

CMAP



Will County Fairmont Neighborhood Existing Conditions Report

Prepared by the Will County Land Use Department

with technical assistance provided by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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Acronyms

AADT - Average annual daily traffic

CMAP - Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

CMAQ - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program

FHWA - Federal Highway Administration

FLIP - Future Leaders in Planning

GIS - Geographic Information System

HPC - Will County Historic Preservation Commission

HUD - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

IDNR - Illinois Department of Natural Resources

IDOT - Illinois Department of Transportation

LTA - Local Technical Assistance Program

LRMP - Land Resource Management Plan

NRPA - National Recreation and Parks Association

RTA - Regional Transportation Authority

SRA - Strategic Regional Arterial

Introduction

Existing Conditions Report

The Will County Land Use Department is endeavoring to add a more detailed plan for the Fairmont area into the County's existing Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP). The LRMP includes a long-range vision for the entire county. The new Fairmont Neighborhood Plan will define the vision of what the community wants to become and the steps needed to meet that vision.



Figure 1. Fairmont study area



Fairmont Community

The Fairmont community is located to the south of the City of Lockport and to the north of the City of Joliet along IL Rt. 171, which is a far western extension of Archer Avenue. The boundaries are approximately State Street (State Route 171) on the west, Briggs Street on the east and Dartmouth Avenue/Rosalind Street on the south. The northern boundary is generally considered Dellwood Park which lies within the incorporated area of Lockport. (Figure 1)

Why Does Fairmont Need a Neighborhood Plan?

Between 1903 and 1907, a good portion of the Fairmont Area was platted as lots to be used for modest housing. For the most part, it was expected that families and individuals who were employed by the industries in Lockport and the east side of Joliet would occupy these homes. From the time of this area being platted, development was sporadic and undefined. One can spot brick bungalows that were built near the time of the original platting, along with a great number of smaller homes built on slab foundations that appear to be built in the latter half of the 20th Century. A relatively large amount of land is still undeveloped and held in large tracts along with numerous undeveloped platted lots that serve as opportunities for infill development.

Will County has a comprehensive plan referred to as the Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) which dictates planning and land use decisions in the unincorporated areas. However in the case of Fairmont, which takes on urban characteristics the County is seeking help to establish a more detailed, sub-area plan that could serve as a component of the LRMP.

The CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program is now helping the Will County Land Use Department draft a neighborhood plan that will guide future growth and focus on implementation. The Fairmont plan will include future land use development, infrastructure improvements, economic development, community synergy; and public areas and culture. Tying Fairmont's plan to priorities established in the GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan, the new plan for Fairmont will guide its future growth and drive economic prosperity.

The new neighborhood plan will serve as a guide for elected officials, municipal staff, community residents, business owners, and potential investors, allowing them to make informed administrative and implementation decisions about community development that affects land use, transportation, infrastructure, and capital improvements within Fairmont.

Purpose of the Existing Conditions Report

Having an accurate understanding of the area's existing conditions is necessary in order to develop an appropriate and effective plan that addresses the correct issues and concerns of the community.

This Existing Conditions Report—representing the accumulation of approximately three months of research, analysis, and public outreach activities — provides an overview of the current conditions in the Fairmont community and is designed to provide an agreed upon “starting point” by which to move forward with the community to create a shared vision. The Existing Conditions Report is organized in the following sections:

- Introduction
- Section 1: Regional Context
- Section 2: Previous Plans, Studies and Reports
- Section 3: Community Outreach So Far...
- Section 4: Demographic and Market Analysis
- Section 5: Existing Land Use and Development
- Section 6: Mobility
- Section 7: Housing
- Section 8: Open Space
- Section 9: Community Services, Health and Infrastructure
- Section 10: Image and Identity

Relationship with the GO TO 2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan

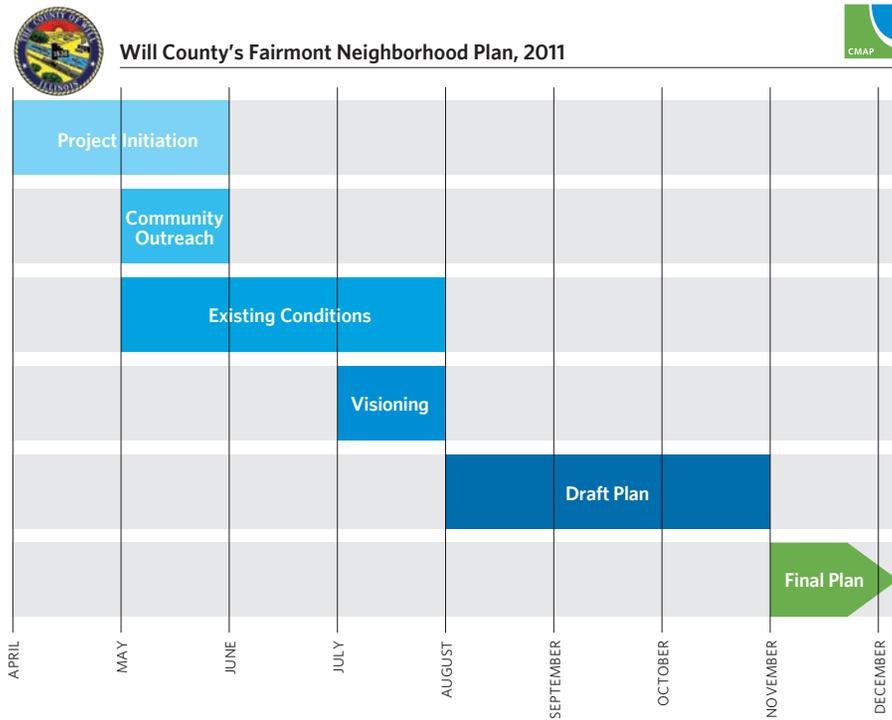
The Fairmont neighborhood plan's high priorities should be to provide county and local guidance and to address community needs and desires. However, the plan should also reflect how Fairmont fits into the larger region, to help the community understand and plan for the impact of regional economic and demographic changes.

A summary of the recently released GO TO 2040 Regional Plan prepared by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is included in Section 1 of the Existing Conditions Report. In addition to an overview of GO TO 2040's themes and policies, that section identifies specific regional recommendations that are likely to have an impact on the content of Fairmont's new neighborhood plan.

Planning Process

The Will County Land Use Department is using a planning process that includes multiple steps. The process is expected to last approximately 6-9 months. The key steps in the planning process are illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 2. Planning process



Public Participation

Public participation is a cornerstone of the planning process. Through public workshops, one-on-one interviews with residents, local business owners, religious institutions, Fairmont School District No. 89, the Lockport Park District, appointed and elected officials and other stakeholders, stakeholder meetings, and on-going communication with a Steering Committee, the Will County Land Use Department is working to ensure that all issues, concerns, and needs are identified, establishing priorities that are clearly defined and recognized by all participants and beneficiaries of the new neighborhood plan.

Next Steps

After the Existing Conditions Report is presented to the Steering Committee and the public, the next step in the process will be for the community to create a shared vision for Fairmont. Building upon the Existing Conditions Report, the Will County Land Use Department with assistance from the CMAP team will work with residents, business owners, elected and appointed officials, and County staff to accomplish this.

One of the next key steps in the planning process to help shape the community's shared vision for Fairmont will be to hold a visioning charrette workshop with the community. Based upon the results from the visioning workshop and from the data and information compiled in the Existing Conditions Report, a common vision with associated goals and objectives will be prepared. Following the creation of the vision, goals and objectives, the Will County Land Use Department with assistance from the CMAP team will begin to develop the elements of the new neighborhood plan.

Section 1

Regional Context

This section provides an overview of how Fairmont fits into the larger Northeastern Illinois region. Having a larger perspective of how Fairmont is situated in the region will aid in both the understanding of existing conditions and in identifying potential opportunities or issues that may be created with planned capital projects in other communities.

Regional Location

The Fairmont community is located between the cities of Lockport and Joliet in unincorporated Will County. Fairmont is positioned near the center of Will County. IL Route 171 traverses the western boundary of the study area and is the primary north-south arterial serving the community. Direct access to the interstate system (via I-355) is provided by either the Maple Road or 159th Street interchanges which are both less than 5 miles from Fairmont.

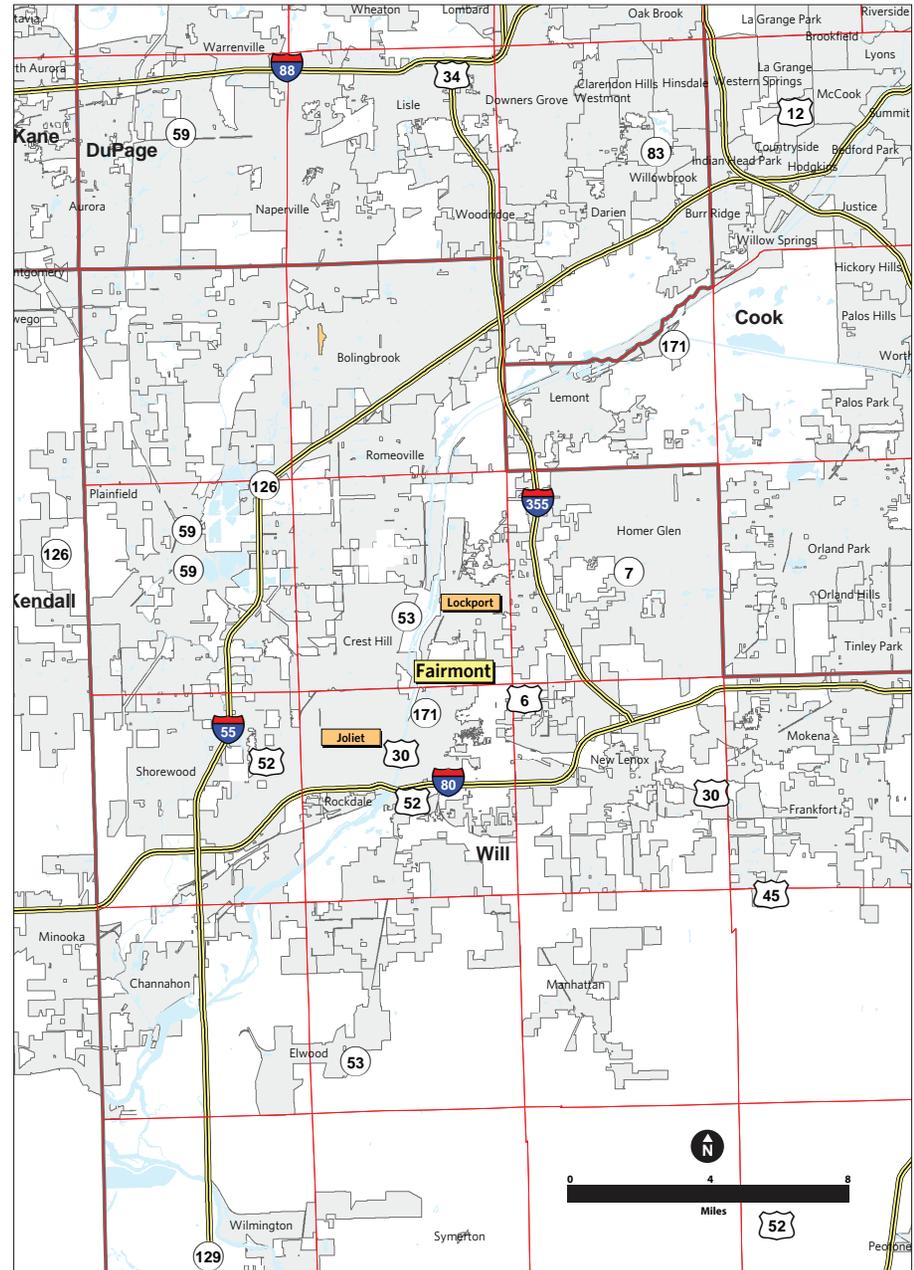
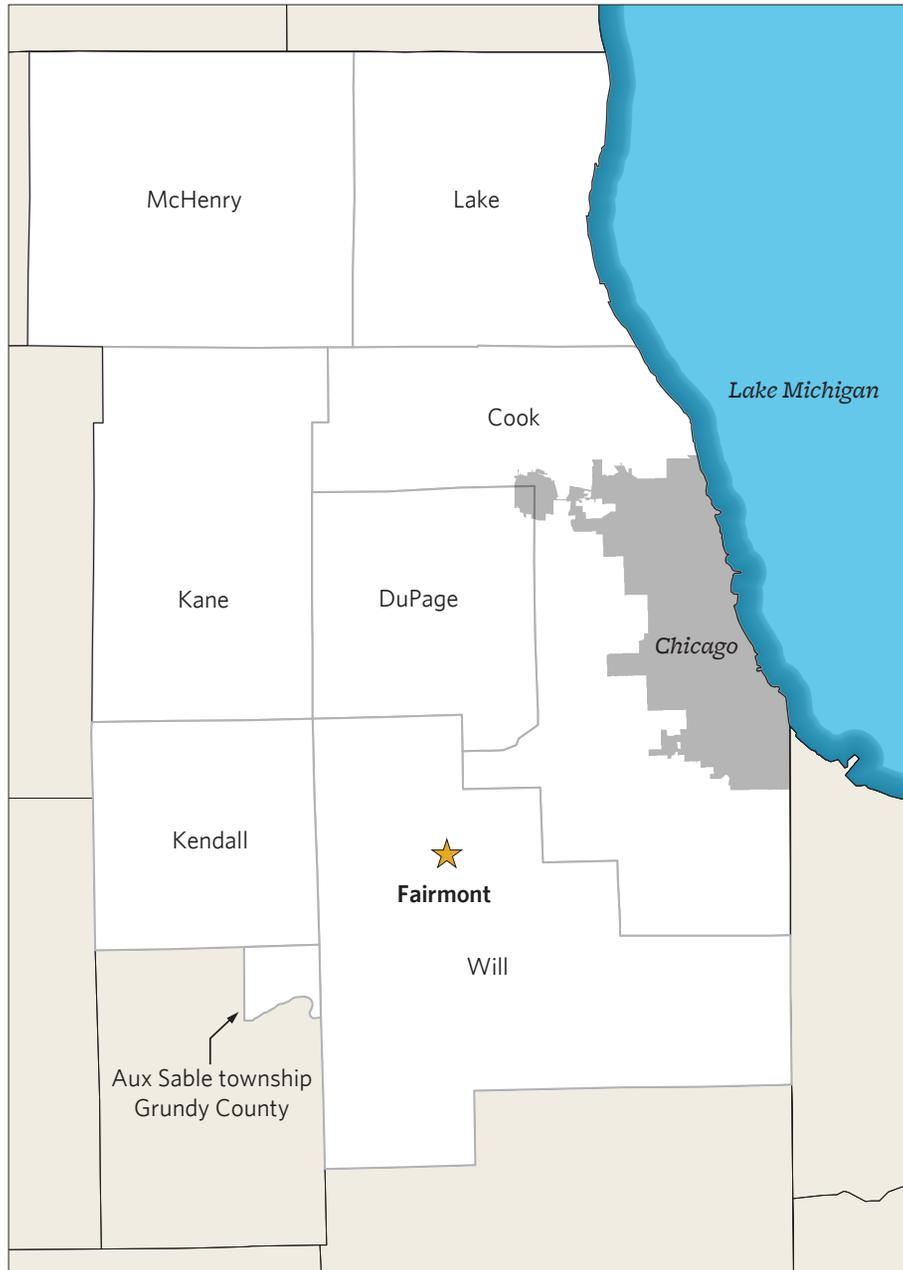
The following are approximate driving distances from the Fairmont community to key local and regional destinations:

- Lockport Metra Station - 2 miles
- I&M Canal Trail Access Point - 2.4 miles (Division Street)
- Joliet Metra Station - 3.2 miles
- I-355 Interchanges - 4.5 miles (Maple Road or 159th Street)
- Midway International Airport - 30 miles
- O'Hare International Airport - 40 miles
- Chicago Loop - 41 miles

Nearest Grocery Store

No grocery store currently exists in the community. The nearest grocery store from Fairmont is over 2 miles away in the City of Lockport, and the nearest grocery store in the City of Joliet is almost 3 miles away.

Figure 3. Location



Section 2

Previous Plans, Studies and Reports

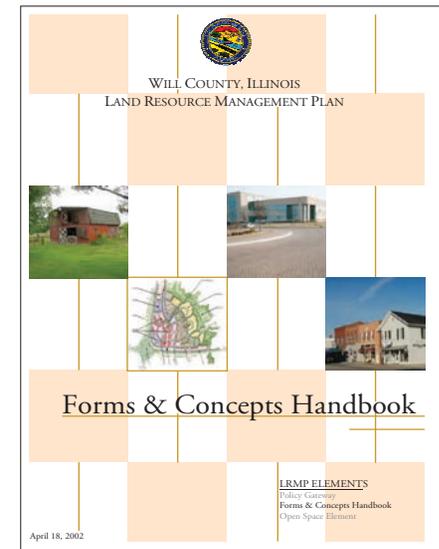
This section provides a brief summary and analysis of previous plans and studies that have an impact on the creation of the new Fairmont neighborhood plan.

Will County's Land Resource Management Plan

Will County's comprehensive plan, the Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP), was originally approved April 18, 2002 and revised January 20, 2011. The plan is a result of an 18-month planning process that included input of over 500 citizens at 21 meetings and workshops across the county. A copy of the plan can be viewed online at <http://www.willcountylanduse.com/AdminDiv/Documents/LRMP/index.html>.

The LRMP predicts that Will County will be fastest growing of the "collar" counties in the Chicago metropolitan region. Its growth is anticipated to be more than 60% over the next 20 years — from slightly more than 500,000 to over 800,000. The region, as a whole, is expected to grow by only 25%.

In an effort to manage growth, the LRMP strives to address land use, preservation of open space and farmland and infrastructure. With more than 30 different jurisdictions making decisions at the local level, the LRMP attempts to tackle countywide planning by addressing quality of life issues that surpass jurisdictional boundaries.



Regional Approach to Land Use

The land use element focuses on land use at a regional level and emphasizes the form of development as well as the way various land uses should and should not occur in different areas.

