

Comprehensive Plan

Prepared for the Village of Seneca, Illinois

2008 Update



Adopted December 16, 2008

Prepared for:

The Village of Seneca, Illinois



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Section I: Introduction

*Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan
Local & Regional Setting
History*

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The foundation of any community is rooted in its people, its economic base, and its foresight into the future. Seneca's initial "planning program" as it was referred to, was completed by Stuart Associates and adopted in the early 1960's. Subsequent revisions were undertaken in 1992 and then again in 2002, with the assistance of in-house Board and Commission members. The Village's decision to implement an update to their existing plan has acknowledged a concern for future growth and the need to direct development and redevelopment efforts to ensure the prosperity of the community. The plan will serve as a comprehensive plan as directed under the Illinois 65ILCS 5/11-12-5 law, which states that a municipal plan commission can prepare and recommend to the village board or city council a comprehensive plan "for the present and future development and redevelopment of a municipality." The Comprehensive Plan Update will establish a statement of policy, expressing the goals and objectives of the Village to develop a well-planned community and maintain a high quality of life for its residents.

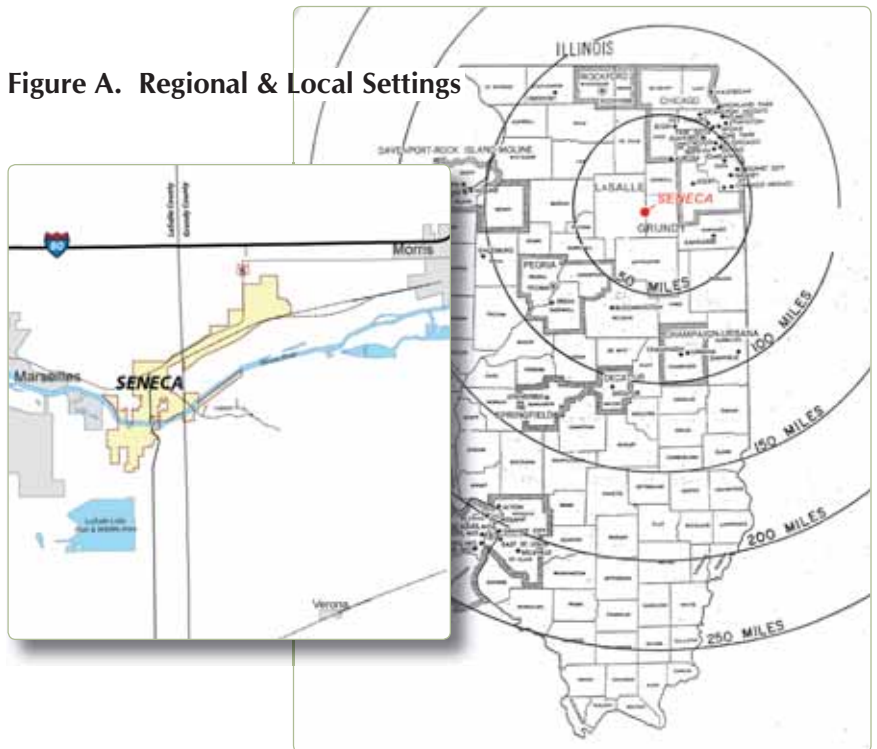
Comprehensive planning is part of an ongoing growth management process that is needed to ensure effective implementation of a community's future vision and review of new development. The purpose of the Plan is to influence the rate, amount, type, location and quality of future development within the community. Effective growth management is the product of combining the recommendations and tenets outlined in the Plan with implementation tools as described in Chapter Eight. Decisions on funding and regulatory controls are typically made during the implementation phase of the comprehensive planning process.

It is important to note that adoption of this Comprehensive Plan Update does not signal the end of the planning process in Seneca. Rather, it signals the beginning of a process of continuing implementation whereby the Plan serves as a guide for the Village to make decisions affecting the future of the community. This requires that Village leaders and the community be familiar with and generally support the major aspects of the Plan. Therefore, it is important that this Plan be well publicized, understood, and supported by the entire community for it to be recognized as a practical and effective guide for the Village. It is also important to keep in mind that the Plan is not static. The Village must periodically re-examine and update the Plan as conditions and community needs change.

LOCAL & REGIONAL SETTING

The Village of Seneca is a rural community with a population of approximately 2,100 residents, and encompassing approximately 6 square miles. The Village is located in both Grundy and LaSalle Counties. **Figure A** below shows Seneca within its local and regional contexts. The community is located approximately 13 miles west of Morris, 17 miles east of Ottawa, and 37 miles west of Joliet, along the I-80 corridor at the Seneca Road (Exit 105) interchange.

Figure A. Regional & Local Settings



Map Sources

- * State Map: U.S. Department of Commerce
- * Regional Map: ICSG

HISTORY

Seneca, formerly known as “Crotty Town”, has a vast and interesting history for a small community. Jeremiah Crotty, the founding father of what was to become Seneca, first came to the LaSalle County area in 1840’s after securing a contract to build sections of the I & M Canal. In 1850, Crotty constructed his home on the old Abel Sprague claim adjacent to the canal, which became the first dwelling in “Crotty Town”. With the 1850’s, came a railroad station (and station house) along the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific rail line; a post office; a store; blacksmith shop; tavern; the first practicing physician and catholic church; a warehouse and steam elevator. The small town known as Crotty continued to flourish due to its location along the canal and railroad corridors.

On February 16, 1865, “Crotty Town” was incorporated and called the town of Seneca. Though the population of Seneca was less than 500 people, the amount of business activity taking place was pretty astounding for a town of such size. Seneca, however was not the only place seeing rapid settlement at that time, the land area south of the Illinois River was experiencing something similar. The Seneca business men saw this southern area as an opportunity to increase the trade in their town and in 1865 organized to have a toll bridge built across the Illinois River. The bridge was completed in 1866 and afforded a means of connection to Seneca from not only the south but the north as well.

The late 1870’s however, brought disaster to the small town. The bridge across the river collapsed and had to be replaced, this time with a stronger, sturdier bridge made of iron. But the worst of it came with the “Great Fire of 1879” when nearly all the businesses in Seneca were destroyed. Fortunately, the owners of those businesses possessed great push and energy and immediately went to work on rebuilding the town.

Prosperity continued in Seneca through the 1890s as businesses continued to locate in town. The small town now included general stores, specialty shops, restaurants and saloons, hotels, craftsman’s shops, barbers, a bakery and meat market, livery stables, and a dentist. As progress on the transportation front improved, the canal which at one time served as the primary means of transportation was being replaced by the much faster railroads.

The turn of the century brought with it, more changes for Seneca. With the construction of Route 6, the use of interurban rail transportation was reduced and coal mining provided a means of economic opportunity. Until 1940, Seneca pretty much resembled a typical small rural community as found throughout the Midwest. Little did the community know that with the initiation of World War II, Seneca would play an important role in military history with the development of a shipyard along the Illinois River and the construction of the LST (landing ship tank).



The construction of the I&M Canal greatly influenced the history of Seneca.



The M.J. Hogan Grain Elevator is the last remaining grain elevator that was built for use on the canal.



Prior to incorporating as the Village of Seneca, the Village was known as Crotty Town.

On June 15, 1942, the first LST was launched and sent down the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers to the open sea. Over the next three years, the Seneca shipyard would be responsible for the construction of 157 LSTs. A result of shipyard operations, included an influx of residents to Seneca and nearby towns to fill the employment needs of the facility and the construction of temporary housing by the Federal Government. The last LST was completed and launched on June 8, 1945. Throughout the next several decades, Seneca would continue to experience typical growth found in a small town. There would be additional population, and new commercial and industrial development, along with the facilities and services needed to meet the demands of residents and business. Seneca celebrated its centennial anniversary in 1965.

In addition to the standard facilities established early in Seneca's history, the Village is now home to a little over 2,000 residents, more than 100 businesses, four marinas, a community park, and several churches of various denominations. Its proximity to the Illinois River, I & M Canal and CSX rail line still make Seneca a place of opportunity. It is fascinating to see how the historical past has continued to play an important role in the community's present.



The LST Memorial was dedicated in Seneca in 2005. The Memorial honors the shipyard workers who built the LSTs and the veterans that served on them.

*Image Source: LST Home Port,
www.abiz4me.com/lst.html*

*Sources: Seneca Area Centennial Celebration-The Story of 100 Years (July 27-August 1, 1965)
Interview/Discussion with Heather Domanske, Seneca Resident
About The Village of Seneca (www.senecalibrary.org)
Seneca Shipyard's Production of LSTs (Illinois Periodicals OnLine-Jennifer O'Brien Marseilles Elementary School)*



Section II: Existing Conditions

Population & Housing
Employment & Travel to Work
Land Uses
Transportation Network
Community Facilities & Public Utilities
Recreation Activities
Planning Issues
Planning Issues Map

The current Village limits include approximately 6 square miles in area, with the recent annexation of 1,600 acres of future industrial land along Route 6. In order to plan for Seneca's future, it is important to understand the existing conditions that characterize the community today. In particular, analyses of population and housing trends, existing land use patterns, the transportation network, and community facilities provide insight into the resources the Village has and need to support existing and future development.

POPULATION & HOUSING

Population

In 2000, the official population for Seneca was 2,053. Between 1940 and 2000, the Village experienced an overall increase in population of approximately 40%, adding 818 new residents during this time. **Table 1** below illustrates the Village's population changes from 1940 to 2000.

Table 1. Total Population (1940-2000)

| YEAR | POPULATION | PERCENT OF POPULATION CHANGE |
|------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| 1940 | 1,235 | - |
| 1950 | 1,435 | + 13% |
| 1960 | 1,719 | + 17% |
| 1970 | 1,781 | + 4% |
| 1980 | 2,098 | + 15% |
| 1990 | 1,878 | -12% |
| 2000 | 2,053 | + 9% |
| 1940-2000 | + 818 | + 40% |

Source: US Census Data

Although the effects of births and deaths on population change are impossible to control, a community can control certain other factors to ensure that its population increases or remains steady. For instance, providing an adequate number of desired jobs that either match the skills of local residents or attract new residents with the desired skills ensures that the community's population will not lose residents as a result of inadequate employment opportunities. A community also needs to provide a high quality of life for its residents to ensure they remain living in Seneca rather than choose to live elsewhere. Quality of life is a function of many factors, such as the education system, employment opportunities, recreation opportunities, cost of living, adequate municipal services, well-maintained public infrastructure, and safety – all factors that the community is able to control. The Village is responsible for maintaining a high quality of life in its community to keep current residents in the community and attract new residents who are seeking a new place to call home.

Housing

The Village's housing units have experienced a similar historical pattern to that of the population, with a slight decrease in housing units between 1980 and 1990. **Table 2** illustrates Seneca's total number of housing units from 1970 to 2000. Overall Seneca expanded its housing stock by 28% during that time period, adding 221 new housing units.

Table 2. Total Village Housing Units (1940-2000)

| YEAR | HOUSING UNITS | PERCENT OF HOUSING UNITS CHANGE |
|------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 1940 | NA | - |
| 1950 | NA | - |
| 1960 | NA | - |
| 1970 | 565 | - |
| 1980 | 736 | + 23 % |
| 1990 | 700 | -5 % |
| 2000 | 786 | + 11 % |
| 1940-2000 | + 221 | + 28 % |

Source: US Census Data

EMPLOYMENT & TRAVEL TO WORK

According to 2000 US Census data, 1,492 residents 16 years and older were accounted for in labor force statistics. Of the total number, 992 were identified as in the labor force or armed forces with the remaining 502 not in the labor force. Of the 934 residents employed in the labor force, almost one-half (48.6%) were employed in the manufacturing, retail trade, or educational, health and social services industries. **Table 3** provides a breakdown of all industries in which the 2000 labor force was employed.

Table 3. Occupations of Labor Force

| OCCUPATION | NUMBER | PERCENT |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, and mining | 19 | 2.0% |
| Construction | 85 | 9.1% |
| Manufacturing | 148 | 15.8% |
| Wholesale trade | 30 | 3.2% |
| Retail trade | 135 | 14.5% |
| Transportation & warehousing, and utilities | 87 | 9.3% |
| Information | 27 | 2.9% |
| Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental & leasing | 41 | 4.4% |
| Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management | 56 | 6.0% |
| Educational, health & social services | 171 | 18.3% |
| Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation & food services | 64 | 6.9% |
| Other services (except public administration) | 26 | 2.8% |
| Public administration | 45 | 4.8% |
| TOTAL | 934 | 100% |

Source: US Census Data

Based on the 2000 census, almost three-fourths (74%) of Seneca residents were employed outside the Village. With public transportation options not available, commuting continues to be a major aspect of daily life for Seneca residents. In 2000, a majority of the commuting workforce (85.1%) drove alone to work and a small percentage (7.3%) carpoolled to work. The rest of the commuting workforce used other means of transportation and a small percentage (3.0%) worked at home, thus having no need to commute at all. Of those commuting to work, the main mode of transportation included private vehicles (cars, trucks, or vans) with the mean travel time to work 26.4 minutes.

LAND USES

The Village is predominantly residential in character with an extensive amount of farmland, and scattered woodlands. Seneca is also fortunate to be one of several corridor communities located along the Illinois River and I & M Canal. The existing residential development is mostly comprised of single-family detached units however there are two mobile home developments and a few apartment buildings. The Village provides a good mix of community facilities to its residents, including a post office, fire station, police department, public library, several churches of various denominations, a community park and an adequate number of schools to meet the existing student population. Due to the community's proximity to the Illinois River, Seneca also includes a recreation component consisting of four (4) marinas and a public boat launch. Commercial land uses are located along Main Street and consist of neighborhood type businesses that cater primarily to the needs of the local population. Industrial development is concentrated along the river and CSX railroad. It is the intent of the *Future Land Use Plan* to provide Seneca with a balanced, long-range planning approach that will complement the Village's existing land uses.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Roadways

The Village's primary road network consists of Route 6, Route 170 (Main Street), Route 25 (E. 29th Road), Old Stage Road and DuPont Road (Route 34/36). Routes 6 and 170 are designated truck routes. The Village has access to I-80 via a single full-interchange at Seneca Road (Exit 105). As the Village continues to grow, and development expands along this network, future roadway improvements to accommodate the increase in traffic can be expected.



Route 6, Route 170, and the CSX Railroad are important transportation routes for the Village.

Railroad

The CSX is a Class I rail line that provides transportation to the eastern United States. As part of the Northern Region-Chicago Division, the rail line connects Chicago to New York. The overall rail network comprises more than 37,000 miles of track, 101,600 freight cars and 45,000 intermodal units. The CSX is located in the northern part of the existing Village limits, just south of Route 6. An existing rail spur provides intermodal services to the industrial businesses within the Shipyard Industrial Park as well as those industrial businesses located south of the river.

Sources: *Wikipedia/CSX Transportation; and www.wikinvest.com*

Waterways

The Illinois River provides another mode of transportation for industrial uses in the Village. All major barge carriers and trucking companies are served by Shipyard Terminal, Inc. located in the Shipyard Industrial Park. The river terminal has the ability to and equipment to provide a variety of services for the transportation of goods and commodities.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & PUBLIC UTILITIES

The Village's quality of life is highly dependent on the availability, access to and quality of community facilities, which include schools, churches, parks and open space, municipal facilities, emergency services, public utilities, and other such facilities that meet the needs of the residents living in Seneca.

