

7.0 AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

This chapter provides an inventory of existing agricultural, natural, and cultural resources in the City of Evansville. In addition, issues associated with these resources are discussed and a vision, with supporting goals and objectives, is presented.

Wisconsin's Smart Growth Law includes 14 goals for local comprehensive planning. The City of Evansville believes that the goals listed below specifically relate to planning for agricultural and natural resources:

- Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and environmental corridors.
- Protection of economically productive "agricultural" areas.
- Protection of agricultural lands for agricultural purposes.

During the Kick-Off Meeting, residents identified the following values related to this element:

- We value the history defined by historical buildings/ architecture, traditional downtown and beautiful homes.
- We value our well-maintained historic district.
- We value the peaceful, rural agricultural setting beyond City limits.

Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources Vision

In 2025, Lake Leota is a clean community asset with abundant fishing and wildlife. Paddlers enjoy the lake's cool, clear water. Residents and visitors also enjoy walking along the Allen Creek Trail between Lake Leota and the Evansville Wildlife Area.

Due to Evansville's ability to accommodate area growth, development pressures in surrounding communities have been reduced. As a result, these towns have been able to direct development toward Evansville in order to preserve their own rural character, maintaining farmland, and protect woodlands.

Within the City, natural features are preserved through effective ordinances. Trees, undeveloped green space, and creative landscaping are important ingredients that contribute to community character.

As has been the tradition, Evansville is renowned for its historic community character. Residents and business-owners have preserved the City's historic buildings and neighborhoods. Evansville offers an array of local restaurants, parks, school and community productions, and a community center to provide cultural and entertainment choices to residents. Every year, community events bring residents together to celebrate the community.

Agricultural Resources

There is agricultural land within the current City limits, but little of it would be considered prime farmland. The City anticipates that much of the agricultural land within the City limits will be developed, although the City believes substantial portions should be preserved as green space, including environmental corridors, when the land ceases to be actively cultivated.

The City anticipates that the new comprehensive plans of the nearby townships will identify preserving agricultural land within the townships as a high priority goal. If townships adopt this goal, the City will strongly support the townships in preserving agricultural land in the townships, provided the land to be preserved is not identified in this plan's *Future Land Use Maps* as being a likely site of future urban development. The City will consider and likely will attempt to implement any request by the townships for changes in City policy that would assist the townships in preserving agricultural land not marked for future urban development. The City also will consider requests to change this plan's *Future Land Use Maps* to preserve as agricultural land areas marked for urban development, but the City will be more reluctant to accommodate such requests, because the areas marked for future urban development can be served efficiently with sanitary sewer service.

Natural Resources and Environmental Concerns

Natural resources help to determine the potential for development. Geology, topography, drainage patterns, floodplains, wetlands, and soil characteristics are among the natural and environmental features that determine if an area is physically suitable for specific types of development.

Preservation of natural resources (wetlands, surface and groundwater, woodlands, shorelines) is an important priority for the City of Evansville. These resources provide recreation opportunities that help to sustain the local economy and enhance the quality of life.

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The City of Evansville is located approximately 900 feet above mean sea level, in the northwest corner of Rock County. Evansville is just south of where the last glacier advanced in Wisconsin. The area to the north is hilly, consisting of mounds of glacial till caused by melting of the most recent glacier. The area to the south of Evansville contains highly dissected stream valleys cut into the bedrock. The last glacial advance did not affect the area to the south, and the steep-sided stream valleys once found throughout this region of the state remain, since they escaped being ground down and filled in by glacial ground moraine or outwash.



Bedrock in the Evansville area consists of Ordovician-aged St. Peter sandstone, which in some places is overlain by more recent dolomites. The St. Peter sandstone ranges in thickness in the area. Municipal well records indicate the sandstone is approximately 115 – 135 feet thick in the City.

Underneath the St. Peter sandstone is approximately 60 feet of dolomite, below which is at least 600 feet of late Cambrian sandstones.

The City of Evansville is located over what used to be a valley for a tributary to the Yahara River. The tributary flowed to the east along a route that is now STH 14 from Evansville to a point north of Janesville. The tributary cut a steep-walled valley under the present city, and eventually flowed into the Yahara River, and then the Rock River. The floor of the ancient valley under Evansville is approximately 100 feet below the present land surface, while just east of the City, the former valley floor is 260 feet below the surface.

When the last glacier started to melt and recede, outwash from the melting of the glacier filled in the ancient stream valley, leaving behind significant depths of relatively clean, permeable sands and gravels in the Evansville area.

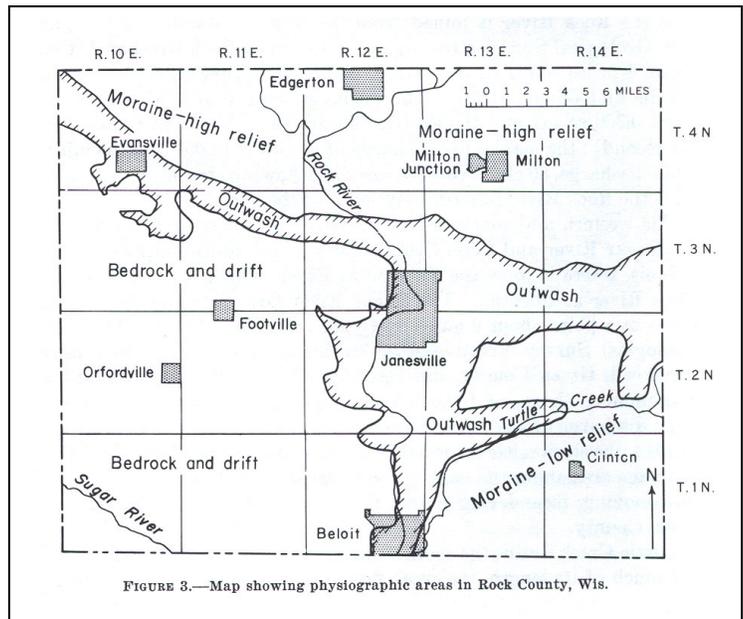


FIGURE 3.—Map showing physiographic areas in Rock County, Wis.

From E.F. LeRoux, *Geology and Ground-Water Resources of Rock County, Wisconsin* 1964

WATERSHEDS AND DRAINAGE

The City of Evansville falls within the Allen Creek and Middle Sugar River Watershed. This watershed covers northeast Green County, northwest Rock County and south central Dane County. The dominant land use in the watershed is agriculture. Municipal wastewater treatment plant discharges to surface waters in the watershed come from Belleville and Brooklyn. Treated water from Evansville's wastewater treatment plant is allowed to soak into the ground, and eventually some of it becomes spring water that feeds into Allen Creek

As is discussed in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element, Evansville has a storm water collection system. Storm water from undeveloped areas and older areas of the City flow to Allen Creek. In newer developments, greenways, detention and retention facilities are used to control storm water.

ALLEN CREEK

Allen Creek is the primary surface water feature in Evansville. It enters the City from the northwest and leaves to the south. Allen Creek is the source water for Lake Leota. Allen Creek rises in southern Dane County, flows through northwest Rock County and northeast Green County before emptying into the Sugar River. About 4.5 miles of the stream above Lake Leota are classified Class II and Class III trout waters (WDNR, 1980). Allen Creek below Evansville is on the State's antidegradation list (NR 102) as an exceptional resource water (ERW), affording it a greater level of protection. The stream below Evansville has a very good, diverse warm water sport fishery. There is some public ownership along the stream south of Evansville.

