

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

This Chapter presents a vision for the future of Tuscola and describes goals, objectives, and strategies to achieve that vision. Housing, Public Infrastructure & Utilities, Transportation, Economic Prosperity, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Community Facilities & Services, and Collaboration & Partnerships are all addressed.

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Chapters 1 and 2 assessed where Tuscola currently stands; the values, assets, liabilities, opportunities, and threats. This Chapter seeks to find where Tuscola is going -- **the vision** -- and how the City is going to get there -- **the goals, objectives, and action steps** -- as defined as follows:

Goal: A goal is a long-term target that states what the community wants to accomplish. Written in general terms, the statement offers an over-arching desired condition.

Objective: An objective is a statement that identifies a course of action to achieve a goal. They are more specific than goals and are usually attainable through planning and implementation activities.

Strategy: A strategy is a plan of action or policy statement designed to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan. Not all strategies will be implemented by the City and some may require collaboration with other entities. Policies typically use words like “shall” or “will” to designate firm commitments by the City. All future actions and decisions made by the City should be consistent with these policies, unless unforeseen circumstances arise which make a policy impractical or impossible to adhere to. Such occasions should be rare and probably indicate a need to amend this plan according to the procedures identified in Chapter 4. Policies using the words “should,” “encourage,” “discourage,” or “may” are intended to serve as a guide for City decisions and actions.

Action Item: These are the small series of steps taken to achieve the objectives and goals. Individually, these usually do not realize big change, however, achieving many action steps can result in noticeable changes toward achieving the goal.

OUR VISION

*Tuscola
will be an all-
encompassing community
that provides outstanding
products and services to our
residents and visitors; inspiring
a sense of community through
our enhanced businesses, civic
organizations, education,
and recreational
opportunities.*

TUSCOLA 2035



OUR GOALS

Housing

- H1** | Tuscola will encourage reinvestment in vacant lots and existing housing stock.
- H2** | The City will plan for safe and attractive housing to meet existing and forecasted housing demands.
- H3** | Future housing development will be in harmony with our sense of community.

Public Infrastructure

- P1** | Tuscola will continue to invest in improving and replacing older, outdated or poorly/under-performing infrastructure.
- P2** | Sewer and water service will effectively meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses.
- P3** | The City will continue to address drainage challenges.
- P4** | Remaining brick streets will be repaired and maintained.

Transportation & Mobility

- T1** | Provide a safe, efficient, reliable, multi-modal, and well-maintained transportation network.
- T2** | Local transportation systems will be well-coordinated with regional systems and investments.
- T3** | Transportation routes will be aesthetically functional and become a visually vital part of the community.
- T4** | The City will invest in connected and safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways.

Economic Development

- E1** | Retain, attract, create and expand businesses that strengthen the local economy, provide employment opportunities, grow the tax base, and enhance Tuscola.
- E2** | Tuscola's economic base will be diverse, self-sufficient, and resilient.
- E3** | Encourage residents to support local businesses through education on the multitude of benefits to the community.

Agricultural & Natural Resources

- AG1** | Maintain, enhance and reinforce the aesthetic quality of life consistent with the character of the city and surrounding landscape by preserving agricultural lands and activities, rural vistas, waterways, and other natural areas.
- AG2** | Ensure safe land use (agricultural, industrial, and manufacturing) practices which protect, enhance, and are in harmony with the natural environment.
- AG3** | The City will support its agricultural heritage and ensure a competitive system as an enhanced economic opportunity and quality of life for residents.

Community Facilities & Services

- FS1** | Tuscola will maintain and enhance recreation facilities and services that support both individual and community health.
- FS2** | Tuscola will respect its history and heritage by preserving and enhancing historic resources and celebrating our agricultural and railroad connections.
- FS3** | Tuscola will continue to offer strong educational systems that attract families and support success and social interaction.
- FS4** | Tuscola will explore the option for fiber / high speed communication infrastructure.
- FS5** | Tuscola will continue to encourage the activities and initiatives of civic and service organizations.

Municipal Government/ Intergovernmental Collaboration

- GC1** | Foster and/or maintain mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with neighboring municipalities, townships, Douglas County, State and Federal agencies, and the schools, colleges and universities which serve Tuscola residents.
- GC2** | Tuscola will continue to collaborate with non-profit and private entities to improve the quality of life for Tuscola residents.
- GC3** | Tuscola will continue to collaborate with developers, public entities and private entities to expand employment / development opportunities.

As a city grows and changes, the housing must also change to meet the needs of the population. While the City is not directly responsible for the development of housing, this chapter is included in the comprehensive plan to provide guidance for decision-makers and developers when considering additions to and renovations of the City's housing stock. Diversity, quality, and affordability are the over arching themes in Tuscola's housing goals.

Shared Citizen Concerns

- 1 | Need for new single-family homes; affordable housing; and senior condos/apartments.
- 2 | Need to improve/maintain older, existing housing stock.
- 3 | New housing should be located within or adjacent to the City.

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H1 | Tuscola will encourage reinvestment in vacant lots and existing housing stock.

Objective H1.1: The City supports infill and redevelopment practices to reinvigorate older and/or deteriorating portions of the community. In the downtown area, the City will consider creative (re)development that includes a mix of residential units, small businesses and/or civic spaces.

Strategies

- The City will consider incentive programs for residential redevelopment in declining or struggling neighborhoods.
- The City will support alternative uses for vacant properties which benefit the neighborhood (i.e. community gardens, mini parks, civic spaces, etc.).

H2 | The City will plan for safe and attractive housing to meet existing and forecasted housing demands.

Objective H2.1: The City will develop and maintain land use plans that guide the location, design, use, and density of existing and future housing developments.

