

Planning Commission

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting #3

October 8, 2013 at 5:30 PM

City Hall Human Resources Conference Room (Lower Level)
1528 3rd Avenue, Rock Island

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes of the regular meeting of September 17, 2013
3. Approval of the written Agenda
4. Comprehensive Plan
 - a. Project update
 - b. Issues and Opportunities Questionnaire (**please complete this prior to the meeting**)
 - c. Quality of Life Questionnaire (**please complete this prior to the meeting**)
 - d. Complete mapping exercise (group exercise during meeting)
 - e. Review Existing Land Use Map (a large format version will be available at the meeting)
 - f. Review outreach summaries – discuss possible vision components
 - g. Next steps
5. Public Comments
6. Other Business
7. Adjournment



UNAPPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2
SEPTEMBER 17, 2013
CITY OF ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS**

The Rock Island Planning Commission held a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers at 1528 – 3rd Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois. The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Levin at 5:18 PM. Present were Commissioners Michael Creger, Bruce Harding, David Levin, Jason Lopez, Diane Oestreich, Lorian Swanson and Berlinda Tyler-Jamison. Commissioners Ted Johnson, Norm Moline, Kevin Nolan and Bruce Peterson were absent. Also in attendance were Ben Griffith, Brandy Howe and Consultants Scott Harrington, Jessica Schmiedicke and Ashley Robertson of Vandewalle & Associates.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 3, 2013 MEETING

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the minutes of the September 3, 2013 meeting. Chairman Levin asked if there were any revisions or corrections necessary and hearing none, asked for a motion. Commissioner Creger made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Tyler-Jamison seconded the motion and the Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Ms. Howe reported that the on-line community survey had been extended to the end of September with over 400 respondents so far. She gave a brief overview of the events of the previous days, including the Community Visioning Workshop at the MLK Center, various focus group meetings, and meetings with students at Augustana College and Rock Island High School.

Commissioner Levin asked about the schedule for the comprehensive planning process since it seemed that the City was getting a late start. Mr. Griffith replied that all state grant applications are audited in Springfield and it was found that a Parks & Recreation grant had been completed but not closed, so the City's "IKE Grant" was placed on hold. It took several months to clear all the paperwork and even though the City got a late start, the State was not going to allow any extension of the deadlines.

Consultant Scott Harrington introduced himself to the Commissioners and gave a brief description of his work background, including Assistant City Administrator for Planning in Moline. He then

began a PowerPoint presentation and explained the Economic Activity Analysis Map. Consultant Jessica Schmiedicke explained the assets and values from the workshop, focus groups and surveys.

Commissioner Tyler-Jamison stated that it was important to have representatives of all demographics for input. There was a brief discussion about the makeup of the previous evening's workshop and how the planning process outreach activities were concluded.

Ms. Schmiedicke provided a listing of challenges, opportunities and focus group concerns, as well as policy and development priorities for the comprehensive planning process. Mr. Harrington summarized by stating that Vandewalle was trying to help the City figure out what it needs to do and how to do it.

Chairman Levin stated that he would like to see the Planning Commission as a focus group, adding that it would be beneficial to the process.

Commissioner Oestreich stated that she and Commissioner Lopez had attended the workshop the night before and wondered how the survey results would be summarized.

Commissioner Lopez stated that even with an indefinite amount of time, something would be missed, but that the process focuses on the big issues and they eventually rise to the top. He suggested that Commissioner Tyler-Jamison attend the next visioning workshop, adding that even though there were no Hispanics at the last one, several nationalities were represented and he was satisfied.

Commissioner Tyler-Jamison stated that she was pleased with the outreach efforts and appreciated that the consultants and staff were going out into the community and making it happen.

Mr. Harrington stated that the forum provided for the exchange of ideas among many different people on many different subjects and that it was always good to hear different points of view.

Commissioner Swanson stated that the Commissioners should be ambassadors of the community, that the focus should be on our fine parks and to have facts to counter what certain other groups and "nimbys" were saying negatively about the City of Rock Island. She concluded by stating that overcoming the City's negative image was going to be the most difficult thing to do.

Commissioner Lopez stated that it's always a challenge to get citizens to realize that new businesses are needed and that will also be difficult when the new businesses wish to locate in or near a residential area.

Mr. Harrington stated that the City leaders, both elected and appointed, would need to walk the walk and not just talk the talk when dealing with difficult projects, adding that objectives sometimes get lost while arguing over the details and that sometimes you need to step back and define objectives, then you can usually find some commonality and work your way toward a workable solution.

Chairman Levin asked what the next steps were. Mr. Harrington answered that the first task would be to summarize and analyze all of the data which had been collected so far, as well as the pending survey data. Once finished, that information could be presented to the Planning Commission and Ms. Howe could begin drafting the plan document.

Commissioner Oestreich asked about the mitigation component of the plan since it was a major tenet of the grant award. Ms. Schmiedicke answered that the typical natural hazard was flooding, but that it would not be difficult for the City since it was protected by a certified levee system and that Rock Island County already had a hazard mitigation plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments provided at the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Oestreich reminded everyone about Bi-State Regional Commission's APA Audio Conference Series and asked Mr. Griffith if he had updated the distribution list. He stated that he had sent it to Patty Pearson and would send the Audio Conference listing to the newly appointed Planning Commissioners.

Mr. Griffith reminded the Commissioners about the second Community Visioning Workshop scheduled for Tuesday, September 24th at St. Pius Catholic Church, beginning at 6:00 PM. He also reminded the Commissioners to be mindful of *ex parte* communication and to call the Planning Office with any questions about any upcoming agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Levin asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Oestreich made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:17 PM, which was seconded by Commissioner Lopez. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission would be October 1, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,



Ben Griffith, AICP

Rock Island Comprehensive Plan
ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is in addition to the online survey available at www.rigov.org. Please mail or drop off completed questionnaires to City Hall, Planning & Redevelopment, 1528 3rd Ave, Rock Island, IL 61201. The City will accept questionnaires through September 30th.

1. What do you VALUE most about the City of Rock Island?

2. What are the MOST APPEALING things about Rock Island and what about Rock Island is GETTING BETTER?

3. What are the LEAST APPEALING things about Rock Island and what about Rock Island is GETTING WORSE?

4. What is MISSING in Rock Island? What types of uses or improvements (i.e. stores, restaurants, parks, trails, etc.) would you like to see added to the City?

5. How should Rock Island SET ITSELF APART from other communities in the Quad Cities? What is/should be our "niche?"

6. What do you believe are the City's three most significant OPPORTUNITIES for the future?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

