

INTRODUCTION



The City of Streator is a small community with a population of slightly more than 14,000. It is located primarily in the far southern portion of LaSalle County, though a small percentage of the city's residents live in northern Livingston County. The city has many enjoyable aspects of rural life: A fairly compact, walkable downtown; solid schools; quaint parks; affordable housing; and a tradition of making quality products. Streator has not experienced considerable growth recently, though that offers many opportunities to capitalize on in the future. The city is noted as a wonderful place to raise a family or to visit.

This document was completed by the North Central Illinois Council of Governments (NCICG) in consultation with the Streator Planning Commission, city staff, and considerable resident input. The previous comprehensive plan was completed in 1969. Though that document had many sound ideas that were implemented, its lifespan was clearly finished and the city needed a revised plan that will hopefully sustain it for the years to come. This planning process took over one year to complete and fashioned some very interested concepts, some of which the city has previously considered and others that for some reason or another, could not be justified.

The comprehensive plan is a long-range outlook on the city's future. The plan attempts to proactively envision future land use issues and to guide growth into areas that can properly handle its impact. It is important to note that the plan is a living document that is only a guide; it can and should be updated as conditions and trends change. The local decision-makers should consistently use the comprehensive plan as a resource whenever any land use assessment is necessary. The plan should provide guidance for a multitude of areas, including economic development, housing, community facilities, transportation, parks and recreation, and urban design. The plan covers not only the city limits but also the city's 1 ½ mile extraterritorial planning jurisdiction, which state law allows the city to plan for. It is intended to look 15 to 20 years into the future.

The comprehensive plan should also be a base for making subdivision and zoning decisions. Though the plan is merely the guide, it can be a powerful tool when used in conjunction with the subdivision and zoning ordinances. It can provide the backing necessary to properly direct development where it best fits and has the most positive impact on the city and its

residents. It is recommended that the Planning Commission further analyze each of those ordinances to determine with more certainty that the plan meets their objectives. Completing the planning process is typically a natural transition into a revision of both ordinances.

An introductory meeting was held with a few city staff and elected officials during early summer 2006. It was intended to shape the overall planning course of action and to create a rough timeline. The meeting allowed the officials to offer a present overview and to explore concerns that could likely be raised during later meetings.

The first key meeting was held with many various key stakeholders in June 2006. The two days of individual chats with the local and regional officials was intended to further identify any important issues and to gather background regarding the city's past and possible future. The local and regional experts can provide a clear and honest assessment of the city in a wide array of categories ranging from technology to economic development to funding obligations. Data was reviewed before and after this meeting to help in basing some of the recommendations found in this plan.

The Planning Commission and NCICG held a kickoff meeting during October 2006. A SWOT analysis was presented to the interested residents. A SWOT analysis consists of a brainstorming sessions where the participants are asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses that they view the city as having. Once each of those is recognized, participants then share what they perceive as being possible opportunities and threats. The goal is to think honestly and broadly, not worrying much about any dreams that may not be achievable.

Later meetings helped shape both the Goals, Objectives, and Policies as well as the Future Land Use Map. These are the two most important parts of the plan. The Goals, Objectives, and Policies textually identify how the city would like to see development occur and the Future Land Use Map spatially identifies where the city would like to see development occur.

This plan focuses on Streator's role within LaSalle County since most of the city is located within that county but also because of its relationship with other nearby cities such as Ottawa and Peru. LaSalle County has a much larger population base than Livingston County, is more urban (or suburban), and will likely continue to experience more growth pressures in the upcoming years. LaSalle County is beginning to prepare for an influx of development and sprawl from the Chicago area, particularly as transportation improvements and cheaper land prices make the cost of living more feasible.

Streator is a unique city in that it is not located on an interstate highway yet is within less than a half hour drive of three: Interstates 39, 55, and 80. This access or lack thereof has typically benefited industrial development and been somewhat of a hindrance in attracting commercial development. It is expected during the length of this plan that Illinois Route 23 may be considered for the construction of additional lanes between Streator and Ottawa. Illinois Route 18 is also a possibility for widening, though it is not expected to have the traffic demand to warrant such construction.

Commercial development would further improve on the city's north side with a Route 23 widening. The road is currently four lanes throughout much of the city but the amount of traffic to the north would expand Streator's market appeal. This area will likely be in demand for big box chain retail development, similar to the land use of this corridor today. While the city looks to increase its sales tax revenues through increased retail development, it will be important to also focus on strengthening the downtown. Streator has a charming central business district that has had difficulties at times competing with the Route 23 commercial corridor. This is not unique to the city and the two can coexist. The existing collection of buildings must be preserved and the city should attempt to attract unique niche stores that can be differentiated from the more typical brand name stores found on the north side. A comprehensive streetscape project should be considered and a parcel within the downtown should be considered as an off-street parking lot.

Streator has an aging housing stock that is showing signs of deterioration. The housing is both among the oldest and cheapest in the region. While a large majority of families can afford to own a home in Streator, families with incomes above the median are often pushed outside of the city for newer, higher-end housing. This also takes away a considerable amount of buying power and can negatively affect the city's demographics when looking to attract economic development. The city's population is expected to slowly rise as new subdivisions begin appearing on the outskirts of Streator.

The support of economic and residential development must be done through infrastructure enhancements. The city is currently undertaking a major project with the Kent Street Interceptor reconstruction. It will have a monumental effect on the city's east side, which has experienced numerous sewer problems over the past couple of decades. Streator has an aging combined sanitary and storm sewer system that is in need of separation. Much of the water and sewer lines in the city are outdated and undersized for the existing development, not to mention the strain that future growth would place on the infrastructure. Systematically improving the utilities is a major city priority.

The city's residents have a strong park system in which to utilize. There is a suitable supply of parkspace in Streator, though some of it is distributed unevenly within the southern half of the city. It is recommended that new residential development maintain or increase the recreation supply by constructing parkspace for the additional residents. Furthermore, to make the city more pedestrian-friendly, attempts should be made to connect as many neighborhoods, parks, schools, and public buildings as possible. The city has a limited off-street trail system aside from the Hopalong Cassidy River Trail and efforts should be made to increase the number of residents walking or bicycling throughout Streator.

Map 1 – Regional Location Map

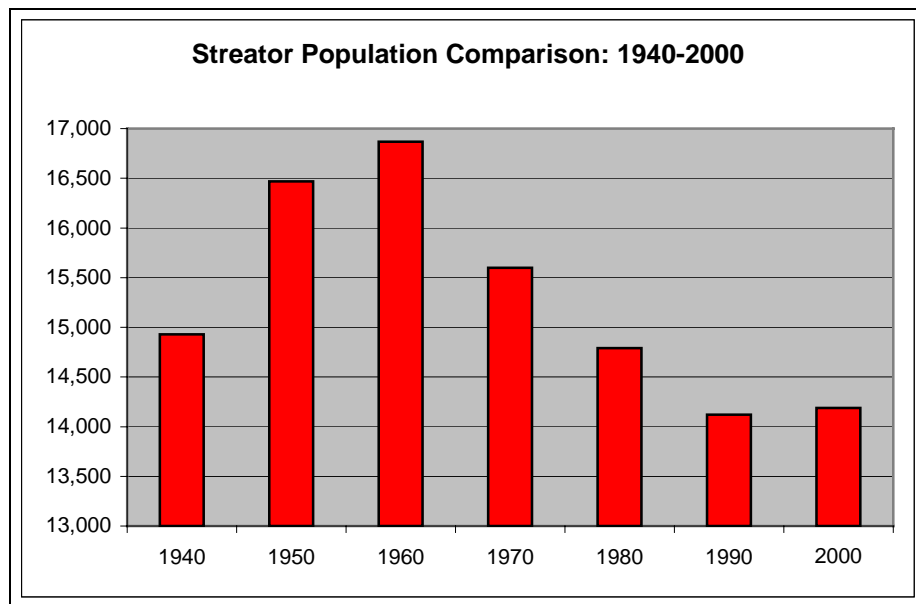
DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Characteristics

Table 1: City of Streator Population

	Streator	+/- % Change	LaSalle County	+/- % Change	Illinois	+/- % Change
1940	14,930	--	97,801	--	7,897,241	--
1950	16,469	10.3%	100,610	2.9%	8,712,176	10.3%
1960	16,868	2.4%	110,800	10.1%	10,081,158	15.7%
1970	15,600	-8.1%	111,409	0.6%	11,110,285	10.2%
1980	14,791	-5.5%	112,033	0.6%	11,427,409	2.9%
1990	14,121	-4.7%	106,913	-4.6%	11,430,602	0.0%
2000	14,190	0.5	111,509	4.1%	12,419,293	8.6%

Source: 1940-2000 U.S. Census

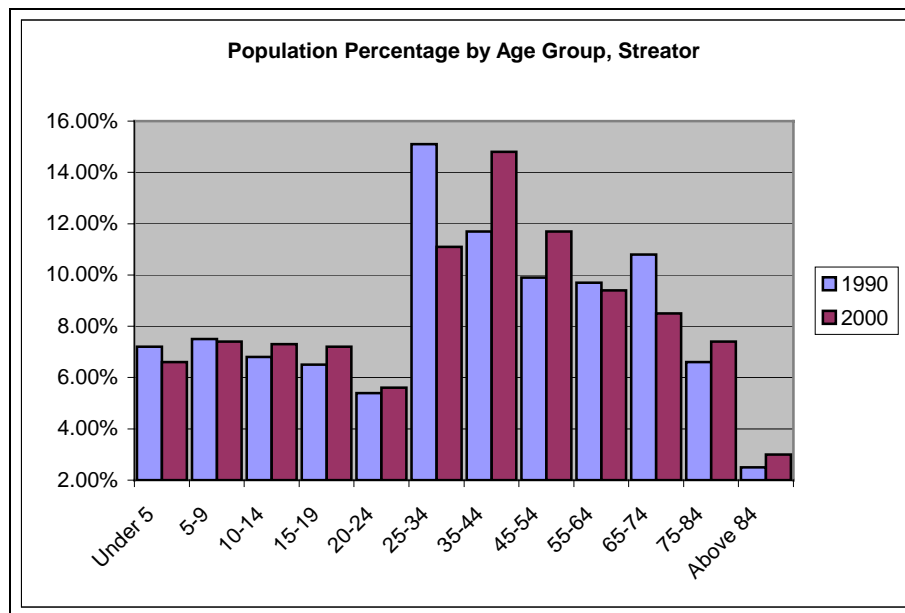


Streator experienced a nearly 20 percent population loss between 1960 and 1990, as approximately 2,700 fewer people lived in the city at the end of this period. The latest Census figures have indicated a slight rise in population for the first time since the 1950's. The decline through 1990 did not mirror the change in population for LaSalle County over the same years. The county had a significant rise between 1950 and 1960 before leveling through 1980. The county's current population is nearly identical to that of 1970. The State of Illinois noticed considerable increases between 1950 and 1970. The last decade brought another large population increase, though much of this is due to the significant growth rate that many Chicago suburbs have noticed.

Table 2: Streator Population by Age Group

Age Range	1990		2000	
	Total Persons	% of Total	Total Persons	% of Total
Under 5	1,017	7.2%	943	6.6%
5-9	1,058	7.5%	1,043	7.4%
10-14	954	6.8%	1,035	7.3%
15-19	916	6.5%	1,021	7.2%
20-24	760	5.4%	801	5.6%
25-34	2,138	15.1%	1,575	11.1%
35-44	1,658	11.7%	2,098	14.8%
45-54	1,405	9.9%	1,663	11.7%
55-64	1,376	9.7%	1,321	9.4%
65-74	1,525	10.8%	1,210	8.5%
75-84	934	6.6%	1,057	7.4%
Above 84	360	2.5%	423	3.0%
Total Population	14,121		14,190	
Median Age	36.0		38.1	

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census



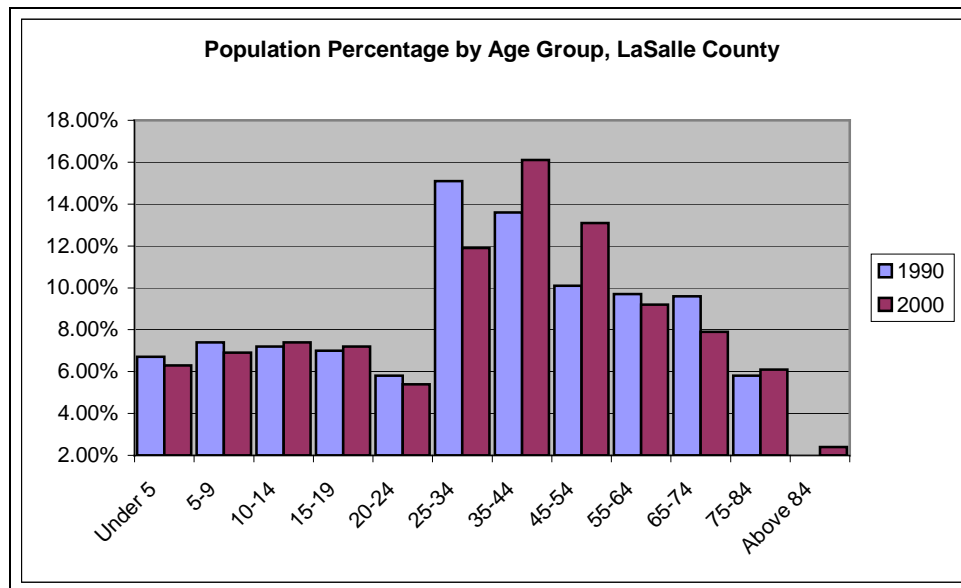
A population pyramid for Streator closely mirrors one of LaSalle County. Each age group from Under 5 to 15-19 is rather equal. There is a slight dip in the 20-24 age group, though this is common for many cities that do not have colleges located within or close to their jurisdiction. A noticeable shift in population between 1990 and 2000 is the 25-44 age group, which comprised 26.8 percent of the population in 1990. By 2000, that age group (which consists of the 35-54 age group) still makes up 26.5 percent if the Streator residents. Another noteworthy increase is the 75 and above age group. As the general U.S. population continues to live longer, a greater proportion of the citizens are balancing this age cohort. This will force a greater need for elderly housing and activities aimed towards seniors. The median

age will likely be over 40 at the 2010 Census, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive look at the manner in which land is developed and a desire for alternative means of transportation.

