

# IMAGINE BELLEVILLE

ADOPTED  
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## SECTION 6

# Land Use and Character



## Introduction

The underlying principle of land use planning is the recognition that the City does not have to passively wait and react to development trends. Instead, it can proactively influence where growth will occur and what quality and character it should reflect based on the community's preferences. This section provides a 20-year policy framework for the physical development of the City and its 1.5-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The analysis is based on local values expressed through public workshops, online and in-person preference surveys, and advisory committee meetings. It is clear that Belleville residents desire to preserve the community's heritage, while at the same time, attracting new amenities and development types that are prevalent throughout the St. Louis region.

Similar to other communities across the Metro East, Belleville's past 10 years of development activity has been largely influenced by market forces. The City has observed new single-family housing starts as high as 215 permits in 2006 and as low as 27 permits in 2012 (see Figure 4.4, *10-Year Housing Trends: Single-Family Detached New Construction* on page 4.5 for more

details). The timing of this trend clearly aligns with the 2007-2009 national recession, which the community is still recovering from. These new homes have varied in character, from the higher density, traditional neighborhood design (TND) homes in the Reunion subdivision to the one-acre lots in The Orchards subdivision.

This section examines the basic use of land, together with the standards and elements of design that impact the appearance of neighborhoods, commercial areas, and corridors. It includes factors such as building form, amount of open space, vegetation, parking, and neighborhood connectivity. However, other sections of this plan discuss implementation measures that also bring about appropriate development patterns, such as access management, housing rehabilitation, strategic infrastructure investments, and other considerations.

Equally important to the analysis of recent development trends is the identification of future residential, commercial, industrial, and civic opportunities that will stimulate Belleville's economy and elevate its quality of life. These recommendations come in the form of methods for implementation, as well as an updated *Future Land Use Plan*, that specify the intended use,



*What types of shopping centers are compatible with our character and would attract users from across the region?*

A - "Big Box" Shopping Center	3
B - Shopping Village	8
C - Urban Center (e.g., Webster Groves)	13
D - Transit-Oriented Development (e.g., Proposed Emerson Park MetroLink Station)	4

**Online Community Survey**



character, and function of developed and undeveloped land.

## Approach

A systematic approach to current- and long-range planning will ensure that new and infill growth occurs in harmony with Belleville’s unique character, while at the same time, complementing the region’s rolling topography, existing infrastructure systems, and employment opportunities. This sensitivity to the built, natural, and economic context is critical to reducing development costs and minimizing negative externalities on the surrounding environment.

As such, land use planning and implementation programs extend beyond the City’s Economic Development, Planning, and Zoning Department into the realms of public safety services, public facilities, utilities, and transportation systems. These crossover and interdependent relationships require coordinated policies and administrative processes to ensure efficient staffing and capital expenditures, as we have seen in other plan sections. The type, pattern, and scale of development will influence and be influenced by:

### Section 2, Growth Capacity and Infrastructure

- Provision of adequate public utilities and services (e.g., water, sewer, stormwater)
- Police and fire public safety services
- Timing and sequencing of future growth
- Reinvestment in existing infrastructure
- Annexations

- Development agreements and utility extension policies

### Section 3, Mobility

- Functional classification system and proposed Master Thoroughfare Plan
- Access management
- “Complete Streets” and multi-modal paths (e.g., trails, bikeways, sidewalks)
- Bus and light-rail public transit
- Street and streetscape design standards
- Transit-oriented development

### Section 4, Housing and Neighborhoods

- Neighborhood identity, planning, and revitalization
- Housing affordability
- Variety of housing types to meet the needs of residents of all ages and economic ability
- Strategic infill and rehabilitation
- Coordinated investments

### Section 5, Economic Development

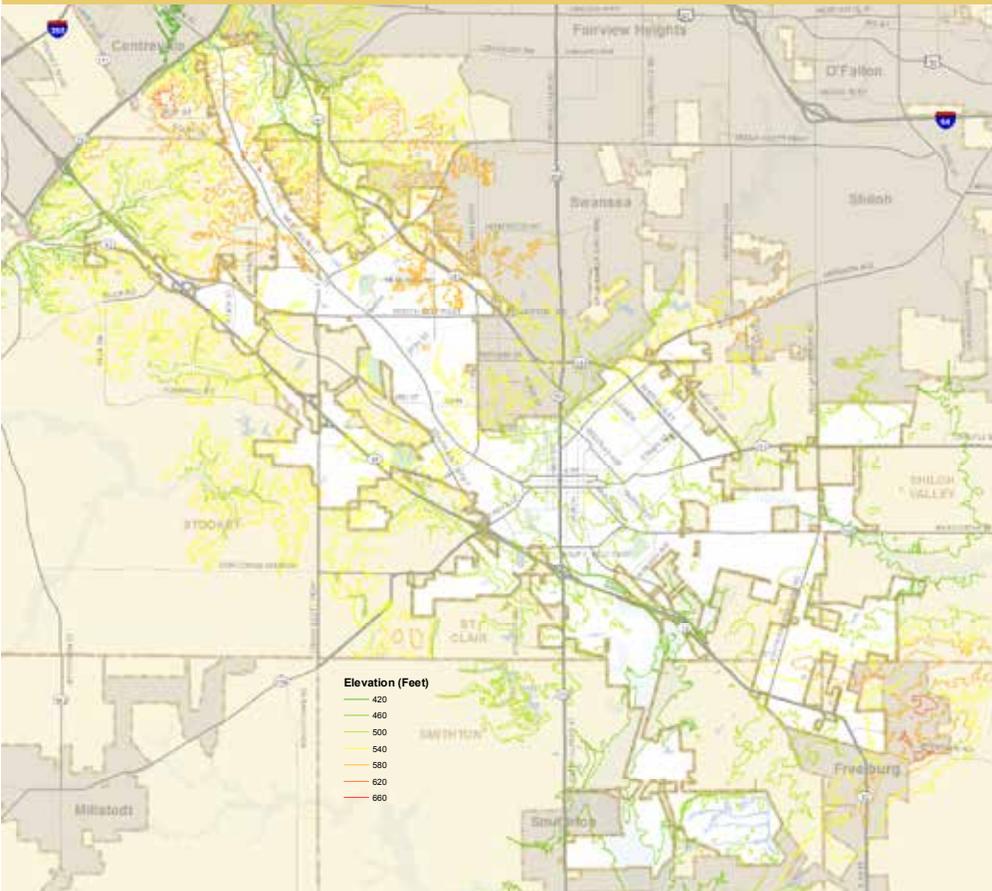
- Availability of land to support targeted retail and industrial businesses
- Public perception of Belleville’s image
- Availability of small and large tracts of industrial land
- Business assistance incentives and development agreements
- Scott Air Force Base
- Transit-oriented development



## Topography

Relief in the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction ranges from level ground to very steep areas that form the bluffs overlooking the wide Mississippi River floodplain. For the most part, land in the City is relatively level. These level areas are primarily located in broad floodplains of creeks and streams and the uplands between the waterways. Over time, the water has cut away soil and rock and created slopes that frame the floodplains of waterways such as Richland Creek and its Wolf Branch. Hilly areas that would require extensive earth-moving measures for new development are a dominant physical characteristic in the northwest portion of the City, created through centuries of erosion.

Source: 2000 - 2020 Comprehensive Plan



## Land Use and Character Context

### Development Constraints<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of natural resources in the Belleville area provides a foundation for decision-making about future development patterns. The process of determining the suitability of land for development involves analyzing the characteristics of the natural environment and identifying restrictions placed on development by each characteristic. Factors such as periodic flooding, subsurface mining, hilly areas, and areas that retain stormwater runoff must be considered in the future planning efforts of the City. These constraints should be considered for various reasons: to avoid hazards to property and the health of the residents; to direct public investments towards suitable development areas; and to optimize public and private investments in areas which can support major developments.

### SOILS

For the most part, soils in the Belleville area do not pose any significant constraints to future development.

<sup>1</sup> This section is derived from the City's 2000-2020 Comprehensive Plan.

Instead, the majority of the soil associations found in the community are well drained and will support many types of development. The soils that may potentially restrict development are found in the forested bottomlands of Richland Creek, where development is limited and restricted due to other natural features such as wetlands and flood hazards.

Although this section provides an overview of conditions in the City, the description of these soil characteristics is extremely general in nature and should not be used for site-specific development decisions. For site-specific development a more detailed analysis should include a review of the St. Clair County Soil Survey and soil samples taken from the development site.

