



BEECHER 2040

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE ★

Comprehensive Plan

Village of Beecher, Illinois
Adopted October 15, 2019

Prepared for the Village of Beecher and
The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning



CMAP

Prepared by Teska Associates Inc., in association with AECOM
and Baxter & Woodman Consulting Engineers



BEECHER 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan is a guide for community leaders and decision makers. Comprehensive plans are used as guides for coordinated, long-range growth and development, preparing for the impacts of changes both inside and near a community. A comprehensive plan lays out the vision for a community through goals and policies, indicating partners and resources to help achieve goals. The Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan highlights community assets, identifies current challenges, and presents the Village's plans for action. The Plan recognizes both local and regional planning challenges and opportunities, and determines priorities regarding housing, economic development, land use, transportation, sustainability, recreation etc.

The Village will use the Plan in reviewing development proposals, planning for infrastructure and other capital improvements, and seeking grants and other funding opportunities. Other organizations, such as the school district or fire district, can use the Plan to understand potential growth and how best to accommodate it. Community organizations can use the Plan to assess the pulse of the community and identify projects they can champion to enhance the Village. Residents and businesses can use the Plan to understand ways they can be involved in building an even stronger community.

Vision Statement:

"In 2040, Beecher is an even better place to live with a revitalized and walkable Downtown, excellent recreational opportunities for all ages, and a thriving economy with an expanding base of local, regional and international businesses. We have provided for an aging population while attracting young families who enjoy our excellent schools and small-town character. The Village and other local governments work closely together to be wise stewards of local taxpayer funds and we have created a strong, diverse and resilient tax base. We have protected and enhanced the environment through sustainable development practices, expanded use of alternative energy, and restoration of native habitats. We are connected to the world via high-speed broadband, rail, and proximity to Chicago – yet set apart in a rural setting that retains our agricultural roots."

Chapters 1-2: Introduction and Creating the Vision

The Village of Beecher is located in eastern Will County, about 40 miles south of Downtown Chicago and around three miles away from the Illinois-Indiana border. The comprehensive planning process began in May of 2018 and spanned a little over a year.

The consultant team began with research and data analysis and learned more about the issues and opportunities facing Beecher through engagement with the Beecher community at a variety of events, in community venues, in English and Spanish—all of which informed the Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Plan lays out a set of goals and objectives for increasing resiliency, retaining and attracting residents, enhancing parks + recreational opportunities, ensuring convenient + safe mobility, revitalizing the Downtown, expanding job opportunities + the tax base, and increasing sustainability over the next 10 - 20 years.

To keep the community informed and engaged in the planning process, the website www.Beecher2040.org was created. Important dates, event + survey summaries, and draft documents were added to the website throughout the process, in addition to e-mail blasts and social media posts by the Village of Beecher and community partners.

Chapter 3: A Resilient Community

Vision: Beecher will be prepared to face foreseeable challenges, including population growth, industrial expansion, and regional transportation projects.

Goals: Encourage infill development, expand industrial opportunities, revitalize Downtown, and continue intergovernmental cooperation.

This chapter includes the Preferred Future Land Use Map that will be used to guide future development in the community and outlines land use goals. The Village designates areas where industrial expansion is preferred, emphasizes the need to focus on infill development, and the importance of preserving open space, especially along Trim Creek.

Chapter 4: A Great Place to Live

Vision: Beecher will build on its reputation as a great place to live and raise a family to attract new residents.

Goals: Attract and retain new residents, including the millennial generation, inspire a sense of community among all, and provide excellent community facilities.



BEECHER 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter highlights many of Beecher's assets and recommends ways to use those assets to attract new residents, including welcoming diversity; maintaining a quality and affordable housing stock for a variety of households and at a variety of price points; marketing the benefits of living in Beecher; and continuing to support and enhance local schools.

Chapter 5: Enhanced Parks + Recreation Opportunities

Vision: Beecher will have excellent park access and recreational opportunities for all age groups.

Goals: Improve access to recreation for all ages and expand access to parks and open space amenities.

This chapter recognizes areas that are currently underserved by parkland and recognizes that many recreational opportunities are geared for youth. The Future Park and Trail Plan lays the groundwork for creating a trail throughout Beecher that would connect to the Plum Creek Greenway Trail and indicates where parks should be added to improve access in the Village.

Chapter 6: Convenient + Safe Mobility

Vision: Future transportation improvements will address all travel modes, including public transportation, rail, trucks, cars, golf carts, bikes and on foot.

Goals: Develop a pedestrian and bicycle network, collaborate with regional agencies in planning regional projects, improve Dixie Highway, improve the collector roadway system throughout the Village, and ensure access to adequate public transit and alternative transportation options.

This chapter recommends updates to local roadways to enhance safety for all users, including closing sidewalk gaps and instituting shared roadways. Close monitoring and participation in planning for regional transportation projects is encouraged to improve accessibility and ensure resident concerns are addressed.

Chapter 7: A Revitalized Downtown

Vision: Historic Downtown Beecher will be celebrated as a local and regional destination.

Goals: Continue to hold events in Downtown, enhance Penfield Street, promote property renovation, expand housing opportunity in Downtown.

This chapter identifies strategic improvements, such as wayfinding signage, historic markers, and opportunity sites for redevelopment in the Downtown that will continue to establish the historic Downtown as a local and regional destination.

Chapter 8: Expanded Job Opportunities + Tax Base

Vision: Beecher will become known as a great place to start and grow a business.

Goals: Develop new industrial opportunities, expand retail and restaurants, develop incentive tools to partner with developers, preserve historic structures, jump-start residential development.

This chapter highlights trends in industrial and commercial development in Will County and notes opportunities for expansion in Beecher and the planning area. The Village commissioned the study of a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) in 2018, which in addition to the Lincoln-394 Corridor Enterprise Zone, creates an incentive for development and local expansion.

Chapter 9: A Sustainable Community

Vision: Future development will be designed to work with the natural environment and public infrastructure will be regularly maintained and enhanced for efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Goals: Maintain Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) to wisely operate municipal infrastructure, including monitoring the quality of Trim Creek, mitigating pollutants within Village limits, minimizing the impacts of flooding events, designating floodplains as open space, and establishing Village-wide goals for waste diversion.

This chapter outlines ways in which the Village, residents, and business owners can incorporate renewable energy, stormwater best management practices, and divert waste from landfills. New development is encouraged to be low-impact and prioritize conservation of farmland and natural features and topography.

Chapter 10: Implementation

The Implementation Guide provides action steps, suggested partners, time frames, and resources for each objective in the Comprehensive Plan.



BEECHER 2040 PLAN INTEGRAL EL INFORME EJECUTIVO

El Plan Integral Beecher 2040 ("el Plan") es un guía para los líderes de la comunidad y los responsables en la toma de decisiones. Los planes integrales se usan como guía para el desarrollo y expansión coordinado de largo plazo, preparándose para los impactos de cambios tanto adentro como cerca de la comunidad. Un plan integral crea una visión para la comunidad a través de las metas y las políticas, e identifica a los socios y a los recursos necesarios para realizar las metas. El Plan Integral Beecher 2040 destaca las ventajas comunitarias, identifica a los retos actuales, y presenta el plan de acción de Beecher. El Plan reconoce a los retos y las oportunidades locales y regionales de la planificación, y determina prioridades sobre la vivienda, el desarrollo económico, el uso de terreno, la transportación, la sustentabilidad, la recreación etc.

El Ayuntamiento usará el Plan cuando revise las propuestas de desarrollo, cuando planee para hacer mejoras en la infraestructura y otras reparaciones capitales, y en la busca de financiamiento y subsidios. Otras organizaciones, como el distrito escolar o el distrito de bomberos, pueden usar el Plan para entender y tener en cuenta el aumento potencial de población. Las organizaciones comunitarias pueden usar el Plan para evaluar el sentido de la comunidad y para abogar los proyectos que realzarán a la comunidad. Los residentes y los negocios pueden usar el Plan para entender cómo pueden involucrarse para construir una comunidad aún más fuerte.

Declaración de Visión:

"En 2040, Beecher es un lugar aún mejor para vivir con un centro revitalizado y fácil de pasear a pie, con oportunidades excelentes para la recreación para toda edad, y una prospera economía con un base imponible en expansión con negocios locales, regionales, e internacionales. Hemos proveído para las personas de mayor edad al igual que atraemos a familias jóvenes que disfrutan de nuestras escuelas excelentes y del carácter de un pueblo pequeño. El Ayuntamiento y otros gobiernos locales trabajan juntos para ser administradores prudentes de los fondos de contribuyentes y hemos creado un fuerte base imponible, diverso y resistente. Hemos protegido y mejorado el medio ambiente a través de las prácticas del desarrollo sustentable, el uso ampliado de energías alternativas, y la restauración de hábitats nativos. Estamos conectado al mundo a través de la banda ancha de alta velocidad, el rail, y proximidad a Chicago-mientras apartado en un entorno rural que conserva a nuestras raíces agrícolas."

Capítulos 1-2: Introducción y Generando la Visión

Beecher está ubicado en el éste del Condado de Will, aproximadamente 40 millas al sur del Centro de Chicago y 3 millas desde la línea estatal. El proceso de planificación del plan integral empezó en mayo de 2018 y duró un poco más de un año.

El equipo de consultores empezó con una investigación y análisis de datos. Conoció más sobre las necesidades y las oportunidades enfrentando a la comunidad de Beecher al conversar con la gente en una variedad de eventos, en espacios de la comunidad, tanto en inglés como en español. Todo esto informó al Plan Integral de Beecher 2040. El Plan establece las metas y los objetivos para: aumentar la resiliencia, retener y atraer a los residentes, mejorar a los parques y las oportunidades de recreación, garantizar la movilidad conveniente y seguro, revitalizar el centro, ampliar a las oportunidades de empleos y el base imponible, y aumentar la sustentabilidad general durante los próximos 10 hasta 20 años.

Para mantener informado e involucrado a la comunidad durante el proceso de planificación, el sitio web www.Beecher2040.org fue creado. El sitio contuvo todas las fechas importantes, los resúmenes de eventos y de la encuesta comunitaria, y los borradores del plan y de otros documentos durante el proceso. También hubo correos electrónicos y publicaciones en las redes

sociales de la administración de Beecher y sus socios sobre el Plan.

Capítulo 3: Una Comunidad Resiliente

Visión: Beecher estará preparado para enfrentarse con los retos previstos, incluyendo el aumento de población, la expansión de usos industriales, y los proyectos regionales de transportación.

Metas: Fomentar al desarrollo de relleno, expandir las oportunidades industriales, revitalizar el centro, y continuar la cooperación intergubernamental.

Este capítulo incluye el Mapa del Uso de Terreno del Futuro Preferido que se usará para guiar el futuro desarrollo de la comunidad; resume las metas de uso de terreno. El Ayuntamiento designa las áreas preferidas para la expansión de usos industriales, enfatiza la necesidad de enfocar en el desarrollo de relleno, y la importancia de preservar el espacio abierto, especialmente por Trim Creek.

Capítulo 4: Un Gran Lugar para Vivir

Visión: Beecher construirá sobre la reputación que tiene actualmente de un gran lugar para vivir y criar a los niños para atraer a nuevos residentes.



BEECHER 2040 PLAN INTEGRAL

EL INFORME EJECUTIVO

Metas: Atraer y retener a nuevos residentes, incluyendo la generación milenaria, inspirar un sentido de comunidad entre todos, y proveer las excelentes instalaciones comunitarias.

Este capítulo destaca a las muchas ventajas de Beecher. Recomienda las maneras en que puede usarlas para atraer a nuevos residentes, que incluye dando la bienvenida a las personas y familias diversas; el mantenimiento de una reserva de viviendas asequibles y de calidad para una variedad de familias y en una variedad de precios; recorrer la palabra sobre los beneficios de vivir en Beecher; y seguir apoyando y mejorando las escuelas locales.

Capítulo 5: Parques y Oportunidades Recreativos Realizados

Visión: Beecher tendrá excelente acceso a los parques y oportunidades recreativas para toda edad.

Metas: Mejorar el acceso a la recreación para toda edad y ampliar el acceso a los parques y comodidades de espacios abiertos.

Este capítulo reconoce a las áreas con menor acceso a zonas verdes y reconoce que muchas de las oportunidades recreativas son orientadas a los jóvenes. El Plan de Parques y Senderos Futuros crea un cianotipo para establecer un sendero por todo Beecher que conectará al Sendero Plum Creek e indica los lugares dentro de la comunidad donde debe establecer nuevos parques para mejorar el acceso.

Capítulo 6: La Movilidad Conveniente y Segura

Visión: Las futuras mejoras de la transportación tomarán en cuenta todos los modos de transporte, incluyendo el tránsito público, el rail, los camiones, los autos, los cochecitos de golf, las bicicletas, y a pie.

Metas: Desarrollar una red para ciclistas y peatones, colaborar con las agencias regionales en los proyectos regionales de planificación, mejorar el sistema de calles de conexión por toda la comunidad, y asegurar que hay acceso adecuado al tránsito público y las alternativas de transportación.

Este capítulo recomienda la actualización de las calles locales para hacerlas más seguras, incluyendo llenar los huecos de la acera y designar las calzadas compartidos. En cuanto a los proyectos regionales de transportación, se alienta que Beecher supervise y participe en los procesos de planificación para asegurar que hay mejoras en la accesibilidad y que las preocupaciones de los residentes sean abordadas.

Capítulo 7: Un Centro Revitalizado

Visión: El centro histórico de Beecher será celebrado como destinación local y regional.

Metas: Seguir la organización de eventos en el centro, hacer mejoras por Penfield Street, promover la renovación de propietarios, ampliar las opciones de vivienda en el centro.

Este capítulo identifica las mejoras que continuarán el establecimiento del centro histórico como destinación local y regional, como las señales de orientación, las señales y placas que describen la historia, y las oportunidades para el redesarrollo en el centro.

Capítulo 8: La Ampliación de Oportunidades de Empleo y el Base Imponible

Visión: Beecher se convertirá en una comunidad conocida por las ventajas de iniciar y expandir un negocio.

Metas: Desarrollar nuevas oportunidades industriales, expandir las tiendas y los restaurantes, desarrollar herramientas para incentivar a las asociaciones con desarrolladores, preservar las estructuras históricas, animar el desarrollo de viviendas.

Este capítulo destaca a las tendencias del desarrollo industrial y comercial dentro del Condado de Will y nota las oportunidades para la expansión dentro de Beecher y en el área de planificación. El Ayuntamiento encargó a un estudio de la designación de un Distrito de la Captura del Incremento de Impuestos (TIF) en 2018, que junto con la Zona Empresarial (Enterprise Zone) del Corredor de Lincoln/Ruta 394 crean incentivos para el desarrollo y la expansión local.

Capítulo 9: Una Comunidad Sostenible

Visión: El desarrollo futuro será diseñado para complementar al medio ambiente y la infraestructura se mantendrá y mejorará regularmente para lograr eficiencia y rentabilidad.

Metas: Mantener Programas de Reparaciones Capitales (CIP) para manejar la infraestructura municipal prudentemente, incluyendo la observación de la calidad de Trim Creek, atenuar los impactos de las aguas pluviales, designar las llanuras de inundación como espacios abiertos, y establecer metas para la desviación de residuos por todo Beecher.

Este capítulo esboza las maneras en que el ayuntamiento, los residentes, y los dueños de negocios pueden incorporar a las energías renovables, usar las mejores prácticas de gestión, y aumentar la desviación de residuos de los vertederos. Se alienta el nuevo desarrollo para que tenga un impacto mínimo y dar prioridad a la conservación de las tierras agrícolas y las características naturales y la topografía.

Capítulo 10: Implementación

La Guía de Implementación describe los pasos de acción, los socios sugeridos, los marcos de tiempo, y los recursos para cada objetivo del Plan Integral.

THANK YOU

Thanks to the many Beecher citizens, businesses, and organizations that participated in the Beecher 2040 process through workshops, events, interviews, and online engagement.

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Scott Wehling, Chair of Public Buildings & Properties, Parks & Recreation Committee

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**Photos not sourced throughout the Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan are from the consultant team.*

CONTENTS

1 Introduction, p. 1

*Introduction
Beecher Today
Past Planning Efforts*

2 Creating the Vision, p. 7

*Comprehensive Planning Process
Community Engagement
Targeted Outreach
Outreach Tools
Vision
Key Planning Issues*

3 A Resilient Community, p. 13

*Introduction
Growth in Beecher
Land Use and Development Goals
Accommodating Growth
Future Land Uses
Intergovernmental Cooperation*

4 A Great Place to Live, p. 27

*Introduction
Housing Market Trends
Changing Age Composition
Retain + Attract New Residents
Housing Options
Senior Housing Demand
Community Gathering
Community Facilities*

5 Enhanced Parks + Recreation Opportunities , p. 39

*Introduction
Park Operations
Parkland Access
Recreation Facilities + Programming
Trails*

6 Convenient + Safe Mobility , p. 49

*Introduction
Bicycle Trails Plan
Pedestrian Access Plan
Regional Transportation
Village Road Network
Truck + Train Nuisance Mitigation*

7 A Revitalized Downtown, p. 63

*Introduction
Historic Building + Uses
Downtown Market Trends
Downtown Land Use Plan
Make Downtown A Regional Destination
Signage Opportunities
Mobility*

8 Expanded Job Opportunities + Tax Base, p. 77

*Introduction
Employment Trends
Occupied Space in Beecher
Industrial Demand in Will County
Industrial Clustering
Retail Demand In Beecher
Development Incentives
Residential Development Improvements*

9 A Sustainable Community, p. 87

*Introduction
Waste Management + Diversion
Alternative/Renewable Energy
Water Quality + Pollution
Capital Improvements Plan Goals*

10 Implementation, p. 99

*Introduction
Living Document
Relationship to Municipal Development Regulations
Partnerships
Resources
Priorities
Implementation Guide*

A Appendix, p. 115

*Abbreviations
Marketing Sheets
Airport & Illiana Alternative Future Land Use
Existing Conditions Report*



Introduction

1

INTRODUCTION

Beecher has a long, rich history—one of community, family, and of prosperity. This Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan prepares Beecher for the next 20 years of community, family and prosperity. Referred to as “the Beecher 2040 Plan” throughout this document, it is the community’s long-range plan, founded on the ideas and goals of the whole community. The Plan outlines strategies to preserve the past, polish the present and prepare for the future. Development of the Plan began with an in-depth analysis of existing conditions (see Existing Conditions Report (ECR) in Appendix). The ECR covered a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, demographics, housing, land use, commercial and industrial demand, transportation and environmental issues. This analysis informed and framed goal-setting for the Beecher 2040 Plan by providing a common set of facts, challenges and opportunities facing the future of the Village.

Purpose of this Plan

The Beecher 2040 Plan highlights community assets, identifies current challenges, and presents the Village’s plans for action. Beecher 2040 updates the previous comprehensive plan, adopted in 1986, amended in 2001. The Plan recognizes both local and regional planning challenges and opportunities, and determines priorities regarding housing, economic development, land use, transportation, sustainability, recreation etc. The Beecher 2040 Plan is a

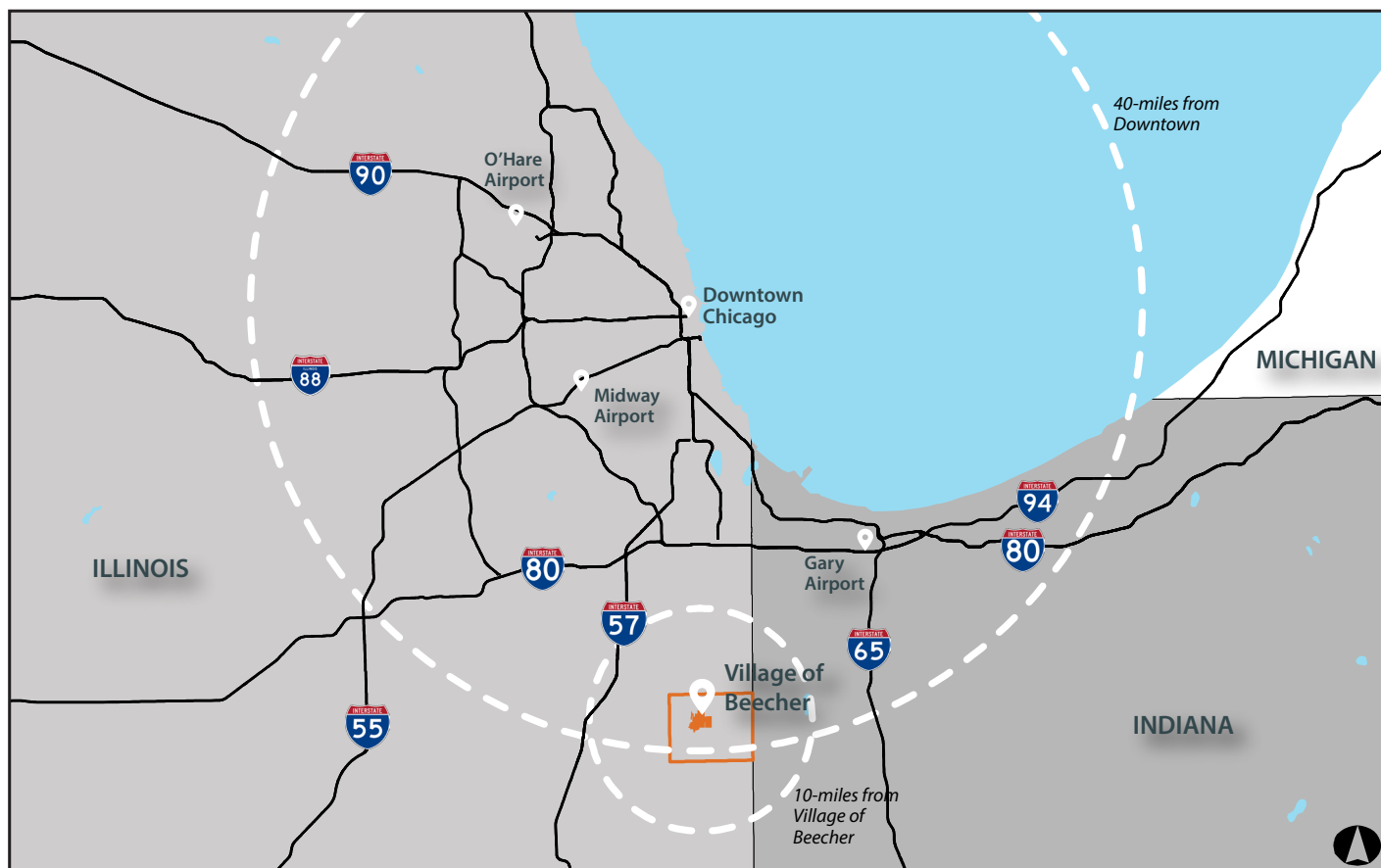
guide for community leaders and decision makers over the next 20 years. The Village will use the Beecher 2040 Plan in reviewing development proposals, planning for infrastructure and other capital improvements, and seeking grants and other funding opportunities. Other organizations, such as the school district or fire district, can use the Beecher 2040 Plan to understand potential growth and how best to accommodate it. Community organizations can use the Beecher 2040 Plan to assess the pulse of the community and identify projects they can champion to enhance the Village. Residents and businesses can use the Beecher 2040 Plan to understand ways they can be involved in building an even stronger community.

Regional Context

Beecher is located in eastern Will County, about 40 miles south of Downtown Chicago and around three miles away from the Illinois-Indiana border (Figure 1.1). Beecher began as a cattle ranching community led by T.L. Miller who spearheaded the construction of the railway to Chicago and Danville. Illinois Route 1, better known as Dixie Highway, bisects the Village and connects to several well-used truck routes. To the north, Route 1 leads to I-394 and connects with I-80/I-294. A few minutes’ drive west to Peotone leads to Route 50 and I-57.

The Village was established in 1870 and officially incorporated in 1884. Beecher remains a small community and does not

Figure 1.1: Regional Location Map



border any other municipalities. Today the Village is home to approximately 4,442 people, hosts 11,000 vehicles daily along IL Route 1/Dixie Highway, and employs around 1,000 people. The Village still has a rural feel despite the traffic that passes through the Village on Route 1/Dixie Highway. The community is home to numerous businesses, restaurants, and community facilities. The Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve and Plum Creek Greenway Trail lie just north of Beecher.

BEECHER TODAY

Beecher is a great example of an American “small town”—where people know and support each other, the local ice cream shop is a youth favorite, and a bit of farmland is always around the corner.

The population of Beecher has more than tripled since 1960, rising significantly between 2000 and 2010. In 2000, the population was 2,033 which more than doubled by 2010 to 4,359 (Figure 1.2). Current estimates indicate that growth has slowed since 2010. Esri forecasts show that the population grew to 4,442 in 2017 and is projected to grow to 4,568 by 2022 (Figure 1.2).

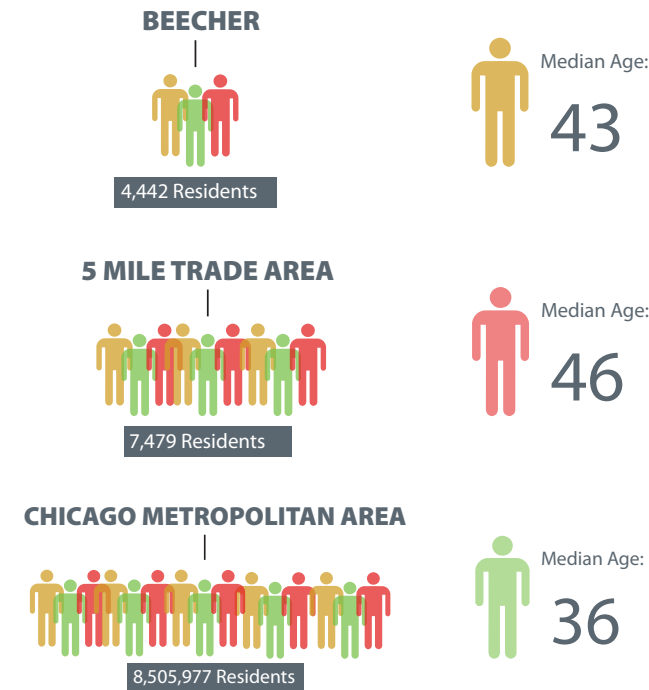
The community is aging and becoming more diverse. The median age rose from 37.6 in 2010 to 43 in 2017 (Figure 1.3). In 2000, 98% of the population was white but that figure has since dropped to 91% white in 2017 (Figure 1.4). Beecher’s population was 3% Black, 0.5% Asian, and 7.7% Hispanic in 2017.

Figure 1.2: Historical Population, Village of Beecher, 1960-2022

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017	2022
Total Population	1,367	1,770	1,509	2,032	2,033	4,359	4,442	4,568

Source: US Census; ESRI Forecasts, Beecher Comprehensive Plan 1989, 1996 Amendment, 2001 Amendment

Figure 1.3: Demographics, 2017



Source: US Census 2000 – Summary File 1 – Esri Forecasts

Figure 1.4: Racial and Ethnic Breakdown, 2000-2017

	2000	2010	2017
White Alone	98%	93.6%	91.9%
Black Alone	0.0%	3.1%	2.9%
Asian Alone	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%
Other	1.4%	2.8%	4.6%
Hispanic of Any Race	1.8%	6.3%	7.7%

Source: US Census 2000 – Summary File 1; Esri Forecasts

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

LOCAL

1989 | Beecher Comprehensive Plan

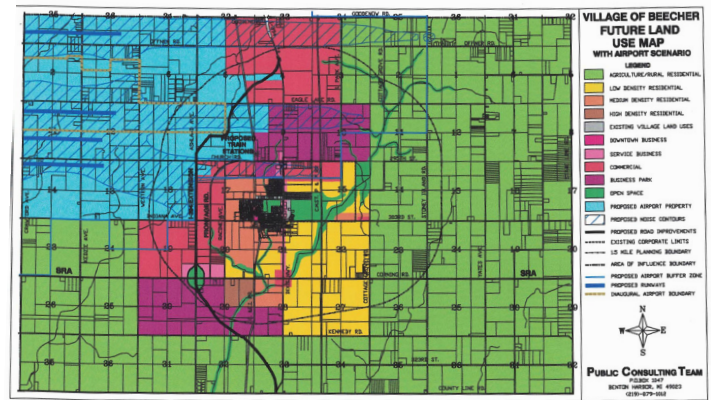
The Village of Beecher adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 1989, compiled by Van Treeck & Associates. This plan recognized Beecher as a small community highly influenced by the Chicago region and that the expansion of Bult Field to create a third regional airport would significantly influence the future of future growth of Beecher. Growth goals included encouraging secure compact urban development that would increase the tax base, provide a range of housing types for Village residents, and encourage coordination and cooperation between all levels of government, among others. Planning policies such as maintaining a predominantly single-family character, encouraging steady growth of businesses and commercial activities, and including the establishment of new industries to diversify the tax base were included. Regarding annexation, the policy was to “annex all contiguous lands which provide for the expansion of the Village in a planned orderly manner”. The top priority was to annex areas that would be best economically served by the Village.

Recommendations from the 1989 Plan that have been implemented include developing an educational and public relations program to facilitate long-range planning, pursuing coordination of planning with other governmental agencies, adopting a strategy for annexation, enforcing land use and zoning regulations, adopting a Capital Improvement Program, initiating an action plan for an Historical District, and conducting a feasibility study to determine the best and most economical way to expand sewage treatment facilities.

1996 | Amendment

Prepared by the Public Consulting Team, this plan focused on planning for two scenarios: one with and one without the third regional airport. The plan projected a 2020 population of between 6,000 (without airport) and 12,000 (with airport). These projections provided have been overly optimistic. The economic development component of the plan focused on provision of land for a new industrial park at the northeast corner of Route 1 and Church Street, however, a residential subdivision (Hunters Chase) eventually developed in that location. An industrial park including Dutch American Foods was developed at the northwest corner of Route 1 and Church Street. Recommendations from the plan that were implemented include moving Village Hall and the Library into new buildings, creating new gateway signage, and making needed improvements to the water and sewer systems (currently underway).

Figure 1.5: Future Land Use Map, 2001 Amendment



2001 | Amendment

Prepared by the Public Consulting Team, the 2001 plan amendment called special attention to a new rail spur, the discussion about creating a western bypass for Route 1, and a lack of commercial and industrial inquiries for land in the southern portion of the Village as had been outlined in previous land use maps. However, recognizing that there had been inquiries for residential development in the northern part of Beecher, where commercial and industrial uses were planned, this plan update indicated a change in zoning to permit residential development to the north. Lastly, this plan update also outlined future land use plan scenarios—one with and one without the construction of the South Suburban Airport (SSA). Several properties were rezoned and developed based on the 2001 amendment.

2003 | Beecher Downtown Improvement Plan

Prepared in 2003 by Fanning/Howey Associates and the Public Consulting Team, this plan provided streetscape and placemaking suggestions for Downtown Beecher. The depot museum, gazebo and gardens resulted from these efforts. Other suggestions, such as curb bump outs and a large town plaza on the west side of the railroad tracks (between Penfield and Hodges Streets) have not been implemented.

2014 | Beecher Water and Sewer Master Plan

The Beecher Water and Sewer Master Plan provided a framework for infrastructure improvements and capacity expansion to accommodate current residents and prepare for the possibility of population increases. See Section 5 of the Existing Conditions Report (in Appendix) for more information regarding this plan.

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

REGIONAL

2011 | Airport Environs Element (Will County)

The Airport Environs Element, a part of the Will County Land Resource Management Plan, indicates the desired outcomes for development of the South Suburban Airport (SSA) and the surrounding uses catalyzed by the airport, including housing, commercial, and industrial development. The SSA is still in the planning and land acquisition stages, but it is expected that the airport will require and catalyze uses such as:

- office employment and hospitality services
- airport-related industrial/distribution
- workforce higher density residential development
- gateway corridors
- agricultural

The plan indicates development nodes for Office & Hospitality or Industrial & Distribution:

- one to the northwest of the current northernmost extent of Beecher
- one to the south along Dixie Highway

Any housing constructed between the airport and Beecher limits is suggested to be high quality multifamily housing that can support the work force for the SSA earning moderate incomes. Housing is intended to be located in areas where noise mitigation has already taken place.

2015 | IL Route 394/IL Route 1 Corridor Plan

The purpose of the IL Route 394/IL Route 1 Corridor Plan was to anticipate future transportation, land use and economic development patterns and develop a cohesive vision for the corridor. The vision was developed in a collaborative effort by the 11 communities and two counties (Cook and Will Counties) along the corridor. This vision includes re-branding the Route 1 Corridor as the Southland Parkway.

Beecher is significantly impacted by several recommendations in the Corridor Plan, including:

- the western Route 1 Bypass, complete with a multi-modal trail
- intersection changes at Eagle Lake and Dixie Highway
- pedestrian improvements along Dixie Highway, including a new sidewalk and crossing improvements at Miller Street
- and a proposed route for Vicennes Trail, which would connect Beecher to Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve.

This plan's recommendations were predicated, in part, on the completion of projects like the South Suburban Airport (SSA), Illiana Expressway, the CSX Intermodal Facility, and SouthEast Service (SES) from Metra. As a result, the plan recommends improvements along Indiana Avenue, Ashland Avenue, Eagle Lake or Crete-Monee Road but would be strongly impacted by the planning and construction of regional projects and their ultimate connections.

2017 | Will Connects 2040 (Will County)

Will Connects 2040 serves as an update to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. It provides a comprehensive look at the County's transportation system over the next 25 years, and provides an action plan to proactively address the issues and needs of the system. The Beecher Bypass is a priority project for the County, but the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has jurisdictional control. Another priority of the plan is preparation for the proposed Illiana Expressway that would run along the south of Beecher, connecting with Route 1.

2017 | Will County Community Friendly Freight Mobility Plan

This plan focuses on the current state of freight networks and lays out the goals that the County has regarding safety, mobility, and economic competitiveness. This mobility plan sets goals, objectives, and performance measures going forward and aims to prepare for the future by ensuring that improvements are prioritized to maintain and improve service in the midst of projected growth. Secondly, the plan includes a workforce action plan for the Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL) industry, aiming to support and strengthen the workforce pipeline of the Will County TDL industry.

The Village of Beecher was included in the steering committee for this plan. While the plan does not address any immediate impacts to the Village, planning for several nearby developments such as the SSA and the CSX Intermodal Facility will have direct implications. The CSX Intermodal Facility in Crete will use only a portion of the land available at the site for TDL industry. This would create a new freight cluster, creating jobs in the area and potentially impacting truck traffic along Route 1.

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

2018 | ON TO 2050 plan

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has developed a master plan for the Chicago Metropolitan Region titled ON TO 2050. This latest regional plan, a update to the GO TO 2040 Plan, recommends a variety of actions and strategies governed by three important planning principles to help communities within the metropolitan region achieve sustainable prosperity. The principles that guided the planning process include:

Inclusive Growth: We must provide economic opportunity for all residents and communities.

Resilience: We must prepare for future changes, both known and unknown.

Prioritized Investment: We must carefully target resources to maximize benefit.

These three principles inform the actions suggested in the plan that address large scale trends that the region is experiencing and will continue to experience in the future.

Given changes in federal and state funding, ON TO 2050 recognizes the need to make investments that are strategic and efficient by incorporating multiple goals in project implementation. Beecher is part of a coordinated growth area within the CMAP region. A coordinated growth area includes a significant amount of agricultural land within or adjacent to the municipal boundary. The focus of planning efforts is on retaining much of the agricultural and natural areas to protect these assets. CMAP recommends that local plans provide more targeted direction for new development in locations with or adjacent to existing infrastructure to accommodate population and business growth. The plan recognizes that infill development within developed areas provides several benefits and CMAP intends to work with communities to create a Targeted Reinvestment Area (TRA) process.

Several regional transportation projects have the potential to impact Beecher and create the need to identify key agricultural and natural areas to protect as conservation areas and long-term planning. These projects include the South Suburban Airport (expansion of the existing Bult Field), a new CSX intermodal Facility in Crete, IL, the Illiana Expressway, and a new Metra SouthEast Service. The planning and development of these projects is ongoing but none are

ON

 CMAP



2050

currently advancing to such a degree that they are expected to come to fruition within the lifetime of the Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The ON TO 2050 Plan identifies fiscally constrained and unconstrained transportation projects which are considered regionally significant projects (RSPs). The South Suburban Airport and the CSX Intermodal Facility are not listed as RSPs or as unconstrained projects. Given the lack of funding and the need for further study, both the Illiana Expressway and Metra SouthEast Service are listed as RSPs but are fiscally unconstrained projects and are not anticipated to be developed within the life of the Beecher 2040 Plan.



Creating the Vision

2

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

The Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan was developed with extensive community input. Driven by and for the community, the plan is the result of input from residents, businesses, and elected and appointed officials. Efforts were focused on “taking the plan to the people” by going to various events and meetings outside of Village Hall. The planning process for Beecher 2040 extended over a year, and involved five key phases as illustrated below.

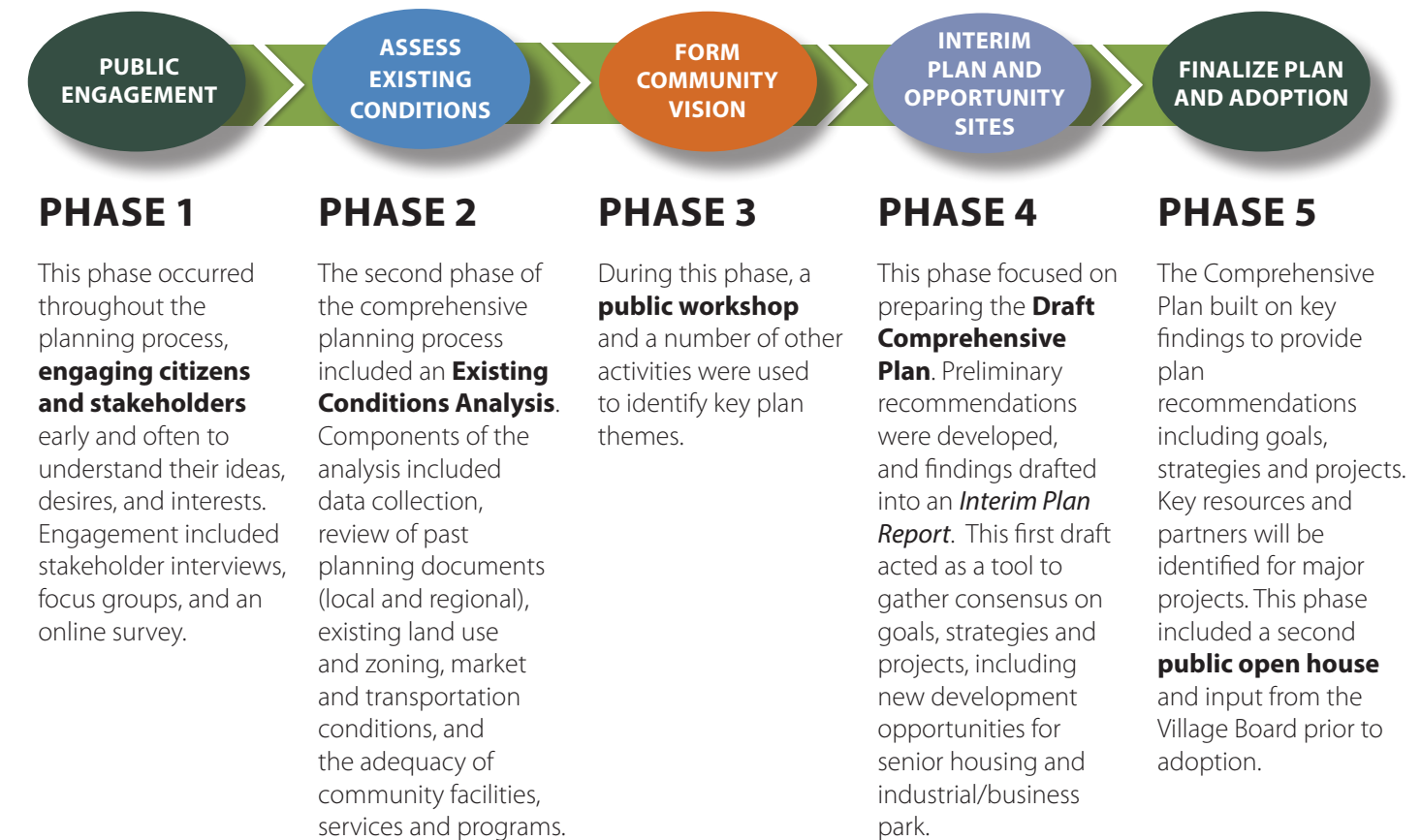
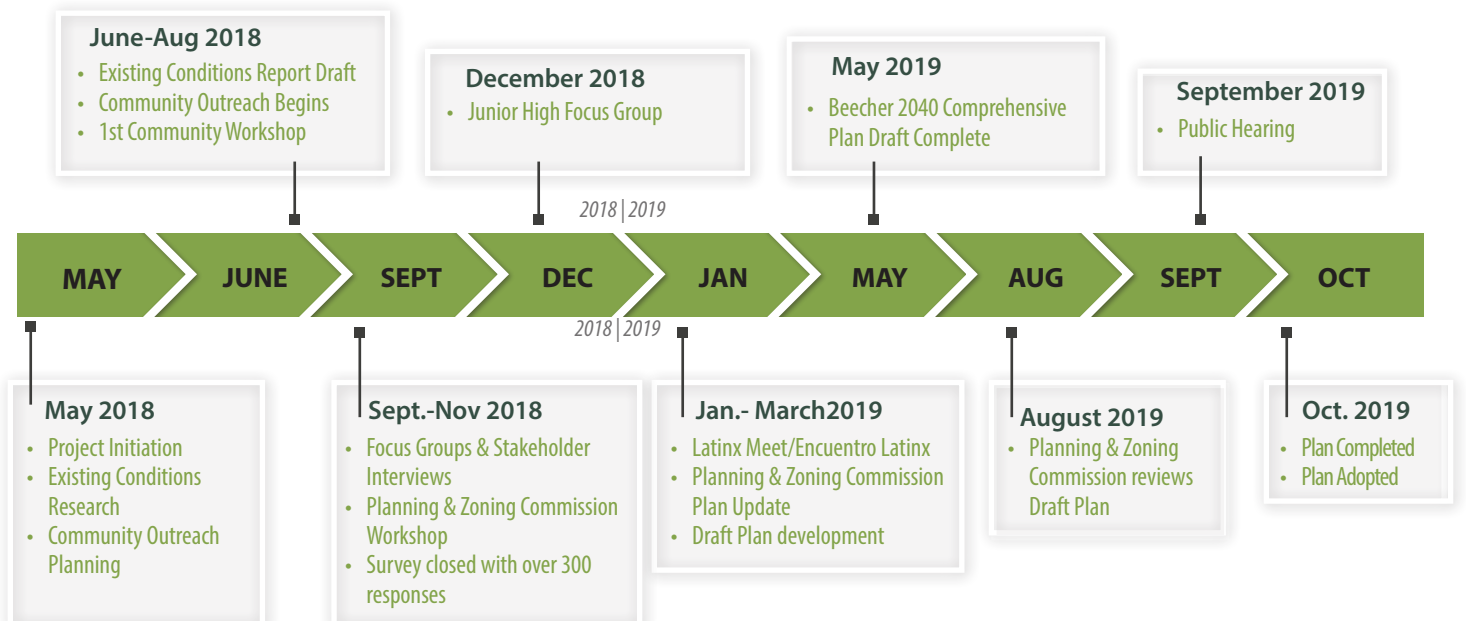


Figure 2.1: Comprehensive Planning Process Timeline



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Several community engagement activities were held devoted entirely to discussion about the comprehensive plan and the planning process, from one-on-one discussions to community-wide workshops and online tools. Development of the Beecher 2040 plan included input from all sectors of the community. Key components of this effort are summarized below.

Steering Committee Meetings

The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) served as the Steering Committee for the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission meets once a month, allowing for regular meetings regarding the Comprehensive Plan and ensuring updates on the progress of the plan can be carried out consistently. Meetings were held at the following PZC meetings:

- July 21, 2018: Kick-off meeting, review of process & scope
- September 27, 2018: Review of existing conditions
- October 25, 2018: Review of survey results & outreach efforts
- January 24, 2019: Review of Key Themes
- February 28, 2019: Review of draft Future Land Use Plan
- April 18, 2019: Review of Special Areas
- August 29, 2019: Review of Draft Plan

Stakeholder Interviews

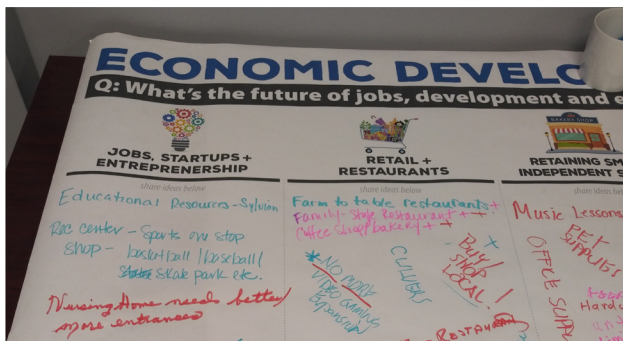
Approximately 10 interviews were conducted with heads of departments and other institutional leaders, including Police and Fire, and with the school superintendent.

Washington Township Intergovernmental Group

This Washington Township Intergovernmental Group was brought into the Beecher 2040 process early-on, with a kick-off meeting in May of 2018 to expose everyone to the planning process and to encourage support and participation. In addition, one-on-one interviews were conducted with the School Superintendent and the Fire District to better understand their planning needs. Once a draft of the plan was developed, it was reviewed by the intergovernmental group for their input and suggestions.

Community Workshop #1 | July 26, 2018

This was the first chance for many community members to learn about comprehensive plans and the planning process. Teska Associates, Inc. and a representative from CMAP provided an overview of demographics, housing data, and land use, indicating important trends. Then, community members were asked to share ideas and concerns at Activity Stations about four different community aspects: Community Character, Economic Development, Social Vibrancy, and Transportation.



Community Workshop #1

Approximately 40 residents attended the first community workshop. Comments received at the activity stations provided the first opportunity for the Village and the consultant team to learn about the concerns of the community in person. Conversation flooded the rooms and the activity stations soon filled up with comments and post-its.

Main takeaways from the workshop included interest in increasing senior housing options, improving pedestrian infrastructure, creating more recreational opportunities (especially for youth), and expanding new restaurants and businesses in the community.

TARGETED OUTREACH

To reach those who were not able to attend the public workshop, the Village held a number of targeted outreach activities to engage the whole Beecher community, ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to share ideas in a comfortable environment. This included engaging the youth, seniors, business owners, the Latino community and more.

Lions Club Summerfest | August 4, 2018

A popular community event, the Lions Club Summerfest yielded a variety of comments from over 50 community members. Most prominently, the community hopes to attract a family restaurant. Other comments included park and recreation enhancements, a trauma center, streets repairs, more healthy food options, expansion of Metra service, and an Advanced Placement (AP) program at the high school.

Youth Commission | August 15, 2018

The Beecher Youth Commission provided insights into the Comprehensive Plan at their August meeting. While many of the suggestions mirrored ideas raised at the community workshop, Youth Commissioners were particularly focused on expanding access to recreational programs in the community and urged consideration of a Park District.

Senior Breakfast | September 22, 2018

The Washington Township Senior Breakfast was a great opportunity to tap into the wisdom and local knowledge of over 100 Beecher residents—many who have lived in Beecher a long time. We asked a few questions and got a lot of feedback!

Attendees noted that they love Beecher—the library, the people, limited traffic, Pace Bus service, the small town, quiet atmosphere, and affordability. They noted that the programs used most are the fire department, Townships programs (breakfast, movie nights, food pantry, etc.) the library, and Dial-A-Ride. The most pressing issues in Beecher in their view are truck traffic on Route 1/Dixie Highway, lack of air conditioning in schools, lack of housing options for people over 55, and condition of some roads (Kentucky Road and Corning Road).

Regarding Downtown Beecher, attendees said that they would like to have a family restaurant and more local shopping options. Others said that the focus on filling vacant stores in other areas of the Village should also be a priority. Lastly, they recommended building an indoor swimming pool which would provide recreation options for the Village and could host water aerobics for seniors.



Senior Breakfast



Junior High Student Focus Group

Beecher Chamber of Commerce | July 16, 2018

Beecher business owners had the chance to share issues and opportunities from their perspective. The main takeaways from this conversation were that there is need to encourage residents to shop locally, an extension of Metra service would boost the economy, a truck bypass would likely impact existing businesses along Route 1, there is a need for more restaurants, and that generally the Village is supportive of local businesses. Their observations, together with the data from Chapter 4 of this report, provide more context for considering the future of commercial retail and industrial business in Beecher.

Jr. High | December 19, 2018

Given that a Comprehensive Plan is a long-term planning document, it's important to keep in mind the perspectives and visions of all ages—including the future adults of Beecher. Junior high school students said when they think “Beecher” they think: home, friendly, orange, small, tiny, boring, and Buddy’s. Students are looking forward to having more recreational opportunities, more shopping options, more and different places to eat locally and better connectivity via sidewalks around town.

Latinx Meet/Encuentro Latinx | January 26, 2019

Data indicates that the number of Hispanic residents is increasing within and near Beecher. Conversations in English and Spanish with Hispanic residents highlighted the best things about the community: a calm small town that feels safe and has good schools. Attendees noted that Beecher’s most pressing challenges are to grow while maintaining stability—to continue to develop but not lose the small-town feel. In addition, attendees expressed interest in finding ways to bring the community together and support common interests, especially youth recreation opportunities.

OUTREACH TOOLS

The consultant team and the Village distributed project cards (shown below), sent e-mail blasts, and included short summaries of community events on the Beecher 2040 website. The Village also actively promoted the Beecher 2040 Plan via their Facebook page.

Website

For the duration of the planning process, a website, Beecher2040.org, was created and dedicated to information about the Comprehensive Plan, including events and meetings and links to surveys for the plan.

The website also provided an opportunity for community members to sign-up for e-mail updates and share their ideas more generally by adding a comment or idea and possibly an example through a photo. The ideas shared on the website to date include: a community pool, a park district, splash pad, skate/bike park area, home mail delivery, and eliminating train horns.

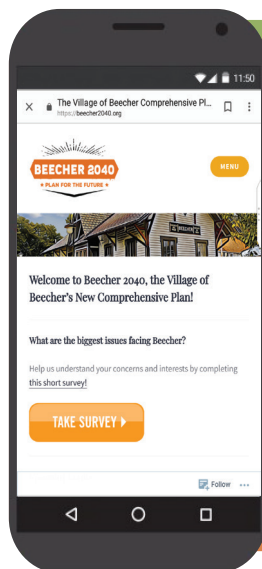
The website provided community members the chance to follow the planning process, learn about upcoming meetings and community events which the project team would attend. Additionally, the website provided summaries of past events, including comments and themes that came out of discussions at those events.

Surveys

The first survey was available from mid-June to mid-October 2018. The survey asked questions such as “What are your favorite things about Beecher?” and “What major economic development goals should Beecher focus on?” A summary of the top themes of the survey is available in the Appendix.



Project Cards (above) were distributed at all events and were available at Village Hall. Project cards act as conversation starters but also provide a little information with the Beecher2040 Website address so residents can learn more and be inspired to participate.



Project Website

67 Followers
1,418 Unique Visitors
2,460 Views

Comprehensive Plan Survey

310 Responses
13 Questions

Outreach Tools

VISION

Based on ideas and comments expressed during development of the Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the following vision statement was developed to guide plan implementation. Future development proposals, municipal budget decisions, and strategic planning efforts should take this vision into consideration.

"In 2040, Beecher is an even better place to live with a revitalized and walkable Downtown, excellent recreational opportunities for all ages, and a thriving economy with an expanding base of local, regional and international businesses. We have provided for an aging population while attracting young families who enjoy our excellent schools and small-town character. The Village and other local governments work closely together to be wise stewards of local taxpayer funds and we have created a strong, diverse and resilient tax base. We have protected and enhanced the environment through sustainable development practices, expanded use of alternative energy, and restoration of native habitats. We are connected to the world via high-speed broadband, rail, and proximity to Chicago – yet set apart in a rural setting that retains our agricultural roots."

KEY PLANNING ISSUES

During development of the Beecher 2040 Plan, several themes emerged as key issues to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. These issues repeatedly surfaced as items of importance to the community as expressed in surveys and workshops. These themes were used as a guide to organizing and focusing the Plan, and a chapter has been devoted to each topic.

A Resilient Community

The Village of Beecher is a community that would be greatly impacted by regional projects. This Plan prepares Beecher for multiple scenarios, including population growth, industrial expansion, and the impacts anticipated with the development of the South Suburban Airport.

A Great Place to Live

Beecher remains home to many long-standing residents and families with long histories in the Village. However, the Village is an established community that will remain home to existing residents and hopes to attract new families to share the quiet, and friendly small-town lifestyle. This Plan aims to identify the assets that make Beecher a great place to live and use that to attract new residents.

Enhanced Parks + Recreation Opportunities

Youth are particularly active in sports in Beecher, but recreation is for everybody! This plan lays out ways in which the Village can expand park access and recreation opportunities for all—the young and the old.

Convenient and Safe Mobility

Getting around Beecher should be easy and safe for everyone, in a car, on a bike, or on two feet. This plan highlights areas where mobility should be improved and the ways in which mobility can be expanded regionally.

A Revitalized Downtown

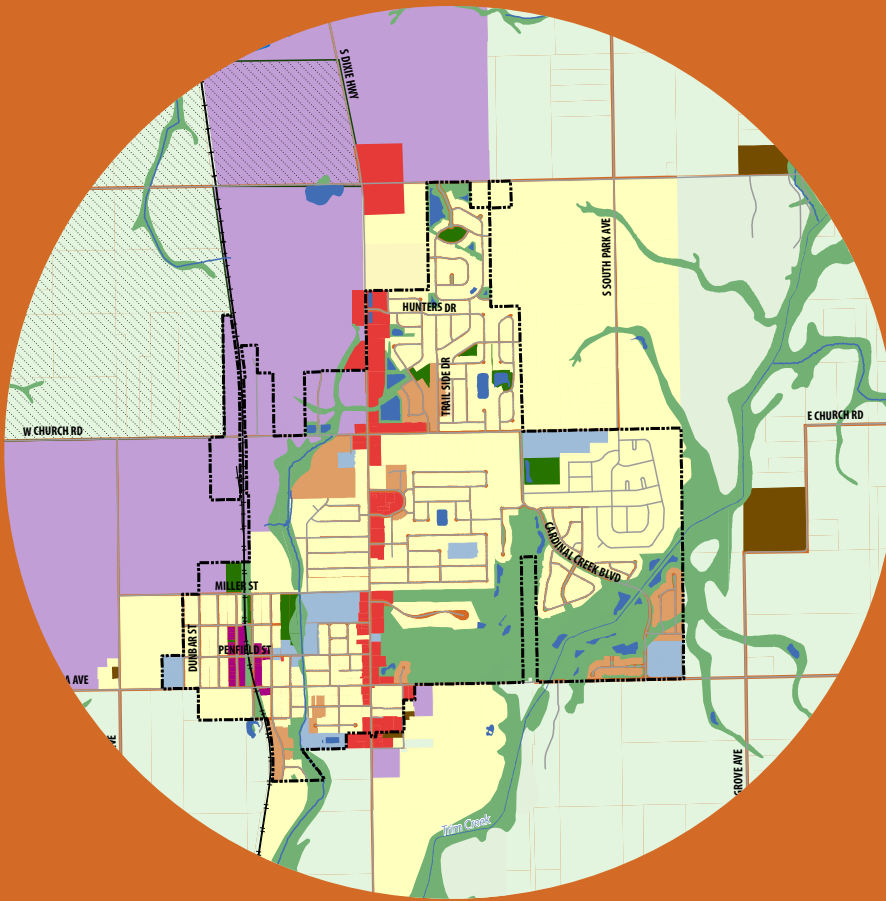
Downtown Beecher still has much of its old charm today, and residents indicated that they would love to see it remain a lively community space. This Plan indicates opportunities for revitalization to make it a local and regional destination.

Expand Job Opportunities and Tax Base

Most Beecher residents work outside the community and the majority of the tax base is residential property. This Plan recognizes the importance of expanding job opportunities through commercial and industrial sectors.

A Sustainable Community

As a small, rural community, the Village has to think critically about how to maintain services and infrastructure and how to grow in ways that are sustainable but also appropriate for Beecher. This plan sets for ideas for what a Sustainable Beecher might look like.



A Resilient Community

3

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, Beecher turns 150. The Village is a community with a long legacy of steadfastness and prosperity in the face of challenges. Beecher has proven itself a strategic and resilient community, with the ability to recover from setbacks. Resilient communities recognize their challenges, prepare to face them and have plans to recover from them. Each community faces unique challenges—from managing the impacts of harsh weather and climates to protecting natural features to balancing the local economy in the face of industry-specific and overall economic strain.

Beecher's primary challenges during the life of this plan include:

- guiding sustainable development and controlling sprawl
- protecting natural resources
- maintaining and expanding a diverse tax base
- maintaining an appropriate, affordable and quality housing stock

A resilient Beecher is a community that is prepared to manage a variety of future pressures resulting from economic shifts and in response to regionally significant projects.

1. Preferred Future Land Use Plan - The Beecher 2040 Future Land Use Plan examines the Preferred Future Land Use Plan, based on currently anticipated trends. The Village finds this plan to be the most realistic scenario, and is consistent with CMAP's ON TO 2050 Plan. This plan assumes that neither the South Suburban Airport nor the Illiana Expressway are developed.

The Future Land Use Plan will be used to guide decisions for the next 20-plus years – unless funding is put in place to begin construction on either the Illiana or the SSA. If one of those projects does move forward, the Village should look to update the Comprehensive Plan, taking into consideration the concepts illustrated on the Alternative Future Land Use Plan found in the Appendix.

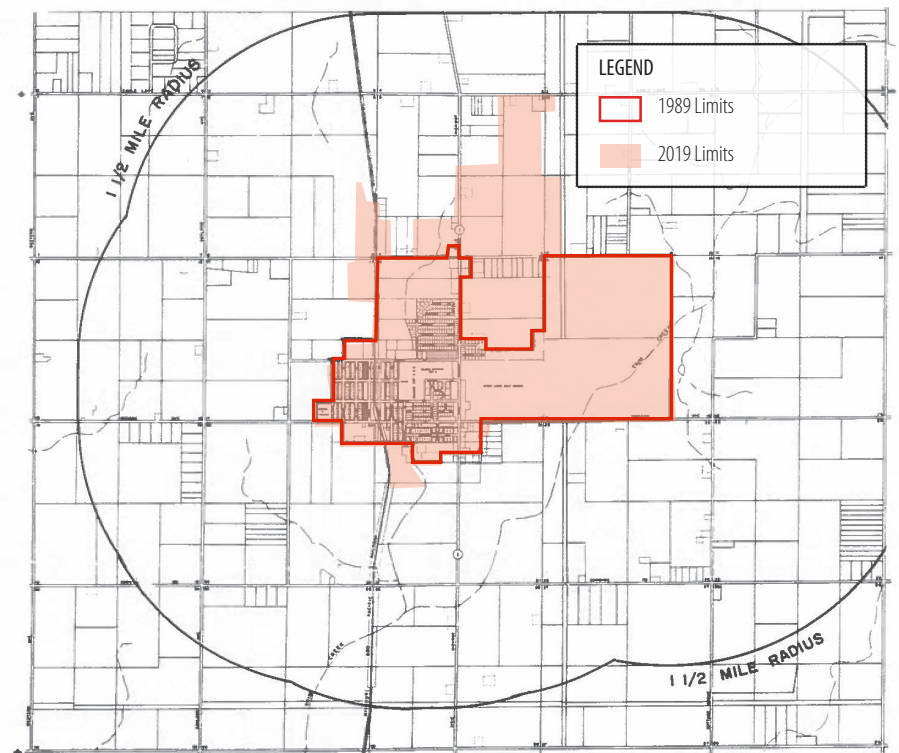
2. Alternative Future Land Use Plan - If both the SSA and the Illiana were to be constructed, this alternative envisions a modified future land use plan to reflect the impact of these major regional projects. **The alternative plan is provided in the Appendix and should be revised if either of these major regional projects were to become a reality.**

GROWTH IN BEECHER

The Village of Beecher is geographically much larger than it was only 30 years ago (Figure 3.1). Between 2000 and 2010, Beecher had a population growth spurt, facilitating the planning and development of new residential neighborhoods. The Great Recession slowed economic growth and development across the country. In Beecher this resulted in the incomplete development of lots in new neighborhoods and halted the development of approved residential subdivisions.

Population increases in Beecher have historically occurred in concert with regional economic development efforts. Beecher's past comprehensive plans recognized the need to be both realistic about natural growth and cognizant of the potential significant impact of regional projects. Thus, past plans created land use scenarios.

Figure 3.1: Planning Area, Village of Beecher Comprehensive Plan, 1989





As of 2019, Beecher has approximately 1,700 approved but undeveloped lots within the Village limits.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT GOALS

After a 10-year period of rapid growth between 2000 and 2010, Beecher has experienced almost another 10-year period of little to no population growth. The Beecher 2040 Plan focuses on local goals and strategies to address resiliency with regard to land use, infill development needs, and potential industrial expansion. Taking into consideration existing conditions, Beecher's land use and development goals include the following:

- Facilitate the **development and/or expansion of industrial uses** north and west of the present-day Village boundaries.
- **Conserve floodways** as public or private open space with the intention of establishing a contiguous trail/path along Trim Creek.
- Continue efforts to **revitalize Downtown Beecher** as a vibrant mixed-use area where the community gathers for special events and everyday outings.
- Prioritize **infill residential development** where development has been approved. Once infill of most existing vacant residential lots occurs, guide new residential development northeast and south of current Village boundaries, supporting **compact residential development** to promote the preservation of open space/agricultural uses (e.g. agrihoods)
- All residential development over 50 acres in size is to **include park/recreation areas** sufficient to maintain or improve park access for residents.
- Pursue **commercial development as infill development**, primarily along Route 1/Dixie Highway, in Downtown and, in the event that the Beecher Bypass is established, at the intersection of Route 1/Dixie Highway and the southern terminus of the bypass.

The Future Land Use Plan (Figures 3.3 and 3.4) reflects the plan for growth in Beecher resulting from natural population increases and expanded industrial development. This is the Village's preferred land use plan.



In some neighborhoods, many undeveloped lots remain, and there are cases, such as in this photo, where a single lot remains undeveloped.

ACCOMMODATING GROWTH

While Chapter 9 focuses on ways Beecher can become a more sustainable community, this chapter recognizes the opportunities to promote smart growth through infill development and conservation design.

Infill Development

Long-established communities often have older, historic structures and developments that were built for their original uses. These communities also have newer structures and developments that are more in keeping with the modern designs and space needs.

Conservation Design

The decision to develop agricultural land is not to be taken lightly since reverting developed land back to agricultural uses is difficult. Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) ON TO 2050 Plan urges communities to "adopt conservation-oriented development standards that avoid development of key natural areas and open space" *. Beecher can promote sustainable development through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs), including promoting development patterns that reduce sprawl and planning for the conservation of agricultural land uses, where necessary. Beecher is a fairly



compact community today, and the Beecher 2040 Plan promotes a similar approach of growth.

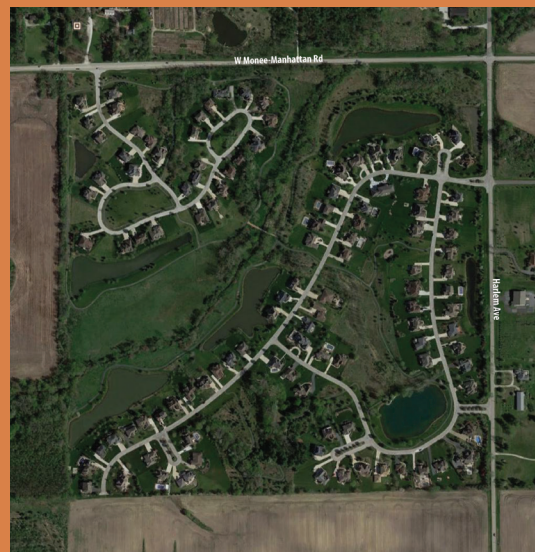
An example of sustainable subdivision design is called an "agrihood", where homes are built in patterns that respect natural features and maximize open space that is used for agriculture. As of 2018, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) identified 27 agrihoods projects in the US and Canada, indicating that the development design is growing in popularity. One of the oldest communities built in this style is Prairie Crossing in Grayslake, IL. The Prairie Crossing community has access to two commuter rail lines into

VILLAGE OF BEECHER SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE CONSERVATION DESIGN DEVELOPMENT OPTION ARTICLE 7

The Village of Beecher subdivision regulations ordinance includes a conservation design development option. The purpose of the option is to "maximize protection of the community's natural resources"; thereby encouraging the protection of natural features of developable land, improve stormwater management, create livable and sustainable mixed-use communities that conserve scenic views and build upon the rural character of Beecher.

The ordinance encourages clustered dwelling and commercial units, diversity of lot sizes and housing types, incentives for the creation and connection of greenway systems and open space, the reduction or erosion and sedimentation, and the reduction of the amount and need for infrastructure and impervious surfaces. The air photo to the right shows an example of a conservation design development in Will County, east of Beecher near Monee.

When all or a portion of a proposed development is within 500 feet or the ordinary high water mark of a lake, stream or river, conservation design must be used or a strong argument against feasibility must be made and accepted by the Village.



Conservation Design Example-- Canterbury Lakes Subdivision, Monee, IL

160 total acres (34 % dedicated open space)

119 homes

Features: gazebos, park benches, 4.5 mile multi-use path

* CMAP, ON TO 2050 Plan Recommendation "Integrate land preservation into strategic growth efforts," <https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/2050/environment/land-preservation>

Chicago, 10 miles of trails, a 13-stall stable, a 24-hour fitness center, 14 parks and playgrounds and more. This community is located in a more developed community than Beecher, but the concept and design is in keeping with the character and vision of the Beecher community and should be considered for future residential developments.

The Urban Land Institute's 2018 Agrihoods: Cultivating Best Practices report highlights a number of *Benefits of Agrihood Developments*.

Overall, the ULI report finds that agrihoods offer proven financial, health, and environmental benefits--to the stakeholders involved in their implementation, to surrounding communities, and to the planet.

Agrihoods can:

- present a **competitive edge** through providing access to fresh, healthy produce
- **promote health and social interaction** by organizing a community around gathering spaces
- **support an attractive return on investment** as studies find as much as a 15 - 30% increase in the value of properties adjacent to parks and open space
- **provide environmental benefits** from the preservation of farmland and low-impact design
- **create jobs and support the local economy** by maintaining agricultural employment even in new housing developments

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) defines *agrihoods* as single-family, multifamily, or mixed-use communities built with a working farm or community garden as a focus.

PRAIRIE CROSSING AGRIHOOD, GRAYSLAKE, IL

"We found ourselves visiting this area often to see our children and five grandchildren. When our son told us that condominiums were being built, we visited in 2007 and put down a deposit shortly thereafter to begin our retired life here. We live in the Bennett Building right over Dalton's Cakes, which makes going out for lunch or dinner really easy. The 10 miles of walking trails have been wonderful for Frank as he tries to manage his diabetes through exercise. We also enjoy the closeness of the Metra trains, even more so now that the trains don't need to blow their horns (Frank played a big role in making that happen along with another condo resident). We go downtown for plays and for fun expeditions with the grandkids, all without needing a car. Prairie Crossing is far more than the bricks and mortar. What we love most about living here is the sense of community."

-- Resident of Prairie Crossing in Grayslake, IL since 2008





FUTURE LAND USES

All land within the Village of Beecher is either developed or is currently zoned for some type of appropriate land use. Growth in the Village is inherently linked with growth in Washington Township. The Village has already annexed and zoned sufficient land to accommodate anticipated residential growth for the foreseeable future. However, there is a need to annex additional areas for industrial development. To accommodate opportunities for employment growth, and long-term residential growth, development proposal in unincorporated areas near the Village limits should be strongly encouraged to annex into Beecher. The Village has the ability to provide water, sewer, and other municipal services that would be unavailable--or more expensive to provide, if development occurred outside the Village. Future Land Uses are described in the following sections:

Agriculture

- Agriculture is expected to remain the predominant use in Washington Township, maintaining the rural character of the community. Corn and soy beans are the primary local crops. While the Village anticipates the conversion of limited agricultural lands for the development of residential, industrial and commercial uses as shown on the Future Land Use Plan, the preservation of agricultural uses outside these areas is strongly encouraged.