Table 3: LaSalle County Population by Age Group

Age Range	1990		2000	
	Total Persons	% of Total	Total Persons	% of Total
Under 5	7,215	6.7%	7,033	6.3%
5-9	7,915	7.4%	7,681	6.9%
10-14	7,746	7.2%	8,280	7.4%
15-19	7,499	7.0%	8,013	7.2%
20-24	6,181	5.8%	6,066	5.4%
25-34	16,177	15.1%	13,319	11.9%
35-44	14,502	13.6%	17,945	16.1%
45-54	10,796	10.1%	14,607	13.1%
55-64	10,366	9.7%	10,273	9.2%
65-74	10,275	9.6%	8,811	7.9%
75-84	6,201	5.8%	6,857	6.1%
Above 84	2,037	1.9%	2,624	2.4%
Total Population	106,913		111,509	
Median Age	32.4		38.1	

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census



Household Characteristics

Mirroring the steady population over the past decade, the city has seen few new households and housing units. Fewer than 100 of each were noticed in Streator. This trend is slightly

lower than the percentage increase for LaSalle County over the same time period within each category. Roughly seven out of every ten housing units is owner occupied. However, nearly all of the new housing units since 1990 have been intended for ownership. This is due primarily to the very affordable housing that the city has (residential options and costs are detailed in later sections). As noted on the chart below, the median house value is significantly lower than that of LaSalle County. The average size of each household and family remained steady.

Table 4: Household Characteristics Summary

	Streator		LaSalle County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total Households	5,665	5,746	41,284	43,417
Total Housing Units	6,053	6,149	43,827	46,438
Owner Occupied Housing Units	3,982 (70.3%)	4,064 (70.7%)	30,224 (73.2%)	32,584 (75.0%)
Renter Occupied Housing Units	1,683 (29.7%)	1,682 (29.3%)	11,060 (26.8%)	10,833 (25.0%)
Persons Per Household	2.45	2.42	2.53	2.49
Persons Per Family	3.07	3.07	3.07	3.04
Families	3,790	3,715	29,313	29,840
Median House Value	\$37,300	\$56,800	\$49,700	\$87,000
Median Monthly Rent	\$219	\$442	\$324	\$474

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

Ethnic Composition

Like LaSalle County, Streator is predominately White. The resident ethnicity increased slightly, as there was a larger percentage of Blacks and Hispanics in 2000. This composition also held true within the county. It is expected that the ethnic composition of Streator will continue to become more diverse in the years to come as development opportunities increase.

Table 5: Race and Ethnic Origin

1990	White	%	Black	%	Hispanic*	%	Amer. Indian/ Eskimo/ Aleut	%	Asian/ Pacific Islander	%
Streator	13,541	95.9	268	1.9	621	4.4	21	0.1	39	0.3
LaSalle County	103,805	97.1	1,153	1.1	3,249	3.0	206	0.2	523	0.5
2000										
Streator	13,378	94.3	292	2.1	942	6.6	27	0.2	1	0.0
LaSalle County	105,896	95.0	1,723	1.5	5,791	5.2	191	0.2	598	0.5

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

Educational Attainment

Like many smaller and rural cities, the overall education level of Streator continues to rise. About one-fourth of the residents have less than a high school diploma, as compared to slightly more than 33 percent in 1990. The percentage of residents with an associate, bachelor’s, or graduate degree has also risen. It is likely attributable to the need to have a high school education at the very least for most jobs. Additionally, more higher-paying and skilled-labor jobs require at least some college experience. The education level should be expected to continually rise as employers increasingly require college degrees and youths view college more commonly.

Table 6: Educational Attainment (Population 25 Years and Older)

1990	Less Than 9th Grade	9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College, No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor’s Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Streator	16.2%	17.9%	40.6%	13.8%	3.7%	5.2%	2.7%
LaSalle County	12.1%	14.8%	39.3%	16.9%	6.4%	7.1%	3.4%
2000							
Streator	10.4%	15.6%	40.6%	18.0%	6.4%	5.6%	3.4%
LaSalle County	6.2%	12.4%	38.6%	22.6%	6.9%	9.0%	4.3%

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

Income

Streator has one of the lowest per capita, median family, and median household incomes in LaSalle County. Though the city’s median household income increased by more than 50 percent during the 1990’s, it is still almost \$6,500 less than the county. The low cost of

living contributes greatly to these figures. However, it also means that there is less buying power among the Streator residents and could be viewed negatively by prospective retail tenants. A significantly less number of families currently live below the poverty as compared to 1990. While the percentage is still higher than both the county and state, there is now less disparity in the ranges of incomes.

Table 7: Income Breakdowns

1990	Per Capita Income	Median Family Income	Median Household Income	Families Below Poverty Level
Streator	\$10,147	\$27,273	\$21,993	15.0%
LaSalle County	\$12,337	\$33,226	\$27,093	8.7%
Illinois	\$15,201	\$38,664	\$32,252	9.0%
2000				
Streator	\$16,650	\$43,774	\$33,868	8.3%
LaSalle County	\$19,185	\$49,533	\$40,308	6.9%
Illinois	\$23,104	\$55,545	\$46,590	7.8%

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

Population Projections

The population projections released by the State of Illinois forecasts a fairly consistent population gain for the county through 2025. The projections should be reasonably attainable, particularly in ten years when it is expected that a more sizable growth spurt will begin hitting LaSalle County. As growth moves farther away from the Chicago metro area, the county will likely experience an abundance of new residents who will like to be within easy access of Chicago but who do not want the hassles of big-city life. Cheaper housing and less demanding transportation networks will also play a role. The population change for the state is slightly more conservative, increasing approximately 3.5 percent between 2010 and 2030.

Table 8: Population Projections

	LaSalle County	% Change	Illinois	% Change
2010	118,385	--	13,279,091	--
2015	124,277	5.0%	13,748,695	3.5%
2020	131,155	5.5%	14,316,487	4.1%
2025	137,954	5.5%	14,784,968	3.3%
2030	141,615	2.7%	15,138,849	2.4%

Source: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity projections

Employment

The unemployment rate for LaSalle County fell by more than 50 percent over the past 20 years. It reached its lowest point in 2000, when the rate was only 5.8 percent. More recently, it has increased slightly, though monthly employment statistics often fluctuate greatly and are easily influenced by seasonal construction jobs. The State of Illinois unemployment rate for February 2007 was 5.3 percent and was 7.3 percent within the Ottawa-Streator Micropolitan Statistical Area.

Table 9: Unemployment Rate for LaSalle County

	Labor		Unemployed	
	Force	Employed	Number	Rate
February 2007	58,597	54,169	4,428	7.6
2005	57,986	54,500	3,486	6.0
2000	57,220	53,925	3,295	5.8
1995	54,719	50,456	4,263	7.8
1990	49,925	45,467	4,458	8.9
1985	51,491	44,548	6,943	13.5

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security

Table 10: Employment by Industry for Streator

NAICS Category	Streator		State of Illinois		Streator Location Quotient
	# of Employees	Percentage	# of Employees	Percentage	
Ag., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	65	1.1%	66,481	1.1%	0.979
Construction	249	4.3%	334,176	5.7%	0.745
Manufacturing	1,481	25.4%	931,162	16.0%	1.592
Wholesale Trade	287	4.9%	222,990	3.8%	1.288
Retail Trade	704	12.1%	643,472	11.0%	1.095
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	488	8.4%	352,193	6.0%	1.386
Information	64	1.1%	172,629	3.0%	0.371
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	218	3.7%	462,169	7.9%	0.472
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services	231	4.0%	590,913	10.1%	0.391
Educational,	1,107	19.0%	1,131,987	19.4%	0.978

Health, and Social Services					
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services	454	7.8%	417,406	7.2%	1.088
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	182	3.1%	275,901	4.7%	0.660
Public Administration	298	5.1%	231,706	4.0%	1.287
Total	5,828	N/A	5,833,185	N/A	

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

A location quotient compares the local economy to the national economy and attempts to identify areas of specialization. It also tries to specify industries that are underserved and have potential for expansion. The location quotient compares each specific employment industry within the city to that of the state. The location quotient is utilized with other economic methods, but it offers a strong indication about strengths and weaknesses within the local economic base. A location quotient of less than one indicates that the specific local employment category is less than could be expected for the given industry or is less developed locally than the rest of the state. It could mean that goods or services are imported from other regions of the state. A location quotient of more than one indicates that the specific local employment category is more than could be expected for the given industry or is more important locally than for the rest of the state. It could also mean that it is a net exporter to other regions of the state.

The above table identifies industries in Streator that are above reasonable expectations and others that could have potential for expansion and development. Two industries have location quotients that are considerably higher than what would be expected for Streator. Manufacturing has a LQ of 1.592 and Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities has a LQ of 1.386. Those employment sectors are much more significant to the local Streator economy than for the rest of the state. Manufacturing employs the most residents, as more than one-fourth of those 25 and older work in this sector. The high LQ and number of employees working in manufacturing indicate Streator's heavy reliance on this industry, not unlike many larger metropolitan areas in the Great Lakes region. While manufacturing jobs typically pay higher wages than many sectors, a lack of job diversity could be felt during economic shifts. Wholesale Trade and Public Administration also have higher LQ's. However, it is much healthier to rely on manufacturing more than retail trade.

Three industries have notably low location quotients. Information (0.371), Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services (0.391), and Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing (0.472) all are less than half as significant locally as compared with the state. Though this could indicate that there may be growth potential, those three sectors combine to employ less than ten percent of the Streator

residents. As noted above, it would benefit the city to have a greater diversity of jobs but not at the detriment of losing higher-paying jobs. The three sectors with low LQ's are each office uses that are more readily available in more populated cities or areas that are near significant educational bases.

LAND USE PRINCIPLES



Land use is a broad term for the current particular purpose or function of land in a specific area. Different types of land use within and surrounding a community may act as a strong force in identifying community character. The current, or existing land use, can also identify patterns of where future land use may occur and the pace of development. The land use analysis can be used in coordination with various data sources to make future land use projections. Therefore, a study of the existing land use patterns within the City of Streator and the 1½ mile extraterritorial jurisdiction is an essential and fundamental component of the comprehensive plan.

Existing Land Use

The purpose of this section is to identify the different types of land use within the Streator corporate limits and the 1½ mile planning area. A study of existing land use was conducted during the summer of 2006. The information gathered during this study was obtained from multiple site checks of properties, aerial photographs, topographic maps, and Planning Commission and City staff knowledge of land use within the area.

Categories of land use identified by this study are identified below. Approximate amounts of land area in acres for each category are also described and shown on the Existing Land Use Map on the following page. The acreages identified for each land use category are estimates, and are intended only to provide a basic representation for the identification of future

planning goals and objectives. The map shows the primary use of each parcel of land. The map is intended to indicate a broad overview of the city’s growth pattern and the distribution of the various land uses. Each land use category is described in more detail below:

Agriculture	Identifies areas that are presently undeveloped, sparsely developed, and/or primarily used for farm-related activities. Located entirely outside the City limits within the 1½ mile planning area.
Single-Family Residential	Identifies detached single-family and duplex dwelling units, as well as related storage, recreational, and other accessory units.
Multiple-Family Residential	Includes apartments, senior housing facilities, as well as related storage, recreational, and other accessory units.
Commercial	Includes all types of retail office, and service related facilities where commercial and customer activity is the primary use. Also includes overnight lodging where permanent housing is not the primary priority.
Industrial	Includes areas where light manufacturing, mining, research facilities, production plants, warehousing, and wholesale businesses are located.
Institutional	Includes land use for schools and associated school grounds, municipal buildings, other government-owned land and facilities, and religious facilities.
Parks and Recreation	Includes primarily undeveloped or preserved land used for parks, recreation, conservation, and other outdoor or nature-related activities.
Open/Unused/Undeveloped	Includes land that is currently vacant, not devoted to any usable land use, is not in agricultural production, or has not been developed.

Approximately 3,840 acres of land are currently within the Streator corporate limits, including roads, utilities, or bodies of water. Much of the land use outside of the city limits and within the 1½ mile boundaries is agricultural, not currently developed, or vacant. Though there are some vacant parcels within the city limits, most of the properties have been developed at one time and may be in a transition phase where the land is or will be changing uses. Single-family residential uses make up the majority of the assorted land uses in Streator. The following table shows the acreage within each land use category in the city’s 1½ mile boundaries.

Map 2 –
Existing Land Use
Map

Table 11: Existing Land Use Breakdowns

Category	Acres (Percent of Total)
Agriculture	12,132 (68.3%)
Single-Family Residential	3,805 (21.4%)
Industrial	922 (5.2%)
Commercial	445 (2.5%)
Parks/Open Space	170 (1.0%)
Multi-Family Residential	168 (0.9%)
Institutional	127 (0.7%)
TOTAL	17,769

Agriculture

Most of the property immediately outside of the city limits and within the 1½ mile boundaries is currently in agricultural production. Streator has not annexed a considerable amount of land in the past couple of decades and this has limited the amount of farmland lost to development. LaSalle County has ideal soils for the production of crops. Types of development such as planned unit developments (PUD) or traditional neighborhood developments (TND) can help preserve suitable agricultural areas or other scenic and topographically challenging lands. Other practices such as transfer of development rights (TDR) or conservation easements can maintain agricultural areas in perpetuity. Development is slowly progressing into LaSalle County and the wave will likely slowly push into the Streator planning area within the time framework of this plan. Prime agricultural areas should be preserved whenever possible and development should be planned for areas that are more appropriate and will not take away large swaths of farmland. The Future Land Use Map attempts to guide development into areas that can support growth, have available or nearby infrastructure, and will not pose considerable environmental risk.



