

MORRIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Morris, Illinois



September 2024



City of Morris Comprehensive Plan

Approved by City Ordinance #4556 on _____, 2024

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This 2024 Comprehensive Plan is an update of the 2022, 2018, and 2010 Comprehensive Plans. The update was prepared by Teska Associates, Inc. The original 2003 Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the North Central Illinois Council of Governments.

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An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing streets, buildings, and green spaces. A river is visible at the bottom right. The text is overlaid on this image.

Chapter 1

Introduction

"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood...Make big plans, aim high in hope and work."

Daniel H. Burnham

Introduction

This Comprehensive Plan is an update to the 2010 Morris Comprehensive Plan. Morris first drafted a Comprehensive Plan in 1967, with updates in 1973, 2003, 2010, 2018, and 2022.

The 2010 update was the result of approximately one year of work by the Morris Planning Commission and the City's planning consultants, Teska Associates, Inc. The planning commission studied and discussed at length the physical, economic, and social conditions of Morris in projecting what the future of the City should be. As a result they developed a set of goals, objectives, and policies for: general development, land use, housing and residential development, historic preservation, commercial development, public utilities, community facilities, open space and recreation, and ongoing planning. The 2018 and 2022 updates built on that work.

To receive additional input a public hearing was held in January, 2018 to discuss the draft document. This was a participatory meeting in which the residents were asked to take an active role reviewing the draft plan and goals, objectives, and policies. Citizens were also asked to offer any suggestions for how to improve the policies that would later be implemented. The residents were asked to try to foresee how the city will develop and/or how they want the city to develop in the future while reviewing the proposed future land use maps.

This 2024 update also included a public hearing, held on September 25, 2024. The 2024 update focused on changes to the Future Land Use Plan in the Airport/Brisbin Road area.

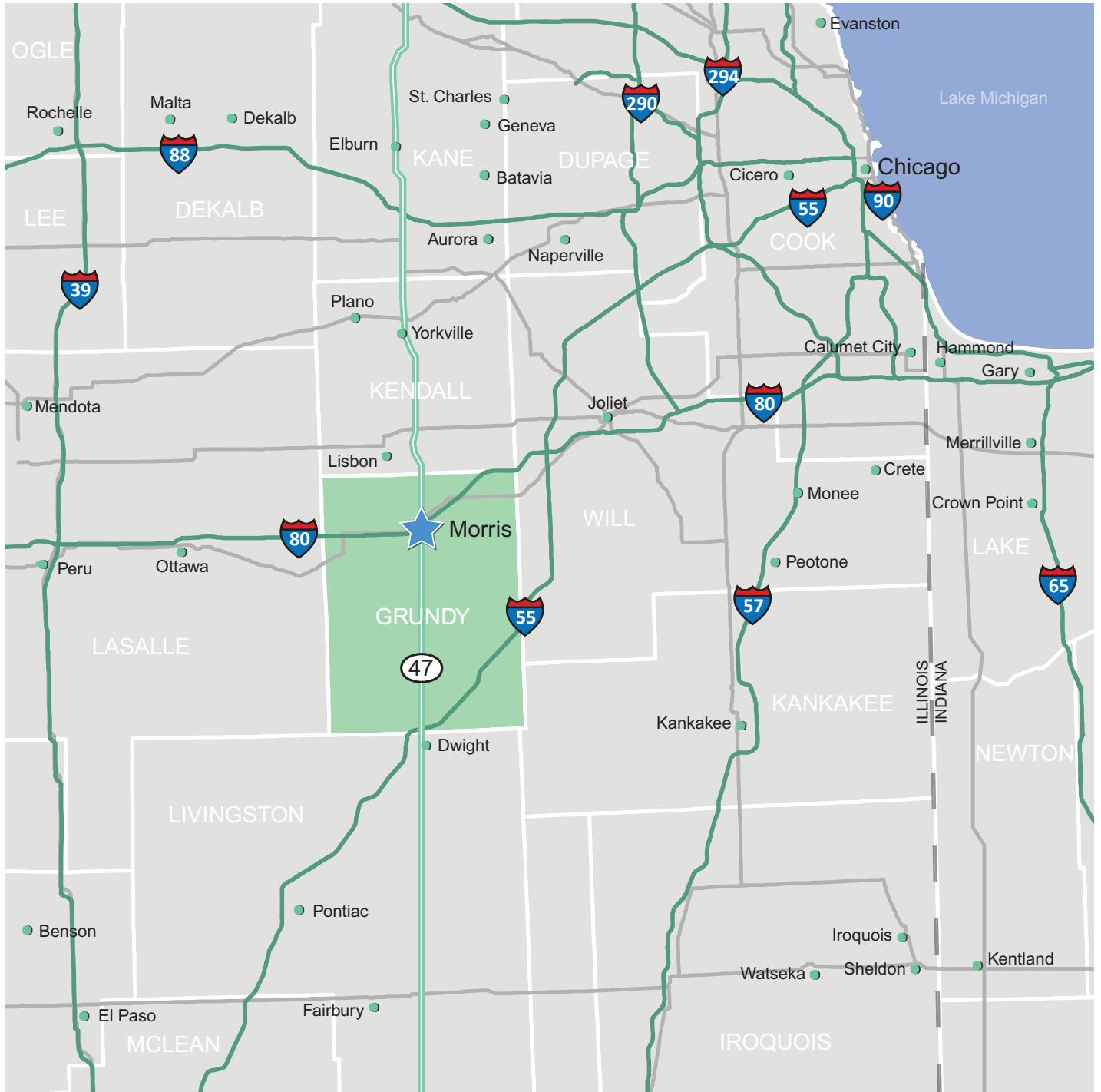
This Comprehensive Plan is a working document. The purpose of the plan is to help City officials in making day-to-day decisions. The plan will serve as a guide for many public decisions, especially land-use changes and preparation of capital improvements programs. The Comprehensive Plan will be a guide on which zoning and subdivision decisions are based. The plan is very important because as elected and appointed officials change over the years, the plan will be there to guide the new officials towards the vision of the City of Morris.

The Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year vision for the City of Morris. Although the Morris Comprehensive Plan is a complete document, the comprehensive planning process is never complete. Changing conditions will require reassessment of various parts of the plan. The plan should be reviewed and updated periodically, either as a whole or by section, as needed.



Distance to Nearby Cities

Regional Location Map



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Chapter 2

History

"The farther behind I leave the past, the closer I am to forging my own character."

Isabelle Eberhardt

Background

The City of Morris is the county seat of Grundy County. Morris was chosen in 1842 as the county seat over the Village of Clarkson, which was two miles west of where Morris is today. The state required that the county seat was to be located on or adjacent to canal land for the expectation of enhancing the adjacent land in price. The first permanent settlers arrived in Morris in 1831. The town is named after Isaac Newton Morris, who was a commissioner of the Illinois & Michigan Canal (I &M). Morris was incorporated April 12, 1842. It was not until 1856 that Morris secured a charter, acknowledging its existence as a city, with a mayor, council, justice, and other city officials.



Grundy County Courthouse



Illinois & Michigan Canal

The I & M Canal has played an important role in the history of Morris. The sesquicentennial celebration of the I & M Canal took place throughout 1999. Construction of the I & M Canal began in 1836. It took twelve years to complete. The canal runs through the city, just north of the Illinois River. The canal was used for freight and public transportation and was the first commercial link between Lake Michigan and the Illinois River. Dams were built to provide adequate depth for the keelboat traffic. Business and shipments in and out of the city were made at the canal; therefore, business was concentrated in the southern portion of the city. Travel time from Morris to Chicago, via the canal, took nearly one full day. The Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific railroad was constructed and opened for service in 1851. It was not until 1853 that passenger service on the Pacific railroad was opened to Morris. The speed and efficiency of train service surpassed the canal and quickly took over as the transportation of choice. Barge and freight traffic, however, continued to utilize the canal, which allowed for business growth in Chicago as well as Morris. Morris was the largest inland grain port and was said to ship sixteen million bushels a year.

The Rock Island Railroad provided the area with fast freight and passenger service and growth in Morris and began from the canal northwards. Passenger service on the Rock Island railroad continued through 1987. The city had an electric streetcar that provided public transportation within the city as well as service to Aurora and Chicago. Concrete highways were built in the 1920's and the east to west four-lane highway, Interstate 80, was opened in 1960. The popularity of the automobile replaced passenger rail service. Commuter rail service may come to Morris in the future. There are two counties and several communities from LaSalle to Joliet that are working together on the concept of passenger service. This would allow residents of the area to take the train to Joliet and then onto train service to Chicago and the suburbs.

Abraham Lincoln visited the Morris home of William T. Hopkins prior to his departure for Ottawa, Illinois, for the Lincoln-Douglas debate. In 1851, Hopkins built The Hopkins House, a hotel originally built in 1841 as the Grundy Hotel. It was destroyed a second time by fire in 1888. The original home of William Hopkins hosted the former Lincoln Nursing Home, located on the 900 block of Fremont.

The Yeoman was the first newspaper in Morris, published in 1844. The Morris Herald began in 1850. John Chapin built the first warehouse, Lane Warehouse, in 1847 on the west side of Calhoun Street. The first factory opened in 1857, the Morris Plow Factory. Prominent businesses to follow in the 1850's through the 70's included Miller's Blacksmith Shop, Knoblock Brothers Tannery, The First National Bank of Morris, The Grundy County National Bank, Gebhard Brewery, the Allen Paper Car Wheel Company, the Morris Cutlery Company, and the Baum Store. Bolen's Yankee match lighter was manufactured in Morris until 1912. Bolen also produced ice cream bar machines and shell cases.

The Lindsay Light and Chemical Company manufactured gas mantles until 1953. S & F Appliance Company bought the Lindsay Light and Chemical Company. S & F Appliance Company gave up manufacturing about 1990. The building was decontaminated, sold, and currently sits empty. Bimet Corporation is a factory that was started in 1954, located on East U.S. 6. Sponge-Cushion Incorporated began in 1962. Jefferson Smurfit, formerly the Self-Locking Carton Company, was located in the paper mill buildings. The company built and moved to the present building on Armstrong Street in 1956. ADA Grain, Illinois Grain, Cargill Grain, and Continental Grain operate on the Illinois River, in Morris, as a shipping center for area and regional grain.

Growth and changes are evident throughout the City of Morris. Examples of such changes are in the adoption of zoning ordinances, the incorporation of a planning commission, the building and growth of multiple dwelling units, expansion of sewer and water, new shopping centers, and the improvement and broadening of municipal services.

Hospital

The hospital was initiated by doctors and began as three rooms on the third floor of the Collins building in 1906. By 1910, the need to expand services and facilities resulted in the purchase and development of a new hospital, located on West High Street. Several additions, renovations, and replacements have been made since the original structure was built. Currently, the hospital has eighty-six beds and approximately 900 employees. They offer emergency and ambulatory care, outpatient services, community-training programs, educational programs, and have affiliate health care facilities in Coal City, Dwight, Gardener, Marseilles, Minooka, Seneca, and South Yorkville. The hospital has an active expansion program in order to accommodate a growing number of patients as well as to provide up-to-date equipment and services.



Morris Hospital



Fire Protection



Morris Fire District

The Fire King Engine Company was the first fire department in Morris. The company was organized under a city ordinance in 1859 and was comprised of engineers, wardens, and firemen. Within a few years, there were two hand engine companies, the aforementioned Fire King and the Niagara. In 1868, the Eagle Hose Company, a volunteer department, was organized and replaced the existing companies. The hand engines were substituted with a steam engine. By 1927, there were twenty-five volunteers. Their equipment consisted of a one thousand-gallon metropolitan triple combination American LaFrance pumper, two double combination trucks with booster pumps, and one hook and ladder truck. In 1990, the Morris Fire Protection and Ambulance District was formed and taxes are collected to pay for fire protection and ambulance service. The district includes 140 square miles of service area. They have their own building and modern equipment. Their emergency services include a rescue squad and ambulance service. Bi-annual pancake breakfasts and an annual carnival are their primary fund raising events.

Churches



Religious services in Morris date back to the 1840's. Public buildings and homes were commonly utilized until permanent church buildings were made available. Over the century, these buildings have been built, some destroyed, expanded, rebuilt, and restored. In 1927, there were eight churches of the following denominations: Baptist, Federated (Congregational and Presbyterian), Methodist Episcopal, Free Methodist, Norwegian Lutheran, Christian Science, and Roman Catholic. Since then, a number of churches have been established. The following is a list of nearly 30 churches that serve the Morris community:

Library District



Morris Public Library

The public library was established in 1873 by the Morris Library Association based purely on public interest and support. The original location of the library was in the former City Hall. In 1910, Morris levied a library tax and an official library board was incorporated. Utilizing grant funds from Andrew Carnegie, Morris was able to purchase, build, and open a new public library by 1913. The present library sits on the Woodbury lot at the corner of Liberty and North Streets. The library is equipped with books, reference materials, magazines, newspapers, cassettes, genealogical resources, computers, Internet access, microfilm, and microfiche reader/printer, photocopier, and income tax forms. Services provided by the library include interlibrary loan, information and reference service, and a variety of activities and programs.

Morris Area Churches

Ambassadors for Christ	Grace Baptist Church
Assembly of God Church	Grace Lutheran Church
Bethlehem Lutheran Church	Kingdom Hall Jehovah's Witnesses
Calvary Baptist Church	Life Church of Morris
Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception	Living Waters Church of the Nazarene
Church of Christ	New Community Christian Church
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	New Hope Lutheran Church
Faith Baptist Church of Goose Lake	My Father's House of Prayer
First Apostolic Church	Morris Area Churches
First Baptist Church	Our Savior's Evangelical Lutheran
First Christian Church	Peace Chapel Assembly of God
First Church of the Nazarene	Peace Lutheran Church
First Presbyterian Church of Morris	St. Thomas Episcopal Church
First United Methodist Church of Morris	Standing in the Word Ministries
Friends in Christ Lutheran Church	

Newspaper

In 1854, the first weekly newspaper, *The Yeoman*, was published in Morris. Twenty-four years later, a daily newspaper was established, which eventually incorporated all local publications. The owner of the paper, William Sackett, passed management to Loren Sackett, which was later bought by the Morris Publishing Company in 1953. Tim West served as publisher of the *Morris Daily Herald* until 2006. Mr. West began his career with the *Herald* as a co-publisher with his father in 1976. The paper is now part of Shaw Media, and is known as the *Morris Herald-News*. On September 29, 2001, the *Morris Daily Herald* was presented with the James S. Copley Memorial Trophy from the Illinois Press Association. The award signifies the *Herald* as the best small daily newspaper in the state of Illinois, recognizing its excellence in writing, photography, and design. The paper has been a repeat recipient of this award, with recognition in 2003, 2006, 2007, and 2008.



The logo for MORRIS HERALD-NEWS features the word "MORRIS" in a large, blue, serif font above the words "HERALD-NEWS" in a smaller, blue, serif font. The background is white.

Schools

The city and residents of Morris take pride in their education system. It is estimated that the first school was opened in 1843. Lessons took place in a log cabin located southeast of the train depot, privately run by Ann Nagle. Private classes were also taught in the public courthouse when court was not in session as well as a room above the local saloon. Records of a school board date back to 1843 and the establishment of district schools took place



White Oak Elementary School

in 1851. Old Center School House was a wooden building built in 1853 on East Jackson Street. The school serviced all grades through the eighth year. In 1876, a three-story stone building was erected, in a different location, to replace the old wooden school building. It was located where the gymnasium of the existing Center School is now.

By 1888, the school had ten classrooms, a library, and a large hall. Each room had sixty-three seats with desks and a blackboard. Four rooms in the basement were used for recreation during bad weather. It was torn down in 1923 to make room for the new Center School, which is now in the process of being torn down. Nearly eighty years later, public education took place in five brick and stone school buildings. Private schools at that time were St. Angela's Catholic Academy and the Morris Normal and Scientific School.



Morris Community High School

Located in the heart of Grundy County, Morris High School was established in 1872 on the second floor of the old Center School building. In 1898, classes opened at the new site on Franklin Street. Two new wings were added to the building in 1914. In 1927, enrollment reached 265 and the building was becoming overcrowded. In 1944, the present designation of Morris Community High School, District 101, was founded. In the spring of 1949, a \$1,200,000 bond referendum was passed for a new building. Northern Illinois Coal Corporation donated 25 acres of land for the site of the new building. In 1960, a new wing was completed and facilities for industrial arts and agriculture were added. From a tiny enrollment limited to two classrooms in 1872, Morris High School has grown to nearly 1,000 students.

An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing streets, buildings, and green spaces. A river is visible at the bottom right. The text 'Chapter 3' is overlaid in a large, brown, serif font.

Chapter 3

Environment

"Nature provides a free lunch, but only if we control our appetites."

William Ruckelshaus, Business Week, 18 June 1990

Environmental Features

Understanding the physical environment is critical to planning for future growth and development. This chapter examines key environmental features which will influence the type and character of development in and around Morris.

Relief and Physiography

Grundy County slopes gently from the highest point near Minooka in the northeastern portion (615 feet above sea level) to about 490 feet along the Illinois River on the west side. The City of Morris is relatively flat with an elevation of about 550 feet. Most of the county drains into the river. The beginning of the river is at the junction of the Des Plaines River from the northeast and the Kankakee River from the southeast. The Mazon River, which flows from the south, is the main tributary. Three creeks drain directly into the Illinois River: the Nettle and Aux Sable Creeks from the north and the Waupecon Creek from the south. All join the Illinois River within the 1½ mile planning area. Moderate annual flooding of the river is common along low-lying adjacent areas.

The City of Morris corporate limits currently cover an area of approximately 6,320 acres, or slightly less than 10 square miles of land. The level surfaces in Morris and Grundy County contribute to the formation of poorly drained soils that have high water tables. A high water table is prevalent when there is a thick zone of free water in the soil. When an impermeable layer is penetrated, the water level rises to saturate the dry zone. Permeability is the ability of a soil to transmit water.

Soils

Soils are responsible for producing our food, filtering our water supply, and supporting our buildings and development. Because there are hundreds of soil types and formations, certain types of soil are better than others for certain uses. Five general factors determine the type of soil that is formed in a certain location. These factors include the composition of the parent material, climate, plants and organisms, land relief, and time.

The disintegration and decomposition of rock form soil parent materials. Parent materials can be distributed by water, wind, or glaciers, resulting in varying mixes and densities. Climate and vegetation are active factors in the soil formation process by altering the accumulated parent material and developing its characteristics to a certain soil classification. The climate accomplishes this by its processes of weathering and erosion. Freezing and thawing help break down minerals and rock fragments. Dead plants and other organisms add to the formation process by contributing rich nutrients and organic matter to the soil through decay.

A soil association is a landscape or geographic area that has a distinctive proportional pattern of different soils. It represents an area containing one or more major soils and one or more minor soils. Normally the soil association is named for its major soil/soils or the most extensive land type. The Grundy County Soil Survey was updated in 2005 and identifies major associations throughout the county. This resource is available on the internet at http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/manuscripts/IL063/0/Grundy_IL.pdf. The following are general descriptions of soil associations identified by the survey that are found in the Morris vicinity.

Elliott-Ashkum-Drummer Association

The Elliot-Ashkum-Drummer association (Figure 1) makes up about 28 percent of the country. It is about 34 percent Elliot soils, 26 percent Ashkum soils, 10 percent Drummer soils, and 30 percent soils of minor extent. The nearly level Elliott soils are on ridges at slightly higher elevations than Ashkum and Drummer soils and are somewhat poorly drained. Ashkum and Drummer soils are in poorly drained, broad depressional areas. All have a black surface layer more than 10 inches thick. The 10-inch or more surface layer in Elliot soils is silt loam. In Ashkum and Drummer soils it is silty clay loam that is sticky when wet.

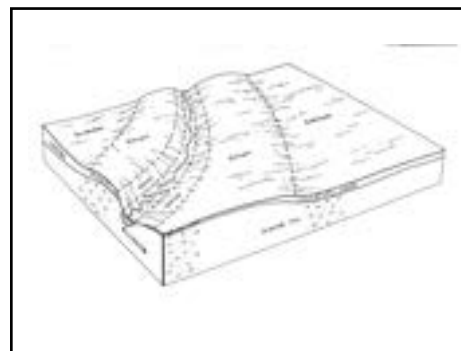
Minor in this association are the moderately well drained Varne soils and well drained Proctor soils on ridges and side slopes, the somewhat poorly drained Martinton soils in level areas, and the very poorly drained Peotone soils and poorly drained Sawmill soils in drainageways. This association is used mainly for corn and soybeans with wetness being the main limitation for farming and for most other uses. Most of it has been drained, but improved drainage is needed. If adequately drained, this association has good potential for cultivated crops. Small ponded areas are common early in spring. Because the severe problem of wetness is so difficult to overcome the potential use for dwellings and sanitary facilities is poor.

Reddick-Andres Association

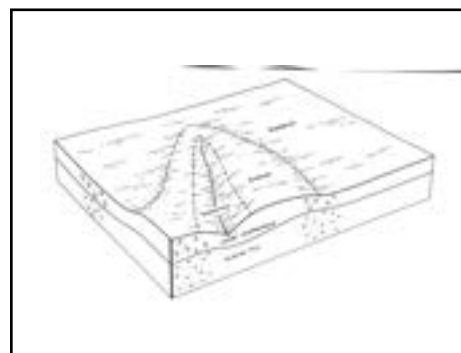
The Reddick-Andres association (Figure 2) covers about 15 percent of the county. It is made up of about 65 percent Reddick soils, 22 percent Andres soils, and 13 percent minor soils. Reddick soils are in broad depression and are poorly drained. Andres soils are in nearly level areas at slightly higher elevations where surface drainage is better but is still somewhat poorly drained. The surface layer is at least 10 inches in Reddick soils, which is silty clay loam that is sticky when wet, and in Andres soils, which is silt loam. Both soils have a silty clay loam, clay loam, or sandy loam subsoil.

Minor in this association are the poorly drained Ashkum soils in depressions, the somewhat poorly drained Lawson soils along drainageways, and the moderately well drained Symerton soils on ridges and side slopes.

This association is used almost entirely for corn and soybeans. Because these soils are nearly level, wetness is the main limitation for farming and for most other uses. Small ponded areas are common early in spring. If adequately drained, this association has good potential for cultivated crops. Because of the wetness of this association, there is a severe limitation for residential uses.



Elliott-Ashkum-Drummer



Reddick-Andres

Drummer-Selma-Brenton Association

The Drummer-Selma-Brenton association makes up about 20 percent of the county. It is about 39 percent Drummer soils, 20 percent Selma soils, 18 percent Brenton soils, and 23 percent minor soils. Drummer and Selma soils are in broad depressions and are poorly drained. The nearly level Brenton soils are at slightly higher elevations where surface drainage is better but still are somewhat poorly drained. The 10-inch or more surface layer is silty clay loam that is sticky when wet in Drummer soils. In Selma soils it is loam, and in Brenton soils it is silt loam.

Minor in this association are the well drained Proctor and Jasper soils on ridges and side slopes, the somewhat poorly drained Starks and Darroch soils in level areas, and the poorly drained Sawmill and Comfrey soils along creek bottoms.

This association is used mostly for corn and soybeans. Wetness is the main limitation for farming and for most other uses. However, if adequately drained they would have good potential for cultivated crops. Small ponded areas are common early in spring. Blowing soil and drought are other management problems to be considered. The wetness of this association causes a severe limitation for residential uses.



Excellent farmland surrounds the City of Morris

Hononegah-Warsaw-Selma Association

The Hononegah-Warsaw-Selma association makes up about two percent of the county. It is about 45 percent Hononegah soils, 16 percent Warsaw soils, 14 percent Selma soils, and 25 percent minor soils. Hononegah and Warsaw soils are on the higher ridges and Selma soils are in low depressions. Hononegah soils are excessively drained, Warsaw soils are well drained, and Selma soils are poorly drained. The surface layer of at least 10 inches is loamy sand in Hononegah soils, loam in Warsaw soils, and loam or clay loam in Selma soils.

Minor in this association are the excessively drained Sparta soils and somewhat excessively drained Ade soils on ridges, the somewhat poorly drained Kane soils in level areas, and the wet Aquolts in low depressions. This association is used for pasture, corn, or soybeans. Some areas are under urban development and some are idle. Some are also used as a source of sand and gravel. Drought is the main limitation for farming in most areas; only Selma soils have adequate moisture holding capacity. This association has poor to good potential for cultivated crops. Many areas are subject to soil blowing. Sanitary facilities have problems in Hononegah and Warsaw because of seepage. Selma soils also are not good for sanitary facilities because they are too wet.

Swygert-Martinton-Milford Association

The Swygert-Martinton-Milford association (Figure 3) makes up about eight percent of the county. It is about 27 percent Swygert soils, 23 percent Martinton soils, 22 percent Milford soils, and 28 percent minor soils.

The somewhat poorly drained Swygert and Martinton soils are slightly higher in elevation than Milford soils, or they are on gentle slopes near drainageways. The poorly drained Milford soils are slightly depressional. The surface layer of 10 or more inches are silt loam in Martinton soils, and in Milford and Swygert soils it is silty clay loam.

Minor in this association are the poorly drained Bryce soils in broad, slightly depressional areas, the poorly drained and somewhat poorly drained Sawmill and Lawson soils in drainageways, and the somewhat poorly drained Nappanee soils in level areas near the main streams. This association is used mainly for corn and soybeans. Some of it has been drained, but in places tile drainage is not effective. Wetness and slow permeability are the main limitations for farming and for most other uses. Pondered areas are common early in the spring. Wetness also severely limits the use of the soils for residences.

Bryce-Shadeland-High Gap Association

The Bryce-Shadeland-High Gap association makes up about seven percent of the county. It is about 23 percent Bryce soils, 22 percent Shadeland soils, eight percent High Gap soils, and 47 percent minor soils. Bryce soils are in slightly depressional areas or in drainageways. Shadeland soils are in level areas at somewhat higher elevations than Bryce soils. High Gap soils are on ridges. Bryce soils have a surface layer that is silty clay loam or silty clay, Shadeland soils have a surface layer of silt loam, and High Gap soils have a loam surface layer. Depth to sandstone and/or shale bedrock is dominantly 20 to 50 inches.

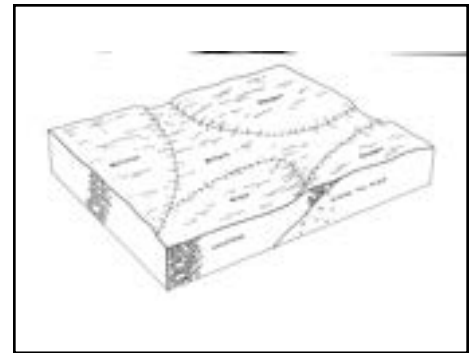
Some of this association is used for cultivated crops. A portion is used for hay and pasture. A small percentage is idle and some is under urban development. Wetness and depth to bedrock are the main limitations for farming and for most other uses.

Because wetness often delays planting, this association has poor potential for cultivated crops. The main management problems are flooding and drainage due to the bedrock. Some areas are droughty or too stony. Wetness or the depth of bedrock, or both, severely limit the use of these soils for residences.

