



Hillsboro 2030 Strategic Plan

**City of Hillsboro, Illinois
October 2020**

Front and back covers: Lake Glenn Shoals, October 2020

Acknowledgements

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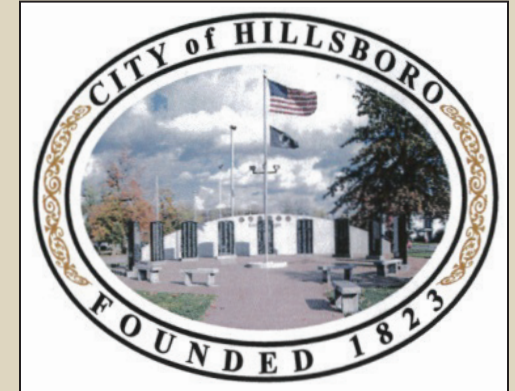
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"Among Friends" sculpture on Lincoln Plaza, Historic Courthouse Square

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Introduction

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History

When a person drives east on State Road 16, they discover a string of hills that rise from the surrounding fields full of corn, soybeans and flowers. On top of these tree covered landscapes sits the city of Hillsboro, Illinois, county seat of Montgomery County and the home of approximately 6500 residents who are passionate about the previous chapters of their history and are busy writing the next part of the city's story. The rolling hills, golden prairies, two lakes nestled in wood covered hills, and the regenerating historic downtown flow into a rural landscape that gives Hillsboro its unique character. That different flavor is attracting a group of companies seeking new paths in the modern rural economy. Companies like CTI, Hayes Abrasives, Orpheum Theater, the Red Rooster Inn, Black Rabbit Coffee Roasters, Opera House Brewing Company and Atlas 46, an inventive e-commerce company, are already opening new chapters in Hillsboro's story in becoming the seventh gig city in the history of Illinois.

Early Native Americans made their homes among the hills Hillsboro now occupies, as evidenced by the Native American burial mounds discovered west of town. Settlers from North Carolina and Kentucky came to the area after the War of 1812, settling along the branches of Shoal creek. The town quickly became a center of making things and discussing important ideas. Abraham Lincoln walked these streets, sat on a friend's front porches telling stories, slept in town hotels, and tried cases at the county courthouse at the head of main street. The Lincoln statue that is located on the city square shows him as he might have appeared on one of his days in town, preparing himself to become the great Emancipator.

In the early part of the 20th century, a unique event called Chautauqua hosted several famous speakers including William Jennings Bryan and Billy Sunday. The gatherings welcomed all points of view, holding both Republican and Democratic days as well as music festivals. Music has always been a part of Hillsboro's history. The WPA (Works Progress Administration) American Guide

series, published in 1940, described Hillsboro as a city alive with music, as evidenced by the building of the Opera House in the early 20th century. One of the town's most famous citizens, Otto Funk, an accomplished fiddler, walked across America and entertained people along the way. He founded "Funk's Lake," a music venue located just south of town at his family farm.

Hillsboro's story is interwoven with stories of people and companies who make things. Hillsboro Glass Company made bottles for a variety of products that were distributed across the country supplying bottles for companies like the Hiram Walker Distillery. An engineering firm, Hurst-Rosche, founded in 1937, continues to design award winning projects beyond the Hillsboro area with offices in St. Louis, Kansas City and Nashville. The mines of Hillsboro supplied much needed energy to our country and the Eagle-Picher Company provided zinc oxide for the production of paint to a large section of that industry.

Mining the riches of that extensive history, Hillsboro is taking its next step into a future that seeks to be a model for other small towns in the Midwest. The town is located eight miles east of I-55 and halfway between the capital of Illinois, Springfield, and St. Louis, Missouri. When it comes to accessibility and a strategic location, the City of Hillsboro is centrally located to take advantage of the three main roadways that lead in and out of town.

In 2017, Hillsboro hooked up to fiber Internet, registering speeds that rival major metropolitan areas. The city is ready to place itself as a leader in the areas of e-commerce and small to mid-level manufacturing. As the town considers future development, the Internet and e-commerce will be at the forefront of the city's strategic planning.

To that end, the Hillsboro City Council, with the advice and help of the Planning Commission, decided to write a Strategic Plan that provides a helpful guide to the city for the next ten years. The new plan is based on the one written in 2014 that was designed to guide the city for five years.



Why A Strategic Plan?

The City of Hillsboro faces several challenges and opportunities as it looks to the next ten years. With the current new development and the significant challenges of the post Covid-19 world, the city finds itself at a critical juncture. It is vitally important to plan for a future city that is thriving and sustainable beyond the current generation of leaders. Led by the City Council, Hillsboro came together to write a strategic plan that will guide the planning and execution of the city for the next ten years.

Benefits of a Plan

The Plan Will Help Manage Future Change

A strategic plan cannot predict the future, but it gives leaders a guide to make meaningful decisions. Future changes can be managed with a flexible plan. The Hillsboro Strategic Plan investigates trends in our demographics, workforce, mobility, housing, economic development and parks and recreation to place us in the best position to address areas of need and maintain flexibility for whatever the future brings to Hillsboro.

The Plan Will Help Hillsboro become a Premier Small Town

Hillsboro has experienced a number of ups and downs in its almost 200-year history. The current upswing occurred six years ago as new businesses driven by city leadership began to take shape. With the new development and preparations for the 21st century, Hillsboro is taking the jump to become a model small town.

Plan will Create a Shared Vision

Strategic plans are more than just a document of ideas. They are a chance for the community to rally around a shared vision and develop a consensus on shared goals that will mold growth in the town for the next ten years.

Municipal Authority for Strategic Plan

Municipalities in Illinois are authorized by state statutes to commission, develop, write and execute city plans. This is reflected in the following sections of the Illinois Statutes

(65 ILCS 5/11-12-6) (from Ch. 24, par. 11-12-6)

Sec. 11-12-6. An official comprehensive plan, or any amendment thereof, or addition thereto, proposed by a plan commission shall be effective in the municipality and contiguous area herein prescribed only after its formal adoption by the corporate authorities. Such plan shall be advisory and in and of itself shall not be construed to regulate or control the use of private property in any way, except as to such part thereof as has been implemented by ordinances duly enacted by the corporate authorities.

Using the Strategic Plan

Hillsboro 2030 is not meant to be a “step by step” document that allows no wiggle room for change or growth. Rather, it should be viewed as a strategic document that may be amended and changed according to the needs of the city.

It is not a zoning ordinance, budget, capital improvement or a regulatory document that binds the city to everything that is written.

This plan is meant to be a foundation for those discussions by laying out a vision for future growth and development. It is meant to be a guide for decision making rather than an authoritative document.



Elements of Hillsboro 2030

The plan contains distinct elements that make up the whole. They are as follows:

Community Profile

This section delves into two distinct sources of information: community research and the data retrieved from various sources. These areas will help develop an overall community profile and the six community values that will shape the rest of the plan.

Six Community Values

Community values, shaped by the research process, are the core structure of the Comprehensive Plan. They will tell what Hillsboro values the most and will provide a vision for the specific goals and sub goals of each section.

Goals and Subgoals

Each community value will have specific goals and sub goals that are to be accomplished by the various responsible parties, as determined by the Town Council.

Future Plans to be Developed

No comprehensive plan is complete and must be flexible enough to add more information as the need arises. To that end, the Hillsboro 2030 plan will recommend separate plans that are to be written in the next five years. Further, this plan will be flexible to the future needs of the city and will have inbuilt ways to review and amend as the need arises.

Implementation Process

Comprehensive plans are useless without some idea of how they will be implemented and monitored. This section will discuss how Hillsboro will continue to monitor and change this plan for the next ten years, including five-year incremental updates.

Strategic Plan Schedule

July-August 2019: Data research and begin writing the first chapters of the plan.

September 12, September 26, and October 3rd, 2019: Joint public meetings with City of Hillsboro, Imagine Hillsboro and Institute for Rural Affairs to determine shared values and goals of the community.

October 4: Research stage complete.

October 14th to November 1st, 2019: The first part of the plan (minus specific goals and sub goals) to be written, edited and presented to Council at the November 12th meeting.

November 21: The first part of the plan to be presented to the Planning Commission (minus specific goals and sub goals).

November 12th to December 31, 2019: All recommended changes, corrections and objections to be presented to the Community Planner.

January 1st to February 28th, 2020: Community planner consults with council members, City Clerk, and department heads about possible project goals for the city.

March 2020: City Planner assembles the list of projects and sends it out to council for grading.

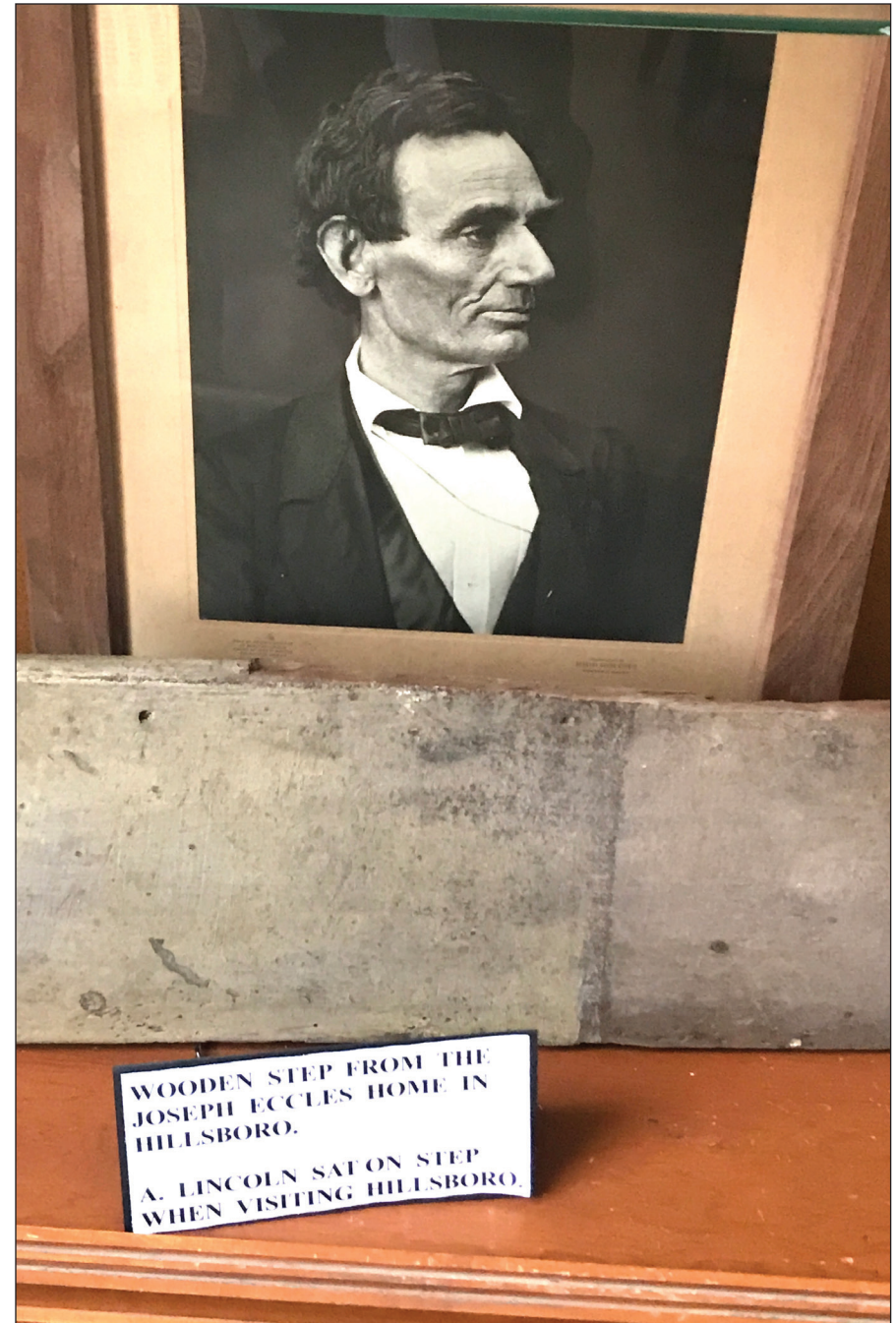
April 2020-May 2020: City Planner completes rough draft and sends it to council and Planning Commission for Comment.

June-July 2020: Council votes on their acceptance of rough draft. Planner works with graphic designer to construct the final plan. Work begins on economic development plan.

August - September 2020: Plan available for public comment and input on the city's website.

October 2020: Final editorial changes made to the plan.

November 2020: Council held public meeting for input on the plan and approved it.



Chapter One

Demographics

Population

Households

Education

Employment

Income

Summary



The Orpheum marked its 100th anniversary in 2020.

Demographics

Overview

Even before the recession of 2007-2009, Illinois faced very difficult times. Population started to decrease, manufacturing and mining vacated the area, and small businesses shut their doors. The southern half of the state received the hardest hits and many areas still have not recovered from their pre-recession levels.

