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# Executive Summary

# Purpose

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## What is a Comprehensive Plan

A Comprehensive Plan is a citizen driven plan to set long-term goals and objectives for the future of the community. It will guide policy related to where and how development or redevelopment should occur. The Comprehensive Plan works to prioritize the values and aspirations of the community by identifying potential locations for future development by type and intensity, as well as corresponding transportation, utility, and amenity improvements.

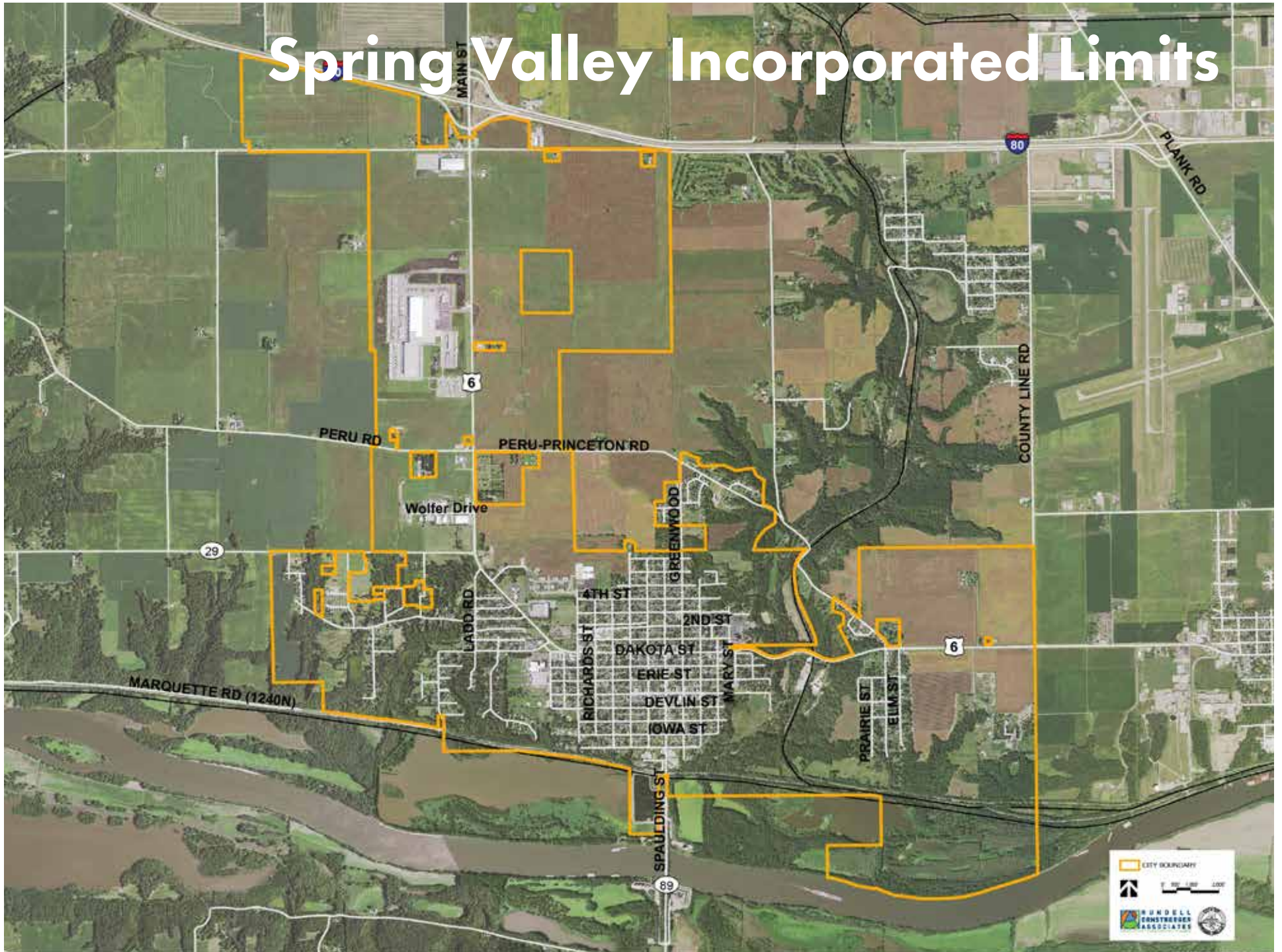
The Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/11-12-5) requires that a city plan commission must prepare a comprehensive plan to serve as a guide for future development and redevelopment within the municipal limits. The Comprehensive Plan is a prerequisite to an ordinance that establishes subdivision controls and transportation or utility construction standards (65 ILCS 5/11-12-6). It also provides the legal basis for development regulations contained within the zoning ordinance.

