2016

2036

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

VILLAGE OF DAWSON, ILLINOIS

SSC RPC Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

Prepared by the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

Prepared for the Village of Dawson by:
THE SPRINGFIELD-SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
200 South 9th Street, Room 212
Springfield, Illinois 62701-1629
217-535-3110
As approved by the Dawson Village Board August 1, 2016

This document is the property of the Village of Dawson, Illinois.

Use of these materials for non-commercial purposes is permitted as long as proper credit is given.

2016

2036

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

VILLAGE OF DAWSON, ILLINOIS

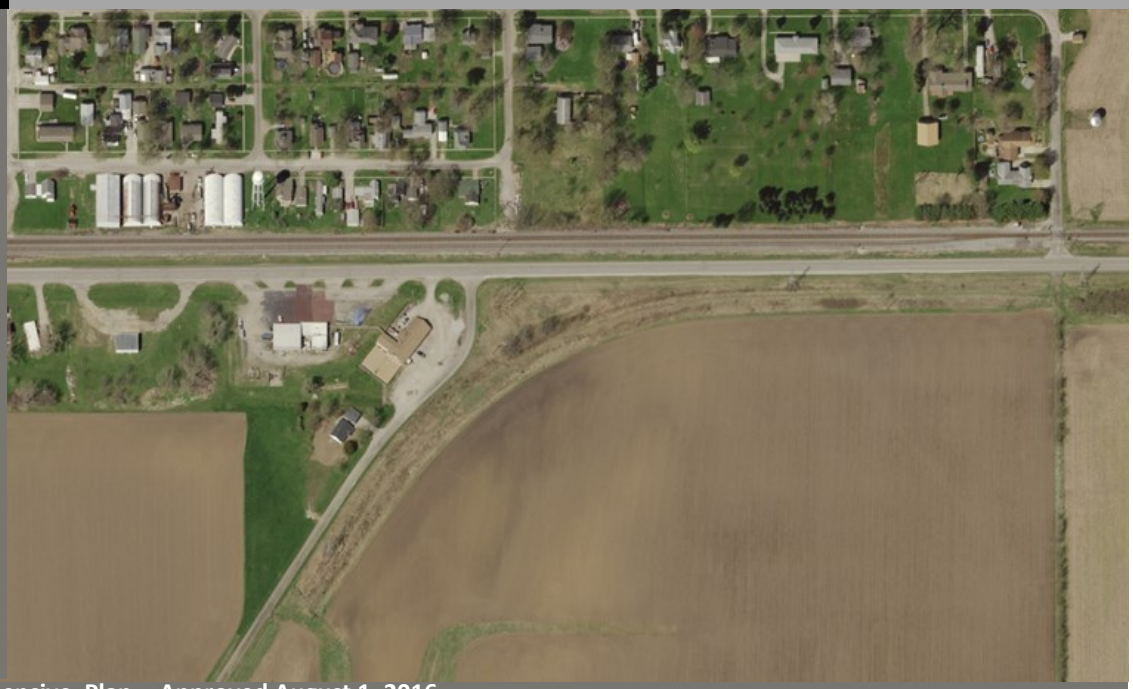


Table of Contents

Letter from the Village President: P.

Letter from the Regional Planning Commission: P.7.

Introduction to the Plan: P. 9.

SECTIONS

I. Dawson's History: P.11.

II. Village Demographics: P. 15.

III. Environmental & Natural Resources: P. 25.

IV. Utility Infrastructure: P. 35.

V. Transportation: P. 37.

VI. Economic & Community Growth: P. 47.

VII. Land Use: P. 55.

VIII. Opportunities & Challenges: P. 61.

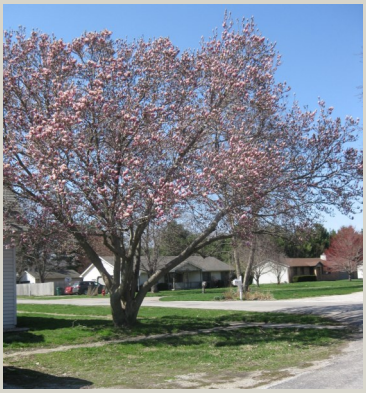
IX. Vision, Strategies & Actions: P. 65.

References: P. 73.

Acknowledgements: P. 75.

Appendix 1: Community Survey Results: P. 77.

Appendix 2: Gateway Corridor Illustrative Designs: P.



Letter from the Village President

Village of Dawson

109 N. Lewis P.O. Box 167
Dawson, IL 62520

Telephone: 217-364-5975 Fax: 217-364-9805
Email: villageofdawson@mchsi.com

Over the past two years, our Village has worked diligently in partnership with the Springfield Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) to create and initiate this twenty year comprehensive plan. The plan highlights Dawson's past while presenting opportunities for Dawson's future.

Though I had several discussions over the years with the SSCRPC to help develop and finalize this plan, the plan's completion wouldn't be possible without the help of several others. First, we cannot base a plan on resident feedback if residents don't respond to the surveys. And Dawson residents provided one of the largest per capita responses that the SSCRPC had ever seen! So first, thank you to all of you that responded to those surveys. Also, the Dawson Citizen Committee volunteered their own time to hold several discussions and meetings with me and the SSCRPC. The plan is largely based on the feedback of these two entities.

As time moves on during the life of this twenty year plan, leadership will change. It will be the responsibility of future Mayors and Trustees to see this plan through to its completion. The plan guides leadership in numerous scenarios for Dawson's future. With the partnership of current leaders, future leaders, and community residents throughout the life of the plan, this plan will enable Dawson to be even more amazing. It has been a great honor to help create a plan that will impact our friends, families, and future generations.

Thank you,
Jeremy Nunes
Village President

Letter from the Regional Planning Commission

March 30, 2016

Dear President Nunes, Village Trustees, and Citizens of Dawson:

In conjunction with the Citizen Planning Committee for the Dawson Comprehensive Plan, the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) is pleased to present this final planning document. It has been an honor and pleasure to work with the leadership and citizens of Dawson in its development, as we found the Village's slogan, "You're with friends here", to be true.

From the very outset of our work, all of those involved set a very simple goal for this effort: to ensure that the perspectives and desires of Dawson residents were incorporated in both the plan and its development. Significant efforts were made to do this. During 2014, for example, residents of the Village responded to a community survey intended to gather their opinions concerning the opportunities and challenges they believed Dawson would face over the next 20 years. The results of the community survey provided the basis for this plan and its recommendations, and the results of this survey should be considered an integral part of the plan and are included in it for that reason.

As a result of the information gathered, the SSCRPC staff worked over many months to develop the plan presented here, which describes the Village's past and present conditions, and then offers reasonable approaches the Village can pursue to further enhance the community in the years to come. We are hopeful that this comprehensive plan will meet the needs of the Village of Dawson over the next 20 years.

In conducting this work the SSCRPC was quite mindful of Abraham Lincoln's admonishment that *"the best way to predict the future is to create it."* We trust that this work will be useful to the residents and leaders of Dawson as you go about the important work of *creating the Village's future* for both those who live there now as well as those who will reside there in the future.

The SSCRPC thanks you for allowing us to share in the opportunity of creating Dawson's future.

Sincerely,
Norm Sims, Executive Director
Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

Introduction to the Plan

This comprehensive plan outlines current conditions and targets future challenges and opportunities for the Village of Dawson. For the next 20 years this plan will offer a road map for the thoughtful development of the Village, providing guidance for resource management, land development, economic and residential growth, and public safety. The Village's history, demographics, ecology, public utilities, transportation, economics, regional impact, and land use policies all contribute significantly to a unified vision for its future, and are addressed by this plan.

The plan was born out of resident feedback and survey data collected by the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) for the Village. Findings from the community survey are provided in Appendix 1 and should be considered an essential component of the plan. Many of the findings from the survey are highlighted in the plan to demonstrate the public's estimation as to the value of any given proposal.

The plan also offers strategies and actions that undergird goals for the Village's long-term success. Some of these strategies and actions will require greater flexibility in implementation than others, and may need to be implemented in concert over time, so are less detailed.

Some unique characteristics set Dawson apart from other communities in the region, particularly those that serve as "bedroom" communities serving the larger metro area. These characteristics will provide the foundation for the Village's future growth. For example, its rich history as an energy-producing and agricultural center has paved the way for the Village's small town atmosphere, and this plan offers deliberate steps that may be taken to exploit and expand upon these and other Village strengths.

Most significantly, the Village's greatest asset is its close geographic proximity to the City of Springfield. The short commute and relatively low cost of living make it an attractive option for potential new residents who seek the employment opportunities that larger urban centers can provide, without giving up the family-friendly rural atmosphere that Dawson offers.

Many of the challenges Dawson faces are common to its peer communities in the area, such as the villages of Buffalo, Mechanicsburg, and Riverton, allowing Dawson to be competitive for future population maintenance and growth, which this plan finds necessary for future success. However, and largely due to lagging population growth, service costs continue to rise without parallel growth in revenue, leading to some weaknesses — particularly related to local schools — that need to be addressed. These may be addressed through local actions, but they also may need to be addressed in creative ways, and some possible approaches are addressed in this plan.

As this plan is intended to serve as a guide and resource for the next 20 years of community growth, moving now to address the concerns and make use of new opportunities will only improve the Village's capability to grow and adapt with the changing needs of its population as well as future events. While the plan was drafted to pragmatically identify areas of improvement, it also provides an approach for Village action, allowing local leaders the flexibility to choose their strategic focus as circumstances and resources permit.

By first determining priorities, then agreeing on a course of action, the Village of Dawson can immediately begin to address its residents' concerns and still cultivate the improvements necessary to build an even stronger community.

Dawson's History

Illinois' First Highway

It is common for communities to grow along transportation routes, and such was the case for Dawson, as it was on the earliest of "highways" for both native Americans and settlers.

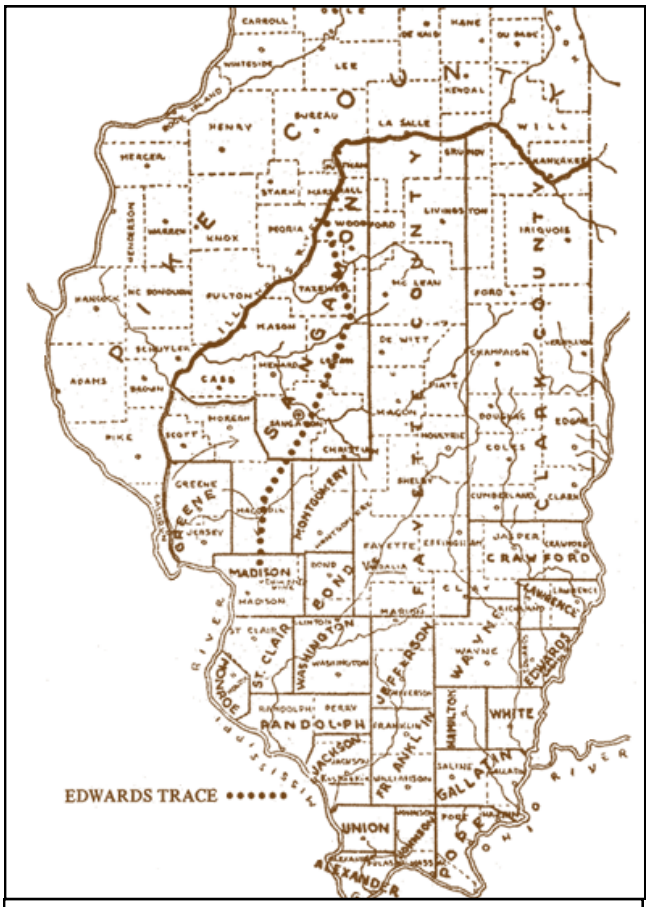
Well prior to 1854 when the village was first laid out, the area of the lower Sangamon River Valley that now makes up the region was a hub for several groups. Various native American tribes, including Mississippians, lived in the area that now includes Dawson and the Village of Riverton, as evidence has been found of their hunting grounds, burial mounds, and the locations of sacrificial rituals. Long-standing migration patterns in-and-around the area led to the creation of a standing trail, or "trace," that was used by many in the area's early years to travel to the Cahokia Mounds in Illinois near St. Louis, Missouri (Moore , Brady and Garrison, 2014). The Trail is quite significant in the early formative years of the Illinois territory.

> ***The line of this Old Indian Trail was the wagon route of most of the early settlers of Sangamon County (Enos, 1911).***

Originally, the trail that connected the Dawson area to the rest of the world was known as the Old Indian Trail, eventually becoming known as Edward's Trace, named after Illinois Governor Ninian Edwards. The Old Indian Trail was located near the western edge of present-day Dawson, and is believed to have followed a general course line between Clear Lake to Buffalo Hart Grove, and then north to Elkhart Hill and beyond. Native American camps were located just south of Buffalo Hart Grove.

According to Furry (2001), before 1830 the Edwards Trace was the only way to get from southern Illinois to northern Illinois, and the most direct route from Fort Russell, which was near present day Edwardsville, to Fort Clark (Peoria). These sites featured significantly during and after the War of 1812 when Territorial Governor Edwards raised an army to suppress the warring Kickappoos who had massacred settlers at Fort Dearborn (present day Chicago).

Over time, Edward's Trace was surveyed and became a formally documented trail, connecting area settlements and forts. It is known to have been traveled by the earliest inhabitants of the region and later used by settlers and traders of the 1700's and 1800's, and was also a significant transportation corridor during the Civil War, connecting the hospitals and training grounds at Camp Butler to Union supply lines.



Edwards Trace, Sangamon County Historical Society.

As noted previously, the Village of Dawson was laid out in 1854 and formally incorporated in 1883. It has connections, albeit indirect, with Abraham Lincoln, as the Village was named after the Honorable John Dawson. Dawson was one of a group of state legislators known at the time as the "Long Nine", who received this name due to their height. All of the Long Nine were closely associated with Lincoln, who was a fellow member of the group.

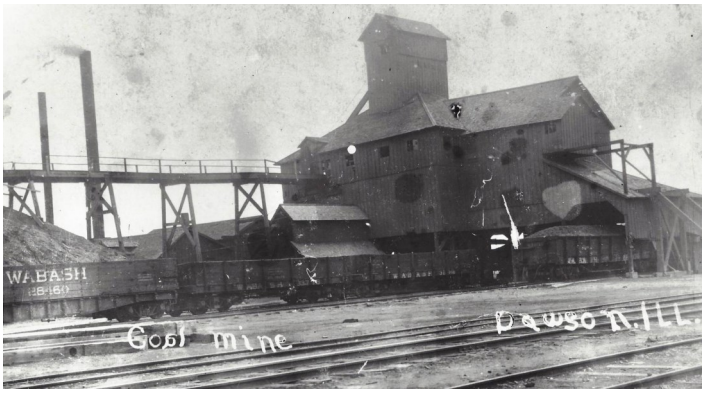
Along with other members of the Long Nine, Dawson was instrumental in securing the movement of the Illinois state capital from Vandalia to Springfield.

Dawson had a large family, and some of his descendants, such as Bertrand Dawson, became very prosperous due to mining operations, successful farming, and breeding businesses in the Dawson area.

Other early settlers, who built residences there even prior to the Village being platted, included John Billington and Abner Wheeland. Typical of early settlers, a collection of occupations and public services made up their careers. For example, Billington had a bakery business and also served as postmaster for a time. He was additionally employed by the Wabash railroad, which ran past Dawson for over 50 years. The first school in Dawson opened in 1867, though this building burned down in 1895 and was rebuilt.

As a growing mining town, Dawson was home to three grocery stores, a church, a blacksmith shop, barber shop, and a stock yard to which the farmers used to send their herds. During WW 11, the troop trains would run through and the children of the Village would run up and wave to the soldiers as they went by.

Many people today are unaware of the influence that coal mining had on the development of Sangamon County, in general, and villages, such as Dawson, in particular. Dawson's early history was certainly affected, beginning with the organization of the Wabash Coal Company in 1880. This later became the Dawson Coal Mining Company. Coal was first mined there in 1881, with the mine operating until 1924. Several mine events punctuate the Village's history, including a fire in 1924 and a shaft cave-in in 1959.



As Dawson's other major business was agriculture, its grain elevator, operated by E.R. Ulrich and Company and later J.L. Smith, was also a community landmark. The elevator experienced a major fire in 1904, which also damaged the Wabash Depot.

Dawson's churches have also been integral to the life of the community throughout much of its history. The First Presbyterian Church was founded in 1857, and the Dawson United Methodist Church was built in 1854. The Methodist Church also experienced fire damage later in its history.

Dawson expanded gradually in the early 1900s, with development of new businesses such as the Crane and Lercher store. Passenger lines on the Wabash rail line contributed to this continued growth. This was not uneventful, as in 1924 two passenger trains collided on the track near Dawson.

Also of note throughout its development was Dawson's caucus system. Since its elections have historically been single-party, Dawson's pre-election caucus meetings typically decided election outcomes, and generally were well-attended if occasionally controversial.

Also significant was Dawson's Centennial Celebration. Dawson's homecoming festivities have historically been well-attended, with newspapers reporting in one instance that over 8,000 attended, with proceeds going to a new fire station for the Dawson Volunteer Fire Department.

The development of infrastructure made up a major portion of municipal news as Dawson moved into the twentieth century. The Village negotiated for a gas supply contract in 1965, received an FHA loan to assist in the development of its water system in

1966, and residents actually received free water for a short period of time in 1967 until meters were up and running at all residences.

The Village then undertook sidewalk repairs in 1970, and also passed a referendum that year creating a fire district. The Village undertook a major water study in 1972, and in 1975 worked with the villages of Buffalo and Mechanicsburg to develop a sewer system.

In the more recent past, Dawson has experienced little growth, becoming a stable outlying community within the Springfield metro area. Its continued vitality will depend on adaptation to the same trends that are affecting rural areas and other collar communities in the County, particularly slow population growth, so that it can continue to prosper into the future.

Village Demographics

An important component of the planning process is understanding the demographic characteristics of a community, particularly those that affect its future development. Understanding demographic trends enables community leaders to better plan for the future in light of what has already taken place, allowing for a vision of its future to develop based upon an empirical understanding of its population as well as its residents' needs and wants. Understanding demographic factors also helps local leaders take practical steps forward by taking into account a community's past, its present, and its desired future vis-à-vis its neighbors and the larger regional community of which it is an integral part.

Parts of Sangamon County, particularly communities outside of metro areas, such as Dawson, face the prospect of population decline. This primarily occurs for two interrelated reasons: a slowing of in-migration by new residents and a quickening of out-migration by native residents. The first situation occurs when older residents are not being replaced by younger residents wishing to relocate to the area, while in the second case younger residents may be leaving the community for college, workforce training or employment, not to return. In planning for the future, rural communities must confront these facts in order to retain the vibrancy which they either currently, or have historically, possessed. To the degree that communities are able to mitigate these potential effects and promote their communities as places for younger families to live and grow, they will achieve the resilience necessary to compete with other localities for potential new residents while retaining their native population.

While all rural communities must face these trends, it is notable that significant out-migration is not assured for each community. Quite a bit hinges on where the community is situated, for instance, whether it is part of a metropolitan area. Dawson, with its proximity to Springfield, may be able to mitigate population decline, because while the Village itself currently offers few employment opportunities, the accessibility of Springfield as a place to work makes Dawson an attractive place to live for those seeking a less dense environment. While Dawson faces the challenge of slower population growth, as many small towns do today, it does not face the plight of small towns further outside of metro areas, where the distance from work to home is much greater. Even so, lagging population growth has had a significant effect. It is therefore incumbent upon community leaders to leverage Dawson's location along with other assets in order to ensure that depopulation trends are off-set and at least some moderate growth occurs.

Population

Over the years 2000-2010, Dawson grew by slightly more than 9%, from a community of 466 persons to 509 persons. Compared to other communities in Springfield this is rather light growth. As Table 1.1 on the next page shows, Dawson has not achieved the high level of growth that communities such as Spaulding and Mechanicsburg are now experiencing.

Other nearby communities with which Dawson may be competing for additional Springfield "bedroom community" growth, such as Riverton and Spaulding,

Table 1.1: COMPARATIVE POPULATIONS *Source: 2010 U.S. Census, ESRI Community Analyst Online*				
	2000	2010	2013 (estimate)	2000 - 2010 % Change
Dawson	466	509	505	9%
Peer Communities				
Buffalo	491	503	499	2%
Mechanicsburg	456	590	600	29%
Neighboring Communities				
Riverton	3,048	3,455	3,469	13%
Spaulding	559	873	869	56%
Springfield	111,454	116,250	117,006	4.3%

have the advantages of a slightly larger population base, and a more suburban setting. However, Dawson offers a uniquely rural setting which may be more desirable to some residents, especially those who grew up in rural communities or who seek a less urban or suburban setting.

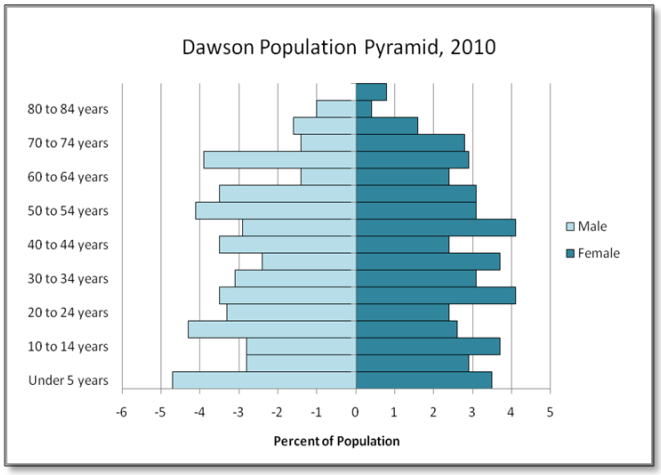
In examining population statistics, a note of caution is warranted. While the decennial census is the most reliable source of population, this information becomes somewhat dated as time between censuses elapses. For this reason it is worthwhile to examine more recent data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau through its Population Estimates Program which provides annual estimates of the population for localities.

As of July 2013, the Census Bureau estimated a population for Dawson of 505, which represents a very slight decrease of four persons. While this is not troubling, Mechanicsburg has continued to grow slightly according to estimates, while Buffalo has slightly shrunk. Again, with the exception of the growth in Mechanicsburg, figures have largely stayed flat for these communities, so what is found for Dawson is consistent with these area trends.

Population Age

In 2010, the median age of Dawson's population was 37.5 years. This figure represents a 3% decrease from the median age of the Village in 2000, which was 38.7. The median age is also slightly lower than Sangamon County's median age of 39.2 years, indicating that Dawson has a slightly younger population today than it had 10 years ago, as well as a younger population than the county as a whole.

However, in terms of age distribution, Dawson is fairly unevenly distributed, as the diagram below shows. The largest five year cohort is under five years-of-age, while the Baby Boomer cohort (50-69) is quite large, particularly the 65-69 age group, which generally includes those of older age who have most recently left the workforce.



This uneven distribution is fairly atypical for communities in Sangamon County, many of which are experiencing a decline in the younger age groups while seeing an increase in population aged 50 and older. However in Dawson's case, the median age has slightly decreased, a trend which, if sustained, portends well for the Village's future.

And in examining Dawson's population pyramid, one finds an uneven distribution of males and females, particularly in the older age groups. What is uncommon in the case of Dawson is that males outnumber females, an unusual occurrence given that females have a longer lifespan, typically outnumbering males in these age groups. It is likely that this is an artifact of Dawson's small population size as it is not evident in the county's population overall.

Also of note is that Dawson does not demonstrate

the population "bulge" at the center of the population pyramid that some other localities exhibit. This is likely due to Dawson having a somewhat asymmetric population, with a relatively large number of older individuals in its population at the same time that it has a larger percentage of children. Census data shows that during the 2000-2010 period there was considerable growth in the youngest cohort; those 5 years-of-age and younger. During that period the population of this group grew by about 62%, going from 26 in 2000 to 42 in 2010. At the same time the Village experienced an increase in its percentage of older residents. During the 2000-2010 period the population of those older than 65 increased by about 82%, going from 48 residents to 83.

But while Dawson has added more young children to its population, there has been no commensurate rise in individuals aged 30 to 44 during the 10-year period. In fact, this age cohort, which makes up a large share of the working-age population, has seen a slight decrease. While some of this may be attributable to long-term residents remaining in the Village, it is also likely that out-migration is occurring among this age group.

As mentioned previously, out-migration tends to occur when younger individuals leave for college, training or careers, and do not return to their communities of birth. It can be devastating to rural communities by causing an ongoing loss in population. Combined with the phenomenon of the population "graying", the effects can be especially troubling. However, due to Dawson adding younger residents in recent years, the effects of out-migration on total population may not be as serious for Dawson as for other rural communities. In any event, the Village should take notice of this trend and recognize how it may affect it in the near future.

Dawson should take steps to retain its younger residents and bring them back to the Village after they complete college or training outside of the Village.

Population Projections

Providing population projections for small communities is difficult due to the volatility of their smaller numbers of residents, with slight increases or decreases in the gross number of inhabitants resulting in large percentage changes. However, coming to some understanding concerning population growth is important in land use planning as it helps to determine the extent to which existing infrastructure, for example, will support growth, or if additional infrastructure build-out will be needed.

Table 1.2: DAWSON POPULATION PROJECTIONS

	Low Growth	Moderate Growth	High Growth
2000	554	554	554
2010	509	509	509
2012	502	502	—
2017	—	—	556
2020	490	530	577
2030	480	559	654

This being the case, the SSCRPC's population projections for Dawson are provided taking into account three scenarios: low growth, moderate growth, and higher growth. The projections for each scenario are shown in Table 1.2.

The Low Growth projection is based upon the rate of population decline found in the 2000 and 2010 Censuses, as well as the 2012 estimate, projected forward to 2030. This scenario would indicate a decline of 29 residents by 2030 if present trends continue. This would be a palpable decline of approximately 5.7%.

The Moderate Growth projection is based upon the assumption that the Village will grow at the same rate as the county as a whole, based upon the average rate of growth in the county over the past 20 years (5.5%), using the 2012 estimate as the base. This projection leads to a population of 559 by 2030, a rebound to a bit more than the Village was found to have in the 2000 Census, or about 9.8% more residents than found in the 2010 census. This would be consistent with past trends.

The High Growth projection is taken from work done by the SSCRPC when it projected population trends for the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) for the Springfield Area Transportation Study. This number uses a 2017 estimate based upon MPA population growth (rather than a 2012 estimate), assumes no migration (either in or out), and uses 1990-2009 birth and death statistics from the Illinois Department of Public Health broken down by municipality.

It seems unlikely that Dawson will reach this higher rate of growth by 2030, leading the SSCRPC to consider the Moderate Growth projection — 559 residents by 2030 — as the most likely scenario.

Age Dependency Ratio

One tool used to assess the implications of a population's age ranges is the *age dependency ratio*. Age dependency ratios are used to indicate the portion of the population considered to be of workforce age — typically those older than 18 but younger than 65 — compared to the proportion of those age groups not of workforce age — typically those younger than 19 but older than 64. In this way, age dependency ratios assess the percentage of the population that is dependent upon those in the workforce, either for their direct support (e.g., financial support, child-rearing, senior care) or because they contribute less to the tax base of the community than those currently in the workforce.

Research and experience suggest that the lower the age dependency ratio of a community — that is, the larger the percentage of those aged 19 to 64 compared to those in the population younger and older than this group — the more economically resilient and viable the community is. This resiliency benefits the local economy in many ways, but it also benefits the local government as it provides for revenue growth while reducing the cost of the services that must be provided to the dependent groups. Increased governmental revenues matched with lower community service costs allocated to dependent groups allows a municipality to provide better services (e.g., greater availability of financial resources to support schools) without raising taxes, the ability to lower the tax rates as a means of encouraging additional business growth and attracting new residents, and the ability to upgrade or expand infrastructure. By contrast, a higher age dependency ratio may make it more difficult for a community to raise the funds it needs to address critical functions such as public education, business retention and attraction, and necessary infrastructure improvements.

There are many ways in which age dependency ratios can be calculated and there are certain assumptions which go into each of them. For this reason, demographers are somewhat split on which method is the most valid indicator of the concept of age dependency. However this gives the ratio flexibility such that age dependency ratios can be calculated to show what information is desired.

Table 1.3 shows the age dependency ratios for Dawson and Sangamon County. In comparison to Sangamon County overall, Dawson's age dependency ratio is markedly higher (77.4 vs. 66.7). As remarked upon above, Dawson's higher dependency ratio is due to the relatively large number of Dawson residents above the retirement age as well as a comparatively large number of young children. Because of its higher percentage of both older and young residents, Dawson has both a higher child dependency ratio and a higher old-age dependency ratio than the county overall. **These figures again point to the need for Dawson to draw younger families into the village and to try to either retain or bring back those younger residents who are moving out of Dawson when they enter the labor force.**

Table 1.3: SUMMARY AGE DEPENDENCY INDICATORS
Source: 2010 U.S. Census

	Dawson	*Sangamon County*
Median age (years)	37.5	39.2
Sex ratio (males per 100 females)	101.2	92.3
Age dependency ratio	77.4	66.7
Old-age dependency ratio	28.9	23.1
Child dependency ratio	48.4	43.6

Again, it is important to note that any conclusions regarding these ratios should be taken with a note of caution, for while the calculation for the child dependency ratio included individuals up until age 19, it may be the case that individuals over that age are still involved in college or training. If this is the case, the child dependency ratio may be an overly conservative estimate of actual child dependency. However, the old age dependency ratio may exhibit the opposite bias as individuals sometimes continue working past the traditional retirement age of 65. Thus, the old age dependency ratio may actually overstate the degree to which these individuals are not participating in the workforce.

Race and Ethnicity

Table 1.4 provides the racial and ethnic composition of Dawson's population as of the 2010 Census.

As the table shows, Dawson is majority white or Caucasian, consistent with other peer municipalities such as Buffalo and Mechanicsburg. Dawson's community is also overwhelmingly native-born, with few residents having been born overseas. The 2008-2012 American Community Survey estimates that of its 534 residents, 523 (98.0%) were born in the United States, with most residents (84.6%) born in Illinois, and a minority (12.9%) born in another state. Foreign-born residents made up 2.1% of the population with all of these individuals having come to America before 2010. The Bureau of the Census' American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that all of these foreign born residents were born in Europe. This figure should be viewed with some skepticism, however, as while they are relatively recent, the ACS survey had a small sample size which results in less accuracy.

TABLE 1.4: RACIAL COMPOSITION OFPOPULATION
Source: 2010 U.S. Census

RACIAL DESIGNATION		%
One Race		99.4
	White	99.4
	Black or African American	0.2
	American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.0
	Asian	0.0
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0
	Some other race	0.0
Two or more races		0.6
	TOTAL	100.0

While Dawson is predominantly white, there is considerable diversity in terms of the ancestry of its residents. When asked to identify their most prominent ancestry, Dawson residents reported German, English, and Italian ancestry among other groups. The largest plurality of residents reported German ancestry (25.0%), followed by Irish (18.2%), English (14.8%), Italian (6.9%), and Scottish (6.0%), with other mostly European groups making up the remaining responses. In addition, 4.3% identified their ancestry simply as "American."

Housing

The 2008-2012 ACS 5-Year Estimates for Dawson show an estimated 258 total housing units, of which 217 (84.1%) were occupied. Of these occupied units, 172 (79.3%) are owner-occupied and 45 (26.6%) are renter-occupied.

By contrast, the 2010 Census reported a total of 228 units of which 213 (93.4%) were occupied and 15 (6.6%) were vacant. While this is a wide discrepancy, the variation may be attributable to the high margin of error (±9.9%) of the ACS estimates. If this is the case, it is likely that the true values are closer to the 2010 Census figures indicating that vacant housing in Dawson is not a large problem. However, the SSCRPC's own survey of the community found that residents in Dawson are concerned about abandoned housing. In fact, nearly 48.6% of respondents in this survey saw abandoned housing as a "medium" or "high" priority. This discrepancy gives pause to the notion that such issues are not a concern to residents, warranting further exploration by community leaders.

Table 1.5 shows the breakdown of the 213 occupied units (2010) within the village by household type.

TABLE 1.5: OCCUPIED UNITS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE
Source: 2010 Census

TOTAL OCCUPIED UNITS	213
Family Households	
Husband-Wife Family	103 (48.4%)
With own children < 18	67 (31.5%)
Non-Family Households	74 (34.7%)
One Person Households	62 (29.1%)
All Households with Children	73 (34.3%)
All Households with individuals 65 years and over	62 (29.1%)

TABLE 1.6: DAWSON HOUSING UNIT TURNOVER *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey*			
RESIDENCE 1 YEAR AGO	#	%	Margin of Error
POPULATION 1 YEAR AND OVER	526		
Same house	503	95.6%	±117
Different house in the U.S.	14	2.7%	±11
Same county	10	1.9%	±10
Different county	4	0.8%	+5
Different state	0	0.0%	±11
Abroad	9	1.7%	±13

About two-thirds (65.3%) were considered "family households," which are defined by the U.S. Census as having "at least one householder and one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption." Of these households, 103 (48.4%) were husband-wife families, and 36 (16.9%) were other family types with no spouse present. In total, 67 households (31.5%) had children present and 74 (34.7%) households were nonfamily households, of which the majority were households with either a female or male living alone.

The data shows that Dawson does not differ greatly from Sangamon County overall on either household size or family size. The average household size in Dawson is 2.39 compared with 2.33 for Sangamon County. Dawson has slightly fewer family households than Sangamon County, at 2.86 persons per family household compared to 2.94 in Springfield, for example. Interestingly, while the numbers are close, it is unlikely that they reflect the same trends. For instance, the relatively low household size in Sangamon County is likely reflected by the high number of young single adults living in Springfield and the number of retirees, including those in nursing homes. By contrast, Dawson's household size is more likely reflective of a comparatively high number of older adults living at home as well as a large proportion of older couple, "empty nesters".

As Table 1.6 indicates, residents in Dawson display little transience, owing perhaps to the high percentage (79%) living in owner-occupied housing. Indeed, compared to one year ago, a vast majority (95.6%) of the population lived in the same house. For those that moved from another locality, most came from somewhere else in Sangamon County with a minority coming from a different county or a different state.

Compared to its peer communities, Dawson has far less housing turnover; only 83.2% of residents in Buffalo and 86.5% of residents in Mechanicsburg lived in the same house currently that they lived in one year ago. The numbers show the difference between communities with higher and lower degrees of transience, but they can be misleading. For instance, Buffalo, which had a higher percentage of individuals who lived in a different house a year ago, has experienced less growth than Dawson. Also, municipalities with a higher percentage of their housing stock made up of rental units show higher degrees of housing unit movement on an annual basis.

Education

Education data provides important information about a community. Educational attainment is correlated with higher long-term earnings as well as better health. However, in rural communities such as Dawson, average educational attainment may be less than in urban communities because of a higher proportion of residents employed in agriculture and blue collar work. Thus, while the figures below depict a lower average level of education in Dawson than Springfield, for example, the more important figure may be possession of a high school diploma or technical training certificate.