7. What do you believe are the top three THREATS OR CHALLENGES Rock Island will face over the next 20 years?

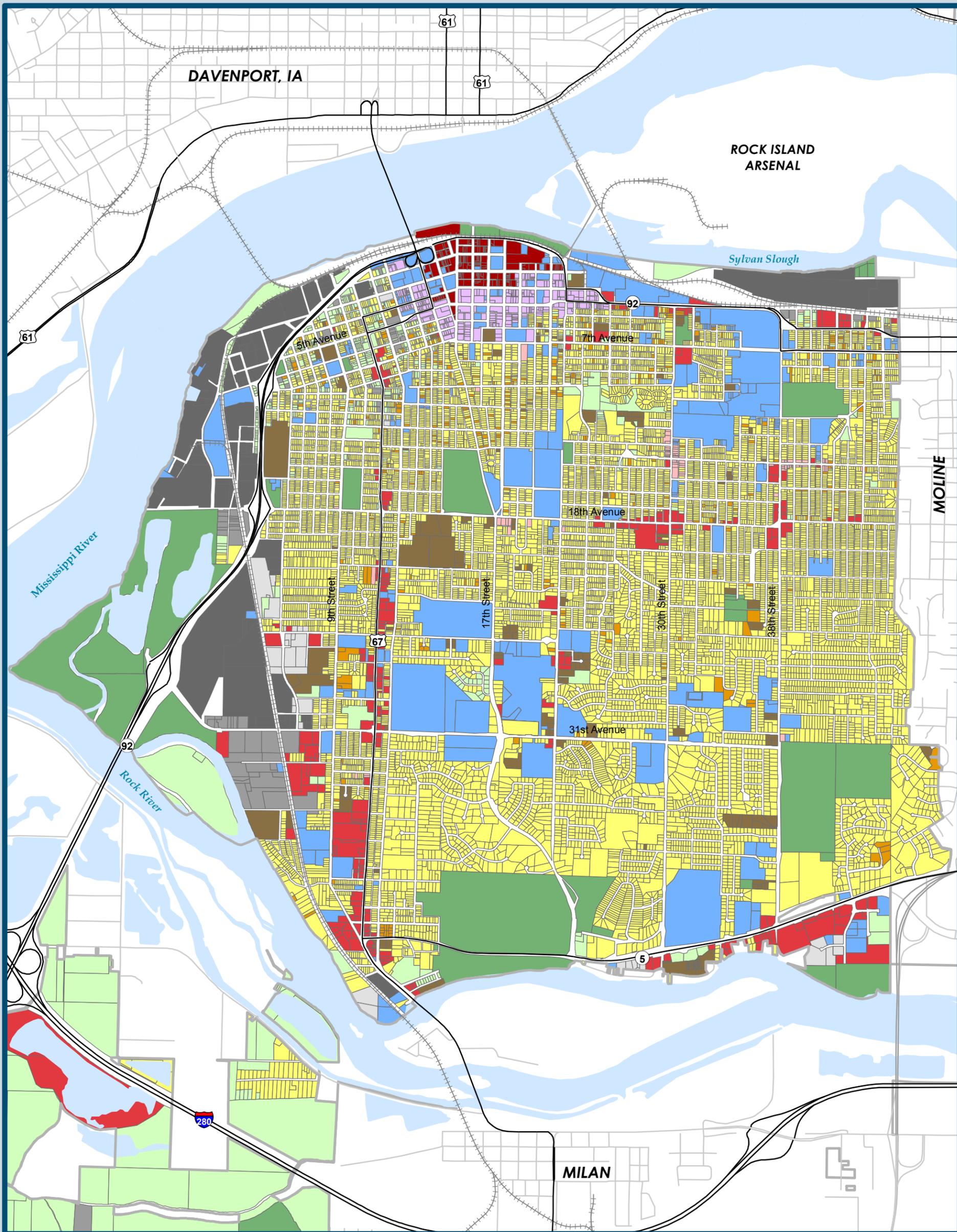
1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Quality of Life Priorities

		Rating 1= not important/ low priority 5 = very Important/ high priority					Comments
1	Increase employment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	Why type of jobs?
2	Expand shopping opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	Where?
3	Improve City infrastructure (e.g. streets, sidewalks, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	Where?
4	Provide more housing options	1	2	3	4	5	Which types and price ranges? Where?
5	Better enforce property maintenance	1	2	3	4	5	What is the biggest concern?
6	Improve quality of education	1	2	3	4	5	At which level(s)?
7	Expand recreational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	Where? What types?
8	Provide more opportunities for bikes and pedestrians	1	2	3	4	5	Where?
9	Improve public transportation	1	2	3	4	5	Where? To which destinations?
10	OTHER: _____ _____ _____ _____	1	2	3	4	5	Describe.



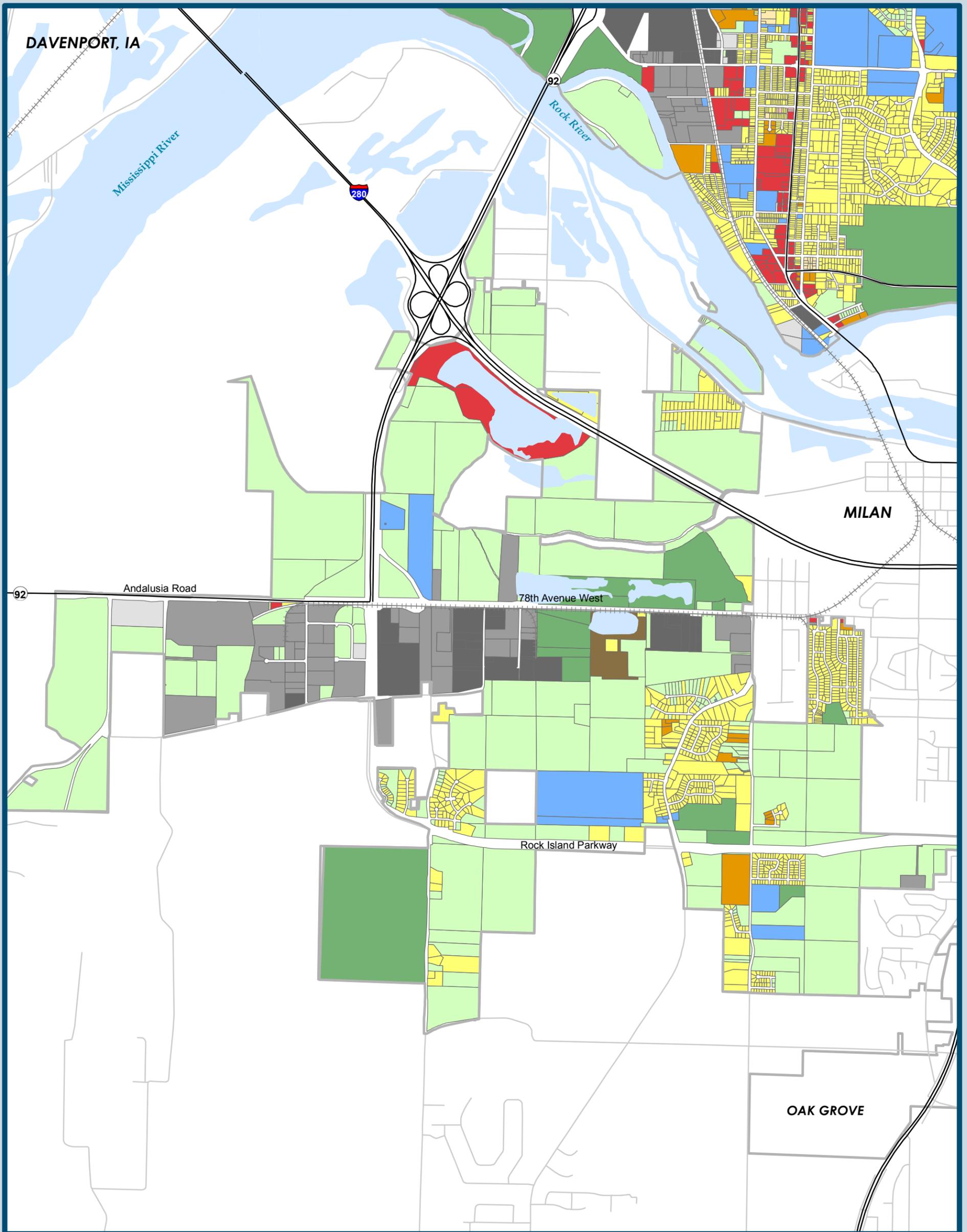
Map 2a: North Existing Land Use

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| City of Rock Island | Single Family | Light Industrial |
| US Interstates | Two Family | General Industrial |
| US Highways | Multi-Family | Heavy Industrial |
| State Highways | Manufactured Homes | Institutional |
| Railroads | Neighborhood Business | Parks and Recreation |
| Surface Water | Downtown Core | Agricultural / Undeveloped |
| | Downtown Transitional | |
| | General Business | |

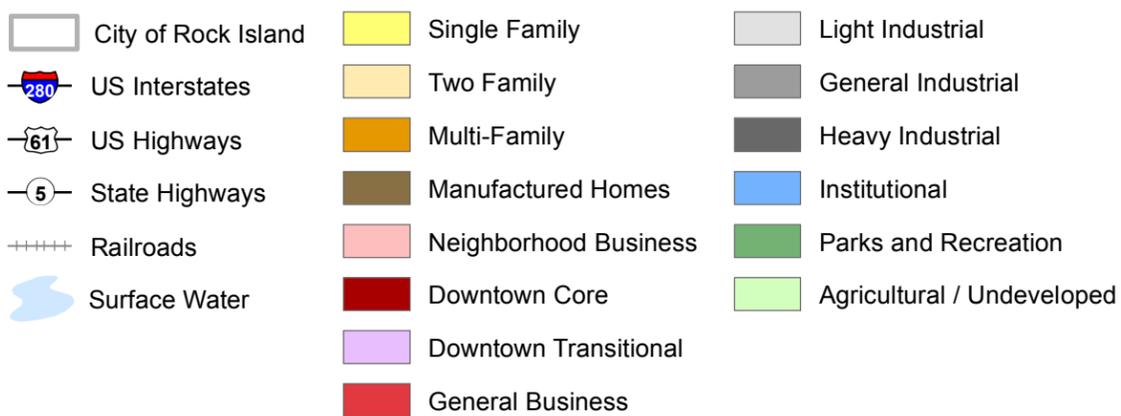


0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Sources: City of Rock Island, Rock Island County GIS, and Iowa DOT
Draft: November 19, 2013



Map 2b: South Existing Land Use



Sources: City of Rock Island, Rock Island County GIS, and Iowa DOT
Draft: November 19, 2013



Constant Contact Survey Results

Survey Name: Rock Island Community Survey

Response Status: Partial & Completed

Filter: None

10/1/2013 4:58 PM CDT

TextBlock:

This community survey is intended to gather citizen input on a range of topics pertaining to quality of life, City services and infrastructure, housing, community and economic development, and cultural activities. The results of this survey will help the Mayor and the City Council to determine City goals and objectives for the upcoming year. The results of this survey will also help to establish policy direction for the City's Comprehensive Plan, a document that will guide growth and development of Rock Island over the next 20 years. All survey responses will remain confidential.

