BRILLIANT.BRIGHT.COMMUNITY.
HEART OF ILLINOIS REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

APRIL 2014

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Project Director: Melissa Eaton, Senior Planner

Day-to-day Project Manager: Nicholas Hayward, Planner III

Editor: Jillian Goforth, Planner II

Heart of Illinois Sustainability Consortium Members

Pamela Anderson - Community Development Director, City of Pekin

Ross Black - Community Development Director, City of Peoria

Suzette Boulais - Executive Director, ArtsPartners of Central Illinois, Inc.

Kathleen Brown - Extension Specialist for Community and Economic Development, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Carl Cannon - Assistant General Manager of Recreation with responsibility for Youth Outreach, Peoria Park District

Brenda Coates - Chief Executive Officer, Peoria Housing Authority

Anthony Corso - Illinois Central College (served 2010 – 2013)

Melissa Eaton - Senior Planner, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Jane Genzel - Executive Director, Peoria Opportunities Foundation

Christopher Gray - Dean of Arts and Communication, Illinois Central College

Sally Hanley - Director of Business Development, Economic Development Council for Central Illinois

Nicholas Hayward - Planner III, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Brandon Holmes - Executive Director, Local Initiatives Support Corporation

Dennis Kief - Peoria County

Ty Livingston - Director of Planning and Community Development, City of East Peoria

Yvonne Long - Director of Modernization and Development, Peoria Housing Authority

Mark Rothert - Assistant County Administrator for Economic Development, Peoria County

Kathryn Shackelford - Planner I, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

David Smesrud - Planner II, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Scott Sorrel - Assistant to County Administrator, Peoria County

This plan is kindly dedicated to two of the region's environmental goddesses who passed during the time of this project. May the work on earth of Keiya (Laurie Winkler) Dancer and Kim St. John provide fertile ground to grow sustainable communities for generations to come.

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OVERVIEW

You have just been dropped into a sustainable community. What do you see that's different from the community you know today? You may see renewable energy for electricity and transportation, compact development, and clean water and air. As you walk past rainwater-friendly sidewalks and passive solar homes, hearing the hum of electric vehicles, you think of the intangibles. You think about economic sustainability and quality of life. Judging by the arts district and what they have lined up for tonight, things look pretty good.

Now you are back in your community. Can you build a path to sustainability? That is what the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is asking of Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford counties in the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program.

AN INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIP

There is no question that communities need to make different choices in order to become sustainable. Our region's leaders must consider development, transportation, housing, and energy-efficiency decisions as interdependent—not mutually exclusive. That may seem like a no-brainer to the layperson, but typically, the transportation department is not the land use department, nor the housing department.

By creating the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the federal government has provided leadership in building these interagency partnerships. Through this program, HUD, the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) collaborate regularly to ensure their policies and programs align with agreed-upon criteria for sustainability. To guide its work, the Partnership developed six livability principles:

- Provide more transportation choices

- Promote equitable, affordable housing

- Enhance economic competitiveness

- Support existing communities

- Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment

- Value communities and neighborhoods

Out of this partnership, the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program was born. It empowers jurisdictions to work collaboratively to achieve these principles of livability and provides a special emphasis on equity, inclusion and access to opportunity.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS

In February of 2011, the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission was one of 45 agencies in the nation that entered into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the amount of $1.2 million to identify the path to sustainability through regional planning, the development of a small business incubator, and the creation of new partnerships inclusive of those traditionally underrepresented in regional planning processes. This was a three-year planning program for Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford counties that was completed in May of 2014.

Local partners in this effort formed the Heart of Illinois Sustainability Consortium, which includes local housing agencies,

units of government, the Heart of Illinois Continuum of Care, Peoria Park District's Youth Outreach Program, ArtsPartners of Central Illinois, Peoria Opportunities Foundation, Illinois Central College, Economic Development Council for Central Illinois, and the University of Illinois Extension Office. This sustainability planning initiative is known locally as Brilliant.Bright.Community.

EXPLORING THE PLAN

The Brilliant.Bright.Community. regional sustainability plan focuses on a variety of community elements, including land use, transportation, environment, economic development, housing, arts and culture, and food availability. The factors explored by program partners include:

- **Housing:** To what extent is adequate affordable housing available in the Tri-County Area, and are there improvements that need to be made? How can we make our housing stock more "green" and energy-efficient?

- **Food:** How can we develop a local food and agriculture system that ensures access to healthy food for all, creates new jobs for the region's residents, and adds more value to the regional economy?

- **Economic development:** How can private and public organizations collaborate to create an economic system that builds on community assets, integrates workforce development

Photo by: Rachel Gardner

with the region's needs, and creates a climate of innovation that spurs healthy entrepreneurism?

- **Transportation:** How can we create a more efficient transportation system that decreases our dependency on fossil fuels while maintaining fast commute times?

- **Land use:** How can we develop the landscape in such a way that promotes a sense of community and ensures equitable access to services and jobs?

- **Natural resources:** How do we maintain and improve our biodiversity, water quality, and air quality?

- **Art and culture:** How can we engage our residents in arts activities that touch our hearts, fire our imaginations, and nurture our creativity in an effort to develop a more culturally and economically rich community?

Photo by: Craig Stocks

E.L.I.T.E. Youth Outreach, a partner in this effort, is a non profit organization that gives at risk youth in the community the skills they need to survive on their own. The Pulses of Hope drum line members serve as positive role models to other young people in the Tri-County area.

Community planning is not the same today as it was even 10 years ago. With digital mapping and modeling software, the consortium held a scenario-planning event in the fall of 2013. At this event, regional leaders—elected officials, nonprofits, governmental staff and other neighborhood champions—were invited to work collaboratively on regional development scenarios, both rural and urban. These scenarios were then plugged into a model that provided

estimates of fiscal impacts on local units of government. This scenario-planning process serves as a guide by providing a big-picture, regional approach to development.

Small business is a significant segment of the economy, and Peoria County is working to be proactive to support this area of economic development. In addition to regional planning through Brilliant.Bright.Community, Peoria County is exploring ways to create a small business incubator, with an emphasis on assisting minority and women-owned businesses. This incubator, referred to as the Peoria Area Opportunity Center, would accelerate the development of successful entrepreneurial companies by providing hands-on assistance and a variety of business and technical support services during those vulnerable early years.

The main goal is to produce businesses that are financially viable when they "graduate" from the incubator, usually within two or three years after entering the program. This incubator would serve as a catalyst to help ignite the goals of the regional planning initiative by supporting underserved populations in business development from a centralized location. It will improve our region's economic competitiveness by taking advantage of the skills and capabilities of populations that have historically been largely underutilized.

ARE WE OPEN TO CHANGE?

Now, recall the differences you experienced between the sustainable community and your community as it is now. To close the gap in those differences, we all need to be open to doing things a bit differently. Things like how and where we shop, what foods we buy, and where we live and work. Even how we play will need to shift to more sustainable practices.

On the other hand, if our region's leaders can truly benefit from sustainability planning, perhaps the change will happen behind the scenes, so gradually and so naturally that the average person might not even notice. Perhaps it's already happening. Someday, you may just find yourself walking past a rain garden to a local farmers market with a free outdoor jazz concert after a great day at the museum, thinking,"I like what we've done in this community."

THE REGION

Analyzing recent and historic demographic data is an important step in defining future needs for the Tri-County Region, including land, services, and infrastructure. The following section provides an overview of current and historic trends in population, households, income, age, racial and ethnic composition, and educational attainment.

POPULATION

The Tri-County Region experienced solid population gains from 1940 to 1980. From 1980 to 1990 however, the region lost over 7% of its population due to an economic downturn that affected the entire state. This recession caused substantial manufacturing employment declines throughout the region, and many individuals and families were forced to leave and find employment elsewhere. From 1990-2010, the region gained back a little over 6% of that loss. According to the 2010 census, the Tri-County Region is now home to 360,552 people.

Population growth throughout the Tri-County region has been somewhat uneven. With the exception of 1980 – 1990, both Woodford and Tazewell Counties have seen steady, and even rapid population growth. Peoria County, on the other hand, has seen much slower growth, and unlike Tazewell and Woodford Counties, was not able to recover from the population loss it suffered in the 1980s. However, Peoria County still remains the most populous area in the region today, with a population of 186,494. For comparison, Tazewell County's 2010 population is 135,394, and Woodford County's 2010 population is 38,664.

Looking forward, population growth projections in the region vary. Table 2.1 on the following page shows the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) population growth projections from 2010 to 2030. These projections can be loosely supported by qualitative observations, including recent growth trends, observation of land use consumption in high-growth areas, and recent diversification of the local economy. The DCEO projection for 2010 was slightly higher than the actual population total.

Other population projections for the region come from the University of Illinois' Land Use Evaluation and Impact Assessment

INFOGRAPHIC 2.1: **REGIONAL POPULATION CHANGE: 1940–2010**
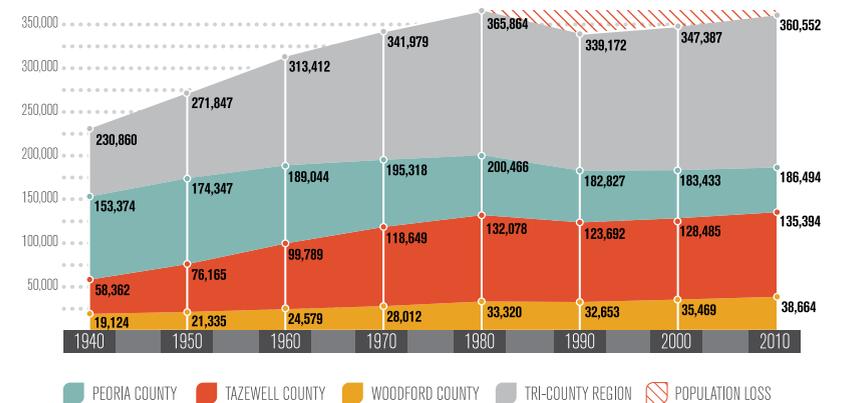
Model (LEAM). This analysis was done on a regional basis, and was not broken down into smaller units of government. Table 2.2 shows the LEAM population projections for 2010 - 2035.

As tables 2.1 and 2.2 show, DCEO projections overestimated population growth, while LEAM projections underestimated population growth for 2010. Although population projections are useful, it is important to remember that the future conditions that impact population can never be entirely known.

TABLE 2.1: DCEO POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2010–2030

	2010 (actual)	2015	2020	2025	2030
PEORIA	187,876 (186,494)	190,903	194,083	195,266	193,314
TAZEWELL	139,616 (135,394)	146,850	154,567	161,456	165,373
WOODFORD	39,362 (38,664)	41,551	43,845	45,789	46,857
TRI-COUNTY REGION	366,854 (360,552)	379,304	392,495	402,511	405,544

TABLE 2.2: LEAM POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2010–2035

	2010 (actual)	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
TRI-COUNTY REGION	355,283 (360,552)	359,305	363,373	367,486	371,646	375,853

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The population of the Tri-County Region is predominantly white; however, the area's population has become slightly more diverse in the past decade. The region's white population only grew by 0.3%, while the Asian, multi-racial and "Other" population groups all more than doubled. Infographic 2.2 shows the change in racial make-up for each county from 1990 to 2010.

The most diverse area in the region is Peoria County, with white residents accounting for 74.4% of the population and African American residents accounting for 17.7% of the population. In addition, Peoria County has the largest share of Asians and multi-racial individuals, with shares of 3.1% and 2.8%, respectively. Woodford and Tazewell Counties are much less diverse. White

residents comprised 97.4% of Woodford County's population and 96.2% of Tazewell County's population in 2010. Refer to the interactive map to see where racial groups are concentrated throughout the Tri-County Region.

The region has also seen changes in its ethnic composition in the past decade. In 2000, 1.6% of the region's population was Hispanic or Latino, and in 2010, the Hispanic and Latino population grew to 2.8% of the population. According to the 2010 census, 75% of these residents are Mexican.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

The Tri-County region has an aging population. From 2000 to 2010, the number of individuals age 55 and over grew by 19.4%, while the number of individuals 20-54 and the number of individuals under 19 declined overall. The most significant gains in population from 2000 to 2010 were in the 55-59 and 60-64 age groups, which grew by 39.6% and 45%, respectively. In contrast, the number of individuals age 35-49 declined by 10.3% in the past decade.

Infographic 2.5 presents regional age distribution as a population pyramid. The population pyramid for the Tri-County region shows an aging population. Though the pyramid becomes wider near its base, it begins to taper off again after the 10-14 age group. An aging population, coupled with the loss of an economically active population and a declining birth rate could place strain on our health care system, create a shortage of workers, and create a greater demand for different services, housing options, and amenities.

INFOGRAPHIC 2.2: **REGIONAL POPULATION CHANGE BY RACE, 1990–2010**
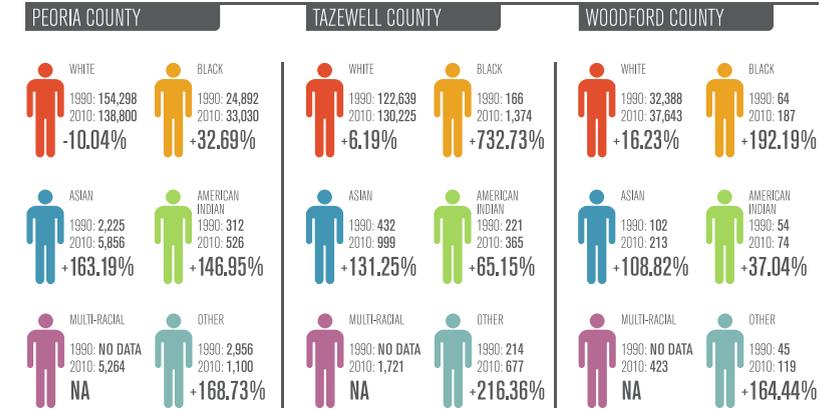
INFOGRAPHIC 2.3: **REGIONAL POPULATION CHANGE, HISPANIC OR LATINO, 1990–2010**
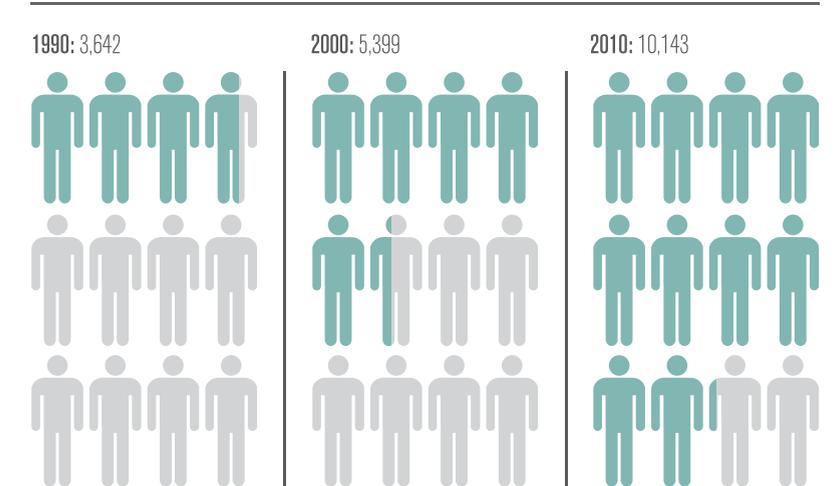
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In the past decade, the Tri-County Region has seen an increase in the number of individuals both with a high school degree and with a bachelor's degree or higher. In 2010, 90.7% of Tri-County residents had obtained a high school degree, compared with 85.5% in 2000. Furthermore, the percent of Tri-County residents with a bachelor's degree or higher increased from 22.8% in 2000 to 26% in 2010.

The Tri-County region has a lower percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher than the state or the nation; however,

our community has a higher percentage of individuals who have obtained a high school degree or higher compared with Illinois and the U.S.

While the percentage of Tri-County residents with a high school degree is promising, local trends in educational performance shed light on larger regional issues. Infographic 2.6 compares test scores and the percentage of low-income students for each high school in the Tri-County region. As the graphic shows, the two variables are correlated. What is even more alarming is the gap between the lowest performing school and the highest performing school. The lowest performing school has an 89.1% low-income rate with only 10.3% of students meeting or exceeding the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE); the highest performing school has an 8% low-income rate with 81% of students meeting or exceeding the PSAE.

MEDIAN INCOME AND POVERTY

The region's median income has increased in the past decade, going from $45,541 to $56,623, an increase of 24%. The Tri-County region has a higher 2010 median income than both the state of Illinois and the nation, with median incomes of $55,735 and $51,914, respectively.

In 2010, 11.9% of the Tri-County population was living below the poverty level. Of the three counties, Peoria County has the highest percentage of individuals living below the poverty line, at 15.6%. For comparison, in 2010, 8.1% of Tazewell County's

INFOGRAPHIC 2.4: **REGIONAL POPULATION CHANGE BY AGE, 2000–2010**

INFOGRAPHIC 2.5: **REGIONAL POPULATION PYRAMID, 2010**
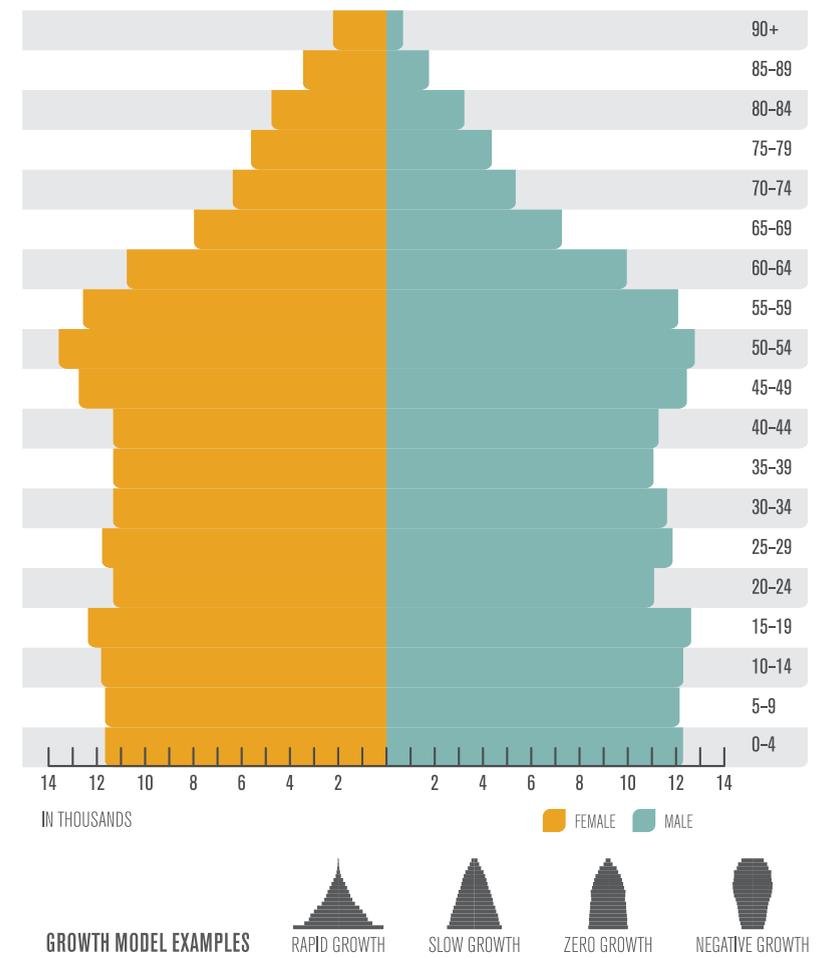
TABLE 2.3: PERCENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

	2000	2010
PEORIA	83.8	89.1
TAZEWELL	85.0	90.5
WOODFORD	87.8	92.6
TRI-COUNTY REGION	85.5	90.7
ILLINOIS	80.4	86.5
UNITED STATES	81.4	85.3

TABLE 2.4: PERCENT BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER

	2000	2010
PEORIA	23.3	28.3
TAZEWELL	18.1	23.8
WOODFORD	27.1	25.9
TRI-COUNTY REGION	22.8	26.0
ILLINOIS	26.1	30.6
UNITED STATES	24.4	28.0

population and 7.8% of Woodford County's population were living in poverty.

There are fewer people living below the poverty level in the Tri-County region relative to the state and the nation. In 2010, 15.3% of U.S. residents and 13.8% of Illinois residents were living in poverty. In the Tri-County area, 17.5% of individuals under 18 and 6.3% of individuals 65 and over were living below the poverty line in 2010.

INFOGRAPHIC 2.6: **TRI-COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL TEST SCORES AND POVERTY, 2011**

Table 2.5 breaks down poverty rates by age for each county, the state, and the nation.

HOUSEHOLDS

The Tri-County region has had a decrease in the number of family households, and an increase in the number of nonfamily households in the past decade. Nonfamily households include people who live alone or nonrelatives living together, such as unmarried partners

or roommates; this change in household diversity may have both cultural and economic causes. For one, it has become more socially acceptable for couples to live together without being married, and secondly, young adults are now more apt to move in together because they can't afford rent on their own.

In addition to a change in the make-up of households, there are also more single-family households and a smaller average household size in 2010 as compared to 2000. If these trends continue, the region will have to reevaluate land use and development patterns as well as infrastructure needs.

TABLE 2.5: PERCENT IN POVERTY, 2010

	TOTAL	UNDER 18 YEARS	18-64 YEARS	65 YEARS & OVER
PEORIA	15.6	23.4	14.0	8.7
TAZEWELL	8.1	10.9	8.1	3.6
WOODFORD	7.8	12.6	6.2	5.5
TRI-COUNTY REGION	11.9	17.5	11.0	6.3
ILLINOIS	13.8	19.4	12.7	8.4
UNITED STATES	15.3	21.6	14.2	9.0

TABLE 2.6: PERCENT FAMILY AND NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS, 2000–2010

	FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS		NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
PEORIA	64.8	62.3	35.2	37.7
TAZEWELL	71.3	68.6	28.7	31.4
WOODFORD	76.6	74.8	23.4	25.2
TRI-COUNTY REGION	68.3	65.9	31.7	34.1
ILLINOIS	67.6	65.8	32.4	34.2

TABLE 2.7: AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE, 2000–2010

	2000	2010
PEORIA	2.43	2.39
TAZEWELL	2.49	2.45
WOODFORD	2.69	2.64
TRI-COUNTY REGION	2.54	2.49
ILLINOIS	2.63	2.59

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The regional population is increasing, but unevenly and only slightly as a whole.

- The region is becoming more diverse, particularly within Peoria County. Racial and ethnic groups are concentrated in specific areas throughout the region.

- The Tri-County region has an aging population. In addition, the region saw a 10.3% decline of its middle-aged adult population in the past decade. These factors could have major implications for the economy, as well as a demand for different services, housing options, and amenities.

- The region has seen an increase in educational attainment; however, educational performance is uneven among the area high schools. Poverty appears to be a factor in this outcome.

- Single-family homes are becoming more abundant, and the average household size is decreasing. This factor holds significant planning implications, particularly with respect to land use and development patterns, as well as infrastructure needs.

REGIONAL MAP

A map is an important and powerful tool for displaying, visualizing, and interpreting complex data. Typically, in plans such as this, geographic data are displayed in multiple maps throughout the document, making it difficult to discover relationships and reveal patterns. This interactive regional map integrates data across all topic areas, thus allowing the user to view, understand, and question connections among land use, housing, transportation, social characteristics, healthcare, and more.

HOW TO USE THIS MAP

The interactive map was created with ArcGIS Online, a web mapping service provided through Esri. To view the map, copy and paste this link into your web browser: http://tcrpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/OnePane/basicviewer/index.html?appid=1f1409e4d35c4282967f85ebd44da0cc

Be patient, the map may take several seconds to fully load.

Once the map application is loaded, you will see a legend on the left hand side of the screen. If the legend is not visible, simply click on the word "legend" located on the map menu bar at the top of the screen. The legend will display the symbology for all data that is currently visible on the map.

Adding Layers

To add layers to the regional map, click on the "layers" tab on the map menu bar, located near the top of the screen. You will now see a list of features, in alphabetical order. Select the layers you wish to add to your map by clicking on the corresponding check box. If you wish to remove a layer from your map, click the corresponding check box a second time.

Once layers are added to your map, they will appear in the legend. If you wish to find out more about a specific feature within a layer, click on that feature within the map to access a pop-up box with information like the name, address, and owner of the feature, for example.

Measuring

Within ArcGIS Online, users can measure distances and areas. To measure an area, click on the measure tool on the map menu bar, and select the "area measure" tool. This icon is a ruler inside of a polygon. Once this tool is selected, click once on your map to start a point. Now, when you move your cursor around the screen, a line will form. Click a second time to create your next point, and so on until you have created your desired area/shape. To close-off or finish your shape, double click at your end point. The measurement result will be visible in the "measure" pop-up box. You can change the unit of measurement by clicking on the current unit of measurement in the measure pop-up box.

To measure a distance, select the "distance measure" tool from the measure pop-up box. This icon is a ruler with a double sided arrow above it. Once the tool is selected, click once on the map to start your point. Click a second time to create your next point, and so on. When you are finished, double click on the map. Again, the measurement result will be visible in the "measure" pop-up box.

Printing and Sharing

ArcGIS Online also allows users to print and share their map. To print, click on the down arrow next to the print tool on the map menu bar. Here you will have the capability to choose the orientation of your printed document and whether you want it in pdf or jpg

format. The map image that will print will display only those layers that are currently turned on within the map.

To share the map document, click on the down arrow next to the share button on the map menu bar. Here you will have a chance to share your document via e-mail, Facebook, or Twitter.

DEFINITIONS

The following section provides definitions for some of the more complex layers included in the regional map.

20 Year Planning Boundary - The 20-year planning boundary encompasses the entire existing urbanized area (as defined by the United States Census Bureau) plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period for the metropolitan transportation plan.

Academic Excellence Schools- Elementary and Middle Schools in which 90 percent of students met or exceeded State standards in reading and math for 3 consecutive years and High Schools in which 85 percent of students met or exceeded State standards on the Prairie State Achievement Exam for 3 consecutive years, and met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the past 2 consecutive years.

Areas of Opportunity - The term "areas of opportunity" generally refers to areas in which elements that contribute to a high quality of life are accessible. The areas of opportunity mapped by TCRPC examined seven different elements: school proficiency; poverty; job

access; labor market engagement; health hazards exposure; housing occupancy; and travel time to work. This data was compiled by HUD and TCRPC.

Each block group received a "score" for each of the seven elements, and the seven scores for each block group were averaged to arrive at an "opportunity score" for the block group. The range of opportunity scores was divided into five equal intervals and the block groups were color-coded according to the five intervals.

Concentrated Areas of Poverty - The regional map includes four tiers of Concentrated Areas of Poverty (CAPs). Tier I CAPs are defined as census tracts that have a majority non-white population, and a family poverty rate that is greater than or equal to 40% or a family poverty rate that is greater than or equal to 300% of the regional average of the family poverty rate for census tracts.

Tier II CAPs are the same as Tier I CAPs, except that they do not have a majority non-white population.

Tier III CAPs are census tracts or block groups that have a median family income (MFI) that is equal to or less than 50 percent of the area MFI as identified by HUD.

Tier IV CAPs are census tracts that have a medium family income (MFI) greater than 50 percent but equal to or less than 70 percent of the area MFI as identified by HUD.

Food Bank - A food bank is a non-profit, charitable organization that distributes food to those who have difficulty purchasing enough food to avoid hunger.

Food Desert - A food desert is defined here as a census tract with at least 50% low-income residents that is more than 0.5 miles from the nearest grocery store.

Impaired Water Bodies - A waterbody (i.e., stream reaches, lakes, waterbody segments) with chronic or recurring monitored violations of the applicable numeric and/or narrative water quality criteria, as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Job Access - Job Access is defined here as those census tracts with the greatest access to jobs, defined as, "A function of the distance to job locations, with the distance to any one location positively weighted by the number of job opportunities and inversely weighted by the labor supply at that location."

Private Subsidized Housing - Private Subsidized Housing are privately owned properties that receive subsidies in order to rent to low-income and moderate-income residents.

Scattered Site Housing - Scattered site housing refers to individual housing units located throughout a city that are owned by a public housing authority.

EXPLORATORY QUESTIONS

The following exploratory questions were developed in order to assist users in exploring relationships and patterns within the regional map. These questions are only a start - users are encouraged to come up with their own questions and analyses.

1. Turn on the following layers:

• Food Deserts

• Food Banks

Where are the food deserts and food banks located in our region? Do they overlap?

Now turn on the following layers:

• Tier I Concentrated Areas of Poverty

• Tier II Concentrated Areas of Poverty

Where are Tier I and Tier II Concentrated Areas of Poverty located in relation to Food Deserts? Do they overlap?

Now turn off the following layers:

• Food Banks

• Food Deserts

Then, turn on the following layer:

• Academic Excellence: Schools

Where are the "Academic Excellence Schools" located? Are any high performing schools located in Tier I or Tier II Concentrated Areas of Poverty?

Do you think there is a relationship between access to schools and grocery stores and poverty levels?

2. Turn on the following layer:

• Elderly (Block Groups with 10pct or more)

Where is the elderly population concentrated in our region?

Now turn on the following layers, one at a time:

• Hospitals

• Pharmacies

• Physicians

• Healthcare Facilities

Where are health related activities concentrated in our region? Does the concentration of healthcare facilities match up with the concentration of the elderly population?

Now turn on the following layer:

• CityLink Service Area

Many elderly individuals cannot or do not drive. Notice the number of health related activities that are inaccessible by public transportation.

3. Turn on the following layers:

• On-Road Marked Bike Lane

• Off-Road Recreational Trail

• Major Employment Centers

Where are the bike lanes and trail in relation to the major employment centers? Are major employment centers accessible by bike? If not, where could better connections be made?

4. Turn on the following layer:

• Unemployment Rate

Note which areas have the highest unemployment rates.

Now turn off the Unemployment Rate layer, and turn on the following layer:

• Job Access (Highest Access)

Which areas have good access to employment? Do the areas with access to jobs have low unemployment rates? If not, why?

TRANSPORTATION
Lead Agency: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Transportation infrastructure plays a key role in development decisions and land use patterns. Since the dawn of human settlement, as people converted from nomadic existences to establishing permanent communities and settlements, transportation has played an important part in decisions of where to locate homes and communities. Modes of transportation have changed through the millennia, from foot to water to rail to roadway and back, but the desire for adequate transportation infrastructure for commerce and personal movement has remained.

The Peoria-Pekin region was originally settled in large part for the quality of transportation access that the Illinois River provides. Subsequently, railroad transportation, combined with water and highway access, helped the region's manufacturing and population base flourish. The region is now faced with the issue of ensuring the kind of safe, efficient transportation access that tomorrow's residents and businesses will demand; developing a transportation system that adequately serves all users must be a priority for the region's future success.

WHO IS INVOLVED

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission- the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Peoria-Pekin metropolitan area. MPOs are responsible for determining how federal transportation funds are to be used. Every transportation improvement receiving federal funds must be approved by the MPO.

Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area Transportation Study- TCRPC has delegated its transportation planning duties to the Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area Transportation Study (PPUATS). In turn, PPUATS serves as an advisory board to TCRPC on all transportation matters. Representation on PPUATS is comprised of elected officials and staff of local municipalities and counties, the General Wayne A. Downing Peoria International Airport, the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District, the Heart of Illinois Regional Port District, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration. PPUATS is made up of two separate committees, a Policy Committee and a Technical Committee.

Human Services Transportation Plan Committee- the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) Committee exists to coordinate public and human services transportation programs in order to better serve disabled, elderly, and low-income individuals, as well as the general public. The Committee makes funding decisions for federal grants, including Section 5310 (Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities), Section 5316 (New Freedom), and Section 5317 (Job Access and Reverse Commute).

Others- See the spotlight on the following page for a list of other organizations and interest groups involved in transportation education, advocacy, and policy decisions.

SPOTLIGHT

FOCUS: Regional Transportation Groups

Interest and Advocacy Groups

- Peoria Mayor's Advisory Committee for the Disabled
- Peoria Area Accessible Transportation Coalition Initiative
- Bike Peoria
- League of Illinois Bicyclists
- Friends of the Rock Island Trail
- Trails for Illinois
- Heart of Illinois Regional Port District
- Rails to Trails Conservancy
- Sierra Club

Clubs

- Illinois Valley Striders (IVS)
- Peoria Bicycle Club
- Peoria Area Mountain Biking Association (PAMBA)
- Illinois Valley Wheelm'n
- River City BMX Mountain Biking Club

- Peoria Triathlon Club
- Peoria Motorcycle Club
- Illinois Valley Yacht Club (IVY Club)
- East Peoria Boat Club
- Peoria Boat Club
- City, Village, and County Governments
- Illinois Department of Transportation

Transportation Providers

- Greater Peoria Mass Transit District
- We Care, Inc.
- Peoria CountyLink
- Council for Disadvantaged People (CDP)

Technical Assistance/Education

- Rural Transit Assistance Center

Personal Vehicles

For traveling to work, school, shopping, medical appointments, and other activities, the personal vehicle is the predominant mode of transportation in the region:

- 93% of households in the Tri-County Region have at least one vehicle available for use, and 59.7% of households have two or more vehicles available for use.

- 92.2% of workers in the Tri-County Region carpool or commute alone by car/truck/SUV to work.

INFOGRAPHIC 4.1: **MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO/FROM WORK: TRI-COUNTY**

92.2% DROVE ALONE OR CARPOOLED

1.1% PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

2.1% WALKED

4.6% OTHER

TRANSPORTATION TODAY

The transportation system in the Peoria region has grown over the past decades to support the growing developed area and population. Like many other urban areas the size of Peoria, the system improvements have been focused primarily on road projects targeted at automobiles and highway traffic, while investments in

other modes of transportation – including bus, passenger train, and bicycling/walking infrastructure – has generally lagged behind. This section will provide an account of the current state of our region's transportation infrastructure.

Despite the fact that private automobiles are the favored mode of transportation, the Tri-County Region has been largely unaffected by systemic congestion issues faced by many other metropolitan areas. This is due to the negligible population growth over the past 50 years, as well as a history of investing in capacity-expanding road projects. Currently, the only congested roads within the urbanized area are portions of Farmington Road in Peoria County, University Street in Peoria, Washington and Camp Streets in East Peoria, Illinois Route 116 near Woodford County, and Detroit Avenue in Morton. Use the interactive map to see where these roads are located in relation to places of employment, housing, and educational institutions. Outside of the urban area, there is no systemic road congestion, although occasional construction projects, traffic accidents, or slow-moving vehicles will cause brief delays.

With so many travelers using personal vehicles on the region's transportation network, it is important that the network not only be efficient, but also safe. Road safety is measured in several ways:

- Pavement conditions- Pavement conditions in the Tri-County Region are rated on a scale from 1 to 9, as reported by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

- Bridge infrastructure- IDOT has established a Structure Management System to maintain data collected from the annual bridge inspections. The inspection process evaluates many factors of the structure's condition and the bridge ultimately

receives a sufficiency rating from 1-100; 100 being the best possible score. Typically, if a structure has a rating of 50 or below, it is eligible for federal funds for reconstruction or repairs. The average rating of all 1,320 bridges in the Tri-County region is 84.

- Crashes- The number of vehicle crashes in the Tri-County Region has decreased since 2007. In fact, the number of crashes went from 10,221 in 2007 to 7,869 in 2011, a 23% decrease. Additionally, the total fatal crashes declined from 36 in 2007 to 22 in 2011, and the total injured in crashes declined by approximately 11%.

Public Transit

Urban Public Transit

The Peoria-Pekin Urbanized area is served by the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District (GPMTD), which operates fixed route general public transportation under the name of CityLink. CityLink's service area includes Peoria, West Peoria Township, and Peoria Heights, and also provides service under contract to the City of Pekin and the East Peoria Mass Transit District. Use the interactive map to locate the area's bus routes.

As gas prices continue to rise and the cost of owning and maintaining a vehicle increases, more individuals may opt to use public transit. The Tri-County Region is already experiencing this trend; from 2007 to 2011, total vehicle miles travelled in the region

INFOGRAPHIC 4.2: **CityLink Ridership, 2008–2012**
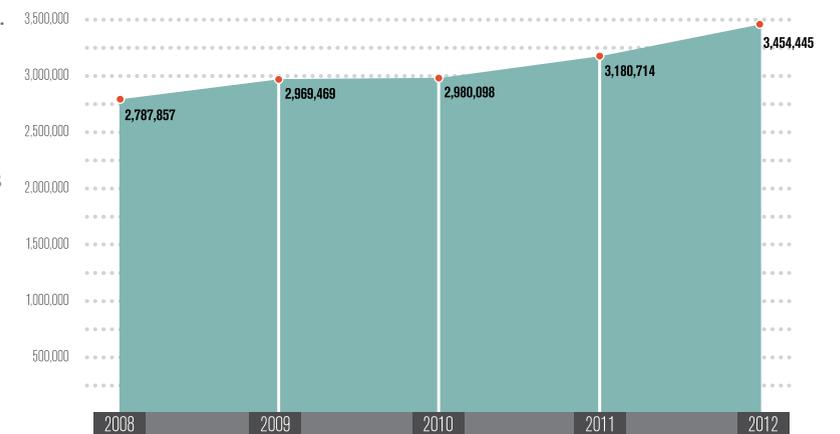
decreased by approximately 3.1% and CityLink experienced record-breaking passenger rides.

In addition to providing fixed route general public transportation, GPMTD contracts with a third-party provider to operate a demand-response paratransit service for individuals who are unable to use the fixed route system due to a disability. This service, referred to as CityLift, provides service to individuals who live within the cities of Peoria, East Peoria, the Village of Peoria Heights, and West Peoria Township.

Though the private vehicle remains the predominant mode of transportation in the region, GPMTD has implemented strategies and programs to enhance public transportation ridership:

- In 2003, GPMTD opened a $4.8 million modern transit center, which includes a covered canopy with eighteen bus-parking stalls. Additionally, YWCA partnered with CityLink to open a day care center in the same block; the arrangement is the first in the State to provide this combination of childcare and transportation.

- In 2011, GPMTD added two hybrid paratransit vehicles to the fleet.

- In 2012, CityLink provided a record-breaking 3,386,163 passenger rides.

- Under their passenger amenities program, GPMTD has increased the number of bus shelters by nearly 50%; installed nearly 1,000 bus stop signs; and installed over 150 bus benches throughout its service area.

- GPMTD partners with the City of Peoria, Peoria Area Civic Events (PACE), the Peoria Riverfront Association, Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, area hotels, the Peoria Civic Center, and others to transport individuals to special events. This service has attracted many "choice" riders to the service.

- GPMTD is currently working on a feasibility study to establish a second transit center facility in north Peoria. The exact location has not yet been determined.

Rural Public Transit

Nearly one-fifth of all Tri-County residents reside in rural areas. For many individuals – particularly the low-income and elderly populations – public transportation is the only option for traveling to work, school, and medical appointments. The Tri-County Region is served by two rural public transportation providers. WeCare, Inc. serves residents of Tazewell and Woodford Counties, and CountyLink serves residents of Peoria County. Both organizations provide demand-response service, which allows individuals to call a dispatcher to schedule a ride at their preferred time and place.

Though many are unfamiliar with rural public transit, the service is an essential need for hundreds of people throughout the region. Peoria's CountyLink alone serves over 500 individuals, the overwhelming majority of which are seniors or developmentally disabled individuals who use the service to get to work, day programs, and medical appointments. For many, this service represents their only option for mobility. Unfortunately, due to high costs and insufficient state and local funding, rural transportation providers are unable to meet the high demand for this service. In early 2013, Peoria County's service had no choice but to raise their fares and cut their service hours by one-fourth.

Bicyclists

Bicyclists represent a small, but growing cohort in the Tri-County region. According to the 2010 census, approximately 1.3 percent of
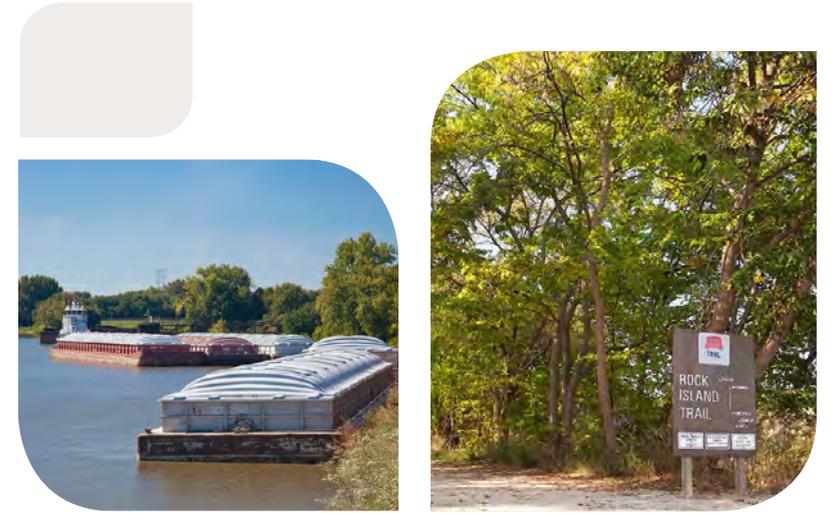
Photos by: Anastasia Samoylova

the working population commutes to work by "some other means," which includes bicycling. This number is up from 0.6% in 2000. This group will likely continue to grow as fuel prices continue to rise and the costs of motorized transportation climbs.

Though the Tri-County Region hasn't been particularly progressive in the construction of safe and efficient bicycle infrastructure, many communities are beginning to understand the economic, social, and environmental values of creating and maintaining bike lanes and trails. Currently, the Tri-County region has approximately 48 miles of off-road trails (32-miles of which are

INFOGRAPHIC 4.3: **APPROXIMATE MILES OF TRAILS PER 10,000 PEOPLE**

CHAMPAIGN-URBANA TRAIL MILES: 55.3	4.46
BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL TRAIL MILES: 48	4.27
QUAD CITIES TRAIL MILES: 60	2.22
PEORIA-PEKIN TRAIL MILES: 32	1.29
SPRINGFIELD TRAIL MILES: 17.5	1.14
DECATUR TRAIL MILES: 9	0.93

INFRASTRUCTURE MILES PER 10,000 CAPITA

located within the Peoria-Pekin urbanized area), 13 miles of marked bike lanes, and 704 miles of suggested bike routes. Additionally, another 74 miles of bike trails have been proposed. When exploring the interactive map, one can see that our current bike infrastructure is fragmented, making it difficult for individuals to use biking as a form of commuting. The suggested bike routes make commuting possible; however, these routes are not marked, and are therefore less accessible than formal bike lanes.

The Rock Island Trail, which has historically been used primarily for recreation, may become a viable option for bicyclists wishing to commute to work in a safe, efficient, and scenic way. In the fall of 2011, an extension called the Kellar-Branch Trail was completed. This off-road trail connects to the Rock Island Trail at Pioneer Parkway, and extends south to a current ending point at Glen Avenue. Eventually, the trail will extend to the River Trail of Illinois in East Peoria and the Morton Community Trail, which will allow people to ride from Morton to Toulon with minimal vehicle contact.

Pedestrians

The Peoria Area is not particularly walkable. According to Walk Score, an internet site that measures the walkability of individual places based on proximity to nearby amenities, the City of Peoria has a walk score of 47 out of 100, and has been labeled as "car-dependent." According to the 2011 ACS 1-year estimates, approximately 2.7% of Peoria residents walk to work. This is down from 3.8% in 2000.

Many individuals in the Tri-County region live too far from work to commute by foot; in 2011, the mean travel-time to work by car for City of Peoria residents was estimated at 16.4 minutes. Some individuals in the region do live within walking distance of their workplace; however, many of those individuals still choose to drive. For the most part, driving is easier, quicker, and more convenient than walking throughout the Peoria region. Furthermore, many sidewalks throughout the city are in poor condition, uninviting, or do not exist at all. To partially address the sidewalk issue, the City of Peoria contracted with TCRPC in 2011 to inventory and perform condition ratings for sidewalk segments throughout the City. The City's goal is to maximize their maintenance investment by prioritizing where sidewalk improvements can be made. TCRPC completed this project in 2013.

Other areas within the Tri-County region are even more car-dependent. According to 2009-2011 ACS 3-year estimates, approximately 2% of Tri-County residents walk to work, and the average travel time to work is about 20.8 minutes. Furthermore, since rural communities are sparsely populated, the presence of sidewalks between and even within rural communities is rare.