Evansville has a long history of volunteer, state, and municipal efforts to maintain the quality of Allen Creek:

- The earliest documented efforts date back to 1908 with the organization of the Union Drainage District. The purpose of the Union Drainage District was to dredge and rechannel the stream to create more tillable land.
- In 1909 and 1910, dredging the waterway from Butts Corners north to the Dane County line had deepened Allen Creek. During this first dredging of the creek, 77,000 cubic yards of material was removed. This allowed the surrounding land to drain into the creek and what had previously been swampland became tillable farmland.
- In 1951, the creek was dredged again and four laterals were constructed to extend the drainage ditch and drain more wetlands. An estimated 145,000 cubic yards of soil was removed in this process.
- In 1972, the Department of Natural Resources recommended improvements to Allen Creek to create a better Lake Leota environment. These actions were needed for many reasons, including the intensive farming of the land near the creek created erosion into the stream and increased the load of sediment carried into the lake. Actions included:
 - Riprapping the banks of the stream and placing retention ponds at the end of the draining ditch laterals to reduce the amount of silt that was carried by the stream. More than 4,000 tons of quarry rock was used to stabilize the creek banks.

- Fencing along the shores of Lake Leota and Allen Creek to prevent farm animals from getting into the stream. Cattle were especially harmful to the stream banks, as the dirt gave way under their feet and caused further erosion of the stream.
- Six cattle crossings were made at various points along Allen Creek.
- The banks of the creek were also sloped with a dragline and seeded with grass to prevent further erosion.

LAKE LEOTA¹

Lake Leota is a 40 acre lake divided by a railroad bridge into a smaller, upper lake (north end) and a larger, lower lake (south end). The lower lake has a maximum depth of 15 feet, while the upper lake is much shallower. Pan fish, trout and carp are present in the lake.

To understand Lake Leota is it necessary to examine at the turbulent history of this controversial lake.



1840 – 1922: From a Mill Pond to a Stream

No one knows for sure when Lake Leota got its name. For many years after the first dam was built in the late 1840s, the lake was known simply as the millpond.

From the 1840s until 1900, the millpond was used as a reservoir for the millrace that powered a grain mill. In September 1900, Evansville Mayor William Stevens purchased the mill property and promised that he would repair the dam and preserve Lake Leota. However, Stevens had no interest in operating a mill and when he could not find anyone to rent and maintain the mill property, he lost interest in preserving the lake. There was a public outcry to save the lake and for nearly 100 years the lake has been the subject of controversy.

As soon as the dam was broken and the lake reduced to a stream, the citizens who wanted the lake restored addressed their concerns to the City Council. In October 1901, they presented the following petition to the Councilmen. *"We the undersigned residents and taxpayers of the City of Evansville, Rock Co., Wis., believing that it will be for the best interest of the City and for the taxpayers and residents, that the former mill pond and land sufficient to flow it so as to keep said pond in good condition, be secured by the City, hereby request your honorable body to at once enter into negotiations with William Stevens and Byron Campbell and others necessary to complete the purchase, with the end in view of purchasing enough land for flowage purposes to keep the pond in good, clean, and healthful condition, and hereby request that if said purchase can be made at reasonable figures that the council at once secure the same."*

To satisfy the demands of the petition, the City Council set up a special committee of citizens and Councilmen to investigate the possibility of purchasing the land and restoring the lake. The

¹ Expert from *Lake Leota - From A Mill Pond*, Researched and Written By Ruth Ann Montgomery. Available on-line at http://mywebpage.netscape.com/ruthannmontgomer/Lake_Leota.html

committee had to investigate the feasibility and costs of raising the dam, clearing old stumps, rotten logs, and decayed vegetation.

William Stevens offered to sell the old mill pond to the City for \$800, but there were other projects that needed attention and the City Council could not fund the restoration of Lake Leota. Since Stevens had no interest in maintaining the mill pond, the dam was cut through and the land that had once been flooded reverted back to the landowners. Allen Creek became an unobstructed stream and the former swimming hole became only a memory.

For the next twenty years, there was a movement from civic groups and some citizens to bring back the lake. After many surveys and a referendum for a bond issue of \$20,000, the 1922 City Council was ready to act. The City of Evansville purchased the lakebed land to restore Lake Leota in 1922.

1923 – 1931: Lake Leota Established and Dredged for the First Time

In February 1923, the City Engineer, E. B. Parsons, presented plans and blue prints for Lake Leota to the City Council.

Before the lake was ever restored and as the dam was under construction several local businessmen suggested that the lake should be dredged of the black topsoil. The supporters of this proposal wanted the new lake to start out with a clean bed. This would make the lake more suitable for game fish and for swimming. They were also concerned that as the lake was flooded, the rotting roots of the plants covered by the water would cause an unpleasant odor. The project was estimated to cost \$1,000.



The City Council delayed the closing of the gates for a few weeks to allow the Commercial Club to gather donations. The money did not come in as expected and the dredging was never completed. However, the City paid to have the bottom of the lake smoothed. This removed the shallow spots in the lake and also removed the vegetation. In some areas of the lake, the bedrock was within a foot of the surface. A gravel beach was made at the north end of the dam.

The lake was filled on November 13, 1923 at 9:15 p.m. The new lake required constant maintenance. Just a few short years after the lake was restored, weeds and vegetation along the east side of the lake needed to be removed and there was also a proposal to cut down the shoreline.

The first dredging of the lake took place in 1931. Only the portion of the lake used as a bathing area was dredged. To improve the shoreline, dirt was removed from the east side of the lake. The dirt taken from the lake was used to improve the ball diamonds in the park.

In July 1931, before the lake was entirely drained, State Game Warden, Lois Marshall, two assistants and volunteers dragged the lake to removed carp, suckers and other rough fish.

A ton of carp and about 600 pounds of suckers were captured in the seining nets - large fishing nets with floats along the top edge and weights along the bottom.

1958: A Second Dredging

The lake was dredged a second time in 1958 when dam repair became necessary. This project covered a large area of the lake and about 25,000 cubic yards of dirt was removed from the lakebed at a cost of \$5,000. When the dredging was complete, the part of the lake that had been dredged was considered to be much cleaner and free of rough fish than the remaining lake.

Citizens were given an opportunity to see the results of the dredging that same year when the City Council decided to lower the level of the lakebed so that the spillways and gates could be repaired. The Councilmen consulted with State officials to protect the fish population of the lake during this project. The State's Conservation Department sent the district fish manager, Arthur R. Ensign, to talk to the City Council at their July 1958 meeting. Ensign explained that the rough fish would be seined and the game fish would be placed in holding ponds for re-stocking Lake Leota when the water was back in the lake. The Conservation Department agreed to "direct and assist" the project at no cost to the City. The seining of the lake was completed in the late summer and the City Council repaired the dam.

1967: Dam Repair

In 1967, the concrete dam cracked under the strain of a flood in the summer of that year. Early on a Saturday morning in late June, Chief of Police Richard Luers, discovered that the spillway was in danger of collapsing. He alerted other police officers and the floodgates were opened to relieve pressure on the dam.

When the floodwater subsided, the park below the dam was littered with dead fish and other debris. Sandbags were placed against the dam to secure it until an estimate of the damage was completed.

At their July meeting, the Councilmen agreed to repair the retaining wall and gates of the dam. In November, the lake was drained so that the crack could be repaired and new fill dirt placed behind the dam. Norman Thompson asked the City Council for permission to use his earth moving equipment to clean the lake bottom. The City Council refused his request and it was several years before there was any interest in dredging. The City did allow the lake to be sprayed with chemicals to try to control weeds and algae. This was done under the supervision of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR).

