

Peotone Planning Priorities Report

April 2021



Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning

Special thanks to:

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Aimee Ingalls, Village Administrator

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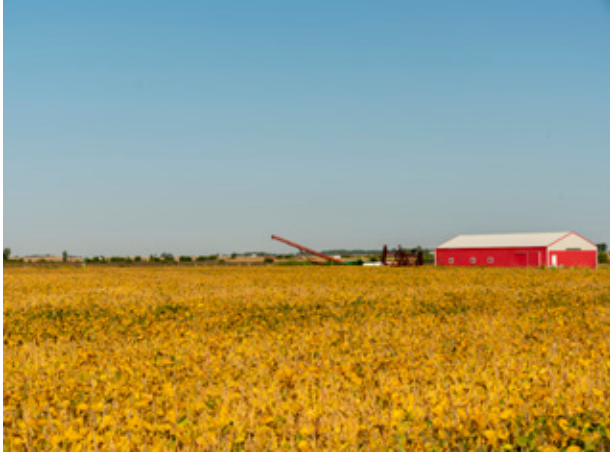


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The image shows the exterior of a building with a light blue facade. On the left, there is a yellow sign that says 'QUALITY'. Above it, another yellow sign partially shows the words 'FROZEN' and 'FOODS'. The building has large glass windows and a glass door. The door has the number '105' on it. To the right of the door, there is a yellow metal structure. The ground in front is a concrete sidewalk with shadows cast by trees. A green semi-transparent banner is overlaid on the top part of the image, containing the text 'Section 1 INTRODUCTION' in white.

Section 1 INTRODUCTION

The Village of Peotone sought technical assistance from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). Given the wide variety of important topics in Peotone, CMAP determined that it would need to work with the Village to decide what type of planning project would be most appropriate. CMAP and the Village concluded that a Planning Priorities Report would help assess the opportunities, assets, and needs in Peotone and determine what type of planning the Village should undertake next.

Planning Process

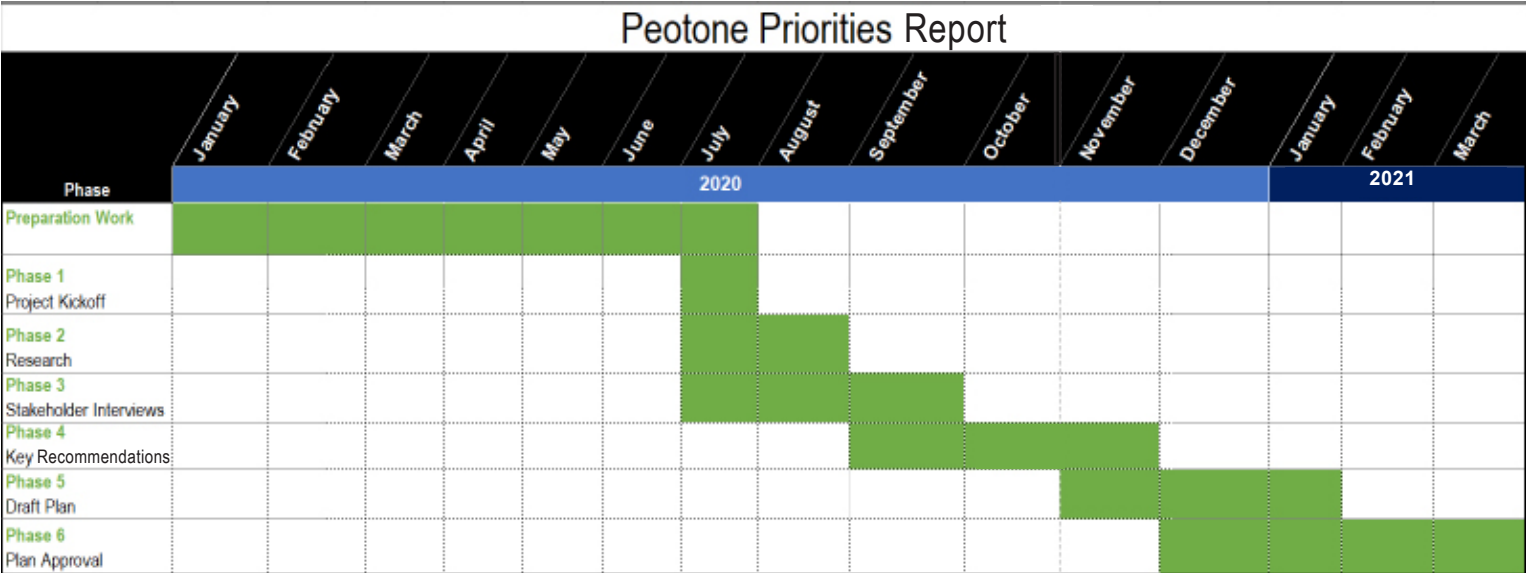
CMAP began working with the Village in late 2019 to develop this Planning Priorities Report. To understand the community’s key planning issues, CMAP staff used various approaches, beginning with analyzing existing conditions and reviewing past local plans. CMAP staff also conducted nearly 20 phone interviews with Peotone’s elected officials, staff, residents, business owners, and other key community stakeholders, which provided additional insight into Peotone’s current conditions, needs, and future local priorities.

Report Structure

This report is a distillation of CMAP’s research, findings, and recommendations for Peotone. The report includes four sections:

- Planning Context, including data and maps.
- Previous Plans, including summaries of existing plans and studies.
- Stakeholder Interviews, including main themes from the interviews.
- Recommendations for Future Planning Projects.

Figure 1: PPR Timetable



ON TO 2050 Comprehensive Regional Plan

Peotone influences and is influenced by the Chicago region. Local autonomy over land-use decisions requires communities to take responsibility for how those decisions shape a community, its neighbors, and the region as a whole. The cumulative choices of 284 municipalities and seven counties determine the quality of life and economic prosperity across our region.

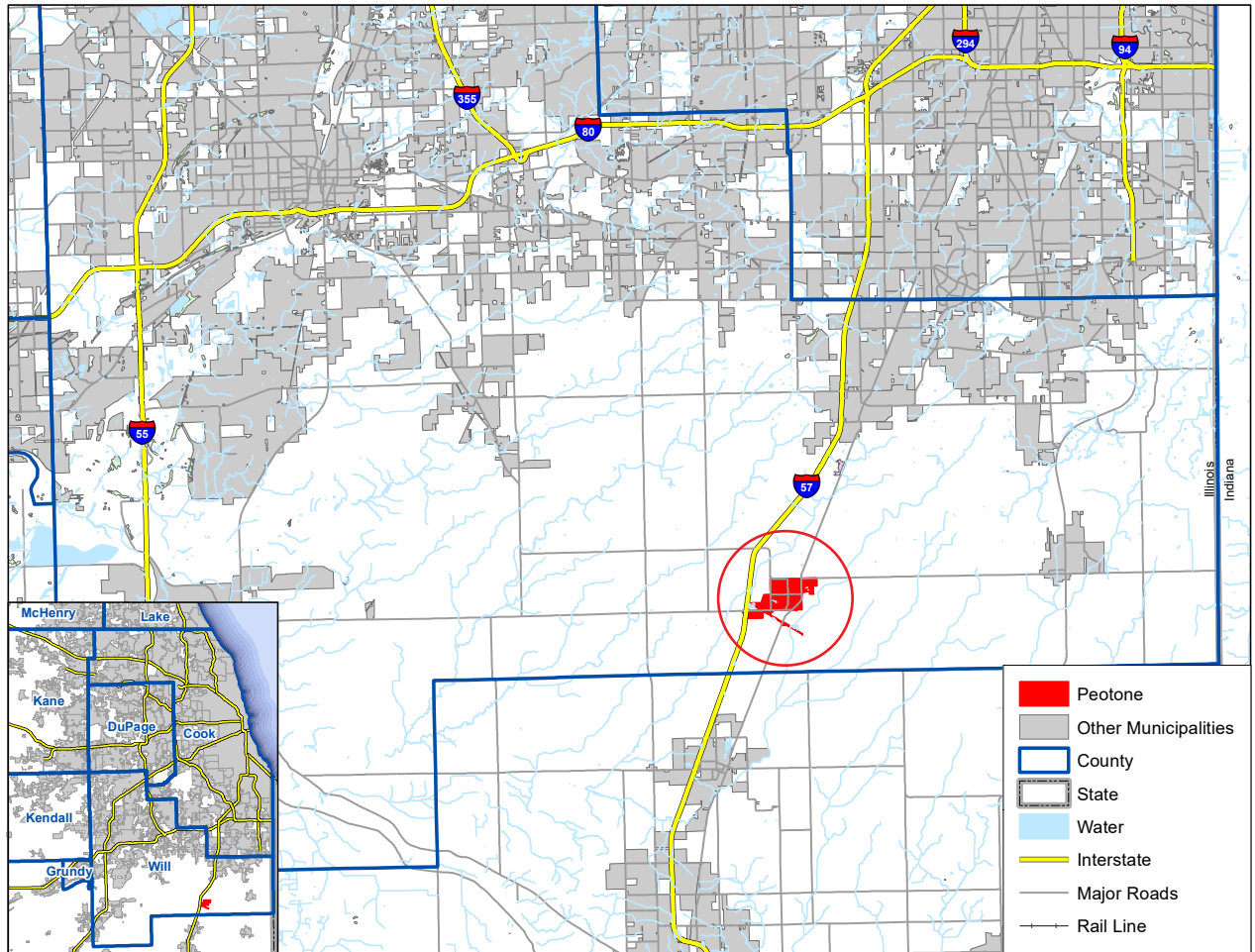
Adopted in October 2018, the ON TO 2050 comprehensive regional plan presents a collective vision for the Chicago region's future and identifies steps for stakeholders across the region to achieve that vision. ON TO 2050 focuses on the need to grow our economy through an opportunity for all (Inclusive Growth), prepare for rapid changes (Resilience), and carefully target resources to maximize benefit (Prioritized Investment). The plan guides transportation investments and frames regional priorities on development, the environment, the economy, and other issues affecting the quality of life.

In particular, ON TO 2050 encourages goals such as reinvestment for vibrant communities by supporting the development of compact, walkable communities; and creating strategic and sustainable development by targeting infill, infrastructure, and natural area investments.

Figure 2: CMAP ON TO 2050 Logo



Figure 3: Regional Context Map of Peotone



Section 2 PLANNING CONTEXT



Peotone is a unique community with assets, resources, and challenges that set the Village apart from other regional communities. Before identifying the next steps for the Village, it is critical first to assess the area’s planning context, including geography, demographics, land use, natural resources, economy, transportation system, and municipal capacity.

