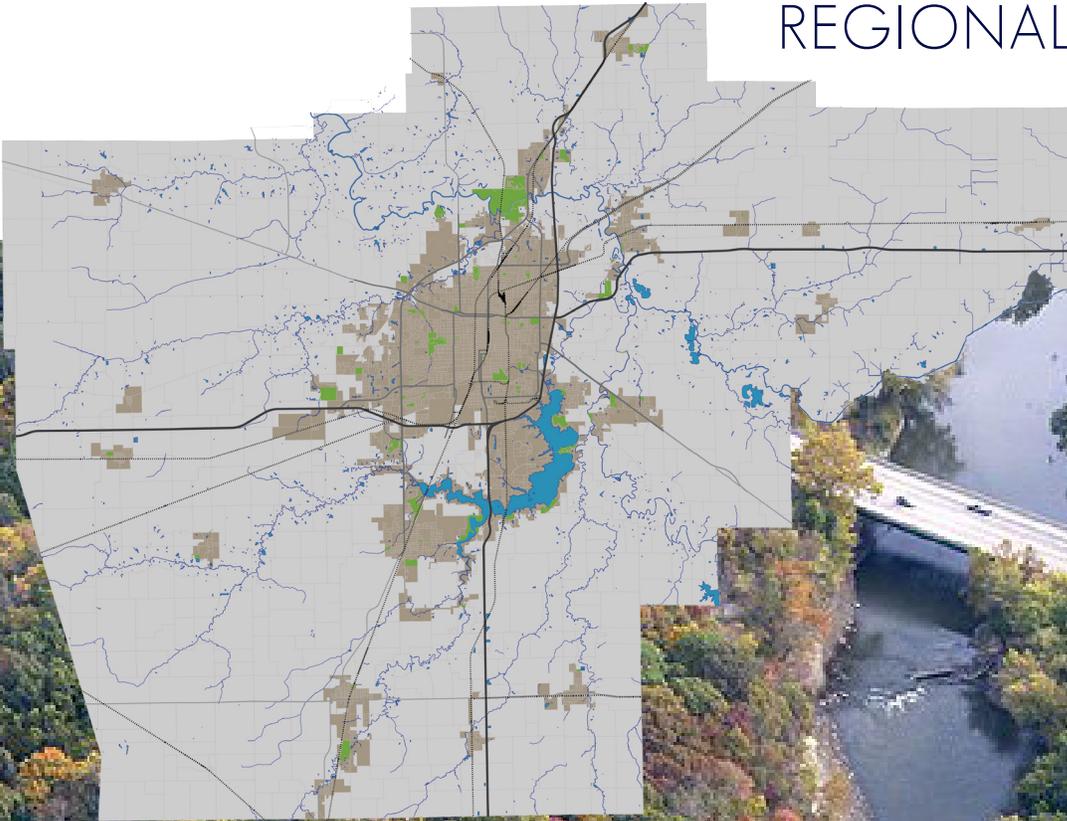


SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

2014



**SSC
RPC**

Springfield-Sangamon County
Regional Planning Commission

ADVISING
PLANNING
EVALUATING
LEADING

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INTRODUCTION

The Planning Mission

At the request of Sangamon County, the City of Springfield, and the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, in 2009 the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) initiated a regional strategic planning process in order to create a compelling vision for the region's long-term growth and development - a vision that builds on significant assets and the opportunities the region offers for strengthening the region's economic vitality and overall quality of life.

The SSCRPC was asked to conduct this work due to the fact that it is the joint planning body for the City of Springfield and Sangamon County, and is charged with managing and coordinating regional planning efforts as well as providing planning services for Sangamon County and its local cities, towns, villages and several special districts. In addition to this statutory mandate, the SSCRPC also acts as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), coordinating the review and approval of federally-funded or sponsored transportation projects through the Springfield Area Transportation Study (SATS).

The Commission's other responsibilities include assisting local communities with comprehensive plan development, subdivision and plat reviews, special district planning, zoning and variance request, and floodplain management.

Given its mission and the nature of the project requested, the SSCRPC established as an initial condition that the entire region be viewed as a "community of interests" working together to achieve a better quality of life for all residents. For this reason, the SSCRPC felt that the envisioned plan required that "community" be viewed in many different ways: as the communities that make up individual villages and cities, the community made of those who live in unincorporated areas, and even communities made of interest groups. Additionally, the SSCRPC found that the plan would need to achieve that vision through practical implementation strategies meant to enhance and improve the region's transportation system, land use patterns, incorporated and unincorporated areas, agricultural areas, parks and open space network, so as to become part of a collaborative planning effort among all of the region's municipalities and other local units of government.



The Region

The Sangamon County region is one of the state’s most important economic centers, with assets that include: a mix of industries; significant infrastructure, open space and transportation systems; a number of heritage, cultural and educational institutions; and a network of distinctive cities, small towns and villages. However, along with these assets come critical challenges that were identified through research and public engagement as part of the planning process.

Strengthening the region’s existing industries and diversifying the economic base to include new business sectors that can sustain long-term growth and regional competitiveness is a critical priority. The region’s transportation system will be greatly enhanced by future high-speed rail service to Springfield, but other system enhancements, such as new roadway connections and an expansion of mass transit services, are needed to broaden the mobility choices and options for businesses and residents. In the region’s small communities and villages, access to health care, commercial services, parks and open space have become key issues in maintaining community viability and vibrancy. Addressing land use development and the physical appearance and visual character of communities, their downtowns, neighborhoods and key transportation corridors, was recognized as an important element in promoting orderly growth and attracting new economic development and investment.



OLD STATE CAPITOL BUILDING STATE HISTORIC SITE, SPRINGFIELD



The Plan and Planning Effort

Prepared by the SSCRPC and its consulting and community partners, this Plan is the region's official planning document, intended to help the region's many communities address important planning issues and challenges. Recognizing that these challenges pose significant threats to long-term sustainability, local communities participated in a multi-year effort to develop the Regional Plan as a response to their challenges.

This multi-year effort included issue identification and priority-setting, field work and technical analysis, public engagement, and plan drafting and development by both the SSCRPC and its consultants. Key to the planning process was the formation by the SSCRPC of five study groups comprised of different regional stakeholders and charged with collecting background information and data, as well as determining important planning issues and priorities to be addressed in the Regional Plan. The study groups were organized around five areas considered at the outset of the planning process to be critical to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the region: environment and natural resources; economic and technology development; transportation and public infrastructure; housing and neighborhoods; and heritage and recreational amenities.

The preparation of the Regional Strategic Plan proceeded according to a four-phase planning process over a period of three years. The first two phases involved the formation of the five study groups by the SSCRPC and their information and data gathering efforts. At the conclusion of the second phase, each study group prepared a written summary of its key findings and planning issues for further analysis. The third phase included a series of public engagement initiatives to solicit public opinions and attitudes regarding regional planning and quality of life issues. A number of community workshops were conducted in different locations throughout the County, some focusing on different stakeholder groups, including local residents, business owners, and college and high school students. An online survey was also made available to those stakeholders who could not attend one of the regional workshops. The fourth, "plan-making" phase involved the preparation of specific planning strategies and implementation action steps that address the key planning priorities identified during the third phase.

With the completion of this fourth phase, which includes the production of this Regional Plan, the SSCRPC will work with relevant partners to develop a land use plan for the unincorporated area of Sangamon County. Accordingly, the planning priorities related to land use throughout the plan have been compiled into a series of policy statements related to land use.

Envisioning a Vital Cycle for the Region Regional Planning Principles and Vision

During the planning process, four key planning principles emerged from the work of the study groups and input from the public to guide the development of this Regional Plan. These planning principles serve as an overarching vision for the region's success.

They call for strategies and activities that will:

Build a resilient region with strong communities through intentional growth.

Regional growth and development should aim at making local communities better places to live that are resilient, adapting well to economic, social and environmental changes. Resilient communities are the products of: well-planned, intentional growth; effective economic development; sound investments in quality infrastructure and transportation systems; and an engaged citizenry that participates in local planning processes.

Intentional growth implies the need for well-considered development that is purposeful, meets local needs, and helps improve the overall quality of life both locally and regionally. Intentioned growth should also lead to higher quality development, which in turn will enhance the visual character and economic climate of the region and its communities. Regional planning efforts should focus on implementing key actions and initiatives that promote the long term sustainability and resiliency of local communities and rural areas.

Preserve and enhance important regional amenities and resources.

Among the region's significant assets are its natural resources and amenities - its waterways, parks and open spaces, its well-known cultural institutions and historic sites, and its traditional downtown districts and neighborhoods in cities and small towns throughout the region. These assets serve the diverse economic, social and cultural needs of the communities in which they are located.

Opportunities to enhance existing resources, as well as add new open space and parks, revitalize downtown districts, and identify and preserve additional heritage sites and attractions should be pursued as ways to diversify economic activity and enrich the region's quality of life.



Intentional Growth

Resource Preservation



Collaborative Vision

Achieve a regional planning vision through collaboration and connectivity.

This is a regional plan. In order for planning goals to be accomplished in the face of limited resource, the region must develop a system of linkages that ensure goals are pursued cooperatively for the most efficient allocation of resources possible. Collaboration can only be achieved in a context of strong physical and social linkages.

An effective and efficient regional transportation system is a key element in promoting sustainability and economic prosperity. Transportation investments should be made strategically with an aim toward supporting the revitalization of existing communities, increasing the commitment toward public transit and implementing new policies that encourage transit-oriented development, complete streets and multi-modalism. An enhanced multi-modal system broadens the transportation choices for residents, resulting in more walkable, livable communities.

With this physical infrastructure in place, social linkages must not be forgotten, as they are also vitally important. Regional planning efforts can best be achieved through collaborative actions and partnerships between different jurisdictions and entities. Fostering collaborative efforts should take place within existing jurisdictional frameworks and relationships between local units of government, but also within a framework for expanded opportunities for participation by other governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups and local citizens. Collaborative efforts and public-private partnerships will be the most effective means for addressing regional planning issues from transportation, housing, infrastructure, environmental protection and economic development - issues that are regional challenges that transcend governmental boundaries.



INTERSTATE BUSINESS 55 / SHERMAN BOULEVARD, SHERMAN



Capacity Building

Build the capacity of local communities and entities in the region to continuously plan for success and implement these plans.

The SSCRPC already plays an important role in working with communities in their planning efforts, from supporting neighborhood revitalization initiatives to the development of local comprehensive plans. Regional approaches require an even more expansive vision, which should also focus on building local community capacity to sustain planning and community development efforts for the long-term.

Building that capacity should involve several activities, from providing on-going training and technical assistance to helping local communities establish the necessary organizations and public-private partnerships to carry forward important planning initiatives as described in this Regional Plan. An on-going institutionalized entity responsible for local advancement, such as a mayors’ caucus or leadership council, may also be important for this effort, and is discussed further on page 81. For purposes of identifying potential implementation partners, this body is identified as the “Regional Leadership Council” throughout the remainder of this Plan.



HISTORIC BANK BUILDING, ROCHESTER



Creating a Vital Cycle

These four principles are not only indicative of a vision for the region, they also demonstrate a larger strategy: the development of a “vital cycle” that encourages and sustains regional success. They can be viewed in terms of a cycle as they represent an on-going process that is circular in nature. It is considered to be one vital to long-term success because the four principles noted above build on and depend upon one another.

As Figure 1 indicates, to achieve our vision of the Sangamon County region as a resilient one with strong communities, intentional growth is necessary. But for intentional growth to occur, actions must be taken to preserve and enhance the important regional amenities and resources that are critical to the region we envision. This can only take place in the presence of plans and actions that are developed collaboratively and which establish both the physical and social connections that tie communities and people together as a region. But to achieve this spirit of collaboration and the presence of connectivity, the communities and other entities in the region must build their capacity to plan and implement those plans continuously.

Opposite of this would be the “vicious cycle” seen in some other regions. This is one in which growth is not intentional, but occurs primarily by happenstance. When growth does occur, it may be at the loss of amenities and resources that supported the original economic and social viability in the region. These losses occur and cannot be off-set because the various “communities” in the region work independently of one another, without consideration of the effect actions that they take might have on other communities. This results in additional gaps in the physical and social infrastructure tying the region together. There is no local capacity to plan and implement these plans, because doing so seems unnecessary or inconsequential to local needs. The end result is additional un-intentioned, happenstance growth that further reduces amenities and resources, maintaining the vicious cycle.

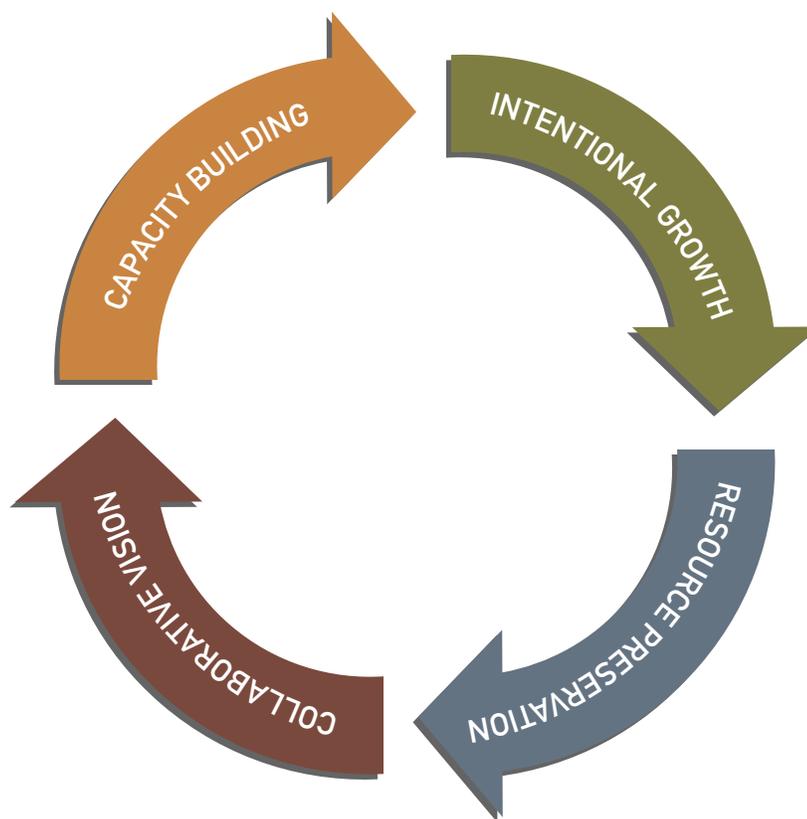


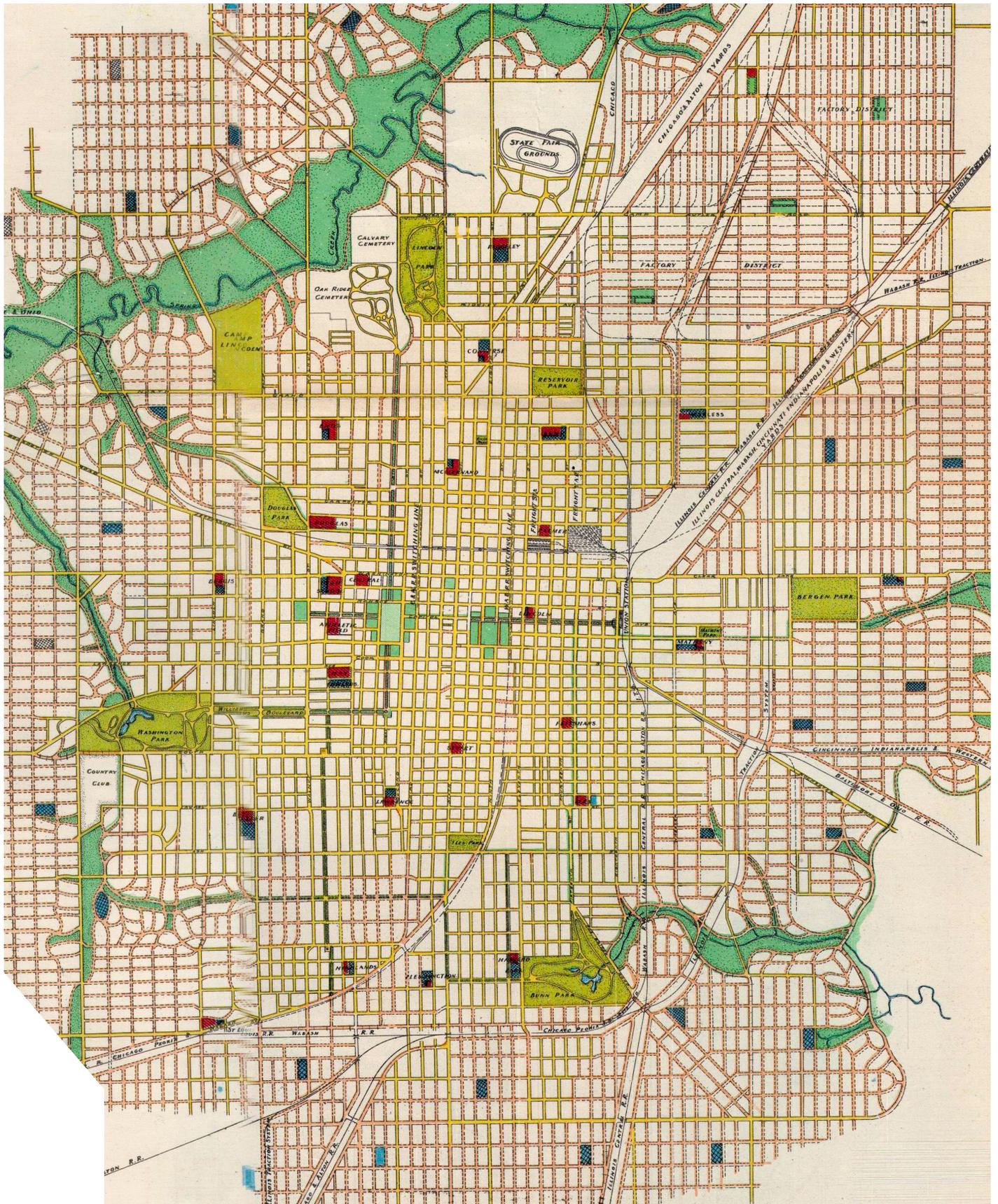
Actions and Actors

One will note when reviewing the strategies intended to advance a vital cycle, which are in Section IV below, that creating such a cycle depends upon parallel cycles of actions and actors.

As efforts to implement this plan become increasingly expansive, and for capacity to be built in the region, the principal actors necessary for implementation will need to be identified, along with those who may not be primary implementers but are vital in providing assistance in implementation. In addition to detailing the numerous actions that may be taken to implement a strategy, the plan indicates the Principal Implementation Parties who must collaborate and coordinate implementation, as well as other Vital Partners expected to play supporting or technical roles in this implementation. Many actors will be required for plan success, but research and experience suggest that it is important for some of the primary ones to be identified at the outset.

FIGURE 1 - VITAL CYCLE





PROPOSED PARK MAP - THE SPRINGFIELD PLAN, 1925; PROVIDED BY SSCRPC

AREAS OF FOCUS: REGIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The vital cycle of principles used in the development of this Regional Plan entertains and evokes certain aspects of the region that are currently known. Over the course of the planning process and the community workshops and individual stakeholder interviews conducted a picture of the planning issues and concerns that stakeholders deemed important emerged.

These issues have been organized and addressed under six planning areas of focus, for the purposes of developing a regional planning framework. This framework allowed for the application of the vital cycle to known facts about the region. In applying the vital cycle to the areas of focus identified in the planning framework and described below, the planning process produced specific plan strategies and recommended actions for the future.



COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND GROWTH

Local attitudes regarding community character and the built environment relate to several issues, such as enhancing the appearances of major transportation corridors, historic downtowns and traditional neighborhoods, and reducing visual clutter and billboards. There is also a desire to maintain the County’s rural, small town character, which can be achieved by encouraging development that is compatible and compact in form, and by connecting the region’s villages and urban areas with well-designed roadways, corridors and trail networks. In addition, local stakeholders also consider improving the region’s visual character to be an important and effective element in both economic and community development, and in enhancing the quality of life, health and well-being of the region’s citizens.



HERITAGE, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Springfield and Sangamon County boast many significant historic, cultural and recreational resources that contribute to the region’s overall quality-of-life and economic vitality. Many of these resources are associated with the life of Abraham Lincoln, such as the Lincoln Home National Historic Site and the Presidential Library and Museum. Yet there are other historic resources and sites within the region, in other communities, villages and rural areas that should be telling a broader story of the County’s history and settlement, but have yet to be identified and documented.

Other smaller-scaled museums and historic sites often lack the financial resources and organizational capacity to enhance their operations and visibility as important destinations for tourists and visitors. Route 66, for instance, remains a significant tourist attraction for the region that is currently underutilized and has underdeveloped and uncoordinated attractions. Such organizations could benefit from assistance to improve their business operations, additional marketing and promotion support, and a well-coordinated regional approach to promoting heritage tourism.

The same could be said for the County’s environmental features and recreational amenities, such as its lakes and rivers, and parks and wildlife areas, which provide opportunities for both residents and visitors to experience the region’s open spaces and scenic areas. Consistent, on-going efforts to enhance existing recreational amenities, as well as add new park spaces, greenways and bike trails where needed and feasible can only bolster the regional economy by increasing recreational tourism spending and by attracting new businesses and trained employees seeking a better quality of life.



TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Local stakeholders recognize the need to improve and maintain streets and roadways as a necessary priority for ensuring the economic viability and transportation efficiencies of their communities. Other transportation priorities include improving east-west access and movement within the City of Springfield, expanding mass transit service to the region’s rural areas, and adding new bike trails to the area’s existing trail network and bike lanes to existing roads where feasible - critical initiatives that can help broaden choices in transportation modes and make the transportation system itself safer and more navigable.

In addition, encouraging the adoption of “complete streets” policies by local governments can also play a significant role in developing a truly multi-modal transportation system so that new and existing roads can provide access and travel for all users, whether pedestrians, cyclists, motorists. To achieve this, public infrastructure of all types should be maintained with a high priority given to financing improvements to aging roads, bridges, tunnels, and water and wastewater systems. Investments in new infrastructure should be well-timed and coordinated to support key regional transportation and economic development initiatives. Opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features, such as bio-swales, retention ponds, and rain gardens, should be pursued to help to reduce stress to local and regional storm water management systems.



OLD STATE HIGHWAY 36, RIVERTON



AGRICULTURE AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Farming in Sangamon County is a valuable and significant industry within the region, and a strong desire exists to maintain and preserve agricultural viability as long as practical into the future. Villages and small towns are also key elements to the rural landscape and economy as they link farm lands and agricultural areas with needed goods and commercial services, although aging and declining populations pose challenges to their long-term economic health.

Economic development and other quality of life issues in rural areas need to be addressed by undertaking local and regionally-coordinated initiatives that ensure small communities continue to serve as economic and social centers for rural residents. Such initiatives could also focus on providing new amenities and services, including access to high speed internet, telemedicine, and mass transit services, among others. In strengthening the agricultural sector, much has already been accomplished regionally to discourage and prevent the unwanted loss of farmland, but other planning tools such as conservation subdivisions and purchase of development right could be considered in promoting better land management and site planning practices. Such practices could help to support the agricultural industry so that it remains an important economic mainstay for the region.



A RURAL BARN AND FARMSTEAD NEAR PLEASANT PLAINS



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL READINESS

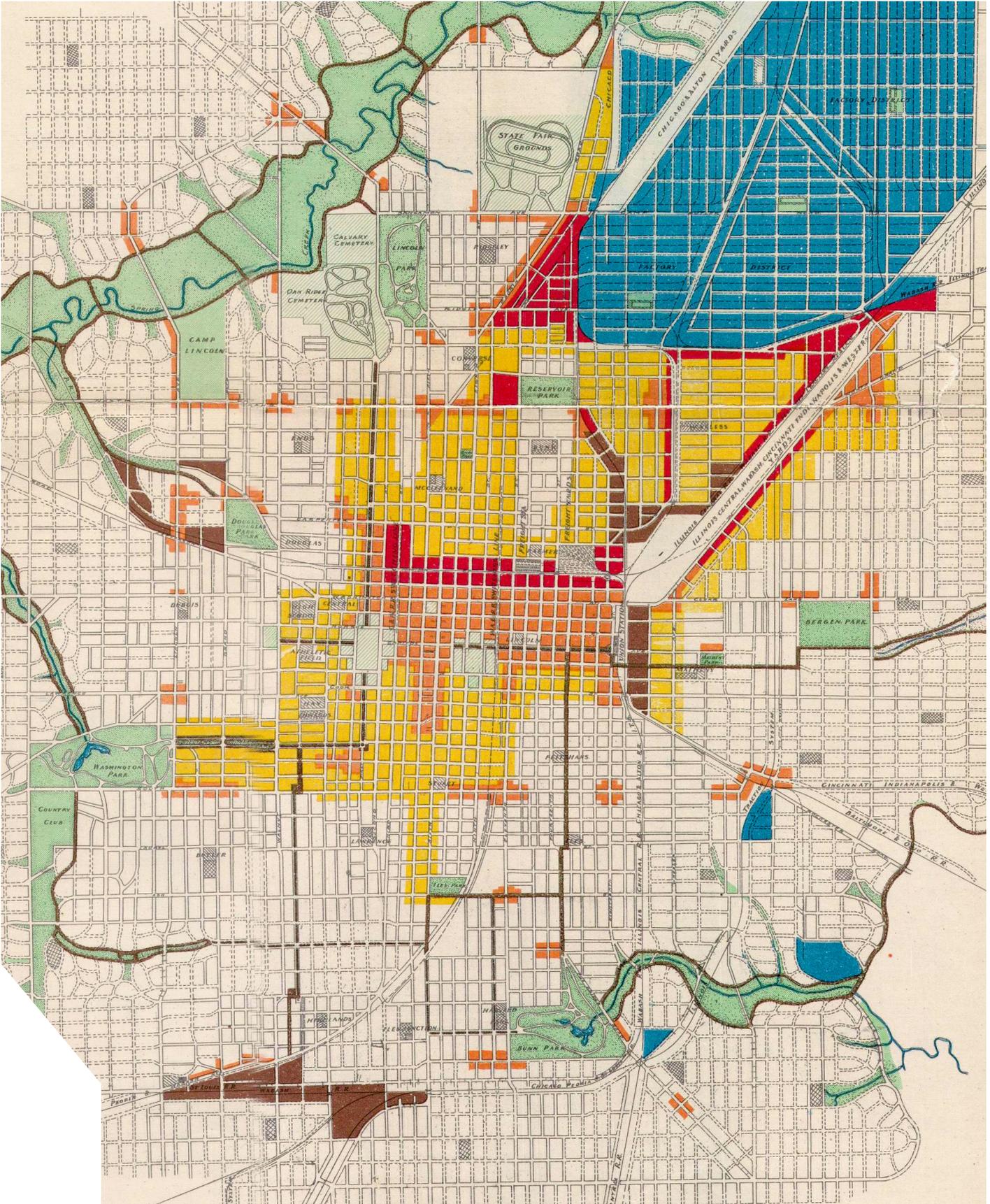
Regional stakeholders and residents desire effective, consistent economic development efforts that diversify and strengthen the County’s key industry sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education, tourism, and government and financial services. There is also a clear need to support small business development and entrepreneurial activity, revitalize traditional commercial districts throughout the region, and engage local colleges and universities in being the linkages between businesses and the training and research needed to ready the region’s workforce for jobs in growing and emerging industries, especially technology-based enterprises.

Finding ways to broaden access to higher learning and training opportunities within the region will also be critical to providing future job opportunities and in enhancing the quality of life for current and future residents. While economic development is generally led by local governments and other private sector organizations, more effective regional coordination and support for economic development initiatives are needed. Regional coordination can also ensure that economic development is balanced and sustainable with other key regional planning goals and objectives expressed within this Regional Plan.

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AND COOPERATION

Consistent, coordinated efforts in achieving government operating efficiencies and cooperation will help the region and its municipalities align more closely with the County’s economic realities, but also set the stage for local government innovation and long-term, sustainable growth. In an era of limited and declining resources, achieving efficiencies and increased effectiveness in local government operations and the delivery of services has become an important and significant priority. Identifying ways to foster collaboration and cooperation among local governments to reduce costs to operations and service delivery, especially in regards to police and fire protection and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure, should always be explored and implemented.

Collaborative efforts could also be extended to economic development, energy efficiency systems, placemaking and beautification activities, as well as the sharing of information and best practices in municipal finance, and planning and community development. Performance indicators that determine the success of cooperative efforts and improvements to local government service delivery should also be developed to help guide and refine efforts local efficiencies. The Citizens’ Efficiency Commission for Sangamon County has recently played a key role in fostering local community collaboration by convening local governments to discuss issues such as electric aggregation, police and fire services and the sharing of equipment and resources (see www.sscrpc.com). Although the Commission is to sunset in November of 2013, a forum in which local communities can continue to discuss issues and collaborate on solutions should continue in some format.



PROPOSED ZONING MAP - THE SPRINGFIELD PLAN, 1925; PROVIDED BY SSCRPC

STRATEGIES FOR CREATING A VITAL CYCLE IN SANGAMON COUNTY

The six identified areas of focus, when approached through the lens of the vital cycle of planning principles, produced in application a number of regional strategies. These strategies represent primary recommended approaches for achieving the regional vision. In order to assist in the implementation of the plan, each of these strategies is followed by a series of implementation actions.

To demonstrate the important linkages between actions and actors in the vital cycle, each implementation action has been labeled with the aspect of the vital cycle it most evidently fulfills. Each implementation action then receives further description in terms of the key actors involved in the process. Since individual implementation actions may involve a broad range of parties in the region, implementation actors have been broken down into the categories of Principal Implementation Parties, or those who might take on roles as the primary conveners or implementers for a recommended action, and Vital Parties, those who are not in the lead convening or implementing role but nonetheless represent key interests that must be involved for the successful implementation of the region's long-term vision.



NEW BERLIN HIGH SCHOOL, NEW BERLIN



SINGLE FAMILY HOME, ROCHESTER

“Local stakeholders also consider improving the region’s visual character as an important and effective element in both economic and community development and in enhancing the quality of life, health and well-being of the region’s citizens.”



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, NEW BERLIN



UNION PARK, AUBURN

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND GROWTH

Local attitudes regarding community character and the built environment relate to several issues, such as enhancing the appearances of major transportation corridors, historic downtowns and traditional neighborhoods, and reducing visual clutter and billboards. There is also a desire to maintain the County's rural, small town character, which can be achieved by encouraging development that is compatible and compact in form, and by connecting the region's villages and urban areas with well-designed roadways, corridors and trail networks. In addition, local stakeholders also consider improving the region's visual character to be an important and effective element in both economic and community development, and in enhancing the quality of life, health and well-being of the region's citizens.





STRATEGY #1:

Ensure that future growth will occur in geographic patterns that allow for public services and infrastructure to be provided in an efficient and fiscally responsible manner.

As a means for managing growth within the region, urban development should be directed into districts and places that are contiguous to existing development and are within reasonable proximity to existing infrastructure-served areas. Local communities should be encouraged to adopt plans and policies that support contiguous development, infill, and the redevelopment and reuse of vacant land and buildings. Such policies will encourage growth near already-developed areas in all communities within the region.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Capacity Building: Assist local communities in the development of local comprehensive plans and development codes

As the lead planning agency for the communities, the SSCRPC has assisted local communities in the preparation of comprehensive plans and zoning codes in recent years. The SSCRPC should continue to provide assistance whenever funded by local communities. Assistance could include evaluating existing comprehensive plans, providing recommendations on plan implementation strategies, and a regular review of plan implementation results, constraints and opportunities. Analyzing and benchmarking the results of assistance efforts should also be undertaken.

Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC, municipalities and County.

Vital Partners: other governmental units, such as special districts.

Capacity Building: Target technical and financial assistance to those communities interested in furthering planning and implementation

Technical assistance to local communities should not just focus on local comprehensive planning but also on local plan implementation, especially those implementation areas that also advance broader regional planning goals such as open space preservation and bike trail network development, stormwater management and economic development. The SSCRPC could then provide a menu of technical assistance services to those communities committed



to plan implementation. Local communities may also be encouraged to identify and utilize funding sources for implementation activities.

Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC, Springfield Area Transportation Study (SATS).

Vital Partners: proposed regional leadership council (RLC), Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce (GSCC) and other local chambers, County, municipalities, other governmental agencies, non-profit civic and planning advocacy groups.

Capacity Building: Conduct planning commissioner workshops

Every two to four years, workshops for local officials that interact with land use, zoning, development, and other planning concepts should be conducted to discuss topics related to updating comprehensive plans and ordinances, making appropriate land use decisions, roles and responsibilities of the local planning and zoning commission, and other planning issues of regional importance.

Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC, local planning and zoning commissions.

Vital Partners: RLC, County, municipalities, other governmental units.

Intentional Growth: Plan for future housing needs and trends

As local communities plan for their long term growth and sustainability, a thorough understanding of the regional housing market is needed to determine the amount of new housing and what housing types will be supported in the future. This can be accomplished through a comprehensive housing market study. This will in turn help inform local communities as they prepare the housing components of their comprehensive plans and other plans for neighborhoods, downtown districts and transportation corridors. Housing market analyses can also assist communities in targeting infill residential development appropriate to local municipal needs. These housing needs should be considered in view of regional growth patterns as a whole, rather than on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis, in order to avoid over-estimating the potential housing demands in the region. Regional benchmarking and indicator data collection activities such as the SSCRPC's SangStat initiative may be of assistance in this respect.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit housing and community revitalization organizations, philanthropic institutions, GSCC and local chambers, and realtor and home builder associations.



Capacity Building: Develop best practice manuals for community plans and zoning ordinances

Appropriate implementing agencies should promote good planning in the region by preparing best practice manuals for community comprehensive planning and model ordinances for local zoning codes. Community planning manuals could provide land use concepts for small towns and villages, as well as for neighborhoods, commercial areas and important transportation corridors in larger communities. Model codes could also include subdivision regulations, signage and parking requirements, landscape ordinances and housing rehabilitation codes.

Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC.

Vital Partners: RLC, municipalities, County, other governmental units.

Intentional Growth: Evaluate consistency of local plans and ordinances to regional planning goals

Working cooperatively with the SSCRPC, local officials should establish a formal process of evaluating and auditing local plans and ordinances for consistency with each other and for consistency with regional planning goals. The reviews and planning updates would also focus on identifying impediments and obstacles to local plan implementation.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County, special districts.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC.

Intentional Growth: Develop a growth and land use development monitoring system

An appropriate local agency should develop a growth monitoring system as a way to measure growth and development trends within the region. The system should measure a variety of growth indicators that can help local communities adjust their planning efforts in response to those indicators, especially in regards to the absorption of land uses in comparison to demand and land availability. Additionally, the system should track population trends, provision of public water and sewer, number of permits issued, and vacancy rates in downtown districts and commercial corridors. The system should be updated every three to five years with yearly trend reports published and distributed to local communities. This initiative could build upon existing regional benchmarking efforts such as SangStat.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, RLC, other government agencies and special districts.



Intentional Growth and Resource Preservation: Fund infrastructure investments that are tied to local plan implementation
As municipalities and other local government entities consider building new or improving existing infrastructure to encourage growth, they should do so in a fashion that reflects local planning priorities. Consideration should be given to adopting policies or creating new funding programs that assist local communities in underwriting infrastructure improvements that also implements key elements of both the community’s comprehensive and capital improvements plans. Funds could perhaps be allocated from the Surface Transportation Program to finance particular projects that promote compact development and sustainability.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.
Vital Partners: IDOT, SATS, SSCRPC, other governmental agencies.



DOWNTOWN SPRINGFIELD



STRATEGY #2:

Promote distinctive “places” within the region, each with a defined character, development form and appearance.

Promote the adoption of new development codes and design standards and guidelines by local communities to ensure higher quality development and site design. Such actions can help encourage new development that is compatible with the form and appearance of adjacent land uses and buildings. However, guiding new development character should not be the only focus of local planning actions. Older, historic downtowns and traditional residential neighborhoods are often considered a community’s “front door” and a defining community character element. For example, over the last several years façade improvements and various streetscaping initiatives have been undertaken in downtown Springfield. Homeowners in Enos Park have taken the initiative to develop a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan with implementation strategies focused on new housing infill and rehabilitation and various transportation and public realm enhancements. Enhancing the overall urban design appearance of these areas, including commercial building, homes, public spaces, infrastructure and streetscape, will help spur reinvestment and attract new residents and businesses.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Collaborative Vision and Capacity Building: Sponsor or conduct local leader or planning commissioner workshops

Conduct an on-going series of workshops as part of a “planning college” for local municipal leaders, planning and zoning commissioners, and neighborhood organizations on the benefits of good community planning and design, including the development of comprehensive plans, zoning codes, design guidelines and subdivision ordinances. The planning college could also focus on topics related to economic development, downtown and neighborhood revitalization, historic preservation, tourism, and complete streets and bike trail development. One venue for such training could be the suggested Regional Leadership Council, building upon the recently organized regional mayors caucus.

Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC, municipal planning and zoning agencies, historic preservation bodies.

Vital Partners: County, municipalities, GSCC and other local chambers, other government agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, philanthropic institutions.



Resource Preservation and Intentional Growth: Conduct regional downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts

Municipalities should plan and implement downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts. The SSCRPC should continue to provide planning and technical assistance to local community development and neighborhood organizations with their efforts to revitalize traditional downtown business districts and residential neighborhoods. Technical assistance could focus on forming local steering committees for planning efforts, providing important data and information, training organizations on elements of good downtown and neighborhood plans, and in reviewing documents and reports before the completion of the planning process.

Principal Implementation Parties: municipalities, local organizations and Mainstreet associations such as Downtown Springfield Incorporated (DSI), neighborhood organizations.

Vital Partners: GSCC and local Chambers, SSCRPC, RLC, other government agencies.

Resource Preservation and Collaborative Vision: Enhance the appearance of important landscapes, viewsheds, and community gateway and transportation corridors through appropriate land use planning and urban design enhancements

Improve the physical appearance and land use patterns of key gateways and transportation corridors in communities throughout the region. Local communities should be assisted in the development of gateway and corridor plans along with new zoning codes and design standards. Additionally, a gateway and corridor planning “guidebook” could be created for use by elected officials and staff in evaluating development and public improvements proposals slated for local gateway areas and transportation corridors. The guidebook would describe the appropriate development form and use concepts for these important areas of the region.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County, IDOT, SATS.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, other government agencies.



