

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STATE OF THE CITY REPORT

CITY OF LASALLE, ILLINOIS

*plan* LaSalle

THE LAKOTA GROUP

THE COMMUNITY AND LAND USE ECONOMICS GROUP,

T.Y. LIN INTERNATIONAL

AUGUST 26, 2013

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# City of LaSalle Comprehensive Plan State of the City Report

*plan*LaSalle





# Contents

<b>Section 1: Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Section 2: The LaSalle Community</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Section 3: Land Use and Existing Conditions</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Section 4: Market and Economic Conditions</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Section 5: Transportation and Infrastructure</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Section 6: Issues and Opportunities</b>	<b>61</b>

## **List of Figures (foldouts)**

- Figure A Regional Context Map
- Figure B Citywide Base Map
- Figure C Zoning Map
- Figure D Five to Ten Drive Time Map
- Figure E Extended Regional Context Map
- Figure F Road Jurisdiction and AADT Map
- Figure G Major Roadway Network Map
- Figure H Bridge Structures Map
- Figure I Storm Sewer Watersheds Map
- Figure J Waste Water Treatment Map
- Figure K Municipal Wells and Aquifer Recharge Area Map



# Section 1

## Introduction

### What is a Comprehensive Plan

The LaSalle Comprehensive Plan outlines the community's vision for what it would like to become in the next 10 to 20 years. As the community seeks to explore new development and revitalization opportunities in the years ahead, it will need a well-defined vision and framework to help guide its investment decisions, especially as economic conditions and trends change over time. Therefore, a Comprehensive Plan serves as the guidebook for elected officials, municipal staff, community residents, business owners, local industries and potential investors, allowing them to make well-informed decisions regarding land use, community development, transportation, open space, neighborhoods, commercial districts, and infrastructure and capital improvements throughout the City.

The time horizon for implementing a Comprehensive Plan and working toward its community vision is usually 10 to 20 years, although the Plan should be reviewed and updated every five years to address local issues, needs and opportunities. The Plan should be used on a daily basis to assist the community in making any land use or development decision. In summary, the Comprehensive Plan serves several purposes:

- *Existing Conditions.* City officials and community members can use the Comprehensive Plan to review where LaSalle is today in terms of its existing population, land use, transportation, infrastructure, flood mitigation and other physical conditions.
- *Development Framework.* The Plan provides a foundation for understanding the types of development and revitalization initiatives and activities that should take place over time within the City. The Plan sets forth broad development and revitalization parameters that can be used to review and refine community improvement and development projects, as well as adjust zoning and development



regulations to ensure that such projects are in conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies set forth in this Comprehensive Plan.

- *Public Investment Guide.* The City Council should use the Comprehensive Plan in its decision-making regarding investments in infrastructure, community facilities, capital improvements, and other development and revitalization initiatives. The Plan can also be used in seeking grants at the regional, state and federal levels.
- *Private Investment Guide.* Developers, industries, entrepreneurs and others interested in investing in LaSalle can use this Plan to gain insight into the City's development policies. Such investors also view sound community planning as critical to ensuring the viability and long-term success of their investments in the community.
- *Public Participation Tool.* The process in creating this Comprehensive Plan provides an opportunity for local leaders and residents to understand and evaluate community strengths and weaknesses, and craft strategies and recommendations for addressing critical planning issues. Additional community participation and involvement through future development and enhancement projects, subarea planning and updates to the Comprehensive Plan, will also provide opportunities to engage the LaSalle community on important development issues.

- *Future Vision.* This Comprehensive Plan will serve as an important tool in informing current and future residents and community stakeholders about the City's vision for the future. Above all, a Comprehensive Plan represents a collaborative process between the City and its citizens in creating a compelling vision for LaSalle's future.

## Comprehensive Plan Organization

A Comprehensive Plan is typically composed of a several interrelated elements and chapters defined within the Illinois Local Planning Assistance Act (Public Act 92-0768). The key elements addressed in the LaSalle Comprehensive Plan are based upon those outlined in the State Statute. In addition, under the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS) 5/11-12-5(1)), a municipal plan commission is responsible for preparing and recommending a “*comprehensive plan for the present and future development or redevelopment of the municipality.*” A comprehensive land-use plan must reflect the local conditions, concerns, and goals of a community. Elements and chapters included in this Comprehensive Plan are:

- Land Use
- Commercial and Industrial Areas
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Industrial Districts
- Parks, Open Space and Natural Areas
- Transportation
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- Flood Mitigation
- Economic Development

These elements are addressed and incorporated where appropriate within this Comprehensive Plan document. Section 2 through 4 describe and analyze the City's current land use, transportation,

infrastructure, environmental, and economic setting. An overall vision and comprehensive plan for the City, along with the future development framework and planning strategies, will be set forth in additional sections in the coming months. A summary of existing plans, reports, and other documents is provided in the next section.

## Planning Mission and Process

In May 2013, the City of LaSalle, along with community stakeholder groups and residents, initiated an eight-month planning process to create a Comprehensive Plan. The Plan's key purpose is to create a long-term vision for enhancing the community's overall land use, economic vitality, and physical appearance and image, along with a set of practical implementation action strategies and initiatives for achieving the Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives. The creation of this Comprehensive Plan is funded through a grant from the Hurricane Ike Disaster Recovery Program administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (IL DCEO).

To facilitate the creation of a Comprehensive Plan, the City of LaSalle engaged a multi-disciplinary planning team that included the following firms:

- The Lakota Group (*Planning, Urban Design, Historic Preservation, Landscape Architecture, Community Relations*)
- Community Land Use and Economics Group (*Economic Analysis, Business Development, Public Policy*)
- T.Y. Lin International (*Transportation Planning, Civil Engineering, Environmental Planning*)

A Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, representing a broad-based segment of community stakeholders, including local civic institutions, property owners, industries, merchants, local residents, and City leaders and officials, was also formed to help guide the Plan's development.

Beyond creating a long-term vision for LaSalle's future, the Plan seeks to understand current conditions and propose strategies and recommendations for the following Comprehensive Plan elements:

- *Land Uses.* Evaluate existing community land uses and identify specific issues, constraints and opportunities to encouraging appropriate land use patterns and development within and near LaSalle's corporate boundaries.
- *Transportation Systems.* Document and analyze LaSalle's current roadway network and physical conditions as a method for exploring opportunities for achieving network efficiencies, roadway changes, and public transit and pedestrian enhancements.



Hegerler-Carus Mansion, photo courtesy of Wikipedia Commons

- *Infrastructure and Capital Improvements.* Conduct an assessment of the City’s sanitary, public utilities, and stormwater management systems and consider strategies for long-term system rehabilitation and capital improvements, as well as integration in broader efforts for flood prevention and mitigation.
- *Neighborhoods and Housing.* Assess and analyze the condition of existing neighborhoods and the existing housing stock in order to determine appropriate planning strategies that accommodate local housing needs while improving the quality and diversity of the housing stock.
- *Commercial Areas.* Examine critical Downtown and commercial area revitalization issues, especially in regards to building and storefront improvements, business and real estate development, urban design enhancements, and existing marketing, promotion, and tourism development issues.
- *Economic/Market Assessment.* Analyze and understand market trends for commercial, residential and industrial development within LaSalle as a basis for establishing recommendations regarding future land use and redevelopment scenarios.
- *Parks and Open Space.* Identify, protect and enhance LaSalle’s “green infrastructure” of existing parks, waterfront and natural systems, as well as consider sustainable design and infrastructure initiatives that reduces stormwater run-off and promotes cleaner air and water.
- *Land Use Policies and Regulatory Tools.* Research and recommend new land use policies and zoning and regulatory tools that manage and direct community growth and revitalization in ways that promotes economic diversity and vibrancy and attractive places and neighborhoods, as well as minimizes or eliminates long-term flood disaster risk.
- *Implementation Strategy.* Develop a detailed implementation strategy that prioritizes specific planning actions, outlines roles and responsibilities between the City of LaSalle and existing agencies, organizations and



Downtown LaSalle, circa 1910s, photo courtesy of Wikipedia Commons

entities, and identifies other stakeholders and groups that could participate in implementation efforts now and into the future.

- *Community Engagement.* Undertake an effective planning process that involves a broad and diverse section of community stakeholders in order to generate consensus for the Comprehensive Plan's long-term development and revitalization vision, and short-term action strategies and planning recommendations.

The planning process for creating the Comprehensive Plan involves three distinct phases: an assessment of current conditions or "State of the City," a "visioning" phase where preliminary comprehensive planning strategies are developed and presented to the community for comment, and a final plan-making phase in which planning goals, strategies and implementation action steps are accepted and adopted by the City and the community.

### Phase 1: State of the City

The first phase, initiated in May 2013, comprised a comprehensive assessment of LaSalle's existing conditions in the following areas: land use, transportation, infrastructure, parks and open space, community facilities and neighborhood, commercial and industrial areas. The planning team also reviewed relevant planning documents and policies, assessed the community's existing economic development activities and, defined challenges and opportunities on achieving short and long-term planning and revitalization goals. The phase also included various focus group and stakeholder interview sessions to gain public input and insight regarding critical planning issues. Field work activities were also conducted. Field work,

document analyses, and review of interview and focus group session proceedings were incorporated in a "State of the City Report."

Phase 1 included the following specific activities:

- *Project Start Meeting and Community Tour (May 11-12, 2013).* A meeting with City staff and officials was conducted to initiate the planning process and to discuss specific items related to the project schedule, scheduling of stakeholder and focus group interview sessions, and formation of the Steering Committee. The consultant team, along with City staff, also conducted a reconnaissance tour of LaSalle to observe and document existing conditions.
- *Stakeholder Interview Sessions (June 15-26, 2013).* Several interview and focus group sessions were conducted over a two-day period with various community stakeholders, including industries and business owners, non-profit groups and institutions, local schools and foundations, residents, and City and regional planning and economic development staff. Subsequent to visit, the consultant team conducted telephone interviews with other key stakeholders that could not participate in earlier on-site sessions. Proceedings of the stakeholder interviews and focus group sessions were recorded and published for public review.
- *Existing Plans/Studies.* A review of existing planning reports and studies was conducted by the planning team. These are summarized in the following section.

- *Team Fieldwork.* The planning team visited LaSalle several times during the months of May, June, July and August 2013, to observe and assess existing conditions within the community.
- *State of the City Report.* Following the completion of Phase 1 assessment and analysis, the planning team prepared the State of the City Report, which summarizes LaSalle's key strengths, challenges, and opportunities for its long-term development and revitalization.

The following will be succeeding phases of the comprehensive planning process to be completed in January 2014.

### **Phase 2: Community Visioning**

The second phase of the planning will involve the creation and development of specific planning concepts and revitalization strategies that enhances LaSalle's physical appearance, transportation and infrastructure options and overall economic environment. As part of the visioning process, planning concepts will be presented during a community workshop and additional stakeholder interviews for discussion and consideration. Afterward, planning concepts will be refined into a draft Comprehensive Plan.

### **Phase 3: Final Comprehensive Plan, Implementation Strategy and Capital Improvements Plan**

Based on the information analysis and community input gathered from the first two phases of the planning process, the final phase will involve the refinement of preliminary planning concepts and implementation strategies into a Final Comprehensive Plan. In addition, based on the infrastructure and facilities assessment conducted

during the State of the City phase, a separate implementation document will be prepared that will include an assessment summary, as well as recommendations for capital improvements to mitigate future flood disasters.

*The LaSalle Comprehensive Plan outlines the community's vision for what it would like to become in the next 10 to 20 years. As the community seeks to explore new development and revitalization opportunities in the years ahead, it will need a well-defined vision and framework to help guide its investment decisions, especially as economic conditions and trends change over time.*

## Section 2

# The LaSalle Community

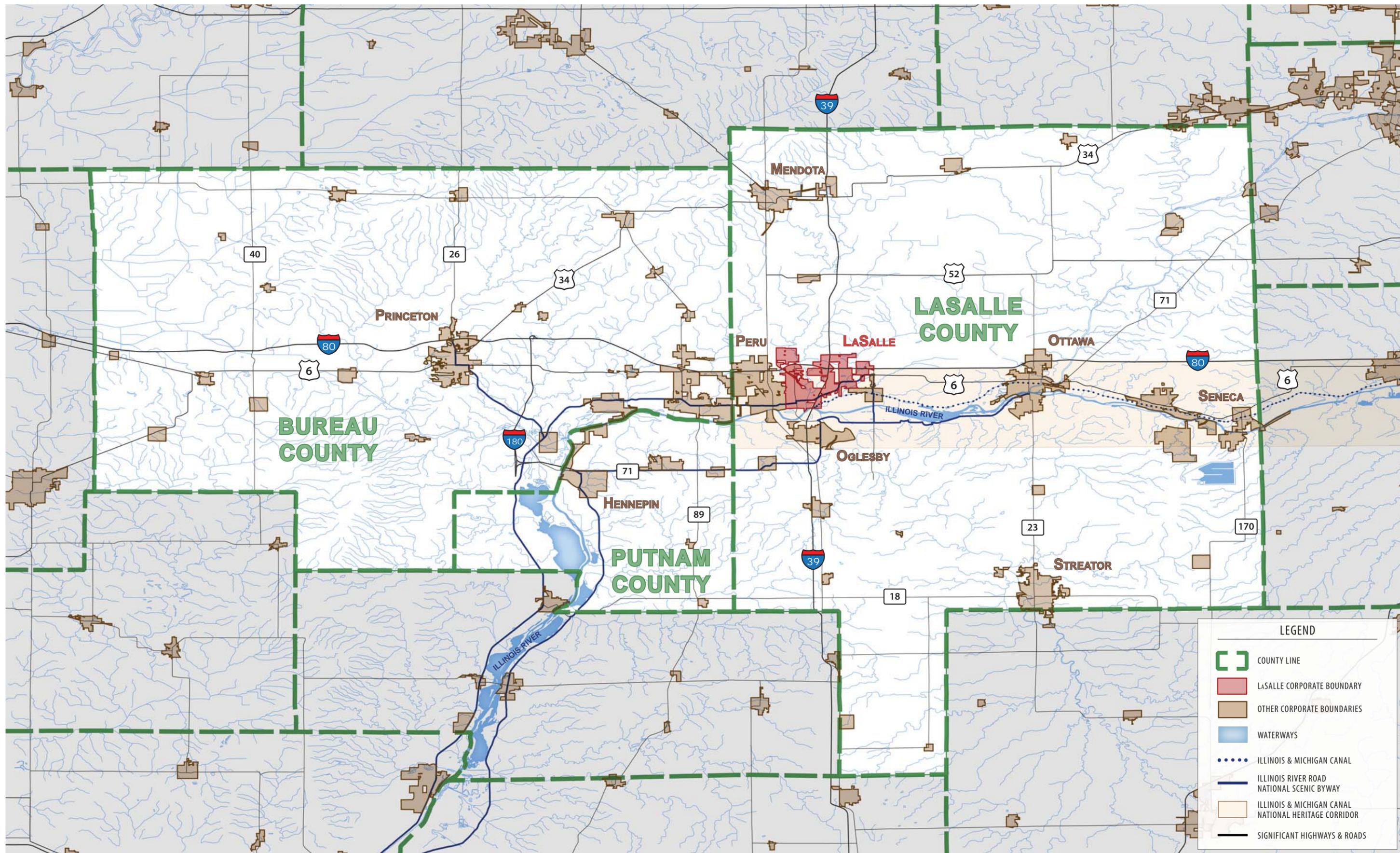
### Regional Context

The City of LaSalle is located in north central Illinois at the juncture of Interstates 80 and 39 and bordering the City of Peru to the west, Utica to the east and southeast, the Illinois River to the south, and unincorporated LaSalle County to the north. LaSalle is one of 32 incorporated municipalities in LaSalle County, which along with Bureau and Putnam Counties comprise the Ottawa-Streator Micropolitan Statistical Area.

A Micropolitan Statistical Area is defined as an area consisting of one or more adjacent counties that have at least one urban core of at least 10,000 in population but less than 50,000. Within the regional context, LaSalle is located between several large cities and metropolitan areas, including Rock Island and Moline of the Quad Cities (90 miles), Rockford (86 miles), Bloomington-Normal (85 miles), DeKalb (50), Joliet (60 miles), Aurora (70 miles), Peoria (91 miles), and Chicago (94 miles). LaSalle is also located within the upper Illinois River valley and the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, the nation's first heritage corridor established by the National Park Service in 1984 to promote the Illinois and Michigan Canal's history and legacy (I & M Canal) from Chicago to LaSalle-Peru (*See Figure A in foldout on following page*).

LaSalle is an established community incorporated in 1852 with a current population of 9,600. The overall population of LaSalle County and Micropolitan Statistical Area is 113,924 and 153,180 respectively. Originally platted as 1837, the community covers more than 12 square miles in land and water area. Like its sister cities in the Heritage Corridor, including Utica, Ottawa, Morris and Joliet, LaSalle grew and prospered during the Nineteenth century when the Illinois and Michigan Canal was constructed and in full operation. Later, the railroads spurred additional growth, especially in its LaSalle's industrial sector as it became a center for mining, raw material processing, and brick manufacturing.





CITY OF LASALLE, ILLINOIS  
 LASALLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
 FIGURE A - REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP

In recent decades, as with many industrial communities, LaSalle has experienced some decline in jobs and population as manufacturing has declined in the region and in other parts of the country. Despite these trends, LaSalle has remained a significant center for industry and manufacturing in the Illinois River Valley. J.C. Whitney, an automotive supply company, Illinois Cement, and the Carus Corporation, are currently the community's largest employers. Recent annexations on LaSalle's eastern boundaries along the U.S. Route 6 corridor present new opportunities for both industrial and commercial expansion. The community's proximity and location to Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks, the I & M Canal Trail, the Illinois River Road Scenic Byway, and other local natural and cultural attractions, also offers opportunities to build a strong local tourism economy that supports small businesses and the revitalization of LaSalle's historic Downtown commercial district.

### Historic Context

The City of LaSalle is named after Rene-Robert Cavalier Sieur de LaSalle, the French explorer who visited the Illinois Valley region in the late 1680s, and who would later construct Fort St. Louis near Starved Rock to protect newly established French trading routes. A few decades earlier, Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette, the first explorers to the area, would establish new missions to serve the local Native American populations, including the Grand Village of the Kaskaskias located north across the Illinois River from Starved Rock. French jurisdiction of the Illinois Valley region would end in 1763 with France's loss to the British during the French and Indian War. At the time, the Illinois River was largely navigable up to LaSalle where low water levels and rapids necessitated several portages over land to transport goods further east.

With Illinois statehood in 1818 and Chicago's continued growth and settlement in the 1800s, a new navigable transportation route between the Illinois River at LaSalle and Chicago was needed to help facilitate the shipment of goods from Chicago and the Great Lakes to St. Louis, and other destinations along the Mississippi River and to the Gulf of Mexico. The construction of the I & M Canal in 1832 would largely serve as the main water transportation route between LaSalle and Chicago and, along with the railroad, spur the tremendous growth and development of Chicago during much of the Nineteenth century.

When completed in 1848, the canal included 17 locks and four aqueducts across its 96-mile length. Two of the locks were located at the canal terminus in LaSalle, where canal boats were lowered to a steamboat basin for the transfer of goods between the Canal, nearby warehouses and steamboats heading south along the Illinois River.