Indeed, these numbers feed the commonly accepted narrative that people are fleeing the countryside and headed into the city with little to no hope these rural towns would ever recover. (Porter 2018)

While this is generally true, an examination of the demographic data tells a more complex story with nuances and caveats. This is certainly true in the greater Hillsboro area and in Montgomery County as a whole. Several different factors must be considered when studying demographic change:

Population

When considering the population data of Montgomery County and Hillsboro for this strategic plan, one must consider a few important factors. First, the significant prison population and how it drastically affects the data. On October 24, 2004, the City of Hillsboro annexed John Graham Correctional Center with all its inmates to be counted as citizens of Hillsboro in the census of 2010. As a result, it significantly affected all areas of population data and tracking. It is important, then, to know the current population data and then weigh it against the numbers listed in this section. As of 2019, the prison population and its effect on the town population is reflected in the accompanying charts.

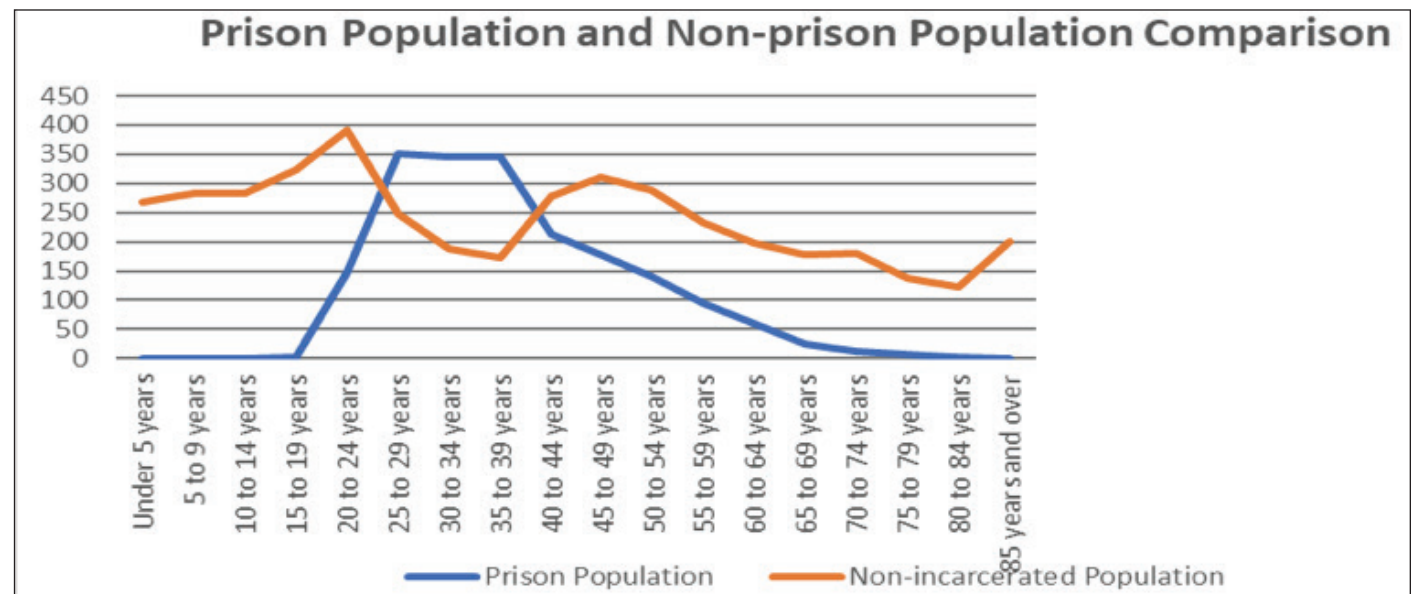
people's age, others leave town for "better opportunities," others move closer to families, and some just prefer major cities.

However, recently, young families have started to come back to Hillsboro, looking to recover a small-town lifestyle. This trend, made evident by the revitalization of downtown buildings, cannot be captured in the raw data. Thus, it is important to investigate the demographics of the Hillsboro and the surrounding area from several different angles.

It is also important to remember that data only tells part of the story of the area. Planners, business leaders and elected officials often fall into the trap of believing that statistics are the "final word."

Data, when used correctly, can give a broad overview that is useful in many of the decisions area leaders make about the city's future. As with all sources of human knowledge, it must be seen in the context of the larger whole and not as a primary source that guides the entire process.

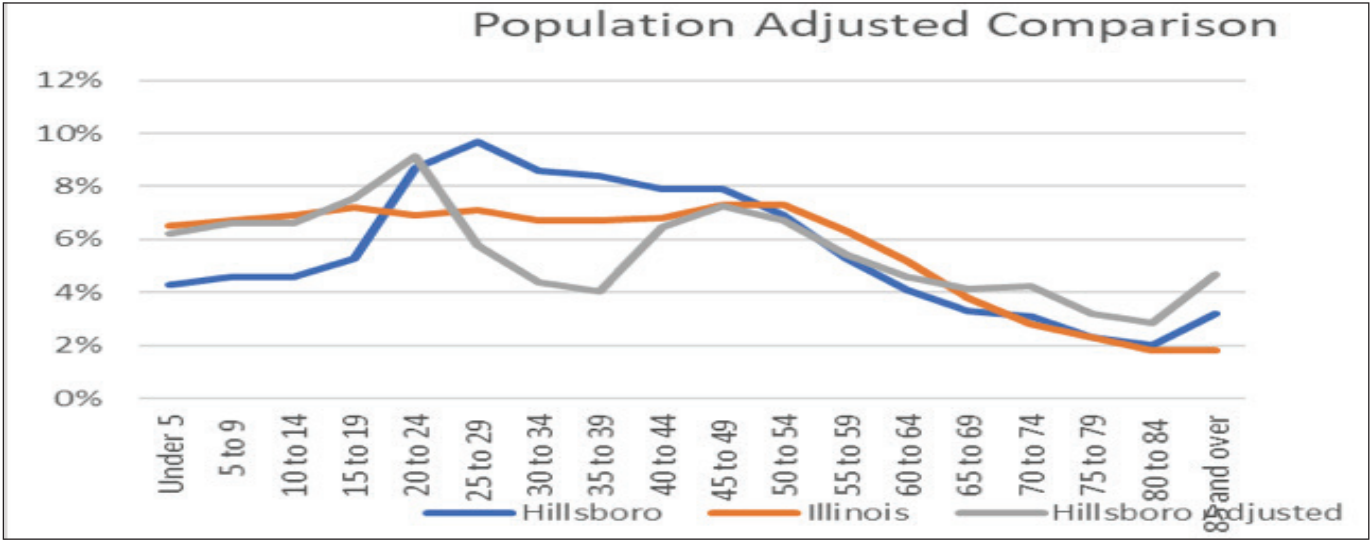
(Figure 1.1)



(Institute for Rural Affairs)

Further, the data collected for these statistics is based on the Decennial Census of 2010 and estimates from 2017-2019. These later numbers are based on the American Community Survey and often do not have the accuracy of a Decennial Census. The Council and Community planner will update this information based on the 2020 numbers in the year 2022 with the yearly progress report.

(Figure 1.2)



(Institute for Rural Affairs)

General Population

These population numbers reveal a few interesting facts. They confirm that the entire state of Illinois is experiencing a serious decline in population. According to the Illinois Policy Center, other than New York, the state of Illinois has lost more population than any other in the United States. (Orphe Divounguy 2018) There are many factors involved, but the most significant is the loss of manufacturing, which is affecting many states in the so-called “rust belt.”

As can be seen from the numbers, Montgomery County and its biggest city of Litchfield reflect this trend. The area is not losing population at an alarming rate in comparison to other distressed counties in the state. Further, the City of Hillsboro is predicted to lose only 3 percent or less by 2020. While the prison population fluctuations must be considered in that number, it doesn’t tell the whole story. Very often, the population of the prison doesn’t change enough to fully explain Hillsboro’s steady numbers and, in fact, may factor into the possible 3 percent loss. There is not enough data to draw solid conclusions. It is safe to say the population numbers of Hillsboro have remained steady with only slight up and down statistical variations in the past 30 years while the county and the state continue a downward trend.

(Figure 1.3)

	1990	2000	2010	2018 (Estimates)	% Change
Hillsboro	4,360	6,365	6,207	5,996	-3.4 %
Litchfield	7,098	6,974	6,939	6,753	-5.3 %
Montgomery County	30,746	30,652	30,104	28,601	-5.0 %
Illinois	11.45 m	12.43 m	12.8m	12.7 m	-0.7 %

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Demographics

Overview

There is no doubt the state, county and city data all tell the same story; the population is aging faster than it can be replaced with a significant reduction reflected in the younger age brackets. This problem is not unique to Illinois, Montgomery County or the City of Hillsboro. It reflects a national trend that is a result of the Baby Boomers, who recently have been bypassed by the Millennials as the largest generation in American history. Further, the Millennials are delaying or choosing not to have

Explanation of Demographic Groups

Youth and Teens (0-19)

At first glance, the decline in population in this age category for the City of Hillsboro might seem alarming. The drop from 2010 to 2018 is 5.2 percent and therefore significant. However, in comparison with state trends, it is lower, as Illinois experienced a ten percent drop. This age range is still a cause for concern. A quick survey of the town shows the need to develop a more kid friendly environment in hopes of retaining and attracting young families. This could include a revamped Central Park, more walkable streets, and a library downtown that would include more kid-oriented events. Further, more should be provided for area teens in order to provide safe “third places” for them to socialize.

Young Adults (20-34)

In this age set, the prison population must be considered, as many of the inmates fall into this range. However, the rise of five percent is enough to raise the possibility of other factors. Typically, this group is reflective of college aged young adults to people starting out their careers and families. Further study in this area might be warranted to determine if the growth is just about the prison population or if there are other factors at play. Having said this, it is important to understand Hillsboro wants to attract this age group and invite them to help with the planning of the city’s future. Indeed, many of this age group are responsible for the revitalization going on in downtown Hillsboro and are motivated to

children, which may result in fewer births, fewer younger children, and fewer families. As more and more Boomers enter the later stage of their lives, the most likely result will be the further aging of the population across the nation.

Thus, Illinois, Montgomery County and Hillsboro fit well within that trend as can be seen with the following charts. However, it is important to drill down into each category and understand the exact nature of each group, as well as reflecting on the data listed in the tables.

attract others to the town as evidenced by the shops Black Rabbit Coffee and Gold Pan Records.

Middle Age (35-54)

This group consists of people with older children and, therefore, are probably set in their careers and lifestyles. It is difficult to explain why the city and county have experienced losses in this area. The possible explanation is that both lost people during the Recession and have never fully recovered, as they sought work in other cities and regions. In order to get them back, the town will need to develop and attract companies that pay higher salaries than the state average, especially when it comes to possible e-commerce jobs with higher paying salaries, as large-scale manufacturing most likely will not return to the area.

Senior Citizens (55 and Older)

As noted in the summary, this is the only area where the growth can be explained in a definitive way. That is, the Baby Boomers are aging and therefore, this category will continue to grow. As noted in the overview, this is a nationwide trend. Hillsboro and Montgomery County must address their needs or risk them moving to other areas. Many in this category are independently wealthy and make significant contributions to the community in a variety of ways. As the city considers making Hillsboro a place where people can retire, it also needs to make sure people are thinking about what will be required to take care of our senior citizens and be able to address their concerns.

Illinois **2010** **2010 (Est)** **2017 (Est)** **2017 (Est)**

	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
1-19	3,605,506	29.1	3,299,969	25.7
20-34 years	4,646,387	21.5	2,670,578	20.8
35-54 years	3,610,612	16.0	3,400,688	26.4
55 Years or Older	3,0812,420	24.0	3,483,291	27.2

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Median Age: 38

Montgomery **2010** **2010** **2017(est)** **2017 (est)**

	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
Under 14 years	7,110	23.7	7110	23.7
20-34 years	5,375	17.9	5,375	17.9
35-54 years	8,610	28.6	8008	28.6
55 Years and Over	9,009	30	9,660	30

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Median Age: 42.4

Hillsboro **2010** **2010** **2017 (Est)** **2017 (Est)**

	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
1-19 years	1,161	18.8	979	13.6
20-34 years	1,670	27	2,323	32.1
35-54 years	1,926	31.1	2417	33.4
55 and older	1,450	23.3	1,512	21

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Average Age: 37.4

Households

Overview

These numbers offer a picture of a changing cultural landscape. A variety of causes could explain the increase of single or nonmarried houses. First, as noted, the aging population results in one spouse dying, thus becoming a “single” household. Second, when examining the data, a significant number of these households are single parents, with single moms outnumbering single dads, especially in Montgomery County and Hillsboro. In many ways, these conclusions support other population statistics; the population is aging, the millennials are not having as many children, waiting longer to be married, and the middle-aged group is not moving back into the county. Finally, these numbers are not reflective of the overall divorce rate in the United States, as it is going down, but then, so are marriages. Therefore, the divorce and marriage rate cannot be the full explanation for the statistical variations.

