



LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

3

LAND USE MIX	35	DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY	43
RESIDENTIAL LAND USE	35	SINGLE FAMILY	43
INSTITUTIONAL LAND USES	39	MULTIPLE FAMILY	44
COMMERCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT LAND USES	39	COMMERCIAL	45
ZONING	40	VACANT LAND	45
OVERLAY ZONING	40	RESIDENTIAL	45
		OFFICE/ MANUFACTURING/ COMMERCIAL	47

FINDINGS AND KEY QUESTIONS

Findings

- There has been a significant shift in Normal's land use philosophy since the adoption of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan (now Uptown) in 2001. The Town embraced the principles of smart growth for the Uptown project. With major portions of the plan now implemented, Uptown is a model for smart growth and has earned the Town national recognition. Since then, the Town has used innovative regulatory tools and economic incentives to promote mixed-use redevelopment along Main Street.
- Broadly speaking, the Town's land use pattern is similar to that of any community. Residential use, the largest land use category, consumes 36% of total acreage. Nearly 70% of residential acreage is occupied by low-density, single-family detached housing, which accounts for only 40% of all housing units. Such low-density development strains municipal resources. In the last two decades, the Town has made a conscious effort to increase residential densities in pursuit of more compact and sustainable development.
- Not surprisingly for a college town with a high percentage of institutional land uses, over a quarter of the Town's developed land is tax-exempt. While institutional uses play an important role in the quality of life in the community, they must be balanced with revenue-generating uses and must be located strategically so as not to strain public resources.
- The physical growth of the Town happens through annexation agreements. The Town currently has 12 active agreements, along with approved plats and vacant residential lots that allow for development of over 3,500 residential units. Further, Uptown 2.0 plan recommends nearly 1,000 urban residential units. These roughly 4,500 potential units can accommodate upwards of 14,000 people, a major percentage of the projected population change in the next 20 to 25 years.

Key Questions

- What can we learn from earlier efforts to apply smart growth principles to residential neighborhoods? How can the existing low-density residential neighborhoods adapt to better reflect those principles? How can the Town work with other partners, such as the school district, to strategically locate community facilities to achieve walkable and bikable neighborhoods?
- Diversity in land use is an important aspect to achieve smarter growth. How can the land use planning and zoning ordinances (and other regulatory tools) aid in achieving such diversity?
- Some current annexation agreements are set to expire soon, while others are valid through 2029. What action should the Town take when agreements expire and extensions are requested? What happens if these annexation agreements are not carried out as originally intended? Should the Town continue to approve additional annexation agreements? How can the Town foster infill development in Uptown while simultaneously approving conventional subdivisions?
- How can the Town and the university work together to proactively plan for the areas most directly influenced by the university? Can ISU's Master Plan and the Town's Comprehensive Plan be better integrated regarding land use issues?

The distribution, type, and intensity of land uses compose the physical tapestry of the city and impact a city's economic and fiscal base. Public infrastructure such as roads, drainage facilities, sewer and water lines form the structural framework that supports development. Community services such as fire protection and parks are important to the safety and livability of communities, and their availability plays an important part in a community's development pattern. This chapter focuses solely on the breakdown of existing uses. The aforementioned growth determinants are examined closely in other chapters.

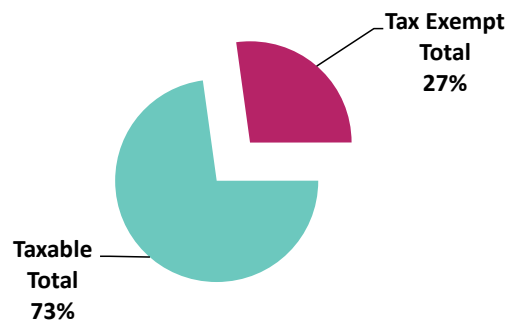
Unless otherwise noted, the land use analysis presented in this chapter is a parcel-based land use analysis^(3.1) derived from local data sources such as McLean County GIS Consortium (McGIS), Normal Township Assessor, and the Town of Normal.

LAND USE MIX

Over 36% (or 3,332 acres) of the Town's parceled land is currently being used for residential purposes, making it the leading land use. Institutional land uses such as schools, colleges, churches, government buildings and social service agencies make up over 17%. Given the presence of Illinois State University and two other higher education institutions, it is not surprising that institutional land use is the second largest category. About 15.48% of land is currently used for employment, 7.74% for parks, 6.32% for commercial and less than half a percent for mixed use. For the most part, the mixed use category refers to residential uses mixed in with office or retail uses. Nearly 13% of the land within the corporate limits of Normal is undeveloped. Map 1.3.1 is a generalized map of existing land uses. .

