

# City of Rockford



Adopted 2006



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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Rockford adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1993 to establish a framework for future growth and development of the City. The Comprehensive Plan was updated in 1999 to anticipate extra-territorial growth based upon near full build out of the land within the City's boundaries at that time. Based on an accelerated rate of annexation and development requests within the last several years and expected continued growth pressures, the City Council has again determined a need to review and update its fundamental planning document.

In this context, this update represents a continuation of the policy framework established initially by the 1993 Comprehensive Plan. The primary focus of this current planning effort is the area that can be immediately serviced by the City's existing sanitary sewer and water utilities as well as establishment of a long range planning area planning that can ultimately be serviced by these same systems in accordance with the current facilities plans prepared by the City's Engineer, Bonestroo Rosene Anderlik and Associates.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan Update is not only to direct future development policy for the City of Rockford but to identify and resolve issues that have affected development in the past. Several of these issues warrant mention with this introduction to the Comprehensive Plan due to their significance and potential impact to the City and its residents:

- **Growth Management.** The concept of growth management within the City of Rockford involves three elements. First, urban expansion must be staged by working with Rockford Township and landowners to allow for orderly annexation of developable parcels to meet anticipated market demands for residential, commercial and industrial land uses.

Second, growth must be planned so that investments in utilities, streets, parks and administration capabilities of the City are fully utilized to minimize expenditure of limited financial resources and to ensure proper operation and maintenance of these existing facilities.

Finally, growth management entails balancing the current high demand for residential land use with opportunities to expand the City's tax and employment base through commercial and industrial development. Related to economic expansion is an ability to provide businesses with necessary public services in the most financially responsible manner possible.

- **Future Land Use.** A critical issue addressed as part of this Comprehensive Plan update is to anticipate future urban land uses in designated as long range growth areas that can be serviced by the City's existing utilities. This planning is necessary to provide information as to the City's long range vision to Rockford residents, adjacent government units and the development community. The

objective here is for the City to establish a preliminary direction for future urban development areas that can be refined in the future as services may be made available based on contemporary community goals and development practices and specific development proposals.

- **Housing Balance.** A need for a diverse housing supply has historically been established as a community objective to meet the life-cycle housing needs of existing and future residents. The extent to which medium and high density housing types have been offered as part of recent development proposals has raised some issues within the City as to what represents an appropriate balance of housing types within Rockford.
- **Transportation.** Regional growth west of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area has resulted in increasing traffic volumes of traffic passing through Rockford and generated within the City. Planning efforts for upgrading TH 55 through Rockford has been an on-going issue for the City that will continue. Traffic within the City due to local trip generation is also a growing concern with related to on-going development. The City must prioritize construction of collector streets to move traffic from local neighborhoods and business centers to regional traffic carriers (TH 55) as part of a comprehensive transportation system that provides convenient access and reduces congestion.
- **Parks and Trails.** With on-going urban development within the City comes on-going need to plan for and acquire land for future City and neighborhood parks. Moreover, a continued expansion of a trail system is also an amenity that will be gaining demand as the City's population increases. Rockford remains in an advantageous position to plan and provide for parks and trails in advance of the actual need. A future Park and Trail System Plan is incorporated as part of this Comprehensive Plan effort to ensure adequate response to the City's open space and recreational needs.
- **Environmental Protection.** Development that occurs must to so respective of preserving, maintaining and enhancing Rockford's natural environmental features. Features of the natural environment such as the Crow River, wetlands, flood plain, trees, and steep slopes serve both functional and aesthetic purposes important to the health, safety and welfare of the City.

## **GOALS AND POLICIES**

The goals and policies chapter of the Comprehensive Plan describes in written form what the community desires to accomplish in terms of its physical environment. These goals and policies are also intended establish guidelines as to how this physical environment is to be achieved. Goals are the end products in terms of housing, employment, service and recreation areas within the community that are ultimately to occur through new development. Policies are action statements that lead toward realization of these stated goals and are to be used as guides in making development related decisions. These elements comprise a review and decision-making process and the basis upon which the development framework for the City of Rockford can be formulated. In addition to guiding response and action, these goals and policies also serve to define evaluation criteria for the changes that are anticipated to occur by the overall Comprehensive Plan.

It must be emphasized that the various statements outlined herein are to be considered collectively. In some instances, a single policy may define a course of action or decision. It is more common, however, that several policies will apply to a given situation. Reactions to individual policies should therefore be tempered in consideration of all applicable statements. The flexibility and adaptability of the goals and policies established in the following paragraphs is such that these statements are a resource to be utilized for any decisions that must be made when unforeseen issues arise.

### **ENVIRONMENT GOALS AND POLICIES**

The protection and preservation of the natural environment is critical toward establishing a healthy and attractive city. The City will protect and strengthen the quality of all environmentally sensitive areas and unique physical features throughout the development process.

1. Impacts from development to drainageways, wetlands, shoreland, floodplains and other natural features that perform important environmental functions in their natural state shall be restricted or prohibited.
2. All activities in naturally or environmentally sensitive areas shall conform to local, county and state regulations. State and federal pollution regulations shall be incorporated into local policy when appropriate.
3. The location, type and condition of existing vegetation shall be indicated in all development requests and preservation of existing trees shall be accomplished where feasible.
4. New development shall be responsible for adding trees and other such amenities to the landscape.

5. Natural drainage patterns shall be preserved wherever feasible.
6. Soil suitability and ground water tables shall be a basis for determining the kind of development to be allowed.
7. Methods of controlling erosion shall be indicated on all development requests.
8. Water bodies and watercourses shall be classified and zoned for specific uses in consideration of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources mandated regulations.
9. Ensure that existing floodplain development is protected from flood waters and that strict adherence and enforcement be paid to all floodplain ordinances and federal floodplain insurance regulations.
10. Discourage the location of non-local governmental solid waste disposal facilities within the City or its extra-territorial planning areas.
11. All development near TH 55 shall consider and give attention to noise levels along the corridor to ensure that there will not be an expectation by adjacent property owners in the future of sound walls or other noise abatement measures.

## **LAND USE**

### **Growth and Extra-Territorial Area Management**

Long range growth and development for the City of Rockford will depend on continued coordination with Rockford Township and Wright County on extra-territorial growth management and annexation. The City will work with Rockford Township and Wright County to stage the continued urban expansion of the City in an orderly manner to provide necessary services such as sanitary sewer, water, streets and land use patterns in an efficient and fiscally responsible manner.

1. Plan utility, service, and major and local street extensions to accommodate long term growth and expansion of the City of Rockford.
2. Delineate the boundary limits for urban expansion and annex land in a staged manner such that urban uses are prevented from prematurely encroaching into rural areas.
3. Discourage development of parcels not contiguous to existing urban development that expand the City's service delivery areas and create scattered nodes of development.

4. Plan the City's utility service and street extensions to accommodate long term growth and urban expansion.
5. Prohibit premature subdivisions in areas that lack adequate infrastructure such as utilities, streets, or parks.
6. Require infrastructure improvements associated with new development to be financed by those creating the need for the improvements, except as may be identified by the City's capital improvement plans.
7. Ensure timely development of approved final plats by requiring financial securities.
8. Provide municipal sanitary sewer and water utilities only to parcels within the City of Rockford on a first come, first serve basis.
9. Expand the boundaries of the City's urban service area and annex parcels only when the following criteria are satisfied:
  - a. Land to be included in the urban service area is not enrolled in an agricultural preservation program.
  - b. The land lies within one-quarter mile of the existing urban service area boundary or presents environmental problems that can be alleviated by the delivery of City water and sewer service.
  - c. There is adequate sanitary sewer and water capacity to serve the parcel for the land use guided by the Future Land Use Plan and the development is not otherwise defined as a premature subdivision as regulated by the City's Subdivision Ordinance.
  - d. The developer and/or benefiting property owners assume the significant majority of improvement and service costs.

### **Development Pattern**

The City of Rockford will work toward the development of a cohesive land use pattern that ensures compatibility and functional relationships among activities through the implementation of the following polices:

1. Provide a variety of development types to satisfy the needs, desires and income levels of all people shall be encouraged, while preventing an over supply of any one type of development.

2. Cluster compatible uses and activities into functionally related neighborhoods or districts determined by physical barriers, similar land use characteristics and service area boundaries.
3. Accomplish transitions between distinctly differing types of land uses so as not to create negative impacts on adjoining developments, encouraging changes in land use to occur either at mid-block points or at neighborhood boundaries borders of areas separated by physical barriers.
4. Incompatible land uses shall be properly regulated so that conflicts are minimized through the use of physical barriers (i.e., topography, drainageways, transportation routes, etc.), distance, screening, or proper physical orientation of lots and buildings.
5. Change established geographic land use designations and related zoning classifications only when it can be demonstrated that the modifications are in the best long term interest of the community and consistent with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
6. Establish standards for development quality for all land uses to insure desired community character.
7. Renewal, replacement, and redevelopment of substandard and grossly incompatible land uses shall be accomplished through public action and private means.
8. Land use development shall be planned so as not to isolate or create land-locked parcels and all development shall be accessed by adequate public streets.
9. Coordinate the City's plans for future growth with neighboring government jurisdictions to encourage unified and compatible developments patterns.

## **Residential Land Use**

Residential neighborhoods are the foundation of Rockford and are to continue to be planned on an individual basis to provide safe, high quality, high amenity living environments. A primary objective of the City is to continue to provide life-cycle housing options within its residential neighborhoods for new and longtime residents.

1. Protect low density residential neighborhoods from encroachment or intrusion of incompatible uses by adequate buffering and/or separation from other residential, as well as non-residential land uses.
2. Review proposals for all housing types in the context of the City's existing overall housing supply and demand.



3. Provide new neighborhoods with connections to local centers of interest such as City parks or the Central Business District by pedestrian, bicycle and automobile access routes.
4. Maintain a high quality residential environment through rehabilitation or where necessary, redevelopment of substandard units.
5. Encourage housing styles and development techniques that conserve land and increase efficiency provided desired densities are not exceeded.
6. Develop and maintain single family dwellings as the primary type of housing within the City with a variety of lot sizes to create potential for added diversity within this type of development.
7. Develop of a variety of twin homes, townhouses, and multiple family dwellings to supplement conventional single family homes giving due consideration to local market demands and desired City character.
8. Development of twin homes, townhouses, and multiple family dwellings shall be limited in scale so as not to be concentrated in any one area of the City or over such acreages at any one location as to create potential land use compatibility, transportation, utility or service delivery issues.

### **Commercial Land Use (Generally)**

The City will continue to promote balanced and viable commercial development responsive to the retail and service needs of Rockford, TH 55 commuters and surrounding market area, with focus on establishing quality commercial and retail opportunities that do not infringe on Rockford's small town character.

1. Designate commercial land areas adequate to meet expected long range development needs on the Future Land Use Plan and a phasing program for utilization shall be defined.
2. Develop commercial and service centers as cohesive, highly interrelated units with adequate off-street parking limited to those locations identified on the Future Land Use Plan.
3. Encourage development of commercial uses that will take advantage of the visibility and access along TH 55.
4. Implement design standards for commercial development that allows for innovative landscaping, parking islands, lighting, and limits the proliferation of signage or outdoor storage.

5. Commercial and service areas are to encourage, promote and provide safe and convenient pedestrian movement throughout the site.
6. Efforts to achieve improvements to or expansion of existing commercial uses, especially within the Central Business District shall be encouraged.

### **Central Business District**

The traditional Central Business District in Rockford continues to be challenged with balancing the potential for retail and service niche businesses and economic feasibility. As a major physical focus of Rockford and the source of its historic character, the maintenance and enhancement of the Central Business District as a commercial, civic and mixed use area shall be a priority for the City.

1. Implement the design and improvements recommended by the Minnesota Design Team as practical and financially feasible.
2. Promote a broad range of retail, service, and office commercial uses, civic uses and unique residential uses within the CBD area.
3. Require site design that establishes building orientations to main streets, intersections or public open spaces.
4. Promote a variety of building designs, but establish guidelines that require continuity in material and façade design.
5. Incorporate a plan for additional parking within the downtown area that functions in an orderly manner, minimizing vehicular circulation and maximizing accessibility to major activity areas.
6. Establish a pedestrian circulation system within the CBD that connects major economic and recreational activity areas to residential neighborhoods and is compatible with the overall Transportation Plan.
7. Encourage small lot single family, townhouse or multiple family residential uses at the periphery of the CBD.