Illinois

	2010	2018 (est)
Family Households	3,182,984	2,303,775
Non-Married Households	1,653,988	1,695,961

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Montgomery County

	2010	2018 (est)
Married Households	7,806	5,696
Non-Married Households	3,846	3,940

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Hillsboro, Illinois

	2010	2018 (est)
Family Households	1,176	743
Non-Married Households	637	639

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Education

Overview

The overall education situation in Hillsboro presents a conflicting picture. According to the Illinois Education Report Card, the system has an 88 percent graduation rate, which is just below the state average. The district has a very high teacher retention rate at 91 percent, which is higher than the overall state numbers. There are some negatives. College enrollment is below the state average even as many high school graduates report some college classes, whether at a four-year institution, community college or technical school.

The school system is underfunded, and 43 percent of the students are considered “economically disadvantaged.” Thus, it seems as if the biggest

problem facing the school system is the need for more money that comes from a broader tax base in the district. There is, of course, a problem, as people do not want to move to an underperforming district nor do potential companies want to ask their employees to move into such a district. The economic problems of the city and county have a profound influence on our educational system.

Further, the number of people with higher degrees is very low. This may be an indication of the overall national trend to start moving away from expensive, four-year schools and seek out other ways to achieve long term employment. There may be a place here for Hillsboro to step in and provide these alternatives, such as workforce development centered on the trades, which are suffering from a significant shortage.

Illinois

Population 18 to 24 years	1,229,450	
Less than high school graduate	155,831	12.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	347,685	28.3%
Some college or associate's degree	565,538	46.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	160,396	13.0%
Population 25 to 34 years	1,782,100	
High school graduate or higher	1,630,390	91.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	724,287	40.6%
Population 35 to 44 years	1,661,674	
High school graduate or higher	1,483,211	89.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	631,513	38.0%
Population 45 to 64 years	3,374,373	
High school graduate or higher	3,019,360	89.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,083,206	32.1%
Population 65 years and over	1,847,932	
High school graduate or higher	1,541,694	83.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	459,578	24.9%

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Education (continued)

Montgomery County

Population 18 to 24 years	2,362	
Less than high school graduate	504	21.3%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	727	30.8%
Some college or associate's degree	874	37.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	257	10.9%
Population 25 to 34 years	3,736	
High school graduate or higher	3,167	84.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	513	13.7%
Population 35 to 44 years	3,504	
High school graduate or higher	3,070	87.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	535	15.3%
Population 45 to 64 years	8,196	
High school graduate or higher	7,214	88.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,195	14.6%
Population 65 years and over	5,518	
High school graduate or higher	4,716	85.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	778	14.1%

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Education (continued)

Hillsboro (2018 Est)

Population 18 to 24 years	718	
Less than high school graduate	242	33.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	184	25.6%
Some college or associate's degree	213	29.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	79	11.0%
Population 25 to 34 years	1,679	
High school graduate or higher	1,384	82.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	149	8.9%
Population 35 to 44 years	1,423	
High school graduate or higher	1,108	77.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	170	11.9%
Population 45 to 64 years	1,656	
High school graduate or higher	1,317	79.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	185	11.2%
Population 65 years and over	850	
High school graduate or higher	758	89.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	213	25.1%

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Employment

Overview

At first glance, the employment data presents a conflicting set of numbers. When it comes to the general unemployment rate, Hillsboro fluctuates from the national average (currently 3.7 in the first half of 2019) to about 1.9 percent. However, the number of people not in the labor force is abnormally high. Partially, this is because of the prison numbers and how they affect every census category.

Further, this section shows people who are not actively searching for work, such as retired people, people who are in school, disabled, or just not looking for work. Again, this is a national trend, being discussed in academic, planning circles, and the popular press. It is difficult to pinpoint exact reasons as to why this group of people are not looking for work. Many believe there are no job prospects and, therefore, do not feel encouraged to search for one. This indicates the need for several different things: a comprehensive labor study, the need for more high paying jobs in the community and the need to build new economies that will produce these jobs.

Illinois

	2010	2010 %	2017	2017 %
In Labor Force	6,654,048	66.8	6,690,195	65.3
Employed	6,062,848	60.8	6,181,653	60.4
Unemployed	569,744	5.7	491,310	4.8
Not in Labor Force	3,313,497	33.2	3,547,688	34.7

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

2019 Unemployment Rate (First Half): 4.2

Montgomery County

	2010	2010 %	2017	2017 %
In Labor Force	13,616	55.1	11,413	47.4
Employed	12,631	51.1	10,750	47.4
Unemployed	965	3.9	663	2.8
Not in Labor Force	11,107	44.9	12,663	52.6

2019 Unemployment Rate (First Half): 4.9

Hillsboro

	2010	2010 %	2017	2017 %
In Labor Force	1,468	30.5	1,689	26.3
Employed	1,379	28.6	1,564	24.3
Unemployed	89	1.8	125	1.9
Not in Labor Force	3,351	69.5	4,738	73.7

2019 Unemployment Rate: 1.7

Commute to Work

Overview

Hillsboro has experienced a significant growth in its commuter population from 2010-2017 while the rest of Montgomery County has decreased. In the categories ranging from 20 minutes to 60 minutes or more, people are driving further to work while still living here.

While there is a negative aspect to this statistic, that is, the need for jobs is driving people further afield, there are some positive implications. It means that people are starting to take advantage of the quality of life in Hillsboro and this will likely increase as the high-speed internet is fully implemented within city limits.

Illinois Commute to Work

	2010	2017
Less than 5 Min	181,857	158,733
5 to 19 Min	1,375,449	1,999,080
20-39 Min	2,001,449	2,084,650
40-60	829,230	893,784
More than 60	638,739	667,781
Total	5,026,724	5,804,028

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Montgomery County, Commute to Work Times

	2010	2018
Less than 5 Min	980	719
5 to 19 Min	5,456	4,582
20-39 Min	2,878	2,700
40-60	1,064	985
More than 60	1,233	985
Total	11,611	9,971

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Hillsboro, Commute to Work Times

	2010	2018
Less than 5 Min	142	170
5 to 19 Min	748	669
20-39 Min	234	360
40-60	61	109
More than 60	93	195
Total	1,278	1,548

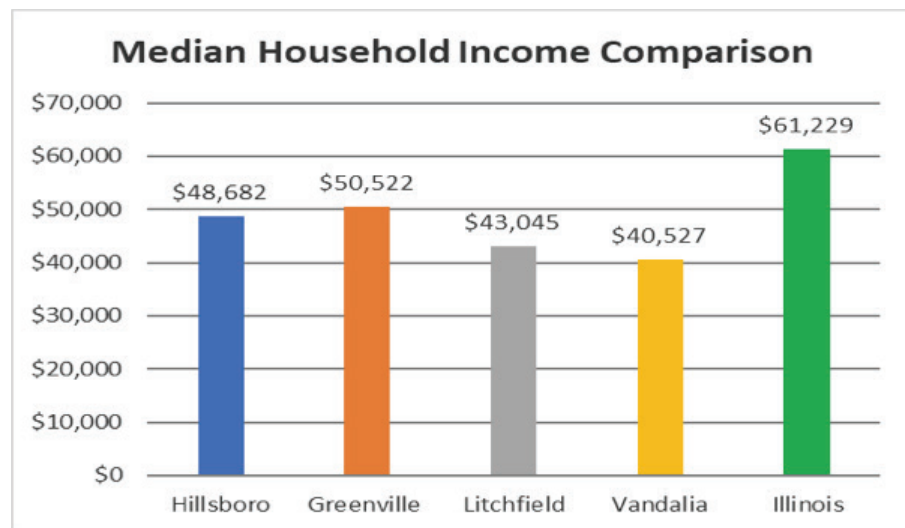
(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Median Household Income

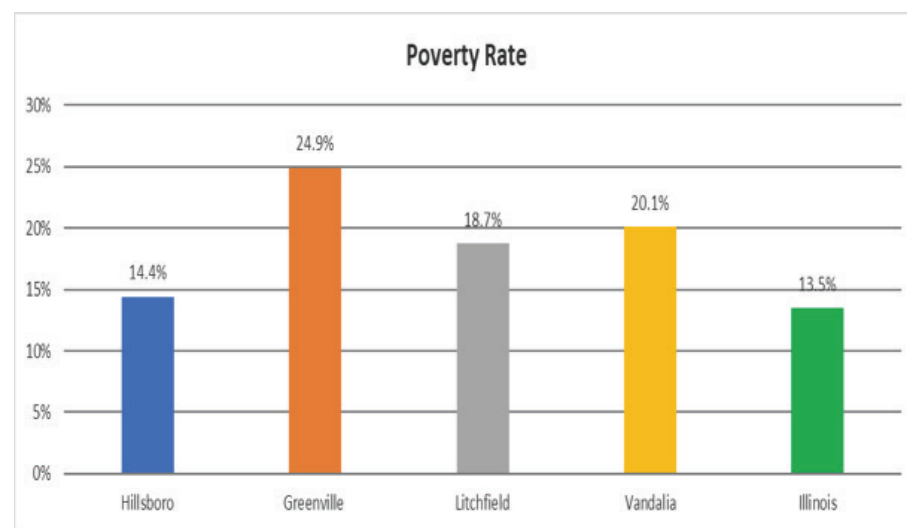
Overview

There are several considerations when it comes to income and pay. First, there are the hard numbers of what people are paid, reflected in the Median Household Income numbers. As can be seen from the chart below, Hillsboro is second only to Greenville, a town with three thousand more people, regarding overall income. In addition, while Hillsboro's poverty rate is a percentage point above the overall Illinois rate, this is well within the statistical margin of error. It is unknown how the prison

population might influence these numbers. When it comes to overall salary, the majority of Hillsboro's citizens are well below the national median average of \$63,688 and the Illinois average of \$61,629. However, there are a surprising number of people with a salary of \$100,000 or more. This demonstrates the need for jobs with higher paying salaries in the area. In comparison with other cities of comparable size, Hillsboro is maintaining its overall salary base and poverty level while not increasing the former or decreasing the latter. This is not a trend that can be maintained over the long haul without deliberate steps in a direction that builds a diverse economy in the region.



(Institute for Rural Affairs, U.S. Census)



(Institute for Rural Affairs, U.S. Census)

Illinois

	2010 %	2018 (est) %
Poverty Level	13.8	12.6
Less than \$50,000	45	41.5
\$50,000 to \$99,999	32	30.1
\$100,000 or more	23	28.4
Median Income	\$55,735	\$61,229

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Montgomery County

	2010 %	2018 (est)%
Poverty Level	16.5	15.5
Less than \$50,000	58.3	53
\$50,000 to \$99,999	30.7	31.2
\$100,00 or More	11	15.9
Median Income	\$40,864	\$47,807

(U.S. Census, American Community Survey)

Hillsboro

	2010	2018 (est) %
Poverty Level	14.4	14.9
Less than \$50,000	56.2	51.9
\$50,000 to \$99,999	31.6	31.2
\$100,000 or More	12.2	16.8
Median Income	\$41,657	\$46,682



St. Agnes Catholic Church on East Tremont Street

Summary of Data Findings

What can be learned about the City of Hillsboro from these numbers? On one hand, there are several positives. Hillsboro has not suffered the complete economic devastation experienced by other cities of similar size in the state of Illinois. The city is not losing population at a significant rate and many of the other population indicators are in line with other national trends such as the aging of the Baby Boomers. When looking at factors outside of the data, there are promising upward trends such as the recent movement downtown and the young people leading it.

However, there are enough significant negatives here that require action by area leaders from the City Council, business sector and our town volunteer organizations such as Imagine Hillsboro. Our poverty rate and “not in labor force” are high, even with the prison population taken into consideration. Further, the heavy decline of manufacturing and mining jobs in the area certainly follow national trends. However, like other areas of the country, Montgomery County and Hillsboro do not have the resources to bring back large manufacturing jobs, nor does it possess the significant workforce to fill these jobs.

Further, coal and coal burning plants are on the decline. The markets are already reflecting this trend, especially when normally energy conservative states like Texas lead the nation in producing alternative energy. Further, the closing of the Coffeen power plant shows what happens when we rely on big corporations for the life of the community. In short, Hillsboro cannot rely on old solutions such as “smokestack” chasing to return people to the area.

Thus, it becomes imperative for Hillsboro's future to come up with a new vision that will allow the city to create a better quality of life for people who are considering moving from the coasts. It should be a plan to create a better quality of life that will involve sustainable development that takes care of the city's natural areas, develop "micro-economies," and keep our area from the gentrification that has priced out blue collar workers in other areas. Hillsboro has all the tools to make this vision a reality and that

was demonstrated in the town meetings held in conjunction with Imagine Hillsboro.

Hillsboro can fix its problems with a longer-term plan focused on doing the “little things” right that will give the city a better foundation in the long run.



Hardcore Hammers opened a downtown retail store in 2020.

Chapter Two

Zoning Districts

Housing

Institutions

Parks and Recreation

Education

Health

Library

Public Utilities

Organizations

Transportation

MAPPING Goals, Strategies



The Veterans Memorial lists men and women who served their country in wars and conflicts beginning with the Civil War.

