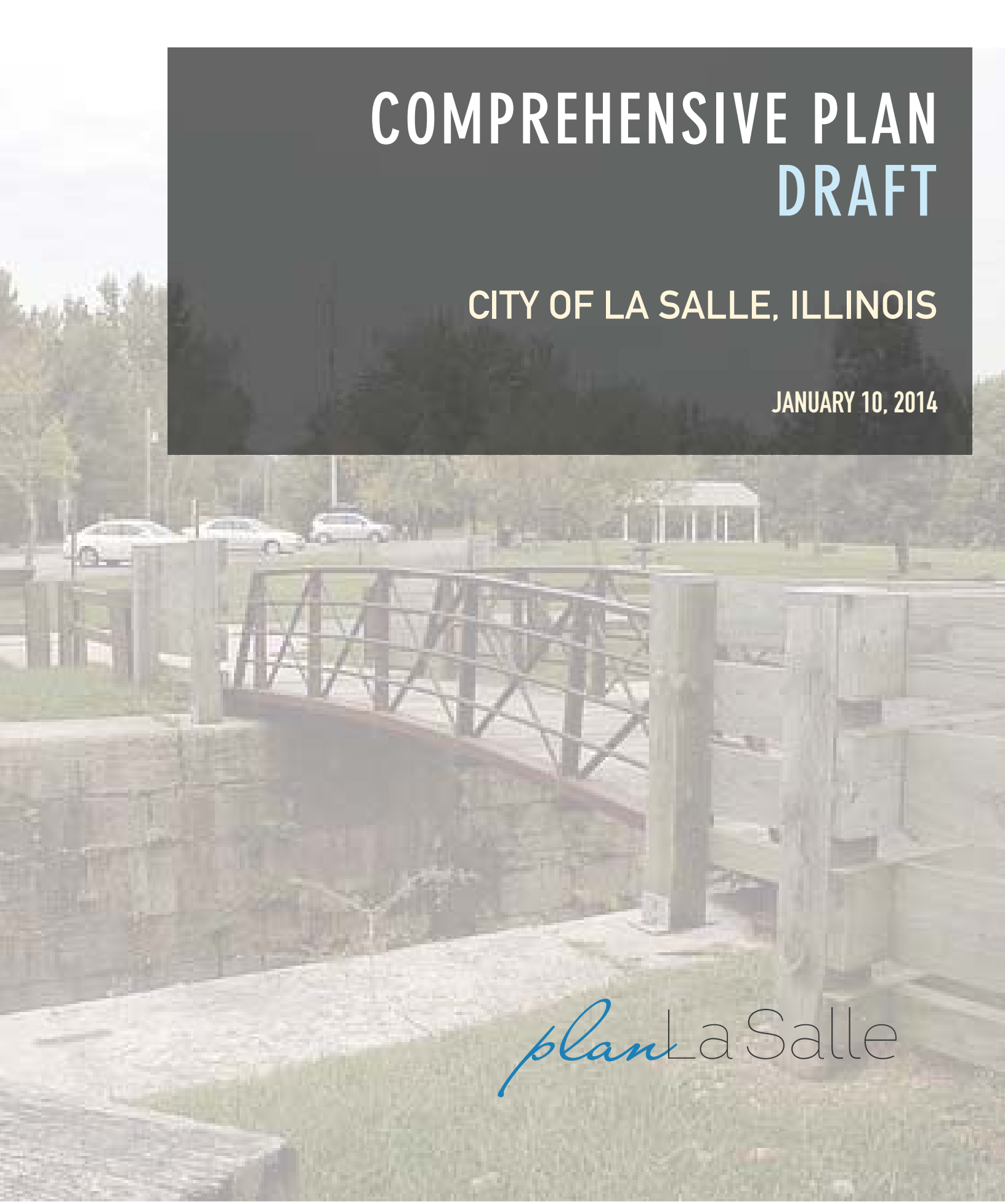
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
DRAFT

CITY OF LA SALLE, ILLINOIS

JANUARY 10, 2014



plan La Salle

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City of La Salle Comprehensive Plan

planLaSalle

Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

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Section 1
Introduction

What is a Comprehensive Plan

The La Salle 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 10 to 20 years, although the Plan should be reviewed and updated every five years to address local needs, issues 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 La Salle is today in terms of its existing population, transportation and infrastructure needs, flood mitigation efforts and other conditions related to its commercial, residential and industrial areas.

- *Development Framework*. The Plan provides a foundation for understanding the types of development and revitalization initiatives that should take place over time within the City. The Plan sets forth broad development and revitalization strategies 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, other capital improvements. 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 La Salle can use the Comprehensive Plan to gain insight into the City's development policies. Such investors also view sound comprehensive 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, stakeholders and residents to understand and evaluate community strengths and weaknesses, and to craft strategies and recommendations for addressing critical planning issues. Future planning efforts for La Salle's residential, commercial, and industrial areas as recommended in this Comprehensive Plan will also provide additional opportunities to engage La Salle stakeholders on important development and revitalization 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 determining La Salle'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 La Salle 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 La Salle, 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 Comprehensive Plan 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 La Salle 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 La Salle's long-term future, the Comprehensive Plan also seeks to understand current conditions and propose strategies and recommendations for the following Comprehensive Plan elements:

- *Land Use*. Evaluate existing community land uses and identify specific issues, constraints and opportunities to encouraging appropriate land use patterns and development within and near La Salle's corporate boundaries.
- *Transportation Systems*. Document and analyze La Salle'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.
- I*nfrastructure and Capital Improvements*. Conduct an assessment of the City's sanitary, public utilities and stormwater management systems, and consider

Hegeler-Carus Mansion, photo courtesy of Wikipedia Commons

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 residential neighborhoods and the existing housing stock in order to determine appropriate planning strategies that address local housing needs through new construction, housing rehabilitation and infill development.

- *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 La Salle as a basis for establishing recommendations regarding future land use and economic development scenarios.

- *Parks and Open Space*. Identify, protect and enhance La Salle'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 La Salle and existing agencies, organizations and entities, and identifies other stakeholders and groups that could participate in implementation efforts now and into the future.

Downtown La Salle, circa 1910s, photo courtesy of Wikipedia Commons

- *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 La Salle'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 demographics and economic development activities and, defined challenges and opportunities on achieving short and long-term planning and revitalization goals.

Phase 1 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." The Report was subsequently reviewed by the Steering Committee with final draft delivered to the City of La Salle in early October 2013.

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 La Salle 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 the 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.

- *Previous Plans/Studies*. A review of previous comprehensive plans, planning reports, facility studies, demographics, and local development regulations was conducted by the Planning Team. These reports and studies are summarized in Section 2.

- *Team Fieldwork*. The Planning Team visited La Salle 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 La Salle's key strengths, challenges, and opportunities for its long-term development and revitalization.

- *Steering Committee Meeting*. The Planning Team met with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to review the contents of the State of the City Report and to consider potential community planning goals and objectives.

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 La Salle'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 La Salle 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 La Salle Community

Regional Context

The City of La Salle 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 La Salle County to the north. La Salle is one of 32 incorporated municipalities in La Salle 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, La Salle is located between several large cities and metropolitan areas, including Rock Island and Moline of the Quad Cities metropolitan area (82 miles), Rockford (72 miles), Bloomington-Normal (63 miles), DeKalb (50), Joliet (55 miles), Aurora (70 miles), Peoria (64 miles), and Chicago (94 miles). La Salle 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 La Salle-Peru *(See Figure A in foldout)*.

La Salle is an established community incorporated in 1852 with a current population of 9,600. The overall population of La Salle 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, La Salle 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 La Salle's industrial sector as it became a center for mining, raw material processing, and brick manufacturing.

Downtown La Salle, photo courtesy of City of La Salle

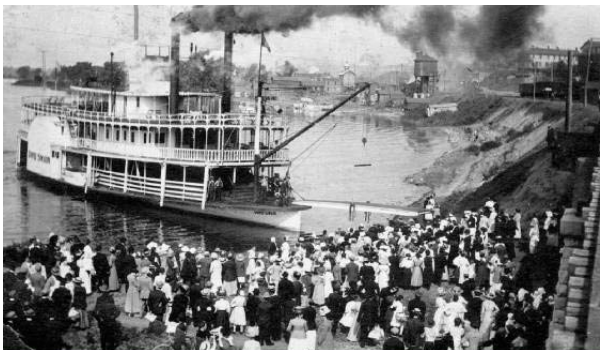
In recent decades, as with many industrial communities, La Salle has experienced some decline in jobs and population as manufacturing has declined in the region and in other parts of the country. Despite these trends, La Salle has remained a significant center for industry and manufacturing in the Illinois 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 La Salle's eastern and western boundaries along the U.S. Route 6 and Interstate 80 corridors 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 Trial, 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 La Salle's historic Downtown commercial district.

Historic Context

The City of La Salle is named after Rene-Robert Cavalier Sieur de La Salle, 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 Jolliet 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 Kaskaskia 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 La Salle 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 La Salle 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 La Salle 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 La Salle, 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.

La Salle, 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 La Salle's development



Steamboat basin at Lock 15, photo courtesy of Wikipedia Commons

pattern between Second and Ninth Streets date from the Commission town plat. Several streets in La Salle 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, La Salle quickly developed as a transportation hub. The Illinois Central, Rock Island, La Salle and Bureau County, and the Chicago Quincy and Burlington railroads all constructed main trunk lines through La Salle, 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 La Salle 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 La Salle continued to grow and prosper as its traditional neighborhoods were largely built out with a range of Queen Anne and Folk Victorian-styled homes. La Salle'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 (current building 1851) and 1874 respectively.

The La Salle 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

St. Hyacinth Church, photo courtesy of Wikipedia Commons

La Salle-Peru Township High School

Kaskaskia Hotel postcard

Ward School, and at Eighth and Tonti Streets, which was known as the Finkler School. La Salle-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, La Salle 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.

In the late 20th century, La Salle'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, La Salle 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 La Salle community to participate in regional efforts to promote heritage and recreational tourism and capitalize on La Salle's unique location and history within the upper Illinois River valley.

Governance Structure

La Salle 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 La Salle Business Association, and the Illinois Municipal League.

Previous Plans and Studies

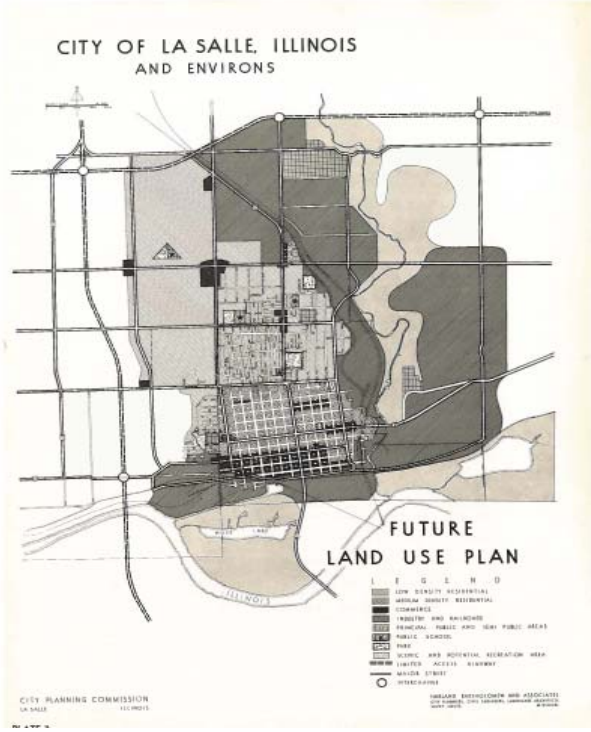
The following is a summary of previous plans, reports, and documents that were reviewed as part of the Comprehensive Plan process. It appears that the last Comprehensive Plan adopted by the City of La Salle was in 1969 although supplementary planning studies have been undertaken in more recent years.

!957 Comprehensive Plan

In 1957, the planning firm of Harland Bartholomew and Associates from St. Louis, Missouri was engaged by the City of La Salle 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."*[1] 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 Vermilion River

[1] *A Plan for the Future Development of La Salle*, Illinois. Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1957, p. 1.



Land Use Plan from 1958 Comprehensive Plan

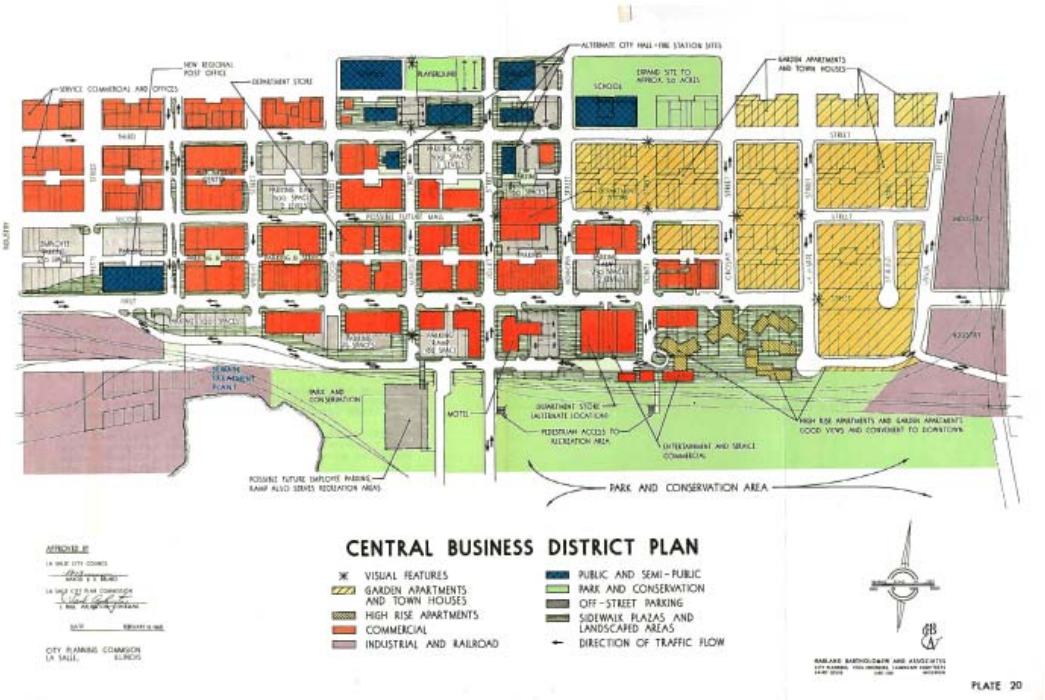
valley. Much of these land use recommendations, however, were based on a future population projection of 15,000 people. A number of sketches and diagrams were provided to illustrate the principles of subdivision design and layout.

1968 Comprehensive Plan

In 1967, Harland Bartholomew and Associates was again retained by the City of La Salle 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 Harpe 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 La Salle'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 Vermilion River valley and Interstate 39 north of the U.S. Route 6 corridor. 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 (IL DNR) 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 and Studies

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

2008 La Salle County Comprehensive Plan

The creation of the 2008 La Salle 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 La Salle County communities. The County is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan.

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 La Salle. The Management Plan, developed 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.*"[2] 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 initiates 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

[2] *Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor Management Plan*. Canal Corridor Association. 2001. Introduction, pages 1-3.

Lock 16 Visitors Center, Canal Corridor Association

specific Alliance activities and initiatives. The Canal Corridor Associations headquarter offices are currently located in Downtown La Salle.

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 La Salle 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."*[3]

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.

[3] *Illinois River Road Corridor Management Plan*. Illinois River Road: Steering Committee and Corridor Communities. 2005. Page 3.

The Plan also seek to facilitate local economic 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 La Salle includes the I & M Canal and the Hegeler-Carus Mansion.

2013 Water System Needs Analysis

A comprehensive assessment and analysis of needed improvements to the City's water delivery system was completed in 2013. The analysis identified several improvements in order to provide water reliably to residents and commercial and industrial users through a 20-year demand period. The analysis has concluded that significant future water demand will mainly come from industrial users and that improvements to the existing water treatment facility, the Ninth Street Booster Station, and the City's well field and water tank are needed to maintain an efficient water delivery system. An estimate of probable costs for posed water system upgrades are also included in the analysis.

Tax Increment Financing Districts

The City of La Salle 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 La Salle Industrial Park TIF near the intersection of the Interstates 80 and IL Route 178, and the Interstate 80/IL Route 351 TIF. *(See Figure B in foldout)* Existing fund balances for each TIF district are summarized below.

Table 1: TIF District Fund Balances (City FY 2011 -2012)

TIF #1: Senica's Oak Ridge Golf Course	$875,836
TIF #2: Interstate 80/IL Route 351	$913,825
TIF #3: J.C. Whitney Industrial Park	$239,980
TIF #4: Vermilionvue/Country Aire	$1,503
TIF #5: Downtown TIF	$1,605
TIF #6: Frontier Lodge and Water Park	$15,521
TIF #7: Industrial Park	$910

Tax-Increment Financing revenues are mostly used for bond payments underwriting various infrastructure improvements within the districts, payments through intergovernmental agreements to other local taxing bodies, and other professional fees and legal expenses.

Enterprise Zone

The City of La Salle is currently part of the Illinois Valley Area Enterprise Zone, which is designed to help stimulate economic development through state and local tax incentives, regulatory relief, and improved governmental services. The Zone is administered by the North Central Illinois Council of Governments (NCICG) and comprises La Salle and the neighboring communities of Peru, Oglesby, North Utica, as well as other surrounding areas in La Salle County.

The Zone 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 La Salle 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.

According to IL DCEO, in 2011, the Illinois Valley Area Enterprise Zone generated more the $8.6 million in private investment and created 80 new full-time jobs. In 2010, the Zone generated $25 million in private investment and created 178 full-time jobs.

The community's proximity and location to Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks, the I & M Canal Trial, 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 La Salle's historic Downtown commercial district.

Section 3
Land Use and Existing Conditions

The section describes the existing land use (see Figure C, Land Use Map, in foldout) and development conditions within La Salle 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

La Salle's residential areas comprise approximately 1,112 acres of land, which represents 15.18 percent of La Salle's total land area.

Single-Family Residential

La Salle'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'Conor Avenue are generally of more recent construction with many mid-century Ranch homes interspersed with homes built over

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

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 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 the led the City to enact a rental inspection program, and to purchase and demolish more problematic properties.

As mentioned previously, newer residential development has occurred along U.S. Route 6 where the Senica's Oak Ridge Golf Club subdivisions and the Golfview subdivision north of Route 6 are located. Other subdivisions include the Vermilionvue, located along North 2959th Road and the Country Aire subdivision at 2969th Road. All four subdivisions have been developed over the last 20 years.

Single-family house, within the Golfview subdivision

Multi-Family Residential Areas

La Salle 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 La Salle 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 State of Illinois. 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.

Existing Downtown commercial buildings

Commercial Areas

La Salle's commercial areas comprise approximately 441.71 acres of land, which represents 6.03 percent of La Salle's total land area. Of that 441.71 acres of commercial land area, approximately 80 percent of it is located in the Downtown business district.

Downtown

The City of La Salle'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 Downtown include City Hall, the La Salle State Bank, the Uptown Grill, the Herrecke Hardware Store and the La Salle 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 Illinois River bottom; however, a parking garage once existed at Canal and Marquette Streets and provided pedestrian access to Lock 14 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 14 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 Harpe 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'Conor and Baker, and between Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Seventh Streets. These uses include retail stores, a restaurant/banquet hall, a motel, and a landscaping 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 on Route 6, includes the La Salle 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

La Salle's industrial areas comprise approximately 1,121.43 acres of land, which represents 15.31 percent of La Salle's total land area.

Historically, La Salle was a major industrial town within the upper Illinois River valley with its industrial land uses concentrated on La Salle'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

Illinois Cement complex

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 La Salle'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 351 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 Vermilion 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. The plant is also adjacent to a stretch of single-family homes along Rockwell Road just north of the I & M Canal. 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 Vermilion 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 (US EPA) placed the site in its National Priorities List in 2003 and remediation activities are being planned.

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

La Salle's agricultural areas comprise approximately 3,427.18 acres of land, which represents 46.80 percent of La Salle's total land area.

Agricultural land is largely located in La Salle's eastern quadrants both north and south of Interstate 80 and U.S. Route 6. Additional farmland is also located along a small strip of Illinois River bottom land. The only agricultural land zoned as agricultural within La Salle's corporate boundary is located to the east of Illinois Cement's East Third Road facility near the Mitchell Grove Nature Preserve. The rest is currently zoned industrial.

Parks, Open Space and Natural Resources

La Salle's parks and open space comprise approximately 1,225.46 acres of land, which represents 16.73 percent of La Salle's total land area.

The City of La Salle has a Parks Department that maintains parks throughout the City, including St. Mary's Hegeler, Matthiessen, Pulaski, and Mary Hegeler Carus Memorial Parks. There are also two Downtown pocket parks/plazas maintained by the Department. It should be noted that parks and open space are not classified under the City's zoning code.

As noted previously, Rotary and Prairie Parks are new park facilities in development. The land for the two parks was secured through both a land purchase and transfer with the Illinois Cement Company, 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 La Salle 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 La

Salle vicinity. At Lock 14 at the Illinois River bottom is the I & M Canal Trail, extending from La Salle to Joliet, and owned and maintained by IL Department of Natural Resources. Matthiessen and Buffalo Rock State Parks are located less than ten miles from La Salle 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 River. In addition, the Pecumsaugan Creek Blackball Mines Nature Preserve, also owned by IL DNR, is located in nearby North Utica adjacent to the Senica's Oak Ridge Golf Club.

Geology

According to the Illinois Geological Survey, La Salle 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 and Floodplains

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 La Salle 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.

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.

The following table summarizes all inventories land uses in the City of La Salle:

Table 2: Current Land Use Inventory

Land Use Category	Areas (acres)	Area (percentage)
Residential	1,111.72	15.1%
Commercial	441.71	6.03%
Industrial	1,121.43	15.31%
Agricultural	3,427.18	46.80%
Parks, Open Space and Natural Areas	1,225.46	16.7%

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 La Salle and other taxing districts. *(See Figure C, Land Use Map, in foldout)*

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

La Salle 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 add space and fire truck bays to the existing fire station.

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

La Salle is home to five school districts: La Salle Elementary School District 122, La Salle-Peru Township High School District 120, the Waltham Community Consolidated School District 185, Peru Elementary School District 124, and the Dimmick School District 175. The majority of La Salle lies in Elementary School District 122 while the Township High School serves the communities of La Salle, Peru, Olgesby, Tonica and Dimmick, and East Waltham, Utica and Deer Park Townships.

School District 122 includes two elementary schools, Jackson and Northwest, and one junior high school, Lincoln. 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 3: School Enrollment within La Salle (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 4: 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
La Salle-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, La Salle is home to several private schools including La Salle-Peru Christian School and Trinity Catholic Academy.

Colleges

There are currently no higher education institutions located in La Salle. Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby is the nearest college providing two-year degree and other certificate programs for La Salle residents. It currently has an enrollment of 4,500 students. A cosmetology school, Educators of Beauty, is located in Downtown La Salle.

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 La Salle 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 La Salle at 2970 Chartres Street, offers basic health care and diagnostic services. The second nearest hospital is St. Margaret's, located in Spring Valley, approximately six miles from Downtown La Salle.

Religious Institutions

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

Library

The La Salle 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 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.