The 2008-2012 ACS provides information on educational attainment on the population aged 25 and older. While the data exclude some individuals who may have recently completed college or training, it nevertheless provides a sketch of education in the community. Overall, the Census Bureau estimates that the vast majority (94%) of individuals in Dawson possess at least a high school diploma. Additionally, 39% of residents have at least "some college" or an associate's degree, and 12% have a bachelor's degree or higher. As with all ACS data, these figures are estimates and the actual percentages may be higher

TABLE 1.7: DAWSON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey*			
	#	%	Margin of Error
Population 25 years and over	352	-	-
Less than 9th grade	6	1.7%	±1.9
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	16	4.5%	±3.1
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	136	38.6%	±8.1
Some college, no degree	89	25.3%	±7.7
Associate's degree	47	13.4%	±6.7
Bachelor's degree	36	10.2%	±5.3
Graduate or professional degree	7	2.0%	±1.7

or lower. To illustrate this variability, Table 1.7 shows ACS education figures for the population of individuals over the age of 25 along with a margin of error. This margin indicates the range to which the sample statistic may differ from the actual figure of the population in either direction. As the table shows, the small sample size relative to population size creates a high margin of error in some categories.

It is also of interest to examine where Dawson stands vs. other communities in Sangamon County. As Table 1.8 indicates, Dawson has a slightly lower high school graduation rate than the county overall, though it has a higher rate than its Tri-City peers: Buffalo and Mechanicsburg. The percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree or greater is also lower than the county average, a fact at least partly attributable to the higher proportion of residents 65 and older than other areas in Sangamon County. Again, Dawson's rural location is a likely factor in explaining the lower percentage of persons with bachelor's degrees. As Table 1.8 shows, the localities with the highest percentage of individuals with a bachelor's or higher live in Springfield and in the satellite communities immediately surrounding that city.

TABLE 1.8: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, Sangamon County Communities *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey*		
	High School or greater	Bachelor's or greater
Dawson	93.8%	12.2%
Sangamon County	91.9%	31.6%
Buffalo	88.4%	18.1%
Chatham	97.7%	41.8%
Riverton	86.2%	17.5%
Grandview	85.8%	7.9%
Mechanicsburg	84.6%	8.4%
Rochester	95.6%	50.8%
Sherman	95.5%	45.3%
Springfield	90.7%	33.1%

It should be noted that as with all ACS data, these figures represent estimates based on reported data to the U.S. Census Bureau. As such, it is useful to compare the findings of the ACS with the findings of SSCRPC's own survey of the community.

According to results from SSCRPC's survey, a much higher percentage of individuals in Dawson report having a college education than is suggested by ACS figures: 22.4% reported having four years of college or a bachelor's degree, and 13.2% (as opposed to 2.0%) reported having a graduate or professional degree. Additionally, 13.2% reported they were either still in college or had some college background. These figures paint a much different picture for Dawson, one in which nearly half of all residents have some education or training beyond the high school level and many have a college degree.

Dawson's attention to education, particularly as it pertains to Tri-City School District will remain important. **As the younger generations of children grow older, becoming school-age, Tri-City will experience larger class sizes. Especially given the recent growth of Mechanicsburg, the interest in maintaining and improving the school district to account for this growth will be imperative.**

Household Income

Household income distribution estimates for Dawson are shown in Table 1.9. Income is an important component of any demographic analysis and there are many ways by which to measure it. No matter how income is measured, there are challenges associated that are not present in measuring other demographic factors. Researchers generally agree that it is difficult to obtain accurate reports of income from individuals via surveys (Moore, Stinson and Welniak, 1997). Due in part to these limitations, the U.S. Census Bureau did not ask individuals about income in the 2010 Census, whereas this data is available for 2000 Census. In light of the time which has elapsed since 2000, the SSCRPC relied on ESRI estimates for the year 2014 for information on household income for this plan.

TABLE 1.9: HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION, 2014 ESTIMATES
Sources: ESRI Community Analyst

	Dawson		Sangamon Co.	
	#	%	#	%
Total Households	209	100%	84038	100%
Less than $15,000	15	7%	10,177	12%
$15,000 to $24,999	11	5%	8,409	10%
$25,000 to $34,999	12	6%	8,450	10%
$35,000 to $49,999	37	18%	12,217	15%
$50,000 to $74,999	82	39%	15,846	19%
$75,000 to $99,999	27	13%	11,164	13%
$100,000 to $149,999	21	10%	11,809	14%
$150,000 to $199,999	3	1%	3,112	4%
$200,000 or more	1	>1%	2,854	3%
Under $35,000	38	18%	27,036	32%
$35,000 - $74,999	119	57%	28,063	33%
$75,000 - $149,999	48	23%	22,973	27%
$150,000 or more	4	2%	5,966	7%

TABLE 1.10: COMPARATIVE HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2008-2012 Estimates
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

	Median	Mean
Dawson	**$46,625**	**$50,209**
Sangamon County	$55,355	$70,417
Buffalo	$42,000	$52,547
Chatham	$79,659	$84,811
Grandview	$45,463	$51,034
Mechanicsburg	$44,886	$58,597
Riverton	$49,583	$54,984
Sherman	$85,269	$103,283
Springfield	$49,627	$66,350

Income data is important because it may be used for comparison purposes both longitudinally (across time) and horizontally (across places). The two tables on this page show ESRI 2014 household income estimates for Dawson, as well as Sangamon County and several peer communities for comparison purposes.

Data is provided in Table 1.10 for both mean and median household income. Median household income is most often used to assess household income levels as it moderates the effects of both very high and very low income levels.

As shown in the table, Sangamon County as a whole has a larger percentage of its households living under $35,000 a year than the Village of Dawson, indicating that Dawson has lower levels of poverty. However, Dawson also has a smaller percentage of households with income over $100,000 per year, indicating less affluence. Taken together, there is far less variance in income in Dawson than the County overall. Indeed, the majority of households report income between $35,000 and $75,000.

There are pluses and minuses to Dawson having such a large number of its residents at similar income levels. On the positive side, Dawson does not suffer from the level of crime associated with poverty that plagues some communities in Sangamon County.

In comparison to its Tri-City peers, Dawson's mean income is higher than both Buffalo and Mechanicsburg while its median income is somewhat lower than both. **So while Dawson may have less wealth overall, it lacks the poverty found in other areas of Sangamon County and seems to be on safer ground than some of the other proximate rural communities**.

Demographic Challenges and Opportunities of Note

Analysis of the data indicates that Dawson confronts many of the same demographic challenges facing other rural communities in central Illinois. These include:

- Population loss due to out-migration and non-replacement of older residents.
- Difficulty in luring younger residents to stay and locate in the Village, particularly that younger demographic cohort known as the Millennials, due to a lack of such amenities as can be found in larger communities.
- A lower than average median household income.

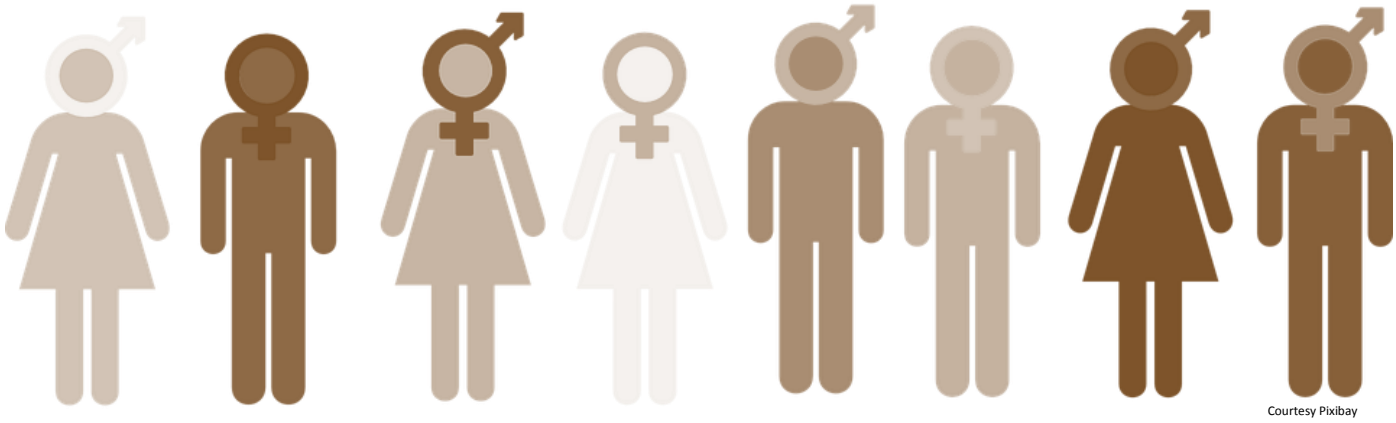
Dawson's large population of younger children should be seen as a boon to the community. Taking steps to ensure Dawson can retain its young families will help brace the Village for population loss due to aging.

However, Dawson will need to address the fact that its population will continue to age, which may lead to a need to invest in services which would benefit the older population and keep them from leaving.

Dawson's comparatively low cost of living should be embraced, and the Village promoted as a more affordable alternative to other satellite communities near Springfield.

While Dawson does not currently have many of the amenities that larger communities have, making it less attractive to younger residents, it does have the opportunity to develop many of them. For example, the Village can develop outdoor recreation and leisure areas focused around existing or developed green spaces.

The advantages arising from the development of trails and improved pedestrian ways as amenities for attracting new and younger residents will be addressed in other sections of this plan.



Courtesy Pixibay

Environmental and Natural Resources

Geology

Geologically Dawson sits in an area called the *Springfield Plain*, "a relatively flat upland that is relatively well dissected by numerous shallow valleys" (Bergstrom, Piskin, & Follmer 1976). Glacial deposits underlie the land surface except in those areas where erosion has reached bedrock. The Springfield Plain lies east of the Buffalo Hart Moraine, a "broad, discontinuous, glacially built ridge" (Bergstrom et al., 1976). This ridge rises above the surface of the plain around Buffalo Hart, Illinois, just north of Dawson. The Springfield Plain was glaciated before the Bloomington Ridged Plain, which lies to its east. The Springfield Plain also features a more prominent tributary network via the Sangamon River than does the Bloomington Ridge Plain.

The appearance of the plain is a result of glacial activity which occurred many years ago. The pre-Illinoian, Illinoian, and Wisconsinian glacial episodes shaped the area affecting the material at the Earth's surface. As such, there are three different layers of earthen material on the ground near Dawson.

The uppermost layer, or quaternary layer, consists primarily of loess, or wind-blown silt, and till, a mix of rock fragments deposited by glaciers. Below the quaternary layer lies the Pennsylvanian layer which consists of bedrock. This layer, formed millions of years ago, has rocks which are sources of coal. These rocks are also sources of shale and clay for bricks. Below the Pennsylvanian layer lie the Mississippian, Devonian, Silurian, Ordovician, Cambrian, and Pre-Cambrian layers that extend thousands of feet into the Earth.

Topography

As with many municipalities in Sangamon County, the topography of Dawson is nearly unchanging as the Village lacks any hills or valleys. Overall there is little change in elevation to note in Dawson. The elevation is around 590 feet and increases slightly along a ridge located south of Old Route 36. Elevation declines near the North Fork of Clear Creek, located just east of Dawson, however for the most part Dawson's elevation remains within 10 feet of 590 feet.

Undermined Areas

As noted previously in the section addressing Dawson's history, coal mining was a major industry in years past. This being the case, there are undermined areas within the Village that affect its development.

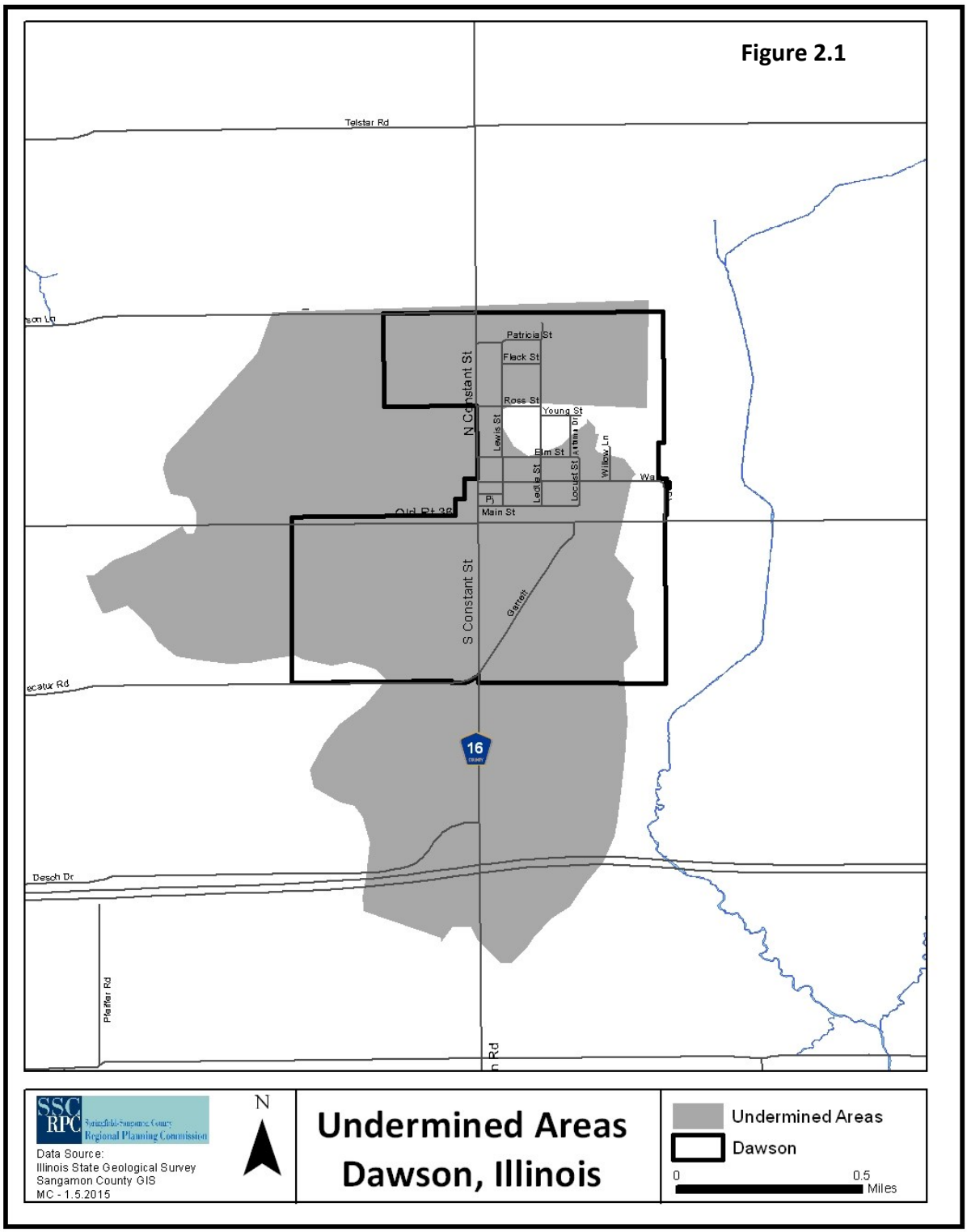
In the early 20th century, the Dawson mine (ISGS Index 343) operated in the Village. First operated by the Athens-Dawson Coal Company from 1916-1918, the mine was operated by Dawson Coal Mining Co. from 1918-1924, the last year in which mining occurred in Dawson (Illinois State Geological Society, 2013a). The Dawson Mine was a shaft mine which extracted coal via the Room and Pillar Panel method. As a result of this mining activity much of the area in and around the Village is undermined, as shown in Figure 2.1 on the next page. Due to the extensive excavation which occurred in the 20th century, no mines are currently operating in Dawson.

While mining is important to Dawson's and the region's history, the mining that took place nearly one hundred years ago may contribute to the ground caving in due to the presence of an underground mine; a phenomenon known as mine subsidence.

Mine subsidence is prevalent in Illinois due to the state's rich mining history. The Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) estimates that 330,000 housing units in Illinois could be exposed to mine subsidence (Rickerl, 2013). The ISGS cautions that cracks suddenly appearing in the foundation or in walls or ceilings that widen or grow may be a sign of mine subsidence. Other signs may include popping and snapping, the house tilting, or "the chimney, porch, or steps [separating] from the rest of the house" (Illinois State Geological Survey, 2013b, pg. 1). ISGS notes while the signs may collectively point to mine subsidence, if only one of two of these is-

sues occur in a structure in isolation of one another, it is unlikely that mine subsidence is the cause.

Resources exist to aid municipalities and persons affected by mine subsidence. In Illinois, IDNR's Abandoned Mined Lands Reclamation Division reclaims abandoned coal mines which existed prior to federal coal mine reclamation standards. The Illinois Mine Subsidence Insurance Fund (IMSF) exists as a non-governmental agency which assures that financial resources are made available to owners of property damaged by mine subsidence.



Soil Suitability for Agriculture and Septic Fields

As with many other municipalities in Sangamon County, agriculture plays a vital role in Dawson. The quality of the soil is important in determining which areas are suitable for farmland. As shown in Figure 2.2 on the next page, most of Dawson is considered prime for farmland or prime for farmland if properly drained, with a small amount of land not considered prime for farmland close to the North Fork of Clear Creek, in the southeast portion of the Village.

Given that much of Dawson is currently used for either residential or agricultural purposes, it is notable that if substantial residential development were to occur, such development would require developing on farmland. Thus, residential development occurs at the expense of currently existing agricultural lands.

Another important consideration is the location of drain tiles. When choosing the site for a new structure or subdivision on soils which were previously farmland, it is important to have an understanding of where the drain tiles are located. If heavy equipment or a foundation is placed on soils where drain tiles are located, the tiles can crack or break. If the drain tiles remain broken, ground water can seep into foundations and basements, causing cracking and/or structural problems. There are methods to mitigate ground water seepage, some of which are very expensive. Knowledge of field tile outlets before a site is developed can alleviate potential future drainage problems and should be considered in development approval.

TABLE 2.1: SOIL SERIES IN THE DAWSON AREA

Assumption	**Hartsburg**	**Sable**
Buckhart	**Hickory**	**Spaulding**
Denny	**Ipava**	**Tama**
Edinburg	**Keomah**	
Elkhart	**Osco**	

The area around Dawson is home to many different soils, and Table 2.1 shows 13 soil types located within 1.5 miles of the corporate limits. Several soils named above have seasonal high water tables that are two feet or less from the surface. Soils with a high water table can affect the stability of a foundation and can cause basement groundwater seepage. Soils with high water tables can also interfere with the ability of septic systems to filter human waste. It is important that the water table of the soils on a particular piece of land be considered when building, especially if one is constructing a residence or other structure with a basement and/or a septic field.

Figure 2.2 (page 31) shows the capacity of different soil types to handle septic system waste. Darker red areas on the map indicate soils which are very limited for septic systems. If one roughly divides the Village into quadrants, the northeast, northwest, and southwest quadrants are very limited for septic fields, indicating septic systems should be prohibited and property owners required to connect to the sewer system. Areas in the southeast quadrant of the Village (i.e. orange/lighter colors), have soil types that are somewhat limited for septic fields, meaning a close inspection thorough soils analysis must be undertaken. **This soils analysis and the map provided form a basis by which the Village may consider additional regulations that result in new development connecting to the existing sewer system as capacity allows.**

Floodplains and Wetlands

Dawson is located near the Sangamon River watershed, but no areas within the Village are currently wetlands coded using the National Fish and Wildlife Service (NFWS) criteria. There are also no areas within Dawson's current corporate limits designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as being in the one hundred year floodplain, however its water plant, which sits outside of the Village limits, is affected by flooding.

Being outside the vicinity of the Sangamon River floodplain differentiates Dawson from some of its neighbors, such as Riverton, where flooding is a concern. With that said, Dawson's proximity to the North Fork of Clear Creek does place it very close to the watershed and it is possible that the creek adjacent to the Village may flood causing problems. However, simply because Dawson is outside of the floodplain and mostly away from the watershed does not guarantee no flooding will occur. Figure 2.4 (page 32) provides a map of floodplain areas in the vicinity.

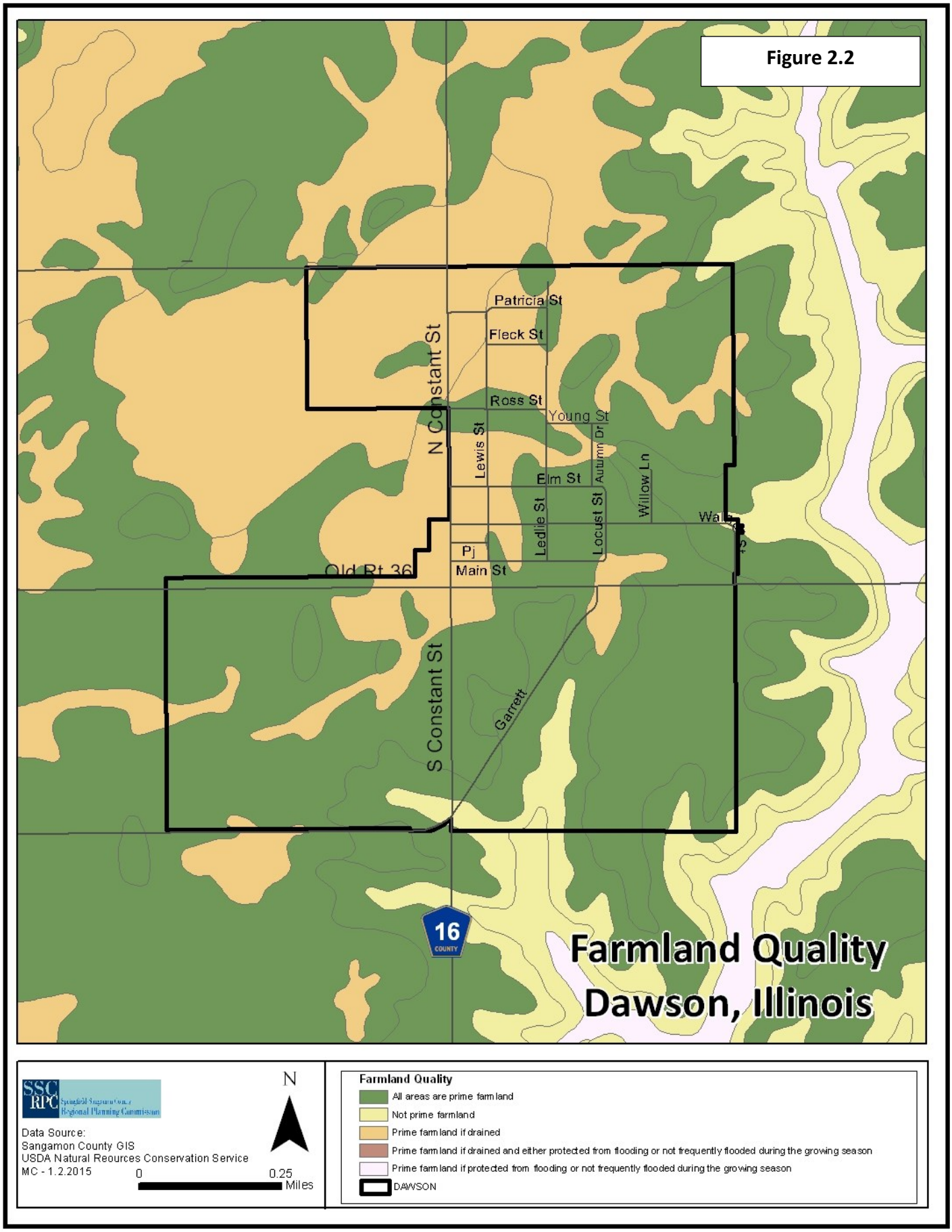


Figure 2.2
Patricia St
Fleck St
N Constant St
Ross St
Young St
Lewis St
Autumn Dr
Willow Ln
Elm St
Ledlie St
Locust St
Pj
Main St
Old Rt 36
S Constant St
Garrett
16
COUNTY
Farmland Quality
Dawson, Illinois
SSC RPC
Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission
Data Source:
Sangamon County GIS
USDA Natural Reources Conservation Service
MC - 1.2.2015
0
0.25
Miles
N
Farmland Quality
All areas are prime farmland
Not prime farmland
Prime farmland if drained
Prime farmland if drained and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season
Prime farmland if protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season
DAWSON

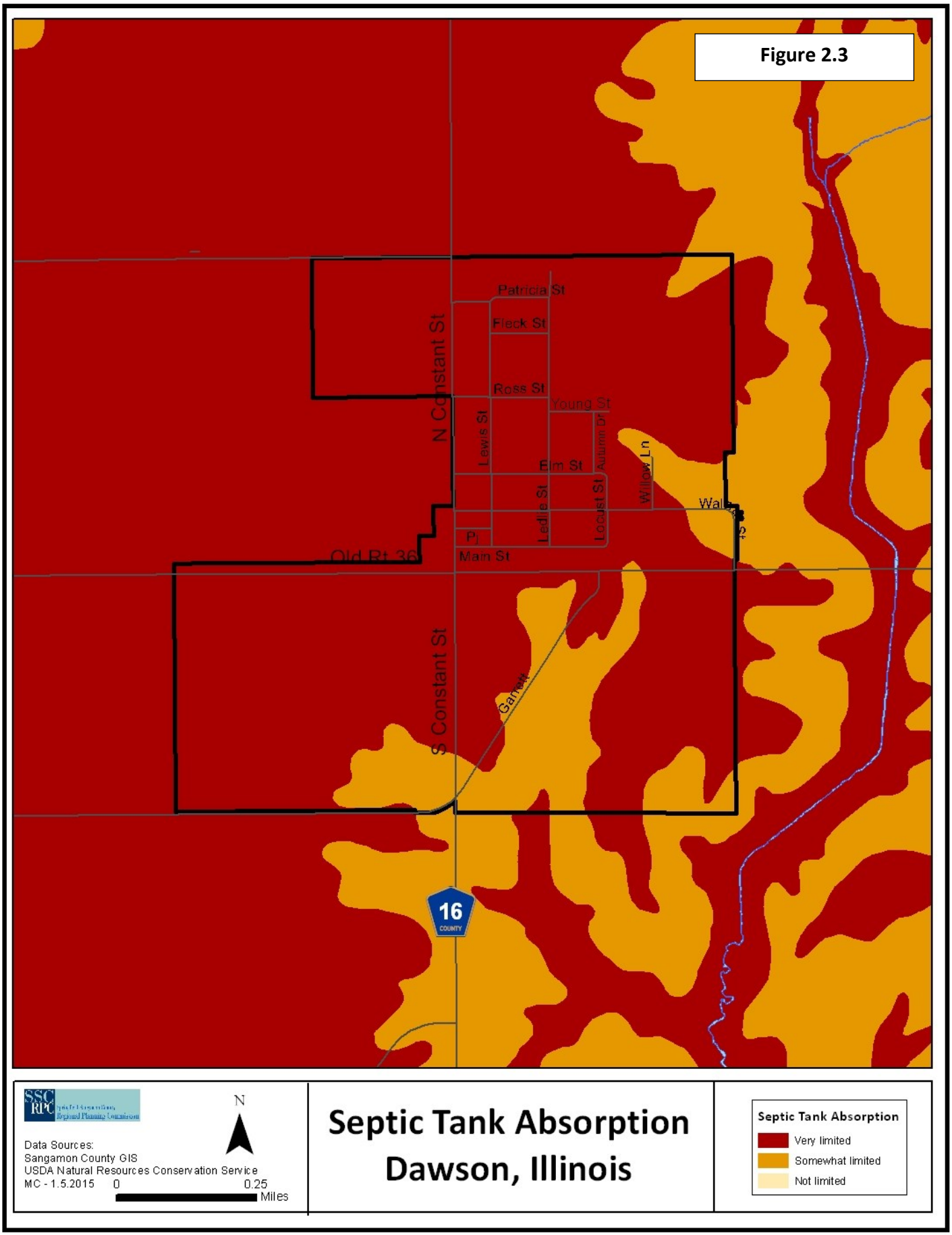
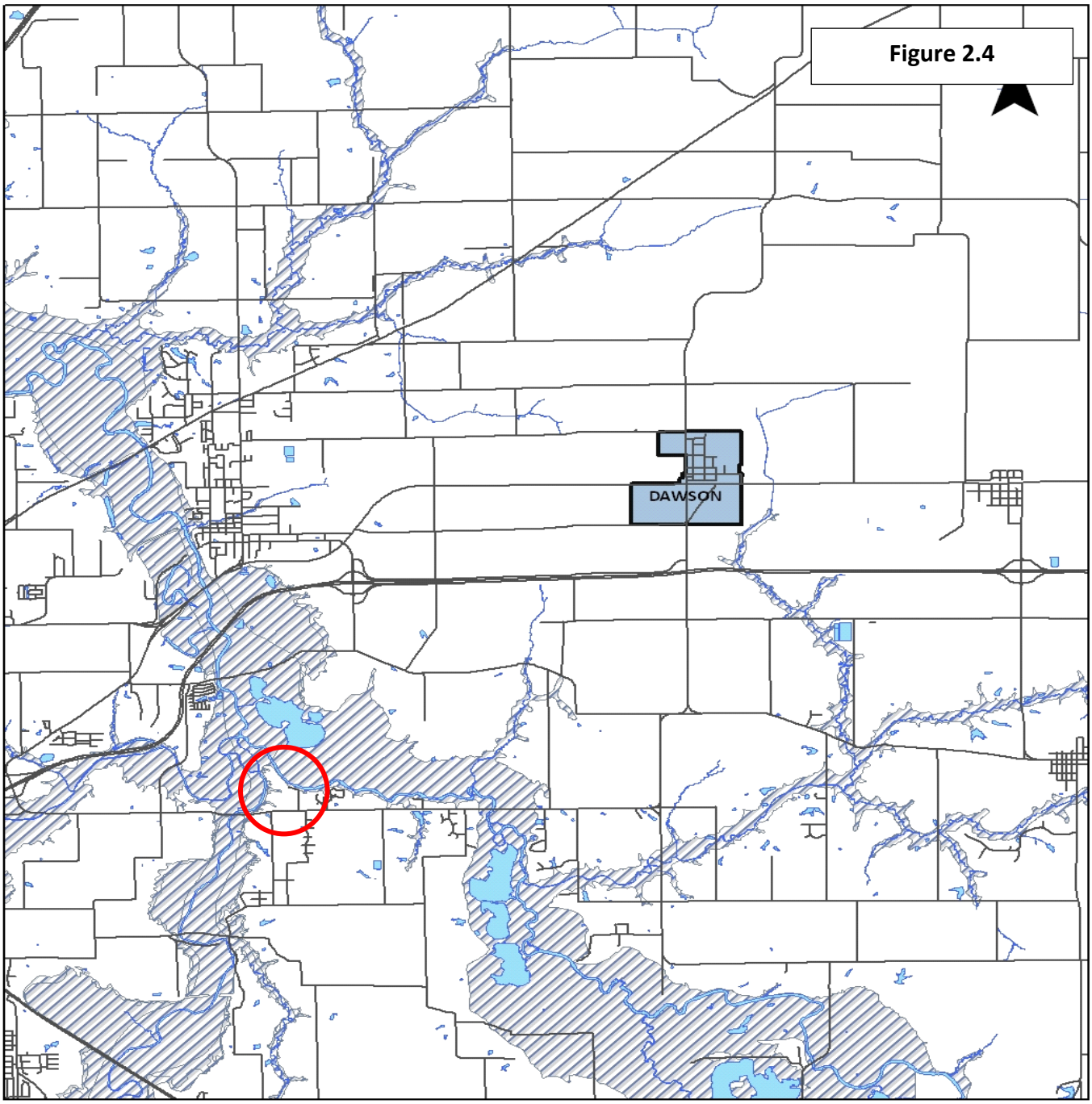


Figure 2.3
Patricia St
Fleck St
Ross St
Young St
N Constant St
Lewis St
Elm St
Autumn Dr
Willow Ln
Ledlie St
Locust St
Walnut St
Pj
Main St
Old Rt 36
S Constant St
Garrett
16
COUNTY
N
Data Sources:
Sangamon County GIS
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
MC - 1.5.2015
0
0.25
Miles
Septic Tank Absorption
Dawson, Illinois
Septic Tank Absorption
Very limited
Somewhat limited
Not limited



SSC RPC Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

Data Source: FEMA, Sangamon County GIS
MC - 01.05.2014

Regional Hydrography and FEMA Flood Hazard Area

Legend
- Hydrography
- FEMA Flood Hazard Zone
- Dawson

Indicates municipal water plant area which may be affected by flooding. This area is identified as it includes the plant as well as roads providing access to it.

Similarly, areas outside the corporate limits contain wetlands coded below using the NFWS criteria. Table 2.2 indicates five different codes, all based on the palustrine (i.e. prairie) system. Palustrine wetlands can be located both near streams and in open ponds. Both styles are characterized by similar vegetation (Cowardin, Carter, Golet and LaRoe: 1979/1992). The location of regulated wetlands matters as development here can trigger additional review/permits by state and/or federal agencies.

Table 2.2: NFWS WETLANDS CODE

Wetlands Code	Code Explanation
PEMA	Palustrine, Emergent, Temporarily Flooded
PEMAdf	Palustrine, Emergent, Temporarily Flooded, Partly Drained/Ditched, Farmed
PFO1A	Palustrine, Forested, Broadleaf Deciduous, Temporarily Flooded
PFO1CH	Palustrine, Forested, Broadleaf Deciduous, Semi/Permanently Flooded
PUBGH	Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom, Intermittently/Permanently Flooded

Tree Canopy

Figure 2.5 (page 34) shows Dawson's tree canopy for the year 2007, the most recent year for which information is available. As with many rural communities in central Illinois, most of the tree cover in the municipality occurs near residential lots. It is notable that those areas which are not covered in trees are primarily agricultural. Street trees are important to a community's well being as they give streets a shaded feel that many believe increases the quality of life in a community, becoming another amenity for residents.

Natural Areas

While located where natural areas abound (see Figure 2.6, p. 35), Dawson itself lacks any natural areas as defined by LaGesse and Associates (2004). However, for the purposes of this comprehensive plan, it is important to stress Dawson's place in the larger Sangamon County region.

Figure 2.7 (p. 36) shows the quality of the surrounding natural area. In terms of acreage, a significant portion of the natural area in Dawson's vicinity is floodplain forest with some areas of slough and others classified as dry mesic upland.

Utilizing the scale below (Table 2.3), LeGesse and Associates graded areas in terms of their natural quality, or the "relative degree of disturbance within that community" (LeGesse, p. 13). Referring to Figure 2.7, most of the natural areas in the vicinity of Dawson are either Grade C or Grade D, indicating some disturbance.

Table 2.3: GRADING SYSTEM FOR NATURAL AREAS
Source: LeGesse & Associates

Grade A	Relatively stable or undisturbed communities.
Grade B	Late successional or lightly disturbed communities.
Grade C	Mid-successional or moderately to heavily disturbed communities.
Grade D	Early successional or severely disturbed communities.
Grade E	Very early successional or very severely disturbed communities.

Efforts should be taken to preserve these areas so that they do not become worse. Notably, there are few natural areas in Illinois left. Overall, only 25,723 acres of high quality natural areas remain in Illinois, less than seven hundredths of one percent of the state's land and water. This figure reflects Illinois' historic use of land for agriculture.