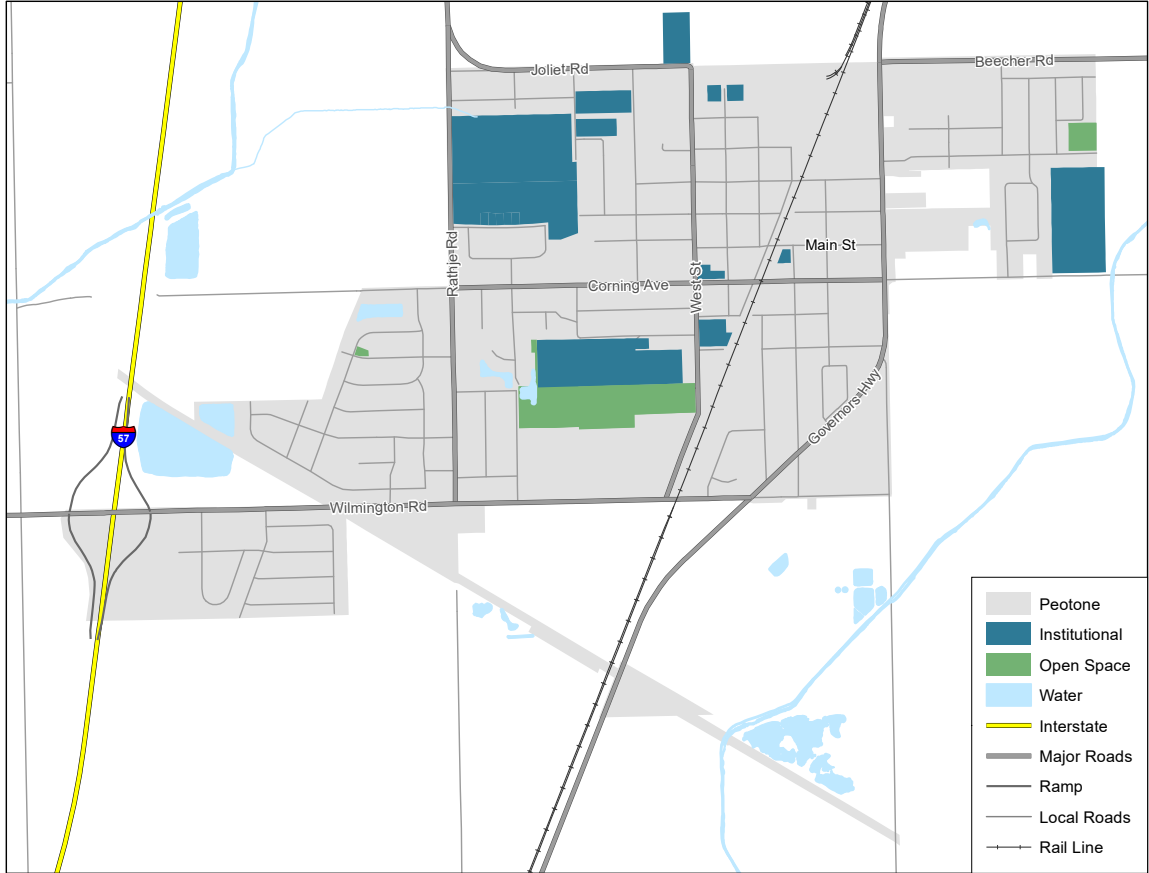
A summary of key data points that describe the current conditions in Peotone follows, drawn from multiple sources, including CMAP’s Community Data Snapshots (see Appendix A), which contain regularly updated data provided by various regional, state, and federal organizations.

Location

Peotone is a small community in southern Will County, located along the Illinois Route 50/I-57 corridor. Peotone is located about 40 miles south of downtown Chicago and 19 miles north of Kankakee, IL. The city neighbors Beecher (population 4,382) to the east and Monee (population 5,124) to the north. As of

2018, Peotone has 4,294 residents. The Metra Electric (M.E.) line provides service to the northwest of the community in University Park (9.5 miles or roughly a twelve-minute) drive from Peotone Village Hall. The Village area is home to significant agricultural resources and is a hub for freight transportation.

Figure 4: Peotone Map



Governance

Peotone has a president-board form of government and is not a [home-rule community](#) (which gives the communities more control over finance and running the community). The President and six Trustees are elected to serve four-year terms. With advice and consent from the Village Board, the President appoints the Village Administrator, Treasurer, and Utility Billing Clerk/Assistant to Zoning Administrator.

The Village operates four main departments: Administration (Finance, Legal, and Engineering sections), Police, Public Works, and Community Development (Building, Economic Development, and Planning/Zoning sections).

Critical Facilities

Critical facilities are generally defined as physical assets that provide services or functions essential to the community, especially during a natural disaster or other disruptive events. Government offices, police and fire stations, hospitals, community centers, nursing homes, and physical infrastructure are all examples of critical facilities.

In Peotone, facilities are spread throughout the community, which increases the resilience of the overall emergency response and recovery systems. Facilities are located outside of the one percent chance floodplain—areas with at least a one percent chance of experience a flood during a given year—and most are located within a walkable distance from the downtown area.



Land Use

Livable communities depend on a mix of land uses that ensure homes, businesses, civic institutions, and open spaces are available to current and future residents. Understanding the Village’s current land use profile and how that profile may change during the years to come is an important first step for creating a unified vision of how the community should develop in the future.

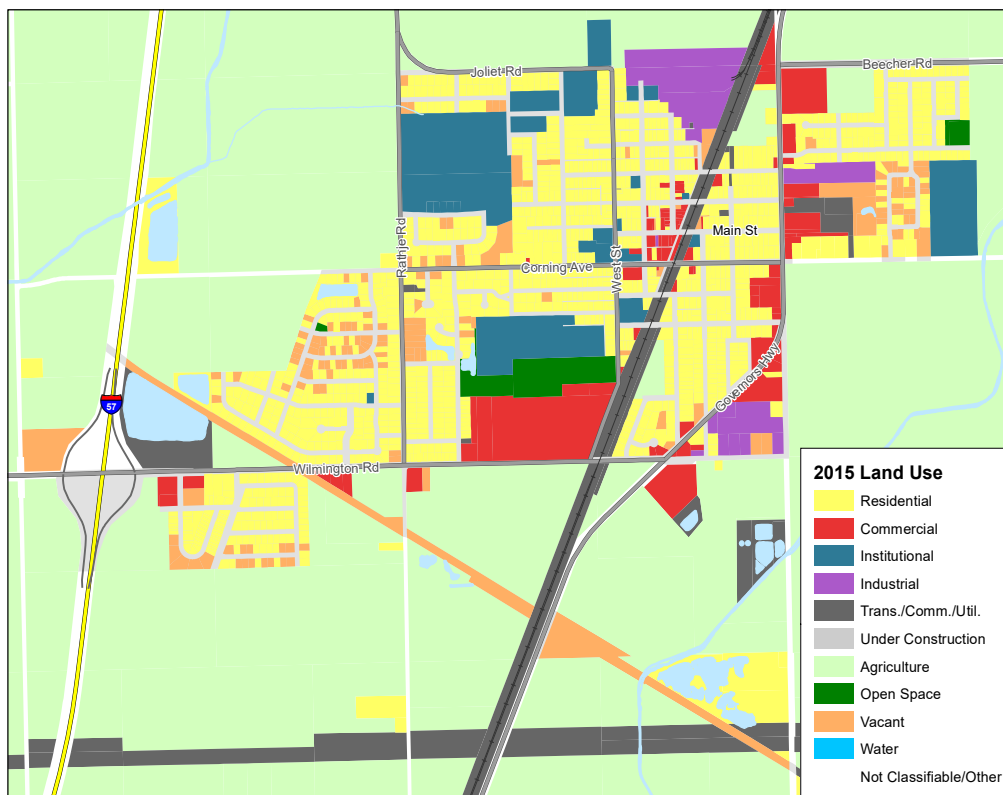
As shown in Figure 5 (“2015 Peotone Land Use Map”), almost a third of the land in Peotone is currently used for residential. Single-family housing—primarily in detached homes—is the most extensive land use, at 32 percent. This development style is found throughout the Village, with the largest clusters located north and west of downtown. Traditionally, homes in Peotone have been built gradually and have maintained the Village’s original grid. In recent years, this trend has shifted in favor of larger-scale developments designed around independent, curvilinear street networks—primarily in the western part of the Village.

Transportation and utilities are the second-largest land use in the Village and account for over 20 percent, including interstates, streets, and railroads. Institutional occupies 8 percent include Village Hall, cemetery, churches, and schools.

As seen in Figure 5, 18 percent of the land in Peotone is currently used for agriculture. Agriculture land is the third-largest land use in Peotone. This land use can be seen all around the outskirts of the Village.

Commercial development makes up over 7 percent of the Village’s land area and is primarily situated along Main Street and Illinois Route 50. The central downtown area is occupied mainly by small-lot commercial properties, including a few mixed-use (residential and commercial) parcels. The Illinois Route 50 corridor in eastern Peotone is home to many of the commercial and industrial businesses. However, a significant portion north of Corning Ave and Illinois Route 50 remains vacant. Village-wide, vacant parcels account for almost 7 percent of Peotone’s land area. Many of the vacant parcels are also located in the western residential part of the community.

Figure 5: 2015 Peotone Land Use Map



Demographics

Understanding the current and projected demographic composition of a community is critical for developing a wide range of planning documents. This is particularly true in smaller towns, such as Peotone, that may experience rapid change due to regional and national socio-economic trends.

As of 2018, Peotone has a total population of 4,294, an increase of more than 3 percent since 2010 and more than 26 percent since 2000. The Village's modest growth in recent years is consistent with historical trends and is comparable to the limited growth throughout northeastern Illinois.

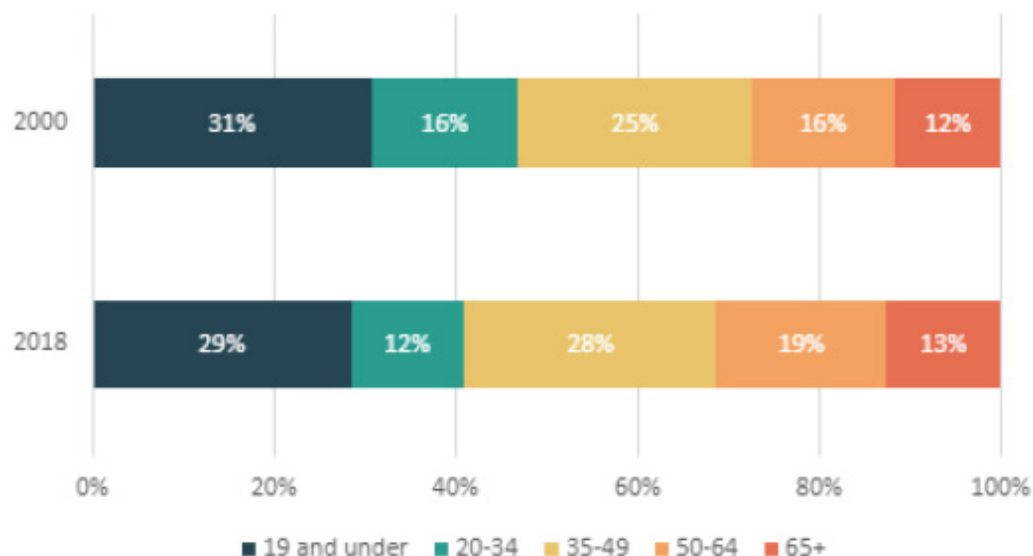
The average household size in Peotone of nearly three persons is similar to the county and region's household sizes. Peotone has a significantly younger population, 30 percent under the age of 19. Yet Peotone does have an aging population. 30 percent of this aging population is over the age of 50. The median age for Peotone is 37.9 and mirrors both the county and region.