### SURFACE WATER/FLOODPLAINS

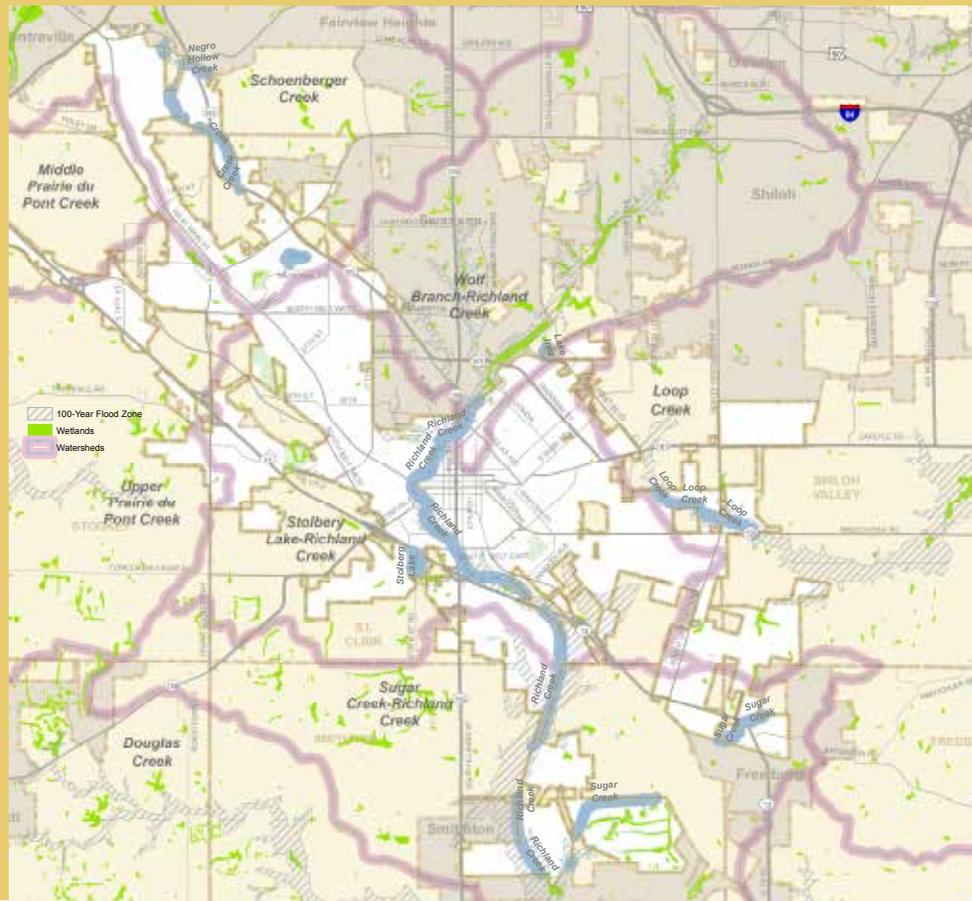
Surface water runoff from rainfall flows from higher elevations to lower elevations. The higher elevations are typically ridges and the lower elevations are streams and creeks. These topographic features form a watershed. The City is divided into four watersheds, all of which eventually empty into the Mississippi River.

The primary watershed is formed by Richland Creek in the central portion of the City. This creek drains

## Natural Features

There are a variety of natural resources in the City and planning area that serve as both opportunities and constraints to future development. The natural features that significantly influence development in the area include steep slopes (as discussed on the previous page), floodplains, wetlands, and mining activity. Floodplains and wetlands form a portion of the hydrological system and create constraints to development, but they also provide the community an opportunity to minimize flooding hazards, improve water quality, protect wildlife habitat, and serve as educational and recreational resources. Subsurface mining is the most wide spread constraint to development due to the extent of mines in the area. To minimize the potential threat to structures, progress should continue to be made in defining the extent and condition of mining activity, and appropriate engineering practices should be encouraged for any structures built above these areas.

Source: 2000 - 2020 Comprehensive Plan



the largest portion of Belleville and surface flow is to the south. To minimize the hazards from flooding, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has identified areas along waterways where surface water runoff can result in property damage and danger to human health. These flood-prone areas are designated as 100-year floodplains or areas that have one percent chance of flooding in any given year. The 100-year floodplain associated with this waterway extends from the northeast portion of the planning area through the heart of the City, and south beyond the border of the planning area. The width of the 100-year floodplain is narrow in the upper reaches where development is not as dense as in the City, and within the heart of the City due to creek bank stabilization. In some areas of the City, developed areas are actually located within the extents of the designated 100-year floodplain. South of the City, the floodplain widens due to less dense development and the compounding of surface water runoff from upstream developed areas.

The northern and eastern portions of the planning area include the large Silver Creek watershed. Surface water flow is to the east. Floodplains are also associated with Loop Creek, which is part of the Silver Creek watershed. The upper extent of the 100-year floodplain for Loop Creek is located in developed portions of Belleville,

widening to the east as terrain allows and development density lessens.

The Prairie Du Pont Creek watershed drains the southwest portion of the planning area and flows west towards the American Bottoms and eventually the Mississippi River. The 100-year floodplain associated with this creek is relatively narrow and limited to the area west of South 59th Street.

The Schoenberger watershed drains the northwest portion of the planning area, flowing west towards the Mississippi River. The creeks and stream in this watershed have carved the steep topography found in this portion of the planning area, resulting in limitations to development. The only regulatory floodplains in this portion of the watershed are located west of Illinois Route 157.

### WETLANDS

Wetlands are areas that have the natural ability to hold water and thereby support aquatic plants and animals. These areas serve many functions including stormwater storage, wildlife habitat, recreation, and water quality improvement. The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps indicate numerous locations where potential wetlands exist, ranging in size from less than one to



*Belleville residents were actively engaged in mapping existing and proposed land development patterns, an exercise that ultimately influenced the Future Land Use Plan.*

greater than 10 acres. Wetlands, particularly those much larger than one acre in size, are generally located along the floodplains of the creeks and streams, and are formed from excessive surface water runoff and high water tables. Wetlands on uplands, which are generally smaller in size, are formed by impervious soil and bedrock conditions.

New development in the planning area will require additional analysis to determine if regulated wetlands exist and if permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) will be required. Developers will want to consider, at a minimum, having a certified wetland delineator take a cursory walk through the development site to determine the existing conditions. After an on-site walkthrough has been completed and wetlands are identified, then coordination with the COE should be initiated if found.

### UNDERMINING

The planning area is within a region that has experienced significant coal mining activity. Although numerous surface strip mines are located in the southern portion of the planning area, much of the mining activity has occurred beneath the surface. Subsurface mining creates the potential for collapse of the surface into a sinkhole, which results from the collapse of

subsurface mines. If the ground moves or sinks enough it can result in damage to buildings depending on the structural integrity of the building and the speed of the subsidence. To help minimize the potential hazards from ground subsidence, the effort to fully understand the extent and physical condition of mining activities around Belleville should continue, and appropriate site development and engineering responses to this hazard potential should be used.

### Development Opportunities

Future land use and character planning gives shape and form to the community's long-range vision, equipping City staff and officials with proactive tools for influencing public and private development. Common pitfalls - which often lead to incompatible development types, costly infrastructure upgrades, and permanent impediments to growth - can be avoided if the City has the right tools in place. In this section, two types of maps were developed to explore development opportunities: **Map 6.1, Development Patterns** and **Map 6.2, Future Land Use Plan**. The planning process engaged diverse stakeholders to determine the community's vision and values.

The first step involved an analysis of opportunity areas for residential, commercial, and industrial

## 1.5 Mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

The City coordinates with the County in planning for the 1.5-mile radius surrounding Belleville’s City limits. Illinois State Statute (65 ILCS 5/11 Division 12) gives municipalities the authority to exercise subdivision authority within unincorporated areas. In areas where no boundary line agreement has been adopted by two adjoining municipalities, the jurisdiction of any one municipality extends to the median line equidistant from its boundary and the boundary of the nearest municipality at any given point on the line.

The County has generally taken the approach of reflecting city-level future land use plans. If municipalities do not have a local comprehensive plan, or the plan does not extend to the 1.5-mile municipal jurisdiction, the County’s *Future Land Use Plan* designation becomes County Agricultural Use - Planned Services Area (or Agricultural - PSA). Agricultural - PSA reflects that if the area should some day be developed, it should be coordinated with the adjacent community and any other public service providers. Outside the 1.5-mile radius, the County’s land use becomes County Agricultural Use (or Agricultural Preservation).

Source: St. Clair County Comprehensive Plan

developments. During a public workshop and a separate Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee meeting, the consultant team facilitated a collaborative exercise to engage community stakeholders in the creation of *Map 6.1, Development Patterns*. This map delineates generalized areas for: new major residential growth areas; neighborhood protection areas; areas in need of improvement; shopping and employment centers; transportation improvements; and community gateways. While availability of infrastructure was generally considered in the creation of this map, the main purpose of the exercise was to depict the community’s “big picture” vision.

The next step in the process involved a translation of this illustration into *Map 6.2, Future Land Use Plan*. This map will serve as the City’s planning blueprint to guide future development and influence land development regulations. If continually reviewed and updated,

By using a community character approach, this plan focuses on the design of individual uses, districts, and neighborhoods that influence the **“look and feel”** of development more than just the “use” itself.

the *Future Land Use Plan* will adapt to market trends while preserving high-quality development character and promoting unified growth patterns. Although this map was evaluated with a finer level of detail than the Development Patterns map, it still functions as a long-range planning tool. Property owners and City officials still must consider site-specific implications through development planning and review. The *Future Land Use Plan* is one of the most far-reaching policy tools at the City’s disposal, influencing:

- Land development ordinances;
- Annexation and extraterritorial jurisdiction expansion;
- Development agreements;
- Infrastructure and community facility planning;
- Parks and recreation planning; and
- Economic development strategy.

## How is the Future Land Use Plan Organized?

Most future land use plans are strongly tied to the literal “uses” of land, such as industrial, commercial, and residential development types. The same land use (and often zoning) categories may assume much different characters depending on their layout, design, and environmental context. For example, a master-planned business park in a heavily landscaped, campus-like setting can be similarly classified as industrial warehouses surrounded by a parking lot. Each of these character/use types can be considered desirable to a community when situated in an appropriate location and developed to standards that minimize their negative impacts.