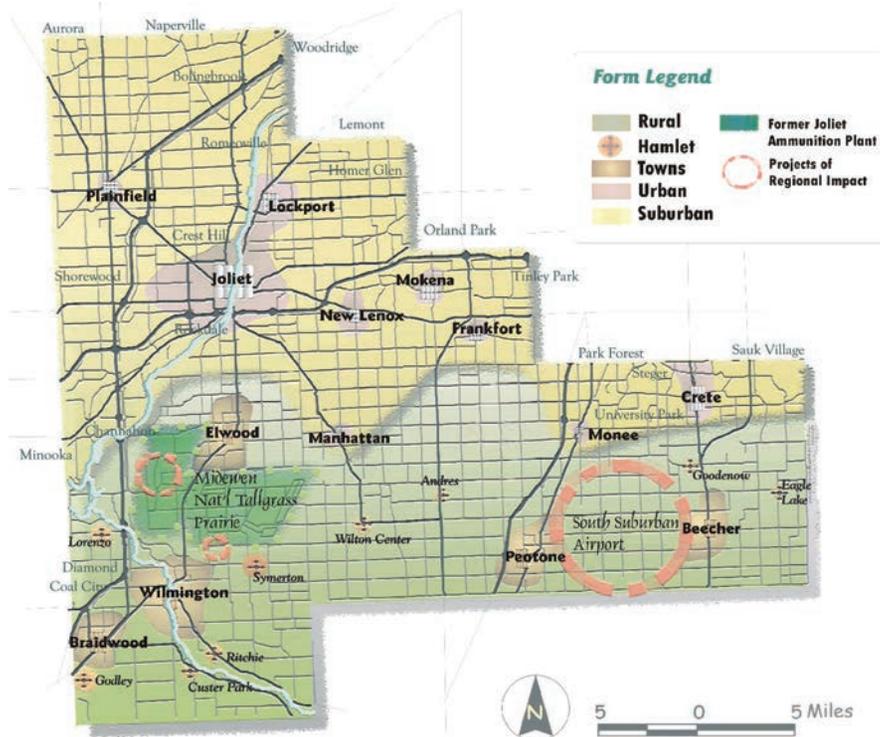
Development Forms

One of the key concepts that the future land use element of the plan is centered upon is “development form.” Development forms refer to the general character of large areas in the County. The identification of development forms is a way to identify distinguishable development patterns at a countywide level. These forms are also identified to assist in managing the County’s land resources.

For each of the forms a series of “keystones” are presented which are statements of desired characteristics. The keystones are intended to serve as a guide to the County and its various communities in assessing development proposals.

Development Forms include: Rural Area; Hamlet; Town; Urban Community; Suburban Community; Interstate Access Location; Former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant Area; and South Suburban Airport.

Figure 4. Development form



Development Use Concepts

Development use concepts focus on more specific land use categories. The use concepts are intended to provide additional guidance to the County and its communities in assessing specific development proposals. The use concepts are provided to offer guidance that can help bridge the gap between forms on a countywide scale and specific land use regulations on a local scale.

Development Use Concepts include: Agricultural; Conservation Design; Conventional Residential Suburban; Traditional Residential; Multi-family Complex; Employment Complex; Regional Commercial; Mid-scale Commercial; Neighborhood Commercial; Free Standing Industry and Office; and, Projects of Regional Impact

The matrix (Table 1.1) is included in the LRMP to assist in determining the general land uses, or development use concepts considered appropriate for the area.

Table 1.1 Development forms and development use concepts

		Development Forms							
		RURAL Pg. 10-12	HAMLET Pg. 13-14	TOWN Pg. 15-18	URBAN COMMUNITY Pg. 19-22	SUBURBAN COMMUNITY Pg. 23-26	INTERSTATE ACCESS LOCATION Pg. 27-28	FORMER JOIAP Pg. 29-30	SSA Pg. 31-33
Development Use Concepts	AGRICULTURAL Pages 34-35	•	•						•
	CONSERVATION DESIGN Pages 36-39	•		•		•			
	CONVENTIONAL RESIDENTIAL SUBURBAN Pages 40-42			•		•			
	TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL Pages 43-45		•	•	•	•			
	MULTI-FAMILY COMPLEX Pages 46-47			•	•	•	•		•
	EMPLOYMENT CAMPUS Pages 48-50			•	•	•	•	•	•
	REGIONAL COMMERCIAL Pages 51-53				•	•	•		
	MID-SCALE COMMERCIAL Page 54			•	•	•			•
	NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL Pages 55-56	•	•	•	•	•			•
	FREESTANDING INDUSTRY & OFFICE Pages 57-58		•	•	•	•		•	
	PROJECTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT Pages 59-60			•	•	•	•	•	•

This Table illustrates the application of the individual Development Use Concepts in each of the defined Development Forms. Each Form and Use Concept is accompanied by an abbreviated version of this table specific to each.

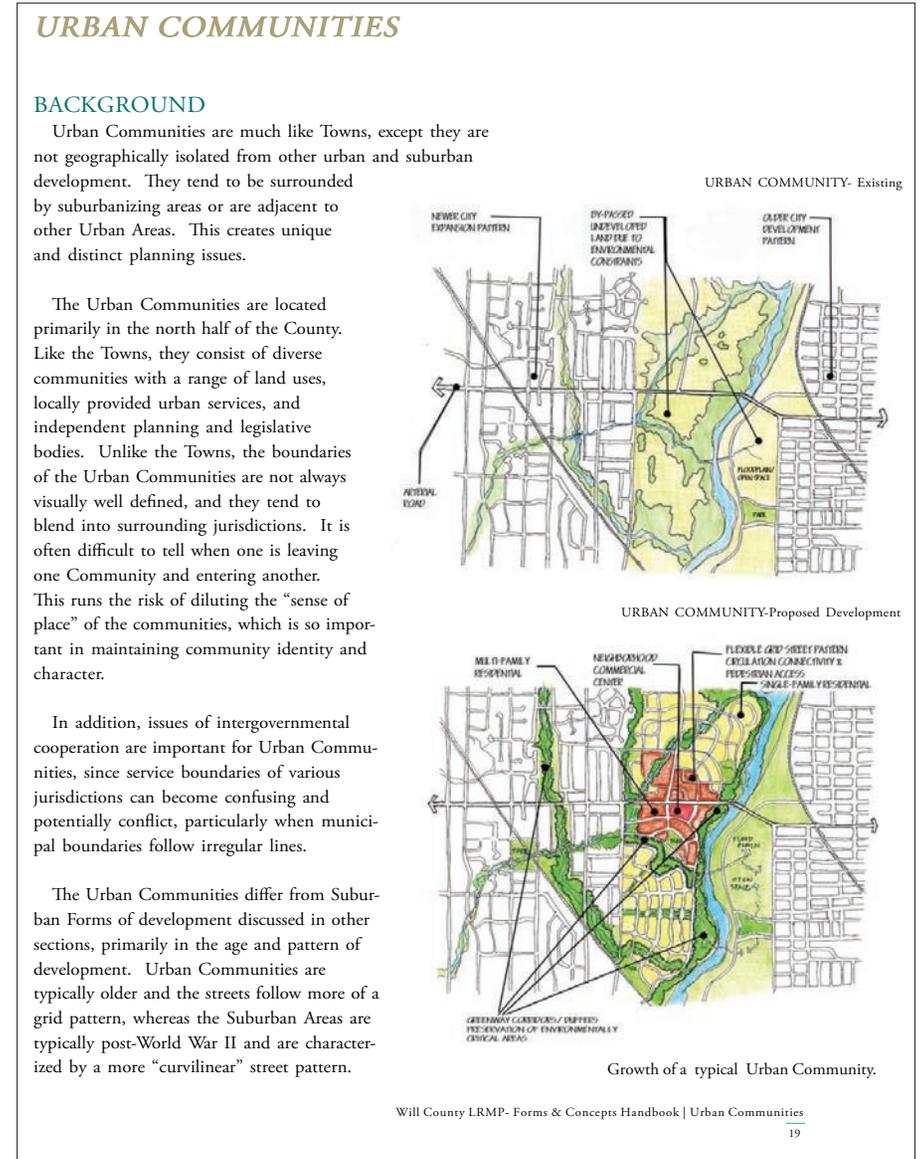
Figure 2: Land Resource Management Matrix

Urban Community

The LRMP classifies the Fairmont area as having the general character of an urban community. The plan acknowledges what Fairmont longs for — an identity. It recognizes that defining community boundaries are important in an effort to create and preserve unique community character, especially in areas that are urban in character. Such places tend to blend into surrounding areas and therefore it is important to maintain community identity and character and establish a “sense of place.” As an urban setting, Fairmont should possess a number of characteristics, identified as “keystones” within the LRMP, such as gateways into the community a central area that defines local identity, a pedestrian-friendly orientation, coordinated stormwater management, balanced housing and employment opportunities and attractive public spaces.

Being considered an urban community Fairmont could, in theory, accommodate the following Development Use Concepts: traditional residential, multi-family complex, institutional, employment campus, regional commercial, mid-scale commercial, neighborhood retail, freestanding industry and office, and projects of regional impact. Use concepts must be weighed to determine whether such development would be appropriate for the Fairmont area. With land available for development, there is potential in Fairmont.

Figure 5. Urban communities from Will county's LRMP



Will County 2030 Transportation Plan

The 2030 Transportation Framework Plan was adopted by the Will County Board on April 16, 2009. The Transportation Plan reflects a collaborative effort among municipalities, townships, regional agencies, and the State of Illinois.

While one of the purposes of the study is to develop a comprehensive transportation plan for the County to address future transportation needs, it is not part of the study's scope to develop specific alignments. Representative alignments are shown within the plan to highlight locations where proposed roadways are needed; however, actual alignment studies are left for detailed engineering design studies by appropriate agencies, separately.

The Will County 2030 Transportation Plan accounts for trucks and all passenger transportation modes, including roadways, public transportation, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. The plan was developed in two steps: 1) an unconstrained plan, and 2) a fiscally constrained plan.

Unconstrained Plan

The first step was to create an unconstrained plan that represents a vision of the transportation solution for Will County. The unconstrained plan identifies a broad set of improvements without considering priorities or the financial limitation of the implementing agencies. The unconstrained plan, however, still recognizes some environmental and social constraints that would make physical construction of the various transportation projects infeasible.

Proposed transportation enhancements that compose the unconstrained plan encompass a variety of improvements including roads, public transportation, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

Unconstrained Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Plan

According to Will County, the unconstrained plan for the non-motorized portion of the County plan does not suggest any major capital projects that cannot be completed by 2030. Many of the goals of the non-motorized portion of the plan can be accomplished through policy initiatives and governmental cooperation, with a major component being the creation of a bicycling and pedestrian plan for the County that involves all of the relevant agencies and municipalities. Local communities should be encouraged to take responsibility for upgrading and connecting to the regional trail system through their community.

Figure 6. Roadway unconstrained plan - projects by type

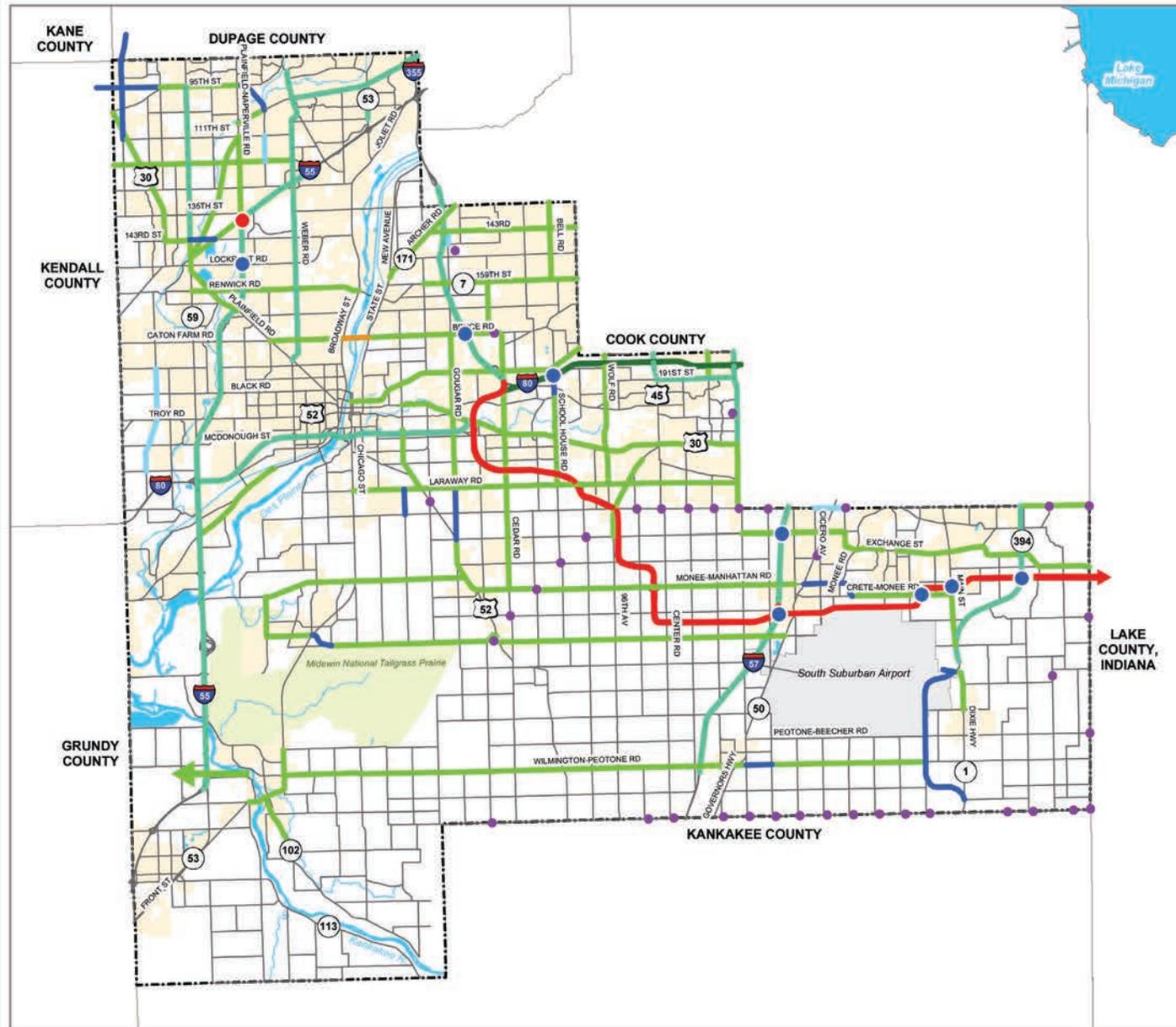


Figure 9-1b
Roadway Unconstrained Plan
Projects By Type

WILL COUNTY
2030 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Legend

- New 4-lane bridge
- New 2-lane roadway
- New 4-lane roadway
- New 4-lane freeway
- Widen to 4-lanes
- Widen to 6-lanes
- Widen to 8-lanes
- Realigned Intersection
- New Full Interchange
- Upgrade Partial Interchange

0 4 8 Miles




Will County 2030 Transportation Plan

CH2MHILL Hutchison Engineering, Inc.
VLECIDES SCHROEDER ASSOCIATES, INC.

Figure 7. Unconstrained bicycle and pedestrian trails plan

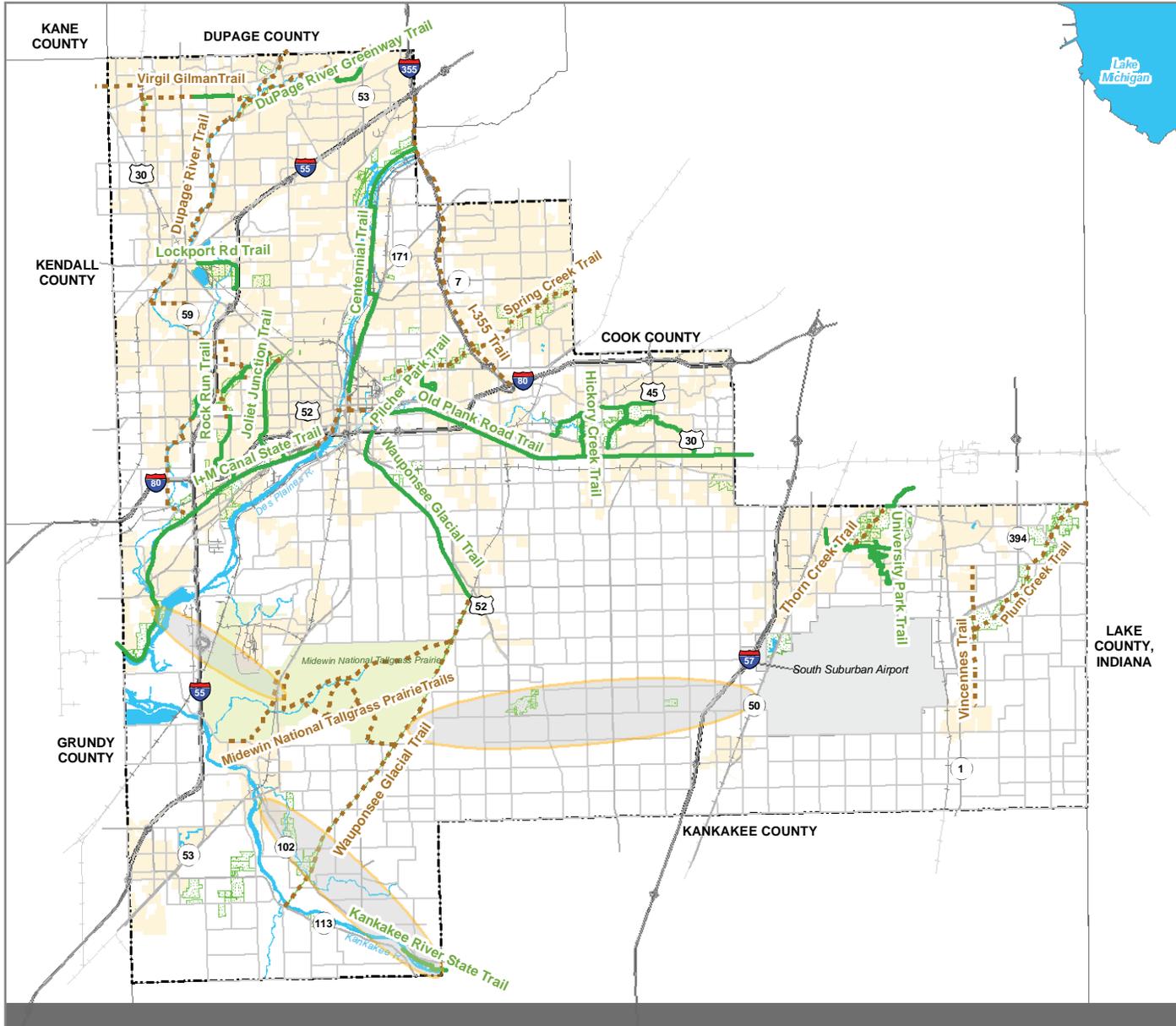
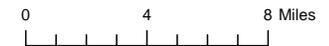


Figure 9-4
Unconstrained Bicycle
& Pedestrian Trails Plan

WILL COUNTY
2030 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Legend

- Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail
- - - Potential Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail
- Conceptual Improvement Area
- Forest Preserve Property



Caton Farm Road/Bruce Road Corridor

One of the projects identified in the unconstrained plan that will directly impact the Fairmont community is the proposed Caton Farm Road/Bruce Road Corridor. On July 16, 2009 the Will County Board adopted a Resolution in Support of the Caton Farm-Oak - Bruce-Middle Alignment. Currently Will County Highway Department has completed a Phase One Preliminary Roadway Plan for the corridor, however, due to expected funding constraints, no timeline has been proposed for actual construction.