## How is it Used

The Comprehensive Plan is used by City staff and officials when reviewing applications for land use changes (rezonings) and other development or redevelopment applications. The plan serves as a guide for future projects to ensure that development aligns with the goals of the community. It also helps guide the community to work towards these goals by prioritizing recommendations in terms of importance. The Comprehensive Plan should be used to inform decisions regarding capital improvements and broader City budgeting. It should be reviewed annually and updated as needed to ensure the goals and objectives remain applicable and reflect the changing needs of the community.



# Spring Valley Incorporated Limits



# Process

Planning is a continuous process that had been initiated prior to this plan and will continue after its adoption. The Grow Spring Valley Comprehensive Plan is the result of a detailed process that brought residents and stakeholders together to identify existing conditions throughout the City, recognize potential trends, and ultimately create recommendations for the future. The plan was developed over nine months with oversight from a project steering committee. In addition to the regularly held steering committee meetings, a series of focus group discussions was held, and two public open houses were used to solicit input from the broader community.

The first open house took place on June 20, 2019 at the Spring Valley City Hall. Participants were able to voice their opinions, interests, and concerns about the current conditions and future vision for the community. The second public open house was held on November 13, 2019. This meeting allowed attendees to review the draft recommendations and begin to prioritize plan objectives. Both open houses were followed with online surveys for those that were not able to attend in person.

In addition to on-going public engagement, the plan process was broken into four major components:

- Discovery
- Visioning
- Frameworks
- Implementation

The discovery phase looked both objectively and subjectively at the issues and challenges facing the City. Issues and opportunities were discussed with the project steering committee, at the first public workshop, and during the focus group discussions. An Existing Conditions Analysis was prepared, highlighting population, housing, and demographic trends. The existing conditions information is included as the last chapter of this plan.

The visioning phase included the creation of the vision statement and associated goals and objectives. The vision and goals served as the structure for the remainder of the plan process. Many of the objectives include ideas that were generated during public engagement while others incorporate best practices demonstrated in other communities.





The frameworks phase was comprised of translating the goals and objectives into more detailed recommendations, explaining the why and how of key plan components. The frameworks are organized around four topics:

- Land Use & Community Form
- Transportation & Utilities
- Downtown
- Quality of Life

Finally, the implementation phase involved identifying the relative priority of plan recommendations and both short and long-term action items. This information ensures that the plan can be used on a regular basis to guide decision making and ultimate community realization of the goals and objectives. After the second workshop, the plan was presented to the City Council and steering committee. The City Council adopted the plan [DATE].



# Vision & Goals

## Vision Statement

Spring Valley is a city full of pride. Residents of all ages and backgrounds are engaged in civic activities, and owners take satisfaction in maintaining attractive buildings and properties. More than simply a place to live or work, Spring Valley is a community made up of diverse neighborhoods, quality schools and parks, and an active downtown. It is a place residents are proud to call home, and where young adults want to return to raise a family if they left for school or a career. St. Paul Street is home to shops, restaurants, offices, and apartments; it is a destination for both Spring Valley residents and visitors alike with an array of community events and activities happening throughout the year. The Dakota Street, US 6, and IL-89 corridor is lined with both new and long-time businesses and industries that provide diverse employment opportunities to residents of Spring Valley and the many neighboring communities in the Illinois Valley. Ultimately, new growth and revitalization of established areas has resulted in increased property values for owners and revenue generation for the City, allowing for superior city services and a high quality of life without having to raise taxes.

## Goals

### Land Use & Community Form

1. Maintain and grow a balance of land uses that support businesses, residents, and visitors while ensuring City services and infrastructure can accommodate new development.
2. Create opportunities for the construction and rehabilitation of diverse housing options that serve the needs of all ages and income levels, and that are compatible with surrounding character and further ensure quality and connected neighborhoods.
3. Grow existing businesses and attract new ones to develop diverse employment opportunities and meet the service needs of both the community and the region.