Peotone's population is aging. Since 2010, the share of residents over the age of 65 has increased over 3 percentage points, from nearly 9 percent to over 11 percent. As shown in Figure 6, this trend is expected to increase during the coming years. As residents

age, their needs change substantially. Limited mobility, especially for residents who cannot drive, can become a substantial challenge in auto-oriented communities. Mobility within the home can provide additional difficulties for elderly residents. Many homes in Peotone were built before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design standards were incorporated into residential construction. During interviews with residents, the need to plan for aging residents was mentioned several times. Many Peotone residents have lived in the community for decades and would like to be a part of the Village's future. This may require adapting building, street, and neighborhood designs to meet their changing needs while ensuring that transportation and in-home assistance services remain available.

The Village's ethnic and racial composition is significantly less diverse than other northeastern Illinois communities. Approximately 89 percent of Peotone residents are non-Hispanic white, compared to 64 percent in Will County and 52 percent in the greater Chicago region. Hispanic and Latino residents make up an additional 11 percent of the Village's population, compared to nearly 36 percent in Will County.

Figure 6: Peotone Age Demographics



Housing

Housing plays an integral role in residents' lives, and a balanced housing supply helps to ensure that a diversity of household types has access to the assets in Peotone. Maintaining a balanced housing supply is essential for ensuring the Village remains a good place to live for people of all ages and economic backgrounds. Having a diverse mix of housing options is particularly important for retaining residents as housing preferences, and demographics change while attracting new residents.

Almost 82 percent of residential units in Peotone are single-family, detached homes. The remainder of the homes are in multifamily buildings. Across northeastern Illinois, 57 percent of all homes are single-family detached, and 46 percent are multifamily. In Peotone, just under half of the homes have three bedrooms, 44 percent. This profile varies noticeably higher from the region 33 percent and county 40 percent. Peotone vacancy is a notably low 3 percent compared to both the region 9 percent and county 6 percent.

The vast majority of Peotone households own their home. At 79 percent, home ownership is significantly higher than that in the Chicago region (58 percent) but comparable to Will County 76 percent. The median home age in Peotone is 43 years built in approximately 1977, which is much older than Will County 1991 and the Chicago region (1968). The most recent housing developments have been in the western part of the community. Gull Landings Homes offers many attached homes, such as single-family homes, condos, townhouses, and lofts. According to Redfin, many of the houses were built from 1994 to 2003 and currently offer a median sale price of \$222,450.

Peotone's housing market is relatively stable and affordable. Peotone's housing market experiences fewer foreclosures than the county and the region. Sales activity in Peotone is trending upward. As of 2018, Peotone averaged 5.5 sales per 100 residential parcels, compared to five in Will County. Peotone experienced an increase in sales to buyers looking to rent property (known as business buyers) in 2015 and 2017.

Table 1. Housing Occupancy and Tenure

	PEOTONE		WILL COUNTY		CMAP REGION	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Occupied	1,514	97.4%	227,848	93.9%	3,107,682	91.4%
<i>Owner-Occupied</i>	1,226	78.8%	184,653	76.1%	1,984,033	58.4%
<i>Renter-Occupied</i>	288	18.5%	43,195	17.8%	1,123,649	33.0%
Vacant	41	2.6%	14,720	6.1%	292,513	8.6%
Total Housing Units	1,555		242,568		3,400,195	

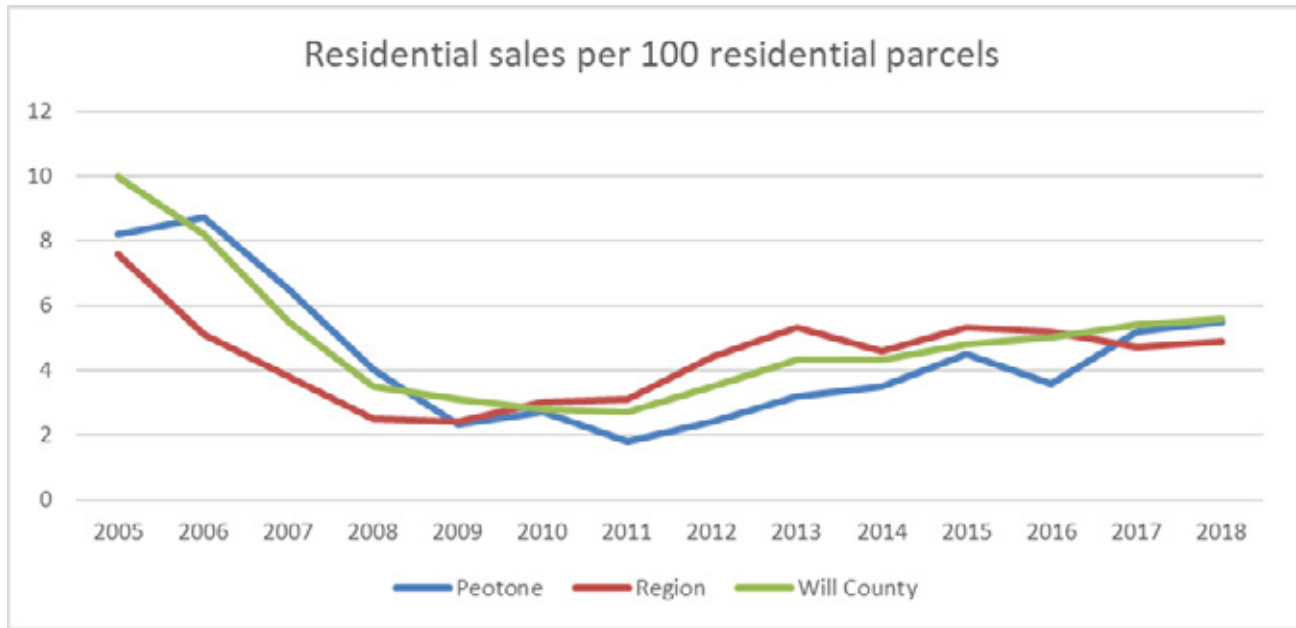
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates. Universe: *Occupied housing units; Housing units

Table 2. Housing Type

	PEOTONE		WILL COUNTY		CMAP REGION	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Single, attached	1,176	75.6%	180,744	74.5%	1,707,038	50.2%
Single, detached	94	6.0%	29,340	12.1%	252,166	7.4%
2 units	68	4.4%	5,004	2.1%	238,040	7.0%
3-4 units	86	5.5%	5,372	22.2%	269,766	7.9%
5+ units	131	8.4%	18,682	7.7%	906,352	26.7%
Housing units*	1,555		239,142		3,373,362	

*Total, excluding mobile, boat, RV, van, etc
Source: 2014-18 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 7: Distance from Home to Work



Economic Development

The Peotone economy is influenced by a broad range of local, regional, and national factors, including employment trends, development and investment patterns, and geography.

Understanding the current condition of these factors and the community's position within the larger, regional context is an important first step for developing a downtown, which includes a market analysis in order to help aid economic development. Data for this section was taken from the American Community Survey using five-year estimates, On the Map, and CoStar.



Educational Attainment

The following graphics depict the educational attainment of Peotone, Will County, and the broader CMAP region. Peotone has the most significant proportion of residents with a high school degree or equivalent. A small percent of Peotone's residents have a graduate degree or higher, contrasting Will County's and CMAP regions' percentages.

Peotone has also seen changes in educational attainment. This data was compiled using data from 2000, 2010, and 2018. More residents are receiving at least a high school degree. There is also a higher rate of college graduation at both the associate's and bachelor's levels. The percent of residents holding an associate's degree increased by less than 1 percent between 2010 and 2018, while the share of residents holding a bachelor's degree held relatively steady at 18 percent between 2010 and 2018.

Income Levels

After adjusting for inflation, the average household income increased from \$74,757 in 2010 to \$83,358 in 2018. The following graphics depict income levels in Peotone, Will County, and the broader CMAP region. The largest portion of Peotone's households (39 percent) make over \$100,000, comparable to Will County's income level, and is higher than the CMAP region's income level. Meanwhile, a quarter of Peotone's population earns under \$50,000.

Table 3. Educational Attainment

	PEOTONE		WILL COUNTY		CMAP REGION	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Less than High School Graduate	139	5.0%	40,752	9.1%	684,093	11.9%
High School Graduate or Equivalency	1,003	36.1%	119,769	26.7%	1,319,895	22.9%
Some College, No Degree	653	23.5%	98,161	21.9%	11,110,944	19.3%
Associate's Degree	368	13.2%	37,351	8.3%	400,050	7.0%
Bachelor's Degree	497	17.9%	97,646	21.8%	1,352,126	23.5%
Graduate or Professional Degree	119	4.3%	54,583	12.2%	888,642	15.4%

Source: 2014-18 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Table 4. Income Level

	PEOTONE		WILL COUNTY		CMAP REGION	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Less than \$25,000	175	11.6%	25,816	11.3%	551,715	17.8%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	240	15.9%	37,648	16.5%	585,464	18.8%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	247	16.3%	39,146	17.2%	504,014	16.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	265	17.5%	31,996	14.0%	390,392	12.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	339	22.4%	47,952	21.0%	516,533	16.6%
\$150,000 and over	248	16.4%	45,290	19.9%	559,533	18.0%
Median HH Income	\$83,358		\$83,504		\$70,444	

Source: 2014-18 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Employment Data

Industry Distribution

Peotone's workforce comprises 71 percent of its residents, who are of 16 years or older. 92 percent are employed, while 8 percent are unemployed as of 2018. Peotone's unemployment rate is slightly higher than that of both the county and CMAP region.

Peotone's five major employment industries are retail trade, education, accommodation and food service, manufacturing, and construction. The top two industry sectors, retail trade at 25 percent, and the education sector at 20 percent, make up almost half of Peotone's employment opportunities. More residents who live in Peotone work in the Village - 10 percent - when compared to those who work in Chicago, at 7 percent.

Peotone also experienced a change in employment status. Between the years 2010 and 2018, the employment rate decreased from 94 percent to 92 percent, while the unemployment rate increased from nearly 5 percent to just under 8 percent. More concerning, the labor force decreased.

Distance to Employment

Although there are many jobs in Peotone, most of Peotone's residents commute outside the Village for employment. About 21 percent of Peotone residents commute under 10 miles for jobs, while 41 percent of residents travel 10-24 miles for work outside of Peotone. The remaining (38 percent) of residents commute anywhere from 25 to 50 and possibly even over 50 miles for work.