Rail

Due to the region's long economic history of heavy manufacturing, industry, distilling, and commodity production/distribution, as well as its situation alongside the Illinois River, the Tri-County area has
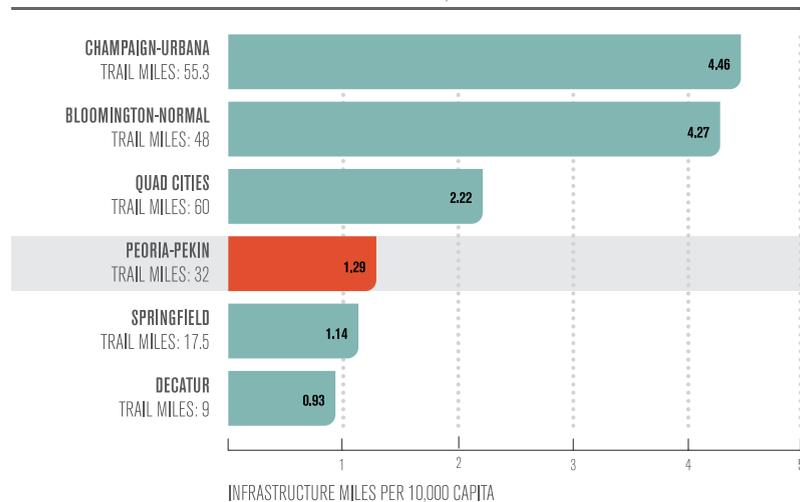
Photo by: Anastasia Samoylova

been recognized nationally for its quality access to railroad service. The region currently has access to four Class-I carriers (e.g. Union Pacific), three regional Class II carriers, and several short-line operators. Explore the interactive map to see how these rail lines connect to the region as a whole.

Though the region enjoys great access to rail infrastructure, services are currently limited to freight. Like many urban areas, Peoria had passenger rail service in the past, but as transportation policy shifted towards the automobile and away from rail, usage

dropped and service was discontinued in the 1980s. In 2011, IDOT and Amtrak conducted a study to determine the feasibility of connecting Peoria to Chicago via high-speed rail. The study concluded that rail service would be too costly, and suggested bus shuttle service from Peoria to the Amtrak Station in Normal, Illinois as an alternative.

Regional leaders were dissatisfied with the results of the Amtrak study, and advocated for a second feasibility study to be completed, and in 2012, TCRPC released a feasibility study regarding

the possibility of creating commuter rail service from Peoria to Bloomington-Normal. Initial findings from the study concluded that investment in commuter rail would create over 2,700 new jobs, while simultaneously promoting and providing sustainable transportation options, transit-oriented development, and mobility for the unemployed, student population, and transit-dependent population of the region. Regional leaders are currently attempting to secure funds for future phases of development for the commuter rail project.

Water

The Illinois River has long been one of Central Illinois' greatest transportation assets. It has provided the area with the ability to create business and distribute products around the globe by serving as a major link for the transport of goods into and out of the Illinois Heartland.

The river has a nine-foot channel depth, making it navigable year round. To the south, the Illinois River connects with the Mississippi River, and from there to ports in New Orleans, where international trade is abundant. To the north, the river connects with Lake Michigan, and from there, to the Atlantic Ocean via the St. Lawrence Seaway, again allowing for international trade. Transporting goods via barge is very cost efficient; it is estimated that large quantities of cargo can be moved by barge for one-third of the cost of rail and one-fifth the cost of truck.

In 2003, a Port District was established in order to enhance the utilization of the Illinois River for freight, and to create transportation and industrial employment opportunities for the residents of the region. The Heart of Illinois Regional Port District serves six counties in central Illinois, including Fulton, Marshall, Mason, Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties.

Air Travel

The Tri-County Region is served by three airports - the General Wayne A. Downing International Airport, the city-owned Pekin Municipal Airport and the Mount Hawley Auxiliary Airport. The latter two are classified as general aviation facilities as the airports are primarily used for air charters, flight training, and private flying.

The General Wayne A. Downing International Airport services a market of approximately 1.5 million people within a ninety-mile radius of Peoria. Scheduled passenger service consists of Allegiant Air, American Eagle, Delta, and United Express, with direct flights offered to Chicago, Atlanta, Detroit, Minneapolis, Denver, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Tampa/St. Petersburg, Dallas/Fort Worth, and Punta Gorda. In addition to passenger air transportation, the airport is host to a fixed-base operator, airport/pilot services, U.S. Customs, and corporate flight departments. The airport also provides cargo service for DHL, Federal Express, and UPS.

In 2012, the Peoria International Airport set a new record of 580,530 passenger trips during the course of one year. This total represents a 13 percent increase over 2011. According to Director of Airports, Gene Olson, the success can be partially attributed to the attractive and efficient new terminal which opened in April 2011. New service to Atlanta, Punta Gorda/Fort Myers, and Florida has also played a part in this recent success.

TRANSPORTATION ASSETS

- The Tri-County Region has been largely unaffected by systemic congestion issues faced by many other metropolitan areas across the nation.

- The Cities of Peoria, East Peoria, and Pekin have access to quality bus service from CityLink, which provided a record 3.4 million rides in 2012.

- The Tri-County Region has two rural public transportation providers which provide access and mobility primarily for the disabled, elderly, and low-income populations.

- The region has over 60 miles of existing bicycle trails, with an additional 74 miles of trails proposed. Many of the proposed trails will connect existing trails in order to form a continuous, more comprehensive bicycling network.

- Quality access to railroad service for freight, including access to four Class I carriers (e.g. Union Pacific), three regional Class II carriers, and several short-line operators.

- The Peoria-Pekin Union Railroad, located in Creve Coeur and East Peoria, is the largest switching and classification yard in Central Illinois, having in excess of 100 miles of track with the capacity of 2500 cars.

- Tri-County regional leaders are committed to establishing a connection to the high speed rail network.

- Due to the significant channel depth of the Illinois River, barges can navigate the river year-round.

- The Illinois River provides a cheaper alternative for transporting freight. It is estimated that cargo can be moved by barge for one-third the cost of rail and one-fifth the cost of truck.

- The Peoria region has access to an international airport, which provides direct flights to Chicago, Atlanta, Detroit, Minneapolis, Denver, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Tampa/St. Petersburg, Dallas/Fort Worth, and Punta Gorda.

TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS

- Several communities within the Peoria-Pekin urbanized area are not served by public transit.

- Though public transportation is gaining support – especially among younger generations – there continues to be a stigma surrounding bus as a form of transportation.

Photos by: Anastasia Samoylova

- Currently, there is no urban public transportation service on Sundays, and rural service is not available on Saturday or Sunday.

- Many bus stops within the community are not accessible – particularly to disabled individuals.

- Rural public transportation is not well understood by the general public, and has not been fully recognized as an essential component to the transportation network.

- For a variety of reasons, use of alternative transportation modes is lacking in the region.

- Retrofitting streets for bike lanes and acquiring land for bike trails can be expensive.

- The built environment does not encourage walking. Many stores cannot be accessed without travelling through a parking-lot.

- Many sidewalks are inaccessible to disabled individuals. Some are too narrow; some are blocked by light poles; and some have a severe slant towards the street.

- While the region enjoys great access to rail infrastructure, rail service is limited strictly to freight; the region currently does not have direct access to Amtrak passenger rail service.

- Significant delays occur in the lock and dam system along the Illinois River. Plans are underway to improve the locks, but construction is many years away.

- Sedimentation from eroding ravines within the Illinois River watershed is reducing the depth of the Illinois River, making it more difficult for barges to navigate through the channels.

- Airport strikes and the recession have caused inconsistency from airlines.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

Increasingly, transportation planners are being asked to plan for a transportation system that – in addition to achieving the important goals of mobility and safety – support a variety of environmental, economic, and social objectives. These include - but are not limited to - improving air quality, providing mobility to disadvantaged people, expanding the economy, and improving public health. Our goals work to address these sustainability principles.

GOAL 1

The Tri-County Region will increase public transit ridership by 10%.

In order to increase public transit ridership by 10%, the following action items are suggested:

- Establish Sunday fixed-route and paratransit bus service.

- Educate the top 10 employers on the benefits of offering flexible start and end times to employees.

- Pass legislation to require all new development located on active or planned bus routes to include accessible paths to bus stops.

- Work with the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District to identify inaccessible bus stops; prioritize those most in need of repair/redevelopment.

- Facilitate an update to the Tri-County Transit Study to determine demand for transit services in unserved rural and urban areas of Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford counties.

- Work with the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District to integrate transit stop, route, schedule, and fare information onto Google Transit.

- Reduce fixed-route service headway times by 50% at peak travel times, specifically along the three highest frequency routes.

- Within one calendar year, establish throughway coach service from the Quad Cities to Danville linking communities along the I-74 corridor.

- Promote, support, and secure funding to establish Passenger Rail service from the Quad Cities to Danville through Peoria.

GOAL 2

The Peoria Region is recognized as a bicycle friendly area by 2019.

In order to become bicycle friendly, the Peoria area should consider the following action items:

- Increase on-road bikeways (Class II) by 100% from 13 to 26 lane-miles utilizing various funding sources such as STU and ITEP allotments.

- Attain 0.5 miles of off-road bikeways (Class I trails) per square mile of land area within the urbanized area by constructing 30 additional miles of trail.

- Implement a minimum of 3 bicycle (enhancement) projects from the Long Range Transportation Plan.

- Develop a plan for a Peoria Lakes trail utilizing ITEP allotments.

- Develop a regional bike plan for the Tri-County Region.

- Educate citizens on proper road sharing techniques through promotional materials and training courses.

- Develop a list of prioritized pedestrian safety improvements to be implemented with Illinois Transportation Improvement Program (ITEP), Surface Transportation Urban (STU) funds, and other sources as funding permits.

- Submit a voluntary application to the League of American Bicyclists to be recognized as a bicycle friendly region.

GOAL 3

The Tri-County Region is committed to preserving and maintaining the existing transportation system.

A sustainable transportation system is one that preserves and maintains current infrastructure, while thoughtfully planning and preparing for future upgrades. The following action items are suggested to reach this goal:

- Maximize the use of the Illinois River to transport overweight and oversize loads.

- Develop partnerships with utility providers and coordinate the location of utilities along corridors and roadways to prevent relocation and/or provide the capacity to make upgrades in the future.

- Incentivize infill development to reduce the need for new roads.

- Reduce vehicle crashes by 25% by making safety improvements where most warranted.

GOAL 4

The Tri-County Region is committed to protecting the environment and promoting energy conservation.

Integrating environmental and land use planning with transportation planning has become an important step in addressing air quality, environmental, and health concerns. In order to reduce dependence on the automobile, individuals need alternative choices for daily travel. The following action items will allow the region to commit to protecting the environment and promoting energy conservation by giving residents options when it comes to daily travel:

- Increase public awareness of green concepts and sustainable infrastructure by incorporating green and sustainable training into regularly held MPO meetings and outreach programs.

- Reduce Vehicle Miles Travelled by 1% each year.

- Meet or exceed Complete Street standards on at least 75% of all new roadway or major reconstruction miles by incorporating pedestrian, bike, bus, and rail access.

- Encourage employers to incentivize carpooling and alternative modes of transportation.

- Facilitate regional revision of zoning and subdivision standards to emphasize mixed-use, compact, and cluster development patterns.

- Integrate stormwater management technologies, such as engineered bioswales, retention wetlands, and other existing/emerging technologies and best practices on all new roadway or reconstruction projects.

- Identify communities without stormwater and erosion control plans in place; assist identified communities in developing plans.

- Secure environmental representation on the Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area Transportation Study (PPUATS) Committee.

- Secure representation from the disabled community on the PPUATS Committee.

MORE INFORMATION

Websites

- Where's the Rack, Peoria?- http://www.wherestherack.org/

Documents

- Illinois Bike Transportation Plan (2013)- http://www.illinoisbikeplan.com/

- Transportation Improvement Program (2013) - This document identifies all street/highway and transit projects plus related enhancement projects programmed for four-year time periods.

- Commuter Rail for Central Illinois Study (2013)

- Human Services Transportation Plan (2012) - This document is a locally-developed strategy for public transit for elderly, disabled, and low-income persons.

- Long Range Transportation Plan (2010) - This document is prepared for the Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area Transportation Study (PPUATS) every five years, and represents the programming of transportation improvements for the years 2010-2035.

- Heart of Peoria Plan (2010)

- Hanna City Trail Concept Plan (2008)

- Rock Island State Trail Extension Concept Plan (2008)

- Peoria County Recreational Trail Connectivity Study (2005)

- Supply Chain Logistics and Transportation Indicators Study (2005)

- Peoria Metro Area Greenways & Trails Plan (1997)

- Greater Peoria Preferred Bike Routes and Trails

LAND USE

Lead Agency: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Just as agriculture has changed over time, so have land development patterns. In the early twentieth century, developed areas in the United States were more compact. Downtown areas served as both the business and retail hubs of communities, residential development occurred in dense subdivisions with several lots per acre, and transit services in the form of trolleys and streetcars were widely used.

After World War II, land was developed far away from traditional city centers, made possible by economic prosperity, the prevalence of the automobile, and changes in housing markets. Shopping malls and strip retail centers anchored by big-box stores in outlying areas replaced downtown cores as the primary retail areas, and single family homes were built on larger lots. These development trends have continued into the 21st Century in the Tri-Counties region. While attempts at urban infill and revitalization are occurring in the region, a good deal of investment and development still occurs outside of traditional urban centers.

WHO IS INVOLVED

The basis for the Land Use section of this plan was originally completed with the region's first integrated plan funded through the Federal Highway Administration's Eco-Logical Planning Grant Program, known locally as "The Big Plan" (TCRPC 2010). To build on this planning process for the Regional Sustainability Plan, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission's (TCRPC) land use planning staff convened to assess and update goals and actions. These updates were reviewed and approved by the HOI Sustainability Consortium.

LAND USE TODAY

A great deal of growth in this region has occurred on the fringes of the urban area, as is true in many areas of the country. Population figures for the region provide evidence of this trend. Since 1970, the population of the City of Peoria has decreased while the populations of Tazewell and Woodford Counties have increased. In addition, a special census conducted in the village of Germantown Hills in Woodford County revealed the population had increased nearly threefold between 1990 and 2007.

Development in the region has also been characterized by decreasing density, or more specifically, land consumption disproportional to population growth. The combined population density of the four largest municipalities in Peoria County (Peoria, Peoria Heights, Chillicothe, and Bartonville) decreased from 6,481 persons per square mile in 1950 to 2,092 persons per square mile in 2000, and this figure has decreased every decade since 1980. The same trend can be seen in Tazewell County; large communities like East Peoria and Pekin are expanding geographically at a much faster pace than they are adding population. Washington and Morton, however, do not appear to be following the trend. Between 2000 and 2010 Washington's population grew at a rate higher than the rate of geographic expansion, and Morton's population and land area grew proportionally. Infographic 5.1 on the following page shows the population and geographic expansion data for the largest communities in the region for 2000 to 2010.

Continuation of prevailing location and density trends is concerning for farmland preservation and protection of environmental assets. Because the areas that surround communities are typically agricultural, fringe development will consume farmland, and farmland will be lost at faster rates if population density

INFOGRAPHIC 5.1: **REGIONAL LAND AREA AND POPULATION CHANGE: 2000–2010**

PERCENT CHANGE

45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5

PEORIA CITY   PEKIN   EAST PEORIA   MORTON   WASHINGTON

■ LAND USE   ■ POPULATION
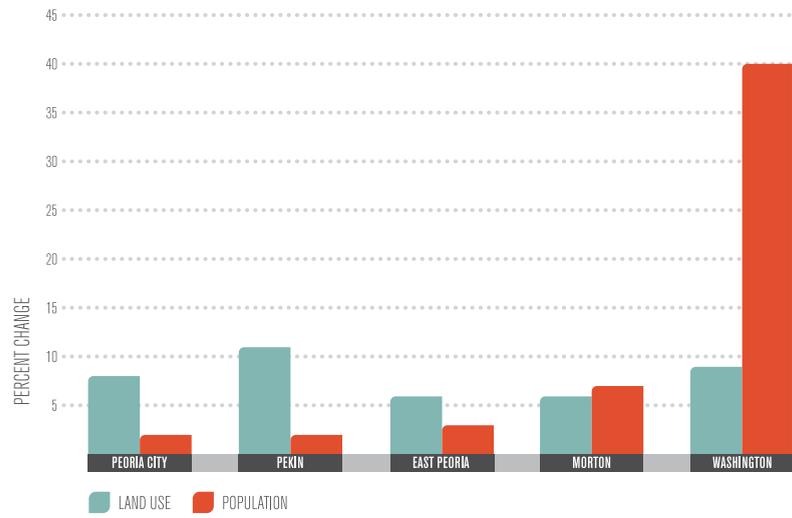
continues to decrease. In the same vein, environmental assets such as forests and wetlands located in outlying areas also could be put at risk if these prevailing trends continue.

In addition to decreasing density of land use, the type of development occurring in fringe areas is not conducive to resilient transportation systems and livable communities. Growth has primarily been residential, with the commercial component comprised of big-box retail stores and strip commercial development. While residential development has occurred throughout the region,

commercial growth has largely been clustered in areas such as the north and northwest City of Peoria, north and east Morton, north and west Washington, and eastern Pekin. These trends have implications on the fiscal health of local units of government.

Some municipalities located throughout the country have attempted to quantify the costs and benefits of new development occurring at the urban fringe. These cost of community services studies (COCS) identify the costs of providing services such as police protection and waste disposal for new development and weigh these costs against the revenue generated by the development. Similar analyses have been completed in the Tri-County region in an attempt to quantify the benefits of new development.

A service delivery study, a type of COCS, was completed for Peoria County as part of its recent Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The study determined the costs and revenues associated with development based on a projected land use pattern for the year 2050. Unlike a traditional COCS, which analyzes the costs and revenue associated with new development at the current time, the Peoria County study analyzed the costs and revenue associated with new development into the future. The study identified two general trends: 1) Local governments and school districts with shrinking population will have the greatest fiscal strain; and 2) Fast growing communities will also face significant fiscal strain. While the former trend is not surprising, the latter trend seems counter-intuitive.

The study forecasted that future population growth will be much greater relative to employment growth, so the residential tax base

Photo by: D. Sharon Pruitt

Photo by: Anastasia Samoylova

(Top) Much of the growth in the region has been residential, as new homes have been built away from city centers.
(Bottom) Development on the fringes has caused older central city stores to suffer, like the one pictured above.

will bear a significant share of the cost of providing services for new development. Expanding the non-residential tax base by attracting more commercial and industrial development will result in a more promising fiscal outlook.

In addition, the City of Peoria attempted to quantify the costs and revenues associated with new development in its designated growth cells (growth cells are part of the city's growth management strategy in which infrastructure improvements such as sanitary sewer are concentrated into a specific geographic area.) The City's study identified the cumulative capital investment, estimated cumulative operating costs, and estimated cumulative revenue from property and sales taxes, permit and sewer connection fees, and payments from the federal government based on population growth. The study estimated that revenues will cover costs in 2015, twenty years after the first growth cell was created. An important caveat is that general estimates were used instead of detailed analysis of the type employed by Peoria County. Nevertheless, the study exemplified a wise strategy: attempting to quantify the costs and benefits of growth to ensure growth pays for itself and contributes to a community's fiscal health.

Another significant land development trend is the reliance on the automobile. In general, land uses are separated and development density is low in the region. While this development pattern is common state- and nation-wide, it has significant implications for the region:

1. **Compliance with federal air quality standards.** The region is in compliance with current standards for ground-level ozone, but the U.S. EPA is expected to tighten the standards in the near future. Depending on the U.S. EPA's decision and future air quality readings, one possible outcome is the region falling into non-attainment, or no longer being in compliance with the standards. This would lead to increased regulation in the region, so efforts to reduce automobile emissions – a significant contributor of pollutants that are measured in air quality readings – can help the region improve its air quality.

2. **Regional traffic congestion.** As noted in the Transportation section, the region is largely unaffected by congestion, and the capacity-building roadway projects proposed in the LRTP likely will preserve the overall efficiency of the roadway network. While overall congestion is projected to remain low, the construction of capacity-building projects at the urban fringe will encourage outward expansion by opening new areas for development while keeping travel times low. Outward development will consume agricultural land and could threaten significant environmental areas, and an increase in the number of automobile trips made to outlying areas can negatively impact air quality.

3. **Strained local government budgets.** Cities in the region have difficulty maintaining existing roadways due to a lack of funding. The construction of additional roads will only increase the number of miles of roads local governments must maintain. Certainly, the automobile will continue to be the primary mode of transportation in the region, and revenues from new development could offset the costs of constructing and maintaining the road network, but efforts to increase the number of trips made via mass transit and non-motorized modes of transportation will benefit the region.

Another trend in regional land development is the siting of residential subdivisions near steep forested slopes. As discussed in the Environment section, much residential development has occurred in and near the forested bluffs throughout the region. The resulting increase in impervious surface and concentration of stormwater runoff over erodible soils has contributed to bluff erosion, and this erosion has led to sedimentation of local rivers and streams, as well as property damage where unstable terrain has compromised retaining walls and decks on residential properties.

According to the Peoria-Pekin Future Landscape Project, a significant proportion of residential development between 1996 and 2000 occurred near moderate and steep slopes. Overall, 83% of all homes built during this time were located within 700 feet of slopes of 7 to 14%, 50% of all homes were within 700 feet of slopes of 15 to 23%, and 31% of all homes were within 700 feet of slopes of more than 23%. In the unincorporated area, 33% of all units were built within 200 feet of slopes of 15 to 23%. More recent data was unavailable, but given the location of much of the development in

growth areas around the region, it can be reasonably assumed these trends have continued over the past ten years.

In response to the growth patterns of the last half-century, efforts are taking place to promote reinvestment in urbanized, central areas. Redevelopment projects like the Peoria Warehouse District and Pekin Downtown revitalization aim to breathe life into neglected commercial hubs, while the East Peoria Levee District project has turned a massive brownfield into commercially productive space.

With the help of a $10 million grant from the US Department of Transportation, a streetscape overhaul of Peoria's historic Warehouse District broke ground in 2013. With an emphasis on complete streets, the project will pair with a newly adopted form-based code to encourage commerce and residences in the area. The Pekin Downtown revitalization program has a similar focus: to bring interest and businesses back to the city's historic Main Street area. A TIF district and enterprise zone in the downtown provide an economic incentive for business owners to keep shop in the heart of town. The East Peoria Levee District is an ongoing effort to redevelop land previously occupied by Caterpillar, Inc that had sat vacant for many years. Opening for business in late 2013, the area provides retail, restaurants, and lodging just across the river from Downtown Peoria. These projects represent the first steps toward curbing land consumption in the region and making use of assets already present in the urban area.

LAND USE ASSETS

- Variety of land uses conducive to urban and rural living, preservation of valuable habitat, and agriculture.

- Local jurisdictions are investigating overall infrastructure costs associated with specific development practices to create more cost efficient cities.

- Plentiful infill potential with empty "big box" stores and residential lots.

- Model land use ordinances available through the regional planning commission

- Illinois River Road Scenic Byway

- Pekin Main Street Community

LAND USE BARRIERS

- Lack of advanced land use planning practices in place that consider community health, environmental preservation, and livable communities as primary factors in policy.

- Land use and zoning policies are prohibitive to sustainable development practices.
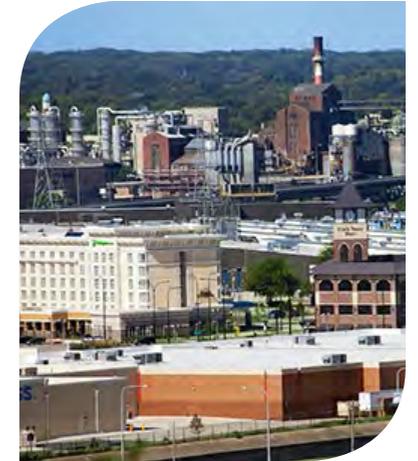
Photos by: Anastasia Samoylova

(Top Left) Residents have begun revitalizing an old Peoria neighborhood; (Top Right) A view of East Peoria's Levee District; (Bottom) Redeveloped buildings within the Peoria Warehouse District.

Photos by: Anastasia Samoylova

LAND USE GOALS

The following land use goals aim to support growth that is proportional with population growth, meets economic demand, makes wise use of land resources, supports an efficient transportation system, preserves environmental assets, and makes fiscal sense for local governments.

GOAL 1

Local governments in the Tri-County area are regionally known in the Midwest for their progressive land use policies and programs.

The following action items are suggested to accomplish the above goal:

- Conduct a regional analysis of municipal and county land use programs, including zoning codes and subdivision ordinances, for the purpose of upgrading land use practices to promote livable cities and sustainable developments.

- Local governments adopt and enforce sustainable land use practices and policies as a result of the analysis.

- Promote and celebrate the new approach to land use planning with public events hosted by local governments, developers, and realtors.

GOAL 2

Historic preservation is foundational to regional tourism and re-development.

Historic preservation can provide tremendous benefits to a community, including opportunities for tourism and economic development. The following action items work to address historic preservation in this region:

- The region's elected leaders and development community partner with the tourism and historic preservation communities to develop an awareness of benefits of historic preservation and recognize impacts of historic buildings and infrastructure on economic development, tourism, and quality of life.

- Create a regional historic preservation strategy that maps historic assets and sets policies and programs to leverage these assets in community and economic development.

- Potential partner agencies: Landmarks Illinois – a statewide preservation advocacy association; Central Illinois Landmarks Foundation; and Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

GOAL 3

Land use decisions are made on a local scale but in a regional context.

The following action items address the above goal:

- Enhance the local fiscal impact modeling tool and tax revenue study to a regional level.

- Through a regional land use and economic development action team, identify and implement opportunities to reduce jurisdictional competition, improve development quality, and provide strategic urban and rural development.

GOAL 4

Preservation of natural resources is a priority in all comprehensive land use plans and policies.

The following action items work to integrate environmental planning and land use planning in order to preserve natural resources and enhance quality of life:

- Integrate identified regional environmental corridors into all land use plans.

- Local jurisdictions adopt environmental protection policies such as stream buffer, steep slope, and stormwater ordinances.

Top Left: Stormwater runoff can cause flooding when proper precautions aren't taken. Top Right and Bottom: The Peoria Riverfront Museum has used native landscaping, bioswales, and a riparian buffer to minimize stormwater runoff.

ENVIRONMENT

Lead Agency: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Central Illinois is rich with environmental resources, from diverse deciduous forests to wetlands, bluffs, and the Illinois River valley. These resources drove population growth of European settlers in the 1800's and early 1900's. Settlers took advantage of the river as a transportation route and supplier of food and mussel shells, the soils and plentiful water through row-crop agriculture and multiple distilleries, and even the clay soils for creating pottery through the American and Peoria Pottery Companies.

Today, natural resources remain a valuable asset; the Illinois River sees more barge traffic than the upper Mississippi, as it is the one inland connection from the Great Lakes to the rest of the world. Additionally, row-crop agriculture dominates the landscape, the manufacturing industry taps the plentiful groundwater supply, gravel operations mine sandy soils along stream and river banks,

and the wind blows across flat plains providing sustainable energy through wind farms. This section provides details of the region's natural resources, an overview of local organizations affiliated with natural resource management, and specific goals aimed at promoting sustainable practices that enhance and protect natural resources.

WHO IS INVOLVED

The basis for the Environment section of this plan was originally completed with the region's first integrated plan funded through the Federal Highway Administration's Eco-Logical Planning Grant Program, known locally as "The Big Plan" (TCRPC 2010). To build on this planning process for the Regional Sustainability Plan, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) staff convened with environmental organizations in a GreenDrinks session and in one additional session held at Peoria Park District's Camp Wokanda. Representatives from the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club, Peoria Park District, Global Warming Solutions, and independent natural resource professionals provided direction on the environmental resources to address and on the goals and actions to move the region towards a sustainable future in regards to natural resource protection.

ENVIRONMENT TODAY

Ecosystems

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) has divided the nation's ecosystems into eco-regions, and Central Illinois is in the Central Corn Belt Plains eco-region: "Prior to European settlement, the region had extensive prairie communities intermixed with oak-hickory forests native to the glaciated plains of the Central Corn Belt Plains. Beginning in the nineteenth century, the natural vegetation was gradually replaced by agriculture. Farms are now extensive on the dark, fertile soils of the Central Corn Belt Plains and mainly produce corn and soybeans; cattle, sheep, poultry, and, especially hogs, are also raised, but they are not as dominant as in the drier Western Corn Belt Plains to the west. Agriculture has affected stream chemistry, turbidity, and habitat."

On a local scale, ecosystems have been fragmented by agriculture and urban development; however, in 2007 an Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) grant allowed Tri-County Regional Planning Commission to map the existing habitats and proposed corridors in order to protect natural areas from development and allow for contiguous habitat. These corridors can be viewed on the online interactive map.

Decurrent False Aster
Photo by: Jane Ward

Photo by: Wes Gibson

Photo By: Michigan Sea Grant

Flora and Fauna

In addition to ecosystem descriptions by the US EPA, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources created a Critical Trends Biological Assessment of the region in 1998. The study states that more than half (51%) of its pre-settlement forest area remains wooded today, compared to 31 % statewide. More of the region's forest retains its original ecological integrity as well, at 0.2 % in the Illinois River Bluffs compared to 0.08% statewide.

Some three dozen species of wetland birds are known to inhabit the region. Of those three dozen, 16 species are officially recognized as threatened or endangered, including the black-crowned night-heron and the king rail. Wetlands are also used heavily as feeding and resting places by migrant birds that move north and south across the mid-continent each spring and fall.

The mix of woodland, savanna, and prairie found in the bluffs along the Illinois River is one of the largest remnant forest ecosystems left in Illinois. Critical to the ecological health of the Illinois River - among other functions, they hold the fragile surface soil against erosion - the bluffs are rich environments in their own right. They are home to flying squirrels and many birds. (Veeries nest in some woodlands, especially in the Peoria Wilds area.) The valley harbors rare plant species such as the decurrent false aster, which exists only in the Illinois River Valley and whose life cycle is adapted to the unique flooding regime found on the Illinois River. The valley also serves as an essential corridor for transient species, including the federally-threatened bald eagle, the state-threatened bobcat, and many migratory bird species.

Below the bluffs in the wooded wetlands in the bottomland, brown creepers nest, as does (occasionally) the rare red-shouldered hawk. Deer, raccoon, muskrat, and mink are common. Reptiles and amphibians from the spring peeper and gray tree frog to the brown snake enliven the woods.

Several of the plants and animals found today in the region are not native. Two percent of the bird species and 4% of the mammals, as well as 21 % of the vascular plants (205 of 996 species) were introduced to the region. An example is multiflora rose, one of 25 introduced plant species that conservationists consider invasive. Another pest is garlic mustard, which has crowded out native spring woodland wildflowers across central Illinois. One of the most prevalent fauna invaders is the Asian carp in the Illinois River. Not only do the carp create biological dysfunction by competing with native fish for food and dredging up sediment from the river bottom, but also, the carp are problematic to those that recreate on the river in that the large fish jump out of the water and have become dangerous for boaters and water skiers.

Illinois River

The Illinois River was at one time one of the most biologically productive in the nation. Early European explorers described plentiful pre-historic sturgeons - fish so big they could tip a canoe - and braided stream channels, particularly through the Peoria area, where one could lose the river path. In the late 1800's, the biological productivity of this river system supported 15 button factories from fresh water mussels and the Illinois River was only second to the Columbia River in fresh water fish production (Illinois History Museum website). It is important to note that human society heavily used this river for transportation, food, and economic vitality for hundreds of generations, and ecologically, the Illinois River was in very good condition upon stewardship of Native Americans. Today, after 20 generations of post-European settlement, the Illinois River is plagued with sewage, litter, nutrient overload, and sediment. Biological diversity is poor, and plants - the life force of the food chain - are not able to root themselves and grow because of restricted sunlight from pollution. Somewhere in this story, there is a lesson on sustainability.

Despite immense degradation, the Illinois River remains a significant biological and hydrological asset. The Illinois River was recognized as a "nationally significant ecosystem" by Congress in the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, and according to a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Illinois River Basin Restoration Comprehensive Plan (2006) the Illinois River is one of a small number of world-class river floodplain ecosystems where biological

TABLE 6.1: IMPAIRED RIVERS AND STREAMS

WATER BODY	DESCRIPTION	CAUSE	SOURCE
ILLINOIS R.	FISH CONSUMPTION	MERCURY	ATMOSPHERIC DEPOSITION - TOXICS
ILLINOIS R.	FISH CONSUMPTION	POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS	SOURCE UNKNOWN
ILLINOIS R.	PRIMARY CONTACT RECREATION	FECAL COLIFORM	SOURCE UNKNOWN
ILLINOIS R.	PUBLIC AND FOOD PROCESSING WATER SUPPLIES	ATRAZINE	
ILLINOIS R.	PUBLIC AND FOOD PROCESSING WATER SUPPLIES	TOTAL DISSOLVED SOLIDS	
SPOON R.	PRIMARY CONTACT RECREATION	FECAL COLIFORM	SOURCE UNKNOWN
PRINCE RUN	AQUATIC LIFE	SEDIMENTATION/SILTATION	AGRICULTURE
PRINCE RUN	AQUATIC LIFE	SEDIMENTATION/SILTATION	CROP PRODUCTION (CROP LAND OR DRY LAND
MACKINAW R.	FISH CONSUMPTION	POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS	SOURCE UNKNOWN
MACKINAW R.	PRIMARY CONTACT RECREATION	FECAL COLIFORM	SOURCE UNKNOWN
HICKORY GROVE DITCH	AQUATIC LIFE	MANGANESE	CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS
HICKORY GROVE DITCH	AQUATIC LIFE	OXYGEN, DISSOLVED	SOURCE UNKNOWN
HICKORY GROVE DITCH	AQUATIC LIFE	SEDIMENTATION/SILTATION	AGRICULTURE
DILLON CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	CAUSE UNKNOWN	SOURCE UNKNOWN
INDIAN CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	PHOSPHORUS (TOTAL)	MUNICIPAL POINT SOURCE DISCHARGES
INDIAN CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS (TSS)	CROP PRODUCTION (CROP LAND OR DRY LAND
PRAIRIE CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	CHLORIDE	MUNICIPAL POINT SOURCE DISCHARGES
PRAIRIE CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	OXYGEN, DISSOLVED	MUNICIPAL POINT SOURCE DISCHARGES
E. BR. PANTHER CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	OXYGEN, DISSOLVED	SOURCE UNKNOWN
KICKAPOO CR.	FISH CONSUMPTION	MERCURY	ATMOSPHERIC DEPOSITION - TOXICS
KICKAPOO CR.	FISH CONSUMPTION	POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS	SOURCE UNKNOWN
KICKAPOO CR.	PRIMARY CONTACT RECREATION	FECAL COLIFORM	SOURCE UNKNOWN
FARGO RUN	AQUATIC LIFE	CAUSE UNKNOWN	SOURCE UNKNOWN
SENACHWINE CR.	PRIMARY CONTACT RECREATION	FECAL COLIFORM	SOURCE UNKNOWN

TABLE 6.1 CONTINUED: IMPAIRED RIVERS AND STREAMS

WATER BODY	DESCRIPTION	CAUSE	SOURCE
MOLE CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	SEDIMENTATION/SILTATION	CROP PRODUCTION (CROP LAND OR DRY LAND)
E. BR. COPPERAS CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	CAUSE UNKNOWN	SOURCE UNKNOWN
LARGENT CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	CAUSE UNKNOWN	SOURCE UNKNOWN
FARM CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	CHLORIDE	URBAN RUNOFF/STORM SEWERS
FARM CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	PH	SOURCE UNKNOWN
FARM CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	PHOSPHORUS (TOTAL)	MUNICIPAL POINT SOURCE DISCHARGES
FARM CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	PHOSPHORUS (TOTAL)	URBAN RUNOFF/STORM SEWERS
FARM CR.	AQUATIC LIFE	TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS (TSS)	URBAN RUNOFF/STORM SEWERS
SPRING SOUTH	AESTHETIC QUALITY	PHOSPHORUS (TOTAL)	CROP PRODUCTION (CROP LAND OR DRY LAND)
SPRING SOUTH	AESTHETIC QUALITY	PHOSPHORUS (TOTAL)	RUNOFF FROM FOREST/GRASSLAND/PARKLAND
SPRING SOUTH	AESTHETIC QUALITY	TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS	CROP PRODUCTION (CROP LAND OR DRY LAND)
SPRING SOUTH	AESTHETIC QUALITY	TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS	HIGHWAY/ROAD/BRIDGE RUNOFF (NON-CONSTRUCTION RELATED)
SPRING SOUTH	AESTHETIC QUALITY	TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS	RUNOFF FROM FOREST/GRASSLAND/PARKLAND
SPRING SOUTH	FISH CONSUMPTION	MERCURY	ATMOSPHERIC DEPOSITION - TOXICS
EVERGREEN	FISH CONSUMPTION	MERCURY	ATMOSPHERIC DEPOSITION - TOXICS
EVERGREEN	PUBLIC AND FOOD PROCESSING WATER SUPPLIES	MANGANESE	SOURCE UNKNOWN
EUREKA	AESTHETIC QUALITY	CAUSE UNKNOWN	CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS
EUREKA	AESTHETIC QUALITY	PHOSPHORUS (TOTAL)	RUNOFF FROM FOREST/GRASSLAND/PARKLAND
EUREKA	AESTHETIC QUALITY	PHOSPHORUS (TOTAL)	WATERFOWL
EUREKA	AESTHETIC QUALITY	TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS (TSS)	SITE CLEARANCE (LAND DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT)
SPRING NORTH	AESTHETIC QUALITY	PHOSPHORUS (TOTAL)	CROP PRODUCTION (CROP LAND OR DRY LAND)
SPRING NORTH	AESTHETIC QUALITY	PHOSPHORUS (TOTAL)	RUNOFF FROM FOREST/GRASSLAND/PARKLAND
SPRING NORTH	AESTHETIC QUALITY	TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS (TSS)	CROP PRODUCTION (CROP LAND OR DRY LAND)
SPRING NORTH	AESTHETIC QUALITT	TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS (TSS)	RUNOFF FROM FOREST/GRASSLAND/PARKLAND
SPRING NORTH	FISH CONSUMPTION	MERCURY	ATMOSPHERIC DEPOSTION - TOXICS

productivity is enhanced by annual flood pulses that feed backwaters and floodplain lakes. With some effort on behalf of today's stewards, the Illinois River has great potential to regain ecological integrity.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency collects data on several, but not all of the streams/rivers of the region. Table 6.1 lists impaired streams.

Illinois River Bluffs

The bluffs are a defining characteristic of the region, yielding immeasurable benefit to the quality-of-life for residents as well as the attraction of visitors and new residents to the area. With the largest contiguous oak-hickory forest in the State of Illinois outside the Shawnee National Forest, the ecological integrity of the bluffs is dependent upon stewardship by fire and thinning of invasive plant species. The flora and fauna diversity in managed areas attracts rare birds and the occasional bobcat. It is important to note that without fire management, invasive trees - mainly sugar maples - grow rampant and prevent grasses and flowering plants from carpeting the forest floor, thus protecting slopes from eroding. The erosion of forest soils and the delivery of sediment to the Illinois River due to this ecological shift is in the hundreds of thousands of tons per year. To learn more about forest management and the impact on biodiversity, visit the demonstration site at Camp Wokanda in Mossville, IL.
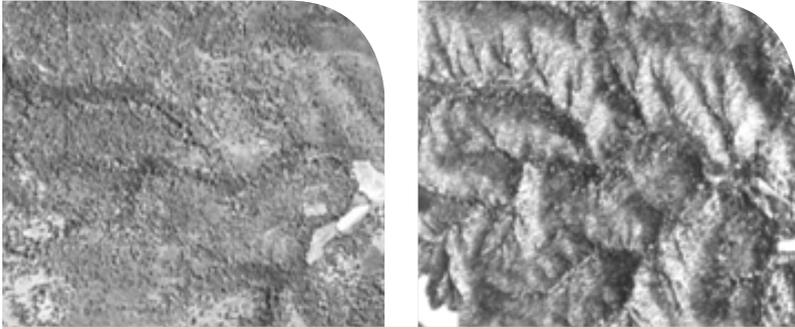
Native Americans would burn the bluffs to reduce wildfires and to improve food crop. Above are Singing Woods Nature Preserve aerial photos from 1938 (left) to 1998 (right). Notice the formation of ravines from a lack of forest management.

Soils

One of the most economically valuable natural resources in the area is the rich topsoil formed from the growth and decomposition of prairie vegetation over thousands of years. Within the region are over one-hundred soil types, each with varying characteristics. The three most predominant types are Ipava, Rozetta, and Tama. All three of these soil types are considered prime farmland.

The uppermost layer of any soil contains the highest amount of organic matter. This is necessary to provide the nutrients needed for plant growth. In this region the depth of this layer changes with each soil type, ranging from 3"-21". Ipava's top layer is 19", Rozetta's top layer is 8", and Tama's top layer is 16". This provides for a great growing environment for vegetation, including agricultural crops. The region loses thousands of tons of topsoil each year due to erosion of exposed farm fields. The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service and the county Soil and Water Conservation Districts work with producers to incorporate soil saving practices on farm fields.

Watershed and Stormwater

The term "watershed" refers to the area of land that drains into a body of water. It is through the concept of watershed that one can understand that the quality of water is intimately connected to the land. When rainwater falls on to the land, it absorbs into the ground, runs into local stream systems or ponds, or is evaporated. Because of the conversion of land from natural systems to urban and row-crop agriculture, rainwater does not infiltrate into the groundwater, but mostly runs off the landscape and into nearby streams. This increased water flow to stream not only erodes the streambanks, but also brings chemical pollution from the landscape to the stream and river systems. Major pollutants in surface waters of developed watersheds include: pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, road salt, dog/pet feces, and sediment .

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the US Environmental Protection Agency regulate stormwater quality through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) permit programs. NPDES focuses on urbanized areas including counties, municipalities and townships, and requires local governments to reduce stormwater pollution, monitor waters, and provide public education on stormwater best practices. The CSO program refers to specific areas where the stormwater and sewage infrastructure systems are combined. In CSO areas, untreated sewage is often deposited directly in the river or adjacent stream system in large rain events. The United States Environmental Protection Agency is currently working with local governments to reduce their CSO impact. Active CSO permits in the region include: City of Peoria, City of Pekin, and the Village of Morton.

Fun fact: *The term "watershed" refers to an area of land that drains into a common body of water. Land and water are intimately connected through the watershed.*

SPOTLIGHT

FOCUS: Habitat Management

Peoria Park District and their volunteer group, Peoria Wilds, are the region's superstars in habitat management in the bluffs. With their construction teams and with grant funding secured by the Peoria Park District and their partner, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, these groups have restored and maintained hundreds of acres of open woodland, oak-hickory forests.

Groundwater

The Tri-County area has vast groundwater resources, including the Mahomet and Sankoty Aquifers. The Sankoty is one of the most extensive aquifers in the state. It frequently is 100 feet thick and is typically found below elevations of 520 to 530 feet above sea level. It has been used as a water source in the Peoria area since at least 1892. The Mahomet Aquifer is a sand and gravel aquifer that underlies 15 counties and ranges from 50 to 200 feet thick. It supplies over 100 million gallons per day of groundwater for public water use, industrial supply, and irrigation.

Groundwater is accessed for drinking, irrigation and commercial use by private and municipal water wells and for its geothermal heating and cooling properties used in heating and air-conditioning our homes, businesses, and industries. Public water supplies are required by law to be tested on a regular basis and provide annual water quality reports.

There are several common minerals, organisms and chemicals that can affect water quality and safety:

- **Coliforms** are bacteria and in themselves are not harmful. They are used as an indicator for other harmful bacteria generally found with them. In Illinois, water tests standards are zero (0) for Coliform.

Fun fact: *90 % of the prairie plant body is under the ground. They have deep extensive root systems to help them survive fires and have the added benefit of absorbing excess stormwater.*

- **E. coli** is one strain of bacteria associated with human and animal fecal matter. Any detectable presence of E. coli in your well water means your water is unsafe for drinking without treatment such as boiling.

- **Nitrates** are an end result of a chemical reaction. Its presence can be the result of commercial fertilizers and human or animal wastes. Infants less than six months old can become sick from drinking formula or eating cereals made with water high in nitrate. Nitrate reduces the amount of oxygen in the blood, resulting in blue baby syndrome. It can even be fatal for young children, the elderly or anyone with an impaired immune system.

- **Iron and/or sulfur bacteria.** Iron is one of the most abundant minerals in the earth's crust and is very common in groundwater. Too much iron makes the water look reddish-brown, can stain laundry and makes drinks taste terrible. Also common are iron and sulfur bacteria which combine with minerals in the water (typically iron, manganese or hydrogen) to produce slime deposits or corrosive gas. Iron and sulfur bacteria are not harmful but can clog pipes and fixtures, produce odors, and provide a habitat for other bacteria such as coliform bacteria.