TextBlock:

Quality of Life

How would you rate:

1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Fair, 4 = Poor, 5 = Very Poor, 6 = No opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Rock Island as a place to live?							415	2.2
Rock Island as a place to raise children?							414	2.7
Rock Island as a place to retire?							415	2.9
The overall quality of your Rock Island neighborhood?							412	2.3

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

Identify the top three reasons you choose to live in Rock Island.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Near Workplace			238	57.9 %
Near Family and Friends			182	44.2 %
Hometown			129	31.3 %
Cost of Housing			159	38.6 %
Community Services			32	7.7 %
Schools			55	13.3 %
Recreational Opportunities			37	9.0 %
Cultural Opportunities			45	10.9 %
Natural Environment			54	13.1 %
Urban Environment			43	10.4 %
Other			93	22.6 %
Totals			411	100%

Prioritize the following items in terms of their ability to improve the quality of life in Rock Island.

1 = Highest priority, 2 = High priority, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Low priority, 5 = Lowest priority, 6 = No opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Increase employment opportunities							406	1.9
Expand shopping opportunities							402	2.3
Improve City infrastructure (e.g. streets, sidewalks, etc.)							400	2.0
Provide more housing options							404	2.9
Better enforce property maintenance							400	2.4
Improve quality of education							405	1.9
Expand recreational opportunities							404	2.8
Provide more opportunities for bikes and pedestrians							405	3.0
Improve public transportation							403	3.2

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

What one change do you feel would most positively impact the quality of life in Rock Island?

303 Response(s)

TextBlock:

City Services & Infrastructure

Please rate the following City Services:

1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Fair, 4 = Poor, 5 = Very poor, 6 = No opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Street Repair							410	3.1
Street Cleaning							410	2.7
Street Lighting							411	2.5
Snow Removal							408	2.1
Garbage Collection							408	1.8
Recycling							409	2.5
Yardwaste Pickup							407	2.8
Sidewalk Maintenance							409	3.5

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

The City provides water, sanitary sewer, and storm water services that are supported solely by user fees.

How would you rank the value of these services?

1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Fair, 4 = Poor, 5 = Very Poor, 6 = No Opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Water							411	2.3
Sewer							408	2.4
Stormwater							406	2.6

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

The City maintains a wide array of public facilities and infrastructure with a limited budget. How should the City prioritize maintenance and new investments?

1 = Highest Priority, 2 = High Priority, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Low Priority, 5 = Lowest Priority, 6 = No Opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Major Streets							407	1.8
Neighborhood Streets							409	2.0
Sidewalks							401	2.4
Bicycle Routes and Trails							402	3.1
Water and Sewer							402	2.0
Parks and Recreational Facilities							404	2.6
Riverfront and River Access							403	2.7
Public Library							400	2.3
City Facilities (City Hall, Police, Fire, Public Works)							405	2.5
Other							121	4.4

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

TextBlock:

Public Safety

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

1 = Very Safe, 2 = Safe, 3 = Unsafe, 4 = Very Unsafe, 5 = Don't Know

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
In your neighborhood during the day?						410	1.5
In your neighborhood at night?						408	1.9
In downtown Rock Island during the day?						411	1.8
In downtown Rock Island at night?						410	2.8

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

How important are each of the following police and emergency services to you?

1 = Very important, 2 = Important, 3 = Not important, 4 = No opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Responding quickly to citizen calls					411	1.2
Enforcing traffic and parking regulations					409	2.3
Visible presence in neighborhoods					407	1.8
Investigating and solving crimes					409	1.4
Fire prevention and education					410	1.9
Responding quickly to medical emergencies					411	1.1
Responding quickly to fires					411	1.1

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

TextBlock:

Housing and Neighborhoods

Compared to neighboring communities, I feel the price of housing in Rock Island is reasonable.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly agree			129	29.1 %
Agree			187	42.2 %
Neutral			42	9.4 %
Disagree			30	6.7 %
Strongly disagree			7	1.5 %
No opinion			18	4.0 %
No Response(s)			30	6.7 %
Totals			443	100%

In your opinion, how would you rate the need for the following housing types in Rock Island?

1 = Need more, 2 = Have enough, 3 = Have too much, 4 = No opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Single family homes					398	1.9
Two family homes (duplexes)					393	2.7
Apartments (studio/efficiency)					394	2.6
Apartments (1-2 bedrooms)					392	2.5
Apartments (3+ bedrooms)					387	2.5
Townhouses and condominiums					394	2.2
Senior housing					392	2.2
Downtown upper-story living					396	2.4
Affordable housing					398	2.1
Executive (high-end) housing					393	2.5

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

What is the best feature in your neighborhood?

319 Response(s)

What three things would you change about your neighborhood?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
More destinations nearby			108	27.2 %
Better access to recreation			47	11.8 %
More community gardens			74	18.6 %
Add/replace sidewalks where missing/broken			231	58.1 %
Better access to public transportation			31	7.8 %
More designated bike paths/routes			74	18.6 %
Schools within walking distance			37	9.3 %
Decrease road width (traffic calming)			46	11.5 %
Increase road width			25	6.2 %
Reduce crime/increase safety			128	32.2 %
Other			109	27.4 %
Totals			397	100%

TextBlock:Community and Economic Development

How often do you shop in the following locations?

1 = Very often, 2 = Often, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Never

Answer	1	2	3	4	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Downtown Rock Island					401	3.3
11th Street Corridor					398	3.5
Blackhawk Road (Highway 5)					401	2.7
College Hill District (generally along 14th Avenue between 30th and 38th Streets)					398	2.6
18th Avenue Corridor					405	1.9
Other locations in Rock Island					359	3.0
Outside of Rock Island					396	1.7

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

In your opinion, how would you rate the supply of the following retail and service businesses in Rock Island?

1 = Need more, 2 = Have enough, 3 = Have too much, 4 = No opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Downtown retail shopping and services					399	1.6
Convenience retail and services in or near my neighborhood					395	2.0
Department and general merchandise stores					396	1.5
Boutique and specialty retail stores					393	1.8
Apparel and shoe stores					394	1.7
Hardware and building supply stores					399	1.8
Small grocery stores					393	1.9
Large grocery stores					397	1.8
Fast food restaurants					401	2.2
Sit-down restaurants					401	1.3

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

Should the City offer financial incentives to encourage development and investment?

1 = Yes, 2 = No, 3 = It depends, 4 = No opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
In the downtown area					399	2.0
On vacant sites outside of the downtown					401	1.8
For office development					397	2.2
For retail development					401	1.8
For industrial development					401	2.1
For residential development					397	2.1

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

Which of the following sustainability initiatives should the City prioritize?

1 = Highest priority, 2 = High priority, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Low priority, 5 = Lowest priority, 6 = No opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Promote local foods							400	2.4
Promote individual and community-wide composting							399	3.0
Promote use of energy efficient vehicles or shared vehicle services							394	3.0
Require bicycle and pedestrian facilities in new developments							398	2.9
Consider reduced parking requirements in new developments							396	3.4
Promote energy efficient building and site design							394	2.3
Strengthen landscaping requirements for new development							397	2.6
Incentivize sustainable site and building design							389	2.6
Increase recycling services, including residential, commercial, and construction materials							397	2.3
Promote water conservation							397	2.5

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

TextBlock:

Recreation & Cultural Activities

How would you rate the following services and facilities?