Community Facilities

Village Hall. The Village Hall is located at the southeast corner of Center and Cash Streets. The single story Village Hall constructed in 2005 currently houses the offices of various Village Administration including offices for the Mayor and Commissioners, Village Clerk, Village Treasurer, Zoning Official, Park Board, and 911 Board; the Council Chambers and a meeting room. In addition, the Village Hall provides office space for the Illinois Emergency Management Association (IEMA) and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).



Village Hall

Police Department. The Village is served by a municipal Police Department. The current facility is located at the northwest corner of Cash and Armour Streets. The Department consists of a full-time Chief position, full- and part-time officers; and various full- and part-time civilian positions (including telecommunicators responding to 911 calls). The Police Department provides a variety of services to the Seneca residents, however when needed, the Department also receives intergovernmental assistance from the LaSalle County and Grundy County Sheriffs Offices and the Illinois State Police.



Police Department

Fire & Ambulance Services. The Village is served by the Seneca Rural Fire Protection District and Seneca Ambulance Service sharing a combined facility located in the Village on Armour Street; and the Morris Fire Protection and Ambulance District. In 1981, the Seneca Rural Fire Protection District and the Village of Seneca entered into an agreement creating a Village Fire Department. When an unincorporated property serviced by the Seneca Rural Fire Protection District is annexed into the corporate limits of Seneca, it will be served by the Village Fire Department.



Fire & Ambulance Services

Public Library. The Village is served by the Seneca Public Library District. The first public library opened in Seneca in the late 1930's as a WPA project. The Library District was formed in 1987. The existing library building is located at the northeast corner of Main and Scott Streets.



Public Library

Schools. The Village of Seneca is part of multiple school districts, however given the location of existing incorporated residential development, students, are primarily attending schools within the Seneca Community Consolidated School District 170 and Seneca Township High School District 160. The Seneca Grade School includes both a North Campus which serves grades Pre-K through 4th and a South Campus which serves grades 5th through 8th; both are located on Oak Street. Seneca High School located on East Scott Street serves grades 9th through 12th. The Circuit Breaker School, located on East Scott Street, provides a special education program for LaSalle County students in grades 5th -12th.

Higher level opportunities for residents of Seneca include several colleges and universities such as Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby; Joliet Junior College and University of St. Francis in Joliet; Waubensee Community College in Sugar Grove; North Central College in Naperville; Lewis University in Romeoville; and Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

Parks and Open Space. The Village's Park Board serves as the recommending and managing body for the Village's existing public parks and open space. Seneca presently has a community park, public swimming pool and public boat launch. Crotty Park comprises approximately 7 acres and is located at the southeast corner of Shipyard Road and Oak Street. This park serves as a central gathering place for the community and home to the LST Memorial. Amenities include ball fields, volleyball courts, picnic shelters/pavilions, play equipment, and perimeter pathway/trail. The Ray Clark Memorial Swimming Pool located at the high school serves as the public pool for the Village.

The LST Memorial Boat Launch located east of Main Street and south of South Street comprises 8 acres. Improvements to the boat launch property were completed in the Spring 2008. In addition to the boat launch, the area also allows for fishing and picnics in one of its multiple shelters.

The community is also served by nearby regional open space and recreational opportunities including Gebhard Woods State Park and Gooselake Prairie State Natural Area (Morris), LaSalle Lake Fish & Wildlife Area, Illini State Park (Marseilles), and Channahon Parkway (Channahon). The Village is also located along the I & M Canal with towpath trail access available from Main Street.

Other. Community facilities also include a branch of the US Post Office; the Seneca Food Pantry serving local area residents; and several churches of various denominations, including Methodist, Lutheran and Catholic. The Village also includes various healthcare offices and is in proximity to hospitals located in Morris, Ottawa and Streator.

Image Sources: Seneca Grade School North Campus, Seneca CCSD #170
Seneca Township High School, Seneca Township High School District #160



Seneca Grade School South Campus (top), Seneca Township High School (middle), Seneca Grade School North Campus (bottom)



Crotty Park

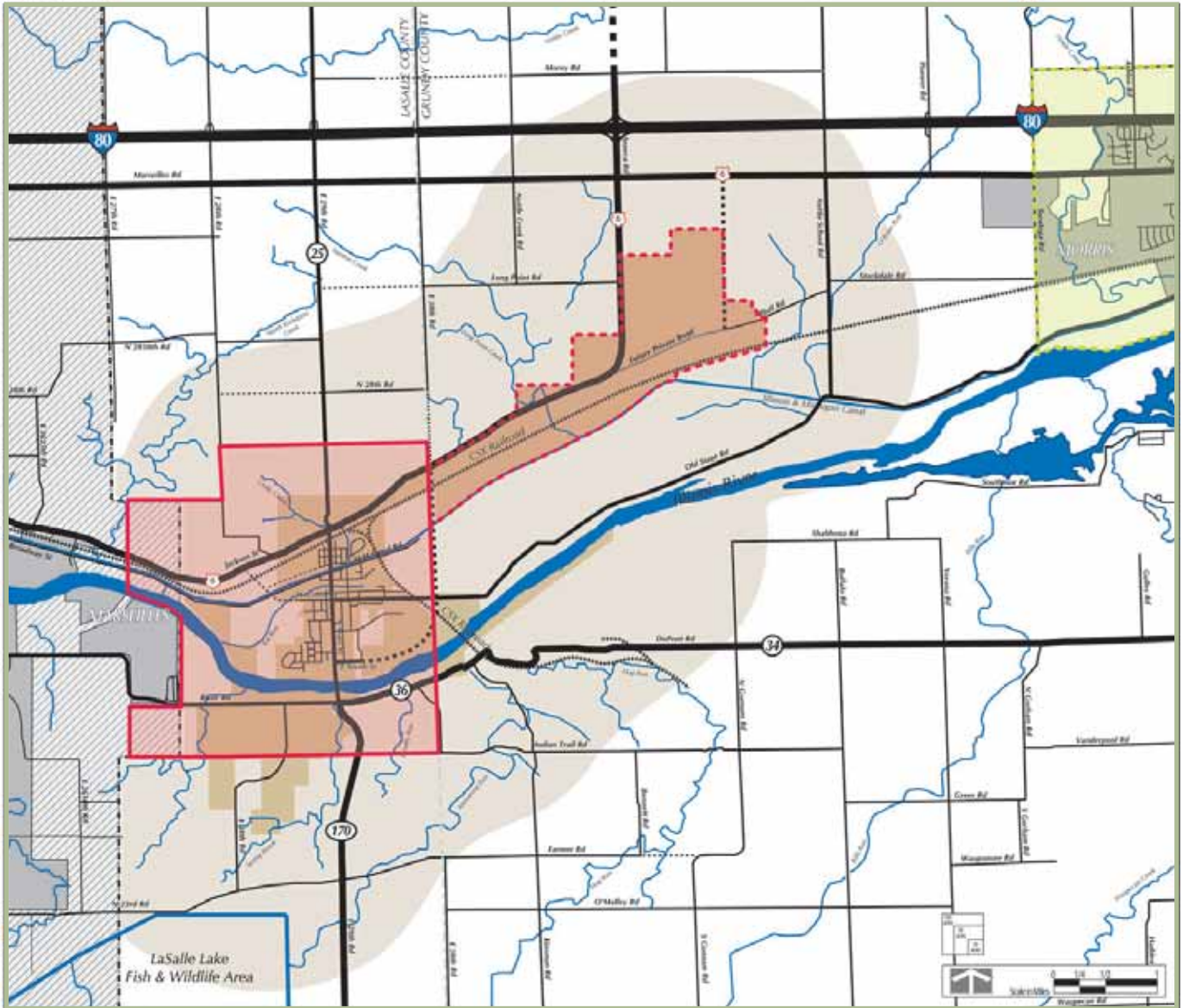


LST Memorial Boat Launch

Public Utilities

Facilities Planning Area. The Facilities Planning Area (FPA) is defined as the Village's boundary limits for the provision of waste water (sanitary) treatment services. The Village provides sanitary sewer services to its incorporated properties. The existing FPA boundary as shown on **Figure B** contains approximately 8 square miles. However, an amendment to expand the Village's FPA boundary is currently under review by the IEPA to accommodate a recent annexation of approximately 1,600 acres (2.5 square miles) of industrial zoned property along Route 6.

Figure B. Existing (solid red line) and Amendment (dashed red line) to Facilities Planning Area Boundary



Water. The Village is currently served by a single, silo-style water tower and a water treatment facility located on the west side of Route 25, north of Route 6. The existing treatment plant has a capacity of 330,000 gallons per day. The current population of 2,053 residents and various institutional, commercial, and industrial businesses in the Village has an average daily usage demand of 260,000 gallons. Treatment plant improvements expected to be completed in 2008 will increase the daily plant capacity to approximately 500,000 gallons per day. Major issues with the Village's current water system include low water pressure to areas that could be served north of the existing treatment plant and tower, and the inability to provide municipal water to development located south of the river.

Sanitary Sewerage Treatment. Sanitary sewerage treatment service is provided at the Village's facility located on West Union Street. The existing plant has a capacity of 384,000 gallons per day, which equates to a potential service population of 3,840 persons. The current average daily flow is 300,000 gallons per day. Similar to water supply capacity, sanitary sewer treatment capacity includes non-residential development, thus reducing the potential residential population served.

At this time, Seneca's current water, water treatment and sewerage treatment systems are more than adequate to serve existing and pending future development.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Waterways

The Illinois River and the Illinois & Michigan (I & M) Canal, provide a significant means of recreational opportunities in the Village that attract year-round visitors to the area. Access to the Illinois River is readily available in Seneca since it is home to several privately-owned marinas. Spring Brook, Hidden Cove, and Anchor In Marinas are located on the south side of the river, with Mariners Village Marina located on the north side. The LST Memorial Boat Launch owned by the Village, also located on the north side, provides public access to the river.

The I & M Canal, located north of the Illinois River provides another source of recreation for the community and visitors. The canal itself allows for 15 miles of canoeing between Channahon State Park and Gebhard Woods, and another 5 miles between Utica and LaSalle. Along the I & M Canal, the state trail can be used by walkers, bicyclists, and snowmobilers. The 61.5 mile trail begins in Rockdale along the towpath trail to LaSalle. The towpath trail access located in Seneca can be found along Main Street, just south of William Street near the MJ Hogan Grain Elevator.

Other Recreation

There are many recreational activities within proximity to the Village that provide recreational opportunities for Seneca residents. They include several area RV campgrounds such as Glenwood Farms and Whispering Pines (Four Star); Woodsmoke Ranch, and The Cliffs Insane Terrain Off-Road Park. Woodsmoke Ranch located on East 28th Road in unincorporated Seneca, comprises approximately 375 acres of land. The Ranch offers privately owned campsites, horse stables, pools, planned activities and an opportunity to experience an authentic western town. It is open year-round.

The Cliffs Insane Terrain Off-Road Park located on East Bluff Road in neighboring Marseilles, provides an off-road trail experience for beginners to advanced riders using jeeps, quads and motorcross vehicles. The Park is also open year-round, Friday through Sunday.

All these recreational facilities contribute to various tourist activity that Seneca experiences year-to-year. As Seneca plans for its future, there can be increased economic benefits to the Village from these outside activities if complimentary businesses such as specialty shops and restaurants are pursued within the Village limits.



Anchor In Marina (above) and Spring Brook Marina (below) are two of several marinas in Seneca that provide direct access to the Illinois River



Access to the Towpath Trail

PLANNING ISSUES

An understanding of existing planning issues is important to an evaluation of future land use. The following section briefly summarizes key planning issues as they relate to planning for Seneca's future.

Marseilles Boundary Agreement

A boundary agreement with the City of Marseilles was approved on April 1, 2008. Though having a boundary agreement reduces the Village's ability to expand to the west, having one provides the Village with a defined planning area allowing officials to plan accordingly.

CSX Railway

The CSX is located in the northern part of the existing Village limits, just south of Route 6. It creates a planning issue because its location essentially bisects the Village's future planning area. Though the primary rail crossing on Main Street is improved with flashing lights and gates, the lack of a grade separated crossing makes it difficult for an unencumbered flow of vehicular and pedestrian movement between the north half and the south half of the Village.

Illinois River/I & M Canal

The Illinois River and I & M Canal are the major waterways that bisect the community. Though both provide a recreational value to the Village, they also contribute to the separation of the community into various segments because bridge crossings are limited. There is a single bridge crossing over the river on Main Street/Route 170; and three bridge crossings over the canal, one on Main Street near the towpath access, one on Nettle School Road/Old Stage Road, and one on Commerce Street. Further complicating the situation is that both are under the jurisdictional control of the State and therefore any future bridge crossings will require the State's review, approval and ability to fund.

County Line

The Village's planning area is located in both LaSalle and Grundy Counties. As such, development is subject not only to Seneca's rules and regulations, but also the applicable County's respective rules and regulations as they relate to roadway improvements, access control, and stormwater management. When it comes to development related matters consistency is typically key, however for Seneca it will be necessary to establish open lines of communication with the LaSalle County officials as well as Grundy County officials to ensure that the review process includes close coordination between the developer and respective County agency.

Route 170/Truck Route

Route 170 has been designated as a Class II truck route by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Since the only bridge crossing over the Illinois River is located on Route 170, a high volume of truck traffic is forced through the central part of the village to reach the shipyard, the concentration of industrial uses located along the river, and the communities south of Seneca.

Morris 1 ½ Mile Planning Area

The City of Morris is located to the east of Seneca. Given the proximity of both communities' municipal limits, Seneca's planning area overlaps with the Morris planning area on the east side of Nettle School Road. The overlapping of the two planning areas can become contentious when a developer approaches both communities with a development proposal. Having a boundary agreement with the City of Morris can curtail any future boundary disputes.

Wetlands

Most wetland areas can be found within designated floodplain and along the I & M Canal and Hog Run Creek. There is also a significant amount of wetland north of Old Stage Road and west of Nettle School Road, with some scattered wetlands throughout the planning area. Wetland areas can impact the type of and amount of development possible on a parcel. Though wetland areas may be mitigated, their mitigation is subject to the review of the Army Corp of Engineers.

Floodplains

The existing 100-year floodplain within the Village's planning area has been delineated in accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Flood Insurance Map. The major floodplain areas are located along the Illinois River, I & M Canal and Rat Run Creek south of Union Street extended. Development within a floodplain is typically not encouraged. However, if development is considered, appropriate measures need to be taken to ensure that any future development within or adjacent to floodplain remains sensitive to this protected area.

Vegetation/Woodlands

Though not specifically identified on the *Planning Issues Map*, the Village's planning area contains many areas of significant woodlands. These mature stands of trees contribute to the overall character of the Village and provide a natural resource and amenity that has taken years to establish. Though some tree removal can be anticipated with future development, it will be important for the Village to ensure that when development is being considered on parcels containing extensive vegetation that development proposals are sensitive to these areas and preservation efforts are strongly encouraged, if not required.

Mining

Coal mining operations once provided an economic opportunity for the Village. A known, former mining location site has been identified west of Main Street, slightly north and south of Route 6 along with three former mining sites having an uncertain location. When development or redevelopment occurs in these areas, it is advisable that the property owner research the depth and magnitude of any past mining operations (i.e. mining method).