The Illinois EPA conducted a comprehensive trend analysis of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) found in community water system (CWS) wells across the state. Industrial, agricultural, and commercial activities can often produce VOCs. They are usually produced in large volumes and are associated with products such as plastics, adhesives, paints, gasoline, fumigants, refrigerants, and dry-cleaning fluids. They can reach groundwater through many sources and routes, including leaking storage tanks, landfills, infiltration of urban runoff and wastewater, septic systems, and injection through wells. There continues to be a statistically significant increasing trend of contamination by VOCs. A Groundwater Contamination Response Strategy and legislation (Public Act 92-652, effective July 11, 2002) were developed and adopted, setting forth procedures to be used by state agencies in their responses to existing and potential groundwater contamination of private wells by VOCs. This Right to Know (RTK) strategy and legislation were developed to notify private well owners about potential groundwater problems of nearby CWS wells with VOC detections. Sites in the study area where notification has been provided include: East Peoria, Hiatts Hideaway MHP, Mackinaw, Marquette Heights in Tazewell County; Princeville in Peoria County; and Roanoke in Woodford County. Volatile organic compounds are an important group of environmental contaminants to monitor and manage in groundwater because of their widespread and long-term use, as well as their ability to persist and migrate in groundwater (IEPA, Illinois Groundwater Protection Program: Biennial Comprehensive Status and Assessment Report, 2012).

Brownfields

The term "brownfield site" means real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Defects on the site add to the cost of redevelopment, and in many cases the rehabilitation costs outweigh the potential value of development. The site is left in its polluted state, often abandoned indefinitely. The disinvestment and disuse draws similar disinvestment in neighboring properties, creating neighborhoods of blight that attract criminal activity and ire from the local community. This process in our region has resulted in blighted legacy neighborhoods and former industry clusters within otherwise healthy communities.

The region contains numerous brownfield sites, most obviously abandoned gas stations, former dry cleaning facilities, and decommissioned multi-acre industrial warehouses. In addition, the region has sites often overlooked such as abandoned offices and dilapidated houses, as well as abandoned rail lines. Many of these areas are located in valuable real estate near the Peoria Lakes and commercial centers. The cost to repair and remediate these buildings/sites has impacted area development by discouraging investment. Note: The region still has many active manufacturing sites and steel mills, which do not qualify as brownfields.

Fortunately, there are successful examples of passive and active brownfield revitalization efforts our communities can adopt to alleviate these issues. The most passive approach can be implemented after building demolition. This approach requires dispersing seeds of remediative plants, such as sun flowers, to lift heavy metals and chemical from the soil during their natural biological process. This method is effective over long periods of time, and with the proper flora and fauna, can relieve the site from contamination. More intensive and rapid remediation methods may involve complete removal of the contaminated soils, filtration barriers between soil and groundwater, permeable treatment walls, soil washing, electrokinetics, mechanical separation, and chemical treatment. The intensive processes are very cost intensive and often public resources are not available to perform the necessary remediation. Some grants and funding streams are available through the EPA and HUD, and should be considered in future planning efforts.

Air Quality

Air quality and transportation are intimately connected through US EPA regulation. The Clean Air Act, which was last amended in 1990, requires EPA to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (40 CFR part 50) for pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment. The EPA Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS) has set National Ambient Air Quality Standards for six principal pollutants, which are called "criteria" pollutants. Of the six pollutants, particulate matter and ozone are most affected by

SPOTLIGHT

Focus: Edwards Coal Plant

A current area of concern for many environmental organizations is the phasing out of the Edwards Coal Plant in Peoria County. The Central Illinois Health Community Alliance is advocating that the U.S. EPA secure a clean-up of the coal ash ponds through the discharge permit for this land. Without proper practices to mitigate contamination of local natural resources, brownfields such as old coal power plants can have severe impact on water, air, and land resources.

the transportation system. While particulate matter is well under the standard in the Peoria-Pekin area, ozone is indeed a contaminant of concern.

The ozone is made up of volatile organics, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and sunshine. There is a great deal of evidence that indicates high concentrations - parts per million (ppm) - of ozone created by high concentrations of pollution and daylight UV rays at the earth's surface can harm lung function and irritate the respiratory system. Major contributors of ozone are automobiles and certain manufacturing operations.

The EPA regulated ozone level is 0.080 ppm. Typical Midwest ozone levels range from 0.070 to 0.073 ppm. This means that the local contributions of ozone can only be .010 to .007 ppm (6% to 3%) if a community is going to remain in attainment. Table 6.2 below shows the US EPA Air Quality index, which was developed in order to help explain air pollution levels to the general public.

TABLE 6.2 US EPA AIR QUALITY INDEX

OZONE CONCENTRATION (ppm) 8-HOUR AVERAGE, UNLESS NOTED	AIR QUALITY DESCRIPTOR
0.000-0.059	GOOD
0.060-0.075	MODERATE
0.076-0.095	UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS
0.096-0.115	UNHEALTHY
0.116-0.374	VERY UNHEALTHY

As sunlight is a variable in the ozone equation, the weather greatly affects ozone levels. Potential for high levels occurs on hot days with lots of sunlight and low winds. The ozone season is April through November, when ozone levels are the highest. Ozone is measured at various sites throughout the nation. All sites are chosen based on EPA standards of site selection. Readings are taken every hour and are averaged over an 8-hour span. Annual Site readings are calculated by selecting the 4th highest 8-hour reading of the year and averaging this reading with readings from the previous two years. IEPA has placed two reading stations in the Peoria-Pekin area. One station is located in the City of Peoria and another in Peoria Heights. EPA calculated levels for the years 2005 – 2008 are shown in Table 6.3 below.

TABLE 6.3 REGIONAL OZONE LEVELS (3-YEAR AVERAGE)

YEAR	2008	2009	2010	2011
EPA STANDARD	75	75	75	75
PEORIA HEIGHTS	72	72	68	69
PEORIA	67	62	57	59

There is speculation that the standard will be decreased within the next few years. This will certainly put the Peoria-Pekin urbanized area at risk for being in non-attainment for air quality. If our region is in non-attainment, then actions to reduce air pollution become mandatory for transportation officials and industries. Transportation officials must design new construction projects to accomplish emissions reductions and must implement programs to reduce emissions from individual citizens. Industry will be subject to more stringent emission restrictions.

Energy

The recent increase in wind power in Illinois has been supported by a renewable portfolio standard passed in 2007, and strengthened in 2009, which requires 10% renewable energy from electric companies by 2010 and 25% by 2025. At the end of 2011, Illinois had 2743 megawatts (MW) of wind power installed, having installed over 700 MW of capacity that year. Illinois has the potential for installing up to an estimated 249,882 MW of wind generation capacity at a hub height of 80 meters. In 2009, it ranked sixth among states for installed wind turbine capacity. The Tri-County area has two wind farms near Minonk of Woodford County (200 acres) and in southern Tazewell County (100 acres).

Fracking:

In June of 2013, Governor Pat Quinn signed legislation to regulate hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in Illinois. Legislation overwhelmingly passed both the Illinois Senate (52-3) and the House (108-9) the month before. The law is now seen as the nation's strictest for oil and gas drilling. While geology is such that fracking is less likely to occur in the Tri-County area, this technology and potential impact is worthy of discussion.

Fracking is the process of drilling and injecting fluid into the ground at a high pressure in order to fracture shale rocks to release natural gas inside. The water brought in is mixed with sand and chemicals to create fracking fluid. The fracking fluid is then pressure injected into the ground through a drilled pipeline. The mixture reaches the end of the well where the high pressure causes the nearby shale rock to crack, creating fissures where natural gas flows into the well. Only 30-50% of the fracturing fluid is recovered, the rest of the fluid is left in the ground and is not biodegradable. A well can be fracked up to 18 times.

A major debate with fracking lies in the concern of contamination of groundwater by toxic fracking fluid. Fracking advocates stress that the fluid is pumped deep into bedrock and is separated from groundwater supplies by several thousand feet of rock. EPA officials are monitoring a small town believed to have groundwater impacts from fracking. The draft "Investigation of Groundwater near Pavillion, Wyoming" states "The data indicates likely impact to ground water that can be explained by hydraulic fracturing." The debate surrounding fracking will continue, and it is important for the region to be aware of the fracking process and its impacts.
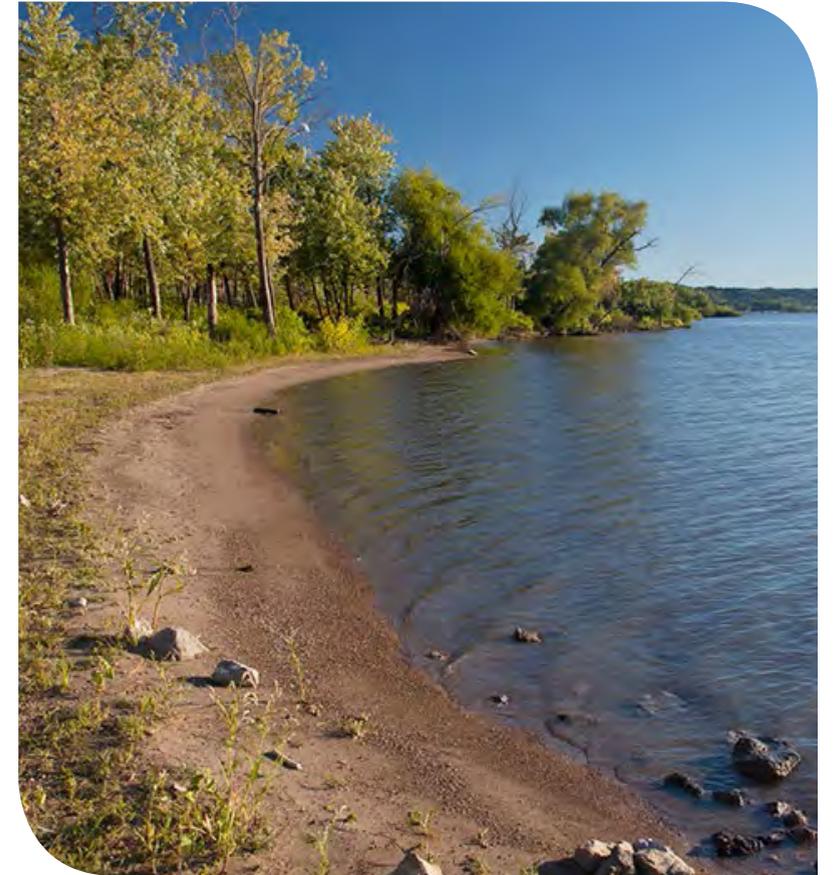
Photo by: Anastasia Samoylova

ENVIRONMENT ASSETS

- Peoria Park District is the largest per capita park district in the nation with 9,000 acres, 6,800 of which have ecological management plans.

- Multiple Illinois Natural Area Inventory sites.

- Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway designation.

- Dedicated, organized environmental organizations that actively participate in public policy.

- Peoria Park District staff has extensive knowledge of ecosystem management.

- The National Research Council identified the Illinois River as one of three large-floodplain river systems in the lower 48 states with the potential to be restored to an approximation of their outstanding biological past.

- Governor's Conference on the Management of the Illinois River is held in Peoria every 2 years.

- Illinois Central College Green Expo is held annually.

- Sun Foundation: World class Arts and Science in the Woods summer camp and Clean Water Celebration held annually.

- US EPA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program: requires local units of governments to address stormwater quality.

- Multiple watershed plans completed for the region including a US EPA and Illinois EPA Total Maximum Daily Load study.

- Extensive groundwater aquifer.

ENVIRONMENT BARRIERS

- Lack of priority of environmental and sustainability disciplines in local governments, private sector, and community organizations.

- Lack of resident education on natural resource protection and sustainability practices.

- Lack of knowledge of the existence of brownfield sites and their impact on water quality and other environmental features.

Photo By: Todd Ryburn

Photo By: William Bryan

ENVIRONMENT GOALS

The original goals listed below were developed in 2009 for the Eco-Logical regional planning initiative, locally known as The Big Plan. For the purpose of this Regional Sustainability Plan, representatives of environmental organizations met over two sessions to further refine goals.

GOAL 1

Local government staff and elected officials possess a current and relevant understanding of best practices for green technologies and policy.

The following action items are suggested in order to keep elected officials and government staff up to date with green technologies and policy:

- Establish regional green technology action group whose purpose is to keep decision makers informed on latest green technologies and policies. This action group consists of local government staff, elected officials, and environmental interest groups and professionals.

  - Host semi-annual training sessions for local government staff and elected officials on green technologies and policy as it relates to land use, built infrastructure, and energy. Supplement training sessions with a concise and visually communicative newsletter.

- Present condensed version (5 minutes) of the above to regional policy committees including the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and the Illinois River Valley Council of Governments.

- Establish a mentor program in which local governments have a "go-to" organization or individual on green technologies, practices, programs, and policies.

GOAL 2

All major regional planning committees including economic development, land use, housing, art, health, and transportation have representation from the environmental community including professionals in the field.

The following action items aim to integrate environmental planning with transportation, land use, art, economic development and health:

- Formally engage environmental interest groups and professionals in regional committees through citizen advisory committees and/or a seat on the decision making board. Recommendations for regional committees are listed below:

  - Transportation planning: Create a citizen's advisory group for Peoria Pekin Urbanized Area Transportation Study (PPUATS).

  - Land Use: Secure representation on planning/ zoning commissions and committees formed for the purpose of updating comprehensive land use plans.

  - Art: Establish representation in proposed regional arts advocacy group.

  - Economic Development:

    - Secure representation on existing committees and action groups of Focus Forward CI, with an emphasis on promoting the use and manufacturing of green technologies.

    - Incorporate green practices and sustainability into private business practices through mentorship programs as described in Goal 1.B

  - Housing: Secure representation on Housing Authority boards with an emphasis on promoting green buildings and energy efficiency.

  - Health: Participation in regional initiatives such as the health needs assessments or sub-committees to Quality Quest.

- Use web-based social networking to create a platform to grow and connect the environmental community and to communicate public meeting and local government participation opportunities.

GOAL 3

Local governments are committed and engaged in implementing the Regional Stormwater Plan for Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties.

The following action items address Goal 3:

- Local governments adopt the plan.

- Create local jurisdiction stormwater utility programs that reflect programs and policy identified in the Regional Stormwater Plan.

- Continue securing grant funding for the installation of best practices.

- All new transportation projects utilize green infrastructure for stormwater conveyance.

- Local governments adopt construction and post-construction stormwater ordinances as recommended in the plan.

GOAL 4

Habitat restoration and cropland/pasture best management practices are a priority for rural land owners and interest organizations.

In order to address habitat restoration and cropland/pasture best management practices, the following action items are proposed:

- Natural Resource Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation Districts continue their work with agricultural community.

- Peoria Park District serves as a model for engaging volunteers and ecological professionals in habitat management for nearby park districts.

- Tri-County Regional Planning Commission continues to cooperate with park districts and local units of government to seek grant funding to provide education and technical assistance to private landowners on forest bluff management.

- Peoria Lakes Basin Alliance continues to support the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in their efforts to improve the ecological integrity of the Illinois River Watershed.

GOAL 5

Local Governments create and adopt a regional sustainable energy plan.

The following steps are proposed in order to create and adopt a regional sustainable energy plan that will be beneficial to all involved:

- Engage local governments, energy providers, major employers, providers of sustainable energy technology, and environmental community in regional energy planning process.

- Focus the planning effort on reducing the region's use of non-renewable energy sources identifying bench marks and accountability for annual reductions.

GOAL 6

The general public is aware of the invaluable resources of sustainable energy, clean water, and clean air, and they are aware of the green technologies and practices used to sustain these resources.

Awareness and education are key strategies in encouraging the general public to participate in activities that reduce the region's overall environmental impact. The following actions support this goal:

- Conduct a professional marketing and outreach campaign on energy and stormwater best practices for residential and commercial properties.

- Identify and market providers of supplies and services supporting energy and stormwater best practices with an emphasis on local providers.

- Tri-County Regional Planning Commission ramps up their Clean Air Action initiative to encourage best practices and keep central Illinois in compliance for ozone air quality standards.

GOAL 7

Local governments and the development community adopt a regional brownfields redevelopment plan.

The following action items address brownfield redevelopment:

- Engage planning commissions, local governments, land owners, developers, and the environmental community in crafting a brownfield plan.

- Identify and map existing brownfield sites and formulate recommendations for sustainable land use practices for these sites.

GOAL 8

The Central Regional Groundwater Protection Committee creates a regional groundwater protection plan including Woodford, Tazewell, Peoria, and Mason Counties. (To be vetted by Central Regional Groundwater Committee)

The following action items are suggested in order to create a regional groundwater protection plan:

- Secure funding from grants, local/state government, FFCI or other stakeholders dependant on high quality and quantity groundwater for regional resiliency.

- Map aquifer recharge zones and develop/adopt policy to protect those areas.

- Depending on funding, conduct scientific investigation of ground water quantity and quality as it pertains to VOCs, nitrates, and bacteria.

HOUSING

Lead Agency: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
Supporting Agencies: Peoria Housing Authority and Peoria Opportunities Foundation

The housing component of this regional planning process resulted in the preparation of a Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (Regional AI). This Regional AI examined housing and fair housing in the entire region and will serve as the reference fair housing document for both the Cities of Peoria and Pekin.

The development of this Regional AI signifies an advancement in fair housing planning in the Tri-County area. For the first time, fair housing has been examined on a regional basis, and many different housing stakeholders in the region participated in this process. Also for the first time, issues pertaining to segregation, concentrated areas of poverty, and access to opportunity were examined, following new guidance developed by HUD that encouraged regions to more broadly examine fair housing through the AI process. Examination of these issues can serve to improve the quality of life and enhance life outcomes for historically underserved and/or marginalized

populations. As a result, this Regional AI for the Tri-County region represents a starting point from which more effective planning can occur on a large scale to promote fair housing, improve quality of life, and increase access to opportunity for all. The remainder of the Housing section will summarize the information provided in the Regional AI. The executive summary of the Regional AI can be accessed in Appendix A of this document.

WHO IS INVOLVED

This planning process was led by a Regional AI Committee composed of municipal staff from the City of Peoria and the City of Pekin, housing authority staff from Peoria, Pekin, and Woodford County, and Peoria Opportunities Foundation staff. The Regional AI Committee met monthly to assure proper documentation of all regional resources for housing, determine barriers to fair housing, and develop recommendations to improve housing equity and access to opportunities. In addition, the Regional AI Committee conducted the following resident and organization outreach:

- **Fair Housing Advocacy Training** – June 2013. Partnered with Peoria Opportunities Foundation and the State of Illinois Department of Human Rights to provide outreach on the

federal fair housing law, how to recognize discrimination in housing, and the proper protocols for reporting discrimination. Over 30 individuals attended and included a variety of interests from apartment complex managers to local advocacy organizations.

- **Regional Housing Plan Kickoff Meeting** – September 2012. Hosted by TCRPC, this public meeting introduced regional leaders to the importance of developing a housing plan and solicited participant feedback on their definition of "sustainable housing" and what the region would need to accomplish their vision for sustainability. Over 50 individuals attended including State of Illinois representatives, city council members, and congressional staff. Participants also included local not-for-profits and advocacy organizations.

- **Regional fair housing survey** – April 2013. A total of 455 individuals responded to this survey that assessed resident perspective on discrimination, segregation, and access to opportunity. The success of the survey is owed, in large part, to the volunteers and staff of the Peoria Park District ELITE Youth and Outreach Division; these individuals went door-to-

door in underserved communities to secure participation. The survey was also released through churches, housing authorities, and regional housing stakeholders.

All public feedback through meetings and surveys was integrated into the identification of regional barriers and plan recommendations.

HOUSING TODAY

Demographics

Demographic data pertaining to race and ethnicity, nativity, familial status, age, and disability status were gathered. The key takeaways from this demographic data are:

- The regional population is growing, and the population is growing fastest in Tazewell and Woodford Counties;

- The regional population is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. The African American, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino populations are increasing, and the majority of these residents are moving to the City of Peoria and Peoria County;

- The number of families with children is decreasing in the region;

- The regional population is getting older; and

- The proportion of regional residents that have a disability is nearly equal to the proportion of state residents and is less than the proportion of national residents.

Segregation

Following new guidance for fair housing planning developed by HUD, this plan examined segregation by race, ethnicity, and national origin; segregation by familial status; and segregation by disability status.

Dot density mapping, analysis of dissimilarity index values, and analysis of predicted racial/ethnic composition ratios was completed to examine segregation by race, ethnicity, and national origin. The following conclusions were reached:

- High numbers of racial and ethnic minorities live in the City of Peoria;

- African Americans are concentrated in southern and central Peoria, the older portions of the City;

- Asians are concentrated in northern Peoria, a newly developed portion of the City;

- Hispanic and Latino residents are concentrated in older portions of the City of Peoria.

Segregation by familial status was analyzed by gathering data on the quantity of family households with own children under 18 years of age in each census tract. The percentage of family households with own children under 18 years of age was calculated for each census tract and compared to other census tracts. This analysis enabled the identification of areas of the region where family households with own children under 18 years of age are more common. This analysis showed the southern and central portions of the City of Peoria as the areas of the region where family households with own children under 18 years of age are most common.

Segregation by disability status was analyzed by gathering data on the percentage of residents that had a disability in 2000 since recent disability status was not available. The areas of the region that have the highest percentage of residents with a disability are central Peoria, southern Peoria, and eastern Pekin.

Concentrated Areas of Poverty

Following the new guidance for fair housing planning provided by HUD, concentrated areas of poverty (CAPs) were identified as part of this housing planning process. HUD defines a racially or ethnically concentrated area of poverty (RCAP or ECAP) as a census tract that has:

1. A majority non-white population; and

2. A family poverty rate that is greater than or equal to 40% OR a family poverty rate that is greater than or equal to 300% of the regional average of the family poverty rate for census tracts.

An analysis of the region's census tracts concluded that five census tracts meet this definition based on the American Community Survey's (ACS) 2010 five-year estimates. All five of these census tracts are located in the southern portion of the City of Peoria. African

INFOGRAPHIC 7.1: **INDIVIDUALS LIVING IN CONCENTRATED AREAS OF POVERTY BY RACE: TRI-COUNTY**

TOTAL POPULATION	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC OR LATINO	ASIAN	AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE
13.6%	8.0%	58.5%	34.2%	6.0%	24.5%
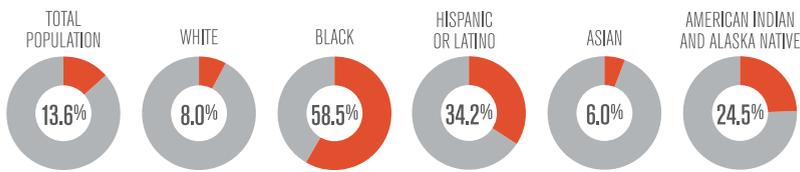
Americans are the majority racial group in each of these tracts, and each tract has a poverty rate above 40 percent. These areas were designated Tier I CAPs.

Upon discovering that the region's only RCAPs and ECAPs as defined by HUD were located in the City of Peoria, the Regional AI Committee that oversaw this housing planning process decided to explore alternative definitions of concentrated areas of poverty to identify other concentrations of poverty that may exist elsewhere in the region. The Committee decided to identify the other census tracts in the region that meet the poverty threshold of the HUD definition of RCAP and ECAP. These tracts were called concentrated areas of poverty, or CAPs, because they meet the poverty threshold of the HUD definition but do not have a majority non-white population. Three tracts meet this definition, and all are located in the City of Peoria; they form a contiguous area with two of the census tracts that meet the HUD definition of RCAP and ECAP. These three tracts comprise downtown Peoria, the North Valley neighborhood, and the Averyville neighborhood. Each of these tracts meets the second part of the HUD poverty threshold: They have a poverty rate greater

than or equal to 300% of the regional poverty rate. These areas were designated as Tier II CAPs.

Having not yet identified any concentrations of poverty outside of the City of Peoria, the Regional AI Committee next identified census tracts and block groups that have a median family income (MFI) that is equal to or less than 50 percent of the area MFI as identified by HUD. Two census tracts and one block group meet this criterion. The census tracts are located in the South Side neighborhood of Peoria and the East Bluff neighborhood of Peoria, and they are contiguous to other areas previously identified as concentrated areas of poverty. The block group is located at the western edge of the City of Peoria near West Peoria. These areas were designated as Tier III CAPs.

Having still not yet identified any concentrations of poverty outside of the City of Peoria, the Regional AI Committee next identified census tracts and block groups that have a MFI greater than 50 percent but equal to or less than 70 percent of the area MFI as identified by HUD. Eight block groups and nine census tracts meet this criterion. These areas are located in or near the communities of Peoria, Bartonville, Norwood, Chillicothe, Pekin, Delavan, and Eureka. These areas were designated as Tier IV CAPs.

The location of subsidized housing units in the region was compared to the location of CAPs to determine if subsidized housing units are disproportionately located in CAPs. The total

number of housing units in the CAPs account for 18 percent of all housing units in the region.

Public Housing Facilities

For the purposes of this document, a public housing facility is defined as a housing facility owned and operated by a public housing authority. The inventory of public housing facilities in the region identified 1,192 housing units in public housing facilities. There are 675 public housing facility housing units in CAPs, and all of these units are located either in Tier I CAPs or Tier II CAPs. So, 57 percent of all public housing facility housing units in the region are located in CAPs; 39 percent in Tier I CAPs and 18 percent in Tier II CAPs. Comparatively, total housing units in the CAPs account for 18 percent of all housing units in the region, so public housing units are disproportionately located in CAPs.

Scattered Site Housing

The Peoria Housing Authority operates 118 scattered site housing units throughout the City of Peoria, and 68 percent of these units are located in CAPs; 9 percent are located in Tier I CAPs, 14 percent are located in Tier II CAPs, and 22 percent are located each in Tier III CAPs and Tier IV CAPs. Comparatively, total housing units in the CAPs account for 37 percent of all housing units in the City of Peoria, so scattered site housing units are disproportionately located in CAPs.

Private Subsidized Housing

A regional inventory identified approximately 5,112 subsidized housing units that are privately owned. This figure is an approximation because the mix of subsidized units and non-subsidized units is not known for every facility. Of this total, 2,183 units – 43 percent – are located in CAPs, with 20 percent of the units located in Tier I and Tier II CAPs. Again, just 18 percent of all housing units in the region are located in CAPs, so private subsidized housing units are disproportionately located in CAPs.

Section 8 Housing

The locations of Section 8 housing choice vouchers operated by the Peoria Housing Authority and the East Peoria Housing Authority were not able to be mapped, so no comparison of their locations with the locations of CAPs was conducted.

Housing for Homeless Persons

A regional inventory identified eight homeless shelters in the region, and all of these shelters are located in CAPs. While there are no shelters located in Tier I CAPs, there are four shelters in Tier II CAPs, one shelter in Tier III CAPs, and three shelters in Tier IV CAPs.

Housing for Persons with Disabilities

According to a list provided by Advocates for Access, a local advocacy and service organization for individuals with disabilities, there are 59 multifamily housing developments in the Tri-County region that are either fully accessible or have some accessible units. Of these 59 developments, 15 developments – 25 percent – are located in CAPs. Comparatively, 18 percent of all housing units in the region are located in CAPs. This inventory of accessible housing consists of housing developments, not total housing units, so a direct comparison between these two percentages cannot be made. However, this statistic suggests that accessible multifamily housing units are disproportionately located in CAPs.

Areas of Opportunity

This housing planning process also examined access to opportunity in the Tri-County region. The term access to opportunity refers to access to elements that contribute to a high quality of life – elements such as jobs, quality schools, healthcare services, fresh healthy foods, and other items. There is no specific definition of what opportunity is; rather, opportunity in this context refers to multiple elements that contribute to a high quality of life.

There is no specific definition of an area of opportunity; the Regional AI Committee was tasked with defining areas of

Photos by: Anastasia Samoylova

Bradford Woods Apartments keeps rents affordable for moderate income households

opportunity for the Tri-County region. The committee began this process by reviewing opportunity index data provided by HUD. To support the Regional AI effort, HUD provided maps that show five different opportunity indices for the Tri-County region. The opportunity indices provided for the Tri-County region were:

- **School Proficiency Index** – A function of the proficiency of elementary schools in reading and math on state test scores.

- **Poverty Index** – A function of the family poverty rate and the percentage of households receiving public assistance.

- **Job Access Index** – A function of the distance to job locations, with the distance to any one location positively weighted by the number of job opportunities and inversely weighted by the labor supply at that location.

- **Labor Market Engagement Index** – A function of unemployment rate, labor force participation rate, and the percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher.

- **Health Hazards Exposure Index** – A function of the volume of toxic industrial releases from the EPA's Toxic Release Inventory, the EPA toxicity assessment of the release chemicals, and the distance to the toxic release facility.

(A sixth opportunity index, the transit access index, was constructed by HUD, but this index is based on data from a source that does not have transit data for the Tri-County region. Thus, no transit access index exists for the Tri-County region.)

INFOGRAPHIC 7.2: **MEDIAN HOME VALUE: TRI-COUNTY**

$119,000
PEORIA COUNTY

$125,700
TAZEWELL COUNTY

$151,500
WOODFORD COUNTY

Data was analyzed for each block group in the region, and each index provided a score on a scale of 1 to 100 for each block group. For example, a block group ranking near 100 on the school proficiency index is a block group that contains or is near to elementary schools in which student proficiency in reading and math on state test scores is very high. A block group ranking near 1 on the school proficiency index is a block group that contains or is near to elementary schools in which student proficiency in reading and math on state test scores is very low. In this way, a comparison in access to school proficiency can be made between different geographic areas.

It should be emphasized that HUD's intent in providing this data was not to dictate what elements of opportunity should be included in a definition of area of opportunity. HUD's intent in providing this data was to be a more active and dynamic partner by assisting the Regional AI Committee in having a discussion of what constitutes an area of opportunity in the Tri-County region. Ultimately, it was the task of the Regional AI Committee to identify what constitutes an area of opportunity in the Tri-County region.

After examining the opportunity indices provided by HUD and gathering information about the methodology that the Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium followed when mapping areas of opportunity, the Regional AI Committee decided to map two additional opportunity indices. These indices are:

- **Percentage Occupied Index**. To calculate this index, the percentage of occupied housing units for each block group in the region was gathered from 2010 United States Census data. Next, the entire range of values was broken up into ten equal intervals. Finally, the values in the highest interval were given an index score of 95, the values in the next highest interval were given an index score of 85, and so forth, with the values in the lowest interval given an index score of 5.

- **Travel Time to Work Index.** To calculate this index, the mean travel time to work for all census tracts in the region was gathered from 2011 United States Census data. All block groups in a given census tract were assigned the value of the census tract. Next, the entire range of values was broken up into ten equal intervals. Finally, the values in the highest interval were given an index score of 95, the values in the next highest interval were given an index score of 85, and so forth, with the values in the lowest interval given an index score of 5.

After the two additional opportunity indices were developed, a single opportunity index was developed by averaging the values

of the seven opportunity indices – the five provided by HUD and the two additional indices – for each block group. The lowest value on this single opportunity index was 13.1 and the highest value was 83.6. This range of values was divided into five equal intervals and mapped.

An examination of the location of subsidized housing, accessible housing, and homeless shelters in the Tri-County region shows that these housing types are disproportionately located outside of areas of opportunity. Just under 25 percent of the regional population lives in areas of opportunity, but less than 3 percent of public housing units are located in areas of opportunity. Also, less than 11 percent of private subsidized housing units and slightly more than 15 percent of accessible housing complexes are located in areas of opportunity.

Access to Mortgage Financing

Access to mortgage financing can be considered another element of opportunity, and access to mortgage financing in the region was examined as part of this analysis. Under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) – enacted by Congress in 1975 – mortgage lending institutions must disclose information about their mortgage lending activity. This information includes data about mortgage applicants such as race, ethnicity, income, and gender, so analysis of HMDA data can help identify disparities in lending patterns between different groups.

INFOGRAPHIC 7.3: **MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HHI GREATER THAN 30%**

WITH A MORTGAGE: 15.3%
WITHOUT A MORTGAGE: 3.7%

19.0%

INFOGRAPHIC 7.4: **GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HHI GREATER THAN 30%**

30–34%: 8%
35–39%: 5.2%
40–49.9%: 7.6%
50% OR MORE: 20.1%

40.9%
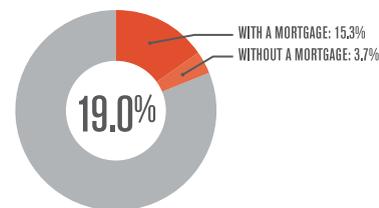
HMDA data for the Tri-County region was downloaded from the HMDA data website (http://www.ffiec.gov/hmda/). Data from the years 2007 through 2012 was analyzed by the Peoria Opportunities Foundation. Overall, this data suggests that African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, and low-income households have greater difficulty obtaining mortgage financing than other groups in the Tri-County region.

Energy Efficiency of Housing

A topic that has received increased attention in recent years is energy efficiency of housing. According to Evergreen Home Energy Consultants, a local home energy consulting firm, energy-efficient housing is housing that: 1) Is well insulated; 2) Has efficient heating and cooling systems; 3) Has efficient lighting such as compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) or light-emitting diode (LED) lights; and 4) Has energy-efficient appliances that meet the ENERGY

STAR certification overseen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Today, there are programs and regulations in place to help homeowners improve the energy efficiency of their homes whether they live in older or newer housing stock.

The most notable local program to promote energy efficiency in existing housing stock is the ActOnEnergy program operated by Ameren, the primary energy utility that serves the Tri-County region. A 2007 Illinois law requires investor-owned utilities to operate a program to promote energy efficiency, and ActOnEnergy is Ameren's energy efficiency program. ActOnEnergy provides homeowners with financial incentives – such as rebates and discounts – for purchasing energy-saving products. The legislation only pertains to investor-owned utilities, so not all utilities offer a similar program.

Other programs exist to serve lower-income households. The Warm Neighbors Cool Friends program operated by Ameren provides weatherization improvements for moderate-income households that do not qualify for federal or state home weatherization programs. The program provides insulation, air sealing, weatherstripping, caulking and home heating equipment upgrades. The Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program funds energy conservation improvements for low-income households. The program funds air sealing, attic and wall insulation, furnace repair and replacement, electric base load reduction, and window and door weatherization.

Energy efficiency of new housing is promoted via existing building codes. In Illinois, state legislation requires all new residential construction for which a building permit application is obtained by a municipality or a county to follow the Illinois Energy Conservation Code, a comprehensive statewide energy conservation code. As a result, the primary issue for ensuring energy-efficient new residential construction is enforcement of the code.

From an opportunity perspective, programs like ActOnEnergy, Warm Neighbors Cool Friends, and the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program enable lower-income households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and realize future energy cost savings. Still, not all utilities are required to offer programs that promote energy efficiency, and there are energy efficiency costs to be borne by homeowners that may be prohibitive. Also, enforcement of the Illinois Energy Conservation Code is key to ensuring all types of new housing are energy efficient.

Housing for Individuals with Disabilities

This housing planning process examined housing for individuals with disabilities. This discussion will address housing for individuals with developmental disabilities, housing for individuals with serious mental illness, and housing for individuals with physical disabilities.

Regional stakeholders that provide services for individuals with developmental disabilities stated that neighborhood opposition to proposed housing for this population has occurred in recent years in the region. This speaks to the need for educational efforts to provide more information to the general public about this population and the importance of community-based housing. It was also expressed that a lack of housing for individuals with developmental disabilities who are not seniors exists in the region.

An important fair housing issue occurring in Illinois is the court-ordered transitioning of individuals with developmental disabilities and individuals with serious mental illness from institutional settings to community-based settings. Stakeholders indicated that some property managers are unwilling to rent to these populations, which further supports the need for educational efforts to provide more information to property managers and the general public about this population and the importance of community-based housing.

Stakeholders also indicated a need for more permanent supportive housing for individuals with serious mental illness. Permanent supportive housing facilities provide affordable housing and supportive services, enabling individuals to obtain needed services while residing in an independent living environment. The South Side Office of Concern is the region's largest permanent supportive housing provider. Some property managers in the region have refused to rent to individuals who have come from permanent supportive housing facilities, further emphasizing the need for educational efforts pertaining to this population.

While there is no quantitative data on the demand for housing for individuals with physical disabilities, stakeholders indicated that a greater quantity of this type of housing is needed in the region. In particular, there is a lack of family housing accessible to individuals with physical disabilities and a lack of subsidized housing for individuals with physical disabilities under the age of 50. There is also concern regarding property managers who are unwilling to make accessibility improvements and concern regarding the issue of housing for individuals with physical disabilities who use service animals and the unwillingness of some property managers to rent to individuals who use service animals.

Stakeholders also discussed the need to promote universal design and visitability in the region. These design movements promote the accessibility of housing for individuals with physical disabilities. Universal design promotes the development of housing that is accessible and usable regardless of age, ability, or status. Universal design consists of features such as ground level entrances without stairs, lever handles for opening doors instead of knobs, and light switches with large flat panels instead of small toggle switches. The visitability movement promotes three key features: at least one zero-step entrance; all interior doors providing at least 31 ¾ inches of unobstructed space; and at least a half bathroom on the main floor. Other features that can improve the accessibility of a housing unit include higher toilets, wider bathrooms, lower cabinets, and flooring that consists of lower carpet and tile.

Jobs-Housing Balance

Jobs-housing balance refers to the accessibility between areas of employment and residential areas. Suitable accessibility between job centers and residential areas can help reduce automobile emissions, decrease the transportation portion of household budgets, and enable individuals who do not own an automobile to travel to places of employment. The HUD job access index was used and major employment centers in the region were mapped to examine the jobs-housing balance.

BARRIERS

Building on the examination of access to opportunity, the Regional AI Committee identified elements of opportunity for which disparities in access exist in the Tri-County region. These elements of opportunity were identified based on discussion among the Regional AI Committee and the input provided by regional housing stakeholders. The following elements of opportunity for which disparities in access exist were identified:

- Quality of housing
- Home ownership
- Jobs
- Transportation to reach jobs
- Convenient healthcare

- Education
- Access to fresh foods

The Regional AI Committee also identified the primary barriers to fair housing enforcement and education that exist in the region. These barriers were identified using data that was gathered and input that was received during the planning process. The following barriers were identified:

- **Lack of awareness of fair housing law.** Input received during the process and comments received during the fair housing advocacy training seminar in 2013 suggest that greater awareness of fair housing law is needed in the region.

- **Lack of awareness among property managers of fair housing law.** Input received during the process suggests that greater awareness of fair housing law among property managers is needed in the region.

- **Lack of fair housing testing in the region.** The only quantifiable data pertaining to housing discrimination in the region comes from the regional fair housing survey conducted as part of this process and the number and type of fair housing charges filed in the region. Other quantifiable data could come from a fair housing testing program. A fair housing testing program "tests" the content of information provided to potential homebuyers and/or renters who are mostly similar except for protected class (such as their race, familial status, or disability status). In this way, a fair housing testing program could provide information about housing discrimination that may be occurring in the region. To date, no known fair housing testing program has ever occurred in the Tri-County region, but Prairie State Legal Services is preparing to develop a fair housing testing program in the Peoria area in 2014.

- **Lack of access to housing in the community for individuals with developmental disabilities and serious mental illness.** Input received during the process suggests that there is a lack of permanent supportive housing for individuals with developmental disabilities and serious mental illness, especially in light of the recent fair housing lawsuits pertaining to individuals with disabilities filed against the State of Illinois after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Olmstead v. L.C.

- **Fair housing pertaining to sexual orientation.** Although no data or input regarding fair housing pertaining to sexual orientation was received during this process, the issue is gaining attention nationally as an emerging fair housing issue. This issue should be monitored in the Tri-County region moving forward.

The Regional AI Committee also identified areas of investment from which potential inequitable outcomes could occur. Investments that occur in housing, transportation, and economic development can result in inequitable outcomes for different groups. Greater awareness of potential inequitable outcomes and greater examination of potential inequitable outcomes prior to investment decisions can help result in more equitable outcomes.

HOUSING GOALS

GOAL 1

Promote energy-efficient housing in the Tri-County region.

The following action items work to promote energy-efficient housing in the Tri-County region:

- Promote existing utility-operated programs that provide financial incentives for energy efficiency among the general public.

- Expand utility-operated programs that provide financial incentives for energy efficiency upgrades to other utility providers.

- Promote the value of energy efficiency housing among the general public.

- Promote the enforcement of the Illinois Energy Conservation Code.

GOAL 2

Provide greater access to appropriate housing for individuals with disabilities.

Providing greater access to appropriate housing for individuals with disabilities requires education, awareness, and support. The following action items are suggested to reach this goal:

- Greater education of the needs and tendencies of individuals with developmental disabilities and serious mental illness for property managers and the general public.

- Greater education of the importance of community-based housing for individuals with developmental disabilities and serious mental illness among property managers and the general public.

- Support the development of housing for individuals with developmental disabilities who are not seniors.

- Support the development of permanent supportive housing;

- Support the development of family housing that is accessible to individuals with physical disabilities.

- Support the development of subsidized housing for individuals with physical disabilities under the age of 50.

- Promote design concepts such as universal design and visibility to improve the accessibility of housing stock.

GOAL 3

Improve job accessibility in the region.

The location of housing can have a major effect on an individual's ability to access jobs. The following action items aim to improve job accessibility through housing initiatives:

- **Develop housing near major centers of employment.** OSF St. Francis Medical Center, one of the region's largest employers, has begun investigating the development of housing near its medical campus. Similar efforts to develop housing near major centers of employment should be encouraged and pursued, especially efforts that would enable housing that is affordable to lower-income households to be developed.

- **Develop places of employment near densely populated areas.** While the land availability of individual sites and the land use regulations of individual jurisdictions will largely dictate where places of employment will be developed, there are efforts underway to grow the regional economy and benefit low-income populations. Focus Forward Central Illinois is a new regional economic development initiative that was created as part of this regional planning process funded by the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The process

to establish Focus Forward Central Illinois identified goals for regional economic development, and one of the goals is to reduce poverty by 10 percent for married couples and female households with children under the age of 5 by 2017. Achievement of this goal would result in lifting 488 households with children under the age of 5 out of poverty. This effort to grow the regional economy and lift households out of poverty should be supported and encouraged.

- **Improve transportation connections between places of employment and densely populated areas.** CityLink, the region's mass transit service provider, is in the process of expanding its service. Recently, CityLink announced that transit service will be provided on Sundays beginning in the spring of 2014 in Peoria, Peoria Heights, and West Peoria. East Peoria also is interested in Sunday service, and this possibility will be further explored. The expansion of transit service on Sundays should enable some individuals who do not have access to an automobile to reach places of employment on Sundays. This is a sound example of how improvement of transportation connections can help improve job accessibility.

GOAL 4

Provide equitable access to opportunity through housing initiatives.

The following are suggested actions to address Goal 4, to provide equitable access through housing initiatives:

Improve quality of housing stock

- Develop a regional campaign to educate and raise awareness of the need for new and rehabilitated housing that is affordable for low-income households.

- Seek funding from non-traditional sources for rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing. Non-traditional sources include entities such as businesses and philanthropic organizations.

- Promote inclusionary zoning in the region.

- Strengthen capacity to develop housing for low-income households.

- Strengthen capacity to administer housing for low-income households.

- Promote and pursue deconstruction and reuse of materials.

- Develop design guidelines to ensure infill construction of new housing is visually compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

- Increase regional capacity for addressing lead-based paint abatement.

Increase home ownership

- Advocate for policy changes to enable moderate-income households to receive financial assistance for housing needs.

- Advocate for funding mechanisms that are not based on the income level of occupants.

- Promote fair housing laws to promote home ownership.

Improve transportation to reach jobs

- Promote creative mechanisms that businesses can use to fund employees' transportation expenses.

- Support the development of new housing near major centers of employment.

- Support expansion of mass transit service in the region.

- Support human services transportation planning (HSTP) process that facilitates improved transportation access for individuals with disabilities.

- Support increased multi-modal transportation infrastructure in the region.

GOAL 5

Address barriers to fair housing enforcement and education.

The following are suggested actions to address Goal 5, to address barriers to fair housing enforcement and education:

Improve awareness of fair housing law

- Continue holding an annual fair housing advocacy training seminar in conjunction with Illinois Department of Human Rights.

Improve awareness among property managers of fair housing law

- Work with local governments to provide basic information about fair housing law to property managers when other information is being provided.

- Develop a fair housing training seminar for property managers and incentivize attendance.

Integrate fair housing testing in the region

- Support the effort of Prairie State Legal Services to develop a fair housing testing program in the region. Prairie State Legal Services is planning to develop a fair housing testing program in the Peoria area in 2014.

- Support additional fair housing testing efforts in the region in the future.

Improve access to housing in the community for individuals with developmental disabilities

- Develop a regional awareness campaign to educate and raise awareness of the need for permanent supportive housing that will reach out to elected officials and property managers.

- Seek funding from non-traditional sources for the development of permanent supportive housing. Non-traditional sources include entities such as businesses and philanthropic organizations.

ART AND CULTURE

Lead Agencies: Illinois Central College and ArtsPartners

For more than a century, Peoria has been known as a city with a rich history in the performance arts, dating back to the Civil War era when show boats would cruise the Illinois River, stopping for performances at river towns like Peoria.

