

City of Rockford

2040 Future Land Use Map & Plan

Planning & Development Committee
Recommendation for Adoption

City of Rockford | Department of Community & Economic Development

Prepared by City Staff
Using GIS data & 2025 Aerial Imagery

Planning Horizon
Through Year 2040

Amendment #1
2040 Comprehensive Plan

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

01

Project Background

Why this update was needed and how it was prepared

02

What the Map Is — and Is Not

Policy guide vs. regulatory document; no zoning changes

03

Land Use Categories

Updated definitions and new designations

04

Key Plan Themes

Growth, housing, economic development, infrastructure

05

Notable Changes

Significant updates from the previous 2011 map

06

Public Engagement

30-day comment period results and staff response

07

Next Steps

Committee recommendation and City Council adoption

1 | PROJECT BACKGROUND



Data Sources Used in This Update

- 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- 2024–2025 Winnebago County aerial imagery
- Current zoning shapefile
- U.S. Census block-level dwelling unit data
- Parcel ownership data
- Existing and planned utility infrastructure
- Boundary agreements
- Google Street View field verification

2 | WHAT THE MAP IS — AND IS NOT

✓ THE MAP IS...

- A long-range policy guide (through 2040)
- The City's vision for how land may evolve over time
- A tool to inform zoning reviews, infrastructure investment, and development proposals
- The first amendment to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- A framework for community discussion and coordinated decision-making

✗ THE MAP IS NOT...

- A zoning change
- Authorization for any development
- An alteration to existing land use entitlements
- A reduction of legally established property rights
- A mandate requiring property owners to redevelop or make changes to their property

Any future zoning change requires a separate public review process and formal City Council action.

3 | FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

 Agriculture	 Commercial & Retail	 Future Urban Dev. (FUD)
 Industrial & Utilities	 Institutional	 Mixed Use Development
 Office	 Parks & Open Space	 Priority Acquisition
 Low Density Residential	 Medium Density Residential	 High Density Residential
 Technology Industry	 Transportation Facilities	 Water Resources

★ *New categories: Future Urban Development (FUD), Technology Industry, and Priority Acquisition*

4 | KEY PLAN THEMES

Guided Growth

- Direct development to existing corridors and infill areas
- Reduce urban sprawl and overextension of public services
- Support orderly, efficient use of infrastructure

Housing Diversity

- Single-family, townhomes, multifamily, and mixed-use
- 2024 Housing Needs Analysis projects several thousand additional units needed by early 2030s
- Workforce and attainable housing options

Economic Development

- Reinforce commercial, industrial & mixed-use corridors
- New Technology Industry designation for tech/R&D growth
- Support job attraction and workforce housing link

Infrastructure & Sustainability

- Align land use with transportation and utility investment
- Protect floodplains, greenways, and natural resources
- Coordinate capital planning with expected and planned growth patterns

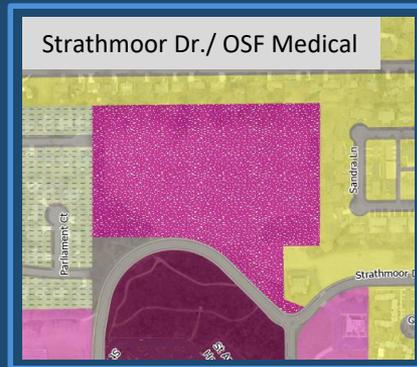
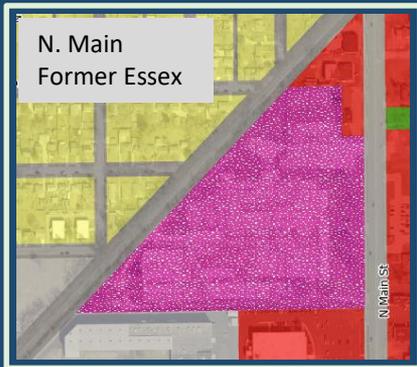
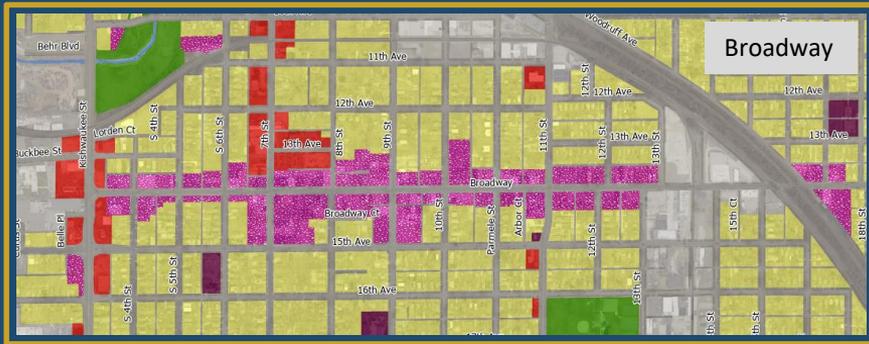
5 | NOTABLE CHANGES FROM THE 2011 MAP