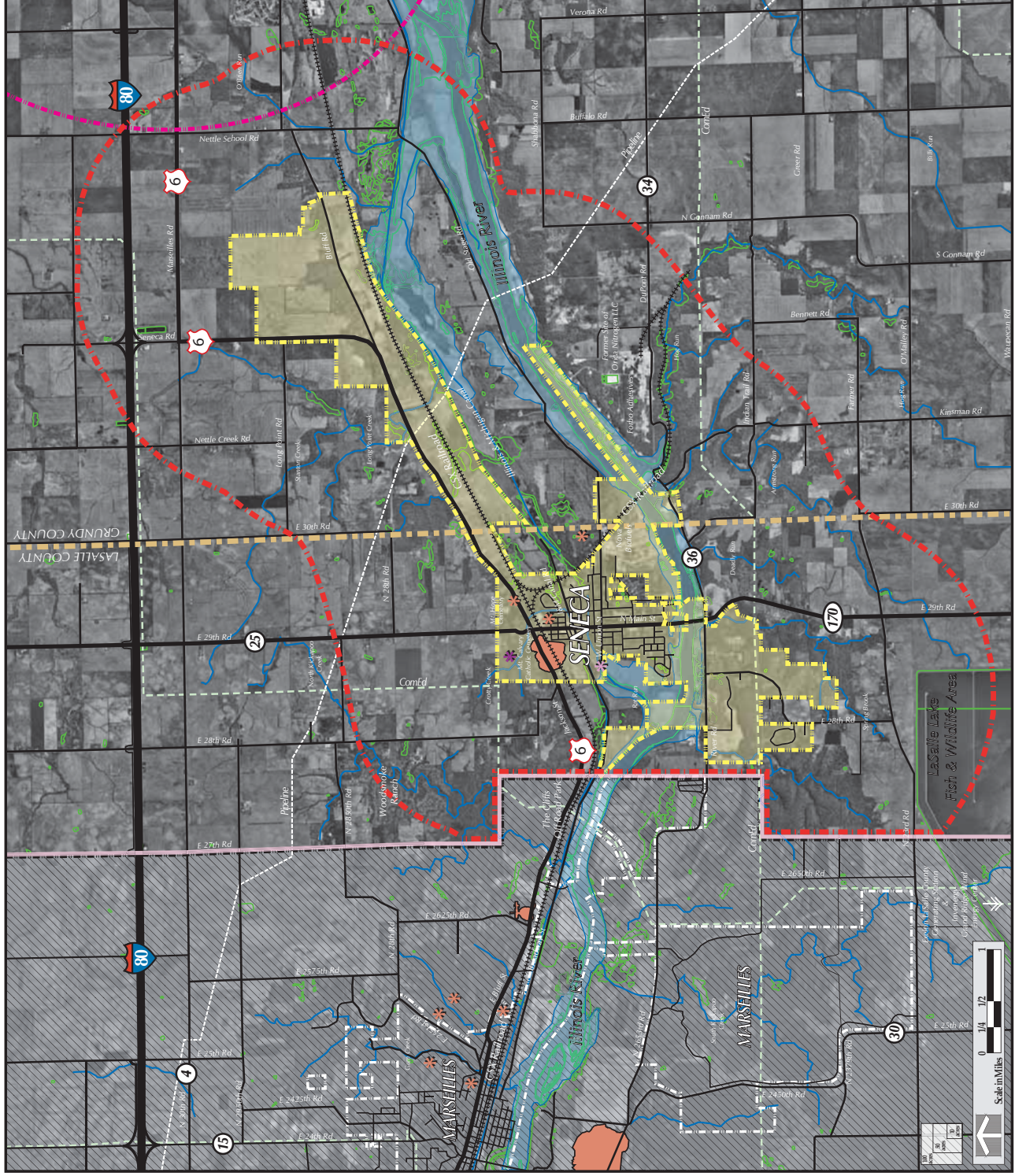
Seneca Comprehensive Plan

Village of Seneca, Illinois

Planning Issues Map

LEGEND

- Seneca Municipal Boundary
- Seneca 1-1/2 Mile Planning Area Boundary
- Morris Planning Boundary
- Seneca - Marseilles Boundary Line Agreement
- Marseilles Boundary Line Agreement Territory
- LaSalle County / Grundy County Line
- Floodplain
- Creek
- Wetlands
- Former Mining Site (uncertain location)
- Former Mining Site (known location)
- Sewage Treatment Plant
- Water Treatment Plant & Tower



Floodplain information via Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Date: 1996

Wetland information via U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory

Date: 1987

Mining information via Illinois State Geological Survey

Date: 2007

Adopted December 16, 2008



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Section III: Future Community Vision

Vision Statement
Community Character
Design Guidelines
Welcome & Wayfinding Signage

VISION STATEMENT

As part of the long-range planning process, it is important for the Village of Seneca to establish a vision for the future. This vision is representative of what the Village hopes to become as it moves forward with decision making on new development proposals, improvements to municipal infrastructure and services, and overall quality of life for its residents. By creating a solid, unified vision, this Plan is designed to ensure that the vision is carried out for many years to come. The vision established by this Comprehensive Plan Update includes the following tenets:

- ❖ Maintain a quality of life that provides residents and families a community that is safe, quaint, and neighborly;
- ❖ Promote cohesive land planning and high quality design standards to manage physical growth with sound planning practices and zoning that compliments the small-town character of the Village and integrates new development with existing development in a positive manner;
- ❖ Expand public parkland and open space opportunities to address passive and active recreational needs as well as preserve natural amenities (wetlands, floodplains, woodlands) that exist in the Village;
- ❖ Pursue economic stability through new business and industry development opportunities to create a self-sustaining community that provides jobs and services to meet the needs of residents and visitors;
- ❖ Improve public infrastructure (utilities and roadways), as needed to ensure that the demands of future development can be adequately addressed;
- ❖ Design a roadway network and transportation system that facilitates safe, efficient and convenient movement of people and goods within the Village and to destinations outside the Village;
- ❖ Incorporate a multi-use trail system that becomes part of the comprehensive network of public parks, recreation facilities, and open space; and
- ❖ Protect the quality and health of all natural water resources and environmental areas within flood zones and wetlands by encouraging traditional and innovative management practices.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Community character is an important element for Seneca's future planning. It is a unifying concept that combines land use, lifestyle and a balance of economics. Such elements shape decisions of residents and businesses to stay in a community or move elsewhere. In addition, community character can be an issue in zoning decisions. With encouragement of creative land planning and quality design, Village Officials will be able to establish a distinctive identity and lasting impression that sets Seneca apart from other communities.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

To-date, Village Officials have relied on annexation negotiations to establish design parameters and guidelines for new development that supports their vision for Seneca. Each time a new project is considered, the developer or builder generates a list of development standards for their proposed plan and the Village in turn reviews and if necessary, further negotiates the proposed standards to their satisfaction. Though this method for establishing design parameters can work, Seneca needs to formulate specific design guidelines that have been collectively endorsed by the Village. Design guidelines allow the Officials and designated staff to provide upfront direction to landowners, developers and builders as to the quality of development that is expected in the Village.

Based on an image preference survey completed as part of this update process, it was clear from the selected representatives taking the survey that future development projects need to provide high quality land planning, architecture, and landscaping. Though specific design guidelines will not be established in this Plan, developers and builders should consider the following concepts when preparing their plans for consideration:

Residential

- ✓ Dwellings should have character and style; incorporate façade articulation, varied roof lines, architectural details/accents, and porches, where appropriate.
- ✓ Use of high quality building materials (brick, stone, cedar siding, architectural grade vinyl siding or a combination) should be used on all elevations.
- ✓ Multi-family dwellings should have unit differentiation and varied entries.
- ✓ Garages should be setback from the main façade so as not to dominate the streetscape; side-loaded or rear-loaded garages are encouraged.
- ✓ Use of decorative garage doors and upgraded driveways (concrete, pavers) are encouraged.
- ✓ Landscape Design – a variety of plant materials and landscaping elements should be provided to create diversity and visually interesting neighborhood landscape; existing trees should be preserved and when possible incorporated into the overall landscape design.
- ✓ Development Signage – signs should be constructed with brick, stone, or high quality hardwoods and be landscaped with material that is equally attractive in both winter and summer.



An Image Preference Survey was conducted in order to incorporate public input into the Design Guidelines.



The survey indicated a preference for residential dwellings constructed of high quality materials, and incorporated features such as facade articulation, varied rooflines, porches, architectural details/accents, and rear- or side-loaded garages.

Commercial

- ✓ Buildings should have character and style; incorporate façade articulation, varied roof lines, and architectural details/accents; use of awnings and glass fronts (including false window treatments) is encouraged where appropriate.
- ✓ Use of high quality building materials such as brick; however use of a masonry product may be considered.
- ✓ Incorporate continuous, raised parapet walls to screen rooftop mechanical equipment.
- ✓ Lighting - use of decorative wall mounted and parking lot lighting fixtures is encouraged; parking lot should be in scale/proportion with size of the building.
- ✓ Landscape Design – parking lot landscaped islands encouraged; parking lots should be separated from roadways by perimeter landscaping; and foundation plantings should be provided (planters as an acceptable alternative when foundation plantings are not feasible).
- ✓ Signage – signs should be of a monument style; constructed with materials and colors to match the building; and landscaped with material that is equally attractive in both winter and summer. For larger commercial development, a unified sign package should be provided identifying the style, height, size and locations of all proposed signage.



Design elements such as awnings, decorative lighting fixtures, and context-sensitive signage contribute to an attractive character and style of commercial buildings.

Industrial

- ✓ Buildings should be constructed using a masonry product.
- ✓ Storage areas should be screened using upgraded style fencing (no silver chain link).
- ✓ Landscape Design - incorporate landscape plantings and elements at building entrances, within front yard areas; and to supplement the screening of storage areas.
- ✓ Signage – signs should be of a monument style; constructed with materials and colors to match the building; and landscaped with material that is equally attractive in both winter and summer; for larger developments, a unified sign package should be provided identifying the style, height, size and locations of all proposed signage.



Landscape plantings and other entrance enhancements can improve the overall aesthetics of an industrial building.

Streetscapes

✓ Residential

- » Incorporate sidewalks; pedestrian trails/paths where feasible.
- » Parkway areas should be wide and accommodate trees.
- » Street pavement widths should be scaled to the function of roadway.
- » Overhead utility lines should be buried, when feasible.
- » Rear Streetscapes - incorporate landscape design (including berms) to screen properties from roadways; fence styles should be consistent.

✓ Downtown & Commercial

- » Incorporate landscape design that separates parking lots from roadways.
- » Overhead utility lines should be buried, when feasible.
- » Incorporate decorative street furniture & lighting.
- » Provide outdoor seating areas, where appropriate.

✓ Signage

- » Commercial areas – number of tenant panels should be limited; spacing/proximity of freestanding signs along the streetscape should be limited.
- » Community Signs are encouraged, however they need to be legible.

✓ Lighting

- » Lighting height should be “to scale” or proportionate to the height of the building; lighting should also compliment the streetscape; decorative lighting fixtures are encouraged.

✓ Parking Lots

- » Perimeter landscaped areas and/or landscaped islands should be provided to breakup expanse of parking lot pavement.
- » Parking lots should be separated or setback from a roadway by a landscaped area.
- » Pedestrian crossing areas and connections should be incorporated through the parking lot and to/from the parking lot to a public sidewalk.

Guidelines can address site design, architecture, signage, lighting, landscaping, pedestrian access/connection, public places, etc. It is strongly recommended that the Village expand upon these concepts and move forward with the creation and adoption of more specific design guidelines.

Representative Images



Gateway features, street furniture, informational signs, decorative paving schemes, and planters with a seating ledge are additional potential streetscape enhancements

WELCOME & WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

Welcome Signage

There are presently four welcome sign locations in the Village. Residents and visitors travelling into the Village from the north, south, east and west are informed at key gateway locations that they have entered Seneca.

The existing welcome signs are constructed of wood and include some landscape plantings. It is recommended that they should be made more prominent by including landscaping that maintains its attractiveness year round. Plant material, coupled with flower colors would attract attention during the day hours, while artistic lighting would draw attention to the signs at night. Welcome signs have been located throughout the Village at current key gateway locations. Since Seneca village limits will continue to expand over time, the existing signs will need to be moved and additional signs may need to be added. When final boundaries have been established, it is recommended that more permanent style signs with a variety of landscape plantings be installed.



West side of Route 25, north of Route 6
- from the north



North side of Route 6 - from the east

Various types of permanent style welcome signs



Wayfinding Signage

Way finding is generally a means of assisting residents and visitors find their way through a community and locate key facilities or places of interest. As the Village expands in size, a wayfinding system can be a very effective tool for Seneca to use to help people navigate through the downtown area as well as boost local economic development. Within the downtown, signs can provide direction to specific destinations while information kiosks can recount stories of the Village's past. Outside the downtown area, signs can provide direction to visitors as they find their way through the Village. Using signs and information kiosks, a wayfinding system should include the following elements:

- ✓ **Similar Materials** - The use of similar building materials offers visual cues that people can recognize and relate quickly, which helps them understand that certain signs and information kiosks are part of an overall system.
- ✓ **Unifying Elements** – Unifying elements such as a logo, uniform color palette, and uniform kiosks together so that residents and visitors understand that they are all related and part of an overall system.
- ✓ **Links to the Past** - Linking the wayfinding system to Seneca's past provides the Village with the opportunity to not only recount its history but also create a system that is unique to the community. Historical pictures and the depiction of historical elements may be also utilized to illustrate the Village's past, such as highlighting the significance of the LST. Also, the color palette may include local school colors to enhance community pride.



Various styles of wayfinding signage



Section IV: Issues & Opportunities

Growth & Development
Economic Development
Downtown Redevelopment Initiatives
Historic Preservation

IV Issues & Opportunities

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

The residential growth in Seneca has been rather scattered over the past years. The *Future Land Use Plan* identifies a variety of residential land use categories to afford existing and future residents a choice of housing options. By encouraging a variety of lot sizes and housing types, the Village is providing existing residents the ability to stay in the community as their needs change as well as inviting new residents to the community. Based on location and excellent schools, it can be anticipated that Seneca will experience future growth pressure for residential development. Residential growth is needed in order to spur interest in the Village for potential commercial development.

Commercial development has experienced the same consistent trend as residential. A majority of commercial development has occurred along Main Street. Existing commercial development primarily includes local retail operations, banks, gas stations, offices, restaurants & drinking establishments. The Village does not have any “big box” type development or regional shopping opportunities to-date. The *Future Land Use Plan* identifies locations for higher intensity commercial (general commercial, and service and wholesale) development along Seneca Road and Route 6 with lower intensity neighborhood commercial located on south side of Route 6 near the downtown area. The *Sub-Area Future Land Use Plan* designates a majority of Main Street/Route 170 corridor for mixed-use and transitional commercial, with some neighborhood commercial north of South Street.

Existing industrial development is concentrated along the Illinois River. The *Future Land Use Plan* provides new industrial opportunities north of railroad and along the east of Route 6 with some lower intensity business park development proposed as a transition between residential and industrial land uses. The future viability for regional commercial and industrial development opportunities is good for Seneca because of its proximity to the Seneca Road/I-80 interchange.