### **Industrial Land Use**

Industrial uses in Rockford have historically been those that are "locally grown", such as those businesses within the City developed Millennium Industrial Park. Rockford will continue to promote development of high quality, high value industries

that enhance the City's economy through an improved tax base and expanded employment opportunities.

1. Promote industrial developments that maximize the return on City investments in public facilities and services.
2. Promote high quality development through the enforcement of the City's zoning performance standards.
3. Encourage infill development, in-place expansion and redevelopment of existing industrial zoned areas of the City.
4. Encourage site upkeep and maintenance through code enforcement to promote a positive industrial and (commercial image) for the City of Rockford.
5. Limit industrial uses only to areas designated for these activities by the Future Land Use Plan.
6. Areas designated for industrial development shall provide for phasing of development as demand increases.
7. Consider all potential physical implications and services and facility demands (i.e., traffic generation, sewer and water demands, etc.) for any proposed industrial development.

### **Public Land Use**

Public facilities are a great part of Rockford's identity. To this end, all public facilities are to be developed and maintained according to the highest adopted standards of design and performance to serve as examples for private development and to create a source of City pride.

1. Locate public facilities and services so as to offer ease of access and minimal response time.
2. Locate public facilities where the use is compatible with the existing and proposed land uses of the area.
3. Develop public facilities upon sites that offer ample land area for any necessary expansion.

## **Economic Development**

The goal of Rockford's economic development efforts is to seek businesses that complement the City in regards to increased jobs and economic base, tax revenues and does not overburden existing City services and infrastructure.

1. Structure economic development efforts to promote those land uses established by the Future Land Use Plan.
2. Identify market conditions that exist within the local and regional economy for economic development and the types of development best suited for Rockford.
3. Identify those economic development programs that meet the City's objectives on a regular basis for their applicability to Rockford's land use policy and the prevailing development market.
4. Focus the use of development incentives on projects that meet the priority objectives of the City, including development within the CBD and diversifying Rockford's employment opportunities.

## **PARKS AND TRAILS GOALS AND POLICIES**

As the population of Rockford continues to grow, the need for additional parks, trails and recreational activities will become a paramount issue. The overall health and general welfare of the City depends in large part on the establishment a comprehensive system of safe, aesthetically pleasing parks, greenways and trails.

1. Acquire park land through land dedication, purchase, eminent domain or donation.
2. Accept land dedicated for park and trail facilities in satisfaction of subdivision requirements only when the parcel satisfies the needs of the community, as determined by the City.
3. Acquire parcels with high amenity value and unique landscape areas, such as river frontage, water bodies, waterways, wetlands, ponds, streams, significant tree stands, native prairie, bluffs or areas of rugged topography, as a amenities within the developing park system.
4. Dedicate proper right-of-way for sidewalks and trails during the subdivision process or acquired as part of improvement projects.
5. Pursue grants and other alternative funding sources for the acquisition and development of park and trail facilities.

6. Integrate parks, greenways and trails as a comprehensive system for serving the recreation needs of Rockford through physical connections and planned development of a full variety of facilities and diverse uses during all seasons.
7. Make improvements to the park and trail system based on a classification system of park and trail facilities defined by the Comprehensive Plan.
8. Recognize the existence and function of private recreation facilities within the Rockford area to avoid unnecessary duplication and conserve financial resources in acquiring and developing public parks and trails.
9. Develop consistent design elements for park and trail facilities (buildings, play equipment, landscape plantings, signage, fixtures, etc.) that promote City identity and recognition of public facilities.
10. Consider long-term costs for maintenance and operation in a facility's design and construction as part of the planning process.
11. Minimize impacts of park development upon adjacent land uses through provision for, but not limited, to the following:
  - a. Appropriate location and orientation of activity areas and buildings.
  - b. Screening and landscaping site design elements.
  - c. Structures are to be designed with appropriate scale, design and color and constructed of quality materials.
  - d. Adequate off-street parking.
12. Coordinate local facility development and related services with the needs and facilities of surrounding local government units, school districts, athletic associations, civic groups and other organizations.
13. Preserve inherent natural amenities or cultural resources when planning the development of specific park and trail sites.
14. Maximize accessibility to parks and other Rockford area destinations to best serve area residents.
15. Provide sidewalks along at least one side of all local through streets within residential neighborhoods and on both sides of all streets within commercial subdivisions.
16. Establish greenway corridors and linear parks to break up urban land use patterns, allow wildlife movement, and preserve open space while allowing people to enjoy the natural amenities within the City.

17. Greenway corridors may include both buildable land and environmentally sensitive areas with a linear park design to conserve and enhance areas such as forests, water bodies, waterways, wetlands, ponds, natural prairies, bluffs or other natural amenities within the community.
18. Coordinate greenway corridors with City stormwater management and other utility plans.
19. Use trails for both transportation and recreational functions as connections between activity centers or by providing access to natural areas, waterways, water bodies or other natural areas.

## **TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND POLICIES**

Transportation is a major issue for the City of Rockford with increasing regional traffic on arterial roadways that pass through the City and new development generating the need for expanded collector streets within the City. The City of Rockford will approach all modes of transportation and related facilities as an integrated system to meet the demands of locally generated traffic.

1. Planning and design of the streets within Rockford shall be based on a functional classification system.
2. Establish and develop a street system that is sensitive to neighborhoods and activity areas along with the provision of facilities that are consistent with the safe and convenient circulation needs of pedestrians and bicyclists to facilitate local movements.
3. Transportation planning and implementation shall be coordinated with neighboring and affected jurisdictions.
4. The City shall work with Wright County, MNDOT and surrounding jurisdictions to identify the means by which long term transportation goals can be met to satisfy both regional and local needs through improvements to the TH 55 corridor.
5. Require minor collector streets in large subdivisions to channel traffic out of the subdivision and onto the City's major collector or arterial street system.
6. Limit vehicular access on to all arterials with adequate distance between intersections and effective utilization of appropriate traffic control methods and devices.
7. All residential streets shall be categorized as low volume carriers and shall be designed to prevent penetration by through traffic to properly direct traffic to major collector or arterial streets.

8. Require proper visibility, design and control of all intersections to promote vehicle and pedestrian safety.
9. Establish standards and controls of signs and lighting for commercial and industrial uses to prevent driver distraction and potential hazards.
10. Act in those areas where incomplete street facilities exist to plan, design, and develop a street system that reflects the highest standards and relates land use to transportation needs.
11. Cooperate with other governmental jurisdictions to introduce transit or para-transit service on the local scale.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

All development that occurs in Rockford is to be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Update the Rockford Comprehensive Plan when such action is deemed appropriate by the City.
2. Establish codes addressing zoning, subdivision, building, and building/property maintenance.
3. Evaluate all development proposals for economic, physical, social and service demand implications with sufficient time provided for thorough analysis and decision-making.
4. Encourage proactive involvement and communication with Rockford area residents and businesses on City issues and services.
5. Make use of available media such as area site postings, newspapers, City newsletters, and the internet as a means to keep citizens informed of all development projects.

## **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Natural resources are of prime importance to the City of Rockford in planning new development and in review of development requests. In addition to serving as aesthetic amenities that enhance the quality of life in the City, natural areas often perform important ecological roles. These natural features can serve as buffers or barriers in determining the extent and direction of development and growth. Therefore, it is necessary that special consideration be given to natural features and systems in formulating Rockford's Comprehensive Plan. Environmentally sensitive areas include those characterized by river corridors, floodplain, steep slopes, vegetation, soil limitations, and wetlands. Rockford has expressed concerns with regards to the preservation and enhancement of these features within the City limits in relation to anticipated development.

### **SHORELANDS**

The Crow River represents the most significant natural feature in the City of Rockford and the outlying planning area. The Crow River provides a strong focal point for Rockford and subsequently represents a critical amenity. It is imperative that proper measures are taken to maintain the integrity of the river through preserving water quality and potential scenic and recreational opportunities which are available.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has established regulations for a state-wide system of shoreland management. These provisions regulate land uses, lot sizes and setback requirements within 500 feet of the ordinary high water line of the river. To date the city has not adopted the DNR shoreland provisions. These regulations should be incorporated into the Rockford Zoning Ordinance to address such specific issues as erosion control along bluffs and the preservation of existing forested areas in undeveloped portions of the shoreland. Adoption of these regulations will ensure that any future development or redevelopment that may occur within the shoreland area should comply with these provisions. The City will need to carefully consider and prepare application of the shoreland regulations to the CBD to allow for continuation of the desired development character.

Spontanski Lake is located along Gabler Avenue within the City's designated Long Range Urban Service Area. Shoreland regulations would similarly apply to any potential urban or rural land use within 1,000 feet of this waterbody's ordinary high water mark.



## **FLOODPLAIN**

A significant portion of the community, including much of the CBD, is located within the 100 year floodplain along the Crow River. Past flooding has raised concerns with property damage and water quality resulting from periodic flooding. As a means of protecting the public health, safety, and welfare, Rockford has adopted floodplain zoning district provisions within the City Zoning Ordinance consistent with state and federal standards. These provisions greatly restrict development within the 100 year floodplain in an effort to minimize the impacts of flooding. All future development and redevelopment within the designated floodplain district shall conform to a specific set of regulations and shall be subject to additional review by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Failure to comply with state and federal standards for floodplain management will result in Rockford residents being unable to obtain federal flood insurance protection.

## **STEEP SLOPES**

Although the majority of Rockford's undeveloped land and outlying planning area is described as flat or gently sloping, a number of areas, particularly along the east side of the Crow River, contain slopes that exceed 12 percent. Development in these areas can be costly, and must be sensitive to the preservation of the natural vegetation and other stabilization practices to prevent erosion.

As a means of minimizing the environmental impact of development in these areas, the City should include an evaluation of slopes on these properties. Factors to be considered are the percentage of grade and surface soil type. Generally, slopes exceeding 12 percent should be examined for any adverse environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the proposed development. However, depending on the soil types involved, lesser slopes may also require attention. Any proposed development on slopes in excess of 12 percent must be required to supply soil tests for review by the City Engineer. Methods of preserving these erodible slopes should be indicated in the development proposal and must also be subject to review and approval.

## **SOILS**

The majority of the vacant land within the City and the extra-territorial planning area has soils with moderate limitations for urban development. However, select undeveloped areas do pose severe limitations for building site development. Careful consideration must be given to the limiting soil factors present on a site prior to approval of development requests. Due to the prevalence of moderate soils in undeveloped portions of the planning area, each development request should be subject to specific review by the City Engineer. At any time during the review process, or during actual construction, if a site is found to contain soils presenting development limitations, methods to correct or overcome these limitations should be implemented in accordance with Uniform Building Code standards and state regulations.

## **VEGETATION**

With the exception of a number of developed neighborhoods and the Crow River corridor, the City of Rockford is void of significant tree massings. Wooded and natural areas provide a unique character and highly desirable amenity for both residential and recreational development. Therefore, efforts should be made to preserve existing vegetation wherever possible.

To this end, the City has adopted tree preservation requirements as part of its subdivision review process. Developers are required to identify trees of a defined caliper width or larger and indicate efforts to preserve these trees to the extent possible. Trees designated for preservation must be maintained and protected during construction. Additionally, the City requires tree planting within all new residential subdivisions.

## **WETLANDS**

The Wetland Conservation Act of 1991 regulates all types of wetland areas within the state. The City must comply with these state regulations in an effort to preserve the vital role of wetlands in the area's ecological system. The City of Rockford has determined that it will serve as the local governmental unit which administers the provisions of the Wetland Conservation Act of 1991. This requires that all proposed impacts to any wetlands within the City must be reviewed to determine compliance with state regulations and mitigation requirements.

In addition to local and state wetland regulations, wetlands within Rockford are also regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is responsible for enforcement of federal wetland provisions. Permits are issued by the Corps for any activity which impacts federally protected wetlands. The City must closely coordinate its permitting activities with the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that all development proposals are obtaining the necessary permits.

The City has adopted additional wetland protection regulations within its Zoning Ordinance to preserve and enhance wetlands. These regulations require establishment of vegetative buffers and minimum building setbacks from delineated wetland boundaries to minimize human encroachment into environmentally sensitive areas.

## LAND USE

Based on the foundation established by the Goals and Policies chapter, this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan provides the primary guide for future growth and improvements related to land use in Rockford. The Future Land Use Plan is a narrative and graphic description for anticipated land uses within the City, as well as the background and rationale for how these designations are established. To this end, the Future Land Use Plan serves both an educational and decision making purpose to establish an understanding of how continued development in Rockford is to occur.

