

**VILLAGE OF**

**BEECHER**

*COMPREHENSIVE*

*LAND-USE PLAN*

APRIL 26, 2005

**VILLAGE OF BEECHER**  
**COMPREHENSIVE LAND-USE PLAN**

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The Village of Beecher is currently experiencing development pressure that far exceeds anything in its history. Expansion of the Chicago suburbs and adjacency to the proposed South Suburban Airport have created a demand for new residential neighborhoods and placed stress on the existing Village infrastructure. All this has led the Village to revisit its Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

This new Comprehensive Plan will be a vision of what that community wants to become, how it wants to grow. While this plan is not a legal document it is a blueprint used to shape the ordinances and policies used to govern the Village and manage its growth.

### **ELEMENTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The comprehensive plan for any community contains a variety of recommendations on a wide array of issues; however, the primary focuses will be on land use, transportation and community facilities and services.

The **land use component** of a comprehensive plan is a snap-shot in time and an image for the future, taking the existing conditions of a community and projecting a desired result. This plan will provide a framework for public and private decisions pertaining to land and community development. It will present the necessary guidelines for managing the character of development and, consequently, the direction of the Village's future. It is also a tool to insure that demand for municipal services does not out-pace the Village's ability to deliver them. A primary role of this plan is the enhancement of the quality of life for Beecher's residents, businesses and visitors. It should promote residential, commercial and employment opportunities to help establish a sound tax base and practical level of municipal services.

It is also the means to set standards for development and redevelopment, to recognize the distinctive characteristics of the physical and economic environment in and around Beecher, and encourage creative adaptation to this landscape. Much of this can be accomplished by offering development bonuses and similar options.

Other land use issues are:

- ❑ The South Suburban Airport is proposed for the property immediately adjacent to the Village to the north and west. Decisions regarding the construction of this airport are anticipated in the very near future.
- ❑ Beecher has long been a rural town: an *exurb*. Suburban growth has now reached the community and its status and nature are becoming *suburban*.
- ❑ Siting of parks and preservation of open space. Additional parks and recreation options will be necessary as the Village grows. Protection of Trim Creek and associated wetlands is important.
- ❑ The development and growth of community institutions must be planned. Residential growth will require additional schools. The current standard for a grade school is 15 to 20 acres with a park/playground as part of the development; a new high school will require 40+ acres.

The **transportation plan** is a very important element of the comprehensive plan. Livable communities require alternative means of getting around, whether they are access to secondary routes, bicycle and pedestrian paths or public transportation options. The Metra Southeast Corridor service is projected to terminate at Balmoral. This will provide commuter rail service to the Chicago Loop.

Another important transportation proposal is the *Beecher By-Pass*, removing thru traffic – primarily truck traffic – from traversing the Village by constructing a limited access route west of the community from the current terminus of I-394 to approximately Rte 1 and the Kankakee County line.

A second highway proposal with major impacts on the Beecher area is the *Illiana Expressway*. This will route interstate traffic between I-65 in Indiana and I-57 in Illinois, relieving much of the through traffic now clogging Dixie Highway.

Like the above components, the **community facilities plan** must reflect the growth in the Village. Incremental increases in the Village's services must match the increases in population. Identifying thresholds for additions to service is imperative

This plan cannot be a truly accurate forecast of Beecher's future, but it is an attempt to foresee the probable impacts from local and regional development projects. There may be some unanticipated event or development that will create changes needing to be addressed. Application, implementation and amendment of this Comprehensive Land-Use Plan is the responsibility of the Plan Commission, Village Board and other Village officials.

## **HISTORY OF BEECHER**

Beecher is located on the fertile moraine between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River drainage systems. The indigenous population, primarily Pottawattamie, was required to move west of the Mississippi River following the Blackhawk War. The first known European settler in the area was Jesse Dutcher, and the first permanent residents were John Rose, Joseph Maxwell and William Strain in the early 1850's. The Vincennes Trail, also known as Hubbard's Trace (Dixie Hwy), provided a route to the growing markets in Chicago.

In the late 1860's the Chicago, Danville & Vincennes Railroad – later the Chicago & Eastern Illinois, now the UP/CSX – began providing freight and passenger service with a depot at Washington Center. The first business in town, the Old Sage Tavern – now the Princess Café, opened in 1870 along the Vincennes Trail.

