

EL PASO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2006



CITY OF EL PASO, ILLINOIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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2006

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

The City of El Paso is a small community that has remained relatively unchanged for many years. However, the community understands that change is inevitable and that successful communities need a plan to manage change.

There are several factors that will impact the future of El Paso. One is the current trend for individuals and families to live in small towns and bedroom communities while commuting to work in larger cities such as Bloomington/Normal. Another factor is the potential for further development at the interchange of Interstate 39 with Route 24 at the west edge of the community.

The pressure for the growth of El Paso will come from outside the community. It is unlikely that the population will increase significantly due to additional employment opportunities within the city.

To prepare for the future, the City of El Paso has prepared this Comprehensive Plan for the community and the mile-and-a-half area surrounding the town. The background, development, and features of the Plan are described in this document.

B. LOCATION

El Paso is located in central Illinois approximately thirteen miles north of the twin cities of Bloomington/Normal. It is 35 miles east of Peoria, Illinois. The closest major city is Chicago, which is 125 miles north of the community.

El Paso is in Woodford County and is part of the Peoria/Pekin Metropolitan Area, commonly known as the Tri-County area. Although El Paso is in the Tri-County area, the metropolitan area of Bloomington/Normal will most likely have a greater impact on its future. See Map I-B-1 on the following page.

Map I-B-1 Location



C. PURPOSE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Comprehensive Planning is a process by which a community guides its future development. Growth can be encouraged to take place where the necessary services can be reasonably provided. Conflicts between uses can be minimized. Financial and other resources can be more effectively used.

The Comprehensive Plan is a *guide*. It is not an ordinance, although changes to the City's Zoning or Subdivision Ordinances may be a result of the Plan. This Comprehensive Plan looks twenty years into the future. However, the Plan is not a static document and should be reviewed and updated every three to five years.

With a Comprehensive Plan, a community can choose and design its own future. The future will come, and local officials will make decisions about it whether or not they have a plan. Only through planning, however, can a community make rational choices for a sustainable future.

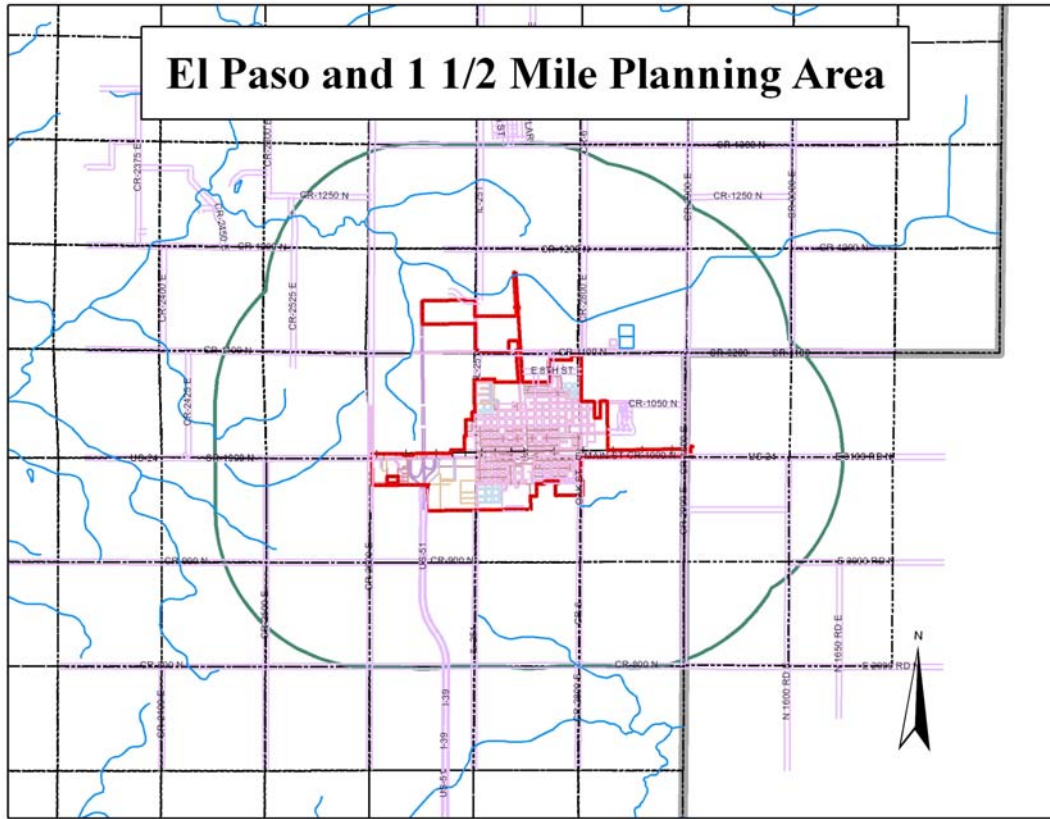
Table I-C-1 shows the elements of a Comprehensive Plan and the question each element addresses.

Table I-C-1 Comprehensive Planning Process	
Element of Comprehensive Plan Inventory of Existing Conditions The Vision Goals and Objectives	Question Where are we now? What do we want to look like in 20 years? How do we get there?

One of the features of a Comprehensive Plan is the inclusion of all land subject to the planning jurisdiction of a community. In Illinois, that area has been defined as all land within a mile-and-a-half of the corporate limits. Illinois law gives communities with a Comprehensive Plan specific regulatory controls within that area. This allows the community to make land use decisions outside their corporate boundaries.

This plan for El Paso will address the community as it exists today and the mile-and-a-half planning area that surrounds it. See Map I-C-2 on the following page.

Map I-C-2



II. INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. LAND USE

Land Use is a term that is used to describe man-made uses of land. Typical land uses are residential, commercial, and industrial. Other land uses are schools, parks, churches, and public uses such as City Hall.

The City of El Paso has a traditional mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The mile-and-a-half area is predominantly agricultural.

As with most communities, the predominant land use in El Paso is residential. Within the residential areas can be found land uses that support the neighborhoods, such as schools, parks, libraries, public buildings such as governmental buildings and churches.

El Paso is fortunate to have an active park system. In addition to South Pointe Park, which is over forty acres in size, there are numerous smaller parks such as Corn Belt Park. El Paso also has a bicycle/walking trail that runs in a north/south direction through the entire community.

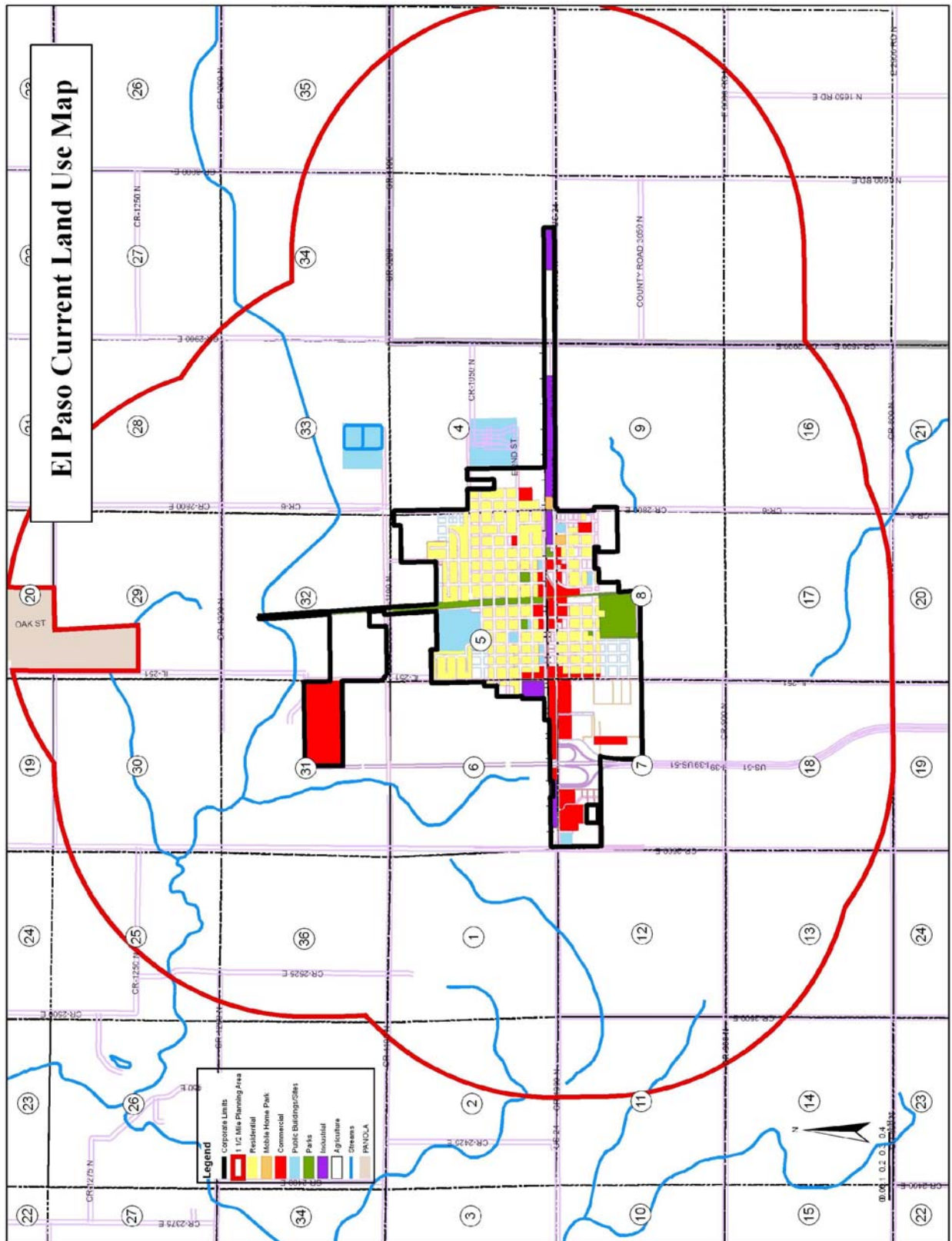
An elementary school, a middle school, and a high school are located in the city. A public library is centrally located on East First Street.

Local businesses support the residents of a community with everyday goods and services. There are two business districts in El Paso, the traditional downtown business district and the highway-oriented business district along Route 24 on the west side of the town.

