

**CITY OF BATAVIA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: LAND USE ELEMENT**

The Land Use Element consists of a general description of the planning area and background information about the major factors that contribute to the land use pattern of the community. This Element also identifies key land use issues and establishes a set of goals and policies reflecting the intent of the City regarding the types and organization of land uses. Finally, the element contains a series of maps that depict the planned land uses desired as the City continues to mature. A key part of the Land Use Element is the land use classification system, which identifies logical categories of land use types and intensities, allowing them to be shown on the Land Use Map (Map LU A).

The Land Use Element is more than a hypothetical idea about how the growth of the City should occur. Being part of the Comprehensive Plan that is adopted by Ordinance, this Element constitutes a concrete statement by the City Council addressing the physical growth of the community. Other regulations, plans and investment decisions of the City will be made in furtherance of the Comprehensive Plan, or the Plan itself will be amended.

Background

Batavia's defining geographic feature is the Fox River. The City was settled in 1833 with the river playing a major role in early industrial development. Most of those industries have left, and many of the historic structures have been adapted for contemporary uses. The population of the City has grown steadily to over 26,000 in 2010. The City is reaching the limit of its outward expansion, with its ultimate population expected to be in the neighborhood of 32,000. Growth on the fringe is giving way to infill and redevelopment of the downtown and older industrial areas.

Batavia's growth is constrained by several physical and political limitations. The City of Geneva forms the northern boundary of Batavia, while the Village of North Aurora and the City of Aurora form the southern boundary. To the east is the 6,800 acre Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory. To the west are portions of the large unincorporated Mill Creek planned residential development and the Nelson Lake Forest Preserve, effectively limiting the City's westward expansion. The community recognizes the value of the Fox River and has focused its attention on the river as a recreational and residential amenity.

The City is widely regarded as an excellent place to live, with safe, stable neighborhoods and a good mix of retail and employment uses. Housing is predominantly single family, but other residential types have been developed. Relatively high housing prices make it difficult for moderate-income families to enter the housing market. Protection of environmental resources has become a significant City goal with the recognition that quality of life requires careful planning.

The City is striving to be a sustainable community—one that provides a full range of housing, employment, shopping, recreation and educational opportunities. Northeast Batavia is the focus of large scale manufacturing, warehousing and related industrial activities. Retail and service businesses are mostly found along the Randall Road corridor and in downtown.

Issues

The City faces the following land use issues:

1. Transitioning from an environment of new growth to one of redevelopment. As the supply of vacant land on the fringe of the City available for new development diminishes, the City now emphasizes redevelopment of existing properties and infill development. Infill development is occurring in the downtown and throughout many older neighborhoods. Annexation of both vacant and underdeveloped land within the planning area will continue.
2. The continued redevelopment of the downtown as a mixed-use area, with added residential, retail, entertainment and office uses a priority. Older commercial and industrial uses are giving way to more active uses. Residential uses are being reintroduced into the downtown.
3. The need for redevelopment and reuse of older industrial areas. There are several obsolete industrial areas and properties that are no longer suitable for modern industrial uses. Some are located in the downtown, but most lie in isolated areas throughout the community. Some are in historic structures in the downtown, while others have simply outlived their usefulness. New land uses need to be found for them.
4. Maintaining the commercial viability of the Randall Road corridor. Commercial activity continues to expand along Randall Road outside of Batavia, intensifying competition with Batavia's existing shopping centers and individual uses. Careful management of uses and maintaining the attractiveness of older properties is essential to the viability of Batavia's commercial corridor, especially in light of the recent economic downturn.
5. How to manage the remaining development potential in fringe areas. As the City reaches the limit of existing sewer treatment capacity, difficult decisions will need to be made regarding annexation of fringe areas. The far northwest will be the most challenging area.
6. Modernizing land use regulations to implement the City's goals for quality development and reasonable land use regulation. The City's subdivision regulations are overdue for revisions. The City's building codes were updated in 2007 to incorporate the International Code series; the 2012 series is expected to be implemented soon. The Zoning Code was comprehensively revised in 2010, and is amended periodically to refine land use regulations.
7. Planning for the redevelopment of South Route 25. As the City begins to increase development standards and apply a more rigorous code compliance effort in this important gateway corridor to the downtown, the area will become more attractive for higher quality development. The new Zoning Code has a set of development standards tailored specifically for the uses on South River Street, and the Land