La Salle Public Library

Historic Resources

Currently, there are three properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including La Salle City Hall, the Kaskaskia Hotel and the Julius W. Hegeler House at 1306 Seventh Street. The National Register is this nations' 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 La Salle 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:

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

- Chicago Burlington and Quincy Railroad Station, south side of Brunner at Creve Coeur Streets
- Residence, 1569 Bucklin Street
- High School Auditorium, La Salle - 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
- La Salle County Carbon Coal Company Building, 1350 First Street
- Goldsmith Building, north side First Street and west of Joliet.
- La Salle 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
- La Salle Rock Island Railroad Station, south side of First Street at Lafayette
- La Salle 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

Former J.C. Penny Store

- Residence, 1132 Marquette Street
- Residence, 1156 Marquette Street
- Residence, 1232 Marquette Street
- La Salle 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
- La Salle 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
- 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 La Salle 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 D in foldout)*

- 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

The table on following page provides information about some of the regulations in place within the various zoning districts. 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

Table 5: La Salle 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

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:

Residential

R-1: Single-Family Residential: La Salle's R-1 districts comprise most of the residential areas north of O'Conor 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'Conor 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: La Salle'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 La Salle, 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 La Salle. 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 Harpe Streets, and another along Eighth Street between Harpe and Tonti. There are other lots and parcels zoned C-2 along St. Vincent's Avenue north of O'Conor 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: La Salle 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 La Salle, but they are not indicated on the latest City zoning map.

Extraterritorial Zoning

The City of La Salle 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 half miles beyond their corporate boundaries. However, La Salle cannot use its extraterritorial zoning authority as La Salle County has exercised its zoning authority in the surrounding unincorporated areas.

Section 4
Market and Economic Conditions

The data presented in this section provides an overview of the existing business and economic climate in La Salle, 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 .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, La Salle'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 .20 percent population decline by 2017. (For comparison, the state population is expected to decline 0.24 percent over the same period.) By 2022, the population is expected to be 9.404. 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. Household size is expected to be 2.34 in 2022. Median household income in 2012 was $39,606. *(Population and household forecasts are summarized in Table 8 on page 39)*

La Salle'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 aging

clustered primarily in populations over 55, and therefore beyond their child-rearing years.

Table 6: La Salle Population				
	2012		2017	
Population by Age	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

La Salle's population is primarily white (89 percent) 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 percent of La Salle's population, are forecast to gradually increase, to 17.2 percent by 2017. La Salle's small African American, American Indian, and Asian populations are forecast to remain stable.

Table 7: Population by Ethnicity				
	2012		2017	
Race and Ethnicity	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%

Forecasts

As mentioned previously, La Salle's population and household size is forecasted to remain mostly stable over the next five to ten years, although the population make-up is expected to gradually change with an increasing Hispanic presence. Table 8 below summarizes population forecasts to the year 2022. The forecasts assume there will be no major variable change; however, any number of factors could change the forecast variables in the intervening years.

Table 8: Population and Household Forecasts

	Census 1990	Census 2000	Avg. Annual Change, 1990-2000	Census 2010	Avg. Annual Change, 2000-2010	2012 Estimate	Avg. Annual Change, 2000-2012	2017 Forecast	Avg. Annual Change, 2012-2017	2022 Forecast
Population	9,507	9,796	0.30%	9,609	-0.19%	9,595	-0.07%	9,499	-0.20%	9,404
Households	4,106	4,161	0.13%	3,970	-0.46%	3,953	-0.21%	3,940	-0.07%	3,927
Household Size	2.31	2.29	0.09%	2.35	0.26%	2.38	0.64%	2.36	-0.17%	2.34
White Alone	9,169	9,182	0.01%	8,574	-0.66%	8,578	0.02%	8,385	-0.45%	8,196
Black Alone	36	125	24.72%	160	2.80%	152	-2.50%	151	-0.13%	150
American Indian Alone	15	17	1.33%	26	5.29%	24	-3.85%	24	0.00%	24
Asian Alone	43	47	0.93%	85	8.09%	77	-4.71%	79	0.52%	81
Some Other Races Alone	146	301	10.62%	545	8.11%	552	0.64%	636	3.04%	733
Two or More Races Alone	96	121	2.60%	219	8.10%	212	-1.60%	224	1.13%	237
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	445	805	8.09%	1,369	7.01%	1,412	1.57%	1,632	3.12%	1,886

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 La Salle. It is also useful to look at population characteristics using the same geographic parameters in order to understand how La Salle's nearby populations are similar or different – and how the differences may influence consumer profiles. The five-minute drive area from Downtown La Salle contains a population approximately equal to the City of La Salle, 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 if not all of Peru, and the fifteen-minute drive area encompasses more rural areas beyond La Salle 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 La Salle are forecast to be stable, with aggregate declines of 0.1 percent or less for the 10 and 15-minute drive areas. *(See Table 9 below)*

Table 9: La Salle Trade Area by Drive Times

	0 - 5 minutes	0 - 10 minutes	0 - 15 minutes
2012 Summary			
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
2017 Summary			
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

Households in La Salle 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 La Salle). 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 La Salle positions itself with respect to nearby customers and the types of businesses it seeks to attract.

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 10: Lifestyle Preferences by Drive Time

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 La Salle 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 La Salle 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 11: Number of Housing Units

	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 La Salle'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 La Salle 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 12: 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 La Salle, 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 La Salle 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 13: Number of Businesses by 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 La Salle 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 La Salle 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 La Salle. Together, they provide a picture of retail spending and opportunity. *(See Figure E above and in foldout for drive time areas)*

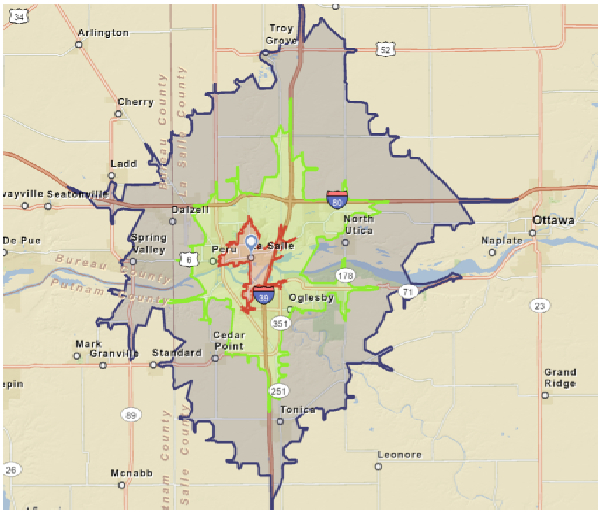


Figure E - Five, Ten, and 15-minute drive areas from Downtown La Salle

Within a five-minute drive area of Downtown La Salle, 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.)

Table 14: Retail 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 15 and 16 on following pages)*.

The three data sets appear to support a few specific opportunities for additional retail that could fit into Downtown La Salle'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 La Salle. Downtown La Salle 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 La Salle area households.

Tourism Activities

Downtown La Salle holds the promise of benefitting from at least two significant, nearby tourist attractions: Starved Rock State Park and the I & M Canal, both of which are regional attractions. Downtown La Salle hosts the Lock 16 Visitor Center and serves as the departure point for canal boat tours at Lock 14. Patronage of the Lock 16 café and gift shop, and canal boat ridership, are tracked by Visitor Center staff and account for 50,000 visitors per year. Casual users of the Canal (e.g., pleasure boating, fishing, etc.) are not tracked.

The Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau collects data on the number of visitors to the Corridor and their economic impact. A 2011 study by the Bureau on the impact of local tourism estimated that visitors to La Salle County attractions spent $164.5 million on purchases directly related to their trip, including lodging, food, transportation, retail, entertainment, and recreation. The Bureau also estimated that regional tourism had an additional indirect economic impact of $28.8 million in the form of 1,290 new jobs directly serving Corridor visitors.

Starved Rock State Park attracts 2.5 million annual visitors and Visitors Bureau officials estimate the great majority of visitor spending in La Salle County can be attributed to the Park and the lodging, restaurants, and retail in adjacent communities. La Salle is close enough to the Park (under 10 miles) to be relevant, but few Park visitors currently have reason to come to La Salle. Chief among the potential La Salle amenities that would capture spending are additional lodging and dining options. Tourism officials describe visitors to Starved Rock as not fitting one demographic profile – or necessarily being outdoor campers and adventurers. While families with children visit the Park, more of the Park's visitors are "active adults" without children,

Table 15: Ten Minute Drive Times Retail 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 16: Fifteen Minute Drive Times Retail Sales Surplus and Gap

	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

including middle-aged women and seniors. These adult visitors may take a light hike, but they are more likely to take a tour (e.g., wine and/or canal boat), dine out, and shop. Typical Park visitor households have incomes over $100,000.

Based on anecdotal reports, the current economic impact of Starved Rock visitors on Downtown La Salle is small: The Daniels Motel offers approximately 32 rooms at an economy-level price point and Hickory Hollow Campground offers camping with amenities and RV sites with hookups. Both the Daniels Motel and Hickory Hollow Campground are frequently overlooked by tourism officials. The City does not currently impose a lodging tax.

The I & M Canal itself, while right on the edge of Downtown, accounts for a small portion of visitor spending. Currently, Canal visitors in La Salle 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. Several other La Salle destinations contribute in small ways to the local visitor economy:

- A small portion of visitor spending can be attributed to business travelers associated with Carus, JC Whitney, and other La Salle companies. But because these visitors generally lodge elsewhere, their spending in La Salle is limited.

- The Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway connects several dozen communities and sites along the Illinois River. (La Salle is not a featured community on the Byway's website because it has not chosen to participate financially in Byway programs.) The Byway's economic impact on La Salle is considered to be minimal at this time.

- The Hegeler Carus Mansion in La Salle offers toursand programming on a regular basis and has the potential to be incorporated into a more comprehensive expansion of tourism in La Salle.

Significant Employers and Industries

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

Table 17: Major Employers

J.C. Whitney	313
Carus Chemical	264
Veteran's Home	200
La Salle-Peru High School	180
Illinois Cement	148
News Tribune	101

Note that J.C Whitney recently closed its La Salle customer service call center (a loss of approximately 50 jobs), and Carus Chemical's employment is split between operations in Peru and La Salle. In addition to their La Salle 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 La Salle, 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 La Salle-based employers expand, they do so in La Salle.

Recapturing sales in these categories will not be sufficient, on their own, of supporting all available commercial space in La Salle. Downtown La Salle 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 La Salle's transportation and infrastructure systems. In the regional context, La Salle 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 F in foldout on following page, La Salle is situated between the metropolitan areas of Chicago, the Quad Cities, Rockford, Peoria, Joliet, Aurora and Bloomington. Smaller metropolitan areas within 50 miles of La Salle include DeKalb and Rochelle. La Salle is located at the intersection of Interstates 80 and 39 and is well connected to the larger northern Illinois area by these interstates. Currently, the Iowa Interstate and CSX rail systems operates the railroad that runs through La Salle and its neighboring community of Peru and North Utica.

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

Roadways

Context and Jurisdiction

Figure G in foldout on following page shows roads in La Salle by jurisdiction including U.S. and State Highways under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) - District 3. La Salle has jurisdiction over the majority of the roadway network with

the exception of one La Salle County Highway (E. 350th Street) {photo caption – La Salle 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 La Salle, Chicago, and the Quad Cities. In addition, U.S. Route 6 follows portions of Third, Fifth, and Joliet Streets through Downtown La Salle. Historically, St. Vincent Avenue/Joliet Street (IL 351) was part of a primary north-south roadway over the Illinois River that connected La Salle 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. Also during this time frame, the Peru Mall was constructed on Illinois Route 351 near Interstate 80. Several local stakeholders have commented that business was redirected to the mall, which had a negative impact on Downtown La Salle economy. During the 1980s, Interstate 39 was completed, which than 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 La Salle and carry high volumes of traffic since they are important connections to the surrounding areas.

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

Gateways

The primary automobile gateways into La Salle are from the north (IL 351 at Interstate 80), the east (U.S. 6 at Interstate 39), and the south (IL 351/IL 71) Joliet Street at the I & M Canal Bridge). Entry into La Salle 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. La Salle 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 La Salle.

Average Daily Traffic

Average daily traffic (ADT), see Figure G in previous foldout illustrates that most of the roads in La Salle have low volumes of traffic. All of the roads carry less than 10,000 vehicles per day, which is typically accommodated on two-land roads. Figure F also illustrates that U.S. 6 and IL

351 have the highest volumes of traffic and are the main roadways through La Salle. In addition, Third Street or U.S. Route 6, east of Joliet St. has the highest volume of traffic in La Salle, with an ADT of 9,050.

Connectivity

From a roadway and land use connection perspective, La Salle has two types of roadway patterns. La Salle 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 La Salle has a well-connected roadway grid.

La Salle 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 H *(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 Vermilion 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

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

Interstate 39, and IL 178 and IL 351 interchanges. Other minor east-west connectors are Edward Duffy/North 30th Road across the Little Vermilion in the northern part of La Salle, and south to 29th 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.

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

Rural roads within La Salle

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.

Downtown Streets, Parking and River Access

La Salle has a charming, historic Downtown district with traditional roadway grid network. First Street is La Salle's considered Downtown's main commercial thoroughfare, traveling east-

First Street, Downtown La Salle

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 street's width is largely attributed to an electric rail line that once ran down its center.

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 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 La Salle should improve access to the I & M Canal and Lock 14. La Salle traditionally developed because of its proximity to the 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 I & M Canal and 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 are in good to fair condition. La Salle has an ongoing program to resurface streets on an as-needed basis through milling and resurfacing with asphalt.

Alleys

La Salle's traditional roadway grid is complemented by a network of alleys which provide for access to parking and garages located in the rear of properties. Despite the alleys, trash collection occurs streetside with the exception of two blocks of Fourth Street. 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 residential alley

Bridges

Bridges in La Salle 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 Vermilion River (sufficiency rating 28 percent), all other bridges are in a state of good repair. Figure I in foldout on following page shows the locations of the bridges.

Table 18: La Salle 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 Vermilion 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 Vermilion River	3/15/2012	1965	2008	82%	Township
506502	Rockwell Road over Little Vermilion River	8/16/2011	1940	2010	28%	La Salle

Source: IDOT Bridge Information, 2013.

Aviation

The Illinois Valley Regional Airport - Walter A. Duncan Field is a general aviation (GA) airport located the north side 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 La Salle. Formerly a towpath 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 both the Grand Illinois and American Discovery Trails, 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 La Salle. Posted speeds and traffic volumes are low in much of La Salle, 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) and the American Discovery Trails (ADT) both travel through La Salle, which comprise 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 both and as per the trail users' guide, both travel on streets through La Salle as follows:

- I & M Canal Trail to Lock 14 parking lot
- Southeast on access road to IL 351
- North over bridge into La Salle
- 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 La Salle Rotary and Prairie Parks, which has the potential to expand the reach of recreational trail bicycling in La Salle, 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 La Salle, west of the Little Vermilion River and south of Eleventh Street. This includes concrete sidewalks and brick sidewalks, many of which are as old at 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 charm and character that could make La Salle distinctive from other municipalities. The brick sidewalks could build on La Salle'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.

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

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

ADA sidewalk ramps

or signalized intersections. Pedestrian signals are 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, Iowa Interstate, and other railroads in La Salle and Peru.

Transit

There are several agencies in the vicinity of La Salle that offer varying types of transit service. Peru City Bus offers transit service in Peru and La Salle. Peru City Bus offers Peru service on Tuesdays and Fridays, La Salle 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 Ottawa and serves La Salle County on a limited basis. 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.

La Salle Township operates transit service in La Salle 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 La Salle, offers call-ahead, for-hire cab service in and around La Salle.

Stormwater Management

The City of La Salle manages storm water through a storm sewer network that discharges into the Little Vermilion River and Illinois River. Figure J in foldout on following page shows the general drainage areas defined by the Little Vermilion River and Pecumsagan Creek watersheds.

The traditional part of La Salle 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 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 La Salle, 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 Vermilion River or the Illinois River. The storm sewers carry storm water to the waterways, including the Little Vermilion 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 La Salle generate discharge rates as high as 9.0 MGD and have resulted in CSO events on multiple occasions. Figure K in foldout on following page shows the locations of WWTP in La Salle 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 La Salle, the City of La Salle 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 Vermilion River. Its current average daily operations are 0.5 MGD.

Figure K also shows the boundaries of the La Salle Peru Facility Planning Area (FPA). The FPA has been approved by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IL EPA). The FPA illustrates the limits of the area that can be served by the La Salle WWTP. As shown on the Figure, the areas beyond the La Salle-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 La Salle's growth area on the east side of the City. Table 16 below shows the current and future design flows for each WWTP in La Salle.

Table 19 - 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 20: 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 La Salle has planned for future growth and capacity in the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The total incorporated area of La Salle 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

La Salle was historically a city of waterway transportation. Located at the end of the navigable portion of the Illinois River, upon construction of the I & M Canal, La Salle became an intermodal hub for goods traveling between Peru and La Salle and the City of Chicago. The I & M Canal as an active commercial waterway declined in 1933 after the opening of the Illinois Waterway. Currently, the I & M Canal is maintained as a recreational facility and the adjacent towpath has been converted to a recreational trail (see Bicycle Facilities). The I & M Canal crosses the Little Vermilion River in an aqueduct at Rockwell Road.

La Salle is situated north of the north bank of the Illinois River. The Little Vermilion River flows through La Salle and Peru and drains into the Illinois River. It is rated in fair condition by IL EPA and contains the only Class IV rapids on a river within the State of Illinois. Much of the incorporated but undeveloped land within La Salle is located east of the Little Vermilion River, indicating that water quality should be a factor in the future growth of La Salle.

Water Supply and Distribution System

Figure L in foldout on following page shows the location of the seven active wells that supply municipal water for La Salle. The wells are at the southern end of La Salle'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 La Salle are required to conduct a groundwater needs assessment and establish adequate protection zones to restrict development activity for the purposes

of protecting groundwater. La Salle is specifically 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 them and harm La Salle's water supply. The City of La Salle conducted a Water System Needs Analysis in July 2013. The report is an assessment of the City's water system including well field, water treatment plant and distribution system. The study proposes capital improvements that would cost between $4.5 and $5.3 million.

The City water system supplies residential, commercial and industrial users. Water demand is mainly from industrial users, primarily Carus Chemical Corporation. The monthly average usage is 3.1 million gallons per day (MGD). Carus accounts for 1.7 MGD (55 percent) of the average monthly demand. The highest monthly usage during a three-year period examined in the study was 3.6 million gallons per day.

The study estimates future water demand for a 20-year period. The anticipated growth is primarily from new industrial users that are expected to move to La Salle, but also includes a 1 percent annual increase in residential use. Water demand for Carus Chemical is assumed to remain constant over the same time period. The water supply (well) system currently has a capacity of 4.8 million gallons per day. The report recommends increasing water supply capacity by 4.0 MGD by adding three new vertical wells with a capital cost between $1.6 and $1.9 million. The wells could be installed over time in an incremental fashion to allow for capital cost phasing. The additional capacity would be useful in attracting new industry to La Salle.

It should be noted that there is a significant difference between water supply and treated water usage. Carus Chemical primarily uses untreated water; therefore, the City's demands for water supply are different than those for treated water. The current average treated water usage is 1.4 MGD and the highest monthly usage is 1.9 million gallons per day. With its current capacity of 3.2 MGD, the water treatment plant can accommodate growth in the near-term and does not need to be expanded at this time. Still, the treatment and distribution system needs repairs, upgrades, and improvement to provide reliable water for the next 20 years. The estimated costs of the repairs, upgrades, and improvements are between $2.9 and $3.4 million.

One aspect of the proposed upgrades is of important note. The Illinois EPA has recommended that the City extend the well casings at least 36 inches above the recommend flood stage that occurred in 2013. The cost for the extended well casings is included in the above repair costs. The Illinois EPA also suggested that the City pursue emergency interconnections with adjacent municipal water systems (Utica or Peru) for mutual aid assistance. The study did not address how the water system interconnections might occur.

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Section 6
Issues and Opportunities

The following are key conclusions regarding the existing land use, economic, transportation and infrastructure conditions in La Salle. 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. La Salle is very well situated from a regional transportation standpoint and has good access to interstates, which also provide access to other metropolitan areas.

Downtown La Salle. Downtown La Salle 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 under-utilized buildings are key revitalization issues that need on-going, sustained efforts to address. First Street in Downtown La Salle 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. La Salle'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, La Salle 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. La Salle 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 additional, 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 La Salle 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 La Salle 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 La Salle 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 Vermilion 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 La Salle'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 La Salle, 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. La Salle has strategically painted its water towers to announce to interstate travelers that they are approaching La Salle. 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. La Salle'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. The Illinois EPA recommends that the City extend the well casings above the record flood stage that occurred in 2013. The Illinois EPA also recommended that the City should pursue emergency interconnection with adjacent municipal water systems for mutual aid assistance. 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 is underway to investigate alternatives.

Section 7
Community Vision

The La Salle Comprehensive Plan represents the results of a collaborative process between the City of La Salle, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, the Plan Commission and La Salle citizens and stakeholders to create a planning vision and framework for the community's long-term future. This process included a series of stakeholder interviews and citizen group focus sessions, public open houses and workshops, and meetings with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

The vision for La Salle is based on planning, development and revitalization strategies that can improve and enhance the community's visual and physical appearances, the vitality of its commercial and industrial areas, the vibrancy of its traditional neighborhoods, the efficiency of its infrastructure systems, and the overall quality of life for its residents over the next 10 to 20 years. This Comprehensive Plan also seeks to build on La Salle's unique assets, including its historic Downtown district; access to nearby Interstate highways; location within the Upper Illinois River Valley, the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor and the Illinois River Road National Scenic By-Way; long-time industries and manufacturers; area schools and religious institutions; parks and open space; and, its civic organizations and engaged stakeholders and citizens.

La Salle Vision Statement

The community's collective ideas for La Salle's long-term revitalization and growth have been drafted in written form as a comprehensive Vision Statement, drawn from the results of various discussions and meetings with stakeholders and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The Vision Statement summarizes La Salle's key strengths and assets while capturing stakeholder consensus and citizen aspirations for diversifying land use and economic activity and creating a more vibrant, resilient community now and into the future.

Twenty years from today, La Salle will have established itself as an economic, social and cultural center in the heart of the Upper Illinois River Valley.

It is a community defined by its revitalized historic Downtown and traditional neighborhoods, well-maintained parks and open space, high-quality schools, engaged institutions, its renewed waterfront area and access to the Illinois and Michigan Canal, and its diverse set of industries, small businesses and employers. La Salle is also an important destination for travelers and tourists seeking to discover an "authentic" city that embraces its history – a history inexorably connected to the Illinois River and the Illinois and Michigan Canal, which binds the community to a larger region from Chicago and the Great Lakes to the Quad Cities and the Mississippi River.

Downtown La Salle continues to be the heart of the community and home for small businesses, professional offices, dining and entertainment establishments, cultural activities, civic organizations and religious institutions, and City Hall and various other government facilities. Downtown is fully-occupied by retail and service businesses that meet the needs of local and area residents, office workers and day-trip tourists attracted to its high-quality, well-known restaurants and specialty stores. Building facades and storefronts have been improved and restored to their original character and upper floors have been converted to new apartments, condominiums and lodging, and bed-and-breakfast operations for visitors and travelers.

Ongoing improvements to the streetscape, public spaces and wayfinding signage visually unify the Downtown while promoting a comfortable, safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. An enhanced plaza space provides an intimate setting for festivals, community gatherings and farmers markets; the plaza also incorporates an overlook to the I & M Canal and the scenery beyond to the Illinois River. A new pedestrian access point to Lock 16 and the former steamboat basin allows direct access for visitors and cyclists to the Downtown district.

La Salle's residential neighborhoods provide a range of housing opportunities for existing residents and newcomers attracted to the community's cost of living, expanding employment base, vibrant Downtown, location to nearby parks and recreation amenities, and quality schools and cultural activities. La Salle's traditional neighborhoods near and around the Downtown are stable and well-maintained with rehabilitated historic homes and brick sidewalks and streets that promote an authentic, pedestrian-scaled neighborhood environment. Vacant properties have also been rehabilitated or redeveloped with quality infill construction designed in a context sensitive manner appropriate to the surrounding architecture and setting. Efforts to revitalize and maintain the vitality of La Salle's traditional neighborhoods are undertaken by collaborative efforts between different entities, including the City, local and regional housing groups, and active neighborhood associations and revitalization organizations.