Community Assets

Current Land Use

(Taken from City of Hillsboro Code, Sections 0)

Overview

Hillsboro is a city on a hill. Or rather, it sits on a series of hills caused by the glaciers and its location in the Shoals Creek watershed. The surrounding area is full of inclines, gullies and creeks that, while giving the city its unique flavor for Central Illinois, it also presents some challenges regarding land usage. Surrounding these hills are fields full of corn, soybeans, and alfalfa that are close to the city boundaries. However, these challenges are an asset to our town's unique flavor, and the city seeks to

use the land in a way that is sustainable while encouraging the flourishing of citizens.

The 2010 Census states that Hillsboro encompasses 8.322 square miles, with 78.7 percent being land and the other 21.2 percent being water, which is partly because of our two large lakes; this means that water management is a significant focus for the city. It is vitally important to the future of the city that town leaders carefully plan and manage our city resources as we face new challenges such as extreme weather changes and new people moving into the area. Indeed, this strategic plan recommends writing a separate future land use plan that will be undertaken in the next five years. To that end, the town council has committed to the following zoning districts.

Existing Zoning Districts

"A" - AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT. The "A" Agricultural District encompasses areas that are presently undeveloped or sparsely developed and that, for various reasons, should remain so for the foreseeable future. Some tracts of land in this District are fertile and relatively level and best suited for agricultural pursuits. Other tracts in this District have such poor soils, steep slopes, inadequate natural drainage, and/or other problems, or are simply so distant from existing developed areas that the provision and maintenance of roads, utilities, and storm water drainage systems would be impractical or burdensomely expensive to the tax-paying public.

"R-1" - SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT (LARGE LOT). In the "R-1", Single-family Residence District, land is principally used for or is best suited for detached, single-family dwellings and related educational, religious and recreational facilities. The regulations for this District are intended to stabilize and preserve sound existing single-family neighborhoods, and to promote the development of subdivisions offering a range of new single-family housing. Other types of residences (manufactured homes, immobilized manufactured homes, duplexes, apartments, etc.) are strictly prohibited in this District.

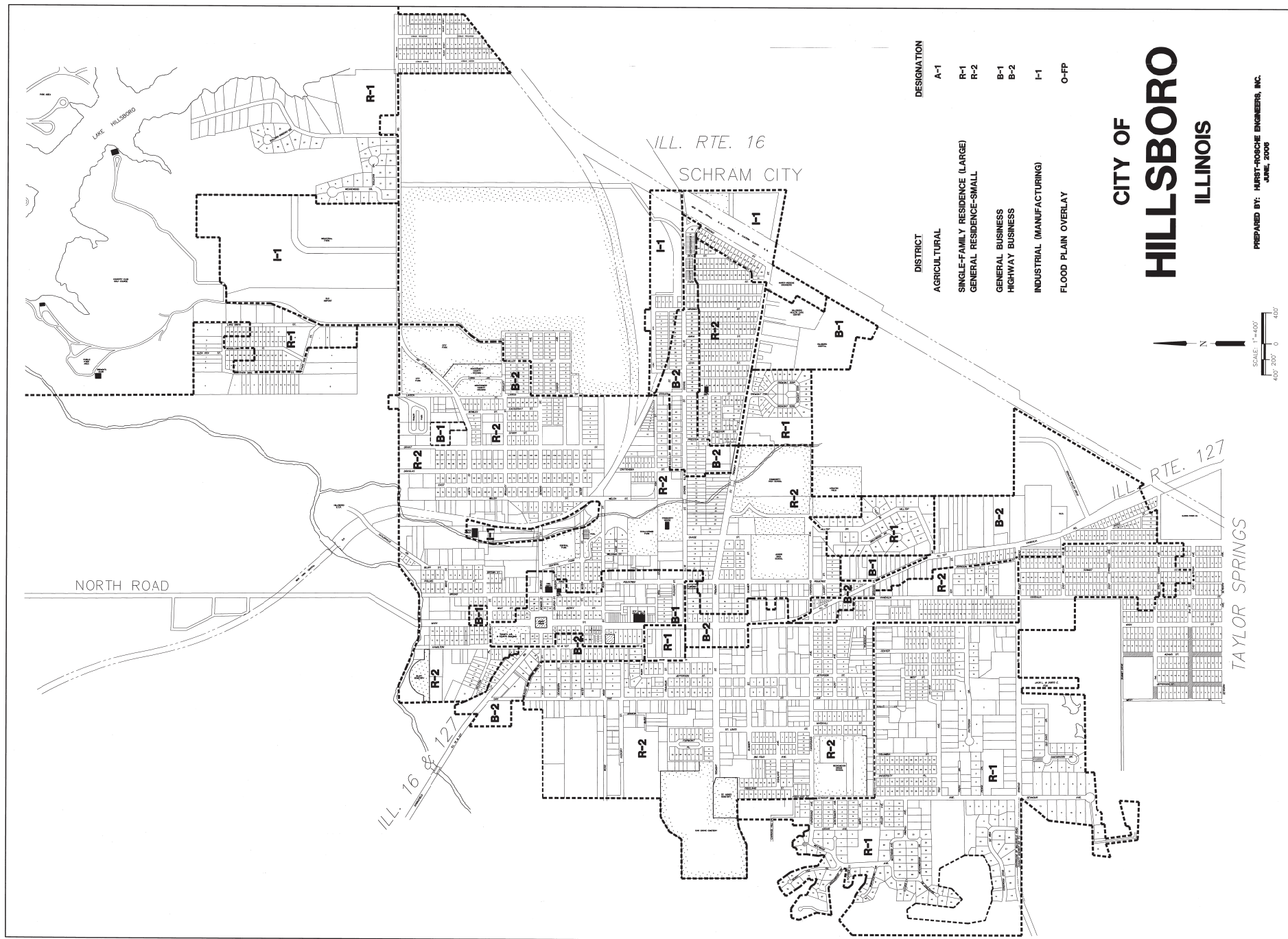
"R-2" - GENERAL RESIDENCE DISTRICT. The "R-2", General Residence

District encompasses areas suitable for both single-family dwellings and multi-family dwellings as well as related educational, religious and recreational facilities.

"B-1" - GENERAL BUSINESS. The "B-1", General Business District primarily encompasses the long-established commercial areas of the city where a wide range of goods and services is offered to the general public at retail or wholesale. Portable or mobile (manufactured) structures may not be used for business purposes in this District.

"B-2" - HIGHWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT. The "B-2", Highway Business District is intended to accommodate and regulate strip commercial developments and compatible uses. Since such businesses, both retail and wholesale, draw their patrons primarily from the motoring public, they typically require direct access to major streets and large lots for off-street parking and loading. Portable or mobile (manufactured) structures may not be used for business purposes in this District.

"I-1" - INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT. The "I-1", Industrial District is intended to provide for areas where industry, research facilities, warehouses, and wholesale businesses may locate without detriment to the remainder of the community. In these areas, a satisfactory correlation of factors required by such uses exists or can be readily achieved.

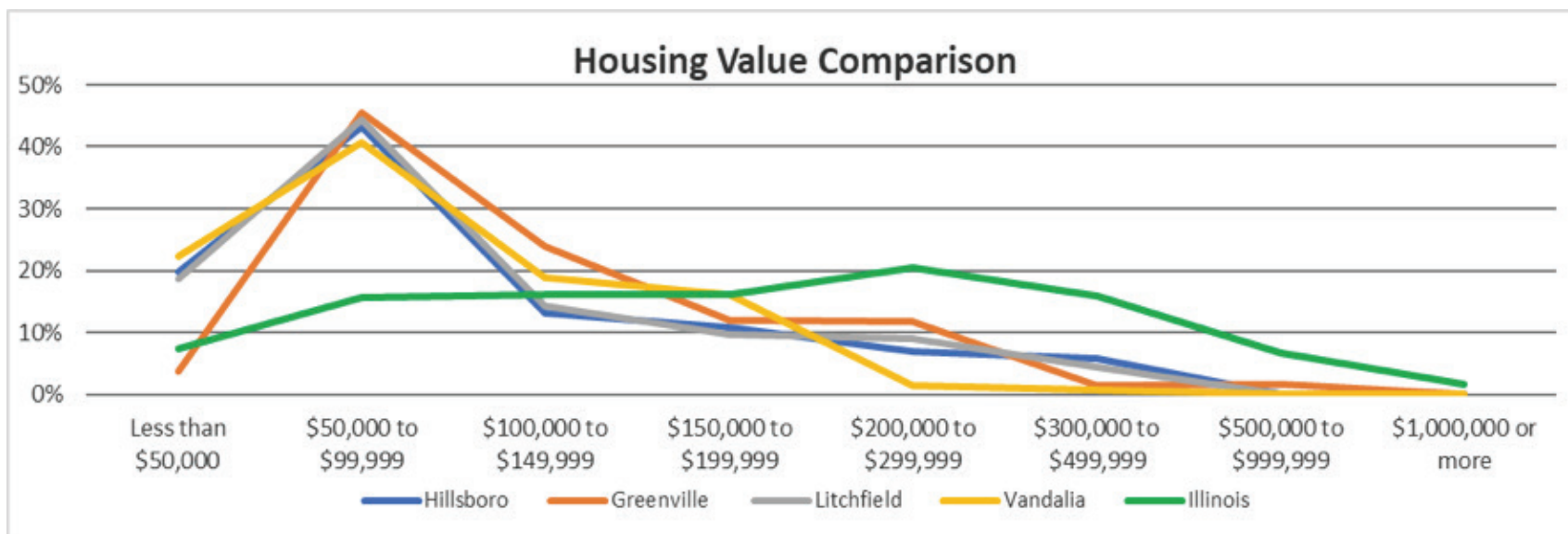


Housing

Overview

The Hillsboro housing market is aging and holds an average value of 50,000-99,999. The average age of the houses within the bounds of the city are approximately 45 years. The last “boom” building periods were in the 1970’s and, strangely, during the economic downturn of 2008-2009. Since then, there has been no significant housing development, either single family houses or apartment complexes built within city limits.

This is a natural by-product of the general loss of population in the city, the county and the state. In other words, there is no need for new housing if the population numbers are not there to demand the need. Developers will inevitably focus on areas where they can make the most profit in the shortest amount of time. Some would argue that if houses are built, people will move into town. This will only work as a part of an overall economic development strategy that includes a plan to recruit people into the area.



Community Assets and Institutions

Overview

Over the past twenty years on the national level, concern has been expressed about the declining participation in community and civic organizations. This concern was raised when the political scientist, Robert Putnam published his landmark book in 2000 entitled *Bowling Alone*. He described the downfall of American communities which, he believed, was centered around the decline of people participating in public groups, organizations, churches, or other charity-based organizations. This

resulted in the neglect of civic buildings, institutions, natural resources and other “public” assets and institutions.

By any fair assessment, the City of Hillsboro has experienced some decline in public participation, but the sense of community and the resulting participation in the community is stronger than in most small towns of the Midwest. This is the key reason it is surviving and starting to thrive. The city possesses some significant public leadership, assets, institutions, and community organizations that contribute to the overall health and strength of the community.

City Government

(Descriptions are adapted from the Hillsboro City Code)

Mayor and Council

Hillsboro is governed by “Commission” form of city government with each commissioner in charge of a city department. Each commissioner is elected for a term of four years with one vote on council matters. The mayor has specific administrative powers unique to him, such as the ability to appoint commissioners to specific areas and task, appoint committee members and general oversight of the city. The council meets every second and fourth Tuesdays of the month unless otherwise noted.

City Boards, Committees and Commissions

Historic Preservation

The Historic Preservation Committee is tasked with the promotion and enhancement of historical interest in the city; to promote civic pride in the beauty of the past as it is represented in the city’s landmarks and historical districts; to stabilize and improve the economic vitality and value of the city’s landmarks and historical areas; to protect and enhance the attractiveness of the city; and to foster and encourage preservation and restoration of structures, areas, and neighborhoods to prevent further urban blight.

Natural Resources

The Natural Resources Committee is designed to promote the public health and general welfare of the City of Hillsboro by planning, promoting, organizing and guiding projects that are meant to develop and enhance the natural resources of City of Hillsboro, including two lakes, bike and hiking trails, parks, and other public lands. It is designed to encourage an outdoor lifestyle in our city that is sustainable and encourages the flourishing of our citizens and the environment around them. They meet every third Tuesday of the month.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is designed to oversee the writing, execution, and implementation of the strategic plan that will guide the present and future development of the city. All of this is accomplished with the oversight of the town council. This is to promote the flourishing of our citizens through looking out for their general, overall quality of life. Further, the Commission will make recommendations as to the general use of the strategic plan and will conduct a yearly review of its contents with a five-year review that will involve modifications, if needed. They meet every third Tuesday of the month.



This 1 million-gallon water storage tank went into operation in October 2003.

Police and Fire Commission

The Police and Fire Commission appoints all officers and members of the Police Department and Fire Department, except the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief, and disciplines, suspends, removes, or discharges officers and members of the Police Department and Fire Department, except the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief. They conduct hearings on charges brought against a member of the Police Department and Fire Department, except the Chief of Police and Fire Chief.