Intentional Growth: Adopt character form districts to manage land use on a regional basis

In Sangamon County, land is mostly managed and regulated by use rather than by development form. Managing land use by development form may be more effective in ensuring that new development is compatible with identifiable development patterns, physical design characteristics and principles, and land uses of certain areas of the region. For example, the region's rural areas have their own particular development form and land use pattern - agricultural uses and industries, farmsteads, and a limited amount of commercial uses serving the farming community. A primary purpose of a rural form district would be to preserve agricultural farm land but also promote the desired physical character of farm and pasture land and the related agricultural commercial businesses. Other form districts could be applied to villages, small towns, river and transportation corridors, and specific locations along current or planned interstate access points to local communities. Within each form district, specific development uses - uses meeting certain physical design and site plan requirements and considered compatible with the overall form district would be allowed. Apart from encouraging better development compatibility, form districts may be more effective in promoting land use development patterns that strengthen the region's design and physical character.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: RLC, SSCRPC.

Intentional Growth: Update existing land use regulatory tools at the local community level

Local communities should update their regulatory tools, including zoning, subdivision codes and sign ordinances, to require higher quality new development in relation to site design, landscaping, lighting, signage and stormwater management. The SSCRPC should assist local communities with code revisions, especially in understanding new regulatory and design management tools, including design guidelines and design overlays as an effective means to managing development design in neighborhoods and commercial areas. In addition, over the last ten years, new zoning systems such as the Form-Based Codes (FBCs) are replacing older conventional zoning codes that emphasize use over a community's urban form and development design. They are also written primarily with illustrations, images and diagrams, rather than text. A form-based code, or some hybrid version between a conventional and form-based zoning ordinance, would be similar and compatible with regional development form districts. The SSCRPC could provide training and technical assistance to local communities that may be interested in revising and creating new land use regulatory codes.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, Sangamon County and municipal zoning departments.



STRATEGY #3:

Protect and enhance environmental features, including greenways and parks, wildlife sanctuaries and nature preserves, and creeks, rivers and lakes, through well coordinated collaborations and the adoption of best practices in regional and local planning.

Sangamon County’s natural resource and environmental assets are significant elements in the region’s quality of life and contribute economic benefits to the value of individual properties, developments and entire communities. Much has been accomplished in maintaining existing parks and open space and in developing new facilities and amenities that meet the recreational needs of local communities and the region. Regional planning initiatives in protecting environmental assets include the development of a long range plan for an integrated, county-wide open space and park network and the adoption of new regulatory tools and ordinances, such as conservation subdivisions in rural areas and overlays to protect streams, waterways and scenic corridors. Options for encouraging private sector actions in protecting and managing environmental assets should also be considered, including a voluntary conservation easement or a land donation program, that are managed at the County level or collaboratively with other agencies and non-profit organizations.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Capacity Building: Adopt a long-range, integrated open space plan for the region

In 1997, a greenways and trails plan for the Springfield and Sangamon County was prepared by a citizen’s advisory committee and the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission but was not officially adopted. The plan provided specific recommendations on potential regional greenways and trails, as well as various acquisition and greenway preservation implementation strategies. Local communities, park and conservation agencies, open space and trail advocates and other government agencies should work together to create an updated Sangamon County open space plan with an overall goal of developing an integrated “green” infrastructure and recreational network. The plan should also serve to protect important natural resources, ensure connectivity between open spaces where feasible, and prioritize and target investments from all jurisdictions in that network. The plan should also identify areas that should be preserved for critical environmental reasons, such as groundwater recharge areas. As part of the new plan’s implementation strategy, a permanent greenway and trails citizens’ committee should be established to carry forward various aspects and elements of the plan.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, conservation districts, local park districts, other government agencies, land owners, land trusts, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, philanthropic institutions.



Resource Preservation: Emphasize the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure network in local community comprehensive plans

In preparing comprehensive plans, local communities should collaborate with parks departments, the Park District, and other agencies to identify areas for new open space and parks. In turn, this may reduce or eliminate the cost of preparing local park district plans or lead to the rezoning of identified areas for new park space by the local municipality.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County, park district.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC other government agencies.

Intentional Growth: Revise existing regulatory tools that can help create new park and open space where needed

The County's and relevant municipalities' planned unit development (PUD) provisions should be revised to add or strengthen requirements for adding new open space, enhancing existing parks or linking up open spaces with trail connections and other greenways. New incentives such as density bonuses or permit fee waivers should be offered in exchange to meeting new planned unit development requirements.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, relevant development interests.

Intentional Growth and Capacity-Building: Where appropriate, adopt conservation subdivision design as a means for protecting open space and natural features

Conservation subdivision codes have been adopted by many communities and counties as an effective means for accommodating new development in more compact forms while protecting natural areas, open space, water quality and wildlife. The open spaces generated by the conservation subdivision would then be held in perpetuity as protected greenway spaces, trails, pasture or woodlands, which could be connected to a regional greenway or trail system. Ideally, conservation subdivisions could also be an allowed development use within a rural development form district and offered to developers as an option to conventional subdivision design. Conservation subdivision codes should be adopted by both the County and municipalities. A manual that could guide local communities in crafting such ordinances could also be developed.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, other governmental agencies.



Resource Preservation: Encourage “greening” projects in urban areas and small towns

While small-scale in nature, community gardens, urban farms and even pocket parks can add to the region’s green infrastructure, as well as satisfy local preferences and needs for additional green space and locally grown food. Technical and financial assistance provided by the County and local municipalities could support such greening initiatives, especially those undertaken by neighborhood groups and civic associations.

Principal Implementation Party: Municipalities.

Vital Partners: advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, local residents, philanthropic institutions.

Intentional Growth: Adopt or update land-cash or land-dedication ordinances for use in providing new park and open space

Land dedication ordinances can be an effective mechanism for providing new park or open space in both development and redevelopment areas of the region and individual communities. Such ordinances may be a part of existing subdivision or planned unit development codes and could be revised to consider cash donations if a developer cannot feasibly provide open space as part of a planned development in greenfield and redevelopment areas. Donated lands should be reasonably located to meet local open spaces and recreational needs. Cash donations can be used to underwrite various open space and capital improvements.

Principal Implementation Party: Municipalities.

Vital Partners: advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.

Collaborative Vision: Foster collaboration between park district, school districts and other agencies in sharing use of open space

To increase the use of park and open space amenities and access to such spaces and amenities for communities that are underserved, agreements between municipal parks and public works departments, the Springfield Park District, and other jurisdictions could be developed for joint use of park and open space for educational and recreational needs.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, park district, school districts.

Vital Partners: RLC, other government agencies.



STRATEGY #4:

Encourage best practices in sustainable design, landscaping, signage, lighting and stormwater management in order to promote sustainability and higher quality developments, public spaces and infrastructure.

Sustainable design practices could bring significant economic and environmental benefits, which include, among others, reducing stormwater run-off, flood risks and the impact on local ecosystems, promoting energy efficiency and lower utility usage, and encouraging higher quality developments that not only respect the environment but also lower operating costs to businesses and companies. Sustainable design also takes advantage of natural ecosystem services, especially in regards to flood mitigation, which lower long-term treatment costs. An effective regional approach to promoting sustainable design could be the development of best practice manuals for local communities that illustrate and describe model standards and codes for local communities and the provision of technical assistance that can help local officials and legislative bodies assess the effectiveness of their plans and codes in addressing sustainability issues.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Collaborative Vision: Develop a regional sustainability plan

A regional sustainability plan can provide a strategic vision and direction for how to improve environmental quality, promote economic resiliency and ensure social equity across the region. Specific strategies and recommendations which the County and local governments can take in promoting energy efficiency, local food production, and reducing waste and greenhouse gas emissions should be important elements within the sustainability plan. Identifying obstacles to achieving local sustainability should also be a part of the planning process.

Principal Implementation Party: RLC.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, local communities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, local residents, philanthropic institutions.



Capacity-Building: Disseminate information and best practices in sustainability and sustainable design through technical assistance, reports and publications

Beyond the creation of a sustainability plan, promoting sustainability practices in local communities should also be considered an important priority within the region. Sustainability information could be compiled in a “best practices” manual covering such topics as water quality, transportation, land use, stormwater management, sustainable design and building standards, and energy efficiency and alternative energy sources. Workshops and seminars using the manual as an educational resource could also be conducted with communities seeking ways to promote sustainability locally.

Principal Implementation Party: SSCRPC.

Vital Partners: RLC, County, municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, local residents, philanthropic institutions.

Capacity Building: Develop sample ordinances related to sustainability and sustainable design

Model ordinances that remove barriers and allow for various sustainability solutions could be created by the County for use and implementation by local communities. For example, model ordinances could address issues related to the use of geothermal systems as permitted accessory uses for single family homes. Shading mechanisms such as targeted tree cover or awnings could also be allowed to extend into setbacks to shade storefronts from the high sun. Model ordinances could be incorporated into the sustainability practice manual or developed into a separate sample ordinance publication.

Principal Implementation Party: SSCRPC, RLC.

Vital Partners: municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.

Intentional Growth: Develop incentives for sustainable development

An incentive program to encourage sustainable development and reward private sector initiative should be developed at both the regional and local levels. Expedited permit review, permit fee waivers or density bonuses could be employed as incentives or developers and building to incorporate sustainable design practices.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: Development community, GSCC and local chambers, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS, PAWNEE



CLAYVILLE HISTORICAL SITE

“Consistent, on-going efforts to enhance existing recreational amenities, as well as add new park spaces, greenways and bike trails where needed and feasible can only bolster the regional economy by increasing recreational tourism spending and by attracting new businesses and trained employees seeking a better quality of life.”



DANA-THOMAS HOUSE STATE HISTORIC SITE, SPRINGFIELD



DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS, AUBURN

STRATEGIES FOR HERITAGE, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Springfield and Sangamon County boast many significant historic, cultural and recreational resources that contribute to the region's overall quality-of-life and economic vitality. Many of these resources are associated with the life of Abraham Lincoln, such as the Lincoln Home National Historic Site and the Presidential Library and Museum. Yet there are other historic resources and sites within the region, in other communities, villages and rural areas that should be telling a broader story of the County's history and settlement, but have yet to be identified and documented.

Other smaller-scaled museums and historic sites often lack the financial resources and organizational capacity to enhance their operations and visibility as important destinations for tourists and visitors. Route 66, for instance, remains a significant tourist attraction for the region that is currently underutilized and has underdeveloped and uncoordinated attractions. Such organizations could benefit from assistance to improve their business operations, additional marketing and promotion support, and a well-coordinated regional approach to promoting heritage tourism.

The same could be said for the County's environmental features and recreational amenities, such as its lakes and rivers, and parks and wildlife areas, which provide opportunities for both residents and visitors to experience the region's open spaces and scenic areas. Consistent, on-going efforts to enhance existing recreational amenities, as well as add new park spaces, greenways and bike trails where needed and feasible can only bolster the regional economy by increasing recreational tourism spending and by attracting new businesses and trained employees seeking a better quality of life.



STRATEGY #1:

Preserve Sangamon County’s important historic and cultural resources by undertaking comprehensive, coordinated efforts in preservation planning and implementation at both the regional and local levels.

The County’s rich heritage encompasses more than just the buildings and sites associated with the legacy of Abraham Lincoln. It also includes the period-style buildings, roadways and bridges, structures and landscapes that tell a much broader story of the settlement, development and growth of the region. Sangamon County currently has a number of historic sites and buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places, this nation’s official list of historic resources deemed worthy of preservation. The County is also home to Lincoln’s Home National Historic Site, the only National Park in Illinois, and is part of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area, which encompasses 42 other counties in the central part of the state. However, beyond the Abraham Lincoln related resources, other buildings, sites and areas within the region may have their own value in interpreting and connecting the story of Sangamon County into one enriched and compelling narrative. Identifying, preserving and maintaining such resources can serve to promote a stronger regional historic preservation ethic and to a broader understanding of the environmental, aesthetic and economic benefits preservation can bring to the region.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Resource Preservation and Collaborative Vision:

Create a region-wide historic preservation plan

The preservation of historic resources can best be accomplished through advanced and coordinated planning efforts between the County, local communities and private sector interests. Creating a regional historic preservation plan can help outline what those planning efforts might be - survey and designation activities, updated ordinances or codes, preservation and adaptive use incentives, for instance - and which level of government should spearhead those initiatives. The plan should also provide recommendations for building a countywide preservation program that aims at promoting preservation as an effective tool for promoting economic development, sustainability and maintaining small town character. The preservation plan could be funded through a Certified Local Government grant from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA).

Principal Implementation Parties: RLC, municipalities, County, SSCRPC.

Vital Partners: IHPA, municipal and County historic preservation commissions and agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



Capacity Building: Continue efforts to survey and document historic resources within the region and locally

Appropriate agency or agencies should embark on efforts to survey all areas of the County to document historic buildings, sites and structures worthy of future preservation efforts, including listing and designation in national, County and local registers of historic places. A comprehensive survey will also serve to identify those resources, including farmsteads, buildings and structures in unincorporated rural areas and villages, that contribute to a broader understanding of the region's historical development. Historic farmsteads and village communities, in particular, are perhaps the most important character-defining features of the rural landscape. Grants made available through the State of Illinois Certified Local Government program can help to underwrite survey program costs. The SSCRPC could also assist local communities, preservation organizations and other entities with local survey work by providing technical support and grant-writing services to help underwrite historic resource survey projects.

Principal Implementation Parties: Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission (SCHPC), Springfield Historic Sites Commission (SHSC), other local historic preservation agencies.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, IHPA, Springfield Convention and Visitors' Bureau (SCVB), municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations

Capacity Building: Utilize new technologies that help to both document and promote existing historic resources, sites, structures and landscapes for both planning and economic development purposes

Surveys help to gain a broader understanding of the existing historical and cultural resources throughout the County, where they are located and why they are important to the region. However, survey information is not valuable if the final report is not accessible to the public, including property owners, developers, investors and others who may want such data for a variety of needs and purposes. Today, new software, internet and GPS technologies allow survey data to be posted to the internet in user friendly formats, allowing the public to access and engage such information through personal computers, tablets and even smart phones. In turn, local governments, the SSCRPC and others, can use the information for preservation planning needs. Certified Local Government grants can also be used to finance such initiatives.

Principal Implementation Party: SCHPC.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, IHPA, SCVB, municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



Capacity Building: Provide technical assistance to local communities

The SSCRPC and the Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission should continue to offer assistance to local communities that have or are yet to recognize and protect their important historic resources. For those cities and communities that have adopted a local historic preservation ordinance, the SSCRPC should continue its role in assisting local commissions and might also be involved in reviewing land and certificate of appropriateness review applications. In those communities that have yet to establish a formal program, the SSCRPC could provide advice and technical assistance in local opinion surveying, drafting a local ordinance and establishing a local commission.

Principal Implementation Party: SCHPC.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, IHPA, municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.

Collaborative Vision: Use intergovernmental agreements to extend landmark protection in local communities

In municipalities and incorporated areas where no formal preservation program exists, intergovernmental agreements should be encouraged to extend the protections of the County’s historic preservation ordinance to important local historic resources.

Principal Implementation Parties: County, municipalities.

Vital Partners: RLC, SCHPC, SHSC, SCVB, SSCRPC.

Intentional Growth: Revise development regulations to consider impacts on historic resources

County and municipal subdivision ordinances and development regulations should incorporate provisions and allowances for the preservation of important historic resources. For example, planned unit developments should always require the preservation and adaptive use of significant historic resources, especially those found in the rural landscape, such as barns and farmsteads. Developers should always be encouraged to find creative ways to incorporate historic resources into their developments. Impacts on the integrity of historic landscapes from developments should be mitigated with landscape and buffering requirements.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, SCHPC, SHSC.



Capacity Building: Undertake educational initiatives to promote the value of historic preservation

Educational programs and tours organized and sponsored by an appropriate central agency in partnership with local communities can be effective in building a greater awareness and understanding of historic preservation's role in enhancing the region's sense of place and in supporting community economic development. The County has opportunities to partner with local organizations and agencies in various educational initiatives, including the Sangamon County and State Historical Societies, the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area, the Presidential Library and Museum, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, among many others. One initiative that could be organized in collaboration with local communities is an annual region wide historic preservation conference.

Principal Implementation Parties: SCHPC, SHSC.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, SCVB, municipalities, County, neighborhood organizations, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, PAWNEE



STRATEGY #2:

Promote historic preservation as an effective approach for economic development and community development within the region.

Trends in local façade redevelopment and TIF expenditures suggest that there is a growing understanding on the part of local communities about the role historic preservation can play in revitalizing commercial districts and neighborhoods. For instance, Springfield has focused on the rehabilitation of historic commercial buildings and storefronts in its downtown to attract new businesses, and the adaptive use of upper floors for new housing and office space. Neighborhood organizations, such as that in Springfield’s Enos Park, have undertaken organized efforts to revitalize their neighborhoods through planned and coordinated efforts to improve the existing housing stock and attract new infill development on vacant lots. Providing technical support and assistance to local communities and organizations wishing to start preservation based revitalization efforts is an important role that should be played by the County, its municipalities, as well as their private sector partners. Historic resources and cultural assets can also play a significant part in expanding the tourism market to include other sites and attractions in the region that have not been included in ongoing tourism marketing efforts. Marketing and supporting heritage assets as integral elements in a well-developed and implemented heritage tourism strategy should be key priority going forward.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Collaborative Vision: Develop a regional historic and recreational tourism plan

Without reservation, heritage tourism is a significant portion of the Sangamon County economy. There is also much potential to broaden the heritage tourism market to include other sites and attractions that may not have always been considered - for instance, historic neighborhoods and commercial districts in Springfield and elsewhere, historic markers and memorials, historic gravesites, unique architectural gems, antique stores, and nature preserves and sanctuaries. A regional tourism plan should be created to identify those other historic resources that could serve as potential destinations, as well as collaborative partnerships in marketing sites and enhancing the visitor experience.

*Principal Implementation Parties: SCVB, municipal tourism groups and agencies.
Vital Partners: SSCRPC, municipalities, GSCC and other local chambers, local economic development organizations, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, philanthropic institutions.*



Capacity Building: Provide technical assistance to communities and organizations seeking to implement historic preservation-based economic development activities

As local governments and organizations undertake planning efforts, technical assistance could be focused on undertaking preservation-based economic development efforts, especially for traditional commercial districts and neighborhoods. In providing assistance, emphasis should be placed on building organizational capacity to accomplish specific preservation-based revitalization strategies.

Principal Implementation Parties: GSCC and other local chambers, local economic development organizations and agencies, SCVB.

Vital Partners: municipalities, county, IHPA, DCEO, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, building owners and private developers, philanthropic institutions.

Resource Preservation: Create a regional scenic roads program, possibly including development of tourism programs and products specific to the Route 66 heritage in the region

Many of the region's roads, especially those that link the County's rural communities together and those located along rivers and creeks, have special scenic qualities that should be maintained. A "scenic roads" program could be developed by the County in partnership with municipalities and townships that designates certain road segments for long term management to ensure that special natural features and viewsheds are protected from inappropriate development. Historical resources should be considered alongside environmental resources in developing routes and road programs, with emphasis on Historic Route 66. A scenic road management plan would need to be created to define how the road is maintained and what features should be preserved.

Principal Implementation Parties: County, municipalities, townships.

Vital Partners: IDOT, SSCRPC, SCVB, Route 66 organizations and associations, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



Capacity Building: Develop a tourism toolkit to facilitate the improvement and management of potential recreational and heritage tourism sites

The tourism plan should inventory and identify those additional sites and resources that could contribute as significant heritage and recreational tourism attractions. Beyond the identification of such sites, subsequent efforts will be needed to improve and enhance them as quality tourism attractions, especially in regards to operational and management issues, as well as needed physical and capital improvements. A “toolkit” should be developed to provide owners and managers of such sites who want to open them to the public substantive information on planning for physical and capital improvements, marketing and promotions, and in augmenting finances and improving operations. The toolkit could also include information for municipalities in creating and coordinating local tourism activities.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipal tourism and economic development agencies and organizations, SCVB, GSCC and other local chambers.

Vital Partners: Tourism sites and recreational attraction, SSCRPC, municipalities, County, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, philanthropic institutions.

Collaborative Vision: Initiate and sustain a coordinated approach to enhancing tourism and supporting other historic, cultural and recreational assets within the region

Implementing a regional tourism plan and initiatives such the tourism “toolkit,” will require consistent on-going management and coordination efforts on the part of some entity. That entity should have the capacity to provide marketing support to existing tourism sites but also some technical support to assist fledgling ones as they seek to enhance their operations and improve their facilities. The SCVB could perhaps take on a more expanded role in regional tourism or, possibly, a new regional tourism partnership could be developed between local communities and the SCVB, the Chamber, the Springfield Metropolitan Exposition and Auditorium Authority (SMEAA) and various other state and local agencies to help implement various elements of a regional tourism plan along with developing new tools, such as the tourism “toolkit” and other forms of technical assistance to building the capacity of local tourism organizations.

Principal Implementation Parties: SCVB, municipal tourism and economic development agencies and organizations, SMEAA, GSCC and other local chambers,

Vital Partners: RLC, SCHPC, SHSC, IHPA, DCEO and IDNR, municipalities, County, tourism sites and recreational attractions, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, philanthropic institutions.



IMAGE PROVIDED BY: CHRIS YOUNG, STATE JOURNAL REGISTER



SMALL TOWN TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL ROADWAY, SANGAMON COUNTY



INTERSTATE 55, SHERMAN

“Encouraging the adoption of ‘complete streets’ policies by local governments can also play a significant role in developing a truly multi-modal transportation system so that new and existing roads can provide access and travel for all users, whether pedestrians, cyclists, motorists.”



SMTD BUS SERVICE, SPRINGFIELD



THIRD AVENUE RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY THROUGH ENOS PARK, SPRINGFIELD

STRATEGIES FOR TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Local stakeholders recognize the need to improve and maintain streets and roadways as a necessary priority for ensuring the economic viability and transportation efficiencies of their communities. Other transportation priorities include improving east-west access and movement within the City of Springfield, expanding mass transit service to the region's rural areas, and adding new bike trails to the area's existing trail network and bike lanes to existing roads where feasible - critical initiatives that can help broaden choices in transportation modes and make the transportation system itself safer and more navigable.

In addition, encouraging the adoption of “complete streets” policies by local governments can also play a significant role in developing a truly multi-modal transportation system so that new and existing roads can provide access and travel for all users, whether pedestrians, cyclists, motorists. To achieve this, public infrastructure of all types should be maintained with a high priority given to financing improvements to aging roads, bridges, tunnels, and water and wastewater systems. Investments in new infrastructure should be well-timed and coordinated to support key regional transportation and economic development initiatives. Opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features, such as bio-swales, retention ponds, and rain gardens, should be pursued to help to reduce stress to local and regional storm water management systems.



STRATEGY #1:

Promote an efficient, multi-modal transportation system that serves residents and commercial enterprises throughout Sangamon County.

Throughout the County, investments will be needed to maintain and improve the existing transportation system, from roads and bridges to public transit. New road construction projects that serve as critical connections in linking the region's transportation system together should be high priorities. With the future consolidation rail lines to the 10th Street corridor in Springfield, new high speed rail will promote additional multi-modal opportunities and transit-oriented development that can benefit Downtown Springfield in particular. Expanding bus transit to other areas of the County can help residents travel to Springfield and other points while helping them reduce gasoline expenses. Most importantly, transportation investments should be well coordinated to support critical economic development activities in efforts to revitalize and maintain the County's traditional commercial districts and neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Collaborative Vision: Continue to lead and manage regional efforts in implementing federal and state investments in developing a regional, multi-modal transportation system based on a sound evaluation and priority system

The Springfield Area Transportation Study (SATS) should continue to lead and manage federal and State level investments in the regional transportation system within the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), but new investments should focus on improving and modernizing the existing system and ensuring there are align with other regional planning priorities both within and outside of the MPA. Investment decisions should also be made with a multi-modal approach in mind to improve the conditions of travel for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. New evaluation criteria and performance measures may be needed for selecting new transportation projects to be funded by federal or state dollars, in particular those that will add capacity to the system. The criteria and performance measurements should make the decision-making process more equitable and transparent to the general public, and also ensure the most critical projects are funded and implemented.

Principal Implementation Party: SATS.

Vital Partners: Federal and State agencies, Sangamon County, SMTD, local governments, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



Intentional Growth: Conduct transit-supportive land use planning

Previous strategies and implementation actions highlight the SSCRPC's continuing role in assisting local communities in planning initiatives. Going forward, the region should encourage local land use planning that encourages mixed uses and housing types that could be supported by rail or bus transit. The transit-oriented planning and development efforts around a new multimodal facility in downtown Springfield to accommodate a new high speed rail station, could be a starting point for undertaking smaller scale TOD land use planning in other parts of the Springfield area. The key is to conduct appropriate land use planning before transit investment is made.

Principal Implementation Party: SSCRPC, City of Springfield, SMTD.

Vital Partners: other relevant municipalities, County, IDOT, DCEO.

Capacity Building: Prioritize modernization and maintenance of roadways and other transportation facilities when making investment decisions

Beyond the construction of key roadway projects, consideration should be given to implementing other modernization and improvement initiatives that can help improve the regional transportation system, including such items as installing better pavement materials, facilitating better signal timing, utilizing modernized pavement management systems in all jurisdictions, and other intelligent transportation system enhancements that allow a smarter, more efficient use of existing transportation networks. Modernization should also extend to mass transit for state-of-the-art buses and train facilities.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, townships, County.

Vital Partners: IDOT, SATS, Springfield Mass Transit District.

Collaborative Vision: Construct key roadway projects that facilitate important connections and travel within the region

Priority funding and construction should be given to those roadway projects that facilitate needed transportation connections within the region, especially in regards to improving east-west travel through Springfield. Investments in such roadways should be strategic in that they should be made in light of other regional planning goals that emphasize compact growth and utilizing existing infrastructure.

Principal Implementation Parties: County, municipalities.

Vital Partners: IDOT, SATS.



Collaborative Vision: Advocate and plan for high speed rail service

The Federal Railroad Administration’s recent approval for the consolidation of all passenger and freight rail service along the 10th Street rail corridor in Springfield is only the prologue for the additional planning and funding needed to complete the consolidation work and for other rail improvements and station area construction. High speed rail service will provide the opportunities to pursue transit-oriented commercial and residential development in downtown Springfield, as well as expand regional recreational and historic tourism within the region. The County, the SSCRPC, the City of Springfield and other agencies and entities should continue to advocate, plan and pursue funding sources for high-speed rail service.

Principal Implementation Parties: County, City of Springfield, SMTD.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, municipalities, IDOT, GSCC, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profits organizations.

Intentional Growth and Collaborative Vision:

Continue efforts to expand access transit services to underserved, rural areas of the County

The Springfield Mass Transit District (SMTD) currently provides a full service bus transit system of mainline, supplemental and para-transit service routes with a 65-square mile service area centered on Springfield and areas to the north, east and south of the city. However, the SMTD does not provide transit services to small towns and communities outside of its service district, and recent studies conducted by the Sangamon-Menard Area Rural Transit initiative (SMART) determined that demand exists for transit services in rural areas, especially for residents who need to travel to other communities for shopping and medical visits. With the establishment of the Sangamon-Menard Area Regional Transit program in 2012, financed primarily through grant monies, rural residents can now access bus transit for travel within both Sangamon and Menard counties. This service should be maintained through long-term planning as the availability of federal and state level funding grants may vary from year to year. Active planning should also be undertaken to expand transit services to those areas of the region near Springfield not served by SMTD and nor classified as a rural area.

Principal Implementation Party: SMART.

Vital Partners: Federal and State agencies, County, SMTD, municipalities, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



Collaborative Vision: Create and maintain a more efficient freight transportation network within the region

According to some estimates, freight rail traffic is expected to increase in Illinois over the next 30 years by more than 20 percent. The recent decisions by the Federal Railroad Administration and the Illinois Department of Transportation to consolidate both freight and passenger lines along the 10th Street corridor in Springfield also bring opportunities to plan more effectively for enhancing the regional freight rail system, especially in improving operating speeds, reducing congestion, and for exploring potential economic development benefits, such as the development of possible rail-truck intermodal facility within Sangamon County. Beyond the need to find monies to finance the 10th Street rail consolidation, the County and the City of Springfield, along with IDOT, the region's railroads and other economic development groups, should form a collaborative task force to identify priority projects that would improve the freight rail transportation system, such as track and signal upgrades, grade separations and viaduct improvements. The task force could also explore possibilities for dedicated truck freight corridors and multi-modal opportunities. The SSCRPC has in recent years completed a freight study that may assist as a foundation for these efforts.

Principal Implementation Parties: Federal and State agencies, SATS.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, Logistics Alliance of Springfield, GSCC, local governments, other governmental agencies, railroads and freight industries.

Intentional Growth: Pursue transit-oriented development opportunities in downtown Springfield

The consolidation of rail lines along the 10th Street corridor and the future introduction of high-speed rail service to Springfield present a unique opportunity for transit-oriented development in downtown Springfield. Preliminary studies undertaken by the SSCRPC demonstrate the possibilities of developing a new multi-modal transportation station for high-speed rail and the SMTD, as well as new commercial uses and an expansion of the Prairie Capital Convention Center, at a location bounded by Adams and Jefferson, and 9th and 11th Streets. Other possibilities include new mixed use and residential development in blocks surrounding the new station. Further study and a final plan are needed to determine the site's full market and real estate development potential of this site and the costs to develop the new station. The plan could be underwritten as part of the efforts to secure monies for the rail line consolidation.

Principal Implementation Parties: City of Springfield, SMTD.

Vital Partners: Federal and State agencies (particularly IDOT and DCEO), County, SSCRPC, GSCC, other governmental agencies, railroads and freight industries.



STRATEGY #2:

Encourage alternative forms of transportation within the region.

The Springfield Area Transportation Study has recognized that one effective means for reducing greenhouse gases and promoting healthier living is through the implementation of the “complete streets” concept: roads and their right-of-ways that provide equal access and use for pedestrians, cyclists and automobiles. Complete streets can provide substantial benefits to the region by ensuring efficient connections between residences, schools, parks, public transportation, offices, and retail destinations, and by encouraging more walking and bicycling to those destinations. Complete streets also serves to lower carbon emissions by reducing reliance on the automobile and the monthly expenditures spent on gasoline and other transportation needs. The region is encouraged to implement complete streets policies, as well as the development of new trails and pedestrian networks, as part of an alternative, multi-modal transportation system that helps to lower the cost of travel for all stakeholders and residents.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Capacity Building: Incorporate bicycle trail and pedestrian improvements within local capital improvement plans

In 2012, the Springfield Area Transportation Study completed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that outlines initiatives for developing a comprehensive complete street, bicycle trail and pedestrian network within SATS planning area, which has been adopted by the City of Springfield and Sangamon County. At the writing of this plan, a Rural Bike and Pedestrian Plan is also in draft through SATS. The Plan presents detailed recommendations for where bike trail additions and pedestrian improvements should occur. Going forward, as a way to facilitate the implementation of new trail and pedestrian improvements, current and future capital improvements plans in the local communities should be updated to incorporate such improvements and complete street elements. In addition, roadway projects planned by IDOT and Sangamon County should also be revised and updated whenever appropriate and feasible.

Principal Implementation Parties: County, municipalities.

Vital Partners: IDOT, SATS, SSCRPC, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



Capacity Building: Track implementation of 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

On an on-going basis, SATS and the SSCRPC should monitor and measure the progress of implementing various elements of the 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Monitoring progress could be undertaken by a volunteer working group comprised of key regional stakeholders who can work together on addressing implementation challenges at the regional and local levels:

Principal Implementation Parties: SATS, SSCRPC.

Vital Partners: IDOT, Sangamon County, local communities, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.

Capacity Building: Develop a design manual for complete streets planning and implementation

The 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan presents guidelines for complete streets and bicycle facility options, including options for trails, side paths, bike lanes and signage. These guidelines provide a good starting point for developing a more comprehensive complete street and trail design and concept manual for the region, which could help guide local communities in their own planning and implementation activities. The manual would also serve to summarize and integrate federal and state roadway requirements and signage rules from the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) with opportunities to incorporate complete street concepts in local and area streets. More importantly, the manual could outline where flexibility in complete street design and construction could occur.

Principal Implementation Parties: SATS.

Vital Partners: IDOT, local communities, other government agencies

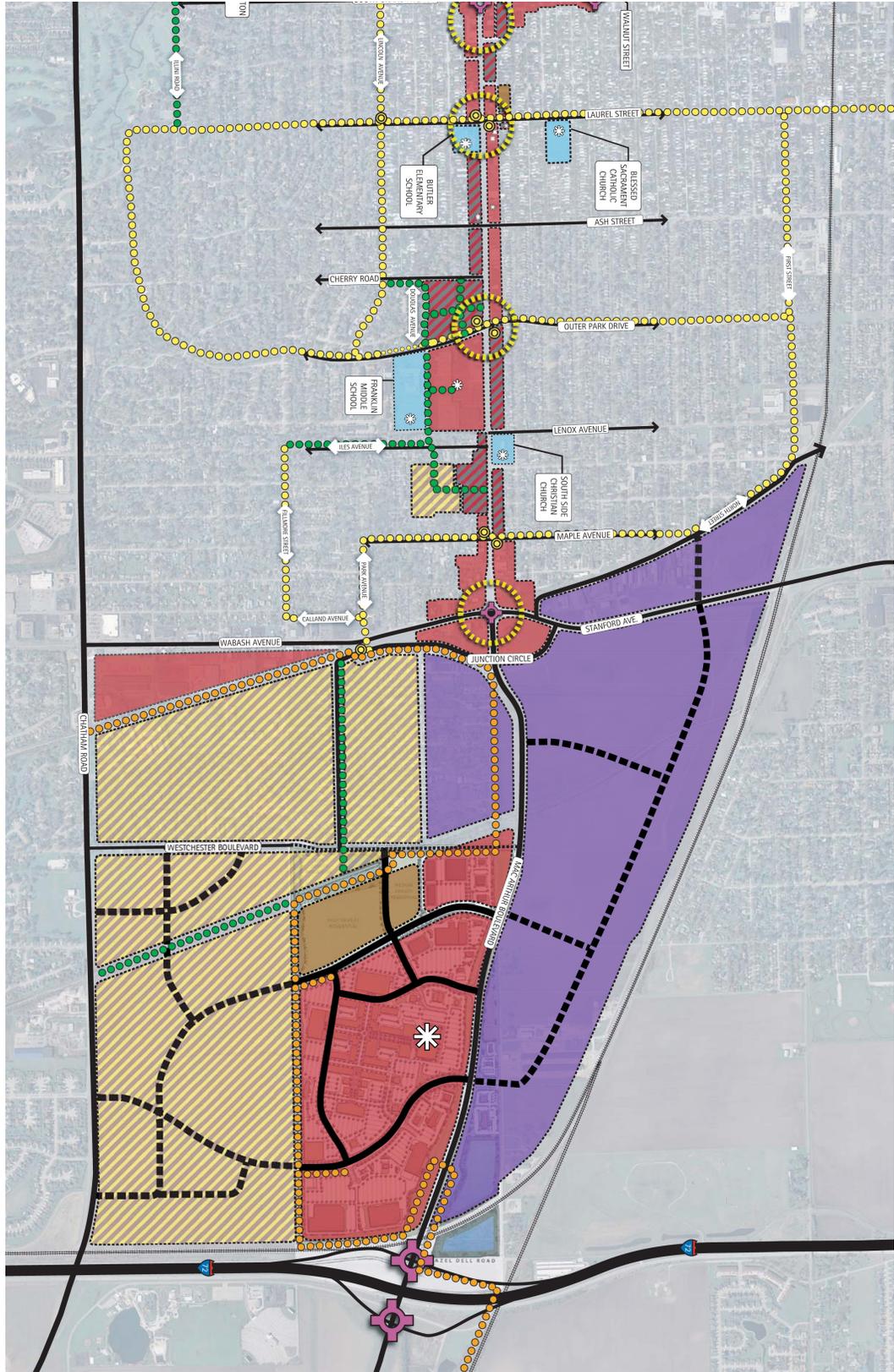
Intentional Growth: Adopt Complete Streets policies and update local development and subdivision codes

The 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan adopted Complete Streets as an important policy for encouraging “accessible transportation network for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders, regardless of age or ability.”¹ One important objective in the Plan is to facilitate the adoption and implementation of complete street polices at the local level through the development of community comprehensive plans and the revision of local land development ordinances. Chatham and Sherman have already adopted policy statements in that regard. Other communities within the region should be encouraged to do so. The SSCRPC could provide technical assistance to other communities in revising subdivision codes and other land development regulations to encourage the implementation and construction of complete streets, and sidewalk and bike path improvements.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, SATS.

¹ Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, *Springfield Area Transportation Study*, page 4.



THE LAND USE STRATEGY FOR THE MACARTHUR BOULEVARD/I-72 INTERCHANGE AREA



Collaborative Vision: Develop and Implement Safe Routes to School projects

Although long-term funding for the Illinois Safe Routes to School program is uncertain, a priority should be placed on improving safety and reducing traffic and air pollution near the vicinity of schools by making bicycling and walking more appealing through sidewalk, bike lane and infrastructure improvements. SATS could assist local communities and school districts with funding applications to the Safe Routes to School Program.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, school districts.

Vital Partners: IDOT, SSCRPC, SATS.

STRATEGY #3:

Plan infrastructure improvements that support the intentional growth of local communities.

Decisions about the location of new development should also be made in part on the ability of local communities to provide infrastructure efficiently. Investments by local communities and the private sector in new sewer, utilities, and storm water management systems should be made in accordance with community comprehensive plans that outline where development should occur and how they should be designed. Ideally, new development should happen in areas already serviced by existing infrastructure and transportation modes as an effective way to facilitate the revitalization and the continued viability of the region's traditional neighborhoods and downtowns.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Capacity Building: Encourage infrastructure planning in local communities

As with local communities and their comprehensive plans, the SSCRPC could also provide assistance with the development of capital improvement plans for local infrastructure and utilities. Capital improvement plans should align with both local and regional planning goals in regards to investing in existing downtowns and neighborhood and supporting new growth that is intentional and appropriate for local community and economic development and is coordinated to the greatest extent possible.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, special districts.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC.