- Use map has been amended to reflect a more realistic future for the area. There is a need for long-term attention in order to improve the appearance and functioning of the area.
8. Making sensitive transitions between residential and non-residential land uses. There are numerous places in the City where industrial and commercial uses abut residential neighborhoods. Where possible these potential use conflicts should be resolved by policies to mitigate impacts and to encourage more compatible uses.
 9. Maintaining a balance of land uses and housing types to serve all portions of the community. The City has a shortage of higher density residential uses, neighborhood commercial areas and downtown living opportunities. The Land Use Element must balance new residential development with the services necessary to support them.
 10. Protecting the industrial and commercial land base. Good jobs, increased assessed valuation and a growing sales tax base all require the preservation and expansion of land devoted to non-residential uses. Batavia needs to balance these factors to support quality public facilities and services, and to provide jobs close to home
 11. Planning for the future of large institutional uses—Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory and Mooseheart. Both institutions face an uncertain long-term future. In addition to Batavia, several other local jurisdictions could vie to annex all or part of Fermilab. Re-use of the 6,800 acres would be challenging due to environmental constraints and the existence of significant above- and below-ground facilities. In 2012, the City annexed some 470 vacant acres of the Mooseheart property. Still facing a declining mission, the remaining 530 or so acres of the Mooseheart campus presents a major development opportunity if Moose International decides to sell or lease portions of that property for private development as it will do for the newly annexed 470 vacant acres. The provision of urban infrastructure would enable substantial development potential.

Goals and Policies

The following goals set forth the community's intent and policies to address the identified issues.

Goal 1. Maintain Batavia as an attractive place to live, work, shop and play, with a balance of land uses

Policies

- a. Designate enough industrial land to provide opportunities for job creation, and protect it from conversion to non-employment use
- b. Protect key retail properties from conversion to non-retail uses while allowing multi-tenant properties to house a healthy mix of uses
- c. Encourage mixed uses of land where they are compatible and integrated with the neighborhood
- d. Raise the quality of new development through zoning, subdivision, design review and other tools
- e. Proactively and fairly enforce land use regulations

Goal 2. Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive and historically significant places

Policies

- a. Designate and adopt historic districts to protect historic neighborhood character
- b. Seek landmark designation for key historic properties
- c. Use floodplain management, wetland protection, tree preservation, conservation management and similar tools to protect significant environmental resources
- d. Expand the open space network to link major park, forest preserve and wetland areas with each other and similar resources in adjacent jurisdictions

Goal 3. Plan land uses to achieve an efficient provision of public facilities and services

Policies

- a. Focus higher density and intensity development in and adjacent to the downtown
- b. Coordinate land use decisions with the availability of public facilities and services, especially schools and sanitary sewers
- c. Avoid underdevelopment of property with ample utility capacity, especially in the downtown
- d. Reserve adequate sewer capacity for downtown development, annexation of unincorporated island properties and key infill parcels

Goal 4. Maintain a diversity of housing types, prices and styles for all segments of the community

Policies

- a. Encourage use of the Zoning Code Planned Development Overlay Zoning District residential density bonus to insure affordability
- b. Encourage new, and the expansion of existing senior housing complexes
- c. Provide a mixture of housing types and densities on large scale mixed use redevelopment parcels
- d. Effectively use information from studies of the Batavia housing market to better address City-wide housing needs

Goal 5. Coordinate land use and transportation planning

Policies

- a. Carefully manage entrances and exits to public streets, in concert with Kane County and IDOT, to insure safe and convenient access to property
- b. Locate higher density residential uses convenient to transit corridors and employment centers
- c. Provide internal circulation routes within and between developments to avoid forcing traffic onto collector and arterial streets
- d. Include bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems in new and expanded developments

Goal 6. Continue to make the downtown and the Fox River the focal point of the community

Policies

- a. Focus the most intense development in the downtown
- b. Improve pedestrian accessibility and safety throughout the downtown
- c. Use redevelopment tools, including tax increment financing, to encourage and shape downtown development
- d. Require development projects to take advantage of views and access to the Fox River
- e. Make Fox River frontage accessible to the public by bicycle trails, parks, plazas and pedestrian areas
- f. Insure safe, convenient, and inviting pedestrian access into the downtown from surrounding neighborhoods
- g. Locate significant new public community facilities in the downtown
- h. Invest in community amenities and public art to make the downtown attractive and inviting