In 1900, a minstrel singer named "Honey Bay" Evans decided to stay in Peoria, where he performed at Rouses Hall which later became the Main Street Theater, Peoria's first vaudeville house. Martin Beck, president of the Orpheum Theater in New York City, opened Peoria's Orpheum Theatre in 1910. If an act was able to "play" the Orpheum in Peoria, that act had the potential of "playing" in New York City. Later, Peoria made its mark in radio with the iconic Fibber McGee and Molly radio sitcom that was broadcast from 1935-1959. Comedians Richard Pryor and Sam Kinison spent their formative years in Peoria, as did songwriter Dan Fogelberg and science fiction writer Philip Jose Farmer. Actors David Ogden Stiers, Susan Dey, Steve Vinovich, and Camryn Manheim all called Peoria and the surrounding area home.

Today, there remains a rich fine arts presence in the Tri-County area. There are more than thirty-eight art galleries and studios where Tri-County residents can create, admire, and purchase works of art in various mediums. Patrons and artists who desire opportunities in music, vocal, and instrumental have a choice of around thirty organizations that sponsor, present, teach, and support music in the Tri-County region. Thespians and theatre lovers can choose from ten area theatres. These theatres reach out to diverse audiences — some produce edgier, experimental fare while others focus primarily on classic and popular productions. Finally, there are three area dance studios where residents of all ages can study and learn various styles of dance. These studios also present recitals and productions for the public.

WHO IS INVOLVED AND HOW?

In 2010 and again in 2011, a public meeting was held to discuss the state of the arts in Central Illinois. At these meetings, local artists, educators, and patrons came to the realization that an organized approach was needed in order to make improvements to our arts community. Representatives from Illinois Central College and ArtsPartners took the lead in this endeavor. ArtsPartners put the call out to the local arts community asking for volunteers. Faculty members at Illinois Central College teamed with volunteers to form a steering committee that conducted research, listening sessions, and ultimately, composed the Arts and Culture section of this plan. Members of the steering committee are listed below:

- Suzette Boulais, Executive Director of ArtsPartners of Central Illinois, Engaged Arts Community

- Anita Tuccillo, Assistant Professor of Art, Illinois Central College, Fulton Plaza redesign with place-based art

- David Smit, Associate Professor of Graphic Design, Illinois Central College, lead planner, graphics

- Roger Bean, Professor of Multimedia, Illinois Central College, Research

- Julie Clemens, Instructor of Music, Illinois Central College, Organization

- Chris Gray, Dean of Arts and Communication, Illinois Central College, Coordinator

- Dr. Megan Foster-Campbell, Assistant Professor of Art, Illinois Central College, Education Focus

- Amanda Relph, CEO, Dance City, Community Voice
- Anthony Corso, Architect and Sustainability Leader, Community Liaison on Place-Based Art
- Tom McMorrow, Associate Professor of Architecture, Illinois Central College
- Lisa Stout, Technical Writer, Washington Community High School

ART AND CULTURE TODAY

Structure of Local Support

In a series of listening sessions with members of the Tri-County arts community, there was much discussion about the issues facing the arts in Central Illinois. While there is a rich fine arts community in the Tri-County area, most arts groups operate as independent entities. Currently, there is no central hub or organization that oversees, coordinates, and works for the benefit of all. As one would expect, some groups thrive, producing quality art and productions. These successful groups tend to draw in audience members; consequently, they are financially stable. However, other arts groups in the region are struggling. Their facilities are in desperate need of updating and repair, their production costs are high, they have to pay at least a minimal staff, and they aren't drawing in enough audience members to support their organization. These groups are barely solvent (if solvent at all). Some survive month to month or

SEPTEMBER
08
2010

MARCH
07
2013

JUNE
03
2013

a+c
arts+culture
listening sessions

APRIL
08
2013

MAY
20
2013

MAY
06
2013

APRIL
24
2013

production to production, not knowing if funding will be available for them to continue.

Some groups have become creative in finding ways to bring in additional revenue. In addition to sales revenues, many groups are fortunate enough to receive donations from sponsors and patrons.

Some groups receive grants to supplement their income or to fund specific projects. Fundraisers are also frequent; these fundraisers range from bake sales to special performances. For instance, Peoria Players and Eastlight Theatre both hosted "Buy a Seat" campaigns in order to purchase new theatre seats. Corn Stock Theatre gave patrons a chance to sponsor a brick in their Brick Garden; they also have a fundraiser called Leonard's Pennies. This fundraiser helps build Corn Stock's scholarship fund. The Contemporary Art Center hosts a silent auction each year, and Illinois Central College's Vagabond Art Club, a student run club that fosters interest in the visual arts, hosts a variety of fundraisers. Recently, these students created and sold ceramic ice cream bowls filled with ice cream. This successful fundraiser will likely be repeated in the future.

While each group typically operates independently, there are organizations that strive to work for the good of all. One such organization is ArtsPartners of Central Illinois. ArtsPartners was founded in 1999 as a not-for-profit organization. This group's primary focus is creating public awareness of the arts in our area; in addition, ArtsPartners works to strengthen the arts as an economic catalyst for the Peoria area. According to the ArtsPartners website, they accomplish their mission in the following ways:

1. Facilitating collaborative initiatives among arts groups and other entities;

2. Expanding audiences;

3. Acting as a liaison and coordinator of arts information and resources;

4. Expanding educational opportunities;

5. Encouraging public participation; and

6. Keeping the arts on the community agenda.

It is important to note that while ArtsPartners strives to make connections among and oversee the various arts groups, they have no authority when it comes to making decisions or setting policy. Unfortunately, the organization does not have the structure, resources, and formal relationships necessary to advocate for the arts at the level this region needs.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Economic status is a definite factor in participating/patronizing the arts. Fortunately, there are a variety of quality, inexpensive art and cultural opportunities that exist in the Tri-County area. One major issue that came to light during the listening sessions is transportation, which affects both participation and patronage of the arts. The regional arts scene is quite spread out, and many residents do not have access to reliable transportation. Education level is also significant. When leaders brought the arts community together to discuss the state of the arts in the Tri-County region,they realized that many of the individual organization audience bases were similar. In fact, most of the arts serve a very narrow portion of the Tri-

County population. Many Tri-County residents have no interest in the fine arts in the area but do enjoy participating in the "popular" arts scene in areas like the Farmington Road Entertainment District.

It is important to note that the arts community boosts the local economy. According to the "Make Art Work" article on the ArtsPartners website, in 2010 arts organizations and patrons were responsible for contributing more than $2.75 billion dollars to the Illinois economy. In Illinois, over 78,000 jobs were created in support of the various arts communities. These jobs include artistic directors, performers, curators, technicians, electricians, designers, builders, office workers, support staff, and countless other jobs.

Looking specifically at the Greater Peoria area, the economic impact of the arts is significant. According to Arts Alliance Illinois, local non-profit arts organizations spent $14.8 million dollars in 2012; patrons of the arts spent $5.6 million dollars supporting the arts during that same period of time, spending money on items like refreshments/snacks, meals, souvenirs/gifts, clothing/accessories, transportation, childcare, lodging, etc. In total, the impact of the arts in the Greater Peoria area was $20.4 million in 2012. Additionally, the arts community in the Greater Peoria area supports 850 full-time jobs, generates a total of $18.6 million in household income to local residents, and delivers $2.2 million in local state and government revenue. Finally, because the Tri-County arts scene is so diverse, it draws not just local patrons but tourists as well, who spend almost double what local residents spend on arts events.

IN 2010 ALONE, **THE ARTS COMMUNITY** WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTRIBUTING OVER **$2.75 BILLION DOLLARS** TO THE ILLINOIS ECONOMY, WHILE ALSO CREATING OVER **78,000** NEW JOBS IN ILLINOIS.

ASSETS

- Diversity in the types of art present in Central Illinois.

- Size and scope of the arts community; there is something for everyone.

- Numerous opportunities for citizens/artists to participate in arts events, with many of these opportunities being quite affordable.

- Arts opportunities are located across the region, rather than in one central location.

- A rich arts tradition exists in our community due to our storied history with regard to the arts.

- The arts provide a major boost to our local economies.

- Most of our area colleges boast respected, prestigious arts programs.

For a complete list of arts organizations in the tri-county area, please visit the ArtsPartners website.

BARRIERS

- Oversaturated market – too much of a good thing.

- Perceived lack of cohesion, resistance to sharing of resources, and overall lack of support amongst the arts community as a whole.

- Stigma surrounding "non-professional" art, e.g. community theater.

- Egotism amongst arts groups, i.e. belief that one art group is superior or more artistic than another.

- Both artists and patrons are stuck in their own silos; they rarely branch out and experience other art forms.

- Lack of exposure and education to the average citizen regarding local arts opportunities and events.

- Lack of knowledge and/or initiative for how to market the arts.

- Lack of arts participation amongst the 25-44 age group.

- Lack of a central hub or overseeing body for the arts community as a whole.

- Lack of a central hub for all information regarding events and opportunities.

- Due to various changes in educational policy (e.g. Common Core and No Child Left Behind), arts education is not a priority in many local schools.

SPOTLIGHT

FOCUS: Arts Education

Arts education is deficient in many local schools. Fine Arts are often among the first subjects to be eliminated when school systems are challenged with limited physical and financial resources. This issue is further exacerbated by the need to dedicate materials and time to meet the requirements for state testing, Common Core Curriculum, and No Child Left Behind. Study after study proves that arts kids are smart kids. According to Arts Education Partnership, participation in art education enhances student learning and literacy. In addition, students involved with the arts tend to thrive in school primarily because they have something to look forward to and can excel in. The Fine Arts involve students who might not otherwise be involved in their school community. It has been proven that exposing children to the arts in school instills a lifelong love of the arts. Art education is a valuable tool that fosters innovation and creativity. Within the arts curriculum, students are encouraged to problem solve, analyze, and enhance critical thinking skills. These proficiencies not only benefit students in school, they translate to useful talents in the workforce. Though colleges and universities in Central Illinois have a strong focus on arts, the programs tend to isolate students within an area of specialization and don't encourage crossover or arts across the curriculum. At all education levels, increasing community involvement would benefit regional arts and culture.

ART AND CULTURE GOALS

GOAL 1

Create an Arts Advocacy group for the Tri-County region by 2017 that acts as leader and strategic planner for the various arts organizations in the area.

- Create a steering committee that includes leaders from various groups, including the arts, municipalities, business, and tourism.
- Define the structure of this group.
- Secure funding.
- Staff the Arts Advocacy Group.

Currently, there is no central organization successfully overseeing all of the various arts groups. As previously stated, Arts Partners makes an effort to fill this need; however, they lack the funding and enforcement power to accomplish all that is needed.

The creation of an Arts Advocacy organization would foster collaboration among the various arts groups in the area, eliminating much of the competition, scheduling issues, and marketing problems. One way this could be accomplished is by taking several existing organizations – for example, Arts Partners, the Peoria Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and the Civic Center Authority – and

combining them into one organization, a unified Tri-County Arts Advocacy Organization. This new organization would benefit the Tri-County arts community immensely, creating a unified voice with a stronger presence in the community. This group could also:

Create a spatial plan for the arts in the Tri-County Region:

While there are benefits to having arts and cultural activities spread throughout the region, a lack of a central hub makes it difficult for some Tri-County residents to access events and other opportunities. There are two ways of solving this problem. First, an agreed upon central location could be identified by the region, e.g. the Warehouse District or Peoria Heights). The other and perhaps better solution would be to find ways to identify, celebrate, and connect the arts groups in the region and offer creative transportation solutions in order to ensure equitable access. In order to achieve this, relationships would need to be fostered with transportation providers and tourism branches throughout the region. It would also be beneficial to create a detailed map of the region's fine arts scene.

Provide the Arts Community with Business and Marketing Support:

A major issue for artists and arts groups in the Tri-County region is a lack of marketing and business skills. Ideally, a dedicated board or organization could step in and conduct training in marketing, fundraising, grant writing, and access to loans, among other things. This board would have experience in civic affairs and would have

Implement unified marketing efforts to attract tourism and to provide recognition for the arts.

Provide educational opportunities to empower artists and art groups by giving them the tools needed to thrive in a business or financial setting.

A unified effort to connect the various arts groups throughout the Tri-County region with themselves, their communities, and civic leadership.

Foster collaboration with the tourism bureaus in the Tri-County region to combine efforts to support future tourism and vistors' experience.

connections within the community and region. Currently, there are a number of organizations already working in Peoria that could provide support including Peoria Next and Start-Up Peoria.

Essentially, this Arts Advocacy Organization would empower artists and art groups by giving them the tools needed to thrive in a business or financial setting. An example of an organization that is thriving in this capacity is HUB Seattle. A similar site in the Tri-County region would be tremendously beneficial.

Create a Dedicated Liaison between the new Arts Advocacy Group and Civic Leaders:

After researching, it was found that there is no unified effort to connect the arts groups, both within specific communities and among the many communities throughout the Tri-County region. Each community currently has its own tourism bureaus and/or city/county boards. These entities function solely for the community they represent. Consequently, there is no independent voice for the arts in the Tri-County area as a whole.

A partnership between the Arts Advocacy Organization and the various local governments and civic leaders is needed so that communities can more easily work together on arts projects. This collaboration could result in less bureaucracy, fewer complications, and less "red tape" when projects are proposed and implemented.

Implement Unified Marketing Efforts to Brand and Promote the Arts:

Branding would be another function of the Arts Advocacy Organization. Essentially, this group would give both a face and voice to the various artists and art groups in the Tri-County region. Publicity and promotion are essential if the arts are to not only survive but also thrive. Branding is a key component and could be accomplished in many ways: slogans, business cards, web sites, and advertising campaigns.

Maintain a Master Calendar of Arts Events in the Region:

Currently, there are many arts organizations that don't communicate well and often don't know how to market themselves. As such, there is quite a bit of confusion as to what artistic events are happening. This causes artists to lose patrons as well as conflicts in scheduling among the arts organizations.

The creation of a master calendar would allow arts organizations to communicate, both with the public and with each other. It would be a central, convenient place to go to find necessary information. Provided it was marketed correctly, it would also draw in more patrons who are currently unaware of all of the arts events in our region.

Foster collaboration with Tourism:

Collaboration with not only the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau but also the tourism bureaus of the various towns in the Tri-County region regarding arts events in the community and surrounding area would also be tasked to the Arts Advocacy Organization. Tourists who visit the region want to know what is happening in each community, and they often enjoy attending fine arts events. If collaboration occurred, there could be cross promotion of arts events (plays, art fairs, concerts, etc.) and tourism, including area hotels, restaurants, shopping, etc.
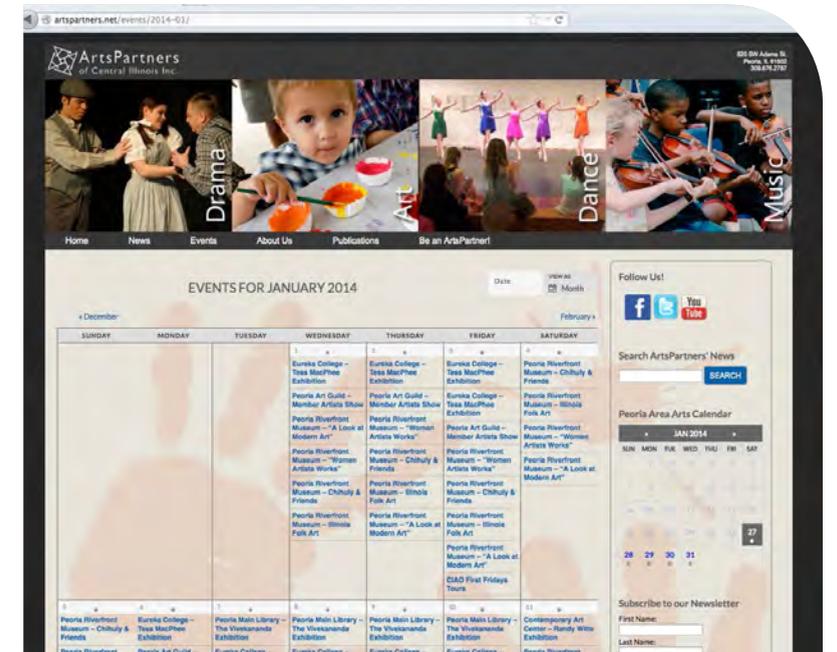
As a result of this planning process, ArtsPartners now hosts and maintains a master calendar of arts events in the region.

GOAL 2

Identify and promote arts communities as identified by geographic and cultural characteristics.

• Form committee from existing arts organizations and neighborhood leaders.

• Identify cultural regions and areas of current pockets of the arts.

• Create marketing strategies to promote unique arts pockets.

There is a need for more community-based art, not simply traditionally accepted art. This art would reflect the local culture and ethnicities of various neighborhoods. A common example of this type of art would be the distinct neighborhood look and feel of SoHo and Greenwich Village, both located in New York City.

In the Tri-County region, this is seen in areas like Peoria Heights and the Warehouse District. Peoria Heights is a charming village that features many unique shops and businesses that cater to the arts community. Peoria Heights also hosts the Illinois Art League Spring Show and the Peoria Heights Fine Arts Fair. From art galleries to custom-made jewelry to photography, there are many opportunities for both patrons of the arts and artists in Peoria Heights.

The fine arts are also thriving in Peoria's Warehouse District. This unique area features a multitude of artists' studios, galleries, boutiques, and restaurants. The area hosts countless art fairs and festivals throughout the year. There is an abundance of public art scattered throughout the district, and on warm evenings, the area becomes an entertainment district featuring outdoor dining choices and live entertainment.

A very different example of an art community is the Farmington Road Entertainment District (FRED), located in West Peoria. Its slogan is, "Where Peoria Comes to Play." FRED successfully celebrates its local color and flavor through blue collar, popular forms of art, including bars, restaurants, and the Juke Box Comedy Club.

Photos by: Anastasia Samoylova

GOAL 3

Create public art in each municipality in the Tri-County area.

- Identify civic leader for each municipality.
- Find funding source for projects.
- Ensure that municipal codes are not obstacles.
- Call to artists to meet needs.

Public art could be utilized in various municipalities in order to promote the arts community and encourage beautification. An example of public art is the *Painted Cow Campaign* in Chicago several years ago. To encourage public art, the Arts Advocacy Organization could work with local governments to establish funding for public art, and limit or streamline bureaucratic procedures in creating and displaying public art.

In addition, the Arts Advocacy group would:

- Work with each municipality to make sure that zoning codes allow for public art, murals, etc.
- Create a funding structure where corporations sponsor public art.

- Create guidelines for public art.
- Communicate to the public about public art in our region.

Currently, there is a public art proposal called the Fulton Plaza ArtWalk Project. This project would feature a multi-modal connection between the existing cultural amenities (e.g. Peoria Civic Center, Peoria City Hall, the Museum Block, and Water Street) within Downtown Peoria's Central Business and Riverfront Districts. This ArtWalk would also function as a destination and cultural amenity for these districts and the region.

The ArtWalk project includes key concepts that support year-round use and a broad spectrum of arts and cultural activities, including mural arts, temporary and permanent multimedia art displays, and flexible program spaces for planned and unplanned cultural activities.
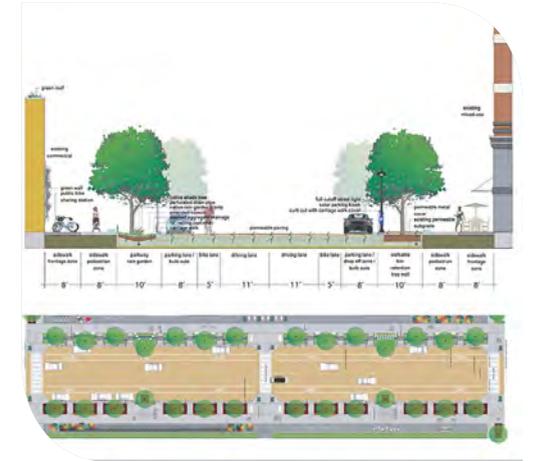
Top: Proposed street design for Fulton Street; Bottom: Artist rendering of Fulton Plaza ArtWalk Project

GOAL 4

Create lifelong supporters of Arts and Culture through access, training, and experiences by implementing arts education opportunities by 2015.

• Enable arts education campaign.

• Establish community based arts education programs.

• Foster collaboration between artists and schools.

More education is needed in the Tri-County area with regard to the arts. Through collaboration and education, lifelong arts lovers and participants can be cultivated. Arts educators should be encouraged to create plans that connect formal arts education from Pre-K to higher education. In looking at an arts education campaign, emphasis would be on education in the schools, as well as education opportunities for members of the community through workshops and classes.

Collaboration should also be encouraged among the various school districts. Schools could coordinate and share supplies, training, and curriculum. Some school districts have more resources than others; other schools might have teachers and staff who have very specific talents and training. Collaboration would allow more schools to benefit from these very specific resources/skills.

Collaboration could also occur between schools and professional artists/organizations in the community. For a stipend or as a volunteer, local artists could come into the schools and teach weekly classes, conduct art related workshops and trainings, etc. These artists could act as coaches and teachers and provide great inspiration to our students.

GOAL 5

Create a Regional/National Event Celebrating the Arts.

The Arts Advocacy Organization should produce a major event celebrating the arts in our region. Many cities with a strong fine arts and culture presence sponsor events of this nature. This event could be a festival celebrating the various arts groups in the Tri-County region. It would create excitement and help to unify the various arts groups in our region and would attract visitors and tourists to the Tri-County area. As a result of community listening sessions and planning with both this committee and with the larger arts community, Ignite Peoria, an arts celebration, is being planned for August of 2014.
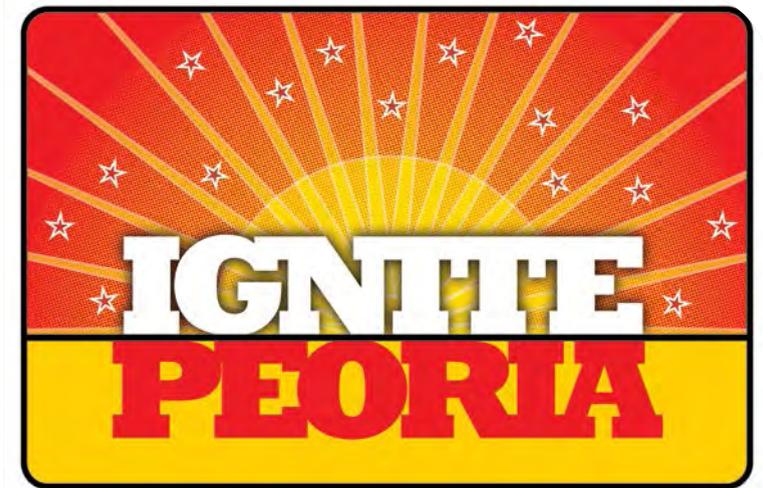
As a result of this planning process, ArtsPartners of Central Illinois, the Peoria Civic Center, and the Peoria Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau are partnering to host Ignite Peoria, an event to celebrate arts and creativity.

CONCLUSION

In spite of many issues, the Tri-County region boasts a diverse fine arts community. These problems, however, need to be tackled so that the arts in Central Illinois can continue to thrive. The creation of an overseeing Arts Advocacy group to foster collaboration among the arts groups and to aid in various functions like fundraising, marketing support, etc. would go a long way in ensuring a bright future for the arts in our region. The benefits of connecting the arts and education are many: students become stronger critical thinkers, develop creative expression, and become effective communicators. Ultimately, arts education creates life-long lovers of art, patrons of the arts, and in many cases, artists. It is imperative that arts advocates do all that they can to support the arts in this community so that the Peoria area can continue its fine arts tradition and the arts continue to "Play in Peoria."

LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION

Arts Alliance Illinois - http://artsalliance.org/

Arts and Education Exchange -www.artseducationexchange.org/site-search/programs

Art in Action -http://www.artinaction.org/w/whyart

Art Partners of Central Illinois -http://artspartners.net

CIAO: Central Illinois Artists Organization - http://ciaopeoria.com

"Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy." Focus Forward CI. Economic Development Council for Central Illinois, Sept. 2012. Web. 1 Jul. 2013.

http://www.focusforwardci.com/files/2012%20CEDS%20public-review[2].pdf

Duniway Elementary School Art Program -http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools/duniway/240.htm

Focus Forward CI - http://www.focusforwardci.com

Greater Reston Arts Center -http://www.restonarts.org/education/artintheschools.htm

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Lead Agencies: ViTAL Economy and Focus Forward Central Illinois

In a recent survey conducted by a third party consultant in which over 300 professionals from local economic development organizations and the private sector participated, 74% of participants expressed that economic development partners of the region were not working cohesively on a regional approach to economic programming. To address this concern, economic organizations in the Central Illinois community created a not-for-profit organization, Focus Forward Central Illinois (FFCI), to unite economic development organizations in public and private sectors and to collaboratively develop and implement an economic strategy that benefits the region as a whole.

The structure of FFCI stems from the success of the Heart of Illinois United Way (HOIUW). HOIUW brings together people from business, labor, government, health, and human services to address needs on a regional basis. It raises money from these diverse sources in order to fund multiple agencies that work to improve the human condition throughout the entire region. It then reports those results to the community at large to gain a buy-in from the people who live and work here. HOIUW increases the organized capacity of the people of Central Illinois to care for one another by collaborating, aggregating, and distributing resources.

Similar to HOIUW, FFCI aggregates, leverages, and collaboratively manages the assets and investments of the region's public, private, and non-profit sectors. It uses those assets to improve community, economic, business, and workforce development, as well as quality of place, healthy and livable communities, and innovation.

Through the FFCI process, Central Illinois has implemented a regional community economic development strategy that transforms economic performance, expands possibilities, and increases prosperity for all. FFCI transparently manages, assesses, and reports on the performance of each segment of this regional strategy, measured against 5-year S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) goals, strategies, and action plans.

FFCI's regional strategy has attracted and will continue to attract more local, regional, and national investment in Central Illinois. This will enable the agencies implementing S.M.A.R.T. strategies to focus 100% of their talents on their missions and outcomes. In the end, FFCI is the "conductor" we have long needed to lead our region.

WHO IS INVOLVED

The graphics on the following pages show the structure of Focus Forward CI and the restructured regional Economic Development Council, which exists with FFCI.

INFOGRAPHIC 9.1: **FFCI BOARD & TWG GOVERNANCE, COLLABORATION ROLES & RELATIONSHIPS**

STATE FUNDS | **LOCAL FUNDS** | **PRIVATE FUNDS** | **FEDERAL FUNDS** | **FOUNDATION FUNDS**

REGIONAL GOVERNANCE ROLES

Manage Regional Collaboration

Trusted Fiduciary

Drive Regional Strategy

Recruit Champions

Investor Relations

Assess Partner Performance

Communications Strategy

Regional Branding

Develop Leadership Institute

Guarantee Transparency/Open Reporting

FOCUS FORWARD CI

POLICY STEERING COMMITTEE

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

REGIONAL COLLABORATION ROLES

CIEDC | CEO COUNCIL

INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM | INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

WORKFORCE ALLIANCE | TCRPC

DATA CENTER OF EXCELLENCE | GeNEXT

COUNTY STRATEGIES | HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

INDUSTRY CLUSTERS | MANUFACTURE CLUSTER

BACKGROUND

In early 2011, the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) identified economic development as a top priority for the region. Soon after, with support from the Illinois Regional Valley Council of Governments (IRVCOG), Vital Economy – an outside consultant located in Maryland – was hired to evaluate the economic performance of the Tri-County area.

After over 300 interviews with business leaders, elected officials, labor representatives, educators, entrepreneurs, and social service providers, the Vital Economy team concluded that regional stakeholders were willing to collaborate with their peers, but the trust required to build successful relationships was missing. Additionally, the plentiful assets found within the Central Illinois region were not being fully leveraged or leveraged at all.

Among Vital Economy's several recommendations was the suggestion to launch a top-down/bottom-up asset-based economic development strategy, or what is now Focus Forward Central Illinois. The economic development journey is guided by a set of best practices successfully employed in other communities across the country including:

- Regional collaboration across public and private sectors;

- Leadership marked by accountability;

- The adoption of steps for managing change;

INFOGRAPHIC 9.2: **EDC RE-ORGANIZATION 2013**

- EDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
- CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
- BUSINESS ATTRACTION
- BUSINESS ASSISTANCE
- WORKFORCE
- QUALITY OF PLACE AND EDD
- OFFICE OPERATIONS
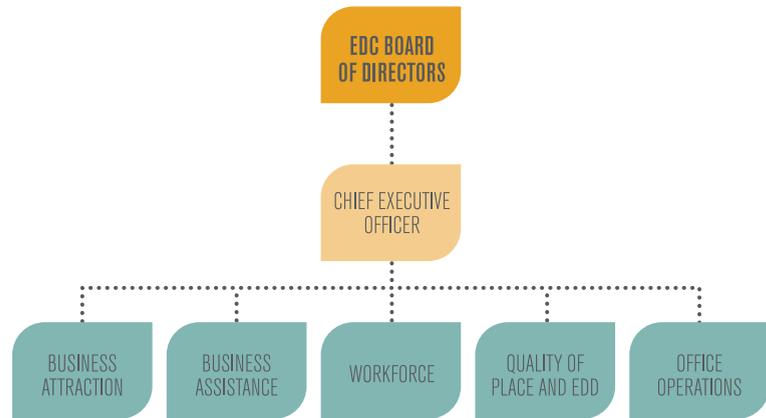
- Integration of economic development, education, and workforce development assets with the private sector to build knowledge-based centers of excellence;

- Asset-based approach that identifies assets for growth;

- Measurable outcomes, benchmarks, and goals;

- Innovation and entrepreneurship;

- Access to funding;

- A clear regional brand that promotes the region's advantages; and

- Commitment to economic development.

Phase I of the journey ended in June, 2013, and included four major milestones: Foundation, Discovery, Connect, and Report. In the Foundation phase, a leadership team was formed, and a sense of urgency was established. Regional stakeholders also identified challenges and opportunities, and developed a series of S.M.A.R.T goals. In the Discovery phase, unique assets of the region were identified, and action teams were created in order to create specific strategies to leverage those unique assets. The Connect phase analyzed the identified assets and external resources and created measurable strategies to link assets and prioritize opportunities. Finally, in the Report phase, a final document was presented to the community at-large and recommendations for implementation were expressed.

The next step for the regional economic development effort is to begin implementation. Below is a list of activities accomplished to date:

- Workforce action teams are building a model to improve how workforce development is designed and accessed, with the understanding that the region must build the workforce to respond to demand so that residents don't lose opportunities.

- New innovation and entrepreneurship efforts have been launched by the GeNext Action team, including a block party in the new Warehouse District and several Startup Peoria events.

- A broadband initiative is underway to improve regional understanding, knowledge, accessibility, and usability of the Internet.

- A Data Center of Excellence is being designed and implemented to integrate all workforce, community, economic, and demographic data with infrastructure, environmental, and land use planning data in a real time virtual approach.

- A transparent and collaborative investment plan for funding economic development activities across the region has been launched.

INFOGRAPHIC 9.3: **EDC RE-ORGANIZATION GOVERNANCE**

PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

- PEORIA COUNTY
  - » COUNTY REP
  - » PRIVATE REP*
  - » CITY REP
- TAZEWELL COUNTY
  - » COUNTY REP
  - » PRIVATE REP
- WOODFORD COUNTY
  - » COUNTY REP
- MASON COUNTY
  - » COUNTY REP
- LOGAN COUNTY
  - » COUNTY REP
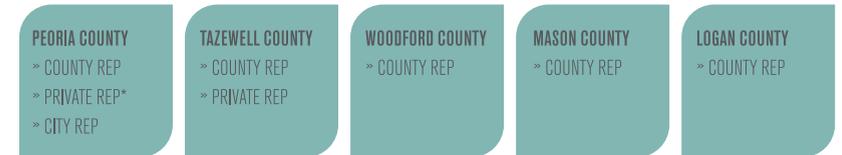
*PRIVATE REPRESENTATION

- POLICY STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIR
- AGRI-BUSINESS CLUSTER
- MANUFACTURE CLUSTER
- TRANSPORTATION DISTRIBUTION AND LOGISTICS CLUSTER
- HEALTHCARE CLUSTER
- EDUCATION
- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
- FINANCE PROFESSIONAL (I.E. CFO, CPA)
- SMALL BUSINESS

INFOGRAPHIC 9.4: **FOCUS FORWARD CI PHASE 1 JOURNEY**

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	PHASE ONE COMPLETE
26			1–5				4–8						

FOUNDATION

What are we trying to change?

What does our economy look like in the future?

Who will lead, coordinate and facilitate?

DISCOVERY

What makes our region unique?

What CED resources do we have and how are they performing?

How do our assets relate to our industry sectors?

CONNECT

How can our assets be leveraged?

How can our assets compound economic value?

What are our priority clusters?

What are the strategies to reach

REPORT

5-year Regional Plan

What is the sequence of action?

Who is responsible for what actions?

What is the projected ROI for the actions?

- Committees have been created and populated to address very specific industry needs of agriculture, healthcare, and education (among others) in order to help achieve the five year SMART goals.

- A new CI Economic Development Council (EDC) mission was developed, centered on implementation of the approved regional strategy. The CI EDC staffing model is based on best practice recommendations and research developed by a regional action team. The CI EDC was spun out of the Heartland Partnership in mid-2013.

Through monumental collaboration, leaders of Focus Forward CI have been able to quicken the pace of economic progress, encourage new investment, and expand business opportunities. This collaboration is unlocking doors to innovative educational and training opportunities through which tomorrow's highly skilled local, national, and international workforce will emerge.

SPOTLIGHT

FOCUS: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Federal regulations require Economic Development Districts (EDD) to have a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in order to apply for assistance under the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) public works and economic adjustment programs. The purpose of the CEDS is to establish a process that will help create jobs, foster more stable and diversified economies, and improve living conditions. It provides a mechanism for coordinating the efforts of individuals, organizations, local governments and private industry concerned with improving and expanding upon economic development. This work coincides with the regional Focus Forward CI initiative.

The Central Illinois EDD consists of Mason, Peoria, Tazewell, Logan, and Woodford Counties. EDDs play a key role in local economic development. Instead of responding to individual requests from over 2,000 eligible county economic development organizations around the nation, EDDs assist the EDA in establishing regional priorities for projects and investments.

The 2012 CEDS document:
- Presents the Region's goals and strategies;
- Describes the challenges, opportunities, and resources of the Central Illinois Region;
- Details the demographics, infrastructure, and natural resources of the Region; and
- Establishes priority programs and projects for implementation.

SPOTLIGHT

FOCUS: Business Assistance and Incubation

Peoria County facilitated several different projects to enhance business assistance and incubation efforts in the region as part of this planning process. The business assistance and incubation work focused on improving business opportunities for minority and disadvantaged populations, strengthening the local foods sector, and building a more vibrant innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem to support the larger regional economic development effort. The following is a summary of the different projects facilitated by Peoria County.

Peoria Area Opportunity Center Business Plan

This business plan was developed for a business incubator project that was recommended for implementation as a result of an earlier feasibility study completed prior to this regional planning process. The working name of the business incubator is the Peoria Area Opportunity Center (PAOC). PAOC is envisioned to provide business assistance to new and early stage-companies through professional staff who deliver and coordinate such services; lead companies to become self-sufficient; and provide shared office services, access to equipment, flexible leases, and expandable space all under one roof. The recommendation is for a mixed-use program serving light manufacturing, assembly, and service businesses, with an emphasis on minority and women-owned enterprises.

HUB Peoria Feasibility Study

The idea behind HUB Peoria is to develop a place that educates, energizes, and inspires would-be entrepreneurs in the region. HUB Peoria is envisioned as a vibrant physical space where creative individuals can be engaged through events, programming, consultation, and education to move projects from ideation to reality. HUB Peoria would be located in a historic former school building in a central city neighborhood of Peoria, and portions of the site would be converted to green space, community gardens, and an outdoor vendor area. HUB Peoria would positively impact its neighborhood and the entire region.

Startup Peoria Incubator Development Plan

Startup Peoria is a grassroots movement to create a community of thinkers and digital makers involved in delivering new technology in Central Illinois. The organization's plan is to establish a Tech Startup Community centered within a co-working space featuring a modern learning laboratory, mentoring and apprentice programs, and opportunities for collaboration and funding. Ultimately, Startup Peoria seeks to establish tech entrepreneurship as an ecosystem that will grow by feeding itself. Collaboration between technologists and the region's business networks will be a key component in the establishment of this ecosystem.

Small Business Web Portal

A small business web portal was established that connects a network of nonprofit, government and private sector business support sectors to help small business. Modeled after KC SourceLink, the web portal helps small businesses in the region by providing businesses with free and easy business access at any time. The portal is a virtual front door for any entrepreneur or small business owner looking for help.

Seeds2Success Feasibility Study

An idea has been raised to convert the Hanna City Work Camp, an abandoned prison facility in Peoria County, into a small farm incubator and demonstration center. This potential site, known as Seeds2Success, would facilitate new farm business development to increase the number of small farms in the region, provide tenants who lease property on the site with farm management experience, and provide a space to wash, pack, and store produce grown on site. The development of Seeds2Success would promote a sustainable local food system and strengthen the regional economy.

Peoria County Gap Fund Feasibility and Implementation Plan

Promising innovations often die due to a lack of early stage capital, where funding is the hardest to obtain because the technology is not yet proven. Early stage innovations are often too speculative for even angel investors or venture capitalists to fund. This dearth of funding is often referred to as a "funding gap." This plan presents the case for establishing a "gap fund" to fill the funding gap and support local development of innovation-based ventures. The plan provides specifics on how to create a local gap fund, what should be funded, and how a gap fund can be implemented and sustained.

ASSETS

Though the HUD regional planning grant focused solely on the Tri-County region, the FFCI process expanded to include each county within our area's Economic Development District (EDD), which includes the Tri-County region as well as Mason and Logan Counties. During the Discovery phase, community leaders and residents were asked to identify opportunities in this designated region:

- Health Care
- Manufacturing
- Transportation (roads, river, rail, air)
- Vibrant arts community
- Broadband/fiber
- Attract and retain young professionals
- Agriculture
- Educated and talented retiree forces looking to volunteer and be involved
- Expand skilled labor
- Abundant water resources, including the Mahomet Teays and Sankoty Aquifers
- Illinois River
- Good work-ethic

- Central location
- Access to education
- Rural and urban mix
- Sense of community
- TransPort port district

The following assets and opportunities were identified and further analyzed within the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:

Labor Force Participation: The labor force participation rate is a measurement of the percentage of people over 16 years of age that are actually working compared to the population that could be working. Woodford County's labor participation rate is higher than the U.S., the state of Illinois, and the rest of the EDD. Additionally, the EDD as a whole has a higher labor participation rate than the U.S.

Technology, Commercialization, and Innovation: The Central Illinois region is an environment ripe with opportunities for entrepreneurs and business investors. Fueled by multiple knowledge communities and business and discovery forums, the wealth of intellectual property creates an environment where ideas become reality. The research and innovation created through Caterpillar, Inc., the nation's largest federal agricultural research services laboratory, the University of Illinois College of Medicine, OSF Health Care,

Photos by: Anastasia Samoylova

Methodist Medical Center, and nationally-recognized universities and colleges brings together all the necessary components for the successful commercialization of knowledge into products, services, and emerging technologies.

Intermodal Logistics: The Central Illinois region is poised to thrive in this important industry segment, as the region is within one day's drive of 50% of the U.S. population. Moreover, convenient access to barge, rail, truck, and air modes of transportation gives our region a distinct competitive advantage in the industry.

Healthcare Services: The Peoria area is Illinois' downstate medical center. Out of the nation's ten "high growth" occupations, eight of those projected to grow the fastest are in health care services. More new jobs created in the next ten years will be in health care than in any other industry. This industry is currently the district's largest employer.

Energy: Green Energy. Wind farms. Biodiesel. Clean coal initiatives. The Midwest stands in an unparalleled position to capitalize on these markets. Innovative policy and incentives at the state and federal level are creating a unique window of opportunity for growth in the energy industry. Our access to high quality grains, robust transportation links, and a powerful workforce make us a prime location for energy industry growth.

Agribusiness/Agriscience: The Central Illinois region is located in the agricultural heartland of the world. The region produces high-quality agricultural products including corn, soybeans and other important crops. Commodity processing involves transforming these agricultural products into useful items such as fuels, chemicals and feeds, and component items for other products. The growth of these value-added ag markets represents huge economic development potential for our region. For example, activity in the biofuels sector has skyrocketed, and there is considerable interest in new nutrients for healthier foods and cosmetic products. Local vineyards and wineries are also experiencing significant expansion.

Specialized Manufacturing: The Central Illinois region has a strong tradition of manufacturing excellence. Manufacturing has become a very global industry; the Midwest remains home to many cutting edge manufacturing operations. Workforce pipeline development is critical to this industry as it grows with innovative new technologies.

BARRIERS

During the Discovery Phase, community members were also asked to identify the region's challenges and barriers. Their answers are as follows:

- Average wage and living conditions
- Public education system should meet the needs, not the "standards"

- Lack of knowledge-based entrepreneur opportunities beyond health care and Caterpillar
- Infrastructure
- River siltation
- Communication
- Lack of ability for non-profits to stabilize financially
- Potential loss of military and national guard units
- Older neighborhoods have high unemployment
- Lack of family recreational opportunities and cultural amenities
- Lack of skilled workforce
- Affordable housing
- Lack of a vibrant downtown
- Lack of emphasis on African-American workforce development
- Crime rate
- Lack of process inclusion
- Communication of business resources, especially for start-ups
- Mass transit
- Too many governmental entities
- Minority base is unprepared for the future

- Lack of self-confidence to empower people to move up the economic ladder

- No vision – No structured strategic plan

- Aging population

- Individualism of each of our communities

- Lack of unified government, especially on local levels

- Our quality of place is unknown from the outside, and we need "pride" within ourselves

The following challenges were identified and further analyzed within the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:

Labor Force Participation: Mason County has a very poor labor participation rate compared to the United States, the State of Illinois, and the rest of the EDD. A low labor force participation rate is usually considered to be a negative indicator of employment opportunity.

Workforce Pipeline: The prime source of current and future workforce (ages 0-44) have declined dramatically in the last twenty years. In 1990, total population in this age range was 235,138. By 2010, the total population in that age range declined to 218,263, a 7.2 percent drop.

Unemployment: Peoria and Tazewell Counties saw economic problems in manufacturing and agriculture during the 1970's

INFOGRAPHIC 9.5: **CENTRAL ILLINOIS HUMAN CAPITAL POTENTIAL**

- OVER 70 YEARS OLD DID NOT WORK
- AGE 16–69 DID NOT WORK
- AGE 16–69 WORKED PART-TIME OR PART-YEAR
- AGE 16–69 WORKED FULL-TIME
- UNDER 16 YEARS OLD DID NOT WORK

UNDEREMPLOYED POPULATION: Over 120,000 people age 16–69 (50% of working age pop.) either did not work or only worked part-time in the past 12 months.

Pie values: 39,586 / 77,121 / 41,478 / 79,434 / 117,856
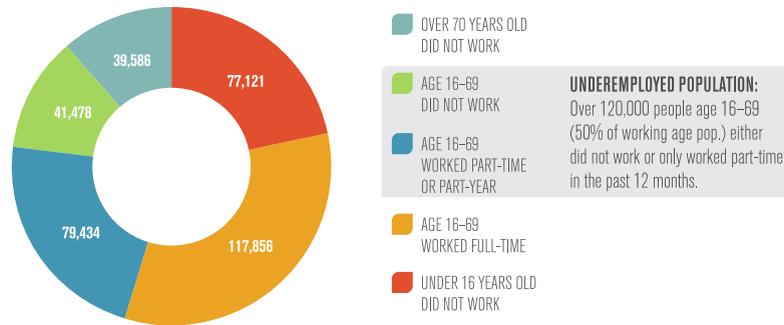
through 1990's, causing significant unemployment. Starting in 1996, unemployment rates declined. Strategies have concentrated on increasing the diversity of economies. The region has transitioned from a primarily manufacturing and agriculture based economy to a diversified economy including growth in health care and transportation industries. This diversity increases EDD opportunity for growth. Due to this diversity, the region has seen a shorter duration and severity of recessionary periods. This presents an opportunity for overcoming the challenges in urban and rural areas.

Per-Capita Income: Census data shows that Peoria and Tazewell Counties all had lower per capita incomes than Illinois' average in 2000 and 2010. The entire region would benefit from the creation of new businesses and higher wage job development.

Collaboration: When surveyed, the lack of collaboration or cooperation among regional leaders and stakeholders was cited by over half of respondents from both the non-profit and private sectors. Typical responses included:

- We have internal competition issues that leads to duplicative efforts.

- We need one unified economic voice for the region. Several groups moving in…sometimes conflicting directions.

- Lack of willingness by some to work together.