Open Space, Parks + Recreation

- Existing parks, recreation areas, and dedicated open space in the Village is expected to remain. Most areas mapped as open space occur within flood zones in the Village and in Washington Township with the intention of reducing the impacts of flooding. Most open space areas are anticipated to remain in private ownership, including Cardinal Creek Golf Course.
- The Village's flood plain regulations will assist in preserving and managing the use of this private open space. Other private open space areas within subdivisions can be addressed at the time of annexation through the establishment of covenants and conservation easements.
-  Single-family Residences (secondary) are areas near the existing Village limits that may be appropriate for future residential development after existing subdivisions and infill locations are nearing full-development. Many of these areas, particularly along Trim Creek, would be appropriate for conservation design as highlighted on pages 15 and 16.
-  Two-Family Residences (or duplexes) are developed in styles similar to single-family homes, except they share a common wall. Development of new duplex homes is encouraged, where appropriate, to increase the range of housing options and price ranges. One area suggested for such housing is southeast of the intersection of Dixie Highway and Eagle Lake Drive. Other areas may be appropriate on a more limited basis within existing partially developed subdivisions to enhance the variety of residential housing options. Ranch-style duplexes are encouraged as they are often popular with senior citizens, offering ease of mobility with reduced property maintenance.

Residential

The Future Land Use Plan recognized five different types of residential areas: Rural Residential, Single-Family Residential, Two-Family Residential, and Multi-Family Residential:




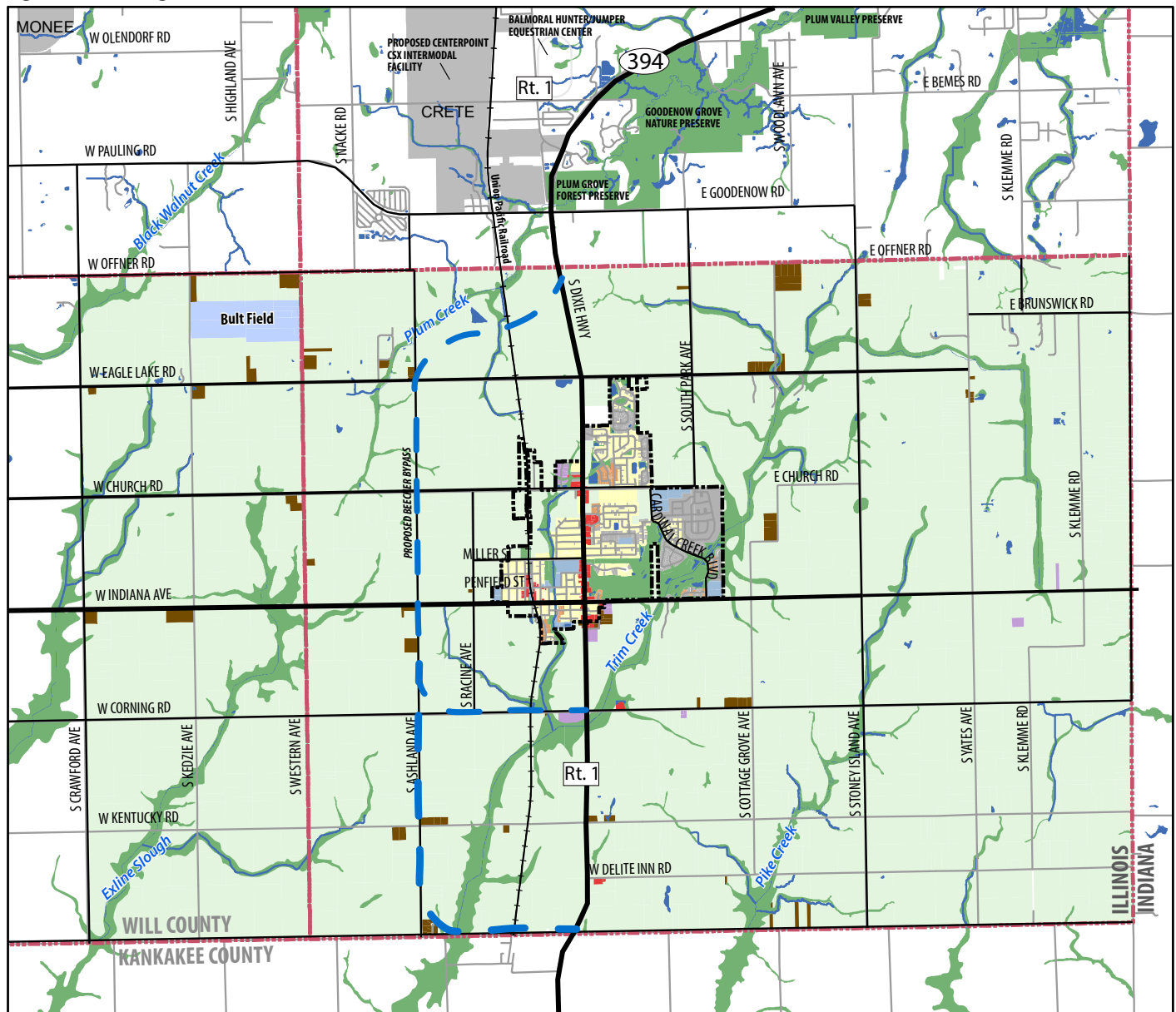
-  Single-Family Residences (primary) are areas within existing neighborhoods and subdivisions or areas already approved for single-family homes. Given the number of undeveloped lots in the Village, the need for additional subdivisions is not on the immediate horizon. Once these existing subdivisions are filled in, new residential development may be appropriate on infill locations or areas immediately adjacent to the Village limits as highlighted on the Future Land Use Plan as Single-Family Residential (secondary). If additional neighborhoods are developed, they should be integrated with trails and park space into the rest of the community.
-  Multi-Family Residences include townhomes, condominiums and apartments. Expansion of multi-family homes is encouraged where appropriate in new development areas to increase the range of housing options and price ranges.
-  Rural Residences are located within Washington Township and are often associated with agricultural land. Rural residences are individual single-family homes that are not a part of a subdivision (although they may be clustered along an existing rural road).

Figure 3.2: Existing Land Use



PLANNING AREA EXISTING LAND USE

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



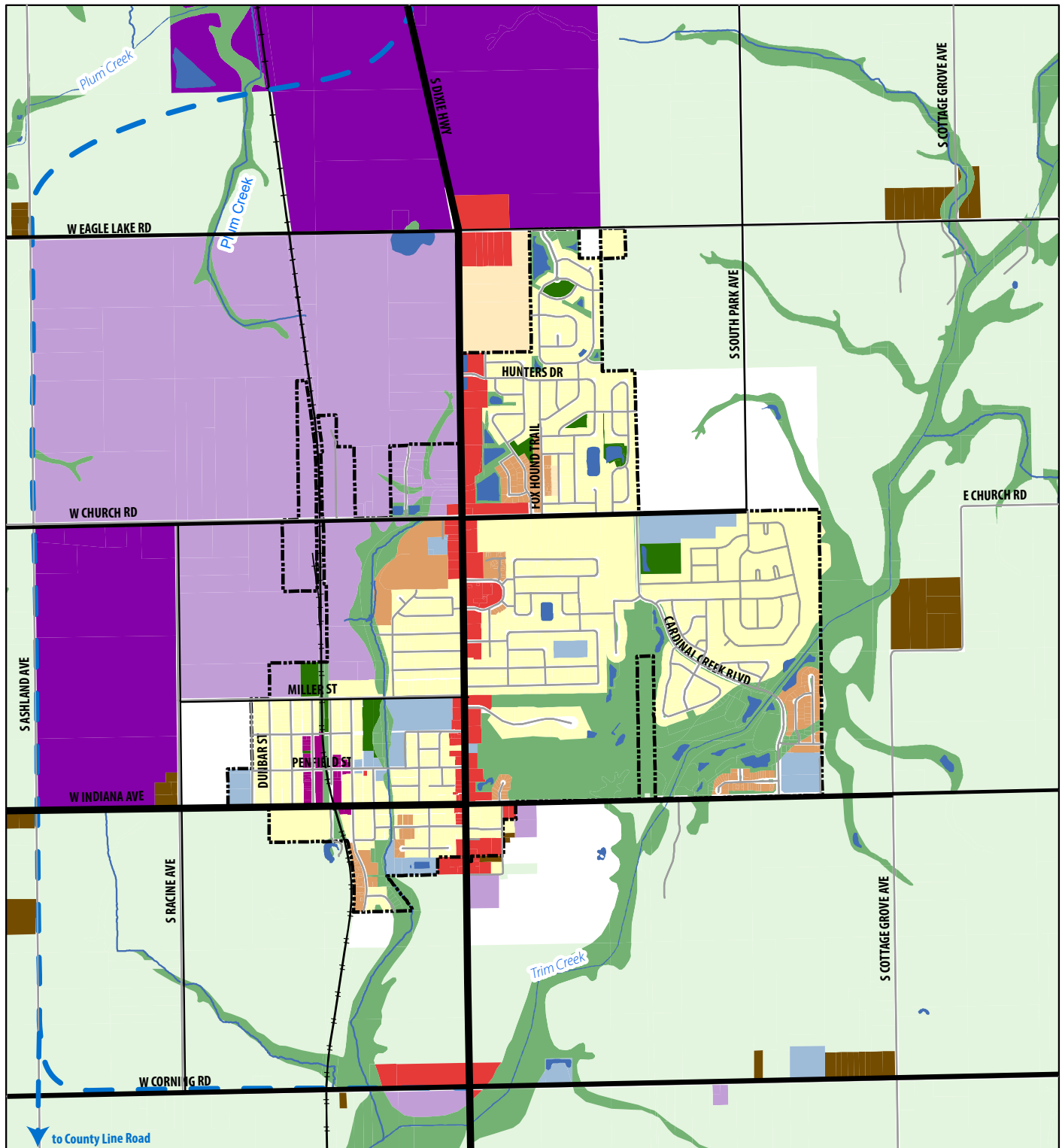
- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Township Limits | Institutional | Single-Family Residential | Agriculture | Potential Beecher Bypass Routes |
| Railroad | Industrial/Office | Two-Family Residential | Open Space | |
| Water Bodies | Mixed-Use | Multi-Family Residential | Park | |
| | Commercial | Rural Residential | Vacant Land | |

This map of Moline, Illinois, displays a network of streets including W OLENDORF RD, W PAULING RD, W OFFNER RD, W EAGLE LAKE RD, W CHURCH RD, W INDIANA AVE, W CORNING RD, W KENTUCKY RD, S CRAWFORD AVE, S KEDZIE AVE, S WESTERN AVE, S SHILAND AVE, S RACINE AVE, S COTTAGE GROVE AVE, S STONEY ISLAND AVE, S YATES AVE, S KLEMMER RD, E BEMES RD, E GOODENOW RD, E OFFNER RD, and E BRUNSWICK RD. Key landmarks and parks shown are Bult Field, Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve, Plum Grove Forest Preserve, and the proposed Centerpoint CSX Intermodal Facility. The map also indicates the location of the Balmoral Hunter/Jumper Equestrian Center and the Union Pacific Railroad. The city is situated at the intersection of Will County to the west and Kankakee County to the south, with the Illinois-Indiana border to the east. Major roads like Rt. 1, 394, and 394A are clearly marked.

PLANNING AREA FUTURE LAND USE PLAN



Figure 3.4: Future Land Use Plan



FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Village Limits | Primary Industrial/Office | Single-Family Residential (primary) | Agriculture |
| Railroad | Secondary Industrial | Single-Family Residential (secondary) | Open Space |
| Water Bodies | Mixed-Use | Two-Family Residential | Park |
| Institutional | Commercial | Multi-Family Residential | Potential Beecher Bypass Routes |
| | Rural Residential | | |

Institutional

- Institutional uses include schools, religious institutions, and Village facilities including Village Hall and Public Works. While the Future Land Use Plan does not show additional institutional uses, they may be appropriate – particularly in residential areas – to support a growing population.
- The best location for future institutional uses will be dependent on the specific use and associated demand for accessibility, traffic, site size, etc. For example, if there was a need for an additional church, a location along East Church Road or along Indiana would be appropriate as both areas would be near residential neighborhoods allowing residents to walk to the facility, while maintaining convenient vehicular access along these collector/arterial roads.

Commercial

- Commercial uses in the Village provide residents access to daily shopping and service needs. They are primarily concentrated along Route 1/Dixie Highway within Village limits. Limited additional commercial development is expected along Route 1/Dixie Highway at the present time. However, the potential construction of a Beecher Bypass route, and increased industrial development could allow the community to support additional commercial development at key bypass intersections, such as at Indiana Avenue or Church Road (this future commercial is not shown on the Future Land Use Plan as it is not anticipated to be needed during the 20 year timeline of this plan).

Mixed-Use

- Properties located in and near the historic Downtown have been designated Mixed-Use in recognition that a variety of uses in close proximity is what facilitates the walkable character of the Downtown. The area includes homes, commercial structures, and parks and institutional uses such as the library and post office. The mix of uses in this area can either be vertical (one use above another) or horizontal (side by side on adjacent parcels).

Industrial

- Industrial uses in the Village are currently limited and there is no room for expansion in the current business park at Church Road near Route 1/Dixie Highway. Industrial uses are anticipated to grow west of the Village limits and north along Route 1/Dixie Highway. These areas have excellent access to both rail and truck routes. Primary industrial opportunities are shown as a solid color of the Future Land use plan. These areas are closer to the existing Village limits and can be most easily served by extension of existing utilities. The Future Land Use Plan also indicates secondary industrial expansion areas north of Eagle Lake Road and south of Church Road, along Ashland Avenue. In all likelihood, the primarily industrial opportunity areas will not be completely built out within the next 20 years, however, these areas would be appropriate to consider for development if the primary areas are filled, or to accommodate some unique large user that would require additional acreage.

The Future Land Use Plan outlines a picture of how Beecher could grow over the next 20 or so years. It paints an optimistic picture – it is very unlikely all areas shown for non-agricultural use will be developed within this time frame. In all likelihood, many of the areas shown for potential industrial and residential development outside the current Village limits will remain in agricultural use for at least the next ten years, if not longer. However, it is important to show additional opportunities for development on a Future Land Use Plan as it provides flexibility for both the market and the desires of individual property owners to govern the pace of development.

Figure 3.2 compares the existing developed land use within the Village of Beecher to that shown on the Future Land Use Plan (Figure 3.3). This comparison shows the largest increase in land use occurring in the single-family residential category, with nearly half of this increase coming from the future development of already platted residential lots. It also shows a significant increase in industrial/office land use, which would help to diversify the Village's economy and provide close-to-home jobs for residents. Beecher should build on its strengths when seeking new industrial development, focusing initially on smaller users that can expand overtime.

The existing Dutch American facility is an excellent example of such a business that has grown, and continues to expand in Beecher. Attracting additional companies in the agricultural/food processing industry would seem a natural fit given Beecher's surroundings and convenient access to national and international markets given the significant intermodal activity in surrounding Will County.

Figure 3.5 shows that, even without annexing any additional property, the Village has the capacity to add 50% more residents given the number of existing platted but undeveloped lots. This suggests that the Village should:

- Work closely with property owners and developers to promote new residential development within existing approved subdivisions. This may include consideration of alternative product types or reconfiguration of undeveloped areas to better match market demand.
- Limit future residential annexations until this existing inventory is significantly reduced (by 50% or more). An exception to this might be a proposal that was particularly unique or innovative, offering a product

type that is not currently available in Beecher such as some of the sustainable development approaches noted latter in this chapter.

Figure 3.7 compares existing and future land use for the larger planning area, which includes all of Washington Township and the eastern portion of Will Township (planning boundary matches the boundary of the Beecher School District). Like Figure 3.6, showing land uses within current Village boundaries, the largest increase in future use is shown in the industrial/office and residential categories.

While this table shows a decrease of over 4,500 agricultural acres, this change is not anticipated within the planning horizon of the Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan. As noted earlier, the plan shows additional development opportunities to provide flexibility given evolving markets and the desires of

property owners. Likewise, the maximum population listed in Figure 3.5 of almost 16,600 is not anticipated within the next 20 years. That estimate is really a holding capacity, assuming every acre shown for residential use were developed. Given local and regional development trends over the past 10 years, it is unlikely Beecher would grow beyond 8,000 to 10,000 residents during the next 20 years.

It is also unlikely that an additional 2,224 acres of industrial/office development will occur during the next 20 years. However, potential catalyst projects like the SSA or the Illiana could quickly increase industrial potential should they become reality. Most likely, much of this area illustrated for future industrial use would remain agricultural in the near term. However, as noted in Chapter 8, there is demand for some industrial expansion in the near-term, and this is a key economic development goal for the Village.



INFILL EXISTING VACANT LOTS

The Village has 300 acres that are set aside for residential uses. Some of those parcels are vacant lots in existing subdivisions whereas others are undeveloped residential subdivisions that already have approval but were never developed as a result of the Great Recession. Much of Beecher's anticipated growth during the life of the Beecher 2040 Plan can be accommodated in these areas, though if there is increased demand, the Future Land Use Plan indicates areas where further residential development is preferred.

Figure 3.5: Existing and Holding Capacity Population

Acres/Population	Existing 2019, within Village Limits	Additional within Village Limits	Additional within Planning Area	Maximum Capacity within Planning Area
Developed Residential Acres	440	347	431	1,542
Population	4,472	2,514	3,121	16,596

Note: Planning area 2018 population includes 6,360 in Washington Township (ACS) and estimated 129 in Will Township

Figure 3.6: Beecher 2018 Corporate Limits Land Use

Land Use	Existing Land Use (Acres)	Future Land Use (Acres)	Difference
Mixed-Use	0	16	16
Commercial	64	84	20
Primary Industrial/Office	13	142	129
Secondary Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a
Agriculture	n/a	n/a	n/a
Open Space/Park	550	356	(194)
Government/Institutional	94	77	(16)
Single-Family Residential (primary)	395	691	296
Single-Family Residential (secondary)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Two-Family Residential	1	1	-
Multi-Family Residential	44	94	50
Rural Residential	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vacant/Undeveloped Residential Land	301	0	(301)

Figure 3.7: Planning Area Land Use (Preferred)

Land Use	Existing Land Use (Acres)	Future Land Use (Acres)	Difference
Mixed-Use	-	16	16
Commercial	70	143	74
Primary Industrial/Office	58	1,196	1,138
Secondary Industrial	-	1,086	1,086
Agriculture	33,428	28,866	(4,562)
Open Space/Park	550	2,338	1,788
Government/Institutional	334	317	(16)
Single-Family Residential (primary)	395	691	296
Single-Family Residential (secondary)	-	378	378
Two-Family Residential	1	1	-
Multi-Family Residential	44	147	103
Rural Residential	324	324	-
Vacant/Undeveloped Residential Land	301	-	(301)
TOTAL	35,504	35,504	-

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

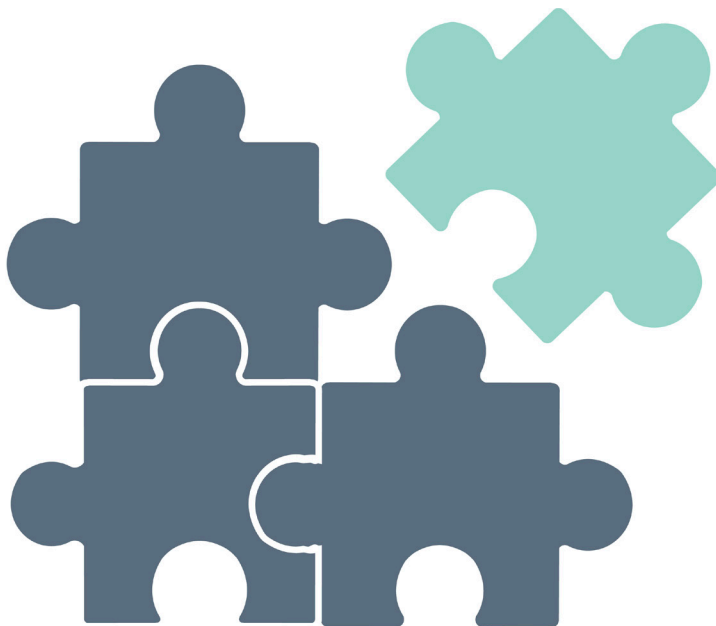
To be a resilient community, local governments must work closely together to serve their mutual constituents. Such cooperation not only promotes good planning, it can lead to sharing of resources and significant cost savings. Governments in Washington Township have long recognized the benefits of cooperation.

Elected and appointed officials with the Village of Beecher, Beecher 200U School District, the Beecher Fire Protection District, the Beecher Library District, and Washington Township meet quarterly to share information, concerns, and opportunities to work cooperatively to better serve the community. This cooperation creates opportunities for local governing bodies to:

- Support the need for expansion of facilities as the community grows
- Cross-market information to reach residents
- Maintain transparency of government

Regionally, the Village collaborates with the Will County Governmental League, South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association (SSMMA), Will County, CMAP, etc. These governmental bodies provide both resources and guidance for the region in which Beecher is a part. Continued intergovernmental cooperation and communication will ensure that Beecher is able to both raise concerns to regional entities and respond locally regarding regional concerns. The Village intends to collaborate with regional bodies in the following ways:

- Participate with regional organizations and agencies to show local perspectives and promote projects with clear regional benefits, particularly those focused on economic development and transportation.
- Cross-market information to ensure that information regarding regional and local projects reaches Beecher residents in a timely fashion.





RECOMMENDATIONS

3-1 Accommodate population growth in Beecher as infill development.

- 3-1-1 Encourage infill residential development in existing and approved neighborhoods and subdivisions.
- 3-1-2 Support compact residential development to promote the preservation of open space/agricultural uses (e.g. agrihoods).
- 3-1-3 Promote new senior housing opportunities near existing cultural and shopping facilities (see Chapter 4 for additional recommendations on senior housing).

3-2 Expand industrial and commercial opportunities, including the continued revitalization of Downtown Beecher.

- 3-2-1 Maintain open communication with local industrial users to anticipate needs and accommodate expansion.
- 3-2-2 Expand the existing industrial park to the north and west.
- 3-2-3 Encourage new commercial development to occur in areas where new transportation routes and new industrial developments occur, as depicted on Future Land Use map.
- 3-2-4 See Chapter 7 for specific recommendations regarding reutilization of Downtown Beecher.

3-3 Expand parks and recreational areas to maintain or improve the current level of service.

- 3-3-1 Ensure that all future residential developments over 50 acres in size include park/recreation areas sufficient to maintain or improve park access for residents.
- 3-3-2 Conserve floodways as public or private open space with the intention of establishing a contiguous trail path along Trim Creek.

3-4 Continue to foster intergovernmental cooperation.

- 3-4-1 Continue to hold intergovernmental meetings.
- 3-4-2 Continue to serve as a member of the SSMMA and other regional organizations such as the Will County Governmental League.



A Great Place
to Live

4

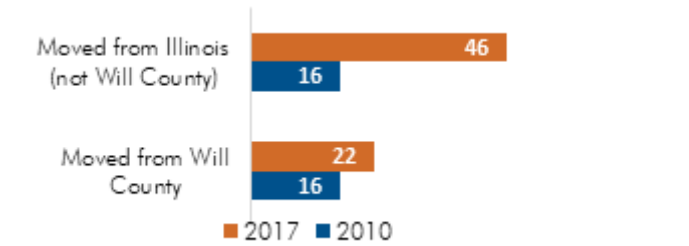
INTRODUCTION

With an appealing small town charm, convenient access to the Chicago region via Dixie Highway/394, and lower land prices, the appeal of Beecher as a great place to live is apparent.

Throughout the Beecher 2040 process, residents made it clear that they love their community. They love the tranquility, the small-town feel, the friendliness of their neighbors and the ability to live close to friends and family. There are many residents who have lived in Beecher their whole life. Some who grew up in Beecher left for college or training and have come back to work or raise their families in Beecher. Beecher residents feel that their community is a great place to live and hope to see a vibrant Beecher in 2040.

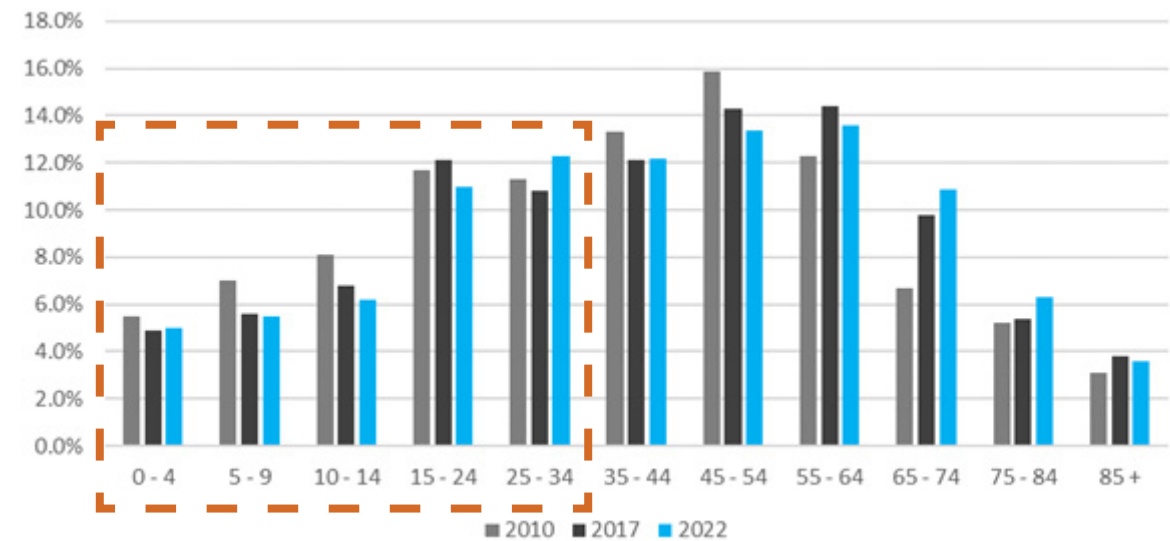
Population trends indicate that more retirees/seniors are staying in or moving to Beecher than young families and professionals. Beecher welcomes both to the community and aims to facilitate the development of more senior living opportunities and supports the development of a variety of housing types to increase both affordability and choice for existing and future residents.

Figure 4.1: In-Migration of Residents 65 and Older to Beecher by Census Tract, 2010-2017



Source: American Community Survey, 2010 and 2017 5-year estimates

Figure 4.3: Population by Age, 2010-2022



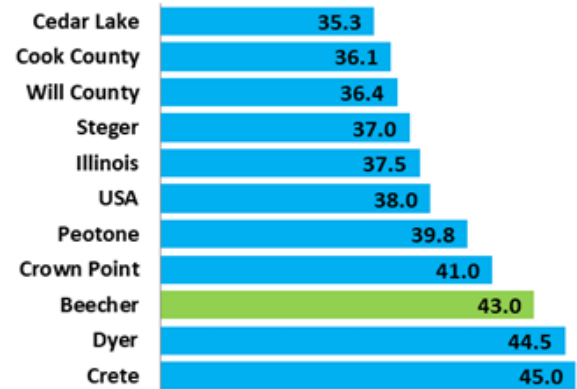
Source: ESRI Forecasts, 2017

HOUSING MARKET TRENDS

Conversations about the Chicago (CMAP region) area housing market begin with acknowledgment that the regional pace of total housing unit construction has not recovered to pre-recession thresholds, and that the region has seen a surge in multi-family construction, with Chicago capturing a surprising share of new housing units (Downtown in particular); rent growth has also accelerated. From a market standpoint, it is also clear that:

- With the youngest Baby Boomers having already turned 50, the next cohort (Generation X) is about 20% smaller (roughly 16 million fewer people). This pool of potential buyers of houses will be smaller for the next several years.
- Emerging concern that Gen X cohort “peak earnings” have been delayed / slowed due to the impact of the Great Recession (i.e. they have less aggregate net worth compared to the typical boomer at the same point in time). From a housing standpoint, trends suggest that the great recession effectively delayed career and housing decisions for Gen X households by an average of 5-7 years.

Figure 4.2: Median Age, 2016



Source: ESRI, 2016, AECOM Analysis

CHANGING AGE COMPOSITION

Historically, Beecher has had an older population than the average municipality in Will County. The shift toward an aging community has occurred due to two trends: existing aging residents and a notable in-migration of older residents to the community. Over 95% of Beecher's residents over 65 live in the same house they lived in the prior year. The remaining 5% of residents 65 and older moved to Beecher, either from another part of Will County or from elsewhere in Illinois outside of the County (Figure 4.1).

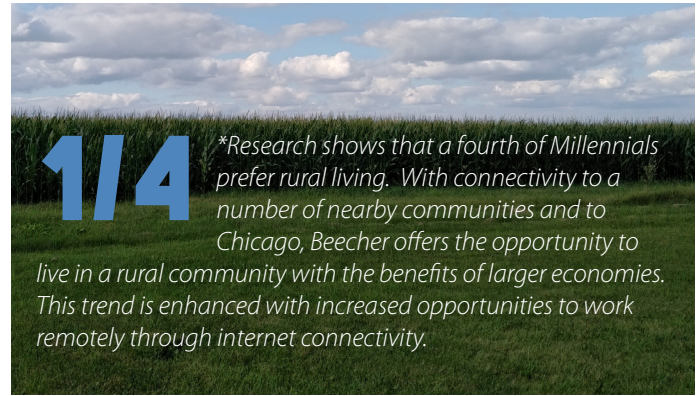
Since 2010, the population has remained steady and is estimated to grow modestly by 2022 (ESRI). However, recent population trends indicate that the community is aging and Beecher's median age of 43 is higher than most neighboring communities (Figure 4.2).

Growing Senior Population

Since 2010, residents ages 55 and older have become a greater proportion of the population and are expected to make up an even greater proportion by 2022 (Figure 4.3). Alternatively, residents under 35 are anticipated to decrease by 2022. Beecher recognizes a need to specifically work to retain and attract the Millennial Generation. This retention will be more likely with an expanded industrial base locally, an enhanced transportation access (like a potential Metra rail extension to Balmoral Park).

Millennials and Post-Millennials

Since 2010, residents ages 55 and older have become a greater proportion of the population and are expected to make up an even greater proportion by 2022 (Figure 4.3). Alternatively, residents under 35 are anticipated to decrease by 2022. Beecher recognizes a need to specifically work to



retain and attract the Millennial Generation. This retention will be more likely with an expanded industrial base locally, with an expanded base of local jobs.

Throughout the Beecher 2040 process, parents and youth alike spoke about the role that the community plays in the development of young people in Beecher. After high school, graduates often leave the communities where they are raised to pursue higher education and employment elsewhere. A goal of this plan is to encourage college graduates from Beecher to return to their home town and either start their own business or find employment in one of the community's growing local businesses.

A multi-generational community provides the opportunity to support all ages through all phases of life. Through targeting the millennial generation, Beecher benefits from continuing the traditional cycle of generational replacement in the economy and in the local community.

RETAINING MILLENNIALS

In November of 2018, the Village invited Phil Gwoke of Bridgeworks, to speak at a Village-wide forum entitled, "From Handshake to #Hashtag". Recognizing that Beecher is home to a range of ages and generations, the Village aimed to start a conversation about connecting and communicating across generations. To help retain and attract young people and young families, the Beecher community will need to bridge generational gaps and find common ground. Events and workshops such as this are a first-step.



**Ikenna Njezmanie, "How Can Firms Located in Rural Areas Position Themselves to Attract and Retain Millennial Talent," Cornell University ILR School, Spring 2016.*

RETAIN AND ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS

Community outreach for the Comprehensive Plan showed that residents love the small-town, quiet nature of Beecher. The rising median age is an indication that the community is not attracting younger generations. While a rising median age does not present serious challenges at present, the trend has several implications long-term. The community envisions Beecher as a community for all ages, where members can grow up and grow old, surrounded by family and friends. The next generation is looking for communities with great quality of life, where they can gather as a community, raise a family, and access great employment opportunities. There are many communities to choose from in the greater Chicago region and Beecher needs to know and show why it's a great fit for every generation.

The Future Land Use Plan (page 20) promotes this strategy by promoting infill growth in locations that are walkable to parks, schools, and in some cases shopping and dining opportunities. A focus on attracting new residents will also enhance opportunities to attract new commercial development to support a growing population.

Market Beecher

Communities promote themselves in a variety of ways today—through their websites, social media, events and everyday interactions. Residents and visitors play a large part in showing others what the community is like by sharing their personal experiences, in person, online and especially on social media. Attracting visitors to the Village allows word to travel outside the community about the community, reaching even more potential future residents. No matter the medium, promoting Beecher is a community effort. The community as a whole represents Beecher. It is important that potential community members learn about why Beecher is a great place to live from the people who know Beecher living the best.

Promote Community Assets

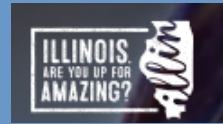
Outreach showed that Beecher residents know exactly why they love the community and continue to live here. Beecher's community assets include:

- a quality education for children from kindergarten through high school
- affordable homes
- consistently low crime rates
- good connectivity to jobs & internet access for telecommuting
- access to shopping and amenities in nearby communities

COMMUNITY MARKETING

States, counties and municipalities are counting their assets and showing them off through marketing programs. Here are some examples:

State of Illinois | www.EnjoyIllinois.com



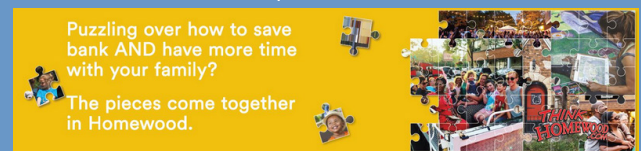
The website aims to help visitors plans trips around the state and promotes food and goods made in by Illinois businesses.

Live Livingston County | www.LiveLivingston.org



The website shares information about the communities and amenities in the county, including education, healthcare and housing.

Think Homewood (IL) | www.village.homewood.il.us



The Village uses their website to showcase the assets of the community and make arguments about why Homewood is a good fit for potential residents.

- a tight-knit, generational community that is family-oriented
- a quiet lifestyle

In addition, Beecher has access to several Will County Forest Preserves, providing Beecher residents the opportunity to spend time in nature hiking, biking, camping, sledding, picnicking, bird watching, plant identifying and more. These community assets should be leveraged through resident testimony and storytelling when marketing Beecher as a great place to live.

Welcome Diversity

In 2000, 63% of young adults in the U.S. between 18 and 34 were white. In 2016, just 55% of them were white. This change in demographics among young adults in the Millennial Generation means that communities must recognize that diversity is an inherent part of the generation, and that acceptance of diversity will be key to attracting and retaining millennials, a generation that generally values diversity.**

**The Brookings Institution, "Diversity defines the millennial generation," June 2016, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2016/06/28/diversity-defines-the-millennial-generation/>

Historically Beecher had very little ethnic and racial diversity (98% white in 2000), but the ethnic and racial composition of Beecher is changing. The number of Hispanic residents has grown since 2000 (from 36 to an estimated 267 in 2017) and is projected to continue to increase. Therefore, facilitating greater integration between Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents is an important part of embracing diversity going forward. Beecher should continue to celebrate and encourage diversity, including the cultural history of different ethnicities.

Embracing diversity in Beecher could occur in several ways. The *CMAP Immigrant Integration Toolkit* is one of many resources that the Village can use to consider appropriate ways to make all new residents, but especially those from minority and immigrant backgrounds feel welcome and celebrated. Beecher has several annual celebrations and events that have become staples of the community, such as the Lions Club Summerfest. The Village should work with the library and schools to consider the addition of events and programs to celebrate diversity and promote respect and understanding of all cultures in the community.

Education

Many families chose to live where there are good schools that provide a quality education for their children. Supporting policies and strategies to continue to provide quality academics, recreation, and the arts through the Beecher 200U School District is an important step in attracting new families. Beecher 200U School District operates an elementary school, a junior high and a high school. Proficiency exams indicate that students in the district perform at or better than the state average in most areas (Figure 4.5). In 2017, 89% were considered college ready, indicating that they achieved a score of at least a 21 on the ACT assessment taken prior to graduation.

All three Beecher schools are rated as commendable. The 200U District's financial capacity for the 2017-2018 school year was 75% of the adequacy target, which is considered the minimum amount required to provide a high-quality education. Spending per pupil was 27% lower in the 200U District than the state average per pupil.

Schools provide younger generations the chance to explore their interests and develop skills that they need to succeed as adults. While still in school, students should be provided the opportunity to explore a variety of careers and professions,



CMAP Immigrant Integration Toolkit (2014) (<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs/local-ordinances-toolkits/immigrant-integration>)

financial resources for those pursuits and learn how to find the tools and resources that will help them make successful transitions upon graduation from school to adult life.

All three Beecher schools have physical capacity to support additional student growth, and if needed, the ability to expand on-site. The School District owns an additional property on the west side of town (northeast corner of Miller Road and Racine Avenue). This property was obtained when the community was growing rapidly. However, it is unlikely that this site will be needed in the foreseeable future, and the Comprehensive Plan envisions this property being sold and developed for a future industrial use. This site is included in the Village's new TIF District.

Access to quality continuing educational opportunities is also important to enhancing Beecher is a great place to live. Beecher is a part of the Prairie State College District. Prairie State College, located less than 30 minutes due north in Chicago Heights, offers Associates degrees in a wide range of academic programs and many continuing educational opportunities. Governors State University in nearby University

Park (less than a 20-minute drive) offers both bachelor's and Master's degrees in many fields of study. Thirty-minutes southwest in Bourbonnais is Olivet Nazarene University, with strengths in engineering, nursing and business. In addition to these proximate regional school locations, Beecher residents can access virtually limitless on-line educational opportunities given the communities access to broadband internet.

A 2010 report by the Kaufman Foundation* shows that startups created the bulk of net new jobs in the US since 1977 (Figure 4.4). Promoting entrepreneurship among students in Beecher schools can help cultivate confidence in their students' aspirations. Beecher should continue to support programming and counseling for students that promotes exploration and connects students with the tools and skills they need to succeed.

Figure 4.4: Startups Create Most New Net Jobs in the US*

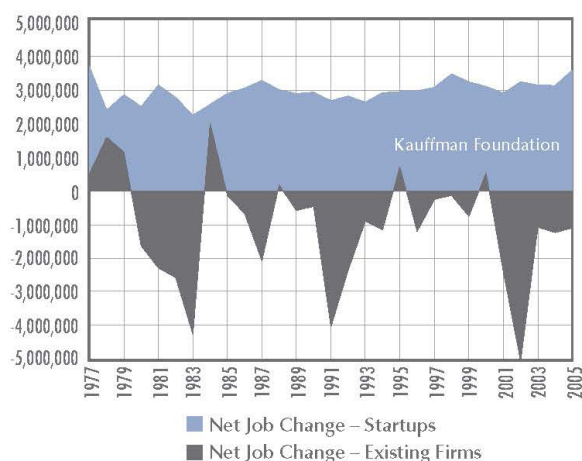


Figure 4.5: Beecher 200U School District Enrollment and Proficiency

	2016-17 Enrollment	2017-18 Enrollment	2016-17 Proficiency Levels	2017-18 Proficiency Levels	2017-18 State Proficiency Levels
Beecher High School	328	323	89% Graduation Rate 522 ELA (SAT avg) 497 Math (SAT avg)	92% Graduate Rate 496 ELA (SAT avg) 480 Math (SAT avg)	85% Graduation Rate 505 ELA (SAT avg) 501 Math (SAT avg)
Beecher Junior High	256	257	50% ELA 24% Math	46% ELA 25% Math	37% ELA 30% Math
Beecher Elementary School	433	427	61% ELA 38% Math	62% ELA 39% Math	37% ELA 32% Math
TOTAL	1,017	1,007			

Source: Illinois Report Card

BEECHER 200U SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Goals | December 10, 2018

Academic Excellence

The District will extend its focus on Academic Excellence, including but not limited to an emphasis on academic opportunities and supports, increased students achievement through advances in technology and the implementation of best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Beecher 200U will continue to develop a strong organizational culture and retain quality educators. Furthermore, solid District student enrollment will be promoted from the advancement of Beecher 200U's excellent educational reputation.

Facilities

The District will provide a modern, functional campus that meets the educational needs of all students, staff, and community members with an emphasis on safety.

Finance

The District will strive to maintain a healthy reserves while providing the resources necessary to support the other Board Goals and being mindful of the impact that property taxes have on the community and its citizens.

Community Engagement

The District will engage the community through communication, partnerships, and alumni connectedness.

*The Kaufman Foundation, "The Importance of Startups in Job Creation and Job Destruction", July 2010, https://www.kauffman.org/-/media/kauffman_org/research-reports-and-covers/2010/07/firm_formation_importance_of_startups.pdf

HOUSING OPTIONS

In order to retain and attract new residents, Beecher needs to provide a variety of housing options which are affordable for a range of households, including young families, established families, retirees and aging seniors. The Village should encourage the development of housing at a range of price points to expand housing options. In addition, the Village should also continue to promote maintenance of the existing housing stock.

A 2013 Gallup poll found that one in four Americans move every five years* and on average, Americans move 11 times over the course of their lifetime.** There are a number of reasons why people move, and not all moves are or need to be to a different community.

Beecher should pursue a healthy mix of housing to include starter homes/smaller homes, multi-family residences, townhomes, senior living facilities, and multigenerational housing options. Retirees and seniors who desire to age in place may not be able to age in their current homes but should be able to find suitable alternatives in their community. A household may simply need a smaller or larger home, a single

or multistory home, a home with a smaller yard, a home with space for a parent or relative, a retirement community, or an assisted living facility etc. A young family may have family and friends in Beecher but may be unable to afford purchasing a home in Beecher. Young adults may desire to stay and work in the community but may be unable to find a suitable option to rent. Beecher should aim to provide a variety of housing options so that as residents' needs change, they can move within the community.

Housing Affordability

Beecher residents, especially renters, are facing high cost-burdens and would benefit from the opportunity to find appropriate housing at lower-costs. In 2009, 42% of homeowners and 27% of renters were spending greater than 30% of their income on housing costs. In 2014, 31% of all homeowners (11% decrease) and 50% of all renters (21% increase) in Beecher spent more than 30% of their income on housing (Figure 4.6). The greater proportion of income that residents spend on housing costs impacts their ability to spend money in other areas and support local businesses, including retail, restaurants, leisure activities etc. The median gross rent for a two-bedroom unit in 2016 was \$845 and \$1164 for a three-bedroom unit (ACS 2016 5-year estimates). To avoid cost-burden, a household would need to earn a minimum of \$34,000 per year to afford a two-bedroom unit at \$845 per month.

The Village has a limited variety of housing options—most homes are single-family or two-family structures, with approximately 14% of residents currently renting. There are limited apartment options in Beecher. The lack of variety in housing types limits the opportunity for a range of households to find appropriate housing at an affordable price.

Figure 4.6: Cost-Burden, Owners and Renters in the Village of Beecher, 2009 -2014

	Homeowners		Renters	
	2009	2014	2009	2014
Cost-Burdened (30-50%)	27%	25%	5%	29%
Severely Cost-Burdened (50%+)	15%	6%	22%	21%

Source: ACS 2005-09; ACS 2010-14; CMAP Tool



* Protect America, "How Many Times Do Americans Move In Their Lifetime?", March 2017, https://www.protectamerica.com/home-security-blog/just-for-fun/many-times-americans-move-lifetime_12718
**FiveThirtyEight, "How Many Times Does the Average Person Move?", January 2015, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-many-times-the-average-person-moves/>

SENIOR HOUSING DEMAND

Analysis of migration trends and Census data suggests growth of roughly 40 senior households per year over the next five years in Beecher. While some of these households may be appropriately accommodated in existing homes, not all will be. The Village should support construction of a variety of housing types, including small homes with limited yards, townhomes, multi-family apartments, and senior living facilities. With a greater variety of housing options, Beecher will reposition itself as a community where residents can remain despite changing housing needs.

Given Beecher's proximity to the border with Indiana, it is normal for residents in both Illinois and Indiana to take advantage of the benefits of living, working, and shopping across state lines. The State of Illinois currently exempts multiple forms of retirement income from taxation, including social security and pension income. In Indiana, however, only social security benefits are exempt from taxation. In the coming years, this could incentivize greater in-migration of retired residents from Indiana to Illinois communities, especially those near the border such as Beecher.

Aging in Place

National trends indicate that 90% of people over age 65 desire to stay in their home as long as possible, and 80% believe that their current residence is where they will continue to live.* For seniors, housing choice often boils down to a desire to remain connected to community, while also anticipating the need for a more amenable neighborhood and additional services, in context with finances. The challenge is that not all senior housing options are able to cost-effectively or operationally offer a full range of services that allow people to transition from age-restricted housing to independent living, to assisted living, to nursing / memory care in one location. While the continuing care retirement center (CCRC) model does respond to these challenges, it also tends to be more expensive. Other factors include:

CMAP

Aging in Place White Paper

June 2016

The CMAP Aging in Place White Paper (2016) shares several strategies for local governments to consider promoting to support aging in place. The report emphasizes that age-friendly neighborhoods "...are walkable, offer housing and transportation choices, as well as access to basic needs and amenities...". The following strategies focus on neighborhood design and housing policies.

Promote mixed-use: accommodate a variety of uses in a compact, pedestrian-friendly development pattern.

Allow a diversity of residential districts and housing types:








- allow townhouses, apartments, and condominiums in various zones, including single-family
- allow assisted living facilities in single-family zones
- encourage smaller minimum floor areas, smaller lot sizes, and more compact development
- allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and multigenerational homes
- reduce parking requirements for senior housing

Accommodate diverse living arrangements: allow child and elder care in residential settings and allow older adults and caregivers to reside together.

*National Conference of State Legislatures and the AARP Public Policy Institute, "Aging in Place: A State Survey of Livability Policies and Practices", December 2011, <https://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/ppi/liv-com/ib190.pdf>

**AARP Livability Index, Beecher, IL, March 2019, <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/search#Beecher+IL+60401+USA>

Figure 4.7: Beecher AARP Livability Index (2019)

	Livability Categories	Beecher Score	Positive Factors	Negative Factors
TOP THIRD	 Environment <i>clean air and water</i>	68	Good local and regional air quality	None
MIDDLE THIRD	 Opportunity <i>inclusion and possibilities</i>	66	Jobs, high school graduation rate, income equality	Age diversity
	 Neighborhood <i>access to life, work, and play</i>	55	Access to parks, low crime rate, mixed-use neighborhoods	Access to jobs by transit
	 Transportation <i>safe and convenient options</i>	51	ADA-accessibility, low congestion, low speed limits	Frequency of local transit service, household transportation costs, crash rate
	 Health <i>prevention, access and quality</i>	50	Access to health care	Patient satisfaction with local hospitals, preventable hospitalization rate
	 Engagement <i>civic and social involvement</i>	47	Availability of local cultural facilities	Broadband cost and speed, number of organizations per 10,000 population
	 Housing <i>affordability and access</i>	36	Number of subsidized housing units per 10,000 people	Housing Costs, percent of homes with zero-step entrances
BOTTOM THIRD	<i>This community does not score below average in any of the Livability Categories.</i>			

- While most baby boomers are still arguably 10 years away from active pressure to pivot toward senior housing, recent trends toward higher property taxes do encourage people to downsize their homes.
- The general desire to age in place remains a basic interest, which is supporting demand for home-based health care services, supported by evolving wearable technologies and access to on-demand transportation services, i.e. Uber / Lyft.
- Changes in insurance markets, health care regulation, and industry consolidation remain a dynamic that is impacting the industry.

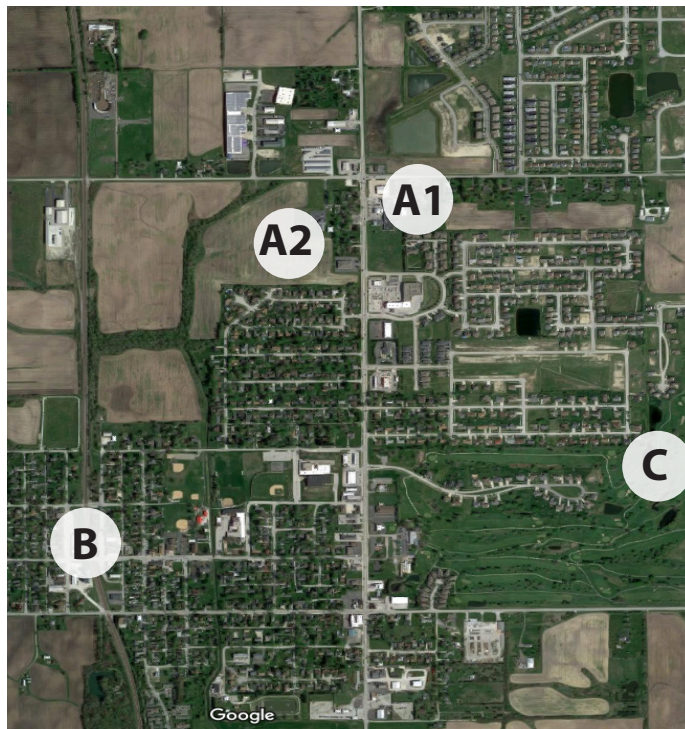


AARP has created a Livability Index that scores communities and neighborhoods against a range of criteria which support aging in place (Figure 4.7). In 2018, Beecher's livability index was 53/100, and of all criteria, housing was found to be the greatest challenge, rated 36/100.* Neighboring communities Crete and Peotone have similar indexes. For comparison, the highest rated small town (less than 100,000 population) in the nation is Fitchburg, Wisconsin with a score of 65. Neighborhoods that accommodate a variety of uses in compact, pedestrian-friendly development patterns are generally well suited for aging in place, so the Village should simultaneously aim to improve mobility throughout the community (CMAP Aging in Place White Paper, 2016).

Opportunity Sites for Senior Housing

While the Village will continue to seek a greater variety of housing types, housing suitable for seniors should be primarily located near amenities and institutions. Currently, Beecher Manor is the only nursing and rehabilitation facility in the Village, providing short-term, long-term and respite care. The facility was recently expanded and already operates near capacity but has limited room for future expansion. The Village should aim to expand senior housing options, including independent and assisted living facilities. The most appropriate sites within current Village limits for such a facility would be adjacent to or nearby Beecher Manor (A1, A2), or in or near Downtown (B) or along Cardinal Creek Boulevard

Figure 4.8: Senior Housing Opportunity Sites



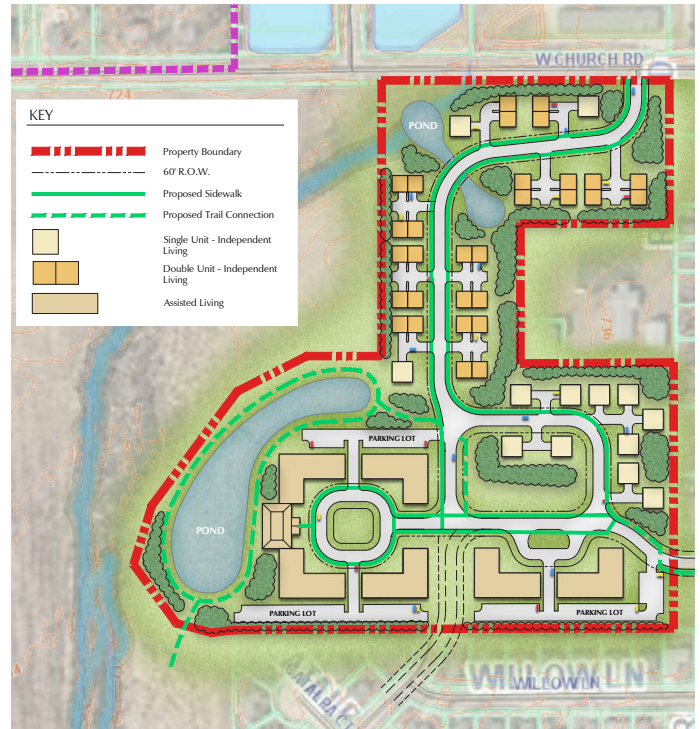
(C) (Figure 4.8). The Cardinal Creek Drive location would be near the Washington Township building that offers several programs and opportunities for seniors.

Site A2 is the Village's preferred site for an assisted living or multi-family independent living facility. This site is near grocery and other shopping options, can easily be linked to trails, has access to utilities, is within the TIF and Enterprise Zone, and has a property owner interested in attracting this type of development. Figure 4.9 illustrates one concept for how senior housing could be developed on the Site A2. The site is large enough that multiple types of housing could be developed, providing a range of senior living options. A marketing sheet that highlights opportunities for senior housing on this and other sites in Beecher is provided in the Appendix.

COMMUNITY GATHERING

Beecher has been an established community for almost 150 years. Over that time, residents have come and gone, businesses have opened and closed, and the size and shape of the community has changed dramatically. In the midst of these changes, Beecher is still a community of neighbors, family, and friends. Over the next 20 years, the Village aims to attract new residents and families and forge a sense of community and identity between existing and future residents. One way to do this is by gathering the community together at community events, local schools, the library etc.

Figure 4.9: Senior Housing Concept Plan



Firemen's Park has been used as a community event location since the 1920s, when the land was purchased by the Volunteer Fire Department to create the first public park in Beecher. The 9 acre park is the second largest in Beecher and remains a great space for community-wide activities. Ensuring that sidewalks and paths and other mobility improvements throughout the Village are well-maintained will reinforce the park as an accessible community space. As the community grows and becomes more diverse, the Village should consider the inclusion of new events at Firemen's Park and other centrally located places.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The entire Village of Beecher is located within Washington Township. Together, the Village and the Township provide numerous services for residents. Throughout the life of this plan, facility expansion needs are expected to be limited unless population growth exceeds 8,000.

Washington Township The Township coordinates Dial-A-Ride transportation services within the Township and local assistance programs. Will County also provides Dial-A-Ride services. The Village coordinates emergency services, including fire and police protection, library services, voting and notary and public information access. Public works maintains and operates public streets the sewer and water system, three wells and pumps, parkway trees, six public buildings and all Village parks.

Village Hall has been in its current location, a repurposed bank facility, since 2014. The facility is adequate for current needs and the location is centrally located within the Village along Route 1/Dixie Highway. However, meeting space is limited, and a large public hearing would likely require relocation to a different facility, such as the Washington Township Building.

The Public Works Department is located along Cardinal Creek Boulevard near Indiana Avenue. The department's current location meets the needs of the department. As Beecher continues to grow, the responsibilities of the department will increase. The existing public works location has room to accommodate anticipated expansion to serve a community of up to 10,000. The expansion of utilities may require the development of new facilities in conjunction with service needs.



The Police Department is located along Penfield Avenue in the former Village Hall. The department has an adequate number of officers and staff and the current building meets the needs of the department. However, the Downtown location of the police station has limited space available for parking and storage of vehicles. To address this issue, the Village recently acquired a property south and west of the station along Reed Street to accommodate vehicle storage and parking.

The Department strives to partner with both local businesses and local organizations. For example, the Department works closely with Beecher 200U, including working to coordinate a School Resource Officer and conducting emergency training, including active shooter drills.

As Beecher continues to grow, the department will consider increasing staffing levels and facilities as needed. Additional land was recently acquired near the police station to accommodate expanded vehicle parking and storage. Staffing should remain proportional to the Village's population. Starting in the 2019-2020 school year, Beecher 200U will once again have a School Resource Officer (SRO) who will be "providing lessons on decision-making for safe and healthy lifestyles, bullying/cyber-bullying, and internet safety" (Superintendent's Blog).

The Beecher Fire Protection District is located along Penfield Avenue. The district currently has an adequate number of staff which are trained for a number of services include fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue services, hazardous materials response and disaster response. The district is exploring locations for a second station to enhance service within the Village. A second fire station location should take into consideration future growth and access issues (challenges created by railroad crossings), particularly future industrial growth on the north and west side of the Village. The current station location on Penfield provides good access to most incorporated areas of Beecher. However, a closed railroad crossing can delay access to areas on the west side of town. Currently, the only grade-separated rail crossing is along Corning Road, approximately one mile south of the existing station. Since most of Beecher's future growth areas are to the north, a location along Eagle Lake Road may be appropriate in the future.



The Fire District is also exploring opportunities to create a local training facility, potentially in cooperation with other local governments and Fire Districts. Currently, the nearest

training facility is in Frankfort around 30 minutes away.

Beecher Library is located along Penfield Avenue. The library offers several services and education programs for residents. The library anticipates that as the community continues to become more diverse that it will begin to organize events and support programming that celebrate the diversity in cultures and ethnicities that make up Beecher. Additionally, a survey in 2011 identified a need to provide a dedicated community room in the library for programs and events and a meeting room for small groups.

This existing library does not have any dedicated community or event space and the current location of the library does not provide an opportunity for easily increasing space. The library is exploring opportunities to address this current need for meeting/event space.



RECOMMENDATIONS

4-1 Retain and attract new residents, including Seniors and Millennials.

- 4-1-1 Promote Beecher as a great place to live.
- 4-1-2 Know and show the assets of the community.
- 4-1-3 Welcome diversity.
- 4-1-4 Support policies and strategies (see Beecher 200Us Goals on page 32) that enable local schools to continue to provide a high-quality education system.
- 4-1-5 Promote access to high-speed, quality internet providers, on par or better than access in neighboring communities.

4-2 Ensure there is a variety of housing options in Beecher to support the needs of existing and future residents.

- 4-2-1 Expand the variety of housing options in Beecher by encouraging the construction and maintenance of different housing types at a range of price points.
- 4-2-2 Encourage expanded residential options for seniors, including the development of senior housing near cultural and commercial facilities.
- 4-2-3 Encourage the development of single-family attached, two-family, and multi-family homes to create more affordable housing for young families, retirees, and seniors.

4-3 Inspire a Sense of Community among new and existing residents.

- 4-3-1 Continue to use established and centralized community spaces for regular events.
- 4-3-2 Continue to utilize social media (Facebook, Next Door, etc.) to inform the community of events, activities, and resources.

4-4 Provide excellent community facilities.

- 4-4-1 Work with the Fire Department to identify an appropriate location for a future fire station and a potential training facility.
- 4-4-2 Work with the Beecher Library to provide indoor space for community events and activities.
- 4-4-3 Provide space for police vehicles (parking and storage) near the existing station.
- 4-4-4 Continue to promote intergovernmental cooperation and sharing of resources within the Beecher area



Enhanced Parks + Recreation Opportunities

5

INTRODUCTION

Across the United States communities are looking critically at ways to promote healthy living. Walkable and bikeable communities with access to trails, forest preserves, parks and recreation facilities offer residents a range of options to be active at any age. Residents of Beecher have access locally to ten parks, located primarily within neighborhoods. Access to thousands of acres of public open space in nearby Will County Forest Preserves is also available. Local schools and organizations coordinate sports teams and the Beecher Youth Commission plans a variety of youth-oriented events. Throughout the Beecher 2040 process, residents of all ages shared a desire for a greater variety of recreation opportunities and options close to home, especially for youth.

PARK OPERATIONS

The Village of Beecher currently owns and operates all 10 of the local parks. Recreational programming is done by local sports associations, with the Beecher Youth Commission organizing limited events and programs for younger residents. This system has served the community well in the past, but certainly has its challenges. Park maintenance is just one of many responsibilities for public works staff, and local sports associations and the Youth Commission operate through a dedicated, but often overburdened, group of volunteers.

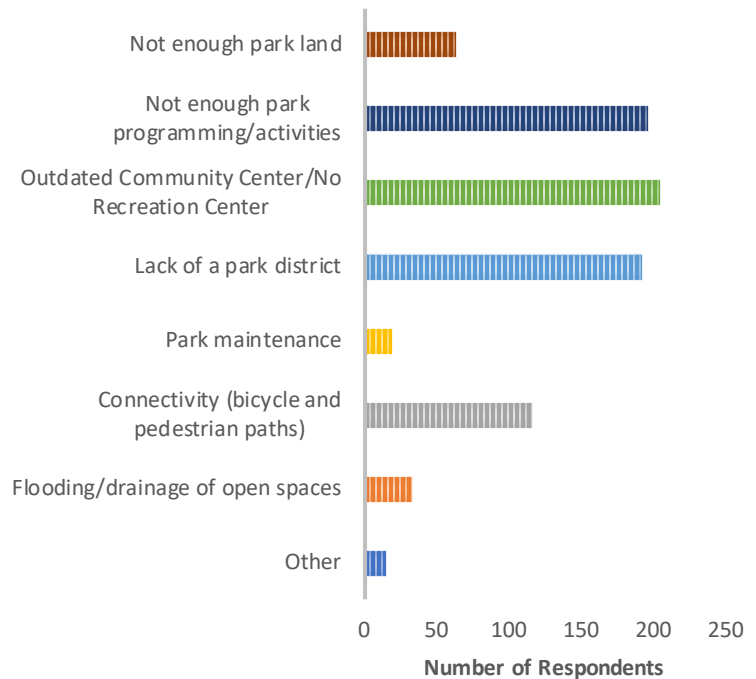
The State of Illinois is somewhat unique, in that many local communities have created a separate Park District to own and operate parks and recreational facilities. Park Districts are separate governmental entities designed to focus solely on provision of recreational opportunities for their constituents. The Village of Beecher currently does not have a park district. Respondents of the Beecher 2040 survey overwhelmingly support the creation of a Park District to maintain and operate park and recreation activities in Beecher. However, costs were not identified in the survey, which could have impacted survey responses.

The community has several options regarding the continued operation of parks and recreation offerings in the community, including:

- Maintain existing systems, including maintenance of parks through the public works department and partnering with Beecher Recreation and other organizations to develop and operate recreational programs.
- Create an independent Park District.
- Create a separate Park Department within Village government.

Figure 5.1: Beecher 2040 Survey Results:

What are the major issues relating to parks and recreation in the Village?



Water Tower Park Playground

Maintaining existing systems is certainly the most cost-effective solution as funds are already budgeted for existing activities. However, lack of dedicated resources specific to parks and recreation will challenge the ability of the Village to expand park facilities and recreational programs.

In Illinois, creation of a park district must be done by referendum and offer unique benefits and challenges. Creation of such as district in Beecher would require strong champions to promote the idea and educate the community on the benefits and the costs associated with having a separate district. It is important to note that the survey question noted above did not address the cost factor associated with an additional property tax to support the district. Creation of a separate park district would need to be a grass roots effort from the community – it cannot, and should not, be driven solely by the Village’s appointed and elected officials.

Another option, rather than creating a separate park district would be to create a parks and recreation department within the Village government. While the Village is too small to support a separate department at the present time, if the Village does grow and additional staff is required, hiring someone with a background in parks and recreation would be an excellent starting point.

The goals behind establishing a Park District or a Park and Recreation Department would be to:

- Enhance the coordination of events and programming in Beecher parks;
- Improve the representation of recreational needs in the community; and
- Provide consistent and dedicated marketing support for events and programming.

PARKLAND ACCESS

For every 1,000 residents in Beecher, there are currently 7.4 acres of parkland in the Village and an additional 1,900 acres of parkland regionally. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends that communities provide a minimum of 6.25 acres/1,000 residents. The CMAP ON TO 2050 plan challenges communities in the region to provide 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. As the community grows, the Village should be vigilant in ensuring that new residential developments have dedicated park areas and that the proportion of parkland for residents is maintained if not increased.

Figure 5.2: Park Land Comparison

	Acres per 1,000 residents	Residents per Park
Beecher Parks	7.4	439
2017 National Average	10.1	2,114

Figure 5.3: Open Space in and near Beecher

Park Name	Acres
Mini-Parks	
Water Tower Park	.25
Depot Park	.5
Women’s Welfare Park	.5
Hunter’s Chase Park	.5
Neighborhood Parks	
Hunter’s Chase East Park	1
Prairie Park	3
Lions Park	5
Nantucket Cove Park	3
Community Parks	
Firemen’s Park	9
Welton Stedt Park	10
TOTAL ACRES	32.75
Regional Parks	
Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve	891
Raccoon Grove Nature Preserve	213
Monee Reservoir	248
Black Walnut Creek Preserve	109
Plum Valley Preserve	455
TOTAL REGIONAL ACRES	1,916

Beecher Parks

The sizes and types of parks within Beecher at present provide access to parkland, but many of the parks are limited in function and insufficient for a growing community. Several parks in Beecher are “mini-parks”, which are less than a quarter of an acre in size. Firemen’s Park and Welton Stedt Park are the largest parks at 9 and 10 acres, respectively. While residents can access any of these parks easily by car, people are more likely to walk to parks when they are a half mile (10-minute walk) or closer to home.

Figure 5.4: Park Access Map

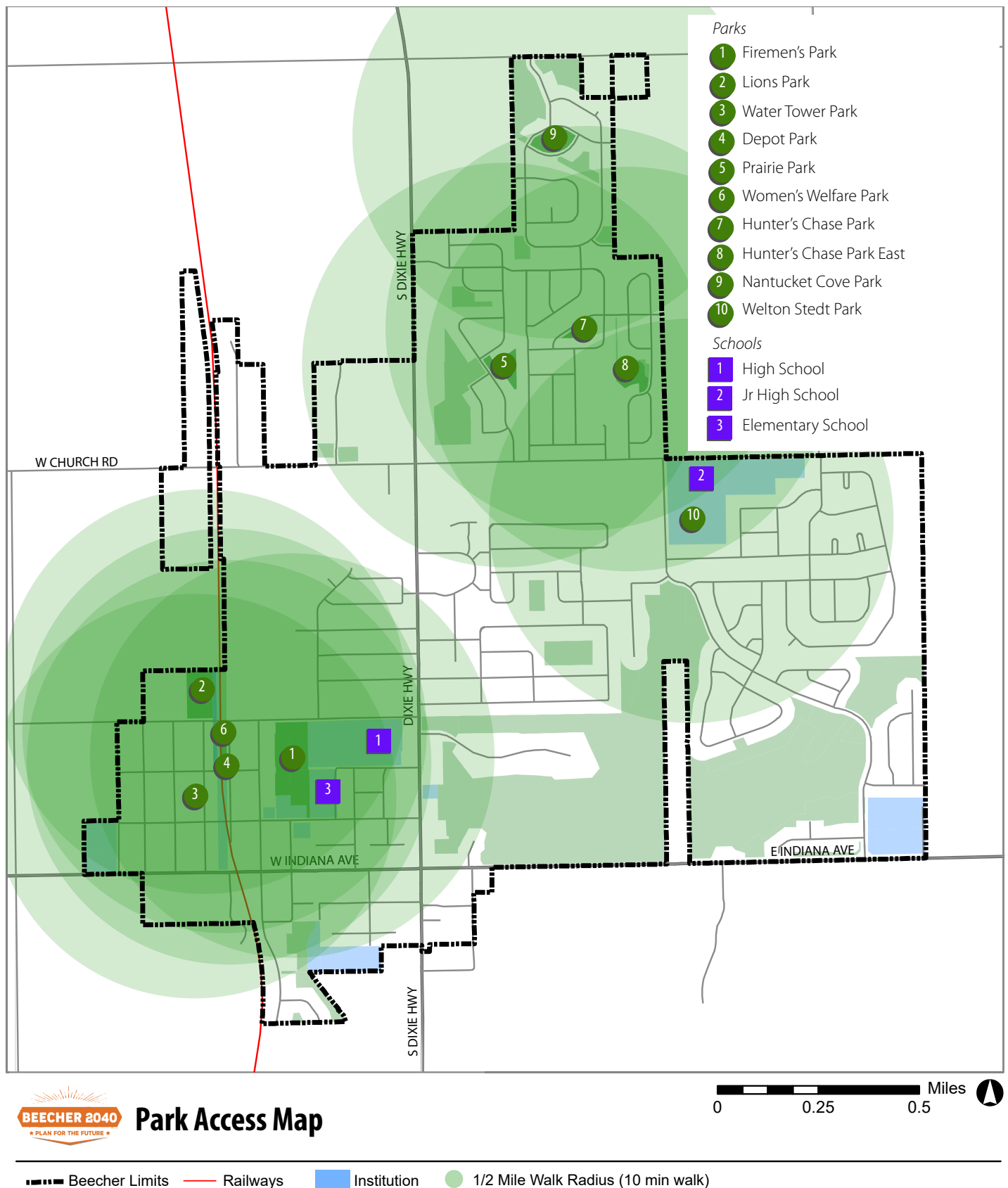


Figure 5.5: Park Land Comparison

Facility	Average # in Illinois per 1,000 pop.*	Facilities Needed in Beecher to match State Averages	# Facilities in Beecher	Surplus/Deficit
1. Water-Based Facilities				
Fishing Piers & Docks (4)	0.0408	0.2	0	0
Aquatic Centers/ Pools	0.0282	0.1	0	-0.1
Spray Grounds	0.0292	0.1	0	-0.1
2. Trails				
Trails (Miles)	0.1630	0.7	0.78	0.06
Bike Trails (Miles)	0.1058	0.5	0	-0.47
Nature Trails (Miles)	0.0547	0.2	0	-0.24
3. Sports Facilities				
Baseball Fields	0.2552	1.1	4	3
Softball Fields	0.1425	0.6	3	2
Basketball Courts	0.2500	1.1	0	-1
Soccer Fields	0.1779	0.8	3	2
Skate Parks	0.0163	0.1	0	0
Golf Course (18 holes)	0.0081	0.0	1	1
Golf Course (9 holes)	0.0051	0.0	1	1
Golf Course (disk or frisbee)	0.0080	0.0	0	0
Tennis Courts (3)	0.8700	3.8	0	-4
Outdoor Ice Rink	n/a	n/a	1	n/a
Volleyball Courts	0.1900	0.8	0	-1
4. Day-Use Facilities				
Picnic Shelters	0.2060	0.9	3	2
Playgrounds	0.4035	1.8	5	3
Dog Parks	0.0074	0.0	0	0

**State of Illinois Outdoor Recreation Plan*

There are four mini-parks in Beecher, many of which are primarily a memorial space with landscaping. Neighborhood parks, such as Hunter's Chase East Park and Prairie Park, are convenient for nearby residents and offer swing sets and open space. Lions Park is larger but is less accessible for residents due to its location. The Welton Stedt Park is used by the junior high school but is open for the public outside of school hours and is the largest park in the community. Firemen's Park operates as the primary community park but modern community parks are often in the 15 to 50 acre range.