There is no absolute right or wrong mix of

Figure 1.3.1. Taxable and tax-exempt properties in Normal



land uses. Every community is unique and thus has a unique mix of uses. In Normal, approximately 27% of land is comprised of tax-exempt uses, such as parks and schools—a high number but not atypical for a university town. These uses are crucial for the quality of life in the community. However, it is important to maintain a healthy balance of revenue-generating and tax-exempt land uses for the long-term financial sustainability of the community. Since there is no magic formula to achieve that balance, this chapter includes comparisons between Normal's land use breakdown and those of similar communities^(3.2). While this is not a perfect apples-to-apples comparison, it provides some insight into Normal's typical and atypical land uses, given its size, university presence and other factors. Residential is the leading land use in most of the comparison communities. Other college towns, like Urbana, record higher percentages of institutional land uses when compared to non-college towns. No major anomalies appear in comparison to other communities.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

The style, size, age and ownership rate of housing stock all have a significant impact on the quality of a neighborhood, its revenue, and its de-

3.1. Parcel-based land use analysis: A parcel is a piece of real estate created for assessment and taxation purposes. It should not be confused with Lots or other divisions of land created to define ownership or other legal uses. The current extent of the Town's corporate limits is approximately 18 sq. mi., of which only 14.6 sq. mi. has been parceled. About 3.4 sq. mi. (or nearly 20% of the land within the corporate limits) is not parceled. This land is considered public right-of-way

(ROW) and is under the control of the Town. The land use calculations included in this chapter are parcel-based. This means that the percentages of land presented by the use type is based on the 14.6 sq. mi. of parceled land within the Town limits.

3.2. Refer to Figure CS-A .1 in the appendix comparing Normal's land use with that of other communities.

mand on services. Residential land uses are further explained below to gain a better understanding of the aforementioned residential land use determinants.

Housing Types in Normal

There are five main housing types in Normal:

1. Single-family detached housing
2. Single-family attached housing
3. Mobile homes

4. Multi-family housing (apartments)
5. Group Quarters

Each of these can be broken down further into sub-types (see Table 1.3.1). The single-family attached housing type is further illustrated in Figure 1.3.2.

Single-family detached housing accounts for nearly two-thirds of all residential acreage but accommodates fewer than 40% of all the housing units. On the other hand, single-family attached housing accounts for less than 7% of land acreage

			Acres	% Acres	# Units	% Units	Units/ Acre	Tax revenue/ Acre
Total Housing Units (GQ not counted as housing units)			3331.6		20,151			
Single-Family	Single-Family Detached		2376.7	71.3%	9,892	39.99%	4.16	\$16,749
	Mobile Homes		100.5	3.0%	681	2.75%	6.77	\$1,243
	Attached	Condos	106.8	3.2%	1,080	4.37%	10.11	\$19,427
		Duplexes	100.7	3.0%	777	3.14%	7.71	\$30,336
		Townhouses/ Row houses	23.7	0.7%	393	1.59%	16.61	\$45,778
Multi-Family	Apartments		349	10.5%	6,604	26.7%	18.92	\$23,565
	Mixed Use Apartments		18.5	0.6%	724	2.93%	39.23	\$81,877
*Group Quarters (GQ)	Students		45.9	1.4	4,009	16.21%	87.29	**
	Non-Students		41.1	1.2	578	2.34%	14.1	**

Table 1.3.1 Breakdown of housing types by acreages and units.

