

Introduction

The Town of Normal and the Twin Cities continue to grow and prosper in much the same way reported in the Town’s previous comprehensive plan completed in 1996 and updated for growth areas in 2001. The Town’s population increased by approximately 25 percent between 1990 and 2000 while area unemployment rates consistently rank among the lowest in the state and nation. Normal and the Twin Cities metropolitan area continue to be a quality place in which to live and work.

Many factors contribute to Normal’s success. Strategic location in the heart of Illinois and America (see Map 1.1), combined with temperate climate, moderate terrain and highly productive agricultural soils, have contributed to the community’s livelihood since its origins in the early 1800’s. Outstanding transportation connections have allowed the

Town to capitalize on its natural assets. First, it was the railroads that stimulated growth in the mid 1800’s. Later, it was the state and interstate highway system that attracted industry, commerce and people to the region. For today and the years ahead, these factors, in combination with expanded air service and the planned multimodal center, are likely to further enhance the Town’s position as a transportation hub. To these assets can be added excellent schools and a wide array of amenities, including entertainment, library facilities, parks, trails, and other urban services.

THE CHALLENGES OF GROWTH

Growth brings with it increasing demands for land, infrastructure and services.



Normal City Hall

More people means more houses and more streets, utilities, schools and other urban and social services, such as police and fire protection. Growth's demands for land and services are heightened by today's dispersed patterns of development in fringe areas, which feature larger lots, wider streets, strictly segregated land uses and greater travel distances made possible by the widespread use of the automobile. Such growth and associated features not only stretch a community's financial ability to serve developing areas, but also create the additional challenge of maintaining economically and socially interactive neighborhoods, while meeting growing demands for land, transportation and essential community services and amenities.

An important problem confronting the Town is to determine how to efficiently, effectively and equitably accommodate growth and development without adversely affecting the character of the existing community or jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Efficiency requires that development be not only compact and contiguous, but that it also maximize the use of existing infrastructure and resources through redevelopment of the existing community whenever possible. Effectiveness requires development to be based on sound principles of community and neighborhood planning and design that encourage social and economic interaction. The problem of equity as it pertains to financing growth will become more manageable if efficient and effective future development is achieved.

WHY THE PLAN WAS PREPARED

The purpose of the plan is to serve as an advisory guide for making decisions on matters pertaining to the future development of the Town. As an advisory guide, the plan is intended to be flexible, generalized in nature and designed for periodic review and revision. It provides direction for the review of future development projects and related decisions on annexations, zoning and capital improvements.

The Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan is one of several documents designed to guide the development of the Bloomington-Normal metropolitan area. This plan updates and supersedes the Town's amended comprehensive plan and the McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan prepared in 2000 as it pertains to the Town of Normal. The Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan was prepared concurrently and coordinated with the preparation of the City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan in order to provide coordinated plans for the development of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