An important land use in any community is that used for industry. It is the industries that provide employment for the residents of a community. In El Paso, industries are located primarily along Route 24 which runs east-west through the community.

Map II-A-1 on the following page is a graphic representation of the current land uses in El Paso

Map II-A-1 (revised)

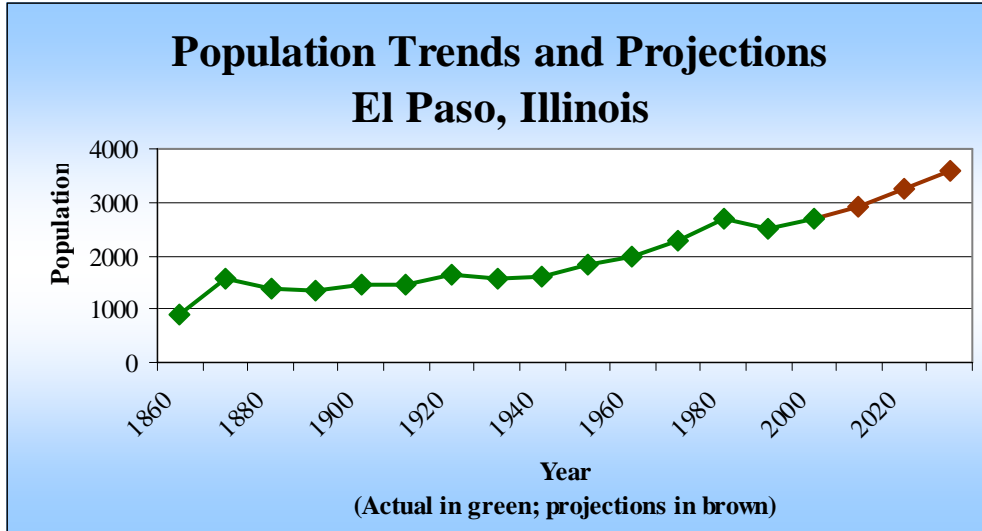


B. POPULATION

Population Trends

El Paso was incorporated in 1854. Since that time, the population has grown at a slow but steady rate. The first census for the community, in 1860, showed a population of 890 residents. One hundred and forty years later, in 2000, the population was 2,695.

Figure II-B-1



Source: Actual - U.S. Bureau of the Census
Projections – Illinois State Census and Data User Services

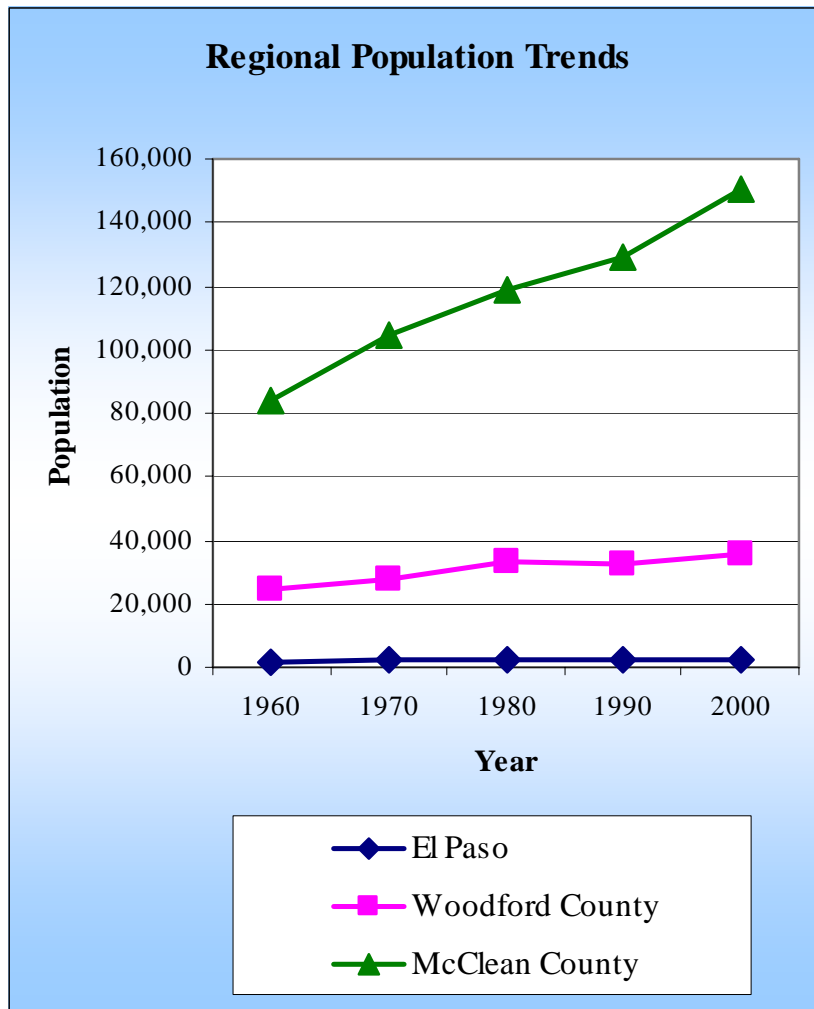
The population of a community often reflects the population growth or decline of the region in which it is located. Therefore, a look at population trends in the county and the region is in order. Figure II-B-2 on the following page compares the population growth of El Paso to the population growth of Woodford and McLean Counties over the last forty years.

The population of Woodford County has slowly and steadily increased since 1960. Most of this population growth has been on the southwestern side of the county, however, as residents of Peoria move to bedroom communities within commuting distance from Peoria.

McLean County has seen tremendous growth in the last forty years. The population of McLean County has almost doubled since 1960. Much of this growth is due to the increase in white-collar employment opportunities in the Bloomington/Normal area.

During these years of moderate growth in Woodford County and substantial growth in McLean County, the population of El Paso has remained stable. However, as population growth moves outward from Bloomington/Normal, El Paso may see population growth. The question we must ask ourselves is “Will this population growth come to El Paso, and if so, when?”

Figure II-B-2



Population Projections

The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to plan for the future of a community, and to plan we must have an understanding of the growth that is to be expected. Figure II-B-1, in addition to showing the actual population of El Paso over the last 140 years, also indicates potential population growth in the next twenty-five years. Based on projections developed by the Illinois State Census and Data User Services, the population in 2025 is projected to be 3600 persons, an increase of approximately 900 persons, or 34%.

Since the 2000 Census was completed, approximately fifty new homes have been built in El Paso. This rate of growth is slightly lower than that predicted in Figure II-B-1.

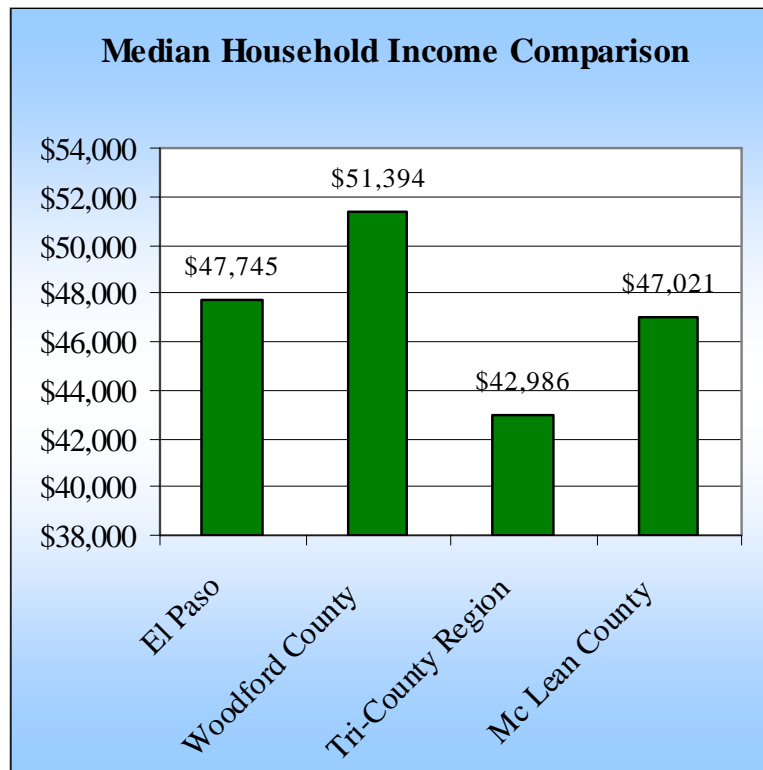
Income

One of the factors that describes a community is income. Half of the households in El Paso (50.2%) have incomes ranging from \$35,000 to \$75,000 a year. The remainder of the households have incomes above or below that amount.

One way to look at income is to analyze the median household income of a community. The median household income in El Paso is \$47,745. Median income means one-half of the households have an income higher than this amount, and one-half have an income below it. The graph below indicates the median income for El Paso and the surrounding areas.

The median income in El Paso is lower than Woodford County but much higher than the Tri-County region as a whole. It is consistent, however, with the median household income in McLean County. See Figure II-B-3.

Figure II-B-3

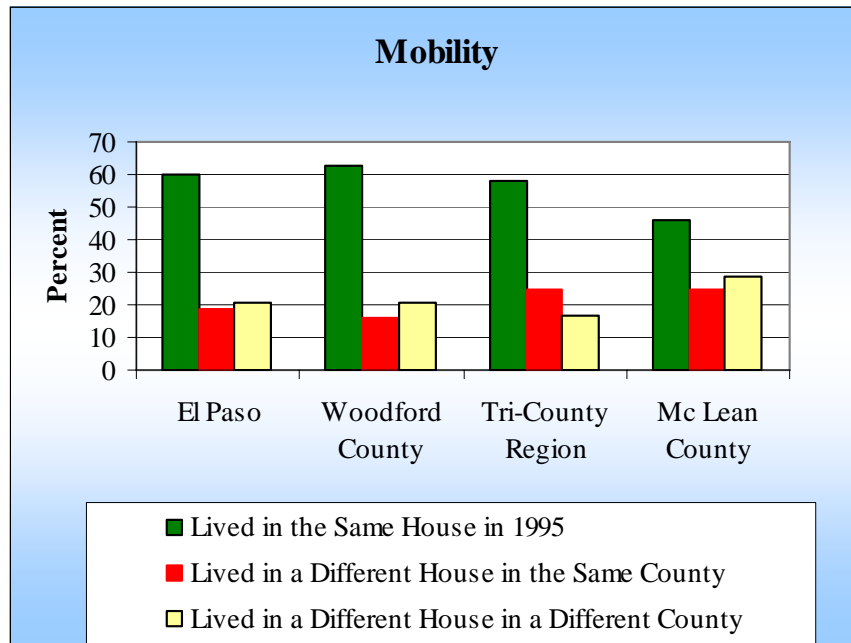


Mobility

Another factor to analyze in describing population is mobility. Mobility refers to the degree to which residents move into or out of a community. The graph on the following page shows the degree to which residents have moved since 1995. For example, 60% of persons in El

Paso lived in the same home in 1995, while 30% lived in a different home. The statistics are similar for Woodford County and the Tri-County Area. In Bloomington/Normal, however, 46% of residents lived in the same home in 1995, while 54% lived in a different home. One conclusion that can be gleaned from this is that the population of EL Paso will continue to grow as new residents move into the community while current residents remain. See Figure II-B-4.

