

WOODFORD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2011

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*The Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Woodford County Board
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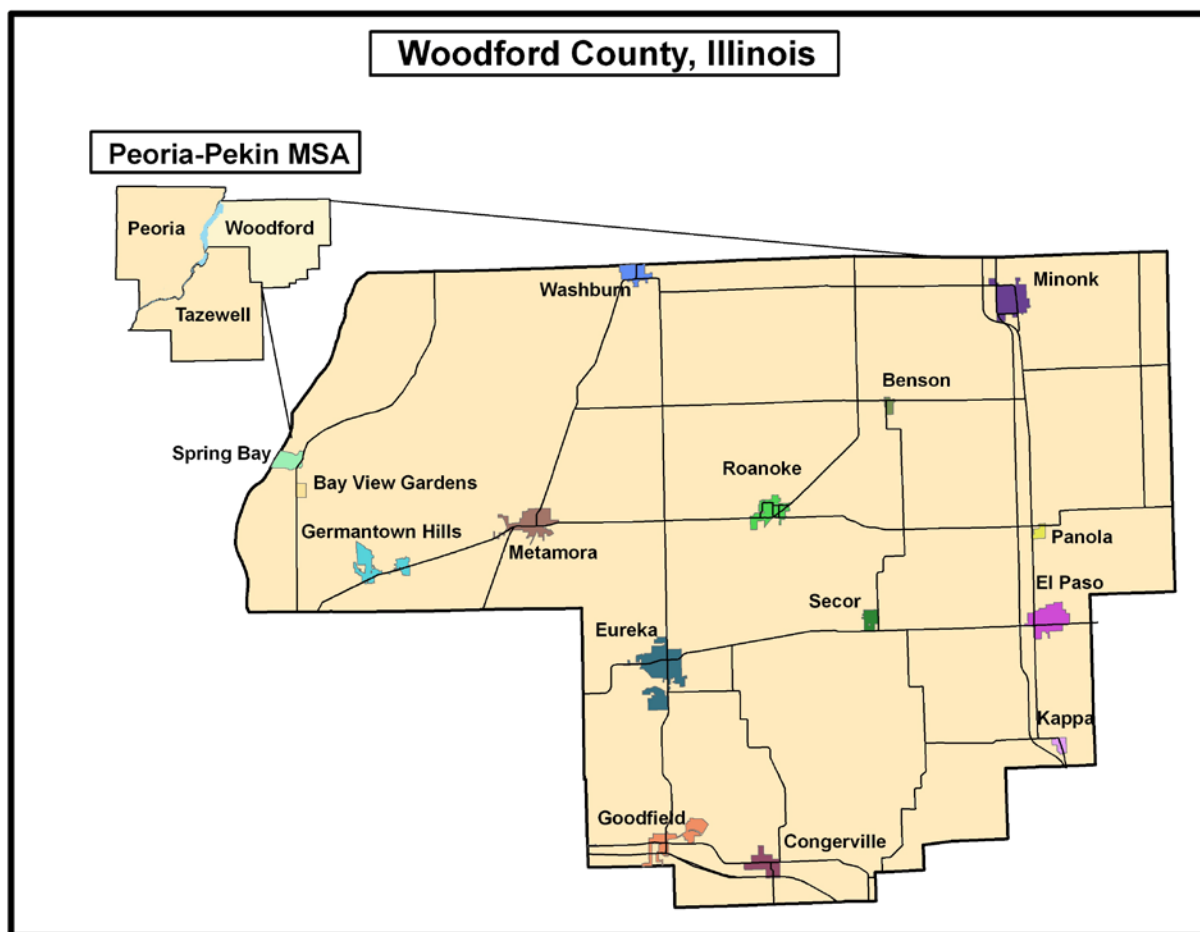
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INTRODUCTION

Background

Woodford County is located in central Illinois and is part of the Peoria/Pekin Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which also includes Peoria and Tazewell Counties. Of the three counties in the MSA, Woodford County is the most rural and least populated.

Woodford County has traditionally been known for its prime agricultural land and family farms. Due to its location between the two metropolitan areas of Peoria and Bloomington-Normal, it is also becoming known for its bedroom communities and its high quality of life.



Woodford County developed its first Comprehensive Plan in 1996. The plan had a planning horizon of twenty-five years, and promoted a successful balance between economic and

residential development, and natural resource preservation. As with any long range planning effort, it is important to periodically update the plan and look to a new planning horizon.

The 1996 Comprehensive Land Use Plan is being updated for one simple reason: change. The current plan was adopted in 1996, and since that time, new federal regulations, new economic realities, and new land uses have changed the physical landscape of Woodford County. Consider the following ways in which the County has changed in the last thirteen years:

Residential Growth

- The State Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity projects growth of 32% by 2030, to 46,857 people
 - 11,388 new people, 4,233 new homes, and 6,500 developed acres
- Loss of prime Agricultural land
- Potential challenge to adequate groundwater supply

Economic Development

- New Industrial Sectors bring new Land Use challenges
 - Windfarm Development
 - Biofuels
- Continually-changing global economics

Transportation Infrastructure

- Eastern Bypass with River Crossing
- Perceived Capacity and Congestion Issues on Routes 24, 116, and 150
- McCluggage Bridge congestion

Illinois River / Environmental Challenges

- Continued siltation and degradation of the IL River
- Inconsistent enforcement of Flood Plain and Stormwater Control ordinances

Tax-Base Inequities & Challenges

- Proportion of property tax revenues paid by Commercial & Industrial uses is far lower than in neighboring Counties
- The tax burden is placed on Residential & Agricultural uses. See chart below.

Proportion of Property Tax Burden by Property Type			
2008 Taxes			
<i>Property Type</i>	<i>Woodford</i>	<i>Peoria</i>	<i>Tazewell</i>
<i>Farm</i>	17.3%	3.6%	5.0%
<i>Residential</i>	72.2%	67.6%	74.9%
<i>Commercial</i>	8.9%	24.5%	17.1%
<i>Industrial</i>	1.4%	4.0%	3.0%
<i>Other</i>	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%
<i>TOTAL</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

Planning. It's a necessary activity completed by individuals to accomplish tasks and improve our future. Whether the task is simple, such as taking a family vacation, or more complex, like starting a business, developing a plan is the crucial first step to ensuring success.

The work of local government is no different. Planning is necessary to improve citizens' quality of life, provide beneficial services, and foster conditions conducive to economic growth. And when the activity being addressed by local government is as complex as land development, a well thought-out plan that provides useful direction and an achievable set of actions is needed.

The Comprehensive Plan puts forth a vision for what Woodford County wants to be in the future. This vision is a set of desired conditions that the County seeks to achieve in the future. While it is true that some changes that occur in Woodford County are outside of the County's control, it is also true that Woodford County possesses tremendous potential to direct the change it seeks. It is this ability that makes the comprehensive planning process such an exciting and useful process for the County.

An important note about the Comprehensive Plan is that it does not carry regulatory authority. The Comprehensive Plan is a guidance document that recommends policies to address issues such as land use, transportation, and economic development. Because a comprehensive planning process utilizes data and public input to yield recommended policies, it is the ideal vehicle on which to base land use regulations such as the zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance. So, while the Plan does not hold the force of law, it does guide the regulations that govern land use development in the County.

This plan is used to guide land use decisions made by the Woodford County Board. For example, the Board will refer to the Comprehensive Plan before rendering judgment on rezoning requests to change the zoning classification of a piece of property.

A major challenge of a Comprehensive Plan is balancing individual property rights with the common good. The Plan, as a guidance document for the county, must strike a fair balance between the interests of property owners with the general interests of the county residents as a whole. Most people would agree that a property owner should not be allowed to play music so loud it interferes with his neighbor's enjoyment of his property. However, the case is not so simple when an action by a property owner interferes with the public good. For example, building in a flood plain may negatively impact downstream properties. For this reason, the laws and ordinances of a jurisdiction must balance these competing interests.

Planning Process

The planning process began in the summer of 2008 with the formation of the Woodford County Comprehensive Plan Committee. The Committee consisted of representatives of the County Board, County staff, municipal officials. Also on the committee were representatives of the Woodford County Farm Bureau, Woodford County Regional Office of Education, and the Woodford County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Because this plan is for the future of Woodford County, it was important to gather input from residents to understand their concerns and establish how their quality of life can be improved. Public input was gathered through two vehicles: a survey and public meetings.

The survey was made available in the fall of 2008 and sought input on major County issues, environmental concerns, location of new development, and transportation. Over 120 persons responded to the survey. Survey Highlights can be found at the top of the next page.

Two rounds of public meetings were held. The first round consisted of meetings in Germantown Hills, Metamora, El Paso, and Roanoke in November 2008 where TCRPC and members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee were present to speak with individuals and answer questions. Posters presenting the purpose of the plan, the plan's focus areas, agriculture data, development data, economic data, and population data were displayed, and the 1996 plan was available for review. The second round was held in August 2010 and consisted of meetings in Germantown Hills, Eureka, and Roanoke, where residents reviewed the draft of the new plan and provided feedback.

TCRPC staff also attended numerous city council/village board meetings in the fall of 2008 to obtain input from elected officials.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Growth and Development

- The rural nature of the county should be preserved
- There should be a balance between new development and preserving agricultural land

Economic Development

- The county should focus on attracting/expanding small businesses in the county
- More everyday services such as retail stores and restaurants are needed in the municipalities
- There is not a clear consensus on the appropriateness of wind farms

Transportation

- There is not a clear consensus on the need for the Eastern Bypass

Environment

- Environmental and natural resources must be protected in the future
- Our water quality must be maintained

The Comprehensive Plan Committee gather the input from the survey and first round of public meetings to develop the plan. They also drew upon their experiences in their roles as experts in their respective fields. Tri-County Regional Planning Commission staff acted as facilitators.

How Is the Plan Organized?

The plan consists of three major concepts: themes, principles, and implementation strategies. **Themes** are major issues affecting the County's future that guided development of the plan. **Principles** are statements of desired future conditions that give direction to each theme. Principles can be likened to "goals," and each theme contains multiple principles. **Implementation strategies** are specific actions and guidelines to accomplish a principle. One or more implementation strategies are listed beneath each principle. Implementation strategies, by their nature, are prescriptive in order to encourage their completion and foster implementation of the plan.

Themes

The five themes of this Woodford County Comprehensive Plan are:

- **Balanced growth of agriculture and other types of development**
- **Economic Development**
- **Proactive collaboration**
- **Transportation**
- **Respect the environment, paying special attention to the Illinois River and Mackinaw River Valley**

Each of these themes will be discussed in turn.

THEME: BALANCED GROWTH OF AGRICULTURE AND OTHER TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT

Woodford County has many opportunities for growth in different sectors and geographic areas that can promote economic vitality. For wisest growth, the environment and transportation systems must be considered when establishing growth opportunities.

A review of demographic data is important for any comprehensive planning process in order to analyze trends that are affecting the county.