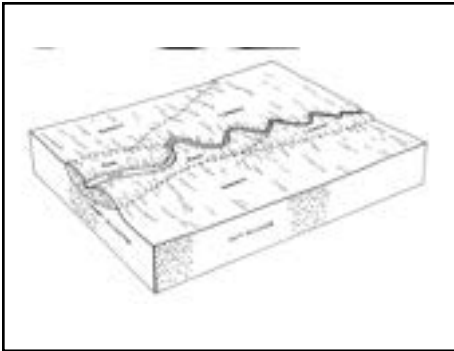
Sawmill-Lawson-Ross Association

The Sawmill-Lawson-Ross association (Figure 4) makes up about four percent of the county. It is about 36 percent Sawmill soils, 24 percent Lawson soils, 11 percent Ross soils, 28 percent water, and one percent minor soils.

Sawmill soils are slightly lower in elevation than Lawson and Ross soils, and they are poorly drained. Lawson soils are somewhat poorly drained and Ross soils are well drained. The surface layer is more than 22 inches thick and is silty



Swygert-Martinton-Milford



Sawmill-Lawson-Ross

clay loam that is sticky when wet in Sawmill soils. In Lawson and Ross soils it is silt loam. All are subject to flooding, but the floodwater recedes faster from Lawson and Ross soils than from Sawmill soils. Sawmill soils tend to remain ponded. This association is used mainly for corn. In some areas when the water table is at or near the surface most of the year, the association is idle or supports only trees and brush. Wetness and flooding are the main limitations for farming and for most other uses including residences. This association has fair to good potential for cultivated crops. Flooding, however, occurs nearly every year and sometimes damages crops.

Geology

Morris lies within the area of North America and Illinois that was covered by continental glaciers during the Ice Age, or Pleistocene. At least three of the four major glacial stages during the Ice Age covered the Morris area. As each glacier advanced through the Midwest during each stage, it picked up soil, pebbles, rocks, and large boulders that were released in this area when the glaciers melted and retreated. This material, called glacial drift, from the Kansan Stage, Illinoian Stage, and finally the Wisconsinian Stage, blanketed most of Illinois when released. Drift material from the Wisconsinian Stage is what we now see as the land surface of Morris and all of Grundy County. The thickness of the glacial drift deposited during that period varies from 50 feet to over 500 feet. Loess, or windblown silt, was picked up from the dry valley floors and deposited in the hills above the glacial drift, occurring in thicknesses from four to six feet.

Mineral Resources

Sand and gravel are dominant resources mined in the Morris area and are primarily used for surfacing roads and as concrete aggregate when washed and graded. These areas are commonly along or near the flood plain of the Illinois River. Excavations that are filled with water could be used for recreational uses such as boating, camping fishing or swimming.

Surface Water



Mazon River

The main hydrological feature in the Morris area is the Illinois River. The Illinois River originates at the confluence of the Kankakee and Des Plaines Rivers in northeastern Grundy County. It then flows west to Hennepin and then south before joining the Mississippi River north of Alton. The river is 273 miles in length with a watershed that covers a sizable portion of the state. The river and adjoining backwaters provide an aquatic resource of some 87,000 surface acres, while the floodplain consists of about 400,000 acres. The building of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal diverted Chicago's untreated wastewaters from Lake Michigan into the river. Pollution and flooding have been problems since the canal's inception.

Besides a dam on the Mississippi at Alton in which pool the lower 80 miles of the Illinois River is included, there are the LaGrange and Peoria dams on the lower 228 miles of sluggish river, and the Starved Rock, Marseilles, and

Dresden Island dams on the upper 45 miles of faster flowing river. Many streams and rivers are tributaries. Water from Lake Michigan flows into the Chicago River, which flows into the Des Plaines River, and finally into the Illinois River. The Illinois Waterway project began in 1919 and helped create a continuous navigation route, nine feet deep and a minimum of 300 feet wide, from Joliet to the Mississippi River. Barges were then able to navigate the length of the river. Diverse aquatic habitats are the basis for the diversity of sport fish present, as each species favors certain habitats over others. The Lieutenant Governor's office operates the Illinois River 2020 Program. Through various educational, environmental, and preservation groups, it is attempting to rehabilitate the river and its watershed to the original state. The state will continue restoring more than 200 acres of wetlands south of the Illinois River near the Route 47 Bridge.

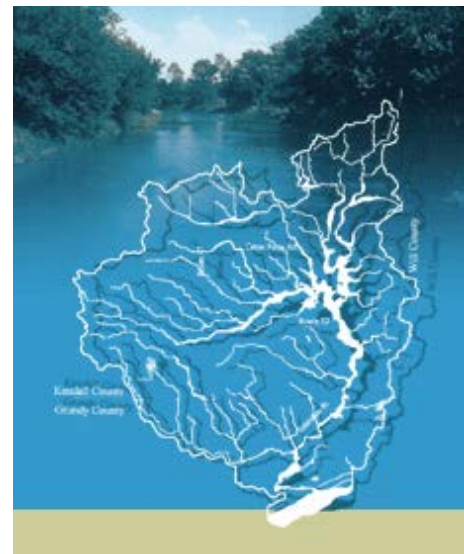
The Illinois River flows through the southern portion of Morris, providing a recreation resource for area residents. There is a substantial floodplain on the south side of the river. Gebhard Woods State Park north of the river is also located in the floodplain.

The Mazon River lies just south of Morris. The Natural Resources Conservation Service completed a Mazon River Watershed Resource Plan in 2005. This plan offers recommendations for managing change in the watershed. More information about this plan, and its recommendations is available on the internet at www.mazonriver.com.

Two other important watersheds are the Aux Sable Creek and Nettle Creek watersheds. The Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District has been active, along with local residents and other conservation partners, in planning for these watersheds. Additional information on these watersheds is available at www.grundycountyswcd.org/watersheds.htm.

Groundwater

Residents of Morris depend on three deep wells for their water supply. These wells are between 1,100 and 1,450 feet and obtain water from either Franconia (dolomite) or Galesville (sandstone) formations. At the bottom end of the Franconian, the material turns somewhat rapidly from dolomite to sandstone. The wells tap into groundwater supplied by aquifers lying below the water table. The aquifer is recharged (filled) as precipitation on the surface percolates through the soil layers, clay, silt, sand, and gravel into the aquifer. The water becomes purified and fortified with nutrients and minerals as it comes in contact with this glacial drift material and gases. The groundwater supply throughout Grundy County, including the Morris area, is pure and plentiful for all types of use.



Aux Sable Creek Watershed

Climate



Grundy County is located in a humid-temperate climate with warm summers and cold winters. The climate favors the weathering and reduction in size of soil minerals and the formation and movement of clay downward. Low pressure areas and associated weather fronts bring frequent changes in temperature, humidity, cloudiness, and wind direction during much of the year. On an average day, the high temperature is 61.1 degrees and the low temperature is 39.1 degrees. The average winter temperature is 31.3 degrees while the average summer temperature is 85.2 degrees. Morris averages 36.58 inches of rainfall each year. This covers most of the growing season for crops. The city sees 38.32 inches of snowfall annually.

The growing season is the number of days between the average date of the last freezing temperature (32 degrees or below) in the spring and the average date of the first such occurrence in the fall. The average growing season in Grundy County and the Morris area lasts for 159 days.

Morris Airport Wildlife Assessment



Midwest Generation Collins Station

In 2008, the United States Department of Agriculture prepared a "Wildlife Hazard Assessment for the Morris Municipal Airport." This extensive report (146 pages) details current conditions and outlines recommendations to minimize the risks of wildlife related aviation accidents. Relevant findings from this assessment include:

- Deer are the greatest threat to aviation, while large flocking birds such as gulls and waterfowl are usually considered the greatest avian threats to aviation.
- The Morris Municipal Airport and surrounding area sustain a large diversity of wildlife. However, only a few primary species are responsible for creating wildlife hazards.
- Blackbirds were the most commonly observed species at the airport, followed by waterfowl (primarily Canadian geese).
- Waterfowl can be particularly hazardous to aircraft because of their large size, weight, flocking behavior, and relative abundance. The best method of control for waterfowl is the removal and exclusion of attractive wetland habitat and agricultural crops.
- The FAA has identified a number of land use practices that should be monitored and regulated on or near airports to minimize potential risks. These practices include:
 - Siting and operation of landfills and other water disposal operations
 - Storm water management facilities and wetlands
 - On-airport detention should be designed to allow a maximum 48-hour detention period.
 - Off-airport storm water management systems within defined zones (see below) should be designed to avoid or minimize standing water, including a similar maximum 48-hour detention period.

Recommendations include:

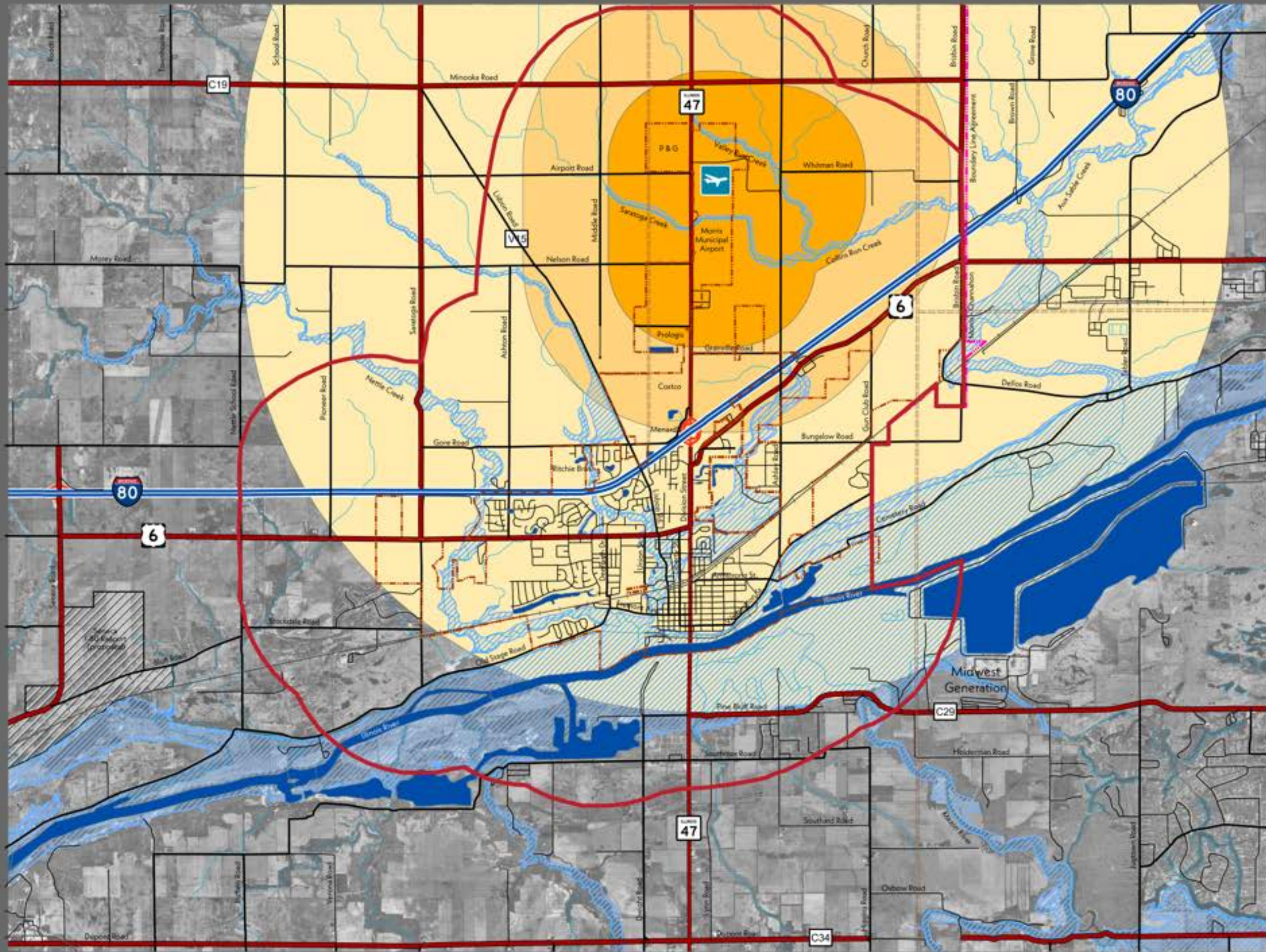
- Steep-sided, rip-rap lined, narrow, linearly shaped water detention basins.
 - Use of wire grids and netting to prevent access of hazardous wildlife to open water.
 - Planting around detention ponds with tall native grasses to minimize attraction of Canadian geese
- Golf courses (due to large grassy areas and open water that are attractive to Canadian geese)
- The FAA defines three separation distances within which hazardous wildlife attractants should be avoided, eliminated, or mitigated. Airport personnel, and potentially state and federal review, of storm water management plans for new development will be important in these areas. These areas are illustrated on the following Environmental Issues Map, and labeled as airport buffers.
 - Perimeter A – 5,000 feet for piston-powered aircraft
 - Perimeter B – 10,000 feet for turbine-powered aircraft
 - Perimeter C – 5-mile range to protect approach, departure and circling airspace.



ComEd Transmission Lines

Electrical Grid

As illustrated on the Environmental Issues Map, Morris is well served by major electrical transmission lines. This was due originally to the proximity of the now closed Midwest Generation Collins Plant located on Pine Bluff Road south of the Illinois River. The 1.2 billion dollar Competitive Power Ventures generating stations became operational in June, 2023. This facility, located just south of Morris, will help ensure a dependable electrical supply for years to come

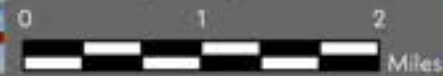


Legend

- 1.5 Mile Planning Area
- Interstate
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local Street
- ComEd ROW
- Railroad
- Lake
- River
- Existing Floodplain
- Morris (Incorporated Area)
- Airport Buffer (5,000 ft.)
- Airport Buffer (10,000 ft.)
- Airport Buffer (5 Miles)



September, 2024



An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing streets, buildings, and green spaces. A river is visible at the bottom right. The text is overlaid on this image.

Chapter 4

Demographics

"Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning."

Benjamin Franklin

The most recent U.S. Decennial Census was conducted in 2020. The following information is based on Census 2020 data, American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, and projections to 2024.

Population Characteristics

Morris has experienced continuing population growth since 1940, and much of the growth in Grundy County has occurred in Morris. Morris and the county have continued to slowly grow since the Great Recession. The population of Morris grew from 13,636 to 14,163 from 2010 to 2020 resulting in a growth of 3.9%. The 2022 ACS population estimate for Morris of 14,491 shows continued slow, steady growth.

Household Characteristics

The number of households in Morris grew from 5,501 to 6,206 from 2010 to 2020, resulting in a growth of 12.8%. The number of households in Grundy County grew from 18,546 to 20,071 from 2010 to 2020, resulting in a growth of 8.2%. In comparison, the number of households in the state of Illinois is grew from 4,836,972 to 4,884,061 from 2010 to 2020, resulting in a growth of 1%.

The average household size is slightly less in Morris (2.27) as compared to Grundy County (2.51), and the average family size in Morris (3.05) is similar to that of Grundy County (3.16).

Housing Units

Most of the housing units in Morris are owner-occupied (53.8%). In comparison, a larger percentage of housing units are owner-occupied in Grundy County (78.8%) and the state of Illinois (66.3%). The median owner-occupied housing value in Morris is estimated to be \$200,000 in 2019 compared to \$199,300 for Grundy County.

The majority of housing units in Morris are single-family detached (57.8%). In comparison, a larger percentage of housing units are single-family detached in Grundy County (72.1%) and the state of Illinois (60.1%).

Ethnic Composition

Morris is made up of predominantly White residents, with a significant minority of Hispanic residents. The ethnic composition of Morris is estimated

Morris Population 1940 - 2020

	City of Morris	± % Change	Grundy County	± % Change	Illinois	± % Change
1940	6,145	--	18,398	--	7,897,241	--
1950	6,926	12.7%	19,217	4.5%	8,712,176	10.3%
1960	7,935	14.6%	22,350	16.3%	10,081,158	15.7%
1970	8,194	3.3%	26,535	18.7%	11,110,285	10.2%
1980	8,833	7.8%	30,582	15.3%	11,427,409	2.9%
1990	10,270	16.3%	32,337	5.7%	11,430,602	0.03%
2000	11,928	16.1%	37,535	16.1%	12,419,293	8.6%
2010	13,636	14.3%	50,063	33.4%	12,830,632	3.3%
2020	14,163	3.9%	52,533	4.9%	12,812,508	-0.1%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census

Morris Housing Units 1940 - 2020

	City of Morris	% change	Grundy County	% change
1940	n/a	--	5,350	--
1950	n/a	--	6,109	14.2%
1960	n/a	--	7,252	18.7%
1970	2,892	--	8,831	21.8%
1980	3,716	28.5%	11,529	30.6%
1990	4,307	15.9%	12,652	9.7%
2000	5,084	18.0%	15,040	18.9%
2010	6,010	18.2%	19,996	33.0%
2020	6,286	4.5%	21,174	5.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Esri

at 86% White, 0.5% African American, 0.1% American Indian and Alaskan Native, 0.9% Asian, 0.0% Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, and 3.3% Two or More Races. The estimated Hispanic population is 9.3%.

The ethnic composition of Grundy County is estimated at 84.6% White, 2.2% African American, 0.3% American Indian and Alaskan Native, 1% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, and 1.4% Two or More Races. The estimated Hispanic population is 11.2%.

In comparison, the estimated ethnic composition of the entire state of Illinois is estimated at 60% White, 14.7% African American, 0.6% American Indian and Alaskan Native, 6.1% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, and 2.2% Two or More Races. The estimated Hispanic population is 18%.

Income Levels

Morris has a lower average and per capita income than both Grundy County and the state of Illinois as a whole. The average household income in Morris is estimated to be \$61,419 and the per capita income \$32,024 in 2020. The average household income in Grundy County is estimated to be \$75,767 and the per capita income \$35,483 in 2020. In comparison, the average household income in the entire state of Illinois is estimated to be \$68,428 and the per capita income \$37,306 in 2020.

Employment

62.4% of the population of Morris is estimated to be employed and aged 16 and over in 2020. The estimated occupational classifications include 27.2% management, business, science, and arts, 23.5% production, transportation, and material moving, 21.9% sales and office, 17.1% service, and 10.4% natural resources, construction, and maintenance.

For Grundy County, 64.5% of the population is estimated to be employed and aged 16 and over in 2020. The estimated occupational classifications include 32% management, business, science, and arts, 20.8% sales and office, 19.3% production, transportation, and material moving, 15.5% service, and 12.3% natural resources, construction, and maintenance.

In comparison, 61.2% of the population of the entire state of Illinois is estimated to be employed and aged 16 and over in 2020. The estimated occupational classifications include 39.8% management, business, science, and arts, 21.5% sales and office, 16.8% service, 14.7% production, transportation, and material moving, and 7.2% natural resources, construction, and maintenance.

Source: U.S. Census, ESRI, and Claritas, Inc.

An aerial photograph of a city grid with a river and a large brown text box. The text box contains the chapter title and a quote.

Chapter 5

Policy Framework

"If you're bored with life -- you don't get up every morning with a burning desire to do things -- you don't have enough goals."

Lou Holtz

In establishing and deciding upon a certain set of development plans or activities, four degrees of decision formulation become apparent. These include community vision, goals, objectives, and policies that range from the broad to the specific. For example, a goal being the most general term could be “to make Morris a better place to live.” A more specific objective following would be to “eliminate all substandard housing.” The policy following could then be stated as “establish a code enforcement project based upon a thorough housing plan.”

Goals are essentially general expressions of values and wishes. They are abstractions providing directions rather than locations and, in a sense, are difficult to obtain. **Objectives**, on the other hand, are specific purposes to be obtained that attempt to reach these broad goals. **Policies** are definitive courses of action chosen from among alternatives to guide future decisions. They deal with the way or ways in which specific objectives may be accomplished. As such, policies provide directions for the preparation of specific plans, programs, and projects.

As one moves from the general to the specific, it must be noted that, over time, new areas of need or new situations become dominant and it is necessary to reappraise and amend goals, objectives, and policies periodically to reflect changing conditions. These goals and objectives should be reviewed and updated every five years. Based upon the present point in time and the existing conditions in the City, the following goals, objectives, and general development policies are recommended.

Vision Statement

Morris will remain a self-sustaining rural community that celebrates its historic downtown, promotes controlled growth, and continues to be a great place to raise a family.

The community benefits from its location at the fringe of the Chicago metropolitan area; with excellent regional and national connections by way of Interstate 80, the CSX Railway, the I&M Canal Bicycle Trail, U.S. Route 6 and Illinois Route 47, the Illinois River, and the Morris Airport. Morris will continue to welcome appropriate residential, commercial, and industrial growth as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

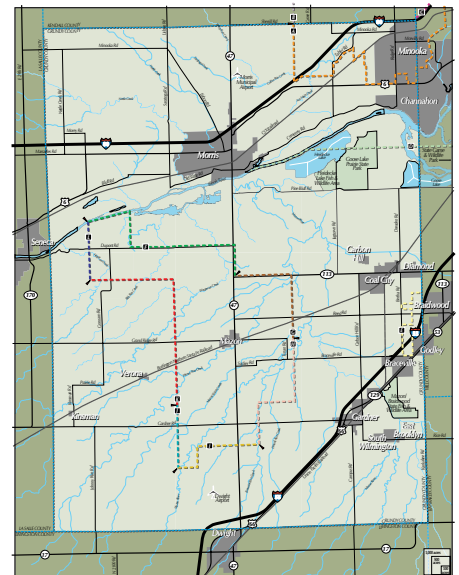
The General Development Goal

While there are several specialized areas that deserve attention in the goal formulation process, there is an over-riding, general goal and set of objectives that pertain to community development as a whole, hence the recognition of this in the term "Comprehensive" Plan. The plan provides the framework within rational decisions can be made to ensure that resources, both public and private, are allocated in the most efficient and equitable manner.

Goal: The Comprehensive Plan is meant to deal realistically with growth and development pressures without forfeiting the characteristics that make Morris a desirable community in which to live and work. The Plan is to establish and maintain an enjoyable, healthful, coherent, and workable environment for the residents of Morris.

Objective 1: Seek to annex areas within the Contiguous Planning Area so that they are developed in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Annex areas through the use of annexation agreements.
2. Annex property into the city, especially north and east along Route 47 and Interstate 80. The airport should be given particular priority.
3. Consider annexation south of Illinois River; the Illinois Department of Natural Resources owns adjacent property to city limits.
4. Forcibly annex properties only when a reasonable agreement cannot be reached and there are significant risks in not doing so.
5. Where developed property requests annexation, carefully evaluate the potential costs and liabilities to the City.
6. At the request of property owners, consider pre-annexation agreements with non-contiguous properties if consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.



Objective 2: Foster good relationships between Morris and neighboring jurisdictions.

1. Participate in and promote joint planning efforts between Morris and Grundy County.
2. Work with Channahon to extend the existing municipal boundary agreement south of the Illinois River to Dupont Road. This will establish a clear eastern limit to the Morris planning area.

3. Work with Seneca to establish a municipal boundary agreement to the west of Morris.
4. Work with Mazon to establish a southern municipal boundary agreement.
5. Maintain the existing municipal boundary agreement with the Village of Minooka.
6. Work closely with groups such as the Grundy County Foundation and the Grundy Economic Development Corporation to foster regional intergovernmental cooperation and education.

Objective 3: Encourage land use, density, and design in conformance with the City's Comprehensive Plan regardless of jurisdiction.



1. Work with Grundy County and other municipalities to implement joint planning agreements under the Local Land Resource Management Planning Act or similar enabling legislation.
2. Review, update, and continue enforcement of the City's subdivision regulations within the 1½ mile jurisdiction area.
3. Maintain high development standards with added emphasis on open space.
4. Promote quality commercial and multi-family development through the City's Site Plan review process.
5. Enhance the primary entrance through enhancements to the Route 47 corridor as outlined in the Community Design section of this Comprehensive Plan.
6. Promote quality single family residential construction through adherence to the residential design guidelines included in the appendix.

Objective 4: Preserve the Community Heritage of Morris.

1. Encourage historical and architectural preservation including regulatory changes.
2. Update guidelines to ensure architectural harmony between existing, remodeled, and new structures within the City.
3. Initiate community projects relating to community heritage involving local clubs, organizations, and residents. The I&M canalport is an excellent example of this type of community effort.
4. Through continued economic and cultural development,

- maintain Morris as an activity hub in the Grundy County area.
- 5. Preserve the natural setting and environmental balance of the Morris region.
- 6. Continue to enforce the City's flood damage prevention ordinances, which restrict development within the flood plain and floodway areas.
- 7. Enact a grading and fill permit system and other related regulations to minimize the impact of geological modifications.
- 8. Enforce site development to respect existing site topography.

Objective 6: Ensure that development designs and land uses are appropriate for the given soil characteristics.

- 1. Consider the findings from the Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District's Natural Resource Inventory Reports when evaluating development proposals.
- 2. Enact regulatory controls over construction to limit wind and water erosion and soil compaction to the minimum necessary for development.
- 3. Carefully review development proposed in areas with hydric soils and soils with severe limitations due to slopes in excess of 10 to 15 percent. Locate development so as to avoid construction in these areas wherever possible.



The Land Use and Urban Form Goal

A basic task in urban planning is to achieve a balance of land uses that result in the lifestyle and environment desired by community residents. Of particular importance are the locations of land uses and facilities that shape the environment such as housing, industries, commercial centers, utilities, transportation facilities, and open space.

Goal: Improve the physical environment and general livability of the City and its environs by minimizing the costs of urbanization by orderly and planned development.

Objective 1: Protect and enhance the natural aesthetic qualities of the community.

- 1. Retain and preserve all actual and visual riverfront and canal open space.

2. Wherever possible secure additional public space and river and canal frontage, through dedication of land, monetary contribution, and other means.
3. Enforce existing site plan review requirements for commercial and multi-family development and monitor built projects to determine if changes are needed to existing regulations.
4. As part of the project review process, ensure that private and public open spaces fit the context of the area.
5. Implement the Route 47 Corridor guidelines contained in this Comprehensive Plan to enhance the overall character of this important community and County gateway.

Objective 2: Provide for future growth and appropriate land use while maintaining and enhancing the Home Town atmosphere of Morris.



1. Maintain the city's current balance of commercial, residential, and industrial development.
2. As part of the project review process, ensure that new projects are within a reasonable scale for the area.
3. Allow only new development or redevelopment that is compatible with existing or proposed neighboring uses.
4. Support a diversified local economy with multiple zoning classifications and encourage mixed-use projects.
5. Develop a greenway system for and around Morris, interconnecting large public open spaces and smaller private open/green spaces.
6. Promote the image of Morris through wise land management, and the development of unique amenities involving signage, walkways, lighting, visual green spaces, definable business and residential boundaries, courtyards, public art, and landscaping.
7. Develop design guidelines for new residential development in the City of Morris.
8. Enforce the newly adopted sign ordinance for the City of Morris.

Objective 3: Preserve and strengthen the integrity of residential, commercial, and industrial neighborhoods.

1. Follow a logical pattern of land use for Morris as presented in the Future Land Use Map.
2. Areas annexed to Morris should adhere to the Future Land Use Map.

3. Continue to exercise jurisdiction over the 1½ mile area.
4. Closely monitor future land use changes in terms of community balance.
5. Make land use planning decisions based on logical land use components and not just individual parcels.