INFOGRAPHIC 9.6: **MOST FREQUENTLY-CITED BARRIERS TO SUCCESS**

LACK OF COLLABORATION / COOPERATION: PAROCHIALISM
LACK OF A PLAN OR STRATEGIC VISION
STATE OF ILLINOIS BUSINESS (INCLUDING SALES TAX BURDEN)
ISSUES WITH THE WORKFORCE (UNSKILLED, UNEDUCATED) / UNIONS

% OF TOTAL RESPONDENTS
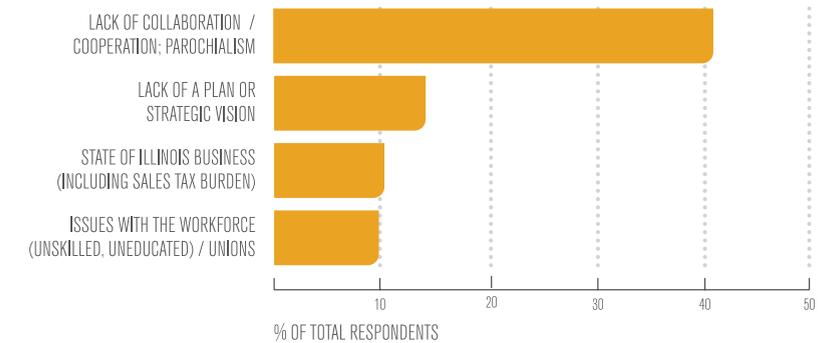
GOALS

The Economic Development District has identified four key areas of concentration as well as measurable outcomes in an effort to increase economic sustainability and growth for the region. These goals are consistent with the goals outlined in the region's CEDS.

To achieve the following goals, implementation efforts will be identified and will include the most viable targeted industries. Information about business needs, strengths and challenges will be gathered from these industry clusters and used to develop specific strategies and deliverables, including specific business retention/ expansion activities.

In addition, strategies will be developed to match new and evolving employee skill sets with the rapidly changing needs of targeted industry employers. By the first annual update report for the CEDS document, the primary targeted industries will be identified and an implementation plan will be reported.

GOAL 1

Improvement in Economic Performance and Development of Targeted Industries: Promote activities and opportunities in targeted industries.

The following SMART goals were developed in order to improve the region's economic performance and development of targeted industries:

- Increase population from 375,218 in 2010 to 386,475 in 2017

- Create 13,190 new jobs across the region, with the following targeted average annual wages:

  - 1,319 new jobs at $53,715 per year

  - 11,841 new jobs at $48,832 per year

- Improvement of 19,456 existing jobs by $5,000 average wage per year

- Ramp up educational attainment of bachelor and graduate degrees for ages 25 and over as follows:

  - 2010 base: 66,715

  - 2012 estimate: 68,719

  - 2013: 69,919

  - 2014: 71,219

  - 2015: 72,769

  - 2016: 74,669

  - 2017: 76,969

- Increase the 25-44 age bracket from 25.2% (94,706 in 2010) to 30% (115,942) of the total population by 2017

GOAL 2

Infrastructure: Improve and/or upgrade the condition of infrastructure and transportation services in the region.

Goal 2 is addressed in the Transportation Section of this document.

GOAL 3

Livability and Business Climate: Create an environment that is conducive to entrepreneurship and overall business activity, increased living standards, safety, healthcare access and cultural opportunities (arts, recreation, eco-tourism and entertainment).

To compete in a global economy, tomorrow's workers must be critical thinkers, problem solvers and effective communicators. With a shortage in qualified workers in technical fields, it is essential to continue exposing students to engineering, manufacturing and other technical trades. Implementation teams will be established to address these issues, increase quality of place, and increase growth opportunities.

GOAL 4

Rural and Small Communities: Create and support efforts to sustain population, jobs and businesses in rural communities and surrounding environment.

Much of this EDD is made up of rural areas and small communities. These communities have a high need for economic development assistance because most do not have the resources to carry out economic development activities on their own.

To achieve these goals, regional outreach and involvement will continue. Implementation teams have been formed to consider metrics and goals in the following areas:

- Business Development & Entrepreneurship

- Workforce & Education

- Public Safety

- Logistics

- Additional regional business climate metrics related to tourism, retail sales tax, etc.

For a more detailed outline of the region's economic strategy, please see Appendix C.

FOOD

Lead Agency: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

All across the United States, in large metropolitan cities such as Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis and Minneapolis, and even in smaller communities closer to home like Iowa City, Bloomington-Normal and Kane County, people are thinking about the food they eat, where it comes from, how it is grown, and how their food choices impact their surroundings.

Instead of the industrialized agricultural food system most common today, consumers are increasingly demanding a food system that emphasizes fresh foods grown close to home using sustainable practices; one that builds healthy people and a healthy environment; and one that is accessible by all residents within a community. This is commonly referred to as a "local food system." Cities at the forefront of the local food movement are charting the course by creating local food advisory committees (such as Food Policy Councils), adopting local food charters and policy resolutions, examining land use and zoning policies, developing educational campaigns, providing skill-based training opportunities, and engaging in conversations with a diverse array of partners who have an interest in local food.

While the local food movement continues to gain momentum nationally, Central Illinois residents are already voicing their support for a strong local food system right here in the Tri-County region and beyond. Many individuals, organizations and businesses throughout the region are currently working to improve the local food system by encouraging residents to grow, sell, and consume more food that is healthy, sustainably produced, and locally grown. Backed by such strong community support, the cities and counties within the region have the potential to become leaders in the local foods movement and pave the way for other urban centers to develop and sustain strong local food systems.

PURPOSE

This plan is meant to serve as a guide to those who want to improve the growth, sales, distribution and consumption of fresh, locally grown foods in order to positively impact the health, food security, economy and environment of the region. Revitalizing the region into a place that embraces healthy and sustainably produced local foods and serving as the hub for the revitalized regional food system requires the development of strategic partnerships amongst many different stakeholders. The process of creating this plan has identified a greater need for collaboration amongst different sectors of the local food system and for the establishment of a local food policy council to carry out plan implementation.

In order to sustain the implementation of this plan, it is recommended that a collaborative Regional Food Policy Council be established. The Food Policy Council would be a committed and wide ranging group of community members ranging from every sector of the food system.

WHO IS INVOLVED

The Role of Local Government

Local governments across the region have the opportunity to take deliberative action to improve and support the complex network of people, facilities, and processes that make up the local food system. Though local government does not grow, process or distribute food, its

policies and regulations can foster (or inhibit) a hospitable environment for these activities within, and surrounding, their city or county limits. Local governments can create the environment needed to sustain a strong local food system by setting public policies and regulations, especially in the areas of land use, zoning, and food safety. In addition, local governments can direct financial and human resources, convene stakeholders, and coordinate local foods efforts and information - all of which can greatly impact residents' and businesses' abilities to grow, sell, distribute, and consume healthy, local food. The Tri-County Local Illinois Food Economy (LIFE) Plan, described in detail below, begins to address these dynamics and the specific roles of the local government in growing the local food system.

Organizational Structure

It became apparent early on in the LIFE plan process that accomplishing any goals would require the participation of a diverse group of partners, both internal within local government and from the broader community. The local food movement touches on a variety of topics relevant to public goals and current projects including public health, land use, housing, zoning, food safety, sustainability, and neighborhood revitalization. Therefore, local government officials and staff need to be actively represented and engaged in the local food movement in addition to a wide array of grower-producers, community groups, residents, and other organizations.

It is recommended that each county in the region appoint 3 - 5 people to serve on the council and that each of the three counties adopts a resolution establishing a formal Food Policy Council (FPC) comprised of each of the county's appointments. The graphic below would represent the Food Policy Council's organizational structure. By establishing a FPC it would formalize the implementation of the LIFE plan. The FPC would be established as an advisory council to

INFOGRAPHIC 10.1: **REGIONAL FOOD POLICY COUNCIL: PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

the leaders in each county and other supporting stakeholders.

The FPC would ideally be comprised of local grower-producers, representatives of the local governments, schools, parks, local businesses, neighborhood organizations, non-profits, community residents, and other organizations. In addition to serving as an advisory body, some specific tasks of the FPC would comprise of: bringing together key partners to share ideas and facilitate connections between those involved in the local food system; develop a mission, strategic vision and recommendations/policy goals beyond what is indicated in the LIFE plan; gather input from the community; be enthusiastic and positive advocates for advancing the local food movement beyond its current state; lobbying different levels of government for policy changes related to local food; and applying for grant opportunities.

FOOD TODAY

Definition of "Local"

Although there is no single definition, the word "local" has come to encompass a common set of values and ideas. A comprehensive definition from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation states that local food systems are built around the principle of "good food," defined as food that is:

• Healthy, as in it protects and enhances the overall health of the body.

- Green, as in it was produced in a manner that is environmentally sustainable.

- Fair, as in no one along the production line was exploited for its creation.

- Affordable, as in people at all socioeconomic levels are able to purchase and have access to it.

Definition of "Food System"

The term "food system" includes all the processes that are involved in keeping people fed including growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, accessing, consuming and disposing of food. A "local" food system refers to these components at the community, city, or regional level.

Benefits of a Local Food System

A strong, equitable local food system built around the core principles of good food has the potential to positively impact a community's public health, security, local economy, and physical environment, while increasing racial, class, and gender equity among its residents:

Health: Due to advancements in technology, whole foods can be cheaply converted to food "products" with high caloric content and little nutritional value. As a result, consumers are experiencing more nutrition-related health problems such as obesity, type II diabetes, heart disease and a subsequent rise in related health care costs. Food that is locally grown and sustainably produced tends to be fresher and more nutrient-dense than processed food. Increasing consumption of healthy foods contributes to improved nutrition and reduced levels of obesity and other chronic diseases.

Food Safety: Food grown locally can be processed and distributed by small and mid-size operations where careful attention can be paid to food quality and safety measures.

INFOGRAPHIC 10.2: **COMPONENTS OF A LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM**
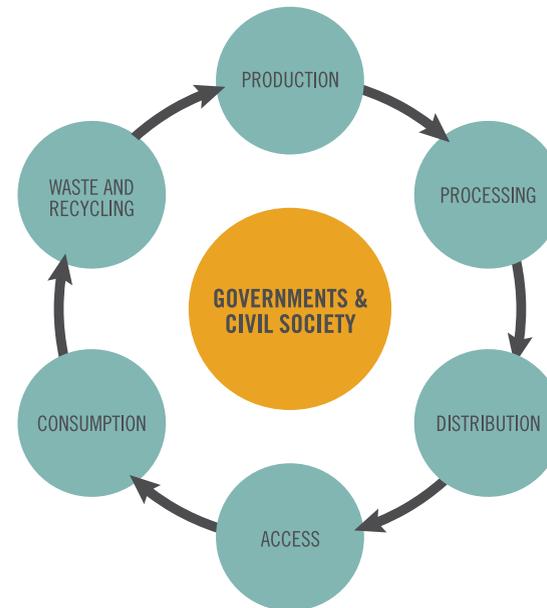
Economy: Consumer expenditure data from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) shows that Tri-County residents spend approximately $1 billion buying food each year, while the Illinois Department of Agriculture reports that more than 90 percent of that food comes from out of state. A local food system supports small farms and local jobs, creates new business opportunities, and encourages the re-circulation of financial capital within the city, region, and state.

Environment: The average American meal now travels 1,500 miles from the farm to the dinner table – a journey that requires extraordinary amounts of fossil fuels and emits large amounts of greenhouse gasses. Producing and buying local food can improve air quality and pollution by reducing the amount of transportation and packaging required to bring our food from farm to table. Local foods grown in a sustainable manner (i.e. no, or fewer, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, composting to build healthy soil, drip irrigation to conserve water) can also reduce chemical and water usage.

Food Security: One definition of food security deals with keeping the food supply and facilities safe from natural disaster and intentional attack. A local food system is typically less vulnerable to disruptions of this nature due to its smaller scale and decentralized setup. Food security also refers to individuals having an adequate supply of food to meet their physical needs. A local food system encourages individuals to share resources in order to provide for the collective needs of their neighbors and the community as a whole.

Equity: A local food system emphasizes a more equitable distribution of food resources (such as farmers markets, community gardens, etc.) to ensure an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food and supports self-sufficiency among families and communities.

Data

Food and agriculture data has been collected primarily from two sources. The first is the 2011 Central Illinois Local Farm & Food Economy study completed by Mr. Ken Meter, a food-systems expert from the Crossroads Resource Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, for the Edible Economy Project, based in Bloomington, Illinois where researchers found that the impact of not purchasing local foods amounts to a total economic loss of $5.8 billion of potential wealth each year to a 32 county region. This loss amounts to more than the value of all food commodities raised in the region (Meter, 2011). The study utilized a wide variety of research services and data, including the Economic Research Service, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the USDA Census of Agriculture. Completed in 2011, Meter's research is the most detailed and accurate study of food and agriculture completed for the Peoria region to-date. The second primary source of food and agriculture data used for this document is the USDA Census of Agriculture. This Census is completed by USDA every five years, and the data used in this plan is from 2007. Finally, in partnership with the University of Illinois, a Master's degree candidate completed local research on

the approach of buyers and producers to local food systems. Her work is referenced in this section and the full report is located in the Appendix.

Highlights of Crossroads Resource Center Study are listed below (Meter, 2011):

- Central Illinois ranchers and farmers sell $4.8 billion of food commodities per year (1987-2009 average), spending $4.3 billion to raise them, for an average gain of $464 million each year.

- Overall, farm producers earned a surplus of $10.7 billion by producing crops and livestock from 1987 to 2009. Farm production costs exceeded cash receipts for 6 years of that 23-year period. Moreover, 27% of the region's farms and ranches reported net losses in 2007 (Ag Census).

- Central Illinois farmers earned $115 million less by selling farm products in 2009 than they earned in 1969 (in 2009 dollars).

- Federal farm support payments averaged $538 million per year for the region from 1987-2009.

- Central Illinois consumers spend $4.3 billion buying food each year, including $2.6 billion for home use.

- Of the $4.3 billion in food purchased by consumers, over $3.9 billion is produced outside the region.

Purchases for home use by residents of Central Illinois break down in the following food categories (Meter, 2011):

PURCHASES FOR HOME USE BY RESIDENTS: CENTRAL ILLINOIS

FOOD CATEGORY	MILLIONS ($)
MEATS, POULTRY, FISH, AND EGGS	$538
FRUITS & VEGETABLES	$435
CEREALS AND BAKERY PRODUCTS	$360
DAIRY PRODUCTS	$296
"OTHER," INCL. SWEETS, FATS, & OILS	$972

In the Peoria region, residents purchase $944 million of food each year, with $577 million of that for home use (2009 data). Purchases for home use by category of food are as follows (Meter, 2011):

PURCHASES FOR HOME USE BY RESIDENTS: PEORIA REGION

FOOD CATEGORY	MILLIONS ($)
MEATS, POULTRY, FISH, AND EGGS	$119
FRUITS & VEGETABLES	$96
CEREALS AND BAKERY PRODUCTS	$80
DAIRY PRODUCTS	$66
"OTHER," INCL. SWEETS, FATS, & OILS	$215

Local food advocates often cite a target for local food purchase of 15% of total consumer food purchases. As evidence of that target, the Illinois Local Foods, Farms, and Jobs Council established a target for 20% of food purchases in the State of Illinois to be made from local sources by the year 2020, a target even higher than the 15% target often cited. If Central Illinois residents purchased 15% of their food for home use directly from local farmers, this would generate $639 million of new farm income for the region. Local food purchased by restaurants and institutions, and subsequently purchased by residents as part of non-home use, could significantly increase the amount of new revenue to the region's farmers.

In summary of the economic impact of farming and food in the Central Illinois region, farmers and ranchers gain $464 million each year producing food commodities, and spend $2.3 billion buying inputs sourced outside of the region, for a total loss of $1.9 billion to the region. Meanwhile, consumers spend $3.9 billion buying food from outside the region. Thus, total economic loss to the region is $5.8 billion of potential wealth each year. This loss amounts to more than the value of all food commodities raised in the region (Meter, 2011).

In addition to the summary data collected and analyzed in the Central Illinois Local Farm and Food Economy report, detailed information regarding agriculture in each of the region's three counties is available from the USDA Agriculture Census, completed in 2007. Selected highlights from this Census are listed next, by county (USDA, 2007).

Peoria County Highlights:

- 877 farms, 2% less than in 2002.

- Peoria County has 259,204 acres of land in farms.

- Farmers sold $126 million of products in 2007.

- $108 million (86%) of these sales were crops.

- $18 million (14%) of these sales were livestock.

- The most prevalent farm size is 50-179 acres, with 258 farms (29%) in this category.

- The next most prevalent farm size is 10-49 acres, with 205 (23%) farms.

- 78 farms (9%) are 1,000 acres or more.

- 295 farms (34%) are less than 50 acres.

- 366 farms (42%) sold less than $10,000 of farm products.

- 253 farms (29%) sold more than $100,000 of farm products.

- 50 farms sold $287,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 25% increase in the number of farms (40 in 2002) selling direct and a 52% increase in direct sales from 2002 sales of $189,000.

- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, one half the national average of 0.4%.

- Peoria County ranks 10th in Illinois for acreage of vegetables, with 2,013.
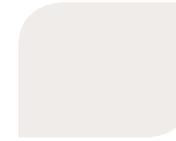
Top Left and Bottom Photo by: Anastasia Samoylov; Top Right Photo by : Shane McGraw

Tazewell County highlights:

- 998 farms, 9% more than in 2002.

- Tazewell County has 329,268 acres of land in farms.

- Farmers sold $185 million of products in 2007.

- $158 million (85%) of these sales were crops.

- $27 million (15%) of these sales were livestock.

- The most prevalent farm size is 50-179 acres, with 236 farms (24%) in this category.

- The next most prevalent farm size is 10-49 acres, with 233 (23%) farms.

- 97 farms (10%) are 1,000 acres or more.

- 374 farms (37%) are less than 50 acres.

- 397 farms (40%) sold less than $10,000 of farm products.

- 342 farms (34%) sold more than $100,000 of farm products.

- 63 farms sold $397,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 19% increase in the number of farms (53 in 2002) selling direct and a 30% increase in direct sales from 2002 sales of $305,000.

- Direct sales were 0.2% of farm product sales, one half the national average of 0.4%.

- Tazewell County is ranked 1st in Illinois for sales of vegetables, with $8.5 million.

- The county ranks 4th in Illinois for acreage of vegetables, with 6,854 acres.

- Tazewell County ranks 10th in Illinois for sales of horses, with $439,000.

- The county ranks 10th for inventory of turkeys in Illinois, but inventory figures were not released by the USDA in order to protect confidentiality, so these totals are incomplete.

Woodford County highlights:

- 932 farms, 1% more than in 2002.

- Woodford County has 288,400 acres of land in farms.

- Farmers sold $177 million of products in 2007.

- $143 million (81%) of these sales were crops.

- $34 million (19%) of these sales were livestock.

- The most prevalent farm size is 50-179 acres, with 235 farms (25%) in this category.

- The next most prevalent farm size is 10-49 acres, with 203 (22%) farms.

- 69 farms (7%) are 1,000 acres or more.

- 322 farms (35%) are less than 50 acres.

- 353 farms (38%) sold less than $10,000 of farm products.

- 356 farms (38%) sold more than $100,000 of farm products.

- 64 farms sold $650,000 of food directly to consumers. This is a 23% increase in the number of farms (52 in 2002) selling direct and a 78% increase in direct sales from 2002 sales of $366,000.

- Direct sales were 0.4% of farm product sales, same as the national average of 0.4%.

- The county ranks 5th in the state as a producer of sheep and goats, with $188,000.

- The county ranks 5th for inventory of pullets for laying flock replacement, but inventory figures were not released by the USDA in order to protect confidentiality.

- Woodford County is the 7th-most important producer of poultry in Illinois, but sales figures were not released by USDA in order to protect confidentiality.

- Woodford County ranks 8th in the state for inventory of laying hens, but inventory figures were not released by the USDA in order to protect confidentiality.

Another study completed in this planning process was through an internship for Master's degree candidate, Stephanie Zvereva on the approach of buyers and producers on local food systems (Zvereva, 2013). Through personal interviews with 17 agricultural producers and interview/surveys completed with nine buyers from healthcare, retail, schools, and wholesale, Zvereva made the following determinations:

- Small growers in the tri-county region simply do not have the consistent high volumes needed by retail outlets and wholesalers.

- In order to expand, they'd need to become full-time or to hire more employees for help

- Prices are too low at the wholesale level.

- Small growers in the Tri-County area prefer retail to wholesales. One of the benefits of farmers markets is that you can sell the product when you have it, setting your own schedule, as opposed to the more stringent demand of wholesale schedules (Vigue 2013). Of course, there are also limits to Illinois' short growing season (Kratz 2013).

- Restaurants and stores need a constant supply year-round—a luxury made possible over the years through globalization and free trade with regions able to grow tomatoes year-round, for instance (Desmond 2013), and Illinois' climate may never be able to accommodate the demand for products outside its growing capabilities (Kratz 2013).

- Increasing regulations by health departments, certification requirements and liability insurance may be hindering farmers' ability to sell to larger buyers. It seems for most growers, restaurants remain a more viable option for sales than stores, wholesalers, hospitals, and schools due to their higher flexibility in purchasing and smaller required quantities (Hartz 2013). Hospitals and schools are also more heavily hampered by safety

and health regulations (Price 2013; Ewalt 2013; Mayer 2013; Griffith 2013).

In her report, Zvereva states, "Overall, it seems most growers are content with maxing out their profits as a large small operation. As one farmer put it, by remaining small enough, one maintains exemption from some of the food safety regulations required only of medium- and large-sized growers (Vigue 2013). But as a small-scale grower with only enough products to sell at farmers markets, wholesale markets are less approachable. Time is better spent maxing out at the premium prices of the farmers markets. Additionally, many farmers lack interest in the marketing, management and distribution aspect of farming as required of growing their business; they'd rather do what they do best and farm" (Waugh 2013; Vigue 2013).

ASSETS

The Tri-County region currently boasts a strong foundation of existing local foods resources that address certain components of the food system outlined above, particularly small-scale production and distribution of locally grown foods. Examples of these resources include:

- 12 farmers' markets and dozens of individual farm stands;

- Dozens of community gardens used for food production, youth programming, and beautification;

- 7 regional CSA (community supported agriculture) farms with dozens of local drop-off points serving hundreds of the region's residents;

- 8 local restaurants that source ingredients from local farms;

- Rich environment of local food-supporting non-profit organizations such as: The Land Connection, Stewards of the Land, Illinois Stewardship Alliance, EP!C, Community Workshop & Training Center, Tazewell County Resource Center, South Side Mission, and Gifts in the Moment;

- Local food-focused educational opportunities;

- Urban gardening-focused youth training programs;

- Strong community support for local food values and activities; and

- 50 identified local farm operations.

BARRIERS

Despite many strengths, gaps remain in the Tri-County food system including:

- Inequitable access to healthy, affordable, local foods across Tri-County communities;

- Lack of small and mid-size processing, aggregation, and distribution infrastructure necessary to connect food growers with consumers;

- Perceived and real barriers to urban food production and consumption (including soil contamination issues and remediation options, and cost of local, healthy foods);

- Lack of communication and coordination among stakeholders throughout the region;

- Disconnect between rural and urban food producers and urban consumers;

- Demand for public land suitable for community food production that exceeds current availability;

- Lack of resident knowledge and skills related to gardening and healthy, local food production, preparation, and preservation (including the concept of seasonality);

- Growers tossing out saleable produce due to lack of access to markets;

- Growers are not equipped to provide produce during the winter months; and

- Growers unable to meet stringent requirements of wholesale buyers.

Top Right and Bottom Photo by: Anastasia Samoylov

GOALS

The development of region-wide goals begins with identifying shared values, which are then translated into goals and broken down into more specific objectives that serve as a guide for public policy and action. Policies then translate objectives into statements that set out standards and guidelines to inform decisions made by local government staff, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Planning and Zoning Commissions, and the County Boards.

The LIFE Plan identifies four key goals for the local food system based on the input gathered from different stakeholders and the research conducted. These include promoting public health and adequate food for everyone; supporting the growth of businesses that sustain our economy; providing services to improve the quality of life for the region's residents and opportunities for residents to engage with their environments and communities; and leading efforts to build a clean and healthy environment.

These goals provide an organizing framework for the plan and include different areas of work with distinct outcomes, reflecting these many types of work. Along with the goals, the LIFE Plan identifies ten values that should guide future work. These values provide a basis for all the recommendations contained in this report. These values shaped the development of the recommendations, and will inform how to carry them out. Recommendations to achieve these goals are determined and detailed in the following section.

GOAL 1

Healthy Food for Everyone

All people should have enough to eat and access to affordable, local, healthy, and sustainable food.

GOAL 2

Prevent Food Waste

Food-related waste should be prevented, reused, or recycled.

GOAL 3

Grow Local

It should be easy and encouraged to grow food in the region, for personal use or for business purposes.

GOAL 4

Strengthen the Local Economy

Businesses that produce, process, distribute, and sell local and healthy foods should grow and thrive in the region.

Values

- Make healthy, high-quality food accessible and affordable.

- Ensure the health and well-being of all people.

- Improve equity in the food system.

- Build diverse and collaborative relationships with community organizations, businesses, and governmental entities.

- Support inclusive community participation in program and policy development.

- Promote regional food security.

- Value and support the role of food and agriculture in the region's economy.

- Support the economic viability of local, sustainable farms.

- Sustain and grow a healthy environment that enhances biodiversity and mitigates climate change.

- Build a food system that supports racial and social justice.

Strategies & Recommendations

This section provides recommendations of actions that entities within the region (preferably working collaboratively on a regional basis) should take to reach the goals identified above. To help reach the goals, the local food policy council should abide by six elements that cut across strategies and describe how to implement the recommendations:

- Create and sustain strong interdepartmental and intergovernmental coordination on food issues.

- Enhance partnerships with the public and private sectors and community based organizations across the region.

- Stimulate collaboration among community organizations, institutions, neighborhoods, and governments.

- Focus on racial and social equity and support the communities most at-risk for food insecurity and diet-related disease.

- Increase inclusive communication and engagement opportunities for the public.

- Use data to assess conditions, inform priorities, and track progress.

See table 10.1 for a full listing of the strategies and recommendations.

Public Education Outreach

While a growing number of people are becoming aware of the importance of the local food system in their lives, many people have not realized its many positive attributes and health and economic implications. The FPC should develop and implement a local foods communications campaign that increases consumer knowledge of, interest in, and demand for local food, that increases awareness of healthy food options among underserved communities, and that elevates existing programs, businesses, and activities that support the local foods movement. Examples include:

- Local governments using their websites to publish local foods information;

- Create educational messages and communications tactics targeted to the needs and interests of various constituencies (low-income individuals, non-English speaking residents, children);

- Conduct listening campaigns to understand the needs of marginalized communities in terms of access, health and growing their own food;

- Develop a public information-sharing mechanism for networking and peer-learning; and

- Establish a branding campaign for local foods unique to the region and encourage buyers to latch on that campaign.

Regional Collaboration

While the region's constituents lie within distinct political boundaries, the Tri-County region is relatively small and the food system exists beyond its borders. Advocacy efforts such as the Edible Economy are underway in McLean County, while other efforts continue in Champaign and Knox Counties. The steering committee should make contact with these counties to determine what related work is being done that may intersect with their own efforts, which may provide opportunities for dialogue and collaboration.

Recruit and Retain More Local Farmers

Throughout the process of creating this plan, it was discovered that the demand for local food is rising, mainly due to changes in consumer preferences and an increase in institutional buying. However, there may not be enough growers in the region to keep up with the demand or those that exist may be having difficulty in harvesting and transporting enough produce to an area where buyers can purchase it. At the same time, growers can be limited in their ability to expand or increase production due to lack of access to

INFOGRAPHIC 10.3: **TRI-COUNTY FARM LAND IN ACRES: 1987–2007**

land, lack of funding, and a lack of labor to assist in planting and harvest. The regional food system is left with a need for new farmers to enter the market. Additionally, the region is experiencing a "brain drain" of recent college graduates leaving the area or otherwise entering other professions besides agriculture. Many such graduates are very qualified to begin a local food farming operation in the region. The FPC should discuss possible actions to take in order to recruit new local food farmers to enter the market and to retain qualified graduates from local colleges. This could be in the form of leveraging some level of taxing authority to provide tax rebates to local food growers, setting aside unused or underused publicly held land for local farmers to cultivate, or setting up a mentorship program between current local food growers and those interested in getting into the business.

Peoria County is exploring a local food incubator concept, called Seeds 2 Success, at the former work camp near Hanna City (west of Peoria). The idea behind this concept is that new, local farmers will till a portion of the vacant land at the camp for local food production, thus providing an opportunity for new farmers to hone their skills and increase the local food supply. It is not known when the incubator will commence operation, but the County is exploring the possibility with the help of the University of Illinois Extension.

INFOGRAPHIC 10.4: **TRI-COUNTY TOTAL FARMS: 1987–2007**
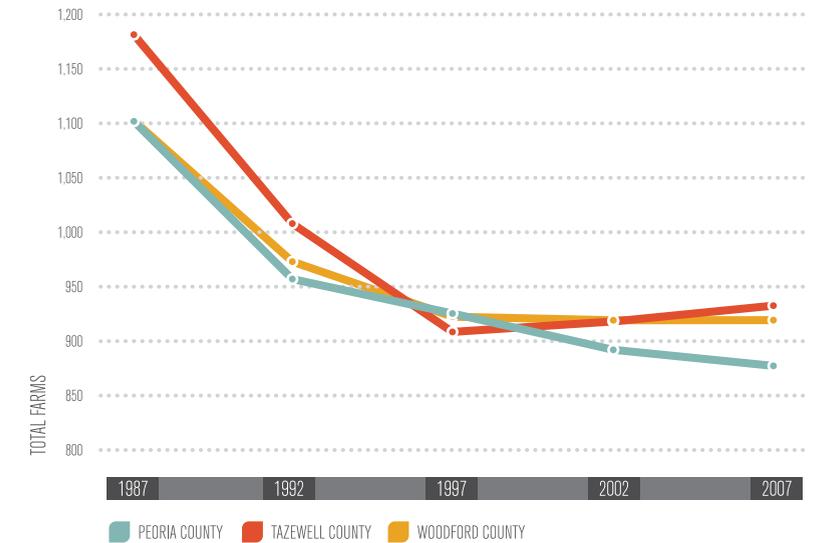
Food Access

There is an issue of access to healthy foods to certain residents in unincorporated and incorporated areas of the region. Several of the region's smaller communities lack a grocery store, and some do not even have a convenience store. Likewise, rural residents near these underserved areas lack the same access to healthy foods. Additionally, many incorporated area residents live in areas where they do not have access to healthy foods, especially the south side of Peoria. These residents, some of which may not have a personal vehicle, must rely

on traveling relatively long distances to access healthy foods. The FPC should work to identify underserved areas and citizens, and develop policies to help create easier and more equitable access to healthy foods. The community gardening efforts of the South Side Mission and Gifts in the Moment are certainly positive developments in Peoria's south side, but more is needed to have a significant impact. Three local non-profit agencies, which provide services to those with developmental disabilities, are seeking to start up a food bus operation, similar to Fresh Moves in Chicago. This mobile produce market has the potential to increase access to healthy, local food to the underserved communities and to anyone who may not have previously considered purchasing local produce.

From data available from the USDA Economic Research Service, approximately 40,000 people in Peoria County (21% of the population) are low-income and live more than ½ mile from the nearest supermarket. Almost 34,000 of those persons live within urban census tracts, which is about 23% of the urbanized population. Over 18,000 people (10% of the population) in Peoria County are low income and live more than a mile from the nearest supermarket. These figures do not include persons who do not have personal vehicles, but since rates of vehicle ownership are lower among low-income populations, it can be especially difficult for these populations to access fresh food at grocery stores given their limitations of income and distance. Elderly persons within the low-income bracket likely have the least amount of access since they may not own a car

TABLE 10.1: STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS, GOAL 1

GOALS	STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Healthy food for everyone — All people should have enough to eat and access to affordable, local, healthy, and sustainable food.	Promote the location of healthy food access points, such as grocery stores, healthy food retail, farmers markets, food gardens, and farms within walking or biking distance from homes, work places, and other gathering places.	» Integrate policies supportive of food access into local and regional plans and efforts. » Explore incentives for locating grocery stores in areas identified as having low food security and poor food access. » As criteria in evaluating transportation projects, include safe and convenient pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections between residential neighborhoods and food access points.
	Use local government purchasing and contracting power to support healthy, local, sustainably produced food.	» Implement best practice nutrition and physical activity standards at public schools. » Adopt healthy vending guidelines for vending machines on public property and in public schools. » Adopt healthy procurement guidelines for City/County contracts, events, and facilities.
	Support programs, policies, and projects that help get more healthy food to children and youth.	» Establish a Farm to Table program. » Provide free summer meals to children. » Provide operational support to food banks and congregate meal programs. » Provide support to family childcare providers to help improve the quality of food served.
	Increase affordability of healthy, local food for low-income residents in the region.	» Distribute Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers to older adult and bags of local produce to home-bound seniors. » Support and expand efforts to enroll eligible families in food assistance programs, including SNAP and WIC. » Motivate healthy food purchases by SNAP recipients by working with partners to create a Fresh Bucks program for use at Farmers Markets.
	Promote healthy food, especially in low-income communities and with youth, through education and collaborative efforts	» Support sustainable food systems and urban agriculture education for teens, adults, seniors, and children.

TABLE 10.1: STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS, GOALS 2 AND 3

GOALS		STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Prevent Food Waste	Food-related waste should be prevented, reused, or recycled.	Prevent edible food from entering the waste stream	» Implement a behavior change campaign aimed at reducing edible food entering the waste stream. » Encourage grocery stores to modify policy and purchasing procedures to reduce the amount of produce thrown out.
		Increase composting of nonedible food.	» Provide free or low-cost compost bins for residential customers and encourage food-waste recycling for commercial customers. » Explore the benefits of collecting garbage every other week, and yard/food waste weekly. » Establish food-waste recycling or composting at municipal facilities. » Promote backyard composting.
Strengthen the local economy	Businesses that produce, process, distribute, and sell local and healthy food should grow and thrive in the region.	Promote the establishment and support existing businesses that grow, distribute, process, and sell local and healthy food.	» Explore the need for local and regional food-processing facilities, cold storage, farm incubators, food hubs and other food-related infrastructure. » Provide comprehensive, user-friendly information on the requirements to operate as a food processor or handler. » Recruit and retain more local farmers through entrepreneurial training programs, demonstration programs and high school/college career fairs. » Work to establish connections between food buyers and local growers/processors who wish to sell their goods on a wholesale basis.
		Celebrate and enhance local food as an element of the region's identity.	» Assess the economic development potential of the food system as a local industry cluster. » Identify opportunities to enhance the region's local food business identity.
		Support farmers markets and small retailers that sell healthy and locally produced food.	» Deliver streamlined permitting services to farmers markets and help existing farmers markets maintain viable locations. » Support existing business owners in increasing healthy foods offered in their stores or restaurants.

or even have a license to drive. This lack of access is compounded during the harsh winter and summer months, when it is especially difficult to walk long distances to the nearest market. The figures for Tazewell and Woodford Counties are improved over Peoria County due to higher rates of vehicle ownership and fewer low-income persons. Nearly 18% in Tazewell and 15% of the population in Woodford are low-income and live more than ½ mile from the nearest supermarket.

Farmland Protection

The region has served as a focal point for the production, processing, and trading of food for many decades. But currently, most of what is grown does not directly feed humans, partly as a result of federal policies that subsidize high-volume crops like grains, but not specialty crops like fruits and vegetables.

The region primarily grows corn, soybeans, and forage crops. The shift away from local food production to a global system has taken root slowly over the course of the past century, aided by government policies and technology investment designed to build economies of scale and efficiency in agriculture. Now, farms are able to produce greater amounts of food on less land: while the amount of farmland in production in our region declined approximately 26,000 acres between 2002 and 2007, the region's corn output in bushels increased almost 54 percent during that same time period. As a whole, Illinois lost approximately half a million acres of farmland

TABLE 10.1: STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS, GOAL 4

GOALS		STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Grow Local	It should be easy and encouraged to grow food in the region, for personal use or for business purposes	Prioritize food production as a use of land.	» Integrate policies supportive of urban agriculture into City/County plans and efforts. » Revise (if necessary) local zoning regulations to align regulations with any adopted policies. » Working within a public property database (where available), develop additional site criteria to more readily identify vacant or underused parcels suitable for urban agriculture. » Explore opportunities to expand rooftop and building-integrated agriculture.
		Develop and support programs to produce food on publically-owned land.	» Support and/or establish community gardening programs in each city, focusing on meeting the needs of all residents interested in growing food in a community garden. » Where appropriate, consider leasing publically-owned land to non-profit community partners to support community goals and produce food for the community. » Encourage schools to start gardening programs to teach students about the importance of growing local, healthy food.
		Support efforts to expand urban food production on privately owned land, including residential, commercial, and institutional properties.	» Encourage new developments to include open space that could be used for community gardening, composting or farmers market stands. » Encourage private businesses with large, open tracts of land to allow farming in specified locations. » Provide education about low-impact, chemical-free home gardening and soil testing/remediation.
		Work jointly with other jurisdictions to conserve agricultural land.	» Support or encourage the county government role in conserving regional agricultural land through zoning controls in prime farmland areas. » If necessary, broaden the definition of "farm" in zoning codes to include smaller operations. » Explore innovative ways in which government or non-profits can help protect regional farmland.

between 2002 and 2007, an area of land larger than Peoria County. However, these long-term trends of consolidation, specialization, and mechanization of agriculture have also had repercussions that include negative environmental externalities.

The FPC should advocate for policies that protect farmland as a valuable natural resource through land use policy in both municipal and county land use and transportation decisions. They should also discourage projects that will have a detrimental impact on the preservation of agricultural lands and discourage use of public funds for such projects.

CONCLUSION

This plan is the first step in a larger journey to improve and support the local food system in the Tri-County region. The final recommendations presented in this report identify key actions that can be taken, recognizing that additional research, planning, and collaboration will be necessary to create a strong local food system that positively impacts the health, economy, environment, and food security of Central Illinois and its residents.

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COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Public participation and input is a critical element of creating a community plan that reflects local needs, wishes, cultures, and personalities. While partners leading each sub-element of this plan conducted their own intensive outreach, the larger HOI Sustainability Consortium held two public sessions and executed an intensive region-wide community survey to gather the public's thoughts and opinions on regional sustainability.

In September of 2011, the HOI Sustainability Consortium held a working meeting in cooperation with Illinois Central College's Green Expo where over 100 participants learned about the regional sustainability initiative and heard from lead project partners. Participants embodied a wide range of expertise from housing to arts to needs of people with disabilities. Following presentations, participants broke out into groups based on the regional sustainability planning elements and were asked to identify the region's assets and how the region can grow based on these assets. Not only did the

participants discuss within their group, but also, they drew their ideas on large blank rays of opportunity. Each ray represented a beam of the sun logo used for the event, Brilliant.Bright.Community. Here are the results:

- **Environment:** It's okay to hug trees and embrace the environmentalist in all of us; clean air and water will be a top priority; the region's leaders will understand the true cost of environmental and ecosystem impairment.

- **Arts:** The Peoria region has a lot to offer with the arts. In the future there will be more connection in the art community to enrich what the region has.

- **Economic Development:** The future holds more connectivity between the employment industry and education institutions. There will be more emphasis on engaging low-income residents in employment opportunities to grow the region strong.

- **Housing:** The region will grow in the understanding of the connections between housing and transportation. People will ride bikes more. Homes will be more energy efficient using green technologies. Open space will regularly be incorporated into urban design. There will be a greater variety of housing types in

urban, suburban, and rural environments. The region will see a "small house" movement with efficient spaces. The development of housing will provide thoughtful places to experience community.

- **Food:** There will be a recognition that residents must restore their own backyard paradise first and then people can save the planet. The art and agriculture community will link to tourism. Fresh, healthy food will be available in food deserts.

- **Land Use:** Land Uses will be blended (they actually drew a picture of a blender) with much less physical separation of residential and retail spaces. The region will change land use rules to allow for more live/work units and zoning regulations that are currently unfriendly will be pleasant, positive experiences for creative developers. It will be easier to access information as it relates to land use regulations and development, and all partners including local jurisdictions, economic development entities, developers, and environmental organizations will share a common concern for the impacts of urban sprawl.

- **Transportation:** There will be greater connectivity of satellite communities to and from the City of Peoria. The Illinois River will continue to be improved as a major freight corridor. Light rail opportunities will exist in the region. The region will build more bus stops and shelters. There will be more funding available for transportation that is alternative to the single-occupant automobile with an emphasis on more public transit. There will be High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes (carpool lanes), and there will be peer motivation to create a critical mass of people using the buses.

The HOI Sustainability Consortium held a second public regional sustainability session at Illinois Central College's 2012 Green Expo. Here participants were provided with an update on the program and were asked to once again consider the various planning elements in light of what is working, what is not working, and what can be done to promote positive outcomes for the future. The results are listed in Table 11.1.

One of the greatest challenges of creating community plans with the insight, wisdom, and experience of local residents is engaging residents in thoughtful dialogue. Public meetings are important, but they are not enough to secure the voices of the region, particularly the voices of the under-served community. To address this challenge, the HOI Sustainability Consortium partnered with Illinois State University's Stevenson Center for Applied Community and Economic Development to conduct regional surveys

TABLE 11.1: ICC GREEN EXPO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EVENT RESULTS

WHAT IS WORKING	WHAT IS NOT WORKING	WHAT CAN BE DIFFERENT
HOUSING		
Energy efficiency, better design, human scale housing	Regulation hampers good development; financing structure makes it hard to get loan for alternative housing	A financial option for improvements other than re-finance; affordable, higher quality rental housing
ARTS AND CULTURE		
Live theater leagues, arts organizations, strong collaboration	Regional brain drain and the loss of working age population, lack of info on how to connect to activities	More collaboration to support all levels and varieties of art/culture from volunteer theater performances to fine art fairs
LAND USE/POPULATION		
New codes, Warehouse District, development plans, brownfield re-development	Traditional zoning divides uses and creates low density	Education and capacity for quality sustainable urban development practices
FOOD		
Central IL fertile soil; 3-7% local food consumption, local farms with CSA's, U of I Extension's Market Makers and Master Gardeners programs	Not putting soils to good use, Central IL 5th in obesity rates	Raise and grow local food, educate schools on local food
TRANSPORTATION		
Bus opportunities	*****	Culture/attitude on using the bus, added bike lanes and paths, employer incentive for carpool/bus/bike, more bus stops

on all planning components. The approach to survey distribution was intensive and time-consuming and involved dropping off and picking up hundreds of surveys throughout the Tri-County area. While partners took a scientific approach and selected randomized addresses for surveying, the project was designed to **oversample low-income residents** to ensure participation. In addition, **ELITE program participants played a crucial role in sampling low-income populations.** ELITE is a vital resource in community planning in that this organization has good relationships in the community, in particular the low-income, traditionally underserved community. While other communities participating in the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program struggled for participation from underserved communities, ELITE made it happen for Central Illinois. What follows is a direct excerpt from the findings report.

Survey Components and Methods

The full process of surveying was split between two questionnaires—one primary and the other secondary. Contents of the primary survey questionnaire are divided in four parts: 1) personal well-being; 2) opinions on the importance of key areas within sustainable development; 3) how well those key areas are currently being provided; and 4) demographic characteristics. The secondary survey is a reduced form of the primary, containing slightly pared-down versions of the second through fourth sections and omitting the first. Three methods of distribution and collection were used.

Initially 'drop-off/pick-up' methods were employed, which lasted about one month. Approximately half of primary survey responses were gathered in this manner, and the other half was mailed. The secondary survey was delivered to residents of South Peoria by student volunteers. The slim survey took roughly one month to conduct. Altogether, 650 completed surveys were collected, with approximately equal number coming from the full and slim versions.

Findings

Tri-County residents tend to consider sustainable community development as more important than how well it is being provided, meaning they want to see more of it. Looking at individual planning focus areas, one stands out: economic development. Issues of economic stability and growth are prominent for residents, ranked as most important for development and perceived to be currently lacking. Respondents also report significant deficits in the provision of alternative commuting options and environmental sustainability in comparison to their importance. In regards to issues surrounding aspects of local foods, public transportation, and arts and culture there is alignment between levels of importance and provision in residents' minds. The only area with evidence of being provided at or above its level of accorded importance at present is housing. However, all aspects fall short of being considered 'well provided.'

Within these findings, differences are seen between certain groups of the population. Younger residents are more active, feel more isolated and desire stronger sustainable development efforts than their elder counterparts. Similarly, persons identifying as belonging to minority racial/ethnic groups feel more isolated in the community than white residents, and also have lower levels of work satisfaction and enjoyment of the natural environment. Additionally, higher educational attainment is strongly associated with higher perceptions of quality of life.