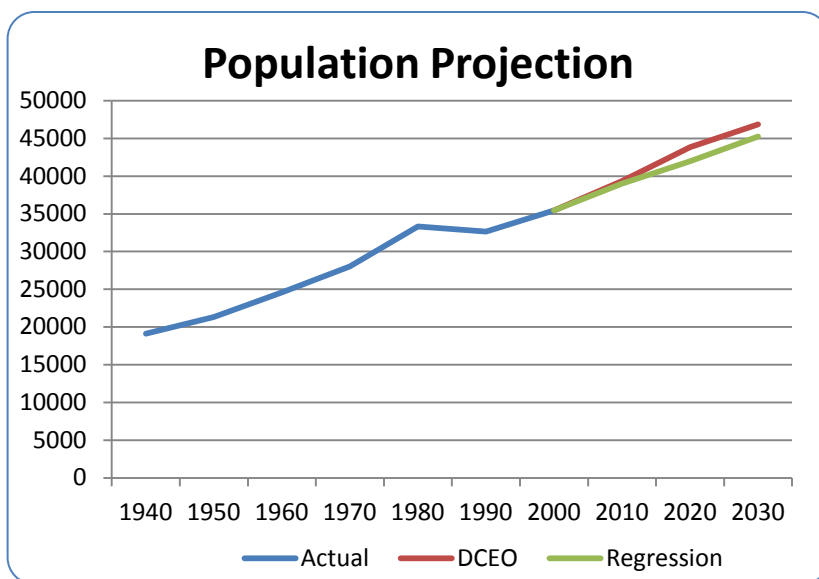
Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Woodford County was 35,469. Except for a reduction in population during the economic recession of the 1980's, the population of the county has seen steady growth for the past sixty years.

The population of Woodford County in twenty years was estimated in order to have a basis for planning for future population growth. Two methods were used to project future population. The first was a projection developed by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). According to DCEO, the population of Woodford County in 2030 will be 46,900, a 32% increase over the 2000 population.

A second method uses regression analysis based on past population growth. This method results in a 2030 population of approximately 45,000, which is a 27% increase over the 2000 population.

For the purposes of this plan, the projected population in 2030 is 45,000 to 47,000 residents.



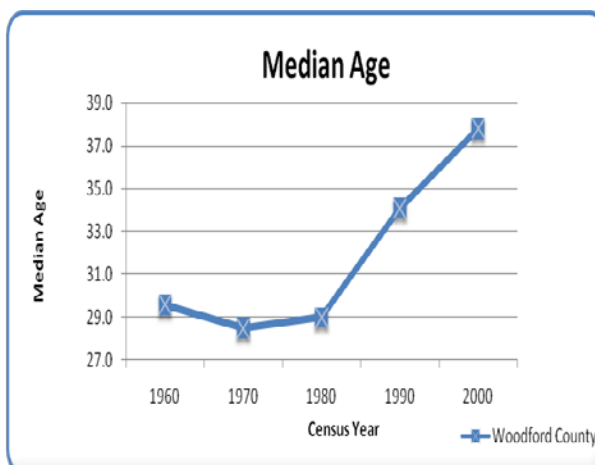
Age of Population

The median age of the population of Woodford County has increased significantly in the last twenty years. (Median age means one-half of the population is below this number, and one-half

is above.) The median age of Woodford County residents has increased every 10 years since 1970, similar to regional and nationwide population trends. An aging population requires different types of services and development than does a younger population.

Incorporated vs. Unincorporated Population

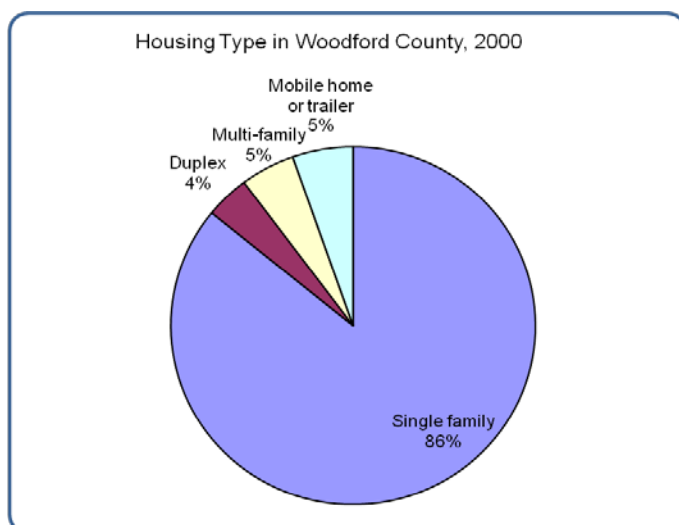
In 2000, 58% of the population of Woodford County lived in incorporated communities such as Eureka, El Paso, Metamora and Germantown Hills, with the remaining 42% living in rural, or unincorporated areas. In 1990, 55% of the population lived in incorporated communities, and 45% in unincorporated areas. There is a slight trend for residents to live in incorporated communities.



Homes and businesses located in most incorporated communities have access to public water and sewer, while homes and businesses in the unincorporated areas use private wells and septic systems. The exception to this is that many homes and businesses in unincorporated areas near Germantown Hills are served by Caterpillar Trail Water District.

Housing Type

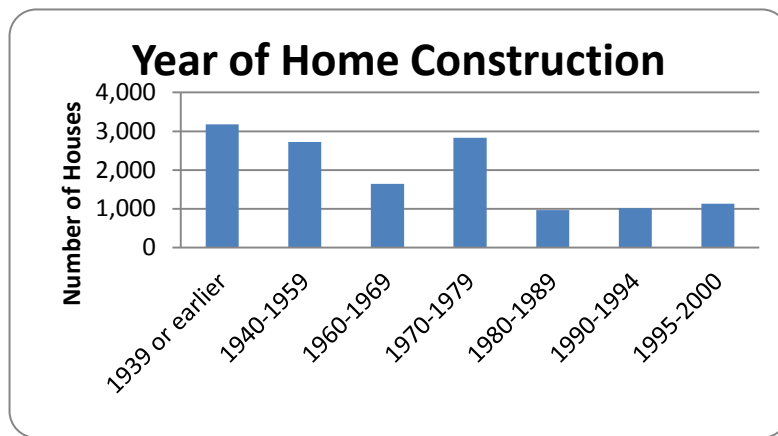
Information on housing is important from a land use perspective. Knowing the types of housing preferred by Woodford County residents will help in determining future housing needs.



The predominant form of housing in Woodford County is single family housing, with 86% of residents in both incorporated and unincorporated areas living in single-family homes. There is minimal multi-family housing in the county. A strong preference for single-family homes is expected to continue as the county grows in population.

Age of Housing

Woodford County has an aging housing stock. According to the 2000 US Census, 77% of the homes in the county (in both incorporated and unincorporated areas) were built before 1980.

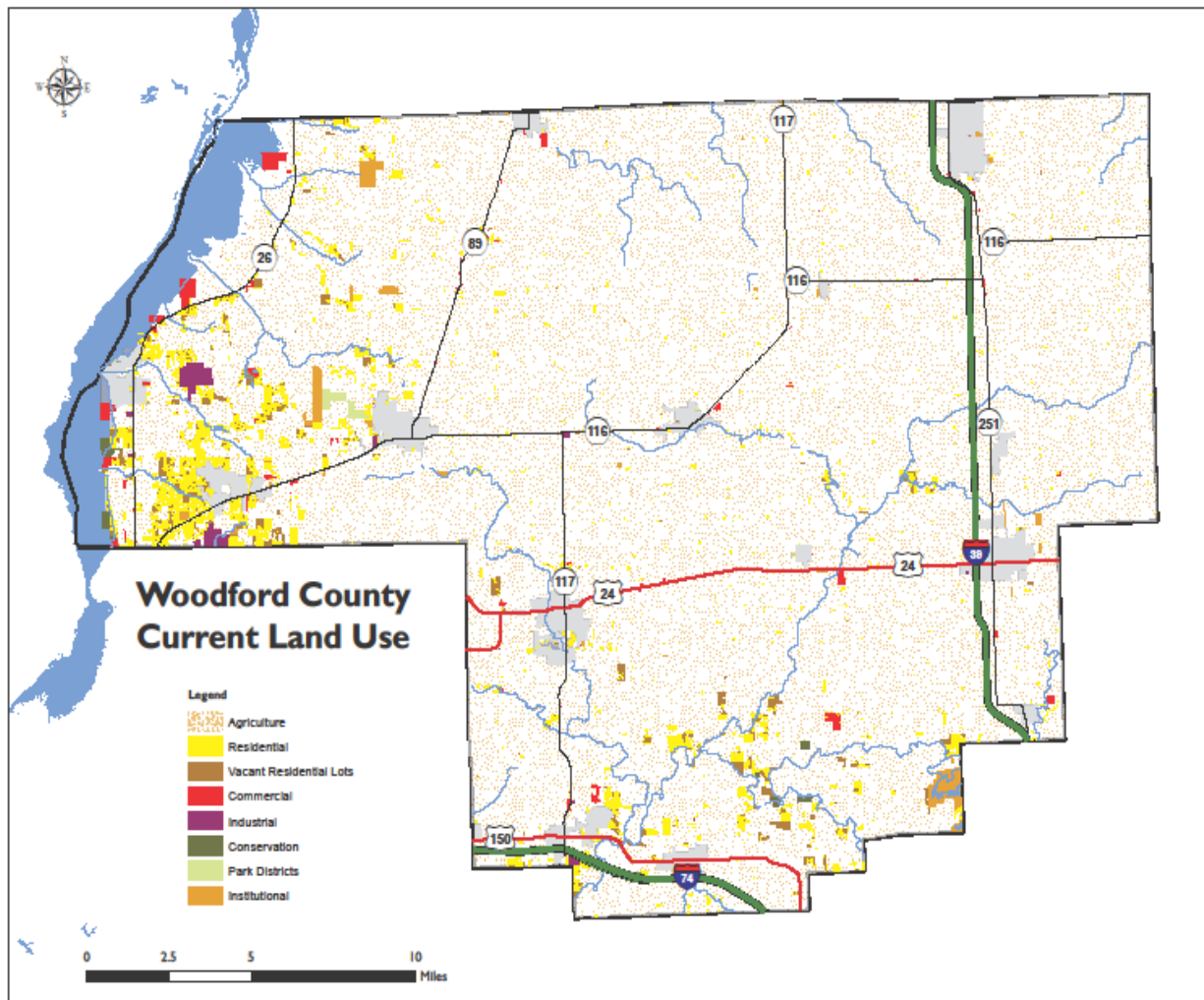


Land Use

The Current Land Use map on the following page shows the predominant land uses in Woodford County. The chart below indicates the percentage of land in Woodford County occupied by each land use.

Breakdown of Land Uses in Woodford County		
<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<i>Agriculture</i>	307,705.55	88.6%
<i>Residential Non-Farm</i>	11,646.49	3.4%
<i>Vacant Residential Lots</i>	2,860.79	0.8%
<i>Institutional</i>	1,871.28	0.5%
<i>Commercial</i>	1,514.65	0.4%
<i>Industrial</i>	882.14	0.3%
<i>Conservation/Park Districts</i>	694.86	0.1%
<i>Other (Water or within Municipalities)</i>	20,204.51	5.8%
TOTAL	347,380.27	99.9%
Source: Woodford County Assessor		

This information is somewhat misleading as to the amount of land used for agriculture. The information was obtained from the Woodford County Assessor's Office, and is based on the land use type at which the property is assessed. Much of the land on the western side of the county along the river bluffs is assessed as agricultural land, although it is not used as such.