Fire and Police Pension Commission

The Fire and Police committees are required by state law for towns with a population of five thousand (5,000) or more but less than five hundred thousand (500,000) inhabitants to help manage pensions for police and firefighters, their surviving spouses, children and certain other dependents.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals investigates, hears and decides exceptions to town zoning codes, rules and regulations. They are tasked with making sure that the town of Hillsboro maintains its unique setting while protecting the quality of life of all the town's citizens. The Board makes its decisions with the help of the community planner, citizen input and the town council.

Civic Buildings

City Hall/Police Department

Hillsboro City Hall is located at 447 South Main Street and houses the Office of the Mayor, the City Clerk, the police and auxiliary police department, Code Enforcement Officer, the City Planner, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Town Council Chambers.

Fire Department

The fire department is located at 110 South Broad Street. Hillsboro boasts one of the best volunteer fire departments in the state, with five full-time firefighters and 35 volunteers, all dedicated to sharpening their skills through extensive training. The city has a AA bond rating and a Class 3 fire insurance rating.



Hillsboro Public Library

Currently, the Hillsboro Public Library is located at 214 School Street in a historic building funded by the Carnegie corporation. However, the library district purchased this building on South Main street, and it is currently undergoing extensive renovation to house a more modern library designed to meet the needs of the community.



Future downtown home of the Hillsboro Area Public Library.

Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation

Arches Rail Trail

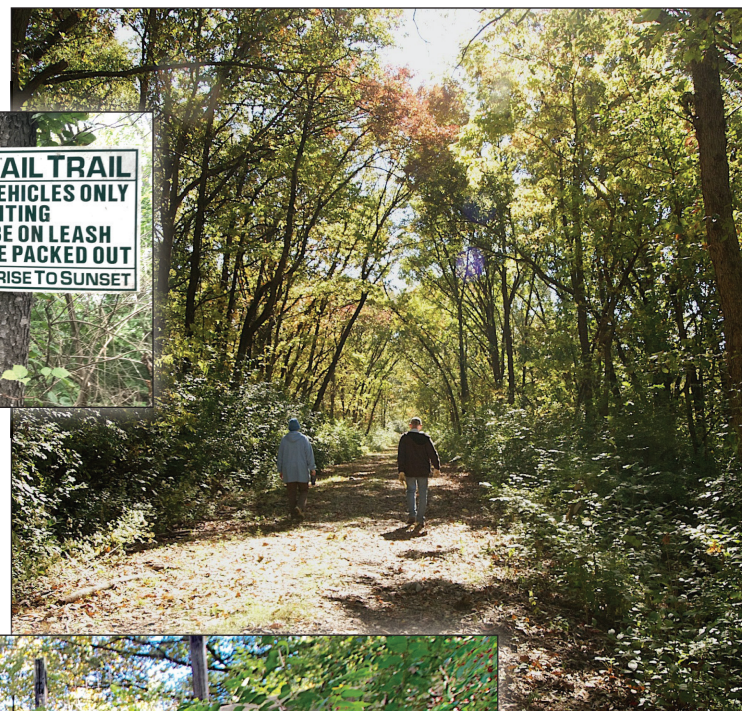
In the Fall of 2012, The Montgomery County Board and NAGS (Natural Area Guardians) helped open the Arches Rail Trail that stretches from Audubon-Bremer bird sanctuary, a mile north of Hillsboro, to the county fairgrounds in Butler. It crosses bridges built around the time of the Civil War and is an excellent example of a natural trail full of wildlife, trees and flowers common to the prairie woodlands of Central Illinois.

Blackman-Evans House

The Blackman-Evans House was built in 1843 by George Blackman who moved to Hillsboro from Massachusetts. Its stone foundation is a unique feature and it is on the National Register of Historic Places. The building is run by the Montgomery County Historical Society.

Central Park

Located at the center of Hillsboro, Central Park is positioned to be a premier park in the area. The updated pool is historic, having been built by the WPA during the depression. Further, the Pawsboro620K9 opened in Fall 2019 and quickly became a “third place” for people to walk their dogs and meet their neighbors. The City of Hillsboro and Imagine Hillsboro drew up plans to redevelop the large field by the pool into an area for people to play, meet, and enjoy the outdoors.



Challacombe House

The Challacombe House is owned by the City of Hillsboro and used as a meeting space for the community. It was built during the Civil War and was once owned by Colonel Jesse Phillips who became Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. It was donated to the city by Esther Challacombe.

Glenn Shoals Lake and North and South Marina

In 1976, Hillsboro finished damming the middle Fork of Shoal Creek to create a 1,250 acre, four-mile-long reservoir. The lake supplies water for surrounding areas and is used by fishing enthusiasts because it is a well-stocked lake. Further, the lake is serviced by the North and South Marinas, the latter having a modern boat dock with a gas station and a restaurant.

Harkey House

The Harkey House was built in 1834 by Solomon Harkey, who came to Hillsboro from North Carolina. Its current location on Broad Street is one block south of the original location. Today, it serves as a museum and the headquarters of the Historical Society of Montgomery County.

Helen & Betty Bremer Wildlife Sanctuary

Bremer Sanctuary is owned by the Illinois Audubon Society and is run by member volunteers of its Hickory Hills Chapter. It was donated to the Audubon Society in 1977 by Helen and Betty Bremer to preserve their family farm, founded in 1857. According to the website, the sanctuary seeks to preserve the forest and restore the savanna to attract grassland birds. It also contains numerous hiking trails and is the starting point of the Arches Rail Trail that goes from the sanctuary to Butler.

Lake Hillsboro and Sherwood Forest Campground

Created in 1917, the lake is the oldest in the area and is now a quiet, wooded haven perfect for kayaking and canoeing. On its shores are Sherwood Forest Campground, home to year-round camping that includes RV and tent sites. It is a sanctuary for Bald Eagles, Great Blue Herons, and a variety of other birds and migrating water fowl.

Sports Complex

Built in 1998, the Hillsboro Sports Complex hosts sporting events from all around the region, including tournaments, leagues, and pick-up games. The grounds include four lighted baseball fields, one unlighted baseball field, one batting cage, five soccer fields, six tennis courts, a football field, two concession areas, a hiking trail and a children's play area. It is a center of outdoor recreation.



The historic Challacombe House can be rented for social functions and meetings.



The South Marina on Glenn Shoals Lake features a restaurant, picnic pavilion and boat slips available to lease.



A handicap-accessible fishing dock is located at the Glenn Shoals North Marina.



This picnic pavilion on 4th of July Point overlooks Lake Hillsboro.



The shaded Sherwood Forest Campground is located on the east side of Lake Hillsboro.

Education

The greater Hillsboro area, which includes the towns of Schram City, Taylor Springs, Butler, Irving, Coffeen, Panama and Donnellson, are served by the Hillsboro Community District #3. It serves a population of 11,500 residents with over 1,700 students in a 266 square mile area.

It provides Pre-kindergarten classes (ages 3-5) through 12th grade. Resources such as parenting classes and home visits for families with children under the age of three are available. The district also provides special education, remedial and gifted classes for student needs.

The district consists of one high school, one junior high, and two

elementary schools (Breckemeyer and Coffeen). The high school sits on 80 acres of land with athletic fields, woodlands, hiking trails, four classroom buildings and a maintenance building. The schools are located in residential areas with playground equipment and picnic areas for the community.

The district employs 140 certified teachers, over 75 support staff and 8 administrators. All of them are committed to serving the students and their respective communities by preparing our young people for the future. The district spends over a quarter of a million dollars a year to upgrade its technology, which includes student classes and preparation for living in the modern world. Further, the high school restarted its trade program to address the growing need for students to enter into careers such as construction, welding, design, and basic infrastructure.



Hillsboro Unit School District students in grades K-5 attend Beckemeyer Elementary School in Hillsboro.

Home of The 'Toppers

The 80-acre campus of Hillsboro High School is renowned for being among the most beautiful in central Illinois.

The main building pictured here and adjacent buildings house classrooms, the library, cafeteria and gymnasium, all atop a wooded hill — hence the name of the school mascot, The Hiltopper.



Home of The Dragons

Grades 6-8 attend Hillsboro Junior High, which is located on the adjoining campus west of the high school.



Health

Hillsboro Area Hospital

The first hospital opened on February 22, 1916, and has grown to be one of the top employers of Montgomery County. In November 1971, the hospital board of directors took action to construct another facility and built the new hospital that opened in 1975 on East Tremont Street.

Since that time, the hospital has continued to expand and develop the area around it. It opened the Douglas-Telfer outpatient clinic and Heartland Home Care facilities in 1990; the Tremont Assisted Living facility started to accept residents in 2003; the Special Care Cottage for dementia and Alzheimer's residents opened in 2004.

Further, the hospital renovated its North Wing to include a new emergency department, imaging center and classrooms. The buildings achieved "Leed Gold Certification" in 2011. The hospital



The hospital building houses patient rooms, emergency department and Hillsboro Specialty Clinics.

consistently wins "Best Places to Work" in the St. Louis area through awards given by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Fusion, a community physical health center that includes a gym, a pool, programs for children, a walking/running track and a basketball court opened in 2006.

Springfield Clinic

Hillsboro Medical Center was founded in 1981 by Doctors Walter Williams and Robert and Barbara Mulch, with specialization in family practice, internal medicine and general surgery. After nine years, they and other physicians merged with Springfield Clinic. The facility plays host to several Springfield-based specialists who participate in an outreach program. The site has also served as a test site for the Electronic Health Record implementation and for Allscript's patient Kiosk project.



Exercise classes and a fully equipped cardio room are among the amenities available at Fusion Fitness Center.



Library

On November 25th, 1903, Andrew Carnegie agreed to give the City of Hillsboro ten thousand dollars to fund a free public library if the City Council agreed to provide a thousand dollars a year to contribute to its upkeep. Thus, the building on 214 School Street was built in 1904. It remained unchanged until 1979 when a significant remodeling project open the basement for a larger collection, created a librarian's office, and a genealogy department.

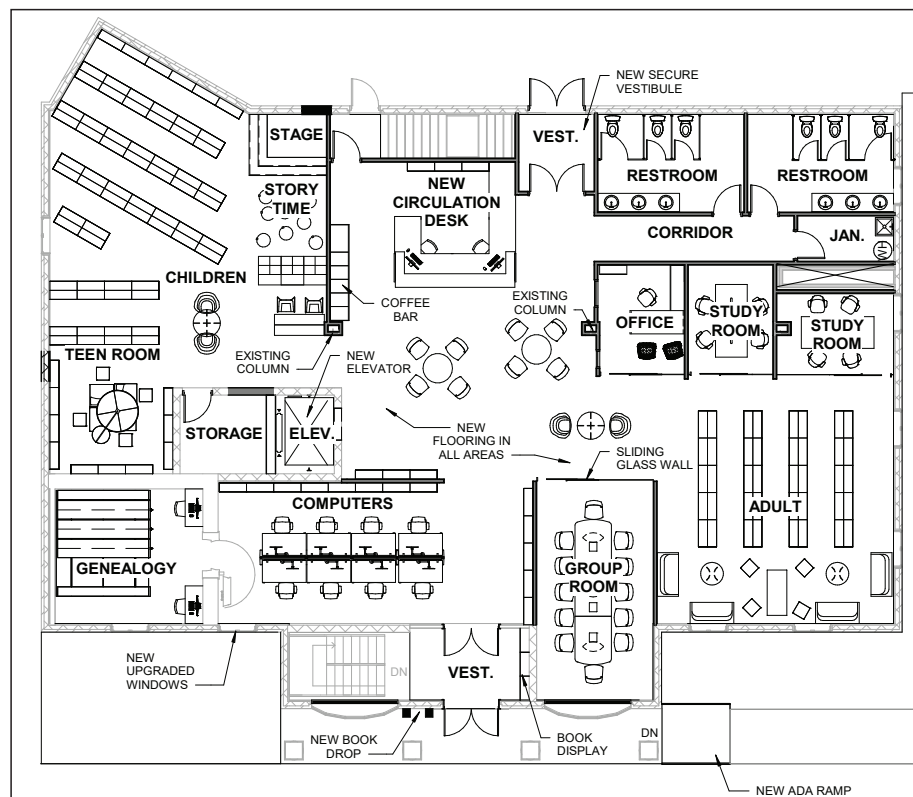
The library offers an up-to-date collection of books and cd-audio books. Further, it provides free Internet to patrons of the library and participates in an interlibrary loan with 5,000 other libraries in the state of Illinois. It also offers children's programs including pre-school and summer reading for all ages.

However, it became clear the Carnegie building is no longer adequate to serve the community's needs. Therefore, the library board purchased the property at 420 South Main Street and is in the process of raising funds and refurbishing it for a modern library space.

In 2019, the Library Board of Directors established Hillsboro Area Public Library District, which includes most of the territory in Hillsboro Unit School District. This not only increased the tax base for the library, but gives all residents of the Library District free access to library services. In October 2020, the library received a \$643,000 public library construction grant from the office of the Illinois Secretary of State to support renovation of the new library.



The Library Board purchased this former bank building at 420 South Main Street to house the new Hillsboro Area Public Library. Below is the floor plan for the main floor, which is all handicap accessible. Parking lots are located to the west and north of the building.



