CITY OF BATAVIA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION
AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT

Introduction

Batavia derives its character not only by the people who live here, but also by the houses and individual neighborhoods throughout the City. Some neighborhoods contain significant historic resources that help connect today's Batavia to its colorful past. Others were built more recently as the Fox Valley is continually being discovered by a new generation as a wonderful place to raise a family.

While many neighborhoods contain the variety of housing needed to accommodate people at various stages in their lives, the City believes there is a need for a greater variety of housing. All neighborhoods have a character worth preserving or enhancing and are a major source of community pride. The City's downtown is a distinct neighborhood characterized by historic non-residential structures. City's efforts to redevelop parts of the downtown including residential units, must take into account the sensitive historic character of the area.

The Housing, Neighborhood Conservation & Historic Preservation Element of the Batavia Comprehensive Plan will identify issues city-wide that can affect the character of the City and its ability to maintain a housing stock to accommodate people of all ages, income levels, and physical and mental abilities. Equally important is Batavia's ability to continue to provide quality housing and neighborhoods to meet residents' needs in the future.

Background

As Batavia continues to grow and evolve, its housing stock must be able to accommodate existing and new residents. This housing stock will be comprised of both new residences and existing residences that must be well maintained. The housing stock found in our community ranges from modest housing, to mid-range newer construction on up to prominent estates. While the trend for new residences is more expensive housing, the City will be challenged to attract more affordable housing in the future.

As the City's neighborhoods age, and growth in the community shifts from fewer annexations to more infill development, it is imperative that the City creates partnerships with its residents, building owners, future developers and other key community and neighborhood stakeholders to implement and execute ongoing efforts to preserve the quality of life. In the downtown, infill development and maintenance of historic downtown buildings is top priority. There are other historic properties throughout the City that deserve similar attention. A map of historic districts, and locally and nationally registered landmarks is shown on map HN A.

With our neighborhoods becoming more mature and developed, we need a greater focus on the energy and conservation initiatives of today's building standards. Older homes that were not built to today's energy and conservation standards will need to be brought up to those standards when being renovated or remodeled.

The 2010 Census reported the City's population at 26,045, residing in 9,554 households. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning projects the City's population to grow to some 39,000 persons residing in over 14,000 households by 2040. The Kane County 2040 Plan projects Kane County's senior population (60+ years old) to grow by over 154,000 As the City continues to develop and mature, there will be an increasing need to provide a wide variety of housing opportunities for Batavia's increasingly diverse population. This element identifies issues that affect the character of neighborhoods, housing opportunities and historic resources. The subsequent goals and policies will provide direction for the preservation and improvement of the character of the community and will help develop a proper balance of housing types.

Issues

1. <u>Aging Buildings.</u> The community has a number of old buildings without perceived alternatives to demolition or readily apparent adaptive reuse.
2. <u>Property Maintenance.</u> Many areas, especially those with large numbers of rental units, older industrial and commercial properties and poorly maintained individual properties need attention. The presence of many foreclosed properties creates neighborhood problems.
3. <u>Redevelopment of Old Homes on Large Lots.</u> The community has many large parcels with smaller homes that are nearing the end of the building's economic value. Some are being torn down and replaced with one or more larger, new homes.
4. <u>Residences Respecting Neighborhood Character.</u> Whether existing homes are being replaced on a one for one basis or are enlarged, regulations need to balance development rights with the architectural character of the neighborhood.
5. <u>Aging Community.</u> Mirroring the national trend, the community is experiencing a change in demographics, particularly with an aging population. The average age of the community is increasing with young adults decreasing as a proportion of the population.
6. <u>Accessibility.</u> The housing market often does not take the initiative to supply housing that is fully accessible to all people.
7. <u>Affordability.</u> Historically, housing costs rise faster than incomes, pricing many out of the market.
8. <u>Loss of Historic Structures.</u> The community has lost historic structures, particularly in the downtown, which threaten to weaken the fabric of historic neighborhoods.

9. <u>Preservation Benefits.</u> The benefits of historic preservation and the value found in historic/established neighborhoods, is not fully realized by the entire community.
10. <u>Community Cohesiveness.</u> A trend among new developments is to promote individual development identity instead of its inclusion in the larger community.
11. <u>Crime-Free Rental Housing.</u> The City has implemented a trial Crime-Free Rental Housing program. The program requires registration of apartment buildings of a certain size and crime free addendums to be added to lease documents. If successful this program has been considered for expansion to additional properties.

<u>Goals and Policies</u>

Goal 1. Provide a wide range of housing opportunities for people in all life circumstances

Policies
a. Provide a diversity of quality rental and owner occupied housing
b. Seek appropriate housing developments in anticipation of increased senior population
c. Provide community workforce housing
d. Continue to allow accessory units such as granny flats, in-law arrangements and coach homes where appropriate
e. Seek opportunities to supply quality affordable housing
f. Encourage varied housing styles, densities and types within neighborhoods
g. Accommodate housing needs for persons with disabilities
h. Stress the importance to financial and lending institutions of remaining committed to meet all housing needs of the City
i. Maintain opportunities to provide higher density housing in conjunction with mixed-use developments
j. Coordinate with faith-based community and social service providers to address the issue of homelessness in the community

Goal 2. Preserve the character of established residential neighborhoods

Policies
a. Strengthen and enforce property maintenance codes
b. Prevent commercial encroachment into residential neighborhoods
c. Identify, improve and rehabilitate deteriorating residential properties
d. Ensure that rental housing meets Housing Quality Standards through a licensing and inspection program
e. Expand Crime Free Housing Program if pilot program is successful to all rental properties in the city