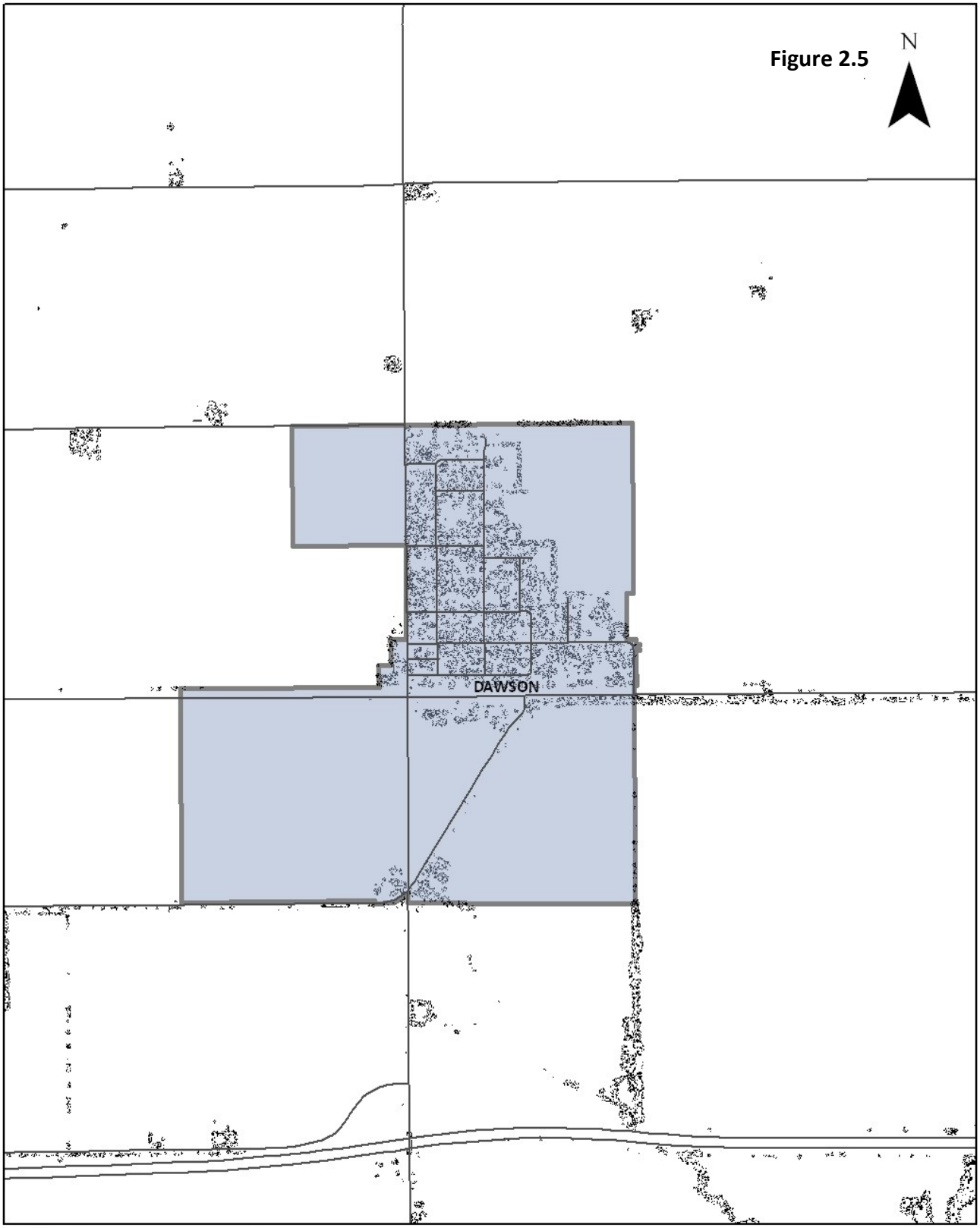
Dawson's proximity to the Sangamon River and the Clear Lake area must be considered as the community looks to the future. As noted in the 2014 Lincoln Heritage Water Trail Study (Massie & Massie Associates, 2014) for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Sangamon River Corridor from Decatur to Petersburg has great potential to become a regional recreational destination for residents and visitors.

Environmental Challenges and Opportunities of Note

The Village is not constrained by any significant environmental factors, and efforts should be emphasized to maintain its green spaces and other natural areas.

However, two challenges exist, one arising from the fact that a significant portion of the Village may be subject to mine subsidence, and flooding may affect its water system, specifically the area around the water plant.

Both are actionable through mitigation and land management.



SSC RPC Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

Data Source: Sangamon County GIS
AU - 02.07.2014

Dawson Tree Canopy
2007

0 0.050.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Miles

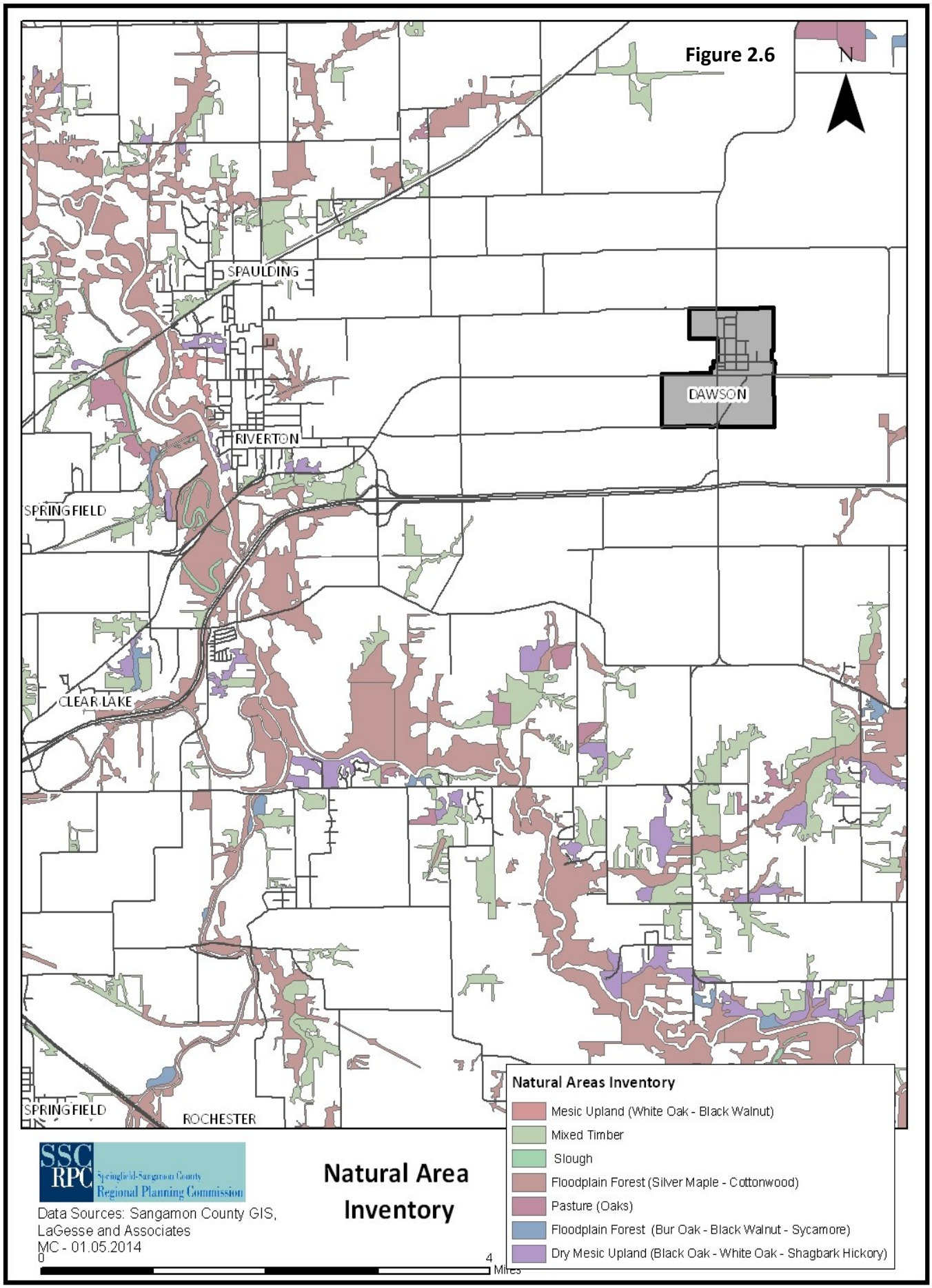


Figure 2.6
N
SPAULDING
DAWSON
RIVERTON
SPRINGFIELD
CLEAR LAKE
SPRINGFIELD
ROCHESTER
Natural Areas Inventory
Mesic Upland (White Oak - Black Walnut)
Mixed Timber
Slough
Floodplain Forest (Silver Maple - Cottonwood)
Pasture (Oaks)
Floodplain Forest (Bur Oak - Black Walnut - Sycamore)
Dry Mesic Upland (Black Oak - White Oak - Shagbark Hickory)
SSC RPC
Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission
Data Sources: Sangamon County GIS, LaGesse and Associates
MC - 01.05.2014
Natural Area Inventory
0
4
Miles

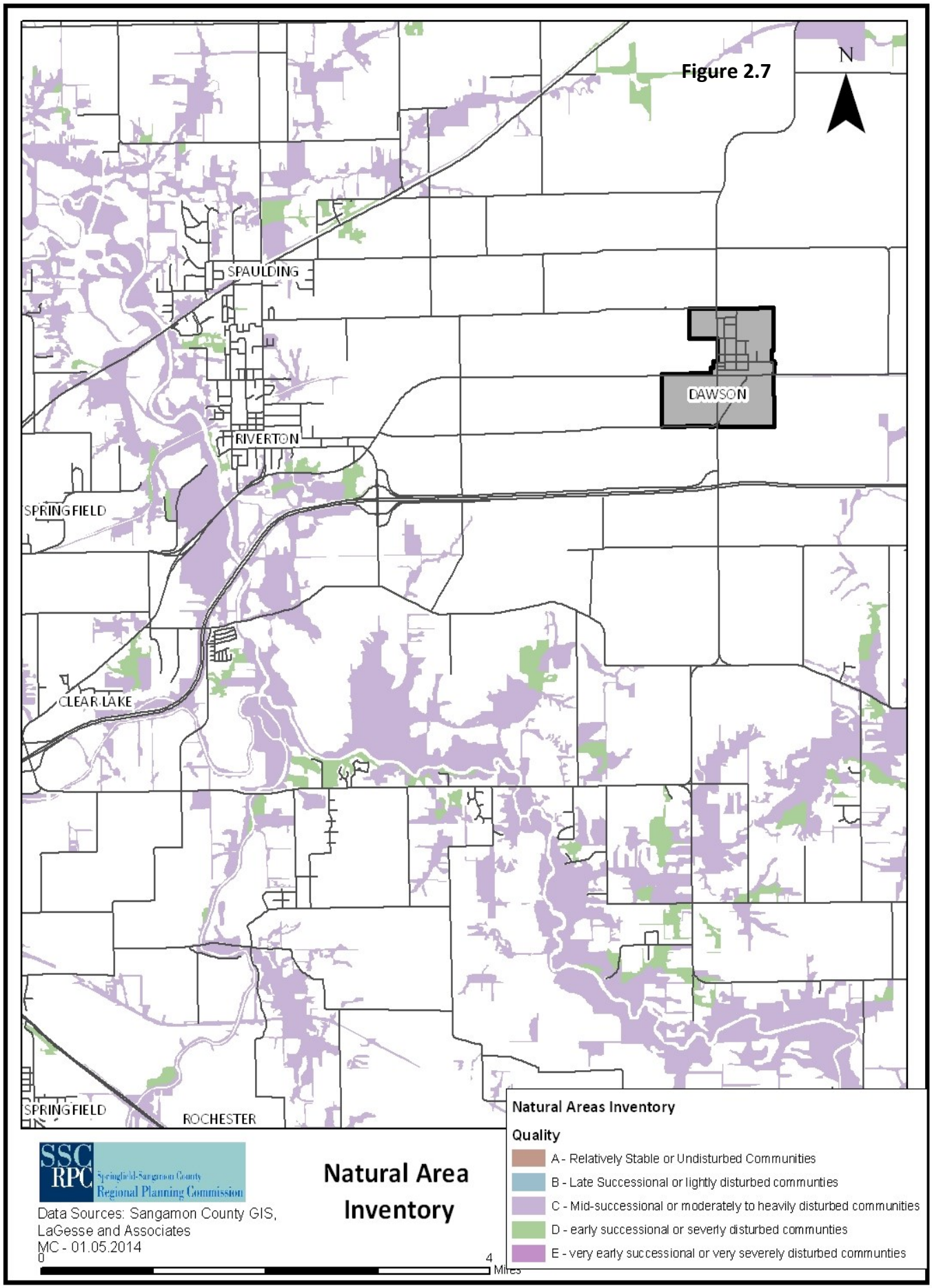


Figure 2.7
N
SPAULDING
DAWSON
RIVERTON
SPRINGFIELD
CLEAR LAKE
SPRINGFIELD
ROCHESTER
Natural Areas Inventory
Quality
A - Relatively Stable or Undisturbed Communities
B - Late Successional or lightly disturbed communties
C - Mid-successional or moderately to heavily disturbed communities
D - early successional or severly disturbed communties
E - very early successional or very severely disturbed communties
SSC RPC
Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission
Data Sources: Sangamon County GIS, LaGesse and Associates
MC - 01.05.2014
Natural Area Inventory
0
4
Miles

Utility Infrastructure

Water Utility

The Village manages its own water utility which supplies water to residents in incorporated Dawson as well as residents nearby. Its water utility currently has three wells, all of which are located southwest of the Village at Mechanicsburg Rd. near a settled portion of unincorporated Clear Lake Township. Source water for the utility comes from the sand and gravel deposits which receive water from the Sangamon River. The wells range from a depth of 41 to 54 feet (Midwest Technology Assistance Center, n.d.). Once extracted, water is treated at a water treatment plant southwest of Dawson. Treated water is stored in two elevated storage tanks. The first is in the unincorporated area south of Dawson, near the water treatment plant. The second is located within the Village, just off of Old Route 36. The capacities of these towers are 100,000 gallons and 50,000 gallons, respectively. The towers were built in 1980 and 1967.

Dawson currently supplies water to all those within the Village, as well as some of the surrounding unincorporated areas. Dawson currently has approximately 24-36 hours spare water capacity for its user load. The Village's water capacity currently allows it some additional capacity, in the range of 50 additional homes along with some small commercial development, and based upon population projections is likely to be able to meet its needs for the time period covered by this plan. **In the event that larger developments were to occur, Dawson would need an additional water main reaching the village.**

One drawback of the existing water utility system is that only a single main currently transports water to the Village from the water treatment plant. This main is a 6-inch main, but in the event of future development, increased water flow from a larger main may be beneficial due to the long distance that this water must be transported. While this appears to be cost-prohibitive without extensive advance planning, the Village should continue to consider this need if the opportunity arises.

Similarly, additional opportunities to "loop" portions of the system to increase flow and pressure would be beneficial. As of the writing of this plan, the Village is considering the option of adding a small residential loop to its water system for this purpose. This would be located on Strawberry Lane south of I-72 in an unincorporated area of Dawson and would expand access to at least a dozen homes, providing the opportunity for development in the Wandering Trails area.

Dawson has tried in the past to apply for funds for a water main extension. This extension would have provided residents who are currently using wells for their water to have access to treated water. In 2011, a design grant request prepared by Greene & Bradford, Inc. was submitted to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), yet no funds were allocated. The proposed project area for the grant included the Strawberry Lane area discussed above.

As it stands now, Dawson residents are served with quality treated water at a reasonable price. While substantial residential or commercial development would necessitate another storage tank or possibly a wider or additional water main, there is no reason to believe at this time that such measures are necessary to meet the needs of residents in the incorporated area. The Village may wish to gather more information regarding the possible replacement of one of its water towers which was built in 1967. As the tower nears the end of its life-cycle, it will be important for Dawson to find funds with which to replace it. Further, even if replacement is not presently

required, there is benefit to exploring the possibility and any alternatives.

Wastewater Utility

Village of Dawson residents are part of the shared Buffalo-Dawson-Mechanicsburg Sewer Commission. The sewer lines for the Village are PVC pipes installed in the 1960s-1970s. These lines have not been slip-lined, but do receive on-going maintenance. The lift associated with the sewer pump station in Dawson was replaced in 2009 through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act federal funding, and is therefore in good condition.

While Dawson's sewer system is generally in good shape and equipped to handle small scale residential or commercial development, larger development (i.e. over 100 lots), would require work on the sewer pumps.

Electric and Gas

The Village of Dawson receives natural gas and electric service from Ameren Illinois. Dawson is also part of the Sangamon County Electric Aggregation Consortium, and may in various contract years purchase electric supply through an Alternative Retail Electric Supplier, though Ameren remains responsible for transmission and distribution and default supply. Gas and electric utilities are adequate, and are likely to be able to meet all future development needs.

Communications

The Village's exclusive cable television provider is Mediacom. Internet access can be provided by Excede, T6 as well as Mediacom. Community leaders have indicated the service is reliable.

Utility Challenges and Opportunities of Note

The Village's basic utility services are sufficient to meet its needs if either the low or moderate population projections are met. If the population of the Village rises above these levels (above 50 new homes), or if there are significant increases in commercial development, improvements to the water system will be needed.

As noted in the previous section, and in terms of water service, additional attention will need to be given to actions intended to protect the water system during flooding events, particularly the water plant. While the Village itself may not be directly subject to flooding, this facility is outside the Village bounds and it, as well as roadway access to it, are susceptible to flooding, as events during early 2016 found. This facility is critical to both current residents as well as future ones.

In order to attract new, younger residents to the Village, attention should be given to improving internet availability to residents. The availability of reliable and fast internet connectivity is a common problem for smaller rural communities, and the weakness of such systems is a limitation to both residential and commercial growth.

In this regard the Village should also understand the importance that its "web" presence will have in enticing businesses and younger residents to reside there. This would include adding additional information to its webpage — a Village profile, for example — as an added recruitment tool.

Transportation

Regional Transportation Planning and the Village of Dawson

Because of the interconnectedness of communities, transportation planning is largely performed at the regional level (Meck and Retzlaff, 2006). With this regional focus in mind, in 1962 Congress reauthorized the Federal-Aid Highway Act calling for the creation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). MPOs are tasked with creating long range transportation plans. These organizations carry out the planning process with the cooperation of states and local jurisdictions. Any urban area with a population of 50,000 or more persons must designate an MPO.

In the Springfield Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), the Springfield Area Transportation Study (SATS) serves as the MPO. The SSCRPC administers SATS in conjunction with Sangamon County, the City of Springfield, Springfield Mass Transit District, other local entities, and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

While Dawson is located just outside of the SATS metropolitan planning area, it is relevant to consider the activities within the MPA as these plans connect the Village to the larger commercial and industrial areas as well as the job centers that exist there, providing linkages to major state and federal roadways serving the MPA. Furthermore, these activities often directly affect Dawson. For example, SATS has identified resurfacing I-72 east of Dawson as a project for which funding is authorized to be sought.

In addition to SATS, the recent Sangamon County Regional Strategic Plan recommends that officials in Dawson engage other partners in seeking to address transportation needs. The plan recommends that communities work not only with SATS, but also with Sangamon County, the SSCRPC, the Regional Leadership Council, and various state and federal agencies in order to identify projects, and then work together to pursue funding for those projects. The Regional Strategic Plan also discusses the importance of incorporating rural concerns into regional transportation planning. While Springfield is serviced by the Springfield Mass Transit District (SMTD), rural communities often lack access to public transportation. The Sangamon-Menard

Area Regional Transit (SMART) program provides transportation to individuals in rural areas who have various needs for which they must travel to other communities.

Roadways

Dawson is linked to the Springfield metropolitan area and surrounding communities via a system of roads. These roads provide access to work, education, recreational opportunities, and residential areas.

All roadway systems are composed of a hierarchy of streets. While there are many ways in which this hierarchy might be described, the SSCRPC employs the language contained in the Sangamon County Code to describe the roadway system. These definitions are provided in Table 4.1 on the next page.

Based upon these definitions, the Village's roadway infrastructure may be described as follows:

Major Arterials : Interstate 72 is within 3.5 miles of the Village going east or west via Old Route 36. At the Overpass Rd. junction, which Dawson residents use to commute to Springfield, the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) in 2012 was approximately 13,500.

Minor Arterials : There are no minor arterials in Dawson, although Old Rt. 36 becomes classified as a minor arterial just west of the Village of Riverton.

Collector Streets : Old Route 36 is a major collector street which provides access to I-72, Springfield, Riverton, Buffalo, and other communities near Dawson. On a daily basis Old Route 36 sees more traffic than any other street in Dawson's corporate limits. According to data from Market Planning Solutions, in

Table 4.1: STREET SYSTEM DEFINITIONS
Major Arterial Street: The highest traffic volume corridors serving major activity centers and longest trip desires. Service to abutting land is subordinate to the provision of travel service to major traffic movements. They are normally spaced on a one mile grid pattern and may include expressways.
Minor Arterial Street: Streets and roadways which interconnect with and augment the major arterial street system and provide service trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel mobility than major arterials. Minor arterials place more emphasis on land access and distribute travel to geographic areas smaller than those identified with major arterials.
Collector Street: Streets penetrating neighborhoods collecting traffic from local streets and channeling it into the arterial street system. A minor amount of through traffic may be expected, but collector streets primarily provide land access service and carry local traffic movements within residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas.
Local Street: Streets not classified in a higher system which primarily provide direct access to abutting land and access to higher types of roadways. They offer the lowest level of mobility being the narrowest and shortest streets in the street system.

2012 Old Route 36 saw AADT of approximately 1,600-2,000 vehicles per day.

Sangamon County Route 16 (Buffalo Hart Rd. / Constance Street) is a north/south major collector street which passes through the Village. The road intersects with Old Route 36 as well as Illinois Route 54 north of the Village. Sangamon County Route 16 also provides access to Mechanicsburg via County Route 33. In 2012, Sangamon County Route 16 saw AADT of approximately 1,100-1,400 vehicles per day depending upon where in the Village this figure is measured.

Local Roads : The bulk of the Village's transportation network is made up of local roads. As the name implies, these roads are intended to provide access to residences and are used primarily by residents of the Village or individuals doing business in Dawson. Traffic volumes for local roads are unlikely to change absent significant residential or commercial expansion in Dawson.

Main Street is an important east/west road which parallels Old Route 36 at the southern portion of the Village. Moving from west-to-east, a grain elevator, agricultural buildings, and houses abut the southern side of the street while the northern side of the street is largely residential throughout. The street intersects with Dawson Road/ Constant Street at its eastern terminus and Locust Street at its western terminus.

Figure 4.1 on the next page provides a map of the primary road network in the Village as well as their functional classification. Figure 4.2 on the subsequent page shows average daily traffic counts.

Traffic Safety

To review the traffic safety needs of the Village, the SSCRPC turned to data from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). IDOT uses five categories to record auto crashes. Crashes are defined as follows:

Fatal Crash: A fatal crash is a motor vehicle crash (single or multiple) that results in the death of one or more persons.

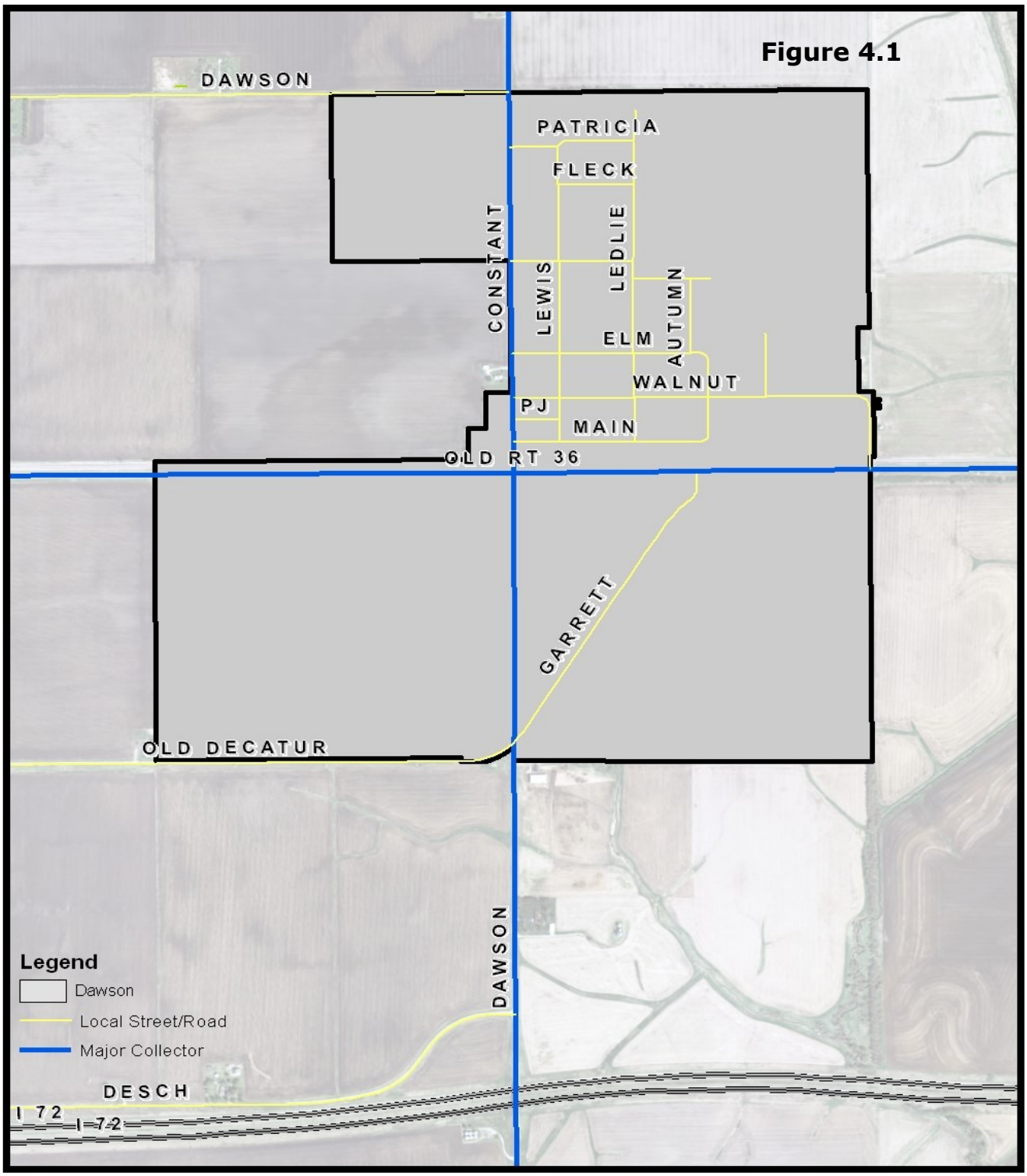
A-Type Injury (incapacitating injury): Any injury, other than a fatal injury, which prevents the injured person from walking, driving, or normally continuing the activities he/she was capable of performing before the injury occurred. Includes severe lacerations, broken limbs, skull or chest injuries, and abdominal injuries.

B-Type Injury (non-incapacitating injury): Any injury, other than a fatal or incapacitating injury, that is evident to observers at the scene of the crash. Inclusions: lumps on the head, abrasions, bruises, and minor lacerations.

C-Type Injury (reported, not evident): Any injury reported or claimed that is not listed above. Inclusions: momentary unconsciousness, claims of injuries not evident, limping, complaints of pain, nausea.

Property Damage: A crash in which there were no deaths or injuries, but property damage is in excess of $500.

There were 15 crashes within Dawson's corporate limits during the five-year period from 2007 through 2011, the most recent period for which data was available from IDOT (see Figure 4.3, p. 43). These figures do not include crashes which occurred near Dawson, including those occurring on Riverton Rd./ Dawson Rd., the site of several crashes.



N

Data Source: SSCRPC, Sangamon County GIS, SMTD, IDOT
MC 12.4.2014

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Miles

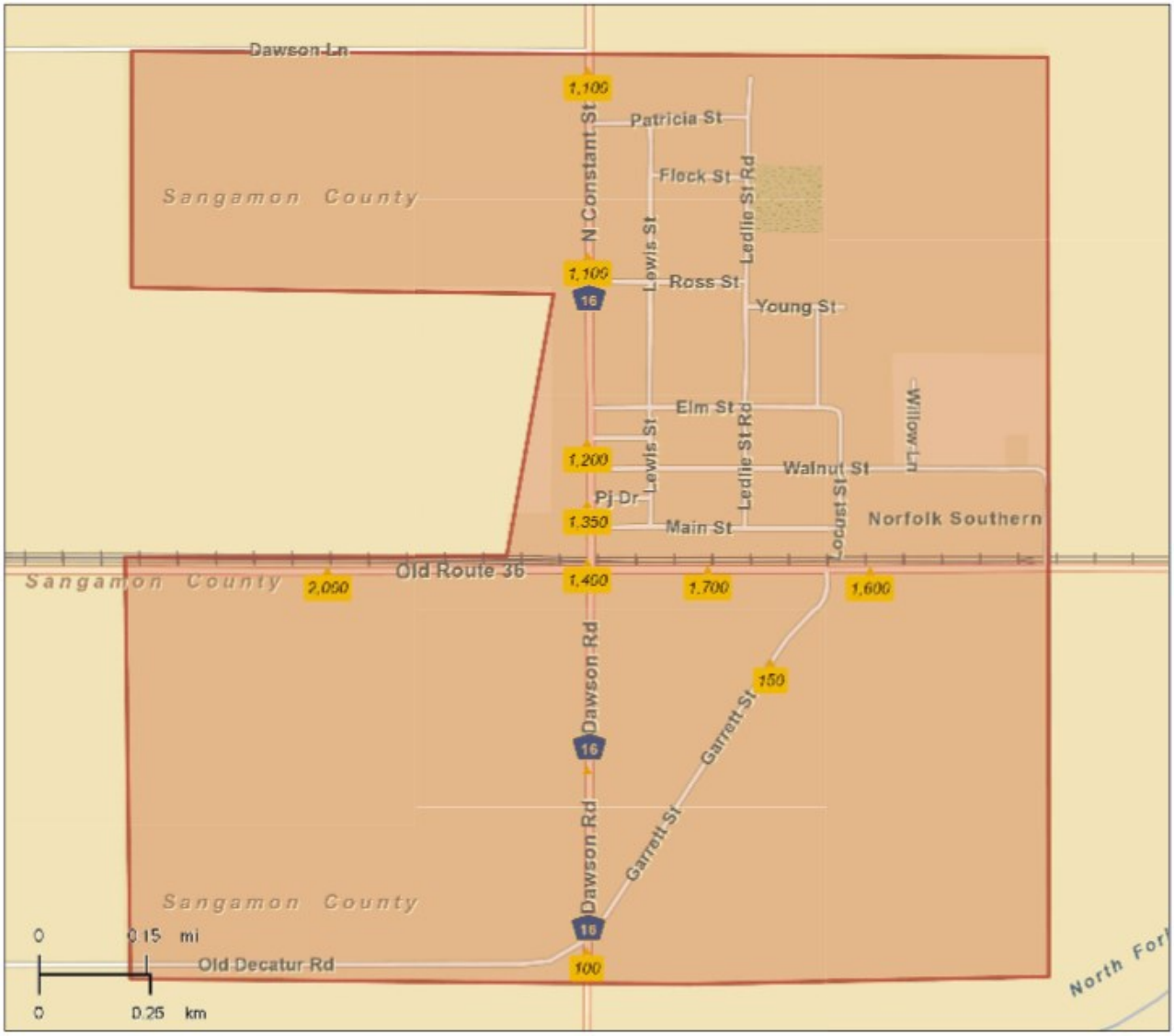
Village of Dawson Functional Classification of Roads

SSC RPC Springfield Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

Figure 4.2

Traffic Count Map

Dawson Village, IL
1718745 (Dawson village)
Geography: Popular places



Average Daily Traffic Volume
- Up to 6,000 vehicles per day
- 6,001 - 15,000
- 15,001 - 30,000
- 30,001 - 50,000
- 50,001 - 100,000
- More than 100,000 per day

Source: ©2012 Market Planning Solutions, Inc.

December 08, 2014

Made with Esri Community Analyst
www.esri.com/ca 800-447-9778 Try it Now!

©2014 Esri

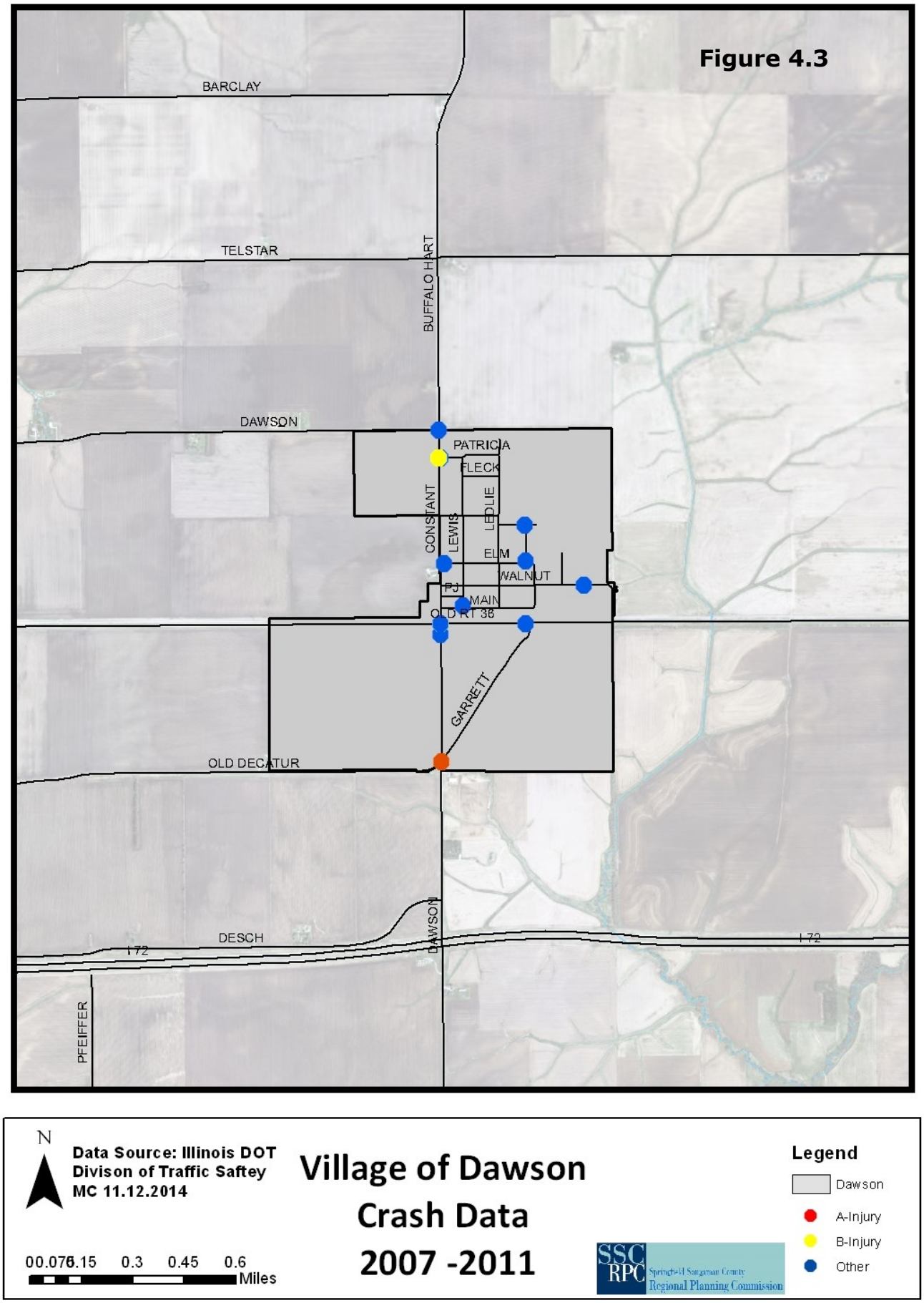


Figure 4.3
BARCLAY
TELSTAR
BUFFALO HART
DAWSON
PATRICIA
FLECK
CONSTANT
LEWIS
LESLIE
ELM
WALNUT
PJ
MAIN
OLD RT 36
GARRETT
OLD DECATUR
DESCH
I 72
I 72
DAWSON
PFEIFFER
N
Data Source: Illinois DOT
Divison of Traffic Saftey
MC 11.12.2014
0 0.075 0.15 0.3 0.45 0.6
Miles
Village of Dawson
Crash Data
2007 -2011
SSC RPC
Springfield Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission
Legend
Dawson
A-Injury
B-Injury
Other

Table 4.2, below, shows the distribution of crashes over this period. As the table indicates, the years with the most crashes during the period were 2008 and 2009, when five crashes occurred in the Village. Other recent years in comparison have had relatively few crashes. Importantly, of the 15 crashes, 13 were property only crashes, while only one was a "B-Type" injury and one an "A-Type" injury.