Taken together, survey findings support HOI Sustainability Consortium efforts. This is particularly true in regards to economic development, involving marginalized populations in the process of planning and implementing policy and programs, and enhancing educational opportunities in the area.

SCENARIO PLANNING

Lead Agency: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Take a moment to consider your community's built environment. Where are the residential and commercial spaces? What do they look like and how do they function? What transportation system connects commerce and the people? Consider the wide-open spaces that provide valuable natural resources for the region. How does your built environment impact your daily life and how would you like this to change in the future?

In September of 2013, the staff of Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC), in partnership with the Heart of Illinois Sustainability Consortium and with funding from the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, asked fifty local stakeholders to gather at HUB Peoria/Thrive Capital Partners on the South Side of Peoria and design future development scenarios that

reflect the participants' quality of life values. This activity is known to land use planners as Scenario Planning and helps participants and community leaders visualize the opportunities and challenges facing land development in the region.

During this process, groups of five or six gathered around maps of the Peoria/Pekin region, and under the confinements of future population growth projections, made recommendations on the type and location of the built environment over the next thirty years. Groups were given a starter pack of stickers to represent projected development patterns. Each sticker represented data including population, infrastructure, buildings, and service needs that accurately reflected land consumption based on area. Participants were then instructed to identify compact and low density development, natural areas they wished to protect, and make recommendations for new roads and trail systems. Due to current issues of high vacancy rates and disinvestment in the urban core, the participants were provided the option to trade their traditional development patterns for "neighborhood re-investment" stickers to allow for in-fill development. In addition, "neighborhood reinforcement" stickers were made available for healthy neighborhoods at risk for blight and crime in the future.

After the mapping session was over, each group had the opportunity to present their findings to the room. The results? There was a lot of overlap among the groups. Many groups placed medium to low-density residential development in the smaller, rural satellite communities. Participants placed neighborhood reinvestment and higher density, mixed-use development in urban centers and buffered them with neighborhood reinforcement. Participants also connected and expanded regional bike/pedestrian trail systems, placed a bridge over the Illinois River near Mossville, and linked Peoria to Chicago and Bloomington-Normal via high-speed rail. Groups protected the Illinois River Bluff forested areas, local and state parks, and regional assets like area universities, historic neighborhoods, and vital transportation portals. All maps were compiled and synthesized to identify trends and similarity (see page 96). The differences came when groups realized their limitations on population growth; here they had to make hard decisions on where to direct urban versus rural growth.

MAPPING SESSIONS: PARTICIPATION
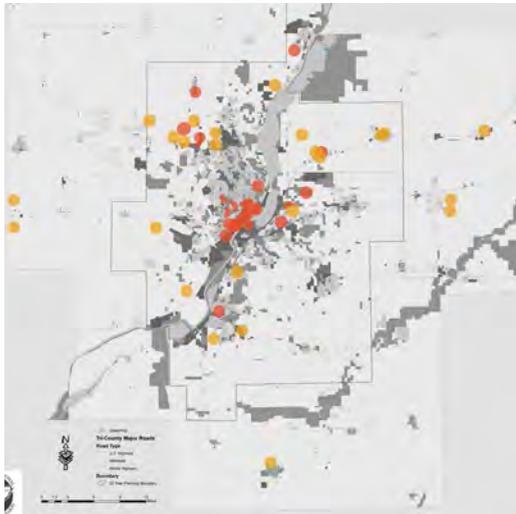
MAP ONE

🔴 Compact Development vs. 🟠 Dispersed Development

There was strong agreement among the groups to increase high density development in the central cities, especially areas in and around the Warehouse District and downtowns Peoria, Pekin, and East Peoria. Particpants were less concise with dispersed growth, though there were indications of concentrated low density growth to the northwest of Peoria and in rural villages scattered throughout the counties.
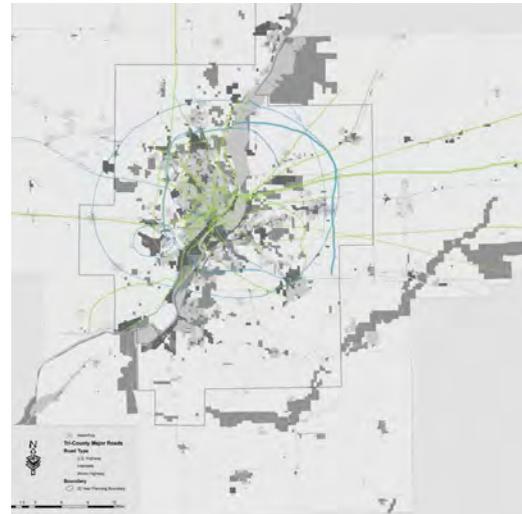
MAP TWO

🟢 Alternative Transportation vs. 🔵 Highway Development

Results showed that participants wanted to drastically increase the amount and connectivity of bike and alternative transportation infrastructure in the region. Furthermore, many groups indicated a desire to connect from Peoria to Chicago and Bloomington-Normal via rail. Almost all groups placed a new bridge over the Illinois River near Mossville and many recommended completing the region's ring road with the Eastern Bypass.
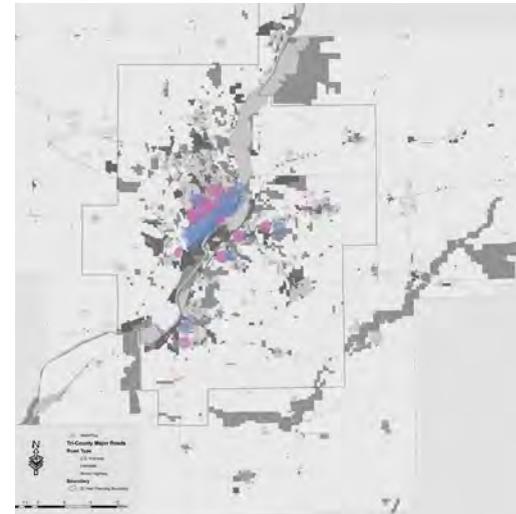
MAP THREE

🟣 Neighborhood Reinforcement and 🔵 Neighborhood Reinvestment

In lieu of dispersed development, participants could trade in chips to reinforce and reinvest in existing neighborhoods. Universally, a need was felt for reinvesting in older neighborhoods suffering from blight and crime in Peoria's South Side and Near Northside, stretching into areas along the East and West Bluffs. Neighborhoods directly adjacent to those were often labeled "Reinforcement". Neighborhood Reinforcement indicates healthy areas at risk for blight and important to protect with infill development.

MAP FOUR

🟢 Environmental Protection and Site Preservation

Participants were asked to identify natural and built resources that were important to protect for future generations. Several groups chose to protect the Illinois River corridor, as well as Jubilee State Park and Wildlife Prairie Park. Forest Park Nature Center and Glen Oak Park were also designated for preservation. Many groups also chose to protect local assets including Bradley University, Illinois Central College, and the historic Moss Avenue neighborhood.

COMMUNITY VIZ ANALYSIS

What does it all mean? We cannot simply stop at a pretty picture on a map. Staff at TCRPC digitized the mapping event results and ran future land use models with Community Viz software, an ArcGIS extension for planning and analysis. For this project, staff examined the fiscal impacts of development on municipalities and school districts, made possible through the integration of the Fiscal Calculator data (described in the spotlight) with Community Viz. As a result of integrating the two, a user can "paint" a regional land development scenario in CommunityViz and generate the overall fiscal impact of the scenario on-the-fly. The analysis was done on a regional scale, which is significant because specific development impacts are often only considered from the perspective of a single jurisdiction.   It is important to be mindful that inter-jurisdictional competition for development could lead to decisions that are less desirable for the region as a whole, thus there is value in a regional entity conducting this analysis with input from the public.

Based on the results of the mapping event, staff developed two preliminary scenarios for our region's future: an extreme compact development scenario and an extreme dispersed development scenario. The following sections describe our methodology, results, and limitations for these two scenarios.

Extreme Compact Development Scenario

During the mapping event, participants were given a set of stickers to represent types of development patterns. The Extreme Compact

Development Scenario identified the quantity and location of each compact development sticker that participants placed on their respective regional maps. Based on this tabulation, each identified community received its proportional share of the 2050 projected population change of 27,729 individuals. For instance, out of 23 total compact development stickers, Downtown Peoria received 11, or 52% of the total. Therefore, the population of Downtown Peoria was increased by 52 percent (14,419) of the 2050 projected population (27,729). The following table shows the quantity of stickers placed in individual communities, and the proportional population change.

TABLE 12.1: EXTREME COMPACT DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

COMMUNITY	NUMBER OF COMPACT DEVELOPMENT STICKERS	TOTAL POPULATION CHANGE
CHILLICOTHE	1	1,109
DOWNTOWN EAST PEORIA	2	2,218
DOWNTOWN PEORIA	11	14,419
DUNLAP	2	2,218
EAST PEORIA	1.5	1,664
GERMANTOWN HILLS	1	1,109
PEORIA (NEAR BRADLEY)	1	1,109
PEORIA (NORTH PEORIA)	1.5	1,664
PEORIA HEIGHTS	1	1,109
PEKIN	1	1,109
TOTAL	23	27,728

Compact development generally means that the space needs of a population can be satisfied with less land area. As such, the total population change for each community was added by increasing the density of existing residential development within current municipal boundaries. As an example, the pictures below show the current land uses in the Village of Dunlap, and the new land uses in the Village of Dunlap based on the Compact Development Scenario. The light yellow color represents low-density residential development, and the tan color represents medium density residential development. By increasing residential density, Dunlap is able to accommodate additional population without consuming more land.
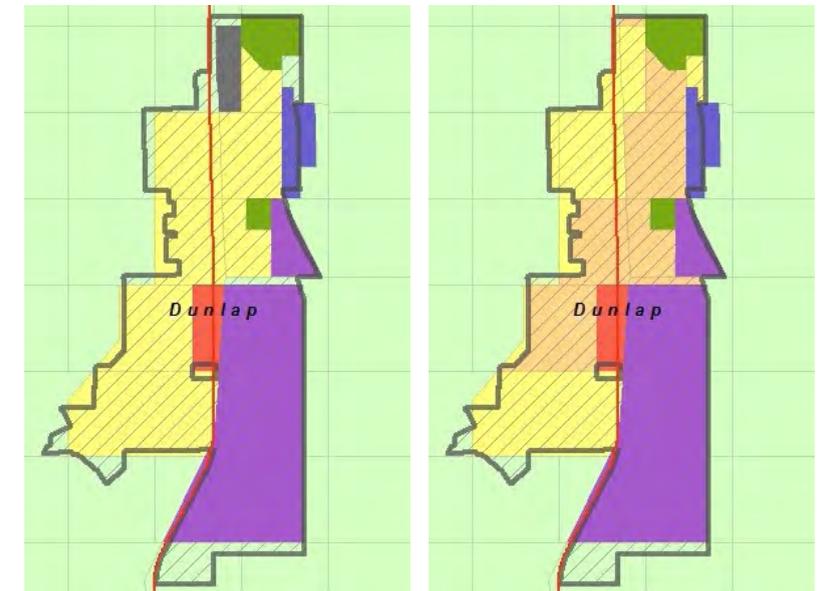
The end result of the Extreme Compact Development Scenario is as follows:

- Change in population: 27,687 (This is slightly less than the projected population due to limitations in the model. This is explained further in the limitations section.)

- Total new school children: 1,757

- Fiscal Impact for School Districts: $15,556,846

- Fiscal Impact for Tri-County Region: $ -75,879

Extreme Dispersed Development Scenario

The Extreme Dispersed Development Scenario identified the quantity and location of each dispersed development sticker that participants placed on their respective regional maps. Based on this tabulation, each identified community received its proportional share of the 2050 projected population change of 27,729 individuals. For instance, out of 24 total stickers, North Peoria received 6, or 25% of the total. Therefore, the population of North Peoria was increased by 25 percent (6,932) of the 2050 projected population (27,729). Table 12.2 shows the quantity of stickers placed in individual communities, and the proportional population change.

Dispersed development was characterized for this analysis by low-density development spread out over previously rural landscapes. As such, the total population change for each community was added by increasing the density of existing rural land uses outside of municipal

TABLE 12.2: EXTREME DISPERSED DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

COMMUNITY	NUMBER OF COMPACT DEVELOPMENT STICKERS	TOTAL POPULATION CHANGE
AIRPORT (PEORIA)	1	1,109
BARTONVILLE	1	1,109
CREVE COEUR	1	1,109
DELAVAN	1	1,109
EAST PEORIA (NORTH)	1	1,109
ELMWOOD	2	2,218
EUREKA	1	1,386*
GERMANTOWN HILLS	2	2,496*
GOODFIELD	2	2,218
METAMORA	2	2,496*
MOSSVILLE	1	1,109
PEKIN	2	2,218
PEORIA (NORTH)	6	6,932
SPRING BAY	1	1,386*
TOTAL	24	28,004

boundaries. As an example, the pictures to the right show the current land uses surrounding the Village of Metamora, and the new land uses outside of the Village limits based on the Dispersed Development Scenario. The light green color represents a rural land use, and the light yellow color represents low density residential development.
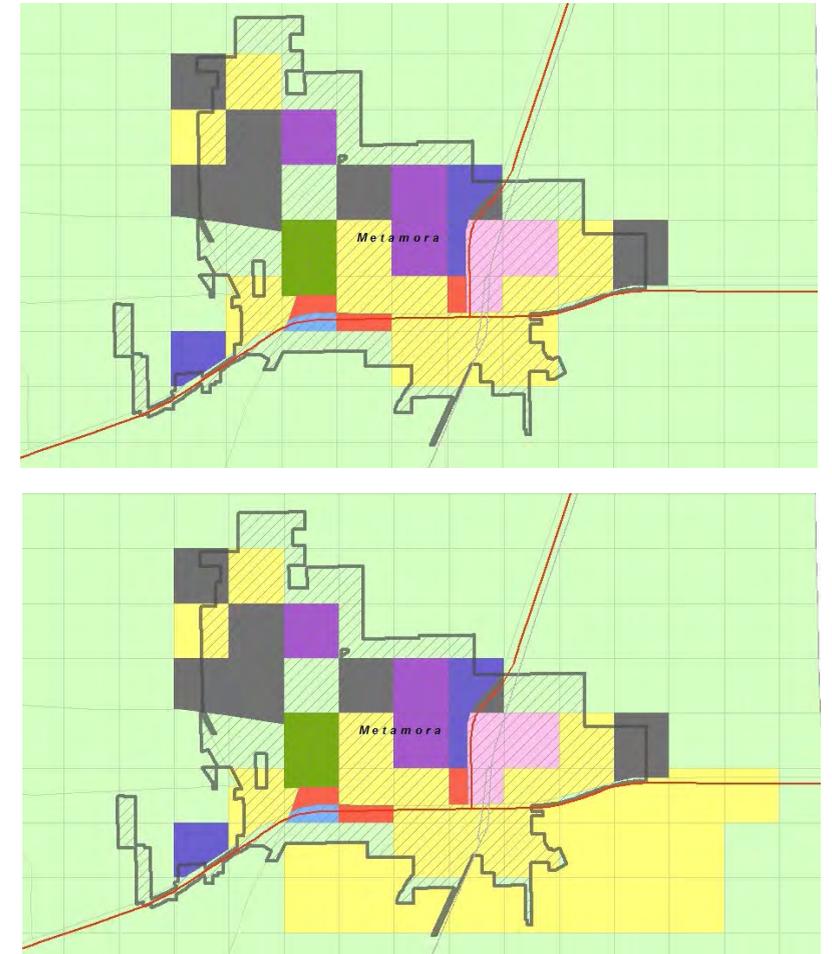
The end result of the Extreme Dispersed Development Scenario is as follows:

• Change in population: 28,112 (This is more than the projected population due to limitations in the model. This is explained further in the limitations section.)

• Total new school children: 3,732

• Fiscal Impact for School Districts: $34,963,333

• Fiscal Impact for Tri-County Region: $-2,398,159

Limitations

Fiscal Mapper Limitations

While the fiscal estimates generated by the Fiscal Mapper for development scenarios are useful and instructive, a more detailed examination of the development scenarios is needed in order to arrive at a fuller understanding of the cost implications of the scenarios.

For example, the compact development scenario assumed the redevelopment of existing low density residential uses as medium density residential uses, and the fiscal impact estimate was negative. In this redevelopment scenario the population will increase, and because the Fiscal Mapper is driven by population change, the fiscal impact estimate assumes higher capital expenses because of the increase in population. However, when redeveloping low density residential uses, infrastructure such as water, sewer, and roads likely already serve the

uses, so the total capital expenses likely will be lower than the figures estimated by the Fiscal Mapper. So, a redevelopment scenario could have a fiscal impact that is more positive than the fiscal impact estimated by the Fiscal Mapper.

As another example, the Fiscal Mapper estimates that the dispersed development scenario will result in a substantial positive fiscal impact for school districts. This scenario assumed the development of rural land as low density residential development, so the substantial positive fiscal impact is largely the result of substantial increases in property tax revenue for the school districts. However, when rural land is developed as low density residential development, it is possible that significant capital expenses will be spent to provide water infrastructure, sewer infrastructure, and roadways. Because school districts do not incur the costs of providing this infrastructure, these costs are not shown in the Fiscal Mapper estimate for school districts. Therefore, it is important to examine the fiscal impact of a development scenario on both municipalities and school districts to more fully understand the various costs and revenues associated with growth.

Participants for the scenario planning mapping event held at HUB Peoria place stickers to determine where and how the Tri-County Region should grow in the future.

Community Viz Limitations

In order to perform an analysis, Community Viz requires that existing land use development be pre-determined. TCRPC staff used a Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) grid to divide the region into sections. Most grids are about 40 acres; however, some are smaller and some are larger. The primary land use for each TAZ was determined in order to create a base map for analysis. This technique has specific limitations:

- The process of determining land uses for each TAZ is time-consuming. As such, TCRPC staff opted to identify land uses for only the 20-year planning boundary. However, during the Scenario Planning Mapping Event, participants were given the option to develop outside of the 20-year planning boundary; attendees placed dispersed development stickers in the communities of Delavan, Goodfield, Eureka, and Elmwood. To address this issue within Community Viz, TCRPC staff applied the determined land use and population change to unincorporated areas of the county in which each respective community is located. This method did not affect the outcome of our final results for municipal estimates.

- Staff was unable to alter the size of individual TAZs. As such, the determined population change for each community is not exact within the analysis.

SPOTLIGHT

FOCUS: Cost of Community Services Study

A cost of community services study was conducted for the Tri-County region as part of this regional planning process, and one output of the study was the Fiscal Calculator tool. Teska Associates, a planning firm based in Evanston, Ill., was hired to perform this study.

The Fiscal Calculator is a spreadsheet-based tool that estimates the fiscal impact of a land development project for municipalities, counties, and school districts in the region. The purpose of this tool is to enable local governments to estimate whether a land development project will "pay for itself" or have a negative fiscal impact for the unit of government. The Fiscal Calculator is an easy-to-use tool that can be deployed when making decisions about proposed land development projects.

The tool was developed using audit information from the municipalities, counties, and school districts in the region, so the fiscal impact estimates are based on the unit of government's actual fiscal data as opposed to national averages. Each unit of government's current revenues, expenses, and population and employees per acre of land use is used in the base analysis employed by the Fiscal Calculator. When information about a proposed development is entered into the Fiscal Calculator, new population and employment densities and the costs of services for housing and employment are applied, resulting in an estimated fiscal impact of the proposed development for the unit of government.

To illustrate the use of the Fiscal Calculator, suppose 5 acres of existing medium-density residential development in Peoria is to be redeveloped as a mixed-use development. To estimate the fiscal impact of this proposed development, a user will first enter the existing land use (5 acres of medium-density residential) for Peoria. The user will next enter the proposed land use (5 acres of mixed-use). If the proposed mixed-use development will include a retail component, the user next enters the anticipated annual total retail sales in order to estimate the sales tax revenue the development will generate. Finally, the user can enter any additional revenues or expenses, such as any infrastructure improvements that are needed. After entering these inputs, the Fiscal Calculator will generate an estimate of either the net fiscal gain or the net fiscal loss for the unit of government of redeveloping 5 acres of medium-density residential development as mixed-use development.

Second, TCRPC staff is new to the Scenario Planning process, and is still building expertise. Therefore, the capabilities of Community Viz were not used to their full potential; in this initial exercise, staff only looked at residential development. This caused an imbalance of residential and commercial land uses, which dramatically affected the fiscal impact to school districts and municipalities.

Finally, TCRPC staff chose to analyze an extreme compact development scenario and an extreme dispersed development scenario. Extremes were chosen in order to gather a better understanding of the overall affect of one development type versus another. However, participants at the Scenario Planning Mapping Event had a more diverse approach to development.

Next Steps

TCRPC plans to continue working with Community Viz for future planning and analysis. Though this exercise only looked at fiscal impacts to school districts and municipalities, Community Viz also has the power to examine demographics, including population density and employment; transportation, including vehicle miles traveled, bicycle trail density, walkability, and average distance to transit; land use and housing, including average lot size and residential vacancy; environment and climate change, including residential building energy use, vehicle-based CO2 emissions, and water use; and economy, including the jobs-housing balance, and the cost of new transit facilities. TCRPC plans to analyze these other indicators in future scenario planning activities.

CONCLUSION

While scenario planning has been conducted in cities such as Denver and Salt Lake City for decades, the concept is new to most regions across the United States including Central Illinois. Through the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program, TCRPC has been working with non-governmental organizations (NGO) and regional planning agencies throughout the nation to elevate local expertise and build capacity for long-term planning and decision-making as it relates to sustainable futures.

A special thank you to all who attended this public mapping event, and if you did not hear about the event but would like to participate in similar activities in the future, please let the staff at TCRPC know how to better notify you. As communities approach environmental and economic limitations, look for land use planners and decision makers to rise to the challenges of sustainability and creating vibrant communities through new technologies and programs supported by extensive public involvement.

APPENDIX

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Partnership for Sustainable Communities Grant Program allowed the Heart of Illinois region to produce more than just the Brilliant.Bright.Community HOI Regional Sustainability Plan.

Regional leaders put together a Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, a five-year economic development strategy, and an analysis of local food producers and buyers. This section provides a closer look at those detailed reports.

CONTENTS

APPENDIX A: REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE

Executive Summary

In 2010, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) received a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As a grant recipient, TCRPC facilitated the preparation of a Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (Regional AI) that examines fair housing in the entire region and will serve as the fair housing plan for both the Cities of Peoria and Pekin. The development of this Regional AI signifies an advancement in fair housing planning in the Tri-County region. For the first time, fair housing has been examined on a regional basis, and issues pertaining to segregation, concentrated areas of poverty, and access to opportunity have been examined, following new guidance developed by HUD that encouraged regions to more broadly examine fair housing through the AI process.

A review of demographic data for the Tri-County region revealed that the regional population is growing and becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. The African American, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino populations are increasing, and the majority of these residents are moving to the City of Peoria and Peoria County. Also, the number of families with children in the region is decreasing, the regional population is getting older, and the proportion of regional residents that have a disability is nearly equal to the proportion of state residents and is less than the proportion of national residents.

Racial segregation does exist in the Tri-County region, and the most significant form of racial segregation is that between Whites and African Americans. The region's African American population is largely concentrated in the southern portion of the City of Peoria. There is a concentration of Hispanic or Latino residents in the southern portion of Peoria and a concentration of Asian residents in the northern portion of Peoria near Mossville and Dunlap, and the vast majority of the regional population outside the City of Peoria is white. The areas of the region that have the highest percentages of families with children under the age of 18 are the southern and central portions of the City of Peoria. The areas of the region that have the highest percentages of residents with disabilities are within and near downtown Peoria, southern Peoria, and eastern Pekin.

This planning process identified five racially concentrated areas of poverty (RCAPs) in the Tri-County region. These RCAPs are located in the southern portion of the City of Peoria; African Americans are the majority racial group in each of these areas, and each area has a poverty rate above 40 percent. Other concentrated areas of poverty were identified elsewhere in Peoria, in Pekin, and in rural areas of the region.

This planning process identified areas of opportunity in the Tri-County region. Areas of opportunity are locations that have access to opportunity, or access to elements that contribute to a high quality of life. The opportunity mapping process conducted as part of this planning process identified areas of opportunity that encompass urban areas, small towns, and rural areas in the Tri-County region. This Regional AI puts forth action items for addressing disparities in access to opportunity, barriers to fair housing enforcement and education, and possible drivers of inequitable investments.

Please contact Tri-County Regional Planning Commission to obtain the complete Regional AI document.

APPENDIX B: REGIONAL RESIDENT SURVEY ON SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Survey of Community Opinions and Attitudes: How Important is Sustainable Development? And How Well Provided in the Tri-County Region?

Melissa Eaton, John Chambers and Eric Porter

Executive Summary

Introduction and Purpose

As part of the broader Heart of Illinois Sustainability Consortium (HISC) work plan and Brilliant.Bright.Community. effort, the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) conducted a survey of persons living within Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford counties. The survey—done in accordance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sustainability Regional Planning Grant received by HISC—was developed in collaboration with the Stevenson Center for Applied Community and Economic Development at Illinois State University. This project was executed over approximately ten months, beginning in late August of 2011. The overarching goals are to incorporate citizen input to guide preparation of the area's long-term sustainability blueprint facilitate implementation of said plan. Yet, this also serves to create name recognition and build awareness of HISC's efforts.

Survey Components and Methods

The full process of surveying was split between two questionnaires—one primary and the other secondary. Contents of the primary survey questionnaire are divided in four parts: 1) personal well-being; 2) opinions on the importance of key areas within sustainable development; 3) how well those key areas are currently being provided; and 4) demographic characteristics. The secondary survey is a reduced form of the primary, containing slightly pared-down versions of the second through fourth sections and omitting the first. Three methods of distribution and collection were used. Initially 'drop-off/pick-up' methods were employed, which lasted about one month. Approximately half of primary survey responses were gathered in this manner, and the other half was mailed. The secondary survey was delivered to residents of South Peoria by student volunteers. The slim survey took roughly one month to conduct. Altogether, 650 completed surveys were collected, with approximately equal number coming from the full and slim versions.

Findings

Tri-county residents tend to consider sustainable community development as more important than how well it is being provided, meaning they want to see more of it and would endorse TCRPC and HISC efforts. Looking at individual planning focus areas, one stands out: economic development. Issues of economic stability and growth are prominent for residents, ranked as most important for development and perceived to be currently lacking. Respondents also

report significant deficits in the provision of alternative commuting options and environmental sustainability in comparison to their importance. In regards to issues surrounding aspects of local foods, public transportation, and arts and culture there is alignment between levels of importance and provision in residents' minds. The only area with evidence of being provided at or above its level of accorded importance at present is housing. However, all aspects fall short of being considered 'well provided.'

Within these findings, differences are seen between certain groups of the population. Younger residents are more active, feel more isolated and desire stronger sustainable development efforts than their elder counterparts. Similarly, persons identifying as belonging to minority racial/ethnic groups feel more isolated in the community than white residents, and also have lower levels of work satisfaction and enjoyment of the natural environment. Additionally, higher educational attainment is strongly associated with higher perceptions of quality of life.

Taken together, survey findings support TCRPC and HISC efforts. This is particularly true in regards to economic development, involving marginalized populations in the process of planning and implementing policy and programs, and enhancing educational opportunities in the area.

Preparing the Survey Questionnaire

Purpose

In preparing to survey the tri-county population, TCRPC kept several ends in mind. Overarching were the goals to incorporate citizen input for the area's long-term sustainability plan and, ultimately, to facilitate implementation of said plan. Yet, this project served a variety of purposes beyond such straightforward aims. It brought both the Commission and the Consortium into resident homes, forming additional name recognition and building awareness of regional development efforts towards a community better equipped to meet tomorrow's challenges as well as today's. TCRPC staff know the significance of defining the community through its people's eyes, and recognizes that the foundation of development work is the population being served. Crucial to making the community's vision one with the Consortium's plan was ensuring the voices of all peoples are heard, particularly those typically excluded from formal development planning. Thus, a concerted effort was made to engage both lower income residents and persons of color, whom are most often neglected in such designs.

Initial Steps

In the spring of 2011, TCRPC began reaching out to local universities for assistance preparing and conducting a survey of the area's population. Following a chain of recommendations, a graduate student intern from the Stevenson Center for Applied Community

and Economic Development at Illinois State University was contracted for the 2011-2012 school year. The intern was tasked with composing a questionnaire, designing survey methodology, assisting in distribution and collection, entering and analyzing the resultant data, and preparing a report for the Commission. Stevenson Center director, Dr. Frank Beck advised as necessary throughout the course of the survey, but primary responsibility for guiding and supervising the project rested with TCRPC staff member Melissa Eaton as well as John Chambers.

Eaton, Chambers and Porter collaborated throughout the fall via phone calls, Internet video conferences and face-to-face meetings, iteratively developing the survey questionnaire. The HISC work plan, TCRPC online content and documents and Consortium meetings— like the Sustainability Planning Information Session at Illinois Central College in September 2011—were instrumental for constructing survey questions to address key components of the Brilliant.Bright. Community. effort. However, it was the TCRPC vision and direction from Eaton and Chambers that brought all the various pieces together and set the blueprint for each piece of the full questionnaire.

Survey Components

The survey project was split between two questionnaires—one primary and the other secondary. The primary questionnaire was composed during the fall months of 2011. Of particular interest in the early planning stages were understandings of resident experiences within the tri-county region. What is it like to live here?

How do people feel about their communities, jobs, neighborhoods, leisure activities, personal health, finances, the trustworthiness of government, and the environmental quality of the area? How important are facets of sustainable development to the average resident? How well are those facets being currently provided? Is there a gap between such importance and provision, generally? Is there a gap for certain groups of residents, whether by age, gender, race/ethnicity or otherwise? Bringing enough questions that would gather the information desired by TCRPC together with considerations of proper survey construction, a three-sheet instrument was written (six pages, front and back). This primary survey document was reviewed by Dr. Beck, TCRPC staff, and then at meetings with the broader HISC body, before being approved (see Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire).

The primary—or full— survey questionnaire's contents are divided in four sections. The opening set of questions assess individuals' feelings of well-being, work satisfaction, community attachment and isolation, level and types of engagement within the community, environmental perspectives, trust in various scales of government, and personal financial situation. These are valuable for getting a picture of how residents experience myriad aspects of life within the tri-county region and provide nuance when considered alongside their reported attitudes on sustainable development. Next come the measures investigating residents' opinions on the importance of key areas within the HISC work plan. These key

areas include: housing, public transportation, alternative routes for commuting (sidewalks, bike lanes), local foods issues, economic development efforts (such as job training), natural environment quality, and arts and culture. As Appendix A shows, it was felt that the best way to gauge the importance attributed to these community features by having respondents note how much money they would contribute towards ensuring they are provided. Few things resonate in people's minds so strongly as the power of 'voting' with one's dollar. The third component is complimentary to the second. It inventories how well the key areas of sustainable development are currently being provided. This is done very straightforwardly and allows for identification of gaps between the level of importance a feature is accorded and how well it's being provided. At the end of the survey, we request for the respondents' demographic characteristics. These are important for comparing the responses by salient groupings, such as age, race/ethnicity, and level of education.

The secondary—or slim—survey (Appendix B) is a reduced form of the full questionnaire. The next section of this report will describe the survey process and why a slimmed version of the survey was necessary. As for the content, it is very similar to the full questionnaire. The first set of questions, being the longest and meant to add nuance to the understanding of the rest, was omitted. In its place, a single question asking whether respondents are proud of their past year's accomplishment was added. Further space saving efforts resulted in a slight paring-down of the other parts, removing

two questions from the second and third parts, and one question from the fourth. The second and third pieces were also simplified to basic assessments of 'important' or 'unimportant'—'provided' or 'not provided'—or 'unsure.' Again, nuance was surrendered in hopes of making a more compact instrument. Finally, an open-ended question, seeking input on what other information TCRPC should be seeking was included.

Distribution, Collection, and Challenges Experienced

Selecting the Sample

A professional service agency, which specializes in generating research samples (Survey Sampling International, SSI), was contracted to select households in the tri-county region to survey. Anticipating approximately a 33% response rate, and desiring at least 500 returned surveys, a random sample of 1,500 households was requested. Randomly selecting households is important in order to gather a sample that is representative—and can stand in place—of the overall tri-county population. With the goal of better incorporating the voices of minority and low-income residents, who are traditionally excluded from planning processes and a challenging group to receive completed surveys from, the sample was stratified. Stratifying the sample entailed over sampling households within zip codes identified by SSI via U.S. Census data with high concentrations of the target populations. A full third of the sample, 500 households, was selected from such zip codes while the remaining 1,000 households were drawn from all other zip codes in the tri-counties.

Drop-off/Pick-up

Initially surveys were distributed in the 'drop-off/pick-up' method. This involves teams of volunteers delivering surveys door-to-door and returning later to collect them. Face-to-face contact is the primary goal of drop-off/pick-up methodology. By making that connection with potential respondents, even briefly, research has demonstrated that the rate of response will be significantly higher than if no such contact is achieved. As a cooperative species, human interactions are infused with informal, non-verbal contracts. Accepting a survey from another person forms a stronger contract than receiving a questionnaire in other, less personal manners. Academic studies have also shown decreasing response rates, generally, in recent years, and drop-off/pick-up was chosen in part to compensate for this phenomenon. Moreover, by making face-to-face contact with tri-county residents, a stronger and more personal connection can be made between the population and the Brilliant. Bright.Community. effort. Drop-off/pick-up is a good fit as it accomplished such personal contact with residents while being less time intensive than face-to-face or phone interviewing, though more so than mailing the questionnaires.

Volunteers were trained in late January, at Trewyn Middle School. The sample was divided into sub-regions within the counties and assigned to the various collaborating agencies and individuals. Approximately half of survey distribution was attempted in this manner (738 households). Contact was made with 344

households, 107 refusing to participate and 237 returning completed questionnaires. The response rate was 38%. Only half of all surveys were attempted in this methodology due to challenges that arose during the process.

Challenges and Response

The first issue confronted during drop-off/pick-up methodology was a shortage of volunteers. Though much less time and labor intensive than face-to-face or even phone interviewing, door-to-door delivery and retrieval requires many hours to complete for 1,500 surveys. It is extremely helpful to have a large base of volunteers or a smaller group able to commit to fulltime surveying over a brief timeframe for this kind of work. Unfortunately the circumstances surrounding this project precluded both, leaving a shorthanded crew, largely comprised of TCRPC staff members, distributing surveys during and outside of work hours, over an extended period of time. One fellow HISC member organization, however, that committed to undertaking a major portion of distribution was Peoria Parks District.

Peoria Parks District staff agreed to cover South Peoria, wherein 542 of the survey households are located—more than full third of the total sample. Staff members who worked on the distribution effort were consistently met with resistance and skepticism, hearing that residents did not feel the survey was applicable to them. After attempting to hand out approximately half of their allotted surveys, returns did not justify the cost. At the same time, TCRPC staff and the Stevenson Center intern were coming to the same conclusion.

In order to complete distribution of the full survey and ensure feedback from South Peoria was attained, two strategies were pursued. First, the remaining full surveys were to be distributed via mail methods. Second, a shorter—slim—survey questionnaire was developed along with faster and more reliable, though less representative, sampling and distribution methods were crafted for South Peoria.

Mailing Methods

To complete distribution of the full survey, households which had not been contacted were mailed a questionnaire along with a business reply envelope and instructions to return their completed survey via the U.S. Postal Service. A total of 752 surveys were mailed. Of these, 27 refused to participate and 81 returned completed surveys. An 11% response rate was attained. This reinforces the importance of in-person contact for boosting response rates. When combined with the drop-off/pick-up responses, 318 full surveys were filled-out and returned. That equates to an overall response rate of 21%, which was achieved between late January and mid-April 2012.

Slim Survey

Considering that the bulk of tri-county residents of color and low-income states reside within South Peoria, the potential for a lack of responses from that area was distressing. Such populations are traditionally underrepresented in regional planning and development procedures, and TCRPC and HISC are determined to correct for that

phenomenon within the current planning effort. Thus, a second—slim—survey questionnaire was composed. It was compressed and stream-lined in effort to facilitate higher response rate. Additionally, high school student volunteers from Peoria Parks District's ELITE program were enlisted to distribute the surveys, each handing out questionnaires to five neighbors.

This method is known as a 'convenience' rather than a random sample. Convenience samples do not ensure all members of a given population have the same chance of being selected, and consequently do not lead to feedback that can confidently be considered representative of the larger population. However, such sampling simplifies and expedites both distribution and collection. As a result, in one month 328 out of a possible 750 surveys were returned, for a 44% response rate. Within those, approximately 25 were determined to be forgeries, making the response rate closer to 40%.

See appendices for all documents related to the methodology. Next, data entry for the survey responses is considered.

Data Entry and Formatting

After collecting the returned surveys, responses were entered into IBM's PASW—statistical software. Approximately ten percent of surveys were later double-checked to ensure minimal mistakes were made during data entry. Very few surveys were found to have any incorrect data, amounting to a less than two percent error in data entry.

When appropriate, the coding for specific questions was reversed (a '1' becomes '5,' a '5' becomes '1,' a '2' becomes '4,' etc.). For example, the questions one through nine in the first section of the full survey generally align higher levels of reported life satisfaction with higher numbered responses. However, questions eight and nine each have an opposite alignment. By reversing the coding, it allows for an index to be created, summing responses from the first nine questions and creating a single measure representing respondents' reported 'happiness.' Similar indices were created using questions fourteen through nineteen in the first section of the full survey: 'work satisfaction,' and questions fifty through fifty-three: 'trust in government.' Indices were also created for each sub-area of sustainable community development (housing, environment, economic development, etc.) in both the 'importance' and 'provision' sections of the surveys. These indices were then standardized, so all scores are between '1' and '5' for the full survey and '1' and '3' for the slim survey, corresponding to the response categories of each respective survey.

Demographic categories were collapsed to dichotomous variables. Comparisons of 'age' refer to the difference between individuals under sixty-five years old and those six-five and older. 'Marital status' denotes either being single or 'having a partner' for the full survey, single or married for the slim. 'Race' indicates white or non-white, and this coding was chosen because of the low numbers for all individual racial groups other than white. The measure 'children' distinguishes between those residents with and those without children living in their home. 'Education' is slightly different, as a three-value measure was created, wherein '1' signifies a high school education or lower, '2' some college, associate's degree or technical certification, and '3' a bachelor's degree or higher.

Finally, a technique known as factor analysis was used to create constructs from the second and third sections of the full survey, and first and second section of the slim survey. These sections correspond to measures of the importance of sustainable community aspects and the provision of such aspects, respectively, for both surveys. Factor analysis takes into account all correlations between a given set of responses and then identifies subgroups of variables within that set which are related and explain the most overall variation within the full set. In the responses to both the full and slim surveys, it was found that all measures of importance are related. That is, respondents tended to answer each question within the second/first section of the full/slim survey similarly, which shows that tri-county residents tend to either agree that sustainable features are important or not, rather than distinguishing between different areas of sustainability, such as public transportation or economic development. A similar pattern emerged for the provision sections, third/second for the full/slim. However, a second construct was produced, showing that the questions about public transportation stand out to residents, and their answers to those questions can influence their other responses as to the level of provision of other sustainable aspects of the region.

Constructs created from the first section of the full survey highlight several components of personal well-being. Two related constructs were created from questions twenty through twenty-eight and questions twenty-nine through thirty-one: activity and creativity. Activity measures respondents' reported amount of leisure activities that take place around the community (i.e., meetings, sporting events, etc.). Creativity measures engagement in artistic leisure activities (such as painting or writing).Questions thirty-two through thirty-nine generated two construct: community attachment and community isolation. Reported feelings of being either strongly connected to or isolated from one's larger community contributed to the creation of these two constructs. Three environmental constructs were created from questions forty-one through forty-nine: perceived level of pollution, enjoyment of natural features (i.e., parks and rivers), and outlook for the future of the area's natural environment. Finally, two constructs were generated using questions fifty-four through fifty-eight: satisfaction with personal finances and outlook for personal finances, which measure respondents' perception of the adequacy of their financial situations and the likelihood their financial situations will improve in the following two years.

Findings from the Survey

Reports of the survey findings follow, starting with a demographic comparison of the tri-county region and the survey respondents. Next come descriptive statistics for the importance and provision indices. Relative rankings within both types of index are compared

(i.e., what is most or least important) and also how each importance index compares to its provision counterpart (the importance of housing versus how well provided it is perceived to be). Then correlations are reported for the indices and constructs—created from segments of the first section in the full survey—analyzing associations between well-being and opinions/perceptions of the importance/provision of sustainable community aspects. Finally, responses are then compared in terms of variation between demographic groups as measured by the indices and constructs described above.

Demographics

Generally, those who responded to the surveys are somewhat unrepresentative of the overall tri-county region, according to U.S. Census data. However, the proportionate differences are not disconcertingly large, especially considering the concerted effort made to over-represent certain groups within the area. Key characteristics used to gauge the representative nature of the survey responses are age, gender, race and ethnicity, and level of education. Table 1 displays the breakdown of demographic characteristics for the tri-county region, full survey, slim survey, and survey respondents overall. Both of the surveys are significantly different from the tri-county region in terms of the age of respondents, over-representing older residents. However, any such survey will draw responses from older members of households, and it is their feedback which is most useful for the current planning effort. The gender distribution

shows males to be under-represented, particularly for the slim survey. For race/ethnicity, full survey respondents are actually fairly representative of the tri-county region, whereas those for the slim survey demonstrate the higher concentration of minority populations within South Peoria. Overall, the goal of drawing out more feedback from traditionally marginalized racial and ethnic populations appears to have been achieved, particularly for African American or black residents. However, certain groups were not well represented: Asian, Native American and Alaska Natives. The area of greatest representativeness is level of education, where only individuals in the region with less than a high school education are under-represented, particularly in the full survey.

Other demographic findings of potential interest include: household size, marital status, presence of children in households, length of residence in tri-county, home ownership, and average daily commute. Overall, respondents living alone comprise 17.8 percent of the survey, whereas the average household size is approximately three persons (when removing persons living in situations such as retirement homes who reported upwards of 197 persons in their household). An almost even number of surveys were completed by residents either married or with a partner as those who report being single (51% versus 49%), and a very similar pattern is seen for the presence of children in households (52% without, 48% with children). Almost half of all respondents report having lived in the tri-county region for over thirty years, which may reflect either a large

native population or more willingness to complete the survey due to higher levels of investment in the region. Sixty-four percent of respondents report owning their home (thirty-six percent renters), and the average daily commute is approximately fifteen minutes.

Ranking of—and Gaps between—Categorical Indices of Importance and Provision

In sections two and three of the full survey respondents were asked to indicate the importance and provision of twenty-three aspects of sustainable community, respectively. Both sections have the same twenty-three items, presented in the same order. To gauge importance in the full survey, respondents were asked to imagine they had set aside $100 to contribute to various area projects and then to indicate how much money on a five-point scale ('1' = $0; '2' = $25; '3' = $50; '4' = $75; '5' = $100) they would contribute to policy/ projects ensuring each of the twenty-three aspects. Responses of '1' or '2' are considered proxies for 'not at all important' and 'somewhat unimportant,' respectively, whereas '4' and '5' are considered 'somewhat important' and 'very important,' and '3' for 'neither.' Opinions on how well each aspect is currently being provided were gathered more simply, asking residents to note where each aspect lands on a six-point scale wherein '1' signifies 'not at all provided,' '5' 'very well provided,' and '6' 'don't know'—all '6' responses were recorded to '3' for creating the indices.

Table 1. Demographic Breakdowns for the Tri-County and Surveys				
	Actual Tri-County	Full Survey	Slim Survey	Overall Survey
Age				
Under 20	36.8	0	6.6	3.2
20 to 34	9.1	5.4	37.7	21.4
35 to 64	39.4	47.1	51.8	52.6
65 and older	14.7	47.5	3.9	26
Gender				
Male	48.8	41.3	34.2	37.8
Female	51.2	58.8	65.8	62.2
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	2	0.3	1.6	0.9
Black	9.6	8.7	49.8	29
Hispanic	2.8	1.2	3.9	2.5
NA/AN	2.7	0.3	0.6	0.5
White	85.1	88.5	37.9	63.6
Other	3.1	1.2	6.1	3.4
Education (at least)				
High School Diploma	86.4	95.6	91.2	93.4
Bachelor's Degree	30.6	29.9	30	30
Graduate Degree	11.7	13.5	12.4	13

The aspects are grouped into seven categories: 1) Housing—questions one and two; 2) Public transportation—four through seven; 3) Alternative commuting options—eight through ten; 4) Local foods—twelve through fourteen; 5) Economic development—fifteen through seventeen; 6) Environment—three, eleven, and eighteen through twenty-one; and 7) Arts and culture—twenty-two and twenty-three. Issues of infrastructure, which are also important to the planning process, are included in the 'environment' index. Index scores were calculated by summing together the answers for each item within the category and then divided by the number of

items, which standardizes scores and allows for comparisons to be made between them.