Strategies

- The city encourages the integration of varied housing types and lot sizes throughout the community to meet the needs of residents of varied income, age and health status. This may include single-family, two-family, multiple family or senior housing choices within the same development area.
- New residential development should be connected to an existing or planned neighborhood area that incorporates traditional neighborhood design. Unplanned or unconnected residential development is strongly discouraged.
- Review ordinances to ensure subdivisions are attractive through green space, landscaping, and hardscaping and are kept maintained.
- Neighborhoods should include housing for all ages and family types.
- Multi-family units will use good building design to blend with surrounding housing stock.
- New development should be well connected to existing amenities within the city.
- New development should be strategically located and arranged to not interrupt a potential greenway or unnecessarily use prime agricultural land/resources.

Objective H2.2: Ensure that residential developments are built and maintained according to levels deemed safe by

industry standards.

Strategies

- The City maintains a comprehensive building code that requires inspection of new structures and repair of unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions.
- The City will increase its oversight and enforcement of property maintenance.
- The City will actively enforce code violations related to housing standards and property maintenance.

Objective H2.3: Existing neighborhoods will be maintained, enhanced and celebrated.

Strategies

- The City encourages and supports the creation of neighborhood associations and locally-led neighborhood planning efforts.
- Redevelopment should be compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- The City will work to improve infrastructure, walkability, lighting, streets, and sidewalks in existing neighborhoods.

H3 | Future housing development will be in harmony with our sense of community.

Objective H3.1: Tuscola will encourage developers to offer safe, attractive and diverse housing options.

Strategies

- The City encourages a mixture of housing unit sizes, types, and market-rate price points in all neighborhoods.
- The City will be aware of market demand for various housing types and will encourage development of units that respond to market demand.
- The City will encourage these developments to use materials, designs, and architectural elements which reflect the existing character of the City which enhances the small town, rural life feel in Tuscola.



Housing Action Items

- ✓ Continually analyze zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure quality housing that meets current standards and needs.
- ✓ Update land development ordinances to require components of traditional neighborhood design and consideration of existing neighborhood context. Greenspace, trails, landscaping and well design hardscape should all be considered.
- ✓ Explore incentives to promote rehabilitation of existing housing within a historic preservation context.
- ✓ Evaluate surrounding communities' incentive programs and types/styles for residential development to ensure Tuscola remains competitive in housing development.
- ✓ Increase budget for property maintenance enforcement.

Shared Citizen Concerns

- 1 | Lack of sidewalks in parts of town, particularly the north side between the school and park.
- 2 | Need for road maintenance and repair in parts of the City.
- 3 | Need for enhanced storm water management.

Local government is responsible for a broad array of essential services, such as sanitary sewer service, stormwater management, water supply, wastewater treatment technologies, roads, sidewalks, and pathways. The quality, efficacy and efficiency of these services have a direct relationship to quality of life for residents. While each of these services is individually managed and monitored, they are considered in the comprehensive plan to ensure that investment in these services serves the overall vision for the City. The over arching themes of the plan for these services are high quality, efficiency and equity.

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P1 | Tuscola will continue to invest in improving and replacing older, outdated or poorly/under-performing infrastructure.

Objective P1.1: The City will work toward the long term goal of installing curb and gutter systems (where feasible) in the older parts of town.

Strategies

- The City will identify where curb and gutter is not present and create a long-term plan for installation.

Objective P1.2: The City will work to find funding and sufficient revenue sources to make the necessary upgrades, changes, and maintenance to its infrastructure.

Strategies

- Look for creative funding, such as grants or low interest loans, to help cover the cost of infrastructure.

P2 | Sewer and water service will effectively meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses.

Objective P1.1: Sewer and water service will be safe.

Strategies

- Water quality standards will continue to be strictly adhered to, including both drinking water standards and standards for quality of treated wastewater returned to waterways to reinforce Tuscola's high quality of life.

Objective P1.2: Development will support the efficiency and fiscal sustainability of sewer and water systems.

Strategies

- The City will encourage infill development and other practices that efficiently and cost effectively utilize existing infrastructure.
- The City will continue to make investments that allow for long-term cost control.

P3 | The City will continue to address drainage challenges.

Objective P3.1: The City will work to address the chronic flooding problems in parts of the City.

Strategies

- Continue improvements to the two drainage channels.
- Continue to investigate alternate storage capacity.

P4 | Remaining brick streets will be repaired and maintained.

Objective P4.1: The City will work toward making the brick streets safe by identifying a sufficient revenue stream.

Strategies

- Create a brick streets management plan by identifying and categorizing existing brick streets to prioritize repairs and maintenance over the long term.



Public Infrastructure Action Items

- ✓ Conduct regular review of sewer/water capacities to serve future growth and development.
- ✓ Stormwater Management Plan creation and implementation.
- ✓ Use good retention/detention methods for new development and ensure methods are used in redevelopment projects.
- ✓ Conduct a stormwater utility feasibility study.
- ✓ Review neighboring municipalities brick streets policies and maintenance programs.

Transportation is an essential aspect of life. It is about the ability to readily and safely gain access to work, school, shopping, recreation, medical care and social gatherings. It is also an essential component of most economic activity. The City of Tuscola's overarching transportation themes are efficiency, maintenance, and enhancement of transportation options and thoroughfares.

Shared Citizen Concerns

- 1 | Lack of walking/biking pathways.
- 2 | Lack of public transportation.

T1 | Provide a safe, efficient, reliable, multi-modal, and well-maintained transportation network.

Objective T1.1: Ensure roads and paths meet the needs of multiple users.