In 1870 Washington Center's name was changed to Beecher, as tribute to New England abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher at the urging of one of the Village's leading citizens, T. L. Miller. The Village was incorporated in 1884 with the first municipal building constructed shortly after.

Cattle and dairy farming were important economic staples in the Beecher area through the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The above mentioned T.L. Miller had imported Hereford beef cattle from England and the Village became a center of Hereford breeding in America. Grain elevators near the depot and shops and craftsmen to serve the area farmers were important to the local economy.

The population of Beecher had always been on a low growth path until recently. The 1960 census was the first to indicate a population exceeding 1,000, at 1,367. It wasn't until the 1980 census that 2,000 was surpassed, reaching 2,024. The 1990 census indicated minimal growth to 2032, with only one resident added by the 2000 census. A special census recently completed, raised Beecher's population to 2908 residents.

### **CURRENT CONDITIONS IN THE VILLAGE OF BEECHER**

The Village of Beecher is a rural market community that is now experiencing development pressure for two reasons: the Chicago suburbs have expanded out to the community; and the proposed South Suburban Airport will be adjacent to the Village's western border. The Village had a flat population over the period from 1980 to 2000 with Census data showing 2024 residents in 1980 and 2033 in 2000. Recent additions at the Hunters Chase and Prairie Crossings subdivisions have increased the population by almost 50% and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission projections for the Village indicate a population of over 11,000 by 2020.

### **BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Beecher and the surrounding area have a variety of housing styles. There is a small section of multi-family rental units at the south end of town and estate/hobby farm development in the surrounding rural area. The original section around the historic downtown displays Queen Anne and American Craftsman architecture along with some more modest Cape Cods and ranches. New development reflects the mid to upper range residential markets: large homes with attached 2 and 3 car garages.

The reconstruction of Dixie Hwy has improved the rhythm and look of the commercial uses along this street. Previously, driveways for these businesses often used the whole frontage; now they are confined and defined, providing for safer ingress/egress and better appearance.

The historic downtown, around Reed and Gould at Penfield has experienced deterioration over the past few years. Reinvestment in this area with parking consolidation, façade restoration and structural rehabilitation of the historic buildings with boutique shops and restaurants could make this an attractive destination.

## **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Beecher sits on top of the moraine between the Great Lakes drainage basin and the Mississippi River basin. The earth around the Village is prime agricultural soil and has produced accordingly for over 150 years. However, it should be noted that some of the soils have peat and other urban development limitations. These areas should be retained for agriculture or other open space uses.

Two Trim Creek branches flow through the Village with east branch still mostly in its natural state. The branch that flows through the original Village has been channelized parallel to the railroad. Stream bank restoration and other natural enhancements are needed to improve the quality of this waterway.

The east branch of Trim Creek flows through agricultural land. The area along this branch is ripe for development and, with this in mind, it is important to protect the waterway and its banks. Any development proposals in its vicinity must include protection of the creek. Wherever possible, it is important to create buffer strips to filter surface run-off and for the enhancement of upland wetlands and other water resources.

## **ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

As noted above, Beecher primary role until recent suburban expansion has been as a rural market town. There have been some industrial users at the edges of town for many years and grain elevators adjacent to the railroad and commercial uses in the traditional downtown. However, it should be noted that much of the community's retail dollar leaves town to regional commercial centers near Kankakee and the south suburbs.

The South Suburban Airport is an opportunity for greater retail and industrial/ warehouse development, particularly for transportation related users. Land adjacent to the airport and in flight paths are recommended for uses that will not be adversely impacted by the airport noise.

## **SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

Census data from 2000 indicates a population of 2033 with a median age of 42.2 years and a median household income (1999) at \$51,250. Both these figures are above the national norms, 35.3 years and \$41,994 respectively. Census data indicates 86.7% of Beecher residents over 25 are high school graduates and 16.3% have a Bachelor's degree or higher. The 2000 Census also indicates 18.2% of the Village's residents were over 65, compared to 12.4% nationally.

Recent growth in the Village has not only increased the total population, 2970 according to a 2004 special census, but should also result in a lowering of the median age and a corresponding decrease in the percentage of over 65 residents.

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTER**

Beecher has a well deserved reputation as a comfortable residential community serving the surrounding agricultural area. Most residents had historic ties to the Village and the surrounding area. This heritage based culture is diminishing as suburban Chicago begins to encroach. The South Suburban Airport will further alter the perception as farms become residences, runways and warehouses.