Housing and Residential Development Goal

To provide the best possible living conditions for the residents of Morris, programs should be developed and implemented that promote the construction of sound new housing, the protection of existing sound housing, the rehabilitation of deteriorating housing, and the replacement of dilapidated and unsound housing.

Goal: Provide an opportunity for a decent home and living environment for every resident and family in the City of Morris.

Objective 1: Protect and enhance the housing stock and mix in Morris.

1. Encourage the continued high quality of residential construction with the continued implementation of BOCA building codes.
2. Improve the quality of housing that becomes deteriorated or dilapidated by enforcing the City’s BOCA maintenance code.
3. Encourage the continued enforcement of the City’s tree ordinance.
4. Strengthen zoning and subdivision regulations to: (a) encourage quality multiplex development, (b) deal with residential conversions, (c) encourage residential development in downtown (only on second level or higher) and, (d) properly regulate factory or pre-built housing.
5. Establish performance standards for the conversion of residential structures to more intense residential areas that are sensitive to the architectural integrity of the structure, as well as the character of the neighborhood.



Objective 2: Ensure a balanced community by providing for a variety of housing types and sizes.

1. Cooperate with organizations and agencies that are studying the issue of attainable housing and consider recommendations that might meet this need in Morris.



2. Develop standards for new types of quality housing units that are adapted to meet the needs of smaller households, the elderly, and the handicapped.
3. Provide the transitions between different housing types by providing open space and landscape buffers or requiring compatible lot sizes and housing style immediately adjacent to existing neighborhoods.



Objective 3: Promote high quality residential environments in well-defined neighborhoods.

1. Protect residential areas from the intrusion of inappropriate land uses.
2. While maintaining individual neighborhood identity, provide for the interconnection of neighborhoods through street, pedestrian/bicycle path, and/or open space/greenway connections.

Objective 4: Promote the physical harmony of neighborhoods.

1. Expand the development review process to include areas of architectural style, unit variety, and other items related to neighborhood uniformity – particularly within the context of planned unit developments and annexation agreements.
2. Provide diversity and variety within housing styles in a subtle manner with the use of form color and materials.

Transportation Goal

A safe, convenient, and efficient transportation system is vital to the future growth and development of Morris. A good street and highway system should not only be capable of accommodating present and future traffic volumes, but should serve the people by connecting living areas with employment, shopping, and recreational areas. In the same sense, the total transportation system, including railroads, should link business and industries with essential services, suppliers, terminals, and markets within and beyond Morris and environs.

Goal: A structuring of transportation facilities to provide quality access to opportunities within Morris, primarily employment, education, recreation, and residential areas, and to important linkages outside the City, such as markets and sources of material supply.

Objective 1: Alleviate areas of current and projected traffic congestion and conflict in order to provide for a safe, efficient, and attractive roadway network.

1. Provide and maintain a street system that is coordinated with county, state, and other transportation plans.
2. Provide and maintain a street system that is compatible with residential, public, and other land uses.
3. Minimize the impact of truck traffic through Morris, directing new warehouses, and other truck traffic generating uses towards Brisbin Road.
4. Provide and maintain adequate off-street parking for residents and shoppers.



Objective 2: Promote development of Morris Airport to meet the local and business current and future flying needs, but discourage a change in the function of the airport toward commercially scheduled flights for commercial jet aircraft.

1. Closely monitor any proposed Morris Airport expansions or changes in operating procedures for an affect land uses.
2. Promote and participate in the extension of the runway according to the Airport Development Plan.
3. Work closely with the GEDC and other to promote compatible commercial, industrial, and service businesses near the airport.



Objective 3: Establish an ongoing database of traffic movement.

1. Maintain and update strategic traffic counts of non-IDOT controlled roads throughout Morris.
2. Monitor the traffic impact of growth in the west and north regions in Morris.

Objective 4: Develop Morris as a pedestrian friendly community.

1. Develop a more detailed pedestrian/bicycle plan for Morris, with a clear implementation schedule and active community participation. This plan should provide additional focus on ways to accommodate bikes within downtown Morris.
2. Continue to require subdivisions to have sidewalks/ pedestrian ways and connect to parks within the subdivision and to adjacent developments.



3. Develop a linkage network connecting pedestrian and bicycle paths, and tying commercial, residential, and open space areas together.
4. Continue to participate in the possible development of a passenger train that would run between LaSalle and Joliet.
5. Provide additional bike parking within downtown Morris, particularly near the Canalport Park and I & M Canal.

Commercial Development Goal

Carefully designed and located commercial facilities are important to the convenience of City residents, and, by providing a wide variety of goods and services, these establishments can contribute to the overall livability and amenity of Morris.



Goal: An adequate supply of well-located and designed commercial facilities to serve existing and future populations.

Objective 1: Strengthen the quality and identity of the commercial areas of Morris.

1. Encourage desirable commercial development on designated sites.
2. Provide convenient and safe access and adequate off-street parking for all shopping and commercial facilities.
3. Enforce the sign and site plan review requirements of the City of Morris to address appropriate architecture, landscaping, and other design characteristics.



Objective 2: Facilitate the ongoing revitalization of the downtown area by implementing ideas from this plan and the HyattPalma Downtown Master Plan 1995.

1. Continue to be part of and promote a public/private partnership for planning and implementing the revitalization of downtown.
2. Provide the opportunity and incentive for business and property owners to enhance the physical appearance of their grounds and buildings.
3. Develop a safe and convenient system and parking facilities for bicycle traffic.
4. Develop a plan to provide additional parking areas to serve the downtown and to maximize the use and attractiveness of existing facilities.
5. Consider, when possible, the creation of more open spaces within downtown.

Objective 3: Maintain a strong commercial base within Morris.

1. Encourage growth and improvement of existing commercial development.
2. Encourage a wider range and balance of retail stores and services.

Objective 4: Enhance the functional and visual quality of the Liberty Street Corridor and other commercial areas.

1. Develop a coordinated comprehensive signage program for the Liberty Street Corridor.
2. Preserve the integrity of existing residential land uses along the Liberty Street Corridor.

Industrial Development Goal

It must be remembered that Morris is in competition with other cities for industry; therefore, it must be accepted that if the city is to share in the industrial expansion of the region it must make things happen itself and not just wait for industry to "come knockin' at the door." In addition, the City must establish a climate which will give confidence to private investors because only through private dollars can Morris expect to improve its competitive economic position.

Carefully designed and located industrial facilities are important to the employment of City residents. The compatibility of industrial sites with surrounding land uses should be a major factor in locating development. The availability of existing Class 3 roads should also play an important role in locating industrial businesses.

Goal: An adequate supply of well-located and designed industrial facilities to serve the needs of the Morris employment community.

Objective 1: Encourage the improvement and/or redevelopment of older industrial areas and Brownfield sites, and encourage new, low impact industrial development in areas having the least impacts on existing traffic patterns and residential areas.

1. Industrial establishments will be expected to achieve a high standard of maintenance and repair. The quality of building and landscape design, the proper storage of trash, the maintenance of the yard, the control of noise, light, and odors, and many other factors will be considered important to the acceptance of proposed industrial developments.



2. Encourage clean industrial establishments.
3. Concentrate industrial areas and buffer them from residential uses.
4. Encourage the development of an industrial base for jobs that can adequately meet the needs of the Morris employment community.
5. Encourage the use of empty industrial buildings and construction in the industrial areas. Buildings that are not in conformance in non-industrial areas should be eliminated.

- Objective 2: Encourage the development of industrial sites where appropriate utilities are available, including sewer, water, roads, telephone, and high speed Internet.
1. Encourage owner-managed or locally responsive industries that require protection of natural resources.
 2. Locate industrial use along pre-existing transportation links.
 3. Continue to support and work closely with the Grundy County Economic Development Council and the Chamber of Commerce.

Community Facilities Goal

There should be established a long - range program for the purpose of providing essential facilities - including land acquisition for schools, playgrounds, parks, community buildings, and governmental services - well in advance of need. High quality community facilities are a prime asset of attracting new high quality residential, commercial, and industrial developments to the City.

The adequate provision of sewer, water, and refuse disposal facilities is necessary for the maintenance of a healthy environment. The availability of public utilities should be a major factor in controlling development.

Goal: Provide and improve public utility systems necessary to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of Morris's population and to guide future development.

Objective 1: Provide a safe and reliable water supply that meets the future needs of Morris residents, industry, and business for consumption and fire protection.

1. Extend water service to the Morris Airport.
2. Assure availability of adequate water storage by constructing reservoirs in the vicinity of a new well.
3. Adopt and maintain a viable program of cross connection control and prevention through a plumbing code.

4. Prepare and adopt a groundwater protection plan.
5. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan for water system improvements including significant replacement projects where roadway or bridge construction is planned.

Objective 2: Provide an adequate sewage system, capable of meeting the present and future needs of the City’s population, industry, and businesses.

1. Provide expanded capacity for wastewater treatment north of Interstate 80.
2. Maintain an ongoing sanitary sewer evaluation program to identify and eliminate extraneous inflow or recommend relief sewer projects.
3. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan for sanitary sewer improvements including an annual replacement and repair program.

Objective 3: To provide the residents of Morris an effective, economical, and environmentally sound storm water and flood plain management network.

1. Preserve the natural characteristics of flood plains and their associated stream, wetland, and shoreline areas wherever possible.
2. Continue the enforcement of the City’s storm water management ordinances.
3. Develop and adopt a regional approach to storm water management based on drainage areas.
4. Develop and implement design standards to promote enhanced water quality from stormwater runoff through detention basin design and other best management practices.
5. Implement the annual review of the City ordinances to keep pace with changing regulations particularly with respect to storm water quality.
6. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan for storm sewer improvements.

Objective 4: Consider telephone and high speed Internet capabilities as a major infrastructure necessity.

1. Work with telephone companies and Internet providers to upgrade infrastructure and services for Internet access for residents and businesses in the Morris area.



2. Work closely with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to encourage the State to push for upgrading telecommunications.

Objective 5: Protect the lives and property of the population living and working within the City against crime in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

1. Expand the Police Department's manpower as the City grows, based on accepted standards in proportion to resident population and nonresidential development.
2. Continue to improve the Police Department's effectiveness by acquiring and using up-to-date communications and support equipment.
3. Continue and expand community participation and education programs, especially those oriented toward children.
4. Design land uses and transportation systems to enhance access for police emergency and patrol activity, and management of disaster situations.



Objective 6: Protect the lives and property of the population living and working within the City against fire and related hazards, in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

1. Expand the Fire Department's manpower as the City grows, based on accepted standards in proportion to resident population and nonresidential development.
2. Expand the Fire Department's facilities as needed, to accommodate the necessary increases in manpower and programs.
3. Widen the scope of participation in the Fire Department's educational programs to help prevent fires and save lives and property.
4. Update codes and standards for building construction and fire safety to anticipate changing technologies as they evolve.
5. Deliver all services at a cost substantially below national or state averages while maintaining quality.
6. Continue employee education and training to assure the delivery of services in a professional manner.
7. Design land uses and transportation systems to enhance access for emergency medical services, fire fighting, and management of disaster situations.

Objective 7: Maintain a high quality health care system that is responsive to Morris’ needs.

1. Encourage health care services to be provided locally.
2. Encourage expansion of the Morris Hospital at the current location while requiring it to be compatible with the neighborhood.

Objective 8: Maintain a public library system that supports the educational, cultural, and economic needs of the community.

1. Support the Morris Public Library District in its goal of providing services to a growing community.
2. Recognize the library facilities as an asset to the downtown area of Morris.

Objective 9: Support the school districts in their goals to ensure that they have adequate facilities, equipment, and staff to meet the needs of the increasing student population.

1. Support Strategic Plans adopted by school districts servicing students in the planning area.
2. Have school districts analyze the capital and operational impact of new developments on the school systems.
3. Work cooperatively with the School Districts, Townships, County, and State of Illinois so that adequate roads and utilities are provided for school facilities.



Objective 10: Plan for land uses and manage annexations and new development so that growth does not hinder the school districts in maintaining a quality educational system without increasing taxes.

1. Coordinate the City’s planning process with educational requirements, including projected enrollments, provision of municipal services, and site selection of educational facilities.
2. Monitor and control the rate and type of residential development within Morris’ jurisdiction to avoid sudden student enrollment peaks.
3. Promote a balance of land uses to ensure that nonresidential property maintains its proportionate share of real estate tax base.
4. When legally feasible, require residential developments to make a significant contribution to funding capital

facilities needed to meet the needs of the new residents generated by the development.

Objective 11: Foster an environment where the different jurisdictions that affect educational quality in the community work cooperatively for the good of our children.

1. Work closely with the school districts to maintain good communications between elected and appointed officials for these entities.
2. Include the school districts as part of the development review process at the staff level and Plan Commission review level.
3. Develop and maintain partnerships with the school districts to foster community involvement and to share facilities.
4. When appropriate, provide input to the school districts regarding the siting of educational facilities.
5. When appropriate, solicit input from the school districts regarding the impact of development and related matters.
6. Advocate and support state legislative efforts to help ensure adequate funding of school districts, for both operational and capital needs.



Photo reprinted with permission:
Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers

Open Space and Recreation Goal

A growing regional population, increased mobility, more leisure time, and a growing interest in outdoor recreation will have the effect of placing tremendous demands for recreational facilities on the community. The challenge to Morris will be to provide open space and recreational facilities to serve the needs of its population.

Goal: Provide and preserve adequate and convenient open space and recreation areas for all City residents and visitors.

Objective 1: Assist in providing suitable recreation programs and facilities for the residents of Morris.

1. Develop a Park District for the residents of Morris.
2. Provide adequate amounts of open space for Morris residents in accordance with accepted open space standards. Require the donation of land or money, in lieu of land, for new subdivisions.
3. Encourage a wide range of active and passive activities available in the parks and open space.
4. Promote cooperation of a Park District and School

Districts for cross-utilization of public schools' playgrounds and open space. This could possibly occur at the Dupont St. fields.

5. Coordinate open space plans with state and federal open space plans and programs.

Objective 2: Maximize the recreational opportunities for all citizens in Morris.

1. Provide and develop neighborhood parks and community parks throughout the community.
2. Provide for the local developed open space needs of new development by requiring dedication of 10 acres per 1,000 population.
3. Prohibit urbanization on flood plains by encouraging the dedication or purchase of flood-prone land for public open space.

Objective 3: Protect the integrity of remnant natural areas within new and existing developments.

1. Discourage the rezoning of natural areas requiring protection from disturbance and development.
2. Strive to maintain floodplains and wetlands in their natural conditions and encourage the restoration of altered stream corridors and wetland wherever possible.
3. Require tree surveys as part of the City's project review process.
4. Develop a tree replacement ordinance.
5. Develop woodland development regulations.
6. Encourage the provision and retention of private open space.



Objective 4: Protect the scenic and recreational value of the I & M Canal and the Illinois River.

1. Continue expanding open space along the I & M Canal by removal of older housing adjacent to canal on Illinois Avenue.
2. Encourage and assist in the acquisition of as much riverfront property as possible.
3. Encourage and participate in the development of open space and recreational facilities and activities along the canal's and river's edge, particularly in the downtown area. As development continues south of the river, the development of recreational land should also be done.



Objective 5: Develop an open space linkage network throughout the community.

1. Support the system of planned regional greenway corridors through the use of zoning, subdivision regulation, land/cash donations, public and private easements, and acquisitions.
2. Require new developments to provide local open space corridors and linkages to connect neighborhoods and recreational facilities through the land use map.
3. Provide convenient access between open space and residential areas.

Objective 6: Create an identifiable, physical community form for Morris, based on open space.

1. Develop a City landscaping strategy designating green space and open space areas throughout the community and along major roadways and gateways.
2. Encourage the development of more neighborhood parks.
3. Require parkland to be set aside in new subdivisions.

Historic Preservation Goal

The area around Morris was settled in the first half of the 19th century. The Illinois and Michigan Canal is just one of the many important factors in the Morris' history. Morris is rich in history and preserving some of this history is important to the character of the City of Morris.

Goal: Encourage the preservation, protection and use of historic buildings and sites as a matter of public policy, because of their historic, architectural, or cultural value, which serve as visible reminders of the history and heritage of Morris.

Objective 1: Encourage the cooperation between local interest groups, public and private, to encourage the recognition, restoration, and tourism potential of old historic buildings, sites, and districts within Morris.

1. Promote and enhance the downtown commercial historic district within Morris.
2. Provide a local policy for the identification and protection of historic properties.
3. Develop design guidelines for new development within a historic district to ensure that it is compatible to the area's historic character.

4. Protect the integrity of designated historic properties with a design review requirement.
5. Respect, protect, and maintain existing cultural and architectural landmarks of historic significance, including their environs and approach routes.
6. The City should develop funding opportunities to assist in the preservation and restoration of historic buildings and areas in Morris.

Ongoing Planning Goal

The ultimate success of a Comprehensive Planning program in Morris will be measured by the degree of acceptance and input it receives from the residents of the City. The recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan can become the expression of the combined will of the community through a vigorous process of citizen participation.

Goal: The use of the Comprehensive Plan as a development guide for future development of Morris and its 1½ mile territory.

Objective 1: Establish and maintain a database of physical factors for the City of Morris.

1. Update the Comprehensive Plan maps as new data becomes available.
2. As technology and budget allow, convert manual physical data base to a computer data base and place the information on the City web site.



Objective 2: Develop a harmonious relationship between natural and man-made development factors.

1. Through the continued use of composite maps, identify adverse impact areas based in natural and man-made development factors.
2. Utilize the Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District in supplying city officials with Natural Resource Inventory Reports for future developments.

Objective 3: Encourage participation of citizen groups not only in local planning, but in county and state planning as well.

1. Encourage the concept of planning and development at the community level in Morris to enhance the overall character and sense of a small community.

2. Encourage the formation of citizen groups interested in the future of the City and its residents.
3. Encourage the attendance of individuals and citizen groups at Planning Commission and all other governmental meetings.
4. Maintain a means whereby activities of the Planning Commission are reported to Morris residents, businessmen, and other public agencies, such as the local news media.
5. Focus on Morris as a unified "community."



Objective 4: Institute a system of planning to coordinate the development process at all levels of government and private activity.

1. Develop policies and standards that will encourage orderly growth by sequencing and timing with the availability of community services.
2. Meet with planning officials from counties, townships, and other area units of government to coordinate future land use plans.

Objective 5: Form and maintain a time frame for reviewing and updating City planning documents, including but not limited to the Comprehensive Plan, zoning ordinance, and subdivision ordinance.

1. Provide all present and future elected and appointed officials with a copy of the Comprehensive Plan for Morris.
2. Place a copy of the Comprehensive Plan for Morris on file with the library and make copies available on the City web site.
3. Review rezonings, variances, etc. on an annual basis to provide an overview of current and future development trends and the consistency in which decisions were made.
4. Provide development information in handout form for use by the general public and developers regarding the procedures for zoning, rezoning, variances, special uses, building permits, etc.

An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing streets, buildings, and green spaces. A river is visible at the bottom right. The text is overlaid on this image.

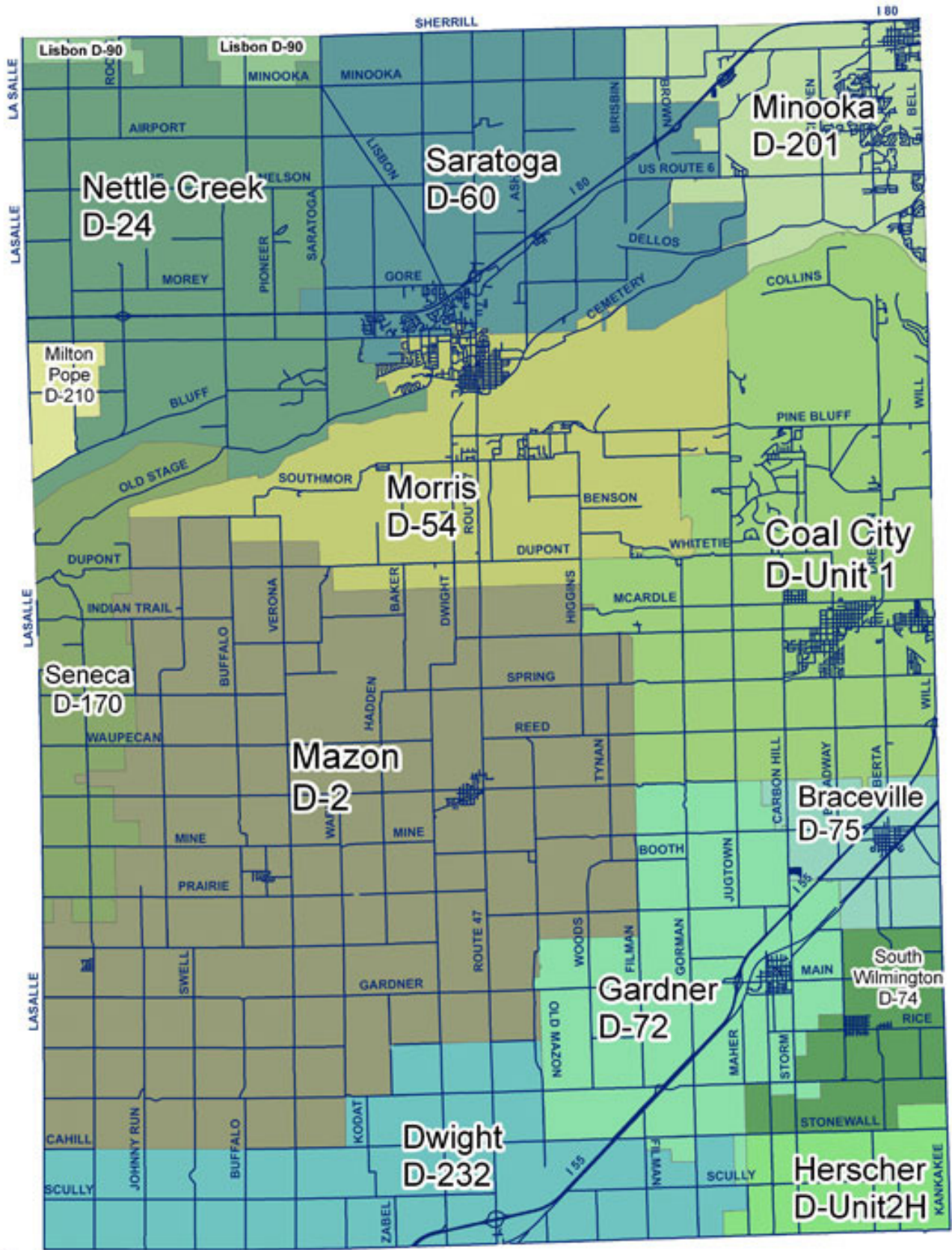
Chapter 6

Community Facilities, Services & Infrastructure

"Create a definite plan for carrying out your desire and begin at once, whether you are ready or not, to put this plan into action."

Napoleon Hill

Grade School Districts



Community Facilities is a term used to refer to the many support facilities such as schools, parks and churches that are needed to support area residents. Also including under this category are infrastructure items such as water and sewer service. This chapter highlights existing facilities and outlines the potential need for new facilities to support community growth.

Education

The public schools serving the Morris area include four elementary schools, one junior high, one high school, and one trade and tech school. There are also two parochial schools in Morris.

School districts covering the Morris area include three elementary school and one high school districts. The elementary districts are the Morris Elementary School District 54, Nettle Creek School District 24c, and Saratoga School District 60c. The high school district is Morris Community High School District 101.

District 54 - White Oak Elementary School and Shabbona Middle School

In 2001, the District combined students from three grade schools into White Oak Elementary School. The 190,000 square foot structure is located on 26.5 acres of land. Each wing also has a multi-purpose room that could be modified into two classrooms in the future if needed. The school also houses a full-scale cafeteria and a stage area located between two gyms and a two-story learning center. In 2016-2017, the District relocated 6th-8th grade students from Shabbona Middle School to the White Oak facility as a cost savings measure. In the 2022 school year, the district accommodated 1,025 students, down from 1,173 in 2020.

District 24c - Nettle Creek School

Nettle Creek School houses grades K-8, and has a current capacity for 400 students. The school is located on the City's far western planning area. The building addition was completed and in use by early 2010. District enrollment has been stable at around 80 students in recent years.

Though no defined strategic or long-range growth plan has been adopted, the District has the ability to purchase land adjacent to the existing school site for expansion opportunities as well as additional land on Route 6. Future residential development in the area of Nettle School has the potential to generate an additional 400 students for the District. If the number of students exceeds the anticipated capacity of the school with the addition,

the District may need to consider constructing a new Middle School grades (6 -8) and restructuring the existing school into an elementary school for K-5.

Immaculate Conception Grammar School

The classroom portion of the building was built in 1962 and is beautifully maintained. The Kenrick Hall portion of the building was completed in 1986. It contains a computer room, large library, gym, and a multi-purpose room that is used by the school as a lunchroom.

Immaculate Conception School provides classes from pre-school through 8th grade and has capacity for up to 300 students. Pre-school is limited to 15 students in each of the two sessions. Enrollment in grades K-8 is limited to a maximum 30 students per classroom. Presently classroom sizes are 20 students.

Immaculate Conception School offers an emphasis on instruction in basic skills. Subject matter, in addition to religion, includes math, language arts, social studies, science, and penmanship. Also, students have classes in the following curriculum areas that are taught by instructors with special training in those fields: physical education, music, art, computers, and library. The school places a great emphasis on technology with students participating in classes weekly. Students in grades 5-8 may participate in band, athletics (basketball & volleyball), student council, speech club and musicals. The school also offers a summer school program. The offerings range from instruction in basic skills to enrichment activities. A Before School program is available on school days for families needing the service on a daily basis, or it may be used on an as-needed basis.

Future school facility improvements will be subject to the evaluation and findings of parish long-range planning initiatives. To-date, the school can adequately accommodate a modest increase in student enrollment, therefore any long-range planning will most likely focus on internal upgrades. The Parish Planning Group adopted a long-range plan in 2010 and has worked to implement it by completing several remodeling projects in recent years.

District 60c - Saratoga School

Saratoga School is a PreK-8 one school district with an enrollment of approximately 800 students. A major life safety and building addition project was completed in August 2008. The life safety portion of the project included new windows, ceilings, floors, air conditioning and heating, and updated electrical and plumbing in the oldest sections of the school. An addition was also built on to the school that includes nine classrooms, a new gymnasium, locker rooms, band room, choir room and a teacher work room. Close to five additional acres were purchased in 2007 to bring the entire school site to almost 29 acres. The master plan for the school site includes housing 5 sections of each grade which will be constructed based on enrollment growth.



Immaculate Conception School



Saratoga School

The Saratoga School District 60c was formed in 1956 from the consolidation of eight “one-room” schools. The district covers 45 square miles that includes the farm community that surrounds the school and subdivisions located close to Interstate 80 and Route 6. These subdivisions are within the city limits of Morris.

Morris High School (District 101)

Located in the heart of Grundy County, Morris High School was established in 1872 on the second floor of the old Center School building. In 1898, classes opened at the new site on Franklin Street. Two new wings were added to the building in 1914. In 1927, enrollment reached 265 and the building was becoming overcrowded.

In 1944, the present designation of Morris Community High School (MCHS), District 101 was founded. In the spring of 1949, a \$1,200,000 bond referendum was passed for a new building. Northern Illinois Coal Corporation donated 25 acres of land for the site of the new building. In 1960, a new wing was completed and facilities for industrial arts and agriculture were added. In 1996, MCHS became one of the first schools in Illinois and the country to adopt the four block system of schooling.