The *Future Land Use Plan* also accommodates Recreation opportunities since the Illinois River serves as a tourist attraction. The recreational land use category encompasses the existing marinas, the public boat launch, and strategic undeveloped properties located along the river. Building upon the existing recreation and tourism market provides another economic benefit to the Village.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

An increased tax base created by additional businesses and industries locating in Seneca will benefit the community. It is not only important to encourage new commercial and industrial development, but maintain a strong support for existing businesses to remain and expand in the Village. Development of new and expansion of existing commercial and industrial uses on vacant lots and adjacent lands will also provide an increase in revenues as well as create new jobs for local area residents.

Existing vacant buildings and lots within the downtown area provide another great opportunity to expand the business potential in the Village. By promoting the location of new businesses to these existing buildings, the economic base of the downtown district will become stronger and revenues will remain in Seneca. An economically strong downtown that remains so despite new commercial development provides an alternate means for Seneca residents to do their day-to-day shopping within the Village. Encouraging infill development before expansion also promotes wise use of the available land. Infill is an efficient method of development because the services are already in place, keeping the costs low for the Village.

The land within and adjacent to Seneca has many services and benefits associated with it. A major benefit of the area is its proximity and access to many types of transportation, such as Interstate 80, the Illinois River, and the CSX railway. The highway interchange at Seneca Road/I-80 will act as a magnet for future regional commercial development due to the high volume of traffic along I-80 and its function as a key regional transportation link.

Services and benefits that Seneca can provide to encourage development include accessible sewerage treatment and water system connections, adequate local infrastructure, and sufficient, appropriately zoned, land. The transportation network combined with local services will make the Seneca area attractive to commercial and industrial businesses.

Seneca Regional Port District

The Seneca Port Authority is a volunteer organization created by legislation in 1961. The District encompasses an area of approximately 5 square miles along the Illinois-Michigan Canal Heritage Corridor. The District has the power to exercise eminent domain for industrial development in Seneca, LaSalle County and the State of Illinois. For businesses looking to expand or locate a facility within the Seneca Regional Port District incentives, such as bond financing and industrial tax increment financing (TIF) are available through the District. Its bonding authority extends anywhere in the State, and the District has the power to issue bonds up to 10 million dollars per investor. The District sponsors TIF's through the Village and currently includes three industrial TIFs – Shipyard Industrial Park, Old Stage Industrial Park, and Seneca I-80 Railport Industrial Park. For more information on the Seneca Port Authority refer to the website www.senecaport.com.



The Shipyard Industrial Park is one of the Seneca Regional Port District's three industrial TIFs

Image Source: Seneca Regional Port District

Seneca Business Association

The Seneca Business Association is a local initiative designed to unite Seneca businesses by promoting local shopping and downtown revitalization. To-date, the Association has created a comprehensive business directory and installed decorative banners on light poles along Main Street. Other initiatives endorsed by the Association include recognition of Seneca by the Illinois River Area Chamber of Commerce; involvement with the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitor Bureau; and updating the Village website with important links and user friendly information for interested businesses looking to locate in Seneca. As businesses and services continue to expand in the Village, the Seneca Business Association may serve as the foundation for a future chamber of commerce.

DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

At the heart of the Village is the existing Main Street (Route 170) corridor which serves as the primary commercial district, providing a variety of goods and services such as banking, eating and drinking establishments, retail services, and auto-services. It is also home to other essential elements of the community, including the Village Hall, Police Department, Fire & Emergency Services, Post Office, Public Library, Crotty Park and several historical buildings, such as the MJ Hogan Grain Elevator. In time, however as the Village limits expand and regional commercial areas along Route 6 develop, this key corridor will be defined as the “Downtown Area” of Seneca and as such, it will present a wealth of opportunities to expand on its historical linkages and create a unique place that sets it apart from other downtowns. Older buildings and under-utilized property provide for redevelopment opportunities that could enhance the appeal and viability of the downtown area.

Redevelopment Strategies

- ✓ Establish a Design Theme
- ✓ Re-use underutilized properties
- ✓ Stimulate new investment
- ✓ Initiate façade improvement programs
- ✓ Encourage building rehab, when feasible
- ✓ Develop downtown streetscape design standards
- ✓ Improve accessibility/Relate transportation & development
- ✓ Serve as a community center/incorporate community events planning
- ✓ Address marketing and promotion

Business Retention/Attraction

The Village should continue to provide support to successful businesses within the downtown area to ensure the business owners recognize the Village’s intent of keeping them in downtown to enhance its character and economic development. It is also important to encourage in-fill development and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties to make use of existing downtown infrastructure. Lastly, it is necessary to attract professional offices that will locate their practices in downtown Seneca not only to provide convenience in close proximity to the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area but to establish and reinforce the need for businesses such as restaurants, retail and additional support services that can also benefit from the office traffic.

Main Street USA Approach

The Main Street approach is a good way to organize a community and preserve the physical, historical and cultural heritage that the community has in the downtown. The National Main Street Center is a federally supported program on a statewide basis, which is designed to offer technical training and skills in preservation and economic development to municipalities with a population greater than 2,000 but no larger than 50,000. A designated Main Street community has a Main Street Coordinator who is in charge of all Main Street programs and organization within that community. The local Main Street office establishes four committees to accomplish the program’s goals.



“Downtown” Seneca provides an opportunity to enhance the Village’s unique identity.



Examples of Facade Design Guidelines, Produced by Teska Associates, Inc. for the Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development & the City of Canton, IL

- ✓ The Organization Committee's goal is to increase membership, organizational skills, volunteers, and education of the Main Street goals and activities.
- ✓ The Promotion Committee's goal is to create a positive image by strengthening the downtown as the center of activities, goods, and services.
- ✓ The Economic Restructuring Committee's goal is to strengthen the existing business district while recruiting specific types of business that will improve the overall marketability downtown.
- ✓ The Design Committee, whose goal is to improve the physical appearance of the Main Street District.

The state office offers technical, training and organizational assistance to the four committees through scheduled workshops, seminars, meetings and training sessions. It is important to keep in mind however, that the Main Street Approach is incremental and will not produce immediate change within the downtown area.

Downtown Area Enhancements

To further development of a tax base and enhance the prosperity within the Village it is of vital importance to create a strong and unified visual content within the downtown area. This not only enhances the individual character of the Village, distinguishing it from the neighboring areas, but also increases the sense of pride that the residents feel towards their Village. Beautifully designed plazas and roadways serve as focal spaces for community life. Increased interaction and attractiveness can encourage businesses to locate within an area.

Other suggestions that could produce more immediate enhancements along Main Street include the use of decorative street lighting and street furniture, decorative pavement, landscaping and landmarks. The use of the street furniture, such as benches, planters, and trash receptacles would help in visually unifying the area. The furniture placed along the sidewalks would act as social nodes and allow for greater outdoor interaction of the Village residents. To minimize the economic impact of the cost of the street furniture to the Village a program may be established so individuals or organizations may sponsor the furniture. Recognition should be given to the sponsor in some form, such as a plaque.



Streetscape elements such as trees, street furniture, lighting, and buried utility lines can substantially enhance the overall aesthetic appeal of a downtown.

A decorative paving scheme can create an ambiance unique to the downtown. The scheme will create a unifying visual pattern in the paving through material changes. These material changes distinguish the sidewalks from parking from the roadway. This serves both an aesthetic as well as a functional purpose. Brick lined sidewalks and curbed parking provide for clear edges and separate pedestrian uses from vehicular uses.

Aesthetically pleasing and durable landscaping serves to complement the street furniture and beautify the downtown. During the summer months the trees would provide shade to the sidewalks and building facades. The foliage should be a mix between evergreens and deciduous trees. Flowering trees can add decorative depth to the areas and avoid the monotony of a single species. Root structure, leaf litter and maintenance should all be considered when determining suitable plant species. It is recommended that a landscaping scheme be developed for the downtown section of Main Street. The scheme could be expanded to include the entire Village at a later time.

Parking

Parking in downtown areas is generally a concern for most communities. As the downtown area begins to redevelop, a downtown parking analysis should be conducted to determine whether the downtown area is

under- or over-served by parking. In the case of a parking deficiency, determine potential sites for additional parking. An example could include replacing parallel with angled parking, because it affords the largest number of spaces that can fit within a road right-of-way. In case of a parking surplus, redevelopment concepts should be analyzed to convert excess parking areas into new development opportunities or open space.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

It is important to preserve the past because history can teach valuable lessons. Preservation of Seneca's heritage and the resources associated with historic events and people act as an educational tool for future generations of Seneca residents. Seneca is a small town with an atmosphere conducive to community interaction and pride. Preserving this atmosphere and the resources that make up Seneca's history gives the Village a link to its past and helps guide them into the future.

To maintain a "small town" feeling and atmosphere, new development must be considerate of the Community's past. The downtown area acts as a central meeting place and encourages interaction which in turn helps to provide the "small town" atmosphere. Community sponsored festivals and activities bring people to the downtown and provide opportunities for interaction and local patronage. Such activities, which can also be associated with historical events, encourage the "small town" atmosphere that exists in Seneca today. In connection with this objective are the Downtown Design, Land Use, and Economic Development goals. All of the objectives working together can promote the continuation of this "small town" atmosphere within the Village.

The recognition of buildings, such as the M.J. Hogan Grain Elevator, and features that are important to the history of Seneca shows pride and respect for the Community's past. Though recognition can take place on a statewide or national level, such as the recognition of the M.J. Hogan Grain Elevator and two of its outbuildings by the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, it is also possible for it to take place on a local level. Recognition can be as simple as a plaque or pamphlet detailing the structure's history and importance to the community. Seneca's history can also be made into a public focal point. LST history of the area could provide many opportunities for heritage tourism, which could educate the local as well as the visiting populations.

The Village should encourage citizen efforts to preserve or restore their properties and educate the property owners on the available options for financial and technical support. Education efforts could include a citizen committee for research, information, and program development; handouts on available opportunities such as workshops, seminars, rehabilitation techniques and support, and agency information for local building owners; community-wide meetings on the importance of preservation to Seneca; and local displays on history for the residents to enjoy and learn. Preservation options vary in degree of protection and support. Adaptive reuse of vacancies can restore an older building for today's needs while saving the structure for the future. Tax credits and other funding are available through state programs for the rehabilitation of historic properties.

To enhance the historic character of the Village, it is recommended that steps be taken to identify historically significant structures; consider restoring or preserving a key residence or two, maintain/reuse historically significant buildings such as the grain elevator; and evaluate the need for and benefits of establishing a historic preservation ordinance and commission.



The M.J. Hogan Grain Elevator (top) and two outbuildings, the office and scale house (bottom), are listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.



Section V: Future Land Use

Land Use Categories

Future Land Use Areas

Population Capacity

Affordable Housing Act

Future Land Use Plan

Sub-Area Future Land Use Plan

Future Land Use

The purpose of designating future land uses is to maintain Seneca's high quality of life through the promotion of a balanced arrangement of land uses providing residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational opportunities. While the *Future Land Use Plan Maps* illustrate the arrangement of future land uses considering existing land uses and proposed development patterns, the map also provides area of substantial open space conservation to protect the sensitive environmental features and help maintain the natural environment as on the community's major strengths. Promoting compatible growth establishes positive relationships between land uses, aesthetics and the environment.

Commercial and industrial development is crucial to sustaining the economy of the Village. It is vital for a municipality to have a diversified tax base. Businesses and shopping in Seneca should serve and meet the demands of its residents. Given the Village's proximity to the Illinois River, expanding Recreation and Industrial development should continue to be key in the future growth of the Village. In addition to helping to maintain a diversified tax base, growth in these land use categories will also create local employment opportunities.

Seneca has a responsibility to ensure that the housing needs of the community are met in terms of affordability and quantity. By supplying a variety of housing options Seneca can diversify and grow. Housing stock should vary in terms of sizes, prices, ownership, and architectural styles. Single-family residences as well as multi-family residences should be incorporated into the future growth of Seneca. Multi-family housing can range from duplexes and townhouses to apartment buildings and condominiums.

Senior housing, whether age-targeted or age-restricted, should be encouraged. The older residents provide a living testimony to the history and culture of Seneca. It is important to provide housing opportunities that meet their needs so that they can remain members of the community.

To assist in the evaluation of development proposals, the Village should work with the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to utilize a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system. This two part system provides information on the agricultural value of existing farmland, along with a site assessment that considers other land development criterion. For further information on LESA refer to the website www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/lesa.

Lastly, when annexing land in accordance with the *Future Land Use Plan*, consideration will need to be given to the impact on existing municipal services and infrastructure, and more importantly the Village's financial ability to expand them if necessary. Contiguous growth is always more beneficial to a community because it allows municipal services and infrastructure to be extended with less cost. Though municipal services and infrastructure are not an issue for Seneca at this time, there will come a time when Officials and the development community will need to work together to establish an agreement identifying responsibility for future improvements and associated costs.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

The future land use categories are described below. Many of the descriptions refer to a maximum density for a particular land use category. All recommended residential categories described below are based upon the "gross buildable acreage" or "net acreage" of a site. The gross buildable part of the land is determined by subtracting those portions of the property which cannot or should not be developed due to sensitive environmental features such as floodplains, wetlands, poor soils, protected wildlife and natural areas, dense woodlands, and natural prairie areas. Densities indicated are for general planning purposes only. Proposed developments will be evaluated and advised as to the acceptable number of units which appear to be appropriate based upon the physical constraints of the subject property, and municipal ordinances.

- ✓ **Agricultural Areas & Conservation Open Space.** The Agricultural Areas and Conservation Open Space land use category is intended to preserve Seneca's traditional rural character by encouraging the protection of economically viable agricultural land and protecting natural resources and areas with unique environmental characteristics such as wetlands, floodplains, streams and woodlands. Protection of natural areas ensure they continue to provide natural functions such as flood storage and conveyance, pollution control, and wildlife habitats. Conservation open spaces are distributed around the Village as well as outside municipal limits. As a preservation measure, this land use category discourages the premature development of vacant or agricultural lands and is also intended to prevent an incompatible mixture of urban and rural uses. Combined with conservation open spaces, agricultural areas help create a "greenbelt" around the Village's planning area providing a safeguard from over-development.
- ✓ **Rural Countryside Residential.** The Rural Countryside Residential land use category allows for an individual residential property comprising at least 5 acres in size, and including farming activities, stables, etc. The property is served by a private well and septic system.
- ✓ **Low Density Residential.** The Low Density Residential land use category represents opportunities for estate-type single family development that typically does not include the provision of municipal sewer and water services. The Low Density Residential category is likely to provide for a density of 1.0 dwelling unit per acre (du/ac) or less.
- ✓ **Medium Density Residential.** The Medium Density Residential category is appropriate for the newer subdivisions consisting of single family detached homes, or a combination of single family detached homes, and duplex units or townhomes. In these developments, municipal utilities such as sewer and water are provided. Given the opportunity for a mix of residential product, subdivisions developed within this residential category will have a density in the 2.5-3.5 du/ac range. Senior housing proposed in medium density residential land use category may require higher densities and shall be reviewed accordingly to ensure compatibility with adjacent existing or future land uses.
- ✓ **Traditional Residential.** The Traditional Residential land use category represents a majority of the Village's existing residential areas, particularly in the established neighborhoods near the Village's future downtown/core area. Since this category includes smaller lot single family homes and multiple family units, densities in the Village residential category will have a range between 6.0-9.0 du/ac.
- ✓ **High Density Residential.** The High Density Residential land use category is intended to include all forms of multiple family or attached housing, including duplexes, townhomes, condominiums and apartments with an overall density of 9.1 du/ac or higher. Existing mobile home park developments have been included in this land use category, however any future mobile home park developments are subject to the provisions established in the Village's Zoning Ordinance.
- ✓ **General Commercial.** The General Commercial land use category is intended to provide for retail businesses that offer a wide range of goods, services, and employment opportunities in locations which abut or front major roadways to provide convenient access and visibility. Given their access to major roadways, general commercial uses generally are set in an auto-oriented setting and are high intensity in character, providing retail goods and services at a regional level. General commercial uses are generally recommended at major intersections and roadway corridors, such as along Route 6 near the I-80 interchange. It is further recommended that commercial developments within this category incorporate full- and/or limited-access driveways and cross access between lots and adjacent commercial properties as determined by the Village Engineer and/or respective agency having jurisdictional control.
- ✓ **Service & Wholesale Commercial.** The Service Wholesale Commercial land use category is intended for businesses that complement and provide support services to industrial related land uses. Since this category of land use may include outdoor storage of materials, equipment, etc. it is essential that the outdoor storage area be designed with a hard, dust free bituminous storage or parking surface; a solid fence or wall having a height equivalent to the materials or equipment being stored; and a landscape buffer yard that

provides year round screening. This land use category is intended to serve as a buffering or transitional land use between industrial land uses and less intense land use categories.