Residential Land Use

Non-farm Residential land uses currently make up 3.4% of the land use in the unincorporated part of the county. The Current Land Use Map shows the distribution of homes outside of incorporated communities. (Farmsteads are not included.) Most of the non-farm housing in unincorporated areas is on the west side of the county in the Illinois River bluffs surrounding Germantown Hills, Metamora, Spring Bay, and Bayview Gardens, or in the southern part of the county in the Mackinaw River watershed.

An analysis was undertaken to determine the amount of acres of land that will be converted to residential use between 2010 and 2030, assuming a 2020 population of 46,000.

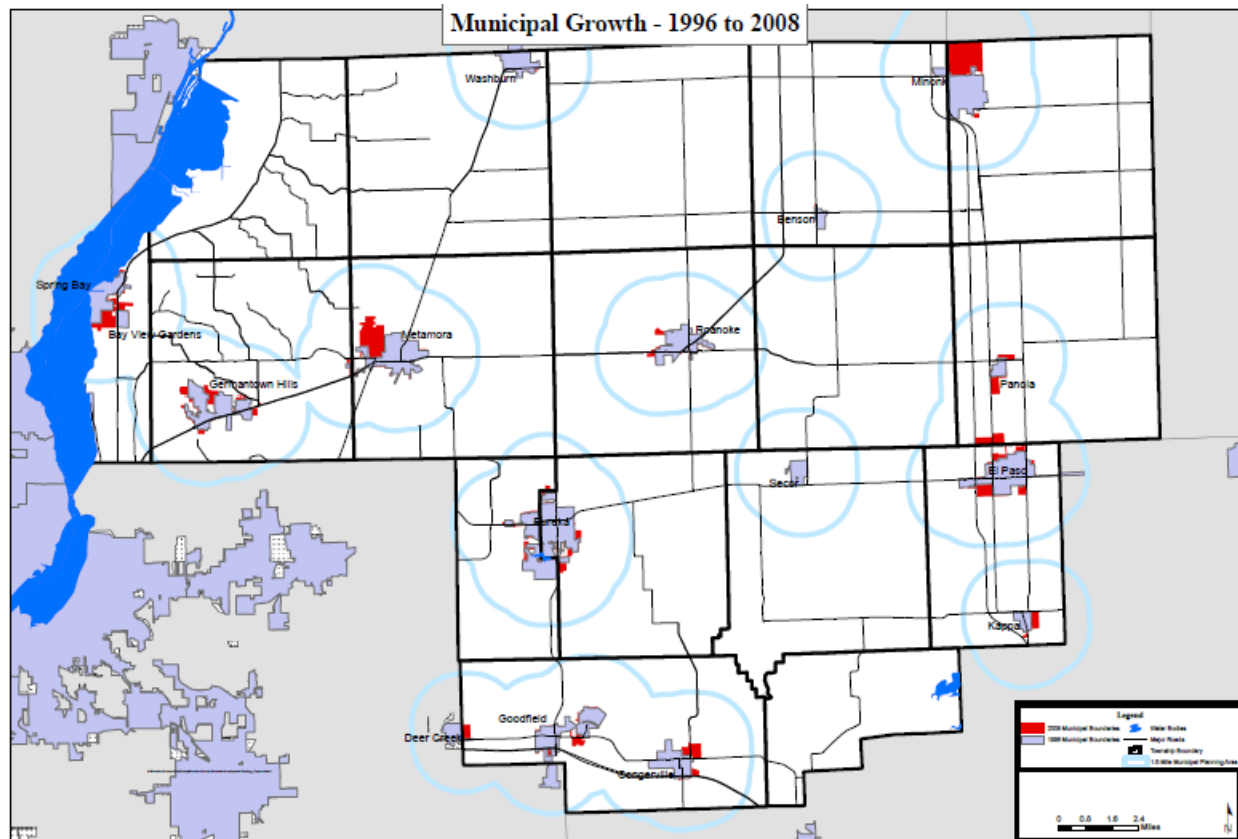
The first step was to determine the number of new homes that will be built. The population will increase by approximately 11,000 persons. At 2.7 persons per household (according to the 2000 Census), approximately 4,100 new homes will be needed. Again, according to the 2000 Census, 58%, or 2,400, of those homes will be in incorporated areas, and 42%, or 1,700, in unincorporated areas. The following chart shows the amount of acreage that will be needed to accommodate these homes.

Amount of Land Needed for Residential Use 2010 to 2030			
	<i>Average Lot Size</i>	<i>Number of Homes</i>	<i>Acres Needed</i>
<i>Unincorporated Areas</i>	3 acres	1,700	5,100
<i>Incorporated Areas</i>	1/3 acre	2,400	800
<i>TOTAL</i>			5,900

According to the chart above, approximately 5,900 acres of land will be converted to residential use between 2010 and 2030.

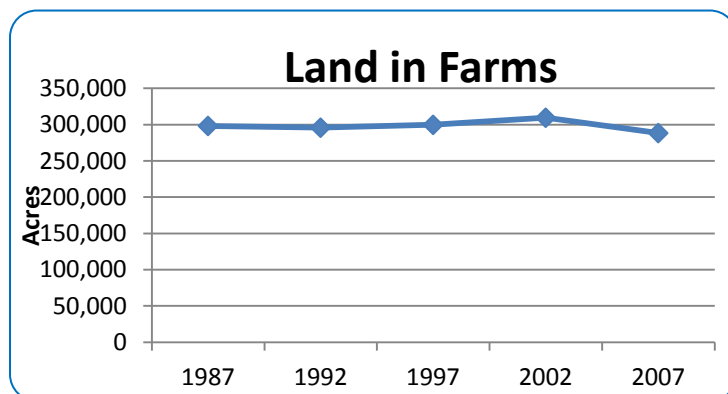
What land will be converted? For incorporated communities, it will most likely be land adjacent to current corporate limits so the new developments have access to public water and sewer.

The map on the next page shows the growth of municipalities from 1996 to 2008. The areas in red represent land annexed by a jurisdiction during that time. The municipalities with the most growth are either located close to Peoria or are located along an interstate. Most, but not all, of the annexed areas have been developed with residential subdivisions. The exceptions are the communities of Minonk, which annexed approximately 600 acres of land for a racetrack, and El Paso, which annexed land for a winery.



Where will land be converted for residential uses in unincorporated areas? Based on past unincorporated development, most of it will be on land that is now in agriculture or is in an environmental/conservation area such as the Illinois River bluffs or the Mackinaw River valley.

Agriculture Land Use



Agriculture has traditionally been the basis of Woodford County's economy, and is the largest land use in the county. According to the chart on Page 11, over 88% of the land area in the county is assessed as agriculture.

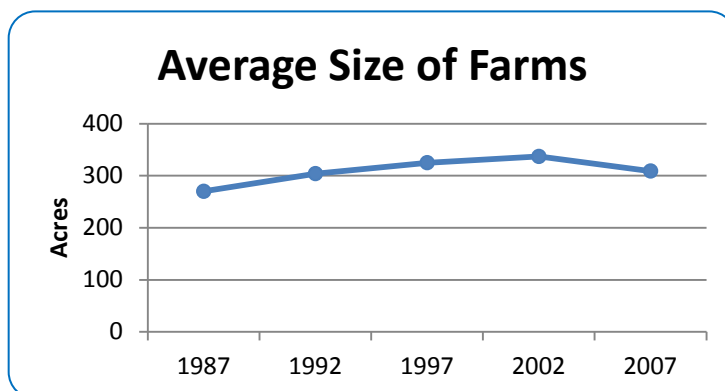
According to the US Department of Agriculture, the number of acres of

land in farms has remained relatively stable over the last twenty years, although there was a slight reduction in 2007. This reduction could be due to land being converted from agricultural use to residential development.

The average size of farms has remained relatively stable; however, there was a slight decrease in the 2007 number. It isn't known at this time if this downward trend will continue. (See chart below.)

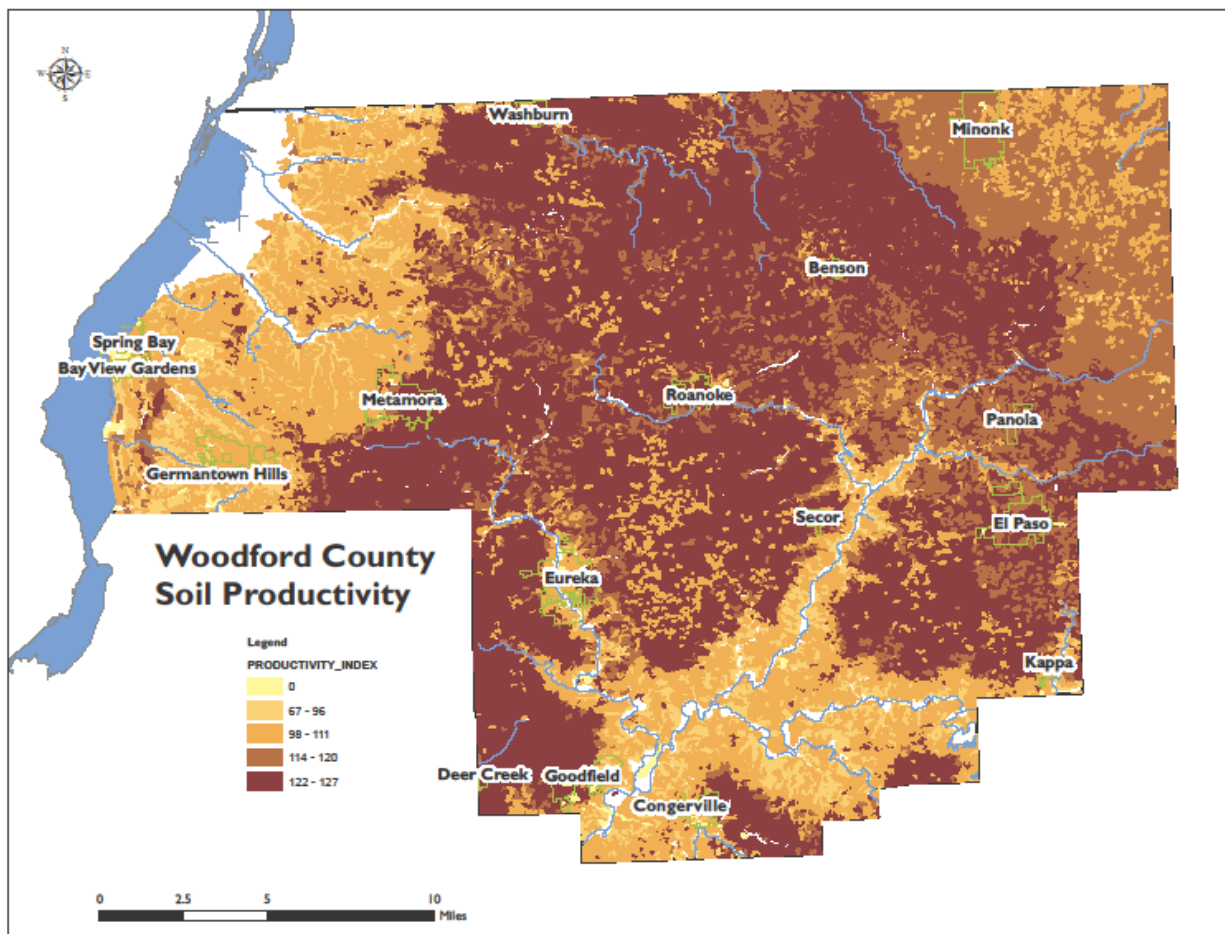
The demand for Woodford County's agricultural products continues to grow. For example, in addition to growing corn for human and livestock consumption, there is a growing demand for corn, soybeans, or other oil-rich seed crops (e.g. pennycress) for use in creating biofuels. With the significant demand increase, there is also significant pressure to utilize all

available parcels of land for production. If the use of corn and soybeans for biofuels continues to increase, the trend may have an increasing impact on land use, increasing the demand for tillable acres.