Water Improvement Efforts of the 1970s and the Third Dredging

By the early 1970s, there was increased interest in dredging the lake. The Jaycees formed a group of volunteers to clean the Allen Creek bed and Lake Leota on Earth Day in 1971. Pictures of cans and other debris floating in the lake were printed in the Evansville Review to illustrate the poor condition of the lake. Churches, sportsmen, firemen, and civic organizations, and scout groups joined together to complete the project.

In February 1972, researchers from the United States Department of Agriculture and the Federal Soil Conservation Service, aided by local volunteers, took samples from the lake to determine the

depth and chemical make-up of the silt. Their efforts revealed that the lake had once again filled with an estimated 247,000 cubic yards of silt.

A USDA Biologist, Laverne C. Stricker, also made a report of the water and sediment analysis of the lake. He noted that parts of the lake were below levels that would allow fish to survive. The lake was also filled with weeds and algae. Phosphorous levels in the lake were thought to be the result of runoff from local farmland. Stricker recommended deepening the lake by dredging it. *"A good percentage of the lake should be 12 feet deep or more. This will slow down growth of aquatic plants,"* Stricker wrote. He also suggested soil conservation practices that would reduce the amount of sediment getting into Allen Creek and Lake Leota from the watershed area.

The Evansville Jaycees established a fund to pay for improving the conditions of the lake. The WDNR recommended that cutting the weeds in the lake would help improve conditions. The Jaycees spearheaded the work. The project was completed in January 1974.

There was other work needed to maintain the lake. The retaining walls of the dam were again in need of repair. In May 1975, the City was allowed to lower the water level in the lake and dredge the shoreline. Dirt removed from the lake was taken to the City's old dumpsite.

That same year, in August 1975, the Rock County Board of Supervisors established the Lake Leota District and appointed a district board of commissioners to manage the lake restoration. In 1977, the Lake Leota District Commissioners hired John Threser of the Environmental Resources Assessment firm of Madison to do a study of the lake and make recommendations for improvements. Threser told the commission that some of the work already completed had helped to keep the lake free of sedimentation.

However, the report also said that the lake was murky and that carp, *"almost big enough to turn our boat over"* were rooting in the sediment at the bottom of the lake, keeping it stirred up. Weeds, rough fish and sediment infilling were the same problems that had plagued the lake since it was first restored in 1923.

The solution Threser offered for restoration of the lake was to remove seven to eight feet of sediment from the lake bottom. He recommended dredging and estimated the cost of dredging at \$2 a cubic yard.

Threser's report was submitted to the WDNR. The study had been the most comprehensive research ever completed on Lake Leota and its primary water supply, Allen Creek. The report reviewed the history of dredging and cleaning of Allen Creek and Lake Leota and described the soil and water conditions of the land bordering the creek and the lake.

The study indicated that 6,500 tons of sediment reached Lake Leota in a year from Allen Creek. About 30 percent of the sediment, an estimated 2,000 cubic yards of material, was trapped in the lake by the dam. The average depth of the sediment measured in the lake was at least four feet and most of this had been washed into the lake from the surrounding watershed.

To improve the quality of the lake, there were a number of problems that had to be solved. First was the sediment removal. The amount that would be removed was to be determined by the Lake Leota District Commission. The Commissioners could decide to completely dredge the lake, or to dredge just below the photic zone (the depth of the lake reached by sunlight). If the 24-acre area of Lake Leota was dredged to the bedrock of the lakebed, the report estimated that 150,000 cubic yards of sediment would need to be removed. At the rate that sediment was accumulating

in the lake, it would take nearly 50 years for the lake to fill back in with sediment to the 1970s depth. The Commissions decided to dredge the lake, if funding was available.

The drawback to this severe dredging would be that it would limit the ability of aquatic plants to survive in the first few years. Once there was sediment build-up, the plants could take root and survive. The report also recommended that the rough fish, carp and suckers, be removed to improve the aquatic plant growth and allow game fish to survive.

The estimated cost of dredging by hydraulic or earth moving equipment was estimated to be \$150,000 to \$225,000. Since the core samples had not determined if the sediment contained hazardous waste, the report did not estimate the cost of disposal of soil if it was contaminated². The DNR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers needed to issue permits for the dredging and waste disposal.

Stumbling blocks of various kinds kept the project from moving ahead. In addition to the cost, there were many government rules and regulations that had to be met before dredging the lake could begin. The engineering study needed to receive approval from the DNR for the permits to restore the lake cost \$8,000. Once the DNR studies were complete, the community was once again faced with a larger than expected cost for renovating the lake. By 1982, the DNR had increased the estimate to \$400,000, including removing 200,000 cubic feet of sediment at a cost of \$1.32 to \$2.02 per cubic yard.

In April 1982, an advisory referendum was presented to Evansville voters asking them to support \$200,000 of the cost. More than 600 people cast their ballots on the advisory referendum. 429 People voted to approve the \$200,000 to restore the lake. 213 People voted against the advisory referendum. At their next meeting, the Evansville City Councilmen voted unanimously to approve the application of a grant to pay for the remaining \$200,000 for dredging the lake.

1990 – January 2005

By 1990, the Department of Natural Resources had told the City Council that it would either have to repair the dam so that it could withstand a flood, or tear out the dam. The cost of dam repair was estimated at \$80,000. The City Council once again voted to have an advisory referendum for an appropriation of \$300,000 to repair the dam and dredge the lake. Once again citizens gave the Council the approval to go ahead with the spending. This time the vote was 515 for the spending and 247 against.

However, only the dam repair was actually approved by the City Council. In 1993, Lake Leota's water was drawn down and residents could see how little depth there was to the water in the lake. During the time the water was drained from the lake, the dam and spillway gates were repaired.

Evansville Review headlines in early 1999 once again focused on Lake Leota and the problem of lake restoration. Citizens are faced with the same problems as in the early 1900s. Should there be a lake or a stream? How much are the citizens of Evansville willing to pay for Lake Leota? The dredging of the 1980s lasted a mere 20 years, not the 50 years that were predicted. If the lake is dredged again, how long will the benefits last? Given the increases in development, projected future growth rates and the associated increases in impervious surface (e.g. roads, driveways, rooftops) it is likely that impacts of dredging will be for a shorter duration.

² Subsequent soil samples were not contaminated with heavy metals, so no solid waste licensing for disposal of the sediment was required. Moreover, the Village of Brooklyn installed a new wastewater treatment facility that reduced pollution coming into Allen Creek above the lake.

SHORELINES

Shoreland areas in the City of Evansville are limited to Allen Creek and its tributaries and Lake Leota. The City has enacted a wetland shoreland protection ordinance. However, the City does not currently have regulations to enforce what people who own non-wetland land adjacent to Lake Leota can do with their property that might have a negative impact on the lake. Rock County Shoreland Zoning protects the part of Lake Leota that is north of the railroad tracks, because that zoning was in place before the City annexed the property. However, there is nothing in the City regulations to protect the part of Lake Leota south of the railroad tracks. Shoreland zoning regulations are designed for efficient use, conservation, development, and protection of water resources.



Lake Leota – Upper Lake

GROUNDWATER & AQUIFERS

The area around Evansville is underlain by thick sequences of sandstone bedrock, which tend to yield higher volumes of water the deeper a well is cased. Many domestic, stock, and smaller industrial wells in western Rock County draw water from the St. Peter sandstone. Most municipal and larger industrial wells in Rock County draw water from the Cambrian sandstones, which underlie the St. Peter sandstone in the Evansville area.