Figure II-B-4



C. HOUSING

After Land Use and Population, the next area to review is Housing. Housing is the largest use of land in any community and is a central focus in community planning. This report will look at the following housing factors: Age, Housing Types, Owner and Renter Occupancy, and Value. As with Population, the primary source of data for this section is the 2000 U.S. Census.

Age of Housing

As mentioned earlier in this report, El Paso is a very old community, and the age of the community is reflected in the age of its housing stock. As indicated in Figure II-C-1, over half (58%) of the homes in the community are over forty years old. Further, under ten percent of the homes have been built since 1990.

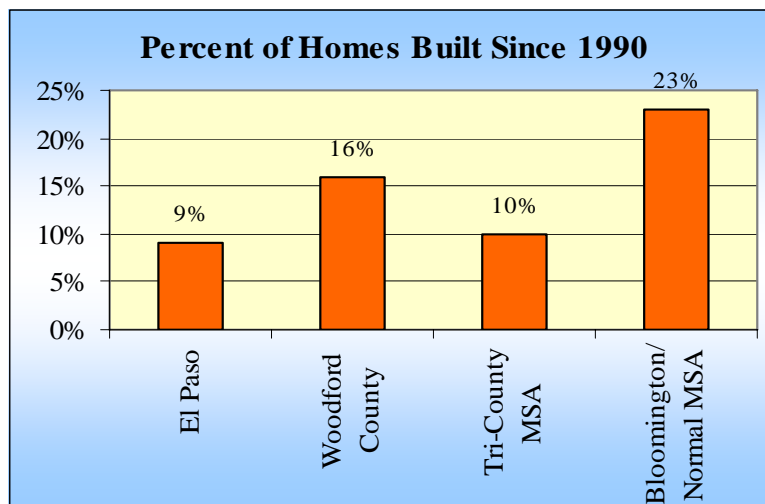
A comparison with other communities is helpful. Figure II-C-2 compares the percentage of homes built since 1990 in El Paso to other areas. Woodford County has had significant new housing, although most of this new housing was on the southwest side of the county near Peoria. In the Bloomington/Normal region (McLean County), 28% of all housing has been built since 1990.

Figure II-C-1

Age of Housing		
Year Built	Number	Percent
1939 or earlier	343	34%
1940 - 1960	245	24%
1960 - 1980	301	29%
1980 - 1990	41	4%
1990 - 2000	94	9%
Total Housing Units	1024	100%

Source: 2000 Census

Figure II-C-2



Another way to look at housing and population growth is to review the number of building permits issued by the City of El Paso for new housing units. The following information was obtained from the City of El Paso building department.

Figure II-C-3

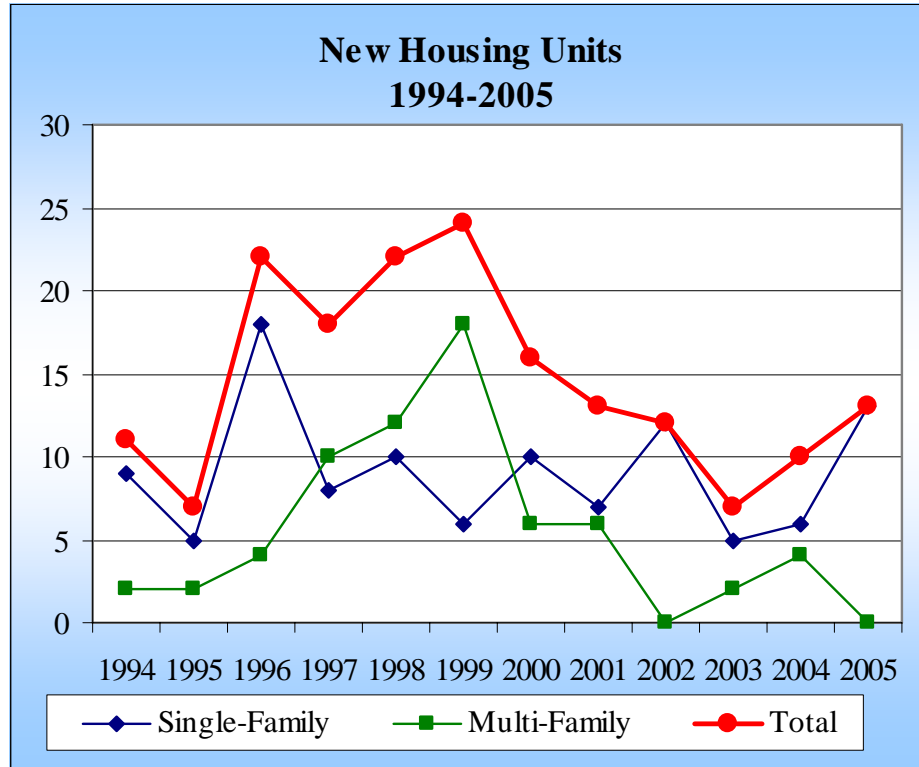


Figure II-C-3 meshes with Figure II-B-1 on Page 7 entitled “Population Trends.” The population of El Paso increased by almost 200 persons from 1990 to 2000. The graph above indicates that 104 new housing units were built during the years 1994 to 1999. Assuming two persons per household, this would easily explain the increase in population during the 1990’s.

Figure II-C-3 also shows that new housing starts for single-family homes have remained steady since the mid 1990’s. However, the number of multi-family units built in any year varies widely.

Types of Housing

Another important area of housing to analyze is the types of housing units. The majority of the housing units in El Paso, as in most communities, are single-family homes. There is a limited amount of duplexes, multi-family housing, and mobile homes. See Figure II-C-4.

As with age of housing, a comparison of types of housing units with other communities is helpful. While over 75% of the housing in El Paso is single-family, this is lower than the proportion of single-family homes in Woodford County or the Tri-County Region. Only McLean County has a smaller proportion of single-family homes, which is most likely due to the existence of Illinois State University in Normal. See Figure II-C-5.

Figure II-C-4

Types of Housing Units		
Housing Type	Number of Units	Percent
Single-Family	778	76%
Duplex	63	6%
Multi-Family	97	9%
Mobile Home	<u>86</u>	8%
Total Units	1,024	

Source: 2000 Census

Figure II-C-5

Types of Housing Units in Other Areas By Percent				
Jurisdiction	Single-Family	Duplex	Multi-Family	Mobile Home
El Paso	76%	6%	9%	8%
Woodford County	86%	4%	5%	5%
Tri-County Region	79%	3%	15%	3%
McLean County	66%	3%	25%	6%

Source: 2000 Census

El Paso has a higher proportion of mobile homes than the remainder of the areas being studied. In the 2000 Census, over eight percent of the housing units were mobile homes. This is a higher percentage than any of the three counties listed in Figure II-C-5. El Paso also has a higher proportion of mobile homes than other municipalities of similar size in Woodford or McLean Counties. See Figure II-C-6.

Figure II-C-6

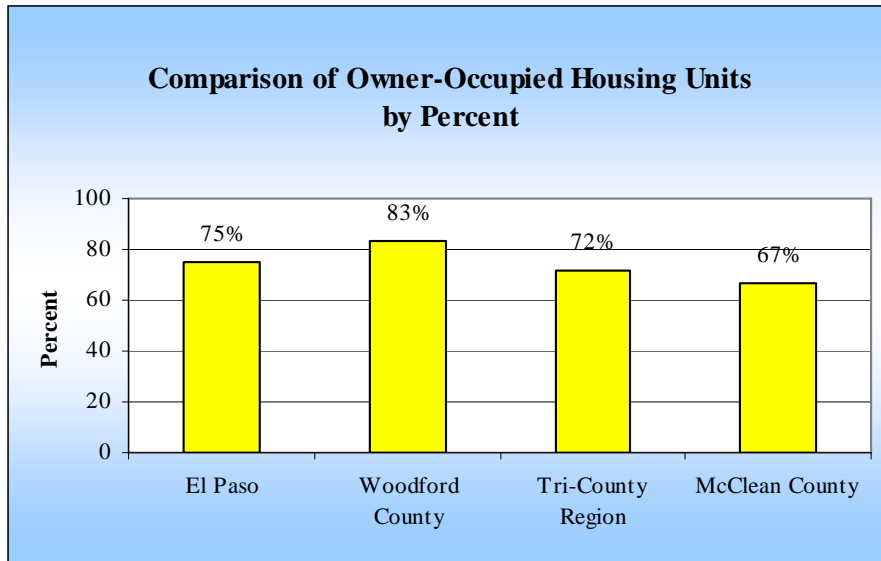
Percentage of Mobile Homes in Other Municipalities	
Municipality	% Mobile Homes
El Paso	8.4
Roanoke	0.2
Metamora	0.4
Minonk	5.5
Chenoa	3.1

Owner and Rental Occupancy

A community typically has a mix of owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing. Families often prefer to own their own homes, while young people and the elderly often prefer to rent. Communities, for the most part, try to encourage home ownership to strengthen neighborhoods; however, communities also have an on-going need for quality rental property.

Seventy-five percent of the homes in El Paso are owner-occupied. This is lower than the percentage in Woodford County but higher than McLean County or the Tri-County region as a whole. Please refer to Figure II-C-7.

Figure II-C-7



Housing Value

The final housing factor to analyze is value. Home values in El Paso range from less than \$50,000 up to \$200,000. As can be seen in Figure II-C-8, most homes fall into the \$50,000 to \$100,000 category.

