



**City Council Study Session Agenda
March 24, 2025 - 5:30 PM
City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3rd Floor,
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL**

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1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Public Comment**
4. **Presentations**
 - a. Strategic Housing Plan
5. **Adjourn**
 - a. Motion: Motion to adjourn.
VV Voice vote is needed.

This agenda may be obtained in accessible formats by qualified persons with a disability by making appropriate arrangements from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (309) 732-2010 or visiting in person at: 1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL 61201.

Strategic Housing Plan

City Council Presentation

Rock Island, Illinois

March 24, 2025

Agenda

- Project Goals
- Plan Structure
- Key Findings
- Strategic Roadmap & Strategies
- Priority Sites and Possible Annexation Areas
- Important Considerations
- Next Steps
- Questions

Project Goals

- Help elected officials, city staff, developers, and community members better understand existing conditions, housing needs, and market dynamics.
- Serve as a data-informed blueprint for housing development and housing priorities in Rock Island for the next 10 years.
- Provide implementation strategies and recommendations to inform decision making.

Plan Structure

- Introductory and Contextual Information
 - Introduction
 - Project Context
- Data Analysis and Research
 - Resident and Employee Demographics and Trends
 - Housing Inventory
 - Housing Market & Affordability
 - Local Housing Incentives and Financing Programs
- Key Findings and Next Steps
 - Summary of Key Findings
 - Strategic Roadmap
 - Priority Sites and Annexation Areas
 - Implementation Matrix

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- Project Goals
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- **Key Findings**
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Key Findings

- The potential offered by the **City's architectural character and natural environment** is not fully realized.
- It has become important for the City to **intervene earlier with deteriorating properties** to avoid losing housing stock and to improve neighborhood stability and conditions.
- Northeast Rock Island's **robust street grid offers the potential for increased walkability and bikeability** with investments in the sidewalk network and cycling infrastructure. These investments could increase the appeal of these neighborhoods allowing them to better compete with neighborhoods in Davenport and Bettendorf.

Key Findings

- The City's choice not to amend the requirement within the International Residential Code for fire sprinkler systems in all new one- and two-family dwellings and townhomes was an intentional effort to continue to further building and life safety. However, the requirement does add to the expense of new home construction and require ongoing maintenance by the homeowner. The City will need to **explore if there are other ways in which a similar level of fire safety in homes can be achieved** that could be incorporated into the building code as an alternative to a sprinkler system. **Financial incentives to cover these added up-front costs should also be considered.**

Key Findings

- Efforts to **improve trust between residents and City Staff** should be prioritized through engagement with residents, increased transparency of City projects, programs, and processes, and the sharing of clear and consistent information with residents.
- While many of the City's requirements regarding permitting and zoning are comparable to those of nearby communities, there is a **perception that internal administrative processes, unclear requirements, and inconsistency across staff members and departments make it difficult to develop in the Rock Island.** Updates to the City website, clearer documentation outlining different processes, and checklists of all required documentation can help everyone to better navigate the processes and improve efficiency.

Key Findings

- There is an **immense shortage of housing opportunities for older residents (65+) and individuals with disabilities**. Introducing additional senior housing could free up some housing stock that is currently occupied by aging homeowners who would prefer to downsize to reduce the burden of home maintenance without leaving the community.
- Each year, there are approximately 400 to 500 **Augustana College students in need of off-campus housing**. Currently, these students primarily occupy inexpensive rental properties within walking distance of the College, some of which may be in poor condition, and most sit vacant during the summer months.

Key Findings

- There is a significant amount of rent-restricted and subsidized affordable housing in Rock Island, and there is some **concern regarding the over-concentration of poverty**. Recent efforts to prioritize housing developments that are smaller-scale, mixed-income, and/or strategically-located have begun to address this. RIHA and CHP are important partners for the City to continue to work with on future subsidized affordable housing projects.

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- **Strategic Roadmap & Strategies**
- Priority Sites and Possible Annexation Areas
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Strategic Roadmap

- Intended to be a guide to the implementation of recommended strategies that can begin to address the housing challenges identified through the planning process.
- Narrative in Strategic Roadmap section along with Implementation Matrix in following section.