While Woodford County has some of the most productive agricultural land in the state, not all of the land is equally productive. The map on the following page shows the Productivity Index of farmland in the county. The Productivity Index, or PI, is established by the University Of Illinois College Of Agriculture and is based on soil type and crop yield, which measures the productivity of the land; the higher the PI, the more productive the land.

The most productive farmland is found in the center of the county. Land in the vicinity of the Illinois River bluffs and the Mackinaw River valley is not as productive.



Commercial and Industrial Land Use

Approximately 2,400 acres of land in the unincorporated parts of the county is used for commercial or industrial purposes, which accounts for less than 1% of the total land area in the County.

Summary

The data regarding increased population, combined with a decrease in the number of acres of land used for agriculture, results in the following:

- Conversion of farmland to other land uses results in the permanent loss of productive agricultural land.
- Land that is converted from farmland will most likely be developed for residential purposes; very little land will be developed for commercial or industrial uses.

Theme, Principles, and Implementation Strategies

BALANCED GROWTH OF AGRICULTURE AND OTHER TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT

Woodford County has many opportunities for growth in different sectors and geographic areas. For wisest growth, the environment and transportation systems must be considered when establishing growth opportunities.

Principle 1	New residential, commercial, and industrial growth is located in areas within or adjacent to areas of existing development.
Implementation Strategy 1	Encourage new residential, commercial, and industrial development to be contiguous to incorporated municipalities and served by public water and sewer.
Implementation Strategy 2	Encourage new commercial and industrial uses to be located along major transportation corridors.
Implementation Strategy 3	Create incentives, especially non-financial, to support the rehabilitation of existing properties and infill housing within incorporated communities.

Principle 2	Agriculture is preserved and supported through mutual respect and balance among agriculture, development, and the environment.
Implementation Strategy 1	Avoid 'leapfrog' development to preserve contiguous tracts of productive agricultural land.
Implementation Strategy 2	Ensure new residents moving into rural areas are educated about agricultural activities and rural living (e.g. distribute Farm Bureau "Country Living" brochure to realtors).
Implementation Strategy 3	Establish a buffer between agriculture and residential land uses for activities like aerial spraying.

Principle 3	Infrastructure costs are minimized by basing growth policies and development decisions on a thorough and sound evaluation of financial sustainability.
Implementation Strategy 1	Require the County to maintain financial balance.
Implementation Strategy 2	Ensure that property and sales taxes generated, at a minimum, equal the cost of providing services to new development.
Implementation Strategy 3	Consider long-term economic benefits when making development decisions.

Principle 4	Communities remain cohesive, and hometown values are encouraged.
Implementation Strategy 1	Encourage participation in and publicity of local events.
Implementation Strategy 2	Future growth provides a diversity of safe and attractive places to live or locate.

Principle 5	Effective emergency response services are maintained and/or improved for all citizens.
Implementation Strategy 1	Promote and encourage incentives and increased training for volunteer firefighters, ambulance, and search and rescue personnel.

THEME: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

Economic development is an important factor in making local land use planning decisions. The location of businesses and industries has a significant impact of the overall health of the county.

Economic Sectors

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

Agriculture has historically been the economic base of Woodford County. The previous chapter of this document indicated that over 88% of the land area in the county is assessed for agricultural purposes. However, only 4% of the population is employed directly in farming.

Woodford County Employment

The table beginning on the top of the next page shows the top fifty employers in Woodford County. It is dominated by the education and health care fields.

EMPLOYMENT IN WOODFORD COUNTY		
Business Name	Location	Number of Employees
Parsons Company, Inc.	Roanoke	221
Metamora Community Nursing Home	Metamora	200
Apostolic Christian Home of Eureka, Illinois	Eureka	190
Eureka Community Unit School District 140	Eureka	170
Bromenn Healthcare	Eureka	160
Maple Lawn Homes, Inc.	Eureka	150
El Paso- Gridley Unit 11	El Paso	150
Cox Transfer, Inc.	Eureka	130
Trustees of Eureka College Inc	Eureka	120
Maple Lawn Health Center	Eureka	120
Metamora Township High School , District 122	Metamora	120
County of Woodford	Eureka	108
Metamora Community Consolidated Schl Dst 1	Metamora	100
Apostolic Christian Home of Roanoke, Illinois	Roanoke	100
El Paso- Gridley Unit 11	El Paso	100
El Paso Nhp LLC	El Paso	93
The National Wheel-O-Vator Co Inc	Roanoke	85
Heritage Manor-El Paso, LLC	El Paso	80
Midamerica Care Foundation Inc	El Paso	80
Woodford County Special Education Co-Op	Metamora	75
Village of Roanoke	Roanoke	74
Angels Visiting	Roanoke	70
Heritage Enterprises, Inc.	El Paso	70
Germantown Hills Sch Dist 69	Metamora	65
Ford Heller Sales Inc	El Paso	65
Charles River Laboratories, Inc.	Roanoke	63
M & M Markets Inc	Metamora	62
Heritage Enterprises, Inc	Minonk	62
Premier Fabrication, Inc.	Congerville	60
El Paso Golf Club	El Paso	60
El Paso Foods Inc	El Paso	60
Eureka Community Unit School District 140	Eureka	54
Eureka Middle School	Eureka	54
Washington Equipment Company Inc	Eureka	50
Kirby Foods, Inc.	Eureka	50
First Baptist Church of Eureka	Eureka	50
McBride & Shoff, Inc.	Metamora	50
Short Enterprises Inc	Metamora	50
Mtco Corporation	Metamora	50
E. I. Du Pont De Nemours and Company	El Paso	50
Pfister Hybrid Corn Company Inc	El Paso	50
Bre Mid America, Inc	El Paso	50
Alpha Community Bank	Minonk	50
Fieldcrest Community School District 6	Minonk	50
Association For The Developmentally Disabled	Eureka	45
Kirby Foods, Inc.	Metamora	45
Metamora Telephone Co	Metamora	45
El Paso- Gridley Unit 11	El Paso	45
Martin Equipment of Illinois, Inc.	Goodfield	44
Ltc Pharmacy Services Inc	Minonk	42

Source: Economic Development Council of Central Illinois

Ideally, a community or region has a substantial number of manufacturing or industrial jobs. These are the jobs that bring in dollars from outside the area. They are also the businesses that generate property taxes for the local governments.

Woodford County does not have a large manufacturing or industrial base. The largest employer is Parsons Company, with 221 employees.

What does the future hold for the employment opportunities in Woodford County? If the past is any predictor of the future, manufacturing jobs will continue to be limited.

The proponents of the Eastern Bypass believe that construction of that roadway will bring economic development to the county. Without a major expressway, it will be difficult to bring in new industry or expand existing companies. (A discussion of the Eastern Bypass can found in the Transportation section of this plan.)

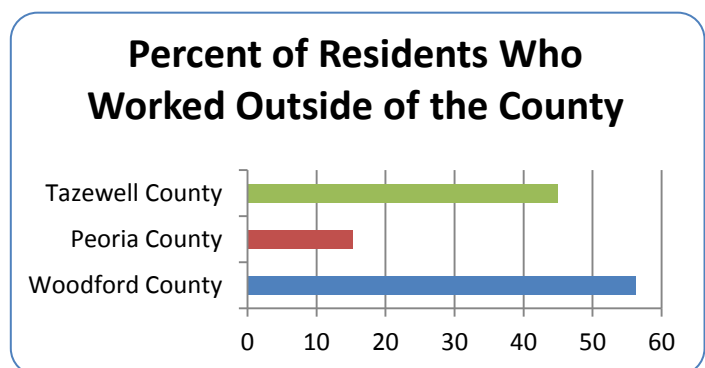
Tourism

Tourism is an economic development sector that is often overlooked, yet it can contribute to Woodford County's economy. Some of the types of tourism that would benefit the county are promotion of natural resources, recreational activities, historic preservation and agritourism. For example, the northwest corner of the county is one of the state's best duck hunting areas. The Illinois river which borders the western side of the county can be used for recreational activities.

Tourism benefits the county by bringing dollars into the area. Gas stations, convenience stores, and restaurants are obvious businesses where tourists spend money. Other businesses, such as meat lockers and taxidermists, also benefit.

Land Use Implications

It is well known that many of the residents of Woodford County are employed outside of the county. Over half of employed persons work outside of Woodford County. In Peoria County, for example, the most urbanized of the three counties in the region, only 15% work outside the county. As the county becomes more of a collection of bedroom communities,

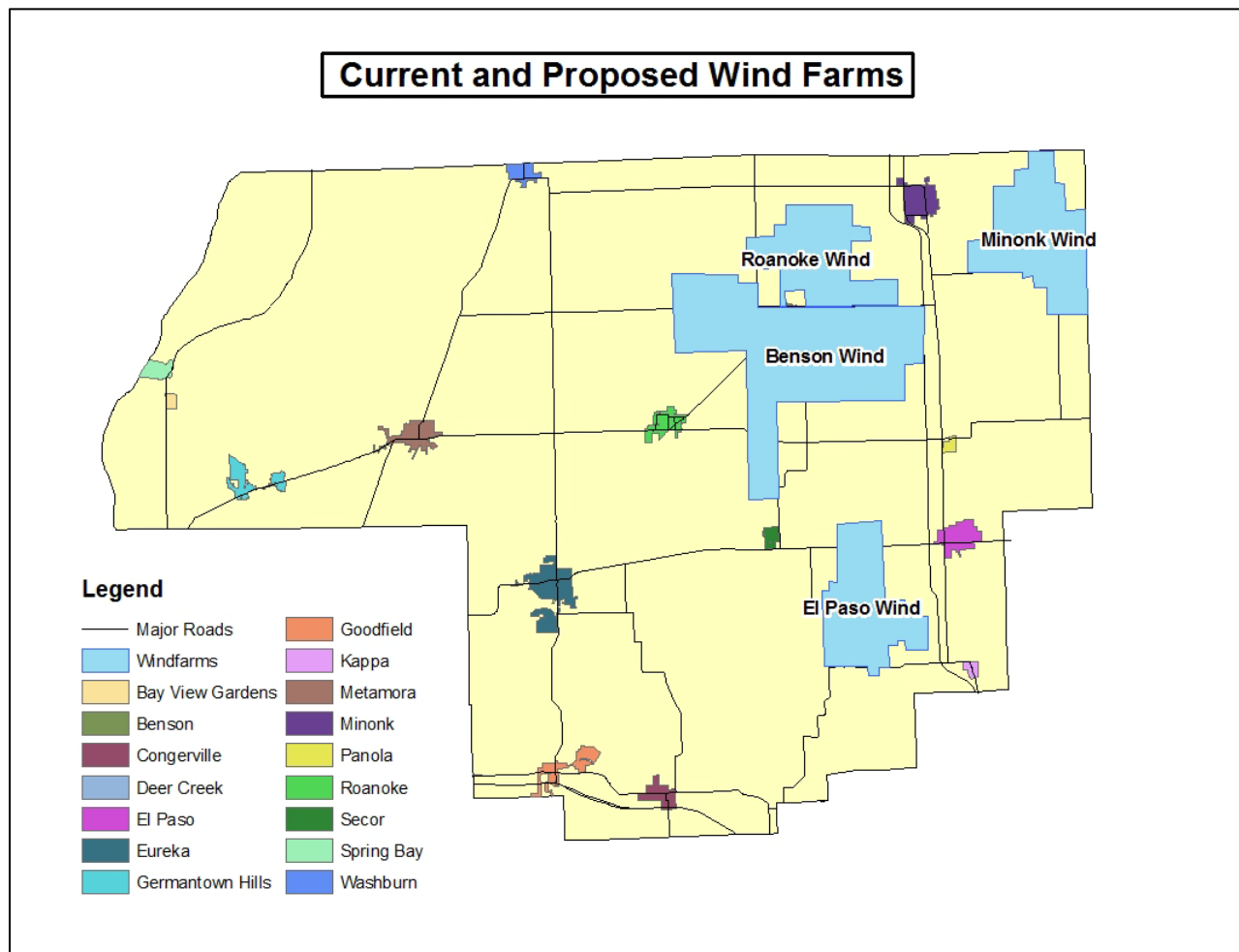


this will continue. The chart to the right indicates the percentage of residents in Woodford County who work outside of the county compared to the same statistic for Peoria and Tazewell Counties.