Forest Preserves

Beecher residents are only a few miles from several Will County Forest Preserve areas, which provide over 1,300 acres of open space to residents of Beecher. In addition to activities such as hiking, camping, and picnicking, visitors have access to the Plum Creek Greenway Trail. The 3.15-mile-long crushed limestone trail winds through Goodenow Grove and is ideal for biking, running, horseback riding, skiing, and snowshoeing.

This plan recommends that the Village of Beecher partner with the Forest Preserve District to create a trail that connects with the southern entrance to the Greenway at Goodenow Road, west of Park Avenue. While the trail should primarily aim to connect to the Greenway Trail, the trail could be extended east along Trim Creek as residential development occurs.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

There are some areas of Beecher where residents do not live within a half mile of any park and the routes to reach the nearest parks are indirect (Figure 5.4):

- South of Indiana Avenue – The existing residential portion of this area is relatively small. However, if additional residential development occurs south of the existing Village limits, a new park could be developed to serve this area.

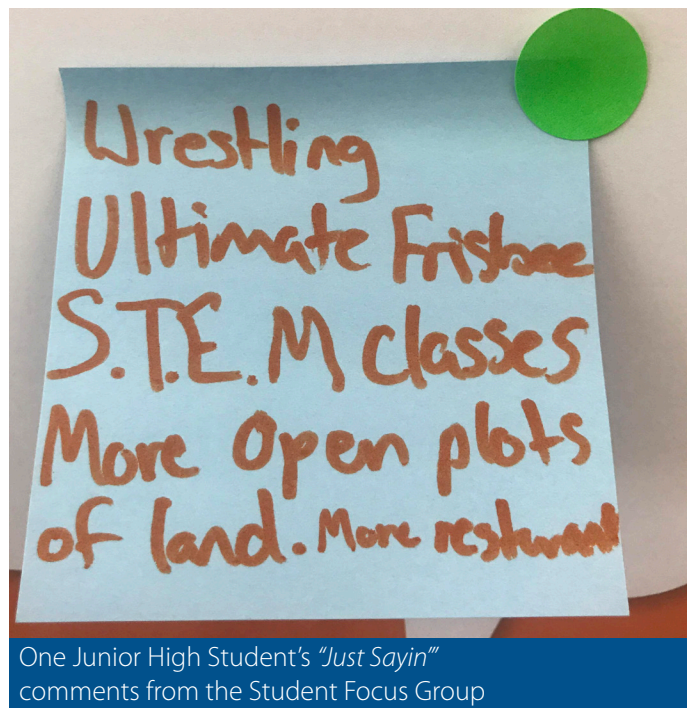
- South end of Cardinal Creek Boulevard – Facilities including a swimming pool and clubhouse. A playground is needed - which can either be developed by the Village after acquisition of a few of the existing vacant lots, or could be developed by the existing Cardinal Creek association as a private recreational amenity serving subdivision residents.
- East of Dixie Highway/north of Miller Street/south of Pine Street/west of Cardinal Creek Boulevard. – As the area develops, the Village should look to acquire a small neighborhood park in this area, ideally along Fir Street given its central location within this portion of the community.

In addition to these potential park sites, the Village should work with developers of any future residential subdivisions to provide neighborhood park spaces that is within walking distance of all residents. The Future Park and Trail Plan shows several general locations for new parks within planned residential areas, including a site south of Eagle Lake Road and west of Park Avenue, and a site south of Indiana Avenue near Trim Creeks.

RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMMING

A greater variety of parkland uses could be incorporated as well, providing dedicated space for sports, family activities and more. Students indicated that they feel they do have convenient parks, but that activities at many parks are limited and not appropriate for a range of ages. The Village should consider adding or expanding park elements that can be used by a variety of ages, including a splash pad, permanent corn hole games, frisbee golf, park benches, etc. There has also been some local interest in a dog park. Given Beecher's location, the community should explore the feasibility of establishing sports facilities that could be used by the region for games and tournaments.

Figure 5.5. compares recreational facilities in Beecher to the average number of such facilities in Illinois. While Beecher general exceeds these averages in most categories, this analysis suggests opportunities for an outdoor basketball court, tennis courts, a volleyball court, and some additional trails. There is very limited space in existing parks to accommodate these types of facilities. These facilities could best be accommodated in a new park given these space limitations – and then only after additional surveys to determine local need as compared to the state averages highlighted in Figure 5.5. However, this plan does outline recommendations for additional trails that would provide recreational opportunities for residents of all ages.



Given the interest expressed in the planning process and limited options locally, it is recommended that the Village pursue an Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) and/or Bike Trail grant application to address existing needs including:

- expansion of the Village's bike trail network
- provision of a splash pad
- installation of additional recreational amenities for all ages such as a permanent cornhole game or additional outdoor fitness stations



Playground equipment at a Beecher Park

Youth Recreation

The Beecher 200U School District offers students the chance to participate in a number of sports throughout the school year, including basketball, baseball, soccer, volleyball, track and field etc. Beecher Rec, a local non-profit organization, coordinates and schedules sports teams for youth in addition to school sports programs. Lynn Marie's School of Dance offers dance classes and Faith Church coordinates youth programs that incorporate recreation, including a day camp in the summers. Other recreation organizations include Beecher P.A.K.T., a non-profit organization that teaches karate to youth; and the Manteno Youth Soccer Association which organizes soccer for youth in Beecher, Grant Park, Manteno, and Peotone.

The Beecher Youth Commission organizes events throughout the year for youth ranging from preschool to age 15. The commission encourages high school students to volunteer. Examples of events and activities include parades, haunted houses, bowling, and parent-child dances. While the youth commission could potentially expand the number and types of events it organizes, parents and youth indicate that expanding every day opportunities for youth to socialize and recreate is the primary goal.

All Ages Recreation

At present, existing recreation programs are geared primarily towards youth and there is no recreation center within the community. As a community with a wide range of ages, the coordination of recreational opportunities for the whole community is an important step in promoting a healthy, active lifestyle in the Village. There are several privately-owned fitness facilities in Beecher which provide fitness classes and weight training, including Fitness Premier, Phoenix Fitness 2, Inaka Dojo, and Becker Fitness & Tanning. Beecher Part-Time Players is a long-standing theater group which organizes productions in Beecher with an all-ages cast. The group has a summer kids camp and teaches youth about stage production, lighting, costuming etc.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Youth Recreation

Throughout the Beecher 2040 process, residents and students made it clear that expanding extracurricular activities and recreation opportunities for youth is an important goal. While there are several options for youth to play sports, using local parks for uncoordinated and impromptu games and activities requires youth to be creative. Parents also said that children involved in sports often travel to other municipalities where there are larger or more accommodating sports facilities for games and tournaments.

Figure 5.6: Beecher Brainstorm, Junior High Student Focus Group



Figure 5.7: Beecher 2040 Survey Results:

Would you or anyone in your family utilize a skate park if one was built in the community?

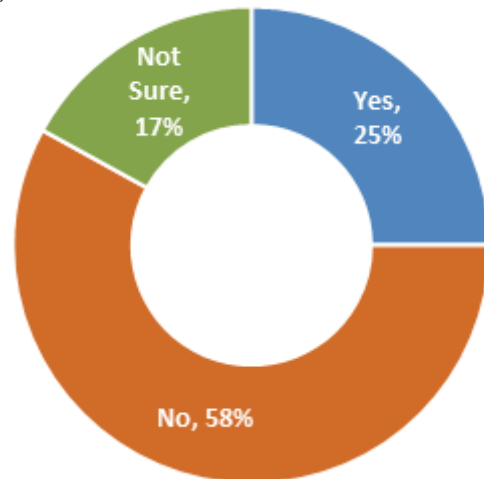


Figure 5.8: Beecher 2040 Survey Results:

Would you or anyone in your family utilize a splash pad park if one was built in the community?

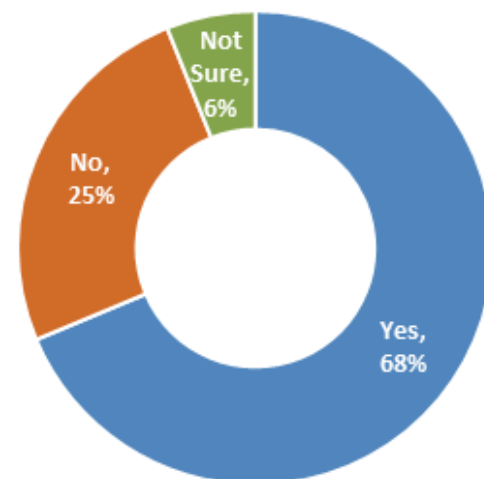
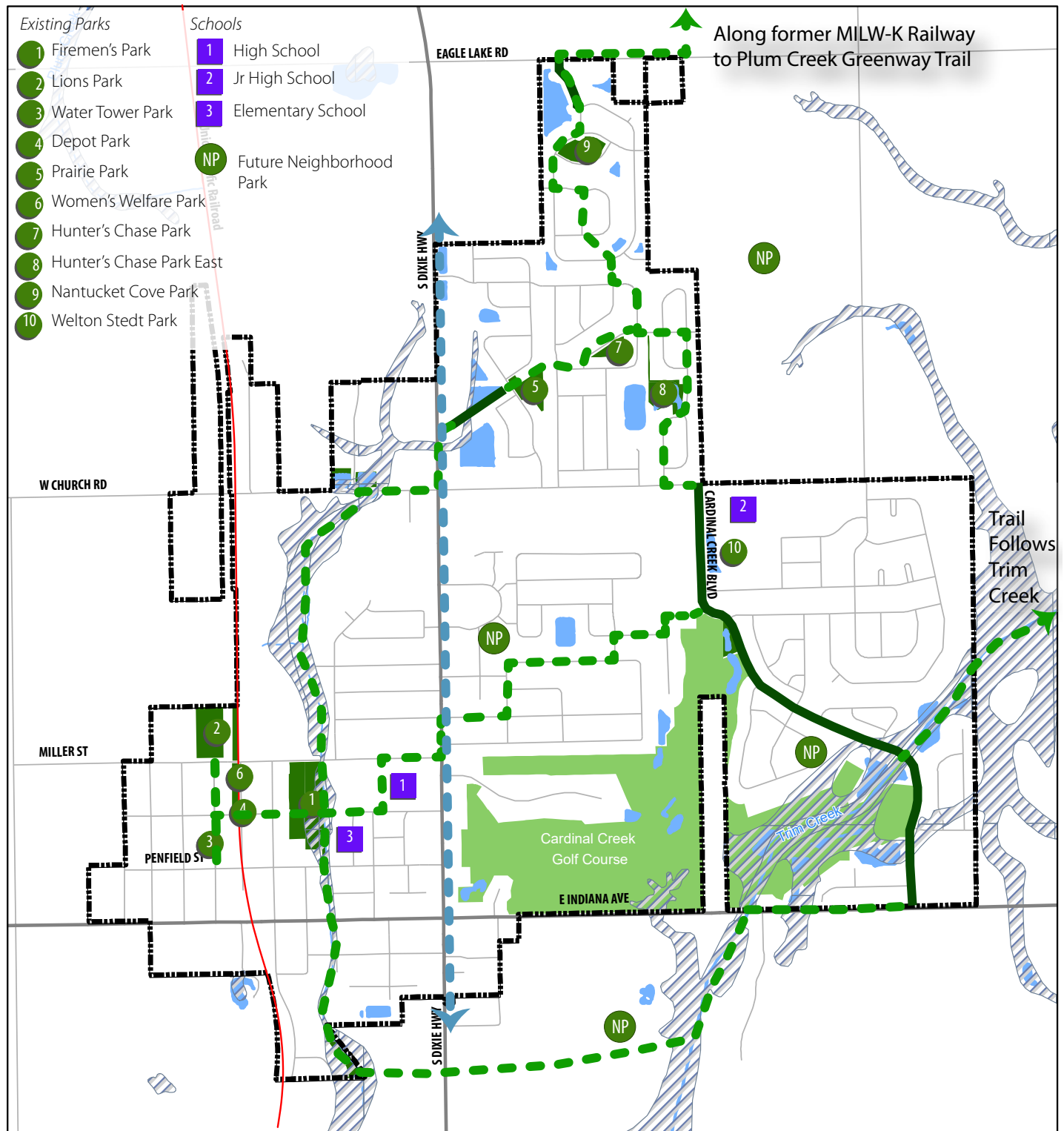


Figure 5.9: Future Park & Trail Plan



FUTURE PARK & TRAIL PLAN

0 0.25 0.5 Miles



- | | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Village Limits | Existing Paved Trail | Waterways |
| Railroad | Proposed Trail Connections | Waterbodies |
| Recreation Areas | Proposed Off-Street Trail | 100-Year Floodzone |
| Park | | |

Junior high students shared several ideas for recreation activities, such as “frolf”, frisbee golf, and sledding areas, emphasizing the need for both summer and wintertime activities (Figure 5.6). They also indicated that they would like to see more places where they can meet up with friends locally.

All Ages Recreation

Residents indicated in the Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan Survey that the lack of a park district and a recreation center are the top issues regarding recreation in the Village (see Figure 5.1). The third was a lack of programming and activities. The survey asked residents to share their ideas about a few key improvements that could be added to parks (Figures 5.7 and 5.8)

Recreation opportunities should be provided for young children, youth, adults and seniors. Examples include:

- The incorporation of recreational programming and facilities in future senior housing developments as appropriate.
- Recreational amenities that would serve the community and the region at large, such as a recreation center, privately operated gym or other community recreation facility.
- Pursue low-cost activities that require minimal infrastructure (i.e. frisbee golf, movies in the park, etc.).
- Fitness classes such as dance, yoga, pilates, kick-boxing, martial arts etc.

The Village should continue partnerships with the Beecher 200U School District, Youth Commission, local churches, the Library, and local service organizations to maintain and enhance existing recreational programs.

TRAILS

At present, Beecher’s trail network is lacking, with few continuous paths and no connections to neighboring communities or nearby trails. There is a paved path along Cardinal Creek Boulevard and walking paths near Firemen’s Park and near the high school, however these paths lack connectivity to each other. The Plum Creek Greenway Trail in Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve is the closest regional



Crosswalk near Beecher Jr. High that would become part of the trail

recreational trail. For some time, there has been interest in establishing a trail within the Village that connects to the Greenway Trail.

The Village is working with property owners and the Will County Forest Preserve District to create access to the trail via the former Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (MILW-K) path. While the tracks have mostly been removed, the path of the former railroad is partially used as a road to maneuver around fields. The proposed trail would run along the former railroad path, from Goodenow Road to Eagle Lake Road, then loop through the Village of Beecher (Figure 5.9). In an effort to preserve Trim Creek and protect property assets, the Village intends for all flood zones to remain open space (public or private) and used to accommodate the trail. Ultimately, the Village envisions that further residential expansion should occur to the east, between existing Village boundaries and Trim Creek. The trail would follow the path of the creek, providing future residents access to the trail as well. (See Chapter 6 for more details.)



RECOMMENDATIONS

5-1 Improve Access to Recreation for all ages.

- 5-1-1 Continue to promote partnerships to maintain and enhance existing recreational programs.
- 5-1-2 Seek the incorporation of recreational facilities and/or space for programming in new developments as appropriate.
- 5-1-3 Consider recreational amenities that would serve the community and the region at large, such as a recreation center, splash pad, or other community recreation facility, or potentially a multi-field sports complex.

5-2 Expand access to parks and open space amenities.

- 5-2-1 Pursue low-cost activities that require minimal infrastructure (i.e. frisbee golf, movies in the park, etc.).
- 5-2-2 Explore the addition of recreational amenities that would serve the community and the region at large (bike path, splash pad, etc.).
- 5-2-3 Facilitate the continued development of designated park areas and their maintenance to serve all residents (all ages and all areas of the community).
- 5-2-4 Require dedication of park space within new subdivisions.
- 5-2-5 Explore the establishment of a separate Park and Recreation Department within the Village or creation of an independent Park District.



Convenient
+ Safe Mobility

6

INTRODUCTION

Beecher is a community on the move. Every day residents are heading out to work, to school, to shop or dine, or to visit a friend or the library. Ensuring that it is convenient and safe to move about the community and to connect to other destinations within the region is the focus of this chapter. The plan addresses mobility for all forms of transportation, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and those that use public transportation.

The Village of Beecher has generally enjoyed good connectivity regionally while also maintaining a more rural nature than many nearby municipalities. Several major transportation projects have been proposed in and around Beecher in the past 20 years such as the Illiana Expressway, the extension of Metra commuter rail service to Crete, and the South Suburban Airport. However, funding does not exist to construct any of these projects and the probability of any of them proceeding during the planning time-frame of Beecher 2040 appears unlikely. None of these projects were included in CMAP's 2050 Plan. This plan summarizes gaps in the existing bicycle and pedestrian network, suggests options to close these gaps, and outlines ways to implement and finance opportunities to increase usage and safety. Bicycle and pedestrian access are two distinct issues. The bicycle trail system is a network of shared-use or multi-use paths (off-road paths that are a minimum of 8 feet wide), bike lanes (dedicated lanes on a roadway) and bicycle-friendly streets (streets with speed limits less than 30 MPH) used for commuting and recreation.

Pedestrian access via a network of sidewalks, while providing connectivity, is distinct from the trail network as bicycle riding on a typical 4 or 5-foot-wide sidewalk can create significant conflicts with pedestrians. Given this distinction, the gaps and recommendations for each of these two networks have been analyzed individually as the Bicycle Trails Plan and Pedestrian Access Plan.

Each of these sections highlights gaps in the existing network and recommends improvements and best practices to increase the safety of users and increase overall participation in these healthy modes of transportation.

BICYCLE TRAILS PLAN

The trail network in Beecher has the potential to connect users to parks, community amenities, schools, regional and local trails, and commercial areas from nearby neighborhoods. However, issues like incomplete sections along the trail that force riders onto busy streets, missing crosswalks, and other bikeway design flaws not only reduce the safety for the users, but also discourage cautious bikers. Improvements are needed



Cardinal Creek Shared-Use Path, Beecher, IL

to complete the trail system so that it functions as a safe and healthy form of recreation and transportation for users of all ages. This section covers the main components of a bicycle trail system and addresses the existing gaps in Beecher's trail network. An efficient bicycle trail network is comprised of several components. The descriptions on the following pages should be used to guide the construction of future trails.

Shared-use Paths

These are off-road bikeways or trails, which are typically located within roadway right-of-way. In Beecher, they are typically 8'-10' wide and accommodate pedestrians, joggers, bicyclists and all other non-motorized users.

On-street Bike Lanes

Where shared-use paths have not yet been constructed or are not feasible, connections to the trail network can be provided by dedicated bicycle lanes along the roadway. A bike lane is that portion of a roadway that has been designated for preferential or exclusive use by bicyclists. Bike lanes provide a dedicated travel lane within the street. Bicyclists travel one-way with the flow of traffic. The minimum width of a bike lane varies based on the roadway cross section and are generally a minimum of 5 feet wide. For curbed streets without parking, bike lanes must be at least 4 feet wide (not including gutter

pan) on each side of the road with longitudinal pavement markings, bike lane symbols, and bike lane signage. There are currently no designated bike lanes in the Village of Beecher.

Shared Roadways

Bicycles may be operated on all roadways except where prohibited by statute or regulation. Most streets within the Village of Beecher are shared roadways. On a shared roadway, bicyclists and motorists share the same travel lanes without a striped separation. Shared roadways can legally be used by bicyclists, regardless of whether the facility has been specifically designated as a bikeway. Shared roadways include:

- Roads and streets with no bicycle provisions.
- Wide outside/curb lanes
- Roadway shoulders
- Designated bicycle routes

Paved Shoulders

Paved shoulders can accommodate bicycle travel efficiently and provide additional benefits to the roadway:

- Shoulders can be used by stopped vehicles or emergency vehicles,
- Shoulders provide added safety to motorists, and
- Paved shoulders provide lateral support for the pavement.

The shoulders along rural roads (which have speed limits less than 45 MPH) can typically be used by bicyclists if they are paved and wide enough. The typical widths of paved shoulders for bicycle use ranges from 4 feet to 8 feet.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Gaps Along the Shared-use Paths

Existing shared-use paths in Beecher were typically constructed during the development of adjacent parcels of land. This has created sections of path that are disconnected due to undeveloped parcels. At such locations, the path abruptly stops at the parcel boundary. If an adjacent parcel is undeveloped at the time of construction of the pathway, a temporary paved connection should be made to the adjacent road with lane markings on the road connecting it to the next shared-use path location (provided the roadway is sufficiently wide to accommodate bike use per the preceding section).



On-street Bike Lane in Lakewood, IL



Lack of shoulder on Indiana Avenue, Beecher, IL



Source: Boston Curbed

Future Connections

The Illinois Highway Code (605 ILCS 5/4-220 new) states that bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be given full consideration in the planning and development of transportation facilities, including the incorporation of such ways into State plans and programs. Portions of both IL Route 1 and Indiana Avenue would make excellent future bicycle routes due to the continuity throughout the Village and their proximity to desired land uses. As the State and County plan to improve IL Route 1 and Indiana Avenue in the future, the Village must work with these agencies to review each project and determine if it is eligible for consideration of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

Bike Lanes Along Minor Collector Roads

For the trail connections along Church Road, Miller Street, Racine Avenue and other low traffic streets, connections can be provided in the form of on-street bike lanes. These should be well signed to guide bikers along the trail network. The Village should consider accommodations for bike lanes in conjunction with planned improvements to these roadways.

Bicycle Parking Facilities

Providing safe and durable racks to secure bicycles is important for schools, parks, and all commercial areas. The racks should be located in visible, well-lit and well-signed areas close to the building entrance (within 100'). The Village should consider the provision of bicycle parking facilities for all future commercial developments.

Sharrows for Shared Lanes

A sharrow is a symbol marked within a travel lane on the pavement and consists of a bicycle with two chevron markings above it. It indicates that the lane is shared by both vehicles and bicycles and warns the motorist to watch out for bicyclists. A Downtown roadway like Penfield Street does not have the space for a separate bike lane. The Village should consider marking the travel lane in each direction with sharrows immediately after an intersection and spaced at intervals not greater than 250 feet thereafter, in conjunction with future improvements in Downtown Beecher. In addition, signage along the roadway with a sharrow and the words "Share the Road" will also help educate drivers about sharrows.

Curb and storm grate details

The Village currently uses storm inlet grates that have bars parallel to the direction of travel and could be located within potential bike lanes. These grates are hazardous for bicyclists because bike tires can be stuck in them. Existing streets within the Village can be retrofitted by replacing standard drainage grates with a design that is more compatible with bicycle use. This will improve mobility and comfort for bicyclists and reduce bicycle-related crashes.

Bicycle Trail Crosswalks

Currently, busy streets like IL Route 1 do not have accommodations for trail connections across their intersections (ex. Church Road, Chestnut Street, Indiana Avenue). Bicycle trails need to be continued to the curb of the cross street with special crosswalk markings for trail users. Where traffic signals exist, the signal request pushbutton should be conveniently located for use by bikers.

Appropriate Lighting of Shared-use Paths

Where biking at night is expected (ex. connections to the Downtown area, recreation facilities and commercial areas along IL Route 1), the provision for lighting shared-use pathways should be considered. The lighting should be scaled to pedestrian or bicycle path users and should be vandal proof where security is an issue. Sections of the IL Route 1 and the roadways in the Downtown are areas where such lighting would be appropriate.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS PLAN

Similar to the bicycle trail network (see Figure 5.9), the network of sidewalks in Beecher has the potential to connect users to parks, community amenities, commercial areas, and to schools within their neighborhoods. Incomplete sections of sidewalks, missing pedestrian crosswalks, lack of access to adjacent amenities or commercial areas and lack of universal design (described in the section below) discourage walking (Figures 6.1 and 6.2).

Two important factors in the choice between driving and walking is the perceived ease of access (based on the points mentioned above) and the travel time. The time it takes to get into a car, drive to a location within a half-mile distance and park, is nearly the same as walking the same distance, if the route is accessible for pedestrians. Hence, locating neighborhood amenities, shops, elementary and middle schools within this half-mile walking distance of residents would encourage them to walk rather than drive. The sections that follow cover the aspects of complete streets needed to encourage walking and highlight specific areas in Beecher that need to be improved. The descriptions below should be used to guide the development of sidewalks and access to amenities within the Beecher Planning Area.

RECOMMENDED PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

Complete the Gaps in the Sidewalk Network

Providing a complete network of sidewalks in Beecher has the potential to connect users to parks, community amenities, commercial areas, and to schools within their neighborhoods. Installing sections of missing sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks will encourage walking to adjacent amenities or commercial areas (Figure 6.1 and 6.2).

Encouraging Safe Routes to Schools

Site plan design that gives schoolchildren the ability to reach school building entrances without crossing bus zones, parking entrances, and student drop-off areas is vital to their

Figure 6.1: Sidewalk Gaps in Hunter's Chase Subdivision



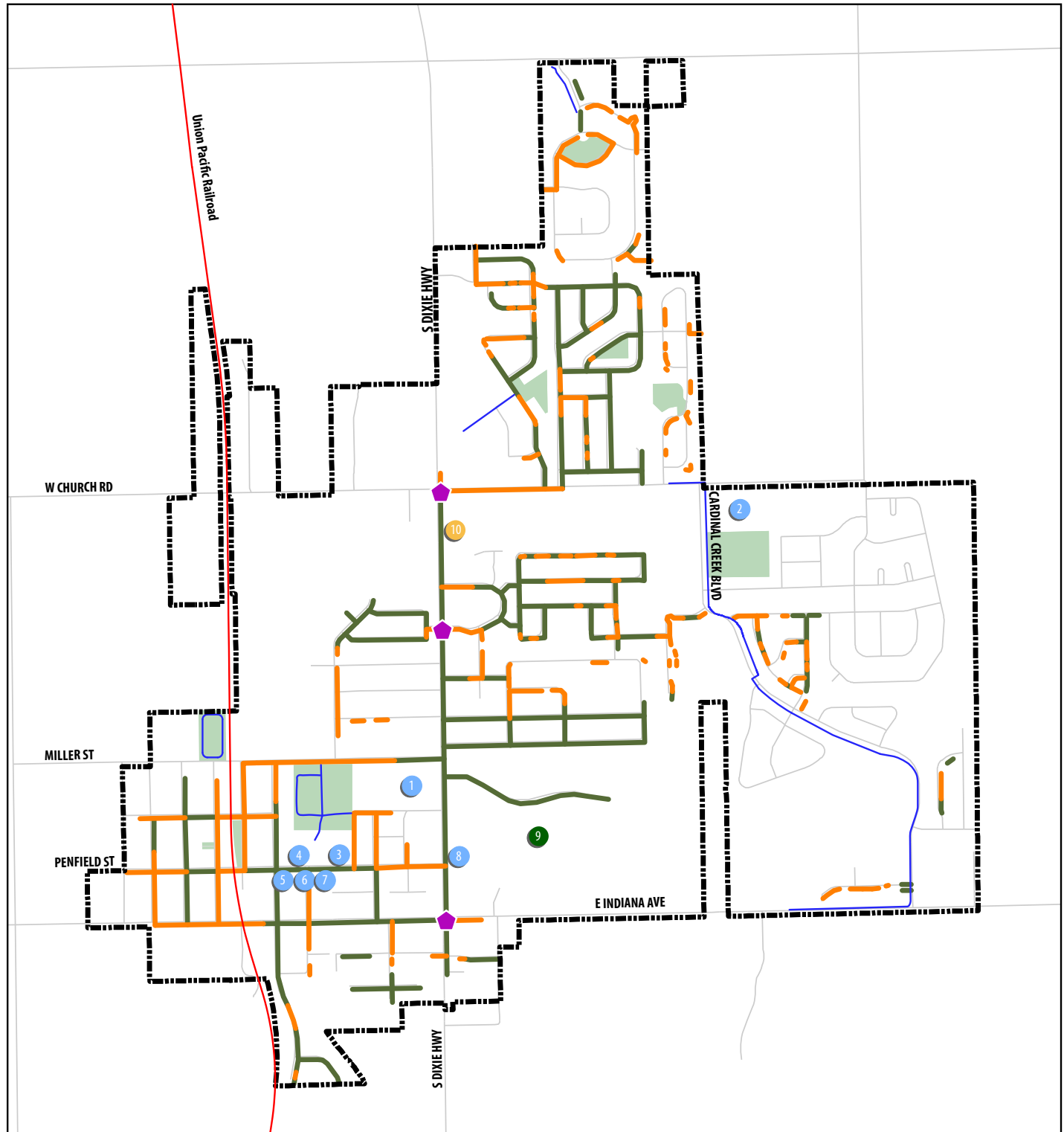
safe passage. This issue is becoming increasingly important as limited funding for schools is causing budget cuts in all areas, but particularly in transportation. In many cases, children that were once bussed across busy streets are now required to walk to school.

Many times, parents concerned for their children's safety will drive them relatively short distances to school, aggravating already congested areas. Traffic calming measures near schools like on-street parking, street trees, narrower streets, marked crosswalks, controlled intersections and caution signs help make motorists more aware while driving near schools and in turn are more likely to watch out for children crossing the street. Educating students and their parents about the benefits of walking and biking to school, provision of sufficient bike storage facilities at each school, and workshops on bike maintenance are all important steps to increase the use of non-motorized options to access schools.

Landscaped Buffer

Trees and plantings along the sidewalk provide the comfort of shade for pedestrians, besides other environmental benefits. They also have a traffic calming effect resulting from the perceived narrowing of the roadway. When planted between the sidewalk and the roadway, they also form a buffer between the traffic and pedestrians, thus increasing their perception of safety. Tree branches must be consistently pruned to avoid conflicts with bikers (pruned to maintain a minimum 7-foot clearance). In addition, the plantings must be sufficiently set back from both street and driveway intersections to maintain visibility for both bike riders and motorists.

Figure 6.2: Existing Sidewalks + Paths



Existing Sidewalks + Paths



- Beecher Limits
- Path
- Sidewalk - One Side
- Sidewalk - Both Sides
- ◆ Signalized Intersection

Institutions

- ① High School
- ② Jr High School
- ③ Elementary School
- ④ Fire Department
- ⑤ Police Department
- ⑥ Post Office
- ⑦ Library
- ⑧ Village Hall

Context

- ⑨ Cardinal Creek Golf Course
- ⑩ Beecher Manor
- Existing Park



Complete Streets

The Village should consider adopting a complete streets policy to accommodate users of all age groups and abilities to access the pedestrian and trails network via non-motorized options.

Curb Treatments

To warn pedestrians about changes in surface types, the use of colored tactile tile strips at the curbs before crosswalks is recommended. These treatments should be incorporated into all future intersection improvement projects.

Signage at Pedestrian Crosswalks

Signage for pedestrians and motorists is encouraged to increase the safety of the pedestrians, especially at busy intersections like those along IL Route 1. Parking lots in commercial areas should have accommodations for pedestrian access from sidewalks and shared-use paths in the area. Signage should also be provided where driveways and sidewalks intersect so that drivers look out for pedestrians before crossing the sidewalk.

Traffic Calming

The use of marked crosswalks, controlled intersections, caution signs, pedestrian crossing islands, bump-outs, mini-roundabouts, etc. will help calm traffic in pedestrian areas and make it safer for pedestrians. Penfield Street in the Downtown core is an excellent example of a location where these measures should be considered. Specific crossings to enhance include Indiana Avenue, Penfield Street, and Hodges Avenue.

Railroad Crossings

Pedestrian crossing surfaces at existing at-grade railroad crossings are missing at several locations in Beecher. Widening the existing crossing surfaces to accommodate pedestrian traffic is important for the safe passage of pedestrians and to remove barriers to accessibility within town.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Air Travel

Excellent passenger airline travel is available to Beecher residents in Chicago at either Midway (39 miles from Beecher) or O'Hare Airport (60 miles). These airports provide excellent connections throughout the country, and around the world. Gary/Chicago International Airport is a full-service, mid-sized airport approximately 32 miles north of Beecher. The Gary/Chicago Airport offers extensive corporate jet services, and has a 8,900 foot runway that can handle larger jets. Bult Field, northwest of Beecher and within the Village's planning area, is operated by IDOT. This is a general aviation and corporate jet facility with a 5,000-foot runway and 139 hangers. Bult Field is known as "the future home of the South Suburban Airport". A 13,000 square foot terminal building was constructed to anchor future expansion efforts. The proximity to this existing



Tactile tile strips at a crosswalk in Skokie, IL



Pedestrian crosswalk signage in Skokie, IL



Landscaped bump-out (corner extension) in Glenview, IL

airport is an asset to Beecher economic development efforts, particularly in attracting future corporations that may have their own corporate jet or take advantage of local charter services.

The future of the South Suburban Airport (SSA) is very uncertain. *It was not included in the CMAP Go To 2050 Plan, and funding is clearly a major hurdle to overcome if the SSA is to ever move forward.* However, considerable time, effort, and funding has been spent to-date in planning for this proposed facility including development of a master plan and completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The FAA has not given final approval of the airspace design and EIS. As of the end of 2018, IDOT has acquired 4,250 of the 5,800 acres needed for the first phase of airport development (see Figure 6.3.). As this exhibit shows, IDOT has acquired land within a mile of the existing Beecher Village limits and has proposed to acquire additional parcels along Eagle Lake Road up to the Union Pacific Rail line within the first phase of airport development. Much of this property is currently rented for continuing farm operations.

While major passenger airlines have expressed no interest in the potential SSA, there has been interest in the potential for

cargo and freight use. Funding is certainly a major obstacle to airport development, and IDOT has explored the potential for a public-private partnership to develop the facility. The uncertainty surrounding the potential for the SSA has been like a cloud hanging over Beecher for many years. Residents have expressed considerable concern regarding the impact the airport would have on their quality-of-life. The Village has participated in past planning efforts regarding the airport. This has not been done in support of the airport, but in acknowledgment that if it were to be constructed it would have a major impact on the community and the Village must be prepared for that. The Village's Future Land Use and Transportation Plans have assumed that the SSA is not constructed. However, the plans also recognize the potential footprint of the airport, and an alternative Village plan has been developed should the airports status change in the near future and the Village were to become faced with a major international airport within it's planning jurisdiction.

Rail Service

The Village of Beecher is currently not directly served by Metra commuter rail. The nearest Metra commuter rail service into Chicago is a 20-minute drive to nearby University Park (Metra Electric District line).

Beecher residents work in communities in all directions—north in Cook County, west in Will County, south in Kankakee County, and east in Indiana. Around 1,000 people worked in Beecher in 2015, but 800, around 80% of workers in Beecher live elsewhere in the region (On The Map Tool, 2015).

The extension of commuter rail service would greatly benefit the residents of the Village of Beecher. The Village should actively participate and support the extension of Metra service, as it will improve the quality of life for Village residents and increase opportunities for development in northern Beecher.

The nearest Amtrak station is in Homewood, approximately 28 miles to the north. That station is served by two Amtrak routes, the City of New Orleans and the Saluki (with service to Carbondale and Southern Illinois University). Both trains also head north to Chicago, where passengers can connect to the larger Amtrak network to destinations across the United States.

Illiana Expressway

The Illinois Department of Transportation has considered a new expressway with an alignment south of Beecher, named the Illiana Expressway. The proposed route of the Illiana Expressway is just south and parallel to the alignment of Corning Road within the southern portion of the Beecher Planning Area.

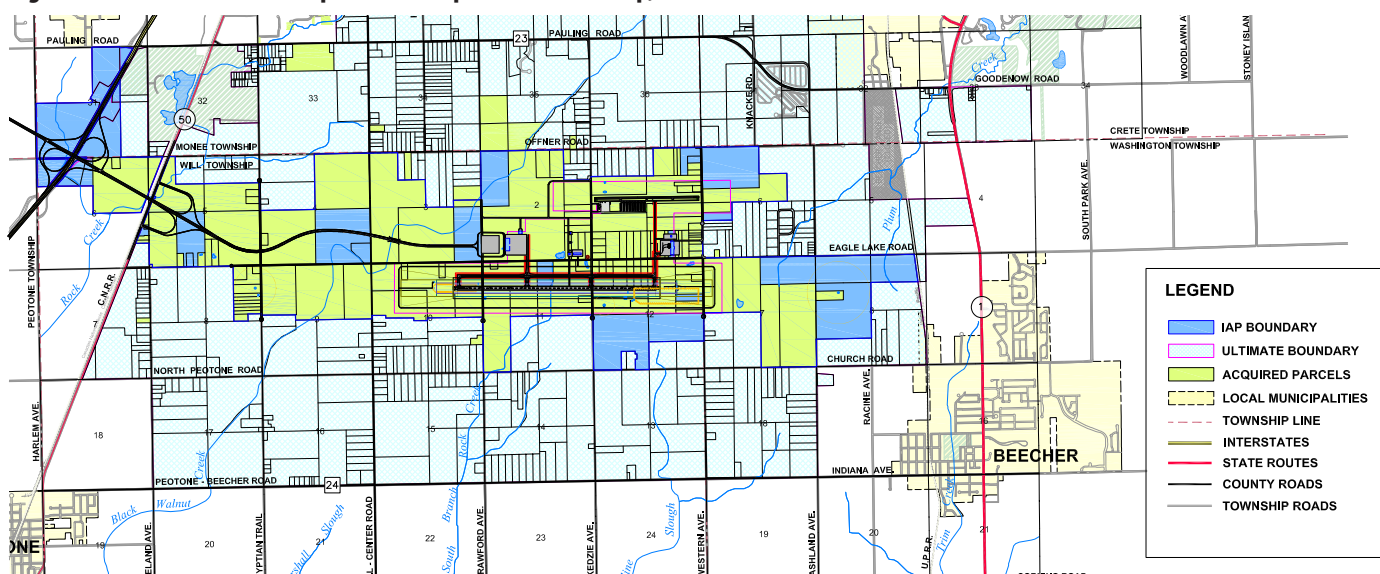
CMAP did not include the Illiana in their recently adopted ON TO 2050 Comprehensive Plan given financial constraints on the overall regional transportation system. Instead, the ON TO 2050 Plan recommends improvements to I-80 to improve traffic flow and capacity.

Public Transportation

With public transportation options lacking for many of Beecher residents, on-demand taxi and ride-sharing services become an important option for Beecher residents. Ride-sharing can save Village residents on transportation costs, including maintenance, insurance, taxes, and financial charges. Reducing the number of vehicles on the road through ride-sharing decreases the overall amount of vehicles emissions which improves air quality and helps conserve non-renewable energy sources.

The Village of Beecher can encourage residents to utilize transit and ride-sharing services by placing links to Washington Township, Will County Dial-a-Ride and ride-sharing providers on the Village website and in the Resident Information Packet.

Figure 6.3: South Suburban Airport Land Acquisition Status Map, 2019



Source: Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

The map displays the Bult Field area in Will County, Illinois. Key features include:

- Proposed Infrastructure:**
 - Centerpoint CSX Intermodal Facility:** Located near the top center, adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad.
 - Proposed Beecher Bypass:** A blue dashed line running vertically through the center of the map.
 - Proposed Road:** A red line running vertically through the center, labeled "S DUNE HWY".
- Major Roads:**
 - Rt. 1 (US-394):** A red line running diagonally from the top right to the bottom center.
 - Local Streets:** W Pauling Rd, W Offner Rd, W Eagle Lake Rd, W Church Rd, W Indiana Ave, W Corning Rd, W Kentucky Rd, S Crawford Ave, S Kedzie Ave, S Western Ave, S Ashland Ave, S Nackle Rd, S Racine Ave, S Cottage Grove Ave, S Stony Island Ave, S Yates Ave, S Klemme Rd, E Bemis Rd, E Goodenow Rd, E Offner Rd, E Brunswick Rd, E Church Rd.
- Geographic Features:**
 - Bult Field:** A light blue shaded area in the center.
 - Union Pacific Railroad:** A black line with cross-ticks running vertically through the center.
 - Cardinal Creek Road:** A red line running diagonally from the center to the bottom right.
- County and State Borders:**
 - Will County / Kankakee County:** A horizontal line at the bottom.
 - Illinois / Indiana:** A vertical line on the right side.

Dixie Highway (IL Route 1) Improvements

Illinois Route 1 is classified as a Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) and a Class II Truck Route by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Illinois Route 1 is also known as Dixie Highway within Village limits and is listed on the National Highway System (NHS). Illinois Route 1 connects the Village to I-394 (an extension of Interstate 94) to the north and east-west arterials such as Indiana Avenue and IL Route 17 to the south. Current traffic volumes are approaching the capacity of the existing 3-lane pavement cross section, leading to congestion, poor levels of service, and inefficient access to adjacent neighborhoods and developments along this route. There are existing traffic signals on IL Route 1 at Church Road, Chestnut Lane and Indiana Avenue.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Enhancements

Illinois Route 1 has curb and gutter and sidewalks present along both sides of the roadway from Church Road to Pasadena Avenue. The roadway currently has no bicycle accommodations. Due to its route continuity and central location within the Village, the Village should consider installing an off-street bicycle trail along the east side of IL Route 1. This could be accomplished by acquiring right-of-way and replacing the existing 5-foot to 7-foot wide sidewalk along the roadway to a 10-foot wide pathway. This proposed off-street path should be extended from Church Road north to Hunters Drive in conjunction with adjacent development. Pedestrian sidewalks should be extended on both sides of IL Route 1 from Pasadena Avenue to Horner Lane. There is a need for an enhanced pedestrian crossing at IL Route 1 and Miller Street. The Village should explore options with the Illinois Department of Transportation for improved signage, high-visibility crosswalk materials, and potential pedestrian-activated traffic signals at this location.

Intersection Improvements

The intersection of IL Route 1 and Indiana Avenue should be analyzed for future traffic conditions and needed geometric improvements. The provision of dedicated left turn lanes on Indiana Avenue should be considered. In addition, dedicated right turn lanes on IL Route 1 may be necessary to accommodate future traffic conditions.

The intersection of IL Route 1 and Church Road should be analyzed for the provision of dedicated right turn lanes on IL Route 1 at this intersection. Pedestrian crosswalks should be added to the north and east legs of this intersection in conjunction with any future geometric improvement project.

VILLAGE ROAD NETWORK

The Village Collector Roadway Network needs to efficiently service the needs of Beecher residents (Figure 6.4). Several of the roadways identified as Collectors in the Village's Transportation Plan require capacity, geometric, and structural upgrades to perform their intended purpose. The discussion below summarizes proposed improvements to the roadways classified as Collectors.

Church Road serves as a local east-west collector street in the Village of Beecher. Church Road has a two-lane rural pavement cross section. The existing roadway will require resurfacing in the near future. Consideration should be given to reconstructing Church Road from IL Route 1 to the western Village limits in order to accommodate future development traffic. The at-grade rail crossing at the UP railroad should be widened in conjunction with reconstruction improvements. The existing bicycle path adjacent to the north side of the roadway should be extended from Pheasant Chase Circle to

EXISTING RAILROAD CROSSINGS





Route 1/Dixie Highway, Beecher, IL

IL Route 1. Pedestrian sidewalk should be installed along the south side of Church Road from IL Route 1 to Cardinal Creek Boulevard.

Penfield Street/ Gould Street serve as minor collector streets in Downtown Beecher. Penfield Street is currently planned to be reconstructed from Gould Street to IL Route 1 as part of an ongoing Village Surface Transportation Program (STP) Project. New sidewalks will be constructed on both sides of the roadway as part of this project. In addition, the bridge over Trim Creek will be replaced and the existing at-grade railroad crossing will be improved.

Gould Street will require reconstruction in the near future. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations should be included in conjunction with this future project.

Cardinal Creek Boulevard serves as a north-south minor collector street in the Village of Beecher. The Village should plan to resurface this roadway and upgrade all pedestrian crossings to current standards in conjunction with this future improvement.

Miller Street serves as a minor east-west collector street in the Village of Beecher. Miller Street has a two-lane rural pavement cross section. The existing roadway will require resurfacing in the near future. Consideration should be given to reconstructing Miller Street from Racine Avenue to Gould Street in order to accommodate future development traffic. A grade-separated rail crossing at the UP railroad should be explored in conjunction with future development and reconstruction improvements. With its east-west continuity, Miller Street may be a more beneficial route long-term for a rail crossing than the existing location at Hodges Street to the south. Pedestrian sidewalk should be installed along both sides of Miller Street from Racine Avenue to Gould Street in conjunction with adjacent developments. Gaps in existing pedestrian sidewalk from Reed Street to IL Route 1 should be filled in when the roadway is resurfaced in this area.

TRUCK & TRAIN NUISANCE MITIGATION

FRA Quiet Zone

There are six at-grade crossing locations within the Village of Beecher planning area between Eagle Lake Road and Kentucky Road where a roadway crosses the Union Pacific rail line. All of the crossings have passive traffic control devices in place, including pavement markings and/or railroad advance warning signs. Active warning devices in place at each crossing include flashing lights, gates, and bells.

There is currently no FRA Quiet Zone in place within Village limits. In order to qualify for Quiet Zone implementation, the Village must coordinate with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The process involves a field visit with FRA personnel to confirm existing conditions, a calculation of an existing safety score, a determination of needed improvements to each crossing, and the calculation of a safety score for the crossings including proposed improvements within the proposed zone. The safety score of the crossings with proposed improvements and no train horns must exceed the score of the existing conditions with train horns.

Most of the existing at-grade crossings in Beecher would need to be upgraded with supplemental safety measures, including concrete medians and constant warning time circuitry, in order to qualify for the implementation of a Quiet Zone.

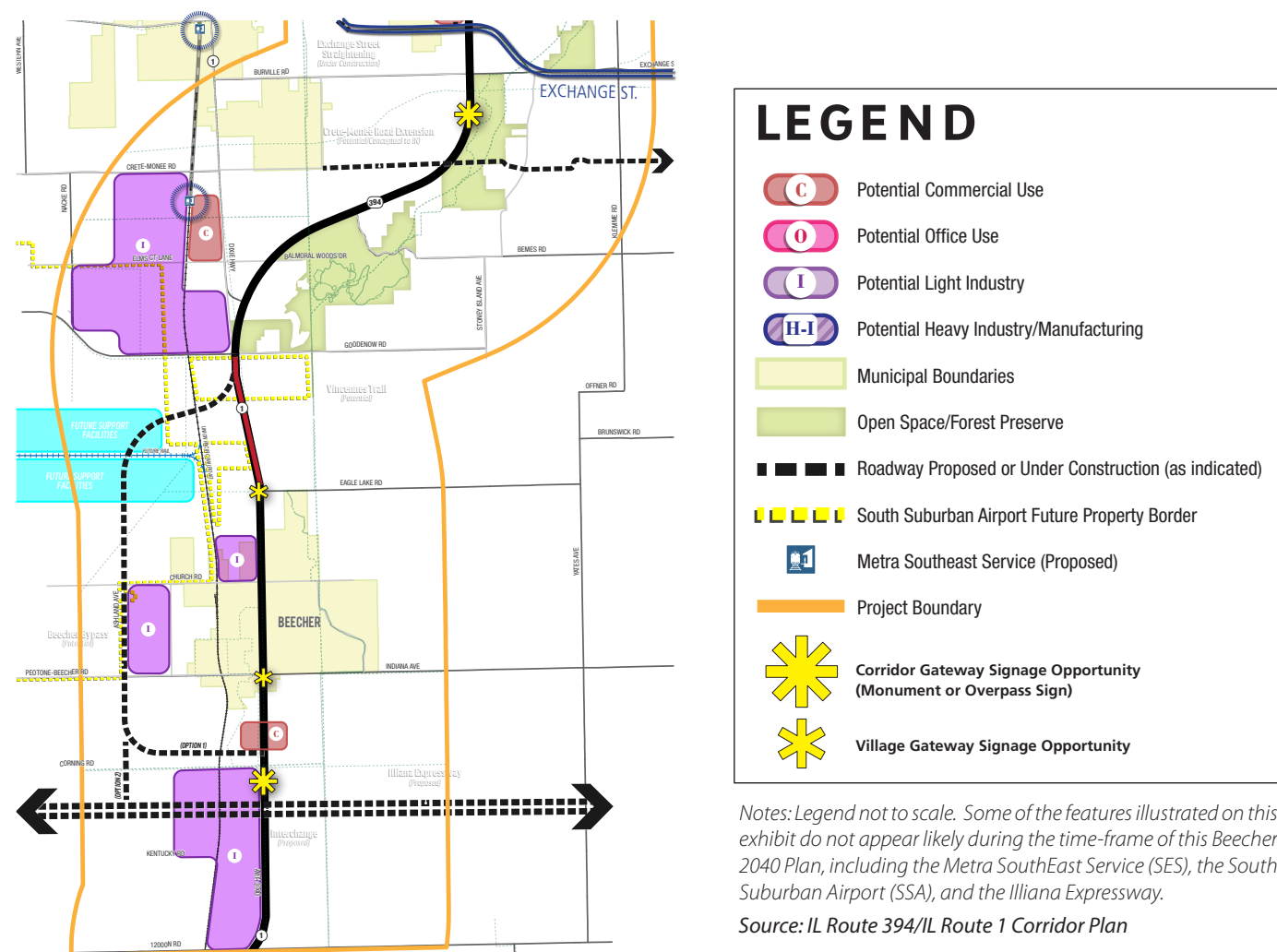
Beecher Bypass Route

The Illinois Department of Transportation has been considering a bypass route for IL Route 1 around the Village of Beecher for some time. This project would likely be implemented in conjunction with a South Suburban Airport and the additional traffic that it would bring to the region. The Beecher Bypass would likely be aligned along Ashland Avenue (Figure 6.5). The Village will need to work together with IDOT to support the creation of a truck bypass route.

Route 1/Dixie Highway Improvements

Illinois Route 1 is classified as Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) and a Class II Truck Route by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Illinois Route 1 is also known as Dixie Highway within Village limits and is listed on the National Highway System (NHS). Illinois Route 1 connects the Village to I-394 (an extension of Interstate 94) to the north and east-west arterials such as Indiana Avenue and IL Route 17 to the

Figure 6.5: South Section of the Land Use Framework Map, IL Route 394/IL Route 1



south. Current traffic volumes are approaching the capacity of the existing 3-lane pavement cross section, leading to congestion, poor levels of service, and inefficient access to adjacent neighborhoods and developments along this route. There are existing traffic signals on IL Route 1 at Church Road, Chestnut Lane and Indiana Avenue.

The construction of the route could create important commercial nodes at its future intersections with IL Route 1 and open new areas to land development. It will be very important for the Village to take a lead role in the planning process and determine the most favorable locations for these future intersections. In addition, the Village will need to assess the impact to businesses along IL Route 1 and make provisions to mitigate the effects of relocating traffic to a western alignment.

Instituting a truck bypass route will reduce truck traffic along Route 1/Dixie Highway primarily. The current truck count along Route 1/Dixie Highway is just under 1,900 through the Village. As a means of mitigating the impact to businesses, this Plan anticipates the development of commercial businesses at the terminus of the Bypass route, near the intersection of Corning and Route 1/Dixie Highway, south of the current Village limits.

In addition, the proposed route of the Illiana Expressway is expected to have an access point at Route 1/Dixie Highway. Together, these major regional transportation projects will incentivize the development of commercial uses along Route 1/Dixie Highway at Corning Road. This plan anticipates the extension of Village limits south to this area, especially to provide utility connections, and would capitalize on development.



RECOMMENDATIONS

6-1 Develop a connected pedestrian and bicycle network that will increase bicycle trips, improve the walkability of the community, and meet the transportation and recreational needs of Village residents.

- 6-1-1 Work with housing developers to close sidewalk gaps.
- 6-1-2 Identify intersections where improved pedestrian crossings are needed and what enhancements would improve safety, particularly at Miller and Dixie Highway.
- 6-1-3 Provide better pedestrian and bicycle linkages to existing and planned destinations.
- 6-1-4 Adopt a Complete Streets Ordinance.
- 6-1-5 Update Subdivision Ordinance.

6-2 Encourage collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies to integrate Village planning with regionally significant projects.

- 6-2-1 Remain engaged in planning for the Illiana Expressway.
- 6-2-2 Implement a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Quiet Zone.
- 6-2-3 Voice community concerns but remain a part of planning for the South Suburban Airport.

6-3 Promote improvements to Dixie Highway, including a Beecher Bypass.

- 6-3-1 Provide bicycle and pedestrian enhancements.
- 6-3-2 Identify intersection improvements.
- 6-3-3 Work together with IDOT to support the creation of a truck bypass route.

6-4 Develop and expand the collector roadway system throughout the Village.

- 6-4-1 Serve existing and new developments.
- 6-4-2 Provide sufficient pavement widths and pavement design.
- 6-4-3 Improve existing railroad crossings to ensure safety and efficient traffic flow.

6-5 Ensure continued access to on-demand and public transportation services.

- 6-5-1 Work closely with Washington Township and Will County to continue to provide Dial-A-Ride services for Beecher residents.
- 6-5-2 Support the use of on-demand taxi services, including ride-sharing services, such as Uber and Lyft, to enhance resident mobility.

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A Revitalized Downtown

7



Original buildings along Reed Street include the livery stable, Hiatt Clinic (the former Bielfeldt House), Clark & Bank Building, and the Myrick Building. In the background are the newer structures -- the municipal building, post office, and Farmers State Bank.
Source: Quasquicentennial by Shirley Biery

INTRODUCTION

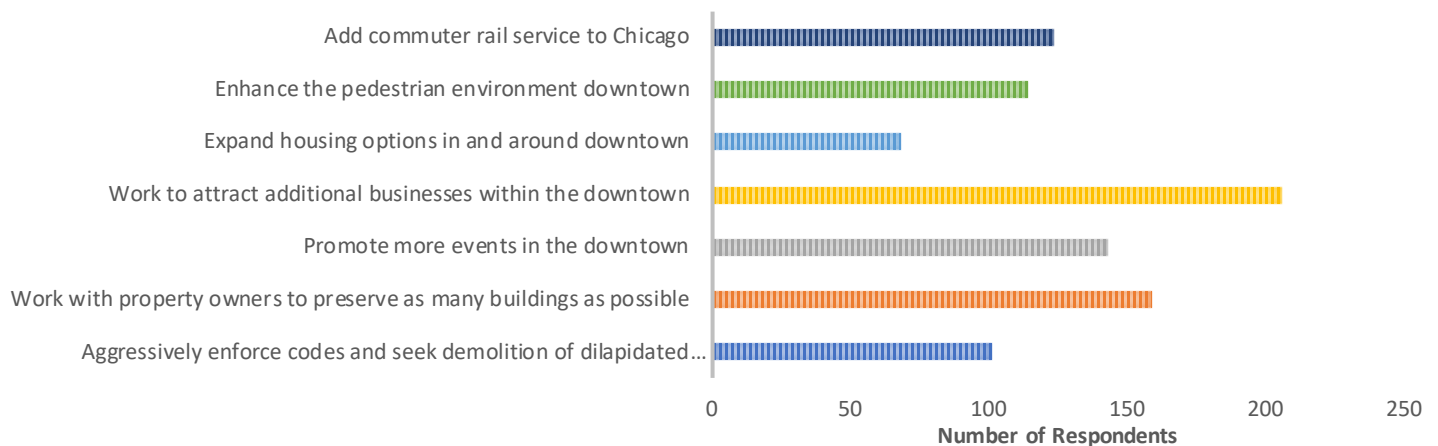
Communities share their stories through structures, monuments, and the legacies of residents. The preservation of history invokes pride in the roots of the community. Beecher celebrated the 125th birthday of the community in 1995 with the publication of a quasquicentennial book, rich with history of the community, its places and people. Now, with the 150th birthday of Beecher just around the corner in 2020, the community is looking to preserve the physical legacy of the community: *the Downtown*.

Like Beecher, communities across Illinois have worked to restore their traditional Downtowns. These small, walkable areas with retail, services, restaurants and parks often reflect the unique identity and history of the town. Events often

take place in or near Downtowns because they are often centralized locations in the community. Downtowns have had a resurgence in popularity in recent years. People love gathering together with their family and children, supporting local establishments, and feeling a sense of belonging—something that can most easily or only be done in a traditional Downtown setting. Community gathering spaces in Downtowns gives residents and visitors the chance to learn about and reaffirm the history of the place. Beecher has an established, tight-knit community. As it grows, Beecher needs to cultivate the preservation and revitalization of a Downtown that reflects that past while embracing the future.

Figure 7.1: Beecher 2040 Survey Results:

Historic Downtown Beecher has seen some positive changes, but still faces some challenges. Should the Village:



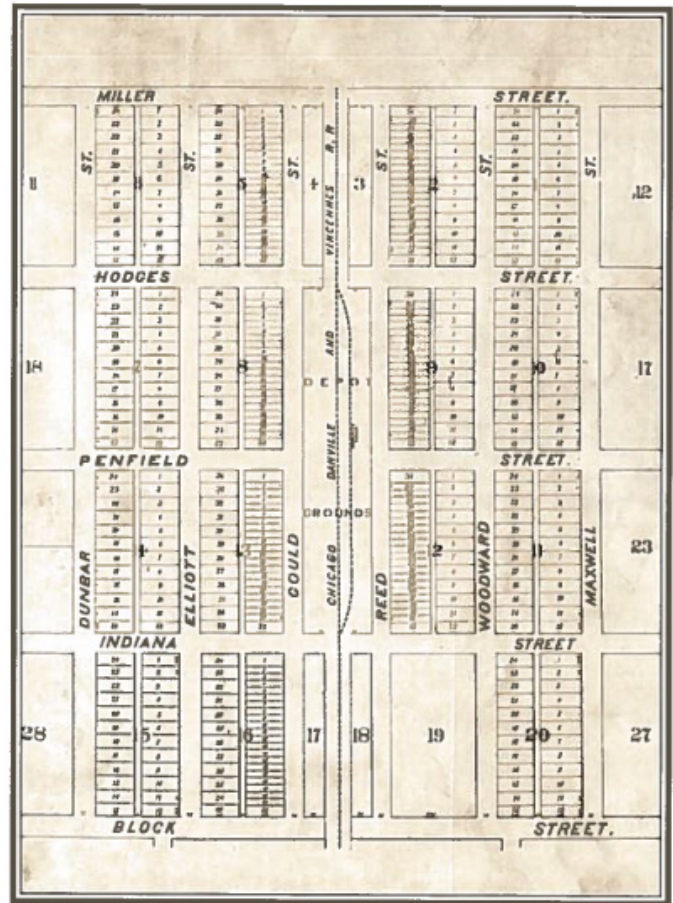
HISTORIC BUILDINGS & USES

Beecher developed around the railroad, creating a Downtown along Gould and Reed Streets between Miller and Block Streets (Figure 7.2). Over time, structures were converted to new uses as needed, and the community grew east towards Route 1/Dixie Highway. Many of the oldest commercial structures remaining in Beecher are located along Penfield, Gould, and Reed Streets. Many of these structures are still occupied today.

2003 Downtown Improvement Plan

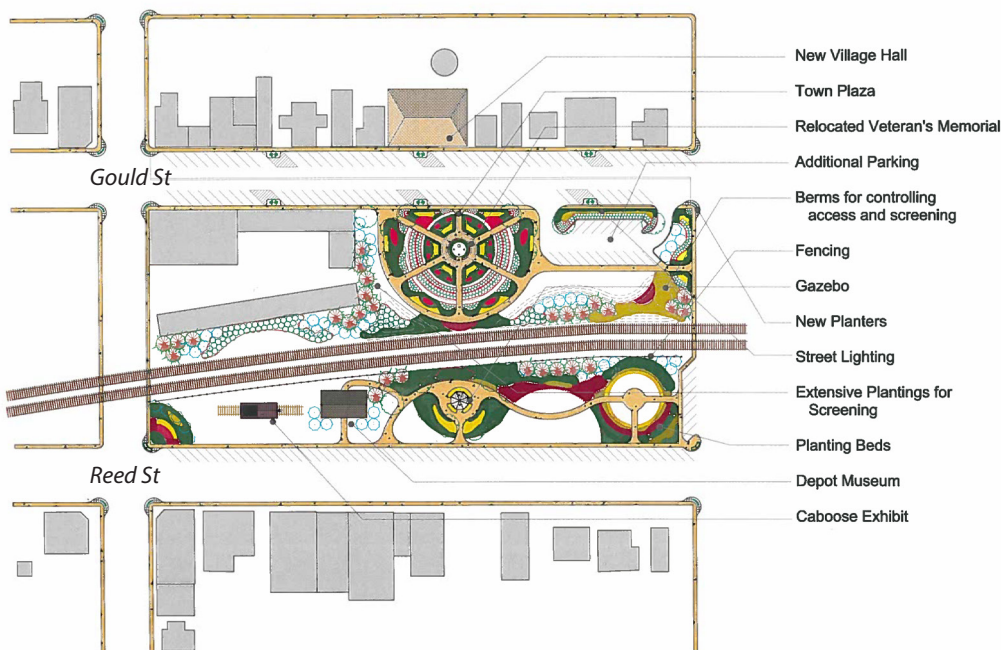
The Village of Beecher commissioned a Downtown Improvement Plan in 2003. This plan provided streetscape and placemaking suggestions for Downtown Beecher, along Gould and Reed Streets between Hodges and Penfield Streets. The plan envisioned a new Village Hall opposite a town Plaza and gardens highlighting the depot museum, a gazebo and the Veteran's memorial (Figure 7.3). Improvements were made along Reed Street, east of the tracks, but suggestions along Gould Street, west of the tracks, were never implemented. The current Village Hall is located along Route 1/Dixie Highway, in a renovated bank building. The location is adequate for the Village's needs and the Village does not anticipate constructing a new Village Hall or moving at this time. The town plaza was not implemented, and the area could still be developed as a town plaza or other use, supported by TIF District #1.

Figure 7.2: Map of Beecher, 1870



Source: Quasiquicentennial, Shirley Biery

Figure 7.3: 2003 Downtown Improvement Plan



Source: Downtown Improvement Plan, Fanning/Howey Associates, Inc.



Downtown Beecher today, looking south along Gould Street

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Preserve Historic Properties

The oldest neighborhoods in Beecher are home to residential and commercial properties, which have historic and cultural value to the community. Many older structures are residential or were originally mixed-used (commercial and residential). While several properties may be eligible for preservation by petitioning to add them to the National Register of Historic Places, there are many ways to preserve history and culture. The Village is committed to encouraging property owners to maintain historic homes and the Downtown area. The maintenance of older homes can pose financial challenges; therefore, the Village will explore ways to partner with property owners to ensure that homes are well-maintained and rehabilitated appropriately.

The Village website provides access to a book written by Shirley Biery in honor of the Quasquicentennial of Beecher. The book offers an extensive historical account of the Village, including photos and detailed descriptions of former residents and structures. As the Village and residents work to prioritize the preservation of historic properties, this book will be an invaluable resource.

Utilize Tax Increment Financing District #1

The Village of Beecher has recently adopted a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District which includes properties in the Downtown. TIFs provide an opportunity to promote public-private partnerships to improve a defined area of the

Village. They provide incentives for property rehabilitation, redevelopment, and site and infrastructure improvements benefiting the properties within the TIF district and the larger community. The TIF district provides a funding mechanism to achieve many of the goals for Downtown outlined in this plan. The TIF was adopted June 10, 2019 and is scheduled to expire in 2042. See Chapter 8 for more about the TIF district and other incentives available in Beecher.

LOCAL BEECHER ESTABLISHMENTS



There are also several well-known historic and culturally significant structures outside of Downtown, including the Beecher Mausoleum, Buddy's Ice Cream (pictured below) and the Princess Café. The preservation of these structures is also important step in celebrating the cultural history of the community and sharing it with residents and visitors alike.

DOWNTOWN MARKET TRENDS

From a market perspective, downtowns present unique factors that must be considered beyond traditional “market forces”. This experience reinforces key unique factors about downtowns that need to be kept in perspective:

- Downtowns offer a complex mix of public and private activity, possibly including employees who commute, residents who live / work, visitors, students, and people who are “just passing through” the community on their way to other destinations. For Beecher, a limited local road network defined largely by Dixie Highway/Illinois State Route 1 would tend to limit the number of people who are otherwise passing through the community, and point to consideration of strategies that encourage people to visit downtown Beecher.
- Downtowns are typically the one walkable place in many communities, so they figure into wellness conversations. Downtown Beecher, with its grid streets and short blocks, is very walkable.
- Downtowns are complicated places from a physical, transportation, and regulatory perspective (fragmented property ownership, old public infrastructure, and buildings which can be both historic and obsolete). In Beecher, the presence of consequential freight railroad infrastructure and “at-grade” crossings are an example of this complexity.
- Downtowns are being influenced by national trends regarding shifts in retail spending and demand for residential development. For downtown

merchants, access to high speed internet can become more important in diversifying sales channels.

- The economics of downtown link with the inventory of occupied retail and office space, the mix of stores, and relationships between rents, store sales, and building values. For example, despite the market appeal of a downtown restaurant in a walkable environment, building owners are sometimes unwilling to make investments to support restaurants due to their high up-front cost of grease traps and related ventilation.

For Downtown Beecher, the analysis points to key market factors that will influence demand in coming years:

Trade Area: the community remains constrained by a smaller trade area that is defined by proximity to larger destinations in Indiana (Crown Point) as well as significant nodes in Illinois (Crete, Monee, and Peotone). Even so, with roughly 10,000 residents estimated for 2017 (ESRI), the local trade area appears under served in retail segments that include restaurants, health and personal care stores, hotels, and general merchandise.

Housing Demand: In 2010, 50% of residents 65 and older moved to Beecher from Will County while the remaining 50% moved to Beecher from another part of Illinois. By 2017, 2 out of 3 Beecher migrants 65 and older migrated from another part of Illinois while the remaining 1/3 of residents migrated from Will County. Migration data for Beecher between 2010 and 2017 points to a trend that, over the next 5 years, there could be demand for an additional 40 senior



Buggies are parked on Reed Street in front of the livery stable and the Hack Hotel. The new Clark & Bank Block Building occupies the corner of Reed and Penfield Streets. The band shell was used for outdoor concerts. Farther north is the depot and the Beecher Creamery.
Source: Quasiquicentennial by Shirley Biery

households (i.e. resident households with a householder 65 or older). While many seniors have a preference to “age-in-place” based on national data, the analysis points to continued demand pressure for senior appropriate living. The analysis also suggests that future senior housing capacity could be targeted for locations closer to downtown Beecher.