The average score for each index is shown in Table 2 and each falls between 2.5 and 3.5 (rounded) or 'somewhat unimportant/ poorly provided' and 'somewhat important/somewhat provided.' Of note is that a significant difference exists between the mean importance and provision scores of four out of the seven indices: economic development, environment, alternative transportation and housing. All are considered significantly more important than their perceived provision, except housing, which is perceived to be better provided than its relative importance. Of the seven, economic development is reported as the most important community aspect for residents, but comes in fifth for perceived provision. Showing an opposite trend, housing ranks fifth in terms of its importance index score but second for provision. The next largest discrepancy is between the importance and provision of alternative transportation options—ranked fifth and seventh, respectively. Otherwise, index scores for each categories importance and provision either matched or landed within one place of one other.

The same indices were created for the slim survey, though they are somewhat different. Questions three and seven were removed (which contributed to the environment and public transportation indices, respectively). Also, the scales for both importance are provision are three-point, wherein '1' corresponds to 'not important/ provided,' '2' to 'unsure,' and '3' to 'important/provided.'

Table 2. Score (Ranking) for Importance and Provision Indices

Index	Importance	Provision
Economic Development	3.5 (1)	2.8 (5)*
Local Foods	3.3 (2)	3.3 (1)
Environment	3.2 (3)	3.0 (3)*
Public Transportation	2.9 (4)	2.9 (4)
Alternative Transportation Options	2.8 (5)	2.6 (7)*
Housing	2.6 (6)	3.2 (2)*
Arts and Culture	2.5 (7)	2.7 (6)

Indicates a significant difference

Patterns seen for the full survey essentially held for the slim version but are less pronounced. Significant differences include: 1) five out of seven categories have significant differences between the mean importance index scores and their provision counterparts—all but housing and public transportation; 2) each of those significant differences shows importance being scored higher than provision; and 3) housing is ranked higher in terms of importance than public transportation and alternative transportation options. Responses to both the full and the slim surveys demonstrate the largest gap between the importance and provision of sustainable community aspects exists for economic development, as well as significant gaps in the importance and provision of both alternative commuting options and issues of the environment. However, the two surveys show contradictions in the existence of gaps between importance and provision for housing, local foods, and arts and culture, while neither noted a significant gap for public transportation.

Correlations

Table 3 displays correlational findings for indices and constructs from the full survey. Boxes without shading contain significant associations and the shaded boxes are non-significant associations. Perhaps the most telling feature of the table is that the vast majority of significant associations exist between the indices and constructs for personal well-being and those for the provision of sustainable community aspects. Conversely only a very few significant associations are present for the importance indices and none for the importance construct.

The three 'personal well-being' indices—joy, work satisfaction, and trust in government—are all significantly and positively associated with either five or seven of the 'provision of sustainable community aspects' indices. These associations are strongest for work satisfaction and weakest for joy. All three are also moderately to strongly associated with the provision construct. Within the personal well-being constructs, community attachment and enjoyment of nature are consistently, positively correlated with the provision indices and the provision construct. Otherwise, only enjoyment of natural features was found to be consistently correlated with the indices/construct for provision. Also, respondents' perceived levels of pollution in the region are associated with perception of how well provided local foods and environmental sustainability features are, as would be expected.

Table 3. Correlations of Indices and Constructs

		1-I	2-I	3-I	4-I	5-I	6-I	7-I	1-P	2-P	3-P	4-P	5-P	6-P	7-P	Importance	Provision	Public Transit
Indices	Joy	0.016	0.035	0.045	0.055	0.009	0.069	0.143	0.165	0.082	0.133	0.148	0.127	0.198	0.116	0.076	0.238	-0.01
	Work Satisfaction	0.083	0.043	0.004	-0.001	0.061	0.045	-0.003	0.316	0.181	0.395	0.585	0.703	0.648	0.423	0.034	0.709	-0.238
	Trust	0.029	0.081	0.024	0.017	0	0.011	0.07	0.175	0.239	0.195	0.131	0.225	0.14	0.204	0.017	0.234	0.143
	Attachment	0.042	0.039	-0.014	0.076	0.072	0.04	0.097	0.22	0.025	0.171	0.229	0.189	0.353	0.175	0.057	0.315	-0.16
Constructs	Isolation	-0.017	0.083	0.022	0.017	0.108	0.069	0.098	0.042	0.115	-0.111	-0.203	-0.152	-0.172	-0.019	0.052	-0.181	0.196
	Active	0.056	0.033	0.073	0.028	0.041	0.059	0.116	0.198	-0.014	-0.016	0.028	0.118	0.085	0.084	0.05	-0.093	-0.109
	Creative	0.09	0.13	0.15	0.027	0.006	0.066	0.123	-0.069	0.058	0.008	-0.143	-0.061	-0.137	-0.017	0.095	-0.097	0.123
	Pollution	0.059	0.094	-0.016	0.036	0.062	0.11	0.119	-0.043	0.05	-0.036	-0.126	-0.031	-0.161	-0.017	0.083	-0.099	0.133
	Enjoy Nature	0.073	0.051	-0.062	-0.038	0.049	-0.02	0.015	0.112	0.141	0.168	0.362	0.254	0.459	0.247	0.012	0.38	-0.11
	Nature Outlook	0.078	0.046	0.142	0.093	0.014	0.054	0.071	0.043	0.087	0.029	0.046	0.098	0.04	-0.05	0.089	0.061	0.074
	Financial Satisfaction	-0.045	0.002	0.09	0.058	0.013	-0.006	0.012	0.264	0.113	0.028	0.069	0.196	0.147	0.053	0.012	0.188	0.008
	Financial Outlook	0.098	0.032	0.195	0.091	0.117	0.055	0.041	0.033	0.083	0.026	-0.139	-0.017	-0.124	-0.027	0.117	-0.08	0.142

* Indices: 1-I/P) Housing; 2-I/P) Public Transportation; 3-I/P) Alternative Commuting Options; 4-I/P) Local Foods; 5-I/P) Economic Development; 6-I/P) Environment; 7-I/P) Arts and Culture

Comparison of Demographic Groups

Differences in the opinions and perceptions held by various key demographic groups were analyzed using independent samples t-tests. Doing so allows identifying where different groups diverge on various facets of personal well-being as well as the importance or provision of the seven identified sustainable community aspects. Seven distinguishing characteristics from the demographics section of the surveys were used to identify salient groups within the tri-county region: age, gender, marital status, presence of children in the household, racial/ethnic identity, and level of education. All are dichotomous variables except for level of education, which is split into three groups (as described above).

Significant differences exist between the under- and over-65 populations in terms of their reported personal well-being, how

important—generally—they find sustainable community aspects, and the importance/provision of a few individual sustainable community aspects. Specifically, the under-65 population tends to report: 1) higher feelings of community isolation; 2) greater levels of leisure activity in the community; 3) brighter outlooks on personal finances; 4) overall attribution of more importance to sustainable community features; and 5) sustainable community aspects of alternative commuting options, economic development and the environment are more important. The over-65 population, on the other hand, tend to report: 1) higher levels of joy, work satisfaction and trust in government; 2) greater feelings of community attachment and enjoyment of the natural environment; and 3) stronger perception of the provision of sustainable environmental community aspects in the tri-county currently.

The genders show few significant differences between their survey responses. Women do tend to report higher feelings of community attachment, though. Men, however, generally report more satisfaction with personal finances, as well as a brighter outlook for future personal financial situation.

Differences between residents with a partner, versus those who are single, are somewhat more pronounced. Those with a partner tend to report: 1) higher levels of joy; 2) more active leisure habits; 3) more satisfaction with personal finances as well as a brighter outlook for the future; 4) fewer feelings of community isolation; and 5) a stronger perception of the provision of sustainable housing facets

in the tri-county region. Single residents, on the other hand, note a higher perception of alternative commuting options being as present in the area.

Respondents with children reported some similar opinions to those with partners, such as more active leisure time habits and brighter financial outlooks. However, they also noted less trust in government, less enjoyment of the natural environment, and a lower perception of sustainable environmental community aspects as being provided.

Differences between racial and ethnic groups are of particular interest. Residents who identify as a race or ethnicity other than white tend to report: 1) higher feelings for community isolation; 2) brighter environmental outlooks; 3) brighter financial outlooks; 4) greater importance placed on public transportation; and 5) stronger perceptions of the provision of public transportation. Respondents identifying as white, however, note: 1) better work satisfaction; 2) more community attachment; 3) more enjoyment of the natural environment; and 4) stronger perceptions of how well provided local foods, economic development, and sustainable environmental community aspects are.

Comparing respondents who claim higher levels of educational attainment to those who claim lower levels (some college or technical certification/a bachelor's or graduate degree versus high school or less/some college or technical certification) it is found that higher

attainment tends to relate to reporting: 1) greater joy; 2) more active leisure events; 3) higher levels of community attachment; 4) greater satisfaction with personal finances; and 5) stronger perception of the provision of sustainable community aspects tied to housing.

Taking these findings into account, what can we say about the tri-county's attitudes and opinions on sustainable community development? How can these perspectives be brought to bear on the crafting of a long-range plan for Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford counties?

Conclusion

Representativeness

Before making conclusions about the findings, it is important to note what the response rate and demographic profile of respondents mean for the survey's representativeness. Keeping in mind its large scale and ambitious scope, as well as the challenges faced during distribution, this survey is an appreciable success. The project was undertaken with the understanding it would be difficult to elicit cooperation from traditionally marginalized populations, and that was certainly the experience. Yet, a sizeable number of surveys were collected from key populations in the area, particularly persons of color, through persistence and adaptive methodologies. Consequently, respondents are fairly representative of the tri-county population. Moreover, the vast majority of questionnaires were completed in full, and a host of useful information can be mined from the resultant data.

However, the findings must still be considered in light of the significant number of refusals and what valuable information could be gleaned from gaining the trust of those residents and incorporating their voices into the planning process. For now, though, it is reasonable to acknowledge that a concerted effort was made to include all populations within the region, the demographic breakdown of salient groups fairly approximates the full tri-county population, and certain intuitive findings lend credence to the validity of the survey construction (i.e., the questions are being understood and answered by respondents in the manner intended). For example, higher educational attainment is associated with greater feelings of financial satisfaction. Taking this into account, generalized conclusions will be made about the findings, with the recommendation that efforts to collect feedback from an even wider segment of the population continue.

Conclusions on Findings

The most consistent finding when comparing the level of importance accorded various aspects of sustainable community development and how well provided they are, is that a gap exists between the two. Specifically, tri-county residents tend to consider these aspects more important relative to their extent of provision. What ought to be taken away from this is that the Brilliant.Bright.Community. effort is a valid one. The community wants to see more sustainable development undertaken, and the survey findings endorse what TCRPC and the HOI Sustainability Consortium are attempting.

Looking at the individual focus areas of the planning, one stands out most prominently: economic development. In light of the prolonged national recession, it is no surprise issues of economic stability and growth are profound, and it is ranked as the most important area for development efforts while being perceived as currently lacking. On the other hand, issues surrounding aspects of local foods, public transportation, and arts and culture are reported as aligning on their relative levels of importance and provision. That's not to say they are unnecessary focus areas, but they are not as pressing to the community as is the economy. Between the aspects like public transportation and the economy are issues of the environment and of alternative commuting options. Respondents report significant deficits in the provision of these community features in comparison to their importance. Though not as large as the gap for economic issues, these are still standing out in the minds of residents. The only area with evidence of being, at present, provided at or above its level of accorded importance is housing. However, even this only receives an average index score between 'neither provided nor lacking' and 'somewhat provided.' In every instance, the average opinion of respondents shows room for improvement in providing sustainable community development.

Within reports of the importance or provision of various sustainable community development aspects, some distinctions were found between certain groups in the tri-county population. Chief among such differences are the following: between the younger and older populations, between racial/ethnic groups, and various levels of educational attainment.

Younger residents are experiencing higher levels of isolation than their older counter-parts, though they are more active in the community. Whether this is the result of shorter residence in the area, or some other cause needing to be addressed, should be of interest to HISC as it continues to craft policy and programs for the future. Furthermore, the younger generations place more importance on sustainability generally and specifically on issues of alternative commuting, economic development and the environment. To match this rising prominence, the region needs to continue building efforts such as Brilliant.Bright.Community. to address the population's evolving interests.

Distinctions between racial and ethnic groups in the tri-county region primarily relate to feelings of personal well-being, though they also diverge significantly on some issues of sustainable community development. Persons identifying with minority groups report greater feelings of isolation, lower work satisfaction and less enjoyment of the natural environment. However, they also not brighter outlooks on their future financial situations and the area's environmental quality. Hearing and working to follow through on providing such a future is tremendous opportunity for HISC to improve the quality of life for all citizens of the tri-counties and also to build trust and inroads to communities traditionally skeptical of governmental development efforts.

In terms of education, findings are fairly intuitive and match conventional wisdom: building human capital through schooling is an effective and direct way to improve quality of life. Higher attainment goes hand-in-hand with reporting greater feelings of joy, activity in the community, attachment to the community, and satisfaction with personal finances. Striving to facilitate higher education within the tri-counties is an effort that could prove instrumental in building a Brilliant.Bright.Community.

APPENDIX C: FOCUS FORWARD CENTRAL ILLINOIS 5-YEAR STRATEGY

Key: Leadership and/or Decision Responsibility

FFCI	(blue)
CIEDC	(green)
ECRPC	(red)
Quality Quest, Public Health District, Healcare Providers	(orange)
Workforce Alliance	(yellow)
Contract Services	(yellow)
Collaboration	(lavender)

FFCI Strategic Plan Elements

ACTIVE ✓

2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018
Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4

GOAL #1: Act Regional – Implement a regional asset based, S.M.A.R.T. comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) and ecosystem, which expands public, private and non-profit collaboration with a common strategic vision. The region will achieve a good to excellent rating for best practices in regional CEDS and collaboration by the end of 2018.

STRATEGY 1A: Strengthen and expand regional collaboration by creating and beginning to implement a regional best practice, performance metric asset-based S.M.A.R.T. CEDS in 2014 with integrated county strategies that is annually updated.

ACTION PLAN 1A-1: FFCI will assist the CIEDC as the Economic Development District establish an EDD Governing Board and a working CEDS Strategy Committee in 2013, which is in accordance with current best practices defined by the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce to oversee the S.M.A.R.T. CEDS.

ACTION PLAN 1A-2: Update the October 2012 regional CEDS by October 2013 by using the FFCI five-year performance metrics and regional five-year CED Strategy as the basis for the S.M.A.R.T. CEDS. ✓

ACTION PLAN 1A-3: Establish county strategy teams in 2013 to develop five-year county S.M.A.R.T. CEDS for Logan, Mason, Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford counties that are integrated with the FFCI five-year regional S.M.A.R.T. CEDS ✓

ACTION PLAN 1A-4: In 2014, develop and implement a performance metric-based prioritization process for nomination and selection of infrastructure projects that are to be included in and connected to accomplishing the measurable goals, objectives/strategies and action plans defined in the S.M.A.R.T. CEDS

STRATEGY 1B – Develop a collaborative regional community economic development ecosystem that enables every local community, economic, workforce development and planning practitioner to be as successful as possible by 2014.

ACTION PLAN 1B-1: Implement recommendations of the EDC Action Team (EDAT) to re-organize the EDC of Central Illinois mission, corporate governance structure and staff resources and responsibilities by 4th Quarter of 2013 ✓

ACTION PLAN 1B-2-: Establish Focus Forward CI as an independent Illinois non-profit organization operating under the 501-C-3 umbrella of the Community Foundation of Central Illinois by 4th quarter of 2013 to be the regions community, economic, and workforce development investor fiduciary and to provide an annual evaluation of community, economic and workforce development performance in accordance with the FFCI 5-year regional plan. ✓
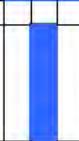
ACTION PLAN 1B-3: Institutionalize the role of the FFCI Technical Working Group (TWG) as a regional Subject Matter Expert (SME) resource to FFCI and the CIEDC. The TWG will bring together community, economic, workforce development and planning practitioners in the region to collaborate, and share knowledge and opportunities to advance the region and local economic development pace. ✓

ACTION PLAN 1B-4: Establish by December 2014 a regional Life Cycle Equity and Debt Finance Action team to map, identify and quantify regional needs, availability and gaps in expertise, types of financing and funding levels for Seed, Start-Up, Emerging or Growth, Established, Expansion and Mature Stages of the Business Cycle for traditional and emerging business sectors.

STRATEGY 1C – Build capacity of local and regional leaders to lead and manage the regional economy as boundary-free and values and connects all of the regions unique assets regardless of location by 2014.

ACTION PLAN 1C-1: Implement Leadership Institute Action Team (LIAT) recommendations to develop a regional leadership curriculum that will build the capacity of regional leaders to collaboratively guide, manage and lead the regional economy across all boundaries. Launch first class by March 2014.

ACTION PLAN 1C-2: Implement a regional e-connectivity strategy by 2015 that connects all of the regions assets, citizens, businesses, organizations and services with applications and increases the knowledge of regional leaders in how to use virtual connections improve their ability to manage, share and leverage assets across jurisdictional boundaries

ACTION PLAN 1C-3: Implement Data Center of Excellence (DCOE) Action Team recommendations to create a regional virtually accessible and integrated one stop data center for local community economic and workforce development entities and their customers by April 2014.

STRATEGY 1D – Expand the 2013 base of 1,000 FFCI champions to 3,000 by 2018; build a sustainable platform of collaborative FFCI funding for community, economic, workforce development and at a base level of $4million/year by 2018.

ACTION PLAN 1D-1: Develop and launch a comprehensive communications strategy in 2013 to establish FFCI as the "United Way" of regional community economic development and source of regional accountability and transparency for CED performance.

ACTION PLAN 1D-2: Conduct Focus Forward CI quarterly briefings across the region in collaboration with FFCI alliance partners starting in 4th Quarter 2013 to broaden community ownership for CED performance and integration of CED activities across the region.

FFCI, CIEDC, TCRPC, TWG, Workforce Alliance (×5)

ACTION PLAN 1D-3: Establish a FFCI investor development team to expand the base of collaborative public, private and non-profit FFCI investors and investments to 300 institutional and 500 individual investors by 2018.

ACTION PLAN 1D-4: Collaborate with the CEO Council to expand the use and effectiveness of the Greater Peoria Economic Score Card as one of the performance metric tools to communicate to the FFCI region and beyond the effectiveness of FFCI sponsored CED initiatives. Establish an annual regional celebration event to celebrate CED accomplishments and to update the regional strategy.

GOAL #2: Expand Economic Performance – By the end of 2018, implement community economic development strategies and action plans which will increase total regional wages by $1.75 billion per year, raise the regional average wage to at least $48,832 per year and generate new state and local tax revenue of $34 million per year.

STRATEGY 2A – Create 13,190 new direct and 20,500 indirect and induced jobs at or above $48,832/Year by 2018.

ACTION PLAN 2A-1: Establish up to six (6) industry cluster action teams for priority and emerging industry sectors identified in Phase 1. Two teams will be launched in 2014 (healthcare and manufacturing); two by 2016 and two by 2017, (Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL), Agri-Business; Destination Management; Professional, Scientific and Technical (PST); Energy and Education).

ACTION PLAN 2A-2: Collaborate with the CEO Council to establish a regional FFCI Task Force in Q4 2013 that identifies how the FFCI region leverages the $1 billion plus manufacturing and healthcare sector expansions in downtown Peoria by at least $4 billion of additional capital investments by 2018.

FFCI & CEO Council

ACTION PLAN 2A-3: Create a Water Resources Action team in 2013 to plan how the region leverages the role of the region's unique water assets as a community economic development (CED) driver. This analysis will consider the importance of regional control of this life critical asset and suggest an action plan for moving forward to leverage this unique & plentiful asset to increase economic development activity and job creation.

✓ FFCI, TCRPC   FFCI, TCRPC

ACTION PLAN 2A-4: Develop and implement by May 2015 a strategy to improve effectiveness and efficiency of government and regulatory services focused on community economic development activities. THis strategy will be based on best practices for single point of entry and one-stop 24/7 government services and lead to a 50% improvement of business and citizen perception of the effectiveness, efficiency and customer service orientation of government services by 2016.

    [yellow cell]   FFCI, TCRPC   FFCI, TCRPC

STRATEGY 2B – Positively impact over 600 firms in the region by increasing the concentration of mid sized firms (20-99 employees) from 10%-15% of total firms and increase total firms by 2.5%-3%/year.

ACTION PLAN 2B-1: CIEDC in collaboration with the FFCI Technical Working Group (TWG) will establish a Business Expansion Action Team (BEAT) to conduct targeted business retention visits starting in 2014 with one-hundred (100) firms per year interested in expansion. Focus of the visits will be to identify internal and/or external barriers to growth and take actions to address these barriers for up to 50 businesses per year.

    100 Visits 50 Business | 100 Visits 50 Business | 100 Visits 50 Business | 100 Visits 50 Business | 100 Visits 50 Business

ACTION PLAN 2B-2: Establish a community development finance role within the CIEDC that collaborates with local community economic development resources across the region to expedite up to 200 business expansion opportunities.

    [blue cell]   40   40   40   40   40

ACTION PLAN 2B-3: Identify value chain leakage opportunities within priority industry sectors that form the basis for viable business plans to attract or grow 100 mid-size firms to address the identified value chain leakage opportunities.

     5   20   25   25   25

ACTION PLAN 2B-4: Establish a technology transfer system by Q4 2014 to identify intellectual property assets within the public or private sector that can be leveraged by up to fifty (50) existing small businesses that will enable them to grow into mid-size firms by Q3 2018.

    [yellow cell]   5   10   15   20

STRATEGY 2C: Create in 2014 and begin proactive administration of a regional innovation ecosystem that will increase the pace of innovation, entrepreneurship and annual business starts by 50% per year by 2018.

ACTION PLAN 2C-1: By Q2 2014 build an indentifcation system by county and regional CRM database to track and communicate new business starts within 90 days of formation in the FFCI region

    [blue cell] [blue cell]

ACTION PLAN 2C-2: Establish an innovation ecosystem action team in 2014 to map all existing regional innovation and entrepreneur development assets and identify gaps that need to be addressed. Fund and implement recommendations including those from Action Plan 1B-4 in 2015

    [blue cell] [green cell] [green cell]

ACTION PLAN 2C-3: Collaborate with Bradley University, The Jump Simulation Center and the USDA Ag Lab to prioritize entrepreneur and innovation development opportunities focused in the areas of Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing, Human Healthcare, Bio-Refining, Energy Technologies, Agri-Medicine and Ag-Tech.

ACTION PLAN 2C-4: In 2014, create and launch an entrepreneur and innovation marketing and education program to brand in the FFCI region as a Mid-America Innovation Hub in conjunction with the regional branding strategy (4A) to improve the culture of support in the region for innovation, risk-taking and entrepreneurs.

STRATEGY 2D – Improve the region's business and entrepreneurship performance ranking in the Greater Peoria Economic Scorecard from 9th to 4th place by 2018.

ACTION PLAN 2D-1: Establish by Q2 2014 a tracking methodology for the four key sections of the business and entrepreneurship performance metrics for business density, concentration of mid-size firms, establishment growth and business affordability

ACTION PLAN 2D-2: Conduct an analysis of why business affordability is not a competitive advantage compared to FFCI peer regions. Identify and prioritize key factors affecting business affordability and define strategies to address them.

GOAL #3: Improve Human Capital – By the end of 2018, reverse demographic trends and population mix to insure a plentiful workforce supply by increasing total population by 3% (+11,257); the prime workforce demographic of 25-44 year old citizens from 25%-30% of population (+21,591); and the labor force participation rate from 65% to 66%.

STRATEGY 3A – Create a regional talent pipeline 360° approach focused on regional career readiness and career pathways by implementing 2013 FFCI Workforce Action Team organizations and program recommendations.

ACTION PLAN 3A-1: Establish a Career Readiness Toolkit, which can be accessed by all ecosystem partners to assist in the personal development of students, job seekers and employees. The Toolkit will incorporate the human skills, talents, behaviors and attitudes required by all career and job classifications in 2013-2018.

ACTION PLAN 3A-2: By 2014, develop and deploy a transformational messaging program for employers, students, parents, job seekers, education and training providers. The goal would be to shift the region's focus towards a broader understanding of the most in-demand career opportunities available through 2018 and the educational and career pathways required to access these opportunities.

ACTION PLAN 3A-3: Develop a system of career pathways for each industry sector in the FFCI region starting in 2014, which includes required human skills, talents, behaviors and attitudes, industry recognized credentials and educational training attainment benchmarks.

ACTION PLAN 3A-4: Design by 2015 a system of analytics that continuously assesses the capacity and effectiveness of the region's talent supply pipeline to respond to changing trends and meet ongoing market demand.

STRATEGY 3B - *Create a dynamic and responsive regional workforce alliance by 2014 that effectively handles an increased system demand of 50,000 individuals from 2013-2018. The alliance will connect and align private and public sector resources and funding sources across the FFCI region. Create a common vision and delivery system among all workforce, human service, educational, employers, economic development, community and faith-based groups.*

ACTION PLAN 3B-1: Design and implement a regional data warehouse to promote employment goals and trends; identify community priorities, ecosystem performance gaps and improve effectiveness of talent/education pipeline within the workforce ecosystem. (See 3A-4)

ACTION PLAN 3B-2: Launch at least one industry specific workforce center of excellence/learning exchange per year starting in 2014 that provides a rapid response approach to current and future workforce needs based on warehouse data, such as long-term retirement trends, demographic trends and future workforce talent requirements, and aligns funding and resources to meet the messaging and specific human development needs. √

Manufacturing   Healthcare   ?   ?   ?

ACTION PLAN 3B-3: Implement targeted talent pipeline strategies (such as leveraging and expanding programs of excellence like Elite, Workforce Network, Career Link, etc.) that will decrease under-employment and unemployment 30% by 2018 with a focus in under-served and under-performing rural and urban communities of the region

ACTION PLAN 3B-4: Develop an alternative system for managing the regional workforce ecosystem in 2013 that is based on the principals of Collective Impact and uses a decentralized flat organizational model to coalesce all workforce ecosystem partners around a common vision and SMART goals. √

STRATEGY 3C –*Increase the number of 25-44 year old citizens by 21,591 to meet the increased demand for prime working age employees and entrepreneurs by 2018.*

ACTION PLAN 3C-1: Develop a multi-cultural population strategy that values, and embraces the importance of increasing by 75% (10,000 persons) the number of non-native born citizens in the FFCI population by 2018.

Develop

ACTION PLAN 3C-2: Collaborate with higher education institutions to develop graduate retention programs to engage undergraduate and graduate students annually in regional community economic development initiatives that increase student connection to the region and result in 5,000 additional students choosing to start their careers in the FFCI region by 2018.

Development

ACTION PLAN 3C-3: Design and implement a social media forum in 2014 for mapping and communicating creative economy and livable community assets and events of interest to GeNEXT and celebrates historic and current innovations that make the FFCI region a Mid-America Innovation Hub.

Develop

ACTION PLAN 3C-4: Engage and support GeNEXT members in development of 1-2 projects per year starting in 2013 that are focused on improving the Quality of Place attractiveness of the region for GeNEXT generations, which reduces the projected outflow of 5,000 GeNEXT citizens and attracts 5,000 additional GeNEXT citizens to the region by 2018.

√

STRATEGY 3D - *Increase the number of industry recognized credentials, associate degrees, and baccalaureate degrees. Improve the average wage of the lowest 10% of the workforce (19,456) by at least $5,000/year through workforce alliance initiatives by 2018.*

ACTION PLAN 3D-1: Increase skill levels of 15,000 of the 79,434 persons in the FFCI region working part time to become full-time employees by filling existing job demand and reduce by 10% the dependence on labor supply coming from non-core counties in the 13-county regional labor shed

Plan

ACTION PLAN 3D-2 – Reduce the number of unemployed citizens over 16 years of age by 4,100 persons by developing their interest and skills to fill current unmet and future job demands in healthcare, manufacturing, TDL and tourism

Plan

ACTION PLAN 3D-3: Advance 4,000 employed persons in their career placement through focused development of soft and hard skills across priority industry sectors

Plan

ACTION PLAN 3D-4: Increase access to jobs and development resources available anywhere in the FFCI region that address capital, human or service infrastructure gaps such as public transportation for low income and underrepresented populations.

Workforce Alliance, TCRPC | Workforce Alliance, TCRPC | Workforce Alliance, TCRPC | Workforce Alliance, TCRPC | Workforce Alliance, TCRPC

GOAL #4: *Value and Enhance CI Way of Life – Quantify, communicate and imbed the importance of the unique rural/urban values of the Way CI Lives, Works and Plays to all who live in CI by 2014. Enhance the CI way of Life by the end of 2018 to attract others to the region through a focus on healthy and livable communities.*

STRATEGY 4A – *Increase the perception of the FFCI region as a desirable live, work and play destination by developing an internal and external regional branding strategy that increases regional awareness of FFCI quality of life assets by 30% in 2014 and increases commercial and recreational visitors from outside the FFCI region 50% by 2016*

ACTION PLAN 4A-1 – Develop by 2014 an online mechanism to map, update and share CI Way of Life creative arts, natural resource, recreational, local foods, tourism, entertainment and active lifestyle assets that enhance how the region lives, works and plays.	[red]					
Action Plan 4A-2: Develop by December 2013 and launch by February-March 2014 an internal regional branding and district tagging strategy for the creative arts, natural resources, recreation, local foods, tourism, entertainment and active lifestyle assets. Goal is to create a cadre of at least 1,000 CI Way of Life Ambassadors with ensured representation of artists, cultural event coordinators, local restaurateurs, and park districts by 2015 that will help increase regional attendance by 40% at local festivals and events by end of 2018 as measured based against an agreed standard benchmark assessment of attendance metrics at 2014 events.	[yellow]	500 Ambassadors 10 Festival Targets	500 Ambassadors 10 Festival Targets	10 Festival Targets	10 Festival Targets	10 Festival Targets
ACTION PLAN 4A-3: Develop by 2015 & implement by September 2015 an external regional branding strategy that reduces negative impressions, increases positive impressions of the FFCI region and brings national attention to the cultural assets of the FFCI region as a desirable destination to live, work and play. Benchmarks for measuring trend changes in volume and sentiment of chatter in digital social space will be developed prior to launch of strategy and annually measured.	[yellow]	[yellow]	Launch, Implement	Implement, Assess	Revise, Implement	Implement, Assess
ACTION PLAN 4A-4 – Develop a regional tourism destination strategy by 2014 that will increase commercial and recreational visitors by 50%, extend average visitors stays by at least one overnight visit and increases economic impact of domestic tourism travel by $200 million/year by 2018.		Development UI Extension	Launch, Implement	Implement, Assess, Measure	Implement, Measure	Implement, Measure

Strategy 4B: *Develop in 2013-14 and implement by 2015-16 a healthy community strategy to enhance the CI Way of Life and workforce health that addresses strategic goals around improved population health, education and income in collaboration with the United Way, Quality Quest, area Hospitals, local Health Departments and FFCI.*

ACTION PLAN 4B-1: Identify and focus on improvement in our region's rates for the top three most critical chronic diseases versus state and national benchmarks, attaining best in country performance by 2030. Identify, prioritize and reach consensus on the top three regional population health improvement opportunities (as identified by the Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA's), Health Department Assessments and United Way Community Assessment) by Jan 2014. Develop multigenerational implementation plan (with milestones at 2015, 2020, 2025 and 2030) by 2015. Candidates for inclusion: Access to Healthcare; Addiction & Substance Abuse; Asthma; Diabetes; Healthy Behaviors; Lung Cancer; Mental Health, Obesity, Infant Mortality; Oral Health; Preventive Health; Reproductive Health; Other Coronary Factors	Research	Plan Development	Implementation	Implementation	Implementation	Implementation

Action Plan 4B-2: Develop and implement a healthy community strategy and implementation plan (2013-2014) that provides evidence-based recommendations that are most likely to reduce the burden of the leading causes of preventable death and major illness by 2018. The seven priorities are: Tobacco Free Living; Preventing Drug Abuse and Excessive Alcohol Use; Healthy Eating; Active Living: Injury and Violence Free Living; Reproductive and Sexual Health; Mental and Emotional Well-Being. Population health improvement goals align with Healthy People 2020 goals and National Prevention Strategy 2030 goals, striving for "best-in-class" performance. FFCI counties are ranked in the top 10 in the state as reported by the County Health Rankings (or equivalent) by 2018		Develop Plan	Develop Plan	Implementation	Implementation	Implementation	Implementation
ACTION PLAN 4B-3: Develop a collaborative, comprehensive, community health education strategy and implementation plan that focuses on, and measures, behavioral changes and resulting health outcomes by April 2014. - Enhance linkages between clinical care and community health prevention activities, including education programs, screening activities, etc. Improve educational outcomes in targeted underserved communities and/or populations through an integrated approach by identifying/developing/implementing a pilot Population Health Education Improvement Program for the CI region by April 2015. - Launch community wide program by 2017. - Establish a minimum per capita funding level to support community health "prevention" initiatives by April 2014.		Develop Plan	Launch Pilot	Pilot	Pilot	Community Wide Program	Community Wide Program
ACTION PLAN 4B-4: Develop a comprehensive community health improvement performance tracking and reporting initiative that (1) aligns with our communities health improvement priorities, and (2) aligns with generally accepted health metrics as defined by the H&HS (Health and Human Services Department) in the Healthy People 2020 and National Prevention Strategy programs. - Community metrics identified and agreed to by all stakeholders by January, 2015. - Baselines for metrics and improvement goals agreed to by community stakeholders by January, 2015. - All goals to meet or exceed goals called out by Healthy People 2020 and National Prevention Strategy 2030			Development	Tracking	Tracking	Tracking	Tracking
STRATEGY 4C – Create a collaborative culture of livable communities throughout the FFCI region that is based on AIA's Ten Livable Community Standards.							
ACTION PLAN 4C-1 – Define FFCI livable community priorities for urban and rural communities by December 2014 that leverages the planning and design resources of the AIA, University of Illinois and the Urban Land Institute.							
ACTION PLAN 4C-2 – Launch a livable community forum in 2014 that communicates the value and importance of livable community standards as a magnet for attracting 25-44 year old knowledge workers and firms to the FFCI region.							
ACTION PLAN 4C-3 – Complete locally developed livable community strategies in 50% of FFCI communities by 2016 and 75% by 2018, which has a priority focus on creating more vibrant 24/7 urban downtown and rural town centers. (36 communities 1000+ residents)							

ACTION PLAN 4C-4 – Define and establish regional capacity building resources within the CIEDC or TCRPC by 2016 to assist local community economic development teams to implement and maintain livable community strategies and action plans

CIEDC, TCRPC, TWG   CIEDC, TCRPC, TWG

Strategy 4D: Develop a comprehensive regional housing market analysis, strategy, and implementation plan that addresses the impact of FFCI SMART goals on the region's housing needs and begins to meet those needs by December 2018.

ACTION PLAN 4D-1 - Conduct a comprehensive regional housing market analysis by June 2014 that focuses both on current market supply and demand, as well as future supply and demand that supports achievement of FFCI SMART goals by 2018. This analysis should consider housing needs and preferences at different income levels in rural and urban communities for owner-occupied, rental, young professionals, special needs, workforce, and active senior living environments.

ACTION PLAN 4D-2 – In conjunction with the 2014 livable community forums, communicate the value of diverse housing alternatives for attracting work and workers to both rural and urban communities, which expands economic development and improves quality of life while meeting the identified demand from the regional housing market analysis.

ACTION PLAN 4D-3 – Develop a comprehensive regional housing strategy by December 2014 based upon the results of the regional housing market analysis and the SMART job creation goals

ACTION PLAN 4D-4 – Collaborate with Action Plan 4C-4 Team to define and establish the regional capacity building resources and tools necessary to stimulate public and private investment to develop alternative housing opportunities in conjunction with rural and urban livable community strategies by April 2015. Implement at least 15 developments that meet the diverse housing preferences of targeted populations across the region with at least one in each county by the end of 2018.

2   4   4   5

The budget amounts in **BLUE BOLD** are amounts from the previously approved FFCI budget
The budget amounts in BLACK are new or additonal items as a result of completing the 5-year strategy
The budget amounts in **RED BOLD** are changes to previoulsy approved budget items, see budget notes below
Cells highlighted in YELLOW are preliminary estimates, subject to change

2013-2018 Budget	Action Plan	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Totals
Source of Funds								
Private - 50K Plus		$150,000	$150,000	$200,000	$200,000	$250,000	$250,000	$1,200,000
Private - 20K Plus		$200,000	$300,000	$400,000	$400,000	$400,000	$400,000	$2,100,000
Private - 10K Plus		$300,000	$350,000	$400,000	$450,000	$500,000	$500,000	$2,500,000
Private, Clusters, NP under 10K		$150,000	$200,000	$250,000	$300,000	$350,000	$400,000	$1,650,000
Private - 5K		$100,000	$125,000	$150,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000	$975,000
Private - 2.5K		$75,000	$100,000	$125,000	$150,000	$200,000	$200,000	$850,000
Private - 1K		$30,000	$40,000	$50,000	$60,000	$70,000	$80,000	$330,000
In-Kind		$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$600,000
Non-Profit Sector 10K plus		$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$600,000
Individual Investors		$0	$25,000	$35,000	$45,000	$55,000	$60,000	$220,000
Illinois Foundations		$100,000	$150,000	$250,000	$350,000	$350,000	$350,000	$1,550,000
National Foundations		$0	$150,000	$250,000	$350,000	$400,000	$450,000	$1,600,000
Federal Grants		$580,000	$500,000	$400,000	$400,000	$400,000	$400,000	$2,680,000
State Grants		$100,000	$100,000	$150,000	$150,000	$200,000	$200,000	$900,000
Healthy Community Grants			$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$7,500,000
Workforce Alliance Grants		$100,000	$250,000	$250,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000	$1,200,000
Local Public Investment (See Fund Model)		$390,000	$521,000	$640,000	$688,000	$721,000	$755,000	$3,715,000
Total Source of Funds		**$2,475,000**	**$4,661,000**	**$5,250,000**	**$5,643,000**	**$5,996,000**	**$6,145,000**	**$30,170,000**
Use of Funds								
FFCI								
Executive Director			$150,000	$150,000	$150,000	$157,000	$164,000	$771,000
Investor Development Coordinator - .5 FTE	1D-3	**$12,500**	**$50,000**	**$50,000**	**$50,000**	**$50,000**	**$50,000**	**$262,500**
Program Manager		**$37,500**	**$60,000**	**$60,000**	**$45,000**	$45,000	$45,000	$292,500
Office Operations Expense		$15,000	$60,000	$60,000	$63,000	$63,000	$65,000	$326,000
Fiduciary Management Fees - Community Foundation		$25,000	$35,000	$35,000	$35,000	$35,000	$35,000	$200,000
Coordinate Funding Investor Team	1D-3							$0
EDCCI Assistance	1A-1							$0
Establishment of FFCI as 501C3	1B-2							$0
Institutionalize the TWG	1B-3							$0
Life Cycle Equity & Debt Finance Analysis	1B-4							$0
Implement the Leadership Institute	1C-1		**$112,500**	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$312,500
FFCI Regional Taskforce Collborate with CEO Council	2A-2							$0
Regional Business Start Identification and CRM System, TWG EDCCI	2C-1		$15,000	$15,000				$30,000

Establish Innovation Action Team	2C-2							$0
Establish Water Resource Team	2A-3							$0
Multi Cultural Strategy	3C-1							$0
Scorecard Tracking Methodology with CEO Council	2D-1							$0
Peoria Scorecard Development, Expansion, Tracking Methodology	1D-4							$0
Phase II Logistics A/V and Communications Budget		$25,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$400,000
Special Projects		$60,000	$80,000	$120,000	$120,000	$120,000	$120,000	$620,000
EDCCI								
Staff & Operations		$350,000	$900,000	$1,150,000	$1,150,000	$1,150,000	$1,150,000	$5,850,000
Grant Writer - .5 FTE	1D-3	$12,500	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$262,500
CEDS Coordination & Production	1A-2							$0
Establish Regional Project Prioritization Process	1A-4							$0
Coordinate Regional Quarterly Briefings	1D-2							$0
Support County Teams	1A-3							$0
Coordinate BEAT Team	2B-1							$0
Establish and Administer Community Development Finance	2B-2							$0
Identify Value Chain Linkage	2B-3							$0
Oversee Technology Transfer System	2B-4							$0
Regional Business Start Identification and CRM System, TWG EDCCI	2C-1							
Coordinate & Support Innovation Action Team	2C-2							$0
Innovation & Entrepreneur Development Opportunities	2C-3							$0
Scorecard Competitive Analysis	2D-2							$0
GeNEXT Coordination & Support	3C-4							$0
Coordination of Industry Cluster Teams	2A-1							$0
Workforce Alliance								
Office of Managing Director (could be existing position)			$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$500,000
Develop and Alternative Management System	3B-4							$0
Career Readiness Toolkit & Maintenance	3A-1			$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$200,000
Implementation of Workforce COE/Learning Exchanges, Career Pathways	3B-2, 3A-3		$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$500,000
Workforce Data Warehouse and Workforce Portal	3B-1		$18,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$78,000
System of Analytics to Measure Workforce	3A-4		$25,000	$25,000				$50,000
Targeted Pipeline Strategies	3B-3							$0
Career Readiness Transformation Marketing Budget	3A-2		$50,000	$50,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000	$700,000
Graduate Retention Program	3C-2							$0
Increase skill levels of 15,000 people	3D-1							$0
Reduce the number of unemployed 16+ years by 4,100 persons	3D-2							$0
Soft Skills Development for 4,000 people	3D-3							$0
Increase Access to Jobs and Resources	3D-4							$0

Annual Event Manufacturing Career Expo	3B-2		$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	$300,000
Annual Event Healthcare Career Expo	3B-2		$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$100,000
Annual Event #3	3B-2					$50,000	$50,000	$100,000
TCRPC								
e-Connectivity Strategy	**1C-2**	**$16,000**	**$50,000**					**$66,000**
Data Center of Excellence	1C-3							$0
Public Transportation & Resource Analysis	3D-4							$0
Online Mechanism to Map Lifestyle assets	4A-1							$0
Define Livable Community Priorities	4C-1							$0
Support Livable Community Strategies in Communities	4C-3							$0
Define Livable Community Capacity Building Resources	4C-4							$0
Regional Housing Market Analysis	4D-1		$15,000					$15,000
Housing Forum with Livable Community Forum	4D-2,4C-2		$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$25,000
Comprehensive Regional Housing Strategy	4D-3							$0
Resources and Tools to Stimulate Public & Private Investment	4D-4							$0
Technical Analyst & Planner - County, Livable Community, Housing Plans			**$75,000**	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$375,000
Coordinate and Support Water Resource Team	2A-3							$0
Local Government COE Competitiveness Strategy	2A-4							$0
Management of Data Center of Excellence (net of DOT offset)	1C-3		$35,000	$35,000	$35,000	$35,000	$35,000	$175,000
Quality Quest & Health Districts								
Total Program Expense - line 97-100			$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$7,500,000
Improvement in Top 3 Chronic Diseases	4B-1							$0
Health Community Strategy	4B-2							$0
Health Education Strategy	4B-3							$0
Health Improvement Performance Tracking Initiative	4B-4							$0
Greater Peoria Business Alliance/CEO Council								
Staff & Operations		**$500,000**	**$550,000**	**$700,000**	**$800,000**	**$900,000**	**$900,000**	**$4,350,000**
FFCI Regional Taskforce Collborate with FFCI	2A-2							$0
Peoria Scorecard Development, Expansion, Tracking Methodology	1D-4							$0
FFCI Regional Taskforce	2A-2							$0
Contract Services								
Innovation Ecosystem	**2C-2**		**$110,000**	**$80,000**		**$75,000**	**$75,000**	**$340,000**
Industry Cluster Opportunity Analysis (6)	**2A-1**		**$150,000**	**$150,000**	**$150,000**			**$450,000**
GeNEXT Social Media Forum	3C-3							$0
Technology Transfer System Plan	2B-4			$25,000	$25,000			$50,000
Multi Cultural Strategy Development	3C-1							$0
FFCI Comprehensive Communications Strategy	1D-1				$100,000	$150,000	$200,000	$450,000
Regional Tourism Destination Strategy	4A-4							$0

	Code							Total
Develop and Implement a Internal Regional Branding Strategy	4A-2				$100,000	$150,000	$200,000	$450,000
County Sub-Plans	1A-3	$125,900						$125,900
Phase I Regional Strategy Logistics, A/V, Marketing & Communications	1D-1	$55,000						$55,000
Rural Community Engagement		$43,500						$43,500
Facilitation of Framework Teams	1B-1	$52,430						$52,430
Implementation Costs for Framework Recommendations		$20,000						$20,000
Facilitation of Phase I Initiative Action Teams		$131,000	$17,000					$148,000
e-Connectivity Strategy	1C-2	$74,000						$74,000
Debt and Equity Finance System	1B-4			$50,000	$140,000	$75,000	$75,000	$340,000
Data Center of Excellence	1C-3	$58,000	$12,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$130,000
Data Center of Excellence Licenses	1C-3	$122,000	$92,000	$86,000	$62,000	$92,000	$92,000	$546,000
Collaborative Fund Raising	1D-3	$35,000	$45,000					$80,000
Business Incubator and Regional Accelerator Plan	2C-2			$88,000				$88,000
Phase II Executive Coaching		$60,000	$100,000	$90,000				$250,000
Oversight of Phase II Initiative Action Teams		$45,000	$60,000	$90,000				$195,000
E-Government Strategy	2A-4			$40,000				$40,000
Develop and Rural/Urban Livable Communities Strategies	4C-3			$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$120,000
Develop and Implement a External Regional Branding Strategy	4A-3, 2C-4	$100,000						$100,000
Leadership Institute	1C-1	$112,500						$112,500
In-kind Support								
TWG Support for Regional Strategy and Sub-Plans		$105,000						$105,000
Total use of Funds		$2,192,830	$4,776,500	$5,294,000	$5,370,000	$5,492,000	$5,601,000	$28,726,330
Net Year Cash (Source - Use)		$282,170	($115,500)	($44,000)	$273,000	$504,000	$544,000	
Net Year on Year Cash Flow		$282,170	$166,670	$122,670	$395,670	$899,670	$1,443,670	

Budget Notes:

1. Adjustments from previous budget approved by PSC

The budget adjustments below represent changes from the previous budget approved by the PSC. The top row (BLUE) shows the previous budget allocation and the second row (RED) shows the new allocation. The new allocation is also reflect in the Source & Use Statement above in RED.