***In an effort to stay consistent with Census data, Group Quarters are not included in the total housing unit count.**

**** Taxes not computed due to institutional influences**

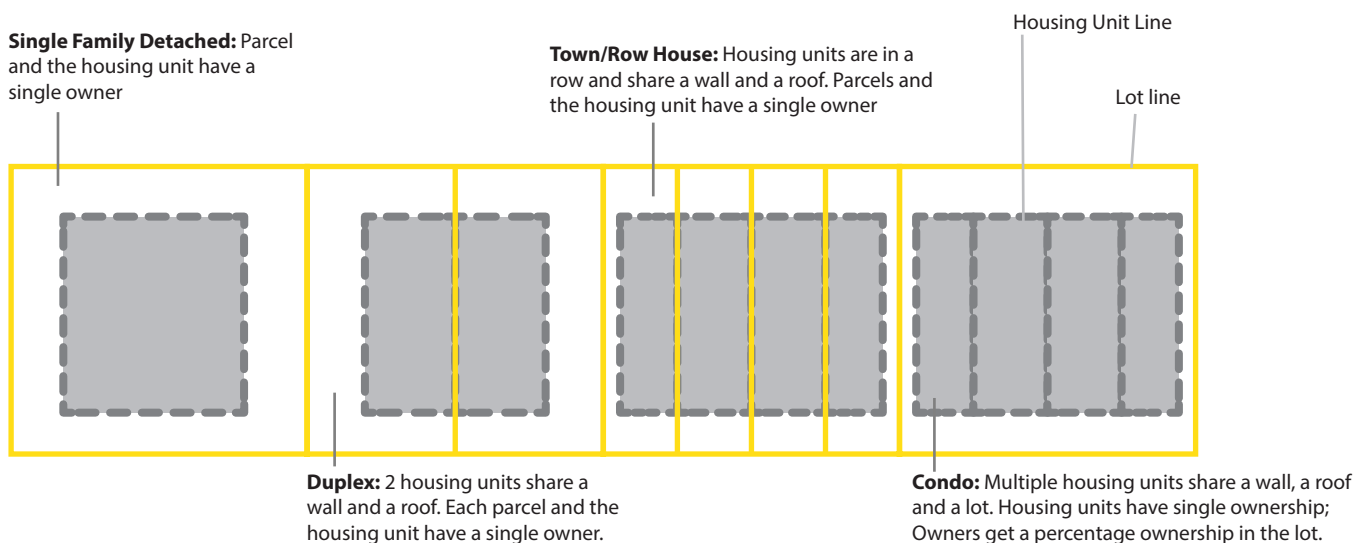
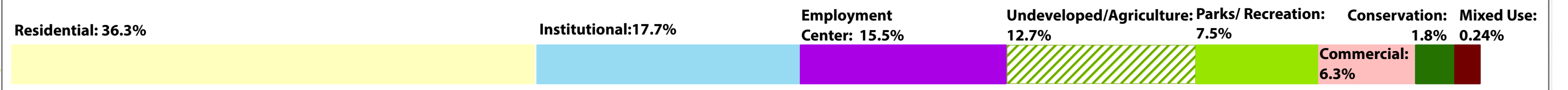
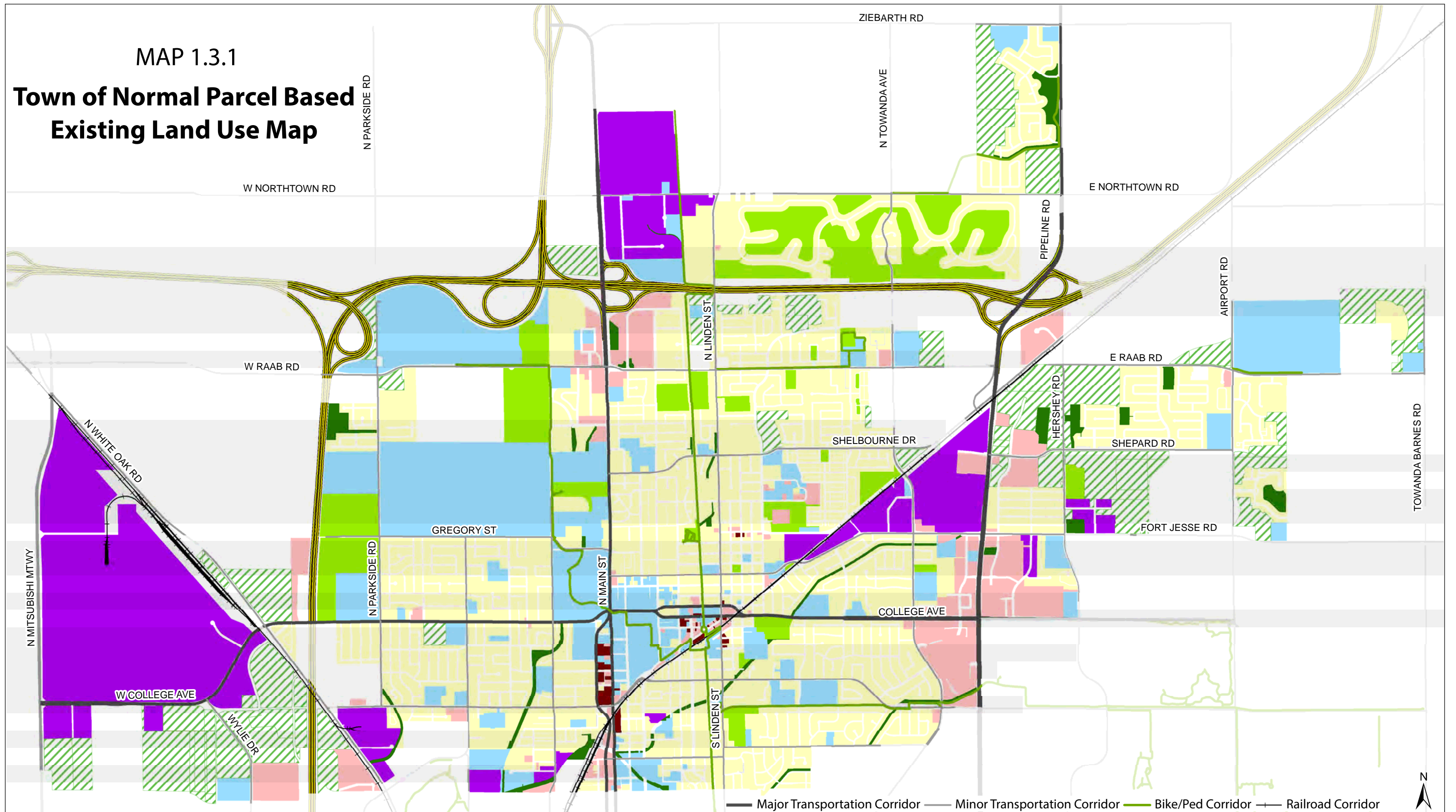


Figure 1.3.2. Single-family residential housing types, explained. These classifications are based on ownership and should not be confused with the housing style.

MAP 1.3.1 **Town of Normal Parcel Based Existing Land Use Map**



but accommodates a little over 9% of total residential units. This is an important distinction because the latter provides a single-family living experience without consuming as much land as the former. These attached housing types also yield the highest tax revenue per acre of all residential housing types (aside from mixed use apartments, which include commercial properties).

As can be expected in a university town like Normal, apartments (particularly mixed-use apartments) provide a greater density per acre. Most of the multi-family apartment units are concentrated around the university. The unique challenges and opportunities presented by this situation are examined in other chapters of this report.

Mixed-use apartment development in the last decade and a half has changed the image of the community, particularly along the Main Street Corridor near campus. Beginning in 2000, residential mixed-use development shifted from a few apartments above retail to large-scale complexes. The Edge, located at the corner of Main Street & Hovey Avenue, was one of the first such developments. These developments, guided by form-based zoning, are closer to the street with parking behind the building. This type of development is very pedestrian-oriented and has helped to bolster the variety of living options for students. However, the town has been less successful in attracting non-student mixed-use housing options. A need for this type of development was originally identified in the Uptown plan, adopted by the Council in 2000. It was further reiterated in the Uptown 2.0 plan, which was recently adopted by the Council in November 2015. Uptown 2.0 identified the need for nearly 1,000 residential units in and around the town center.