LaSalle, along with Lockport in Will County, were the first to be platted in 1837 by the I & M Canal Commission, which was established in the early 1830s to help survey and sell land to finance the Canal's construction. The square blocks that characterize LaSalle's development pattern between Second and Ninth Streets date



Steamboat basin at Lock 15

from the Commission town plat. Several streets in LaSalle are associated with the Canal, including Bucklin and Wright Streets, both named after canal engineers.

With the coming of the railroads in the 1840s and 50s, LaSalle quickly developed as a transportation hub. The Illinois Central, Rock Island, LaSalle and Bureau County, and the Chicago Quincy and Burlington railroads all constructed main trunk lines through LaSalle, with the Rock Island Railroad the first to construct a bridge over the Illinois River as part of a line that connected Cairo, Illinois to Galena. The canal and the railroads helped to spur the growth of the Downtown district as commercial storefronts, banks, and hotels were developed to serve a growing population of workers employed by newly established industries and farmers settling in the surrounding countryside to farm its rich soil. Major industries at the time included coal, textiles, and glass and brick manufacturing.

In 1858, Matthiessen and Hegeler Zinc Company was established and would become one the country's largest producer of zinc, a material later used for the production of armaments during the Civil War and earning LaSalle its "Zinc City" name. The zinc production and smelting facilities were located on land located at Sterling and Eighth Streets. The Company would largely cease its operations until the 1960s; Carus Corporation, a manufacturer of potassium permanganate and other specialty chemicals currently occupies the land south of the Zinc Company's site. One of the co-founders of the Matthiessen and Hegeler Zinc Company, Edward Hegeler, also launched Open Court Publishing, which would become a major publisher of books and journals related to science and philosophy. He would later commission Chicago architect W. W. Boyington to design his 57-room Second Empire mansion on Seventh

Street. The Hegeler Carus Mansion, as it is known today, is currently undergoing a multi-year restoration and is a National Historic Landmark.

During the mid to late 1800s, the railroads began to supplant the I & M Canal as a route for moving freight traffic, and was succeeded by the construction of its modern replacement, the Illinois Waterway, in the 1930s. It was also during this time period that LaSalle continued to grow and prosper as its traditional neighborhoods were largely built out with a range of Queen Anne and Folk Victorian-styled homes. LaSalle's first churches and religious institutions were founded at this time, including the First Congregationalist Church at Fifth and Joliet Streets (current building built 1923), the Grace United Methodist Church at Chartres and Gooding (current building 1958), and St. Patrick's and St. Hyacinths, both Catholic churches established in 1838 and 1874 respectively.

The LaSalle Public Elementary School system was started in 1857 with the first schools located at Third Street and Bucklin, once known as the "Old Brick School," First Street and Joliet, the Third Ward School, and at Eighth and Tonti Streets, which was known as the Finkler School. LaSalle-



St. Hyacinth Church



LaSalle-Peru Township High School

Peru Township High School, located at Chartres and Fifth Streets, would be constructed in 1897 with later building additions in succeeding decades. Downtown's growth was marked by the opening of the Hotel Kaskaskia in 1915, designed by the prominent Chicago architecture firm of Marshall and Fox.

From the turn of the century to 1950s, although no longer a major freight and shipping destination with the decline of the I & M Canal, LaSalle continued to prosper as an important industrial center in the upper Illinois River valley. Residential growth continued north from the City's original plat above Ninth Street with a mix of Cape Cod and Ranch homes. Downtown continued as the community's only significant commercial district with major retailers such as J.C Penny and Kresge's, and other business establishments, including hotels, civic institutions, and banks, bars and restaurants, occupying the buildings and storefronts along First and Second Streets. The waterfront bottoms, where warehouses and other structures were once located adjacent to the I & M Canal steamboat basin, were replaced with other industries, and later with the City sanitary plant.



Kaskaskia Hotel

In the late 20th century, LaSalle's Downtown's experienced new challenges to its economic fortunes with the opening of the Peru Mall in 1973 and the development of other commercial centers in surrounding Illinois River valley communities. The closure of several manufacturing plants, including the Westclox factory in neighboring Peru, which once employed as many as 3,500, also led to fewer blue collar job opportunities. In recent years, LaSalle has undertaken new efforts to add new land for industrial expansion, as well as create new incentives for revitalizing the Downtown district and re-suing its intact core of historic commercial buildings. The establishment of the I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor in 1991 and its recent inclusion as part of the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway also provides opportunities for the LaSalle community to participate in regional efforts to promote heritage and recreational tourism and capitalize on LaSalle's unique location and history within the upper Illinois River valley.

## Governance Structure

LaSalle is currently governed by a mayor-council form of local government. The City Council is comprised of eight elected aldermen with

two representing each of the four wards within the City. There is currently no full-time city administrator although there are three offices and eight departments that carry out specific municipal functions, including the City Treasurer, Clerk and Attorney offices, the Public Works department, Engineering, Finance, Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, Building Department, and Police and Fire. There are also several commissions and boards staffed primarily by aldermen and local citizens appointed by the Mayor including: the Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Board, Emergency 911 Board, the Economic Development Commission, the Police and Judiciary Committee, Grants, Finance, Streets and Alleys, Wastewater and Environmental, Public Grounds and Real Estate, Licenses, Local Improvements, and Building Codes. The City also has formal liaison appointments with other taxing districts, agencies and organizations such as the Library and Park Boards, the Downtown Business Association, and the Illinois Municipal League.

## Previous Plans and Studies

The following is a summary of previous plans, reports, and documents that were reviewed as part of the Comprehensive Plan process. It appears that the last Comprehensive Plan adopted by the City of LaSalle was in 1969 although supplementary planning studies have been undertaken in more recent years.

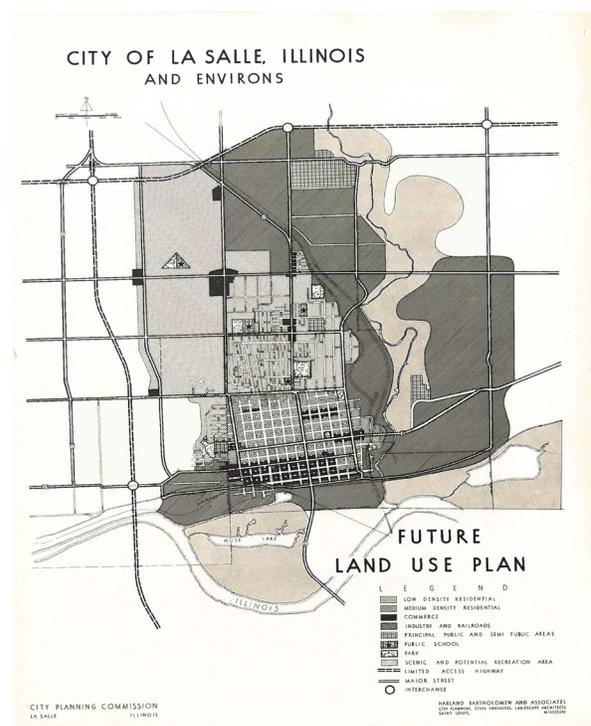
### 1957 Comprehensive Plan

In 1957, the planning firm of Harland Bartholomew and Associates from St. Louis, Missouri was engaged by the City of LaSalle in the development of its first community comprehensive plan. Previously, in 1954, the City established its first Plan Commission. The firm of Harland Bartholomew and Associates was led at the time by Harland Bartholomew, a one-time professor of planning at the University of Illinois at Urbana-

Champaign and regarded at the time as one of the first and foremost practitioners of community comprehensive planning.

The Plan's primary chapters and elements included an existing land use survey and future land use plan, a proposed zoning ordinance, a street and transportation plan, and recommendations for subdivision control and regulations. The Plan's overall intent was to *"insure its orderly and harmonious development but also the intensity of land utilization can be controlled and directed."*<sup>1</sup> Major recommendations in the 1957 Plan included an expansion of low-density residential to the north and west of the City's central core and industrial to the east. Scenic or potential recreational areas were suggested on land south of Downtown to the Illinois River, and along the Little Vermillion River

<sup>1</sup> *A Plan for the Future Development of LaSalle, Illinois.* Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1957, p. 1.



Land Use Map from 1958 Comprehensive Plan

valley. Much of these land use recommendations, however, were based on a future population projection of 15,000 people. A number of sketches and diagrams were provided to illustrate the principles of subdivision design and layout.

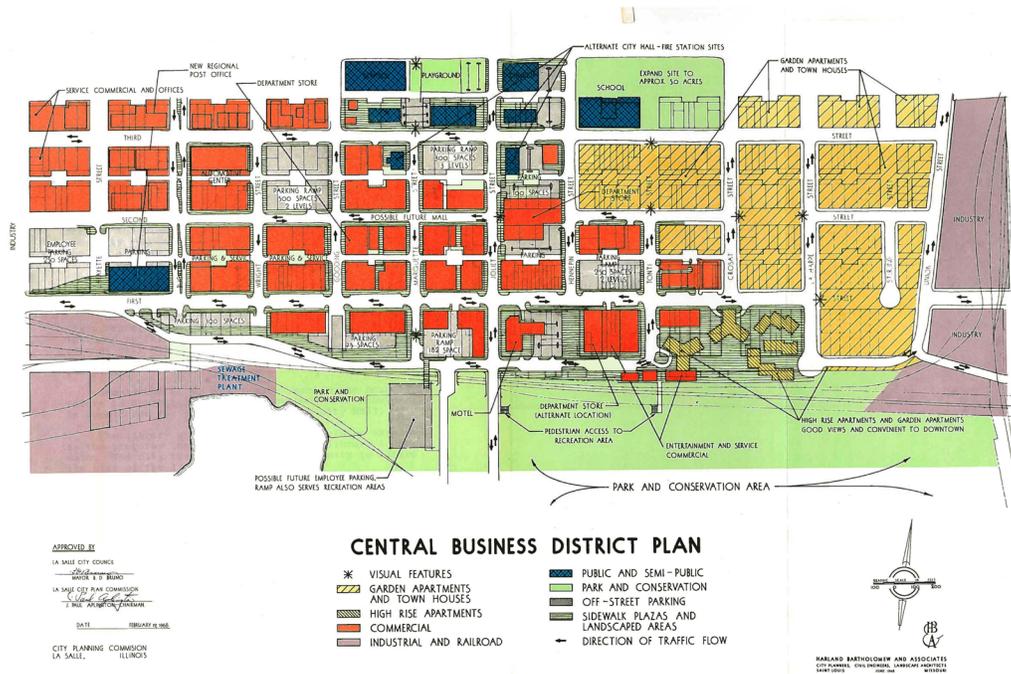
**1968 Comprehensive Plan**

In 1967, Harland Bartholomew and Associates was again retained by the City of LaSalle to create a new Comprehensive Plan, first with a set of preliminary studies and then with a final Comprehensive Plan prepared in 1968. As with the 1957 Plan, land use and the community’s transportation system were again the central plan elements; however, chapters were also included on community facilities, water supply, neighborhoods and the Downtown business district, which was subject to a more intensive land use and parking study. There were several significant planning recommendations suggested for the Downtown, many of which were not realized, including the development of

a garden apartment district between Hennepin and Union Streets, the addition of new schools and public facilities along Third Street, and the construction of new commercial buildings along First Street between Laharpe and Joliet. The garden apartment district concept would only be feasible with the closure or vacation of several Downtown streets. These concepts for Downtown were made on the assumption that the commercial district could support 750,000 square feet of additional commercial space. It appears that several of the parking lots recommendations for the rear lot areas of First Street were implemented.

**2013 Rotary and Prairie Parks Master Plan**

In 2012, a community planning effort was undertaken to inventory and assess LaSalle’s current parks and recreational areas and to determine the need for additional parks and open space. In 2013, a master plan was prepared for the creation of two new parks, Prairie and Rotary Parks, to



Downtown Land Use Map from 1968 Comprehensive Plan

be located between the Little Vermillion River valley and Interstate 39 in the City's northeast quadrant. Rotary Park will be developed over five separate phases and will include up to five baseball diamonds, two soccer fields, shelters, a dog park, playgrounds, parking areas, and a new fishing pond. Total costs for the first phase will be \$1.2 million, although the City has secured an Open Space and Land Acquisition (OSLAD) grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (ILDNR) to partially defray costs for the first two phases. Costs for the remaining phases will total \$780,000. Prairie Park will be designed and developed for less intense uses and will include walking and cycling paths, shelters, fishing overlooks, and an amphitheater and a pavilion. Total development costs for Prairie Park will be \$4.1 million. It is also envisioned that the Parks would be connected to the I & M Canal bike trail through the creation of a connecting trail, which is currently being studied by the City.

### Other Plans

The following is a summary of other plans and documents that include planning implications for the City of LaSalle.

#### 2008 LaSalle County Comprehensive Plan

The creation of the 2008 LaSalle County Comprehensive Plan followed the 2006 enactment of the County's most recent zoning ordinance and its last comprehensive plan in 1999. Key planning goals and objectives presented in the Comprehensive Plan include preserving farmland well-suited for long-term agricultural use, protecting green space and environmentally sensitive areas from inappropriate development, and implementing a county-wide stormwater and water resources management program. Reclaiming former industrial for new economic uses, integrating effective land use planning with transportation

improvements, and supporting quality economic development initiatives that strengthens existing commercial centers and diversifies the employment base are also stated as important planning objectives. These goals are part of a larger vision to encourage more compact growth and development within existing communities so that the County's main economic and quality of life assets, its agriculture and natural resources, can be maintained and even enhanced for the long-term. An extensive stakeholder engagement process was undertaken as part of the planning process with workshops and charrettes conducted in several LaSalle County communities.

#### 2011 Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor Management Plan

The I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor was established by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, in 1991 to promote common stewardship and revitalization of the important places and historic resources along the I & M Canal's route between Chicago and LaSalle. The Management Plan, developed by the Canal Corridor Association, the Heritage Corridor's management entity, seeks to serve "*as a framework for the existing heritage work of the stakeholders in the IMCNHC,*" and "*...as a roadmap for all the stakeholders in the Corridor to work together building on mutual interests.*"<sup>2</sup> One of the central features of the Management Plan is the creation of a Canal Alliance composed of wide range of municipalities, agencies, organizations, institutions and individuals that could work together on various initiatives related to tourism development, historic resource protection, environmental activities, education and interpretation, and recreation. The Canal Corridor Association would be responsible for managing Alliance operations and in implementing specific Alliance activities and initiatives. The

<sup>2</sup> *Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor Management Plan*. Canal Corridor Association. 2001. Introduction, pages 1-3.



Lock 16 Visitors Center, Canal Corridor Association

Canal Corridor Associations headquarter offices are currently located in Downtown LaSalle.

### **2005, Illinois River Road Corridor Management Plan**

The Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway, which encompasses an area from Ottawa to Havana, Illinois, was designated in 2005 by the Federal Highway Administration and is one 150 National Scenic Byways across the country. In the LaSalle area, the Byway uses U.S. Route 6 and 71 as the primary signed byway routes. The purpose of the Byway Management Plan is to provide guidance and direction in *“enhance(ing) people’s experience of the nature, history and archaeology, and other intrinsic qualities of the byway, while providing and maintaining unique recreational and educational experiences for visitors and residents, and sustaining local communities’ economies and quality of life.”*<sup>3</sup>

Specific chapters in the Management Plan focus on building collaborative efforts between communities, organizations, and citizens in enhancing existing recreational, environmental, and historical and cultural resources and assets within the Byway. The Plan also seek to facilitate local economic

<sup>3</sup> *Illinois River Road Corridor Management Plan*. Illinois River Road: Steering Committee and Corridor Communities. 2005. Page 3.

development based on enhancing existing assets and fostering tourism to local nature areas and trails, state parks, museums, farms, waterfronts, and gardens.

The management entity for the Byway is the Heartland Commerce and Economic Development Foundation; the Byway is also a program of the Economic Development Council for Central Illinois and the Heartland Partnership. In 2009, a Natural Resources Interpretive Plan was prepared in order to enhance the visitor experience to the Byway through wayfinding signage, interpretive displays and programs, maps, audio tours, and social and electronic media. Recommended interpretative initiatives for LaSalle includes the I & M Canal and the Hegeler-Carus Mansion.

### **Tax Increment Financing Districts**

The City of LaSalle has established several Tax Increment Finance Districts (TIFs) to help stimulate redevelopment and enhancement within the community. Improvements include, but are not restricted to:

- Cost of studies, surveys, development of plans and specifications, including architectural and engineering
- Property acquisition and assembly
- Rehabilitation, reconstruction, or repair or remodeling of existing public or private buildings
- Costs of construction of public works or improvements
- Elimination or removal of contaminants and other impediments to site improvements
- Job training and retraining projects
- Relocation costs

Existing TIF districts include the Downtown TIF, the U.S. Route 6/Senica's Oak Ridge Golf Course TIF, the J.C. Whitney Industrial Park TIF, the Vermilionvue and Country Aire subdivision TIF, the Frontier Lodge and Water Park TIF, the LaSalle Industrial Park TIF near the intersection of the Interstates 80 and 39, and the Interstate 80/IL Route 351 TIF.

### Enterprise Zone

The City of LaSalle is currently designated an Illinois Enterprise Zone, which is designed to help stimulate economic development through state and local tax incentives, regulatory relief, and improved governmental services. The City currently offers the following incentives:

- *Sales Tax Exemption.* A 6.25 percent state sales tax exemption is permitted on building materials to be used in the Enterprise Zone.
- *Enterprise Zone Machinery and Equipment Consumables/Pollution Control Facilities Sales Tax Exemption.* A 6.25 percent state sales tax exemption on purchases of tangible personal property to be used in the manufacturing or assembly process or in the operation of a pollution control facility within the Enterprise Zone is available.
- *Enterprise Zone Utility Tax Exemption.* A state utility tax exemption on gas, electricity. The Illinois Commerce Commission's administrative charge and telecommunication excise tax is available to businesses located in the LaSalle Enterprise Zone.
- *Enterprise Zone Investment Tax Credit.* A state investment tax credit of 0.5 percent is allowed for taxpayers who invest in qualified properties in the Zone. Qualified property includes machinery, equipment and buildings.
- *Dividend Income Deduction.* Individuals, corporations, trusts and estates are not taxed on dividend income from corporations doing substantially all their business in the Enterprise Zone.
- *Jobs Tax Credit.* The Enterprise Zone Jobs Tax Credit allows a business a \$500 credit on Illinois income taxes for each job created in the Zone of which a certified eligible worker is hired. A minimum of five workers must be hired to qualify for the credit. The credit is effective for people hired on or after January 1, 1986.

*The community's proximity and location to Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks, the I & M Canal Trail, the Illinois River Road Scenic Byway, and other local natural and cultural attractions, also offers opportunities to build a strong local tourism economy that supports small businesses and the revitalization of LaSalle's historic downtown commercial district.*



# Section 3

## Land Use and Existing Conditions

The section describes the existing land use and development conditions within LaSalle with a focus on types of uses, existing zoning, and the built environment. The information in this section has been obtained from a visual assessment of the community undertaken by the planning team in from May through July 2013.