Strategies

- New roads shall be built according to City standards and inspected before accepted for dedication. The City maintains requirements for new roads and driveways that aim to ensure safety for all users. Roadway design will account for snow removal needs, including adequate terrace width between the street and the sidewalk. The City may utilize its official mapping powers to coordinate long-term facility planning in its extraterritorial area.
- The City encourages the development of neighborhoods that are oriented towards pedestrians and well-served by sidewalks, bicycle routes, and other non-motorized transportation facilities. Bicycle and pedestrian ways, including sidewalks within developments, shall be designed to connect to adjacent developments, schools, parks, shopping areas, and existing or planned pedestrian or bicycle facilities.
- When considering new development proposals the City may require intergovernmental agreements that define the responsibilities of the City, the developer and neighboring jurisdictions regarding any required improvements to City streets and funding of such improvements. The City may also require that the property owner, or their agent, fund the preparation of a traffic impact analysis by an independent professional prior to approving new development. Where appropriate, the City may designate weight restrictions and truck routes to protect local streets.
- The City will work with representatives from the IDOT and Douglas County to raise awareness of local concerns when State and County highways in the area are slated for improvement. The City will coordinate improvements to adjacent local roads, when appropriate.

T2 | Local transportation systems will be well-coordinated with regional systems and investments.

Objective T2.1: The City will maximize the cost-effectiveness of the regional transportation system by coordinating planning, design and funding with regional and state agencies, as well as neighboring jurisdictions.

Strategies

- The City will work with neighboring jurisdictions to coordinate mobility goals and a vision for the future.
- The City will inform the community about regional and state transportation projects, and will encourage public involvement.
- Because of the large commuter population, the City will work with the Illinois DOT to improve access to and efficiency of major transportation routes through joint planning and policy initiatives.
- Coordinate major transportation projects with property owners, neighboring communities, Douglas County, and the Illinois Department of Transportation.
- Engage residents to ensure their commuting needs are being met.

- The City will continue to support regional efforts with Central Illinois Public Transit.

T3 | Transportation routes will be aesthetically functional and become a visually vital part of the community.

Objective T3.1: The City will coordinate with the Illinois Department of Transportation to ensure the Interstate-57 interchange is maintained.

Strategies

- The City will communicate with IDOT to ensure the interchange on I-57 remains in good condition.
- The City will work with IDOT to improve the Right of Way surrounding the interchange to Tuscola.
- The City will seek funding for aesthetic/artistic enhancements to the interchange which reflect the communities charm and vision.

Objective T3.2: The City will coordinate with the railroad(s) to clean up crossings and associated right-of-way.

Strategies

- The City will reach out to the railroad company to clean up railroad right-of-way throughout the community. Most notably, the crossings at Main Street, Niles Avenue, Carico Street, and Prairies Street.

Objective T3.3: Major interior thoroughfares will be visually appealing and functionally safe and efficient.

Strategies

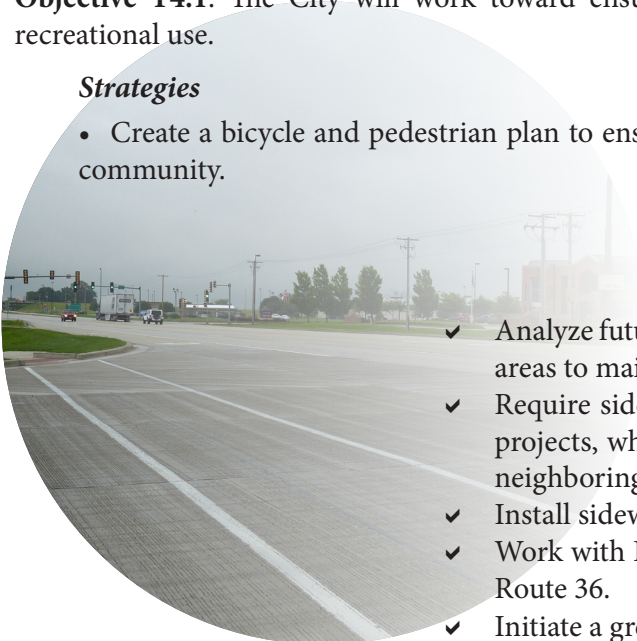
- Pursue funding sources for installation and creation of artwork and enhancements along key routes and at key locations throughout Tuscola.

T4 | The City will invest in connected and safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways.

Objective T4.1: The City will work toward ensuring connected and continuous pathways for daily and recreational use.

Strategies

- Create a bicycle and pedestrian plan to ensure connected, safe and efficient pathways throughout the community.



Transportation & Mobility Action Items

- ✓ Analyze future road extensions and connections for future development areas to maintain proper street connections and traffic flow.
- ✓ Require sidewalks for all new development and major redevelopment projects, whether sidewalks currently exist adjacent or not. Encourage neighboring properties to install sidewalks.
- ✓ Install sidewalks where none currently exists.
- ✓ Work with IDOT to ensure safe and proper pedestrian crossings along Route 36.
- ✓ Initiate a greenbelt trail system and inter connectivity of parks.

Shared Citizen Concerns

- 1 | Deteriorating buildings throughout town.
- 2 | Lack of “sit-down” style restaurants.
- 3 | Need to retain/attract younger professionals/families.
- 4 | Lack of employment opportunities (outside of minimum wage retail).
- 5 | Lack of recent investment within the downtown.

Economic prosperity is realized through the growth and retention of jobs, a diversity of businesses types, an increase in buying power, investment in the built environment, and a general improvement in the community’s already high quality of life. Creating economic prosperity requires the collaborative efforts of public and private entities, and the support of the community overall. Tuscola’s prosperity themes are education, diversity, industry, and growth from within.

The City recognizes that economic success requires extensive collaboration with other public and private entities -- the City will be an active partner in these efforts and will avoid duplication of services. City “support” for these efforts may include staff time, funding, policies, or simply endorsement.

Retention of young professionals, lack of higher paying jobs within the community, and proximity to Champaign-Urbana were all identified as issues that Tuscola must overcome to ensure economic prosperity.