Intentional Growth: Focus infrastructure investments that spur important economic development activities in existing areas

The region should prioritize investments in new infrastructure that support critical economic development initiatives: initiatives that have the strong promise of adding new jobs and employment in existing and emerging industry sectors, such as the Mid-Illinois Medical District. In addition, infrastructure investment should also be targeted to areas that have planned their long-term growth and development. For example, in 2010, a corridor revitalization plan was prepared for Springfield's MacArthur Boulevard, with significant land use recommendations for the area bounded along the Boulevard's extension between Interstate 72 and Wabash Ave. This area could potentially accommodate new light industrial and distribution uses if certain infrastructure investments are made. Infrastructure investment made in this context can help to achieve intentional growth while accommodating important economic development.

*Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.
Vital Partners: SSCRPC, GSCC.*



SPRINGFIELD CLINIC, PART OF THE MID-ILLINOIS MEDICAL DISTRICT, SPRINGFIELD



STRATEGY #4:

Incorporate best practices in stormwater management wherever feasible for existing and new infrastructure.

A more sustainable infrastructure network could help the region become more competitive by maintaining or lowering municipal utility and service costs. For example, sustainable approaches to the local capture, treatment, use and re-use of water can lower the costs for water and sewage treatment. Introducing bio-swales, green buffer zones, and permeable pavement treatments where applicable and appropriate to soil type can help to reduce storm water runoff and ameliorate adverse runoff conditions from significant weather events. Sustainable design solutions should be incorporated within existing local and countywide storm water management plans and systems.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Capacity Building: Prepare a regional storm water management plan and implementation ordinance

The region currently does not have comprehensive storm water management plan that can guide the design, development, operation and maintenance of a well connected and integrated storm water management program. Ideally, the management plan should include the development and enforcement of storm water run-off controls for new construction, prevention of pollution in streams and waterways, and storm water management and pollution prevention for county facilities. Storm water management ordinance would be necessary to establish specific standards for discharges to and maintenance of the regional storm water system. A regional storm water management plan should be developed in tandem with any revision to the 1997 Greenway and Open Space Plan to identify areas, such as floodplains and groundwater recharge locales, which should be open space and part of the regional storm water system.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County, SSCRPC.

Vital Partners: RLC, CWLP, Springfield Metro Sanitary District.



Capacity Building: Provide technical and financial assistance in storm water management to local communities

Encourage best storm water management practices in local communities by providing technical and financial assistance, especially to those communities that have expressed interest in incorporating such practices in public improvement and infrastructure projects. Financial assistance could come in the form of competitive grants.

Principal Implementation Party: SMSD.

Vital Partners: Sangamon County, municipalities, SSCRPC, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, local residents.

Resource Preservation and Intentional Growth: Maintain and replace storm water infrastructure where needed with more effective, sustainable forms of storm water controls

As development and redevelopment activities take place in the region, alternative storm water management approaches should be encouraged that rely less on significant infrastructure improvements and more on sustainable design approaches. Storm water management is a matter of concern for the region due to aging infrastructure and combined sewer overflow issues, particularly within the City of Springfield. In addition to planning for needed capital improvements, low-impact development (LID) is one approach that relies on decentralized, micro-scaled controls that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source. Instead of conveying and treating storm water solely in large end-of-pipe facilities located at the bottom of drainage areas, LID addresses storm water through small-scale landscape practices and design approaches that preserve natural drainage features and patterns. This approach along with maintaining and enhancing the region's existing green infrastructure of floodplains, wetlands and forested areas can provide significant water quality benefits. Alternative systems should be addressed within the regional and local storm water management planning efforts.

Principal Implementation Parties: SMSD, City of Springfield.

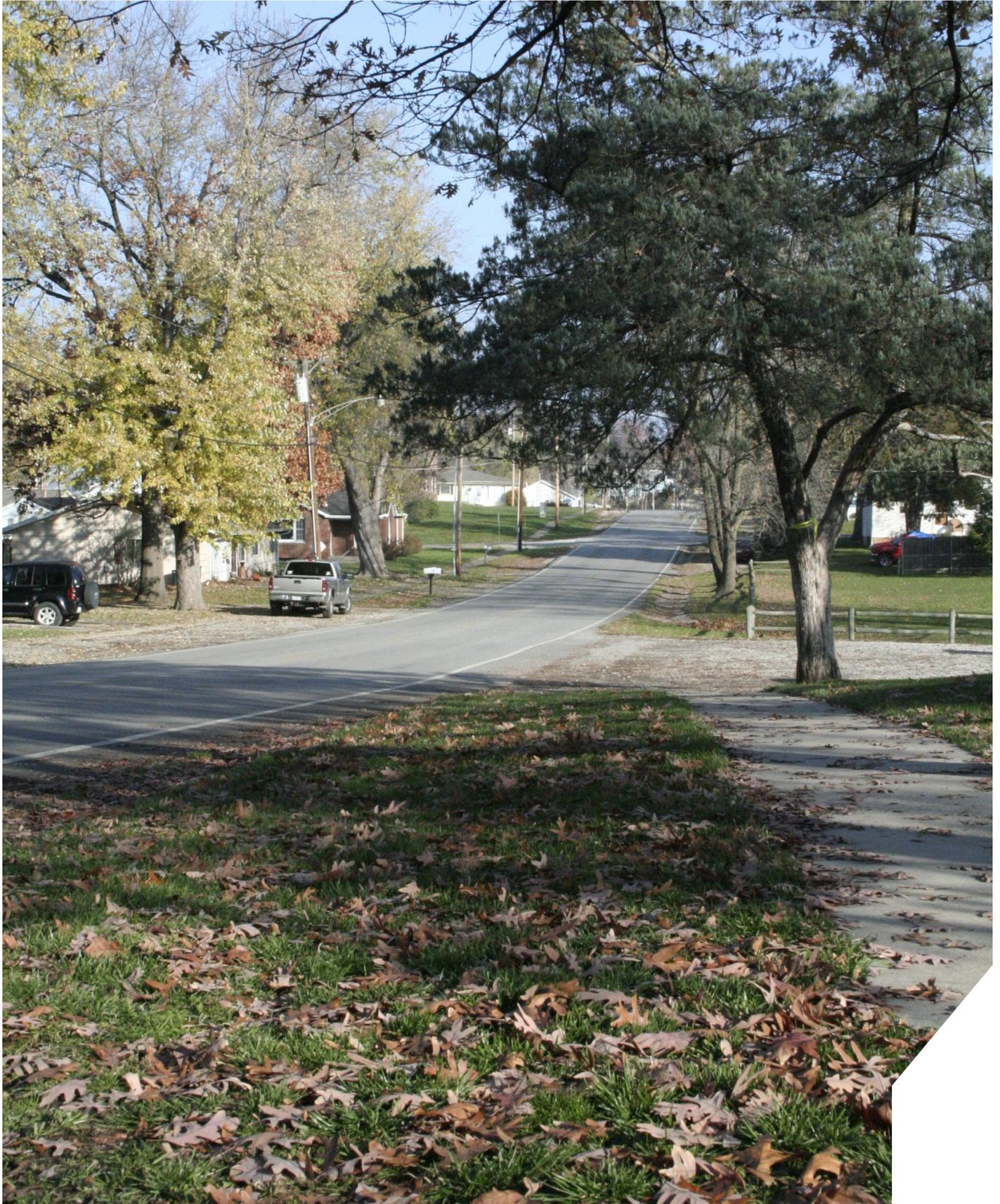
Vital Partners: Sangamon County, SSCRPC, municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, local residents.

Capacity Building: Pursue funding sources for other storm water management and flood prevention programs

In recent years, Sangamon County has pursued various funding sources, such as the Hazard Mitigation grants from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), to conduct various flood prevention initiatives within the region. The County and other partners should continue to pursue such funding sources for continued efforts in floodplain management and flood mitigation.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



SMALL TOWN TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL ROADWAY, RIVERTON



FARMLAND, SANGAMON COUNTY

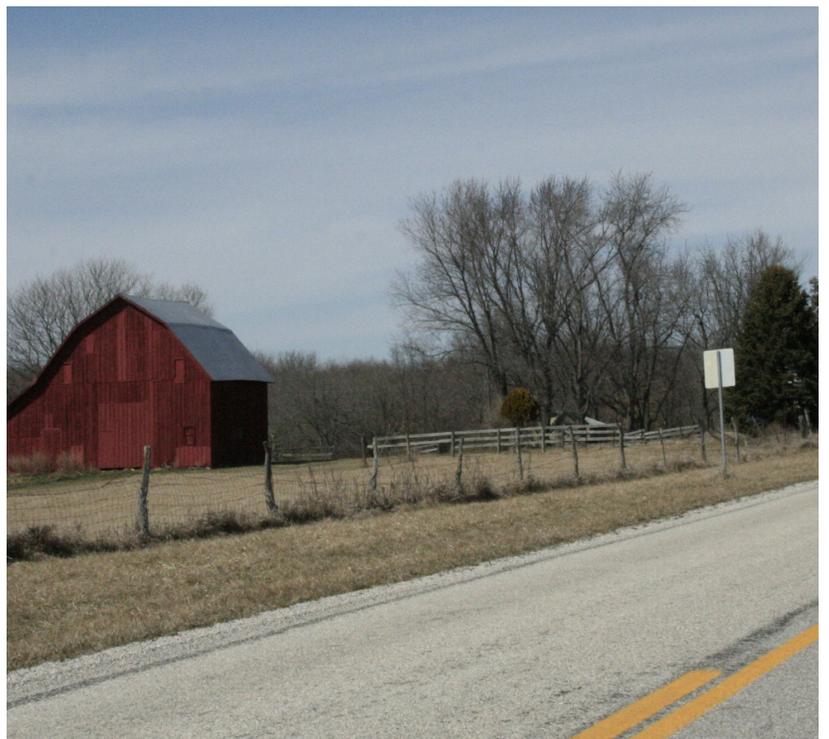


GATEWAY SIGNAGE, LOAMI

“Economic development and other quality of life issues in rural areas need to be addressed by undertaking local and regionally-coordinated initiatives that ensure small communities continue to serve as economic and social centers for rural residents.”



RURAL ROADWAY, SANGAMON COUNTY



A RURAL BARN NEAR PLEASANT PLAINS

STRATEGIES FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Farming in Sangamon County is a valuable and significant industry within the region, and a strong desire exists to maintain and preserve agricultural viability as long as practical into the future. Villages and small towns are also key elements to the rural landscape and economy as they link farm lands and agricultural areas with needed goods and commercial services, although aging and declining populations pose challenges to their long-term economic health.

Economic development and other quality of life issues in rural areas need to be addressed by undertaking local and regionally-coordinated initiatives that ensure small communities continue to serve as economic and social centers for rural residents. Such initiatives could also focus on providing new amenities and services, including access to high speed internet, telemedicine, and mass transit services, among others. In strengthening the agricultural sector, much has already been accomplished regionally to discourage and prevent the unwanted loss of farmland, but other planning tools such as conservation subdivisions and purchase of development right could be considered in promoting better land management and site planning practices. Such practices could help to support the agricultural industry so that it remains an important economic mainstay for the region.



STRATEGY #1:

Maintain and grow agriculture as a critical element to a diverse and healthy regional economy.

Agriculture is a significant industry in Sangamon County and keeping it viable into the future is an important priority for the region. Agriculture contributes to the regional economy through the sale of farm products and the creation of supporting businesses and services. Farms are also a distinctive part of the rural landscape and provide communities a sense of history, cultural identity and connection to the region’s early settlement. The County has already adopted land use regulatory measures in recent years to maintain the region’s farmland and to work with rural communities on their long-term planning and development. Beyond these important steps, the region should consider additional initiatives and actions that would enhance the long-term viability of farming and agriculture-related businesses. For instance, supporting efforts to promote sustainable food systems that can help sustain local farming and provide and distribute fresh foods to areas of the region that are not serviced adequately. Such efforts not only strengthen the local agricultural economy and preserve farmland but will also promote healthy communities.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Collaborative Vision: Create an agriculture sector development task force and plan

A task force should be created with a collaborative effort between the region’s farm-related organizations and economic development entities to research and understand sector trends and the opportunities for strengthening the County’s agriculture industry. An agricultural sector action plan could then be developed focusing on issues such as farm ownership succession planning, access to financing for farm expansion, new product development, and collective marketing initiatives, among others. The task force could also monitor new developments and trends in this important economic sector and incorporate findings in future business development and marketing efforts.

Principal Implementation Party: County.

Vital Partners: Illinois Department of Agriculture, University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, Sangamon County Farm Bureau, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



Resource Preservation and Capacity Building: Document the economic benefits of agriculture within the region

Promoting broader public awareness and understanding of the economic importance of the farming and agriculture industries should be a key priority going forward. One way to increase awareness is to research the economic profile of the region's farming sector and document specific indicators such as the average size of farms, the number of agriculture-related business, employment impact of farming, total agriculture industry output within the region and estimated market value of agricultural products sold, among other indicators to be determined and studied. Once the research and documentation is complete, an executive summary and final report can be prepared and distributed. The indicators and executive summary could be updated on a regular basis. The Sangamon County Farm Bureau, the Illinois Department of Agriculture and other non-profit groups such as the American Farmland Trust could be potential partners in this initiative.

Principal Implementation Parties: County, Sangamon County Farm Bureau.

Vital Partners: Illinois Department of Agriculture, University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.

Intentional Growth: Develop and promote a regional agritourism sector

The University of Illinois Extension Service and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Division of Tourism have worked closely in recent years to promote agritourism by providing marketing support and business development assistance to agritourism entrepreneurs. Collaborative efforts within the region should be undertaken to develop a technical support network for encouraging new agritourism businesses - a network that can help direct existing farm owners and prospective entrepreneurs receive the necessary assistance to establish their tourism enterprises. As part of those efforts, a regional agritourism marketing strategy should also be developed and integrated with other tourism marketing initiatives and the local and regional levels.

Principal Implementation Parties: Sangamon County Farm Bureau, GSCC and other local chambers.

Vital Partners: University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, Illinois Department of Tourism, County, SCVB, municipalities, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



Intentional Growth and Collaborative Vision: Encourage and support regional and local community-initiated food systems

A report released by the Springfield Area Local Food Task Force in 2010 estimates that \$633 million of farm income leaves the region, and if regional consumers purchased just 15 percent of the food they need locally, it would produce \$100 million in new income.¹ Community-initiated efforts to develop local food systems have been gaining momentum throughout the country as an effective means for enhancing access locally grown foods and promoting healthy communities. Such systems could also support a growing base of family farms and community gardens, as well as facilitate the development of other food and agricultural related businesses that create jobs and re-circulate capital within the region. While the Task Force report provides a number of recommendations to address obstacles to fully developing local food systems, it also offers several key planning-related strategies, including the incorporation of local food systems into local comprehensive and economic development plans.² One other key recommendation is the establishment of a local food system council that can bring together various stakeholders in coordinating local food system development efforts.

Principal Implementation Party: Springfield Area Local Food Task Force.

Vital Partners: County, Sangamon County Farm Bureau, University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, municipalities, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, colleges and universities, local school districts.

Capacity Building: Establish a Sangamon County agriculture innovation center

Key stakeholders in the agriculture sector should collaborate on establishing an agricultural innovation center that can spearhead regional marketing efforts and research new product development for existing farmers and farming entrepreneurs. The Center could become part of a larger technology innovation effort for other industry sectors in the region involving other economic development groups, universities, municipalities, and non-profit groups.

Principal Implementation Parties: University of Illinois Extension Services, Sangamon County Farm Bureau.

Vital Partners: Other local colleges and universities, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, private sector stakeholders and investors.

¹ *Building Wealth in Our Health, Community and Economy: Developing a Local Food System in the Springfield Area.* Springfield Area Local Food Task Force, October 2010, page 3

² IBID, page 13.



Capacity Building: Build upon and publicize existing agricultural conservation easement program

Many states and counties across the country have enacted agricultural conservation easement programs to help preserve farmland from conversion or development. The Sangamon County Conservancy Trust provides a local example of this type of activity. Conservation easements may be sold or donated by a farmland owner to Sangamon County, to a local government or to a local land trust. Donating or selling the easement can permanently protect farmland from being lost to future development, as well as provide several benefits to the land owner, including receiving some cash or equity for retirement purposes or to expand farming operations, and as an estate planning tool to pass the farmstead to other family members. Expanding upon and promoting the activities of the Conservancy Trust will assist in preservation of the important resource of farmland in Sangamon County.

Principal Implementation Party: Sangamon County Conservancy Trust.

Vital Partners: Sangamon County, SSCRPC, municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.

Collaborative Vision: Create a Sangamon County agriculture brand awareness program

Sangamon County is known for having some of the most fertile and productive farmland in Illinois. A branding campaign that promotes the region's quality farm products as "Illinois' Best" would help to market the County's agricultural industry locally and statewide. A branding campaign may encourage better access to high value markets, including grocers and restaurants. The campaign would also promote the economic value of the industry within the larger region. The awareness program could be funded through cooperative efforts between the agriculture industry and economic development groups.

Principal Implementation Parties: Sangamon County Farm Bureau, GSCC and other local chambers.

Vital Partners: University of Illinois Extension Services, local farmers and agricultural businesses, economic development organizations, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



STRATEGY #2:

Ensure the long-term vitality of the region’s agricultural industry, associated ancillary uses of rural land, small towns, and villages by facilitating local economic development and addressing important quality of life issues.

Facilitating economic development in the rural small towns of Sangamon County should be a regional priority as they offer housing choices for those who want to live in a rural setting and serve as important service and commercial centers - financial, legal, medical, recreational, and retail uses are usually all located within their downtown districts or nearby neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Capacity Building: Offer technical assistance to small towns and villages seeking to revitalize their downtown districts and neighborhoods

Small communities and villages within the region may need technical assistance and support in revitalizing their downtown districts and adjacent neighborhoods. Some communities may have already received planning advice in these matters in their local comprehensive plans but may need additional guidance on specific implementation actions such as streetscape and infrastructure enhancements, building improvements and façade rehabilitation, and organizational development - helping local community stakeholders organize effectively to sustain their revitalization initiatives for the long-term. The SSCRPC could work in collaboration with other agency and entities, such as the Extension Service and Small Business Development Center, to provide additional assistance in areas of business development and entrepreneurship.

Principal Implementation Party: SSCRPC.

Vital Partners: Municipalities, Illinois Mainstreet program, other governmental agencies, private sector stakeholders and investors.



Intentional Growth: Conduct local community-initiated development and investment initiatives to bring needed commercial services to rural communities within the region

Some rural areas and small communities may not support certain retail stores and commercial services due to marketplace constraints or lack of private sector investment, often requiring local residents to travel to other communities to purchase needed goods and services. Community-owned businesses, where the start-up capital is generated by local investors, and operations managed by the investors themselves, have become important alternatives to bringing new businesses to struggling downtown and neighborhood commercial districts. Typical formats for community-owned businesses include food and grocery cooperatives, and restaurants and dry goods stores. Where there is market opportunity and need in local communities for certain commercial services, convening local exploratory groups and potential investors, and providing research and technical assistance could be services provided to local communities seeking direction on how to establish a community-owned commercial enterprise.

Principal Implementation Party: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: University of Illinois Extension Service, Small Business Development Center, SSCRPC, other governmental agencies, private sector stakeholders and investors.



AMERICA'S CUP OF COFFEE CORNER, PLEASANT PLAINS



Capacity Building: Pursue grant and funding opportunities to facilitate community development in the region's rural areas and small towns

Securing funding sources for rural community development efforts is always a significant challenge, made even more so in today's era of decreasing funding levels for governmental grant programs. However, grant funding opportunities that support a number of rural community revitalization efforts should be pursued from both public and private sector sources, including local corporations and philanthropic foundations and non-profit organizations. Rural development grant programs from the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development and Transportation, as well as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency can fund various initiatives in affordable housing, economic development, infrastructure, public utility and telecommunication enhancements, and rural transit services. Grant programs from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity can help support the establishment of revolving loan fund programs for business and real estate development activities. The SSCRPC or another appropriate entity could provide staff support for local grant writing efforts or identify other grant writing professionals or entities that can prepare applications for specific local community projects. A Citizens' Efficiency Commission document outlining needs for this type of activity is also available at www.sscrpc.com.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, private sector professionals.



DOWNTOWN LOAMI



Capacity Building: Develop a broader organizational structure to address quality of life

Access to quality health care, locally-produced food, education and job training, and mass transit are important quality of life issues for residents in the region's rural areas. In recent years, the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS)'s Office of Survey Research and several Springfield-based foundations have undertaken several efforts in surveying and measuring local resident attitudes and opinions regarding the level and quality of services provided within the region. While such survey activities have contributed a level of understanding to the range of quality of life issues that may exist in the region, there is no comprehensive approach or organizational structure in place to effectively address them. A new, regional organizational framework is needed to secure and direct resources and coordinate efforts collaboratively with other entities and agencies to provide services and find solutions to unique issues facing the region's rural communities.

This framework could constitute a new organizational entity charged with providing a certain set of services such as telemedicine or child care services. Alternatively, an existing organization could expand its mission and scope of work to provide services on a more regional basis, perhaps partnering with other entities to deliver them. Partnership opportunities may already exist for issues related local food systems or expanding broadband internet services. An assessment of organizational approaches should be undertaken by key regional stakeholder groups to determine the most effective and efficient organizational structure to address quality of life issues.

Principal Implementation Party: RLC.

Vital Partners: University of Illinois Extension Service, University of Illinois – Springfield, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, County, SSCRPC, other governmental agencies, municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organization, foundations, private sector stakeholders and investors, local residents.



STOREFRONT BUILDINGS, NEW BERLIN



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, SPRINGFIELD



ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM

“There is also a clear need to support small business development and entrepreneurial activity, revitalize traditional commercial districts throughout the region, and engage local colleges and universities in being the linkages between businesses and the training and research needed to ready the region’s workforce for jobs in growing and emerging industries.”



HOUSING REHABILITATION, ENOS PARK, SPRINGFIELD



NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, ENOS PARK, SPRINGFIELD

STRATEGIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Regional stakeholders and residents desire effective, consistent economic development efforts that diversify and strengthen the County's key industry sectors such as agriculture, education, tourism, and government and financial services. There is also a clear need to support small business development and entrepreneurial activity, revitalize traditional commercial districts throughout the region, and engage local colleges and universities in being the linkages between businesses and the training and research needed to ready the region's workforce for jobs in growing and emerging industries, especially technology-based enterprises.

Finding ways to broaden access to higher learning and training opportunities within the region will also be critical to providing future job opportunities and in enhancing the quality of life for current and future residents. While economic development is generally led by local governments and other private sector organizations, more effective regional coordination and support for economic development initiatives are needed. Regional coordination can also ensure that economic development is balanced and sustainable with other key regional planning goals and objectives expressed within this Regional Plan.



STRATEGY #1:

Promote regional growth by improving quality of life, strengthening key industry sectors, and diversifying economic opportunity.

Regional economic development efforts should focus on expanding the base of employers and industries, especially in sectors that are the region's strengths over the near term: medical and healthcare, government, tourism and agriculture. In order to strengthen these industries, special attention should be given to factors that facilitate and encourage growth and development. Although many specific tools exist that can be explored in a future, detailed regional economic development plan, foundational to economic development efforts is an awareness that the "building blocks" of a community influence the likelihood of business growth and expansion by enhancing productive capacity of the resources and capital base in the region.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Capacity Building: Emphasize quality of life initiatives in planning and economic development activities

In addition to the components described elsewhere in this plan, including open spaces, transportation connectivity, residential housing, and other factors that make communities vibrant and livable, specific consideration should be given to actions that improve quality of life in the region. Maintaining strong primary and secondary education systems, as well as workforce training programs, play an important role in investing in the regional workforce, as well as retaining and attracting businesses and their employees. Parties responsible for economic development activities in Sangamon County's future should continue to prioritize investment in these areas.

Principal Implementation Parties: RLC, GSCC and other local chambers, local economic development entities, SSCRPC.

Vital Partners: Local school districts, municipalities, local colleges and universities, private sector stakeholders and investors.



Intentional Growth: Foster development-readiness through targeted infrastructure and organizational improvements

Economic development efforts for the region will be successful only if the support systems of organizational and built infrastructure on which they rely are healthy. Local officials' decisions to invest in infrastructure should consider and prioritize economic development needs, specifically those that assist in growing targeted key current industries or leverage diversified private sector investment in the region. Built infrastructure including roadways and sewer systems should be maintained and improved proactively in order to ensure continued capacity to support critical industries. The organizational "infrastructure" key to economic development includes governmental bodies involved in development planning and review, as well as associations such as local chambers of commerce. Functional, proactive, and navigable organizations are key to encouraging growth and development.

Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: GSCC and other local chambers, other governmental bodies engaged in development process, economic development entities.

Collaborative Vision and Capacity Building: Adjust and fine-tune economic development marketing efforts

The strengths of Sangamon County include more than just governmental services, tourism and health care, but also its agricultural industry, small towns, and open spaces and scenic beauty. While working to attract business in key industries and to diversify into other areas, marketing efforts between economic development and tourism groups should be reviewed and adjusted to capture the region's additional brand identities.

Principal Implementation Parties: GSCC and other local chambers, local economic development organizations and agencies.

Vital Partners: Advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, municipalities.



THE STATE HOUSE INN, SPRINGFIELD



PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, SPRINGFIELD



STRATEGY #2:

Coordinate economic development efforts among local communities on a regional basis.

The economic development activities discussed above as well as others will be of greatest benefit if considered and pursued within a broad regional framework. Communities' economic strengths and weaknesses have influence beyond their individual jurisdictional boundaries. Economic development should be defined as achieving broad-based prosperity by generating opportunity and stimulating business activity in the neighborhoods and traditional commercial districts throughout the region.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Collaborative Vision: Prepare a regional economic development plan

Economic development efforts for the region should be guided by a regional economic development plan that can identify specific opportunities to improve the regional economy. The plan should have a special emphasis on addressing economic development issues in the region's small communities, especially in regards to small business and workforce development, identifying critical infrastructure improvements that support economic development efforts, key indicators and performance benchmarks, organizational capacity needs and potential collaborative or partnership opportunities among existing entities and agencies. The plan should also address regional tourism development, the agricultural industry, and transportation and infrastructure enhancements needed to contribute to improving the economic vitality of the County's communities and rural areas. Key regional stakeholder groups should be convened to develop the plan and to assist in its implementation.

Principal Implementation Parties: RLC, GSCC and other local chambers, municipal economic development entities.

Vital Partners: County, municipalities, local colleges and universities, DCEO, IDOT, Central Illinois Economic Development Authority (CIEDA), advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, foundations, private sector stakeholders and investors.

Capacity Building: Develop a set of performance-based incentives and financial assistance programs for regional economic development initiatives.

Incentives such as tax increment financing (TIF), enterprise zone tax exemptions and abatements, and Community Development Block Grant-funded incentives, have been extensively used by the City of Springfield and other municipalities to encourage business



and industry expansions and retail development. New incentives, however, are needed to facilitate other forms of economic development throughout the region, including the revitalization of downtown and neighborhood commercial districts, agricultural and farming-related enterprises, and small business development. Such incentives should be focused on strengthening the region’s existing economic assets and supporting the creation of small businesses and entrepreneurship, which is a significant source of new job creation. Other incentives can focus on business expansion and building new industry start-ups as long as such incentives are targeted to key industries only and are performance-based; meaning that specific performance criteria, such as the number of jobs created and minimum wage levels paid, must be met over a period of time by the industry to avoid incentive recapture. Determining what new economic incentives are needed should be undertaken during the development of the regional economic development plan.

Principal Implementation Parties: RLC, GSCC and other local chambers, municipal economic development organizations and agencies.

Vital Partners: County, municipalities, local colleges and universities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, foundations, private sector stakeholders and investors.

Capacity Building: Add information and enhance access to information on available sites and buildings

The Quantum Growth Partnership of Springfield and Sangamon County maintains an online database of available development sites and buildings within the region. The database could be expanded in scope to include buildings and developable sites located within the downtowns and commercial districts of the smaller towns and villages within the region. Additionally, access to database for new data input could be increased to allow other agencies and governments to add information on available buildings and development sites.

Principal Implementation Party: GSCC.

Vital Partners: County, economic development entities, municipalities, SSCRPC, local colleges and universities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.

Capacity Building: Advocate for needed legislation at the local, regional, statewide and federal levels that support and facilitate important economic development initiatives

Both governmental and non-governmental economic development entities should work together to advocate for important legislative changes that are of mutual interests and benefits to the region. Such legislation may relate to issues that support economic development, including transportation, infrastructure, workforce development, housing and the environment.

Principal Party: Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: GSCC, economic development entities.



STRATEGY #3:

Build local entities' capacity to conduct local economic development, expanding upon the resources of existing local agencies and organizations to attract new businesses and address economic development needs.

Numerous local entities in recent years have considered the possibility of potential partnerships with local universities in building certain industry sectors, most notably in the Mid-Illinois Medical District, where medical research work could be expanded with the presence of research faculty at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. However, there may be opportunities where other colleges and universities could partner with local agencies in developing entrepreneurial and multidisciplinary solutions to local economic development issues with the involvement of faculty, students and industry leaders.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Capacity Building: Conduct business start-up and entrepreneurial development initiatives in collaboration with existing entities

A business incubator in the region would facilitate the start-up of new service businesses. The incubator could be developed in partnership with the University of Illinois at Springfield, other local colleges, the GSCC, and the Small Business Development Center at Lincoln Land Community College. The 2011 Economic Development Strategy Report for the City of Springfield recommends the establishment of such an incubator. The entities described above could bring the resources and knowledge of its faculty to the initiative in business administration, computer science, and accountancy and information technology. A "student studio" or "garage" could also be established alongside the incubator as way to teach and involve college students in creating their local entrepreneurship endeavors.

Principal Implementation Party: Small Business Development Center.

Vital Partners: Local universities and colleges, GSCC, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



Capacity Building: Leverage the resources of local universities and colleges to support local economic development and revitalization efforts in local communities, commercial districts and neighborhoods

The location of University of Illinois at Springfield, Lincoln Land Community College, Benedictine University and Robert Morris University within Sangamon County provides opportunities for offering resources to small towns, local units of government, schools and non-profit organizations when working on rural and regional economic development issues. Potentially the four institutions could work together, and in collaboration with the GSCC, RLC or another organization, to establish a regional center for economic development; a center that could also work hand-in-hand with an agricultural innovation center to strengthen and enhance the region's overall economic position. Major elements and services of such a Center include providing assistance in brokering or leveraging resources for specific projects, applied research and information, and community planning and development. The center could also organize workshops and symposia as an ongoing effort to educate and inform regional stakeholders on critical regional economic issues. At the same time, the center would work to involve faculty and students in the challenges and issues facing local communities, providing students with rich opportunities for applied learning. Examples of such opportunities include undertaking a county-wide historic resources survey or working with a downtown committee to revitalize Main Street storefronts.

Principal Implementation Parties: RLC, GSCC, local universities and colleges.

Vital Partners: County, municipalities.

Capacity Building: Establish a regional venture capital fund

Explore the creation of a regional venture capital fund to help investors and entrepreneurs create and grow profitable businesses throughout the region. The fund could be managed by the new center for economic development mentioned above, by the GSCC, the County, or by a private firm or the local banking community, but the exploration should be conducted by a regional task force composed of local governments, civic organizations, foundations, and the private sector. The fund should be targeted toward clusters of major industry sectors, including agriculture. A range of private and public revenue sources should contribute to such a fund, and philanthropic organizations could play a significant role.

Principal Implementation Party: GSCC.

Vital Partners: foundations, private sector, County, municipalities, local universities and colleges, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations.



Resource Preservation: Work collaboratively with the universities and colleges to target key local industries and promote sustainable industry

Achieving an environmentally and financially sustainable regional economy also implies a need to strive to produce innovative settings that fosters and attracts green businesses: businesses that stand to benefit from incorporating sustainability and sustainable design practices. Improving financial and environmental sustainability of key community industries and expending into innovative areas increases the likelihood of long-term community viability. As with economic development, collaborative efforts within the region's educational sector to promote sustainable industries can help to diversify the region's economic base. As an example, Northwestern University's Tiny House Project allows students to learn how to construct energy efficient homes in partnership with a new private sector company, which are then sold in the private market. It is the goal of the project to train students in sustainability while fostering new green industries. A model such as this could be replicated with local colleges and universities in Sangamon County.

Principal Implementation Party: RLC.

Vital Partners: Sangamon County, local universities and colleges, GSCC and other local chambers, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, foundations, private sector.



LAKE SPRINGFIELD WITH CITY WATER, LIGHT & POWER IN THE BACKGROUND, SPRINGFIELD



AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE, WILLIAMSVILLE



TOWN HALL BUILDING, ROCHESTER



PLEASANT PLAINS HIGH SCHOOL, PLEASANT PLAINS

“In an era of limited and declining resources, achieving efficiencies and increased effectiveness in local government operations and the delivery of services has become an important and significant priority.”



CITY HALL COMPLEX,
SPRINGFIELD



OLD STATE CAPITAL BUILDING STATE HISTORIC SITE, SPRINGFIELD

STRATEGIES FOR GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AND COOPERATION

Consistent, coordinated efforts in achieving government operating efficiencies and cooperation will help the region and its municipalities align more closely with the County's economic realities, but also set the stage for local government innovation and long-term, sustainable growth. In an era of limited resources, achieving efficiencies and increased effectiveness in local government operations and the delivery of services has become an important and significant priority. Identifying ways to foster collaboration and cooperation among local governments to reduce costs to operations and service delivery, especially in regards to police and fire protection and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure, should always be explored and implemented.

Collaborative efforts could also be extended to economic development, energy efficiency systems, placemaking and beautification activities, as well as the sharing of information and best practices in municipal finance, and planning and community development. Performance indicators that determine the success of cooperative efforts and improvements to local government service delivery should also be developed to help guide and refine local efforts and efficiencies. The Citizens' Efficiency Commission for Sangamon County has recently played a key role in fostering local community collaboration by convening local governments to discuss issues such as electric aggregation, police and fire services and the sharing of equipment and resources (see www.sscrpc.com). Although the Commission has reached the end of its original term of action, a new forum — the Regional Leadership Council — has been established to pursue collaborative planning and economic development initiatives.



STRATEGY #1:

Work together as a region to ensure coordinated regional planning, especially for those issues that transcend jurisdictional boundaries.

In recent years, the SSCRPC has engaged the elected officials of various local governments and townships throughout the region to discuss ways in which operating efficiencies can be achieved through collaborative actions and efforts. In addition, there are opportunities for collaborative efforts to implement various elements of this Regional Plan.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Collaborative Vision: Identify linkages and opportunities for regional collaboration around potential funding opportunities.

A new Regional Leadership Council should work collaboratively to identify opportunities for future state, federal, and private funding for planning, transportation, infrastructure and economic development initiatives that support and achieve important regional priorities.

Principal Implementation Party: RLC.

Vital Partners: Sangamon County, SSCRPC, municipalities, other governmental agencies.

Collaborative Vision: Analyze the efficiency and fiscal benefits of sharing or consolidating local services

Analysis should be undertaken to formally understanding the benefits of working cooperatively to provide some local services. A newly established RLC could study and continue existing local efforts and make specific recommendations based on regional consensus. In order to strengthen local government capacity in the region, all partners involved should work to implement efficiency improvements where needed and provide an ongoing forum in which efficiency issues can be discussed, solutions generated, and actions taken among the communities of Sangamon County. A work-group or collaborative forum may prove to be a suitable method for promoting intergovernmental collaboration, and should remain a principal means of achieving efficiency goals going forward. A history of previous efforts to collaborate on service provision was compiled by the Citizens' Efficiency Commission for Sangamon County, and is available at www.sscrpc.com.

Principal Implementation Party: RLC.

Vital Partners: County, SSCRPC, municipalities, other governmental agencies.



Capacity Building: Continue efforts to establish and empower a permanent regional caucus or conference of mayors and elected officials to facilitate discussions and actions on issues of both local and regional importance for government advancement and on-going improvement

Efforts to formally establish a Regional Leadership Council (RLC) should be continued. During this regional planning process, an informal caucus of mayors and the County leaders has been meeting both with the SSCRPC and the Citizens' Efficiency Commission, and the Citizens' Efficiency Commission has been assisting in the formalization of this group. The RLC is seen as a logical transition to a more formal and permanent entity that would act as a regional community caucus or council of local governments might, providing ongoing leadership in the implementation of components of this regional plan as well as on critical issues facing the region, including transportation, growth and development, quality of life, and agriculture and economic development. This group should be responsible for assisting and leading local governments throughout the region in building capacity and working toward better, more innovative administrative practices. The group could serve as an effective forum for building personal relationships among the region's mayors and public officials and for assisting local governments in support each other on issues ranging from funding municipal services to advocating new state legislation. The RLC could also foster communication and coordination among the region's communities to promote a positive image of the Sangamon County as a place to live, work, and play; cultivate and maintain a strong and engaged civic culture; and strengthen vital partnerships with the business community to ensure economic prosperity. This entity could also serve as a hub for other working groups of local officials with more specific areas of focus and expertise. It is particularly important to give consideration to how such an entity might be funded and supported on a regional basis, and staff assistance provided from an appropriately situated regional body such as the SSCRPC. This may prove important on a transitional or permanent basis.

Principal Implementation Parties: RLC, Municipalities, County.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, CEC.

Capacity Building: Provide planning and technical assistance in building the implementation capacity of local governments

Many governmental agencies in Sangamon County lack the capacity or culture to measure performance, manage for results, or inform decision-making through long-range planning. Comprehensive planning, organization strategic plans, and capital plans all play a role in building this capacity. Continuing to encourage these changes in local public sector thinking will have long-term results on the operational efficiency of local governments.

Principal Implementation Party: RLC.

Vital Partners: SSCRPC, local universities and colleges.