The Strategic Roadmap is divided into three categories:

1. Strategies for Existing Housing Stock
2. Strategies for New Housing Development
3. Strategies for Shaping the City's Narrative

Strategies for Existing Housing Stock

General Overview:

- One of the City's largest assets when it comes to housing is its existing housing stock. However, without sufficient maintenance and upkeep, these properties can also become a liability.
- The City's building codes, code enforcement and nuisance policies, and property registration requirements all strive to ensure residential buildings in Rock Island are safe and habitable.
- However, each of these policies requires ongoing enforcement and monitoring, regular updates to ensure effectiveness, and resources for residents and property owners.

Primary Focus:

- Continuing to move from reactive to proactive code enforcement
- Using cross-departmental data collection and monitoring to prevent deterioration
- Stepping up support for maintenance and rehabilitation of homes

Strategies for New Housing Development

General Overview:

- New residential development can occur in essentially three different scenarios: infill development, larger-site residential development, and the annexation of land for future development or recently developed land.
- To encourage new housing development and overcome the current state of stagnant residential development, the City must prioritize and focus its efforts.

Primary Focus:

- Ten specific priority sites targeted for new development
- The development of a clear annexation policy
- Updating policies and procedures to make developing housing easier
- Stepping up support for local partners aligned with the City's housing goals

Strategies for Shaping the City's Narrative

General Overview:

- Among residents, there is a great sense of pride in the City, the school district, and the neighborhoods. However, among non-residents, there seems to be a general perception that Rock Island may not be the community of choice within the Quad Cities.
- Moving forward, the City will have to work to change the way in which it is viewed both individually and relative to its peers through positive and proactive marketing efforts.

Primary Focus:

- Updating the City website
- Making residents and developers aware of resources, programs, and priority sites
- Improving the perception of Rock Island through coordinated marketing and promotion

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Priority Sites

- 10 Priority Sites identified for new housing development
- These Priority Sites have undergone a preliminary review of feasibility for development.
- Further efforts by the City with regards to these sites should include:
 - Collect and review past engineering or environmental reports for the sites
 - Investigate existing infrastructure on and around sites and make improvements whenever possible to improve development feasibility
 - Proactively re-zone sites whenever possible
 - Make efforts to obtain site control of any remaining parcels
 - Leverage TIF, Enterprise Zone, Rivers Edge Redevelopment Area, and other incentives to support new development
 - Approaching developers for proposals