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## Transportation & Utilities

1. Provide a safe and efficient transportation system in coordination with proactive land use planning, to connect neighborhoods, employment centers, and other community destinations.
2. Create a complete and connected pedestrian and bicycle system that allows users of all ages and abilities to safely travel for work, school, everyday needs, and recreation.
3. Maintain utility infrastructure to better serve existing residents and businesses and expand capacity to accommodate planned growth and development.



## Downtown

1. Revitalize the downtown into a vibrant, mixed use district that serves as a shopping and dining, housing, and civic destination within the community.
2. Ensure protection and rehabilitation of existing building stock and promote new construction on vacant lots that supports the established form and character of the downtown.
3. Improve streets and public spaces to further establish community character and promote private investment in the downtown.



## Quality of life

1. Enhance pride within the community and grow resident engagement in civic and cultural activities.
2. Continue to develop and grow a balanced parks and recreation system with investments in existing facilities that are connected to key destinations and the neighborhoods they serve.
3. Continue to support, grow, and create community institutions that contribute to overall quality of life in Spring Valley.
4. Grow city capacity to better serve residents and businesses, and explore opportunities for new ways to communicate and engage with residents and employers.

# Implementation

Implementation is the process by which the recommendations of the comprehensive plan get translated into meaningful change within the community. The key challenge often comes in translating a plan's vision, goals, and recommendations into the day-to-day operations and actions of City government, key stakeholders, business owners, and residents. While the plan goals and objectives have been organized under the categories of Land Use & Community Form, Transportation & Utilities, Downtown, and Quality of Life, they are all interconnected, and implementation relies on treating each component as a part of a whole. Care was taken to ensure the Plan provides policies, programs, and recommendations within the context of that basic reality. Not all the goals and objectives can be completed immediately, so the plan must be treated as a living document. This means that the plan should continue to evolve over time as physical, economic, and social conditions change, and as resources become available. The City must consider the necessary staff and budget resources and prioritize actions in order to successfully implement the comprehensive plan.

After taking into consideration the communicated needs of the City and the information and ideas discussed throughout the planning process, a list of ten primary initiatives has been identified to help prioritize City projects and create a working plan of next steps. These recommendations are described in more detail throughout the plan and specifically within the implementation chapter and should be used as the first set of work plan items to be prioritized and completed. During plan review periods, the City should reassess current conditions and adjust this list appropriately. The top ten initiatives, in no particular order, are:

- Form a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee.
- Create a three to five-year capital improvements plan.
- Update the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to better reflect the goals and recommendations of this plan.
- Develop a Code Enforcement Strategy to improve the visual appearance of the community.
- Create a neighborhood stabilization program to address housing maintenance, rehabilitation, and blight elimination.





- Create a Downtown streetscape plan and pursue funding for improvements.
- Prioritize missing pedestrian infrastructure and pursue funding for improvements.
- Update the Parks and Recreation plan with a focus on improvements to Coal Miners Park and increased community events programming.
- Develop a communications plan to better share good news about the community and also provide an official avenue for nuisance complaints or other issue identification.
- Grow the Spring Valley Business Revitalization Grant Program and help to identify building needs to proactively support downtown revitalization efforts.

Perhaps most important from this list is the need to develop a code enforcement strategy to enhance the image of the community and better protect historic buildings. Input received from residents, business owners, government and community leaders throughout the process emphasized the need for increased code enforcement. The vision for the community and the asset growth outlined will be a natural succession once efforts to follow existing codes and ordinances are employed, monitored,

and maintained consistently. Unfortunately, when properties are not adequately maintained, the City must get involved through code enforcement. This is typically a resource intensive process that involves City staff and legal counsel. As opposed to trying to pursue all code violations at all times, it may be more efficient and effective to target code enforcement efforts to specific issues for a set period of time. For example, inoperable vehicles may be one focus, and then move on to high grass/weeds, unsafe buildings, or illegal signage. One of the benefits to this targeted approach is that no individual can claim unfair treatment by the City because multiple similar notices will be sent at the same time. Similarly, when dealing with multiple similar violations, there will likely be efficiencies realized for staff and legal counsel resources. The end goal of such a program should be code compliance leading to a more attractive community, it will also show property owners that the City is serious about its appearance and hopefully elevate property maintenance city-wide. This targeted effort will have positive effects on all categories of community life in Spring Valley including transportation and utilities, land use and community form, downtown and the overall quality of life.