In addition to seniors, many younger individuals and families gravitate to downtown areas for similar reasons – access to parks, the library, schools, etc. Downtown Beecher has all those elements which are appealing to a younger family. The one draw back would be the active freight rail line running through downtown. Enhanced railroad crossings would improve this issue (see transportation chapter).

The analysis points to several opportunities that have applicability for Beecher in the future:

- One or two additional restaurants
- Senior housing
- Limited office, focused primarily on service uses
- Other multi-family housing (townhomes or apartments)
- Anticipated development densities would be expected to continue to favor 1-story development, and most areas proposed for mixed use would be done horizontally – with compatible uses side-by-side rather than one over another. However, if a developer were interested in doing a vertically mixed building of perhaps three stories that would certainly fit within the character and intent of Downtown Beecher.

- Dixie Highway is expected to remain the primary commercial corridor, with limited retailing focused on specialty/niche businesses

In general, retail opportunities can be sustained through the implementation of principals contained in the Main Street program as defined by the National Trust for Historic preservation Main Street Center. In general, Main Street programs are defined by four key strategies:

- 1. Economic vitality** – efforts to diversify local economies and support new business formation
- 2. Design** – focused on historic character, with people centered public spaces
- 3. Organization** – Leadership and organizational capacity for downtown
- 4. Promotion** – Support for special events, as well as “buy-local” programs

Many communities have over time, leveraged Main Street programs to build niche clusters of specialty shops. In Beecher’s case, it may not have the size and critical mass needed to fund a full-time organization needed to manage a traditional Main Street program. However, Village staff, the Chamber of Commerce, and other local organizations can still use elements of the proven Main Street approach to downtown revitalization.



Martin Firuhaber opened a grocery and market in the Stade Brothers Store, corner of Penfield and Gould Streets, in 1935. His new automatic cooled meat counter is located in the rear of the store. Source: Quasiquicentennial by Shirley Biery

DOWNTOWN LAND USE PLAN

While the Village of Beecher was historically centered around the Downtown, many businesses and institutions relocated to the Route 1/Dixie Highway corridor. At present, the Downtown hosts a mix of uses. In order to revitalize the Downtown, the area needs a clearly articulated and renewed purpose and identity to set it apart from other commercial and community areas.

The vision for the future of the Downtown is as a mixed-use area, recognizing the character of the area both historically and at present (Figure 7.4). This mixed use will most likely be vertical, not horizontal, with compatible uses located side-by-side in or two-story structures.

In addition to businesses and residences, there are numerous parks in the vicinity of the Downtown, including Lions Park, Depot Park, Women’s Welfare Park, Water Tower Park, and Firemen’s Park. East of the Downtown, along Penfield, there are numerous institutional uses, including the Beecher Library, Police Department, Fire Department and the Beecher Elementary School, the post office and several churches.

The concentration of institutional uses along Penfield, including Firemen’s Park which has been used historically as a community gathering place, solidify Penfield Street as a prominent corridor and connector between the Downtown and Route 1/Dixie Highway. Maintenance and streetscape improvements along Penfield, including sidewalk maintenance, park maintenance, pedestrian seating areas, wayfinding signage, façade upgrades etc. all play a part in establishing the corridor as the primary connector of community assets. As this roadway is planned for improvement in 2021, the Village has an excellent opportunity to enhance the Penfield corridor as a vital part of Downtown Beecher (Figure 7.4).

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Preserve Existing Housing

The oldest residences in Beecher are clustered around the Downtown, west of Dixie Highway and south of Miller Street. While many homes have been well-maintained, the costs of maintaining older homes and structures can be significant and will continue to be a challenge. Renewed interest in the Downtown could drive demand for housing, sparking rehabilitation interest and redevelopment in the area. The Village hopes to promote the preservation of historic homes and the neighborhood through preservation and rehabilitation so that these pieces of history remain assets for the community.

In Beecher there are a limited range of housing types and price points. The broader Downtown area is largely single-family residential and was built on a grid street system that is largely walkable. Residents near the Downtown have particularly convenient access to many community facilities and institutions, something that many Millennials look for and is useful for seniors.

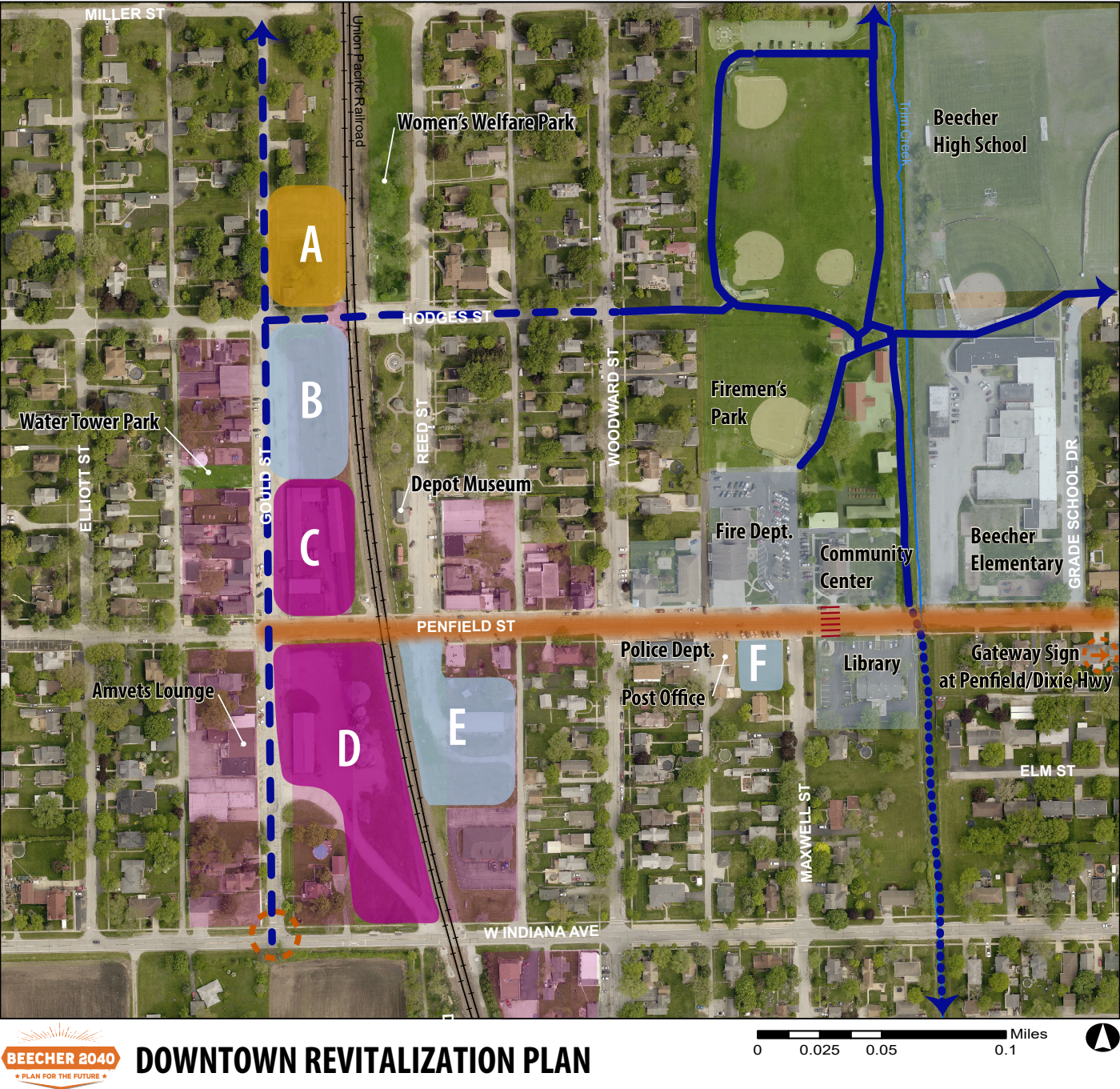
Expand Housing Options

















The Village envisions preserving and rehabilitating historic homes in the Downtown and supports the development of new residential options, including townhomes, senior housing, and high-density residential buildings in the Downtown. While the preservation of historic homes is preferred, redevelopment of dilapidated and deteriorating structures in Beecher’s oldest areas is anticipated, creating opportunities for the development of new housing. The construction of townhomes or multifamily units could help improve affordability and cater to the needs of young professionals, small families, and retirees looking to downsize.

SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES LOCATED NEAR BEECHER DOWNTOWN:



Figure 7.4: Downtown Revitalization Plan



FUTURE LAND USES		ENHANCEMENTS		OPPORTUNITY SITES	
	Mixed-Use		Streetscape Enhancements		Existing Trail
	Institutional/Civic		Wayfinding/Gateway Signage		Proposed On-Street Trail
	Park		Crosswalk		Proposed Off-Street Trail
	High-Density Residential				High-Density Residential
					Civic or Mixed-Use
					Mixed-Use
					Commercial/Mixed-Use
					Civic
					Civic

Encourage Commercial Uses in Historic Buildings

Commercial businesses that remain in or near the Downtown are located within original structures, often occupying only a single suite on the ground floor. Business include Ernie's Barber Shop, Sophia's Café, Beecher Amvets Lounge, and newer businesses such as Sit-N-Bull Saloon and the Gould Vault. A revitalization of the Downtown would ideally support an increase in the number and types of businesses and the reoccupation of vacant, often historic, spaces.

Attract New Businesses

In addition to existing businesses, the Downtown is a great location for businesses that create foot traffic, such as restaurants and cafes, fitness studios, book stores, and other services. With a greater number of businesses that attract customers during the day, at night, and on weekends, the livelier the area will be, incentivizing other businesses to locate there. Almost all new residential and commercial

construction has taken place east of the Downtown, having taken advantage of larger lots to build larger structures and circulation patterns that the Downtown could not provide or support. Route 1/Dixie Highway provides direct access to over 11,000 vehicles per day, as opposed to less than 1,000 passing through the Downtown. Route 1 is a designated truck route, driving the market for fast and fast-casual restaurants, convenience stores, and gas stations.

Provide Additional Off-Street Parking

When Penfield Street is improved, the on-street parking will be changed from angled to parallel. This will significantly reduce the number of available spaces within the downtown area. To compensate for this loss, additional public parking should be provided - potentially in one or more of the areas illustrated on page 70 for potential civic use (Sites B, E or F).

FORMER MYRICK MEAT MARKET

The Myrick Market was the first brick business building in Beecher, constructed in 1903 by W. F. Myrick. The Myrick family lived on the second floor.

THEN



NOW



*W. F. Myrick stands behind his counter in 1914 He specialized in summer sausage. The store was at 765 Penfield Street.
Source: Quasquicentennial by Shirley Biery*

Hold Events In and Near Downtown Beecher

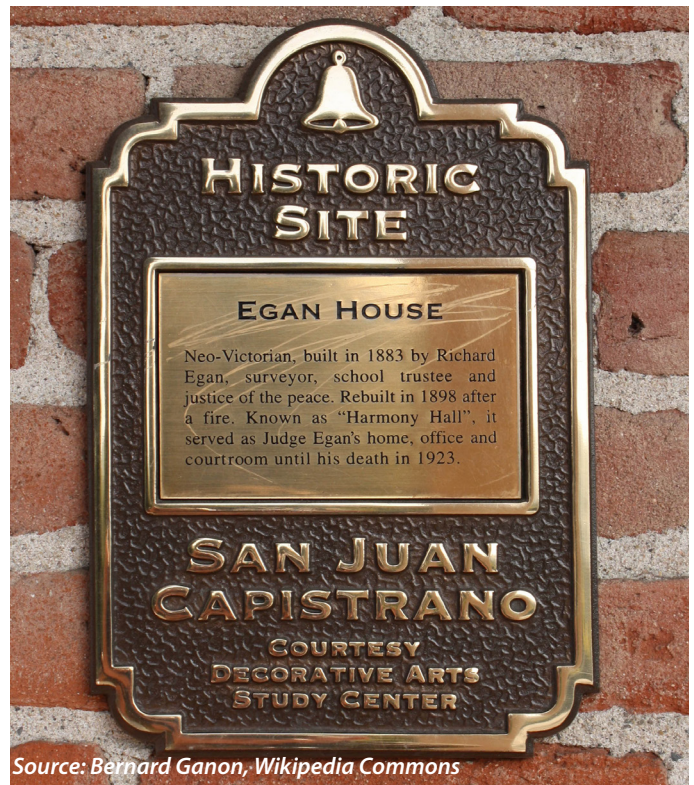
The Beecher Downtown is a small, mixed-use area, and commercial uses are located in several areas rather than adjacent to each other. While locals may know where businesses are, visitors likely will not. Using a variety of marketing methods can help improve visibility of existing businesses, highlight the present and the past represented in the Downtown, and help focus efforts for revitalization.

Community events in and around the Downtown help draw attention to the area, giving attendees the opportunity to discover or rediscover the place itself and galvanize support for revitalization. Hosting events in and around the Downtown helps to solidify the Downtown as the main gathering area for the community; hosting events makes it clear whether the existing infrastructure is sufficient and where improvements are needed.

Several events occur annually at Firemen's Park such as the Lions Club Summerfest, the Fourth of July Festival, National Night Out, the Easter Egg Hunt and others. Marketing for these events is primarily done via social media and the Village's website. Many local organizations and the Village cross-promote events and activities, which is a great way to expand the audience for events. The Village and community organizations should continue to provide information about events in a variety of mediums to reach residents and the larger community. The Farmer's Market and car show are also held in Downtown Beecher along Gould Street.

Market Events Widely

Business directories, community event calendars, flyers at community locations, banners along well-traveled streets, social media posts, radio and newspaper advertisements should all be considered to help market the community and events. There are several ways that locals and visitors can "discover" events and businesses, including numerous websites, mobile apps, in print, and by word of mouth. Events can be added to Facebook, Google Maps, and sites such as Eventbrite. Businesses can connect with local and regional chambers of commerce, maintain up-to-date Google Maps profiles, and advertise with local newspapers, radio stations or organizations. Beecher should aim to be a local and regional destination and should market events, businesses and the community in a variety of ways to increase the reach the widest audience possible.



Connect Visitors with Local History

With 150 years of history, Beecher has a lot to share. From the early beginnings when T. L. Miller established his cattle/farm to now, a lot has changed. The Village should consider ways to share history where it happened. Many communities have created permanent historical markers or historical campaigns that commemorate events and historical figures in historic areas. Beecher should consider ways to share its history in the Downtown.



Intersection of Indiana Avenue and Dixie Highway -- Village Marshall Fred Hinze and Frank Hunte watch traffic on Dixie Highway. At right is Oberheide's Restaurant and Market. Wehmhoefer's Garage is to the north. Frank Hunte's General Store was on the southwest corner. The Automobile at left is turning west on Indianan Avenue. Source: Quasquicentennial by Shirley Biery

SIGNAGE OPPORTUNITIES

Signs can be used to mark the main entrances of a community or a district. These gateway signs are one of the first opportunities a community has to introduce itself and what it has to offer. Passing a sign makes people feel like they have officially stepped into the community. Wayfinding signage is complementary and should be located along main streets and corridors to lead residents and visitors to important community institutions, places of interest, commercial districts/Downtowns, and parks and recreation areas, paths and trails.

Existing gateway signs in Beecher are appropriately placed and in good condition. Even in a small community, wayfinding signage is an effective way to orient visitors and direct them to community assets. The Village has gateway signs and a few wayfinding signs along Route 1/ Dixie Highway.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Establish Gateways to Downtown

Penfield Street is an important gateway to Beecher's Downtown from Route 1/Dixie Highway. Along Penfield there are several community buildings and institutions, including the Library, Beecher Elementary, the Police and Fire Departments and the Post Office. Firemen's Park, which has been used as a local gathering space for events,



Source: Edgewater Wayfinding Survey



The Village installed a wooden boardwalk in 2017, creating a network of ramps and railings along Gould Street in Downtown Beecher.

is also accessible via Penfield Street. Penfield, Gould and Reed Streets should be used to highlight the Downtown, its history, existing businesses, and community facilities.

Add Wayfinding Signage for Downtown

However, wayfinding signage should also be located at other major intersections that lead directly to the Downtown, such as Indiana Avenue and Gould Street:

- Penfield Street and Route 1/Dixie Highway
- Indiana Avenue and Gould Street

Refresh Existing Signage

At present, there are signs in both ways of travel along Route 1/Dixie Highway for the “Business District”, and signs northbound for the library and police department. Existing signage indicates that the Village Hall is also located along Penfield which is no longer the case and should be remedied.

In addition, existing signage for the Historic Route 1/Dixie Highway are faded and difficult to read. Replacement and new signage will allow the Village to refresh the look of signs and install signage that will highlight important points of interest and enhance wayfinding in the Village.

MOBILITY

The Downtown is easy to access by car and by foot. Businesses have parking directly in front of them and there are sidewalks along Gould Street, Penfield Street and Hodges Street, making it easy to get around in the Downtown area. In

2017, a wooden boardwalk was installed along Gould Street, connecting several Downtown businesses with ramps and stairs. Revitalizing the Downtown will bring more people to the area and their chosen mode of transportation will determine infrastructure needs.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

The maintenance of and improvements in pedestrian and bike infrastructure in the Downtown and along Penfield are recommended. Street maintenance should continue to be a priority but should also create and maintain infrastructure for pedestrians and bikes to encourage active modes of transportation. The addition of bike parking, benches and seating areas, and wayfinding signage are all improvements that can help make the Downtown a comfortable and convenient place to move around in.





RECOMMENDATIONS

7-1 Explore opportunities to remember Beecher's history and create educational installations.

- 7-1-1 Develop a TIF funded grant program and enter development agreements to provide incentives for property maintenance, rehabilitation, and redevelopment.
- 7-1-2 Work with property owners to attract new commercial and residential redevelopment of opportunity sites illustrated in Figure 7.4.

7-2 Support a mix of uses in downtown, including the option to add senior housing.

- 7-2-1 Promote the creation and maintenance of infrastructure for cars, pedestrians and bikes along Penfield (adequate parking areas, sidewalks in good condition, bike parking, benches and seating areas, etc.)
- 7-2-2 Explore opportunities for Developing Senior Housing near Downtown.
- 7-2-3 Explore opportunities for developing townhomes or other multifamily residences in Downtown.

7-3 Continue to host events in and around the Downtown.

- 7-3-1 Continue to use Firemen's Park and other locations near the Downtown for community gatherings.
- 7-3-2 Add new or modify existing events to engage all residents and maintain interest and participation.

7-4 Enhance Penfield Street to better accommodate pedestrians, bicycles and cars.

- 7-4-1 Create and install gateway/wayfinding signage at the corner of Penfield Street and Route 1/Dixie Highway and along Penfield, Gould and Reed Streets.
- 7-4-2 Emphasize pedestrian and bike circulation within future Downtown improvements.

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Expanded Job
Opportunities +
Tax Base

8

INTRODUCTION

The Village of Beecher is primarily a residential community. Local businesses, schools and healthcare employed around 1,000 people in 2015, only 20% of which were Beecher residents. About 1,800 residents work outside the community, in Will County, Cook County, Kankakee County and Indiana. While Beecher is well-connected, enabling residents to easily access employment opportunities in other communities that may not be available in the Village, long commutes pose several adverse impacts, including reducing the amount of time that parents can spend with children and in the community during the work week. The Village hopes to retain and attract residents, while growing the number and types of jobs locally, and expanding and diversifying the tax base.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

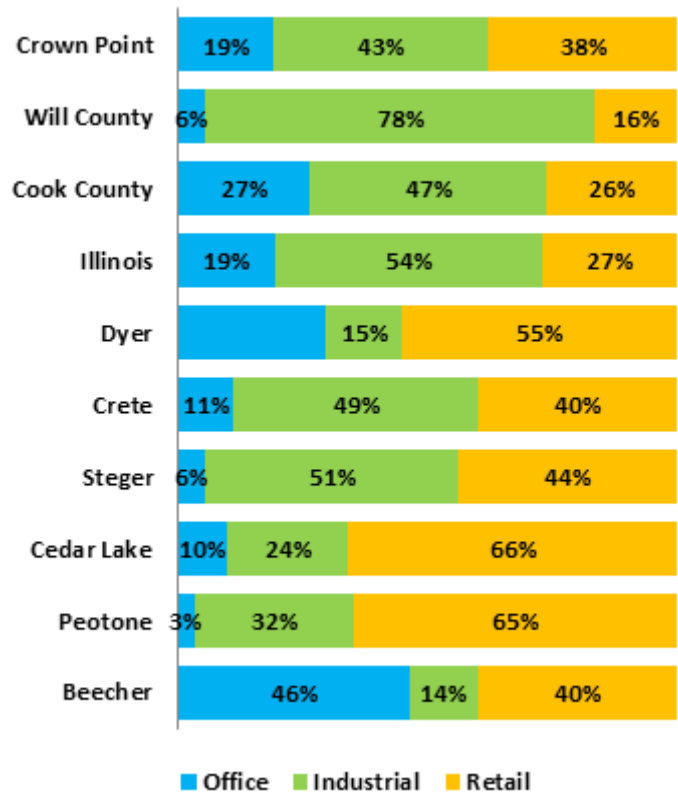
Overall, the Village saw a modest increase in the number of jobs (+0.5%) and an increase in the number of Beecher residents who are employed (+7.5%) between 2010 and 2015. Most employment opportunities in Beecher are in the healthcare, manufacturing, retail trade, or education services. Employment in Healthcare and Manufacturing increased significantly in 2015, with the expansion of Beecher Manor nursing home. Compared to neighboring communities, such as Peotone, Dyer, Cedar Lake, and Crete, Beecher saw a modest increase in jobs between 2010 and 2015. However, the percentage of employed residents grew significantly more than in neighboring communities during the same time (OnTheMap Tool).

Retail trade and education have consistently been strong employment sectors and are expected to continue to expand as the population grows. Finance and insurance had been a significant employment sector, peaking in 2011 and remaining high until 2014, but decreased significantly in 2015.

OCCUPIED SPACE IN BEECHER

Analysis of occupied space in Beecher and nearby communities indicates that Beecher has an abundance of office space and significantly less industrial space compared to neighboring communities, such as Peotone, Crete and Cedar Lake, Indiana (Figure 8.1). Beecher currently has no available industrial lots ready for development. However, the newly created TIF district includes several areas appropriate for future industrial use.

Figure 8.1: Occupied Space Mix, 2017



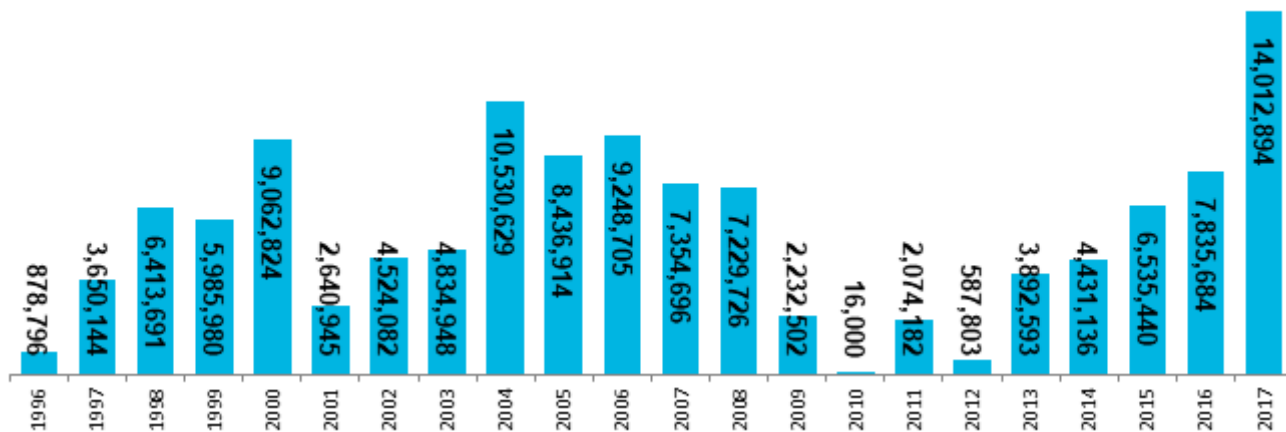
Source: CoStar



INDUSTRIAL DEMAND IN WILL COUNTY

The demand for industrial space in Will County is highly correlated with the needs of North American freight and manufacturing. Will County is the 4th most populous county in Illinois (690,000 people) and the nation's "Largest" inland Port, with connections across 4 interstates, 5 Class I railroads, 3 waterways, and 3 intermodal terminals (Union Pacific, BNSF, and Canadian National). Particularly since 2010, the county has seen a dramatic increase in industrial space construction, at a pace well above pre-recession thresholds (Figure 8.2). Growing intermodal traffic is a function of several factors since 2000: "Amazon effect" e-commerce, Manufacturing recovery, and Panama Canal and eastern seaboard port growth.

Figure 8.2: Will County Industrial Space Construction

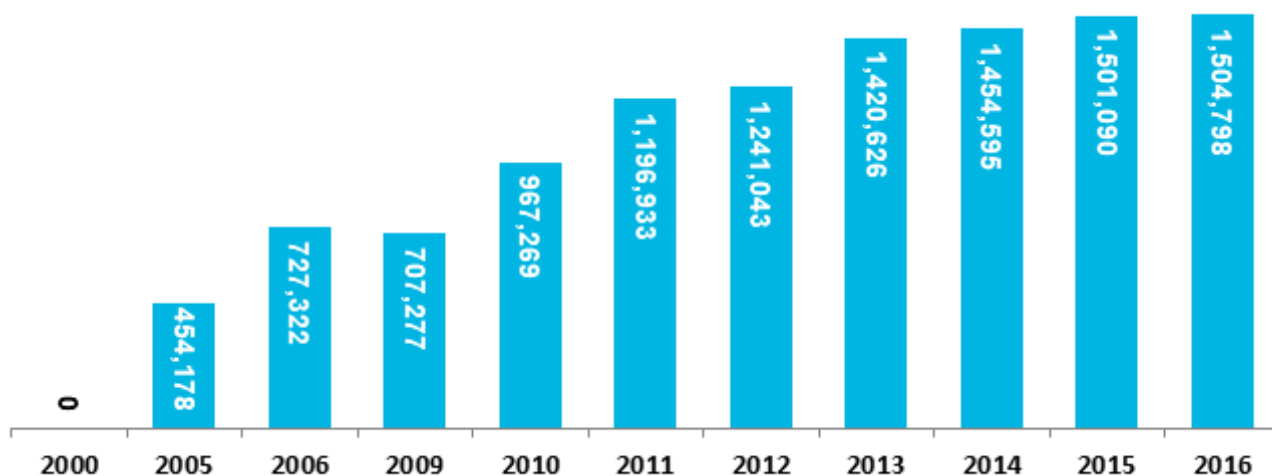


Source: CoStar

INDUSTRIAL CLUSTERING

There are 14 freight clusters in the Will County, totaling more than 86 million square feet of manufacturing and warehouse space. In addition, there is an abundance of land with industrial zoning in place, possibly in excess of 18,000 acres. Due to increased freight traffic, the number of container "lifts" at three intermodal yards in western Will County has steadily increased, totaling 1,504,798 in 2016 (Figure 8.3). CSX remains a key variable for Will County; while CSX had proposed a new intermodal yard in Crete in 2018, but the project is now on hold.

Figure 8.3: Total Will County Container Lifts



Source: CMAP

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Support Retention and Expansion of Existing Industry

There are several industrial businesses in Beecher which have been a part of the community for many years. The Village will continue to work with these businesses to ensure that their needs and concerns are addressed and to support their expansion in Beecher. Beecher is well-poised to help existing businesses grow and expand in the community, in turn creating jobs for residents and expanding the tax base.

Develop New Industrial Opportunities

Beecher welcomes the opportunity to begin new partnerships and create more jobs. Beecher envisions an expansion of industrial uses north and west of the Village, creating the opportunity for both expanded and new industrial parks (Figure 8.4). This location would provide direct rail access opportunities and direct truck access via the Beecher Bypass while also allowing the community maximum flexibility of other regional infrastructure projects were to move forward.

Coordinated development of this area as an industrial park is ideal and will require the collaboration of many stakeholders. The Village should continue to collaborate with the Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIA) 10 and the larger Economic Development Region (EDR) 4 to target appropriate new industrial users/uses in Beecher, such as food processing and

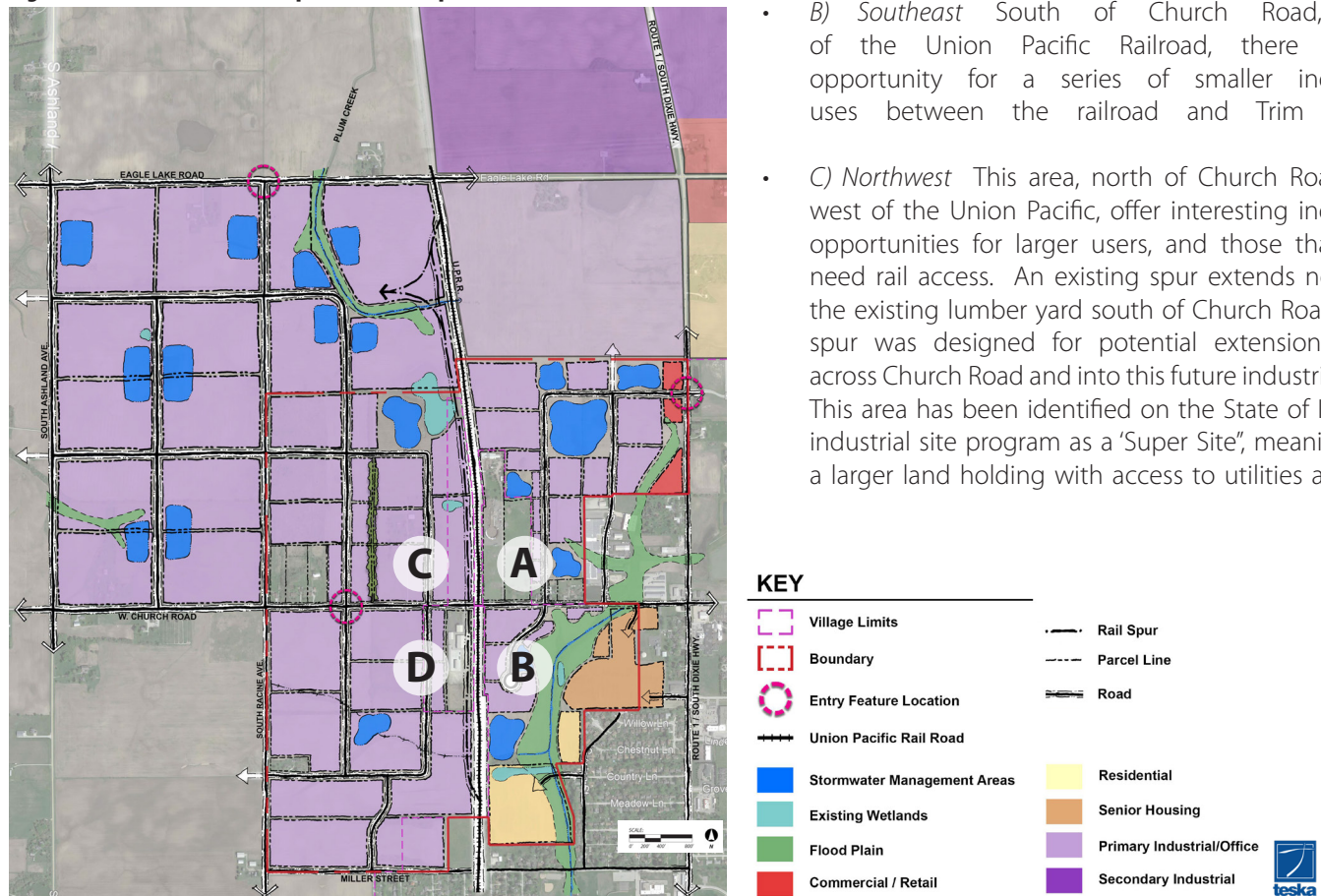
production. Learn more about EDR 4 and LWIA 10 plans at https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning/Pages/Plans_MOUs_Dashboard.aspx

In addition to partnering with these State-level agencies, the Village must work even closer with local partners such as the Will County Center for Economic Development (www.willcountyced.com) and the Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation (www.visitchicagosouthland.com). These organizations actively promote industrial development, offering excellent networking, educational, and cross-promotional opportunities.

The *Industrial Park Expansion Concept Plan* (Figure 8.4) provides an example of how Beecher could grow its industrial base. Highlights of this concept include:

- *A) Northeast* A logical first step in industrial expansion would be extension of Dutch American Way to the north, eventually connecting back to the east to Dixie Highway/Route 1. This extension would also open-up additional opportunities to expand the business park west to the Union Pacific Railroad. This industrial expansion should be focused on a series of smaller lots that can accommodate growing businesses like the existing business park along Dutch American Way.
- *B) Southeast* South of Church Road, east of the Union Pacific Railroad, there is an opportunity for a series of smaller industrial uses between the railroad and Trim Creek.
- *C) Northwest* This area, north of Church Road and west of the Union Pacific, offer interesting industrial opportunities for larger users, and those that may need rail access. An existing spur extends north to the existing lumber yard south of Church Road. This spur was designed for potential extension north across Church Road and into this future industrial area. This area has been identified on the State of Illinois's industrial site program as a 'Super Site', meaning it is a larger land holding with access to utilities and rail.

Figure 8.4: Industrial Park Expansion Concept Plan



Source: Teska Associates, Inc.

- *D) Southwest* The area south of Church Road and west of the Union Pacific Railroad also offers excellent industrial opportunities for large or small users.

There are currently 58 acres of land in the Village of Beecher that are being used for industrial purposes. The future land use plan increases planned industrial areas to approximately 1,500 acres (primary) and to 2,280 acres (primary and secondary), a total increase of almost 4,000%. Development will occur over time and may never expand into the Secondary Industrial area, but the Village is ready to facilitate expansion as appropriate. All areas shown for industrial are anticipated to remain in agricultural use until needed to accommodate industrial development.

The future land use plan makes a distinction between primary and secondary industrial areas. Primary areas are likely to develop first, as they are nearest the Village and would be easier to serve with utility and other infrastructure extensions. Secondary industrial areas are farther out, and would only be appropriate once the primary industrial areas are developed -- or a major user was attracted to Beecher which required the additional land.

Demand for industrial space is often directly linked to locational advantages, including access to transportation modes including air, rail, truck and sea. If developed in the future, the South Suburban Airport and/or the Illiana Expressway could offer unique advantages for further industrial development in the Village. The Alternate Future Land Use Plan anticipates industrial development between the planned ultimate boundary for the SSA and the present Village limits.

RETAIL DEMAND IN BEECHER

Beecher currently has a number of local, independent businesses as well as some national chains, such as Subway and Dunkin Donuts, and some regional chains like Casey's and Walt's Food Center. As the population has grown, the number of retailers and restaurants has grown. A greater variety of businesses and restaurants is desired by residents. Large format retailers and restaurants pay close attention to traffic counts, commercial clusters, and growing population bases when considering new locations. An approximate trade area for Beecher (based on midpoints between Beecher and nearby cities) includes 10,100 residents (Figure 8.5). In order to understand the market potential within the trade area, per capita establishment values were compared to the State average (Figure 8.6). In 2017, the Beecher trade area had fewer establishments in retail, accommodation, and food service per capita than the State average. This suggests that the community could support additional restaurants and as the community continues to grow some retail expansion is feasible.

Second to sufficient demand, one of the major hurdles in attracting new businesses and restaurants is the availability of retail space. The cost of building a standalone retail or restaurant space is significant in addition to the start-up cost for a business. The Village should aim to leverage existing retail space and encourage support of existing local businesses.

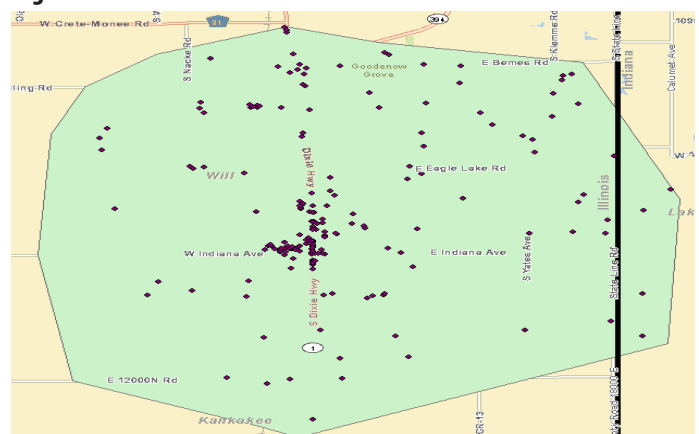
Local Business Support

Beecher's Chamber of Commerce is active on social media and maintains a user-friendly website with a business directory. The Chamber hosts Cruise Nights, annual golf outings, community dinners, and garage sale days. The Chamber's Facebook page is frequently updated with event information, promotions at local businesses, and information regarding new businesses in the community. Research shows that "Buy Local" campaigns are an effective means of incentivizing local residents to support local businesses which keeps more money local.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Community outreach in Beecher showed that residents love their community and would like to shop and dine more locally. Across the nation and in neighboring communities, brick-and-mortar retail continues to face challenges to remain open and financially soluble due to the competition from e-commerce. Businesses have tried to retain the relevance of their physical locations in a variety of ways, including closing less profitable locations and downsizing brick-and-mortar locations.

Figure 8.5: Beecher Trade Area



Source: AECOM

Figure 8.6: Establishment Per Capita, Beecher Trade Area

Relative Establishment per Capita Values: Beecher Study Area and Illinois (2017)		
NAICS	Description	Relative Establishments per Capita
444	Building material and garden supply stores	158%
447	Gasoline stations	117%
441	Motor vehicle and parts dealers	112%
442	Furniture and home furnishings stores	109%
445	Food and beverage stores	92%
451	Sports, hobby, music instrument, book stores	68%
722	Food services and drinking places	56%
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	55%
721	Accommodation	48%
446	Health and personal care stores	47%
452	General merchandise stores	40%
448	Clothing and clothing accessories stores	35%
443	Electronics and appliance stores	0%

Source: AECOM

Buy Local Campaigns

Many small communities in Illinois have promoted buy-local campaigns, aimed to galvanize support for local retailers, helping local businesses stay in business and in the community. Buying local can come with an up-front cost, however, as prices near home may be higher than in neighboring communities or purchasing online via the internet. Beecher is not immune from these challenges and while there are a few long-standing restaurants in the Village, the greatest challenge going forward will be to maintain and expand the variety of retail and restaurants in the community.

In recent years, some new restaurants have opened and subsequently closed and retail in the community offers a limited variety of goods. While the Village does anticipate the potential for population growth, maintaining a balance of offerings that the community and visitors can adequately support will be key. To do this, the Village must prioritize commercial areas in town and continue to promote the benefits of buying local as stabilizing forces.

In small towns, the ability to support a large number of businesses is a challenge. The challenge to businesses is to focus on catering to the needs and demands of customers. The challenge to residents is to support local businesses as best they can, understanding that the local exchange of money is mutually beneficial.

BUY LOCAL CAMPAIGNS | CENTRAL ILLINOIS BUY FRESH BUY LOCAL



Buy Local campaigns encourage communities of all sizes to buy locally made and produced goods and food. Research produced by several sources, including Civic Economics and the Institute for Local Self-Reliance find that there is a multiplier effect or a local premium wherein local independent businesses recirculate a far greater percentage of revenue locally compared to locally-owned franchises.

In Illinois, the Central Illinois Buy Fresh Buy Local is a nonprofit organization run by the Illinois Stewardship Alliance which was started in 2000. According to their website, 95% of all food products in Illinois are not grown in the state but imported from other states and countries--but if every Illinois household dedicated just \$10 of weekly grocery dollars towards food products produced in the state, a total of \$47 million would be re-invested in the economy.

The organization primarily aims to encourage the purchase of food products produced in Illinois. They provides access to information, including a directory of farms, recipes, farmer's markets, festivals and organize the September Eat Local Challenge.

Attract New Businesses to Commercial Areas

Route 1/Dixie Highway Route 1 is effectively the commercial main street running through Beecher today. The corridor offers great visibility and the highest average daily traffic counts (ADT) in the Village at 11,000 vehicles per day (vpd). Within Village limits, there is some room for commercial expansion and new commercial developments can be accommodated along Route 1 north and south of the Village. New facilities and businesses that could serve the region would be easily accessible located along Route 1/ Dixie Highway and could provide spillover opportunities for existing local establishments.

Downtown Beecher The community hopes to continue revitalizing the Downtown and preserve it as a mixed-use area, where historic structures from the beginnings of the Village still stand, offering residents and visitors a taste of the past. Currently there are a limited number of businesses in the Downtown area but there are vacant storefronts that the new businesses could move into. For more details about how the Village plans to revitalize Downtown, see Chapter 7.

Expand and Improve Broadband Access

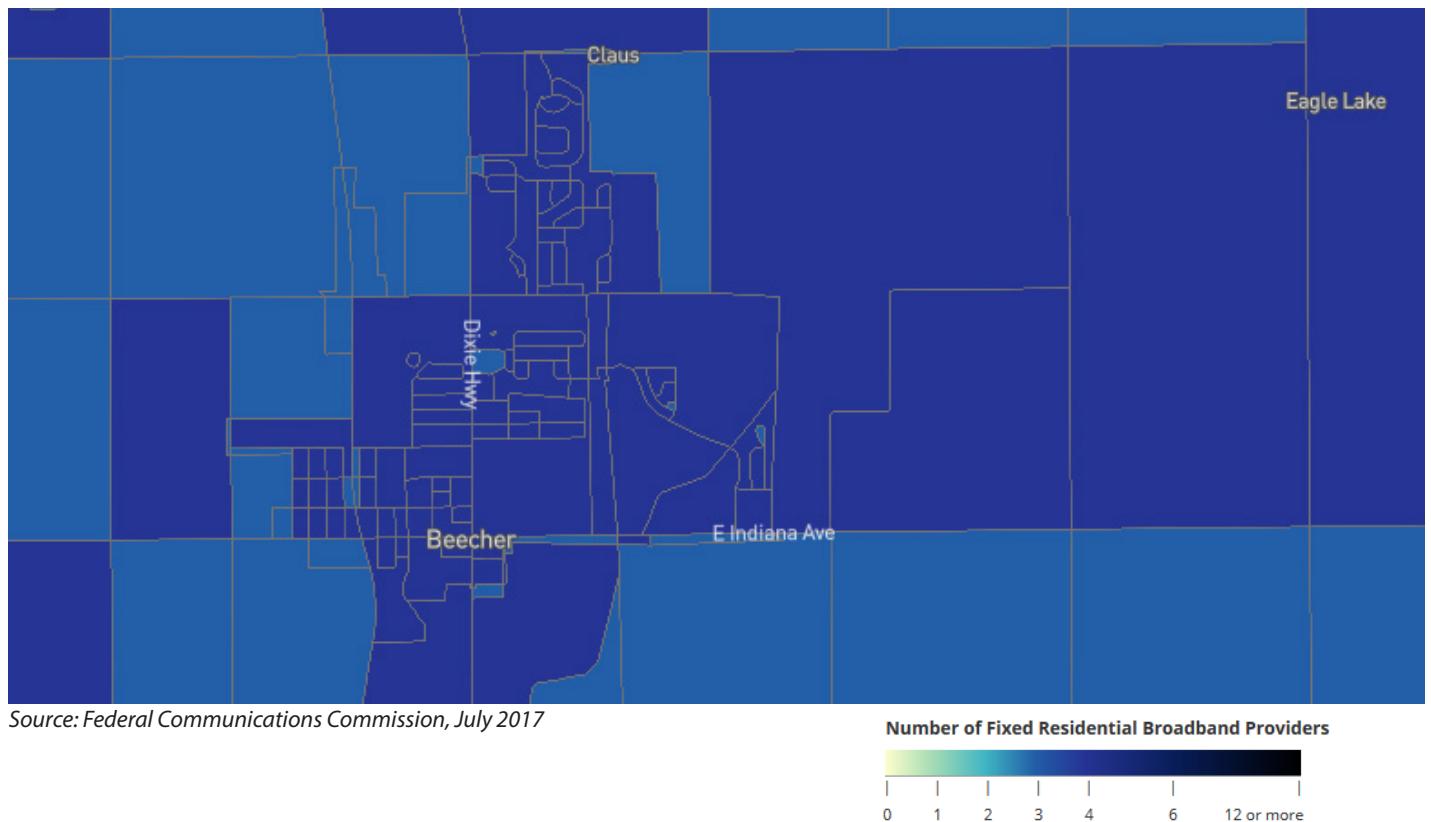
Commercial businesses rely heavily on repeat customers and the ability to be discovered. While historically the discovery was done in person, in brick and mortar stores, many businesses

WHAT DO BEECHER RESIDENTS WANT?

Residents would most like to see family restaurants and expanded retail shopping options, both of which are appropriate for Route 1/Dixie Highway and could be attracted. They would also like to have sports facilities closer to home.

all over the world market their products and services entirely online today. Depending on the user/industry, access to high-speed internet may be an important consideration when moving to the community. The majority of Beecher has access to several broadband internet providers, including Comcast, Surf Air Wireless, dishNET, ViaSat, and AT&T, but there are some areas that have more limited options (as of June 2017). Beecher residents currently have access to cable, DSL and satellite internet technologies (Figure 8.7). Areas where residential expansion is expected have the greatest number of options and speed, but existing and future industrial areas are more limited. As the Village works to expand current and new industrial parks, access to reliable high-speed internet is an important consideration and must be extended to these future industrial sites.

Figure 8.7: Broadband Internet Access



DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Tax Increment Financing In 2018 the Village commissioned the study of a Tax Increment Finance District (TIF). The District, approved June 10, 2019, included properties in the Downtown and along Church Road and Route 1/Dixie Highway in the west and north of the Village. Consistent with this Plan, the boundary of the TIF District (Figure 8.8) encompasses areas intended for industrial and commercial development and rehabilitation (see Figure 2.3 Future Land Use Map).

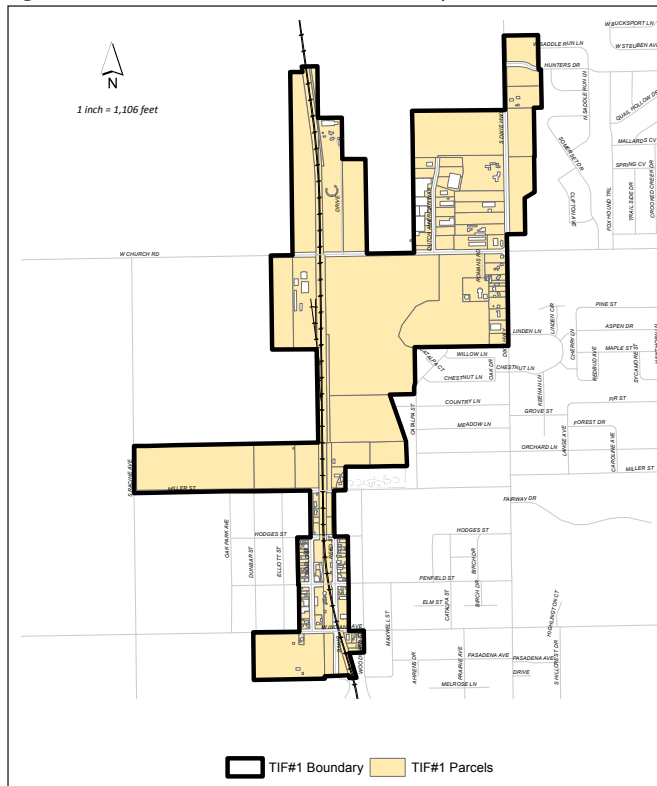
Enterprise Zone The Lincoln & 394 Corridor Enterprise Zone was established in 2017 and includes area within Village limits along Route 1/Dixie Highway, along the Union Pacific Railroad, and in existing and planned industrial areas (Figure 8.9). Enterprise Zones are intended to incentivize economic growth and neighborhood revitalization by providing tax incentives and exemptions, such as tax abatements on building materials, a 50% abatement on real estate taxes and a 50% discount on local building permits (restrictions apply). In addition, each zone offers local incentives.

BENEFITS OF ENTERPRISE ZONES

Core benefits of enterprise zones are sales tax abatement on building materials for projects in the zone with valid Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) building materials sales tax exemption certificate; 50% abatement of the municipal portion of real estate taxes on the added tax value the project creates for 5 years (Projects in a TIF or receiving other property tax abatements are not eligible for this benefit); and 50% discount on local building permit fees (All other fees and inspection procedures follow local ordinances).

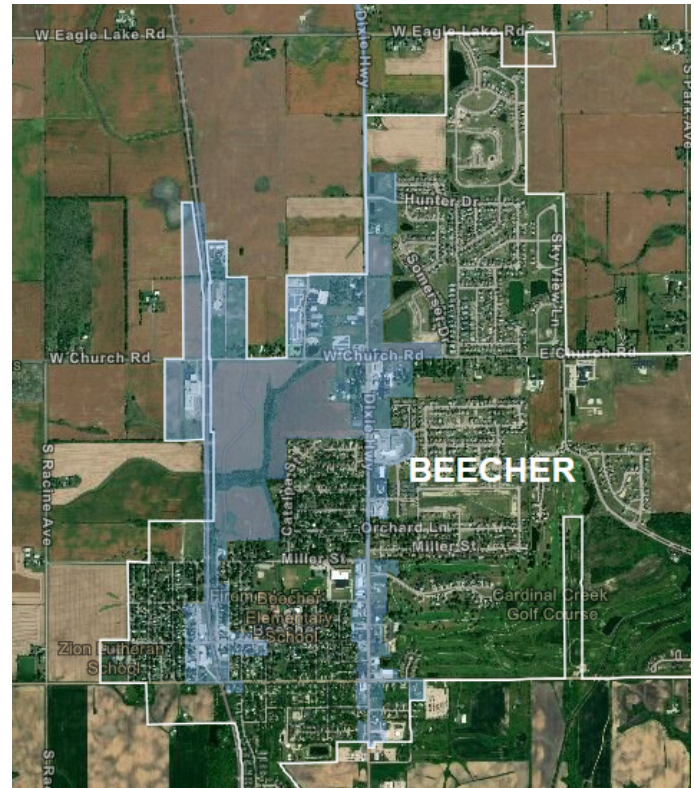
Learn more about the boundaries and benefits of the Lincoln-394 Enterprise Zone at the link at the bottom of this page.

Figure 8.8: Beecher TIF #1 District Boundary



Source: Beecher TIF #1 Redevelopment Plan & Program, Village of Beecher

Figure 8.9: Lincoln-394 Corridor Enterprise Zone Boundary



Source: SSMMMA Lincoln-394 Corridor Enterprise Zone Website

Lincoln-394 Enterprise Zone: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=c9ff83764472433184f089672f4d81e1>

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Infill Development

Residential development in the Village took off in the early 2000s but slowed toward the end of the decade during the Great Recession. As a result, the Village approved numerous residential lots which remain vacant and therefore generate significantly less revenue in taxes (Figure 8.10). While the housing market overall has slowed, there are still unmet housing needs in Beecher. The Village will prioritize residential construction on these lots in order to expand housing opportunity and the tax base.

Housing Type & Cost Mix

Of all vacant lots waiting for development, the majority are for single-family homes, typically on 8,500 square lots. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that while many Beecher residents are able to live comfortably, a quarter of homeowners and a half of all renters are cost-burdened. The Village cannot directly change these numbers, but it can encourage the development of residences that maintain high-quality construction at lower costs, including duplexes and townhomes.

Beecher has traditionally seen very low-density residential development, common in rural and suburban communities. However, the introduction of higher density residences, such as townhomes and apartments have been well integrated into the community. These units retain the character of single-family homes as they are attached but built at a maximum of two stories. With the amount of single-family residences planned for development in Beecher, the Village should actively seek opportunities for the development of higher density residential options, especially multifamily units.

As the median age rises, it is clear the Beecher is home to a growing proportion of seniors, many of whom may prefer to live in a smaller or more manageable home and others may need an assisted living environment. The Village should pursue opportunities to develop both.

Figure 8.10: Dwelling Unit Potential at 100% Build Out

	Units
Existing Dwelling Units	1,627
Approved, Undeveloped Dwelling Units	1,710
Total (dwelling units at 100% build out)	3,337

Source: Village of Beecher



RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8-1

Develop New Industrial Opportunities.
- 8-1-1

Work with property owners and developers to create a new industrial park or expand the existing park.
- 8-1-2

Work with existing businesses to accommodate their expansion in Beecher.
- 8-1-3

Develop a marketing program to attract new investment in Beecher.
- 8-1-4

Promote access to high-speed, quality internet providers, on par or better than access in neighboring communities.
- 8-2

Expand retail and restaurant options in Beecher.
- 8-2-1

Strategically promote commercial areas in Beecher to ensure greater success.
- 8-2-2

Promote the benefits of spending money locally.
- 8-3

Develop incentive tools to partner with private development.
- 8-3-1

Create an incentive policy to guide the use of Tax Increment Finance District, sales tax rebates, and other potential incentives.
- 8-3-2

Enhance the economic development tab on the Village’s web site to highlight available sites and Village partnership opportunities
- 8-4

Promote preservation of historic properties.
- 8-4-1

Partner with property owners to keep older homes in good condition.
- 8-4-2

Promote the preservation of the Downtown Area.
- 8-5

Jump-start residential development.
- 8-5-1

Encourage infill residential development.
- 8-5-2

Encourage new residential construction that maintains quality, but is lower cost (smaller homes, duplexes, townhomes, etc.).
- 8-5-3

Encourage construction of new senior housing opportunities.

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A Sustainable Community

9

INTRODUCTION

Communities are taking different approaches to becoming more sustainable and resilient, including changes both to how a community is run and how the community lives. The word “sustainability” may first evoke ideas about energy use and production or stormwater management, but a sustainable community is also one in which multimodal transportation is a priority; where food, goods and jobs are produced and available locally; and where waste is seen as a resource. This chapter defines what a ‘Sustainable Beecher’ could look like, describes infrastructure and utility needs, and outlines the ways in which the Village encourages greater sustainable use of resources.

The infrastructure and utilities we use are generally provided and maintained at a small cost per person—sometimes so small that it’s easy to take them for granted. Infrastructure includes things like roads, bridges, sidewalks and stormwater management areas, and even maintained green space like parks. Utilities include water and sewer services, internet and phone services, electricity and gas, and trash and recycling pickup. A variety of infrastructure and utilities support us as we go about our daily lives, but what we require to go about our daily lives can change over time based on the way we develop, move around, shop and play in our communities.

This chapter envisions a Sustainable Beecher as a community that:

- Aims to reduce overall waste through reuse and recycling, diverting it from landfills;
- Prioritizes water conservation through public education and ordinances;
- Encourages the adoption of renewable energy systems such as solar;
- Protects the integrity and quality of Trim Creek and local watersheds (Plum Creek and Pike Trim Creek Watersheds);
- Encourages compact and low-impact development patterns to preserve high quality agricultural land;
- Maintains efficient and effective infrastructure; and
- A community that teaches children about the environment and how to care for it.

CASE STUDY SUSTAINABLE BEREA | BERE, KENTUCKY



Sustainable Berea is a non-profit organization that began in 2005 in a local community church in Berea, Kentucky (population 15,500, 2017). The original 15 members of the organization were concerned about the local impacts of climate change, population growth, environmental degradation, resource depletion, and rising national debt. The organization has organized numerous events since then, including a rain barrel festival, four 10-mile potlucks, nine solar tours, a film series, workshops, and skill shares. The organization has also published two local foods/local recipe books and organized five local food expos.

The 2008 Rain Barrel Festival was a watershed event where barrels were painted and auctioned and 15 local and regional water conservation organizations set up booths. The event was attended by 1,500 people.

In 2014, the Backyard Beekeeping project began, providing resources and education to five local households each year to become beekeepers.

In 2015, the First Annual Victory Garden Blitz organized 100 volunteers to help build and install 180 raised garden beds in Berea, primarily in low-income households.

In 2018, the Harvesting Hope job-skills program was launched, helping women recovering from opioid addiction through service with the Berea Urban Farm.

The case study above, of efforts in Berea, Kentucky, is one example of how a small community can embrace sustainability. As a small community, Beecher has unique advantages to make significant changes and drive sustainability locally and in the region. As a member of the Greenest Region Compact (GRC), Beecher has already taken a first step to becoming a more sustainable community by being part of the larger regional conversation.

WASTE MANAGEMENT + DIVERSION

Beecher is one of the thirty-eight communities in the Will County Service Area that are eligible to utilize the Prairie View landfill in Wilmington, IL. While this is a relatively new landfill (opened 2004) and has the capacity to service the County for another 22 years*, Will County has a goal of 55% waste diversion by 2022 through recycling and composting. That's roughly a 12% increase from the 43% diversion rate achieved in the County as of 2016. While Zero Waste (90% diversion) is desirable, the County recognizes that the infrastructure is not in place yet for that goal to be attainable by 2022. However, the County will continue to set incremental goals that will allow for a substantial increase in waste diversion over the next few years.

The Village of Beecher already has several programs in operation that help reduce and divert waste, including curbside recycling, leaf/brush collection and yard waste disposal. To meet or exceed the County's goal, Beecher should consider ways to increase waste diversion locally, through continued educational efforts through social media and newsletters to:

- Encourage greater participation in existing programs
- Increase awareness of the impact of diverting waste by type
- Partner with Beecher schools to educate students about the life cycle of products

Leaf Collection is collected by the Village maintenance crew in the Fall and is exclusive of brush and yard waste. Educational efforts should focus on the benefits of leaf mulching to reduce the need to collect and transport yard waste.

Refuse Collection is provided under contract with the Village of Beecher by a private firm, Homewood/Star Disposal. Open burning within Village limits as well as dumping on public or private property is prohibited.

Brush Pick-up is provided by the Village maintenance crew between April and November.

Yard Waste is collected and taken to a compost site by Homewood/Star Disposal between April and November.

* Will County. 2017. Solid Waste Management Plan Update 2007-2016. http://www.willcountygreen.com/assets/1/AssetManager/SWPLAN2007-2016_Approved12-21.pdf



Recycling

Through Homewood/Star Disposal, Beecher residents can recycle a variety of paper, cardboard, aluminum, plastic and glass curbside. The service does have some restrictions, so it is imperative that the Village partner with Star Disposal to educate residents to ensure they know what products are eligible for curbside recycling.

Residents of Beecher and Washington Township can also drop off items at the Washington Township Recycling Center (30200 Town Center Road). The center provides textile drop boxes for old clothing and shoes.

Electronics Recycling

Will County offers several drop off locations for electronics, including the Peotone Police Department at 208 E. Main Street in Peotone. Electronics are not eligible for curbside recycling and are not accepted at the Washington Township Recycling Center.

WILL COUNTY GREEN | GREEN GUIDE

Will County's Green Guide provides information about recycling, composting, solar, rain barrels, household hazardous materials, bike and transit options, farmer's markets, energy efficiency options, and recycling events and more on their website, www.WillCountyGreen.com



SOLAR ROOFTOPS | DUTCH AMERICAN FOODS

Dutch American Foods facility in Beecher has around 3,000 panels installed on the roof, producing 32% of the site's electricity needs (920 kW). The panels were installed in 2016 and the business used Sustainable Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) to help fund installation.



ALTERNATIVE/RENEWABLE ENERGY

The benefits of transitioning to alternative or renewable energy sources are significant—including improved health conditions for workers and residents near systems, job creation, reduction in carbon emissions and water usage. In the State of Illinois, energy sources include nuclear, coal, natural gas, wind, biomass, hydroelectric, oil, solar, and other fossil fuels. Currently, nuclear and coal generate over 80% of all energy in the state*, but as the infrastructure for other energy systems expands, reliance on fossil fuels will lessen. The Illinois Power Agency's (IPA) Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan (approved in April of 2018) and the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) (passed in 2016) aim to expand renewable energy sources and usage in the state. The IPA's goal is to acquire 25% of all energy from renewable sources by 2025.**

The transition to renewable energies, such as solar, wind, and geothermal, continues to become more cost effective for homes and businesses. There are several incentives and rebate programs in Illinois for residential, commercial and industrial users, including renewable energy production tax credits, special tax assessments, and solar energy buy-back programs:

- Residential, commercial and industrial customers are eligible for special tax assessments which use a property valuation that does not account for a solar system.

- Commercial and industrial customers are eligible for solar rebates through Commonwealth Edison (ComEd), up to \$250 per kilowatt (kW) of installed solar power, up to 2,000 kW capacity. ***
- The Federal Investment Tax Credit (ITC) allows solar energy system owners to deduct 30 percent of the cost of installing a solar energy system from their federal taxes. The tax credit applies to both residential and commercial systems, as long as the taxpayer owns their system.

In Beecher, there are a few notable uses of solar, including the rooftop of Dutch American Foods and solar powered crosswalks at Church Road and Beecher Junior High. Dutch American Foods, Inc. has around 3,000 panels installed, producing 32% of the site's electricity needs (920 kW). ****

The cost of adding solar to a home or business is still cost-prohibitive for many, but incentives like rebates and tax credits can make it a worthwhile addition. The Village will continue to encourage residents and business owners to consider adding solar energy systems to their homes, buildings and properties in Beecher. Although solar energy systems are still connected to the energy grid, switching to renewable energy systems helps the community and the state meet renewable energy generation goals, reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

* U.S. Energy Information Administration. Open Data API, Electricity Net Generation. <https://windexchange.energy.gov/states/il>

** Illinois Power Agency. 2018. Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan. <http://illinoisabp.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Long-Term-Renewable-Resources-Procurement-Plan-8-6-18.pdf>

*** Commonwealth Edison. Incentives. <http://www.comed.com/WaysToSave/ForYourBusiness/Pages/SmallBusiness.aspx>

**** Verde Solutions. Dutch American Foods. <https://verdesolutions.com/dutch-american-foods/>

Solar Energy

Traditionally electricity has been generated at a single source, such as a hydroelectric plant. Solar energy, however, has advantages in that power can be generated with a single photovoltaic (PV) panel. Virtually any building with a roof could install solar panels and potentially generate sufficient electricity for all the energy needs of that structure. Solar gardens, also called community solar installations, are large areas where many solar panels are installed on the ground. The energy produced is then distributed through the energy grid. Subscribers, who may have paid an upfront cost toward installation or may simply pay for their energy per kWh.

The State of Illinois currently has several subsidies and incentives for the installation of solar panels and more recently for expanding solar gardens in the state. In particular, the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) was passed in 2016, creating a new community solar program that allows any customer of ComEd or Ameren to subscribe to a community solar garden. Current solar installations around the state are inadequate, so solar garden developers are submitting applications to a lottery which will determine the future locations of solar gardens for the community solar program. The initial goal is to develop 666 megawatts of new photovoltaic generation in the state by the end of the 2020-2021 delivery year (Illinois Power Agency).*

Solar Gardens

Two solar projects near Beecher were recently awarded tax credits by the State of Illinois. Borrego Solar Systems, Inc. was accepted into Block 3 of the community solar system for a site on the south side of Goodenow Road just east of Park Avenue. The Community Power Group, LLC was also selected for a site south of Beecher, immediately east of Faith United Reformed Church on Corning Road. Each project is designed to generate 2 megawatts of energy. Combined, this is enough power to provide energy to approximately 800 homes or approximately half of Beecher's residential needs.

Geothermal Heating & Cooling

Geothermal heating and cooling systems are generally considered to be one of the most efficient systems, extending cost savings of between 30 and 70% on monthly utility bills. The systems circulate fluid through heating or cooling loops which either extract heat from or deposit heat into the ground, taking advantage of the consistent temperatures below the Earth's surface. While the cost and installation of geothermal systems are more expensive than an HVAC system, they require less energy to operate, saving money on utility bills.

The federal government currently offers homeowners and 30% tax credit for the installation of a geothermal system on their residential property. This 30% tax credit will be available through the end of 2019, then it will reduce to 26% through 2020 and 22% through 2021, when the credit expires. There is also an investment tax credit for commercial installations that will be available through January 1, 2022 offering a 10% tax credit.**

Wind Energy

Another type of renewable energy is the use of wind turbines which generate electricity, transfer it to the power grid, and is then distributed by utility providers to customers. There are two main types of wind energy, Utility-scale wind and Distributed or "small" wind. Utility-scale wind is created by large turbines, ranging in size from 100 kilowatts (kW) to several megawatts (MW). Small wind turbines produce less than 100 kWh and are generally not connected to the power grid, providing the energy directly to a home, farm or small business. Because of their location, they tend to be larger in size and can generate greater amounts of power. Modern turbines begin to generate electricity at wind speeds between 6 and 9 miles per hour (mph) and will shut off at roughly 55 mph to avoid damage..*** Beecher was an early adopter of regulations to allow wind energy systems, adopting a zoning amendment in 2009 that accommodates both small and large wind energy systems.



Source: Nenad Kajić / Venekohr, Wikipedia Commons

* Illinois Power Agency. Adjustable Block Program. <https://illinoisabp.com/about/>

** Geothermal Alliance of Illinois. Geothermal Tax Credits. <http://www.gaoi.org/incentives/>

*** American Wind Energy Association. Basics of Wind Energy. <https://www.awea.org/wind-101/basics-of-wind-energy>

In Illinois there are several utility-scale wind farms wherein multiple wind turbines are close together and send electricity to the power grid. The Pilot Hill Wind Farm in Kankakee County provides 175 MW of energy, and is under contract to power Microsoft's Illinois Data Center. The Top Crop Wind Farm in Grundy and LaSalle Counties has installed capacity of 300 MW, with the ability to power 104,000 homes annually.

Beecher amended zoning regulations in 2017 to provide for alternative energy systems including solar gardens and individual systems for a business or residence. However, regulations do not yet address small wind energy systems.

WATER QUALITY + POLLUTION

Stormwater Management

Stormwater infrastructure consists of street and roadway inlets and gutters, roadside ditches, small channels and swales, and an underground pipe system for runoff. Stormwater is piped to the Trim Creek Tributary and the Trim Creek, which ultimately discharges into the Kankakee River. While flood zones do include some developed areas, flooding has not historically been a significant threat for the Village. The Penfield Street bridge over the western branch of Trim Creek is scheduled for replacement as part of the 2020 Penfield Road Reconstruction Surface Transportation Project to reduce flood damage resulting from the bridge's condition.

The Village became a Certified Community under the Will County Stormwater Management Ordinance when this Ordinance was first adopted in 2004. Floodplain development and stormwater runoff are managed via this ordinance. Detention is required for all residential developments of 2 or more single-family homes on site 5 acres or larger, multi-family and non-residential developments on sites 1 acre or larger, redevelopment of more than 25,000 square on existing sites 1 acre or larger, and for roadway widening of 2 acres or more. Controlled release and storm water storage are required to control the 100-year, 24-hour event to no more than 0.15 cubic feet per second per acre, and the 2-year, 24-hour event to 0.04 cubic feet per second per acre or less. Where detention will discharge to agricultural land uses, the first 0.75 inches of runoff from the hydraulically connected impervious area is required to be stored below the primary gravity outlet. This extended detention can only discharge by infiltration into subsurface perforated drainage pipes, or via evapotranspiration.



Drainage at Lions Park, Beecher, IL

Sediment and Erosion Control is required by the County Ordinance as well as the construction site runoff permit program of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

Development in Floodplain

Floodplain development requirements in Beecher exceed the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program, including compensatory storage for all floodplain filling. All structures in and adjacent to the Special Flood Hazard Area are required to have 1 foot of freeboard above the Base Flood Elevation. Work in the regulatory floodway is limited to the uses allowed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Office of Water Resources. The Village was delegated floodway permit authority by the IDNR in 1991. This authority is limited; Beecher cannot permit projects in public waters, projects proposed by itself or a higher level of government, and other projects such as the hydraulic approval of bridges and culverts.