Woodford County has often been referred to a ‘bedroom county.’ On the western side of the county, many residents commute to Peoria for employment. On the eastern side of the county, many residents commute to the Bloomington/Normal area. This trend is expected to continue into the future.

Wind Farms

Recent years have seen a new land use in Woodford County. Woodford County has seen the growth of wind energy that has been spreading across the nation. The Minonk Windfarm was officially approved in July of 2010, and three more windfarm sites have been proposed west of I-39. It is becoming increasingly important that Woodford County take steps to plan for the existence of one windfarm and the possibility of additional windfarms in the future.



Theme, Principles, and Implementation Strategies

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

Principle 1	Businesses are retained, attracted, and locally expanded to ensure a solid tax base.
Implementation Strategy 1	Review existing economic development programs to ensure that services necessary for a sound economy are present.
Implementation Strategy 2	Encourage competitive County-wide high speed internet service.
Implementation Strategy 3	Encourage the placement and use of fiber-optic cable systems throughout the county.
Implementation Strategy 4	Continue to be a part of the Heart Of Illinois Regional Port District.
Implementation Strategy 5	Establish an Economic Development Committee and develop an Economic Development Plan for the county that includes land designated for industrial development.

Principle 2	Technical and vocational training and education are encouraged in order to ensure a properly trained workforce necessary for a strong economy.
Implementation Strategy 1	Expand vocational education opportunities for pool of qualified employees.
Implementation Strategy 2	Coordinate with public school systems to ensure the provisions of vocational training.
Implementation Strategy 3	Coordinate with public school systems to support and improve training specifically with reading, writing, and arithmetic skills.
Implementation Strategy 4	Work with school districts to investigate job training cooperation opportunities such as internships.
Implementation Strategy 5	Collaborate with the business community on new and unique programs and funding to train youth in necessary skills.
Implementation Strategy 6	Encourage schools to provide curriculum that offers both basic vocational and college preparatory classes.

Principle 3	Diversification in the agricultural economy is encouraged by supporting non-traditional and value-added agricultural products, and agriculture-related industry.
Implementation Strategy 1	Foster the development of non-traditional crop production by supporting and incentivizing farmers markets and locally-sold agricultural products.
Implementation Strategy 2	Encourage community programs that promote agriculture to youth, such as cleaning up vacant lots, planting gardens, and selling produce.

Principle 4	Existing and new development offers recreational amenities.
Implementation Strategy 1	Encourage multi-use trails in existing and new residential developments.
Implementation Strategy 2	Actively develop the riverfront as a location for play, work, and natural resource preservation.
Implementation Strategy 3	Support the conversion of future abandoned railroad corridors into a multi-use trail.

THEME: PROACTIVE COLLABORATION

Woodford County is being pulled in different directions by growth opportunities and surrounding areas. Community, governmental, and non-profit agencies need to work together to address our opportunities and challenges.

Background

The state of Illinois has a vast array of governmental units. According to the Illinois Department of Commerce, there are over 6,600 units of local government in the state, and almost all have the power to impose property taxes.

Woodford County is no exception to this fact. In addition to county government, there are cities, villages, townships, school districts, and water districts, to name a few. As Woodford County grows, it becomes more and more important to coordinate growth with all units of government.

In addition to the number of governmental units, there is another factor that makes cooperation important, especially between the county and municipalities. In Illinois, state law gives municipalities the right to plan for the future use of land within one and one-half miles of their corporate limits.

Many municipalities in Woodford County have adopted a Comprehensive Plan, which is the vehicle for planning in the mile-and-a-half area. The following municipalities have such a plan: Germantown Hills, Metamora, Roanoke, El Paso, and Eureka.

The land within a municipalities' mile-and-a-half jurisdiction is still under county zoning authority unless the land is annexed to the municipality. A potential conflict arises if there are inconsistencies between the community's plan and the county's plan.

Theme, Principles, and Implementation Strategies

PROACTIVE COLLABORATION

Woodford County is being pulled in different directions by growth opportunities and surrounding areas. Community, non-profit, and governmental agencies need to work together to address our opportunities and challenges.

Principle 1	The County proactively seeks opportunities and acknowledges challenges.
Principle 2	Municipalities and townships are included in land-use and transportation decisions when appropriate.
Implementation Strategy 1	Cooperate with Metamora and Germantown Hills growth area to determine future growth opportunities and restrictions.
Implementation Strategy 2	Respect the Future Land Use Plans of municipalities as they plan for the future growth of land within their one-and-a-half mile planning jurisdictions.
Principle 3	Officials in Woodford County, its municipalities, townships, and other governmental units are familiar with each other's goals.
Implementation Strategy 1	Investigate creation of Woodford County Council of Governments.
Implementation Strategy 2	Collaborate with other units of government internal and external to Woodford County on current issues and technologies.

THEME: TRANSPORTATION

Woodford County's proximity to Peoria and Bloomington-Normal allows residents to work outside the county. The proposed Eastern Bypass raises development questions that should be addressed in order to provide the best transportation access within our county.

The goal of transportation planning is to provide the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout an area. Transportation is more than roadways for cars and trucks. It also includes mass transit, and non-motorized forms of transportation such as walking and bicycling. This section will discuss all three forms of transportation.

Highway Transportation

The county highway transportation system is typically composed of four types of roads, classified by the jurisdiction that maintains them. These four types of roads are: federal highways, state highways, county highways, and township roads.

For the most part, federal and state highways deal with the movement of people and goods into and out of the region as a whole, although they also carry traffic within the county. County highways and township roads, however, primarily carry traffic within the county.

The federal and state highway network is critical to economic development, as it transports freight into and out of the region. It also carries workers who are employed at businesses and industries inside and outside the county. The county highways and township roads provide an essential function of moving people and goods from farm to market.

Woodford County is fortunate to have a large number of federal and state highways which provide transportation connections to the urbanized area, as well as other regions and states. These routes include Interstates 74 and 39; US 24 and 150; and IL 26, 89, 116, 117 and 251.

While the Illinois Department of Transportation has the responsibility for developing and maintaining the federal and state highways, Woodford County is responsible for developing and maintaining its network of county highways; with the individual townships being responsible for maintaining township roads. The development and maintenance of the transportation infrastructure must be done in a fiscally sustainable fashion.

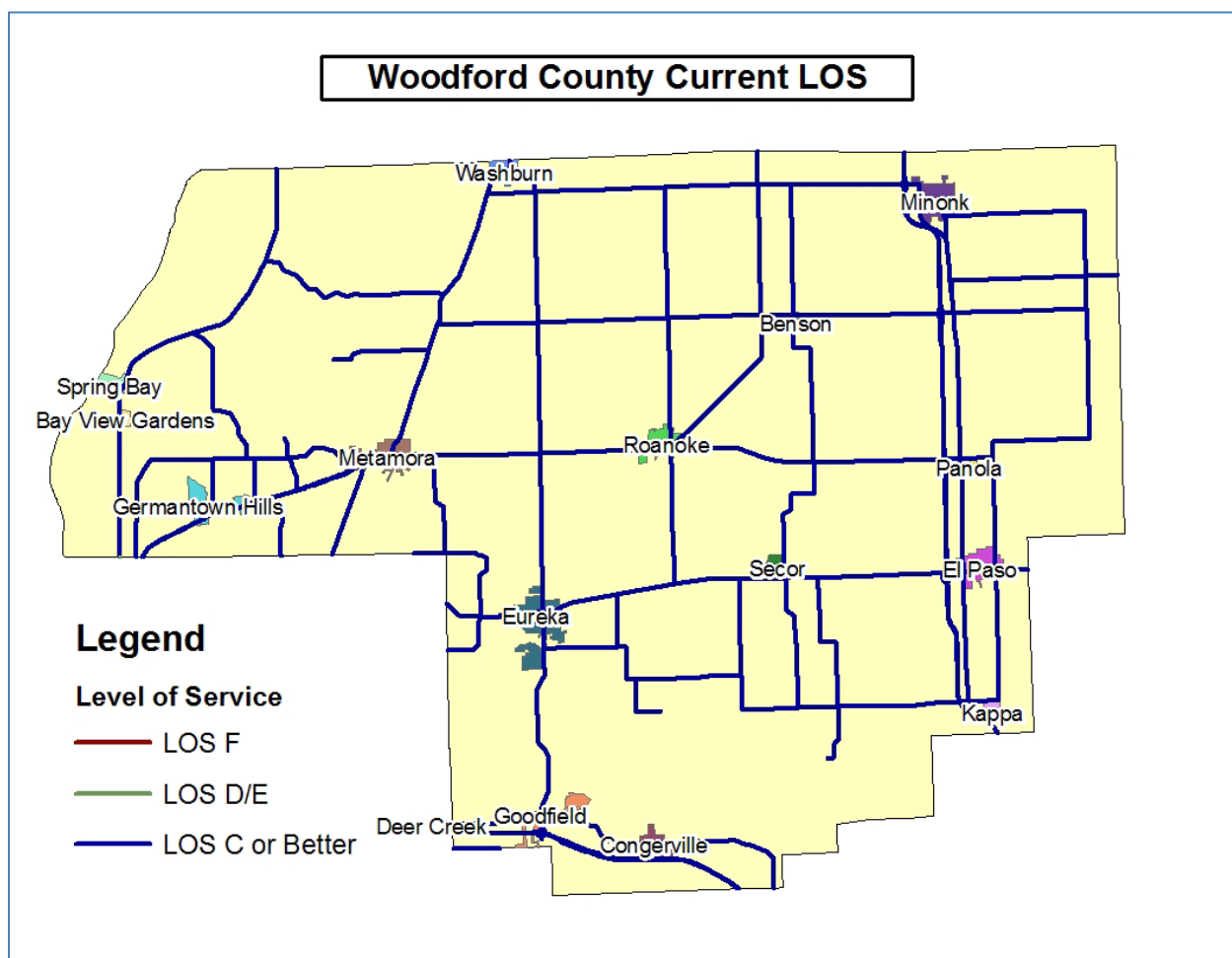
An analysis was undertaken to determine the federal and state highways in Woodford County that are near or at capacity. For this task, the newly developed Travel Demand Model was used. The Travel Demand Model was developed by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

and is a model that calculates projected traffic volume of a roadway and compares it to the capacity of the road. This ratio is then converted into a Level of Service (LOS) rating of A (best) to F (worst). A LOS of C or better is considered acceptable, while a LOS of D means the roadway is in decline, and a LOS of E or F means the roadway is significantly over capacity.

