

Executive Summary

The Logan County Regional Planning Commission, through its Comprehensive Plan Committee and with the technical assistance of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission, has developed Acres of Opportunity: Logan County Comprehensive Plan to guide the ongoing social, physical and economic development of Logan County and its communities.

The distribution and intensity of land use are primary influences on the sustainability of growth, and central considerations in the allocation of future land uses. Land use planning endeavors to balance the social, economic and environmental needs of the community. Both the quantity and location of land developed for various uses have enormous impact on the livability, economic soundness and environmental balance of the region.

The key findings and provisions of the Logan County Comprehensive Plan are outlined below.

PHYSICAL FEATURES

- Logan County is situated at the center of Illinois, and exemplifies the rich natural resources of central Illinois, particularly in its highly productive agricultural areas.
- More than 95 percent of the County's 618 square miles are in active agricultural use, utilizing the area's fertile soil and open topography.
- The County is crossed by an extensive network of waterways, including Salt Creek, Sugar Creek, Kickapoo Creek, Deer Creek and Lake Fork. The stream system supports wildlife habitats and wooded areas not otherwise prevalent in the County.
- Logan County is situated atop multiple

strata of coal reserves, which support the operations of the Viper Mine at Elkhart.

COUNTY HISTORY

- European settlement of Logan County began in 1819, and by the 1830's had increased sufficiently to prompt the formation of the towns of Middleton and Postville. The County was formally separated from Sangamon County in 1839.
- The introduction of the railroad in the 1850's brought new residents into Logan County, including German and Irish immigrants who worked in the developing agricultural, coal mining and railroad sectors of the County's evolving economic base.
- The City of Lincoln, the largest community in the County, and the current seat of County government, was chartered in 1853. Its location was selected to maximize benefits from the railroad. The involvement of Abraham Lincoln in the efforts to found the city began Logan County's close and fond association with the future president.

PRESENT ECONOMY AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

- Although diverse, the County's economic base is centered on education, health and social services, manufacturing, retail trade and agriculture. Principal employers include the Logan and Lincoln Correctional Center, Eaton Corporation, Lincoln Memorial Hospital, International Coal Group (formerly the Turriss Coal Company) and Federal Express.
- Over the past ten years, unemployment in Logan County has fluctuated between a

low of 3.5 percent and a high of 6.2 percent. Since 2000, unemployment has trended upward.

- Logan County's median household and family income levels compare favorably with smaller rural counties in central Illinois, but are below the medians in counties with larger central cities. The County has a comparatively low poverty rate.
- Logan County's economic resources provide a sound basis for economic development success, and the County's central location, quality of life and extensive transportation network create a solid foundation for attracting new employers.

POPULATION

- Although Logan County experienced some loss of population between 1960 and 1990, the trend reversed in the 1990's with a slight population increase, although not to the peak level of 33,656 residents in 1960. Census 2000 found 31,183 residents in the County, with approximately half of the County's population residing in the City of Lincoln.
- The percentage of residents aged sixty and above living in Logan County and Lincoln is higher than the average nationally and statewide. Both also have a slightly lower percentage population of persons under age 20 than the national and state averages.
- Over eighty percent of Logan County adults have completed high school, with less than fifteen percent having attained a bachelor's or advanced degree. Educational attainment in the County's population is consistent with other small, rural counties, but less advanced than average in central Illinois.

- Population projections in the Comprehensive Plan are designed to recognize and reflect the impacts of economic and social change, including the effects of renewed economic development.
- Logan County's population is projected to increase by nine percent between 2005 and 2025, resulting in a 2025 County population of 34,000. A majority of the projected growth is expected to be concentrated in urban areas, notably in the City of Lincoln.
- The forecasted population growth represents a significant expectation that the combination of the County's internal population attractors and its benefits as a residential base for persons employed elsewhere, will provide incentives for increasing in-migration.

HOUSING

- Seventy-one percent of the County's existing housing units are owner-occupied, while 29 percent are rented. The rate of home ownership has increased by four percent since 1990. In 2000, these units housed 86.3 percent of the population; the remaining 13.7 percent resided in group quarters, including college housing and other institutional housing locations.
- Anticipated population growth will require new housing to be built over the term of the plan. It is expected that an additional 2,432 persons will live in households, and 385 additional persons will occupy group quarters.
- County-wide, it is expected that approximately 300 acres of new lower-density residential development area, and 20 acres of higher-density residential development area will be required. One-half of the residential development area required is expected to be located in and around the

City of Lincoln.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

- Logan County is served by Interstates 55 and 155, which provide access to Peoria, Springfield, Bloomington-Normal and the nationwide transportation system. State highways provide access to Decatur and Clinton.
- The State and County highway systems connect several communities not located on the interstate corridor, including Mt. Pulaski, Latham, Emden and Middleton.
- Lincoln is served by freight and passenger rail services, and by the Logan County Airport, which offers access to general aviation services, but does not offer commercial air service.

GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- Logan County's long range goal is for a healthful and aesthetically pleasing environment that meets the physical, social and economic needs of all segments of the population.
- The plan presents objectives and policies addressing the following community issues: community and environment, growth and development, transportation and public services and interagency cooperation.

COUNTY LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN

- The County land use plan focuses on land use designations appropriate to broad areas of the County, including conservation and recreation, agriculture and municipal growth areas.

- The transportation plan delineates transportation improvements included in the Illinois Department of Transportation five-year work program, as well as transportation improvements proposed by other entities, and proposals regarding the Logan County Airport.
- The land use and transportation plans reflect the designation of planned and potential bikeways, including the Logan County portion of the Historic Route 66 Trail, and a proposed Logan County loop trail network that employs County highways and township roads to access recreational areas and cities and towns throughout the County.

COMMUNITY LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLANS

The Comprehensive Plan includes targeting land use and transportation plans for the Cities of Lincoln, Atlanta and Mt. Pulaski, and the Village of Elkhart.

Atlanta

- Atlanta's land use plan illustrates 75 acres of land designated for new residential development, and an additional 102 acres of residential reserve. The plan also anticipates considerable new commercial development in Atlanta's TIF district, which includes a large area east of the city and surrounding the interchange with Interstate 55. A significant amount of land is designated for commercial and industrial development.
- Atlanta plans to create an internal trail system, which will connect the city park and elementary school with residential areas to the north, and to larger trail systems. Street extensions are illustrated in areas designated for new residential development.

Elkhart

- Elkhart's plan provides for 33 acres of new residential development area, which builds on new neighborhoods already being developed. The plan also provides for 31 acres of residential reserve, including areas south of Kennedy Street on the main route into Elkhart from Interstate 55, and a second south of the existing developed area. Nearly 20 acres of commercial development area are also identified in the plan.
- Elkhart is not expected to require street extensions to accommodate residential growth, as the street network has already been expanded in the wake of recent development activity. Both the Route 66 and County loop trail proposed locations pass through the center of Elkhart.

Lincoln

- Lincoln is expected to be the focus of considerable growth in residential, commercial and industrial development. The plan provides nearly 300 acres of new residential development area, much of which is infill, and an additional 315 acres of residential reserve, located to the west, south and northeast. Over 20 acres of higher-density residential development area is also provided in the plan.
- The plan identifies 228 acres of commercial development area, and over 400 acres of industrial development area, located primarily in the Woodlawn Road and 5th Street east-west corridors leading towards Interstate 55. Industrial development is also designated for locations on the northern edge of the city.
- Street extensions in Lincoln are shown in both the residential and commercial/industrial development areas. Also shown is a proposed bicycle route utilizing city

streets. Lincoln is the central element in the proposed County loop trail, and along the Route 66 proposed trail location. The transportation plan also notes the impacts to be considered from proposed improvements to the Logan County Airport.

Mt. Pulaski

- The land use plan for Mt. Pulaski identifies 31 acres of residential development area, some of which adjoins land currently undergoing development. An additional 70 acres is identified as residential reserve, including a substantial area located on the northwestern edge of the city. New commercial development areas totaling 47 acres are provided, much of which is located within the city's TIF district. Over fifteen acres of land for industrial development is also identified in the plan.
- Street network extensions are shown in larger areas of new residential development area. Mt. Pulaski is also included in the proposed County loop trail route.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- Upon adoption of the Plan, efforts should begin to implement identified strategies, and engage in an ongoing dialogue among all plan stakeholders to carry out the following tasks:
 - Prioritize goals, objectives and strategies
 - Develop implementation plans for priority strategies
 - Monitor the progress of implementation
 - Engage in an ongoing dialogue with the public, government and public and private agencies regarding progress in implementing the plan
 - Continue to update the plan to reflect stages of implementation and evolving community desires and circumstances
- Implementation of the plan should include

assessment of, and where appropriate and feasible, the use of legal, financial and administrative tools available to meet plan objectives.

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