Goal 3. Conserve historical and cultural resources

Policies
a. Maintain an up-to-date historic preservation ordinance
b. Support the Historic Preservation Commission in its efforts to identify, and to preserve historic resources in a flexible manner
c. Continue and expand the Historic Preservation Commission's educational role on historic preservation to citizens and members of the community
d. Develop a landmark survey to identify unique properties with historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic importance, interest, or value
e. Keep an updated Historic Property Survey
f. Support organizations that actively promote Batavia's cultural heritage and history
g. Study the establishment of future historic districts

Goal 4. Create diverse neighborhoods

Policies
a. Maintain effective Multi-Family Design Guidelines
b. Identify areas of infill development that do not disrupt the existing neighborhood environment
c. Consider development and redevelopment at greater density where appropriate

Goal 5. Improve neighborhood quality

Policies
a. Encourage all residents and property owners to become stakeholders in improving their neighborhoods
b. Support efforts to increase neighborhood safety
c. Continue City infrastructure improvements, especially those that promote pedestrian friendly and walkable neighborhoods

Goal 6. Assure quality living environments

Policies
a. Require establishment of homeowners' associations in new neighborhoods that contain commonly owned improvements
b. Establish backup special service areas where homeowner associations maintain common facilities
c. Maintain contemporary building and construction codes
d. Enforce all building, safety, zoning and fire codes to prevent overcrowding and unsafe conditions
e. Discourage the use of subdivision identification signs to promote a unified Batavia identity.

Map HN A - Historic Properties
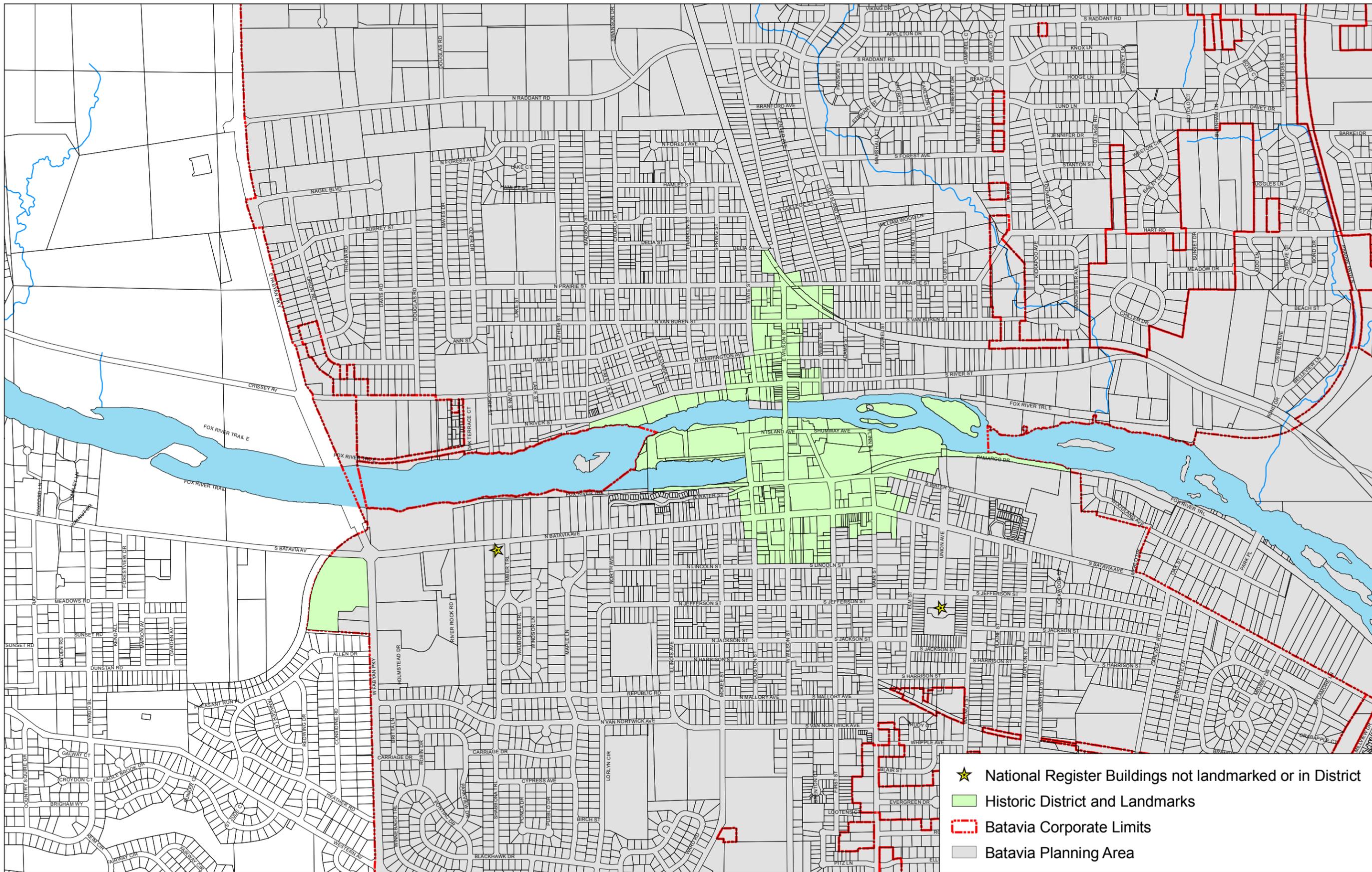
Legend:
- ★ National Register Buildings not landmarked or in District
- Historic District and Landmarks
- Batavia Corporate Limits
- Batavia Planning Area

N

0   0.25   0.5 Miles

Community Development Department 8/22/2007

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