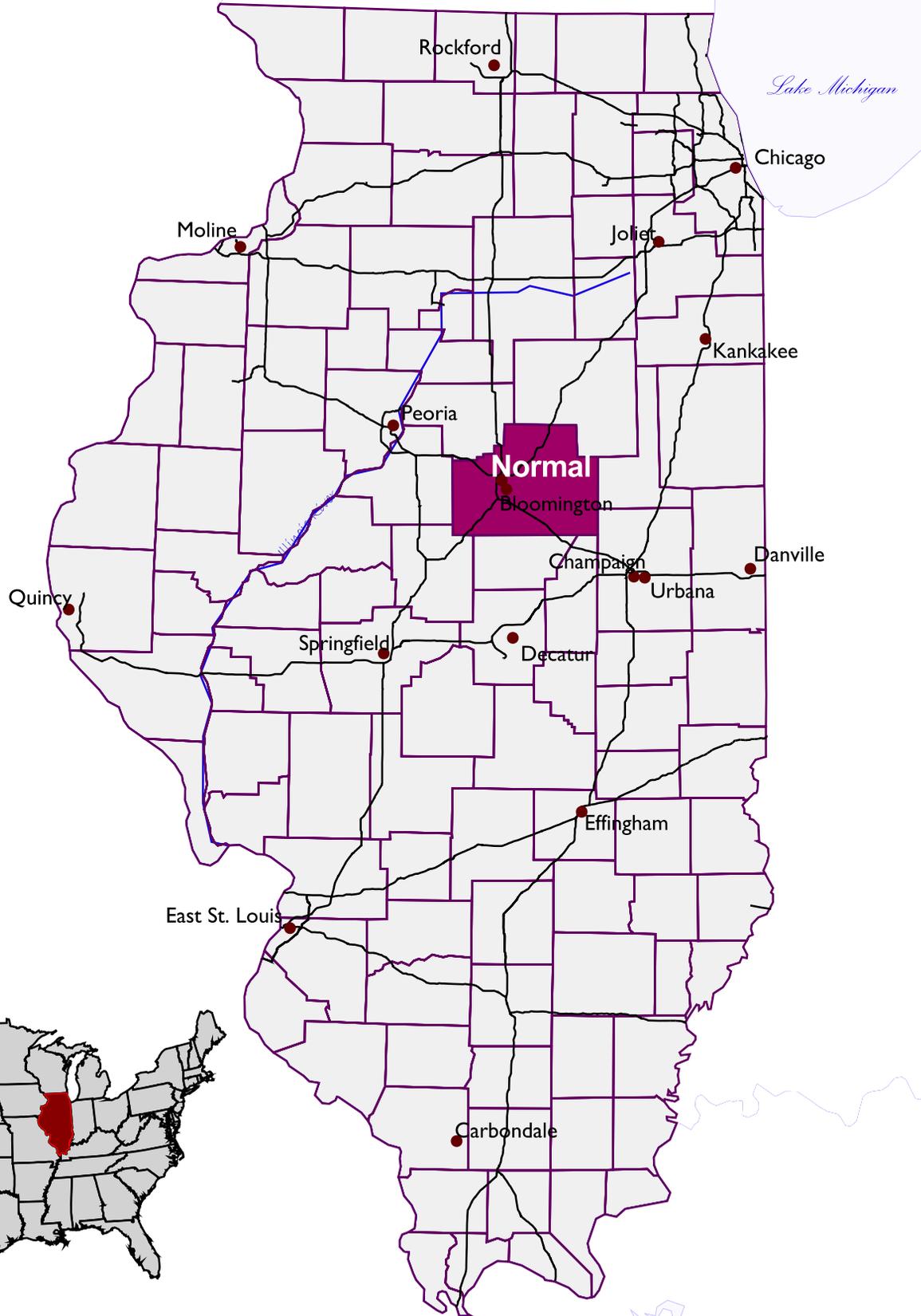
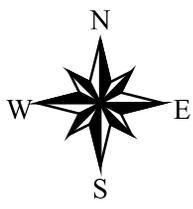
WHAT THE PLAN DOES

This comprehensive plan addresses the future development of Normal and the immediate vicinity for a minimum distance of one and one-half miles for a period of approximately 20 years extending to the year 2025. The plan contains five components beginning with a community profile, followed by community goals, objectives and policies. It then addresses future growth and the implications of that growth on the Town's land and infrastructure requirements. The report presents the Town's Plan in text and graphic form, followed by an implementation strategy.

The plan was designed to be consistent in form with the City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan. Many of the goals, objectives and policies are similar, although some differences exist due to differing characteristics and philosophies between the two communities.

HOW THE PLAN WAS PREPARED

The comprehensive plan was prepared in cooperation with Town elected and appointed officials and staff using a process that involved research, analysis and policy review. The process began with research to update the base of information that determines the community's resources, needs and potentials. This



Legend

- McLean County
- Other Illinois Counties
- Principal Places
- Interstate Highways
- Lakes
- Rivers

Map I.1
Regional Perspective
Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan



research included compilation and mapping of a wide range of features and facilities, and a review and update of census and other data. The process also included coordination with other ongoing projects and studies of Normal including the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Downtown Renewal Plan. Considering the results of these activities, the Town's goals, objectives and policies were reviewed and updated for fifteen identified community issues. Plans for land use, transportation and community facilities were then prepared and included in a preliminary report for review and comment by the public, Town officials and other affected government agencies for consideration in the adoption of the comprehensive plan.

WHAT THE PLAN DOES NOT DO

A comprehensive plan has certain inherent limitations. First, a community plan does not represent an end result. The planning report represents a series of intermediate steps in the planning process. Although the plan summarizes survey results, presents community goals and objectives, outlines policies and plans for future development, and identifies needed actions, these actions must be carried out and supplemented with continuous review and updating in order to complete the process. Secondly, the plan does not attempt to thoroughly analyze every aspect of community development. The plan is concerned with outlining a basic course of action to encourage development that preserves and enhances the local quality of life. Its recommendations are generalized in regard to future land use patterns, street alignments and facilities. In order to avoid duplication of efforts, the plan is deliberately more generalized where more detailed target area planning has been identified.