Figure II-C-8

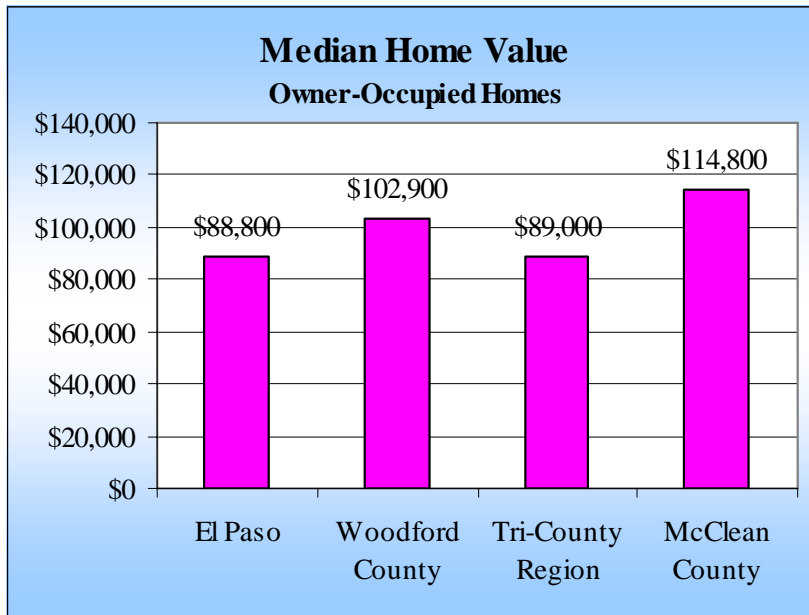
Value of Owner-Occupied Homes in El Paso		
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than \$50,000	39	6%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	360	57%
\$100,000 to 149,999	184	29%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	53	8%
\$200,000 or more	0	0%

Source: 2000 Census

Another way to look at home values is to look at the median value of homes in a given area. Median value means one-half of the homes are below this value, and one-half are above. The median value of homes in El Paso is \$88,800. Figure II-C-9 compares the median value of homes in El Paso to Woodford County, the Tri-County region, and McLean County.

El Paso has a slightly lower median home value than the Tri-County Area. However, it is significantly lower than both Woodford County, of which it is a part, and McLean County. This is to be expected given that there has been little new housing construction in El Paso in recent years.

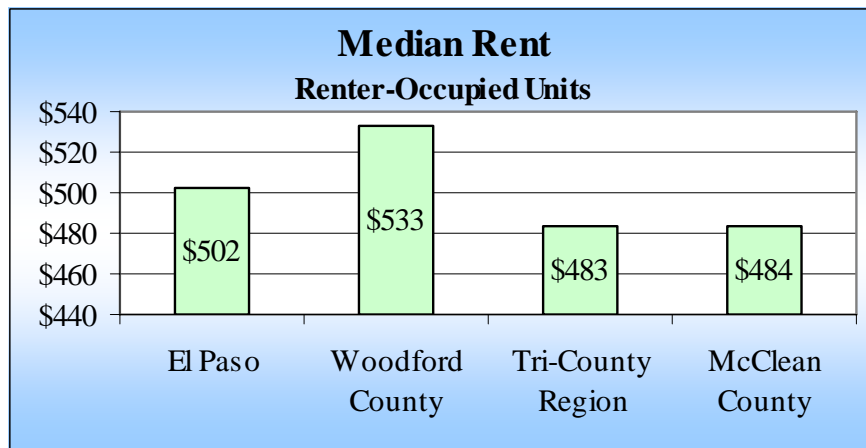
Figure II-C-9



Source: 2000 Census

Rental Rates

Figure II-C-10



Source: 2000 Census

In addition to home values, it is important to review rental rates for renter-occupied units. Figure II-C-10 on the previous page indicates the median rent for El Paso and surrounding areas. (Median Rent means one-half of the units rent for an amount above this value, and one-half are below.)

The rental rates in El Paso are higher than in McLean County or the Tri-County area. However, they are lower than Woodford County.

D. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Wastewater Collection and Treatment

The residents of El Paso are served by a municipal sanitary sewer system that was constructed in 1967. The system is a combination of gravity sewers and pump stations that take wastewater from its point of origin to the treatment plant approximately one-half mile northeast of the city.

The City of El Paso commissioned a study in 2002 of the condition of the sanitary sewer system. The study found that, in general, the condition of the system is satisfactory. However, there is one significant problem with the wastewater system. A gravity sewer at First Street that collects wastewater from the Pine Street pump station is at capacity. The problem is exacerbated during heavy rains when rainwater infiltrates the system. Until this issue is resolved, growth on the south and west sides of the community will be restricted.

A sanitary system has two primary functions. One is to collect the wastewater and take it to a treatment plant, and the second is to treat the wastewater and discharge it into an approved drainage way. The collection system has at least one major issue. As for the second function, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has rated the capacity of the treatment system at 4,610 population equivalents. With a current population of 2,695, there is excess capacity in the treatment plant.

The 2002 study makes recommendations for upgrading the wastewater system. As part of the recommendations, the study looks at potential land uses for the growth areas of the city. Residential development is suggested for the north of the city, and business/industrial to the west and southwest of the city.

As this report is being written, the city of El Paso is installing a trunk sewer along Illinois 251. The purpose of this construction is two-fold: to mitigate capacity problems that were outlined in the 2002 study, and to provide wastewater service to Furrow's Winery, a recently annexed development to the city. The construction of this trunk sewer opens up the land between Interstate 39 and Route 251 to development.

Water Treatment and Distribution

The City of El Paso provides drinking water to its residents. The Water Treatment Plant is capable of producing water at a rate of 600 gallons per minute. Treatment at the plant consists of iron removal, filtering, softening, as well as the addition of chlorine, phosphate and fluoride. El Paso has received commendation from the Illinois Department of Health for the last seven consecutive years, because the city achieved the highest standard of compliance possible in its fluoridation program.

Water for the system is obtained from wells. Two of these wells are located at the Water Treatment Plant (301 West Front Street). A third well is located at the corner of Third & Central Streets. The fourth and newest of these wells is located on Eighth Street along the walking trail, and it was completed in the fall of 2001. The oldest well has been serving the

City since approximately 1882. Water is transported around the City through a network of water mains ranging in size from 4" to 12" in diameter. The mains range in age from those which were installed recently to some which were installed in 1896 and are still in use today.

According to Chuck Arbuckle, the City's Director of Public Works, the water system is in excellent condition. Approximately 500 new residents can be served with the existing system. At that point, upsizing the existing plant or digging new wells will be required.

The population projections discussed in Part B of this chapter indicate that the city will grow by approximately 900 residents in the next twenty-five years. An increase of 500 residents should not occur for at least twelve years.

Fire Protection

Fire protection is provided by a local volunteer fire department. El Paso also has a volunteer emergency medical team and disaster relief office.

Eighty percent of the respondents to the community survey rated the fire protection as good. 83% of the respondents rated the ambulance service as good. (See the Appendix for the full survey results.)

Law Enforcement

The City of El Paso has an eight person police department that provides 24 hour police coverage for the city.

Sixty-nine percent of the respondents to the community survey rated the fire department as good.

City Government/Administration

The City of El Paso is a Mayoral/Aldermatic form of Municipal government. All officials are elected for four year terms, with three Aldermen elected at the same time as the Mayor and the others elected two years later. The City is divided into three wards with 2 Aldermen representing each.

The city also has a city clerk, a city administrator, and administrative assistants.

E. TRANSPORTATION

The goal of transportation planning is to provide safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout a community. Transportation is more than roadways for cars and trucks. It also includes rail, mass transit, and non-motorized forms of transportation such as walking and bicycling.

Highway Transportation

The highway transportation system is typically composed of three types of streets, known as arterials, collectors, and local streets. Each of these street classifications has different characteristics and functions, as defined below:

STREET CLASSIFICATION DEFINITIONS

Arterial Streets

Arterial streets are major routes for traffic movement within a region, and deal with the movement of people and goods into and out of a community. They have the fastest speed limit of the three types of streets, and can typically be accessed only at specific points along their length. Route 24 is the only arterial street in El Paso (other than Interstate 39).

Collector Streets

Collector streets connect the arterial roads to the local street system, and thus carry a higher level of traffic than local streets. Collector streets may provide direct access to adjacent land. However, they primarily route traffic from local streets to arterials.

Local Streets

Local streets provide direct access to adjacent land and carry a relatively small proportion of the vehicle miles traveled. These streets serve primarily residential neighborhoods, and often have sidewalks on one or both sides. Speed limits on these streets are the lowest of the three types of streets, and they have the highest amount of pedestrian activity.

Both collector streets and local streets deal with the movement of people and goods within a community.

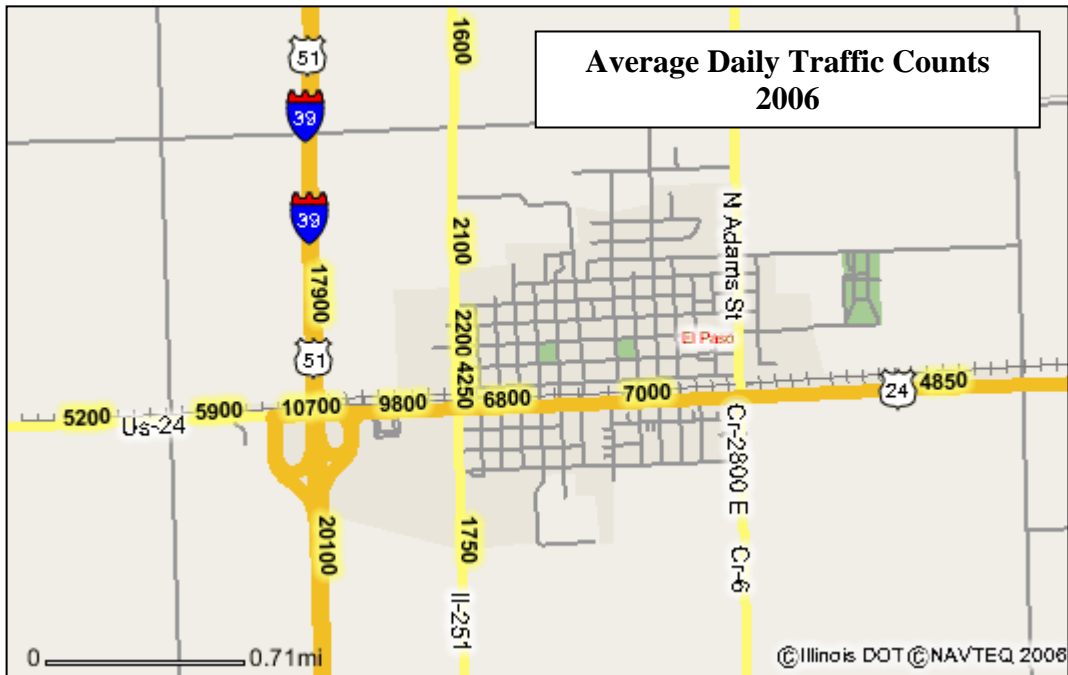
Arterial Streets

The only arterial street in El Paso is US Route 24, a two-lane federal highway that runs in an east-west direction through the community. US Route 24 connects to other arterials in

the region. Interstate 39 is on the western edge of El Paso. Interstates 55 and 74 are approximately fourteen miles south of El Paso. In addition, northbound Interstate 55 can be accessed fifteen miles east of the city. Interstate 80 is forty-five miles north of the city.