### Residential Areas

#### Single-Family Residential

LaSalle's single family housing stock represents the City's second largest land use in terms of acreage next to industrial. The majority of single-family homes are located in and around the Downtown district and north of Third Street to Twenty-Seventh Street, although pockets of residential subdivisions exist east of Chartres Street and north of Twenty-Seventh, and both north and south along the U.S. Route 6 corridor heading to North Utica. It is in this area north of U.S. Route 6, East Sixth Road, and Interstate 80 and along Pecumsagan Creek, where land has been zoned for additional single-family residential development. An extensive single family subdivision is also located south of the Senica's Oak Ridge Golf Club. It appears that most homes constructed prior to World War II and consist of a range of styles and building forms, from Folk Victorian worker cottages near the Downtown and the former Matthiessen and Hegeler Zinc Company complex. Parcels are generally small in these areas with limited room for additions.

Housing north of Maple Street and O'Connor Avenue are generally of more recent construction with many mid-century Ranch homes interspersed with homes built over the last twenty years. The conditions of single-family residential areas range from fair to excellent depending on location. Housing located closer to Downtown were observed to be to be in fair condition, while homes above Eleventh Street were found to be in good to





Single-family housing, 1051 Fourth Street (above), 1910 Chartres (below)

excellent condition. Several stakeholder groups have mentioned that the number of single-family homes that have been converted to rental properties has increased over the years. Of those properties, some have experienced significant deterioration, which has led the City to enact a rental inspection program, and to purchase and demolish more problematic properties.

### Multi-Family Residential Areas

LaSalle is home to few multi-family constructed apartments, townhomes or condominium buildings, although there are a number of older two to four-flats that were built within single-family residential areas and conversions of single-family homes to

rental apartments. The only significant high-rise apartment building is the Robert Hughett Towers at 1040 Second Street, owned and operated by the LaSalle County Housing Authority. Centennial Courts, a low-scale multi-unit Housing Authority property, is located at 901 Grant Avenue, which is also just north of the Illinois Veterans Home at 1015 O’Conor Avenue and operated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Blossom Trailer Park is located at St. Vincent’s Avenue just north of Twenty-Seventh Street and accommodates approximately 60 mobile trailer homes. Community stakeholders have also stated that a number of apartments exist in the upper floors of many Downtown commercial buildings.

## Commercial Areas

### Downtown

The City of LaSalle’s commercial uses are largely concentrated in its Downtown district, between Bucklin, Union, First and Third Streets (U.S. Route 6), with some businesses located along the U.S. Route 6 corridor toward North Utica. The Downtown mostly consists of traditional commercial buildings constructed to the sidewalk and range in height from two to four stories. The first floors contain a mix of retail businesses, restaurants and offices while the upper floors contain offices, apartments and condominiums. First Street remains the Downtown’s principal retail/commercial thoroughfare and generally has a lower vacancy rate than Second and Third Streets where a number of larger buildings, such as the former U.S. Post Office building and the Kaskaskia Hotel complex, are underutilized or vacant. The future re-use and rehabilitation of the Kaskaskia Hotel property represents a significant opportunity to catalyze Downtown reinvestment and revitalization. Significant anchors within the



Existing Downtown commercial buildings.

Downtown include City Hall, the LaSalle State Bank, the Uptown Bar and Grill, the Herrecke Hardware Store and the LaSalle Canal Boat and Lock 16 Visitors Center. Building conditions range from good to fair with some buildings having been recently rehabilitated while others, especially those located further east along First Street near Union, are in need of façade maintenance, storefront reconstruction, and signage and merchandising improvements. The City has offered incentive grant monies to encourage property owners to undertake both façade and interior improvements.

In contrast to the traditional, pedestrian-oriented building fabric found on First and Second Streets, some segments of Third Street include more auto-

oriented development that service auto travelers along U. S. Route 6 with parking lots facing the sidewalk. Along the southern half of First Street east of Joliet, there are also a number of smaller commercial businesses interspersed with some light industrial and residential. There is also limited or pedestrian access from First Street to the I & M Canal and the waterfront; however, a parking garage once existed at Canal and Marquette Streets and provided pedestrian access to Lock 16 over the CSX rail lines. This has since been demolished. There has been significant interest expressed among local stakeholders to construct an access point from Downtown to Lock 16 and the I & M Canal Trail. The Downtown district overall has the potential to become a unique environment that could capitalize on its traditional commercial buildings and location to the historic terminus of the I & M Canal.

### Other Commercial Areas

Beyond the Downtown, there is one other concentration of commercial activity along Eighth Street between Laharpe and Tonti. This area comprises mostly of one to two-story traditional commercial buildings. Other commercial areas include individual parcels and lots along St. Vincent's Avenue (IL 351) between O'Connor and Baker, and between Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Seventh Streets. These uses include retail stores, a restaurant/banquet hall, a motel, and a landscape supply business, among others. A number of commercial establishments also exist along the U.S. Route 6 corridor, including companies related to electrical and contractor supplies and heavy construction equipment rental. To the east of Route 6, includes the LaSalle Speedway and Senica's Oak Ridge Golf Club, which includes an on-site restaurant and banquet hall. This development site is currently has a Central Business District zoning classification.

## Industrial Areas

Historically, LaSalle was a major industrial town within the upper Illinois River valley with its industrial land uses concentrated on LaSalle's eastern boundaries and the Illinois River bottom. Today, industrial land constitutes a significant portion of its overall land area, expanding along U.S. Route 6 to Route 178 and beyond Interstates 80 and 39. Along the Illinois River bottom, where the I & M Canal and its steamboat basin once met the Illinois River, and a CSX rail spur traverses the area, a number of light and heavy industrial uses exist, including a scrap metal and recycling business, a lumber yard, and a feed manufacturing plant. An Archer-Daniels Midland port facility is located in the vicinity but just outside LaSalle's corporate boundary to the west. One of the City's wastewater treatment plants is also located along the bottoms just below the Downtown district. An area east of IL 251 to the Illinois River and south of the I & M Canal is zoned light industrial although it currently remains as a crop field and wetlands.

To the east of the Little Vermillion River is the Illinois Cement production complex, which occupies a significant amount of land northeast to U.S. Route 6 where one of its entrances is located.



Illinois Cement Complex

The plant is also adjacent to a stretch of single-family homes along Rockwell Street just north of the I & M Canal to LaSalle's easternmost corporate boundary past Interstate 39. Illinois Cement also operates a facility on East Third Road northeast of the IL 351/Interstate 80 interchange. North of U.S. Route 6 is the East Side Waste Water Treatment Plant, although two cemeteries lie southwest of the plant site along the Little Vermillion River. To the north of the Treatment Plant, two parks, Rotary and Prairie Parks are planned and being developed; the current zoning map classifies the land as light and heavy industrial. To the west across the Little Vermilion is the Carus Chemical complex, which also comprises the 160-acre Matthiessen and Hegeler Zinc Company's zinc smelting facilities and rolling mills, and is now a designated Superfund site. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency placed the site in its National Priorities List in 2003 and has conducted various remediation activities.

Along the U.S. Route 6 corridor north to the Interstate 39 interchange and beyond is largely farmland with some single-family residential. Much of the land is currently zoned for light and heavy-industrial. The J.C Whitney auto parts supplier occupies a substantial site along U.S. Route 6 just east of IL Route 178. North of Interstate 80, a 147-acre parcel was recently re-zoned from agriculture to heavy industrial to permit a new sand mine to operate.

## Agricultural Areas

The only agricultural land within LaSalle's corporate boundary is located to the east of Illinois Cement's East Third Road facility near the Mitchell Grove Nature Preserve.

## Community Facilities and Institutions

Municipal and other community facility needs were inventoried and evaluated as part of this assignment and based on interviews with staff and elected leaders for the City of LaSalle and other taxing districts. *(See Figure B in foldout on following page)*

### City Hall

City Hall, which contains offices for all municipal departments, including Police, is located at 745 Second Street. This building is currently listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places. The top floor of the building is the old council chamber that cannot be used for public purposes since the building lacks an elevator that would be needed for compliance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). In addition, there are parts of the building that could be upgraded and rehabilitated.

### Fire Station

LaSalle has one fire station that is located at 1227 Fifth Street. With new development anticipated from newly annexed land area to the east, there may be a need to consider an additional fire station or a shared services agreement with the Utica Community Fire Protection District.

### Public Works Building

The public works building located in Downtown at 745 Second Street is beyond its useful life and is a state of disrepair. The City is currently exploring options for an alternative site or building.

### Schools

LaSalle is home to two school districts, Elementary School District 122 and LaSalle-Peru Township High School District 120. District 122 includes

two elementary schools, Jackson and Northwest, and one junior high school, Lincoln. The Township High School serves the communities of LaSalle, Peru, Olgesby, Tonica and Dimmick. There are currently no major significant facility needs for the districts, although attracting and retaining experienced and well-qualified teachers, and decreasing the student mobility rate is a challenge, especially for School District 122.

The following tables provide school enrollment information:

**Table 1: School Enrollment within LaSalle (2009-2010)**

District	Total Schools	Total Students	Student-Teacher Ratio
District 122	3	1011	15.02
District 120	1	1214	13.92

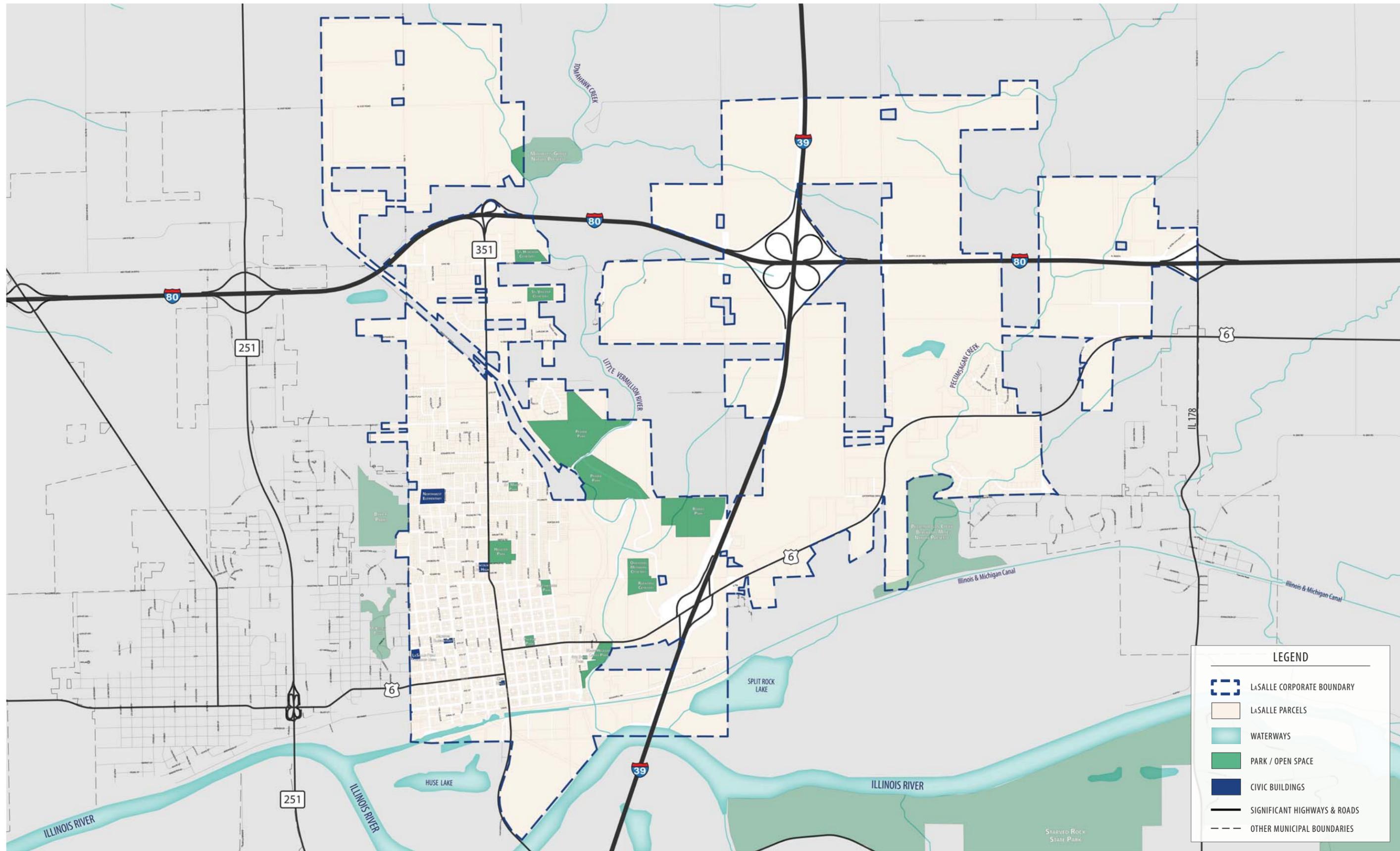
Compared to the State of Illinois average of 15.19 students per teacher, both District 122 and 120 are below this number.

**Table 2: School Enrollment by School (2009-2010)**

School	Total Students	Student-Teacher Ratio
Jackson Elementary	125	25.00
Northwest Elementary	606	14.57
Lincoln Junior High School	257	13.53
LaSalle-Peru Township	1214	13.92

Compared to the State of Illinois average of 15.19 students per teacher, only Jackson Elementary is above this number.

In addition to the public schools, LaSalle is home to several private schools including LaSalle-Peru Christian School and Trinity Catholic Academy.



CITY OF LASALLE, ILLINOIS  
 LASALLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
 FIGURE B - CITY-WIDE BASE MAP

### Colleges

There are currently no higher education institutions located in LaSalle. Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby is the nearest college providing two-year degree and other certificate programs for LaSalle residents. It currently has an enrollment of 4,000 students.

### Hospitals

The nearest hospital, Illinois Valley Community Hospital, is located in Peru and employs more than 600 people, making it one of the largest employers in the area. The Hospital was established in the mid-1970s as part of a merger between St. Mary's Hospital in LaSalle and People's Hospital in Peru. The Hospital has 100 beds plus additional outpatient and small clinic facilities. The Hygienic Institute Community Health Center, affiliated with Illinois Valley Community Hospital and located in LaSalle at 2970 Chartres Street, offers basic health care and diagnostic services.

### Religious Institutions

Many religious institutions are located within LaSalle and fulfill important spiritual and social functions within the community. Many religious institutions have been in the LaSalle community since its earliest years, while others are relatively new and show a desire to become an integral part of the community.

### Library

The LaSalle Public Library is located at 305 Marquette Street and is mainly housed in a building designed by architect Victor Matteson and largely funded through a \$25,000 grant from Andrew Carnegie. Over the decades, the Library has undergone several renovations and expansions, the most recent in 2003 when a new addition tripled the size of the building. According to Library's



LaSalle Public Library

website, it currently houses over 45,000 volumes that include adult and juvenile fiction and non-fiction, audio books, Spanish language materials, a genealogy and local history collection, music compact discs, DVDs, reference titles, magazines, and videos.

### Parks, Open Space and Natural Resources

The City of LaSalle has a Parks Department that maintains parks throughout the City, including St. Mary's Hegeler, Matthiessen, Pulaski and Mary Hegeler Carus Memorial Parks. As noted previously, Rotary and Prairie Parks are new park facilities in development. The land for the latter two parks was donated by Illinois Cement, which was once the site of a quarry owned and used by the company. Rotary Park will provide for active recreation uses, including soccer, baseball and softball fields, a dog park, a fishing pier and a wheelchair accessible playground, while Prairie Park will offer more passive uses with trails and walking paths. It is unclear if the Parks Department has adopted a plan for long-term maintenance and improvements to the City's parks system, although the Rotary and Prairie Parks master plan included a basic assessment of local recreational needs. The assessment determined that new soccer,

softball and baseball fields as well as facilities for winter recreational activities were the highest needs within the LaSalle community. However, given the development of the new parks, several local stakeholders expressed concern that funding their ongoing operation and maintenance would be a challenge since no budget and financing sources had been developed and identified.

Beyond the City's park system, there are a number of other recreational assets in and around the LaSalle vicinity. Along the Illinois River bottom is the I & M Canal Trail, which extends from LaSalle to Joliet, and Starved Rock, Matthiessen and Buffalo Rock State Parks are located less than ten miles from LaSalle along State Routes 71 and 178, and Dee Bennett Road. The Mitchell's Grove Nature Preserve, which was donated to the Illinois DNR in 1998 by a local family, is located just northeast of the Interstate 80 and Illinois 351 interchange along the Little Vermilion. In addition, the Pecumsaugan Creek Blackball Mines Nature Preserve, also owned by Illinois DNR, is located in nearby North Utica adjacent to the Senica's Oak Ridge Golf Club.

## Geology

According to the Illinois Geological Survey, LaSalle geologic characteristics include subsurface layers of sandstone, limestone, shale, and coal, especially in its southern area and along the Little Vermilion River. North of Eleventh Street, the geology changes to silty clay to sandy loam.

## Wetlands

Wetlands are defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) for jurisdictional purposes as areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient

to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. The Army Corps and Illinois DNR regulate impacts to wetlands. Wetlands present in LaSalle were identified during field review and with the use of the Nationwide Wetland Inventory maps. Both emerging freshwater and forested/shrub freshwater wetland are located along the Illinois River bottom area adjacent to the I & M Canal and the Illinois River itself. Some dry farm fields are located within the wetland areas.

## Floodplains

Current Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain maps show special flood hazard areas, the area of the one-percent-annual-chance flood, to include much of the Illinois River bottom area and land along the Little Vermilion River valley from the Illinois River north and past Interstate 80. The most recent Flood Insurance Study (FIS) was conducted by FEMA in 2011. Encroachment on floodplains, such as structures and fill, has the potential to reduce flood-carrying capacity, increase flood heights and velocities, and increase flood hazards in areas beyond the encroachment itself.

## Historic Resources

Currently, there are three properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including LaSalle City Hall, the Kaskaskia Hotel and the Julius W. Hegeler House at 1306 Seventh Street. The National Register is this nation's official list of buildings, sites and structures that are worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register does not impose restrictions on the use of private property but does provide tax credits for the rehabilitation of income-producing buildings and other incentives. In addition, both the Hegeler-Carus Mansion and the I & M Canal Locks and

Towpath are National Historic Landmarks, which are significant buildings and places designated only by the Secretary of the Interior.