Beyond La Salle's traditional neighborhoods, new construction in well-planned subdivisions along the U.S. Route 6 corridor and other areas provide additional opportunities for those seeking a semi-rural environment to live and raise a family. All neighborhoods are served adequately by parks, bike trails, open space and recreational opportunities, including the completed Rotary and Prairie Parks and the trail connection from the parks to the I & M Canal. An interpretative park and bike trail system is developed on the reclaimed Mathiessen and Hegeler Zinc Works site – a park where signage and interpretative displays tell the story of a once important legacy industry.

In addition to its neighborhoods, La Salle is a significant employment center – retaining its long-time, home-town industries while attracting new businesses and start-up companies seeking a suitable environment in La Salle's established areas or in newly-planned and designed industrial park space along the U.S. Route 6 Corridor. La Salle's industrial parks are well-designed with attractive landscaping and signage, and adequate-sized streets and lots to accommodate future development, transportation and future expansion needs. The U.S. Route 6 Corridor has maintained its semi-rural feel and character, including its vegetation, and landscape and agricultural vistas, while allowing for a mix of single-family and small-scale commercial uses to be developed in ways that respect the Corridor's overall physical and natural character. Bike trails and "complete streets" allow for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians to travel from the Corridor and its adjacent industrial parks and subdivisions, to other areas of La Salle including Downtown and residential neighborhoods. Natural resource mining is conducted on La Salle's outer industrial areas, which are reclaimed for future natural areas and development.

A number of events combining arts and culture are held throughout the year, in the Downtown and the neighborhoods, to celebrate the City's rich diversity and history – a history linked inexorably to the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Such events, along with Downtown businesses and other attractions, such as the Hegeler-Carus Mansion and Rotary Park, draw a steady influx of visitors and tourists, which support nearby restaurants, hotels and bed and breakfast operations. Visitors are attracted from all parts of the country to learn about the I & M Canal legacy and to take part in sight-seeing, cycling, fishing, canoeing and boating activities along the waterfront, and the Little Vermilion and Illinois Rivers. The Waterfront area has been reclaimed with new paths and open space amenities.

The La Salle community has been successful in revitalizing its Downtown and neighborhoods and retaining and attracting businesses and industries through successful partnerships between many different agencies, groups and organizations. Its success can also be attributed to hard work and commitment to seeing the long-term and using planning processes to engage residents and other stakeholders alike in plan-making and implementation.

Land Use Planning Strategy

The La Salle community will achieve its long term planning goals and an enhanced quality of life for its residents through a balanced and well-considered approach to its overall land use and development pattern. Clearly, a balance between land uses is needed to ensure there is adequate industrial land, that commercial growth and residential development can be guided to appropriate locations, and that the City's street and infrastructure network are not overly burdened, especially in the community's U.S. Route 6 Gateway Area. Land use diversity also promotes economic diversity and long-term community resiliency to changes in local and regional economic conditions.

Specific land use objectives are described later in this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan within different themes. The future land use map shows the recommended pattern of land use in the City and the following definitions describe each land use category proposed in the future land use map.

Traditional Downtown Core
Bounded by Bucklin and Hennepin Streets, U.S. Route 6 and the Illinois and Michigan Canal, the Traditional Downtown Core is intended to allow a mix of commercial and residential uses in both existing buildings and new construction, and to maintain the Downtown as the community's primary shopping district. Existing historic commercial buildings and storefronts will be rehabilitated for new retail and service uses while upper floors will accommodate new offices, apartments, condominiums and bed-and-breakfasts and lodging establishments for tourists and visitors. Additionally, light assembly and fabrication activities associated with some retail businesses could also be permitted in the back portions and upper floors of existing buildings. In the long-term, as market forces can support, new mixed-use development could take place on vacant land and opportunity sites and designed in a way to reinforce Downtown's traditional pedestrian-oriented character and low-scale context. Allowing a mix of uses in the Downtown can help facilitate increased utilization of buildings and spaces as well as build increased value in Downtown real estate and businesses.

Downtown Neighborhood
The traditional residential neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown consist primarily of single-family residential and small-scaled neighborhood-oriented commercial uses. Downtown Neighborhoods reflect the importance of maintaining the single-family residential character of these neighborhoods while allowing for some select opportunities for new single and multi-family development to take place around and near the Traditional Downtown core. Neighborhood-scaled retail and business uses will also be allowed although vacant and under-utilized buildings could be converted to single-family occupancy. These neighborhoods should be suitably screened and buffered from nearby industrial uses.

Neighborhood Commercial
Neighborhood Commercial uses are at the same scale as Downtown Neighborhood but would provide exclusively for retail and service uses for residents in the immediate neighborhood and in a form that is context-sensitive. Neighborhood commercial is meant to be applied in areas that are already neighborhood commercial in context.

Interstate/Gateway Commercial
Interstate-Commercial areas occur along key transportation nodes and intersections along Interstate exits, and would support single-story, auto-oriented commercial uses serving both local residents and travelers. Ideally, parking areas for such developments would be adequately and appropriately screened and landscaped.

Route 6 Corridor Gateway Commercial
Consistent with maintaining the semi-rural character of lands east of Interstate 39, small to mid-sized commercial uses would be permitted along portions of U.S. Route 6 in a form that respects the predominant land development pattern of one-story buildings, large lots, 20 to 40 foot setbacks from the roadway, and side and rear parking areas. Lot and development standards would require preservation of existing landscape features and vegetation along with proper landscaping and screening for parking areas.

Traditional Neighborhood
Residential neighborhoods adjacent to the Downtown at U.S. Route 6 north to O'Conor Avenue mainly consist of historic homes, most single-family, some single-family converted to multi-family use. This designation seeks to preserve and protect the historic single-family character of these neighborhoods by encouraging housing rehabilitation and compatible new infill development that compliments the scale and design of the existing housing stock. Residential infill should be encouraged on the smaller lots that may exist in these neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Residential
While the neighborhoods north of O'Conor Avenue contain mostly single-family residential homes built after World War II, the essential character of these areas will remain single family with select opportunities for multi-family development in appropriate locations. In these areas, residential lot sizes will be slightly larger than those found in the Traditional Neighborhood.

Semi-Rural Residential
To maintain the mostly semi-rural character of lands east of Interstate 39, the Semi-Rural Residential land use classification would permit larger lot single-family residential development while preserving open spaces, vistas and natural areas within such developments. Semi-rural residential developments would lend themselves quite readily to conservation subdivisions, which allows the clustering of single family homes to fit more naturally within the existing landscape and preserve existing open spaces, farmsteads and cultural resources. Access to semi-rural residential developments would be through improved collector roads off from U.S. Route 6 rather than on the Route 6 as is currently allowed.

Route 6 Corridor Gateway Residential
Portions of the U.S. Route 6 Corridor near Interstate 39 will remain large-lot single-family residential with any future residential development respecting the existing setback and lot size patterns.

Institutional
The future land use map identifies significant public sector institutions within La Salle, including municipal buildings, other government facilities, religious institutions, elementary and middle schools, and La Salle-Peru Township High School.

Parks and Open Space
This designation encompasses local parks and recreation facilities within La Salle's municipal boundaries including Rotary and Prairie Parks and the potential conversion of the former Mathiessen and Hegeler Zinc Works to open space and interpretive park.

Agricultural Transition
Agricultural Transition areas are those that are currently in agricultural use but are expected to transition at some point in the future. These areas are expected to receive upgrades and improvements to the existing road and street networks before they transition to industrial use.

Waterfront and Natural Area Zone
Land along the I & M Canal area south toward the Illinois River shall remain in use for heritage tourism, agricultural and recreational uses. Portions of the area near the River Street Wastewater Treatment Plant that are in industrial use could transition over time to provide additional park and open space with connections to the Downtown – perhaps as stairways or a pedestrian bridge to Canal and First Streets. A marina could also be considered in this zone if feasible and permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; however, minimal, if any, development should take place given the waterfront zone's location within a special flood hazard area. The long term goal is to enhance this zone's scenic qualities and potential for providing additional recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors.

Light Industrial
Light industrial zones are intended to provide for light production and assembly, warehousing, office and research, and other similar uses in completely contained buildings and structures that do not involve the release of polluting sounds, odors and materials. Permitted building footprints would be 22,000 square feet and larger. With some exceptions, most retail and general commercial uses will generally not be permitted in light industrial areas although landscaping and buffering requirements to adjacent land uses of a lower intensity will be required. Light industrial uses will remain in existing areas and concentrated along the eastern segments of the U.S. Route 6 Corridor.

Light Industrial Modern
Industrial modern areas accommodate more modern and larger-scaled industrial production facilities of over 40,000 square feet that do not involve the release of polluting odors and materials. Limited medium-scaled, auto-oriented commercial uses such as back-office operations, data-processing centers, and builder supply stores would be permitted.

Heavy Industrial
Higher intensity industrial facilities, such as mining, concrete and asphalt production and truck and freight terminals – ones that have the potential to emit polluting odors and materials, degrade infrastructure and cause potential land use conflicts – would be classified as heavy industrial. Heavy industrial areas should be served by adequate infrastructure, including roadways and utilities and have significant setbacks and buffering from adjacent land uses of a lower intensity.

The purpose of creating these unique classifications is to allow the City to achieve the following important land use and community development goals and objectives:

- Revitalize the Traditional Downtown Core as a pedestrian-friendly, mixed use center for retail, office and residential uses. Commercial uses, especially, are concentrated in the Downtown core to promote and maintain its long-term economic viability and vitality.
- Preserve and enhance the character of established neighborhoods.
- Plan and locate industrial uses, especially heavy industries and mining operations, in appropriate locations that avoid potential conflicts with residential areas and supported with adequate streets and infrastructure.
- Plan for the long-term reclamation of existing, future and retired open pits and strip mines to return them for potential economic use, whether recreational, residential, commercial or industrial.
- Maintain the scenic and environmental qualities of lands east of Interstate 39 and in the U.S. Route 6 Gateway Area while managing the overall land use intensity and design character of future residential, commercial and industrial development.
- Enhance the Illinois River bottom and I & M Canal areas as additional open space and recreational areas.

Downtown Revitalization Goals and Objectives

The City of La Salle and its stakeholder partners will continue to work towards creating a vibrant and resilient Downtown commercial district that supports a wide range of uses and activities and attracts shoppers, visitors and investors from the region and beyond.

To accomplish this, the City and its partners will:

- Remove barriers and obstacles to Downtown investment and facilitate the use of incentive programs to rehabilitate and preserve historic commercial buildings and storefronts and convert upper floors for location-neutral businesses, office and residential uses.
- Maintain on-going business and real estate development efforts that support entrepreneurial endeavors, attract needed retail and commercial services, and facilitate the innovative adaptive use of vacant and under-utilized space. New construction within the Downtown should share the same setback, height and scale characteristics of the existing historic commercial buildings.
- Undertake additional streetscape, urban design and infrastructure improvements to unify Downtown's visual appearance, provide for a comfortable and safe pedestrian environment, connect the Downtown to the I & M Canal and Waterfront, and create new public spaces and plazas in order to enhance Downtown's sense of place.
- Make Downtown a center for tourism and cultural activities by attracting additional restaurants, reusing the Kaskaskia Hotel, and increasing upper-story lodging and bed and breakfasts operations.
- Establish a formal management program or entity that works in partnership with the City, business and property owners, and other investors and stakeholders on spearheading and facilitating Downtown revitalization and redevelopment initiatives.

Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Goals and Objectives

The City of La Salle will maintain the quality and livability of its neighborhoods by preserving its existing housing stock and mix while seeking opportunities for new housing in existing neighborhoods and in areas that can support new housing too meet future market demand.

To accomplish this, the City and its partners will:

- Maintain the City's historic and older single-family housing stock through proactive preservation and rehabilitation programs with an emphasis on returning multi-family conversions back to single-family ownership. In addition, rehabilitate existing multi-family units that are in need of maintenance and improvements.
- Identify and implement comprehensive strategies and partnerships that would help mitigate the impact of vacancies on overall neighborhood appearance and stability.
- Undertake improvements to neighborhood infrastructure and preserve and maintain distinguishing streetscape features such as brick streets and sidewalks to promote neighborhood identity and character.
- Revise zoning and other code requirements to encourage infill housing in existing neighborhoods on lots where housing once existed or is currently vacant.
- Establish neighborhood associations and organizations that can work as liaisons between the City and homeowners, renters and landlords in identifying and addressing neighborhood revitalization and housing development issues.
- Designate historic landmarks and districts as a way to build and promote citizen pride and recognition of La Salle's important historically and architecturally significant homes and residences.

Parks, Open Space and Natural Environment Goals and Objectives

The City of La Salle will strive to maintain and improve its system of parks and open spaces as well as enhance access to regional recreational amenities though pedestrian and bicycle connections for residents and visitors alike.

To accomplish this, the City will:

- Ensure the City and its Parks Department will have adequate financial resources and staff to maintain and program new and existing park facilities, including Rotary and Prairie Parks, as well as plan for future park enhancements and capital improvements.
- Create non-motorized connections in the form of bike lanes, bike trails, pedestrian sidewalks, and pedestrian trails that connect La Salle residents to local and regional amenities including Rotary and Prairie Parks, the I & M Canal and Grand Illinois bicycle trails, the Senica's Oak Ridge Golf Course, the Pecumsaugan Creek Blackball Mines and Mitchell's Grove Nature Preserves.
- Plan for park and recreational amenity improvements to La Salle's I & M Canal and waterfront areas, including pedestrian connections to the Downtown district.
- Protect the natural environment and City's infrastructure by incorporating best management practices aimed at reducing stormwater runoff, flooding, and environmental impacts of new development within the community.
- Encourage the creation of additional open spaces, parks and greenways along the U.S. Route 6 Corridor though the adoption of flexible subdivision design standards, and the conversion of the former Matthiessen and Hegeler factory complex site into an interpretative park.

Transportation Goals and Objectives

The City of La Salle will provide and maintain an efficient transportation system of streets, bridges and pedestrian and bicycle paths that will enable residents, businesses and visitors safe and viable options to navigate the community and connect to other regional transportation systems.

The City and its partners will:

- Conduct on-going capital improvements to City-owned streets, bridges and sidewalks to ensure the transportation system is well-maintained and connected, and designed with sufficient capacity to support adjacent land uses.
- Promote local and regional bike trail connections that connect La Salle neighborhoods, Downtown and the Waterfront with each other and with amenities and attractions outside the community's boundaries.
- Support efforts to establish and operate a regional mass transportation system that provides access for La Salle residents to Downtown, neighborhoods, and other local and regional attractions and destinations.
- Implement a Downtown parking management plan that will maximize use of the existing parking supply while supporting strategically the Downtown's ongoing revitalization as a destination for shopping, working, living, entertainment and tourism.

Infrastructure, Capital Improvements and Community Facilities

The City of La Salle will maintain and operate efficient infrastructure systems for water supply, wastewater treatment, flood mitigation and stormwater management, and plan and finance accordingly improvements and enhancements to various community facilities.

The City and its partners will:

- Create and adopt on an annual basis a capital improvements plan that outlines priority expenditures for enhancements to the City's infrastructure, including its streets and sidewalks, water supply and stormwater management and flood prevention systems.
- Continue planning and funding efforts to separate storm and wastewater sewer systems in older parts of La Salle while implementing measures to effectively manage the rate of stormwater discharge from new development in other parts of the City.
- Secure the water supply system by developing water walls on higher levels of ground or executing agreements with adjacent municipalities to allow for interconnected water lines and shared use of the water supply.
- Reserve the I & M Canal area, the Waterfront and the banks of the Little Vermilion River and other streams for agriculture, open space and recreational use as a mitigation measure against future flooding and flood-related property damage.
- Plan appropriately for future community facilities, including City Hall, the Police and Fire Departments and Public Works to ensure respective departments of the City have adequate space and equipment to function and operate. With the exception of the Public Works Department and to the extent that it is feasible, all community facilities should be located in or near the Downtown district.

Economic and Industrial Development Goals and Objectives

The City of La Salle and its partners will continue to work towards creating a viable and sustainable business and industrial environment, enabling the City to become one of the Upper Illinois Valley's leading economic and employment centers.

To accomplish this, the City and its partners will:

- Foster a positive environment for small and medium-sized retail, service, professional, entertainment and tourism-related businesses to locate in the Downtown district.
- Focus on workforce development opportunities that will allow the local labor force to be employed by local businesses and industries.
- Support the development of a modern industrial park that can accommodate light industries and ancillary office uses in a well-designed, high-quality physical environment.
- Maintain, develop and enhance local tourism attractions and destinations, and leverage the financial and staff resources of regional tourism entities to market La Salle as a compelling destination for day-trip visitors and heritage and recreational tourists.
- Coordinate and target infrastructure and capital improvement expenditures in areas where industrial and commercial development are expected and desired to occur.

Community Image and Identity Goals and Objectives

The City of La Salle will highlight unique assets of the City and promote the community's historic sense of place within the Upper Illinois River Valley.

To accomplish this, the City and its partners will:

- Design and install gateway and wayfinding signage at key entrance ways that identify and direct visitors to key community destinations.
- Facilitate the preservation of architecturally and historically significant properties, sites and structures within the community.
- Support festivals, special events and marketing programs that promote La Salle's unique heritage, Downtown destinations, and the community's diverse populations and distinctive businesses and neighborhoods.

Section 8
Plan Recommendations & Implementation Strategies

This chapter of the La Salle Comprehensive Plan presents the recommended strategies for achieving the City's long-term community vision. The recommendations are categorized into three planning themes:

- Planning Theme #1: Revitalize the Community Core
- Planning Theme #2: Manage Development in the U.S. Route 6 Gateway Area
- Planning Theme #3: Maintain Natural Areas and Enhance the Waterfront

Each of the themes presented in this Comprehensive Plan include the following information:

- **Theme Overview** – a summary of existing conditions and the primary planning goals, strategies and recommendations
- **Policies** – straightforward policy statements that should guide the La Salle community in its planning efforts and in achieving long-term planning goals
- **Strategies** – suggested strategies and recommendations for implementing planning policies
- **Strategy Prioritization** – the prioritization of strategies is meant to clearly identify roles, assign responsibilities, designate resources, and check the progress in completing tasks.

The matrix below demonstrates how the planning themes contained in this chapter relate to the goals and objectives presented in the previous Community Vision section.

	DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION	HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS	PARKS, OPEN SPACE & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	TRANSPORTATION	INFRASTRUCTURE, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS & COMMUNITY FACILITIES	ECONOMIC & INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY IMAGE & SIGNAGE
THEME 1 Revitalize the Community Core	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
THEME 2 Manage Development in the U.S. Route 6 Gateway Area		X	X	X	X	X	X
THEME 3 Maintain Natural Areas and Enhance the Waterfront			X		X		

Theme #1: Revitalize the Community Core

Overview

As an older industrial I & M Canal town, the La Salle community should focus its efforts on revitalizing the Downtown district and on maintaining the vibrancy and long-term stability of its traditional neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown and between U.S. Route 6 and 24th Street. The Downtown and the adjacent neighborhoods have many distinguishing qualities – they are compact, walkable and designed and built to a scale that promotes the image of a quintessential American small town. They both also represent past investments in infrastructure, which creates a more limited strain on municipal services in their maintenance and replacement as compared to development elsewhere, making their revitalization more economically and environmentally beneficial for the City. Downtown offers low-cost storefront and upper story space for new start-up businesses, apartment and condominium units, lodging facilities and office uses. Nearby neighborhoods provide housing close to schools, highways, employment centers, parks and recreational areas. Revitalizing core neighborhoods can also be the starting point for encouraging single-family ownership, improved appearances and generating citizen pride of place. Just as important, a thriving community core, where social, commercial and cultural activities are flourishing, will help to attract new residents, visitors and business and industries to La Salle.

Primary planning strategies for La Salle's community core focus on removing barriers to revitalization and reinvestment, whether financial or regulatory in nature, and the implementation of ongoing efforts in small business and housing development, building improvements, and urban design and infrastructure enhancements. A key element to these planning strategies is the need to forge effective partnerships between the public and private sectors to share in implementation responsibilities. Such partnerships may come in the form of ad-hoc or formal organizational structures and entities – entities that can help engage citizens and additional stakeholders in the implementation process and lessen the burden on the City of La Salle.

La Salle's Community Core Area

Policy Statements

The following policy statements serve as guiding tenets for revitalizing the Community Core. Each policy statement is addressed by at least one strategy in the following narrative:

I. Revitalize the Downtown district by implementing a land use strategy that concentrates appropriate commercial, institutional, residential and light industrial uses in existing buildings and in new development in order to make Downtown the center of economic, social, cultural and governmental activities.

II. Adopt a land use strategy for Community Core neighborhoods that increases home ownership opportunities and strengthens the tax base while encouraging appropriate new construction along with the rehabilitation and preservation of surrounding properties to promote more vibrant and visually cohesive neighborhoods.

III. Address barriers to Community Core reinvestment by revising zoning and other municipal codes and by creating a program of incentives for housing rehabilitation, infill construction and façade and storefront improvements in the Downtown District.

IV. Consider historic buildings, sites and districts as valuable assets and anchors in revitalizing the Community Core. The historic character of the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods should be maintained whenever possible and feasible.

V. Undertake infrastructure improvements according to priority needs in the Community Core and as outlined in yearly capital improvement plans.

VI. Initiate and manage on-going small business development efforts that facilitate business start-ups and expansions in the Downtown and other commercial districts in the Community Core.

VII. Plan, design, and implement urban design, streetscape, wayfinding and public space improvements that enhance that Community Core's overall visual appearance, safety and comfort for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

VIII. Evaluate the costs and benefits for targeted public investments for specific Downtown and Neighborhood revitalization projects, and wherever possible, create public-private partnerships for project implementation and to build community support. Benchmarks and tools should also be created to allow elected and appointed officials evaluate accurately and effectively individual revitalization and redevelopment projects and ensure that each project has a positive impact in the Downtown and neighborhoods.

IX. Provide implement initiatives that enhance the visitor experience to Downtown and neighborhood attractions while participating in regional tourism development efforts that leverages marketing and promotion dollars to enhance La Salle's visibility within the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor and the Illinois River Road National Scenic By-Way.

X. Improve the Community Core transportation network by maintaining existing Downtown and neighborhood roadway and sidewalk systems as well as incorporating new bike lanes and trails that connect to the I & M Canal and the Grand Illinois bike trail systems and other destinations within La Salle.

XI. Encourage site design for new commercial and residential uses within the Community Core that respects the existing design and development context of surrounding blocks and neighborhoods.

XII. Identify partnership opportunities with the private sector, including businesses and industries, civic associations, institutions, and neighborhood associations and non-profit groups, to advance key Community Core revitalization and development initiatives. Benchmarks and tools to evaluate the effectiveness of such partnerships should also be established by the City.

Recommended Strategies

The following planning strategies represent specific action steps to implementing the policy statements for the Community Core. Strategies are organized under four categories based on shared character and land use traits. The four categories included within La Salle's Community Core are:

- Traditional Downtown Core
- Downtown Neighborhoods
- Traditional Neighborhoods
- Neighborhood Residential

For each of these strategy areas, a series of recommendations have been provided that include actions to be undertaken by the City and partner organizations/agencies to support and promote the revitalization of the Community Core; as well as the alignment of policies, programs and regulations to help guide elected and appointed officials realize and achieve intended planning goals.

TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWN CORE

Downtown should be La Salle's economic and social center and its revitalization will strengthen the community as a whole as well as help to attract new residents and industries. Downtown, however, remains a work in progress and while much of the regional retail spending has shifted over time to shopping centers in Peru, Downtown La Salle presents opportunities to establish a new economic base, one that differentiated from a big-box retail environment. Downtown must also capitalize on its intact core of historic commercial buildings and distinctive setting adjacent to the I & M Canal.

Key elements of the planning and revitalization strategy for the Downtown District include:

Tourism
Currently, tourism plays an almost insignificant role in Downtown's economy but it represents an under-valued and under-performing niche. The tourism market needs to be developed and integrated into other economic and neighborhood development efforts for the Community Core.

Housing
New upper-story housing units are being developed Downtown in a somewhat ad-hoc manner. Downtown housing, especially in the upper floors of existing commercial buildings, intensifies the use of land, makes use of existing infrastructure and makes historic commercial buildings more valuable over the long run. New housing also brings new customers to Downtown businesses and provides rental income to property owners and merchants in support of building improvements and maintenance. Downtown housing, whether in the form of upper-story apartments and condominiums or new residential infill construction, should be diversified and expanded wherever possible.

Senior Living
Like many communities across the country, La Salle's population is aging, and, even if the City successfully attracts some younger families, the age shift creates new pressures and demands on the existing housing inventory. Downtown can provide housing opportunities that accommodate senior living needs within the Upper Illinois Valley region.

Retail
Several long-standing retailers notwithstanding, Downtown retail is currently the weakest of its economic sectors. This segment can be revitalized incrementally over time, with a strategic focus on businesses that provide unique products and services.

Dining and Entertainment
Restaurant dining is the single largest cluster of Downtown businesses and over half of the community's 37 restaurants are located in the Downtown district. However, many restaurants are not immediately visible to Downtown shoppers and visitors as some lack appropriate signage and storefront merchandising while others are not located along First Street, Downtown's main commercial thoroughfare. La Salle has an opportunity to build and transform this cluster into a vibrant part of the Downtown's retail sector.

Historic Buildings
Downtown facade and storefronts improvements, as with upper-story housing efforts, have been undertaken at an ad-hoc, sporadic pace, sometimes with mixed results as some storefronts and facades have been appropriately rehabilitated while others have not. Still, Downtown's historic commercial buildings are its greatest asset and on-going programs and efforts to improve the appearances of all buildings should be pursued.

Streetscape and Public Spaces
In recent years, the City has undertaken roadway, sidewalk and streetscape improvements to First Street, which has vastly enhanced the visual appearance of Downtown's most important commercial street. Streetscape enhancements should be extended to other streets and blocks and special initiatives to add new public event spaces can help make Downtown a destination for special events, festivals and other social gatherings.

Catalytic Projects
Key projects that would catalyze Downtown's revitalization include the adaptive use of the Kaskaskia Hotel as well as other large historic commercial buildings that are partially utilized or vacant. The City should prioritize such projects and collaborate with key partners, developers and investors to undertake, finance and complete such projects.

Quality Infill Development
While there have been few redevelopment projects in the Downtown and in eth surrounding neighborhood zones in recent decades, parking lots and vacant and underutilized land could provide opportunities for future infill development. Future infill, whether commercial, residential or mixed-use in nature, should respect the predominant building form, lot placement and design character found in buildings within the same block. This ensures that new development in the Downtown district fits in to its immediate context and strengthens the overall quality of Downtown's built environment.

Downtown Core Land Use

As mentioned previously, La Salle's Traditional Downtown Core is bounded by U.S. Route 6 and the Illinois and Michigan Canal to the north and south, and Hennepin and Bucklin Streets to the east and west respectively. It is intended within the Downtown Core to permit a mix of commercial, residential and light industrial uses to strengthen Downtown's position as the community primary shopping district. Therefore, the general land use direction for the Downtown Core is to encourage street-level, pedestrian-oriented commercial uses, while allowing offices and residential uses on upper floors above retail. Office and service uses may be allowed at street level where there is no negative impact on street vitality. Upper-floor residential uses can include apartments, condominiums, and bed and breakfast and lodging spaces.

Code Changes and Requirements

Several changes to the zoning code are recommended in regards to specific Downtown land use planning goals. These changes include:

Boundaries
Adjust the current C-3: Central Business District zoning boundaries to reflect the Downtown district true boundaries at Hennepin and Bucklin Street and the I & M Canal and U.S. Route 6. The remaining areas outside these boundaries may be reclassified as Downtown Neighborhood.

Conditional Uses
A set of conditional uses for the Traditional Downtown Core should be adopted allowing a number of residential, public, commercial and industrial uses to locate in the Downtown while minimizing any potential detrimental effects these use may have to adjacent buildings and businesses. Detrimental effects may include the emission of noise and pollutants from manufacturing processes, impacts to Downtown's parking supply, or types of development that are not ordinarily compatible to Downtown's pedestrian-oriented commercial character. Conditional uses typically include light industrial assembly and wholesale distribution facilities, small and medium-scale auto-oriented uses and drive-thru facilities, retirement and senior living apartments, agricultural-related businesses, college and educational facilities and religious institutions. Conditional uses are usually granted through a public hearing process.

Residential Uses
The current C-3: Central Business District zoning does not expressly permit upper-story housing such as apartments, condominiums, bed-and-breakfast operation and short-term lodging spaces. Such uses should be conditionally permitted as long as such projects can demonstrate that new residential and lodging units are serviced by adequate parking. A minimum 500 square feet per dwelling units should be required for upper-story residential units.

Parking
In many small communities, first floor commercial uses are often exempted from providing parking. Parking requirements for upper-story residential and offices uses may be waived if the building is located within 1,000 feet of a public parking lot or garage. Off-street parking should be placed to the rear of buildings rather than the front.

Lot Requirements
The minimum lot area requirement for the C-3: Central Business District is 500 square feet with no requirements for setbacks, minimum lot widths and frontages. Minimum lot areas within the Downtown should be between 2,500 to 3,000 square feet with lot widths between 25 to 50 feet to encourage new development that is compatible with the prevailing size, massing and widths of existing buildings. Zero setbacks or build-to lines to the front lot line should also be adopted to encourage pedestrian-oriented development that enhances and strengthens Downtown's streetwall.

Excluded Land Uses
Specific land uses that are currently permitted in the C-3: Central Business District but should be excluded from the Traditional Downtown Core include truck and transfer terminals, used car and storage lots, and recycling facilities. Such uses have the potential to pose conflicts with Downtown's commercial and residential uses and its traditional pedestrian-oriented physical character. Truck and transfer terminals in particular can have significant negative impacts in the Downtown and adjoining neighborhoods and should be located in heavy industrial areas preferably.

Downtown Core Retail Development

Retail development usually follows the market opportunities – in other words; retail follows where people already live. This poses a particular challenge for La Salle: while the Downtown has retained several important retail anchors and functions, the existing retail uses are sparse and scattered in location over a relatively large downtown commercial area. Various incentives and business and real estate development initiatives should be developed and undertaken by the City and various partners and stakeholder groups to re-establish a more vibrant retail presence in the Downtown district.

Concentrate Retail Activities on 1st Street

Given its existing cluster of businesses and its overall physical settings and historic character, 1st Street already functions as Downtown La Salle's primary commercial street. At least initially, 1st Street's retail economy should be bolstered by incentivizing and directing new retail businesses to vacant buildings and storefronts at least.

In practice, this means:

- Actively marketing available retail spaces to strategically-sought tenants;
- Prioritizing façade improvement incentives on buildings along 1st Street for the near-term;
- Focusing newly-created financial incentives for business development along the 1st Street corridor for the near-term.

Establish a Permanent "Pop-Up" Store

One way to generate new retail presence in the Downtown and build momentum for attracting additional retail is to acquire a no-rent, or low-rent, lease on a Downtown storefront and manage it as a rotating "pop-up", where local entrepreneurs can try out their business concepts in a short-term, low-risk platform. The actual duration of a pop-up business may range from one day to three months.

There are several benefits of a permanent "pop-up space," including:

- It creates interest and inter-activity since there is something new happening Downtown that people will come to see;
- It lowers risk for entrepreneurs interested in testing out their ideas;
- It reduces the appearance of failure that may happen when a new business opens and then closes a few months later; in general, pop-ups have planned closure dates;
- It allows testing of business concepts that can later be spun off into freestanding, permanent businesses.

Offer a Retail Rent Rebate

Allocate a portion of TIF revenues or some other source of funds for lease rebates for new retail or restaurant businesses opening within the Downtown TIF district. For the incentive to be effective and motivating, consider a rebate of three to six months' rent. The rebate would be paid out after the business has been open at least one year.

Establish a Business Plan Competition

To motivate and encourage local entrepreneurs to open new Downtown retail businesses, a business plan competition could be established that offers technical assistance and monetary grants in exchange for a well-developed businesses plan from the entrepreneur. A variety of communities have held successful competitions of this type. As an example, communities may offer a $5,000 grant or micro-loan to competition winners to partially defray start-up costs.

Downtown Dining and Entertainment

Since Downtown La Salle has a small cluster of restaurants, this can, at least initially, serve to attract summer visitors to nearby State Parks. Restaurants and other entertainment establishments will need to be marketed effectively, through social media and rack cards in area hotels among other means and methods, in order for visitors to make the trip to Downtown La Salle.

Promote Downtown Restaurant Cluster
Create a set of marketing suggestions, tips and technical advice to help existing restaurants promote themselves more effectively to their local and visitor audiences (see example illustration).

Tips and advice may include:

- Demographic and lifestyle profile information about local customers and park visitors
- Trade area
- Customer engagement (e.g., social media) tools
- Performance benchmarks

Attract New Restaurants
As discussed previously and in succeeding sections, a mix of financial incentives can be tailored strategically to attract specific business types, including restaurants, to specific areas of Downtown. However, it would be beneficial to attract new restaurant to spaces adjacent or nearby other restaurants to build a more visible cluster along 1st Street preferably. It is important that these incentives include specific guidelines and parameters on what types of businesses will be eligible so they effectively attract desired business types to priority locations.

Downtown Core Tourism Development

Tourism is frequently overlooked as an economic development and Downtown revitalization strategy. One of tourism's key advantages is that it brings customers to Downtown La Salle who do not live in any of the nearby catchment areas – in other words, local drive areas or typical radii from the downtown district. These customers are additive in that they represent spending over and above what local households already spend. However, their impact is limited only by the number of people who visit regional attractions, such as Starved Rock and Mathiessen State Parks, and the number of those visitors who can be enticed to visit La Salle.

La Salle County currently attracts 2.5 million visitors annually. These visitors represent $164 million in direct spending, which delivers $12.00 in state and local sales taxes. Based on the visitor profiles described in the State of the City chapter, the primary regional draw is Starved Rock State Park. Visitor demographic characteristics extend beyond young outdoor adventurers as significant numbers of Park visitors are:

- Women, often traveling with other women;
- Seniors, traveling in as individuals and couples, but also in groups;
- Many visitors represent relatively affluent households, earning more than $100,000 per year.

Visitors need services and amenities in order to choose to visit La Salle. While financing for large projects, such as the reuse of the Kaskaskia Hotel, can be elusive, some projects can be advanced in smaller steps and can help La Salle gain a foothold in this sector.

Develop Downtown Lodging Opportunities

Visitors to Starved Rock State Park need additional lodging options, and La Salle currently has a very limited supply of hotel and lodging rooms. A downtown location, along with downtown's existing amenities, including its restaurants, the I & M Canal Visitor Center, and access to the Lock 14 and the I & M Canal itself, align with the lifestyle preferences of many Starved Rock visitors. The hotel room inventory increased 40 percent around 2010 with the opening of three chain hotels in Peru and Ottawa, and absorption of this new inventory continues. With the future development of the Kaskaskia Hotel uncertain, it is recommended that interim, incremental lodging solutions in La Salle, starting with upper-story, "self-serve" bed and breakfasts be pursued. These lodging spaces are typically apartment or loft-style overnight or short-term rentals, and they include a small kitchen stocked with breakfast items. Rooms are cleaned and re-stocked between guest stays, but typically not on a nightly basis.

Two types of upper-story lodging room configurations could be offered in downtown La Salle:

- Studio and one-bedroom units should be developed to serve couples.
- Larger, multi-bedroom units should be developed to serve small groups traveling together (e.g., families or non-family groups of three to six people). There is currently a shortage of this lodging product in the La Salle/Starved Rock vicinity.

Establish Hotel/Motel Tax

As some nearby communities in the Upper Illinois River Valley have already done, La Salle should establish a local hotel and motel tax in addition to the 6 percent hotel/motel tax levied by the State of Illinois. Revenues should be used specifically for tourism-related activities, including marketing of La Salle as a destination and incentivizing the development of new lodging and other visitor amenities.

Expand Restaurant Offerings

Attracting Starved Rock visitors and other tourists to La Salle will require a broader selection of restaurants and other amenities in addition to lodging. Two or three additional restaurants in downtown could establish La Salle as a dining destination for Starved Rock State Park visitors. In particular, new restaurants should appeal to the lifestyle preferences of Park visitors, including healthy dining options, "farm-to-table" menus, and promotion of local agriculture.

Attract Sporting Equipment Retailer

A handful of bike shops and outfitters serve the regional recreational visitor market, but none is available in La Salle. Outdoor equipment sales and rental will be a market follower, in that it will become viable once La Salle has established a more solid tourism base. As with other initiatives to diversify downtown's economy, an equipment rental or outfitter business can be located in the downtown by recruiting or establishing a new outfitter or by incentivizing an existing outfitter in the region to open a seasonal downtown pop-up store.

Establish a Venture Fund

In order to spur the creation of tourism-related businesses, La Salle can capitalize a venture fund to seed the development of new upper-story lodging facilities, restaurants, an equipment rental store, and other tourism-related businesses and amenities. A dedicated venture fund can then make strategic debt or equity investments in new enterprises. The venture fund can be established with hotel/motel tax revenues, or it may also be funded by local investors and/or philanthropists.

Downtown Housing Development

A few pioneers have already made their homes in renovated and repurposed downtown upper-floors, but such projects proceed on an ad hoc basis and there are no incentives or formal program to accelerate the scale and pace of such projects throughout the Downtown. Adding downtown residential units brings customers to stores and restaurants but it also establishes downtown as an attractive place to live and socialize. Such development often precedes growth in retail, entertainment, and arts-related businesses and activities in the downtown.

The most compatible household profiles for downtown living spaces include empty nesters, young singles and couples, and seniors. For empty nesters and young couples and singles, loft-style living is a motivator to live downtown – as indeed, most of the recently developed upper-story units downtown can attest. For seniors, access, walkability, independence, and inter-activity are key motivators. Seniors require a different housing product altogether – one that does not yet exist in downtown La Salle.

Rental Reimbursement

Use downtown TIF funds to offer a six-month rent rebate for first-time downtown tenants in newly-developed units within the downtown core. For example, Springfield, Illinois, offered a rent rebate incentive to spur downtown housing development and experienced significant success from such a program. Having catalyzed initial downtown residential projects, new units are now being developed without a TIF subsidy, as the downtown TIF district nears its 23-year sunset.

Residential Development Loan Fund

Designate a portion of TIF funds to establish a revolving loan fund for residential development projects. Low-interest, fixed-rate loans of up to $50,000 would significantly reduce the cost of upper-story rehabilitation and conversion costs. Alternatively, upper-floor rehabilitations can also be facilitated by having local banks establish a special construction loans and the City buys down loan's interest rate.

Façade Improvement Grants

Designate a portion of TIF moneys to fund façade improvement grants in the downtown district, with guidelines that prioritize downtown residential and downtown retail projects. Typically, façade grant programs require a match from the building owner and have a cap on the total amount of the grant. For example, many façade grant programs require 50 percent match with a cap of $10,000. Such requirements would fund a $20,000 façade improvement project.

Kaskaskia Hotel Senior Apartments

Study the feasibility of redeveloping the Kaskaskia Hotel as senior apartments. While there still may be opportunities to secure financing to re-open the building as boutique hotel, it is important to consider alternative uses, including retail and other commercial uses for the ground floor. With La Salle's aging population, the Kaskaskia may be well-suited to offer a niche senior housing product not currently available in the region: downtown apartment-style living. The level of care and the structure of the rents/fees are beyond the scope of this plan (e.g., some senior residential developments establish a buy-in fee and a monthly rent; some sell a condo unit with monthly fees, etc.). Ideally, the facility would include continuing care, so those residents who move into independent living apartments can avoid the disruption of relocating if they need additional care. Seniors living at the Kaskaskia would be close to retail businesses, restaurants and services within walking distance of First Street.

Community-Initiated Development

In Downtown La Salle, where investment risks are not currently balanced by potential investment reward, individual entrepreneurs may not yet be motivated to initiate new housing, lodging and retail development. In such situations, community-led development initiatives facilitated by the City and other public-private partnerships can lead to new investment activity and may be needed until the private sector becomes more motivated to participate in the Downtown revitalization process.

Community-initiated development includes a variety of tools and tactics to consider. For example:

- A municipality or unit of government may purchase a vacant property and turn it over to a non-profit developer;
- A venture fund may capitalize a strategic development project;
- A group of citizens may start a cooperative retail business or a community stock corporation by selling shares in a start-up;
- A community group may raise capital for a business startup through Kickstarter, Indiegogo, or other crowd-funding internet sites.

If, for example, no private developer can be incentivized to develop lodging in Downtown La Salle, civic leaders and Downtown advocates can use crowd-funding tools to start up a project and demonstrate that an unmet lodging market exists. Community-initiated development processes have become more practical and achievable than it once was due to low-cost crowd sourcing and crowd-funding tools. It has also been validated and advanced by the provisions of the 2012 JOBS Act, which makes it less cumbersome for individuals to invest in small business ventures.

Downtown Core Building Rehabilitation and Preservation Planning

The City of La Salle has been working with several property owners in recent years to improve the exterior appearances of Downtown's traditional commercial buildings. Façade and storefront enhancements are the most visible signs of progress in Downtown's revitalization and builds momentum for future building rehabilitation and adaptive use projects. Therefore, the City should facilitate additional façade and storefront improvements by providing financial incentives, design education and architectural assistance. Such assistance can help Downtown property owners undertake a range of projects ranging in scope from a simple maintenance project to a complete façade and storefront rehabilitation.

Maintain a Downtown Building Inventory

The City should maintain a Downtown building inventory if one has not been developed already. The inventory should include information and data about each building, including its exterior physical condition, historic photographs, square footages and current tenants. The information collected through such an inventory would allow the City to have a more thorough understanding of Downtown's overall vacancy rate, adaptive use opportunities and priority building rehabilitation candidates. The inventory itself would serve as a repository for all information pertaining to buildings and structures in the Downtown.

Encourage Cost-Effective Building Improvements

When undertaking the building inventory, the City should assess each building closely to identify its original architectural features and elements to devise a preliminary program of work within each building's inventory file to rehabilitate those features using appropriate preservation methods and quality building materials. Those buildings needing small-scale improvements, such as new awnings, signage, removal of false fronts, or new storefront painting should be the focus of near-term efforts.

Create Downtown Design Guidelines

If the City is to establish a façade grant or incentive program as recommended previously, a set of design guidelines should be developed and adopted for use in reviewing the quality and appropriateness of façade, signage and storefront improvement projects seeking financial assistance. Design guidelines, which include text and illustrative graphics, provide advice and guidance on retaining and repairing what is architecturally and historically significant about a traditional commercial building; what is not significant can be changed.
For a traditional commercial building, its front and side façades (if visible) and storefronts are usually considered significant elements. Historic elements of the front façade should be retained and repaired wherever feasible since they provide a level of authenticity that new materials cannot. Design guidelines can also address the form, articulation and architectural style of new development. Design guidelines ensure that grant-funded building improvement projects are of high quality and promote a sense of place and authenticity to Downtown's building fabric.

List Downtown in the National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is this nation's official list of architectural, historical and cultural resources worthy of preservation. The National Register is administered in partnership between the National Park Service and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. The City along with other Downtown stakeholders should investigate the potential for listing the Downtown in the National Register since contributing properties within a National Register District would be eligible for Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits, a significant incentive for facilitating building rehabilitation and adaptive use projects. Properties would also be eligible for tax deductions for easement donations and the easing of building code and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Although historic properties are not exempted from codes or from meeting basic life-safety requirements, National Register listing generally makes it easier to recognize the technical challenges of making historic buildings fully compliant without significantly altering historic character.

It should be noted that National Register listing does not restrict a property owner from use of the building. The La Salle City Hall and the Kaskaskia Hotel are already individually listed in the National Register; other properties may also be individually eligible. The City should consult with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency regarding the steps and procedures for nominating and listing the Downtown as a National Register District.

Encourage Use of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit

The National Park Service, in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA), administers the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program in Illinois to encourage rehabilitation and reinvestment in historic buildings. Through this program, a 20 percent tax credit is provided to owners and developers of income-producing historic buildings who undertake a substantial rehabilitation of a historic building in which rehabilitation costs must be equal to or greater than the adjusted basis of the property minus the cost of the land, plus improvements already made, minus depreciation already taken. Property owners and developers must follow an application process with IHPA to determine if the building is eligible to take the credit. Most contributing income-producing buildings in a National Register Historic District would qualify for the credit.

Downtown Core Urban Design

Recent streetscape improvements to First Street have enhanced Downtown's overall visual appearance and have made it a more attractive environment for shoppers, diners and visitors. However, much more remains to accomplish in terms of urban design improvements to build Downtown's image and brand as distinct traditional commercial district and a special place for community events and social interaction with family and friends. This translates for the need to undertake a more complete urban design program that incorporates streetscape, public space and wayfinding signage initiatives.

Develop a Downtown Wayfinding Signage Program

Although some wayfinding signage for I & M Canal-related sites at the U.S. Route 6 and Joliet Street intersection, Downtown La Salle generally lacks a identity signage and directional signage to help facilitate the movement of motorists and pedestrians to key Downtown sites, parking and attractions. A motorist could travel along U.S. Route 6 without knowing the Downtown district was located directly south of the roadway. A comprehensive wayfinding signage program is needed and should be designed in such a way promote a specific La Salle brand identity, which could be used in gateway and wayfinding signage in other areas of the community.

A comprehensive signage system should be designed to include:

- A downtown La Salle brand (image, logo, look, character, colors)
- External directional signs that lead to Downtown
- Identity gateways at key edges and entrances such as Joliet Street and U.S. Route 6 near City Hall
- Internal directional signs that lead to places, spaces, and public parking in Downtown

Create a Comprehensive Downtown Streetscape Program

Although First Street has been recently enhanced, a more comprehensive streetscape design program is needed to knit together other areas of the Downtown Core more cohesively. A streetscape plan and program with coordinated design elements such as paving materials, landscaping, planters, trash cans, and pedestrian crosswalks should be established. Such a plan could also address outdoor cafes and public art to further activate Downtown streets. Pedestrian-scaled decorative streetlights rather than "cobra head" lights should also be considered as part of the program to improve lighting and reinforce a unified attractive Downtown image. The streetscaping program can be financed through dedicated capital improvement monies, TIF financing, special grants or though a Special Service Area.

The following principles in the streetscape design and engineering should be kept in mind when proceeding forward with the implementation of future streetscape and urban design improvements:

- Balance the needs of pedestrians and motorists as well as provide amenities and orientation for shoppers and visitors when designing and implementing future streetscape and roadway improvements.
- Ensure Downtown roadways, side streets, driveways and parking lots should are efficient, accessible and safe.
- Continue improvements to alleys and ensure their accessibility and functionality for delivery vehicles, local residents, residents and visitors to the Downtown.
- Reduce the amount of asphalt and blacktop wherever feasible and introduce sustainable design features such as xeriscapes and permeable pavement systems.
- Incorporate a new Downtown identity, brand and logo in signage systems and other streetscape elements.