Storm Water Management Program (SWMP)

Beecher has a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) and was required by the EPA to prepare and comply with a Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) plan in 2017. The Plan identifies best management practices (BMPs) for managing stormwater in the Village, including public education and outreach, public participation, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction site runoff, post-construction runoff control, and pollution prevention.

Public Education and Outreach

The Village annually publishes stormwater educational articles in its newsletters to residents. Topics include education on the environmental impacts of stormwater discharge, how to reduce stormwater pollutants, and hazards of illegal discharges and improper waste disposal. The Village keeps stormwater articles on its website to inform residents on how to reduce stormwater quality impacts.

Public Participation/Involvement

The Village participates in and advertises an annual fall stream clean-up along Trim Creek. The Public Works Director organizes staff involvement and its public advertisement. Residents contact the Village to report stormwater related issues. The Village publishes the reporting number in its newsletters, where it encourages residents to report issues such as ordinance related issues, construction site soil-erosion issues, maintenance issues, and illicit discharges.

Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination

The Village maintains a digital storm sewer atlas of existing outfalls, receiving waters, and storm sewer pipes. The Village adopted the Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Ordinance that prohibits non-stormwater discharges into the Village's storm sewer system. The Ordinance provides a means to penalize any violations. To monitor receiving water health, the Village tests Trim Creek twice a month for ammonia, BOD, total suspended solids, and pH. The Village utilizes its illicit discharge tracing procedures by screening dry-weather outfalls, performing regular storm sewer maintenance, and by acting on public reporting. The Public Works Director is responsible for continuing regular program activity and tracing an illicit discharge. The Village disconnects any illicit discharges identified from the tracing program. The Village annually screens all outfalls for potential illicit discharges. It also screens storm sewer structures during routine maintenance.

Construction Site Runoff Control

The Village controls construction site soil erosion and sediment through its Soil Erosion Control Ordinance, the Will County Stormwater Management Ordinance, and its Subdivision Control Ordinance. Any regulated construction site must contain a stormwater pollution prevention plan that meets or exceeds requirements of the ILR10 permit and Illinois Urban Manual, 2002. When site plans are reviewed by the Village, water quality is considered. The Village inspects construction sites to ensure soil erosion controls are met. The Village Administrator ensures the ordinances are enforced in the plan review process and also in the field.



Beecher's Water Storage Tank

Post-Construction Runoff Control

Stormwater management is regulated from new development and redevelopment projects through the Village's Subdivision Ordinance and by the Will County Stormwater Management Ordinance. Sites are inspected during and after construction for compliance with the Village ordinances.

Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping

The Village annually conducts employee training on prevention and reduction of storm water pollution from municipal activities. The program addresses activities such as park and open space maintenance, fleet and building maintenance, operation of storage yards, snow disposal, new construction and land disturbances, storm water system maintenance procedures for proper disposal of street cleaning debris and catch basin materials, and addresses ways that flood management projects impact water quality, non-point source pollution control, and aquatic habitats. This program also addresses the hazards associated with illegal discharges and improper disposal of waste.

The Village conducts a regular inspection and maintenance program to reduce pollutant runoff from municipal operations. The program's effectiveness is biennially evaluated to determine effectiveness. Currently, the program includes: the sweeping of all Village streets each year, jetting storm sewers as needed and cleaning the associated catch basins, inspecting and cleaning catch basins after large storms, regrading ditches approximately every 10 years, and mowing and maintaining three dry bottom detention ponds.

The Village utilizes its formal Municipal Pollution and Prevention Program with policies designed to prevent storm water pollution associated with municipal operations. Road salt is stored in a salt dome for long-term storage. During the winter season, salt is also temporarily stored in a building with three permanent walls; the fourth side is covered by a tarp when the salt is not being loaded or unloaded. This building rests on an asphalt pad and the surrounding area is diked to prevent salt from running off the site. Flammable and hazardous chemicals are stored in fireproof metal cabinets. Chlorine gas used to disinfect drinking water is stored per Title 3 chemical safety standards. The Village transports used vehicle oil to a local service station for recycling.

Low-Impact Development A major cause of increased stormwater runoff is the increase in impermeable land due to development. Low-impact development strategies prioritize the preservation of green space in new residential development, thereby enhancing stormwater management and reducing disturbances to natural ecosystems. The Village anticipates residential development to occur between the current limits and the east branch of Trim Creek. The Village should partner with developers to prioritize low-impact development strategies to create new residential neighborhoods that maintain the tranquility and rural nature of the Village and protect the natural environment and resources, especially Trim Creek.

Rain Barrels The use of rain barrels on private property allows individual property owners to divert stormwater and potentially lower their own water bills by using captured rainwater instead of using municipal water. Rain barrels are easy to install and use, and they allow property owners increased water security. Will County encourages the use of rain barrels to conserve water and divert stormwater.

Bioswales Bioswales are used in place of, or in conjunction with, curbs and gutters to guide stormwater and retain greater amounts where it accumulates. They tend to be vegetated low-lying areas, with a mild slope. They tend to be located in parking lots, along roadways and sidewalks, and near existing draining areas. Native plants are recommended,



Example of rain barrel



Bioswale in Pingree Grove, IL

and denser vegetation combined with permeable materials, such as gravel, increase effectiveness. Learn more at <http://nrcsolutions.org/bioswales/>

Rain Gardens While these gardens may look the same as other gardens, the differentiating characteristics are the shape and location of rain gardens. They are often placed to capture stormwater runoff, such as from a roof or paved area. Generally they are bowl or saucer shaped so as to retain runoff for a few days to allow the water to infiltrate into the surrounding soil. Hardy, native plants are recommended, reducing maintenance, though debris, trash, weeds and invasive species must be removed. Learn more at <http://nrcsolutions.org/rain-gardens/>

Permeable Surfaces In order to reduce overall stormwater, the reduction of impermeable surfaces helps to retain water on site. Beyond retention and detension basins, establishing rain gardens and bioswales with native plantings and water tolerant plants expand permeable surfaces and are aesthetically pleasing. Rain gardens can be relatively small and are often used in parking lots and parks. To further reduce impermeable surfaces, Beecher can encourage the use of permeable pavers and/or porous/permeable pavements in place of driveways and in parking lots. By increasing the permeability of paved surfaces, stormwater can infiltrate directly into subsoil. Underground cisterns can help manage stormwater on site and be used for onsite landscaping. While the costs of rehabilitating existing impermeable surfaces with permeable options is often prohibitive, these best management practices are encouraged in new and infill developments.

Parking Regulation In an effort to provide enough parking, many communities have long instituted parking minimums for commercial/office, industrial, institutional and multifamily dwellings. In many cases, those minimums greatly exceeded demand. Transportation and parking demand continue to change, and some communities are finding that instituting parking maximums, or eliminating parking requirements altogether in certain areas is leading to better designed places that support walkability. Reducing the amount of parking built for new housing, commercial and industrial developments automatically reduces the amount of permeable surface and encourages developers to add green space and pedestrian infrastructure.

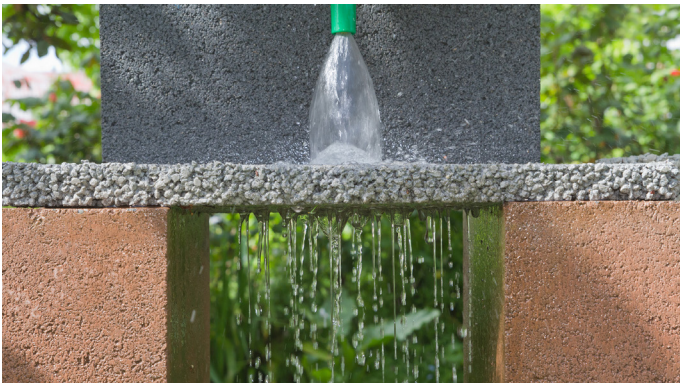
Figure 9.1 shows a comparison of some of the existing parking regulations in Beecher with the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), Crete, IL and Plainfield, IL. Beecher has similar regulations as Crete and Plainfield, both larger communities in Will County. Compared to ITE recommendations, Beecher’s minimums are on par or higher for those uses. However, as Beecher works to incorporate better pedestrian and bike infrastructure, parking demand could reduce, or remain steady even as the population grows. In addition, regulations for residential properties (not included in Figure 9.1) should be reviewed periodically so as to ensure new developments provide appropriate amounts of parking for single-family, two-family and multi-family homes.



Rain Gardens



Permeable Pavers



Permeable Pavement

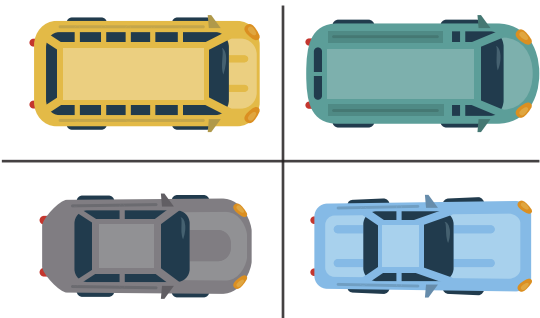


Figure 9.1 Parking Regulation Comparison

Use	Current Beecher Requirements	Suggested Minimum	Suggested Maximum	Institute of Transportation Engineers	Plainfield, IL (pop. 43k)	Crete, IL (pop. 8.1k)
Bars	not listed separately	1/100	1/65	not listed separately	1/150	not listed separately
Office	3.3 per 1,000 sq. ft.	1/400	1/250	1 per 357 sq. ft.	1/300	1/250
Medical office	6/1,000 sq. ft.			1 per 312 sq. ft.	1/200	1/200
Restaurants (no pick-up/drive-thru)	10/1,000 sq. ft.	1/100	1/65	1 per 94 sq. ft.	1/100	1/3 seats + 1/employee
Restaurants (with pick-up/drive-thru & on-site seating)	10/1,000 sq. ft. + 10 stacking spaces	1/125	1/100	1 per 110 sq. ft.	1/100	1/3 seats + 1/employee + 8 stacking
Restaurants (with pick-up or drive-thru only)	5.5 spaces/1,000 sq ft	1/250	1/200	not listed separately	1/200	not listed separately

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) GOALS

The Village of Beecher owns and maintains a central water supply, a central wastewater treatment facility, and sanitary and storm conveyance systems. The existing water and sewer infrastructure are aging, and the Village has been performing improvement work to replace the older water mains and the deteriorated wastewater treatment plant equipment.

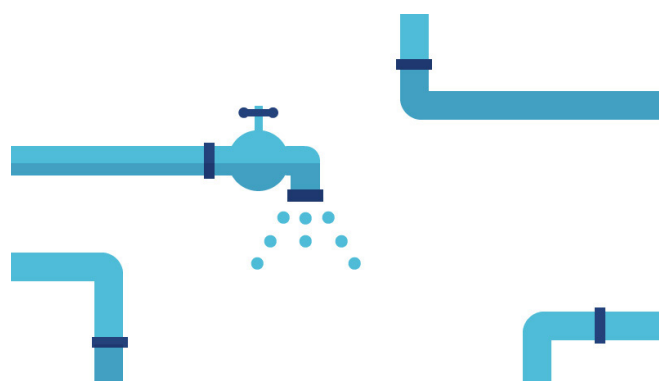
The Village's current 5-year Financial Plan includes the following water and sewer infrastructure projects:

- water main replacement on Gould Street, Indiana Avenue and Penfield Street;
- security system installation at Village wellhouses;
- pump repairs at Well #3 and Well #4;
- pump replacement at Well #5;
- and the rehabilitation of the Fairway Drive lift station.

While the sewer and water systems meet immediate needs in the Village, future growth will require additional infrastructure. Water conservation strategies and stormwater best management practices (BMPs) could reduce the construction and long-term maintenance costs for the Village and preserve the supply.

Water System

The Village has been actively replacing water mains over the last few years, including mains on Penfield, Elm and Dunbar Streets. The 2014 Water and Sewer Master Plan identified a deficiency in water storage capacity and the addition of a new storage facility in the near future is a priority. The Village



utilizes the shallow limestone aquifer for its water supply and distributes it to the community through its wells, water mains and storage facilities. The existing well supply capacity is adequate to serve the immediate needs of the Village (annual 0.5 MGD) until the maximum daily water demand reaches approximately 2.88 million gallons per day.

Water conservation strategies should be implemented now to reduce the amount of additional capacity needed and to protect the long-term water supply. These strategies include infrastructure renewal and conservation through public education, development ordinances and Village policies. When the Village exceeds this demand, additional wells should be drilled to maintain adequate capacity. The locations of the new wells should be strategically located to coincide with areas of new developments but must be located at least a half mile from one another to prevent interference. Past observation of water levels indicate that the aquifer has sufficient capacity, but a groundwater capacity evaluation to determine the long-term capacity of the limestone aquifer should be pursued when the Village requires additional supply.

The existing storage capacity is deficient by approximately

WaterSense has more than **2,000** organizational partners...

Partner Totals by State

Color	Partner Totals Range
Yellow	1 - 9
Green	10 - 19
Purple	20 - 29
Orange	30 - 39
Blue	40+

Source: EPA WaterSense Accomplishments 2018 Report

CMAP's Water 2050: Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Supply/Demand Plan (2010) outlines a number of strategies for water use conservation to increase efficiency, thereby reducing the amount of new water demand. The following recommendations come from, or are based on, those outlined in the report:

- Conduct local water demand forecast and integrate demand management and conservation strategies in land use and infrastructure planning efforts.
- Protect the quantity and quality of water supply sources through open space and recharge area protection, as well as other water pollution control measures.
- Adopt a lawn watering ordinance to reduce excessive outdoor lawn watering.
- Become an EPA WaterSense partner.
- Develop contingency plans for droughts and other water emergencies that limit the availability of water.
- Encourage water conservation strategies in new industrial development.
- Support partner and state efforts to better understand shallow groundwater sources, including mapping of important and/or sensitive groundwater recharge areas.
- Evaluate water rates to ensure they are paying for the

costs of providing service and helping to encourage conservation.

- Conduct a water loss audit to identify potential non-revenue water

As a member of the Greenest Region Compact, Beecher is encouraged to adopt these goals for water stewardship and conservation locally:

- Use and distribute water efficiently
- Protect and improve water quality
- Manage water system assets sustainably
- Optimize the use of natural and built systems to manage stormwater
- Practice stewardship of water resources
- Enact policies to protect water resources
- Engage the community in water stewardship

Sewer and Wastewater System

The central sewer treatment and disposal plant has undergone expansion and currently serves about 5,200 people and has a capacity to serve 6,000. The plant is currently undergoing expansion to serve up to 12,000 people and is expected to be completed in 2019.

Sewer Collection & Pumping Stations

The Village's original collection system has been expanded over the years. While the capacity of the system remains sufficient for the current population, the 2014 Water and Sewer Master Plan found that inflow and infiltration (I/I) issues have become a significant issue and are expected to increase as the system is used more heavily. There are currently four pumping stations which adequately serve current residents, but they are nearing capacity and the Village will need to install new trunk sewer and pumping stations as the Village expands.



Beecher's Wastewater Treatment Plant



RECOMMENDATIONS

9-1 Maintain and implement capital improvement plans (CIPs) to wisely operate municipal infrastructure (parks, pipes, pavement, etc.).

- 9-1-1 Identify opportunities to expand or improve the sustainability of municipal services and utilities, including the reduction of landfill needs, the reduction of energy usage, the increased use of renewable energies, etc.
- 9-1-2 Support the use and implementation of alternative energy uses by residential, commercial and industrial users.
- 9-1-3 Consider strategies for water conservation to reduce energy use and help maintain a long term supply of water.

9-2 Continue to monitor the health of Trim Creek and mitigate pollutants within Village boundaries.

- 9-2-1 Enact policies to protect shallow aquifer water supply source.
- 9-2-2 Continue public education efforts regarding water safety and pollutants to reduce non-point source pollution.
- 9-2-3 Partner with the IL-EPA to monitor water quality and identify point source pollution.
- 9-2-4 Work with developers to create sustainable stormwater management plans.
- 9-2-5 Implement sustainable road deicing policies to decrease application of road salt.

9-3 Minimize the impacts of flood events through Stormwater Management and the designation of floodways as open space.

- 9-3-1 Encourage low-impact development.
- 9-3-2 Establish the land use of flood zones as open space.
- 9-3-3 Establish a walking/biking trail along Trim Creek with native plantings.
- 9-3-4 Encourage residents to adopt water-conserving solutions such as rainwater capture to improve water security and reduce stormwater.
- 9-3-5 Establish rain gardens and bioswales within parks or on other public projects to source as a community demonstration.

9-4 Establish Village-wide goals for waste diversion in line with Will County's goals.

- 9-4-1 Continue to provide recycling services to residents and/or partner with local organizations to provide recycling drop off sites.
- 9-4-2 Establish policies to promote recycling within Village government and at Village sponsored events.

Implementation

10

INTRODUCTION

This Comprehensive Plan examines Beecher holistically, considering many factors both within and outside of the Village that contribute to its future. The vision outlined in this plan will require commitment, time, energy, and financial resources to achieve. This chapter offers specific suggestions on *key efforts, partnerships, resources, and priorities* to take the plan from vision to reality.

A LIVING DOCUMENT

The Beecher 2040 Plan should be a living document—one that is used regularly to guide growth and development, and one that is updated periodically to respond to changing conditions. The plan should serve as:

- *A key reference* when planning and reviewing development proposals
- *A guide for future growth and development* for capital facilities planning, both for the Village and for other local taxing bodies
- *A tool* to guide grant applications for park, mobility, infrastructure, and other capital improvements

The Beecher 2040 Plan should be reviewed annually by the Planning Commission to identify areas that need to be adjusted based on changing conditions in and around Beecher. It is recommended that the plan undergo a more thorough review every five years and be updated at least every ten years.

RELATIONSHIP TO MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

The Village has several regulatory tools that will help implement the vision outlined in the Beecher 2040 Plan. Primary tools include zoning and subdivision regulations.

Zoning Ordinance

The Village of Beecher Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 2006, and has been continuously revised and updated since its adoption. Recent amendments to the Zoning Ordinance include revisions to update sections related to temporary signage and solar panels within the Village. The Village has also been reviewing regulations for trailers and recreational vehicles in residential districts. The Village has provisions to allow greenhouses in backyards, does allow pet pigs, and has made a conscious choice not to allow backyard chickens.

Although the Village has consistently reviewed and updated the Zoning Ordinance throughout the years, this process is ongoing and additional revisions may be necessary to comply with changes in State law, and to further implement the goals and recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Village adopted regulations on wind energy systems in 2009, and solar energy in 2017. These regulations should be monitored for effectiveness, and adjusted as needed to accommodate changing technologies. There has recently been two (2) new wind farm developments approved by the State of Illinois in close proximity to the Village. These nearby projects suggest that wind speeds in and around Beecher will support wind energy production.

The Village has established a transparent and effective process to review zoning petitions. This process involves an initial presentation and introduction to the Plan Commission prior to a required public hearing. Although this process adds time on the front end, it saves time and confusion overall and is beneficial for both the Village and applicants.

The Village has reviewed State of Illinois regulations for medical marijuana in 2014, but did not amend the Zoning Ordinance at that time. Now that the State of Illinois has legalized recreational marijuana use, it is recommended that the Village amend their zoning regulations to address the range of uses associated with this legalization, including cultivation centers, dispensaries, and potential smoking lounges.

The Village should review current parking requirements (in particular for multi-family residential (2 per unit) and retail (1 per 200 square feet)) against actual parking demands and current trends. Current parking requirements require parking minimums which likely exceed demand, resulting in large paved parking areas. To enhance the walkable nature, and in recognition of the available on-street parking in the area, it is recommended that the Village reduce on-site parking requirements in Downtown Beecher.

Subdivision Ordinance

The Village of Beecher Subdivision Ordinance was adopted in 2007. The Subdivision Ordinance includes regulations for subdivision of parcels, design standards, conservation design, stormwater management, soil erosion, and wetland protection.

The Subdivision Ordinance provides standards for conventional, conservation, and hybrid design. Conventional design standards rely on State and County standards (IDOT, IEPA, etc.). Conservation design is specifically highlighted

in this Comprehensive Plan, and is currently encouraged through the Subdivision Ordinance when development occurs within 500ft. of a lake/stream/river. Hybrid design standards provide more conventional standards as well as bonuses for conservation elements.

The Subdivision Ordinance also establishes a Lowland Conservancy Overlay District to the Zoning Ordinance that limits development in flood-prone areas and requires a special use for new development.

The Village's details for roadways, sidewalks and bicycle paths should be updated to reflect current IDOT pay items and recommended material thicknesses. Requirements for bicycle parking for multi-family, institutional and retail uses should also be considered. It is also recommended that the Village adopt a Complete Streets Ordinance and modify the Subdivision Ordinance to include Complete Streets provisions.

PARTNERSHIPS

As a small town, partnerships are essential to achieving the bold vision outlined in the Beecher 2040 Plan. The Village has a strong history of successful partnering between governments, residents, and other local organizations to achieve common goals and objectives. Enhancing and building upon this track record of successful partnerships will be essential in plan implementation. Many of these critical local, regional, state, and national partnerships are summarized in the table below, and in the Implementation Guide at the end of this chapter.

Local Government Coordination

Local governments in the Beecher area strive to have regular meetings and coordinate activities to facilitate efficient government and wise use of tax payer dollars. There are quarterly meetings of all local governments within Washington Township where key topics of interest are discussed and governments share issues and concerns they are facing. In addition to the Village of Beecher, participants include Washington Township, the Beecher School District, and the Fire Protection District and the Beecher Community Library. This group has explored, and in some cases implemented, shared resources and purchasing activities where there was a shared cost and benefit to each local entity.



PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION | THE WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP CENTER

The Washington Township Center, which was dedicated in 2002, was constructed due to the cooperation, vision and combined resources of the Village of Beecher, Washington Township Road District, Washington Township and the Beecher Community School District.

The Center sits on 7 acres and houses all township offices including a large meeting room where many local governmental meetings are held.

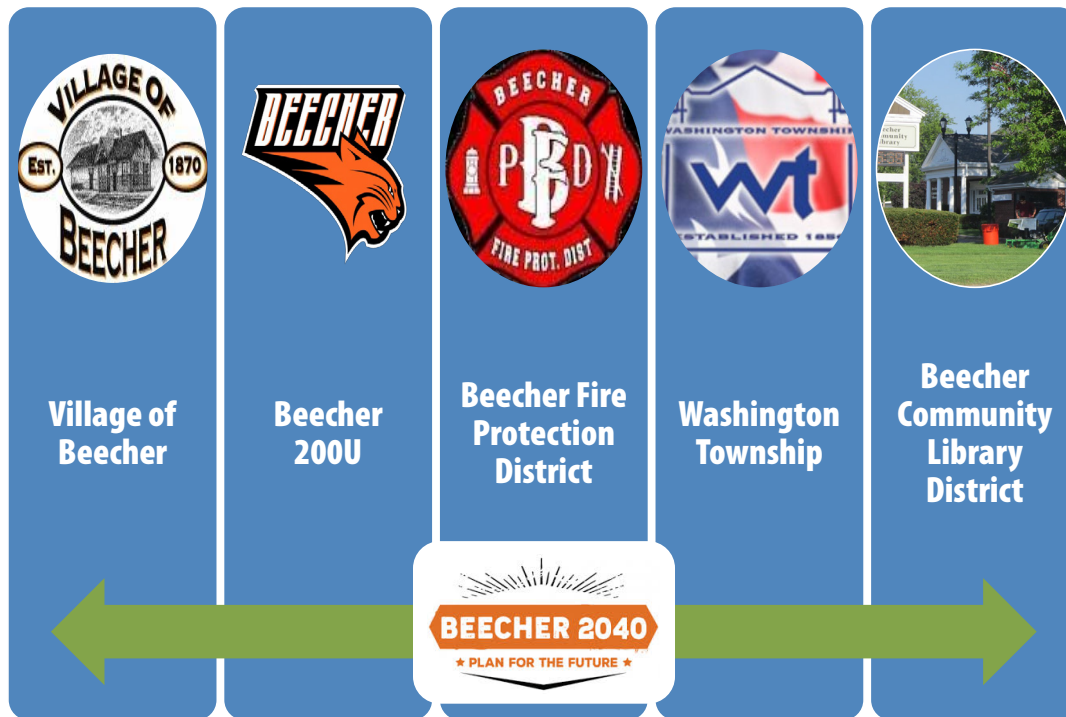
In addition, the Center is home to the Washington Township Road District offices and over 9,000 square feet of garage and shop space for Road District vehicles and equipment. The west end of the building is owned by the Beecher School District and serves as a repair and maintenance shop for school district buses and vans. There is also a 60' vehicle wash bay used by all the entities. The grounds surrounding the facility are used for school district bus parking, a shared card-controlled fuel system, a 1200-ton salt storage dome shared by the Village of Beecher and Township plus paved parking for over 50 vehicles. The Washington Township Recycling Center is also located on the property.

The Washington Township Center is truly a testament to what taxing bodies can accomplish by working together.

Table 10.1: Beecher 2040 Partners

Abbreviation	Organization
200U	Beecher School District 200U
3Rivers	Three River Association of Realtors
BFPD	Beecher Fire Protection District
BR	Beecher Recreation
BPD	Beecher Police Department
BYC	Beecher Youth Commission
CD	The Conservation Foundation
CED	Will County Center for Economic Development
CSCVB	Chicago Southland Convention and Visitors Bureau
CSEDC	Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation
DCEO	Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Illinois)
FRA	Federal Rail Administration
GRC	Greenest Region Compact

Abbreviation	Organization
IDNR	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
IEPA	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
IPRA	Illinois Parks and Recreation Association
Library	Beecher Community Library District
PSC	Prairie State College
SSMMA	South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
UP	Union Pacific Railroad
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
WCFPD	Will County Forest Preserve District
WCGL	Will County Governmental League
WCHC	Will County Historical Society
WCHD	Will County Highway Department
WT	Washington Township



RESOURCES

Funding a vision is always a challenge, whether that vision is for a home improvement project or development of a park improvement or other municipal facility. The Implementation Guide highlights several potential funding sources to supplement traditional municipal funding sources. Many of these sources are grant programs that offer financial assistance to local governments. Key resources are summarized in the following table.

Table 10.2: Beecher 2040 Resources

Abbreviation	Organization
BPP	Bike Path Program (IDNR grants)
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
EZ	Enterprise Zones
ISL	Illinois State Library
MFT	Motor Fuel Tax
OSLAD	Open Space Land Acquisition and Development
SRTC	Safe Routes to Schools
TAP	Tourism Attraction Grant Program (DCEO)
TIF	Beecher Tax Increment Financing District #1

In addition, local and regional partners can be a significant resource both in terms of planning and funding capital and operational elements. The Washington Township Center is an excellent example of local governments partnering to share resources and maximize the use of taxpayer dollars. Local governments should continue to explore opportunities to expand the sharing of resources, including but not limited to:

- Shared purchasing of supplies (office, fuel, construction materials, etc.)
- Staff sharing – activities like human resources or purchasing are examples of functions that have been shared between local governments
- Joint park/school development – Existing Beecher schools are adjacent to parks, providing opportunities to share and maximize the use of outdoor recreational facilities. This tradition should be continued should there be a need for a future school site in the community.

To achieve the priority projects identified in the Beecher 2040 Plan, one of the biggest resources required will be staff time to coordinate partners, work closely with elected and appointed officials, and identify and secure funding. Given the Village’s limited staff and multiple responsibilities, staff time availability may be a limiting factor in the implementation of some plan recommendations.

PRIORITIES

Implementation of the Beecher 2040 Plan will occur over the next 20 plus years. To help guide that effort, objectives have been prioritized as follows:

SHORT TERM

0-3 Years

Most short-term priorities are lower cost, and can show immediate results.

MEDIUM TERM

4-6 Years

These are priority items that require some budgeting and funding before they can begin.

LONG TERM

7+ Years

These items, while important, often have a greater price tag associated with them and will take time to plan and fund.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

It will take the entire community to put the Beecher 2040 Plan into action. While the Village will obviously be a central player in the implementation, many other partners will be needed to achieve the plan's vision. The following table provides a summary of key goals and objectives from each chapter of the Beecher 2040 Plan, along with a summary of key partners, resources, and priority.

Table 10.3: Beecher 2040 Implementation Guide

	Goal	Objective	Partners	Resource(s)	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
CHAPTER 3 - A RESILIENT COMMUNITY	3-1 Accommodate population growth in Beecher as infill development.	1. Encourage infill residential development in existing and approved neighborhoods and subdivisions.	Property owners, developers, banks, 3Rivers	TIF	X	X	
		2. Support compact residential development to promote the preservation of open space/agricultural uses (e.g. agrihoods).	Property owners, developers, banks, 3Rivers	TIF	X	X	X
		3. Promote new senior housing opportunities near existing cultural and shopping facilities (see Chapter 4 for additional recommendations on seniors housing).	Property owners, developers, banks, 3Rivers	TIF	X		
	3-2 Expand industrial and commercial opportunities, including the continued revitalization of Downtown Beecher.	1. Maintain open communication with local industrial users to anticipate needs and accommodate expansion.	Local businesses, banks, Chamber, ComEd, CSEDC, CED		X	X	X
		2. Expand the existing industrial park to the north and west.	Property owners, developers, banks, DCEO, UP	TIF, EZ	X	X	X
		3. Encourage new commercial development to occur in areas where new transportation reoutes and new industrial developments occur, as depicted on the Future Land Use Map.	Property owners, developers, banks	TIF	X	X	
		4. See Chapter 7 for specific recommendations regarding reutilization of Downtown Beecher.					

	Goal	Objective	Partners	Resource(s)	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
CHAPTER 3 - A RESILIENT COMMUNITY	3-3 Expand parks and recreational areas to maintain or improve the current level of service.	1. Ensure that all future residential developments over 50 acres in size include park/recreation areas sufficient to maintain or improve park access for residents.	Property owners, developers, banks, 3Rivers			X	X
		2. Conserve floodways as public or private open space with the intention of establishing a contiguous trail path along Trim Creek.	Property owners, developers, banks, 3Rivers		X	X	X
	3-4 Continue to foster intergovernmental cooperation.	1. Continue to hold intergovernmental meetings.	WT, 200U, BFPD, Library		X	X	X
		2. Continue to serve as a member of the SSMMA and other regional organizations such as the Will County Governmental League.	SSMMA, WCGL, CMAP		X	X	X
CHAPTER 4 - A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE	4-1 Retain and attract new residents, including Seniors and Millennials.	1. Promote Beecher as a great place to live.	Residents, Chamber, Kiwanis, CSCVB, faith community, 3Rivers	CSCVB	X		
		2. Know and show the assets of the Community.	Residents, Chamber, CSCVB, 3Rivers	TAP	X		
		3. Welcome diversity.	Faith community		X	X	X
		4. Support policies and strategies (see Beecher 200Us Goals on page 32) that enable local schools to continue to provide a high-quality education system.	200U, PSC		X	X	X

	Goal	Objective	Partners	Resource(s)	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
CHAPTER 4 - A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE	4-1 Continued	5. Promote access to high-speed, quality internet providers, on par or better than access in neighboring communities.	CSEDC, CED, Local Providers		X		
	4-2 Ensure there is a variety of housing options in Beecher to support the needs of existing and future residents.	1. Expand the variety of housing options in Beecher by encouraging the construction and maintenance of different housing types at a range of price points.	Developers, banks		X	X	X
		2. Encourage expanded residential options for seniors, including the development of senior housing near cultural and commercial facilities.	Developers, banks	TIF	X	X	X
		3. Encourage the development of single-family attached, two-family, and multi-family homes to create more affordable housing for young families, retirees, and seniors.	Developers, banks	TIF	X	X	X
	4-3 Inspire a sense of community among new and existing residents.	1. Continue to use established and centralized community spaces for regular events.	Kiwanis, BYC, CSCVB		X	X	X
		2. Continue to utilize social media (Facebook, Next Door, etc.) to inform the community of events, activities, and resources.	Library, CSCVB, WT		X	X	X
	4-4 Provide excellent community facilities.	1. Work with the Fire District to identify a location for an additional fire station and a potential training facility.	BFPD				X
		2. Work with the Beecher Library to provide indoor space for community events and activities.	Library	ISL		X	

	Goal	Objective	Partners	Resource(s)	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
	4-4 Continued	3. Provide space for police vehicles (parking and storage) near the existing station.			X		
		4. Continue to promote intergovernmental cooperation and sharing of resources within the Beecher area.	BFD, WT, 200U, Library		X	X	X
CHAPTER 5 - ENHANCED PARKS + RECREATION	5-1 Improve Access to Recreation for all ages.	1. Continue to promote partnerships to maintain and enhance existing recreational programs.	200Y, BYC, Library, faith community, WCFPD, BR		X	X	X
		2. Seek the incorporation of recreational facilities and/or space for programming in new developments as appropriate.	Developers, property owners	OSLAD		X	X
		3. Consider recreational amenities that would serve the community and the region at large, such as a recreation center, splash pad, or other community recreation facility, or potentially a multi-field sports complex.	BYC, IDNR, BR	OSLAD		X	X
	5-2 Expand access to parks and open space amenities.	1. Pursue low-cost activities that require minimal infrastructure (i.e. frisbee golf, movies in the park, etc.).	BYC, Kiwanis		X		
		2. Explore the addition of recreational amenities that would serve the community and the region at large (bike path, splash pad, etc.).	BYC, IDNR, BR	OSLAD		X	X
		3. Facilitate the continued development of designated park areas and their maintenance to serve all residents (all ages and all areas of the community).	BR, BYC	OSLAD		X	X

	Goal	Objective	Partners	Resource(s)	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
	5-2 Continued	4. Require dedication of park space within new subdivisions.	Developers, property owners		X	X	X
		5. Explore the establishment of a separate Park and Recreation Department within the Village or creation of an independent Park District.	BR, BYC, IPRA			X	
CHAPTER 6 - CONVENIENT + SAFE MOBILITY	6-1 Develop a connected pedestrian and bicycle network that will increase bicycle trips, improve the walkability of the community, and meet the transportation and recreational needs of Village residents.	1. Work with housing developers to close sidewalk gaps.	Developers		X		
		2. Identify intersections where improved pedestrian crossings are needed and what enhancements would improve safety, particularly at Miller and Dixie Highway.	IDOT, WCHD	SRTS, CMAQ	X		
		3. Provide better pedestrian and bicycle linkages to existing and planned destinations.	WCFPD	BPP		X	X
		4. Adopt a Complete Streets Ordinance.			X		
		5. Update Subdivision Ordinance.			X		
	6-2 Encourage collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies to integrate Village planning projects.	1. Remain engaged in planning for the Illiana Expressway.	IDOT			X	X
		2. Implement Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Quiet Zone.	FRA		X		
		3. Voice community concerns but remain a part of planning for the South Suburban Airport.	IDOT, SSMMA, WCGL				X

	Goal	Objective	Partners	Resource(s)	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
CHAPTER 6 - CONVENIENT + SAFE MOBILITY	6-3 Promote improvements to Dixie Highway, including a Beecher Bypass.	1. Provide bicycle and pedestrian enhancements.	IDOT			X	
		2. Identify intersection improvements.	IDOT		X		
		3. Work together with IDOT to support the creation of a truck bypass route.	IDOT, property owners				X
	6-4 Develop and expand the collector roadway system throughout the Village.	1. Serve existing and new developments.	Developers		X	X	X
		2. Provide sufficient pavement widths and pavement design.	Developers	MFT	X	X	X
		3. Improve existing railroad crossings to ensure safety and efficient traffic flow.	UP		X		
	6-5 Ensure continued access to on-demand and public transportation services.	1. Work closely with Washington Township and Will County to continue to provide Dial-A-Ride services for Beecher residents.	WT, WC		X	X	X
		2. Support the use of on-demand taxi services, including ride-sharing services, such as Uber and Lyft, to enhance resident mobility.	Local rideshare services		X	X	X
CHAPTER 7 - A REVITALIZED	7-1 Explore opportunities to remember Beecher's history and create educational installations.	1. Develop a TIF funded grant program and enter development agreements to provide incentives for property maintenance, rehabilitation, and redevelopment.	Local businesses	TIF	X	X	
		2. Work with property owners to attract new commercial and residential redevelopment of opportunity sites (see Figure 7.4 on page 70).	Property owners, developers		X	X	X

	Goal	Objective	Partners	Resource(s)	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
CHAPTER 7 - A REVITALIZED DOWNTOWN	7-2 Support a mix of uses in Downtown, including the option to add senior housing.	1. Promote the creation and maintenance of infrastructure for cars, pedestrians and bikes along Penfield (adequate parking areas, sidewalks in good condition, bike parking, benches and seating areas, etc.).	Local businesses	TIF	X	X	
		2. Explore opportunities for developing senior housing near Downtown.	Developers, Property owners	TIF	X	X	X
		3. Explore opportunities for developing townhomes or other multi-family residences in Downtown.	Developers, Property owners	TIF		X	X
	7-3 Continue to host events in and around the Downtown.	1. Continue to use Firemen's Park and other locations near the Downtown for community gatherings.	BR, Kiwanis		X	X	X
		2. Add new or modify existing events to engage all residents and maintain interest and participation.	BR, BYC, Kiwanis			X	X
	7-4 Enhance Penfield Street to better accommodate pedestrians, bicycles and cars.	1. Create and install gateway/wayfinding signage at the corner of Penfield Street and Route 1/Dixie Highway and along Penfield, Gould and Reed Streets.	IDOT		X		
		2. Emphasize pedestrian and bike circulation within future Downtown improvements.	Property owners, local businesses		X	X	

	Goal	Objective	Partners	Resource(s)	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
CHAPTER 8 - EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES + TAX BASE	8-1 Develop new industrial opportunities.	1. Work with property owners and developers to create a new industrial park or expand the existing park.	Developers, property owners, CSEDC, CED	TIF	X	X	
		2. Work with existing businesses to accommodate their expansion in Beecher.	Local businesses, banks, Chamber	TIF	X	X	X
		3. Develop a marketing program to attract new investment in Beecher.	CSEDC, CED		X		
		4. Promote access to high-speed, quality internet providers, on par or better than access in neighboring communities.	CSEDC, CED, Local Providers		X		
	8-2 Expand retail and restaurant options in Beecher.	1. Strategically promote commercial areas in Beecher to ensure greater success.	CSEDC, CED, Local Brokers		X	X	X
		2. Promote the benefits of spending money locally.	Chamber		X		
	8-3 Develop incentive tools to partner with private development.	1. Create an incentive policy to guide the use of Tax Increment Finance District, sales tax rebates, and other potential incentives.	CSEDC, CED		X		
		2. Enhance the economic development tab on the Village's web site to highlight available sites and Village partnership opportunities.			X		

	Goal	Objective	Partners	Resource(s)	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
CHAPTER 8 - EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES + TAX BASE	8-4 Promote preservation of historic properties.	1. Partner with property owners to keep older homes in good condition.	Property owners, local contractors and hardware supply businesses		X	X	X
		2. Promote the preservation of the Downtown Area.	Property owners, WCHS		X	X	X
	8-5 Jump-start residential development.	1. Encourage infill residential development.	Developers, 3Rivers, Local Brokers		X	X	
		2. Encourage new residential construction that maintains quality, but is lower cost (smaller homes, duplexes, townhomes, etc.).	Developers, 3Rivers		X	X	
		3. Encourage construction of new senior housing opportunities.	Developers, 3Rivers, Local Brokers		X	X	
CHAPTER 9 - A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY	9-1 Maintain and implement capital improvement plans (CIPs) to wisely operate municipal infrastructure (parks, pipes, pavement, etc.).	1. Identify opportunities to expand or improve the sustainability of municipal services and utilities, including the reduction of landfill needs, the reduction of energy usage, the increased use of renewable energies, etc..	Homewood Disposal (or current provider), ComEd, Nicor			X	
		2. Support the use and implementation of alternative energy uses by residential, commercial and industrial users.	Property owners, businesses		X	X	X
		3. Consider strategies for water conservation to reduce energy use and help maintain a long-term supply of water.	Property owners, Greenest Region Compact		X	X	X

	Goal	Objective	Partners	Resource(s)	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
CHAPTER 9 - A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY	9-2 Continue to monitor the health of Trim Creek and mitigate pollutants within Village boundaries.	1. Enact policies to protect shallow aquifer water supply source.			X	X	X
		2. Continue public education efforts regarding water safety and pollutants to reduce non-point source pollution.	IEPA		X	X	X
		3. Partner with the IL-EPA to monitor water quality and identify point source pollution.	IEPA		X	X	X
		4. Work with developers to create sustainable stormwater management plans.	Developers		X	X	X
		5. Implement sustainable road deicing policies to decrease application of road salt.	Public Works		X	X	
	9-3 Minimize the impacts of flood events through stormwater management and the designation of floodways as open space.	1. Encourage low-impact development.	Developers			X	X
		2. Establish the land use of flood zones as open space.	Developers, property owners		X	X	X
		3. Establish a walking/biking trail along Trim Creek with native plantings	WCFPD, property owners			X	
		4. Encourage residents to adopt water-conserving solutions such as rainwater capture to improve water security and reduce stormwater	CD, residents		X		

	Goal	Objective	Partners	Resource(s)	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
CHAPTER 9	9-3 Continued	5. Establish rain gardens and bio-swales within parks or on other public projects to source as a community demonstration	CD, developers, residents, businesses		X		
	9-4 Establish Village-wide goals for waste diversion in line with Will County's goals	1. Continue to provide recycling services to residents and/or partner with local organizations to provide recycling drop off sites or events	Homewood Disposal (or current provider), WT, WC		X	X	X
		2. Establish policies to promote recycling within Village government and at Village sponsored events	BR, BYC		X		

Appendix



ACRONYMS

There are a number of acronyms used throughout this plan. For convenience and to ensure clarity, they have been included here as a reference.

ACT: American College Testing

ADA (Compliance): American Disabilities Act (Compliance)

CAGR: Compounded Annual Growth Rate

CSX: CSX Corporate

ETJ: Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

FRA: Federal Rail Association

GRC: Greenest Region Compact

I/I: Inflow and Infiltration

IDOT: Illinois Department of Transportation

ISA: Illinois Science Assessment

MDT: Mobile Data Terminal

MGD: Millions of Gallons per day

MS4 : Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System

NRPA: National Recreation and Park Association

PARCC: Partnership for Assessment for Readiness for College and Career

RT 1: Illinois Route 1

SF: Square Foot

SSA: South Suburban Airport

TBBS: Talking Book and Braille Service

VPD: Vehicles Per Day

Industrial Opportunity

Village of
BEECHER
Illinois

GROW YOUR BUSINESS IN BEECHER

Join these local businesses:

- Dutch American Foods, Inc.
- R.P. Lumber Company
- Rispen Seeds, Inc.
- Childrens Plus, Inc.
- DeJong Equipment Company, Inc.



ADVANTAGES

RAIL: Potential for direct rail access via spur north of Church Road (Union Pacific Railroad), including an approved Illinois super site.

ROAD: Access to Route 1 (ADT 11,100) connecting to IL-394; proximate access to I-57, I-65 and I-80

INCENTIVES: New TIF District covers industrial expansion area; Lincoln/394 Enterprise Zone includes several properties in expansion area

AMENITIES: Abundant water supply, business-friendly government, small town environment, with excellent regional accessibility

REGION AT A GLANCE



LOCAL WORKFORCE

LOCAL WORKFORCE: over 600,000 people within a 30-minute drive of Beecher

QUALITY OF LIFE: Beecher offers a range of affordable homes, is a family-friendly community, and represents small-town living at its finest!

CONTACT

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(708) 946-2261
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Economic Development Webpage:
<https://villageofbeecher.org/economic-development/>

Celebrating 150 years of strong community and business -- Come see what all the fuss is about!

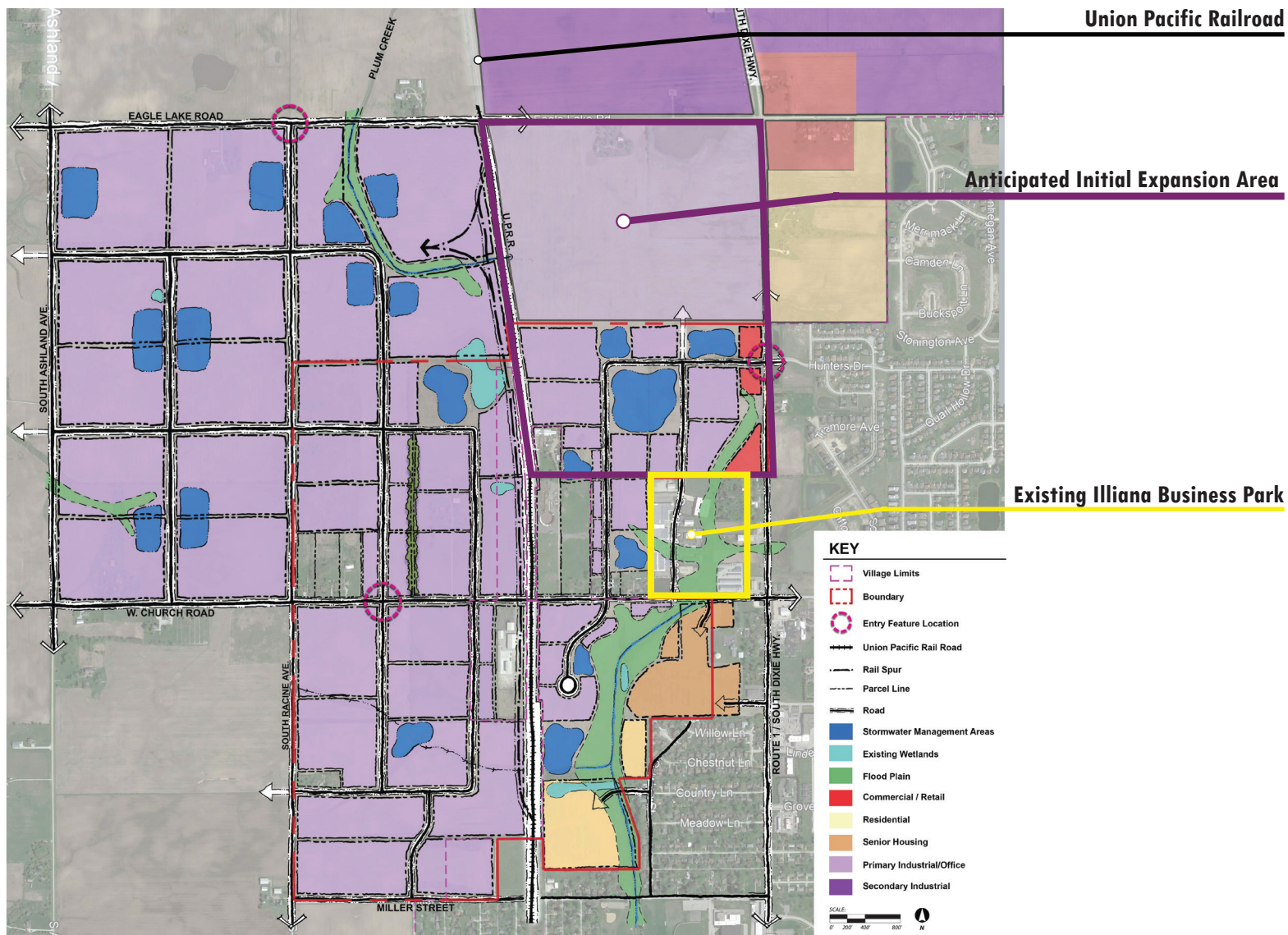
Industrial Opportunity

Village of
BEECHER
Illinois

WILL COUNTY INDUSTRIAL MARKET

- ▶ Fourth most populous county in Illinois (690,000 people)
- ▶ Nation's largest inland port, with connections across 4 interstates, 5 Class I railroads, 3 waterways, and 3 intermodal terminals (Union Pacific, BNSF, and Canadian National).
- ▶ Dramatic increase in industrial space construction since 2010--over 39 million square feet, well above pre-recessions thresholds
- ▶ Existing industrial clusters such as I-55/I-355/Joliet Road and Romeoville are now approaching build-out

CONCEPT PLAN--INDUSTRIAL PARK EXPANSION



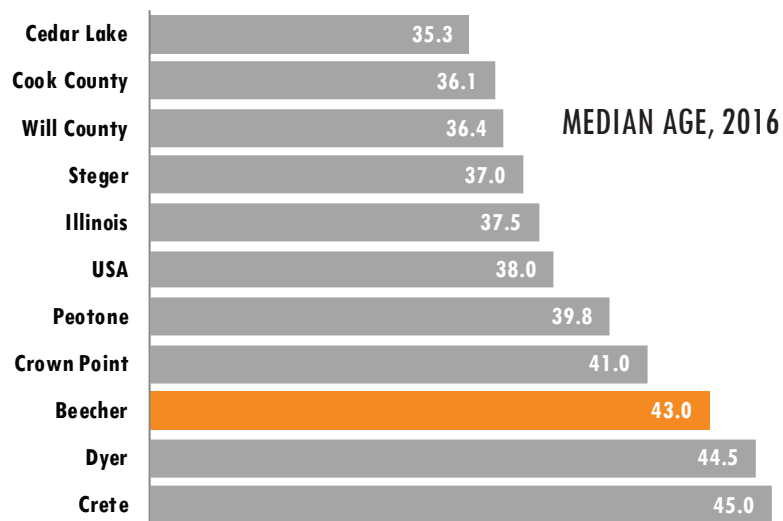
Celebrating 150 years of strong community and business -- Come see what all the fuss is about!

Senior Housing Opportunity

Village of
BEECHER
Illinois

SENIORS ARE MOVING TO BEECHER

- ▶ US Census/American Community Survey data shows that residents over 65 are moving to Beecher from Will County and elsewhere in Illinois
- ▶ Residents 65 and older increased from 13% to 18% between 2010 and 2017
- ▶ Median age was 43 in 2016, up from 40.3 in 2010



REGION AT A GLANCE



WHY SENIORS LOVE BEECHER

- ▶ Great quality of life, active community
- ▶ Local senior activities and events organized by Washington Township
- ▶ Near Governors State University Center for Performing Arts
- ▶ Walkable community with access to local and regional parks and open space

CONTACT

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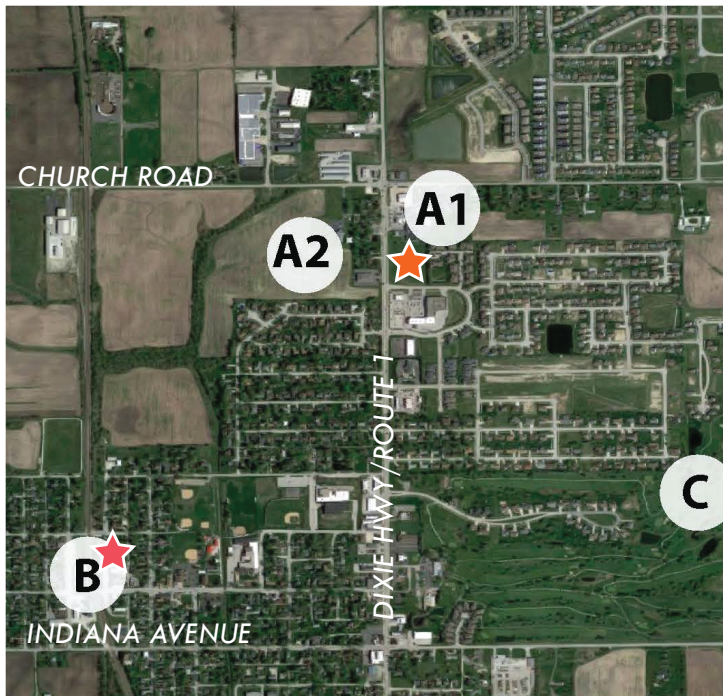
Economic Development Webpage:

<https://villageofbeecher.org/economic-development/>

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Senior Housing Opportunity

POTENTIAL SITES



★ Beecher Manor ★ Downtown Beecher

The Village of Beecher's Comprehensive Plan identifies four sites as potential locations for senior housing:

- ▶ Sites A1 and A2 are near personal service businesses and a large grocer.
- ▶ Site B is in the Downtown, a walkable area near the Library, Police and Fire, and large community park.
- ▶ Site C is located near the 18-hole Cardinal Creek Golf Course, surrounded by open space and newer homes and adjacent to Washington Township senior activities.

SITE A2 CONCEPT PLAN



Site A2 is a single 24.5-acre undeveloped parcel adjacent to Church Road and a branch of Trim Creek.

- ▶ Immediate access to grocery and restaurants within walking distance
- ▶ Trail connection to community park and library
- ▶ Interested seller
- ▶ In TIF and Lincoln-394 Enterprise Zone
- ▶ Water and Sewer access available

Celebrating 150 years of strong community and family -- Come see what all the fuss is about!

ALTERNATIVE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Should either the South Suburban Airport or the Illiana Expressway or both come to fruition, the preferred approach to planning is to create a new comprehensive plan. Ideally, this plan would be developed at a regional scale, working cooperatively with CMAP, Will County, and neighboring communities like Peotone and Crete to develop integrated solutions to address the opportunities and challenges presented by these major regional transportation projects. Once this regional planning is completed, the Village could either adopt elements of this regional plan or further refine the regional recommendations into an updated Comprehensive Plan.

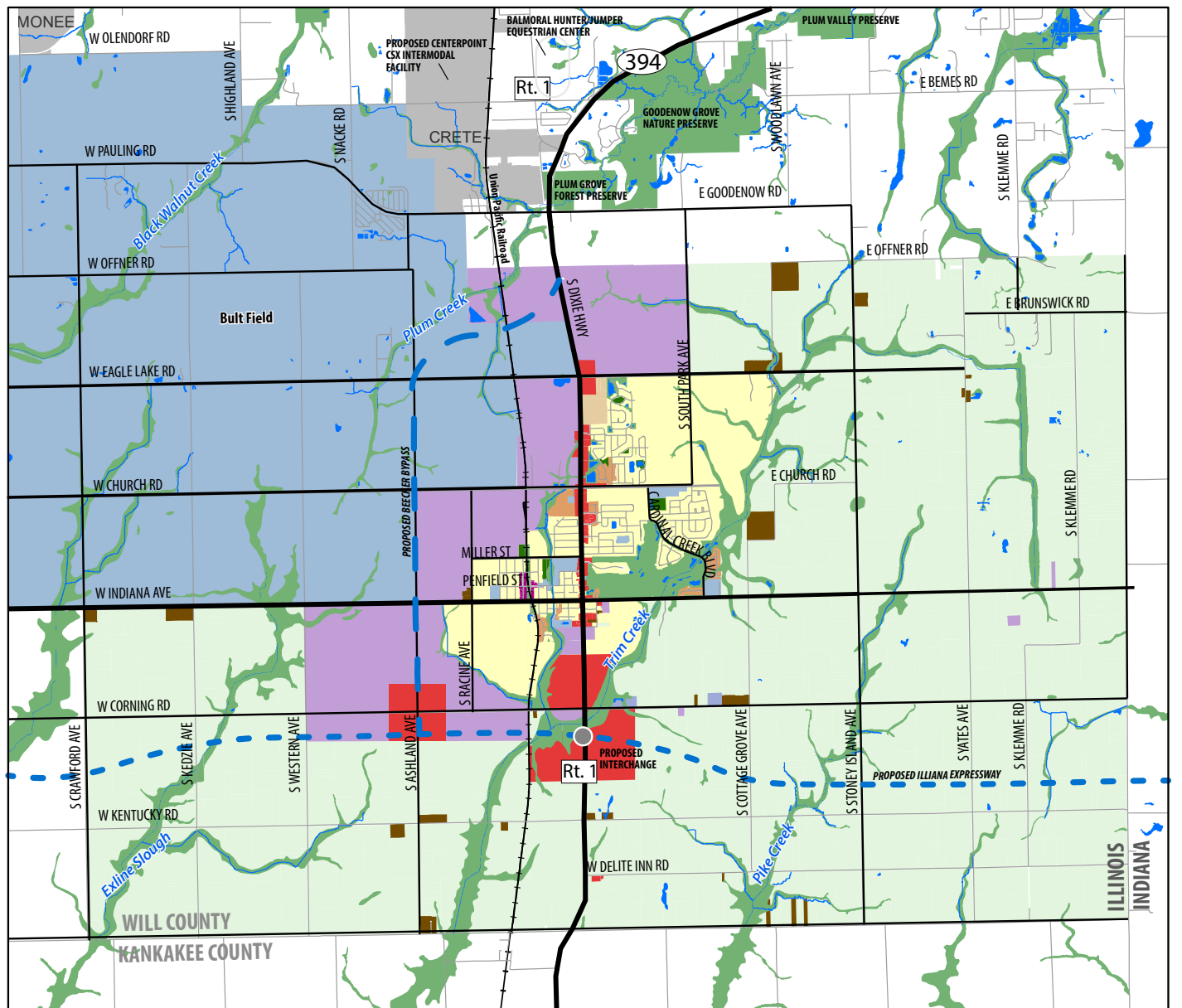
During development of the Beecher 2040 Plan, a conceptual alternative plan that included both the SSA and the Illiana was developed and is illustrated on the following page. The Airport & Illiana Alternative Future Land Use Map (A.1) is a preliminary vision of a modified plan that would create additional growth and development opportunities, reflective of the anticipated impact of these major regional projects.

Other regional facilities including the proposed CSX Intermodal Facility also have the potential to impact growth and development. However, at the present time that development is also stalled and currently appears unlikely to resurface.

Taking into consideration existing conditions, should the community experience a period of expansive growth due to regional transportation projects, Beecher's land use and development goals include those in the Preferred Future Land Use Plan and the following:

- **Facilitate the development and/or expansion of industrial uses** north and west of the present-day Village boundaries.
- Pursue **commercial development primarily along Route 1/Dixie Highway and in Downtown**. Infill development is preferred, but new development is expected near the intersections of Route 1/Dixie Highway with the southern terminus of the Beecher Bypass.

Figure: A.1 Airport & Illiana Alternative Future Land Use Plan



AIRPORT & ILLIANA ALTERNATIVE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



- | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------|---|
| Township Limits | Mixed-Use | Rural Residential | Agriculture | Proposed South Suburban Airport (Ultimate Boundary) |
| Railroad | Commercial | Single-Family Residential | Open Space | Proposed Beecher Bypass |
| Water Bodies | Industrial/Office | Two-Family Residential | Park | Proposed Illiana Expressway |
| | Institutional | Multi-Family Residential | | |

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BEECHER EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

November 26, 2018

Prepared for the Village of Beecher and
The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning



Teska Associates Inc., in association with AECOM
and Baxter & Woodman Consulting Engineers



CONTENTS

SECTION

PAGE NUMBER

1	Introduction	02
2	Planning Process + Community Outreach	11
3	Demographics and Housing	20
4	Land Use + Zoning	25
5	Commercial + Industrial	33
6	Transportation + Infrastructure	41
7	Community Facilities, Programs, and Services	52
8	Natural Resources + Open Space	58
9	Key Findings + Next Steps	69
10	Appendix	73

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**Photos not sourced throughout this report are from the consultant team.*

Introduction

1

THE VILLAGE OF BEECHER, est. 1870

The Village of Beecher is located in Will County, about 40 miles to Downtown Chicago and around three miles away from the Illinois-Indiana border (Figure 1.1). Beecher began as a cattle ranching community led by T.I. Miller who spearheaded the construction of the railway to Chicago and Danville. Illinois Route 1, better known as Dixie Highway, bisects the Village and connects to several well used truck routes. To the north, Route 1 leads to I-394 and connects with I-80/I-294. A few minutes drive west to Peotone leads to Route 50 and I-57. The Village incorporated in 1957 and soon added residential neighborhoods, community facilities and additional businesses. The Village is home to approximately 4,442 people, with the community mostly comprised of residential and agricultural areas.

The Existing Conditions Report is the first step in preparing Beecher's new Comprehensive Plan: Beecher 2040. It studies the past and present in order to understand the Village's potential for the future by looking at demographics, housing, land use, commercial and industrial demand, transportation and environmental issues. It will inform and frame goal-setting for the Comprehensive Plan by providing a common set of facts, challenges and opportunities facing the future of the Village.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

- A guide to coordinated, long-range growth and development over the next 15-20 years.
- Focuses on the Village's vision for the future through goals and policies.
- Provides an opportunity to prepare for the impacts of changes both inside and near the community.

Figure 1.1: Regional Location Map



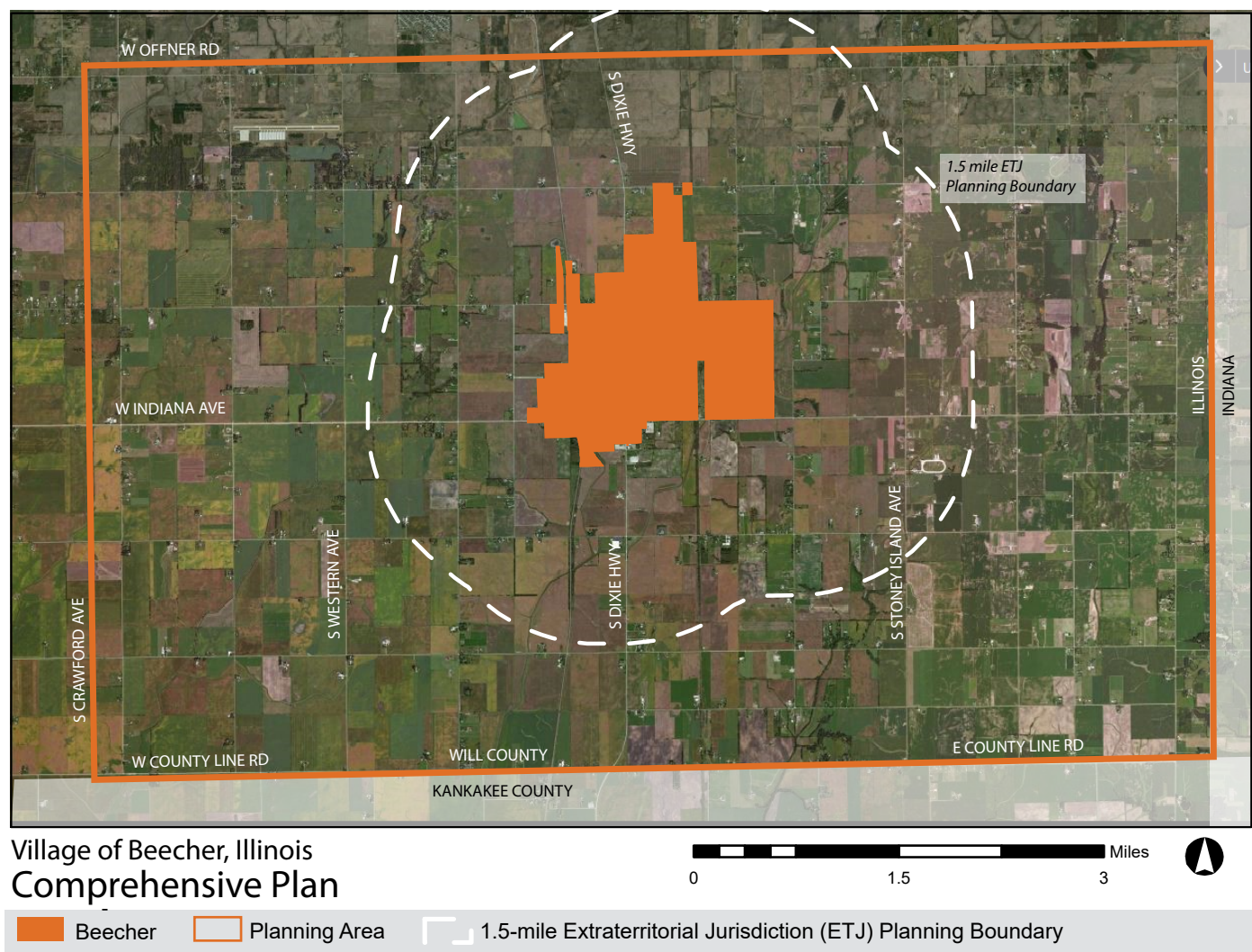
Village of Beecher, Illinois
Comprehensive Plan



PLANNING AREA

As part of the comprehensive planning process, the Village of Beecher has the authority and responsibility to plan for areas within the 1.5-mile extra-territorial (ETJ) planning area (beyond the village limits). Beecher is the only municipality completely contained within Washington Township, so the boundaries of the township and the local school district form the planning area for this plan (Crawford Avenue to the west and Offner Road to the north). Thus, the planning area is extended to the Indiana-Illinois state line to the east, and the Will-Kankakee County Line to the south (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Planning Area Map



Source: Village of Beecher, Google Maps (aerial)

PAST PLANS

LOCAL PLANS

.....

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN | 1989

The Village of Beecher adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 1989 compiled by Van Treeck & Associates. This plan recognized that although Beecher was a small community, the influence of the Chicago region and a potential third regional airport would significantly influence future growth. Growth goals included encouraging secure compact urban development that would increase the tax base, provide a range of housing types for Village residents, encourage coordination and cooperation between all levels of government among others. Planning policies such as maintaining a predominantly single-family character, encouraging steady growth of businesses and commercial activities, and including the establishment of new industries to diversify the tax base were included. The policy regarding annexation was to “annex all contiguous lands which provide for the expansion of the Village in a planned orderly manner”. The top priority would be to annex areas that were the best economically served by the Village.

Implementation plans included developing an educational and public relations program to facilitate long-range planning, pursuing coordination of planning with other governmental agencies, adopting a strategy for annexation, enforcing land use and zoning regulations, adopting a Capital Improvement Program, initiating an action plan for an Historical District, and conducting a feasibility study to determine the best and most economical way to expand sewage treatment facilities.

- **AMENDMENT | 1996**

Prepared by the Public Consulting Team, this plan included two scenarios, with and without the third regional airport. The plan projected a 2020 population of between 2,400 (without airport) and 4,700 (with airport). Unless there is a rapid increase in population in the next couple of years, the high-end projections appear to have been remarkably accurate. The economic development component of the plan focused on provision of land for a new industrial park at the northeast corner of Route 1 and Church Street. While a residential subdivision (Hunters Chase) eventually developed in that location, an industrial park including Dutch American was developed at the northwest corner of Route 1 and Church Street. Recommendations from the plan that were implemented include moving Village Hall and the Library into new buildings, creating new gateway signage, and making needed improvements to the water and sewer systems (currently underway).

- **AMENDMENT | 2001**

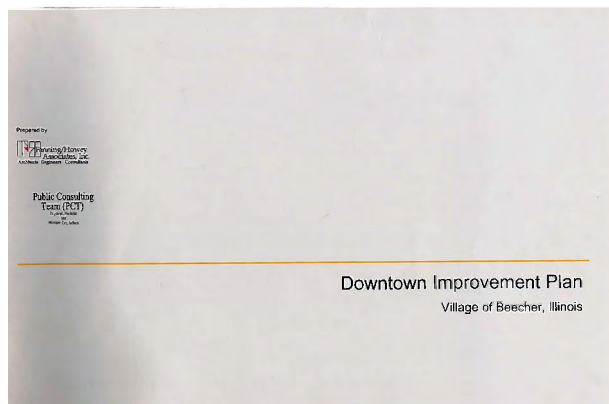
Prepared by the Public Consulting Team, the 2001 update called special attention to a new rail spur, the discussion about creating a western bypass for Route 1, and a lack of commercial and industrial inquiries for land in the southern portion of the village as had been outlined in previous land use maps. Recognizing that there had been inquiries for residential development in the northern part of Beecher, where commercial and industrial uses were planned, the Plan Update indicated a change in zoning to permit development. Lastly, the plan outlined future land use plans for two scenarios--with and without the construction of the South Suburban Airport (SSA).

APPEARANCE GUIDELINES | 1998

In an effort to maintain the historic character of the oldest areas of Beecher, Appearance Guidelines were written to provide details regarding the features and land uses desired. Creating guidelines for the Route 1 corridor was recommended, but not a part of the document.

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN | 2003

Prepared in 2003 by Fanning/Howey Associates and the Public Consulting Team, this plan provided streetscape and placemaking suggestions for downtown Beecher. The depot museum, gazebo and gardens resulted from these efforts. Other suggestions, such as curb bump outs and a large town plaza on the west side of the railroad tracks (between Penfield and Hodges Streets) were never implemented.