Ownership

The 2010 decennial census recorded 18,816 housing units in Normal. Based on the information gathered from building permits, there were 20,151 housing units as of Fall 2015. Of the 20,151 housing units, 45% were identified as rental. Map 3.6 and Table 3.4 in the appendix provide more detailed information on this subject.

The majority of the rental units are in the form of multi-unit apartment buildings or complexes. There are some exceptions to this general

observation. The neighborhoods in the close vicinity of the ISU campus have rental units in the single family housing types. The opportunities and challenges presented by this situation are examined closely in the Planning Analysis Zone chapter (under the University Influence Zone).

INSTITUTIONAL LAND USES

Unsurprisingly for a college town, institutional land use is Normal's second-biggest land use category. Institutions such as the colleges and universities, schools, churches, government buildings, and social service agencies make up nearly 18% of the total parceled acreage.

The majority of institutional land uses are tax-exempt. When institutional land use is combined with other non-revenue-generating tax uses such as recreational (8%) and conservation (2%), the non-revenue-generating total comes to nearly 28%.

There are substantial vacant acreages under institutional ownership. Location of certain institutional uses, such as schools and churches, along the fringes of the corporate limits causes stress on infrastructure expansion and maintenance. The purpose of this exercise is not to diminish the value of institutional uses but merely to point out the need to locate them strategically and use them effectively.

COMMERCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT LAND USES

The commercial (6%) and employment (16%) land use categories house the retail, employment, office and other uses that drive the economy. Together, these two land use categories make up nearly 22% of the parceled area. As can be easily identified in the land use map, these properties are mainly along the major rail and road transportation corridors. These typically generate more revenue per acre and demand fewer services when compared to residential land uses.

Only 1.75% of commercial acreage is currently categorized as neighborhood commercial. Given the replacement of small neighborhood retail by big-box stores, this is somewhat expected. However, this phenomenon continues to pose challenges in achieving smart growth goals such as compact communities and pedestrian-oriented development.

In October 2015, the Town of Normal, along with the broader regional community, adopted BN Advantage, a regional economic development strategy. This initiative identified five target sectors for retention, expansion and attraction in the community. The land, building, and infrastructure needs for these sectors are discussed at greater length in Chapter 1.4, Economic Vitality.

ZONING

The Zoning Ordinance is one of the tools with which land use is regulated. A zoning map is adopted and published annually to show the spatial extent and boundaries of the zoning districts. For the purpose of this analysis, the Town’s various zoning districts are grouped into five categories: residential, commercial, office/manufacturing, institutional, and agriculture. Map 1.3.2 shows these groupings geographically.

It is important to note that zoning is different from land use. However, zoning for the most part dictates land use. The properties which use the land for purposes other than those currently permitted by the underlying zoning are called non-conforming properties. The Town of Normal has few non-conforming properties. Most of the existing non-conformities are residential uses

along the Main Street corridor. This can be expected given the changes in the character of that corridor, particularly over the last two decades.

Although the Town’s current form of Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1969, significant updates have been made since then:

- Historic Preservation Code, added in 1990
- Downtown Design Review Code and Traditional Neighborhood Design, added in 2002
- Community Design Standards, added in 2003 as a replacement for the previous “Appearance Review Standards.”
- Sign Code, comprehensively amended in 2001.

Many of these revised standards are enforced through overlay zoning, described below.

OVERLAY ZONING

Historic Overlay District: This overlay protects and preserves the historic properties in the three historic districts (Old North Normal, Highland, and Cedar Crest) as well as scattered landmark sites throughout the community. The Cedar Crest Historic District is the only district listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Parking Impact Zone: This overlay was estab-



Related Definitions

3.3. Form-Based Code: A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law.

3.4. Planned Unit Development (PUD): A PUD is a large, integrated development adhering to a comprehensive plan and typically located on a single tract of land. PUD is a form of development that, although conceived decades ago, can be used today to advance a number of important smart growth and sustainability objectives. PUD has a number of distinct advantages over conventional lot-by-lot development. Properly administered, PUD can offer a degree of flexibility that allows creativity in land planning, site design, and the protection of environmentally sensitive lands not possible with conventional subdivision and development practices. Moreover, properly applied, PUD is capable of mixing residential and non-residential land uses, providing broader housing choices, allowing more compact development, permanently preserving common open space, reducing vehicle trips, and

providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities. In exchange for design flexibility, developers are better able to provide amenities and infrastructure improvements, and find it easier to accommodate environmental and scenic attributes.