With the above in mind it is imperative that Beecher maintain its character by segregating the more noxious land uses and their impacts from residential areas. It is also important to guarantee residential developments provide amenities appropriate to their character.

### **EMERGING ISSUES**

The greatest future impact on the Village and surrounding area will be the South Suburban Airport. This will create land demands for housing and airport related commercial and industrial uses that are unprecedented. One of the primary roles of this Plan is to channel the future development to areas where impacts from the airport are not deleterious to the land use. As much as possible, residential areas should be segregated from the noise and congestion created by the airport. Airport support activities and industrial uses where airport impacts are inconsequential belong in the airport zone – north and west of the Village.

Growth has its consequences. The services being provided by the Village and other taxing bodies, schools, fire district etc., are being strained. The school district is nearing capacity at all its schools and will need new buildings to accommodate anticipated growth. New recreation programs and parks will be needed to serve the expanding population. Roads will have to improve to meet traffic demands. Other municipal services and public utilities also need to grow with the community.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Successful planning for the future of the Village is predicated upon the identification of appropriate goals and their related objectives, which provide direction and focus. The adoption of these goals and pursuit of the objectives will not guarantee success; however, these do present the policy framework upon which land use decisions, now and in the future, must be supported. Because no other municipality is within the planning area it is of particular importance that these goals and objectives also be applicable to the land adjacent to the Village.

#### **□ LAND USE:**

- A. Land development will reflect the needs of the community and compatibility with the environmental conditions and neighboring uses.
- B. Foster a development climate to attract superior residential, commercial and industrial land uses.
- C. Protect existing property values through building standards and development design that will ensure quality growth and life styles.

- D. Manage growth and development to provide for efficient and harmonious land-use patterns. This should apply to all land uses: residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and agricultural.
- E. The South Suburban Airport may become a reality. The Village must establish land development patterns that reflect the environment the airport will create.

**Residential:**

Beecher seeks to provide for comfortable, safe, secure and attractive housing for all residents of the Village and surrounding area.

1. *Adopt development guidelines and incentives to take advantage of the environmental amenities in the area.*
2. *Adopt policies and programs to promote the maintenance and /or improvement of all properties within the Village.*
3. *Avoid residential development and other related uses in areas that will be negatively affected by noise, traffic and other undesirable impacts from the proposed airport.*

**Commercial/Office:**

A. Provide for and encourage commercial and office development along and adjacent to Dixie Highway to generate tax revenues, employment opportunities and convenient shopping for residents.

1. *Recognize areas for potential office/commercial development to provide goods, services and employment opportunities within Village.*
2. *Encourage commercial uses that address the community's needs for goods and services.*

B. Recognize other commercial development and redevelopment opportunities.

1. *Promote rehabilitation and redevelopment in the traditional downtown, along the railroad, and identify opportunities to attract new business.*
2. *Support commercial and office development at interchanges along the Beecher Bi-Pass.*

**Industrial:**

Facilitate clean and safe industrial developments within the Village. This will increase the tax base and provide employment opportunities.

1. *Enforce effective and efficient industrial standards pertaining to particulate matter, noise and other adverse impacts of industrial development.*
2. *Encourage improved property maintenance, landscaping and appearance standards for industrial developments.*
3. *Work with the Third Airport South Suburban Airport planners to determine appropriate areas for industrial development and the particular industries to be targeted.*