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## Introduction



# Purpose

## What is a Comprehensive Plan

A Comprehensive Plan is a citizen driven plan to set long-term goals and objectives for the future of the community. It will guide policy changes and help create a pattern for where and how development or redevelopment should occur. The Comprehensive Plan works to prioritize the values and aspirations of the community by identifying potential locations for future development by type and intensity, as well as corresponding transportation, utility, and amenity improvements.

The Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/11-12-5) requires that a city plan commission must prepare a comprehensive plan to serve as a guide for future development and redevelopment within the municipal limits. The Comprehensive Plan is a prerequisite to an ordinance that establishes subdivision controls and transportation or utility construction standards (65 ILCS 5/11-12-6). It also provides the legal basis for development regulations contained within the zoning ordinance.

## Why Have it

Comprehensive plans are documents that lay out the foundation for future development through a series of tools, goals, and objectives. They are the basis for which zoning and subdivision ordinances can be created, adopted, and changed for a community to best represent and achieve their needs for the future. Typically, these long-term plans will help City officials and staff identify existing needs of the community and prioritize projects while looking towards the future. The Comprehensive Plan cannot address every issue of the community in adequate detail, so it is also used to identify areas and issues that likely need more specific action or study.

Comprehensive plans should be updated as needed to ensure that the changing needs of the community are being represented. Typically this occurs every seven to ten years. The previous comprehensive plan for Spring Valley was created in 1970 and no longer accurately targets the needs of the community today. This process, which involved analysis of data and feedback from residents, officials, business owners and others across the community, has worked to accurately represent the needs of Spring Valley and help to prioritize projects to be implemented in the short and long-term.



## How is it Used

The Comprehensive Plan is used by City staff and officials when reviewing applications for land use changes (rezonings) and other development or redevelopment applications. The plan serves as a guide for future projects to ensure that development aligns with the goals of the community. It also helps guide the community to work towards these goals by prioritizing recommendations in terms of importance. The Comprehensive Plan should be used to inform decisions regarding capital improvements and broader City budgeting.



Members of the planning team met with Hall High School students on May 3, 2019.

# Background

## History of Spring Valley

Spring valley was founded in 1884 along the Illinois River by Henry J. Miller and his son-in-law, who were early settlers of the area. The land was a coal field which made it easy to establish a coal mining business. Together, they acquired mineral rights to 5,000 acres and purchased 500 acres of land to build the town. The town was incorporated on February 8, 1886. Since then, Spring Valley has grown to 7.37 square miles of land area (4,716.8 acres).

Spring Valley was settled and built with the idea that it would be a thriving, large city. Two coal mining companies were started, the Spring Valley Coal Company and the Spring Valley Townsite Company. Both of these companies spent money to help build the town. Space was set aside for schools, churches, and other public buildings and facilities and roads were designed to be wide. St. Paul Street became one of the widest streets in the state and was further widened in 1984. Within the first four years, by 1888, Spring Valley had seen such rapid growth that the population reached 3,000 people.

By 1888, two churches had been built, the Congregational and the Immaculate Conception; two schools were built, the Immaculate Conception parochial and the Lincoln Public School; a newspaper started, the Spring Valley Gazette; and a public library built. The library was established by the "Knights of Labor," the Coal Miner's Union in 1885 before the town was a year old and before any type of government was formed. Lincoln Public School offered a two-year high school course for people to enroll in. Another school, the Hall Township and Vocational School, was constructed in 1914 and trained people in shop, carpentry, printing, drafting, cooking, sewing, typing, shorthand, bookkeeping, and banking. Additional schools came and went since the start of the community in 1886. Now, three schools remain in the City: John F. Kennedy Elementary School, Hall High School, and Saint Bede Academy, which is a Catholic college preparatory high school on the east side of the City.





**Historic photo of Spring Valley featuring the original bridge built in 1934.  
Photo by Art Kistler, IDOT.**

More recent changes in the community include construction of the Walmart Distribution Center in 2001 and creation of the tax increment financing (TIF) district in 2006. John F. Kennedy School was significantly expanded in 2014 and an all new Hall High School opened in the fall of 2015. St. Bede Academy recently completed a STEM Science lab and Student Commons addition to their facility.