The purpose of the new corridor/bridge is to provide a transportation system improvement that will address capacity, operational, and safety deficiencies; and satisfy projected 2030 travel demands within a regional corridor extending between Caton Farm Road at U.S. Route 30 and IL Route 7 (159th Street) at Cedar Road. Specifically, the proposed system improvements should accommodate population and employment growth, provide improved system linkage by providing a new bridge over the Des Plaines River, accommodate projected transportation demand, optimize modal interrelationships and increase travel safety in the study area. The project corridor extends a length of approximately 10 miles. The plan also includes the development of a four-lane continuous roadway along the Caton Farm Road/ Bruce Road/Cedar Road/IL Route 7 corridor.

Once completed, Will County’s 2030 Transportation Plan identifies the corridor as a Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA).

Figure 8. Proposed Caton Farm Road/Bruce Road corridor



CMAP’s Future Leaders in Planning (FLIP) Program

FLIP is a leadership development opportunity where students can contribute to a better future for our region. With the release of GO TO 2040, the FLIP final project focused on plan implementation in a very specific area: Fairmont. None of the streets in this historic, unincorporated community of Will County have sidewalks. As a result, students must choose between walking to school in the street or being driven to school by their parents. In the summer of 2010, Will County Land Use Department had submitted a Safe Routes To School grant proposal. The objective of the proposal was to pave a sidewalk on a highly traveled section of Green Garden Avenue, which leads directly to the community elementary school.

The 2010-2011 FLIP cohort spent the entire year researching and developing recommendations to add value to that proposal. Using interviews with community leaders, 8th graders and high school students, walking surveys, census data and other information, they determined that the community’s major needs are resources, improved safety and infrastructure improvements. However, they also determined that the community’s strong sense of history, diversity and institutions were assets to be leveraged.

Ultimately, they recommended that the community throw a block party to celebrate the pavement of the sidewalk to increase its use and demonstrate the beginning of a longer planning process. They encouraged community members to develop programs to increase safety walking to and from school, such as a safety patrol or walking school bus. Finally, FLIP students recommended the use of environmentally friendly paving materials to facilitate stormwater recharge.

FLIP participants presented this research to Will County and Lockport Township officials along with community leaders and parents at the Fairmont Community Center on Saturday, May 7th, 2011.

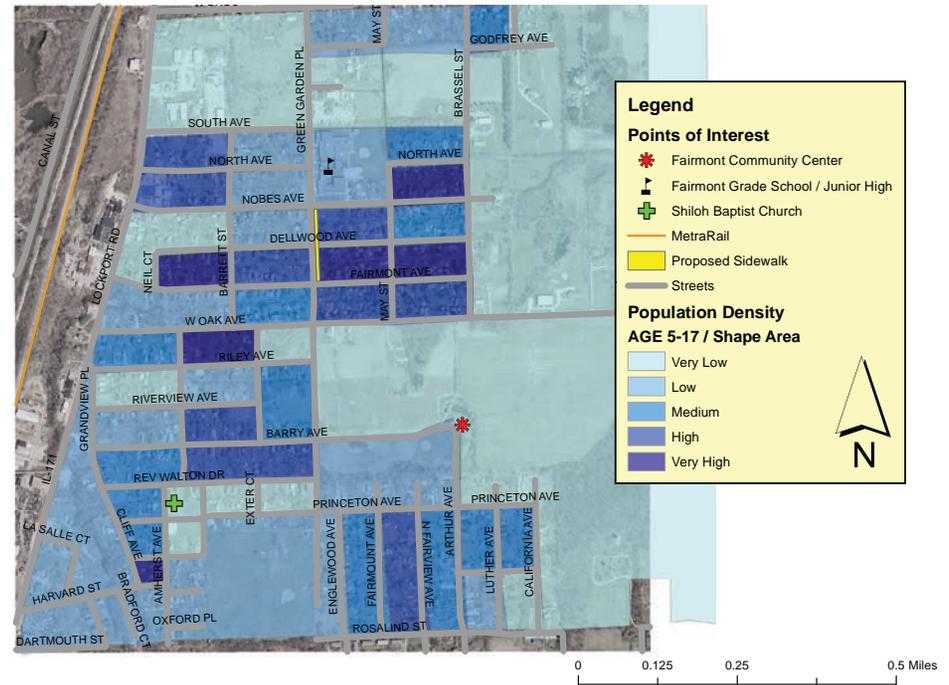
Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to Schools is a popular program spreading across the U.S. and is designed to decrease traffic and pollution and increase the health of and safety for the children and the community. The program also addresses the safety concerns of parents by encouraging greater enforcement of traffic laws, educating the public, and exploring ways to create safer streets.

“Safe Routes to School programs enable community leaders, schools and parents across the United States to improve safety and encourage more children, including children with disabilities, to safely walk and bicycle to school. In the process, programs are working to reduce traffic congestion and improve health and the environment, making communities more livable for everyone.”

-National Center for Safe Routes to Schools

Figure 9. FLIP program - potential sidewalk routes and student density



One of the graphics produced by the FLIP program illustrates the population density of children ages 5 to 17 living in Fairmont, over 400 total. Areas of darker blue show where higher amounts of children are currently living. The yellow line illustrates the proposed sidewalk.

Community Design Workshop

During the spring of 2009, CMAP paired several communities across the region with local architecture and design firms to create visualizations of how sites within these communities might look in 2040 under different scenarios.

The Fairmont neighborhood was one of the communities selected to be part of the program.

Illustrations were prepared by Ginkgo Planning & Design, who worked in collaboration with a local advisory committee composed of representatives from Fairmont, Lockport, Joliet and Will County. Working within the framework of CMAP’s three regional scenarios, the architects and local advisory committee explored viable options for Fairmont that would build upon the assets of the community.

Preserve

The first scenario, “Preserve”, looked at how development might occur with the preservation of existing assets, including the creation of a small village green and improved pedestrian amenities. The preserve scenario illustrates the following possibilities:

- Preserve the compactness and walkable size of the community by restricting new growth into the green field sites
- Promote infill development and new homes on the existing blocks
- Invest in the existing infrastructure
- Improve State Street as a green gateway with a landscaped boulevard and sidewalks/ bike trails
- Improve Green Garden Place as the main neighborhood street that connects all parts of the community
- Invest in building a civic core around the community center

Figure 10. Community design workshop: Preserve

PRESERVE
FAIRMONT

What if we preserve the best features of our communities and region for generations to come, trying to accommodate growth without changing what we value in the region?

Fairmont is a small community in unincorporated Will County nestled between Historic Lockport and the City of Joliet. The community has grown along the eastern edge of State Street, the main arterial leading to Fairmont. The developed part of town has remained small and walkable, stretching only about five blocks deep from State Street. While there are some auto dealerships and small businesses along the west side of State Street, there is no neighborhood retail in Fairmont to meet the needs of the community. This small working class community has seen very little public or private investment in recent years, and basic needs like sidewalks and neighborhood amenities are missing.

Yet there is great potential here for this small community to carve out a very unique identity for themselves in the 21st Century.

Instead of being an in-between place between Lockport and Joliet, Fairmont could become a great livable neighborhood that has not been damaged by the sprawling subdivisions of the post war decades. Here, the blocks are still small and walkable, homes are modest and affordable, and the community centers, the school and churches are only a few blocks from each home. Most importantly, there are wonderful natural resources and open spaces all around – the Des Plaines River, the I & M Canal, Dellwood Park, creeks and farmland.

Prepared by
GINKGO Planning & Design, Inc.
 19400 Parkside Dr., Orland Park, IL 60442
 www.ginkgoplanning.com

Some assets of Fairmont today: the community center, small homes and Dellwood Park - all within walking distance from each home

PRESERVE THE CHARACTER OF A SMALL WALKABLE COMMUNITY

1, 2 & 3 A compact community with high potential shown in red

NESTLED BETWEEN TWO URBAN AREAS

The PRESERVE scenario showcases these possibilities for the Fairmont Community:

- 1 Preserve the **COMPACTNESS and WALKABLE** size of the community by restricting new growth into the green field sites
- 2 Promote **INFILL DEVELOPMENT and NEW HOMES** on the existing blocks without investing in expanding infrastructure
- 3 Invest in the **EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE** – add sidewalks, trees, crosswalks and landscaping to all neighborhood streets

- 4 Improve **State Street as GREEN GATEWAY** to Fairmont with a landscaped boulevard and sidewalks / bike trails
- 5 Improve **Green Garden Place** as the main neighborhood street that connects all parts of the community – the homes, Dellwood Park, the school and the community center. Add sidewalks, street trees, lighting, crosswalks and landscaping to make this a safe pedestrian street for all ages
- 6 Invest in building a **CIVIC CORE** around the **COMMUNITY CENTER** to offer basic community needs within walking distance of each home

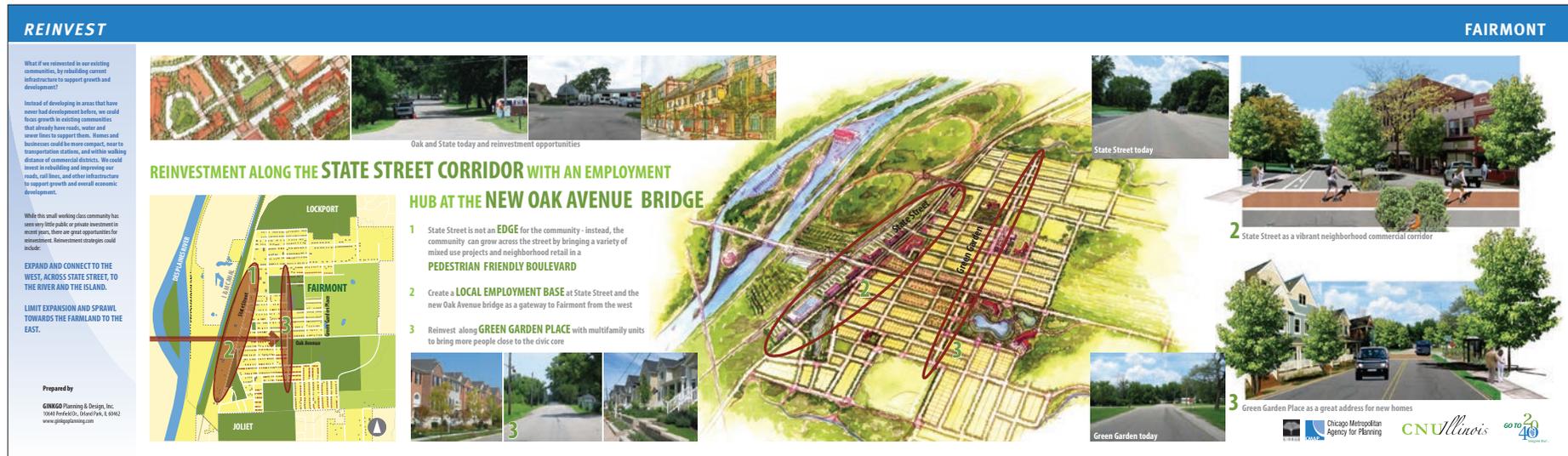
Green Garden as pedestrian friendly, green street

Reinvest

The second scenario, “Reinvest”, focused on major investments in infrastructure with new infill and mixed-use development. The reinvest scenario focuses on reinvesting along the State Street Corridor as an employment hub at the new Oak Avenue bridge. The scenario recommends:

- That State Street is not an edge for the community, instead the community can grow across the street in a pedestrian friendly boulevard
- Creating a local employment base at State Street and the new Oak Avenue bridge
- Reinvesting along Green Garden Place with multi-family units

Figure 11. Community design workshop: Reinvest



Innovate

The third scenario, “Innovate”, illustrated the use of new technologies and ideas for stormwater management, transit, agriculture, and the addition of new green jobs as a foundation for the local economy. The innovate scenario is based upon the following premise:

“All residents in Fairmont should be able to walk safely to bus shelters along shaded streets with sidewalks, lighting and signage. The community should be part of a larger bike trail system that connects to the river, the canals and the parks. In the future, perhaps State Street can evolve into a trolley corridor that can take residents to the Joliet and Lockport stations. Better transit access can create the opportunity of BRINGING GREEN JOBS to the community. The island, river and canals can also be a revenue generating recreational destinations on a regional bike trail system.”

The innovate scenario illustrates the following possibilities:

- An efficient bus transit loop
- Potential trolley/light rail connection
- Regional bike trail and bridge
- Agricultural preservation
- Green industry
- Regional recreation attractions and revenue generator

Figure 12. Community design workshop: Innovate

Figure 13. City of Lockport boundary agreement



City of Lockport Comprehensive Plan

The City of Lockport adopted its Comprehensive Plan in December 1997. In addition to planning for future land uses within the City's existing municipal boundary, as per State statutes, the City's Plan also plans for the unincorporated areas within 1/2 mile of its current municipal boundary.

As show in Figure 10, the City of Lockport's Comprehensive Plan illustrates a boundary agreement line that runs through the Fairmont Community. The Comprehensive Plan recommends future land uses for parcels within the boundary agreement line which generally runs north of Oak Street (east of Brassel Street) and north of South Avenue (west of Brassel Street).

The Comprehensive Plan identifies a variety of uses within the northern portion of the Fairmont Study area including single family residential (an area recommended for 1.5-2.5 units per acre, and another area for 2.5-3.5 units per acre) commercial uses fronting IL Route 171, and industrial uses along Green Garden Place.

City of Joliet

The City of Joliet does not have any official adopted plans created for the Fairmont community. The City does not have a single Comprehensive Plan, instead, a number of subarea plans for certain areas within the City have been created. The subarea plans that have been adopted by the City do not include the Fairmont area.

Lockport - Joliet Boundary Agreement

Currently Under Review.

GO TO 2040

Future versions of this document will include a section describing the recommendations of GO TO 2040, the comprehensive regional plan for the Chicago metropolitan area. The section will focus on those recommendations that are most relevant to the Fairmont community.

Section 3

Community Outreach So Far...

One of the major elements of the LTA program is an emphasis on outreach and public engagement that involves all groups within a community in the decision-making process, particularly focusing on populations that have typically been underrepresented or harder to reach in previous planning processes. These populations include but are not limited to: youth; senior citizens; multi-family property owners/renters; industrial business owners; community organizations and religious institutions.

Fairmont benefits from having a rich history and strong cultural diversity. These attributes will allow for the community to retain their identity but also allow for growth and innovation. As a result of being unincorporated, their identity has not had the opportunity to flourish over that last couple of years. However the plan would allow the desires of the residents to overcome this obstacle would rejuvenate Fairmont's community and help bolster the community's quality of life.

The Will County Land Use Department with assistance from the CMAP team are working with Fairmont stakeholders to learn about what residents care about in the community. Part of this process involves holding public meetings throughout the next six to nine months. The main outreach approach for the Fairmont community is a door-to-door canvassing campaign. Utilizing community organizations, churches, and the school will also aid in informing residents about upcoming public meetings.

Steering Committee Meeting #1

The Steering Committee is comprised of eleven community leaders who have a vested interest in the Fairmont community. Each committee member brings a plethora of both historic and current information on Fairmont. Their knowledge and commitment is essential as the plan is created and implemented.

The first steering committee meeting took place at the Fairmont Community Center on Thursday, May 19, 2011. At this meeting members of the steering committee were given a short overview of the Fairmont neighborhood plan project and asked to provide their insight and opinions about the community.

Issues

Steering committee members provided a number of varying issues and concerns within the Fairmont community. Many longtime residents and business owners on the committee referenced that many of the issues have existed for several years. The majority of the issues expressed by the steering committee centered upon the need for some type of improvement or project to happen in Fairmont that would support the local residents. Possible projects included: new sidewalks; street signs; gateway signs; and new street surfacing. Committee members also discussed the need to improve the appearance of the community, especially to clean up litter and to reexamine regularly scheduled garbage pick-up. Other issues included the need to attract businesses to locate in the community, and the potential to create a special service district, or potential incorporation, to create an identity for the community, as well as a potential funding source to make the necessary and desired improvements.

Top Issues

- Increased criminal activity
- The inadequacy of street lighting, sidewalks, drainage issues
- Current and future government services
- Potential growth/infill development
- Lack of funding sources
- Need for local businesses

Possible Projects

To address their key issues members of the Committee identified the following projects that they would like to see completed in Fairmont: new infrastructure installed; additional police protection; scheduled garbage pick-up; and a farmers market.

Opportunities

Although several issues and concerns were discussed, Committee Members also provided a long list of opportunities for Fairmont. Due to a rich history of family generations living within Fairmont, the steering committee saw that the residents were a great strength and that resident input would help determine the needs and wants of the Fairmont area. Specific opportunities in the community were centered upon potential infill development projects including; proximity to Interstate 355 for attracting new residents; available and affordable land ripe for development; filling vacant homes and residential properties; working with local businesses and religious institutions to support the community either through employment opportunities or potential volunteer efforts; traffic along IL Route 171 for potential shoppers; and the undeveloped parcels to the east of the community, towards Briggs Street, may present opportunities for new growth.