- The previous map did not include water resources as a land use. The updated map includes hydrology with new detailed data that was developed by city staff. All waterways within the 100 year floodplain are included in the Future Land Use Map.



6 | NOTABLE CHANGES FROM THE 2011 MAP

- The Mixed-Use classification was refined, and additional areas of the City were identified as having high potential for mixed-use development. There are now over 25 areas designated as future mixed use.



7 | NOTABLE CHANGES FROM THE 2011 MAP

- Residential development was examined in detail due to numerous recent studies citing the need for a substantial number of new or repurposed units. The classifications were defined with greater specificity and given constraints based on the number of dwelling units per acre: low (0-3), medium (4-15) high (16+). The previous map had very little variation between the low, medium, and high designations.



8 | NOTABLE CHANGES FROM THE 2011 MAP

Methodology & Data Improvements

- This update utilized 2025 aerial photography at a much higher resolution than was available for the previous update allowing for higher accuracy and more detail.
- Analysis was conducted at the parcel level using GIS also resulting in more detail and accuracy compared to the previous map.
- Cross-reference with Google Street View, Census dwelling unit data, and utility infrastructure

Expanded Geographic Scope

- Now covers the unincorporated island portions of Winnebago County within the City and adjacent to the municipal boundary within the ultimate planning boundary
- Integrated housing component aligned with Comp. Plan and Housing Needs Analysis reports.

Housing Integration

- Tied to the 2024 Housing Needs Analysis & Market Study, projecting demand for several thousand additional housing units by early 2030's. The 2011 map had no such connection.
- Residential density categories are more formally structured and aligned with the City Zoning Ordinance (R-1, R-2, R-3/R-4)

Comprehensive Plan Alignment

- Directly tied to and serves as the ***first formal amendment to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan*** – adopted October 2023

Ongoing Maintenance and Update Framework

- The 2040 Future Land Use Map will be reviewed at least once a year to remain up-to-date and relevant. Additionally, amendments may be considered when circumstances warrant and when consistent with broader Comp Plan goals. Amendments are only approved through City Council. This flexibility allows the City to remain responsive while simultaneously maintaining a stable and predictable long-range planning tool.

9 | PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Process

- 30-day public comment period launched January 30, 2026
- Interactive Future Land Use Map made publicly accessible online
- Residents, businesses, and stakeholders invited to review and comment
- Comments submitted via email

Value of Public Input

- Ensures map reflects local priorities
- Highlights concerns not visible in data alone
- Strengthens transparency and community trust

Staff Response to Comments

- All comments reviewed and carefully considered
- Minor symbology modifications to several land use designations were modified to increase visibility.
- Limited adjustments to specific land use classifications following staff review
- No major changes were required

"All input received during the public comment period was reviewed and carefully considered and where applicable implemented into the Plan."

10 | NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATION

1

P&D Committee Review

Committee reviews the 2040 Future Land Use Map & Plan today and considers a recommendation for adoption

2

Committee Recommendation

Committee votes to recommend adoption to the full City Council

3

City Council Adoption

Full City Council considers adoption — this becomes the 1st Amendment to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan

4

Ongoing Updates

Map will be reviewed and updated periodically (anticipated annually) as conditions and data evolve

City of Rockford

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Questions & Discussion

Planning & Development Committee | City of Rockford, Illinois