1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Fair, 4 = Poor, 5 = Very Poor, 6 = No Opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
City Parks							403	1.9
Recreational Programs							404	2.5
Recreation Facilities							403	2.4
Rock Island Public Libraries							406	2.1
Martin Luther King Center							407	3.7

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

Which of the following activities do you do regularly?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Jogging/Running			92	23.0 %
Walking/Walking Pets			304	76.0 %
Biking			149	37.2 %
Swimming			76	19.0 %
Golfing			58	14.4 %
Tennis			22	5.5 %
Volleyball			12	3.0 %
Baseball/Softball			40	10.0 %
Basketball			20	5.0 %
Yoga/Pilates			57	14.2 %
Do not regularly participate in these activities			49	12.2 %
Other			58	14.4 %
Totals			400	100%

What recreational opportunities are missing from Rock Island?

139 Response(s)

How would you rate the cultural activities and community events in Rock Island?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Excellent			63	14.2 %
Good			209	47.1 %
Fair			86	19.4 %
Poor			13	2.9 %
Very poor			8	1.8 %
No opinion			27	6.0 %
No Response(s)			37	8.3 %
Totals			443	100%

What cultural activities or community events are missing in Rock Island?

115 Response(s)

TextBlock:

Local Government and Media Outlets

How would you rate the City's efforts to:

1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Fair, 4 = Poor, 5 = Very Poor, 6 = No Opinion

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Provide information on important issues?							403	2.8
Gather citizen input on important issues?							396	3.1

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

Do you read a local newspaper? If so, which do you read most often.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
QC Times			62	13.9 %
Argus			218	49.2 %
Dispatch			40	9.0 %
Not applicable/Do not read a local newspaper			67	15.1 %
Other			17	3.8 %
No Response(s)			39	8.8 %
Totals			443	100%

Do you regularly watch local TV news? If so, which station do you watch most often?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
WHBF/CBS (4)			42	9.4 %
KWQC/NBC (6)			153	34.5 %
WQAD/ABC (8)			99	22.3 %
KLJB/Fox (18)			12	2.7 %
Not applicable/Do not regularly watch local TV news			87	19.6 %
Other			11	2.4 %
No Response(s)			39	8.8 %
Totals			443	100%

Please indicate the one source from which you are most likely to gather information on City events, services, and issues.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Newspaper			159	35.8 %
Television			63	14.2 %
Social media (e.g. Facebook, twitter)			62	13.9 %
City website			45	10.1 %
Word of mouth			39	8.8 %
Not applicable			0	0.0 %
Other			37	8.3 %
No Response(s)			38	8.5 %
Totals			443	100%

How many City Council, Commission, or Committee meetings have you watched on Public Access Channel 9 in the past year?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
0			265	59.8 %
1 to 3			89	20.0 %
4 to 7			29	6.5 %
8 to 10			8	1.8 %
11+			12	2.7 %
No Response(s)			40	9.0 %
Totals			443	100%

How often have you visited the City's website (www.rigov.org) in the past six months?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Never			37	8.3 %
1 time			36	8.1 %
2-5 times			186	41.9 %
6-9 times			64	14.4 %
10 or more times			79	17.8 %
No Response(s)			41	9.2 %
Totals			443	100%

What are the reasons you visit the City's website?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
General information			266	66.8 %
Specific project information			195	48.9 %
Forms or applications			67	16.8 %
Employment			39	9.7 %
Minutes or agendas			79	19.8 %
Do not visit the City's website			27	6.7 %
Other			41	10.3 %
Totals			398	100%

How would you rate the City's website in terms of its ability to supply the information you are seeking?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Excellent			49	11.0 %
Good			207	46.7 %
Fair			76	17.1 %
Poor			19	4.2 %
Very Poor			5	1.1 %
No opinion			48	10.8 %
No Response(s)			39	8.8 %
Totals			443	100%

How do you prefer to be notified of City events, activities, and public meetings?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
City website			140	34.8 %
Newspaper			191	47.5 %
Facebook			113	28.1 %
Twitter			17	4.2 %
Email blast			142	35.3 %
Other			31	7.7 %
Totals			402	100%

TextBlock:

Respondent Profile

How many years have you lived in Rock Island?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
0-1 year			17	3.8 %
2-5 years			42	9.4 %
6-10 years			51	11.5 %
11-15 years			29	6.5 %
16-25 years			71	16.0 %
26+ years			185	41.7 %
I am not a Rock Island resident			14	3.1 %
No Response(s)			34	7.6 %
Totals			443	100%

If you are employed, in which community do you work?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Rock Island			221	49.8 %
Moline			26	5.8 %
East Moline			11	2.4 %
Milan			7	1.5 %
Rock Island Arsenal			10	2.2 %
Silvis			1	<1 %
Davenport			36	8.1 %
Bettendorf			7	1.5 %
Retired or Work at Home			63	14.2 %
Other			11	2.4 %
No Response(s)			50	11.2 %
Totals			443	100%

Do you own or rent your place of residence?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Own			349	78.7 %
Rent			55	12.4 %
No Response(s)			39	8.8 %
Totals			443	100%

How many people live in your household?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
1			66	14.8 %
2			162	36.5 %
3			76	17.1 %
4			63	14.2 %
5+			35	7.9 %
No Response(s)			41	9.2 %
Totals			443	100%

How many children under age 18 live in your household?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
0			272	61.3 %
1			54	12.1 %
2			46	10.3 %
3			17	3.8 %
4			10	2.2 %
5+			2	<1 %
No Response(s)			42	9.4 %
Totals			443	100%

What is your age?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Under 18			3	<1 %
18-24			14	3.1 %
25-34			62	13.9 %
35-44			72	16.2 %
45-54			81	18.2 %
55-64			124	27.9 %
65 and over			53	11.9 %
No Response(s)			34	7.6 %
Totals			443	100%

What is your gender?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Male			164	37.0 %
Female			243	54.8 %
No Response(s)			36	8.1 %
Totals			443	100%

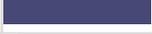
What is the highest level of education you completed?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Grade school or less			0	0.0 %
Some high school			1	<1 %
High school diploma			19	4.2 %
Vocational/tech school			11	2.4 %
Some college/Jr. college			83	18.7 %
College degree			127	28.6 %
Some graduate work			30	6.7 %
Post grad/professional degree			136	30.6 %
No Response(s)			36	8.1 %
Totals			443	100%

What is your household income before taxes?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Less than \$20,000			25	5.6 %
\$20,001 - \$35,000			38	8.5 %
\$35,001 - \$60,000			80	18.0 %
\$60,001 - \$90,000			96	21.6 %
\$90,001 - \$120,000			77	17.3 %
More than \$120,000			58	13.0 %
No Response(s)			69	15.5 %
Totals			443	100%

*** In which area of the community do you reside?**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Area 1			56	12.6 %
Area 2			85	19.1 %
Area 3			17	3.8 %
Area 4			15	3.3 %
Area 5			80	18.0 %
Area 6			38	8.5 %
Area 7			96	21.6 %
Area 8			11	2.4 %
My home is not in the City of Rock Island			16	3.6 %
No Response(s)			29	6.5 %
Totals			443	100%

TextBlock:

Thank you for participating in this community survey!

Public Outreach and Community Visioning

A comprehensive citizen review process is critical in developing a plan that accurately reflects the goals and values of the community. This Comprehensive Plan was developed through an eleven-month planning process that included a robust public outreach program to ensure that the plan was based on the community's vision for the future. City staff coordinated the planning process and public outreach effort with assistance from the Vandewalle & Associates. Rock Island's public outreach efforts were designed to follow an organized process for public participation, Planning Commission Steering Committee guidance, City Council review and action on the Comprehensive Plan.

Planning Commission and Department Head Survey

As part of the planning process, Planning Commission members and department heads were asked to complete an online survey to provide their perspective on evolving trends in Rock Island. Topics covered included positive changes in Rock Island over the past 5-10 years; issues and obstacles facing the City; infrastructure and operational needs; and assets, opportunities, and future priorities. The responses collected are summarized below.

Positive Changes

- Recent new developments, such as: Whitewater Junction, Schwiebert Park, Jumer's Casino, the Quad City Botanical Center, and the Math and Science Center.
- Future developments taking place in Rock Island, including construction of the MetroLink transportation facilities, the new police station, and the planned Wal-Mart at an 11th Street redevelopment site.
- Reinvestment activities, including numerous downtown renovations, adaptive reuse at McKesson Lofts and Jackson Square, the expansion of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center and construction of new housing in the New Old Chicago area, and business activity in the College Hill District.