Goal 7. Redevelop obsolete industrial areas as mixed-use developments compatible with neighborhood character

Policies

- a. Plan for adaptive reuse and redevelopment of older industrial areas
- b. Provide incentives for creative mixed-use redevelopment of abandoned industrial areas
- c. Integrate viable historic structures into new developments
- d. Continue and extend the existing street pattern in redevelopment projects
- e. Provide community gathering spaces in major redevelopment projects

Goal 8. Provide gradual land use transitions and buffers between lower intensity and higher intensity uses

Policies

- a. Transition from industrial uses to service business or office uses adjacent to residential neighborhoods
- b. Where appropriate, encourage new developments to provide larger than required setbacks and additional screening as a transition between incompatible uses
- c. Transition land uses within large-scale new developments
- d. Use streets, rail lines and natural features instead of property lines as land use district boundaries
- e. Consider transitional zoning district designations to effectively separate incompatible land uses when amending the Official Zoning Map

Goal 9. Maintain sufficient retail and employment areas to ensure the fiscal and economic vitality of the City

Policies

- a. Protect employment areas from encroachment by incompatible non-commercial uses
- b. Locate offices and financial institutions in a manner to complement retail uses
- c. Encourage opportunities for neighborhood retail west of the Randall Road corridor and community retail east of the Fox River
- d. Maximize retail use opportunities on the Mooseheart property

Goal 10. Establish a system of parks, open spaces and trails that supports neighborhoods, protects sensitive environmental areas

Policies

- a. Require new residential development to dedicate land for parks, or pay an equivalent fee toward the acquisition of parkland
- b. Pursue public ownership of lands fronting the Fox River
- c. Require new development and redevelopment to orient open areas toward adjacent rivers and creeks
- d. Identify key wetlands, forested areas and stream corridors for open space protection or acquisition
- e. Cooperate with the Batavia and Geneva Park Districts and the Kane County Forest Preserve District to provide active and passive recreational opportunities for residents

Goal 11. Plan for the possible reuse of both the Fermilab and unincorporated Mooseheart properties

Policies

- a. Allow for the reuse of the Fermilab property, should the Federal government offer it for redevelopment
- b. Remain open to the potential annexation and development of the unincorporated Mooseheart property

Exhibit A – Land Use Classification System

The classification system is used to identify the various different land uses shown on the Land Use Map.

Residential:

- 0 - .25 Dwelling Units/Acre (Corresponds to Kane County Countryside Estate Residential)
- >.25 - .5 DU/Acre (The current lowest density classification; equivalent to a range of 1 unit per 4 acres to 1 unit per 2 acres; corresponds to Kane County Rural Residential)
- >.5 - 2 DU/Acre (1/2 acre to 2 acre lots, may or may not have sewer service)
- >2 - 3.5 DU/Acre (typical newer City neighborhood)
- >3.5 - 5 DU/Acre (Typical older City neighborhood)
- >5 - 8 DU/Acre (Attached single-family, duplex to townhouse)
- >8 - 15 DU/Acre (Townhouse, condominium, apartment)
- >15 - 25 DU/Acre (High density condominium, apartment)

Commercial:

- Neighborhood Commercial (Small scale retail & service uses)
- Community Commercial (Small to medium scale retail, service, entertainment, and office uses)
- General Commercial (Medium to large scale retail & service uses)

Employment:

- Office (Professional and general offices)
- Service Business (Quasi-industrial uses, small scale office, retail, service, and indoor storage uses)
- Light Industrial (Office/warehouse, light manufacturing/assembly, laboratories, business parks)
- General Industrial (Warehousing, truck terminals, fleet facilities, manufacturing, outdoor storage)

Miscellaneous:

- Public Facility/Institutional (Facilities owned by a public agency, religious institution or a semi-public institution)
- Parks & Open Space (Land owned by a public entity, private land permanently preserved as open space, river)
- Transportation/Utility Corridor (Railroad right-of-way, utility right-of-way)
- Downtown Mixed Use (One or more uses permitted—retail, office, entertainment, public facility/institutional or multi-family residential)
- Mixed Use (Redevelopment projects outside of the downtown)
- Agriculture (Kane County 2030 Land Use classification)