STRATEGY #2:

Build capacity of local organizations and partners to assist in plan implementation

Planning initiatives related to improving community aesthetics, conservation and open space, trail development, and downtown and neighborhood revitalization are ideal opportunities for involving local volunteers and private and non-profit sector organizations. Volunteers and volunteer organizations have played important roles in community development and revitalization throughout the years, often spearheading campaigns for capital improvements and the implementation of revitalization plans and projects. Organizations such as the Sangamon Conservancy Trust and Springfield Green, for instance, could become implementation partners for regional conservation and open space development efforts. Neighborhood associations and downtown revitalization organizations, likewise, could be partners for planning and facilitating streetscape enhancements and building improvements. Building the administrative and technical capacity of these organizations should be a key regional priority. It should also be a priority for the County and local government to find ways in which effective working partnerships could be forged with private sector and other volunteer-supported non-profit groups.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Capacity Building: Provide training and technical assistance in building the implementation capacity of local non-profit and advocacy groups

Local non-profit and other non-governmental groups have the potential for being key plan implementation partners and undertaking significant roles in promoting innovation in improving community livability, economic development, and downtown and neighborhood revitalization. Many such groups are mentioned in the strategies above as either being principle implementation parties or vital partners. These groups can often move more quickly than the public sector in response to critical community and economic development issues. Enhancing their capacity to do such things should be a critical priority; therefore, offering technical assistance and training in organizational development, fundraising, volunteer development, and strategic planning, would be essential in building local expertise and capacity. The center of economic development, as mentioned previously, could play an important role in leveraging faculty and other professional resources in providing technical assistance.

Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC, local universities and colleges.

Vital Partners: RLC, GSCC, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, foundations, private sector.



Collaborative Vision: Involve philanthropic organizations in regional and local planning activities

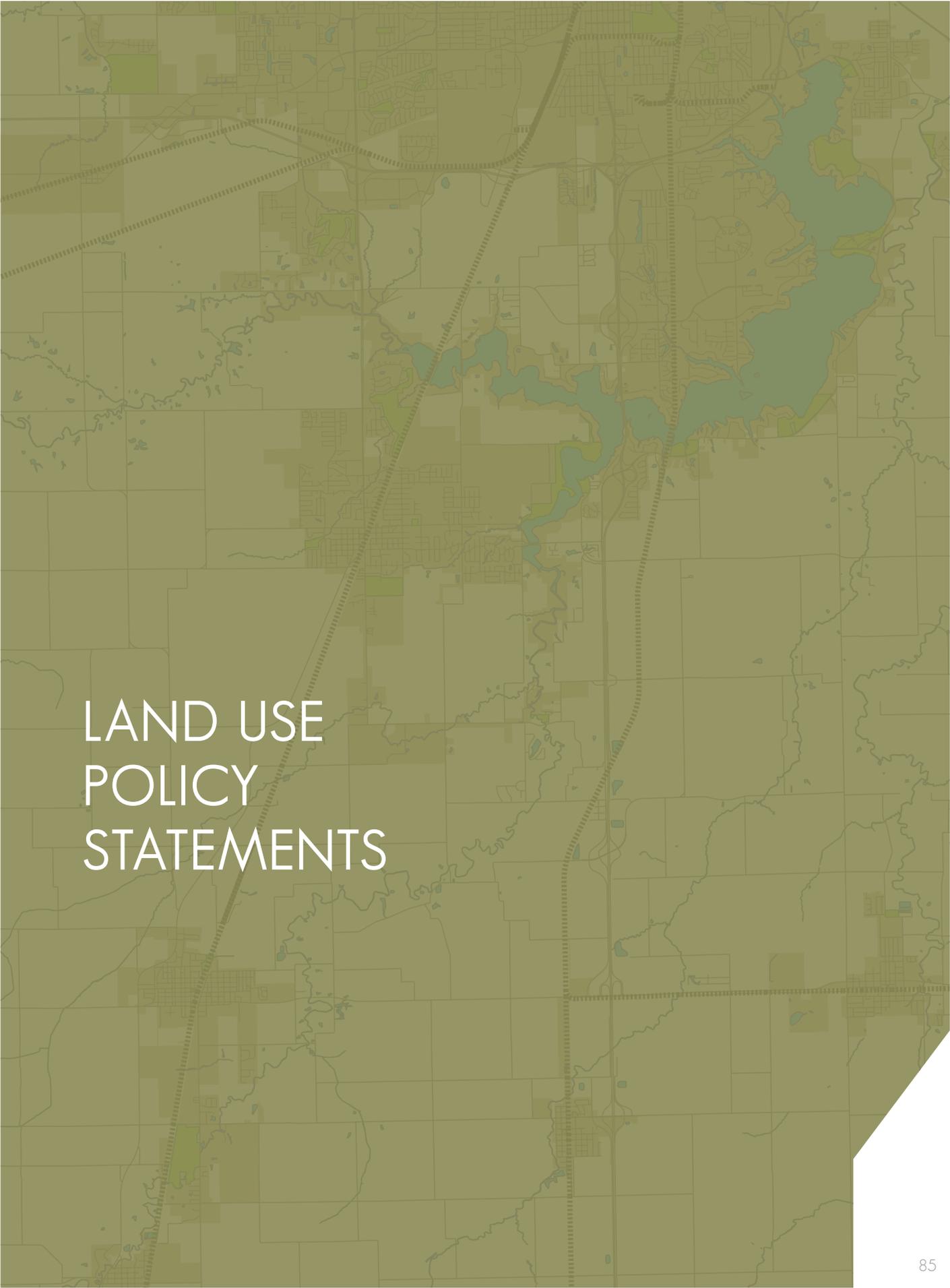
Local foundations and philanthropic organizations already provide funding for many different types of initiatives, including some that are central to this regional plan. These organizations can fund activities that are generally outside of the scope of the public sector, and have the ability to quickly redirect funding in response to new threats and opportunities. Partnerships between philanthropic organizations and the public sector can be quite effective and should be explored more thoroughly to accomplish critical elements of this plan, and to pair the flexibility of private funding with the institutional capacity of government. Partnership across sectors is also important for generating community buy-in for comprehensive planning and implementation activities.

Principal Implementation Party: SSCRPC.

Vital Partners: RLC, GSCC and other local chambers, local universities and colleges, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, foundations, private sector.



SANGAMON COUNTY BUILDING, SPRINGFIELD



LAND USE POLICY STATEMENTS

LAND USE POLICY STATEMENTS

As was noted earlier, this plan was intended to provide a vision of the region as a community of interests, working together through shared strategies and actions intended to create a vital cycle for long-term and sustainable growth and economic success. It was also seen as providing guidance to the various municipal units of government as they assessed their land use plans or considered their development. In this regard, the Plan was seen as being particularly relevant to land use in the unincorporated areas of the County and along the transportation corridors that tie the various municipalities together.

This being the case, and based upon the regional vision of a vital cycle outlined above, the SSCRPC identified several general policy principles related to future land use that can be distilled from the vision, strategies, and implementation actions established to guide the region's future. These land use principles are intended to tie identified planning goals and frameworks to geographically specific areas. In other words, they outline what the strategies and actions above might look like if tied to "the ground" and utilized in land use decision-making and development along the region's inter-connecting transportation corridors.

These land use policy principles may be presented as statements that assist in the final stage of the plan, the development of a regional land use map for the unincorporated areas. As described above, the Regional Plan was introduced both as an opportunity for development of a strategic framework for regional action, and also as a comprehensive plan to inform land use planning. By implementing the policy statements below, the unincorporated portions of the county as well as its embedded municipalities can work together to advance the regional vision through their approach to land use.



UNION STATION, CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU, SPRINGFIELD



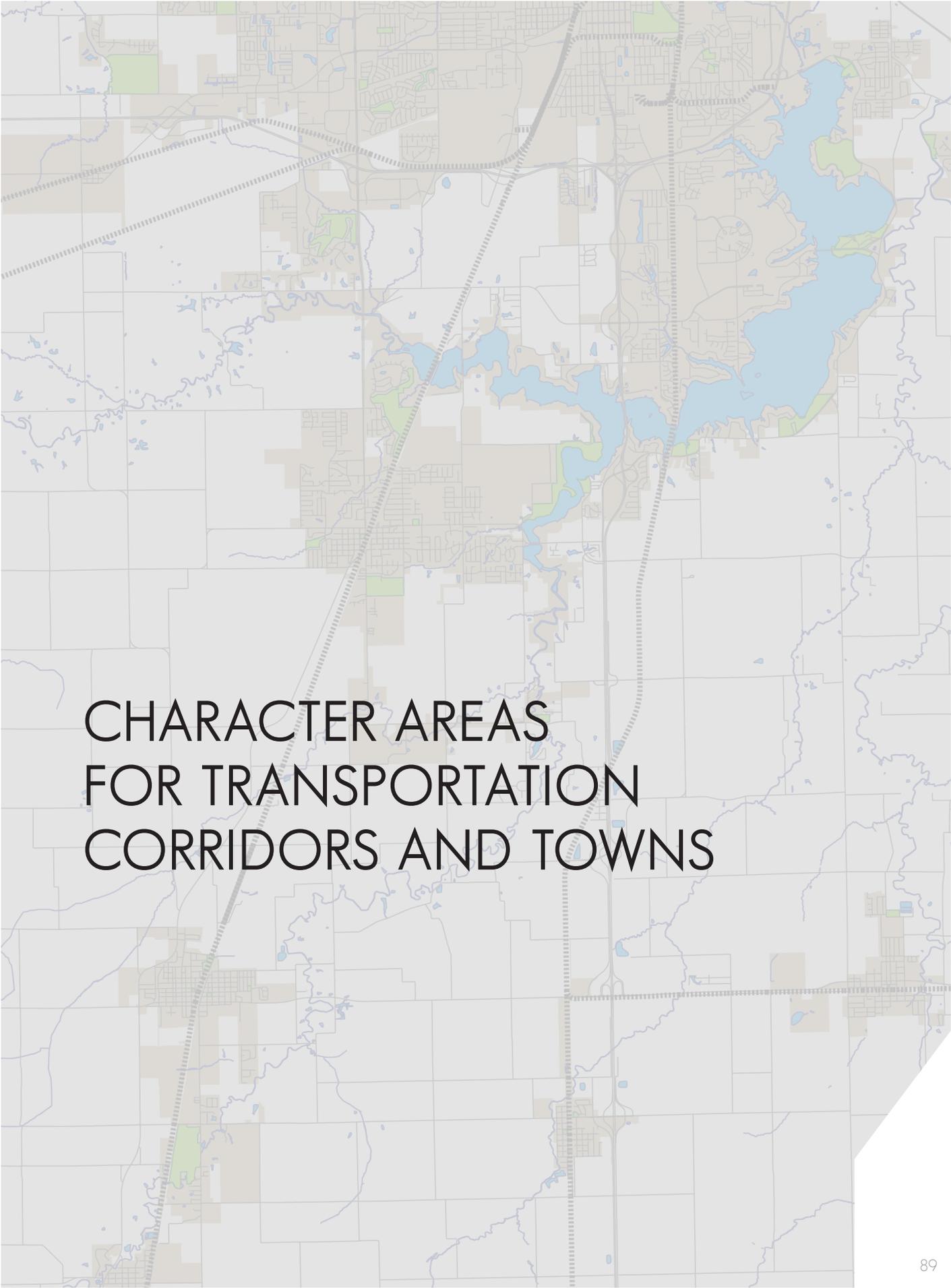
OLD TRAIN STATION, CHATAM



VETERANS MEMORIAL, CLEAR LAKE TOWNSHIP

The general policy statements are that in Sangamon County land should be used in such a way as to:

- Be consistent with existing planned and intended uses.
- Encourage residential, commercial, and industrial growth near already-developed areas in all communities within the region.
- Encourage and support contiguous development, the infill of previously developed areas that are no longer being efficiently and effectively used, and the redevelopment and reuse of vacant land and buildings.
- Target areas that minimize the infrastructure burdens placed on local governments.
- Target commercial development to areas surrounding key intersections, corridors, and community gateways.
- Preserve prime agricultural farm land while providing needed amenities in support of rural communities.
- Emphasize key gateways and corridors that encourage the flow of people and goods, and that protect travelers.
- Preserve existing open space, greenways and waterways, and encourage connectedness between natural areas.
- Protect areas and structures of historic and cultural significance.



CHARACTER AREAS FOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS AND TOWNS

CHARACTER AREAS FOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS AND TOWNS

The general principles described above are intended to guide land use on a broad regional basis. However, and as was also noted, there are points of interaction between the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county in which the various local jurisdictions that have land use authority and a vested interest in how and why land is used could potentially experience conflict. Accordingly, the SSCRPC again emphasizes the vital cycle as a mechanism to create a strong, strategic, and dynamic model for connections and collaboration, and has worked to demonstrate the way that the land use principles above can be implemented in pursuit of forging such cooperation.

One of the priority principles of the vital cycle is that of forging interjurisdictional and regional connections. To demonstrate the manner in which the land use policy statements above may ultimately lead to better connections, this section of the Regional Plan presents a long-term vision for a set of regional “Character Areas.”

The SSCRPC and its consultants have found through the planning process that the concept of linking uses to connecting corridors is particularly relevant to land use planning in the region. The Character Areas described below can be used by the County to ensure that new growth fits appropriately within its physical and land use context, and can be complementary, rather than in conflict, with the land use plans of municipal jurisdictions that also adopt the Character Area concept.

Moreover, these areas serve as a framework for guiding future growth and development, especially in the region’s cities, small towns, and along key transportation corridors. The use of “character areas” refers to the general physical design and development pattern and form within the region which we desire to maintain through future planning and regulation.

The identification of these areas and their descriptions is also important as they go beyond the land use principles by visually representing a preliminary application of many of the concepts described in the vital cycle of planning principles as they appear on the ground in Sangamon County. The planning principles of the vital cycle specifically identify that corridors and linkages are an important part of the regional framework. In keeping with this prioritization, the application of Character Areas to regional planning is intended to guide land use via corridor-like patterns appropriate to the overarching connection-creating principles outlined in this plan.

The Character Areas presented in this section are offered as illustrative concepts and not as specific land use regulations. The SSCRPC has crafted this plan with the understanding that working with County leaders it will ultimately develop a comprehensive land use plan for the unincorporated County, which will represent the final phase of this planning project.

To help the reader and those who will ultimately be involved in future land use planning, the concepts described below are provided through the lens of specific, illustrative corridors that help to define and describe certain characteristics of areas that should be give additional attention in land use planning and the subsequent development of any needed regulations. Below we describe the corridors that help identify the Sangamon region's Character Areas. However, these corridors neither represent the only areas where the Character Area concepts might apply, nor a comprehensive framework for all varieties of Character Area that may arise in the construction of the final comprehensive land use plan. They are, however, seen as a useful platform for that consideration, representing concepts that may also be adopted and put to use by the smaller municipalities throughout the county.



SINGLE FAMILY HOME, ROCHESTER



RIVERSIDE PARK, SPRINGFIELD



BUSINESS GATEWAY CORRIDOR: Examples from the Business 55 Corridor

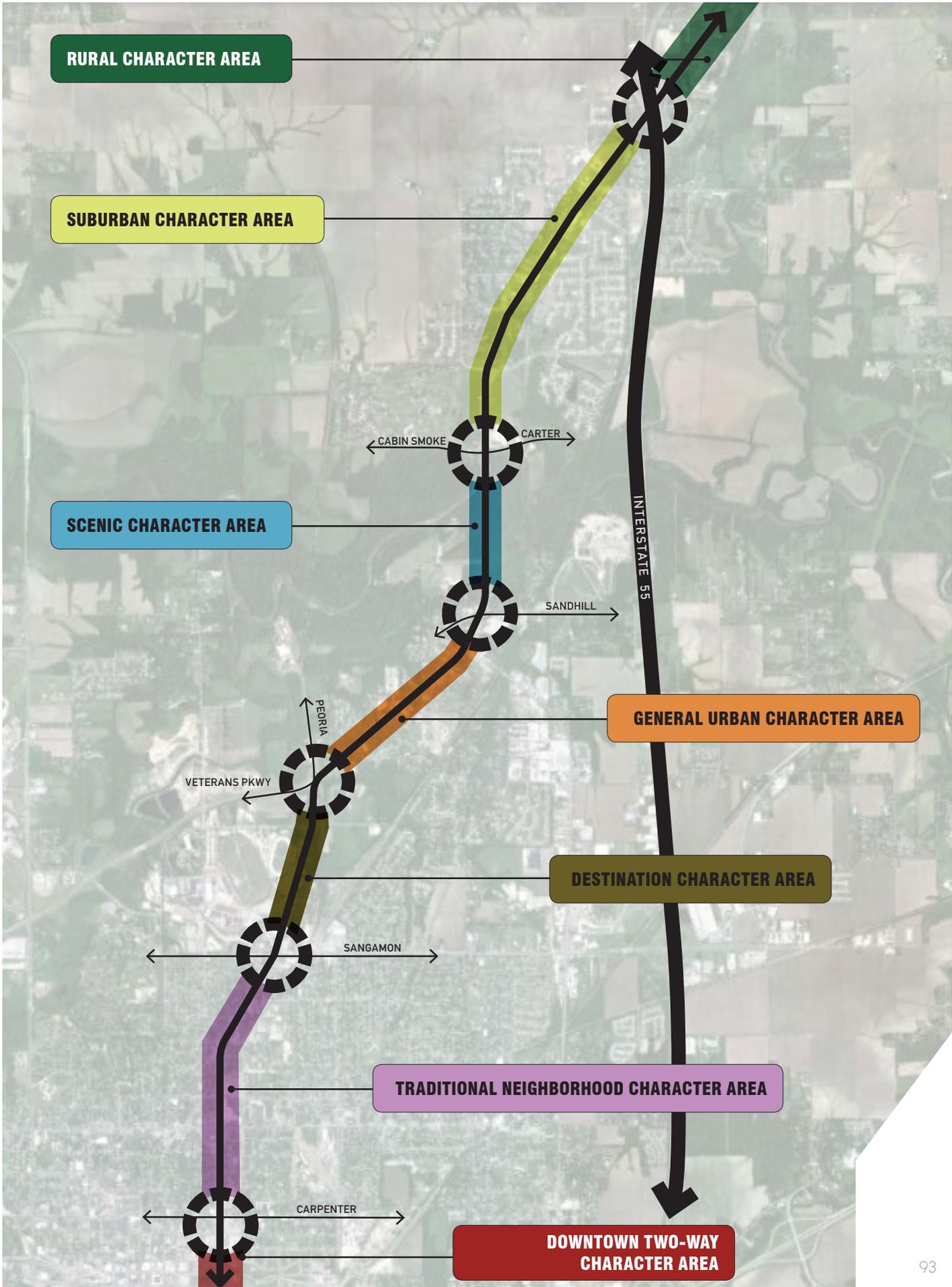


Business 55 is representative of what will be termed a Business Gateway Corridor that is useful in describing several Character Areas. It acts as an eight-mile transportation corridor into Sangamon County and downtown Springfield from the north. Business 55 is a significant corridor for the area, and was historically the gateway for U.S. Route 66 into Springfield. Its historical significance and importance to the regional transportation network make it a prime example for the corridor character area concepts described below. The following Character Areas refer to the general physical design, development pattern and form along the Business 55 corridor. Again, although these Character Areas are inspired by specific portions of the Business 55 corridor, they are not unique to this area and similar physical development patterns are observed throughout the County.

This gateway corridor exemplifies the following Character Areas to be considered in land use planning: Rural, Suburban, Scenic, General Urban, Destination, Traditional Neighborhood, and Downtown Two-Way.



GATEWAY SIGNAGE, SHERMAN BOULEVARD, SHERMAN





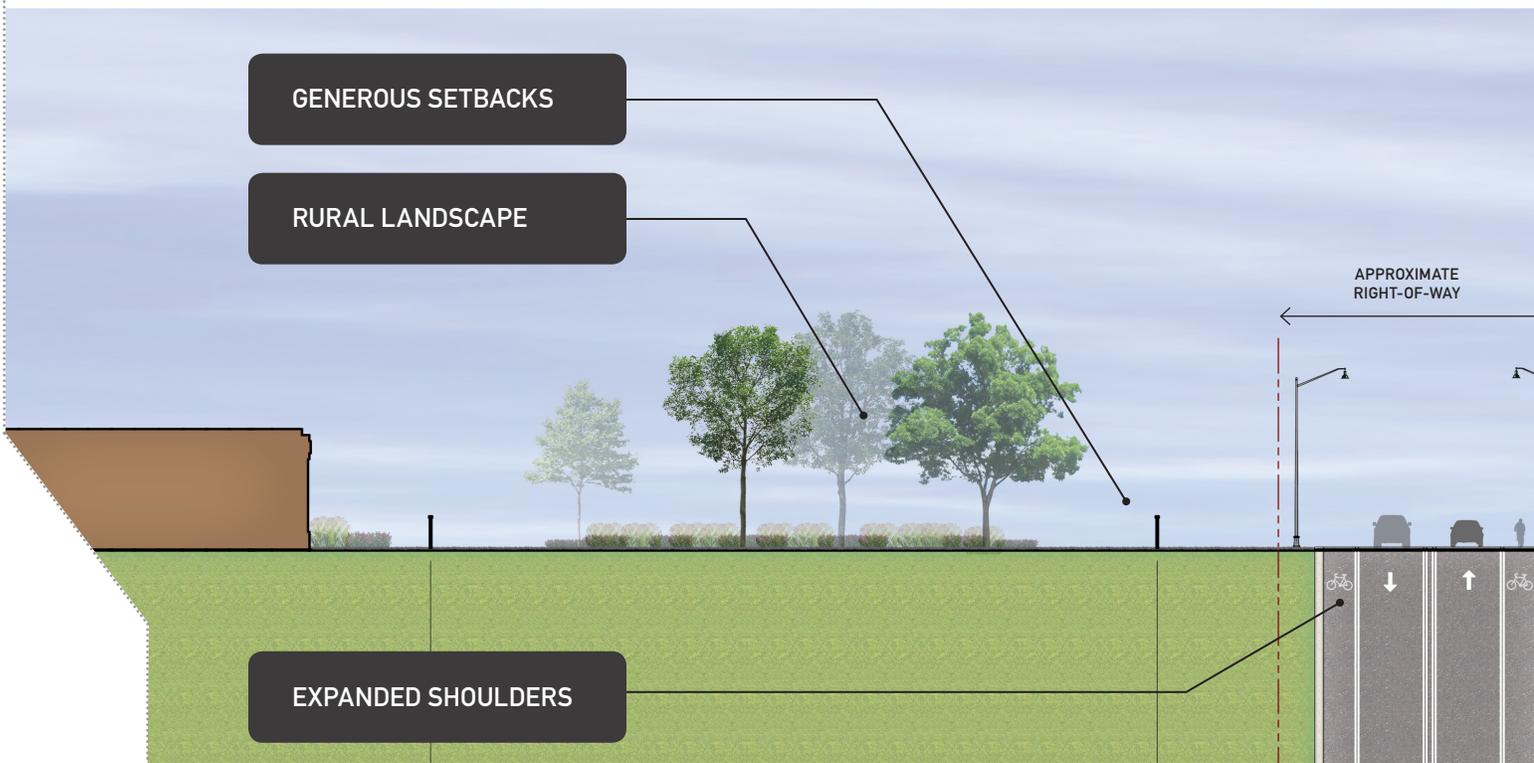
RURAL CHARACTER AREA:

Rural Character Areas are defined primarily by agricultural uses, farmsteads and other agriculture-related business uses.

The development pattern largely consists of large lots, minimal infrastructure services, such as sewer and water, and paved roads with deep setbacks and without curbs and gutters. Setback areas are largely agricultural with some lawn areas and other trees and landscaping features fronting a house, barns or other building. Roadways may be gravel or paved with shoulders. Some roadways may have enough space for bicycle lanes.

Typical development uses and forms in Rural Character Areas include:

- Agricultural uses that have productive capability, as best referenced by the Land Evaluation Site Assessment system (LESA), and that maintain the historic rural and agricultural development patterns.
- Rural agricultural commercial uses such as nurseries, elevators, supply stores, small groceries, and feed stores.
- Preserved historic features including barns and farmsteads.
- Single-family residential development that does not encroach upon viable and productive farmland, and other natural features.
- Conservation subdivision development that does not encroach upon viable and productive farmland and other natural features.





FARMLAND, SANGAMON COUNTY



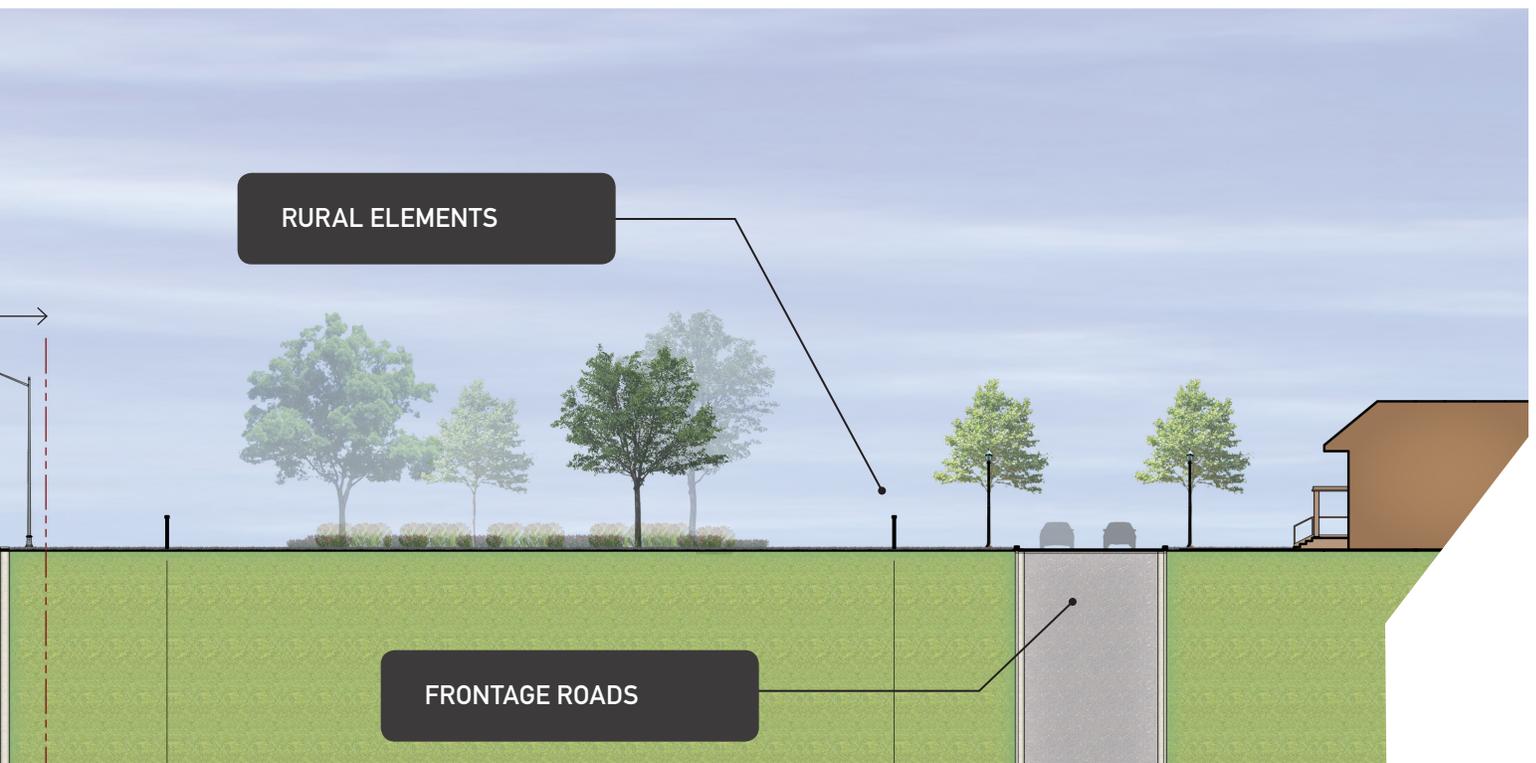
RURAL ROADWAY, SHERMAN



RURAL ROADWAY, SANGAMON COUNTY



RURAL BARN, PLEASANT PLAINS





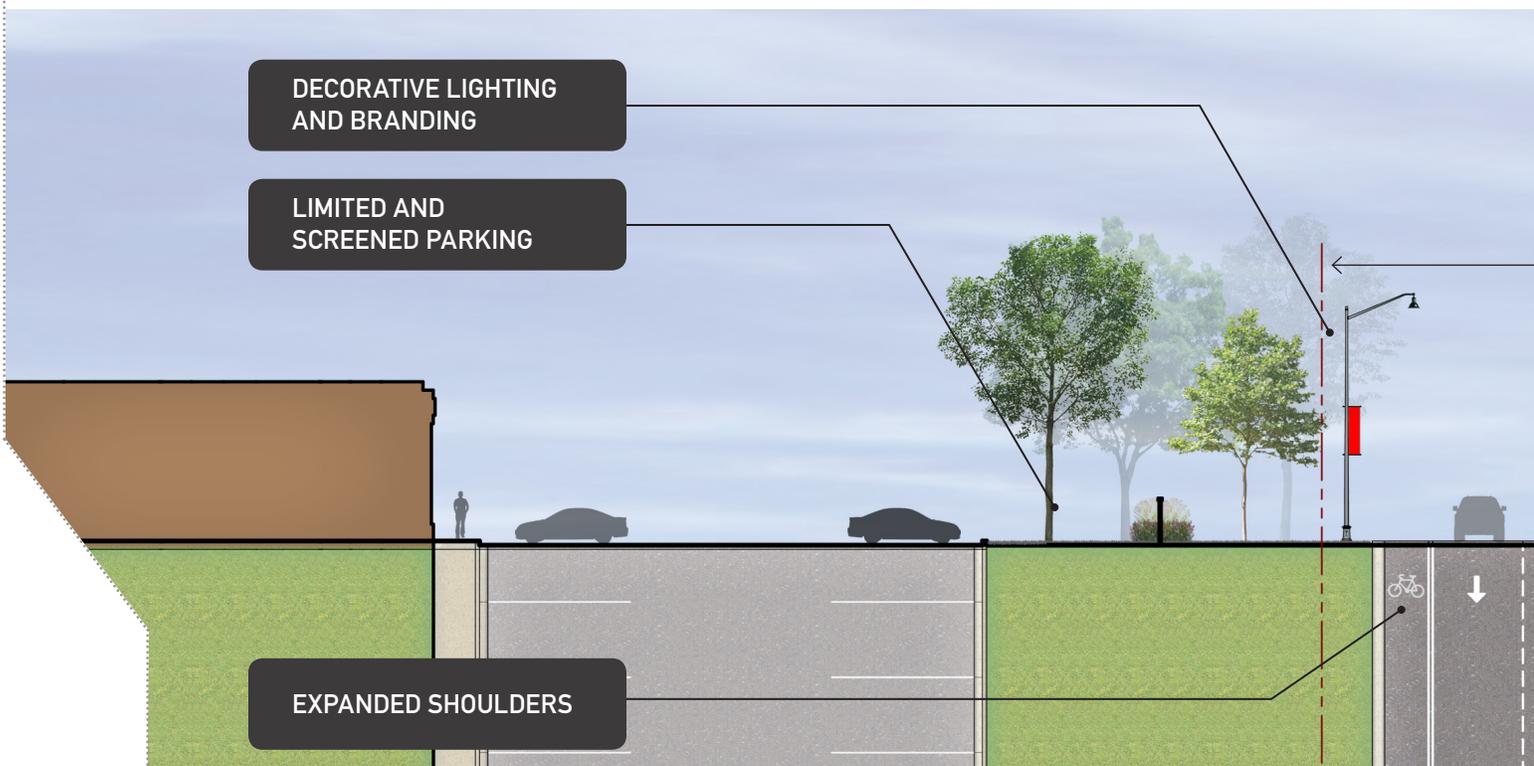
SUBURBAN CHARACTER AREA:

Suburban Character Areas are largely defined as a mix between commercial and residential uses on large lots that are accessed by the automobile. Suburban character areas are intended to be locations for future planned growth and development.

The development pattern largely consists of smaller lots serviced by existing infrastructure such as sewer and water, and paved roads with setbacks and curbs and gutters. Setback areas are largely lawn with trees, sidewalks and landscaping features fronting both commercial and residential development. Roadways are paved with shoulders, with some roadways having space for a bicycle lane.

Typical development uses and forms in Suburban Character Areas include:

- Commercial uses needing front and rear parking. Front parking is screened with appropriate landscaping and lighting.
- Retail and office uses in low-rise buildings.
- Single and low-rise multi-family residential development facing the roadway or a frontage road. Residential development should not encroach upon viable and productive farmland, other natural features or scenic areas .
- Conservation subdivision development that does not encroach upon viable and productive farmland, and other natural features and scenic areas.
- Roadway width that accommodates at least one bicycle lane.
- Quality gateway elements near suburban residential or commercial districts.
- Mixed-use developments that are low rise in character.





COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SHERMAN



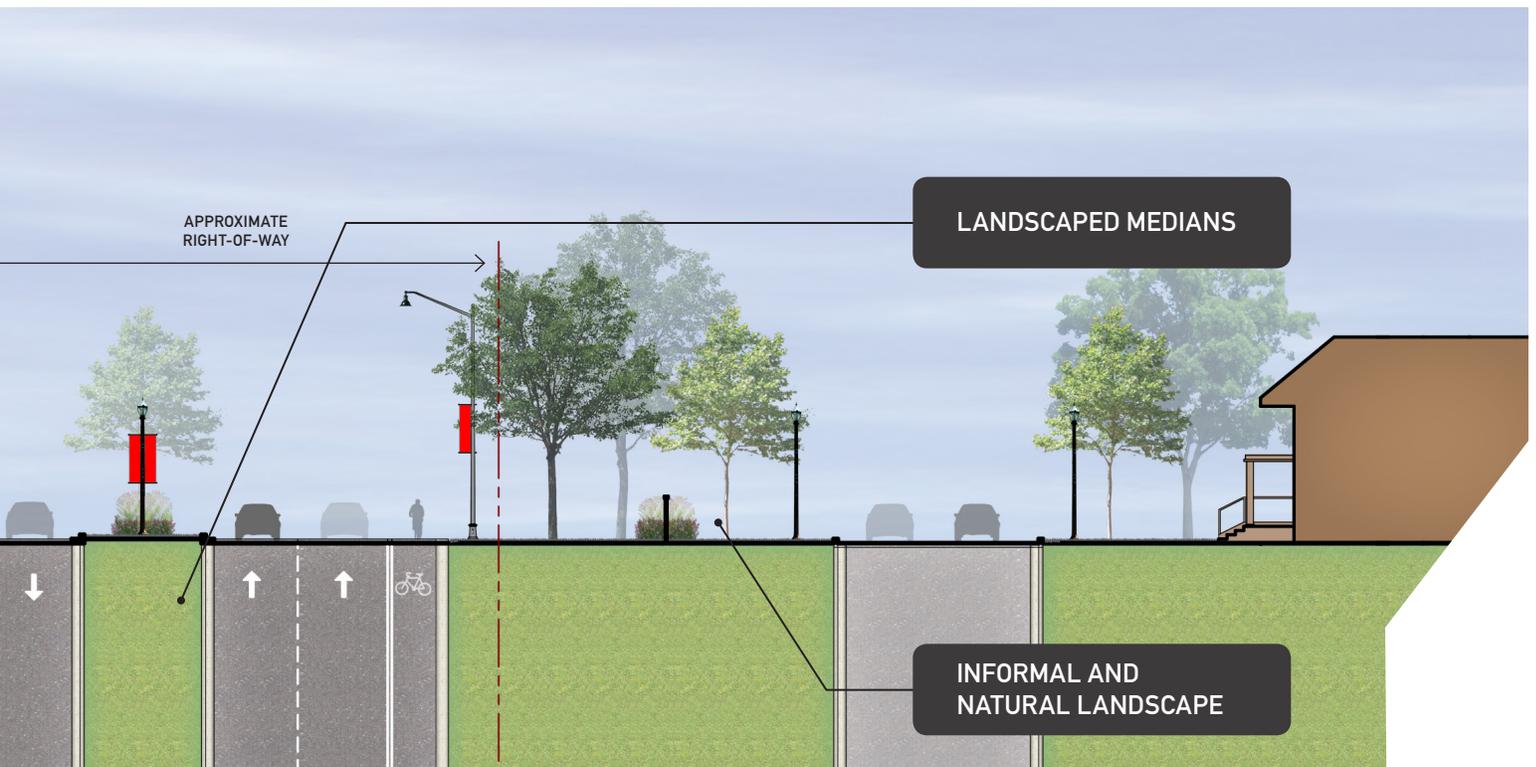
SUBURBAN ROADWAY, SHERMAN



BOULEVARD LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE, SHERMAN



SUBURBAN ROADWAY, SHERMAN





SCENIC CHARACTER AREA:

The Scenic Character Area is often found as a setting for open space with some informal development within small communities and larger urban areas.

The open space may be a park, golf club, a river greenway, or adjacent to rural or agricultural land. The open space element of this character area should always be maintained while allowing for well-scaled commercial and residential development. Commercial development should always place parking in the rear. The roadway could be two to four lanes with a landscaped median. Sidewalks, trees and landscaping should be incorporated within the right-of-way.