Beneath the surface of Evansville is the valley of an ancient streambed, which has been filled in by fairly clean glacial outwash. This creates another permeable body capable of yielding water for consumptive use.

There are no significant confining layers separating the glacially laid near-surface materials, the St. Peter sandstone, and the Cambrian sandstones, so the entire groundwater system in the area is considered to be a single aquifer. Groundwater is recharged primarily from precipitation from above. Horizontal groundwater movement is to the east toward the Rock River.

Due to the relatively permeable materials in the area separating surface activities from the groundwater aquifer, wellhead protection programs³ are necessary to safeguard water supplies in the area.

The arsenic issues associated with drawing water from the St. Peter sandstone aquifer in northeastern Wisconsin have, for the most part, not been identified in southeastern Wisconsin. The elevated arsenic levels found in northeastern Wisconsin have been linked to a narrow sulfide-bearing zone in the top of the St. Peter sandstone. Wells that oxygenate that zone while producing groundwater from it have been found to release arsenic into the groundwater.

³ More than 200 Wisconsin communities have wellhead protection programs in place. For more information refer to <http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gw/whp.htm>

In the Evansville area, either the sulfide-bearing zone has been stripped away by past glacial activity, or wells are not oxygenating and drawing water from that zone. Nevertheless, testing potable wells for arsenic is a prudent means to assure a safe water supply.

WETLANDS & FLOODPLAINS

Wetlands act as a natural filtering system for sediment and nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrates. They also serve as a natural buffer, protecting shorelines and stream banks from erosion. Wetlands are also essential in providing wildlife habitat, flood control, and groundwater recharge.

Floodplains serve many important functions related to flood and erosion control, water quality, groundwater recharge and fish and wildlife habitats. Areas susceptible to flooding are considered unsuitable for development because of risks to lives and property.

Due to these benefits, regulations place limitations on the development and use of wetlands and floodplains. Under sections 87.3 and 144.26 of the Wisconsin Statutes, a municipality has the authority to give greater protection to wetlands, shoreland and floodplain areas.

WOODLANDS

Prior to settlement, the vegetation of Rock County was entirely forested with areas of mixed conifer-northern hardwood forest. As people moved to the area, much of the forests were cleared for agricultural crops. The City of Evansville was originally called "The Grove" because of a large stand of timber to the northwest. Early industries included a sawmill and gristmill on Allen Creek that cleared portions of the timber. Evansville has been designated as a Tree City USA for the amount of trees planted by the City in 2001, 2002, and 2003. The City planted many of these trees in the terraces along streets in new residential subdivisions, using funds donated by the developers and builders.

WILDLIFE HABITATS

Unfortunately there is not a source of comprehensive habitat information for Evansville. To protect habitat areas from encroachment, detailed habitat information collected by the WDNR is not available to the public. Resident observation is the best available local resource about wildlife habitat areas.

Primary wildlife habitat areas correspond to the environmental corridors shown on the *Natural Features Map*. These areas provide food and cover for deer, raccoons, skunk and other small creatures common in the area. Nearby farm fields also serve as a food source for deer, sandhill cranes, turkeys and waterfowl in the area. [Farmland is also a very important local wildlife habitat that provides travel corridors between waterways and woodlands. Farmland also provides cover opportunities and large contiguous open spaces needed by wildlife.](#)

Wildlife Habitat Fragmentation

A primary threat to wildlife is **fragmentation** -- the breaking up of larger habitat areas into smaller sections. Fragmentation decreases wildlife population sizes, isolates habitat areas and creates more edges -- where two dissimilar habitats meet (i.e. grassland and residential subdivisions).

Aquatic habitats include Lake Leota and Allen Creek. The quality of these water resources as aquatic habitats was discussed in previous sections of this chapter.

Unfortunately, it must be noted here that Rock County has had deer test positive for Chronic Wasting Disease. In 2004, the eradication zone expanded from the Wisconsin State Line to USH 14 in Rock County.

EVANSVILLE WILDLIFE AREA

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources manages the Evansville Wildlife Area that is located approximately 1 mile south of the City on STH 213. This property includes 6,567 acres (564 of which is owned by the WDNR and 6,003 is leased). The property includes 12 parking lots for visitor use. Principal wildlife observed in the area includes pheasants, rabbits, deer, squirrels, quail, songbirds, and sandhill cranes. Trout fishing and bird watching are common recreational pursuits by visitors to the property. The Evansville Wildlife Area includes a variety of natural habitats including, marsh, woodlots, stream, cropland and grassland.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

There are many threatened and endangered plant and animal species in Rock County. Numerous endangered, threatened and otherwise rare species live in Rock County. Unfortunately, there is not a specific list or map available for Evansville. The WDNR does have county maps available of threatened and endangered species. These maps are very general and do not specially identify habitat areas within the county. The reason for this is because the WDNR does not want people to visit or otherwise intrude on the habitats of endangered and threatened species. The WDNR is attempting to identify and catalog endangered plant and animal species across the state. For a complete, up-to-date list, refer to www.dnr.state.wi.us. The state and federal government have programs and laws in effect to protect threatened and endangered plant and animal species in the City of Evansville and beyond.

EXOTIC AND INVASIVE SPECIES

Non-native, or exotic, plant and animal species have been recognized in recent years as a major threat to the integrity of native habitats and species, as well as a potential economic threat (damage to crops, tourist economy, etc). The WDNR requires that any person seeking to bring a non-native fish or wild animal for introduction in Wisconsin obtain a permit. The City of Evansville can help combat exotic species by educating residents about non-native species, encouraging residents to use native plants in landscaping, and developing ordinances.

METALLIC AND NON-METALLIC MINING RESOURCES

Since Evansville is located on a glacial outwash plain, it has a good supply of sand and gravel. These deposits are located along Allen Creek and also in the eastern half of the City. There are no metallic or non-metallic mining operations in the City of Evansville.

SOILS^{4 5}

There are four general associations of soils in and around Evansville. North of the City is the **Kidder-St. Charles Association**. These are deep, well drained and moderately well drained. Most of this soil is cultivated and used to grow corn, soybeans, small grains and legumes. The major soil types in this association have slopes of less than 6% and no serious limitations for use as home sites and septic tank systems.

The **Plano-Warsaw-Dreden Association** covers most of the City. It consists of deep and moderately deep, well drained and moderately well drained, nearly level to sloping soils over stratified sand and gravel. Most of this association is cultivated and used to grow corn, soybeans, small grains, and legumes. The more sloping soils in this association are subject to erosion. There are many good sources of sand and gravel in this association. Due to the porous substratum, there is some danger of groundwater pollution from septic tank systems.

The **Sebewa-Kane Association** is found in the southern and central parts of the City. These are moderately deep, poorly drained and somewhat poorly drained, nearly level and gently sloping soils over stratified sand and gravel. Most of this association is cultivated and used to grow corn, soybeans, small grains and legumes. Wet soils that have not been drained are either used as pasture land or wildlife habitat. Proper drainage is the main concern in maintaining the wet soils for dependable crop production. The loose sand that underlies the Kan and Sebewa soils can clog tile lines unless precautions are taken to prevent the sand from entering the tile.

The fourth association, **Edmund-Rockton-Whalan Association**, lies to the west and southwest of Evansville. These are shallow and moderately deep, well-drained soils over dolomite bedrock. Much of this association is cultivated and used to grow corn, small grains and legumes. The major soils in this association are not suitable for septic systems. There is a danger of groundwater contamination by unfiltered materials moving through crevasses in the dolomite.