Issues and Obstacles Facing the City

- Population loss, a trend that is evidenced by Census data – Rock Island's population is down almost two percent since 2000 and 17 percent since 1980.
- Unfavorable community image related to crime, high taxes, and school performance.
- Deteriorating public infrastructure, such as streets and sidewalks.
- Property maintenance issues related to disinvestment.
- Limited unsubsidized new construction and lack of new high-end residential development.
- Recent loss of businesses, including Seifert Clothing, Servus Rubber, Zimmerman Honda.
- An overall lack of vision for the city.

Infrastructure Needs over the 20 Years

- Street repair and sidewalk maintenance as well as water and sewer system upgrades.
- A connected system of bike routes and off-street multipurpose trails.
- Broadband/wireless internet, especially in the downtown and business development areas.

Public Facility Needs over the 20 Years

- Public libraries needs include overall facility maintenance and technology upgrades. The 30/31 branch is currently operating at capacity and may need expansion or relocation to accommodate growing demand at this branch.
- Inclusion of prisoner detention and court service capabilities was identified as a need for the new police station.
- Technology upgrades are needed at City Hall. In addition, many departments are operating at capacity; it was suggested that a facility expansion could occur into the area currently occupied by the Police Department once the new police station has been completed.
- The Parks & Recreation Department was noted as needing a more robust maintenance budget, as well as park facility and shelter repairs. It was also suggested that a new swimming pool will likely be needed in Southwest Rock Island as that area develops.

Existing Assets, Emerging Trends, and Potential Opportunities

- Continued redevelopment of the Mississippi riverfront and leveraging this asset to promote new development.
- Improve the City's image as business-friendly, and work on business retention as well as expansion.
- Continue to expand the City's tax base through new business recruitment and development.
- Continue to develop new housing in the Downtown, West End, and Southwest Rock Island.
- Position Rock Island's diversity as an advantage.
- Implement quality of life improvements to attract new residents, such as families with young children.
- Strengthen development standards to improve the quality of new development.
- Carve out Rock Island's niche in the Quad Cities.

Community Vision Workshops

In September 2013, City staff and Vandewalle & Associates conducted two community vision workshops to gather public opinion on a variety of issues related to the future of the community. The first meeting was held on September 16, 2013 at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center. Approximately 50 participants were in attendance. Several interpreters were also in attendance to accommodate members of the community that are non-English speakers. The second meeting was held on September 24, 2013 at St. Pius Catholic Church; approximately 21 participants were in attendance. Interpreter services were not needed at this meeting.

These interactive meetings allowed participants to identify key values and opportunities, spotlight areas of interest and concern, and express their ideas on how the community should grow over the next 20 years. In the first part of this workshop, participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire. Participants were asked what they value most about Rock Island, what the City's most significant opportunities for the future, and the top challenges the City will face over the next 20 years.

Participants identified what they **value most** about Rock Island:

- Neighborhoods (10 responses)
- Diversity (10)
- Parks—especially Blackhawk State Park and Schwiebert Riverfront Park (10)
- History of the community/historic districts (7)
- Cost of living (2)
- Responsive local leaders (2)
- Friendliness (2)
- City services, operations, Bus system
- Four seasons

- ◉ Augustana College (4)
- ◉ Quality of life (4)
- ◉ Schools (4)
- ◉ Mississippi and Rock Rivers (4)
- ◉ Sense of community engagement (4)
- ◉ The people (3)
- ◉ Fiscal responsibility (3)
- ◉ Bike paths (3)
- ◉ Welcoming atmosphere (2)
- ◉ The District (2)
- ◉ Small town feel (2)
- ◉ Walkability (2)
- ◉ Scenery
- ◉ Tax incentive programs
- ◉ Housing diversity
- ◉ Responsive local lenders
- ◉ Open government
- ◉ Good size
- ◉ Jumer's Casino
- ◉ Rock Island High School
- ◉ Courthouse
- ◉ Can live near work
- ◉ Unique food options

Participants identified the following as the **most appealing things** of Rock Island:

- ◉ Parks (9 responses)
- ◉ Riverfront/river location (7)
- ◉ Neighborhoods (6)
- ◉ Augustana College (5)
- ◉ Downtown revitalization (4)
- ◉ Diversity (3)
- ◉ Affordable housing (3)
- ◉ Welcoming (3)
- ◉ History/historic districts (3)
- ◉ Events (3)
- ◉ Natural beauty (2)
- ◉ Bike paths (2)
- ◉ Commercial and retail improving (2)
- ◉ Schools (2)
- ◉ Library (2)
- ◉ Potential to grow and improve
- ◉ Hilltop area
- ◉ City services
- ◉ Support systems for struggling families
- ◉ Bus system
- ◉ Housing improving
- ◉ Nonprofits that contribute to the city
- ◉ Old trees
- ◉ Active residents
- ◉ Multiple easy transportation options
- ◉ Small town feel
- ◉ Safety improving

Participants identified the following as the **least appealing things** about Rock Island.

- ◉ Vacant buildings/properties (9 responses)
- ◉ Streets/infrastructure (8)
- ◉ Poor housing appearance (5)
- ◉ Riverfront industrial /scrap yard (6)
- ◉ Balancing bars and restaurants in the District/late night problems (5)
- ◉ School system (5)
- ◉ City leadership (4)
- ◉ Crime (4)
- ◉ Top of the hill vs. bottom of the hill (3)
- ◉ Lack of shopping/restaurant options (3)
- ◉ Lack of awareness of good things (2)
- ◉ Teenage mothers (2)
- ◉ Evictions (2)
- ◉ Litter (2)
- ◉ Citizenship
- ◉ Homelessness
- ◉ Levy obscures views
- ◉ Lack of employment opportunities
- ◉ Unemployment
- ◉ Community perception
- ◉ Lack of enforcement of city codes
- ◉ City focuses on attracting big boxes/chains vs. small businesses
- ◉ Food desert at bottom of hill (esp. west)
- ◉ Summer events too expensive for families
- ◉ More people living in the same house
- ◉ Management of Century Woods
- ◉ Real estate taxes, special assessments
- ◉ Attitudes of police officers

Participants identified the following as **missing in Rock Island:**

- ◉ Retail and restaurants options (17 responses)
- ◉ Transportation options (2)
- ◉ Small businesses
- ◉ New housing (market rate, owner)

- ◉ Bike trail system (2)
- ◉ Activities/supervision for youth (2)
- ◉ Solid employers (2)
- ◉ Government leadership
- ◉ Higher income residents
- ◉ Focus on Douglas Park
- ◉ Bathroom facilities at Denkmann Park and MLK Parks
- ◉ occupied)
- ◉ Better school system
- ◉ Higher education
- ◉ Art and cultural opportunities
- ◉ Teen club
- ◉ Downtown grocery store
- ◉ Community center
- ◉ Removal of vacant properties

Participants identified the following as options **setting Rock Island apart:**

- ◉ Welcoming diversity and young families (5 responses)
- ◉ Walkability (4)
- ◉ History (3)
- ◉ Specialty shopping (2)
- ◉ The District (2)
- ◉ Local businesses (2)
- ◉ Better schools (2)
- ◉ Safety
- ◉ Going green/homesteading
- ◉ Attractive streets with unique lighting
- ◉ Eclectic unique areas
- ◉ Railroad
- ◉ Art galleries
- ◉ Affordable living in Quad Cities
- ◉ Beautiful homes/neighborhoods
- ◉ Good neighbors
- ◉ Beautiful parks
- ◉ Lower taxes

Participants identified the following as **opportunities** for the future:

- ◉ Retail and restaurants options (7 responses)
- ◉ Downtown (6)
- ◉ Improve schools (4)
- ◉ Leadership training for youth (2)
- ◉ Diversity (2)
- ◉ Sustainability (2)
- ◉ Building on historic character (2)
- ◉ Housing (2)
- ◉ Riverfront
- ◉ Jumer's Crossing
- ◉ 11th St corridor
- ◉ Logistics
- ◉ Appeal to young families
- ◉ Move Arsenal
- ◉ Parks
- ◉ Adaptive reuse
- ◉ Clean up poorly maintained properties
- ◉ Museum
- ◉ Promote RI for families
- ◉ Jobs
- ◉ Start up opportunities for entrepreneurs
- ◉ Market rate apartments
- ◉ "Immigrant energy"
- ◉ Address immigrant/refugee population in the Quad Cities, partner with nonprofits that provide services to them
- ◉ Community's openness to change
- ◉ Building up all vacant lots
- ◉ No more gardens
- ◉ Farmers market
- ◉ Infrastructure, streets
- ◉ Community/neighborhood collaboration
- ◉ New businesses
- ◉ Homesteading