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E1 | Retain, attract, create and expand businesses that strengthen the local economy, provide employment opportunities, grow the tax base, and enhance Tuscola.

Objective E1.1: Maintain strategies to promote sustainable economic development.

Strategies

- The City supports the expansion of existing businesses, and supports the attraction and development of new businesses that complement existing establishments for the employment of Tuscola citizens.
- The City supports the idea of public-private partnerships and will work pro-actively with private business and land owners to facilitate investment in the community.
- The City will continue to collaborate with neighboring municipalities, Douglas County, and local and regional economic development organizations to promote economic prosperity for the region.
- The City may consider the use of public land acquisition to expand the commercial tax base of Tuscola.
- The City encourages brownfield or infill (re)development before considering creating new sites within in Tuscola.
- The City will work with private landowners and State agencies to clean up contaminated or blighted sites that threaten the public health, safety and welfare and to redevelop these sites to productive uses.
- The City promotes its downtown as a compact, pedestrian-oriented business district that supports employment, shopping, and housing opportunities.

Objective E1.2: Use the City’s transportation strengths and assets as economic drivers.

Strategies

- The City actively promotes the development of land along I-57, Rt. 36 and Rt. 45 for commercial/industrial businesses.

Objective E1.3: Use the City’s agricultural strengths and assets as economic drivers.

Strategies

- The City continues to promote business growth connected to the agricultural economy, including local food production, value-added products (e.g. certified

organic products), and specialty commerce.

- The City continues to support the development of farm-based businesses and cottage industries within its boundaries and extraterritorial area to support farm families and enhance the agricultural economy and identity of the area.
- The City will work to improve access and safety for agricultural implements traveling to and from the grain elevator located on the edge of Downtown.

Objective E1.4: Create and maintain an attractive and aesthetically pleasing business environment.

Strategies

- The City maintains design guidelines for businesses to address landscaping, aesthetics, lighting, noise, parking and access. This is particularly important on main arterials and within the Downtown District.
- The City and its partners will prioritize workforce recruitment through efforts to make and promote Tuscola as a great place to live and locate a business. (Promoting Tuscola's high quality of life will make employee attraction and retention easier, and this will facilitate employment growth).
- The City will support the creative arts, including live performance, public art installations, art galleries, etc., as an important element of workforce attraction and economic development.
- The City will support healthy living practices and initiatives to increase community appeal and reduce health care costs.

Objective E1.5: Existing Tuscola businesses will retain and expand employment, especially those considered “primary sector”.

Strategies

- The City will support the needs of growing businesses and will work with local/regional partners to provide programs, space and infrastructure necessary to support an expanding workforce.

Objective E1.6: The City will have both space and incentive tools to support business creation, growth, and expansion.

Strategies

- The City will ensure an adequate supply of land for commercial and industrial development through land use controls (e.g. Zoning Ordinance or the Future Land Use Map).
- The City will continue to use development tools such as tax

Tuscola's Workforce

Not surprisingly Tuscola's unemployment rate increased since 2000 alongside the County and State-- Most likely due to the fact that in 2010 the United States was in an economic downturn commonly referred to as the “Great Recession”, accounting for the higher unemployment rates to be included in the five-year average.

Over 80% of workers in Tuscola earn a private wage and salary. And nearly a sixth (13.8%) of the labor force in Tuscola is employed by a Governmental (Local, State or Federal) entity.

Tuscola's Economy

The most common occupational category among Tuscola's residents is “Sales and office occupations” (30.4%) and is closely followed by “Management, business, science, and arts occupations” (28.0%). “Production, transportation, and material moving occupations” (17.0%) and “Service occupations” (16.2%) follow next, respectively. In this regard, Tuscola more closely resembles the State than Douglas County.

The “industry” that employs the most City residents is “Educational services, and health care and social assistance” category (21.2%) with retail trade not far behind (19.2%). Smaller numbers are employed in “Manufacturing” (15.7%), “Arts, entertainment, and recreation,

“Primary sector employers” are those that produce more goods or services than can be consumed by the local economy, and therefore export a portion of their output, bringing outside dollars into the local economy.

and accommodation and food services” (11.5%), and “Transportation and warehousing, and utilities” (7.3%). This local employment profile is similar to that of the region.

incremental financing districts and enterprise zones to offer incentives that support employment growth.

Objective E1.7: Entrepreneurialism and small business growth will be enthusiastically and continuously supported in Tuscola.

Strategies

- The City will support collaboration among its partners to provide local entrepreneurship training and encouragement.
- The City supports the cottage industries which include home occupations and home-based businesses in residential districts as a means to enhance residents' income opportunities, increase local employment, and foster business creation and entrepreneurship. However, activities that alter the residential character of the neighborhood, such as objectionable changes in traffic, noise, odor, light, or appearance of the home and property, will not be tolerated.
- The City will support and promote minority- and women-owned businesses.

Objective E1.8: Avoid land use conflicts between business and non-business use.

Strategies

- Review and update the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Ordinance as necessary.

E2 | Tuscola's economic base will be diverse, self-sufficient, and resilient.

Objective E2.1: Attract new jobs to the community in varied, but specific, sectors.

Strategies

- The city will encourage and support efforts to recruit businesses and growth industries not currently prevalent in the City. Areas of focus should capitalize on the educated workforce and may include information technology, energy technology, professional services, and health-related products and services.
- Agricultural services should also be exploited given the nature of the County and the history agriculture has played in and around Tuscola.

See Section A.4 Economic Prosperity of **Appendix A: Community Indicators Report** for more information and data on existing economic conditions and indicators for Tuscola and the region.

- The City will work with key stakeholders to establish a base of creative industries (e.g. arts, sciences, research, architecture) to enhance quality of life and expand the professional workforce.

