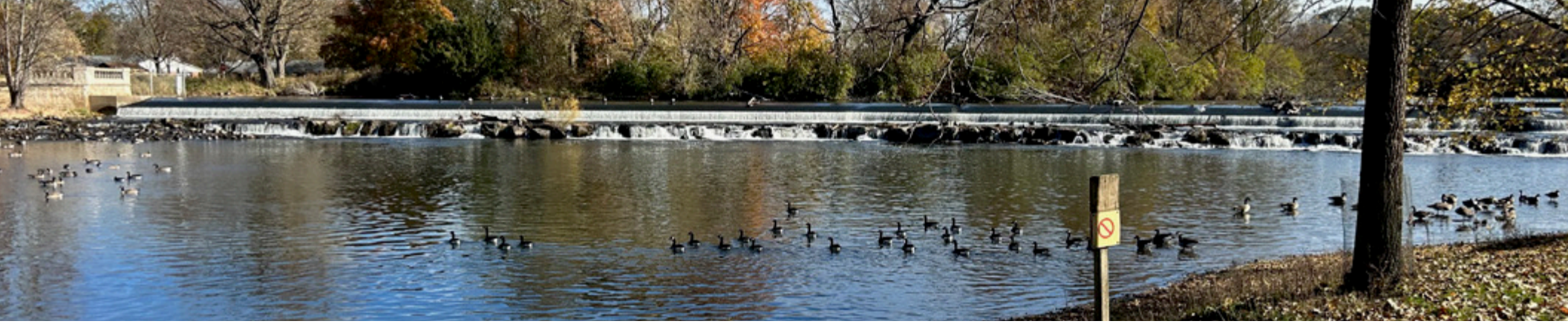
The State of Illinois Conservation District Act defines open land or open space as any space or area of land or water, the preservation or the restriction of development or the use of which would maintain or enhance the conservation of natural and/or scenic resources. The acquisition of such open land can be for the purpose of protecting a natural stream or water supply, promoting the conservation of soils or wetlands and affording or enhancing public outdoor recreational activities. The District can also acquire wild land which is open land not under cultivation or subject to intensive use or development.

Conservation Areas

Belvidere is home to multiple conservation areas including LIB Conservation, Distillery Road, and Anderson Bend – consisting of prairies, woodlands, and wetlands. These areas preserve and maintain natural areas and open spaces so that people of all ages and abilities can learn and contribute to conservation in impactful ways. These areas were set aside for ecological, educational, and recreational purposes of supporting native plants and wildlife populations. Properties maintained and managed by the Boone County Conservation District (BCCD) are typically referred to as conservation areas.

Conservation Design

Conservation design, or clustered development, is an environmentally sensitive approach that groups buildings together to preserve open spaces. It is an effective method for managing stormwater, reducing the need for extensive infrastructure, and creating communal parklands by utilizing natural stormwater management. This technique can be used in both residential and non-residential settings to maintain desired densities while also protecting natural areas and floodways.



Forestry

Trees are a valuable resource for the community that support aesthetic value, clean air and water, increase biodiversity, and conserve energy. Slow-growing trees such as North American Oak offer low-maintenance and better mechanisms against harmful insects and diseases. Growing a more robust, healthy urban tree canopy can help achieve greater community livability and quality of life in the City.

Dark Sky Initiatives

Outdoor lighting from commercial, industrial, and other non-residential uses can generate off-site impacts negatively affecting people's sleep patterns, disrupting wildlife, and wasting energy. Dark sky friendly strategies typically include requiring LED fixtures, regulating color temperature, and limiting light trespass between properties. The City should consider establishing standards and initiatives to support dark sky programs and reducing unnecessary nighttime lighting.

Sustainable Development

As Belvidere continues to grow, it should continue to support sustainable development and healthy environments. The City should consider utilizing green development practices such as adaptive reuse, green buildings, and low impact development to ensure the well-being of residents and protect its natural resources for future generations.

Adaptive Reuse

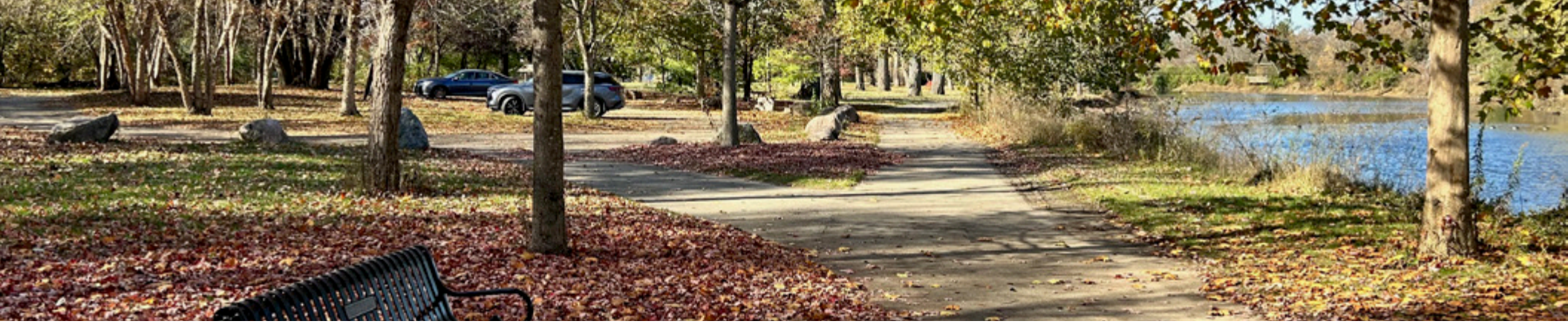
Adaptive reuse is the method of repurposing or "recycling" an existing structure for a new use other than for what it was initially intended for. Adaptive reuse can be used to bring life to aged, underutilized, or disinvested buildings in the community that are still structurally sound and feature desirable built form. It can be used to reactivate the Downtown corridor along State Street preserving the character of the area while supporting new uses.