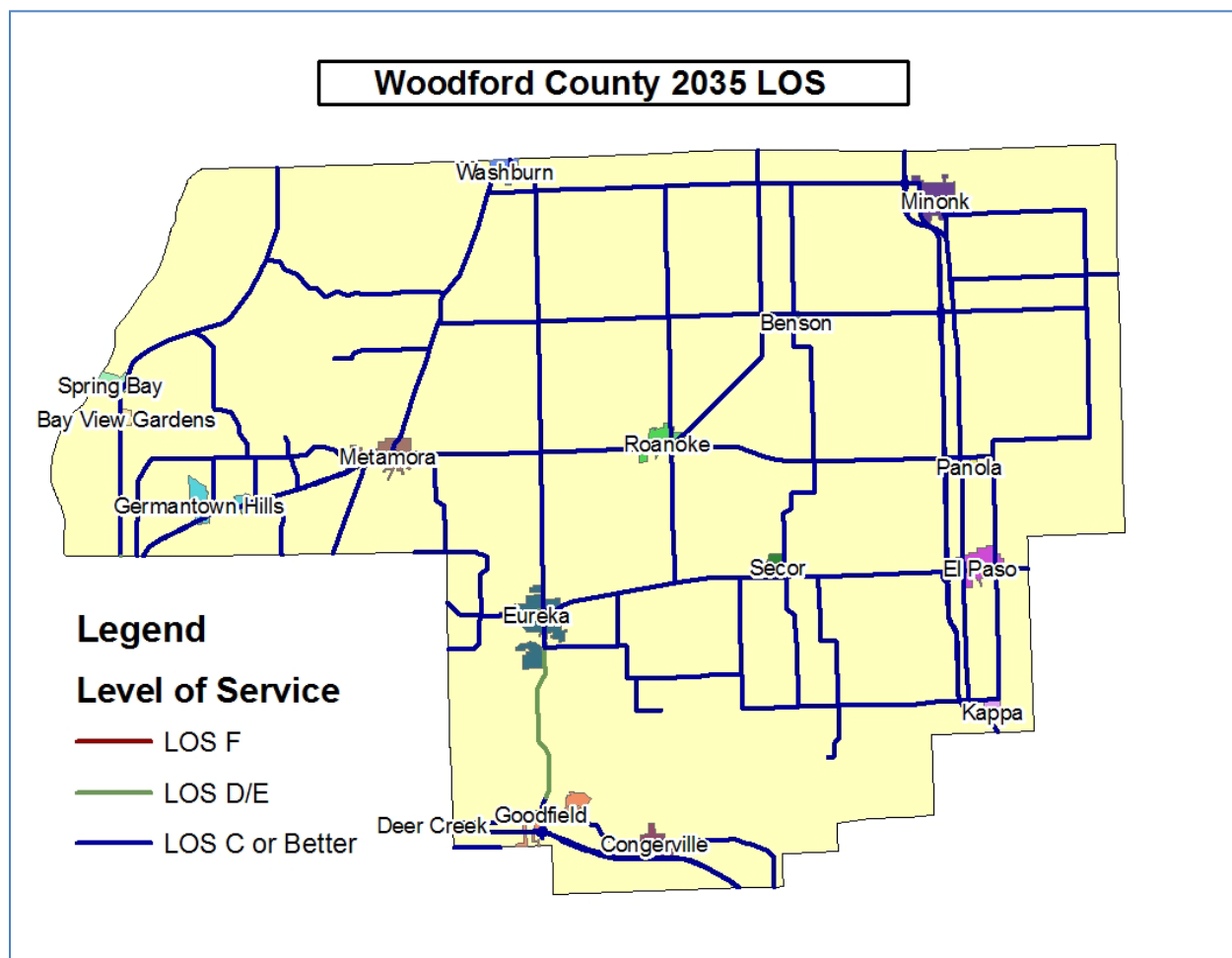
A person's perception of congestion is shaped by their experiences. What is considered congestion in Woodford County, would be nothing to a driver in a larger community. The travel demand model is a way to look at congestion levels objectively.

The model was used to analyze roads as they exist today in Woodford County, and was also used to analyze roads twenty-five years in the future based on expected growth.

For roads as they exist today in Woodford County, the model indicates that all highways in Woodford County have a LOS of C or better. In other words, there are no federal or state highways that are congested. See the map below.



The travel demand model was also used to project possible future congestion based on population growth. The map below shows the LOS of roads in Woodford County assuming no improvements are made to those roads in the next twenty-five years. Only one federal or state highway falls below a LOS of C. That road is Illinois Route 117 between Goodfield and Eureka.



Although there are no roadways that fall below a LOS of C in the twenty-five year model, some roadways will see increased travel as the population increases. The list below contains the roads that show increased travel in the next twenty-five years. These are the roads that are most likely to become congested, and they should be monitored for potential problems.

Increased Congestion from 25-Year Model

<i>Highway</i>	<i>Location</i>
IL 117	I-74 to US 24
IL 116	Through Metamora
CH 23 (FAS 367)	Tazewell Co. Line to IL 116
US 150	Deer Creek to Goodfield
US 24	CH 3 to Eureka
IL 26	Tazewell Co. Line to Bay View Gardens
IL 117/116	CR 1400 E to Roanoke
US 24 (W. Main/El Paso)	IL 251 to S. Central Street

Future Improvements

Every five years, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) develops a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the tri-county urbanized area. The LRTP is a planning document that includes all transportation projects that propose to use federal funding. The 2010-2035 LRTP includes several projects in Woodford County. These projects include federal, state and local highways. The list below contains all of the Woodford County projects included in the LRTP. All of the Woodford County projects in the LRTP are maintenance projects; there are no projects that add capacity.

US 24 – Washington to IL 117	Resurfacing and new traffic signals	IDOT
US 150 – Deer Creek to IL 117	Resurfacing	IDOT
IL 26 – South of Spring Bay	Bridge Replacement	IDOT
IL 89 – 3 miles north of IL 116	Bridge Replacement	IDOT
IL 116 – East Peoria to Far Hills Road	Resurfacing	IDOT
IL 116/IL 117 – Roanoke	Bridge Replacement	IDOT
IL 251 – IL 116 to El Paso	Resurfacing and Bridge Work	IDOT
Hickory Point Road Improvements - IL 116 to Santa Fe Trail (CH 25)	Reconstruction and Resurfacing	Woodford County
IL Route 116/CH 23/ CH 25 Intersection - Signalize Intersection	Safety Improvements	Woodford County/IDOT
Douglas Road Box Culvert Improvement - Walnut Creek (1 mile South of IL 116)	Replacing a box culvert over a tributary	Woodford County
Township Road 113 Improvements (Woodland Knolls Road) – (Santa Fe Trail to IL 116)	Reconstruction and Resurfacing	Woodford County
Douglas Road Improvement – IL 116 to Tazewell County Line	Resurfacing and Shoulder Widening	Woodford County
Township Road 50 (Coal Bank Road)	Replacing a narrow, weight restricted bridge over a tributary	Woodford County
Woodford County Highway 3	Replacing a box culvert over a tributary	Woodford County
County Highway 2- SN 102-3001	Bridge Replacement	Woodford County
County Highway 2 - IL 251 to Minonk	Widening and resurfacing	Woodford County
County Highway 1- IL 116 to Washburn	Widening and reconstruction	Woodford County
County Highway 25 (Santa Fe Trail)	Bridge replacement	Woodford County
County Highway 13 - US 24 to Roanoke	Widening & reconstruction	Woodford County
County Highway 3 - SN 102-5000	Replacement of concrete box culvert	Woodford County
County Highway 27 IL 116 to Santa Fe Trail	Reconstruction and Resurfacing	Woodford County
County Highway 6 (El Paso to Kappa)	Widening & reconstruction	Woodford County
County Highway 23 (Douglas Rd) Box Culvert	Replacement fo concrete box culvert	Woodford County
County Highway 23 (Douglas Rd) IL 116 to Tazewell Co.	Widening & Resurfacing	Woodford County
County Highway 8 - US 24 to 600 N	Re-alignment & reconstruction	Woodford County

Traffic Circulation on Federal and State Routes

Traffic circulation deals with the ability of traffic to move freight and passenger vehicles within the county. Woodford County has excellent east-west traffic circulation. US 24, US 150, IL 116,

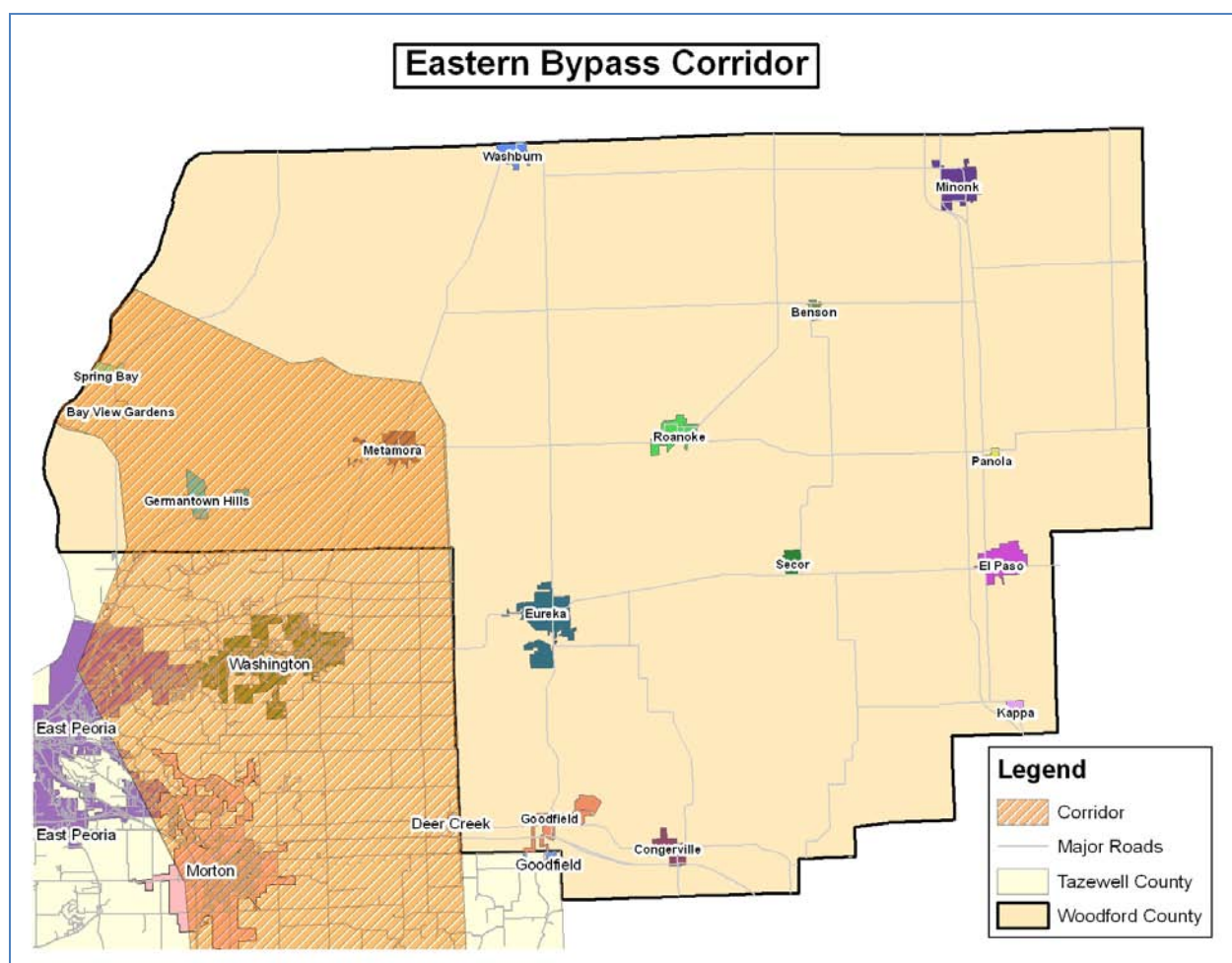
and I-74 traverse the entire width of the county, making east-west travel throughout the county very efficient.