Development is slowly progressing into LaSalle County and the wave will likely slowly push into the Streator planning area within the time framework of this plan. Prime agricultural areas should be preserved whenever possible and development should be planned for areas that are more appropriate and will not take away large swaths of farmland. The Future Land Use Map attempts to guide development into areas that can support growth, have available or nearby infrastructure, and will not pose considerable environmental risk.

Institutional/Infrastructure

Institutional land uses include all city-owned buildings and properties and any other public or tax-exempt buildings, such as schools or churches. As with most cities the size of Streator, there is a variety of such uses spread throughout the city. An assortment of churches is found primarily south of Illinois Route 18. Three cemeteries are located on the west side of the city.

Ten schools can be found in Streator and five school districts house the city's youths. Streator High School is located just north of downtown on Illinois Route 23. It recently had a \$32 million building expansion project completed within the last year that added a new common area, library, additional classrooms, and a band room. While the structure has been

in use for many years, it has served the community well and figures to survive throughout the life of this plan. The school is one of the pillars of the city and is home to approximately 1,070 students and 130 teachers and staff members. In addition, Woodland Unit School District serves the portion of Streator located in Livingston County.

Streator Elementary District has five public elementary and junior high schools: Centennial Elementary School, Kimes Elementary School, Northlawn Junior High School, Oakland Park Elementary School, and Sherman Elementary School. Together, these schools house nearly 2,000 students. The schools will likely see slow growth over the next ten years. The school district is in the process of creating a strategic plan. Two private elementary schools are located in Streator, Rhema Christian Academy and St. Anthony School. About 500 students attend the private schools in Streator. Many of these schools are located within entirely residential areas and are the centerpieces of the neighborhoods. The school plays a unifying role in each of these neighborhoods and gives each area vitality.



Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC) in Oglesby is located within 25 minutes of Streator. It offers post-high school educational opportunities for youths as well as adult education classes for adults. The city should continue to work with IVCC to broaden the classes offered to create a workforce that will be able to meet the needs of any type of business. Online courses should also be pursued through IVCC.

The City Hall houses many of the city's personnel as well as serving as the police department headquarters. The building, located in a former school, is ideally located at the intersection of Routes 18 and 23 on the southwest side of the downtown area. The reutilization of the school has suited the city well, though there is a lack of off-street parking for larger community meetings.

There is a need for a new police station and 911 dispatch center that would be separated from the City Hall. Technological changes and Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations have made a separate facility imperative. The city has considered constructing a \$4.5 million facility near the new fire station. It would include additional meeting space and kitchen facilities. Currently, 24 full-time police officers are employed. There is a need to hire an animal control officer due to the high number of animal complaints. The new fire station was completed during October 2005 and replaced a 100-year-old facility. It is located on Wasson Street on the east side of town. The new station should provide the necessary space and equipment for the department for the foreseeable future. Fifteen full-time fire fighters work in Streator. Once the police station is completed, a senior center could be added to the building. There is also the need for a new public works facility that can handle the space and equipment needs of the city.

Having a Chamber of Commerce benefits a city the size of Streator. The Streator Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI) promotes the city and is a primary business development taskforce. Its mission is: “Retain, support, and expand economic development leading to a better quality of life in Streator.” SACCI works with local, regional, and state stakeholders to pursue potential development leads and the necessary funding for infrastructure and educational enhancements.

Other institutional buildings include an historic post office located within the downtown. Though parking is an issue at the building, the structure’s appearance is difficult to replace. The city’s library is also located within the downtown. The Streator YMCA is a modern facility that serves the resident recreation needs. It contains an Olympic-size swimming pool, basketball court, racquetball court, and has physical fitness programs for all age groups.

St. Mary’s Hospital has served Streator for almost 125 years and is its largest employer. It was founded in 1887 by the Hospital Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis. The hospital currently has 251 beds with a staff totaling 550 and provides medical services such as emergency care, pediatrics, oncology, chemotherapy, and home health and hospice care.



The hospital generates about \$50 million in revenue annually in its 30-mile radius area. It currently draws about 65 percent of the Streator market share and 13 percent of the outlying share. The hospital would like to capture 80 percent of the Streator market and 30 percent of the surrounding area. A recent upgrade to the physical plant was started and there are plans to renovate the entire building in the future. A joint venture expansion of the YMCA is possible to add a rehabilitation station.

The city has completed a portion of a capital improvement plan over the last year that covers a wide scope of topics. It comprises sections on many public works and transportation components, including a wastewater treatment plan (completed in January 2006), sewer collection plan (October 2006), stormwater management plan (June 2006), sidewalk rehabilitation plan (May 2006), tree survey and removal report (October 2006), tree replacement plan, parks and recreation plan, buildings plan, vehicles and major equipment plan, and records and documentation plan. Each report documents or will document the near-term and future priorities that the city would like to complete. The capital improvement plan for all City Departments should be completed and updated on a regular basis.

The completion of such a document is a great benefit to the city since it will clearly outline what projects need to be completed and the expected costs and revenues available for each.

A solid capital improvement plan can save the city considerable money and will efficiently locate and time infrastructure improvements. A cost-benefit analysis should be completed as a base for any capital improvements decision-making. It is important for the City Council to continually evaluate and update the plan as conditions are warranted. There should also be a strong connection between the capital improvement plan and the comprehensive plan.

Streator has an aging infrastructure system that has seen many updates. There has been a substantial need to update the infrastructure to not only attract new development and growth, but to keep up with the needs of the existing community. It would be difficult to support new development without extensive upgrades to the water and sanitary sewer lines. The water lines are in fairly solid shape. There are only two 4-inch mains in the city and water pressure does not pose a problem. The water treatment plant does have the capacity to handle current needs but could have problems when new development arrives and puts a strain on the existing facility. The city should ensure that all annexed areas have sanitary sewer access.

Streator has a combined sanitary and storm sewer system. Combined systems were easier to construct than separated sewer lines. This presents problems during times of large storms when the treatment system has trouble managing the amount of flow that results. The city rebuilt large portions of the Prairie Creek and Coal Run Creek Interceptors during the early 1990's. One of the most important goals of this plan is to continue pursuing the separation of the combined sewer system.

Perhaps the largest city public works project would be the Kent Street Interceptor reconstruction. There have been at least 19 major problems with the Interceptor during the past 25 years. The tributary area is estimated at 320 acres and runs approximately 4,200 feet. The project is so important because it serves over 850 housing units with a population of approximately 2,600. The project covers an area from a ravine at the west end of Kent Street to Illinois Street. It is recommended that the city completely separate the combined sewers within the drainage area. The project has an estimated cost of \$4.6 million. Illinois Environmental Protection Agency grants could pay for a portion of the cost. It is expected that construction would begin during the summer of 2008.

The city should apply for Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) grants to pay for part of the cost of any infrastructure improvements. The grants, which are administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, help finance economic development projects, public facilities, and housing rehabilitation. The CDAP program targets cities or areas that contain low-to-moderate income residents. Eligible public facilities projects can receive dollars toward the construction of water, sanitary sewer, or storm sewer lines. The city can apply for money for the preparation of any studies or analyses and also for design engineering.

The city should strongly rely on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to systematically map each of the utility lines. The use of GIS is common in many cities for the updating of zoning classifications, utilities, transportation networks, and as a database for any important parcel records that can be found with the click of a mouse. GIS is a solid tool during the development and implementation of a capital improvement plan.

The official City of Streator website is an important tool that impacts the city's residents and outsiders looking for information on the community. It must be updated regularly. Among the information that should be found on the website include upcoming meeting agendas and past meeting minutes, economic development information, downloadable and printable permits, community links, and city ordinances. It is also increasingly used to allow residents to pay utility bills. The website is often the first place residents or developers look when searching for information on the city. It must be user-friendly and present the precise image that Streator would like to project.

The Streator Area Enterprise Zone is a development incentive for commercial or industrial businesses looking to expand, renovate, or for new construction. Eligible participants can receive a four-year abatement of half of the property taxes following the completion of the project. An investment tax credit of 0.5% against the state income tax for investment in qualified property within the zone can be obtained. A jobs tax credit per employee is available if the hired employees are certified as dislocated workers or economically disadvantaged. Finally, a sales tax exemption of the 7.5% tax on building materials purchased within LaSalle or Livingston Counties can also be acquired.

There are two Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts currently within the city limits. One is small and only encompasses the Bill Walsh automobile dealership area. The second TIF district encompasses the majority of the downtown and central business district. The downtown TIF was completed within the past year and should be a solid economic development incentive. TIF support could spur private redevelopment through the assistance with building renovation or construction. Other possible locations for a TIF district would be on the east side of the city that includes some underutilized, dilapidated, or vacant industrial buildings, including a large former glass factory, on the northern commercial corridor, and on the western industrial corridor. TIF is a tool that should be used in those areas that could use the assistance to stimulate growth.

Climate

Streator has a continental climate typical of northern Illinois with warm to hot summers and cold winters. The average winter temperature is 25 degrees Fahrenheit and the average summer temperature is 72 degrees Fahrenheit. The city averages about 38 inches of precipitation a year, including 32 inches of snowfall a year. The average date of the last frost is in mid-to late-April and there are approximately 180 days in the normal growing season. A solid growing season can typically be expected from late April through early October in Streator. Major droughts are infrequent, though recent years have experienced drier conditions than normal and have had a negative impact on the many acres of corn and soybean fields surrounding Streator.

Geology

Though much of Streator is relatively flat, the exposed valleys of the Vermillion River and Prairie Creek indicate some interesting landforms and elevation changes. The Cahokia Alluvium is the dominant stratigraphic unit found along those areas. Much of the Streator area consists of the Lemont Formation, which is a massive red to gray diamicton. Other stratigraphic units found in and around Streator include Peoria Silt, Equality Formation, and Carbondale Formation. The areas around the river and creek valleys should be buffered and preserved from encroaching development.

LaSalle County lies within one of the most geologic diverse areas within Illinois. The Illinois River helped shape the valleys that are so picturesque and changed the landscape from a predominant level topography to one that has rolling hills and undulations. Limited exposed bedrock and thick drift is found within the valleys around Streator. The city is within the Bloomington Ridged Plain and features some relatively steep slopes. Loamy till and clayey till deposited as moraines are the surficial deposits in this area. The river basin has well developed rolling moraines within the upper Illinois River area. According to the LaSalle County Soil Survey, the Bloomington Ridged Plain consists mainly of Woodfordian glacial till of Wisconsinian age, and is characterized by low, broad ridges, with intervening wide stretches of relatively flat or gently undulating ground moraines.

The county was covered by continental glaciers during the Ice Age or Pleistocene. The thickness of the glacial drift varies from as little as 50 feet or less to over 500 feet. Limestone is prevalent along the Illinois River and it is exposed on some bluffs overlooking cities on the river. Illite is the dominant clay mineral in the glacial tills, ranging from 50 to 70 percent. Clay and shale are mined extensively in the county for making tile and brick.

Soils

Many types of soil can be found within and outside of the Streator city limits. Some of the more frequently found varieties include Elburn silt loam, which is located around the central part of the city and is the most common soil found in LaSalle County. It is found in areas with zero to two percent slopes and are somewhat poorly drained. Other soils within Streator include Orthents, which is a loamy soil that is found in undulating and rolling areas around the Vermilion River. It is not recommended that development or farming occur on Orthents soils.

Camden silt loam is located primarily in the western half of the city. It can be found in areas ranging from flat to slopes of up to 18 percent. Camden soils are well drained and have moderate permeability. The soils are excellent for raising crops such as corn and soybeans and should be protected from development whenever possible. Rutland silty clay loam is located heavily in the northeast quadrant of the city. These soils are somewhat poorly drained and have moderately slow permeability. Finally, the Streator silty clay loam soils can be located in Streator. They are primarily contained within the northeastern quarter of the city. It is found on sites with limited slopes and the drainage is poor.

Use of Future Land Use Map

The planning map on the following page does not necessarily mirror the current regulated zoning districts for the City of Streator. Current zoning maps are available at City Hall. Rather, the Future Land Use Map serves as a guide, representing a basis for future land use planning, on which future zoning updates and rezoning decisions should be based. This includes the 1½ mile planning jurisdiction, which includes reasonable areas where development could occur outside of the city limits and where development should be restricted or protected from building.

The zoning ordinance should be configured in a manner that is easily flexible and allows greater conformity to the policies in this plan and the Future Land Use Map. Needs of developers and residents will continue to evolve and both this plan and the zoning ordinance should reflect that desire. It is recommended that the zoning ordinance be revised following the adoption of this plan. The map reflects the areas in and around the city that have the existing infrastructure to add growth. It also attempts in most cases to preserve prime farmland and move development to areas that can support the new structures.

These areas of future land use were determined by current growth and development patterns, along with significant studies of the current land uses. Many key stakeholders with the city were consulted to get opinions and knowledge of future development options. The planning map fundamentally indicates how the City would like to manage and encourage growth over the next 15 to 20 years. The map also provides a legal basis for City officials to base planning and land use decisions. Developers and landowners can use the Future Land Use Map as an informational tool to identify where the City will support new development. It is highly recommended that the city analyze the map each year and make revisions every five years. As new development comes into the city and building conditions and trends change, it is important to stay ahead of the development curve. The development climate can and does change frequently, so the city must take measures to best deal with the changes.