Green Buildings

Green buildings are buildings that are designed to reduce or eliminate negative impacts on the environment and human health. They are efficient structures that reduce the resources used (energy, water, and materials) through improved siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance, and removal. Certifications such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), National Green Building Standard (NGBS), and Energy Star are awards for development that meets or exceeds specific sustainability standards.

Low Impact Development

Low Impact Development (LID) is the integration of green infrastructure and conservation of on-site natural features to mitigate stormwater runoff and protect water quality. It has numerous environmental benefits on top of stormwater management, including reducing urban heat islands, improving air quality, and promoting economic vitality through attractive urban settings. Examples include incorporating permeable surfaces, xeriscaping, grassed swales, rain gardens, bioretention strips, and green roofs into parking lot, streetscape, and building designs.



Wetlands

Wetlands are unique environments that serve as links between watersheds and the water to which they drain. Wetlands serve as valuable flood protection, water quality improvement, and shoreline erosion control. Despite the benefits of wetlands and preserving sensitive aquifer recharge areas, Belvidere may face challenges with flooding as it seeks to redevelop the properties along the Kishwaukee River.

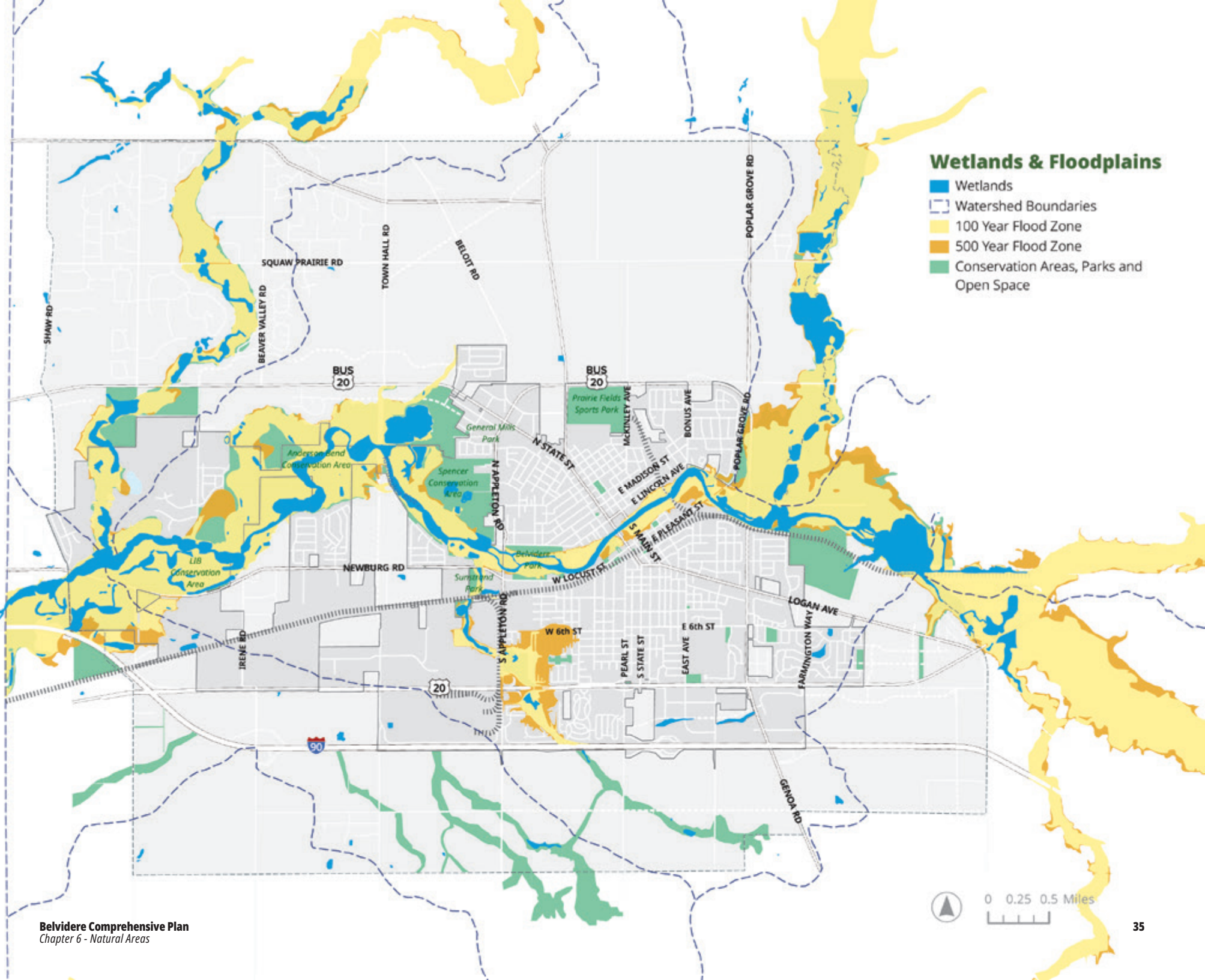
Watersheds are areas of land that drain the rainfall, snowmelt, and streams to a common body of water such as a lake, river, or wetland. Healthy watersheds can help alleviate potential engineering challenges associated with stormwater, flooding, and drinking water. The Kishwaukee watershed is the primary watershed within Belvidere.