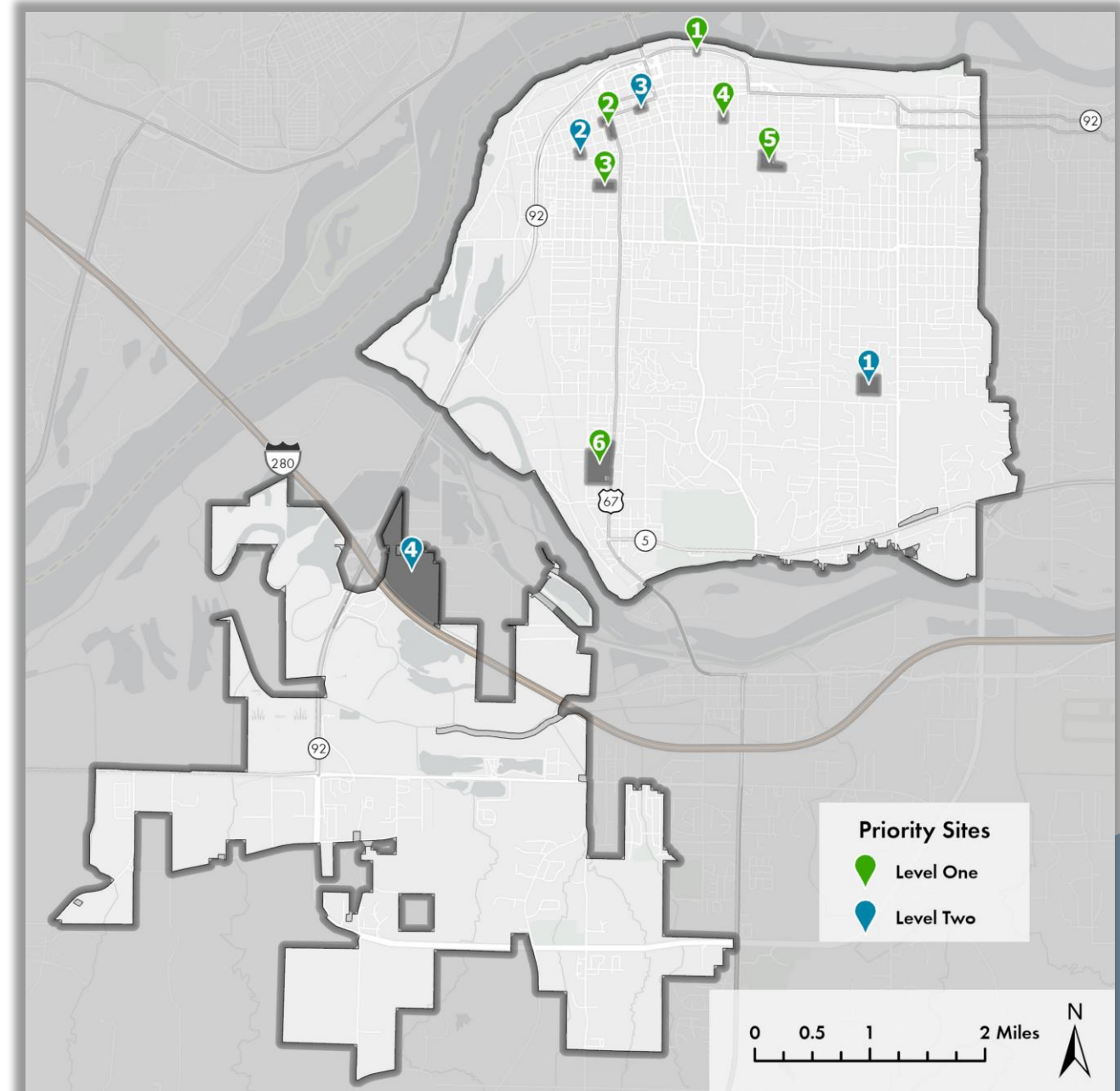
Priority Sites

Level One Priority Site:

sites that are, or are very close to, development ready

Level Two Priority Site:

sites that have additional barriers to development that will require more action by the City or an interested developer