Figure 8: Distance from Home to Work

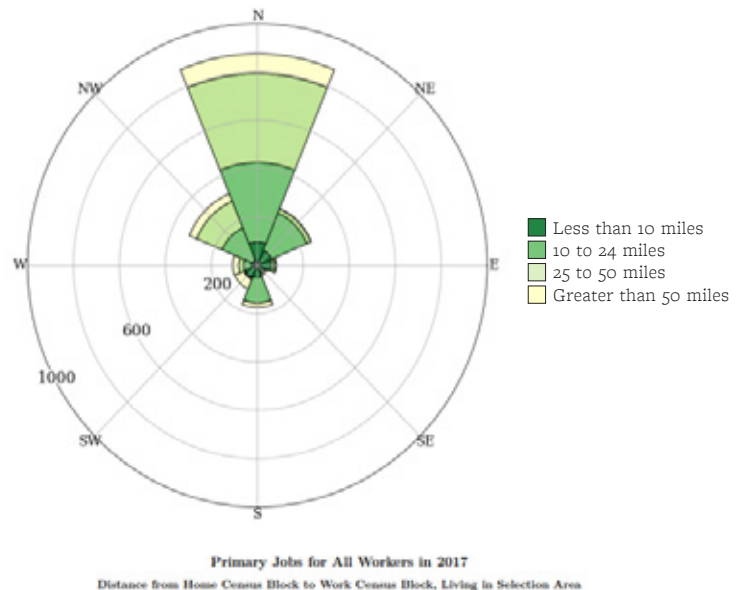


Table 5. Employment Statistics

	Peotone		Will County		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
In Labor Force	2,430	71.3	367,773	68.9	4,547,626	67.2
Employed*	2,238	92.1	348,560	94.8	4,231,812	93.1
Unemployed*	192	7.9	18,946	5.2	304,075	6.7
Not In Labor Force	978	28.7	165,669	31.1	2,215,759	32.8

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates.
*Does not include employed population in the Armed Forces.

Universe: *In Labor Force; Population 16 years and older.

Retail Information

Peotone’s retail data was taken from CoStar data between 2010 and 2020. Since 2010, Peotone has 37 retail buildings with 266,496 ft² of space. The amount of available and vacant space has decreased since 2010. Currently, out of the total available retail space, 3 percent is available, while 1.5 percent is vacant. There are no retail buildings under construction. Although there is a very large truck stop development on the west side of Peotone, it is important to note that CoStar does not classify it as retail, and it is not mentioned in this section.

Table 6. Retail Information

Retail Characteristic	2020	2021
Number of retail buildings	37	37
Total space (sq.ft)	266,495	266,495
Available space (sq.ft)	9,510	17,382
Available space (percent)	3.6	6.5
Vacancy space (sq.ft)	4,110	14,572
Vacancy space (percent)	1.5	5.5
Buildings under construction	0	--

Source: COSTAR Data, 2020-2021

Peotone’s Downtown District

The Village of Peotone has two TIF districts, created to act as an incentive to bring additional business developments and revenue into Peotone. TIF, or Tax Increment Financing districts, are special districts created to generate revenue from property taxes. When a TIF is first implemented, the surrounding area’s property tax rates are frozen to act as a base. As development begins in the area, property values will increase because of the increase in property tax rates that property owners actually pay. This increase is the “increment” compared to the frozen property tax rate when the TIF was first implemented. The proposed increment is then used to develop new businesses in the TIF district further.

Figure 9: Peotone Downtown Area



The Downtown TIF

Peotone’s downtown area is one of the two TIF districts in the Village. The buildings in downtown Peotone are vacant. The area struggles to attract new business owners because of two primary reasons. First, it is costly to bring buildings in the area up to code. Second, even if a developer or business owner has funds to rehabilitate a building, they might not have the money to start a business. The hope is that the tax increments’ revenue will help alleviate the costs entrepreneurs would have otherwise had to shoulder. Peotone’s downtown is expecting \$18.55 million of public improvement projects through the TIF.

TIF District 2

Peotone’s second TIF district is set apart from the Downtown TIF and instead contains a portion of the Business Development District (BDD). This TIF district is budgeted for \$33.9 million of public improvement projects. This district also projects \$21.3 million of eligible private expenses to further the redevelopment goals laid out in TIF District 2’s plan. Figure # provides a breakdown of the budget for this district’s public improvement projects.

Table 7. Peotone Public Projects and Related Costs, 2019

Description of Project	Estimated Cost (Budget)
Public works construction, improvements, upgrades, and maintenance or resurfacing of streets, roads, alleys, parking lots, and sidewalks, including labor, equipment, parts, and materials	\$4,000,000
Public works construction, improvements, upgrades, and maintenance of sanitary sewer lines, pump and lift stations, treatment plant, lagoons, manholes, and related facilities, including labor, equipment parts, and materials	\$3,500,000
Public works construction, improvements, upgrades, and maintenance of water mains and related lines and hydrants, storage and treatment facilities including labor, equipment, parts, and materials	\$3,000,000
Storm sewer drainage infrastructure, including the construction, improvements, upgrades, and maintenance of retention ponds and detention basins, including labor, equipment, parts, and materials	\$5,000,000
Public works or improvements related to utilities, including, but not limited to, gas, electric, cable, and telecommunication infrastructure, including labor, equipment, parts, and materials	\$1,200,000
Public property assembly costs relating to the acquisition of land and buildings, demolition, site improvements, and clearing and grading of land	\$3,300,000
Construction/reconstruction, repairs, and maintenance of public facilities, including labor, equipment, parts, and materials	\$500,000
Removal and remediation of environmental contaminants and physical impediments to redevelopment	\$250,000
TIF District-related marketing, signage, website, lighting	\$150,000
Construction, improvements, upgrades, and maintenance of public parks, trails, green space, and urban forestry improvements	\$200,000
Staff and professional service including, but not limited to engineering, architecture, planning (including updates of the Village’s Comprehensive Plan), legal, financial, accounting, marketing, training, continued education, economic development services, and TIF-related public administration necessary for the implementation of the TIF Redevelopment Plan and Projects	\$350,000
Public safety, fire, and rescue and other emergency services training, facilities, equipment, and personnel necessary to promote and protect the health, safety, morals, and welfare of the public within the Redevelopment Project Area	\$400,000
Costs relating to job training and retraining, including “welfare to work” programs implemented by businesses located within the Redevelopment Project Area	\$50,000
Public and Private TIF-eligible project costs within contiguous TIF Districts	\$200,000
Capital Costs/reimbursements to other taxing districts	\$10,000,000
TOTAL:	\$33,900,000

Source: Village of Peotone Business Development District No. 1, 2019

Tourism

Peotone is regionally famous for the Will County Fair, bringing many visitors to the Peotone and surrounding area each year. The fair itself runs for five days in August, though popular events are held at the fairground throughout the spring, summer, and fall.

In addition to the fair, residents from across the region come to Peotone or attend other Will County Fairgrounds events, such as the Annual Motorcycle Swap Meet. In recent years, the Village has partnered with residents and business owners to develop a strategy for growing tourism in the Village using revenues generated through the TIF district development. The committee has proposed using the funds for various community projects.

East of downtown Peotone, the Canadian National Rail line runs through the center of Peotone. The Peotone depot has been out of service for many years now. The depot once was an active stop along the Illinois Central Railway. The depot was a stop for passengers, mail, and home to a telegraph office. Currently, the depot has been restored and refurbished as an antique store.

Figure 10: Peotone Depot



Transportation

A modern transportation system is indispensable; residents must travel quickly and easily around Peotone and the larger Chicago region to sustain our economy and quality of life. Businesses must be able to count on the timely delivery of their goods. With an aging and congested transportation system, maintenance and modernization are necessary to respond to mobility needs and trends.

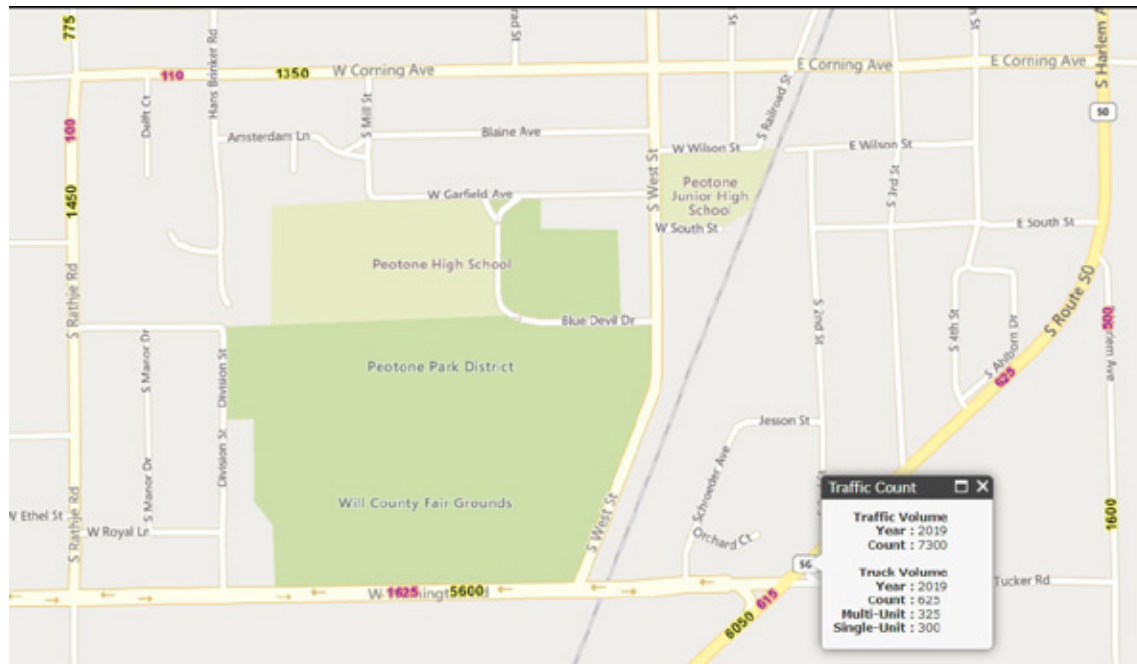
A viable transportation network is essential for communities, establishes the basis for the movement of goods and access to services, and provides personal mobility. Easy access to surrounding areas, the Chicago region, and beyond is important. A good transportation network consists of various modes and can positively impact a community and its residents' quality of life.

The primary mode of transportation in Peotone is vehicular/automobile. Peotone enjoys nearby direct access to Interstate 57. Two main thoroughfares, Wilmington Road (Designated Truck Route) and Illinois Route 50, carry the bulk of auto traffic and are heavily utilized by the trucking industry. Annual Average Daily Traffic, is 5,600 for Wilmington Road (1,625 for trucks) and 7,300 for Illinois Route 50 (625 for trucks). Since truck traffic utilizes these roads, the downtown area is spared the negative aspects of truck traffic, allowing the downtown area to maintain its small-town, quaint character. Main thoroughfares in the downtown area include North Street, Main Street, Railroad Street, and 2nd Street. Illinois Route 50 serves as the main commercial corridor.