Public Meeting #1

The first public meeting for the Fairmont Neighborhood plan took place on Thursday, May 19, 2011. It was held at the Fairmont Community Center from 7:00PM-8:30PM. To inform residents about the meeting, CMAP staff and steering committee members canvassed homes and businesses in the community. Twenty-one hours of canvassing the community allowed for a highly effective meeting notification and also provided an additional opportunity for residents to provide input. A total of four hundred twenty nine doors were knocked on with contact being made to 46% of the residents.

Another outreach strategy was to advertise and conduct the public meeting in both English and Spanish. Highlights of marketing the event included, having marketing material available in both English/Spanish, in addition, the project team provided onsite child care at the meeting.

The approach was successful. Canvassing along with utilizing the networks of the local organizations in Fairmont, not only began building interest and momentum within the community, it brought over fifty residents to the first public meeting. The onsite childcare was also instrumental in attracting families to attend the meeting. There were nine children being cared for by a volunteer staff from Rasmussen College, who entertained the children with a video and arts and crafts.

At the meeting, residents were given an overview presentation of the neighborhood plan project. After the project overview was given, a facilitated exercise for the whole group took place.

Issues

Each meeting participant was able to state their top issue of concern in the community. Attendees provided a list of over 40 issues and concerns. These issues ranged to cover all areas of the study area and included all types of issues from physical to psychological. Overall, the residents of Fairmont yearn for a better quality of life with a lack of public safety provided as their number one concern. Other top issues included a lack of adequate and maintained infrastructure such as: no sidewalks; poor street lighting; flooding concerns; open ditches; and poor street surfaces that consist of large potholes or re-patched roads that are too high. Attendees often noted that paying for infrastructure improvements would likely be difficult and many discussed which agency, or what funds, could be used to pay for and maintain new infrastructure. Other issues given by attendees included a need to improve the appearance of the community; the need to clean up the litter, especially in the alleys and within the street right-of-ways; the lack of police presence; the need for a safe and attractive facility, with an HVAC system, that will entertain and provide recreation opportunities for children in the community; the need for businesses in the community to provide employment opportunities and places to shop locally; and the desire to help fill the vacant homes and residential properties in the community.

Top Issues

- Safety/Crime
- Poor Infrastructure/Potential Costs
- Need Local Businesses
- Unattractive Appearance
- Fill Vacancies

Opportunities

Attendees were then asked to identify the opportunities for new construction projects or improvements in the community that would help to enhance the livability of their neighborhood. Opportunities for infill development were noted often by attendees with a focus on filling vacant homes with new families. Others expressed a desire to see the Lockport Township Park District parks improved in the community to include new recreational amenities. Creating a larger park, or smaller neighborhood scaled parks in the neighborhood were noted by some attendees as opportunities that existed in the community. Another significant opportunity given by attendees was to take advantage of the vehicles on IL Route 171 to attract new business into the community to provide employment and to help fill the local daily shopping needs of Fairmont residents.

Key Person Interview Summary

Key Person Interviews allowed for the Will County Land Use Department staff and CMAP planners to gain a more in-depth understanding of the community they are creating a plan for. A select group of elected officials, government administrators, neighborhood organizations and residents were asked to interview with CMAP staff on Thursday, June 16, 2011 and Friday June 17, 2011.

Will County Land Use Department staff selected the persons to be interviewed. A total of twelve, one-hour, interviews were scheduled between both dates. They began at 8:00AM and concluded at 4:30PM. Although there were many similarities among the responses, each interview brought forth a different perspective of Fairmont.

People interviewed included:

- Rev. Herbert Brooks, Jr., Will County Board member, 8th District
- Percy Conway, Lockport Township Trustee and business owner in Fairmont
- Latina Harris, Community resident and President of Fairmont Partnership
- Rev. Richard D. House, Pastor of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church
- Kimberly Jones, Community Development Director, City of Lockport
- Larry McCasland, Utility Management
- Laurie McPhillips, Board President of Will County Habitat for Humanity and Will County Board Member, 3rd District
- Brian Parker, Zoning Technician, Will County Land Use Department
- Raymond Semplinski, Chief Building Official for Will County Land Use Department
- Frank Stewart, Will County Board Member, 8th District
- Henry Travis, Community Activist, former Fairmont School District #89 Board Member, and former Will County Board Member
- Dr. Sonya Whitaker, Superintendent, Fairmont School District #89
- Denise Winfrey, Will County Board Member, 8th District

Issues

Common issues provided by interviewees included primarily economic concerns for Fairmont. Many discussed the poor economic conditions in Fairmont and the lack of potential funding sources or employment opportunities in the community to address these concerns. Other key issues included the need to improve the image and identity of Fairmont. Unfortunately, although for many, they stated that they were proud to be from and live in Fairmont, with generations of families living there, many have left the area. Interviewees noted that although some have left, those who have stayed in Fairmont continue to work hard to improve the community to create a better quality of life. These individuals have taken on leadership positions to push the community forward, and there is a need for the younger generations to carry the torch and step into these roles. Another key issue mentioned was the perceived lack of government support for the area. Some mentioned that the education system had a poor reputation (but that it was turning around) and others mentioned the need of more government resources in general to be spent in the community to help Fairmont residents.

Opportunities

Interviewees listed several strengths and opportunities in the community. Specific opportunities in the community were centered upon future government efforts, improved safety, new housing, and potential growth within and outside of the community. Many noted that the traffic along IL Route 171 and possibly along Briggs Street may provide future retail opportunities. The large number of religious institutions in the community were seen as an asset that could be used as a foundation to attract new residents and businesses into the area. Interviewees also would like to see Will County, the Township, the School District, the Park District, and the Cities of Lockport and Joliet work together to help plan for and improve the Fairmont community.

Historical Perspective

The key person interviews have led to the start of compiling Fairmont's history. Further work is however needed. Through discussions with longtime residents and business owners, the history of events in the community has begun to unfold. Each interview pieced together the history of Fairmont, giving a different perspective of how it once was. The history will continue to evolve with future research. The information gathered through key person interviews is included in Section 10 of this report.

Section 4

Demographic and Market Analysis

To gain insight into the market and demographic dynamics that impact the Fairmont community, data from the U.S. Census was gathered for analysis. Although Fairmont is an unincorporated community, it is recognized by the U.S. Census as a “Census Designated Place”, or a place that functions as an independent community for analysis purposes. Data discussed in this section comes from the 2000 U.S. Census, and from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, both collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. For comparisons and trend analysis, data was also gathered for the same periods for Will County and the Chicago, IL-IN Urbanized Area, which includes all contiguous areas with a population density of more than 1,000 persons per square mile.



Demographic Analysis

Fairmont can be characterized generally as a low-to-moderate income community, with significant pockets of middle-class and working-class family households, as well as more impoverished sections. Fairmont is overwhelmingly a community of single-family homes, with a very limited number of multifamily uses in the area. Analysis of U.S. Census and American Community Survey data yields the following findings.

Table 4.1: Population

	FAIRMONT	WILL COUNTY	CHICAGO REGION
Population Change, 2000-2009 (Pct.)	-16.8%	32.3%	1.3%

Table 4.2. Race/ethnicity

	2000	PERCENT	2009	PCT.	PERCENT CHANGE
White	839	32.7%	572	26.8%	-31.8%
Black	1,373	53.6%	1,260	59.1%	-8.2%
Hispanic	279	10.9%	231	10.8%	-17.2%
Asian	12	0.5%	45	2.1%	275.0%
Other	60	2.3%	24	1.1%	-60.0%

Table 4.3: Median age

	2000	2009	% CHANGE
Fairmont	34.2%	46.7%	36.5%
Will County	33.3%	34.3%	3.0%
Chicago Region	33.8%	35.1%	3.8%

Population

Despite being in the region’s fastest growing county, Fairmont lost population. Between 2000 and 2009, Fairmont’s population declined by nearly 17 percent (from 2,563 to 2,132 residents). That decline stands in contrast to the rapid population growth of Will County over the same period (32 percent). Region-wide, population grew by only 1 percent.

Fairmont is unique in its diversity, particularly for Will County. Nearly three-quarters of Fairmont residents are members of a minority group, far exceeding the same percentage for Will County (30 percent) and for the region (47 percent).

Fairmont is aging rapidly. The median age of Fairmont residents grew dramatically between 2000 and 2009. Median age grew from 34.2 years to 46.7 years over the nine-year period, compared with a small increase for Will County (33.3 to 34.3) and for the region (33.8 to 35.1). This can be largely attributed to a significant decline in the number of persons under the age of 18 — from 707 in 2000 to 414 in 2009.

Table 4.4: Age distribution 2000

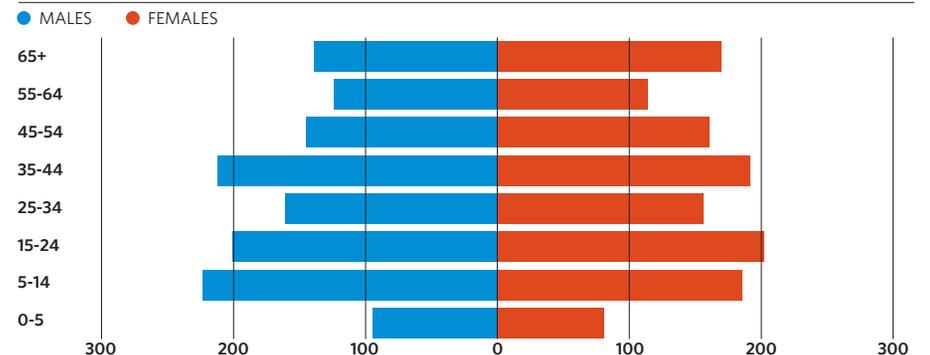
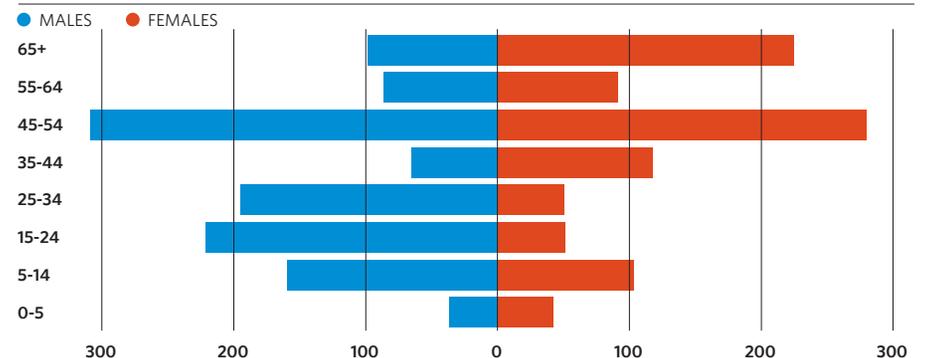


Table 4.4: Age distribution 2009



Housing Analysis

Fairmont is a strong homeownership community. In 2009, 83 percent of Fairmont’s housing units were owner-occupied single-family homes, up from 75 percent in 2000. This is consistent with homeownership throughout Will County, with percentages of 85 percent and 83 percent over the same periods. Both figures are substantially higher than that for the Chicago region, with a 67 percent homeownership figure.

Housing in Fairmont is older, smaller and much less expensive than housing in Will County and the region. In 2009, the median age of a home in Fairmont was 53 years. This compares favorably with the Chicago region (46 years), but stands in contrast to Will County (23 years). Unlike Will County, whose rapid housing growth led to a substantial decrease in the age of structures, the addition of a far smaller percentage of new homes in Fairmont over the last decade has had a negligible impact. Fairmont’s homes tend to be smaller on average than those in Will County and the Chicago region, with an average of 5.3 rooms in 2009 (6.4 for Will County and 5.4 for the region). However, the starkest housing contrast for Fairmont lies in its value – owner-occupied home values have consistently remained about half of the value of homes overall in Will County and in the Chicago region.

Despite its affordability, homebuyers are not currently looking at Fairmont as a destination. Although Will County’s number of homeowners grew by nearly 30 percent between 2000 and 2009, that same figure grew by only 1.7 percent in Fairmont.

Fairmont added housing units at a rate faster than that of the Chicago region. The number of housing units in Fairmont grew from 901 in 2000 to 972 in 2009, an 8 percent increase. That compares very favorably with the increase for the region (5 percent), but falls short of the increase in Will County over the same period (29 percent).

Vacant units more than quadrupled in Fairmont between 2000 and 2009. On the other hand, the number of vacant housing units in Fairmont substantially increased over the nine-year span, from 40 in 2000 to 176 in 2009. This four-fold increase, however, can be attributed to the localized impact of a national concern (the housing market crash and foreclosure crisis) on a small community. The number of vacant units grew substantially as well in Will County (74 percent) and the region (86 percent).

Table 4.5: Owner occupied housing

	2000	2009
Fairmont	75.6%	83.2%
Will County	83.2%	85.1%
Chicago Region	64.1%	66.6%

Table 4.6: Median year structure built

	2000	2009
Fairmont	1955	1956
Will County	1977	1986
Chicago Region	1962	1963

Table 4.7: Median number of rooms

	2000	2009
Fairmont	5.3	5.3
Will County	6.3	6.4
Chicago Region	5.3	5.4

Table 4.8: Median value, owner occupied housing units

	2000	2009	% CHANGE
Fairmont	\$82,200	\$124,800	51.8%
Will County	\$154,300	\$235,800	52.8%
Chicago Region	\$161,400	\$256,400	58.9%

Employment Analysis

The number of employed adults in Fairmont has fallen dramatically since 2000. The number of employed adults in Fairmont dropped 34 percent between 2000 and 2009. Will County saw a growth of 32 percent of employed adults over the same period, spurred on by the rapid growth of the last decade. For the Chicago region, the number of employed adults grew only 4 percent.

The composition of the employment market for Fairmont residents has shifted since 2000, but not enough to compensate for the loss of manufacturing employment. In 2000, manufacturing employment accounted for 23 percent of jobs held by residents, the largest share in any employment sector. By 2009 manufacturing accounted for 15 percent of jobs, falling to fourth among employment sectors.

However, Fairmont residents have benefitted from their proximity to the abundant-and-growing transportation-related jobs locating in Will County. While Fairmont residents have witnessed job losses in other sectors, the numbers of residents employed in transportation-related activities has substantially increased. Fairmont residents saw a 150 percent increase in employment in distribution and intermodal jobs, a sector that has been one of particular strength in Will County.

A growing share of Fairmont residents are employed in industries and jobs that are shrinking at the county and regional level. In 2000, 32 percent of Fairmont workers worked in the manufacturing, construction or transportation industry; by 2009 that figure rose to 45 percent. Over that same period those figures shrunk in both Will County (31 to 28 percent) and the Chicago region (27 to 25 percent). This dynamic is further illustrated in the types of jobs that Fairmont workers have. In 2000, 30 percent of Fairmont workers were in construction or production jobs, rising to 41 percent in 2009. Again, those same figures shrunk over the same period in Will County (26 to 24 percent) and the Chicago region (22 to 21 percent).

Tables detailing the Employment Data are provided in the Appendix attached herein.

Economic Analysis

Overall, household incomes in Fairmont are losing ground relative to Will County and the Chicago region; however, among white and black households, household incomes are rising at a rate that outpaces that of similar residents in Will County and the Chicago region. For all households, Fairmont has struggled to keep pace with increases in median household income when compared to Will County and the Chicago region. However, that does not hold true for all groups in Fairmont. In fact, median household income for white and black households in Fairmont increased at a rate faster than that of Will County and the region. Fairmont’s Hispanic households were unique in that they actually experienced a decline in median household income from 2000 to 2009, thereby lowering the figure for all households in the community.

Fewer Fairmont residents are receiving high school diplomas; however, the number of residents with bachelor’s degrees grew sharply. Fewer adult Fairmont residents have high school diplomas in 2009 compared to 2000. This stands in contrast to the increases witnessed for Will County and the greater region. However, there was a more than six-fold increase in the number of Fairmont adults with an educational attainment of a bachelor’s degree or more since 2000, despite the fact that the actual number of Fairmont adults aged 25 and older decreased.

Table 4.9: Median household income

	FAIRMONT	WILL COUNTY	CHICAGO REGION
Change in MHI, 2000-2009	11.2%	19.1%	16.6%
Change in White MHI, 2000-2009	21.7%	20.7%	20.3%
Change in Black MHI, 2000-2009	11.6%	1.9%	9.2%
Change in Hispanic MHI, 2000-2009	-4.5%	10.8%	14.1%

Table 4.10: Detailed median household income

	FAIRMONT		WILL COUNTY		CHICAGO REGION	
	2000	2009	2000	2009	2000	2009
Median Household Income	\$40,907	\$45,476	\$62,238	\$74,118	\$50,747	\$59,193
MHI, Whites	\$41,761	\$50,833	\$64,154	\$77,411	\$56,865	\$68,435
MHI, Blacks	\$37,955	\$42,356	\$47,960	\$48,848	\$32,962	\$35,979
MHI, Hispanics	\$60,536	\$57,794	\$54,049	\$59,861	\$41,291	\$47,114

Conclusion

Fairmont's demographics exhibit many traits and trends that lend themselves to the conventional conclusion that the community is not a destination of choice and suffers from increasing poverty. Chief among them may be the following:

- **Fairmont appears to have been particularly adversely affected by the housing mortgage crisis of the last three years.** The number of homeowners increased substantially during the last decade, but so did the number of vacancies. This could indicate that a number of residents assumed mortgages that fell into foreclosure during the latter third of the decade.
- **Fairmont's workers are increasingly employed in industries and jobs that declining at the county and regional level.** Fairmont has long been considered a "blue-collar" community, and over the last decade the share of workers in manufacturing, construction, transportation and production jobs grew. However, data at the county and regional level indicate that jobs in those areas are declining while jobs in areas such as education, health care and services are increasing, and Fairmont's residents are not benefitting from the shift.

However, Fairmont does exhibit traits that, if leveraged properly, can form the basis of community revitalization.