Table 4.2: CRASHES IN DAWSON, 2007 – 2011
Source: Illinois Department of Transportation

Year	Number of Crashes
2007	1
2008	2
2009	5
2010	5
2011	2

The low rate of accidents, specifically those causing serious harm, reflect positively on the Village and are perhaps attributable to the low rate of speed at which vehicles in Dawson are usually travelling.

While it is difficult to extrapolate from data as old as that provided by IDOT, it would seem that based upon the low rates of serious accidents, the community does not face significant problems related to serious accidents, at least within corporate limits.

This appears to be validated by the community survey conducted by the SSCRPC for Dawson. Respondents to the survey did not report problems with traffic in the Village. Indeed, respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with safety given current enforcement levels and existing speed limits. At the same time, respondents did express concern about drivers not obeying traffic laws, with 27.3% saying that it was a "significant/severe problem."

Railroads

The Norfolk Southern Railroad runs east-west through Dawson at the southern end of the Village, paralleling Old Route 36 to the south and Main Street to the north. The trunk line extends from Kansas City, MO, in the west to Decatur, Fort Wayne, IN, and other destinations farther east. It is part of the interconnected Norfolk Southern system of railroads, the most extensive freight network in the eastern United States. As a freight line, there is no passenger traffic on this particular rail corridor.

There are two at-grade crossings in the Village. The first, on the western side of Dawson, intersects with County Highway 16. The second, at the eastern edge of Dawson, intersects with Walnut Street. Both crossings are just north of Old Route 36 at the southern terminus of the settled portion of the Village.

As with any at-grade crossing, there are significant safety concerns associated with the intersections. Pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists must observe caution around the intersection due to the high speed of rail traffic. Currently, stop signs on both the northern and southern sides of the railroad indicate to passengers the presence of the railroad.

The Village may wish to consider additional signage or other improvements to address safety concerns related to its at-grade crossings. Funding for improvements is made available from the State of Illinois through the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). ICC administers the Crossing Safety Improvement Program (CSIP). Funds are appropriated to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) which pays the majority of the costs through the State Road Fund.

Pedestrian Connectivity

Sidewalks provide the principle means for pedestrian travel in most communities. However, in Dawson many streets do not have accompanying sidewalks, which reduces pedestrian connectivity and creates the potential for accidents.

This presents a transportation planning challenge for the Village, and several questions pertaining to sidewalks were included in the SSCRPC community survey.

A majority (67.6%) of respondents to the survey indicated that they are more likely to walk in the street than on the sidewalk when they walk in their neighborhood, whereas 6.8% indicated there were "no

sidewalks available." These numbers are unsurprising given the many streets in Dawson lacking sidewalks. As a follow-up question on the survey, respondents were asked what would encourage them to use sidewalks instead of streets. Top responses included "sidewalks in better condition" (41.6%) and "more sidewalks/paths" (31.2%).

Additionally, respondents indicated concerns related to privacy. For instance, one resident mentioned that the "sidewalks were too narrow" whereas another mentioned that they "don't want people in yard." Again, these concerns were not unexpected given that sidewalks in Dawson are often narrow and end abruptly. Furthermore, they are often close to residential structures creating privacy concerns. For these reasons, many residents in Dawson reported they were unlikely to utilize the sidewalks. Yet while some residents disapproved of proposed sidewalk improvements and installation along residential streets, a majority of respondents were in favor. Almost 60% either "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed that the Village should improve or install sidewalks in those areas.

Consideration by the Village for improving sidewalks is important for both transportation accessibility and safety reasons, as well as it being beneficial in attracting growth.

In regards to safety, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) identifies fatal crashes involving pedestrians nationwide. In 2012, the year for which the most recent data was available, there were 4,743 pedestrians killed and 76,000 pedestrians injured in traffic crashes across the United States. The NHTSA points out that "on average, a pedestrian was killed every 2 hours and injured every 7 minutes in traffic crashes" (2014). These figures have increased in recent years as a percentage of total fatalities, accounting for 14% of all traffic fatalities. And unlike what one might think, the NTHSA states that most of these crashes occur when the pedestrian is *not* in an intersection.

The addition of both pedestrian and other non-modernized transportation (such as trails, which are addressed below) to the Village's planning is important as it is related to both state and federal efforts termed the *Complete Streets Policy*. This policy is rapidly becoming a requirement for receipt of federal and even state roadway funding.

Complete Streets refers to public rights-of-way that are designed for all users — including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders — regardless of age or ability. While Dawson is a rural community in character, the Village should still seek to adopt a policy that recognizes the importance of serving pedestrians and bicyclists in addition to motorists, and that takes into account the differing levels of ability of some of its residents due to age.

Requiring that new developments adhere to the Complete Streets concept is not difficult. The Village can require that developers install ADA compliant sidewalks along both sides of the street thereby opening up travel to persons with physical disabilities and making travel safer for children. The Village can do this by amending its subdivision ordinance to reflect the Complete Streets concept.

Retrofitting sidewalks on already platted land presents a more serious challenge as monies are unlikely to be available to address existing sidewalks. Additionally, public opinion may be opposed to installing new sidewalks.

In the Dawson community survey, residents generally saw improving and installing sidewalks as a "low priority." Yet at the same time, residents stipulated that having sidewalks in better condition would encourage them to use the sidewalk over the street (41.6% agreed with this statement). Thus it is not that residents are unwilling to use sidewalks, rather, individuals would like a quality, connected network of sidewalks on which to walk.

These challenges should not stop Dawson from retrofitting sidewalks when feasible. Doing so would make properties more appealing, make travel safer for children, and allow the Village to become more connected to the broader area. For now, the Village should continue to explore funding possibilities as well as mandate that new development require ADA -compliant pedestrian infrastructure in order to promote Complete Streets.

Multi-Use Trails

Considering the availability of all modes of transportation, including both pedestrian and bicycle movement, is important in community planning as larger numbers of people are using these modes and expect their availability in the places where they want to live. This is particularly true within younger adult population cohorts, such as those the Village may wish to attract. They are also becoming a requirement associated with state and federal road and highway funding due to the adoption of the Complete Streets Policy, which contemplates that these non-motorized modes of travel must be addressed when roads are built or reconfigured. While provisions for bicyclists may be made available on roads, rural communities have found multi-use trails to be beneficial in enticing younger residents to their communities.

Paved Trails

Currently, Dawson lacks paved multi-use trails that can be utilized by individuals for either bicycle or pedestrian travel. Trails such as these allow for alternative transportation to work or to other nearby areas and promote exercise and recreation. Currently, residents in Rochester, Springfield, and Chatham enjoy access to recreation via the Lost Bridge Trail and the Interurban Trail. These trails increase revenue for the communities outside of Springfield in which they are located, and contribute to a positive image of the community. **Dawson should explore cost effective ways in which a trail connection could reach the Village so as to increase tourism and promote its image. Dawson has explored trail options with Buffalo, and such dialogue and joint planning should continue.**

There are many ways in which funding for such a purpose can be procured. However, funds which are provided by state agencies (i.e., IDNR, IDOT) are partially dependent upon the fiscal health of the State of Illinois and often require local matching funds. As such, funding may not be currently available in all cases. Engaging funding agencies to learn more about the status of such programs and about new opportunities for funding is imperative given the fiscal climate in Illinois.

There are two primary programs that the Village might consider that offer funding to communities to construct multi-use trials:

The **Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP):** According to IDOT, ITEP provides funding for community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historic, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of Illinois' transportation infrastructure. Sponsors may receive up to 80% reimbursement for project costs while the remaining 20% is the responsibility of the award recipient. Typically the application process opens sometime in February to May. Application review takes place June through August, and the awards are announced in September and October.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS): While this program is not directly applicable to the Village due to the location of the schools serving it residents, it should be advanced for those locations as part of any paved trail system Dawson provides or ultimately connects with.

SRTS is an IDOT program that provides funding for sidewalks and pedestrian improvements that create linkages to schools, enabling school children to walk or bike safely to their school destinations. Created in 2005, SRTS promotes positive health behavior in children, and allows for various types of improvements including new sidewalks, sidewalk repair, roundabouts, bike lanes, signals, wide shoulders, and other improvements. The Springfield engineering firm Greene and Bradford, Inc. recently conducted a study in which they identified potential sidewalk placements in Dawson. The proposed sidewalks would impact an estimated 47 elementary students. While the program is intended to provide a safe route for children, it may also further open up Dawson to transportation networks existing outside of the Village. Other small communities in the region have been successful in receiving these funds.

Unpaved Trails

Unpaved trails are a low-cost way to connect areas for the purpose of recreation as well as transportation. The SATS planned bicycle network extends into Riverton, becoming part of the Riverton Comprehensive Plan, and would extend as far as Dawson to allow residents of Dawson to commute to Riverton by this means.

Increased investment in recreational opportunities and historic sites in Riverton would help make the case for the construction of the trail as would future development in both Riverton and Dawson. However, absent such development it is still in Dawson's interest to pursue construction as the trail could be used to attract potential younger residents and link the village to more urbanized parts of Sangamon County.

Should Dawson wish to pursue funding opportunities for developing unpaved trails, it would be wise to consider programs administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR):

The Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Grant Program provides financial aid to government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and other eligible groups or individuals to develop, operate, maintain, and acquire land for off-highway vehicle parks and trails. These facilities must be open and accessible to the public. Applications for the OHV grant program are due March 1 of each calendar year and awards are generally announced within 180 days following the deadline date. Grant proposals require a non-refundable application fee which is calculated at ¼ of 1% of the total award requested with a minimum fee of $100 and a maximum fee of $300.

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funds a variety of motorized and non-motorized trail projects. Seventy percent of costs are funded federally and 30% must be matched by the recipient. The maximum grant award is $200,000 per application for non-motorized development projects. There is no set maximum grant award for acquisition of motorized projects. Applications are placed through IDNR and are due by March 1 of the calendar year. There are sometimes long delays between application and funding for this grant source. As with the OHV program, the application fee is ¼ of 1% of the total award requested.

The Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program was created in 1990 to assist eligible units of government in acquiring, constructing, and rehabilitating non-motorized bicycle paths and directly related support facilities. Grants are available to any local government agency having statutory authority to acquire and develop land for public bicycle path purposes. Project applications are limited to land acquisition or trail development along a single trail corridor. Projects involving looped trails are not eligible for assistance. Approved projects are eligible for up to 50% of approved project costs. Maximum assistance is for a development (construction) project is limited to $200,000 per annual request. No maximum grant amount limit exists for acquisition projects other than the established annual state appropriation level for the program. The application fee is calculated using the same formula as specified in the OHV and RTP programs.

Joint Efforts

Various opportunities exist for Dawson to make use of other trail projects to advance its non-motorized transportation network, and a potential partnership with Buffalo was previously mentioned. In addition, the comprehensive plan for the Village of Riverton addresses the use of Springfield's Clear Lake Gravel Pits, southwest of Dawson, for this purpose. The Riverton Plan calls for the lakes and natural area associated with the gravel pits to be utilized for recreational development and public use. If implemented, these projects could have a positive impact on all nearby communities, including Dawson.

Another opportunity exists related to the Old Route 36 Trail. Running parallel on the south side of Old Route 36 from west of Illiopolis to Riverton is a vacated railroad right-of-way that creates an opportunity for a rail-to-trail conversion.

Much of the corridor is owned by the state (including all of the stretch west of Buffalo), with some segments in railroad ownership and one small parcel in private ownership. Much interest was expressed by citizens and communities in the area to develop a trail along this corridor, which could ultimately tie to Dawson.

Transportation Challenges and Opportunities of Note

Overall, Dawson's transportation infrastructure for motorized vehicles is adequate to meet its needs in the foreseeable future, and appears to be adequate to provide the access needed by its residents in a safe way. Additional attention will need to be given to it should population and household growth over the period studied be greater than the mid-range growth projected here, but the population growth anticipated by this plan should not negatively affect the system.

The Village has access to rail, but given its location and the current limitations of its businesses (particularly the lack of any industrial users) it is unlikely that additional rail capacity will be needed. There are some concerns regarding at-grade rail crossings and those concerns should be addressed.

Particular attention is given to the need for the Village to address non-motorized transportation; specifically pedestrians and bicyclists. This is for three reasons:

- Both community survey comments and field observation leads to the conclusion that the sidewalk system should be improved, both as an amenity to residents but also for safety reasons. This is of particular importance in areas near and surrounding community park land, including the expansion of this area noted in the Land Use section of this plan presented in a following section. The Village should consider development of a trail around this area.
- As maintaining and growing its population, particularly younger families, were found to be the major challenges facing the Village, attention should be given to improving amenities for both pedestrians and bicyclists. This is because such amenities are useful in attracting younger families and individuals. Research suggests that the portion of the population known as the Millennials — which currently is the largest demographic group in the United States — is seeking the types of amenities most often found in more urban areas. Pedestrian and bicycle amenities (along with reliable internet access) such as those described in this plan can help "level the playing field" for smaller communities.
- The community survey indicated that Dawson residents were more inclined for the Village to seek grants in order to fund improvements rather than use other local revenue sources, and state and federal highway and road funds are likely to require a Complete Streets approach. Such an approach would require that the Village address both pedestrian and bicycle travel when road improvements are contemplated.

One should also note that the potential exists for regional approaches to meeting these needs, and some are described above. Joint efforts with surrounding communities could serve Dawson well in providing the various amenities younger people seek, and reduce the Village's costs to provide them.

Concern was also voiced in the community survey concerning the Village's "presence", since it is not directly located on an interstate. The Village may improve its presence through "way-finding" signage and improvements in the look of its transportation arrival areas, and federal and state grants are sometimes available for this purpose though the federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The Village may wish to consider the Small Town Gateway Corridor, Arrival Character Area, and Small Town Commercial Character Area designs offered in the *Sangamon County Regional Strategic Plan* (2014) for all of its streets and roadways. Illustrative designs are provided in Appendix 2 of this plan.

These improvements would call for better designed and attractive signage at corridors leading to the Village, as well as the removal of lighted or unlighted portable signs, as well as other flashing lighted signs that are not necessary for public safety.

Economic and Community Growth

Economic development involves the efforts undertaken by policy makers, community leaders, businesspersons, and other stakeholders to improve the financial well-being and quality of life of a community through the creation, retention, and expansion of business activity in the community. Economic development is, in a sense, community development due to the link between economic and social growth.

As a community's economic base grows and diversifies, new opportunities for residents of the community arise. Efforts to improve the economic situation of a community are important because they can expand the community's tax base, allowing it to provide the services and quality-of-life amenities residents desire, as well as the growing customer base and infrastructure that business needs, providing a vital cycle for additional growth.

The way a community approaches economic development and growth will differ due to a number of factors, some of which are outside of the community's control. Location, for example, affects the ability of a municipality to draw both residential and commercial development, as do the attitudes of community members toward development.

For rural communities economic growth is important because the population trend in many cases is toward decline. Troublingly, there are indications that this trend could worsen.

Members of the Millennial Generation, now the largest component of the U.S. population as mentioned in the previous section, are leaving small towns and not returning (Dure 2014), and in many cases seeking a lifestyle more like that which can be found in larger cities (Sims, 2016). With this in mind, communities must increase efforts to attract younger residents by catering to their needs.

Efforts such as creating a downtown "core" and expanding recreational activities, such as those that can be provided by bike trail networks, even if taken in small steps, may have large payoffs as they provide the younger generation with incentives to move into rural communities with a lower costs of living, particularly when these communities are located near larger urban areas.

Yet while it may seem that economic growth is critical to smaller communities in light of present challenges, its residents may not share this view. Not all residents desire growth, and some residents may favor certain types of residential growth while disfavoring business growth.

In the community survey conducted for Dawson, residents indicated a preference for moderate population and business growth, with only a small minority favoring rapid growth. This sentiment indicates that Dawson residents would likely be uncomfortable with significant changes in population or business makeup. In light of these considerations, future development must take into account both the necessity of growth and the desire of residents to maintain village character. Therefore it is imperative that those involved in the implementation of initiatives undertaken to promote growth take into account the desires of the Village's residents as expressed in the survey, and make the effort to explain both the positive and negative outcomes that will arise depending upon the development path Dawson ultimately takes.

In any event, there are a number of fundamental factors that are relevant to Dawson's future economic and community growth.

Supporting Infrastructure

Consumers, producers, and suppliers all depend on the supporting infrastructure to access local businesses. Additionally, residents depend on well maintained and resilient infrastructure to meet their daily needs.

Minimally, roads and highways need to be maintained, water must be available to businesses and residents, and gas, electricity, and telecommunications must be provided at a reasonable cost and with minimal service interruption.

Roadway Access

Dawson is advantaged for economic growth in that although it is not on an interstate, it is still easily accessed by major highways. Old Route 36 runs adja-

cent to the southern portion of the Village providing east-west transit to Springfield in the west and Buffalo to the east.

Interstate 72 is accessible within 3 ½ miles to both the east and west near the villages of Buffalo and Riverton, respectively. I-55 access is within 10 miles of the Village via I-72 and Old Route 36, providing transit to St. Louis in the south and Chicago in the North.

While Dawson may be better-equipped for development if it had direct I-72 access — like the nearby communities of Buffalo, Mechanicsburg, and Riverton — Old Route 36 still allows for adequate highway travel including access to nearby interstates. Residents can reach much of the City of Springfield, where 61.0% of respondents in the community survey report working, within a 15-minute drive. These roadways allow for quick and efficient travel to Dawson from nearby villages and the City of Springfield. Dawson is also reasonably close to Decatur, where 2.6% of community survey respondents reported working. Travel times from the Village to other locations in the region are shown in Figure 5.1 on this page.

Utilities

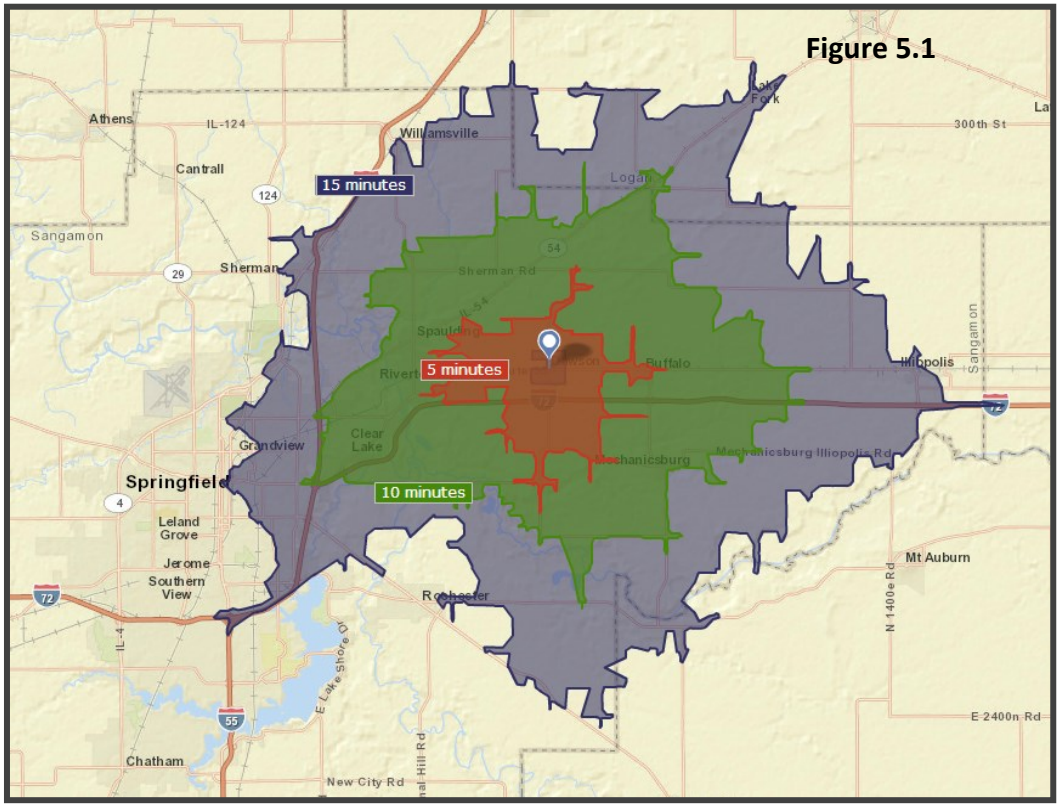
As discussed above in the *Utilities Infrastructure* section, Dawson is well served by its Village maintained water utility. Absent large residential or commercial development, Dawson is well-equipped to continue to supply water to both its residents and residents in rural communities outside the Village. However, should a new subdivision in excess of 50 homes be planned, the Village would need to increase the size of its water main in order to serve these new customers.

It should be noted that the Dawson Village President Jeremy Nunes received special recognition in 2015 for innovative, cost effective leadership by agreeing to a shared service model for water system maintenance duties with neighboring community of Riverton. This award was presented by the Sangamon County Citizens' Efficiency Commission. Efforts such as these will additionally benefit the Village in the future.

Workforce Availability

As previously discussed in the demographics section of this plan, according to the U.S. Census Bureau Dawson's population was 509 in 2010. This represents a 9% increase from its 2000 population of 466. Both the potential for population growth and resident age are key factors in assessing local long-term development capacity, and the demographics of the community show both positive and negative trends.

As discussed in the demographics section, Dawson has a median age (37.5 years) slightly below that of Sangamon County as a whole (39.2 years), suggesting that there is a demographic makeup beneficial to strong workforce potential. However, the most likely projection of future population growth in the Village is a static one or even a slight decline. Additionally, Dawson's dependency ratio (77.4) is substantially higher than that of the rest of Sanga-



mon County (66.7). This appears to be largely due to a high percentage of dependent children, especially children under the age of five.

As shown in Table 5.1, the Census Bureau estimates that 179 persons in Dawson over the age of 16 are employed full-time. Of these full-time employees, a plurality of individuals (35.1%) are employed in "sales and office" occupations, closely followed by "management, business, science, and arts" occupations (30.7%), so these two groups alone make up about two-thirds of the local employment base.

Individuals employed in this broad second category, which includes education and healthcare as well as business and financial occupations, earn a median income of $42,083. For this category, females tend to earn higher wages than males, largely on account of higher median incomes for teachers which are grouped into the category. In other categories, men tend to earn more than women as women are more likely to be involved in lower paying occupations than males, particularly in the low paying service sector, where median income is estimated at only $15,625 for females. However, more women than men are employed full-time in Dawson.

However, only analyzing full-time workers paints an incomplete picture of the workforce in Dawson as many individuals tend to be employed part-time.

The Census Bureau estimates that of the 353 individuals ages 16 to 64, 55.2% of these individuals worked 50 to 52 weeks a year, whereas an additional 27.5% worked at least one week during the year, and 17.3% did not work at all. Women were more likely to work than men and more likely to work full-time. Compared to Sangamon County as a whole, individuals were more likely to work, but less likely to work full-time hours: in Sangamon County 62.5% usually worked 35 or more hours per week whereas this figure was 56.9% in Dawson.

While individuals are slightly more likely to work part-time compared to the County overall, these figures need not be viewed negatively. Indeed, Dawson's employment figures compare very favorably to neighboring municipalities.

For instance, the mean hours worked in Dawson (38.3) compared favorably to the 32.8 for Buffalo, and the 40.5 for Mechanicsburg. Furthermore, 30.1% of individuals in Buffalo and 25.8% of individuals in Mechanicsburg between the ages of 16 and 64 did not work at all in the previous year, representing a large increase. Because of the large proportion of both older and younger residents in Dawson, it is likely that these numbers demonstrate economic health for the Village rather than simply a larger percentage of younger adults in Dawson who are engaged in training and education. Dawson should take note of this favorable data in future marketing activities as they demonstrate its economic health vis-à-vis its neighbors and other smaller, rural communities in the region.

Based on travel times to work and feedback from the Dawson community survey, the SSCRPC estimates that only 7.8% of residents work within the Village. This number is unsurprising, given the paucity of businesses located within Village limits. However, the figure could be slightly higher or lower due to

TABLE 5.1.: DAWSON WORKFORCE BY OCCUPATION (FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES 16 YEARS OR OLDER)

Source: U.S. Census

Occupation	Total Employed	% of workforce	% Male	% Female	Median Income (Male)	Median Income (Female)
All	179	100%	45.3%	54.7%	$38,036	$34,167
Management, business, science, and arts	55	30.7%	34.5%	65.5%	$38,125	$55,625
Service	18	10.1%	11.1%	88.9%	**	$15,625
Sales and office	63	35.1%	31.7%	68.3%	$38,750	$30,250
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	17	9.5%	100.0%	0.0%	$30,356	**
Production, transportation, and material moving	26	14.5%	88.5%	11.5%	$80,313	**

sampling bias, as will be discussed in the community survey section (Appendix 1). As mentioned previously, a majority of residents in the community survey reported working in Springfield (61.0%), although a small percentage (10.4%) reported working in another community, and even a few respondents (5.2%) indicated that they work at home. Overall, Dawson is largely dependent upon the economic health of Springfield to provide employment opportunities for its residents.

The differential of those working within Dawson versus outside of it, indicates that there is a significant labor capacity to support additional growth if jobs comparable to those found outside the community were available.

This labor availability is important in terms of the community's long-term growth, but does not appear to present as much of a barrier as the previously mentioned slow-growth population trend.

Total population in Dawson has increased slightly, though estimates on growth have differed. Additionally, as the population ages, it will be especially important for Dawson to retain members of the working age population as well as attract new residents. This will be necessary to avoid additional loss of population such as that seen occurring in some rural communities in the region.

As the demographics review indicated, Dawson has grown about 9% over the past 10 years, which lags behind growth in Mechanicsburg (29%), Spaulding (56%), and Riverton (13%), and is most likely to see static to slow growth over the next 20 years. **As such, attracting new, younger residents will help spur growth, increase Village revenues, and offset losses as the population ages. It will also encourage a stronger concentration of full-time, working age residents, which would encourage additional residential as well as some limited commercial development.**

In order to maintain growth, Dawson will need to position itself as a quieter alternative to communities such as Riverton. **Assets such as a low poverty rate, a high percentage of individuals who own their homes, and a low percentage of unemployed individuals should be stressed to market Dawson as a rural community of choice in Sangamon County.**

While population trends for the Village are encouraging when compared to similar communities in the region, it will not be enough for the Dawson's community leaders to simply hope that potential residents will see the Village's strengths; they will need to be continually assessed, stressed and then marketed.

Business Establishments

According to Dun & Bradstreet, Inc., data, Dawson has a small commercial sector which employs about 33 individuals in 13 firms. The sectors with the largest employers are construction (11 employees), eating and drinking establishments (7 employees), and home improvement (7 employees). There are more agriculture and mining, construction, and hotel and lodging firms (3 each) than any other firms, however with the exception of construction, these firms employ only one or two persons.

Table 5.2 shows selected businesses in Dawson. While there are a number of other businesses incorporated within the Village, these are generally small proprietorships or firms with less than five employees; in many cases, only one. Again, and as reflected in the community survey, the Dun & Bradstreet data show that most residents work outside the Village rather than for firms within it.

Table 5.2: SELECTED ILLUSTRATIVE BUSINESSES IN DAWSON
Source: Dun & Bradstreet, Inc.

Businesses
All Weather Courts, Inc.
Gusto's Pizza & The Blue Room
T Bone Bar and Grill
Hood Brothers Fence Company

Business Revenue

The current state of revenue-generating business activity can be partially assessed from sales tax data. Sales taxes disbursed to the Village from 2007 through 2013 are shown in Table 5.3.

The table reveals that the revenues disbursed to the Village increased slightly from 2007 to 2009, but then decreased sharply from 2009 to 2010 as the effects of the recession were felt. Sales taxes then

rebounded slightly until the 2012 disbursement year, when they once again dropped dramatically, this time to the lowest point in the seven-year period displayed, rebounding again in 2013. Even at that point revenues were slightly less than in 2007 ($271.36, 5.3%), and $1,800.85 (27.2%) less than the seven year high, which occurred in 2009.

TABLE 5.3: DISBURSEMENT INFORMATION FOR DAWSON SALES TAXES, Calendar Years 2007-2013
Source: Illinois Department of Revenue

Year	Municipal Sales Tax	Percent Change from Previous Year
2007	$5,087.39	-
2008	$5,582.95	10%
2009	$6,616.88	19%
2010	$4,494.72	-32%
2011	$5,096.86	13%
2012	$3,927.85	-23%
2013	$4,816.03	23%

Household and Housing Market Presence and Potential

As noted previously, Dawson's population over the next 20 years is projected to be static with relatively small gains. However, household income data shows that Dawson residents have strong consumer potential. As Table 5.4 indicates, Dawson is in the mid-range when compared to nearby peer communities with a median household income below the state of Illinois, which is $56,853, and on par with Sangamon County as a whole ($50,166). Compared to its Tri-City peers Buffalo and Mechanicsburg however, Dawson has considerably more purchasing power as measured by household income.

The 2010 Census counted 213 households within Village limits. During the period 2000-2010 Dawson added 25 households, an increase of 13.3% over that period. While household totals have not been calculated since the 2010 Census, ESRI estimates that in 2014 there are 209 households in Dawson. ESRI further projects that by 2019 there will be 204 households in Dawson. Thus from the period 2010-2019, ESRI estimates a decrease in households of 4.3%, which represents an average annual decrease of 0.9% per year. While these estimates suggest a negative outlook for the Village, they should be considered in context. First, they are estimates and may not reflect actual conditions which may be slightly better or worse. Second, the projected loss is not critically significant. It may be the case that Dawson will not lose population, however it is important that the Village consider the possibility that this loss will occur.

The average size of a household in Dawson is 2.46 persons which sits squarely in the middle of its peers, Buffalo and Mechanicsburg, and is comparable to the county-wide average.

As mentioned previously, Dawson had about 146 family households out of its 217 households in 2010, meaning that about 67.3% of households in Dawson are family households. This is compared to 58.3% of households in Buffalo and 77.8% of households in Mechanicsburg. Table 5.5, below, shows summary comparisons between Dawson and neighboring communities. It is interesting to note that Dawson seems to be squarely in the middle in terms of household size and the percentage of family households, while it tends to have a larger family size than many of its neighboring communities. These are positive indicators.

Moreover, many of these families have children, pointing to a brighter future for Dawson compared to other peer localities. Fully 41% of Dawson's

Table 5.4: 2010 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, Sangamon County, Illinois
Source: ESRI Business Analyst Online, U.S .Census Bureau

	2010 Median Household Income	2010 Population
Dawson	**$50,147**	**509**
Buffalo	**$41,771**	**503**
Mechanicsburg	**$43,125**	**590**
Riverton	**$57,037**	**3,179**
Curran	**$55,661**	**240**

households have children compared to lower numbers in Buffalo and Mechanicsburg. Thus, even though Mechanicsburg has seen growth in recent years, Dawson still has a large number of children which can point to future growth. While this would seem to portend well for Dawson, there are obviously other communities into which a family can move, so it is again important for the Village to consider ways to draw potential residents as a rural community of choice.

The marketability of the Village as a residential destination is largely dependent upon the quality of its housing stock. The value of homes, as well as the year in which the structure was built, play a large role in whether a family will locate to an area. Dawson had a median home value of $137,838 in 2014 according to ESRI estimates, a figure below that of its peer Tri-City communities, although very close to neighboring Riverton ($138,997).

By contrast, the mean (average value) of a home in Dawson is $152,287. As discussed above, a median value close to the mean indicates that home values in Dawson are largely similar, one home to another. This trend largely mirrors the median household income in Dawson, which showed a similar lack of disparity.

While this similarity in housing value may be viewed positively, it is worth noting that a lack of affluent residents means less revenue for the Village. Related to this, many residents in the Village indicated in the community survey that they did not want the character of their community to change substantially over time. In fact, 70% of respondents thought it was either somewhat or very important for Dawson to have housing for all incomes. **This being said, residents in Dawson are far more likely to indicate a wish for new single family housing than multi-family housing and indicate a strong preference for new development to be owner-occupied.**

ESRI estimates that Dawson's median home value will grow from $137,838 in 2014 to $189,634 in 2019. This is a 37.6% increase in value over these five years and would demonstrate an average annual increase of 7.5%. While these figures are estimates and account in large part for changes in inflation, they show that household values in Dawson will continue to rise. Looking at new households, ESRI predicts no increase in total units over the period 2014-2019, although it does predict a slight shift from owner-occupied to renter-occupied housing during this time period. These estimates are based partially upon recent trends in Dawson, such as the lack of new residential construction over the past two decades. When preparing its estimates, ESRI assumes this trend will continue.

Despite a lack of recent construction, Dawson benefits from the fact that its homes are newer than some other rural communities in Sangamon County. For instance, the median year a structure in Dawson

TABLE 5.5: SUMMARY INDICATORS FOR HOUSEHOLDS
Source: 2010 Census

	Total Households	Average Household Size	Average Family Size	% Family Households	% Households with Children (under age 18)
Dawson	217	2.46	2.99	67%	41%
Peers					
Buffalo	180	2.18	2.79	58%	28%
Mechanicsburg	220	2.67	2.78	78%	36%
Surrounding Communities					
Riverton	1,410	2.45	2.71	77%	42%
Rochester	1,390	2.67	3.08	77%	40%
Springfield	50,142	2.25	2.94	57%	28%
Sangamon County	*82,402*	*2.35*	*2.95*	63%	30.5%

was built is 1969, newer than Mechanicsburg (1955) and Buffalo (1967), and on par with the figure for Sangamon County overall (1972). However this obscures the fact that very little development has occurred in Dawson since the 1990s. Indeed, the Census Bureau estimates that of the 258 housing units in Dawson, only three were built after 1999. By comparison, 43 units were built in the 1990s and 25 were built in the 1980s.

Also of interest for Dawson's future marketability is the vacancy rate in the village. This is important as Dawson must deal with vacant units as its projected population trend continues to shape its character.

Whether the Village experiences the decline faced by some rural areas or conversely expands, the way in which the Village deals with vacant units will play a large role on perceptions of Dawson as a place for families to locate.

ESRI estimates that of 228 housing units in 2014, 8% of these are vacant. This estimate represents a small increase from 2010 Census figures which found a vacancy rate of 7%. For 2019, ESRI projects a vacancy rate of 10%.

It is important to note, however, that in the 2010 Census, seven of the 15 vacant units were currently listed as "for rent" while one had recently sold, and another was listed as "seasonal/recreational/occasional" use. Only six units were listed as "other vacant." While this would seem to signify that abandoned housing is not an issue in the Village, as noted previously, the results of the Dawson community survey suggest that for some residents abandoned housing is a problem. Indeed, nearly 50% of respondents indicated that addressing abandoned housing was a medium or a large priority for the Village. Even though the low vacancy rate suggests respondents may have been referring to unkempt housing or other issues rather than actually abandoned structures, it is an important question to address in comprehensive plan implementation.