Figure 11: Will County Fair Grounds



Figure 12: Peotone Traffic Map



Source: Illinois Department of Transportation, Peotone Traffic Counts 2019

There are no public transit services in the Village. Will Ride Dial-a-Ride offers limited service to select individuals, based on need. Additionally, the Village falls within the Pace Rideshare service area. The Illinois Central railroad runs through the Village, but there are no passenger stops. The nearest Amtrak Passenger Train Station is located in Kankakee. There is no Metra service in the Village, the nearest Metra Station with service to Downtown Chicago on the Metra Electric line in University Park.

Figure 13: Peotone’s Sidewalk Network



The Village enjoys a sidewalk network that provides pedestrian access/connectivity from most residences to the downtown area. According to CMAP’s Regional Sidewalk Inventory, most streets in the Village have complete sidewalks, with a majority having complete sidewalks on both sides of the street. Peotone currently has no right of way or protected bicycle paths and trails. Peotone can implement improvement strategies for these elements. The Village was established using the traditional grid system.

Work Trips

U.S. Census data provides a glimpse into the work travel patterns into and out of Peotone. A majority of Peotone residents, 1,763, leave the Village for employment, while 198 Peotone residents work within the Village. A total of 702 residents from other communities' work in Peotone. See Figure 8.

Table 8. Vehicle Availability

	2010 Percentage	2018 Percentage
No Vehicle Available	5.3%	3.4%
1 Vehicle Available	26.5%	29.6%
2 Vehicle Available	45.7%	34.7%
3 or more Vehicle Available	22.6%	32.2%

* Not included in "total commuters."
 "Source: 2006-2010 and 2014-2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates.

Figure 14: A Local Road in Peotone



Mobility

The predominant mode of travel is the automobile. The percentage of households in Peotone that have no car available is lower than Will County and much lower than the region. From 2010 to 2017, households with no vehicles significantly decreased. Data shows an increase in vehicle availability, which is essential in this auto-dependent area.

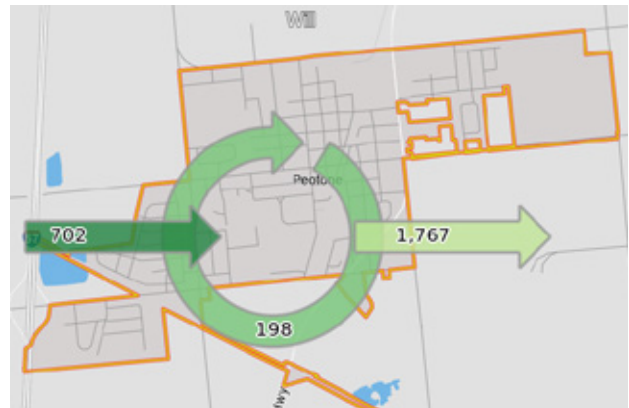
Driving to work alone is the overwhelming travel mode for work trips. Peotone has a higher percentage of residents driving to work alone (work trips) compared to Will County and the region, and the percentage continues to increase. For Peotone residents, using other categories for work trips, and transit/walking/biking, decreased. These figures demonstrate the importance of and dependence on the automobile for Peotone residents. See Tables 8 and 9.

Table 9. Mode of Travel

	2010 Percentage	2018 Percentage
Work at Home*	N/A	N/A
Drive Alone	88.3%	97.4%
Carpool	7.5%	0.5%
Transit	2.3%	1.5%
Walk or Bike	1.4%	0.5%
Other	0.5%	0.0%
Total Commuters	2,343	2,205
Mean Commute Time (Minutes)	30.1	N/A

* Not included in "total commuters."
 "Source: 2006-2010 and 2014-2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates.

Figure 15: Employee Inflow/Outflow

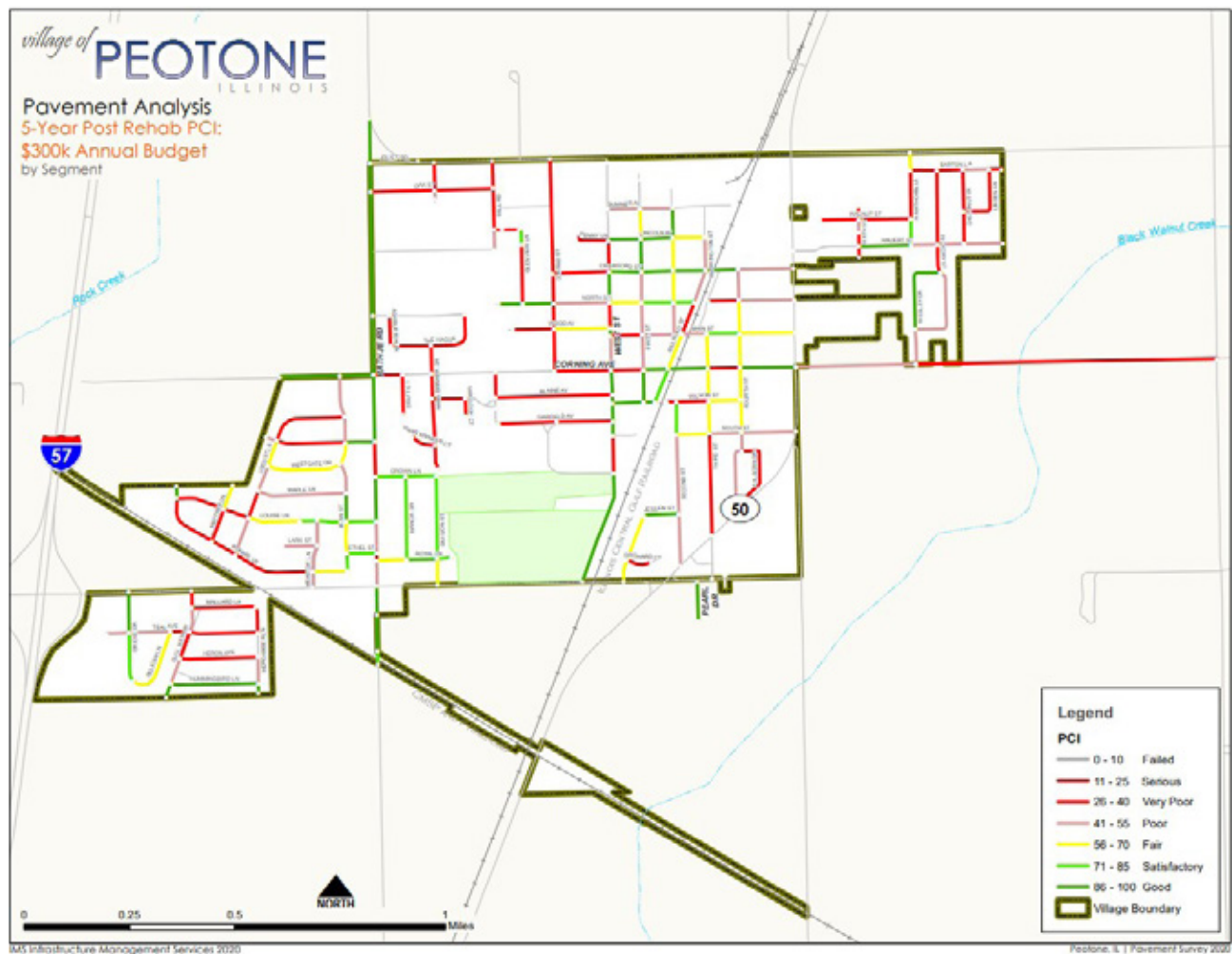


Pavement Management

Maintaining and preserving roadway networks is vital to any community and is a significant activity that Peotone addresses within the parameters of allotted budgets. The best method to obtain the maximum value of available funds is by using a pavement management system. Once implemented, an effective pavement information management system can help the Village develop long-term rehabilitation programs and budgets. The process can prioritize and address critical improvements, lower repair costs, and delay expensive total reconstruction projects.

In 2019 IMS Infrastructure Management Services, LLC (IMS) was contracted by CMAP to conduct a pavement condition assessment and funding analysis for the Village of Peotone. A Laser Road Surface Tester was used on approximately 22 centerline miles of Village maintained asphalt and concrete roadways. A report of the findings and analysis was prepared in early 2020. Figure 16 presents the results in map form.

Figure 16. Peotone Pavement Analysis



The data revealed the following distribution of pavement conditions, as shown in Figure 17:

- Nine percent (8.5 percent) of the network can be considered in “good” condition and require only routine maintenance. These streets are prime targets for crack seal treatments.
- Fifteen percent (14.8 percent) of the network falls into the Satisfactory classification. These roads benefit most from preventative maintenance techniques such as micro-surfacing, slurry seals, and localized panel repairs.
- Twenty-nine percent (29.2 percent) of the streets are rated as “fair” and are candidates for lighter surface-based rehabilitations such as thin overlays or slight panel replacements.
- Forty-eight percent (47.6 percent) of the network can be considered Poor to Very Poor conditions representing candidates for progressively thicker overlay-based rehabilitation or panel replacements. If left untreated, they will decline rapidly into reconstruction candidates.
- Zero percent (0 percent) of the network was rated Failed or Serious.

The analysis examined several budgets and implementation scenarios to assist the Village in determining effective ways to proceed. Taking into consideration the findings below, Peotone can create a cost-effective approach to maintain local roadways:

- The current annual budget for Peotone is \$300k per year dedicated to pavement rehabilitation. This will drop the average Pavement Condition Index (PCI) to 53 over five years.
- A minimum suggested budget of approximately \$1.2M per year is the tipping point to prevent further backlog growth.
- The Peotone network has an average PCI of 57 and a backlog of \$5.5M at the time of survey (backlog being the value of deferred work below the critical PCI), with most of the network landing in the Fair to Poor PCI range.
- With the Village’s existing budget, the network conditions will continue to deteriorate into the low 50’s PCI range, and the backlog will continue to grow over time.
- It is worth noting that the Village does have a fair amount of streets approaching the end of their lifespan where overlays can be effective.