Map 3 – Future Land Use Map

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Each section has a corresponding list of goals, objectives, and policies that encapsulates the most important strategies for the city to consider. They range from the broad to the specific. Goals are in essence general expressions of values and wishes. They are abstractions providing directions rather than locations and, in a sense, are difficult to obtain. Objectives, on the other hand, are specific purposes to be obtained that attempt to reach these broad goals. Policies are definitive courses of action chosen from among a possible group of alternatives to guide future decisions. They deal with the way or ways in which specific objectives may be accomplished. As such, policies provide directions for the preparation of specific plans, programs, and projects. Policies should be detailed and provide measurable outcomes to analyze the future. The Implementation section offers further detail into the most important policy statements and gives a timeline for the city to implement each category. Funding options are presented, where applicable.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies – Institutional/Infrastructure

Goal: Allow opportunities for an array of socioeconomic groups by meeting minimum standards for available services.

Objective: Enhance the city’s public facilities in order to meet the needs that increased growth presents.

Policy: Consider the various alternatives to creating new space for the police department, including the construction of a new police station.

Policy: Strengthen each of the schools including the influential attachment that each school has with the neighborhood it is located. Allow greater use of the schools by the neighborhood residents.

Policy: Work with each of the schools and Illinois Valley Community College to determine challenging and innovative curriculum offerings that will further bolster the educational opportunities for residents of all ages.

Policy: Consider alternative library building projects that include utilizing and maintaining the existing library as one of the city’s structural treasures.

Policy: Strongly consider the creation of a Tax Increment Financing district to fund improvements for both public and private investments in the northern commercial corridor and/or western industrial corridor.

Policy: Continue regular updates of the city’s capital improvements plan to prioritize decision-making and as a means of financial analysis.

Policy: Strengthen the existing water and sewer lines within underserved annexed areas before constructing new lines merely for prospective development.

Policy: Mandate that no new development occurs without the proper infrastructure already being in place or that the new infrastructure will be more than satisfactory to support the growth.

Policy: Continue to pursue the completion of the Kent Street Interceptor project.

Policy: Consider a redesigned city webpage that allows even greater access to information and is updated regularly.

Policy: Pursue the availability of DSL access for every residence and business within the city.

TRANSPORTATION



Regional Location

The City of Streator is located primarily in southern LaSalle County, with a portion of the city located in northern Livingston County (see map on Page 4). Only one small neighboring city (Kangley) is located within 10 miles of Streator. This location helps perpetuate the image of isolation from many of the other primary cities within LaSalle County. The Vermillion River is the primary water body, though it is not wide enough to allow for shipping. It offers terrific recreational opportunities and is often used for canoeing and kayaking.

Streator is accessed from a north-south direction by Illinois Route 23 and via the west and east from Illinois Route 18. Interstate highway access is available within 20 minutes from each direction. Interstate 39 is approximately 12 miles west of Streator, the country's most heavily traveled limited-access highway, Interstate 80, is approximately 20 miles north, and Interstate 55 is about 20 miles to the east or south. This regional transportation availability ensures that industry is not far from being able to ship and receive goods quickly and efficiently. The access to these highways provides commuting times to Chicago, Rockford, the Quad Cities, and Bloomington/Normal of about 90 minutes and to Des Moines, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, and St. Louis in about four hours. Additionally, Streator is about 15 miles south of Ottawa, the county seat of LaSalle County and about 30 miles northwest of the county seat of Livingston County, Pontiac.

Though the city does not have a navigable shipping body of water within its corporate limits, the Illinois River is only 15 minutes north of Streator. The river is the state's largest and connects to the Mississippi River and the Sanitary & Ship Canal, which ultimately deposits into Lake Michigan. This location allows for barge travel to many major cities in the Midwest, East, and South.

One of the stigmas that the real and perceived isolation presents is that it is difficult for Streator to capitalize on visitors exiting from any of the Interstate highways. The city is not located close enough to any of them to capture the development that usually occurs around many of the interchanges within the state. Instead, Streator has to use other methods to bring visitors into the city and cannot rely on chain retail businesses serving as the impetus. This has also been detrimental recently when attempting to pursue large sales-tax producing businesses. Though it is expected that larger commercial businesses will begin looking at Streator much closer in upcoming years, the location of many similar-sized towns with closer access to Interstate highway can be a slight hindrance in attracting economic development.

LaSalle County adopted a zoning ordinance for the first time in April 2006. While this does not affect Streator's ability to plan for its 1½ mile jurisdiction, it does not give the city zoning authority within the 1½ mile area. Instead Streator is given slightly more ability to deny undesired development. If the city offers its denial of a project in writing, the vote of the County Board must then be by super majority instead of by simple majority. Though this does not give the city the right to outright deny undesired projects within its 1½ mile jurisdiction, it does not completely shut the city out of the development process outside of its corporate limits.

Illinois law allows municipalities to plan for a 1½ mile radius around the existing city limits based on the date of incorporation. This gives the city the ability to plan for any future development that may come in within this area surrounding the corporate limits of Streator and the Village of Kanglely. Streator's 1½ mile planning boundary touches that of Kanglely. However, Streator's earlier date of incorporation allows it to have planning authority on everything within the planning boundary.

Transportation Network

Streator and the surrounding region is served by multiple forms of transportation, including highways, railroads, and waterways. These are imperative in guaranteeing that industrial development has the proper means with which to transport goods and services. Map 4, on the following page, shows the existing transportation options within the 1½ mile planning area and any proposed future improvements.

Highways

There are three basic functional classifications of roads: Arterials, collectors, and local roads. Each classification serves an important purpose to move people in and around the county and city efficiently. Also, these classifications are based primarily on their average daily traffic

and not on unusual traffic patterns that may cause more traffic on a given day. The largest Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) fiscal year 2007-2012 project is the replacement of the Broadway Street bridge over the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad tracks on the city's east side. Construction is underway on the \$5.3 million project, which is a collaborative effort between the city, IDOT, the Interstate Commerce Commission, and BNSF. The bridge is in sore need of replacement and will provide better access to the city's east side when complete.



- Arterials

These are the major roadways that move vehicles in and out of a city. They act as connections to major points and other major traffic generators. Arterials are meant to carry more than 5,000 vehicles per day or 500 vehicles per hour. On-street parking is generally prohibited and driveways and curb cuts are kept to a minimum. They are usually intended to serve a high degree of mobility and a lower degree of access. Two such roads meet this definition in Streator: Illinois Routes 23 and 18.

Route 23 is a north-south highway that connects Streator with Ottawa to the north and Pontiac to the south. The road becomes four lanes as it enters the city from the north. It turns into a one-way street at 1st Street and stays that way until leaving that city at Palmer Avenue. The road serves as the primary commercial corridor of the city and takes travelers through the central business district. As a multi-lane highway, it is intended to move vehicular traffic safely and efficiently through the city. Speed limits are kept relatively low (with the exception of near the city entrances to the north and south). About 13,000 vehicles daily utilize the portion of Route 23 in northern Streator. This route between Streator and Ottawa is heavily traveled and may very likely require widening to four or five lanes as development continues in each city.

It is slightly unusual for a city the size of Streator to have one one-way highway and even more uncommon to have two such roads. One of the pros of one-way streets is the safe manner in which traffic can maneuver through a city. There is obviously less chance of potentially dangerous impacts of oncoming traffic. The one-way streets also require that two streets are utilized as higher-traveled thoroughfares. Land prices may increase and businesses may be more attracted to a wider commercial corridor because of the one-way streets. However, traffic generally moves faster because of the perceived lack of driver awareness that results from a decrease in oncoming travel. Because the traffic typically moves faster, often businesses are hurt because traffic has less time to notice signage and has a smaller amount of time in which to stop.

The primary collector in Streator is Illinois Route 18, which is the main east-west road into and out of the city. It connects Streator with Interstates 39 and 55. Though the average daily traffic is only about half of that on Route 23 with a peak count of 6,700, the street is as important as Route 23 because of its bond with the two limited-access highways. The road also passes through the downtown and serves as the other commercial corridor.

Map 4 –

Transportation Map

Route 18 is the city's other one-way street. The distance of the one-way portion is relatively short. Eastbound traffic must make two 90-degree turns to continue on Route 18. The traffic signals on Route 18 would be too difficult to synchronize to turn into a two-way street. Previously, the signals caused backups for the vehicular traffic.

- Collectors

The purpose of the collectors is to provide for the movement of traffic through the city on a more local basis. They act as the connection between arterials and smaller residential streets. Ideally, collectors transport vehicles quickly to arterials with the least amount of necessary intersections. Generally, a wide array of development occurs on collectors. It can range from heavy manufacturing industries to low density residential development. Collector roads typically carry between 2,000 and 8,000 vehicles per day and are usually two lanes wide.



Collector roads generally have a balance between mobility and access. Collectors in Streator include but are not limited to 1st Street, Broadway Street, 12th Street, Shabbona Street, and Otter Creek Road.

- Local or Residential Streets

The third category of roads is intended only for the access to housing or neighborhood commercial establishments. They are not constructed for any other type of land use. Speed limits are intentionally kept to a minimum to ensure a safe environment for citizens and pedestrians in the area and to minimize the number of additional vehicles from using the roads. This is often done through the use of cul-de-sacs and loops, though they should be used sparingly if at all. Residential streets generally flow into arterials and collectors. With the exception of the roads detailed above, most of the roads in Streator are classified as local or residential streets. The city has some unique brick streets. Though the city has not viewed the preservation of the brick streets as a priority due to the high cost and need to repair other streets, it should identify the most repairable streets and attempt to rehabilitate them. Brick streets are costly to maintain, need regular maintenance, and can cause problems with snow plows, but there is an ambiance to them that cannot be replaced. It is urged that some of the roads be retained by budgeting money each year for their preservation.

The overwhelming majority of roads in Streator form a grid network. The grid pattern is characterized by generally straight north-south and east-west roads and most streets connect into two ingress and egress passages. This system is usually more efficient and less costly to build and maintain. Travelers have an easier time orienting themselves to the city's layout

than with a system of curvilinear roads. Newer subdivisions typically have more cul-de-sacs or dead-end streets because of desire of many homeowners to live on a quieter street with less traffic. Since Streator has not had a large number of new subdivisions over the past two decades, the grid network has still dominated the local transportation system.

Only about 40 percent of the streets in Streator have curbs and gutters and there are still most streets in the older residential areas that do not. The construction of curbs and gutters should likely correspond to any water and sewer line improvements. Also, many neighborhoods lack sidewalks on at least one side of the street. It is highly recommended that curbs and gutters be required in new subdivision design and that sidewalks be constructed on both sides of the street whenever possible. A goal of this plan is to make the city more walkable and the availability of sidewalks or dedicated recreation paths makes reaching that goal much easier.

Parking

Downtown Streator is a fairly sizable area that encompasses many square blocks. On-street parking is the most readily available type. There is not a great supply of off-street parking spaces or lots. Though there is not a colossal demand for a large off-street parking lot, relying too heavily on off-street parking often limits the capture rate for downtown merchants in smaller towns. Many people are used to parking their vehicles in off-street lots due to the proliferation of malls and other chain retail stores that are not located in a downtown area. Because of this, some people have a perception that they will not frequent unique merchants if parking is not safe and located on a busy street with passing traffic.

In addition, another perception that is common to most downtown commercial districts is that parking must be within close proximity to where the customer is doing their shopping. Though it is impossible to have a ready supply of parking spaces within the sight distance of every store in the downtown, creating smaller lots within one to two blocks of every store is more feasible and could significantly boost the sales of the merchants.

The demand for parking in the central business district is typically highest on weeknights and weekends when the most people are available to do their shopping or to run their errands. Often, there is an abundance of available spaces on the weekdays. Therefore, while it is recommended that the city consider the addition of more off-street parking spaces, this should not necessarily be done at the expense of sales tax revenue producing businesses that may want to locate in the downtown. The parking lots should not be located on parcels that may have the potential for redevelopment or have prime commercial frontage. Rather, they should be located on parcels that cannot suffice as locations for businesses due to lack of visibility, size, or other factors.



The city should consider the purchase of any lots that could improve the parking perception in Streator. Once the lots are constructed, proper signage is very important to direct the visitor to available parking spaces and to orient the customer to the downtown area. The signage could be done in conjunction with a city-wide wayfinding signage system that would indicate important landmarks and significant buildings such as the library, city hall, post office, and the Streator airport.

Parking lots built outside of the downtown area for future commercial and/or industrial uses should attempt to use shared parking if the uses are adjacent to one another. This would lessen the amount of parking that would have to be provided and lessen the number of curb cuts onto a road. Shared lots also decrease the amount of impervious surface and potential runoff into adjacent properties. Whenever possible, parking should be kept to the side or rear of buildings to partially eliminate the unsightly look of large expanses of parking. Also, it is strongly urged that minimum landscaping provisions be met for both the building and parking lot. Doing so would help create the transition from urban to rural environment.

Gateways and Signs

Streator has city entrance signs coming from each direction of Routes 18 and 23. The signs are rather simple with a message of “Welcome to Streator.” The brown signs with white lettering and green and red outlines are large enough for passing traffic to easily read. There are no messages or symbols on the signs that could convey a local institution or landmark.

If the city were to undertake a wayfinding program, the entrance signs should be factored into the design of the wayfinding signage. Simple colors and text should be used to create highly visible signs. The signs should give precise directions to the visitor without being overbearing. Though the entrance signs are sufficient, the city may consider adding a motto or picture of a proud landmark, such as the Hopalong Cassidy Trail.

Railroads

Two main national freight railroads pass through Streator. The Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad travels in an east-west manner, though it passes through Streator in a north-south direction. This is one of the busiest railroad lines in the country and connects the city with Chicago and Kansas City. Considerable amounts of freight pass through the city daily. The Norfolk Southern Railway has a shorter line that passes through Streator and connects with an industrial plant in Hennepin to the end of the line in western Indiana. This line does not have the daily frequency like the BNSF does. The Illinois Rail Net is a spur rail line that runs to Ottawa and has one daily train.