Presently, there are no National Register Historic Districts in LaSalle and nor are there current historic resource surveys that identify and document architecturally and historically significant buildings and structures. However, the Illinois Historic Structures and Landmarks Surveys, undertaken by the State of Illinois from 1970 to 1975, identified approximately 55 buildings that could be potentially significant and eligible for the National Register individually or as part of a district. Identified properties include the following:

- Chicago Burlington and Quincy Railroad Station, south side of Brunner at Creve Coeur Streets
- Residence, 1569 Bucklin Street
- High School Auditorium, LaSalle - Peru Township High School, 541 Chartres Street
- W. E. Fitch House, 1111 Gooding Street
- Residence, northwest corner Joliet and Third Streets
- Matthiessen and Hegeler Zinc Company Office, east of Sterling and north side of Ninth Street
- Residence, 318 Marquette Street
- Residence, 747 Marquette Street
- Residence, southwest corner Marquette and Eighth Streets
- Residence, 2200 St. Vincent's Avenue
- Railroad Building Warehouse, east side of Union and south of Third Street
- Commercial Building, 644 First Street
- Fahrney Building, 722-724 First Street
- Commercial Building, 734 First Street
- LaSalle County Carbon Coal Company Building, 1350 First Street

- Goldsmith Building, north side First Street and west of Joliet.
- LaSalle Theater, south side of First Street and west of Joliet
- Joa-Rose Dress Shop, north side First Street and east of Joliet
- U.S. Post Office, southwest corner of Third Street and Marquette
- Commercial Building, 959 Ninth Street
- Residence, 2154 St. Vincent Avenue
- St. Hyacinth's Catholic Church, 927 Tenth Street
- LaSalle Rock Island Railroad Station, south side of First Street at Lafayette



The Slovene National Home (above) and the LaSalle State Bank Building, 1970s

- LaSalle Public Library, northwest corner Third Street and Marquette
- St. Patrick's Church, northeast corner Fourth Street and Marquette
- St. Joseph's Church, southeast corner Fifth Street and Hennepin
- Residence, 921 Ninth Street
- Kasimir Piersk House, 1027 Tenth Street
- Residence, 1505 Bucklin Street
- Residence, northwest corner Bucklin Street and Roosevelt
- Commercial Building, 225 Gooding Street
- Commercial Building, southwest corner Joliet Street and Second
- Residence, 753 Marquette Street
- Residence, 1045 Marquette Street
- Residence, 1132 Marquette Street
- Residence, 1156 Marquette Street
- Residence, 1232 Marquette Street
- LaSalle Super Market, southwest corner Marquette Street and Second
- Lincoln School, 1165 St. Vincent Avenue
- Herrecke Building, 431 First Street
- Commercial Building, 640 First Street
- Commercial Building, 726 First Street
- Commercial Building, north side First Street and east of Bucklin
- Commercial Building, north side of First Street and west of Joliet
- LaSalle State Bank, southwest corner First Street and Marquette
- Commercial Building, north side First Street and west of Marquette
- Knights of Columbus Hall, northwest corner Second Street and Gooding
- Trinity United Church of Christ, north side of Fourth Street and east of Joliet
- Residence, 530 Fifth Street



Former J.C. Penny Store

- Residence, 720 Sixth Street
- Church St. Joseph's (?) SE Corner Fifth & Hennepin
- Residence, 625 Eighth Street
- Residence, 1106 Ninth Street
- Aaron Gunn Family Home, 1212 Linden Street

Given that the Illinois Historic Structures and Landmarks Surveys are more than 40 years old, and properties documented may have changed or have been substantially altered since the surveys were conducted, a new survey may be warranted to determine whether there are potential eligible individual National Register properties and Historic Districts. Historic preservation tax credits could become an important incentive for adapting and rehabilitating historic commercial building within the Downtown district.

## Zoning

The current LaSalle Zoning Ordinance represents the community's existing development pattern for the most part, although there are discrepancies in some areas that are zoned industrial and commercial

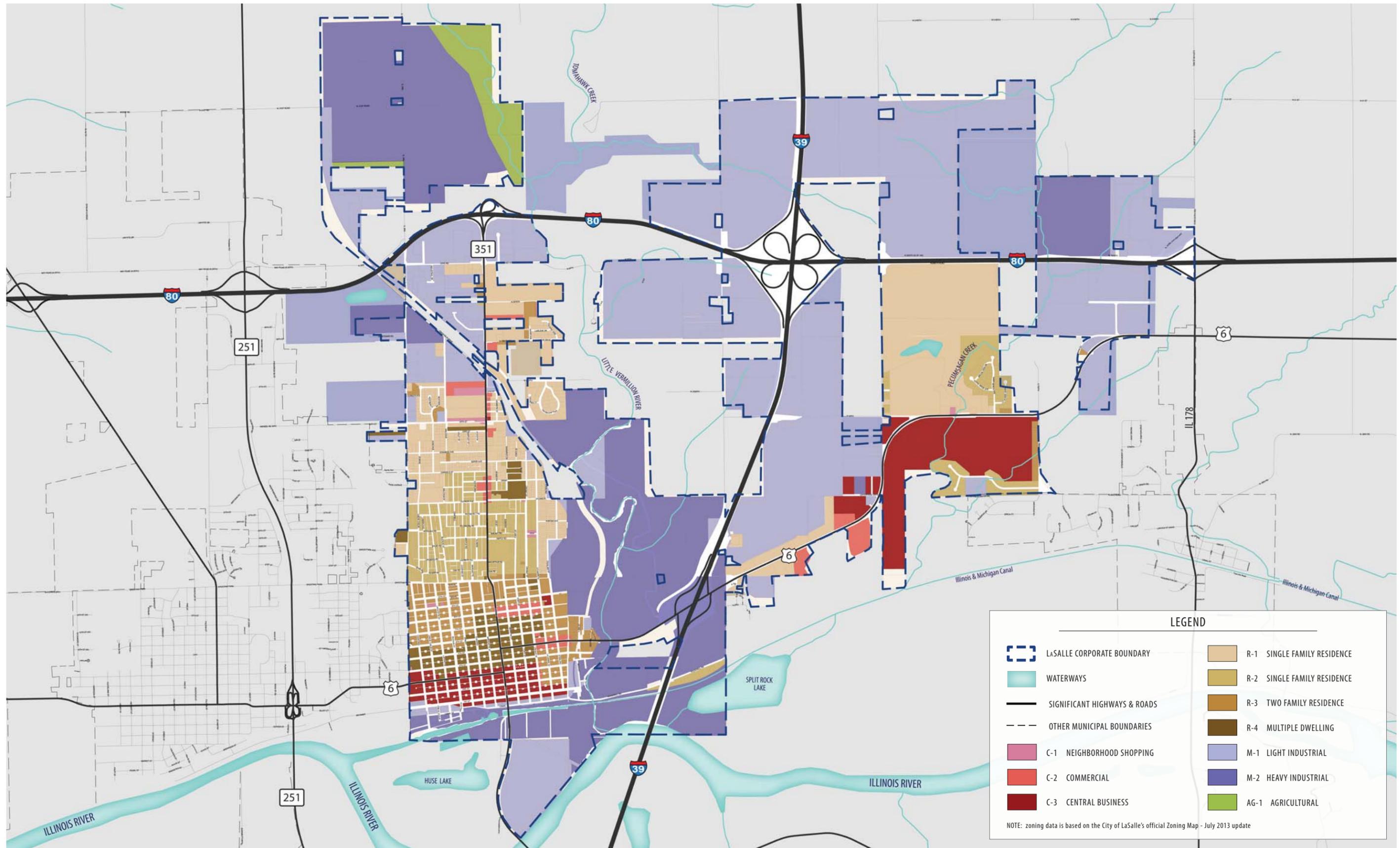
but that are currently in agricultural use. There is also no zoning classification for public and institutional uses. The existing zoning classifications include *(See Figure C in foldout on following page)*:

- R-1: Single-Family Residential
- R-2: Single Family Residential
- R-3: Two-Family Residential
- R-4: Multiple Dwelling Residential
- C-1: Neighborhood Shopping
- C-2: Commercial
- C-3: Central Business
- M-1: Light Industrial
- M-2: Heavy Industrial
- AG-1: Agricultural

Most of these districts provide basic requirements for development density and permitted uses. Some modifications to the existing zoning and the introduction of new zoning mechanisms will likely be required to implement aspects of this Comprehensive Plan. Potential changes could include consolidating or eliminating districts, or creating additional districts to allow a range of densities and uses in appropriate locations. Redrawing districts or changing designations in some areas also could help reduce land-use conflicts. Adding design requirements and flexibility regarding building design and massing, landscape and streetscape, and signage will also be important considerations. An analysis of each zone follows:

The table below provides information about some of the regulations in place within the various districts.

Table 3: LaSalle Zoning Height and Area Requirements (in feet)				
Zoning	Maximum Height	Minimum Lot Area	Minimum Lot Width	Front Yard Setback
R-1	35	7,500	60	25
R-2	35	6,000	50	25
R-3	35	5,000 (1-family) 2,500 (2-family)	50	25
R-4	45	5,000 (1-family) 2,500 (2-family) 1,500 (multiple)	50	45
C-1	35	5,000 (1-family) 2,500 (2-family) 1,500 (multiple)		25
C-2	45	5,000 (1-family) 2,500 (2-family) 1,500 (multiple)		25
C-3	150	500		
M-1	125	5,000 (1-family) 2,500 (2-family) 1,500 (multiple)		25
M-2	125			25
AG-1	35	7,500	60	30



CITY OF LASALLE, ILLINOIS  
 LASALLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
 FIGURE C - ZONING MAP

**LEGEND**

LaSALLE CORPORATE BOUNDARY	R-1 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE
WATERWAYS	R-2 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE
SIGNIFICANT HIGHWAYS & ROADS	R-3 TWO FAMILY RESIDENCE
OTHER MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES	R-4 MULTIPLE DWELLING
C-1 NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING	M-1 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
C-2 COMMERCIAL	M-2 HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
C-3 CENTRAL BUSINESS	AG-1 AGRICULTURAL

NOTE: zoning data is based on the City of LaSalle's official Zoning Map - July 2013 update

## Residential

**R-1: Single-Family Residential:** LaSalle's R-1 districts comprise most of the residential areas north of O'Connor Avenue and adjacent to the Carus Chemical complex on the City's east side. An addition R-1 area is located along the U.S. Route 6 corridor. The R-1 districts may include one-family dwellings, churches and places of worship, home occupations, schools and public facilities, and parks and playgrounds. The R-1 District also permits golf and country clubs. However, uses other than single-family are typically classified as conditional uses given the impact that providing on-street and off-street parking may have in single-family residential areas. The required minimum lot area may also be slightly high given the smaller lot sizes found in some of the older, traditional residential areas.

**R-2: Single Family Residential:** The R-2 districts include residential areas between O'Connor and Eleventh Street, and along certain areas of the U.S. Route 6 corridor. Use requirements are the same as in the R-1 zone with an overall aim to allow for more residential units per acre to be constructed. This classification appears to be suitable for the areas in which they are located.

**R-3: Two-Family Residential:** LaSalle's R-3 districts are largely located south of Eleventh Street within the community's older, traditional core. Use requirements differ from the R-1 and R-2 districts in that two-family residences are allowed, although it is not defined whether two-family residences can be attached, detached or stacked. These districts largely include the two-flats that may be located in predominately single-family neighborhoods. This classification appears to be suitable for the areas in which they are located.

**R-4: Multiple Dwelling Residential:** There is currently one R-4 district in LaSalle, which encompasses an area north of the Downtown District. The classification permits all uses from the R-1 to R-3 zones plus rooming and boarding houses, nursing homes, private clubs and lodges, hospitals and various schools and religious institutions. These permitted uses are often classified as conditional uses in most community zoning codes. In addition, this zoning classification does not specify a maximum number of dwelling units per acre, and it is unclear if mobile and manufactured homes are permitted, despite a R-4 mobile home park located near the St. Vincent's Avenue/Twenty-Seventh Street intersection. This zoning classification appears to be appropriate as it applies to flats and smaller-scale multiple housing units located within the City's traditional single-family neighborhoods.

**C-1: Neighborhood Shopping:** There are few C-1 districts in LaSalle. The purpose of the district classification is to provide convenience retail and services to adjacent residential neighborhoods, with permitted uses including retail and service establishments, offices, bank branches, restaurants and cafes, personal service shops, filling stations, advertising signs and structures, and accessory buildings. It is unclear what the minimum or maximum lot areas are in C-1 districts, although there are references to lot areas required in the R-4 districts. A front set back is also required, which is not typical for traditional neighborhood shopping districts where buildings are often built to the sidewalk.

**C-2: Commercial:** There are several pockets of C-2 commercial areas, including one located along the U.S. Route 6 corridor, one along Route 6 between Union and Laharpe Streets, and another along Eighth Street between Laharpe and Tonti.

There are other lots and parcels zoned C-2 along St. Vincent's Avenue north of O'Connor Avenue. These areas are typically characterized as small, one-half or one-block or lot segments. The C-2 zoning classification allows for slightly more intensive, larger-scaled auto-oriented commercial uses, including automobile sales rooms, bowling alleys, drive-in restaurants, hotels and motels, tire sales and service, including vulcanizing, and veterinaries or animal hospitals. As with the C-1 district, it is unclear what are the minimum or maximum lot areas are required. There is also a lack of landscaping and buffering requirements between C-2 districts and different adjacent land use zones.

**C-3: Central Business District:** The majority of the Downtown district between First and Fourth Streets is zoned Central Business District, which permits a wide range of commercial uses, although it does not specify what types of public or semi-public uses are allowed, such as hospitals, churches, community centers, upper-story residential. Interestingly, wholesale and light-manufacturing uses are permitted whereas most communities would classify them as conditional uses; however, allowing some forms of light manufacturing would be beneficial in promoting the reuse of vacant buildings and upper-floor spaces. In other cases, such uses could take up valuable storefront frontage. In addition, parking requirements for retail businesses in the C-3 district are slightly high and may encourage the development of large parking lots, which would not fit the pedestrian-oriented character of the historic Downtown core. Truck and transfer terminals should also be discouraged. Again, not minimum or maximum lot area is specified.

There are C-3 areas along the Downtown fringes, especially along Chartres, Creve Coeur, Union and Sterling Streets where the commercial fabric breaks down and weaves into the adjacent residential

fabric. These areas may be more suitable for the C-1 commercial zoning.

**M-1: Light Industrial:** The purpose of the M-1 district is to provide locations for light manufacturing and industrial uses where there is a minimal expectation for outdoor storage and emission of noxious fumes. The majority of the newly annexed land in the City along the Interstate 80 and 39 corridors has been zoned M-I Light Industrial. Uses permitted in the M-1 district include product processing and packaging, appliance manufacturers, warehouses and storage yards; trucking terminals, and contractor yards. Automobile junk yards and petroleum storage areas, which are permitted, are typical uses for heavy industrial districts. Curiously, drive-in theaters and all commercial uses permitted in the C-3 Central Business District zone are also allowed, which are not typical uses in industrial areas. Height and area regulations are minimal or not specified.

**M-2: Heavy Industrial:** The M-2 district provides location for heavy manufacturing and industry, which incorporates the Carus Chemical and Illinois Cement production sites and businesses located along the Illinois River bottom. There are only a few instances where M-2 districts abut or are immediately adjacent to residential districts. Height and area regulations are minimal or non-existent, except for those areas that abut or are adjacent to residential districts.

**AG-1: Agricultural:** LaSalle currently has only one area that is zoned agricultural, which permits farms, nursery, stables and single family residential. Other permitted uses include radio stations and their towers, colleges, and other uses allowed in the R-1 Single Family districts. These uses are typically classified as conditional uses in other zoning codes.

### **Subdivision Regulations and Planned Unit Developments**

The City currently has subdivision and planned unit development regulations within its land usage code. Subdivision regulations include basic standards for streets and alleys, sidewalks, sanitary systems, and blocks and lot dimensions. It is unclear when the City has last updated the subdivision code since there may be need to revise it to be in conformance with comprehensive planning goals related to improving community appearance, sustainable design, street connectivity, infrastructure and complete streets. Planned unit developments have been approved in LaSalle but they are not indicated on the latest City zoning map.

### **Extraterritorial Zoning**

The City of LaSalle appears to have last adopted an extraterritorial district area and zoning map in the 1960s. Illinois communities are allowed to adopt an extraterritorial district area and zoning map up to one and a half miles beyond their corporate boundaries.



## Section 4

# Market and Economic Conditions

The data presented in this section provides an overview of the existing business and economic climate in LaSalle, as well as identifies economic trends related to employment, household incomes, and education. Data discussed in this section comes from the 2000 U.S. Census, the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, and the 2010 U.S. Census, all collected by the U.S. Census Bureau.

### Demographic Summary

Population characteristics and trends were examined in order to understand how household composition impacts future economic development plans, as well as City services and school enrollment.

#### Population

After a decline of 12 percent in the 1980s, LaSalle's population recovered modestly in the 1990s (4 percent) and 2000s (1.4 percent). The most recent population count (2012) was reported at 9,595 and demographers predict a 1 percent population decline by 2017. (For comparison, the state population is expected to decline 0.24 percent over the same period.) The 2012 population represents 3,953 households, and household size is expected to remain virtually unchanged, from 2.38 in 2012 to 2.36 in 2017. Median household income was \$39,606.

LaSalle's population is aging, with a current median age of 38.8 years and a forecasted median age of 39.3 by 2017. The trend will have longer-term impacts on school enrollment and demand for different housing products. For the present time, however, the school-aged population (0-19 years old) is forecast to remain stable through 2017, with the forecasted aging clustered primarily in populations over 55, and therefore beyond their child-rearing years.



Table 4: LaSalle Population

Population by Age	2012		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 4	684	7.1%	674	7.1%
5 - 9	636	6.6%	622	6.6%
10 - 14	550	5.7%	545	5.7%
15 - 19	572	6.0%	537	5.7%
20 - 24	586	6.1%	534	5.6%
25 - 34	1,351	14.1%	1,347	14.2%
35 - 44	1,117	11.6%	1,081	11.4%
45 - 54	1,369	14.3%	1,249	13.2%
55 - 64	1,192	12.4%	1,223	12.9%
65 - 74	722	7.5%	850	9.0%
75 - 84	474	4.9%	482	5.1%
85+	341	3.6%	352	3.7%

### Race and Ethnicity

LaSalle's population is primarily white (89%) and the racial makeup is forecast to remain virtually unchanged for the near future. However, persons of Hispanic origin (any race), currently making up 14.7% of LaSalle's population, are forecast to gradually increase, to 17.2% by 2017. LaSalle's small African American, American Indian, and Asian populations are forecast to remain stable.

Table 5: Population by Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	2012		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	8,578	89.4%	8,385	88.3%
Black Alone	152	1.6%	151	1.6%
American Indian Alone	24	0.3%	24	0.3%
Asian Alone	77	0.8%	79	0.8%
Some Other Race Alone	552	5.8%	636	6.7%
Two or More Races	212	2.2%	224	2.4%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	1,412	14.7%	1,632	17.2%

### Population Characteristics by Trade Area

In the economic assessment (later in this section), purchasing power and sales leakage was examined by drive times from downtown LaSalle. It is also useful to look at population characteristics using the same geographic parameters in order to understand how LaSalle's nearby populations are similar or different – and how the differences may influence consumer profiles.

The five-minute drive area from downtown LaSalle contains a population approximately equal to the City of LaSalle, at 10,026 people, even though the boundaries of the City and the boundaries of the drive area do not coincide. The ten-minute drive area includes much of Peru, and the fifteen-minute drive area encompasses more rural areas beyond LaSalle and Peru. (In general, drive areas of five to ten minutes reflect a trade area for convenience-

based shopping.) While the City's population is expected to decline by 1 percent by 2017, the population in the larger trade areas around LaSalle are forecast to be stable, with aggregate declines of 0.1 percent or less for the 10 and 15-minute drive areas.

Households in LaSalle are less affluent than those in its surrounding trade areas. The 2012 median income in the five-minute drive area from downtown was \$38,208 (just below the median income reported for all households in the City of LaSalle). The median income in the 15-minute drive area, however, was \$44,417, or 16 percent above households in the five-minute drive area. This fact may influence how downtown LaSalle positions itself with respect to nearby customers and the types of businesses it seeks to attract.