□ **TRANSPORTATION:**

A. Plan for transportation facilities and capacities to meet demand and conform to the Village's needs.

1. *Strengthen the Village's relationship with the Illinois Department of Transportation to insure improvements on state highways do not create unintended consequences within the Village.*
  2. *Identify funding sources for facility improvements.*
- B. Provide for safe and efficient transportation alternatives within the Village and to neighboring areas.
1. *Develop a bicycle/pedestrian system for future growth.*
  2. *Provide for a road network that does not require the use of the major arterials to move within the Village.*
- C. Work with IDOT and the South Suburban Airport to minimize airport related traffic through the Village, including a western bypass around the Village.
- D. Support the development of the Southeast Commuter Rail service with its terminal station at Balmoral.
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**  
Encourage office, commercial and industrial development to improve the tax base and provide employment opportunities for residents.
1. *Investigate Historic Preservation, the Mainstreet Program and other possible funding sources to facilitate the enhancement of the traditional downtown.*
  2. *Establish a business recruitment plan to promote the Village and diversify the tax base.*
  3. *Target industries and ancillary services related to airports.*
  4. *Develop the old downtown as a destination point for boutique commercial uses and social interaction.*
  5. *Recruit rail users for industrial areas adjacent to the UP/CSX and its spurs.*
- **PUBLIC & PRIVATE UTILITIES:**  
Ensure capacities for sewer, water and private utilities are sufficient to meet the needs of the community and establish benchmarks for public and private utilities for increased capacity to meet future needs.
- **COMMUNITY CHARACTER:**
- A. Endeavor to achieve a modern, convenient, safe, wholesome and aesthetically satisfying environment to make Beecher an attractive place to live, work and enjoy leisure time.
  - B. Foster a positive civic identity and community pride built on the qualities of a comfortable, safe, family oriented community.
- **PUBLIC FACILITIES:**
- A. Promote a quality living and working environment by ensuring facilities and services that are responsive to the needs of the residents and businesses in Beecher, and effectively and efficiently serve the needs of those residents and businesses.
  - B. Investigate the feasibility and participation in regional water and sewer cooperation.

□ **OPEN SPACE AND PARKS AND RECREATION:**

- A. Beecher encourages environmentally sensitive development that preserves the amenities of the natural environment, such as Trim Creek and its associated wetlands, and wherever possible enhancing these areas.
1. *Development proposals shall meet or exceed the open space requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.*
  2. *Design criteria for parks and other open space areas will meet the highest standards for environmental protection and enhancement.*
- B. The Village has established a benchmark of 12.5 acres of park land for every 1000 residents. Additional amenities are important for community leisure activities.
1. *Centralized park (Fireman's Park) for passive recreation – this will connect to and be part of the old downtown as a destination point.*
  2. *The Village shall establish a 40 acre outdoor sports complex for youth and adult sports activities. This complex should be located along an arterial and buffered from residential areas.*
  3. *System of neighborhood parks and tot lots from ¼ to 3 acres.*

**RESIDENTIAL:**

Beecher seeks to provide for comfortable, safe, secure and attractive housing for all residents of the Village and surrounding area.

1. *Adopt development guidelines and incentives to take advantage of the environmental amenities in the area.*

The Beecher Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance have requirements for the provision of landscaping, public art and other amenities. These play an important role in establishing the benchmarks for development quality. While the primary focus of these expenditures should be within the contributing development some may also be placed in areas of special importance to the Village of Beecher

Of particular interest is the land adjacent to Trim Creek. A green corridor should be a component of all development along this waterway.

2. *Adopt policies and programs to promote the maintenance and /or improvement of all properties within the Village.*

The housing stock in the Village is well maintained; however, some of the older homes are reaching an age where maintenance costs begin to increase. This may particularly become problematic for seniors who own some of these homes. Active community outreach to provide assistance for these residents will help guarantee a continued high quality residential environment in Beecher.

3. *Avoid residential development and other related uses in areas that will be negatively affected by noise, traffic and other undesirable impacts from the proposed airport.*

The South Suburban Airport may be build adjacent to Beecher to the north and west. Air traffic patterns and associated noise impacts are anticipated along to the Eagle Lake Road and Church Road corridors, west of Dixie Hwy. These areas should be targeted for airport related commercial and industrial development.

### **Determining Residential Densities**

There are two approaches to regulating land use, particularly residential land use, within a village. The traditional approach is to establish lot sizes – such as 10,000 or 12,000 square feet – and setback requirements. Developers subdivide the property and build to the standards. The approach generally produces individual neighborhoods with homes scaled to the lot. It can be very desirable and attractive, but this can also lead to generic, look-alike subdivision with little variety or identity.

The second approach is to manage development based on density. This method has greater flexibility and potentially more creativity. It is particularly appropriate for areas with extensive wetlands, slopes and/or other environmental features. It views density, not lot size, as the means of determining design.

For instance, if a parcel had 50 “buildable” acres and would be permitted 100 dwelling units under traditional zoning according to lot size regulations, it will also be allowed 100 dwelling units (possibly more if bonuses are given) under the density approach. However, lot size is not the factor that determines subdivision design. Topography and other natural factors will dictate the development layout. It may allow homes to be clustered around a natural feature, on smaller lots, to take advantage of vistas. This approach can also lead to efficient development designs, served by water and sewer in areas that previously would have been well and septic.