- ✓ **Neighborhood Commercial.** The Neighborhood Commercial land use category is intended to provide convenient retail establishments and services to adjacent residential neighborhoods. Neighborhood commercial uses may be scattered throughout the Village along arterial or collector roadways and their inter-sections. Generally, a neighborhood commercial center may be incorporated as part of an overall residential subdivision proposal, as such it should be screened and buffered from adjacent residential areas and should provide pedestrian access to the commercial areas from adjacent residential uses.
- ✓ **Transitional Commercial.** The Transitional Commercial land use category is intended to provide for retail and office establishments that offer a wide range of goods, services, and employment opportunities in locations that allow for conversion of residential structures to professional and limited commercial uses while still maintaining the residential character of the structures. In addition, transitional commercial uses provide appropriate transition between higher intensity non-residential uses and adjacent residential neighborhoods. Transitional commercial uses generally are low intensity character, providing retail goods and services in establishments such as specialty and retail shops, restaurants, small boutiques, and professional offices. It is also possible that a structure within an area designated for the Transitional Commercial land use is maintained as a residential structure or converted back to its original residential use. With the potential for a mix of non-residential and residential structures, proper attention to building scale and site design within areas designated for Transitional Commercial land use are imperative to help accentuate transitions between adjacent uses. While the Transitional Commercial land use category is also appropriate for the downtown area, the Mixed-Use land use category (see below) is more applicable given its broader mix of permitted uses.
- ✓ **Mixed Use.** The Mixed Use land use category is designed to provide opportunities for a variety of potential uses, including mixtures of retail, office, institutional and limited residential development, such as residences located on upper floors of commercial buildings. Smaller-scale apartment and condominium buildings can also be appropriate in the mixed use category when located in proximity to a train station. While single family structures with mixed uses are encouraged, different uses within stand-alone structures are permitted provided appropriate building scale and site design. The downtown of the Village is the most appropriate area for mixed uses as it has historically developed as an area providing small scale retail and businesses providing goods and services to residents in the adjacent neighborhoods. Vacant and under-utilized properties within the downtown area provide opportunities for mixed use development.
- ✓ **Recreation.** From Memorial Day through Labor Day, the Village experiences a tremendous tourist draw of boaters, campers and bikers due to its marinas, access to the Illinois River, and proximity to the Woodsmoke Ranch and the I & M Canal corridor/trail. The Recreation land use category is geared toward seasonal boating, camping and biking activities as well as complimentary businesses and services that meet the needs of the tourists and related activities.
- ✓ **Parks & Open Space.** The Parks and Public Open Space land use category includes passive and active recreational areas, and open space generally accessible and usable by the public. Greenway corridors that incorporate a trail or pathway system will also be considered in this land use category.
- ✓ **Public/Institutional.** The Public/Institutional land use category encompasses those lands owned and operated by federal, state, or local governments as well as public and private educational facilities, cemeteries, churches, or other quasi-public or non-profit facilities.
- ✓ **Business Park.** The Business Park land use category provides opportunities for nuisance-free business parks and other light industry, preferably in well-designed, attractive buildings in a landscaped campus-like environment. Warehouse distribution (buildings having less than 100,000 square feet in area), high tech, engineering, office and research uses are particularly appropriate for this category. Public storage facilities may also be appropriate if built at a smaller scale than typical warehousing facilities.

- ✓ **Industrial.** The Industrial land use category provides opportunities for high intensity industrial uses, including warehousing (buildings over 100,000 square feet in area), manufacturing, and processing uses. This land use category will have access to arterial roadways, railroads, and/or waterways. Industrial land uses are to be well buffered from incompatible land uses, by solid screening, such as fencing or walls in combination with intense landscaping treatment. When possible, industrial establishments should be located an appropriate distance away from other less intense uses.

FUTURE LAND USE AREAS

The planning area illustrated on the *Future Land Use Plan* encompasses approximately 40 square miles. The following table (**Table 4**) provides a break-down of the land uses proposed within the limits of the planning area.

Table 4. Future Land Use Table

| LAND USE | TOTAL | |
|--|---------------|-------------|
| | ACRES | PERCENT |
| Agricultural Areas & Conservation Open Space | 3,614 | 14.3% |
| Rural Countryside Residential | 2,709 | 10.7% |
| Low Density Residential | 4,225 | 16.7% |
| Medium Density Residential | 4,225 | 16.7% |
| Traditional Residential | 350 | 1.4% |
| High Density Residential | 26 | 0.1% |
| General Commercial | 1,804 | 7.1% |
| Service & Wholesale Commercial | 585 | 2.3% |
| Recreation | 907 | 3.6% |
| Neighborhood Commercial | 473 | 1.9% |
| Transitional Commercial | 20 | 0.1% |
| Mixed Use | 122 | 0.5% |
| Parks & Public Open Space | 2,699 | 10.7% |
| Public/Institutional | 194 | 0.8% |
| Business Park | 418 | 1.7% |
| Industrial | 2,904 | 11.5% |
| TOTAL ACRES | 25,275 | 100% |
| TOTAL SQUARE MILES = 39.4 | | |

POPULATION CAPACITY

Population trends and development patterns are important factors in determining how much Seneca's population will grow in the future. Population estimates provide a basis for determining the appropriate allocation of resources to establish new municipal services such as sewer and water, and parks. Other agencies such as the school district, library district, and police, and emergency services can also benefit from having this available information as they each review and plan for the needs of their respective agencies to service the Seneca planning area.

Based on full build-out of the residential areas identified on the *Future Land Use Plan* (including the *SubArea Future Land Use Plan*), using the average densities (.2 dwelling units per acre for rural countryside residential, 1.0 dwelling unit per acre for low density residential, 3.0 dwelling units per acre for medium density residential, 7.5 for traditional residential, and 12.0 dwelling units per acre for high density residential) the total population of Seneca could reach as high as 39,360 residents. This ultimate population (**Table 5**) should be viewed more as a holding capacity than a projection since it is difficult to determine the timing of future growth and the rate at which it will occur.

Table 5. Population Capacity Table

| RESIDENTIAL LAND USE | ACRES | AVERAGE DENSITY | AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE | POPULATION CAPACITY |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Rural Countryside Residential | 1,896 | 0.2 | 2.76 | 1,047 |
| Low Density Residential | 2,957 | 1.0 | 2.76 | 8,161 |
| Medium Density Residential | 2,957 | 3.0 | 2.76 | 24,484 |
| Traditional Residential | 245 | 7.5 | 2.76 | 5,072 |
| High Density Residential | 18 | 12.0 | 2.76 | 596 |
| TOTAL | 8,073 | - | - | 39,360 |

Notes: 1. Average household size based on 2000 US Census Data
2. Acres of residential land uses have been reduced by 30% to account for roadway/right-of-way and infrastructure improvements

Based on historical data, Seneca has only experienced an average growth of approximately 8%. As shown in **Table 6**, viewed from the perspective of previous population trends, Seneca's population could reach 2,586 by 2030, assuming the Village maintained a steady population increase. It can be expected that at some point in the future, the Village will experience a yearly growth rate significantly greater than the average and most likely greater than the highest rate of growth experienced to date.

Table 6. Population Projection Table

| YEAR | POPULATION |
|------|------------|
| 2000 | 2,053 |
| 2010 | 2,217* |
| 2020 | 2,394* |
| 2030 | 2,586* |

* Population estimates based on an average growth rate of 8%

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT

The Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act (Public Act 93-595), which went into effect on January 1, 2004, is intended to encourage Illinois municipalities and counties to provide a sufficient amount of affordable housing into their communities. Under the Act, all municipalities and counties that do not provide sufficient affordable housing are required to adopt an affordable housing plan. The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) is required by the Act to determine and publish a list of municipalities and counties that are exempt and non-exempt from the requirements of the Act. Based on formulas, factors, and definitions stated in the Act, municipalities and counties with less than 10% affordable housing are required to incorporate more affordable housing into their communities.

At this time, Seneca meets the exemption test by having approximately 54% affordable units. **Table 7** below provides a comparison between the Village and nearby communities' affordable housing percentages. Affordable housing is not an issue for the Village now, however as the Village approaches complete build-out, it will be important to ensure that as development and redevelopment occur that affordable housing opportunities continue to exist.

Table 7. Comparison of Affordable Units in Nearby Communities

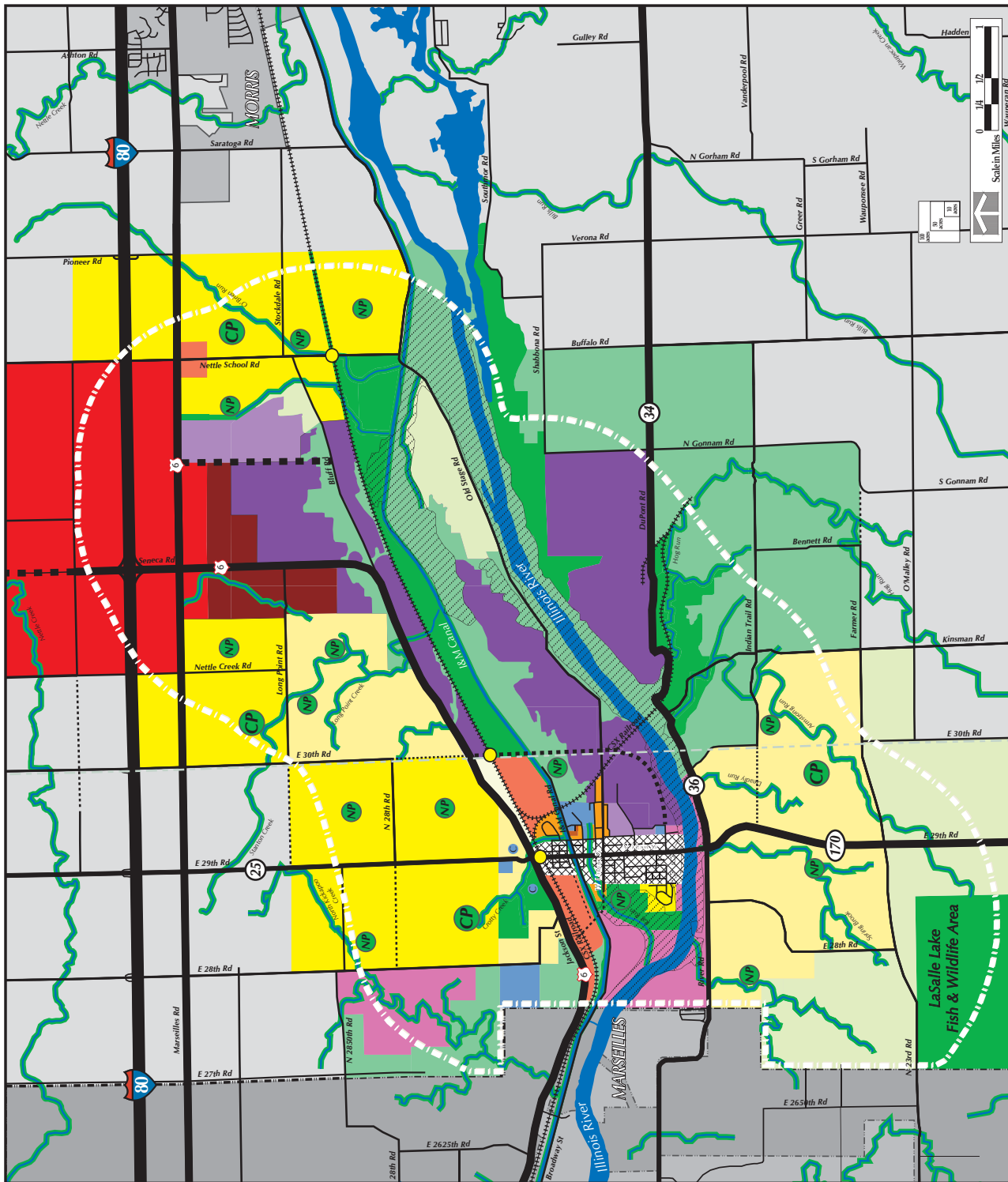
| COMMUNITY | TOTAL NUMBER OF AFFORDABLE UNITS | TOTAL NUMBER OF UNITS | PERCENT OF AFFORDABLE UNITS |
|---------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Seneca | 408 | 754 | 54.1% |
| Morris | 2,940 | 4,928 | 59.7% |
| Marseilles | 1,515 | 1,946 | 77.9% |
| Ottawa | 5,314 | 7,685 | 69.1% |
| Joliet | 23,707 | 37,080 | 63.9% |

Source: Report on Affordable Housing Planning & Appeal Act Public Act 93-595, as amended by Public Act 93-678; Submitted to Illinois Housing Development Authority; Submitted by University of Illinois Building Research Council; July 23, 2004.