The following illustrations are based on soils data. They are generalized and reflect areas of special concern. Specific use of a parcel would depend on further tests of the soils involved.

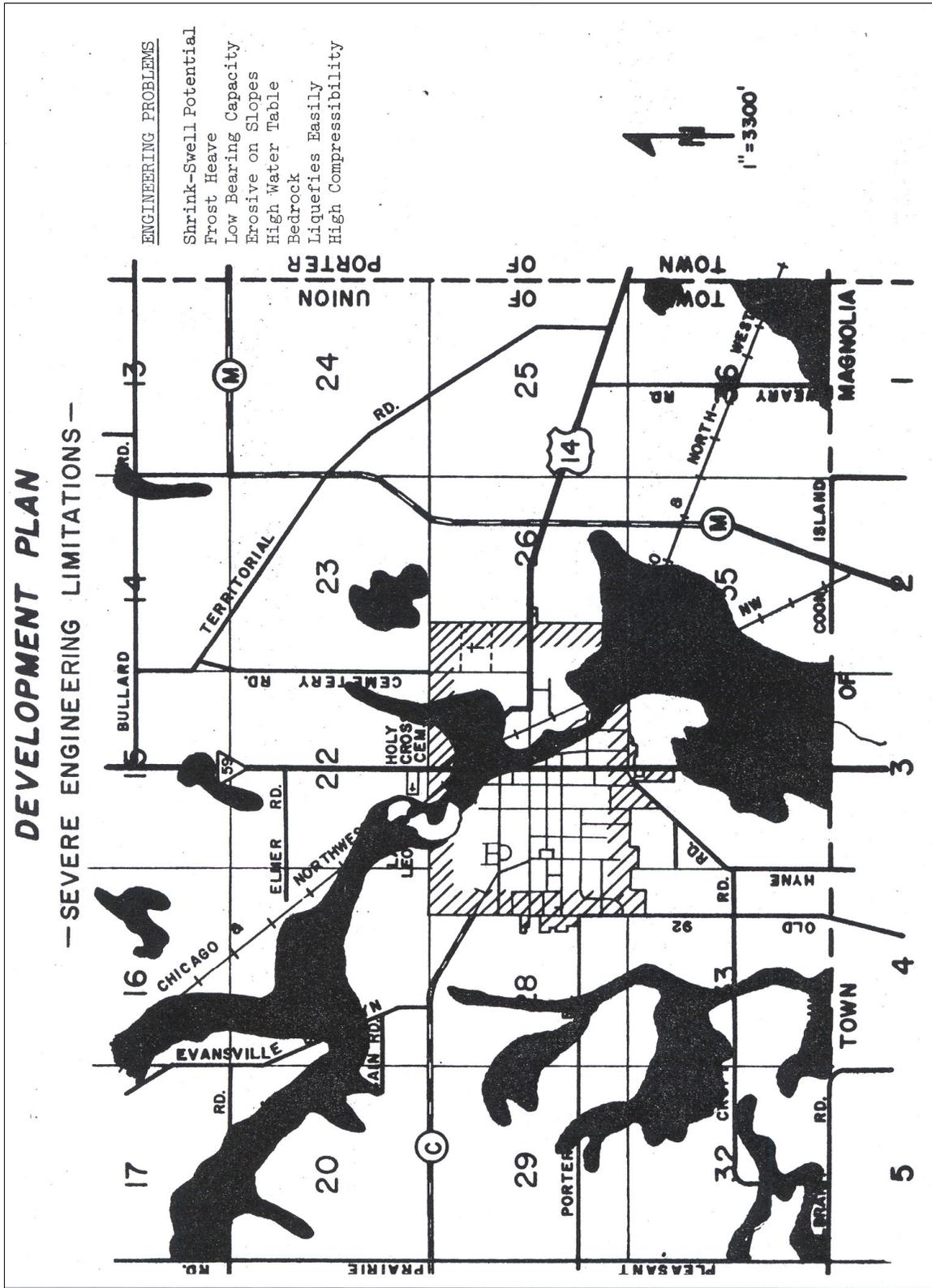
Figure 3 shows areas within the vicinity with noted engineering limitations. These soils are poorly or somewhat poorly drained and which would require special engineering to be built upon. Engineering problems include:

- A high shrink-swell potential (the difference in volume of a given weight of particular soil when dry and when moist)
- A high water table that can cause problems such as flotation of pipes and frost-heave
- The soil may have a low bearing capacity and not be suitable to support the weight of construction
- Bedrock near the surface makes digging basements or location of wastewater and water mains difficult

⁴ Rock County Planning Department. *Evansville Master Planning Program*, Volume 1, February 1977.

⁵ United States Dept of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, *Soil Survey of Rock County*, 1974.

FIGURE 3



ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDORS⁶

The *Natural Features Map* provided in this chapter includes environmental corridors. What follows is a definition of the areas included in this environmental corridor.

Lowland areas include wetlands, lands in floodplains, shorelands, and lands having wet soils. Much of this land is restricted from development by wetland protection laws. Most of these soils are also restricted from development because of the difficulty in having on-site sewer. These lowland areas include Allen Creek, areas to the North of Lake Leota, and the Evansville Wildlife Area.

Upland areas included in the environmental corridor have slopes greater than 20% and lands within the managed forest law. Areas with 20% or greater slope are very difficult to build upon because they are easily eroded. The intent of protecting these upland areas is to preserve, protect, enhance, and restore significant woodlands, scenic areas, submarginal farmlands and areas having slopes in excess of 20%; to limit erosion and sedimentation; to promote and maintain the natural beauty of the area; and to preserve areas having significant topography, potential recreation sites, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources that contribute to environmental quality.

AIR QUALITY

The following information is from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources:

“A few common air pollutants are found all over the United States. These pollutants can injure health, harm the environment and cause property damage. EPA calls these pollutants **criteria air pollutants** because the agency has regulated them by first developing health-based **criteria** (science-based guidelines) as the basis for setting permissible levels. One set of limits (**primary standard**) protects health; another set of limits (**secondary standard**) is intended to prevent environmental and property damage. A geographic area that meets or does better than the primary standard is called an **attainment area**; areas that don't meet the primary standard are called **nonattainment areas**.”

Rock County is an attainment area. Based on available data from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Evansville appears to have good-moderate air quality. Nearby areas to the east along USH 14 and to the south (in Illinois) are classified as having unhealthy conditions for sensitive groups of people (e.g. elderly, children, asthmatics). The nearest air quality monitoring stations are located in the Madison and Beloit. More information on air quality is available at www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/air/.

⁶ Much of this section was referenced from the 1996 Evansville Master Plan Update.

Historical Resources

Historical resources, like natural resources, are valuable assets, which should be preserved. The City of Evansville takes great pride in its history. This was clearly expressed in the community's values and strengths listed in the beginning chapters of this plan. This pride is also illustrated on the community's welcome signs, which read "*Welcome to Historic Evansville - Wisconsin's Finest Collection of Historic Homes.*"



Founded as a village in 1839, Evansville grew as a rural market community. Much of Evansville's heritage architecture is due to the steady growth of the community. A rich variety of architectural styles can be seen in the City. A walk up Main Street is a tour of more than a century of diverse styles in building. This is in keeping with the Wisconsin State Historical Society's designation of Evansville as having "*the finest collection of 1840's to 1915 architecture of any small town in Wisconsin.*"



In Wisconsin, Evansville is one of the pioneers in the preservation of heritage resources. During the 1970's evolution of the preservation movement, Evansville civic leaders actively pursued the foundations for the preservation of local historic resources.