Public Utilities

The City of Hillsboro Public Utilities consist of the Water, Street and Public Works and the Wastewater Department. Currently, our water plant is being managed by Woodward and Curran, a private company.

The water treatment plant is a surface supply plant with the capacity of 2.5 million gallons a day. Hillsboro water comes from a combination of the two reservoir lakes: Lake Glenn Shoals and Hillsboro Lake. The plant provides water for the following: City of Hillsboro, City of Coffeen, Graham Correctional Center, Montgomery County Rural Water District, Village of Schram City, and Village of Taylor Springs. The water is treated with ammonia, chlorine,

coagulants and fluoride. After purification, it is stored in 500,000 gallon underground storage and a million gallon water storage tank.

Hillsboro's Wastewater Treatment plan is a Class 1 facility and possesses the capacity to treat 1.8 to 2.5 million gallons per day. The plant was nominated in 2000, 2001, and 2008 by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for treatment plant of the year.

The Street and Public Properties are responsible for the upkeep of all the public streets, streetlights, signage, and sidewalks in the city. This includes being responsible for the remaining brick streets and maintaining their condition.



The capacity of the city's water treatment plant is 2.5 million gallons a day.

Community Organizations

Overview

While most communities work hard at maintaining and developing their physical infrastructure, they do not pay attention to one of their most vital resources: social infrastructure. Civic engagement is at all time low through America, and cities, towns and villages are feeling the neglect. City leaders often are confronted with immediate needs such as infrastructure and put very little investment into social capital.

Thankfully, the City of Hillsboro doesn't share this problem. It has many vital volunteer organizations that play significant roles in the life of the town. Further, elected officials are often a part of these organizations or help provide funding and motivation to fill in the gaps. Below are the organizations that contribute to the life blood of the city.

Daughters of the American Revolution

The Christiana Tillson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) is an active organization in the greater Hillsboro area. Since 1959, the chapter has been honoring outstanding students through DAR Good Citizen awards and scholarships, promoting historical preservation,; honoring and supporting veterans and current members of the armed services, encouraging education, celebrating Constitution Week, participating in conservation events, and distributing the American flag at events throughout the area.

Imagine Hillsboro

This all volunteer civic organization started in the Spring of 2015, led by the mayor and a group of motivated citizens through a

program facilitated by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University. Through "MAPPING the Future of the Community," citizens organized Imagine Hillsboro which includes committees that are responsible for the following: Downtown, Parks and Recreation, Technology, Festivals and Events, Education, and Volunteer Recruitment.

As a private nonprofit, it is designed to continue to further develop a quality of life in Hillsboro that involves embracing the small-town charm while planning for its future.



Imagine Hillsboro's annual Cardboard Boat Regatta challenges entrants to build themed boats that will stay afloat while they paddle a short race course on Lake Hillsboro.

Community Organizations

Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce

Founded in June 1955, the Chamber seeks to coordinate the talents of local business and community leaders, advocate the interests of Hillsboro and Montgomery County to all levels of government, and seek to develop a better overall quality of life in the city through developing the small business community.

Hillsboro Community Development Corporation

The Hillsboro Community Development Corporation (HCDC) is a group of corporate and individual investors whose goal is to bring housing and business opportunities to the Hillsboro area. Currently, they have a duplex housing project in development.

Hillsboro Lions Club

The Hillsboro Lions Club seeks to serve the community by gathering individuals to give their valuable time and effort to improve their communities and the world.

Hillsboro Moose Club

The Hillsboro Moose club is “An international organization of men and women dedicated to caring for young and old, bringing communities closer together, and celebrating life.” They also run an event center that hosts venue weddings, reunions, and local fundraisers.

Hillsboro Rotary Club

The Hillsboro Rotary is part of a global network of 1.2 million neighbors, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers “who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.”

Hillsboro Sertoma Club

The Hillsboro Sertoma Club is dedicated to serving everyone in the area. They join with Sertomans across the country dedicated to a single purpose: serve the communities and improve the lives of those who need help. Their mission and their passion is to improve the quality of life for those at risk or impacted by hearing loss through education and support.

Hillsboro Ministerial Alliance

The purpose of the Hillsboro Ministerial Fellowship is to provide opportunities for area churches to cooperate with one another for ministry and community. This includes ecumenical worship services, outreach events, and coordinating assistance for those in need. They currently hold two annual, ecumenical worship services, support a shared food bank, operate an annual warm clothing program for the children in local schools, host a free community-wide meal on Thanksgiving Day, serve as hosts for blood drives put on the area blood bank, and much more. They meet monthly for prayer, information and to develop new ways to serve the community.

Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation

The MCEDC seeks to “increase the economic standard of living and quality of life in Montgomery County through promotion, research, education, support and engagement.” Currently, it is working the six county CEDS study, county tourism, grant assistance, Montgomery CEO program, support Montgomery EDGE (Enhancing Development with Growing Enterprises through business retention visits), county planning support, small business seminars, and State and Federal Resource management support.

Transportation

Overview

According to the 2019 Community Survey estimates, many people commute outside of Hillsboro for work, often driving over 20 minutes a day to their work sites. It is important to understand our current transportation resources and the possible needs we may have in the future.

Roads

Hillsboro is located between two major National Interstate highways with easy access to both. The closest is Interstate 55, located ten minutes from downtown Hillsboro, a major source of commerce and traffic between the cities of St. Louis, Springfield, Bloomington and Chicago. St. Louis is an hour drive south, Springfield an hour drive to the north and Chicago is a four-hour drive to the north.

Interstate-70 is a 20-minute drive to the south. This gives citizens another route to St. Louis and cities like Kansas City, Denver and all states west. To the east, Indianapolis, Indiana, and Columbus, Ohio are easy day drives, with access to the entire East Coast.

Hillsboro is at the crossroads of three major state roads, Illinois 16, 127, and 185; all are heavily trafficked for regional commerce. In 2017, the Illinois Department of Transportation determined that 11,000 cars and trucks passed through Hillsboro, equaling Litchfield which is situated directly on Interstate 55. For a town of 6,000 people, this is a significant amount of traffic and adds to the economic growth of the town.

Airports

Hillsboro has easy access to three airports, St. Louis Lambert International, MidAmerica Airport and Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport. Lambert is the largest medium sized hub in the country with

all major airlines operating flights, with Southwest having the most flights. It is an airport that has undergone a significant renaissance the past few years, undergoing major expansion in its carriers, passenger services and available gates. Lambert is located an hour and fifteen minutes from downtown Hillsboro.

MidAmerica Airport, located in Mascoutah, Illinois, is 60 miles from downtown Hillsboro. It is a secondary airport for the St. Louis that includes direct service to locations in Florida, Nevada and Arizona. Further, it contains significant cargo facilities and has direct light rail service to the Metropolitan St. Louis area.

Abraham Lincoln, located in Springfield, Illinois, is a regional airport with non-hub status. Its major carrier is Allegiant, with flights to Chicago, Dallas and Florida. It is located about an hour from Hillsboro, with most citizens choosing to fly out of St. Louis.

The area is also serviced by Litchfield Municipal Airport which mostly accommodates private planes, helicopters and some military traffic.

Trains

The nearest Amtrak station is Carlinville, Illinois, a thirty-mile drive from downtown Hillsboro. High Speed trains that run from Chicago to St. Louis pass through daily. At this time, there is no public transportation from Hillsboro to Carlinville, as Central Illinois Public Transit does not service the station. A possible service to the train station should be considered to help encourage telecommuters.

Public Transportation

The sole source of public transportation in Hillsboro and Montgomery County is provided by the nonprofit, Central Illinois Public Transit. Trips must be scheduled in advance. The vans are ADA compliant and wheelchair accessible. Monthly passes for \$35 can be purchased as well as round-trip tickets for \$6 if the location is within the county.

Community Meetings

In May of 2015, The Institute for Rural Affairs, the City of Hillsboro and a group of citizens met together to discuss the future of the city. Imagine Hillsboro was formed and has proceeded to make a significant mark on the life of the city.

The need to update the city strategic plan became evident and Imagine Hillsboro wanted to set new goals for its future. They petitioned the Institute for Rural Affairs to conduct a new mapping strategy session that would also help the city to consider concrete goals for its twenty-year plan. To that end, three sessions of public input and participation were planned and held on September 12th, 26th, and October 3rd.

During these meetings, citizens were invited to give their input through a series of exercises that involved investigating successes, failures and challenges moving forward. An average crowd of fifty people attended each session to examine research, throw out ideas and develop an action plan to move forward. Listed below are the goals and ideas presented at the meetings which provide valuable insight into the values, goals and direction of the community.

Goals and Strategic Ideas as presented at MAPPING sessions

Goal 1: Hillsboro's beautiful historic downtown is famous for its quirky mix of high-quality restaurants, drinking establishments, and unique retail stores that offer visitors and residents a fun and engaging shopping experience in an attractive setting of restored buildings and lovely streetscaping.

1. Develop a marketing plan to attract businesses and shoppers/diners in coordination with other teams.
2. Gather input from downtown business owners.
3. Update city branding.

4. Develop a handout with all incentives available.
5. Replace billboard by City Hall with a digital sign.
6. Develop a common theme/expand Sherwood Forest theme.
7. Create cool city maps.
8. Work with the city to create a Vision statement.
9. Develop a retail/dining attraction/development program.
10. Develop incentives for people to start a retail or dining establishment.
11. Survey town on what kind of business/restaurants they would like to have.
12. Work with the city to improve infrastructure for development.
13. Widen sidewalks.
14. Improve Rte. 16/127 corridor from Lomas Del Sol to Casey's.
15. Improve parking availability and quality.
16. Encourage business owners to leave parking spaces for customers on Main Street.
17. Work on developing the arts in the community, including murals downtown.
18. Develop attractive, uniform wayfinding system.
19. Put a sign at Harvest Church to direct downtown.
20. Direct people to public parking.
21. Consistent "Welcome" signs from all directions with slogan.
22. Upgrade signage.
23. Develop new green spaces and gathering spaces throughout town.
24. Create a walkable downtown with many "third" places.
25. Beautify/green space/plants/flowers in ALL parts of town.
26. Beautify Lincoln Plaza.
27. Encourage building owners to make improvements.
28. Publicize Facade Grant and create before and after videos.
29. Encourage the enforcement of ordinances for vacant buildings.
30. Encourage the development of pop-up shops.
31. Coordinate retail/dining development efforts with the Chamber of Commerce and city.
32. Advocate city's adoption of uniform signage standard for businesses.

Goal 2: Hillsboro has a top-ranked school system with dedicated teachers and exemplary facilities. Students excel in Hillsboro and enjoy a variety of opportunities from college prep and AP classes to the arts, vocational and technical training. In addition, the community supports the school and offers educational and entertaining opportunities for children.

1. Expand vocational classes.
2. Continue partnership with LLCC (CNA program).
3. Work with technology committee on technology for teachers/ continuing education and students.
4. Offer coding classes.
5. Renovate current facilities and build a new high school
6. Develop/expand opportunities for students to learn about real careers in the community.
7. Develop after school internship program.
8. Organize mentoring/shadowing programs.
9. Adopt a flex school model.
10. Offer alternative learning options.
11. Make sure every student has some sort of individualized education program.
12. Bring back courses in mythology, theatre, Shakespeare, and multimedia.
13. Offer mental health with classes like yoga and meditation to deal with depression/stress/anxiety.
14. Improve life skills class.
15. Improve dual credit classes.
16. Era-appropriate clubs.
17. Promote/encourage band/music/arts.
18. Promote the positive aspects of possible consolidation.
19. Develop education programs for adults.
20. Hire more teachers and counselors.
21. Recruit Hillsboro grads as teachers.
22. Develop a more robust volunteer recruitment and retention program for volunteers and mentors.

23. Develop promotional and educational programs about the school district.
24. Offer Common Core seminars.

Goal 3: Hillsboro has a thriving industrial/manufacturing sector with a special emphasis on technology. Businesses have been attracted to Hillsboro and nurtured through a variety of incentives and programs.

1. Promote Hillsboro as the technology business hub for Montgomery County.
2. Develop a marketing plan to promote the community as a place to start or relocate a business in coordination with other teams.
3. Promote available sites for businesses.
4. Create a City brochure with summary of economic incentives, both locally and through county/MCEDC • Highlight and promote success stories and why they chose Hillsboro.
5. Work with schools to develop a workforce with in-demand skills.
6. Develop a business recruitment program.
7. Develop business partnerships and attract complementary business.
8. Identify needs in the community.
9. Offer scholarships and other incentives for in-demand industries/ services to come to Hillsboro.
10. Work with education team on programs to expose students to job market and local opportunities.
11. Organize a job fair and high school job opportunities.
12. Develop internship opportunities with local businesses.
13. Work with high school to develop job shadowing.
14. Develop a program to clean up sites for development.
15. Develop a building corporation to provide buildings to factories, business, etc.
16. Work with the Chamber to develop welcome packages for businesses.
17. Encourage commercial real estate development.