VILLAGE SURVEY | FALL 2011

This community-wide survey had a total of 333 responses, or a response rate of 22%. Key findings included:

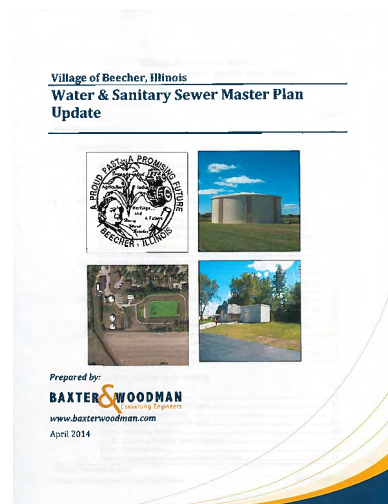
- Residents are generally pleased with municipal services, with garbage disposal receiving the highest rating and code enforcement the greatest concern.
- Residents, by a 2:1 margin, believe the Illiana Expressway is necessary
- 70% opposed the South Suburban Airport, but 85% support the Village's participation in the airport planning process and the push for local control.
- Some interest was expressed in a dog park, and 66% of residents favored a bike path connecting the Village to Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve. Of those responding, 56% opposed the formation of a Park District.

WATER AND SEWER MASTER PLAN | 2014

The Water and Sewer Master Plan provided a framework for infrastructure improvements and capacity expansion to accommodate current residents and prepare for the possibility of population increases. Please see Section 5 for more information regarding this plan.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM PLAN (MS4) | 2017

The Stormwater Management Program Plan (MS4) was completed in 2017. It details the steps that Village plans to take to "minimize the impacts of stormwater discharges the on local water quality". Please see Section 5 for more information regarding this plan.



REGIONAL PLANS

TRIM CREEK WATERSHED PLANNING PROJECT | 2005-06

In 2003, the Campaign for Sensible Growth, Metropolitan Planning Council and Openlands began research surrounding the relationship between development, land use, water quality, and water quantity. The report “Changing Course” was published in 2004, which indicated that surface water quality in northeastern Illinois had improved in the previous three decades, but that unregulated non-point source pollution was impacting the quality of surface waters and the potable water supply was becoming strained. Please see Section 8 for more information.

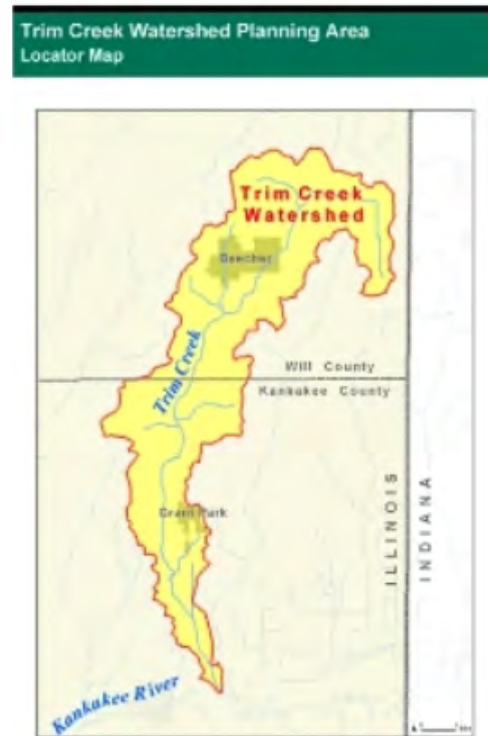
IL ROUTE 394/IL ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR PLAN | 2015

The purpose of the IL Route 394/IL Route 1 Corridor study was to anticipate future transportation, land use and economic development patterns and develop a cohesive vision for the Corridor. The vision was developed in a collaborative effort by the 11 communities and two counties, Cook County and Will County, along the Corridor. This vision includes re-branding the Route 1 corridor as the Southland Parkway.

While several communities are included within this plan, Beecher is significantly impacted by several recommendations and plans include:

- the western Route 1 Bypass, complete with a multi-modal trail
- intersection changes at Eagle Lake and Dixie Highway
- pedestrian improvements along Dixie Highway, including a new sidewalk and crossing improvements at Miller Street
- and a proposed route for Vicennes Trail, which would connect Beecher to Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve.

Additionally, proposed regional projects such as the South Suburban Airport, the Illiana Expressway, the CSX Intermodal Facility create greater inertia for these projects and others, such as an extension of Metra Commuter Rail through a new SouthEast Service line along the Union Pacific/CSX railroad. Such service would potentially create final stop at Balmoral Park, just north of Beecher along Route 1. Given the potential impacts of the Beecher Bypass and the Illiana Expressway, truck improvements are recommended along Indiana Avenue, Ashland Avenue, Eagle Lake or Crete-Monee Road but would be strongly impacted by the planning and construction of regional projects and their ultimate connections.



Source: Trim Creek Watershed Planning Project

Figure 1.3: South Section of the Land Use Framework Map, IL Route 394/IL Route 1

The implementation of regional projects are expected to be catalytic and trigger land use changes within and surrounding Beecher. The plan recognized opportunity for development within Beecher, including 1,500+ acres of improved and unimproved land (available at the writing of the plan). The priority areas for development are indicated in Figure 1.3 (right)

ON TO 2050 PLAN | 2018

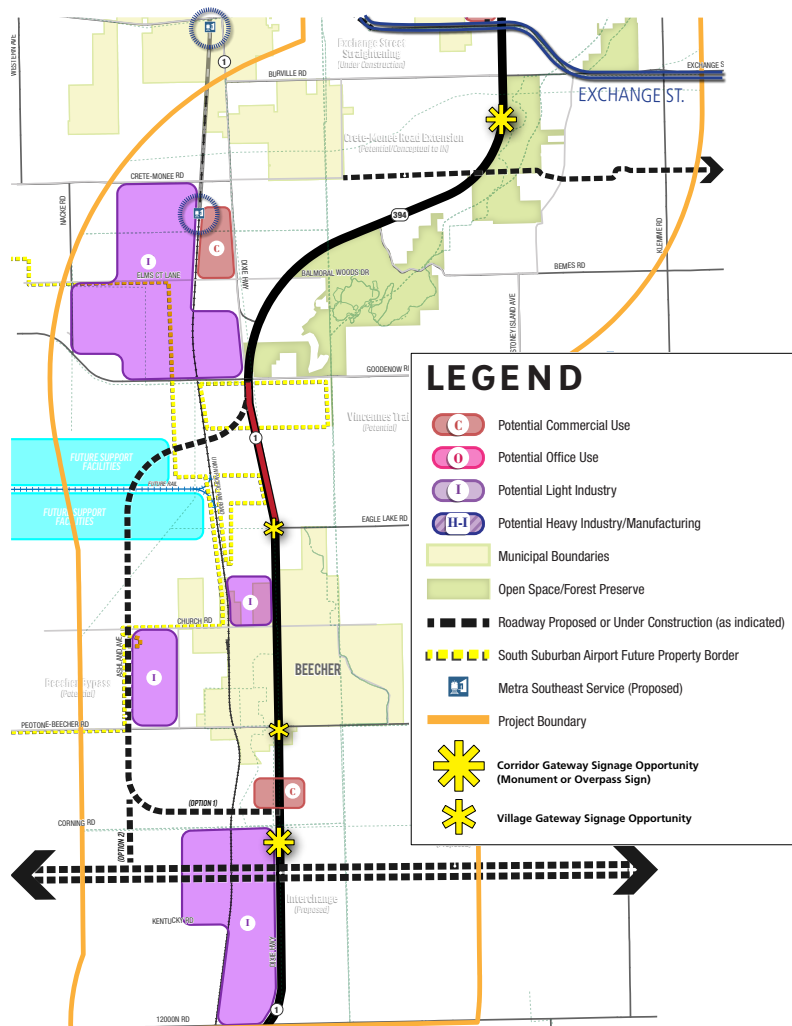
The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has developed a master plan for the Chicago Metropolitan Region titled ON TO 2050. This latest regional plan recommends a variety of actions and strategies governed by three important planning principles to help communities within the metropolitan region achieve sustainable prosperity. The principles that will guide the planning process include:

Inclusive Growth: We must provide economic opportunity for all residents and communities.

Resilience: We must prepare for future changes, both known and unknown.

Prioritized Investment: We must carefully target resources to maximize benefit.

These three principles inform the actions suggested in the plan that address large scale trends that the region is experiencing and will continue to experience in the future.



Source: IL Route 394/IL Route 1 Corridor Plan

Given changes in federal and state funding, ON TO 2050 recognizes the need to make investments that are strategic and efficient by incorporating multiple goals in project implementation. Beecher is part of the coordinated growth areas for the CMAP region, thus development is expected to be in concert with regional projects and development in nearby communities. The plan recognizes that infill development within developed areas provides several benefits and CMAP intends to work with communities to create a Targeted Reinvestment Area (TRA) process. In addition, given lack of funding and the need for further study, the Illiana Expressway is listed under fiscally unconstrained projects. The plan recognizes that development pressures create the need to identify key agricultural and natural areas to protect as conservation areas and long-term planning.

WILL COUNTY PLANS

EASTERN WILL COUNTY WASTEWATER PLANNING STUDY | 2008

This study encompassed six eastern townships in Will County, including Washington Township. The focus was to determine how to best provide wastewater service for this area given projected population increases. The Village of Beecher owns and operates its own wastewater collection system and wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) which permitted an average flow of 0.60 millions of gallons per day (MGD). At that time, an expansion of the system to 1.2 MGD was awaiting approval from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and was ultimately approved and expected to be completed in 2019. The WWTP discharges into the West Branch of Trim Creek, and ultimately into the Kankakee River Basin.

AIRPORT ENVIRONS ELEMENT | 2011

The South Suburban Airport (SSA) is still in the planning and land acquisition stages. The Airport Environs Element, a part of the Will County Land Resource Management Plan, indicates the desired outcomes for development of both the airport and surrounding uses catalyzed by the airport, including housing, commercial, and industrial development. It is expected that the airport will require and catalyze uses such as:

1. Office Employment and Hospitality Services
2. Airport-related Industrial/Distribution
3. Workforce Higher Density Residential Development
4. Gateway Corridors
5. Agricultural

The plan indicates development nodes for Office & Hospitality or Industrial & Distribution:

- one to the northwest of the current northernmost extent of Beecher
- one to the south along Dixie Highway

Any housing constructed between the airport and Beecher limits is suggested to be high quality multifamily housing that can support the work force for the SSA earning moderate incomes. Housing is intended to be located in areas where noise mitigation has already taken place.



COUNTY-WIDE ALL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN | 2013

The County-Wide Hazard Mitigation Plan for Will County enables the County to take advantage of FEMA's resources, especially funding. The plan identifies the risks to different hazards (Natural Hazards, Technological Hazards, and Societal Hazards) and gaps in preparation and mitigation for county communities. Hazards categorized as High Risk in the plan include Winter/Ice Storms, Flooding, Tornadoes, Thunderstorms, Infrastructure Failures, Hazardous Materials Release, Nuclear Power Plant Accident, Terrorist Attacks and Enemy Attacks.

WILL CONNECTS 2040 | 2017

Will Connects 2040 serves as an update to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. It provides a comprehensive look at the county's transportation system over the next 25 years, and provides an action plan to proactively address the issues and needs of the system. The Beecher Bypass is a priority project for the county, but IDOT has jurisdictional control. Another planning priority of the plan is preparation for the proposed Illiana Expressway that would run along the south of Beecher, connecting with Route 1.

WILL COUNTY COMMUNITY FRIENDLY FREIGHT MOBILITY PLAN | 2017

This plan focuses on the current state of freight networks and lays out the goals that the County has regarding safety, mobility, and economic competitiveness. The plan sets goals, objectives, and performance measures going forward and aims to prepare for the future by ensuring that improvements are prioritized to maintain and improve service in the midst of projected growth. Secondly, the plan includes a workforce action plan for the Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL) industry, aiming to support and strengthen the workforce pipeline of the Will County TDL industry.

The Village of Beecher was included in the steering committee for this plan. While the plan does not address any immediate impacts to the Village, planning for several nearby developments such as the SSA and the CSX Intermodal Facility will have direct implications. The CSX Intermodal Facility in Crete will use only a portion of the land available at the site for TDL industry. This would create a new freight cluster, creating jobs in the area and potentially impacting truck traffic along Route 1.

Planning Process

+

Community

Outreach

2

PROJECT PHASING:



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

PHASE 1

This phase occurs throughout the planning process, engaging citizens and stakeholders early and often to understand their ideas, desires, and interests. The public's input informs the Steering Committee's work toward establishing a common vision for future growth and development in Beecher.



ASSESS EXISTING CONDITIONS

PHASE 2

The second phase of the Comprehensive Planning process is to perform this Existing Conditions Analysis. Components of the Analysis include data collection, review of past planning documents (local and regional), existing land use and zoning, market and transportation conditions, and the adequacy of community facilities, services and programs.



FORM COMMUNITY VISION

PHASE 3

During this phase, an interactive public workshop will engage citizens and other stakeholders. That public input will be used to inform the Steering Committee's work in establishing a common vision for future growth and development in Beecher.



DEVELOP PLAN OPPORTUNITIES

PHASE 4

This phase focuses on preparing the draft Comprehensive Plan. During this phase, preliminary recommendations will be developed, and findings drafted into an Interim Plan Report. This first rough draft acts as a tool to gather consensus on goals, strategies and projects that will guide the Comprehensive Plan. This effort will also drill down on two identified development opportunities; new senior housing and creation of a future industrial/business park.



DRAFT PLAN AND ADOPTION

PHASE 5

The Comprehensive Plan will build on key findings to provide plan recommendations including goals, strategies and projects. Key resources and partners will be identified for major projects. This phase includes a second public open house and input from the Village Board prior to adoption.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Lions Club Summerfest | August 4, 2018

A popular community event, the Lions Club Summerfest yielded a variety of comments from over 50 community members. Most prominently, the community hopes to attract a family restaurant. Other comments included park and recreation enhancements, a trauma center, streets repairs, more healthy food options, expansion of Metra service, and an Advanced Placement (AP) program at the high school.

Youth Commission | August 15, 2018

The Beecher Youth Commission provided insights into the Comprehensive Plan at their August meeting. While many of the suggestions mirrored ideas raised at the community workshop, Youth Commissioners were particularly focused on expanding access to recreational programs in the community and urged consideration of a Park District.

Senior Breakfast | September 22, 2018

The Washington Township Senior Breakfast was a great opportunity to tap into the wisdom and local knowledge of over 100 Beecher residents—many who have lived in Beecher a long time. We asked a few questions and got a lot of feedback!

Attendees noted that they love Beecher—the library, the people, limited traffic, Pace Bus service, the small town, quiet atmosphere, and affordability. They noted that the programs used most are the fire department, Townships programs (breakfast, movie nights, food pantry, etc.) the library, and Dial-A-Ride. The most pressing issues in Beecher in their view are truck traffic on Route 1/Dixie Highway, lack of air conditioning in schools, lack of housing options for people over 55, and condition of some roads (Kentucky Road and Corning Road).

Regarding downtown Beecher, attendees said that they would like to have a family restaurant and more local shopping options. Others said that the focus on filling vacant stores in

other areas of the Village should also be a priority. Lastly, they recommended building an indoor swimming pool which would provide recreation options for the Village and could host water aerobics for seniors.

FOCUS GROUPS

Holding focus groups provides the opportunity for conversation among peers or among groups with similar interests. Such an environment often helps people feel at ease and open to sharing needs and desires that they may otherwise hold back sharing in other environments. The following focus groups have been held or are planned for later in the planning process:

Beecher Chamber of Commerce | July 16, 2018

Beecher business owners had the chance to share issues and opportunities from their perspective. The main takeaways from this conversation were that there is need to encourage residents to shop locally, an extension of Metra service would boost the economy, a truck bypass would likely impact existing businesses along Route 1, there is a need for more restaurants, and that generally the Village is supportive of local businesses. Their observations, together with the data from Section 4 of this report, provide more context for considering the future of commercial retail and industrial business in Beecher.

Hispanic Community | TBA

Data indicates that the number of Hispanic residents is increasing within and near Beecher. Scheduling a focus group with the Hispanic community of Beecher is a top priority.

Jr. High/High School | TBA

Given that a Comprehensive Plan is a long-term planning documents, it's important to keep in mind the perspectives and visions of all ages—including the future adults of Beecher. Focus groups with Jr. High and High School students provide insight into the ways in which a community supports young



people—their education, recreation options, and their employment aspirations. Retaining young people is proving to be more difficult for many communities, so getting an understanding of the future Beecher’s teenagers see is an absolute must.

OUTREACH TOOLS

The consultant team and the Village distributed projects cards (shown below), sent e-mail blasts, and included short summaries for community events. The Village also actively promoted the Beecher 2040 plan via their Facebook page.

WEBSITE

For the duration of the planning process, a website, Beecher2040.org, was created and dedicated to information about the Comprehensive Plan, including events and meetings and links to surveys for the plan.

The website also provided an opportunity for community members to sign-up for e-mail updates and share their ideas more generally by adding a comment or idea and possibly an example through a photo. The ideas shared on the website to date include: a community pool, a park district, splash pad,

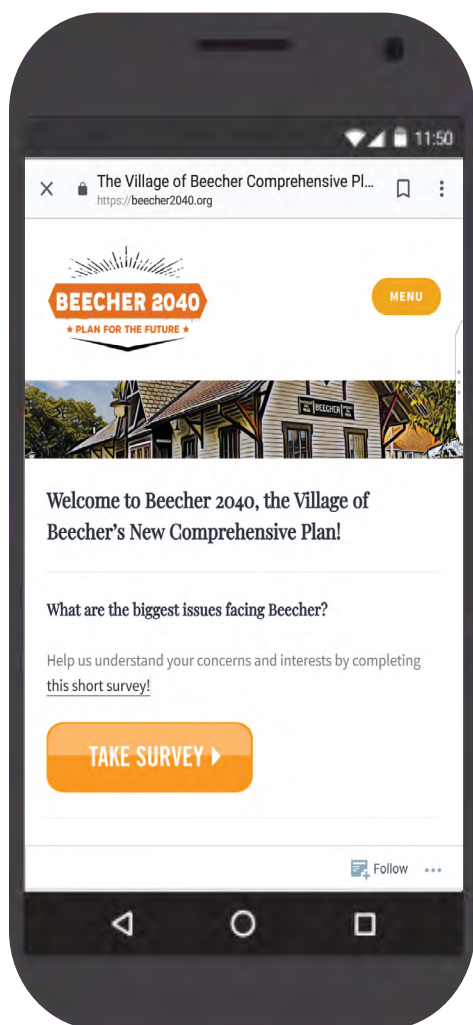
skate/bike park area, home mail delivery, and eliminating train horns.

The website provided community members the chance to follow the planning process and learn about upcoming meetings and which events the project team would attend. Additionally, summaries of past events include major themes from discussions at the event.

SURVEYS

The first survey was available from mid-June to mid-October 2018. The survey asked questions such as “What are your favorite things about Beecher?” and “What major economic development goals should Beecher focus on?”

The following summary indicates the Top Responses for each question in the survey and Open Response Themes from comments respondents provided.



Comprehensive Plan Survey

” 310 Responses

13 Questions

Project Cards (at left) were distributed at all events and were available at Village Hall. Project cards act as conversation starters but also provide a little information with the Beecher2040 Website address so residents can learn more and be inspired to contribute.



67 Followers



1,418 Unique Visitors



2,460 Views



Comprehensive Plan Survey Summary of Results

- The survey was open from mid-June 2018 to mid-October 2018.
- A total of 310 people took the survey.
- At the end of the survey there was an open-ended question to provide respondents the opportunity to share something they felt was missing or emphasize their top priorities.

Q1: What are your favorite things about Beecher? (Rank top 3)

Top responses

- Rural Location/Small Town Atmosphere
- Public Safety
- High Quality Schools
- Near Friends and Family.

Open Response Themes

- Low crime
- Connectivity—expressways, public transit, near enough to Chicago

Q2: What are the biggest challenges facing Beecher? (Rank top 3)

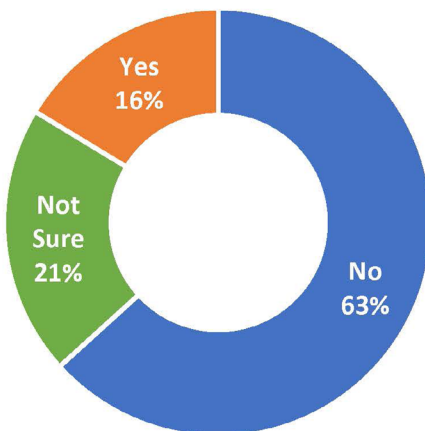
Top responses

- High Property Taxes
- Limited Recreational Opportunities
- Freight Trains
- Truck Traffic

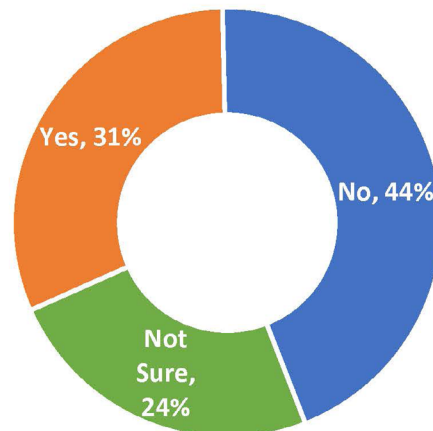
Open Response Themes

- Educational quality in local schools
- Need a plan for future development/revitalization

Q3: Do you support the proposed South Suburban Airport?



Q4: Do you support the proposed Illiana Expressway?





Comprehensive Plan Survey Summary of Results

Q5: Historic downtown Beecher (along the railroad tracks) has seen some positive changes, but still faces some challenges. Should the Village: (pick top two)

Top Responses

- *Expanding Housing Option in and around Downtown*
- *Adding Commuter Rail Service to Chicago*
- *Aggressively Enforce Codes and Seek Demolition of Dilapidate Buildings*
- *Enhance the Pedestrian Environment Downtown*

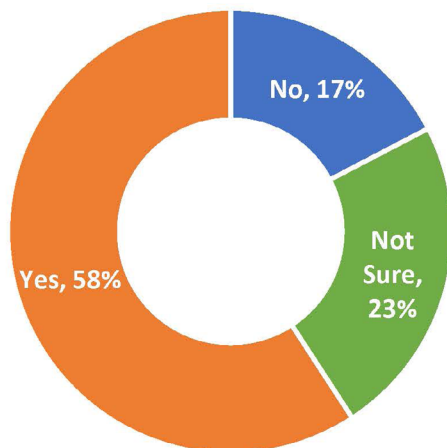
However, all options for this question ranked highly, indicating that all actions are important considerations going forward. Other answers included:

- *Work with property owners to preserve as many buildings as possible*
- *Promote more events in the downtown*

Open Response Themes

- Chicago rail service has pros and cons
- A vibrant commercial area is desirable—traffic will impact where that's possible

Q6: Do you support the creation of a western truck bypass around Beecher which would connect I-394 with the proposed Illiana Expressway (cars could still use existing Route 1)?





Comprehensive Plan Survey Summary of Results

Q7: What major economic development goals should Beecher focus on? (Rank top 2)

Top Goals

- Attracting New Shops and Restaurants
- Reviving Historic downtown Beecher along the railroad tracks
- Attracting New Office and Light Industrial Opportunities

Open Response Themes

- Improve recreational opportunities for the community
- Balance development needs with small town charm

Q8: What are the major issues related to housing in Beecher? (Rank top 2)

Top Issues

- Vacant Lots
- Housing Quality (construction)
- Lack of Variety (single-family, apartments, townhomes, condos)
- Lack of Senior Housing Opportunities

Open Response Themes (55 responses!)

- Concerns about property taxation rate compared with service needs
- Quality and variety (aesthetic) of housing construction
- Improve harmony between owners/renters

Q9: What are the major issues relating to parks and recreation in the Village? (Rank top 3)

Survey results indicate that the community is most concerned about the *Lack of a Park District*.

Top Responses

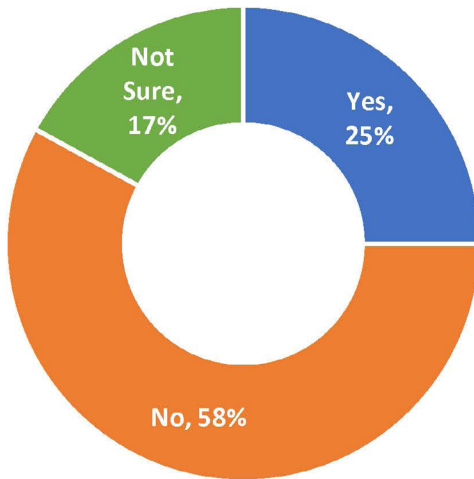
- Outdated Community Center/No Recreation Center
- Not Enough Park Programming/Activities
- Connectivity (bicycle/pedestrian paths)

Open Response Themes

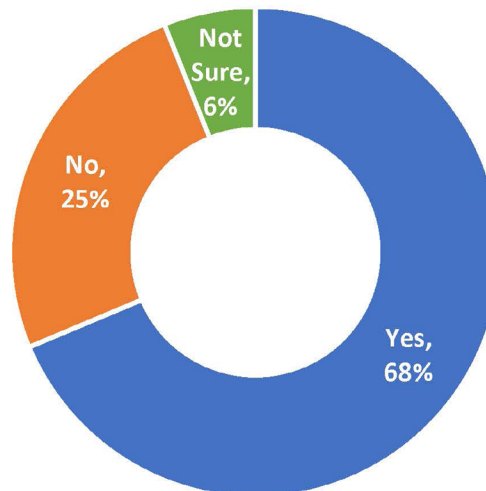
- Park activities for a greater range of residents
- Improve marketing for events/activities

Comprehensive Plan Survey Summary of Results

Q10: Would you or anyone in your family utilize a skate park if one was built in the community?



Q11: Would you or anyone in your family utilize a splash pad park if one was built in the community?



Q12: Do you support creation of a Park District to maintain and operate park and recreation activities in Beecher?

Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they support the creation of a Park District in Beecher (82%).

Q13: If you have any additional concerns or issues you feel Beecher should address in planning for the future, please list them below:

This final question allowed respondents to share any concerns or issues they felt were not addressed in the rest of the survey. Over 100 (30%) of all respondents left a comment and the following are themes from their responses:

- Improve connectivity of sidewalks within Beecher, both in downtown and residential areas
- Expand activities for all ages—children, middle-aged, seniors
- Greater variety of stores and restaurants; limit videogaming
- Road safety concerns
- Affordability for residents and businesses

Demographics + Housing

3

DEMOGRAPHICS

Beecher's demographic profile provides a snapshot of the Village today. The data provides information on population, households, education levels, and racial background of the Village's residents. It provides an overview of housing issues in the Village including type of tenure, vacancy and cost burden.

POPULATION

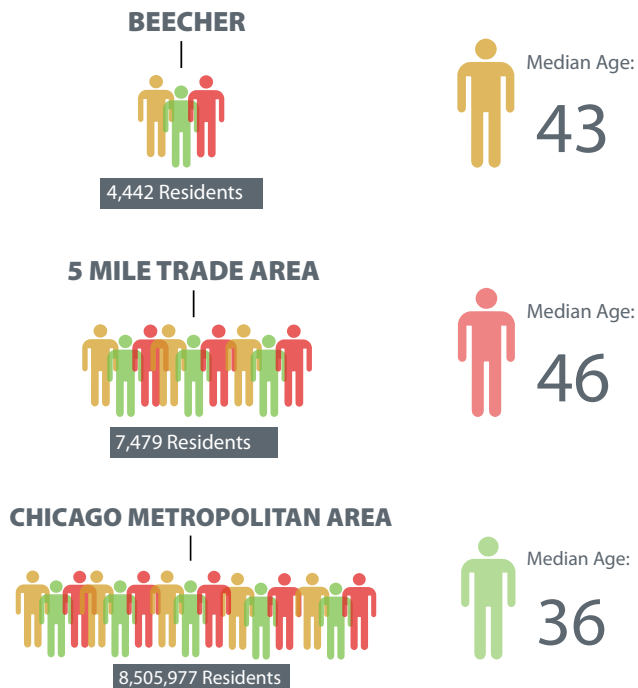
The population of Beecher rose significantly between 2000 and 2010, but current estimates and projections indicate that growth slowed since 2010 (Figure 3.1). In 2000, the population was 2,033 which more than doubled by 2010 to 4,359 (Figure 3.1). Esri forecasts that in 2017 the population grew to 4,442 and by 2022 that it will grow to 4,568 (Figure 3.1). CMAP's 2040 projections for Beecher, however, forecasts

Figure 3.1: Village of Beecher Population, 2000-2022

	2000	2010	2017	2022
Total Population	2,033	4,359	4,442	4,568
Total Households	830	1,581	1,596	1,640

Source: US Census 2000 – Summary File 1 – Esri Forecasts

Figure 3.2: Demographics



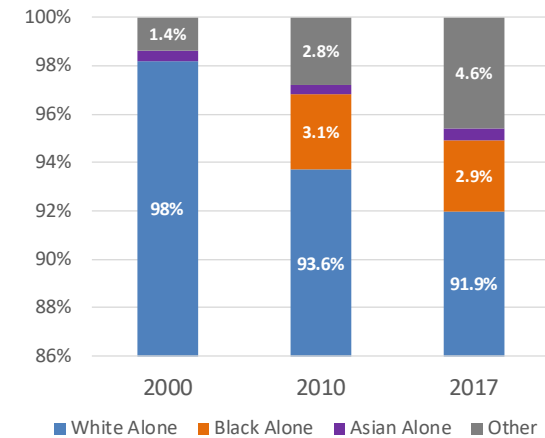
Source: US Census 2000 – Summary File 1 – Esri Forecasts

an increase to 8,600 residents. The 2040 Forecast was based on policy changes that support infill and redevelopment.

The community is aging, evidenced by increases in the median age which has increased from 37.6 in 2010 to 43 in 2017 (Figure 3.2). Beecher has also become more diverse. In 2000, 98% of the population was white (Figure 3.3). This changed to a mix of 91% white, 3% black, 0.5% Asian, and 7.7% Hispanic in 2016 (Figure 3.3).

Education levels have improved since 2000. Around 13% of the population over 25 had not attained a High School Degree, whereas in 2017, Esri projects that number has dropped to just 6% (Figure 3.4). Additionally, the number of residents who have obtained an Associates Degree has also increased, from 3.6% in 2000 to almost 12% in 2017 (Figure 3.4).

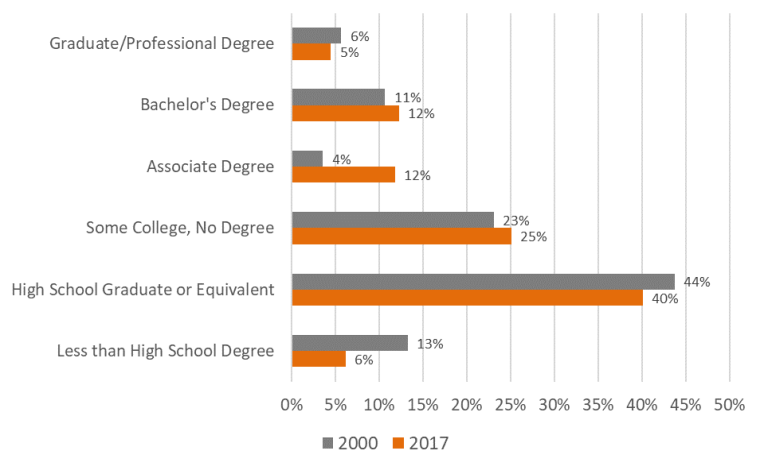
Figure 3.3: Racial Breakdown in Beecher 2000-2017



	2000	2010	2016
Hispanic of Any Race	1.8%	6.3%	7.7%

Source: US Census 2000 – Summary File 1; Esri Forecasts

Figure 3.4 : Education Attainment Over Age 25



Source: US Census 2000 – Summary File 1 – Esri Forecasts

HOUSING

About half of all homes in Beecher were built within the last 20 years, but just under 20% were built before 1940 (Figure 3.5). While a significant portion of older homes is not necessarily negative, there is a higher risk of older homes falling into disrepair or harboring health hazards such as lead paint or asbestos materials.

Homes currently for sale in Beecher (as of July 10, 2018), had an average listing price of \$231,500. (Figure 3.6) A total of 46 single family residential homes were for sale and the median price of Beecher homes for sale was \$198,750 (Not the Chicago MLS). This is similar to the median home value found in ESRI, \$229,200 (Figure 3.7). Additionally, home sale data from the

Figure 3.5: Beecher Housing Stock by Year Built

	Number	Percent
2000 or later	918	50.8%
1970-1999	287	15.9%
1940-1969	275	15.2%
Before 1940	327	18.1%
Median Year Built	2000	

Source: CMAP Community Snapshot, American Community Survey 2015 5-year estimates

Figure 3.6: Beecher Housing Inventory

Homes for Sale	46
Average Price	\$231,500
Median Price	\$198,750
Average Square Footage	1,995

Source: ESRI Forecasts, Will County Assessor, as of July 2018

Will County Assessor's office show similar pricing. For homes sold between 2005-2016, the average price was \$239,000.

Beecher has approximately 1,580 housing units (2016). Most units are owner-occupied (Figure 3.8) and about 7.9% of all units were vacant in 2017. Relative to the region, Beecher has a significantly higher percentage of owner-occupied single-family homes (65%) and significantly fewer multi-family homes (both owner and renter-occupied).

Between 2000 and 2016, Beecher added housing units at a faster annual rate (2.7%) than Cook County (0.4%) and Will County (2.1%) (ESRI). However, its annual growth post-Recession has been slower than its neighboring communities.

Figure 3.7: Median Home Value in Beecher and Surrounding Communities

Steger	\$116,192
Crete	\$182,295
Cedar Lake	\$189,200
Illinois	\$190,380
Peotone	\$194,595
USA	\$198,891
Dyer	\$210,485
Crown Point	\$215,500
Will County	\$229,150
Beecher	\$229,259
Cook County	\$244,668

Source: ESRI, 2016

Figure 3.8: Comparison of Owner and Renter-occupied Units, Beecher & CMAP Region

	Beecher		CMAP Region	
	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied
Single-family	65%	5%	48%	5%
Townhome	8%	3%	6%	1%
Multi-family	1%	18%	12%	28%
Mobile home	0%	0%	1%	0%
TOTAL	74%	26%	66%	34

Source: American Community Survey 2010-14

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

While the median household income and home sales price data provide information about what residents are earning (data in Chapter 5) and the average cost of a home, neither provides an understanding of the true housing costs for owners or renters. The US Census provides data on the *cost burden* of housing, defined as *housing costs that exceed 30% of the monthly income of the household*.

In 2014, approximately 31% of all homeowners in Beecher were cost burdened. Six percent of those homeowners spent more than half of their income toward housing monthly (Figure 3.9). This is a significant improvement from 2009 when 43% of residents were cost burdened and 15% were paying more than half their income toward housing in 2009.

Renters, however, have not fared as well. In 2009 around 28% of renter households were cost burdened and in 2014 that percentage rose to 50%. The share of residents spending between 30% and 50% of their incomes on housing costs rose from 5% in 2009 to almost 30% in 2014 and around 20% of residents were spending more than 50% of their income towards rent in 2009 and 2014 (Figure 3.10).

This indicates that over 40% of all households in 2009 were spending a significant portion of their income to pay for housing costs, and in 2014, the proportion of owners decreased while the proportion of renters increased. The greater proportion of income that residents spend on housing costs impacts their ability to spend money in other areas and support local businesses, such as retail, restaurants, leisure activities etc. According to 5-year ACS estimates in 2016, the median gross rent for a two bedroom unit was \$845 and \$1164 for a three bedroom unit.

Figure 3.9: Percent of owner-occupied households paying more than 30% of income on monthly owner costs

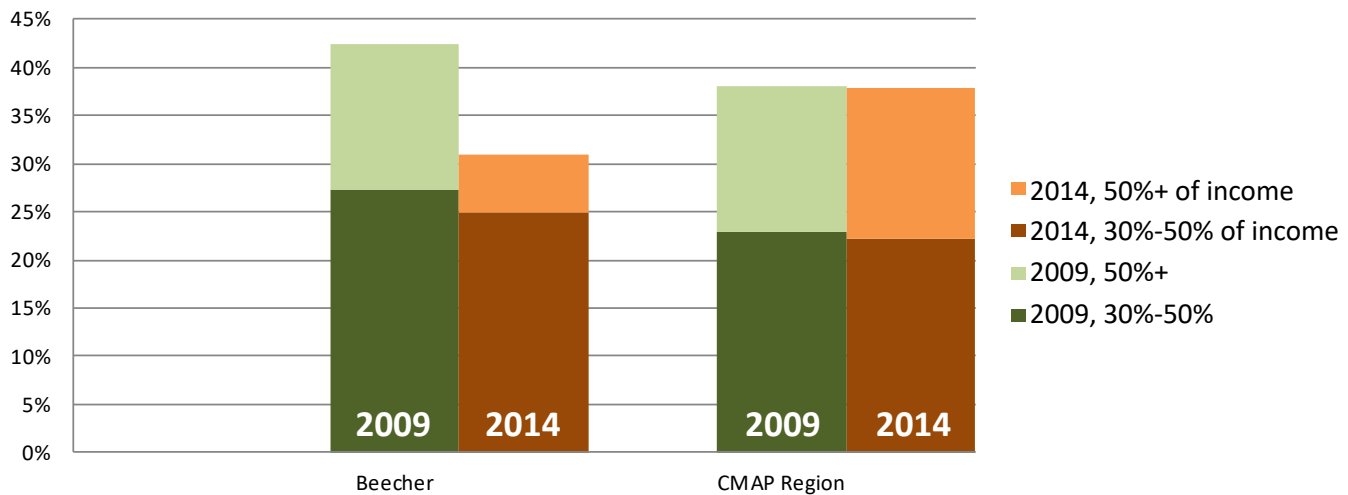
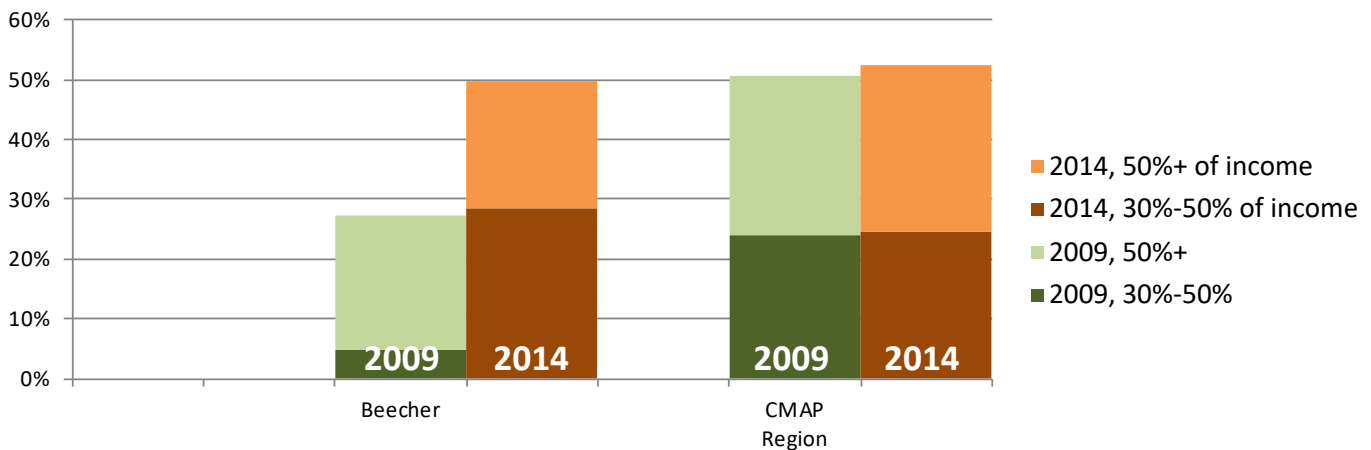


Figure 3.10: Percent of renter-occupied households paying more than 30% of income on gross rent



Source: CMAP Homes for a Changing Region Toolkit and American Community Survey 2005-2009 and 2010-14

RESIDENT AND WORKER PROFILE ANALYSIS

Figure 3.11: Inflow and Outflow of
Employees and Residents, 2015



NOTE: Overlay arrows do not indicate directionality of worker flow between home and employment locations
Source: OnTheMap Tool, US Census Bureau, Center of Economic Studies, 2015

WHERE RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES LIVE

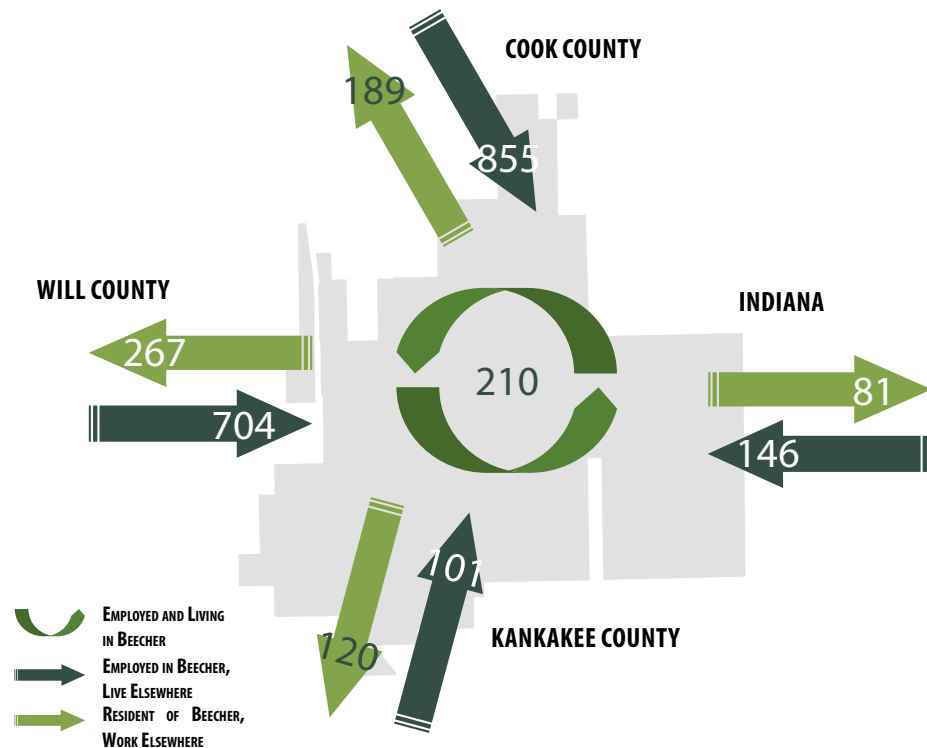
It is common that some residents of a community live and work in the community, some work outside the community, and some workers in the community live outside the community.

Beecher residents work in a variety of locations. Almost 2,000 Beecher residents work outside the community (Figure 3.11) and the majority (94%) drove alone to work in 2014 (US Census, Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program).

In 2015, around 1,000 people worked in Beecher, but only 210 were Beecher residents. Figure 3.12 shows where residents go to work and where workers live.

Figure 3.11 shows that a small portion of Beecher residents live and work in Beecher, while the majority (1,884) leave the community for work. Almost 800 workers in Beecher live outside the community.

Figure 3.12: Where Beecher Residents Work/Where the Beecher Workforce Lives, 2015



Source: OnTheMap Tool, US Census Bureau, Center of Economic Studies, 2015

Figure 3.12 shows that Beecher residents commute to a variety of locations for work. Two hundred and ten (210) work in Beecher, and another 267 work elsewhere in Will County. Others go to Cook County (189) or Kankakee County (120), and some travel to Indiana for work (81).

However, workers in Beecher commute mostly from Cook County (855) and Will County (704),. Another 146 travel from Indiana and 101 travel from Kankakee County.

Land Use + Zoning

4

LAND USE

The existing land use pattern and zoning regulations of a community are its fundamental building blocks to guide future development. Understanding these factors is important so that the Comprehensive Plan guides future growth that respects the past. This focus helps ensure the plan can enhance residents' quality of life and create a positive environment for businesses.

Figure 4.4 shows the existing land use for all property within Beecher. The *Existing Land Use Distribution Table* below shows that the primary land uses are *Residential, Parks and Open Space* (including the Golf Course), *Agriculture*, and *Undeveloped Land* (Figure 4.1). Vacant parcels account for an additional 9% of land and Institutional and Utility uses account for 6% of land in the Village.

Figure 4.1: Existing Land Use Distribution

Existing Land Use Distribution		
Land Use	Acres	% Land of Beecher
Residential (includes Single-Family, Multi-family, and General Residences)	440	30%
Parks/Golf Course/Open Space	283	19%
Agriculture	255	17%
Undeveloped Land	166	11%
Vacant Parcels	135	9%
Institutional/Utility	94	6%
Commercial	64	4%
Industrial	13	1%

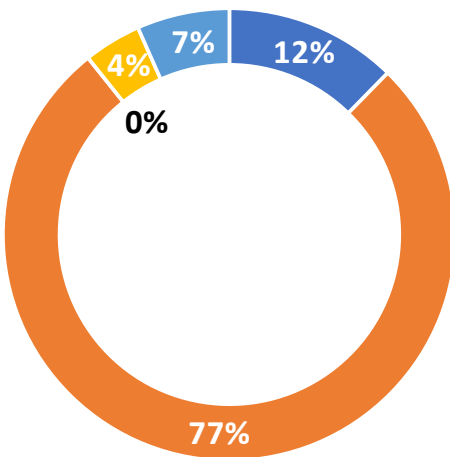
Source: Village of Beecher, field observations in 2018

LAND USE SNAPSHOTS

The following descriptions provide more context for each land use, including example businesses and locations.

Agricultural	Industrial/Office	Parks/Open Space
		
Agricultural land within the Village of Beecher is located primarily in the west. Much of it lies adjacent to residential land, though there are pockets of agricultural land surrounded by residential, commercial and institutional uses.	Industrial uses are currently located in the north, just west of Dixie Highway, adjacent to some commercial businesses and vacant land. Major industrial business are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rispens Seeds Children's Plus Dutch American Foods, Inc. 	There are several open spaces and recreation areas within the village including ten parks and the Cardinal Creek Golf Course.

Residential	Commercial	Civic/Institutional
		
Beecher's residential land uses are primarily single-family with limited multi-family developments including duplexes and multifamily homes.	There are limited commercial uses throughout the Village, mostly located along Dixie Highway and in Olde Beecher.	Civic/institutional uses include schools, churches, a library, a police station, and fire station. Village Hall is located along Dixie Highway.



- Single-Family (R1A)
- Single-Family (R-1)
- Two-Family (R-2)
- General Residence (R-3)
- Residence Estate (RE)

Some of the major businesses include:



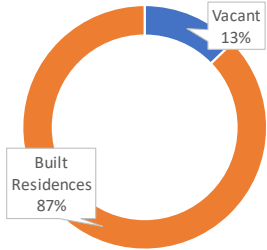


- De Jong Equipment
- R. P. Lumber
- Princess Cafe
- Do-It Best Hardware
- Walt's Food Center

Some of the major Civic/Institutional uses include:



- Beecher Village Hall
- Beecher Elementary School
- Beecher Junior High School
- Beecher High School

Railroad/Utilities	Vacant/Undeveloped
 <p>The Union Pacific Railroad runs north/south in the western portion of the Village, creating four rail crossings. The railway separates a small portion of residential development from the rest of the Village, and has a single spur to R. P. Lumber Company just south of W Church Rd.</p>	  <p>Much of the vacant land in the Village is located in existing residential neighborhoods. Around 13% of land zoned for residential uses is currently vacant. There are vacant lots in northern subdivisions (Nantucket Cove and Hunters Chase). The Cardinal Creek area has seen the construction of several homes, but construction has stalled largely due to lack of demand. The Fieldgate subdivision, just northeast of Cardinal Creek has been platted, but development has stalled as well.</p>

VACANT LOTS

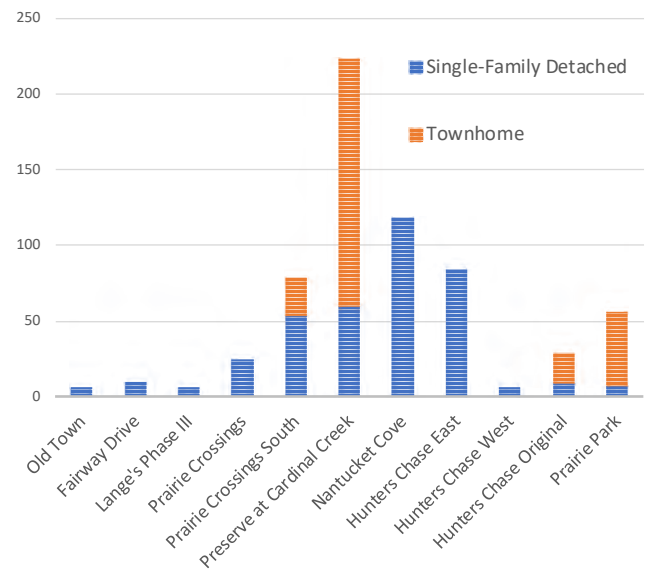
Around 20% of Village land is either undeveloped or vacant at present (Figure 4.1), and the vast majority of this land is already approved for residential purposes.

Figure 4.2 shows the number of vacant lots by subdivision, including lots for Single-Family detached houses and Townhomes, as of August 1, 2018.

There are a total of 1,068 lots that remain unimproved or developed in the Preserve at Cardinal Creek, Fieldgate and Creekside subdivisions that have been platted and approved for residential development.

As of August 1, 2018, there were 1,627 dwelling units in Beecher. There are a total of 1,710 residential lots that were approved but not built, including vacant lots (Figure 4.3) and undeveloped lots. At 100% build-out, this would mean that a total of 3,337 dwelling units would be available within Beecher. Given the current average household size of 2.6, this would indicate that Beecher would have the capacity to house about 9,000 residents without additional annexation or approval of a new subdivision.

Figure 4.2: Vacant Lot Distribution



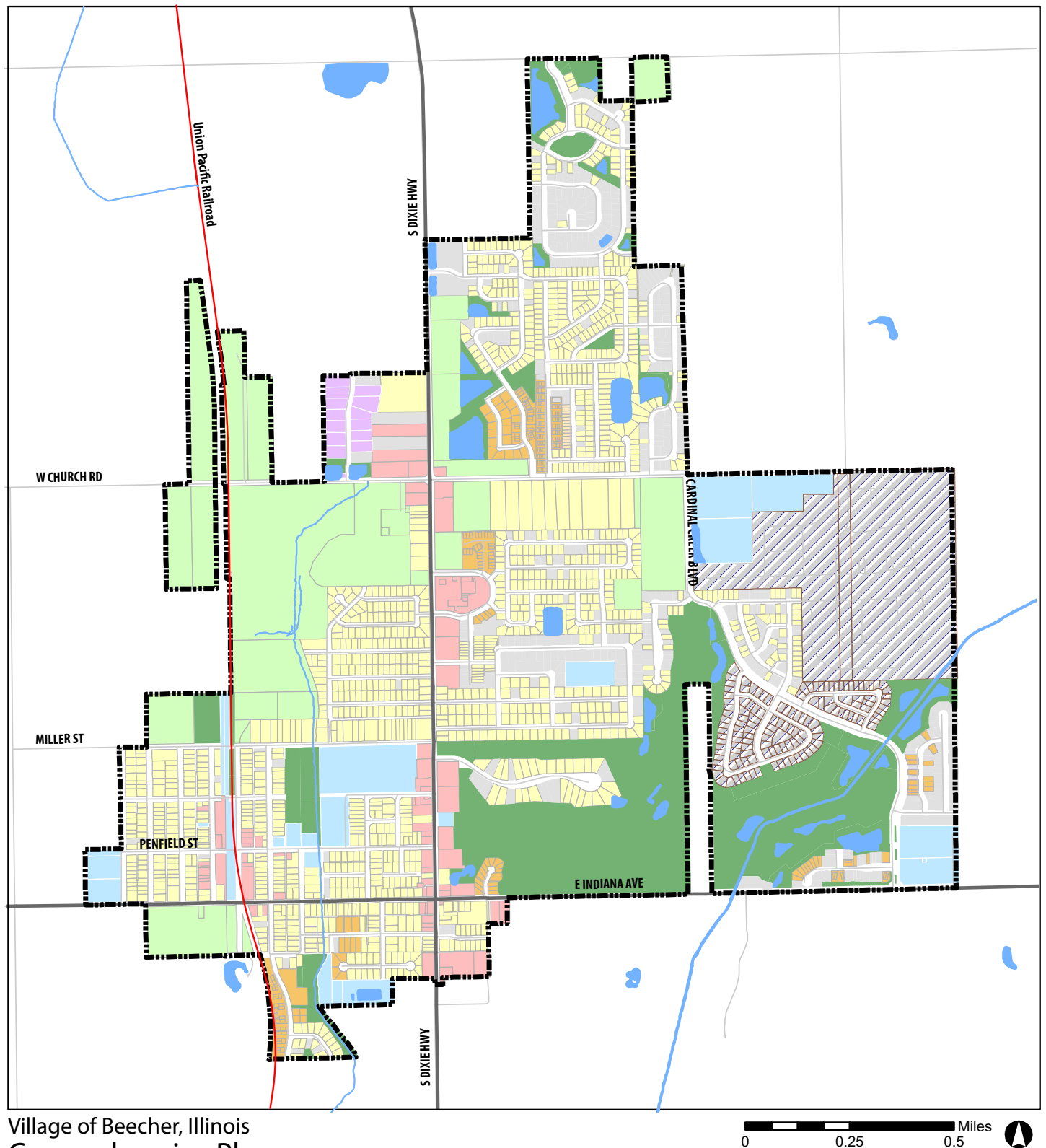
Source: Village of Beecher

Figure 4.3: Dwelling Unit Potential at 100% Build Out

Total Existing Dwelling Units	1,627
Total Approved , Undeveloped Dwelling Units	1,710
Dwelling Units at 100% Build Out	3,337

Source: Village of Beecher

Figure 4.4: Existing Land Use



**Village of Beecher, Illinois
Comprehensive Plan**

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

July 2018

Land Use Categories

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Agriculture | Commercial | Vacant Parcel |
| Single-Family Residence | Industrial/Office | Undeveloped Parcels |
| Two-Family Residence | Open Space | Railways |
| Multi-Family Residence | Institutional/Utility | Streets |
| | | Beecher Limits |

Source: Will County and Village of Beecher

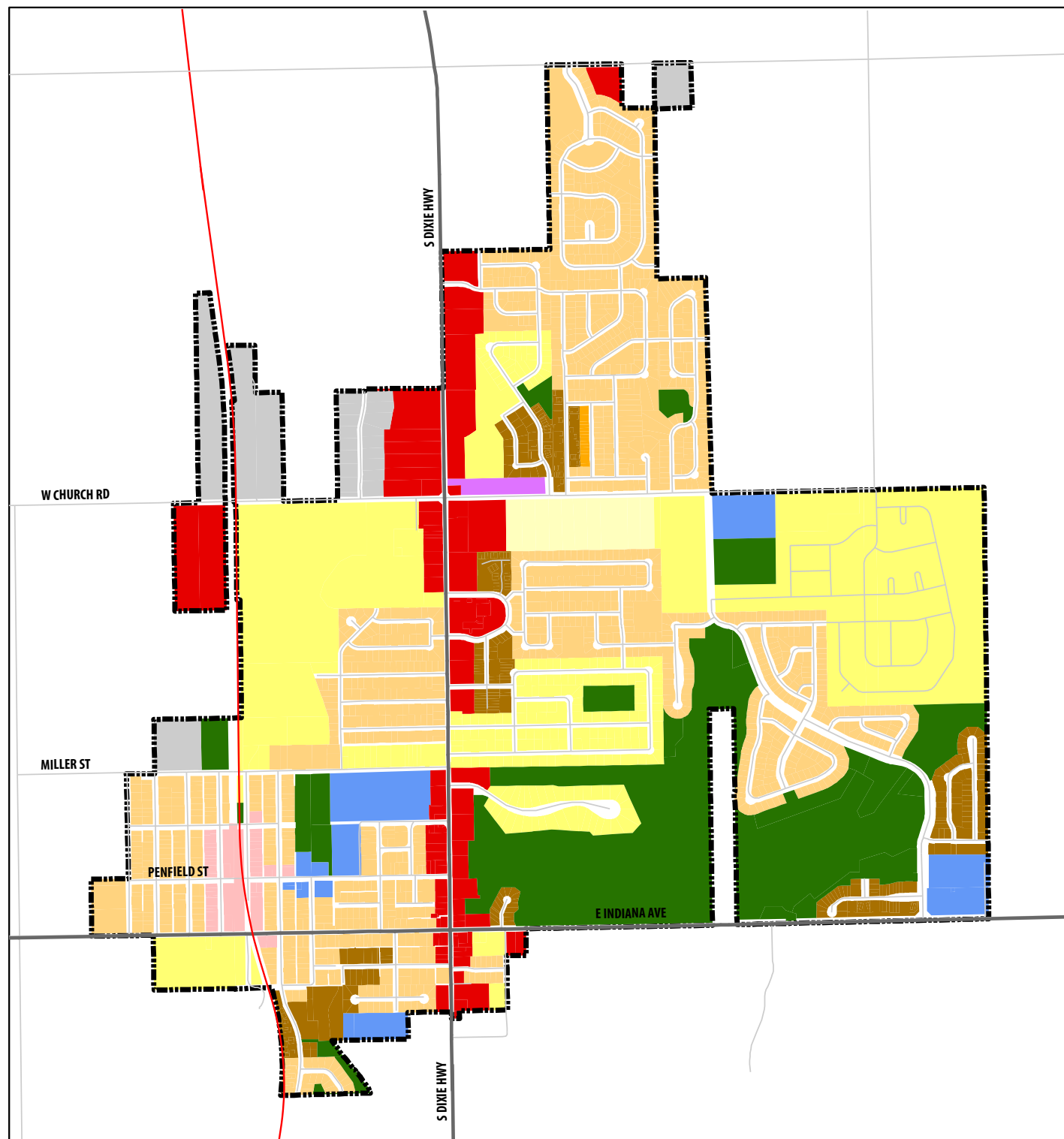
ZONING

Beecher's zoning regulations are comprised of eleven zoning districts. Figure 4.5 below expands on the purpose for each. There are four residential zoning districts, three districts for business/commercial uses, and one each for Agriculture, Industrial and Institutional uses. Per the Zoning Ordinance, any land annexed into the village is first zoned as AG-1 Agriculture (unless other agreements have been made), and all public ways are zoned in accordance with the zoning district of the property immediately abutting. Figure 4.6 shows the location of these zoning districts.

Figure 4.5: Zoning Districts

Zoning Districts	Purpose
AG-1 Agriculture	The AG-1 Agriculture District provides and preserves land for farming, horticulture, forestry, animal raising and breeding, and other forms of growing crops such as greenhouses within the village. The AG-1 District also allows farm homesteads, the sale of agricultural products and research/experimental farms.
RE Residence Estate	The RE Residence Estate District provides for residence estates including single-family detached dwellings, agriculture, and home occupations together. Special uses can be granted to locate uses such as religious institutions, cemeteries, golf courses, hospitals, nursery schools, parks, public utilities etc.
R-1 Single-Family	The R-1 Single-Family Residence District provides for single-family residential development within the village. The R-1 District provides for limited nonresidential uses that are compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.
R-1A Single-Family	The R-1A Single-Family Residence District allows single-family residential lots less than seventy-five feet (75') in width as conforming within the village. The R-1 District provides for limited nonresidential uses that are compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.
R-2 Two Family	The R-2 Two Family Residence District provides for two-family dwellings. The R-2 District provides for limited nonresidential uses that are compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.
R-3 General Residence	The purpose of R-3 General Residential District is to provide for, and preserve, quality higher density residential development, including multifamily dwellings. The R-3 district also provides for limited nonresidential uses that are compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods, and allows a number of commercial uses as a special use.
B-1 Historic Downtown	The B-1 Historical Downtown Business District is designed to preserve and enhance the character of the older and original business area of the village. The B-1 district provides for a variety of commercial, office and institutional uses. With permission, residential units are permitted above the first floor.
B-2 Local Business District	The B-2 Local Business District promotes a mix of retail, personal service and office uses that meet the daily needs of local residents. The B-2 district permits a wider range of commercial uses than the B-1 district to accommodate incompatible uses in the B-1 district. With permission, residential units are permitted above the first floor.
B-3 General Business and Service District	The B-3 General Business and Service District accommodates a variety of related shopper-type businesses and personal services with other complimentary uses. The B-3 district permits a wider range of uses than the B-2 and B-1 districts, and with permission, allows residential units above the first floor.
I-1 Limited Industrial	The I-1 Limited Industrial District provides land for development by industrial firms with high standards of performance which are still compatible with residential and business districts. The I-1 district permits most manufacturing, wholesaling, and warehousing facilities with adequate protection to adjacent uses and sufficient control of external effects.
GI Government and Institutional	The GI Government and Institutional District permits municipal and other public oriented uses separate from residential, commercial, and industrial uses. This includes municipal office buildings, public safety buildings, churches and schools, public works facilities, and utility and water management facilities are detention areas.

Figure 4.6: Existing Zoning Map



**Village of Beecher, Illinois
Comprehensive Plan**

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

April 2011

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| AG-1 Agricultural | R-2 Two Family | B-2 Local Business |
| RE Residential Estate | R-3 General Residence | B-3 General Business |
| R-1 Single Family | OS Open Space | I-1 Limited Industrial |
| R-1A Single Family | B-1 Historic Downtown | O-R Office Research |
| | | GI Government Institutional |

Source: Will County, Village of Beecher

RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

Beecher saw a significant increase in population and a subsequent increase in residential development since 2000. The Village currently has four residential zoning districts. The descriptions of each in Figure 4.5 begin to help differentiate between the housing types, but there are also visual differences.

As the Beecher prepares for potential increases in residential development in the coming years, there are several things to think about: preference for housing types, housing price range needs, household size needs, etc. Figure 4.7 shows examples of homes within each zoning district.

Figure 4.7: Examples of Housing in Residential Zoning Districts

R-1A Single-Family	R-1 Single-Family
	
R-2 Two-Family	R-3 General Residence
	
RE Residential Estate	
	

Source: Google Maps, Teska

Commercial

+

Industrial

5

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL ANALYSIS

A commercial and industrial market analysis was conducted to understand current supply and demand patterns for Beecher. The analysis provides a framework for the issues and challenges in planning for the future of the Village. Beecher's location near the Illinois-Indiana border and near several major transportation routes makes it a strategic community to attract industry. Several regional projects have the potential to rapidly impact residential, commercial and industrial development in Beecher, but all projects remain stalled at present.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

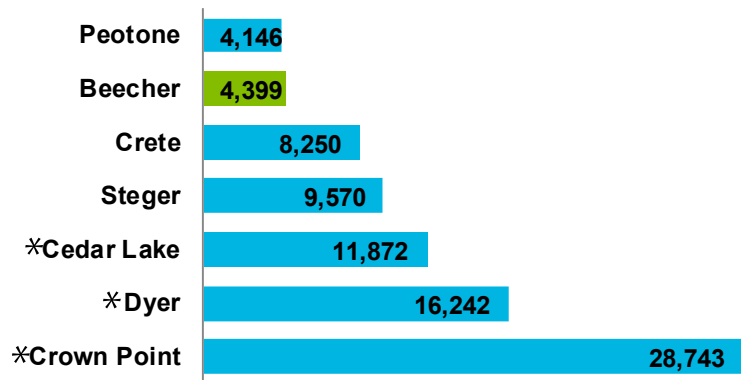
POPULATION

Beecher experienced a sharp population increase between 2000 and 2010, and was home to more than 4,000 residents in 2016 (Figure 5.1). Since 2000, approximately 1,600 more residents have settled in Beecher, yielding a 0.15% compounded annual growth rate (Figure 5.2). This growth rate exceeds the growth in neighboring communities such as Crete and Steger, but is growing slower than the state, both Will and Cook Counties, and when compared to nearby Indiana communities (Cedar Lake and Crown Point).

HOUSEHOLDS

Beecher had an average household size of 2.71 people in 2016, above the U.S. average of 2.59. Though total population increased slightly, total households remained almost unchanged between 2010-2016. Trends on the following page speak to changes in average household size and median age, factors which impact population change.

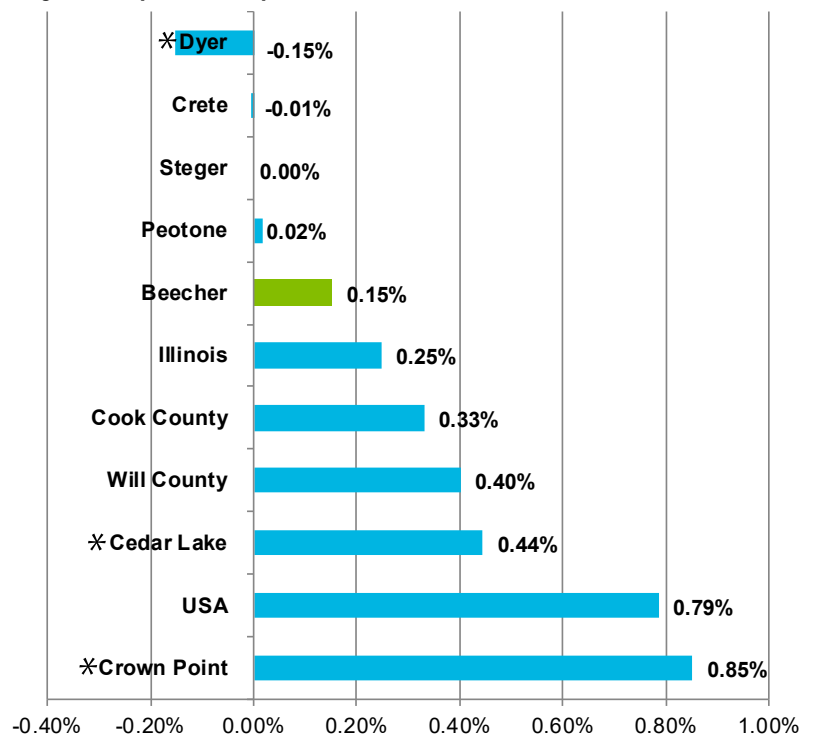
Figure 5.1: Population, 2016



Source: ESRI

* Indiana community

Figure 5.2: Population - Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR), 2010-2016



Source: ESRI

* Indiana community



View of Beecher from Racine Avenue and Miller Street

MEDIAN AGE

Beecher has a higher median age than most neighboring communities, and also has higher median age than both Cook and Will Counties (Figure 5.3). Though the median age is higher than some of its peer cities, its household size remains larger than many nearby communities.

Data for 2016 shows that the median age in Beecher has increased since 2010, from 40 to 43; this rate of change since 2010 (1.1%) is well above state and national averages (0.5% and 0.4%). Average household size in Beecher was 2.71 in 2016 (Figure 5.4). Over time, acceleration in median age tends to correlate with lower average household sizes (i.e. fewer families moving into a community).

Figure 5.3: Median Age, 2016

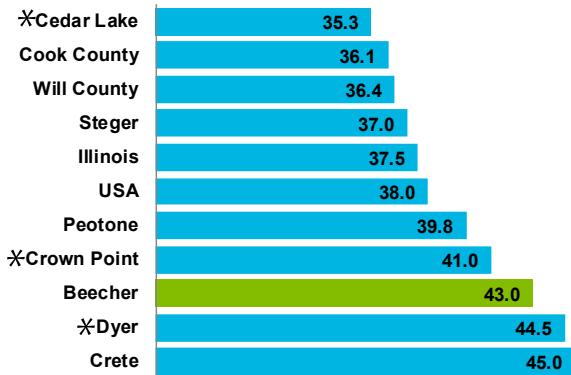
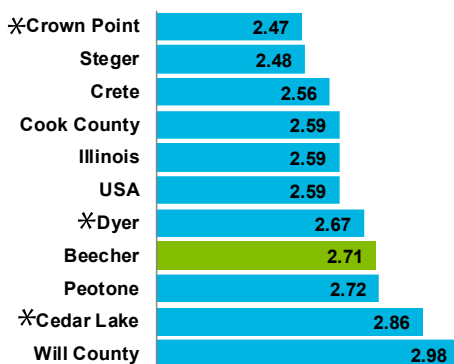


Figure 5.4: Average Household Size, 2016



INCOME

Median household income in Beecher is similar to neighboring communities. However, as of 2016, it was lower than Will County yet higher than Cook County and Illinois (Figure 5.5).