US Route 24 carries from 4,850 to 9,800 vehicles per day through the community. See Figure II-E-1.

Figure II-E-1

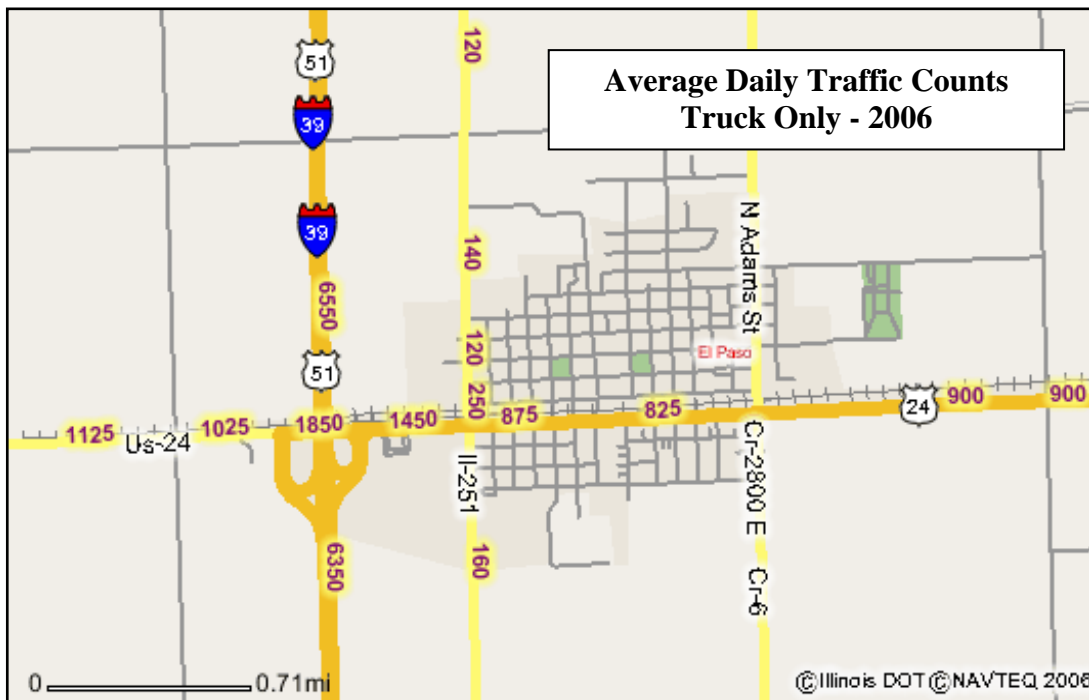


Source: Illinois Department of Transportation

Arterials are a vital link in the transportation system of the region. They allow the movement of freight into and out of the region in an efficient, safe, and reliable manner. They keep existing businesses and industries in the region and are an important factor in encouraging new ones to locate here.

US Route 24 carries the bulk of the truck traffic that goes through El Paso. There is a consistent number of trucks that use US Route on a daily basis – approximately 800 to 1,100. However, as expected, these numbers rise significantly at the Interstate 39/US Route 24 interchange. See Figure II-E-2.

Figure II-E-2



Source: Illinois Department of Transportation

Capacity of US Route 24

The capacity of a highway is defined as the maximum number of vehicles that can reasonably be expected to use the facility in a given time period under prevailing roadway, traffic, and control conditions. It is typically measured using a concept called Level of Service (LOS). The LOS comprises a set of defined operating conditions for each type of roadway.

There are numerous operating conditions used in defining the LOS. Some of these are average daily traffic (passenger vehicles and trucks), peak hour traffic, percentage of trucks using the roadway, lane width, speed limit, and the number of intersections. For purposes of this plan, however, only two factors were considered: average daily traffic and percentage of trucks.

A Threshold Level of Service is the borderline between inadequate and adequate Levels of Service. For US Route 24, a two-lane highway, an Average Daily Traffic less than 10,000 and truck traffic of less than ten percent is considered adequate. Quantities over those figures means vehicles may not be able to travel in a safe and efficient manner.

For the two-lane portion of US Route 24, the Average Daily Traffic is from just under 5,000 to 7,000 vehicles per day (vpd), which is well below the standard of 10,000 vpd. However,

Truck traffic is over the ten percent threshold, and in some areas is substantially above the threshold. See Figure II-E-3.

Figure II-E-3

LEVEL OF SERVICE			
US ROUTE 24			
	ADT*	ADT*	
	All		
Road Segment	Vehicles	Trucks	% Truck Traffic
CR 2500 E to CR 2600 E	5200	1125	22%
CR 2600 E to I-39	5900	1025	17%
IL-251 to N. Central	6800	875	13%
N. Central to CR 2800 E	7000	825	12%
CR 2800 E to CR 2900 E	4850	900	19%

*Average Daily Traffic

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation

Figure II-E-3 indicates that the traffic on US Route 24 does not meet Illinois Department of Transportation standards for safety and efficiency. There are two primary methods of improving this situation: US Route 24 could be widened to four lanes through the community, or a bypass around the community could be built. Unless US Route 24 is used as part of a Peoria to Chicago highway (see discussion below), the first option is more likely.

Peoria to Chicago Highway

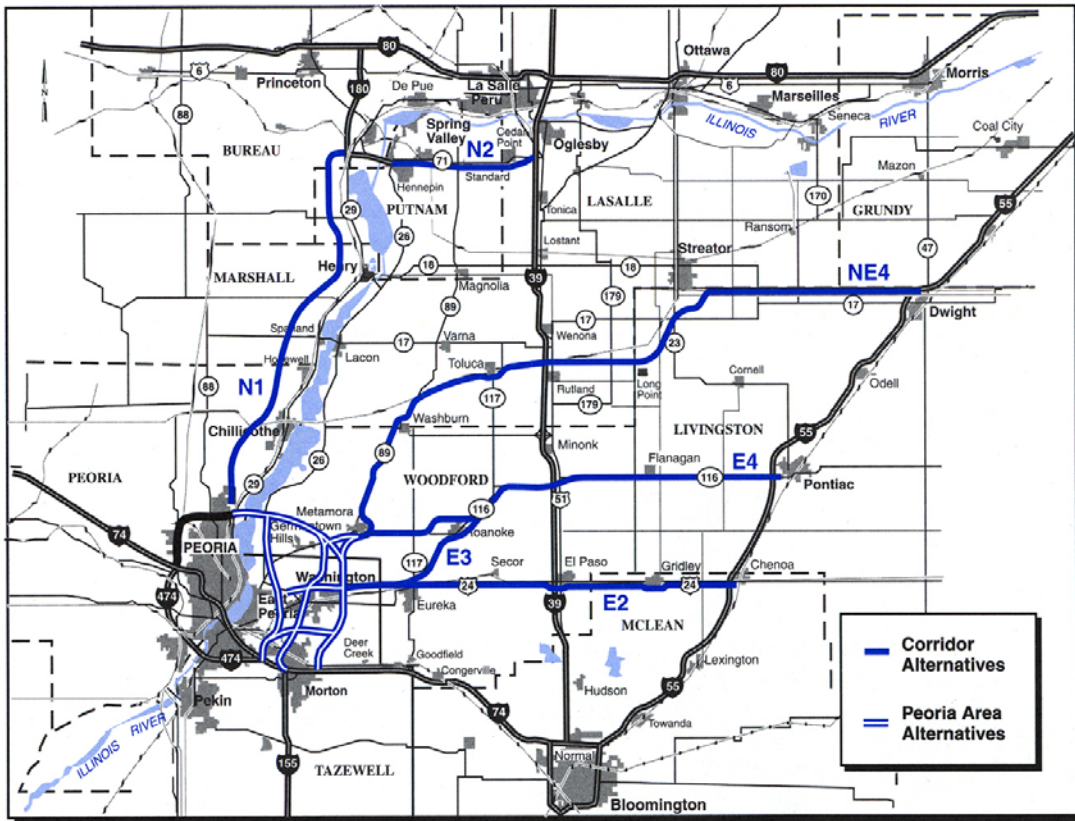
In the mid 1990’s, a plan was conceived to build a limited access highway from Peoria to the Chicago area. The project included two sections – the completion of Interstate 474 around Peoria (sometimes referred to as the ring road), and the construction of a highway from Interstate 474 to Chicago.

The Illinois Department of Transportation began both sections of the project. However, the project was not completed. There was significant controversy at the time regarding the corridor for completing Interstate 474 around Peoria. Without the completion of Interstate 474, the highway to Chicago could not be built.

Figure II-E-4 shows the proposed locations of the ring road and the highway. Corridor E2 would impact El Paso directly. If corridor E2 was chosen, a further decision would have to be made, and that is whether US Route 24 would be improved and widened in its present location through El Paso, or whether a bypass around El Paso would be built.

As of this writing, there is a renewed interest in building the ring road and completing the Interstate 474 loop around Peoria. However, there has been no further discussion on the Peoria to Chicago Highway.