As an alternative, **this plan uses a “community character approach,” which is more distinctly defined by the intensity (height and scale) of development, the arrangement of buildings and parking areas, the preservation and use of open space, and other aesthetic design features.** For instance, Downtown, West Belleville, and other parts of the original settlement have a grid street pattern with buildings mostly positioned close to the street and sidewalks. This traditional form of development differentiates the mature areas of Belleville from the development that has occurred in recent years, such as Maple Hill subdivision and Belleville Crossing shopping center. These later-established areas are largely characterized by greater setbacks and expansive parking areas, larger-scale buildings and out-parcels, and towering signs in the commercial areas. While also commercial in use, the outlying shopping malls and large-scale buildings produce a much different character of development than Downtown or the smaller commercial strip centers along West Main Street, for instance.

It is this combination of land use and design that determines the compatibility and quality of development. Aesthetic enhancements such as attention to building scale, abundant landscaping and screening, sign control, and site amenities also contribute to the appeal of a neighborhood or commercial area. It is each of the above considerations that, collectively, are responsible for the community’s character and appearance.

## Land Use and Character Classifications

Belleville can be generally divided into 11 future land use and character classes as follows:

### Rural / Agricultural

The Rural / Agricultural character category consists of lands that are sparsely developed, with mainly agricultural and very low-density residential as the primary uses. This category provides its residents with the choice of seclusion within the countryside and away from a more developed setting. For this reason, it is unusual to find rural character within the City limits, except in areas that have been annexed for eventual development, or to preserve rural character through the protections afforded by agricultural zoning.

#### DEVELOPMENT TYPES

- Residential homesteads
- Planned development to accommodate conservation and cluster designs
- Agricultural uses
- Agriculture-focused commercial retail
- Agricultural support uses with industrial characteristics
- Parks and public spaces

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Rural character from wide open landscapes, with minimal sense of enclosure and views to the horizon unbroken by buildings in most places.
- Scattered residential development on relatively large acreages, resulting in very high open space ratios and very low site coverage (sometimes with residential “estate” areas providing a transition from Suburban to Rural densities, with estate lots typically ranging from two to five acres).
- Typically no centralized water or sanitary sewer service available. Also much greater reliance on

## Future Land Use Planning vs. Zoning

The *Zoning Code* plays a significant role in establishing and protecting the physical character of the community. After all, these regulations determine the types of use and delineation of districts, together with the height and area requirements and standards for landscaping, open space, and signage. As a result, the *Zoning Code* largely directs the development outcomes. This is important since it provides a regulatory context in which local land use decisions may be made to foster a sustainable environment, a prosperous economy, and a high quality of life. The City's development ordinances represent the primary tools for implementing this policy document. A number of key recommendations are presented later in this chapter that are intended to reconcile the zoning districts and their intended character.

Although the *Future Land Use Plan* is only a guidance document, its role is especially relevant since it often leads to *Zoning Code* updates and rewrites. It is only through the official Zoning Map and the ongoing zoning administration process that binding, legally enforceable decisions are made about property uses and compatibility on a case-by-case basis. Adoption of this *Comprehensive Plan* (and *Future Land Use Plan*) does not mean that the City's zoning approach or mapping will automatically change. This is partly because there is a timing aspect to zoning, meaning that a *Future Land Use Plan* generally indicates ultimate outcomes while a Zoning Map may reflect interim situations or existing, stable land uses that are not expected to change in the near future.

The comparison below highlights the distinct purposes and uses of a *Future Land Use Plan* relative to a Zoning Map.

### Future Land Use Plan

#### PURPOSE

- Outlook for the future use of land and the character of development in the community
- Macro level - generalized development patterns

#### USE

- Guidance for the City's Zoning Map and related decisions (zone change requests, variance applications, etc.)
- Baseline for monitoring consistency of actions and decisions with this *Comprehensive Plan*

#### INPUTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Existing land use in the City
- Elevating area character (urban, suburban, rural) as a core planning focus along with basic land use (residential, commercial, industrial, public/institutional)
- The locational aspects of community planning priorities for economic development, housing, infrastructure, parks and recreation, public facilities, etc.

### Zoning Map

#### PURPOSE

- Basis for applying different land use regulations and development standards in different areas of the community ("zones")
- Micro level - site-specific focus

#### USE

- Regulating development as it is proposed - or as sites are positioned for the future (by the owner or the City) with appropriate zoning

#### INPUTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- *Comprehensive Plan* and *Future Land Use Plan* for general guidance
- Protecting existing neighborhoods and uses from incompatible infill or redevelopment, and rural and natural resource areas from urban encroachment
- Zoning decisions which differ substantially from the general development pattern depicted on the *Future Land Use Plan* should indicate the need for some adjustments to the planning map the next time this *Comprehensive Plan* is revised

natural drainage systems, except where altered significantly by agricultural operations.

- Potential for conservation developments that further concentrate the overall development footprint through cluster designs, with increased open space set-aside to maintain the overall Rural character and buffer adjacent properties. May also make alternative community wastewater treatment methods feasible to eliminate the need for individual on-site septic systems.

### Parks and Open Space

This use category includes all the City's public parks, outdoor recreation areas, and open spaces that have been committed to public or private enjoyment and recreational pursuits.

#### DEVELOPMENT TYPES

- Public parks and open space
- Public trails
- Public recreation areas
- Public or private lands within floodplain or storm water management areas that are generally unsuitable for development

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Public parkland theoretically will remain so in perpetuity compared to other public property, such as buildings, that can transition to private ownership at some point.
- Park design, intensity of development, and planned uses/activities should match area character (e.g., public squares/plazas in Downtown; athletic fields/courts and play equipment in large community parks located and designed for intensive use; and nature parks for passive recreation in Suburban areas).

### Suburban Residential

Suburban Residential development typically includes larger lots that allow for adequate separation between homes, while preserving the natural character of the region's topography and vegetation. These homes are exclusively located in subdivisions given the importance of common open space and clustered development.

#### DEVELOPMENT TYPES

- Detached residential dwellings
- Planned developments to provide other housing types (e.g., attached residential) with increased

open space to preserve a suburban character setting

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Less noticeable accommodation of the automobile on sites compared to general residential areas, especially where driveways are on the side of homes rather than occupying a portion of the front yard space, and where garages are situated to the side or rear of the main dwelling.
- Can establish development options which allow for smaller lot sizes in exchange for greater open space, with the additional open space devoted to maintaining the Suburban character and buffering adjacent properties and roads.

### General Residential

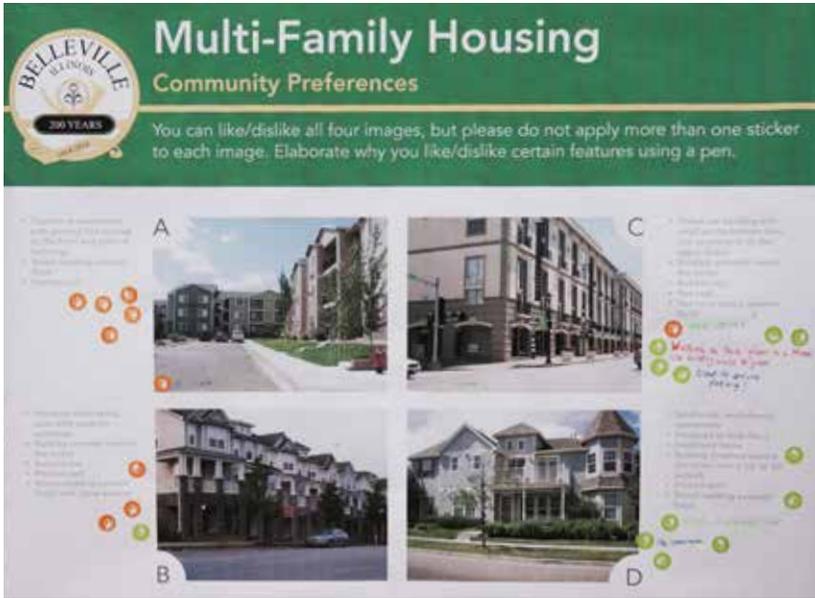
This designation generally pertains to detached residential dwellings; attached housing types (subject to compatibility and open space standards, e.g., duplexes, townhomes, patio homes); planned developments with a potential mix of housing types and varying densities subject to compatibility and open space standards (including traditional neighborhood design patterns), etc. Multi-family typically has a General Residential Character but has a separate designation on the Future Land Use Plan given its higher intensity of use. General Residential character typically exhibits:

#### DEVELOPMENT TYPES

- Detached residential
- Attached residential
- Neighborhood-scale places of worship

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Less openness and separation between dwellings compared to Suburban character areas.
- Often the accommodation of the automobile detracts from house design (e.g., front-loading garages dominating the front façade), attractive front yards (e.g., more of front yard devoted to driveway area), and street aesthetics. The previous cited factors, plus uniform lot sizes, front setbacks and/or minimal variation in individual house design, can all create a monotonous neighborhood appearance.
- Multi-family development sites dominated by buildings and surface parking, with minimal area devoted to open space or landscaping.



**Public Input**

A community preferences survey from one of the public workshops indicated participants preferred either mixed-use development types with retail on the ground floor and multi-family housing on the upper floors, or preferred smaller-scale multi-family units that replicated the look of traditional residences (e.g., pitched roofs, high degree of window transparency, facade articulation).