Having such freight traffic on multiple lines passing through Streator has its benefits and its problems. The lines are a great attraction for industrial development. They allow goods to be shipped in a timely and efficient manner to most metropolitan areas in the Midwest and around the country. But the rail lines also take away from residential cohesion. They effectively divide neighborhoods and act as a separation or a visible barrier among the residents. The lines also create scattered industrial development. While the freight

transportation is certainly viewed as a positive for the city, they do create land use planning difficulties.

No passenger rail lines serve Streator. The nearest Amtrak rail stations are located within a half hour drive in Dwight or Pontiac. A study has been ongoing that is exploring the feasibility of providing a new passenger rail line that would connect Joliet with LaSalle/Peru. Such a line would be a great benefit for the entire LaSalle County region. The extension is likely many years away from possible implementation because of the heavy financial burden such an extension would cause to make improvements to the rail, stations, parking, and the operation of the railroad.

Waterways

There are no major navigable bodies of water that pass through Streator. The largest river is the Vermilion River, which flows in a southeast-northwest direction into the Illinois River. The Vermilion is a river known for its canoeing and kayaking activity. It often has a very good current that creates exciting recreational opportunities. The Illinois River is approximately 15 miles north of Streator and is one of the major east-west navigable bodies of water in the state. It provides access to the Des Plaines River and eventually can connect to Chicago and Lake Michigan. It moves downstream to the Mississippi River, St. Louis, and New Orleans.

Air Service

There is one public airport within the 1½ mile planning jurisdiction. Streator Airport is one mile east of the city limits. It has a 2,500 foot lighted runway. Private maintenance, storage, and charter service are available. The nearest commercial airport is Central Illinois Regional Airport in Bloomington/Normal. It has about 42,000 annual operations and served more than 230,000 customers in 2005. Chicago's Midway and O'Hare International Airports are within two hours of Streator.



Goals, Objectives, and Policies – Transportation

- Goal:** Continue making Streator an accessible destination for all forms of pedestrian, vehicular, and rail transportation.
- Objective:** Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the local road network.
- Policy:* Pursue the completion of the reconstruction of the Broadway Street bridge over the BNSF Railroad tracks.
- Policy:* Closely follow the annual transportation improvements denoted within the capital improvements plan.
- Policy:* Do not allow unnecessarily wide right-of-ways on new collector streets or local roads.
- Policy:* Prioritize all local street repairs and make repairs to bridges that could disrupt the local Streator economy.
- Policy:* Consider the construction of at least one off-street parking lot within the downtown to provide for additional parking for the area merchants.
- Policy:* Eliminate as many surface crossings as possible that travel near residential areas or improve the visibility and protection for pedestrians and automobile traffic.
- Policy:* Make the downtown more pedestrian-friendly by adding decorative crosswalks and street furniture.
- Policy:* Create better sidewalk and walking path linkages between the parks, schools, downtown, and other public buildings.
- Policy:* Support and encourage coordinated efforts to provide transportation alternatives for individuals without access to their own vehicles including the elderly, disabled, and low-income people.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE



Existing Land Use

Streator has a solid system of parks and recreational areas. There are 168.7 acres of public park space within the city limits. In addition, the schools provide recreation space, with Streator High School holding more than 20 acres of fields. City Park is located in the heart of the city, on the north perimeter of the downtown. It is primarily a passive recreation area with large oak trees that provide shade to much of the park. Playground equipment is available, though some of the equipment may need to be replaced in the upcoming years because of safety concerns. The restroom facilities are in need of upgrades. City Park's 10.8 acres is utilized during summer festivals and as an informal gathering place.

Land was donated at Water Street for a small park next to the Vermilion River. It can be utilized for fishing or to enjoy the moving water. Hopalong Cassidy River Trail and canoe launch is located along Illinois Route 18 on the west side of the city on the Vermilion River. The park, which provides public access to the river, has been heavily utilized during the summer as a prime location to utilize the river and its solid recreational opportunities. Almost 14 acres of public park space is located here.

Marilla Park is a small wooded area on the city's far north side that contains beautiful topography. It is the city's second largest park. The park contains five benches, two slides, three swings, a backstop, grills, picnic shelters, picnic tables, and restrooms.

Bodznick Park contains 4.5 acres and is adjacent to the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks in the city's southeastern quadrant. It is heavily utilized for softball games. Oakland Park contains 5.5 acres on the south side of the city. Included among the amenities at the park are shelters, picnic tables, grills, a slide, seven swings, four tot swings, and a backstop.

Southside Park contains 9.1 acres and is located near the southeast borders of the city. A few baseball diamonds can be found within this park. Spring Lake Park contains 37.2 acres and is the city's largest park. Though it is visited regularly, the park holds considerable potential as a restored natural area with multi-use trails and public restrooms. Sherman Park is a small neighborhood park that contains 2.1 acres and is located on the city's east side at the intersection of Hickory and Johnson Streets. It contains numerous playground items and two old tennis courts that do not currently have nets and an uneven playing surface.

Anderson Park Golf Course is a 32-acre nine-hole course located on Illinois Route 23 on the north side of the city. It receives a considerable amount of play during the warmer months, with up to 20,000 rounds per year. Rates are very affordable for residents and non-residents alike. The clubhouse needs considerably maintenance and could be replaced. The course does not have room for expansion because of the close proximity of the adjacent land uses. Streator Country Club is a semi-private nine-hole golf course located on the far northwest side of the city.



Map 5 –
Parks and Recreation
Map

Future Land Use

The city currently has slightly more than the recommended minimum for public park space. Recreation standards recommend at least 10.5 acres of public park space per each 1,000 population. With a population of 14,190, Streator should have almost 150 acres of public park space. Therefore, the city currently has about 20 acres more than the recommended minimum. However, this includes Anderson Golf Course, which can only be utilized by paying a fee. If the golf course is taken out of the total supply, Streator has about 136 acres.

The parks are balanced fairly well throughout the city. Only one park is located north of City Park in the central part of the city (not including Anderson Golf Course), though the Streator High School athletic fields are located on the west side of the city near the Vermilion River. The east side of the city to the north of Illinois Route 18 is the primary area that is underserved. Though most of the east and northeast side of the city are well-established residential



districts, efforts should be undertaken to locate a small, neighborhood-level park somewhere within this area to serve the recreational needs of the adjacent residents.

It is recommended that neighborhood-level parks (one acre or less in size and serving residents within a 10-minute walk or ½ mile radius) be located within close proximity to every household in the city. These parks are the easiest to add to the overall parks system because of their lack of size and since they do not have to be heavily equipped. They do not significantly add to the total park acreage but they greatly enhance the quality of life for those living nearby that can allow the neighborhood children a place to play safely. Every park should be connected via sidewalks or dedicated walk/bicycle trails.

The city should consider the possibility of purchasing vacant lots within the northeast or northwest portions of the city. Underutilized or vacant lots are usually perfect candidates for small neighborhood parks. A new park often increases the livability of a neighborhood and can increase nearby property values. The parks do not have to be heavily landscaped or contain numerous recreational amenities. They should contain direct signage and adequate lighting that maintains a safe atmosphere within the subdivision. The lighting should only be directed to those areas within the park and not to any adjacent properties.

There is an adequate supply of community-level parks within Streator. This category typically consists of larger parks that serve most, if not all, of the city. Though neither park that is considered a community park for the purposes of this plan meets the common minimum size requirements, they both serve the function of such a park. People generally will drive to use such a park and it has a large capacity capable of holding many events at the same time. City Park and Southside Park both fall within this category. Community-level parks characteristically are not located within heavily populated residential areas because of the amount of traffic and noise that can be generated. The parks are designed for all age groups and contain both active and passive recreational components. Space is available for team sports such as baseball/softball and soccer and the park can also contain an area for a walking path, fishing area, playgrounds, or picnic tables.



The city currently has a park dedication component within all new residential subdivisions. It is a solid manner in which to maintain a steady level of parkspace for the entire city. Requiring the park be included within new development allows for better site planning and hopefully a park that better serves the residents it is intended to serve. The park dedication ratio should be a

minimum of 0.025 acres per planned housing unit. In some cases where there already is a substantial supply of parkspace, a fee in lieu provision can be acquired which would be placed into an interest accruing parks fund to be utilized for future park construction elsewhere in the city. Often, the location of a house within close proximity of a park is one of the top considerations for families looking to situate in a city.

There is not a dedicated pedestrian path in any part of the city. Combined with only a minor percentage of the streets containing sidewalks, Streator is not currently a pedestrian-friendly city. Along with requiring parkspace be dedicated within new developments, the city should work closely with developers to create a recreation path within the interior and exterior of the subdivision. The trails should have as few crossings with collector or arterial roads as possible. It would also be beneficial to utilize on-road trails where space is not available as dedicated off-road paths. The city should strive to create paths that lead to public access points with the Vermilion River. Space near the river is ideal for parkspace because of the area's location within the 100-year floodplain. Development should be highly restricted within a floodplain and preserving the region as a linear park would be the best use of the land.

Additionally, the city should consult with the local utility companies about utilizing their right-of-ways as pedestrian paths. Some of the best available space is often adjacent to large electrical lines because the land would not be utilized for any other use and a long corridor

makes for a terrific recreation trail. If Illinois Route 23 is widened to four or five lanes, the city should push for the creation of a trail that would parallel the road toward Ottawa. In Ottawa, a trail could connect with the I&M Canal path, which travels from LaSalle to Joliet.

To create additional parkspace, the city should make the most of the various grant programs offered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The program most suitable for the city is the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant. The city could apply for a matching grant for the acquisition of land or for park development. The competitive program has benefited numerous communities in Illinois and should be utilized for Streator in its attempts to add recreational opportunities within the city.

Much of the playground equipment in the Streator parks is showing signs of age and could be replaced. The city should analyze the equipment at each park to prioritize which equipment should be replaced first.

The James Street Recreation Area could be utilized in the future for ballfields and tennis courts. It also holds the potential to serve as a larger sports and aquatics complex. The 20-acre area would require removal of debris material to utilize the area as a recreational amenity. The high cost of such a project may deter the realization of it as a park, but the area holds considerable potential to increase the recreational demands of the Streator residents. The project is currently in a design phase.

The clubhouse at Anderson Park Golf Course will be replaced with a rebuilt clubhouse and golf cart storage facility soon at an estimated cost of \$500,000. The golf course is within the Route 23 commercial corridor and there will likely be demand to sell the land for retail development in the future. However, it provides a necessary recreational element to the citizens of Streator at a very reasonable cost.

The city should pursue partnerships with the area schools to make use of the parks and open spaces on their properties. Though the citizens that live near the schools utilize the outdoor areas, formal recreational programs could further utilize the parks and create additional opportunities for the residents. There should be many options available for people of all ages. The city could embrace co-op programs with Ottawa if there is not enough participation within Streator for a certain desired program.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies – Parks and Environment

Goal: Maintain recreational opportunities for people of all ages and expand the program offerings as the demographics of the city evolve.

Objective 1: Attempt to serve each area of the city with recreational opportunities.

Policy: Determine an appropriate area of at least two acres within the northeast and northwest areas of the city to place a neighborhood-level park.

Policy: Analyze each underserved or vacant property in the city for their potential to provide for parkspace.

Policy: Continue the park dedication component currently in place for all new residential subdivisions or a fee-in-lieu provision that would create satisfactory space and amenities for the new residents.

Policy: Utilize the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development grant program to leverage city funds for the acquisition and/or creation of additional parkland.

Objective 2: Create a network of greenways and trails that promote walking and bicycling.

Policy: Connect pedestrian trails with important city facilities such as city hall, library, parks, and schools.

Policy: Create a partnership with the local utility companies to utilize easements as pedestrian trails.

Policy: Maintain open corridors adjacent to and near the Vermilion River and other tributaries as open space for pedestrian use.

Policy: Maintain open dialogue with the Illinois Department of Transportation to locate a pedestrian trail adjacent to a possible widening of Route 23.

Objective 3: Coordinate a regular update of the city's parks equipment with the capital improvements plan.

Policy: Continue to maintain and improve the Anderson Park Golf Course property as a unique asset to the city.

Policy: Seek to utilize James Street as a recreation area for the citizens of Streator.

Policy: Prioritize the oldest and least safe equipment and set aside funding to replace the equipment.

Policy: Set minimum standards for the level of safety for the park equipment that meet federal Americans With Disabilities requirements. The equipment must not be used when it falls below the minimum level.

INDUSTRIAL



Existing Land Use

A rich industrial tradition that dates to the 19th century can be found in Streator. The city's workers have created products that are vital to the day-to-day lives of many citizens around the country. Streator has been one of the leading manufacturers of glass products, which were formerly fabricated in classic brick buildings on Route 18. Owens-Illinois Glass Container, Inc. manufacturers glass bottles at a site on the northwest side of the city. Owens-Illinois employs about 210 people and is the fifth largest employer in Streator. The plant can make two million bottles each day on the three shifts even though it only uses a fraction of its 660,000 square feet of space. It uses two furnaces to make the glass and four machines to mold it. The company invented the first automatic bottle-making machine in 1903. These former glass-making buildings closed more than two decades ago and are currently looking for tenants.

Vactor Manufacturing is the city's second largest employer, following St. Mary's Hospital. The company, which is the world's top producer of heavy-duty truck-mounted municipal sewer cleaning equipment, has 530 employees and has annual revenues of about \$170 million. The company's 200,000 square foot headquarters is on the far southern side of town near the intersection of Livingston Road and Illinois Street. Vactor Manufacturing was founded in 1911 under the name Myers-Sherman. During the early 1960's, the business began to design, patent and manufacture a line of sewer and catch basin cleaners for the municipal public works market. In 1969, it introduced the first combination sewer cleaner to combine water jetting and vacuuming action.

The third largest employer in Streator is U.S. Foodservice. The large distribution center on Quality Lane and 12th Street near the city's southern border has more than 400 employees. The company provides food to many different business sectors, including restaurants, schools, healthcare providers, and hotels. U.S. Foodservice is one of the country's largest foodservice distributors and has annual revenues around \$15 billion per year.