Figure II-E-4



Collector Streets

Collector streets move traffic from arterials to local roads. They have a lower speed limit than arterials but a higher speed limit than local streets. The City of El Paso has not formally identified collector streets. However, the following streets act as collectors: the primary north-south collector streets are Route 251 and County Highway 6 (Adams/Oak Street). The east-west collector streets are CR 1100 North (Clearview) and Route 24. In El Paso, Route 24 acts as both an arterial and a collector street as it is used for both through traffic and internal circulation within the city.

An issue with collector streets is the need for extensions of existing streets as the community grows. There are three streets extensions that should be considered as development occurs. The first is an extension of Clay Street east of Oak Street to CR 2900 E. The second is an extension of 5th Street west of Walnut to County Highway 251. The third is extension of Cherry Street north of 8th Street when/if this area develops.

Local Streets

All streets not identified as an arterial or a collector are local streets. As in most communities, most of the streets in El Paso are local.

The older part of El Paso is built on a typical grid street system. For the most part, blocks are of similar length and width and there are few dead-end streets or cul-de-sacs. One of the benefits of a grid system is that traffic slows down at intersections, thus making the community safe for pedestrians.

The disadvantage of a typical grid system is that although all streets are made to handle the same amount of traffic, some streets will naturally carry more traffic than others. A case in point are Pine, Elm and Sycamore Streets. These three streets are the only north-south streets (in addition to Route 251 and Adams) that cross the railroad tracks at Front Street. Therefore, these streets carry more traffic than other local streets.

In the newer parts of El Paso, cul-de-sacs are common. While cul-de-sacs eliminate most traffic, they cut down on the walkability of the neighborhood.

Rail Transportation

The City of El Paso has an active rail line that runs parallel to US Route 24. The Toledo, Peoria, and Western Railroad carries five or less trains a day through the community. The train does not stop in El Paso. Vehicle circulation is impacted when trains are active.

Sidewalks

Most of the time, when transportation is discussed, vehicle transportation comes to mind. However, pedestrian transportation must also be considered. Although we are a car-oriented society, there is still a need for safe and efficient walking routes.

Sidewalks are used by residents of the community as they go to school, work, or recreational activities. They are also used by mail carriers, newspaper carriers, and other delivery persons.

In El Paso, many of the residential streets have sidewalks, but many do not. In areas with sidewalks, the sidewalk is not located adjacent to the street pavement. Instead, there is a wide tree lawn between the street and the sidewalk. This layout is ideal as it totally separates pedestrians from vehicle traffic.

In areas without sidewalks, pedestrians must walk on the roadway. On local streets with lower traffic volumes, this is not a severe safety hazard; however, sidewalks are still preferred on all streets.

F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

An integral part of any community is its economic prosperity. Existing commercial and industrial uses must be kept vibrant while new commercial and industrial growth is needed to maintain and increase economic opportunities and potential.

There are two parts to the economy of a community. The first focuses on the economic base of a community. The economic base is that part of the local economy that brings in dollars from outside the community in the form of wages. The second part of the economy is the recycling of those dollars throughout the community for everyday goods and services.

THE ECONOMIC CYCLE

A manufacturing company such as American Buildings hires local residents to work in its manufacturing facility. The products they make are sold outside of El Paso. Wages are paid to the employees from the revenue the company receives when it sells its products.

The employees take their wages and buy everyday good goods and services. They purchase retail products such as groceries and gasoline, and services such as banking and auto repair.

Both parts of the economy are necessary to a community. It has been estimated that every dollar of base industry wages leads to four or five dollars of additional spending in the local economy.

Economic Base

The most typical economic base industry is manufacturing. There are two major economic base industries in El Paso: American Buildings employs approximately 300 persons, and Dupont Chemical employs 135. (Source: *Economic Development Council for Central Illinois*.) Other economic base industries are agriculture, and commercial businesses at the Interstate 39 interchange that bring in dollars from outside the community.

Figure II-F-1 is a list of the major employers in El Paso. Note that some of these businesses are economic base industries and others are not.

Figure II-F-1

MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN EL PASO		
Employer	Product/Service	Employees
American Buildings	Metal Fabrication	300
Dupont Chemical	Agriculture Products	135
El Paso School District	Public Education	70
Pfister Hybrid	Farm Seed Products	60
El Paso Telephone	Public Utility	20

Local Economy

As mentioned above, every dollar of base industry employment leads to four or five dollars of additional spending. Ideally, much of that money stays in the community. The Community Survey asked respondents “Approximately how much of your purchasing is done in El Paso for the following items?” The results, shown below in Figure II-F-2, indicate that residents shop in El Paso for many of these items. The exceptions are items or services not found in El Paso, such as full service restaurants or specialty goods.

Figure II-F-2

PERCENTAGE OF PURCHASING IN EL PASO			
	Almost None (0 to 10%)	Some (10% to 50%)	Most (50% to 100%)
Groceries	12%	42%	46%
Gasoline	20%	39%	40%
Auto Repair	19%	17%	64%
Banking	18%	16%	66%
Medical/Pharmacy	19%	25%	56%
Hardware	25%	48%	27%
Appliances	47%	28%	25%
Full Service Dining	33%	53%	14%
Casual Dining/Fast Food	21%	56%	23%
New & Used Cars	33%	23%	44%
Home Furnishings and Carpeting	36%	31%	33%
Specialty Items/Home Decor	51%	36%	13%
Home Maintenance and Remodeling Contractors	34%	28%	38%

Agriculture

The mile-and-a-half planning area surrounding the city of El Paso is predominantly used for agriculture. Much of the soil in this area is considered prime agricultural land.

Agriculture is an important part of the economy of the El Paso area. Many families make a living from farming. In addition, there are numerous businesses in El Paso related to farming. For example, the corporate home of Pfister Seed is located on the west side of El Paso. Others farm-related businesses are DuPont Agricultural Products, Linco Equipment, and Sun Ag, Inc.

Vacant Buildings/Lots

El Paso has few vacant lots or buildings zoned for commercial or industrial uses. There is limited industrially-zoned land available near the Interstate 39 interchange. The Elms Restaurant, an El Paso landmark along Route 24, has been vacant for many years.

G. CULTURAL FACILITIES

In the last school year (2005-2006), school children in El Paso were served by the El Paso-Gridley CUSD #11, a joint school system with the Village of Gridley, seven miles east of El Paso. Each community has its own elementary and middle schools, and all high school students attend El Paso High School.

Prior to the last school year, each community had its own school district and high school.

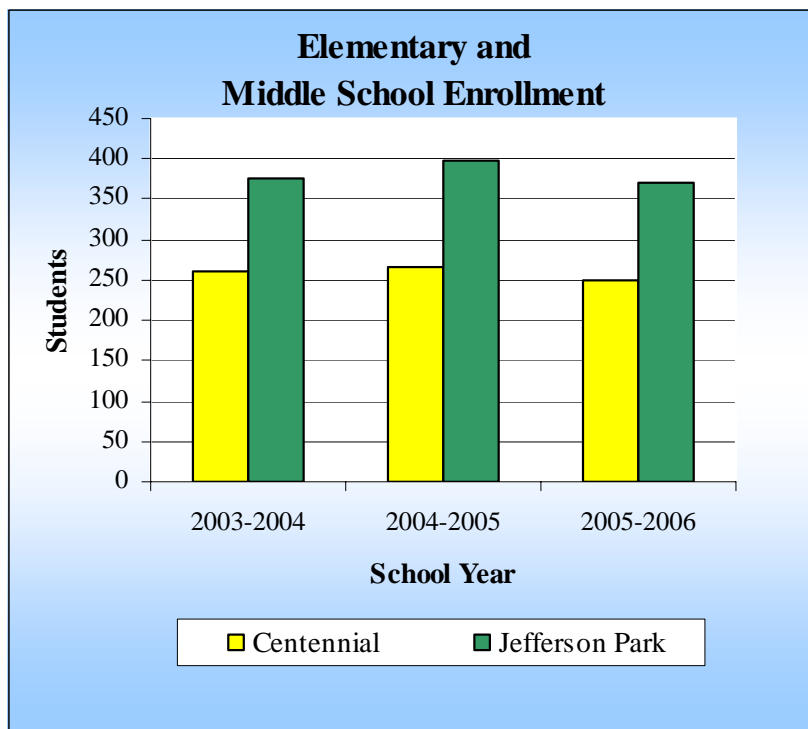
Schools

Elementary School and Middle School

Students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through fourth grade attend Jefferson Park Elementary School. Students in grades five through eight attend Centennial Middle School. As seen in Figure II-G-1, enrollments in these two schools have been relatively constant over the last three school years.

The elementary school and middle school are centrally located within the community. The majority of students live within one-half mile of the school they attend.

Figure II-G-1



High School

The El Paso-Gridley High School is located in the city of El Paso. Students from both the El Paso and Gridley areas attend this school. The enrollment of the high school increased over 40% in the 2005-2006 school year, due to the consolidation of the El Paso and Gridley school districts.

65% of the respondents to the community survey rated the school system as 'good' on a scale of 'good', 'fair', or 'poor.' Only 2% rated it as 'poor'.

Post Secondary Education

El Paso does not have within its borders any institutions of higher learning. However, the following schools are close to El Paso:

- Heartland Community College, Normal, Illinois; 16 miles
- Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois; 16 miles
- Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Illinois; 19 miles

Library

The community is served by the El Paso Public Library, located in Jefferson Park across the street from the Jefferson Park Elementary School. The library is open six days a week, and contains over 21,000 books, and approximately 300 audio materials and 900 video materials. 70% of the survey respondents rated the library as 'good' on a scale of 'good', 'fair', or 'poor.' Figure II-G-2 is a photo of the library.

Figure II-G-2



H. NATURAL RESOURCES

Parks and Recreation

El Paso is known for its parks and recreations facilities. The community is home to six parks that vary in size from one-fourth of a block to forty acres. In addition to numerous parks, the city has a 5.4 mile walking/biking trail that was built on an abandoned railroad right-of-way through the middle of town.

See Figure II-H-1 for a listing of El Paso parks and the amenities they provide.

Figure II-H-1

EL PASO PARKS		
Name	Size	Facilities
South Pointe Park	40 Acres	Swimming pool, community center, playground, fishing pond, tennis courts, baseball & softball diamonds, basketball courts, volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, Frisbee golf course, and picnic shelters.
Jefferson Park		Children's playground, outdoor stage, picnic shelters
Corn Belt Park	3/4 Block	Tennis courts, playground, picnic shelter, restrooms
Franklin Park	1 Block	Playground, basketball court, picnic areas
Eagle Park		
Toddlers Park	1/4 Block	Playground
Bicycle/Walking Trail	5.4 Miles	

The City of El Paso programs numerous activities as part of its Parks and Recreation Department. Activities for children, adults, and seniors are provided.