### BASIS OF THE PLAN

Although the emphasis of this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is on land use, the Future Land Use Plan is comprised of several interrelated elements, including the natural environment, land use, transportation and community facilities. To ensure the integration of these various components, the Future Land Use Plan must be derived from the primary function of City government, the established goals of Rockford and the following concepts:

- **Focus on Identity.** In order to enhance the identity of the City of Rockford, it is essential that efforts continue towards maintaining and enhancing the existing character of the City. At the core of Rockford's character is the CBD and surrounding neighborhoods. The more modern focus of contemporary development has been individual neighborhoods. Each existing neighborhood and those developed in the future should relate well within itself as well as to adjoining neighborhoods and the entire City of Rockford.

Residential development in the form of curvilinear, cluster-type neighborhood design is now preferred in place of a traditional block grid as this pattern increases privacy and safety. Curvilinear development patterns are based on a fundamental consideration for natural and man-made barriers, which organize neighborhoods and minimize through traffic. Finally, overall neighborhood orientation is to be established in terms of amenities and services as a focus for neighborhood activity. To this end, park land and open spaces within neighborhoods are often the primary focus while interconnectivity between neighborhoods is critical to create a larger sense of community.

- **Growth Management.** It is the City of Rockford's intent to welcome continued urban expansion provided that development is only allowed in an orderly and fiscally responsible manner. The concept of growth staging presents the primary strategy for managing urban growth within the City. While it is argued that growth staging arbitrarily constrains development and adversely impacts the economics of development, it can be clearly shown that haphazard and premature development can (and often does) result in severe economic consequences for local government. The basic philosophy underlying the

proposed concept of growth management is to avoid premature urban development that exceeds the City's service capabilities and to allow for compatible co-existence of urban and rural areas.

Growth management for Rockford involves the need to coordinate urban expansion with Rockford Township and Wright County to ensure orderly annexation of parcels for development and establishment of appropriate interim controls to ensure that any rural density development that occurs prior to urban expansion does not create physical barriers that lead to greater public and private expenses.

- **Local Employment Opportunities and Tax Base.** Rockford has actively promoted expansion of local employment opportunities and tax base with its development of the Millennium Industrial Park. Opportunities for additional commercial and industrial development continue to grow given planned improvements to regional transportation corridors and continued residential development.
- **Environmental Protection.** Environmentally sensitive development will preserve the health of Rockford citizens, attract a more diverse economic base and minimize the need for future public investments in clean up or beautification. It is the intent of these efforts to continue to promote high quality development within the City and simultaneously, minimize potential environmental impacts.
- **Land Use Compatibility.** The intensity of land uses should decrease as one moves away from an activity center, which may be applied specifically to the segment of TH 55 within the City. The high traffic volumes and visibility associated with TH 55 make or will make the areas adjacent to the corridors significant activity generators. With this in mind, it is important that a land use transition take place between the higher intensity commercial and industrial uses and lower intensity residential uses that form the second tier of development. As a means of maintaining the integrity of the residential neighborhoods, providing a population base for commercial activity, and providing an alternative housing type, medium and high density residential development should surround the City's commercial core within the CBD and along TH 55.

Design industrial areas which allow for a variety of lot sizes and building arrangements

Light industry and business campus development

Utilize a positive transition of compatible land uses between commercial development and residential neighborhoods

Heavy industrial uses

Infill existing areas with new development

Major transportation facilities

Medium density residential

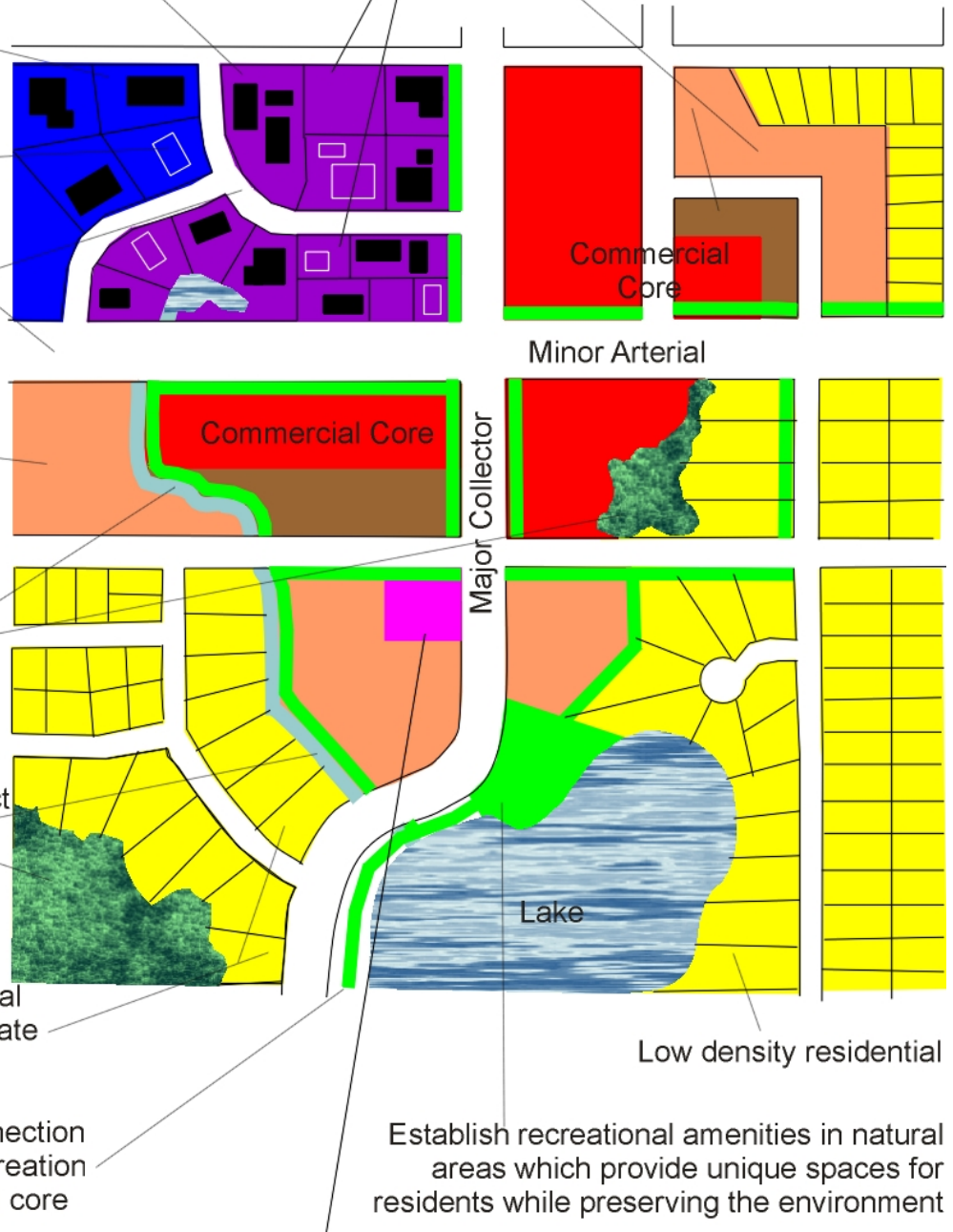
Natural features can provide excellent buffers between varying land uses

Transition to curvilinear street patterns to respect natural features

Utilize large lot platting along natural features and integrate recreational facilities where appropriate

Provide pedestrian connection from residential and recreation areas to the commercial core

Community Facilities



- **Land Uses to Functional Street Classification.** Functional classification refers to the function each roadway should perform before determining street widths, speed limits, intersection control or other design features. The design and access needed for a specific roadway should be dependent upon adjacent land uses, projected traffic volumes, street configuration and right-of-way acquisition.

## PROJECTIONS

### Household and Population

According to City building permit data, 454 new homes have been constructed in the City during the period between 1993 and 2004, or 38 new homes per year. This information is used together with U.S. Census data to project future population growth for Rockford.

City of Rockford Projected Population 2003-2020					
	1990	2000	2005	2010	2020
Households	980	1,296	1,496	1,700	2,100
H.H. Size	2.72	2.69	2.68	2.67	2.67
Population	2,665	3,484	4,009	4,539	5,607
Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000 Northwest Associated Consultants, Inc.					

Assuming a conservative average annual increase of 40 new homes per year, Rockford's population will increase to 5,607 persons by 2020. Based on recent development activity and favorable economic conditions, this population projection is viewed as highly conservative.

### Residential Land Absorption

The household projections may be translated into land absorption projections over the same period from 2005 to 2020 to estimate likely demand for developable parcels. Based on an estimate of 40 new dwelling units per year, the City may absorb an additional 218 acres of land for residential uses by 2020. Again, this projection is likely very conservative given the recent increases in development activity and continued favorable economic conditions. To account for these factors, an overage estimate has also been shown that increases project land absorption by 50 percent.

<b>City of Rockford Projected Land Absorption 2005 - 2020</b>				
	2005 to 2010	2010 to 2020	<b>Total</b>	Total + Overage
New Households	204	400	<b>604</b>	906
Est. Density	2.75	2.75	<b>2.75</b>	2.75
Land Absorption	73 ac.	145 ac.	<b>218 ac.</b>	329 ac.
Source: Northwest Associated Consultants, Inc.				

## Commercial and Industrial Land Demand

Future commercial and industrial development cannot be realistically projected based on the uncertainty of many of the elements involved that are beyond the City's control. In recognition of the need to expand the City's commercial and industrial tax base, the following factors will have a major influence on future commercial and industrial development in the City.

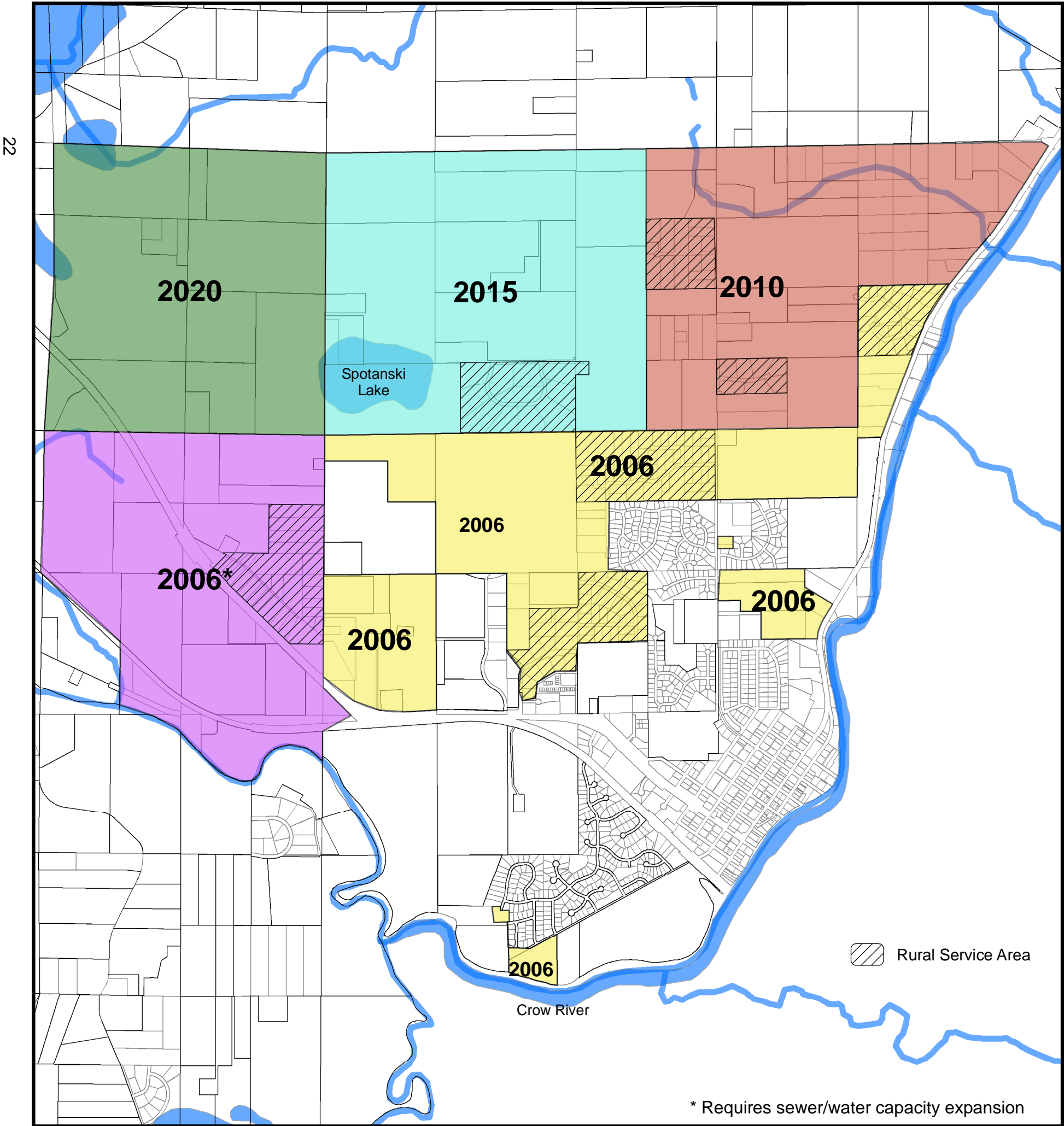
- Adequate land supply.
- Availability of municipal sewer and water.
- Planned improvements to TH 55.
- Increased population in Rockford and surrounding areas.
- Regional and national economic factors.