From a tiny enrollment limited to two classrooms in 1872, Morris High School has grown significantly, growing 850 to 900 students.

MCHS is involved in a curriculum development process designed to improve student achievement. The various core academic departments have also started articulation with the feeder elementary districts in an effort to better prepare students for high school.



Morris High School

Higher Level Education Opportunities

Higher level educational opportunities for residents of Morris include several colleges and universities such as Joliet Junior College (branch in Morris), University of St. Francis in Joliet; Waubensee Community College in Sugar Grove; North Central College in Naperville; Lewis University in Romeoville; and Northern Illinois University in Dekalb.

The Joliet Junior College Morris Education Center is located at the former Shabbona Middle School site at 725 School Street. The center serves the greater Grundy County community and surrounding areas by providing continuing education and workforce services. Classrooms are available for meetings, recruiting events, professional development, and employer training. All classrooms are equipped with the latest instructional technology. The College offers a variety of workforce preparation opportunities at the Morris Education Center. JJC has been awarded several Workforce Investment Act grants by the Grundy Livingston Kankakee Workforce board to provide training and employment assistance to eligible youth, adults and dislocated workers. These programs are all offered at the Grundy Workforce

School Enrollment			
	September 2012	September 2016	September 2023
Nettle Creek School, Dist. 24c	90	83	78
Saratoga School, Dist. 60c	800	803	818
Shabbona School, Dist. 54	383	498*	311
White Oak Elementary, Dist. 54	819	678*	717
Morris High School, Dist. 101	979	842	876

*The sharp increase for Shabbona and sharp decrease for White Oak in 2016 is a result of the District adding 5th grade to the Shabbona enrollment count (and thus removing it from the White Oak enrollment count) for just that year. The 2017 enrollment numbers are: Shabbona (6th-8th): 316 students; White Oak (Pre-K-5th): 829 students.

Source: Illinois State Board of Education

District Enrollment			
	September 2012	September 2016	September 2023
District 24c	90	83	78
District 54	1,202	1,179	1,028
District 60c	800	806	818
District 101	979	852	876
Parochial School	221	213	
Totals	3,292	3,133	

Sources: Illinois State Board of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

Morris Area Schools		
Schools	Grades Served	District
Grundy Area Vocational Center	11-12 & Post-High School	Trade & Technical Training
Grundy County Special Education Cooperative	K-12	Districts within Cooperative Area
Immaculate Conception School	Pre-K-8	Private
Joliet Junior College	Post-High School	Grundy County Center
First United Methodist Church Preschool	Pre-K	Private
Morris Community High School	9-12	Morris School District #101
Nettle Creek Elementary School	K-8	Nettle Creek Community Consolidated School Dist #24C
Premier Academy	6-12	Grundy/Kendall County Regional Office of Education
Rainbow Preschool	Pre-K	Private
Saratoga Elementary School	K-8	Saratoga Community Consolidated School Dist. #60C
Step by Step Child Care Center	Preschool & Daycare	Private
White Oak Elementary/Shabbona Middle School	K-8	Morris School Dist. #54

Services office in the JJC Morris Education Center. Opportunities include a resource room for job seekers and an online Job Board listing open positions in the region.

Library

Morris Area Public Library is located at the northwest corner of Liberty and North Streets. The current facility is approximately 22,000 square feet in area and adequately houses library services at this time. In 2008, a new parking lot containing 38 spaces was completed behind the library building at the northeast corner of Wauponsee and North Streets.





Morris Public Library

The library is open seven days per week and serves approximately 17,000 people. The facility has a collection containing over 50,000 books, as well as items such as magazines, newspapers, compact disks, videos (on cassette and DVD), and audio books (on cassette and CD). The library is a full member of the Prairie Area Library System (PALS). This provides the residents of Morris access to the more than 1.5 million items within the system's database. There are two on-line catalog PCs for reference to books within PALS. The library has a collection of more than 2,000 videos (on VHS and DVD), approximately 800 audio books (on cassette and CD), and a music CD collection.

Services available include photocopying, faxing, laminating and scanning for a nominal fee. There are twenty personal computers available to the public for researching on the internet, along with three express internet iMacs and one express internet PC. All public access computers are attached to printers. A study room, meeting room, and an auditorium are available for residents to use. The study room is for one to two people, the multipurpose meeting room will hold up to 75 people, and the auditorium seats up to 200. The library plans to break ground in 2025 on an expansion to add a community room.

City Owned Parks

Bristol Pointe Park

This 8.2 acre neighborhood park includes two sets of play equipment, a picnic area, one volley ball court, a single basketball court and walking paths.

Parks and Recreation

The Community Facilities Map shows the recreation facilities within and around the City of Morris. There are nine developed city parks having a combined area of over 50 acres. The City owns an additional 16 acres of undeveloped open space designated for future parks and recreation. The site management agency of these parks is the Department of Public Works. The Department of Natural Resources owns and manages 47 acres in the city, consisting of two state parks and the Illinois and Michigan Canal Trail. Morris also has additional youth activities organized by the City, District 101 Recreation Center, Greater Joliet Area YMCA, and private associations and organizations. The following list describes facilities available at each location.

Chapin Park

Chapin Park is located on 1.48 acres, on Chapin Street, west of Route 47. It is the oldest park in Morris, enclosed in 1854. Facilities consist of a large gazebo, picnic tables, playground equipment, and restrooms.

Fields of Saratoga Park

Fields of Saratoga Park is located in the subdivision, on the outskirts of city limits on 8.85 acres of land. Facilities include a tennis court, basketball court, playground equipment, volleyball court, restrooms, small lake, climbing apparatus, and walking paths.

Goodwill Park

Goodwill Park is located on 1.62 acres on the east side of Morris on Illinois 47 between North and Chapin Streets. Facilities include two ballfields, playground equipment, bleachers, concession stand, and restrooms. This park was renovated in 2023 to include a new picnic shelter and playground.

Goold Park

Goold Park was purchased in 1916. It is located on 13.77 acres, referred to as Upper Goold and Lower Goold. The park is situated about one block west of Chapin Park. Nettle Creek runs through the park. Facilities at Upper Goold include two tennis courts, horseshoe pits, picnic tables, grills, and playground equipment. Facilities at Lower Goold include one sand volleyball court, playground equipment, one shelter, outdoor seasonal pool (1921), concession stand, and restrooms. A bandshell was added in 2017.

Unnamed Pocket Park

This park is located on about an acre of land on the south side of Goold Park. It is an open grassy space with a fence on the backside. Locals refer to this pocket-sized open space as Dog Park. It is common to see fox, raccoon, deer, and gopher enjoying the grassy field.

Lions Park

Lions Park is located on 3.85 acres, north of Hickory Lake. Facilities include playground equipment, a picnic shelter, restrooms, and a quarter-mile gravel multi-purpose trail.

McKinley Park

McKinley Park sits on 2.05 acres, on McKinley Street, east of Route 47. It used to be the site of the outdoor skating rink. Facilities include a lighted ballfield, bleachers, dugouts, two tennis courts, a basketball court, playground equipment, and restrooms.



Chapin Park



Pavilion at Goold Park



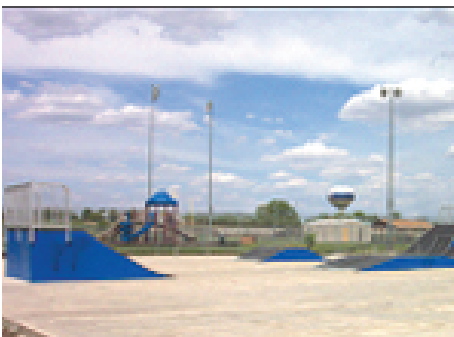
Public Pool at Goold Park



Lions Park



Above: Westside Park Playground
Below: Westside Park Skate Park



Rockwell Estates Subdivision

This partially developed park includes playground equipment from the former Center School, a walking path, and landscaping. The size of this park will be limited to 6.6 acres since the majority of the property is located in flood plain which limits uses. Other future amenities to be provided include a small covered picnic pavilion, and benches along the creek.

Westside Park

Westside Park is located on 10.5 acres, across the street to the north from the White Oaks Elementary School. This is the only park in this area of the city. Facilities include: softball and baseball fields, pod of playground equipment, a walking path, a skateboard park and natural prairie grass plantings. This park is undergoing 1.75-million-dollar renovations in 2024, including playground renovation and new pickle ball courts.

Canalport Park (1 Acre)

Primary use is interpretive-passive. No playground equipment or athletic uses planned; may eventually be the site of a multi- purpose, countywide, senior citizens center. The site will focus on the attributes of the I & M Canal.

Boulder Ridge Subdivision (6.8 Acres)

Currently partially in-use as an informal soccer field, topography does lend itself to more then passive use. One playground set to be installed. Adjacent to a wetland, the park could function as an educational tool.

Deer Ridge Subdivision (4.0 Acres)

The park is proposed to function as a neighborhood park with play stations and recreation uses. It will eventually contain a picnic shelter and, if needed expanded recreational facilities.

Riverfront Park (4.8 Acres)

Park use has been determined to be passive with an interpretive pod describing the “working” river. Walks, pathways, and eventually a river wall-overlook would complete the area.

Rotary Park (1.3 Acres)

This small passive park in downtown Morris is located adjacent to the Train Depot. It features extensive landscaping, a winding path and benches, and a rail car.

Tag-A-Long Dog Park (9.5 Acres)

Opened in 2016, this facility was the idea of Girl Scout Emily Lamaze. It includes two fenced areas, one for smaller dogs and one for larger dogs.

Other Parks and Recreation Resources

District #101 Recreation Center

District #101 Recreation Center is located at the Morris High School and available to the public for an admission fee with hours before school, in the evenings during the week and in the afternoons on the weekend. The recreation center offers a workout facility with weights and an indoor pool. In addition, the center has a number of activities and programs for all age groups that include swimming lessons and a variety of sport teams.

Gebhard Woods State Park

Gebhard Woods State Park is 29 acres of parkland owned and managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The park was purchased in 1933. Facilities include one picnic shelter, restrooms, a small lake, and a bridge to the I & M Canal, known as the towpath, on the other side of the canal. Typical recreation opportunities are camping, fishing, hiking, biking, or walking.



Pond at Gebhard Woods

Gooselake Prairie State Park

Gooselake Prairie State Park is an Illinois State Park dedicated to the preservation of prairieland. Key activity includes seven miles of hiking trails. The Prairie View Trail is a 3.5 mile trail that provides visitors an opportunity to view prairie and farmland, strip mine reclamation areas, and low-lying marshes. The Tall Grass Nature Trail, also 3.5 miles, allows visitors to view the trademark grasses found throughout the Park.

Greater Joliet Area YMCA (c/o Galowich Family YMCA)

In 2006, the Galowich Family YMCA, located in Joliet began providing services to the Morris community. Children in Morris can participate in the Youth Basketball League and Summer Camp programs. Recently, the Greater Joliet Area YMCA has been granted a charter through its national offices for a 5th branch, the Morris Family YMCA. The organization is currently seeking community involvement through public meetings, and citizen participation on Steering Committees regarding goals, programming, and capital contributions. A site for a future YMCA was recently donated along Route 6, west of Saratoga Road.

Heidecke Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area

Heidecke Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area is a 2,000 acre lake that offers fishing and hunting. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has managed the lake since it was leased in 1978 when it was built as a cooling lake for the former Collins Power Plant.



I & M Canal

Hickory Lake West

This is currently a privately owned half-acre park, located in the Hickory Lake Subdivision. Facilities include a picnic shelter and tables.

Illinois and Michigan Canal Trail

The I & M Canal runs through the City of Morris. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources manages three acres of trail-way and open space along the canal.

John Roth Lighted Ballpark

John Roth Lighted Ballpark is part of Shabbona Middle School, District #54. Facilities include two lighted ballfields, concessions, and restrooms.

Morris Country Club

The Morris Country Club is an 18-hole private club located on Route 6. The course opened in 1925 and the clubhouse in 1927. The club offers a full-service restaurant, banquet facilities, a driving range and practice green, a golf shop and professional golf instruction.

Nettle Creek Country Club

The Nettle Creek Country Club is a public golf course, located in the residential subdivision of Nettle Creek, on the west side of Saratoga Road. It is an 18-hole course with a pro-shop and restaurant.

William G. Stratton State Park

Stratton State Park is 15 acres of land bought and managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources since 1960. Facilities include boat launches, picnic tables, grills, multi-purpose paths/trails, a newly renovated river bridge, and restrooms. Typical recreation opportunities are boating, fishing, canoeing, biking, walking, snowmobiling, and running.

Future Park and School Needs

To accommodate future growth, the City of Morris and local school districts will need to expand and enhance existing facilities. Expansion of school facilities will be the responsibility of the individual school districts, and is not specifically addressed in this Comprehensive Plan. However, the Future Land Use Plan does provide an indication of where additional residential growth is anticipated. This information should be used by the local school districts in their future facilities planning.

The provision of parks and open space in Morris is accomplished by a number of entities, including the City of Morris. The table on the following pages categorizes existing municipal park facilities as either neighborhood parks or community/special use parks based on their function.

Neighborhood Parks are generally smaller parks, between 0.5 and 10 acres in size, which meet local needs. Ideally, all residents would have a neighborhood park within walking distance of their home (approximately ½ mile). These parks typically contain a playground, benches, paths, and other facilities such as basketball courts, tennis courts, and open play space based on the size and local recreational needs.

The City of Morris has already acquired several properties for future neighborhood parks in the Boulder Ridge and Deer Ridge Subdivisions. Additional neighborhood parks should be provided in larger new residential developments. Ideally, neighborhood parks should be located near the middle of the area they serve, away from major roadways. It is often desirable to locate neighborhood parks adjacent to elementary or middle schools, making it possible to share facilities and reduce maintenance and operating costs.

Community Parks are larger facilities, from 11 acres to 100 acres in size. Goold Park is the best local example of a Community Park. This type of park typically contains major sports fields (soccer, softball, baseball, football, etc.), passive areas for picnicking or natural trails, swimming pools or recreation centers that serve all or a large portion of the City.

As Morris expands, it is recommended that a site for a large community park be considered on the west side of the community. Such a park should be in the 25 to 75 acre range to accommodate a variety of future recreational needs for the community. Such a park could be located either north or south of Interstate 80, and should have good connections to collector and arterial street systems to provide easy access to Morris residents.

Existing Parks in Morris

Neighborhood Parks	Location	Acres
Bristol Pointe	C3	8.2
Chapin	C4	1.5
Fields of Saratoga	C5	8.9
Goodwill	C6	1.6
Lions	C7	3.9
McKinley	C8	2.1
Rockwell Estates	C9	6.6
Westside	C10	10.5
Boulder Ridge	C11	6.8
Deer Ridge	C12	4.0
Riverfront	C13	4.8
Total Neighborhood Parks		58.8
Community or Special Use Parks		
Goold	C1	14.8
Rotary	C14	1.3
Canalport	C2	1.0
Tag-A-Long	C15	9.5
Total Community or Special Use Parks		26.6
Total Existing Parks		85.4

Special Use Parks, as the name suggests, are unique facilities designed to serve a specific function. Canalport Park is the best example of such a facility in Morris. No specific standard exists for special use parks, as they are highly dependent on local needs and circumstances.

Table 1 provides a summary of existing park facilities in Morris based on the above classification system. Table 2 provides an evaluation of existing and future park needs in Morris. As Table 2 suggests, Morris is currently deficient in developed park acres based on commonly excepted standards established by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). However, it should be noted that Morris is blessed with a number of additional non-municipal park facilities which help to provide for local recreational needs. The presence of two State Parks within the City, plus Goose Lake State Park just outside the City’s planning limits, helps to provide recreational opportunities to Morris residents. The I&M Canal Bike Path, as well as other parks and recreation resources also help to meet current recreational needs. However, it is clear that future residential development will create additional demand for park space. As new subdivisions are reviewed, opportunities for additional park land should be provided as outlined in the City’s park dedication requirements in the subdivision ordinance.

Comparison of Morris Parks to Planning Standards

Existing Park Acres	85.4
2020 Population	14,163
Recommended Acres per 1,000 People	10.6
Existing Park Acres per 1,000 People	6.03
Recommended Additional Park Acres (current)	56.23
Recommended Additional Park Acres (ultimate)	494.6

Notes:

1. 10 acres per 1,000 from National recreation and Parks Association Standards
2. Ultimate additional park acres based on a build-out population of 57,000

Public Services

Essential to the function of Morris are its Public Services. Morris is home to several public entities that provide citizens with vital functions. Morris’s public service institutions include the Grundy County Offices, Grundy County Courthouse, City Hall, a Police force, a Fire Department, and healthcare services.

County Courthouse and Administration



The City of Morris is the County Seat for Grundy County. County offices are at two locations in Morris. The courthouse is downtown on the corner of Liberty and Washington and has the offices of the County Clerk, Assessor, Treasurer, Probation, Public Defender, State’s Attorney, Circuit Clerk, and the County Jail. The courthouse houses the 13th Judicial Court. The County Administration Building on U.S. 6 has the County Board room, County Board administration office, solid waste management office, and planning and zoning office.





Morris Municipal Complex Opened in 2010

City Hall/Municipal Complex

A new 45,000 square foot municipal complex on the southwest corner of Route 47 and Chapin Street was completed in 2010. The new facility was designed and sized to accommodate future staffing, service and storage needs of the City government and Police Department.

Police Protection

The City of Morris Police Department is on duty 24-hours a day and is staffed by a Police Chief, 1 Deputy Chief, 5 Sergeants, 3 Detectives, 16 Patrol Officers, 2 Narcotics Detection Dogs, 11 part-time Patrol Officers, and 4 support staff. The department utilizes 22 squad cars to patrol the City (17 marked and 5 unmarked), 1 motorcycle, and 2 golf/utility carts.

Patrol Officers work 12-hour shifts. When needed, the Department coordinates with outside (part-time) Officers who "fill-in" and supplement the Patrol Division. Four civilian positions (one ordinance enforcer, and two full-time administrative assistants, and an information technology clerk) provide support to the Department. In addition to the basic police protection and investigation duties, community services provided include 5th grade D.A.R.E. Program, child safety seat checks/installs, and house and business safety checks. One officer is assigned to Morris Community High School as a School Resource Officer, and one officer is assigned to a narcotics task force. The Department personnel also participate in the Special Olympics Torch Run and support Special Connections.

The Police Department occupies approximately 75% of the new Municipal Complex.

Fire and Ambulance Protection



Morris Fire Station #2

The Morris Fire and Ambulance Protection District covers 144 square miles. The District is led by a Fire Chief under the direction of the Board of Trustees. The Fire District provides fire and ambulance services with a combination of both full-time and part-time staffing from two fire stations. One station is in the northwest section of town on Ashton Road. A new station was recently completed in historic downtown.

The District has an ISO Public Protection Classification of 3, which places the community in the top 3% in the nation. The District provides this protection utilizing four engine companies, one truck company, one squad company, two brush trucks and three Advanced Life Support ambulances. Due to our proximity to the Illinois River, the Fire District has a Swift Water Rescue Team with three boats.

All new firefighters are required to be a certified Basic Operations Firefighter with the Illinois Fire Marshal Office and Emergency Medical Technicians. The District's Fire Bureau is responsible for all fire inspections and building codes for all properties and buildings within the Fire District, except for the City of Morris. The City of Morris Fire Marshal is responsible for all fire inspections and fire codes located within the city limits of Morris. The City of Morris and the Fire District work hand in hand providing these services. Dispatch and emergency communications are provided by the Grundy County Consolidated 911 Center.

Health Care



Morris Hospital

Morris Hospital (renamed in 2004 to Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers) offers a wide spectrum of services, ranging from radiation treatment for cancer, to specialized care for newborns, to assistance with transportation to and from medical related appointments. Morris Hospital includes an 86-bed hospital with 900 employees, 350 auxiliary members, and more than 180 physicians representing most medical specialties to address family healthcare needs. The Emergency Department, designated as a Level II Trauma Center, has cared for more than 25,000 patients per year for the past several years. A helipad is close-by for transporting patients who require even a higher level of care.

Since 2003, the hospital expanded parking; increased space for the intensive care unit; and added a cardiac cauterization lab, a fourth surgical unit and 8 family birthing suites. In addition, a Senior Well Program has been implemented which offers health and exercise classes, health screenings and a quarterly newsletter providing important health information and updates. The facility has also expanded services such as physical and occupational

therapy and immediate care to branch locations to keep like-services convenient and accessible for the area. Morris Hospital has established a partnership with an oncology group located on Route 6 to provide a radiation therapy center. Vacated right-of-way and properties along Liberty Street have been purchased for future growth and development opportunities.

For a number of years, Morris Hospital participated in the development of a Community Health Needs Assessment and Plan in cooperation with the Grundy County Health Department, Education Service Network and U of I Extension. Now, in compliance with provisions of the Affordable Care Act and Internal Revenue Service regulations for tax-exempt hospitals, Morris Hospital completes its own Community Health Needs Assessment. The most recent Community Health Needs Assessment was completed in 2016.

Like previous years, heart disease, cancer, stroke and lung disease continue to surface as the leading causes of death in the communities served by Morris Hospital.

In the counties served by Morris Hospital (Grundy, Kendall, LaSalle, Livingston and Will), over one-fourth of adults are overweight and close to one-third are obese. These percentages equate to over 60% of the adult population being overweight or obese. In response to the 2016 findings, Morris Hospital is in the processing of creating a three year implementation strategy that focuses on the priority health areas identified in the study. Administrators are currently looking to update the 2006-2009 Strategic Plan. It is anticipated that the updated plan will take the organization 3-5 years into the future.

Other

Community facilities or services also include a branch of the US Post Office, located on the north side of Washington Street between Division and Franklin Streets; several churches of various denominations, including Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian.

Infrastructure

Morris has an infrastructure system in place designed to bring the necessary resources to thousands of residents. The most notable resource distributed and collected by the Morris Infrastructure is water.

Water System

The water system is a city wide looped system with pipe ranging from 4"-16". The older area of the city consists primarily of cast iron pipe. Ductile iron replaced cast iron in the 1960's and PVC pipe became predominate in the 1980's. There are two system zones to the water system. Third Avenue and U.S. 6 make up the lower zone and a booster pumping station to cover the higher zone supplies the I-80 tower. A temporary booster station has been installed on north Route 47 to increase fire flow capacity. The movable booster station can be used as needed throughout the City.

Four deep wells and three elevated tanks supply the system. Well #3 is located at the southwest corner of Main Street and Wauponsee Street with a depth of 1,450 feet and a capacity of 900 gallons per minute (gpm). Well #5 is located on Gould Park Drive and is 1,462 feet deep with a capacity of 1,100 gpm. Well #6 is at Park Boulevard and Edgewood Drive and 1,451 feet deep with a capacity of 1,000 gpm. The City constructed Well #7 at the west end of Washington Street which has a capacity of approximately 1,200 gpm.

The City has a storage capacity of 2,750,000 gallons of water. There are two 1,000,000 gallon tanks and one 750,000 gallon tank. One of the two larger tanks is north of I-80 just east of Illinois 47 and the other is on U.S. 6 on the west side of the city. The smaller tower is located on Third Avenue.

The water treatment plant has a 100,000 gallon reservoir to hold aerated water. There are three vertical turbine pumps that average about 1,400 gpm each. The plant also has four ion-exchange softening, chlorination, fluoridation, and phosphate is added for corrosion control.

The water system is in very good condition with minimal operational problems. The City is continually upgrading the distribution system with new valves and hydrants.

Sanitary Sewer System

The sanitary sewer treatment plant design is 2.5 million gallons a day average flow and the flows at the present time are 2.0 million gallons a day average flow. The design maximum flow for the plant is 8.0 million gallons a day. The collection system is a gravity flow system with eight lift stations. The plant was originally built in 1953 and has had several upgrades over the years. The original buildings still standing include the main office building that has a basement and sub-basement and a thickener unit for sludge storage.



New Water Tower Near the Costco Warehouse Campus

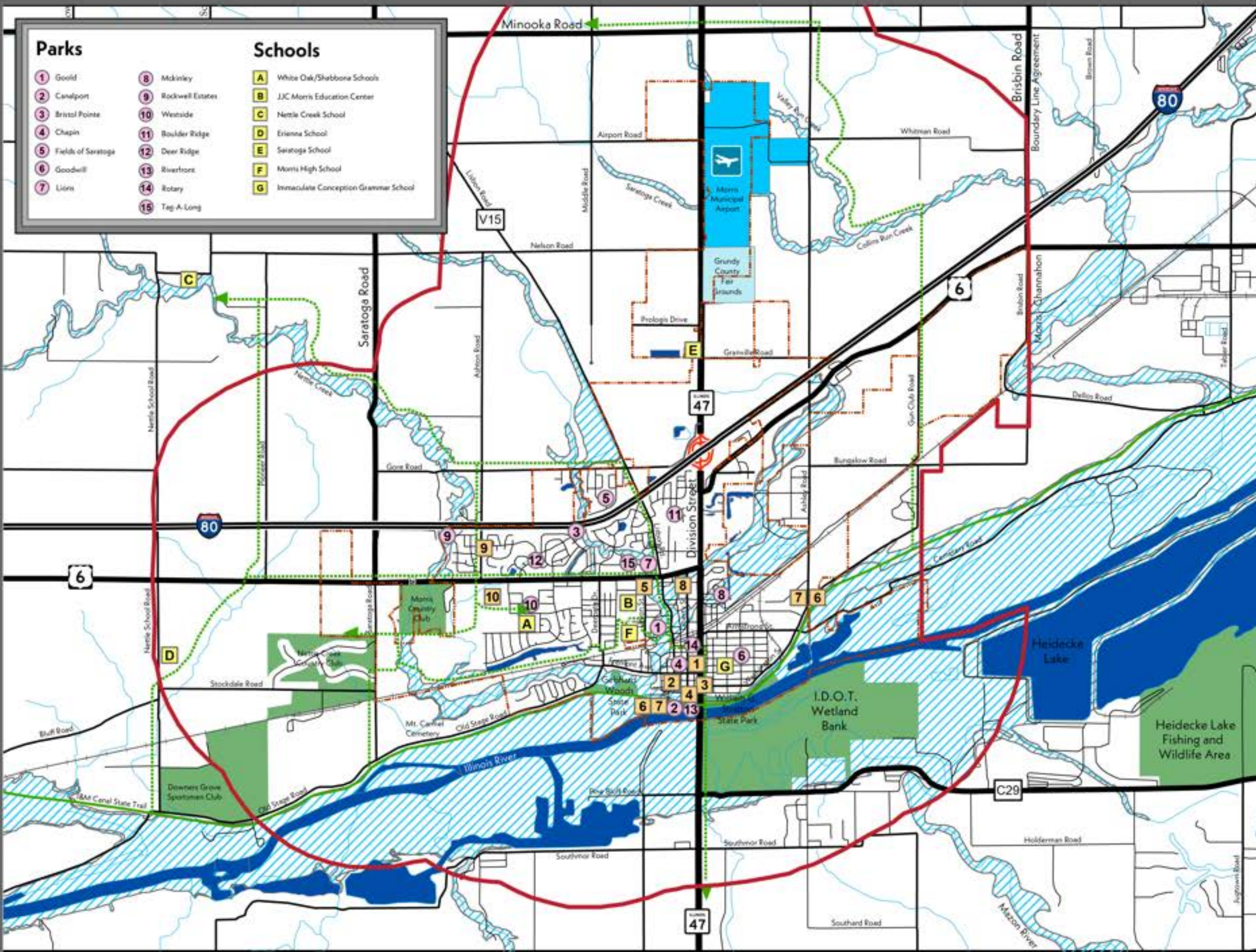
In 1970-71, an expansion of the facilities included a blower building, chlorine room with two Walker process treatment units. In 1988-89, new pumps were installed in the main building, and an old anaerobic digester was converted to aerobic, sludge storage. In 1990-91, an additional clarifier was added, then in 2002 the City added a bar screen and grit removal system and another clarifier and thickened sludge storage unit. In 2013, an excess flow facility was added to capture and treat high flows experienced during precipitation events. In late 2008, a new 0.90 million gallons per day (mgd) treatment plant constructed on Ashley Road became operational. This second plant is expandable to 5.0 mgd and has been designed to provide service for approximately 10,000 acres of future growth. In 2017, additional aeration and sludge digesters were added to this plan to accommodate a new industrial customer.