Goal 4: : Hillsboro is a haven for technology-based businesses and telecommuters. People and companies flock to Hillsboro to enjoy a superior quality of life and high-speed connectivity. In addition, Hillsboro youth enjoy a variety of opportunities to learn about, utilize, and develop technology.

1. Develop a marketing plan to promote Hillsboro as a location for technology-based businesses and telecommuters in coordination with other teams.
2. Market the high-speed internet available.
3. Promote library as a tech resource.
4. Promote working at home.
5. Use technology to market Hillsboro.
6. Be creative with promoting Imagine Hillsboro.
7. Develop co-working spaces.
8. Work with schools and Lincoln Land to develop tech savvy workforce.
9. Develop “Master Teacher” sessions.
10. Offer incentives for teachers to incorporate technology.
11. Offer visual effects classes.
12. Offer A/V Club and classes to produce video of sports and other events.
13. Bring E sports to schools.
14. Develop a technology incubator.
15. Work with education team to develop job shadowing program for tech jobs.
16. Develop a food delivery service in Hillsboro similar to Uber Eats/Door Dash.
17. Work with businesses to promote the use of technology.
18. Offer informational classes on websites and social media.
19. Help educate business about free or low-cost apps or programs to help develop their business.
20. Coordinate businesses with the schools to bring back Co-op Program.
21. Develop a high-tech conferencing center. Investigate the new library or Hillsboro Area Hospital as possible locations.
22. Finish downtown Wi-Fi project and advertise to applicable businesses.

Goal 5: Art enthusiasts and tourists flock to Hillsboro to enjoy both a wide range of family friendly festivals and events, many focusing on the arts, as well as incredible public art pieces.

1. Develop new events/festivals or revive discontinued events/festivals.
2. Bring back music festivals (Chautauqua).
3. Offer live bands on lakes and in town.
4. Organize an arts festival.
5. Attract a Renaissance fair.
6. Create a Highland Games.
7. Organize a Blues and Barbeque Festival.
8. Coordinate Bicentennial celebration.
9. Organize an art and wine event.
10. Create a tour of homes.
11. Offer a Game Jam competition.
12. Create a Bluegrass Festival.
13. Coordinate a video game competition.
14. Offer a poetry night.
15. Create more open microphone opportunities.
16. Downtown music entertainment.
17. Develop/improve venues for festivals/events.
18. Cover Lincoln Plaza and add sound system.
19. Develop public art projects in coordination with beautification/retail team.
20. Display works of art.
21. Bring Wall Dogs to town.
22. Create pop-up galleries.
23. Ensure ALL of these events or opportunities are on the community calendar online.
24. Increase/improve marketing of events.
25. Develop online tourism promotion.

Goal 6: Both residents and visitors enjoy a variety of parks and trails in and near Hillsboro including Lake Hillsboro, Lake Glenn Shoals and the Bremer Sanctuary. Sports and recreation activities are offered year-round for all ages in high quality indoor and outdoor facilities.

1. Improve/expand current parks and recreation facilities.
2. Revitalize Central Park pool.
3. Develop/improve Central Park.
4. Light soccer fields.
5. Concession stand for JFL and tennis.
6. Address need for upkeep and maintenance of existing facilities.
7. Recruit volunteers to maintain parks and facilities.
8. Create a beach-swimming access at Glenn Schools Lake.
9. Organize more family sports at Central Park/lake area.
10. Revitalize youth programs at lake.
11. Develop bike/walking trails.
12. Connect paths to all recreation areas (Bremer).
13. Develop/attract sporting/recreation businesses.
14. Attract a business to rent bicycles, paddle boats, kayaks, etc.
15. Develop mini golf course.
16. Develop new sports facilities/courses.
17. Develop a Frisbee golf course.
18. Create a bocce ball court.
19. Develop winter sports such as ice skating.
20. Build a skate park.
21. Install a splash park.
22. Build more playgrounds and accessible playgrounds.
23. Arrange for food vendors/food trucks on weekends.
24. Partner with Festivals and Events to arrange festivals/tournaments/ events in parks.
25. Organize a Highland Games.
26. Fishing contests/tournaments.
27. Organize Kickball.
28. Offer whiffle ball.
29. Offer a Renaissance festival.
30. Expand the adult sports leagues/clubs.
31. Create a park district.
32. Develop marketing plan for parks and recreation coordinated with all teams.
33. Integrate parks and recreation as part of branding and marketing strategy.



Atlas 46, which opened in 2019 in a renovated downtown building, employs 60 in the manufacture of high quality work clothing and gear.



Chapter Three

Summary of Community Survey

Hillsboro Vision Statement

Strategic Principles

Bluebird Trail at Bremer Wildlife Sanctuary

Hillsboro and the Future

Summary of Community Survey

The citizens and leaders of Hillsboro, Illinois, considered the community profile research and information. Though this discernment process, the city recognized our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, not to mention our place in the wider cultures of Montgomery County, the state of Illinois and the United States as a whole.

Our strengths lie in our strong community participation across all levels of our town culture. If there is a need, people respond with their time, talent and treasure until that need is fulfilled. This is evident from participation in helping our citizens in need, participating in Imagine Hillsboro, raising money for a dog park and the ongoing efforts to resurrect central park. All of these are citizen-led and this is a vital component of any rebuilding of a small town. Hillsboro is truly a counter argument to the assertion that civic engagement is dead.

Further, Hillsboro is committed to a technology-based future, fueled by CTI's high-speed internet. This enables the town to build a different economy that is more sustainable in the long run; town leaders are committed to this idea. To this end, many businesses are marketing their products outside of the community. Further, people have chosen to live here and telecommute to their jobs. Our downtown is thriving with nearly every building occupied and space at a premium, a good problem to have for a small Central Illinois town.

However, these positives should not make the city complacent, but rather help it realize Hillsboro is at a critical point of its history. Indeed, it's not an exaggeration that the actions of the next five to ten years will decide the town's future. Our positives illumine that the town faces several challenges that could easily hinder all of the progress made in the past ten years.

Hillsboro recognizes that the declining population, the poverty rate, the desperate need for workforce development, aging infrastructure, and younger people not returning to the town after college are serious challenges that require significant action.

These must be addressed because the wider culture is changing at an eye-blinking rate. Numerous articles and studies show that millennials, the largest generation in American history, are on the move to not just smaller cities but also small cities. They're looking for a better overall quality of life while still retaining what is important to them.

The astronomical cost of living is causing people to reconsider moving to places like Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco or New York. Indeed, nearby St. Louis is experiencing a tech boom that is prompting people to move there for the lower cost of living and the better quality of life. Further, studies show that people are leaving urban areas due to the Covid-19 crisis and there is speculation they may not return.

With this information, the city developed a strategic vision for the city guided by six concrete principles that will govern the decision-making process on all levels for the next ten years.

Hillsboro Vision Statement

Our vision is to make Hillsboro a beautiful and sustainable community that encourages and develops an atmosphere of human flourishing for all our citizens. This will be accomplished through developing a locally based economy, building an equitable quality of life, and protecting the natural environment that surrounds our city.

Six Strategic Principles

In order to accomplish this vision, the city is committed to the following six guiding principles:

Hillsboro Will Commit to Fiscal Responsibility and Updated Physical Infrastructure

Hillsboro Will Create a Sustainable and Locally Focused Economy

Hillsboro Will Preserve our Historic Small-Town Atmosphere

Hillsboro Will Focus on Bringing Others into Our Community

Hillsboro Will Develop a Healthy Outdoor Lifestyle in our Community

Hillsboro Will Continue to Rebuild its Social Infrastructure

With these six principles in mind, Hillsboro can execute its vision and plan the future with specific goals and outcomes that will hopefully change the face of the city over the next ten years.

Chapter Four

Goals and Recommendations

Tier One - Critical Projects

Tier Two - Important Projects

Tier Three - Needed Projects

Tier Four - Projects



Hillsboro Country Club 's scenic 9-hole golf course, historic clubhouse and restaurant, Tobias Public House

Plan Principles, Goals and Recommendations

After months of consultation with the town council and various department heads, the community planner put together a list of projects, goals and objectives for the next ten years. This list was distributed to the Planning Commission for their advice and the town council to vote on their priorities.

The community planner tallied the votes of the council and put together a list based on a tier system of importance, with ten projects or goals listed in each tier.

Tier One: Critical Projects must begin immediately.

Tier Two: Important Projects must begin in next three years.

Tier Three: Needed Projects to begin in next five years.

Tier Four: Projects that should fill in the gaps as time allows.

Tier One

Rebuild Sewer Plant and Install New Sewer Systems

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Commit to Fiscal Responsibility and Updated Physical Infrastructure.

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner for Public Safety, Commissioner for Streets and Public Property, Commissioner for Public Utilities, City Clerk.

Outside Partnerships: Woodard and Curran

Sub Goals:

1. Woodard and Curran develop plan to the city for consideration.
2. Town Council considers the plan to either adopt or adjust.
3. All involved parties figure out how to fund the projects.
4. Connect Pinnacle Point and Parkside Subdivision to City Water and sewer.

Develop Eagle Zinc Property as Light Industrial Park

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Create a Sustainable and Locally Focused Economy.

Responsible Parties: Mayor, City Clerk, City Planner

Outside Partnerships: St. Louis Makes, Illinois Economic Development Office

Sub Goals:

1. Develop a marketing plan and pitch for land.
2. Research, engage, and recruit business for the land.
3. Fill up the land with small to midlevel manufacturing by 2025.

Continue to Develop and Implement Sidewalk Restoration and Install Program

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Commit to Fiscal Responsibility and Updated Physical Infrastructure.

Responsible Parties: Commissioner of Streets and Public Property, Street and Public Works Department

Outside Partnerships: To Be Decided Development Office

Overlapping Goals and Sub Goals:

1. Implement Current Sidewalk plan

2. Assess in three years what other streets need to be updated.
3. Complete sidewalks in ten years.

Develop a Capital Improvement Funding Priority List

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Commit to Fiscal Responsibility and Updated Physical Infrastructure.

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Town Council, Department Heads, City Clerk, Community and Economic Planner.

Outside Partnerships: Woodard and Curran, Hurst-Rosche Engineering

Sub Goals:

1. Community Planner talks with everyone to determine their goals and projects, making up a list for the council's consideration.
2. Council considers the list and determines infrastructure priorities.
3. City Clerk and Community Planner distribute final results.
4. Town Council makes funding and budget decisions based on the list.

Commission Economic Development Plan

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Create a Sustainable and Locally Focused Economy

Responsible Parties: Mayor, City Clerk, Community and Economic Planner.

Outside Partnerships: Chamber of Commerce, Imagine Hillsboro, Atlas 46

Sub Goals:

1. Convene a committee to get input on a marketing strategy for

the town.

2. Research and Write a Comprehensive Marketing and Recruiting plan for the city that includes plans for target markets, people, and story to tell about the town.
3. Implement Marketing and recruiting plan through a variety of social media outlets and St. Louis Regional Chamber of Commerce.
4. Make a joint website with the Chamber of Commerce and Imagine Hillsboro

Develop Marketing and Recruiting Plan for the City

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Create a Sustainable and Locally Focused Economy

Responsible Parties: Mayor, City Clerk, Community and Economic Planner.

Outside Partnerships: Chamber of Commerce, Imagine Hillsboro, Atlas 46

Sub Goals:

1. Convene a committee to gather input on a marketing strategy for the town.
2. Research and Write a Comprehensive Marketing and Recruiting plan for the city that includes plans for target markets, people, and story to tell about the town.
3. Implement Marketing and recruiting plan through a variety of social media outlets and St. Louis Regional Chamber of Commerce.
4. Make a joint website with the Chamber of Commerce and Imagine Hillsboro.

Redevelop Main Street Parking, Streets & Infrastructure

Strategic Principle: : Hillsboro Will Commit to Fiscal Responsibility and Updated Physical Infrastructure.

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner of Streets and Public Property, Commissioner of Public Utilities, Street and Public Works Department, City Clerk and City Planner.

Outside Partnerships: IDOT, Hurst-Rosche

Sub Goals:

1. Work with Hurst-Rosche to develop downtown development plan.
2. Apply for ITEP and possible block grants to fund the project.
3. Begin project in 2021 and finish before the bicentennial in 2023.

Fill all Vacant Commercial Buildings with Businesses Includes Developing a Plan with Noncompliant Owners

Strategic Principle: : Hillsboro Will Create a Sustainable and Locally Focused Economy

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner for Public Safety, Commissioner for Streets and Public Property, City Clerk, Code Enforcement Officer, City Planner.

Outside Partnerships: To Be Determined

Sub Goals:

1. Commission a brief report of all buildings downtown including owners who are either willing to sell or need renters.
2. Hold meeting of business owners who need renters and explain what they need to do for the city to help them find occupants.
3. Develop a plan for noncompliant owners in the downtown district.

Create an Incubator to Create Small Businesses in Town

Strategic Principle: : Hillsboro Will Create a Sustainable and Locally Focused Economy

Responsible Parties: Mayor and City Planner

Outside Partnerships: Incubator Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce.

Sub Goals:

1. Recruit an executive director and board for a nonprofit incubator.
2. Help search and provide funds along with community partners.
3. Launch The Coop incubator by Spring of 2021.
4. Make The Coop a small business development resource for Montgomery County and the surrounding region.

Repair All Brick Streets

Strategic Principle: : Hillsboro Will Commit to Fiscal Responsibility and Updated Physical Infrastructure.

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner for Streets and Public Property, City Clerk, Community and Economic Planner, Street and Public Works Department

Outside Partnerships: Incubator Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce.

Sub Goals:

1. Conduct survey of brick streets to see which are fixable and which should be replaced.
2. Based on the survey, construct a plan to implement repairs or replacement.
3. Plan funding of the project through a variety of possible sources.

Tier Two

Commission Workforce Study to Give Full Picture of Current Workforce in Hillsboro and its Needs

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Create a Sustainable and Locally Focused Economy

Responsible Parties: Mayor, City Clerk and City Planner.

Outside Partnerships: To Be Determined

Overlapping Goal and Sub Goals:

- 1 The Town Council commissions a workforce study to determine our current workforce resources, actual workforce and our future needs.
2. Partner with an outside resource for information and data.
3. Write workforce study, present to the council and publish it for public use.

Work with Developers to Develop Housing on Land Owned by the City of Hillsboro

Strategic Principle: Mayor, Commissioner for Streets and Public Property

Responsible Parties: Mayor, City Clerk and City Planner.

Outside Partnerships: To Be Determined

Sub Goals:

- 1 Revisit and Update Current RFP's for city land.
2. Develop incentive package for housing developers
3. Actively recruit local, regional and national housing developers.

Commission Future Land Use Plan

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Preserve our Historic Small-Town Atmosphere.

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner for Public Safety, Commissioner for Public Property, City Clerk, City Planner, Street and Public Works Department.

Outside Partnerships: To Be Determined

Sub Goals:

1. The City Council will commission a committee to write a growth management plan to include subcommittees on housing, retail properties, annexation, development, and public property.
2. Commission meets over a year time frame to research and write the plan.
3. Annex Plan to the overall Strategic Plan.

Repair Concrete on Spillway on Lake Hillsboro

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Commit to Fiscal Responsibility and Updated Physical Infrastructure.

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner for Streets and Public Property, City Clerk, Community and Economic Planner

Outside Partnerships: Hurst-Rosche, Others to be determined

Sub Goals:

1. Evaluate Illinois EPA report for possible options.
2. Hurst-Rosche presents plan to council for consideration.
3. Plan implemented to fix dam by 2030.

Repair or Replace Bridges

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Commit to Fiscal Responsibility and Updated Physical Infrastructure.

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner for Streets and Public Property, City Clerk, Street and Public Works Department, Community and Economic Planner

Outside Partnerships: IDOT, Montgomery County

Sub Goals:

1. Read and Evaluate IDOT's Bridge Report
2. Repair or Replace Seward Street Bridge
3. Repair or Replace Tremont Street Bridge.
4. Repair or Replace Wood Street Bridge

Continue to Develop Lakes into a Destination for Outdoor Recreation

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Develop a Healthy Outdoor

Lifestyle in our Community

Responsible Parties: Commissioner of Streets and Public Properties, Natural Resources Committee, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, City Planner.

Outside Partnerships: Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, Imagine Hillsboro

Sub Goals:

1. Construct Kayak Launch and chart Kayak path on Lake Hillsboro
2. Continue to work with IDNR with stocking of fish for Lake Hillsboro and Glen Shoals Lake.
3. Build Roof over Gas Pumps in South Marina.
4. Purchase Barge for Glenn Shoals Lake to help with shoreline stabilization.
5. Develop a plan to address the Siltation Problem in Lake Hillsboro and Glenn Shoals Lake.
6. Continue Rip-Rapping Efforts to Protect Banks of Lake Glenn Shoals.

Tier Three

Commission a Sustainable Energy Plan for the City

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Commit to Fiscal Responsibility and Updated Physical Infrastructure.

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner for Public Health and Safety, Commissioner for Streets and Public Property, City Clerk, City Planner, Street and Public Works Department

Outside Partnerships: To Be Determined

Sub Goals:

1. Commission a report on developing and encouraging sustainable energy use in the city.
2. Partner with outside group to provide data and expertise.
3. Research and Write the report over the course of a six-month period.
4. Present report to the city council for action and possible implementation.

Redevelop Central Park into a Third Place for the Citizens of Hillsboro

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Develop a Healthy Outdoor Lifestyle in our Community

Responsible Parties: Commissioner of Streets and Public Properties, Natural Resources Committee, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, City Planner.

Outside Partnerships: Imagine Hillsboro, Parks and Recreation Central Park Sub-Committee.

Overlapping Goals and Sub Goals:

1. Work with Imagine Hillsboro to write and implement plan for Central Park Redevelopment
2. Raise money for project from a variety of sources including private donations, grants, public groups and city participation.
3. Build the project in four different stages.

Build a Hiking and Running Trail System that Connects Throughout Various Points in the City

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Develop a Healthy Outdoor Lifestyle in our Community

Responsible Parties: Commissioner of Streets and Public Properties, Natural Resources Committee, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, City Planner.

Outside Partnerships: Imagine Hillsboro

Sub Goals:

1. Re-examine Current Trail Plan
2. Obtain all needed permits from Illinois Department of Natural Resources including bridge building and wetlands management.
3. Build three bridges over tributaries of Shoal Creek running through Challacombe and Central Parks.
4. Plan Community Trail Building Days with Imagine Hillsboro
5. Develop Funding through grants, city budget, private partnerships and private donations.
6. Construct the trails using Central Park as the trailhead.
7. Connect trail System with Bremer Bird Sanctuary and Arches Trail.
8. Work with county to connect trails to a larger statewide system.

Develop Network to Help the City's Poor and Unemployed to Include Job Resources, Mental Health, Soft Skill Training, Food Pantries, and Child-Care Resources

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Create a Sustainable and Locally Focused Economy

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner of Public Health and Safety, Community and Economic Planner

Outside Partnerships: Ministerial Alliance, Hospital, The Coop Incubator, Chamber of Commerce, Volunteer Groups.

Sub Goals:

1. Mayor will hold a summit of these groups to obtain a full picture of what is going on in the county and region.
2. Network would develop on its own with regular help and input

Reexamine and Rewrite Ordinances, Especially Historic Downtown

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Preserve our Historic Small-Town Atmosphere.

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner for Public Safety, Commissioner for Streets and Public Property, City Clerk, City Planner, Street and Public Works Department

Outside Partnerships: To Be Determined

Overlapping Goals and Sub Goals:

1. Mayor, City Clerk and City Planner reread ordinances pertaining to Main Street development.
2. Mayor, City Clerk, City Planner and City Attorney draw up ordinances to protect the historic look of downtown, which will include recommendations on signs, storefronts, and sidewalks. Ordinances presented to city council for approval.

Tier Four

Commission a Walkability Study of the City

Strategic Principle: Commissioner for Public Safety, Commissioner for Public Property, City Clerk, City Planner, Street and Public Works Department

Responsible Parties: Commissioner for Public Safety, Commissioner for Public Property, City Clerk, City Planner, Street and Public Works Department

Outside Partnerships: To Be Determined

Sub Goals:

1. Commission a walkability study of the city.
2. Construct traffic slow down options on South Main Street including crosswalks and signs.
3. Work with public health organizations to plan a “get active” campaign for the citizens of Hillsboro.
4. Identify new places for Sidewalks.

Develop Mental and Drug Rehabilitation Health Resources

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Continue to Rebuild its Social Infrastructure

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner of Public Health and Safety, Community and Economic Planner

Outside Partnerships: To Be Determined

Sub Goals:

1. Recruit mental health and drug rehabilitation providers to town.
2. Hold Mayor’s Summit on mental health and drug rehabilitation.
3. Form permanent Public Health Advisory Committee.

Build More Small Reading Parks Throughout the City

Strategic Principle: Commissioner of Streets and Public Properties, Natural Resources Committee, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, City Planner.

Responsible Parties: Mayor, Commissioner of Public Health and Safety, Community and Economic Planner

Outside Partnerships: Imagine Hillsboro

Sub Goals:

1. Commissioner for Public Safety and Commissioner for Public Property oversee a discussion with the Natural Resources Committee to determine if small lot properties owned by the city could be turned into small parks and green spaces that are easy to take down and sell when needed.
2. City Planner and Superintendent of Parks work with the Natural Resources Committee to make plans for "Small Parks."
3. Build Three Small Parks in the City Within Ten Years.

Develop a Plan for the Future of the Sports Park

Strategic Principle: Hillsboro Will Develop a Healthy Outdoor Lifestyle in our Community

Responsible Parties: Commissioner of Streets and Public Properties, Natural Resources Committee, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, Community Planner

Outside Partnerships: Imagine Hillsboro

Sub Goals:

1. Commissioner of Streets and Public Properties and Superintendent of Parks and Recreation work with current managers of the park to develop a plan.
2. Plan is voted on by the City Council.



Historic Red Rooster Inn and future brewery located on Courthouse Square in downtown Hillsboro



Central Park currently features a large swimming pool and new pickleball courts. A new ADA accessible playground, walking trail and recreational ball field will be built on the north half of the park.

Chapter Five

Plans to be Added

Economic Development

Future Land Use

Energy Sustainability

Parks and Recreation

Plans to be Added

Overview

In constructing this strategic plan, it became apparent to the City Council, the Planning Commission and the Community planner that four separate plans would be needed to address future efforts. They also recognized that each would involve further research, consultation and preparedness that could not be achieved in the space of 2019-2020. To that end, they proposed these plans be developed within a five-year window starting in Fall 2020 and ending in Spring 2026.

Economic Development Plan - Montgomery County and the City of Hillsboro are facing an uncertain future with several variables that must be considered when planning for the city's economic future. With the help and consultation of Western Illinois University, the St. Louis Regional Chamber of Commerce and other economic professionals, the Community Planner will research and write an economic plan that will be added in this section of Hillsboro 2030. This effort will commence in the Fall of 2020 and be finished by the end of the year for a council vote in January 2021.

Future Land Use Plan - This is a vital and recommended component of any future city planning. It allows a municipality to consider how, when and where they want the city to grow. Research shows that cities with comprehensive future land use plans grow at a more sustainable pace and minimize possible problems. This plan will be commissioned by the City Council in December 2020 and begun in January 2021. The research effort will be led by the Community Planner and the City Clerk with outside partnerships to be consulted. A plan will be presented for public comment and voted on by the end of Summer 2021.

Energy Sustainability Plan - Cities across the country are switching to alternative energy methods and saving taxpayers money that can be focused on other projects. Further, as Hillsboro counts on its natural

environment as a key source of revenue, it is important to consider how we will take care of it for future generations. This plan will be commissioned by the city council in 2022 and finished by the end of the year.

Update Parks and Recreation Plan - When people consider moving into a new area, parks, walking trails and outdoor recreation are high on their list to consider. Separate plans for trails, Central Park development, and for the lakes exist, but these need to be updated as Hillsboro moves into the future; it is a necessity. The timeline for this plan is under consideration.



Historic St. Paul's Lutheran Church on Courthouse Square

Chapter Six

Implementation and the Future



Opera House Brewing Co., which offers a wide selection of craft beers as well as whiskeys, is a popular gathering place in downtown Hillsboro.

Implementation and The Future

In order for Hillsboro 2030 to be successful, consideration of how to implement the plan is a vital part of moving it forward. To that end, the following implementation guidelines are recommended.

- 1) Once the plan is adopted by the council in Fall 2020, all city departments will be instructed to work on the goals required for their area.
- 2) The Community Planner is required to give a yearly “State of the Plan” report to the City Council at the first meeting in December. This report should include the status update of all the projects listed, recommendations for the council to consider in the following year, and critical feedback from the community.
- 3) If changes must be made, the Council will instruct the Community Planner to make the needed changes, and he will have one month to make the changes.

4) At the five-year mark, the Council will instruct the Community Planner and the Planning Commission to do a five year evaluation that will include information on goals met, changes that need to be made either by addition or subtraction, and possible recommendations. This evaluation will include consultation with the Council, department heads and any outside consultants employed by the city.

5) At the ten-year mark, the Council will follow the steps outlined in section 3, with the added instruction to the community planner to make significant changes for the next ten years of Hillsboro’s history.

With these outlined steps, Hillsboro will ensure that a plan will guide its future and that is flexible enough to change as required. In the city’s almost two-hundred-year history, it has risen to meet a variety of challenges and trials. The ones it faces in the next few years are some of the most difficult as it looks towards an uncertain economic future centered during a time of uncertainty in the country. With careful planning, discussion, and implementation, the city believes that its best days are ahead and a bright future awaits for anyone who calls Hillsboro home.



The Historic Courthouse houses county offices, and Circuit Court offices are located in the new Courthouse.



The Harkey House, built in 1834, is Hillsboro's oldest home and is the museum for the Historical Society of Montgomery County. The Society also owns the Blackman-Evans House, built in 1843, on South Main Street. Both are on the National Register of Historic Places.