**What is Traditional Neighborhood Design?**

Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) is characterized by one-family and two-family homes on small lots, narrow front yards with front porches and gardens, detached garages in the backyard, walkable “Main Street” commercial areas with shops lining the sidewalk, and public parks, town greens, or village squares. TND calls for compact, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods with a mix of commercial and residential uses, a variety of housing types, and public places where people have opportunities to socialize and engage in civic life.

Direct Source: Capitol Region Council of Governments

**Neighborhood Conservation**

The Neighborhood Conservation (NC) designation is applied to established neighborhoods that are largely built-out and stable, and where no significant change in development type or pattern is expected or desired. To implement the intent and policies of the *Future Land Use Plan*, the current zoning designations for these NC areas may warrant repurposing, and their uses and standards may require recalibration, to achieve certain, desired development outcomes. In this way, all existing, stable neighborhoods would transition from their current zoning designation to an “NC” designation, which results in a series of NC subdistricts (i.e., NC-1, NC-2, etc.), each of which is customized for a particular area. Essentially, this would “lock in” standards for each area that reflect and reinforce how the neighborhood originally developed, or has evolved over time, and the existing, prevailing character. This recommended approach to the zoning of existing neighborhoods allows for compatible building additions and site improvements, whereas typical zoning designations may cause such positive actions to require variances or be labeled as “nonconformities.” As a result, desired

reinvestment is promoted while ensuring that existing neighborhood character is maintained even with redevelopment or infill activity (although changes in stable neighborhoods generally come from incremental expansion and modification of existing homes over time, and not due to large-scale redevelopment). The Neighborhood Conservation district designation can be further divided into sub-districts to preserve the character of specific neighborhoods.

**DEVELOPMENT TYPES**

*(Depending on neighborhood-specific standards):*

- Detached residential dwellings
- Attached, multi-family dwellings
- Public/institutional
- Parks and public spaces

**CHARACTERISTICS**

- Integrity of older, intact neighborhoods protected through customized Neighborhood Conservation zoning with standards that ensure no significant



Reunion subdivision has characteristics of a TND neighborhood, although it does not have a mix of commercial uses. These types of neighborhoods typically trigger the Planned Unit Development process (highlighted on page 6.20).



Urban Center / Downtown



Neighborhood Conservation / Original Town Center



General Residential / Autumn Woods



Suburban Residential / The Orchards





Neighborhood Commercial



General Commercial

change in the development type or pattern and reinforce existing physical conditions (e.g., lot sizes, building setbacks, etc.).

- Designed to preserve existing housing stock (and avoid excessive nonconformities and variance requests), and also to govern periodic infill and/or redevelopment activity within a neighborhood to ensure compatibility.
- Depending on the particular neighborhood, the customized zoning may recognize and embrace small-scale office or retail/service uses that have always been part of the area’s fabric. Such uses could also be allowed to expand within certain limits, or a particular Neighborhood Conservation sub-district could provide for new uses of this type to occur on vacant sites at the edge of the neighborhood or other appropriate locations. This can be especially important to neighborhood integrity when older homes are falling into disrepair or are no longer marketable, and conversion to other uses is best for all—but when done compatibly under the Neighborhood Conservation standards.

### Neighborhood Commercial

Outside of Belleville’s Downtown, major corridors and major shopping centers like Belleville Crossing and Green Mount Commons, Belleville’s commercial uses should be designed at a neighborhood scale in Neighborhood Commercial configurations. Rather than designing linear strips, these commercial centers occupy much smaller building footprints than typical businesses found on Illinois Route 15. They tend to

cater to pedestrians by providing neighborhood conveniences such as drug stores, professional services, and boutique retail uses. Proposed locations include smaller commercial centers adjacent to and surrounded by neighborhoods.

#### DEVELOPMENT TYPES

- Small-scale mixed-use residential and commercial buildings on single sites and within individual structures
- Homes that have been converted to commercial uses, but arranged in clustered nodes
- Commercial retail
- Office
- Public/institutional
- Parks, plazas, and civic spaces

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Maximum two-story structures encouraged.
- High degree of landscape surface.
- Neighborhood-scale commercial uses should be encouraged on sites near the edges of Neighborhood Commercial areas, which are best suited to accommodate such uses while ensuring compatibility with nearby residential uses.

### General Commercial

Commercial development that is oriented toward the automobile has become commonplace across the nation since the 1950s and is characterized by roads, driveways, and at-grade parking areas that commonly exceed the



## Livable Centers

Downtown Belleville contains all the characteristics of a “livable center.” It is compact and mixed use, designed to be walkable, and connected and accessible.

Downtown serves as the City’s historic center, housing St. Clair County buildings and a number of longstanding cultural, commercial, and civic amenities. As Belleville looks to the future, it will be necessary to create new livable centers to accommodate different needs and offer geographic diversity. Whether they have a transit-oriented development focus or capitalize on the success of major institutions, such as Lindenwood University - Belleville, Southwestern Illinois College, and Memorial Hospital, the City’s physical layout and regional connectivity position the community to support development of new livable centers.



area of the building(s) as a percent of ground cover. The dominance of buildings and surface parking relative to landscaped or unimproved areas is what distinguishes General Commercial development from Neighborhood Commercial character. Belleville Crossing, Green Mount Commons, and the “strip” commercial areas along Carlyle Avenue represent typical General Commercial areas in the City.

### DEVELOPMENT TYPES

- “Strip” commercial centers along major roadways, with a range of uses, including those on high-profile “pad” sites along the roadway frontage
- Automobile service-related enterprises (e.g. gas / service stations, auto parts, car washes)
- Restaurant chains (e.g., fast food, other)
- “Big-box” commercial stores (e.g., grocery, appliances, clothing, etc.)
- Offices
- Potential hotels and motels
- Places of worship

### CHARACTERISTICS

- Significant portions of development sites devoted to vehicular access drives, circulation routes, surface parking, and loading/delivery areas, making pavement the most prominent visual feature.
- Buildings typically set back toward rear of site to accommodate expansive parking areas in front, closest to passing traffic.

- Less emphasis on architectural design in many cases, with building façades often lacking articulation and having large banks of single-pane windows.
- Development desire to maximize signage (number, size) to capitalize on site visibility to passing traffic.
- Often not conducive for access or on-site circulation by pedestrians or cyclists.

## Urban Center

The City’s Downtown commercial area is considered an Urban Center. Buildings are located on or near their front property lines and it is clearly a pedestrian friendly environment. Urban Centers are typified by small or nonexistent front and side yards, extensive pedestrian circulation, and the continuous row of structures that are unbroken by standalone parking lots or front yard parking areas. Where possible, buildings in Urban Centers have been delineated (primarily using alleyways) to ensure that new development will maintain a uniform building height and minimal setback on both sides of internal streets.

### DEVELOPMENT TYPES

- Mixed-use (on single sites and within individual structures)
- Residential above commercial or office
- Live/work units
- Attached residential
- Commercial retail/services
- Office



## For Belleville to be a “complete” city, what are the missing pieces?

### Small manufacturing and the jobs that would bring.

“Years ago Belleville was a manufacturing city and people came here to work. Jobs are important -- people have money to spend, pride in their properties, more young people stay here to work.”

- Public / institutional
- Places of worship
- Entertainment
- Parking structures and public or commercial surface parking areas
- Parks and public spaces

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Streets and other public spaces framed by buildings with zero/minimal front setbacks, creating “architectural enclosure” versus the progressively more open feel in other character areas (General, Suburban, Rural).
- Mostly on-street parking and minimal surface parking (until the urban character begins to give way to typical site design oriented toward the automobile).
- The only place where structured parking may make sense and be financially viable (e.g., proposed site at High Street and Washington Street).
- Greatest site coverage.
- Multi-story structures encouraged.
- Most conducive for pedestrian activity and interaction, with public plazas and pocket parks providing green space amid the Urban environment, and a place to gather and host community events.
- Streetscape enhancements in public ways usually emphasized given limited area for private landscaping relative to other character areas.
- Public/institutional uses designed to match Urban character.

### Planned Industrial and Business Parks

Planned Industrial and Business Parks are suburban in character, typically in a campus-style setting that features reduced site coverage and increased open space. As the City seeks to attract major employers, this type of setting will be an attractive alternative to office space similar to strip commercial malls or a more traditional industrial park.

#### DEVELOPMENT TYPES

- Primarily office, medical, and technology/research uses
- Possibility of light industrial uses (including warehousing/distribution), but well screened and in buildings with upgraded facade treatments
- Public/institutional
- Common green spaces

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Typically a minimum open space ratio (lot coverage) of 20 to 30 percent, which allows for sizable building footprints since most developments involve large sites.
- Extensive landscaping of business park perimeter, and special streetscaping and design treatments at entries, key intersections, and internal focal points.
- Development outcomes often controlled by private covenants and restrictions that exceed City ordinances and development standards.
- Intended to create a highly attractive business investment environment.
- Site operations are conducted indoors with no (or very limited) outdoor storage or display.