However, the county lacks the same efficiency in north-south travel. The only federal or state highways that travel in a north-south direction throughout the county are IL 251 and I-39. Other state highways, such as IL 26, IL 89, and IL 117, traverse only parts of the county.

Eastern Bypass

A major road project that may impact Woodford County is the Eastern Bypass with a bridge over the Illinois River. The Eastern Bypass is essentially the completion of the I-474 loop around the Tri-County urbanized area.

The Illinois Department of Transportation is currently studying the need for the bypass and bridge. As of the writing of this plan, IDOT has selected a corridor, shown below, and has begun the process of studying potential alignments.



A schedule for the completion of the Eastern Bypass and bridge has not been developed. It will most likely be twenty years or more before the highway is constructed.

The final alignment and construction schedule are not known, making it difficult to plan for the future. For example, where will interchanges be located? How will those interchanges affect land use?

It is important that the County keep abreast of IDOT's plans for the Eastern Bypass. As decisions are made as to the alignment of the roadway, this plan should be revisited to assess impacts on the future development of the county.

Mode of Travel

Woodford County is considered a commuter county; that is, a large proportion of its residents are employed outside of the county. As the graph on Page 21 shows, over one-half of the residents of Woodford County work outside of the county. The following chart indicates the mode of transportation for workers in Woodford County and surrounding counties.

The primary mode of travel to work in Woodford County and its surrounding counties is by private automobile.

Mode of Travel to Work by County

	<i>Woodford</i>	<i>Tazewell</i>	<i>Peoria</i>	<i>McLean</i>
<i>Drove Alone</i>	83%	85%	83%	80%
<i>Carpooled</i>	0.9%	10%	10%	10%
<i>Public Transportation</i>	0%	1%	2%	1%
<i>Walked</i>	3%	1%	3%	5%
<i>Other</i>	4%	3%	2%	4%
<i>Travel Time (minutes)</i>	22.2	20.6	18.6	17

Mass Transit

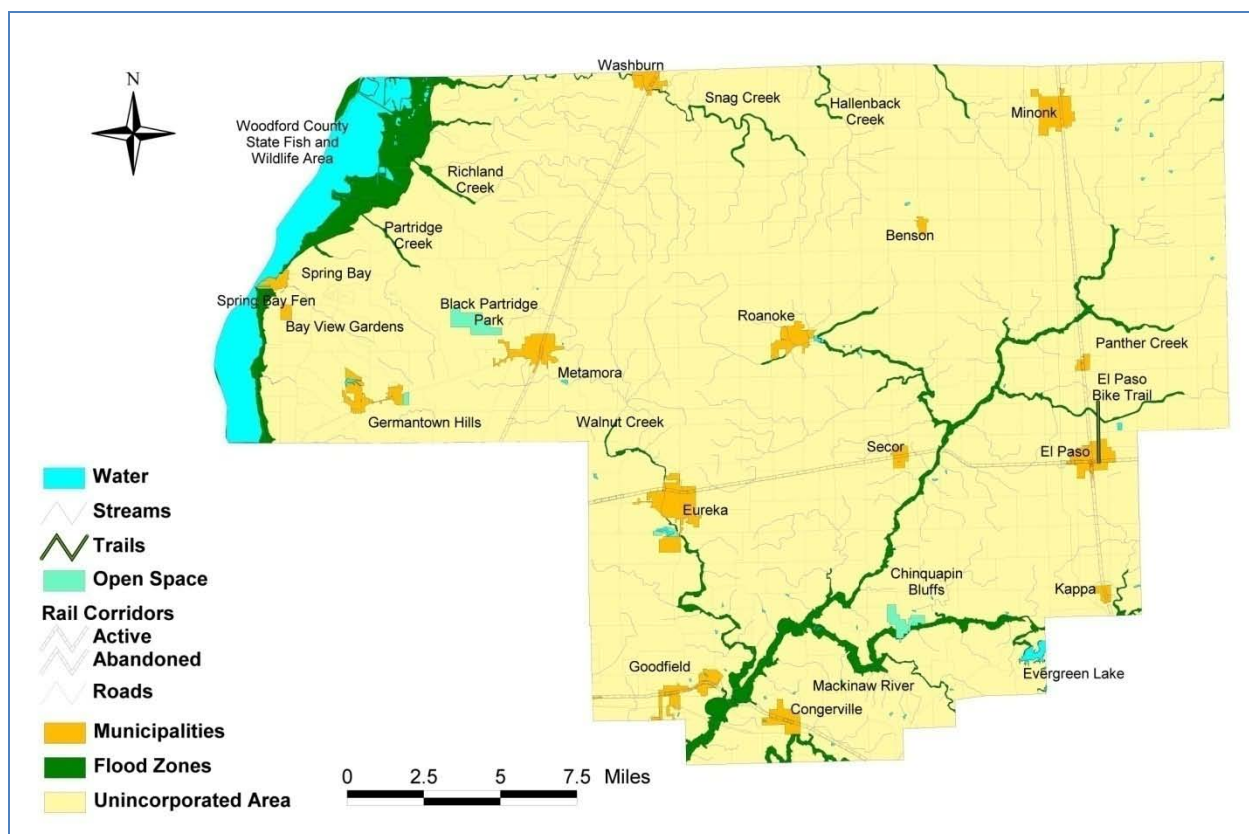
An alternative to driving private vehicles for work, school, medical or recreational purposes is mass transit. Mass Transit (busses) is not available in Woodford County, and is minimally used in the surrounding counties. Mass transit is most efficient in areas averaging four to five dwelling units per acre, or where the residential density corresponds to gross population densities of 3,000 to 4,000 persons per square mile. There are no areas in Woodford County that meet this density threshold and there is no regular mass transit service in the County. However, Woodford County

does have limited public transportation. We Care, located in Eureka, provides door-to-door service throughout the County. While the service is primarily used by elderly and disabled residents, it is available to all residents of the County.

Non-Motorized Transportation

Greenways and trails play an important role in shaping an area's livability by preserving natural resources and wildlife, providing erosion and storm water control and providing alternate transportation and recreational opportunities. Woodford County is rural in nature and does not currently have an extensive array of greenway and trail opportunities. There is, however, the opportunity for connectivity between Woodford County municipalities as well as to neighboring counties.

In July 2002, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) funded a Greenways and Trails Plan for Woodford County. Below is a map from the 2002 Plan showing the Greenway and Trail Resources in Woodford County, including environmentally sensitive areas, such as river bluffs and floodplains; rail corridors, both active and abandoned; and existing trails such as the El Paso Bike Trail.



The 2002 Plan recommended that local governmental agencies utilize the plan in all aspects of transportation and land use planning. Local governments should also:

- Consider greenways and trails in planning for road and highway projects
- Create working relationships with railroad companies to increase the ability to implement rail-trail projects
- Utilize the plan and preserve natural and environment corridors when making development decisions
- Work with property owners and encourage them to preserve sensitive areas in their natural state. If development is imminent, steps should be taken to preserve the character of the area and to protect lower watershed properties as much as possible.
- Educate residents about the benefits of greenways and trails.

Theme, Principles, and Implementation Strategies

TRANSPORTATION

Woodford County's proximity to Peoria and Bloomington-Normal allows residents to work outside the county. The proposed Eastern Bypass raises development questions that should be addressed in order to provide the best transportation access within our county.

Principle 1	The planning process coordinates the transportation system with growth.
Implementation Strategy 1	Address development questions raised by the Eastern Bypass.
Implementation Strategy 2	Work with the Heart of Illinois Regional Port District to determine growth opportunities in logistics or freight transportation.
Implementation Strategy 3	Capitalize on proximity to Peoria and Bloomington-Normal.
Implementation Strategy 4	Monitor the amount of traffic on roads that have the most potential for being congested; work with the appropriate jurisdiction (IDOT, county or township) to address the problem.

Principle 2	Safe, affordable, and accessible public transportation is available throughout the County
Implementation Strategy 1	Work with rural transportation providers (e.g., We Care) to identify additional transportation needs and opportunities for elderly, disabled, and low income residents.
Implementation Strategy 2	Continue to participate in the Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP), which coordinates transportation services such as paratransit to increase efficiency and performance.

Principle 3	The transportation network is safe, consistent, and environmentally-sound
Implementation Strategy 1	Build transportation infrastructure that is safe and efficient for all users, including vehicles, freight, public transit, and non-motorized.
Implementation Strategy 2	Educate drivers on the movement of farm machinery and farmers about safe movement of farm vehicles on rural roads.
Implementation Strategy 3	Consider bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in all transportation improvement projects.
Implementation Strategy 4	Implement recommendations of the 2002 <i>Unurbanized Greenways and Trails Plan for Woodford and McLean County</i>

Principle 4	New infrastructure is balanced with maintenance of existing infrastructure in a fiscally sustainable approach.
Implementation Strategy 1	Ensure that new transportation infrastructure is not built at the expense of maintaining existing infrastructure.
Implementation Strategy 2	Investigate innovative programs, techniques, and materials to fund, construct, and maintain the transportation system and other infrastructure systems.

THEME: RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT, PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE ILLINOIS RIVER AND THE MACKINAW RIVER VALLEY

Woodford County benefits from a variety of environmental assets, including the Illinois River, Mackinaw River, river bluffs, and rural landscapes

Background

Woodford County is fortunate to contain within its boundaries a variety of environmental assets. The flat fertile fields, wooded slopes, ravines, timber filled areas, and the wildlife-inhabited wetlands contribute to a diverse landscape that provides many benefits to residents of the County.