Participants identified the following as potential **threats or challenges** that Rock Island may face over the next 20 years:

- ◉ Aging infrastructure (6)
- ◉ City leadership (4)
- ◉ Poverty (3)
- ◉ Decreasing city revenue (3)
- ◉ Declining population (3)
- ◉ Crime (3)
- ◉ Income disparity
- ◉ Parking
- ◉ Noise downtown
- ◉ Industrial development in SW RI
- ◉ Augustana taking land off tax roll
- ◉ Housing for low wage workers

- ⦿ Too much low income housing (2)
- ⦿ Traditional economic development (2)
- ⦿ Technical education (2)
- ⦿ Community perceptions (2)
- ⦿ Lack of educated population (2)
- ⦿ Loss of young families to neigh cities (2)
- ⦿ Lack of employment opportunities
- ⦿ Vacant properties
- ⦿ State of Illinois policies on schools, pensions, and poverty
- ⦿ Housing
- ⦿ Redevelopment: unique buildings replaced by generic buildings
- ⦿ Not planning for climate change
- ⦿ Transportation/fuel costs
- ⦿ Emphasis on large shopping centers
- ⦿ Integrating immigrants
- ⦿ Lack of home buying opportunities for racial/ethnic minorities
- ⦿ Economy fluxes
- ⦿ Teen pregnancy
- ⦿ Loss of green space
- ⦿ Rental housing
- ⦿ Limited area for growth
- ⦿ High taxes

Part two of the workshops involved a mapping exercise to spotlight areas of public interest and concern. Within groups, participants were asked to identify areas that should be singled out for special focus in the plan, including potential areas for new commercial, residential, industrial, redevelopment and infill, and preservation. Summary maps are provided on pages 12-13.

Student Vision Workshops

Vision workshops were held in mid-September for Rock Island High School, Augustana College, and Black Hawk College. The student workshops provided an opportunity for Rock Island's younger residents to express their vision for the future of Rock Island. These workshops also provide insight into what students value most about the community and what factors may influence their decision to remain in Rock Island in the future. These workshops were conducted in the same manner as the community vision workshops, described above. Summary of the student mapping exercise are included on community vision workshop summary maps on pages 12-13.

Augustana College/Black Hawk College

College students identified what they **value most** about Rock Island:

- ⦿ Rivers (4)
- ⦿ Blackhawk State Park (3)
- ⦿ The District (3)
- ⦿ Size of the community (2)
- ⦿ Schwiebert Park (2)
- ⦿ Parks/green space (2)
- ⦿ Attractive community
- ⦿ Available resources
- ⦿ City maintenance
- ⦿ Historical values/history
- ⦿ Sunset Marina
- ⦿ Shops and restaurants
- ⦿ Augustana
- ⦿ Bike trail
- ⦿ Diversity
- ⦿ Activities
- ⦿ Arsenal
- ⦿ Project Now

College students identified the following as the **most appealing things** of Rock Island:

- ⦿ Riverfront (6)
- ⦿ Parks/Recreation (4)
- ⦿ The District (3)
- ⦿ Improved bike accessibility (3)
- ⦿ Augustana (2)
- ⦿ Safe/low crime (2)
- ⦿ Bars
- ⦿ Post-industrial architecture
- ⦿ Amtrak service
- ⦿ Continued updating and modernization of attractions
- ⦿ College Hill District

- ⦿ Attractive/appearance (2)
- ⦿ Low traffic
- ⦿ Downtown area shopping
- ⦿ Distinct neighborhood character
- ⦿ Quad Cities location

College students identified the following as the **least appealing things** about Rock Island.

- ⦿ Poor road conditions (6)
- ⦿ 11th Street (3)
- ⦿ Poor housing appearance (3)
- ⦿ Community appearance (2)
- ⦿ Vacant buildings/closed businesses (2)
- ⦿ Lack of retail choices
- ⦿ Lack of parks and bike paths
- ⦿ Segregation
- ⦿ Image of neighborhoods around Augustana
- ⦿ Crime
- ⦿ Bottom of the hill

College students identified the following as **missing in Rock Island:**

- ⦿ Retail and restaurants options (9)
- ⦿ Parks and trails (6)
- ⦿ Entertainment options
- ⦿ Better public transportation (bus, street car, ferry, train)
- ⦿ Emphasis on historic downtown
- ⦿ Sense of community
- ⦿ Weekday events downtown
- ⦿ Dog park

College students identified the following as options **setting Rock Island apart:**

- ⦿ River (3)
- ⦿ Be a sustainable city (2)
- ⦿ Entertainment/night life/improve The District (2)
- ⦿ Residential maintenance standards
- ⦿ Railroad
- ⦿ Green space and parks
- ⦿ Family friendly
- ⦿ Growth of Arsenal

College students identified the following as **opportunities** for the future:

- ⦿ Embracing/connecting to the river (7)
- ⦿ Improve The District (6)
- ⦿ Augustana (2)
- ⦿ Crime control (2)
- ⦿ Improve the Jumer's area
- ⦿ Improve bad areas
- ⦿ Bike paths and lanes
- ⦿ Grass roots neighborhood organizations
- ⦿ Wal-Mart
- ⦿ Jobs
- ⦿ Connection to Quad Cities
- ⦿ Historic character
- ⦿ Improve education system
- ⦿ Improve infrastructure
- ⦿ Tax incentives
- ⦿ Use empty land for parks and agriculture
- ⦿ Passenger trail
- ⦿ Arsenal
- ⦿ John Deere
- ⦿ Public transportation
- ⦿ Parks/green space
- ⦿ Brick streets
- ⦿ Mixed use development
- ⦿ Increase stores/restaurants Downtown

College students identified the following as potential **threats or challenges** that Rock Island may face over the next 20 years:

- ⦿ Perception of the community (5)
- ⦿ Condition of housing stock (4)
- ⦿ Retaining residents (3)
- ⦿ Decreased water quality (2)
- ⦿ Low density development (2)
- ⦿ Taxes (2)
- ⦿ Competitive wage jobs
- ⦿ Losing young ambitious people
- ⦿ Aging infrastructure
- ⦿ Economic development

- ⦿ Vacant/run-down buildings (2)
- ⦿ Poverty (2)
- ⦿ Declining education system (2)
- ⦿ Crime (2)
- ⦿ Protection of historic areas
- ⦿ Public transportation
- ⦿ Lack of interest
- ⦿ Sprawl

Rock Island High School

High school students identified what they **value most** about Rock Island:

- ⦿ Diversity of people, businesses, and food (4)
- ⦿ Education system (2)
- ⦿ Seeks public opinions (2)
- ⦿ Community feel
- ⦿ Valuing other cultures
- ⦿ Location right on Mississippi River

High school students identified the following as the **most appealing things** of Rock Island:

- ⦿ Parks (4)
- ⦿ Diverse community (3)
- ⦿ Vast array of activities (2)
- ⦿ Crime rate is getting better
- ⦿ Low cost of living
- ⦿ Festivals
- ⦿ Location right on Mississippi River
- ⦿ Variety of business opportunities

High school students identified the following as the **least appealing things** about Rock Island.

- ⦿ Area below the hill (3)
- ⦿ Rude/disrespectful people (3)
- ⦿ Tourism and Shopping
- ⦿ Entertainment options
- ⦿ Public education system
- ⦿ Trash in parks
- ⦿ Run down houses

High school students identified the following as **missing in Rock Island**:

- ⦿ Mall, shopping opportunities (7)
- ⦿ A draw to bring people (2)
- ⦿ Upgrade to parks (2)
- ⦿ Restaurants (2)
- ⦿ Accessible entrance to Rock River
- ⦿ Parks and nicer businesses down the hill

High school students identified the following as options **setting Rock Island apart**:

- ⦿ Organize rally/festival on the River (2)
- ⦿ Adding more accessible parks
- ⦿ Fixing landscape
- ⦿ Arsenal
- ⦿ Reasonably priced place to live w/luxury benefits
- ⦿ Schools
- ⦿ Being uniquely Rock Island
- ⦿ Mississippi River
- ⦿ Friendliness in any part of the community

High school students identified the following as **opportunities** for the future:

- ⦿ Improving school district/education (5)
- ⦿ More shopping (4)
- ⦿ More jobs (4)
- ⦿ Environment (3)
- ⦿ Transportation Options – trains (2)
- ⦿ Improve the parks (2)
- ⦿ Bring in more tourist attractions (2)
- ⦿ Space to expand
- ⦿ Augustana College
- ⦿ Alternative Energy – solar
- ⦿ Rebuilding
- ⦿ Becoming more widely known
- ⦿ Affordable environment

High school students identified the following as potential **threats or challenges** that Rock Island may face over the next 20 years:

- Economic downturns (3)
- Not enough growth/jobs (3)
- Lack of education/education level (2)
- Failing school system (2)
- Money (2)
- Road conditions/Terrible roads (2)
- AIDS (2)
- Population leaving area
- People willing to cooperate
- Big stores taking over houses
- Cleaning up Rock Island
- Lack of public transit usage
- Feeling of safety
- Global warming/environment
- Wal-Mart putting others out of business
- Space
- Poor overall environment/reputation
- All of Rock Island becoming like 11th Street

Focus Group Work Sessions

Focus group sessions with young professionals; real estate, finance and development professionals; business leaders, and representatives from neighboring jurisdictions were conducted in mid-September 2013. The focus groups were facilitated by Vandewalle & Associates and provided an opportunity for detailed, small-group discussions on specialized areas of expertise. A summary from each focus group discussion is provided below.