There are also indications that Dawson will largely remain in its current state with slight adjustments in the form of an increased number of renter-occupied units at the expense of owner-occupied units. **For Dawson to grow residentially, it will need to invest resources into drawing developers as the availability for newer housing will likely dictate the extent to which Dawson is able to attract new residents.**

Other considerations, such as the quality of the public school district, will also play a role. Some comparative data related to school districts is provided in Table 5.6.

While there has not been substantial residential development in recent years, this fact does not preclude future development, which remains possible in light of the recent growth in the eastern portion of Riverton. In terms of its business presence, Dawson residents indicated in the community survey a desire for slow to moderate growth. Residents were largely in favor of a proposed convenience store/gas station, but indicated that they would be unwilling to utilize some other types of businesses (e.g., bars

TABLE 5.6: MEASURES OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, SELECTED SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN SANGAMON COUNTY
Source: Illinois State Board of Education 2014

	2012-2013 Composite ISAT Scores (Grades 3-8)	2012-2013 PSAE Composite Scores (Grade 11)	ACT Composite Graduating Class of 2013	Student Mobility	Low income
Tri-City CUSD 1	62%	46%	19.6	4%	39%
Riverton CUSD 14	57%	53%	19.0	18%	48%
Rochester CUSD 3A	78%	72%	22.2	6%	14%
Pleasant Plains CUSD 8	75%	63%	21.8	8%	12%
Williamsville CUSD 15	70%	76%	21.6	8%	12%
Springfield Public Schools District 186	49%	41%	18.9	20%	61%
Statewide Average	59%	53%	20.3	13%	50%

without service of food) if they were available in the Village.

These preferences, along with the current composition of Dawson, imply that residents enjoy the current community character of the Village. **As such, the Village should take strides to retain this character while encouraging moderate residential and commercial growth where possible, buffering such development from existing residences.**

TABLE 5.7: TAX RATES FOR COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES
Sangamon County, Illinois
Source: Illinois Department of Revenue, Sangamon County Clerk

	Dawson	Buffalo	Mechanicsburg	Riverton
Sales Tax	**6.25%**	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%
Use and Service Tax	**6.25%**	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%
Telecommunication Tax	**11.50%**	10.00%	7.00%	11.00%
Corporate Property Tax	**0.25%**	0.50%	0.29%	0.42%

Tax Rates

Local tax rates affect whether a business decides to remain in, expand, or relocate to a municipality. They can also affect housing starts and residential relocation.

Low taxes make a municipality more competitive, and offering tax incentives increases the chances of business growth in a community. As Table 5.7 shows, Dawson charges no additional sales tax over that which exists in Sangamon County, and the Village's use and service tax is also the same as it is for the rest of the county. This is consistent with other municipalities.

One difference is the communications tax which varies by location. As the table shows, Dawson has a slightly higher communications tax than surrounding communities at 11.5%. Dawson's municipal property tax rate is 0.25%, a lower rate than surrounding communities. However, this may be misleading as property taxes are levied by many different agencies, and individuals in a municipality may be subject to different tax rates than others living in that same municipality due to which special districts they might be in.

In addition to municipal property taxes, Dawson residents are also subject to taxes from Tri-City Schools, Lincoln Land Community College, Sangamon County, Dawson's Fire Protection District, Mechanicsburg Township, and Tri-City Library. These taxes result in a total property tax bill of around 7.05% for the tax year 2013. This was a modest increase from 2012's tax rate of 7.01%. This figure is comparable to other municipalities near Dawson. For instance, a typical property owner in Buffalo paid about 7.2% in property taxes in 2013, whereas Mechanicsburg's tax rate was slightly lower at 6.9%.

Economic and Community Development Challenges and Opportunities of Note

Analysis indicates that Dawson currently enjoys the supporting infrastructure and workforce necessary to address the modest rate of growth anticipated over the planning period largely desired by current residents. Its tax rates are also not outside the range of other peer communities.

Current residents appear to want some business growth, a gas station/convenience store is particularly desired, but not growth that will fundamentally change the community's character. This does present some quandary. Even the addition of a gas station/convenience store will most likely occur if the Village shows more robust population growth.

The community survey does not indicate that residents are opposed to growth, only that it be a thoughtful and modest one. Local leaders will need to find ways to explain to residents that population growth and business growth (including businesses providing additional goods and services) are intertwined, so actions to hold the current level of population and entice new residents is, in-and-of-itself, an economic development strategy that will increase the competitiveness of the community for new local businesses and services. This will include those businesses most desired.

Land Use: Current and Proposed

General Characteristics

The Village of Dawson encompasses approximately .88 square miles, or about 563 acres, with none of the area taken up by water and little property, outside of right-of-ways, being undevelopable land.

A field survey of existing land uses in the Village was completed during fall of 2015. It found that Dawson's land use is generally comprised of the eight following categories:

- **Agriculture Areas:** Including pastureland and farmland.
- **Park Open Space:** Areas used for parks and recreation, as well as environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Community Facilities:** Public facilities including, but not limited to, schools, churches, community centers, fire stations, libraries, village halls, cemeteries, and government buildings.
- **Vacant Land:** Lots without buildings or other uses, or areas expected to be developed or with development potential. Includes platted lots that do not yet have buildings.
- **Single Family Residential:** Detached, single family housing units, with one unit per lot.
- **Multiple Family Residential:** Buildings with two or more residential dwellings.
- **Commercial Use:** Any office, service, retail, museum, tourist attraction, or wholesale trade use except those involving extensive trucking, shipping, warehousing, and outside storage.
- **Heavy Commercial/Industrial:** Service and commercial uses involving trucking, shipping, warehousing, or outside storage, highway oriented businesses, heavy and light industrial uses.

A map that provides the most detailed and accurate depiction of existing general land use can be found in Figure 6.1 on the following page.

Overall, Dawson has a fairly typical distribution of land us-

es for a small rural community, with slight exceptions. The top three categories of existing land use are: single family residential; open space; and agricultural. The majority of land use is residential or agriculture.

One common characteristic of rural communities is the large amount of land that is classified for agricultural use. While many communities located outside of a large urban core tend to experience an increase in single family residential development over time on agricultural land within their boundaries, such growth in the Village has been comparatively low due to its slow population growth.

Nevertheless, Dawson's location relative to the City of Springfield makes it a viable candidate for residential growth. Much of the land within the Village's extra-territorial jurisdiction (the 1.5 miles surrounding Dawson's corporate limits), particularly to the immediate east, is agricultural land that may be suitable for development if it can properly be served by utility infrastructure, including water and sewer. Dawson's extra-territorial limits are generally described in Figure 6.2 on page 59.

Figure 6.1

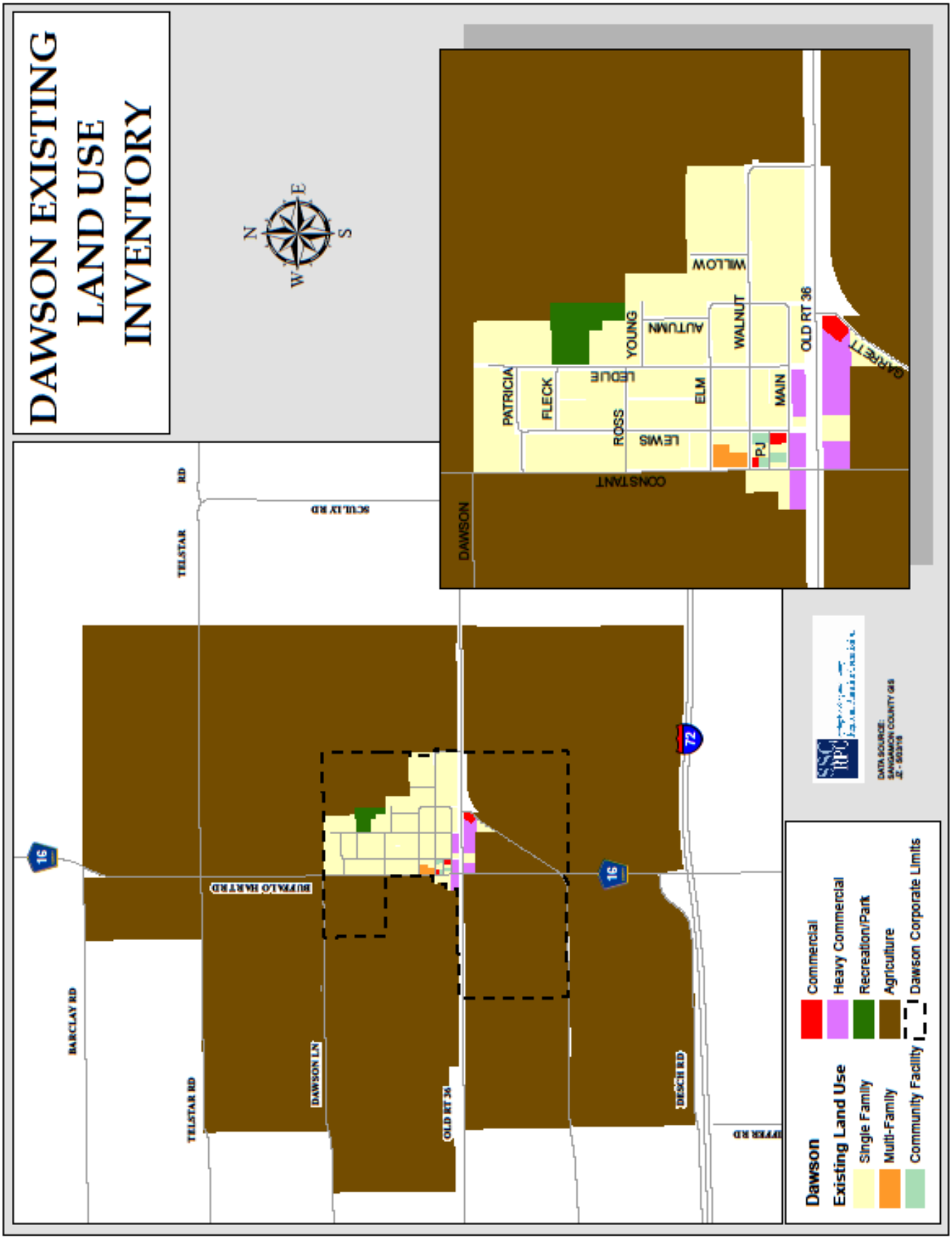
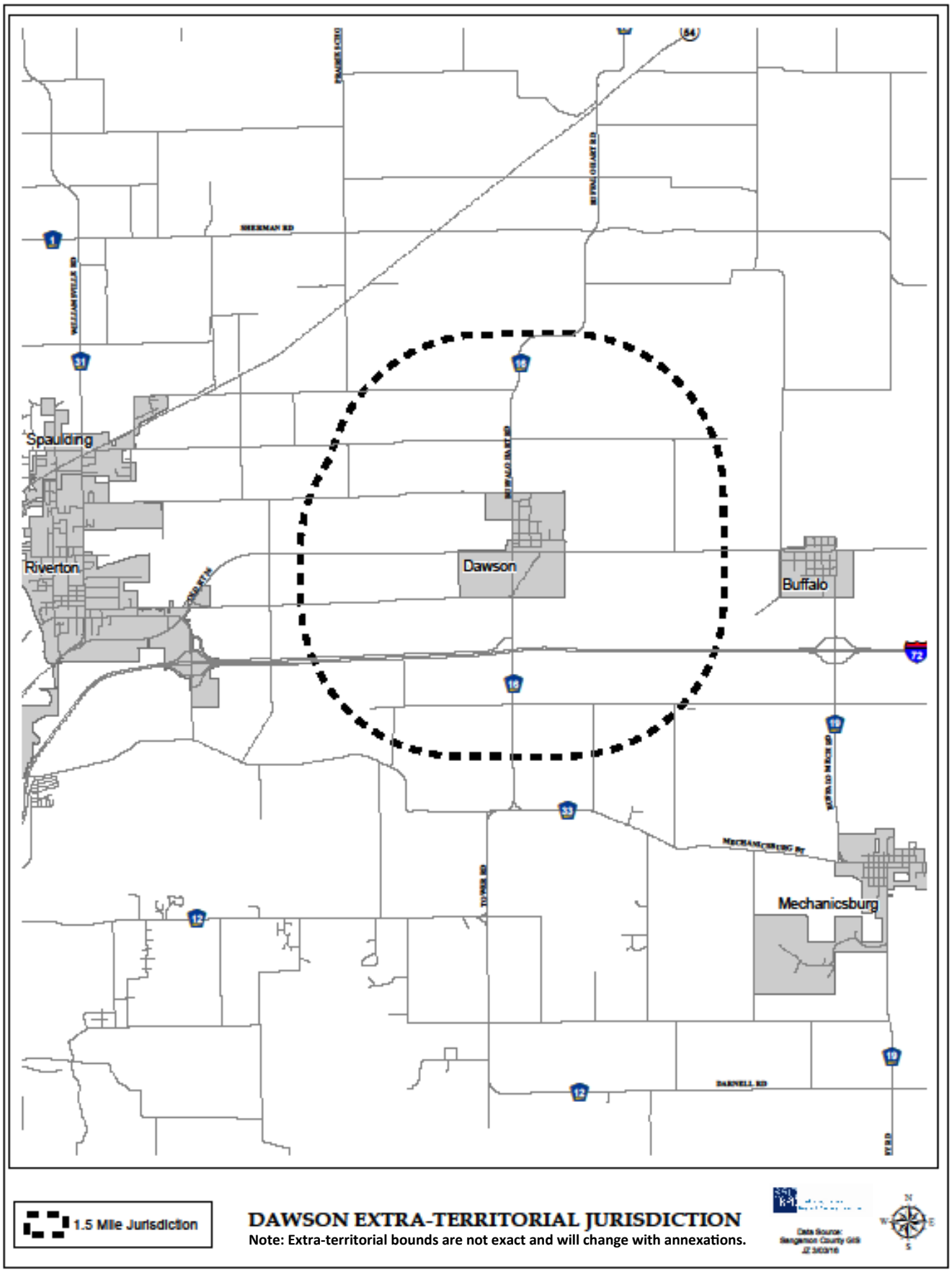

DAWSON EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY
N
E
S
W
BARCLAY RD
TELSTAR RD
TELSTAR RD
SCULLY RD
BUFFALO MARY RD
DAWSON LN
OLD RT 36
DESCH RD
JEFFERS RD
16
16
72
DAWSON
CONSTANT
LEWIS
ROSS
LEDUE
YOUNG
AUTUMN
WALNUT
WILLOW
PATRICIA
FLECK
ELM
MAIN
PJ
OLD RT 36
GARRETT
Dawson
Existing Land Use
Single Family
Multi-Family
Community Facility
Commercial
Heavy Commercial
Recreation/Park
Agriculture
Dawson Corporate Limits
DATA SOURCE:
SANGAMON COUNTY GIS

Figure 6.2


Spaulding
Riverton
Dawson
Buffalo
Mechanicsburg
1.5 Mile Jurisdiction
DAWSON EXTRA-TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION
Note: Extra-territorial bounds are not exact and will change with annexations.

Proposed and Future Land Use

The identification of the best paths for future land use in Dawson and its extra-territorial jurisdiction is based upon all of the factors previously considered in this plan: demographic factors, including potential population growth; the estimated impacts of land use on the environment and natural resources as well as associated factors (such as undermining and soil drainage) that may limit or constrain growth in various parts of the locality; the ability of the local infrastructure, including transportation and utilities, to serve the area and adequately meet growth projections; and the potential for economic growth, affecting both population growth and the ability of the Village to service its growth needs.

This being the case, the identification of future land use is one of the most essential and important components of a municipal comprehensive plan, as it undergirds Village zoning decisions and assists in guiding the development process over the long-term.

The proposed land use component of the Dawson comprehensive plan, then, presents a picture, based upon current assumptions, of what growth may look like in the future. Combined, the proposed land use maps, the related proposed strategies and actions (which will be addressed in a following section of this plan), and the information presented in the prior sections of this plan, provide a framework to guide development decisions for Dawson into the foreseeable future.

The proposed land use map is also intended to provide a logical, visual representation of where particular land uses should be located in the growth scenario for Dawson presented here. However, flexibility is also important in implementing the comprehensive plan, because the community's needs and desires can change over time, and in smaller communities may change due to unexpected events. Flexibility is required because it is impossible to see exactly what development proposals may occur in future years.

Land Use Practices and Principles Applied

One common practice for ensuring that compatible uses are located in neighboring areas through land use planning and zoning is often termed "Euclidean". This approach, which is widely used throughout the nation, is intended to buffer less intense uses from more intense ones, establishing levels of intensity.

As the proposed land uses presented in this plan will undergird Village zoning, it was also considered in the development of the proposed land use plan. By considering intensity of use, this approach attempts to place similar uses near one another, grouping residences, commercial areas, and industrial areas, for example, together in appropriate areas (zones or districts) with like uses, buffering less intense land uses from more intense ones. As buffering less intense uses from more intense ones has long been a standard planning practice and is a common one, it is considered a relevant planning principle for the Dawson proposed land use plan.

However, critics sometime suggest that Euclidean planning and zoning decreases interconnections within a community, walkability for example, which would not be the case if a more mixed-use approach were taken that allows the blending of uses in a single area to increase connectivity. Most smaller towns, and even the city centers of large cities, have developed around a blending of uses and even now enjoy the connectivity that it brings.

Because of Dawson's smaller size, connectivity within it — and the sense of community that greater connectivity brings — is likely to be facilitated through land use policies that allow for aspects of both Euclidian and mix-use land development principles. This leads to a proposed land use plan that adopts aspects of both approaches, clustering like uses in similar areas to decrease the sometimes unsightly and hazardous blending of uses currently in place, yet still allowing for the targeting of appropriate locations for a mix of uses.

Dawson's future land use philosophy should also be flexible enough to address any expansion or annexation that the community may wish to undertake. **Once the Village adopts the comprehensive plan and has legislated land development policies and procedures, it may exercise its extra-territorial jurisdiction over development within the 1.5 mile area surrounding its corporate limits.**

It should be noted that the Village's corporate limits expand to within one mile of Riverton's village limits, meaning that an overlapping of extra-territorial jurisdictions would exist. As much of the area between the two jurisdictions is agricultural and Dawson has ample room for growth within its existing corporate limits, future annexations are not anticipated in the near-term.

Proposed Land Use Categories

The proposed land use map for the Village of Dawson includes a number of land use categories built around those which already exist (see the section above addressing current land use), but with some differences. The proposed land use categories and definitions are:

- **Agriculture:** Areas that are pastureland and farmland.
- **Park and Open Space:** Includes formal parks but also amenity open space areas that can be used for recreation, as well as environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Community Facility:** Public facilities including but not limited to schools, churches, community centers, fire stations, libraries, village halls, cemeteries, and government buildings.
- **Single Family Residential:** Detached, single family housing units, with one unit per lot.
- **Multi- Family Residential:** Buildings with two or more residential dwelling units.
- **Commercial**: Any office and/or service use, including banks, healthcare, and retail, as well as museum or tourist attractions.
- **Heavy commercial:** Uses involving trucking, shipping, warehousing, or outside storage, highway oriented businesses, and heavy and light industrial uses.

These uses are displayed by Figure 6.3, the Dawson Proposed Land Use Map, on the next page. While the underlying uses for specific parcels are better addressed via a visual land use map, the descriptions of the land uses should allow the Village to identify key districts and target areas in keeping with growth strategies and activities that will be considered in another section of this plan.

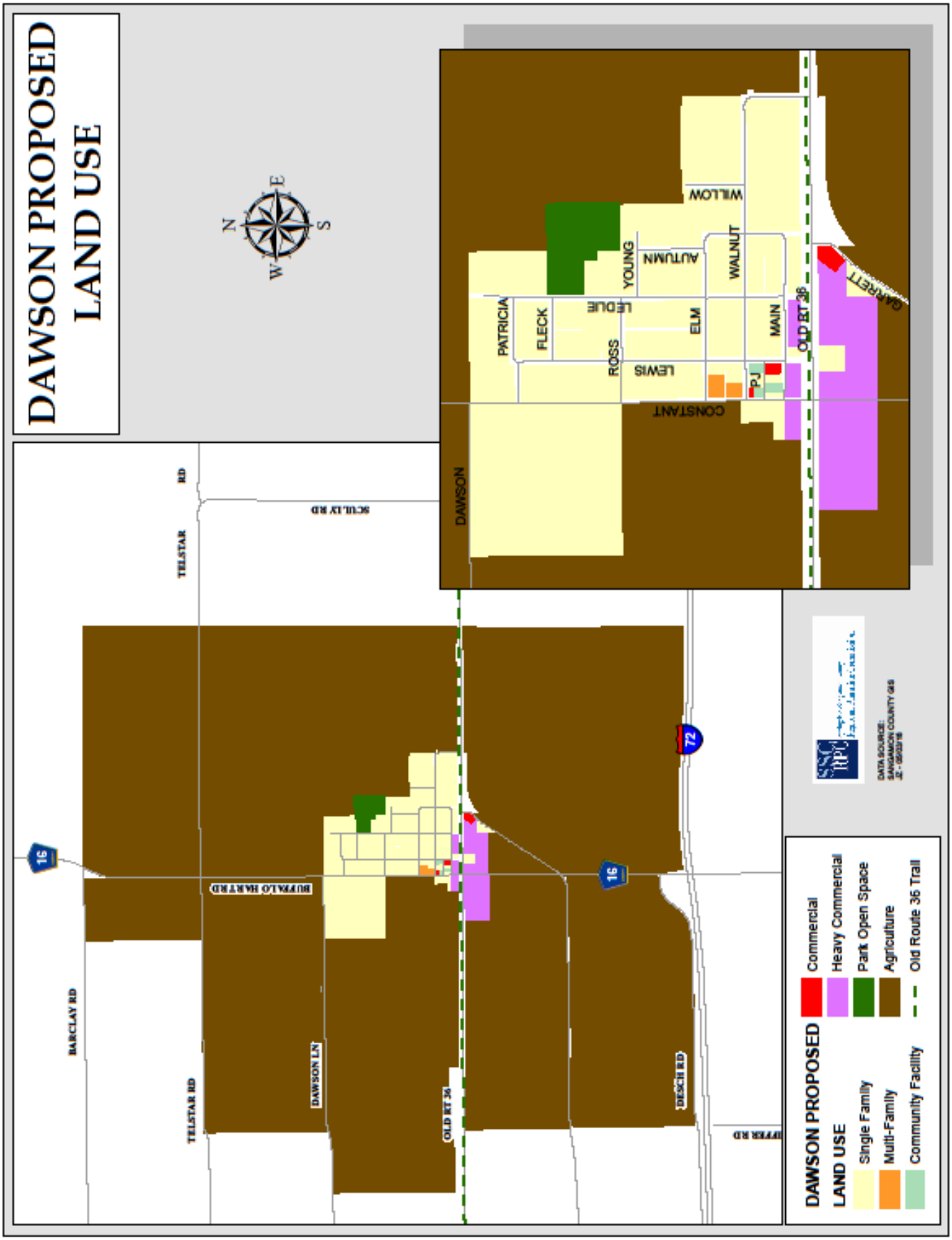
Again, the land uses identified in Figure 6.3 provide the "big picture" to guide overall development priorities in Dawson.

Current Compared to Proposed Uses

The proposed land use map contemplates three major changes to currently existing land use consistent with the likely growth scenario, but allowing for the higher growth scenario if it should occur. As Figure 6.3 indicates, they are:

- The expansion of land area set aside for single-family residential growth to the northwest, in an area currently used for agricultural purposes. This provides consistency with the existing residential area to its east.
- The expansion of land for park and open space to the immediate east of that currently used for a park and recreation. This would provide an additional amenity to attract new residents.
- Finally, the expansion of land area set aside for heavy commercial use to the south along Old Rt. 36, adjacent to land already used for such purposes. This use would be buffered from residential areas to the north by the existing commercial area, as well as by Old Rt. 36. While there are some residential properties in the area, a mix of uses is possible in this vicinity, and the classification of the property as for heavier commercial use would still allow the flexibility for lighter, highway service-related businesses to locate there.

Figure 6.3


DAWSON PROPOSED
LAND USE
N
W
E
S
DAWSON
PATRICIA
FLECK
ROSS
LEDUE
YOUNG
AUTUMN
LEWIS
ELM
WALNUT
WILLOW
CONSTANT
PJ
MAIN
OLD RT 36
GARRETT
16
72
BUFFALO HART RD
TELSTAR RD
BARCLAY RD
DAWSON LN
OLD RT 36
DESCH RD
DATA SOURCE:
SANGAMON COUNTY GIS
DAWSON PROPOSED
LAND USE
Single Family
Multi-Family
Community Facility
Commercial
Heavy Commercial
Park Open Space
Agriculture
Old Route 36 Trail

Opportunities and Challenges

Often the proposed land use map is mistakenly viewed as the plan by the public, but a comprehensive plan includes much more than that, addressing land use policies as well as the strategies intended to guide development throughout the 20-year period identified in this plan.

In order to shape its future, Dawson must recognize both its strengths and weaknesses, drawing upon its assets and reducing its liabilities in order to hold and attract both residents and job creating development. Coming to the understanding that Dawson competes with other municipalities in the region is central to overcoming obstacles to growth while retaining the Village's unique character. **Specifically, Dawson must be able to confront the trends influencing where younger people and families choose to locate while addressing why individuals may choose to leave the community.**

With this knowledge, Dawson will be able to attract future residents and businesses, mitigating any population loss as its residents age. With that said, Dawson must be realistic about growth and its ability to attract specific commercial development. Such development will occur only after changes in current population growth takes place and are, as such, in the future.

The Village does have the opportunities and tools necessary to provide for the needs of its residents over the next 20 to 25 years. These include:

Geographic Location: One of Dawson's greatest assets is its proximity to Springfield. While Dawson is further away from Springfield than some of its neighbors, it is close enough for a reasonable commute into that city. While lacking an interstate exit of its own, Dawson is within close range of I-72, and downtown Springfield is reachable within a 12-14 minute drive via Old Route 36/Interstate-72.

Additionally, Decatur is accessible via I-72. While this is a somewhat lengthy commute, 2.6% of residents in the community survey reported working in Decatur already.

All-in-all, the lack of direct I-72 access would not preclude future residents from choosing Dawson as a place to call home.

Furthermore, many residents of Dawson enjoy the fact that they are somewhat isolated from Springfield yet close enough to that city to work, shop, and recreate there. The fact that the Village is just far enough away from Springfield gives it a distinctive small town, rural feel, which is an asset to be highlighted rather than shunned. And as Springfield's young adult population ages and begins to raise children, it will be important for Dawson to market itself as a destination away from some of the problems associated with urban environments.

At the same time, while Dawson is located closer to Springfield than nearby Buffalo, Mechanicsburg, and many other rural communities in the county, it is still perceived as being distant from the urban center. Furthermore, the lack of direct access to I-72 does harm Dawson simply because it leads to the Village being less visible than other communities where a visible interstate connection exists.

This loss of visibility creates a barrier to both residential and business growth. For example, and as has been previously noted, the community lacks such simple amenities as a gas station and convenience store. The need for this addition to the Village was overwhelmingly cited as the most preferred potential commercial development in the Village by respondents to the community survey.

But while many of Dawson's residents indicated in the community survey their desire for such a business to be available, it is unlikely absent future residential development. Both will need to go hand-in-hand.

Therefore, Dawson should strive to achieve visibility in other ways, minimally by improved signage near Village entrances as described in Appendix 2.

Cost of Living: Dawson is an affordable community in which to live. The median value of a home in the Village is currently estimated at $137,838. This is a figure below that of some other surrounding communities where the cost of owning a home is out of reach for some families.

The Village also benefits from having lower property taxes than some other communities in the area. Dawson's low cost of living may help attract potential residents who would like to live in a more rural setting but are concerned about higher costs associated with some of Springfield's various satellite communities.

Schools: During their early years the school serves as a primary place of socialization for children. Children spend a considerable amount of time at school and as such, parents are heavily invested in the schools where their children are taught. The school in which a child is placed often plays a large role in where families decide to move.

Thus it is important for Dawson, as it is faced with the prospect of static population growth and the potential for decline, to attract families with the excellence of its public schools.

While Tri-City Schools produce better results on state tests (ISAT, PSAE) and the ACT than both Springfield Public Schools and Riverton CUSD, Tri-City schools have faced numerous challenges, including infrastructure issues, potentially leading to the belief that local schools offer a less than satisfactory learning environment.

For these reasons, it is prudent for Dawson to consider measures that might be taken to improve Tri-City schools, including any advantages that might arise from consolidation or partnership with the neighboring Riverton schools.

In the Dawson community survey respondents were split over whether they preferred consolidation with the Riverton School District, with some respondents strongly opposed while others were supportive or neutral. But whether or not some form of partnership is possible, attention must be given to the challenge of school improvement if the Village wishes to retain the residents it currently has, on the short-term, or entice new residents, on the longer term.

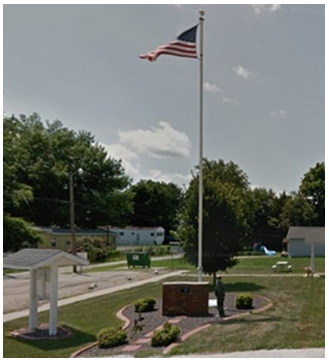
The perceived quality of the local school system plays a large role in family relocation decisions for both families whose children are at or nearing school age as well as for potential residents rearing children. It is especially true for communities outside of metro areas that seek to draw young families from urban ones. For these reasons, it would be prudent for the Village to consider its schools — and any changes that would lead to improvement — as it considers methods to retain and attract residents.

Even if school district consolidation is not an option, improving the facilities and the image of Tri-City schools will help in marketing Dawson to future residents. The Dawson community survey found 69.7% of respondents reporting that improving Tri-City schools was of either "medium" or "high priority", indicating a widespread acknowledgement that improvement is necessary.

Respondents also indicated that Tri-City should explore avenues for increasing revenues to meet needs related to its aging facilities, with only 10.9% “somewhat” or “strongly” disagreeing that this was necessary. Thus, while test scores indicate Tri-City is on par with neighboring school districts, Dawson faces the challenge of selling its school district to potential residents as well as the challenge of paying to upgrade school infrastructure.

Water Infrastructure: The Village has capacity to adequately serve its current water supply demand. There is also capacity to serve low and medium population growth scenarios. The Village has capacity to serve an additional 50 home sites and perhaps a small business. Growth beyond a low or medium growth scenario may require additional water main and tower capacity.

Village officials should continue to closely monitor water capacity and future demand. Leaders may wish to consider how medium to high population growth strategy may be served in the future.



Vision, Strategies and Actions

The preceding sections of this plan provide an overview of the Village's present situation, the trends seen as affecting it over the next 20 years, and an assessment of some strengths and weaknesses. It begins the development of a blueprint for the community's future by identifying a number of considerations to be taken into account to ensure both community stability and amenity preservation.

As population maintenance if not growth is essential to Dawson's future, particular attention should be given to strategies and actions that will encourage population stability by maintaining the Village's base of younger residents while attracting new ones. Building upon the community's population base provides a focal point for community efforts for the period addressed in this plan.

In order to achieve the future the residents of the Village and its leadership desire, Dawson should consider and address a number of specific strategies relevant to plan implementation. An initial set of strategies is presented below, and in some cases illustrative action steps are identified that will assist the Village in advancing these initiatives.

The strategies and actions included here are primarily intended to address population challenges, and are built upon the foundation provided in the previous analytic sections of this plan as well as the input provided by residents during the planning process. The strategies listed in this section are intended to equip Dawson to continue to serve resident needs and wishes in an informed manner, while expanding upon the services and amenities that new residents will likely desire.

Strategies are divided into sections that parallel the plan, including the demographic, environmental, utility, transportation, economic development, and land use sections. Land use goals are also reflected in the previously presented land use map. As many of these areas overlap, aspects of the various strategies overlap these categories as well.

Though many issues may ultimately face the Village in the years to come, the opportunities and challenges currently seen as facing Dawson *can* be addressed. And they can be addressed in such a way as to protect, cultivate, and promote the community's people, its rich history, and its position as a place where families can enjoy the high quality of life that a smaller community provides. As the Village slogan says, "You're with friends here."

A key goal for Dawson is to protect and promote its rich heritage, as well as the community character that makes it unique, while still encouraging population growth. By focusing on its unique attributes and location, Dawson can do this while increasing community pride in place.

One must acknowledge that small communities face resource challenges and constraints. Yet Dawson has many unique resources. **The Village's attributes in the areas of location, history, solid infrastructure and natural environment, lead to a vision of the Village as a place that is welcoming to families, near enough to a metro area to have the advantages of a bedroom community without the growth problems these communities often have, and close enough to nearby recreational amenities to offer a varied lifestyle attractive to both current and new residents.** This vision acknowledges, however, that Dawson may not be able to pursue such a lofty vision in the short-term, but must work to achieve it over the course of this plan.

The various strategies and action items identified below present various degrees of challenge for the Village. However, if thoughtfully considered they can assist the community in differentiating between the priorities that various items might be given by taking into account the feasibility of achieving various ends over both the short and long terms. This provides for additional flexibility in plan implementation over time.

But they cannot be dismissed, and local leaders must consider more than maintenance activities, paying particular attention to the strategies that will develop the amenities in and around Dawson that are preferred by young families considering locating there even if employed elsewhere.

Demographic Strategies

It is often said that "demographics are destiny." The nature and composition of a village's population can determine the viability of any number of its strategies, either through an engaged populace that supports on-going strategic improvement, or an at-risk population that contributes to the challenges facing village officials.

While villages have limited ability to influence demographic inputs like birth and death rates, migration patterns and similar social components of a community's demographic makeup may be more readily influenced by governmental actions and programs.

Strategy 1: Encourage Dawson's younger age cohort to remain local as they age.

Action 1: Consider a Village-sponsored scholarship program for residents to attend nearby colleges, universities and technical schools.

Action 2: Reach out to public and private local institutions providing workforce training and/or higher education to develop a discount program for Village residents.

Action 3: Consider youth development needs as an ongoing component of Village amenity and service prioritization.

Action 4: Implement continued property maintenance enforcement efforts and neighborhood engagement activities to develop community pride in place.

Strategy 2: Promote the development of a strong, healthy and safe youth population.

Action 1: Continue sidewalk expansion efforts in keeping with transportation planning-identified initiatives to address youth pedestrian safety and youth obesity concerns.

Action 2: Target sidewalk/trail expansion efforts to connect youth resources, including to the school and the park.

Strategy 3: Strengthen Dawson's workforce to bolster community income levels.

Action 1: Identify partner institutions for workforce training and post-secondary education opportunities.

Action 2: Provide local office for job training or placement personnel and invite the institutions mentioned in the previous two actions to use of this facility.

Action 3: Ensure that transportation options are available to link residents to places of employment outside of the Village by supporting rural transit or carpool start-ups.

Strategy 4: Care for the needs of aging Dawson residents.

Action 1: Continue sidewalk rehabilitation efforts to ensure village walkability even for those with limited mobility.

Action 2: Partner with the Sangamon-Menard Area Rural Transit program and other regional actors to ensure adequate resources for connecting seniors and other persons in need to required health and social services.