Natural Environment

The natural environment is the physical basis for community development and is one starting point for planning considerations. An evaluation of the physical setting is necessary to identify and prioritize potential growth areas. In addition, an understanding of the natural environment is also necessary to prevent unwanted damage to the environment by development or other human activities.

Topography

The City of El Paso and the surrounding mile-and-a-half planning area are predominantly flat. Most slopes are less than 2%, with some slopes ranging up to 5%. The flatness of the terrain causes challenges to the location of sewer lines, which depend on slope. Lift stations to move wastewater to the treatment plant are currently necessary, and more will be needed as development moves into the planning area.

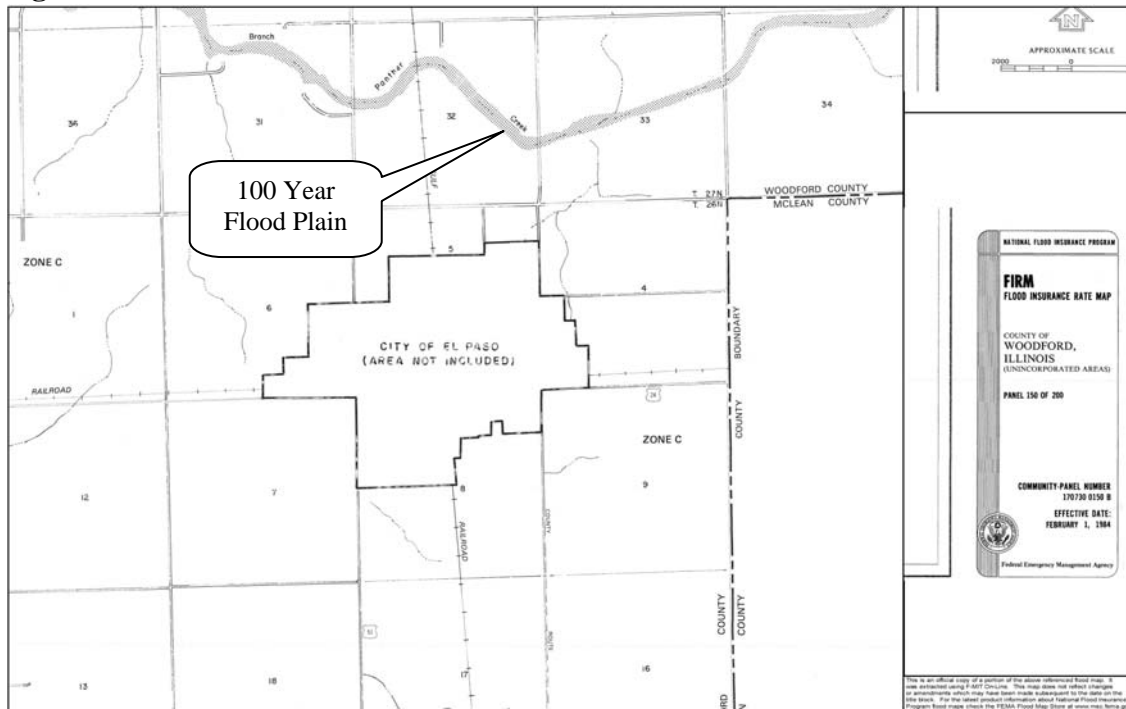
Soil Types

The soils found in the mile-and-a-half planning area fall into two soil associations: the Ipava-Sable-Tama Association and the Chenoa-El Paso-Graymont Association. Soils in both associations are known for their high organic content and large proportion of silty loam. They are poor to moderately well-drained and need subsurface drains when used for row crops. All land in the mile-and-a-half planning area is considered prime agricultural land.

Flood Plains

There are no major waterways that flow through the city of El Paso. Approximately one mile north of the city, the east branch of Panther Creek flows in a northwesterly direction toward Panther Creek. Panther Creek flows into the Mackinaw River and from there to the Illinois River. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has defined an area along the east branch of Panther Creek a 100-year flood plain. A 100-year flood plain is defined as an area of land having a one percent chance of flooding in any given year. FEMA requires restrictions on development in flood plains, although they can be used for open space or recreational uses. In Figure II-H-2, below, the flood plain is the area in gray along the East Branch of Panther Creek.

Figure II-H-2



III. TWENTY YEAR VISION FOR EL PASO

The first step of the Comprehensive Plan, called the Inventory of Inventory Conditions, answered the question “Where are we now?” The second step, The Vision, answers the question “What do we want to look like in the future?”

In order to answer this question, the Comprehensive Planning Committee looked at the Analysis of Existing Conditions as well as the responses to the Community Survey (the results of the Survey can be found in the Appendix). They also took a hard look at the strengths and weaknesses of the community. From there, they created the following Vision Statement:

VISION STATEMENT

The City of El Paso is a progressive community that is building for the future today. We will encourage growth and economic vitality while maintaining our agricultural heritage. Residents, businesses, churches and civic organizations work together towards a healthy, attractive and safe community.

Together we create a community of good neighbors. We have pride in our homes and patronize local businesses. Citizens of all ages have access to high-caliber medical, educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities. We will do this while keeping housing, taxes, goods and services affordable for the citizens of our city.

IV. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The third and final section of the Comprehensive Plan answers the question “How do we get there?” This section outlines the goals and objectives that are often considered the “meat” of a Comprehensive Plan.

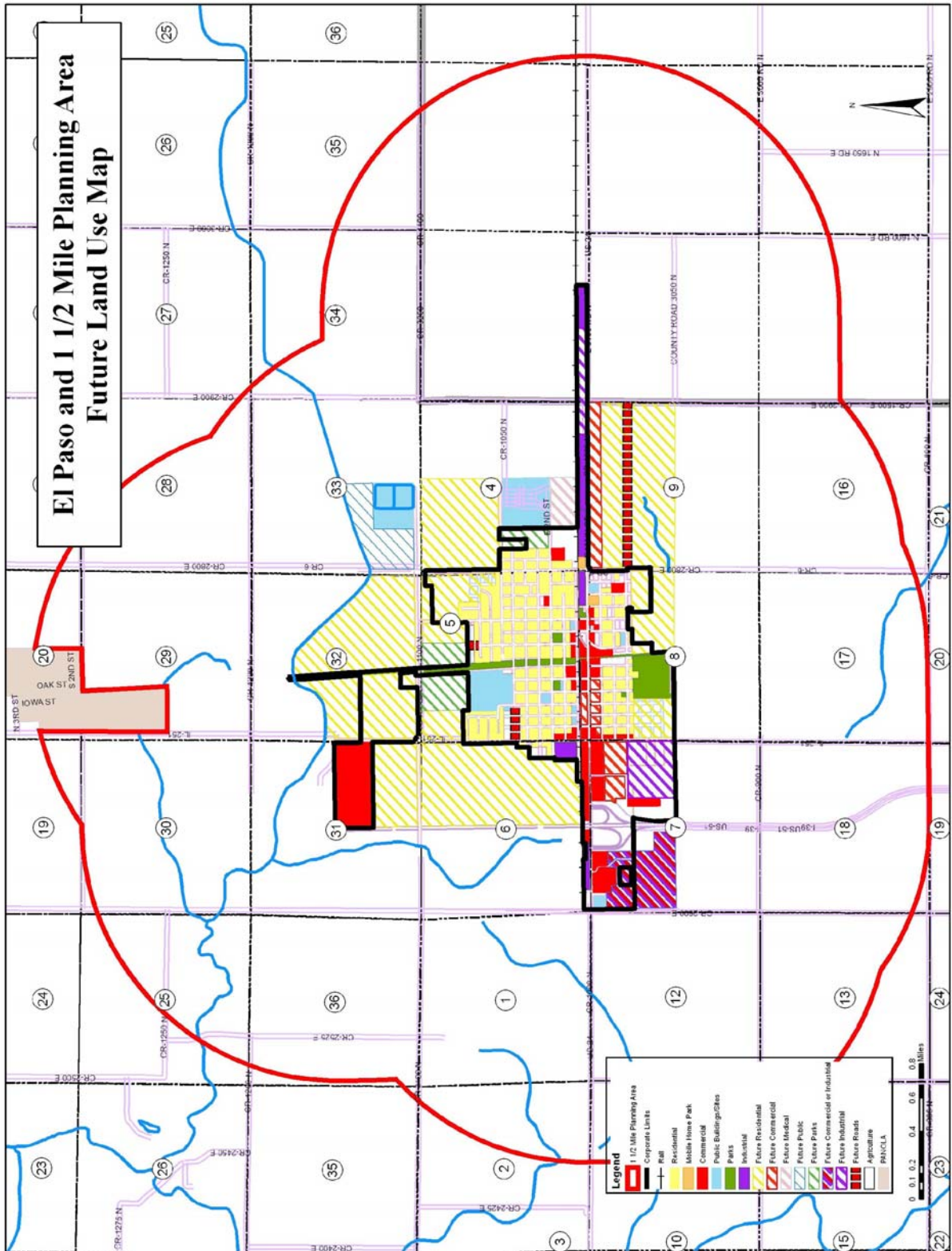
This section of the Plan is the culmination of months of work, and is the reason the plan is called “comprehensive.” The Goals and Objectives look at individual elements of the community and fits them together in an over-all plan.

It is important to evaluate progress as the Plan is implemented. In addition, the Plan should be reviewed every three to five years in response to on-going changes in the community. Also, the Plan should be shared with new members of the Village Board, Planning Commission, and other groups who will be part of the implementation.