A new IL-89 bridge over the Illinois River opened in 2018, improving the connection between Spring Valley/Bureau County and Putnam County. The original bridge was built in 1934. Due to poor condition, the bridge was demolished in August 2018 but not before construction of the new bridge was completed. The bridges ran parallel to each other and the new bridge, completed with the help of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), opened on June 18, 2018. The bridge was dedicated as the "Illinois Valley Veterans Memorial Bridge." The new construction started in February 2016 and is wider than the previous bridge. Eight-foot shoulders allow for any vehicle to pull off and away from traffic, wider lanes improve access for emergency vehicles and first responders, and pedestrians and bicyclists can travel across the river.



**New Developments**

- Build out 20 residential units
- Provide additional parking
- Specify green building practices
- Coordinate with adjacent projects

**Transportation**

- Walkability, which connects the adjacent communities with use of Orange St between Franklin and Orange, 200 Commercial to East of C, Commercial St, east of Orange St
- Trail to East Market Park
- Connect street and adjacent transit and recreation

**Quality of Life**

- Local community, green & sustainable - consider regional solutions
- Reinforce regional cultural identity
- Define property boundaries and code enforcement
- Make smart programming, quality, address, etc.
- Support growth with expanding residential presence
- Resilient center in City Park

**Grow Spring Valley**







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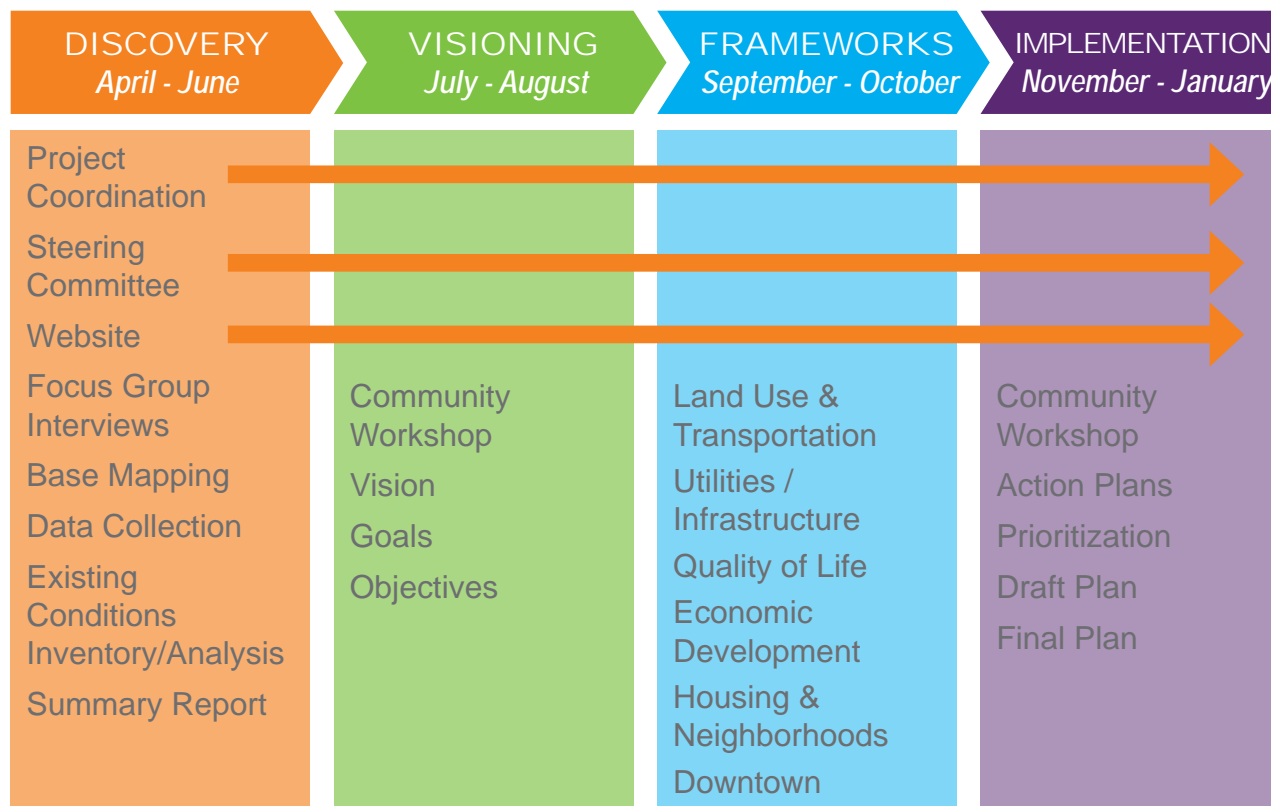
# Process & Community Engagement