EXPANDED SHOULDERS

APPROXIMATE
RIGHT-OF-WAY



SCENIC ROADWAY NEAR LAKE SPRINGFIELD



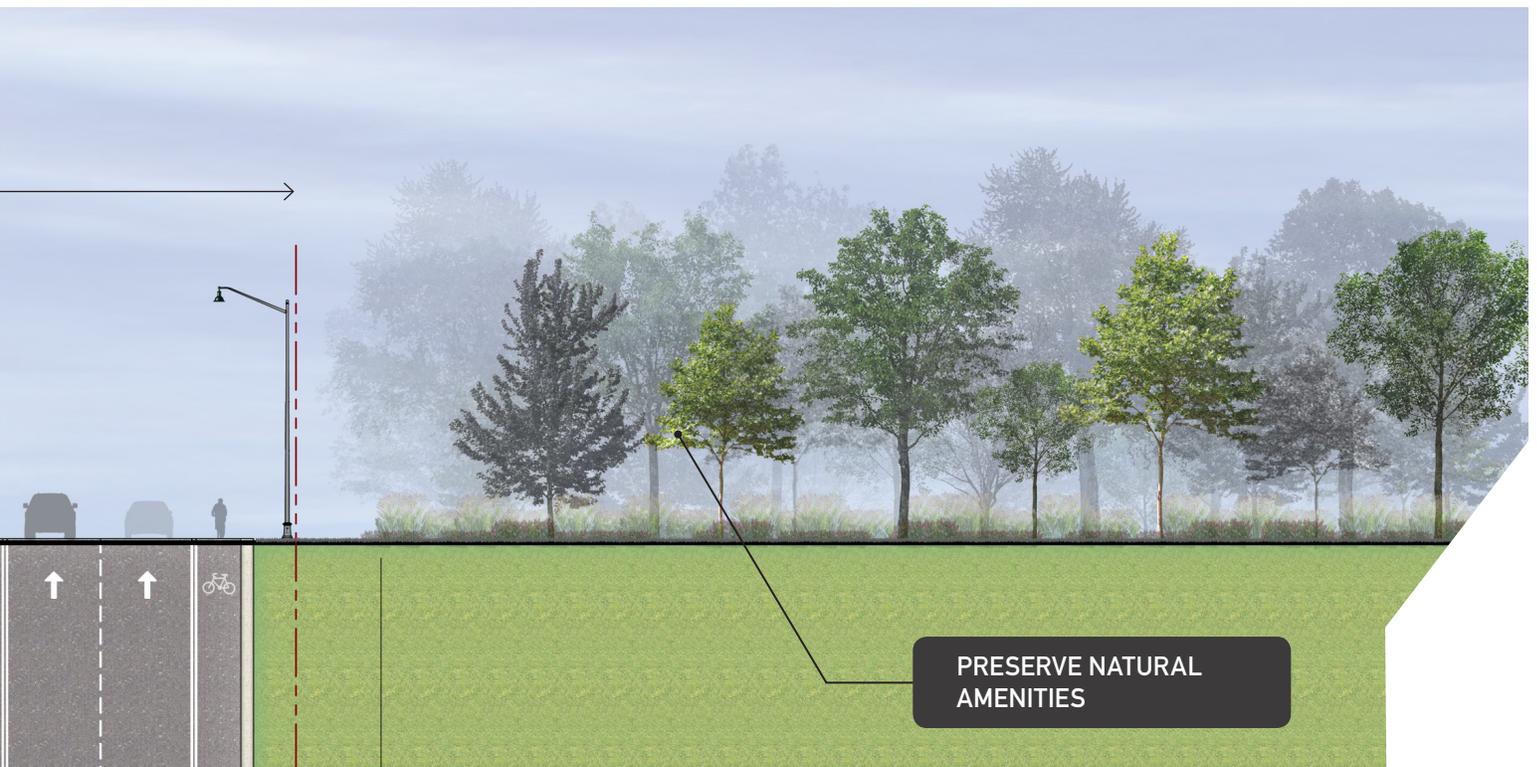
SCENIC ROADWAY NEAR RIVERSIDE PARK



SCENIC ROADWAY NEAR RIVERSIDE PARK



SCENIC ROADWAY NEAR LAKE SPRINGFIELD





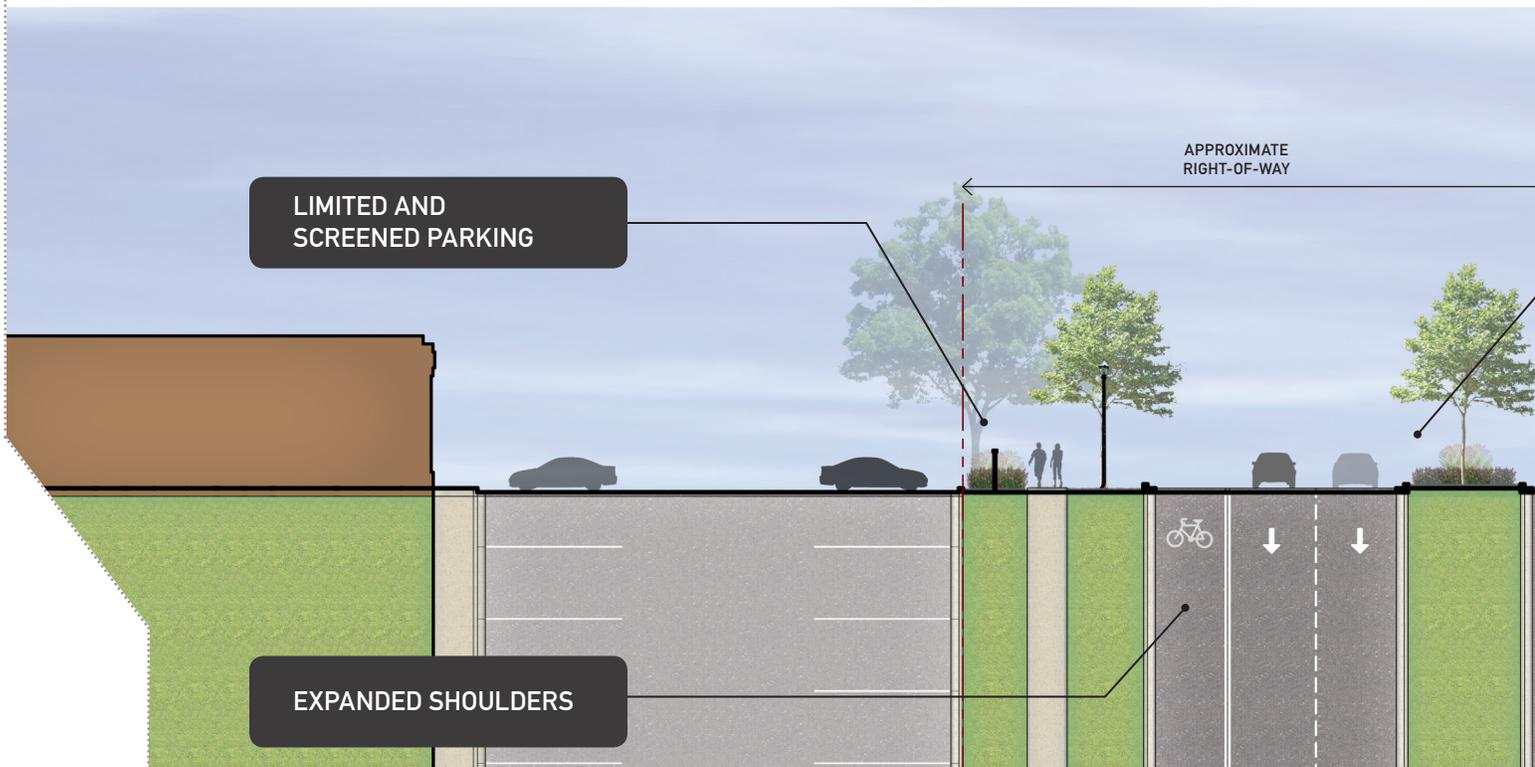
GENERAL URBAN CHARACTER AREA:

General Urban Character Areas are largely defined as being general commercial arterials and thoroughfares.

The development pattern largely consists of large to small lots serviced by existing infrastructure such as sewer and water, and paved roads with setbacks and curbs and gutters. Setback areas may vary to accommodate larger commercial uses but usually have trees, sidewalks and landscaping features fronting both commercial development. Roadways are paved with bicycle lanes on both sides.

Typical development uses and forms in General Urban Character Areas include:

- Commercial uses needing front and rear parking. Front parking is screened with appropriate landscaping and lighting.
- Retail and office uses in low-rise buildings.
- Single and low-rise multi-family residential development may be allowed.
- Roadway width should accommodate bicycle lanes in both travel directions.
- Quality gateway elements and signage could be accommodated.
- Mixed-use developments are encouraged if they are low rise in character.





COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SHERMAN



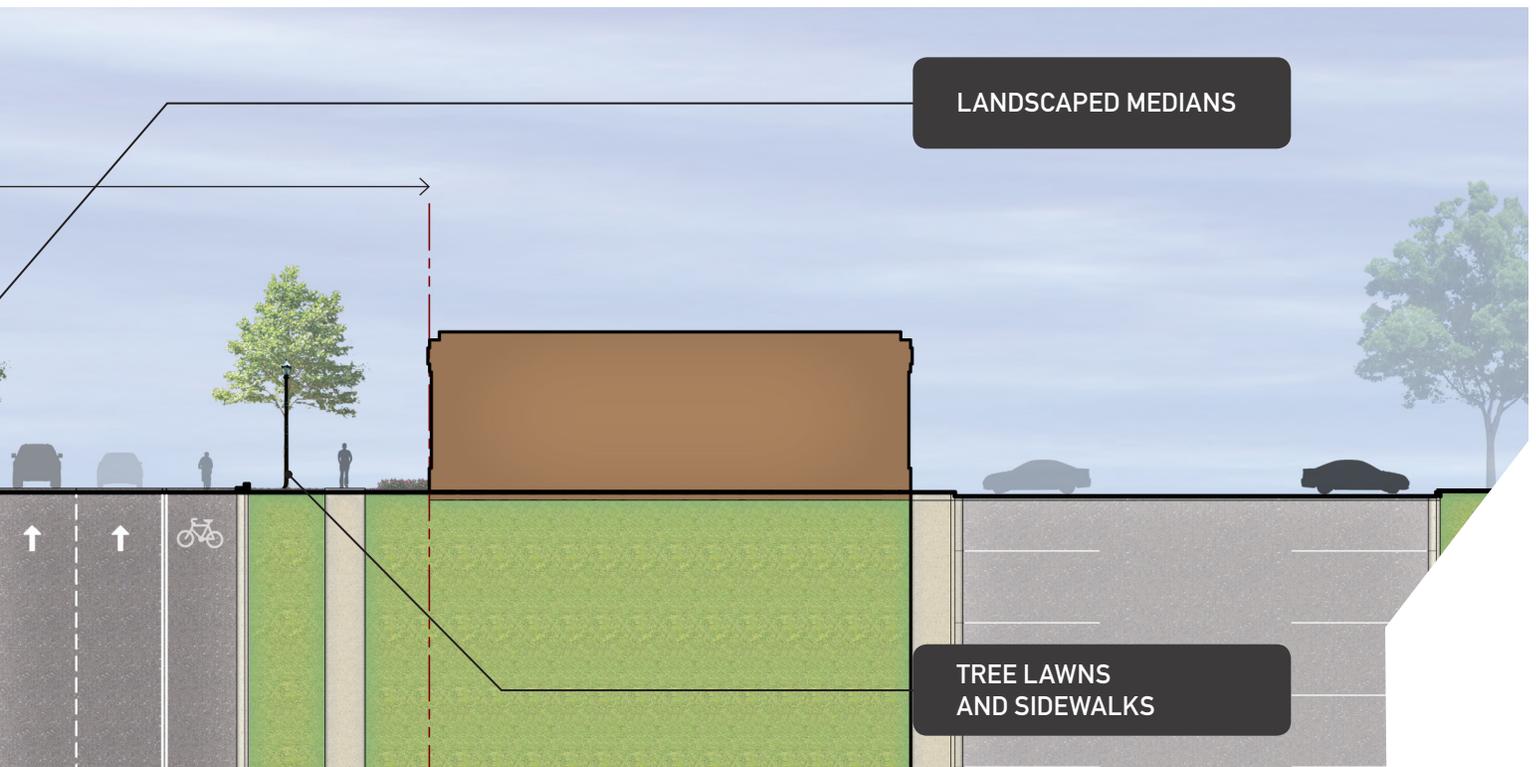
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SHERMAN



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SPAULDING



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SHERMAN



DESTINATION CHARACTER AREA:

Destination Character Areas are largely defined as including a larger regional amenity and/or attraction, as well as geography surrounding it. The “destination” or key amenity should be a resource with area-wide draw, and offer a large, unique asset to the region. The surroundings of the destination are also included in this character area because of the importance of integrating destinations into their landscape.

The Illinois State Fair Grounds and its surroundings provide an example of such an area, because this area creates a unique segment of the Business 55 corridor, as it includes a mix of residential and commercial uses adjacent to the Fair Grounds. Improvements to this area should focus on integrating and knitting the Fair Grounds into the surrounding fabric.

The development pattern for a destination character area may largely consist of large to small lots serviced by existing infrastructure such as sewer and water, and paved roads with setbacks and curbs and gutters. Setback areas should generally be consistent to accommodate commercial and residential uses but should have trees, sidewalks and landscaping features. The roadway segment will not always be able to accommodate a bicycle lane or on-street parking, but pedestrian safety should be encouraged.

Typical development uses and forms in Destination Character Areas include:

- Commercial uses needing rear parking only.
- Single family residential uses.
- Retail and office uses in low-rise buildings.
- Enhanced landscaping and sidewalk treatments between destination facilities and the surrounding roadways, including visually appealing fencing as needed.
- Quality gateway elements and signage should be accommodated.
- Mixed-use developments are encouraged if they are low rise in character.



ILLINOIS STATE FAIR GROUNDS, SPRINGFIELD



ILLINOIS STATE FAIR GROUNDS, SPRINGFIELD



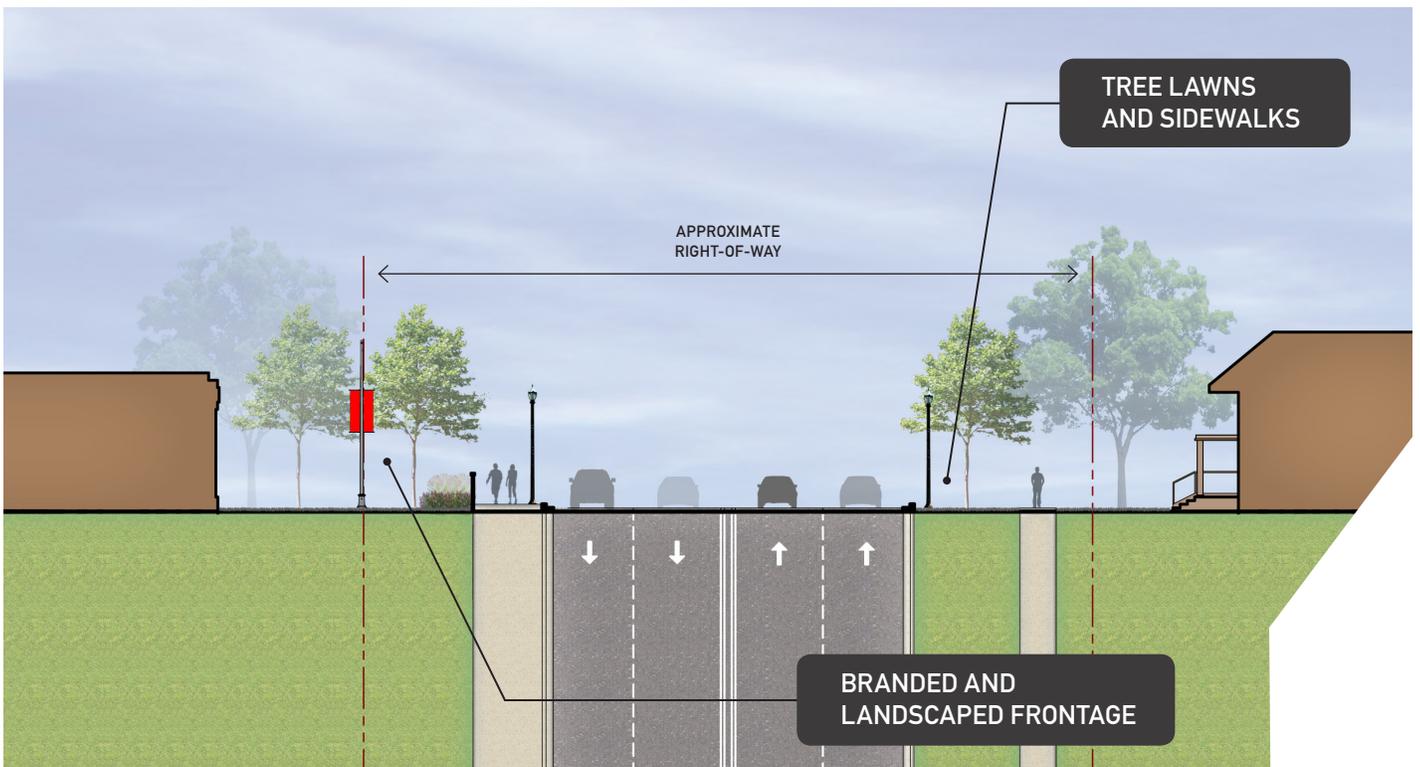
ILLINOIS STATE FAIR GROUNDS, SPRINGFIELD



ILLINOIS STATE FAIR GROUNDS, SPRINGFIELD



ILLINOIS STATE FAIR GROUNDS, SPRINGFIELD





TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREA:

The Traditional Neighborhood Character Area should reinforce the prevailing developing pattern of single-family homes and low-rise commercial buildings that face the transportation corridor. Single family homes have consistent setbacks while commercial buildings are constructed to the sidewalk.

The development pattern largely consists of large to small lots serviced by existing infrastructure such as sewer and water, and paved roads with setbacks and curbs and gutters. Setback areas are consistent with a parkway that includes trees, sidewalks and landscaping features. The roadway segment will not be able to accommodate a bicycle lane but may accommodate one lane of on-street parking.

Typical development uses and character features in Traditional Neighborhood Character Areas includes:

- Commercial uses needing rear parking only.
- Single family and multifamily residential uses.
- Retail and office uses in low-rise buildings.
- Enhanced landscaping and sidewalk treatments.
- Quality gateway elements and signage.
- Mixed-use developments.



ENOS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD, SPRINGFIELD



TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD STREET, SPRINGFIELD



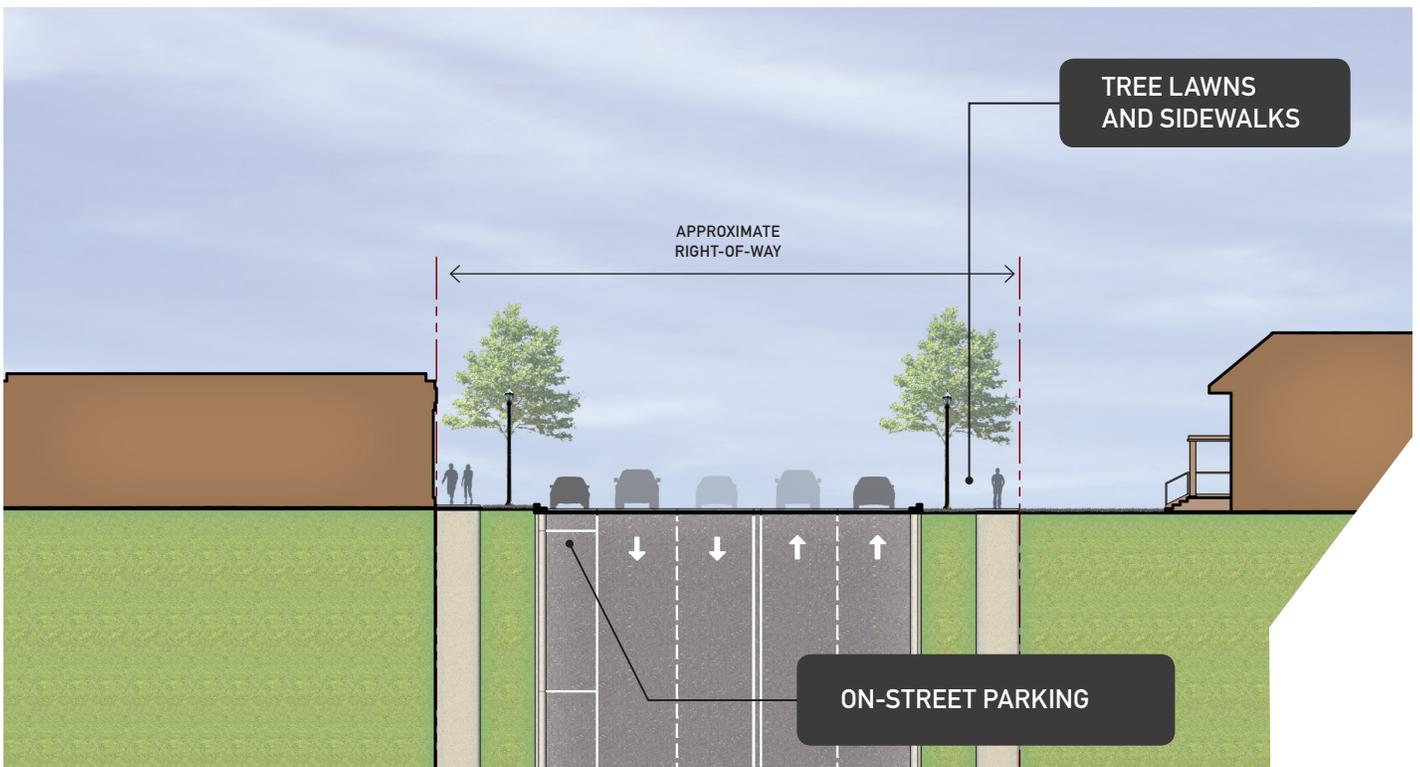
TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD STREET, SPRINGFIELD



TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD STREET, CLEAR LAKE TOWNSHIP



TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD STREET, SPRINGFIELD





DOWNTOWN TWO-WAY CHARACTER AREA:

The terminus of most significant transportation corridors is in the downtown commercial district where development density is highest with buildings that house commercial, residential and cultural functions.

Development in the Downtown Two-way Character Area has zero setback with parking located at the building rear, along the street or in garage structures. The roadway may allow for one or two-way travel with two parking lanes. Sidewalk streetscape elements may include new lighting standards, trees, planting beds and special paving materials.



DOWNTOWN STREETScape, SPRINGFIELD



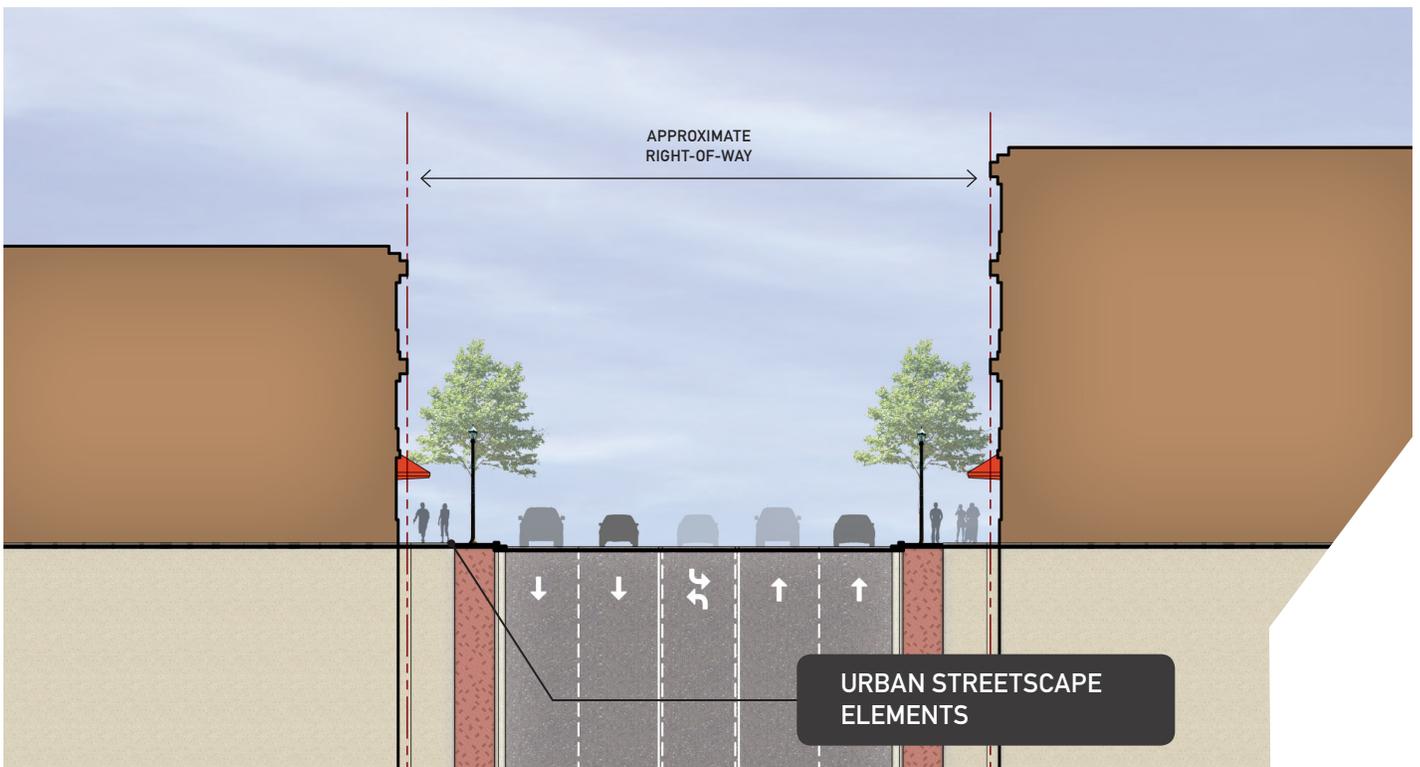
DOWNTOWN STREET, SPRINGFIELD



DOWNTOWN STREETScape, SPRINGFIELD



DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS, SPRINGFIELD

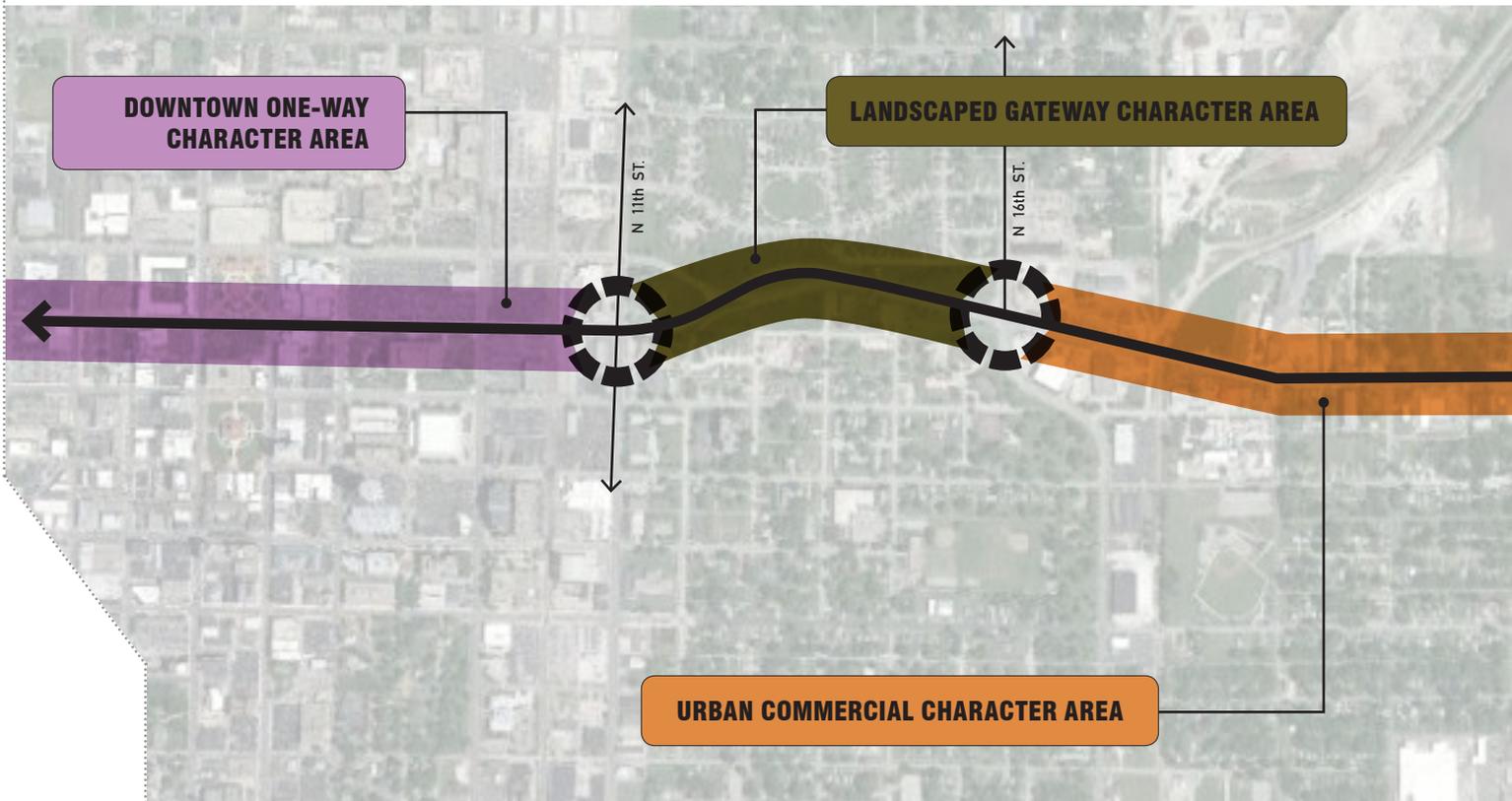




RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL GATEWAY CORRIDOR: Examples from the Clear Lake Avenue Corridor

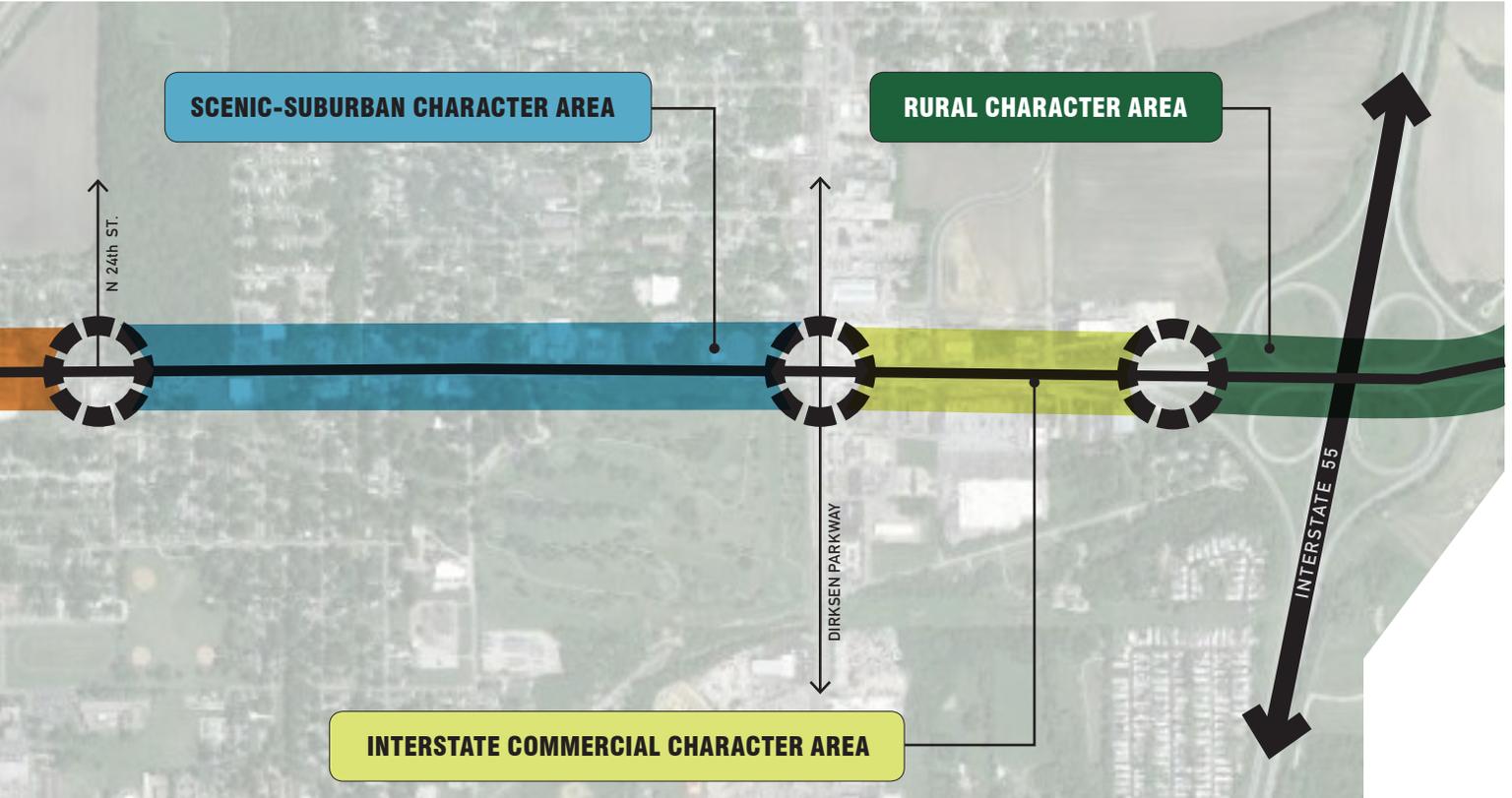
Clear Lake Avenue acts as a three-mile gateway corridor into Sangamon County and downtown Springfield from the east. For the purposes of this plan, it has been termed a Residential/Commercial Gateway Corridor.

The following Character Areas refer to the general physical design, and development pattern and form along corridors such as the one Clear Lake Avenue exemplifies. Again, although these Character Areas are inspired by specific portions of Clear Lake Avenue, they are not unique to this area and similar physical development patterns are observed throughout the County. This gateway corridor exemplifies the following character areas: Rural, Interstate Commercial, Scenic-Suburban, Urban Commercial, Landscaped Gateway, and Downtown One-way.





CLEAR LAKE AVENUE, SPRINGFIELD

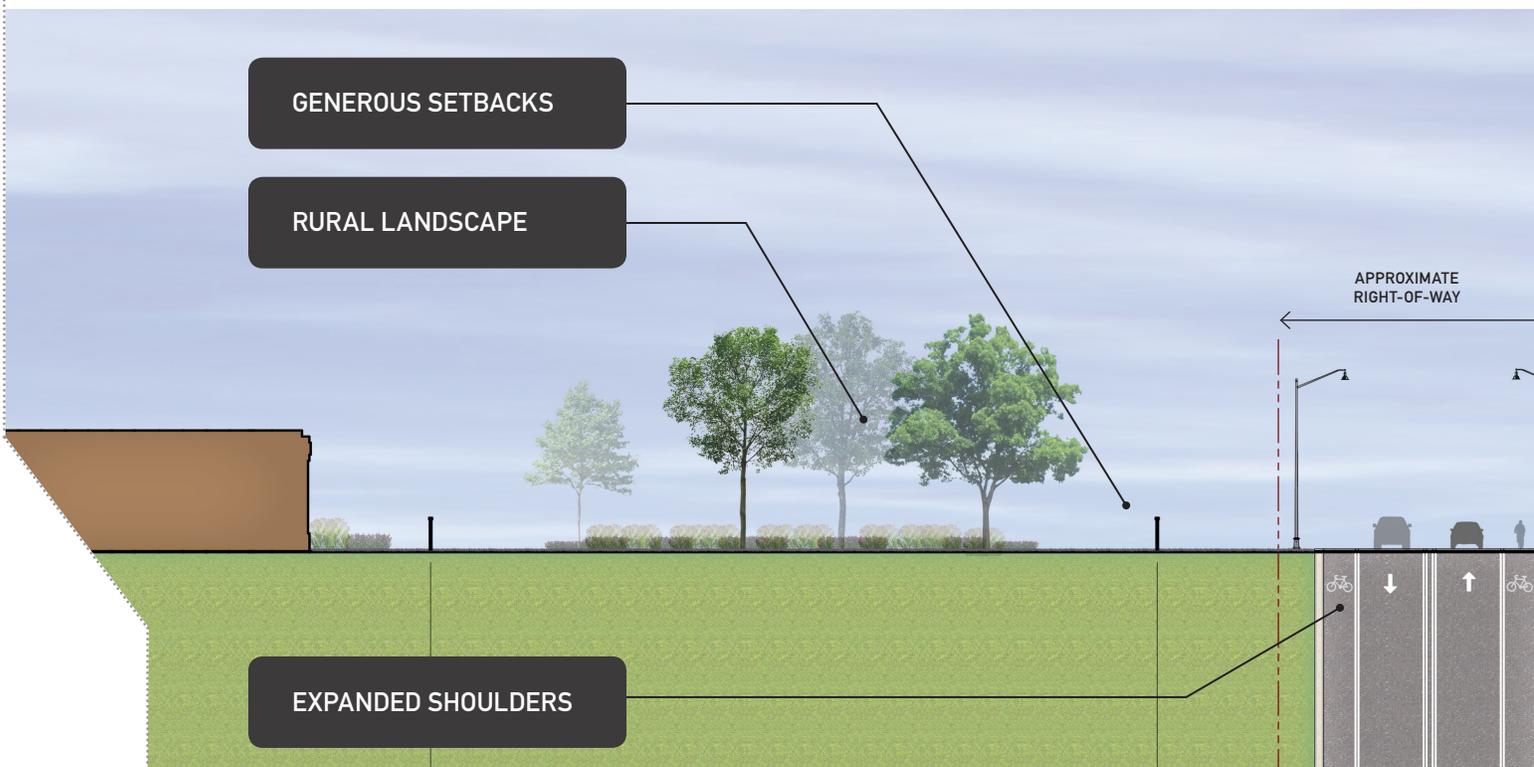




RURAL CHARACTER AREA:

A Rural Character Area occurs where transportation corridors move from a rural setting into a more urban setting or into a smaller village. This most often occurs at Interstate exit and entrance ramps into a community, for one-half to one mile until commercial and residential areas are encountered.

Development along this segment should have generous setbacks in order to preserve the area's rural or agricultural character. Trees, landscaping and wood fencing should be accommodated within the setback to enhance overall visual character. Sidewalks are not necessary. Residential and commercial developments should front rural corridors and the roadway should be two travel lanes in width with generous paved shoulders that can accommodate a bike lane. Parking should be placed in the rear of all commercial and industrial development, if any exists.