Per capita income of Beecher residents is higher than most of the comparative geographies; only Crete and Dyer had higher per capita incomes in 2016 (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.5: Median Household Income, 2016

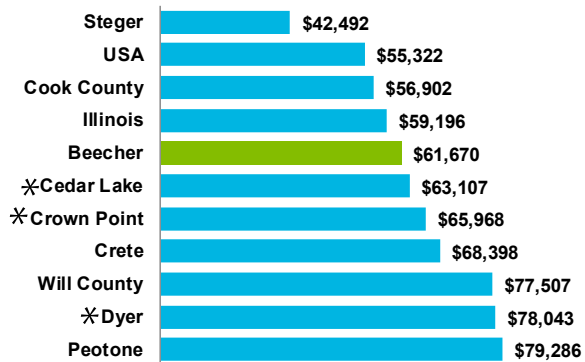
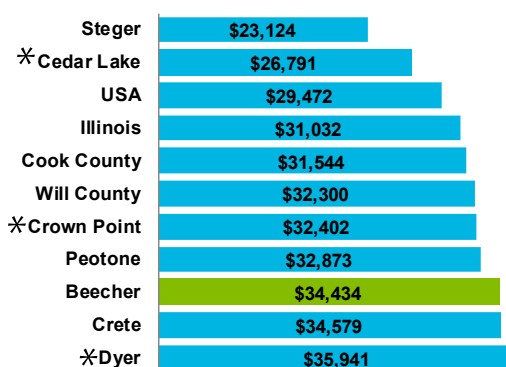


Figure 5.6: Per Capita Income, 2016



Source: Esri

* Indiana community.

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL REAL ESTATE

Commercial real estate in Beecher is evenly split between Office and Retail (86%), with a small amount of Industrial (Figure 5.7). There is a total of 342,000 occupied square feet in Beecher, according to CoStar. Compared to other communities, Beecher has a much higher percentage of commercial space utilized for office purposes (46%) and a much lower percentage of commercial space used for industrial purposes (14%).

Between 2010-2015, Beecher saw growth in occupied space (covering retail, office, and industrial space, faster than inventory, i.e. new construction). However, according to CoStar, inventory has not increased since 2008 and growth rates for occupancy are well above noted benchmarks. Employment growth rates are approximately 1.2% percent since 2010 (Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.7: Occupied Space Mix (2017)

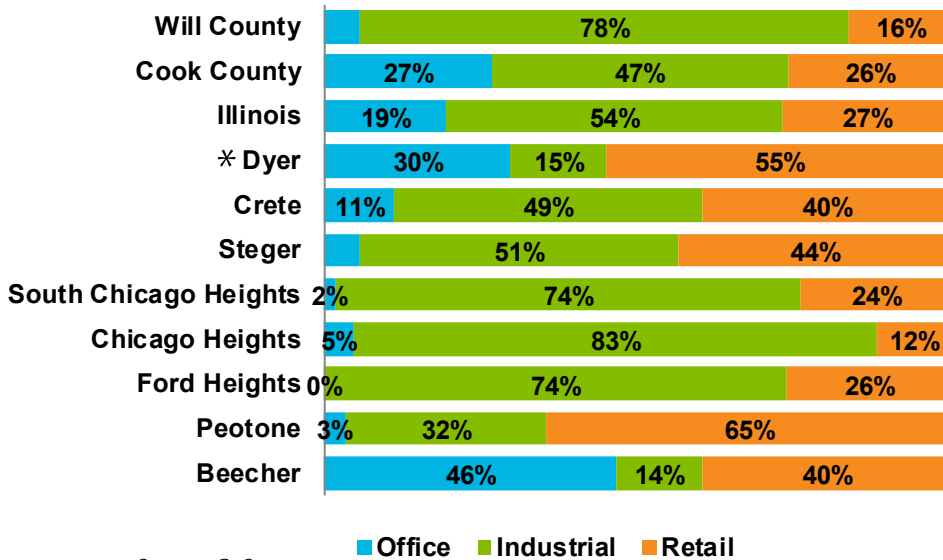
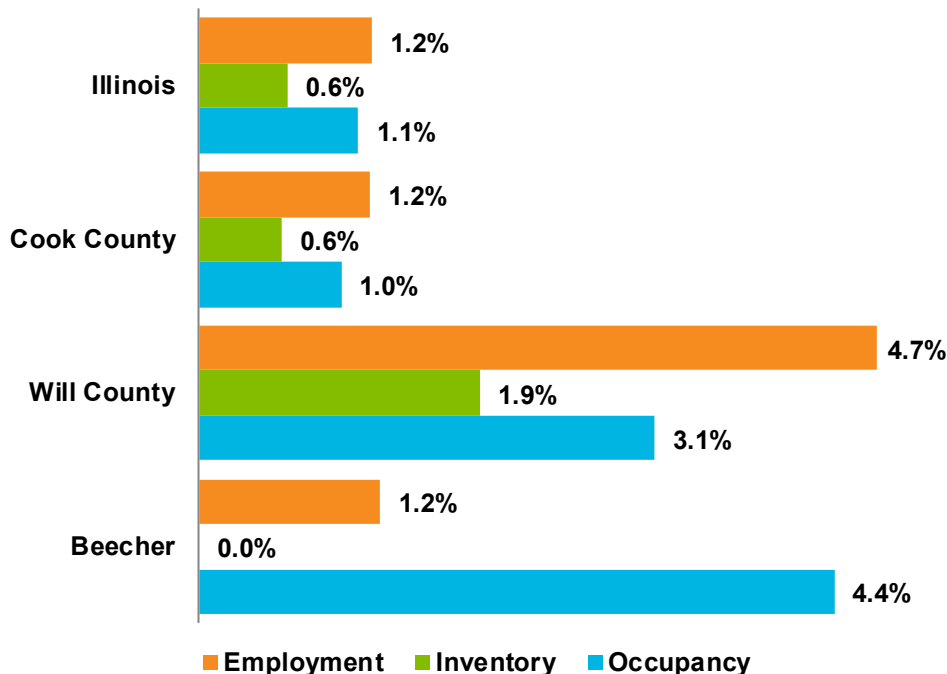


Figure 5.8: Real Estate Growth Rates (2010-2015)



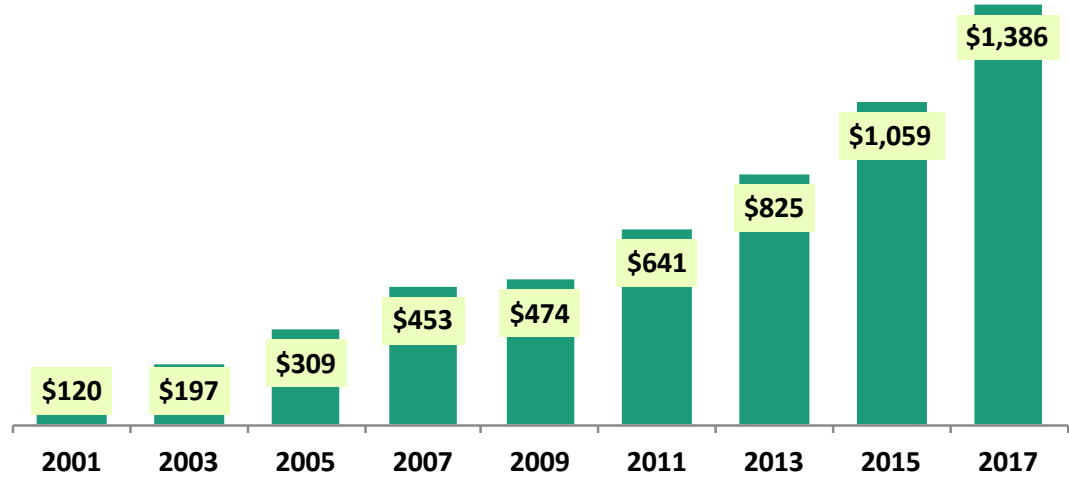
RETAIL SALES

In 2017, e-commerce sales reached \$1,386 per capita, 8.9% of total U.S. retail sales (Figure 5.9). This is linked with the aggressive growth of Amazon, which supported 4% of retail sales in 2017 or about 44% of U.S. e-commerce sales. Notably, total e-commerce spending per capita has “slowed” since 2010, by 15% year over year (US Census).

Post-recession, US restaurant spending has increased, while grocery spending has remained relatively consistent. While warehouse club and superstore sales were dramatically higher than restaurant and grocery spending through 2005, these store categories saw significant decreases in sales growth in 2008 and have not recovered to pre-recession levels (Figure 5.10).

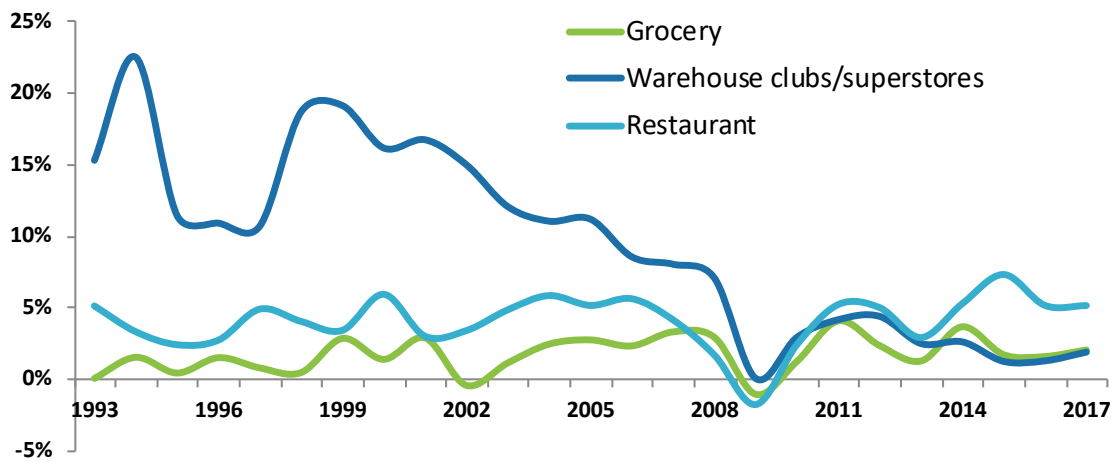
While the dust has only begun to settle around the purchase of Whole Foods by Amazon, traditional grocery store chains have felt increased pressure.

Figure 5.9: E-Commerce Dollar Spending per Capita, US



Source: US Census

Figure 5.10: Year-Over-Year Change in Per Capita Spending, US

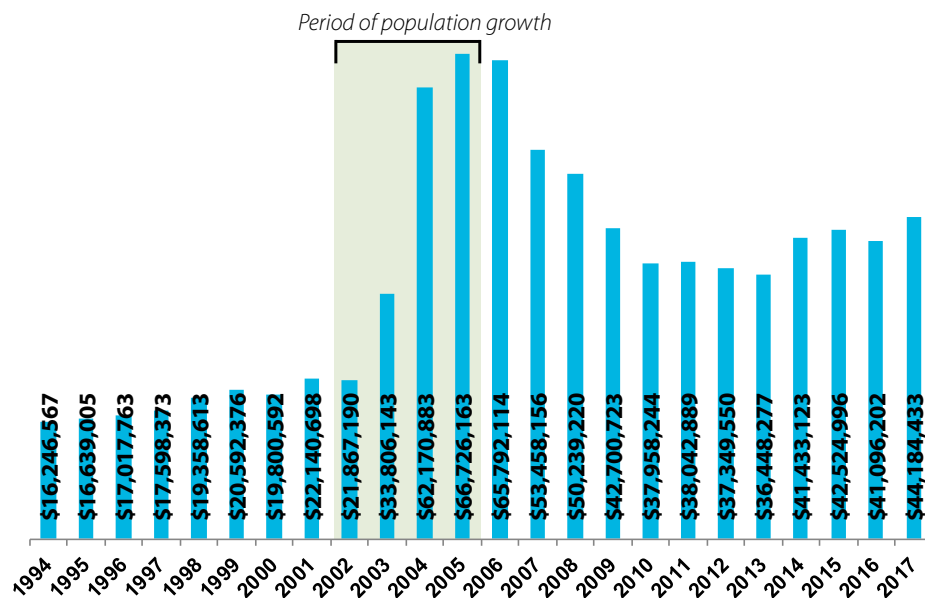


Source: US Census

RETAIL TRENDS IN BEECHER

While retail sales in Beecher peaked in 2005 at \$66.7 million, trends since 2014 speak to rough stability in sales, from about \$41.4 million in 2014 to \$44.1 million in 2017 (Figure 5.11). Miscellaneous retailers / drug stores along with food stores and restaurants account for the majority of retail sales (71.5%) in 2017.

Figure 5.11: Village of Beecher Retail Sales



Source: Illinois Department of Revenue

In 2004, agriculture sales increased from \$12.3 million to \$40.4 million, but began decreasing in 2006. Sales in 2017 were just \$2.8 million. In 2005, food sales rose from \$0 to \$9.2 million.

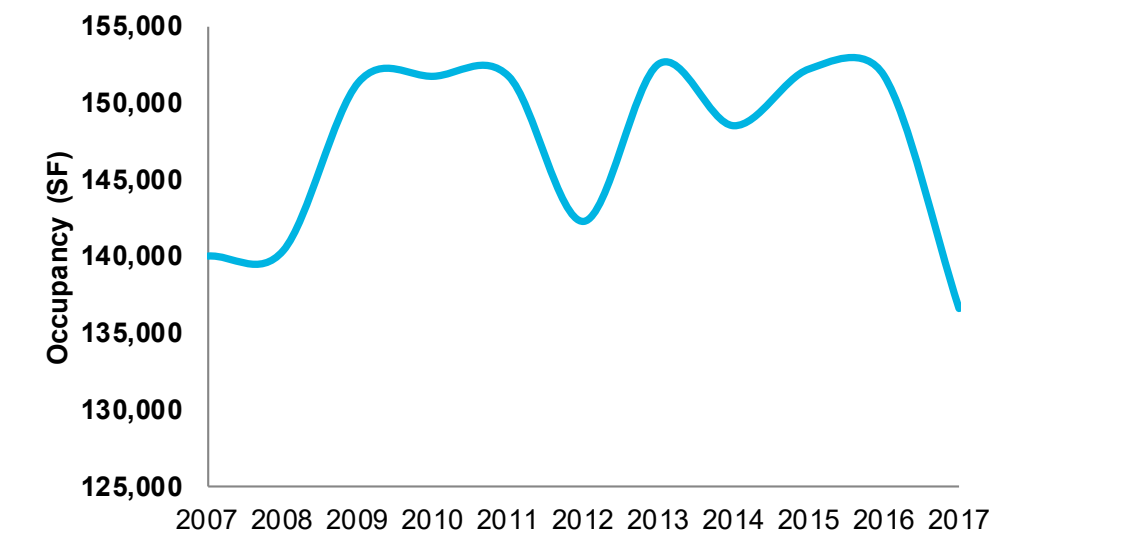
Across all retail sectors, Beecher has been able to retain most retail sales (0.71 pull factor in 2016). A pull factor indicates the amount of retail sales based on the population (leakage or surplus). The closer a pull factor is to 0, it indicates that there is limited local sales, suggesting residents are purchasing using the internet or in other communities. A pull factor greater than 1 indicates that the community is attracting sales from people outside the community. Beecher's overall pull factor of 0.71 indicates that there is some leakage to other municipalities, however, the pull factor for food was 2.48, indicating that the community attracts sales in food beyond estimates for residents alone. Food generated just under \$20 million in retail sales in 2017 alone.

RETAIL REAL ESTATE

Retail occupancy decreased slightly in 2012, increasing again in 2013 and decreasing again in 2017 to its lowest levels since the recession (Figure 5.12). This trend is in contrast to its neighboring communities where retail occupancy has been mostly increasing (Figure 5.13).

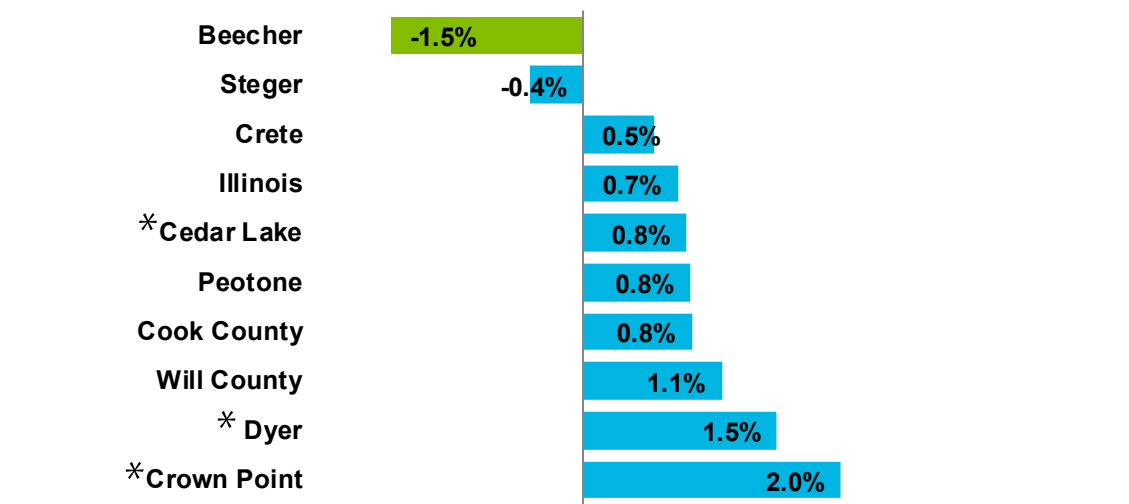
However, a few new establishments have opened in Beecher in recent years, including Casey’s General Store, Subway, and Dunkin Donuts.

Figure 5.12: Beecher Retail Occupancy (SF)



Source: CoStar

Figure 5.13: Retail Occupancy (SF) Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) (2010-2017)



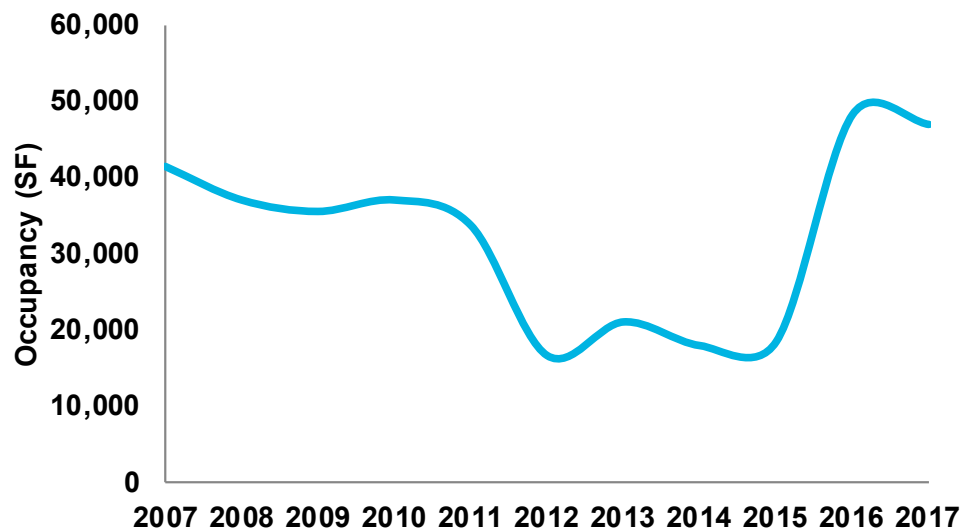
Source: CoStar

* Indiana community.

INDUSTRIAL REAL ESTATE

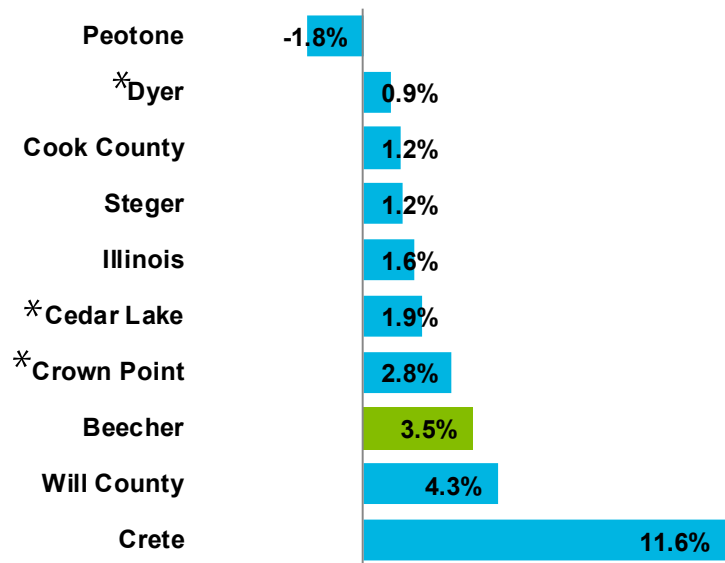
Industrial occupancy in Beecher increased at an annual rate of 3.5% between 2010 and 2017 (Figure 5.14). Beecher ranked second out of its neighboring communities for the fastest growth rate in industrial occupancy since 2010, slower only than Crete (Figure 5.15). The challenge for Beecher is a lack of available industrial lots to continue this growth. As of July 2018, there was only one small lot available for new industrial development.

Figure 5.14: Beecher Industrial Occupancy (SF)



Source: CoStar

Figure 5.15: Industrial Occupancy (SF) Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) (2010-2017)



Source: CoStar

* Indiana community.

Transportation + Infrastructure

6

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM ANALYSIS

Transportation is a critical issue for the residents of the Village of Beecher. The Village is located 38 miles south of downtown Chicago, approximately 9 miles east of Interstate 57. Since Route 1 serves as the main north-south arterial in this area, high truck traffic volumes are routed through the center of the Village. There are few alternative north-south routes within the Village limits, creating traffic back-ups, congestion, and noise. Addressing this congestion, and its related safety concerns, is a priority for Village residents and staff officials and is critical to support new growth plans in the Village.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION -- ROAD

Capital Projects

According to the Will County Division of Transportation, there are no planned construction projects in 2018. However, there are plans for multi-year resurfacing and ADA improvements on Route 1 between 2019-2024.

Beecher Bypass (Illinois Route 1): A proposal that has been discussed locally is a western bypass route, along Ashland Avenue around Beecher, but it has not been implemented.

Illiana Expressway

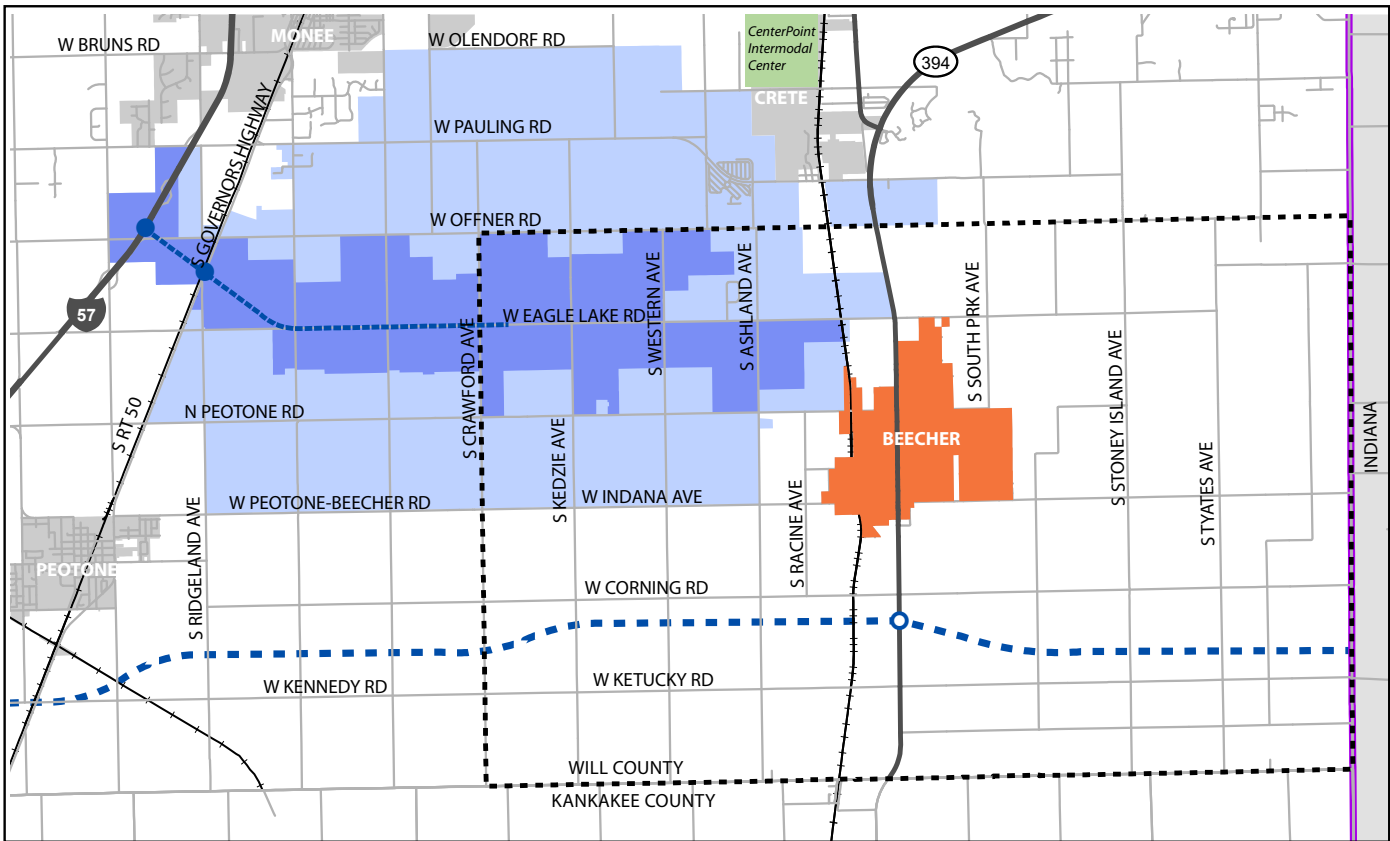
The proposed Illiana Expressway alignment would run approximately a mile south of Beecher, with a full access point at Route 1 (Figure 6.1). At present, construction of the Illiana Expressway has not commenced because it is not funded and is indefinitely on hold.

Truck Routes

The State of Illinois has established a Designated State Truck Route System that consists of three classifications of roadways. Each classification allows for maximum legal vehicle dimensions and loaded vehicle weights. In Beecher, two roadways are part of the State Truck Route System:

- Class II Facility: IL Route 1
- Church Road from Racine Avenue to IL Route 1

Figure 6.1: Future Regional Improvements



Village of Beecher, Illinois Comprehensive Plan

- | | | |
|---------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Beecher | South Suburban Airport Inaugural Boundary | Proposed Illiana highway Route |
| Planning Area | South Suburban Airport Ultimate Boundary | Proposed Illiana Full Access Point |
| Streets | Proposed South Suburban Airport Access Drive | CSX CenterPoint Intermodal Center |
| Railways | Proposed South Suburban Airport Full Access Point | |

Source: South Suburban Airport Layout Plan (IDOT); Illinois Department of Transportation; CSX

The Village roadway network currently lacks a defined east-west truck route across its planning boundaries. The lack of defined truck routes can create traffic congestion and safety issues within the Village.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION -- RAIL

CSX Crete Intermodal Terminal

The new CSX Crete Intermodal Freight Terminal will be located north of Goodenow Road, adjacent to Route 1 on the west (Figure 6.1). It will have an annual processing capacity of 500,000 lifts, 2,600 container spaces and operations are proposed to commence early 2020.

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Quiet Zones

The Union Pacific (UP) Railroad runs north-south through the western half of Beecher. Train operations are restricted to hauling freight only and occur throughout a 24-hour period. There is an average of 40 trains per day utilizing this facility over two sets of tracks. There are 6 at-grade crossing locations within the Village of Beecher between Eagle Lake Road and Kentucky Road (where a roadway crosses the rail line). All the crossings have passive traffic control devices in place, including pavement markings and/or railroad advance warning signs. Active warning devices in place at each crossing include flashing lights, gates, and bells.

There is currently no FRA Quiet Zone in place within Village limits. In order to qualify for Quiet Zone implementation, most of the existing at-grade crossings would need to be upgraded with supplemental safety measures, including concrete medians and constant warning time circuitry.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION -- AIR

Bult Field

Bult Field is located just north of W Eagle Lake Road, between Kedzie Avenue and Western Avenue. Bult Field is located within the footprint of the planned inaugural boundary of the South Suburban Airport (SSA) and would be replaced by the new airport (Figure 6.1). During 2017, a total of 13,300 air operations were performed. Operations have consistently been around 13,000 for at least the last 10 years.

South Suburban Airport (SSA)

The Proposed SSA location is northwest of Beecher. (Figure 6.1) The inaugural boundary for the airport is not directly adjacent to Beecher limits, but the planned ultimate boundary will be. At present, parcel acquisition for the SSA is ongoing but construction has not commenced.



Bult Field Operations Building

MAJOR THOROUGHFARES

The following thoroughfares can be located in Figure 6.2 and more information about the road network is found in Figure 6.3.

A) Illinois Route 1 (Dixie Highway)

Illinois Route 1 bisects the Village and is a key element of the regional transportation system in eastern Will County. The route is classified as Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) and a Class II Truck Route by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

Illinois Route 1, also known as Dixie Highway within Village limits, is listed on the National Highway System (NHS). Illinois Route 1 connects the Village to I-394 (an extension of Interstate 94) to the north and east-west arterials such as Indiana Avenue and IL Route 17 to the south.

The current traffic volume on Illinois Route 1 is 11,100 vpd with over 16% of those vehicles being trucks (1,875 vpd).

Current traffic volumes are approaching the capacity of the existing 3-lane pavement cross section, leading to congestion, poor levels of service, and inefficient access to adjacent neighborhoods and developments along this route.

Illinois Route 1 has curb and gutter and sidewalks present along both sides of the roadway from Church Road to Indiana Avenue within Village limits. The roadway currently has no bicycle accommodations. There are existing traffic signals on IL Route 1 at Church Road, Chestnut Lane and Indiana Avenue.

B) Indiana Avenue (County Highway 24)

Indiana Avenue (Will County Highway 24) is an important east-west arterial in the Will County transportation network for the south-east portion of the County. Indiana Avenue is classified as a Principal Arterial west of Illinois Route 1 and a Major Collector route east of IL Route 1 by the IDOT. Indiana Avenue connects the Village to Interstate 57 to the west and the Illinois-Indiana State Line to the east.

The current traffic volume on Indiana Avenue is 2,600 vpd west of IL Route 1 and 2,250 vpd east of IL Route 1. Indiana Avenue has a two-lane rural pavement cross section within Village limits. The roadway currently has sidewalks on the north side of the street from Dunbar Street to Woodward Street and sidewalks on both side of the street from Woodward Street to IL Route 1. Indiana Avenue has an off-street bicycle path adjacent to the north side of the roadway from Trim Creek to Cardinal Creek Boulevard.

C) Church Road

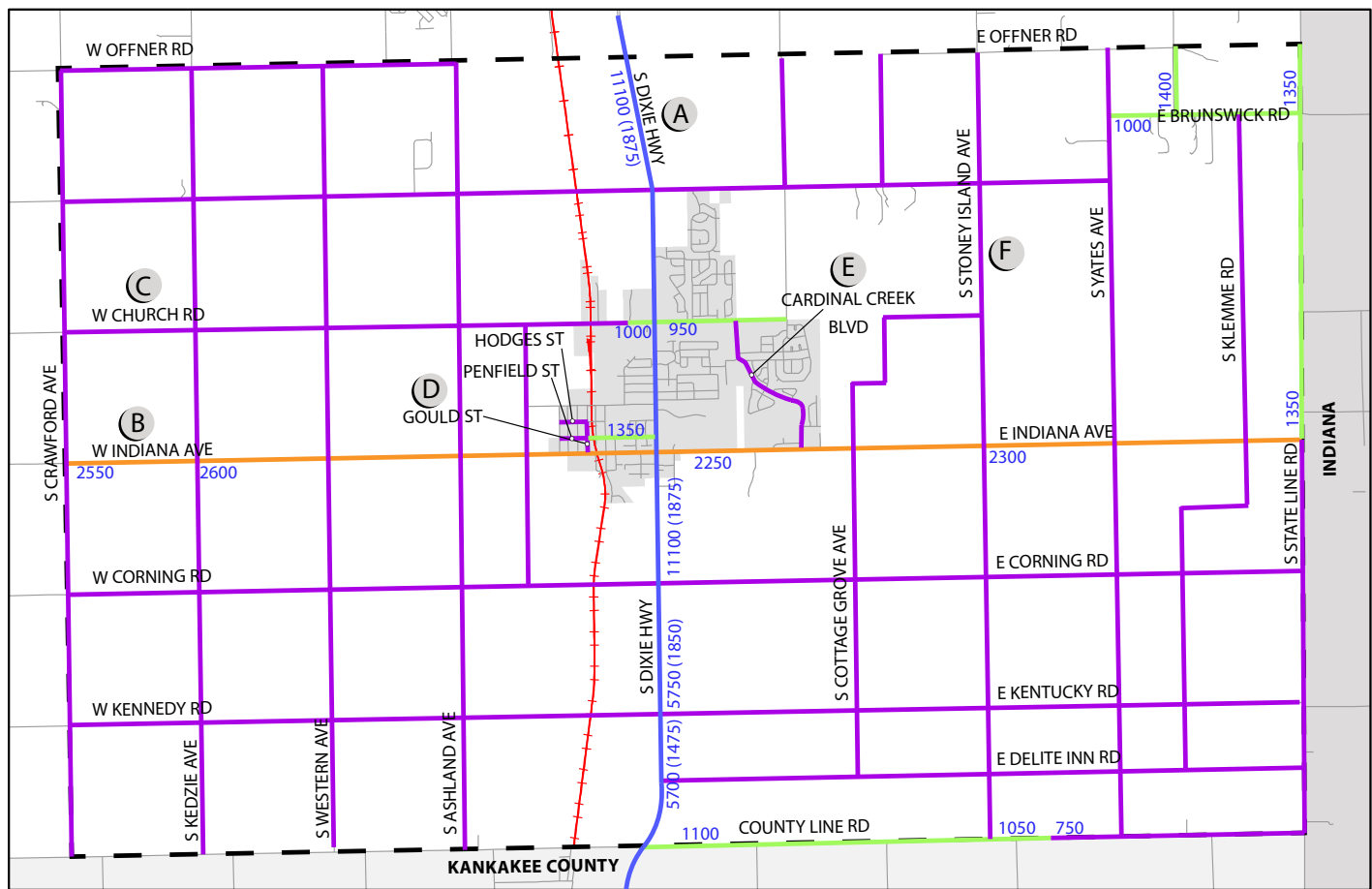
Church Road serves as a local east-west collector street in the Village of Beecher. Church Road is classified as a Minor Collector from IL Route 1 to Cardinal Creek Boulevard by the IDOT. Church Road is designated as a Class II Truck Route between Racine Avenue and IL Route 1. Church Road connects the Village to 80th Avenue/ Joliet Road to the west and Park Avenue to the east. The current traffic volume on Church Road varies from 475 to 1,000 vpd within Village limits. Church Road has a two-lane rural pavement cross-section.

The roadway currently has sidewalks on the north side of the street from IL Route 1 to Fox Hound Trail. Church Road has a bicycle path adjacent to the north side of the roadway from Pheasant Chase Circle to Cardinal Creek Boulevard.

D) Penfield Street & Gould Street

Penfield Street and Gould Street serve as downtown collector streets in the Village of Beecher. Penfield Street and Gould Street are classified as a Major Collectors from IL Route 1 to Indiana Avenue by the IDOT. Penfield Street runs east-west through the Village's main downtown commercial area and is the gateway to the Village's historic downtown district. The current traffic volume on Penfield Street is 1,350 vpd. The current traffic volume on Gould Street is 275 vpd. Both roadways generally have two-lane urban pavement cross sections with sidewalks on at least one side. There are no bicycle accommodations on either roadway. On-street parking is present on both roads near the Police Station.

Figure 6.2: Regional Transportation Map



Village of Beecher, Illinois Comprehensive Plan

- +— Railroad
- Beecher Limits
- Planning Area
- Streets
- 750 ADT
- 750-1500 ADT
- 1500-3000 ADT
- 3000+ ADT
- 1100 2016 ADT Counts
- (900) 2016 Truck ADT Counts
- ADT = Average Daily Traffic

Source: Getting Around Illinois, IDOT, June 2018

E) Cardinal Creek Boulevard

Cardinal Creek Boulevard serves as a local north-south collector street. Classified as a Minor Collector from Church Road to Indiana Avenue, the current traffic volume is 375 vpd. Cardinal Creek Boulevard has a two-lane urban pavement cross section and the roadway has an adjacent bicycle path that runs primarily along its west side.

F) Stoney Island Avenue

Stoney Island Avenue serves as a regional north-south collector street east of the Village of Beecher and is classified as a Minor Collector from Burrville Road to County Line Road. The current traffic volume on Stoney Island Avenue is 200 vpd. Stoney Island Avenue has a two-lane rural pavement cross section, but the roadway currently has no sidewalks or bicycle accommodations.

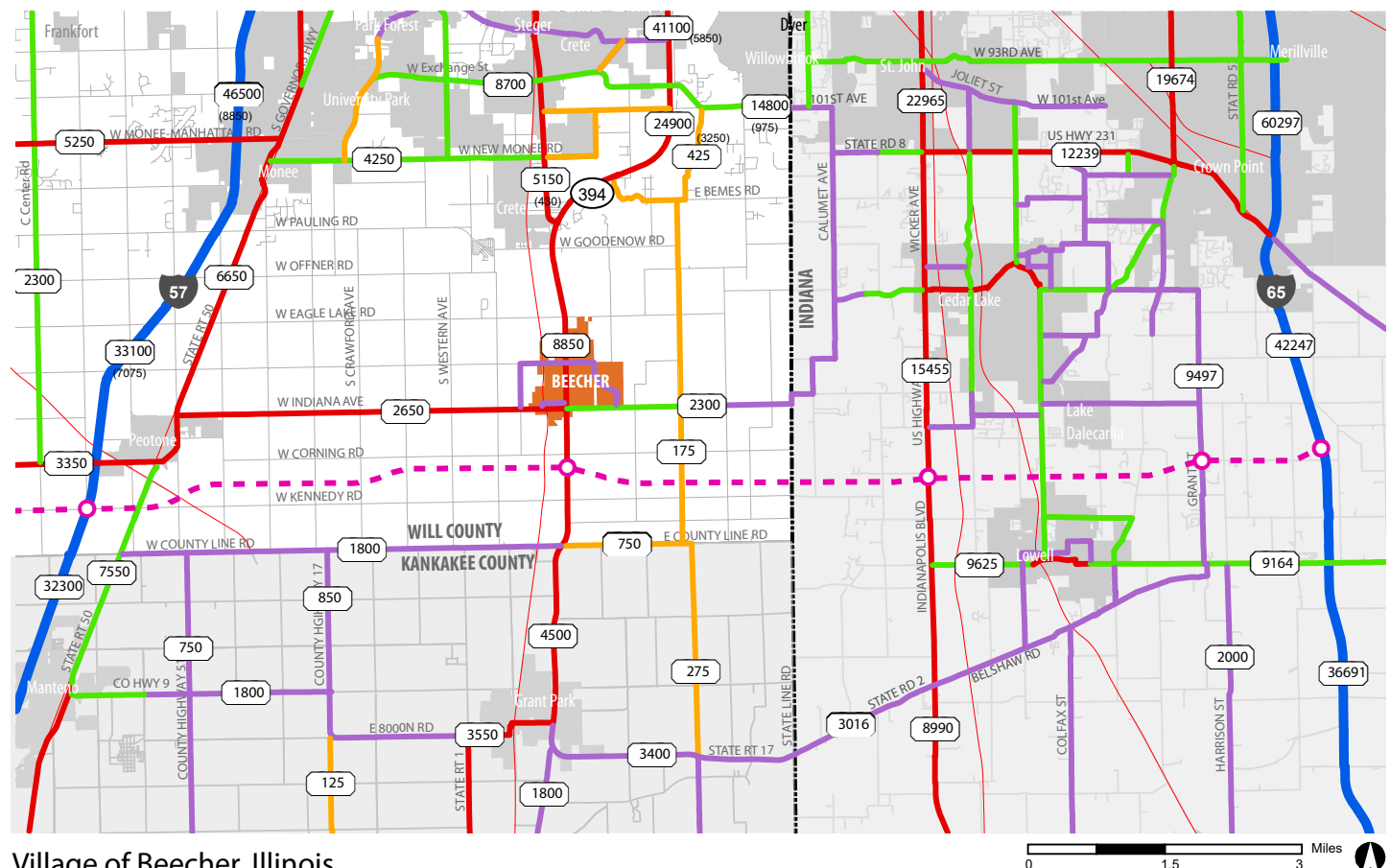
VEHICULAR SAFETY

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) publishes a 5% report which contains the top 5 percent of roadway locations exhibiting the most severe safety needs based on crashes, injuries, deaths, traffic volume levels, and other relevant data as determined by the State. There are several sections of roadway within the Village's planning boundaries which are listed by IDOT in the 5% report:

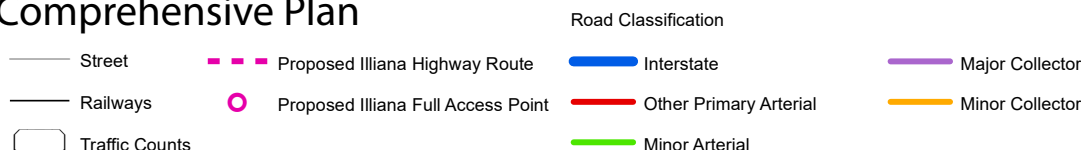
- Offner Road – Crawford Avenue to Kedzie Avenue
- Eagle Lake Road – Streamwood Drive to Ashland Avenue
- Eagle Lake Road – IL Route 1 to Millbridge Parkway
- Eagle Lake Road – Park Avenue to Stoney Island Avenue
- Church Road – Western Avenue to Ashland Avenue
- Corning Road – IL Route 1 to Cottage Grove Avenue
- Kedzie Avenue – Offner Road to Eagle Lake Road
- Western Avenue – Indiana Avenue to Corning Road

For more information about IDOT's 5% crash data see <http://www.idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/safety/Illinois-Roadway-Crash-Data>

Figure 6.3: Existing Road Network



Village of Beecher, Illinois Comprehensive Plan



Source: 5-year Classification Maps, IDOT, 2015-2017

In addition, the following intersections within the Village's planning boundaries are listed by IDOT in the 5% report:

- Indiana Avenue at Kedzie Avenue
- Indiana Avenue at Ashland Avenue
- Indiana Avenue at Stoney Island Avenue
- Indiana Avenue at Yates Avenue

PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Walkability is very important to the residents of the Village of Beecher and many pedestrian accommodations exist within Village limits. IL Route 1 has sidewalks on both sides of the roadway between Church Road and Indiana Avenue. Three traffic signals with pedestrian signals and pushbuttons are present along this roadway section to facilitate crossing of the state route. However, there is not a protected pedestrian crossing present at Miller Street adjacent to the Beecher High School, which is the longest east-west roadway in the Village with sidewalk accommodations.

Sidewalks are generally present along at least one side of the street in the residential areas of Beecher, however gaps do still exist (Figure 6.4). In some cases, sidewalks have small breaks, making them discontinuous in some residential areas.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

The Village has four main off-road bicycle facilities:

- Circular pathway around the park adjacent to Miller Street and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks
- Circular pathway around the park adjacent to the Beecher Elementary School
- Pathway adjacent to Cardinal Creek Boulevard from Church Road to Indiana Avenue
- Pathway adjacent to Ashford Boulevard

The Village bicycle path network lacks an east-west route or a north-south route on the west side of IL Route 1.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Commuter Rail

Beecher is not directly served by Metra commuter rail at present. The nearest Metra service is available in University Park (Metra Electric District line), 10 miles away, around a 20 minute drive north of Beecher.

Bus Service

Beecher is not directly served by Pace commuter bus service. The nearest connection to Pace service is available in Chicago Heights, 11 miles away (about a 25 minute drive).

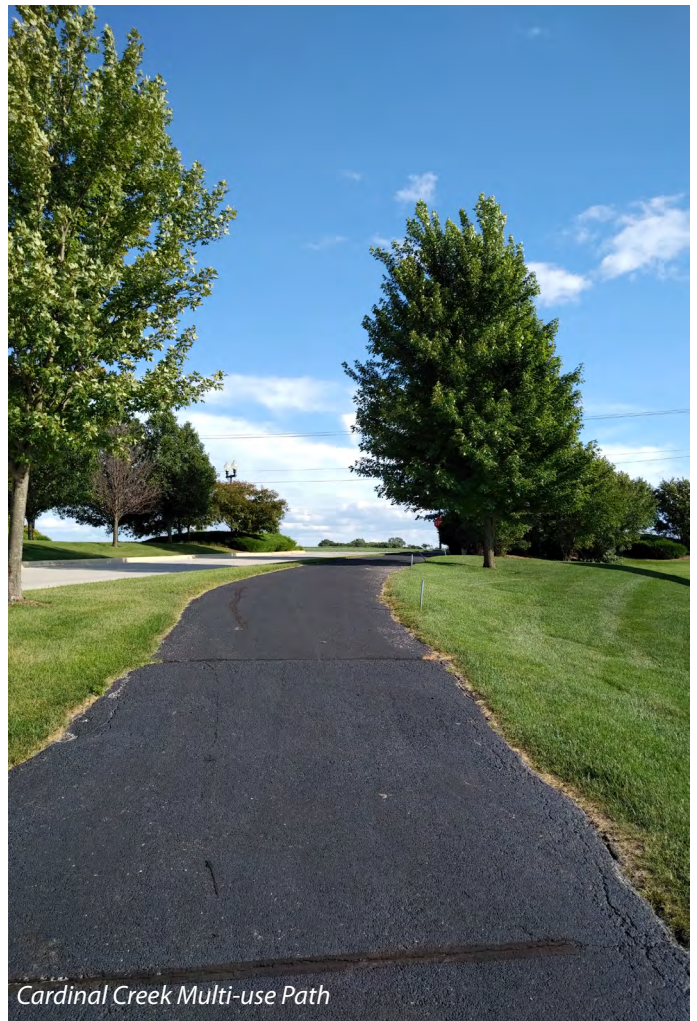
Paratransit Service

Paratransit services extends transportation service in areas that are not served by other fixed route service. Paratransit also is prepared to serve people with disabilities and the elderly. In Will County, Will-Ride is a dial-a-ride paratransit service that can be accessed by senior citizens (60 years of age and older) and by residents with a disability. Will-Ride can be used by most residents in Will County to go to work, shopping, to visit family etc, but service by Washington Township residents is available only for medical appointments.

The cost is \$2 for a one-way trip within Washington Township and \$4 for one-way trips outside the Township. The service is operated Monday-Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm.

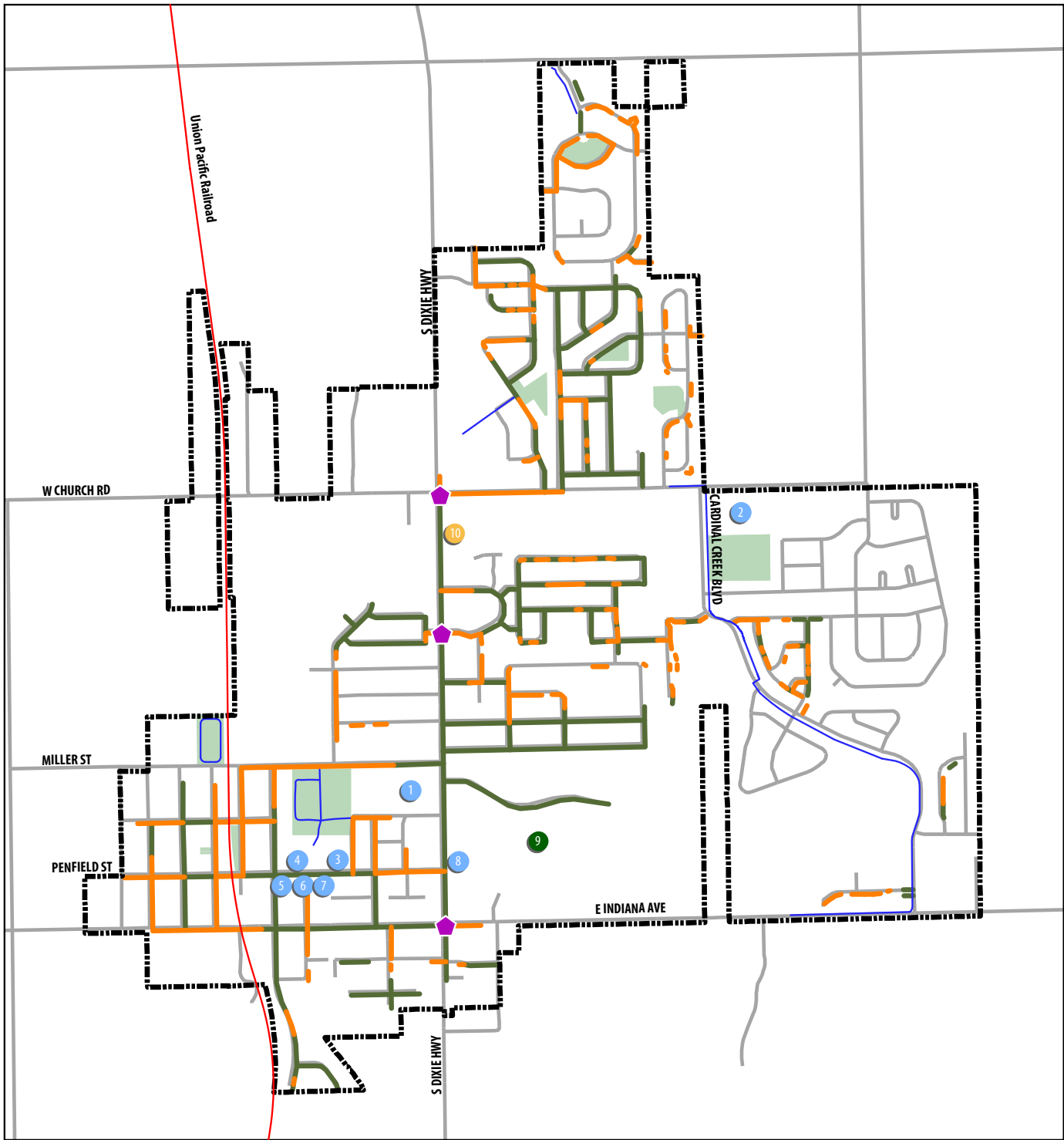
Washington Township Dial-a-Ride Service

Washington Township dial-a-ride (paratransit) service provides pre-arranged transit service for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. This non-fixed route service uses vans and buses to provide pre-arranged trips between individuals' homes and anywhere within Township limits. The service is available on Wednesdays from 9:00am to 2:30pm. The cost is \$2.00 each way and reservations must be made in advance.



Cardinal Creek Multi-use Path

Figure 6.4: Existing Sidewalks Map



Village of Beecher, Illinois
Comprehensive Plan

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">--- Beecher Limits— Path— Sidewalk - One Side— Sidewalk - Both Sides◆ Signalized Intersection | <p><i>Institutions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 High School2 Jr High School3 Elementary School4 Fire Department5 Police Department6 Post Office7 Library8 Village Hall | <p><i>Context</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">9 Cardinal Creek Golf Course10 Beecher ManorExisting Park |
|---|--|---|

Source: GIS Base Mapping, by Will County, June 2018

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND STORMWATER ANALYSIS

The Beecher Facilities Planning Area (FPA) was originally established by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) to provide the planning boundaries for the Village's wastewater treatment facilities. The FPA consists of the Village of Beecher and certain unincorporated areas within Washington Township, Will County, totaling about 3,900 acres. Figure 6.6 shows the current Village of Beecher FPA as designated by the IEPA and as shown in the 2013 CMAP database.

The Village owns a central water supply, a central wastewater treatment plant, and sanitary and storm conveyance systems. The existing water and sewer infrastructure is aging and the Village has been performing improvement work to replace the older water mains and the deteriorated wastewater treatment plant equipment. Generally speaking, the sewer and water systems meets the immediate needs of the Village. However,

future growth will require additional infrastructure.

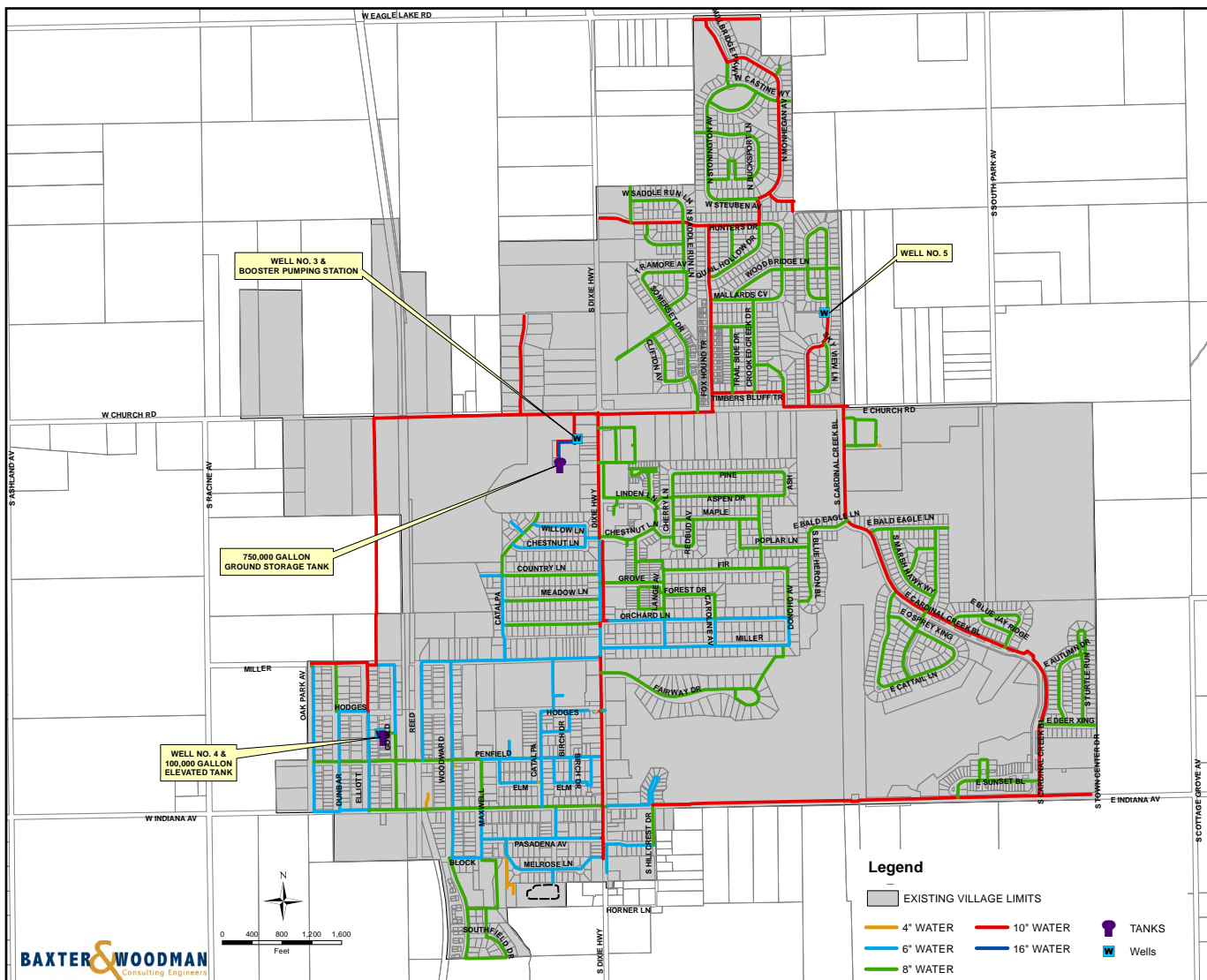
WATER SYSTEM

The Village of Beecher provides a central water supply system for its residents. The water system is comprised of three wells, one elevated storage tank, one ground storage tank with an associated booster pumping station, and a water distribution system that includes approximately 32 miles of water main. Figure 6.5 shows the existing sub-basin boundary and water system map.

The older water mains in the Village have frequent breaks and the Village has been actively replacing those mains over the last years. Within the last 4 years, the Village has replaced the mains on Penfield Street and Elm Street. Similar work is scheduled to start in the summer of 2018 at Dunbar Street. The Village should continue these efforts to replace the older water mains.

The existing well supply capacity meets the immediate needs of the Village and it will max out at a daily demand of

Figure 6.5: Existing Sub-basin Boundary and Water System Map*



Source: Village of Beecher Wastewater Facility Plan, September 2016

*See Appendix for enlarged map.

approximately 2.88 millions of gallons per day (MGD). As future growth occurs within the planning area, additional wells will need to be planned out. Future growth and climate change effects will place a greater strain on Beecher’s existing groundwater resources. The Village should determine the long-term capacity of the limestone aquifer and consider their water availability and infrastructure costs when evaluating future development.

The 2014 Water and Sewer Master Plan identified that the water storage capacity is deficient by approximately 150,000 gallons. Currently, this deficiency is being supplemented by the excess well capacity. However, the Village will need to install a new storage facility in the near future. As with the wells, the Village will need to consider the costs for new storage facilities when planning future development.

SEWER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEM

Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Village provides central sewage treatment and disposal.

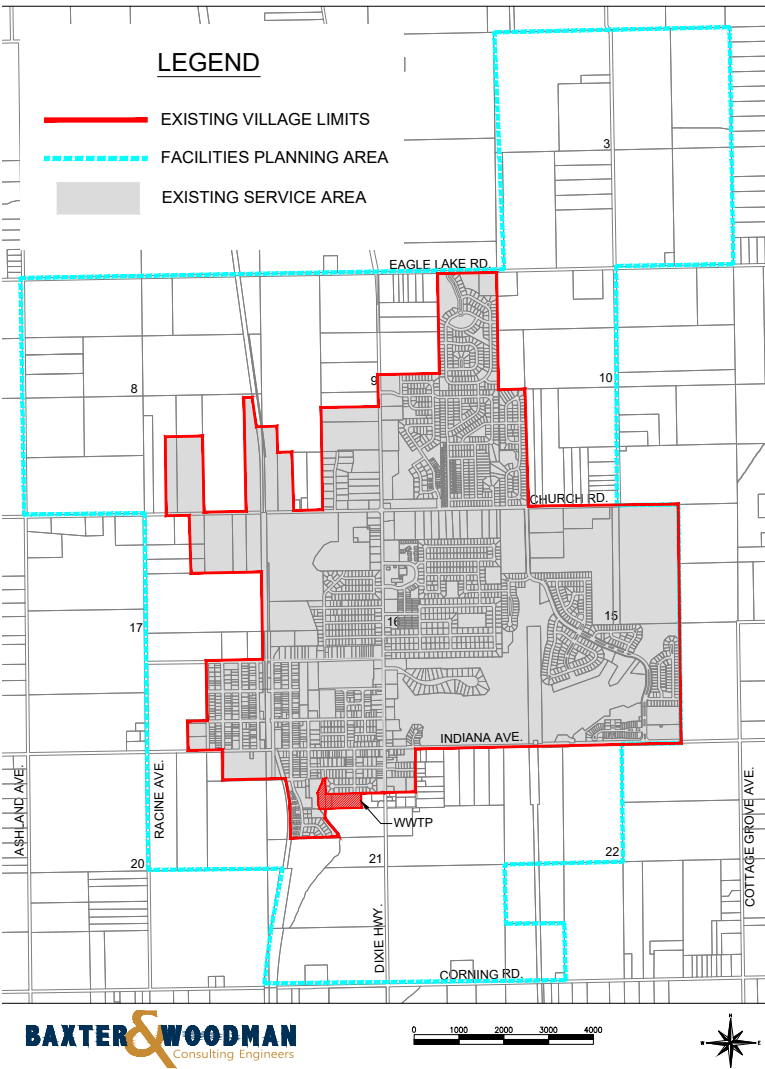
Wastewater enters the treatment plant site through an 18-inch gravity sewer from the north, an 8-inch gravity sewer from west, and a 12-inch forcemain from the Trim Creek Excess Flow Pumping Station.

The operation of the existing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) started in 1963. Originally designed to serve a community of 3,000 population equivalent (P.E.) (average flow of 0.3 MGD), the plant has undergone several expansions since. In 1997, the plant doubled its capacity to 0.6 MGD in order to serve up to 6,000 P.E. Currently the plant is serving about 5,200 people and therefore nearing its maximum capacity. Figure 6.6. shows the existing wastewater service area and the facilities planning area. Additionally, the piping and equipment at the plant is nearing or, in some case, has passed its useful life.

In order to maintain existing treatment and to provide service upon build-out of the areas included in the Village’s existing service area (Figure 6.6) the wastewater treatment plant is under construction for expanding it as much as its current footprint will allow. This expansion will increase its treatment capacity to 1.2 MGD Designed Average Flow and to 3.0 MGD Design Hourly Peak Flow, which will serve up to 12,000 P.E. The improvements will also include certain provisions for potential near-term and mid-term phosphorus effluent limitations that might come in place in the next 10 to 20 years. The construction of this \$8.7 million project began in 2018 and is expected to be completed in August 2019.

An increase of the service population beyond 12,000 P.E. would require the Village to acquire additional property for expansion of the treatment facilities.

Figure 6.6: Wastewater Facility Plan, Facilities Planning Area*



Sewer Collection

The Village’s original collection system was constructed in the 1960’s and has been expanded over the years. Figure 6.7 presents a map of the existing sanitary sewer system. The 2014 Water and Sewer Master Plan reported that the older sewers in the Village have significant inflow and infiltration (I/I) issues. Inflow and infiltration is the term used by wastewater professionals to refer to groundwater and stormwater entering the sanitary collection system via damaged sanitary infrastructure or inappropriately connected private drains. Inflow refers to non-wastewater entering the sanitary collection system intentionally or unintentionally from above-ground surfaces, such as storm runoff trickling into leaky manholes. Infiltration refers to non-wastewater entering the sanitary collection system via underground

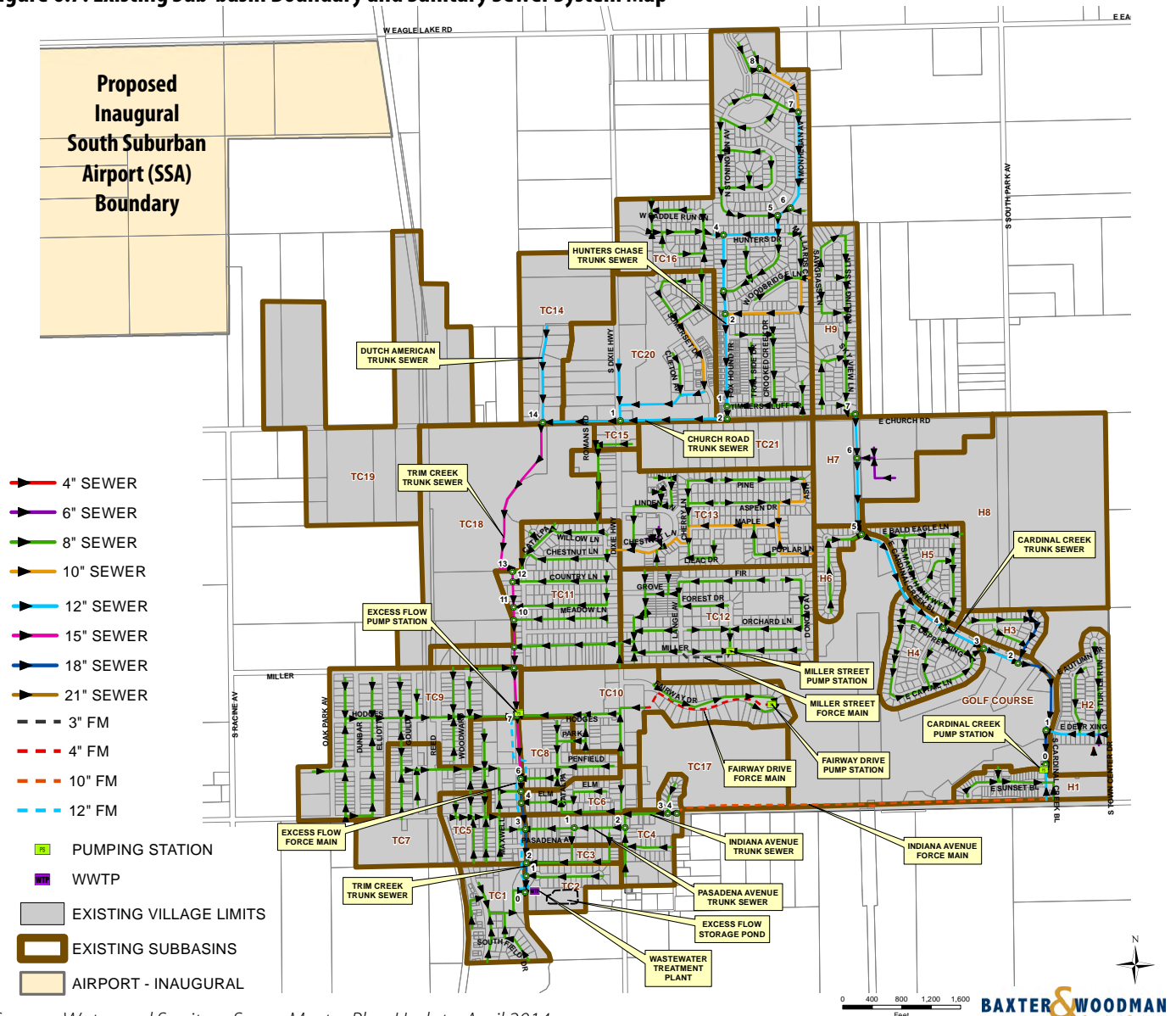
Source: Village of Beecher Wastewater Facility Plan, September 2016
*See Appendix for enlarged map.

Additionally, the 2016 Beecher Wastewater Facility Plan indicated that the 15-inch and 18-inch Trim Creek Truck

As new development is incorporated, the conveyed wastewater flow through the existing collection system will increase, which will leave less reserve capacity in the pipes and will worsen I/I issues.

Pumping Station	Year Constructed	Type	No. of pumps	Capacity (gpm)
Cardinal Creek	2005	Submersible	2	1240
Trim Creek – Excess Flow	2000	Portable	1	2,500
Fairway Drive	1980	Submersible	2	80
Miller Street	1970s	Submersible	2	75

Figure 6.7: Existing Sub-basin Boundary and Sanitary Sewer System Map*

50 | Existing Conditions **Transportation and Infrastructure**

When planning future development, the Village will need to utilize the 2014 Water and Sewer Master Plan for the planning and construction of new sanitary trunk sewers.

Sewer Pumping Stations

The locations of the four sewer pumping stations are shown on Figure 6.8. The 2014 Water and Sewer Master Plan deemed the capacity and location of the existing pumping station as sufficient for the current residents. However, they are nearing capacity and future development will require the installation of new trunk sewers and pumping stations.

STORMWATER SYSTEM

The Village's stormwater system consists of street and roadway inlets and gutters, roadside ditches, small channels and swales, and an underground pipe system which collects stormwater runoff and transports it to the Trim Creek River Tributary and the Trim Creek River, which ultimately discharges into the Kankakee River.

The Village has a stormwater permit that requires environmentally safe discharge of storm water into its local rivers. This permit requires the Village to develop, implement, and enforce a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Program (MS4) designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants from the Village to the maximum extent applicable, to protect water quality and meet IEPA regulations. The Village is currently enforcing the following best management practices (BMPs):

- Public Education and Outreach via website articles and residence newsletters
- Public Participation and Involvement through the stream clean-up event along the Trim Creek River
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination via an ordinance to penalize any violations
- Construction Site Runoff Control via site inspections
- Municipal Good Housekeeping via employee training and regular inspections to reduce municipal pollutant runoff

The Trim Creek River and a Trim Creek River Tributary flow through the Village of Beecher. The floodway and floodplain for the two waterways consist primarily of rural areas with

sparse residential housing. The Village of Beecher indicated that there are no known reports of flooding within the Village limits.