Four prominent business parks are located within the city limits or the 1½ mile planning area. Both Streator Industrial Park and Westgate Industrial Park are next to Vactor Manufacturing on 12th Street. Eagle Point Business Center is located on Route 18 just outside of Streator. Streator Industrial Warehouse Facility is located on the city's north side. Each business park has space available, have utilities ready for connection, and most have rail access adjacent to the park.

The business supply is rather divided between light and heavy industrial. The strong industrial tradition has ensured a solid well-paying employment base. It will be important for the city and the Streator Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry to continue working with each of the industries to determine if there are any needs that can be met to maintain or even expand the various companies. The city's infrastructure must be kept modern to exceed the requirements of each business. To this point, the utilities, road network, and rail system are sufficient to maintain the number of jobs currently located in Streator.

Streator's location on two primary state thoroughfares that travel in each direction to interstate highways and three railroads are solid influences when attracting industrial development. Truck or rail traffic can quickly access major cities in little time. This combined with lower land prices should mean that industry would be attracted to Streator in the years to come. The city should always attempt to diversify the economy with higher-paying jobs that meet the overall educational background of the residents.

Future Land Use

As with many smaller cities in the U.S., Streator's first goal should be to retain its current industrial base. Most of the companies have been located in the city for many decades and it is important not to take them for granted. The competition for development continues to increase in this country and abroad and there is always a fear that a company will relocate in

a country with lower wages. Streator should be able to maintain its current employment supply because of its longstanding industrial institution but it cannot take this as a foregone conclusion.

There are a few vacant buildings or empty sites in Streator that could have the potential for development. The two old glass facilities are ready for redevelopment, though the sites may be more prime for a combination of residential and commercial due to their locations near downtown and quieter residential neighborhoods. Also, many of the buildings and sites within the city may not meet the size requirements of some larger companies that may be looking to relocate.

Most industrial opportunities figure to be outside of the current city limits. In particular, greenfield sites with rail access from the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe, Norfolk Southern, or Illinois RailNet will likely be the most popular, particularly for those that require freight transportation to ship their goods. The west side of the city towards the Eagle Point Business Center within the Western Growth Area will also be an attractive area, as detailed in a 1999 report completed by Teska Associates. This part of the city and the 1½ mile planning area provides the best access to an interstate highway, though rail transportation is not immediately adjacent, and large tracts of land would be available. Since much of this area has not been developed, the city should institute landscape guidelines to enhance the appearance of the Route 18 corridor.

Any new industrial facilities should ideally be located within an area that will not detrimentally affect nearby residential neighborhoods. Though much of the industrial uses figure to be located far enough to not impact any housing developments, they must not negatively impact any current residents. All industrial uses should be shielded from residential uses through the use of buffering, which can range from grass berms to fencing. Light, air, water, and noise pollution should be minimized as much as possible. In addition, the city should continue to mandate minimum standards for landscaping of the entire property, particularly the parking lots and around the periphery.

Streator figures to be positioned for distribution and warehousing uses more than heavy manufacturing. Ethanol plants have also begun appearing more frequently in some Illinois cities that have rail and/or water access. The city should create development-ready areas that can be marketed as a package. This includes a detailed listing of the utilities either on the site or the distance away from the site, truck and rail transportation access, the cost of land or buildings, and the zoning of the property. The city and Chamber of Commerce currently show this on the SACCI website. However, more information that is updated frequently would really help in the pursuit of economic development. Additionally, the city should rezone planned industrial parcels in anticipation of new development. This would require one less bureaucratic effort when a developer is ready to consider building in Streator. The city should consider each on a case-by-case basis depending on the surrounding land uses and transportation corridors. Coordination of economic development on a regional basis will also benefit Streator as residents do commute for employment opportunities.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies – Industrial

Goal: Maintain a high-paying job base of diverse companies while strategically looking for growth industries that would match the assets that the city has to offer.

Objective 1: Retain the existing industrial base that has helped define Streator for decades.

Policy: Continue to meet with the existing companies on a regular basis to discuss any particular needs that should be addressed by either entity.

Policy: Support a strong marketing effort through SACCI to showcase the advantages of locating businesses in Streator and the financial savings that is available.

Policy: Strengthen the business attraction and retention components of the city and SACCI websites.

Policy: Create incentives that would make it more financially feasible for new businesses to locate in Marseilles or existing businesses to enhance obsolete facilities and create new products.

Policy: Revise the city's zoning ordinance to plan for areas that are likely to be in demand for industrial growth.

Policy: Encourage any existing companies to upgrade their facilities by utilizing any current or future financing assistance.

Policy: Ensure that the existing infrastructure is adequate to support the current businesses and that areas planned for industrial uses have the necessary utilities either in place or nearby.

Policy: Coordinate with Streator High School and Illinois Valley Community College to utilize their facilities and increase the abilities and attractiveness of prospective Streator employees.

Objective 2: Minimize the impact of industrial operations on adjacent land uses.

Policy: Continue to require a high degree of building design and site design standards for all new industries.

Policy: As the city experiences more growth, evaluate the maximum thresholds for air, light, noise, and water pollution.

Policy: Continue to require the buffering of industrial uses from other less intensive uses such as residential and parks.

Policy: Construct industrial facilities that have easily convertible space that makes it easier to adapt to changing industry trends and conditions.

COMMERCIAL



Existing Land Use

This analysis includes retail and office uses within Streator and its planning area. Commercial establishments can be found in most areas of the city, though the prime locations are along Routes 23 and 18 and within the downtown. Route 23 north of downtown is the primary shopping destination area within the city, due primarily to its widened transportation corridor and the city's highest average daily traffic totals. Route 23 has the majority of chain retail stores. Some have begun to show signs of deterioration and disrepair and are in need of revitalization. This is typical of many older commercial districts that reach an end of a lifespan before more attractive stores or stores with a different selection of goods start to take a greater portion of the market share. Most smaller downtowns have experienced this phenomenon at some point in their city's history and the trend is difficult to withstand without extraordinary efforts.

Streator has a rather substantial downtown. It encompasses an area of Hickory Street on the north, Bridge Street on the south, Wasson Street on the east, and Oak Street on the west. Most of the buildings are well-built and are contribute greatly to the architecture of Streator. The downtown used to be the focal point of commerce in Streator but must now compete with the highway commercial businesses on Route 23. It is not the primary shopping district but is still a focal point of the city. Though the size of the downtown is large, it is easily walkable and does not require an automobile to maneuver. The city's library and post office are both located within the central business district. There is a mix of small local niche retailers and office uses such as banks. Most of the local businesses maintain a standard 9

a.m. – 5 p.m. schedule from Monday through Friday. A newer chain drugstore is also located within the district. Some of the buildings are vacant or underutilized. City Park is located on the north side of Hickory Street and provides a great oasis for shoppers tired after a long day.

Scattered neighborhood commercial uses can be found in many neighborhoods. These generally consist of uses that are aimed at residents within a rather small radius. The business establishments include taverns, restaurants, and small convenience stores. Locating smaller retail businesses within primarily residential areas offers a nice mix of uses and usually provides a service that unifies a neighborhood. Most mixed-use neighborhoods are typically older, as the majority of new developments are entirely residential and zoning ordinances today are rather regimented to separate land uses as much as possible. This mix adds vibrancy to a neighborhood that is often hard to replicate in newer subdivisions.

Few commercial establishments are located outside of the city limits and within the 1½ mile planning jurisdiction.

Future Land Use

- Route 23 and Outlying City Limits

The commercial corridor along Route 23 north of downtown is the primary shopping district in Streator. The majority of the land uses along the route are commercial, with scattered residential structures throughout the corridor. This area contains a mix of small- and large-scale retailers. This is also the only corridor with regional shopping centers whose target markets extend beyond just the residents of the city. The city's two largest stores (Kmart and Kroger) can be found on Route 23 as well as fast food restaurants, sit down restaurants, a hotel, banks, and other miscellaneous commercial uses. This corridor is intended for vehicle usage, as the buildings are oriented towards the rear of the lots with large expanses of parking in front.

Most of the future commercial development figures to be along Route 23 within and just outside of the current city limits, particularly if the road is widened further between Streator and Ottawa. It is expected during the life of this plan that a Wal-Mart Supercenter will locate within this corridor. Streator appears to meet the market demographics that Wal-Mart looks for and there is not another store within at least 20 miles of the city. This would be a benefit to the city. Though the store will likely slightly impact other retailers that offer similar merchandise, Wal-Mart has a history of drawing shoppers from outside of the area and creating spinoff businesses to build on its outlots or surrounding sites. If a store is built, the city would see greatly increased sales tax revenues. The additional sales tax is sorely needed because of Streator's dependence on higher than desired property taxes. The city currently has a sales tax of 7.5 percent, which is in line with most communities.

The corridor has fared somewhat well over the last decade. However, some of the shopping centers and sites have begun to deteriorate and are in need of rehabilitation. The evolution of

a shopping center is fairly limited because of the attraction of newer stores with different architectural amenities. It does not take too many years for a shopping center to become dilapidated if regular maintenance and site improvements do not take place. It will be important for the shopping centers along Route 23 to undergo an appearance makeover to remain competitive as additional commercial development spreads along the corridor. Some of these improvements will likely include façade refurbishing, parking lot reconstruction and landscaping, lighting upgrades, and signage repairs. This can be done through public/private partnerships, though it is imperative for the property owner to be willing to invest in any improvements.

The city should create a strong landscaping ordinance for the Route 23 corridor that will ensure that all developments are attractive. Sound design and construction will add value to not only the new development but also adjacent properties. It is urged that parking lots be placed on the side or rear of buildings in order to eliminate unsightly large swaths



of pavement that can currently be found along the corridor. The placement of buildings on the lot is also important, particularly within the existing city limits. Locating the building closer to the street, mandating the use of quality building materials, utilizing trees and shrubs to shield the building and parking lot, and hiding detention ponds, utilities, and trash containers from view will all make the overall site blend with the surrounding context more easily. As development spreads further north on Route 23, it is recommended that access drives be limited to encourage the use of shared access among multiple developments. This will be particularly important near the Marilla Park Road intersection, which will likely be the commercial growth hot spot. Much of this can be accomplished through clear zoning ordinance objectives and sound site plan reviews of all new developments.



The city's lodging market is limited to one local and one chain motel on this corridor. Other overnight stays can be found in Ottawa or Peru. The market is expected to continue in this regard because of the distance from an interstate highway. The most likely area for another hotel would likely be on Route 23 on the city's north side. The probable addition of a Wal-Mart Supercenter may spur other development, which could include visitor lodging.

- Downtown

The downtown encompasses many square blocks and at one time was the only available shopping in the city. It has since lost a lot of its attention to the retailers located along the Route 23 corridor. Because of the size of the area, this plan recommends maintaining the existing boundaries and strengthening the district instead of seeking an extension outside of the current borders. The current appearance of the area and history of the downtown offer

tremendous potential for the future if development is kept within the reasonable boundaries that have been set for years.

The Route 23 corridor will continue to be the primary shopping area within the city. It will be important for the downtown to distinguish itself as a separate area that does not appear to be competing with the highway commercial uses on Route 23. The establishments must offer niches that cannot be found in the outlying businesses. Customer service is imperative to differentiate the two shopping districts. Stores should occasionally stay open during longer periods of time, particularly on weekends or during community festivals. A sizable percentage of business is not captured because most residents work during the only time many downtown merchants are open. It is probably not feasible or worthwhile to maintain longer operating hours each day of the week, but one or two nights a week should be designated for additional operating hours by as many of the businesses as possible.

It is recommended that the city consider the creation of building design guidelines for the downtown. There is a solid building stock currently, though the age of some of the buildings could begin to show on the exteriors. Design guidelines are intended to show developers the types of developments the city and its residents would like to see. They should be flexible enough to allow for a multitude of styles, but stringent enough to ensure that the future building appearance will not detract from the existing styles. The design guidelines should cover at minimum the building facades, materials, colors, windows, signage, and massing. Implementing these guidelines will help to guarantee that the downtown is a shopping destination but its buildings maintain a sense of style that is appealing to shoppers and draws them to walk throughout the district.

There are some scattered vacant lots and buildings that negatively affect the central business district. The city must attempt to make the best possible use of the land or building whenever possible. This is complicated because many property owners live outside of Streator and often do not give as much consideration to the upkeep of the property if it is not in use or is underutilized. Absentee landowners can disapprovingly influence shoppers who decide to shop in the district based on its appearance.

The city should pursue the enforcement of minimal property maintenance standards on deteriorating buildings or properties. It only takes a few unsightly buildings and/or litter-filled lots to create a negative perception about an area and it is important to maintain a district that has a high degree of uniformity. This perception is difficult to overturn once it has had the chance to infiltrate the minds of residents and outside consumers. The enforcement of property maintenance standards would help to ensure that buildings and lots do not become a negative influence on the rest of the central business district.

One of the best ways to make the downtown livelier is to utilize the upper stories of buildings. The downtown is currently more populated between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., though a few stores that stay open later keep some shoppers in the area. The utilization of the downtown as a mixed use commercial and residential area will help move it closer to a goal of creating a 24-hour district. Many of the buildings that have space available as living quarters could be utilized for apartment or condominiums. Though some of the structures

would likely have considerable expenses to rehabilitate, such projects would be very beneficial to the downtown. The market for downtown living has been rejuvenated in recent years as cities have taken a refocus to the viability of their downtowns. The types of likely interested parties include young singles and retired empty nesters.