Future Land Use Map

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | Agricultural Areas & Conservation Open Space | | Cemetery |
| | Rural Countryside Residential | | Future Community Park Site |
| | Low Density Residential | | Future Neighborhood Park Site |
| | Medium Density Residential | | Potential Grade Separated Crossing |
| | Traditional Residential | | Watercourse |
| | High Density Residential | | Floodplain (100 Year) |
| | General Commercial | | Refer to Sub-Area Future Land Use Plan |
| | Service & Wholesale Commercial | | Refer to Sub-Area Future Land Use Plan |
| | Recreation | | 1.5 Mile Planning Boundary (Seneca) |
| | Neighborhood Commercial | | Proposed Road (Refer to Transportation Plan) |
| | Transitional Commercial | | |
| | Mixed Use | | |
| | Parks & Open Space | | |
| | Public/ Institutional | | |
| | Business Park | | |
| | Industrial | | |

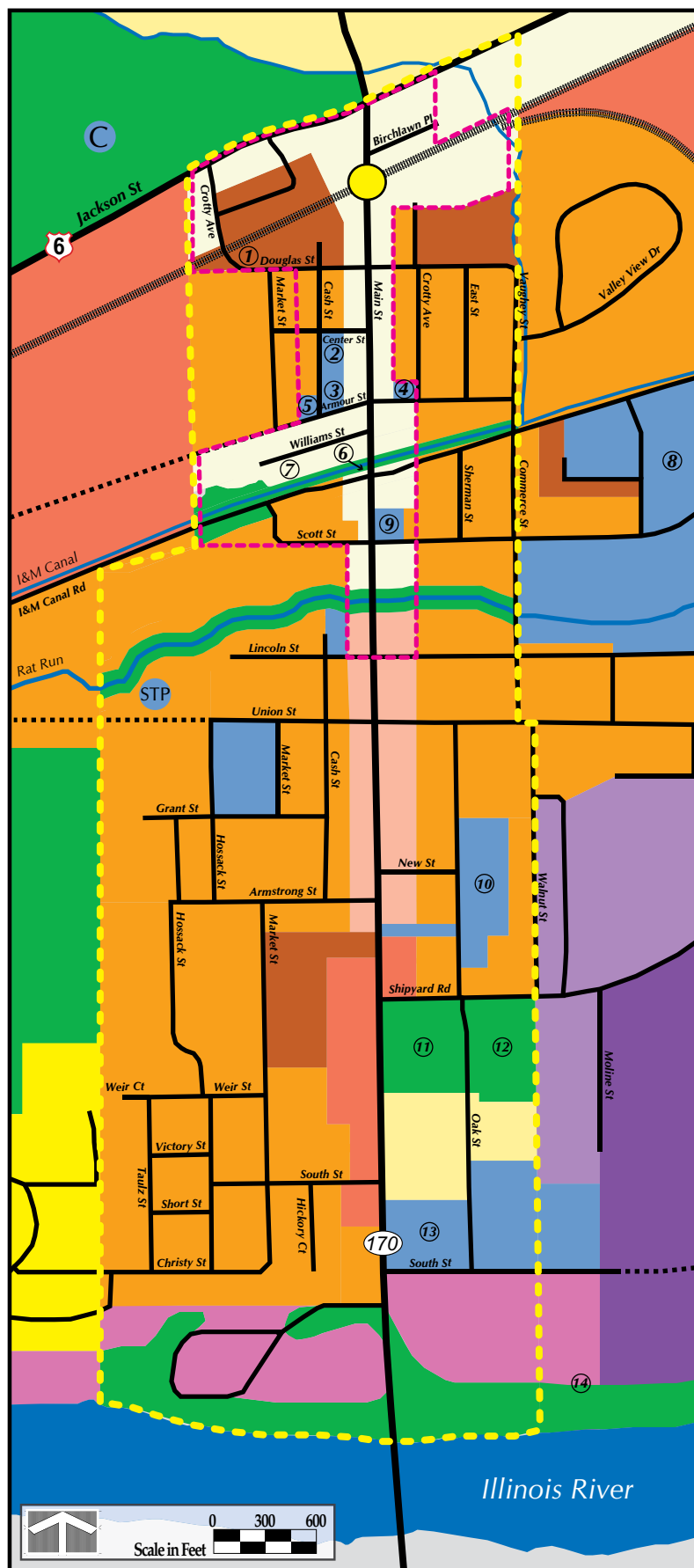




Seneca Comprehensive Plan

Village of Seneca, Illinois

SubArea Future Land Use Plan



LEGEND

- Agricultural Areas & Conservation Open Space
- Rural Countryside Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Traditional Residential
- High Density Residential
- General Commercial
- Service & Wholesale Commercial
- Recreation
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Transitional Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Parks & Public Open Space
- Public / Institutional
- Business Park
- Industrial
- Potential Grade Separated Crossing
- Cemetary
- Municipal Sewage Treatment Plant
- Watercourse
- SubArea Boundary
- Downtown Boundary

- ① Manlius Township Building
- ② Village Hall
- ③ Fire & Emergency Services
- ④ Post Office
- ⑤ Police Station
- ⑥ I&M Access Trail
- ⑦ M.J. Hogan Grain Elevator
- ⑧ Seneca High School
- ⑨ Public Library
- ⑩ Seneca Grade School North Campus
- ⑪ Athletic Fields
- ⑫ Crotty Park
- ⑬ Seneca Grade School South Campus
- ⑭ LST Memorial Boat Launch

Adopted December 16, 2008



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Section VI: Future Transportation Network

Roadway Classifications

Roadway Improvements & Extensions/Connections

Truck Routes

Railroad Corridors & Crossings

Future Transportation Plan

Illinois River

Mixed Use Trails

Future Mixed Use Trails Plan

VI — Future Transportation Network

The *Future Transportation Plan* illustrates an efficient transportation network to adequately serve the community. In addition, proper maintenance of the transportation network will ensure that local roads adequately serve the present population while exhibiting the benefits of their accessibility and visibility to attract future private development. The various transportation concepts illustrated on the *Future Transportation Plan* are described below.

ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS

Interstate 80 (I-80)

Interstates or highways provide a high-degree of mobility, with access limited to grade separated interchanges, spaced at least one mile apart, to preserve the high speeds (46-65 mph), high volume characteristics of the facility. These facilities are typically part of the state or federal highway system. I-80 is located north of the current Village limits and provides access to Village via the Seneca Road (Exit 105) interchange.

Arterials

Arterial roads are intended to provide a high degree of mobility and function as the primary travel routes for vehicles entering, leaving, and passing through urban areas. They are intended to carry high volumes of traffic at high operating speeds and have capacity to operate at high levels of service. Although arterials do serve such major developments as central business districts, large commercial centers, industrial/business parks and residential areas, access management is essential to preserve capacity. There are several arterial roadways indicated on the *Future Transportation Plan*, Routes 6, 170, 34 and 36. Seneca Road (Exit 105) provides an interchange connection to I-80. Both Route 6 and 170 are under the jurisdictional control of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Therefore, all future improvements and accesses will be subject to IDOT's review and approval.

Route 36 is under the jurisdictional control of the LaSalle County Highway Department and it is expected that Route 34 (DuPont Road) will become a Grundy County Road in the future. Both of these roadways are slated for improvements in the immediate future by the respective County agencies.

Right-of-way should be preserved or acquired accordingly as new subdivisions and development occurs along both roadways to ensure that future roadway improvements can be made accordingly. Typically, a minimum right-of-way width for an arterial road can range from 100-120 feet with additional right-of-way needed at strategic intersections to accommodate turn-lanes and signalization. For an arterial roadway, a typical cross section can be 5-6 lanes depending on projected traffic counts, land use patterns and needed improvements.

Collector Roads

The collector street system is designed to support the arterial network. Collector roads consist of medium-capacity, medium volume roads that serve to link high-level arterial roads to lower level local streets. Operating speeds are typically lower on collectors than arterials and should have limited continuity to discourage through traffic but still provide for local movement of vehicles between residential, commercial, and industrial areas of the community. The collector system provides for some direct land access, but to a more limited degree than local streets. When a collector road is located within a residential neighborhood, it is recommended that driveway access to private lots be prohibited.

Given the current layout of the existing road network through the Village and future planning area, collectors roads will be classified as "major collectors" and "minor collectors". It is recommended that collector road

rights-of-way be preserved or acquired through subdivision dedications and that a width between 80-100 feet be provided, depending on the roads classification. For a major collector, the right-of-way width can be wide as 100 feet to accommodate a 4-lane cross section, and for a minor collector the right-of-way width can vary between 70-80 feet to accommodate a 3-lane or 4-lane cross section, depending on the land use patterns and needed improvements. Additional right-of-way may be needed at strategic intersections to accommodate turn lanes and signalization and in other areas as necessary to accommodate roadway re-alignments. It can be anticipated that some of the designated collector roads are or will become County roadways in the future and subject to their jurisdictional control for improvements, access and maintenance. Subject roadways will be defined on either the Official Highway Map of LaSalle County (2008 Comprehensive Plan) or will be further defined upon completion of an overall Grundy County Transportation Plan. As new development proposals are presented to the Village, it will be important for the respective County agencies to be consulted if the development is adjacent to an existing or future County roadway.

At this time, the *Future Transportation Plan* identifies Major and Minor Collector Roads as follows:

- ✓ Major Collector Roads
 - » Route 25 (E. 29th Road) – north of Route 6
 - » Nettle School Road – portion south of Route 6 to Old Stage Road
 - » Old Stage Road/Union Street (portion east of Main Street)
 - » River Road – portion west of Main Street
 - » Future Road connecting Route 6 to Bluff Road
- ✓ Minor Collector Roads
 - » Nettle School Road – portion north of Route 6
 - » Morey Road – west of Nettle School Road; east of Route 25
 - » Long Point Road – west of Route 6; east of Route 25
 - » E. 28th Road – north of Route 6 and connection between River Road and N. 23rd Road
 - » E. 30th Road
 - » N. 30th Road
 - » West Union Street
 - » Indian Trail Road
 - » Farmer Road/N. 23rd Road
 - » Kinsman Road
 - » Gonnam Road – south of Route 34 (DuPont Road)
 - » Buffalo Road – south of Route 34 (DuPont Road)

Local Streets

All streets not identified as arterials or collectors on the Plan are classified as Local Streets. Local streets typically carry low volumes of traffic at slow speeds to provide for safe and convenient access to housing areas and other land uses. Local streets also serve a social function for residents. Neighborhood streets are often a place where residents bike or walk when sidewalks are not provided. Local streets also provide direct land access. Movement along local streets is incidental and involves traveling to or from a collector roadway. Therefore, trips lengths on local streets are typically short. The local street system is also typically planned to ensure that all neighborhoods are accessible by at least two routes for emergency and service vehicles.

Recommended Guidelines for Local Streets

- ✓ Local streets should be protected from through traffic.
- ✓ Local streets should be protected from vehicles traveling in excess of 30 mph*.
- ✓ Local streets should be protected from parking unrelated to residential or commercial activities in the neighborhood.

* It is recommended that the Village consider implementing the “Drive 25 Keep Kids Alive” initiative. An important part of this initiative includes reducing speed limits in residential neighborhoods to 25 mph.

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS & EXTENSIONS/CONNECTIONS

Since there are several roadways outside the control of Seneca, for those roadways under the jurisdictional control of the State of Illinois, LaSalle County or Grundy County, the Village will need to work with the respective agencies closely as new development occurs along those specific roadways. For roadways under the control of the Village, improvements will be completed as the budget allows.

In addition to identifying future roadway classifications, the *Future Transportation Plan* also identifies potential roadway extensions or connections as a means to provide orderly and efficient circulation in the long term. The following roadway extensions or connections are shown:

- ✓ Morey Road – western extension to connect Nettle Creek Road to Route 25
- ✓ Long Point Road – western extension to connect E. 30th Road to Route 25
- ✓ N. 28th Road – western extension to connect Route 25 to E. 28th Road
- ✓ E. 30th Road – southern extension to Route 6; further extension south to Old Stage Road with future connection to South Street extended
- ✓ W. Union Street – extension/connection to Route 6 (Jackson Road)
- ✓ South Street – eastern extension to connect to future E. 30th Road
- ✓ Indian Trail Road – western extension to connect to Route 170
- ✓ Farmer Road - eastern extension to connect to N. Gonnarn Road

Any future extension of E. 30th Road south of Route 6 would necessitate a bridge crossing over the I & M Canal. Recognizing the more immediate transportation needs of the Village, a bridge crossing in this location will likely be a longer-term project to be considered. However, it is important to establish the need for this bridge and identify it as a key transportation initiative. As commercial and industrial land uses continue to expand within Seneca's planning area, Village Officials should pursue discussions with the State to determine the feasibility of this bridge crossing.

TRUCK ROUTES

The State of Illinois designated truck routes through the Village are Route 6 and Route 170/Main Street. As new commercial and industrial development occurs along Route 6 necessary roadway improvements will need to occur to accommodate the increase in both vehicular and truck traffic. Given the full interchange at I-80, it can be anticipated that Route 6 will remain a truck route.

Route 170/Main Street is a designated truck route that travels through the main corridor of the future downtown area of the Village. The downtown areas of communities are typically pedestrian oriented and include on-street parking. This Plan references the downtown area as an important economic opportunity and encourages the creation of a separate Downtown Plan to ensure that overall design, parking and access remains effective for a pedestrian friendly environment. Since truck traffic can significantly impact the ability to create a pedestrian friendly environment, alternative by-pass truck traffic routes have been considered to minimize truck traffic on Main Street from Route 6 to Lincoln Street. Three (3) by-pass options include Nettle School Road south of Route 6 to Old Stage Road west; E. 30th Road extension south of Route 6 to Old Stage Road west, and South Street extension to the west. Each option provides an alternative connection to Route 170. But as stated in the previous Section, a bridge crossing over the I & M Canal would need to be pursued with the State in order for the E. 30th Road extension to be considered.

RAILROAD CORRIDORS & CROSSINGS

The CSX railroad corridor is a predominant feature within the Village. Therefore, an in-depth analysis should be conducted on how to effectively incorporate the railroad as a multi-faceted asset to the community (not just a means of product transport). Methods should be developed to transform the railroad from a physical division of the Village to community features that bind the Village together.

To reduce the impact of the railroad it is recommended that a minimum one hundred (100) foot wide buffer area be provided on either side of the railroad right-of-way. This buffer area should incorporate fences, hedgerows, and other landscaping techniques to provide a safe buffer for land uses, other than industrial, adjacent to the railroad.

There are several at-grade crossings throughout the Village. The safety of these crossings should be evaluated to ensure safe travel by vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. When upgrades are needed, the Village will need to work with the CSX Corporation who owns the right-of-way. In locations where only cross bars exist at the crossing, flashing lights and gates may need to be installed in the future. **Table 8** identifies the existing condition of each railroad crossing within the Village.



An at-grade crossing with flashing lights and gates at Crotty Avenue / Douglas Street

Table 8. Condition of Existing Railroad Crossings

| FLASHING LIGHTS & GATES | CROSS BARS ONLY |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Main Street | Union Street |
| Crotty Avenue/Douglas Street | Route 36 |
| | DuPont Road |
| | I & M Canal Road |
| | Nettle School Road |

Given the potential volume of rail traffic on the CSX railroad with the addition of an intermodal facility, it would be desirable to have a grade separated (underpass or overpass) crossing within the Village. Within the Village's planning area, three (3) grade separated crossings should be pursued, one on Main Street, a second on Nettle Creek Road and a third as part of the E. 30th Road extension improvements south of Route 6.