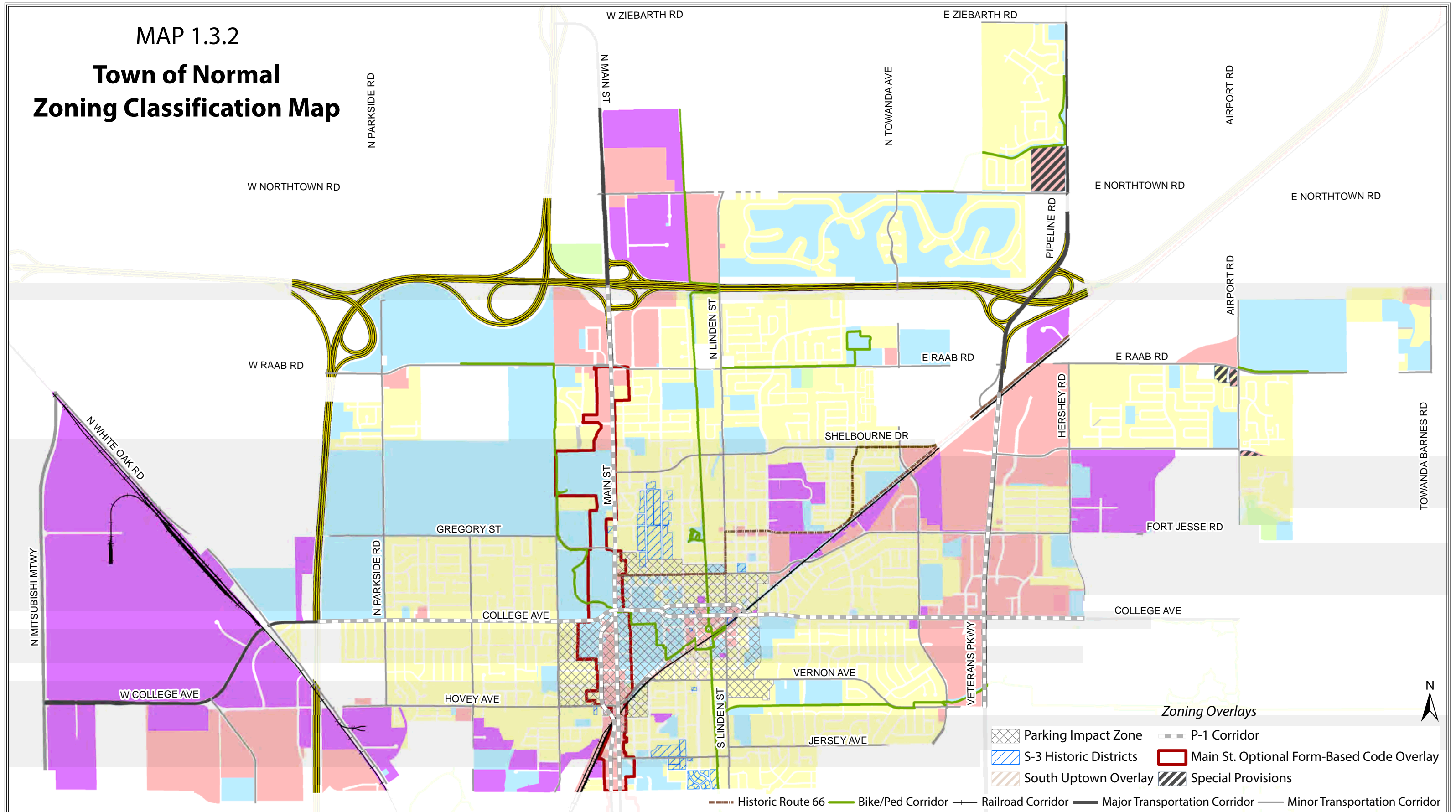
3.5. Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND): TND, also known as neo-traditional development and new urbanism, is used to describe planning and development of newer developments that take their forms from the structure and layout of early 20th-century neighborhoods built before automobiles were widely used. The key principles of TNDs include:

- Compact neighborhoods with a mix of uses and housing types.
- A network of streets with sidewalks and street trees to facilitate convenient and safe movement throughout neighborhoods for all modes of transportation, with a focus on pedestrian.
- Integration of parks and public spaces into the neighborhood.
- Placement of important civic buildings on key sites to create landmarks and a strong sense of place.

MAP 1.3.2

Town of Normal

Zoning Classification Map



Residential: 3697.4 Acres or 39.05%		Institutional: 2354.6 Acres or 25.85 %		Office/ Manufacturing: 1819.8 Acres or 19.48%		Commercial: 1394.9 Acres or 14.81%		Agriculture (0.6%)
R-1A- 1396.5 acres or 14.95%		S-1- 712.9 acres or 7.63%		C-1 - 229.9 acres or 2.46%		B-1- 1276.2 acres or 13.54%		
R-1B- 1596.8 acres or 16.74%		S-2 - 16.41.7 acres or 18.22%		M-1- 399.4 acres or 4.28%		B-2- 30.0 acres or 0.32%		
R-2- 219.7 acres or 2.19%				M-2- 1190.5 acres or 12.74%		C-2- 24.3 acres or 0.26%		
R-3A- 448.9 acres or 4.81%						C-3- 64.4 acres or 0.69%		
R-3B- 35.4 acres or 0.38%								

lished to increase safety and lessen congestion in the public streets, provide adequate but not excessive off-street parking facilities for commercial and residential properties, and set standards for the requirement of off-street parking and loading unique to the particular needs adjacent to the university campus.

South Uptown: This overlay was created to administer form-based code^(3.3) in the area south of Uptown.