Natural Areas Recommendations:

- Review existing regulations in the Municipal Code to explore amendments to the natural resource protection standards that support the vision and goals of conservation in Belvidere.
- In keeping with the City's focus on conservation, the City should review and update the code to better help regulate and guide lighting to support dark skies strategies and initiatives.
- Identify and explore ways to promote access to Belvidere's recreational conservation areas.
- Prioritize higher density redevelopment and infill projects within already built areas to avoid premature sprawl in long term preservation and agriculture growth areas as well as reduce greenfield development.
- Work with private developers to preserve significant natural features on sites such as mature trees, streams, wetlands, and other unique ecological features.
- Incorporate green infrastructure and green building practices into future developments and public streetscapes, prioritizing pedestrian-oriented areas in areas like Downtown.
- Consider expanding infrastructure for electric vehicles in parking lots, multi-family development, and public charging stations.
- Promote adaptive reuse over redevelopment for structures that are structurally sound, feature desirable built form, and/or are historically significant.
- The City should explore incentives to include density bonuses that allow developers to build taller and more dense projects in exchange for low-maintenance native planting and incorporating green space into new development.
- Emphasize conservation design techniques near floodways and wetlands, to protect natural areas and accommodate new growth and development.
- Embrace the Kishwaukee River as a part of Belvidere's identity and another natural resource amenity for the City.
- Partner with Boone County Conservation District to identify, maintain, and procure land to be preserved as open space and/or create conservation areas.
- Utilize the goals and recommendations outlined in the *Belvidere Park District Master Plan* to identify and preserve critical open spaces in Belvidere as natural resources and recreational amenities.

Wetlands & Floodplains

- Wetlands
- Watershed Boundaries
- 100 Year Flood Zone
- 500 Year Flood Zone
- Conservation Areas, Parks and Open Space



07 Implementation

The **Belvidere Comprehensive Plan** is a foundation for future-making research land use, development, and community improvement. The purpose of the plan is to direct action within Belvidere that supports the established vision and core fundamental principles of the community. Implementation and encouraging positive momentum in the community are crucial for the success of the Comprehensive Plan.

Successful implementation of the plan will require the cooperation of a diverse range of organizations and stakeholders., including City Staff, elected and appointed officials, public agencies, the local business community, property owners, developers, and residents. Combined efforts of these groups will be essential in achieving the City's future vision.

Using the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan should be used as the official policy guide for decision-making by the City Council, Planning Commission, as well as other boards, commissions, and city staff. The Plan should serve as a primary reference in guiding policy formation, evaluating projects and planning initiatives, reviewing development proposals, and prioritizing public expenditures.

Referencing the Comprehensive Plan will ensure future planning efforts and decisions align with the community's long-term vision and goals. Service providers and partner organizations should also be encouraged to use the Comprehensive Plan when considering new development, facilities, infrastructure updates, and programming within Belvidere.

To promote regular use of the Plan, the City should:

- Post the Comprehensive Plan document on the City website and make it available in hard copy at City Hall and the Ida Public Library for easy public access.
- Educate the public on how the Plan connects to development projects and other proposals occurring within the City.
- Align annual departmental budget requests with Plan goals.
- Guide the City Council, Planning Commission, and other boards and commissions in the administration, interpretation, and continuous application of the Plan
- Meet with key department heads and officials to explain the Plan's purpose, importance, and benefits.
- Maintain a list of possible amendments, issues, or needs that may be changed, added, or deleted from the Plan.
- Coordinate with and assist the City Council, Planning Commission in the Plan amendment process, as necessary.



Develop and Maintain Partnerships

To leverage Belvidere's regional position, it is essential that the City develops and maintains partnerships with a wide variety of groups and organizations. Facilitating regular communication and cooperation with partners will support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and provide opportunities to work collaboratively toward mutual interests. Further, engagement will facilitate a greater regional perspective on how issues are addressed in the area.