	Code							Total
Industry Cluster Opportunity Analysis (8)	2A-1	$115,000	$230,000	$230,000	$115,000	$75,000	$75,000	$840,000
Industry Cluster Opportunity Analysis (6)	2A-1		$150,000	$150,000	$150,000			$450,000
Special Projects		$120,000	$80,000	$120,000	$120,000	$120,000	$120,000	$680,000
Special Projects		$60,000	$140,000	$120,000	$120,000	$120,000	$120,000	$680,000
		Recruitment & Branding Strategies						
Phase III Budget						$298,000	$298,000	$596,000
Phase III Budget						$0	$0	$0
Implementation of Workforce COE/Learning Exchanges	3B-2	$104,500	$104,500			$50,000	$50,000	$309,000
Implementation of Workforce COE/Learning Exchanges	3B-2		$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$500,000

2. If EDA funding is involved in CEDS Production & Coordination (Action 1A-2), it will require the equivalant of 1 FTE for EDD compliance

3. Highlighted Line Items 21, 96, 111, and 113 are very preliminary and will likely change as the applicable strategies and action teams

APPENDIX D: UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO LOCAL FOOD EXPANSION INTO WHOLESALE MARKETS

Stevie Zvereva, University of Illinois at Springfield; Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Introduction

Demand for local food is increasing, but existing producers need to produce more in order to meet demand, and more producers need to come into existence. Some producers target direct retail markets like farmers markets, which serve as integral links between urban, suburban and rural communities, but it may behoove some growers to expand into wholesale and diversify their operations in order to meet the uptick in demand and to increase their revenues. The local economic benefits of the expansion of local foods into wholesale markets are evident (Meter 2011; Feagan 2007). Additionally, improving food access depends on the affordability and availability of food at the local retail level. Some common efforts of improving food access have focused on direct marketing channels, such as farmers markets. While Illinois ranks 4th in the nation for its number of farmers markets (Flider 2013), this sector still represents a significantly low percentage of the entire buying population. Although there have been some piecemeal attempts by local producers to sell to retail stores and restaurants in the tri-county region, local food growth has been limited. I conducted a series of interviews with growers and buyers to determine both the perceived barriers to expanding local food sales by growers into wholesale markets, and the barriers to expanding local food purchasing by wholesale buyers.

Student Learning Goals and Objectives

My Masters of Arts concentration is Sustainable Development and Policy. The Sustainable Development and Policy concentration explores theories of sustainable development and policy in order to: 1) understand the historical context and critically evaluate the current framework of natural resources and environmental policy; 2) gain a comprehensive understanding of the conceptual elements of sustainability; 3) communicate and evaluate issues in sustainable development policies and practices; and 4) assess the feasibility of and strategies for natural resources and environmental policy changes toward sustainable development.

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) provided ample opportunity to explore the themes of this concentration as the organization provides regional planning services to the tri-county region including Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford counties in central Illinois. These services include regional projects in the areas of integrated planning, environment and transportation. David and I identified a specific relevant project that tied in well with my interests and the organization's needs. The project centered on current local food system research as part of a larger regional sustainability plan for the tri-county region. Within the local food study, there was an opportunity to specifically explore the perspectives of growers and buyers—from schools to retailers and wholesalers—within the local food structure to determine opportunities and barriers to expanding the wholesale market for local foods in central Illinois.

Methods

Utilizing TCRPC's and University of Illinois Extension's existing contact lists, I compiled a list of growers in central Illinois and sorted the results by the tri-county region—Tazewell, Woodford and Peoria. I then cross-referenced the list per county with the University of Illinois' MarketMaker site, a growing interactive database of food industry marketing and business data. I also compared the list to the vendors listed at each of the 16 farmers markets operating within the tri-county region (Table 1). The result was a directory of about 20 growers per county. I categorized the growers by farmers market—and headed out to reach as many growers as possible both through in-person interviews at the farmers markets, and for the busier markets, by distributing a "Grower Survey" (Appendix 1) to willing participants. I followed up with other growers via phone. The survey included a series of questions from which I based all interviews for consistency. The interview questions were developed in tandem with David Smesrud of TCRPC and reflected previous related studies (Adams 2012; Ogawa et al. 2013; Berkencamp 2013).

Table 1. Known farmers markets in the tri-county (Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford) area.

Farmers Market	Address
Peoria Riverfront Market	300 SW Water St., Peoria
Peoria Metro Centre Market	4700 N University St., Peoria
Peoria Heights Market	4450 North Prospect Road, Peoria Heights
EPIC Market	1913 W. Townline Road, Peoria
TCRC Market	21310 Illinois 9, Tremont
Pekin Downtown Market	Capitol Street Between Court and Elizabeth, Downtown Pekin
Morton Farmers Market	210 S Main street, Morton
Roth Countryside Produce	220 Detroit Avenue, Morton
Washington Square Farmers Market	Washington Square, Washington
Heritage Farmers Market	20235 Illinois Rt 9, Pekin
Congerville Farmers Market	214 Main Street, Congerville
Metamora Farmers Market	113 E partridge St., Metamora
Dunlap Farmers Market	Central Park (Water Tower), Dunlap
East Peoria Farmers Market	Target parking lot, E. Peoria
Unity Point Atrium Market	900 Main St., Peoria
Junction City	Junction City Ctr., Peoria

In total, I interviewed eight farmers, and conducted nine additional surveys of growers, for a total of 17 grower participants of various types (Table 2; Figure 1).

Table 2. Grower study participants by county.

Peoria County	Tazewell County	Woodford County	Other
DMG Beehaven Farm	WynHil Golden Acre Farm	Yoder Produce	Crump Produce
Children's Home Garden		Anonymous 1	Plow Creek Farm & Bakery
Greengold Acres		Anonymous 2	Anonymous 3
Thunderbolt Gardens		White Chimney Farms	Hartz Produce
Sam's Garden Farm		Schaer Produce	
Living Earth Farm		J&S Produce	

Figure 1. Breakdown of grower interviewees by farm type.

For the buyer interviews, I compiled a list of tri-county schools, hospitals, wholesalers and retailers and reached out first through email. Unfortunately, the response rate for buyers was less desirable than intended; of an attempted 16 interviews, I conducted a total of six interviews, with three additional respondents (Table 3), evenly spread by industry type (Figure 2). I also conducted the buyer interviews using a survey of pre-determined questions as a guide (Appendix 2), while still allowing for ample spontaneity from one subject to the next.

Table 3. Buyer study participants by county.

Peoria County	Tazewell County	Woodford County	Other
Schnucks	Waugh Foods	--	Knox College
OSF Healthcare	Central Illinois Produce		Neimann Foods
Hy-Vee			Augustana College
Methodist Medical Center			

Figure 2. Breakdown of buyer interviewees by industry type.
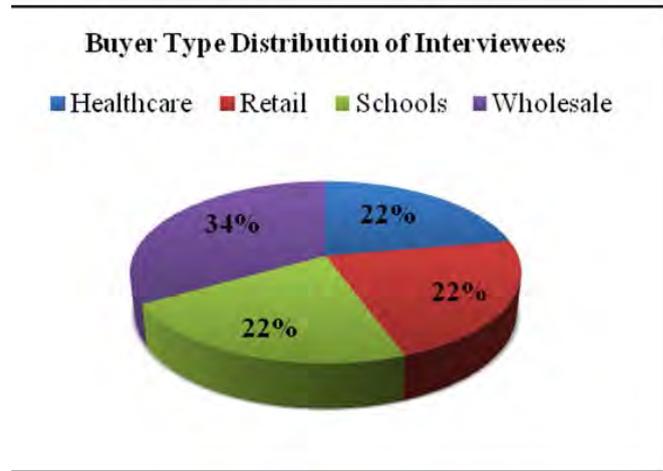
All interviews were conducted in person or by phone, using an audio recorder for accuracy in transcription. Each of the interviewees gave their consent for recording prior to the start of the interviews. I assessed relevancy of replies and identified trends between interviews based on responses. Additional notes came from the Local and Regional Food Summit in Bloomington and the University of Illinois Extension "Meet the Buyers" event in Galesburg, where I was able to utilize speakers' presentations to glean three more useful sources—Knox College, Augustana College and Neimann Foods. Taking detailed notes allowed me to use these three additional buyers as additional qualitative data within my buyer set. Of course, these presentation notes, conducted without the use of an audio recorder are more subject to personal interpretation.

Results

Growers

Collectively, the 17 growers contacted for this study attribute 95 percent of their sales to retail and 5 percent to wholesale (Table 4). Of those farmers selling wholesale, over 62 percent of their wholesale business is specifically targeting distributors, vendors and restaurants. About 37 percent of wholesale business targets co-ops, hubs and CSAs. None of the interviewees currently sell to schools (Figure 3). Further, none of the growers are currently selling mostly wholesale, and in fact, most growers wish to stay that way. When asked, 59 percent of the growers interviewed expressed no interest in expanding further into wholesale markets. The remaining growers expressed their desire as "Interested," or "Somewhat interested," with no grower expressing that they were "Very interested" or "Needed more information" (Figure 4).

Table 4. Grower distribution of retail and wholesale sales by county.

County	Average Percent Retail	Average Percent Wholesale
Peoria	99%	1%
Tazewell	100%	0%
Woodford	98%	3%
Bureau	90%	10%
Marshall	100%	0%
McLean	70%	30%
Stark	75%	25%
Total	**95%**	**5%**

Figure 3. Growers' wholesale distribution by business type.
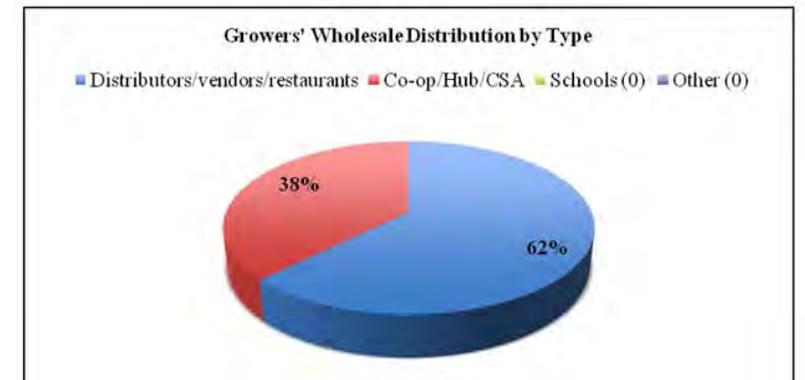
Figure 4. Grower interest level in expanding into wholesale markets.
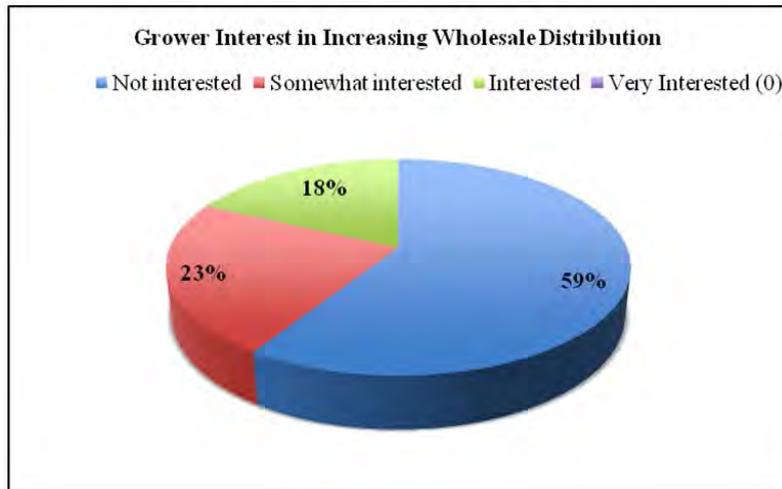
Growers expressed several reasons for not expanding into wholesale markets (Figure 5). The main barrier identified is inadequate volume. Additionally, growers expressed concerns about pricing for their products being too low at the wholesale level. Not having enough help on the farm, preferring farmers markets over wholesale, not having anyone to make deliveries, and not having enough product variety were also listed as potential barriers to wholesale expansion. Currently, none of the growers interviewed is GAP-certified or has a HACCP plan, and of those interviewed, only

three growers are willing to consider achieving future certification (Figure 6).

Figure 5. Grower-identified barriers to wholesale expansion.
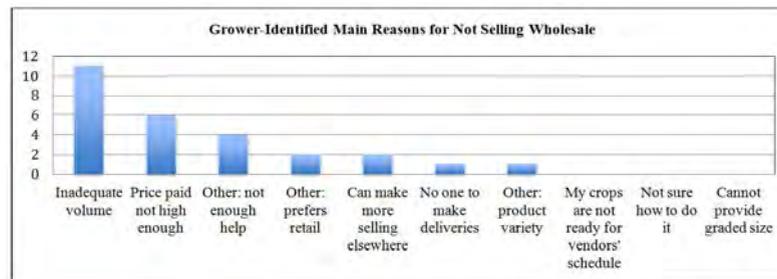
Figure 6. Growers' interest in achieving future certification.
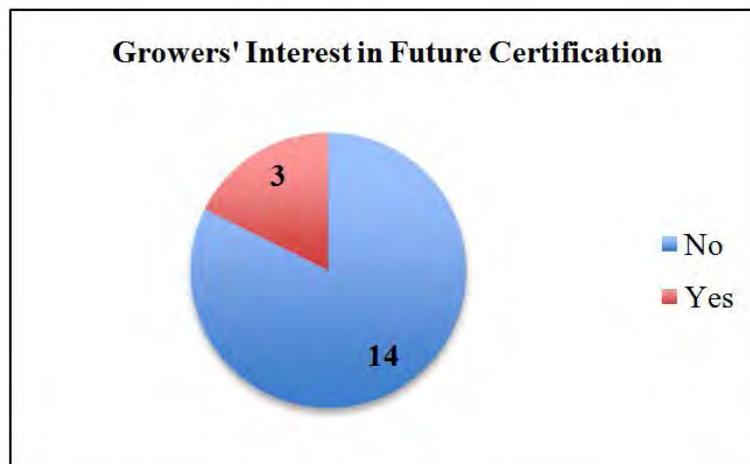
Buyers

Every buyer interviewee agreed to some extent that local food does have a unique marketing advantage, and eight of the nine buyers are currently purchasing some local food. Of the buyers purchasing local food, collectively they attribute an average five percent of their total purchasing to local food (Table 5). Buyers identified various barriers to expanding purchases of local products (Figure 7), including vendor contracts as the largest barrier. Fifty-six percent of interviewees find the prices for local food to be too high and inconsistent availability across seasons to also be a major obstacle to increasing local purchasing. Additionally, 45 percent of interviewees require higher volume than local growers can currently provide. Several interviewees also expressed other hindrances to local food purchasing due to reasons like specific grading requirements, and unwillingness or inability on the farmers' end to package products according to industry standards. Consistent sizing, availability, and quality were also noted as perceived problems. When asked from what source they would prefer to purchase local foods, most buyers chose "Directly from farmers" (Figure 8).

Table 5. Buyers' local purchasing breakdown.

| County	Average Percent Local	Average Percent Non-Local
Adams	10.0%	90.0%
Knox	3.0%	97.0%
Peoria	5.5%	94.5%
Rock Island	5.0%	95.0%
Tazewell	2.5%	97.5%
Total	**5.0%**	**95.0%**

Figure 7. Top barriers to local food purchasing as identified in buyer interviews.

Figure 8. Buyers' preferences on sources from which to buy local food.
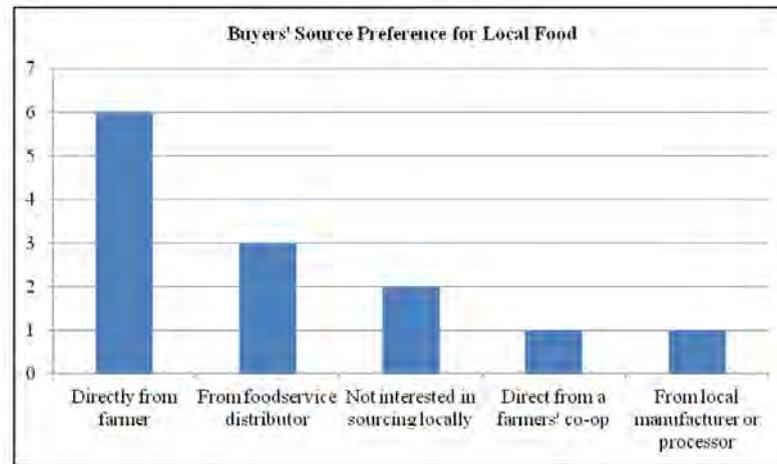
Seventy-eight percent of buyers require some form of certification from buyers (Figure 9) and everyone interviewed requires liability insurance, though the amount required varied from buyer to buyer. Of the nine buyers in the study, 22 percent rank local food purchasing as "Somewhat important," 33 percent as "Important," and 44 percent as "Very important," with no interviewee choosing "Not important" (Figure 10).

Figure 9. Breakdown of buyers requiring certification.

Do you require Gap certification or HACCP?

YES: 22%   **NO:** 88%
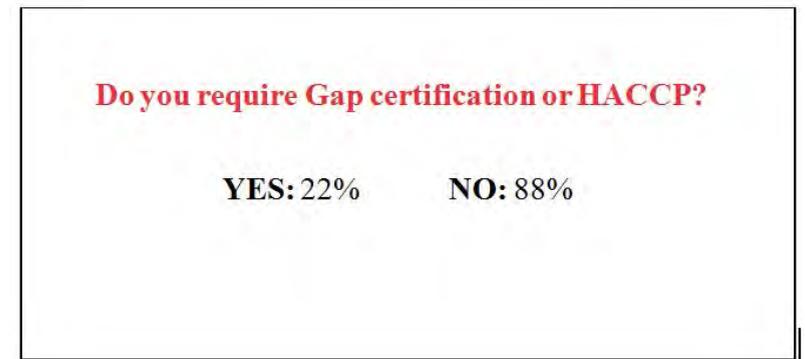
Figure 10. Buyers' impression of the importance of local food.
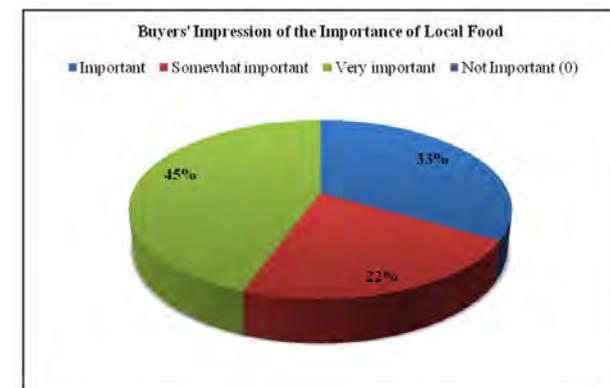
Discussion

Small growers in the tri-county region simply do not have the consistent high volumes needed by retail outlets and wholesalers (Appendix 3). For most small growers, particularly for those under ten acres, farming is part-time work only (Grillot 2013; "Thunder" 2013; Hilst 2013). In order to expand, they'd need to become full-time or to hire more employees for help (Appendix 4). Yet, when asked if they're willing to expand their operations, they seem content in remaining small and part-time (Grillot 2013; Hilst 2013). Additionally, prices are too low at the wholesale level (Appendix 5). Farmers markets command higher prices for premium products (Hartz 2013), which is a main motivating factor behind many farmers' stubborn willingness to do all the work, preparation and travel required to sell at farmers markets.

When farms are smaller, there seems to be less willingness to accept lower wholesale prices, unless they can gear up production to be better able to sell in bulk (Hartz 2013). Additionally, one of the benefits of farmers markets is that you can sell the product when you have it, setting your own schedule, as opposed to the more stringent demand of wholesale schedules (Vigue 2013). Of course, there are also limits to Illinois' short growing season (Kratz 2013). Restaurants and stores need a constant supply year-round—a luxury made possible over the years through globalization and free trade with regions able to grow tomatoes year-round, for instance (Desmond 2013), and Illinois' climate may never be able to accommodate the

demand for products outside its growing capabilities (Kratz 2013).

Additionally, increasing regulations by health departments, certification requirements and liability insurance may be hindering farmers' ability to sell to larger buyers (Appendix 6). These certifications are expensive and many cannot afford to incorporate these programs at their small size of production (Patterson 2013). It seems for most growers, restaurants remain a more viable option for sales than stores, wholesalers, hospitals and schools due to their higher flexibility in purchasing and smaller required quantities (Hartz 2013). Hospitals and schools are also more heavily hampered by safety and health regulations (Price 2013; Ewalt 2013; Mayer 2013; Griffith 2013).

Overall, it seems most growers are content with maxing out their profits as a large small operation. As one farmer put it, by remaining small enough, one maintains exemption from some of the food safety regulations required only of medium- and large-sized growers (Vigue 2013). But as a small-scale grower with only enough products to sell at farmers markets, wholesale markets are less approachable. Time is better spent maxing out at the premium prices of the farmers markets. Additionally, many farmers lack interest in the marketing, management and distribution aspect of farming as required of growing their business; they'd rather to do what they do best and farm (Waugh 2013; Vigue 2013).

An expression of helplessness in making decisions came from healthcare-industry food buyers whose buying decisions are dictated by corporate contracts with large vendors (Ewalt 2013; Price 2013), and by high-volume needs requiring low costs (Appendix 7). Some buyers discussed the need for farmers to come down on their price in order to even consider the viability of bulk purchasing (Waugh 2013; Kratz 2013; Neimann 2013). Some buyers also described an unwillingness or inability on the farmers' end to package and grade their products according to industry standards (Desmond 2013). In fact, overall, consistent sizing, availability, quantity and quality issues dominated most discussions (Appendix 8). Additionally, most buyers required growers to have liability insurance plans (Appendix 9). With every expression of the importance of purchasing local food, every buyer also had some form of constraint in purchasing as being "beyond their control" (Appendix 10).

Conclusion

In considering the highlights of the interviews and their potential application to larger sustainability plans at Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, there are a few recurring barriers that might be well addressed by plans put forth by the organization. For instance, it seems the number one issue to address is the limits to local food production levels, a common barrier expressed by both growers and buyers. Providing beginning farmer education courses, new farmer outreach, farm planning materials and incentives could counter these limits; developing and supporting programs to produce

more food locally could help in strengthening the capacity for the expansion of local food into the community.

Consumer demand must also be considered, and well documented. Although the focus of my project was not to document consumer demand levels, a similar study currently underway by the University of Illinois Extension will gauge buyers' and growers' interest in purchasing local foods (Brown 2013). Collaboration with groups conducting similar research to document consumer interest in local foods could help to strengthen the promotion of existing businesses, farmers markets and retailers that grow, distribute, process and sell local food. Further, documentation of a heightened demand for local food could provide the incentive needed by larger buyers to fuel their increased purchasing of local products. For instance, a few buyer interviewees attested to sourcing more local purchases based on solid evidence that their customers would buy (and often be willing to pay more) for local goods, like guaranteed student demand at colleges (Mayer 2013; Griffith 2013). More documentation of this sort of demand could really serve as a catalyst to increase purchasing by wholesalers, distributors and other vendors on the middlemen side.

The creation of local food systems emphasizes bringing food producers and consumers into more direct relationships, but the development of ongoing, viable direct markets has often proven challenging (Hinrichs 2000). While farmers markets continue to grow, they remain a niche market. There is no doubt that shortening food system chains and reducing the miles from farm to plate can positively alter the economic and social viability of regions (Feagan 2007; Meter 2011), but the discovery of barriers like inadequate volume, cost, certification requirements and consistency issues will require real dedicated efforts to aim to resolve. Further, the incentive of smaller farmers to expand and become more efficient may be diminished as more time is spent off the farm performing additional entrepreneurial activities (Martinez 2010) such as marketing and traveling to deliver products to buyers. The creation of a regional food policy group could help to build local capacity to produce, distribute and control local supplies by keeping decision-making power within the community and lessening dependence on external sources for food (Anderson and Cook 2000) in the tri-county region.

Appendix 1. Grower survey questions used to guide interviews.

Grower Survey for Interview Use

County in which production located (Circle one): Peoria Tazewell Woodford

Total farm acreage (Circle one): 0-5 acres   6-10 acres   11-30 acres   31+ acres

How long growing (Choose one): 1-5 years   6-10 years   11-20 years   21+ years

Vegetable Crops produced (Please list):

Fruit crops produced (Please list):

Proteins produced (Please list):

Other products (Please list):

Description of business (Please list): Retail _____% Wholesale_____%

For wholesale, list percentage of products (adding to 100%) sold to:

Schools/districts_____

Distributor/vendor_____

Co-op/Hub_____

Other_____

If you are not selling mostly wholesale, why not? (Choose all that apply).

* Not sure how to do it.
* Price paid not high enough.
* Can make more selling elsewhere.
* My crops aren't ready for vendors' schedule.
* No one to make deliveries.
* Schools want graded size; I can't provide.
* Quantities wanted too small.
* Quantities wanted too large.
* Other: _____

If demand was identified, rank your desire to increase your wholesale sales. (Choose one).

0   1   2   3   4

Need more info   Not interested   Somewhat interested   Interested   Very interested

Using the scale above (1-5), specifically rank your interest in selling more products:

a.   Directly to schools: 1   2   3   4   5

b.   Directly to co-ops: 1   2   3   4   5

c.   Directly to wholesalers (vendors, distributors): 1   2   3   4   5

Do you have any Food Safety Certifications on your farm, such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)? (Choose one).

Yes   No

If not, why not? _____

If demand was identified, would you consider getting GAP certified so that you could expand wholesale? (Choose one).

Yes   No

What would entice you to sell more produce at the wholesale level? (Please list).

_____

How important is it to you that your products are sold locally? (Choose one).

Not important   Somewhat Important   Important   Very important

Additional Comments/Concerns/Suggestions:

Appendix 2. Grower survey questions used to guide interviews.

Buyer Survey to Guide Interviews

1.   Does your establishment purchase locally grown food?

•   Yes, currently (Answer Q2a, b, and c then skip to Q3)

•   Yes, in the past but not currently (Answer Q2a, d, and e)

•   No (Answer Q2d and e)

2a. Why did your establishment first decide to purchase locally grown food?

2b. Why does your establishment continue to purchase locally grown food?

2c. What would influence your establishment to increase the variety of locally grown food it purchases?

2 d. Why haven't you purchased or why have you discontinued purchasing locally grown food? (Check all that apply).

•   Not sure how to do it.

•   I can't find interested local growers.

•   Prices for local food are too high.

•   Local growers can't provide necessary grading/certification (GAP, HACCP, etc.)

•   I need more volume than local growers can provide.

•   Limited variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.

•   Inconsistent quality.

•   Inconsistent availability across seasons.

•   Improper packaging.

•   Unreliable delivery options.

•   Other

2e. If these issues were adequately addressed by a potential vendor, would you purchase locally grown food?

•   Yes (Skip to #3)

•   No (Answer 2f, then proceed to #3)

2f. Why not?

3. In your opinion, what challenges or obstacles are the most difficult to overcome in purchasing locally grown food?

4. Overall per year, what percent of your establishment's food purchases are locally grown food products? __% (Please provide your best estimate).

5. At the height of the local growing season, what percent of your establishment's food purchases are locally grown food products? _____% (Please provide your best estimate).

6. Where has your establishment purchased locally grown food? (Select as many as apply).

- Direct from a farmer (not from a farmers market)
- Direct from a farmer's co-op (not from a farmers market)
- From a farmers market
- From a local manufacturer or processor
- From a food service distributor
- No preference / do not currently purchase local food
- Other

7. If interested in sourcing locally, what is your establishment's preferred source for locally grown food? (Select only one).

- Direct from a farmer (not from a farmers market)
- Direct from a farmer's co-op (not from a farmers market)
- From a farmers market
- From a local manufacturer or processor
- From a food service distributor
- Not interested in sourcing locally
- Other

8. To the best of your knowledge, please list any products your establishment purchases that are locally grown or produced:

9. How important is it to you that your products are locally sourced? (Select one).

Not important   Somewhat Important   Important   Very Important

10. In your opinion, do locally grown food products have unique market advantages in their appeal to your customers?

Yes   No

11. Do you require growers to have food safety certifications such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)?

Yes   No

12. In what county is your establishment located? Peoria   Tazewell   Woodford   Other

Any Additional Comments:

Appendix 3. Grower quotes on inadequate volume as a barrier to expanding wholesale.

"…We're not large enough because grocery stores [need to] have a continuous supply, and when you're a small operation (I only keep about 40 acres of produce), I can't be a full supplier of that facility. The facility's too big for me to supply by myself, so obviously they have to buy from other people" (Hartz Produce).

"I sell all direct to customers. I don't see myself ramping up at all except in the case of tree nuts where I would move those into a congregate local food hub type of situation…Right now we don't have enough farmers. Until you get farmers willing to grow a couple acres not in corn or soybeans but five to ten or twenty acres of a crop or two or three or five… we don't have enough people. (Patterson 2013).

"I'm growing tomatoes, mainly for the Riverfront Market. That was the idea behind it. I was thinking about doing other markets and possibly wholesaling to restaurants… and then I realized that 1,000 sq. feet is really only adequate for the one market here. When I do have extras—like this Saturday was a really slow day at the market—I ended up selling my extras to another farm in town. They resell them… ("Thunderbolt" 2013)

"Strawberries are all I grow. A half acre—it's kind of a small project. It's not like I'm a full-time farmer. Pretty much 90 to 95 percent of everything is sold right off the farm to local people… If you're selling produce to the store you have to guarantee that it's really high quality, and you have to have a lot. So if you're only 5 or 10 acres, which most produce farmers around here are, you just can't provide the amount of produce that would be required to do it. There are a few smaller stores around here year-round that you can work with, but it's kind of limited. So the farmers markets are just the best way to jump into it" (Vigue 2013).

Appendix 4. Grower quotes on not having enough help as a barrier to expanding wholesale.

"Right now it's an issue of not having enough extra crops. And the reason there's not is because it's hard to find enough people to work for me to do that kind of thing because it's a seasonal job" (Vigue 2013).

"My wife and I run the business and we do [the farmers market] up there on Saturday morning, more as a social event. If we were a much larger operation it'd be a much different story but that's part of the problem. In days past…we used to do more wholesaling for smaller grocery stores. But those businesses are no longer in existence; they've all been taken over by the big supermarkets. At this stage in the game, when I'm looking at not being in business in the next three to five years, I'm not interested [in wholesale expansion]" (Schaer 2013).

"I don't have time to maintain a week long farm stand or anything like that…Just growing tomatoes, you have them for about two months, but people want to buy them for about two weeks, and the interest drops off on either end of that like it did last week. Right now I work part time at another job and I'm able to do the garden part time and sell at the markets on the weekend. If I went full-time, I'd have to budge on one side or another—I'd get a large farm and devote all my time to it" ("Thunderbolt" 2013).

Appendix 5. Grower quotes on price as a barrier to expanding wholesale.

"Even with eight acres it's tough to do any wholesaling just because you know what you're going to get moneywise… The better prices [are the main motivator for selling at farmers markets]. I feel that I need to get everything I can out of the farm…Maybe if you had a contract that guaranteed you would sell everything you grew that'd be one thing, but I've heard stories about people having contracts with Walmart and some other places and they back out at the last minute…It kind of turns you off from even looking at the wholesale markets when you hear stories like that" (Hartz 2013).

"…The size of my farm—or garden—is not really adequate to sell at lower wholesale prices. The guy at [a local restaurant] is talking two dollars a pound or goes up a little from there, which isn't terrible. At Metrocentre, those tomatoes are being sold for probably $2 a pound. But when I sell my extras wholesale to the Metrocentre it's for about $1 per pound. I'm able—because it's a farmers market and because I grow a specialty crop and because it's organic—to get $3 a pound at the Riverfront Market. Going much below that… would be a bit cost-preventative… I've lived in other places around the country that can definitely command a higher price. It's kind of funny that people will sometimes come to the market and scoff at my prices of $3 a pound for organic heirloom tomatoes, then I'll go to Fresh Market and see "organic heirloom tomatoes" grown in Mexico or California for $5 a pound. If that demand could be created around here on a

larger scale there'd definitely be more value" ("Thunderbolt" 2013).

"The problem is that it's hard to get the price you need for your products if you're doing [wholesale]—especially with stores—you're limited on what you can sell. You need to have that farmers market to sell what you have when you have it" (Vigue 2013).

"Most grocery stores survive off of one percent… everyone I know over here who's ever sold to groceries has always marked down to wholesale prices…even though they might be selling at retail quantities, none of them get retail prices" (Patterson 2013).

Appendix 6. Grower quotes on certification as a barrier to expanding wholesale.

"These restaurants I talked to verbally, they knew and took my word for it that I'm organic. The farm that I sell to at the Metrocentre is organic, and they took my word for it… when you work on that small of a scale and you're not dealing with contracts, there's a little more trust maybe. But if you're getting into contracts and doing [wholesale] on a larger scale, certification would probably be necessary" ("Thunderbolt" 2013).

"My biggest concern at this time is the increasing demands as far as being certified and the sanitation [due to] FSMA [changes]. It all depends on how those rules are interpreted and how they're finalized because it will shut this conversation down immediately…We can't afford it. We're not making that much money" (Patterson 2013).

"I don't know of any local farmers around here who are GAP-certified. It's something that none of us are really looking forward to" (Hartz 2013).

"The health department has screwed everything up…I would eat these women's pies a hundred times before any pie sold at the grocery store—this is natural, local, simple food. Not manufactured, no added chemicals and flavors and ingredients like at the stores. This is what's safer. And the increase in rules is killing that. The health department doesn't care about health. They only care about getting money—and they found there's a source here asking for permits and fees, so they jumped on it" (Hilst 2013).

"[I would not be interested in selling collectively with other farmers] mostly because of the new food safety laws that were recently passed that basically made so much paperwork required just to document your practices—even if you are perfectly following all the food safety rules, the amount for documentation required is just crazy. It's possible if you do it on a small scale and then are exempt from some of the regulations. But then, if you are small-scale and selling at the farmers markets, then it just doesn't make sense to sell also on the wholesale level. If there was some way to not have all the food safety problems going on and there was some sort of hub or if someone started like a produce distribution hub where the farmer didn't have to do any marketing, but he could also get premium prices, it'd be awesome. You'd probably have to get some sort of exemption from the government so that the farmer wouldn't have to be submitting all the paperwork, but if the farmer was small enough, he might not have to" (Vigue 2013).

Appendix 7. Buyer quotes on price as a barrier to increasing local food purchases.

"In the healthcare environment, we're driven by costs nowadays. Everything's dictated by cost, cost, cost" (Price 2013).

"In defense of the little farmer, they have costs associated to producing their products and when they sell their products they're often underbid by the large commercial growers. I mean, think about it—everyone wants the dollar-value hamburger. You can't even make a veggie burger for a buck, but everyone only wants to pay a dollar for that burger, and at the end of the day, you can only achieve those costs with quantity purchasing and quantity production. And the local little heroes—with maybe ten acres— I think they're a niche market but in a high-value place like our hospital—we're 327 beds here at Methodist—that's a lot of food we're buying. We're buying over a million dollars a year in food" (Price 2013).

"There are so many things to consider but in my mind, most people—maybe they do understand [the value of local food]—but from my understanding, they're not willing to pay a full price for the product" (Davison 2013).

"To be honest, the growing season's extremely short and if they're not doing anything that is a cash crop, saying corn or soybeans on top of the produce, then I don't think there's a way for [farmers] to keep their prices down and still make a living. Local does command a little more in pricing generally, but unless they're doing the cash crops or if they're a commercial local farm where they're extremely efficient—that's what it comes down to: They have to be extremely efficient and reduce their costs…If [farmers] want to go to the farmers market and make $2 or $3 a pound for potatoes, that's fair. But the restaurants are not going to pay $2 per pound. It's still a potato. It's not a golden potato…And cost is everything in restaurants…" (Kratz 2013).

"We could be approached by a host of local growers who have locally grown produce, but if the cost was prohibitive to our customers, then we couldn't buy it, because it's all based on demand, because we're not using it, we're only transporting it. And in the produce arena, the challenge that I see is the inherent nature of the product: Produce is a relatively low-cost item, and there's a tremendous amount of efficiency in producing it in bulk and packaging and all those different efficiencies. I believe that the local grower is going to lack in all those efficient technologies… and in getting the economies of scale that they're going… to need in order for them to be competitive. If head lettuce is $12 a case I see it's highly unlikely that a restaurant is going to pay three times that much for head lettuce just because it's grown locally… On the upside, transportation costs to get lettuce from California to here is probably 50 percent of the cost. That's where I see—as far as competing—[local farmers] don't have that cost of transportation to get it from California to Illinois, so they have that as

far as a competitive advantage. But can they grow it like California—where they're growing thousands of acres of lettuce and they have a machine that picks it and puts it in a box?" (Waugh 2013).

"Pricing is usually pretty good for us—we work with farmers well, they work with us. They usually quote me a price, and I'll tell them if it's around what I'm paying from the warehouse, but usually I'm pretty good [about price]" (Schatterman 2013).

"Cost is also very important. We work under very tight budget constraints here at the hospital—budget cuts are here right now as we speak, and I know that sometimes it can be a little more expensive [to buy local]" (Ewalt 2013).

"Do I agree [local farmers] should get a higher price than what I'm selling at the retail store? Well, they're those [customers] that will spend the extra money—just like they'll spend a little extra for an extra-fancy [graded] apple. Same thing with organics. You have your organic shoppers and they're willing to spend a little bit extra money, because they know it's free of pesticides and other contaminants… The food industry, in a nutshell, is a lot of money. Grocery stores sell between $100,000 and $150,000 a week in produce. So safety is huge and being GAP-certified is always preferred. Between safety, sizing, quality and wholesale packaging, it then comes down to price. And as wholesalers, we're in it to make money" (Desmond 2013).

"[We] understand why local growers have high prices, but we must also stay competitive" (Neimann 2013).

Appendix 8. Buyer quotes on sizing, availability quantity and quality as a barrier to increasing local purchasing.

"In healthcare, we use a 113-count apple. That means there are 113 apples in a case and we know that apple will be 97 calories. These mega-farms know how to size an apple and they're putting them in the case and it's 113 in the case. Period. The oranges are 120-count in a case. [Local vendors] don't have the mega-machinery. They're still going out handpicking them and you get your apples in a crate and you have to size them yourself" (Price 2013).

"The biggest issue we have with produce is that farmers want to sell large quantities… but are unwilling to package produce as large quantities of produce…Farmers just think they can show up [and] shoot us a price, but then we have to produce labor and boxes which should generally be included in the price of the product" (Kratz 2013).

"I do have farmers call me once, possibly twice a week concerning picking up products of theirs. Again, I ask them the same questions: a) What's the sizing? b) How are you packaging it? 3) The quantity that they have. Unfortunately in Illinois, we're really winding down on almost everything except for hard squashes and corn. So availability of a wide variety of stuff is very difficult to come by because Illinois has a very short growing season…Tomatoes right now are fairly plentiful and I had farmers come to me saying I have 300 pounds of tomatoes. We go through about 10,000 pounds of tomatoes per

week. So quantity wise, unfortunately, [is a problem]. I'd love to take in 300 pounds of tomatoes, but they're not sized. If you go into a grocery store, you'll notice most tomatoes are around the same size. Most wholesale, restaurants, hospitals… they want consistent sizing on products…They know they can buy a certain size tomato, get two slices out of it for this sandwich and expect good prices for the tomatoes. The local stuff seems to be a little more oddball-shaped. It's not that commercial" (Kratz 2013).

"I'd say availability [is the biggest issue]. It's not like someone is approaching us saying, 'Hey, we can supply you with these pork products or these beef products.' There's nobody communicating to us that says they're out trying to sell it…we haven't gotten past the "who has the supply" [step]. The hard part is knowing how much they have, because people in the restaurant business want the same quality products every week, and if they're not producing it on a continuous basis, they aren't going to just run it one week but not the next" (Waugh 2013).

"The weather's the biggest challenge, and if everything's available at the right time for us—availability is basically the only problem I have" (Schatterman 2013).

"I have national contracts for pretty much every item except shellfish and part of that is just the sourcing and the reliability issue. You know, I need…25 cases of lettuce a week. I have to have 25 cases of lettuce a week. I can't have 17 because it's been really hot and the

lettuce molted" (Price 2013).

"We get people that will call and ask us, 'Can we sell you x item?' And I'm like, 'Well, how much do you have?' And sometimes, I'd wipe his whole crop out in three days. And customers ask us about… homegrown strawberries. Well, there's no one in the area who could even supply me with the amount that we need. Because I'm one of the top ten in the company in berry sales. It would be great, but [it's not possible]" (Desmond 2013).

Appendix 9. Buyer quotes on liability insurance as a barrier to increasing local food purchases.

"Anyone that we deal with requires between $2 and $3 million in liability insurance. I'll give you an example [why]…About ten years ago there was a green onion scare. …[Prior to] that point, they were harvesting 2 million pounds of green onions a week. That dropped to 700,000 pounds, and it's never really recovered" (Kratz 2013).

"The minimum proof of insurance [we will accept] is $300,000 for liability…While GAP-certification is not required, each grower must complete a questionnaire concerning best practices" (Neimann 2013).

"We, as a company, and most companies around the country are requiring…over a million dollars of liability insurance to even talk. If you don't have it, we won't talk to you. I've had to turn some people away. You get a million dollar policy and then maybe we can talk, because Schnucks is not going to take the fall for something like [an outbreak]. HACCP plans are mainly for things that are coming out of

California, but as far as here…we don't require that as of right now. But anything coming out of California and especially any cut fruit is all HACCP plan (Desmond 2013).

Appendix 10. Buyer quotes on local food purchasing being out of their control.

"We belong to a purchasing co-op…they do all the contracting [and] field certification…If I wanted to know the day that particular apple was picked what the temperature was out in Washington [state] and the different temperature ranges that truck went through before it got to my backdoor before they've shipped it to me, they're able to provide me that detailed of a report—for just about everything— lettuce, zucchini, whatever fresh vegetable you buy. People don't realize how many safety processes and protocols have been put into place in the trucking industry and the food purchasing industry" (Price 2013).

"Schools depend on running a food-service program…They have very specific people that they buy from so it's very difficult to get into the school districts unless you're one of their suppliers. We do a couple hospitals too, but their requirements for GAP and insurance and everything is on the product they get… [Farmers are] very limited by the scope [of size]… until they think bigger, until they think of becoming a commercial farming enterprise and making it a little more wholesale friendly, it's going to be hit or miss for farms like that" (Kratz 2013).

"Ultimately there has to be demand at the consumer level of the product. Personally, they're a lot of buzzwords associated with the whole "green initiative" and "buying local" and "reducing your carbon footprint," but you still need to have that demand, and the growers are only going to make a decent living if there's enough demand to warrant what they do. And that demand really comes down to whether or not the consumer demands the product enough" (Waugh 2013).

"I'm the manager of catering at OSF—but all the purchasing decisions are mandated from our corporate office. They're the ones who do the contracts with our buyers. They make these contracts for the entire OSF corporation.

I'm very interested [in local food] but our hands are tied… Our corporate office has a contract with a prime vendor so that's where we have to buy our food from. We'd have to have meetings with our corporate office and we'd have to ask their permission to be able to [make any local purchases]" (Ewalt 2013).

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