For the purpose of determining the number of “buildable” acres and, consequently, the number of dwelling units to be allowed the following formula will apply.

**BUILDABLE ACRES** = the total acreage of the property minus the following:

1. Wetlands, currently under the regulation of the Army Corps of Engineers, and other land that is generally inundated by water;
2. All floodway and floodway fringe within the 100 year floodplain, as shown on official FEMA maps;
3. Land within the right-of-way or easement of an existing roadway;
4. Land within an existing permanent easement prohibiting development; and
5. Land with slopes exceeding 25% (22.5°) or soils and subsurface geology subject to slumping shall also be subtracted from total acreage when determining a properties buildable acreage; however, homes may still be constructed on such slopes to take advantage of unique vistas provided

appropriate engineering procedures are followed to maintain stability of the structure and minimize erosion.

The village may consider a bonus in the total number of dwelling units provided the development includes such items as:

1. Open space areas accessible to the public;
2. Trails or paths where appropriate;
3. Preserved stands of mature trees;
4. Open space areas linked to similar public or private open space on adjacent properties; and/or
5. Sewer, water and other public utilities are included in the infrastructure. This is particularly appropriate to areas proposed for estate development.

**COMMERCIAL/OFFICE:**

A. Provide for and encourage commercial and office development along and adjacent to Dixie Highway to generate tax revenues, employment opportunities and convenient shopping for residents.

1. *Recognize areas for potential office/commercial development to provide goods, services and employment opportunities within Village.*

New residential developments should include commercial sections adjacent to Dixie Hwy and other arterials.

2. *Encourage commercial uses that address the community's needs for goods and services.*

Currently, much of the Village's retail dollar is spent outside the Village. Attracting a variety of stores to keep a larger portion of retail spending in the community is important. Programs promoting retail and other commercial uses along Dixie Highway can help meet this challenge.

B. Recognize other commercial development and redevelopment opportunities.

1. *Promote rehabilitation and redevelopment in the traditional downtown, along the railroad, and identify opportunities to attract new business.*

A façade restoration and improvement program in the traditional retail section of the Village can begin to build a new sense of place and destination point for the surrounding area. New structures in this area should be sensitive to traditional architecture.

2. *Support commercial and office development at interchanges along the Beecher By-Pass.*

The Beecher By-Pass will separate the Village from the South Suburban Airport. It will also become a high traffic corridor that can feed commercial and office development. Interchanges and access points to this route should be zoned for retail and office uses to take advantage of this opportunity to improve the Village's tax base.

#### **INDUSTRIAL:**

Facilitate clean and safe industrial developments within the Village. This will increase the tax base and provide employment opportunities.

1. *Enforce effective and efficient industrial standards pertaining to particulate matter, noise and other adverse impacts of industrial development.*

Review the Village's requirements and compare them with current standards. Any areas that do not meet the accepted standards should be updated.

2. *Encourage improved property maintenance, landscaping and appearance standards for industrial developments.*

Property maintenance and landscaping are just as important for industrial properties as residential and commercial. An award program recognizing attractive and well maintained industrial properties can encourage this activity.

3. *Work with the South Suburban Airport planners to determine appropriate areas for industrial development and the particular industries to be targeted.*

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

The Village of Beecher began as a market town along the primary north-south route in eastern Illinois/western Indiana, the Vincennes Trail now Dixie Highway. Today, a transportation project, the South Suburban Airport, will be an important component future growth and stability of the Village.

Providing for easy access and circulation for both community residents and thru traffic is an important component of a transportation plan. The **Roadway Classification System** establishes functional levels for roads to define the role of each component of the system.

Roads have two basic functions: mobility and land access. For roadway designers these uses are incompatible. Smooth traffic flow and higher speeds provide for mobility. For land access, low speeds and inconsistent flows are desirable. As a means of accomplishing both functions a hierarchical roadway network has been developed. Roads are designed and defined by their function to provide for the movement of traffic through the network. Each element of the hierarchy acts as a feeder to the next higher component in the network. The classification system is:

**Freeways** – Freeways provide for high mobility with limited access at grade separated, widely spaced interchanges. Freeways are typically part of the state and federal highway systems.