Young Professionals Focus Group

Young professionals of the Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce were in attendance. Attendees discussed Rock Island's assets and trends along with their impression of key issues and challenges facing Rock Island. Schwiebert Riverfront Park and the riverfront in general were identified as Rock Island's greatest assets. It was also suggested, however, that these assets are not fully leveraged to the City's advantage and there is an opportunity to capitalize on these assets in ways that the other Quad City communities have not. For example, a food and beverage venue with riverfront access/views could be a valued amenity in Rock Island. Participants also identified key issues and challenges facing Rock Island, including the following:

- Rock Island has a negative reputation in the Quad City region; particularly with regard to public schools, public safety, high property taxes, and socio-economic factors.
- Retaining families and young professionals is a challenge—including young professionals from minority demographics that seek more diverse communities where they may have greater access to their peers.
- Rock Island lacks the type of amenities that draw new residents and visitors (e.g. restaurants, shopping, and entertainment/nightlife options for adults).
- There is a perception and anecdotal evidence that those living on the Iowa side have very little reason to visit Rock Island or the Illinois side of the Quad Cities.
- Housing options are limited in Rock Island. It was also suggested that realtors play a role in directing new Quad City residents to live on the Iowa side.
- There is a need to develop a balanced mix of businesses in the downtown and elsewhere in Rock Island. There is also a need for more offices, services, and chain restaurants and retail in addition to the local establishments currently in operation.

Real Estate, Finance, and Development Professionals Focus Group

Professionals representing local real estate agencies, banks, and development firms were in attendance. Attendees discussed issues impacting the local real estate and development markets. The following issues and challenges were identified:

- High property taxes on the Illinois side of the Quad Cities are a deterrent to new development. Further, Rock Island and Moline have the highest tax rates on the Illinois side. However, lower income tax rates make Illinois a more favorable place to do business.
- Illinois offers incentives to encourage residential development—one being that spec houses are not fully taxed until sold. It was also noted that the City of Rock Island offers a housing tax rebate program for eligible home buyers.
- A recent housing study indicated that Rock Island is an aging community with a need for more senior housing. It was also suggested that new residential growth is needed to maintain and attract middle and upper income residents as well as residents in the 25-35 age demographic. Participants suggested that the best way to capture new residential growth is provision of amenities, such as walkable neighborhoods and school district improvements.
- Challenges for new development include competition with Iowa, which is seen as having a greater number of amenities. There are also fewer greenfield sites available for development in Rock Island; those that do exist are more difficult to market as they are further removed from the urban core.

Small to Mid-Sized Business Focus Group

Small and mid-sized businesses owners were in attendance. Attendees discussed issues impacting small business retention and development as well as issues and opportunities facing Rock Island. This focus group identified Rock Island as “business-friendly,” particularly for small businesses. It was also noted that the Rock Island Arsenal is a significant asset for the community in terms of business attraction; particularly businesses with government contracts. It was also suggested that there is significant potential for new business development on Rock Island’s main thoroughfares. In particular, the planned Wal-Mart is likely to spur additional infill development in the vicinity as has happened in other urban areas, including Bettendorf. Participants also identified key issues and challenges facing Rock Island, including the following:

- Iowa is a right-to-work state, which puts Illinois and Rock Island at a competitive disadvantage in terms of business development.
- It is costly for small businesses to train young employees and difficult to retain them once the investment in training has been made. Many employers of small businesses place a higher value on tenured professionals that do not require training.
- Rock Island’s school system is struggling compared to other cities in the area, which negatively impacts neighborhoods. It was suggested that the City work with the school district to lower property taxes and improve the image of local schools to stem the tide of people moving to the Iowa side of the river. It was also noted that realtors play a role in directing new Quad City residents to live on the Iowa side.
- The City should consider repealing the 1.5% prepared food and beverage tax which increases the sales tax to 9% for restaurant establishments. This is in comparison to 7% in Scott County, which already has a much better business climate and is experiencing more growth.
- The media negatively and often unfairly portrays Rock Island as having higher rates of crime than other Quad Cities.

CEO/Large Business Focus Group

Chief executive officers and large businesses owners were in attendance. Attendees discussed issues impacting business development, community assets and attracting new residents Quad Cities. This group indicated that Rock Island’s strength is its vibrant, engaged neighborhoods. It

was suggested that instead of competing with Iowa to attract those residents interested in the types of suburban neighborhoods offered in Iowa, Rock Island should instead target those seeking a more urban lifestyle and traditional neighborhoods. Other strengths identified included:

- The success of the Live/Work Rock Island program in attracting new residents to Rock Island. It was suggested, however, that a comparable program should also be made available to middle incomes.
- Rock Island has an urban feel, but is also very manageable in terms of traffic congestion when compared to other cities, such as Chicago. This is a draw for many people.
- Rock Island boasts the highest number of most small businesses and the largest entrepreneurship spirit in the Quad Cities.
- It was noted that the school district has a poor reputation in the Quad Cities; however, it was reported that Rock Island High School has a very good, if not the best, college prep program among the Quad City high schools.

The following were identified as Rock Island's weaknesses:

- Rock Island struggles with high property taxes and limited job opportunities.
- Realtors impact location decisions of future residents. Often, realtors will focus their energy on showing properties on the Iowa side of the Quad Cities.
- Rock Island has struggled to define itself.
- The supporters for local development projects are not always vocal in the community. The minority "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) factions are very vocal but there is no counter voice. Thoughtful comments are needed to challenge the hollow arguments that dominate the show. A framework should be set to challenge the NIMBY loud voice.
- There is a very limited draw in attracting visitors to Rock Island. For example, comments on Trip Advisor related to Jumer's Casino: "Beautiful casino in the middle of nowhere," "Great casino but don't expect to do anything else."

The following were identified as potential opportunities for Rock Island:

- The private sector should partner with local schools at all levels to develop career readiness programs.
- Develop walkable/bikeable places to attract young professionals. These are quality of life components sought by new Augustana professors.
- The retail business incubator has been successful; however, it was suggested that with technology today, there is a greater need for an environment that fosters creativity, entrepreneurship, and technology without a traditional incubator. The area near Rozz Tox is ideal for such conversations to take place.
- Rock Island should be the third location for expansion for the successful local chains in the other cities in the Quad Cities.