A. PLANNING ELEMENT: LAND USE

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
<i>Long-range, general aims of the community. Goals are broad and abstract.</i>	<i>A specific action to meet the goal. Objectives are precise, tangible, and concrete.</i>
1. Plan for a mix of land uses that allow for the growth of the city but prevent urban sprawl	a. Locate new developments adjacent to existing developments and close to water and sanitary sewer lines
	b. Use the Future Land Map as a guide for future development (see Map on the following page).
	c. Review all Woodford County zoning cases that fall within the city's 1 ½ mile planning jurisdiction.
	d. Encourage development in vacant or underutilized buildings and property within the City.
2. Manage growth so that it is consistent with the community's ability to service existing and new developments	a. Develop an annexation policy for the city

Future Land Use Map (revised)



B. PLANNING ELEMENT: POPULATION AND HOUSING

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
<i>Long-range, general aims of the community. Goals are broad and abstract.</i>	<i>A specific action to meet the goal. Objectives are precise, tangible, and concrete.</i>
1. Plan for a population of 3,000 – 3,500 persons in twenty years	a. Establish a City Planning Commission
	b. Review Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and update if necessary
2. Encourage the development of quality housing for current and future residents	a. Promote the development of senior housing/assisted living facility
	b. Limit the proportion of mobile homes to less than 5% of the total housing stock of the community.
3. Maintain El Paso as a small town with rural values	a. Provide inter-connections between new subdivisions to maintain the walkable nature of the city
	b. Require sidewalks in all new subdivisions

C. PLANNING ELEMENT: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
<i>Long-range, general aims of the community. Goals are broad and abstract.</i>	<i>A specific action to meet the goal. Objectives are precise, tangible, and concrete.</i>
1. Upgrade the sanitary sewer system to accommodate future growth	a. Implement the recommendations of the Wastewater Treatment and Collection Report prepared in 2002
2. Improve the water system to accommodate future growth	a. Undertake a study of the city's water system
3. Provide a safe and secure environment for the residents of El Paso	a. Continue to prepare for natural disasters such as tornados
	b. Maintain an adequate police department

D. PLANNING ELEMENT: TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
<i>Long-range, general aims of the community. Goals are broad and abstract.</i>	<i>A specific action to meet the goal. Objectives are precise, tangible, and concrete.</i>
1. Provide a safe and efficient regional transportation system	a. If/when a Peoria to Chicago highway is built near El Paso, encourage IDOT to build it around, rather than through, the community.
2. Provide a safe and efficient transportation and circulation system within the city	a. Connect new subdivisions with schools, parks, and the bike trail through walking trails and sidewalks.
	b. Allow cul-de-sacs in new subdivisions only when necessary due to topography or other physical features such as streams
	c. Build sidewalks along all existing residential streets in order to connect all areas of the city.
	d. Extend the following streets as the city develops: Clay Street east of Oak Street, Cherry Street north of 8 th Street, and 5 th Street west of Walnut Street (See Future Land Use Map)
	e. Identify the following streets as Collector Streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illinois Route 251 • Pine • County Highway 6/Oak/Adams • CR 1100 N/clearview • Front • Main • Clay

E. PLANNING ELEMENT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
<i>Long-range, general aims of the community. Goals are broad and abstract.</i>	<i>A specific action to meet the goal. Objectives are precise, tangible, and concrete.</i>
1. Encourage new or expanded base industries in El Paso in order to provide jobs and generate property taxes	a. Increase water and sewer capacity near the I-39 interchange
	b. Support agricultural and agriculturally-related businesses
	c. Encourage the use of existing industrially-zoned land within the city limits before annexing additional land
	d. Improve the management of the city's revolving loan program in order to have additional funds to loan to businesses.
2. Provide basic goods and services within the community	a. Encourage local residents to shop locally for everyday goods and services
	b. Encourage the re-use of vacant commercial buildings

F. PLANNING ELEMENT: CULTURAL FACILITIES

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
<i>Long-range, general aims of the community. Goals are broad and abstract.</i>	<i>A specific action to meet the goal. Objectives are precise, tangible, and concrete.</i>
1. Maintain quality educational opportunities for residents	a. Provide for extra-curricular educational opportunities for youth, adults, and elderly persons
	b. Work cooperatively with the El Paso Public Library to improve/upgrade the library

G. PLANNING ELEMENT: NATURAL RESOURCES

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
<i>Long-range, general aims of the community. Goals are broad and abstract.</i>	<i>A specific action to meet the goal. Objectives are precise, tangible, and concrete.</i>
1. Maintain the city's excellent parks and recreation system	a. Set aside land for additional parks as the city grows
	b. Provide more parks and recreation programs as the community grows
	c. Maintain parks and playground equipment to the highest degree possible
2. Preserve and enhance the natural environment	a. Implement a flood plain ordinance as development approaches the East Branch of Panther Creek

APPENDIX

EL PASO COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The following are the results of the community survey undertaken in El Paso and its surrounding planning area in December 2005.

1,074 surveys were mailed to residents of El Paso with their December water bill. An additional 152 surveys were mailed to residents of the mile-and-a-half planning area surrounding El Paso.

Over 300 surveys were returned. The overall response rate was 27%. In the city limits, the response rate was 29%, and in the surrounding area the response rate was 16%. (A response rate of at least 20% is desired.)

The survey was developed and tabulated by the El Paso Comprehensive Planning Committee with the assistance of Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.

1. What age group are you in?

[0%] Under 21	[29%]	51 to 65
[14%] 22 to 35	[16%]	66 to 75
[27%] 36 to 50	[15%]	Over 75

2. How many persons under the age of 18 live in your home?

0	<u>64%</u>
1	<u>15%</u>
2	<u>14%</u>
3	<u>5%</u>
4 or more	<u>2%</u>

3. How long have you lived in the El Paso area? Average is 31 Years

4. Do you live within the City Limits of El Paso? Yes 93% No 7%

5. Where do you work (or attend school)?

[29%]El Paso
[27%]Bloomington/Normal
[10%]Other Location: Please specify: <u>Pontiac, Gridley, Minonk, Washington, Eureka, Peoria, Roanoke and others</u>
[35%]Retired/Not Working

6. Please rate the quality of the following governmental services in El Paso:

	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
Police Protection	[69%]	[18%]	[5%]	[8%]
Ambulance Service	[83%]	[4%]	[0%]	[12%]
Fire Protection	[80%]	[6%]	[1%]	[14%]
City Water	[69%]	[19%]	[4%]	[8%]
City Sewage Treatment	[66%]	[13%]	[3%]	[17%]
Library	[70%]	[14%]	[2%]	[14%]
Recycling Program	[53%]	[18%]	[5%]	[23%]
Parks & Recreation	[56%]	[24%]	[9%]	[11%]
Road Maintenance	[39%]	[42%]	[14%]	[5%]
Schools	[65%]	[19%]	[2%]	[14%]
Yard Waste Pick-Up	[72%]	[14%]	[4%]	[10%]

7. Approximately how much of your purchasing is done in El Paso for:

	Almost None (0 to 10%)	Some (10% to 50%)	Most (50% to 100%)
Groceries	[12%]	[42%]	[46%]
Gasoline	[20%]	[39%]	[40%]
Auto Repair	[19%]	[17%]	[64%]
Banking	[18%]	[16%]	[66%]
Medical/Pharmacy	[19%]	[25%]	[56%]
Hardware	[25%]	[48%]	[27%]
Appliances	[47%]	[28%]	[25%]
Full Service Dining	[33%]	[53%]	[14%]
Casual Dining/Fast Food	[21%]	[56%]	[23%]
New & Used Cars	[33%]	[23%]	[44%]
Home Furnishings and Carpeting	[36%]	[31%]	[33%]
Specialty Items/Home Decor	[51%]	[36%]	[13%]
Home Maintenance and Remodeling Contractors	[34%]	[28%]	[38%]

8. There has been discussion about a Peoria to Chicago highway. As part of this project, Route 24 may be turned into a 4-lane expressway. What is your opinion of the following?

	For	Against	No Opinion
The new Route 24 goes around El Paso	[56%]	[22%]	[23%]
The new Route 24 passes through El Paso (as it does now)	[22%]	[54%]	[25%]
The Peoria to Chicago Highway is not built near El Paso	[28%]	[26%]	[47%]

9. What priority should be given to the development of the following:

	High	Medium	Low	No Opinion
Professional Offices	[17%]	[41%]	[24%]	[18%]
Retail Stores	[35%]	[41%]	[12%]	[11%]
Industry	[42%]	[32%]	[16%]	[10%]
Retirement Homes	[26%]	[46%]	[17%]	[11%]
Affordable Housing	[43%]	[28%]	[17%]	[11%]
Rental Housing	[17%]	[34%]	[32%]	[17%]
New Subdivisions	[14%]	[32%]	[39%]	[15%]
Additional Recreational Facilities	[20%]	[32%]	[32%]	[15%]
Sidewalks	[40%]	[35%]	[15%]	[10%]
Increased Police Protection	[17%]	[39%]	[33%]	[12%]
Pre-Schools/Daycare	[24%]	[33%]	[18%]	[25%]
Volunteer Services for People in Need	[35%]	[44%]	[10%]	[11%]
Traffic Studies Along Rt. 24	[22%]	[30%]	[29%]	[19%]
Alternative Energy Sources such as Wind Farms or Solar	[31%]	[28%]	[23%]	[18%]

The responses to the open-ended questions (Questions 10, 11, and 12) have been summarized below:

10. What are the features of El Paso that make it an attractive place to live?

- Good schools
- Good parks and recreational facilities
- Small town atmosphere
- Many businesses and services available (for the size of the town)
- Convenient location. Close to B/N, Peoria, easy access to I-39
- People are friendly and caring
- Low crime rate
- Residents have pride in their community
- Many churches to choose from
- Good medical care. Doctors, pharmacy, ambulance service

11. What are the most serious problems facing our community?

- High property taxes
- Financial problems with parks and recreation department
- City Council isn't responsive to needs of citizens (burn barrels)
- Rising costs of utilities, especially water, sewer, phone
- Need more activities for youth
- Not enough jobs in town
- Library needs to be expanded
- Park swimming pool and the high school pool should be maintained/repared
- School Board not fiscally responsible/need better leadership on school board/school tax rate too high
- Many streets need better maintenance/sidewalks/stop signs

12. The following is a sampling of additional comments made by respondents:

- Alleys should be maintained by the City
- Too much speeding on city streets, especially Sycamore
- We need a Park District
- I love the corn festival and other community activities
- Blacktop the walking trail
- Garbage pick-up should be free and we should be able to put anything out on the curb
- Don't let El Paso grow too fast; we'll have drugs and crime
- We need a 4-way stop at the entrance/exit to Westgate
- Do not build low-income housing
- Have developers pay full cost of extending infrastructure
- Route 24 through town looks rundown
- Thanks for asking for my opinion.