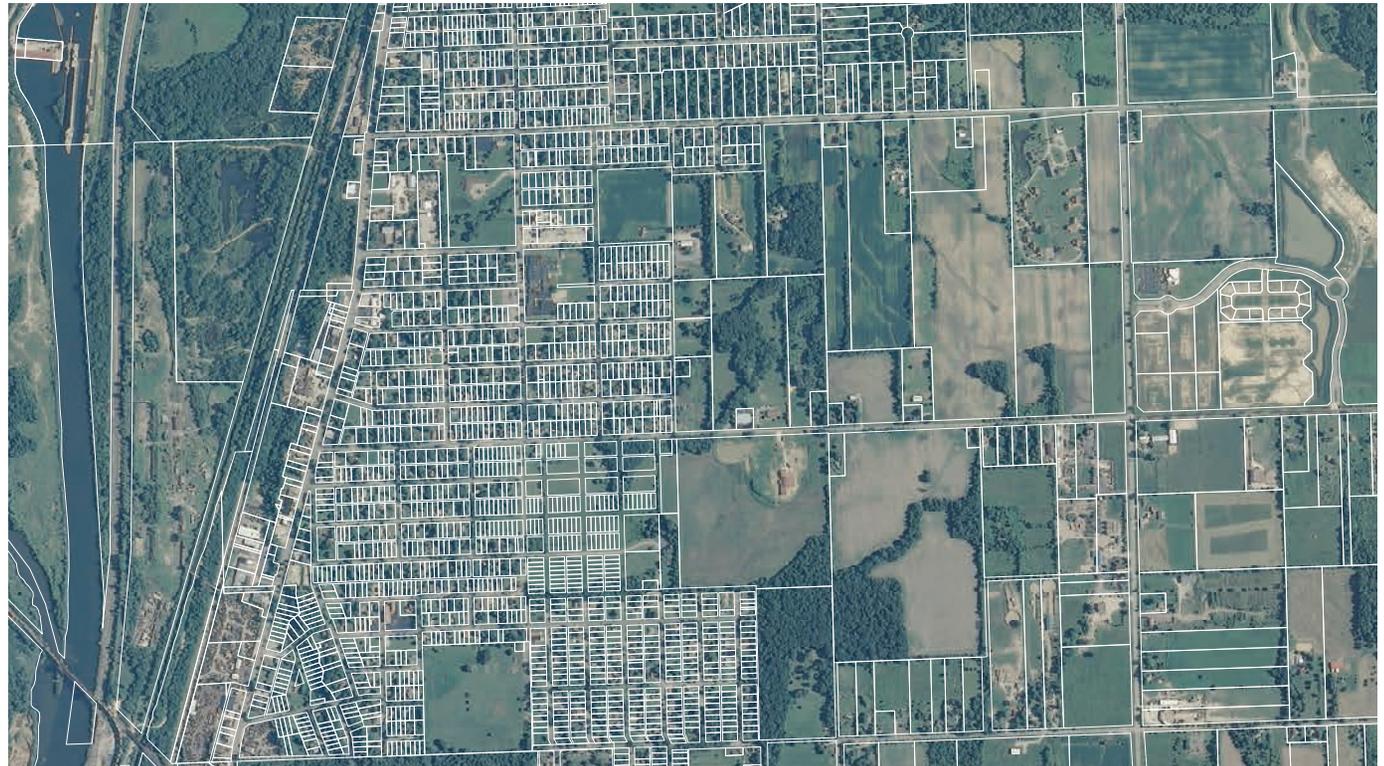
- **Growth has occurred around Fairmont, and that growth provides Fairmont with the opportunity to remake its identity.** Will County in general, and Lockport in particular, have grown substantially over the last decade, but Fairmont has witnessed little of that growth within its boundaries. Fairmont is well-positioned to benefit from additional growth once market conditions improve.
- **An opportunity may exist for Fairmont to diversify its housing stock with newer and larger homes at various price points.** The age and relative affordability of Fairmont's older homes may have had a dampening effect on new home construction. However, a market may exist for current and potential new Fairmont residents who desire newer homes in the community.
- **Incomes among Fairmont's two largest demographic groups are increasing at a faster rate when compared to the county and the region, which can form the basis for attracting additional investment.** Prior to the economic downturn of the last three years, Fairmont may have been experiencing a mini-transition from its previous position as an affordable housing enclave to a more middle-income destination. Increasing household incomes among whites and blacks, despite declining populations, may bear this out. Continued increasing incomes may attract the attention of developers and retailers seeking to build in the community.
- **Educational attainment is also increasing at a faster rate when compared to the county and the region, again forming the basis for attracting additional investment.** Although starting from a small base figure, the number of Fairmont adult residents with a bachelor's degree or higher exploded during the past decade. Similar continued improvements, as with increasing incomes, can form the foundation for residential and commercial development.

Section 5

Existing Land Use and Development

This section describes the existing land use and development conditions within Fairmont with a focus on types of land use, Will County zoning, and built environment. The information in this section was obtained from Will County's geographic information systems (GIS) data, and based upon a visual analysis of the community.

An aerial of the Fairmont community with parcel lines shown. Parcels in the western segment of the study area are much smaller in the subdivided residential areas when compared to the larger agricultural and undeveloped parcels in the eastern portion.



Existing Land use

A detailed inventory of the community's existing land use pattern is shown in Figure 15. The following categories were created to establish a baseline land use perspective for Fairmont.

Residential

Single-Family Residential – The majority of the parcels in the Fairmont community are detached single-family homes. The types of homes, architectural styles, and conditions of each home varies throughout the community. It is very common to see new home construction next to vacant or poorly maintained structures.

Multi-Family Residential – Very few multi-family home apartments exist in the Fairmont community. Most multi-family units are located within group homes and assisted living properties.

Other

Vacant Property/Building – A substantial number of vacant properties and structures exist throughout the community in both the residential neighborhoods and in the business areas along IL Route 171.

Unbuilt Road – Several streets have been platted in the community, however, many have not been constructed.

Table 5.1. Percentage of land by category in study area

	LOTS	ACREAGE	PERCENTAGE
NO Coding in Will Parcel data	13	30.5	3%
Commercial	77	71.6	7%
Exemp	44	109.8	11%
Agriculture	28	268.8	28%
Industrial	24	28.0	3%
Residential	1582	463.9	48%
Totals	1768	972.8	100%
Vacant**	715 (40%)	161.5 (16%)	

Data Source: Will County, Dec 2009, ** Approximate based upon field survey work in June 2011.

Commercial

Retail – Most retail land uses exist along IL Route 171 and consist of restaurants and a barber shop.

Auto Service – The majority of uses, many of which are the largest business parcels in the study area are auto wreckers and auto service uses. Many of these uses have outdoor storage areas.

Industrial – Many industrial uses are located along IL Route 171 ranging from storage, to landscaping companies, to office, to heavy industry. Many industrial uses have outdoor storage areas.

Community Facilities

Cemetery – Two cemeteries are located in the study area.

Religious Institution – A large number of churches exist throughout the Fairmont community, some within residential neighborhoods.

School – Fairmont School, which focuses on elementary education, is an important community facility in Fairmont.

Institutional – This land use classification includes institutional uses other than the school including a rehabilitation center.

Utilities – A number of utilities owned by private utility companies and governmental agencies exist in the community including cellular towers

Township Highway Department – The Lockport Township Highway Department is located in the study area off of IL Route 171.

Open Space

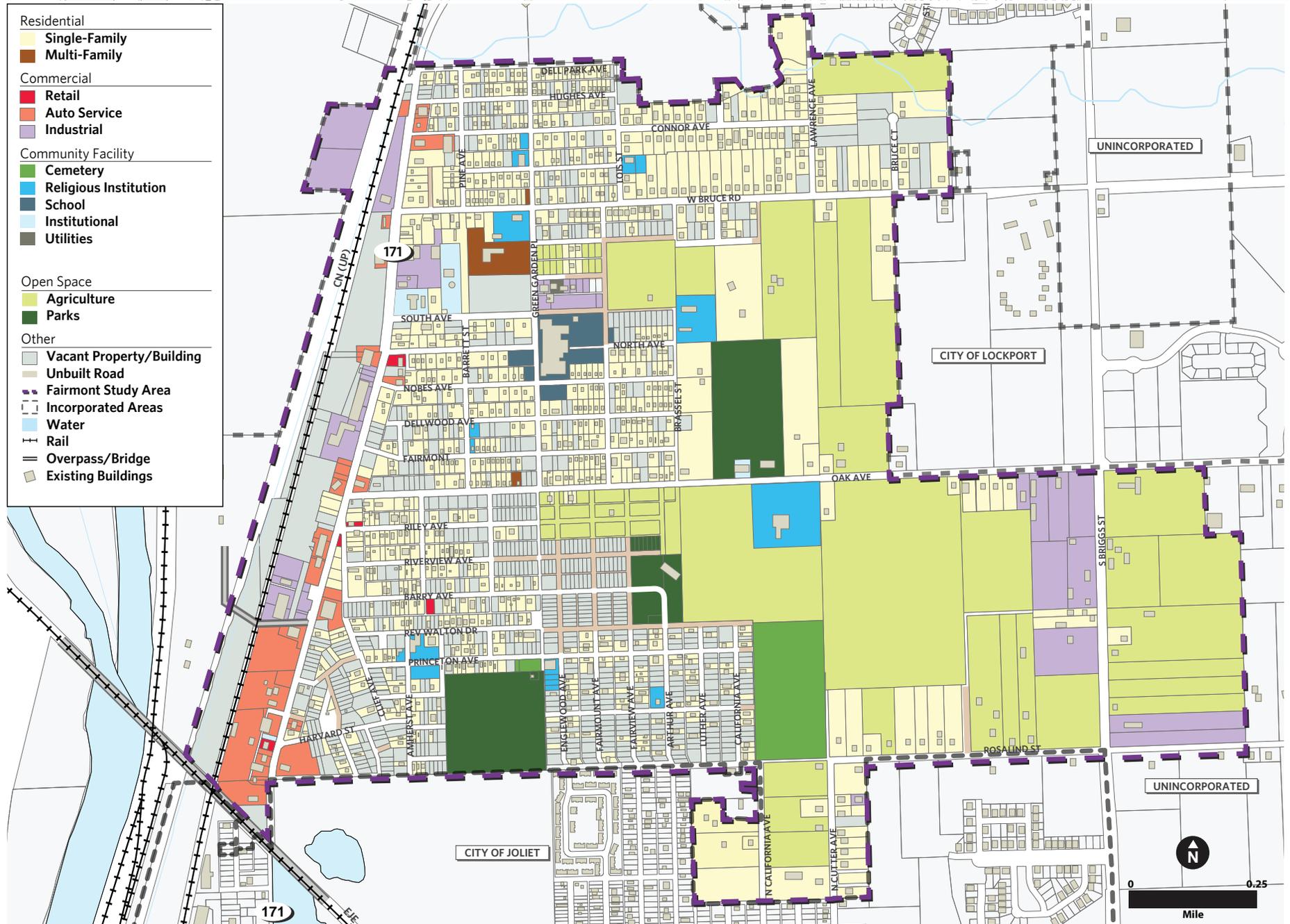
Agriculture – Several acres within the Fairmont study area are used for active farming especially in the eastern portion.

Public Parks – A number of public parks and open space areas are located in the community, primarily owned and operated by the Lockport Township Park District.

Private Open Space – A private disc golf course called Trinity Links, is located on the north side of Oak Street.

Nearby Parks – One of the Park District's largest parks, Dellwood Park, is located just north of the study area.

Figure 15. Existing land use



Will County Zoning

As an unincorporated area, Fairmont is regulated by the Will County Zoning Ordinance. As illustrated in Figure 17, the existing zoning designations closely reflect the current land uses. The following zoning classifications are used by Will County in the Fairmont area:

- E-2, Single-Family Estate Residence District - Minimum area of 2.5 acres; Minimum frontage of 180 feet; No structure shall exceed the height restriction per the Building Code; Lot coverage 20%
- R-1 Single-Family Residence District - Minimum area of 60,000 square feet; Minimum frontage of 165 feet; Minimum frontage of 180 feet; No structure shall exceed the height restriction per the Building Code; Lot coverage 20%
- R-3, Single-Family Residence District - Minimum area of 20,000 square feet; Minimum frontage of 90 feet; Minimum frontage of 180 feet; No structure shall exceed the height restriction per the Building Code; Lot coverage 30%
- R-4, Single-Family Residence District - Minimum area of 12,500 square feet; Minimum frontage of 70 feet; Minimum frontage of 180 feet; No structure shall exceed the height restriction per the Building Code; Lot coverage 40%
- C-1 Local Shopping District - Minimum area of 12,000 square feet; Minimum frontage of 80 feet; Maximum height of 25 feet; Floor Area Ratio not to exceed 1.0
- C-2 Community Shopping District - Minimum area of 12,000 square feet; Minimum frontage of 80 feet; Maximum height of 45 feet; Floor Area Ratio not to exceed 2.0
- C-4 Highway Commercial District - Minimum area of 20,000 square feet; Minimum frontage of 80 feet; Maximum height of 45 feet; Floor Area Ratio not to exceed 2.0
- I-1 Limited Industrial District - Minimum area of 10,000 square feet; Minimum frontage of 60 feet; Maximum height of 35 feet; Floor area ratio not to exceed 1.2
- I-2 General Industrial District - Minimum area of 10,000 square feet; Minimum frontage of 80 feet; No structure shall exceed 2 stories or 35 feet when within 200 feet of a residence. Beyond 200ft. from a residence district, one additional foot in height may be added from each 2 feet of distance. Floor area ratio not to exceed 1.5
- A-1 Agricultural District - Minimum area of 10 acres; Minimum frontage of 300 feet; No structure shall exceed the height restriction per the Building Code; Lot coverage 20%
- A-2 Rural Residence District - Minimum area of 2.5 acres; Minimum frontage of 300 feet; No structure shall exceed the height restriction per the Building Code; Lot coverage 20%

Zoning Analysis

Fairmont's existing land use pattern closely complies with the zoning district each parcel is in. There are no significant pre-existing non-conforming uses. However, the following existing land uses are in contrast to their current zoning.

Religious Institutions and Cemeteries on Residential and Agricultural zoned parcels

No specific religious institution zoning designation exists in Will County. In the study area religious institutions are located on R-4 and A-1 parcels. Religious institutions are permitted uses in the R-4 District and as a special use in the A-1 District.

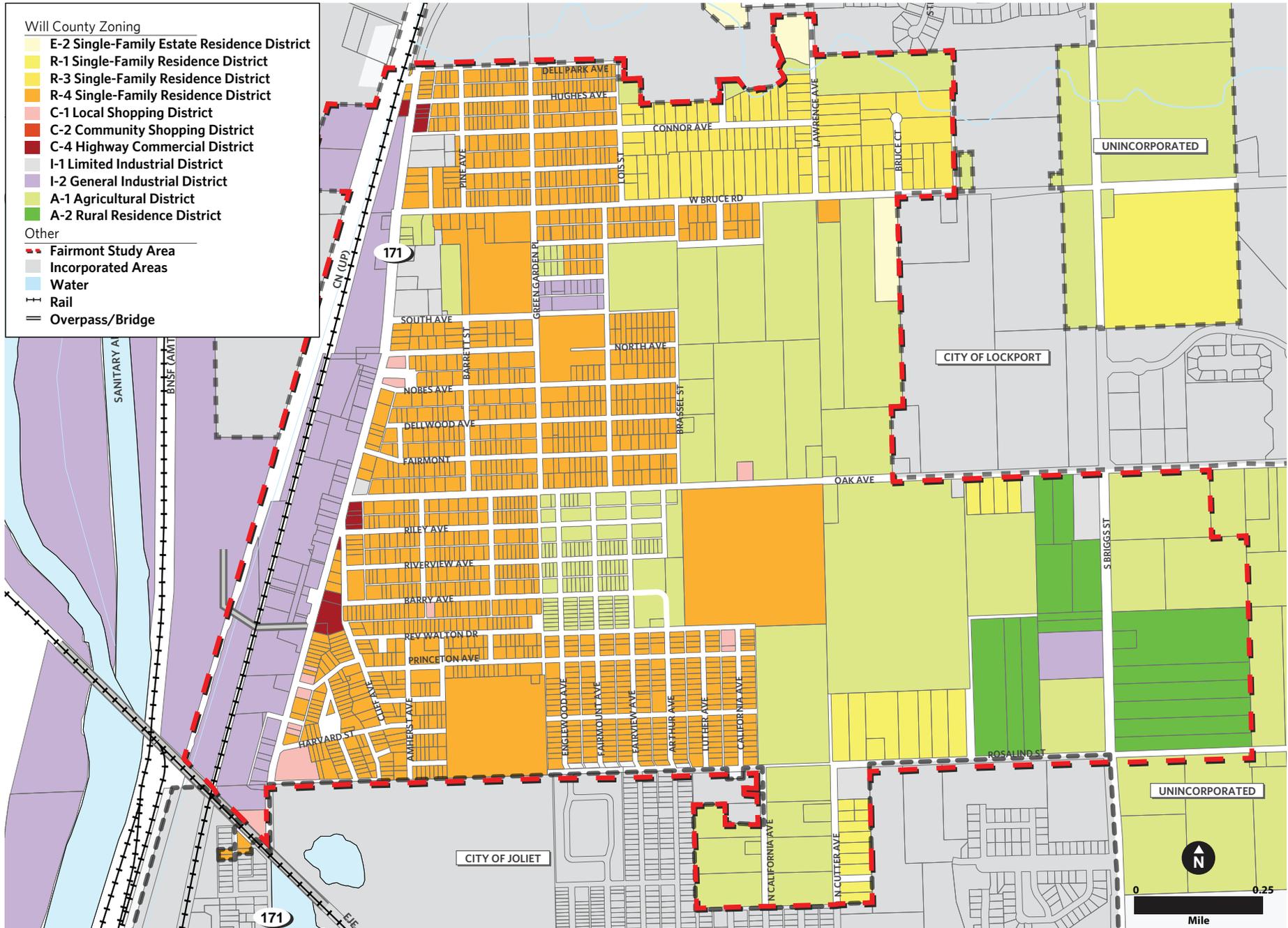
Parks on Residential and Agricultural zoned parcels

Similar to Religious Institutions and Cemeteries, no specific zoning designation exists in Will County for parks. In the study area, parks are located on A-1 and R-4 parcels. Parks are permitted in the A-1 and R-4 Districts.