Figure 1.3.3. Single-family detached housing permits

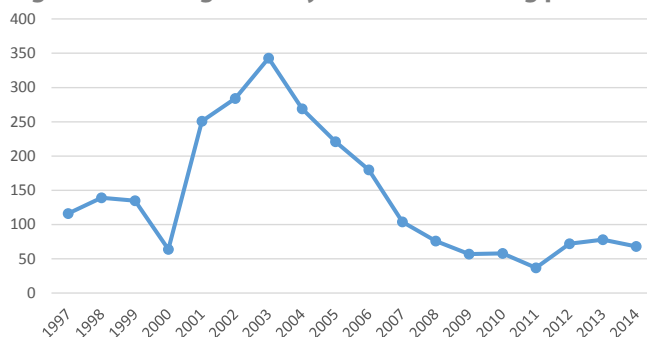


Figure 1.3.4. Multi-family housing permits

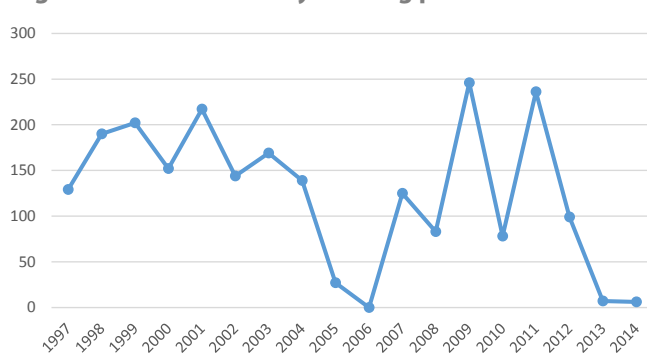


Figure 1.3.5. Single family attached housing permits



Optional Main Street Form Based Overlay District: This overlay district was created to enhance the livability, walkability, and appearance of the Main Street corridor.

P1-Corridor Overlay District: The intent of this district is to enhance the visual character and economic value of the Town's major commercial corridors (College Avenue, Main Street and Veterans Parkway) by prohibiting uses that have an industrial appearance.

The Town also uses tools such as Planned Unit Development (PUD^(3.4)) to promote denser residential developments and advance Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND^(3.5)) standards. These revisions allowed the Town to meet the land use and development needs of the 21st century while continuing to protect the health, safety and welfare of its population.

While the Town has achieved denser residential developments in recent years, TND has been a mixed success. A lack of clear urban design standards and the incomplete understanding of TND concepts by the local development community have resulted in the implementation of certain elements within the newer subdivisions, but none that satisfy the core intent of TND.

Given the number of overlay zones, the Town may need to consider a complete rewrite of its zoning code to improve the predictability of this regulatory tool.

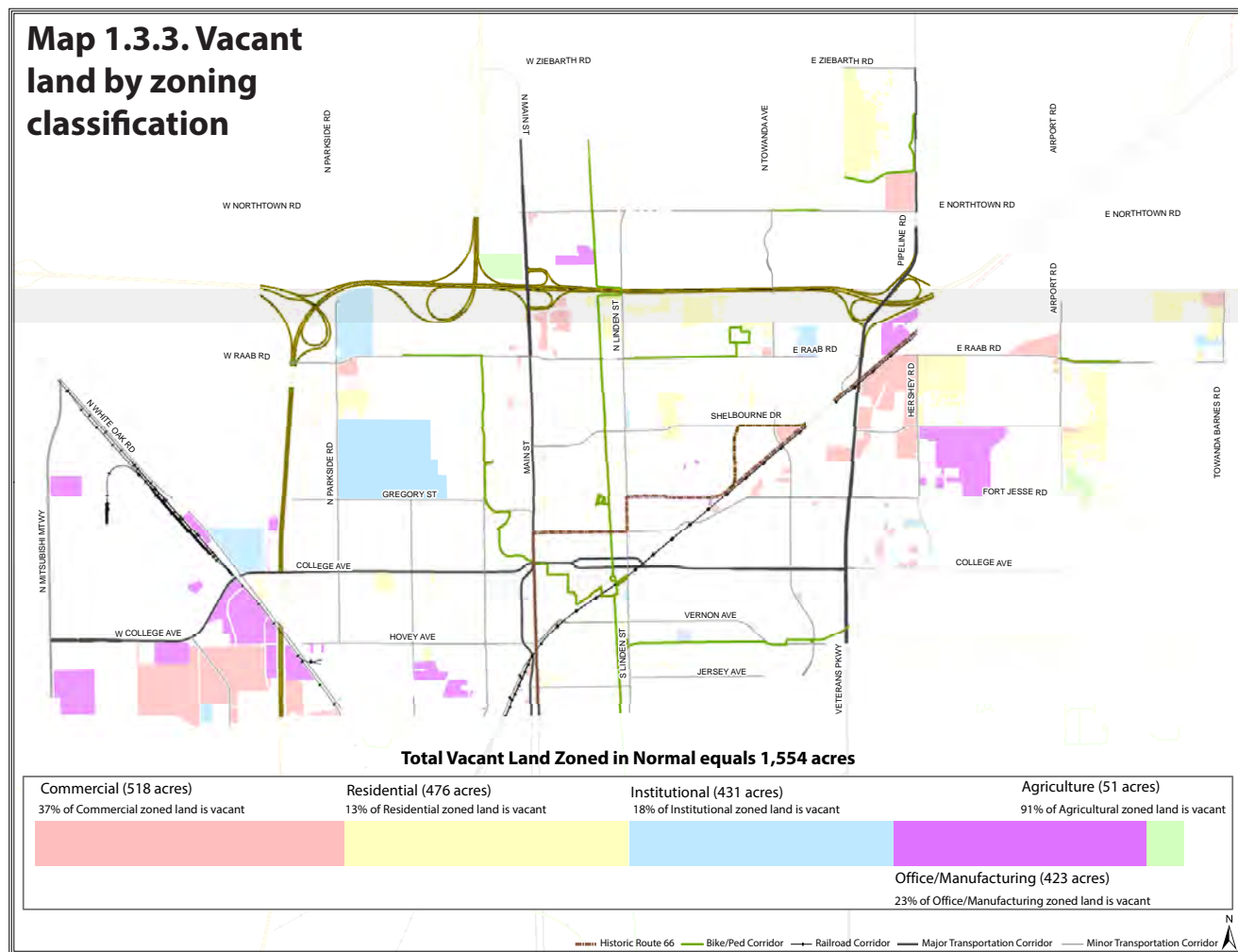
DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The Town's growth can also be tracked by the number of building permits issued for new developments over a period of time. From 1997 to 2014, about 6,000 new residential units were constructed, of which 60% were single-family and 40% were multi-family.