**Table 6: Drive Times**

	0 - 5 minutes	0 - 10 minutes	0 - 15 minutes
<b>2012 Summary</b>			
Population	9,987	24,987	34,526
Households	4,226	10,523	14,482
Median Age	38.4	42.1	42.0
Median Household Income	\$38,208	\$43,612	\$44,417
<b>2017 Summary</b>			
Population	9,886	24,863	34,388
Households	4,210	10,541	14,532
Median Age	38.9	42.8	42.8
Median Household Income	\$43,740	\$51,127	\$51,728

**Lifestyle Preferences**

Income differences among trade areas notwithstanding, the lifestyle characteristics of households in the three drive areas are quite similar to each other and share the same top three Tapestry™ segments. “Tapestry™ is a consumer segmentation system developed by ESRI. It clusters similar consumer households by their characteristics and preferences and is based on the underlying principle that “birds of a feather flock together,” or households that live near each other tend to share many other lifestyle characteristics.

These three Tapestry segments represent middle-class households: their life stages are different (retirees versus starting families and careers), but all are consumers nonetheless. All of the households are characterized by an interest in their homes and home improvements.

Table 7: LaSalle Population			
Tapestry Segment	5-minute drive area	10-minute drive area	15-minute drive area
Rustbelt Traditions	29.6%	15.1%	11.2%
Rustbelt Retirees	25.1%	28.9%	25.3%
Great Expectations	16.8%	12.4%	9.9%

**Rustbelt Traditions.** These residents stick close to home; for years, they’ve lived, worked, shopped, and played in the same area. Not tempted by fads, they stick to familiar products and services. They drive domestic cars. They will spend money on their families, yard maintenance, and home improvements. They will hire contractors for special projects such as the installation of roofing, carpet, and flooring. These financially conservative residents prefer to bank at a credit union and have personal savings. They might carry a personal loan and hold low-value life and homeowner’s insurance

policies. They’re frugal and shop for bargains at Sam’s Club, J.C. Penny, and Kmart. They go online weekly to play games and shop. They go bowling, fishing, and hunting and attend car races, country music shows, and ice hockey games. They are re big TV fans; they watch sitcoms and sports events. They also subscribe to cable and watch it regularly. Favorite channels are truTV, the Game Show Network, and the Disney Channel.

**Rustbelt Retirees.** These hardworking folks are settled; many have lived in the same house for years. Loyal to country and community, they tend to be politically conservative. They participate in public activities and fund-raising, visit elected officials, and work for political parties or candidates. They belong to fraternal organizations, unions, and veterans’ clubs. Practical people who take pride in their homes and gardens, Rustbelt Retirees buy home furnishings and work on remodeling projects to update their houses. They watch their pennies, use coupons, and look for bargains at discount stores and warehouse clubs. They own savings bonds and certificates of deposit and hold life insurance policies. They eat out at family restaurants such as Perkins and Friendly’s and watch rented movies on DVD instead of going to the theater. They also go bowling, play cards and bingo, gamble in Atlantic City, and go to horse races. They watch home improvement shows, sports events, news programs, game shows, and old reruns on TV. Favorite channels include Home & Garden Television, the Hallmark Channel, and the Weather Channel. They listen to country, oldies, and sports radio and peruse the daily newspaper.

**Great Expectations Homeowners.** Great Expectations homeowners are not afraid to tackle smaller maintenance and remodeling projects, but they also enjoy a young and active lifestyle. They go out to dinner and to the movies. They do most of

their grocery shopping at Wal-Mart Supercenters, Aldi, and Shop 'n Save. They throw Frisbees; play softball and pool; go canoeing; watch horror, science fiction, and drama films on DVD; and listen to country music, classic rock, and sports on the radio. They watch dramas, auto racing, and the evening news on TV. They occasionally eat at Arby's and Dairy Queen. They shop at major discount and department stores. They rarely travel. Focused on starting their careers, they're not investing for their retirement years.

## Housing Assessment

For 2012, the City of LaSalle had 4,431 housing units, covering a range of single-family and multi-family types. By observation, residences further north of downtown are, on the whole, better-maintained than residences closer to downtown. There are probably a number of reasons for this observed difference, including the likelihood that neighborhoods closer to downtown contain a greater proportion of rental units than other LaSalle neighborhoods. The median home value for the city in 2012 was \$87,453.

Overall occupancy was reported at 89.2 percent for 2012. Among occupied units, about 35 percent were rentals and the rest owner-occupied, a proportion that closely tracks the national homeownership rate of 65 percent.

Table 8: LaSalle Population		
	Number of units (2012)	% of units (2012)
Total Housing Units	4,431	100.0%
Owner	2,570	58.0%
Renter	1,383	31.2%
Vacant	478	10.8%

If LaSalle's population continues to inch downward (and household size remains constant), vacancies are projected to increase by 0.5 percent (to 11.3 percent) by 2017.

## Units Per Structure

About 79 percent of homes in LaSalle are single-family detached houses. Data for single and multi-unit residential buildings is reported below, however, because of small sample sizes in the American Community Survey, data for multi-unit buildings are known to have a high margin of error.

Table 9: Housing Units by Units in Structure (2005-2009 American Community Survey)		
Total	4,596	100.0%
1, detached	3,625	78.9%
1, attached	114	2.5%
2	168	3.7%
3 to 9	383	8.3%
10 or more units	223	4.8%
Mobile home	83	1.8%

New-home construction is expected to remain flat over the next five years, with an expected increase of only 11 new homes.

## Downtown Housing

There are a handful of Downtown, upper-story housing units – some currently under development. While at this point, it is an incidental portion of the housing inventory, these “loft-style” products provide a new and unique option in LaSalle, one that anecdotally has appeal for local empty-nesters. All downtown housing – and especially downtown housing in mixed-use buildings – has

multiple positive impacts. Two economic benefits are worth mentioning here: Mixed-use housing in downtown makes downtown commercial buildings more sustainable by making them economically more productive (and therefore more likely to be maintained). Downtown housing in any form (mixed-use or single-use) increases the number of nearby customers likely to shop in downtown businesses, adding to downtown vibrancy.

## Economic Assessment

### Downtown Business Inventory

Downtown LaSalle hosts approximately 248 active businesses, not including heavy industries on the edges of downtown. These small downtown businesses cumulatively represent approximately 2,036 jobs and \$419 million in gross annual sales.

Approximately 88 downtown businesses (35 percent of the total) are retail or retail-service businesses. While this is a substantial portion, it is (currently) not the dominant downtown commercial activity, and two other factors make retail to appear to play an even smaller roll in downtown’s economy: First, existing retail is scattered across a relatively large geographic area, meaning that the retail character of downtown can escape perception by the casual shopper. Second, a number of “retail” businesses (e.g., gas stations or tire stores) may not be perceived as retail, further diluting the downtown retail cluster.

Professionals, professional offices, and non-retail services make up the largest cluster of downtown businesses, accounting for 98 businesses, or 40 percent of the total. Some of these businesses (especially medical offices) attract in-person visits, and some of those visits may spin off to benefit other downtown businesses, such as restaurants and retail shops.

**Table 10: Business Type**

Business type	No. of businesses
Apparel and accessories	8
Retail auto and auto parts	3
Other misc. retail (e.g., appliance, hardware, florist, musical instruments, etc.)	21
Banking	6
Entertainment	3
Restaurants	17
Bars	7
Personal care (e.g., hair/nail salons)	11
Auto-related services (including gas/service stations)	12
Medical	27
Professional services (e.g., lawyers, accountants)	27
Other services & offices (e.g., staffing, video production, newspaper, advertising, etc.)	19
Real estate agents and property management	4
Non-bank financial services (incl. insurance, investment advisers, pawn shops)	20
Catering	2
Light manufacturing (incl. sign makers, printers, dental labs)	5
Wholesalers	2
Construction-related	10
Storage	1
Transportation	2
Freight and logistics	2
Government	17
Religious	3
Social services	13
Civic associations	3
Schools	3

## Sales Potential and Sales Void

The concept of sales void is based on the idea that households spend a certain amount of money on a predictable set of goods and services – and they are likely to make a large portion of their purchases close (or relatively close) to home. Trade areas vary for different kinds of purchases (e.g., one is likely to travel farther to buy a car than to buy groceries), but by defining a geographic area within which people are likely to make their day-to-day purchases, reasonable estimates can then be made of how much money local households spend within LaSalle and how much they spend outside.

Retail sales void is the result of subtracting local retail sales from consumers' available spending (i.e., "buying power"). It is a traditional benchmark for determining supportable new retail uses, but it is one factor among many that influence retail sales. Marketing, visual appearance, product mix, and other factors also influence where people shop. In addition, large-format retail (including the Peru Mall and its nearby big-box stores) capture much of LaSalle households' spending. Even if the big box stores did not exist in nearby Peru, sales void analyses have changed in recent years as a significant portion of retail purchases, and a growing number of convenience-type purchases (e.g., prescription drugs and even household supplies), have migrated to online retailers.

Drive times are used (as opposed to City or other political boundaries) to estimate trade areas because they better reflect a consumer's actual behavior. Three drive areas were looked at: Five, Ten, and 15 minutes from the center of downtown LaSalle. Together, they provide a picture of retail spending and opportunity. *(See Figure D above and in foldout for drive time areas)*

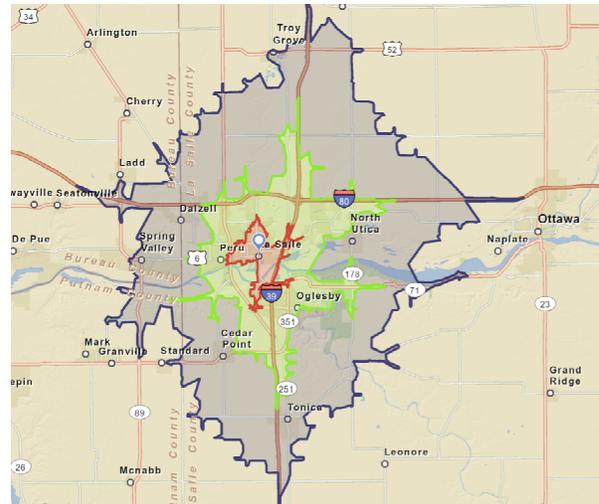
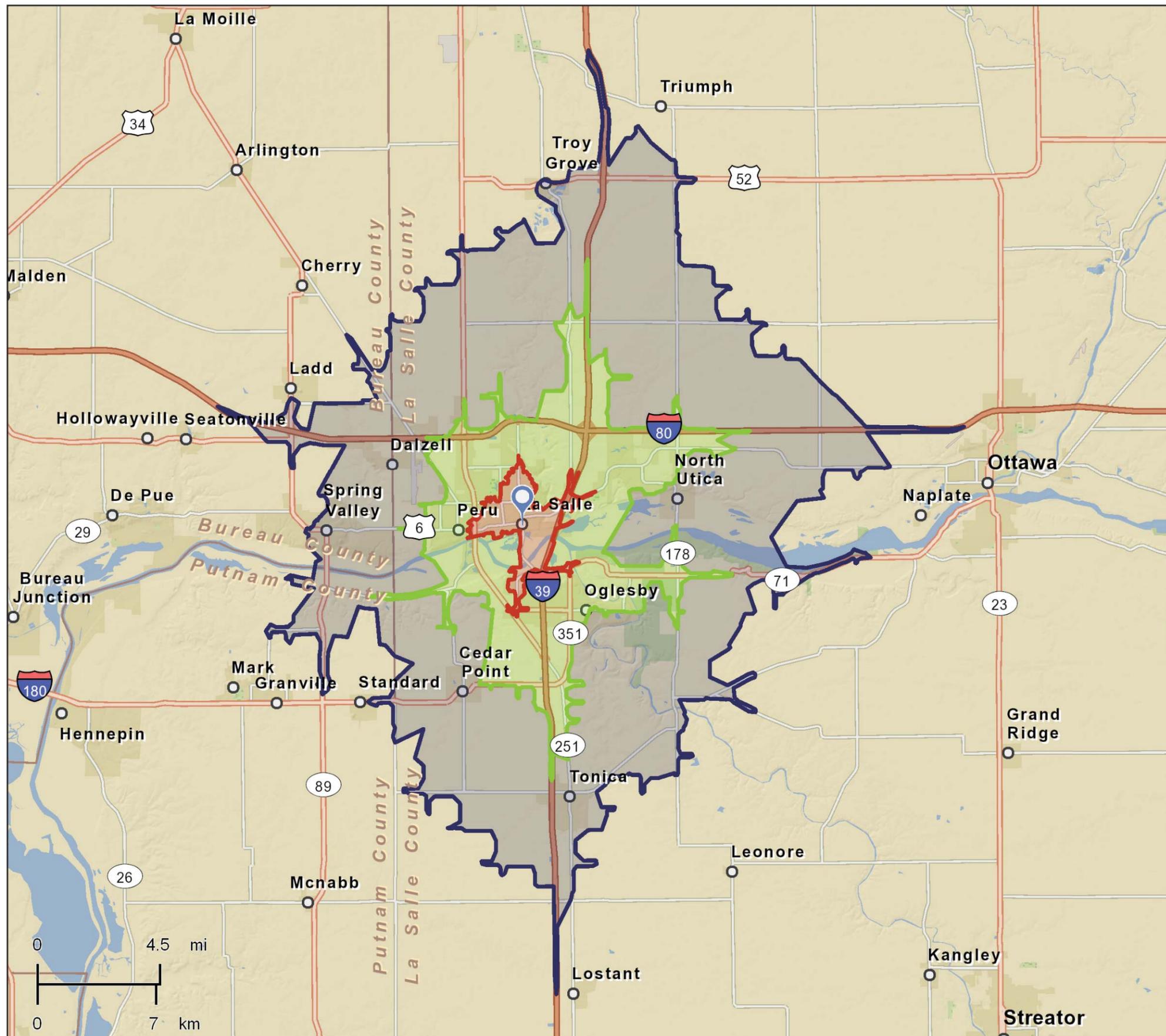


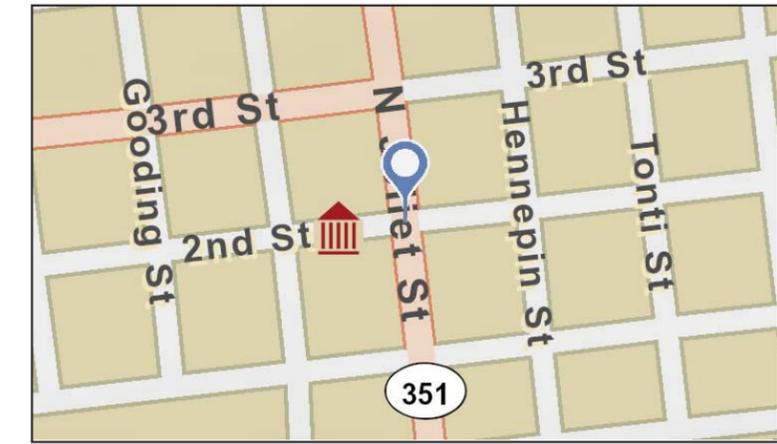
Figure D - Five, Ten, and 15-minute drive areas from downtown LaSalle

Within a five-minute drive area of downtown LaSalle, there is an overall retail sales gap of \$31.4 million. With a few exceptions (notably, groceries), most retail segments show that spending is leaking outside the immediate area. (some of the surplus grocery sales are attributed to Sav-A-Lot, which is at the edge of the five-minute zone, but presumably attracts shoppers from a more complete ring around the store.) Viewed in isolation, these data would seem to indicate many opportunities to recapture leaked sales.

In the tables on following page, green numbers reflect sales leakage (which, in some cases, can be thought of as retail "opportunities," and red numbers reflect a sales surplus, evidence of consumer spending imported from areas beyond the defined map.)



POINT OF ORIGINATION



REGIONAL LOCATION



Table 11: Sales Surplus and Gaps				
	NAICS	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap
Industry Summary		(Retail Potential)	(Retail Sales)	
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$91,594,658	\$60,241,260	\$31,353,397
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$82,867,642	\$52,486,687	\$30,380,955
Total Food & Drink	722	\$8,727,015	\$7,754,573	\$972,442
	NAICS	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap
Industry Group		(Retail Potential)	(Retail Sales)	
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$15,517,420	\$1,368,779	\$14,148,641
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$1,709,524	\$786,090	\$923,434
Furniture Stores	4421	\$1,020,962	\$761,010	\$259,952
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$688,562	\$25,079	\$663,482
Electronics & Appliance Stores	4431	\$2,200,760	\$92,006	\$2,108,754
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$2,704,087	\$428,048	\$2,276,039
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$2,189,946	\$401,993	\$1,787,952
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$514,141	\$26,055	\$488,087
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$13,509,232	\$33,063,188	-\$19,553,956
Grocery Stores	4451	\$12,074,962	\$32,495,605	-\$20,420,643
Specialty Food Stores	4452	\$404,664	\$146,366	\$258,297
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$1,029,606	\$421,217	\$608,389
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$7,204,078	\$1,521,496	\$5,682,582
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$8,830,031	\$6,129,674	\$2,700,357
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$4,995,314	\$1,118,403	\$3,876,911
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$2,111,798	\$665,486	\$1,446,312
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$14,818,755	\$705,991	\$14,112,764
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$1,815,902	\$664,357	\$1,151,545
Florists	4531	\$108,081	\$178,015	-\$69,934
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$294,975	\$171,168	\$123,807
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$168,153	\$2,056	\$166,097
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$1,244,693	\$313,118	\$931,575
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$8,727,015	\$7,754,573	\$972,442
Full-Service Restaurants	7221	\$3,862,348	\$2,534,694	\$1,327,655
Limited-Service Eating Places	7222	\$4,021,099	\$3,119,755	\$901,344
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$439,878	\$1,724,225	-\$1,284,347

## Ten and Fifteen-Minute Drive Areas

The ten and fifteen-minute drive areas change the sales gap picture dramatically. These larger drive areas take in both a larger number of consumer households and a larger number of retail stores, including Peru's major shopping centers. By including these major retail sites, and the spending of many additional households, the sales gap landscape changes. The data for the larger areas show overall sales surpluses: \$251 million for the ten-minute drive area, and \$352 million for the fifteen-minute drive area (*see Tables 12 and 13 on following pages*).

The three data sets appear to support a few specific opportunities for additional retail that could fit into Downtown LaSalle's traditional retail configurations. Most promising among these are Health and Personal Care Stores (e.g., drug store), and Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores.

Recapturing sales in these categories will not be sufficient, on their own, of supporting all available commercial space in LaSalle. Downtown LaSalle will need to carve out a new market position, opportunities for which will be explored in subsequent phases of this planning project.

In addition to existing commercial space Downtown, the City has recently annexed large parcels near the intersection of U.S. Route 6 and Interstate 39, with a long-term view toward industrial or large-scale retail development. The surpluses shown in the retail sales gap data indicate no obvious unmet retail demand for large-format retail. Nevertheless, proximity to interstate travelers provides access to non-local customers for specialty or destination. New retail at these sites would not necessarily be solely supported by LaSalle area households.

## Tourism Activities

Downtown LaSalle holds the promise of benefitting from at least two significant, nearby tourist attractions: Starved Rock State Park and the Illinois & Michigan Canal, both of which are regional draws. The Canal, which effectively starts in Downtown LaSalle, hosts the Lock 16 visitor center and serves as the departure point for boat tours. Use of the Lock 16 café and gift shop, and canal boat ridership, are tracked by visitor center staff. Casual users of the Canal (e.g., pleasure boating, fishing, etc.) is not tracked.

The Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau collects data on the number of visitors to the Corridor and their economic impact. In a 2011 study on the impact of tourism, the Bureau estimated that visitors to attractions in LaSalle County spent \$164.5 million on purchases directly related to their trip, including lodging, food, transportation, retail, entertainment, and recreation. By applying multipliers, the Bureau estimated that tourists caused an additional indirect economic impact of \$28.8 million in the form of employee payrolls for jobs directly serving Corridor visitors, accounting for 1,290 jobs.

It is assumed that the majority of visitor spending and economic impact in LaSalle County can be attributed to Starved Rock State Park and, the lodging, restaurants, and retail in communities adjacent to the Park. Based on anecdotal reports, the current economic impact of Starved Rock visitors on Downtown LaSalle is very small. (Because there is currently no lodging available in LaSalle, it diminishes the likelihood that Park visitors will also visit LaSalle.) There are, however, opportunities to make better economic connections between the two places, which will be discussed in future portions of this work.

Table 12: Ten Minute Drive Times Sales Surplus and Gaps				
	NAICS	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap
Industry Summary		(Retail Potential)	(Retail Sales)	
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$258,071,582	\$509,542,977	-\$251,471,395
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$233,448,322	\$462,031,505	-\$228,583,183
Total Food & Drink	722	\$24,623,260	\$47,511,471	-\$22,888,211
	NAICS	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap
Industry Group		(Retail Potential)	(Retail Sales)	
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$43,848,530	\$30,321,891	\$13,526,639
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$4,865,352	\$4,484,037	\$381,315
Furniture Stores	4421	\$2,886,722	\$3,991,328	-\$1,104,606
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$1,978,630	\$492,709	\$1,485,920
Electronics & Appliance Stores	4431	\$6,209,384	\$3,952,405	\$2,256,979
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$7,911,815	\$15,544,079	-\$7,632,265
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$6,434,072	\$15,479,812	-\$9,045,740
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$1,477,743	\$64,268	\$1,413,475
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$37,791,002	\$117,901,451	-\$80,110,450
Grocery Stores	4451	\$33,751,670	\$116,300,030	-\$82,548,360
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$2,908,673	\$1,246,803	\$1,661,870
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$20,368,749	\$5,812,836	\$14,555,913
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$24,629,149	\$71,923,861	-\$47,294,712
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$14,043,538	\$5,794,801	\$8,248,736
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$5,910,548	\$4,400,247	\$1,510,301
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$41,543,023	\$50,268,360	-\$8,725,337
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$5,126,611	\$3,666,668	\$1,459,943
Florists	4531	\$312,695	\$182,493	\$130,202
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$832,931	\$2,356,688	-\$1,523,757
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$468,422	\$85,489	\$382,933
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$3,512,562	\$1,041,998	\$2,470,565
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$24,623,260	\$47,511,471	-\$22,888,211
Full-Service Restaurants	7221	\$10,902,195	\$15,786,581	-\$4,884,387
Limited-Service Eating Places	7222	\$11,334,276	\$28,316,763	-\$16,982,487
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$1,246,952	\$2,671,541	-\$1,424,589

Table 13: Fifteen Minute Drive Times Sales Surplus and Gaps

	NAICS	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap
Industry Summary		(Retail Potential)	(Retail Sales)	
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$357,272,120	\$708,844,129	-\$351,572,008
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$323,473,143	\$649,209,434	-\$325,736,291
Total Food & Drink	722	\$33,798,977	\$59,634,695	-\$25,835,718
	NAICS	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap
Industry Group		(Retail Potential)	(Retail Sales)	
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$60,800,952	\$39,630,369	\$21,170,583
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$6,679,594	\$4,824,860	\$1,854,734
Furniture Stores	4421	\$3,962,419	\$4,166,712	-\$204,293
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$2,717,175	\$658,148	\$2,059,027
Electronics & Appliance Stores	4431	\$8,572,167	\$4,404,975	\$4,167,192
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$11,087,194	\$15,582,498	-\$4,495,304
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$8,980,167	\$15,518,230	-\$6,538,063
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$2,107,027	\$64,268	\$2,042,759
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$52,284,638	\$121,241,685	-\$68,957,047
Grocery Stores	4451	\$46,713,760	\$117,842,472	-\$71,128,712
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$4,006,917	\$2,725,768	\$1,281,149
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$28,326,677	\$7,220,830	\$21,105,847
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$34,291,092	\$138,390,304	-\$104,099,212
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$19,208,746	\$6,163,323	\$13,045,424
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$8,167,066	\$6,356,898	\$1,810,168
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$57,441,091	\$118,661,875	-\$61,220,784
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$7,156,322	\$4,508,896	\$2,647,425
Florists	4531	\$441,267	\$200,983	\$240,285
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$1,152,037	\$2,448,443	-\$1,296,407
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$643,108	\$336,804	\$306,304
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$4,919,910	\$1,522,666	\$3,397,244
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$33,798,977	\$59,634,695	-\$25,835,718
Full-Service Restaurants	7221	\$14,959,385	\$21,611,484	-\$6,652,100
Limited-Service Eating Places	7222	\$15,578,261	\$32,001,201	-\$16,422,941
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$1,697,490	\$3,876,957	-\$2,179,467

The Canal itself, while right on the edge of Downtown, also accounts for a small portion of visitor spending. Currently, Canal visitors in LaSalle are most likely to purchase lunch or gift items at the visitor center, where they may also buy boat tickets, but the Downtown and the Canal would both benefit from a more seamless physical connection.

A small portion of total visitor spending in LaSalle County can also be attributed to business travelers associated with Carus, J.C Whitney, and other LaSalle companies. But because these visitors, too, must stay elsewhere, their spending in LaSalle is limited.

**Significant Employers and Industries**

LaSalle has the benefit of being home to several significant industries and employers. According to the Illinois Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, the six largest LaSalle employers are:

Table 14: Major Employers	
J.C. Whitney	313
Carus Chemical	264
Veteran’s Home	200
LaSalle-Peru High School	180
Illinois Cement	148
News Tribune	101

Note that J.C Whitney recently closed its LaSalle customer service call center (a loss of approximately 50 jobs), and Carus Chemical’s employment is split between operations in Peru and LaSalle. In addition to their LaSalle presence, both J.C Whitney (a division of US Auto Parts) and Carus Chemical have operations outside Illinois.

With regard to the large annexed parcels at U.S. Route 6 and Interstate 39, their potential for industrial development is not subject to traditional market analysis demand and leakage analysis since there are, typically, no local customers for the industrial product. In recent decades, as many segments of US manufacturing have been transformed by global pressures, the recruitment of industry has become “incentive-based” rather than “market-based”: Cities and states across the country are competing with one another to offer ever more costly incentives to attract industries and jobs. In LaSalle, a more effective strategy would be to build an outstanding community and quality of life to attract businesses in the future, and to make sure that when LaSalle-based employers expand, they do so in LaSalle.

*Recapturing sales in these categories will not be sufficient, on their own, of supporting all available commercial space in LaSalle. Downtown LaSalle will need to carve out a new market position, opportunities for which will be explored in subsequent phases of this planning project.*

## Section 5

# Transportation and Infrastructure

This section provides a summary of the existing conditions associated with LaSalle's transportation and infrastructure systems. In the regional context, LaSalle is located at a crossroads between several major metropolitan areas via several Interstate and U.S. Highways, the CSX Railroad, and the Illinois River. As shown in Figure E in foldout on following page, LaSalle is situated between the metropolitan areas of Chicago, the Quad Cities, Rockford, Peoria, and Bloomington. Smaller metropolitan areas within 50 miles of LaSalle include DeKalb and Rochelle. LaSalle is located at the intersection of Interstates 80 and 39 and is well connected to the larger northern Illinois area by these interstates. Currently, CSX Transportation operates the railroad that runs through LaSalle and its neighboring community of Peru.

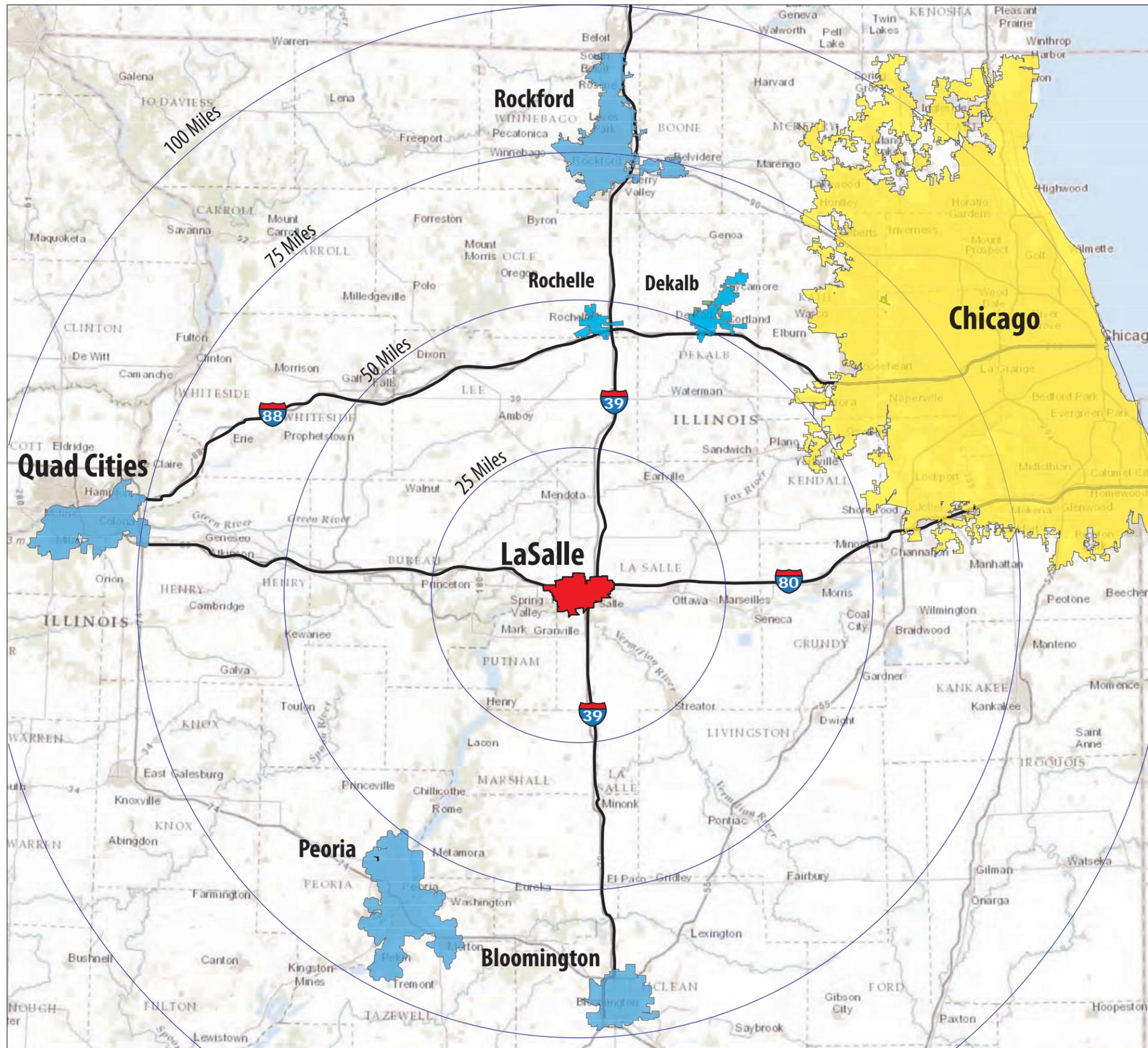
Situated along the Illinois River and the Illinois and Michigan Canal, much of the City's historical development was due to water transportation. LaSalle's location at the entry point of the canal has affected industrial development in LaSalle since its founding. Prior to the construction of the I & M Canal, Peru and LaSalle were busy port cities as the Illinois River was navigable up to LaSalle and Peru. Goods headed to and from Chicago would transfer from water to rail in LaSalle and Peru. Today, Interstates 80 and 39, and the CSX Railroad are the primary modes of commercial transportation to and through LaSalle.

### Roadways

#### Context and Jurisdiction

Figure F in foldout on following page shows roads in LaSalle by jurisdiction including U.S. and State Highways under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) - District 3. LaSalle has jurisdiction over the majority of the roadway network with the exception of one LaSalle County Highway (E. 350th Street) {photo caption – LaSalle

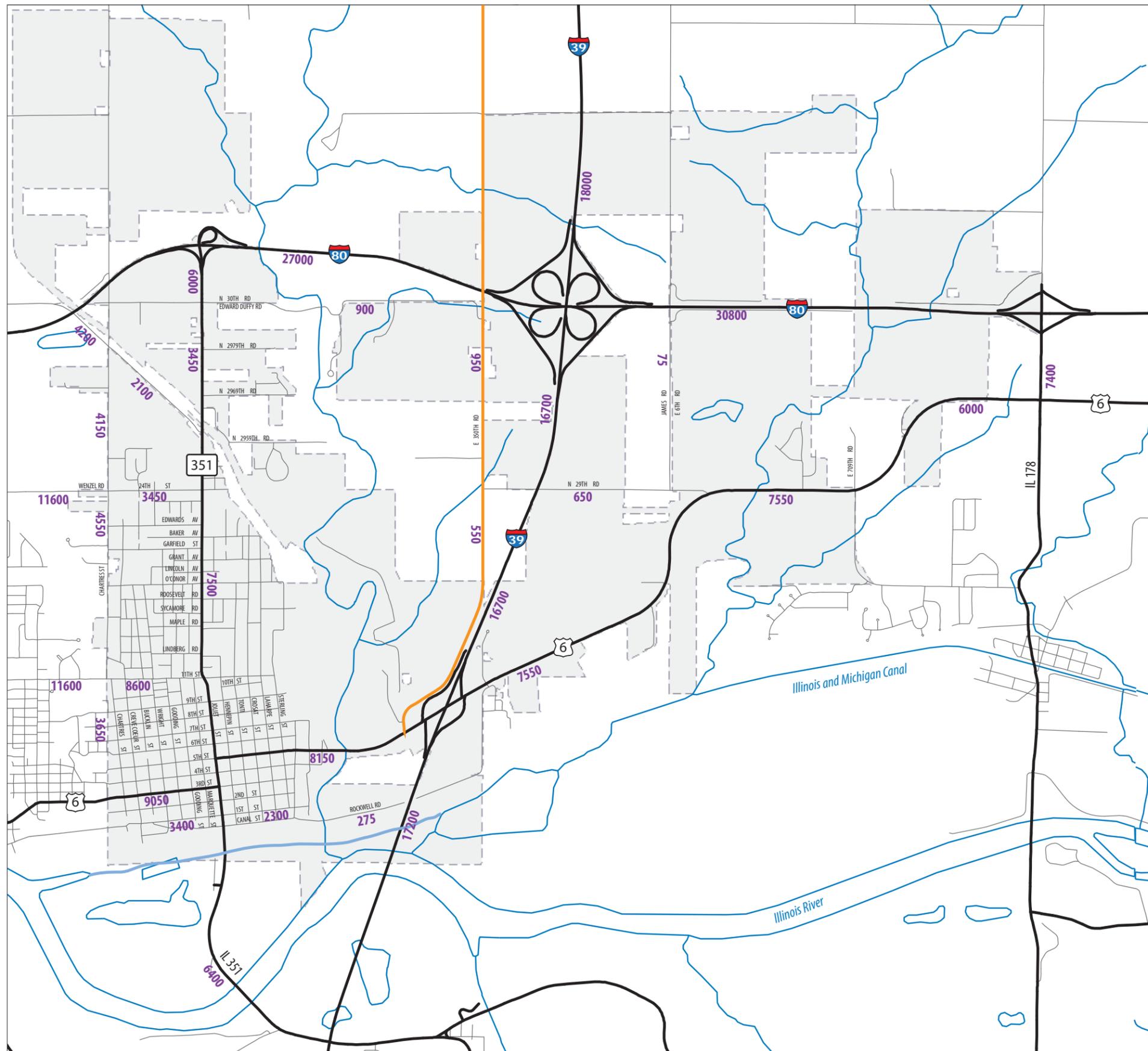




**Legend**

- LaSalle-Peru
- Chicago Urban Area
- Other Urban Areas
- Interstate
- Distance From LaSalle (miles)

Not To Scale



### Legend

- LaSalle Corporate Boundary
- Waterway
- Interstate Highway
- US Highway
- IL State Highway
- County Highway
- 6000** Average Daily Traffic

Not To Scale

County Highway 13}, and two highways under the jurisdiction of IDOT (U.S. Route 6 and IL 351).

Prior to the construction of Interstate 80, U.S. Route 6 was the primary east-west highway connecting LaSalle, Chicago, and the Quad Cities. In addition, U.S. Route 6 follows portions of Third, Fifth, and Joliet Streets through Downtown LaSalle. Historically, St. Vincent Avenue/Joliet Street (IL 351) was part of a primary north-south roadway over the Illinois River that connected LaSalle with Rockford and Bloomington/Normal. During the 1950s, Rock Street in Peru (IL 251) was extended over the Illinois River and this became the main north-south connection. During this time frame, the Peru Mall was constructed on Illinois Route 251 near Interstate 80. Several local stakeholders have commented that business was redirected to the mall, which had a negative impact on Downtown LaSalle economy. During the 1990s, Interstate 39 was completed, which then became the primary roadway for north-south travel. Both U.S. Route 6 and IL 351 continue to be main arterials, east-west and north-south respectively, through LaSalle and carry high volumes of traffic since they are important connections to the surrounding areas.

## Gateways

The primary automobile gateways into LaSalle are from the north (IL 351 at I-80), the east (U.S. 6 at I-39), and the south (IL 351/Joliet Street at the I & M Canal Bridge). Entry into LaSalle from the west occurs from U.S. Route 6 from Peru. The U.S. Route 6 gateway sign west of IL 178 was the only noted gateway sign along these routes. LaSalle has strategically placed the water towers so that travelers along Interstates 80 and 39 can see the community name on the towers. These are good means of informing the traveling public that they are approaching LaSalle.



Gateway signage on US Route 6 west of IL 178 (above), LaSalle water tower (below)

## Average Daily Traffic

Average daily traffic (ADT), see [Figure F in previous page](#) illustrates that most of the roads in LaSalle have low volumes of traffic. All of the roads carry less than 10,000 vehicles per day, which is typically accommodated on two-lane roads. Figure F also illustrates that U.S. 6 and IL 351 have the highest volumes of traffic and are the main roadways through LaSalle. In addition, Third Street or U.S. Route 6, east of Joliet St. has the highest volume of traffic in LaSalle, with an ADT of 9,050.

## Connectivity

From a roadway and land use connection perspective, LaSalle has two types of roadway patterns. LaSalle older sections, including its Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, has a traditional roadway grid that is easy to navigate and is beneficial to motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. These areas were platted with a traditional roadway grid that parallels the I & M Canal and Illinois River Valley. At Eleventh Street, the grid shifts to align to a true north-south axis. This traditional area of LaSalle has a well-connected roadway grid.