Develop a Plaza Space for Festivals and Gatherings

Recently, landscaping enhancements were undertaken to the parking lot at Gooding and First Streets to serve as a small, informal gathering space. Additional enhancements to the parking lot, including the installation of special paving, trees and an overlook to the I & M Canal area, could be considered to transform the space into a temporary farmer's market or festival space on weekends (*see concept plan on following page*). Such a space can also serve as the resting spot for shoppers, a place to enjoy views of the Illinois River bottom, or a lunch spot for downtown employees. The space would remain a parking lot during the weekdays and when festivals and events are not planned during the weekends. A staircase from the overlook could be installed on the bluff to allow pedestrians and visitor access to I & M Canal and other areas of the riverfront. Alternative plaza spaces could include other parking lots and under-utilized land along First and Canal Streets, and the parking lot at Marquette and Second Streets.

Explore Options for I & M Canal Access

Access to the I & M Canal from First and Canal Streets remains a key priority in connecting the Downtown to the Canal Trail and Lock 14. However, there are two key challenges: seeking permission from the CSX and Iowa Interstate Railroads and meeting Americans with Disability Act requirements for any pedestrian bridges, paths and staircases that could be constructed and funded through public dollars to address the grade changes between First and Canal Streets and the Illinois River bottom area. In actuality, addressing the ADA requirements may prove to be more complicated and challenging that receiving access permission from the railroads. In that regard, reusing the embankment from the previous access point near Canal and Marquette Streets may prove to be a suitable location for an elevator or ramp to be installed close to the I & M Canal. The bluff and the grade change along Canal Street are significant obstacles to installing ramps or an elevator.

DOWNTOWN PLAZA CONCEPT PLAN

Improved planting/ seating area with distinct focal point

Existing parking spaces retained

Decorative paving defines plaza as a unique space

New Canopy Trees

Scenic overlook

NORTH

Downtown Core Transportation and Capital Improvements

The Downtown Core is well-served by its current street network, which provides enough space for on-street parking and ample sidewalks for additional streetscape improvements. All streets in the Downtown Core should receive the same level of maintenance and streetscape enhancements as First Street; therefore, a Downtown capital improvements plan should take into account and schedule street resurfacing, sidewalk replacements and streetscaping enhancements for all Downtown streets and right-of-ways. In addition to maintaining the street system, other transportation priorities relate to connecting bicycle trail systems and managing the parking system.

Manage Downtown Parking

On-street parking is relatively well-utilized in Downtown, especially with the recent increase in commercial, retail and tourism activities. There also appears to be an ample amount of both on- and off-street parking to accommodate immediate needs; however, as the Downtown Core revitalizes and develops over time, and as more people visit for shopping, dining and tourism activities, there will be greater demand for off-street parking. When this occurs, a parking management study would be warranted. As a general planning principal for traditional commercial district, any off-street surface parking lot should be located off First Street and behind buildings to avoid breaking up the building streetwall. Furthermore, make parking lots more efficient by connecting and sharing them wherever feasible.

Install Bicycle Trail Signage

The Grand Illinois Trail passes through La Salle –the 500-mile bicycle trail system that crosses northern Illinois from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River. The La Salle portion starts at the I & M Lock 14 parking lot and travels southeast on the access road to Illinois Route 351, north over the bridge into La Salle, and then west along First Street, Canal Street and Water Street into Peru. The City of La Salle should install signage along these various points to designate the route.

Construct the Rotary and Prairie Park Bicycle Trail

The City also has recently prepared a plan to connect the I & M Canal and Grand Illinois Trails with Rotary and Prairie Parks. This new trail has the potential to expand the reach of the region's recreational bicycle trail system and bicycling itself as a mode of transportation for trips in and around the community. The City should pursue funding opportunities to construct this important trail connection.

Improve Downtown Infrastructure Systems

Parts of the Traditional Downtown are serviced by combined sanitary-stormwater sewer system. The River Street Waste Water Treatment Facility can become overloaded during storm events, which results in sanitary waste discharging into nearby waterways. The City has taken ongoing action to correct this problem and a study currently is underway to investigate methods and improvements to eliminate combined sewer overflow events.

Downtown Core Marketing

Downtown La Salle's natural and built environments are distinguished by local landmarks and historic buildings and scenic location adjacent to the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the Illinois River. It is these features that set Downtown La Salle apart from other communities along the Upper Illinois River Valley. The Downtown district's ability to capture an increased share of local, regional and visitor consumer markets will likely depend on the effectiveness of marketing and promotional strategies that are designed to target and attract key market segments and that highlight the Downtown as a center for understanding local history, heritage, culture, government, entertainment, events and local products and services.

Downtown Market Analysis

Conduct additional market analysis and consumer surveys in order to gain a strong understanding of existing and potential Downtown markets and their characteristics, and to assess findings relative to Downtown marketing and promotion strategies.

Strengthen Existing Partnerships

Align with, support and work to expand events already staged in the Downtown as well as strengthen and maintain partnerships with the La Salle Business Association and other civic and non-profit groups already staging events in the downtown area, with an eye toward enhancing events or adding new festivals or event components, where appropriate.

Involve Area Youth

Work to involve area youth in Downtown activities and events including introducing additional events or festival activities specifically targeting area youth.

Undertake Small-Scaled Promotion Events

Work with the La Salle Business Association to introduce and produce small-scale entertainment and events "on the street" and at a new plaza space to enhance the Downtown area's "entertainment factor." Event strategies, particularly in the short-term, should place emphasis on small-scale activities, local performances and events that help to "tell a story;" focus on family, friends, kids, local history and culture; and re-establish a strong sense of downtown La Salle as a gathering place and center of community life. Smaller-scale promotional activities and events staged in the Downtown can also attract attention and create a heightened sense of the Downtown as a place for fun and entertainment.

Examples of small-scale promotion events include:

- Organizing a student-alumni "street ball" basketball game or "local celebrity" free-throw competition staged in the Downtown area, possibly in connection with the local schools and/or another civic organization.
- Creating a "walking history showcase" using interpretive displays and/or historic photos of Downtown buildings displayed in the storefronts of both vacant and occupied buildings as part of a walking history tour or living history skit staged during the National Historic Preservation Awareness Month campaign in May of each year.
- Hosting a periodic "block party" or town social, or a special "Lunch Bucket Lounge" lunchtime entertainment series during the summer, which might be coordinated with local churches, civic organizations and area employers.
- Inviting community groups to decorate Christmas trees located in storefront windows as part of a walking "Enchanted Forest" holiday display and promotion, "unveiled" as part of the annual tree lighting ceremony.

Develop New Signature Events

Work to introduce additional "signature" festivals or events in Downtown La Salle where needed and feasible as a means of reinforcing the Downtown's "brand" image and, potentially, to generate revenue for broader downtown marketing and initiatives. Such examples could include beer and wine-tasting events and/or competition, an old-fashioned block party or street dance, a "La Salle First" living history festival, or an open house to show off a historic building that has been recently rehabilitated or is in need of rehabilitation.

Enhance Partnerships with Tourism-Related Organizations

The City of La Salle should maintain communications and partnerships with local and regional tourism organizations, including the Heritage Corridor Visitors Bureau and the Illinois River National Scenic Byway, to market and promote Downtown La Salle as an important visitor destination. The Heritage Corridor Visitors Bureau actively promotes the region's natural and historic resources and can provide information on visitor demographics, tourism planning initiatives and other lodging and visitor amenities. In addition, Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway organization may also serve as a marketing resource.

Tourism-oriented marketing and promotional activities include:

- Work with Downtown restaurants, destination-oriented retailers, the Lock 16 Visitors Center and other visitor-oriented facilities, such as the Hegeler-Carus Mansion, to assemble a professional quality Downtown La Salle Shopping and Attractions Guide for placement and distribution at area and regional lodging and visitor-oriented facilities.
- Organize visitor-oriented businesses and facilities to participate in cooperative advertising opportunities and leveraging participant dollars to gain prominent placement in tourism publications.
- Organize and host familiarization (FAM) tours for travel agents, tour operators, travel writers, and other tourism professionals.
- Develop and "plant" feature articles and editorial content promoting downtown La Salle as a visitor attraction in tourism publications and newspaper travel sections.
- Develop and maintain high quality visitor-oriented Internet website content that promotes the Downtown as a "must see" visitor attraction as part of a Downtown La Salle website as well as through features, event listings and reciprocating links with the Heritage Corridor Visitors Bureau, the Illinois River National Scenic By-Way, and other local, Regional and state tourism-related agencies and websites.

Downtown Management

To successfully revitalize a traditional downtown commercial district, several different elements need to be considered, including facilitating building rehabilitations and adaptive use, improving infrastructure, developing new businesses, and producing effective marketing and promotion activities. However, initiating and managing the downtown revitalization process does not happen on its own and must be guided, ideally, by a management organization with dedicated staff that can devote its resources to several different activities, including marketing and branding, public space maintenance, business development, and on-going communications with downtown stakeholders.

Moving Downtown revitalization process forward for La Salle will require some form of management entity as most successful downtown commercial districts have established a public or private entity to implement a comprehensive revitalization strategy through a combination of marketing activities, targeted incentive programs, and on-going engagement with downtown stakeholders and community residents.

One management entity form that could be implemented in La Salle is the Main Street revitalization program, developed and advocated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center. Under this program, a downtown management entity adopts two or three market-based strategies, such as developing a downtown tourism market, and those strategies are implemented across four broad areas of work, which include:

Design
The rehabilitation of downtown commercial buildings and enhancement of public spaces.

Organization
The involvement of private and public-sector leaders in revitalization planning and implementation.

Promotion
Marketing downtown, cultivating its image, and producing events, ad campaigns, and social media activities.

Economic Restructuring
Matching downtown's economy, business recruitment, and real estate development to changing market conditions and opportunities.

Of the approximately 2,000 or so Main Street programs across the country, including 44 in Illinois, most have full-time downtown managers, a board of directors, and volunteer-staffed committees representing the four areas of work, Main Street programs are typically funded by a mix of public and private resources, which may include:

- A contribution from the City's general fund;
- Tax Increment Finance revenue;
- An established business improvement district or Special Services Area;
- Contributions from residents;
- Contributions from business owners;
- Corporate funders; and,
- Foundation grants.

Assistance in establishing a Main Street program is available from the Illinois Main Street program, which is housed in Illinois DCEO, and from private consultants. Alternative to a Main Street program, a non-profit development corporation could also be established with broader responsibilities in neighborhood revitalization activities along with revitalization projects within the downtown district. Neighborhood development corporations are explained further in the Traditional Neighborhoods section of this Comprehensive Plan.

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS

Downtown Neighborhoods consist primarily of the residential areas east and west of the Traditional Downtown Core; areas that are currently zoned C-3: Central Business District. These areas are primarily single family residential in character with some neighborhood-scaled commercial and light industrial uses; property conditions range generally from good to fair. The overall planning focus for Downtown Neighborhoods is retain, rehabilitate and revitalize the single-family housing stock while allowing for some redevelopment to take place in locations that could support two-family and multi-family housing close to or on the edges the Traditional Downtown Core. Small-scale commercial and light industrial uses would remain although some flexibility would be allowed to transition such uses over time to residential.

Key elements of the planning and revitalization strategy for the Downtown Neighborhoods include:

Tourism
Currently, bed and breakfast establishments are not permitted in La Salle's residential areas. Permitting them conditionally could help provide additional lodging facilities for tourists and visitors we well as help rehabilitate and preserve historic homes suitable for lodging facilities.

Commercial and Light Industrial Uses
There are a number of small-scale commercial and light industrial uses remain in the Downtown Neighborhoods, including fast-food and sit-down restaurants, auto-body shops, small offices and other low-impact fabricating type industries. Existing uses can remain in the neighborhood although no higher intensity industrial and commercial uses should be allowed. Building and property improvements should be encouraged and new landscaping and buffering requirements considered as part of the zoning code for new light industrial and commercial abutting a residential property or block. Residential use for existing commercial buildings that have remained vacant over a period of time may be permitted in Downtown Neighborhoods. Truck and transfer terminals and heavy industries should be discouraged near or adjacent Downtown Neighborhoods with the exception of those that already exist. Truck and transfer terminals for sand mining transportation in particular is discouraged due to the potential noise, odors and pollutants that may emanate from such activities to adjacent Downtown Neighborhoods. Sand mining transfer activities should be located outside the Community Core.

Housing
Specific initiatives to rehabilitate and maintain Downtown Neighborhood housing stock, especially the single-family housing west of Bucklin Street, should be pursued by the City and other partner organizations and entities. The areas east of Tonti Street and south of U.S. Route 6 contain a mix of single family residential, along with public, institutional and light industrial uses. The Harland Bartholomew plans from eth 1960s called for garden apartment complexes in parts of this area in support of the retail and commercial services offered in the Downtown district. Although higher density residential seems unlikely in this area, some opportunities may exist to redevelop some parcels blocks into medium-scaled multi-family developments of two to four stories in height as well as senior housing opportunities that accommodate senior living needs within the Upper Illinois Valley region. Additionally, any historically and architecturally significant homes and resources within the Downtown Neighborhoods should be preserved and rehabilitated whenever possible and feasible.

Streetscape and Infrastructure
Neighborhood infrastructure improvements should focus on street repaving and maintenance, sidewalk replacement where needed, the preservation of brick sidewalks and streets where present, new street signage installation and the preservation and enhancement of existing green and open space. Street and infrastructure improvements should be programmed according to yearly neighborhood capital improvement plans.

Downtown Neighborhood Land Use

Downtown Neighborhoods are generally located south of Illinois Route 6 to Canal Street and from Bucklin Street to the municipal boundary and from Tonti to Union Streets. It is intended to permit mostly single-family residential with a mix of multi-family and small-scale commercial and light industrial uses. An expansion of commercial and light industrial uses is discouraged in order to concentrate such uses in the Downtown Core.

Code Changes and Requirements

To achieve the long-term planning goals for Downtown Neighborhood areas, it is recommended that a new zoning classification and accompanying requirements be considered and adopted. Permitted uses would include single and two-family homes, bed and breakfast facilities, small scale retail and commercial uses, parks and open space, offices, and public and semi-public uses such as funeral homes and day-care operations. Multi-family and light industrial uses would be conditional uses as well as ground floor residential in commercial buildings. Lot and side-yard requirements would generally reflect the existing lot conditions in Downtown Neighborhood areas.

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Traditional Neighborhoods are located primarily north of U.S. Route to O'Conor Avenue, including the residential areas that were part of the La Salle's original plat dating from the construction of the I & M Canal. Traditional Neighborhoods are currently R-1 and R-2: Single-Family, R-3: Two-Family, with pockets of R-4: Multi-Family.
These areas are primarily single-family residential in character with some neighborhood-scaled commercial uses along Eighth Street. A majority of the homes were constructed prior to World War II and consist mainly of Folk Victorian, Queen Anne, and Craftsman-styled bungalows. Over the decades, a number of single family properties have been converted to rental homes and apartments while others have been lost to property abandonment and demolition.

The overall focus for Traditional Neighborhoods is to retain, rehabilitate and revitalize the traditional single-family housing stock while allowing for some infill development to take place in locations that could accommodate new single family housing. Small-scale commercial uses would remain although new commercial development would be discouraged in order to concentrate such uses in the Traditional Downtown Core and other suitable areas. Planning strategies presented below for Traditional Neighborhoods recognize that La Salle's neighborhoods are stable with blocks of well-maintained homes on tree-shaded lots, although there may be scattered problem properties that are located on oversized lots, are of substandard construction, or have been converted to marginal rental use and are the first to be abandoned. Therefore, rather than lose additional housing units that could trigger neighborhood disinvestment, an approach that emphasizes the positive assets of Traditional Neighborhoods, targeted investments in the strongest blocks, incentives for property improvements, and marketing and promoting visible neighborhood change is recommended.

Key elements of the planning and revitalization strategy for the Traditional Neighborhoods include:

Housing
Specific initiatives to rehabilitate and maintain the single-family housing stock in Traditional Neighborhoods should be pursued by the City and other partner organizations and entities. The design, charm and pedestrian scale of several neighborhood areas are significant community assets and efforts to organize and mobilize residents and homeowners to participate in various revitalization activities can help to maintain neighborhood stability and increase property values. Therefore, the key elements of the housing strategy include the creation of specific incentives and programs to encourage housing rehabilitation and infill construction, initiatives to convert apartments back to single-family ownership, neighborhood-building and marketing efforts, and enhancing the organizational capacity of the City and neighborhood groups to implement a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization program.

Tourism
Currently, bed and breakfast establishments are not permitted in La Salle's traditional residential areas. Permitting them as-of-right or conditionally could help provide additional lodging facilities for tourists and visitors we well as help rehabilitate and preserve historic homes suitable for such lodging uses.

Commercial Uses
As with Downtown Neighborhoods, there are a small number of small-and medium-scaled commercial uses in the Traditional Neighborhoods, mostly along Illinois 351 and Eighth Street. These include grocery and drug stores, small offices, a banquet hall, a motel and other retail and services businesses. Existing commercial uses should remain but higher intensity commercial should only be considered in a redevelopment context that does negatively impact surrounding residential areas. Industrial uses should not be permitted. Building and property improvements should be encouraged and new landscaping and buffering requirements considered as part of the zoning code for new commercial abutting a residential property or block. Residential uses for existing commercial buildings that have remained vacant over a period of time may be permitted in Downtown Neighborhoods.

Streetscape and Infrastructure
As with Downtown Neighborhoods, neighborhood infrastructure improvements should focus on street repaving and maintenance, sidewalk replacement where needed, the preservation of brick sidewalks and streets where present, new street signage installation and the preservation and enhancement of existing park and open space. Street and infrastructure improvements should be programmed according to yearly neighborhood capital improvement plans.

Code Changes and Requirements

Several changes to the zoning code are recommended in regards to specific Traditional Neighborhood land use planning goals. These changes include:

Boundaries
Areas encompassing portions of the R-2, R-3 and R-4 residential zones from U.S. Route 6 to O'Conor Avenue could be included as part of a new Traditional Neighborhood Zone to maintain the traditional, contextually appropriate setbacks, uses, and other standards in a manner consistent with this Comprehensive Plan. Expressly permitted uses include single-family residential, parks and open space. Areas north of O'Conor Avenue could also be considered as part of the Traditional Neighborhood classification if they contain a high percentage of older homes and similar lot and site characteristics.

Conditional Uses
A set of conditional uses for the Traditional Neighborhoods should be adopted allowing flexibility to permit two-family and multi-family housing in appropriate locations, religious institutions, golf clubs, schools and community centers, and small-scale traditional retail and commercial uses. Several of these uses are currently permitted in the current zoning code, which, in some circumstances, may lead to development that is not appropriate to older, traditional neighborhoods. Bed-of-breakfast operations should also be permitted conditionally, which could help provide additional lodging facilities for tourists and visitors we well as help preserve and preserve historic homes suitable for lodging facilities.

Upper-Story Residential Uses
Current commercial zoning in the Traditional Neighborhoods does not expressly permit upper-story housing such as apartments, condominiums, bed-and-breakfast operation and short-term lodging spaces. Such uses should be conditionally permitted as long as such projects can demonstrate that new residential and lodging units are serviced by adequate parking.

Lot Requirements
Minimum lot requirements range from 6,000 square feet in the R-2 zone to 5,000 square feet in the R-3 and R-4 zones; minimum lot widths are 50 feet. A base minimum lot requirement of 5,000 square feet should be considered for Traditional Neighborhoods in order to accommodate infill development on vacant lots. Setbacks for multi-family development should also be modified to ensure they are fit in to the traditional neighborhood fabric. Such setbacks could be equal to the average setback provided by all other buildings on the same side of the street within 300 to 500 feet of the subject property.

Housing Rehabilitation

As mentioned previously, the principal planning goals for La Salle's Traditional Neighborhoods are to encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of existing single family residential homes, enhance neighborhood stability and promote such neighborhoods as quality places to live. More specifically, even though the majority of homes are single-family with some rental conversions, La Salle should also strive to encourage a diversity of housing stock that includes for-sale single-family as well as rental opportunities for individuals and families that may not be in a position to buy homes. In other words, as some single-family homes have been converted to apartments over the years, there may be some benefit to keeping converted homes as apartments to meet affordable housing needs in the community. Markets for rental housing may include children coming home from college, seniors looking to downsize and age in place, and families saving to purchase for a starter or bigger home elsewhere in La Salle. Furthermore, rehabilitating the existing housing stock also serves to maintain the overall design character and urban form of existing neighborhoods as well as preserve historically and architecturally significant homes and residences that are important to promoting La Salle as a distinctive place in the Illinois River Valley.

Establish a Housing Rehabilitation Incentive Program

Establish a housing rehabilitation incentive program that can offer grants or below-market financing that would available both to current residents for making property improvements and new residents seeking to rehabilitate new homes up to neighborhood standards. However, incentives at first would be targeted to certain blocks in order to facilitate enhancements to housing exteriors and build momentum for additional private investments along adjacent blocks. Targeted blocks need not be ones with the most needs, such as the number of vacant properties, but rather where there may be a strong likelihood of positive and visible neighborhood change.

The incentive program could come in the following form:

Low-Interest Rehabilitation Loan Program
New homebuyers would be eligible for low-interest loans to make improvements in conjunction with property purchase within a targeted block. The loan would typically carry a fixed interest rate that may be 1 percent below the 60-day Fannie Mae rate with the home buyer contributing three to five percent of the purchase price from their own funds. The buyer may then borrow the balance of the funds needed to buy and renovate the home, possibly as much as 110% of the after rehabilitation appraisal of the property. There should be no homeowner income restrictions on the use of this loan program and all applicants must have the ability to pay the loan back and meet standard underwriting requirements. The City could also require that converted apartment homes be rehabilitated as single-family residences as a condition for loan approval.

Rehabilitation Grant Program
Existing homeowners located within targeted blocks would be eligible for $5,000 or $10,000 matching grants to undertake various exterior property improvements, including painting, siding removal and installation, landscaping, lighting and other site improvements. There should be no homeowner income restrictions to use the grant program; they must also match the grant with their monies. The grant program could be structured as a forgivable loan whereby the property owner must undertake the improvements and live in the residence for five years. If the property owner fails to meet such requirements, the owner is subject to loan recapture.

Design Assistance
Basic design and architectural assistance could be provided to grant or loan applicants to ensure that proper home rehabilitation methods and procedures are followed and a desired neighborhood appearance is achieved with grant or loan proceeds.

Homebuyer Counseling
Counseling can be provided to prospective homeowners on topics related to house maintenance and repair, and maintaining a good mortgage payment history.

Design Manual
In addition to design assistance, a design manual can be prepared by the City and partner organizations to provide guidelines and best practices to exterior housing rehabilitation. The manual could cover topics such as siding repair and removal, painting, porch repair and replacement, new additions, landscaping, garages, and driveways. Photos, images and graphics could help illustrate and describe rehabilitation methods and standards.

Financing the incentive program could come from several different sources, including municipal general revenues, grants and loan programs from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs and the Illinois Housing Development Authority, regional and local foundations, private lenders in the area and community housing development organizations (CHDO's), with the nearest CHDO based in Rock Falls. Administration and management of the financial incentive programs could be undertaken by the City of La Salle or in partnership with a non-profit community development corporation that could have the additional responsibilities of marketing and promoting the program as well as housing development initiatives in La Salle. Alternatively, the non-profit corporation could be part of a broader regional initiative, with involvement from the communities of Peru, Olgesby, Utica and Spring Valley, in order to share the costs of staffing and operating the non-profit (see recommendation below).