SINGLE-FAMILY

These permits peaked in the early 2000's and fell to an all-time low during the recession years (2009-2011). With the exception of a slight increase in single-family attached housing in 2013, there has not been much improvement in

Map 1.3.3. Vacant land by zoning classification



this area. The single-family residential permits are directly correlated to the Town's population growth and local economic activity.

MULTI-FAMILY

These permits have increased and decreased in a pattern unrelated to other local economic fluctuations. This is partly due to the change in on-campus student housing at Illinois State

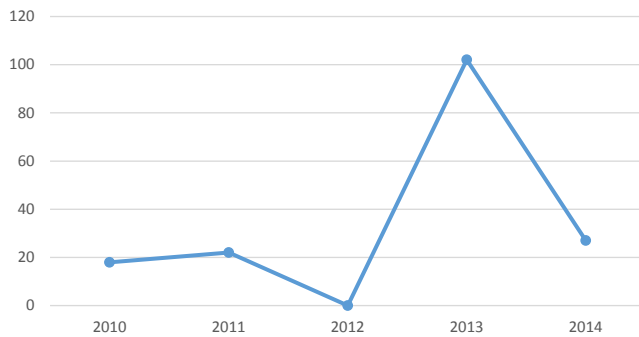
University, which eliminated approximately 2,400 on-campus beds through building demolition and remodeling. Many of the new apartments built by the private sector to compensate for the lost beds fall into one of two categories:

1. Luxury student apartment complexes with on-site amenities, including theater rooms, high-end kitchen finishes, and workout rooms.

	Density in Units/ Acre		
	Allowed	Town-wide Avg	New development Avg
R-1A- Low Density Single-Family Residence Dist	4	3.4	2.6
R-1B- Medium Density Single-Family Residence Dist	6	4.9	5.1
R-2- Mixed Residence Dist	14	6.9	7.1
R-3A- Medium Density Multiple-Family Residence Dist	12 to 18	16.5	16.8
R-3B- High Density Multiple-Family Residence Dist	Up to 72	31.2	45.1

Table 1.3.2. Allowed and observed densities by residential zoning classification. The Town-wide column is the average density throughout the Town. The new development average is the density observed in newer residential developments (since 2000). The potential units for future developments are calculated using the newer development densities based on the underlying zoning, if within the corporate limits, or as stated in the annexation agreements.

Figure 1.3.6. Mixed-use building permits



A prime example is the Lodge on Willow (northeast corner of Willow and School streets), where the apartments surround a courtyard with an in-ground pool.

2. Large-scale, mixed-use projects with student apartments above a first floor of commercial space. The first such project was The Edge, built at the corner of Main and Hovey. In addition to the mix of uses, The Edge was the first project to include structured parking. Several years after the construction of The Edge, the Town adopted an Optional Form-Based Code to encourage dense, mixed-use development along the Main Street Corridor, in keeping with the goals of the Main Street Plan. Building permit activity for these mixed-use projects is shown in Figure 1.3.6.

COMMERCIAL

These permits also reflect the health of the local economy. Commercial permits peaked in 2008 and steeply declined in 2009 as a result of the global recession (see Figure 1.3.7). Since then, the annual number of permits has been fairly steady from year to year.

VACANT LAND

A vacant land assessment determines potential or projected future development capacity. There are nearly 1,600 acres of vacant land within the Town limits. Map 1.3.3 shows the geographic location of the existing vacant land and its zoning.

RESIDENTIAL

The majority of vacant land is currently zoned residential and is subject to annexation

Figure 1.3.7. Commercial building permits



agreements. Map 1.3.4 and the associated tables, 1.3.3 and 1.3.4, contain additional information on these agreements.

The potential capacity for future new residential units is summarized below (+/- 50 units):

- Currently annexed vacant land, platted for residential uses or available for residential development: 495 (+/-)
- Currently annexed vacant land with valid annexation agreements for residential development: 1,820 (+/-)
- Currently un-annexed property with valid annexation agreements for residential development: 1,357 (+/-)

Together, there is a potential for 3,672 (+/-) new residential units. As discussed earlier, the Uptown 2.0 plan identified a potential for approximately 1,000 new residential units in and around Uptown. Based on the Town's average family size of 3.01 (per Census 2010), these potential units can accommodate upwards of 14,000 people—the projected population increase over the next 15 to 25 years (please refer to Chapter 1.2, Demographics and Projections, for growth rates and population projection scenarios).