Education & Income

The level of education attained by a community can provide valuable insight into the existing labor force, including availability of skilled and professional workers and demand for training opportunities. The percentage of Tuscola residents 25 years or older who have at least a high school diploma is 90.40%. The percentage of residents who have obtained a bachelor's degree is 12.4%. This percentage also saw a decrease over the two reporting periods, from 16.7% in the 2005-2009 sample. While this could be sampling error in the data, it is generally inconsistent with regional and national trends, in which the recession economy encouraged more people to seek and complete post-secondary degrees.

Income is another way to look at the economic vitality of a community. For Tuscola, the per capita income at \$25,282 is higher than the County's \$23,732. The median family (\$66,349) and median household (\$49,865) incomes for Tuscola are roughly the same as the County, but under performing the State as a whole. These lower averages are certainly related to the level of educational attainment and percentage of individuals living below the poverty level. In the City, 10.9% of the population is estimated to be below the poverty level. (*The Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to detect who is poor. If the total income for a family or unrelated individual falls below the relevant poverty threshold, then the family or unrelated individual is classified as being "below the poverty level".*)

Objective E2.2: Explore possibilities to increase the service sector and related areas to increase job opportunities for newer generations.

Strategies

- The City should consider the creation of a small business incubator to help further the development of small business and innovation within Tuscola.

Objective E2.3: Encourage and promote the development of environmentally sustainable industries.

Strategies

- The emphasis will be placed on attracting businesses and industries that operate in a sustainable manner, contribute to the sustainability of the community as a whole, and are responsible environmental stewards.
- Alternative crops for energy resources may be a sector in which Tuscola can excel.

E3 | Encourage residents to support local businesses through education on the multitude of benefits to the community.

Objective E3.1: The City will start/support a buy and shop local campaign.

Strategies

- Use traditional and social media outlets to deliver message on benefits of patronizing local establishments.

Economic Development Action Items

- ✓ Identify and plan for infrastructure investments required to make priority (re)development sites more competitive for economic development.
- ✓ Identify funding sources and mechanisms for public realm and capital improvements to support economic development.
- ✓ Identify target business types and offer incentives to businesses in those sectors to locate or expand in Tuscola.
- ✓ Develop and implement an internship and summer job programs to encourage residence of youth after college.
- ✓ Coordinate with local educational institutions to identify employment growth opportunities.
- ✓ Continuously update the City website and all social media outlets to emphasize the assets of Tuscola as a vibrant, modern community with a rich history and an exceptional quality of life not found in surrounding communities.
- Continue to develop the easy to understand “one-stop-shop” for economic development on the City website, with links to partner resources.
- Evaluate potential public/private partnerships for community benefit.
- Participate in monthly communications with key stakeholders to discuss the future of the area and maintain an open dialogue among entities.
- Create and enhance entry features to the community and to the downtown (e.g. landscaping, signage, banners, gateways, monuments, etc.).
- ✓ Promote growth of tax base in all areas of the community, including infill, redevelopment and improvements in existing developed areas and continued growth in planned new development areas.
- ✓ Investigate the implementation of an Overlay District to link the Downtown and Route 36 Corridor Plans.

The abundance and health of our agricultural and natural resources are vital to the well being of our community, the prosperity of our economy and the health of our regional ecological systems. This section outlines the objectives and strategies for preserving, protecting, and restoring our natural and agricultural resources. As our most visible natural resource, fertile farm ground, is considered a priority resource for protection, in balance with its transportation and recreation functions. Because all systems are interconnected, these strategies address water, land, wildlife, air, vegetation, food systems, and the welfare of our citizens.

Shared Citizen Concerns

- 1 | Industrial practices harming the natural environment.
- 2 | Quality air, groundwater, and farmland are vital to the citizens.

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3-14

AG1 | Maintain, enhance and reinforce the aesthetic quality of life consistent with the character of the city and surrounding landscape by preserving agricultural lands and activities, rural vistas, waterways, and other natural areas.

Objective AG1.1: Preserve productive agricultural lands or those lands that have severe limitations due to grades, soils, not suitable for building, or sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands, floodplains, and streams in order to protect these areas from degradation for continued agricultural use whenever possible.

Strategies

- The City discourages new development that is not contiguous with existing development.
- The City will restrict development in areas that have documented threatened and endangered species, or have severe limitations due to steep slopes, soils not suitable for building, or sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands, floodplains, and streams (Hayes Branch and Scattering Fork and associated tributaries) in order to protect these areas from degradation. The City shall require these natural resources features to be depicted on all site plans, preliminary plats, and certified survey maps in order to facilitate preservation of natural resources.

AG2 | Ensure safe land use (agricultural, industrial, and manufacturing) practices which protect, enhance, and are in harmony with the natural environment.

Objective AG2.1: The City will support and encourage land use practices which do not harm the natural environment.

Strategies

- Work with businesses and interest groups to ensure productive and safe practices.

Objective AG2.2: Protect local water sources from harmful agricultural and industrial practices.

Strategies

- The City will use all available powers to protect sensitive environmental areas within the City's extraterritorial area.
- The City will ensure that stormwater runoff is contained as much as possible to prevent contaminated infiltration into the groundwater and running into the streams.

Objective AG2.3: Improve stormwater system to prevent overflow during rain events.

Tuscola's Agricultural & Natural Resources

Tuscola has rich and varied natural and agricultural resources. Almost all of the open space surrounding the city is utilized for agricultural purposes with a mix of corn and soybean farms. Other open space is dedicated to pasture, floodplains and streams.

Strategies

- Continue improvements to the two drainage channels along with investigate alternate storage capacity.

Objective AG2.4: Practice techniques which both curb and prevent stormwater runoff.

Strategies

- The City will encourage the use of Rain Barrels and Rain Gardens for both residential and commercial uses.

Objective AG2.5: Encourage the use of green infrastructure in new development and redevelopment projects.