Amendment to Section 11 of the Zoning Ordinance (2007)

This amendment was put in place to allow smaller existing lots to be built without a variance. It relaxed the lot size and setbacks to accommodate smaller lots such as those that exist throughout much of Fairmont area. The Ordinance states, "*it has been determined that amendments are necessary to establish site and structure requirements for certain non-conforming R-4 and R-5 lots of record, and said amendments establish minimum lot areas of six thousand five-hundred (6,500) square feet, minimum lot widths (lot frontages) of fifty (50) feet, and minimum side yard setbacks of ten (10) feet for certain non-conforming R-4 and R-5 lots of record, created on or before July 20, 1978.*"

Figure 17. Current zoning



Built Environment

As illustrated in Figure 18, the built environment for Fairmont, which consists primarily of one-story, single family homes, is centered upon Green Garden Place.

In general, the majority of the area's structures are predominately located west of Brassel Street. East of Brassel Street the built environment drops significantly to include only a small number of homes, religious institutions, and light industrial businesses.

Will County characterizes Fairmont as an "urban environment." As an urban setting, the Will County LRMP states that areas such as Fairmont should possess a number of characteristics identified as "keystones." Possible keystones for Fairmont include gateways into the community, a central area that defines local identity, a pedestrian-friendly orientation, coordinated stormwater management, balanced housing and employment opportunities and attractive public spaces.

As parcels within Fairmont are improved, the County's overall vision for "urban environments" should provide direction to potential developers, residents, and elected officials in making future land use and development decisions.

Residential Neighborhoods

The majority of the residential neighborhoods in Fairmont include single-family detached homes. These homes are mostly modest sized single-story homes on fairly narrow parcels. It is common to see older homes adjacent to new homes throughout all residential blocks. Many of the residential neighborhoods suffer from vacancies that detract from the sense of community and cohesiveness of the neighborhoods.

There are very few multi-family housing units in Fairmont. Only a handful of multi-family residential properties exist in the community. In addition, according to the Will County Zoning Ordinance, there are no parcels zoned for multi-family housing within the study area.

According to some property owners, the County zoning regulations are too restrictive. According to some residents, parcels have been rezoned over time in the community and that has made it difficult to construct new homes or additions. Due to the size of some parcels, constructing new homes that meet the County zoning requirements, including minimum setbacks, is presenting challenges. Will County Land Use Department has taken a step to address this issue. In 2006, the Department amended the lot size requirements for a residential district to allow development on smaller lot sizes. In 2007, the Will County Board passed Resolution No. 07-39, which amended the Zoning Ordinance to allow development on the smaller lots that exist in the Fairmont area.

The larger number of vacant properties presents an excellent potential for infill development. Because of the large number of vacancies located throughout the community, several sites could be attractive for new infill development. A number of these vacant lots are zoned Agricultural, yet many of them have been platted for residential development. New infill development within residential neighborhoods should be primarily new residential homes, while the vacancies along IL Route 171 present opportunities for new businesses to locate in Fairmont. In addition to new homes and business, opportunities for new multi-use trails, garden plots, and neighborhood parks also exist.

Business Area (IL Route 171)

As the primary arterial servicing Fairmont, IL Route 171 is the key commercial corridor in the community. Currently, however, the majority of businesses located in this corridor consist of automotive service and outdoor storage businesses. Only a small number of retail businesses including a restaurant and a barbershop exist in this section of Fairmont.

Industrial uses dominate this corridor. Many industrial uses in this area range from storage and landscaping companies, to office, auto storage/parts, and heavy industry. Many of these industrial businesses have outdoor storage areas that are visible from the street. The majority of the businesses with outdoor storage, especially the auto parts businesses, do have screening along IL Route 171.

IL Route 171 businesses do provide employment opportunities and attract potential shoppers into the area. The majority of the businesses (automotive and industrial) along IL Route 171 appear to be well occupied based upon a windshield survey of the parking lots and activity within each business.

The built environment in the IL Route 171 Corridor does not support walkability. This section of IL Route 171 is generally unattractive and lacks a “sense of place.” Travelers have very little indication that the Fairmont community is located off of the corridor. There are no sidewalks located within the corridor, and there are very few reasons that pedestrians would walk to, or along, this segment.

Residents do not generally identify with IL Route 171. At the initial community meetings, very little discussion occurred regarding IL Route 171. Residents did identify the corridor as the area with the most potential for new commercial/retail businesses to locate, however, most residents did not identify issues with a lack of pedestrian and bicycle access along IL Route 171. Although the corridor is a large physical barrier (four lane arterial) for pedestrian crossings, residents do not perceive it as a barrier, most likely because there are no sidewalks leading from the neighborhoods to IL Route 171 and there are generally no businesses on the west side of the street that would attract pedestrians.



Photos showing the general character of IL Route 171 through the Fairmont Community.

Vacancies

A large number of vacant homes, businesses, and properties are scattered throughout the community. As highlighted in the existing land use section, a substantial number of vacancies exist in Fairmont. The vacancies detract from any sense of “rhythm” in the neighborhoods, and create unoccupied pockets within residential areas that are often unmaintained and unattractive. In addition to vacancies within neighborhoods, a large number of platted parcels are undeveloped, especial near the intersection of Green Garden Place and Rev. Walton Drive.

General Condition of Structures

Although several homes and businesses in the community are well-maintained and attractive, there are a large number of structures in Fairmont that appear to be in poor condition. The majority of the vacant homes and businesses in the community appear to have suffered from a lack of upkeep. Several vacant homes are boarded up and most have lawns that are now overgrown with litter and debris.

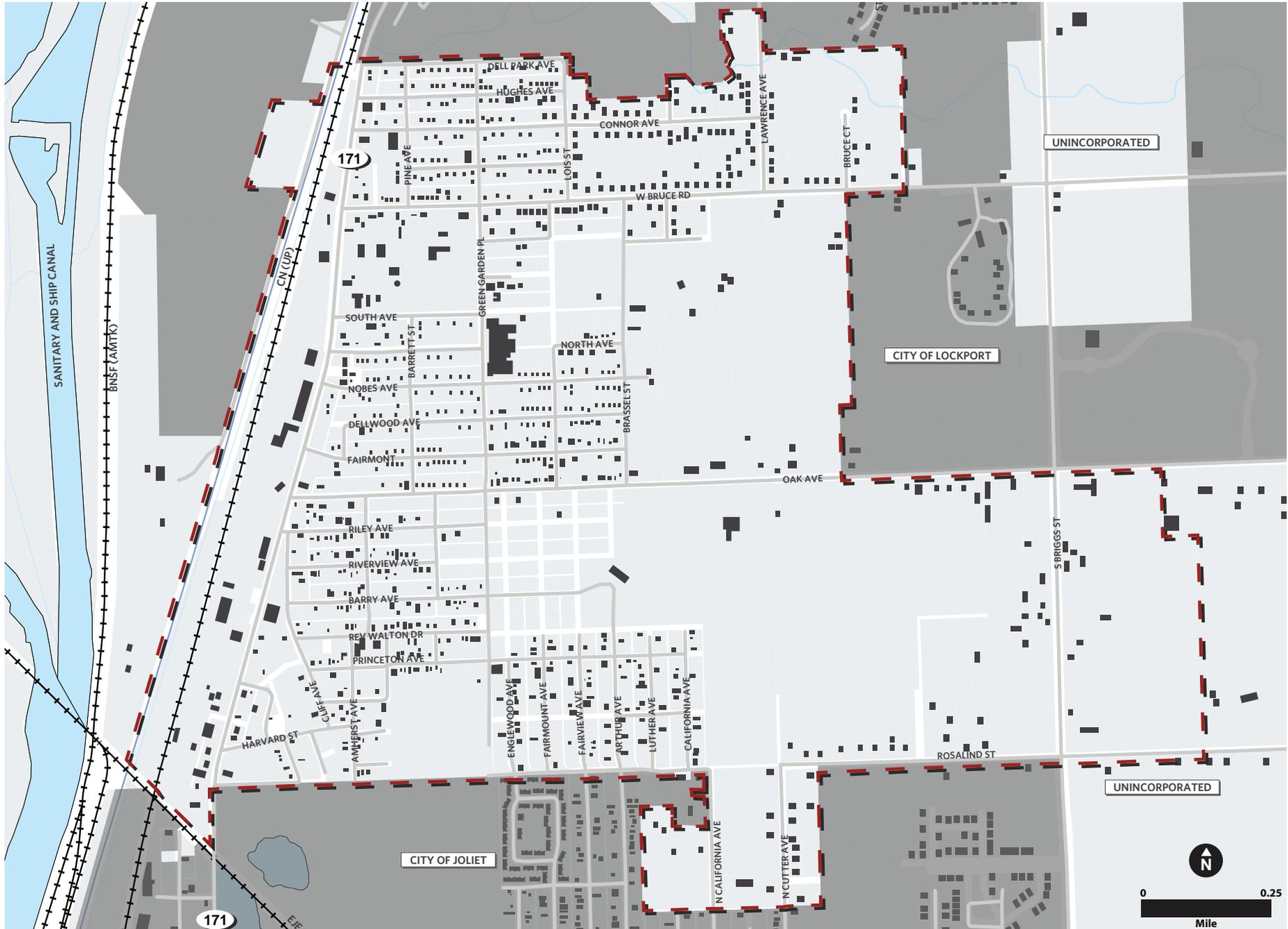
Flooding

Residents expressed concern that some areas within the community are prone to flooding. According to residents areas of the community flood, primarily on those parcels that are located in the floodplain, and for those homes where the streets are at a much higher grade than the adjacent properties. According to residents, overtime, roads have been resurfaced which has raised the street elevations which causes flooding onto adjacent properties.

Potential Brownfields

There may be potential brownfield sites that may prohibit redevelopment along IL Route 171. Based upon the types of industrial businesses that exist, or previously existed along the IL Route 171 corridor, there is a likelihood that brownfield sites may exist. Brownfields are abandoned, unused, or underused industrial and commercial properties. Brownfield properties vary in size, location, age, and past use.

Figure 18. Built environment



Section 6

Mobility

This section describes the existing transportation system within Fairmont with a focus on streets, public transit, and alternative transportation infrastructure such as sidewalks and trails. The information in this section was obtained from Will County, the Lockport Township Highway Department, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Pace, and based upon a visual analysis of existing conditions.



In general, residents within Fairmont rely primarily on private automobiles and the Pace bus routes to travel within and outside of the community. Although no formal sidewalks exist along the majority of the public streets in Fairmont, many residents walk on the streets as they go from one place to another throughout the community. This has the potential of creating unsafe conditions for both motorists and pedestrians/bicyclists especially in the evening when it can be difficult to see pedestrians/bicyclists on the street. Limited street lighting compounds this issue. There are also limited pedestrian or bicycle connections outside of the community to adjacent neighborhoods, parks, and community facilities which also discourages walking and bicycling as an alternative mode of transportation.

Roadways

Functional Classification

The County has established a functional classified highway system to recognize existing travel patterns and to reinforce and control traffic flow. Creation of a system whereby different roadways are engineered to handle varying types of demand is essential.

Roadways vary in width, design, cross-section, or traffic volume, but also in their function. The functional classification of a road describes the character of service the road is intended to provide. The various road classifications primarily serve two competing functions, access to property and travel mobility depending upon their purpose. The following are definitions are stated in Will County's Transportation Plan for the general road functional classifications within the Fairmont community:

- **Principal and Minor Arterials** are highways that are generally characterized by their ability to quickly move relatively large volumes of traffic with fewer provisions for access to adjacent properties. Arterial highways provide for high-speed travel and longer distance trips. The designation of Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) is correlated to principal arterials with the primary function of mobility. Will County is planning on constructing a new bridge over the Des Plaines River which will create a new Caton Farm/Bruce Road corridor through Fairmont. Due to the expected costs of the project, construction of the new corridor is not expected to occur in the near future. Once completed, Will County is planning to designate the new corridor a SRA.
- **Collector roads** are characterized by a relatively even distribution of access and mobility functions. Traffic volumes, speeds, and trip lengths are typically smaller on collector roads than on arterial roads.

- **Local roads** are public roads and streets not classified as arterials or collectors. Local streets are characterized by numerous points of direct access to adjacent properties. Speeds and volumes are low and trip distances short.

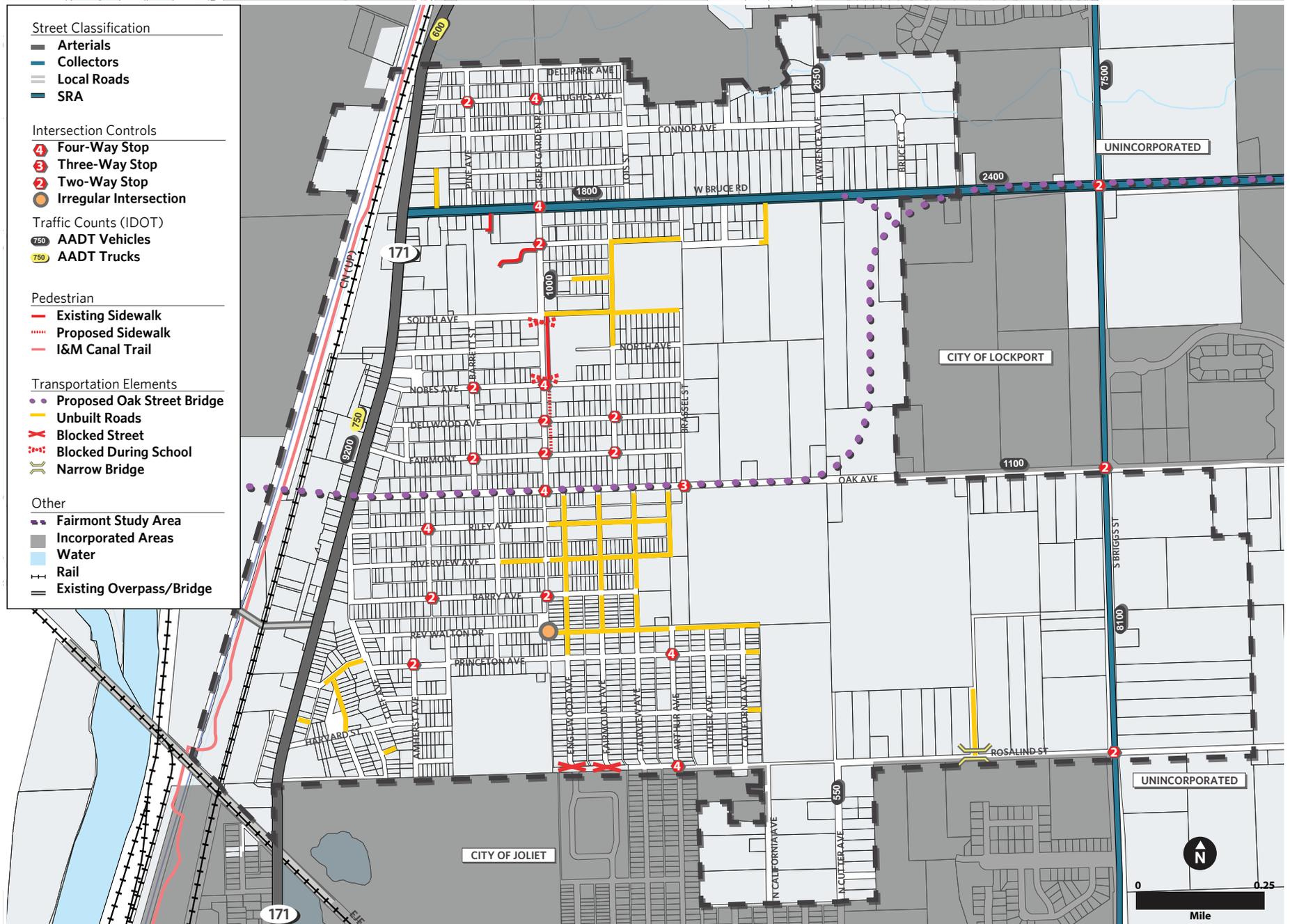
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

Vehicle Miles Traveled represents the average annual auto travel by households. This includes commute travel, but also all other daily auto trips. According to data collected from CNT (Center for Neighborhood Technology), the VMT per household in the Fairmont community is 22,969. This is higher than the VMT for the region which is 16,567.

Street Conditions

In general, the conditions of most street surfaces in the Fairmont community are in poor condition. Many streets are in need of resurfacing or pothole filling. Because no curb or gutters exist in the community, most streets are crowned to drain into the adjacent open swales/ditches. At the first public meeting, a number of residents expressed concern regarding the flooding caused by the streets onto their adjoining residential properties. According to residents, overtime, as the streets are resurfaced, the elevation of the streets has continued to rise which has compounded the flooding problems on lower residential parcels. Furthermore, lack of curbing throughout the community has also led to deterioration along the pavement edges.

Figure 19. Mobility



Transit

The Fairmont community is served by Pace bus routes that provide linkages to nearby Metra Stations. The following is a discussion regarding the two bus routes that provide service within Fairmont. In addition to the Pace bus routes, information is provided for the two nearest Metra Stations: Joliet Union Station and Lockport Metra Station.

Pace Bus Routes

Two Pace bus routes provide service in Fairmont: Route #509 Forest Park; and Route #834 Joliet-Downers Grove. Although marked bus stops exist in the community, no formal bus shelters exist. The following tables illustrate the ridership trend during the month of May over the last three years.

Bus Route 509 Forest Park

Weekday ridership for the main bus route in Fairmont (#509) has increased over the last three years, from 225 riders in May 2009 to 269 in May of this year. Saturday ridership has decreased slightly from 180 riders in May 2010 to 162 in May of this year.

Table 6.1. Bus route 509 Forest Park ridership trend

RIDERSHIP	MAY 2011	MAY 2010	MAY 2009
Weekday	269	250	225
Saturday	162	180	160

Source: RTAMS

Bus Route 834 Joliet-Downers Grove

Ridership for Bus Route #834 is much higher than Route #509. Route #834 also is a much longer route that extends from Joliet's Union Station to Lockport Metra Station and to Main Street Downers Grove Metra Station. Weekday ridership has increased over the last three years from 700 (May 2009) to 850 (May 2011). Similar to the Saturday ridership trend for Route #509, this route has also experienced a decline in ridership from 310 (May 2010) to 300 (May 2011).