## Guiding Principles for Land Use and Character

- We will encourage new development and significant redevelopment where adequate public services and utility capacity are already in place or projected for improvement.
- We will effectively manage future growth to achieve a compact and fiscally responsible pattern of development. Preferably, development should occur on vacant infill areas and/or areas contiguous to existing development and then sequentially outward as adequate facilities become available. New development or redevelopment on vacant parcels in an existing neighborhood should maintain compatibility with existing uses and the prevailing character of the area.
- We will encourage development patterns that provide appropriate transitions and buffering between differing land use intensities. Where developments of incompatible intensities abut, there should be adequate landscaping and screening to separate them.
- We will prioritize community enhancements along Belleville's most visible and heavily used gateways, corridors, and districts.
- We will maintain and enhance Belleville's historic and cultural assets in accordance with preservation guidelines and development standards.
- We will promote neighborhood development patterns that are highly walkable, meaning there is a mixture of uses within convenient distances so that automobiles are not essential for relatively short trips.
- We will include a variety of housing types and sizes to accommodate the needs of existing and prospective residents. This includes, but is not limited to, youth, college students, single professionals, families, empty nesters, and seniors.
- We will develop multi-family housing at a density and scale that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, available utilities, and roadway capacity. Larger multi-family developments should be located on sites with adequate space for off-street parking, accessory structures, and recreational activity.
- We will protect the natural beauty of Belleville through the development of a comprehensive system of parks, trails, and open spaces and by avoiding developing sites on environmentally sensitive land, to the extent possible.



Planned Business and Industrial Park / Illinois Route 15 Frontage



Industrial / Belle Valley Industrial Park



## Ready for Growth

In context of the 2007 - 2009 national recession, subdivisions across the country stalled. Since the *2000 - 2020 Comprehensive Plan*, the City has observed new single-family housing starts as high as 215 permits in 2006 and as low as 27 permits in 2012. Subdivisions like Autumn Woods have the utility and transportation infrastructure in place to support the next wave of growth.



## Industrial

Industrial developments are predominantly characterized by large parking and storage areas and minimal greenspace. These areas can be enhanced through landscaping and buffering standards, master planning via “business parks,” and optimal site selection. The City’s Belle Valley Industrial Park is a high-quality example.

### DEVELOPMENT TYPES

- Heavy and light industrial
- Heavy commercial (building materials, auto repair, etc.)
- Office uses (as accessory to an industrial use)
- Public/institutional

### CHARACTERISTICS

- Typically designed to accommodate the automobile, although industrial park developments may feature more open space and landscaping, regulated signage, screening, etc.
- Outdoor activity and storage, which should be screened where visible from public ways and extensively buffered from residential areas.
- Larger tracts of land suitable to accommodate a range of business and industrial needs.
- Must be equipped with modern infrastructure (e.g., fiber networks).

## Public / Institutional

This category encompasses major City-owned facilities, plus other public and private buildings and sites with

an institutional nature, such as schools, Lindenwood University - Belleville (LU-B) and Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) campuses, Memorial Hospital, and St. Elizabeth’s Hospital.

### DEVELOPMENT TYPES

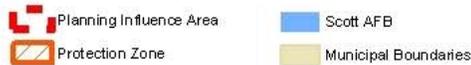
- Municipal and other government buildings
- Public safety facilities (police, fire)
- Schools, colleges, and universities
- Hospitals and medical centers
- Cemeteries

### CHARACTERISTICS

- High degree of visitation and/or pedestrian activity in some cases, with people coming and going throughout the day
- Institutional functions may require multiple buildings, arranged in a campus-like setting
- Facilities may have special parking and passenger drop-off requirements
- Buildings are sometimes set back from the road to provide more prominence, with large amounts of open spaces surrounding the buildings

## Key Issues and Considerations

- To the south and east, Belleville’s City limits abut rural development patterns, including agricultural fields and multi-acre estate lots (e.g., Town Hall Estates). According to the St. Clair County



## Scott Air Force Base

Scott Air Force Base and its runway approaches occupy a significant area east of the City limits in the County. While conveniently situated as an economic development asset for industrial and commercial uses - neighborhoods, schools, and churches are typically discouraged within the immediate vicinity due to noise impacts and height restrictions. The Planning Influence Area and Protection Zone (shown in the map inset to the left) most directly influence Shiloh's development patterns, although Belleville's eastward expansion along Carlyle Avenue will also be impacted.

Map Source: Joint Land Use Study (2008), Scott Air Force Base MidAmerica St. Louis Airport

*Comprehensive Plan* (2011), 70 percent of land in St. Clair County is still in agricultural production.

- New residential construction has been slow to recover after the 2007-2009 national recession. Shovel-ready subdivisions like Brook Taylor Estates (19% build-out), Autumn Woods (26% build out), and Orchard Lakes (19% build-out) will attract near-term residential growth to the south and southwest (see Figure 4.4, 10-Year Housing Trends: Single-Family Detached New Construction on page 4.5 for more details).
- The \$7 million Downtown streetscape improvement project has helped to catalyze more programming, new retail and office tenants, and overall revitalization to the area. These streetscape improvements are being extended beyond the Downtown area to include West Main Street (6th Street to 28th Street, just beyond LU-B), East Main Street (Oak Street to Douglas Avenue), and Illinois Route 159 (North Illinois Street) from Main Street to North Douglas Avenue in the next five years.
- The creation of LU-B (2003) and the State Police Crime Lab (2014) near the intersection of West Main Street and South 23rd Street have formed a new mixed-use node, blending institutional uses with higher-density residential, office, and commercial developments. LU-B has invested more than \$25 million, including updated classrooms, a campus auditorium and gyms, a student center, and two new student dormitories (23rd Street and West Main Street). This area will experience higher automobile and pedestrian impacts as the University continues to expand its enrollment and physical footprint in the area.
- The City formed two business districts to help spur the new construction and expansion of two General Commercial centers: Green Mount Commons (500,000 SF) and Belleville Crossing (600,000 SF). Belleville Crossing is located near the intersection of Illinois Route 15 and Frank Scott Parkway and is surrounded by significant undeveloped tracts of land for future expansion. Green Mount Commons is located near the intersection of Green Mount Road and Carlyle Avenue. Planned roadway improvements will increase overall access and reduce traffic congestion.
- The peripheral development of these commercial centers have contributed to the gradual deterioration of older commercial areas, such as the former Wal-Mart building. There are many instances of vacant buildings, abandonments, and marginal commercial enterprises in the highly visible corridors to the community. The City should consider policies and regulations that will effectively prevent any further over-extension of commercial development. It also needs to ensure that vacated and abandoned structures are appropriately reused or removed in a timely fashion.
- Throughout this planning process, community residents have consistently expressed the need

## Downtown Parking

P

The goal of the *Downtown Parking Feasibility Study*, completed in April 2012, was to investigate opportunities for structured parking development in Downtown Belleville to support current need as well as future growth. This report was aimed at identifying potential sites within the Downtown where a parking structure could be developed to best satisfy both current and future parking needs. In addition, design concepts, associated costs, and potential aesthetic concepts for parking structure development are included within the study. City staff were solicited for their input as to which sites they felt were most appropriate given their understanding of Downtown.

Currently, the parking situation Downtown is heightened when the County court is in session. Future strain on parking is predicted as growth and redevelopment has been identified along Main Street moving eastward, an area which also is most in need for expanded parking options. In particular, the study determined the need for 250 more parking spaces in a structured facility. Ultimately, the study recommended that a site located on the northeast corner of High Street and Washington Street is the best opportunity for the development of additional parking supply nearest to where demand is the greatest. This site also affords opportunities to stimulate additional development in Downtown, and redevelopment eastward along Main Street.

Source: Downtown Parking Deck Feasibility Study

**"Insufficient or remote parking can deter growth."**

### Parking Lot Landscaping

Due to the size and prominent location of parking lots, their landscaping makes a strong visual impact throughout the community. Revised standards based on the ratio of islands per parking spaces (rather than five percent of the overall site coverage, which is the City's current standard) will help to distribute landscaping improvements and reduce the "heat island" effect.

for upscale apartments or condos near Downtown that provide an alternative to older, single-family housing stock that is most common throughout the City. This desire is contrasted by concern over some existing multi-family housing stock, which has been characterized as "tired" or "poorly maintained." The City's adoption of a Crime-Free Housing Ordinance (2013) is viewed as a useful tool for improving the existing conditions.

- Over the last decade, the national dialogue has placed greater importance on "healthy lifestyles" and obesity prevention. Belleville's land development and mobility systems - including parks, pedestrian and bicycle trails, recreational centers, and community gardens - are significant factors in supporting this movement. The *Parks, Recreation and Greenways Master Plan (2008)*, summarized on page 6.23, highlights some of the key findings for expanding Belleville's recreation system. Since that plan, the City has developed Bicentennial Park and Belleville Dog Park at Rotary Park.
- Residents have consistently expressed concern over the appearance and maintenance of commercial and residential property. These concerns include, but are not limited to: painting condition, littering, broken windows, signage, graffiti, and fire damage.
- Scattered, single industrial buildings throughout Belleville represent potential land use and character incompatibilities, especially if the buildings are vacated (e.g., former Stag Brewery facilities, see page 5.21 for more details). While many of these buildings accommodate relatively "light" manufacturing operations, they can represent potential use conflicts nearby (and often adjoining) residential neighborhoods. The undesirable effects of this pattern can be mitigated by enhanced





landscape buffering and use of turning lanes where needed, as well as provisions to effectively transition these uses over time.

## Strategic Recommendations

- **Priority 1** | Improve the appearance, quality, and compatibility of existing and future development.
- **Priority 2** | Strengthen Belleville's sense of identity and connectivity in context of its large size and unique shape.
- **Priority 3** | Create community focal points and destinations along major corridors, at commercial and employment centers, and in mixed-use districts throughout the community.

### Priority 1 | Improve the appearance, quality, and compatibility of existing and future development.

The appearance of the City is, perhaps, the single most evident glimpse of the effectiveness of the City's development standards. These perceptions of the community are largely driven by the physical environment. For this reason, the quality of development is essential to the community's ongoing and future success. While the City has a number of useful tools in place, the comprehensive planning process naturally triggers re-evaluation of their effectiveness.