In 1976, 22 citizens appointed to a steering committee facilitated a comprehensive survey of the historic structures in the City. A result of this survey was the Evansville Historic District, a 120-acre, 22-block area consisting of most of the downtown commercial buildings and near west side residences. Evansville has two listings in the National Register of Historic Places. The Eager Free Public Library was listed in 1977 and the Evansville Historic District was designated in 1978. The Historic District listing is 332 structures, 299 contributing and 33 non-contributing. The National Register of Historic Places is maintained by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. Listed properties are eligible for federal tax incentives for qualified rehabilitation and any federally funded project substantially altering a listed structure is subject to review.

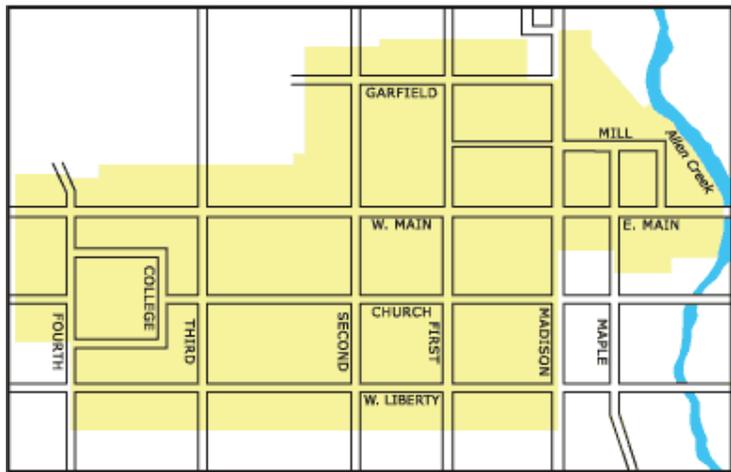
Wisconsin statutes require any city, like Evansville, that contains any property listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places to have an ordinance to regulate "any place, structure or object with a special character, historic, archaeological or aesthetic interest, or other significant value, for the purpose of preserving the place, structure or object and its significant characteristics". The same statute also requires cities like Evansville to regulate "all historical or archaeological landmarks and all property within each historic district to preserve the historic or archaeological landmarks and property within the district and the character of the district". Finally, the statutes provide for creation of a city historic preservation commission to designate landmarks and establish historic districts. (Sec. 62.23 (7)(em), Wisconsin Statutes.)

The Evansville Historic Preservation Commission was formed in 1978. The Commission currently consists of seven members appointed by the Mayor, six for staggered two-year terms and an alderperson with a one-year term. The Commission meets monthly and is charged with designation, review and education authority. The Commission receives annual funding from the City budget. Monies have been used to purchase historical reference materials for the City library, assist in the production of a City brochure, support historic education projects in the school system, supplement restoration funding for projects such as the Baker Building Project of the Evansville Grove Society, the local historical society, and provide funding assistance to the signage component of the downtown building facade improvement program. The Zoning Ordinance, in *Section 130-1121*, also establishes the Historic Conservation Overlay District. It provides regulations in addition to the regulations of the underlying zoning district. The Section states:

These regulations are intended to protect against destruction of or encroachment upon such areas, structures or premises; to encourage uses which will lead to their continuance, conservation and improvement in a manner appropriate to preservation of the cultural and historic heritage of the city, to prevent creation of environmental influences adverse to such purposes, and to ensure that new structures and uses within such districts will be in keeping with the character to be preserved and enhanced, thereby to protect and promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing property values and making the district a more attractive and desirable place in which to live.

The Evansville Historic Preservation Commission receives notification of all applications for conditional use permits in the Historic Conservation Overlay District and is charged with reviewing the applications and advising the Plan Commission as to whether the conditional use plans are compatible with the surrounding areas.

EVANSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT MAP



Source: Evansville Architectural Survey and Preservation Plan, revised second edition, 1977

Between 1978 and 1996, the Commission acquired 42 preservation easements for significant City historic residences. The City residences with easements display bronze plaques signifying their special historic value to the community. Six of the residences with restrictive covenants are located outside of the Historic District. A preservation easement, also known as a restrictive covenant, is a legal agreement that grants an interest in a historic property, usually to a qualified nonprofit organization or government to accomplish preservation

objectives. A property owner transfers to the organization the responsibility to protect the property from changes that would compromise its historical/architectural character. The covenants held by the Evansville Historic Preservation Commission provide protection for structural and/or exterior changes to the property. The easements are recorded in the county records office. The easement is permanently attached to the property title and granted in perpetuity. An easement is therefore binding on all future owners. Preservation easements

provide the best protection, other than outright acquisition, against inappropriate alteration of heritage buildings.

In 1985, the City of Evansville was approved as one of the first Certified Local Governments (CLGs) by the Wisconsin Historical Society. Additional administrative procedures are required of CLGs, such as forwarding of monthly minutes of the local preservation commission to the Wisconsin Historical Society and annual reporting to the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. Certified Local Government status provides eligibility for annual grants administered by the Wisconsin Historical Society with funds provided by the National Park Service. Past CLG funds were awarded to Evansville for the development of rehabilitation guidelines for the Evansville Historic District, heritage architecture educational materials, and a walking tour guide of historic structures. Currently, there are 46 CLGs in Wisconsin and \$75,000-\$100,000 in annual grant funds available. A CLG grant application to update the 1976 inventory is pending.

The City of Evansville has shown its commitment to preservation of publicly owned cultural resources. A recent remodeling of City Hall that included making the facility ADA-compliant was accomplished while maintaining the integrity of the building exterior. An addition to the City Library was completed with utmost attention to preservation of the nationally designated historic building. Infrastructure improvements can have significant impacts on local cultural resources and the City has provided historic street lighting in the downtown and is sensitive to appropriate street, sidewalk and landscaping improvements as the downtown revitalization project commences. There is discussion regarding reconsideration of participation in the Wisconsin Main Street program. The City's role as steward of publicly owned cultural resources serves as a model for the community.

The Wisconsin Main Street Program was enacted in 1987. It is a strategy for downtown revitalization designed to promote the historic and economic redevelopment of traditional business districts. Each year communities are selected to join the program. These communities receive technical training and support to restore the economic and cultural vitality to Main Street. Early in the Program's existence, the City of Evansville considered participation as a Main Street community. The City did not pursue inclusion in the Program. A more detailed description of the Main Street Program is provided later in this chapter.

For More Information....

The **Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory (AHI)** includes 371 listings for the City of Evansville's. Properties listed in the AHI are part of the State of Wisconsin official historic catalogue. The AHI is comprised of written text (and some photographs) of each property, which documents the property's architecture and history. The AHI inventory is housed at the **State Historical Society** of Wisconsin in Madison and is maintained by the Society's Division of Historic Preservation. For a complete list of catalogued historic sites in the City of Evansville, visit the AHI on the Internet at www.shsw.wisc.edu/ahi/.



TOP: United Methodist Church
 MIDDLE: Congregational United Church of Christ
 BOTTOM: Grace Independent Baptist Church

Cultural Resources

Evansville is a community with a strong sense of local culture. There are nine churches (see box at right) in the City that promote social, cultural, and spiritual growth.

The Evansville High School Performing Arts Center provides a showcase for Evansville Community Theater and performing artists in addition to student groups.

The Eager Free Public Library is also a valued cultural resource in the community.