Figure 17. Peotone Pavement Conditions

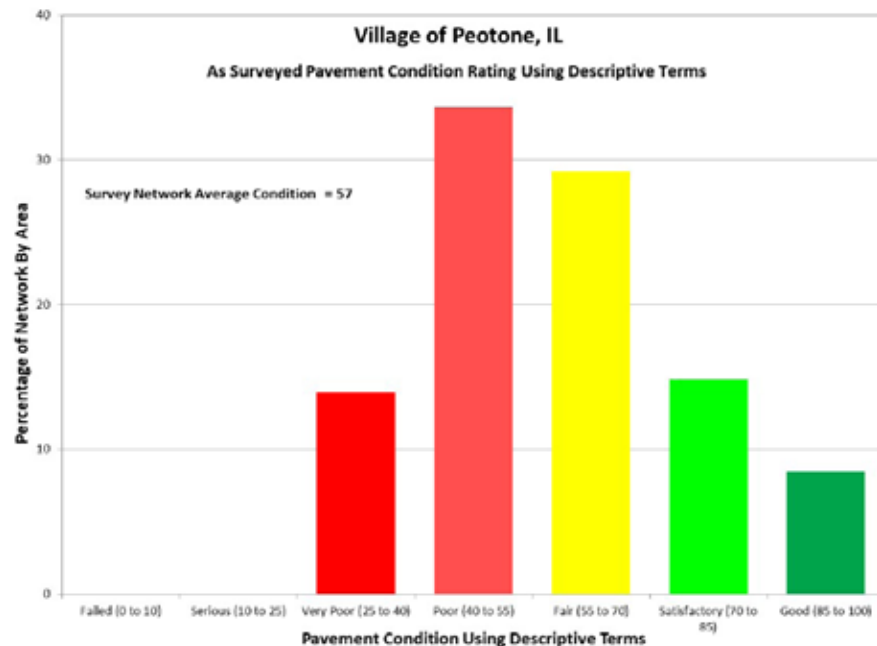


Figure 18: Peotone Pavement Report

Peotone, IL

Pavement Management Analysis Report

February, 2020

Village of Peotone
Attn.: Troy Golem, Village Engineer
208 E Main Street
Peotone, IL

In Association with:
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning





IMS Infrastructure Management Services
8380 S. Kyrene Road Suite 101, Tempe, AZ 85284
Phone: (480) 839-4347, Fax: (480) 839-4348
www.imsanalysis.com

Traffic Impact Study for the Proposed Truck Stop and Hotel by Sam Schwartz Transportation Consultants

The 146-page Traffic Impact Study for the proposed truck stop and the hotel was completed in January 2019 by Sam Schwartz Transportation Consultants. The Traffic Impact Study (TIS) is a mainly engineering document that makes recommendations for the Wilmington-Peotone Road improvements (County Route 25) and 88th Avenue due to the proposed development and future traffic conditions.

The document provided existing conditions, future conditions, recommendations/conclusions, and an accompanying appendix.

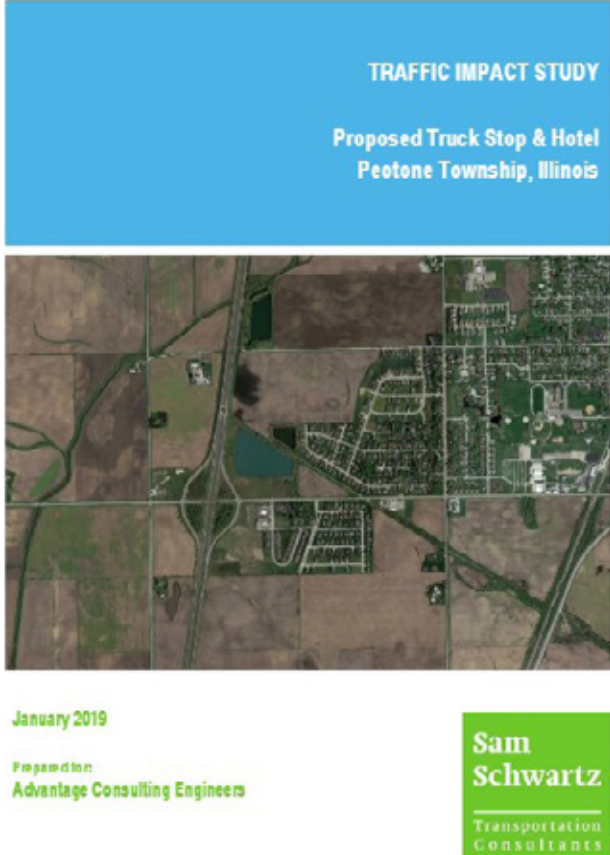
The study reviewed the existing land and road conditions at the intersection as well as conducted traffic counts in December 2018. The study concluded the existing traffic does not warrant traffic signals at 88th Avenue or the I-57 ramps per the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). However, the study concluded that dedicated left and right turn lanes are warranted on Wilmington Road for vehicles turning on to the I-57 ramps, which is included in the WCDOT Project Needs List.

The study then reviewed future conditions with projected traffic from the entire Truck Stop development using the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) trip generation data, directional distribution, and future traffic information from CMAP. According to the Year 2022 condition report results, Traffic Signals are not warranted at 88th Avenue or the I-57 ramps. For the Year 2039 conditions, Traffic Signals are warranted at 88th Avenue and the I-57 ramps.

The study determined that the improved intersection geometry should have eastbound and westbound dedicated left-turn lanes on Wilmington Road and dedicated left-turn lanes on southbound and northbound (for symmetry) 88th Avenue. A dedicated right turn lane on Wilmington Road W.B. 88th Avenue should be a 3-lane section with a center median/left turn lane. The Level of Service (LOS) at 88th Avenue S.B. and the I-57 ramps would not be ideal and have delays during weekday peak hours. High delays are not uncommon for minor-leg stop-controlled approaches at intersections with a principal arterial route. The intersections would work better with traffic signals, but the signals are not warranted at this time.

Because of the ramps' delays, the study looked at ramp queue to avoid spill out into mainline I-57. It determined that the ramps lengths will be sufficient and not be expected to present an issue for operation or safety along mainline I-57.

Figure 19: Sam Schwarts Traffic Impact Study



Natural Resources and Environment

The natural environment and natural resources are a vital part of every community’s livelihood. A reverence for natural areas through restoration, maintenance and upkeep, and expansion is imperative and provides multi-fold benefits to the Village of Peotone and its residents. Positive impacts include recreational and scenic open space, flood control, and clean air and water. Attention to and enhancing natural areas contributes to an improved quality of life and establishes a community “sense of place.” All planning priorities and implementation strategies should consider the natural environment and include steps to preserve and/or improve their condition and status. Such actions will contribute to environmental sustainability and resiliency.

Land Cover

The Village of Peotone is located within Ecoregion 54a — the Illinois/Indiana Prairie Ecoregion. This area consists of natural vegetation such as a mosaic of bluestem prairie and oak-hickory forest. The mostly flat to rolling plains of Ecoregion 54a are typically dark, fertile soils developed under tall-grass prairie. Marshes and wet prairies occurred in poorly drained areas. At the time of settlement, poorly drained lands, ponds, and swamps were common. Nearly all natural prairie has been replaced by agriculture. Today, much of the area surrounding Peotone is agricultural.

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is an approach to water management that protects and restores the natural water cycle. It is effective, economical, and enhances community livability and sustainability while addressing stormwater management and heat island mitigation. Green infrastructure can provide a range of ecosystem functions, including stormwater management, recreation, habitat provision, and air purification. There are two planning concepts, regional green infrastructure, and site-scale green infrastructure.

Figure 20: Green Infrastructure



Figure 21: Open Land

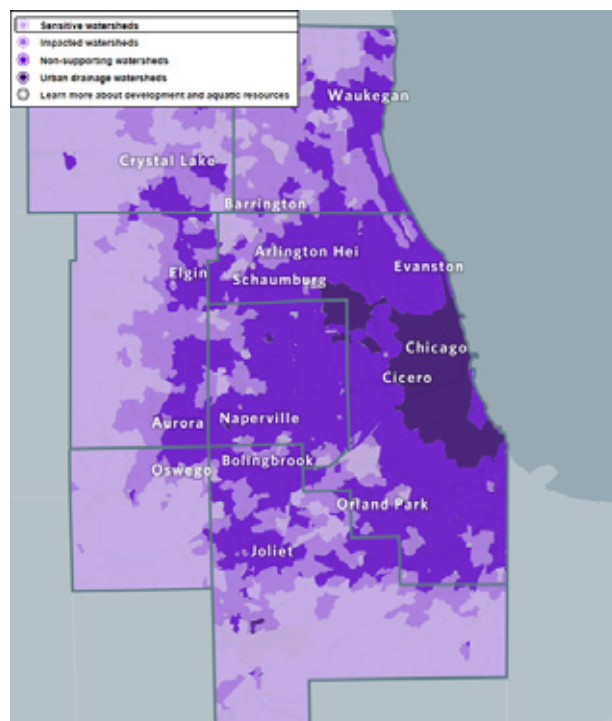


Watershed/Rivers/Wetlands

Watersheds are land areas that drain surface water to a specific point in the landscape, such as a stream or a lake. Peotone is located within the Kankakee Watershed Basin, which is part of the Illinois River Basin. Additionally, Black Walnut Creek and Rock Creek are waterways located in the area.

Wetlands serve as a valuable resource regarding flood control, habitat restoration, and water preservation. Wetlands provide temporary stormwater retention during heavy rainfall, preventing flooding and possible contamination of water sources such as lakes and rivers. Additionally, these areas provide suitable homes for native flora and fauna as well as wildlife. Wetland areas should be identified in all Village plans and projects. They should be protected, and steps should be taken to preserve and improve their condition. Green Infrastructure and Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be utilized in wetland areas.

Figure 22: Watersheds of the Chicago Regions



Open Space and Parks

According to 2013 general land use, Peotone had nearly 24 acres of open space, 2 percent of the Village's land use. For accessible park acreage per 1,000 residents, Peotone has 5.6 acres, compared to 8.9 acres for Will County and 5.6 acres for the CMAP region.

The Peotone Park District operates four parks: Main Park, located along Blue Devil Lane north of the Will County Fairgrounds; Division Street Park, located along Division Street south of Crown Lane; Westgate Park, located at the corner of Locust Lane and Garfield Avenue in the Westgate subdivision; and Lloyd Bates Park, located at the end of Hauert Street. Together these parks offer a variety of space and recreational activities. Main Park is the center of Park District activities and houses the administrative office and indoor facilities such as meeting spaces. The Park District activities include movies in the park, 5K runs/walks, softball, tennis, basketball, and disc golf. There is a dedicated path within the Main Park area.

Additionally, the Village of Peotone owns the Peotone Mill, a late 19th Century wind-powered grist mill. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Will County Register of Historic Places. The Will County Fairgrounds are located near the southern end of the Village. Peotone does not own or operate the Fairgrounds.

Figure 23: Parks



Floodplains

Floodplains are areas next to waterways that are susceptible to flooding during heavy rainfall. The one percent annual chance floodplain, commonly known as the 100-year floodplain, is an area with a one percent chance of flooding each year. Because of the greater frequency and intensity of rainstorms due to climate change, flooding within floodplains is occurring more frequently. Peotone is considered an “Area of Minimal Flood Hazard.” See Figure 24 (“Zones of Flood Risk”) below, for the locations of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Zones. These are the areas of Peotone that are at a greater risk for flooding. These areas include the northeast corner of the Village, adjacent to Peotone High School, and some residential development. The open land surrounding Peotone High School can help offset any flooding in the area. The Agricultural land surrounding Peotone can also be beneficial to prevent flooding.