Streator should consider an overall streetscape plan for the central business district. Because the two arterial roads in the city either cross through or on the outside of the area, heavy traffic can deter people from wanting to frequent the downtown. The arterials bring automobile traffic and an increased visibility, but the noise associated with the vehicles can make downtown shopping adventurous. The city would be wise to continue their attempt to soften the impact from the traffic and make the area more pedestrian-friendly. The Streator Downtown Heritage Beautification Project is a solid effort to accomplish this goal. The Streator Downtown Area Businesses (SDAB) received a \$200,000 grant from the state that could include the addition of ornamental light poles, benches, street trees, decorative sidewalks, and a retro clock fixture. The project is expected to commence during the summer of 2008.



In the meantime, the city and SDAB should continue to raise money to complete the streetscape of the entire downtown. It is important that the downtown boundaries have a unified appearance to better identify the downtown as a destination area for residents and visitors. Currently, the downtown does not have clearly defined boundaries. This is partially due to the two arterials that utilize wide thoroughfares and do not persuade considerable walking in the area. Benches, trash receptacles, and planters should be located within frequent intervals throughout the district. The street trees and low decorative fencing should be used as a buffer to the automobile traffic and to better protect the pedestrian sidewalk zone. Bumpouts are also recommended at many intersections to shorten the distance pedestrians have to cross a street and to slow traffic.

The city can apply for Illinois Transportation Enhancements Program grants through the Illinois Department of Transportation. The program provides for an 80/20 reimbursement for eligible projects including historic preservation, landscaping and scenic beautification, rails-to-trails corridor preservation, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The 1969 Streator Comprehensive Plan identified utilizing Monroe Street between Bridge and Hickory Streets as a pedestrian mall. This is generally not recommended now because of

the need for vehicular traffic throughout the downtown and for the grid network of streets to continue whenever possible.

The city, SACCI, and SDAB should also consider a well-conceived marketing plan to make the downtown a target for potential visitors and to try to capture a greater portion of a tourism market. This can be accomplished in a myriad of ways. At a minimum, the downtown should receive high-profile viewing on the SACCI and city websites. The sites should impress on potential visitors the beauty of Streator in general and the great shopping and dining opportunities available downtown. Advertising can also be used in economic development trade journals, local and regional newspapers, billboards, and general public mailings.

As with industrial businesses within the city of Streator, it is important that the elected officials make a concerted outreach effort towards the existing downtown businesses. Regular communication should be kept to acknowledge the needs and desires of the local retailers. The city's recently created Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district should create more development interest downtown. The TIF will be used to spur redevelopment and rehabilitation by setting aside financing for new construction or building improvement projects. TIF is an economic development tool that is used by many cities in Illinois to spur investment within clearly defined areas that may have some degree of distress. TIF funds can also be used to make overall improvements to the downtown such as adding new streetscape amenities.

The downtown property owners should be prodded to make improvements to their buildings. Often, a lack of available financing is a serious barrier to making the types of building upgrades that are desired. A TIF district would help lessen that gap between the desire to improve one's building and a limitation on available dollars to make it happen. Further enticement can be created through annual awards for property owners that do invest in the downtown. The city could create a fund that would award cash prizes to those that do the best rehabilitation efforts each year.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies – Commercial Development

Goal: Cause Streator to be a more viable local and regional competitor in the attempt to capture a greater percentage of sales taxes.

Objective 1: Create a highway commercial corridor that appeals to both residents and visitors to Streator.

Policy: Encourage big box stores to locate within the northern Route 23 area where large parcels of land are available.

Policy: Encourage the rehabilitation of existing shopping centers on Route 23, including building facades, parking lots, lighting, and signage.

- Policy:* When feasible, reuse vacant or underutilized commercial facilities.
- Policy:* Attract stores to the area that are either not currently available or do not sufficiently capture the available market.
- Policy:* Ensure that sufficient infrastructure capacity is available to sustain any level of growth along Route 23.
- Policy:* Create a more manageable scale by locating new buildings closer to the street and locating parking lots to the sides and rear of buildings.
- Policy:* Revise the city's zoning ordinance to properly identify the desired type of commercial development.
- Policy:* Limit the frequency of curb-cuts and require adjacent commercial developments to share access drives.
- Policy:* Whenever possible, continue to require pedestrian connections within all developments and internal sidewalks within larger developments.

Objective 2: Further distinguish the central business district as a destination location.

- Policy:* Center the city efforts on maintaining the current downtown boundaries rather than increasing the district's size.
- Policy:* Focus on attracting and promoting niche businesses that are unique within LaSalle or Livingston Counties.
- Policy:* Consider extending the business operating hours during certain weekdays and weekends, particularly when city festivals occur.
- Policy:* Consider creating building design guidelines to maintain a desired look of the downtown building stock.
- Policy:* Clean vacant or dilapidated properties and establish minimum property maintenance standards for all buildings.
- Policy:* Attempt to utilize the upper portions of buildings for residential uses to maintain a larger population base during all hours of the day.
- Policy:* Create a marketing campaign to showcase the great qualities of the Streator downtown.

Policy: Continue the creation of a unified streetscape effort by pursuing grant opportunities that would fund a portion or all of the city's expenses.

Policy: Consider the creation of a downtown Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to offer low interest loans for façade improvements and other permanent improvements.

RESIDENTIAL



Existing Land Use

Streator has a very affordable and aging housing stock. It consists primarily of single-family detached dwellings. Much of the housing in the city is in solid condition but there are some homes beginning to show signs of deterioration. There has been little new residential development in Streator within the past 20 years. The majority of the homes in Streator can be bought by any income group. As seen in the table below, more than 90 percent of the homes in the city have a value of less than \$100,000. This percentage far exceeds that of any comparable nearby city. The city’s median value of an owner-occupied housing unit is \$56,800, which is one of the lowest figures within north central Illinois. The city’s median value in 1990 was \$37,300, meaning that the overall housing stock increased in value by over 50 percent over the previous decade. A lower housing value would be expected because there have been few new housing starts in recent years.

Table 12 – Median Housing Value by Category Percentage

Value	Ottawa	Peru	Pontiac	Streator	Illinois
Less than \$50,000	6.5%	9.1%	14.0%	40.5%	9.3%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	55.9%	59.5%	63.8%	49.7%	26.4%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	23.8%	22.2%	15.5%	7.1%	23.6%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	10.8%	5.8%	4.7%	2.0%	17.4%

\$200,000 - \$299,999	2.2%	2.2%	2.0%	0.3%	14.0%
\$300,000 - \$499,999	0.8%	0.6%	0.0%	0.2%	6.6%
\$500,000 - \$999,999	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%	0.2%	2.3%
\$1,000,000 or more	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Median Value	\$87,500	\$85,700	\$73,800	\$56,800	\$130,800

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Streator predominately has detached single-family housing units. Nearly four out of every five housing units are of this variety. Slightly more than 13 percent of the housing consists of multi-family residential. A senior housing development was completed within the last decade on the city's northwest side. A smaller subsection of the city lives in a mobile home community. The housing composition is fairly similar to most of the other notable nearby cities as indicated below. There is not a considerable need for multi-family housing in Streator because of the exceptional affordability of most units.

Table 13 – Housing Units in Structure by Category Percentage

Units in Structure	Ottawa	Peru	Pontiac	Streator	Illinois
1-unit detached	70.6%	77.7%	66.1%	78.1%	57.9%
1-unit attached	3.0%	0.9%	2.3%	0.3%	4.8%
2 units	8.9%	6.7%	5.7%	4.5%	6.9%
3 or 4 units	6.5%	3.5%	7.0%	5.1%	6.5%
5 to 9 units	3.2%	2.6%	4.7%	3.6%	6.2%
10 to 19 units	3.4%	3.4%	3.0%	1.8%	4.3%
20 or more units	3.1%	3.3%	4.9%	2.7%	10.1%
Mobile home	1.1%	1.9%	6.3%	3.9%	3.2%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Streator has a noticeably aging housing stock. Slightly more than six percent of the homes in the city have been constructed since 1980. Building trends within this decade also follow this trend. This will be discussed in more detail below. Streator has lagged behind other comparable communities that have experienced more residential growth over the previous two decades. Immediately to the north, Ottawa noticed a relative housing boom since 1990, as about ten percent of its housing units have been constructed during that time.

Conversely, about 75 percent of the housing in the city is 50 years of age or older. The lack of new housing is a large reason why the median housing price is so minimal when compared

to the surrounding cities. Plus, the median incomes in Streator are lower, which does not allow for the types of housing improvement projects that are often needed to maintain and upgrade older homes. A large percentage of the homes in the city are rather sound structurally and their solid construction has allowed the majority of them to last as long as they have. However, an aging housing stock is further compounded by a population that is increasing in age and has difficulty maintaining their home or would even like to move into a senior housing community. The deficiency of housing options is often not appealing to families that may consider moving to the area and the lack of suitable options to sell helps drive the price down slightly.

Table 14 – Housing Unit Age by Category Percentage

Age of Structure	Ottawa	Peru	Pontiac	Streator	Illinois
1999 to March 2000	1.2%	2.1%	0.9%	0.2%	1.6%
1995 to 1998	5.0%	2.4%	3.9%	0.7%	5.3%
1990 to 1994	3.6%	2.5%	6.1%	1.3%	5.5%
1980 to 1989	6.5%	2.7%	9.7%	4.0%	9.7%
1970 to 1979	12.2%	8.3%	16.1%	8.9%	16.3%
1960 to 1969	7.9%	14.8%	13.0%	10.4%	14.6%
1940 to 1959	28.3%	30.4%	18.2%	32.3%	24.4%
1939 or earlier	35.3%	36.9%	32.1%	42.2%	22.6%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Future Land Use

The large majority of housing options in Streator are single- or two-family residential units. This figures to remain the case because of the extreme affordability of owning a home versus renting an apartment. The housing market regionally experienced a considerable upswing during much of the 2000's, though it is expected to become more stagnant as the market does its typical fluctuation. About 14 building permits were issued annually over the past four years. This trend is expected to remain fairly consistent into the near future, though larger developments may be more likely towards the end of this plan. Few subdivisions are currently platted with remaining lots to be developed.

Residential development will likely be spurred if transportation improvements are made to Illinois Routes 23 or 18. While the widening of either road would enhance commercial and industrial development, housing also benefits from the increased accessibility that the roads would provide to one of the nearby interstate highways. Much of the single-family residential opportunities figure to be to the north of the city, with some low density development possible to the west of the Vermilion River.

Though there is a lack of available rental properties or apartments in the city, this is not a serious shortage that needs to be addressed. However, if large single-family developments

come into the city over the next couple of decades, it will be important to ensure that housing options remain for all segments of the population. The median monthly rental price in Streator doubled from 1990 to 2000 yet is still slightly lower than that of LaSalle County.

Rehabilitation of the existing housing stock will be a major priority for the city. The property taxes are relatively high at this point, due primarily to a lower than desired sales tax base. The attraction of businesses that can contribute greater sales taxes to the city's coffers will significantly reduce its reliance on property taxes. This, in turn, will make it more financially feasible for many families to undertake the types of structure improvements that are necessary or desired. A revolving loan fund (RLF) can be created that would set aside money for residents to rehabilitate their homes utilizing low interest loans. The purpose of a RLF is to support and stimulate private investment. Often, a maximum income level is established to ensure that residents have a greater need for the loan than others with more financial means.



Part of the deterioration of the housing stock can be attributed to absentee landlords that are not willing or do not have the financial means to invest in their properties. There is generally a lack of interest on behalf of absentee landowners to maintain their buildings. The city should consider holding a referendum to become a home rule community, which would allow the city to take greater action against those who do not maintain their properties. Under home rule, the state would grant the city more powers than they currently have and it would allow for more innovative and responsive solutions to problems that may be more specific to Streator.

The city should consider applying for a grant to undertake a housing rehabilitation project. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) benefits low-to-moderate income residents and can improve the city's housing stock. The city could apply for up to \$350,000 towards homes that have a demonstrated need for rehabilitation. The city should target a specific area that does not exceed the income threshold and has a large percentage of its home in need of repair. Gradual strengthening of each neighborhood will dramatically change the appearance of the structures in Streator and create an increased quality of life for the residents.

Much of the transportation system exists as a grid network, which makes navigating throughout Streator for residents and visitors very simple. This should continue within new residential developments. There can be slight variations from the strict grid network, particularly where topographical concerns are present or other landmarks must be planned around. However, there should be a strict limitation on the frequency of cul-de-sacs. It is important to have more than one means of ingress and egress within a neighborhood and cul-de-sacs take away from the efficiency of the local roads network. Cul-de-sacs should only be

allowed where multiple access points are not available and there should be a maximum length for each dead end street. The connectivity should be planned to join all future roads.

Since the majority of the homes in Streator were built before 1960, lot sizes are considerably smaller than those found typically in most new developments. Because the lot sizes generally do not conform to today's building trends, the desire or ability to rebuild homes is lessened. Infill development is not considered to be in real great demand because new housing can be found on larger lots at relatively cheap prices. There will likely be scattered infill because of the number of homes that require rehabilitation.

It will be important for the city to analyze its zoning ordinance to determine if the existing residential requirements are sufficient for the current building stock and future planned residential areas. There will likely need to be a few different residential districts to permit construction within the established areas of the city that have smaller lots and within future annexed areas that would be less dense. There are currently two single-family residential zoning districts for low- and medium-density development. A third may be needed for larger lot zoning in the future. The city's subdivision ordinance will also need to be reviewed to verify if it is satisfactory to properly control new growth and to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to support the growth.

Housing design can become rather plain in larger subdivisions unless the city requires some degree of diversity within the building styles. Countless newer subdivisions utilize a cookie-cutter approach with few variations of housing appearances. This detracts from the overall architectural integrity of the surrounding city. Monotony codes recommend various building styles, heights, facades, materials, and lot layouts. The monotony codes should be a recommendation instead of a mandate and should offer developers several means to meet the purpose of the codes. Offering different housing styles appeals to families wanting unique neighborhoods that create a quality of life that can often be compromised within subdivisions that look so similar.