Environmental Strategies

Pursuing policies that account for the environment will help the Village reach several goals. In the Environment and the Utilities sections of this plan, it was noted that the natural environment near Dawson influences its development prospects.

Strategy 1: Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas through improved human stewardship.

Action: Consider Sangamon River access as an important regional amenity for future Village develop-

ment efforts, and promote it as such.

Strategy 2: Promote increased resident interaction with the natural environment.

Action 1: Consider the Village's proximity to, and future planning for, natural areas and regional recreational opportunities.

Action 2: Consider partnerships with recreational tourism groups such as the Central Illinois Trails Association.

Strategy 3: Explore new revenue sources related to environmental heritage preservation efforts.

Action 1: Explore funding lines available for the promotion and improvement of a designated natural area.

Action 2: Seek information and opportunities from partner organizations such as Friends of Sangamon Valley and the Lincoln Heritage Water Trail Association.

Utilities Strategies

Dawson will need to consider a strategy specifically related to its utilities to ensure that on-going Village improvement and expansion are fostered by continued high-caliber community-built infrastructure, utility pricing, and utility services.

Strategy 1: Address capital needs of the existing utility system.

Action 1: Develop and adopt a Village long-range capital needs plan.

Action 2: Work toward the implementation of a long-range capital plan in phased increments.

Action 3: Consider, as appropriate, opportunities for collaborative bonding with other jurisdictions to reduce bond administrative costs for capital projects.

Strategy 2: Support utility access to new residents and businesses.

Action 1: Ensure potential developers and residents are aware of Village support.

Action 2: Continue to track residential growth levels to ensure that adequate water service is available should housing growth exceed plan expectations.

Strategy 3: Explore regional cooperation efforts that may benefit utility systems.

Action 1: Consider shared administrative resources with other jurisdictions in the region, as is feasible given staffing needs.

Action 2: Continue cooperation with Village of Riverton for shared utility maintenance.

Transportation Strategies

Where people live and work, where economic activity takes place, and the modes that people choose to move from place to place, all contribute to the demand for an efficient, safe, and connected transportation network. The provision of such a network is vital to the success of any municipality, and consideration of all modes of transportation is of particular importance in retaining and attracting new residents. The following proposed strategies reinforce the key ideas discussed in the transportation section: pedestrian connectivity; recreation and trail opportunities; and planning for an effective road network.

Strategy 1: Provide a safe and efficient transportation network for all types and demographics of users.

Action 1: Adopt and incorporate, as appropriate, the Complete Streets concept, as defined by the Illinois Department of Transportation, where appropriate.

Action 2: Ensure that future development includes Complete Streets designs, such as sidewalks or pedestrian ways.

Strategy 2: Expand pedestrian infrastructure.

Action 1: Construct sidewalks in areas where they do not exist.

Action 2: Refurbish or improve sidewalks where they are in poor condition.

Strategy 3: Work to establish a multi-use paved trail network.

Action 1: Identify priority trail connections as outlined in SATS trail network plans.

Action 2: Link all trail developments to historical and environmental resource planning.

Action 3: Continue conversations with villages of Riverton and Buffalo regarding rail-to-trail efforts.

Action 4: Support a partnership with Riverton related to a feasibility study to explore creation of bike/pedestrian bridge over the Sangamon River at or near the location of the previous bridge as part of a trail network in the area. This may include the addition of Dawson as part of a "Riverview Branch" Trail as an amenity for the communities in the area.

Action 5: Begin to purchase or acquire easements, property donations, or property access commitments for the associated trail corridors, including those leading from Dawson to Springfield, the Clear Lake gravel pits, Buffalo and, if possible, Waldrop, Carpenter, and Riverside Parks near Sherman.

Strategy 5: Explore creation of a multi-use unpaved trail network.

Action 1: Identify and connect with community partners, such as the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Central Illinois Trails Association, Lincoln Heritage Water Trail Association, and others.

Action 2: Consider acquiring property near floodplain, river bottom, gravel pit areas, or other open spaces for ATV, equestrian, mountain bike, or multi-use unpaved trails linking Dawson with neighboring communities.

Action 3: Work with other private or public landowners to develop similar trails.

Action 4: Educate residents on the economic development and health benefits of trails.

Action 5: Provide support to volunteer groups engaged in the development and maintenance of multi-use unpaved trails in the region.

Action 6: Consider corporate sponsors and partners for recreational trail development and promotion, and work to incent private investment and development in these unique assets and resources.

Strategy 7: **Participate in regional efforts to improve transportation network.**

Action 1: Educate, support, and publicize to Village residents, particularly older ones, the proposed Sangamon-Menard Area Rural Transit service.

Action 2: Reach out to partner jurisdictions regarding shared grant application opportunities.

Economic and Community Development Strategies

Both economic and community development are key components in enhancing the quality of life and financial interests of a community. Expanding, attracting, creating, and retaining existing businesses increases a community's employment opportunities and household incomes, and also provide the basis for additional population growth. Effective economic development policies and programs in particular produce the financial resources needed to ensure that a community's long-range plans are implemented.

Economic development policies and programs help pave the way for a community to create growth, sustain growth, and become a competitive community. Strengthening both economic and community development efforts can help create a "vital cycle" in which rising real incomes are reinvested in a community leading to additional economic and population growth, and subsequently greater income growth.

Studying a community's market presence and its ability or inability to create or maintain growth is vital to long-range visions and plans. Moreover, a series of focused and successful development strategies will identify the unique characteristics of Dawson and provide it with better insights into how it may highlight and leverage its advantages, while

reducing or mitigating the factors that might create declining growth.

Strategy 1: Retain the Village's existing businesses and expand upon this base by creating an attractive business environment.

Action 1: Maintain and improve current infrastructure and development-readiness through implementation of a Village capital plan.

Action 2: Continue to ensure strong and consistent local government operations to facilitate business interactions.

Action 3: Identify any existing areas in the Village that are not currently provided with low-cost, high-speed internet service, or where the service is considered marginal, working with service providers to address these needs.

Action 4: Develop and expand upon programs and policies that support existing businesses and encourage their expansion.

Action 5 Consider a façade easement and improvement program to assist commercial property owners in updating their facades while still maintaining the character of their buildings.

Action 6: Study and pursue opportunities to strengthen and create efficiencies in local governmental operations so as to reduce future development costs.

Action 7: Create and maintain a community profile and an inventory of available development sites in the area.

Action 8: Maintain an up-to-date and professional presence on the internet that showcases the long term plan of the community, and which provides links to information and data that would be helpful to a business or potential resident considering locating in the community. This presence should provide links to local contacts that would be of assistance to them.

Action 9: Encourage the use of state, federal and local programs that help fund local economic development and residential projects.

Action 10: Take active steps to become familiar with the available assistance programs, their applicability to potential projects, and their application requirements.

Action 11: Pursue opportunities to create linkages between a local economic development committee and state and federal program staff who manage economic and community development assistance programs.

Strategy 2: Minimize or remove all unnecessary or counter-productive barriers to future residential and commercial development.

Action 1: Work to reduce utility costs, and market these low costs to make Dawson attractive to new homebuyers.

Action 2: Explore school district merger or other alternatives for educational facility improvement and to alleviate possible development constraints.

Action 3: Engage in long-term development planning activities, including capital plan development and implementation.

Action 4: Encourage new commercial and industrial users to locate in the proposed commercial areas by developing a comprehensive document that provides all appropriate site information to help market a selected commercial or industrial site to a potential user.

Action 5: Ensure that all site selection information is shared with economic development professionals throughout the region.

Action 6: Continue to monitor growth to ensure that water capacity can meet future growth demands.

Strategy 3: **Promote Village "Pride in Place" to ensure strong, neighborhood-like setting.**

Action 1: Promote homeownership incentives sponsored by state and federal government agencies, or develop village homeownership initiatives, potentially including a down payment assistance program or first-year property tax abatement.

Action 2: Minimize mobile homes in future land use decisions, being guided by the comprehensive land use plan as well as on-going plan updates.

Action 3: Ensure quality construction materials and methods in any new development through Village development ordinances.

Action 4: Increase code enforcement activities; work with partner jurisdictions, such as Sangamon County, to pursue cooperative code enforcement.

Action 5: Consider creation of a focused deterrence strategy for property code violations through landlord training and accountability practices.

Action 6: Continue to sponsor Village clean-up days to improve neighborhood appearances.

Action 7: Encourage on-going citizen participation in local projects, potentially through the creation of a Dawson Improvement Committee.

Action 8: Encourage the creation of a local Dawson Garden Club, and provide resources to encourage plantings and maintenance of flowers and shrubs in the Village. The Village may use property already under its control for this purpose, developing an amenity similar to the community garden on East Elm.

Strategy 4: **Develop community amenities to attract new residents and promote the small community quality of life.**

Action 1: Continually expand and improve upon Village park and open space.

Action 2: Enhance and maintain existing transportation infrastructure to facilitate and incent population maintenance and growth by ensuring that Dawson is pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

Action 3: Create or improve sidewalks and curbing to increase pedestrian safety and mobility.

Action 4: Ensure that ordinances regulating Village development reflect transportation infrastructure goals.

Action 5: Consider hosting Village-sponsored festivals, picnics, fairs, or programs to foster civic engagement and social ties, such as the successful July 4th activities.

Action 6: Utilize the significant history related to the Old Indian Trial/Edwards Trace Trail. Consider a Heritage Days type of festival which could include reenactments of Native American, pioneer or civil war life as it occurred many years ago.

Action 7: Create improved gateway entrance to Dawson, such as that described in Appendix 2 of this plan, in order to increase notice of the Village as well as promote a sense of place.

Strategy 5: Integrate land use patterns consistent with economic and community development best practices.

Action 1: Expand enforcement efforts related to standards of zoning, land use, and property maintenance.

Action 2: Adopt the land use plan and work to increase property values through the implementation of strong land use principles.

Strategy 6: Revitalize the commercial district using historic amenities to benefit development efforts.

Action 1: Identify an historic area or areas as priorities for redevelopment or reuse and designate them through appropriate signage.

Action 2: Consider hosting a festival related to the Old Indian Trail/ Edwards Trace Trail to cultivate community engagement & Village promotion.

Action 3: Identify and provide incentives to attract new businesses into a designated "main street" area.

Action 4: Related to the previously mentioned façade improvement program and "main street" improvement, establish a group to assist in the development of this area, and develop guidelines for such an effort in keeping with historic or landmark structures.

Strategy 7: Consider tourism as a potential for economic growth by utilizing historic resources and regional development efforts.

Action 1: Identify and market local Old Indian Trail/ Edwards Trace Trail, as well as mining, Native American, nearby WWII Era Sangamon Ordinance Plant, and other historic resources.

Action 2: Create a "local heroes" exhibit in the Village Hall or a similar location, highlighting any notable Dawson residents.

Action 3: Develop an exploratory committee to take efforts to consider a festival related to the Old Indian Trail/ Edwards Trace Trail.

Action 4: Consider the creation of a local museum that displays artifacts and research related to Dawson's history.

Action 5: Seek funding for the development of a comprehensive Dawson area history study, emphasizing especially the connection to the Interurban Rail line and Sangamon Ordinance Plant, Native American history, Edward's Trace, and Civil War history.

Action 6: Work closely with the Looking For Lincoln Coalition to identify opportunities related to the Lincoln Era and John Dawson's role as one of the historic "Long Nine" legislators.

Action 7: Create a strong web presence that includes well-developed maps identifying historic assets and amenities of interest in the area.

Action 8: Develop a Dawson historic site inventory and mobile application to assist tourists in locating historic sites and activities in or near the Village.

Strategy 8: Consider recreation access as a community and economic development incentive.

Action 1: Assist in development of trails in and around the villages of Dawson, Riverton, and Buffalo.

Action 2: Develop partnerships with regional recreation groups and corporate sponsors to foster greater recreational investment in the region.

Action 3: Utilize and market access and proximity to Springfield and its entertainment and recreational amenities as Village assets.

Action 4: Pursue opportunities to link Dawson with Riverton and Springfield, to take advantage of Springfield's tourism amenities and the trail network in Sangamon County connecting with Riverton,

through priority corridor trail development.

Strategy 9: Consider efforts to engage in long term development planning.

Action 1: Offer municipal support to local civic organization(s) to encourage growth and participation, and to foster citizen involvement in local projects.

Action 2: Encourage on-going local leadership participation in regional efforts such as Regional Leadership Council (RLC) and other inter-governmental groups. The Village is currently active in the RLC and the Village President is Secretary of this group.

Land Development Strategies

This comprehensive plan considers ways in which the Village can plan for growth in a manner that helps it increase its population while maintaining a good quality of life. Residents have expressed a desire through the community survey to maintain a moderate to slow population growth, yet slightly more robust business growth.

By promoting a contiguous growth pattern, this plan retains consistency with the best practices in community development, while still realizing that there are times when a contiguous growth pattern must be balanced with the need to serve current residents in the most effective manner.

As such, flexibility and common sense should complement the implementation of the following strategies and activities, while emphasizing the Proposed Land Use Plan.

Strategy 1: Promote an economical and efficient growth pattern which ensures development occurs in appropriate areas.

Action 1: Establish as a priority the continued renewal and strengthening of existing infrastructure.

Action 2: Target new infrastructure toward areas where growth is encouraged as per the Proposed Land Use plan.

Action 3: Ensure that all new development is served by public water and a public sewer.

Action 4: Clarify extra-territorial jurisdiction through inter-governmental agreements where needed, and work to exercise authority over development within this extra-territorial area.

Strategy 2: Make aggressive efforts to eliminate existing dilapidated housing.

Action 1: Limit the future use of mobile homes and place them in sites (mobile home parks) specific to this use.

Action 2: Enforce local building codes and require existing substandard structures to come into compliance or be removed from the site.

Action 3: Identify housing varieties and price ranges under-utilized in the community and region.

Action 4: Promote development specifically targeted to meet these market needs.

Strategy 3: Gradually develop land use patterns that maintain similar uses in similar areas.

Action 1: Gradually reposition land uses to phase Dawson into a scenario more closely paralleling Euclidean zoning.

Action 2: Adopt a land use plan and work to increase property values through implementing strong land use principles as contemplated.

Strategy 4: Periodically assess this comprehensive plan for any needed updates.

Action 1: Review and amend the comprehensive plan as necessary in five years to account for changes in land use and development patterns since inception.

Action 2: Update the comprehensive plan as needed in 10 years.

References

Bergstrom, R.E., Piskin, K., and Follmer, L.R. (1976). *Geology for Planning in the Springfield-Decatur Region, Illinois.* Illinois State Geological Survey Circular 497. ISGS: Champaign, IL.

Cowardin, L.M., Carter, V., Golet, F.C., and LaRoe, E.T. (1979/1992). *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States.* Retrieved from: http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Documents/Classification-of-Wetlands-and-Deepwater-Habitats-of-the-United-States.pdf.

Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (2014). *Global Duns Market Identifiers.* Retrieved from: http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.uis.edu:2048/hottopics/lnacademic/.

Dure, B. (2014). *Why Millennials are Avoiding Small-Town America*. Retrieved from: http://mesacc.libguides.com/content.php?pid=38266&sid=281078.

Enos, Z.A. (1911). [From the Papers of Z. A. Enos] Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, 4(2), 220. Illinois State Historical Society: Springfield, IL.

File, T., and Kominski, R. (2012). *Dependency Ratios in the United States: A State and Metropolitan Area Analysis*. Retrieved from: http://www.census.gov/hhes/well-being/files/Dependency%20Ratios%20in%20the%20United%20States.pdf.

Furry, W. (2001). *Barely a Trace: What's Left of the Old Indian Trail Known as Edwards Trace.* Illinois State Historical Society. Retrieved from: http://www.sancohis.org/OLDER%20FILES/trace.htm.

Illinois Department of Revenue (2014a). *Local Government: Sales and Related Taxes - Disbursements.* Retrieved from: http://revenue.state.il.us/localgovernment/disbursements/SalesRelated/sales.htm.

Illinois Department of Revenue (2014b). *Tax Rate Database.* Retrieved from: http://tax.illinois.gov/TaxRates.

Illinois Department of Transportation (n.d.). *Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP).* Retrieved from: http://www.idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/local-transportation-partners/county-engineers-and-local-public-agencies/funding-opportunities/ITEP.

Illinois Mine Subsidence Insurance Fund (2014). *Should I Purchase Mine Subsidence Insurance?* Retrieved from: https://www.imsif.com/doYouNeed.

Illinois State Board of Education (2014). *Illinois Report Card: 2012-2013*. Retrieved from: http://illinoisreportcard.com/District.aspx?districtId=51084014026.

Illinois State Geological Survey (2013a). *Directory of Coal Mines in Illinois: Sangamon County*. Retrieved from: http://isgs.illinois.edu/sites/isgs/files/maps/coal-maps/mines-series/mines-directories/pdf-files/mines-directory-sangamon.pdf.

Illinois State Geological Survey (2013b). *Mine Subsidence in Illinois: Facts for Homeowners*. Retrieved from: http://library.isgs.uiuc.edu/Pubs/pdfs/circulars/c569-2013.pdf.

LaGesse and Associates (2004). *Inventory of Sangamon County Natural Areas*. Friends of Sangamon Valley: Springfield, IL.

Massie & Massie (2014). *The Lincoln Heritage Water Trail*. Illinois Department of Natural Resources: Springfield, IL.

Midwest Technology Assistance Center (2010). *Midwest Technology Assistance Center for Small Public Water Systems Final Report*. Illinois Soil and Water Survey. Retrieved from: http://hdl.handle.net/2142/15160.

Moore, J. C., Stinson, L.L., and Welniak, E.J. (2000). *Income Measurement Error in Surveys: A Review*. Journal of Official Statistics, 16(4), 331-362: Stockholm.

Moore, L., Brady, D., and Garrison, T. (2014). *Documenting the Edward's Trace: Investigating Notes from Field Surveys of Locations along the Trace Corridor.* Draft document not publicly released; see authors.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2014). *Traffic Safety Facts: 2012 Data*. Retrieved from: http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811888.pdf.

Rickerl, S. (2013). *Potential High for Mine Subsidence,* The Southern. Retrieved from: http://thesouthern.com/news/local/potential-high-for-mine-subsidence/article_8ff496d2-9a84-11e2-af75-001a4bcf887a.html.

Sangamon County Clerk (2014). *Property Tax Rates: 2013.* Retrieved from: https://www.sangamoncountyclerk.com/Taxes/documents/2013TaxRates.pdf.

Sims, N. (2015). *Planning for Growth: Reviewing Economic Growth Trends in the Springfield-Sangamon County Metro Region*. SSCRPC: Springfield, IL.

Sims, N. (2016). *The Millennials: What Local Leaders Should Know about America's Newest Generation – A Review of Surveys and Assessments*. SSCRPC: Springfield, IL.

Springfield Area Transportation Study (2015). *2040 Long Range Transportation Plan.* SSCRPC: Springfield, IL.

Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (2014). *Sangamon County Regional Strategic Plan.* SSCRPC: Springfield, IL.

Uden, A. (2015a). *2010 Census Analysis.* SSCRPC: Springfield, IL.

Uden, A. (2015b). *How Resilient is Our Regional Economy?* SSCRPC: Springfield, IL.

U.S. Census Bureau (2014a). *Work Status in the Past 12 Months: 2008-2012*, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from: http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_12_5YR_S2303&prodType=table.

U.S. Census Bureau (2014b). *Occupation by Sex and Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months: 2008-2012*, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from: http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_12_5YR_S2402&prodType=table.

U. S. Department of Agriculture (2004). *Soil Survey of Sangamon County, Illinois*. Retrieved from: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/illinois/IL167/0/sangamon_IL.pdf.

Acknowledgements

The production of this plan would not have been possible without the assistance of the Dawson Village Board and the Dawson Comprehensive Plan Citizen Committee.

Dawson Village Board

Hon. Jeremy Nunes, Mayor

Hon. Joan Davis

Hon. Josh Blakeman

Hon. Jake Byerline

Hon. Robin Ashton-Hale

Hon. Nancy Prytherch

Hon. John Reilly

The Citizen Committee for the Village of Dawson Comprehensive Plan

Theresa Waters

Tom Hughes

Mike Tozer

Connie Tozer

Wayne Dillinger

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizations for their assistance:

Dawson Fire Department

Dawson Community Club

Shelly Farley

Pat Curry

Charlie Abbott

Many thanks as well to the many Village of Dawson residents who gave willingly of their time to complete the community survey and provide comments.

Appendix 1: Community Survey Results

In the spring of 2014, the SSCRPC prepared a community survey for the Village of Dawson, intended to gauge residents' attitudes, opinions, and beliefs, which would shape the comprehensive plan for the Village. Each household in Dawson (212 households) received a survey by mail from the SSCRPC. Using a postage-paid envelope provided with the survey, 77 responses were completed and anonymously returned to SSCRPC, a response rate of 36.3%. In light of the smaller number of households in the Village, the SSCRPC found this to be a robust response rate that compared favorably with other communities in which it has conducted survey research.

The survey was broken down into five content area sections and a demographic section.

Section 1 examined opinions on a wide variety of matters of general concern to residents, such as the price of utilities and the condition of parks and public spaces. This section also contained questions asking citizens about their attitudes toward local government institutions such as the Village board and the public works department, as well as their sentiments toward proposed policies.

Section 2 examined attitudes toward housing conditions and issues.

Section 3 looked at transportation issues, including whether the Village should install or make improvements to sidewalks and trails.

Section 4 covered questions pertaining to environmental issues in Dawson, and Section 5 contained questions which assessed economic development in the community.

Figure A.1
Demographics of Dawson
(Survey Sample and 2010 Census Population)

Persons Per Household	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6+**
Survey Respondents (n=76)	30.3%	44.7%	7.9%	11.8%	3.9%	1.3%
Dawson Actual (2010 Census)	29.1%	33.8%	17.4%	11.7%	5.6%	2.3%

Gender	**Female**	**Male**
Survey Respondents (n=74)	48.6%	51.4%
Dawson (2014 ESRI estimates)	49.7%	50.3%

Age	**0-17**	**18-25**	**26-35**	**36-45**	**46-55**	**56-65**	**65+**
Survey Respondents (n= 76)	0.0%	2.6%	13.2%	18.4%	15.8%	22.4%	27.6%
Dawson (2014 ESRI estimates)	~11.7%	~16.5%	~13.6	~11.5%	~13.4%	~15.2%	~18.2%

Children in Household	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6+**
Survey Respondents (n= 76)	72.4%	11.8%	13.2%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%
Dawson Actual (2010 Census)	65.7%	34.3%					

Educational Attainment	**<HS Diploma**	**HS/GED**	**Some College**	**Bachelor's**	**Grad. Degree**
Survey Respondents (n= 72)	2.6%	48.7%	13.2%	22.4%	13.2%
Dawson (ESRI 2014 forecast)	~6.7%	~33.4%	~39.3%	~16.9%	~3.7%

Income Level	**<$25k**	**$25-50k**	**$50-75k**	**$75-100k**	**$100k-150k**	**$150k+**
Survey Respondents (n= 65)	15.4%	32.3%	24.6%	16.9%	9.2%	1.5%
Dawson (ESRI 2014 forecast)	~12.5%	~23.4%	~39.2%	~12.9%	~10%	~1.9%

Please Note: ESRI categories differ slightly from survey categories. Figures for children in households represents households with any number of children under 18, regardless of relation. Figures pertaining to educational attainment are for population age 25 and older, and Dawson ESRI forecast is highest attainment of any individual living in household.

Demographics and Survey Validity

The SSCRPC strives to achieve validity in its analyses by considering the demographic profiles of respondents in comparison of those of the community at large. As depicted in Figure A.1 above, with the exception of age, and to a lesser extent income, respondents are fairly close to the citizens of the Village as a whole on most demographic variables.

Given the time and cost constraints associated with its community surveys, the SSCRPC typically does not fully employ more rigorous and costly methodological tools sometimes utilized in scientific surveys. For example, in some surveys, researchers work to increase validity by weighting the responses by respondent demographic information. A researcher could weigh more highly the responses of younger individuals, who commonly do not respond to surveys as frequently as older persons. However, to weight the variables for this survey would result in incredibly large weight being given to only a few responses, and could skew the results of the data. Accordingly, the SSCPRC instead works to bear any demographic distinctions in mind when examining relevant survey questions, and provides responses that demonstrate any meaningful age-group distinctions throughout the analysis.

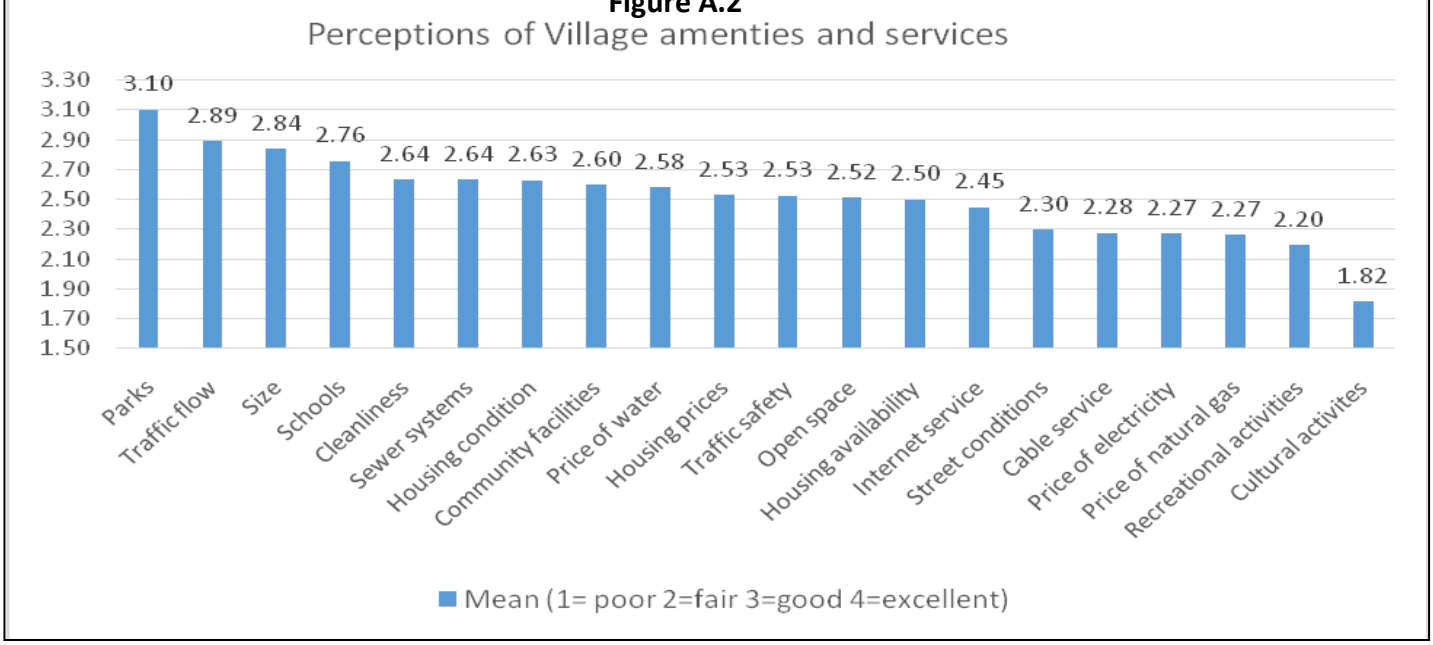
As Figure A.1 demonstrates, respondents for the survey largely paralleled the demographic makeup of the Village. However, respondents were older, more likely to have a college degree, and less likely to have children living in the household than the population of Dawson overall. Again, this is not uncommon in community surveys, and has been taken into account in SSCRPC consideration of responses. Differences between respondents and the population of the Village in terms of gender are almost nonexistent, and respondents were as likely to live in multiple-person households as the population overall.

The SSCRPC also notes that any demographic differences in the respondent profile can come from multiple sources. For some questions, such as household income, respondents may have chosen not to answer a particular survey question. In other cases, demographics may differ because not everyone who received a survey completed the survey. As with all surveys, there is likely to be some bias due to nonresponse. However, because the survey was mailed to all households in the study population, there is likely to be very little selection bias (the chance that individuals in the population were not included in the study). As such, the survey is likely as valid an indicator of public opinion in Dawson as possible, given time and cost constraints.

Village Characteristics and Concerns

Figure A.2, below, displays mean (average) scores for twenty community features. Scores were scaled using a range from 1 to 4, with 1 representing "poor," 2 representing "fair," 3 representing "good," and 4

Figure A.2



representing "excellent". The survey also contained the option "not available in the Village" as a fifth possible response. While the SSCRPC reviewed this response and took it into consideration, for statistical purposes all percentages and means pertaining to this question were calculated without this response.

One of the Village characteristics perceived most favorably by survey respondents is Dawson's small population size. As of 2010, there were 509 Individuals living in the Village. For the most part, residents of Dawson see this as a good thing. In fact, when asked to rate the size (population) of the Village, over 70.0% of respondents felt that the size of the Village was either "good" or "excellent." This is consistent with respondents' open-ended comments, where the vast majority cited the "small town" feel of Dawson as their favorite feature.

In addition to being satisfied with the size of the Village, respondents think highly of their park, which has a mean score of 3.10, the highest score of all features.

Respondents also positively evaluated traffic flow (mean= 2.89), which may be aided by its smaller population size. Schools also received high marks, with 74.1% of respondents rating schools as either "excellent" or "good". While there are no schools within the Village, this rating likely indicates sentiment toward Tri-City school district.

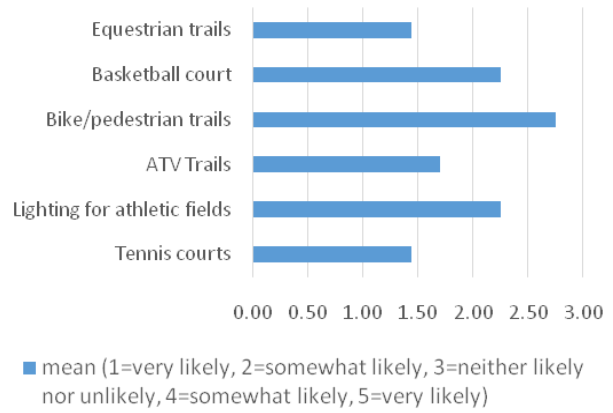
By and large, respondents rated Village aesthetics and infrastructure rather favorably as well. In fact, 64.3% of respondents rated the cleanliness of the Village as either "excellent" or "good". By contrast, housing condition was rated somewhat less highly, though still positively, with 60.0% of respondents rating the condition of houses as either "excellent" or "good. By contrast, street conditions were seen by respondents to be mostly in fair or even poor condition overall with 62.3% percent of respondents rating streets as such. Additionally, only 6.5% of respondents rated street conditions in the Village to be "excellent."

Other areas of concern for respondents are the cost of utilities such as natural gas and electricity, cable and internet service, and cultural and recreational activities. Recreational and cultural activities are rated particularly poorly, with 65.2% and 83.6% of respondents respectively calling them either "fair" or "poor" respectively. In the case of cultural activities, fully 40.0% of respondents rated these to be "poor". On the other hand, it is helpful to note that several respondents cited the Fourth of July celebration positively in their open-ended responses, leading the SSCRPC to speculate that residents enjoy activities offered currently and would prefer to see more in the Village.

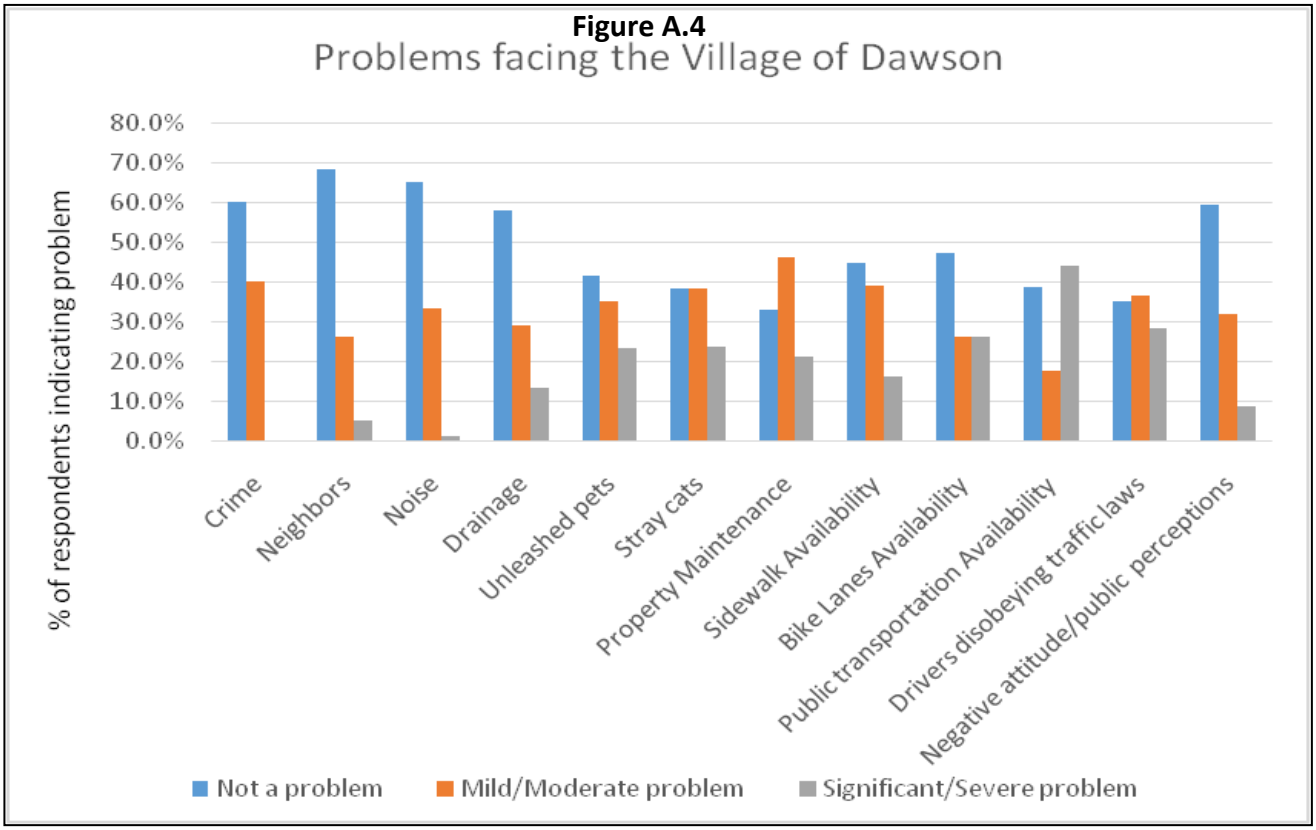
In light of respondent comments about recreational activities, the survey asked respondents how likely they would be to utilize five recreational amenities if they were to be built or expanded upon in Dawson. Interestingly, respondents indicated fairly low likelihoods overall. Few respondents indicated they would use a tennis court or equestrian trails if these were added although some respondents did indicate they would use bike or pedestrian trails and basketball courts. Overall however, support of these proposed additions is relatively low (see Figure A.3).

Figure A.3

Liklihood of use, proposed activities



The survey also asked respondents whether certain conditions in the Village represent a concern to them. Respondents varied in their level of concern regarding different conditions. At the low end, crime was largely judged not to be a problem in the Village, as only 40.0% indicated it was a "mild/ moderate problem" and no respondent indicated crime was a "severe/significant problem" in the Village. Additionally, neighbors were not perceived by respondents to be a concern; 68.4% said their neighbors were "not a problem" and only 5.3% said that neighbors represented a "significant/severe" problem. (see Figure A.4 on the next page).