Additionally, in September of 2019, major flooding occurred due to extremely heavy rainfall.

The heaviest hit areas included the Peotone Park area and Wilmington Road/south of Wilmington Road, west of Rathje Road. As a result, Wilmington Road was closed, and flooded areas also included local streets, front yards, backyards, and basements/crawlspaces. The Village administered a survey to document the damage. It should be noted that the occurrences of urban flooding increase as areas become developed. Factors such as an increase in paved roads, low-lying areas, new developments that include basements, and a decrease in open space can increase flooding. Any future development should consider potential implications regarding flooding. Flooding mitigation strategies can be implemented to counter-balance any possible flooding, such as elements referenced in the Green Infrastructure Section of this report and other infrastructure considerations such as stormwater facilities, detention basins, and sewer systems.

Figure 24: Zones of Flood Risk

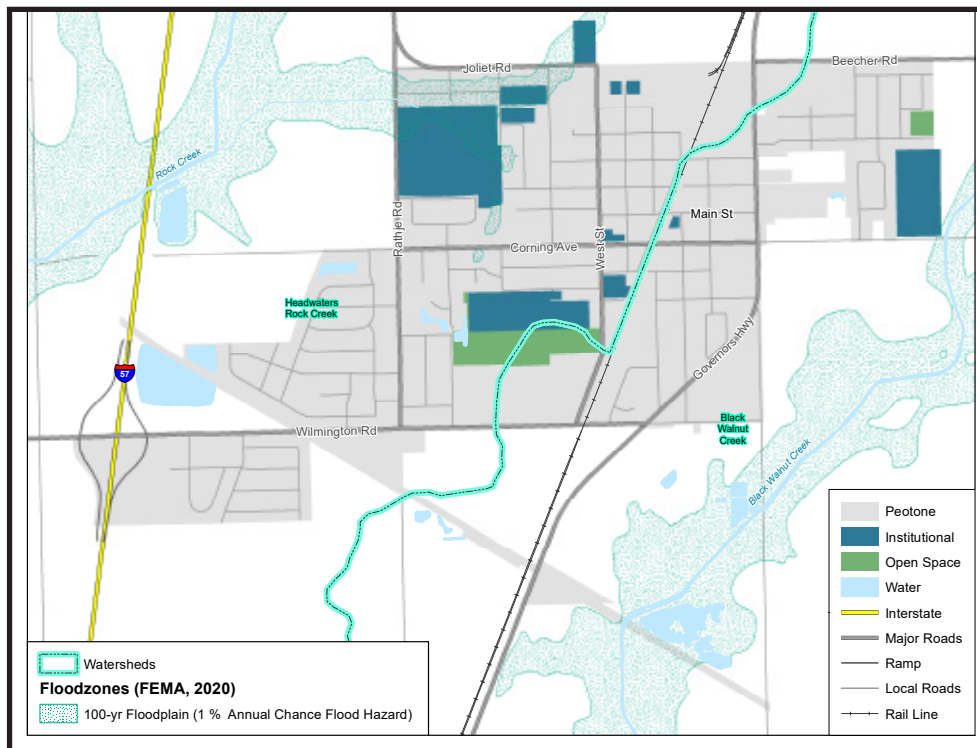


Figure 25: September 2019 Flooding in Peotone



Source: Village of Peotone

Water Supply

Safe and high-quality drinking water is an essential requirement for communities and is an important part of Village infrastructure. Peotone’s water and sewer system was purchased by Aqua America, effective October 2018. Aqua America is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and improvements of the system. The water source is groundwater from three wells drilled into the shallow Bedrock aquifer at depths ranging from 135 to 300 feet deep. Together they produced about 340,000 gallons per day. This source of supply will change in 2021 to the Kankakee River.

According to Aqua America 2020 Peotone Water Quality Report, the water supply complied with all water quality regulations in 2019. Additionally, Aqua America reports that through a source water assessment, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) determined that the water is not susceptible to contamination. In response to the USEPA’s groundwater rule, the IEPA has determined Aqua Illinois, Peotone water supply, is not vulnerable to viral contamination.

The IEPA has also granted a vulnerability waiver by Special Exemption Permit from January 1, 2012, to December 31, 2019, for Synthetic Organic Chemicals. This is based on aquifer type, favorable sampling

history, well integrity, and the identification of any potential routes of contamination within 100 feet of the wells. The Village is awaiting further determinations.

Historic Structural Study

In 2014, the Will County Land Use Department published a report on Peotone’s existing farmsteads, comprised of 141 farmsteads and 850 individual structures within 36 square miles. This new report was created to replace the last survey report, conducted in 1988, in light of the need to reassess the region’s agricultural heritage. The report establishes that Peotone contains two of Will County’s landmarks – the H.A. Rahtje Mill and St. John’s United Church of Christ. Eighteen farmstead sites within Peotone have the potential to be designated as a Will County Historic Site as well. This report also documents Peotone’s European settlement history, which began in the 1830s. Peotone has been a farming community since that time. Peotone had experienced various farming industries, such as grazing animal livestock, grain-growing, and dairy farming. Being located close to the interstate, Peotone has witnessed residential and commercial development. This report was funded by the Department of the Interior and was administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

Section 3 OUTREACH SUMMARY



Key Themes from Stakeholder Interviews and Public Opinion Survey

Affiliation and Tenure in Peotone

94 percent of survey responders stated that they are Peotone residents, whether they own or rent housing. Nearly 25 percent of responders stated that they are involved in different organizations or nonprofits, while just under 20 percent of responders said they either own a business or work in Peotone. Responses categorized in “other” include:

- Having children that go to the school district
- Grew up in Peotone – own several rentals in Peotone – live in Green Garden
- Attending church as well as doing their shopping in Peotone

A graphical depiction of the breakdown in responses can be found in the appendix.

At 32 percent, most survey takers have stated that they have lived in Peotone for 20-40 years. 24 percent of respondents said that they have been in Peotone for 10-20 years, while 14 percent of respondents stated that they have been in the Village for 5-10 years. Respondents could only choose one option for this question. A graphical depiction of tenure length can be found in the appendix.

Figure 26: Buildings in Peotone



“It’s a small community, and because of this, children are free to play and explore the way I did when I was younger. I love that we have an agricultural focus because it helps us appreciate where things come from and the hard work put into growing things.”

Most Significant Contributors to Peotone's Character

This survey question was open-ended and provided respondents the opportunity to give a brief answer on what they believe makes Peotone a unique place to live. Below are the most common responses, with the most frequently mentioned attribute on top:

- **Small town atmosphere.** Many respondents commented on Peotone's small-town atmosphere that accompanies the Village's quietness, and the closeness people feel.
- **The people.** Respondents frequently mentioned the sense of community, trust, and closeness that they feel with their neighbors. They also feel that the people of Peotone have a passion and drive for the community and should be harnessed to move the Village forward.
- **Location.** Many commented on the ideal placement of Peotone relative to Chicago. Its placement offers a rural community setting and its benefits while having access to Chicago and surrounding municipalities.
- **Safety.** Respondents often cited that safety is one of Peotone's attractors. There is little to no crime, and the Village offers a peaceful atmosphere.
- **Peotone's downtown area.** Many have mentioned that Peotone's downtown has history and can be built to serve the Village better.
- **Schools.** Many commented on the quality of the schools. Despite the possible underfunding, the schools are still able to provide well for their students.

Figure 27: A Home in Peotone



Outreach Summaries

The topical summaries presented below reflect numerous conversations and survey results and cannot be attributed to a single individual or organization. The responses below highlight the themes that were mentioned continuously across all public outreach conducted. These themes also reflected the priority areas residents would like to Peotone grow in, within the next ten years. These themes will be used as a basis for the recommendations crafted into the final planning priorities report.

- Attract More Businesses to Downtown Peotone
- Reinvest and Bringing Buildings Up to Code in Downtown Peotone
- Encourage Business Growth in Peotone
- Controlled Growth in Peotone
- Events to Foster Community Involvement
- Funding Opportunities
- Transportation
- Parks and open spaces

Attract More Businesses to Downtown Peotone

Many who were interviewed expressed a desire to see a greater variety of businesses in the downtown area. Some possibilities include a coffee shop, additional ice cream parlors, boutique shops, a clothing store, a sit-down restaurant, a microbrewery, craft businesses, and a hardware store. Peotone residents want business development along Illinois Route 50. All hope additional economic development would encourage more people in the downtown area. Despite this desire, most residents noted they end up spending most of their money outside Peotone because of the limited business options locally. However, some residents bought their cars in Peotone, and others enjoy visiting the local ice cream shop, coffee shop, and restaurants that Peotone does have.

Reinvest and Bringing Buildings Up to Code in Downtown Peotone

Many stakeholders perceive downtown Peotone as rundown, with significant code issues. This could hinder business revitalization, as it may be expensive to fix buildings up. If buildings were rehabilitated before a business moved in, it could be an incentive to attract development within the area.

“*There is so much potential, Peotone is cute and has a nice community base, and I would love to see the downtown area built up.*”

“*The downtown could possibly be a nice (never going to be a big retail center) possibility for boutiques and niche shops. Trying to use the TIF district to get rid of unsightly buildings to make more pleasant so bus can take advantage of that area.*”

Encourage Business Growth in Peotone

Creating more economic opportunities in Peotone could help the Village be more competitive alongside its surrounding municipalities. Peotone already has some incentives in place, such as its TIF districts and its active Chamber of Commerce. Additional incentives can be put in place to increase the number of businesses in Peotone. A greater economic variety could increase the sales tax generated, which would take the tax burden off Peotone’s residents. The residents believe that businesses will be attracted to Peotone if restaurants can create an economic foundation. One resident states that Peotone does not have a great need or desire to add additional business ventures.

Controlled Growth in Peotone

Many interviewees expressed the desire to see Peotone grow steadily. Economic and residential growth were among the most commonly cited types of development. Many thought that decreasing the tax burden and revitalizing the Village would encourage such growth. However, interviewees stressed that they do not wish to see Peotone grow too rapidly, as they want to keep the small-town atmosphere that Peotone is well known for. With Aqua’s purchase of Peotone’s water and sewer system, it will be easier to stretch development to areas that need utility lines. Additional businesses could also attract people to Peotone, as well as expanding housing selection and residential areas. Residents also wish to see additional infrastructure improvements for the sidewalk, sewers, and other public spaces.

Figure 28: Downtown Peotone



Events to Foster Community Involvement

Although Peotone is a small town, it has grown considerably since many of the residents first began living there. The small-town atmosphere is still present, but it is currently not as apparent or strong as it was a few decades ago. In order to foster community closeness, the Village needs more community events year-round, like Christmas in the Park and Peotone's Antique Car Show. Residents also expressed the desire to be included in planning processes, encouraging more connectedness between them and Village leaders.