FARMLAND, SANGAMON COUNTY



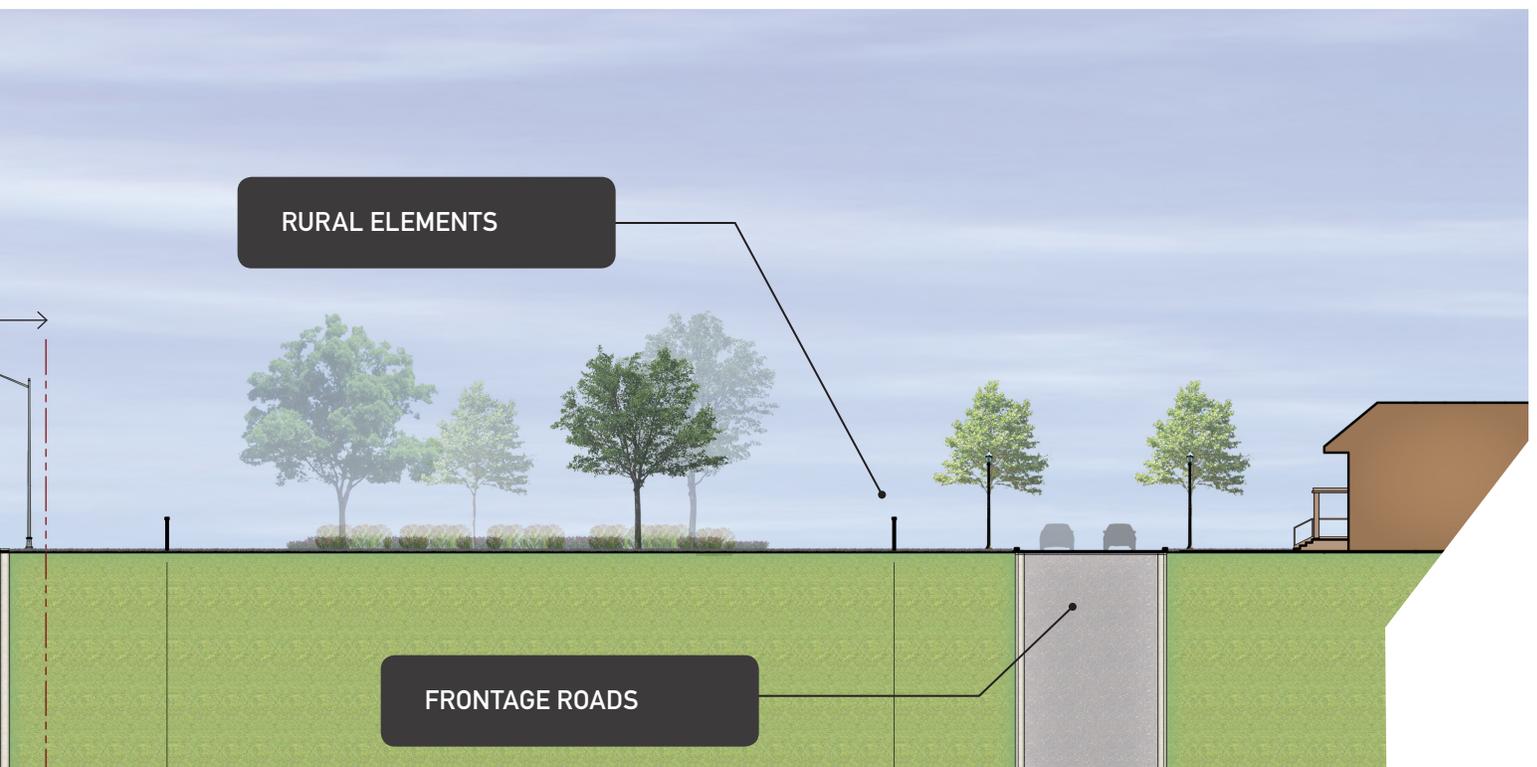
RURAL ROADWAY, SHERMAN



RURAL ROADWAY, SANGAMON COUNTY



RURAL BARN NEAR PLEASANT PLAINS

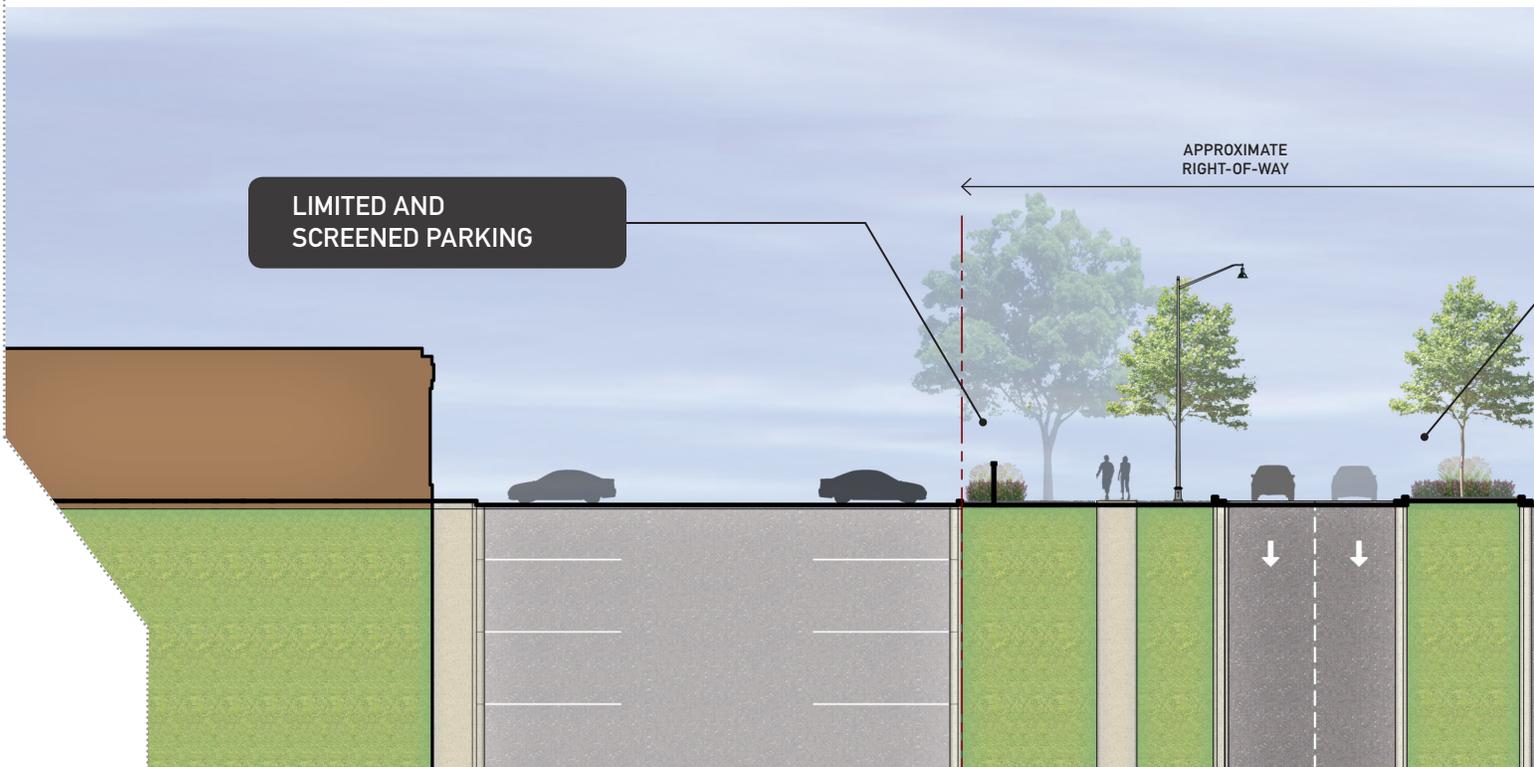




INTERSTATE COMMERCIAL CHARACTER AREA:

The Interstate Commercial Character Areas occur along key transportation roads and arterials, especially in Springfield and sometimes in other communities in Sangamon County.

The roadway is typically four travel lanes with a landscaped median to provide a visual identity and character to the corridor. Single story commercial is the predominant land use although light industrial could also be located in this segment. Parking should be located in the rear of buildings, although some exceptions could be permitted if the parking is screened with appropriate landscaping and limited to one-bay widths. Sidewalks should be provided within an appropriately landscaped road right-of-way.





COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SPRINGFIELD



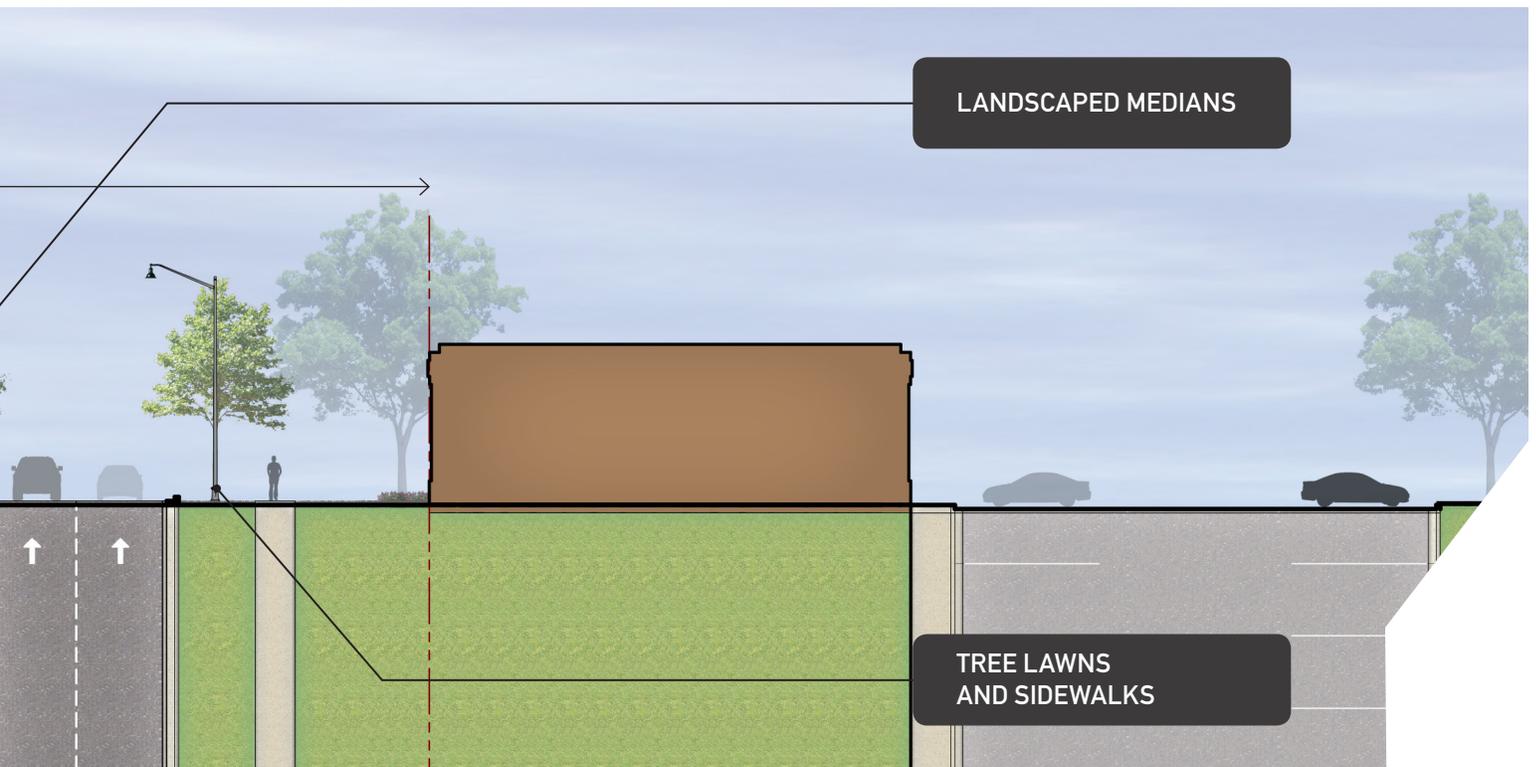
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SHERMAN

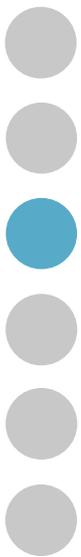


COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SHERMAN



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SPRINGFIELD

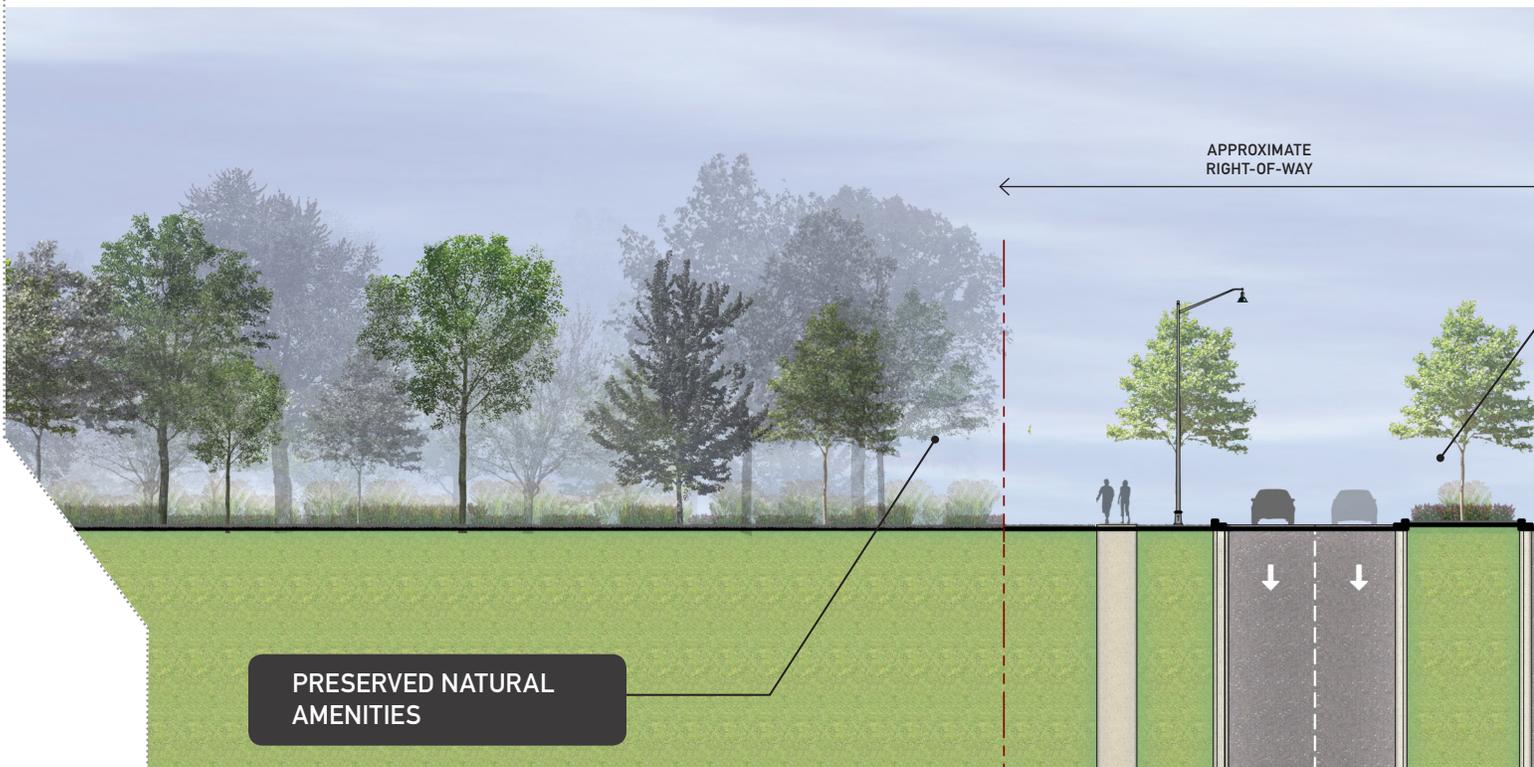




SCENIC-SUBURBAN CHARACTER AREA:

The Scenic-Suburban Character Area is often found as a setting for open space with some informal development within small communities and larger urban areas.

The open space may be a park, golf club, a river greenway, or adjacent to rural or agricultural land. The open space element of this character area should always be maintained while allowing for well-scaled commercial and residential development. Commercial development should always place parking in the rear. The roadway could be two to four lanes with a landscaped median. Sidewalks, trees and landscaping should be incorporated within the right-of-way.





SCENIC-SUBURBAN ROADWAY, CLEAR LAKE TOWNSHIP



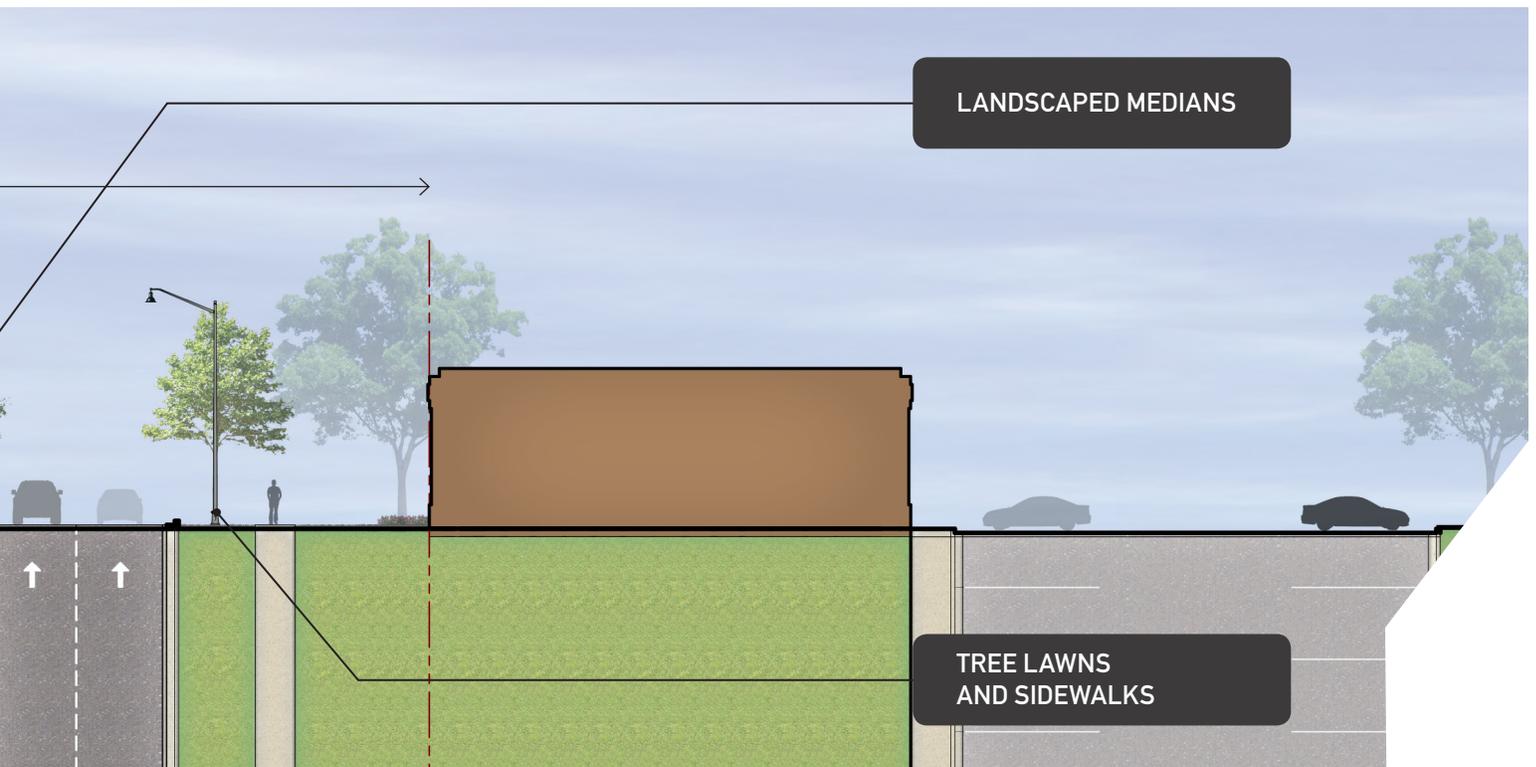
SCENIC-SUBURBAN ROADWAY, SHERMAN, ILLINOIS

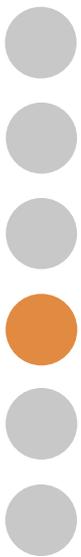


SCENIC-SUBURBAN ROADWAY NEAR RIVERSIDE PARK



SCENIC-SUBURBAN ROADWAY NEAR LAKE SPRINGFIELD





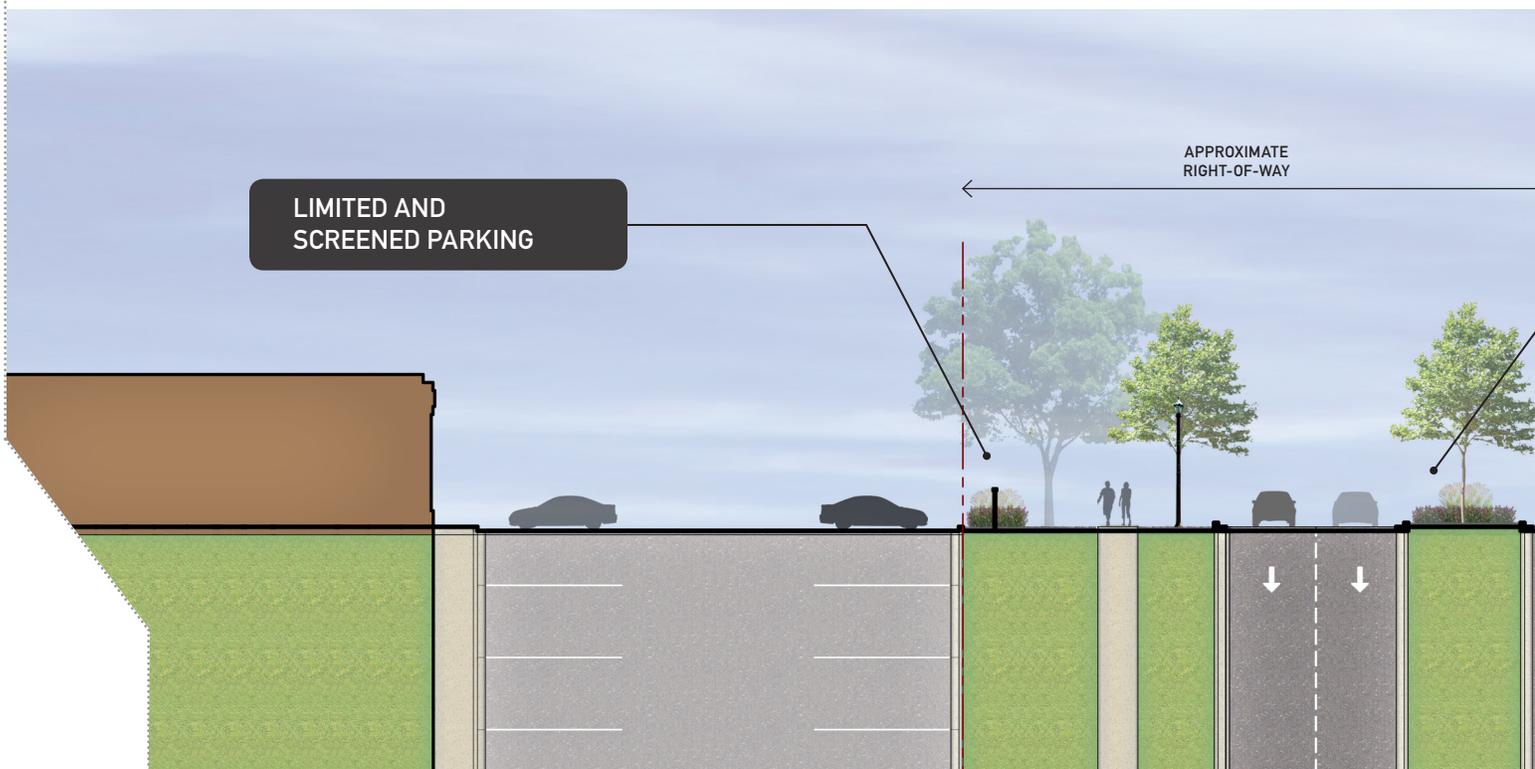
URBAN COMMERCIAL CHARACTER AREA:

Urban Commercial Character Areas are largely defined as being general commercial corridors that may lead to a community’s central business district.

The development pattern largely consists of large to small lots serviced by existing infrastructure such as sewer and water, and paved roads with setbacks and curbs and gutters. Setback areas may vary to accommodate larger commercial uses but usually have trees, sidewalks and landscaping features fronting both commercial development. Roadways are paved but may not accommodate bicycle lanes.

Typical development uses and forms in Urban Commercial Character Areas include:

- Commercial uses needing front and rear parking. Front parking is screened with appropriate landscaping and lighting.
- Retail and office uses in low-rise buildings.
- Multi-family residential development may be allowed.
- Quality gateway elements and signage could be accommodated.
- Mixed-use developments are encouraged if they are low rise in character.





COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SHERMAN



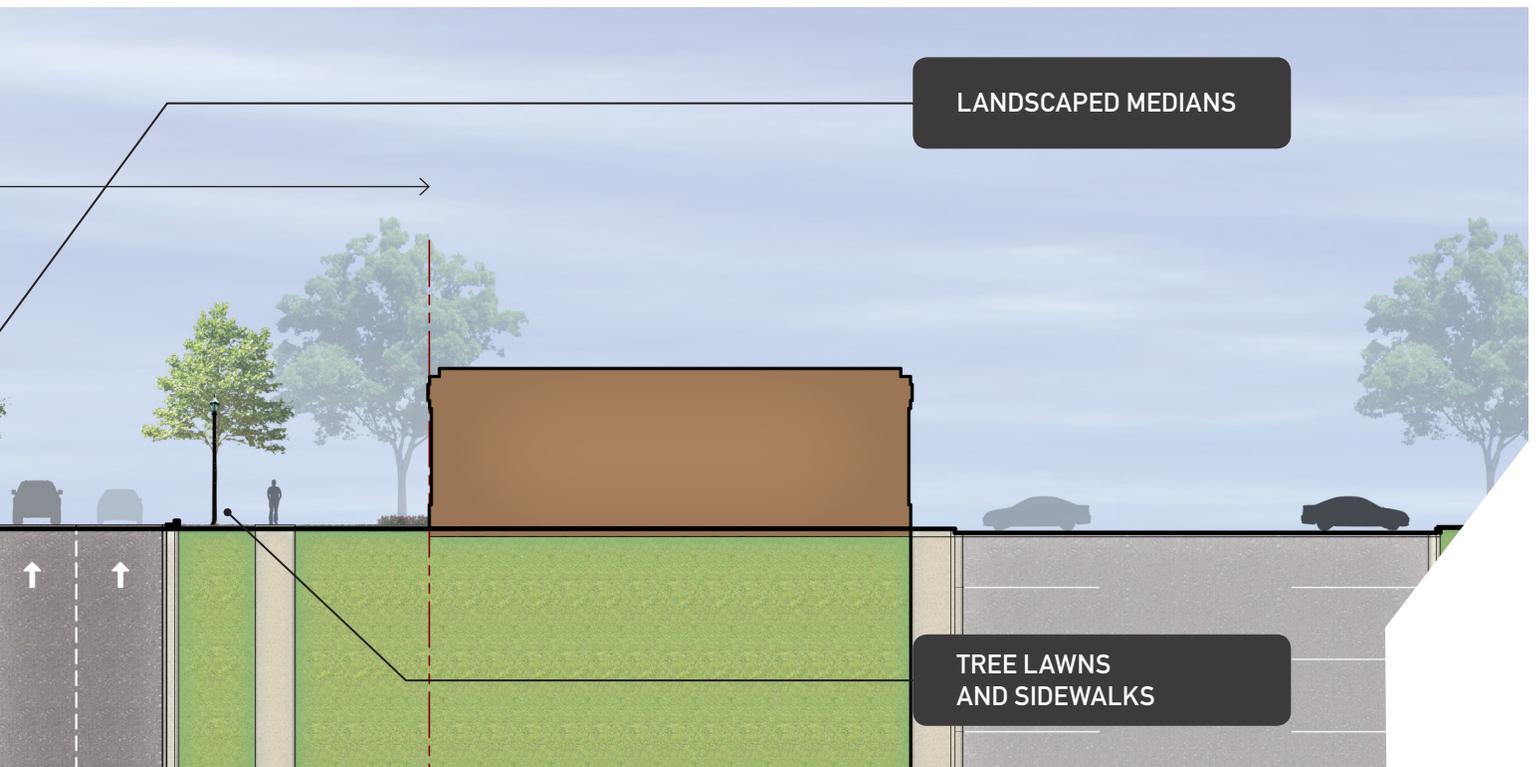
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SPRINGFIELD



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SPRINGFIELD



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SHERMAN



LANDSCAPED MEDIANS

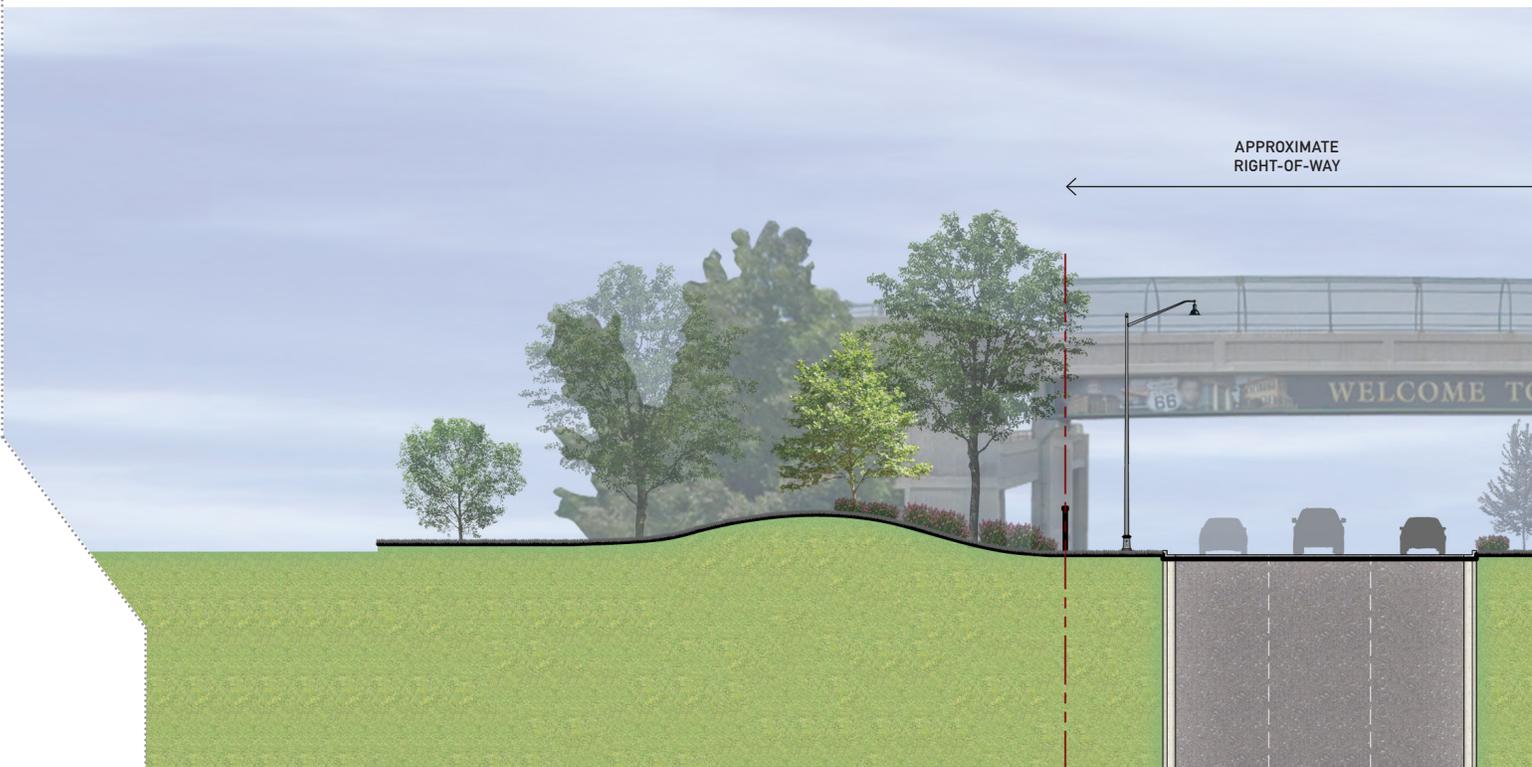
TREE LAWNS
AND SIDEWALKS



LANDSCAPED GATEWAY CHARACTER AREA:

The Landscaped Gateway Character Area can be found at different entrance points from highways and arterials into villages, small towns, and larger urbanized areas, or along corridors before entering downtown districts and neighborhoods.

Key distinguishing features of the Landscaped Gateway Character Area include gateway signage or sculptural elements, special lighting, and pedestrian and landscaping treatments along the right-of-way.





GATEWAY MONUMENT, WILLIAMSVILLE



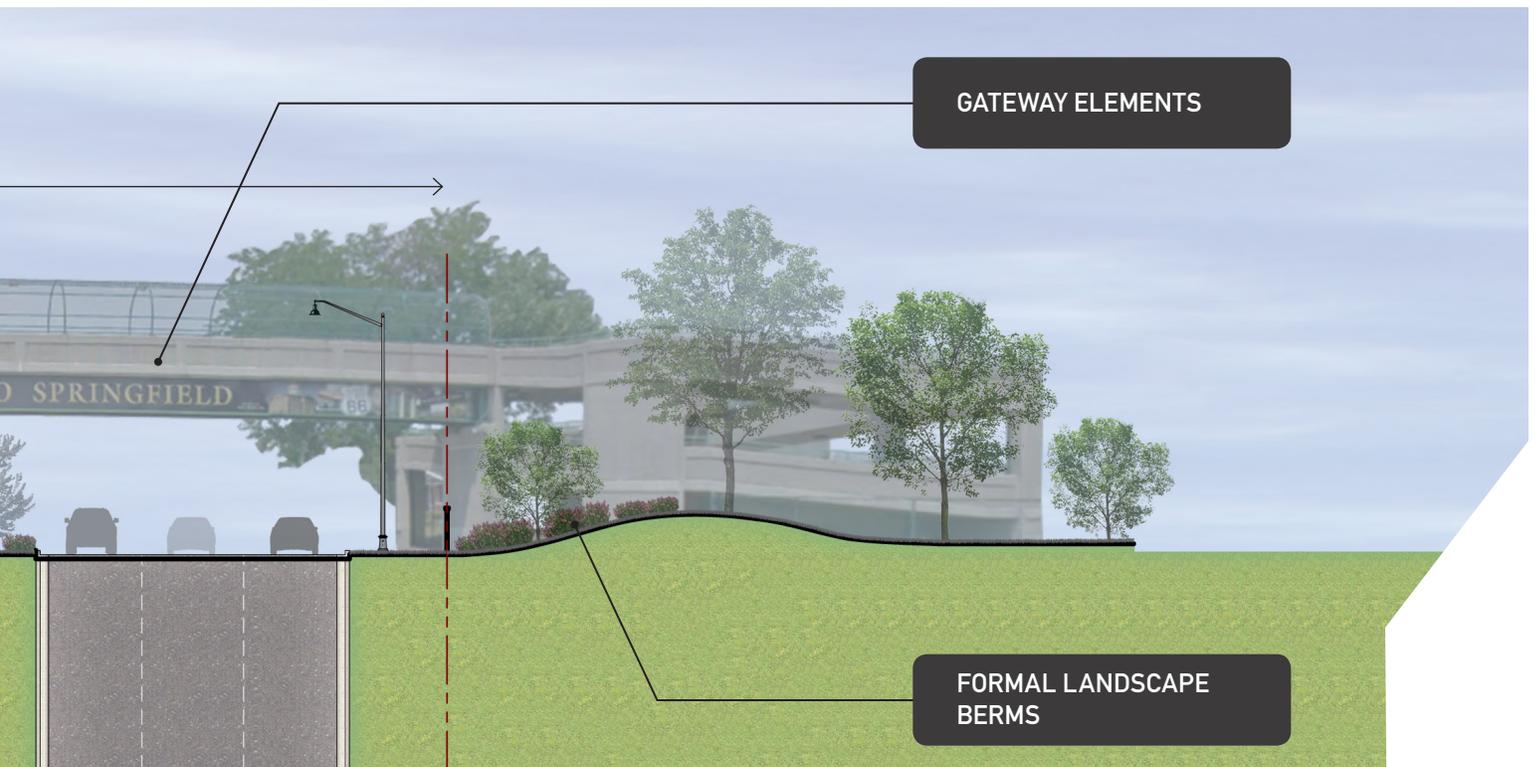
GATEWAY SIGNAGE, PLEASANT PLAINS



GATEWAY LANDSCAPING, SPRINGFIELD



GATEWAY SIGNAGE, NEW BERLIN



GATEWAY ELEMENTS

FORMAL LANDSCAPE
BERMS



DOWNTOWN ONE-WAY CHARACTER AREA:

Most transportation corridors start or end in a traditional downtown commercial district where development density is highest. Downtown buildings accommodate commercial uses, upper-story residential and a number of cultural functions.

Development in the Downtown One-way Character Area has zero setback with parking located at the building rear, along the street or in garage structures. The roadway may allow for one or two-way travel with two parking lanes. which is not accommodated in the Downtown Two-Way Character Area. On-street parking allows for customer parking near stores and promotes a more comfortable pedestrian environment as parked cars act as a buffer between the sidewalk and traffic. Sidewalk streetscape elements may include new lighting standards, trees, planting beds and special paving materials.