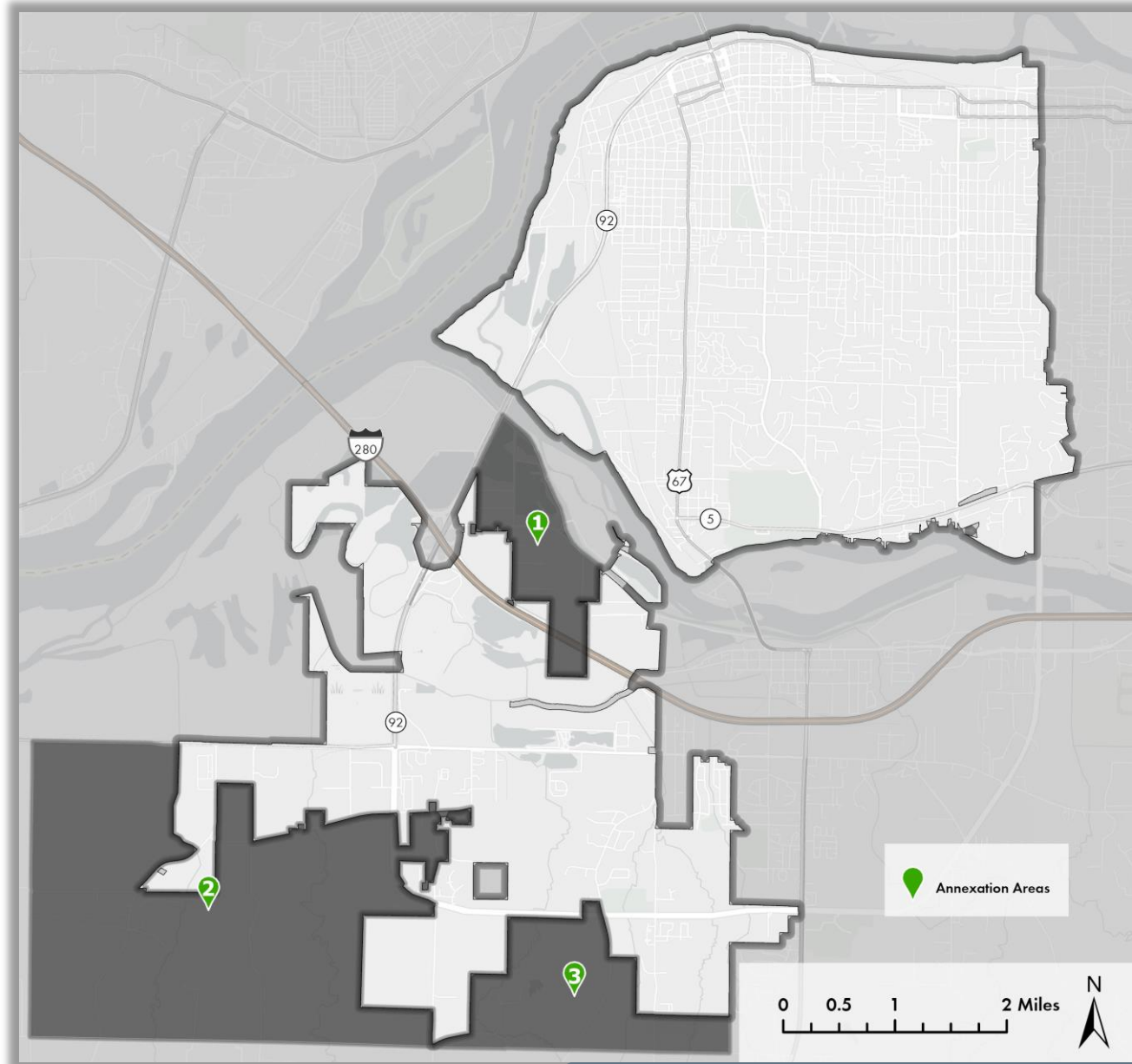
While these sites are intended to be a focus for the City, this list should not be used to discourage residential development on other sites. Most notably, it will be crucial for the City to continue to explore opportunities to incentivize infill development on vacant lots throughout the City.

Possible Annexation Areas

- Three primary areas identified for consideration for future annexation
- The City must create an annexation policy that can serve as a guiding document when considering annexations in the future, assisting in the evaluation of financial impact and feasibility and informing decision-making.
- The City should not rush to annex new property but instead take care to understand the possible impact of annexation on the City's expenses and revenue streams.
- Once the City has created an annexation policy and determined sites for residential annexation and development, the City should focus on investing in infrastructure improvements and/or expansions that would benefit these sites and improve development feasibility.

Possible Annexation Areas

- Three primary areas identified for consideration for future annexation
- The City must create an annexation policy that can serve as a guiding document when considering annexations in the future, assisting in the evaluation of financial impact and feasibility and informing decision-making.



These Annexation Areas should be considered general guides for the City's future growth rather than definitive areas that will be annexed in the future. It is possible that portions of these areas may never be annexed while others may be annexed gradually over time.

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Important Considerations

If residential development is truly a high priority for the City, ***leaders must put as much emphasis on residential development as they would on commercial and industrial projects.*** That means using tools like TIF, Enterprise Zone and other incentives to support residential development. This is a significant change in policy and mindset.

Important Considerations

The City needs to ***proactively promote residential development on their priority sites*** by reaching out to developers and partner organizations. This should include informal discussions with interested parties as well as issuing formal requests for proposals by developers.

Important Considerations

To gradually shift perceptions of Rock Island as a community of choice, ***the City must think more strategically about messaging and communications***. These messages need to be crafted thoughtfully and projected in a way that builds the image of Rock Island as an approachable partner for progress. This will require time, effort, and financial resources but will pay off, especially as the City begins to accomplish the other goals in the plan.

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Next Steps

Recommending Vote on Plan by Planning and Zoning Commission on **April 7**

Vote on Plan Adoption by City Council on **April 14**

Any Questions?