In walkable communities (refer to the Transportation Element for more information) public space is tidy, well kept, respected and appreciated. In many areas, public spaces are surrounded by residential development so there are many “eyes on the street” to promote a sense of safety. In Evansville, residents and other stakeholders have repeatedly expressed their desire to see improvements in the downtown appearance (e.g. public sidewalks, façade improvements, signage, lighting, etc). Accordingly, revitalization efforts are planned in 2007. Residents have also expressed their pride in their historic areas and public recreation spaces (e.g. parks, tree-lined streets in historic district, etc.). As a result, the Historic Preservation Commission and City Council have sought to preserve areas that have special historic, scenic, or scientific interest.

Another element of a walkable, healthy community is celebration of public space. As is discussed in the Economic Development Element, there are many annual events in Evansville. These activities contribute to the sense of collective community identity and pride. They also contribute to the local culture by recognizing Evansville’s history and people. During the Kick-Off Meeting, residents expressed a desire to see cultural offerings further expanded as the City continues to grow. For example, the Evansville Community Partnership sponsors an annual Chili Cook-Off in March and an annual Music and Arts Festival in July in conjunction with the Fourth of July Celebration.

- The Churches of Evansville**
- First Baptist Church
101 W. Church St., 882-4488
 - Grace Independent Baptist Church
23 W. Church St., 882-5576
 - St. Paul Catholic Church
35 Garfield Ave., 882-4138
 - Congregational United Church of Christ
112 W. Church St., 882-5475
 - Jehovah’s Witnesses Kingdom Hall
Elmer Rd., 882-5475
 - St. John’s Lutheran Church
312 S. Third St., 882-4044
 - United Methodist Church
21 S. Madison St., 882-4622
 - Evansville Seventh Day Adventist Church
453 W. Main St., 882-2170
 - Evansville Community Church
457 W. Main St., 882-6552

Programs and Trends

CITY REGULATIONS

The Evansville Zoning Ordinance includes basic provisions for historic preservation (refer to the Economic Development Element for more information). City ordinances also address floodplains, wetlands and stormwater retention and detention (refer to the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element for more information). These codes lay the foundation for protection of natural and cultural resources. This plan suggests changes and new ordinances that should be considered.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

In 2004, the City created a new tax incremental district, TID No. 5, which encompasses much of the downtown. The City intends to attract redevelopment and rehabilitation projects to the downtown by providing “pay as you go” financial assistance to these private development projects. The City is particularly interested in projects that involve development of new housing, such as condominiums or apartments, which will increase the population density in and around the downtown. Increasing the downtown population density will provide more potential customers within walking distance of the downtown shops and restaurants, which will strengthen the downtown’s retail sector. If existing buildings will be demolished as part of downtown redevelopment projects that receive financial assistance from the City, the City will insist that the new buildings have historic appearing façades.

The City anticipates these redevelopment or rehabilitation projects will produce far more tax increment than they consume. This additional tax increment will be used to pay debt service on public infrastructure projects, such as replacing the aged sanitary sewer and water mains under Main Street in the downtown and reconstructing the street, curb and gutter, and sidewalks. These public infrastructure projects will include enhancements such as historic appearing street lighting and crosswalks made to look like brick pavers. In addition, the City will use tax increment to finance incentive grants for façade improvements to private buildings or to interior renovations needed to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses. The use of tax increment to improve the downtown is coordinated by the Evansville Redevelopment Authority, which the City created in 2004 for this purpose.

ECP DOWNTOWN ACTIVITIES

Since its inception, the Evansville Community Partnership (ECP) has recognized Evansville’s downtown as an important aspect of the community’s identity and has sought to foster the community’s participation in preserving the downtown. Once or twice a year, the ECP recruits volunteers to clean up the downtown, with assistance from personnel from the City’s Department of Public Works. The ECP also organized an annual music festival downtown, although this annual event has been moved to Leonard-Leota Park and will be held in conjunction with the Fourth of July celebration.

MAIN STREET PROGRAM

In hundreds of cities and towns throughout the United States, civic leaders are working to bring life back to Main Street. Whether it's the major downtown corridor in a small town or the commercial center of a larger city, Main Street is being rediscovered. As they work to reinforce and rekindle the economic vitality and values that Main Street stands for, communities are utilizing the four-part National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Approach⁷. Evansville may wish to consider participating in the Main Street Approach (refer to the box at right).

Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources Issues

What follows is a description of the major concerns expressed during the planning process. Strategies to address these concerns are included in the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of this element.

SHORELAND ZONING

There is a need to consider adopting a shoreland protection zone as part of the zoning ordinance. Evansville has a wetland shoreland ordinance to protect wetlands adjacent to bodies of water. But Evansville does not currently have provisions in the zoning code to regulate what people who own land adjacent to Lake Leota can do with their property that might have a negative impact on the lake. Rock County's shoreland zoning protects Lake Leota from harmful land uses near the lake's shore north of the railroad tracks, because that zoning ordinance was in force at the time the City annexed that part of the lake shore. There is nothing in the City or Rock County ordinances that protects Lake Leota from harmful land uses near the lake's shore south of the railroad tracks.

Similarly, if the City annexes property that contains or borders on a navigable stream, the City will have to choose among the following three options: (1) enforce Rock County's shoreland zoning ordinance, (2) ask Rock County to enforce its shoreland zoning ordinance, even though the property has been annexed into the City, or (3) enact and enforce the City's own shoreland zoning ordinance.

⁷ For more information refer to: www.mainstreet.org

The Main Street Approach

Building on the architecture, personal service, and traditional values of downtown's, the Main Street Approach has earned national recognition as a practical four-part strategy appropriately scaled to a community's local resources and conditions.

1. **ORGANIZATION:** Building partnerships to create a consistent revitalization program and develop effective management and leadership downtown. Diverse groups-merchants, bankers, public officials, the chamber of commerce and civic groups-must work together to improve downtown.
2. **PROMOTION:** Reestablishing downtown as a compelling place for shoppers, investors and visitors. This means not only improving sales but also rekindling community excitement and involvement. Promotion ranges from street festivals to retail merchandising, from community education to aggressive public relations.
3. **DESIGN:** Enhancing the visual quality of the downtown. Attention must be given to the elements of the downtown environment-not just buildings and storefronts but also public improvements, rear entries, signs, landscaping, window displays and graphic materials.
4. **ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING:** Strengthening the existing economic assets of the business district while diversifying its economic base. Activities include market analysis to understand the changing market place; adaptive reuse of vacant structures as entertainment or cultural facilities; and sharpening the competitiveness of Main Street's traditional merchants.

THE FUTURE OF LAKE LEOTA

From the start of the planning process, the future of Lake Leota was raised as a community concern. At the Kick-Off Meeting, residents indicated efforts to maintain and improve public access to Lake Leota and Allen Creek were local priorities. Specifically, many residents indicated the lake should be dredged to promote additional activities on the lake.

A local organization, Save Our Lake Environment (S.O.L.E.), has spearheaded an effort to restore Lake Leota's former beauty. S.O.L.E. and the City recently completed a road map for the restoration of Lake Leota:

Lake Leota Restoration Decision Making Road Map

1. Decide whether to dredge the entire lake or instead establish a shallow lake habitat in part of the lake (e.g., in the upper lake) and dredge the rest
2. Select dredging technology (hydraulic vs. mechanical)
3. Select sediment disposal sites
4. Redirect Allen Creek flow back into upper lake
5. Conduct a watershed study on the upstream Allen Creek watershed

Although a watershed study is not required prior to dredging Lake Leota, the City and S.O.L.E. have obtained grants totaling \$20,000 from WDNR for a watershed study to identify contributors of sediment into the lake. This study will be completed in 2005. S.O.L.E. is also examining habitat creation by drawing down the lake, allowing the sediment to settle, and planting aquatic and wetland plants. This approach in conjunction with a partial dredging seems to provide the most cost-effective method to restore Lake Leota.