**Arterials** – Major arterials are intended to provide a high degree of mobility and function as the primary travel routes in and between urbanized areas. In more densely developed areas they have one-mile spacing and are designed to carry high traffic volumes at speeds of 35 to 45 mph. In less dense areas the spacing is greater and speeds occasionally higher. Signalized intersections should be no closer than ½ mile to allow for the smooth flow of traffic. Left and right turn lanes should be provided at intersections.

Minor arterials interconnect and supplement the major arterial system by accommodating shorter trips to work, shopping and recreational activities at the community level. Operating speeds and capacity may be less than major arterials and some property access may be allowed.

**Collectors** – Collectors are medium capacity, medium volume streets that feed the arterial network. Operating speeds are lower and they should have limited continuity to discourage through traffic but still provide local movement for vehicles between residential, commercial and employment centers. The collector system can provide for direct land access but to a more limited degree than the local streets.

**Local Streets** – The local street system should provide direct land access. Speeds are low and through traffic deterred. Local street systems should be designed so that all neighborhoods are accessible by at least two routes for emergency and service vehicles.

Residential streets should be linked to traffic carrying streets (collectors and arterials) in a way that provides good access to other parts of the community while discouraging through traffic.

Currently in the Beecher area I-394, terminating less than two miles north of town, is the only Freeway level roadway. Future plans associated with the South Suburban Airport development include extending this freeway to the airport and the Beecher By-Pass running north-south at approximately Ashland Ave, the east edge of the airport property, to reconnect with Dixie Hwy near the Kankakee County Line.

The Beecher By-Pass is very important to the Village because it will remove a large number of interstate trucks from Dixie Hwy. The present level of truck traffic, 2540 ADT, is disruptive and creates traffic problems along the primary corridor in town.

Dixie Hwy is the only major arterial in Beecher and the surrounding planning area. The current ADT is 7900 and expected to grow. The new 3 lane cross section will serve the anticipated traffic needs provided the Beecher By-Pass is constructed.

Minor arterials include Racine Ave, Church Road, Eagle Lake Road and Indiana Ave in the Village and roads associated with the mile grid, Corning Road and others, in the planning area. While the current traffic levels on many of these do not suggest arterial status, projected growth indicates these all be recognized as arterial routes for the future. These roads should have 80 to 100 foot rights-of-way and be constructed to arterial standards whenever there is adjacent development.

The collector streets that currently serve the Village include Penfield and Miller in the original section and Fox Hound Trail in Hunters Chase. Other collector streets will be designated as additional subdivisions come on line.

### **METRA SOUTHEAST**

Metra, the commuter rail service provider for the Chicago area, has proposed a new commuter rail service to the southeast suburbs with its terminal station near Balmoral Park, approximately four miles north of the Village. This is an excellent opportunity to provide alternative transportation services to the residents, especially those working in the Chicago Loop, and is supported by the Village.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

### **MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS**

The Village is currently completing an analysis of its land, buildings and departmental needs for the future because it is quickly outgrowing the existing Village Hall and the adjacent Police Department. A new Village Hall designed to meet current demands and to accommodate future expansion, should be constructed.

Similarly, a new Police Department facility is also needed. The recommended staffing level for police departments is 2 ½ to 3 sworn officers per 1000 population, plus civilian support staff. A new police station should be designed to accommodate the necessary staff to properly serve the Village's anticipated growth.

The Public Works Department garage is currently located adjacent to the sewage treatment plant. Expansion of the treatment plant may require the removal of this facility. If this happens the any new facility should be located in an industrial area or adjacent to other similar facilities, such as the township garage.

### **SEWER AND WATER**

The Village is responsible for the provision of water and the disposal of wastewater for some of its residents. While potable water has been provided since the early twentieth century, sanitary sewer services were first provided to the residents of the original section of the village in the early 1960's.

Currently approved developments will bring the Beecher Sanitary Treatment Plant to its limits. Any new development will create a requirement for plant expansion. Similarly, the water system is approaching its capacity. A new well and another reservoir are

immediate requirements to address demand from new residential development. Again, new developments must be required to expand this infrastructure.

### **STORMWATER**

All new development within the Village and in surrounding areas will have to meet the requirements of the Village drainage ordinance. Creative uses and designs for detention ponds are encouraged.