LaSalle has annexed an extensive amount of undeveloped land, which compared to the traditional areas, is not well connected with a roadway system. However, there does not appear to be capacity problem. That is, the current roadway network has a low volume of traffic and will not likely reach capacity problems within the near future. However, there are some connectivity issues that should be addressed as development occurs.

Interstate 80 is a barrier to north-south movement; however, as illustrated in [Figure G \(in foldout on following page\)](#), there are plenty of roadways across Interstate 80 to eliminate this as a significant barrier to north-south movement.

East-west movement is divided by waterways (Little Vermillion River and Pecumsagan Creek) and Interstate 39. Currently, U.S. Route 6 provides the most significant east-west roadway connector. Interstate 80 also provides east-west connectivity, but access to this interstate is limited to the IL 178 and IL 351 interchanges. Other minor east-west connectors are Edward Duffy/North 30th Road across the Little Vermillion in the northern part of LaSalle, and North to Ninth Road across Interstate 39. The traffic volume on these two roadways is currently light at 900 ADT and 650 ADT, respectively, and they could handle an increase in traffic.



Airport Road under Interstate 80 (above), East Sixth/James Road Bridge over Interstate 80 (below)

New development could affect roadway capacity and condition. For example, an industrial land use could add truck traffic to roadways that are not designed for the weight — roadways that may have to be rebuilt in the future. In addition, many of the rural roads have open drainage swales. Heavier truck traffic could cause a need to rebuild roads and installing storm sewers to address drainage. In another instance, commercial land use could also significantly increase traffic volumes that would require the need for traffic improvements. All new developments should consider roadway connections to adjoining land and the existing roadway network. The traffic impacts of new development should be reviewed on a development by development basis.





Rural roads within LaSalle

### Downtown Streets, Parking and River Access

LaSalle has a charming, historic Downtown district with traditional roadway grid network. First Street is LaSalle’s considered Downtown’s main commercial thoroughfare, traveling east-west and intersecting Joliet Street (IL 351) at the community’s center. First Street is a wide, two-lane street with angle parking from Bucklin Street to Crosat Street and wide sidewalks connecting seven blocks of storefronts.

The City’s original plat provided adequate room in the right of way for sidewalks, parking, and travel lanes for automobiles. The street has ample



First Street, Downtown LaSalle

width to accommodate pedestrians, parking and vehicles. The street has extra width that could be used to provide a landscaped median or increase the sidewalk width. Such features could be devoted to streetscape, landscape or additional pedestrian space.

Several stakeholders have stated that the supply of parking in the Downtown should be increased. The on-street parking is relatively well-utilized in Downtown, especially with a recent increase in commercial, retail and tourism activities. As Downtown development occurs and more people visit it, there will be greater demands for parking. However, there appears to be an ample amount of on-street parking to accommodate the immediate needs. Providing off-street parking adjoining buildings that are close to the front property line should be avoided. If parking becomes an issue, a more detailed parking study would be warranted.

In addition, several stakeholders also mentioned that LaSalle should improve access from the Downtown to the Illinois River bottom area. LaSalle traditionally developed because of its proximity to the Illinois River and terminus of the I & M Canal. This connection would help to remind people of the City’s history and to improve the recreational aspects of the I & M Canal and the Illinois River.

The Illinois River bottom includes the CSX railroad, Canal Street, and the East Side Waste Water Treatment Plant. Access is difficult due to the change in grade and limited roadway connections. There are only two roadway connections to Canal Street with Marquette Street as one-way southbound and then Canal Street connecting to First Street at the western end of the Downtown.



River Street Waste Water Treatment Plant

### Roadway Condition

The roads surfaces appear to be in good to fair condition. LaSalle has an ongoing program to resurface streets on an as-needed basis through milling and resurfacing with asphalt.

### Alleys

LaSalle's traditional roadway grid is complemented by a network of alleys which provide for trash collection and access to parking located in the rear of properties. Much of the community's original alley network was paved in brick which has been paved with asphalt in recent years. Several stakeholders have mentioned that there is a need to patch up alleys in some locations. This may be the case in some locations, but for the most part the alleys are in good condition.

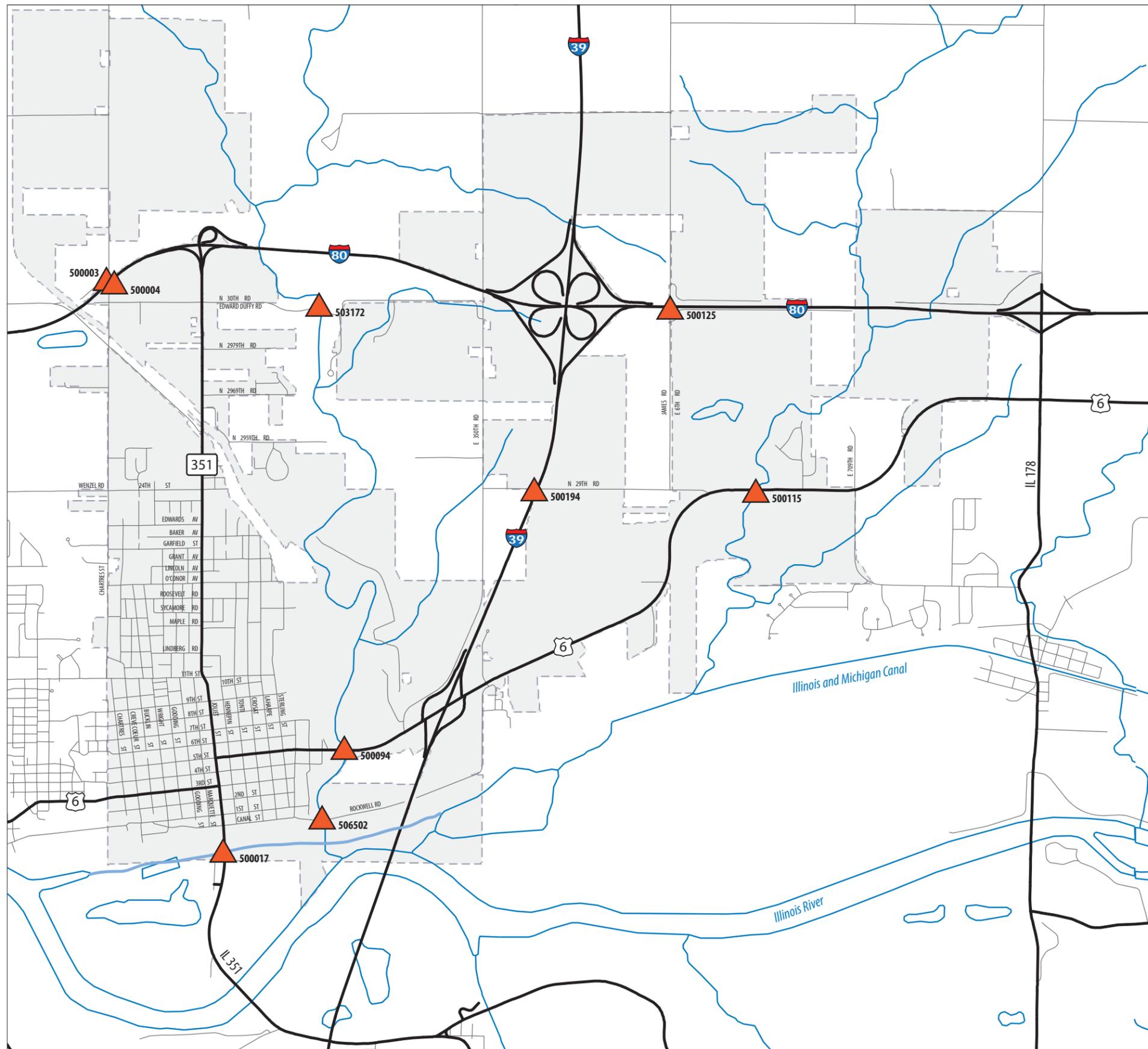


Existing alley

### Bridges

Bridges in LaSalle are reviewed for their sufficiency ratings by Illinois Department of Transportation. Bridges are routinely inspected and IDOT maintains a database of inspection reports. Each bridge is assigned a sufficiency rating which is expressed as a percent.

Table 15 on following page below shows inspection and sufficiency rating information for each bridge. With the exception of the Rockwell Road Bridge over the Little Vermillion River (sufficiency rating 28 percent), all other bridges are in a state of good repair. [Figure H in foldout on following page](#) shows the locations of the bridges.



### Legend

- LaSalle Corporate Boundary
- Waterway
- Interstate Highway
- US Highway
- IL State Highway
- Bridge Structure
- 500003** Structure Number

Not To Scale

Table 15: LaSalle Bridge Inspection Summary

Structure Number	Location	Inspected	Original Construction	Last Reconstructed	Sufficiency Rating	Jurisdiction
500003	I-80 (westbound) over East 3rd	1/10/2012	1961	1996	94%	IDOT
500004	I-80 (eastbound) over East 3rd	1/10/2012	1961	1996	94%	IDOT
500017	IL 351 over I&M Canal, CSX RR	3/26/2013	1953	2001	90%	IDOT
500094	US 6 over Little Vermillion River	2/25/2013	1966	2007	85%	IDOT
500115	US 6 over Pecumsagan Creek	2/5/2013	1954	NA	76%	IDOT
500125	E 6th Road over I-80	2/25/2013	1961	NA	96%	IDOT
500194	N 29th Road over I-39 / US 51	1/30/2012	1985	NA	98%	IDOT
503172	N 30th Street over Little Vermillion River	3/15/2012	1965	2008	82%	Township
506502	Rockwell Road over Little Vermillion River	8/16/2011	1940	2010	28%	LaSalle

Source: IDOT Bridge Information, 2013.

### Aviation

The Illinois Valley Regional Airport - Walter A. Duncan Field is a general aviation (GA) airport located northwest of Peru at Plank Road and Interstate 80. The airport has two lighted, paved runways and accommodates business jets and Global Express aircraft. The fixed base operator (FBO) for Illinois Valley Regional Airport is Midwest Avtech.

### Bicycle

The I & M Canal Trail provides a high-quality bicycle recreation facility along the I & M Canal in LaSalle. Formerly a tow path until the canal closed in 1933, the trail stretches from the locks of the canal east to Ottawa and on to Joliet. The I & M Canal Trail is part of the Grand Illinois Trail, which consists of a network of trails linking Lake Michigan with the Mississippi River.

Aside from the canal trail, there are no facilities designated explicitly for bicycles in LaSalle. Posted speeds and traffic volumes are low in much of LaSalle, resulting in low levels of traffic stress for a majority of community's roadway grid. However, high stress roadways present barriers to a connected roadway network for bicyclists and limit overall connectivity.

The Grand Illinois Trail (GIT), sponsored by the Illinois DNR, travels through LaSalle. The Trail is a 500-mile system of bicycle trails and routes that cross northern Illinois from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River. The I & M Canal Trail is included in the GIT, and as per the trail users' guide, the GIT travels on street through LaSalle as follows:

- I & M Canal Trail to Lock 14 parking lot
- Southeast on access road to IL 351
- North over bridge into LaSalle
- West of First Street/Canal Street/Water Street (in Peru)

A trail study is currently underway to identify possible bicycle connections from the I & M Canal Trail to LaSalle Rotary and Prairie Parks, which has the potential to expand the reach of recreational trail bicycling in LaSalle, as well as expand bicycling as an additional mode of transportation for trips in and around the community.

### **Pedestrian Network**

Sidewalks are prevalent throughout most of the traditional part of LaSalle, west of the Little Vermillion River and south of Eleventh Street. This includes concrete sidewalks and brick sidewalks, many of which are as old as the City itself. North of Eleventh Street, a few local streets lack sidewalks.

The brick sidewalks add an interesting issue for future consideration. Does the City desire to preserve the brick sidewalks? They provide a unique



Existing brick sidewalks (above), deteriorating sidewalk (below)

charm and character that could make LaSalle distinctive from other municipalities. The brick sidewalks could build on LaSalle's character and help to promote the City's effort to create a unique identity. In many places, the sidewalk has been removed and not replaced or reconstructed in the traditional manner using concrete. The areas without sidewalks leave a question as to whether they should be restored with new brick sidewalks or concrete.

The City has demonstrated commitment to improving the pedestrian environment. Crosswalks generally are marked on major roads at stop signs or signalized intersections. Pedestrian signals are



ADA sidewalk ramps

provided for crosswalks at signalized intersections, and some signals include countdown clocks. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant sidewalk ramps have been provided at many locations and several intersections in the Downtown have been designed to include bump outs, which are extensions of the sidewalk that reduce the width of the road, frame on-street parking, and shorten crosswalk lengths to improve pedestrian accommodations.

The grid network and short blocks provide for a transportation network that is beneficial to pedestrians and provides an environment that supports walking. However, many parts of the traditional core neighborhoods do not have sidewalks {photo captions – lack of sidewalks}. Given the traditional nature of the traditional roadway grid, pedestrian network improvements are needed.

### Railroads

CSX Transportation owns and operates freight rail service between Chicago and Utica, Illinois. The Iowa and Interstate Railroad (IAIS) owns and operates service between Omaha to Bureau, Illinois. Lease arrangements are in place between CSX, IAIS, and other railroads in LaSalle and Peru.

### Transit

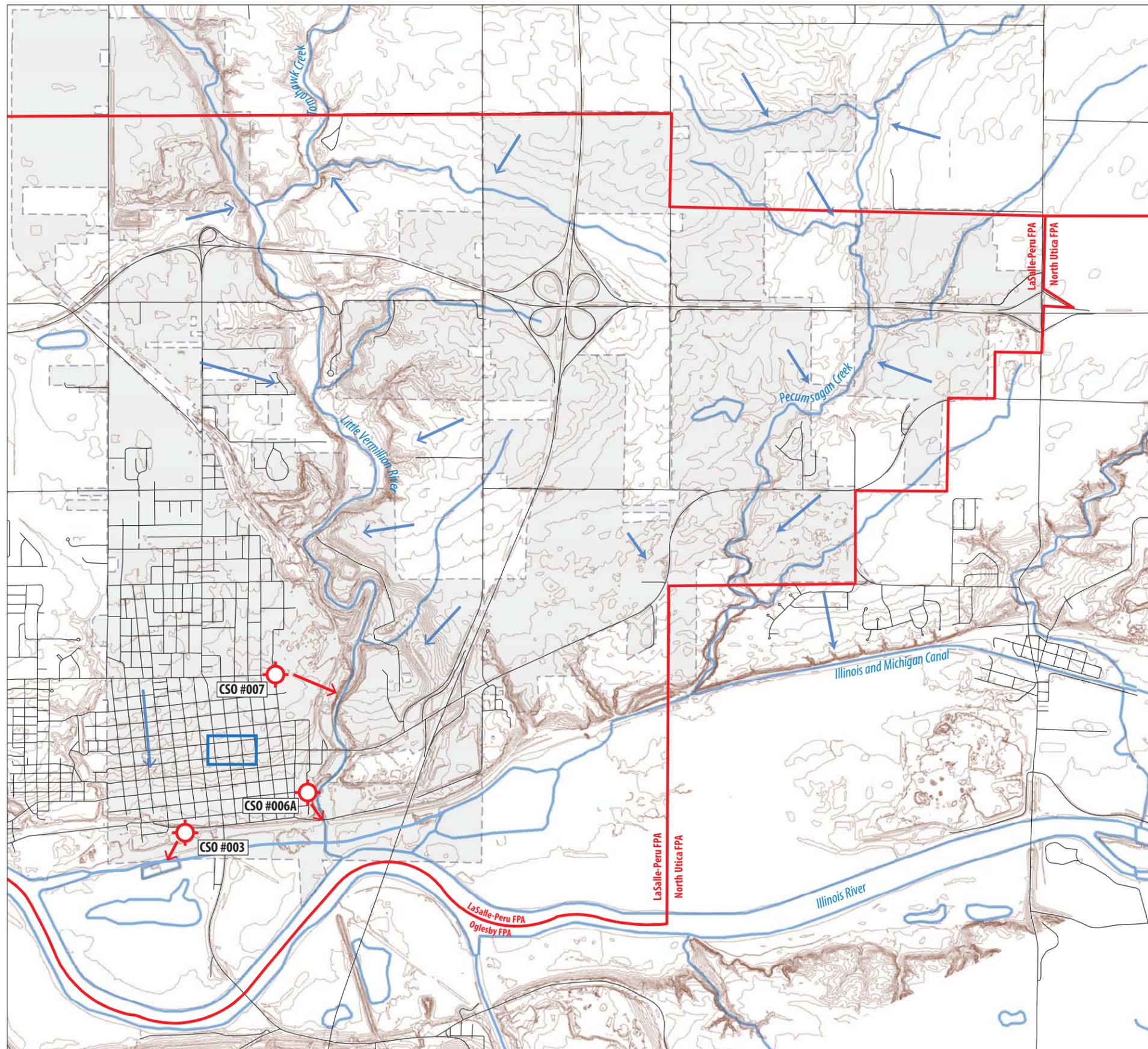
There are several agencies in the vicinity of LaSalle that offer varying types of transit service. Peru City Bus offers transit service in Peru and LaSalle. Peru City Bus offers Peru service on Tuesdays and Fridays, LaSalle service on Mondays and Thursdays. The bus company operates on a call-ahead format and offers accessible transportation service. North Central Area Transit (NCAT) is operated out of the city of Ottawa and serves on a limited basis the cities of Ottawa and Oglesby. Currently, this program is small, primarily serving Illinois Valley Community College and area hospitals, but is expected to grow as buses are acquired for the program.

LaSalle Township operates transit service in LaSalle on a call-ahead basis and the Illinois Valley Community Hospital offers transportation services for patients traveling to and from hospital appointments. Illinois Valley City Cab, based in LaSalle, offers call-ahead, for-hire cab service in and around LaSalle.

### Storm Water Management

The City of LaSalle manages storm water through a storm sewer network that discharges into the Little Vermillion River and Illinois River. [Figure I in foldout on following page](#) shows the general drainage areas defined by the Little Vermillion River and Pecumsagan Creek watersheds.

The traditional part of LaSalle uses combined sewers, which were constructed to accommodate storm water runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial waste water in a single sewer network. The combined sewer system transports storm and waste water to the city's waste water treatment plant to be treated prior to being discharged into nearby rivers. These types of systems were common historically in



**Legend**

- LaSalle-Peru Facility Planning Area (FPA) Boundary
- LaSalle Corporate Boundary
- 10-foot Elevation Contour
- ~ Waterway
- Flow Direction (General)
- ⊙ Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO)
- CSO Discharge into River Overflow Events

Not To Scale

many older communities. However, during periods of heavy rainfall, combined sewer systems may exceed the capacity of waste water treatment plants to treat all of the water, resulting in a combined sewer overflow (CSO) that is discharged into nearby rivers without being treated. The locations where CSOs discharge into water bodies during storm events are monitored by the City.

As newer areas are built in LaSalle, they are provided with separated sanitary and storm sewers. The sanitary sewers carry the domestic and industrial sewage to waste water treatment facilities prior to discharge to the Little Vermillion River or the Illinois River. The storm sewers carry storm water to the waterways, including the Little Vermillion River, Pecumsagan Creek and Illinois River. However, new development can cause storm water to flow faster and in greater quantities to the waterways. Measures to control the amount and rate of storm water discharge from new development are needed to prevent downstream flooding. As CSO is no longer an acceptable method for managing storm water, the City has been working to separate storm and sanitary sewer networks to completely eliminate CSO events. Future development will create additional impervious surfaces that will increase storm water run-off and create a challenge for mitigating flood damages associated with excess stormwater run-off.