Strategies

- The City will encourage permeable paving for surface parking lots.
- The City will encourage the development of swales and rain gardens in future (re)development projects.



“Green infrastructure” is a network of open spaces and natural features woven into the built environment that provides natural stormwater management and essential ecosystem connections.



“Permeable paving” utilizes porous materials and laying techniques to allow water to percolate and infiltrate the soil beneath the paving, instead of running off as with impervious paving.

AG3 | The City will support its agricultural heritage and ensure a competitive system as an enhanced economic opportunity and quality of life for residents.

Objective AG3.1: The City through its partners will stay abreast of the latest technologies and agricultural advancements to ensure a competitive market and sustainable production.

Objective AG3.2: The City will work with partners like the Farm Bureau to form a specific agricultural strategic plan for the City with the intent of educating and informing residents while appropriately developing and growing the city and the agricultural sector.

Agricultural & Natural Resources Action Items

- ✓ Consider the adoption of best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater management and low-impact development.
- ✓ Educate and coordinate erosion control regulations in accordance with the NPDES regulations.
- ✓ Work to identify local point and non-point source pollution and implement steps for remediation.
- ✓ Develop a stormwater education program to inform citizens of BMPs including the use of rain barrels, rain gardens, green roofs, permeable paving, etc.
- ✓ Create a “green belt” along Hayes Branch Creek to protect water resources & create recreational opportunities.

Local government is responsible for a broad array of essential services (park and recreation facilities, fire and police protection, public schools, etc.). The quality, efficacy and efficiency of these services have a direct relationship to quality of life for residents. While each of these services is individually managed and monitored, they are considered in the comprehensive plan to ensure that investment in these services serves the overall vision for the City. The over arching themes of the plan for these services are high quality, efficiency, and variety.

FS1 | Tuscola will maintain and enhance recreation facilities and services that support both individual and community health.

Objective FS1.1: The City's recreation facilities will be managed with an understanding of the diverse outdoor recreational needs and strong desires of the community.

Strategies

- The City will continue their work to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities.
- The City will continue to develop recreational opportunities around Tuscola, including introducing trail facilities.
- The City will coordinate recreational planning with other public and private entities to maximize resources (e.g. School District, Hospital, etc.).
- The City will continue to improve existing park and recreation facilities and services to meet the needs of the community, while improving safety and efficiency of the facilities provided.
- The City will explore the feasibility of an indoor recreation center through unique partnerships.
- The City will explore all opportunities and potential for North Ward Park (See Chapter 4 - Land Use).

FS2 | Tuscola will respect its history and heritage by preserving and enhancing historic resources and celebrating our agricultural and railroad connections.

Objective FS2.1: Tuscola will safeguard the City's architectural, prehistoric, historic, aesthetic and cultural heritage.

Strategies

- The City will continue to support heritage planning through the Planning Commission's review and the local designation of historic landmarks and districts.
- The City will develop and maintain design guidelines for (re)development of potential historic districts, including the Downtown.
- The City will promote and safeguard the historical landscape in addition to structures and districts.
- The City will apply criteria for Capital Projects that require evaluation and mitigation of negative impacts to historic assets.
- The City encourages (adaptive) reuse and rehabilitation of historic structures.

Objective FS2.2: Tuscola will foster pride in the legacy of beauty and achievements of the past.

Strategies

- The City will collaborate with the Tuscola Public School District and other educational institutions to

facilitate local history tours, projects and lesson plans.

- The City will support and recognize private historic rehabilitation.
- The City will incorporate historical heritage considerations in the development of neighborhood plans.

Objective FS2.3: Tuscola will utilize its historic assets for economic development.

Strategies

- The City will promote its cultural and historical resources as amenities for prospective businesses and industries.
- The City will continue to market its historic and cultural assets as tourist attractions, and will develop/improve infrastructure and amenities to increase tourism.

FS3 | Tuscola will continue to offer strong educational systems that attract families and support success and social interaction.

Objective FS3.1: Tuscola Community Unit School District #301 will keep pace with changes to the population it serves.

Strategies

- The City will collaborate with the Tuscola Public School District to anticipate and plan for changes in the size or makeup of the City's school-age population.
- The City will support the School District and regional economic development agencies to attract and retain high quality educators and staff.

Objective FS3.2: Tuscola's Public Schools will be an integral part of community life, much more than simply a primary and secondary education service.

Strategies

- The City will collaborate with the School District to maximize the community's capital investment in school facilities by making those facilities readily available, as feasible, for other uses that support social interaction and health within the community, such as community meetings, neighborhood festivals, and adult sports.
- The City will collaborate with the School District to promote and make available to all residents certain services and events, such as student athletics and music and drama performances.
- The City will support School District efforts to engage residents in the education process through tutoring, mentoring, and guest speaker initiatives.
- The City will support and encourage School District efforts to teach students about local history and instill civic pride through knowledge of the community.
- The City will work with and support the School District in attracting new families to the area.

Objective FS3.3: Tuscola will encourage lifelong learning through public and private programs.

Strategies

- The City will support higher education institutions, such as the University of Illinois, Parkland Community



College, and Richland Community College, to provide continuing education, professional development, personal enrichment and summer programs for Tuscola residents.

- The City will work with cultural and historical institutions (including the Public Library and the Douglas County Museum) to develop free and low-cost educational and cultural programs for residents of all ages.

FS4 | Tuscola will explore the option for fiber/high speed communication infrastructure.

Objective FS4.1: The City will inquire about the feasibility of high speed communication line through Tuscola.

Strategies

- Contact surrounding communities about costs and procedures to providing such a network within Tuscola.

FS5 | Tuscola will continue to encourage the activities and initiatives of civic and service organizations.

Objective FS5.1: Ensure the continuation of community pride through support of local organizations' events and happenings.