DOWNTOWN STREETScape, SPRINGFIELD



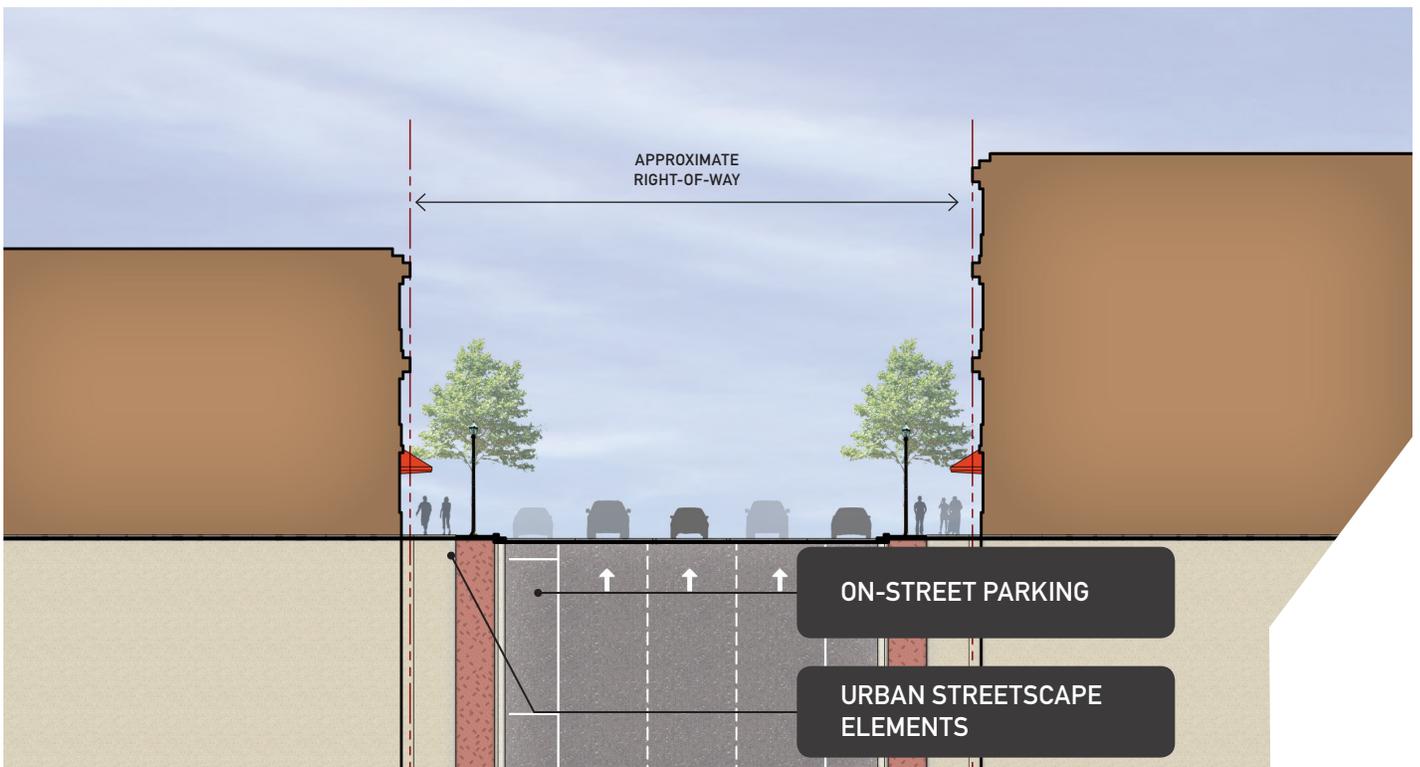
DOWNTOWN STREET, SPRINGFIELD



DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS, SPRINGFIELD



DOWNTOWN STREETScape, SPRINGFIELD





SMALL TOWN GATEWAY CORRIDOR: Examples from the Village of Buffalo

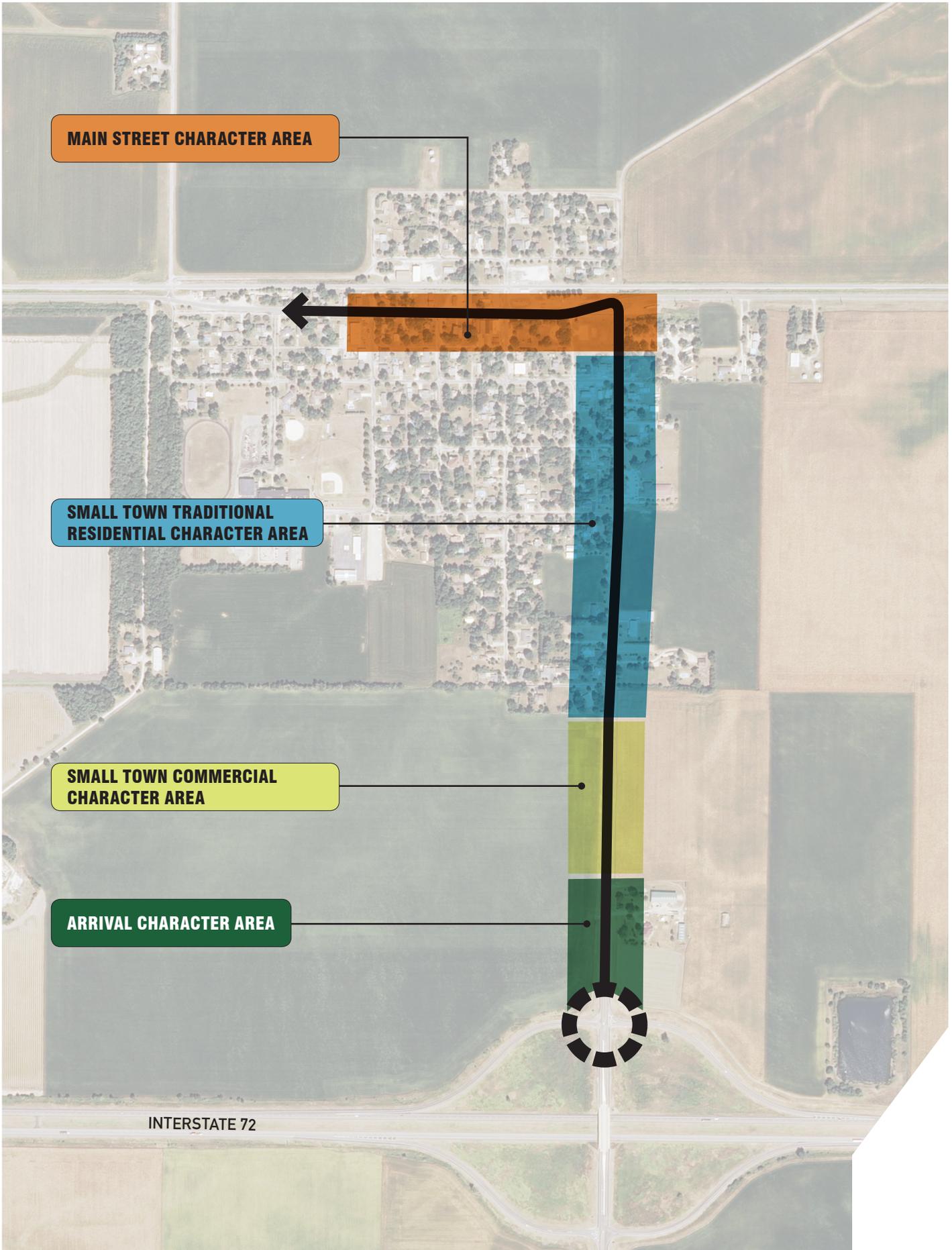
Numerous villages in Sangamon County have gateway corridors from the nearest major roadway into their downtown that span less than five miles and encompass the majority of character types that exist within the village or small town.

The following Character Areas refer to the general physical design and development pattern and form along one example of a small town gateway corridor located in the Village of Buffalo. Again, although these “character areas” are inspired by specific portions of Buffalo, they are not unique to this area and similar physical development patterns are observed throughout the County.

This gateway corridor exemplifies the following character areas: Arrival, Small Town Commercial, Small Town Traditional Residential, and Main Street.



LANDSCAPED MEDIAN, WILLIAMSVILLE



MAIN STREET CHARACTER AREA

**SMALL TOWN TRADITIONAL
RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREA**

**SMALL TOWN COMMERCIAL
CHARACTER AREA**

ARRIVAL CHARACTER AREA

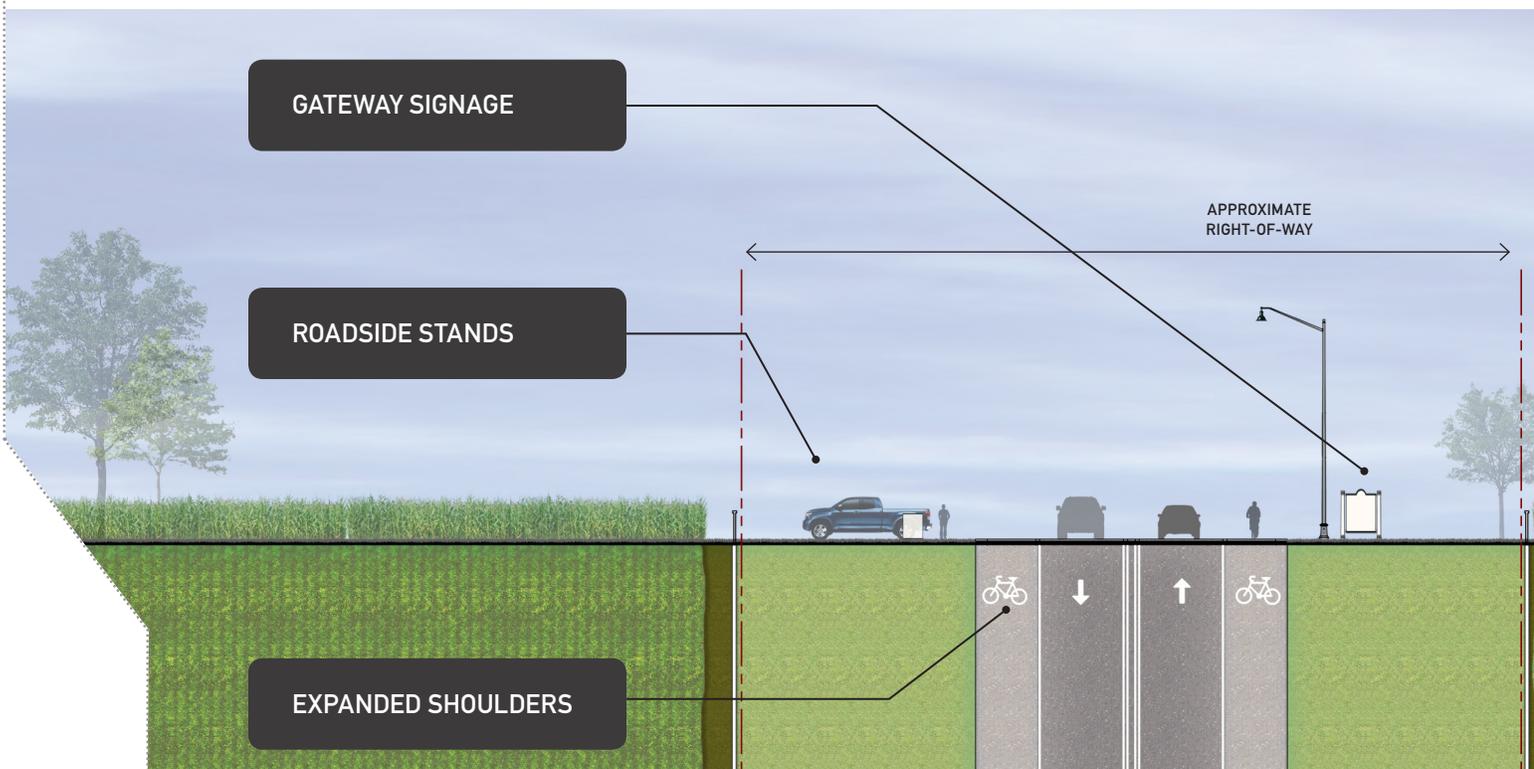
INTERSTATE 72



ARRIVAL CHARACTER AREA:

The land and space between an Interstate or highway entrance and a small community's first commercial developments and residential neighborhoods is defined as the arrival character area, and is typically found in most of the County's small towns and villages.

Key distinguishing features along the roadway of the arrival character area usually include open space, forests, riverways and farmland, and are often the setting for a community's gateway monuments and entrance signs. Development, if any, is sparse and may include barns, farmsteads or other small-scale buildings that are generously set back from the roadway. The roadway has 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. This character area defines the entrance and arrival sequence into a community and provides the first impressions of the community to travelers and visitors.





FARMLAND, SANGAMON COUNTY



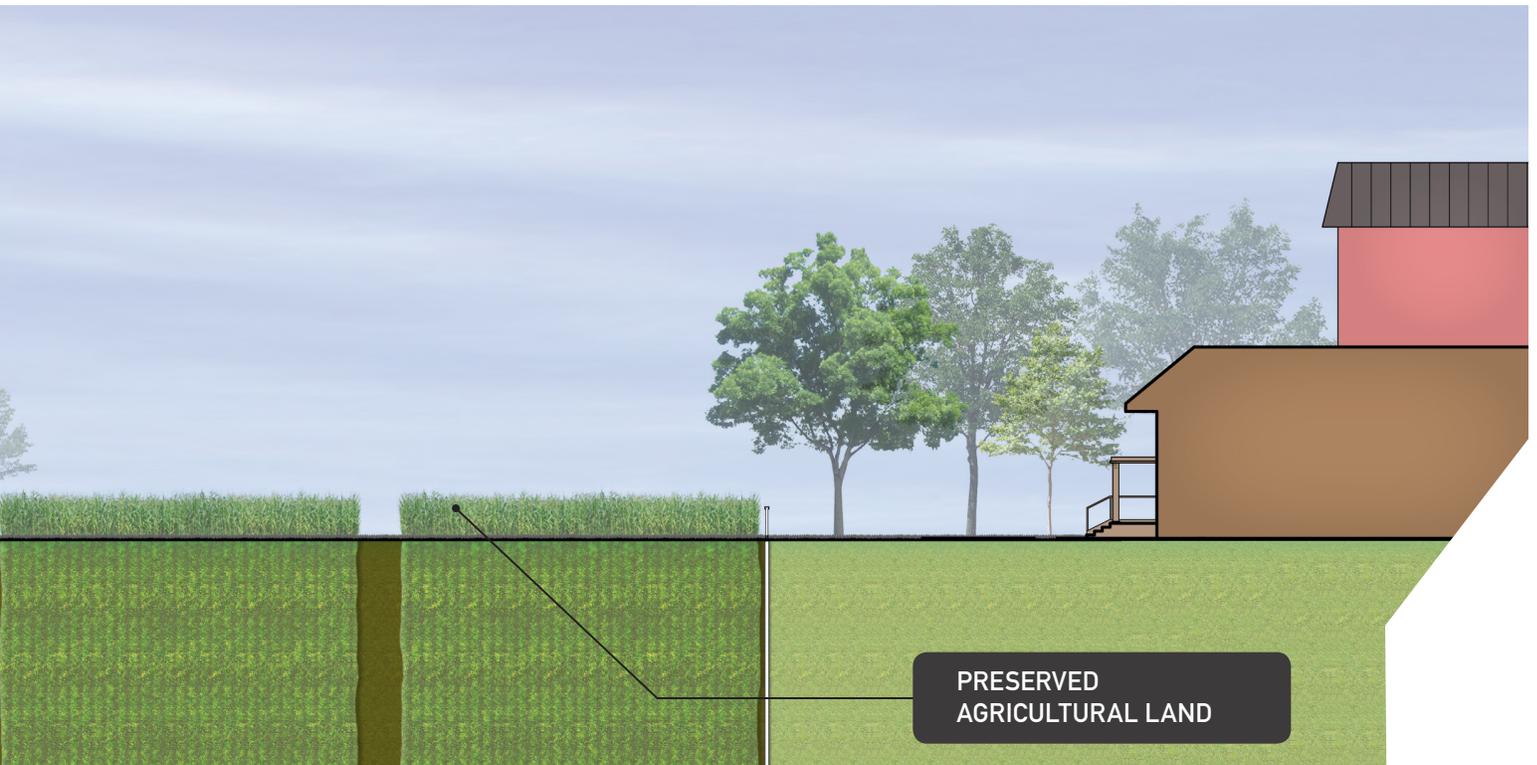
GATEWAY SIGNAGE, LOAMI



RURAL ROADWAY, SANGAMON COUNTY



RURAL BARN NEAR PLEASANT PLAINS



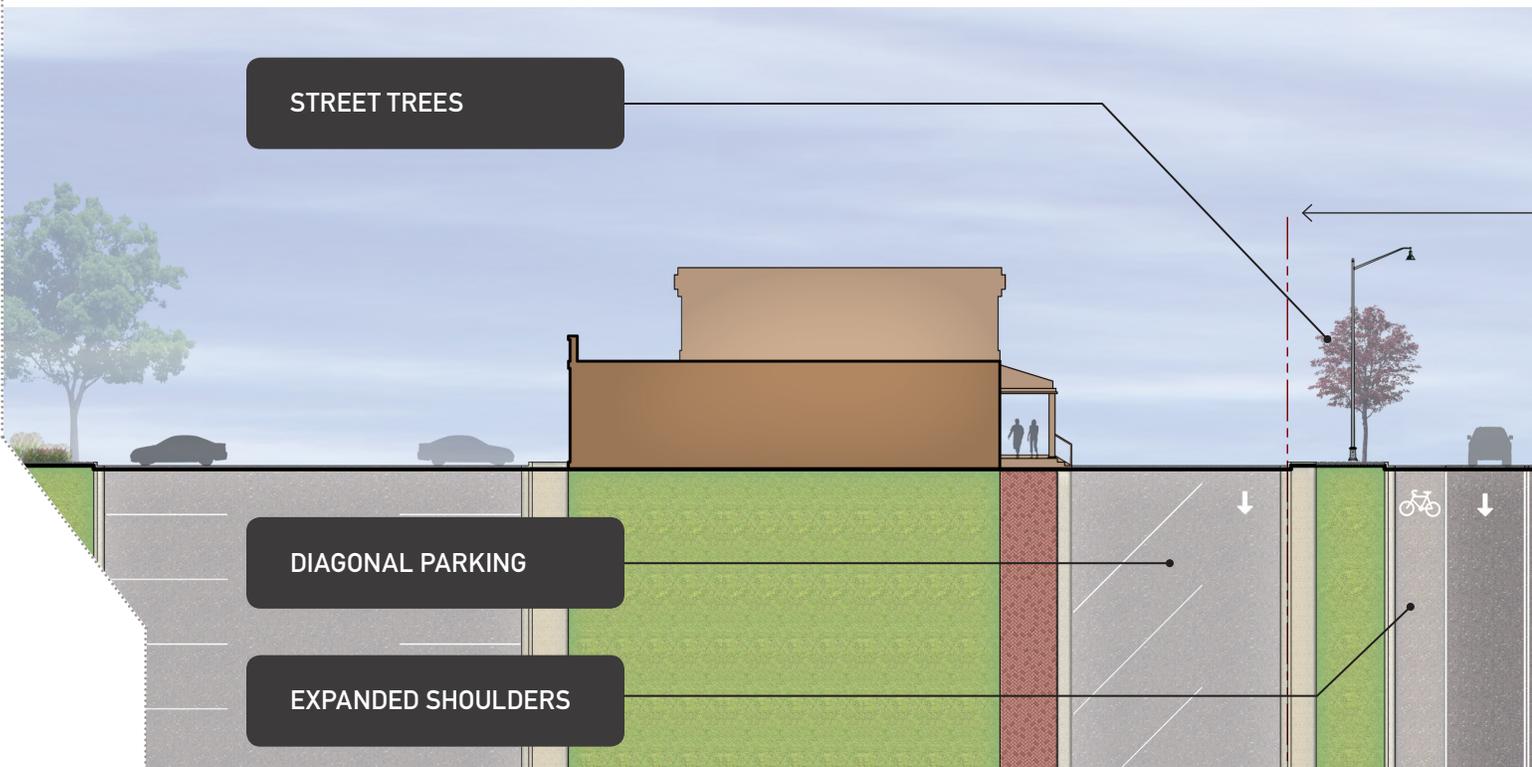
PRESERVED
AGRICULTURAL LAND



SMALL TOWN COMMERCIAL CHARACTER AREA:

The Small Town Commercial Character Area is found in small towns and villages, typically between the Interstate and rural gateway segments and the traditional residential and downtown districts.

This area provides space for limited retail activities, such as convenience stores, gas stations and restaurants that serve the need of Interstate travelers and local residents. New development is typically one story with parking located to 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 roadway should have two lanes of travel with wider shoulders to accommodate cyclists and appropriate landscaping and trees in the parkway.





DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS, AUBURN



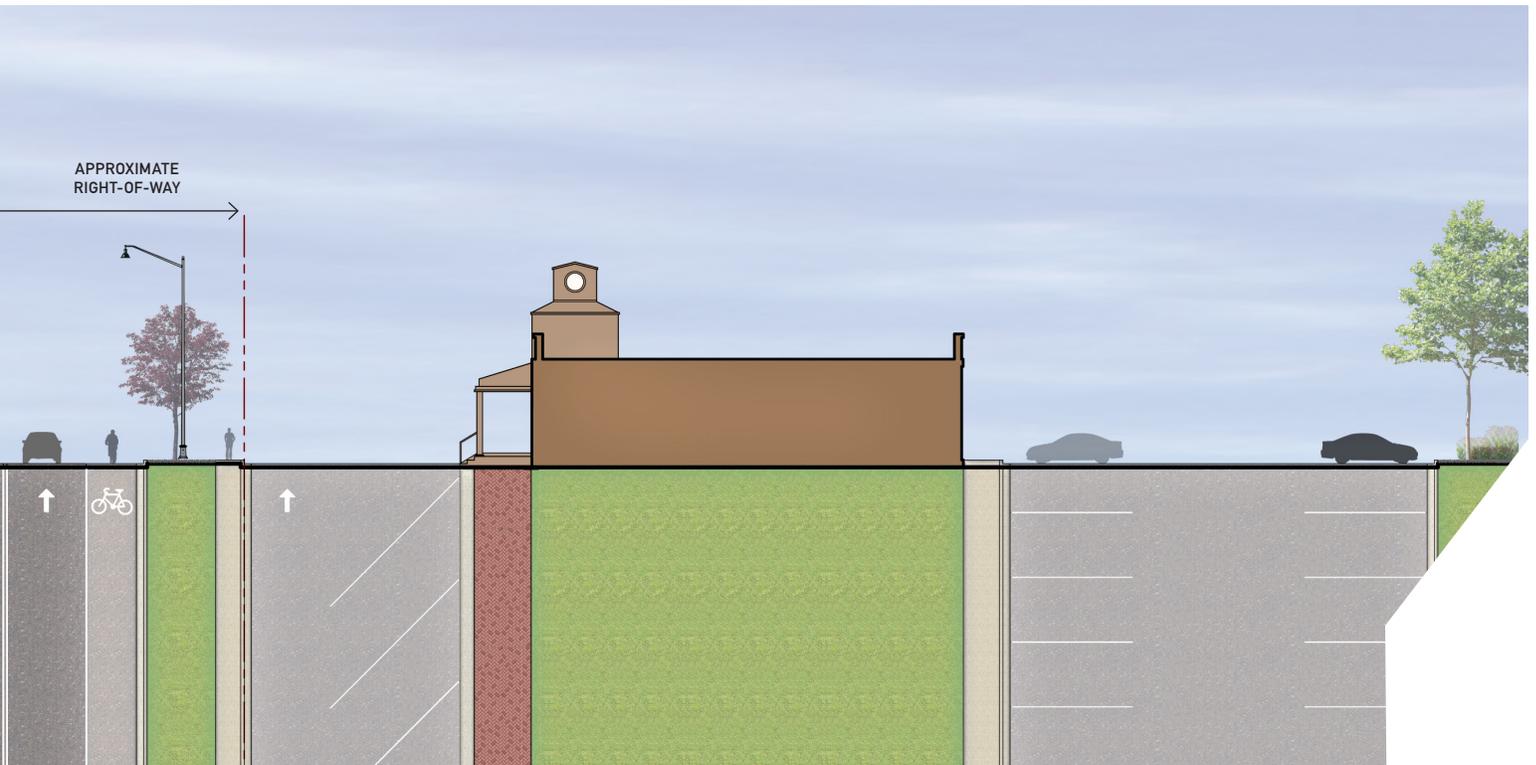
DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS, AUBURN



DIVERNON TOWNSHIP LIBRARY



AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE, SANGAMON COUNTY

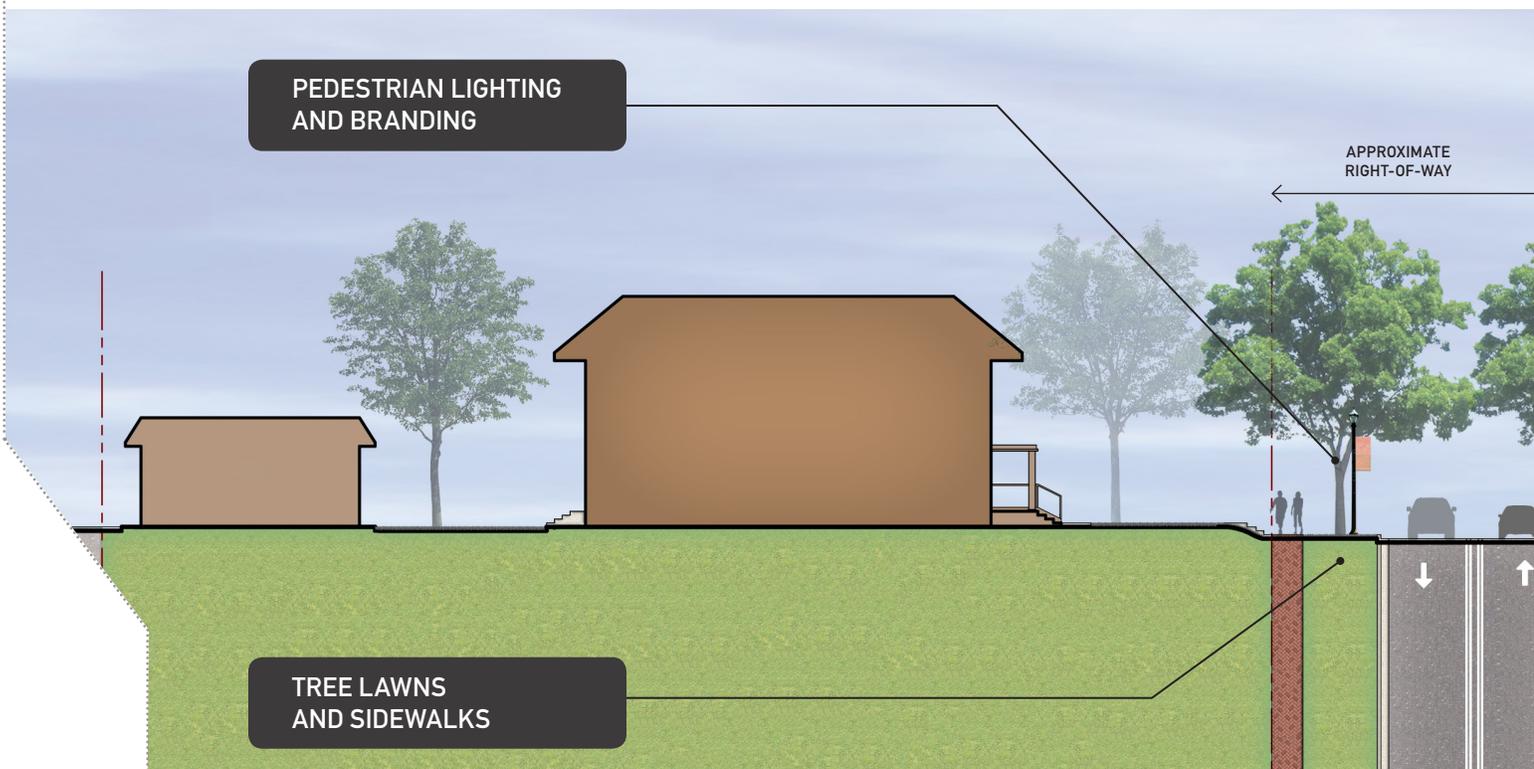




SMALL TOWN TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREA:

Small Town Traditional Residential Character Areas typically have older, well-maintained homes that front the street and designed with compatible materials and scale.

They will also have rear alleys and garages. The roadway narrows from the Interstate commercial areas to include two lanes of travel without a wide shoulder. Sidewalks should be provided to accommodate safe pedestrian travel and parkways landscaped with trees, new lighting and other features.





RESIDENTIAL STREET NEAR PAWNEE



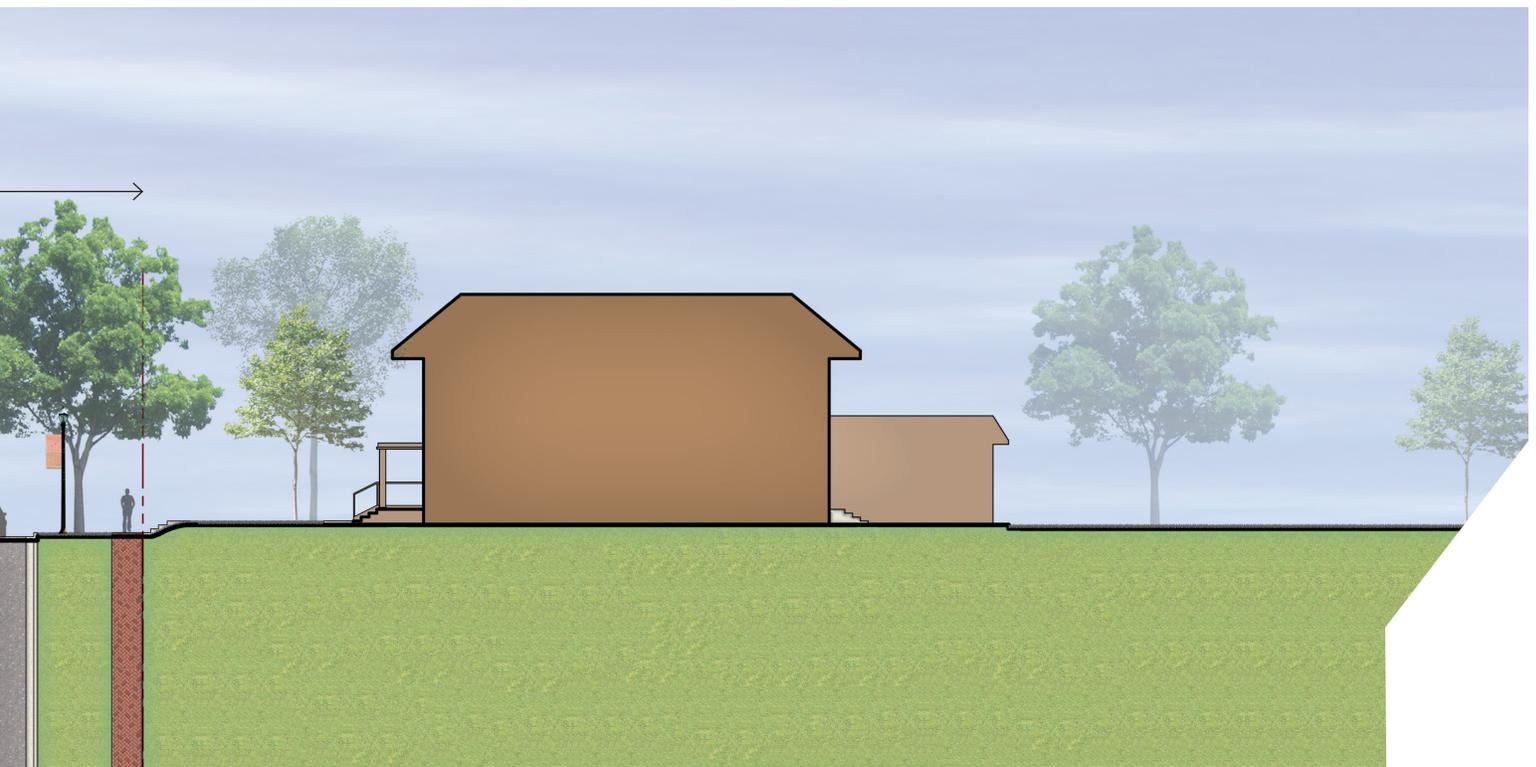
SINGLE FAMILY HOME, WILLIAMSVILLE



SINGLE FAMILY HOME, ROCHESTER



RESIDENTIAL STREET NEAR ROCHESTER

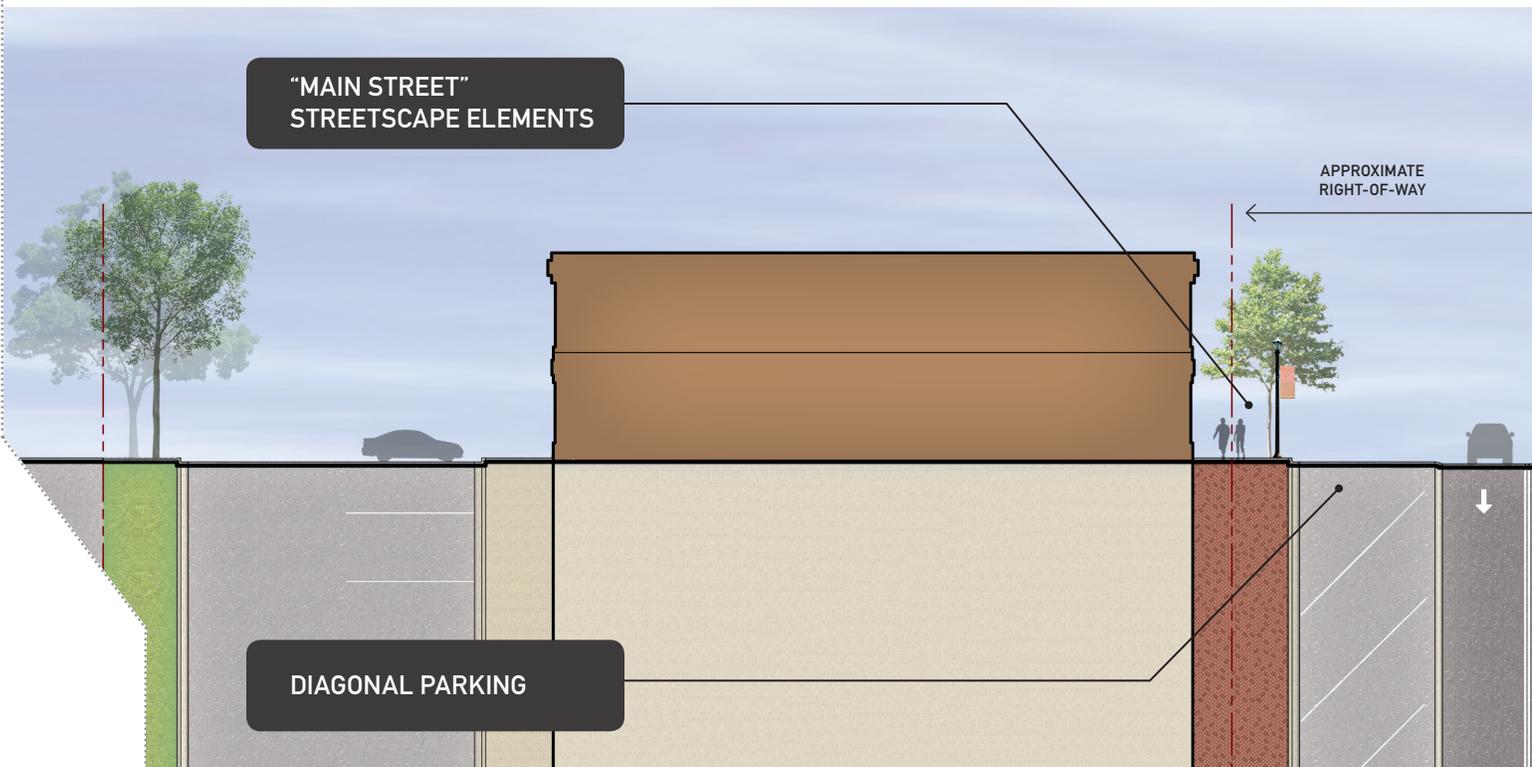




MAIN STREET CHARACTER AREA:

The Main Streets of small towns and villages are the commercial, civic, and social centers of their communities, typically characterized by one to three story historic commercial buildings, a public square and institutional uses including village hall, the post office and the library.

The main thoroughfare should have two lanes of travel, on-street parallel or diagonal parking and streetscaping treatments special crosswalk pavement and sidewalks with new lighting, trees or planting beds.





DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS, PLEASANT PLAINS



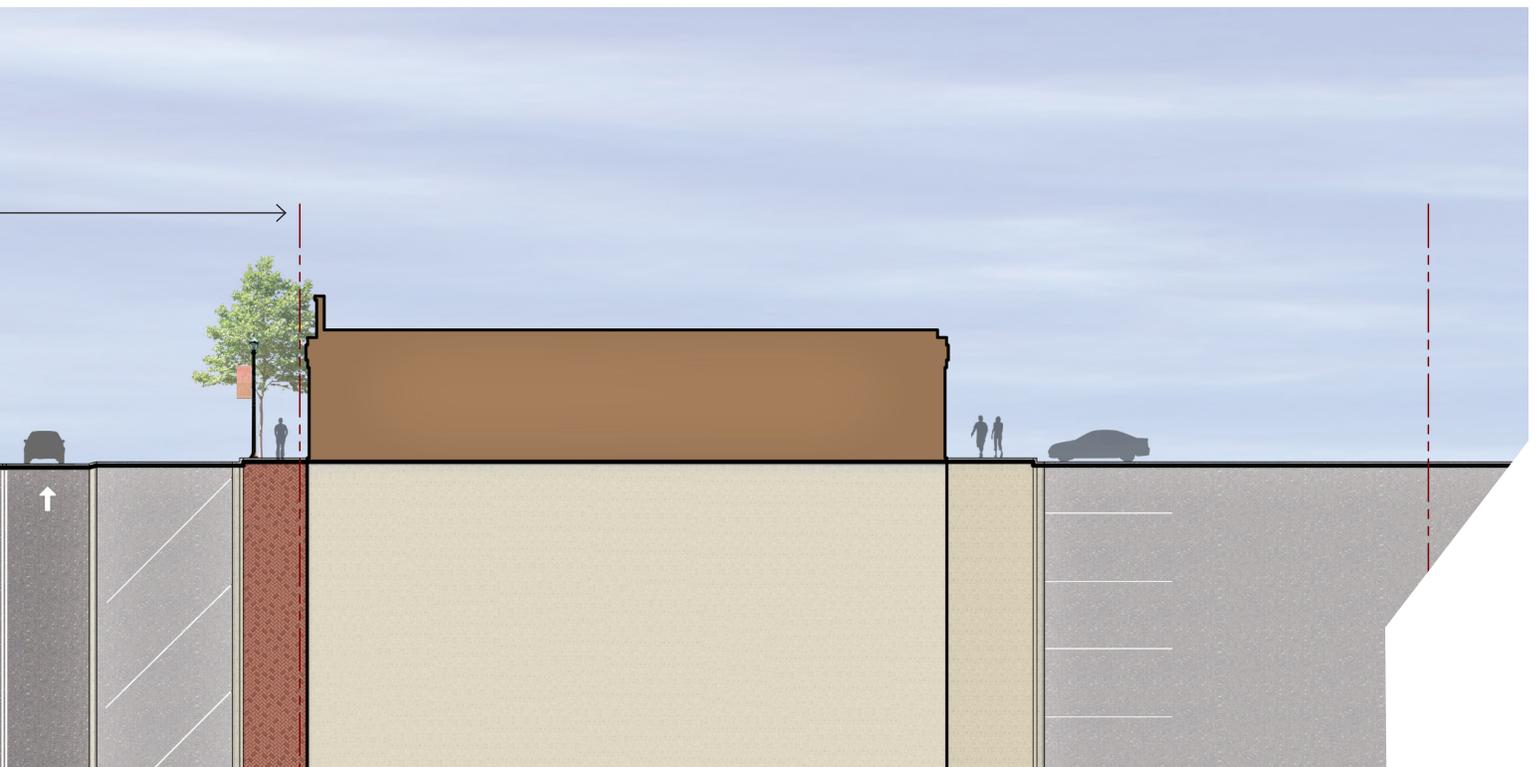
DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS, PAWNEE

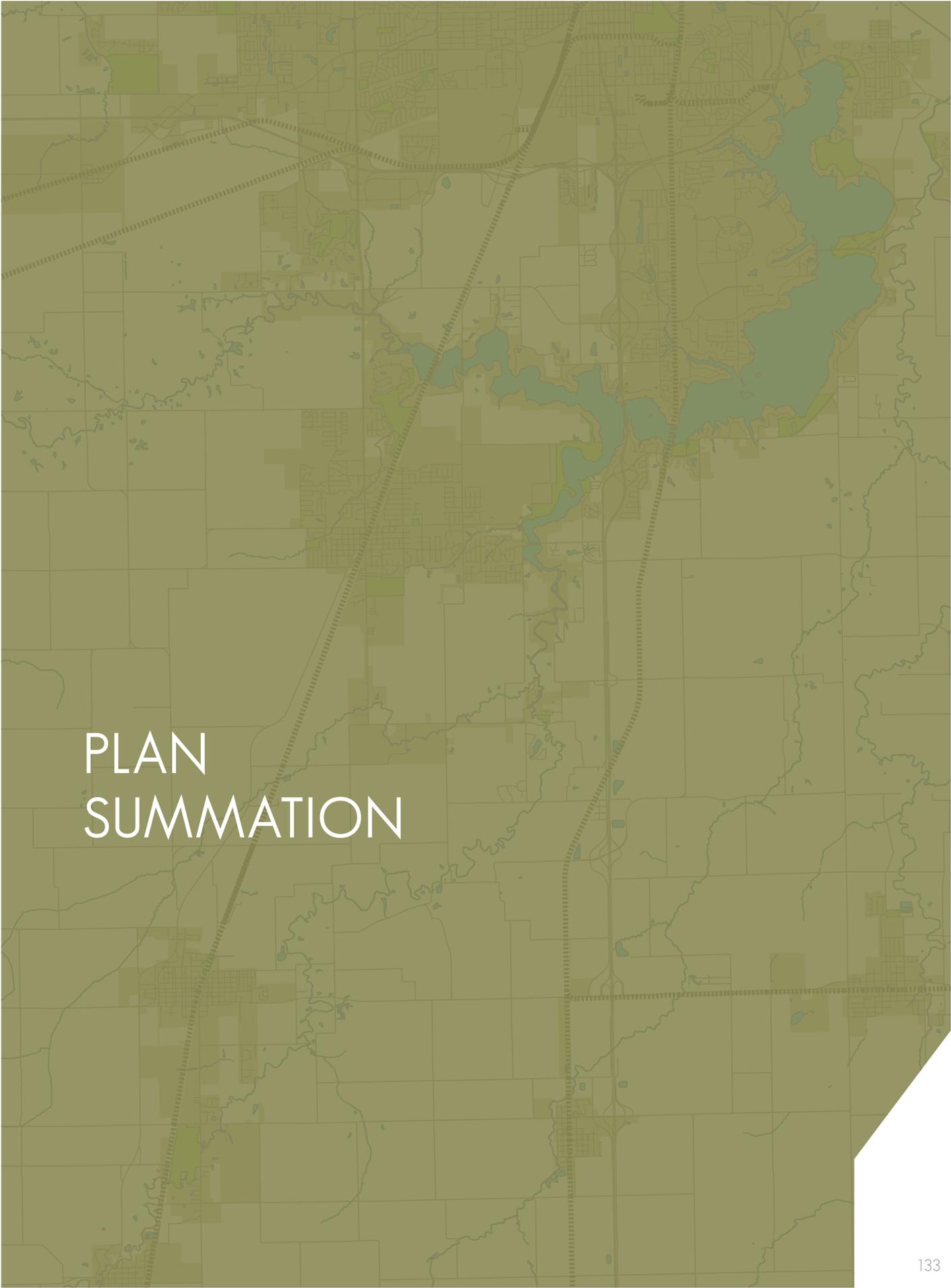


DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS, AUBURN



DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS, AUBURN





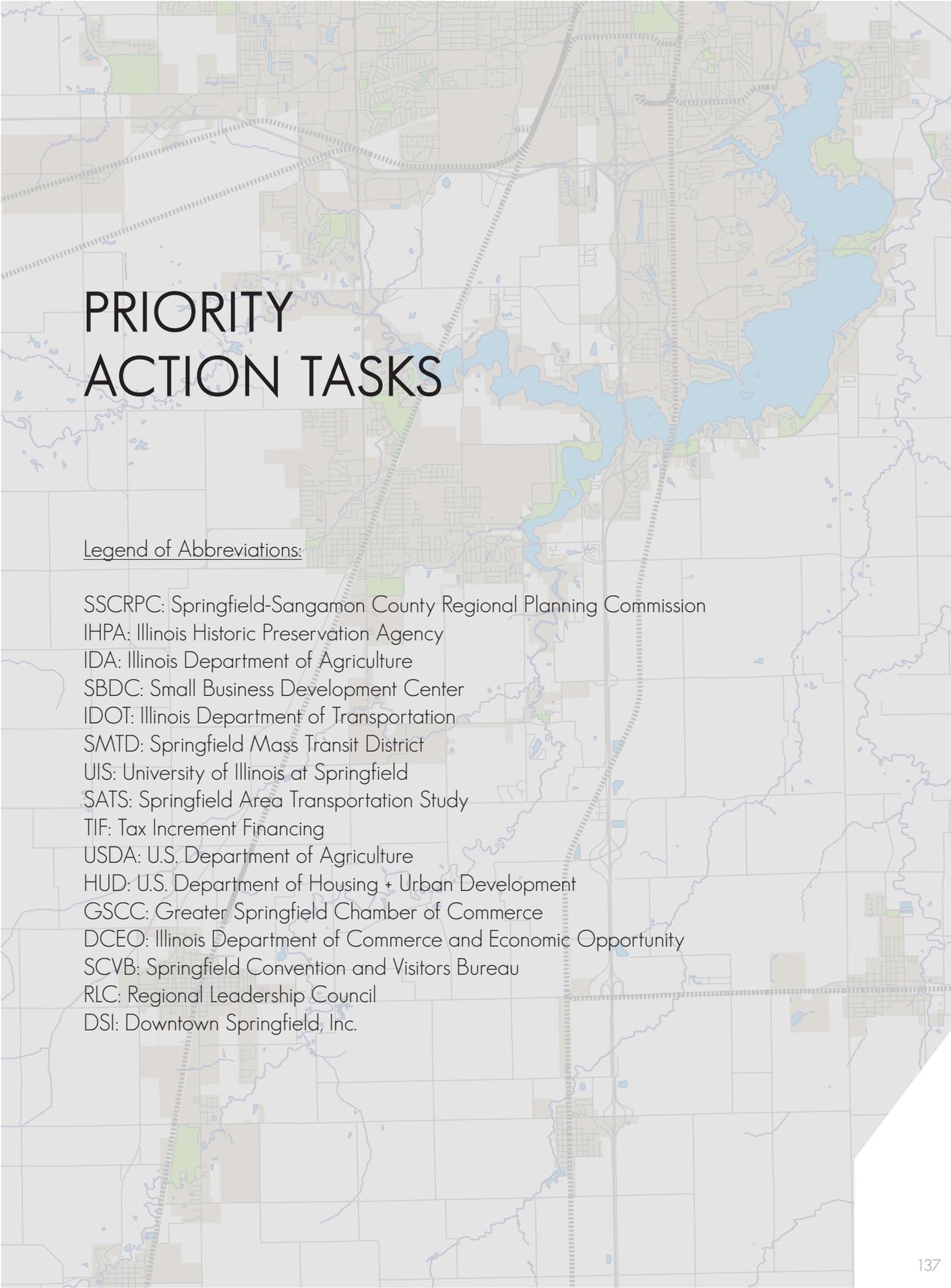
PLAN SUMMATION

“Ultimately, these polices seek to enhance the quality of life for all Sangamon County residents while making the region more livable and sustainable.”

PLAN SUMMATION

The strategies and policy statements presented in this Regional Strategic Plan focus on several key planning areas and priorities, including the revitalization of neighborhoods and communities, the creation of an efficient transportation system, the strengthening of the region's agricultural sector and small town economies, and the enhancement of the County's overall physical appearance and visual character. These policies build on regional strengths and desires with a more complete statement of planning priorities, and are intended to provide guidance in shaping the region's future planning and decision-making. Ultimately, these policies seek to enhance the quality of life for all Sangamon County residents while making the region more livable and sustainable.

Going forward, collaborative efforts at implementation between different communities and stakeholder groups, Vital Partners and Implementation Parties will be critical to moving forward and achieving Plan strategies and recommendations. Such efforts must also be ongoing and well-coordinated with methods and means to measure and assess progress as well as determine new solutions and courses of action that address implementation obstacles and constraints. Only by forging strong partnerships between communities and implementation partners and being diligent, flexible and creative in meeting implementation challenges can a truly comprehensive regional vision be realized.



PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

Legend of Abbreviations:

SSCRPC: Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

IHPA: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

IDA: Illinois Department of Agriculture

SBDC: Small Business Development Center

IDOT: Illinois Department of Transportation

SMTD: Springfield Mass Transit District

UIS: University of Illinois at Springfield

SATS: Springfield Area Transportation Study

TIF: Tax Increment Financing

USDA: U.S. Department of Agriculture

HUD: U.S. Department of Housing + Urban Development

GSCC: Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce

DCEO: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

SCVB: Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau

RLC: Regional Leadership Council

DSI: Downtown Springfield, Inc.

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND GROWTH

STRATEGY #1: Ensure that future growth will occur in geographic patterns that allow for public services and infrastructure to be provided in an efficient and fiscally responsible manner.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
Assist local communities in the development of local comprehensive plans and development codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC, municipalities and County Vital Partners: other governmental units, such as special districts
Target technical and financial assistance to those communities interested in furthering planning and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC, Springfield Area Transportation Study (SATS) Vital Partners: proposed regional leadership council (RLC), Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce (GSCC) and other local chambers, County, municipalities, other governmental agencies, non-profit civic and planning advocacy groups
Conduct planning commissioner workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC, local planning and zoning commissions. Vital Partners: RLC, County, municipalities, other governmental units
Plan for future housing needs and trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: SSCRPC, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit housing and community revitalization organizations, philanthropic institutions, GSCC and local chambers, and realtor and home builder associations
Develop best practice manuals for community plans and zoning ordinances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC Vital Partners: RLC, municipalities, County, other governmental units
Evaluate consistency of local plans and ordinances to regional planning goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County, special districts Vital Partners: SSCRPC
Develop a growth and land use development monitoring system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: SSCRPC, RLC, other government agencies and special districts
Fund infrastructure investments that are tied to local plan implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: IDOT, SATS, SSCRPC, other governmental agencies

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

	FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Private entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate existing plans • Provide assistance to local communities • Review plan implementation results, constraints + opportunities 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify communities with key plan implementation needs • Develop menu of technical services to be delivered • Identify funding sources for implementation projects 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare workshop topics + materials • Establish training calendar • Conduct workshops 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCRPC • Municipalities • Governmental grant sources • Foundations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regional steering committee on housing • Conduct regional housing study • Adjust local comprehensive plan housing elements 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop model comprehensive plan + subdivision code • Identify other planning best practice topics for further consideration • Develop other model codes + ordinances. 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate existing community plan + ordinances • Identify obstacles to local plan implementation 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCRPC • Municipalities • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine land development + growth indicators • Measure land development + growth every 3 to 5 years • Publish reports 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Local communities • TIF • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize key infrastructure improvements identified in local comprehensive plans • Identify potential funding sources for regional infrastructure fund. 	◆ MEDIUM

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND GROWTH

STRATEGY #2: Promote distinctive “places” within the region, each with a defined character, development form and appearance.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
Sponsor or conduct local leader or planning commissioner workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC, municipal planning and zoning agencies, historic preservation bodies Vital Partners: County, municipalities, GSCC and other local chambers, other government agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, philanthropic institutions
Conduct regional downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: municipalities, local organizations and Mainstreet associations such as Downtown Springfield Incorporated (DSI), neighborhood organizations Vital Partners: GSCC and local Chambers, SSCRPC, RLC, other government agencies
Enhance the appearance of important landscapes, viewsheds, and community gateway and transportation corridors through appropriate land use planning and urban design enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County, IDOT, SATS Vital Partners: SSCRPC, other government agencies
Adopt character form districts to manage land use on a regional basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: RLC, SSCRPC
Update existing land use regulatory tools at the local community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: SSCRPC, Sangamon County and municipal zoning departments

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

	FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify workshop topics + establish workshop training calendar • Identify workshop instructors + trainers • Conduct workshops 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify planning + technical assistance needs of downtown + neighborhood organizations • Provide planning + technical support for downtown + neighborhood revitalization efforts 	<p>▲ HIGH</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key landscapes, viewsheds + transportation corridors for potential enhancements • Prioritize enhancement initiatives • Fund, design + implement enhancement projects 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCRPC • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regional steering committee on character areas + districts • Map character areas + districts • Adopt a county wide regulating plan according to character areas 	<p>▲ HIGH</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate local community zoning + land use development codes • Provide assistance to local communities • Assist with code adoption + implementation 	<p>▲ HIGH</p>

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND GROWTH

STRATEGY #3: Protect and enhance environmental features, including greenways and parks, wildlife sanctuaries and nature preserves, and creeks, rivers and lakes, through well coordinated collaborations and the adoption of best practices in regional and local planning.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
Adopt a long-range, integrated open space plan for the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: SSCRPC, conservation districts, local park districts, other government agencies, land owners, land trusts, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, philanthropic institutions
Emphasize the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure network in local community comprehensive plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County, park district Vital Partners: SSCRPC other government agencies
Revise existing regulatory tools that can help create new park and open space where needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: SSCRPC, relevant development interests
Where appropriate, adopt conservation subdivision design as a means for protecting open space and natural features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: SSCRPC, other governmental agencies
Encourage “greening” projects in urban areas and small towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: Municipalities. Vital Partners: advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, local residents, philanthropic institutions
Adopt or update land-cash or land-dedication ordinances for use in providing new park and open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: Municipalities Vital Partners: advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
Foster collaboration between park district, school districts and other agencies in sharing use of open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, park district, school districts Vital Partners: RLC, other government agencies

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

	FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form regional open space steering committee • Update 1997 Open Space + Greenway Plan • Prioritize Greenway Plan implementation projects 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify new park + open space opportunities during regional open space or local comprehensive planning process • Identify funding sources for project implementation 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review County PUD code • Revise County PUD code 	▼ LOW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For steering committee to guide development of conservation subdivision code • Draft conservation subdivision code • Adopt + implement conservation subdivision code. 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance to local communities + organizations 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations • Land trusts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form regional steering committee to study a potential ordinance/program • Develop enabling ordinance 	▼ LOW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess regional open space needs + sharing opportunities during open space planning process • Identify potential joint use partners + forge agreements where necessary 	▼ LOW

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND GROWTH

STRATEGY #4: Encourage best practices in sustainable design, landscaping, signage, lighting and stormwater management in order to promote sustainability and higher quality developments, public spaces and infrastructure.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
Develop a regional sustainability plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: RLC Vital Partners: SSCRPC, local communities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, local residents, philanthropic institutions
Disseminate information and best practices in sustainability and sustainable design through technical assistance, reports and publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: SSCRPC Vital Partners: RLC, County, municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, local residents, philanthropic institutions
Develop sample ordinances related to sustainability and sustainable design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: SSCRPC, RLC Vital Partners: municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
Develop incentives for sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: Development community, GSCC and local chambers, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

	FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key regional sustainability efforts to be addressed in plan • Form regional sustainability steering committee • Develop plan 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sustainability best practices manual • Develop training workshop materials • Establish training calendar + conduct workshops 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft sample ordinances • Conduct workshops + assist in ordinance adoption + implementation 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form task force to consider available incentives • Create + adopt incentives • Develop + disseminate information + materials 	<p>▼ LOW</p>

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



HERITAGE, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

STRATEGY #1: Protect and enhance environmental features, including greenways and parks, wildlife sanctuaries and nature preserves, and creeks, rivers and lakes, through well coordinated collaborations and the adoption of best practices in regional and local planning.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
Create a region-wide historic preservation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: RLC, municipalities, County, SSCRPC Vital Partners: IHPA, municipal and County historic preservation commissions and agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
Continue efforts to survey and document historic resources within the region and locally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission (SCHPC), Springfield Historic Sites Commission (SHSC), other local historic preservation agencies Vital Partners: SSCRPC, IHPA, Springfield Convention and Visitors' Bureau (SCVB), municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
Utilize new technologies that help to both document and promote existing historic resources, sites, structures and landscapes for both planning and economic development purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: SCHPC Vital Partners: SSCRPC, IHPA, SCVB, municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
Provide technical assistance to local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: SCHPC Vital Partners: SSCRPC, IHPA, municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
Use intergovernmental agreements to extend landmark protection in local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: County, municipalities Vital Partners: RLC, SCHPC, SHSC, SCVB, SSCRPC
Revise development regulations to consider impacts on historic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: SSCRPC, SCHPC, SHSC
Undertake educational initiatives to promote the value of historic preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SCHPC, SHSC Vital Partners: SSCRPC, SCVB, municipalities, County, neighborhood organizations, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

	FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Illinois Historic Preservation Agency • Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form regional steering committee • Draft preservation plan • Adopt + implement preservation plan 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Illinois Historic Preservation Agency • Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide County in survey areas + schedule survey program • Conduct surveys • Make survey available to public through internet-based technologies 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Illinois Historic Preservation Agency • Local communities • Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess + purchase software programs + internet technologies 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Governmental grant sources • Foundations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key technical assistance needs • Develop information materials • Provide assistance upon request 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Local municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key local historic resources in need of protection • Develop intergovernmental agreement 	▼ LOW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Local municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing building, zoning + subdivision codes • Revise/update building, zoning + subdivision codes 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Illinois Historic Preservation Agency • Local communities • Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form education subcommittee of Historic Preservation Commission • Develop work plan of educational initiatives • Undertake activities during National Historic Preservation Month 	◆ MEDIUM

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



HERITAGE, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

STRATEGY #2: Promote historic preservation as an effective approach for economic development and community development within the region.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
<p>Develop a regional historic and recreational tourism plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SCVB, municipal tourism groups and agencies Vital Partners: SSCRPC, municipalities, GSCC and other local chambers, local economic development organizations, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, philanthropic institutions
<p>Provide technical assistance to communities and organizations seeking to implement historic preservation-based economic development activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: GSCC and other local chambers, local economic development organizations and agencies, SCVB Vital Partners: municipalities, county, IHPA, DCEO, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, building owners and private developers, philanthropic institutions
<p>Create a regional scenic roads program, possibly including development of tourism programs and products specific to the Route 66 heritage in the region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: County, municipalities, townships Vital Partners: IDOT, SSCRPC, SCVB, Route 66 organizations and associations, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
<p>Develop a tourism toolkit to facilitate the improvement and management of potential recreational and heritage tourism sites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipal tourism and economic development agencies and organizations, SCVB, GSCC and other local chambers Vital Partners: Tourism sites and recreational attraction, SSCRPC, municipalities, County, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, philanthropic institutions
<p>Initiate and sustain a coordinated approach to enhancing tourism and supporting other historic, cultural and recreational assets within the region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SCVB, municipal tourism and economic development agencies and organizations, SMEAA, GSCC and other local chambers Vital Partners: RLC, SCHPC, SHSC, IHPA, DCEO and IDNR, municipalities, County, tourism sites and recreational attractions, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, philanthropic institutions

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Illinois Historic Preservation Agency • Grants • Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form regional steering committee • Engage professional consultants • Develop, adopt + implement regional heritage + recreational plan 	▲ HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Illinois Historic Preservation Agency • Local communities • Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations • Developers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key technical assistance needs • Develop information materials • Provide assistance upon request 	◆ MEDIUM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Municipal • Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations • Land trusts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form regional task force to explore program development + implementation • Develop program criteria • Create rustic road + adopt road management plans 	▼ LOW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Illinois Historic Preservation Agency • Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide County in survey areas + schedule survey program • Conduct surveys • Make survey available to public through internet-based technologies 	◆ MEDIUM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel/motel tax • Municipalities • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review regional tourism findings related to organizational development • Implement new organizational structure 	▲ HIGH

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGY #1: Promote an efficient, multi-modal transportation system that serves residents and commercial enterprises throughout Sangamon County.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
Continue to lead and manage regional efforts in implementing federal and state investments in developing a regional, multi-modal transportation system based on a sound evaluation and priority system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: SATS Vital Partners: Federal and State agencies, Sangamon County, SMTD, local governments, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
Conduct transit-supportive land use planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: SSCRPC, City of Springfield, SMTD Vital Partners: other relevant municipalities, County, IDOT, DCEO
Prioritize modernization and maintenance of roadways and other transportation facilities when making investment decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, townships, County Vital Partners: IDOT, SATS, Springfield Mass Transit District
Construct key roadway projects that facilitate important connections and travel within the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: County, municipalities Vital Partners: IDOT, SATS
Advocate and plan for high speed rail service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: County, City of Springfield, SMTD Vital Partners: SSCRPC, municipalities, IDOT, GSCC, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profits organizations
Continue efforts to expand access transit services to underserved, rural areas of the County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: SMART Vital Partners: Federal and State agencies, County, SMTD, municipalities, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
Create and maintain a more efficient freight transportation network within the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Federal and State agencies, SATS Vital Partners: SSCRPC, Logistics Alliance of Springfield, GSCC, local governments, other governmental agencies, railroads and freight industries
Pursue transit-oriented development opportunities in downtown Springfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: City of Springfield, SMTD Vital Partners: Federal and State agencies (particularly IDOT and DCEO), County, SSCRPC, GSCC, other governmental agencies, railroads and freight industries

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

	FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Illinois • County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop evaluation criteria for major capital expenditure projects • Vet criteria with major stakeholders • Coordinate use of evaluation criteria 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • County • Municipalities • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review opportunities for transit-supportive land use planning in local planning documents • Provide planning services to local communities on transit supportive land use planning 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • State of Illinois • Municipalities • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research impacts of cost effective modernization strategies • Identify areas, needs where modernization efforts can be of most benefit 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • State of Illinois • Municipalities • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review + prioritize planned transportation projects in SATS 2013-2030 • Review priority list with local communities + key stakeholder groups 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • State of Illinois • Municipalities • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an advocacy plan for further funding • Secure funding for rail consolidation engineering + construction • Secure funding for more detailed Downtown Springfield transit oriented development plan 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • County • Municipalities • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing rural transit program + understand existing transportation needs • Identify + secure funding • Expand transit services 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • County • Municipalities • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement recommendations of regional freight study • Build larger coalition/regional steering committee to implement study/advocate for resources • Undertake next phase of rail/freight systems improvements 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • County • City of Springfield • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing studies + plans • Pursue funding for detailed TOD study • Secure funding sources + implement plan 	▲ HIGH

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGY #2: Encourage alternative forms of transportation within the region.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
<p>Incorporate bicycle trail and pedestrian improvements within local capital improvement plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: County, municipalities Vital Partners: IDOT, SATS, SSCRPC, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
<p>Track implementation of 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SATS, SSCRPC Vital Partners: IDOT, Sangamon County, local communities, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
<p>Develop a design manual for complete streets planning and implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SATS Vital Partners: IDOT, local communities, other government agencies
<p>Adopt Complete Streets policies and update local development and subdivision codes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: SSCRPC, SATS
<p>Develop and Implement Safe Routes to School projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, school districts Vital Partners: IDOT, SSCRPC, SATS

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

	FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Local municipalities • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review local community capital improvement plans • Provide assistance to local communities in updating plans • Provide additional technical assistance 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form implementation committee + meet annually or biannually • Determine implementation challenges + course of action 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • County • Other governmental grant sources • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form steering committee to guide development of design manual • Engage professional consultant or complete manual in-house • Distribute manual 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • Local municipalities • Governmental grant sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review local community comprehensive plans • Provide assistance to local communities in updating plans • Provide additional technical assistance 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State • IDOT • Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine availability of funding • Assist local communities with grant applications 	◆ MEDIUM

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGY #3: Plan infrastructure improvements that support the intentional growth of local communities.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
Encourage infrastructure planning in local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, special districts Vital Partners: SSCRPC
Focus infrastructure investments that spur important economic development activities in existing areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: SSCRPC, GSCC

STRATEGY #4: Incorporate best practices in stormwater management wherever feasible for existing and new infrastructure.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
Prepare a regional storm water management plan and implementation ordinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County, SSCRPC Vital Partners: RLC, CWLP, Springfield Metro Sanitary District
Provide technical and financial assistance in storm water management to local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: SMSD Vital Partners: Sangamon County, municipalities, SSCRPC, advocacy groups and nonprofit organizations, local residents
Maintain and replace storm water infrastructure where needed with more effective, sustainable forms of storm water controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SMSD, City of Springfield Vital Partners: Sangamon County, SSCRPC, municipalities, advocacy groups and nonprofit organizations, local residents
Pursue funding sources for other storm water management and flood prevention programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: SSCRPC, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Local communities Other governmental grant sources Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist communities in capital improvement planning during comprehensive planning process Provide assistance on an as-needed basis 	▲ HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal County Other governmental grant sources Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form regional infrastructure task force Identify priority infrastructure improvement projects Identify + secure funding sources 	▲ HIGH

FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State Local communities + drainage districts Other governmental grant sources Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form regional stormwater management task force Develop stormwater management plan Implement stormwater management plan 	▲ HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State, County Local communities + drainage districts Other governmental grant sources Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess local technical assistance needs Develop incentive/grant program to encourage better stormwater management practices 	◆ MEDIUM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Local communities + drainage districts Other governmental grant sources Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage low-impact development provisions in local + county development codes Develop a low-impact development best practices manual 	▲ HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Local communities + drainage districts Other governmental grant sources Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine specific initiatives through stormwater management planning Seek funding sources 	◆ MEDIUM

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



AGRICULTURE AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

STRATEGY #1: Maintain and grow agriculture as a critical element to a diverse and healthy regional economy.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
<p>Create an agriculture sector development task force and plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: County Vital Partners: Illinois Department of Agriculture, University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, Sangamon County Farm Bureau, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
<p>Document the economic benefits of agriculture within the region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: County, Sangamon County Farm Bureau Vital Partners: Illinois Department of Agriculture, University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
<p>Develop and promote a regional agritourism sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Sangamon County Farm Bureau, GSCC and other local chambers Vital Partners: University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, Illinois Department of Tourism, County, SCVB municipalities, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
<p>Encourage and support regional and local community-initiated food systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: Springfield Area Local Food Task Force Vital Partners: County, Sangamon County Farm Bureau, University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, municipalities, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities, local school districts
<p>Establish a Sangamon County agriculture innovation center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: University of Illinois Extension Services, Sangamon County Farm Bureau Vital Partners: Other local colleges and universities, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, private sector stakeholders and investors
<p>Build upon and publicize existing agricultural conservation easement program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: Sangamon County Conservancy Trust Vital Partners: Sangamon County, SSCRPC, municipalities, advocacy groups and nonprofit organizations
<p>Create a Sangamon County agriculture brand awareness program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Sangamon County Farm Bureau, GSCC and other local chambers Vital Partners: University of Illinois Extension Services, local farmers and agricultural businesses, economic development organizations, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

	FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Other governmental agencies Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form regional task force on agriculture Develop + implement agricultural sector action plan Undertake marketing activities 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Other governmental agencies Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop indicators Monitor indicators + publish findings 	▼ LOW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Other governmental agencies Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop tourism + marketing plan concurrently with agricultural sector plan Develop support network for developing agri-businesses 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Other governmental agencies Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish local food council to address obstacles to local food system initiatives 	▲ HIGH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Other governmental agencies Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine organizing + development entity Determine financing plan, location, operating plan Construct/develop center 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Advocacy groups Non-profits Other governmental grant sources Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop criteria for conservation easement program Seek partners for implementing a local conservation easement program Implement + monitor program operations 	◆ MEDIUM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Other governmental agencies Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop branding program concurrently with agricultural sector + marketing plan Seek sponsors + financing partners Implement + manage branding program 	▼ LOW

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



AGRICULTURE AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

STRATEGY #2: Ensure the long-term vitality of the region’s agricultural industry, small towns and villages by facilitating local economic development and addressing important quality of life issues.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
<p>Offer technical assistance to small towns and villages seeking to revitalize their downtown districts and neighborhoods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Implementation Party: SSCRPC • Vital Partners: Municipalities, Illinois Mainstreet program, other governmental agencies, private sector stakeholders and investors
<p>Conduct local community-initiated development and investment initiatives to bring needed commercial services to rural communities within the region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Implementation Party: Municipalities, County • Vital Partners: University of Illinois Extension Service, Small Business Development Center, SSCRPC, other governmental agencies, private sector stakeholders and investors
<p>Pursue grant and funding opportunities to facilitate community development in the region’s rural areas and small towns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County • Vital Partners: SSCRPC, other governmental agencies, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, private sector professionals
<p>Develop a broader organizational structure to address quality of life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Implementation Party: RLC • Vital Partners: University of Illinois Extension Service, University of Illinois – Springfield, Southern Illinois University School of medicine, County, SSCRPC, other governmental agencies, municipalities, advocacy groups and non-profit organization, foundations, private sector stakeholders and investors, local residents

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Other governmental agencies Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess local technical assistance needs Develop menus of technical assistance services Deliver services 	<p>▲ HIGH</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Other governmental agencies Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene local exploratory groups when needed Convene development team Determine need for additional technical assistance to local development groups 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Other governmental agencies Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify + pursue grant opportunities for specific projects 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County Other governmental agencies Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct assessment to determine need for broader organizational structure + framework in undertaking comprehensive quality of life initiatives Implement organizational framework Determine need for additional technical assistance to local development groups 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY #1: Promote regional growth by improving quality of life, strengthening key industry sectors, and diversifying economic opportunity.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
<p>Emphasize quality of life initiatives in planning and economic development activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: RLC, GSCC and other local chambers, local economic development entities, SSCRPC Vital Partners: Local school districts, municipalities, local colleges and universities, private sector stakeholders and investors
<p>Foster development-readiness through targeted infrastructure and organizational improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: GSCC and other local chambers, other governmental bodies engaged in development process, economic development entities
<p>Adjust and fine-tune economic development marketing efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: GSCC and other local chambers, local economic development organizations and agencies Vital Partners: Advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, municipalities

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, County, local + other governmental agencies • Economic development entities • Local colleges, universities and school districts • Private sector groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and enhance regional and local workforce training programs. • Develop initiatives and programs that improve public and local schools. • Support initiatives that improve access to arts, culture and recreation as a way to generate economic growth and employment. 	<p>▲ HIGH</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, County, local + other governmental agencies • Economic development entities • Private sector groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory local infrastructure improvement needs. • Identify organizations for potential capacity building efforts. 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, County, local + other governmental agencies • Economic development entities • Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations • Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing economic development market efforts • Develop new, coordinated marketing materials and advertising efforts. 	<p>▼ LOW</p>

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY #2: Coordinate economic development efforts among local communities on a regional basis.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
<p>Prepare a regional economic development plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: RLC, GSCC and other local chambers, municipal economic development entities Vital Partners: County, municipalities, local colleges and universities, DCEO, IDOT, Central Illinois Economic Development Authority (CIEDA), advocacy groups and nonprofit organizations, foundations, private sector stakeholders and investors
<p>Develop a set of performance based incentives and financial assistance programs for regional economic development initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: RLC, GSCC and other local chambers, municipal economic development organizations and agencies Vital Partners: County, municipalities, local colleges and universities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, foundations, private sector stakeholders and investors
<p>Add information and enhance access to information on available sites and buildings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: GSCC Vital Partners: County, economic development entities, municipalities, SSCRPC, local colleges and universities, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
<p>Advocate for needed legislation at the local, regional, statewide and federal levels that support and facilitate important economic development initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Party: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: GSCC, economic development entities

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County + other governmental agencies Economic development entities Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form regional economic development steering committee with participation from towns + villages Develop or update existing economic development plans Consider organization structure(s) to implement plan 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County, local + other governmental agencies Economic development entities Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop set of performance incentives based on needs from the economic development plan Monitor effectiveness of incentive programs 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County, local + other governmental agencies Economic development entities Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess technical needs/issues in sharing a regional vacant lands/buildings database Develop regional database + monitor effectiveness 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County, local + other governmental agencies Economic development entities Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and adopt priority lists for legislative advocacy issues. Conduce advocacy activities. 	<p>▲ HIGH</p>

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY #3: Build local entities' capacity to conduct local economic development, expanding upon the resources of existing local agencies and organizations to attract new businesses and address economic development needs.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
<p>Conduct business start-up and entrepreneurial development initiatives in collaboration with existing entities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Implementation Party: Small Business Development Center • Vital Partners: Local universities and colleges, GSCC, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
<p>Leverage the resources of local universities and colleges to support local economic development and revitalization efforts in local communities, commercial districts and neighborhoods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Implementation Parties: RLC, GSCC, local universities and colleges • Vital Partners: County, municipalities
<p>Establish a regional venture capital fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Implementation Party: GSCC • Vital Partners: foundations, private sector, County, municipalities, local universities and colleges, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations
<p>Work collaboratively with the universities and colleges to target key local industries and promote sustainable industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Implementation Party: RLC • Vital Partners: Sangamon County, local universities and colleges, GSCC and other local chambers, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, foundations, private sector

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County, local + other governmental agencies Local universities + colleges Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish business incubator with involvement of local universities + economic development entities Monitor incubator efforts in establishing new businesses 	<p>▲ HIGH</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County, local + other governmental agencies Local universities + colleges Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine need for a regional economic development center Provide technical + financial assistance to local communities + clients Conduct technical workshops 	<p>▲ HIGH</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County, local + other governmental agencies Local universities + colleges Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore need for a regional venture capital fund Determine funding sources + operational management structure Target fund use to major industry sectors including agriculture 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, State, County, local + other governmental agencies Local universities + colleges Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential green industry markets as part of regional economic development plan Explore opportunities for local college + university involvement Engage private sector partners 	<p>◆ MEDIUM</p>

SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AND COOPERATION

STRATEGY #1: Work together as a region to ensure coordinated regional planning, especially for those issues that transcend jurisdictional boundaries.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
Identify linkages and opportunities for regional collaboration around potential funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: RLC Vital Partners: Sangamon County, SSCRPC, municipalities, other governmental agencies
Analyze the efficiency and fiscal benefits of sharing or consolidating local services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: RLC Vital Partners: County, SSCRPC, municipalities, other governmental agencies
Establish and empower a permanent regional caucus or conference of mayors and elected officials to facilitate discussions and actions on issues of both local and regional importance for government advancement and on-going improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: Municipalities, County Vital Partners: SSCRPC, CEC
Provide planning and technical assistance in building the implementation capacity of local governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: RLC Vital Partners: SSCRPC, local universities and colleges

STRATEGY #2: Build capacity of local organizations and partners to assist in plan implementation.

INITIATIVES	IMPLEMENTATION ACTORS
Provide training and technical assistance in building the implementation capacity of local non-profit and advocacy groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Parties: SSCRPC, local universities and colleges Vital Partners: RLC, GSCC, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, foundations, private sector
Involve philanthropic organizations in regional and local planning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Implementation Party: SSCRPC Vital Partners: RLC, GSCC and other local chambers, local universities and colleges, advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, foundations, private sector

PRIORITY ACTION TASKS

FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify funding opportunities to address critical issues through the regional caucus 	▲ HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Local communities Other governmental agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a regional study group Engage outside technical + consultation assistance as necessary 	▲ HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish permanent caucus Conduct regular meetings to deliberate on issues of regional importance Establish annual project + advocacy agendas 	▲ HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Local communities Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess local planning and technical assistance needs. Assist in the preparation of local comprehensive and capital improvement plans. Engage outside technical + consultation assistance when needed and appropriate. 	◆ MEDIUM

FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS / KEY TASKS	PRIORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County, local + other governmental agencies Local universities + colleges Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess local organization capacity levels + training needs Consider regional center for economic development in delivering technical assistance Engage outside technical + consultation assistance as necessary in working with local non-profits 	◆ MEDIUM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County, local + other governmental agencies Advocacy groups + non-profit organizations Foundations Other private sector sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore partnership opportunities with local foundations + other philanthropic institutions 	◆ MEDIUM