While maintaining its existing partnerships, the city should identify new opportunities for partnerships with organizations and agencies to aid in the implementation of the comprehensive plan. This should include neighboring municipalities and townships, regional and state agencies, school districts, neighborhood groups, the local business community, and other groups with a vested interest in Belvidere.

The City should continue to partner with or explore new opportunities with at least the following groups:

- Elected Officials
- Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
- Illinois Office of Tourist
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Boone County
- Boone County Public Transit
- Boone County Conservation District
- Boone County SWCD
- Belvidere Area of Chamber of Commerce
- Belvidere Township Park District
- Utility and Service Providers
- Metra
- Rock Valley College
- Ida Public Library
- Region 1 Planning Council
- Economic development agencies (Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and Growth Dimensions)
- Community United School District 100

Reviewing and Updating the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document and must evolve and change over time. For example, if community attitudes change or new issues arise that are beyond the scope of the current document, the Plan should be revised and updated accordingly.

The City should undertake a complete review and update of the Plan every five years, and intermittent evaluations every two to three years to identify smaller changes. The City should maintain a public list of potential amendments, issues, or needs. Ideally, these reviews should coincide with the preparation of the City's budget and upcoming capital improvements. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the commitments for the upcoming fiscal year. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.

Maintain Public Communication

The Comprehensive Plan community outreach program was designed to solicit feedback on issues and opportunities from residents and stakeholders. Public engagement included a community workshop, stakeholder interviews and an online questionnaire and other methods to engage with residents, businesses, property owners, local officials, and other community stakeholders. The outreach effort supports the planning process as well as fostering stewardship and communicates the importance of the Comprehensive Plan within Belvidere. To sustain this core value of public engagement, the City should continue to communicate with the public via online updates, announcements of major project achievements, and newsletters including information about planning and development effort.

Belvidere should maintain a way for residents and stakeholders to offer feedback and ask questions about planning initiatives and ongoing projects. Further, the City should consider hosting additional workshops and engagement opportunities in the future to allow residents the opportunity to review the Plan and offer feedback about changing issues, opportunities, trends, and community preferences.

Potential Funding Sources

The following is a review of potential funding sources that the City can pursue to support the Comprehensive Plan implementation. It is important to note that funding sources are subject to change over time. As such, the City should continue to research and monitor grants, funding agencies, and programs to identify deadlines, funding specifications, and new opportunities as they become available. These programs are organized by funding category, including:

- **General Economic Development**
- **Growth Dimensions**
- **Transportation and Infrastructure**
- **Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces**
- **Energy Efficiency & Resiliency**

General Economic Development

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

One of the primary purposes of Tax Increment Finance (TIF) funding is to incentivize and attract desired development within key commercial areas. TIF dollars can be used for elements like infrastructure, streetscaping, public improvements, land assemblage, and offsetting the cost of development. Land assemblage is a tactic employed in land acquisition, where one acquires two or more adjacent parcels, combining them into single parcel.

TIF utilizes future increases in property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district to pay for improvements and further incentivize continued reinvestment. As the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties within a TIF District increases, the TIF fund captures incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established and reinvests those funds within the district. Local officials may then issue bonds or undertake other financial obligations based on the growth in new revenue. The maximum life of a TIF district in the State of Illinois is 23 years, although the State Legislature can authorize up to a 35-year extension.

Belvidere currently has two TIF districts, the Kishwaukee River 1 and Kishwaukee River 2 which are currently active. Funding requests to these districts should be carefully evaluated to ensure that it is in keeping with the City's vision.

GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Assistance Program

A business assistance grant program can be utilized to attract targeted retail businesses and assist existing businesses located within a particular area. Business assistance funds are typically offered in the form of a matching grant that pays for a defined percentage of eligible expenditures. The expenditures are typically limited to build-out costs, signage, moving expenses, and physical improvements to the property necessary to accommodate a new business or the expansion of an existing business. The size of the grant available can also be tied to the potential impact the proposed project could have on the area. For example, the grant could vary based on the anticipated sales tax to be generated by the project.

Special Service Area

Special Service Areas (SSAs) can be used to fund improvements and programs within a designated boundary. An SSA is essentially added to the property tax of the properties within the identified service area and the revenue received is channeled back into projects and programs benefiting those properties. An SSA can be rejected if 51% of the property owners and electors within a designated area object. SSA funds can be used for such things as streetscape improvements, extra trash pickup, district marketing, and special events. An SSA could help facilitate improvements within specified areas identified as areas in need of improvement within the Comprehensive Plan.

Business Development Districts

As authorized by Division 74.3 of the Municipal Code of the State of Illinois, a municipality may designate, after public hearings, an area as a Business Development District (BDD). A BDD would allow the City to levy up to an additional 1% retailer's occupation tax, 1% hotel tax, and 1% sales tax within a designated district. Similar to a TIF district, a BDD has a maximum life of 23 years. BDD legislation also permits municipalities to utilize tax revenue growth that has been generated by BDD properties to fund improvements in the district. BDD funds can be used for infrastructure improvements, public improvements, site acquisition, and land assemblage and could be applicable in the identified subareas or emerging business and industrial parks in the community. Given the limited amount of funds that a BDD can generate, compared to a TIF district, BDD designation is best suited for funding small scale improvements and property maintenance programs.