# Process

The City of Spring Valley hired Rundell Ernstberger Associates to facilitate the planning process and creation of the Grow Spring Valley Comprehensive Plan. The process began in April of 2019 and shortly thereafter, the first steering committee meeting was held in May. This group was comprised of City Staff and Officials, residents, and business owners who helped guide this process to completion. This group met periodically throughout the process, helps to identify issues and opportunities, and provided feedback on plan goals and objectives as they were developed.

Additionally, focus group meetings were held in June to allow for more diverse input across the community. Students, community leaders, and other property and business owners and city staff who were not a part of the steering committee were interviewed during this time. These interviews helped to gather more information about the existing concerns and future opportunities of Spring Valley.





Hall High School students participating in a mapping exercise.



Attendees and exercises at the first public open house, held on June 20, 2019.



A resident provides input at the Cinco de Mayo festival.

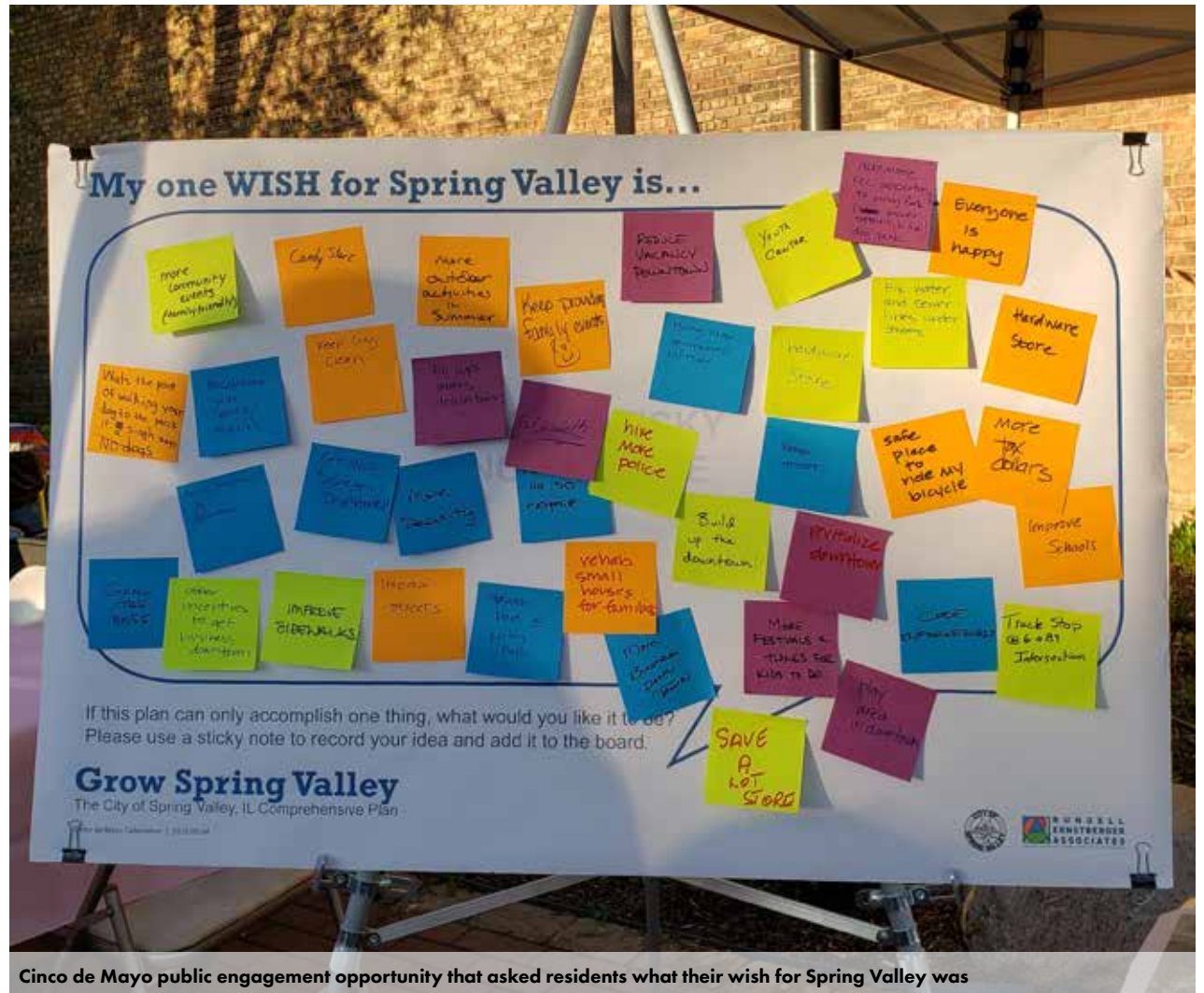
Public events and meetings were held throughout this process. The Cinco de Mayo festival was a chance for the community to get involved early on in the process of creating the plan by participating in a couple activities. Open house style public meetings were held in June and November which allowed for the public to comment on any of the work done up to that point and provide feedback.