### **PRIVATE UTILITIES**

New developments within the Village shall be provided with private utilities to meet the anticipated needs of the users. Adequate capacities must be included at construction. As utility technologies improve all sections of Beecher should be brought up to the new standards.

All new construction in the Village – residential, commercial and industrial – must include provisions to adapt to developing telecommunication technologies, including telephone and cable easements. Existing development in the Village should also be updated as needed.

### **PARKS**

The parks and recreation programs in the Village should continue to expand to meet growth. Currently the Village has 3 public parks:

- ❑ Fireman's Park – 9 acres
- ❑ Hunters Chase Park – 3 acres
- ❑ Lions Park – 5 ½ acres

Because the primary source of the Village's growth is new housing – attracting young families with children – parks and recreational activities are very important. Organized recreation leagues, such as baseball or soccer, can have two significant benefits:

1. They will provide recreation outlets for both children and adults, and
2. They can foster a sense of identity within the Village.

While neighborhood parks are being identified and built along with the residential subdivisions the location for a larger, village park, with ball fields, playgrounds and picnic area should be identified and the land, approximately forty acres, acquired. Development of the park can be completed in increments as the village continues to grow.

### **FIRE/EMS**

The Beecher Fire Protection District provides fire protection and emergency medical services to Village residents and Washington Township.

### **LIBRARY**

The Beecher Library District serves Village residents and for a membership fee residents outside the Village. The library is a member of a sharing library system that allows it to extend and expand its lending opportunities.

### **SCHOOLS**

The Village is served by Unit District 200. There are three schools:

- ❑ Beecher Grade School K-5
- ❑ Beecher Junior High School 6-8
- ❑ Beecher High School 9-12

The district also serves all of Washington Township and Will Township west to Crawford Ave.

Future growth within the district will require the construction of schools within the Village. The optimum amount of land for a grade school and associated recreation areas is approximately twenty acres. Wherever possible these schools should be located adjacent to neighborhood parks as a means of improving recreational opportunities.

Zion Lutheran School has approximately 120 students from kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade along with a pre-school program.

Prairie State College provides post high school education for residents and Governors State University is convenient for Bachelors level and graduate courses.

## **GROWTH PROJECTIONS**

Population growth in the Village of Beecher and surrounding areas is a given. The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) projects the 2020 population of the Village to be over 12,000 with the construction of the South Suburban Airport. NIPC's 2030 projection is a population of over 20,000. The Land-Use Map included in this Plan has a built-out population projection of 20,000 to 24,000 by the year 2030. This is a realistic projection particularly if the South Suburban Airport is constructed and expands to two runways over the period.

It is imperative that this growth take place within the Village boundaries. This will guarantee development standards are met and the impacts of development on the existing residents are properly accounted for. The future land-use map in this *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* indicates single-family development, at approximately 2.7 units per acre, as the primary residential land use in the currently undeveloped areas within the Village's planning jurisdiction.

This projected rate of growth can severely strain the Village's infrastructure capacities. Water and sanitary sewer system improvements, including wells and treatment plant expansions, are an acknowledged part of the developers' infrastructure requirements. In fact, if these components are not expanded development cannot and will not happen. However, other components of the infrastructure do not have the same immediate integration into the system. These are more service oriented sectors: schools, library, parks and other municipal services. They are also components that require new land acquisition and buildings, with planning and financial requirements that extend the time-lines for their construction and implementation. All this dictates a need to carefully plot the Village's growth and the expansion of the service components to meet the needs of the new and existing residents.

With this in mind, all new developments must have rate of sales targets, or velocity rates, that are within identified growth projections. Penalties for exceeding velocity rates must be attached to all annexation and other developer agreements. In addition, all new developments will be expected to pay their fair share of new infrastructure facilities and service requirements. Annexation agreements must adequately address these concerns. It is imperative that all growth take place within the Village boundaries. This will guarantee development standards are met and the impacts of development on the existing residents are properly accounted for. The future land-use map in this *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* indicates single-family development as the primary residential land use in the currently undeveloped areas within the Village's planning jurisdiction. Build-out of these indicated areas at a 2.7 units per acre ratio will result in a population of approximately 22,000. Increasing or lowering the densities will have a corresponding impact on the future population. Village staff and the Village Engineer shall conduct a needs assessment for each land use application prior to consideration by the Plan Commission.