Tax Abatement

Property tax abatements are typically used as an incentive to attract business and revitalize the local economy and can be applied to address a wide range of community issues. In the State of Illinois, municipalities and other taxing districts can abate any portion of the tax that they individually levy on a property. The period of tax abatement on a given property can be no longer than 10 years and the total combined sum of abated taxes for all taxing districts cannot exceed \$4 million over that period. A taxing district can administer the abatement by one of two methods: 1) lowering the tax rate; or 2) initiating a property tax freeze where the property is taxed based on a pre-development assessed value.

In some circumstances, municipalities can also petition the County to lower a property's assessment. For example, a commercial property could be assessed at a percentage equivalent to a residential property. This is an effective means of lowering a property tax bill; however, it should be noted that this method impacts all taxing districts and not just the district making the request.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) is a tool like tax abatement. The City can use PILOT to reduce the property tax burden of a business for a predetermined period. In this instance, the City and property owners will agree to the annual payment of a set fee in place of property taxes. Payments are generally made in the form of a fixed sum, but they may also be paid as a percentage of the income generated by a property. PILOT can also be a means of reducing the fiscal impact on the City of a nonprofit, institutional use, or other non-taxpaying entity location on a key site. While such uses can be desirable as activity generators, they can also negatively impact municipal services because they do not pay taxes. Provisions can be made to offset that negative impact by allowing the City to be compensated for at least a portion of the revenue that would otherwise be collected in the form of property tax.

Incubators

Business incubators provide low-cost space and specialized support to small companies. Such services might include administrative consulting, access to office equipment and training, and assistance in accessing credit. Incubators are typically owned by public entities such as municipalities or economic development agencies who then subsidize rents and services with grants. In addition to job creation and generating activity, the goal is to facilitate the growth and expansion of startup businesses within an area.

Downtown Façade Improvement Program

The downtown façade improvement program is designed to enhance the overall appearance and image of Belvidere's Downtown Historic Districts. The City of Belvidere will provide matching grants to encourage façade improvements of storefronts in the downtown area. The building/business owners are eligible for up to the lesser of 50% of the actual façade improvements costs, or the maximum amount allowed by the City Council.

GROWTH DIMENSIONS

Growth Dimensions

Business Development Public Infrastructure Program (BDPIP)

The BDPIP is a grant initiative that offers grants to local governments for public infrastructure improvements supporting business expansion or relocation. This leads to significant private investment and job creation/retention. In Belvidere it could attract more businesses, boost local employment, and enhance public infrastructure, promoting economic growth and community development.

Community Development Assistance Program for Economic Development (CDAP-ED)

The CDAP-ED program offers grants to local governments for economic development activities related to business retention and or expansion opportunities. This program is focused on creating employment opportunities for low-to-moderate income individuals and improving the quality of life. This program could provide funding up to \$750,000 to Belvidere for public infrastructure improvements and business support, leading to job creation, business expansion and improved community conditions.

Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Loan Program.

The CSBG Loan Program is administered jointly by Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), statewide Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and Illinois Ventures for Community Action (IVCA). The Program provides long-term, fixed-rate financing to new or expanding small businesses in exchange for job creation and employment for low-income individuals.

Economic Development For a Growing Economy Tax Credit Program (EDGE)

The EDGE program offers tax incentives to companies choosing Illinois over other states for their operations. The program can provide tax credits to qualifying companies, equal to the amount of state income taxes withheld from the salaries of employees in the newly created jobs.

Enterprise Zone Participation Loan Program (EZ/PLP)

EZ/PLP is a variation of the conventional Participation Loan Program (PLP) Program since DCEO subordinates the loans to participating lenders, but the EZ/PLP may offer a more attractive loan rate to small businesses located in enterprise zones.

Participation Loan Program (PLP)

The PLP program is designed to work through banks and other lending institutions, providing subordinate financial assistance to Illinois small businesses employing Illinois workers. Business with less than 500 employees may apply for loans not less than \$10,000 nor more than \$750,000. The loans shall not exceed 25% of the total project and may not be used as debt refinancing or contingency

Enterprise Zone Program

The Illinois Enterprise Zone Program is designed to stimulate economic growth and neighborhood revitalization in economically depressed areas of the state. This is accomplished through state and local tax incentives, regulatory relief, and improved governmental services

High Impact Business (HIB)

The HIB program offers tax incentives to businesses undertaking significant capital investments and job creation/retention in Illinois. The qualifying projects require a minimum investment of \$12 million for 500 new jobs or \$30 million for retaining 1500 jobs. Benefits include investment tax credits, sales tax exemptions on building materials, utilities, and manufacturing equipment. The program also supports new electric generating facilities, coal facilities, upgraded transportation facilities, and gasification facilities.