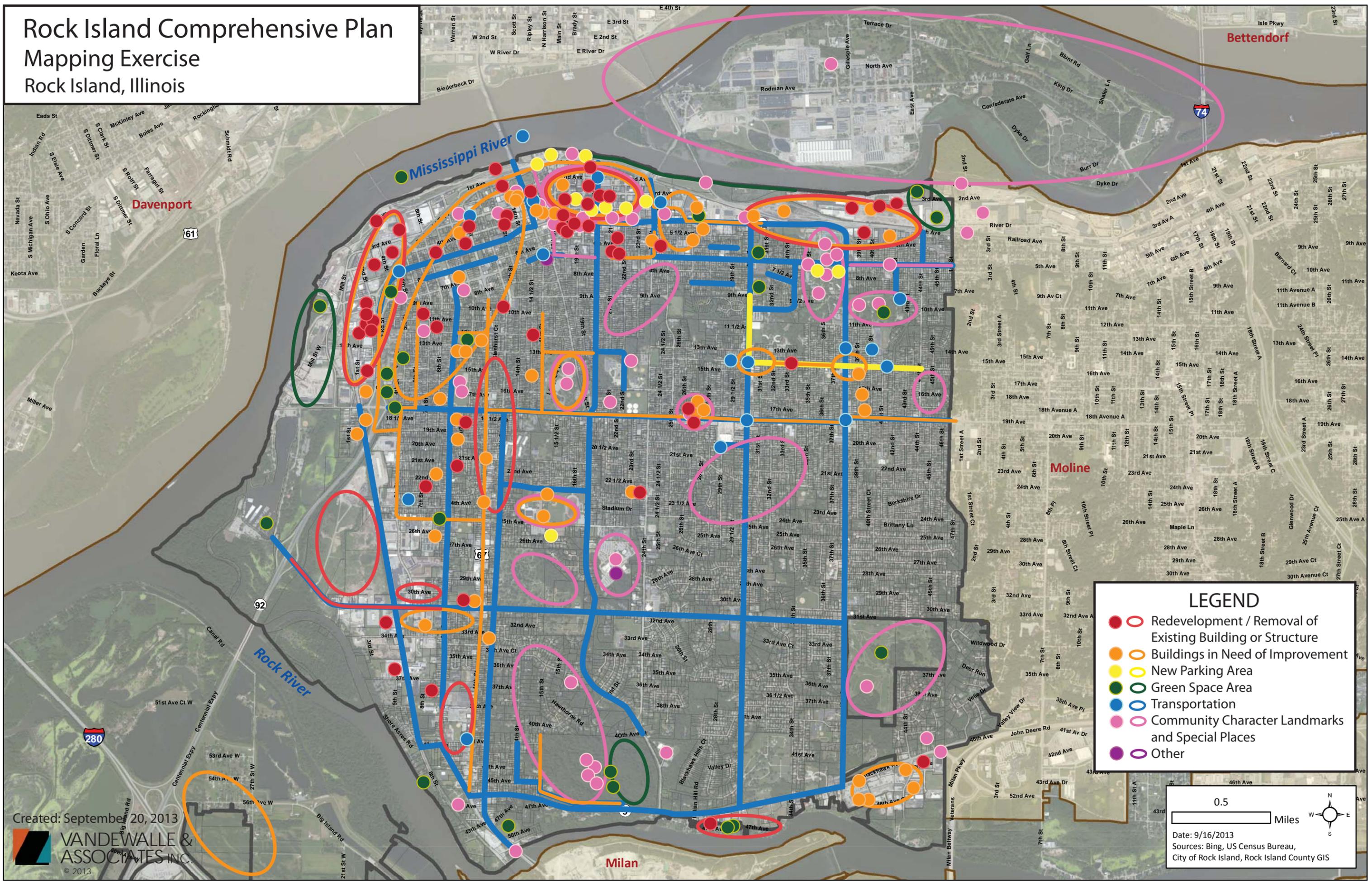
Intergovernmental Focus Group

Representatives from neighboring jurisdictions and the Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce were in attendance. Attendees discussed a variety of intergovernmental issues, but largely focused on economic development issues in the Quad Cities.

- Entrepreneurship is a strength in the region; however, connecting entrepreneurs with venture capital is a hurdle, but an important one to overcome.

- Rock Island's minority population is an asset and many immigrants are starting new businesses.
- The Amtrak planned for Moline will bring business, help retain students, and attract parents to the Quad Cities. Rock Island should position itself to attract University of Iowa students who have a research and development spirit who want quick access to Chicago.
- Defense was identified as a target niche for Rock Island and the Quad City area as a whole due to the location of the Rock Island Arsenal; however, Rock Island has a unique advantage for attract defense contractors because of its "Rock Island" address.
- The local building stock, and office space in particular, is aging and difficult to retrofit to meet the current demand for office. The office market is fairly soft, at the same time there are not a lot of available spaces.
- There is a need for flex space and market ready sites in the Quad Cities. There are many opportunities for projects but limited sites.
- Rock Island's downtown currently lacks the mix of businesses that should be in a downtown.
- A community's bicycle transportation network is an asset. Currently it is fairly easy to go east to west by bike, however getting around north to south is difficult due to a lack of connections.

Rock Island Comprehensive Plan Mapping Exercise Rock Island, Illinois



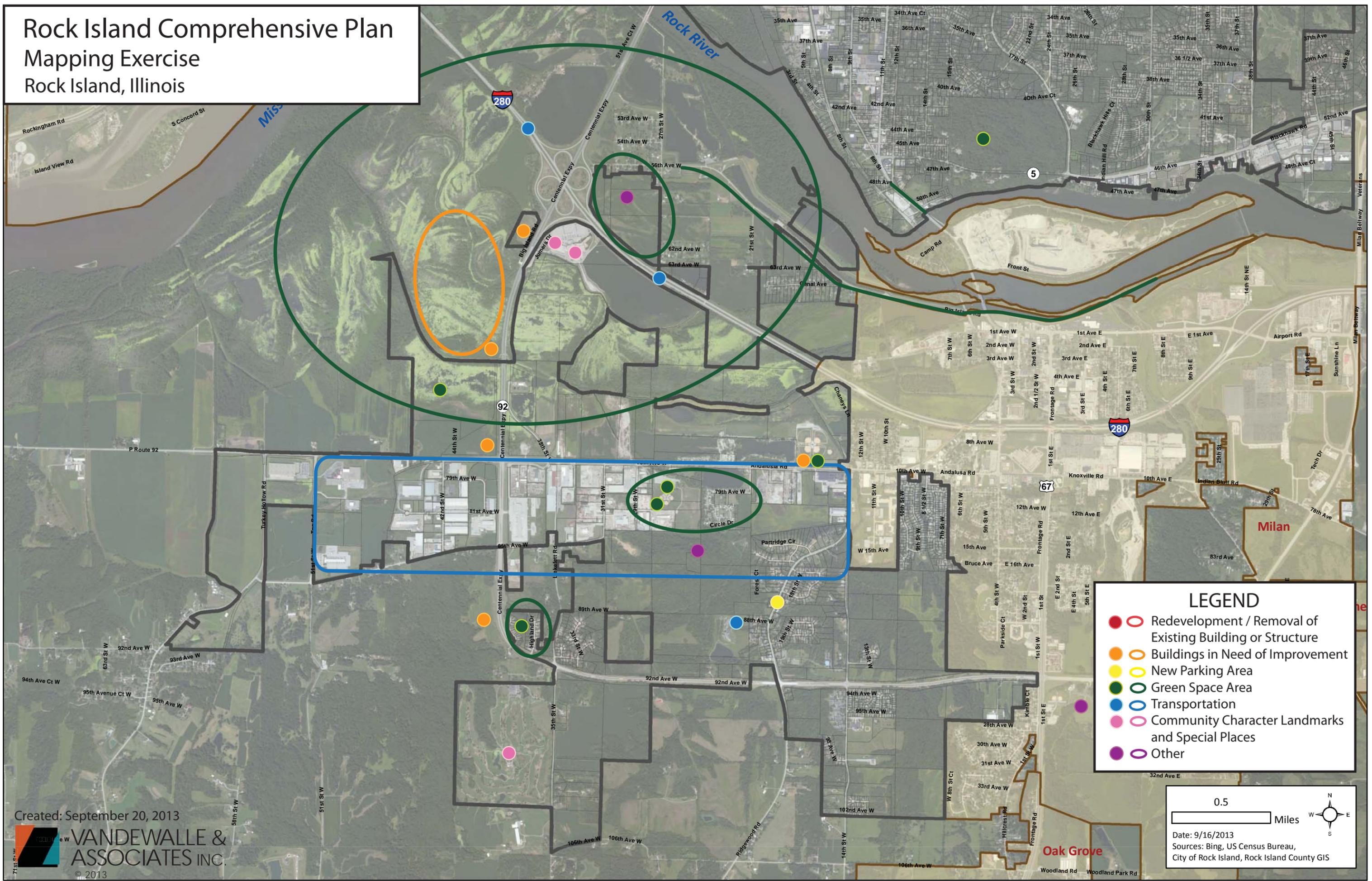
LEGEND

- Redevelopment / Removal of Existing Building or Structure
- Buildings in Need of Improvement
- New Parking Area
- Green Space Area
- Transportation
- Community Character Landmarks and Special Places
- Other

0.5
Miles

Date: 9/16/2013
Sources: Bing, US Census Bureau,
City of Rock Island, Rock Island County GIS

Rock Island Comprehensive Plan Mapping Exercise Rock Island, Illinois



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