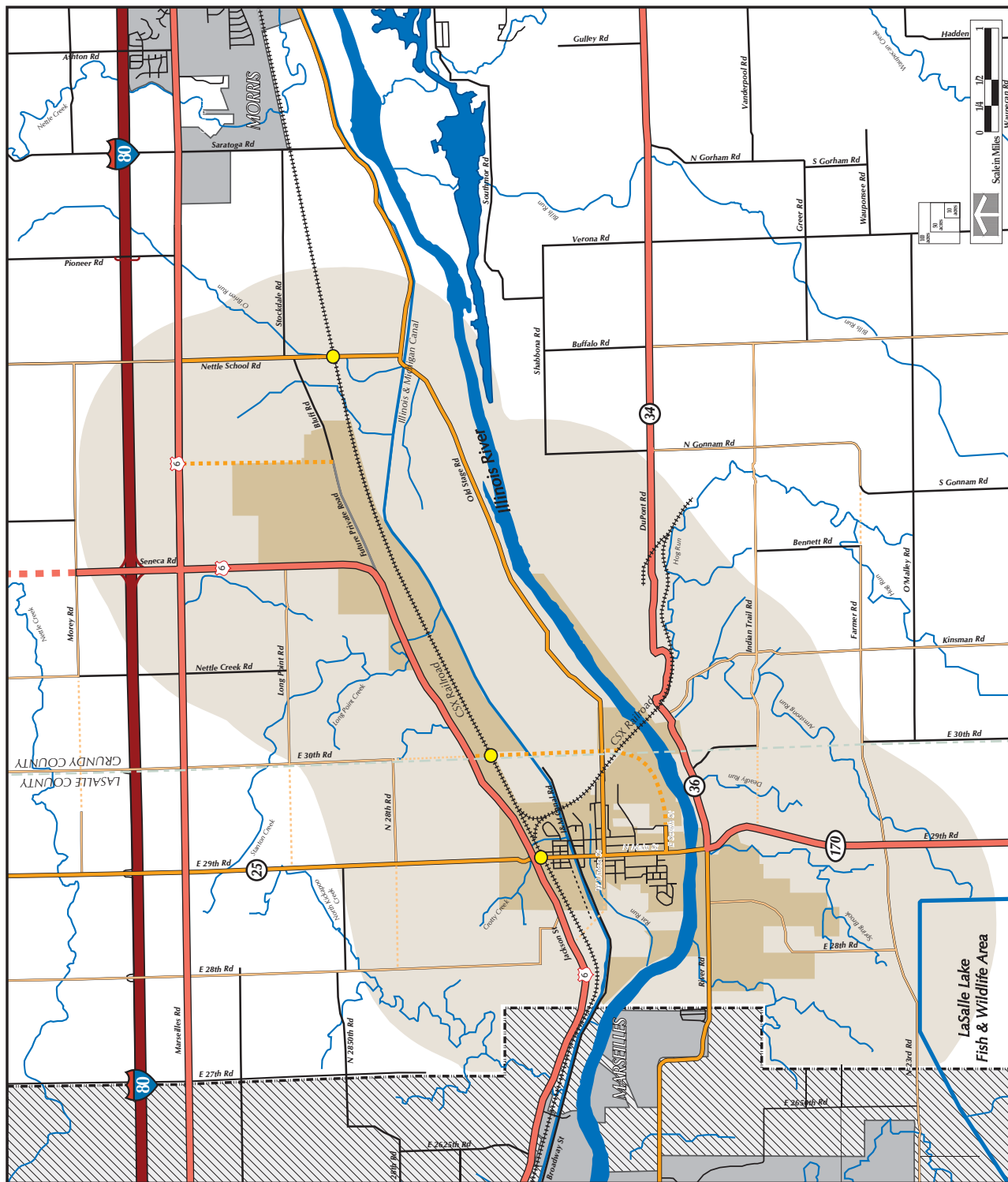
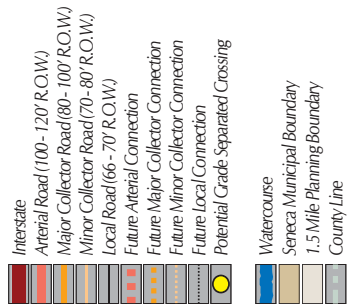
These grade separated crossing locations have been identified on both the *Future Land Use Plan*, *SubArea Future Land Use Plan* and *Future Transportation Plan* so that appropriate right-of-way can be preserved; and site planning and access layout of adjacent future development can be designed accordingly.

ILLINOIS RIVER

The Illinois River not only serves a recreational opportunity for the Village but provides viable means of intermodal transportation for industrial activities located along the river. It can be anticipated that the river will continue to be an important transportation component in Seneca.

Future Transportation Plan

LEGEND



MIXED USE TRAILS

Trails provide pedestrians and bicyclists with recreational opportunities and an alternative to road transportation. They also connect parks, open spaces, schools, and other community facilities to ensure that trail users are able to travel from one location to another on a safe, continuous trail network.

As development proposals are reviewed and approved, additional means for trail connections to the I & M towpath; existing and future greenways, open space and parks; schools; local recreation uses and regional recreational facilities will be required.

The *Mixed Use Trails Plan* illustrates a combination of future on- and off-street trails. Off-street trails shown along roadways will be constructed in lieu of a public sidewalk on one side of the street. Since topography, natural features and roadway improvements can impact the design of the trail, actual trail locations may change once detailed engineering plans are submitted for review. To provide sufficient space for future trails, the recommended width of an improved trail surface should be eight (8) to ten (10) feet. The actual access easement may be twenty (20) feet in width to allow for adequate “fall zones” on either side of the trail. For trails located along roadways, the easement width may be less. Future trails shall be constructed of asphalt.

It is anticipated that developers will be obligated to construct those portions of the trail adjacent to their proposed developments.



Future development should provide more connections to the I&M towpath.



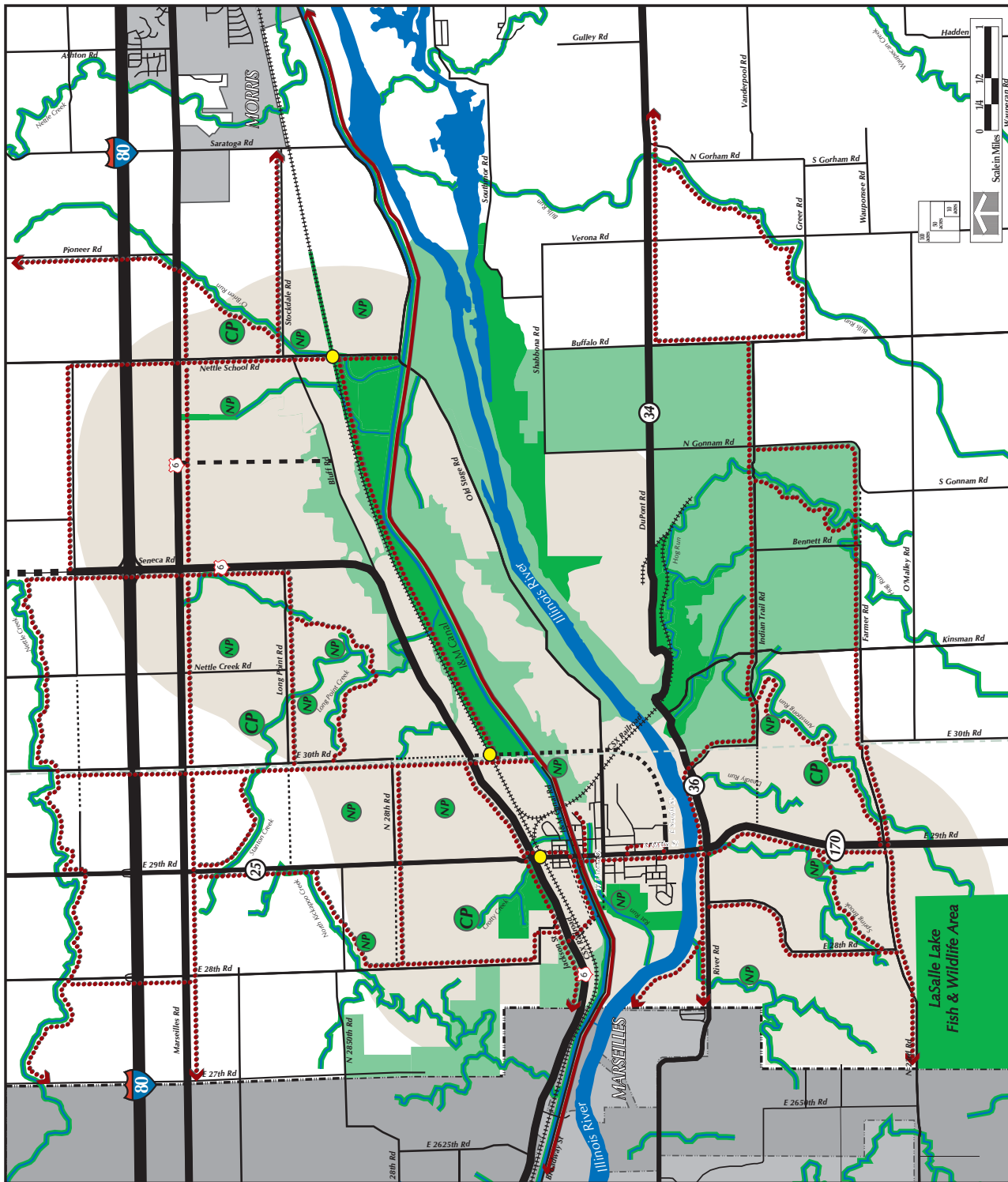
Examples of off-street trails include a trail in lieu of a public sidewalk (above), or along a greenway (below).



Mixed Use Trails Plan

LEGEND

- Future Trail
- Existing Trail
- Agricultural Areas & Conservation Open Space
- Parks & Open Space
- Public/ Institutional
- 1.5 Mile Planning Boundary
- Watercourse
- County Line
- Proposed Road (Refer to Transportation Plan)
- Future Community Park Site
- Future Neighborhood Park Site
- Potential Grade-Separated Crossing





Section VII: Future Community Facilities & Utilities

Municipal Facilities & Public Utilities

Emergency Services

Parks & Open Space

Schools

Public Library

Other

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES & PUBLIC UTILITIES

Municipal Facilities

Village Hall. As growth continues and the need for related municipal service increases, the Village will need to evaluate staffing requirements. Though staff positions may be created and added incrementally over time, at some point, a space needs study may need to be completed to determine the future functionality of the existing village hall and public works facilities. Not only is it important to expand the municipal services to meet the demands of growth, but it is also important that future facilities provide an efficient work environment. Maintaining the Village Hall within the downtown area is typically recommended since it can serve as a key catalyst for generating people traffic to the downtown. If the existing building becomes obsolete for its current use as a Village Hall, it is recommended that the building be reused for some other community related purpose.

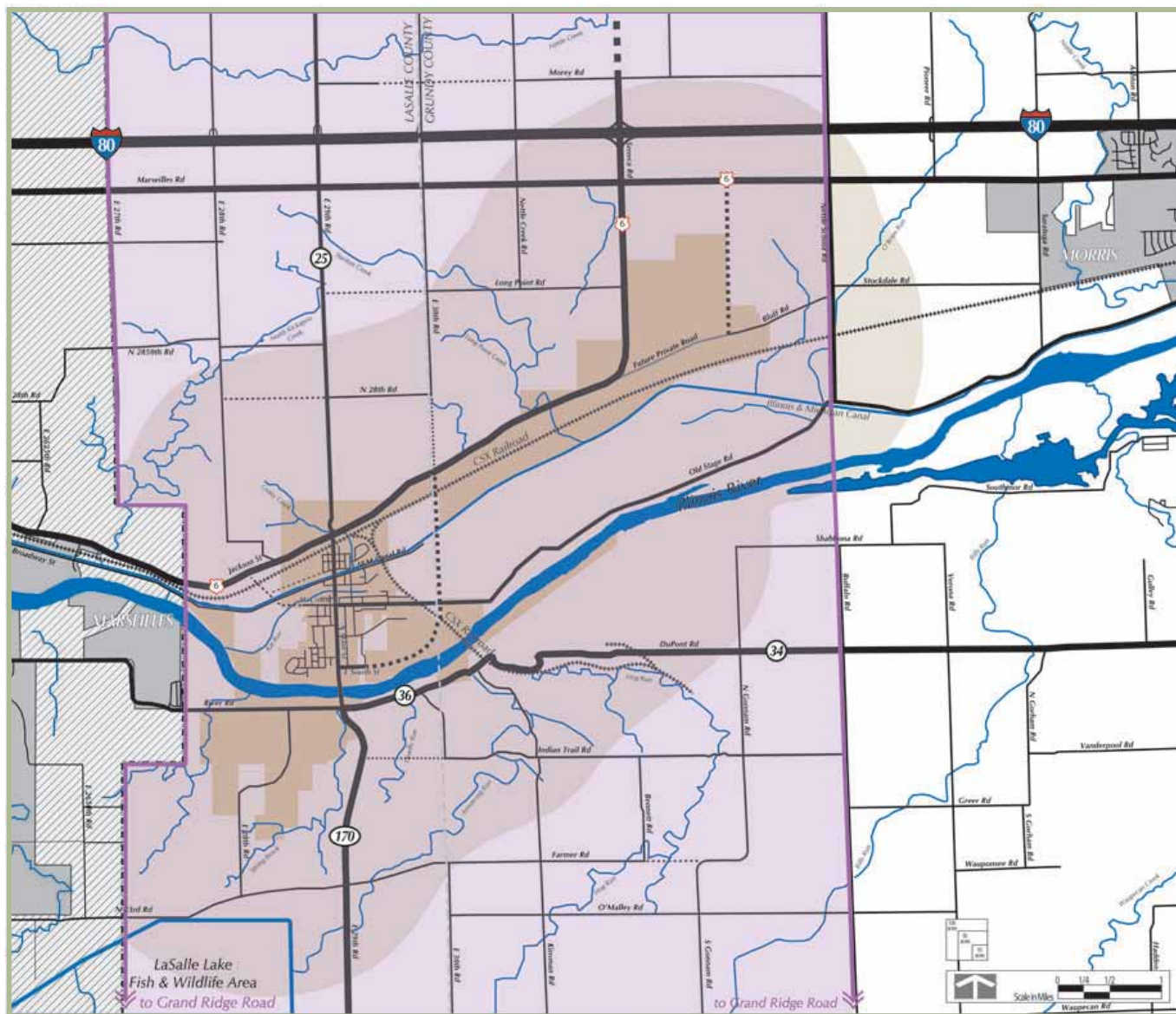
Police Department. Over the years, as Seneca has added residents, homes and businesses to the community, the Seneca Police Department has taken steps to address the changing needs associated with growth. As growth occurs in the future, it can be expected that the Police Department will continue to experience an increase in the number of calls for service, thus creating the need for additional full-time officers and civilian staff, vehicles and building space. As the number of officers and amount of equipment/vehicles increases, the Village will need to evaluate the usefulness of the existing police facility and its ability to provide a secure and efficient police work environment. Given the size constraints of the existing building and site, and the amount of population growth expected within the Village's planning area, a new police department facility will ultimately need to be considered and planned for. Depending on the location of a future police facility, a satellite facility may also need to be evaluated at some point. A strategic growth plan can be a useful tool to evaluate future staffing and space needs to ensure that the ratio of officers and level of services provided keep up with the demands of an increased population and expanded Village limits.

Public Utilities. In terms of future planning initiatives, Seneca is evaluating the need to upgrade the existing sewerage treatment plant (STP) as it relates to the timing of pending development. The possibility of constructing a second STP has been discussed however not being pursued at this time. Once the evaluation is complete, Village officials will have a better understanding of the best approach to take to address treatment demands.

Though the Village's current systems have capacity to accommodate some additional growth, a master plan for future improvements to the Village's water system, stormwater management program and wastewater collection/treatment is strongly recommended. Since the timing for a master plan is not immediate, it is encouraged that Seneca officials commission engineering studies and/or reports regarding overall future demands on the systems based on the projected population capacity and anticipated commercial and industrial development opportunities. These types of studies and reports can advise Village officials on the amount of needed expansion, locations for future facilities and the costs associated with such improvements. They also establish a foundation for the master utilities plan. In the meantime, these studies and reports can be effective tools for monitoring capacity of the existing systems and preparing the Village when confronted with growth issues.