Encourage Infill Housing Development

It has been recognized that there may be some opportunities for infill housing on lots where single-family housing once existed or where empty lots and land offer the prospect of adding new housing density to certain blocks and neighborhoods. Ideally, facilitating infill development should be undertaken by a private non-profit neighborhood development corporation that can obtain lots by gift, exchange, foreclosure, purchase or transfer from the City or tax claim bureaus. Properties could then be held by the CDC or in a land bank, which is a public authority created to acquire, hold, manage and develop vacant properties. Land banks are authorized under Illinois Finance Authority Act Article 815. Under Illinois law, land banks have the power to transfer property and to clear liens for the purpose of redevelopment, but not the power of condemnation. The City of La Salle could opt to form its own land bank authority or utilize other land banks that operate within the Upper Illinois Valley region.

Whether or not the City chooses to use a land bank authority or a CDC to conduct infill development, a program to help finance and develop new homes on vacant lots should be created. Similar to the housing rehabilitation, a pool of new construction contractors and housing development organizations should be used as partners to execute infill development contracts, and a revolving loan fund should established to finance new construction projects. A loan pool using private lender sources, foundation and philanthropic sources, state grants and resources and New Market Tax Credits can be accumulated to capitalize the loan pool. New housing should also designed and constructed according to prepared design guidelines, perhaps as part of the neighborhood design manual mentioned in the previous recommendations and housing rehabilitation.

Promote Neighborhood Housing Opportunities and Quality of Life

La Salle's Traditional Neighborhoods have many assets and positive qualities that should be more actively marketed and promoted to realtors, lenders and prospective homeowners. Marketing activities can help change local attitudes and mindsets about La Salle's neighborhoods and help shape a more consistent, positive image regarding neighborhood housing opportunities and quality of life. Marketing efforts should not just be seen as supplemental to housing development initiatives proposed above but as integral to building momentum for housing and neighborhood improvements, attracting future homebuyers and in engaging current residents in neighborhood revitalization efforts.

A Traditional Neighborhoods marketing program can encompass two different set of activities: neighborhood-based events, such as block parties and house walks, organized by local residents and neighborhood associations with participation from the City and other groups, and print and internet-based tools that promote financial incentive programs, recently rehabilitated homes for sale, before and after pictures of home improvements, neighborhood amenities, and local lending sources. Internet-based tools could also include a neighborhood blog that allows local residents to post stories about their home rehabbing experiences. Internet-based activities could be conducted by the City or by a non-profit neighborhood development corporation (see recommendation below on neighborhood capacity).

Designate Neighborhoods in the National Register of Historic Places

Certain neighborhoods may be eligible for listing as a district in the National Register of Historic Places, which is this nation's official list of architectural, historical and cultural resources worthy of preservation. The Illinois Historic Structures and Landmarks Surveys identified a number of homes and residences in the Traditional Neighborhoods as potentially eligible for individual listing in the National Register. In turn, blocks and neighborhoods could also be eligible as districts.

The City should consult with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency regarding the necessary procedures for determining whether there are potential National Register districts; most likely, a survey may need to be conducted to assess the integrity of properties already inventoried as part of earlier state surveys and the number of homes and building that could contribute to a district. Neighborhood National Register Districts are honorary and do not restrict the property owner from use of the property. District designations do allow homeowners to access the Illinois Historic Property Tax Freeze Program, which freezes a homeowner's property tax assessment at pre-rehabilitation levels for eight years if they undertake a substantial rehabilitation of their historic property. After eight years, the assessment rises to regular levels over the next four years. Furthermore, National Register Districts have also proven that they can stabilize neighborhoods and raise property values, and promote a sense of prestige and pride in a neighborhood's history and architecture.

Build Neighborhood Organization Capacity

Implementing and facilitating housing development and revitalization initiatives in Traditional Neighborhoods will require the City, neighborhood stakeholders and other partners to create and adopt a formal or ad-hoc organizational structure, perhaps in the form of a non-profit development corporation structure or through citizen-led neighborhood associations. Neighborhood associations comprise of local residents and other interested citizens that devote their time and energy to improve a well-defined neighborhood area that they and others live in. Most neighborhood associations are concerned with quality of life issues and are proactive in preparing neighborhood plans, starting community gardens, upgrading park equipment, organizing block parties and festivals or installing traffic calming on a residential street. Neighborhood associations can be established as charitable non-profit groups and can be effective partners in a variety of neighborhood marketing and revitalization efforts.

Alternatively, a more formal community development corporation could be established and funded through a variety of sources to take on specific responsibilities related to managing neighborhood incentive programs, receiving properties for future infill development and overseeing internet-based marketing and promotion efforts. While neighborhood associations typically focus efforts on a specific geographically-defined neighborhood, a community development corporation would concentrate its scope of activities on the entire Community Core, including the Traditional and Downtown Neighborhoods. Funding a full-time development corporation that works exclusively in La Salle's neighborhoods will be the principal challenge, however. Ways to address that issue include establishing the corporation as a joint venture between Peru, Olgesby, Utica and Spring Valley or forming it as part of existing organization or entity.

Neighborhood Urban Design and Capital Improvements

An annual Capital Improvement Program that prioritizes important infrastructure projects within the Traditional Neighborhoods should be developed and adopted by the City in collaboration with local residents and neighborhood groups. Potential projects should include the repair and rebuilding of alleys, curbs, streets and sidewalks where needed and new parkway landscaping and streetscaping where necessary and desired.

In some areas, existing brick streets and sidewalks provide a sense of color, warmth and beauty to La Salle's historic neighborhoods. Sidewalks are an important asset that encourage walking and improve community health.

Since brick streets and sidewalks last three times longer than concrete or asphalt, should be rehabilitated and preserved as an effective way to reduce long-term infrastructure replacement costs. Furthermore, a program for improving parkway appearances with landscaping and new trees should also be considered and implemented.

Neighborhood "greening" initiatives and other public space enhancements can also be included as part of an overall urban design and capital improvement program for Traditional Neighborhoods, which could be funded through a combination of City revenues, grants, fundraising and special assessments. Such initiatives can include neighborhood vegetable gardens, "green" alleys and streets, rain gardens and public art installations should also be considered. Green alleys and streets are surfaced with a permeable pavement system to aid in reducing stormwater run-off; rain gardens, which can be installed in parkways and on private property, also helps to reduce stormwater run-off as well as filter pollutants reaching the Little Vermilion and other nearby creeks and streams.

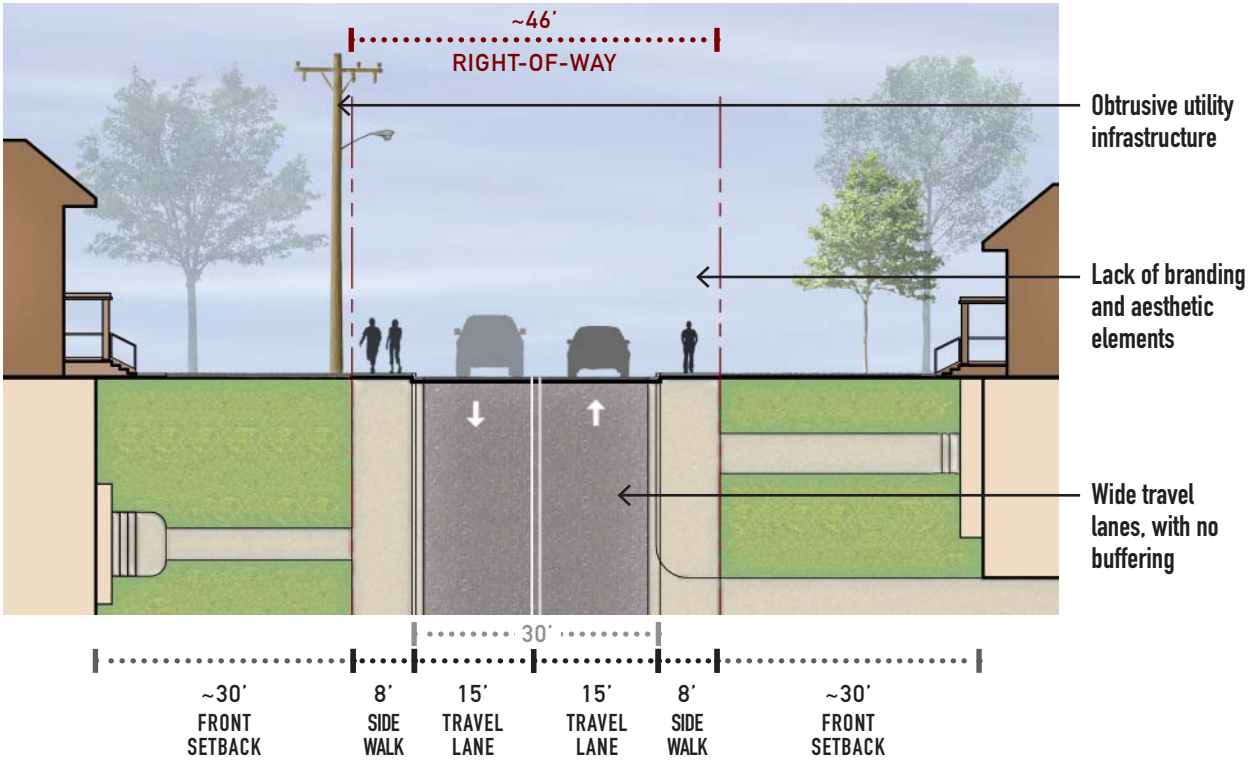
Since Joliet Street and U.S. Route 6 are important transportation routes within La Salle's Traditional Core, a higher level of streetscape and landscaping treatments along their lengths are suggested to add more visual interest to these streets as important gateways into adjacent neighborhoods. Streetscape treatments can include gateway and wayfinding signage, new street lights, banners, trees, landscaped medians where feasible, and specially paved crosswalks and parkway landscaping. In some places, sidewalks could potentially be widened to accommodate the additional landscaping enhancements. The City will need to work with the Illinois Department of Transportation to determine what streetscape and landscape enhancements could be allowed and accommodated and what funding for implementation may be available.

As with the Downtown Core, much of the Traditional Neighborhoods are serviced by combined sanitary-stormwater sewer system. The River Street Waste Water Treatment Facility can become overloaded during storm events, which results in sanitary waste discharging into nearby waterways. The City has taken ongoing action to correct this problem and a study currently is underway to investigate methods and improvements to eliminate combined sewer overflow events.

COMMUNITY CORE GATEWAY STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

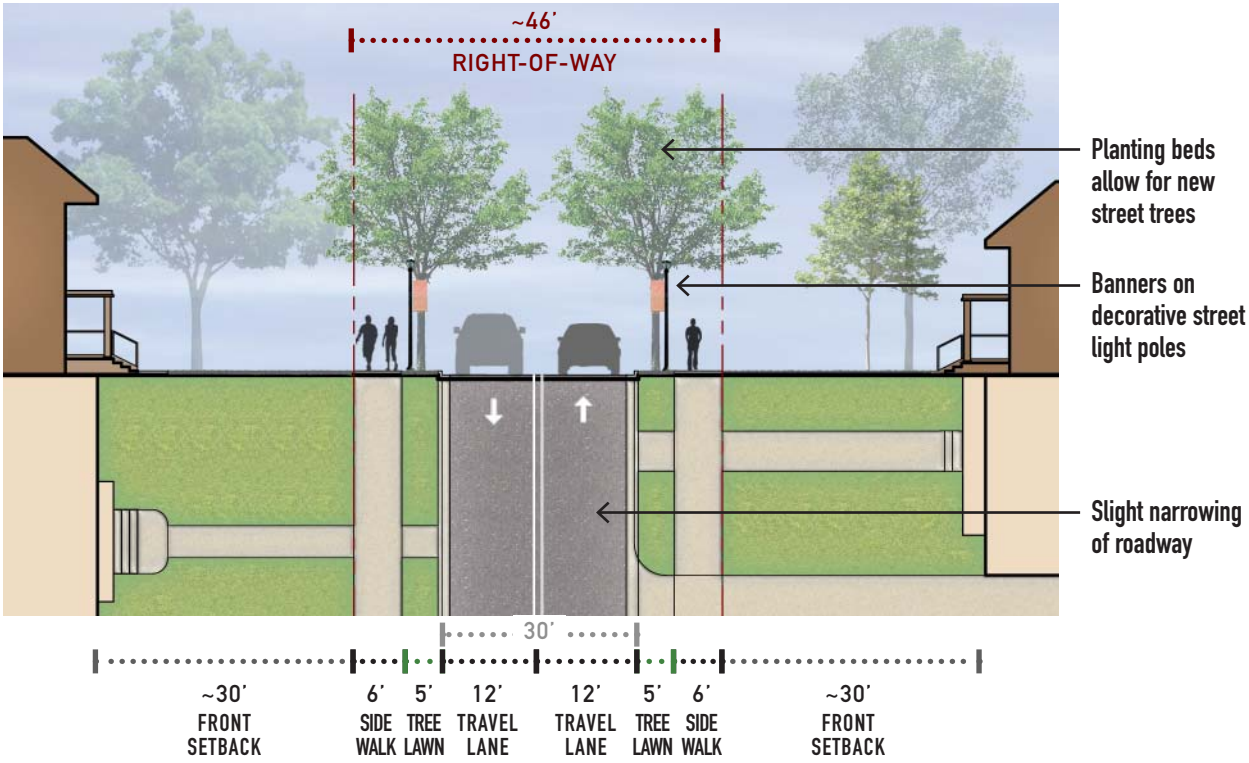
TYPICAL EXISTING CONDITION

ST. VINCENTS AVE./JOLIET ST. & 5TH ST.



POTENTIAL FUTURE CONDITION

ST. VINCENTS AVE./JOLIET ST. & 5TH ST.



NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL

Neighborhood Residential areas are generally located north of O'Conor Avenue and contain mostly single-family homes of more recent construction on larger lots. It is intended to permit mostly single-family residential with a mix of multi-family at locations suitable for such use. Existing commercial uses shall remain but an expansion of such uses is discouraged to maintain the existing residential fabric while concentrating commercial activity in the Traditional Downtown Core.

Code Changes and Requirements

Several changes to the zoning code are recommended in regards to specific Neighborhood Residential land use planning goals. These changes include:

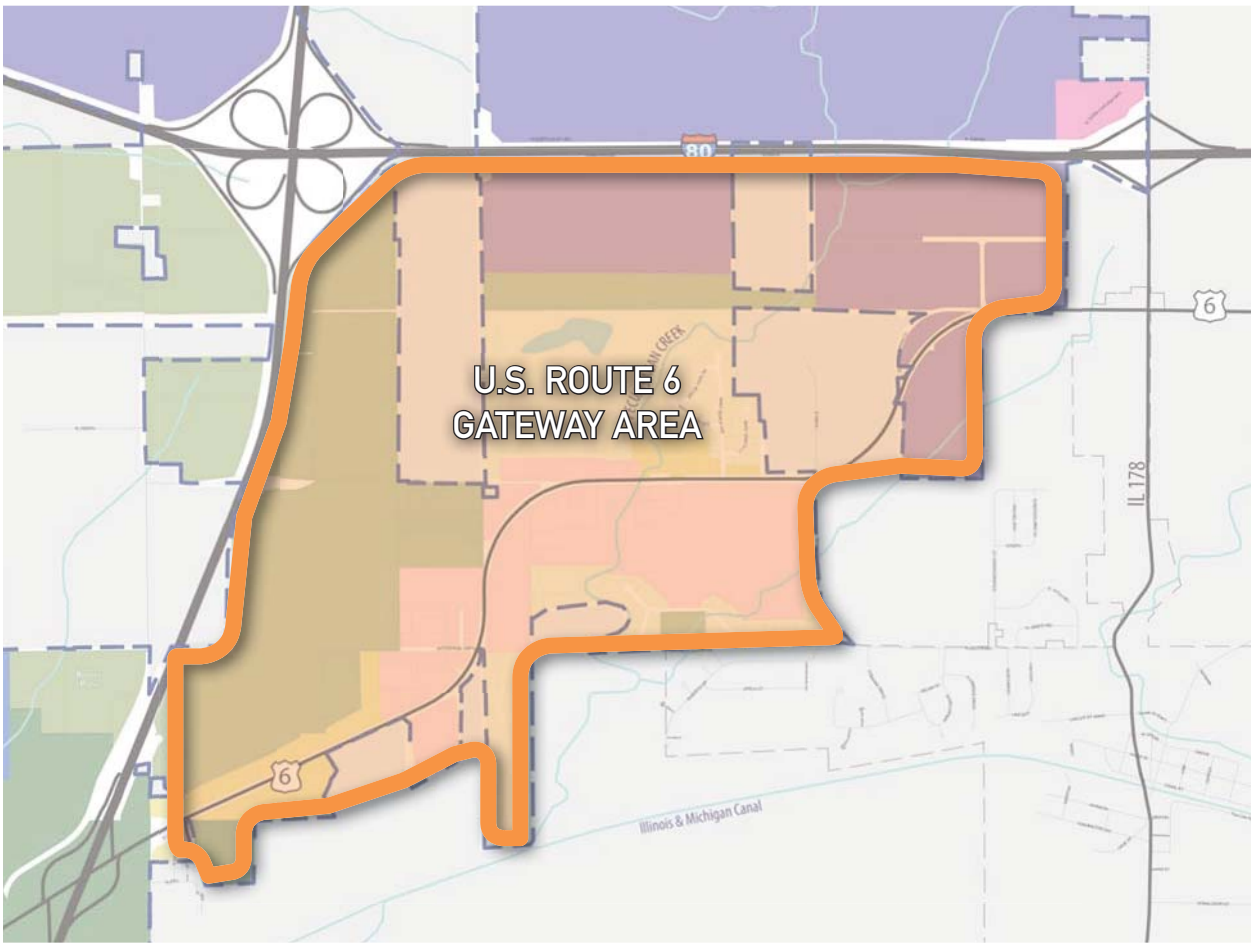
Conditional Uses
A set of conditional uses for the Residential Neighborhoods should be adopted allowing flexibility to permit two-family and multi-family housing in appropriate locations, religious institutions, golf clubs, schools and community centers, and small-scale traditional retail and commercial uses. Several of these uses are currently permitted in the current zoning code, which, in some circumstances, may lead to development that is not appropriate to this Residential Neighborhood land use pattern. Bed-of-breakfast operations should also be considered a conditional use.

Lot Requirements
The majority of the Neighborhood Residential area is currently zoned R-!: Single Family Residential, which has a minimum lot area of 7,500 square feet and a minimum lot width of 60 feet. These requirements are appropriate to encouraging the type of larger lot residential developments that is already the predominant development pattern.

Theme #2: Manage Development in the U.S. Route 6 Gateway Area

Overview

The newly annexed areas along U.S. Route 6 east of Interstate 39 and extending towards State Route 178 already contains a mix of residential, recreational, commercial and industrial uses amidst a semi-rural setting with rolling hills, small farms, streams and creeks, natural areas and open space. While there is a community desire to expand commercial and industrial uses within this area, there is also an understanding that such expansion can also compromise the area's scenic and environmental qualities, which are significant assets to attracting new residents, businesses and industries to the community. Potential conflicts between higher intensity industrial uses near residential and recreational areas can result in significant negative impacts, including noise, air and water pollution, increased traffic and degradation of local roads, and lost investment opportunities and lower property values. Since the area is still relatively undeveloped, the La Salle community has the opportunity to properly plan the Gateway for where industrial, commercial and residential uses should be located while maintaining the area's scenic setting and semi-rural development pattern.



The Route 6 Gateway Area

Primary planning strategies for Gateway Area is to manage commercial and residential uses along U.S. Route 6 in a way that respects the current development pattern of large lots, low-scale buildings and deep setbacks from the road. This way, the rolling typography and scenic views along the Route 6 can be maintained. A zoning overlay or a new zoning classification can be adopted to help guide development along this important corridor. Light Industrial uses should be concentrated in and around the existing industrial park just west of Illinois Route 178; additional land west and south of the park could be developed as additional industrial space that could accommodate office, back-office, research and light manufacturing and fabricating uses more compatible to the residential and recreational uses near the Senica's Oak Ridge golf course and nearby Utica. Heavy industrial uses, especially mining and extraction concerns, should be located north of Interstate 80 where adjacent agricultural uses and nearby access to Interstate 80 present less conflict with residential and commercial areas and relatively less impact on the local road network. Other parts of the Gateway could be maintained as agricultural or open space and reserved for future residential or industrial expansion.

Policy Statements

The following policy statements serve as guiding tenets for managing the growth and development of the U.S. Route 6 Gateway Area. Each policy statement is addressed by at least one strategy in the following narrative:

I. Develop the Gateway Area by implementing a land use strategy that concentrates appropriate commercial, institutional, residential and light industrial uses in locations that minimize land use conflicts, protects property values, and maintains the Area's overall semi-rural, scenic and environmental qualities.

II. Carefully manage commercial and residential development along U.S. Route 6 in a form and scale that respects the current development pattern and protects scenic views from the roadway.

III. Adopt new zoning, subdivision and regulatory tools to encourage high quality building and site design for industrial parks, residential neighborhoods, park space and commercial developments.

IV. Ensure that all new development within the Gateway Area is well-connected to adjacent land uses and incorporated as part of a well-planned and maintained roadway network – a roadway network that should also adequately support the transportation and traffic needs of adjacent and nearby residential, commercial, industrial and recreational uses.

V. Undertake improvements to water, sewer and other infrastructure systems according to priority needs for the Gateway Area and as outlined in yearly capital improvement plans.

VI. Plan, design, and implement urban design, streetscape, wayfinding and public improvements that enhance the Gateway Area's overall visual appearance and character.

VII. Evaluate the costs and benefits for targeted public investments for specific Gateway development projects, and wherever possible, create public-private partnerships for project implementation and to build community support. Benchmarks and tools should also be created to allow elected and appointed officials evaluate accurately and effectively individual development projects and ensure that such projects do not contradict or impact established long-term Gateway planning goals.

Recommended Strategies

The following planning strategies represent specific action steps to implementing the policy statements for the U.S. Route 6 Gateway Area.
Similar to the Community Core, strategies are organized under categories based on shared character and land use traits. The two categories included within the Route 6 Gateway Area are:

- U.S. Route 6 Corridor
- Semi-Rural Residential

For each of these strategy areas, a series of recommendations have been provided that include actions to be undertaken by the City and partner organizations/agencies to support and promote the development of the gateway areas; as well as the alignment of policies, programs and regulations to help guide elected and appointed officials realize and achieve intended planning goals.

U.S. ROUTE 6 CORRIDOR

Within the Gateway Area, U.S. Route 6 presents a significant opportunity to develop a distinctive transportation corridor that accommodates small to medium-scaled commercial and uses and single-family residences in ways that respect and maintains surrounding semi-rural setting. Currently, Route 6 is mostly commercial and residential in character with a landscape setting of large swales, deep development setbacks, rolling typography and vista views over adjacent agricultural land. Its scenery and visual environment could be significant selling points to prospective residents and businesses wanted to locate to La Salle. Although this land use direction for Route 6 is intended to offer flexibility for residential and commercial development, in it is not intended to allow to allow industrial uses, which can pose significant land use conflicts and detract from the Corridor's environmental and visual qualities. Industrial uses should be located in sites within the Gateway area that are near sufficient transportation networks and infrastructure capacities.