LONG-TERM PRESERVATION OF EVANSVILLE'S HISTORY

At the Kick-Off Meeting, some participants expressed concern that while the City has a significant Historic District and Historic Preservation Commission, Evansville does not do enough to honor local history. Much of this concern seems to stem from the fact that:

- The zoning ordinance has limited detail and enforcement provisions.
- In surrounding communities, unique farm buildings are being lost to neglect.
- The City could do more to market its unique parks and historic resources to attract new businesses and tourism.

The City has not maximized its opportunities for historic preservation. For example, the Historic Preservation Commission's preservation easement program was dormant from the mid 1990s to 2004. Discussions with individuals at the Wisconsin Historical Society have indicated that the large number of easements held by the Commission is unique and remarkable, and to their knowledge no other community holds more than one or two easements. Residential property

Siltation Challenges

Lake Leota is a lake that has demonstrated that it is subject to accelerated siltation. This situation makes the lake less conducive to many fish. Lake Leota has several lake vulnerability issues that promote siltation, including:

Low Mean Depth

A High Shoalness Ratio – sunlight penetrates to the bottom of much of the lake, which supports accelerated plant growth.

A High Mean Hydrologic Residence Time – Amount of time that inflowing water stays in a lake is called residence time. The shorter the residence time the less high nutrient inflows will affect it because they will flow through the water. This is why efforts were made in the 1970s to improve the banks, shores, and lands immediately adjacent to Allen Creek by planting grasses and preventing farm animals from entering the water.

owners have recently approached the Commission about protecting their historic properties through easements. In 2004, Commission members presented information on easements to the historic homeowners group of the Evansville Grove Society in the fall of 2004. Several homeowners indicated their willingness to pursue easement protection. In addition, because City of Evansville is a Certified Local Government, the City is eligible to receive historic preservation grants, but has made few applications for such grants. The Historic Preservation Commission should become more knowledgeable about funding sources and more adept at writing grant applications.

Strategic planning activities by the Historic Preservation Commission are needed to accomplish Commission training, provide community education of the importance of cultural resource preservation and re-establish designation efforts, among other priorities. The culmination of Commission training and planning efforts would be the development of a community preservation plan. A City preservation plan would provide a road map of preservation strategy and activities for the community and would guide and prioritize the work of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The revitalization of downtown is critical to maintaining important aspects of the character and identity of the City of Evansville as it experiences rapid growth. Reconsideration of participation in the Wisconsin Main Street Program, refinement of design guidelines for historic storefronts and infill construction in the commercial district, and development of funding sources for renovation/ rehabilitation are items needing exploration.

For it to be financially viable to maintain and renovate historic commercial buildings in the downtown over the long term, downtown businesses need more customers and sales. A considerable amount of vehicle traffic bypasses the current downtown commercial district on Union Street. One of the goals of TID No. 5 is to enlarge the downtown commercial district to the east to include the area between Union Street and Allen Creek. If the Union Street area is redeveloped to entice drivers passing through the city to stop and shop or eat, then the City should explore ways to encourage these visitors to stay longer and visit the shops and restaurants in the existing downtown commercial district.

LOSS OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Given the rapid growth rate in the City and surrounding area, and the population projections that indicate this trend will continue, there is a real concern about the impact development is having on natural areas. Preservation of natural resources is important to preserving the rural character of the area, maintaining wildlife habitat, and providing green infrastructure (e.g. wetlands and floodplains for storm water management, scenic areas, etc.) needed to sustain Evansville's high quality of living. The City should watch for environmentally sensitive land near the City's limits to become available for sale and seek assistance from the WDNR, non-profit organizations or private donors to purchase the land for conservation and low-impact recreation uses (e.g., hiking and bicycling).

Coordination with Other Comprehensive Plan Elements

The development of the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element required coordination with all of the required plan elements. For example, when considering economic development strategies the limitations presented by natural resources (e.g. wetlands, floodplains) was important to consider as was the benefits natural areas provide to the local quality of living. Below is a description of the critical issues addressed with respect to the Transportation, Land Use, Housing and Intergovernmental Cooperation Elements. These elements are profiled because their coordination with the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element is critical to the success of the plan.

TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Element discusses the need to provide trails through the community to provide access to natural areas and parks. Evansville also has a guided walking tour of the historic district, which requires that sidewalks be well maintained to accommodate the walking tour.

LAND USE

Residents of the City have clearly indicated that the preservation of natural resources is a priority. As a result, when the *Future Land Use Maps* were developed special consideration was given to this priority and environmental corridors are provided. In addition, the goals, objectives and policies in this chapter include provisions to protect floodplains, wetlands, and other natural (and man-made) resources, including Lake Leota.

HOUSING

Housing, if not carefully located and planned for, can have a negative impact on natural resources and farming operations. The City will attempt to control the pace of new residential development to keep the City population growth rate close to the rate during the 1990s (27%) and to focus such new development within or near the current City limits in order to be able to provide sanitary sewer service in an efficient manner. Finally, the City will seek to encourage and coordinate the construction of new collector streets to provide more direct access between new residential subdivisions and USH 14, to slow or reverse the growth in the number of City residents who commute to and from work using township roads or county highways. If not carefully planned, additional traffic, people, and services associated with housing development can quickly destroy rural character. The City of Evansville would like to encourage development within its boundaries to concentrate regional (e.g. the northwestern corner of Rock County) development in a location where services are readily available. Directing development to the City will help to protect natural resources and farmlands in surrounding communities. This strategy for housing development is reflected in the *Future Land Use Maps*.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

As is discussed in the *Agricultural Resources* portion of this chapter, to protect the rural character of the area, the nearby townships need to take a direct and active role in farmland preservation. To be successful, coordination with Evansville is needed to direct development to the City, away

from important farmland areas. This approach brings jobs and development to the area, with far less impact on the rural character.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

It is Evansville's vision that the community will retain its small city charm in a rural setting. Natural resources will be protected and serve as an environmental, recreational, and economic asset to the City. Residential and commercial development will be in harmony with the City's natural environment. The City will also work, in accordance with the Intergovernmental Coordination Element of the Wisconsin "Smart Growth" Law, with neighboring communities, the school district, Rock County, and the State of Wisconsin to ensure that natural resources are adequately protected for future generations. Goals to support this vision are provided in Chapter 12. Supporting policies are provided below.

POLICIES

Encourage development within the City corporate limits, connected to municipal sanitary and water systems, to promote efficient, compact urban development patterns that maximize available services and includes adequate open space.

Preserve the most significant aspects of the natural resource base, that is, primary environmental corridors and surrounding agricultural lands, which contribute to the maintenance of the ecological balance, natural beauty, agricultural production and economic well being of the City and environs.

Plan for and support the extension of public services in an orderly manner to discourage scattered rural development.

Encourage the proper handling of wastes and chemicals so that they produce a minimum effect upon ground and surface water.

Regulate the type of industrial development near the City's municipal wells to minimize the chances of groundwater contamination.

Consider the additional costs both for actual construction and needed services associated with developing in areas with engineering limitations (soil, slope, groundwater, bedrock) when determining the amount of the letter of credit that the developer must provide to guarantee the construction of public improvements.

Continue to require water softeners to cycle based on demand rather than at set times.