## GROWTH STAGING PLAN

Recognizing that the City's land absorption and population projections cannot be considered 100 percent accurate, it is important that the community take steps to protect its investment in its municipal sanitary sewer and water systems and avoid the unfair influence of property values. By delineating urban service areas and urban service expansion areas, future development may be guided in a manner that does not prematurely open new areas for development and allow a continuation of rural uses in areas so designated either on an interim or permanent basis. Given that supply of land for additional development is dependent upon annexation of territory from Rockford Township, such staging areas take on greater importance for the City.

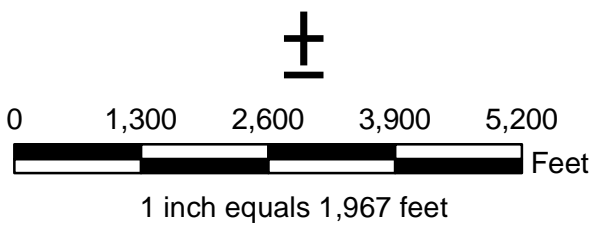
The delineation of the Rockford planning area into urban service and urban service expansion areas is based on a number of factors, including land absorption projections, potential sewer and water serviceability, existing land use, and physical barriers. The service area designations are described below.

# City of Rockford Growth Staging Plan



## Growth Staging Plan

Phase	Gross Acres	Net Acres
2005-2010	831	513
2005-2015	663	464
2010-2015	646	366
2015-2020	542	461
2020-2025	504	472
+2025	983	863



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Source: Wright County, Hennepin County, Minnesota DNR,  
Northwest Associated Consultants, Inc. April, 2006.



- **Urban Service Area.** This district identifies lands to which sanitary sewer and water service is to be made immediately available and is comprised of land within the current boundaries of the City of Rockford and extra territorial areas. According to the City Engineer, there is adequate sanitary sewer treatment and water system capacity to service the Urban Service Area. Those parcels included in the designated Urban Service Area are not guaranteed access to sanitary sewer and water utilities, which is only to be allocated to developments with approved preliminary and final plats and executed development contracts providing for payment to receive utility services.
- **Urban Service Expansion Area.** The Urban Service Expansion Area graphically defines areas of the City where the Urban Service Area may be expanded in the future. Urban expansion into the Urban Service Expansion Area likely will trigger facilities expansions for both the sanitary sewer treatment plant and water system based on the City Engineer's estimates.

Five year staging areas have been designated for the Urban Service Expansion Area for planning purposes based on anticipated demand, feasibility of extending sanitary sewer and water utilities and available capacities. Actual expansion of the Urban Service Area to include parcels currently within the Urban Service Expansion Area will be dependent upon annexation, available sanitary sewer and water capacities, market demands and satisfaction of each of the following criteria:

1. Land to be included in the urban service area is not enrolled in an agricultural preservation program.
2. The land lies within one-quarter mile of the existing urban service area boundary or presents environmental problems that can be alleviated by the delivery of City water and sewer service.
3. There is adequate sanitary sewer and water capacity for the to serve the parcel for the land use guided by the Future Land Use Plan and the development is not otherwise defined as a premature subdivision as regulated by the City's Subdivision Ordinance.
4. The developer and/or benefiting property owners assume responsibility for the improvement and service costs.

Within the designated Urban Service Expansion Area, the division of existing large tracts of land into residential lots less than 20 acres in area should be discouraged as an interim use prior to extension of sanitary sewer and water utilities allowing for urban density development. Alternatively, the City should work with Rockford Township to establish a rural transition zone that allows for interim development to occur based upon clustered subdivision designs intended

to preserve the majority of a parcel for future urban development. The desired results of this approach are to maintain orderly community growth, discourage competition for sanitary sewer hook ups necessary to finance the cost of the utilities and prevent leap frog development.

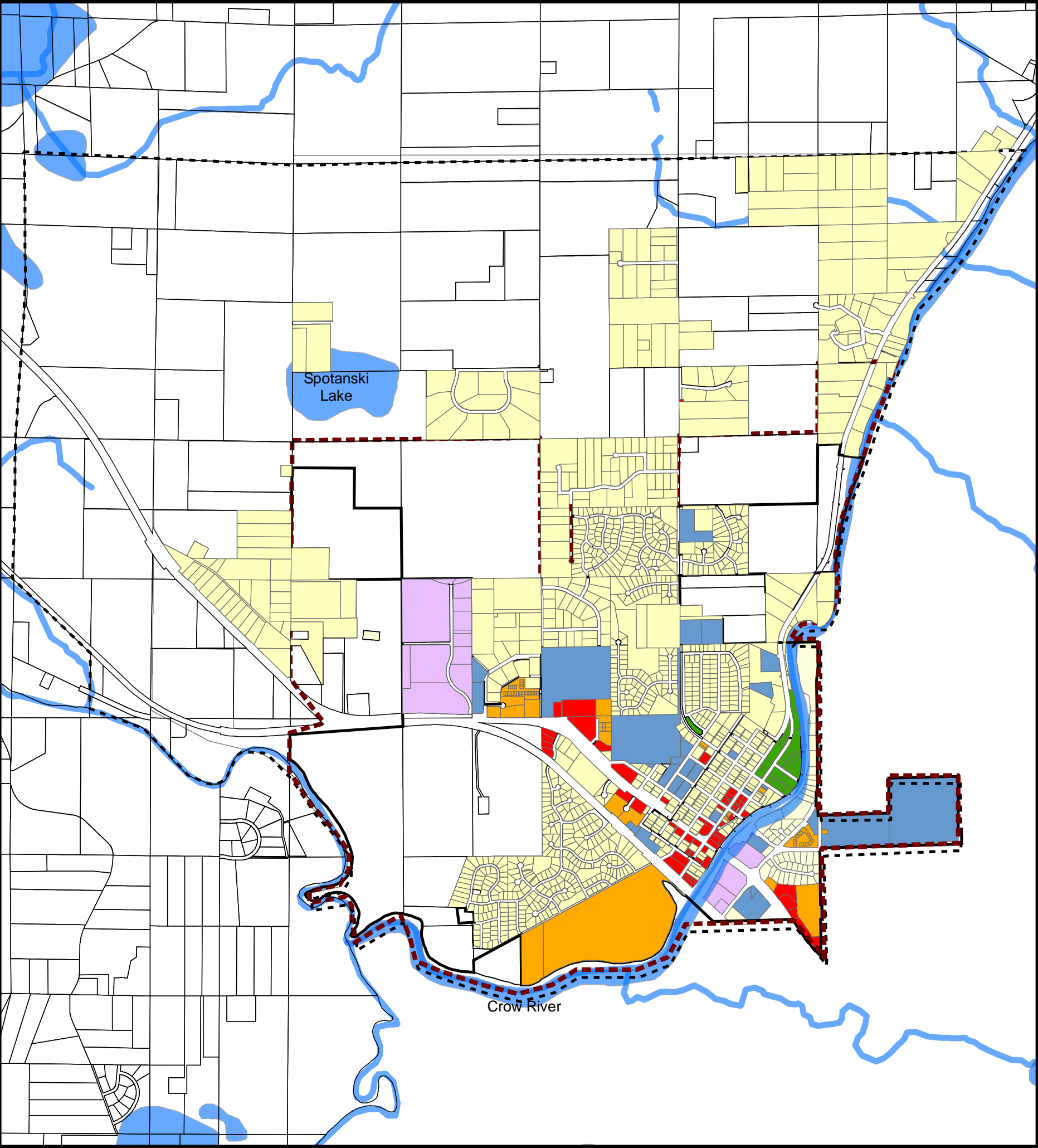
## Existing Land Use

The table below highlights existing land use within the current boundaries of the City of Rockford and the extra-territorial planning area designated as Urban Service Expansion Area:












<b>City of Rockford / Extra Territory Area 2004 Existing Land Use</b>				
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acreage Within City Boundaries</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Acreage Within USEA</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Single Family Residential	370 ac.	38.0%	1,223 ac.	29.8%
Townhouse and Multiple Family Residential	137 ac.	14.1%	137 ac.	3.1%
Commercial	38 ac.	3.9%	38 ac.	0.9%
Industrial	105 ac.	10.8%	105 ac.	2.1%
Institutional	138 ac.	14.2%	158 ac.	3.9%
Park/Open Space	18 ac.	1.9%	18 ac.	0.4%
Undeveloped	16 ac.	1.6%	2,451 ac.	59.8%
Right-of-Way	151 ac.	15.6%		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>973 ac.</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,130 ac.</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Source: Northwest Associated Consultants, Inc.				

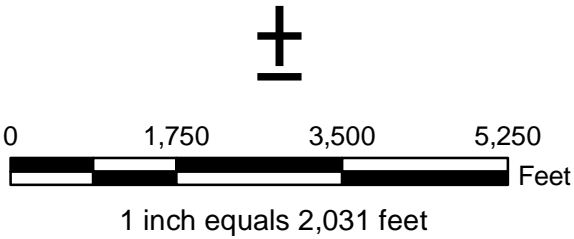
# City of Rockford

## Existing Land Use Plan



### Existing Land Use

- |   |               |   |                              |
|---|---------------|---|------------------------------|
|  | Interim Rural |  | CBD Boundary                 |
|  | Residential   |  | City Limits                  |
|  | Multi Family  |  | Urban Service Area           |
|  | Institutional |  | Urban Service Expansion Area |
|  | Commercial    |   |                              |
|  | Industrial    |   |                              |
|  | Park          |   |                              |



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Source: Wright County, Hennepin County, Minnesota DNR,  
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## **FUTURE LAND USE**

The Land Use Plan, consisting of a map and narrative text, provides a description of desired locations for future land uses within the City. The Future Land Use Plan is intended to serve as a guide to the private sector in planning potential developments and for City officials in assessing development requests and how they relate to the community's vision for an area of the City. In the sections that follow, specific categories of rural, residential, commercial and industrial land uses are described and depicted graphically.

### **Residential Uses**

Residential land uses are and will remain the predominant urban land use within the City of Rockford. The City's goals and policies promote continued development of a diversified housing stock that is accessible to a wide range of residents based on household need and incomes. The following paragraphs outline the City's direction for future residential growth:

- **Life Cycle Housing.** The City has recognized the need to offer a choice of housing options to supplement single family dwellings for the life cycle needs of its population. Multiple family dwelling units and townhouses usually provide the least expensive housing type, where young people can begin saving for purchase of their own home. As families are started, spatial needs may outgrow that provided by higher density dwelling units. Larger townhouses and small single family dwellings provide affordable first homes for the young family where pride in ownership is established and equity can be built. As the family grows to its ultimate size, space needs increase again and a larger move-up single family home fulfills these needs. When children grow older and leave home, space needs are reduced and large houses may become under-utilized. At this point, the parents may find it desirable to move to a smaller house, or to a townhouse where maintenance is taken care of for them. Eventually, the elderly couple may desire to move into a multiple family dwelling unit again or to some type of elderly multiple family residences.

**Housing Diversity.** The majority of Rockford's existing housing stock consists of single family dwellings, which according to the 2000 Census are 48.1 percent of the dwelling units within the City. Furthermore, 33.5 percent of the existing housing stock is manufactured housing unit and 18.4 percent is comprised of twin homes, townhouses or multiple family units.