Storm Sewer System

Some of the City's storm sewer system is connected to the sanitary sewer system. However, the City is currently working on making these two separate systems. Approximately 90% of the combined system has been separated.



Parks		Schools	
1	Goold	A	White Oak/Shabbona Schools
2	Canalport	B	JJC Morris Education Center
3	Bristol Pointe	C	Nettle Creek School
4	Chapin	D	Erienna School
5	Fields of Saratoga	E	Saratoga School
6	Goodwill	F	Morris High School
7	Lions	G	Immaculate Conception Grammar School
8	McKinley		
9	Rockwell Estates		
10	Westside		
11	Boulder Ridge		
12	Deer Ridge		
13	Riverfront		
14	Rotary		
15	Tagi-A-Long		



Legend

- Interstate
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local Street
- Existing Path
- Proposed Path
- Existing Floodplain
- Open Space
- 1.5-Mile Planning Area

Other Public Facilities

- 1 City Hall
- 2 Old City Hall
- 3 Post Office
- 4 County Courthouse
- 5 County Building
- 6 Public Works
- 7 Treatment Plant
- 8 Morris Hospital
- 9 West Fire Station
- 10 Future YMCA

September, 2024

0.5 0.25 0 0.5 Miles

Base map data source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Floodplain data source: Illinois State Water Survey

An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing streets, buildings, and green spaces. A river is visible at the bottom right. The text is overlaid on this image.

Chapter 7

Land Use

"It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory."

W. Edwards Deming

Land use is a broad term for the current or future purpose or function of land in a specific area. Different types of land use within and surrounding a community may act as a strong force in identifying community character. Existing land use can also identify patterns of how future land use may occur. Therefore, a study of the existing land use patterns within the City of Morris and the 1½ mile extraterritorial jurisdiction is an essential part of the comprehensive plan.

Existing Land Use

The purpose of this section is to identify the different types of land use within the Morris corporate limits and 1½ mile planning area. A study of existing land use was conducted in 2001. The information gathered during this study was obtained from a site check of properties, aerial photographs, city staff, and plan commission knowledge of land use within the area. It has been updated based on 2009 conditions. Categories of land use identified by this study are defined below. The acreages identified for each land use category are estimates, and are intended only to provide a basic representation for the identification of future planning goals and objectives. The Existing Land Use Map does not show a parcel-by-parcel use of land; however, it shows a general approximation of land use within the community according to each category, as described below.

Agriculture

Identifies areas that are presently vacant, undeveloped, sparsely developed, or primarily used for farm-related activities.

Conservation

Identifies land that is in its original state and not liable for development. Such land includes wetlands or low-lying areas that are not usable recreational areas.

Recreation/Open Space

Includes primarily undeveloped or preserved land used for parks, recreation, and other outdoor or nature-related activities.

Institutional

Includes land used for schools and associated school grounds, municipal buildings, churches, cemeteries, City-operated parking lots, and other government-owned land and facilities.

Industrial

Includes areas where manufacturing, mining, research facilities, production plants, warehousing, and wholesale businesses are located.

Commercial

Includes all types of retail, office, and service-related facilities where commercial and customer activity is the primary use.

Residential

Identifies areas including both single and multifamily dwelling units, as well as related storage and recreational facilities.

The following table shows an estimated breakdown of the existing land use within the Morris corporate boundaries and 1½ mile planning area. There is a total area of 23,518 acres within the Morris planning area. Of this total, agriculture is the major land use with over 12,500 acres, which represents approximately 53 percent of the total land area within the Morris one and one-half mile planning area.

Approximate Area of Existing Land Use by Classification

Land Use Category	2003 Area (Acres)	Additional Area (Acres)	2009 Area (Acres)	2017 Area (Acres)
Agriculture	9,488	3,089(1)	12,577	12,577
Residential	2,983	190	3,173	3,198
Industrial	2,386	270	2,656	2,710
Conservation	2,251	0	2,251	2,251
Recreation/Open Space	2,017 (2)	-310	1,707	1,660
Institutional	660	3	663	663
Commercial	445	46	491	513
TOTAL	20,230	3,288	23,518	23,572

Source: ArcView GIS calculations (rounded to nearest acre) from the existing Morris land use map.

- (1) Includes a loss of approximately 199 acres based on new development, and expansion of the City's planning area based on recent annexations (3,288 acres)
- (2) Several areas within the existing Morris corporate limits were classified in 2003 as open space/parks although in reality they were just agricultural properties or wooded areas that have since been planned and/or developed

Residential land accounts for approximately 13 percent of the land in the 1½ mile planning area. Morris primarily consists of single-family housing. The housing stock is generally solid. Older housing is found near downtown. Zoning codes have typically separated residential neighborhoods from commercial and industrial districts. More recent housing developments have been built to the west along U.S. 6. The newer housing units are on slightly larger lots and include a mix of single-family attached and single-family detached developments. Morris has a larger percentage of rental housing than most nearby towns. Residential properties are rather affordable as compared to some in neighboring Kendall or Will Counties.



Townhomes are among the range of housing styles residents have to choose from

The third largest category is industrial with 2,656 acres. The bulk of this is located in two areas. A large landfill can be found on the east side of Ashley Road. This area consists of over 1,000 acres. The second large industrial area is a mining area south of the Illinois River and west of Illinois 47. Morris' location along a major river and heavily traveled I-80 makes it a prime spot for industries that need a transportation system that can move goods quickly. The updated existing land use map also illustrates the new Prologis business park located on Route 47 north of Saratoga School.

Conservation land is located outside of the Morris City limits along the Illinois and Mazon Rivers. The low-lying area south of the Illinois River surrounding the meandering Mazon River is entirely in the 100-year floodplain and is not a developable location. Conservation districts are in their original state and generally are not considered usable recreation areas.

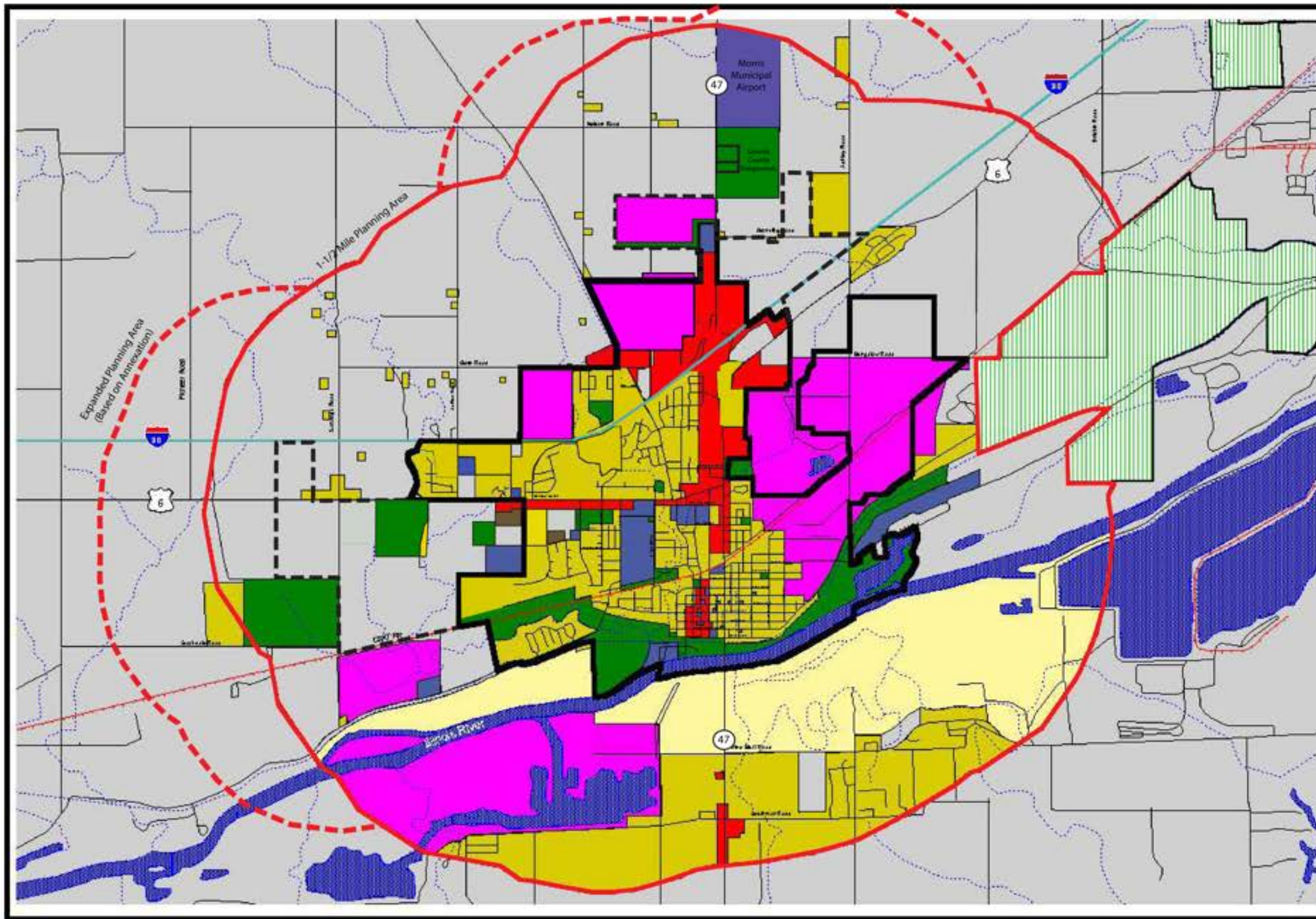
Morris is fortunate to have a considerable amount of usable open space and recreation areas. Its location along the I&M Canal offers a terrific bike/walk path. Two golf courses and Gebhard Woods State Park are found within the 1½ mile planning area. There are many city- or privately-owned parks in Morris. Residents have a multitude of recreation opportunities, though there is no organized park district.













The addition of benches to the downtown has created a pedestrian-friendly environment

The sixth largest category is institutional land. Many churches can be found in Morris. This category also includes two sewage treatment plants, cemeteries, and the Grundy County Administrative Building. White Oak School is one of the largest in Illinois and has the latest in technology. The Morris Hospital is undergoing an expansion along Lisbon and Edwards Streets. The newest institutional use on the existing land use map is the new fire station on Ashton Road.

Commercial property consumes approximately 491 acres of land. Illinois 47 is the main chain retail strip. Some additional commercial franchises can be found on West U.S. 6. Floor area ratios (FAR) are typically between 0.1 and 0.5. The floor area ratio is the total floor area of all buildings on a lot divided by the area of the lot. The central business district is primarily contained



Morris Existing Land Use

-  1-1/2 Mile Planning Area
-  Morris City Limits
-  Interstate 80
-  Roads
-  Railroads
-  Streams
-  Existing Agriculture
-  Existing Conservation
-  Existing Open Space / Parks
-  Existing Institutional
-  Existing Industrial
-  Existing Commercial
-  Existing Residential
-  Channahon



0 0.5 1.0 Miles

Note: Map to be used with Comprehensive Plan text.

May 2003 Created by N.C.I.C. of G.
December 2022 Updated by Teska Associates, Inc.

to a 15-square block area. Many older family-owned businesses are found downtown. FAR is higher downtown, as development is denser. The Morris Downtown Development Partnership has helped make the downtown more inviting. Recent aesthetic improvements have included decorative paving and pedestrian scale lighting. The Grundy County Economic Development Corporation and the Grundy County Chamber of Commerce have been vital in pursuing industrial and commercial businesses. The City should continue to work with each of these organizations to keep them aware of any proposed improvements and what the grand vision is for the different commercial corridors. Offices uses are clustered in two areas of Morris, downtown and the west Route 6 corridor. The current downtown mainly services daytime activity.

The 2020 Land Area and Density table illustrates the population and the number of housing units in Morris and Grundy County when compared to the amount of land within its boundaries in 2000. Other nearby towns and counties are used as comparisons. Kendall County is similar to Grundy County because of its rural character but rapidly changing built environment. Kane County is the fifth largest county in Illinois but most of its population is located along the eastern one-third of the county. Grundy County has not experienced nearly as much growth but should follow the patterns that Kane and Kendall Counties are currently and will encounter in the future.

2020 Land Area and Density

Place	Population	Housing Units	Area in Square Miles			Density Per Square Mile	
			Total Area	Water Area	Land Area	Population	Housing Units
Morris	14,163	6,286	10.26	0.35	9.91	1,429	634
Channahon	13,383	4,684	16.9	1.28	15.62	857	300
Oswego	34,585	11,886	15.07	0.15	14.89	2,323	798
Plainfield	44,762	14,027	25.75	1.03	24.72	1,811	567
Grundy County	52,533	21,174	430.54	12.41	418.13	126	51
Kane County	516,522	188,510	523.01	3.64	519.37	995	363
Kendall County	131,869	45,008	322.22	1.98	320.24	412	141
Illinois	12,812,508	5,426,429	57,914.38	2,399.3	55,499	231	98

Source: 2020 Decennial Census

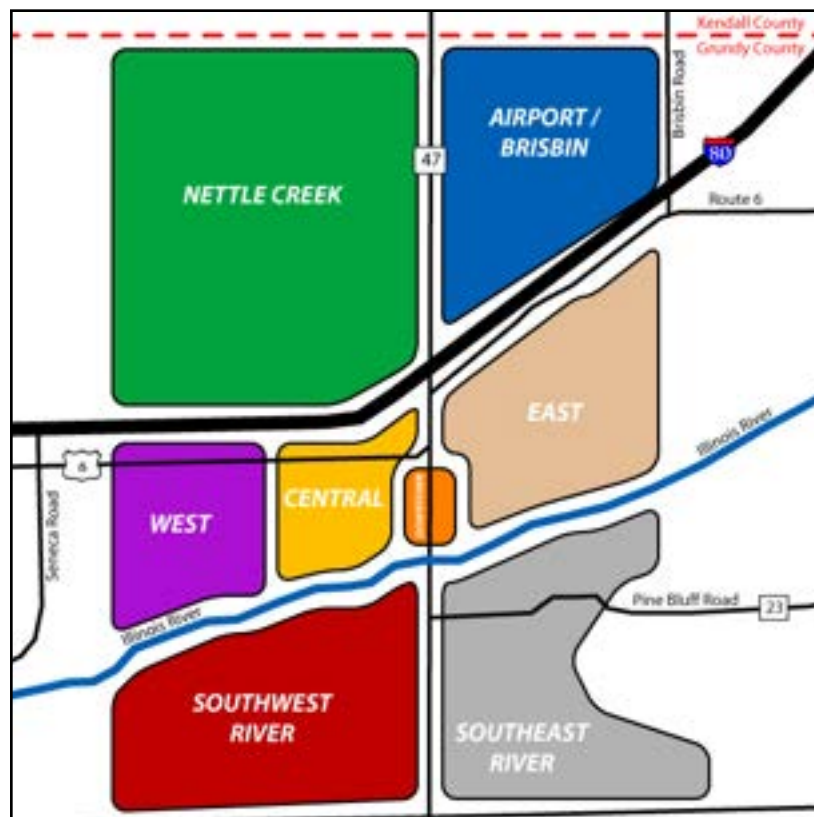
Though Morris has a population less than Oswego or Plainfield, it had nearly 500 more housing units than either town in 2000. However, with the housing boom that occurred in the 2000-2006 period both communities have now passed Morris in total housing units. Unfortunately, data is not readily available on the total land area in each community, thus a comparison of current density per square mile is not provided.

Future Land Use

Upon reviewing the existing land use within the Morris corporate limits and 1½ mile extraterritorial jurisdiction, the Morris Plan Commission has identified areas of need for future development. Many of these needs are expressed in the Goals and Objectives section of this plan.

The Future Land Use Map identifies areas for future development for the entire planning area in all the various land use categories. More specific downtown guidelines are contained in the 2020 Enhance Downtown Morris Master Plan. It should be used along with the Morris Comprehensive Plan during the implementation efforts. The larger Morris planning area has also been divided into a series of eight sub-areas. Specific planning issues and recommendations for each of these sub-areas are contained at the end of this section. The Plan Commission envisions these land use patterns to develop over the next 15 to 20 years.

Future Land Use Sub-Areas



Future Land Use Categories

Agriculture

Identifies areas that are primarily used for farm-related activities.



The future land use map details where agriculture should remain. Past trends help illustrate that the U.S. 6 and Illinois 47 corridors will continue to be sought after. Any new development should only take place within close proximity to existing roads and utilities. It is important to keep residential developments within the box detailed in this document by not extending water and sewer lines into designated agricultural areas. Development near current agricultural areas should decrease in density and wastewater must be properly disposed.

Private Open Space

Identifies areas with environmental features worthy of preservation and generally not appropriate for intense development. These areas include flood plain, wetlands, and areas of steep slope or significant tree cover. These areas provide important environmental corridors for both storm water and wildlife.



A large portion of land is located in low-lying areas south of the Illinois River and is prone to flooding. Development should be restricted in these areas in order to protect the existing streamways. Smaller streams in the planning area should be protected from development by at least 100 feet on either side. Any development in 100-year floodplain areas should be carefully analyzed before building permits are issued. Vistas of the I&M Canal and the Illinois River should be protected.

Several mining areas exist in and around Morris, particularly along the Illinois River. These areas are illustrated for industrial use on the Future Land Use Plan. However, the majority of these mining areas are generally within the River flood plain. When mining operations are complete, it would be appropriate to convert these areas into either private or public open space resources.

Public Open Space

Municipal and state parks, along with other areas owned by public agencies that are intended for conservation and/or recreational purposes.

Morris' location on the I & M Canal trail and Gebhard Woods State Park give residents the opportunity to take advantage of two excellent greenway systems. The city currently has a sufficient amount of parks and open space

for its residents. A park district would help offer a wider array of activities for residents of all age groups. Partnerships can be created through the various schools in Morris to further utilize recreation facilities. There should be at least 10.0 acres of local usable open space/parkland per 1,000 residents for neighborhood and community parks. This does not include regional parks such as Gebhard Woods and the I & M Canal. Vacant or underutilized parcels of land can be used as small parks or community gardens.

The Morris Riverplace, LLC has proposed to construct a residential development and marina east of Ashley Road along the Illinois River. This would be beneficial for the region, as there are few marinas on the river. Boaters would have more opportunities to keep their boats in a secure place and allow for greater use of the river. Preliminary plans for the proposed Sandy Bay development include 264 condominiums, 195 single family lots, a clubhouse/yacht club/bar/grill, a separate restaurant, a 250 unit rack storage building, and a 462 space marina plus common areas reserved for recreation and ponds.

A greenway plan would help identify areas that are potential places for park space. Floodplains are often great locations for parks and greenways. This is a logical approach to utilize land that is easily flooded. Morris should urge that any new developments set aside usable open space. Connections should also be established through sidewalks or wooded paths that lead to parks. Greenways help put less emphasis on automobile traffic and therefore, less strain on existing road infrastructure. Bicycle racks should be placed at various points of downtown to promote alternative means of transportation. Greater connectivity must occur between residential areas, parks, and higher activity centers.

The Guide for Development of New Bicycle Facilities, published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, should be consulted when bikeways are constructed. Bicycle paths paralleling existing highways can be built in two ways. First, bike lanes can share the road with vehicular traffic through posted signs or a restricted lane designated by painted lines. Second, a paved path can be separated from vehicular traffic usually by using heightened curbs and 2-4 foot wide grass buffers. Easements can provide the means to construct these paths on privately owned property.



Institutional

Includes land used for schools and associated school grounds, municipal buildings, churches, cemeteries, City-operated parking lots, and other government-owned land and facilities.

Airport Business

Limited industrial development, with smaller lots and businesses located near the Morris Municipal Airport.

Morris is unique in that it has a significant and expanding municipal airport. Land uses that can capitalize on this airport access, as well as the excellent north/south access provided by Route 47 and the unmatched east/west access of Interstate 80 can be accommodated on the east and north sides of the airport. The character of these developments will be like limited industrial development, with smaller lots and businesses. However, it is anticipated that aviation related businesses, and businesses with corporate jets would desire to be located near the airport.

This land use category can serve as a transition between the airport and areas planned for residential use to the east. Existing creeks in the area should be preserved and used for both stormwater management and as a land use buffer. Zoning for airport business land uses would typically be light manufacturing.

Business Park

Office, data centers, and light industrial development, incorporating quality architectural and landscape design. Such areas will typically not include warehousing unless incorporated into an overall campus with other facilities (for example, the Costco development which integrates includes both a meat packing facility and distribution facilities). Employment and enhanced tax base are key community benefits to the significant acres developed to this land use.



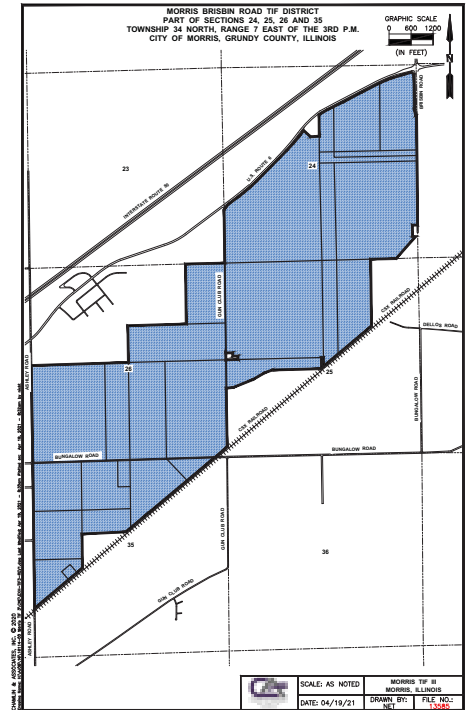
This type of development accommodates corporate facilities that accommodate research and development, traditional office uses, and modern uses such as data centers. A data center is a facility used primarily for the storage, management, processing, and transmission of digital data which houses computer and/or network equipment, systems, servers, appliances, and other associated components, including supporting equipment, related to digital data operations. Morris is well positioned to accommodate future data centers, which require excellent access to a strong and reliable electrical supply, and access to the technical talent needed to operate such a high-tech facility.

Significant areas north and east of the City are proposed for future business park development. In fact, much of this area will likely remain in agricultural use for the short term. However, the following factors combine to suggest that Morris has a significant long-term opportunity to attract additional business park development:

- The Morris Airport provides a unique asset that may attract additional corporations to locate a facility in Morris.
- Interstate 80 is the major east-west route across North America. The Route 47 and Brisbin Road interchanges provided the direct access needed to capitalize on this key national transportation facility.
- Rail access is available to proposed business park areas south of I-80, providing additional opportunities for intermodal development that can capitalize on both rail and truck transit.
- The City of Morris recently created the Brisbin Road TIF District to help spur new business park development.

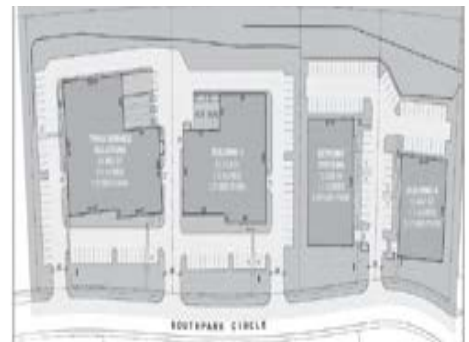
More intense manufacturing uses are also appropriate within the business park land use category. Such uses do not have to be interpreted as “dirty” development. A carefully implemented land use plan can separate heavy manufacturing from residential or commercial uses. Clean industrial establishments should be encouraged in areas that will have the least impact on existing traffic patterns. Less intrusive industry should be used as a buffer near residential and commercial development. Areas with both highway and rail access are particularly appropriate for these more intense uses.

The business park land use category illustrated in the Comprehensive Plan translates to the Manufacturing zoning districts in the Morris Zoning Ordinance. In general, areas planned for business park use in the Comprehensive Plan may be appropriate for M-1. Development of these areas as Planned Unit Developments is encouraged to promote quality design standards. Some business park areas, particularly adjacent to rail access, may also be appropriate for more intense M-2 zoning.



Limited Industrial

Small commercial uses such as contractors, light manufacturing and assembly, offices, and similar businesses call into the limited industrial lands use category. Lots of between 1 and 5 acres are typical in these areas. While semi-trucks may occasionally make deliveries within a limited industrial area, they may not be parked overnight.



These uses are primarily served by smaller work trucks and delivery vehicles. Many of the businesses that have developed in the Ashley Road Business Park are good examples of this type of use. Contractors, cabinet makers, and many other types of businesses have unique needs for good access. However, they generally do not need a location along a major arterial roadway like Route 47 or Route 6. Key locations for limited industrial use are areas between Gore Road and north of Interstate 80, and along Ashley Road. Other areas shown for limited industrial use are located along the south side of Route 6 behind Wal-Mart and as a transition between older neighborhoods on the east side of Morris’s traditional residential neighborhoods. The limited industrial land use category best fits the light manufacturing zoning district.



Logistics/Industrial

The logistics/industrial land use category provides opportunities for warehousing and distribution facilities with convenient access to the regional and national transportation network. Logistics/Industrial areas may also integrate uses listed under Business Park.



In our modern economy, the ability to quickly distribute products is essential. Morris's location in the Chicago region, and on the coast-to-coast Interstate 80, suggest that it is a prime location for such warehouse and distribution facilities. Corporations like Proctor & Gamble and GE have recognized the City's locational advantages and have constructed facilities in town in recent years.

The City, along with other Grundy County partners, pushed to construct the Brisbin Road interchange along I-80 to be able to capitalize on these locational advantages and accommodate the truck traffic generated by logistics businesses while minimizing impact on residential areas. Most areas planned for future logistics/industrial use are within this Brisbin Road Corridor on the eastern edge of the community. These areas have excellent interstate and rail access both regionally and nationally. Areas planned for logistics/industrial use would best fit the City's M-2 zoning district.

Commercial

Retail, office, and service-related facilities where commercial and customer activity is the primary use.



The bulk of the commercial land use illustrated on the Future Land Use Plan is located along Illinois 47. This designation differs from downtown in many ways. Buildings are typically designed more uniquely, often because chain retailers have set architectural patterns that are followed. The density is less because of the many free-standing buildings. Building square-footage is much higher. The corridors are primarily intended to be serviced by automobiles. Curb cutouts are more abundant because of the prevalence of these uses. Parking is generally found in the front of the buildings. Many functions can be found along Illinois 47 and U.S. 6. These include, but are not limited to:

- Big-box retail stores
- Automobile dealers
- Fast-food franchises
- Gas stations

Utilities should be buried underground in order to maintain a pleasing streetscape. Power lines limit the views of passing motorists and help clutter vistas. Other types of development besides commercial should be

discouraged throughout this corridor. Morris must be careful when offering subsidies for development in this area. This can create an equity issue and should not be done at the expense of downtown business owners.