Illinois Capital Access Program (CAP)

The Illinois Capital Access Program (CAP) provides financial institutions with an opportunity to make loans to small and new businesses that aren't eligible for conventional lending policies. CAP is a type of loan portfolio insurance that provides additional lending protection in case of loan defaults. Through CAP, lenders have access to a proven financing mechanism to meet the needs of Illinois small businesses and financial institutions.

Illinois State Treasurers Office

The Illinois State Treasurers Office has numerous programs designed to assist the business community. It provides access to capital and financing at affordable rates to promote economic development activities that create and retain jobs with the state.

Large Business Development Program (LBDP)

The LBDP program provides grants to businesses undertaking a major expansion or relocation project that result in substantial private investment and the job creation or retention of jobs in the State. The available funds may be used by large businesses for bondable business activities, including financing the purchase of land or buildings, construction or renovation and procuring machinery and equipment. The grant eligibility and amounts are determined based on investment amount and job creation.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Minority, Women, and Disabled Participation Loan Program

MWD/PLP programs are variations of conventional PLPs, as DCEO subordinates the loans through participating lending institutions, but the MWD/PLP program offers loans up to \$50,000 or 50% of the total project to Illinois small businesses that are 51% owned and managed by individuals who are minorities, women or disabled.

New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC)

The NMTC program incentivizes community development and economic growth using tax credits that attract private investment to distressed communities. It allows individuals and corporate investors to receive tax credit against a tax credit their federal income tax in exchange for making equity investments in specialized financial intermediaries called Community Development Entities.

The Illinois Finance Authority (IFA)

The Illinois Finance Authority (IFA) is a self-financed, state authority principally engaged in issuing taxable and tax-exempt bonds, making loan, and investing capital for businesses, non-profit corporations, agriculture, and local government units statewide.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Funding Guide

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) in conjunction with the Regional Transit-Oriented Development Working Group created the TOD Funding Guide to assist communities with the development of TOD. The document is intended to be used primarily by community and economic development practitioners throughout northern Illinois.

The guide includes a comprehensive directory of funding sources that serve TOD initiatives including programs for municipalities, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and others that work to promote TOD. The City should reference this guide regularly to understand application deadlines and eligibility requirements.

Illinois Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) Fund

The City receives revenue from the Illinois Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) Fund that can be applied to road projects. Per the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), these funds are derived from a tax on the privilege of operating motor vehicles upon public highways and of operating recreational watercraft upon Illinois waters, based on the consumption of motor fuel. Each month a warrant is issued to each municipal treasurer in the amount of the municipality's share of MFT Fund collected for the preceding month. Monthly distributions are posted on IDOT's website.

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21)

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) authorizes federal funding to improve transportation infrastructure, enhance economic growth, and protect the environment. Eligible projects improve air and water quality, restore wetlands and natural habitat, or rejuvenate urban areas through transportation redevelopment, increased transit, or sustainable alternatives to urban sprawl.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) aims to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The HSIP is administered by FHWA and had a 2020 budget of \$2.4 billion. To qualify for HSIP funds, a State must develop, implement, and update a state highway safety program (SHSP), produce a program of projects or strategies to reduce identified safety problems, and evaluate the SHSP regularly. Eligible local projects include pedestrian hybrid beacons and roadway improvements that provide separation between pedestrians and motor vehicles, such as medians and pedestrian crossing islands.

Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Program

The Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program provides funding for the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure-related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bike to school. SRTS projects are funded at 100% with no local match required, with a funding limit of \$200,000 for infrastructure projects and \$50,000 for non-infrastructure projects. Eligible applications include:

- Sidewalk improvements
- Traffic calming and speed reduction
- Pedestrian and bicycle-crossing improvements
- On-street bicycle facilities
- Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Secure bicycle parking systems
- Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools
- Education programs and activities to increase rates of walking and biking to school

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)

With federal reimbursement, IDOT administers Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) funds, which have historically been available for up to 50% of the costs of right-of-way and easement acquisition, and up to 80% of the costs for preliminary engineering, utility relocations, construction engineering, and construction costs. ITEP eligible projects include: Pedestrian/bicycle facility projects that create an alternative transportation option for access to workplaces, businesses, schools, shopping centers, and communities. Pedestrian/bicycle facility projects can be new construction or improvements to existing facilities.

- Landscape/streetscape projects.
- Scenic beautification projects.
- Conversion of abandoned railroad corridors to trails.
- Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities.
- Vegetation management in transportation rights-of-way.
- Archaeological activities relating to impacts from the implementation of a transportation project.
- Stormwater management control and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff.
- Reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program.