Community Facilities & Services Action Items

- ✓ Continue to facilitate and improve park and recreation facilities, programs, amenities and special events.
- ✓ Study feasibility of a Community Recreation Facility.
- ✓ Improve supply of information (uniform interpretive signage, websites, online forms, maps, etc.) at and for community facilities and key attractions.
- ✓ Pursue grants to update community facilities.
- ✓ Evaluate parks for compliance with ADA standards and prepare a transition plan to make necessary changes over time.
- ✓ Evaluated high speed internet for city residents and businesses.
- ✓ Include a public arts component in development Requests for Proposal for City-owned sites.
- ✓ Continue to support the development of heritage planning and consider the creation of a commission and/or action plan.
- ✓ Develop and maintain guidelines for development in historic districts.
- ✓ Continue to implement the Downtown Master Plan.
- ✓ Construct and maintain uniform interpretive wayfinding signage at key attraction locations to further promote the assets of the community.
- ✓ Look into feasibility of park board or more formalized structure for programming.



Successful and vibrant communities rely upon collaborative efforts among city businesses and organizations and benefit from partnerships with regional organizations and state and federal agencies. The City of Tuscola has a strong history of collaboration with multi-partner projects. This section defines the City's strategies on collaboration and provides guidance on reaching out to new partners and maintaining existing relationships.

GC1 | Foster and/or maintain mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with neighboring municipalities, townships, Douglas County, State and Federal agencies, and the schools, colleges and universities which serve Tuscola residents.

Objective GC1.1: Tuscola will think regionally while acting locally.

Strategies

- The City acknowledges the importance of regional systems and connections, especially for transportation, economic development, and natural resources protection, and will make a conscious effort to include neighboring jurisdictions, the County, and entities within the Tuscola region in major policy and planning related initiatives.
- The City will continue to work with Central Illinois Public Transit to develop, fund, and implement regional planning and mobility efforts.
- The City will make efforts to establish regional partnerships for special projects and issues, such as trail and recreation improvements, tourism, and sustainability.

Objective GC1.2: Reduce costs and improve quality of municipal services through partnerships with neighboring towns and municipalities.

Strategies

- The City will actively participate, review, monitor, and comment on pending plans from neighboring municipalities, Douglas County, and State or Federal agencies on land use or planning activities that would affect Tuscola.
- The City will continue to work with neighboring municipalities to identify opportunities for shared services or other cooperative planning efforts.

Objective GC1.3: Communicate clearly with Douglas County and Regional Agencies to establish mutually agreeable development goals and objectives in the City's extraterritorial area.

Strategies

- To the extent possible, the City will coordinate its Comprehensive Plan with any future Comprehensive Plan for the County.
- The City will continue to work with Douglas County and Regional Agencies to identify opportunities for shared services or other cooperative planning efforts.

Objective GC1.4: The City will coordinate with the School District on decisions affecting facilities and land use.

Strategies

- The City will work with the School District on any future facilities planning.

GC2 | Tuscola will continue to collaborate with non-profit and private entities to improve the quality of life for Tuscola residents.

Objective GC2.1: Tuscola will encourage more and better development through public-private partnerships.

Strategies

- The City will consider creative uses of its powers, borrowing capacity, and taxpayer funds to support private development projects that further public interests, especially for well-paying job growth, downtown investment, multi-modal transportation, and enhancement of arts and culture.

Objective GC2.2: Tuscola will partner with non-profits to ensure adequate social services for all residents.

Strategies

- The City will collaborate with local non-profits and social service agencies to ensure there are sufficient resources for all residents and that service is fair and adequate.
- The City will partner with agencies like United Way and American Red Cross to expand access to an awareness of emergency social services and sustenance programs.

GC3 | Tuscola will continue to collaborate with developers, public entities and private entities to expand employment / development opportunities.

Objective GC3.1: Tuscola will support efforts and organizations geared towards furthering Tuscola's primary employment sectors.

Strategies

- The City will support the adequate promotion of Tuscola as a great place to expand, grow and start a business or industry.
- The City will support the adequate promotion of Tuscola as a great place to live and work.



Municipal Government / Intergovernmental Collaboration Action Items

- ✓ Host meetings with regional partners to explore ways in which collaboration on programs or services can improve quality, access, and efficiency.
- ✓ Communicate with other jurisdictions whenever service contracts or major capital improvements are up for consideration, to identify cost savings opportunities through partnerships and shared service arrangements.

Zoning Ordinance Overview

The Zoning Ordinance is a highly used and influential document for a community because it provides the ways and means to shape the look and feel of the built environment. It's original purpose is to segregate uses that are thought to be incompatible, or at a minimum, reduce the impact of varying uses in close proximity. This regulatory process can help make sense of the built environment by controlling uses, managing land, and managing the bulk, density, and mass of structures. Ultimately, the City's Zoning Ordinance should protect the rights and value of all property owners and find ways to ensure all uses can harmoniously coexist.

While the City of Tuscola Zoning Ordinance has been updated on a need-to basis, the bulk of the Ordinance is dated by decades and, at minimum, in need of a serious revision. This section does not provide a new Ordinance or even rewrite parts of the Ordinance, but it does review strengths and weaknesses of the document and provides insight for consideration when the time comes for a full update or rewrite of the existing Ordinance.

Since the time of the adoption of the last Comprehensive Plan in 2001, there have been over 70 petitions to the Zoning and Planning Commission for Variances (35), Special Use Permits (23), and Text Amendments (5). Surprisingly, only one (1) request for rezoning has been petitioned since 2001. Although, there were several requests for uses within the Transitional Zone. A cursory review of these petitions shows what might be considered standard requests: shallower setbacks in the front, side and rear yards, sign size, home occupations, fence height, etc.