Additional commercial areas should develop south of the Illinois River. This would serve as smaller-scale neighborhood commercial establishments near the intersection of Illinois 47 and Southmor Road. Future road widening on Illinois 47 could make this a prime destination for retail. It is also recommended that commercial remain the predominant land use along West U.S. 6. The density should decrease as commercial uses begin to transition to residential areas.



Business Transition

Typically older areas of Morris where increased traffic and development patterns suggest that existing residential structures may be appropriate for conversion to low-intensity office and other retail and service uses. Careful site plan review will be needed in these areas to maintain the residential character of these areas through buffering and sensitive architectural and landscape design. Off-street parking should be located in a rear or side yard only. New construction should have a residential character. This category may also include newer areas of the community where a transition between more intense commercial use and residential uses is appropriate.



Estate Residential

Areas where single-family residential development density is limited to under 1 dwelling unit per acre. Independent sewer and water systems may be permitted on such properties.

Low Density Residential

Areas primarily intended for single family detached homes. Density will typically be between 1 and 2 dwelling units per acre.

Medium Density Residential

Identifies areas including both single family detached and attached homes. Duplexes, townhomes, and similar housing products are anticipated in medium density residential areas. Residential densities of between 2.1 and 6.0 dwelling units per acre are anticipated.

High Density Residential

Identifies areas intended for condominiums, apartments, and other multi-family housing. Residential densities of between 6.1 and 12.0 dwelling units per acre are anticipated, although higher densities may be appropriate for senior housing projects or downtown developments.



Existing residential properties should be maintained according to the City's BOCA maintenance codes. Grants should be made available to low-income homeowners that wish to rehabilitate their homes. Neighborhoods that have well-kept properties help reduce the perception of crime and increase the attractiveness to visitors. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has a housing rehab grant program that the city may be eligible for.

While it is the goal of Morris to provide housing for a wide range of incomes, it is understood that traditional single family housing will be in demand. Transitions should be provided between neighborhoods using open space or landscaped buffers. New neighborhoods should establish unique themes that make them identifiable. Residential developments should provide a diversity and variety of housing style in order to keep a distinct architectural style.



As suburbia comes closer to Morris in proceeding years, land preservation is a primary concern. A goal of any new development should be to preserve some land that can be used by residents for recreation. Each neighborhood can be connected through open space or greenway corridors. Developers can gain density bonuses by setting aside land that remains in its original state and serves a recreational purpose. Cluster developments differ from traditional developments in that houses are built on smaller lots while preserving land from construction. This decreases the need for utility and road extension, making subdivisions more cost-effective. Cluster design is more functional and creates a more defensible enclosure. Density would decrease towards the boundaries of the planning area to maintain a rural environment by utilizing larger lots.

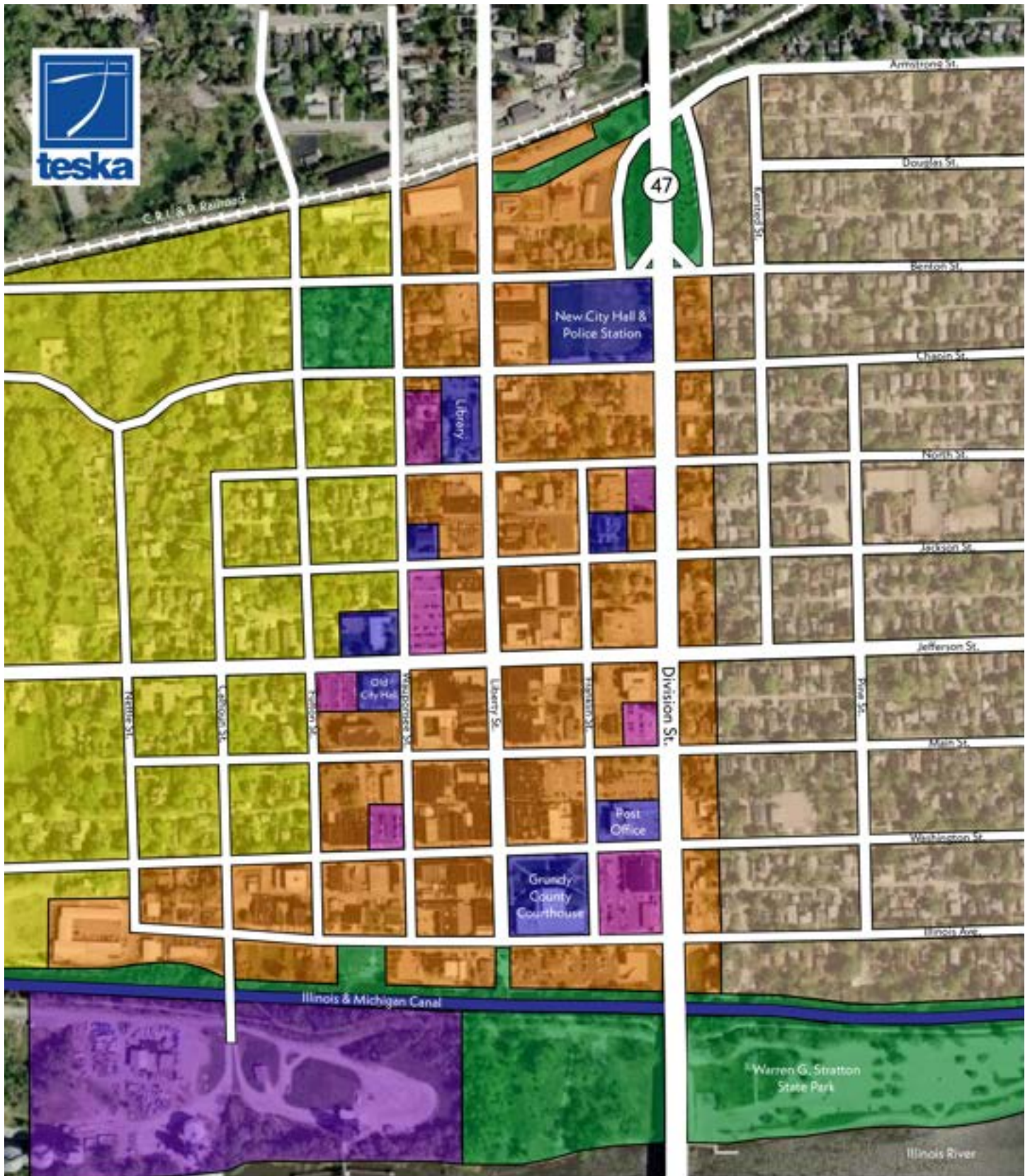
Downtown Mixed Use

Downtown Morris acts as the cultural and social center for residents. It should be an identifiable area to both residents and visitors and create a "sense of place."



Pedestrians should be able to walk without concern for large industrial trucks passing through the downtown. Aesthetically-pleasing signs are currently directing people to the downtown and other important places. It houses traditional retail services along Liberty Street and is also the home of the Grundy County Courthouse.

This plan does not suggest a growing downtown area but rather a strengthening district. A solid downtown should have activity 24 hours per day. A plan for downtown Morris was developed in 1996-1997 by the consulting firm of HyettPalma. May of the recommendations of that plan have been completed, and it is recommended that the Morris Downtown



MORRIS DOWNTOWN PLAN

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Downtown |  Institutional |
|  Low Density Residential |  Industrial |
|  Medium Density Residential |  Parking |
| |  Open Space |



Development Partnership, Inc. and the City of Morris work cooperatively on a new downtown plan for the next 20 years. Many functions are necessary to maintain a lively area. These include:

- Residential
- Entertainment
- Financial
- Bed and Breakfasts
- Governmental
- Mixed Use (single-family or multi-family housing or offices, plus commercial uses)
- Cultural
- Public Spaces

Residential uses can be included as mixed-use developments, which encourages greater density and brings additional foot traffic at most hours of the day. Entertainment and cultural activities are needed as alternative means to bring people to the area. Acceptable entertainment uses include the following:

- Sit-down restaurants with maximum capacities of 125
- Bookstores, florists, or drug stores
- Small, limited-item convenience stores

Restaurants that have outdoor patios convey the perception of pedestrian friendliness. Office space brings a different clientele to the downtown area. Like residential development, it can achieve a mix of uses. Small-scale lodging, such as bed and breakfasts, keep visitors in the district. Because these businesses are often in larger houses, these are typically located on the outskirts of the downtown.

Morris's location to the I & M Canal and the Grundy County Courthouse promotes festivals or concerts to be held during the warmer months of the year. The courthouse lawn can serve as an important public meeting space.

Pedestrian-oriented items, such as benches, decorative planters, and brick sidewalks, should be included to create a district that stands out from other parts of the city. Speed limits must intentionally be kept low to prohibit vehicles from creating safety problems for pedestrians. Lower speeds keep noise to a minimum, which also encourages congregating on sidewalks, and allows drivers to view the buildings. Bump-outs or curb extensions should be used near intersections to keep traffic from speeding and to offer safety to crossing pedestrians by shortening the distance needed to walk to the other side of the street. Bike racks or other street furniture can be placed there.

Proposed Commuter Train Station Area

The extension of the Metra passenger rail service would pass through the downtown area on the current CSX tracks. The City could utilize the existing train station near Benton and Liberty Streets. It was rehabilitated recently and is being used by the Grundy County Chamber of Commerce. Keeping the Chamber at the station would allow for even greater advertising of Morris to the train passengers.

Depending on the number of daily trains, parking will need to be added. The current lot can hold approximately 25 vehicles. Vacant land is available east of the existing lot and would be suitable for parking. On-street parking is also available nearby. Morris should urge people to use mass transit by pushing for higher density developments within a quarter-mile of the station. Uses should be mixed with ground level commercial and either residential or office space on the upper floors. Having the station near the downtown shopping district also would create additional pedestrian traffic for extended hours of the day during the entire week.

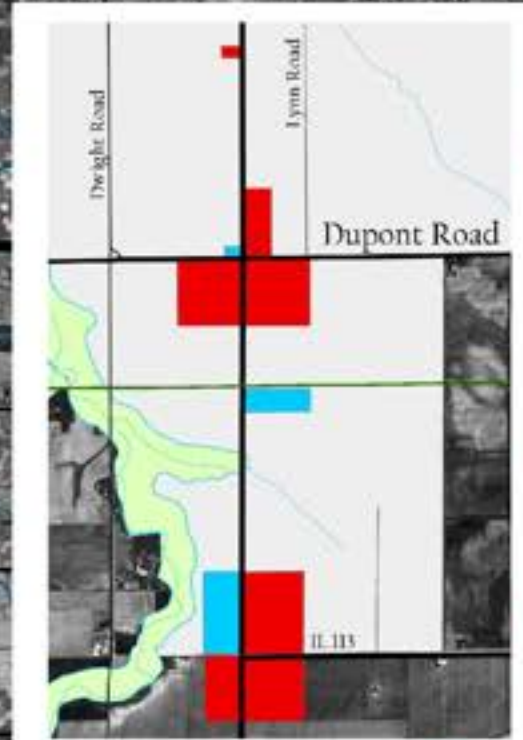
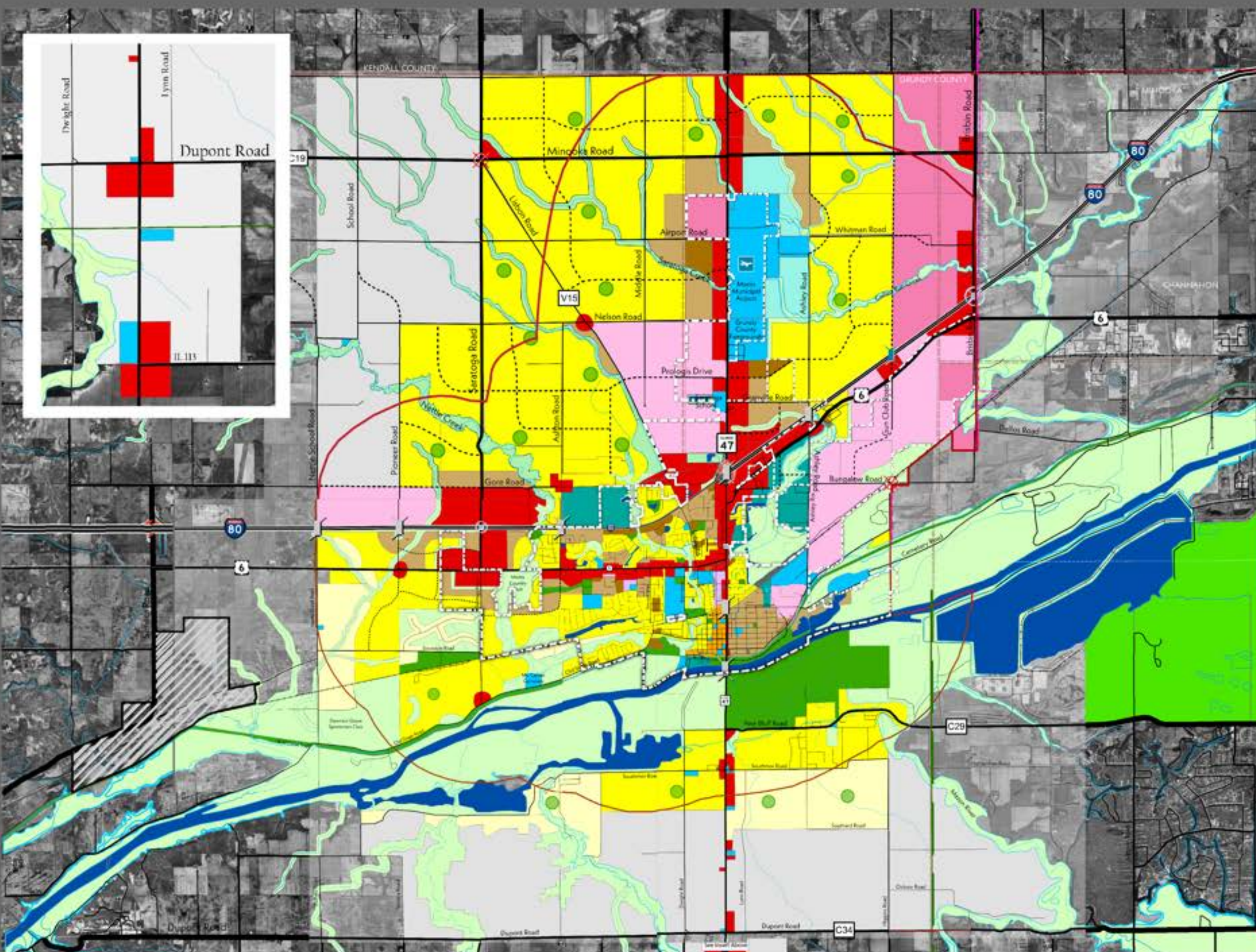
Use of Future Land Use Map

The planning map on the following page does not necessarily mirror the current regulated zoning districts for the City of Morris. Zoning maps are available at City Hall. Rather, the Future Land Use map serves as a guide, representing a basis for future land use planning, on which future zoning updates and rezoning decisions will be based.

These areas of future land use are determined by current growth and development patterns, along with significant studies of current land use. The planning map essentially shows how the City would like to manage growth over the next 15 to 20 years. The map also provides a legal basis for City officials to base planning and land use decisions on. Developers and landowners can use the Future Land Use map as an informational tool to identify where the City will support new development.

Future Land Use Areas

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	10,849	20.7%
Public Open Space	1,475	2.8%
Private Open Space	8,019	15.3%
Institutional	1,094	2.1%
Roads	2,600	5.0%
Estate Residential	2,149	4.1%
Low Density Residential	13,854	26.5%
Medium Density Residential	1,758	3.4%
High Density Residential	210	0.4%
Commercial	2,407	4.6%
Downtown	73	0.1%
Limited Industrial	791	1.5%
Logistics Industrial	2,145	4.1%
Business Park	4,376	8.4%
Airport Business	564	1.1%
TOTAL	52,365	100.0%



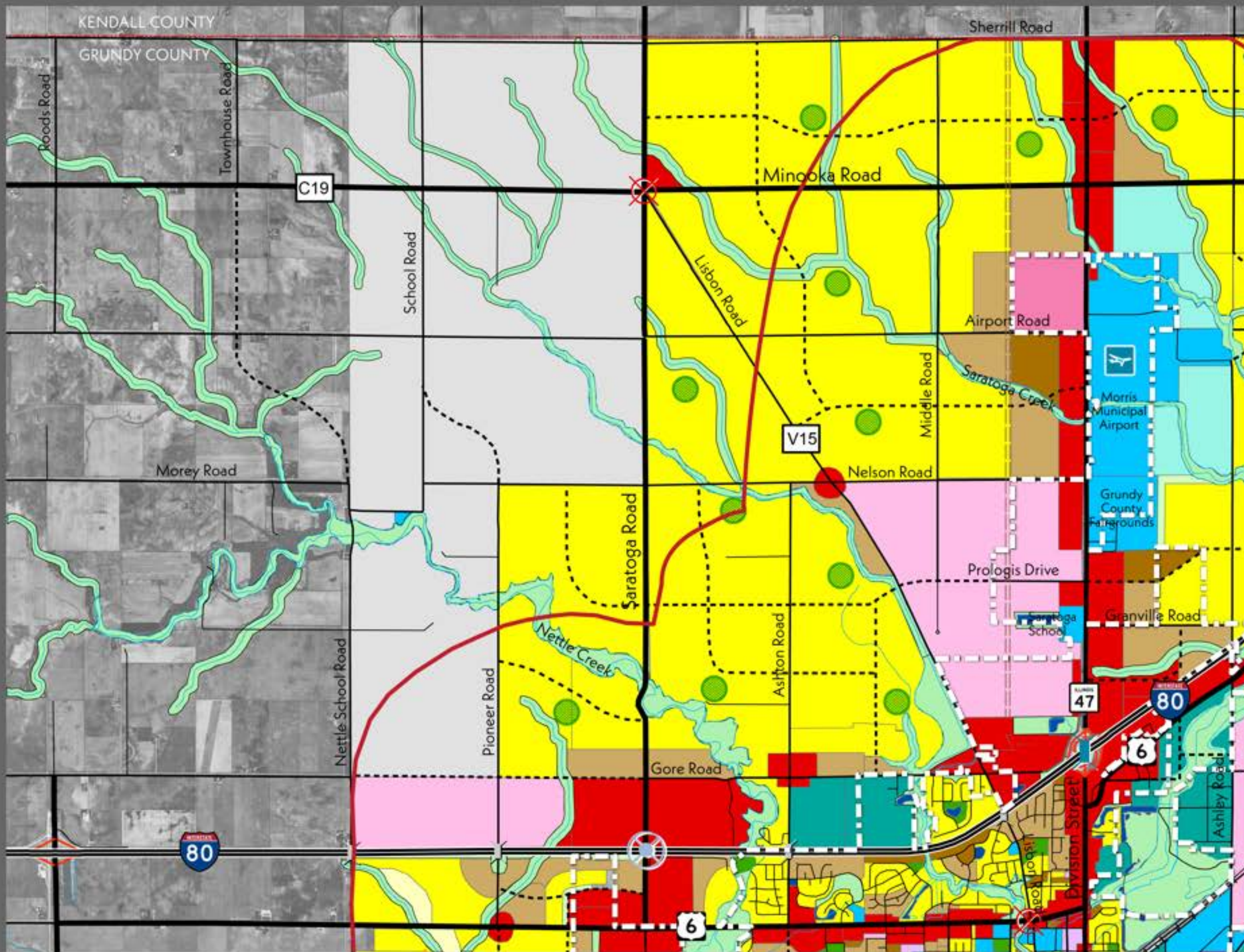
Legend

- New Interchange
- Existing Interchange
- Intersection Improvement
- Proposed Bridge Overpass
- Existing Bridge
- Traffic Circle
- Gateway
- County Line
- ComEd Line
- ComEd ROW
- Channahon Boundary
- 1.5 Mile Planning
- Interstate
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local Street
- New Arterial
- New Collector
- Railroad
- Morris Municipal Boundary
- Existing Floodplain
- Agricultural
- Estate Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Downtown
- Business Park
- Business Transition
- Logistic Industrial
- Airport Business
- Limited Industrial
- Open Space (Private)
- Open Space (Public)
- Conceptual Park Location (Public)



September, 2024





Legend

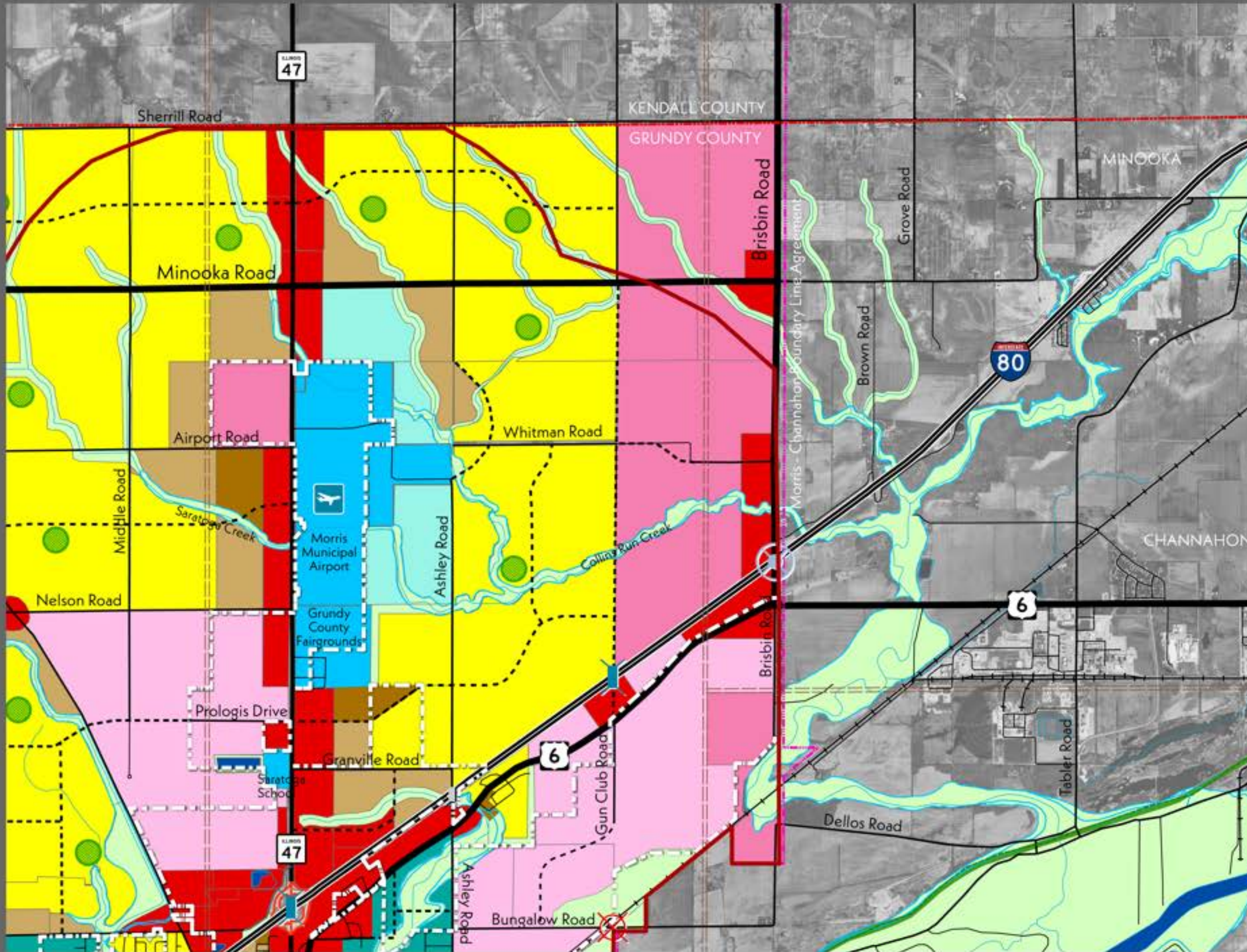
-  New Interchange
-  Intersection Improvement
-  Bridge Overpass
-  ComEd Line
-  ComEd ROW
-  I & M Canal Trail
-  Channahon Boundary Agreement
-  1.5-Mile Planning Area
-  Morris Municipal Boundary
-  Interstate
-  Major Arterial
-  Minor Arterial
-  Collector
-  Local Street
-  New Arterial
-  New Collector
-  Railroad
-  Existing Floodplain
-  Agricultural
-  Estate Residential
-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Institutional
-  Downtown
-  Commercial
-  Business Transition
-  Airport Business
-  Limited Industrial
-  Business Park
-  Logistic Industrial
-  Open Space (Private)
-  Open Space (Public)
-  Conceptual Park Location (Public)




September, 2024




Base map data source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Floodplain data source: Illinois State Water Survey



Legend

- New Interchange
- Intersection Improvement
- Bridge Overpass
- ComEd Line
- ComEd ROW
- I & M Canal Trail
- Channahon Boundary Agreement
- 1.5-Mile Planning Area
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September, 2024

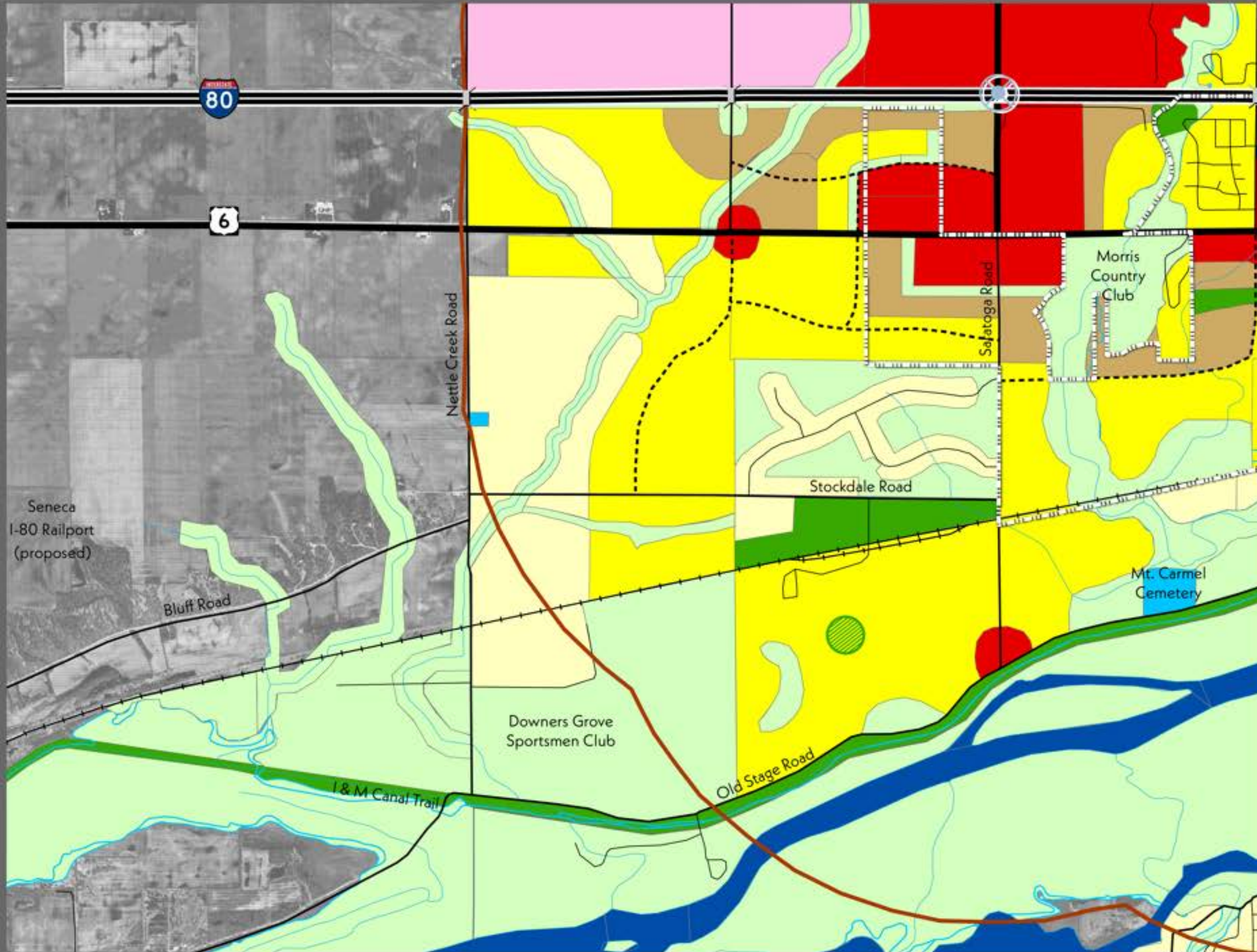




Base map data source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Floodplain data source: Illinois State Water Survey