Facilities Planning Area. Below **Figure C** illustrates Seneca’s desire to expand their facilities planning area (FPA) boundary to include the land identified within their future planning area as depicted on the Future Land Use Plan as well as any other land that results in additional expansion of their future planning area boundary due to expansion in the Village limits. The FPA boundary shown encompasses a total area of approximately 72 square miles. Any future amendments to the Seneca FPA boundary will require review and ultimate approval by the Illinois EPA. The Village Engineer can assist with the preparation of needed documents and the formal application process when an FPA amendment is needed.

Figure C. Desired Future Facilities Planning Area Boundary



EMERGENCY SERVICES

Fire & Ambulance Services

The demand for emergency services can be expected to increase with the future growth and development anticipated within the Village's planning area. The existing combined facility and site has minimal potential for future expansion as full-time staff and equipment/vehicles are added, however, given that response time is critical, additional stations will need to be considered and planned for. Future facilities will be based on ISO (Insurance Services Organization) location requirements for fire stations. A strategic growth plan can be a useful tool for emergency services as well to assist in the evaluation of future staffing and space needs to ensure that demands of an increased population and expanded Village limits can continue to be adequately met.

PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Park and open space are invaluable assets to any community. They provide a means of recreation where people can meet and enjoy each other's company within a natural setting. Park systems create a balance between the natural and built environments and provide relaxation, recreational space and opportunities to provide programs and activities for residents. At present, several youth programs (football, baseball, softball and soccer) are provided through respective and separate organizations. Due to the demand for these programs, the school district has provided the use of their facilities in order to afford Seneca residents an opportunity to participate in programs within the community. Combined school and park facilities are encouraged, and as presently demonstrated can provide a great benefit to the community. Solidifying this cooperative effort as a means to continue programming is essential in the interim. As the demand for various programs and activities increases with future residential growth, the Village will need to plan accordingly when accepting future park sites. At some point in time, it may be necessary for the Village officials and residents to endorse the creation of a Park District.

The Village's Subdivision Regulations require the dedication of public parkland based on 3.75 acres per 1,000 residents. The National Recreation and Parks Association suggests 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The Village currently has approximately 15 acres of designated improved parkland (Crotty Park and LST Memorial Boat launch) and one acre of unimproved parkland located in the Valley View subdivision. **Table 9** illustrates that based on the anticipated population growth for the Village at build-out of the proposed planning area, approximately 394 acres of land should be devoted to parkland. The *Future Land Use Plan* identifies recommended park locations for up to 13 neighborhood parks and 4 community parks, however the Parks Board and Village Officials will ultimately determine the type, size and location of any new park sites. A neighborhood park should be a minimum of five (5) acres in size, whereas a community park can range in size from a minimum of twelve (12) acres up to thirty (30) acres depending on its location and amenities.

Table 9.

| RESIDENTIAL LAND USE CLASSIFICATION | TOTAL POPULATION | REQUIRED PUBLIC PARK ACREAGE |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| Rural Countryside Residential | 1,047 | 10 |
| Low Density Residential | 8,161 | 82 |
| Medium Density Residential | 24,484 | 245 |
| Traditional Residential | 5,072 | 51 |
| High Density Residential | 596 | 6 |
| TOTAL | 39,360 | 394 |

Note: Park acreage based on a ratio of 10 acres per 1,000 residents as recommended by the National Recreation & Parks Association

SCHOOLS

The majority of the Village's planning area is located in the Seneca Community Consolidated School District 170 and the Seneca Township High School District 160 with a small portion of the northeastern part of the planning area being located in the Nettle Creek Community Consolidated School District 24c and the Morris High School District 101. Initially, it can be anticipated that new residential development within the Village's planning area will occur within the Seneca Districts. The Seneca Grade School District is currently at a capacity of 600 students, however future expansion opportunities at the South Campus can increase overall capacity to 800 students. The Seneca High School District currently has a student capacity of 750 students, but future additions to the existing building in accordance with the District's 2007 Site Facilities Master Plan can increase capacity to 1,100 Students. Both Districts have the ability to accommodate early growth within the planning area.

Based on full build-out population of the proposed planning area, **Table 10** shown below provides an insight into the number of overall students to be generated from within the Seneca planning area. The table also identifies the estimated required number of acres generated by the potential student population in Seneca. These projections will be helpful in assisting the respective Districts with planning for future growth. Since the service areas of the respected School Districts extend beyond the Village limits and proposed planning area, it will be difficult to determine future locations of new schools. However, key ways that the Village can ensure that School Districts needs are met with future growth include involving the Districts early in the development review process and incorporating required developer land/cash obligations.

Table 10.

| RESIDENTIAL LAND USE CLASSIFICA- TION | TOTAL LAND ACREAGE | RESI- DENTIAL DENSITY (du/ac) | TOTAL DWELLING UNITS | ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | | MIDDLE SCHOOL | | HIGH SCHOOL | |
|--|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| | | | | TOTAL STUDENTS | TOTAL ACRES | TOTAL STUDENTS | TOTAL ACRES | TOTAL STUDENTS | TOTAL ACRES |
| Rural Country- side Residential | 1,896 | .20 | 379 | 201 | 4 | 113 | 2 | 137 | 3 |
| Low Density Residential | 2,957 | 1.00 | 2,957 | 1,567 | 31 | 881 | 17 | 1,065 | 21 |
| Medium Density Residential | 2,957 | 3.00 | 8,871 | 4,702 | 94 | 2,644 | 51 | 3,194 | 64 |
| Traditional Resi- dential | 245 | 7.50 | 1,838 | 974 | 19 | 548 | 10 | 662 | 13 |
| High Density Residential | 18 | 12.00 | 216 | 114 | 2 | 64 | 1 | 78 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 39,360 | - | 14,261 | 7,558 | 151 | 4,250 | 81 | 5,134 | 103 |

Note: Estimates for school age population based on formulations from the Illinois School Consulting Service/Associated Municipal Consultants, Inc.

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Using the projected population of the Seneca planning area, the Library District can use this population information to plan for the future needs of their service area. Similar to the school districts, the Library District service area extends beyond the Seneca village limits and proposed planning area.

OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Using the projected population of the Seneca planning area, other community can also use this population information to determine any future needs of their respective agency or organization.



Section VIII: Comprehensive Plan Implementation

Plan Implementation
Annexation Policy & Boundary Agreements
Intergovernmental Cooperation
Monitoring & Updating the Comprehensive Plan

VIII — Comprehensive Plan Implementation

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Plan implementation consists of a variety of activities that will collectively ensure that the Village grows and develops into a well-planned community. Implementation tools represent proactive activities that the Village should undertake to generate the types and character of development that foster a well-planned community with a high quality of life. In addition to devising a set of implementation tools, the Village will also need to review and modify existing Village regulations to implement policies and recommendations outlined in this Plan.

The implementation phase of the planning process begins when the Village Board adopts the Plan. Adoption of the Plan then initiates the implementation of the recommendations and objectives identified in this Plan. Since the implementation phase will require time and effort on the part of the Village Officials, as well as sensible allocation of the Village's financial resources, the Village Board should prioritize all activities to be carried out. To facilitate the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, the Village should also consider the following activities:

- ✓ **Update & Revise Applicable Development Ordinances.** The Village will need to review and update its Zoning Ordinance and/or Subdivision Regulations to ensure that they are consistent with objectives of this Plan as well as desired development trends.
- ✓ **Update & Revise the Land/Cash Ordinance.** To be proactive in meeting future public parkland and school requirements as the Village grows, the Village will need to review and update its land/cash ordinance to be reflective of current market values for an acre of improved land, as well as include school land/cash obligations by incorporating current population tables and land requirements to determine a developers obligations to the Village (for public parkland) and the respective School Districts.
- ✓ **Review & Revise Development Review Process.** A clear-cut, comprehensive review process that identifies submission requirements and provides consistency as to how various projects are evaluated, will allow the Village to review detailed plans and documentation that when approved will hold the developer to the design standards and parameters as determined by the Village based on the recommendations and objectives outlined in this Plan.
- ✓ **Complete a Development Impact Study for Infrastructure & Services.** New development can have an impact on Village infrastructure (such as roads, sewer and water) and municipal services, therefore Seneca will need to study the necessary infrastructure improvements and the demand on municipal services to determine the proportionate costs attributable to new development.
- ✓ **Adopt a Floodplain/Wetlands Ordinance.** Given the amount of identified floodplain and watercourses within the Village's planning area, the Village will need to adopt an ordinance addressing these sensitive areas as they relate to future development. A recent trend has been that municipalities adopt a County-wide ordinance in effect to maintain consistency when it comes to development related matters.
- ✓ **Review & Update Village Permitting and Inspection Fees.** Since costs associated with new development can impact the workload and services of Village staff, the Village will need to consider routinely reviewing and updating permitting and inspection fees to ensure that fees are adequately addressing the staff services provided to new development.

- ✓ **Design Guidelines.** The Village will need to create and adopt design guidelines for all future development to ensure high quality land planning, architecture, open space, signage and landscaping.
- ✓ **Economic Development Initiatives.** Maintain open communications with all agencies that can assist in the promotion of Seneca as a place for economic development opportunities. Provide agencies with updated information regarding land use opportunities, community offerings and other such information needed to attract new business to the Village.
- ✓ **Develop a Downtown Plan and Design Guidelines.** As the future center of the community, the downtown area will be an invaluable asset to the community. It provides residents with a centralized gathering place that can offer the community with unique shopping, eating and entertainment (festivals, fairs, movies in the park, concerts, etc.). To enhance the identity of the downtown, the Village will need to consider the creation of a formal strategic plan for the area. Even though, downtown initiatives and a sub-area plan including the future downtown area have been provided in this Update, they can only serve as a foundation for establishing more specific recommendations that are needed in order to determine which downtown elements are worth preserving/enhancing, which ones need redevelopment and which ones are lacking or missing.

By developing specific design guidelines, the Village can standardize the visual character of Main Street. The guidelines should address fundamental design issues such as maintaining a complementary façade appearance along Main Street; the placement of buildings on their lots with respect to setbacks and orientation; establishing size and height guidelines for compatibility with surrounding structures; and identifying acceptable building materials for the construction and renovation of buildings.

- ✓ **Neighborhood Preservation Initiatives.** To promote attractive and well maintained residential neighborhoods and non-residential properties, and discourage property decline, the Village will need to resolve property maintenance violations, and provide education, outreach and resources to the community to foster attractive neighborhoods and developments to prevent neighborhood deterioration. Example initiatives can include establishing regulations addressing junk, debris and/or outside storage; overgrown vegetation or weeds; abandoned vehicles; storage of trash and recycling containers; and supporting neighborhood cleanup programs and events.
- ✓ **Develop a Streets and Infrastructure Improvements Plan.** The existing, older neighborhoods within the Village do not have curb, gutter, or defined parkways. This Plan should also include replacement and/or upgrades to substandard infrastructure (water, sanitary sewer, etc.).
- ✓ **Adopt a 3 to 5 Year Capitol Improvements Program.** A capitol improvements program relates the recommendations in this Plan with the financial capabilities of the Village. A capitol improvements program is generally defined as a prioritized record of public improvements to be provided over a certain period of time (generally 3-5 years) relating to the need for improvements such as streets, parks and open spaces, and other civic infrastructure.
- ✓ **Public Transportation Initiatives.** Seneca residents, similar to the majority of LaSalle & Grundy County residents rely on their automobiles as the primary means of transportation. With an increase in employment opportunities, it will be necessary for the Village to cooperate regionally on any future evaluation of the need for and benefits of establishing a regional public transportation system.
- ✓ **Prepare an Affordable Housing Strategy.** Though not an issue now, as the community continues to grow it will be important to ensure that as the housing stock increases and house values rise, that affordable housing opportunities continue to exist. Affordable housing isn't intended to reduce the quality of or standards by which housing is constructed, but to provide residents of all income levels a chance to live in a desirable neighborhood through cooperative efforts between a public/private partnership.

- ✓ **Prepare a Telecommunications Plan.** The ability of a community to provide quality telecommunication service is as important as providing an efficient transportation network and adequate public utilities (such as sewer and water). A solid telecommunication network will benefit both residents and businesses. Given the competitive nature of economic development in general, high quality and easily accessible telecommunication service can help distinguish a community and attract potential future development.

ANNEXATION POLICY & BOUNDARY AGREEMENTS

The Village of Seneca should actively pursue annexation of properties to control development within its planning area. While state statutes provide municipalities with some control over subdivision standards within 1-1/2 miles of a municipal boundary, a Village only has control of land use decisions for property that is annexed or can be annexed. The process of annexing land in Illinois also provides the Village and the private property owners the ability to enter into annexation agreements outlining a number of development controls which may extend beyond the standards set in the Village's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. Annexation agreements often outline who will be responsible for extension of roads and utilities and the timing of these improvements.

Annexation of properties that lie between two neighboring communities can sometimes lead to complications. As a result, neighboring communities typically draft a boundary agreement to ensure that their respective planning areas (defined by their 1 ½ mile planning areas) do not intrude on one another. A boundary agreement is especially essential for neighboring communities that are separated by a very short distance, such as the short distance between Seneca and Morris. Even when neighboring communities are relatively far apart, such as longer distances between Seneca and communities such as Mazon and Ransom, a boundary agreement is still recommended to curtail any boundary disputes in the future.

It is recommended that Seneca officials work with neighboring communities to establish boundary agreements. At a minimum, a boundary agreement should include a map delineating the boundaries and supporting text outlining any policies related to the boundary. Physical elements (e.g. rivers, creeks, major roads, etc.) and other types of boundaries (e.g. 1 ½ miles planning boundaries, facility planning area (FPA) boundaries, etc.) can be used as guides for establishing boundary agreements.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

This Comprehensive Plan Update promotes intergovernmental cooperation through joint planning for roads, parks, schools, and land use. As such, recommended intergovernmental cooperation will be needed, particularly in the following areas:

1. **Boundary Agreements** – The Village should adopt and maintain boundary agreements with all neighboring communities. Such agreements will allow each community to plan for their ultimate growth, avoid competition for right to annex individual parcels of land, and provide some understanding to each community what is planned for the “other side of the line.”
2. **Roadway Improvements** – The Village must work closely with Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and LaSalle County and Grundy County Highway Departments on future improvements and access to regional roadways that pass through the Village.
3. **School Planning** – The Village must work closely with respective School Districts to plan new school locations to serve Seneca residents. This effort should include review of new development proposals for possible land and/or cash donations, along with general planning for other site acquisitions.

4. Regional Storm Water Management – The Village should work closely with the Army Corps of Engineers on stormwater management issues such as flood control and wetlands protection. In addition, the Village should work with LaSalle County and Grundy County.
5. Fire Protection & Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – Work with Seneca Rural Fire Protection District, respective Districts and EMS to site additional satellite stations to ensure adequate services can be provided to the entire community.

MONITORING & UPDATING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is based on dynamic variables whose future direction cannot always be accurately depicted. This Plan is based on currently available information regarding community conditions and desires, growth and development trends, and an understanding of local community issues. Over time, most if not all of these assumptions can change. Accordingly, changes in variables such as population and development trends should be monitored periodically and compared with the Plan's initial assumptions. Based on this periodic review, modifications to the Plan may be necessary to ensure that the Plan is kept current and accurately reflects the community's needs and overall vision.

At minimum, the *Future Land Use Plan* should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that new development is following the prescribed vision established by the Plan. It is recommended that the Village review and update the Plan as needed. Typically, Updates to the overall Comprehensive Plan should occur every 5 years, but not longer than every 10 years, depending on the extent of growth and change in the Village.