For those who could not make it to the public meetings, a website was created at the beginning of the process and updated periodically. These updates consisted of posting meeting materials from the steering committee and public meetings, as well as online survey opportunities. These surveys helped to gather information based on existing concerns and opportunities, and guidance for the continuing development of the plan.

# Community Engagement

## Surveys

Two public surveys were posted after each public meeting. This allowed residents an opportunity to voice their opinion if they did not attend the public meeting. Each survey consisted of the same activities at the public meetings and allowed for additional comments and feedback. The first survey involved determining what types of issues and opportunities were most important for the community. The second survey focused on the draft goals and objectives and allowed participants to determine what was most important to focus on or prioritize for Spring Valley within four categories: land use and community form, transportation and utilities, the downtown, and quality of life.



Cinco de Mayo public engagement opportunity that asked residents what their wish for Spring Valley was





PROJECT INFORMATION

DOCUMENT CENTER

FREQUENTLY ASKED  
QUESTIONS

CONTACT



# GROW SPRING VALLEY

*The City of Spring Valley, IL Comprehensive Plan*



## COMMUNITY SURVEY

Community participation and input is critical to the success of the planning process. A community survey has been created to collect feedback from individuals who were not able to attend the community workshop on November 13, 2019. Please use the following link to complete the survey; it will take you to the Grow Spring Valley page on the SurveyMonkey site.

[SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/GROWSPRINGVALLEY](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/growspringvalley)

## ABOUT THE PLAN

The City of Spring Valley, in partnership with Rundell Emetharger Associates, has begun a process to update the City's Comprehensive Plan. This planning process will outline a vision and strategic framework for future development, redevelopment, and community building projects within the City. It will also ensure that Spring Valley maintains a high

**A project website was maintained throughout the process to advertise meetings, collect input, and post documents**

## Online Outreach

In addition to in-person community engagement opportunities, the planning process included a project website. The website was updated throughout the process so residents who were unable to attend any of the engagement opportunities would be able to view project materials and progress. The website included a comment section for visitors to offer their input to the planning team, and links to the online surveys were posted to increase outreach and gather more public opinions.



# Community Engagement

## Findings Summary

Community input and participation were critical to this planning process. Multiple opportunities and issues were brought up continually throughout the process by steering committee members, focus group participants, City officials, and residents through additional community outreach and engagement opportunities. What was discussed throughout this process was that there is a need for attracting both residents and businesses to the area and retaining them, and finding ways to attract visitors to the area through entertainment and recreation amenities. Development and reinvestment in the downtown along St. Paul Street was a primary focus, as well as connectivity and general maintenance of properties.