Table 6.2. Bus route 834 ridership trend

RIDERSHIP	MAY 2011	MAY 2010	MAY 2009
Weekday	850	690	700
Saturday	300	320	305

Source: RTAMS

Metra

The two nearest Metra stations are the Joliet Union Station and the Lockport Metra Station. The following is a summary of the ridership information provided by Metra for each station.

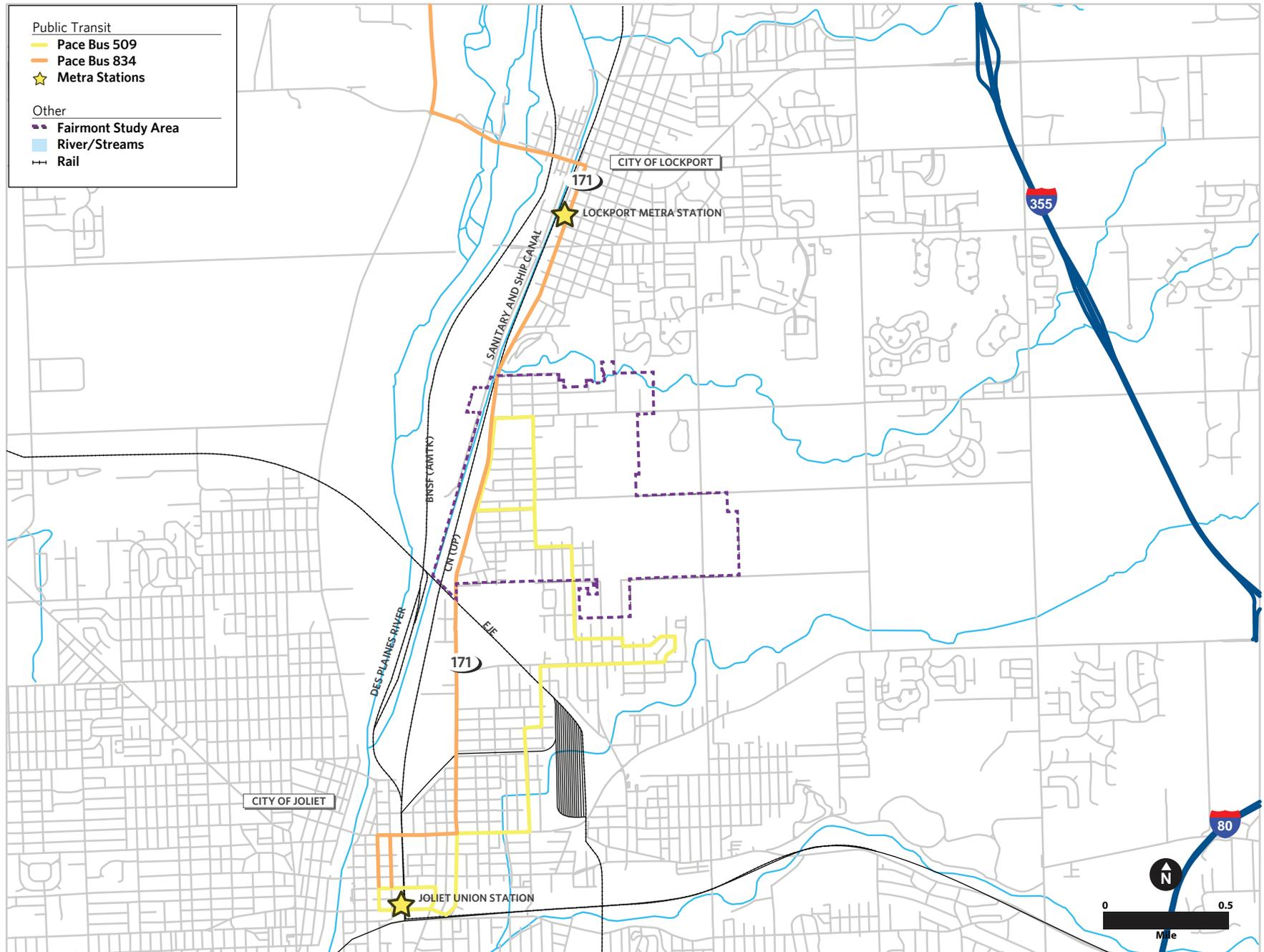
Joliet Union Station

Weekday Boardings	1,353 (2006 count)
Parking Capacity	611 spaces (2008 count)
Parking Utilization	100%
Mode of Access	5% walked, 68% drive alone, 19% dropped off, 5% carpool, 3% bus, 1% other (2006 survey)

Lockport Metra Station

Weekday Boardings	552 (2006 count)
Parking Capacity	337 spaces (2008 count)
Parking Utilization	99%
Mode of Access	2% walked, 76% drive alone, 11% dropped off, 10% carpool (2006 survey)

Figure 20. Public transit serving Fairmont



Bicycle/Pedestrian

No off-street or on-street bicycle paths or trails exist in the Fairmont community. Off-street trails do exist however, outside of the community in Dellwood Park and along the I&M Canal. Unfortunately, accesses these trails from Fairmont is difficult and no clearly demarcated direct connections exist. The nearest connection to the I&M Canal trail is approximately 1.5 miles north of Fairmont in Lockport. The following is a brief overview of the I&M Canal Trail which is the nearest regional trail system.

Pedestrian Safety

Potential safety issues in the community exist for pedestrians due to the lack of sidewalks. This issue is especially of concern for students walking to and from school. Currently students must walk directly on the streets. Many residents do not park in their driveways, but along the street right-of-way which creates unsafe driving conditions and impedes pedestrian walkability, especially if future sidewalks are considered to be constructed.

Will County has applied for a grant to construct a segment of sidewalk near Fairmont School through the Federal Safe Routes to School program. The numerous vacant parcels and vacant street right-of-ways in the community could provide opportunities for future trail development.

I&M Canal Trail

The Forest Preserve District of Will County owns and maintains most of the Centennial Trail/I&M Canal Trail through Will County and The Lockport Township Park District owns and maintains the I&M Canal Trail. The Centennial Trail/I&M Canal Trail extends 12.5 miles in three segments between the Cook County line and the City of Joliet. In Cook County, the trail extends an additional 9.5 miles to Columbia Woods at Willow Springs Road.

A second segment of the Centennial Trail/I&M Canal Trail runs from 135th Street south to Second Street in Lockport along the I&M Canal for a distance of 3.25 miles. The crushed limestone trail travels passes near several historic canal locks. In Lockport, the trail connects to Lockport Township Park District's I&M Canal Trail, which links to the Park District's Dellwood and Dellwood West Parks.

From Lockport, the trail travels south through the Forest Preserve District's Joliet Iron Works Historic Site. This 2.7-mile section is surfaced with crushed limestone. Parking is available at the Joliet Iron Works Historic Site, on Columbia Street in downtown Joliet. Street routes from Joliet Iron Works connect the trail to the State of Illinois' I&M Canal State Trail to the southwest, the Old Plank Road Trail to the east, and the Wauponsee Glacial Trail to the southeast.

Figure 21. I&M Canal Trail through Fairmont area



Forest Preserve District of Will County

The northern trailhead for the I&M Canal Trails is located at Isle a la Cache on 135th Street (Romeo Road), 0.25 mile east of Route 53, in Romeoville.

The southern trailhead for the I&M Canal Trails is located at the Joliet Iron Works Historic Site, .10 mile east of Route 53 (Scott Street) and .10 mile south of the Ruby Street Bridge, on Columbia Street in downtown Joliet.

For additional information, please call us at 815.727.8700

Data Source: Forest Preserve District of Will County

Section 7

Housing

During the 1920s, a good portion of the Fairmont Area was platted as lots to be used for modest housing. For the most part, it was expected that families and individuals who were employed by the industries in Lockport and the east side of Joliet would occupy these homes. From the time of this area being platted, development was sporadic and undefined. One can spot brick bungalows that were built near the time of the original platting, along with a great number of smaller homes built on slab foundations that appear to be built in the latter half of the 20th Century. A relatively large amount of land is still undeveloped and held in large tracts along with numerous undeveloped platted lots.



Architectural Style

Fairmont does not have an identifiable architectural character. Rather, the community is comprised of many diverse building types and architectural styles. While similar building architectural styling is not a prerequisite for community identity, architecture is a feature that can contribute strongly to sense of place. One of the area's most unique characteristics in terms of housing is its diversity of new and old homes within the same blocks. It is very common to see homes constructed within the last few years intermixed with homes constructed in the 1920s. There are some homes or structures that might be eligible for landmark designation by the Will County Historic Preservation Commission.

Types of Homes

The majority of homes in the community are single-family detached residences. There are only a small number of multi-family residential units within the study, and the majority of those are part of a township senior housing development and a rehabilitation center.

Vacancies

The large numbers of vacancies in the community detracts from the sense of community in the residential areas. As shown in the Existing Land Use figure included earlier in this report, the large number of vacant parcels, homes, businesses, and even religious institutions are scattered throughout the neighborhoods. Many of the vacant homes in the community are in poor condition. In general, the vacant homes create an unattractive and poor image of the community.

Zoning

Primarily, the majority of the housing in the community falls within the County's R4 Single Family Residential Zoning District. According to the County's zoning ordinance the classification has the following stated as its primary purpose:

“The R4 district is established to provide for an environment of predominately single-family dwellings with certain additional compatible uses which serve the residents living in the district. The R4 district is also established to implement the purpose and intent for residential districts by providing a use density permitted of not less than 3.63 units per acre; where provisions for compatible community facilities and services are available or can be made available in the near future.”

It appears that housing is expected to develop on much of agricultural-zoned lands, which is platted for residential development. These lands may need to be rezoned to residential to encourage such development in the future.

Housing and Transportation (H+T) Affordability Index

Housing and Transportation (H+T) Affordability Index has been developed as a more complete measure of affordability beyond the standard method of assessing only housing costs. By taking into account both the cost of housing as well as the cost of transportation associated with the location of the home, H+T provides a more complete understanding of affordability. Dividing these costs by Representative Regional Incomes illustrates the Cost Burden placed on a Typical Household by H+T expenses.

While housing alone is traditionally deemed affordable when consuming no more than 30% of income, the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) has defined an affordable range for H+T as the combined costs consuming no more than 45% of income. CNT has calculated the housing costs as a percent of income to be 19.8% in Fairmont (compared to 28.5% in the region). Source: http://htaindex.cnt.org/mapping_tool.php#region=Chicago%2C%20IL&theme_menu=0&layer1=23&layer2=24

Habitat for Humanity

Since its incorporation in 1988, Habitat for Humanity has built 53 houses in the Will County area - 20 houses in Joliet and 32 houses in Lockport Township. Over 30 Habitat homes have been constructed in Fairmont. A total of seven homes have been built along Reverend Walton Drive as part of their block-build program. Before 2008, Habitat's work sparked other builders to construct homes in the area, which positively impacted community character.

This affordable housing program qualifies families earning 30 to 50 percent of the median income for the area. Selected families must have good credit because Habitat for Humanity not only builds a house with them, Habitat also loans the family the money to purchase the house. No profit is added to the house price and the loan has zero interest. Families must demonstrate need for the Habitat housing during their selection process.

The building and trades classes at Lockport Township High School have constructed 10 Habitat houses in Fairmont. Two classes of students per school day each work an hour and a half learning about the trades by working in a real laboratory setting. Joliet Junior College HVAC and electrical classes work on Habitat for Humanity sites. WILCO Career Center began a partnership with Habitat during the 2006-2007 school year.

The partnership of Habitat for Humanity with the County of Will and the City of Joliet has provided much needed HOME dollars in support of the house building. These HOME dollars coupled with a house sponsorship of \$65,000 and hours of volunteer time assure that families are selected and supported, land is acquired, building materials are purchased (or donated) and the structure is completed.

Volunteers come from corporations, churches and interested individuals. The same is true of dollars and gifts-in-kind. One of the most exciting partnerships in recent times was the 2004 partnership with Kensington Homes and Lakewood Homes. Both of these homebuilders funded and built Habitat houses in Lockport on Rev. Walton Drive.

Today, some Fairmont residents are now owners of the first properties Habitat built. To foster community building, Habitat has hosted a picnic for Fairmont residents who live in Habitat homes. Habitat for Humanity is hoping that this picnic will become an annual event. Habitat has also launched "Brush with Kindness," where three non-Habitat homes were painted and a cookout was held afterwards.

Housing Analysis

The Fairmont area primarily consists of single-family homes, with few multi-family developments. Analysis of U.S. Census and American Community Survey data yield the following findings.

Housing Units

It is apparent that Fairmont benefitted from the real estate boom that took place prior to the economic crash in 2008. A total of 47 housing units were constructed between 2000 and 2010. This attributes to the 5.2% increase in housing units during this time period.

Table 7.1: Number of Housing Units

	2000	2010	% CHANGE
Total Housing Units	901	948	5.2%

Housing Tenure

Although the number of housing units has increased, the overall number of occupied housing units has decreased by 2.2%. Over the last decade, the number of residents renting has grown at a fast rate compared to homeownership which has seen a steep decline.

Table 7.2: Housing Tenure

	2000	2010	% CHANGE
Occupied Housing Units	861	842	-2.2%
Owner-Occupied	646	575	-11.0%
Renter Occupied	215	267	24.2%

Vacancy

Given that the number of occupied housing units has increased, vacant units have increased tremendously by 165%, from 40 units in 2000 to 106 in 2010.

Given that Fairmont has an opportunity to reinvent itself by establishing a unique identity that would attract newcomers, this community could become attractive to the degree that vacant units could become occupied. This would create a more stable Fairmont.

Table 7.3: Vacant Units

	2000	2010	% CHANGE
Vacant Housing Units	40	106	165%

Figure 22. Residential areas



Section 8

Open Space

This section describes the existing open space within Fairmont with a focus on agricultural land, parks, wooded areas, streams, wetlands, topography, and floodplains. The information in this section was obtained from Will County, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and based upon a visual analysis of existing conditions.

Public Parks

The Fairmont community is served by two park sites and one school within the study area, and three park sites adjacent to the study area. The following is a summary of the parks that serve Fairmont:

A.F. Hill Park

Located in the southern portion of the community off of Green Garden Place, this 20 acre park provides a variety of recreational amenities including: a playground, two baseball fields, two basketball courts, and horseshoe pits. Some residents expressed concern that there are no public restrooms at the park.

Fairmont Community Center and Park

The Lockport Township Park District owns and operates the community and adjacent park which includes a playground. The usable public open space outside of the Community Center including the park and the open play area across Arthur Avenue is approximately 3 acres.

Fairmont School

Although not a public park, Fairmont School does provide outdoor open space for students and residents (after school hours). Approximately 2.5 acres of open space exists east of the school building that includes a baseball field, open play area, and a playground.

Nearby Public Parks

Dellwood Park

Dellwood park is one of the Park District's largest parks consisting of 150 acres at the intersection of Route 171 and Woods Drive just north of the Fairmont community. Recreational amenities at the park include: four playgrounds, seven baseball fields, five soccer fields, an in-line skating rink, five picnic shelters, six tennis courts, a sand volleyball court, horseshoe pits, and trails. There is limited direct pedestrian access between the Fairmont community and Dellwood Park.

Dellwood Park West

The Park District purchased 176 acres of property west of Route 171 off of South Canal Road to develop a new park site. At this time no recreational amenities have been constructed at the park.

Forest Park

The Joliet Park District owns and operates this 12 acre park that is located just south of the Fairmont study area near Cutter Avenue and Rosalind Street. The park includes a soccer field, a baseball field, and a playground.

Public Park Access

The School District and Lockport Township Park District provides approximately 25.5 acres of open space within Fairmont. Based upon a population of 3,380 residents, this amount of open space equates to a ratio of 7.5 acres per 1,000 people. This number is below the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standard is 10 acres of open space for 1,000 residents. However, residents of Fairmont also have access to several major parks nearby, including the large Dellwood Park.



Environmental Features and Elevation Change

The Fairmont community includes a number of quality environmental features including streams, wetlands, and heavily wooded areas.

Contours

One of the area's most prevalent features is its steep change in elevation from Route 171 eastward. The elevation increases quickly from 556' near the intersection of Route 176 and Harvard Avenue, to 634' at the top of the hill at the intersection of Bradford Court and Harvard Court an approximate distance of 820 feet (a 1:8 slope, or 12.5%).

After this steep elevation change, the terrain of the rest of the study area becomes relatively flat. Moving east from this location the elevation increases only slightly from 634' to 668' at Briggs Road which is a distance of approximately 6,900'. Within this flat area many parcels are still used for agricultural purposes where acceptable grades and quality soil conditions exist.

Wetlands, Floodplain, and Streams

Fairmont is located in the Lower Des Plaines River Basin. Faction Run stream traverses the northern boundary of the study area through Dellwood Park and into the Des Plaines River. Two wetlands exist in the community east of Fairmont School. The parcels impacted by the wetlands are currently vacant parcels. Potential development on these parcels will be impacted by these wetlands. In addition to wetlands, some parcels are impacted by a floodplain. At the first public workshop, some residents expressed concerns regarding the flooding that occurs on their properties within the floodplain. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates floodplains as areas that are predicted to be inundated with flood waters in the 100-year storm event.

Wooded Areas

As illustrated on Figure 24, a large number of wooded areas exist in the community. These wooded areas consist of primarily large trees and well-established vegetation. Wooded areas are located generally on vacant parcels or within the front and rear yards of the residential neighborhoods.