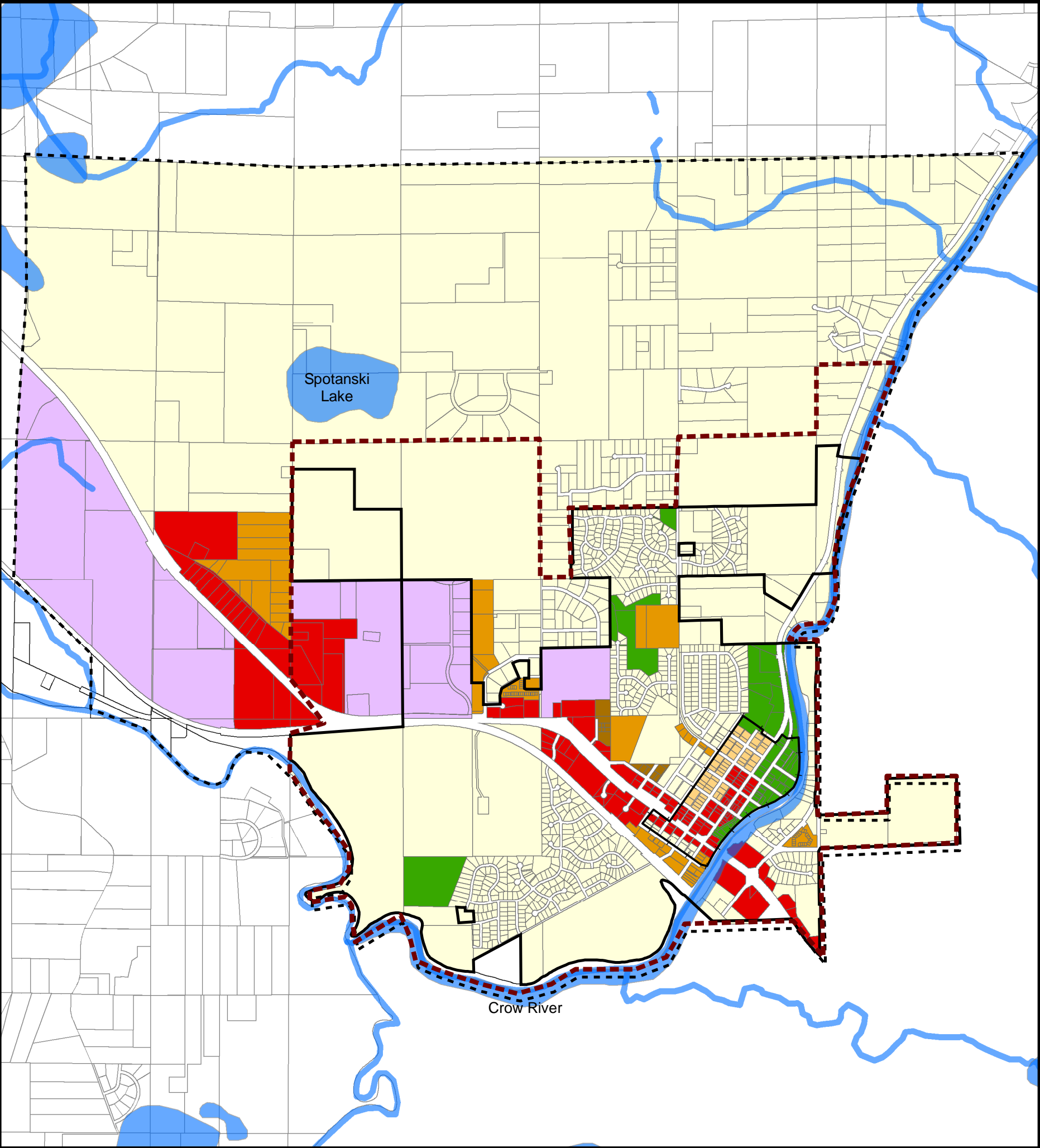
Recently, the number of townhouse dwellings proposed to be developed within the Urban Service Area raises concern as to the balance of the overall housing supply within the City and the long term sustainability of homeowners associations regarding property and building maintenance within townhouse developments. The recent prevalence of townhouse development in the City is due to site specific or location factors.

The City emphasizes that single family detached dwellings are to be the primary dwelling unit type to occur within Rockford through continued implementation of the Future Land Use Plan. The City will continue to monitor the supply of housing types within the City and will continue to review development proposals involving townhouse or multiple family dwelling types for areas designated for low density land use on an individual basis provided that overall density limits are not exceeded.













- **Housing/Property Maintenance.** According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 45.8 percent of the City's existing housing has been constructed since 1990, with 1987 being the median year of construction. As such, the majority of existing housing constructed within the City is relatively new and in very good condition. Older areas of Rockford likely have more mature housing stock that requires additional maintenance. Housing maintenance efforts serve to protect neighborhood integrity and property values. Initiatives that the City may consider implementing to encourage on-going maintenance include providing information on home improvement loans, hosting a home remodeling fair, point-of-sale inspections and identification of problem sites for targeted code enforcement efforts. The City is considering adoption of a rental housing code.
- **Affordable Housing.** The need to provide housing options for all segments of the population regardless of income is a life-cycle and work force issue recognized by the City of Rockford in relation. Information on the existing supply of owner-occupied housing within the City indicates that a majority of these properties meet established regional affordability guidelines based on a median value of \$107,000.00, even accounting for inflation since the data was collected. The City will continue to stress the need for affordable housing options while emphasizing diversity in available housing type and density, by promoting maintenance of the existing housing stock, and private sector development efforts. However, the greatest need for more housing options within the City currently is in the higher value brackets of the market.
- **Low Density Residential Uses.** Within the Urban Service Area, low density residential uses (one to less than 2.5 dwelling units per acre) will continue to be the predominate urban land use within Rockford. The areas guided for low density residential land uses on the Future Land Use Plan map reflect expansion outward from existing neighborhoods and logical extension of utilities and streets based on the land absorption projections outlined in previous sections. Immediate attention should be given to the infill of the sanitary sewer service districts along established service lines and transportation corridors and existing vacant home sites in established neighborhoods prior to further expansion of the Urban Service Area.

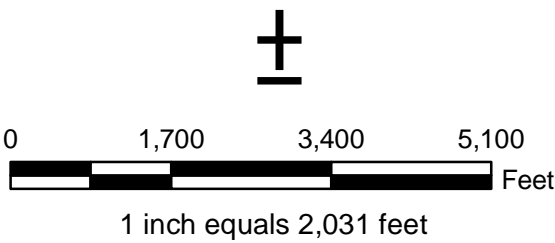
# City of Rockford Future Land Use Plan

28



## Future Land Use

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Interim Rural     |  CBD Boundary                 |
|  LD Residential    |  City Limits                  |
|  LD/MD Residential |  Urban Service Area           |
|  MD Residential    |  Urban Service Expansion Area |
|  HD Residential    |  |
|  Commercial        |  |
|  Industrial        |  |
|  Park/Open Space   |  |



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The City's intent is that these low density residential areas will develop primarily with single family dwellings on urban R-1 District lots. The City may allow at its discretion development of less intense twinhome or townhouses having not more than two common walls per dwelling unit on a case-by-case basis. Factors to be considered in evaluating development proposals for areas guided for low density residential uses include the type and mix of housing in the immediate area, the balance of housing in the community at the time of the proposal, the proximity of environmentally sensitive areas, the design quality of the proposed development and the proposed dwelling units, capacity of streets serving the area and the impact of the proposed development to the City's service capabilities.

- **Medium and High Density Residential Uses.** Medium density residential land uses typically consist of townhouses with three to eight dwellings per building ranging in density from five to eight dwelling units per acre. High density land uses, defined as more than nine units per acre, would include multiple family dwellings and more dense townhouse developments.

Concerns have been noted about these developments related to land use compatibility, housing value, property and building maintenance, traffic generation and functional site design. In recognizing these issues, the City will implement the following strategies for development of areas guided for medium density and high density residential land use:

1. Townhouses constructed in areas guided for medium density residential land use shall be limited to not more than two common walls per dwelling unit to encourage development of horizontally oriented, low-mass buildings.
2. Townhouse and multiple family developments are to be dispersed throughout the City to avoid concentration at any single location. Furthermore, townhouse and multiple family developments are encouraged to limit the concentration of any single building type or design within a given project to minimize the scale of the development and provide greater visual diversity.
3. Townhouse and multiple family dwellings are encouraged to develop in areas adjacent to commercial or industrial uses to provide market and employee support. Integrating commercial and residential land uses through innovative urban design is an opportunity encouraged by the Comprehensive Plan.
4. A secondary function of these locations is to provide for a transition between commercial, industrial and higher function streets and low density residential neighborhoods.

5. Townhouse and multiple family developments are to have access to collector or arterial streets to reduce traffic entering low density residential neighborhoods.
6. The City will establish performance standards to provide for townhouse or multiple family developments related to setbacks and required screening and landscaping to address compatibility with adjacent low density residential neighborhoods.
7. The City will establish uniform performance standards for townhouse and multiple family developments intended to replace the current PUD based process as the standard regulatory approach to these types of land uses to address the following building and site design elements:
  - a. Provision of aesthetically pleasing exterior treatments constructed of durable, low maintenance materials.
  - b. Establishment of minimum building design requirements such as floor areas and garage to ensure functional dwelling units.
  - c. Promote quality site design by establishing requirements for vehicle and pedestrian access, building setbacks, guest parking, open space and landscaping.
  - d. Require establishment of a homeowners association with adequate rules and financial standards to ensure on-going site and building maintenance.
  - e. Use of a PUD based development approach will remain as an option to accommodate projects exhibiting unique elements that exceed basic site and/or building design expectations.

Medium and high density residential uses should also be located in close proximity to the Central Business District or other commercial areas to take full advantage of the services/amenities in these areas. In addition, higher density housing developments help provide the needed customer base for commercial land uses. Higher density residential uses should also be considered as part of potential "mixed use" development in response to the changing role of the City's CBD. By definition, a mixed use development is a tract of land or structure with two or more different uses such as, but not limited to, residential, office, retail or entertainment in a compact urban form.

- **Manufactured Housing.** Manufactured housing constitutes a significant portion of housing in Rockford based on 2000 U.S. Census data indicating that these dwellings represent 33.5 percent of the City's housing supply. The availability of owner-type housing for low and moderate income households is to be



encouraged within the City. However, it is also City policy to discourage an over-balanced supply of one type of housing, to discourage an over-supply of one level of housing cost, and to discourage physical concentrations of a specific housing type. Considering manufactured homes already constitute a significant percentage of Rockford's current housing supply, the allowance of new or expansion of existing manufactured home developments is contrary to these established policies and is to be discouraged.

## **Commercial Uses**

As noted in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, contemporary commercial development along TH 55 has detracted from Rockford's CBD. If the City plans to preserve the CBD as a commercial center, there are certain strategies that can be undertaken to escalate the area's drawing power.

As retail commercial business continues to concentrate along Highway 55, the CBD will continue to experience a decline in customer business. One way the City is attempting to keep the CBD a vital part of the community is to modify it to become a self supporting area outside of the commercial development oriented toward the TH 55. The City has encouraged location of service and entertainment uses within the CBD that are more destination businesses. The City has also focused on making the CBD a civic focus for Rockford anchored by City Hall (with possible expansion plans) and library. The City also would like to undertake streetscape improvements to beautify the area. To reinforce the CBD as an independent business center, the City may wish to further confine its boundaries and encourage multiple family residential uses in the area. The appropriateness of single family housing within the central core area is questioned due to compatibility concerns.

Continued residential growth in Rockford will likely result in a need for additional goods and services business locations. The need for additional commercial goods and services in Rockford is tempered somewhat by the bedroom character of the City and larger more established commercial areas in Plymouth and Buffalo. In recognition of its visibility and accessibility, future commercial development in the City will likely be attracted to the TH 55 corridor.

Existing commercial development along the TH 55 corridor has historically occurred in a piecemeal fashion without comprehensive site planning. To enhance the area's commercial attractiveness and improve area circulation, it is recommended that a frontage road system plan be developed. The plan should recognize both existing commercial development along the corridor as well as that anticipated in the future. This issue is discussed further in the transportation related section of the Comprehensive Plan.

With TH 55 also acting as the "gateway" to the City, it is important that commercial development maintain a high standard of quality. The highway commercial center should feature unified building standards, attractive landscaping, environmental beautification and controlled parking, loading and service. The City should plan now to allow for the market potential that will occur in the future and implement commercial land use policies and guidelines as the future market warrants.

## **Industrial Uses**

Industrial development in Rockford comprises only 10.8 percent of the City's existing land area. Existing industrial development is concentrated along TH 55 near its intersection with CSAH 50 as well as the successful Millennium Industrial Park developed by the City through various economic development incentives. Future planning for industrial expansion areas and the need for more land is as a high priority for the City.

In response to this desire to increase development, the Future Land Use Plan has identified areas of general industrial development. The selection of these areas was based on existing and forthcoming industrial operations, as well as the following considerations.

1. Industrial sites should be reasonably level and offer a site area that is capable of accommodating industrial buildings and required ancillary activities (i.e., parking, shipping and receiving, outdoor storage, etc.).
2. Sites should be well drained and capable of bearing heavy loads and be outside of the floodplain.
3. The sites should have proper access and take advantage of available community transportation facilities such as highways or railroads.
4. The site should be protected from residential encroachment or incompatible industrial neighbors.
5. The industrial area should allow for further future industrial expansion.

By analyzing the aforementioned criteria and appreciating a variation in industrial use types, the area to the west of the Millennium Industrial Park is deemed appropriate for industrial use so as to fully exploit inherent visibility and access opportunities (highway and railroad) provided from TH 55.

## **PARKS AND TRAILS**

The purpose of the Park and Trail chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is to develop a coordinated program for acquisition and development of facilities within Rockford based on existing and projected community needs. The Park and Trail Plan is an integral component of the Comprehensive Plan, especially in relation to implementation of the Future Land Use Plan.

It is anticipated that park and trail facilities will be acquired and developed along with the continued growth. Rockford's future development pattern is founded in the concept of interconnected neighborhoods and amenities such as parks and open spaces intended to provide focus and identity. Trails serve to connect these individual neighborhoods to adjacent neighborhoods and other City centers. Furthermore, development of the parks and trails system is a public facility issue involving delivery of high-quality, cost effective services.

### **PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM**

Rockford's existing and future park and trail system is comprised of a variety of sites and facilities that are defined according to use, size, and facility development. The classification of park facilities assists in planning a comprehensive system that responds to Rockford's needs, existing and planned land use patterns and densities and the physical character of the City.

The classifications established for the Rockford park and trail system are based on nationally recognized park characteristics with modifications intended to reflect local needs and conditions. It is a tool to guide City decision makers in determining park locations, area and facilities. Specific standards and criteria are recommended for each type of park facility, although some flexibility may be anticipated based on specific circumstances that may arise.

### **City Parks**

City parks are defined as the largest and most comprehensive facilities within the Rockford's overall park and trail system, differentiating them from neighborhood parks. City parks should have a minimum area of 25 acres with facilities intended to be used by the entire Rockford area. The location of City parks should capitalize on areas of high natural amenity such as rivers, forested areas, watercourses, etc. that appeal to larger groups and provide for community access. Facilities within City parks are to be developed to accommodate large crowds and special events such as a community festival or holidays. Activities typically include walking, picnicking (family and large groups), passive and organized sports and community events.

- **Service Area:** City wide
- **Per Capita Standard:** 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 population
- **Desirable Area:** 25 acres minimum / 50 to 100 acres desired
- **Primary Function:** Extensive area for City-wide use that may provide active, passive, educational, cultural, or programmed functions for all age groups.
- **Typical Facilities:** Multiple Use Trails  
Volleyball, horseshoes, softball, court games  
Play structures  
Picnic facilities  
Scenic views.  
Fishing.  
Restrooms/parking/signage/trash collection

## **Playfields**

Playfields are targeted towards organized adult and youth play on a city-wide basis. These facilities should respond to needs for softball fields, baseball fields, soccer/football fields, multiple tennis courts, swimming pools, and ice sheets. Site lighting and irrigation are likely required to allow for extended hours required for team competition. Playfields serve populations up to 25,000 persons. However, the facility design is related primarily to the needs of user organizations. Joint use of facilities with elementary, middle or high school facilities can be considered where schedules and maintenance requirements agree. The majority of the users for these facilities will come from beyond walking distance making adequate access from collector or arterial streets, off-street parking and convenience facilities important.

- **Service Area:** City-wide
- **Per Capita Standard:** 2.0 to 2.5 acres per 1,000 population
- **Desirable Area:** 20 acre minimum / 30 acres desired
- **Primary Function:** Participants in athletic activities that may be organized or informal.
- **Locations:** Facilities must be located with access to collector or arterial streets on a relatively flat site. Proximity to school facilities may be desirable.
- **Typical Facilities:** Baseball  
Softball

- Soccer
- Football
- Tennis
- Hockey/Free Skating
- Swimming pools
- Play structures
- Spectator seating
- Picnic facilities
- Trail connections
- Off-street parking
- Restrooms/concessions
- Storage facilities

## Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are the fundamental building blocks of Rockford's park and trail system and the focus for individual neighborhoods. Neighborhood parks are to be distributed through the City's residential areas and are intended to provide equal facilities and access. Optimum service areas for neighborhood parks should be within a one-quarter to one-half mile radius unobstructed by major roadways or physical barriers. The population served by individual parks should not exceed 5,000 persons.

Neighborhood parks should be five to 20 acres in area to allow for a mix of active and passive uses. Sites selected for neighborhood parks should possess physical features that accommodate basic recreational programming. In some cases, combined use of an elementary or middle school site should be considered to minimize duplication of facilities. Characteristics of neighborhood park sites include gently rolling to level terrain with well drained soils, partially wooded areas, a regular geometric shape and convenient street access and site visibility. Water features or wetlands are acceptable and may be desirable provided that soil or drainage conflicts are avoided.

- **Service Area:** One-quarter to one-half mile radius uninterrupted by physical barriers.
- **Per Capita Standard:** 2.5 to 3.5 developed acres per 1,000 persons
- **Desirable Area:** 5 to 20 acres with 5 to 10 acres of active use.
- **Primary Function:** The park is to provide informal neighborhood open space with provisions for active recreational uses that responds to neighborhood needs. Primary users will be children and families rather than organized athletic functions.

- **Locations:** Centrally located within a service area or defined neighborhood, the park may be adjacent to elementary or middle school facilities or other park elements. Primary access should occur by walking or bicycle and neighborhood parks should be connected to the community trail system. Secondary access should include street access and vehicle parking facilities. Adjacent land uses should be residential, school grounds, collector streets or community open space.  
  
Natural characteristics should include generally flat topography and soils compatible with facility development. Vegetation should be representative of the neighborhood with partially wooded sites preferred. Visibility should allow good sight lines into the parcel to encourage use and ensure security. Water features such as ponds, creeks, or wetland should be included only if they are compatible with the facility design and do not create safety issues.
- **Typical Facilities:** Informal softball/soccer fields  
Multiple Use Trails  
Volleyball, horseshoes, court games  
Play structures for varying ages.  
Picnic facilities  
Benches  
Skating (pleasure and hockey)  
Sledding  
Picnic shelter for larger sites / Picnic tables  
Restrooms  
Landscaping  
Trash collection  
Off-street parking (20 stall minimum)

### **Greenway Corridors/Conservancy Areas**

Park facilities within this designation are to accommodate varying types of trails within wide right-of-way or parcels and uses can include walking, biking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, hiking, and pleasure driving. Rockford should capitalize on the availability of natural resources for greenway corridors, such as the wetland and floodplain areas of the Parkwood development. Natural corridors such as creeks, drainageways, wooded areas or bluff lines can serve as greenways. Utility easements, rail rights-of-way, or parkways can also be designated.

Conservatory areas have the primary goal of preserving sensitive natural areas within the community. Large wetlands, creeks, drainageways, retention ponds, wildlife corridors, bluff lines or other unique environmental features should be preserved as a conservatory area. In general, conservatory areas should be acquired outside of the park dedication process or direct purchase such as tax forfeiture, direct dedication or drainage and utility easements. The principal objective of the greenway corridor and conservatory areas is to sufficiently preserve the resource such that trail uses can appreciate its character and natural qualities. No active recreational uses should occur within these areas.

- **Service Area:** City wide
- **Per Capita Standard:** Not applicable
- **Desirable Area:** Variable (minimum width 100 feet)
- **Primary Function:** Areas that provide for recreational walking, biking, cross country skiing in conjunction with wild life corridors, nature viewing, resource preservation, conservation or specific management activities consistent with the characteristics of a given area.
- **Locations:** Typically include natural or designated corridors such as utility or rail rights-of-way and parkway streets or natural features such as bluff lines vegetation stands, water features or other characteristics that provide opportunities for passive recreational use. Greenway corridors may provide secondary connections to neighborhood or community facilities, but are distinct from typical trail corridors by wide rights-of-way and use of facility amenities.
- **Typical Facilities:** Trails Pedestrian/bicycle access only  
Benches / Small picnic areas  
Interpretive/informational signage  
Access points / parking areas  
Scenic views

## Special Use Facilities

Facilities that provide special activities, unique built environments or single purpose events fit this classification. Development of these facilities should respond to distinct markets, demands or opportunities within Rockford.

- **Service Area:** City wide
- **Per Capita Standard:** Variable
- **Desirable Area:** Variable
- **Primary Function:** Areas intended for single-purpose recreation activities whose use requires a freestanding facility because of specific characteristics or incompatibility with other uses. Facilities typical of this designation include public and private uses such as golf courses, nature centers, conservatories, arboretums, gardens, ski areas or frisbee golf.
- **Locations:** Locations will be dictated by the use's specific need for unusual physical characteristics such as topography, water features, vegetation or soils; or those uses that must be buffered or kept independent of developed areas.

## FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

Development of individual parks and the overall park system will be guided by the following national standards:



PARK FACILITY STANDARDS						
Activity/Facility	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended Orientation	Number of Units Per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
Basketball	2,400-3,036 SF	Full Court: 46' – 50' x 84' with 5' unobstructed space on all sides  Half Court: 40' x 40'	Long axis north-south	Full Court: 1/city plus 1 per 5,000 or  Half Court: 1/city plus 1 per 2,000	¼ to ½ mile	Usually in school, recreation center, or church facility. Safe walking or bike access. Outdoor courts in neighborhood & community parks, plus active recreation areas in other park settings.
Ice Hockey	22,000 SF incl. support area plus parking	Rink 85' x 200' (minimum 85' x 185') additional 5,000 SF support area	Long axis north-south	Outdoor – 1/city plus 1/3,000	10-15 minutes travel time maximum	Best as part of multi-purpose neighborhood park
Free Skating	Minimum 20,000 SF	Varies	None	1/city plus 1 per ¾ to 1 mile radii	¾ - 1 mile	Usually in neighborhood park
Tennis	Minimum of 7,200 SF single court (2 acres for complex)	36' x 78' 12' clearance on both sides; 21' clearance on both sides	Long axis north-south	1 court per 2,000	¼ - ½ mile	Best in batteries of 2 or more. Located in neighborhood/community park or adjacent to school site.
Volleyball	Minimum of 2,000 SF	20' x 60' Minimum 6' clearance on all sides	Long axis north-south	1 court per 5,000	¼ - ½ mile	Same as other court activities (e.g., basketball, etc.)
Baseball 1 – Official  2 – Little League	Minimum 3.0-3.85 AC  Minimum 1.2 AC	- Base lines – 90' Pitching distance 60½' Foul lines min. 320' Center field 400'+ - Base lines – 60' Pitching distance 46' Foul lines 200' Center field 200'-250'	Locate home plate so pitcher throwing across sun & batter not facing it. Line from home plate through pitcher's mound run east-north-east.	1/city plus 1 per 6,000 plus lighted – 1 per 15,000	¼ - ½ mile	Lighted fields part of community complex
Field Hockey	Minimum 1.5 AC	180' x 300' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides	Fall season – long axis NW to SW. For long periods, north to south.	1 per 20,000	15 minutes travel time	Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school

PARK FACILITY STANDARDS						
Activity/Facility	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended Orientation	Number of Units Per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
Football	Minimum 1.5 AC	160' x 360' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides	Same as field hockey	1 per 20,000	15 minutes travel time	Same as field hockey
Soccer	1.7 to 2.1 AC	195' to 225' x 300' to 360' with a 10' min. clearance on all sides	Same as field hockey	1/city plus 1/3,500 people	1-2 miles	Number of units depends on popularity. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to schools or neighborhood parks
Softball	1.5 to 2.0 AC	Base lines 65' Pitching distance – 55' Min. 40' – women Fast pitch field radius from plate – 225' between foul lines Slow pitch– 275' (men) 250' (women)	Same as baseball	1/city plus 1 per 2,000	¼ - ½ mile	Sight difference in dimensions for 16" slow pitch. May also be sued for youth baseball
Multiple Rec. Court (basketball, volleyball, tennis)	10,000 SF	120' x 80'	Long axis of courts with primary use is north-south	1/city plus 1 per 2,000 (may include basketball, tennis, and multi-use)	¼ - ½ mile	Should be located in neighborhood parks
Archery Range	Minimum .65 AC	300' length x minimum 10' wide betw. targets. Roped clear space on sides of range min. of 30' clear space behind targets minimum of 90' x 45' with bunker	Archer facing north + or – 45 degrees	1 per 50,000	30 minutes travel time	Part of a regional/metro park complex or community special use facility
Par 3 (18 hole)	50-60 AC	Average length-vary 600-1,700 yards	Majority of holes on north-south axis	NA	15-30 minutes travel time	9 hole course can accommodate 350 people/day.
9 hole standard	Minimum 50 AC	Average length – 2,250 yards		1/25,000		18 hole course can accommodate 500-550 people a day.
18 hole standard	Minimum 110 AC	Average length – 6,500 yards		1/50,000		May be privately owned.

PARK FACILITY STANDARDS						
Activity/Facility	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended Orientation	Number of Units Per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
Golf Driving Range	13.5 AC for minimum of 25 tees	900' x 690' wide, add 12' width for each additional tee	Long axis south-west-northeast with golfer driving toward northeast	1 per 50,000	15-30 minutes travel time	Part of golf course complex. As a separate unit, may be privately operated.
Swimming Pools	Varies on size of pool & amenities. Usually ½ to 2 AC site.	Teaching – minimum of 25' x 45' even depth of 3-4 feet. Competitive-minimum of 25m x 16m. Minimum of 27 SF of water surface per swimmer. Ratios of 2:1 deck vs. water.	None – although care must be taken in siting of lifeguard stations in relation to afternoon sun.	1 per 20,000 (pools should accommodate 3-5% of total population at a time)	15-30 minutes travel time	Pools for general community use should be planned for teaching, competitive and recreational purposes with enough depth (3.4m) to accommodate 1m and 3m diving boards. Located in community park or school site.
Beach Areas	NA	Beach area should have 50 SF of land and 50 SF of water per user. Turnover rate is three. There should be 3-4 acres supporting land per acre of beach.	NA	NA	NA	Should have sand bottom with slope of maximum of 5% (flat preferable). Boating areas completely segregated from swimming areas.

Source: National Recreation and Parks Association, Barton-Aschman Associates Inc.

## **FUTURE PARK AND TRAIL PLAN**

This section provides an analysis of future park, trail and open space needs for the City of Rockford. These recommendations relate to park, trail and open space policies and classification standards outlined previously to the growth and land use expectations identified in the Land Use chapter. In analyzing future facility needs, consideration was given to the following factors:

- Comparison of growth against national park standards.
- Continued integration of school facilities within the City's park and trail system to avoid duplicate investment in park and recreation facilities.
- Continued improvement in trail system to improve access to City parks. This will serve to expand the service areas of existing facilities.
- Integrate the analysis of park needs with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan to identify park, trail and open space needs based on future land use, population growth and distribution, transportation planning, sewer service staging, and environmental protection.

### **Park Needs Based on National Standards**

Rockford has approximately 15 acres of park land. Rockford School District facilities that serve the Rockford also are critical in providing local recreational facilities supplementing the City's community park and neighborhood park system.

Usable, active park area is reduced in most parks due to a variety of constraints and Rockford is no exception. The effective, usable area in virtually all of the City's parks must take into consideration natural limitations including wetlands, drainage basins, steep slopes and wooded areas. These factors obviously contribute to park aesthetics and provide passive conservation areas for the community.

The table below lists per capita park acreage norms for active use purposes within a municipal park system. These standards indicate a range of park acreage for such active uses as ball fields, athletic facilities, play equipment, parking and similar developed uses. Passive or inactive conservation parcels are not considered by these standards and these respective use acreages should be subtracted from total areas before any comparisons are made.



<b>NRPA PER CAPITA PARK ACREAGE STANDARDS FOR ACTIVE USE PARCELS</b>	
	Acre/1,000 Population (minimum to desirable)
Mini-Park	0.25 - 0.5
Neighborhood Park	2.5 – 3.5
Athletic Field	2.0 – 2.5
Community Park	5.0 – 8.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.75 – 14.5</b>

Based on these standards, Rockford's overall existing park facilities for the current population of 4,009 people is adequate only if City and Rockford School District facilities are considered. Future park needs are outlined in the following table based upon the growth projections described in the Future Land Use Plan. The City will need to add additional neighborhood park facilities concurrent to continued development.

<b>FUTURE ACTIVE AREA RECOMMENDATIONS</b>					
	Community Parks	Community Playfields	Neighbor- hood Parks	Play Lots	Total Acres
Per Capita National Std. Acres/1,000 Population	5.0 – 8.0	2.0 – 2.5	2.5 – 3.5	0.5	
2005 Active Acreage Needs Population: 4,009	20.0- 32.1	8.0- 10.0	10.0- 14.0	2.0	40.0- 58.1
2010 Active Acreage Needs Population: 4,539	22.7- 36.3	9.1- 10.9	10.9- 15.9	2.3	45.0- 65.4
2020 Active Acreage Needs Population: 5,879	29.4- 47.0	11.8- 14.7	14.7- 20.6	2.9	58.8- 85.2

The City must prioritize acquisition of land for new neighborhood parks and consider expansion of Riverview park in terms of land and facilities as Rockford continues to grow.

## **Trails**

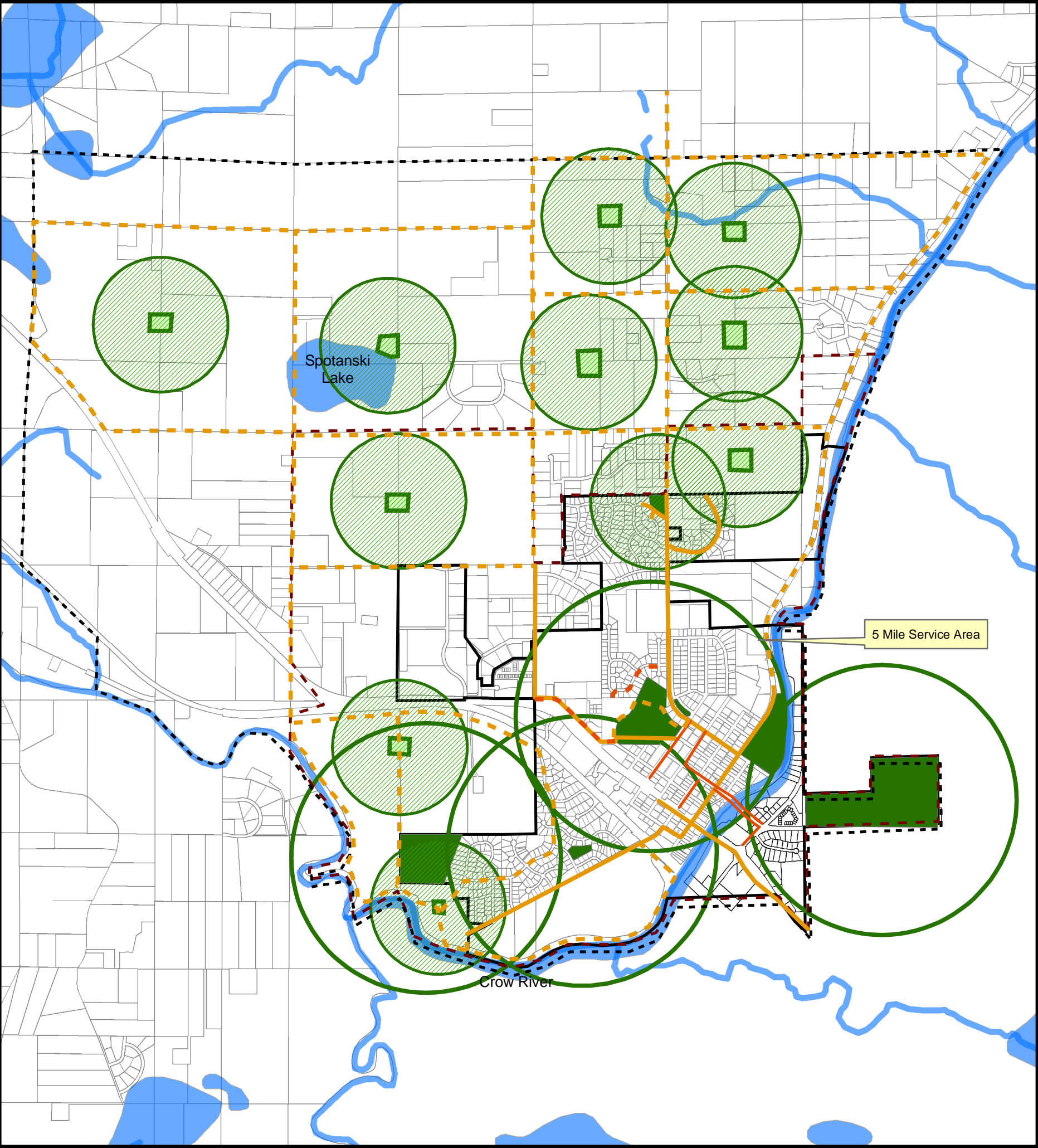
The trail plan is integral to both Rockford's transportation and park system, providing access to scenic and recreational areas of the area. The trail plan attempts to strike a balance between transportation and recreation objectives of the City and subsequently provides a plan for a comprehensive multiple purpose trail system. In addressing both the recreational and transportation aspects of the trail system, the following elements were considered:

1. Trails must be accessible to the users. Densely populated areas of the City should receive high priority when considering trail routes. Trail development in areas of greatest user demand achieves the best utilization of trail facilities and the highest return on the capital investment.
2. To encourage trail use, trails must be planned to connect important trail user destinations. Popular recreational and commuter destinations include major residential neighborhoods, school sites, park sites, shopping areas, park and ride sites, centers of employment, and civic events and activities.
3. Trail user protection is another important concern when determining the route and type of trail. To provide the utmost protection to the trail user, trails separated from the street corridor by boulevard are preferred whenever possible.
4. Trail rights-of-way will be acquired as part of the dedication process of a subdivision or included as streets are built or improved within the City right-of-way.
5. Establishment of trails in conjunction with park development can expand the service area of neighborhood parks through improved access making trail planning integral to future neighborhood park development.
6. Rockford's local trail system will be integrated with that of adjoining communities and the County trail systems to gain access to destinations beyond the City's boundaries.

## **Vision of the Future Park and Trail System**

The following map provides a vision of the City's future park, trails and open space plan. This graphic plan, in conjunction with City goals and policies, system recommendations, and the land use plan is intended to establish the framework for decision-making on future system improvements. No timeframe is established for implementation of the Future Park and Trail System Plan in that development of these facilities is anticipated to occur simultaneously with urban growth.

# City of Rockford Future Park and Trail System



**Parks**

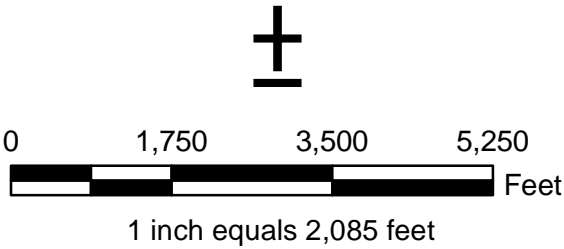
- Existing Parks
- Potential Future Parks

**Park Service Area**

- 1/4 Mile
- 1/2 Mile

**Trails**

- Existing Trail
- Future Trail
- Sidewalk
- Future Sidewalk
- Urban Service Area
- Urban Service Expansion Area
- Rockford City Limits



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Source: Wright County, Hennepin County, Minnesota DNR,  
Northwest Associated Consultants, Inc. Inventory  
Map Date: April, 2006

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The Transportation Plan provides for an integrated transportation system that is related to the land use patterns within the City and the surrounding region. Rockford's existing transportation system is functional but lacks key connections for efficient travel throughout the City. Continued expansion of construction of major and minor collector streets must accompany new development to ensure adequate access for new residents and businesses. The upgrade of TH 55 to four lanes within the City is on-going issue and is likely to impact development patterns along that corridor.

### **STREETS - FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM**

Functional classification refers to the purpose each roadway should serve as a means of determining street widths, speed limits, intersection control or other design features. Functional classifications are to be used in Rockford's street network as a comprehensive planning tool used to determine the design and relationship of local streets to other County and State roadways. The following table and map illustrates the general concept of the system.

The width needed for a specific roadway should be dependent upon projected traffic volumes, street configuration and right-of-way acquisition. Direct lot access to major collector and arterial streets is to be prohibited to avoid the problems created by vehicles waiting to turn into private driveways. Numerous access points from private business, as well as local streets, disrupt the flow of vehicles traveling at posted speeds along major collector and arterial streets. The City should update its development regulations to establish more comprehensive controls on intersection and access spacing in relation to the functional classification system. These spacing requirements must also take into consideration MNDOT and Wright County requirements.

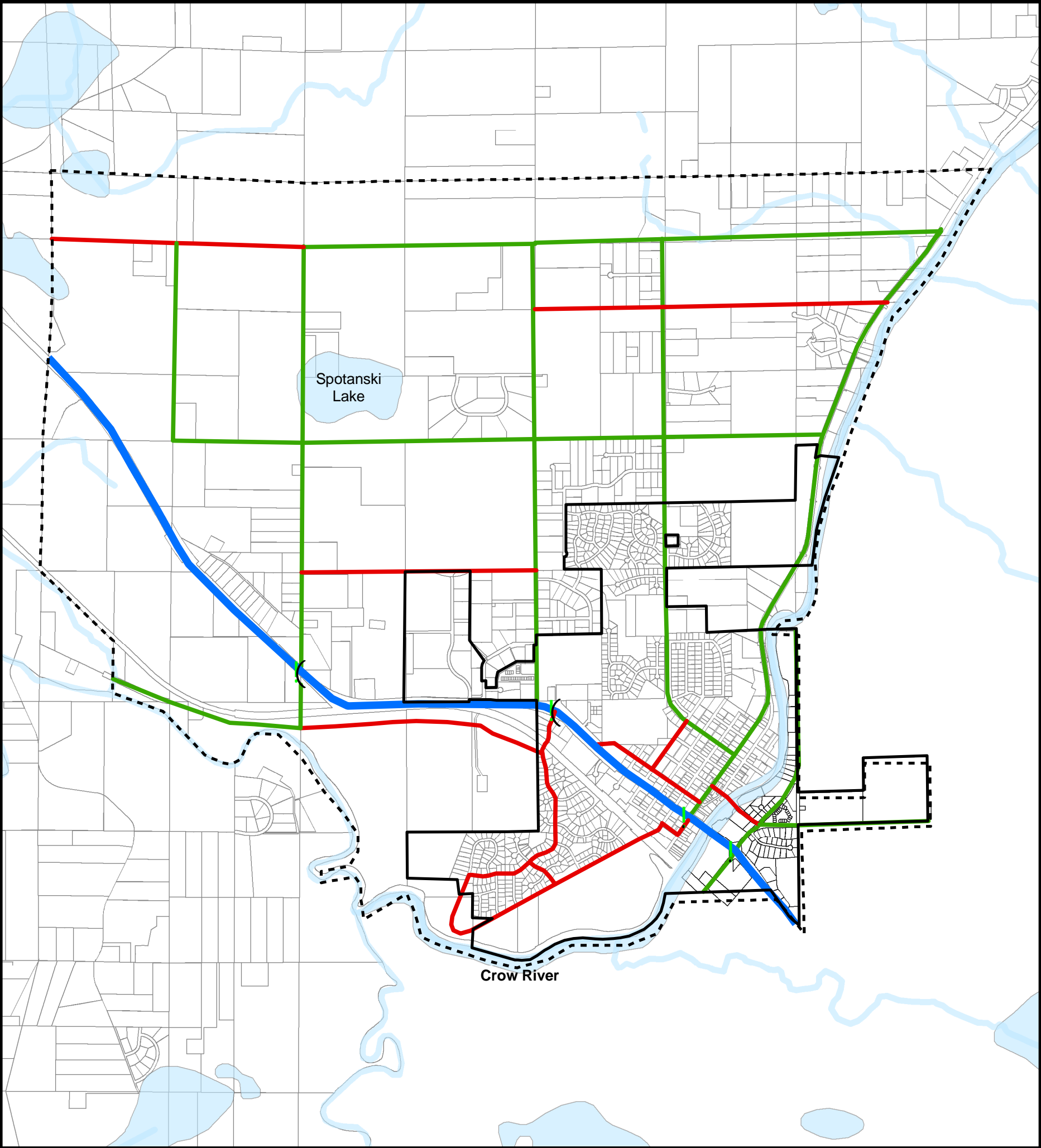
An additional concept that should also be considered within the City's developing transportation system is the establishment of a series of minor collector streets. These streets typically lie within the interior of large developing areas and are designed to assist in the overall movement of traffic within projected neighborhoods or districts. These streets may be defined as areas are developing to assist movement toward centralized access points along major collector or arterial roadways.



FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS					
Characteristic	Principal Arterial		Minor Arterial	Collector	Local Street
	Interstate Freeway	Other Principal Arterial			
System Mileage	Suggested federal upper limits for interstate and other principal arterials combined: urban 10%		Suggested federal limitations for principal arterials and minor arterials combined: urban 15-25%	Suggested federal limitations: urban 5-10%, rural 20-35%	Suggested federal limitations: urban 65-80%, rural 63-75%
Percent of Travel (VMT)	Suggested federal limitations for interstate freeways and other principal arterials combined: 40-65%		Suggested federal limitations for principal arterials and minor arterials combined: 65-80%	Suggested limitations: 5-10%	Suggested federal limitations: 10-30%
Intersection	Grade separated	Desirable; grade separated. Minimum: high capacity controlled at-grade intersections	Traffic signals and cross street stops	Four-way stops and some traffic signals; local street stops	As required
Parking	None	None	Restricted as necessary	Restricted as necessary	Restricted as necessary
Large Trucks	No restriction	No restriction	Restricted as necessary	Restricted as necessary	Restricted as necessary
Management Tools	Interchange spacing	Traffic signal progression, staging of reconstruction, intersection spacing	Traffic signal progression, land access management, preferential treatment for transit	Number of lanes, traffic signal timing, land access management	Intersection control, cul-de-sacs, diverters
Vehicles Carried	Urban: 25,000-150,000 Rural: 5,000-50,000	Urban: 15,000-100,000 Rural: 2,500-25,000	Urban: 5,000-30,000 Rural: 1,000-10,000	Urban: 1,000-15,000 Rural: 250-2,500	Urban: Less than 1,000 Rural: Less than 1,000
Posted Speed Limit	Urban: 45-55 Rural: Legal Limit	Urban: 40-50 Rural: Legal Limit	Urban: 30-45 Rural: Legal Limit	Urban: 30-40 Rural: 35-45	Urban: Maximum 30 Rural: Maximum 30
Right-of-Way	300 feet	100-300 feet	60-150 feet	60-100 feet	50-80 feet

# City of Rockford Transportation Plan

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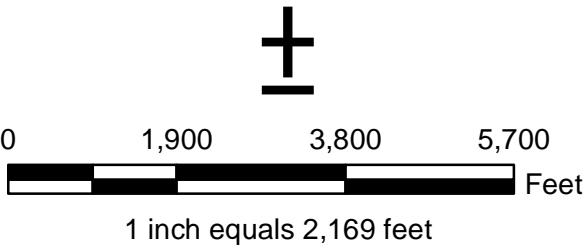


## Road Type

- Arterial Street
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Rockford City Limits
- Urban Service Expansion Area

## Traffic Signals

- Existing Signals
- Future Signals



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Map Date: April, 2006

## **Trunk Highway 55**

TH 55 is the only arterial street designated on the Rockford Transportation Plan and is the primary regional connection to and from the City. MNDOT has been planning a future upgrade of TH 55 between I-494 in Plymouth and Annandale as a four-lane highway due to increasing traffic volumes resulting from growth in Wright County. No timetable for improvement of TH 55 has been scheduled. The City of Rockford is engaged in planning for the expanded roadway as part of a coalition of local and regional jurisdictions along the corridor. The future expansion of TH 55 will likely effect in place businesses along the roadway, especially near the CBD given expanded right of-way needs. To this end, the City must remain active in all aspects of the project planning.

Consistent with the arterial classification of TH 55 and MNDOT restrictions, direct property access to TH 55 is limited. The City must continue efforts to develop frontage streets along both sides of the roadway. On the north side of TH 55, the frontage road is focused on existing Walnut Street between Haug Avenue and Main Street. On the south side, a frontage road system is more difficult due to fragmented properties and the CP Rail Road. A critical need for both sides of TH 55 is installation of a traffic signal at TH 55 and Autumn Oaks Drive to provide a second signalized crossing of TH 55 in addition to the existing controlled intersections at Main Street and CSAH 50.

## **Major Collector Streets**

County highways are the extent of current major collector streets within the City and include Wright County CSAH 33, CSAH 20, and CSAH 50 and Hennepin County CSAH 10 east of the Crow River. The limitation of these roadways to north-south routes inhibits access across the City and also serves to funnel significant volumes of traffic to congested intersections with TH 55. A critical need exists for the City to develop east-west major (and minor) collector street routes within the Long Range Urban Service Area as development occurs to more evenly distribute traffic and provide cross-City access.

Also critical is the need to upgrade Haug Avenue as a second north-south major collector street west of the Crow River and as a potential realignment of CSAH 33 to direct through traffic away from existing developed residential areas and the CBD. Haug Avenue is currently a rural gravel roadway over most of its length with shared jurisdiction between Rockford and Rockford Township over various segments. As development occurs along this corridor, necessary right-of-way must be acquired and improvement of the roadway planned to upgrade the street to extend to TH 55 at the planned intersection with Autumn Oaks Drive on the south side of TH 55. Gabler Avenue on the west line of the Long Range Urban Service Area will also serve a similar function as an improved Haug Avenue.

## **Minor Collector and Local Streets**

The City should concentrate on the extension of local streets in functional patterns as development continues. Future development within Rockford is expected to radiate outward from the current Urban Service Area. Internal local street connections between new subdivisions must be planned at not less than one-quarter mile intervals to ensure proper access and circulation off of collector and arterial streets.

As a means of reducing long term maintenance costs to the City, Rockford should continue to place a strong emphasis on quality street standard designs. Sidewalks have recently been adopted as a standard requirement along on side of all local streets to provide necessary pedestrian circulation. Minimum design standards for concrete construction and proper boulevard width are necessary to insure safety. The City continues implementation of a capital improvement program for the upgrade of existing local streets within older areas of Rockford to address roadways in poor condition.

Note must also be made of the alleys in older portions of Rockford. Although recent development trends promote use of alleys for property access, they add unnecessary costs at the time of development as well and maintenance and replacement costs for the City. As such, they should not be allowed in new residential subdivisions except as private driveways under limited circumstance. Limitation on the use of private drives is also appropriate to consider for townhouse developments to avoid their use as a substitute of public streets which is a public safety issue.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

No regular public transportation services are available within the City of Rockford. MNDOT has established a park and ride facility in the parking lot of the Rockford Mall. This park and ride provides a valuable service to the City given its commuter population. The City must monitor use of the park and ride facility and consider additional facilities if there is demand.

## **RAILROADS**

The Canadian Pacific Railroad operates a rail line that bisects the City over an east-west route generally parallel to TH 55. The railroad right-of-way is adjacent to agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial land uses. The frequency and speed of train trips per day along this rail is a compatibility issue for potential development occurring adjacent to the right-of-way.

The right-of-way also presents challenges in terms of access to areas of the City south of the railroad. Crossings of the railroad are limited to the grade separated overpass at Maple Street and the at-grade crossing at Autumn Oaks Drive. CP Rail will not allow any additional at grade crossings.

An opportunity exists that a third access to the area south of the railroad will be constructed by the developer of the Morely, Foss and Wagner properties located at the southwest corner of the City. Final plat approval for a residential subdivision in this area is conditioned upon the developer securing at their cost a new access across the CP Rail west of Autumn Oaks Drive either by extension of a public street to CR 115 beyond an existing at-grade crossing or by construction of a bridge over the rail line and extension of a street to CR 115 near TH 55 and Gabler Avenue.

## **AIRPORTS**

There are no airports within the City of Rockford. The closest full-service airport facilities to the City are Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport in Minneapolis. Small plane airport facilities also exist in the Cities of Buffalo and Maple Plain.