



BEECHER 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan is a guide for community leaders and decision makers. Comprehensive plans are used as guides for coordinated, long-range growth and development, preparing for the impacts of changes both inside and near a community. A comprehensive plan lays out the vision for a community through goals and policies, indicating partners and resources to help achieve goals. The Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan highlights community assets, identifies current challenges, and presents the Village’s plans for action. The Plan recognizes both local and regional planning challenges and opportunities, and determines priorities regarding housing, economic development, land use, transportation, sustainability, recreation etc.

The Village will use the Plan in reviewing development proposals, planning for infrastructure and other capital improvements, and seeking grants and other funding opportunities. Other organizations, such as the school district or fire district, can use the Plan to understand potential growth and how best to accommodate it. Community organizations can use the Plan to assess the pulse of the community and identify projects they can champion to enhance the Village. Residents and businesses can use the Plan to understand ways they can be involved in building an even stronger community.

Vision Statement:

“In 2040, Beecher is an even better place to live with a revitalized and walkable Downtown, excellent recreational opportunities for all ages, and a thriving economy with an expanding base of local, regional and international businesses. We have provided for an aging population while attracting young families who enjoy our excellent schools and small-town character. The Village and other local governments work closely together to be wise stewards of local taxpayer funds and we have created a strong, diverse and resilient tax base. We have protected and enhanced the environment through sustainable development practices, expanded use of alternative energy, and restoration of native habitats. We are connected to the world via high-speed broadband, rail, and proximity to Chicago – yet set apart in a rural setting that retains our agricultural roots.”

Chapters 1-2: Introduction and Creating the Vision

The Village of Beecher is located in eastern Will County, about 40 miles south of Downtown Chicago and around three miles away from the Illinois-Indiana border. The comprehensive planning process began in May of 2018 and spanned a little over a year.

The consultant team began with research and data analysis and learned more about the issues and opportunities facing Beecher through engagement with the Beecher community at a variety of events, in community venues, in English and Spanish—all of which informed the Beecher 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Plan lays out a set of goals and objectives for increasing resiliency, retaining and attracting residents, enhancing parks + recreational opportunities, ensuring convenient + safe mobility, revitalizing the Downtown, expanding job opportunities + the tax base, and increasing sustainability over the next 10 - 20 years.

To keep the community informed and engaged in the planning process, the website www.Beecher2040.org was created. Important dates, event + survey summaries, and draft documents were added to the website throughout the process, in addition to e-mail blasts and social media posts by the Village of Beecher and community partners.

Chapter 3: A Resilient Community

Vision: Beecher will be prepared to face foreseeable challenges, including population growth, industrial expansion, and regional transportation projects.

Goals: Encourage infill development, expand industrial opportunities, revitalize Downtown, and continue intergovernmental cooperation.

This chapter includes the Preferred Future Land Use Map that will be used to guide future development in the community and outlines land use goals. The Village designates areas where industrial expansion is preferred, emphasizes the need to focus on infill development, and the importance of preserving open space, especially along Trim Creek.

Chapter 4: A Great Place to Live

Vision: Beecher will build on its reputation as a great place to live and raise a family to attract new residents.

Goals: Attract and retain new residents, including the millennial generation, inspire a sense of community among all, and provide excellent community facilities.



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This chapter highlights many of Beecher’s assets and recommends ways to use those assets to attract new residents, including welcoming diversity; maintaining a quality and affordable housing stock for a variety of households and at a variety of price points; marketing the benefits of living in Beecher; and continuing to support and enhance local schools.

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Chapter 5: Enhanced Parks + Recreation Opportunities

Vision: Beecher will have excellent park access and recreational opportunities for all age groups.

Goals: Improve access to recreation for all ages and expand access to parks and open space amenities.

This chapter recognizes areas that are currently underserved by parkland and recognizes that many recreational opportunities are geared for youth. The Future Park and Trail Plan lays the groundwork for creating a trail throughout Beecher that would connect to the Plum Creek Greenway Trail and indicates where parks should be added to improve access in the Village.

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Chapter 6: Convenient + Safe Mobility

Vision: Future transportation improvements will address all travel modes, including public transportation, rail, trucks, cars, golf carts, bikes and on foot.

Goals: Develop a pedestrian and bicycle network, collaborate with regional agencies in planning regional projects, improve Dixie Highway, improve the collector roadway system throughout the Village, and ensure access to adequate public transit and alternative transportation options.

This chapter recommends updates to local roadways to enhance safety for all users, including closing sidewalk gaps and instituting shared roadways. Close monitoring and participation in planning for regional transportation projects is encouraged to improve accessibility and ensure resident concerns are addressed.

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Chapter 7: A Revitalized Downtown

Vision: Historic Downtown Beecher will be celebrated as a local and regional destination.

Goals: Continue to hold events in Downtown, enhance Penfield Street, promote property renovation, expand housing opportunity in Downtown.

This chapter identifies strategic improvements, such as wayfinding signage, historic markers, and opportunity sites for redevelopment in the Downtown that will continue to establish the historic Downtown as a local and regional destination.

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Chapter 8: Expanded Job Opportunities + Tax Base

Vision: Beecher will become known as a great place to start and grow a business.

Goals: Develop new industrial opportunities, expand retail and restaurants, develop incentive tools to partner with developers, preserve historic structures, jump-start residential development.

This chapter highlights trends in industrial and commercial development in Will County and notes opportunities for expansion in Beecher and the planning area. The Village commissioned the study of a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) in 2018, which in addition to the Lincoln-394 Corridor Enterprise Zone, creates an incentive for development and local expansion.

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Chapter 9: A Sustainable Community

Vision: Future development will be designed to work with the natural environment and public infrastructure will be regularly maintained and enhanced for efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Goals: Maintain Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) to wisely operate municipal infrastructure, including monitoring the quality of Trim Creek, mitigating pollutants within Village limits, minimizing the impacts of flooding events, designating floodplains as open space, and establishing Village-wide goals for waste diversion.

This chapter outlines ways in which the Village, residents, and business owners can incorporate renewable energy, stormwater best management practices, and divert waste from landfills. New development is encouraged to be low-impact and prioritize conservation of farmland and natural features and topography.

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Chapter 10: Implementation

The Implementation Guide provides action steps, suggested partners, time frames, and resources for each objective in the Comprehensive Plan.