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) funds are administered by IDOT and allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for roadway and roadway-related items. STBGP funds may be used for a variety of projects, including roadway rehabilitation, reconstruction, and restoration; widening and adding lanes; intersection improvements; traffic signage improvements; and green infrastructure funding. Projects must be identified in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and be consistent with the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Urban STBGP funds are programmed and awarded to communities by the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), TCRPC. Projects require a 20% match which is paid for by the state and/or locally. Generally, these funds may not be used on local roads or rural minor collector projects. Exceptions include bridge and tunnel projects; safety projects; fringe and corridor parking facilities/programs; recreational trails, pedestrian, and bicycle projects; Safe Routes to School projects; boulevard/roadway projects largely in the right-of-way of divided highways; and inspection/evaluation of bridges, tunnels, and other highway assets.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

Surface Transportation Program (STP) is a sub-program of the STBGP which provides funding for non-motorized transportation projects. Projects range from on-street bike facilities to multi-use paths and sidewalk infill programs to Safe Routes to School projects. Bicycle projects must be principally for transportation, rather than recreation.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program is a federally funded program of surface transportation improvements designed to improve air quality and mitigate congestion. The variety of transportation projects funded through the CMAQ program encourage alternatives to driving alone, improve traffic flow, and help urban areas meet air quality goals through transit improvements, traffic flow improvements, bicycle facility projects, or direct emissions reduction projects.

PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program

Colorado-based non-profit PeopleForBikes' Bike Industry Community Grant Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to bike, especially in support of communities impacted by historic disinvestment. The grant prioritizes infrastructure projects that improve a community's City Ratings score (PeopleForBikes' index of a community's bikeability) by building connections in a low-stress bikeway network or improving access to recreational amenities. Grants support the material costs of infrastructure construction or non-material costs directly related and necessary to infrastructure building and range from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program is a federally funded grant program for trail-related land acquisition, development, or restoration. The grants are awarded based on the results of a competitive scoring process and the application's suitability under MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act). A minimum 20% match is required by the applicant. Grants are to be used for motorized or non-motorized trail development, renovation, and/or preservation. All projects must be maintained for 25 years. Eligible applicants include municipalities, counties, schools, non-profits, and for-profit businesses.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Illinois Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program, similar to the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) program, provides grants to municipalities, counties, and school districts to be used for outdoor recreation projects. Projects require a 50% match.

Park and Recreational Facilities Construction (PARC)

The Park and Recreational Facilities Construction (PARC) program is a state-financed program with grant funds offered to eligible local governments for park and recreation unit construction projects and land acquisition. Funded project amounts range from \$25,000 to \$2.5 million.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) administers several grant-in-aid programs to help municipalities and other local agencies provide public outdoor recreational areas and facilities. The programs operate on a cost-reimbursement basis to a government or not-for-profit organization. Local governments can receive one grant per program per year, with no restrictions on the number of local governments that can be funded for a given location. IDNR grants are organized into three major categories: Open Space Land Acquisition and Development; Boat Access Area Development; and the Illinois Trails Grant Program.

Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Program

The Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) program awards up to 50% of project costs up to a maximum of \$750,000 for acquisition and \$400,000 for development/renovation of recreational facilities, such as playgrounds, outdoor nature areas, campgrounds, fishing piers, park roads / paths, and beaches.

Illinois Trails Grant Programs

The Illinois Trails Grant Programs offer five financial assistance grants for the acquisition, development, and occasional maintenance of trails for public recreation uses. These programs include the Bike Path Program, the Local Government Snowmobile Program, the Snowmobile Trail Establishment Fund, the Off-Highway Vehicle Program, and the Federal Recreational Trails Program. These reimbursable grants are administered by IDNR under a 50% state, 50% local cost share. There is a \$200,000 maximum per project with \$1 million in grant funds available each year. Only off-road paths and trails with a hard paved or aggregate surface are eligible. The grants can fund land acquisition for securing a linear corridor or right-of-way to be used for bicycle path development.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RESILIENCY

Energy Efficiency and Resiliency

Illinois Clean Energy Foundation

The Illinois Clean Energy Foundation provides financial support for clean energy projects in Illinois. The Foundation was established with a \$225 million endowment from Commonwealth Edison. The Foundation offers grants under two programs: the Energy Program and the Natural Areas Program.

Energy Program

First Responders Resilience Pilot Program – Municipal police stations, fire stations, and public agencies can apply for grants that help pay for solar electric panels with battery energy storage systems.

Photovoltaic Systems for Nature/Welcome Centers

– This is a pilot program to support the installation of photovoltaic systems at qualified non-profit nature centers and welcome centers. Projects are encouraged to both use renewable energy as a system for power and as a medium for teaching about sustainable energy use.

Solar Thermal, Biomass, Advancing Renewable Energy, and Emerging Technology Grants

– The Foundation supports Solar Thermal, Biomass, Advancing Renewable Energy, and Emerging Technology projects in categories where incentives are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Net Zero Energy Building Grants – Pre-proposal applications are by invitation only upon approval of a Request for Information (RFI).

Natural Areas Program

Land Acquisition – The Foundation will consider projects that protect valuable natural resources in perpetuity through the purchase of conservation easements. These projects should support wildlife habitat protection in natural areas.

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Grants

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) provides financial assistance for certain land, air, and water-related projects. These grants offer funding to keep drinking water safe and improve the water quality of Illinois' lakes, streams, and wetlands.

Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO) Program

The Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO) program funds green infrastructure projects and best management practices that prevent, eliminate, or reduce water quality issues by decreasing stormwater runoff. The state-financed program offers \$75,000 to \$2.5 million grants. The program matches 75% of costs, with 25% to be provided by the applicant.