#### ACTION STEPS

- **Land Development Ordinance Updates.**  
Comprehensively review and update the *Zoning Code*, *Subdivision Code*, and *Sign Control Code* to achieve the community's desired appearance and character. Priority considerations include, but are not limited to:
  - » Redefined **zoning districts** to focus on character (e.g., rural, suburban, general, urban)

versus traditional use classifications (e.g., A1 Single-Family Residential, A1-A Single-Family Residential, A-1H Single-Family Residential), including potential for Neighborhood Conservation districts to facilitate infill development (see page 6.9 for more details);

- » Enhanced **parking** design, location, and minimum landscaping requirements (e.g., transition landscaping requirements from percent lot coverage to number of islands per spaces) (see the inset above);
  - » Refinement and updates to the **planned unit development** (PUD) process to ensure its provisions are consistent with this plan (see the inset on the following page);
  - » Higher quality **multi-family housing design standards** (e.g., variable building heights, facade articulation, setbacks, building materials) (see the inset on page 6.10);
  - » Higher quality and more specific design standards for **commercial and industrial buildings**, especially ones exceeding 50,000 square feet (e.g., roof articulation; design of backs of buildings facing major thoroughfares, pedestrian-oriented site design; connectivity between adjoining businesses; performance-based setbacks; location and orientation of building in relation to street; screening and storage; facade materials, colors, and articulation; and signage); currently the "C-5 Planned Commercial District" is intended to encourage innovative site layouts and coordinated architectural treatment of commercial uses and structures; and
  - » Requirements for reuse or demolition of a building if it becomes **vacant or dormant** for an extended period of time.
- **Development and Redevelopment Agreement Requirements.** When appropriate, attach higher

## Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)

The City's *Zoning Code* allows developers to submit a PUD application in any zoning district, but only upon the issuance of a special use permit. It allows greater flexibility to preserve open space and respond to unique environmental considerations (a key objective of conservation subdivisions) and provide various housing types and other structures and uses (a key objective of traditional neighborhood design) as long as the overall average density does not exceed the usual zoning district limit.

This common practice is a flexible regulatory tool whereby the City can be assured that upon completion, approved development projects will substantially conform to the plans or models which constituted the basis for the City's issuance of the necessary zoning, subdivision, and/or building permit. ***It is intended to encourage innovative site layouts and coordinated architectural treatment of different housing types and other structures, as well as a more cost-effective installation of streets, sewers, utilities, and other improvements.***

The City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, has adopted a point system to set clear expectations for the types of amenities that are considered for alternatives. The following sample "menu" of amenities and assigned point values are from the City of Minneapolis' PUD application form.

***In order to ensure community values are upheld, some cities have chosen to adopt a point system that requires a certain minimum amount of credits for every planned unit development and for each alternative to a zoning code requirement requested.***

10	Historic preservation	Preservation, rehabilitation or restoration of designated historic landmarks as a part of the development, subject to the approval of the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission.
10	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)	The proposed development shall meet the minimum standards for LEED Silver certification. The project does not have to achieve actual LEED certification; however, the developer must submit the LEED checklist and documentation to the city, approved by a LEED Accredited Professional (LEED-AP), that shows that the project will comply with LEED Silver requirements.
10	Minnesota Sustainable Building Guidelines (B3-MSBG)	The proposed development shall meet the minimum required and recommended MSBG standards that would equal a LEED silver certification. The developer must submit documentation to the city including the MSBG checklist and a letter, signed by the owner or a licensed design professional, that shows that the project will comply with MSBG required and recommended standards equivalent to a LEED Silver certification. The recommended standards utilized should be those that most closely align with city sustainability goals.
10	Public right-of-way dedication	Dedication of land and construction of a public road, alley, pathway, or greenway that is part of an approved city plan or that restores the city's traditional grid subject to the approval of the applicable agencies or departments. Right-of-way improvements should be designed in accordance with Chapter 598, Land Subdivision Regulations. Points shall not be awarded for the reconstruction or relocation of an alley to facilitate an alley vacation.
10	Underground parking	All parking shall be located underground. Where the grade of the site slopes significantly, all parking shall be enclosed in a floor level of the building that does not meet the definition of a story. Further, exterior parking garage walls adjacent to the public street shall not extend more than three (3) feet above the adjacent grade measured from the finished floor of the first level.
5	Conservation of the built environment	Significant renovation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of an existing building(s), rather than demolition.

Source: City of Minneapolis



## Context Sensitive Design

### Mobility projects are critical to the character of the surrounding uses and should be responsive to and compatible with the physical setting.

Context sensitive design is a contemporary approach to transportation project design, operation, and maintenance that requires more careful consideration of the natural and built settings through which roads and transit projects pass (e.g., rural and scenic areas, commercial and industrial districts, campuses and business parks, downtowns, neighborhoods, etc.). This approach “seeks to balance the need to move vehicles efficiently and safely with other desirable outcomes, including historic preservation, environmental sustainability, and vital public spaces.”

quality design and landscaping standards to development and redevelopment agreements to support the guiding principles of this plan. The City negotiates these requirements on a case-by-case basis and should be proportional to the scale of investment and in adherence with state law.

- **Historic Preservation.** Review the *Design Guideline/Policy and Procedures Manual (2002)* to ensure the provisions are compatible with the vision for the community, associated homeowners, and Historic Preservation Commission. Belleville’s three local districts include: Hexenbuckel Historic District, Oakland Historic District, and Old Belleville Historic District. Both Hexenbuckel and Old Belleville Historic Districts are also included within the National Register Historic District. The City is in the process of establishing a fourth local district (and third potential national one) in what was the original town of West Belleville. Properties within nationally recognized districts may qualify for a 20 percent investment tax credit for the rehabilitation of the historic structure. As part of this effort, it is recommended that the City explore how a local historic preservation grant program would complement the City’s existing business assistance programs. See page 6.22 for additional details.
- **Traffic Study Requirements.** Consider increasing the specificity of traffic study requirements in the *Subdivision Code* to ensure the City can sufficiently evaluate if the scale of development is appropriate for a particular site and what mitigation measures may be necessary, on and/or off the site, to ensure safe and efficient access and maintain traffic flow on impacted public roadways. *The community’s strong emphasis on infill development of vacant and underutilized lots in this plan warrants greater sensitivity to the traffic impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods.* Typical mitigation approaches vary

according to the extent of traffic impact but may include:

- » Limiting the number of access driveways or altering their design or location along major thoroughfares, like Main Street;
- » Requiring developer contribution to traffic signal upgrades or timing changes;
- » Requiring installation of deceleration and/or acceleration lanes for main driveways to reduce traffic conflicts in busy areas; and
- » Requiring developer contribution to intersection improvements, which typically involves construction of new or lengthened left and/or right turn lanes.

### Priority 2 | Strengthen Belleville’s sense of identity and connectivity in context of its large size and unique shape.

Belleville’s street system moves residents from their homes to employment and shopping centers, schools, and places of leisure. The development patterns internal to this system begin to dictate the location of gateways, destinations (e.g., schools and parks), points of access, and sidewalk and bicycle alternatives. The majority of the City’s older residential areas are designed as part of this elaborate network, naturally providing good connectivity within and through neighborhoods. As the City continues to balance neighborhood revitalization of older neighborhoods with new growth, the community will be challenged with defining its identity and connectedness on multiple scales - at the block, neighborhood, and community levels.

#### ACTION STEPS

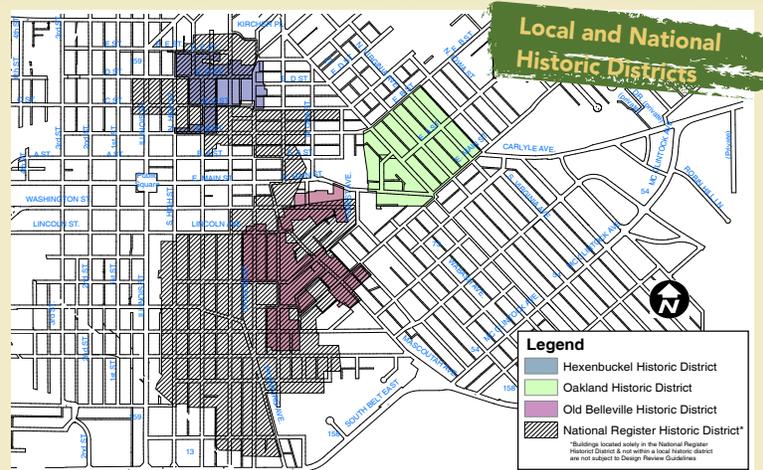
- **Gateway Enhancements.** Prioritize gateway improvements and include them in the proposed capital improvements program. These improvements include high-profile monuments,

Source: Belleville Historical Society

# Historic Districts

## Historic Preservation Commission

Belleville's Historic Preservation Commission was founded by city ordinance in 1972. The purpose of the commission is to identify and inventory those places, areas, and buildings having special historical, cultural, or aesthetic interest or value. In December 2002, the City Council adopted a "Design Guideline Manual" which gives the commission responsibility for reviewing all exterior changes in the City's historic districts. Currently, Belleville has three local historic districts, two of which are encompassed within a National Register Historic District. The three local districts include: Hexenbuckel Historic District, Oakland Historic District, and Old Belleville Historic District. Both Hexenbuckel and Old Belleville Historic Districts are also included within the National Register Historic District.