Given the amount of development that could potentially occur, it is important that the Town be careful and deliberate with the future expansion of the corporate boundary. Clear community-wide growth priorities must be established during the visioning process for new annexations, and the timelines on existing annexation agreements should be extended. Such guidelines play a key role in achieving the recently adopted Uptown vision. Why? Locating new residential develop-

Map 1.3.4. Residential vacant land

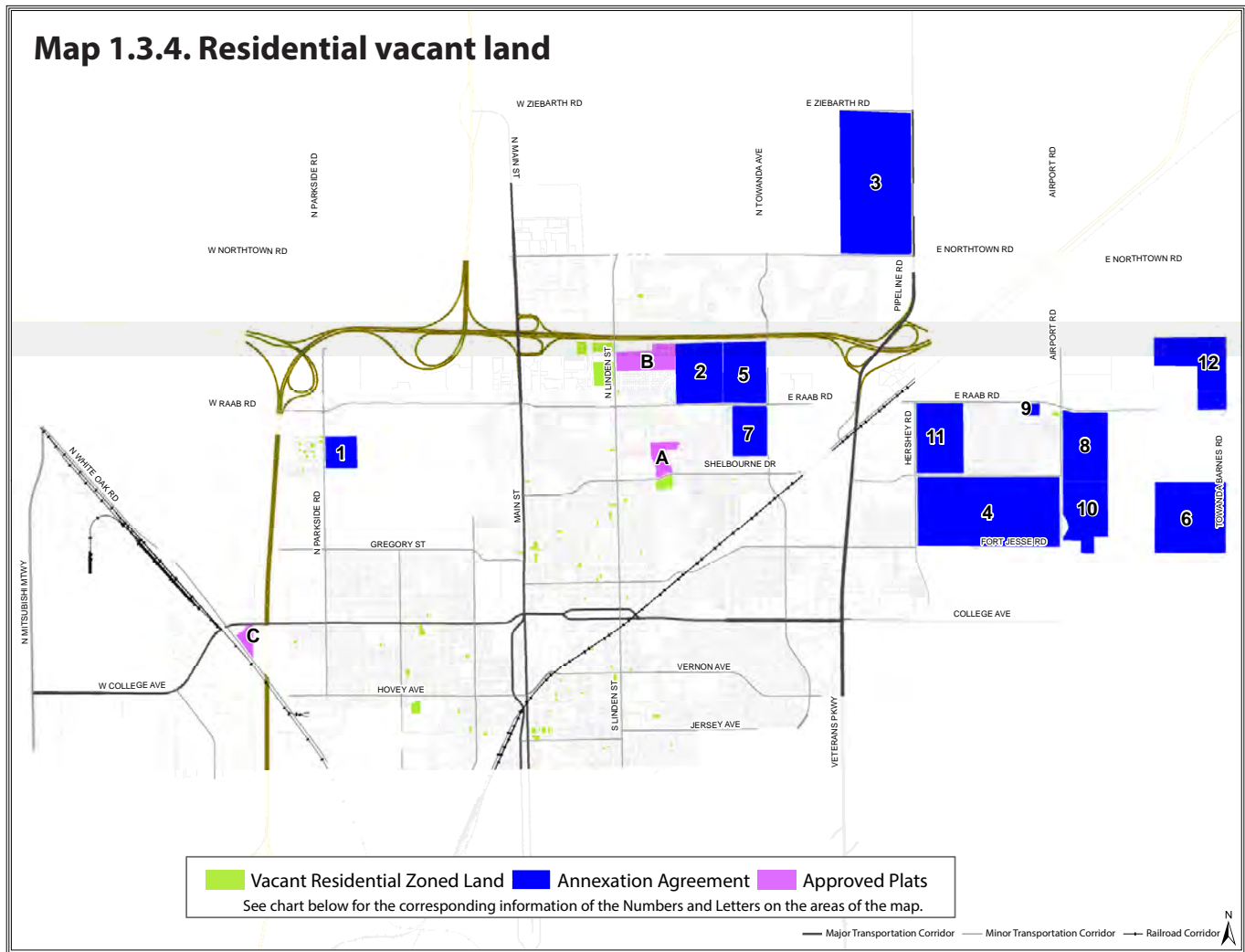


Table 1.3.3. Annexation agreements

ID	Development	Potential #'s on un-annexed property	Potential #'s on annexed property	Exp Date
1	Greystone Subdivision		144	
2	Wintergreen		146	2016
3	North Bridge		711	2019
4	Fort Jesse Office Complex/ Country Acres	958		2020
5	Carden Park	213	51	2020
6	Franklin Heights	426		2021
7	Kelley Glen	150	39	2022
8	Vineyards		140	2024
9	Taylor	36		2024
10	Trails on Sunset Lake		176	2027
11	Blackstone Trails		265	2029
12	Apostolic Christian Church		148	2029
	Totals	1,357	1,820	

Table 1.3.4. Approved plats & vacant lots

ID	Development	Potential #'s
A	Collie Ridge	80
B	Pheasant Ridge	79
C	Prairie Garden	36
	Vacant Lots dispersed throughout the community	300
	Total	495

ments in the greenfields would make it difficult for the Town to facilitate infill redevelopments around Uptown, particularly in the current economic conditions.

OFFICE/ MANUFACTURING/ COMMERCIAL

There are nearly 900 acres of vacant land zoned for office/manufacturing/commercial uses. Combined with the redevelopment potential for the infill sites, these vacancies mean that there are many opportunities for commercial and employment center development. These possibilities are discussed more in depth in Chapter 1.4, Economic Vitality.