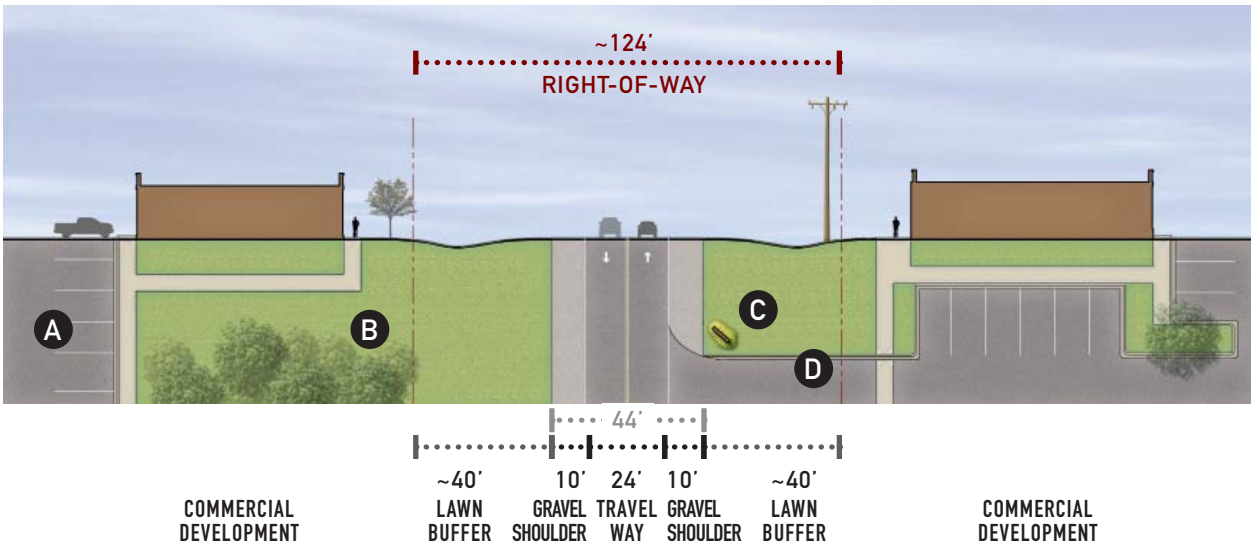
Key elements of the planning strategy for the U.S. Route 6 Corridor include:

Corridor Commercial
Small to medium scaled commercial uses and support services should be concentrated along U.S. Route 6 to meet the needs of La Salle residents living in the Community Core and the Gateway Area as well as those that may be traveling through to other destinations. It also provides for commercial services that relate to tourism, rural and agriculturally-related uses. Typical permitted uses would include: "country stores." small-scale eating and drinking establishments, nurseries or landscaping businesses, animal services, professional services, agricultural supplies and bed and breakfasts establishments. All commercial uses should be compatible in design and scale with semi-rural and rural areas. Corridor Commercial will offer

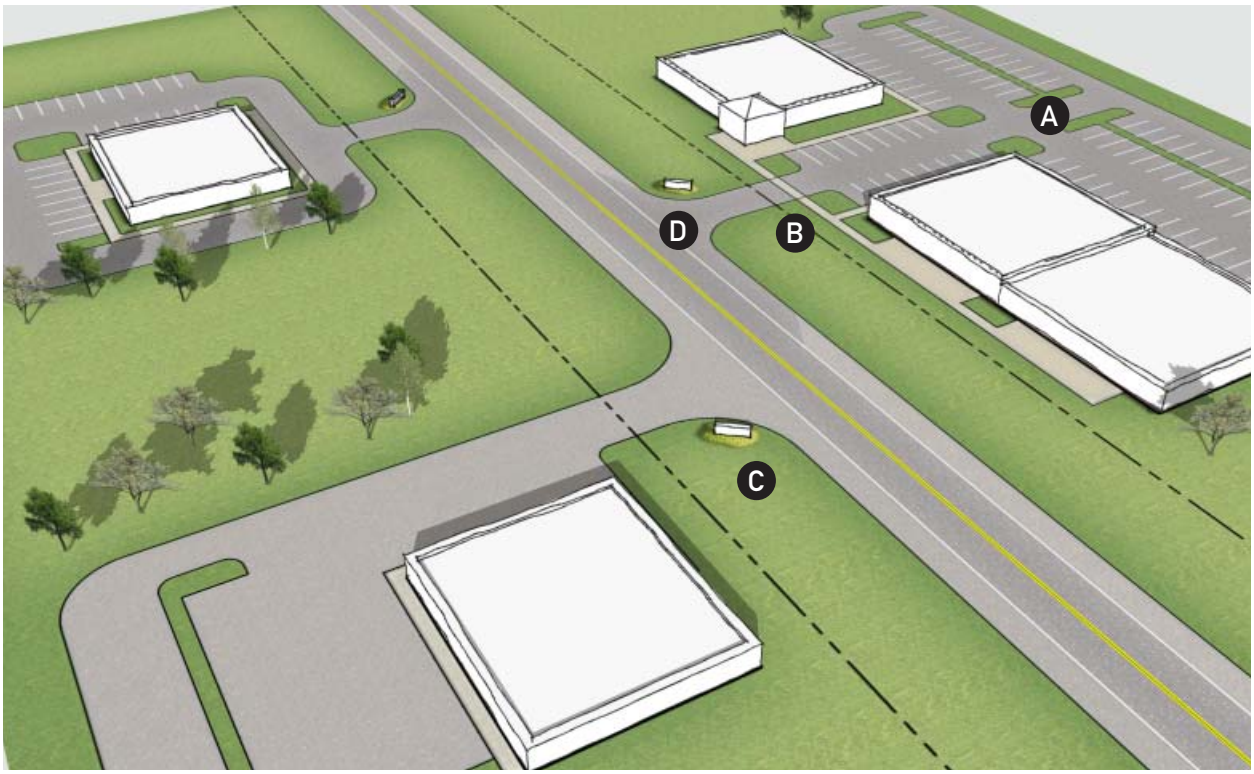
U.S. ROUTE 6 COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

TYPICAL PROPOSED CONDITION

U.S. ROUTE 6



- **A** REAR / SIDE PARKING AREAS
- **B** APPROPRIATELY SCALED & CONSISTENT PRIVATE SETBACKS
- **C** WELL-DESIGNED IDENTITY SIGNAGE
- **D** MINIMAL CURB CUTS



Bird's eye concept rendering of typical U.S. Route 6 commercial corridor condtions

flexibility for the Gateway Area where potential land use conflicts may be of less concern. Ideally, access to Corridor commercial uses should be made through shared driveways and frontage roads while parking should be located to the side or rear in order to preserve existing swales, landscaping, setbacks and green space.

Corridor Residential
Larger lot single-family homes would be encouraged along Illinois Route 6 as an optimal land use that reinforces Corridor's the semi-rural character and as a means in offering a different housing choice from those available in the Community Core. Single-family development should designed to blend with the natural landscape with densities that are derived in consideration of physical conditions, community character, and availability of public services, roads and other infrastructure. Civic uses would also be permitted

Conditional Uses
A set of conditional uses for the Corridor Commercial and Residential land areas should be adopted allowing a number of residential, commercial and light industrial uses to locate along the U.S. Route 6 Corridor while minimizing any potential detrimental effects these use may have to adjacent land uses and the Corridor overall scenic and environmental qualities. Conditional uses for the Corridor Commercial Area may include automotive car sales, large scale wholesaling and distribution, drive-through restaurants, mobile homes and scrap metal operations. For Corridor Residential areas, conditional uses may include mobile homes, civic uses, child care centers, senior living facilities, and small-scale office uses.

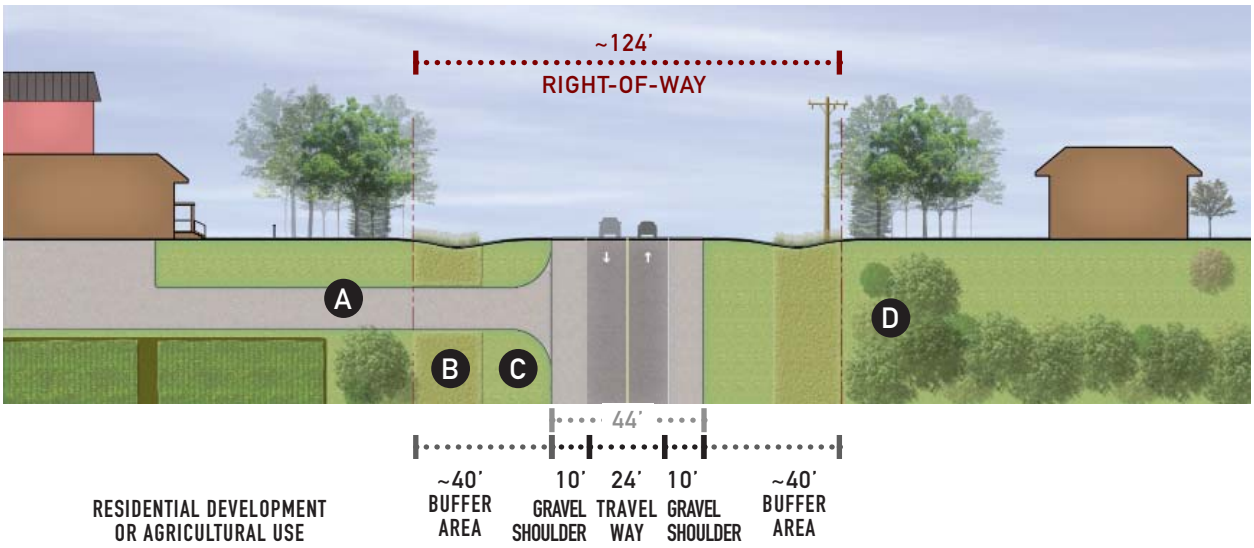
Design Standards
A basic set of design standards should be required by zoning code to ensure that the Corridor's overall design environment is maintained and enhanced as the U.S. Route 6 is developed over time. At the very least, landscape buffering between land uses of different classifications and intensities should be required, including residential between agriculture and residential and commercial. Sustainable design solutions, which reduce stormwater runoff and other environmental impacts to development, include allowing dirt and gravel driveways, permeable pavers and the construction of rain gardens.

Lot and Density Requirements
In general, the desired development density for residential along the Corridor should be two dwelling units per acre with commercial buildings at one building per acre to accommodate necessary parking. General off-street parking requirements should be lowered for Corridor Commercial Land Uses.

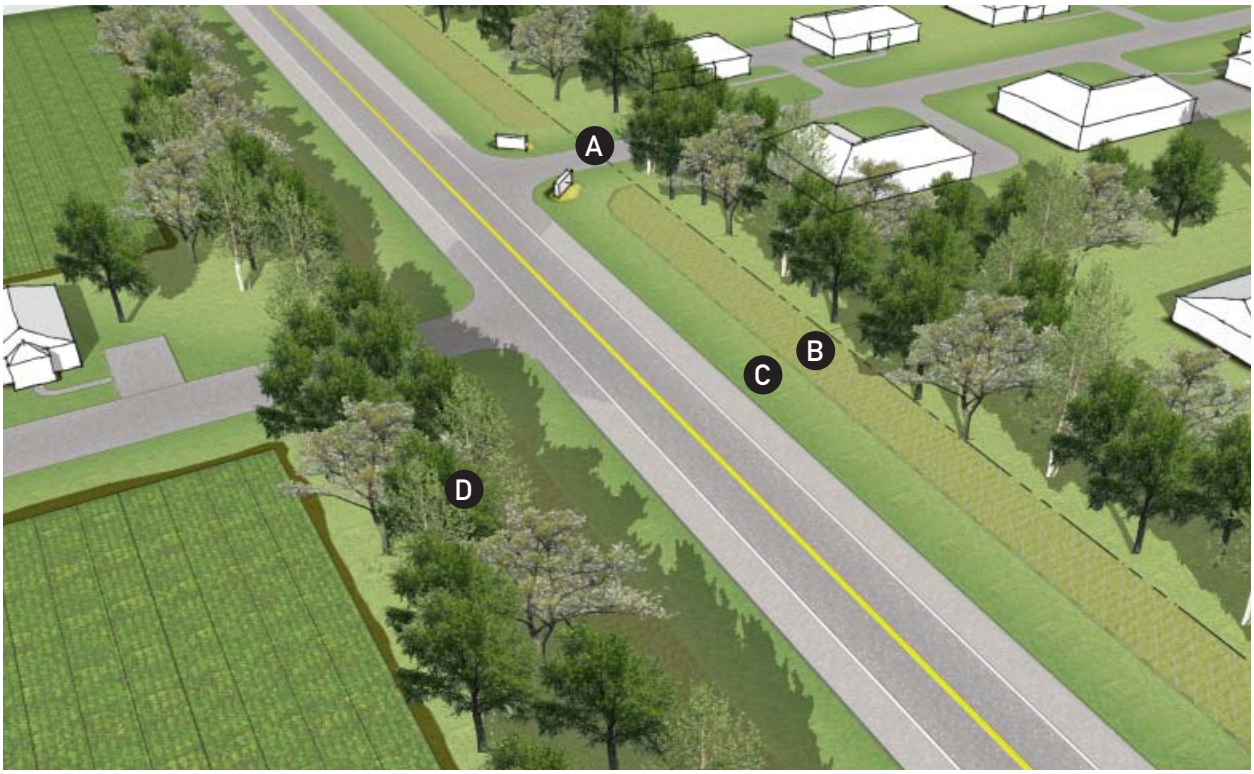
U.S. ROUTE 6 RESIDENTIAL CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

TYPICAL PROPOSED CONDITION

U.S. ROUTE 6



- **A** SHARED ACCESS DRIVES WITH MINIMAL CURB CUTS
- **B** NATURALIZED BUFFER AREA
- **C** GRASS BUFFER AREA
- **D** PRIVATE NATURALIZED OR AGRICULTURAL BUFFER



Bird's eye concept rendering of typical U.S. Route 6 residential corridor condtions

SEMI-RURAL RESIDENTIAL

As with Corridor Residential along Illinois Route 6, Semi-Rural Residential provides opportunities to homebuyers and new residents a different housing choice – new residential construction on larger lots in a distinctive setting of open spaces, vistas, natural features and landscaping. Semi-Rural Residential would be mostly located north and south of U.S. Route 6 in areas suitable for incorporating natural and other landscape features such as streams, creeks, woodlands, hillocks and farmsteads. Although this land use direction is intended to offer flexibility for residential and commercial development, It is not intended to allow to allow industrial uses, which can pose significant land use conflicts and detract from the Gateway Area's environmental and visual qualities, as well as impact property values of nearby residential areas. Industrial uses should be located on sites within the Gateway area that are near sufficient transportation networks and infrastructure capacities. Semi-rural residential developments should be accessed off from U.S. Route 6 from new collector streets and frontage roads rather than direct driveway access from U.S. Route 6.

Key elements of the planning strategy for the U.S. Route 6 Corridor include:

Residential Uses
Large-lot residential is the primary development form in Semi-Rural Areas, areas that may be served by municipal water sewer systems or not.

Conditional Uses
A set of conditional uses for Semi-Rural Residential areas should be adopted allowing a limited number of conditional uses that will have minimal impact on residential developments and the surrounding landscapes. Conditional uses may include bed and breakfast facilities, shared housing arrangements, churches, police and fire facilities, community gardens, golf courses, schools and athletic complexes.

Design Standards
A basic set of design standards should be required by zoning code to ensure that Semi-Rural Residential Areas are maintained and enhanced as whole residential neighborhoods develop over time. At the very least, landscape buffering between residential developments and commercial and industrial land uses should be required. Sustainable design solutions, which reduce stormwater runoff and other environmental impacts to development, include allowing dirt and gravel driveways, permeable paving system and the construction of rain gardens. An alternative option is to require that residential subdivisions be planned to conserve open space and natural resources, protect agricultural operations including grazing, increase fire safety and defensibility, reduce impervious footprints, and provide public amenities such parks and community gardens.

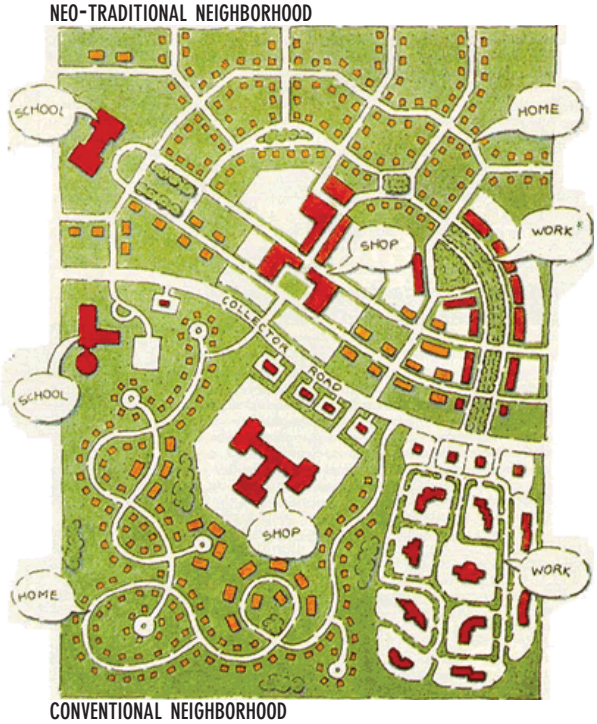
Neo-Traditional Subdivisions

The City of La Salle currently uses a conventional subdivision code that produces low density, single family residential development, characterized, sometimes, by a lack of connectivity to other nearby land uses. Although the current subdivision code has served the community adequately with recent residential developments adjacent to Senica's Oak Ridge Golf Course, there are alternative subdivision design methods that could be utilized in future semi-rural developments that promote better street layouts, connectivity and housing design. One subdivision design alternative is the Neo-Traditional Neighborhood approach, which copy urban neighborhood design principles that were popular during the first half of the twentieth century and typically feature a mix of housing types, street front porches, rear loaded garages, narrow gridded streets, sidewalks, and an integration of uses such as homes, shops, and open space. A Neo-Traditional subdivision design requirement could be instituted as a "floating" zone that may be selected as an alternative design approach by a developer or builder.

Conservation Subdivisions

Another increasingly popular alternative to today's typical subdivisions, and which would be more suitable to the East Gateway Area in terms of maintaining open space, vistas and environmental qualities, is the Conservation Subdivision. Conservation Subdivisions create dense clusters of homes by leaving undeveloped green space for agriculture, conservation, preservation of cultural resources and community use. Generally 40 to 60 percent of a development site is set aside in primary or secondary conservation areas; therefore, homes are built on smaller lots than in a conventional subdivision and are situated to provide the greatest view of the preserved open space. Conservation subdivisions can also be designed to make the best possible use of existing infrastructure. Placing residential development within a natural resource context means that land-use planning decisions will be made in accordance with a cohesive plan for the whole regional landscape rather than considered individually, project by project. In addition, new

NEO-TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD



CONVENTIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Illustration of a Neo-Traditional Neighborhood (top) versus a Conventional Neighborhood (bottom)
Image credit: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company

CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION

CONVENTIONAL SUBDIVISION

Illustration of a Conventional Subdivision (top) versus a Conservation Subdivision (bottom)
Image credit: Randall Arendt

developments are designed to reduce construction in floodplains and aquifer recharging areas and to link adjoining parcels for linear recreation areas. Like Neo-traditional Neighborhoods, Conservation Subdivisions could be instituted as a "floating" zone that may be selected as an alternative design approach by a developer or builder.

Interstate Commercial

Land located near intersections along Interstate 80 and Interstate 39 would be suitable locations for commercial activities that service both La Salle residents and travelers. At these locations, commercial development could consist of single-story auto-oriented uses with parking to the rear of the building or to the front with adequate screening and landscaping to adjacent uses. Light industrial uses with setbacks from the roadway would also be permitted. Hotels and lodging facilities would be conditional uses.

Agricultural Transition

Although currently zoned industrial, significant land areas in the Gateway's western portions and along Interstate 39 are currently agricultural in land use. It is unclear is these areas will be developed as industrial in the near-term. They could be suitable for semi-rural residential developments and conservation subdivisions as well given the typography and scenic qualities, and location to the Community Core. Alternatively, the land may be suitable both residential and industrial development provided that industrial uses are located further north near the Interstate 39 intersection and are separated from residential developments through open space and landscape buffers, and are served by an adequate street network. An Agricultural Transition land use designation acknowledges that agriculture and farming will remain viable near to mid-term uses but that the area could transition to semi-rural residential, industrial or a combination of the two.

Industrial

Portions of the U.S. Route 6 Gateway Area have already developed for both light and heavy industrial uses with newer areas north of Interstate 80 expected to develop for mining and resource extraction industries, but not exclusively. The industrial land use strategy proposes an expansion of light industries within the Gateway Area to the west of the current industrial park along Interstate 80, where access can be facilitated, ideally, with a new road network that does not rely exclusively on U.S. Route 60 for transporting materials and manufacturing goods. Ideally, light industries should be located in well-designed and landscaped park settings where smaller-scaled warehouse and distribution facilities, research and development, and other attached office facilities can be located. A more formally designed industrial park setting can help blend such developments with the overall semi-rural environment of the Gateway Area.

Key elements of the planning strategy for Gateway Area Industrial uses include:

Light Industrial
Light industrial zones will be mostly located within La Salle's Community Core at its northwestern boundaries near Interstate 80. Light industrial is intended to provide for light production and assembly, warehousing, office and research, and other similar uses in completely contained buildings that do not involve the release of polluting sounds, odors and materials. Therefore, light industrial uses can be located near or adjacent to residential areas. Lot requirements are recommended in these areas with a minimum of 22,000 to 25,000 square feet. General commercial uses will generally not be permitted in these areas with exception of restaurants, small-scaled agricultural related businesses, child care centers and clinics.

Light Industrial Modern
Similar to light industrial, light industrial modern areas should accommodate larger-scaled industrial facilities of over 25,000 square feet that do not involve the release of polluting orders and materials,

Light industrial modern will be located at the eastern edge of the Gateway Area both north and south in U.S. Route 6 Corridor. Limited medium-scaled, auto-oriented commercial uses such as back-office operations, data-processing centers, and builder supply stores would also be permitted but encouraged in a more formally designed landscaped industrial park setting.

Expanding Light Industrial Modern uses further west in the Gateway Area offers opportunities a more modern industrial park setting which can be a more sustainable environment for businesses needing larger facilities. Such parks can be designed with a grid system of streets and large, efficient blocks that can accommodate a range of building sizes with off-street parking. This may also require a new street network that connects to U.S. Route 6 but away from Semi-Rural Residential areas. New business parks should have an attractive, green appearance with common setbacks, parkway landscaping, and screening of loading/ service areas. New buildings will be clustered to share service drives and loading/service areas where possible. Such areas will be centered within blocks away from streets to reduce visibility and truck turning movements, and maximize buildable land area. Furthermore, new business parks should also include a shared stormwater detention system as well as provide open space and buffers between uses.

Heavy Industrial

Higher intensity industrial facilities, including mining and resource and energy production concerns, and heavy truck and freight terminals – ones that have the potential to emit polluting odors and materials, degrade infrastructure and cause potential land use conflicts – would be classified as heavy industrial. Heavy industrial areas must be served by adequate infrastructure, including roadways and utilities and have significant setbacks and buffering from adjacent land uses of a lower intensity. Such uses should be located north of Interstate 80 where their location has a sufficient distance from residential and commercial uses along the U.S. Route 6 Corridor. Mining uses along U.S. Route has the significant potential to impact property values and diminish the Gateway Area's visual and environmental quality. All mining uses should be part of a conditional use permitting process where all facets of mining operation can be assessed for their impacts on local roads, infrastructure and water supply.

Mine Reclamation Planning

Typically, most state and county governments require mining operators to file a mining site reuse and reclamation plan in order to first operate. In turn, the City should require mining operations within municipal boundaries to submit a reclamation plan as part of the conditional use permitting process. Alternatively, a reclamation ordinance could be adopted by the City to ensure that sites can be reclaimed for future use and avoid any safety, environmental and economic impacts left by an abandoned mine.

Transportation Infrastructure

In addition to roadways, additional planning should be undertaken to extend railroad spurs or building transfer stations within and north of the Gateway Area for transporting and hauling sand and other heavy industrial products.