General Comments:

- *The Zoning Ordinance should incorporate best practices for urban planning and design.*
- *Clear, updated illustrations should be used throughout the document to highlight important and key points. This can be especially helpful to convey intent and execution of setback, bulk, and height regulations.*
- *The form, or presentation, of the Ordinance should pay careful attention in ensuring a clear, intelligible and readable document.*
- *It should cover situations occurring today, but be flexible enough to allow for future changes in habits and desires.*

Permitted Uses

The Zoning Ordinance (ZO) does contain an easy to use chart which clearly states if a use can or cannot be located within a district or if it would require a special use permit. The only districts not featured within the chart are the R-1 Single Family Residence and R-2 General Dwelling District. Generally speaking, the following is suggested:

Suggestions:

- *Future changes to the ZO should include the R-1 and R-2 districts on the Chart.*
- *Remove outdated or obsolete uses. Example: Remove 'Telegraph Office'.*
- *Generalize some uses. Only call out uses which would require a special use permit or similar. For example, calling out specific types of retail uses isn't necessary unless that use requires a special use permit in a district that other retail uses do not.*

Special Uses

Given recent trends in start up businesses and the desire to be ones own boss, special use permits may become more relevant and sought after. Additionally, more people are telecommuting and working remotely either from a home office or a virtual/rentable office space. Generally speaking, the following is suggested:

Suggestions:

- *Home Occupations be considered in all residential districts as long as it does not hinder the look or feel of a residential environment.*
- *Review and remove outdated and obsolete special uses and add newer uses to meet recent trends (e.g. work from home and small/start up businesses).*

Existing Zoning District Analysis

District	Pros	Cons	Suggestions
<i>Transitional (T): The intent of this district is to ensure cohesive, contiguous development and to prevent what is commonly known as "sprawl" development.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controls expansion of City Services Prevents Sprawl and conserves prime agricultural land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited Commercial and no Industrial uses are allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider Commercial and Industrial uses near I-57 in the Transitional Zone
<i>Single-Family Dwelling (D-1): The typical lot intended in this district is for newer single-family, detached homes.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodates consumer expectations for new housing Allows for population growth 		
<i>General Dwelling (D-2): This district covers all housing types and is found mostly in the older residential areas of the City.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodates older housing developments Allows for a mix of units Allows for higher density Encourages infill development 		
<i>Mobile Home Dwelling (D-3): This district allows for installation of mobile homes.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for alternative housing Provides a safe, healthy, and comfortable environment 		
<i>Single Family Residence (R-1): This district is similar to the D-1 District with the added allowance of a golf course and without the allowance of special use permits.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to D-1 Utilities must be buried No special uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No special uses allowed 	
<i>General Dwelling (R-2): Similar to the D-2 District but without the allowance of special use permits.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to D-2 Allows for mix of units Zero lot lines allowed No special use permits Utilities must be buried 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No special use permits 	
<i>Highway Business (B-1): Located primarily along Route 36 and the I-57 Interchange, this district caters to automobile traffic and encourages good traffic design in and between businesses.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business types are ideal for large thoroughfare traffic Auto oriented/dependant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages large parking lots (stormwater issues) No maximum % of lot coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set maximum parking requirements to reduce amount of parking lot Assign a maximum lot coverage % so that some area can be left impermeable and for landscaping
<i>General Business (B-2): The intent of this district is to accommodate businesses that do not require the space or traffic volume of the B-1 District, but do require more than can be accommodated in the B-3 District.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good transition between B-1 and B-3 Auto oriented/dependant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No maximum % of lot coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a maximum lot coverage % so that some area can be left impermeable and for landscaping
<i>Central Business (B-3): This District primarily covers Downtown Tuscola and encourages a mix of uses and pedestrian activity over automobile traffic.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian oriented development Multiple / Mix of uses allowed Higher density development 		
<i>Light Industry (I-1): Uses that do not normally create a discernible nuisance beyond the property lines.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good transition between Commercial and Industrial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No maximum % of lot coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a maximum lot coverage % so that some area can be left impermeable and for landscaping
<i>Heavy Industry (I-2): Uses which are potentially hazardous or which have nuisance effects when can be discernible beyond the property lines.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not allowed near residential and prime retail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No maximum % of lot coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a maximum lot coverage % so that some area can be left impermeable and for landscaping
<i>Floodplain (FP): An area identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as prone to flooding. The intent of this district is prevent harm to structures or uses within the area and to ensure the risk of flooding is not increased with new development.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevents increasing flood damages Intent is to protect all properties inside and outside the district 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentives for removing development in the district or reducing existing problems

Off-Street Parking & Loading

Generally speaking, the following is suggested:

Suggestions:

- Allow for and encourage permeable pavement materials to reduce stormwater runoff.
- In the “General Requirements” section, landscaping should be encouraged at a minimum, if not required, for parking lots, and not just to screen between different land uses. Larger parking lots should require interior landscaping to break up large rows of parking spaces and potentially provide stormwater relief.

Sign Regulations

The sign regulations appear to be up to date. Changes made should reflect any future comments from the public or if the City and Sign Board of Appeals determine that the existing regulations are not creating or maintaining the type of environment desired by the community.

Streets and Sidewalks

- Establish a minimum sidewalk width if not already established elsewhere.
- Establish rules and regulations for bike lanes and paths.

Miscellaneous Suggestions

- Establish an Overlay District along the Route 36 Corridor and into the Downtown to provide design guidelines and bridge existing plans for the areas.
- Establish Landscaping Regulations to ensure holistic and quality site design along with a safe and attractive community. Landscaping regulations should include maintenance requirements and ideally would help reduce runoff.
- Establish Lighting Regulations to limit light pollution while providing a safe community environment.
- In addition to the Zoning Map and Ordinances, the City should provide a link to all zoning applications on the website.
- Review and update as necessary all existing zoning permit applications.