The following is a list of key findings reiterated throughout the engagement process:

### Land Use & Community Form

- Build out the IL-89 corridor with employment generating uses
- Develop the area around the I-80/IL-89 interchange with restaurant, hospitality, and retail businesses
- Need to create more residential neighborhoods that attract families
- Specific desired uses that were mentioned repeatedly: hardware store, hotel, supermarket
- Attract businesses that will create jobs, to in turn attract families
- Utilize recent school improvements as an economic development attraction tool
- Encourage continued business development along E. Dakota Street/US Hwy 6
- Attract a commercial anchor tenant to the vacant property at the corner of W. Dakota Street and N. Strong Street

### Transportation & Utilities

- Better maintenance of the existing roadway network
- There is not a need for many new roads/connections
- Must improve sidewalk network and pedestrian safety (areas continually mentioned include the north side of Dakota Street between Ponsetti Drive and Strong Street, between JFK Elementary and Hall High School, along N. Greenwood Street, and along E. Dakota Street/US Hwy 6 and specifically “the curves”)
- Recent accessibility improvements to curb ramps have been impactful
- Add a trail in Coal Miners Park
- Improve access to the riverfront area with a trail/complete the missing section of the I&M trail
- Improve public transportation systems to provide better access to employment and between Spring Valley and Peru/LaSalle

## Downtown

- Attract new businesses/reduce vacancy
- Many buildings need maintenance/repair/renovation
- Buildings are being neglected to the point that they are unsafe and must be torn down, leaving unattractive gaps along St. Paul Street
- Too many downtown buildings are vacant but not for sale, don't know what property owners are waiting for
- Better code enforcement is needed to ensure property and building upkeep
- Better utilize the mini park for events and programming
- The curb bump-outs on St. Paul Street were a good idea but they aren't being maintained
- Downtown seems to be trending towards more bars and gambling parlors, need to ensure there are destinations for all ages, especially families

## Quality of Life

- Need to grow community pride & involvement
- Too many negative attitudes about the community, especially from Spring Valley's own residents
- Better embrace and reflect current cultural diversity
- Improved property maintenance and code enforcement in Spring Valley neighborhoods
- Need to attract/promote entertainment and recreation amenities for families and young adults
- Must balance growth with maintaining the established character of the community



Cinco de Mayo public engagement opportunity that let residents map community assets and concerns.









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Vision, Goals & Objectives

# Vision, Goals & Objectives Hierarchy

## Vision

The vision is the overall future state of where the City aims to be in the coming years. The vision statement guides the development of the goals and objectives of the plan and should be realistically achievable for the community.

## Frameworks

Frameworks are the organizational topics outlined throughout this document. These frameworks help to identify specific goals and objectives within the component areas:

- Land Use & Community Form
- Transportation & Utilities
- Downtown
- Quality of Life

## Goals

Goal statements help to target specific issues and concerns within each framework. These are guides to help government officials evaluate future development and changes within the City by assessing if development will work towards achieving a goal and ultimately the vision.

## Objectives

Objectives support each goal statement. They should be specific and collectively serve as a path to how a goal will be accomplished. Objectives may describe recommended policies or initiatives, or relate to the physical construction of infrastructure or specific development types. Objectives should be sufficiently quantifiable to gauge the appropriateness of development applications and be understood by both the decision-makers and the general community.

## Why have a Vision Statement

The vision statement provides a sense of direction and is the overall endgame once the plan is achieved, which is why a vision is written as a future condition. The vision is developed relatively early in the planning process and helps to guide decision-making and shape the overall plan. If an idea, policy, or objective would help advance Spring Valley to the vision, it was included in the plan. The vision not only serves as part of a decision-making tool for the plan, but also for the decisions that are made in implementing the plan. While not the only consideration, policy and decision makers should remember the vision to help guide whether a decision is right for the community.

# Vision Statement



Spring Valley is a city full of pride. Residents of all ages and backgrounds are engaged in civic activities, and owners take satisfaction in maintaining attractive buildings and properties. More than simply a place to live or work, Spring Valley is a community made up of diverse neighborhoods, quality schools and parks, and an active downtown. It is a place residents are proud to call home, and where young adults want to return to raise a family if they left for school or a career. St. Paul Street is home to shops, restaurants, offices, and apartments; it is a destination for both Spring Valley residents and visitors alike with an array of community events and activities happening throughout the year. The Dakota Street, US 6, and IL-89 corridor is lined with both new and long-time businesses and industries that provide diverse employment opportunities to residents of Spring Valley and the many neighboring communities in the Illinois Valley. Ultimately, new growth and revitalization of established areas has resulted in increased property values for owners and revenue generation for the City, allowing for superior city services and a high quality of life without having to raise taxes.