City of Morris

Future Land Use
West Sub-Area



Legend

- New Interchange
- Bridge Overpass
- I & M Canal Trail
- 1.5-Mile Planning Area
- Morris Municipal Boundary
- Interstate
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local Street
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Seneca I-80 Railport (proposed)

Bluff Road

Nettle Creek Road

Stockdale Road

Seljatoga Road

Morris Country Club

Mt. Carmel Cemetery

Downers Grove Sportsmen Club

Old Stage Road

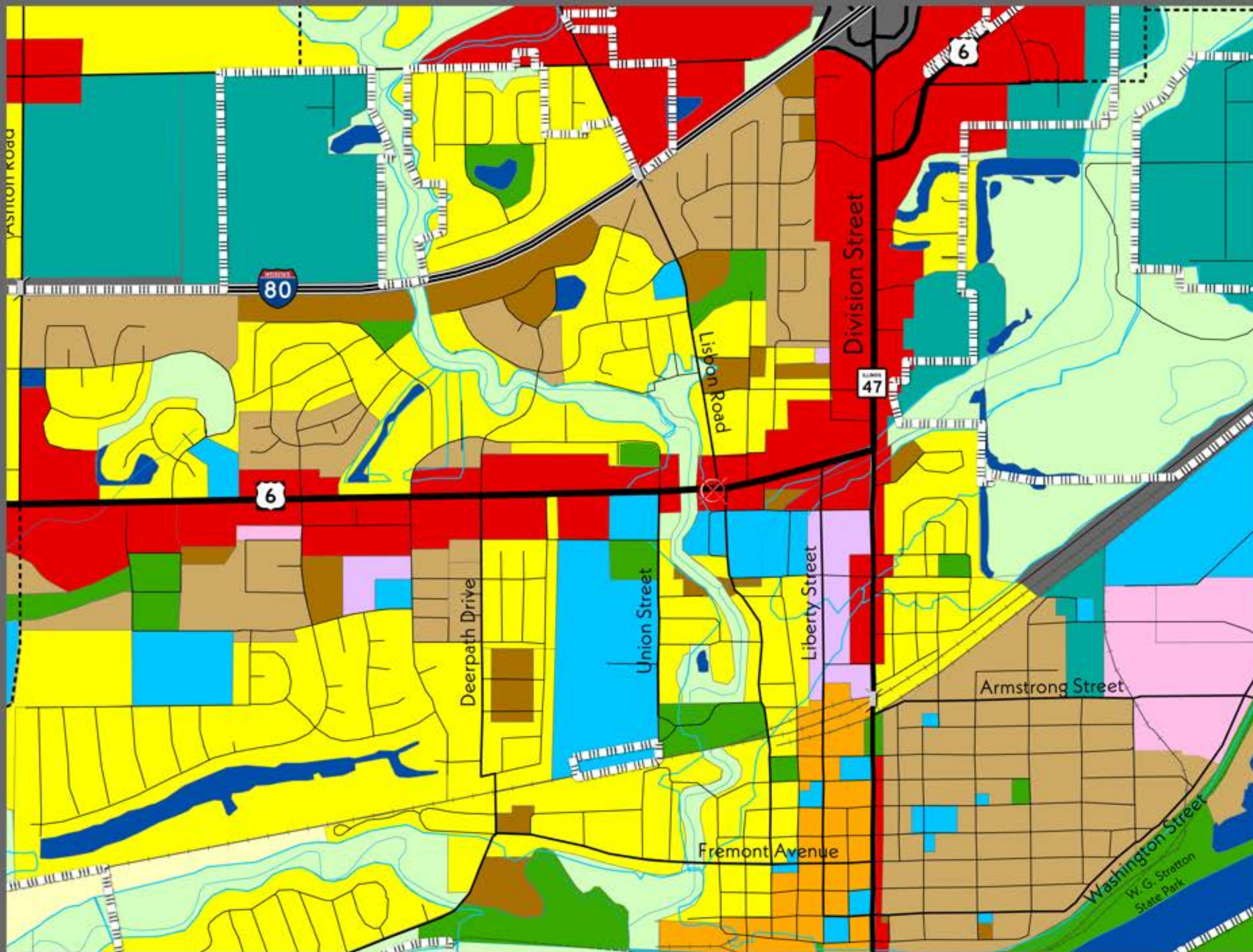
I & M Canal Trail



September, 2024

0.25 0.125 0 0.25 Miles





Legend

- New Interchange
- Intersection Improvement
- Bridge Overpass
- ComEd Line
- ComEd ROW
- I & M Canal Trail
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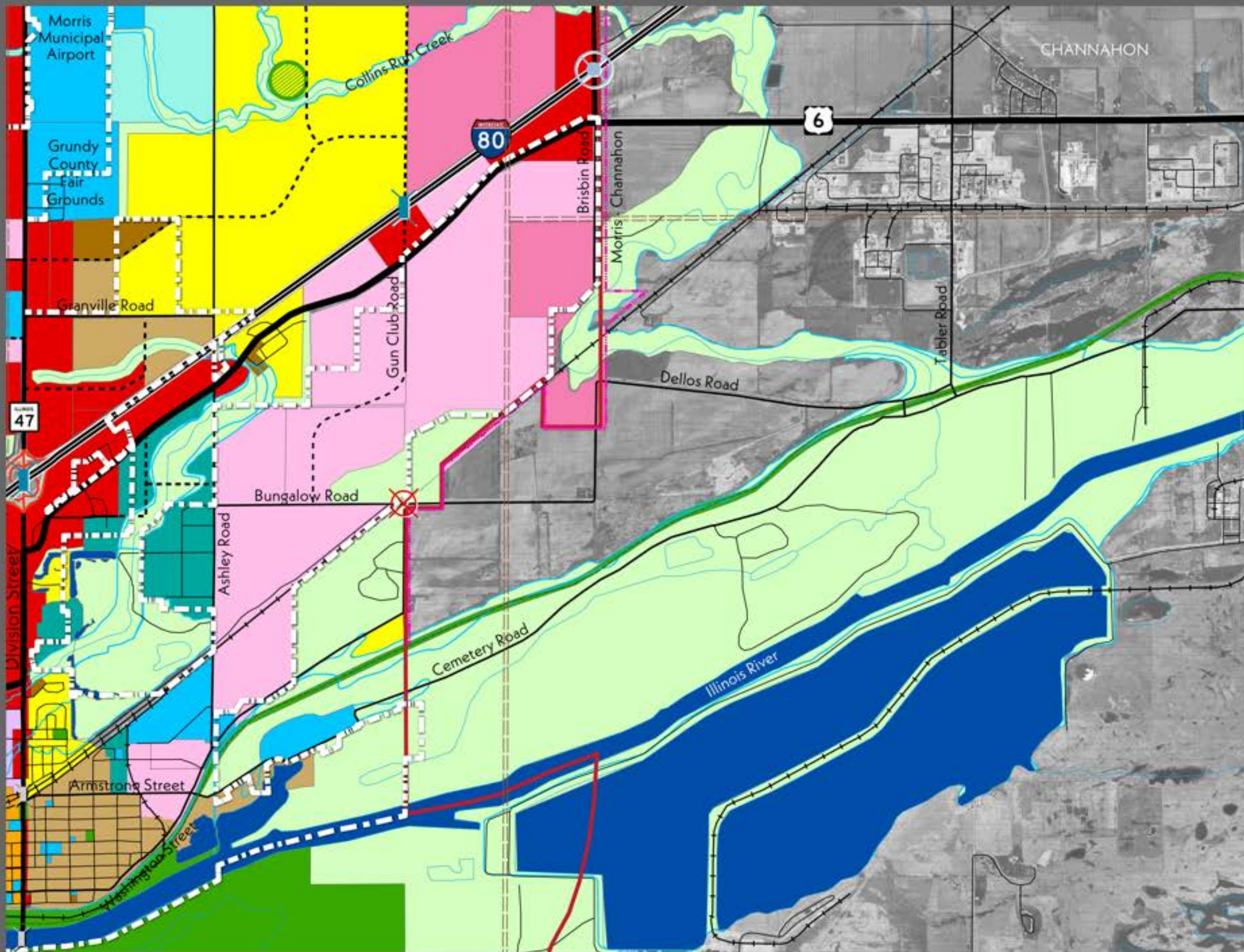


September, 2024



City of Morris

Future Land Use
East Sub-Area



Legend

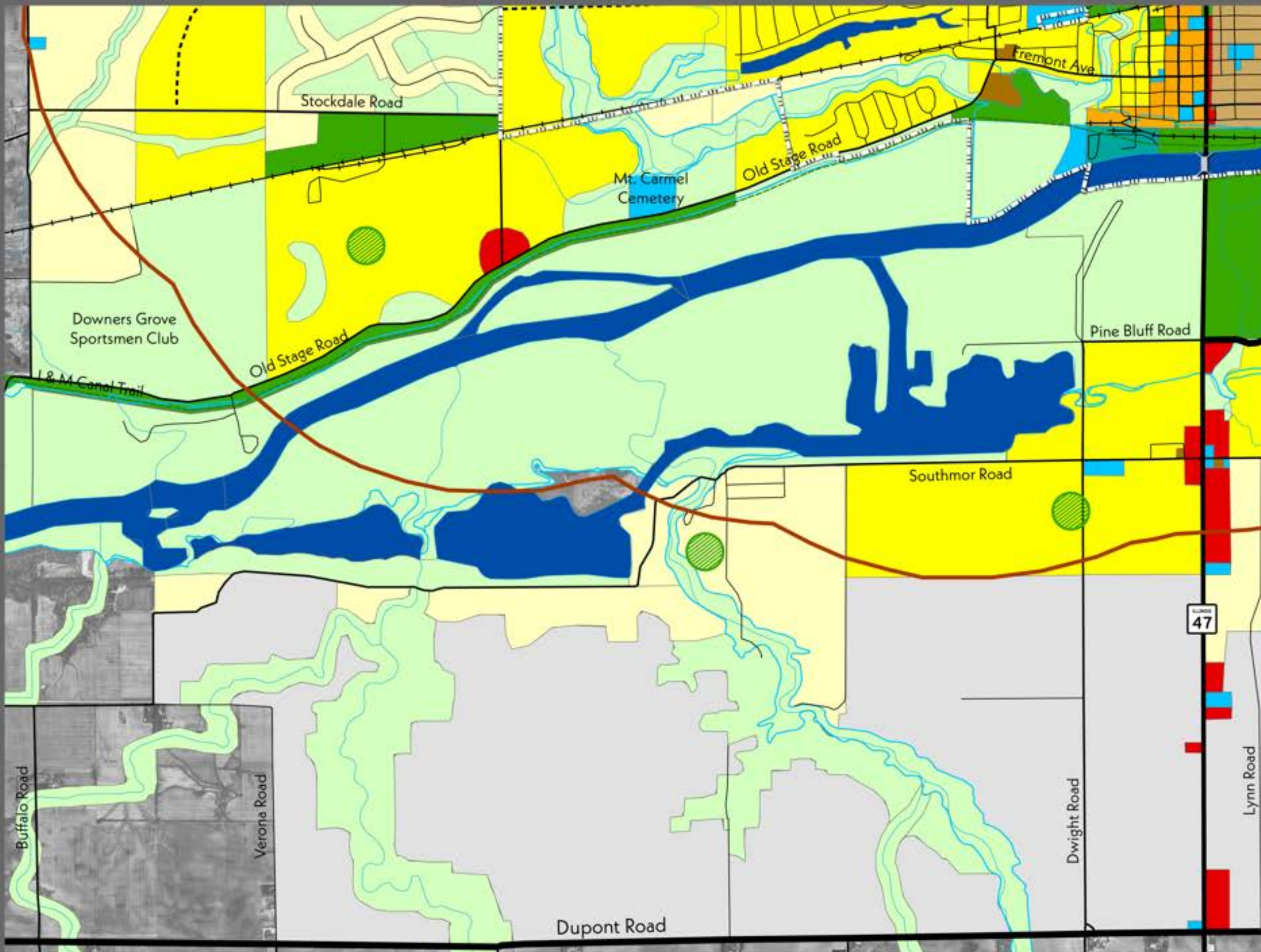
- New Interchange
- Intersection Improvement
- Bridge Overpass
- ComEd Line
- ComEd ROW
- I & M Canal Trail
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September, 2024



Base map data source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Floodplain data source: Illinois State Water Survey



Legend

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- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
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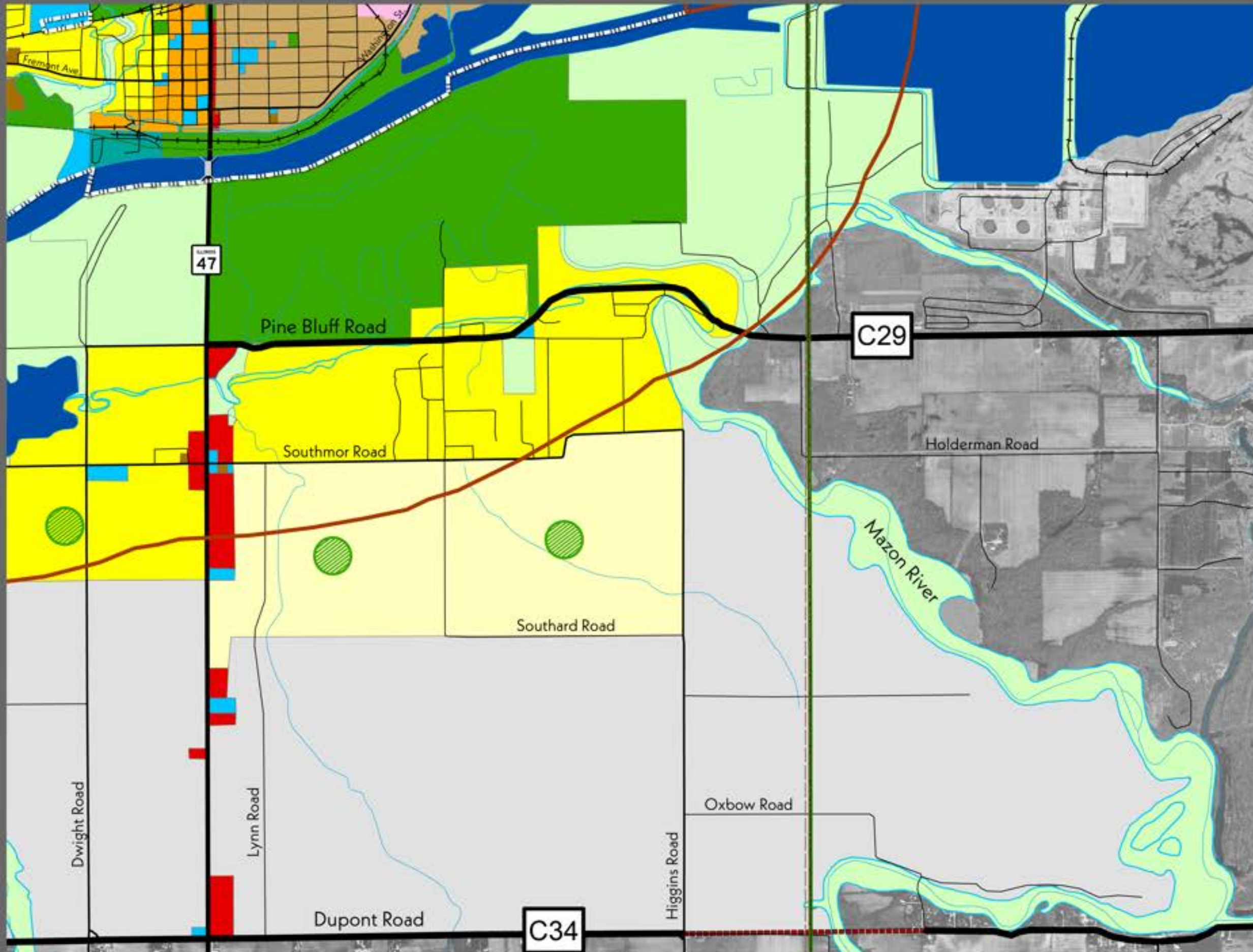


September, 2024

0.250.125 0 0.25Miles



Base map data source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Floodplain data source: Illinois State Water Survey



Legend

- Bridge Overpass
- ComEd Line
- ComEd ROW
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September, 2024



Base map data source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Floodplain data source: Illinois State Water Survey

An aerial photograph of a city street grid, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, green spaces, and a river in the lower right corner. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be overlaid.

Chapter 8

Transportation

"Americans will put up with anything provided it doesn't block Traffic."

Arnold Bennett

The City of Morris is located in northern Grundy County in northeastern Illinois. Morris is the county seat. It is approximately 60 miles southwest of Chicago. Morris is within 75 miles of Bloomington/Normal, Peoria, Rockford, and 100 miles from Champaign-Urbana. It is within 250 miles of many other metropolitan areas including Indianapolis, Madison, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. Morris is a growing community of approximately 15,000 residents. Most necessary services are provided, though some additional cultural and social activities can be found in Joliet or the Chicago metro area.

Regional Setting

Morris is on the fringe of the sprawling Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The city is located near a rapidly growing corridor along eastern Kendall and western Will Counties. While this growth has slowed significantly in recent years due to the recession and other factors, it is expected that growth will eventually continue to surge south and west toward Grundy County. Morris is challenged by the recent growth in land area by neighboring Channahon.

Existing Transportation Infrastructure

Many forms of transportation serve Morris, including highways, railroads, and waterways. These ensure that industrial development has the proper means with which to transport goods and services. The current transportation infrastructure continues to be enhanced to provide the needs of a growing population. Map 2 shows the existing transportation system and future transportation opportunities in and around Morris.



View From Interstate 80

Roadways

There are four basic functional classifications of roads. Each classification serves an important purpose to move people in and around the city efficiently.

- **Highways**

Morris is blessed to be located along the heavily traveled Interstate 80, which extends across the entire length of the United States connecting New York and San Francisco. This critical Interstate carried approximately 39,000 vehicles daily in 2024 (east of Route 47). Approximately 36% of this total was truck traffic.

- **Arterials**

These are the major roadways that move vehicles in and out of the city. They act as connections to major points. Arterials are meant to carry more than 5,000 vehicles per day or 500 vehicles per hour. On-street parking is generally prohibited and driveways and curb cuts are kept to a minimum. While initially constructed as two lane roadways, most arterial roadways should be designed with wider right-of-ways to accommodate future widening to accommodate turn lanes, intersection improvements, and future additional through lanes. Arterial roadways in and around Morris include:

- o U.S. Route 6 runs east-west through the town, paralleling I-80. Seneca and Channahon are neighboring municipalities to the west and east respectively on U.S. 6. There is an average of 13,700 vehicles daily on U.S. 6 west of Illinois 47 and 12,200 vehicles east of Illinois 47. Morris, Minooka, and Channahon, recently received a grant to study needed traffic improvements along Route 6. IDOT also has plans to improve Route 6 west of Route 47 within Morris.
- o Illinois Route 47 is one of the major north-south State Routes. It connects Morris with Yorkville to the north and Dwight to the south. Beyond neighboring communities, Route 47 extends north to the Wisconsin border and south to Interstate 74 and the City of Champaign. More than 27,000 vehicles come through the city limits daily along Illinois 47.
- o Several other roadways are also identified as arterial roadways on the Transportation Plan. These roadways provide important links to neighboring communities and counties. Unlike the above major arterial roads, most of the following roadways are all controlled by the Grundy County Highway Department. These routes include:
 - * Minooka Road (County Route 19) on the far northern end of the Morris planning area.
 - * Dupont Road (County Route 34) on the far southern end of the Morris planning area.
 - * Pine Bluff Road (County Route 29) runs on the south side, and generally parallel to the Illinois River. This route is important regionally, as it turns into Lorenzo Road to the east in Will County, with an interchange at Interstate 55.
 - * Saratoga Road
 - * Seneca Road
 - * Brisbin Road

- **Collectors**

The purpose of a collector street is to provide for the movement of traffic through the city on a more local basis. They act as the connection between arterials and smaller residential streets. Ideally, collectors transport vehicles quickly to arterials with the least amount of necessary intersections. Generally, a wide array of development occurs on collectors. It can range from heavy manufacturing industries to low density residential development. Collector roads typically carry between 1,000 and 8,000 vehicles per day and are two lanes wide. Such examples in Morris include Lisbon Road, Ashton Road, Ashley Road, and Union Street.

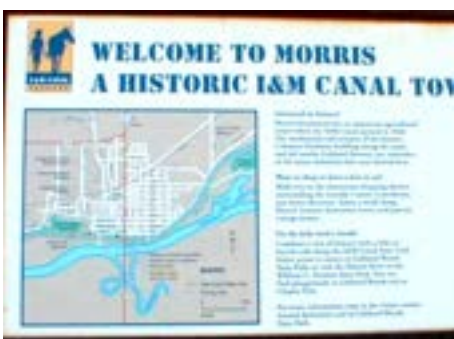
- **Local or Residential Streets**

The fourth category of roads is intended only for access to housing. They are not constructed for any other type of land use. Speed limits are intentionally kept at a minimum to ensure a safe environment for citizens and pedestrians in the area and to minimize the number of additional vehicles from using the roads. Residential streets generally flow into collectors. Many new subdivision developments have added to the number of residential streets in Morris.

Railroads

Morris is served by the CSX freight line, which runs between Joliet and Henry. One round trip freight train runs on a typical day on the line. It connects with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), Iowa Interstate, and Union Pacific (UP) Railroads. As two of the largest railroads in the country, the BNSF and UP move a large percentage of the nation's freight. Morris does lack industrial sites with freight railroad access. Passenger rail does not currently serve Morris. The nearest Amtrak rail stations are located in Dwight, Joliet, and Plano, 15-25 miles away.

An initial study was completed in 2003 examining the potential to extend commuter rail service through Morris on the CSX line. The proposed Illinois Valley Commuter Rail Line would extend from LaSalle-Peru to Joliet (with connections into the City of Chicago). Three, three-car trains would travel in the morning and evening peak periods, between 90 and 110 mph on the 60-mile long Joliet-LaSalle leg. The service would make use of existing tracks, but there would need to be some track and bridge upgrades, as well as construction of sidings. No funding has been allocated for this rail service.



Sign Found on I&M Canal

Waterways and Pedestrian Paths

The Illinois & Michigan Canal flows east-west directly through the City limits. The canal runs between LaSalle and Chicago. Constructed in 1848, it was used in the 19th Century by barge traffic. Later, shipping demands declared the canal too narrow for barges to pass through and railroads became the means of moving goods and people. The canal is now part of a National

Register of Historic Places bike/walk trail. It is the nation's first National Heritage Corridor.

The Illinois River runs east-west along the City's south boundary. The river is entirely navigable and maintains a nine-foot navigation channel between its eight locks and dams. Barge traffic is extensive on the river throughout the year. The channel depth is nine feet. The Illinois River is a primary connection between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River. Morris' location on the Illinois River allows for the capability of shipping bulk goods via barge, which appeals to heavy manufacturing industries. The Environmental Issues Map highlights areas that are within the flood plain of the Illinois River and other smaller waterways. The Illinois River is also heavily used by residents and visitors for recreation.

Air Service

The Morris Municipal Airport serves Grundy County. It is located approximately 1½ miles north of Interstate 80. It is a publicly owned, public use, general aviation airport with one paved runway. It has a 5,500 foot-long lighted runway. In 2017, 76 aircraft were based at the airport, with an average of 116 airport operations daily. The airport does not offer scheduled passenger carrier service. Several local businesses utilize Morris Municipal Airport. It is primarily used for corporate and private flights. The airport generates an average of \$309 in economic impact per operation and has a \$13 million annual economic impact on the Morris area. The airport has three corporate hangars and provides jet fuel and avgas sales.

A publicly owned, public use, general aviation airport is located in Joliet, 15 miles from Morris. Primary commercial airports O'Hare and Midway in Chicago are located approximately 60-75 miles from the city. Other primary commercial airports within 100 miles of Morris are in Bloomington, Peoria, and Rockford.

Future Transportation Improvements

Highways

Any new roads should remain consistent with the current grid pattern found in Morris. Residential streets that are interconnected help ensure a safer road network. Cul-de-sacs and other dead-end streets should be discouraged whenever possible. Less congestion occurs with through streets and drivers are more aware of their surroundings because of the additional crossings. Drivers also have a greater awareness of which direction they are traveling.

Free parking facilities can be found at various locations around the downtown area as well as on most streets. On-street parking helps improve car access, slows traffic, and buffers walking areas from the travel lanes. Parking is generally available, though any new development should be considerate of parking demand that could be created. Parking facilities should blend in with



New Bridge Under Construction
Over The Illinois River

the surrounding downtown through the use of landscaping and benches. Mixing of land uses is encouraged.

Many towns have parking minimums for corridor commercial areas but no maximum standards. This helps create an abundance of unsightly parking lots that are often unused and results in an inefficient use of land. Much of the parking available through Morris' thoroughfare commercial corridor is located in front of the buildings. Maximums of four parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area should be considered for many commercial uses.



Free Parking Lots Are Found Throughout The Downtown Area

Shared parking for nearby businesses is encouraged. Lots of more than 50 spaces must incorporate landscaping into the design. Landscaping can include the use of berms, shrubs, or trees. Lots of more than 200 spaces must include marked walkways from the parking areas to the entrances of the establishments. Density and design bonuses can be offered for businesses that locate parking to the side or rear.