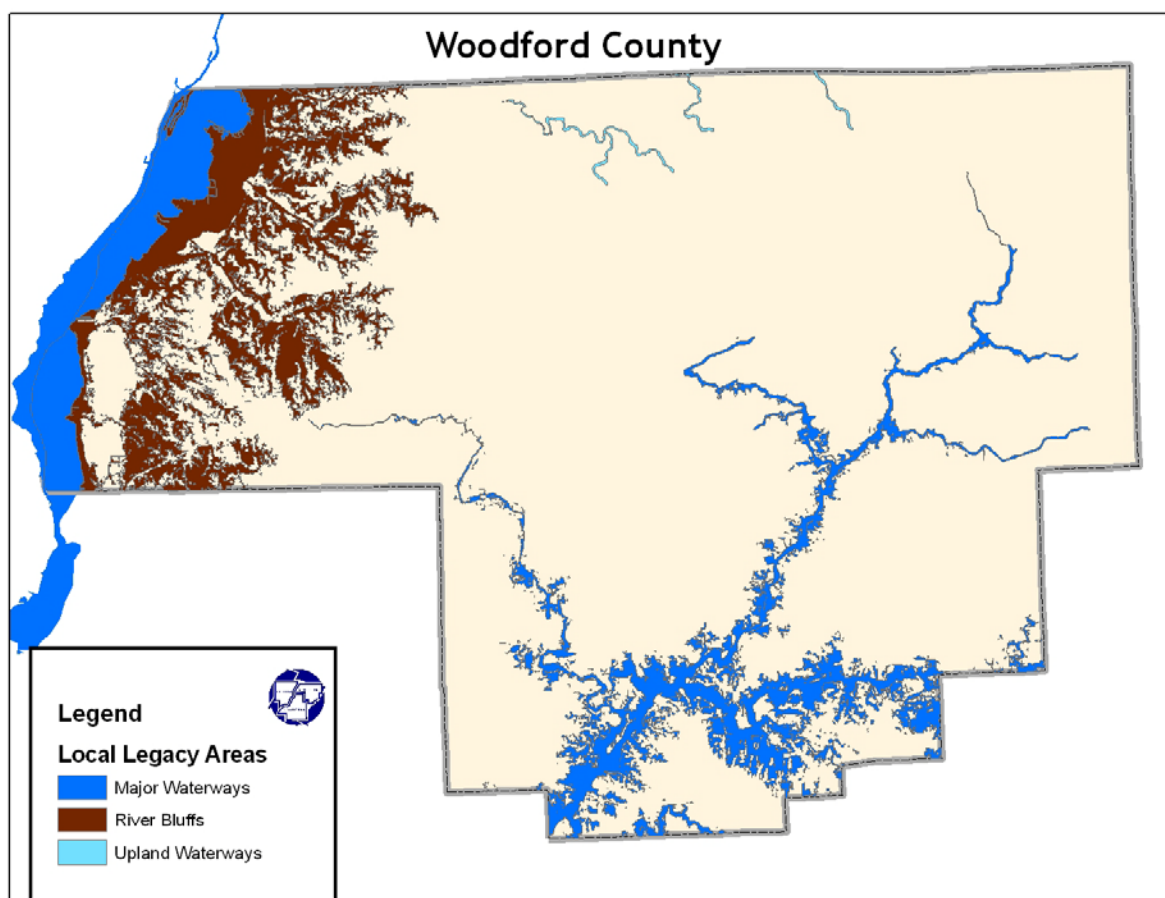
Some of these benefits are easy to quantify. The productivity of farm fields can be translated into a dollar amount that agriculture brings to the County, and water bodies such as the Illinois and Mackinaw Rivers provide recreational opportunities for individuals who reside both in the County and elsewhere.

Other benefits are difficult to identify. An isolated woodland patch may appear to be “wasteland” to a passerby, but a nearby homeowner may regard the patch as a valuable scenic resource, and a birdwatcher may laud the patch as significant bird habitat. Although individual opinions of any one piece of land will vary, the variety of land cover types in Woodford County is a valuable attribute, and this variety should be widely recognized and preserved.

Tri-County Local Legacy Plan

In 2004 Tri-County Regional Planning Commission identified the environmentally significant areas within Woodford County through development of the Tri-County Local Legacy Plan. Using a methodology established as part of an inventory of environmental areas in Peoria County, specific areas were identified as worthy of preservation. See the map on the following page.

These areas encompass major waterways, upland waterways, upland natural areas, and river bluffs. This Comprehensive Land Use Plan asserts that these environmentally significant areas shall be preserved in their current state so that they retain their significance and provide the residents of Woodford County with important environmental benefits.



These environmentally significant areas do not represent all of the land in the County that should be preserved for its environmental benefit. Other undeveloped areas exist in the County as open space that is worthy of being preserved as well.

For the purposes of this plan, open space refers to undeveloped land or water areas dominated by naturally pervious surfaces. Open space can consist of a variety of land cover types such as woodlands, wetlands, prairies, pastures and other types. When open space is proposed to be rezoned, developed as a Special Use, or developed as a subdivision, its environmental benefits should be weighed against the benefits of the proposed development to determine how the land should be developed.

An example of open space that merits preservation is a steep wooded slope near a stream. Development that occurs near the slope could lead to a substantial increase in stormwater runoff that could erode the soil on the slope and fill the stream with sediment. If it is found that development near a steep slope will lead to sedimentation, the proposal should be modified to protect the slope from erosion and the stream from sedimentation.

Stormwater Management

Water is a significant natural resource that needs to be protected for current and future generations. One of the most serious environmental issues facing Woodford County is the challenge of stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff is that portion of rain and snowmelt that is not absorbed into the ground where it falls. Unfortunately, current methods of stormwater management have contributed to erosion, sedimentation of lakes and rivers, and poor water quality.

The problem is especially serious in the more urbanized areas of the county. When land is developed for residential, commercial, industrial, and other uses, the quantity of impervious surfaces increases. Impervious surfaces do not absorb water, so increases in impervious surfaces increase the amount of storm water runoff. Rain and snowmelt that otherwise would have been absorbed into the ground where it fell is directed elsewhere.

In addition, as stormwater flows over impervious surfaces such as roads, driveways, and rooftops, it picks up oil and fertilizers from lawns and driveways, which ends up in streams and rivers.

Woodford County has many developed areas near the edges of river bluffs, especially on the western side of the county. In these areas, stormwater is often discharged into steep slopes where it speeds downhill and disrupts soil, resulting in accelerated and often severe erosion.

In the 1990's, Woodford County enacted an Erosion and Stormwater Control Ordinance. This ordinance regulates stormwater runoff from new development. While the Erosion and Stormwater Control Ordinance goes a long way to prevent damage to the environment caused by stormwater, there are other approaches, both regulatory and non-regulatory, that could be used.

In May 2009, the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission completed a plan to address stormwater on a regional basis. Entitled *Honoring Our Water: A Regional Stormwater Plan for Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties of Illinois*, the plan addresses the challenges of a degrading stormwater infrastructure and the contamination of local streams and the Illinois River. While some communities are addressing the problems with localized initiatives, a comprehensive, regional approach is necessary to have an impact on the complex stormwater systems that drains and waters the soils of the tri-county area.

There are a number of regulatory methods that can be used to manage storm water. A few are listed below:

Steep Slope Ordinance. A Steep Slope Ordinance regulates the type and amount of construction that can be undertaken in and near a steep slope in order to protect the land from unnecessary erosion.

Stream Buffer Ordinance. A Stream Buffer Ordinance protects property adjacent to riparian areas from stream bank erosion by implementing specifications for the establishment, protection, and maintenance of vegetated areas along the stream.

Conservation Easement. A Conservation Easement is a voluntary agreement that allows a landowner to limit the type or amount of development on their property while retaining private ownership of the land. The easement is recorded with the County Register of Deeds and applies to all future owners of the land.

While many persons consider stormwater runoff an urban problem, it is also a concern in the rural areas of the county. In rural areas where agriculture is the predominant land use, stormwater runoff not only deposits soil into streams, it also picks up agricultural chemicals and animal waste. There are a number of programs to assist farmers in being good stewards of their land.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. CRP is administered by the Farm Service Agency, with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) providing technical land eligibility determinations, conservation planning and practice implementation.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP was reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) to provide a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

Theme, Principles, and Implementation Strategies

RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT, PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE ILLINOIS RIVER AND THE MACKINAW RIVER VALLEY

Woodford County benefits from a variety of environmental assets, including the Illinois River, Mackinaw River, river bluffs, and rural landscapes

Principle 1	Growth and development are managed in ways that promote stewardship of our natural resources and protects environmental corridors.
Implementation Strategy 1	Consider the presence of environmental areas when considering re-zonings, analyzing potential developments, or reviewing permits.
Implementation Strategy 2	Revisit goals of previously completed watershed and environmental plans.
Implementation Strategy 3	Adopt <i>Honoring Our Water: A Regional Stormwater Plan for Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties, Illinois</i>
Implementation Strategy 4	Facilitate the creation of voluntary conservation easements by providing assistance to private landowners in navigating the legal process.
Implementation Strategy 5	Develop and support comprehensive plans that consider wildlife patterns and protect open spaces.
Implementation Strategy 6	Investigate alternative methods of protecting natural areas, including incentive-based, regulatory, and voluntary approaches.

Principle 2	Conservation Areas are protected from over-development.
Implementation Strategy 1	Consider strengthening the restrictions of the Conservation Zoning District to limit development and preserve the natural character of the District.
Implementation Strategy 2	Utilize conservation areas for stormwater control and water quality management.
Implementation Strategy 3	Utilize conservation areas as part of the economic development strategy of the county by encouraging outdoor recreation in these areas.

Principle 3	The Illinois River and Mackinaw River are recognized as an important resource that benefits the County and is protected from harm.
Implementation Strategy 1	Develop educational and tourism materials to residents and visitors.
Implementation Strategy 2	Promote agricultural practices that reduce sedimentation and contamination of surface water resources.
Implementation Strategy 3	Restrict land development when proposed to occur within a floodzone.
Implementation Strategy 4	Support efforts to restore the Illinois River's natural functions.
Implementation Strategy 5	Promote the creation of voluntary agricultural conservation easements

Principle 4	Preservation and protection of the natural environment is a priority in all new developments.
Implementation Strategy 1	Revise building codes and regulations to require development practices that are sensitive to the environment.
Implementation Strategy 2	Require preservation of natural areas in developments, including specific open space set-asides in new housing developments.

Principle 5	Surface water bodies and aquifers are protected from contamination and/or degradation.
Implementation Strategy 1	Support the existing stormwater management ordinance, which focuses on best management practices.
Implementation Strategy 2	Participate in regional stormwater control efforts.

Principle 6	The importance of natural resource preservation is taught through a comprehensive education strategy.
Implementation Strategy 1	Educate elected officials, builders and developers on conservation design standards.

Implementation Strategy 2	Educate property owners on proper stewardship of the areas in which they reside.
Implementation Strategy 3	Coordinate with school districts to implement natural resource education.
Implementation Strategy 4	Display information to the public regarding natural area restoration projects.
Implementation Strategy 5	Include zoning information in the real estate transaction process.
Implementation Strategy 6	Include zoning district information on the County website.
Implementation Strategy 7	Support efforts to control non-native plants and animals, such as Asian Carp, from spreading and doing economic harm.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map for Woodford County is presented below. The future land use map is intended to be a guide to show which areas are best suited for agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and conservation uses. The map does not show the specific projected acreage amounts needed for different land uses identified in this document because identifying specific locations for specific uses is difficult and unrealistic; land development does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, this map shows the general areas where development should occur to ensure an orderly development pattern that is in the best interests of current and future residents of the county.

Woodford County Future Land Use Map