Section 319 (h) Non-point Source pollution Control Financial Assistance Program

The Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Financial Assistance program aims to protect water quality in Illinois through the control of nonpoint source pollution. The program includes providing funding to groups to implement projects that utilize cost-effective best management practices on a watershed scale. Projects may include detention basins and filter strips or erosion control ordinances and setback zones. Technical assistance and information/education programs are also eligible. The IEPA funds approximately 15 projects per year, with the average annual funding being \$3.5 million. Typically, funds are approximately 60% of total project costs, and the applicant provides the remainder as a match.

ACTION MATRIX

The Implementation Action Matrix offers a comprehensive list of all implementation strategies, policies, and recommendations contained within the **Belvidere Comprehensive Plan**. The matrix provides City staff with a tool to prioritize implementation activities and projects over the life of the plan. In addition, the matrix allows the City to approve specific, actionable items on an annual basis and evaluate progress based upon completed implementation strategies. While partners are not identified for each action item in the Action Matrix, the City may partner with a number of agencies, non-profits, and private entities to achieve the objectives of this Plan. The Action Matrix indicates the following elements:

Key Action Item

Key action items include capital projects, policy or regulatory amendments, and strategies that should be prioritized to lay the foundation for long-term Plan implementation.

Time Frame

Time frame indicates in approximately how many years the City should begin to undertake the action item. Descriptions of each time frame are detailed below:

- **Ongoing:** currently being implemented and should continue to be implemented over time
- **Short-term:** less than two years
- **Mid-term:** two to four years
- **Long-term:** over four years

Category	Key Action Item	Time Frame	Potential Partners
Land Use	Align the City Zoning Ordinance and Building Codes to the recommendations of the Land Use Plan when next updated.	Short-term	
Land Use	Be proactive in code enforcement, properly budgeting to maintain enforcement operations and citing visible violations.	Ongoing	
Land Use	Support residents in the upkeep of their property through different programs and incentives.	Long-term	
Land Use	Identify strategies to incentivize adaptive reuse and redevelopment of existing businesses over new greenfield development.	Mid-term	
Land Use	Update and enforce commercial building design standards to allow for flexibility while promoting quality design.	Mid-term	Belvidere Chamber of Commerce
Land Use	Develop a more detailed corridor plan to address land use and development, access and mobility, and design character of major roadways.	Mid-term	Illinois Department of Transportation, Boone County
Land Use	Establish the Downtown as a focal point for mixed-uses, pedestrian activity and community events.	Long-term	Belvidere Chamber of Commerce
Land Use	Align future infrastructure investment with the needs of existing and planned industrial and business flex development.	Long-term	
Land Use	Establish regular communication with existing and future businesses to identify issues and solutions to local problems.	Ongoing	Belvidere Chamber of Commerce
Transportation	Improve and expand public transportation services to provide more efficient, eco-friendly transportation alternatives.	Long-term	Boone County Public Transit, Illinois Department of Transportation
Transportation	Ensure appropriate maintenance and improvement of the roadways to support future development and multimodal connectivity.	Long-term	Illinois Department of Transportation, Boone County, Metra
Transportation	Improve truck route infrastructure and logistics to accommodate larger vehicles and business development.	Long-term	
Transportation	Provide better connections at critical points where pedestrian movement is significantly hindered.	Long-term	
Transportation	Prioritize complete streets for areas around schools and roads that logically connect neighborhoods.	Mid-term	
Transportation	Connect existing bicycle trails and bicycle paths with complete streets.	Long-term	
Transportation	Implement green infrastructure within new street designs to enhance environmental sustainability.	Long-term	
Transportation	Formalize and adopt a bike and pedestrian plan to guide investment.	Mid-term	
Transportation	Encourage multi-use paths to be provided along the main roads in future developments.	Mid-term	
Transportation	Work with property owners to identify opportunities to implement curb cut consolidation	Short-term	
Community Facilities	Identify necessary upgrades, replacements, renovations, and long-term maintenance projects for municipal buildings, facilities, and equipment.	Long-term	Public Works Department
Community Facilities	Support existing public safety services and designate potential future locations for new facilities as the City grows.	Short-term	Public Works Department, Belvidere Fire Department, Belvidere Police Department
Natural Areas	Establish a guide for park and recreational areas activation items.	Mid-term	Boone County Conservation District, Belvidere Park District
Natural Areas	Explore incentives to include density bonuses for developers.	Short-term	
Natural Areas	Emphasize conservation design techniques near floodways and wetlands.	Mid-term	Boone County Conservation District, Belvidere Park District
Natural Areas	Embrace the Kishwaukee River as a part of Belvidere's identity and another natural resource amenity for the City.	Long-term	Boone County Conservation District, Belvidere Park District, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Natural Areas	Utilize the goals and recommendations outlined in the Belvidere Park District Master Plan to identify and preserve critical open spaces.	Short-term	Boone County Conservation District, Belvidere Park District