The Old Belleville District was established in 1974 and remains the oldest historic district in Belleville. Hexenbuckel and Oakland Historic Districts were established in 1991 and 1995, respectively.

## West Belleville Historic District Nomination

The Historic Preservation Commission is currently in the process of pursuing historic designation for the neighborhood of West Belleville. In the fall of 2012, City Council authorized a contract with St. Louis-based historic preservation firm Lafser & Associates for a proposal to establish the West Belleville National Register Historic District. If approved by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the district would encompass an area of nearly 500 properties, mainly comprised of German street houses in a narrow corridor running west from Sixth Street to 16th Street. These German street homes were built primarily by immigrants from Germany between the 1830s to 1870s. West Belleville is also home to the former Stag Brewery, and remnants of the original brewery still exist. Aside from preserving the community's heritage, there is an economic incentive to preserving historic properties. A property listed in the National Register, or located within a National Register Historic District, may qualify for 20 percent investment tax credit for the rehabilitation of the historic structure.

## Proposed West Belleville Historic District Designation



The West Belleville National Register Historic District nomination is expected to be delivered to the Illinois Historic Site Advisory Board by mid-2014.

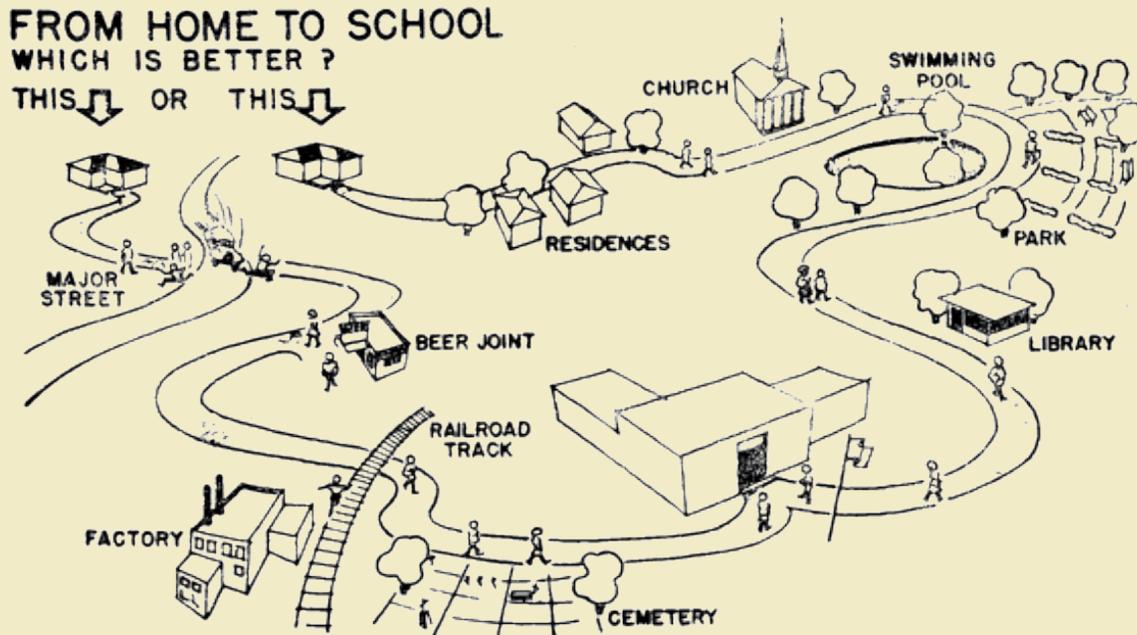
Sources: The Greater Belleville Chamber, Belleville News-Democrat, St. Louis Post-Dispatch



## School Site Selection

School site selection is critical to the overall fabric and design of Belleville's neighborhoods. The City should continue to partner with the school districts to identify opportune school locations in and around Belleville. Special consideration should be given to compatible land uses; traffic congestion; automobile and pedestrian safety; and infrastructure barriers.

Image Source: Planning Advisory Service, Information Report No. 175, August 1963

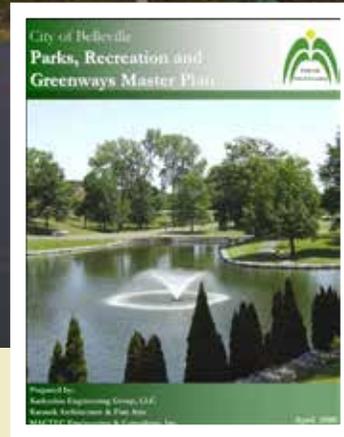


landscaping, streetscaping treatments, flags and banners, ornamental lighting, land contouring, public art, paving material, and pedestrian/bikeway trails. Coordination with IDOT will be required along designated state and federal highways. The entranceway along Illinois Route 159 serves as an example. The gateway improvements should be carefully sited and of sufficient scale and quality design to stand out from other corridor signage and visual elements. Based on public input in this planning process, priority locations are displayed in *Map 6.1, Development Patterns*.

- **Gateway and Corridor Overlay District.** Similar to Belleville's Flood Plain and Historic Preservation Overlay Districts, consider establishing an overlay district at Belleville's signature gateways and along main corridors. As defined by the *Zoning Code*, an overlay district is a zoning district superimposed over one or more standard (primary) zoning districts or portions thereof for the purpose of controlling specific developmental considerations above and beyond the standard requirements. This proposed

district would require new construction (and future re-purposed uses) to develop in a higher quality manner with stricter access management and design standards than standard development projects. Part of this assessment would also be to evaluate the standard zoning designations along the City's major gateways and corridors to ensure the uses and character are compatible with the objectives of this plan.

- **Street Connectivity and Mobility Standards.** In accordance with *Section 3, Mobility*, review the street design standards in the *Subdivision Code* and *Streets Code* to increase neighborhood connectivity, promote "complete streets" (as described in the inset on page 3.7) and context sensitive design strategies (as described above). For example, consider updating the *Subdivision Code* threshold requirements for sidewalks on both sides of the street (decreasing the overall density for the subdivision from greater than four dwelling units per gross acre, the current standard, to greater than three dwelling units per gross



Rotary Park

## Parks, Recreation and Greenways Master Plan

Parks and recreation facilities are an essential part of a healthy, quality, and vibrant community environment. They provide the necessary components for events outside of the home and after work and school activities. Whether for passive or active use, parks and recreation facilities are an important part of everyday, active living – providing health benefits for children, adults, and seniors alike. Belleville’s park system enhances the community’s quality of life, boosting economic development efforts to recruit and retain a skilled workforce; build a strong tax base to finance system expansion, facility enhancements, and maintenance; and attract new families and retirees alike.

The *Parks, Recreation and Greenways Master Plan (2008)* addresses the availability, quality, type, size, and location of recreation opportunities to meet the needs of Belleville’s residents and visitors to the community. It seeks to achieve a balance between their benefits and the costs to develop and maintain them.

### System Goals

Based on the needs and demands of the community, eight goals were highlighted:

1. Acquire a minimum of 115 acres of land for new recreation by the year 2030. The addition of Bicentennial Park and enhancement of Rotary Park contribute to this need.
2. Educate the citizens of Belleville to be stewards of the rich, natural communities of the City.

**Mission:** To be committed to wholesome, family oriented recreation in a fiscally responsible manner that interprets the culture and history of the community while expanding recreation opportunities in a healthy and safe environment for all generations of City residents.



3. Provide parks and recreational opportunities that result in adequate geographic coverage and sufficient accessibility to all City residents.
4. Expand the Richland Creek Greenway trail to link to additional City neighborhoods and the regional trail network.
5. Broaden the range of recreational opportunities for City residents by providing additional active and passive recreation facilities in existing and new parks.
6. Provide an expanded variety of programs and instructional personnel as necessary to meet the needs of all age groups.
7. Provide an effective level of system-wide maintenance that results in the superior operation of parks, recreation facilities, and support facilities.
8. Implement new and innovative methods for funding recreation system improvements throughout the planning period.

Source: City of Belleville Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Master Plan



## For Belleville to be a “complete” city, what are the missing pieces?



### Create an art district in Belleville.

“In every city I have traveled to that is as spread out like ours, they seem to thrive better with districts, where like minded individuals flock to work and live and create a unique area that locals and visitors alike can enjoy. An art district is more or less an area of cheap lofts and studios for artists, one or two galleries and an old warehouse or large building where artists can work and teach children interested in this trade and help them create, so more or less workshops for children and adults. Unique cuisine would be the theme, as an artist would be considered to have a unique palette. International fare - Latin, Indian, Thai, Italian, to name a few, along with Vegan and gluten free foods.”

acre). Several of the newer subdivisions, such as Autumn Woods, have average lot sizes just above 1/4-acre lots and are, therefore, not required to have sidewalks on both sides of the street.

- **Neighborhood Planning.** In accordance with *Section 4, Housing and Neighborhoods*, use the Belleville Neighborhood Partnership (BNP) as a foundation to increase the capacity of neighborhood zones to establish sub-area plans within each district. These partnerships will facilitate a more unified whole among the community. Plus, the planning efforts out of the BNP will serve as a vehicle to identify priority capital improvement projects within each neighborhood zone.

### Priority 3 | Create community focal points and destinations along major corridors, at commercial and employment centers, and in mixed-use districts throughout the community.