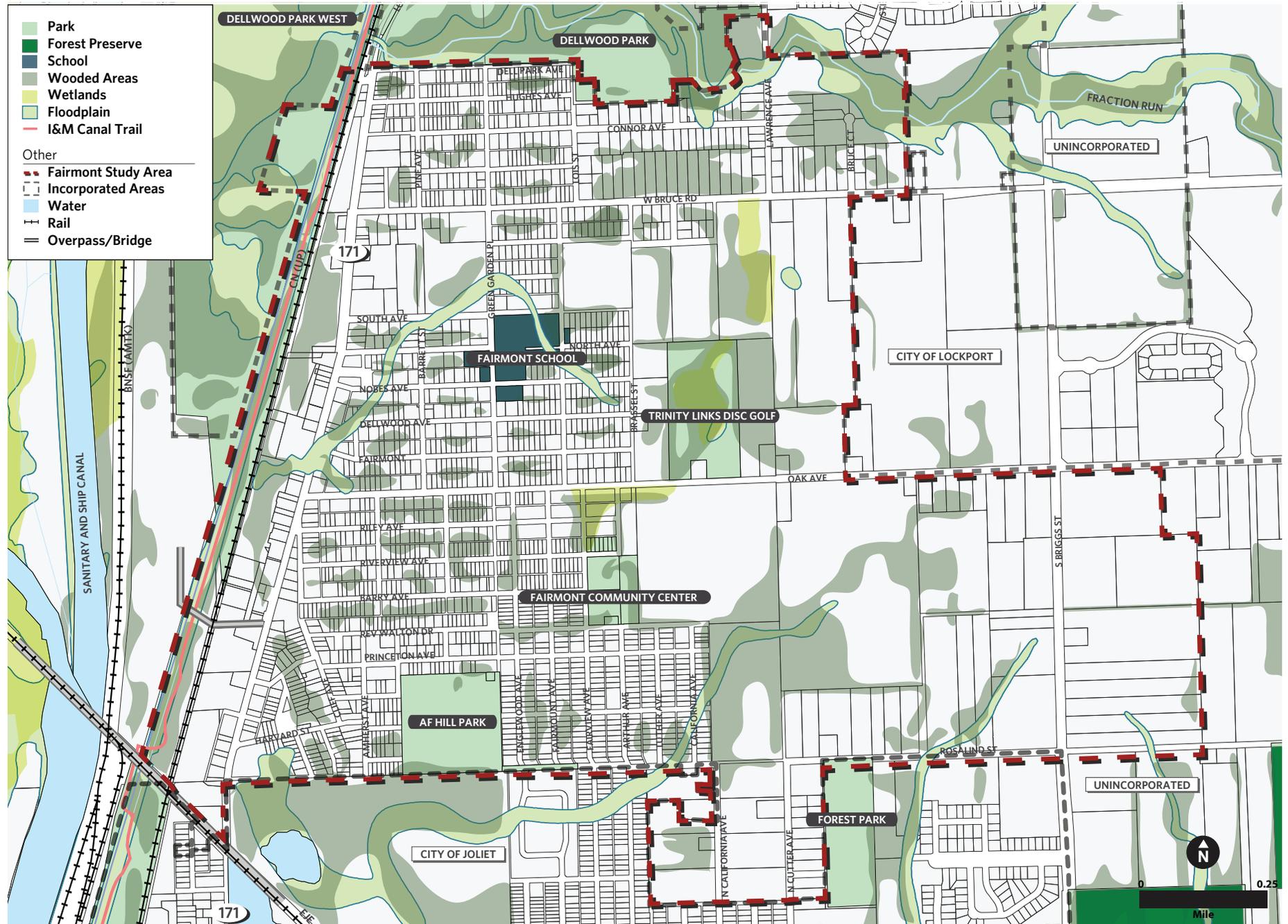
Upper photo: This photo illustrates an example of the heavily wooded areas that exist throughout Fairmont.

Lower photo: A view from IL Route 171 to the west (looking towards the Des Plaines River.) As shown, the elevation drops quickly to a lower elevation which consists of industry and vacant parcels.

Figure 23. Public parks



Figure 24. Environmental features



Section 9

Community Services, Health and Infrastructure

This section describes the existing community services, health services, and public infrastructure in the Fairmont community. One of Fairmont's greatest strengths is its current system of community services. Conversely, the area's existing infrastructure (streets, water and sewer) are in need of, or expected to require in the future, improved maintenance and repair.



Public Resources

As an unincorporated area, Fairmont must rely on primarily on non-municipal governmental agencies such as Lockport Township and Will County for the provision of public resources.



Infrastructure

Overall the infrastructure in Fairmont, which includes roadways, utilities, water and sewer and drainage is acceptable, however, there are certain types of infrastructure that are in need of improvement. The first infrastructure issue is the poor condition of many of the roadways in Fairmont. The streets should be repaved or resurfaced to improve their usability and their overall condition. Specific roadway issues were also raised by residents regarding the flooding that occurs as a result of the “raised” streets. Overtime, the resurfacing of the streets has caused the elevation of the streets to rise, while causing flooding onto adjacent properties.

At the first public meeting, several residents also discussed the need to improve street lighting within the community. According to residents, there are not enough street lights within the residential neighborhoods. Very few street lights exist within the neighborhoods. According to officials, the Lockport Township Highway Department runs an effective snow removal program throughout the community.

Water and Sewer

Fairmont is on a sewer and water system controlled by Lockport Township. Water is acquired from aquifers. Construction for this water system began in/around 1976 (see Figure 27 which illustrates the As-Built Drawings). At this time, Lockport Township contracts with a private firm to manage the water system.

Sewage is treated at the City of Lockport facility. Prior to this period, there were individual wells, and community wells were used for potable water. Sewage was disseminated through individual (and failing) septic fields.

Waste

Currently no regularly scheduled household waste and recycling program exists in Fairmont. There is no formal garbage pickup program in Fairmont. Residents are on their own to contract with a service provider, however, there is no unified service or specific contractor.

Public Services

Public services in Fairmont are primarily provided by School District #89, and the Lockport Township Park District. The following is a summary of each of these organizations.

Education

Fairmont School District #89 serves the community. Fairmont School, located at 735 Green Garden Place is an important facility in the community. Fairmont School District #89's mission statement is "We at Fairmont School District 89 in partnership with families and the community, will promote an environment that challenges all students to achieve their highest potential as respectful, responsible, lifelong learners." Fairmont residents are also within the Lockport Township High School District #205.

Table 9.1. Fairmont School District Compared to State of Illinois

	FAIRMONT SCHOOL	STATE OF ILLINOIS
Total Enrollment	301	2,070,125
Percentage White	4.7%	53.3%
Percentage Black	64.5%	19.1%
Percentage Hispanic	22.6%	20.8%
Percentage Asian	0%	4.1%
Percentage Native American	3.3%	0.2%
Percentage Multi-Racial/Multi-Ethnic	5.0%	2.5%
Percentage of Students that are low income	84.1%	42.9%
Parental Involvement	100%	96.7%
Attendance Rate	95.4%	93.7%
Mobility Rate **	74.3%	13.5%

Source: Illinois State Board of Education 2008-2009 School Year

** According to the Illinois State Board of Education website, mobility is also known as turnover, which reflects any enrollment change between the first school day in October and the last day of the school year. It is the sum of the students who transferred out and the students who transferred in, divided by the average daily enrollment, multiplied by 100. Students are counted each time they transfer out or in during the reporting year. Thus, individual students may be counted more than once.

In 2011, Fairmont School, through the Principal's office provided Will County with approximate mode of travel information for students. According to the school, the following is a breakdown of the modes of travel that students use to and from school.

Table 9.2. Student modes of travel

Fairmont has approximately 260 students (2011)
150 walk
10 bike
100 driven in family vehicle

Source: Fairmont School, Principal's Office 2011

Parks

The Lockport Township Park District owns and operates two parks within Fairmont; A.F. Hill Park and the Fairmont Community Center; and two parks adjacent to the Fairmont community; Dellwood Park, Dellwood Park West. The Joliet Park District owns and operates Forest Park which is located southeast of the study area.

Fairmont Community Center and Park

The Park District owns and operates the Fairmont Community Center which is located at Arthur and Barry Avenues. The facility has served the Fairmont area for over twenty years. The facility includes three classrooms, a pre-school, a food pantry, and a gymnasium.

Emergency Services

Emergency services in Fairmont are primarily provided by Will County and the Lockport Township Fire Protection District. The following is a summary of each of the services provided.

Law Enforcement and Protection

The Will County Sheriff's Department patrols the Fairmont community. The Sheriff's Department has a mutual aid agreement (911 first responder) with the Cities of Lockport and Joliet.

Fire Protection

Fire Protection comes from the Lockport Township Fire protection District. The closest fire station is Lockport Fire Station #4 which is located 0.25 miles east of Briggs Road on the north side of Bruce Street.

Health Services

No medical centers, doctor's offices, or hospitals are located in the Fairmont community. Two major hospitals are located within proximity to the neighborhood: Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center in Joliet; and the future Silver Cross replacement hospital in New Lenox (to be opened in 2012).

- Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center is located at 333 N. Madison Street in Joliet, approximately 6 miles from Fairmont. The 480-bed facility is designated as a Primary Stroke Center and a Neuroscience Institute. The medical center has been recognized nationally for advanced cardiac care including a world-class open heart program, family-centered obstetrics, a joint pain center and a Level II Trauma Center.
- Silver Cross is constructing a replacement hospital in New Lenox (1900 Silver Cross Boulevard). Their current campus is located at 1200 Maple Road in Joliet. The new state-of-the-art hospital will open in 2012. The current facility, which opened in 1895, has seen Silver Cross grow from a 33-bed, two-story hospital into a healthcare network featuring a 304-bed acute-care hospital with a team of more than 3,000 employees, physicians and volunteers. The replacement hospital brings services from Children's Memorial Hospital, the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (RIC) – the #1 Rehabilitation Hospital in the Nation, and the University of Chicago Medical Center.

Library

The Des Plaines Valley Library District serves Fairmont. The District serves Crest Hill, Lockport and Romeoville. The closest library branch to Fairmont is approximately two miles away at the Lockport Library located at 121 East Eighth Street.

Public and Nonprofit Resources

A number of public and nonprofit resources are provided in Fairmont by different organizations and groups. The following highlights some of the key providers of these resources in the community.

Religious Institutions

Many religious institutions are located within Fairmont which fills important spiritual and social needs of the community. Many institutions have been in the community for decades, while some new churches have recently been constructed or are currently under construction.

Habitat for Humanity

Over a twenty-year period, Habitat for Humanity has built a number of homes throughout the community. Over 30 Habitat homes have been constructed in Fairmont, including seven homes along Reverend Walton Drive as part of Habitat's block-build program.

Neighborhood Groups

Some neighborhood groups have been formed throughout the years in Fairmont including the Fairmont Partnership, the Fairmont Advisory Council, and Concerned Citizens of Fairmont. These neighborhood groups continue to help build a sense of community in Fairmont.

To improve community safety in the 1980s, Fairmont residents joined to form a block watch group. At that time the number of burglaries was on the rise. This program encouraged residents to report suspicious activity to the sheriff's police department.

S.O.S. Village

Northeast of the Fairmont community is S.O.S. Village. The organization's mission is to build families for children in need, help them shape their own futures, and share in the development of their communities.

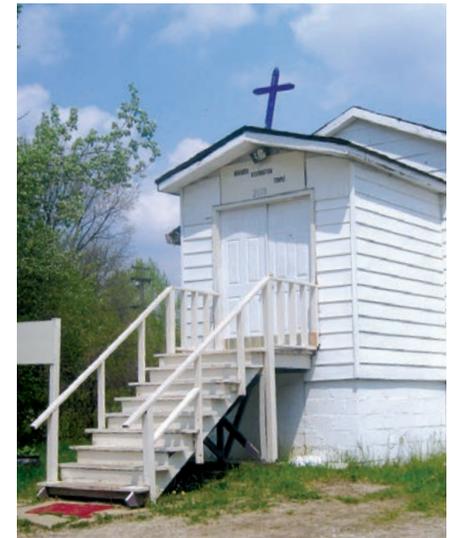


Figure 26. Community facilities



Section 10

Image and Identity

The history and culture of the Fairmont community is in need of documentation and preservation. Many long-time residents have interesting and proud stories of Fairmont's past, however, very little resources to ensure the history of the community have been created. As part of the planning process, community leaders, residents, and others, have been asked to provide their stories and experiences in the area to document the history of Fairmont in an ongoing effort to create and strengthen a unique image and identify for the community. This section attempts to provide a chronological timeline of Fairmont's history.

Historical Overview

Although Fairmont has a rich history, no formal history has been documented. One of the key outcomes of this planning process is that the community can start to document its history to help preserve and build upon its history.

The information and content provided in this section were made available from a Herald News Special Report published in July 1985. Also, longtime residents and leaders in the Fairmont community, through one-on-one interviews, contributed in good faith to this section. CMAP does not give any warranty as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the information and an early recommendation from this plan is that Will County continue to work with residents and community leaders to learn the history of Fairmont.

Historical Timeline

In the 1830s, most of Fairmont's land was known as Middletown. Later, settlers had difficulty deciding whether to call this farming community "Fairmont" or "Fairmount," hence the two different street names that exist today. The name "Fairmont" may have been chosen based on the idea of a nice area on top of a hill.

In addition to farmers, Fairmont was home to laborers at Carnegie Steel, later U.S. Steel, or in the nearby quarries that helped build Statesville Prison. More recent residents have been employees of U.S. Steel, Caterpillar, the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, G.A.F. Roofing, Chevron Texaco, and the brickyard in Joliet.

Fairmont has been considered to be a diverse community. In the past, groups settled in certain areas. Italian families settled north of Bruce Road. Many African-Americans who migrated to Fairmont from the South between 1910 and 1970 settled in a 40-acre area located between Rosalind Street and Princeton Avenue.

Majority of Fairmont's land was platted between 1903 and 1907. Despite its early growth, it was never annexed by an adjacent community or grew large enough to incorporate on its own.

In 1958, the building known as Fairmont Community Center was constructed to house Fairmont's first school — A.F. Hill School. A.F. Hill School, named for its principal, would later become Fairmont School and relocate to Green Garden Avenue. In the early 1980s, Fairmont School underwent renovations to connect the elementary school and middle school. A.F. Hill's namesake has been preserved in the Fairmont area, hence A.F. Hill Park. The Community Center is managed by the Lockport Township Park District.

In 1976, Fairmont received a \$2.2 million grant and \$1.1 million loan from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for construction of water mains and sanitary sewers. Prior to sewer and water services, Fairmont residents would either frequent the two community wells (one at Amherst Avenue and Reverend Walton Drive and the other at Princeton Avenue and Arthur Avenue) or use their own private wells.

In the early 1980s, Fairmont faced economic decline like many other places throughout the country. Due to companies downsizing, shutting down or relocating, many Fairmont residents became unemployed or moved to other communities to seek employment.

Image and Identity

This section presents the physical characteristics and distinguishing elements that create the image and identity of Fairmont.

Architecture

The urban fabric of a community is crucial to creating a sense of place. Fairmont's architecture and urban character is very diversified without any sense of cohesion. Although the different architectural styles are unique to each home, overall, they do little together to create a strong sense of image, identity and unity for the community.



Streetscape

Fairmont has very little streetscape. No streetscape exists in the public rights of way. Without gateway signs, pedestrian sidewalks, landscaping, street trees, or any other types of visible amenity, there is no image or identity of Fairmont presented to visitors either traveling through the residential neighborhoods or along the primary arterials such as IL Route 171.



Appendix

Employment Data Comparison

Table A.1: Employment by Industry, Fairmont

BY INDUSTRY	2000	2009	PERCENT CHANGE
Total Employed, 16+	1,134	749	-34.0%
Agriculture	4	0	-100.0%
Construction	47	72	53.2%
Manufacturing	258	112	-56.6%
Wholesale Trade	39	15	-61.5%
Retail Trade	169	60	-64.5%
Trans / Comm / Util	59	150	154.2%
Finance / Ins. / Real Est.	68	5	-92.6%
Prof/Mgmt/Admin	72	137	90.3%
Education/HC	167	120	-28.1%
Arts/Rec/Food Service	105	14	-86.7%
Other Services	66	20	-69.7%
Public Administration	20	13	-35.0%
Information	60	31	-48.3%

Table A.2: Employment by occupation, Fairmont

BY OCCUPATION	2000	2009	PERCENT CHANGE
Management	195	109	-44.1%
Service	226	139	-38.5%
Sales/Office	374	196	-47.6%
Farming	0	0	—
Construction	77	63	-18.2%
Production	262	242	-7.6%

Table A.3: Employment by industry, Will county

BY INDUSTRY	2000	2009	PERCENT CHANGE
Total Employed, 16+	246,431	325,748	32.2%
Agriculture	966	1,755	81.7%
Construction	20,209	25,905	28.2%
Manufacturing	38,068	40,829	7.3%
Wholesale Trade	10,521	13,203	25.5%
Retail Trade	29,429	39,393	33.9%
Trans / Comm / Util	18,441	24,137	30.9%
Finance / Ins. / Real Est.	19,727	24,081	22.1%
Prof/Mgmt/Admin	23,207	32,762	41.2%
Education/HC	43,396	64,802	49.3%
Arts/Rec/Food Service	16,597	26,243	58.1%
Other Services	10,384	14,735	41.9%
Public Administration	8,437	10,758	27.5%
Information	7,049	7,145	1.4%

Table A.4: Employment by occupation, Will county

BY OCCUPATION	2000	2009	PERCENT CHANGE
Management	83,446	111,663	33.8%
Service	29,471	48,805	65.6%
Sales/Office	70,006	86,475	23.5%
Farming	369	584	58.3%
Construction	27,607	32,746	18.6%
Production	35,532	45,475	28.0%

Table A.5: Employment by industry, Chicago region

BY INDUSTRY	2000	2009	PERCENT CHANGE
Total Employed, 16+	3,859,316	4,012,640	4.0%
Agriculture	5,861	8,278	41.2%
Construction	209,010	239,312	14.5%
Manufacturing	593,717	508,110	-14.4%
Wholesale Trade	159,220	149,606	-6.0%
Retail Trade	412,606	419,159	1.6%
Trans / Comm / Util	242,318	242,611	0.1%
Finance / Ins. / Real Est.	338,697	351,688	3.8%
Prof/Mgmt/Admin	467,028	501,304	7.3%
Education/HC	707,138	812,685	14.9%
Arts/Rec/Food Service	278,486	349,804	25.6%
Other Services	181,921	193,035	6.1%
Public Administration	134,412	135,464	0.8%
Information	128,902	101,584	-21.2%

Table A.5: Employment by industry, Chicago region

BY OCCUPATION	2000	2009	PERCENT CHANGE
Management	1,391,028	1,469,102	5.6%
Service	507,817	637,898	25.6%
Sales/Office	1,102,970	1,063,426	-3.6%
Farming	3,494	4,629	32.5%
Construction	291,651	300,182	2.9%
Production	562,356	537,403	-4.4%



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The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMA) is the region's official comprehensive planning organization. Its GO TO 2040 planning campaign is helping the region's seven counties and 284 communities to implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality of life issues. See www.cmap.illinois.gov for more information.