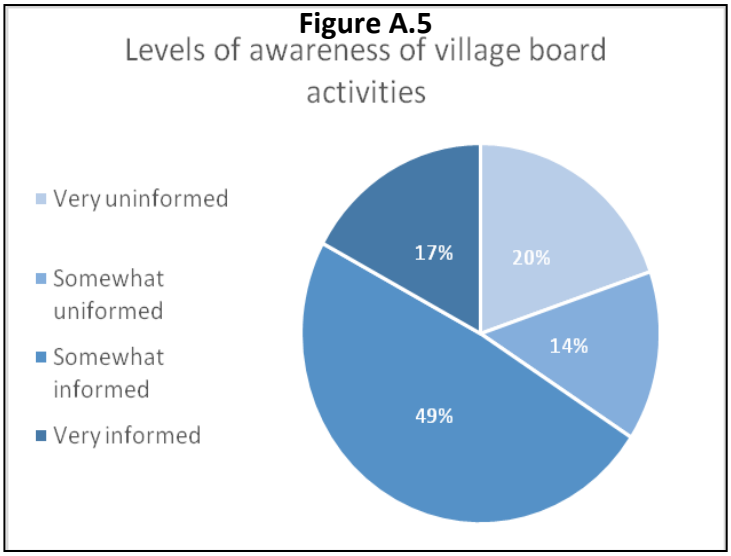
Conversely, stray cats and unleashed pets are viewed as problematic in Dawson, with a majority of respondents indicating that these were either a "mild/moderate" problem or a "significant/severe" problem. In fact, over 23.0% of respondents indicated that both of these issues were a significant or severe problem. Respondents also viewed the maintenance of property and the lack of availability of sidewalks as problematic. Specifically, 67.2% indicated that maintenance of properties represented a problem in the Village. A majority of respondents also saw the lack of bike lanes as a problem. This finding is consistent with the respondents' indicated willingness to utilize bike trails, as discussed above, and is explored later in this analysis.

Civic Engagement and Evaluations of Local Service Providers

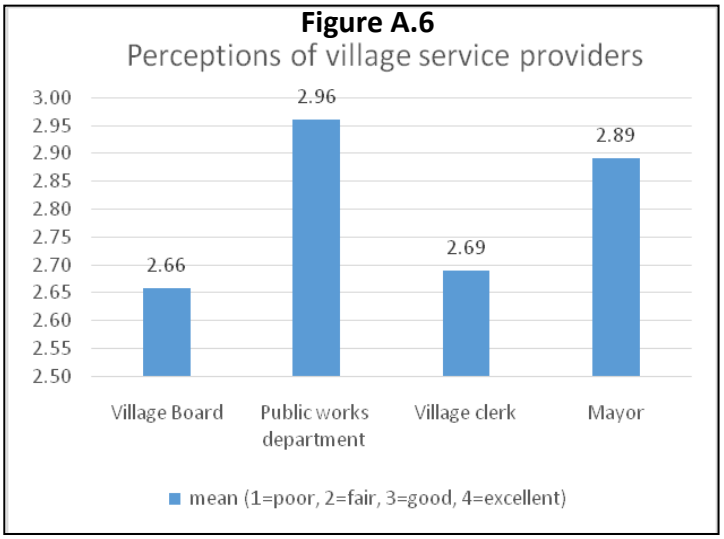
Respondents were asked how informed they felt about Village Board activities on a four point scale ranging from "very uninformed" to "very informed" (see Figure A.5). A majority of respondents consider themselves to be either "somewhat informed" or "very informed".

However, different groups indicate different levels of being informed. For instance, 69.4% of females versus 62.2% of males consider themselves to be either somewhat or very informed. Additionally, respondents who own their home are far more likely to say they are informed than those who do not, at 71.4% and 41.7% respectively.

In terms of how respondents stay informed about Village activities, respondents indicated they rely upon word of mouth (63.6%), read the newspaper (46.8%), or check social media (32.5%). Additionally, five respondents indicated they learned about Village Board activities from reading the Village's monthly newsletter.



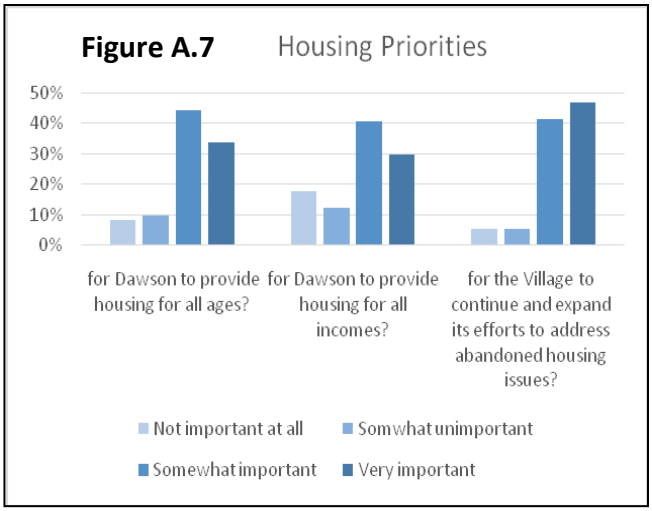
The survey asked respondents to rate four Village service providers: the Village Board, the public works department, the Village Clerk, and the Mayor. As can be seen in Figure A.6, respondents rated their public works department mostly highly, followed very closely by the Mayor. The Village Clerk and Village Board also received fairly favorable marks. Furthermore, a majority of respondents rated each provider as either "good" or "excellent".



Citizens in Dawson are also involved in civic organizations, although much of that involvement occurs outside of the Village. This is largely due to the fact that, because of its more rural setting, Dawson lacks the infrastructure to provide its citizens with spaces in which to participate in some civic activities. Respondents were most likely to be involved in church groups among the various categories. A large number (41.6%) of respondents indicated they were involved in church groups or religious organizations either within the Village of Dawson, somewhere else, or both. However, only 1.0% of respondents indicated they were involved in these activities within the Village. After church groups, respondents indicated they were involved in charitable organizations the most (19.5%), followed by sports programs (16.9%), civic groups or fraternal organizations (14.3%), and parent-teacher or school associations (6.5%).

Housing and Environment

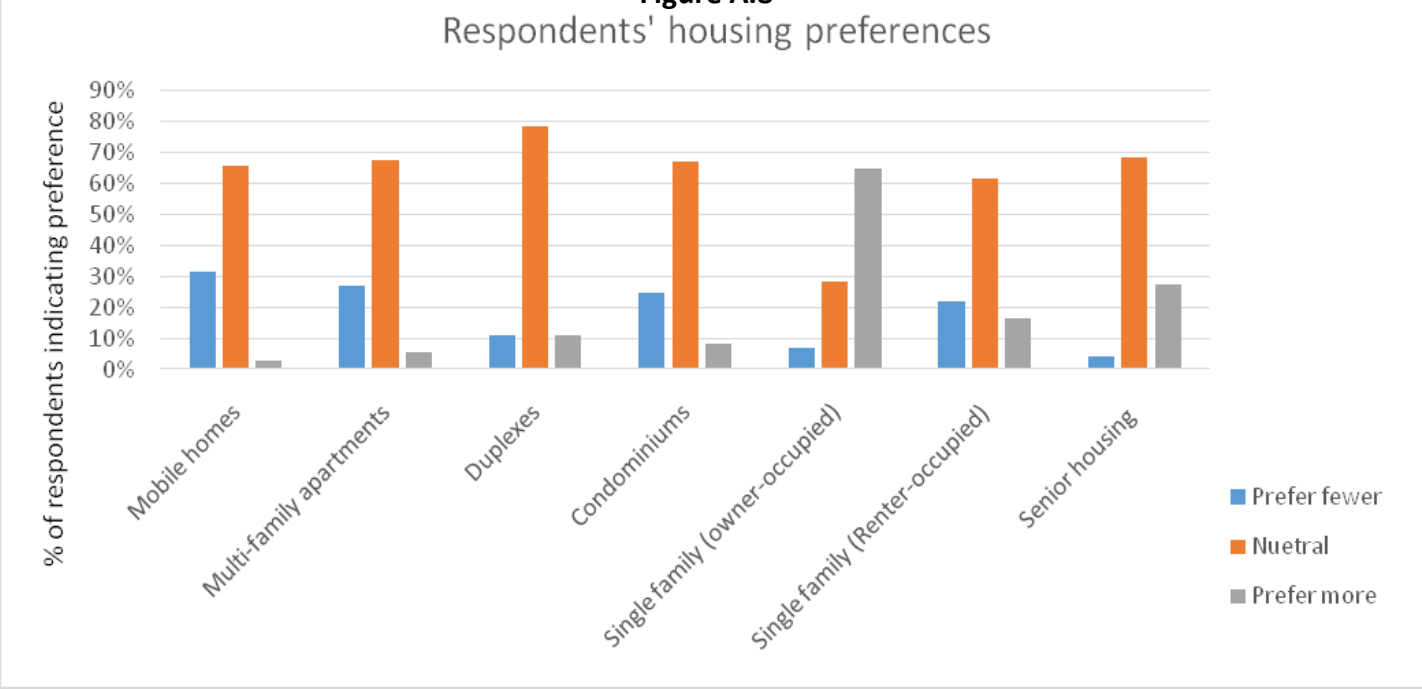
The survey also asked residents how they felt towards different types of housing. Overall, respondents indicated that they are largely neutral toward significant changes in the composition of the housing stock. A notable exception to this finding is the desire to increase the number of single family owner-occupied units. As Figures A.7, below, and A.8, on the next page, suggest, respondents were least likely to favor increasing mobile homes (31.5% preferred less), multi-family apartments (27.0%), and condominiums (24.7%). Again, individuals were most supportive of additional owner-occupied homes (65.9% preferred more). This high level of support may illustrate that individuals in Dawson, while content with the quiet atmosphere that the town offers, are nonetheless welcoming of additional residents so long as the character of the Village is not significantly changed.



The survey also asked about attitudes toward senior housing and having housing for all. The SSCRPC found it important to examine how older residents particularly feel about these issues, particularly in light of the demographics discussed above in this plan. For example, 40% of respondents over the age of 65 indicated that they would prefer more senior housing or assisted living in the Village, versus 27% of respondents overall. However, contrary to what might be expected, slightly fewer seniors felt it was important to provide housing to all ages versus respondents overall. This may be due to these individuals already having secured housing for retirement, whereas younger individuals, particularly those in their late fifties and early sixties, are just beginning to think about retirement and their future needs.

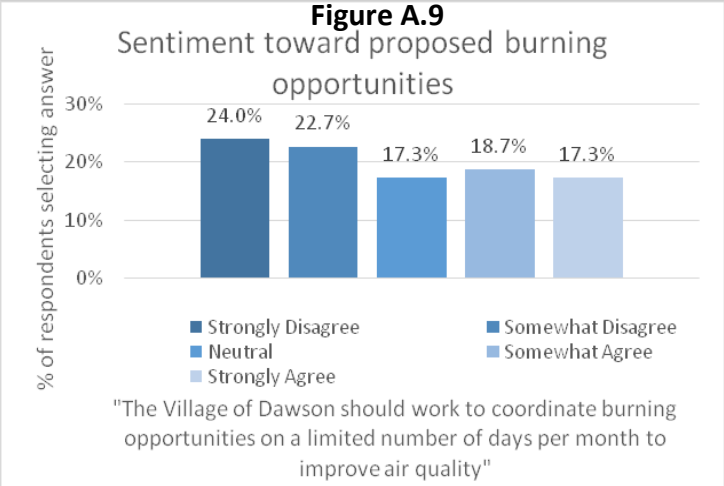
Citizens in Dawson appear to be concerned about the Village's environment. Indeed, the majority of

Figure A.8



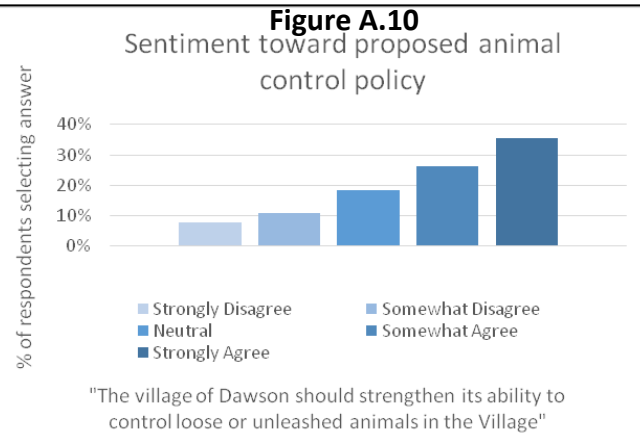
respondents reported recycling (70.1%) as an unmet need. However, respondents were somewhat ambivalent when asked whether the Village should work to coordinate burning opportunities to improve air quality (see Figure A.9). While 36.0% either somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement shown at the bottom of Figure A.9, 46.7% disagreed and 17.3% indicated they were "neutral".

Figure A.9



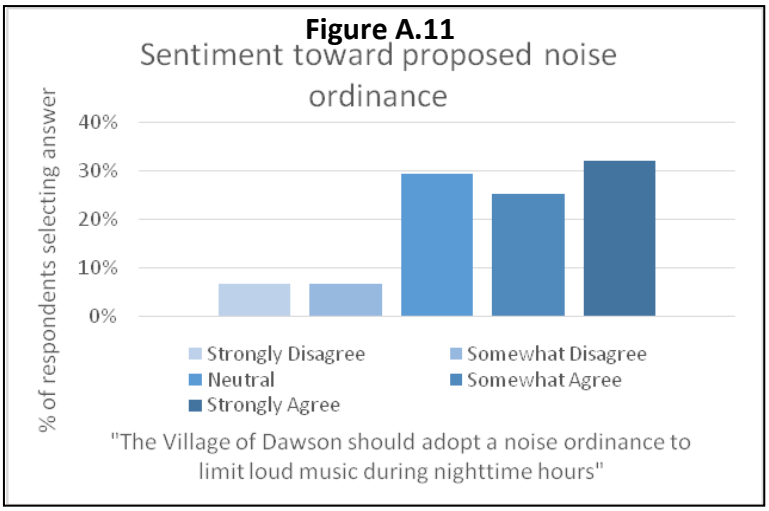
On the other hand, a majority (61.6%) of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement "Dawson should strengthen its ability to control loose or unleashed animals in the Village", which is consistent with the finding discussed above that respondents saw both unleashed pets and stray cats as significant problems (see Figure A.10).

Figure A.10



Noise is thought to be a problem in Dawson, as a majority (57.3%) of citizens either somewhat or strongly agree that the Village should adopt a noise ordinance to limit loud music during nighttime hours (see Figure A.11 on next page). Surprisingly, this concern is not consistent with the finding that citizens, by and large, do not report that noise is a significant problem in the Village. One explanation for the inconsistency may be that while there *is* a noise ordinance in place, there may be an enforcement issue in some localized areas where nighttime noise occurs. Further exploration into incidences of loud music during evening hours may be worthwhile.

Perhaps the most pressing environmental problem facing the Village is the presence of abandoned



housing. When asked how important it is for the Village to continue and expand its efforts to address abandoned housing issues, 88.0% of respondents indicated this was somewhat or very important, and a plurality (46.7%) indicated this was "very important". Respondents also saw addressing abandoned housing as a priority for the Village, with 51.3% seeing this as either a medium or high priority. This is an interesting finding, because it is in stark contrast to the Census data which suggests a very low vacancy rate in the Village.

Village Finances and Policy Priorities

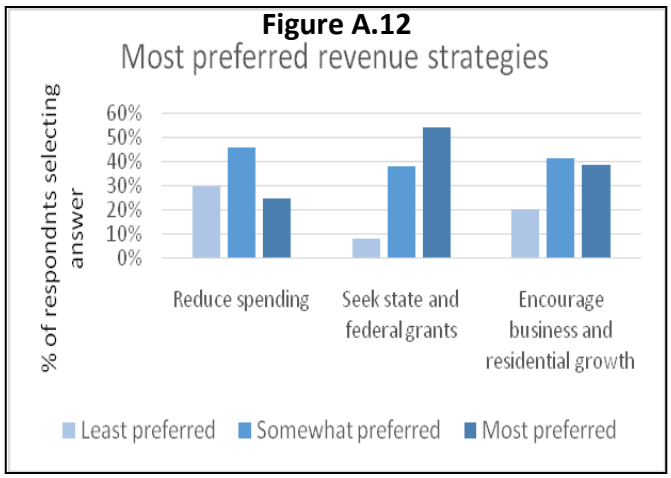
The survey asked many questions regarding Village finances, with the aim of discovering how citizens prefer the Village raise funds to meet financial obligations. Additionally, the survey asked respondents how they would prioritize spending should additional funds become available to the Village. The results of these questions are shown in Figures A.12 and A.13.

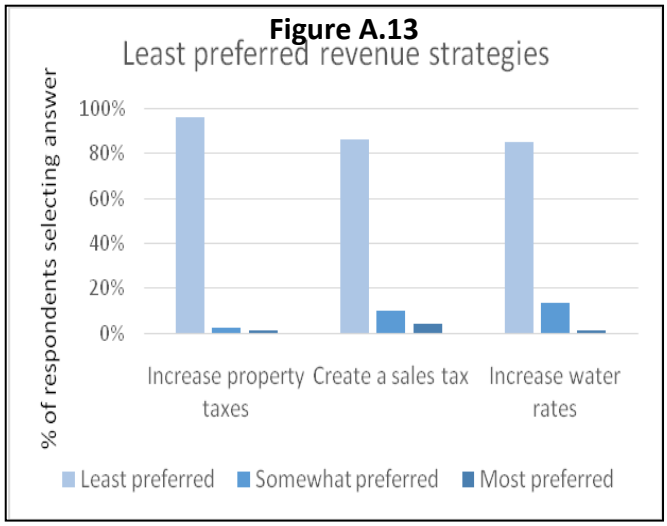
Of eight different strategies suggested, citizens in Dawson preferred to seek grant opportunities above all other approaches as the means of meeting Village financial needs. Indeed, 37.8% of respondents described this strategy as "most preferred" and 54.1% described it as "somewhat preferred". This, of course, would presume that grant funding would be available from State and Federal sources, and that the Village would be able to provide any necessary matching funds from current revenues.

The SSCRPC believes that this is a notable finding, particularly given that grant funding opportunities often take into account community population size and the income levels of its residents, with more populous and poorer communities receiving funding preference over less populous and wealthier ones. Given the low levels of anticipated population growth in Dawson, grant funding opportunities may be limited other than on the basis of low family income. This provides another reason for concern related to Dawson's long term population growth.

The next preferred strategy was encouraging business and residential growth, with 41.3% and 38.7% describing the strategy as "somewhat preferred" and "most preferred", respectively. Again, community growth will be a factor in this strategy being successful.

Reducing spending closely followed encouraging growth as the third most preferred strategy.





An initial look at the strategies that respondents most preferred leads to the conclusion that the citizens of Dawson prefer strategies which will not raise taxes or otherwise cause citizens to incur a substantial financial burden in helping to raise funds. In fact, revenue increasing strategies that rely on raising revenues through the creation of a sales tax, increasing property taxes and increasing water rates, were highly unpopular. These results indicate that raising funds through taxation may be difficult for the Village, requiring that it seek other ways to fund its financial obligations.

If funds were to be raised through taxation, respondents slightly preferred a sales tax or increasing water rates to increasing the property tax, though again, all three of these options were unpopular. Interestingly, the opposition to property tax is not affected by home ownership, as 100% of those who rent still called this a "least preferred" strategy.

Two other strategies offered concerned the use of bond revenue (borrowing) and school district consolidation. In both cases, a majority of respondents indicated these strategies were "least preferred". However, these strategies were nevertheless ranked as more preferable than strategies which would impose or raise taxes on citizens.

Many respondents selected "somewhat preferred", perhaps suggesting that a moderately sized segment of citizens view borrowing through the use of the municipality's bonding authority as a short-term solution to meeting financial obligations.

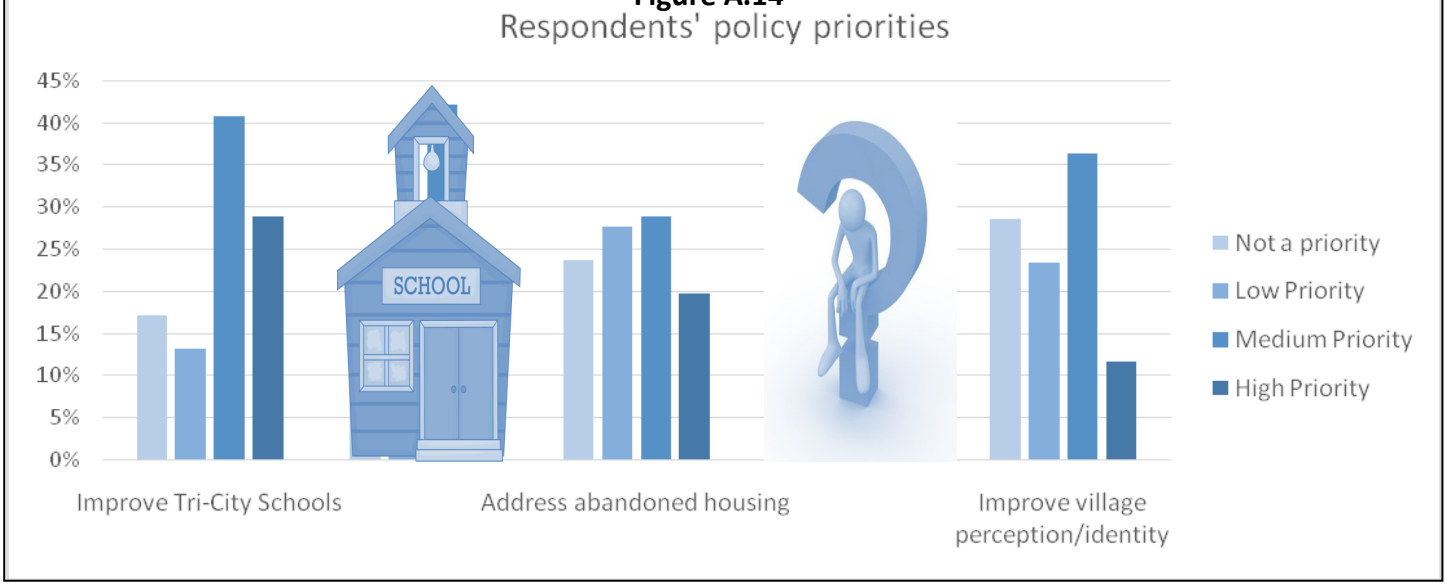
Residents were also asked to indicate their priorities for the use of new revenues if additional resources did become available. Respondents indicated that they would most prefer these resources to be used to improve Tri-City schools (69.7% said this was a "medium" or "high priority"), improve streets and roads (67.1% "medium" or "high priority"), and improve or install sidewalks (50% "medium" or "high priority").

While a majority of respondents see improving schools as priority (see Figure A.14), they are far more ambivalent about school district consolidation, which would potentially lower costs for school services, and they are opposed to property tax increases, an important revenue source for funding schools. This suggests that for residents who wish to see schools improved, it may be necessary to explore alternative ways of generating revenue or finding other options by which schools might be improved.

Economic Growth and Community Development

Dawson is a largely residential community with few businesses located within Village limits. As such, when asked what services and businesses they utilized within the Village, many respondents indicated they did not use a majority of services *within* the village.

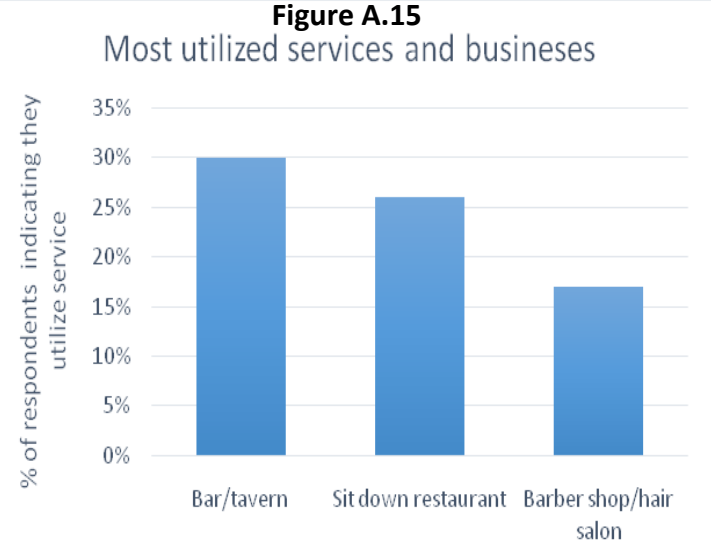
Figure A.14



For instance, no respondents indicated they utilized a financial planner, an accountant, or an insurance agent within the Village. This is unsurprising, given that these services do not exist within the Village. However, it was significant that only one respondent indicated using a day care in the Village, given that many families in Illinois choose home day care services which could be made within Village limits.

Three respondents indicated that they used a bank within the Village, and six respondents reported using a gas station, neither of which exists within Village limits. In the first case, it is possible that respondents considered the ATM in the Village to represent banking functions, and in the second case, respondents were likely to have been referring to a no longer available service station. These examples illustrate the difficulty in asking respondents to indicate whether they utilize services within the Village, as some respondents were likely unsure about the location of the Village's corporate limits.

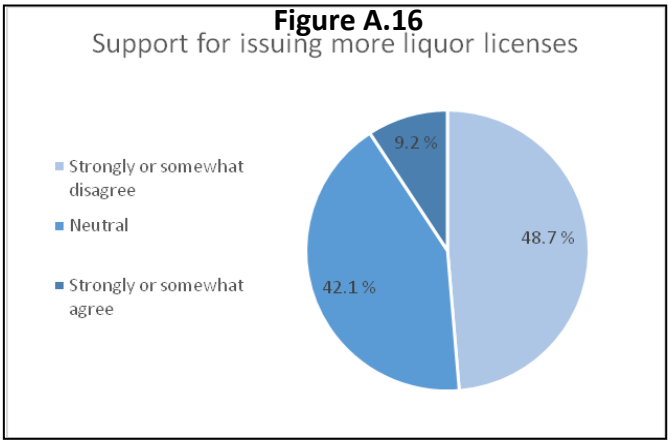
Figure A.15



The services most utilized within the Village by respondents (Figure A. 15) were bars, sit-down restaurants, and barbers, though in no case did a majority of respondents indicate they utilized these services.

Unsurprisingly, because bars and taverns were identified as the most utilized services in the Village, respondents indicated little desire to see more bars introduced into Dawson. Indeed, no respondent indicated they would like to see more bars or taverns in the Village, signifying that adding new drinking establishments would not be welcome by a large number of residents. Similarly, though a plurality (41.6%) of respondents were neutral when asked to state their opinion to the statement, "The Village of Dawson should issue more liquor licenses", a significant minority strongly disagreed with this statement, and only 8.2% of respondents either "somewhat agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the Village should issue more licenses (see Figure A.16).

Figure A.16



By contrast, 19% of respondents indicated they would like to see more sit-down restaurants in Dawson. At least some respondents would like to see restaurants which do not serve alcohol or at least do not cater to a drinking crowd. For example, in an open-ended response, one respondent indicated they "don't drink," while another responded that they would like to see "food without a bar." Still another respondent indicated that they "don't frequent bars."

Respondents indicated a strong desire to see a gas station (57.1% indicated a preference) and a convenience store (55.8% indicated a preference) in Dawson. These numbers are higher than for any other business or service suggested in the survey.

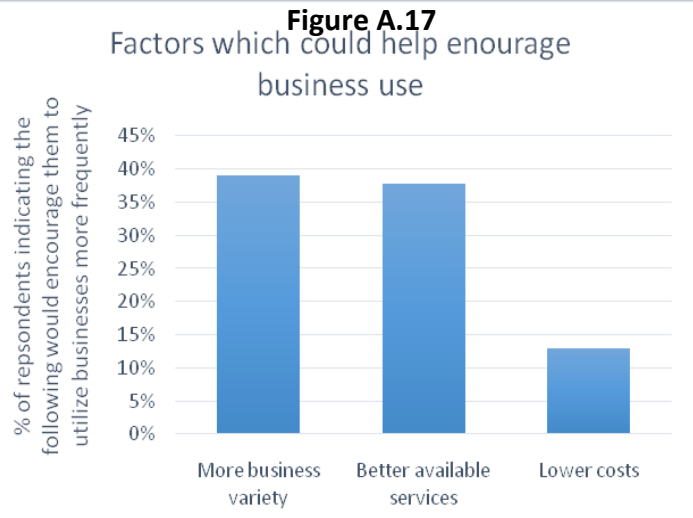
In fact, for all other services and businesses suggested, the average number of respondents indicating support for adding or expanding upon these services was only 8.5%. This suggests a strong desire by the majority of residents to add a gas station and/or a convenience store within the Village. Further, with the addition of a gas station, respondents would

also receive the services of a convenience store of some capacity in addition to the possibility of a car wash.

It is also important to note that demand for a gas station/ convenience store may be even higher than the above percentages suggest. When asked at another point in the survey whether Dawson should work to attract such a business, 81.6% of respondents indicated they either "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" Dawson should take steps to accomplish this. Because of these considerations, as well as the strong desire of respondents to add this service, further exploration into adding a gas station within the Village is worthwhile, though the Village should be pragmatic about its possibilities for attracting such development.

Although there are, at present, only a small number of services currently utilized within the Village, this may be due to factors such as cost and quality concerns that caused respondents to utilize services outside of the Village. To investigate potential ways in which citizens might further utilize services in the Village, the survey asked respondents which of the following would encourage service use: more business variety, better available services, lower costs and/ or improved business facilities (Figure A.17).

Figure A.17



Here, respondents indicated that a greater variety (39.0%) and availability (37.7%) of services would encourage them to utilize businesses in the Village more frequently. Additionally, 13% of respondents indicated that lower costs would encourage them to use more local businesses. This sentiment was echoed in open-ended responses, where one person spoke about the high cost of local services. However, other responses mentioned the lack of services and the difficulty for a town the size of Dawson to add certain services due to lower demand.

As discussed, demand for a convenience store/gas station is very high in Dawson. However, generally speaking, respondents are somewhat more ambivalent about attracting additional commercial and industrial development to the Village. Generally, residents were less in agreement with attracting additional commercial and industrial development than residential development. However, demand for commercial development was highest to the south of existing development, across Route 36. There 50.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with placing commercial development (see Figure A.18).

Demand for more residential development, however, is rather high. This is consistent with findings

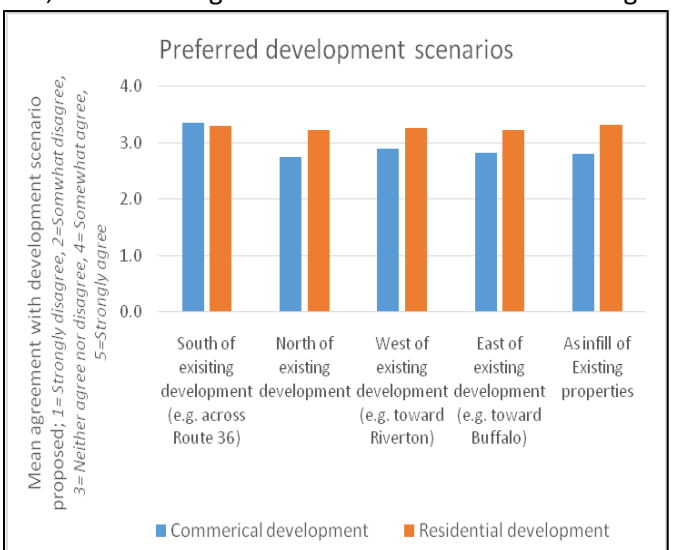


Figure A.18

that respondents preferred more owner-occupied residential housing. Yet while respondents indicated they would like to see residential development in Dawson, they are somewhat ambivalent about where this development should occur.

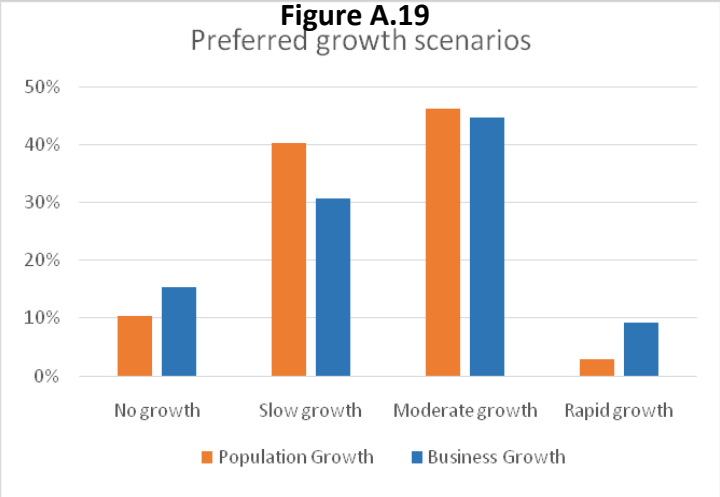
When asked to indicate their level of agreement related to additional residential development in locations either north, south, east, or west of existing development, a plurality of respondents responded they "neither agree or disagree" for each item. However, in each case, respondents were more likely to indicate that they agree that the Village should

encourage residential development than they were to disagree.

Additionally, most respondents agreed or were neutral with reference to the statement that the Village should encourage residential development as infill development of existing properties. While there were a high number of neutral responses, the findings do indicate that there are few residents opposed to additional residential development in any one location.

As shown in Figure A.19, overall respondents prefer slow or moderate growth when it comes to both business growth and population growth. However, when asked which of the following growth scenarios they would prefer, a larger percentage of respondents indicated they wanted both "no growth" and "rapid growth" for businesses, whereas responses for population growth were somewhat more concentrated in the "slow growth" and "moderate growth" responses.

Figure A.19



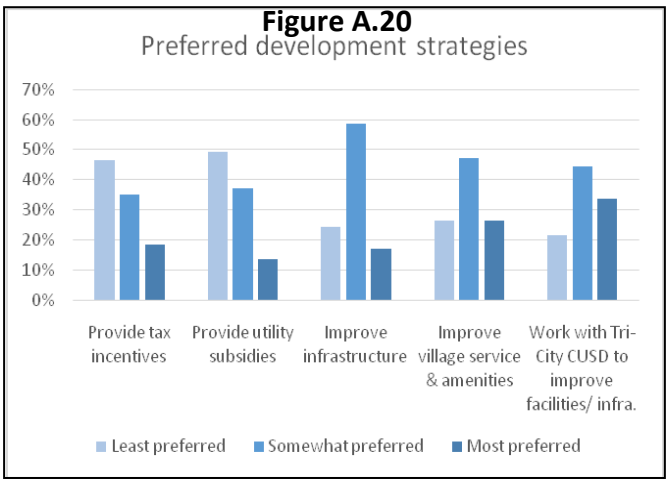
It is notable that very few respondents wanted either no growth (9.1% population, 13.0% business) or rapid growth (3.0% population, 9.2% business). This may indicate a desire to keep things somewhat the way they are while focusing on enough growth opportunities for sustainability. Regarding the somewhat greater dispersion of responses for business growth, it may be the case that respondents are disinclined to see certain types of businesses added, but have a strong preference for others. We have already noted this pertaining to responses to previous survey questions.

While not all respondents desire business growth, the survey points to the fact a substantial number do, albeit at a slow or moderate rate. Furthermore, a majority of citizens are clearly supportive of growth when development takes the form of a convenience store/gas station.

Because this growth has not yet taken place, it is worth exploring the ways in which the Village might incentivize business development.

Toward this end, the survey asked about specific strategies the Village might employ (see Figure A. 20).

Figure A.20



Of the five strategies suggested, the most popular was working with Tri-City to improve facilities and infrastructure (78.4% "somewhat" or "most preferred"), followed by improving infrastructure (75.7% "somewhat" or "most preferred"), and improving Village service & amenities (73.6% "somewhat" or "most preferred"). By contrast, the least preferred development strategies were providing utility subsidies (49.3% "least preferred") and providing tax incentives (46.5% "least preferred"). These findings speak to overall concerns about taxation mentioned previously and point to the possibility that citizens do not favor the idea of providing new businesses or real estate developers with tax breaks to spur development.

Transportation

The transportation network plays a significant role in connecting residents to businesses and services, as well as connecting businesses with their markets. Likely due to its rural location, residents in Dawson overwhelmingly travel to work by car. In fact, 72.7% indicated they commute this way while only 3.9% indicate they walk to work and 1.3% indicate they use a bicycle. Notably, no respondent indicated using public transport, indicative of the fact that no public transport system yet exists that serves Dawson.

The Sangamon-Menard Area Rural Transit (SMART) program which will soon be available to residents may change these numbers somewhat, as the system would allow some individuals to travel out of Dawson without the need of a car. At present, 26.3% of respondents indicated they were aware of the SMART program and 13.4% said they were either "somewhat likely" or very likely to use the new SMART program once available. Suggesting that ongoing efforts to market this service may be of benefit, 15.8% said they "don't know" (see Figure A.21).

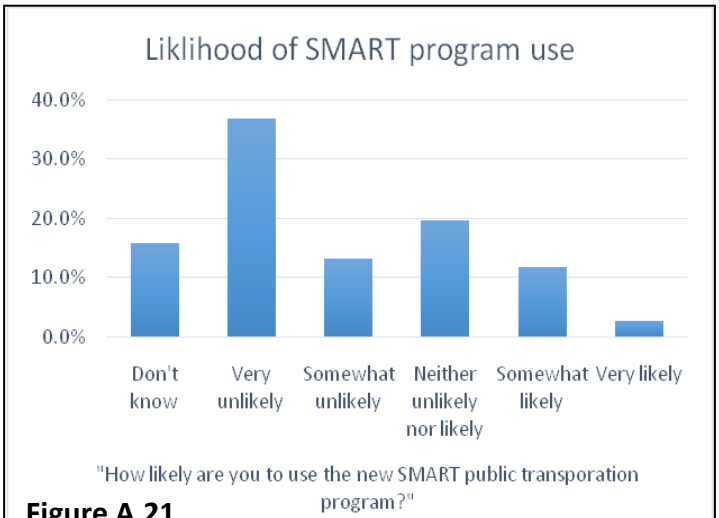


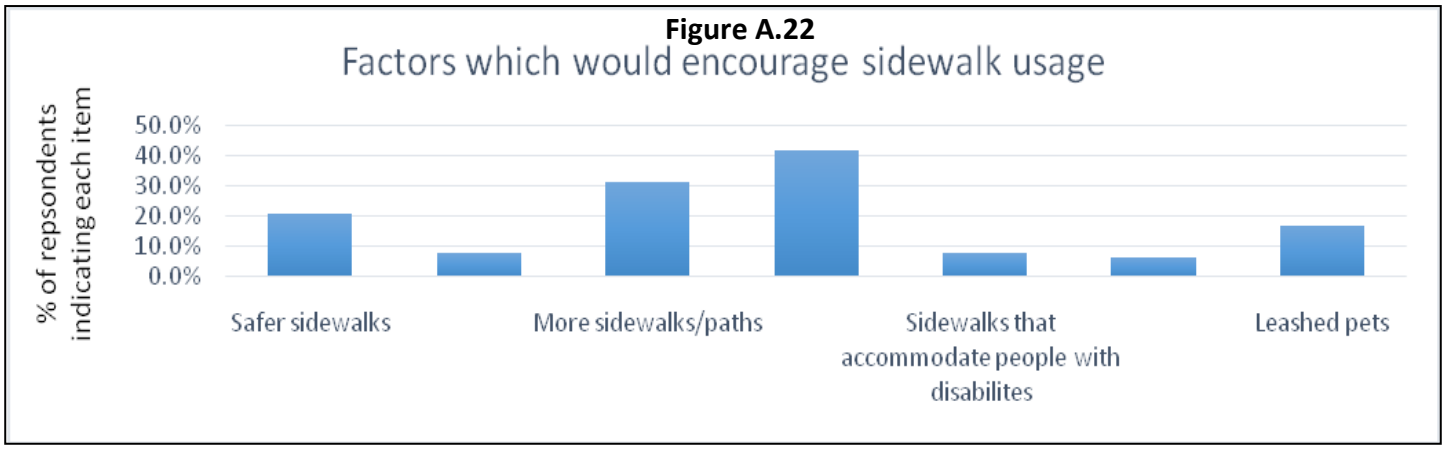
Figure A.21

For the most part, respondents do not indicate they encounter problems when travelling throughout Dawson. Indeed, for 12 questions corresponding to potential problems encountered in the Village, only one potential problem, drivers ignoring stop signs, was indicated by a majority (55.8%) of respondents as a problem. Additionally, pluralities of respondents reported problems with 4-wheelers or ATVs on the road (32.1%), fast traffic (24.7%), the conditions of roads (27.3%), and vehicles parked along the street (22.1%). However, 26.0% indicated they did not encounter any problems on the road.

Residents in Dawson frequently walk, run or bike throughout town. When asked how likely they are to do so on a day with good weather, 65.3% said they are "somewhat likely" or "very likely." Respondents also tend to walk in the street, instead of on the sidewalk, rather often. Indeed, 67.6% indicated they were either "somewhat" or "very likely" to do so, and an additional 6.8% indicated there were no sidewalks available. Having sidewalks in better condition (41.6%), having more sidewalks and paths (31.2%), having safer sidewalks (20.8%), and having pets on a leash (16.9%) were indicated by respondents as factors which would encourage them to use sidewalks instead of streets. Additionally, open-ended responses pointed to issues with overgrown foliage.

While many respondents reported walking throughout town on a nice day, there may be ways in which respondents would be encouraged to walk or bike more frequently (Figure A.22). Indeed, 31% of respondents indicated that having better sidewalks

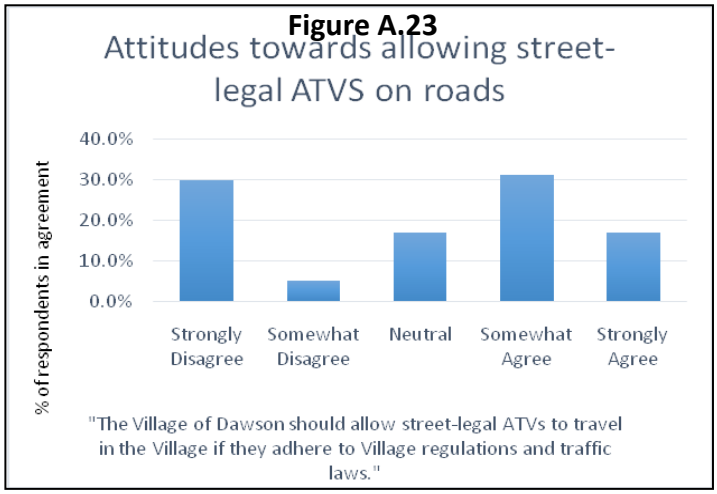
Figure A.22



would encourage themselves or their families to walk or bike more often. Similarly 27% of respondents indicated having more sidewalks would encourage them to do this, whereas 30% saw having more pleasant paths available as a factor which might encourage this behavior. Additionally, 14% saw better bike paths as helpful. While somewhat low, these levels of support suggest that some residents in Dawson are interested in bike paths for exercise. Additionally, 23% of respondents indicated that having pets on leashes would encourage them to exercise more, and 8% cited safe routes (see Figure A.22). While safety does not appear to be a serious concern for many respondents in survey, there are clearly some individuals in Dawson who are concerned about pets without leashes in the Village, as exemplified by the numbers here and elsewhere in the survey.

Some respondents expressed concern over ATVs on the road, and respondents were therefore split regarding whether or not the Village should allow street-legal ATVs on streets as long as they adhere to Village regulations and traffic laws (Figure A.23).

Figure A.23



Overall, 48.1% of respondents agreed that this would be good idea, while 35.1% disagreed regarding the proposed policy and 16.9% indicated they were neutral to the idea. However, it is notable that among those who disagreed, the majority indicated that they "strongly disagree." Therefore, it appears that a substantial minority of persons are strongly opposed to the idea.

Residents are also split on restrictions on golf cart travel in the Village, though the figures show that further restrictions would be largely unpopular. For instance, 47.7% of respondents either "somewhat disagree" or "strongly disagree" that golf carts should be further restricted, whereas 23.7% "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree", and 28.9% were neutral. While not as substantial a minority as those who are opposed to ATV street usage, there are some individuals in Dawson who are also displeased with golf carts being used for transportation.

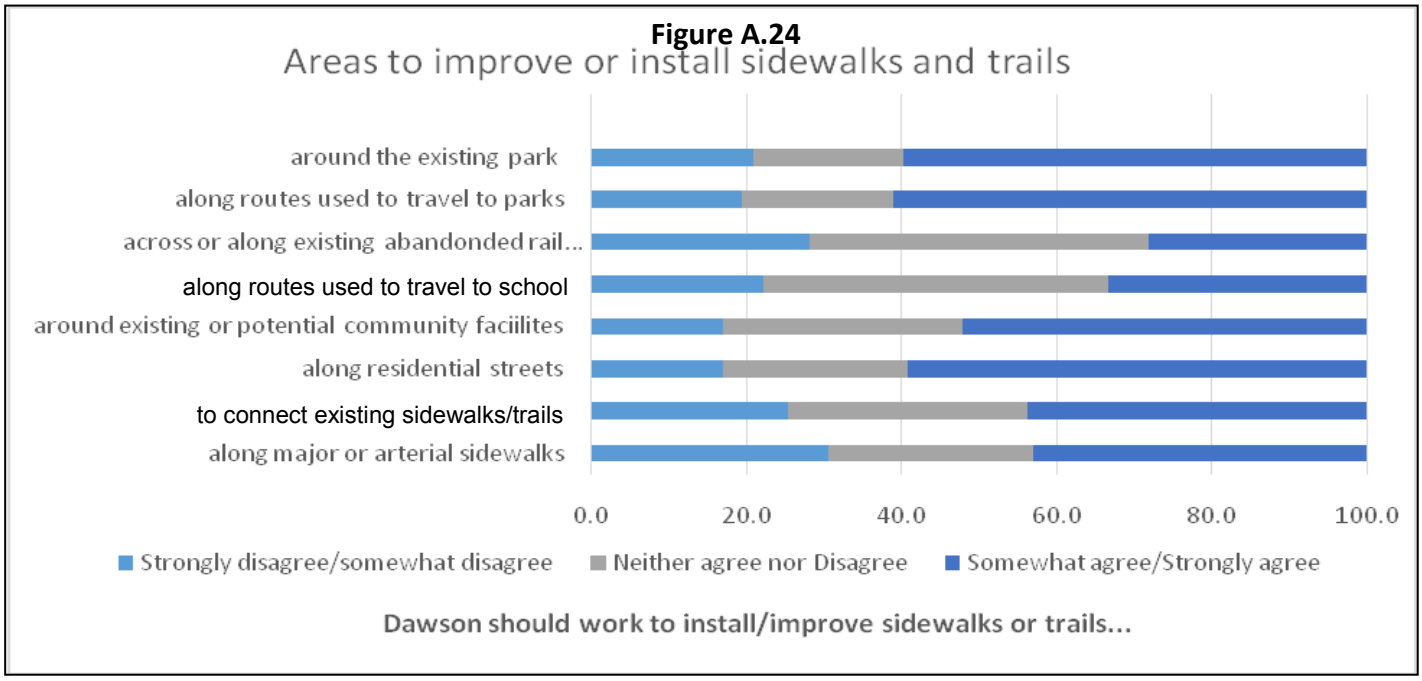
As noted elsewhere in this analysis, Dawson residents also largely expressed support for sidewalks. A majority indicated they were in favor of installing or improving sidewalks and trails along routes used to travel to parks (61.1% "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree"), around the existing park (59.7% "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" and along residential streets (59.2% "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree").

Attitudes were more mixed in other areas (see Figure A.24). For instance, only 33.3% indicated they would like to see sidewalks and trails along routes used to travel to school. This may be limited because of the response bias related to resident age discussed above. In spite of the fact that residents voiced most likelihood of utilizing bike trails among various recreational amenities, support for building a trail along existing or abandoned rail corridors was limited, only 28.2% "somewhat" or "strongly agreed" that the Village should work toward this.

The survey also asked respondents whether or not they believe Dawson should install streetlights along major or arterial roadways (e.g. Route 36), along residential streets, and in public areas and around community facilities (see Figure A.25). By and large, respondents indicated they are neutral to these proposals. A plurality of respondents selected "neither disagree nor agree" in response to each question. There was however, a stronger minority of individuals who favored additional streetlights in public areas and around community facilities (36.9% "somewhat" or "strongly agree").

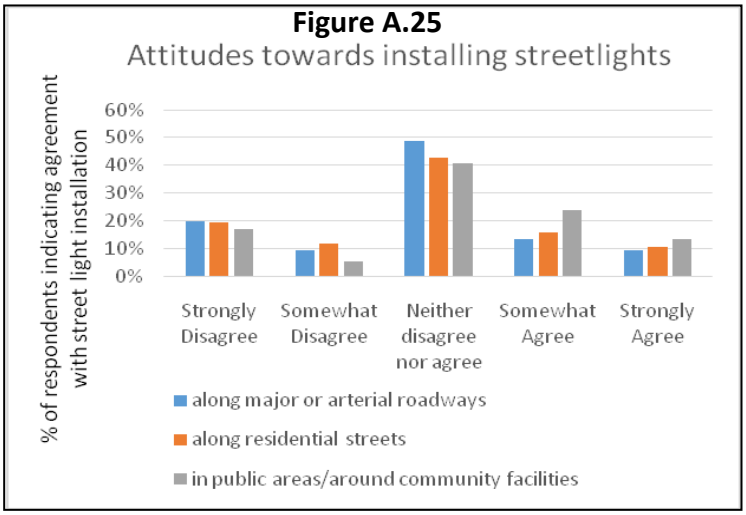
Finally, regarding safety, the survey asked respondents to indicate whether or not they feel "very safe"

Figure A.24



in Dawson while performing specific activities: while walking and biking, using existing sidewalks, with existing speed limits, with the existing traffic enforcement levels, and around railroad crossings. Results indicate that most respondents feel safe in Dawson, although a sizable minority of individuals indicated they do not feel very safe with the existing level of traffic enforcement (22.7%) or using existing sidewalks (14.7%). Again, overall perceptions of safety in Dawson are generally quite high.

Figure A.25



Appendix 2: Gateway Corridor Illustrative Designs

One of the major concerns voiced by Dawson residents relates to the lack of visual presence of the Village, particularly from the interstate. Given the Village's location, this will not likely change, and many smaller communities face the same problem.

However, as the Sangamon County Regional Strategic Plan points out (pp. 122-131), this problem can be partially addressed through the creation of a *gateway corridor* that connects other roadways that exemplify small town *character areas.*

This gateway corridor typically connects four character areas: an *Arrival Area*; *Small Town Commercial Area*; *Small Town Traditional Residential Area*; and *Main Street Area*. The SSCRPC believes that such a corridor can be developed for the Village of Dawson, particularly targeting the Old US 36 and Dawson Road/Constant Street connection as an Arrival Area, and then using the Dawson Original Town area as a focal point around which these other character areas can develop over time.

Arrival Character Area

The Arrival Character Area defines the entrance and arrival sequence into a community and provides the first impressions of the community to travelers and visitors. An example of such an area from the Regional Strategic Plan is shown in Figure B.1.

This character area focuses on the land and space between a major roadway entrance, such as the intersection of Old Route 36 and Constant St., and the community's first commercial developments or residential neighborhoods.

The key distinguishing features along the roadway in the Arrival Area usually include such things as open space and farmland, and they become the setting for a community's gateway monuments and entrance signs. These gateway signs or monuments need not be expensive or elaborate, as the photo of the Village of Loami sign, above, shows.

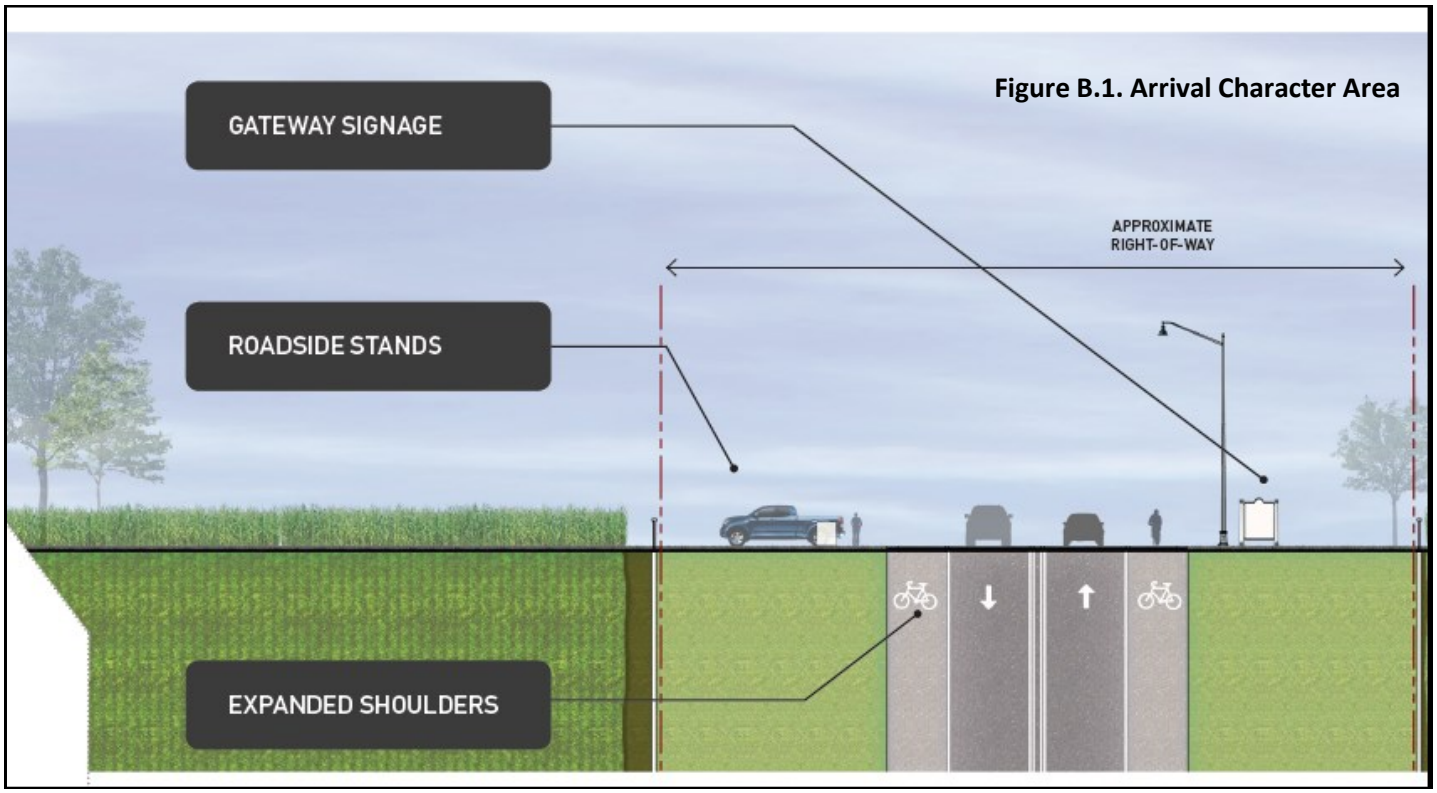


Figure B.1. Arrival Character Area

Visual clutter, on the other hand, such as temporary and portable signs (lighted or unlighted), should be absent from this area.

Development, if any, in these areas may be sparse, but often include farmsteads, barns or other small-scale buildings set back from the roadway. Some small scale buildings already exist in the Old Route 66/Constant intersection area, and attention should be given to their redevelopment and appearance.

These areas typically have two lanes of travel, with wide shoulders accommodating ample space for bike lanes with natural or artificial swales defining a broad separation between the roadway and adjacent open space, farmland or development.

These areas are also often places where small outdoor stands may be allowed for produce or potted plant sales during season, offering additional opportunities for a community garden to sell or exchange produce, and even a means of encouraging additional commercial and residential landscaping.

Small Town Commercial Character Area

This character area is found in small towns and villages, and is usually designed to fit between the Arrival Character Area and traditional residential and small commercial areas. An illustrative example is shown in Figure B.2.

It provides space for limited retail activities, such as convenience stores, gas stations, restaurants and similar establishments that serve residents as well as visitors.

While these areas are most often focused on the development of properties between Interstates and rural gateway segments, the SSCRPC believes that they can be applicable to some corridors in and around Dawson as well. It is represented in Dawson by the parcels on Constant St. and Dawson Rd. immediately north and south of Old Route 66.

New development in these areas is typically one story with parking located in the rear and screened from adjacent land uses with trees and landscape features. Parking may be allowed in the front, but should be limited to one-bay in width.

The roadways in these areas should have two lanes of travel with wider shoulders to accommodate cyclists and appropriate landscaping and trees in a parkway.

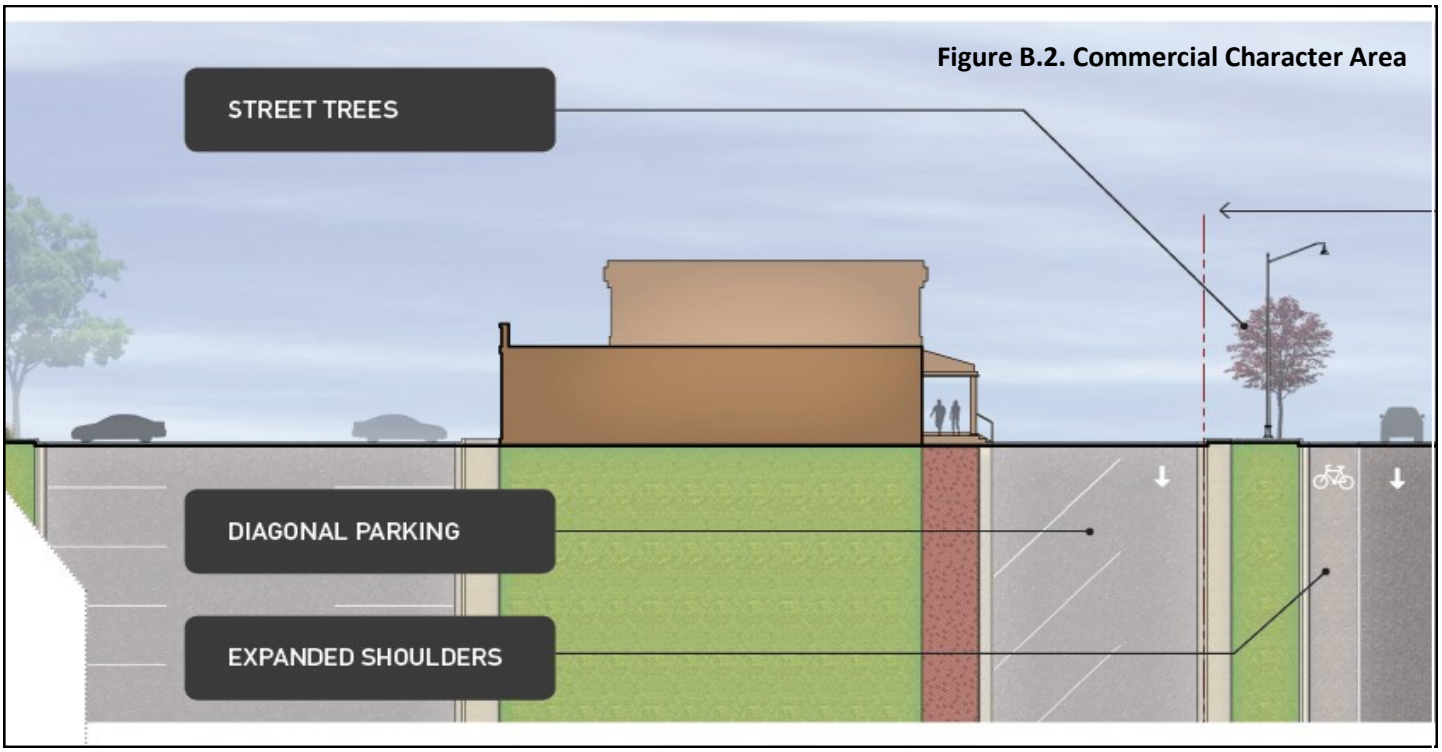


Figure B.2. Commercial Character Area

Small Town Traditional Residential Character Area

These areas typically have older, well maintained homes that front on the street and designed with compatible materials and scale. They may also have alleys and garages and narrower roads. Sidewalks should be provided to accommodate safe pedestrian travel, and they should be landscaped with trees, new lighting and other features. An illustrative example is shown in Figure B.3. New areas of this type can be developed , particularly in the area west of north Constant St.

Areas demonstrating these characteristics already exist in the Village, as the photographs below show, and efforts should be made to maintain and expand beyond them.

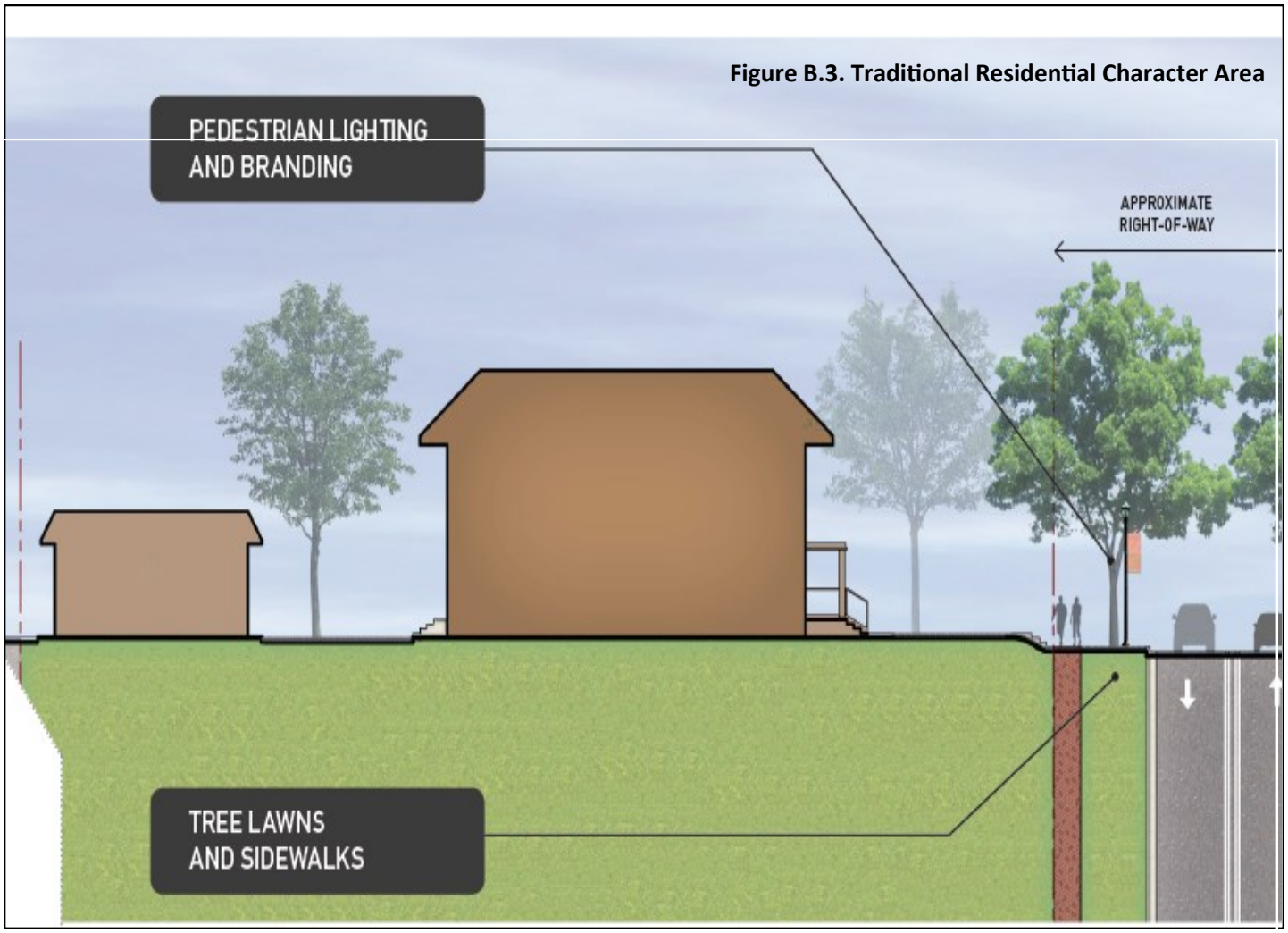


Figure B.3. Traditional Residential Character Area

Main Street Character Area

Dawson does not currently provide the typical main street that many small towns and villages offer, *but could*. As part of its long range planning, the Village should give attention to developing a Main Street Character area along Constant St. from Old Route 36 to the residential area expected to develop to the northwest as shown on the proposed land use plan.

Such areas are important as they provide pivot-points for future development as well as a place of community focus. This is because the Main Streets of small towns and villages typically are the commercial, civic and social centers of their communities. They are characterized by one to three story historic commercial buildings or buildings (both residential and commercial) designed to meld into the structural landscape and block face that the community wishes to advance as indicative of its past.

The main thoroughfare in such areas provides for two lanes of travel, and on-street parallel or diagonal parking, in commercial areas. They also offer streetscape treatments that include special crosswalk pavement, sidewalks with new lighting, and trees or planted beds.

One might think that Main Street areas do not entertain residential developments, but they can and do. This is particularly true if the residential areas are provided at the edges of a small town's commercial area, as could be the case in Dawson. Figures B.4.1. and B.4.2 provide an illustrative examples of such a character area, showing scale for both one and two story structures .

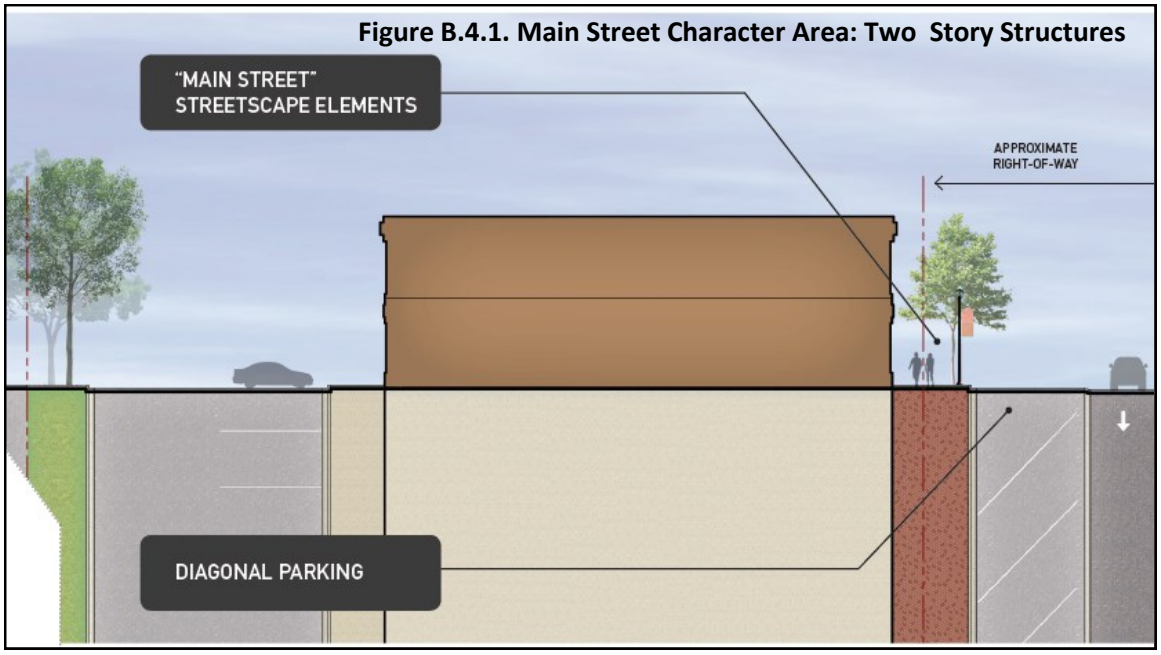


Figure B.4.1. Main Street Character Area: Two Story Structures

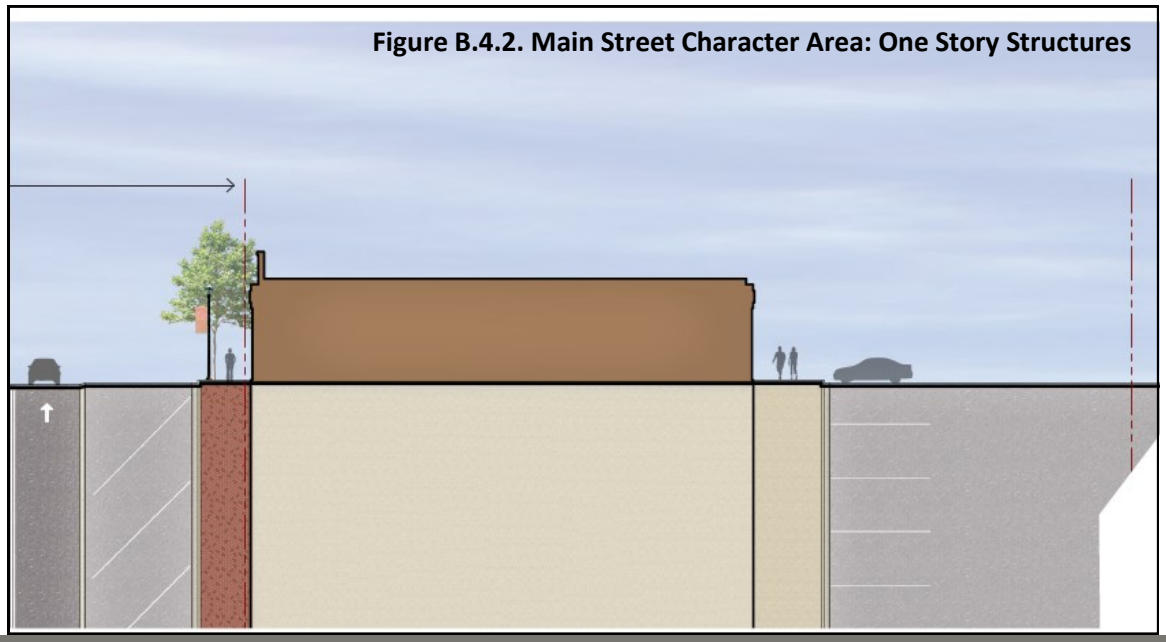


Figure B.4.2. Main Street Character Area: One Story Structures

VILLAGE OF DAWSON ILLINOIS

EST. 1954

You're with friends here

SSC RPC

2016