Belleville residents and business owners desire for the community to be a regional growth center for jobs, housing, recreation, entertainment, healthcare, and education. As the largest Illinois city south of Springfield, Belleville is physically and economically positioned to serve all the needs of the community plus its surrounding area. As the City adds new amenities, one of its challenges will be to create unique places that do not compete with one another. For instance, the commercial and civic functions of Downtown clearly have a different character and scale than development along Illinois Route 15. Future public investments should help to define areas of civic importance and celebrate those differences.

[Continued on Page 6.27]

## Cherokee Street

Cherokee Street offers more than 12 blocks of independently owned and operated specialty shops, art galleries, restaurants and cafes on the south side of St. Louis. The area has recently been noted for its diversity and eclectic mix of small businesses, affordable property, and demographic diversity. Cherokee Street has gained a reputation as a place for youthful entrepreneurs, artists, and Hispanic business owners. The new emergence of Cherokee Street has been celebrated mainly as a grassroots effort. “There’s not one single vision or master plan that’s driving the rejuvenation. It’s really the individual business owners, residents, and just the multitude of different types of amenities that are here that just kind of works. It’s a rare combination,” commented an owner of a St. Louis clothing depot in the area.

“Cherokee Street has flourished organically, cultivated by young entrepreneurs.”

- Southern Living Magazine, 2013

On one hand, the success of Cherokee Street can be attributed to the attraction of businesses that promote both the commercial corridors and the surrounding neighborhoods. Jason Deem, a developer who moved to Cherokee Street and over the years has worked on business and community development in the area, claims the area’s ability to embrace “**diversity, creativity, arts, and culture**” has helped attract a unique and diverse mix of independently owned business.” According to him, “space is affordable so people are less afraid to experiment with a business model that would be too much of a risk to try elsewhere.”

Source: STL Beacon

# Transit-Oriented Development in Belleville

## Introduction

In the last 20 years, the Metro Transit – St. Louis system has generated an estimated \$2 billion in residential and commercial transit-oriented development (TOD) projects near transit stations, such as the Emerson Park residential housing development in East St. Louis. This type of clustered mixed-use pattern has been proposed at Belleville’s three MetroLink stations several times in the last decade. However, a combination of economic and political factors has prevented development from occurring. As recent as 2011, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) assembled a technical advisory panel to study the viability of TOD near the Scheel Street Station. The panel found a need for:

- A variety of housing types, including senior housing;
- Convenience retail and business services; and
- Offices and small-scale institutional uses.

One of the recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan* is to invest in a more detailed TOD study to specify the market-supported land use mix, scale, and development character for each station, starting with the one closest to Downtown on Scheel Street (see page 5.12). The study would also provide specific directives for: incentives, infrastructure requirements, land assembly, site design, financing, and marketing.

## Benefits and Challenges to TOD\*

### Benefits

- Improved access to job centers and expanded trade areas
- Optimizes Belleville’s competitive advantage relative to Metro East communities without stations
- Expanded mobility choices that reduce automobile dependence, reduce transportation costs, and increase disposable income
- Potential for added value created through increased and/or sustained property values
- Walkable communities that accommodate more healthy and active lifestyles
- Increased transit ridership and fare revenue (average daily ridership across entire system is 45,209)

- Reduced vehicle miles traveled, which lowers congestion, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions

### Challenges

- Identifying a market- and community-supported mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses
- Variety of public and private property owners surrounding the station, including the City, St. Clair County Transit District, and Metro
- Lack of adequate infrastructure, especially in mature areas of the community
- Potential impacts to surrounding property owners
- Complexity of managing and funding TOD projects

\*Source: Reconnecting America, 2011

## Best Practices\*

- Station areas should be planned as mixed-use developments, combining an optimal mix of commercial, residential, and institutional uses into clustered, mixed-use buildings.
- City should focus on regulating the type and architectural style of structure rather than the specific land use.
- TOD typically embodies “traditional neighborhood development” (TND) principles, such as more compact development patterns, narrower lots, smaller front yards, abundant public areas, interconnected neighborhoods, and calm traffic. These types of developments prioritize non-automobile modes of travel, such as a walking, biking, and bus connectivity.
- Station area development may be regulated through an overlay district or by incorporating transit-oriented features into the City’s base zoning districts.
- Use station areas to create a gateway for the community.
- Provide clear, direct, and convenient routes for cars to access the station, continuous and safe sidewalks/pathways to make pedestrian access easy, and provide bike paths and storage locations to encourage bicycle access.
- Create a mix of land uses around the station area, including housing, employment centers, governmental functions, schools, healthcare facilities, and recreation.
- Develop essential services and conveniences immediately adjacent to the station to facilitate “trip-linking” by commuters.
- Provide safe, well-lit, attractive areas for places to wait, park, drop-off/pick-up, and transfer between other modes of transportation.



- Create an overall environment that is active, human scaled, and visually diverse, and create a sense of safety, security, and predictability.

\*Sources: 2000 Belleville Comprehensive Plan and Institute for Transportation and Development Policy's (ITDP) Principles: (Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, 2013)

## Belleville's MetroLink Stations

### Memorial Hospital



#### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Located near the intersection of Illinois Route 161 and the North 57th Street/ Drake Road expansion
- Areas north and east of the station are undeveloped with the potential for mixed-use residential/commercial development

### Scheel Street



#### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Located near the intersection of Scheel Street and Douglas Avenue in Downtown Belleville
- Surrounding uses include mature neighborhoods, providing a sufficient number of rooftops to support a higher concentration of mixed-uses

### SWIC @ IL 161



#### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Located just east of Southwestern Illinois College
- Areas north and east of the station are undeveloped with the potential for mixed use residential/commercial development

### ACTION STEPS

#### ■ **Sub-Area and Strategic Corridor Plans.**

Using *Map 6.1, Development Patterns*, and *Map 6.2, Future Land Use Plan*, as guides, continue to expand the success of Downtown as a "livable center" to other parts of the community (see inset on page 6.13 for definition). Prepare sub-area and corridor plans that provide sufficient detail to result in a regulating plan that illustrates the intended arrangement and form of development. This may include the following example elements:

- » cursory site analysis, property inventory, and building conditions survey;
- » Public spaces and activity areas;
- » Contextual relationships with existing uses and adjacent properties;
- » A real estate market overview with summary data on property values, construction costs, and neighborhood demographics;
- » A parcel-by-parcel "triage map" depicting sites of high, medium, and low importance for improvements;
- » Circulation and connectivity to schools, parks, and other destinations;
- » An illustrated and annotated conceptual master plan, including typical lot, block, and building footprint considerations to reflect general character and scale;
- » Design alternatives for key sites; and
- » Corridor and sub-area branding, such as an "arts district."

- **Downtown Parking.** As part of the capital improvement program, increase Downtown parking capacity by adding a 250-space

parking deck on the northeast corner of High Street and Washington Street, as documented by the *Downtown Parking Feasibility Study (2012)* as well as other recommendations within this plan (see insert on page 6.18). This site has the potential to stimulate eastward redevelopment along Main Street (see sidebar Downtown Parking) and increase business activity in the vicinity. The *Zoning Code* currently exempts parking requirements for businesses located within 500 feet (equal to approximately 1-1/2 blocks) of a municipal lot, a significant benefit to the surrounding businesses.

- **Parks, Recreation, and Hike-Bike System.** Update the *Parks, Recreation and Greenways Master Plan (2008)* to review progress and revisit priorities, including the most recent parks and recreation additions (e.g., Bicentennial Park, Belleville Dog Park at Rotary Park). As part of this update process, include a dedicated pedestrian and bicyclist component to include current and proposed paths (sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use trails) to improve Belleville's connectivity to the region. This requires coordination with the Metro East Park and Recreation District, St. Clair County Highway Department, St. Clair County Transit District, Metro, East-West Gateway Council of Governments, and Illinois Department of Transportation.
- **Enterprise Zone Boundaries.** In coordination with the *Future Land Use Plan* and economic development objectives, re-define the City's enterprise zone boundaries to optimize benefit for commercial and employment centers in context of the state re-application process. Belleville's Enterprise Zone is scheduled to expire in June 2016 at the conclusion of its 30-year life cycle. As the City reapplies, it must comply with new program modifications from 2012, when the Governor

amended the Illinois Enterprise Zone Act. This law resulted in increased reporting requirements and a revised process for selecting zones. The law also eliminates three of the tax incentives provided to businesses in enterprise zones: the income tax credit of \$500 for each hire that is economically disadvantaged or a dislocated worker; the income tax exemption for dividends paid by corporations; and the deduction for interest income from loans secured by eligible investment credit property.<sup>2</sup> Businesses in enterprise zones can still take advantage of the remaining five state tax incentives, as well as any local tax incentives offered.

- **Transit-Oriented Development.** In accordance with *Section 3, Mobility*, and *Section 5, Economic Development*, consider transit-oriented development strategies at the City's three MetroLink stations. Priority should be placed on the Scheel Street station. See the inset on page 6.26 for more details.
- **Belleville's Planned Business and Industrial Parks.** In accordance with *Section 5, Economic Development*, continue increasing Belleville's overall percent of Planned Business and Industrial Park and Industrial land use classifications as a recruitment tool for attracting major employers. Location of these sites should include convenient and affordable access to modern utility, transportation, and telecommunications infrastructure; sufficient access and visibility to the region's major thoroughfares (e.g., widening of Green Mount Road); compatible adjoining land uses that can mitigate the noise and traffic impacts (i.e., avoidance of schools, parks, and low-density residential areas); and sufficient buffering between adjoining uses.

<sup>2</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning