

SOUTHWEST ROCK ISLAND PLAN



prepared for:

**City of Rock Island, Illinois
Rock Island County, Illinois
Development Association of Rock Island**

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SUMMARY

Plans are only as valid as the visions which inspire them and the will to achieve them.



This Southwest Rock Island Plan embraces a bold vision for the future: one in which the Southwest Area becomes one of the most desirable places to live, work, and shop in the Quad Cities. It is a vision in which the area's scenic resources and country character are protected and where healthy growth in new patterns of residential, clean industrial, office, and retail development strengthens the City's economy. It is vision in which development and investment accelerates because of, not in spite of, higher expectations for the quality of development.

The vision presented in the Southwest Rock Island Plan will only be realized if the public will is sufficient to overcome inertia, change perceptions, raise expectations, and commit to a new era of public-private partnership. With broad community buy-in to the shared vision, and with sufficient public will to achieve it, the plan calls for action which if followed will accelerate positive change, with success building upon success.

Overview: The Nature of a Strategic Direction

The essence of the plan is a new **strategic direction** for the future of Southwest Rock Island. A strategic direction is composed of two elements: 1) a **direction** towards a shared vision and 2) a **strategy** defining what needs to be done to initiate change in the desired direction. Thus, a strategic direction suggests both new expectations for the future and new activities to help meet those expectations. The change prescribed by the Southwest Rock Island Plan is significant and will be an important test of the will of the Rock Island community to act boldly to achieve progress. In addressing the future of Southwest Rock Island, the community faces a choice:

- To continue the conventional policies of the past, with little reason to expect an improvement in the quantity or quality of growth, or
- To deliberately change direction with raised expectations, new standards for development quality, and bold new initiatives.

The purpose of the vision is to create the motivation to change attitudes, perceptions, and expectations regarding Southwest Rock Island. Once motivated by higher expectations for what can be achieved, the public will to act will follow. These higher expectations for quality growth in Southwest Rock Island can, in this way, become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Topping the list of changed perceptions must be to replace a “negative” (the preoccupation with the past lack of growth) with a “positive” – pride in the quality of life, scenic environment, and other attributes that make Southwest Rock Island unique within the Quad Cities.

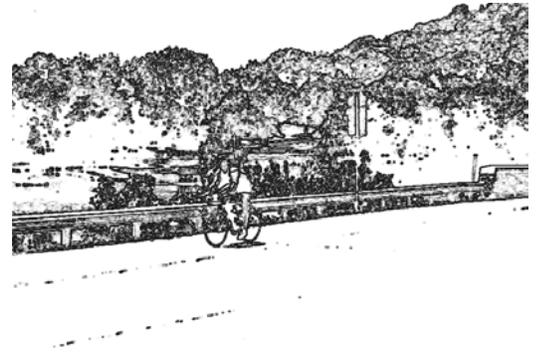
Likewise, the notion that Rock Island should seek to emulate the quantity and quality of development that has fueled the growth on the Iowa side of the Quad Cities must be replaced by a conviction that Southwest Rock Island is able to compete best by capitalizing on its own strengths. These strengths include, among others, its natural environment; its country, small town character; and its ability to accommodate development types that do not occur elsewhere in the Quad Cities. Building on these strengths, the plan seeks to raise standards of quality, encouraging only those forms of development that make a positive contribution to the character of Southwest Rock Island and reinforcing the perception that it is a desirable place to live, work and shop. Taking the opposite approach – lowering standards of quality to attract any type of development – would send the wrong message and further erode the area’s natural advantages.

Capturing Quality Growth

The direction set in the plan is initially twofold:

1. To achieve **population growth** through residential development tailored both to the unique character of Southwest Rock Island and to the opportunity to meet the housing needs of those who seek something other than the conventional suburban development; and
2. To accelerate **employment growth** with an emphasis on clean industry, technology, and quality office development.

There is a relationship between these two directions derived from the fact that locational decisions by corporations, as well as families, are increasingly driven by quality of life and community character preferences. By emphasizing community character and the quality of housing and neighborhoods, Southwest Rock Island can become the location of preference for many seeking more than conventional subdivisions. As new corporate executives, managers, and professionals discover the area, they will be inclined to locate their businesses here to take



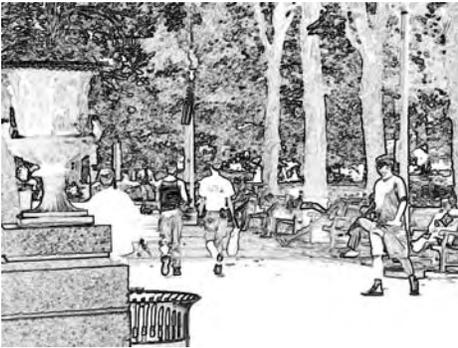
advantage of convenient regional access. Likewise, many of the well paid managers and skilled employees of these new businesses will recognize the advantages of living near work, in neighborhoods that offer a scenic character, quality schools, and abundant open space – a quality of life that is much more than what conventional suburban subdivisions have to offer elsewhere in the Quad Cities.



Although the plan also aims to accommodate new forms of retail development, this objective will only be achieved as population growth creates sufficient market demand to support retail growth.

Plan Initiatives

The vision for the future of Southwest Rock Island is presented in Chapter 3.0 of the plan. In support of this vision and the associated strategic direction to attract high quality residential, employment, (and eventually) retail growth, the plan proposes a series of initiatives, as follows.



The Future Land Use Plan presented in Chapter 4.0 specifies a **land use mix** comprised of new forms of residential growth tailored to the unique characteristics of the Southwest Area. This mix includes **conservation development** in the scenic rolling terrain to the west of Highland Springs Municipal Golf Course and **compact development** to the east, including townhouses, condominiums, and smaller lot single-family residences in a “village-like” atmosphere. Technology-oriented light industrial and corporate office development will extend along the Andalusia Road corridor, further reinforcing the local economy and tax base.

When population and employment growth reaches certain market thresholds, retail and other neighborhood-oriented uses will occur at selected locations in **mixed-use centers** to provide convenient access and to help shape community identity.



Development character will be enhanced through new guidelines for development quality and protection of unique natural features and scenic views. Summarized in Section 4.3 and presented in full in Appendix A, the conceptual design guidelines are intended not to increase the cost of development but rather to improve its character through basic site planning principles.

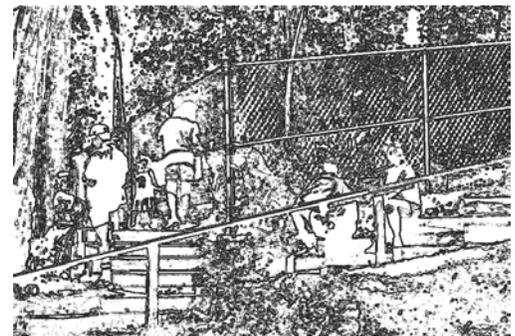
To support population growth attracted by an outstanding quality of life, **community facilities** in Southwest Rock Island must be second to none in the Quad Cities. Chapter 5.0



describes initiatives to enhance existing community facilities such as parks and the Southwest Branch Library and to develop new amenities, linked by greenway and trail corridors. The greenway corridors will be designed to retain wetlands, woodlands, and stream corridors and to create a **green network** that enhances quality of life and the distinctive character of Southwest Rock Island. Landscape improvements are proposed to key roadway corridors and “gateway” intersections to further enhance the identity of the area. As growth proceeds, further roadway improvements will enhance access and separate local and regional traffic, while water and sewer service will be provided to guide development into appropriate, cost-effective patterns.

To effectuate positive change the plan must not “go on the shelf” but rather lead to immediate action. Chapter 6.0 identifies actions to implement the plan, as follows:

- **Regulatory changes** to promote new patterns of development, set higher standards for development quality, and to protect those scenic characteristics which create “added value” in the community character of Southwest Rock Island. These changes are designed not to affect established property rights or to mandate particular forms of development, but rather to provide flexibility and incentives for the types of development envisioned by the plan.
- **Public investments** in well planned infrastructure systems, enhanced community facilities, and a network of scenic roadway and greenway corridors.
- New **public-private partnerships**, in which the City shifts from a strictly reactive or regulatory posture to a proactive role in creating incentives to support or initiate projects that can serve as models for the desired patterns of development.
- **Marketing initiatives** to reverse negative perceptions and raise expectations. These initiatives can begin by establishing a new “imageable” name for the area, reinforcing a distinctive identity which then must be communicated effectively to the real estate industry through outreach efforts and through demonstration of the marketability and feasibility of new forms of development.
- Effective **intergovernmental coordination**, both to allow the City to work with its neighbors to address development and infrastructure issues in and around Southwest Rock Island, and to promote quality development in the area as part of a broader strategy for economic growth throughout the Quad Cities.



The most successful and desirable communities in the nation, both large cities and small towns, share one thing in common:



they all arrived at one or more points in their history where citizens made a conscious choice to change direction, to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles in order to achieve a better future. The Rock Island community is at such a point in contemplating how it will make use of one of its most valuable assets, its Southwest Area.

The creation and adoption of the Southwest Rock Island Plan could be a turning point for the community, the point at which higher expectations and community pride create sufficient public will to carry out an aggressive, but achievable, plan of action. Having achieved the plan, in looking back from some point in the not-too-distant future, many will speak with pride about (and take credit for) what was achieved. Others may wonder “Why did we wait so long?” or “Why did we not think and act even more boldly?”

Alternatively, the Southwest Rock Island Plan could end up “on the shelf,” becoming a footnote in the community’s on-going desire to achieve quality growth and greater economic prosperity. Looking back from that very different future, some may wonder “Who is to blame for our lack of progress?” or “Why didn’t we act when we had the chance?” or “What more might I and my neighbors have done?” It is only prudent to question whether this, or any other, plan will work; whether its strategies are foolproof; and whether it offers a guarantee of success. While no plan can provide an ironclad guarantee of success, the community must weigh the known results of inaction against the presently unknown results of taking action to make Southwest Rock Island the kind of place it can be.

1.0 INTRODUCTION



Rock River

Southwest Rock Island is the incorporated area of the City of Rock Island and the City's adjoining 1½ mile planning jurisdiction in unincorporated Rock Island County located southwest of the Rock River (Figure 1). It was last studied in depth in 1982 to 1983, when City Council approved the Southwest Area Comprehensive Plan. The introduction to that plan stated:

The Southwest Area of Rock Island is one of the most important areas for future development in the Illinois portion of the Quad Cities. Although economic conditions in the early 1980's have hampered urban development throughout the region, locations such as the Southwest Area have great potential for new residential development and industrial expansion. As economic conditions improve, a share of the region's growth will occur in the Southwest Area. The ultimate attractiveness of the Southwest Area as a place to live and work will be determined to a large extent by how well public and private development decisions are coordinated.

Since adoption of the 1983 Southwest Area Comprehensive Plan, development in the area has not occurred as rapidly as desired. While this was in part due to the prolonged recession of the 1980's, Southwest Rock Island attracted little new residential development in the 1990's while the Iowa portion of the Quad Cities experienced significant growth. Perceiving the area's unfulfilled development potential, in 1999 the City in conjunction with the Development Association of Rock Island and Rock Island County initiated preparation of a new Southwest Rock Island Plan. The 14-member Southwest Plan Committee, comprised of City and County residents, officials, and staff, was appointed to guide development of the plan.

The study area for the Southwest Rock Island Plan comprises approximately 16,700 acres. This includes approximately 11,300 acres south of 78th Avenue West (Andalusia Road), of which about 2,500 acres are located within the City of Rock Island and 8,800 acres in unincorporated Rock Island.

The Southwest Rock Island Plan sets a new long-range vision for the future of Southwest Rock Island, supported by policies

related to land use, the quality and sequencing of development, the preservation of open space and natural resources, and the provision of public infrastructure and amenities. The plan also recommends actions to be undertaken by the City and its partners to realize the vision. In its totality, the plan reflects a new strategy for the future of Southwest Rock Island: one that seeks to capitalize on the area's strengths (as opposed to the strengths of its competitors) and transform constraints such as difficult topography into advantages that will help create momentum for public acceptance.

The Southwest Rock Island Plan was developed with the input of the Southwest Plan Committee, City and County residents, and officials. The planning process consisted of the following steps:

Phase I – Project Background and Issues

- A workshop with the Southwest Plan Committee to discuss:
1) their expectations for outcomes of the plan and 2) Southwest Rock Island's assets and liabilities
- Interviews with persons who have an interest in the future of Southwest Rock Island to identify key issues
- Analysis of background information concerning the physical, social, and economic context of Southwest Rock Island, the City of Rock Island, and the Quad Cities region

Phase II – Community Vision for the Future

- A public meeting to discuss Southwest Rock Island in terms of current strengths and weaknesses and future opportunities and threats
- A Committee workshop to identify the elements of a vision statement for the future
- Preparation of an *Issues, Vision, and Goals Report* synthesizing the results of Phases I and II, including a vision, goals, and objectives for the future of Southwest Rock Island

Phase III – Southwest Rock Island Plan

- Meetings and workshops with Rock Island City Council, the Planning Commission, the public, and the Southwest Plan Committee to discuss the *Issues, Vision, and Goals Report* and establish consensus for development of the Draft Southwest Rock Island Plan
- Preparation of the Draft Southwest Rock Island Plan, including policies and implementation strategies related to future land use, community facilities and infrastructure, and other areas of concern
- A City Council workshop, Committee meeting, and

- Planning Commission hearing to discuss the Draft Plan
- Revisions to the Draft Plan based upon the input received at the meetings
- Adoption of the Final Plan by Rock Island City Council on December 18, 2000

As of publication of this plan, Rock Island County Board adoption was anticipated in February 2001.

The plan contains five chapters following this introduction. Chapter 2.0 summarizes important issues for the future of Southwest Rock Island, derived from the analysis of background information and input received from stakeholders through the interviews and meetings. Chapter 3.0 presents a vision for Southwest Rock Island's future, along with goals and objectives to guide decision-making by the City and the County in support of the vision.

Building on the vision, goals, and objectives, Chapters 4.0 to 6.0 describe in more detail proposed long-range land uses and implementation strategies for Southwest Rock Island. Chapter 4.0 proposes an overall physical development concept for the area, along with the types, locations, and forms of future land uses. Chapter 5.0 presents policies in support of the proposed future land use plan, including the sequencing of future development and the provision of community facilities, roads, and water and sewer service. Chapter 6.0 identifies actions that the City and its partners should take to implement the plan with respect to regulatory changes, public investment, marketing, and intergovernmental coordination.

The final section of the plan is an appendix containing conceptual design guidelines. These guidelines are intended to provide property owners, developers, and the City with the design "tools" to achieve development that is consistent with the vision, goals, and objectives of the Southwest Rock Island Plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ISSUES



Southwest Rock Island's rolling

Members of the Rock Island community (referred to as “stakeholders” in this plan) have identified a variety of issues that are important to Southwest Rock Island’s future. Because of its resource of undeveloped land, Southwest Rock Island is seen as a potential growth area that is key to the City’s future. While the City has successfully promoted industrial development along 78th Avenue West (Andalusia Road), there is widespread concern about the lack of recent development in the remainder of the area. In contrast to the conventional suburban development that is occurring on the Iowa side of the Mississippi River, some citizens envision capitalizing on Southwest Rock Island’s assets – its rolling topography, “country” character, etc. – to offer an ambience and a lifestyle that sets the area apart in the Quad Cities market.

Based upon the input received from interviews and meetings, combined with an analysis of background information, issues important to the future of Southwest Rock Island have been identified in the following eight categories:

1. Capturing New Development
2. Land Use Mix
3. Development Character
4. The Natural Environment
5. Community Facilities and Infrastructure
6. Image and Relationship to the City of Rock Island
7. Marketing Southwest Rock Island
8. Intergovernmental Coordination

Each of these issue categories is discussed below.

2.1 CAPTURING NEW DEVELOPMENT

Issue: The Illinois side of the Mississippi River in general and Southwest Rock Island in particular are not capturing their share of regional growth.

According to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Bi-State Region (Bi-State Regional Commission, 1999), the population of the Davenport-Rock Island-Moline Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)¹ increased by a modest 2 percent between 1990 and 1998, from 350,861 (U.S. Census data) to 357,813 (estimate). During this period, Scott County in Iowa experienced the largest increase (5 percent) while Rock Island County declined by 0.7 percent. Population projections developed by the Bi-State Regional Commission indicate continued moderate increases for the region, with a “best case” projection of 8.8 percent in total population growth between 1990 and 2010 for Rock Island County, compared to 18.6 percent for Scott County.

Population information specific to Southwest Rock Island is available from the 1990 U.S. Census for census tracts covering the incorporated part of the study area. According to this information, the population of incorporated Southwest Rock Island in 1990 was 3,045, compared to 40,662 for the City as a whole. This figure is an increase of 2.6 percent from 1980, when the Southwest Rock Island population was reported at 2,968. (During the same period, the population of the City declined 13.4 percent, from 46,928 to 40,662.) Although Southwest Rock Island experienced slight population growth from 1980 to 1990, the rate of increase is well below the period from 1970 to 1980, when the population grew from 1,296 to 2,968, or 129 percent.

With regard to new housing starts, the Bi-State Regional Commission reports that the Davenport-Rock Island-Moline MSA averaged 786 single-family and 448 multi-family building permits a year (new construction) between 1995 and 1998 (1,234 per year). During the same period, Rock Island County averaged 207 single-family and 213 multi-family building permits a year, compared to 462 single-family and 203 multi-family building permits a year for Scott County. Comparable figures for the City of Rock Island indicate that the rate of development in the City and the Southwest Area lagged well behind the County and the region as a whole. From 1995 to 1999, 94 new residential buildings were constructed in the City of Rock Island, of which 20 were new homes in the incorporated portion of Southwest Rock Island.²

The slow pace of residential development in the City of Rock Island is in part attributable to the lack of available land north

¹ The Davenport-Rock Island-Moline MSA includes Scott County, IA and Rock Island and Henry Counties, IL.

² Source: City of Rock Island

of the Rock River. Nevertheless, it is evident that Southwest Rock Island, where substantial undeveloped land exists, has not generated interest from prospective developers or residents compared to Scott County or other parts of Rock Island County. While industrial growth has occurred along the Andalusia Road corridor (see Section 2.2), the lack of residential development has been identified as a primary issue for the Southwest Area Plan by stakeholders. As discussed below, a variety of factors likely contribute to this situation. The challenge and opportunity for the future is to counteract prevailing trends by capturing a larger share of the regional housing market for Southwest Rock Island.

2.2 LAND USE MIX

Issue: What should the future mix of land uses in Southwest Rock Island be?

The generalized pattern of existing land use in Southwest Rock Island is illustrated in Figure 2. This pattern can be summarized as follows:

- The northernmost portion of the study area, next to the Rock and Mississippi Rivers, consists mainly of open space (wetlands and floodplain). Some older residential development exists on Big Island, located east of the I-280/Centennial Expressway interchange.
- Industrial/commercial uses predominate along the 78th Avenue West (Andalusia Road) corridor, interspersed with agricultural land and open space.
- The higher land south of the Andalusia Road corridor and 85th Avenue West contains residential development in older subdivisions or as individual homes along roads. This development is scattered among large tracts of agricultural or other undeveloped land.



Home in a rural setting

Stakeholders have identified several issues related to land use in Southwest Rock Island as worthy of note. First, there is a lack of retail development; the nearest concentration of stores is located along Andalusia Road in Milan. The absence of retail development is attributable to several factors. These include Southwest Rock Island's relatively small population, the lack of land zoned for retail uses (Business zoning is limited to four undeveloped parcels along 92nd Avenue West), and competition not only from Milan, but also from "big box" retail and other regional shopping opportunities available in Moline. Along with the slow pace of residential growth, these factors

indicate the difficulty of promoting retail development – which depends upon high visibility access to an established population base – in Southwest Rock Island. Nevertheless, retail has been identified as a potentially important part of Southwest Rock Island’s future land use mix, due both to the benefits it would provide for residents’ quality of life and the tax revenues it would bring to the City of Rock Island.

The types of retail uses that are appropriate (and feasible) in Southwest Rock Island constitute an important question. Some stakeholders indicate that they would like to see large stores developed in the area. The feasibility of such development, however, is questionable, given Southwest Rock Island’s small population and peripheral location in the Quad Cities trade market compared to Moline. Others identify a need for smaller scale, neighborhood-oriented retail and service uses. Again, such uses are dependent upon a base of support from existing residential development, although the traffic volumes and employment along Andalusia Road are a potential source of patronage.

Another issue is the presence of what have been termed “non-contributing” land uses (i.e., uses whose character could affect the desirability of adjacent or nearby properties for development). Found in several locations in the study area, such uses are an established part of Southwest Rock Island’s land use pattern and need to be considered in planning for the future of the area. An example is the gun club property located west of the Highland Springs Golf Course. Because this use is best suited to a rural location where noise impacts on surrounding residents can be minimized, working with the gun club to find an appropriate alternate site might be considered as the area develops.

With respect to the future, there is general agreement that Southwest Rock Island should contain a diverse mix or “balance” of land uses. In addition to retail, stakeholders express interest in research/office uses to supplement traditional manufacturing and warehouse/distribution activities. Interest has also been expressed in a wider variety of housing types and prices tailored towards a range of market demands and income levels (e.g., condominiums that appeal to young persons and empty nesters; other alternatives to conventional subdivisions).

2.3 DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

Issue: What policies and standards should guide the quality and form of new development?

Development character refers to the visual quality of developed land uses and the pattern in which they are located on the landscape. The character of development in Southwest Rock Island changes sharply from the industrial scale and forms of the uses located on flat, open land along Andalusia Road to the rural residential ambience of the roads located on the higher land to the south. In the latter area, residential development consists of: 1) subdivisions developed off of the major roadways in conventional suburban patterns with small lots and 2) individual homes along the roadways. In this area, topography and other natural features do not lend themselves to development of the expansive subdivisions with efficient lot layouts that are characteristic of “cornfield” development in the Iowa Quad Cities.



Thoms Proestler building entrance

The character and form of existing development in Southwest Rock Island is less than optimal in several respects. While Thoms Proestler and Barjan are well-designed facilities, the visual quality of development along Andalusia Road varies widely. In the rural residential area to the south, the piecemeal nature of development and topographic constraints have resulted in subdivisions and other land uses that are largely isolated from each other. The individual homes along the roadways affect visual quality (i.e., the “view from the road”) and may preclude options for the development of interior properties. Nevertheless, the area’s substantial resource of undeveloped land provides an opportunity to create new, distinctive forms of development.

The land use policies and zoning regulations currently in place for Southwest Rock Island will perpetuate conventional patterns of development. Generalized existing zoning, referenced to current City and County zoning categories for the study area, is shown in Figure 3. Most of the land along Andalusia Road within the incorporated area of the City of Rock Island is zoned I-2 (General Industrial), allowing for a wide range of manufacturing and heavy industrial uses. No design standards are in place to govern the view of new development from public roadways. In the incorporated part of the study area to the south, the predominant zoning is residential in seven separate categories:

- **R-1:** one-family detached dwellings, 7,500 square foot minimum lots

- **R-2:** one-family detached dwellings, 5,000 square foot minimum lots
- **R-3:** one and two-family dwellings, 5,000 square foot minimum lots, 3,000 square foot minimum lot area per family
- **R-4:** one to six-family dwellings, 5,000 square foot minimum lots, 2,000 square foot minimum lot area per family
- **R-5 and R-6:** multi-family dwellings and apartments, 5,000 square foot minimum lots, 2,000 square foot minimum lot area per family
- **R-7:** mobile homes

Combined with typical suburban setback requirements (e.g., 30-foot front yard depth), these categories are designed to accommodate development that may not be well suited to the area’s topography (see Section 2.4). In addition, there is a question as to whether the types of development permitted by the regulations (e.g., conventional suburban subdivisions with small lots) can compete in the region’s housing market, especially given Southwest Rock Island’s unique characteristics.

The portion of Southwest Rock Island in Rock Island County is mostly zoned Agricultural (AG-1). Some areas are zoned Suburban Estate (SE) and Single-Family Dwelling (R-1), the latter category applying mostly to developed subdivisions. Single-family residences are permitted in the AG-1 and SE districts on minimum one-acre lots. The R-1 district permits minimum lot sizes of 8,000 square feet if served by a central sewerage system and 20,000 square feet if not reasonably served by a central sewerage system.

The 1998 *Rock Island County Land Use Plan* designates most of the unincorporated area of Southwest Rock Island for low to medium-density residential zoning. The unincorporated area to the east of a line along Ridgewood Avenue is designated for “high-density” residential zoning (similar to the City’s R-1 and R-2 zoning). The different regulations and policies in place in the City and County underscores the need to coordinate land use decision-making for the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the study area if a coherent plan for Southwest Rock Island is to be effectively implemented.

As previously noted, Southwest Rock Island has relatively little land zoned for retail uses and stakeholders would like to see more of this type of development. The visual appearance and form of any future retail development (e.g., strip development along highways versus concentration in a discrete center or



Example of a retail “town center”
2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ISSUES

centers) will affect Southwest Rock Island's character. A "town center" with a retail component has been suggested by some as a potential focus of community identity for the area.

In summary, a basic choice for the future of Southwest Rock Island is whether the City and County wish to continue established practice – which, with the exception of industrial development along Andalusia Road, has not produced the level of growth desired – or to "change course." The latter option would seek to better compete in the regional market by promoting forms of development that aspire to higher standards of quality and that take advantage of the area's natural and other amenities. It would necessitate changes to land use policies and regulations and proactive public investment designed to enhance the quality of life and the attractiveness of Southwest Rock Island as a place to live and do business. This approach does not have to mandate particular development types, but could instead establish choices and incentives appropriate to the Southwest Rock Island environment.

2.4 THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Issue: Natural features pose both an opportunity and constraint for development in Southwest Rock Island.

The pattern of land use and development in Southwest Rock Island is strongly influenced by the natural environment. Significant natural features in the study area are shown on Figures 4 (Hydrology) and 5 (Woodlands and Steep Slopes). As previously noted, the study area is divided into two distinct physiographic zones: the flat valley land along the Rock and Mississippi Rivers and the higher, rolling land to the south, which is dissected by streams set in wooded, steeply sloping ravines.

In the first physiographic zone, a large portion of the flat valley land north of Andalusia Road contains wetland and/or is located within the 100-year floodplain. Water is ubiquitous in this area, in the form of sloughs, creeks, ponds, and the rivers themselves. The area contains two parks/natural reserves: the Mark Twain Wildlife and Fish Refuge on the Mississippi River and the Hennepin Canal Parkway State Park along the Rock River. Federal regulations generally prohibit construction in wetlands. Areas located within the 100-year floodplain (and outside of designated wetlands and floodways) may be developed, provided that the development complies with the

City of Rock Island's Ordinance Regulating Development of Special Flood Hazard Areas. Key provisions of this ordinance include:

- Buildings within the 100-year floodplain may be constructed on fill, provided that the lowest floor (including basement) is at or above the floodplain elevation and the fill does not adversely affect the flow of surface drainage from or onto neighboring properties.
- Buildings within the 100-year floodplain must incorporate construction methods and practices that minimize flood damage.

The flat valley land south of Andalusia Road is mostly located outside of the designated 100-year floodplain. It is generally



well-suited for industrial development because of the level topography, although characteristics of the bottomland soils such as poor drainage increase the cost of construction.

The transition from valley to upland is marked by a distinct topographic change from flat land to north-facing slopes that provide views towards the river. The higher land to the south is characterized by rolling terrain with soils that pose few serious constraints to development, except where steep slopes or bottomland soils along streams occur. In this area, the more level land is located along the ridgetops, which are interspersed with steeper, wooded slopes along south-to-north flowing streams. Most of the major roadways run north-south to take advantage of more level topography along the ridgetops. The scattered residential subdivisions have also been sited to take advantage of gentler terrain. Typically, they have one entrance from a through roadway and back onto steeply sloping ravines.

Particularly in the upland areas to the south, Southwest Rock Island's natural environment represents both a constraint and an opportunity for development. Problems posed by natural factors – in particular the prevalent topographic conditions – include a fragmented development pattern, the high cost of extending infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer), and the difficulty of establishing efficient lot patterns. Of particular concern are steep slope areas, which make construction more

cross the river



expensive and are subject to erosion and sedimentation with corresponding impacts to watercourses from grading and clearing of vegetation. At the same time, the visual diversity of the landscape, as reflected in the varied topography and cover types (woodlands, pasture, and open agricultural land), creates a potentially distinctive setting for new development. There is general consensus among stakeholders that Southwest Rock Island's natural assets should be retained in developments that respond to and incorporate natural features.

2.5 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue: What levels of investment should the City make in community facilities and infrastructure in Southwest Rock Island to support existing and future development?

This topic encompasses: 1) publicly provided facilities that are important to residents' quality of life (e.g., parks and libraries) and 2) basic infrastructure needed to support development, including roads and utilities (water and sewer lines). Another issue is the emerging demand for high-speed telecommunications access by businesses and homeowners. Community facilities and infrastructure in the study area are illustrated on Figures 6 and 7 and discussed below.

2.5.1 Community Facilities

The City of Rock Island has made significant investments in the Southwest Area, as evidenced by the following public facilities located in the incorporated portion of the study area:

- **Highland Springs Municipal Golf Course:** Eighteen-hole golf course located on 200 acres on the west side of 35th Street West
- **Alan Campbell Sports Complex:** Ball diamond complex with lighted baseball and softball fields located on 30 acres off of Andalusia Road
- **Hasselroth & Dog Park:** Five-acre park located on Andalusia Road next to the Alan Campbell Sports Complex, with facilities including a playground, ballfield, and fenced area for dogs. Sand Creek runs through Hasselroth and the Alan Campbell Sports Complex (see discussion of greenways below).



- **McKay Park:** Park located on 30 acres off Ridgewood Avenue and 92nd Avenue West, offering basketball and tennis courts, ballfields, playground apparatus, and other facilities. It also includes a natural area associated with Kyte Creek (see discussion of greenways below).
- **Haymaker Park:** Five-acre neighborhood park located behind the Ridgewood Elementary School east of 14th Street West
- **Shadybrook Park:** Six-acre neighborhood park located at 83rd Avenue West and 9th Street West in a residential neighborhood in the northeastern corner of the study area
- **Southwest Branch Library:** Located on Ridgewood Road across from McKay Park, along with a fire station and water tower

In addition, Ridgewood Elementary School, part of the Rock Island/Milan School District, is located in Southwest Rock Island. The boundary between the Rock Island/Milan School District and the Rockridge School District, which covers the western part of the study area, is shown on Figure 6.

Like natural resources, stakeholders identify community facilities as an important amenity offered by Southwest Rock Island that could help to distinguish it in the marketplace. The City's Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan includes the following projects that indicate a continuing commitment to invest in community facilities in Southwest Rock Island:

- Improvements to the Alan Campbell Sports Complex
- Improvements to Highland Springs Golf Course
- Improvements to McKay Park
- Acquisition of land to expand the Alan Campbell Sports Complex and/or Highland Springs Golf Course
- Acquisition of additional parkland in Southwest Rock Island
- Improvements to the Southwest Branch Library

Some stakeholders have noted that a system of greenways along stream corridors and other linear features in Southwest Rock Island could form a significant community amenity in the future. Such a system would preserve sensitive resources, establish a framework for development that highlights the area's natural amenities, provide recreational opportunities, and connect parks and other land uses. The *Comprehensive Greenway Plan for the Illinois Quad Cities Metropolitan Area* (Illinois Quad Cities Metropolitan Area Greenway Coalition, May 1997) proposes a series of greenways throughout the Quad Cities,

including several components that connect to Southwest Rock Island. The plan defines a greenway as:

...a corridor of open space connecting natural areas, cultural and historic sites, parks, neighborhoods and communities. As our “Green Infrastructure,” they are essential for the health, safety and general welfare of the public, similar to our roads and utilities.

The plan further differentiates between “active” greenways (“intended for recreational purposes such as multi-use trails, on-street bicycle routes, canoeing/water trails, etc.”) and “passive” greenways (“intended for conservation and preservation” and which may include “low intensity nature trails”). The plan identifies the following greenways in Southwest Rock Island:



- **Hennepin Canal:** active greenway of state-wide importance; has an established trail within the Hennepin Canal Parkway State Park
- **Rock Island Parkway³:** active greenway designated along Route 92 and 92nd Avenue West from the Rock River through Southwest Rock Island to Milan; could connect across the Rock River to Sunset Park and the terminus of the Great River Trail along the Mississippi River
- **Old Mill Creek:** passive greenway designated along a creek north of Andalusia Road that flows west to the Mississippi River at the Mark Twain Fish and Wildlife Refuge; designated as a high regional priority due to water quality considerations
- **Sand Creek:** passive greenway designated along a creek that flows north through Southwest Rock Island to Old Mill Creek

Hennepin Canal

³ It is recommended that this roadway, currently known as the Centennial Expressway north of Andalusia Road and Milan Beltway south of Andalusia Road, be renamed the Rock Island Parkway (see p. 28).

- **Kyte Creek:** passive greenway designated along a creek that flows north through Southwest Rock Island to Old Mill Creek

With the exception of funds designated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to improve the Hennepin Canal trail, none of these greenways are currently programmed for implementation. The Southwest Rock Island Plan provides an opportunity to incorporate a greenway strategy that addresses the corridors identified by the regional greenway plan and additional greenways along locally significant stream corridors.

2.5.2 Infrastructure

Road System



Several roadways provide Southwest Rock Island with excellent access to the rest of the region. The roadways that convey the most traffic include I-280; the Centennial Expressway, which connects to the City of Rock Island; and 78th Avenue West (Andalusia Road), which provides east-west access parallel to the Mississippi and Rock Rivers. 92nd Avenue West (currently known as the Milan Beltway), a divided highway constructed in the 1980's to connect the Centennial Expressway at Andalusia Road with U.S. 67, is another important component of the area's road system. This roadway carries relatively light traffic volumes and has not spurred the development that was hoped when it was constructed. An extension of the east end of the Beltway across the Rock River in Milan is programmed by the State of Illinois for completion within the next five years. This extension will provide a direct connection to Moline and regional shopping opportunities available along the John Deere Expressway, thus further enhancing the regional accessibility of Southwest Rock Island.

The lack of development along 92nd Avenue West has had the positive effect of maintaining a "parkway" appearance. However, there are no standards in place to address the appearance of future development from the road. Access for future development is also an issue. Access points for properties

adjacent to the beltway were negotiated as part of the original right-of-way taking and are shown on Figure 7.

Most secondary roadways in Southwest Rock Island run north-south because of the predominant topography. Turkey Hollow Road and Ridgewood Road/14th Street W. function as the primary collector roads that convey traffic to and from Andalusia Road.

Southwest Rock Island has no reported traffic capacity problems. Traffic counts from 1986 to 1996 reveal slight to moderate growth in traffic over that time period. Andalusia Road has in the past been identified as a potential candidate for widening to four lanes, and the Illinois Department of Transportation (DOT) owns land at its intersection with Centennial Expressway that could accommodate a grade-separated interchange. However, no such improvements are planned nor are likely to be needed for the foreseeable future. It has been suggested that discussions should be initiated with DOT with respect to the availability of this land for other purposes.

Stakeholders identify Southwest Rock Island's accessibility to the rest of the region as an asset. They also express concern regarding the condition and appearance of some of the roadways, particularly secondary roads constructed to rural standards (i.e., no shoulders, unimproved surface). Several roadway improvement/resurfacing projects are included in the City's Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan, including:

- Paving of the shoulders of Ridgewood Road from Mel McKay Park to Foxwood Drive to improve its appearance and provide a better pathway for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Paving of 85th Avenue West/31th Street West in stages between Turkey Hollow Road and Andalusia Road
- Paving of 83rd Avenue West (a local street that provides access to Shadybrook Park) between 9th Street West and 10th Street West

Public Sewer and Water

Public water and sanitary sewer are currently available to a portion of the study area (see Figure 5). The City's Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan contains several projects to upgrade portions of the public water and sewer systems:

- Extension of sanitary sewer to the vicinity of Highlands Spring Golf Course to serve future residential development in the area

- Extension of public water south from 92nd Avenue West to serve future residential development in the area
- Construction of a water storage facility in the vicinity of Highland Springs Golf Course and other system improvements along 85th Avenue West and 92nd Avenue West. These improvements will enhance system reliability and fire protection and provide water service to undeveloped lands near the golf course.

Even with these improvements, the lack of water and sewer service in most of Southwest Rock Island is a significant constraint to development. The cost of extending utilities is compounded by topography and drainage patterns combined with the extent of the unserved area. In the unincorporated portion of the study area, private sewage disposal systems and wells are permitted if connections to public utilities are not reasonably available and soils are suitable to handle on-site sewage discharges. County regulations require a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet where on-site sewage disposal is necessary.

The expense of providing public water and sewer to unserved, undeveloped portions of Southwest Rock Island raises several basic policy questions. First is the level of investment the City is willing to make in extending water and sewer infrastructure to support new development. If used proactively, such investment is a potential tool to facilitate desirable types of development, but carries a significant price tag. To facilitate development of Foxwood, a recent subdivision, the City provided a no-interest loan to pay for the required infrastructure improvements. This loan was repaid as the lots were sold. A second question is whether the City (and County) should endorse the concept of on-site sewage disposal and wells for new development where suitable soils exist and extension of public lines is deemed to be too costly.⁴ A third, related question is the extent to which provision of public water and sewer should be used as a tool to promote development that is contiguous to existing developed areas, as opposed to “leapfrog” or “sprawl” into more remote portions of the study area.

Telecommunications Infrastructure

The new economy has changed the face of development on a global scale. The demand for information both at home and at

⁴ According to the Soil Survey of Rock Island County, IL (United States Department of Agriculture, 1977) most soil types in the upland portions of the study area south of the Andalusia Road corridor are generally suitable for on-site sewage disposal, except where steep slopes exist.

work has increased drastically in the last five years. Expectations of new and growing businesses and young families is to be able to access that information instantaneously. For both commercial/industrial and residential development, telecommunications infrastructure will play a major role in the decision-making process.

Tech-savvy businesses and homebuyers will demand access and speed (together referred to as bandwidth) in their data connections. Many relocation decisions made by new businesses and homeowners will be based primarily on this bandwidth issue. Thus the availability of adequate telecommunications infrastructure will be critical to attracting new development to Southwest Rock Island.

In discussions with local ISP's (Internet Service Providers), it is apparent that the entire area south of the Rock River is severely hampered in this regard. The central office (Ameritech Phone Switch Office) has outdated equipment and the company has no plans to update the equipment in the near future. There is also no known installation of fiber optic equipment or lines south of the Rock River. The central office would not even be able to handle the lines if they were installed. Many customers south of the river cannot even obtain standard phone services such as "caller ID," "call waiting," etc. Companies relying on "telephony" services to operate their businesses are not likely to move to Southwest Rock Island unless significant improvements are made to the existing systems.

Addressing this issue may require a significant public/private partnership to insure that adequate telecommunications infrastructure is in place to support development. The magnitude of this project will most likely require major intergovernmental cooperation efforts extending beyond the City of Rock Island and Rock Island County.

2.6 IMAGE AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE CITY OF ROCK ISLAND

Issue: What can be done to establish a positive image and identity for Southwest Rock Island and communicate this image to prospective residents? How should the image relate to the City of Rock Island?

The previous issue categories largely focus on the physical characteristics that affect Southwest Rock Island’s suitability for development. However, most stakeholders assert that intangible factors involving the image of Southwest Rock Island (and the City of Rock Island) are a major reason for the lack of current development in the area. These factors can be summarized as follows:



Southwest Rock Island horse farm

- Southwest Rock Island has no clearly defined image in either the City of Rock Island or the Quad Cities region. Despite its accessibility and the qualities of its landscape, it is generally perceived as a remote area with little character. This perception is reinforced by the lack of recent developments similar in scale and critical mass to those in the Iowa portion of the Quad Cities.
- Because of its association with the City of Rock Island, Southwest Rock Island is subject to negative perceptions regarding issues such as the quality of schools, crime, and taxes.

Counteracting these perceptions is essential if Southwest Rock Island’s development potential is to be realized. While it is difficult to change established mindsets, a compelling case can be made that many of these perceived liabilities are in fact assets:

- **Remoteness:** Southwest Rock Island is located within an easy drive of the rest of the Quad Cities region. Construction of the Milan Beltway extension across the Rock River will enhance its accessibility.
- **Character:** As described previously, Southwest Rock Island offers a varied landscape with natural features and a “country” ambience that could provide an attractive setting for sensitively located new development. These features are largely lacking in the Iowa locations that are attracting much of the current development activity in the region. Some public action may be necessary to enhance the character of some developed parts of the study area (e.g., design standards and investment in landscaping/right-of-way improvements for Andalusia Road).

- **Schools:** Southwest Rock Island is partially located in the Rock Island/Milan School District and partially in the Rockridge School District. According to stakeholders, the Rock Island/Milan School District, in particular, is viewed by many in the region to be of lesser quality because of the “urban” population that it serves. In fact, the Rock Island/Milan School District is a progressive one that prides itself on being a center of educational excellence, as measured by standards of achievement such as the number of National Merit Semi-Finalists produced.
- **Crime:** According to stakeholders, the City of Rock Island is viewed by many in the region as a high crime area. Uniform crime statistics for Illinois reveal the crime index for the City of Rock Island to be somewhat higher than the state average for all communities but lower than the City of Moline (Crime in Illinois, Illinois State Police, Division of Administration, Crime Studies Section, 1998). The incidence of crime in the Southwest Area is much lower than the rate for the City as a whole and the state-wide average.
- **Taxes:** The reported differences in tax burdens between the City of Rock Island, the Illinois Quad Cities, and the Iowa Quad Cities vary according to source. Property tax comparables published by Ruhl and Ruhl Real Estate Company for 1998-1999 indicate that the tax on a \$170,000 home was \$4,111 in Coal Valley, \$5,084 in Rock Island Township, and \$5,348 in Blackhawk Township (within the Rock Island City limits), all in the Illinois Quad Cities. In Iowa, the tax on a \$170,000 home was \$5,308 in Bettendorf and \$5,669 in Davenport. State income taxes are a flat rate of 3 percent in Illinois versus a graduated rate in Iowa that results in an effective top rate of 5.75% to 6.25% on individuals with adjusted incomes over \$51,660. Income from pensions is taxed in Iowa but not in Illinois.

In summary, the above facts are in clear contrast to the unfair public perceptions that must change if Southwest Rock Island is to compete for regional growth on a level playing field.

If this set of issues is to be addressed and the development desired by stakeholders and the City realized, a positive image – one that sets Southwest Rock Island apart in the Quad Cities market – needs to be established.⁵ Because the Southwest is the City of Rock Island’s future growth area, this image needs to be conceived in the context of a broader strategy that highlights

⁵ As a first step, it has been suggested that a more descriptive name than “Southwest Rock Island” be identified to support establishment of a distinctive identity for the area.

the City’s assets (its historic, livable neighborhoods, emerging entertainment district, progressive school system, etc.). This effort is already underway in the Rock Island Community Marketing Program, whose mission is stated as follows:

The mission of the Community Marketing Program is to improve the perception of Rock Island as a place to live, visit, or make an investment.

Under development as part of this program, the Rock Island Marketing Plan identifies community strengths, community weaknesses (perceived and real), key audiences to reach with a positive message about Rock Island, and potential housing market niches. One of the niches is defined as “natural beauty subdivisions” in Southwest Rock Island.

A related question involves the relationship of future development in Southwest Rock Island to the City. The Rock River and associated wetlands create a physical and perceptual barrier, although the actual driving time between the City and Southwest Rock Island along the Centennial Expressway is not long. As the “gateway” to Southwest Rock Island from the City and the region, the visual character and type of development along Andalusia Road is also an issue, particularly at the intersection with the Centennial Expressway.



View of Sunset Park and Marina

Because the history and character of the City and Southwest Rock Island are quite different, the latter area should probably be viewed as offering development and lifestyle choices that complement rather than replicate those available in the City (as suggested in the Rock Island Marketing Plan). Nevertheless, opportunities exist to more clearly link the two areas, for example through unified design treatment of Route 92/92nd Avenue West and development of a greenway system with the Rock River as a connecting corridor.⁶

2.7 MARKETING SOUTHWEST ROCK ISLAND

Issue: A proactive marketing strategy is needed to help “jumpstart” development in Southwest Rock Island.

⁶ It has also been suggested that these two highways be renamed the “Rock Island Parkway” to emphasize the relationship of Southwest Rock Island to the City and dispel the notion that it is a way to get somewhere else (Milan).

Promoting (residential) development in Southwest Rock Island is a challenge because it in essence entails creating a market for a product and lifestyle that are not available elsewhere in the region. For a variety of reasons, developers are concerned about market viability and infrastructure costs and are skeptical about experimenting with new forms of development; there are few homes on the market; and homebuyers are choosing to locate elsewhere. Foxwood, a recent subdivision, experienced disappointing initial sales (although resale values have been strong).

Stakeholders assert that a proactive marketing strategy needs to be initiated if this situation is to be changed. One component of this strategy should be to work to dispel the negative perceptions described in Section 2.6 above. A second is to highlight Southwest Rock Island's largely unrecognized assets: its "country" character and relaxed quality of life, the availability of open space and community amenities, convenient access to the Quad Cities region, etc. A third potential component is to build on these assets to define a market "niche" in the form of development types that are not offered elsewhere in the region (as opposed to competing against the strength of the Iowa market, conventional subdivisions on readily developable land).

Members of the real estate community are understandably skeptical about the prospects of new development – particularly development that deviates from conventional practices – in Southwest Rock Island. This skepticism underscores the potential need for the City to play an active role in making the initial project or projects happen. Recently the City sponsored an attempt to identify a property with a receptive landowner for development, but was unable to identify a suitable opportunity. Given the importance of the first "demonstration" project to generate momentum for development, renewed efforts along these lines would seem warranted.

2.8 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Issue: The likelihood of successful development in Southwest Rock Island would be enhanced by effective coordination among Quad Cities governments.

The future of Southwest Rock Island will not be determined by the City and County alone, but is closely tied to the well-being of the entire Quad Cities region. If development is to occur at a faster pace than at present, Southwest Rock Island will need to

attract a larger share of the regional housing market, possibly by offering distinctive products that meet unfulfilled demands. But, as previously discussed, the overall growth rate in the region is modest. Prospects for development in Southwest Rock Island would be enhanced if the regional growth rate were to increase, as opposed to merely redistributing the growth that is already taking place. Stimulating growth at the regional scale requires a coordinated economic development strategy designed to strengthen and diversify the regional economy in the context of changing national and global economies. Developing and implementing such a strategy is a complex endeavor involving municipalities in both the Illinois and Iowa portions of the Quad Cities. Regional economic development is a primary mission of two organizations, the Quad Cities Development Group and the Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Commission.⁷ Although this issue is beyond the scope of this plan, it underscores the importance of intergovernmental coordination that seeks cooperative solutions to regional problems.

Intergovernmental coordination can potentially take place at several different levels. The first level involves the City's immediate neighbors to the south: Rock Island County and Milan. Coordinated planning and decision-making to address common issues such as land use and infrastructure would benefit all three jurisdictions. Coordination with the County regarding policies for the unincorporated portion of the study area is especially important to the success of the Southwest Rock Island Plan.

The Illinois portion of the Quad Cities is a second focus for intergovernmental cooperation. This involves working with Moline, Milan, and other communities to identify ways to increase Illinois' share of the regional development market. Two organizations, the Illinois Quad City Regional Economic Development Authority and the Illinois Quad Cities Intergovernmental Committee, currently operate at this level.

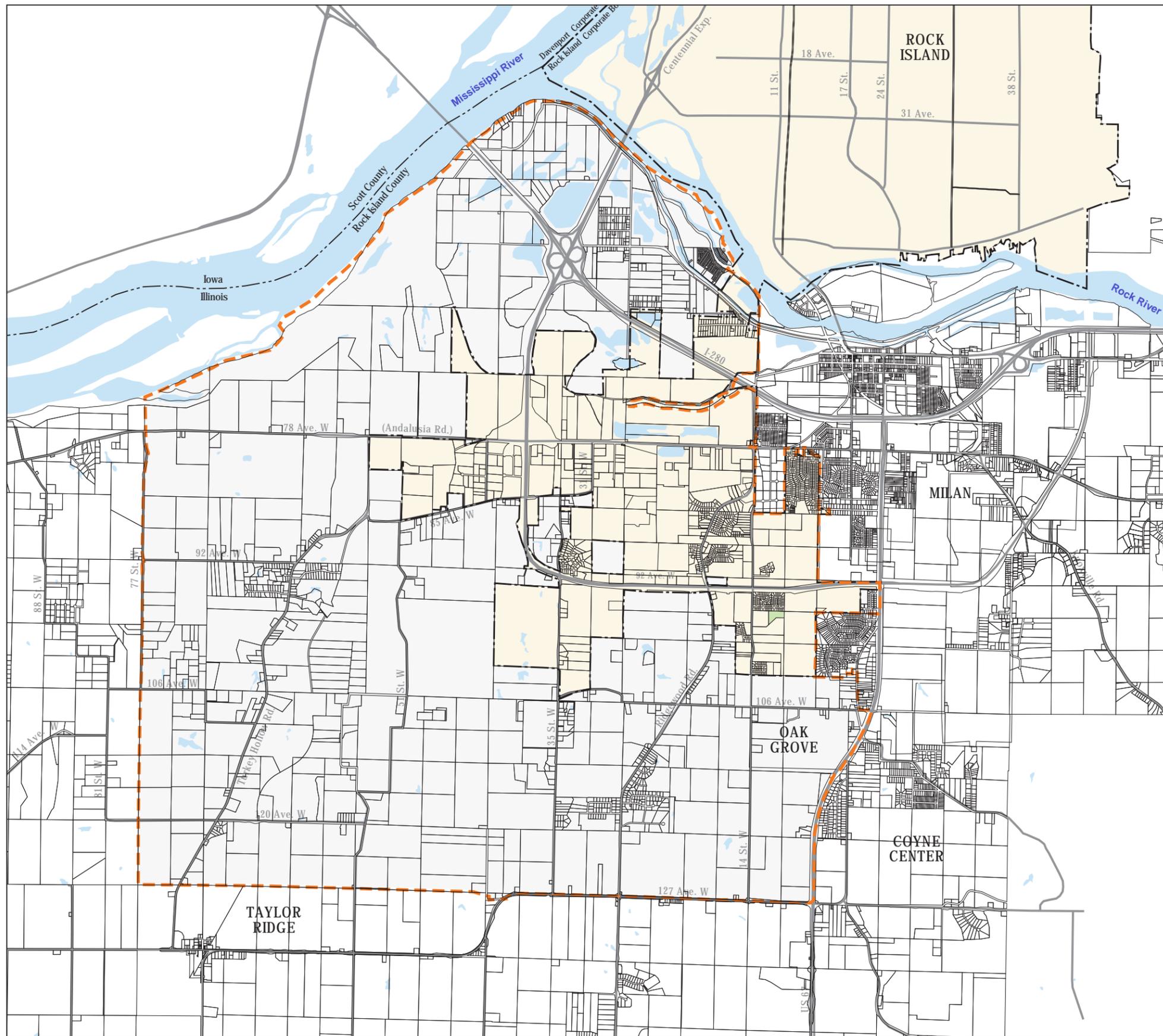
The third level is the Quad Cities region as a whole. Efforts at the three levels can be complementary rather than competitive, through strategies identifying appropriate niches that

⁷ A public/private partnership made up of businesses, local and county governments, and the region's two community colleges, the Quad Cities Development Group's mission is to promote and market economic development in the Quad Cities. The Bi-State Commission is a regional planning agency whose responsibilities include preparing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Quad Cities region under the Economic Development Administration Reform Act of 1998.

emphasize the strengths of the individual communities and maximize effectiveness and cost efficiencies by leveraging shared resources.

An example of a way in which Southwest Rock Island could potentially fit into a regional economic development strategy is by offering higher end, estate residences for corporate executives attracted by the area's "country" setting. The success of such an initiative would be tied to a coordinated, regional marketing strategy that seeks to attract businesses based upon the advantages that the Quad Cities has to offer (location/access; productive labor force; low cost of living/housing; amenities such as rural landscapes and greenways; etc.).

Fig. 1. Southwest Rock Island Study Area



- Legend**
-  Study Area Boundary
 -  Rock Island Corporate Boundary

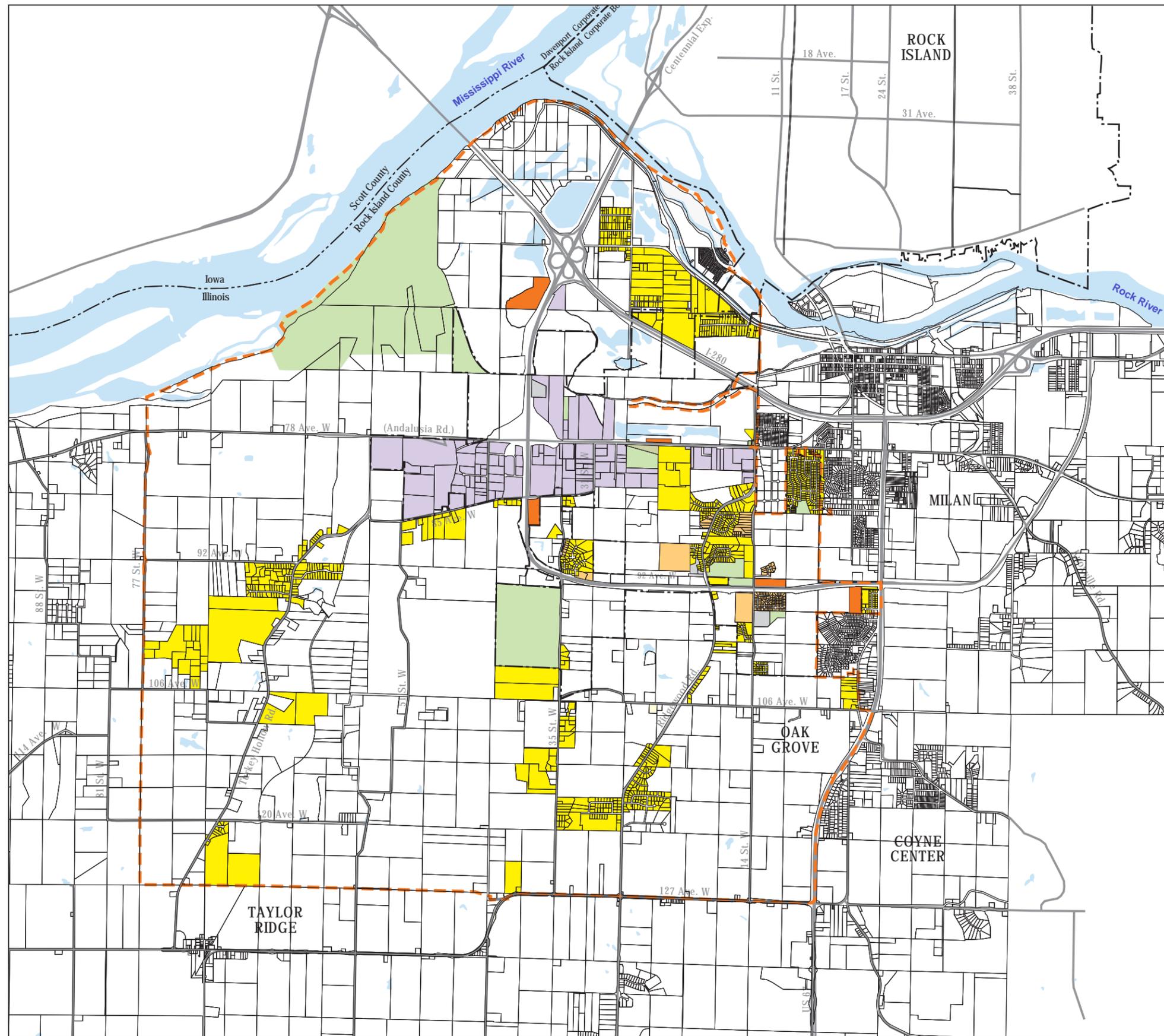
Data Source:
 Rock Island County G.I.S. Department, March 2000
 USGS Digital map, Horizontal Technology, Inc. 1997



City of Rock Island, Illinois
Southwest Rock Island Plan

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 Randall Arendt

Fig. 2. Generalized Existing Land Use



Legend

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Rock Island Corporate Boundary
-  Undeveloped/Agricultural Use
-  Single-Family Residential
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Park
-  Public Facilities

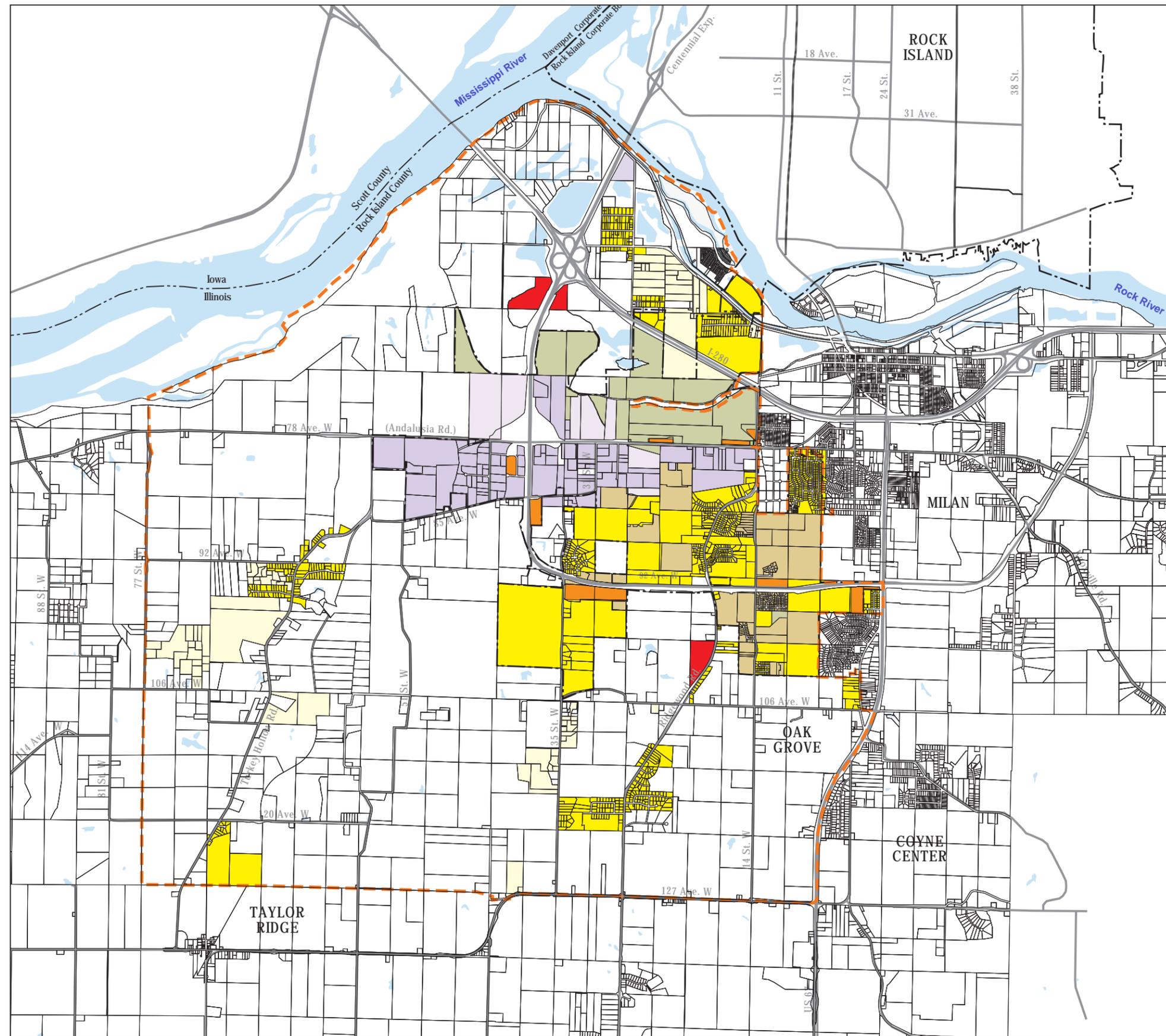
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 City of Rock Island
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Fig. 3. Generalized Existing Zoning



Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- Rock Island Corporate Boundary
- Agriculture/Conservation**
 - Rural Agriculture (AG County)
 - Conservation (C-1 City)
- Residential**
 - Suburban Estate (SE County)
 - Single Family Residential (R-1, R-2 City; R-1 County)
 - Higher Density Residential (R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7 City; R-2 County)
- Commercial**
 - Highway/General Commercial (B-3, B-4 City; C-2 County)
 - Heavy Commercial (C-3 County)
- Industrial**
 - Light Industrial/Manufacturing (I-1 City; M-1 County)
 - General/Heavy Industrial/Manufacturing (I-2 City; M-2 County)

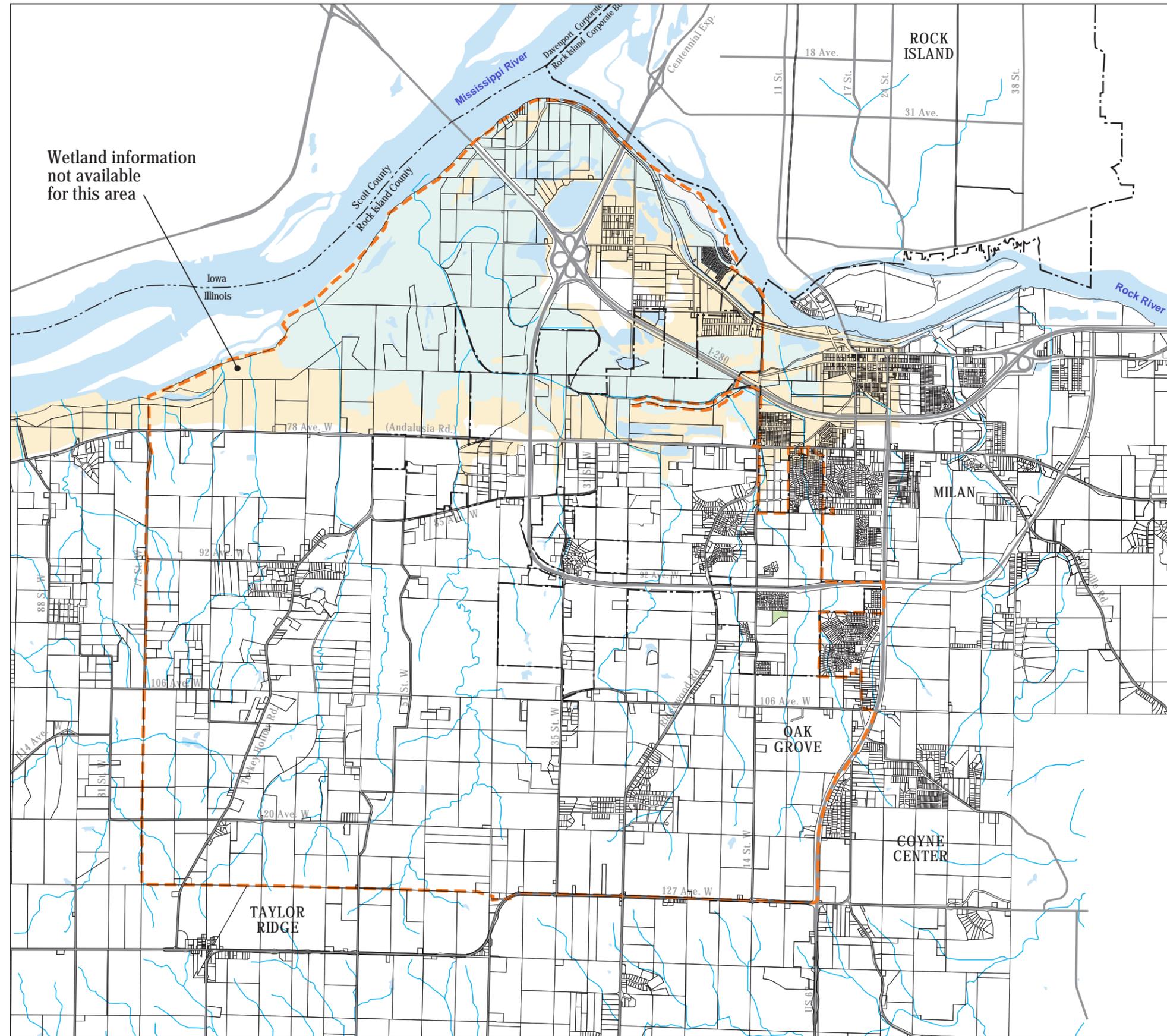
Data Source:
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 City of Rock Island
 USGS Digital map, Horizontal Technology, Inc. 1997



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Southwest Rock Island Plan

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Fig. 4. Hydrology



- Legend**
- Study Area Boundary
 - Rock Island Corporate Boundary
 - Open Water
 - Streams
 - Wetlands
 - 100-Year Floodplain (Outside of Wetlands)

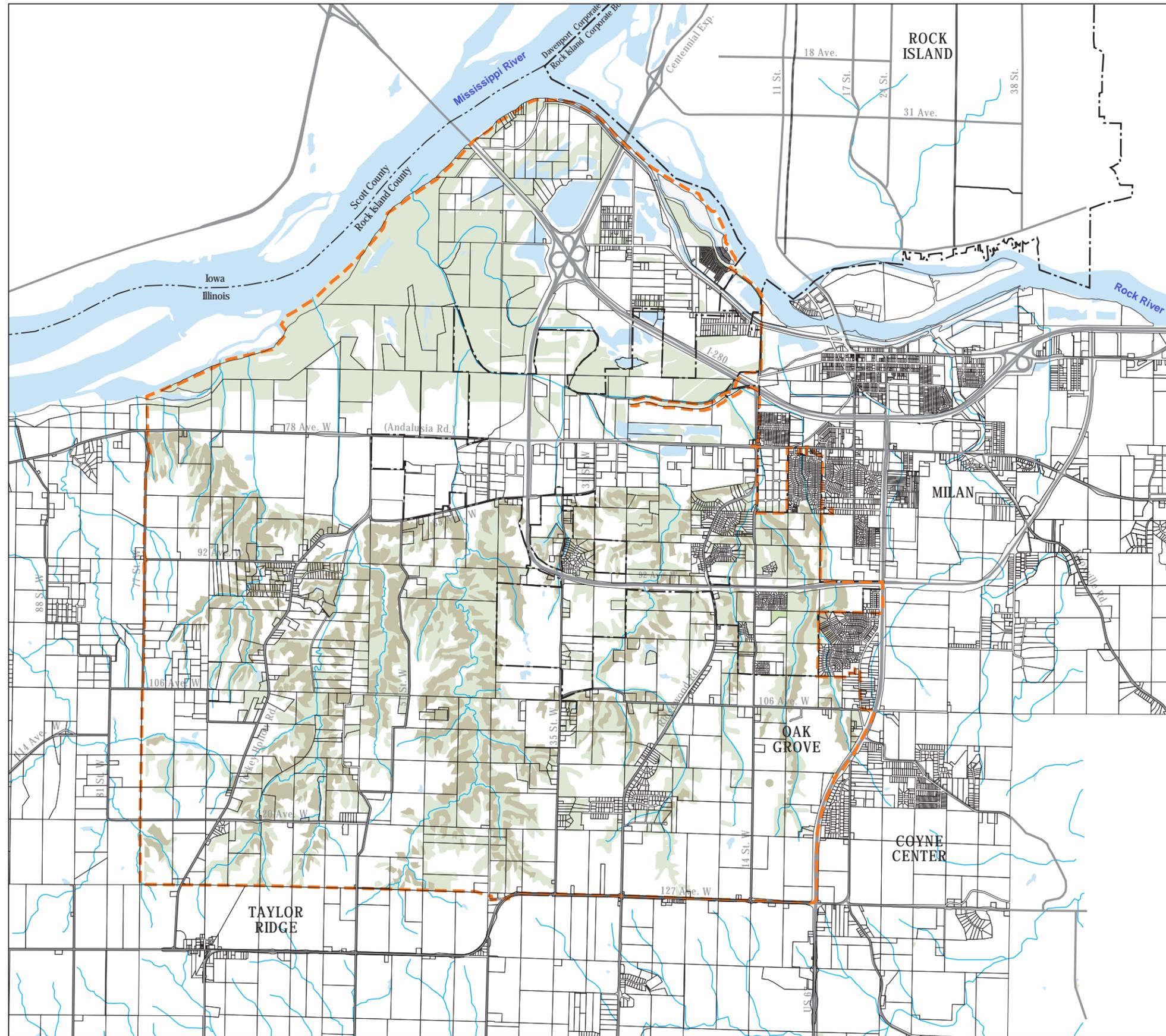
Data Source:
 Rock Island County G.I.S. Department, March 2000
 USGS Digital map, Horizontal Technology, Inc. 1997
 Rock River Valley, Wetland Rankings map, section 1
 Bi-State Regional Commission, May 1996
 Firm Flood Insurance Rate map, 1987
 Federal Emergency Management Agency



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Southwest Rock Island Plan

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Fig. 5. Woodlands and Steep Slopes



Legend

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Rock Island Corporate Boundary
-  Streams
-  Woodlands
-  Steep Slopes (Slope > 15%)

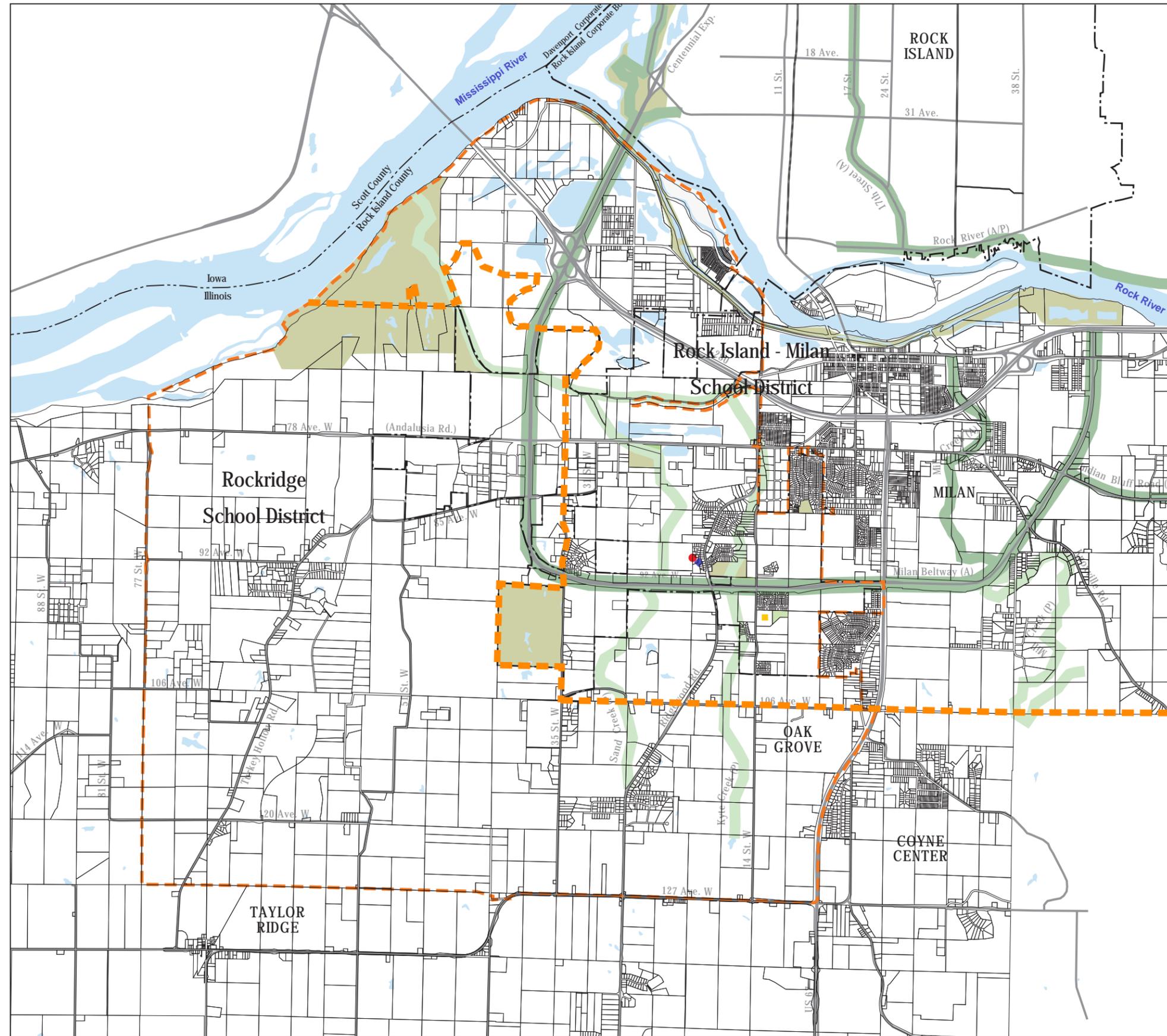
Data Source:
 Rock Island County G.I.S. Department, March 2000
 USGS Digital map, Horizontal Technology, Inc. 1997



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Fig. 6. Community Facilities



Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- Rock Island Corporate Boundary
- School District Boundary

Community Facilities

- School
- Library
- Fire Station

Greenways (Proposed by Comprehensive Greenway Plan)

- Passive Greenways (P)
- Active Greenways (A)
- Parks

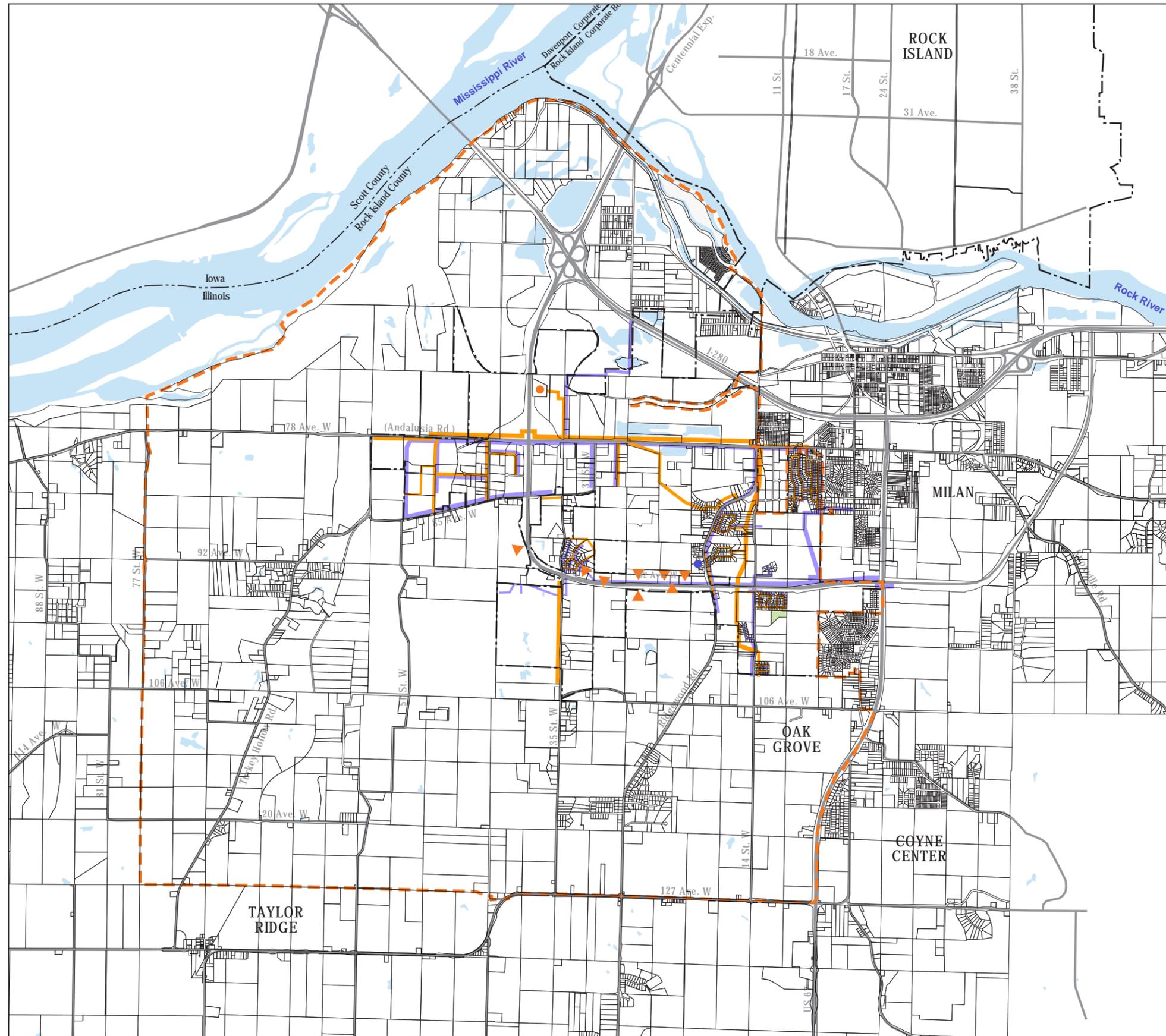
Data Source:
 Rock Island County G.I.S. Department, March 2000
 Comprehensive Greenway Plan Map, May 1997
 Illinois Quad Cities Metropolitan Area Greenway Coalition



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Fig. 7. Infrastructure



Legend

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Rock Island Corporate Boundary
- Infrastructure**
-  Water Tower
-  Sewage Treatment Plant
-  Existing and Planned Public Water Lines
-  Existing and Planned Public Sewer Lines
-  Approved Access Points (92nd Ave. W.)

Data Source:
 Rock Island County G.I.S. Department, March 2000
 City of Rock Island



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3.0 VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 VISION STATEMENT



The Rock Island community recognizes a strategic opportunity to “design” the future of its Southwest Area: a future of economic prosperity and outstanding quality of life, in a setting that incorporates natural features and amenities and accommodates lifestyle choices in urban, suburban, and country settings. This opportunity is expressed in the vision statement presented below.

The City and County will act to realize this future vision by setting high standards and by undertaking strategic investments through intergovernmental and public-private partnerships. Through these strategic actions, a momentum of investment, of development, and of public opinion will build incrementally in fulfillment of the vision.

Living the Southwest Rock Island Experience

The Southwest Rock Island of the future will set a new standard for community character in the Quad Cities, embracing livable neighborhoods linked by a network of outstanding community amenities in a setting of natural beauty. As Southwest Rock Island grows, it will:

- Respond to **development opportunities** uniquely suited to its special character and location within the Quad Cities region.
- Incorporate a balance of quality land uses, including:
 - **Residential development** offering choices for suburban and country living, complementing the opportunities available in historic Rock Island neighborhoods
 - **Clean industrial and business development** providing jobs and economic vitality
 - **Commercial retail development** serving local needs
 - **Natural areas, scenic open spaces, and agriculture** maintaining the community’s heritage and character.

- Structure the community with “form-givers” that enhance the area’s identity and sense of place, comprising:
 - **Connections:** scenic roadways, trails, and greenways along forested ravines, streams, and other water features, that link neighborhoods and land uses together and to the City and the region
 - **Community amenities:** parks, golf courses, community facilities, and natural areas that contribute to an outstanding quality of life
 - **Focal points:** retail, civic, and other centers that act as a focus of community activity, identity, and neighborliness.

The realized vision of livable neighborhoods and economic vitality in a scenic setting, combined with the convenience of location, excellent services, and amenities, will produce **added value** and a **community identity** that distinguishes Southwest Rock Island within the Quad Cities.

3.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Land Use and Development

Goal

Promote quality development and a balance of land uses appropriate to Southwest Rock Island’s distinctive character.

Objectives

- Encourage clean industrial and business uses that contribute to building an image as a quality employment center.
- Encourage housing types, prices, and patterns of development that provide a range of choices for residential living.
- Encourage retail and service uses in designated locations to serve local needs and provide focuses of community identity.
- Preserve natural areas, scenic open spaces, and agricultural land within the pattern of development.
- Enact standards and incentives to encourage quality in new developments.

Natural Environment

Goal

Protect Southwest Rock Island’s sensitive natural features,

including steep slopes, woodlands, water, and floodplains.

Objectives

- Enact standards and incentives to encourage preservation of sensitive natural resources.
- Establish a system of greenways along streams and other linear corridors to protect natural features and processes and provide walking/biking trail connections throughout Southwest Rock Island.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Goal

Provide community facilities and infrastructure in a cost-effective manner that promotes desirable types and patterns of development and enhances quality of life.

Objectives

- Provide high-quality parks and other community facilities to meet current and future needs of residents.
- Provide an attractive, well-maintained road network that accommodates projected levels of traffic, enhances connectivity internally within Southwest Rock Island and externally to the City and region, and respects natural and visual resources.
- As permitted by costs, extend water and sewer service to serve desired locations and types of development.
- Work with private providers to install telecommunications infrastructure needed to attract businesses and homebuyers.

Image and Identity

Goal

Establish a positive image and distinctive identity for Southwest Rock Island within the Quad Cities region.

Objectives

- Create the perception of a lifestyle and character unique within the region.
- Through a combination of public and private investment, establish physical connections (e.g., scenic roadways and greenways) and focal points (e.g., parks and retail centers) that help tie the community together, provide centers of activity, and enhance the area's identity.
- Market Southwest Rock Island as an attractive location for

development.

- Work with local, regional, and state governments and organizations to promote realization of the vision, goals, and objectives for Southwest Rock Island.

4.0 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN



Undeveloped land in Southwest Rock Island

This chapter describes the proposed future pattern of land uses and development in Southwest Rock Island. The Future Land Use Plan is designed to support the vision, goals, and objectives defined in Chapter 3.0 by specifying the proposed types, locations, and character of future land uses. Section 4.1 presents a proposed future development concept for the area, based upon the opportunities and constraints identified in Chapter 2.0. Section 4.2 identifies in more detail the proposed future locations and characteristics of different types of land uses, including employment, residential, commercial, and open space/public uses. Finally, Section 4.3 provides an overview of conceptual design guidelines intended to encourage new developments with a character and quality that distinguish Southwest Rock Island within the Quad Cities region. (These guidelines are presented in more detail in Appendix A.) The regulatory modifications recommended in Chapter 6.0 and the design guidelines constitute the core of the implementation phase of this plan, ensuring that the vision, goals, and objectives articulated in Chapter 3.0 will in fact be realized as Southwest Rock Island develops.

4.1 DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Opportunities and constraints for development in Southwest Rock Island related to physical factors (natural landscape features and man-made infrastructure) are described in detail in Chapter 2.0. These opportunities and constraints can be summarized as follows:

- Most of the flat valley land north of Andalusia Road contains wetland and/or is located within the 100-year floodplain. Most of this area is best suited for open space/conservation uses, although some development is possible in locations that do not contain wetland.
- The flat valley land south of Andalusia Road is well suited for industrial development, although soil conditions may increase the cost of construction.
- The presence of steep slopes and stream corridors make conventional development difficult in much of the upland

area to the south. These conditions are especially prevalent in the area to the west of 35th Street West.

- Much of Southwest Rock Island is unserved by public water and sewer. Topography and drainage patterns increase the cost of extending public water and sewer to unserved areas.
- While Southwest Rock Island’s abundant natural resources (open water, wetlands, floodplain, woodlands, steep slopes, stream corridors, etc.) pose constraints for development, they can also be viewed as significant natural amenities that create opportunities for new types of development that could establish a distinctive niche in the Quad Cities market. If sensitively handled, these environmental constraints can add value to the resulting residential product.
- I-280, Route 92/92nd Avenue West (currently known as the Centennial Expressway/Milan Beltway), and 78th Avenue West (Andalusia Road) provide excellent regional access from Southwest Rock Island to the rest of the Quad Cities. 92nd Avenue West has the character of a “parkway” due to its “green” edges, which should be retained as adjoining properties are eventually developed. Together with Route 92, it creates the potential for a visually attractive link between downtown Rock Island and its southwest area (the “Rock Island Parkway”).
- The Hennepin Canal, Rock Island Parkway, and several stream corridors are designated in the *Comprehensive Greenway Plan for the Illinois Quad Cities Metropolitan Area*, suggesting that they could be conserved as open space amenities comprising part of a regional greenway system. Other streams in the area could also become part of the greenway system.

Development opportunities and constraints in Southwest Rock Island are shown on Figure 8. Included are several “opportunity” sites that appear to be particularly good candidates for development.

Figure 9 illustrates the proposed Future Development Concept for Southwest Rock Island. **This concept is designed to capitalize on the area’s strengths and to transform constraints such as steep slopes and stream corridors into assets for development.** Its major elements are to:

1. Organize future development around a **network of greenways and open spaces**, including stream corridors, steep slopes and woodlands, wetlands, and parks and



Pond at Highland Springs Golf Course



*Mississippi River greenway bicycle/
pedestrian trail*

recreation areas.¹ This network will preserve natural resources and processes, provide a “value-added” setting for development, and serve to interconnect neighborhoods and businesses through a system of trails.

2. Rename the Centennial Expressway and Milan Beltway as the **Rock Island Parkway**, with landscape enhancements and design guidelines designed to create a consistent visual character and link between downtown and Southwest Rock Island. Develop a continuous bicycle/pedestrian trail along the parkway as part of the greenway network.
3. Support development of a business or businesses oriented towards the interstate at the **I-280/Rock Island Parkway interchange**, as permitted by development constraints.
4. Improve the visual character of the Rock Island Parkway/Andalusia Road intersection, commensurate with its importance as the **primary gateway** to Southwest Rock Island. Encourage **quality retail development** at this intersection.
5. Develop the flat valley land on the south side of Andalusia Road from Turkey Hollow Road to the west for **employment-related uses**, including light industrial and office development in a “campus-like” setting.
6. Pursue **opportunities for non-residential development and redevelopment** along the rest of the Andalusia Road corridor, as permitted by wetland/floodplain constraints. Initiate a program to improve the visual character of this roadway through landscape enhancements and design guidelines.
7. In the upland area to the south, encourage development of **residential neighborhoods** in **open space settings**. Accommodate retail and office development in neighborhood-oriented, **mixed-use centers**. Designate the eastern and western portions for two different types of development, **compact** and **conservation** – each with a unique character – based upon the suitability of the land and the preservation of valued natural and scenic resources.

4.2 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The purpose of a Future Land Use Plan is to provide policy guidance for decisions regarding new development by the City and County. The Proposed Future Land Use Plan for

¹ Figure 9 shows, for illustrative purposes, the generalized location of a future greenway/open space network based upon topographic (steep slope) and stream location information taken from United States Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle maps.

Southwest Rock Island is illustrated in Figure 10. Consistent with the Development Concept described in Section 4.1, it indicates the preferred future locations of land uses in the following categories:

- Employment (Light Industrial, Office/Research)
- Residential (Medium Density, Low Density)
- Commercial
- Open Space/Public (Open Space/Conservation, Parks and Recreation, Other Public Uses)

These categories of uses are described in Sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.4, respectively.

Within the broad parameters for types and locations of uses set by the Future Land Use Plan, the intent of the Southwest Rock Island Plan is to define a new direction for future development through coordinated public policies and partnerships with the private sector. This direction is intended to enhance the character and quality of development, not by mandating certain approaches, but by providing flexibility within the land use categories, guidelines, and incentives for new and creative forms of development. For each of the major land use categories, design concept sketches have been prepared for illustrative purposes to show the types of development envisioned.

4.2.1 Employment Uses

The existing industrial development along the Andalusia Road corridor represents a significant part of the City of Rock Island's employment and tax base. The Future Land Use Plan designates two categories of employment-related uses: **Light Industrial** and **Office-Research**.

Light Industrial

This land use category is intended to provide for uses such as warehousing and distribution, light manufacturing and assembly, and corporate offices. The Future Land Use Plan designates most of the flat land along the southern side of Andalusia as Light Industrial, including both existing uses in the City to the east of Turkey Hollow Road and future uses in the County to the west of Turkey Hollow Road. Although much of the area in the City is currently zoned I-2 (Heavy Industrial), heavy industrial uses are for the most part absent, do not match current market demands, and are not compatible with the desired future character of Southwest Rock Island.

The flat, currently agricultural area to the west of Turkey Hollow Road represents the primary future expansion opportunity for this land use category. In promoting future development of this area, the City and County should seek not only large-scale warehouse/distribution uses similar to the Barjan and Thoms Proestler facilities to the east, but also corporate office/research uses that may be drawn to the attractive setting. Figure 11 indicates how a portion of this area might be developed with a combination of office and light industrial uses. These uses are provided in a campus-like setting that includes a man-made water feature/stormwater detention facility in the open space adjacent to a roadway. A commercial component with restaurants and shops that could serve nearby office workers and residents is suggested as part of a mixed-use development.

Office-Research

Modeled after the City’s proposed Office/Research Park and Technology Zoning District, the Office-Research land use category is intended to provide for low intensity office and employment uses in a “green/open space atmosphere conducive to quality development with the preservation of significant natural features.”² Lands designated for this use include:

- Properties along the north side of Andalusia located outside of designated wetlands, as permitted by floodplain constraints
- Properties on either side of the “Rock Island Parkway” just south of 85th Avenue West



Land on north side of Andalusia Road

The land on the north side of Andalusia Road is constrained by the presence of wetland and floodplain. However, opportunities exist for low-density office developments that preserve natural features as open space and site amenities. These opportunities should be pursued over the longer term as a secondary priority to development of the Light Industrial-designated land west of Turkey Hollow Road and south of Andalusia Road.

Unlike other lands designated for employment uses, the properties along the Rock Island Parkway are located on the rolling uplands located to the south of the flat valley lands. These uses are intended to serve as a transition between more intense industrial uses to the north and existing/proposed residential development to the south. Topographic conditions

² City of Rock Island Zoning Ordinance, Article XXIX – Office/Research Park and Technology District, Section 29.0, General Description (proposed)

suggest that the sites are most appropriately developed for low-density office/research uses that minimize disturbance of steep slopes and maintain a visual buffer along the Parkway.

In addition to the properties directly abutting the Rock Island Parkway, low-density office/research should be considered as a possible use in the area to the west. Bounded to the north by the valley/upland edge and to the south by 92nd Avenue West and a line along 92nd Avenue West extended, this area is predominantly designated for low-density residential use (see Section 4.2.2 below). However, compatible office/research uses should be considered on sites with adequate topography and road access and where utility issues can be addressed.

4.2.2 Residential Uses

Existing residential uses in Southwest Rock Island are mostly located in the higher land south of the Andalusia Road corridor and 85th Avenue West. This area also contains most of the developable land remaining in the study area. The Future Land Use Plan designates these areas for predominantly residential uses in two categories: **Medium-Density** and **Low-Density**.

Medium-Density Residential

Corresponding to the “compact development” area shown on Figure 9 (Proposed Development Concept), lands designated Medium-Density Residential extend from west of 35th Street West to the eastern boundary of the study area. Located partially within the present Rock Island corporate limits and partially within unincorporated Rock Island County, this area is characterized by relatively favorable topography and access to utilities compared with lands to the west. A mix of dwelling types (single-family, townhouses, condominiums/apartments) is envisioned in the area. Maximum permitted densities are proposed to be in the range of those allowed by the existing residential zoning districts, consistent with the constraints imposed by natural features such as steep slopes. New developments should incorporate open space as an amenity for residents, in both of two complementary ways: greenways that preserve sensitive natural features and more formal “village” greens, commons, or neighborhood parks.

Another important feature of the Medium-Density Residential area is the provision of one or more centers with a mix of uses – retail, office, multi-family, and possibly public/institutional – to serve as focuses of activity and community identity for residents. The potential locations of two such mixed-use centers are shown on Figure 9. From the standpoint of location,



Example of a “neighborhood common”

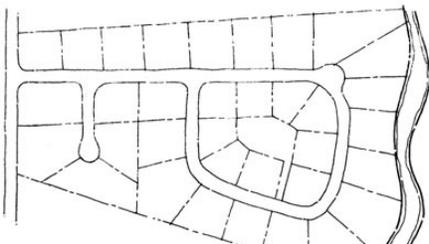
accessibility, and topographic conditions, the best candidate site is located at the intersection of 35th Avenue West with the Rock Island Parkway, across from the Highland Springs Municipal Golf Course. A second potential mixed-use center, which likely would be developed in the longer term as the surrounding area is built out with residential development, is located to the south on the west side of Ridgewood Road.

For illustrative purposes, Figure 12 shows the conceptual layout of a mixed-use center with surrounding residential development. Care has been taken in the preparation of this layout to enhance the development value and potential return on investment through sensitive design and the provision of amenities. The conceptual site program includes retail stores, offices, and apartments in the center; an adjacent office park; townhouses; and single-family residences. A significant amount of open space is provided, including: 1) environmentally sensitive features (steep slopes and drainageways) preserved in their natural condition and 2) central commons and smaller neighborhood greens within the development areas. Most of the residential lots back onto open space or face it across the street, significantly increasing their livability and marketability. Pathway connections are provided from the development to the open space, including a connection to a regional greenway in the southeast corner of the site.

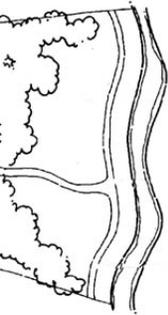
Low-Density Residential

The Low-Density Residential category corresponds to the “conservation development” area shown on Figure 9, extending west of the Highland Springs Municipal Golf Course to the western study area boundary. This area is located entirely within Rock Island County. With the exception of peripheral locations along the western and southern study area boundaries, the area is topographically dissected by numerous stream corridors and associated steep slopes. Another development constraint is the relative remoteness of water and sewer service compared to the compact development area to the east.

Because of its uneven terrain, utility constraints, and locational attributes, this area is proposed for single-family residential development at relatively low densities (one unit per acre maximum, consistent with the current Agricultural and Suburban Estate zoning that covers almost the entire area). In order to preserve sensitive natural features and provide an attractive residential setting, new developments should incorporate principles of **conservation development**.



Endorsed both by environmental interests and development organizations such as the National Homebuilders Association, conservation development is a “win-win” approach that has been successfully used in communities throughout the country to accommodate development while preserving open space. Conservation development rearranges and clusters development so as to set aside a substantial amount of the property (typically 50 percent or more) as permanently protected open space, while maintaining the overall permitted density on the tract. In a zone allowing one unit per acre, for example, 50 percent or more of the property could be preserved as open space if the homes were sited on lots one-half acre or less in size. In general, conservation subdivisions are designed to have clusters of homes and roadways in patterns consistent with natural site conditions. Typically, open space in large private yards is traded for much larger, shared open space that flows through and links subdivisions. The open space is retained in perpetuity as greenways, trails, woodlands, pastures, or other uses that maintain open, scenic character and contribute to the quality of life of residents. The open space can be owned in common by a homeowners’ association, be dedicated as land or easements to the municipality or a private conservation organization, or be placed in private ownership for compatible commercial purposes, such as agricultural land or equestrian facilities.



Specific benefits of conservation development include:

- It provides open space and recreational amenities for residents, increasing the value of the development. Studies have demonstrated that homes in conservation subdivisions typically have higher resale value than those in conventional subdivisions.
- The more compact development patterns allowed by conservation development reduce the amount of streets and utilities, reducing initial site improvement (developer) costs and long-term (taxpayer) costs for maintenance and services.
- It improves the visual quality of new development as seen from public roads by facilitating the maintenance of “green” buffers.
- It preserves open space for the community at little expense to the taxpayer while creating enhanced value for developers. With proper planning and design, the open space can form part of an inter-connected, community-wide system of parks, greenways, and trails.

Particularly in the area designated Low-Density Residential, Southwest Rock Island is ideally suited for conservation



Examples of conservation development. 40 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

development. The steep slopes, woodlands, and stream corridors that make conventional subdivisions difficult if not impracticable throughout most of the area can be transformed into assets by development that preserves these features as open space. Whereas the existing county zoning restricts lot sizes to one acre, allowing smaller lots will permit development to be clustered away from sensitive natural features.³

Figure 13 shows how a property in the Low-Density Residential area could be developed using conservation development principles. This property is characterized by especially severe constraints, including steep slopes and a stream corridor that bisects the tract, rendering much of it unbuildable. These constraints lend themselves to an approach that provides large, high value, “country estate” lots, perhaps catering to corporate executives. In other situations, smaller lots that establish higher overall densities could be appropriate, depending upon the configuration of the individual properties.

It should be noted that the conservation development approach is not limited to the area designated Low-Density Residential on the Future Land Use Plan. The illustrative concept for the Medium-Density Residential area shown in Figure 12 incorporates conservation development principles in the form of designated open space and greenways. As previously noted, access to utilities is relatively easier and topographic constraints tend to be less severe in that area. Greater flexibility for development on smaller lots (including attached and multi-family housing) is highly desirable to preserve open space, which enhances livability, marketability, and economic value.

4.2.3 Commercial Uses

City officials have identified increasing Rock Island’s commercial tax base as an important objective. Southwest Rock Island currently lacks any significant commercial/retail development, a condition primarily attributable due to the area’s small population base and the presence of established commercial uses in other communities (see Section 2.2). The Future Land Use Plan designates several locations for future retail development. These locations are:

³ Assuming that development will be served by private septic systems and wells, lot sizes could be reduced to 20,000 square feet under county health regulations. Flexibility in these regulations, as they exist or as they might be modified, could allow individual sewage disposal fields to be located off the lot, within the common open space (see Section 5.3).

- Property in the southeast quadrant of the I-280/Rock Island Parkway interchange (the portion located outside of designated wetland and floodplain). In the future, this property could potentially be developed for a business or businesses (e.g., a hotel) oriented towards the interstate if issues related to access and utility service can be resolved.⁴
- Properties north of Andalusia Road on either side of the Rock Island Parkway intersection (the portion located outside of designated wetland). Because of their high visibility, these properties could be developed for highway-oriented retail uses if justified by market demand. The property on the west side of the intersection provides the more viable opportunity because it is currently undeveloped. The properties on the east side of the intersection currently support industrial uses which conceivably could be redeveloped for commercial/retail uses over the long term. Floodplain issues would need to be resolved for development on either side of the intersection.
- Property in the southeast quadrant of the Rock Island Parkway/35th Street West intersection that is currently zoned for commercial use. A designated mixed-use center with visibility from the Parkway, this property offers good potential for commercial development.
- Property at the eastern edge of the study area on the south side of the Rock Island Parkway, near its intersection with U.S. Route 67.

An existing commercial establishment in the southeast quadrant of the Rock Island Parkway/85th Avenue West intersection is also designated for commercial use on the Future Land Use Plan.

In addition to the commercial locations shown on Figure 10, neighborhood-oriented retail uses could be developed as part of a future mixed-use center or centers in the compact development (Medium Density Residential) area. As conceptually shown on Figure 11, retail uses could also be incorporated into office/ employment-related developments.

Figure 14 provides an illustrative example of how property at the Andalusia Road/Rock Island Parkway intersection might be developed for retail uses. The conceptual program includes two large “super-stores” and smaller retail establishments. In keeping with the importance of the site at the “gateway” to

⁴ This property has been proposed as a potential site for relocating Casino Rock Island. While the Southwest Rock Island Plan takes no position on this proposal, it could be a compatible use, particularly if it includes a hotel.

Southwest Rock Island and the objective of setting a high standard of quality for new development, the concept incorporates design features to enhance views from adjacent roadways. The concept maintains wetlands but assumes development on portions of the property within the 100-year floodplain.

A market feasibility study for retail development has not been prepared for this plan. However, it must be emphasized that retail development is not likely to occur in Southwest Rock Island in the absence of sufficient market demand provided by an established residential population base. Thus the establishment of viable retail uses should be viewed as a longer range proposition that will follow after a sustained period of residential development.

4.2.4 Open Space/Public Uses

The Future Land Use Plan designates land for open space and public uses in the following categories:

- The **Open Space/Conservation** category includes designated wetlands north of Andalusia Road.
- The **Parks and Recreation** category includes existing City of Rock Island parks.
- The **Other Public** category includes other existing public uses, such as Ridgewood Elementary School and the Southwest Branch Library.

As noted on the Future Land Use Plan, additional open space should be protected within areas designated for future development, in the form of a greenway network comprised of stream corridors, steep slopes, and woodlands (see Figure 9). These lands would be permanently dedicated as open space through application of the conservation development principles described in Section 4.2.2.

In addition, over the long term, additional land will need to be acquired for parks/recreation and other public uses as the population of Southwest Rock Island grows.

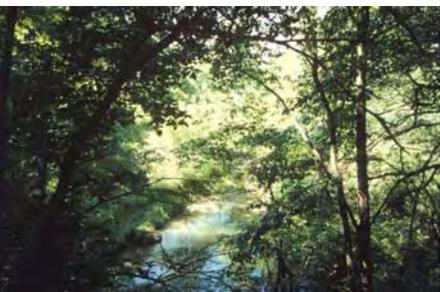
4.3 DESIGN GUIDELINES

Conceptual design guidelines have been developed to provide property owners, developers, and the City with the “tools” to achieve development consistent with the vision, goals, and objectives for the future growth of Southwest Rock Island.

These guidelines are presented in detail in Appendix A. The guidelines are organized into four sections:

1. General Environmental Standards
2. Employment Uses
3. Residential Uses
4. Commercial Uses

General Environmental Standards



This section addresses the protection of natural resources throughout Southwest Rock Island. Key provisions include:

- Protect stream corridors and wetlands from disturbance
- Minimize disturbance to intact woodlands
- Adapt the design of the development to the natural terrain; avoid development on slopes greater than 25%
- Provide dedicated open space to protect sensitive natural resources, to be accessible to the largest practicable number of lots within the development, and to connect to greenway corridors on adjacent properties
- Maintain scenic views from public roadways

Employment Uses

This section contains guidelines for developments in the Light Industrial and Office-Research areas shown on the Future Land Use Plan. Key provisions include:

- To the maximum extent possible, provide minimum 200' open space buffers between public roads and large buildings in the Light Industrial area. Plant trees in front of large, unarticulated building facades that face the road
- To the maximum extent possible, provide minimum 100' open space buffers between public roads and buildings in the Office-Research area
- Locate large parking and other vehicular use areas to the side and rear of buildings rather than between buildings and public roads
- Integrate open space and natural features into the pattern of the development



Residential Uses

This section contains guidelines for developments in the Medium-Density and Low-Density Residential areas shown on the Future Land Use Plan. Key provisions include:

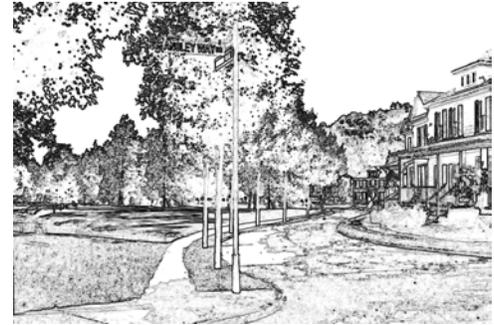


Medium-Density Residential (Compact Development)

- Provide mixed-use centers with a variety of residential and commercial uses, a distinctive character and sense of community, and an interconnected street network. The guidelines address the design of blocks, street networks, common open space, mixed-use cores, and the distribution of dwelling types and densities.
- Provide a mix of housing types, lot areas, and lot widths
- Maximize the number of housing units that back up on to open space or face it across the street
- Encourage side-loaded garages or deep setbacks for front-loading garages serving single-family detached dwellings
- Encourage alley-loaded garages for townhouses
- Encourage rental apartments above commercial uses in mixed-use cores
- Use measures such as buffers and screening to avoid potential conflicts with existing uses (e.g., apartment buildings next to single-family residences)

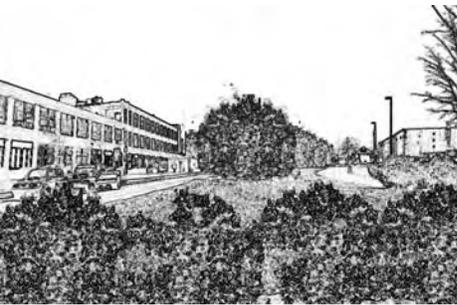
Low-Density Residential (Conservation Development)

- Organize development and lot layouts around interconnected greenways
- Provide a variety of lot sizes and varied front setbacks appropriate to the topography and other natural features
- Provide “foreground meadows” or other form of landscape buffer at least 100’ wide between public roads and development lot lines
- Design roadways to standards appropriate to the low-density, “country” context (standard asphalt paving but narrower roadway widths, alternatives to concrete curb and gutter, etc.)
- Encourage side-loaded garages or deep setbacks for front-loading garages serving single-family detached dwellings



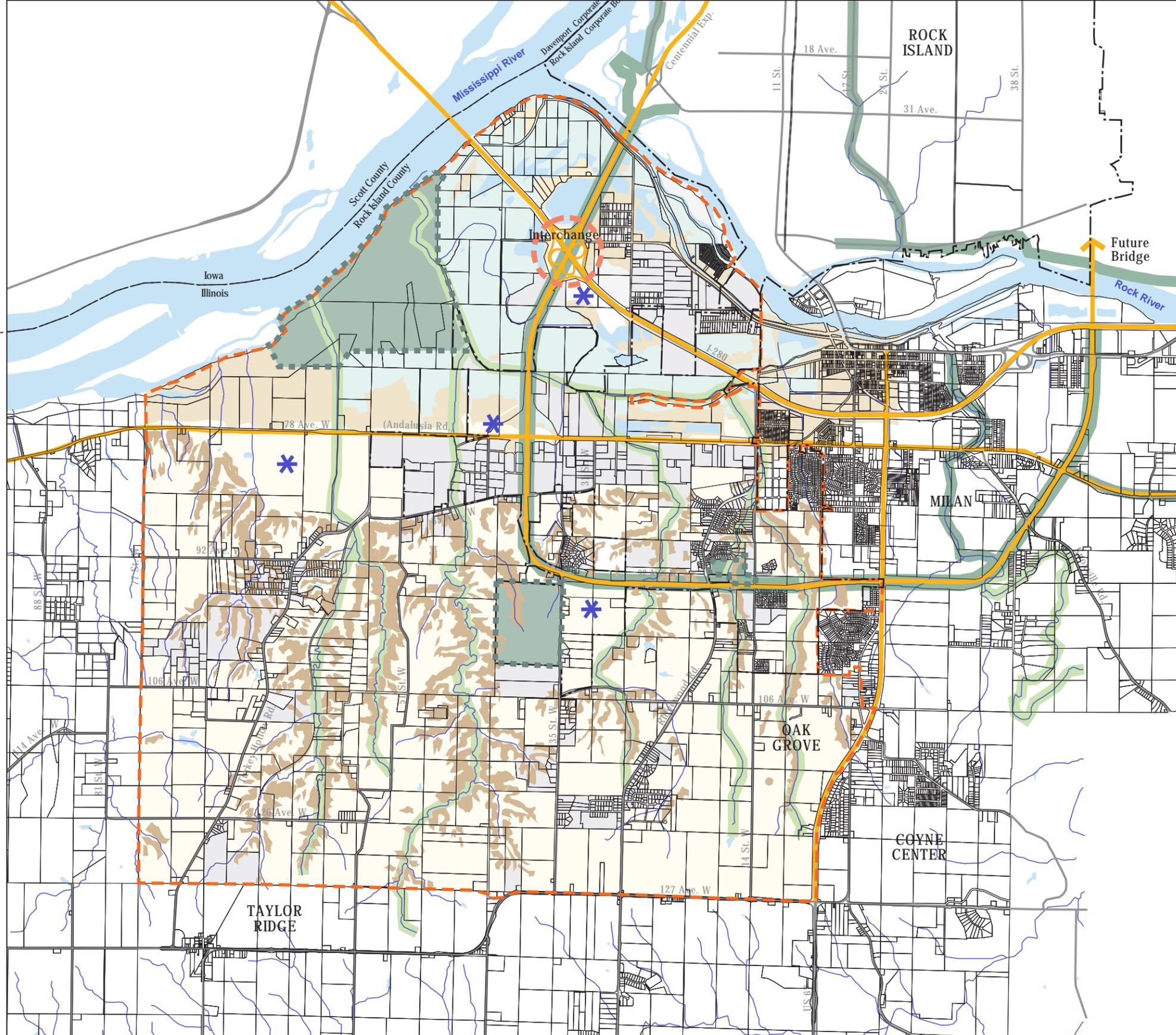
Commercial Uses

This section contains guidelines for developments in the Commercial areas shown on the Future Land Use Plan. Key provisions include:



- Provide landscaped buffers between larger commercial structures and public streets
- Locate smaller commercial structures close to streets with sidewalks and tree plantings
- Locate large parking areas to the side and rear of buildings rather than between buildings and public streets
- Integrate open space and natural features into the pattern of the development

Fig. 8. Development Opportunities and Constraints



- Legend**
- Study Area Boundary
 - Rock Island Corporate Boundary
- Natural Features**
- Wetlands
 - 100-Year Floodplain (Outside of Wetlands)
 - Steep Slopes (slope > 15%)
 - Streams
- Corridors**
- Primary Roadway Corridors
 - Potential Greenway Corridors (Passive/Active)
- Land Uses**
- Major Open Space Uses
 - Other Existing Land Uses
 - Potential Development Areas
 - Development Opportunity Sites

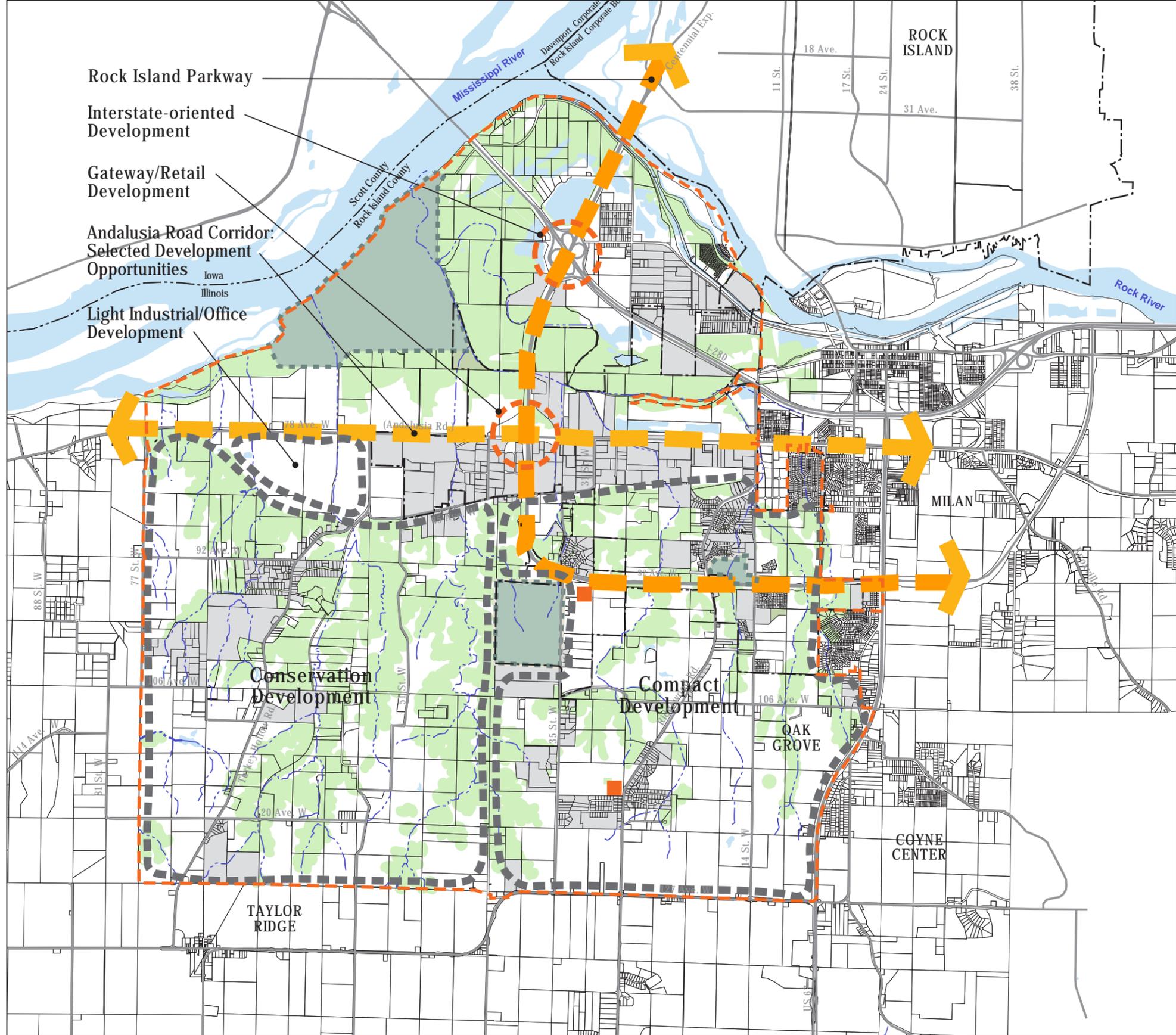
Data Source:
 Rock Island County G.I.S. Department, March 2000
 City of Rock Island



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Fig. 9. Proposed Development Concept



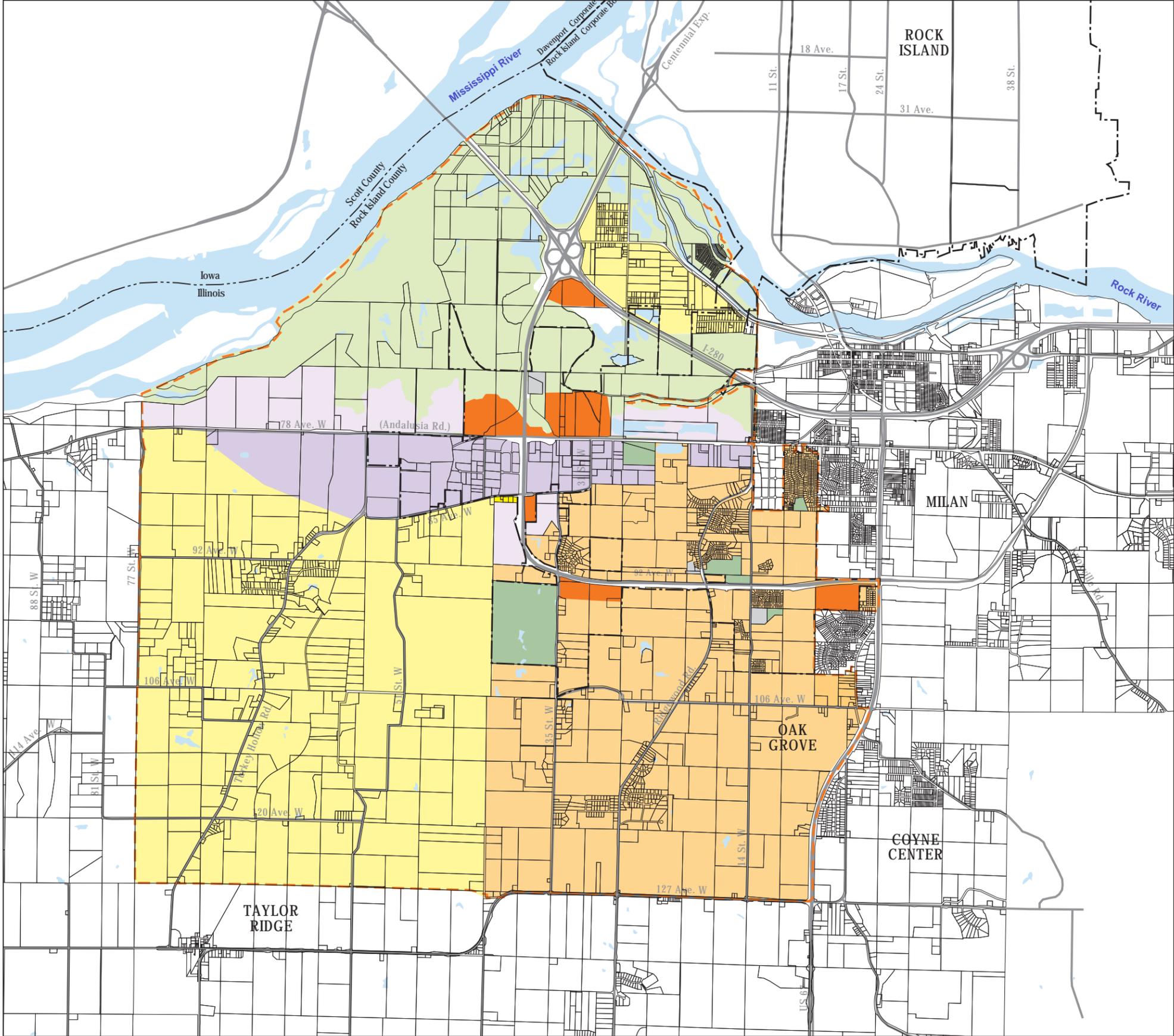
- Legend**
- Study Area Boundary
 - Rock Island Corporate Boundary
 - Greenway/Open Space Network (Generalized Location)
 - Major Roadway Corridor
 - Mixed Use Center
 - Major Existing Parks
 - Existing Development



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Fig. 10. Future Land Use Plan



Legend

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Rock Island Corporate Boundary
-  Low-Density Residential
-  Medium-Density Residential
-  Commercial
-  Office/Research
-  Light Industrial
-  Open Space/Conservation
-  Parks and Recreation
-  Other Public

Notes:

1. Open Space/Conservation uses shall also be protected within areas designated for future development, in the form of a greenway network of stream corridors, wetlands, steep slopes, and woodlands.
2. Additional land will need to be acquired in the future for parks/recreation and other public uses as Southwest Rock Island grows.
3. Low-density office/research uses may be permitted within the area designated Low-Density Residential north of 92nd Avenue W. and 92nd Avenue W. extended in accordance with Section 4.2.1 of the Plan.
4. Mixed-use centers may be permitted within the area designated Medium-Density Residential in accordance with Section 4.2.2 of the Plan.



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Fig. 11. Illustrative Office/Light Industrial Development

Total Site Area:	62 acres
Open Space:	15.2 acres (46% of total)
Office Space:	290,000 sf
Warehouse and Distribution:	160,000 sf
Commercial Space:	29,000 sf



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Fig. 12. Illustrative Compact Development

Total Site Area:	120 acres
Open Space:	53 acres (44% of total)
Environmentally Sensitive Areas:	42 acres
Public Parks:	11 acres

Site Program

Single Family	147 units
Townhouses	102 units
Apartments	50 units
Retail	45,000 sf
Mixed-Use	110,000 sf
Office	45,000 sf

0 250 ft 500 ft 750 ft



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Fig. 13. Illustrative Conservation Development

Total Site Area:	317 acres
Open Space:	225 acres (70% of total)
Environmentally Sensitive Areas:	203 acres
One-Acre to Two-Acre Lots:	47
Five-Acre Lots:	6



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Fig. 14. Illustrative Retail Development

Total Site Area:	160 acres
Open Space:	85 acres (53% of total)
Environmentally Sensitive Areas:	75 acres

Commercial Space:	250,000 sf
Super-stores:	225,000 sf
Smaller Stores:	25,000 sf



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5.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

5.1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES



Hasselroth Park



Ridgewood Elementary School

Southwest Rock Island contains a number of community improvements that serve area residents, including park and recreational facilities, a library, and an elementary school (see Section 2.5.1). These facilities are important to the future vision of Southwest Rock Island as a community with a quality of life and amenities that set it apart in the Quad Cities region. Thus the City should move forward with the projects in its Capital Improvement Plan to upgrade specific facilities.

In addition to upgrading existing facilities, the Capital Improvement Plan includes land acquisition projects to 1) expand the Alan Campbell Sports Complex and/or Highland Springs Golf Course and 2) establish additional parkland in new locations in Southwest Rock Island. Because the Sports Complex and Golf Course are the centers of recreational activity in this area, acquiring land to allow for expansion of the existing facilities makes good sense. The Sports Complex, in particular, is a regional recreational center and is experiencing increased demand for use of its ballfields. Improvements to these and other existing community facilities in the area should seek to enhance their roles as centers of community activity. Acquisition of parkland in new locations should be considered a longer-range proposition at the present time, for the following reasons:

- The current population is relatively small and appears to be adequately served by the existing facilities.
- Based upon recent trends, future population growth in the area will be slow. To counteract these trends, this plan proposes new forms of development as a way of encouraging quality growth. These new forms – termed “compact” and “conservation” development – include dedicated open space as part of the pattern of development, reducing the need for publicly acquired parkland.

Nevertheless, over the long term additional land will need to be acquired and/or developed for parks and recreation as the

population of Southwest Rock Island grows. In the future, this need could be met by:

- More intensive recreational development and utilization of McKay Park (potentially including acquisition of adjacent property, if available). Care should be taken to preserve the Kyte Creek greenway and associated steep slopes in conjunction with any such development.
- Expansion of Haymaker Park, which together with the adjacent Ridgewood Elementary School provides an existing focus of community activity. The City is currently exploring the possibility of acquiring additional land in the vicinity of this park.
- Development of public recreational uses on land acquired in the vicinity of Highland Springs Golf Course per the City's Capital Improvement Plan. Such facilities would complement the mixed-use center proposed at the intersection of 35th Street West with the "Rock Island Parkway."
- In the longer term, acquisition of property in the currently unincorporated area south of 106th Avenue West to serve as community parkland (similar to McKay Park) for future population growth. This could include one park within the Medium-Density Residential area and one park within the Low-Density Residential area. The parks should be located to take advantage of relatively level topography in order to maximize opportunities for active recreational facilities.

Similar to the discussion of new parks and recreation facilities above, the relatively small current population of Southwest Rock Island reduces the need to develop other community facilities in the short or mid term. For example, some stakeholders have observed that a middle or high school would greatly enhance the image and community identity of the area. Development of such a facility is dependent on achieving a critical mass of population as well as on school district planning, and thus is at best a long-term prospect. The Rock Island/Milan School District has, in fact, already acquired land in Milan to accommodate a future middle school. This plan makes no recommendations to change current school district plans or established school district boundaries.

With regard to the issue of open space preservation, it is recommended that establishment of a system of greenway corridors throughout Southwest Rock Island be pursued as a high priority. This system can be largely achieved through application of the conservation development principles described in Chapter 4.0. Public action will be necessary to set the stage for incremental development of the system over time as greenways are designated in private developments. As an

early action, the City should conduct a feasibility study for a pedestrian/bicycle trail along the Centennial Expressway/Milan Beltway (renamed the “Rock Island Parkway”), which will form the central spine of the system. (An illustrative concept for improvements to the Rock Island Parkway is shown in Figure 15.) Of particular concern from the standpoint of design feasibility are the connections across the Rock River from Sunset Park and Marina and across the I-280 interchange. Funds available through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) are a potential source of funding for this trail.

Questions were raised during the planning process about the extent to which the City of Rock Island would be responsible for ownership and maintenance of dedicated open space areas. As noted in Section 4.2.2, a range of ownership options are available. These include the local municipality and several private sector alternatives: a homeowners’ association, a business operator (in the case of a farm or other compatible commercial venture), or a non-profit land conservation organization. In most cases, the protected land remains in private ownership, as local governments tend to be reluctant to increase land ownership/maintenance responsibilities while developers tend to be reluctant to entrust care of land to the public sector. In selected situations (e.g., when the protected land will provide a link in an area-wide greenway trail system and associated maintenance costs will be moderate), municipal ownership may be the best solution if agreed to by both parties.

In most circumstances, an association of homeowners within the development is the preferred mechanism for management of dedicated open space. One of the keys to the success of a homeowners’ association is a relatively low dues schedule for members, which is achievable if facilities within the open space are kept simple and inexpensive to maintain. For example, at Echo Hill in Amherst, MA, where facilities include low-maintenance items such as woodland trails, a two-acre grassy common, a pond with a float or raft, two tennis courts, and a baseball diamond and backstop, annual dues rose from \$20 to only \$75 per family between 1969 and 1993.¹

Private, non-profit land conservation organizations could play an important role in developing a network of greenways in Southwest Rock Island. In communities throughout the country, locally based land trusts are preserving open space through outright purchase or the acceptance of gifts or

¹ Randall Arendt, *Rural by Design*. Chicago: American Planning Association, 1994, p. 247

easements on land. In Southwest Rock Island, a private land trust could accept ownership of or easements on open space lands within conservation subdivisions as part of an overall mission of greenway preservation. The Trust for Public Lands is a national organization that assists local communities on issues related to land conservation and open space protection. Another organization that helps communities specifically with establishing and operating land trusts is the Land Trust Alliance in Washington, DC. These organizations could be consulted for technical assistance in forming a private land conservation trust and undertaking other strategies to implement the greenway system.

5.2 ROAD NETWORK

The two roadways that are most important to the image of Southwest Rock Island are the Centennial Expressway/Milan Beltway (the “Rock Island Parkway”) and 78th Avenue West (Andalusia Road). Neither of these roadways is experiencing identified traffic capacity problems at the present time, although Andalusia Road should be monitored with regard to the potential need for widening to four lanes as future development increases the amount of traffic it conveys. The visual character of these two key roadways is of more immediate concern to the goal of creating a positive image and distinctive identity for Southwest Rock Island in the Quad Cities region. The City should take steps to maintain and improve the appearance of these roadways through: 1) investment in public landscape improvements and 2) attention to the character of adjacent private development.

With regard to landscape improvements, it is recommended that the City initiate a long-term program of planting trees along these two roadways. Particularly along Andalusia Road, a continuous tree canopy would help unify and enhance the attractiveness of a currently uneven visual environment. Species that will thrive in the bottomland soils and achieve a large size at maturity should be selected. Coordination with the Illinois DOT will be necessary for tree planting along the Rock Island Parkway north of Andalusia Road and Andalusia Road west of the Rock Island Parkway intersection (both segments of State Route 92). Also, the improvements to the Rock Island Parkway should be conceived as part of a unified design that seeks to enhance the image of the entire parkway corridor, including the connection to downtown Rock Island. In addition to tree plantings, improvements such as lighting, signage, and public art should be considered as part of this design.



Andalusia Road

The proposed landscape improvements should also include more intensive treatment of high visibility intersections. As the “gateway” to Southwest Rock Island, the Andalusia Road/Rock Island Parkway intersection is the highest priority for such treatment, including landscape plantings, signage, and other measures to reinforce Southwest Rock Island’s identity and connection to the City of Rock Island. Other intersections that could be considered for similar landscape improvements over time include:

- Rock Island Parkway/85th Avenue West²
- Rock Island Parkway/35th Street West
- Rock Island Parkway/Ridgewood Road
- Rock Island Parkway/14th Street West
- Rock Island Parkway/U.S. 67
- Andalusia Road/Ridgewood Road
- Andalusia Road/Turkey Hollow Road

With regard to adjacent private development, the County should strive to maintain the open, “green” character of presently undeveloped portions of the Rock Island Parkway and Andalusia Road by working with landowners and developers on the siting and design of new developments, using the design guidelines described in Section 4.3. Specific measures to be encouraged include the maintenance of existing green buffers (which are particularly striking along the Rock Island Parkway south of 85th Avenue West) and the provision of landscaped setbacks between proposed developments and the roadways. The locations of new access points should be properly spaced in accordance with accepted traffic management principles. Opportunities should also be sought to improve the visual character of existing development along Andalusia Road over time by encouraging infill and re-development that is consistent with the design guidelines.

Some stakeholders have identified the condition of secondary roads in Southwest Rock Island as a liability. Located in rural parts of the study area with little traffic, these roads typically lack shoulders, standard asphalt surfacing, etc. and may have segments with substandard horizontal or vertical alignments. The City’s Capital Improvements Plan contains several

² Improvements to 85th Avenue West from 31st Street West to Turkey Hollow Road are programmed in the Capital Improvement Plan, with engineering beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001/02 and construction in FY 2002/03 for the segment from the Rock Island Parkway to 51st Street West. These and similar roadway improvement projects should incorporate appropriate landscaping, pathway, and other improvements consistent with this plan.

roadway resurfacing/widening projects designed to address specific roadway segments that serve existing development within the city limits (see Section 2.5.2). Additional improvements to existing roads (e.g., widenings, turn lanes, and traffic signals in certain locations) will need to be phased over time as development in Southwest Rock Island proceeds. For example, development of a mixed-use center at the intersection of the Rock Island Parkway and 35th Street West as suggested in Section 4.2.2 will require improvements to a portion of 35th Street West. In this process, the City can target public investment in roadway improvements as an incentive to promote the types of development identified in this plan.

Because of the current light to moderate traffic levels, it is unlikely that construction of new roadways (other than local streets serving private developments) will be needed in the foreseeable future. As Southwest Rock Island builds out, however, the need for additional collector roads – particularly in the medium-density residential zone – will need to be monitored. Ideally, traffic circulation standards call for a spacing of approximately one-half mile between collector streets. While the current spacing of north-south roads, including 35th Street West, Ridgewood Road, and 14th Street, approaches this standard, topographic conditions have limited the development of east-west roadways. In the future, projects such as extending 85th Avenue West to the east to Ridgewood Road or 106th Avenue West to the west to 51st Street West may need to be considered depending upon the pattern and intensity of new development.

As with the two primary arterials (Rock Island Parkway and Andalusia Road), the “view from the road” is an important issue for Southwest Rock Island’s secondary roadways. At present, these roadways contribute greatly to the scenic character and “country” ambience of the area. As noted in Section 2.3, this character has been affected over the years by the piecemeal development of homes along roadways such as Ridgewood Road. The Illinois Plat Act limits the ability of municipal government to regulate the subdivision of individual lots along existing roads. Nevertheless, the City and County should attempt to encourage new developments that maintain the open, scenic character of Southwest Rock Island’s secondary roadways, through compact/conservation design options and other measures that preserve the “view from the road.”



View from Southwest Rock Island



Example of conservation subdivision with landscape buffer adjacent to roadway

5.3 SEWER AND WATER SERVICE

City policy regarding the provision of sanitary sewer and water service will be an important factor in shaping future development patterns in Southwest Rock Island. The City's Capital Improvement Plan designates funds for sewer and water extensions to serve future residential development in unspecified locations (see Section 2.5.2), indicating a commitment to investing in public sewer and water service as a strategy to promote development. Sewer and water improvements should be targeted to promote the types of development proposed for Southwest Rock Island in Section 4.2 (Future Land Use Plan), in particular:

- The area south of Andalusia Road and west of Turkey Hollow Road designated for light industrial/office development
- The area designated for “compact development” south of the Rock Island Parkway

The area to the west of Highland Springs Golf Course (designated for “conservation development” in Figure 9, Proposed Development Concept) is more difficult and expensive to serve with public water and (especially) sanitary sewer because of topographic conditions and the area's relative remoteness from existing utility lines. It is anticipated that this area will be developed at relatively low densities using on-site sewage disposal systems and wells, although opportunities to extend public water and sewer lines located adjacent to the area may exist and should be pursued if feasible to serve proposed developments. Over the long term, it may prove cost-effective to extend public water service throughout the area while continuing to rely on on-site sewage disposal systems. Use of alternative arrangements, such as sewage disposal fields or wells located in common open space areas, should be encouraged consistent with county and state health regulations where appropriate to facilitate conservation development options. Such systems could remain in individual ownership, thus avoiding the extra costs and complexities involved with shared facilities.

5.4 DEVELOPMENT SEQUENCING

“Development sequencing” refers to the locations in which new developments are constructed over time. Ideally, new development should occur immediately adjacent (contiguous) to existing development, moving outward in an orderly fashion in tandem with the extension of public facilities, including sanitary sewer and water lines and any required roadway improvements. As a general policy, the City should seek to

promote new development that is contiguous to existing developed areas through the targeted extension of public sewer and water lines, beginning with undeveloped properties located inside the existing corporate boundary. As development proceeds, the sewer and water service extensions should be tied to annexation of adjacent, unincorporated areas into the City as they are developed. Such sequencing of development will promote the efficient provision of municipal utilities and services. Because of its more favorable topography, location within or near the current city limits, and relative proximity to existing utilities, the “compact development” area is designated as one of two priority development and annexation areas in Southwest Rock Island. The second is the area south of Andalusia Road and west of Turkey Hollow Road that is designated for light industrial/office development.³

Within this overall policy guideline, the City (and County) should pursue opportunities for new development throughout Southwest Rock Island, provided that the development will contribute to the desired future character of the area, as defined by the principles and guidelines described in Chapter 4.0. Examples include “conservation” developments in the designated low-density residential area west of the Highland Springs Golf Course or “compact” developments located east of 35th Street West that do not border existing development (provided that it is feasible to extend public utilities in the latter case). Thus the approach to development sequencing should incorporate flexibility where appropriate to capitalize on project-specific opportunities that can set the tone for and generate additional momentum for development in Southwest Rock Island.

³ It should be noted that any and all future annexations in Southwest Rock Island will follow the requirements of Illinois annexation law. State law mandates the consent of a majority of the affected property owners and electors, with the specific requirements depending upon the type of annexation proceeding. Voluntary annexations and pre-annexation agreements between the City and property owners are among the types of annexation permitted by state statute. Annexation initiated unilaterally by the City is not contemplated nor is it possible under Illinois law.

6.0 ACTION PLAN



Highland Springs Golf Course

Plans are turned into reality by taking action. It is recommended that the City of Rock Island and its partners with a stake in the future of Southwest Rock Island initiate the following types of actions to implement this plan:

- Regulatory Changes
- Public Investment
- Marketing
- Intergovernmental Coordination

This chapter describes the actions that are recommended in each of the above categories.

6.1 REGULATORY CHANGES

Changes to current development regulations will be necessary to enable the types of development envisioned in this plan. **These changes, particularly in the areas designated for “compact” and “conservation” development, are not intended to affect established property rights or to mandate particular forms of development.** Instead, the proposed changes are designed to provide flexibility and incentives for the types of development envisioned by this plan.

The following specific changes to regulations are proposed. These changes should be adopted through the processes governing revisions to the existing Illinois Quad Cities Subdivision Ordinance and the proposed Unified Zoning Ordinance for the City and County of Rock Island (currently undergoing review for adoption).

1. **Add a “yield plan” provision to the Subdivision Ordinance for the purpose of calculating permitted densities.** Under the present zoning regulations, which were originally written for “flat land” conditions, permitted densities are determined by minimum lot sizes (e.g., 7,500 square feet in the R-1 zone). No allowance is made for environmental constraints (e.g., steep slopes) that may render development impracticable in some locations. A yield plan provision would require proposed subdivision

layouts to reflect a realistic development pattern that could reasonably be expected to be implemented, taking into account the presence of steep slopes, wetlands, stream corridors, etc. Requirements minimizing development on slopes between 15% and 25% and prohibiting development on slopes greater than 25% should be included.

In a related change to the Subdivision Ordinance, it is recommended that the optional “Pre-filing Conference” (Section 4-1 in the current ordinance) be changed to a “Conceptual Sketch Plan” procedural step. This step would entail submission of 1) an “Existing Resources and Site Analysis” map and 2) a sketch plan of the proposed development. Building on current requirements for Preliminary Plats, the Existing Resources and Site Analysis Map would delineate sensitive natural features on the site (15-25% slopes, slopes greater than 25%, wetlands, significant wooded areas, etc.). The sketch plan would be prepared on tracing paper as an overlay to the Existing Resources and Site Analysis Map, delineating the general locations of proposed roads, building lots, and greenways. The proposed greenway lands should be based upon the natural features shown on the Existing Resources and Site Analysis Map, and should be used to provide a framework for the layout of roads and building lots. As part of the Conceptual Site Plan process, a site visit should be scheduled to allow the applicant and city representatives of the City to view the site together.

2. **Incorporate two new districts, Compact Development and Conservation Development, into the Zoning Ordinance.** Corresponding to the Medium-Density Residential and Low-Density Residential categories shown on the Future Land Use Map, these districts would not preclude conventional types of development (e.g., one-family detached dwellings on lots with at least 7,500 square feet of unconstrained land and 75-foot widths in the R-1 zone). Instead, they would function as regulatory options that provide landowners and developers with incentives to pursue the types of development described in Section 4.2.2. These incentives would include:

- Increased density tied to the amount of open space provided. The base density would be derived from a net yield plan drawn to show a realistic development pattern under the existing zoning and taking into account environmental constraints such as steep slopes. Densities would be allowed to increase above the base on a “sliding scale” as the amount of permanently

dedicated open space increases, up to a realistic maximum.

- Relaxation in minimum lot area and width requirements to achieve the increased densities.
- In selected locations and subject to performance standards to avoid conflicts with established uses, allowance for a wider range of housing types (e.g., townhouses and multi-family dwellings in districts zoned for one-family detached dwellings). In addition, some non-residential uses would be permitted subject to standards in mixed-use centers proposed in the Compact Development District.

As an example of the way in which these incentives would work, imagine a hypothetical parcel in the R-1 zone with a net yield that is constrained by the presence of steep slopes associated with a stream corridor. By selecting the Compact Development overlay option, the property owner could increase the overall density of the development while providing substantial open space and community amenities through a plan that provides a mix of lot sizes and housing types that would not be permitted in the R-1 zone. (This mix would include some lots smaller than 7,500 square feet and some townhouses and condominiums in addition to one-family detached dwellings.)

3. **Develop the conceptual design guidelines presented in Appendix A into standards to be used in the review of proposed developments.** The existing Zoning Ordinance generally lacks standards to govern the visual character of new development. An important part of the vision for the future of Southwest Rock Island is the idea that improving the quality of development will contribute to making the area a desirable place to live, work, and shop in the Quad Cities region. The proposed standards are not intended to increase the expense of new developments (e.g., by requiring the use of particular materials or architectural styles). Rather, they are designed to positively influence development character, effects on community resources, and contributions to quality of life through basic site planning principles, such as preserving sensitive natural features and addressing the views of developments from public roads. The standards would need to be adopted in conjunction with site plan review provisions for all new developments in Southwest Rock Island, perhaps handled administratively through staff of the City's Community and Economic Development Department. In the review process, staff would continue the City's established tradition of

working cooperatively with developers to achieve outcomes that benefit all parties.

4. **Institute a prohibition on billboards.** Maintaining and enhancing the visual character of Southwest Rock Island's roadways is important to create a positive image for the desired types of development. A prohibition on billboard signage along the area's roadways should be considered to help achieve this objective.

In addition to the above regulatory changes, some properties will need to be considered for rezoning if they are to be brought into conformance with the Future Land Use Plan. Examples within Rock Island's current corporate boundary include:

- The northeast and northwest quadrants of the "Rock Island Parkway"/78th Avenue West intersection (currently zoned mostly for industrial uses and designated for commercial use on the Future Land Use Plan)
- The area zoned I-2 (General Industrial) on the south side of 78th Avenue West (designated for light industrial use [i.e., I-1] on the Future Land Use Plan)

Most of the study area within unincorporated Rock Island County is presently zoned Rural Agricultural (AG-1) or Suburban Estates (SE). Consistent with current annexation procedures, agriculturally zoned properties designated on the Future Land Use Plan for more intensive uses such as Light Industrial (i.e., west along 78th Avenue West) and Medium-Density Residential (i.e., south of 92nd Avenue West) will be rezoned to the appropriate zoning categories as they are developed and provided with public utilities. Similar to the proposed process for the Medium-Density Residential area, the base density in the area designated for Low-Density Residential on the Future Land Use Plan will be set by a yield plan. The yield plan will show a realistic development pattern using the lot requirements of the current AG-1 and SE zoning (one-acre minimum size and 165 foot minimum width) and taking into account steep slopes and other environmental constraints. Incentives in the form of increased yield and smaller lot sizes and widths will be provided for subdivisions that incorporate conservation development principles.

6.2 PUBLIC INVESTMENT

The regulatory changes described in Section 6.1 are necessary but will not by themselves cause the types of development envisioned for Southwest Rock Island to take place. Generating

momentum for quality development will require proactive measures by the City of Rock Island, including financial incentives and investments in capital improvements, if property owners and developers are to be expected to pursue new forms of development in a currently “soft” real estate market. These measures should include a continuation of existing programs plus new public investments to promote desired development. Specific recommendations for public investment include:

1. **Continue to allocate funding for infrastructure improvements to support desired new types of development.** The City’s Capital Improvement Plan includes \$280,000 to extend the water distribution system and \$276,000 to extend sanitary sewers to serve unspecified future development in Southwest Rock Island. These funds should be targeted to support “compact developments” as described in Section 4.2.2. If allowed by budgetary constraints, the current appropriation should be augmented by additional funding if needed to help “close the deal” on a particularly promising development prospect.
2. **Continue to provide tax incentives for new development.** The City’s New Construction Tax Incentive Program provides annual rebates of up to \$1,500 in city property taxes and 40% of Rock Island-Milan School District taxes for three years following the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy on an owner-occupied new home constructed on any undeveloped house. While this program has not appreciably increased the rate of development in Southwest Rock Island, it should be continued as part of a package of incentives for new construction in the area. Consideration should be given to extending the program to cover other forms of new construction, such as multi-family dwellings and retail establishments.
3. **Continue to invest in improvements to existing community facilities in Southwest Rock Island.** The City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) includes projects to improve the Southwest Branch Library and to improve and expand parks located in Southwest Rock Island. These improvements should be given a high priority because of the importance of the facilities to the area’s quality of life. As described in Section 5.1, parkland acquisition and development should initially focus on enhancing the roles of existing parks as centers of community activity.

Of the park projects contained in the CIP, the proposed enhancements to the Highland Springs Golf Course should be considered a high priority because of the potential of the

golf course to act as a catalyst for new development in the vicinity. It is recommended that the City explore alternative scenarios for enhanced utilization of the golf course in relationship to the development potential of adjacent properties, including the possibility of land acquisition as proposed in the CIP.

4. **Invest in landscape improvements to Southwest Rock Island’s major roadway corridors.** The Rock Island Parkway and 78th Avenue West (Andalusia Road) are the corridors most important to the visual image of Southwest Rock Island. A phased program for landscape improvements to these corridors should be developed and implemented over time. The first priority is to develop and implement a unified design plan for the Rock Island Parkway, including a pedestrian/bicycle trail along the Rock Island Parkway to connect across the Rock River to the Sunset Park and Marina (see Section 5.2). This plan should include landscape plantings and other visual improvements at the Rock Island Parkway/Andalusia Road intersection (including an attractive sign with the new name for Southwest Rock Island – see Section 6.3 below).

5. **Consider acquiring a key property or properties for the purpose of soliciting development proposals.** The timely initiation of a “demonstration” project or projects that lead the way for further development is critical to generating momentum for successful implementation of the Southwest Rock Island Plan. Thus even if all the public sector actions outlined in this chapter are implemented, the success of the plan will still depend upon the willingness of a landowner or developer to come forward with a proposal for the desired type of development. The City could attempt to “jump start” this process by acquiring a suitable property or properties and then inviting developers to submit proposals for development. In so doing, the City would be able to set the development parameters while assuming some of the risk involved in a new product that is untested in the local market. Although this approach has some advantages, it is recommended that the City initially focus its efforts on encouraging and supporting private sector development through the other actions described in this chapter. Under this scenario, the city would pursue land acquisition only if the initial efforts prove unsuccessful in stimulating the desired types of development.

6.3 MARKETING

An aggressive marketing strategy by the City will be needed to dispel negative perceptions and “sell” the advantages of Southwest Rock Island as a desirable place for developers, businesses, and residents. Such an effort is already underway at the city-wide level (see discussion of the Rock Island Marketing Plan in Section 2.6). Implemented as part of the broader, city-wide marketing campaign, the strategy for Southwest Rock Island should pursue the following objectives:

- Educate the Quad Cities real estate and development community about the advantages of Southwest Rock Island and the value that is created by the types of development envisioned for the area by this plan.
- Target marketing efforts towards “niche” market segments that capitalize on Southwest Rock Island’s assets and meet demands that are currently unfilled in the Quad Cities market.

Specific recommendations include:

1. **Establish new names for Route 92/92nd Avenue West and Southwest Rock Island as a whole.** Throughout development of this plan, stakeholders asserted that names other than the “Milan Beltway” and “Southwest Rock Island” would better capture the essence of the area as well as peoples’ imaginations. As part of promoting a new identity, Route 92/92nd Avenue West (now called the Centennial Expressway/Milan Beltway) should be renamed the Rock Island Parkway. In addition, a new name (perhaps together with an attractive logo) for the area should be identified to replace “Southwest Rock Island.” The name and logo would then be used on all signage and marketing materials related to Rock Island’s Southwest Area.
2. **Develop materials to educate the public about the objectives of the Southwest Rock Island Plan and to promote the area as a desirable place for new development.** Materials could include an attractive color brochure, a dedicated page on the City’s web site, a PowerPoint slide show for making presentations to groups, and an exhibit for display at locations such as the Southwest Branch Library. The materials would draw on the text and graphics prepared for the Southwest Rock Island Plan and should be coordinated with the City’s overall Marketing Plan.
3. **Initiate an outreach program to the real estate and development community regarding the assets of Southwest Rock Island and the advantages of the types**

of development proposed in this plan. This program will have two primary purposes. The first is to counteract negative perceptions that may exist about the area and to inform realtors and others about the unfulfilled potential that exists. This effort should be coordinated with a broader outreach effort for the City of Rock Island as a whole. The second is to educate landowners, developers, and realtors about the value created by compact and conservation development forms. While these types of development are new to the Quad Cities market, there are numerous examples of successful developments throughout the country that have created greater value than conventional subdivisions. As part of the education effort, a tour could be arranged of a successful example or examples in the Midwest and/or a developer of one of these projects invited to the Quad Cities to speak on his experiences.

4. **Sponsor a feasibility study to more precisely define target markets for Southwest Rock Island.** The premise of the proposed marketing strategy is that Southwest Rock Island can best compete in the regional housing market by offering unique, “niche” products that take advantage of the quality of life the area offers. Examples include condominiums or townhouses catering to young families and empty nesters, houses abutting open space in conservation subdivisions, and “estate lots” for executives. A market study prepared by an economic or real estate consultant is recommended to more precisely define the parameters of these target niches in the context of the overall regional market. This study would allow the City to focus its marketing efforts and would provide a realistic basis for moving forward with a public/private development venture, if it chooses to do so.

6.4 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The future success of Southwest Rock Island will in large part be tied to the success of the Quad Cities region as a whole (see Section 2.8). Thus the City of Rock Island should take an active role in initiatives that seek to enhance economic development at the regional level and in which the Southwest Area can play a significant role by offering opportunities for quality residential and business development. The City will also need to work with its immediate neighbors on issues that transcend its current boundary. Recommended focuses of cooperative planning include:

- **Work with Rock Island County on coordinated strategies to implement the plan.** The most immediate priority is to incorporate the regulatory changes proposed in Section 6.1 into the new City/County Unified Development Ordinance. (The proposed changes to the Illinois Quad Cities Subdivision Ordinance will need to be coordinated with the other Illinois jurisdictions as well.) The City and County should also coordinate efforts to implement other policies and recommendations of the Southwest Rock Island Plan and the County's 1998 Land Use Plan pertaining to growth management, improvements to infrastructure and community facilities, etc.
- **Explore with Milan officials possibilities for interjurisdictional cooperation on issues of common concern.** Although Milan declined to participate with the City in this study, a number of issues addressed in the plan are of concern to both jurisdictions. Examples include the viability and image of commercial retail and other uses along Andalusia Road, the coordinated provision of public infrastructure and facilities, and the health of the Rock Island-Milan School District. As a first priority, it is recommended that the City, County, and Milan officials work to address land use and visual character issues along the Andalusia Road corridor.
- **Work with regional economic development agencies at the state and bi-state levels to address the objectives for development in Southwest Rock Island.** Agencies operating at the State of Illinois level include the Illinois Quad City Regional Economic Development Authority and the Illinois Quad Cities Intergovernmental Committee. The Quad Cities Development Group and the Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Commission operate at the bi-state level. The City should work with these agencies on ways to implement the Southwest Rock Island Plan, including identification of sources of funding for capital projects such as infrastructure improvements.

Two actions that will require a significant level of intergovernmental coordination are considered especially important to the future of Southwest Rock Island. These actions are:

1. **Plan for development of a greenway system throughout Southwest Rock Island as part of a regional network.** While it is anticipated that the proposed greenway system will be established largely through dedicated open space in private developments, the public sector will play an

important role in overall system planning and possibly in acquiring key greenway segments. To be successful, establishment of a greenway network in Southwest Rock Island cannot depend upon the efforts of the City (and County) alone. Instead, it must be part of a regional initiative that includes players such as the Bi-State Regional Commission and the Illinois Quad Cities Metropolitan Area Greenway Coalition.

As an early action in planning for a greenway system, it is recommended that the potential role of a private, non-profit land conservation trust in preserving open space in Southwest Rock Island and elsewhere in the region be explored. This could be an existing organization (if a suitable one exists) or a new one formed by citizens with the mission of promoting and acquiring open space and greenway lands in the Illinois Quad Cities. As noted in Section 5.1, assistance in setting up a new land trust could be sought from a national organization such as the Land Trust Alliance.

2. **Plan for improvements to telecommunications infrastructure needed to attract businesses and homebuyers.** As described in Section 2.5.2, the entire area south of the Rock River is hampered by the lack of telecommunications infrastructure adequate to meet current demands for access to and speed of data. Addressing this issue will require a partnership between the public sector and private providers to investigate opportunities to upgrade the existing infrastructure. Regional economic development entities will need to play an important role in this effort.

6.5 ACTION SCHEDULE

Sections 6.1 to 6.4 recommend a complex set of actions that are beyond the resources of the City and its partners to implement simultaneously. In addition, it will be necessary to initiate some actions relatively early to set the stage for subsequent implementation steps. Thus for the plan to be successful, a realistic program is needed to set priorities and provide guidance regarding the sequence in which the recommended actions are to be carried out. This program should include a process for monitoring progress made in implementing the plan over time and making any necessary “mid-course” corrections.

Table 1 provides a schedule for implementing the Southwest Rock Island Plan comprised of actions divided into two categories:

- **Immediate Actions:** Actions to be initiated within one year of plan adoption.
- **Short to Mid-Term Actions:** Actions to be initiated within two to five years of plan adoption.

The proposed schedule is ambitious in that it identifies a number of actions for initiation during the first year following plan adoption. To help generate momentum and provide an advocate for moving the plan forward, an **Implementation Task Force** with the mission of overseeing implementation of the Southwest Rock Island Plan should be established immediately upon adoption of the plan. Similar to the composition of the Southwest Plan Committee that oversaw preparation of the plan, this task force should be comprised of city and county citizens, officials, and staff.

It should be noted that the action schedule is intended as a guide for decision-making rather than as a rigid prescription. Over time, it will need to be adjusted in response to actual progress made in implementing the plan, taking into account factors such as shifting priorities, operational considerations, and changes in the external environment (e.g., the regional development climate). To address these various issues, the Implementation Task Force should annually review progress made in implementing the Southwest Rock Island Plan and recommend to City Council a modified action program for the upcoming year based upon the review. In addition to the yearly evaluations, a major revision of the Southwest Rock Island Plan should be undertaken five years following plan adoption. This revision should evaluate the overall progress made in implementing the plan, revisit the plan's original assumptions, and set a new agenda for the subsequent years.

Table 1. Action Schedule

Immediate Actions (Year One)	Short to Mid-Term Actions (Years Two to Five)
Regulations	
Draft and adopt regulatory changes (subdivision ordinance modifications, compact/conservation development overlay districts, design standards, billboard prohibition)	Support desired development types (compact, conservation) with regulatory incentives
Public Investment	
Develop a plan to enhance the Rock Island Parkway, including landscape improvements and a bicycle/pedestrian pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement plan to enhance the Rock Island Parkway - Explore potential role of Casino Rock Island in contributing to improvements if it relocates to I-280/Parkway interchange
Develop scenarios for enhanced utilization of Highland Springs Golf Course as a catalyst for desired development types	Implement enhancements to Highland Springs Golf Course
Incorporate appropriate landscaping and other enhancements into design of 85th Avenue West improvements	Incorporate appropriate landscaping and other enhancements into design and construction of major Southwest Rock Island roadway improvement projects
	Support desired types of development with appropriate infrastructure investments
	If necessary, consider acquiring a key property or properties to actively solicit development proposals
	Develop and begin implementing a land use and visual enhancement plan for the Andalusia Road corridor
Marketing	
Pursue marketing initiatives: parkway/area name changes, promotional materials (brochure, website, PowerPoint presentation, library display)	Continue and strengthen marketing initiatives
Initiate an outreach program to landowners/developers to identify prospective development candidates	
Undertake market/economic feasibility study of target development markets (residential and non-residential)	
Intergovernmental Coordination	
Initiate planning for an area-wide greenway system by identifying participants and implementation options	Establish private, nonprofit land conservation trust at the regional level as a vehicle for implementing the greenway system
Investigate opportunities to enhance telecommunications infrastructure to support business, residential, and consumer needs	Through a regional public/private partnership, implement telecommunications infrastructure enhancements

APPENDIX A.

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

This appendix contains conceptual design standards intended to provide property owners, developers, and the City of Rock Island with the “tools” to achieve development consistent with the vision, goals, and objectives for the future growth of Southwest Rock Island. The guidelines are organized into the following sections:

1.0 GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

1.1 Stream Corridors, Wetlands, and Floodplains

1.2 Woodlands

1.3 Steep Slopes

1.4 Greenway Design Standards

1.5 Views

2.0 EMPLOYMENT USES

2.1 Light Industrial

2.2 Office-Research

3.0 RESIDENTIAL USES

3.1 Medium Density Residential (Compact Development)

3.1.1 Mixed-Use Centers

- A. Blocks
- B. Streets
- C. Common Open Space
- D. Mixed-Use Core
- E. Density

3.1.2 Residential Uses

- A. Single-Family Detached Lots
- B. Townhouses
- C. Apartments

3.2 Low Density Residential (Conservation Development)

4.0 COMMERCIAL USES

1.0 GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

All subdivisions and land developments shall avoid or minimize adverse impacts on the site's natural resources, preserve and protect sensitive open spaces, and preserve important visual features of the landscape. In designing a subdivision and land development plan for any tract, the applicant shall be guided by the following standards. The intent is not to prohibit development, but to direct it to the least sensitive portions of the site.

1.1 Stream Corridors, Wetlands, and Floodplains

- Disturbance to streams, drainage swales, wetlands, and areas with seasonally high water tables shall be minimized.
- Construction within designated floodplains shall comply with the applicable regulations governing development in special flood hazard areas.

1.2 Woodlands

- Healthy woodlands exceeding one acre in size shall be preserved and designated as greenway areas, to the maximum extent possible. Proposed site improvements shall be located, designed, and constructed to minimize the loss or degradation of woodland areas.
- Developments shall be designated to preserve woodlands along roadways, property lines and corridors such as streams, swales, and hedgerows.
- Disturbance or removal of woodlands occupying environmentally sensitive areas shall be undertaken only when approved by the City of Rock Island and on a limited, selected basis to minimize the adverse impacts of such actions.

1.3 Steep Slopes

Site Design

- The design of developments shall be adapted to the natural hillside topography and minimize the need for disturbance to steep slopes.
- Different lot sizes and shapes shall be allowed, with the prime determinant being the natural terrain.
- Development on slopes between 15% and 25% shall be minimized.
- Development on steep slopes greater than 25% shall be prohibited.

Grading

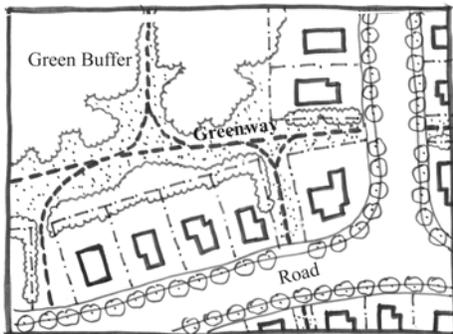
- The grading and excavation proposed in connection with the development shall not result in soil erosion, silting of lower slopes, slide damage, flooding, severe scarring, or any other geological instability that would affect the public health, safety, and welfare.
- The use of retaining structures that significantly reduce the need for grading is encouraged.

Circulation

- Where feasible, roadways and driveways shall be aligned to conform to the natural contours to minimize required earthwork.
- The use of cul-de-sacs, loop streets, and common driveways shall be encouraged if grading is reduced significantly by their use.
- Buildings shall be kept as close as possible to the street serving them to minimize the needs for long driveways.
- Parking areas located on existing flat portions of the site shall be encouraged.

Vegetation

- Existing vegetation shall be preserved to the maximum extent practicable.
- Development often necessitates the removal of trees to accommodate roads, parking, buildings, and other facilities. Every effort shall be made through the design, layout, and construction of development to incorporate and preserve as many trees as possible.
- All graded or disturbed areas that are not otherwise developed or protected from erosion shall be permanently revegetated.

**1.4 Greenway Design Standards**

- The provision of greenways and open space within subdivisions and land developments is strongly encouraged.
- Greenway lands shall be directly accessible to the largest practicable number of lots within the subdivision.
- Wherever possible, greenways on adjacent properties shall be interconnected to provide a continuous network of greenway lands throughout Southwest Rock Island.
- The design of greenway corridors in any subdivision or land development plan shall incorporate, to the extent possible:

- Stream channels, floodplains, wet soils, swales, and other lowland areas, including adjacent buffer areas that may be required to insure their protection.
- Moderate to steep slopes, particularly those adjoining streams and water bodies.
- Healthy woodlands.
- Historic structures and sites.
- Visually prominent topographic features such as knolls, hilltops and ridges, and scenic viewsheds as seen from public roads.
- Existing trails.

1.5 Views

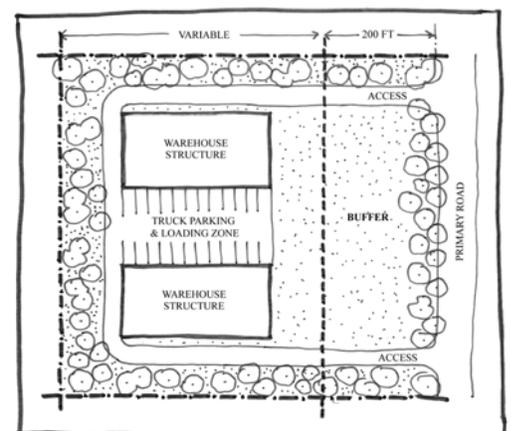
- Developments shall be designed so that the buildings, roads, and parking areas do not significantly impair views of important landscape features from adjacent public roads.
- View corridors and scenic roads shall be respected by locating developments away from these features.
- When site conditions enable the locations of structures close to existing public roads, landscape buffers at least 100 feet in width shall be provided to the maximum extent feasible. Such buffers shall contain existing and/or new vegetation.

2.0 EMPLOYMENT USES

The design guidelines for Employment Uses shall apply to all developments within this category as defined and designated in the Future Land Use Plan.

2.1 Light Industrial

- Views of large structures and vehicular use areas adjacent to public roads shall be minimized. Landscape buffers no less than 200 feet in width shall be provided to the maximum extent possible. When large unarticulated building facades face a public road, trees shall be planted to provide visual interest.
- Whenever possible, development shall be located to the rear of the parcel, leaving a large tract of open space in the front of the structures that can function for natural stormwater retention, greenway trails, visual control from the roads, etc.
- Loading zones and truck parking shall be provided in between or in the rear of the structures.
- Controlled access points shall be provided from main roads only.

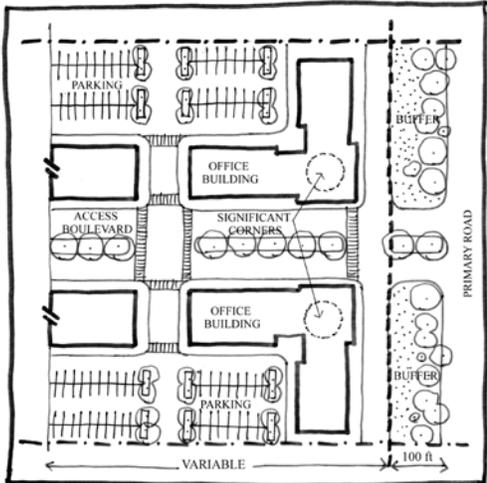


Right: Warehouse building location

2.2 Office-Research

Building Location

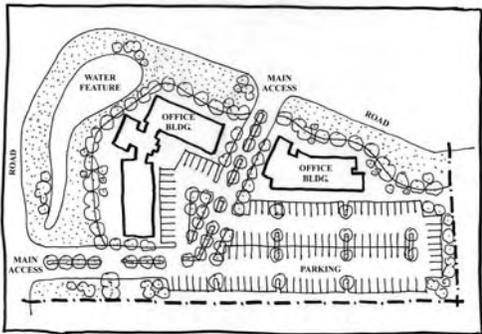
- Views of large structures and vehicular use areas adjacent to public roads shall be minimized. Landscape buffers no less that 100 feet in width shall be provided to the maximum extent possible.
- Whenever possible, development shall be organized around open space that can provide natural stormwater retention, greenway trails, etc.
- Provision of retail opportunities is encouraged to create a mixed-use environment. Whenever possible a small public space shall be strategically located to provide pedestrian amenities.
- Corner buildings shall be designed with additional height and/or architectural details to emphasize their location.
- The incorporation of water features at intersections or along the development is encouraged to enhance the view of the structures from the road.



Left: Access layout for office developments

Street Layout and Parking

- Whenever necessary, a hierarchy of street types organized in a logical street network shall be provided. Long straight streets shall be avoided. Incorporation of boulevards with planted medians shall be encouraged.
- The street layout shall be adapted to the topography, unique natural features, environmental constraints of the site, and peripheral open space areas. The street layout shall provide for open space views and surrounding vistas.
- Controlled secondary access points to surrounding roads shall be provided to ensure a good traffic flow on main access roads.
- Surface or structured parking shall be located to the side or the rear of buildings rather than between buildings and public roads.



Left: Corner parcel layout for office developments (Randall Arendt, "Rural by Design", 1994)

3.0 RESIDENTIAL USES

3.1 Medium Density Residential (Compact Development)

The Medium Density Residential design guidelines shall apply to all developments within this category as designated on the Future Land Use Plan.

3.1.1 Mixed-use Centers

Mixed-use centers are developments that:

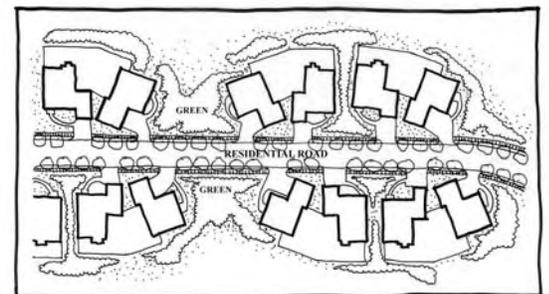
- Provide for a variety of mixed-use, residential and commercial uses
- Create a sense of community
- Incorporate an interconnected network of streets
- Promote a distinctive character

Mixed-use centers share certain fundamental features, although they differ from each other primarily in size and intensity. Common features of these small communities include block sizes and structure locations, an interconnected street network, common open spaces, a mixed-use core, and the distribution of dwelling types and densities.

A. Blocks

- Streets shall be designed to create blocks that are generally rectilinear in shape or a modified rectilinear shape. Amorphously shaped blocks are only encouraged where topographic conditions necessitate such a configuration.
- To the greatest extent possible, blocks shall be designed to have a maximum length of 600 feet. Blocks greater than 600 feet long shall generally be provided with cross-block pedestrian connections at mid-block locations.
- The placement of structures in the proposed development shall attempt to create a sense of visual continuity and enclosure. Front yard setbacks shall vary according to uses, street types, and the speed of traffic.

Right: Variations of structure locations (Randall Arendt, "Rural by Design", 1994)

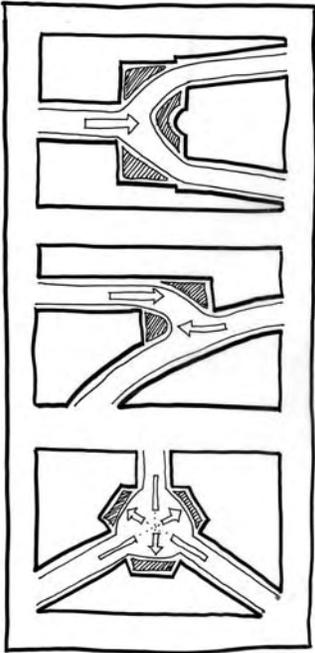


B. Streets

- New streets proposed to be created as part of any development proposal shall be integrated and interconnected closely with the existing street network.
- The street layout shall incorporate a hierarchy of street types that corresponds to the different uses.
- The street layout shall be a modified grid pattern adapted to the topography, unique natural features, environmental constraints of the site, and peripheral open space areas. The street layout shall take into

consideration the location of parks, other internal open spaces, gateways, and vistas.

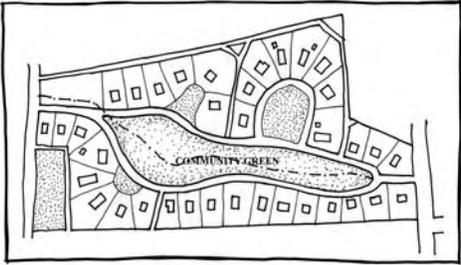
- Interconnections with adjacent arterial or collector roadways shall be provided where possible. Linkages to adjacent developments and neighborhoods with pedestrian and bicycle paths are recommended where possible.
- The use of cul-de-sacs and other roadways with a single point of access shall be minimized. To the greatest extent possible, streets shall be designed to have a maximum of 600 feet, from intersection to intersection, and, to the greatest extent possible, shall either continue through an intersection, or terminate in a “T” intersection directly opposite the center of a building, an internal open space area, or a view into a peripheral open space area.
- Commercial/mixed-use streets shall provide opportunity for parallel or head-in parking, thereby doubling the parking capacity of the commercial street, while accommodating two moving lanes of traffic.
- Lanes shall be provided for certain uses and may be used to create service access.
- The coordinated planting of deciduous shade trees within the right-of-way of all streets is encouraged as a central unifying feature in community developments.



Left: Residential street termination views (Randall Arendt, “Rural by Design”, 1994)

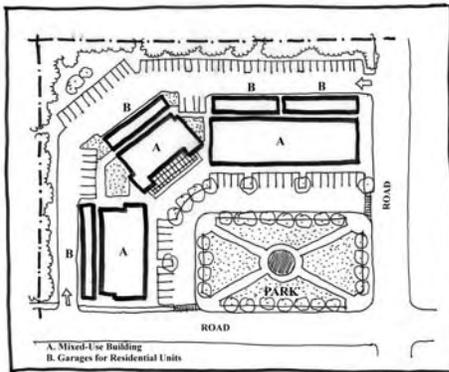
C. Common Open Space

- A central green or commons provides a foundation for the social life of the community and shall be an integral element of every small community.
- The optimal size of a common green is related to the population of the community. Two hundred square feet per housing unit is recommended.
- The green is best located where it is accessible to the highest possible number of residents and adjacent to any mixed-use core.
- Internal views onto green parks or commons and streets that terminate in green spaces are encouraged. Whenever possible houses shall have views out the back yard into open spaces whether they be woods, open land, or agricultural fields.



Left: Residential common open space (Randall Arendt, “Rural by Design”, 1994)

D. Mixed-Use Core



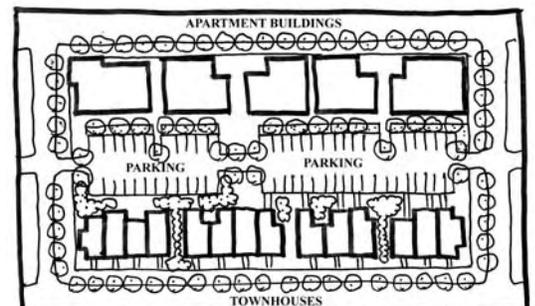
- The core of the Mixed-Use Center shall provide: a central and integrated location for equal access; a balance of residential and non-residential uses; civic and social facilities; and vertical elements that render it immediately identifiable in the landscape
- The core shall be accessible by car, foot, and bicycle.
- Its location shall be responsive to existing roads and residential patterns.
- Whenever possible, buildings within the core shall define the main common space.

Left: Mixed-use core layout (Randall Arendt, "Rural by Design", 1994)

- Each small community shall have a minimum amount of local or neighborhood retail facilities.
- Mixed-use buildings with retail on the ground and offices or residential above shall be encouraged.
- Parking shall not be allowed in the front of buildings, unless it is on-street, parallel or head-in. Larger, well-landscaped parking areas shall be confined to the rear of buildings and connected to the front by well-designed pedestrian alleys.
- Buildings at the core shall be closely spaced providing for façade continuity.
- Commercial buildings may be set back from the property line if an outdoor display area or café is anticipated.

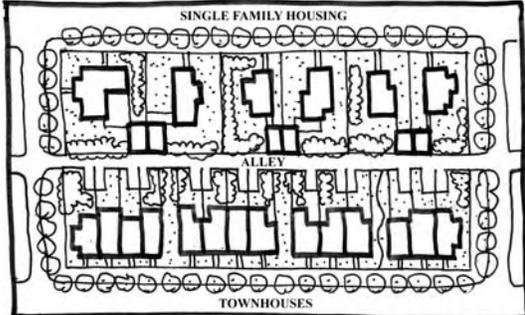
E. Density

- Residential net density shall generally decrease from the community green and/or core of the center towards the periphery of the community.
- A mix of dwelling unit types shall be distributed throughout the development. Smaller lots and higher net density dwelling units are generally located closer to the



community core and main street commercial area, if such is provided.

- Whenever possible, unit types shall be the same on both sides of a street. Alleys or rear property lines shall be



used to separate different types of unit types.

Right: Alleys or parking lots can be used to separate different uses

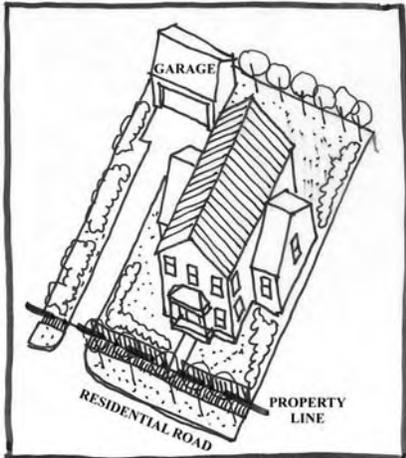
3.1.2. Residential Uses

The development guidelines for all residential uses outside of the Mixed-Use Centers shall comply with the following standards:

- A mix of housing types shall be provided to help achieve the necessary visual quality and the market and economic mix.
- Lot areas and lot widths shall vary at random to the greatest extent possible, in order to eliminate the appearance of a standardized subdivision. Lots shall vary by a minimum of five-foot increments.
- Narrower lots shall be located around community greens to increase the number of units that include front open space views.
- Buildings on corner lots shall be considered significant structures since they are highly visible from adjacent streets.
- Specific design guidelines for each housing type are provided for the following categories:
 - A. Single-Family Detached Lot
 - B. Townhouses
 - C. Apartments

A. Single-Family Detached Lots

- Whenever possible, the number of lots backing on to open space or fronting on it across the street shall be maximized.



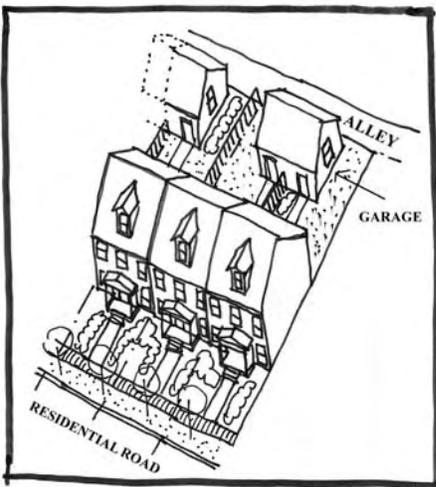
ELINES

- A modest range of front setbacks in strategic locations shall be encouraged to enhance the variety of streetscapes throughout the development.
- Different building sizes and styles shall be encouraged to provide variety of views and textures.
- Side-loaded garages or deep setbacks for front-loading garages shall be encouraged.
- Shared-driveways shall be encouraged.

Left: Single-family detached unit layout

B. Townhouses

- Alley-loaded garages shall be encouraged as they assure continuous façade frontages along the primary street.
- Lots shall be located close to the mixed-use core area or to primary corridors.
- Buildings shall define the streetscape through the use of



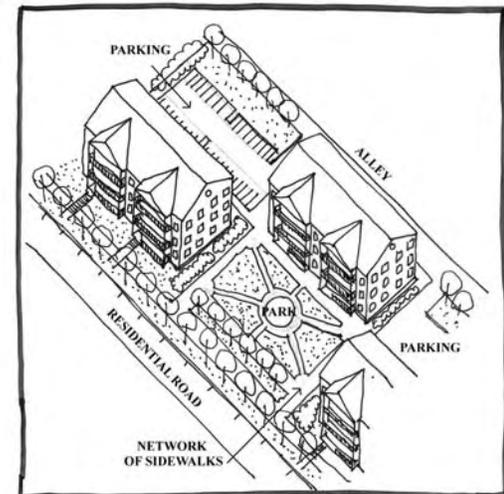
uniform setbacks along the build-to-line for each block. The streetscape shall be also reinforced by walls, hedges, or fences which define front yards.

- A lot with multiple buildings may be organized around features such as courtyards, or greens that encourage pedestrian activity and incidental social interaction among users.
- Buildings shall reflect a continuity of treatment obtained by maintaining the building scale or by subtly graduating changes; by maintaining base courses, cornices lines, horizontal lines of fenestration, etc. Visual interest and variety can be achieved by offsetting walls and rooflines, or by changing colors and architectural styles, etc.

Left: Townhouse layout

C. Apartments

- Lots for apartment buildings shall balance the functional requirements of parking with the provision of pedestrian amenities. Transition areas between parking and commercial or residential uses shall be carefully designed and landscaped.
- Courtyards or internal parks enclosed by apartment structures are highly encouraged. A logical network of walkways that connect sidewalks, common open space, and parking lots shall be provided.
- On residential streets, sidewalks and tree planting along the front of apartment buildings shall be provided as they promote pedestrian activities and help define the streetscape.



- When site conditions enable the locations of structures close to primary roads, a landscape buffer at least 100 feet in width between public roads and development lot lines shall be provided.
- Parking for the housing units of a mixed-use structure shall be provided in a rear parking lot accessed through a service alley.
- Setbacks and screening shall be provided between apartment buildings/parking areas and adjacent properties.
- Rental apartments may be provided above commercial uses in Mixed-Use Cores. This type of housing can provide living accommodations for employees and others within the community.

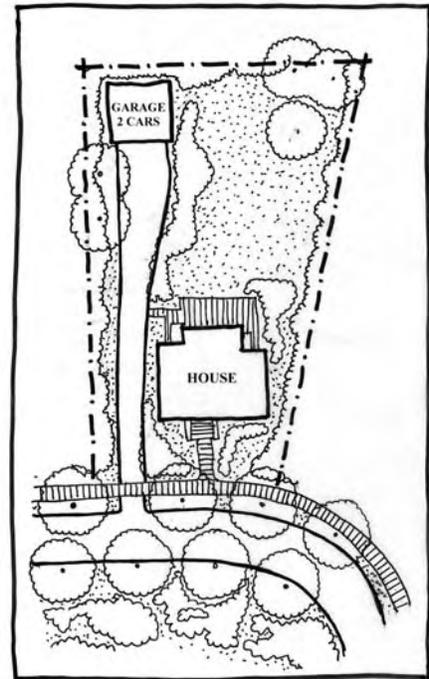
Right: Apartment buildings layout

3.2 Low Density Residential (Conservation Development)

The Low Density Residential design guidelines shall apply to all developments within this category as designated on the Future Land Use Plan.

- Whenever possible, development layouts shall be organized around interconnected greenways.
- Lots shall be designed to provide residents with visual access to greenway land to the maximum extent possible.
- Large clear-cuts to open up panoramic views should be prohibited, and cutting shall be limited to “view tunnels” through foliage.
- When site conditions enable the locations of structures close to the roads, “foreground meadows” or other landscape buffers at least 100 feet in width between public roads and development lot lines shall be provided.
- Front setbacks shall be varied as the streetscape shall be limited by natural elements rather than residential structures.
- Provision of parking in the rear of the lot accessed by a driveway that runs through one side yard shall be encouraged.
- Shared-driveways shall be encouraged.
- Cul-de-sacs may be allowed to minimize disturbance to steep slopes and other environmentally sensitive areas.

Right: Conservation development lot layout (Randall Arendt, “Rural by Design”, 1994)



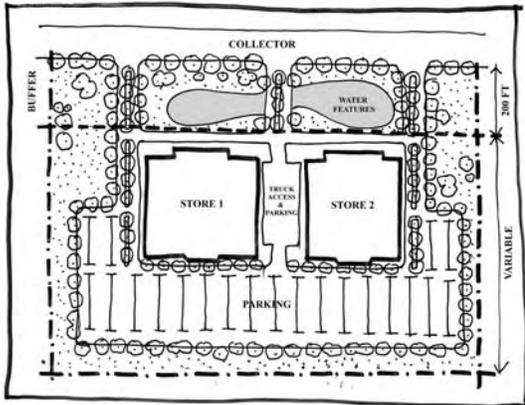
- Roadways shall be designed to standards appropriate to the low-density context (narrower cartway widths with standard asphalt paving, alternatives to concrete curb and gutter, etc.)
- Developments shall provide for a variety of lots sizes appropriate to the topography. For example, potential lots at the end of cul-de-sacs may be larger in size, thus providing for estate lots within the development.

4.0 COMMERCIAL USES

The Commercial Uses design guidelines apply to all developments within this category as defined and designated in the Future Land Use Plan.

Building Size, Bulk and Location

- Small commercial developments consist of retail structures of no more than 10,000 sf. each. Large commercial structures consist of super-stores, anchor



Left: Access layout for commercial developments

stores or other retail structures of more than 10,000 sf. each.

- If the commercial development consists of a mix of structures of different sizes, larger buildings shall be located behind smaller structures.
- Small commercial structures shall front onto a street or boulevard and shall be organized in blocks of no more than 600 ft. each. If more than 3 blocks are to be built, a small, central public space can be provided.
- Sidewalks and tree planting along the front of small commercial buildings shall be provided as they promote pedestrian activities and help define the streetscape.
- Main entrances to small commercial buildings or shops shall be from the main street, and not from the rear of buildings.
- Primary facades of commercial buildings shall avoid having long, monotonous, uninterrupted walls. Building wall offsets, including projections, recesses, and changes in floor level, shall be used in order to add architectural interest and variety.

- Buildings on corners that have at least two facades exposed to public streets shall be considered significant structures. These buildings shall be designed with additional height and architectural embellishment such as corner towers to emphasize their location.
- Billboards or signs on roofs, dormers, and balconies shall be discouraged. Signs affixed to the exterior of a building shall be architecturally compatible with the style, composition, materials, colors, and details of the building, as well as with other signs used on the building or its vicinity.

Street Layout and Parking

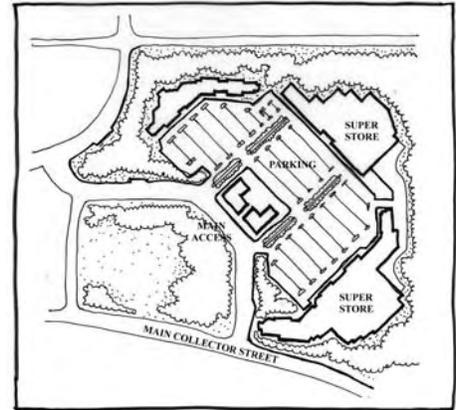
- Whenever necessary, a logical street network of interconnected streets shall be provided.
- Controlled secondary access points to surrounding roads shall be provided to ensure a good traffic flow on the main access roads.
- Parallel or head-in parking shall be provided whenever possible. Surface or structured parking shall be located to the side or rear of the commercial structures.

- Loading docks and other service requirements shall be placed at the rear of the buildings and accessed from service driveways.

Views and Open Space

- A landscaped buffer a minimum of 200 feet in width shall be provided in order to buffer large super-store developments from the roads.
- Whenever possible, development shall be organized around open space that can function for natural stormwater retention, greenway trails, etc.

Right: Landscape buffer for large super-store development (Randall Arendt, "Rural by Design", 1994)



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