The vicinity of the Penfield Street Bridge is urbanized and it was surveyed in 2017 to determine which locations were sensitive to flooding due to backwater from the existing bridge. The hydraulic study for this area reported the Penfield Street Bridge to be a source of demonstrable flood damage and recommended that existing bridge be replaced with a 3-sided bridge structure. The Village plans to perform this work as part of the 2020 Penfield Road Reconstruction Surface Transportation Project.

Stormwater Management Program Plan (MS4)

The 2017 MS4 plan for the Village of Beecher lays out the ways in which the Village performs activities in such a way as to "minimize the impacts of stormwater discharges on local water quality".

The village disseminates information regarding stormwater to residents through newsletters and involves the public in caring for stormwater systems through an annual clean-up of Trim Creek. Residents can report stormwater related issues directly to the Village or via a smartphone app.

The Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Ordinance allows Beecher to consistently monitor water quality and pursue and penalize illicit discharges. Construction sites are also regulated to control sediment and soil erosion during and after construction.

In order to prevent pollution due to the general activities of the village, several precautions are taken such as performing employee training on prevention and reduction of storm water pollution, performing regular inspections and maintenance of storm water infrastructure (street sweeping, storm sewer jetting and cleaning catch basins. Also, storing all flammable and hazardous chemicals in fireproof metal cabinets and salt in a protected permanent diked structure.

Community Facilities, Programs + Services

7

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Together, the Village of Beecher and Washington Township provide a number of resources and services for residents within the township. Will County also plays an active role in planning for regional programming and service needs.

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP

Washington Township was formed in 1856 and includes 45 square miles, including the Village of Beecher. The township receives emergency services from the Beecher Fire Protection Service, the Beecher Police Department (village residents) and the Will County Police (rural residents). The township boundaries serve as the boundaries for School District 200. Additionally, the Washington Township Road District maintains over 70 miles of roads.

Township offices are located at the Washington Township Center at 30200 Town Center Road. The building was dedicated in 2002.

The original Washington Township Center still stands at 673 Penfield Street in Beecher. Built in 1929, the 2-story building recently received electrical improvements and air conditioning and is available for meeting, assemblies and other local activities.

Assistance Programs

The township provides several assistance programs:

- The Benefit Access Program provides free transit rides for seniors and persons with disabilities, and a Secretary of State license plate discount.
- The “Feed Our Own” program, currently being run by local volunteers.
- The Washington Township Food Pantry is located at the Community building.
- General Assistance is administered to individuals or families who meet financial and non-financial

requirements. All applicants must be currently seeking employment or pending disability.

- The Medical Loan Closet was created in 2004 and allows residents of the township to borrow medical equipment for short term needs including wheelchairs, walkers, crutches etc.

VILLAGE FACILITIES & SERVICES

Village Hall

Village Hall serves as the office space for professional staff and Village officials, as well as the location for board meetings, public meetings, and other events as needed. At Village Hall, residents can access services such as voter’s registration, notary and public information access.

Police Department

The Beecher Police Department has a total of 17 sworn officers and 1 specialty officer and civilian records personnel. Each squad is equipped with a video camera, mobile data terminal (MDT), “moving” radar unit, and tactical use weapons.

Officers are dispatched via Laraway Communications Center. The Beecher Police Department is located at 724 Penfield Street near the Fire Department and Community Library.

Fire Protection District

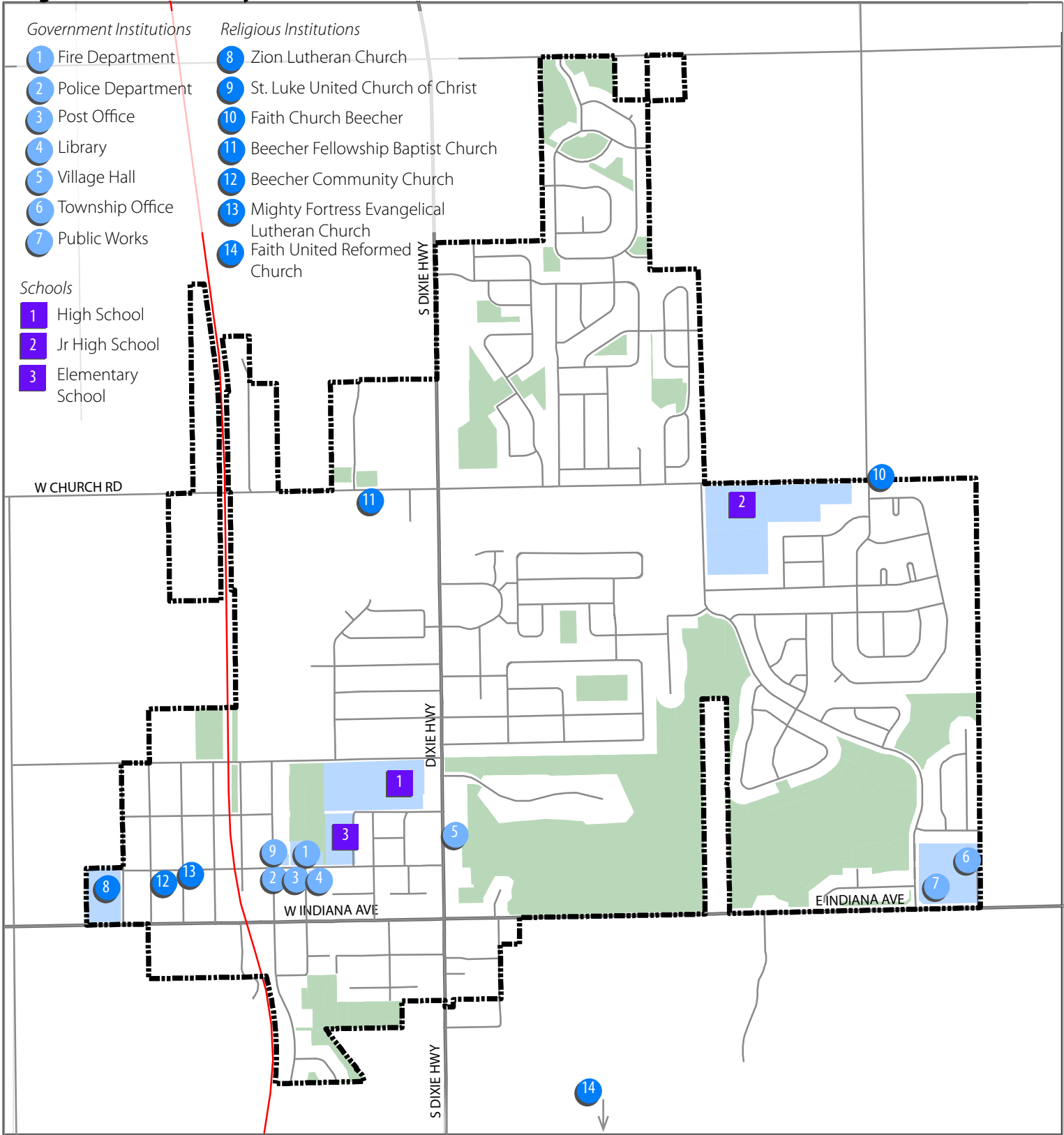
The Beecher Fire Protection District currently has 47 staff members which includes firefighters, Paramedics, and EMTs. Their services include fire protections, emergency medical services, vehicle rescue services, water rescue, hazardous materials response, technical rescue, confined space rescue, structural collapse rescue and disaster rescue.

The Beecher Fire Protection District is located at 711 Penfield Street, near the Police Department and the Community Library. The station’s location adjacent to the railroad can be problematic for emergencies across the railroad. The District is exploring a second station to enhance service.



Beecher Fire Protection District

Figure 7.1: Community Facilities



Village of Beecher, Illinois
Comprehensive Plan

Source: Village of Beecher, Google Maps



Public Works

The Village's Public Works Department includes eight full-time staff and one part-time employee. The Department maintains and operates public rights-of-way, a sewer plant, three wells and pumps, parkway trees, a 100,000 gallon elevated water tank, a 750,000 gallon above ground concrete water tank, booster pumping station, sidewalks, water mains, sewer lines, six public buildings, and the Village parks.

Garbage, Yard Waste & Recycling

Garbage collection is performed by Star Disposal Service, contracted by the Village, every Monday. All open burning within Village limits and dumping on public or private property is prohibited.

Curbside recycling collection is performed bi-weekly on Mondays. Additionally, the Washington Township Paper, Glass & Plastic Recycling Center is located at the Township Center Monday-Friday and on the 2nd Saturday of the month. The nearest Electronic Recycling Site is located in Peotone, IL at 208 E Main St.

Leaf Collection is provided between the end of October and Thanksgiving by the Village. Grass clippings and brush collection is collected bi-weekly. Yard Waste collection is on Mondays between April 1st and November 30th and is taken to a compost site.

Library

The Beecher Community Library is located at 660 Penfield St. and serves all residents of Washington Township. The library is open Monday-Friday with limited hours on Saturdays, and offers computers and access to the internet in addition to library holdings and research databases.

The library coordinates events such as Story Times for 1-3 year olds, a Spanish Story Time for children ages 5+, and one-on-one computer instruction. For blind and physically handicapped residents, the Illinois State Library Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS) can be used to access materials via mail or digital download.

The 2011 Village resident survey identified a need to have a dedicated community room in the library for programs and events and a meeting room for small groups.

Nonprofit services

Beecher Rec is a volunteer non-profit organization that organizes recreational teams for baseball, softball, t-ball, basketball, football, golf, soccer, and volleyball.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Beecher residents have access to several private medical practitioners within the Village. The Franciscan Health Outpatient Therapy Center in Beecher provides a variety of services including outpatient rehabilitation, vestibular rehabilitation, physical therapy, balance and fall prevention, occupational therapy, and sports medicine. The closest hospital is Presence St. Mary's Hospital in Kankakee, about a 30 minute drive south.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Beecher is served by the 200U School District, a unified district serving students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Within Village limits, there are an elementary, junior high, and high school. Students served by the 200U District must live within the boundary of Washington Township. Zion Lutheran Church also offers private instruction within Beecher limits (Figure 7.2).

Higher education is available at a number of institutions nearby. Beecher is located within the district boundaries for Prairie State College (Figure 7.3).



Figure 7.2: Beecher Schools

	2017 Enrollment	% English Language Learners	% Students with Disabilities	Proficiency Levels**	State Comparison
200U School District					
Beecher High School (9-12)	328	2%	11%	58% College Ready 89% Graduation Rate	51% College Ready 87% Graduation Rate
Beecher Junior High (6-8)	256	2%	13%	37% PARCC 42% ISA	34% PARCC 51% ISA
Beecher Elementary School (Pre-K-5)	433	4%	16%	50% PARCC 49% ISA	34% PARCC 51% ISA

Source: Illinois Report Card, 2017

Figure 7.3: Nearby Colleges and Universities

	Distance from Beecher	Degree Types Offered
Colleges/Universities		
Prairie State College	17 miles	Associates
Governors State University	15 miles	Bachelors, Masters, Doctoral
Olivet Nazarene University	25 miles	Bachelors, Masters
Joliet Junior College	23 miles	Associates
Kankakee Community College	34 miles	Associates

**

College Readiness is based on the percentage of graduating seniors who achieve a combined score of at least 21 on any ACT assessment taken prior to graduating.

Graduation Rate is the percentage of students who receive a diploma each year against the number of students who had enrolled in the 9th grade as part of that cohort.

ISA stands for the Illinois Science Assessment which measures science proficiency.

PARCC stands for Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career which measures college readiness for students in grades 1-8.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

There are several religious institutions in Beecher, including the Zion Lutheran Church, the St. Luke United Church of Christ, Faith Church Beecher, Beecher Fellowship Baptist Church, Beecher Community Church, and Mighty Fortress Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The St. Luke United Church of Christ operates a food pantry and clothing closet the 2nd Saturday of each month.

The Zion Lutheran Church operates a school, with 3 and 4 year preschool programs, and kindergarten through the 8th grade.

The locations of churches in Beecher can be viewed in Figure 7.1.



Natural Resources

+

Recreational
Open Space

8

NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE

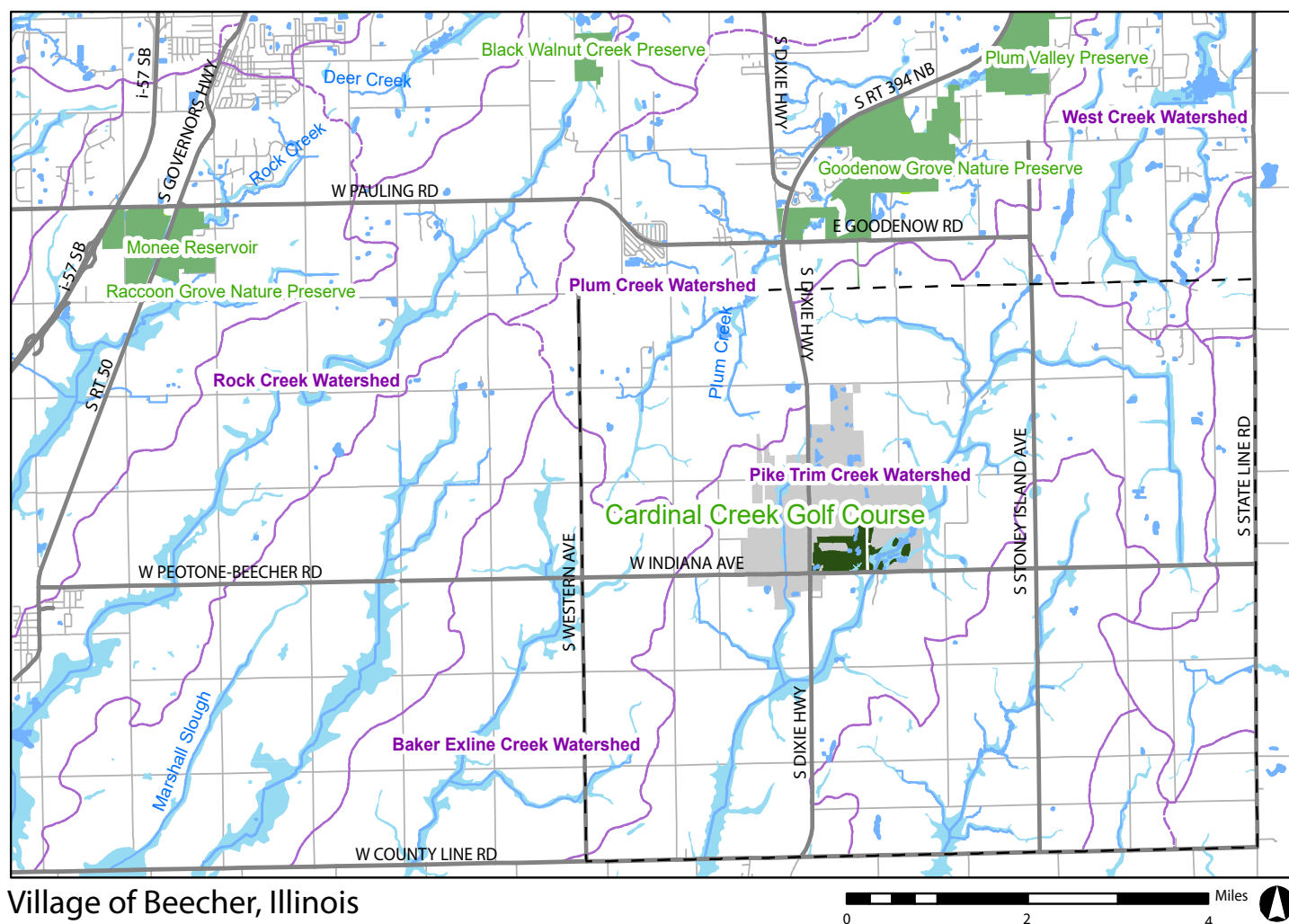
The Village of Beecher sits in an area of the state where there are a number of undeveloped or agricultural areas in addition to nature preserves and designated recreational open space. This is both an asset, adding to the character of the community and the potential for outdoor activities, and also an opportunity to take part in planning for preservation and proper care of natural resources. Water resources are of utmost importance due to the difficulties in maintaining high quality water bodies concurrently with development. As Beecher prepares for the future, preparing to protect and preserve naturally occurring water resources is a top priority.

PROTECTING & PRESERVING NATURAL RESOURCES

While many aspects of planning are wholly contained within governmental boundaries and jurisdictions, natural resources transcend these boundaries and many times require multiple communities to take part in planning and stewardship for natural resources (See Figure 8.1). Small creeks and streams eventually lead to larger rivers, multiple waterways recharge small watersheds, and small watersheds make up larger watersheds. Regional protected areas, such as nature and forest preserves and state parks often share boundaries with multiple communities and are enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

Planning to protect and preserve natural resources begins with understanding where a community lies within natural boundaries, then with gathering information regarding their quality. Lastly, the community must grapple with current

Figure 8.1: Natural Resources



Village of Beecher, Illinois
Comprehensive Plan

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Village of Beecher | Watershed Boundary | Will County Nature Preserves |
| Planning Area | 100 Year Flood Zone | Recreation Areas |
| Roads | Waterways | |

Source: Will County

conditions, understanding what actions must be taken to improve and maintain quality over time.

This report performs the first two steps, and the Comprehensive Planning process lays the groundwork for the community to determine courses of action for the third.

WATERWAYS

Branches of Trim Creek run through the Village in two areas: through the Cardinal Creek Golf Course, west of Dixie Highway and through neighborhoods adjacent to Firemen's Park and Beecher Elementary School (Figure 8.2).

Trim Creek is a biologically significant stream (BSS) and was most recently rated a Class C stream. A biologically significant stream indicates that the stream has a healthy habitat present in the stream for aquatic wildlife to thrive. Waterways are classified by quality ratings: A (highest) through E (lowest). The most recent integrity rating for Trim Creek is Class C and the most recent diversity rating is Class B.*

Trim Creek is a tributary of the Kankakee River, thus the water quality of Trim Creek has a direct impact on the quality of the Kankakee River. Pollution that enters Trim Creek eventually flows into the Kankakee River. Beecher has a responsibility to protect and preserve Trim Creek, as an importance waterway locally, but also because it impacts regional water quality, an important water source for a number of communities. The branches of the Kankakee River range from Class B and Class C integrity and diversity ratings.

** To learn more about biological stream ratings, see the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' 2008 report, "Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System".*

WATERSHEDS

Branches of Trim Creek within Beecher form part of the Pike Trim Creek Watershed, part of the larger Kankakee Watershed. The headwaters for the Kankakee Watershed are in South Bend, Indiana, and the Kankakee Watershed extends from South Bend into Illinois and covers an area that extends slightly west of the city of Kankakee. Beecher is located near the bottom of the Kankakee Watershed.

Both the Kankakee River and Trim Creek are sources of drinking water for residents and property owners of the watershed. The Kankakee River has numerous threats, including sedimentation from upstream and in tributaries. For the Trim Creek Watershed, the largest current land use is agriculture, which, depending on practices, can have both positive and/or negative impacts on

the water quantity and quality of the watershed. Population and economic growth impact run-off and discharge to the stream and have the potential to impact ground water quality. The village boundary is near the Baker Exline and Plum Creek Watersheds which would be impacted by the construction of the SSA (Figure 8.2). Plum Creek and Exline Slough could one day be located within the boundaries of Beecher. Both are Class C streams.

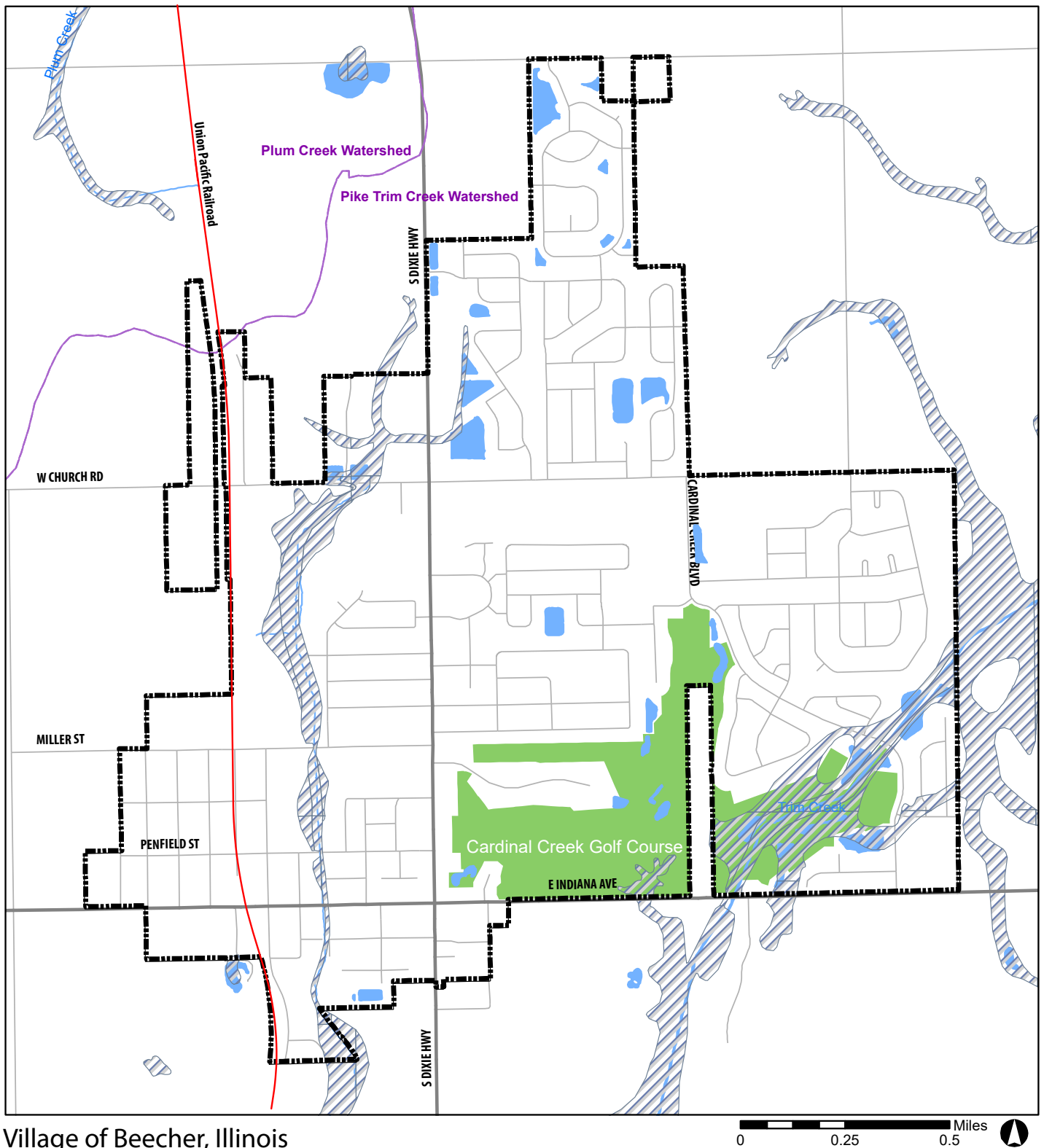
"Changing Course" Report | 2004

In 2003, the Campaign for Sensible Growth, Metropolitan Planning Council and Openlands began research surrounding the relationship between development, land use, water quality, and water quantity. Their report "Changing Course" published in 2004, features Trim Creek and indicated that while surface water quality in northeastern Illinois had improved in the previous three decades, unregulated non-point source pollution was impacting the quality of surface waters and the potable water supply was becoming strained. The main source of pollution was stormwater runoff from regional growth and development.



Trim Creek in Cardinal Creek Subdivision, Beecher, IL

Figure 8.2: Natural Features in Beecher



Village of Beecher, Illinois
Comprehensive Plan

- Recreation Areas
- Waterways
- Waterbodies
- 100-Year Floodzone
- Beecher Limits
- Watershed Boundaries

Source: Will County

In 2005, this group began watershed planning projects with communities and counties—one being the Trim Creek Watershed Planning Project. A Year-One report and Action Plan was written in 2005. Goals included:

- achieve an integrated pattern of development and open space that creates sustainable communities, and conserves water resources and ecosystems in Trim Creek watershed and the Kankakee River
- protect, enhance, restore, and properly manage natural resources and ecosystems of the Trim Creek watershed
- maintain the distinctive character of communities to preserve quality of life and promote economic vitality
- manage draining in the watershed in ways that accommodate economic development and agriculture while enhancing water quality and habitat conditions

PROTECTING WATER QUALITY

The Village of Beecher is situated in an ecologically important area near the headwaters of Trim Creek and Plum Creek (see Figure 8.3). Headwater streams are smaller first- and second-order streams that are vitally important to downstream water quality. High water quality sustains ecosystem health, drinking water sources, and recreation potential. Stormwater runoff and other sources of nonpoint pollution from urbanized areas and agricultural fields can impact the health of Trim Creek and Plum Creek as well as the Kankakee River and Little Calumet River to which they respectively flow.

Impervious surfaces, including buildings, roads, and parking lots, negatively affect water quality by preventing stormwater from infiltrating into the ground. Instead, water that falls on these surfaces washes away as stormwater runoff, picking up sediment, oils, and debris as it travels to stormwater systems, rivers, and streams. As imperviousness increases, so does runoff, resulting in more untreated water entering rivers, streams, and lakes. Chloride pollution from road salt and nutrients from agriculture and wastewater treatment facilities degrade water quality. Increasingly, pharmaceuticals and other contaminants, which are not removed by traditional wastewater treatment processes, are negatively affecting aquatic wildlife.

The Clean Water Act requires the State of Illinois to establish water quality criteria for all surface waters within the state and monitor water quality to ensure that beneficial uses are supported. According to metrics used by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) in 2016, Trim Creek is fully supporting aquatic life and aesthetic quality.¹ The State of Illinois is also responsible for monitoring the biological quality of

the state’s lakes and streams. Trim Creek, as well as downstream segments of the Kankakee River, received designation as a Biologically Significant Stream, which indicates a presence of healthy habitat present in the stream for aquatic wildlife to thrive.²

Development and management decisions are important considerations in protecting the water quality in Beecher and downstream communities. Protecting and restoring natural features that contribute to high water quality, such as wetlands, riparian areas, and hydric soils, improving landscaping and lawn care practices, implementing stormwater best management practices (BMPs), and engaging residents in programs like Conservation@Home can have a positive effect on reducing nutrients to Trim Creek and Plum Creek. Reducing road salt use and encouraging proper application and management through sensible salting practices will protect waterways from chlorides.

FLOODPLAINS

Trim Creek has a significant 100-year floodplain which constrains new development. Areas of Beecher which have been platted and approved for development are primarily outside of the floodplain, though the eastern portion of Cardinal Creek Golf Course and some homes near the golf course are within the floodplain (see Figure 8.2). Additionally, the West Branch of Trim Creek passes through the oldest area of Beecher, and its floodplain would cause flooding for a number of residential homes, the Beecher Community Library, Beecher Elementary School and several industrial and commercial properties at Church and Dutch American Way.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE VISION

While recent residential development in Beecher has ensured that there are a number of detention and retention ponds within Beecher, there is no guiding vision for green infrastructure in the community at present. Other planning initiatives have gathered information about existing conditions, trends, and local actions (such as the 2017 MS4 Plan, see Chapter 6) impacting environmental sustainability. However, given the size of Beecher and the uncertainty of regional, state-led projects such as the SSA and the Illiana Expressway, the Village is best positioned to spearhead a regional conversation about the green infrastructure vision in Eastern Will County.

Footnotes

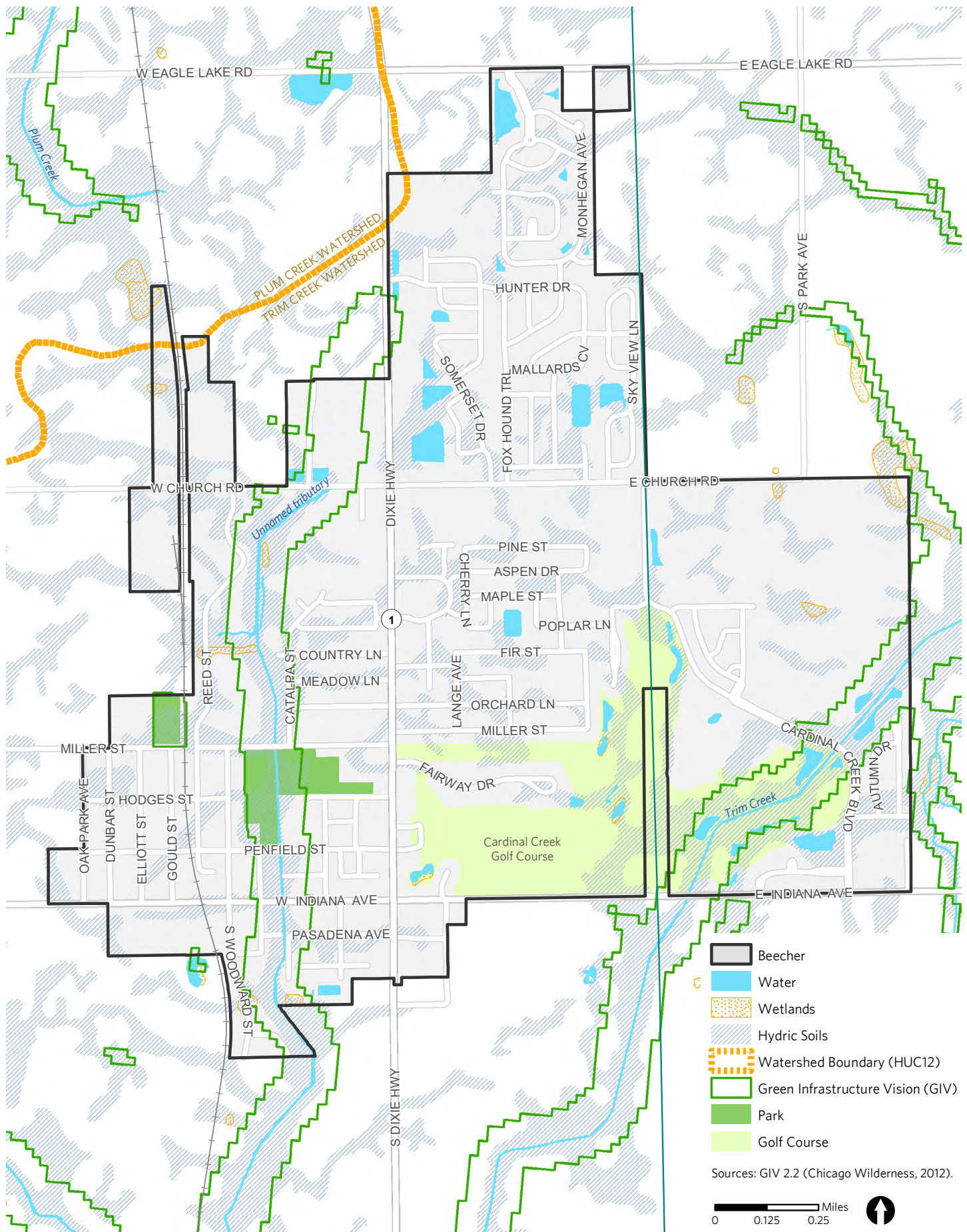
¹ The stream was not assessed for fish consumption, primary contact, or secondary contact. IEPA, “Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List 2016,” July 2016, <https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/Documents/iepa/water-quality/watershed-management/tmdls/2016/303-d-list/iwq-report-surface-water.pdf>

² IDNR, 2008. Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System. See <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/biologicalstreamratings/Pages/default.aspx>

³ Riparian areas comprise the land alongside waterbodies and wetlands. The Green Infrastructure Vision (GIV) identifies riparian areas as they provide a multitude of ecosystem benefits, including water quality.

⁴ Conservation@Home: <http://theconservationfoundation.org/page.php?PageID=82>

Figure 8.3: Streams, Wetlands, and Hydric Soils



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2018.

OPEN SPACE

RECREATIONAL AREAS

Cardinal Creek Golf Course

Previously known as the Shady Lawn Golf Course, this course has been active for many years but was not always a part of the Village. The 27-hole golf course includes three event spaces including a banquet hall and catering options which can accommodate between 30 and 250 guests.

REGIONAL NATURE PRESERVES

All of the following preserves are owned and operated by the Will County Forest Preserve District.

Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve

The preserve is 891 acres and is part of the Plum Creek preservation system. Historically, the land was used as a Boy Scout camp. The preserve includes almost 2 miles of natural surface trails for hiking/running, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The preserve is connected to trails outside the preserve as well, and the Vicennes Trail is intended to be extended to connect with Beecher.

There are picnic shelters for rental, 16 camp sites, and a 40 foot hill for sledding in the winter.

Raccoon Grove Nature Preserve

The Nature Preserve is farther away than Goodenow Grove, and offers 213 acres of open space. Part of the Rock Creek preservation system, Raccoon Grove was dedicated in 1989 and is home to a variety of habitats, plants and animals species. The preserve includes 0.27 miles of natural surface trail for hiking and running.



Picnic Area in Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve

Monee Reservoir

The Reservoir is part of the Rock Creek preservation system and includes a 6-acre lake. There are 1.6 miles of natural surface trail ideal for hiking/running, skiing and snowshoeing. The preserve offers two picnic shelters and rents equipment for badminton and volleyball. Fishing is permitted, though catch-and-release is encouraged and there are daily limits for certain species. Additionally, visitors can canoe/kayak on the lake or rent a rowboat or pedal-boat.

Plum Valley Preserve

The Plum Valley Preserve protects forest and wetland habitat and a portion of Plum Creek. It is home to a variety of reptiles, birds, and plant species.

Black Walnut Creek Preserve

This preserve comprises the Black Walnut Creek preservation system and protects wetland habitat and a portion of Black Walnut Creek.



Plum Creek Nature Center

PARKS & RECREATION

There are currently 10 parks in Beecher. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) suggests that a park system have at a minimum 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population. For each 1,000 residents in Beecher, there are currently over 7 acres of park land within Village limits (Figure 8.4).

Parks in Beecher are open until dusk and currently, there is no Park District. All parks are maintained by the Village Public Works Department.

See Figure 8.5 for a list of all parks and Figure 8.6 for a map of all parks and their proximity to local schools.

Neighborhood and Mini-Parks

Neighborhood parks are designed to provide residents with daily opportunities for outdoor recreation in a park within walking distance of their home. They are typically in the 2 to 10-acre range, and feature a playground, sports courts, and some active recreational space for team practices, frisbee, etc. Mini-parks serve a similar function at a reduced size and typically contain a playground, seating area, and green space. In Beecher, Nantucket Cove, Prairie, Lions, and Hunter's Chase East parks are all considered neighborhood parks. Water Tower and Hunter's Chase parks are examples of mini-parks.

Community Parks

Community parks include facilities designed to serve the entire community, such as ball fields for team sports, stages and amphitheaters, swimming pools, tracks, etc. Community parks are typically in the range of between 10 and 50 acres in size. While at the smaller end of this scale, both Fireman's Park and Welton Stedt parks are both considered community parks given their extensive ball fields and facilities targeted at the entire community.

Special Use Parks

As the name suggests, special use parks don't fit neatly into one of the above classifications – they are designed to accommodate some specific and unique purpose. In Beecher, Depot Park is a good example of a special use park with its Veteran's Memorial and Historic Depot Building and Museum. Woman's Welfare Park is also considered a special use facility with its gardens and gazebo. There are no park size standards for special use parks as each is unique to the facilities they contain.

Figure 8.4: Park Land Comparison

	Acres per 1,000 residents	Residents per Park
Beecher Parks	7.4	439
2017 National Average	10.1	2,114

Figure 8.5: Beecher Parks

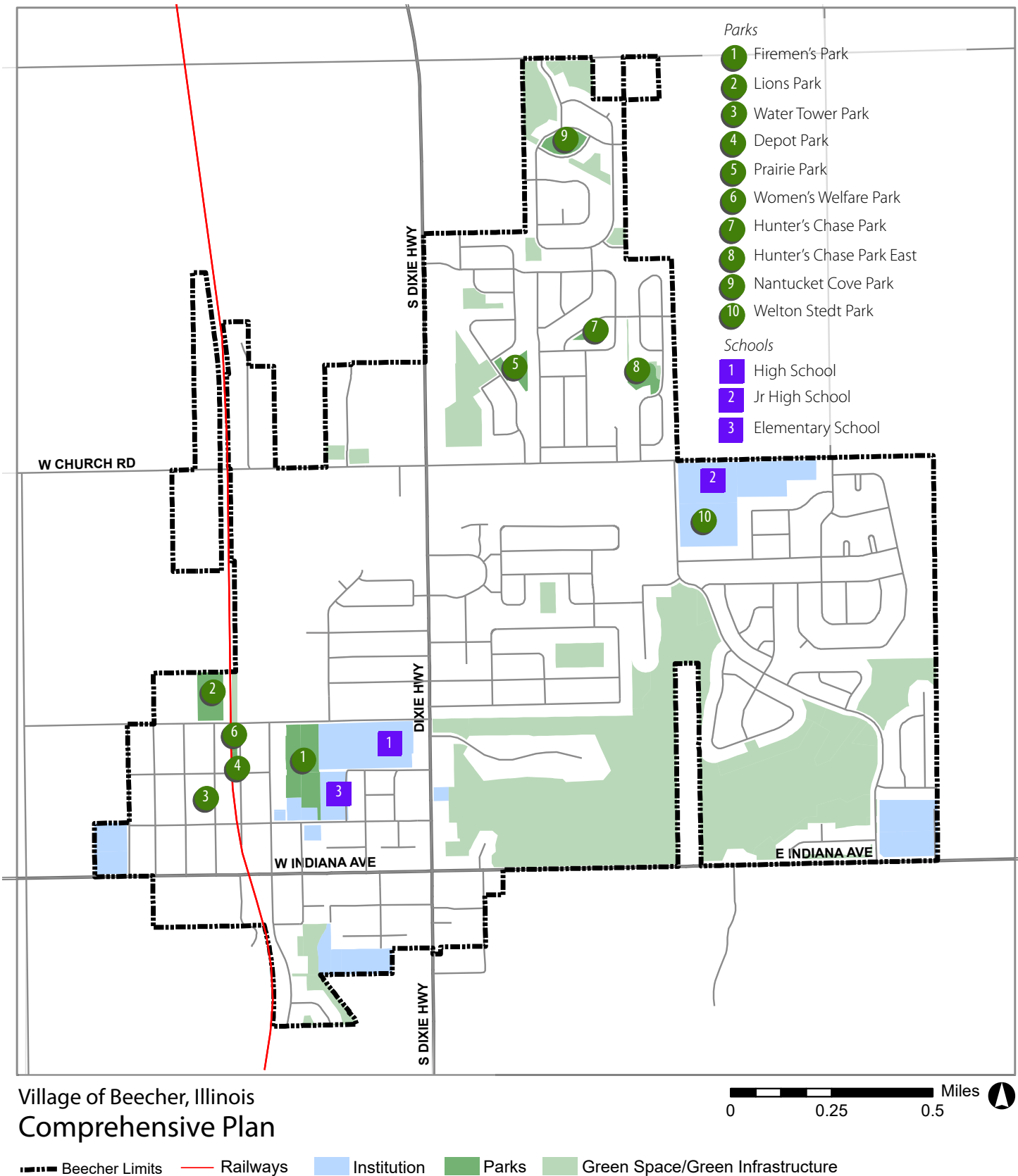
Park Name	Acres
Mini-Parks	
Water Tower Park	.25
Depot Park	.5
Women's Welfare Park	.5
Hunter's Chase Park	.5
Neighborhood Parks	
Hunter's Chase East Park	1
Prairie Park	3
Lions Park	5
Community Parks	
Nantucket Cove Park	3
Firemen's Park	9
Welton Stedt Park	10
TOTAL ACRES	32.75
Regional Parks	
Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve	891
Raccoon Grove Nature Preserve	213
Monee Reservoir	248
Black Walnut Creek Preserve	109
Plum Valley Preserve	455

Source: Village of Beecher, Will County

Regional Parks

While not located within Beecher limits, regional parks provide recreational options for Beecher residents beyond the capabilities of smaller parks within the community. A list of nearby regional parks is included in Figure 8.5.

Figure 8.6: Beecher Parks



Village of Beecher, Illinois
Comprehensive Plan

Source: Village of Beecher, Google Maps

ACCESS TO PARKS

There are a number of parks in Beecher, but in some cases several parks are clustered together, leaving some areas of the Village with access to multiple parks within a half mile, and others with access to one or no parks within a half mile (Figure 8.7). Access to parks and recreation within a half mile encourages physical activity, especially when parks contain recreational opportunities for all ages.

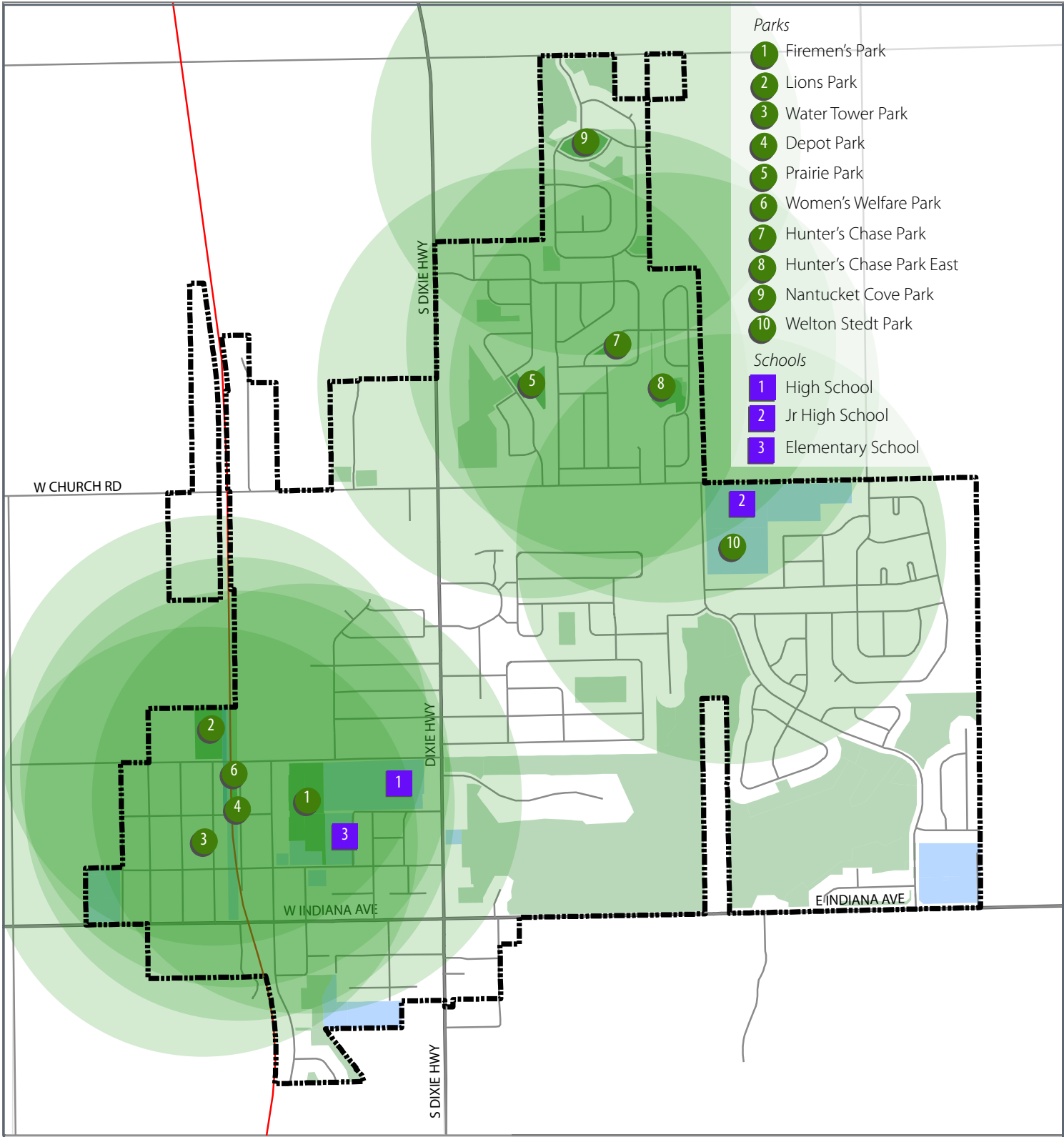
At present, areas of Beecher where residents do not have a park within a half mile include residences:

- on Southfield Drive and Woodward Street
- on Pasadena Avenue and Indiana Avenue near Dixie Highway
- in Prairie Crossings subdivision
- in Cardinal Creek subdivision
- in Highlington Estates subdivision



Water Tower Park

Figure 8.7: Walkability to Beecher Parks



Village of Beecher, Illinois
Comprehensive Plan

Source: Village of Beecher, Google Maps

Key Findings

+

Next Steps

9

KEY FINDINGS

Throughout analysis, steering committee meetings and community workshops several key findings emerged. The following are descriptions of those findings and the approach that will be used to address those findings.

.....

PLANNING PROCESS + COMMUNITY OUTREACH | SECTION 2

Community outreach for the Comprehensive Plan was carried out through a variety of mediums—both online and in-person. Below is a summary of the impacts of that outreach:

- Engaged over 50 people in person at events such as the Lions Club Summerfest.
- Engaged over 40 people at Community Workshops.
- Gathered opinions from a range of ages through a youth focus group with local high school students and seniors at the September 22nd senior breakfast.
- Gathered the opinions of 310 community members through the Comprehensive Plan Survey.
- The Beecher2040 website had almost 1,500 unique visitors, and 67 people signed up for e-mail blasts.

DEMOGRAPHICS + HOUSING | SECTION 3

Beecher had 4,442 residents in 2017. The community doubled in population between 2000 and 2010, but growth has slowed dramatically in recent years. The population is showing signs of aging, diversifying racially, and is becoming more educated. Homeownership is high, but many households are spending more the 30% of their monthly income on housing.

- The median age continues to increase, indicating that the community is aging.
- Beecher is becoming more diverse, with significant increases in the percentage of Hispanic residents from 1.8% in 2000 to 7.7% in 2016.
- Residents are becoming more educated, with increases in the proportion of residents with some college, Associates, and bachelor's degrees.
- Homeownership is high in Beecher—65%, and the average home price in 2018 is \$231,000.
- Beecher has the highest median home value among neighboring communities and is higher than Will County. Half of all homes have been built since 2000, though there are many vacant lots where homes are planned but have yet to be constructed.
- About 30% of residents work in Beecher, another 30% work just outside Beecher in surrounding communities.
- Data indicates that about 30% of homeowners spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing in Beecher, 6% of which are paying more than 50% each month. Among households that rent their homes, half are cost burdened, and about 30% are extremely cost-burdened, spending more than 50% of their income on housing costs.

LAND USE + ZONING | SECTION 4

Beecher is a residential community with limited commercial and industrial uses. While located in a rural setting, Beecher experiences heavy north-south truck and rail traffic daily on Route One and the Union Pacific Railway.

- Within Beecher, the highest percentage of existing land use is residential (30%), followed by parks & open space (19%) and agriculture (17%).
- Commercial businesses are limited, but include a grocery store, hardware store, and a few restaurants.
- The downtown area is small, but remains commercial in nature and is near schools, the library, parks and other community services.
- Industrial companies are clustered in the northwest of Beecher along the railroad.
- Several residential zoning districts highlight the variety of homes and neighborhoods within Beecher. There are a number of parks located within walking distance for most subdivisions.
- The community continues to be surrounded mostly by agricultural land.

COMMERCIAL + INDUSTRIAL | SECTION 5

Beecher has a different commercial space makeup than other similar communities and has seen decreases in occupancy in retail spaces but increases in industrial spaces. Overall, retail sales remain steady.

- Compared to neighboring communities, Beecher has a higher proportion of occupied office space (46%) and a very limited amount of occupied industrial space (15%).
- Employment has grown about 1.2% since 2010 (4.7% in Will County) and occupancy increased significantly 4.4% (3.1% in Will County).
- Retail sales in Beecher have increased since 2000, more than doubling in several years (2004-2009). Overall sales have decreased since that time but remain fairly steady at around \$40 million a year since 2014.
- Occupancy for retail establishments in Beecher has decreased in recent years by -1.5% between 2010 and 2017. For industrial establishments, occupancy increased by 3.5% between 2010 and 2017. Industrial occupancy is almost 100%, and the only remaining industrial lot is planned for construction in 2019.

TRANSPORTATION + INFRASTRUCTURE | SECTION 6

While major airports, expressways and rail lines have all been proposed immediately adjacent to Beecher, no major projects are likely to occur within the next 10-15 years. However, there are improvements that are recommended for Illinois Route 394/Route 1. Residents have some limited access to public transportation and bike trails. Sidewalks are available at least on one side of the street throughout most of the Village and infrastructure needs continue to be evaluated and expanded as necessary.

- The community continues to be a thoroughfare for trucks and trains and could be in proximity to both a new expressway and a new airport within the next 10-20 years.
- A new intermodal freight facility is in the planning stages to the north of Beecher in Crete. If developed, this project could create significant additional truck and rail traffic through Beecher.
- Illinois Route 1, also known as Dixie Highway, is the busiest roadway in Beecher, carrying almost 9,000 vehicles per day. Route 1 continues south of Beecher, eventually extending to the Ohio River on Illinois's border with Kentucky. It also links to Indiana Avenue (County Highway 24) which allows for east-west travel and connects west to I-57 and east to U.S. Highway 41 in Indiana.
- Within Beecher, most streets are quiet and have low traffic volumes, making them safer for motorists and bicyclists.
- Residents have limited public transportation options in Beecher. Some residents drive to the Metra Commuter Rail Station in University Park. Residents also have access to Will County's Paratransit service and Washington Township's Dial-A-Ride service.
- Beecher maintains its own water and sewer/wastewater systems. The Village is actively replacing water mains to improve service, though future population growth will necessitate expansion of the system. Sewer and wastewater facilities have expanded, with a major expansion of the treatment plant currently underway. Beecher has not had significant flooding issues and is presently able to sufficiently manage increases in stormwater.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, PROGRAMS + SERVICES | SECTION 7

Together, Beecher and Washington Township provide essential services and programs for residents. Schools are located within Beecher and most students graduate within four years.

- Beecher has a local elementary, middle and high school. The District is well regarded and has adequate capacity to accommodate anticipated growth. In 2017, Beecher High School graduated 89% of seniors, compared to the state which graduated 87% of all seniors.
- The Beecher Youth Commission puts on many activities for area families, and Beecher Recreation offers many team sports. The City currently operates several existing parks. There has been some interest in the potential to create a Park District.
- The Beecher library is well loved by the community but has no dedicated space for programs or events.

NATURAL RESOURCES + RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE | SECTION 8

Beecher residents have access to local and regional recreation areas, including neighborhood parks and nature preserves. Natural resources such as the Trim Creek Watershed are in good condition and flooding is a minor concern.

- Beecher is a small but developed community surrounded by agricultural uses. Recent reports indicate that water quality in the Trim Creek watershed appears to be good. However, population and industrial growth have the potential to impact the quality of the watershed and waterways. Approaches to mitigate these potential impacts should be incorporated into future planning.
- There are several Forest Preserves in the region, including Black Walnut Creek Preserve, Monee Reservoir, and Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve.
- Parks and recreational areas within Beecher provide over 7 acres of parkland per resident. Almost all residents live within a 10-minute walk (.5 miles) of at least one park.

NEXT STEPS

The Existing Conditions Report informs the Comprehensive Plan and helps indicate where Beecher is today. Concurrent community engagement helps indicate the desires of the community. Together, these efforts guide the comprehensive planning process. The following are the next steps in this process:

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CONTINUED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While community engagement and outreach has already occurred at community events such as the Lions Club Summerfest, at public open houses, and through the survey and website (Beecher2040.org), engagement will continue throughout the planning process. The goal is to engage as many community members as possible in the settings in which they are most comfortable. While much of the outreach to date has been fairly broad-based, further outreach will begin to ask more specific questions around key topics that have proved to be priorities for the community.

Continued engagement is also a tool for the Village to gather feedback on the Comprehensive Plan throughout the process. The website, www.Beecher2040.org, announces all upcoming events and is a space for the community to review major themes and comments from past events.

Future outreach efforts will include meeting with middle school and/or high school age youth, and an event focused on direct outreach to the growing Hispanic community. A future community workshop will focus on key special areas.

SPECIAL AREAS

The Planning Commission/Steering Committee selected two areas for more detailed analysis and recommendations within the Comprehensive Plan. Additional research and recommendations will be given for opportunities to developed additional housing opportunities for senior citizens. Many residents directly expressed interest in increasing housing options for seniors, and data shows that the population of Beecher is aging. Given the limited amount of available industrial property and solid market potential, the plan will also examine opportunities to develop a new business park.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

A draft future land use plan will be developed to guide future development. The primary plan will assume that the South Suburban Airport and the Iliana Expressway do not happen. However, alternative concepts will be created to illustrate how these projects would impact development opportunities. Transportation and community facilities plans will also be developed to support the proposed land use plan.

APPENDIX

10

ACRONYMS

There are a number of acronyms used throughout this report. For convenience and to ensure clarity, they have been included here as a reference.

ACT: American College Testing

ADA (Compliance): American Disabilities Act (Compliance)

CAGR: Compounded Annual Growth Rate

CSX: CSX Corporate

ETJ: Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

FRA: Federal Rail Association

I/I: Inflow and Infiltration

IDOT: Illinois Department of Transportation

ISA: Illinois Science Assessment

MDT: Mobile Data Terminal

MGD: Millions of Gallons per day

MS4 : Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System

NRPA: National Recreation and Park Association

PARCC: Partnership for Assessment for Readiness for College and Career

RT 1: Illinois Route 1

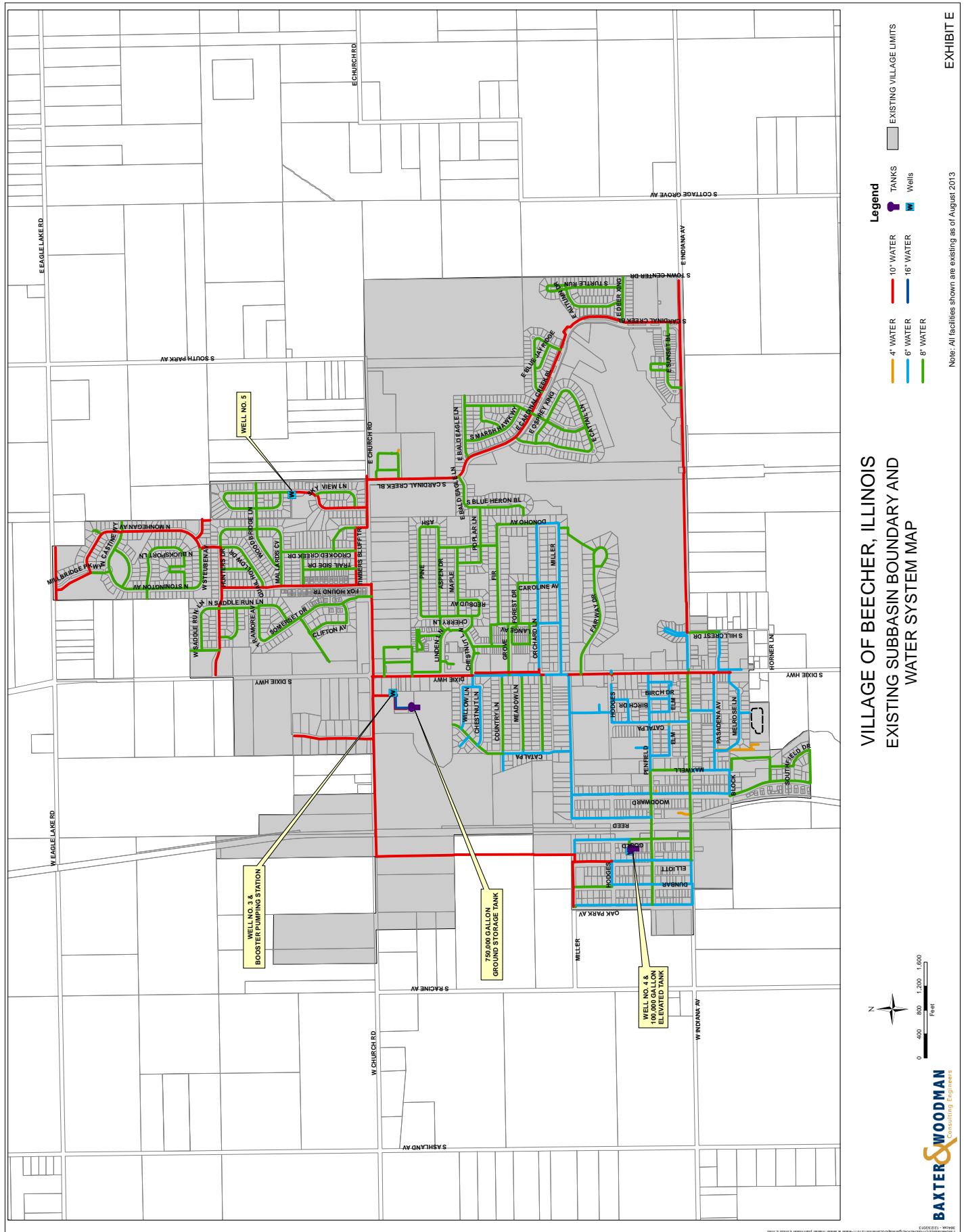
SF: Square Foot

SSA: South Suburban Airport

TBBS: Talking Book and Braille Service

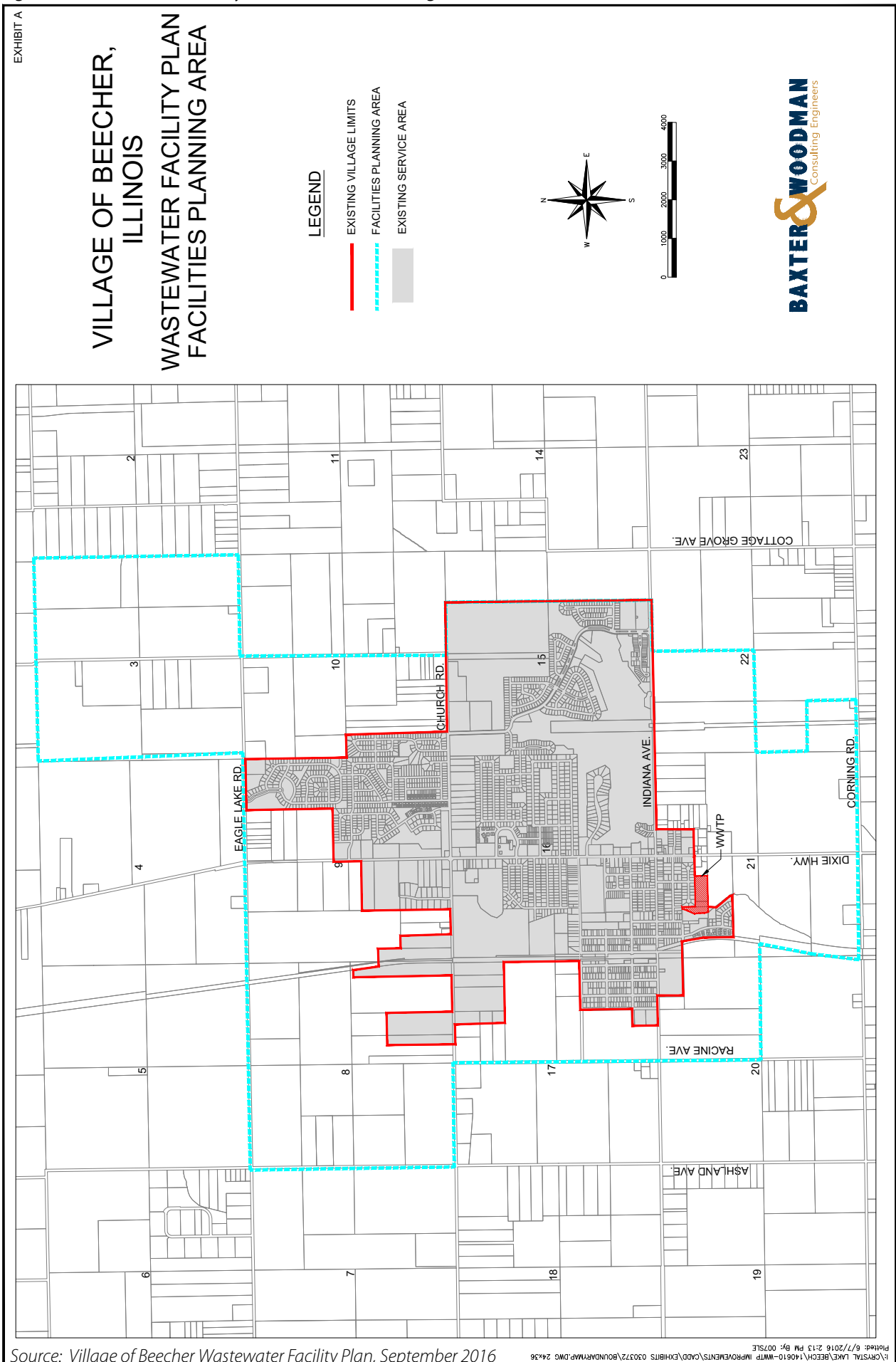
VPD: Vehicles Per Day

Figure 6.5: Existing Sub-basin Boundary and Water System Map



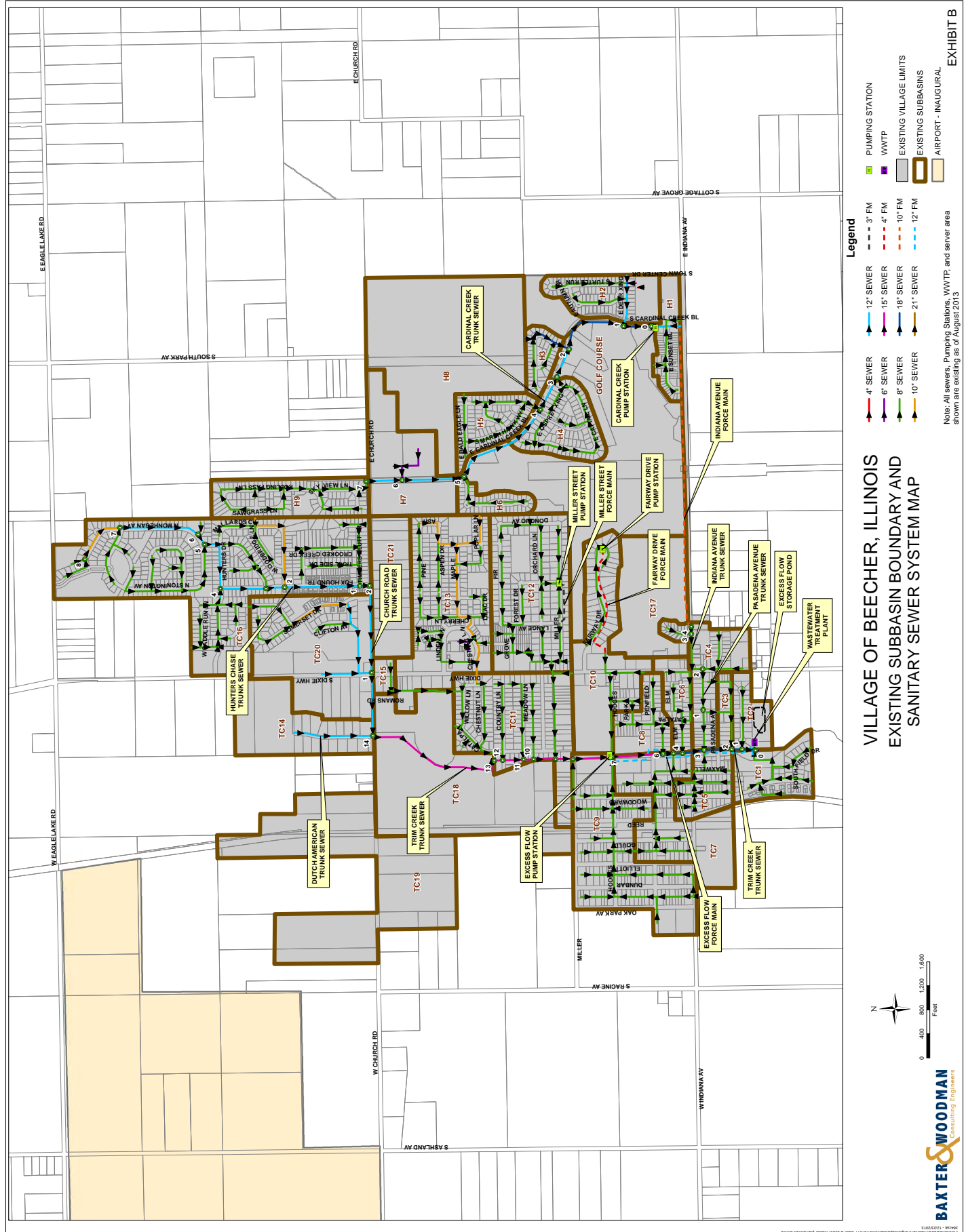
Source: Village of Beecher Wastewater Facility Plan, September 2016

Figure 6.6: Wastewater Facility Plan, Facilities Planning Area



Source: Village of Beecher Wastewater Facility Plan, September 2016

Figure 6.7: Existing Sub-basin Boundary and Sanitary Sewer System Map



Source: Water and Sanitary Sewer Master Plan Update, April 2014

VILLAGE OF BEECHER, WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ORDINANCE NO. 15

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE YEARS 2020 THROUGH 2040 FOR VILLAGE OF BEECHER, WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

WHEREAS, the Corporate Authorities of the Village of Beecher, Will County, Illinois, have engaged Teska Associates, Inc., to prepare and submit a Comprehensive Plan for the years 2020 through 2040 for the Village of Beecher, Will County, Illinois ("Comprehensive Plan 2040"); and

WHEREAS, public meetings were held pertaining to the Comprehensive Plan 2040 with business owners, the Village Board, bank officials, the Chamber of Commerce, School Administrators, residents, and others; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission, after proper notice according to applicable law, held a public hearing on September 26, 2019, which was attended by citizens of the Village, who remitted oral and written testimony regarding the Comprehensive Plan 2040; and

WHEREAS, the Beecher Planning and Zoning Commission has recommended that the Corporate Authorities of the Village of Beecher adopt the Comprehensive Plan 2040; and

WHEREAS, the Corporate Authorities of this Village of Beecher, Will County, Illinois, having reviewed the Illinois Compiled Statutes and current Village Comprehensive Plan, now concur that it is advisable, necessary, and in the best interests of the residents of the Village of Beecher that the Village of Beecher adopt the Comprehensive Plan 2040.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF BEECHER, WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS, AS FOLLOWS:

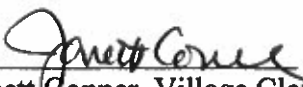
SECTION ONE: That the Comprehensive Plan 2040, attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby adopted as the Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Beecher, Will County, Illinois, for the year 2020 through the year 2040.

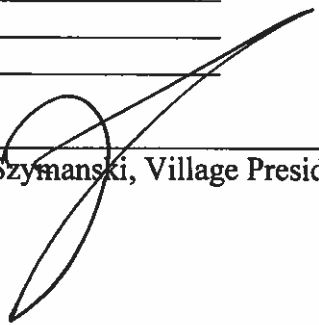
SECTION TWO: That this Ordinance shall be effective after its passage by the Village Board, its approval by the President. The Clerk shall maintain a copy of the Comprehensive Plan 2040 for public inspection during normal business hours pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/11-12-6.

PASSED and APPROVED this 15th day of October, 2019.

Yeas:	<u>6</u>
Nays:	<u>0</u>
Abstain:	<u>0</u>
Present:	<u>0</u>

ATTEST:


Janett Conner, Village Clerk


Greg Szymanski, Village President