Gateways

Visitors need better recognition of the city when entering via automobile. Landscaped gateways offer a sense of identity. They should ideally be located on well-traveled roads that funnel traffic through Morris. The gateways can include additional signage that points out important locations such as the downtown or museums and the mileages to each destination. For example, a potential sign could read "Morris: County Seat of Grundy County." There are many locations where these would be found in Morris. They include:

- The Interstate 80 and Illinois 47 interchange
- Illinois 47 at Minooka Road
- Illinois 47 at Southmor Road
- U.S. 6 at Nettle School Road
- U.S. 6 at Brisbin Road

Morris currently has attractive, old-fashioned signs that lead visitors to places like the library. These should be expanded upon by making them easier to read at all hours. The gateways would be used in coordination with the current signs.

Bike Routes and Greenways

A bike route system should be developed that creates path linkages throughout Morris. As future population growth occurs, efforts should be made to include parks and greenways in new residential developments. Many uses can be linked to encourage a pedestrian-friendly city. These include:



A Sign Directing Visitors To Downtown Morris

- Commercial corridors
- Train station
- Downtown
- Parks
- Schools
- Subdivisions

The future transportation map details the linkages that are recommended for Morris. Downtown sidewalks would serve as additional linkages. Spinoff paths would connect neighborhood parks such as McKinley and Goodwill.

Alternative modes of transportation should be encouraged. Bicycle racks should be placed near the entrance of major buildings. This can ease the number of parking spots that would be required during peak weekday arrivals. Recreation is vital to the quality of life of any town. As such, this plan suggests creating paths that link to both local and state parks. Safety of youth is always the utmost concern when designing roads and parks. The map details the creation of paths that connect most local parks as well as Gebhard Woods State Park. This would create paths to Chapin Park, Gould Park, Morris High School, White Oak Elementary and Shabbona Middle Schools, the future Morris athletic fields north of White Oak, and Fields of Saratoga Park. These paths are designed in several loops throughout Morris. This creates links to key destinations and more pleasant roundtrip options for bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the city. Pedestrianways along these roads would likely be in the form of a separate bike lane that would be shared with automobile traffic. The lanes should be marked accordingly to keep bicyclists away from faster moving traffic.

The City recently received a grant to study pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout Morris.

Railroads

In December 2023, a committee was formed by several officials, including the Mayor of Morris, to launch the Peoria-Chicago Passenger Rail Project. This project proposes a passenger rail route between Peoria and Chicago Union Station, passing through LaSalle-Peru, Utica, Ottawa, Morris, and Joliet, with plans for five daily round trips and an estimated 600 daily riders. Alongside local municipalities, the project involves several key stakeholders, including the Tazewell & Peoria Railroad, Iowa Interstate Railroad, CSX Transportation, Metra, and Amtrak. The completion of this project will connect communities along the existing freight rail lines to the Chicago metropolitan area with convenient passenger rail services. Additionally, it is expected to serve as a catalyst for new economic development opportunities, diversify the local housing market, and enhance transportation infrastructure in Morris. This project has been selected for the Federal Rail Administration's Corridor Identification Program and planning and funding efforts are on-going.

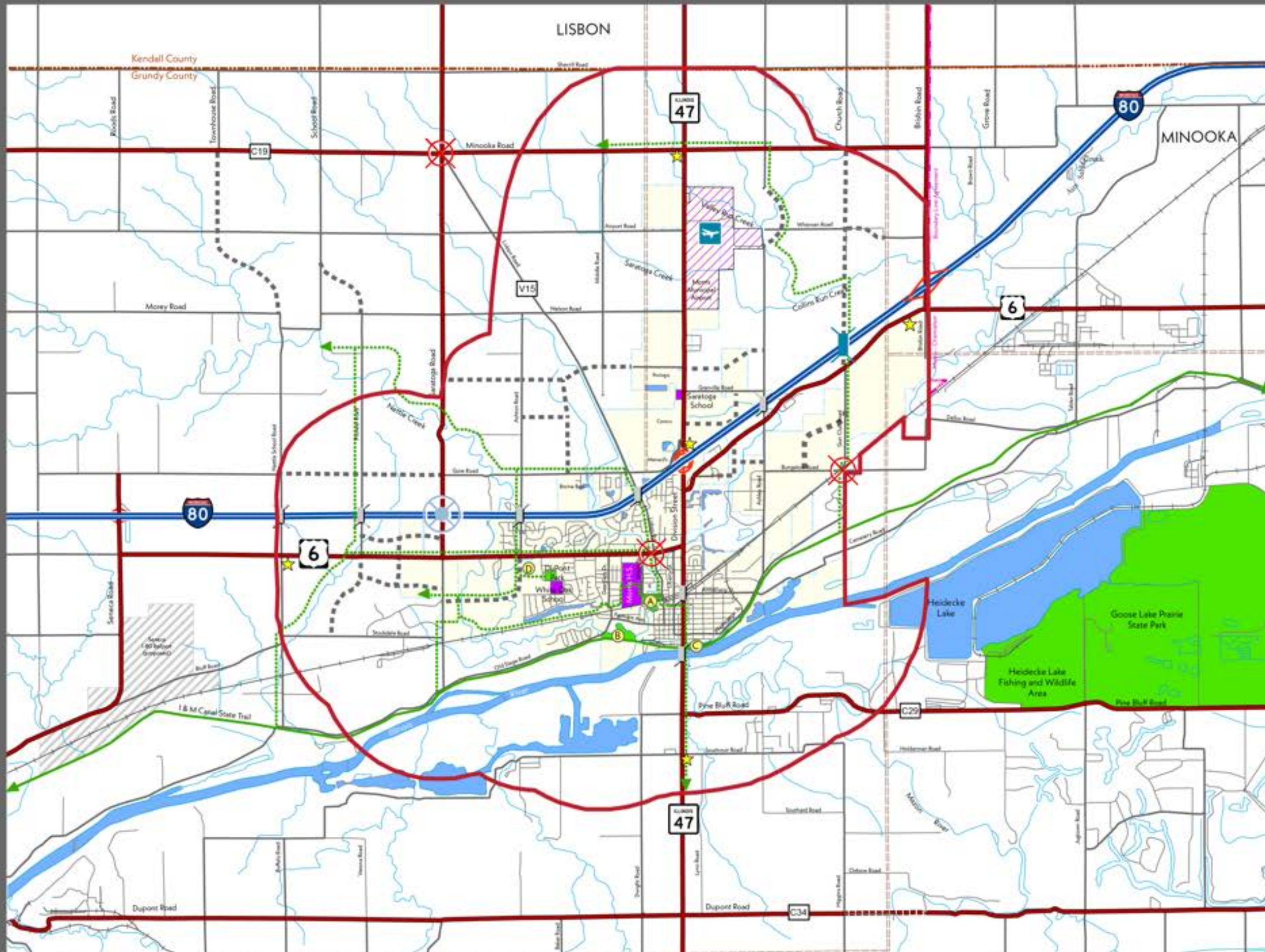


Existing Morris Railroad Station

Air Service

The City of Morris is actively planning for future improvements at the Morris Municipal Airport. The Future Airport Layout Plan highlights a number of anticipated enhancements, including:

- Widening the primary existing north-south runway 18-36. The existing runway is approximately 5,500' x 75'. This runway is proposed to be expanded to 5,500' x 100'.
- Add a new 4000' x 75' east-west runway.
- Rerouting of Ashley Road on the east side of the airport to accommodate the new runway.
- Develop several new buildings including a terminal building, corporate storage hangers, multi-unit hangers, and an FBO maintenance building.
- Expanding the parking lot.
- Installation of Precision Approach Path Indicators (PAPI).
- The airport currently has three instrument approaches and is in the process of establishing a localizer performance with vertical guidance (LPV) precision approach.



Existing Transportation System

-  Interstate
-  Arterial
-  Collector
-  Local Street
-  Bike Path
-  Railroad
-  ComEd Right-Of-Way
-  Streams/Waterways
-  Existing Bridge

Proposed Transportation Improvements

-  New Arterial
-  New Collector
-  Bike Path
-  Gateway Feature
-  New Interchange
-  Intersection Improvement
-  Bridge Overpass

-  Morris (Incorporated Area)
-  Pre-Annexation Areas
-  1.5 Mile Planning Limits
-  Existing Floodplain
-  School
-  Park
-  A Goold Park
-  B Gebhard Woods State Park
-  C W.G. Stratton State Park
-  D Proposed YMCA, Park, School



September, 2024



Base map data source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Floodplain data source: Illinois State Water Survey

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An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing a river and a bridge. The grid is composed of streets and buildings, with green spaces interspersed. The river flows through the lower right portion of the image, and a bridge spans across it. The overall scene is a dense urban environment.

Chapter 9

Community Design

"Always design a thing by considering it in its next larger context -- a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, an environment in a city plan."

Eliel Saarinen, "Time", July 2, 1956

While transportation systems and land use have a significant impact on the character of a community, landscaping, architecture, lighting, and other appearance issues also have a strong influence on community perceptions. This chapter addresses a number of key community design issues.

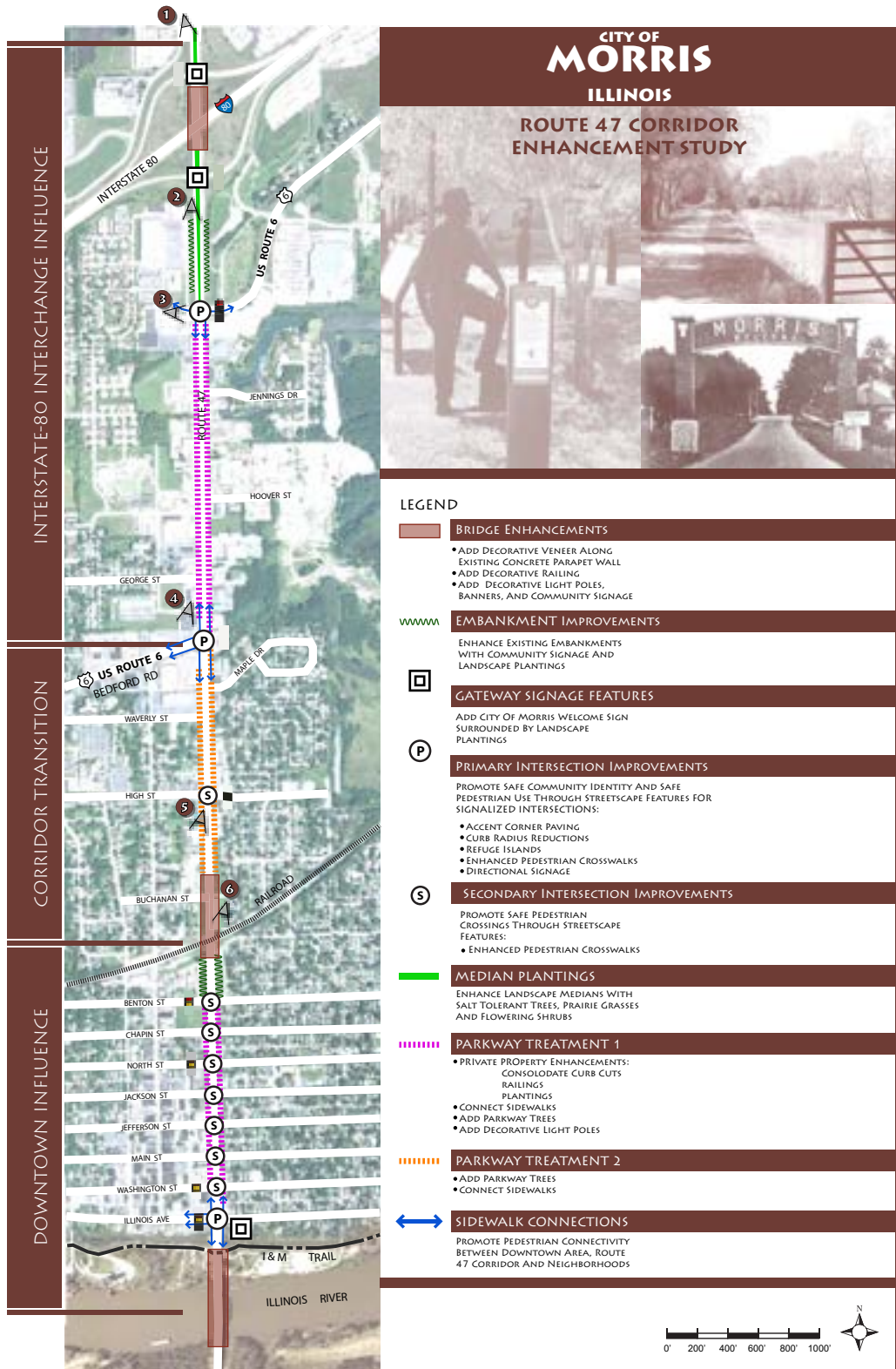
Architectural Guidelines

The Morris Site Plan review ordinance provides some basic architectural requirements for commercial and multi-family development. To date, these requirements have been used to guide newer commercial projects such as Menard's, Arby's, Taco Bell, and the new Holiday Inn Express. These standards generally seem to be serving the community well.

One concern expressed by the Plan Commission is a need to develop standards for single-family housing. Traditionally, this has not been an issue in Morris as residential development has been done by small builders in a custom or semi-custom format which lends itself to a variety of architectural styles and approaches. However, there is concern that a production builder could propose a project in Morris and develop homes that would not meet the community's quality and variety expectations. To address this concern, it is recommended that any larger new residential subdivision be developed as a Planned Unit Development. Through the approval process for a Planned Unit Development, a specific Architectural Pattern Book can be reviewed and approved by the City to outline clear architectural standards for the subdivision. Another alternative is for the City to develop residential design guidelines. Coal City is a community which has taken this approach in recent years.

Route 47 Corridor

The Route 47 corridor serves as the front door for Morris, and much of Grundy County. This corridor is largely commercial, with some of the City's major retail businesses located along this roadway. Between the Illinois River and the railroad, the City has done a good job of creating murals and signs which direct motorists to the downtown. Unfortunately, there is little that is distinctive about the corridor between Interstate 80 and the railroad bridge. This stretch of Route 47 is typical of many areas adjacent to the nation's Interstate Highway system. Enhancement of this corridor could help significantly in creating a favorable first impression of the community. The following pages provide some potential ways to enhance this corridor and make it uniquely Morris.





GATEWAY FEATURES AT I-80 INTERCHANGE



ENHANCEMENTS NORTH OF US ROUTE 6



INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS AT ROUTE 6/GREEN ACRES DRIVE AND ROUTE 47



TESKA ASSOCIATES, INC.
www.TeskaAssociates.com



4



INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS AT ROUTE 6/ BEDFORD ROAD AND ROUTE 47



5



PRIVATE PROPERTY ENHANCEMENTS TO BUILDING FACADE, PARKING AREA AND BUSINESS SIGNAGE



6



BRIDGE ENHANCEMENTS ABOVE ILLINOIS RAILROAD



TESKA ASSOCIATES, INC.
www.TeskaAssociates.com

Residential/Commercial Buffers

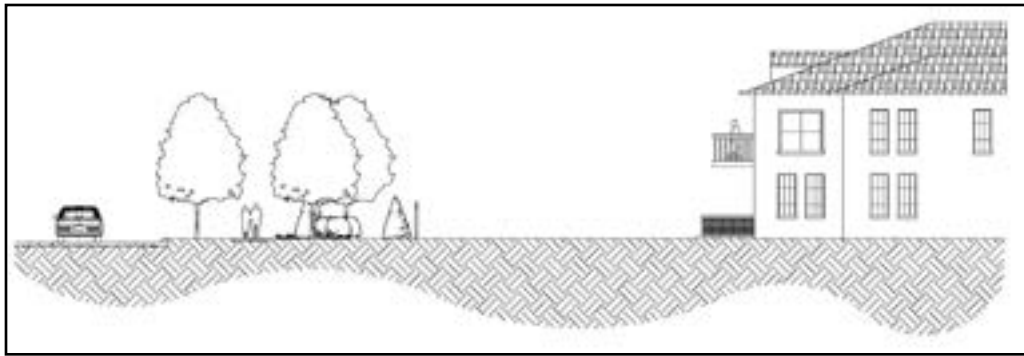
Another community design issue that has been identified by the Plan Commission is the creation of appropriate buffers for residential development. The following illustrations depict two scenarios. The first scenario is where a residential development backs to a major roadway, typically an arterial or collector street. The second scenario illustrates a situation where a residential use backs to a commercial or industrial use. Both examples assume a typical 100' section, which would be repeated for the length of the buffer. Details of appropriate buffering can best be evaluated at the site plan or subdivision review stage. However, these guidelines should be helpful in developing appropriate buffering standards. In reviewing these buffer concepts, the following should be considered:

Residential buffer along a major roadway

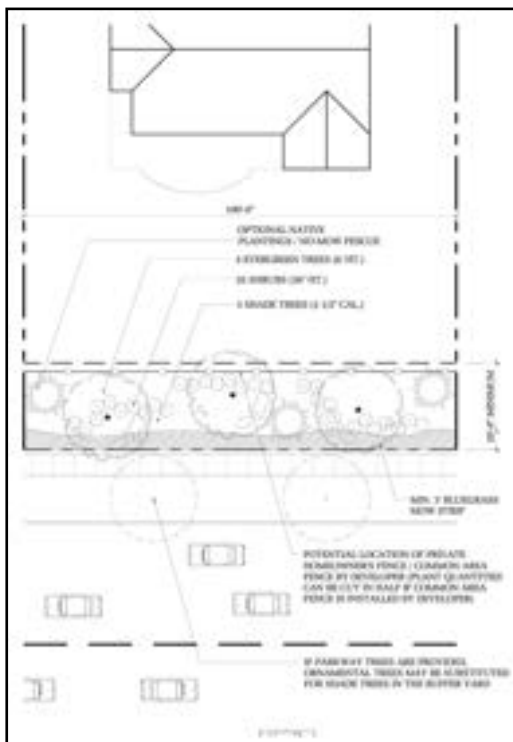
- Buffer typically would be placed in a landscape easement on a private lot. However, in certain situations the buffer could occur within an expanded roadway right-of-way.
- Where a bike path is planned to parallel the roadway, some flexibility should be considered to allow the path to vary the alignment to create a more appealing visual and riding experience.
- The illustration assumes a traditional turf area along the property line, and the use of native plantings that do not require regular mowing for the remainder of the buffer. However, if a more manicured look is desired turf grass may be used throughout.
- Where a berm is appropriate, the minimum buffer should be increased to a minimum of 30' in width. Along Interstate 80, a minimum 50' width buffer is recommended with the potential need for greater width depending on the height of the berm.

Residential/Commercial Buffer

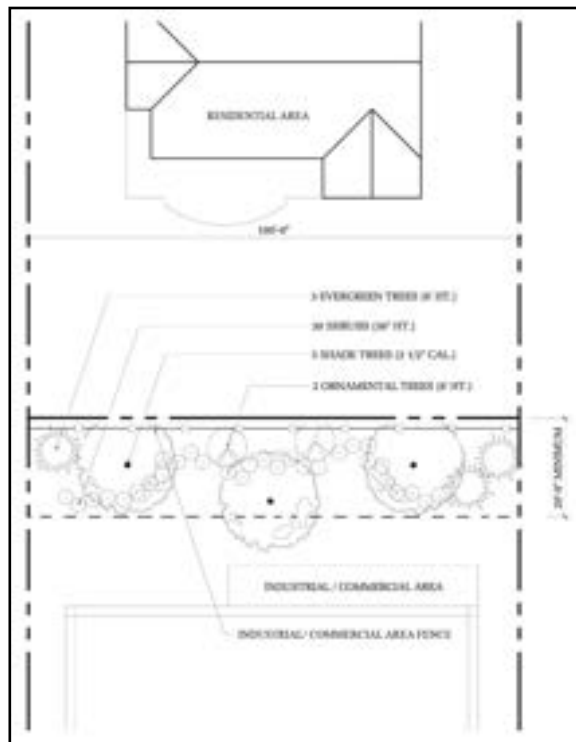
- General assumption is that the industrial/commercial use should be responsible for providing the buffer. If, however, a new residential use is proposed adjacent to an existing industrial/commercial use the buffer can be placed on the residential property.
- If a berm is appropriate, a minimum 30' buffer is recommended.
- Additional evergreen trees may be appropriate, particularly if screening loading or outside storage areas.



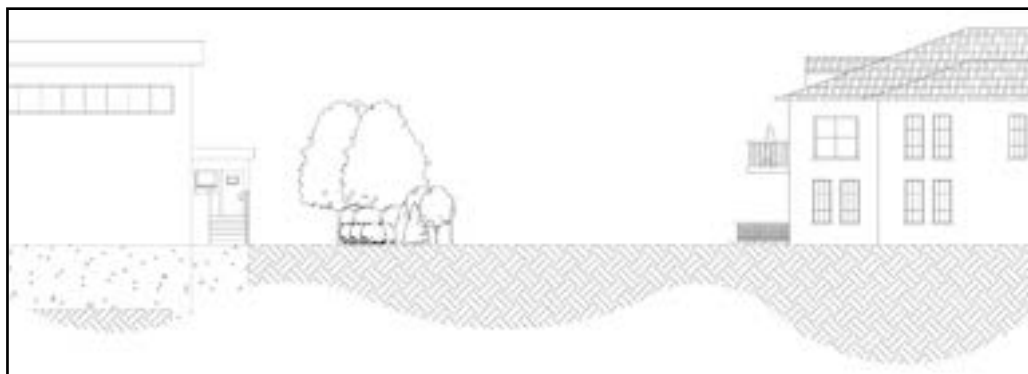
Buffer along major roadway



Buffer along major roadway



Residential / commercial buffer



Residential / commercial buffer

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An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing streets, buildings, and green spaces. A river is visible at the bottom right. The text is overlaid on this image.

Chapter 10

Implementation

"Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work."

Peter Drucker

The City of Morris's Comprehensive Plan Update is a community policy statement comprised of a variety of both graphic and narrative policies intended to provide basic guidelines for making community development decisions. The Plan is intended to be used by City officials, persons making private sector investments, and by all citizens interested in the future development of Morris and the surrounding planning area. The completion of the plan update is only one part of the community planning process. The implementation of the goals, objectives and policies of the plan update can only be attained over a period of time and only through the collective efforts of the public and private sectors. The implementation step is the most critical in the planning process, and determines the success of this plan.

It is the hope of the plan commission members that this document, when used in accordance with the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, will guide development within the City and surrounding areas for the next 20 years.

Comprehensive Plan Update

The comprehensive plan update in itself is an important implementation tool. It can influence public and private decisions by providing a readily available source of information and ideas. The plan document is basically a coordinated set of advisory proposals. The degree to which this influences decisions depends upon the soundness of the plan, its relevance to the actual situation, and its availability to developers and the public. A plan that cannot be seen and is not used can hardly be influential.

The Planning Commission will present its official actions to goals, objectives, and policies in the comprehensive plan update. If the Planning Commission and City Council neglect the comprehensive plan, others will follow suit. On the other hand, if the Planning Commission and other City agencies use the Plan to guide and substantiate decisions, private decision makers are likely to do so as well. So printing and disseminating the Plan is an important step toward its implementation. This document must be made available to the public for purchase at the City Hall and/or other specific locations. It should also be made available for free on the City's web site.

City Council

The Morris City Council is the final authority on policy formulation for the community. It adopts the budget, passes local ordinances, and develops

planning policy under direction of the Mayor. City Council member support is essential for effective functioning of the planning process. The Mayor and Council appoint the planning commission and adopt the City Comprehensive Plan. To implement the plan the Council will administer the zoning ordinance, site plan review and subdivision regulations through future development issues.

Plan Commission

The Morris Plan Commission consists of a chairman and six other members, which are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. The commission is established to advise elected officials on direct planning matters, while representing the overall views of the community. The plan commission shall have the power to prepare and recommend to the City Council a comprehensive plan for present and future development or redevelopment of the City. The plan may be made applicable to land within the corporate limits of the City and contiguous territory not more than 1.5 miles beyond the corporate limits and not included in any other municipality. The plan may be implemented by ordinances as designated by the City Council.

Additional powers of the plan commission include: to recommend changes from time to time in the official comprehensive plan; to prepare and recommend to the City Council from time to time, plans for specific improvements in pursuance of the official plan; to give aid to the City officials charged with the direction of projects for improvements suggested in the official plan; and to promote the realization of the official plan.

The plan commission's most important responsibility is to ensure that the Council is aware of the community's viewpoints on direct planning issues. The commission acts as the mediator between the public and elected officials, spending time researching, studying, and listening to public opinion and comment, and making recommendations to the Council to reflect the community's views.

Zoning

The primary content of the City of Morris Zoning Ordinance was adopted in June 1987. There have been several changes to the ordinance over the years, including major updates to residential and manufacturing districts. In accordance with Illinois State Law, the ordinance regulates structures and land uses in order to preserve, protect, and promote the public health, safety, and welfare through implementation of Morris's comprehensive plan.

The zoning ordinance will help to guide the City in regulating land use as the community grows. The City Council realizes that a good environment and a

good community do not just happen. Zoning is the primary implementation tool of the planning process as it relates to private land and development.

It is recommended that the City continues to keep the code current to reflect modern zoning practices and case law. An update is also needed to implement some of the land use recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, including the addition of several new zoning categories as noted below. Key areas of focus for the ordinance amendment should include:

- Consider a Business Transition district
- Update Planned Unit Development regulations
- Update the General Provisions section, include the definitions, to meet modern zoning regulation standards
- Expand and clarify provisions for home occupations
- Add provisions for buffering between residential and commercial use (either through the zoning ordinance, or within the Site Plan Review ordinance.

Variations

A yearly summary report of variance requests and outcomes should be compiled. Monitoring variance requests is an excellent technique that can be used to gauge the appropriateness and effectiveness of the zoning regulations.

Subdivision Regulations

The current City of Morris Subdivision Regulations Ordinance was adopted in 1976. There have been several revisions to this ordinance over the years. While zoning controls land use, subdivision regulations control and direct the division and development of land - the separation of one or more parcels of undeveloped land from a larger parcel. The ordinance spells out standards for improvements and services, such as streets, sidewalks, sewage, and water lines, among others. A subdivider is usually required to install some, if not all, of the improvements before any lots can be sold or construction can begin.

The subdivision ordinance serves to ensure orderly growth that will be physically attractive and not a heavy burden on city finances. There should be consistency between the comprehensive plan, the zoning ordinance, capital improvements plan, and the subdivision ordinance. Subdivision regulations should also be administered in keeping with the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, and capital improvements program.

Boundary Agreements

To promote orderly growth and development, Illinois Statutes allow neighboring municipalities to enter into boundary agreements. Such agreements allow adjacent communities to better plan for future infrastructure and other community facilities needs while promoting joint planning along shared boundaries. Without such an agreement, municipalities can be put in a difficult competitive situation where a property owner could petition for annexation to both communities. The City of Morris has a boundary agreement in place with the Village of Minooka (generally along Brisbin Road). The City also has an agreement with the Village of Channahon - although that agreement generally only extends south to the I & M Canal. It is recommended that the City work with neighboring communities to develop additional boundary agreements to promote appropriate growth and development in and around Morris. Such agreements should include the following (generally listed in the order of priority):

- Seneca
- Channahon (extending south from the current end-point of DuPont Road)
- Lisbon
- Mazon

Updating the Plan

The Morris Comprehensive Plan, in whole or in part, may be amended from time to time, as necessary and as planning and legislative bodies deem appropriate. Because of the timeliness of the information and goals presented in this plan, this document must be reviewed regularly to remain updated, ideally every four to five years. New goals and objectives, along with added or amended maps and information must be added.

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