## Waste Water Treatment

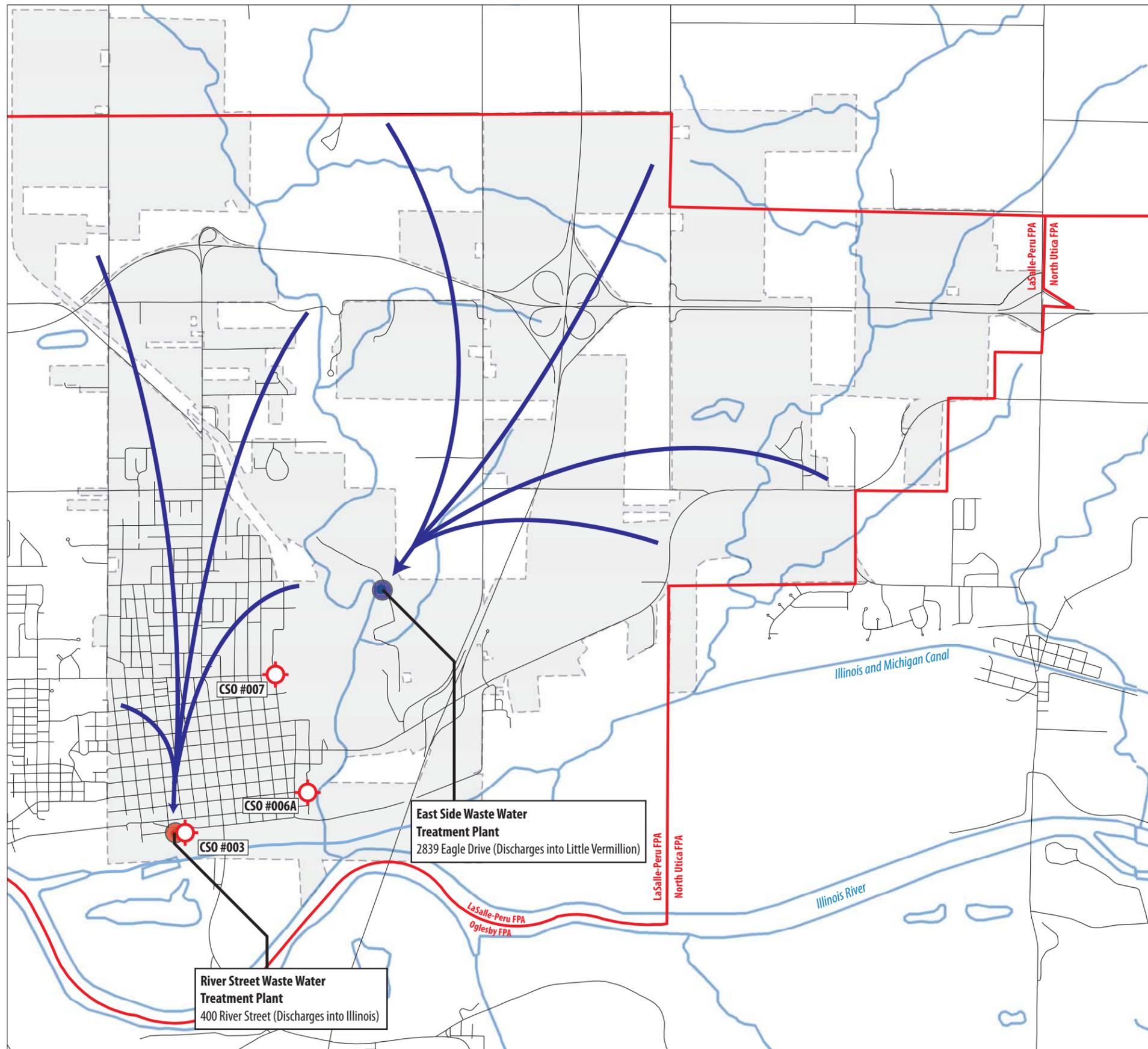
The city operates two waste water treatment plants (WWTP). The older plant, located at 400 River Street, handles nearly all of the waste water treatment needs of the City with an average daily operation of 3.3 million gallons per day (MGD). During heavy rainfall events, the traditional older parts of LaSalle generate discharge rates as high as 9.0 MGD and have resulted in CSO events on

multiple occasions. [Figure J in foldout on following page](#) shows the locations of WWTP in LaSalle and the location CSOs. The City has been working on efforts to separate sewers in the traditional part of the City. A study is currently underway to mitigate CSOs. The River Street WWTP would operate more efficiently and may free up additional treatment capacity once storm and sanitary sewer networks are separated and storm sewer runoff is not directed through the WWTP.

To accommodate future growth in the eastern part of LaSalle, the City of LaSalle recently constructed the East Side WWTP located at 2839 Eagle Drive. The East Side WWTP opened in 2009 and was constructed with an outfall to the Little Vermillion River. Its current average daily operations are 0.5 MGD.

Figure J also shows the boundaries of the LaSalle Peru Facility Planning Area (FPA). The FPA has been approved by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). The FPA illustrates the limits of the area that can be served by the LaSalle WWTP. As shown on the Figure, the areas beyond the LaSalle-Peru FPA are or will be served by other Facility Planning Areas.

According to the Facility Planning Report prepared for the City, the East Side WWTP is projected to expand in size over several phases as growth occurs. Build out capacity of the East Side WWTP is projected at 6.4 MGD expanding in phases to keep pace with development that is projected for LaSalle's growth area on the east side of the City. Table 16 below shows the current and future design flows for each WWTP in LaSalle.



**Legend**

- LaSalle-Peru Facility Planning Area (FPA) Boundary
- LaSalle Corporate Boundary
- ~ Waterway
- ➔ General Sanitary Sewer Flow
- ⊙ Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO)

Not To Scale ↑

Table 16 - Waste Water Treatment Design Flows			
	River Street	East Side	
Design Flow*	Current	Current	Future
Average	3.3	0.5	4.
Maximum	9.0	1.6	6.4
*Million gallons per day (MGD)			

In estimating future capacity for the East Side WWTP, the following land use forecast was used as shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Land Use Forecasts for East Side WWTP		
Land Use	Acres	Square Miles
Commercial	957	1.5
Industrial	1,075	1.7
Single Family Residential	1,420	2.2
Multiple Family Residential	158	0.2
Park Area	428	0.7
Total Developed Acres	4,038	6.3

The above forecasts were used to prepare estimate of development potential for sizing the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The actual future development may be different from the forecast. The table illustrates that LaSalle has planned for future growth and capacity in the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The total incorporated area of LaSalle is 11.8 square miles. Approximately 5.5 square miles (47 percent) of this incorporated land area is served by the River Street WWTP. The remaining 6.3 square miles (53 percent) will be served by the East Side Waste Water Treatment Plant.

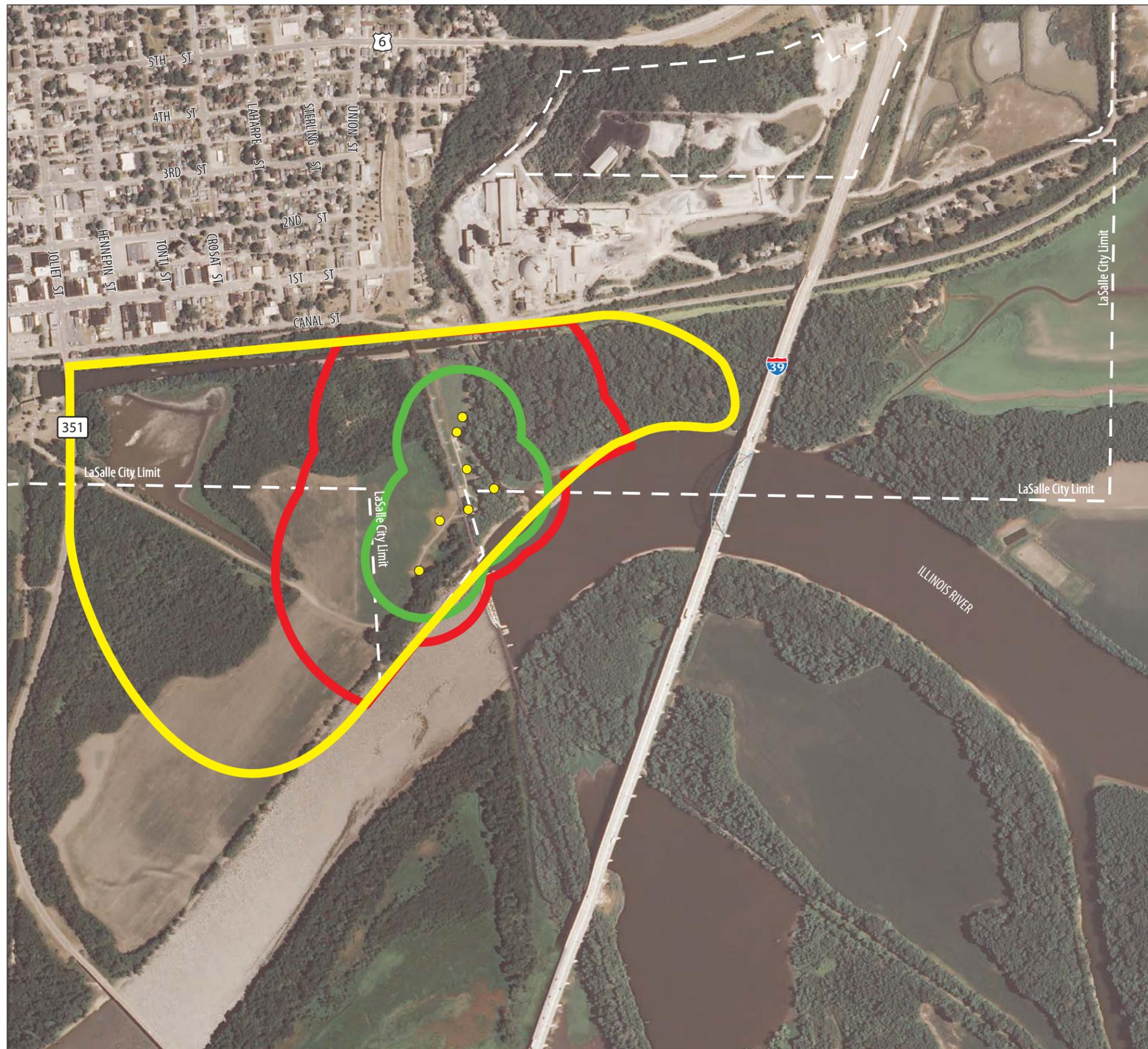
## Waterways

LaSalle was historically a city of waterway transportation. Located at the end of the navigable portion of the Illinois River prior to the construction of the I & M Canal, LaSalle was an intermodal hub for goods traveling between the Illinois River, I & M Canal and the City of Chicago. The I & M Canal, formerly a major provider of transportation between Chicago and the Mississippi River, was closed to navigation in 1933 after the Illinois Waterway opened nearby at the Starved Rock Lock and Dam nearby in Utica, Illinois. Currently, the I & M Canal is maintained as a recreational facility and the adjacent tow path has been converted to a recreational trail (see Bicycle Facilities). The I & M Canal crosses the Little Vermillion River in an aqueduct at Rockwell Street.

LaSalle is situated on the north bank of the Illinois River. The Little Vermillion River flows through LaSalle and Peru and drains into the Illinois River. It is rated in fair condition by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and contains the only Class IV rapids on a river within the State of Illinois. Much of the incorporated but undeveloped land within LaSalle is located east of the Little Vermillion River, indicating that water quality should be a factor in the future growth of LaSalle.

## Wells and Water Supply

Figure K `in foldout on following page shows the location of the seven active wells that supply municipal water for LaSalle. The wells are at the southern end of LaSalle’s corporate limits and are in the floodplain. The 1987 Illinois Groundwater Protection Act (415 ILCS 55) establishes areas near public wells where development activity or waste have the potential to contaminate the groundwater supply. As a result, municipalities such as LaSalle



**Legend**

-  Waterway
-  Well
-  Minimum Setback Zone (400')
-  1000' Setback Zone
-  5-Year Aquifer Recharge Area

Not To Scale 

are required to conduct a groundwater needs assessment and establish adequate protection zones to restrict development activity for the purposes of protecting groundwater.

LaSalle is empowered by the Groundwater Protection Act to establish a maximum 1,000' protection zone around all municipal wells. Figure L shows the location of this zone as well as the minimum required setback zone (400') and the 5-year recharge area, a zone that indicates a critical area that can impact the quality of groundwater drawn from wells over a five-year period.

Given that the wells are subject to flooding, there is a threat that flood waters could contaminate the wells and harm LaSalle's water supply. A study currently is underway to address this potential problem. One option that was suggested was to develop another well on higher ground above the Illinois River Floodplain. Another option would be consider agreements with adjacent municipalities that would allow interconnected water lines and shared use of water supply. Another alternative would be to allow the interconnected water lines, but permit the shared use of water during an emergency.



## Section 6

# Issues and Opportunities

The following are key conclusions regarding the existing land use, economic, transportation and infrastructure conditions in LaSalle. Moving forward in the planning process, these key findings should help to shape and inform the community’s vision, goals and objectives, and ultimate recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Regional Context.** LaSalle is very well situated from a regional transportation standpoint and has good access to interstates, which also provide access to other metropolitan areas.

**Downtown LaSalle.** Downtown LaSalle remains the commercial, civic and social center of the City and efforts to improve its economic vitality and diversity have gained momentum in recent years. However, façade and storefront improvements and the re-use of vacant and underutilized buildings are key revitalization issues that need on-going, sustained efforts to address. First Street in Downtown LaSalle is a charming “Main Street” with unique character; its roadway also has extra width that could be used to increase pedestrian space. Other urban design improvements could also enhance Downtown’s sense of place. Overall, a historic preservation-based revitalization approach that capitalizes on the Downtown’s existing built assets and proximity to the I & M Canal should be considered and pursued.

**Traditional Neighborhoods.** LaSalle’s older, traditional neighborhoods were observed to be in mostly good condition, although the housing stock near and around the Downtown and some areas below Eleventh Street show signs of deterioration. Stakeholders have commented that a number of single-family homes are being rented or converted to multiple units. The City has also taken steps to establish a rental inspection program and buy problem properties for demolition; in turn, there appears to be little or no active efforts or initiatives at the local and regional levels to improve neighborhood housing conditions, whether through housing



rehabilitation or infill development programs apart from Habitat for Humanity projects. There also appears to be no efforts in promoting the preservation of architecturally and historically significant residential properties within the neighborhoods.

**Tourism.** Like its neighboring communities in the Upper Illinois Valley, LaSalle benefits from its location within the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway, and among several state parks. LaSalle could potentially capture more of the regional tourism market if there were sustained, long-term efforts at revitalizing Downtown, encouraging bed and breakfast operations, and improving access from the Downtown to the Illinois River Bottom area, which was suggested by several stakeholders. The steep change in grade makes this complicated but providing some access from Downtown directly to Lock 16 has merit and should be pursued.

**Zoning Code and Map.** The existing zoning code has significant gaps in lot size and coverage requirements, especially in its commercial zoning districts, and there are a number of permitted uses in each of the zoning classifications that should be reviewed for the types and land uses they should or should not allow. In addition, there are very minimal requirements for building and site appearance, and landscaping and buffering between different land uses. Alternatively, there is also a lack of flexibility in the zoning code that could allow for groupings of similar land uses to take place under a unified development process. Flexibility can be achieved through planned unit development processes, conservation subdivisions or other zoning overlay types. Overall, the zoning code should be subject to a general revision in order to help achieve more far-reaching comprehensive planning goals for the community.

**Community Facilities and Recreational Activities.**

The City is home to a number of excellent community facilities including religious institutions and schools. There may be a need to add a new fires station if development continues in areas east of the Little Vermilion River. Rotary and Prairie Parks have the potential to be a valuable recreational assets although their programming and operational finances still need to be determined. In addition, there are a number of other parks and natural areas that are in close proximity to City — finding ways to improve walkability and connection between some of these resources are being pursued. Other needed community facility improvements include a new public works building and the possible rehabilitation and modernization of City Hall.

**Roadway Capacity and Land Use.** It is assumed that any commercial development that would generate large traffic volumes would be restricted to areas near the interstate interchanges. However, industrial development could potentially impact the rural roadways and therefore, the truck routes should be examined for potential roadway impact. Residential developments over 40 units should be reviewed for the amount of traffic that will be generated on the roadway network.

**Roadway Condition and Connectivity.** Roads generally appear to be maintained in good condition. However, the newer parts of LaSalle have rural roads that are not well connected. Although these roads have low volumes of traffic, which will probably not increase dramatically in the near future, new development resulting in significant truck traffic could have a deteriorating affect on roadway conditions. The traditional areas of LaSalle have an effective roadway grid that disperses traffic without causing congestion on any one roadway.

**Industrial Growth and Development.** A significant amount of land zoned for industrial has been annexed to the City in recent years. It is unclear if all of that land will be absorbed for new industries.

Office and distribution facilities should be considered as permitted uses in M-1 districts to encourage the creation of modern, high-quality business parks rather than scattered industrial sites. Distribution facilities, however, should be limited to locations that have good highway access and that will not encourage truck traffic in or adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Historically, heavy industrial were often located adjacent to residential districts, which may have had negative impacts on those neighborhoods. Since light-industrial uses/zones are often adjacent to residential areas, the uses allowed should be reviewed to reduce land-use conflicts involving noise, emissions, and potential environmental impacts.

**Capital Improvement Plan.** The City of LaSalle does not currently prepare an annual capital improvement plan. Preparing annual plans should be a high priority.

**Bridges.** The Rockwell Road Bridge over the Little Vermillion River has a low sufficiency rating from IDOT and will require future improvements. This project should be incorporated in the capital improvements plan.

**Sidewalks and Bicycle Improvements.**

Sidewalks are missing in parts of the traditional neighborhoods. Some streets have adjoining brick sidewalks which add to LaSalle's unique charm and character. An overall plan for pedestrian improvements as part of the community's capital improvements plan should be considered. In addition, the Grand Illinois Trail passes through

LaSalle, but signs and directional information is lacking. It would be useful to provide signage and wayfinding for the route. The City is also preparing a plan to connect the Grand Illinois Trail with Rotary Park.

**Gateways.** LaSalle has strategically painted its water towers to announce to interstate travelers that they are approaching LaSalle. Additional gateway work could be installed at the other main roadways into the City as part of an overall community and wayfinding and urban design enhancements.

**Stormwater Management.** As the east side area develops along the U.S. Route 6 corridor, there will be greater storm water runoff scenarios that can create downstream flooding. An examination of storm water controls and management should be undertaken by the City in the near future.

**Water Supply and Capacity.** LaSalle's water supply is taken from wells in the Illinois River floodplain. Flooding has threatened the closure of the wells, but this has yet to occur. Still, LaSalle needs to consider the possibility and a study currently is underway to develop an alternative should this happen. Additionally, much of the traditional neighborhoods and the Downtown are on combined sewers. The River Street WWTF can become overloaded during storm events. The City has undertaken several steps to correct this problem and a study currently is underway to investigate alternatives.