Gateway Area Transportation and Capital Improvements

Since the Gateway Area is still mainly agricultural in land use, the existing road network in largely rural in design and currently supports low traffic volumes. The roadways are well-maintained but there are not adequate to support future large-scale industrial development is that were to occur, especially additional mining activities where heavy transport trucks can lead to degraded road surfaces and water quality within the area's watershed. There is also a lack of east-west connectivity, which causes most traffic to use U.S. Route 6 as principal transportation artery between La Salle's Community Core and the Gateway area.

The La Salle community should consider the following recommendations as ways to efficiently plan for transportation and infrastructure improvements in the Gateway Area.

Concentrate Heavy Industrial Uses North of Interstate 80

As mentioned previously, mining and other heavy industrial uses should be concentrated north of Interstate 80 to avoid potential land use impacts. These uses, along with other Interstate-oriented commercial businesses that have the potential to generate significant traffic should be located near the Interstate 80 and 178 interchanges, which can handle large volumes of traffic rather than roads further south in the Gateway area.

Manage Traffic Access Along U.S. Route 6

Frontage roads, shared driveways, turn lanes, or restricted access points should be considered as part of the overall planning and development strategy for the U.S. Route 6, which is under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation. Shared driveways in particular can help to retain the existing landscape of swales and deep setbacks by reducing the need for additional pavement surfaces. Frontage roads can also restrict access points to Route 6, which can help in maintaining landscape elements as well as direct traffic to appropriate Route entry and exit points.

Roadway Assessment

Industrial land uses such as mining may generate lower traffic volumes than commercial development, but mining transport trucks will have a significant impact on the roadway condition. A roadway assessment for new industrial development should be conducted to determine how such development will impact the local roadway network and ways in which the City can recover costs associated with the impacts.

Roadway Connectivity

All new developments in the Gateway Area, whether recreational, commercial, industrial and residential, should connect to adjoining land uses and the existing roadway network. This can help facilitate east-west traffic movement and alleviate traffic load on U.S. Route 6.

Traffic Impact Studies

Potential traffic impacts should be reviewed when new driveways and access points are needed for the construction of traffic-generating enterprise, industry or residential development within the Gateway Area. In particular, residential developments over 20 units should be reviewed for the amount of traffic that will be generated on the roadway network. A traffic impact analysis (TIA) consists of an engineering study that compares before and after traffic conditions on a roadway network due to a proposed land change and mitigation measures to alleviate conditions that may lead to traffic congestions and other roadway impacts.

Development Impact Assessment

The City of La Salle should prepare a fiscal impact analysis program that can be applied to large scale development within the Gateway Area. As most new development will likely occur east of the Little Vermillion River and north of Interstate 80, an impact assessment program should evaluate how new development will impact roadways and infrastructure. Although the City has already extended sewer and water services to most areas within the Gateway, it is unclear if additional capital improvements will be needed to service developments with special roadway and infrastructure needs. The overall purpose of the assessment program would be to assess a fee to recover the associated fiscal impact. New development, therefore, would be assessed a fee to recover the costs associated with expanding the waste water treatment, water supply systems and other infrastructure systems.

Road Upgrade and Maintenance Agreements

Road upgrade and maintenance agreements (RUMA's) are used by counties and local governments to help pay for road upgrades and improvements that are impacted regionally by mining and energy production sites. Under such agreements, the operator of mining and energy production sites agrees to pay for road upgrades, crossing and intersection improvements and maintenance for roads that will be explicitly used during drilling activity. Such agreements are usually required as part of conditional use permitting process as mining and heavy manufacturing uses are typically classified as conditional uses in most zoning codes. In such cases, the mining operator contributes an escrow amount based on the cost of road repair per mile times the total number of town roads that will be used by the operator's truck hauling fleet. Road upgrades projects are still undertaken by the municipality or the county. Road upgrade and maintenance agreements are usually negotiated and approved between a county and local municipality since mining operators will likely be using roads shared by towns and counties.

Gateway Area Urban Design Enhancements

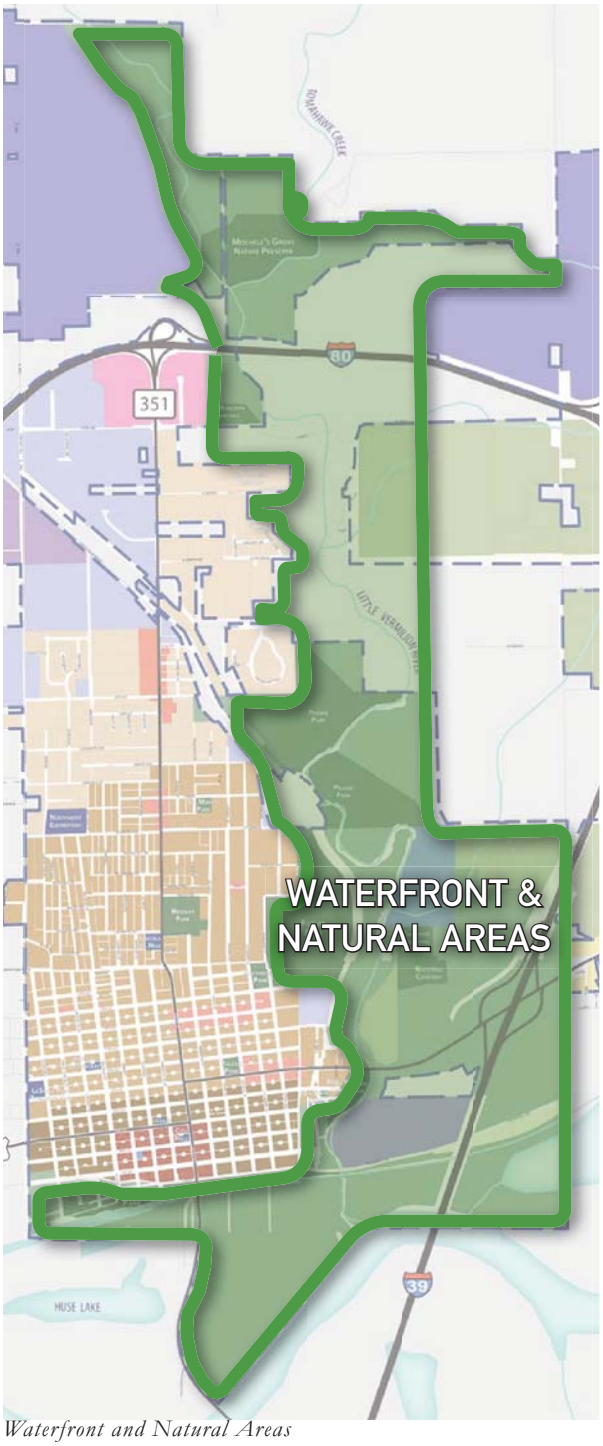
Gateway enhancements and signage should be considered for Illinois 178 and Interstate 80, Illinois 351 and Interstate 80, U.S. Route 6 and Interstate 39, Route 6 at the eastern and western City limits, and Illinois 351 at the southern municipal limits. These enhancements could be a monument-type welcome sign with a "Thank You for Visiting La Salle" logo. Additional enhancements could include flowers and ornamental design features. The gateways should be designed and installed as part of an overall community urban design and branding program.

Theme #3: Maintain Natural Areas and Enhance the Waterfront

Overview

The Upper Illinois River Valley has long been known for its scenic qualities and recreational opportunities, especially with such resources as Starved Rock State Park and the Illinois and Michigan Canal bike trail, which has its terminus point in La Salle. Although La Salle's waterfront area already contains several uses, from light industrial uses to the River Street Wastewater Treatment Plant, to Lock 14 and farm and bottom lands, there may be opportunities for some parks and open space enhancements that make the waterfront a visually attractive place for both recreational and heritage tourism activities. Reserving the waterfront for open space and recreational opportunities can maintain the area as a natural buffer and mitigation measure to future flooding events. In addition to the waterfront and the soon-to-be completed Rotary and Prairie Parks, there may be other opportunities to create a green belt in the center of the community as a natural boundary between the Community Core and the U.S. Route 6 Gateway. Among these opportunities is to convert the former Mathiessen and Hegeler factory complex into an interpretive park, where residents and visitors can walk, job and bike while viewing outdoor exhibits and public art that tell the story of this nationally well-known industrial site.

It should be noted that providing residents with greater access to open areas is a critical component of enhancing quality of life. Along with providing a location for outdoor activity, it also allows for a greater degree of social interaction and results in strengthening the sense of community. Similarly, bicycle and pedestrian circulation networks help improve residents' physical health and develop connectivity to local and regional destinations. The City has undertaken plans aimed at connecting bicycle trail networks to the Downtown, the I & M Canal, and the newly planned Rotary and Prairie Parks, which should encourage an active/healthier lifestyle for residents.



Waterfront and Natural Areas

Policy Statements

The following policy statements serve as guiding tenets for managing and maintaining natural areas and the Waterfront within La Salle. Each policy statement is addressed by at least one strategy in the following narrative:

I. Identify opportunities for creating new recreational amenities in the form of parks and other open space within easy access of residents and visitors. New amenities should only be created when financial and staffing resources can be readily identified to support park design, programming and maintenance for the near and long-terms.

II. Maximize the utilization of the waterfront for recreational and heritage tourism purposes while accommodating current the City's current wastewater treatment facility

III. Reclaim vacant and environmentally degraded land for potential open space and parkland that meet the local and visitor recreational needs.

IV. Discourage future development in areas planned for new open spaces and parks and a mitigation measures to prevent future flooding, especially along the Waterfront, the Little Vermilion and other environmentally sensitive areas.

V. Explore partnerships between public agencies and between public and private stakeholders wherever possible to accomplish planning goals and objectives related to parks, open space and flood mitigation.

Recommended Strategies

The following planning strategies represent specific action steps to implementing the policy statements for natural and waterfront areas. These strategies are organized under categories based on shared character and land use traits. The two categories for Theme #3 are:

- Open Spaces and Naturalized Areas
- Waterfront Areas

For each of these strategy areas, a series of recommendations have been provided that include actions to be undertaken by the City and partner organizations/agencies to support waterfront, open space, and natural area planning goals; as well as the alignment of policies, programs and regulations to help guide elected and appointed officials realize and achieve intended planning goals

OPEN SPACES AND NATURALIZED AREAS

Parks and Open Space Master Plan

The City should develop a more comprehensive master plan for its park system in order to evaluate all existing facilities and natural resources, assess public needs via survey and workshops, and develop funding strategies for future park improvements, including potential enhancements to the Waterfront Area and the Mathiessen and Hegeler Interpretive park. The Plan will build upon recommendations contained within the recently completed plans for Rotary and Prairie Parks, which included some analysis on community park needs. The Master Plan will allow the City to be more competitive in applying for additional include Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grants, Lake and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development (DCEO) grants.

Mathiessen and Hegeler Factory Complex Interpretive Park

While the clean-up and remediation of the Mathiessen and Hegeler Site will be completed at some point on the future, the La Salle community should begin to plan for its future re-use. Its most likely reuse scenario is to transition the site for additional open space with pedestrian and bicycle paths. As open space, it could serve as a suitable flood mitigation measure along the Little Vermilion River; as an open space amenity, it could also serve as an interpretive park that could tell the story of the Mathiessen and Hegeler Factory complex with outdoor exhibits, sculptures, public arts and special markers to denote where buildings once stood. The interpretive park could be second stop for tourists already visiting the Hegeler-Carus Mansion.

Open Space Requirements and Planned Developments

The existing Planned Unit Development (PUD) regulations within the zoning ordinance apply to any new development that contains a grouping of multiple land uses. At present, the regulations do not require developers to provide any open space as part of the approval of the planned unit development. The City should modify the ordinance to require a minimum percentage of the total planned site area allocated for open space which may include recreation amenities and community facilities, either dedicated to the City or retained under private ownership. Alternatively, the City could substitute this requirement by offering developers options to use Neo-Traditional Neighborhood or Conservations Subdivision "floating" zones for their developments. Both floating zones would also require open space dedication requirements.

Community Gardens Program

A community gardens program should be initiated by the City and managed in co-partnership with other groups and entities to enhance neighborhood character, increase access to locally grown food, and decrease City costs associated with maintenance of empty lots in Community Core neighborhoods. There are different ways to organize community gardening programs as some offer garden space at no cost to residents in return for maintenance and upkeep. Another method is to establish a lease program whereby a not-for-profit organization or neighborhood association creates gardens for a low fee. Additionally, La Salle should pursue grant opportunities as they arise, preferably as a joint effort between the responsible parties and the City. In addition, the City should permit community gardens in most zoning classifications in the Community Core and standards should be developed on how community gardens should be designed and managed.

WATERFRONT AREAS

Waterfront Master Plan

A more specific Waterfront Master Plan should be developed, either as part of the Overall Parks and Open Space Master Plan or separately from that process, in order to design and consider what enhancements could take place along the Waterfront. Although the River Street Wastewater Treatment Plant will remain along the Waterfront, the area around it could be transformed by incorporating Lock 14 and the Steamboat Basin Area of the into a recreational zone with additional open space, an expanded pedestrian and bicycle path network, and places for public art installation. Enhancement of the waterfront should serve as a critical catalyst in spurring investment in Downtown buildings and businesses that overlook the waterfront.

Developing the Waterfront Master Plan will need to take into consideration the possibility of creating it in collaboration with the City of Peru, both which share a working industrial and commercial waterfront. There may be a significant opportunity to create a more comprehensive Waterfront plan for both communities that addresses the retention of industrial and commercial businesses while integrating recreational amenities and enhancements to the Waterfront's physical environments, buildings, streets and open space. A working waterfront that includes opportunities for residents and visitors to ride their bikes and walk along the area can only enhance La Salle and the region's recreational opportunities.

Water Supply and Infrastructure

As mentioned in the State of the City, La Salle'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. The City has recently completed a study that suggested how this issue should be addressed and has recommended improvements to the system that would increase water capacity. However, one issue not addressed in the study was the potential to connect the La Salle water system with a neighboring community, including Utica or Peru. An interconnected system could provide back up for both municipalities should a disruption to the water supply occur. This option may be less expensive than relocating the floodplain wells to a different location.

Section 9
Funding Sources

The following are several major sources of funding that may have potential for implementing the revitalization strategies presented in this Comprehensive Plan:

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing is a State authorized program administered by a municipality that allocates future increases in property taxes from a designated area for improvements dedicated to that area. Under TIF, the property taxes due to an increased value from new development, increases in new assessment due to rehabilitation or improvement or tax rate changes, are allocated to the municipality in a Tax Increment Allocation Fund to be used for various redevelopment activities within the designated area. Other taxing districts continue to receive property taxes at the same level as before the TIF district was instituted. Eligible Comprehensive Plan implementation costs include:

- Zoning code revisions and design guidelines
- Streets and infrastructure
- Building improvement program
- Wayfinding signage design and installation
- Streetscape design and construction
- Waterfront development and easement purchases

Business Improvement District (BID)

A BID is a State authorized financing program that municipalities can establish for improving infrastructure and attracting new commercial growth in a designated business improvement district. A BID is adopted by ordinance and is funded by small increments added to local sales or hotel taxes. Sales taxes can be used for several revitalization or redevelopment activities allowed under the BID statute; however, hotel taxes must be used for tourism and convention related activities. A BID remains in place for 23 years and revenues collected within it are placed in a Business District Tax Allocation Fund. One significant advantage of a BID is the flexibility and wider range of activities in which BID monies can be used as opposed to a TIF district or Special Service Area. Eligible Plan implementation costs include:

- Code revisions and design guidelines
- Building improvement program
- Wayfinding signage design and installation
- Streetscape design and construction
- Infrastructure improvements
- Riverfront development and easement purchases
- Business retention/attraction program
- Salaries related to implementation activities

Special Service Area (SSA)

A Special Service Area is a State authorized financing program that can be administered by the City or by a designated service provider agency, to deliver a wide range of additional services and physical improvements in a defined geographic area such as a central business district or commercial corridor. An SSA is funded by a special tax assessment paid by the property owners in the designated SSA district and can finance a variety of district management activities including marketing and special events, trash and snow removal, and sidewalk/public space maintenance. Special Service Areas can also underwrite infrastructure and building improvements. Eligible implementation costs include:

- Building improvement program
- Wayfinding signage design and installation
- Streetscape design and construction
- Business retention/attraction program
- Salaries related to implementation activities
- Branding, marketing and promotion activities
- Special events
- Streetscape maintenance services
- Staff salaries related to implementation activities

Although a municipal government is required to pass an ordinance to adopt the SSA, a separate service provider, such as a Main Street program, chamber of commerce, or community development corporation, to serve as the SSA's operating and governing entity. The process for establishing an SSA requires obtaining support from property owners and taxpayers within the proposed SSA district. An overall strategy for organizing

stakeholder support is important, along with determining the SSA's governing structure, level of services to be provided, and annual budget and boundaries. The municipality and service provider agency are required to hold a hearing to discuss the benefits of an SSA with local stakeholders. A 60-day waiting period after the public hearing is required before adoption of the final SSA ordinance. If 51 percent of registered voters and property owners of record within the proposed SSA district boundaries file a petition to oppose adoption, the ordinance cannot be approved. The entire process to establish an SSA can take between six and 12 months.

Capital Improvement Plan

Most communities incorporate some aspects of Comprehensive Plan public improvement initiatives within the municipal capital improvements plan, which should be evaluated on an annual basis. Capital improvement funding could be used to support various projects outlined in the Plan, including:

- Water supply system improvements
- Stormwater management improvements
- Public facilities
- Street and sidewalk improvements and streetscape implementation
- Public parking improvements
- Signage and wayfinding programs
- Waterfront development

Recognizing that public budgets are tight and somewhat limited in the current economy, the City should investigate shared improvements and funding opportunities with other municipal taxing bodies or public/private partnerships.

General Revenue Bonds

Depending upon the City's bond rating and current bond/debt load and retirement, the City may investigate the ability of long-term bonds for specific planning projects and infrastructure initiatives. Bonding for public infrastructure, open space or streetscape improvements, or site acquisition, are some of the key catalytic Comprehensive Plan elements that should be considered.

Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)

Administered by IDOT and funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FHA), the ITEP provides grant funds to underwrite projects that expand transportation choices and enhance the overall physical environment and transportation experience. Eligible projects include streetscape improvements, provision of pedestrian, and bicycle facilities, environmental mitigation due to highway run-off and pollution, control and removal of outdoor advertising and rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings and facilities. Projects may receive up to 80 percent reimbursement for project costs with the remaining 20 percent paid by the local government or sponsoring agency. Average grant awards range from $700,000 to $900,000. Applications for the ITEP program are taken yearly and are awarded on a competitive basis. Eligible Comprehensive Plan implementation costs include:

- Signage design and installation
- Road/streetscape design and construction
- Trail linkages and improvements

Public Water Supply Loan Program

Administered by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, this Program provides low-interest loans to local governments for replacement and construction of community facilities such as water mains and stormwater sewer systems. Engineering and construction costs are eligible expenses. Municipalities must provide design plans as well as documentation of adequate sources of revenue and security for loan repayment. Eligible Plan implementation costs include:

- Road/streetscape design and construction
- Infrastructure improvements for development sites

Open Space and Land Acquisition Program (OSLAD) and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Open Space and Land Acquisition Program offers grants to municipalities for the acquisition and development of land for open space, parks and bike paths. Funding assistance is awarded on a 50 percent matching basis with grant awards up to $750,000 for land acquisition and $400,000 for development and renovation. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources administers this program along with the Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federally funded initiative that also provides 50 percent matching grants for park and open space projects that meet the recreational needs of local communities. Both programs encourage best practices in land management and sustainability. Eligible Comprehensive Plan implementation costs include:

- Park Improvements
- Waterfront development

Park and Recreational Facility Construction Program (PARC)

Administered by IDNR, the Park and Recreational Facility Construction Program provides grants to eligible local governments for various park and recreation construction projects, including the acquisition of land for open space purposes and the construction and rehabilitation of recreational facilities and buildings. All properties acquired with PARC assistance are required to have a covenant placed on the deed at the time of the recording that stipulates the property must be used in perpetuity for indoor/outdoor recreational purposes. Eligible Comprehensive Plan implementation costs include:

- Park Improvements
- Waterfront development

DCEO Participation Loan Program

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Participation Loan Program provides funds for small businesses, including working capital, land/equipment purchase and building construction/rehabilitation. The Program works through local banks to provide loans ranging from $10,000 to $750,000. Eligible expenses include:

- Building improvements
- Business development

Illinois Capital Access Program

Administered by DCEO, the Illinois Capital Access Program encourages banks to provide financing to small or new businesses that would not otherwise qualify. The program is underwritten by a reserve fund established through DCEO and the borrower. Eligible expenses include:

- Building improvements
- Business development

Illinois Revolving Line of Credit Program

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity administers a revolving line of credit for businesses needing working capital at low-interest rates from $10,000 to $750,000. Eligible expenses include:

- Building improvements
- Business development

Illinois Finance Authority Participation Loan Program

The Illinois Finance Authority Participation Loan Program works through local banks to provide low, fixed rate loans for the purchase of land and equipment as well as building construction and rehabilitation. Proceeds include up to $500,000 or 50 percent participation in the loan. Eligible expenses include:

- Building improvements
- Business development

U.S. Small Business Association (SBA)
With local banks, the SBA provides a number of guaranteed loan programs for existing and start-up businesses. Its 7(a) Loan Program in particular provides guaranteed financing for working capital, equipment, fixtures/furnishings, land/building improvements and debt refinancing. Short-term smaller loans of up to $35,000 for working capital, inventory purchase and building improvements are available through the Micro-Loan Program.

- Business development

Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program

Since 1976, the National Park Service, in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA), has administered the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program to encourage rehabilitation and reinvestment in historic buildings. A 20 percent tax credit is provided to owners and developers of income-producing historic buildings who undertake a substantial rehabilitation project in which rehabilitation costs must be equal to or greater than the property's adjusted basis, which is the property's purchase price existing minus the cost of the land, plus improvements already made, minus depreciation already taken. In addition, the project must also be a certified rehabilitation as determined through a three-part application process with IHPA. All contributing buildings within a potential Downtown La Salle National Register Historic District are eligible for the tax credit. It is highly recommended that IHPA be consulted on project scope and details before beginning the application process. Eligible Plan implementation costs include:

- Historic Building Rehabilitation

Brownfield Assessment Grants

Administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Brownfield Assessment Grants provide funding for the inventory and assessment of local brownfield site contaminated by hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants, including petroleum. Grant awards vary from $100,000 to $350,000. Potential Eligible Plan implementation costs include:

- Superfund site planning

Other Funding Sources

Grants, contributions and technical assistance from foundations, corporations, institutions, other government agencies, and other businesses and individuals can also be secured to fund Comprehensive Plan initiatives. Private sector sources, for example, can help fund promotion and marketing activities as well as specific Comprehensive elements, such as contributions for community gardens and waterfront enhancements.

Equity Fund/Community Supported Financing

The possibility of forming an equity fund for business capitalization, expansion and stabilization for Boulevard businesses should be explored. This might take the form of small group of investors pooling funds to create one or more needed businesses or a downtown small business venture fund seeded and capitalized by private individuals, local and regional foundations and government grants. Community financed businesses can also be structured as cooperatives or as local stock corporations, which could be a realistic solution for reusing vacant space in the Downtown.

Business Plan Competitions

Annual business plan competitions can be a useful and effective tool for helping existing business owners develop skills and increase sales and/or efficiency. It has been found to be particularly effective when each year's competition focuses on a specific challenge, such as adding a new product line, developing an online storefront or adding a new distribution channel. The competition could offer a cash prize, coupled with technical assistance to help all interested businesses compete. La Salle could be the primary organizer of the business plan competitions and fund it through grants or contributions.