Residential development will generally transition from the more dense housing that is found throughout the city to less dense that newer subdivisions will figure to have. Larger estate or rural residential housing should contain lot sizes that are more appropriate for residential developments located near farmland. Lot sizes should be a minimum of one acre in size, particularly if sewer access is not available. Utilizing larger lot standards will put less of a burden on the infrastructure system and reduce the overall density of the city's housing. The most likely area for larger lot subdivisions would be either east or south of the city limits.

Parks should be planned along with new subdivisions. As new development is annexed into the city, there should be sufficient parkspace dedicated to serve the entire subdivision. It will be important to maintain and enhance the recreation supply throughout the city. It is recommended that a trail system also be constructed within larger new subdivisions. A peripheral easement of 20 feet is sufficient space to construct a dedicated trail. Interior sidewalks should connect to the exterior trails. It will also be important for the city to continue requiring sidewalks on each side of the street within all new developments.

The city currently has adopted building codes but does not have a sufficient staff to properly enforce them consistently. The building codes are vital to ensure that the city's structural composition remains largely intact and to significantly reduce the potential for safety problems. Streator should analyze its building fee structure to recoup the costs of building inspections. The fees should not be significant enough to deter development but should be at a level that supports the operation of the program and does not compromise any life safety issues.

Impact fees would also be another item for the city to consider implementing. Impact fees can cover everything from water and sewer construction to school construction. The city already requires an impact fee to provide assistance for park development and to the city schools. The purpose of the impact fees is to make the new development pay its share of costs that are forced onto other community services. They must be structured in a way that will only pay for the costs of new development and not any past city problems.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies – Residential Development

Goal: Maintain and enhance the housing options for current and future residents.

Objective 1: Increase the variety of housing opportunities.

Policy: Plan for the annexation of new residential opportunities in areas that are not protected from development.

Policy: Attempt for residential growth that diversifies the city's demographic groups and wage earners.

Policy: Ensure housing opportunities for all income groups, including a greater supply of rental options.

Policy: Continue to require parks to be created with all new residential developments or a fee in lieu for the construction of parks in other areas of the city as a way to maintain the supply of recreational space for all residents.

Policy: Analyze both the zoning and subdivision ordinances to allow for multiple forms of housing developments and to shape the types of development that may occur within the city.

Policy: Consider creating another residential zoning district that allows for larger lot development as a way to transition the level of density.

Policy: Consider the possibility of requiring impact fees that will cover the cost of public services such as utilities and roads beyond what is already required for parks and schools.

Policy: Consider the creation of a residential monotony code within larger new subdivisions as a way to enhance the city’s architectural variety and integrity.

Policy: Continue to require buffers or transitions between commercial/industrial districts and residential areas.

Policy: Urge residential development to be in areas where public infrastructure is already located or planned.

Policy: Attempt whenever possible to maintain the city’s grid network while only allowing a minimal number of cul-de-sacs.

Objective 2: Preserve the city’s existing housing stock.

Policy: Enforce a minimal property maintenance code for all houses within the city.

Policy: Promote among neighborhood groups the need to rehabilitate the existing housing stock within each subdivision.

Policy: Consider applying for grants that can help lower income residents finance the rehabilitation of their homes.

Policy: Consider the creation of a revolving loan fund as a measure to allow residents to undertake preservation efforts.

Policy: Enforce the existing building code to ensure that all future residences are constructed properly and safely.

Policy: Consider becoming a home rule community to assist with the problem of absentee landlords and deteriorating properties.

Policy: Encourage the use of infill construction on vacant or underutilized lots or to reconstruct homes that are considerably dilapidated.

IMPLEMENTATION



The City of Streator Comprehensive Plan is a comprehensive community guide comprised of a variety of both graphic and narrative policies to assist the public officials in making community development decisions. The plan is intended to be used by the various city officials, personnel making private sector investments, and by all citizens interested in the future development of Streator and the 1½ mile extraterritorial jurisdiction planning area. The completion of the plan is only one part of the community planning process. The implementation of the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan can only be attained over a period of time and only through the collective efforts of the public and private sectors. The implementation step is the most critical in the planning process, as it sets into motion the priorities that are outlined in this plan.

It is the hope of the Planning Commission members that this document, when used in accordance with the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, will guide development within the city and surrounding areas for the next 20 years.

Comprehensive Plan Development

The development of a comprehensive plan in itself is an important implementation tool. It can influence public and private decision-making by providing a readily available source of information and ideas. The plan document is basically a coordinated set of advisory

proposals. The degree to which this influences decisions depends upon the soundness of the plan, its relevance to the actual situation, and its availability to developers and the public. A plan that is not available to the public and is not used can hardly be influential.

The Planning Commission will present its official actions to goals, objectives, and policies in the comprehensive plan. If the Planning Commission and City Council neglect the comprehensive plan, others will follow suit. On the other hand, if the Planning Commission and other city policy makers embrace the plan and use it to guide and substantiate decisions, private decision makers are likely to do so as well. Therefore, printing and disseminating the plan to the public is an important step toward its implementation, but is only one step. This document must be made available to the public for purchase at the City Hall. The city should also make the plan available on the city's and Streator Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry websites.

City Council

The Streator City Council is the ultimate authority on policy formulation for the community. It adopts the budget, passes local ordinances, and develops planning policy under direction of the Mayor. City Council member support is essential for effective functioning of the comprehensive plan. To implement the plan, the Council will administer the zoning and subdivision ordinances through future development issues. The City Council should examine creative ways to implement the comprehensive plan. Different funding sources should be looked at for all projects and the city should also look for traditional and nontraditional professional and labor resources. In order to assist in the implementation of this plan, the City Council should continue developing a 5-year capital improvements plan, which should be reviewed and updated each year.

Planning Commission

The Streator Planning Commission consists of a chairman and six other members, which are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. The Commission is established to advise elected officials on direct planning matters, while representing the overall views of the community. Currently, the Planning Commission meets monthly. The Planning Commission has the power to prepare and recommend to the City Council this plan for present and future development or redevelopment of the city. The plan may be made applicable to land within the corporate limits of the city and contiguous territory not more than 1½ miles beyond the corporate limits and not included in any other municipality or their previously planned area. Streator has priority on all planning matters within the 1½ mile boundaries. The plan may be implemented by ordinances as designated by the City Council.

Additional powers of the Planning Commission as specified within State of Illinois statute include: To recommend changes from time to time in the official comprehensive plan; to prepare and recommend to the City Council from time to time, plans for specific improvements in pursuance of the official plan; to give aid to the city officials charged with

the direction of projects for improvements suggested in the official plan; and to promote the realization of the official plan.

The Planning Commission's most important responsibility is to ensure that the Council is aware of the community's viewpoints on direct planning issues. The Commission acts as the mediator between the public and elected officials, spending time researching, studying, and listening to public opinion and comment, and making recommendations to the Council to reflect the community's vision.

Updating the Plan

The Streator Comprehensive Plan, in whole or in part, may be amended from time to time, as necessary and as planning and legislative bodies deem appropriate. Because of the timeliness of the information and goals presented in this plan, this document must be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary, ideally every four to five years. New objectives and policies, along with added or amended maps and information, must be added.

Prioritized Timeline

Following is a list of priority items to be completed in the implementation of the Streator Comprehensive Plan. These items are broken into three time frames: Immediate, 0-2 years; middle, 3-5 years; and long range, 6-10 years. The most immediate items are those that can and should be started with relative ease and/or are more urgent to the future of Streator. Items with longer time frames are intended for early thought, but may take more resources and schedules for implementation. These items are not listed in any particular order or importance for that time frame.

Immediate: 0-2 years

1. Strongly consider the creation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to fund improvements for both public and private investments in the northern commercial corridor and/or western industrial corridor.
 - Each of these areas would likely benefit from the creation of a TIF district, the greatest of which being the industrial corridor. TIF is an important economic development tool that when used properly can stimulate growth more than by letting market forces dictate development. TIF should be considered to help influence developers and businesses to consider Streator.
2. Continue regular updates of the city's capital improvements plan (CIP) to prioritize decision-making and as a means of financial analysis.

- The updating of the CIP is integral to creating cost-effective decisions. The city is on the right track currently while developing the CIP. It must continue the customary role of making sound infrastructure decisions that are based on information provided in the report, which will be embraced more easily politically and by the public.
3. Continue to pursue the completion of the Kent Street Interceptor project.
 - This is one of the most important projects the city will likely face in the future. Its completion will have a major impact on hundreds of structures on the city's east side. The city's infrastructure must be maintained and upgraded in order to see any growth and the Kent Street Interceptor plan will go a long way to ensuring that there are less disruptions in the utility service that many people take for granted.
 4. Consider a redesigned city webpage that allows even greater access to information and is updated regularly.
 - The web site is often the first connection between the city and a prospective resident, employer, or developer. It should be inviting and present as much information to the public as possible. Among the items that should be included on the webpage are meeting notes, permit and application information, maps, and all city ordinances. It must be updated regularly to be relevant.
 5. Make the downtown more pedestrian-friendly by adding decorative crosswalks and street furniture.
 - Besides the operation of the businesses and the availability of parking, creating a safe inviting atmosphere is important to attracting downtown shoppers. The city should continue the implementation of its downtown streetscape grant and utilize other funding sources to create a unified appearance throughout the downtown.
 6. Create a strong marketing effort through the Streator Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI) and other local regional resources to showcase the advantages of locating businesses in Streator and the financial savings that is available.
 - A formidable combination between the city and SACCI should be utilized to extol the virtues of locating a business in Streator. The collaboration should also be utilized to determine areas that need to be improved in order to make Streator more competitive when trying to attract companies to the city.

7. Require a high degree of building design and site design standards for all new industries.
 - Streator has such a tradition of having strong employers that have supplied well-paying jobs. There have also been some visually-impressive buildings that still command attention today. New industrial buildings should continue that consideration for how the structure impacts the surrounding community. These measures should be included within any revisions of the city's zoning ordinance.
8. Clean vacant or dilapidated properties and establish minimum property maintenance standards for all buildings within the downtown.
 - It only takes a few deteriorating buildings to detract from the overall appearance of an area. Though much of the downtown building stock and properties are not considered to be blighted, a property maintenance code can enforce minimum standards that should be easy to meet and would strengthen the downtown.
9. Consider applying for grants that can help lower income residents finance the rehabilitation of their homes.
 - Since much of the housing within Streator is 50 years of age or older, many homes are in need of repair. However, the lack of disposable income prohibits many homeowners from being able to make the types of repairs that are needed. The city should consider applying for a Community Development Assistance Program grant through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. The competitive program can help close the financial gaps that the homeowners have when trying to maintain their home.

Middle: 3-5 years

1. Pursue the availability of DSL access for every residence and business within the city.
 - As this technology grows, it is becoming expected to be available at home or at many business establishments such as restaurants and bookstores. The city should consider a contract with a service provider that would offer DSL access for free or for a greatly reduced price to every structure within the city limits.
2. Consider the construction of at least one off-street parking lot within the downtown to provide for additional parking for the area merchants.

- Though there is not an overabundant demand for parking during most parts of the day in the downtown area, the perception that there is a lack of parking overshadows the supply. A dedicated off-street parking area to be used for the downtown shops should be considered on a parcel or parcels that are currently vacant.
3. Determine an appropriate area of at least two acres within the northeast and northwest areas of the city to place a neighborhood-level park.
 - The city's overall supply of parkspace does not make this a vital priority at this point. However, as new subdivisions begin to develop in the future, the underserved area to the north of Route 18 will begin to manifest as residents become required to travel longer distances to access parks. The park should ideally be located within walking distance of a large percentage of residents within a 10-minute radius.
 4. Encourage the rehabilitation of existing shopping centers on Route 23, including building facades, parking lots, lighting, and signage.
 - The city should approach property owners and tenants about a collaborative approach to improving the appearance and the viability of the Route 23 commercial corridor. The area has the potential to be a strong commercial base but it has shown signs of wear. This could be accomplished in part through the creation of a TIF district throughout the corridor.
 5. Consider the possibility of requiring impact fees that will cover the cost of public services such as utilities and roads.
 - As new residential development begins to surge toward Streator, it will soon be the time to consider utilizing additional impact fees to withstand the impact of the new growth. The impact fees would take away some of the financial burden of the growth and direct some of it towards the new development. These are already in place to recover some of the burden on the city's parks and schools.
 6. Consider creating another residential zoning district that allows for larger lot development as a way to transition the level of density.
 - New residential development will be built on the periphery of the existing city limits and likely contain larger lots than are currently found in Streator. Since much of the existing development is denser than what is ordinarily found in newer developments, the zoning ordinance should be amended to allow for lower density housing in those areas that are deemed prime for residential growth.

Long Range: 6-10 years

1. Eliminate as many railroad surface crossings as possible that travel near residential areas or improve the visibility and protection for pedestrians and automobile traffic.
 - Though this will likely be very difficult to accomplish, the city should attempt to eliminate any potential safety hazards as possible. These crossings slow the efficiency of traffic due to the number of trains that pass through Streator each day. They also have the effect of placing invisible walls between neighborhoods.
2. Maintain open dialogue with the Illinois Department of Transportation to locate a pedestrian trail adjacent to a possible widening of Route 23.
 - It will likely be many years before the construction of additional lanes is considered for Route 23. However, the construction would be optimal to create a connection to Ottawa and the I&M Canal Trail. Doing so would like Streator to a much larger regional and national trail system and expand the recreational opportunities for the city residents.
3. Encourage the use of infill construction on vacant or underutilized lots or to reconstruct homes that are considerably dilapidated.
 - The large majority of housing in Streator is currently deemed affordable and the housing prices are among the lowest in the region. As new subdivisions begin construction in the future, the median housing value will likely sharply increase. It will be important to maintain the existing housing stock and to pursue the construction of homes on cheaper, vacant lots within existing older neighborhoods.