The largest attractor for residents to move into Peotone was the prices of the homes. Housing prices were lower, and building a home was more affordable, than in surrounding neighborhoods. Many others have moved for family reasons; either their parents had moved to Peotone when they were younger, or the residents had wanted to raise their own families here. Some others became exposed to Peotone through their attendance at the Will County Fair as well. Most of the residents do not envision ever leaving. Peotone residents' passion has been mentioned many times, and interviewed residents hope to use this passion to create more community action. Many praise the school district, public works department, the library, the park district, the police department, and the fire department. Lastly, many of the residents interviewed had said that they were not involved in any community groups or organizations when asked.

Parks and Open Spaces

The parks and open spaces are utilized on varying levels. Some residents do not use them, while others cannot because they are not in the vicinity. Still, others use them infrequently or casually. All the residents believe that there are enough parks and open spaces across Peotone, although a better distribution is desired. While there are many parks and open spaces, there are mixed reactions on whether the availability is adequate or not. The fairgrounds, when not used for the fair, could be made available to the public. The open spaces available are sufficient for sporting events like soccer or football. Some use the parks to fly their drones because of how open they are. Possible improvements include creating a diversity of spaces, such as a splash pad, dog park, or newer playground equipment. Some man-made landscapes were also suggested, such as building a lake to attract more people into Peotone.

Transportation

Residents who work in Peotone often bike or walk to their employment places. Many residents feel that it is enjoyable to bike or walk through Peotone, but certain areas lack pedestrian infrastructure. The central part of Peotone is more pedestrian-friendly than subdivisions disconnected from the heart of the Village. However pedestrian-friendly Peotone maybe, some improvements could be made. Tree-trimming could help clear the sidewalks. Some areas are not as well-lit as others, which create safety hazards through tripping, etc. Peotone could benefit from adding another sidewalk on the side of Willington-Peotone Road. that does not have one. Bike paths could also be put on this thoroughfare. One resident remarked that although Peotone has sidewalks, there are no destinations. Other residents mentioned the possibility of using the old railroad tracks that run through town as part of a walking loop or trail.



Section 4 RECOMMENDATIONS



This priorities report provides an opportunity to comprehensively assess the challenges and opportunities of Peotone. It is clear that communities like Peotone could benefit from a wide range of planning projects to address future needs and investment priorities—for their commercial corridors, residential areas, public infrastructure, transportation assets, and parks and open spaces.

But the most effective next step for Peotone will be to focus on a Downtown Plan. Peotone has been the subject of numerous planning initiatives that have devoted considerable time and attention to the Village’s position as a destination with historical, cultural, and natural assets. While these plans provide broad goals and strategies, they do not reflect Peotone’s desire to focus its planning work on its downtown. Downtown Peotone’s unique location for future shopping and dining near Illinois Route 50 and Interstate 57 may attract patrons from both Peotone and the surrounding area. Still, the Village does not have a localized strategy for leveraging tourism or economic development. While this is the highest priority, Peotone should also pursue a few key action items in the near-term as well. Both the recommended Downtown Plan and the additional action items are described in greater detail in the following sections.

Primary Recommendation: Create a Downtown Plan for the Village of Peotone

CMAP primarily recommends that the Village of Peotone develop a Downtown Plan in order to answer identified challenges. Residents feel that downtown Peotone lacks a variety of retailers and does not meet local residents’ needs. The presence of truck traffic along Illinois Route 50 and Interstate 57 is an asset to the community, potentially bringing more visitors to the downtown. In order to serve current residents and additional visitors, there needs to be a vision to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and economic development.

The community may develop a unified vision for the downtown through the planning process and identify strategies to support its future investment priorities for its downtown. These recommendations were developed through conversations with Village officials, the Steering Committee, Peotone residents,

stakeholders, and the data analysis done by CMAP. The Plan should focus on Peotone’s downtown along Main Street and look at the surrounding neighborhood. Peotone will need to finalize the exact study area.

The Plan will give the community a vision for the downtown and identify strategies to support economic growth, increase safety and connectivity, and engage local and regional partners in implementation efforts. The Downtown Plan will have many different elements and topics, but it is essential the Plan include the following; market analysis, historic preservation strategies, and community branding strategy. This recommendation could be pursued together, or the Village may choose to pursue any of the recommendations separately over the short or long term.

Specific Priorities for the Downtown Plan: Market Analysis

Many buildings in downtown Peotone are vacant or in need of rehabilitation. Residents feel that downtown Peotone lacks a variety of retailers and does not meet residents' needs. Residents are passionate about improving downtown Peotone and supporting businesses there that meet their needs. Residents would like local amenities such as boutiques, coffee shops, and other dining establishments downtown. Stakeholders see an opportunity to build off Peotone's existing draws, like the Will County Fairground. For the Plan to be meaningful—and its recommendations feasible—it will be essential to conduct a market analysis of the downtown Main Street corridor and commercial areas as part of the Plan.

What should a market analysis include?

A market analysis is typically conducted at the scale of a community or subarea to analyze conditions and trends related to local employment and demographics and the potential development of residential, retail, industrial, office, medical and educational, and other uses. Assessing supply, demand, and special conditions can help a community or group of communities define target markets, types of development, and the level of unmet demand in the study area. Given Peotone's small size and largely rural location, development potential would be driven largely by the local community's characteristics. Specifically, the market analysis should answer the following questions.

- What are Peotone's assets from a market perspective, and how can the assets be leveraged?
- What is the potential for retail, or residential development? Based on Peotone's assets and challenges, what key sectors should the Village pursue?
- How much development can be supported, and of what types? How does this compare to the amount of vacant and Village-owned land in the Downtown TIF district?

Historic Preservation, Development, and Redevelopment of Compatible Land Uses in Downtown

Peotone's downtown has many historic buildings that contribute to the local character of communities. Their past identities shape the community and contribute to the local cultural fabric. In Peotone, most residents mentioned how vital historic preservation is to them. Today, many communities are making efforts to save historic buildings. Historic preservation can play a role in revitalizing downtown Peotone by leveraging the Downtown TIF district and using historic tax credits. Together, these additional funding sources help to offset the cost of historic preservation and incent investment in historic downtowns. Education about state and federal revitalization and historic preservation programs ensures preservation advocates and municipal governments can take advantage of excellent funding opportunities.

Create a Consistent Community Branding and Wayfinding

The Village currently has multiple Peotone "brands." We heard from staff and residents that the community needs a new and consistent brand for the community. The Village currently does not have a comprehensive "downtown-centric" signage system to highlight the area and orient visitors. There is an opportunity to work with the community to develop a new unified vision and branding for Peotone. Wayfinding signage helps people navigate through an area and reach their destination. When paired with branding, it can create a common identity for the Village.

The Village should collaborate with residents to develop a design that represents Peotone. Once complete, this design can be incorporated into the new street signs and wayfinding signage to reinforce the Villages' identity. Branded wayfinding should be incorporated into future redevelopment to support the area as a single destination and should complement proposed bike and sidewalk improvements to familiarize users with the community network. There is an opportunity for the Village to work with other Village departments and services to promote a consistent look across Peotone. This could be done in parallel with other wayfinding efforts and the Downtown Plan.

Secondary Recommendations

In addition to pursuing a Downtown Plan, which is the primary recommendation and will be a longer-term process, opportunities exist to make near-term improvements. The following recommendations provide actions that the community can pursue now. Though these recommendations are smaller in scope than a full Downtown Plan, they also address key concerns brought up by local stakeholders and community members and are designed to use minimal resources from local officials and staff members, minimizing implementation difficulty.

Community Capacity Building

To foster team-building between residents and public officials, the community would like to be involved in outreach events for any future planning process. Historically, residents feel as though many relevant planning decisions made for Peotone were done with minimal community input. Although recently, the Mayor has established a communication channel through social media and generated great responses, there remains an opportunity for the community to continue building communication and be included in future planning endeavors.

Having a strong network of residents connected through a shared love for the community contributes to its character and promotes a sense of respect, dignity, engagement, collaboration, and livelihood among neighbors. This strong sense of community exists within Peotone. To do this, an up-to-date list of

local existing businesses and institutions should be kept, and individuals should become familiar with the services they provide. Local business and community meetings should be used to keep these groups informed, and support should be given to efforts to develop community leadership and participation. Potential organizations include property and business owners, industrial and commercial organizations, religious leaders and members, community groups, arts, cultural organizations, organizing or advocacy groups, health organizations, parks, schools, and libraries.

In many cases, organized community-building activities are the most effective way to engage residents through community events. Block parties, street fairs and festivals, and community gardens can help bring different groups together and help residents feel more integrated. Several community events are already being held, and these can be used as opportunities to bring different segments of the population together. Components could also be added to existing events to help draw different audiences. Additional new possibilities could be more low-key. For instance, the Village of Skokie has sponsored “Know Your Neighbor Week,” during which residents are encouraged to invite their neighbors over coffee in their homes. The Village provided hosts with kits that included invitations, conversation starters, and coupons to local bakeries and coffee shops.

“ *A webpage for the Downtown Plan that residents and stakeholders can use to read the Plan in its entirety. This will allow the public to track Plan progress and access information on the Plan’s community events. This webpage should also house interim Plan materials, such as the Existing Conditions Report, to view maps, demographic data, and community engagement materials. The Downtown Plan web page should be easy to access from the Villages website’s homepage and provide updates to users through social media and community newsletters.*

Consider establishing a Downtown Planning Task Force to effectively advocate, promote, market, and monitor the Downtown Plan’s creation. The task force should comprise a highly diversified collection of downtown and municipal stakeholders and staff that will positively contribute to making the Downtown Plan a reality. ”

Funding Opportunities

Peotone is actively pursuing projects and improvements throughout the Village but lacks the required funds to implement them properly. In an effort to fund priority projects, Peotone can position itself to identify and apply for appropriate funding opportunities. The following steps can be taken to increase awareness and readiness regarding various funding opportunities. These examples can increase the likelihood of receiving grant awards.

- Subscribe to CMAP's Weekly Update, which provides timely and pertinent information.
- Maximize the relationship with the Will County Governmental League (WCGL). WCGL provides information and guidance on the application requirements and process for many formula and competitive funding programs (state, federal, and other). Additionally, WCGL serves as a resource for training and legislative/municipal information.
- Attend workshops, training, webinars, and classes regarding funding programs.
- Utilize associations that provide relevant assistance.
- Develop a program list and project summaries for priority projects.
- Become familiar with common funding requirements, and position the Village to be prepared before the funding opportunity is announced.
- Work with regional partners to investigate region-wide issues such as truck routing and community studies, which will examine the impact of trucks and recommend alleviation and mitigation strategies for specific communities.

Pursue Sustainable Growth and Stormwater Management/ Flood Mitigation

As open land within and around the Village of Peotone becomes developed, flooding and related issues will increase. [ON TO 2050](#) has goals to protect the natural environment vulnerable to the impacts of flooding. [Flooding and insufficient stormwater management](#) are concerns in some areas of Peotone, particularly on the west side of town. As the community grows, it is important that the Village take steps to reduce flooding, protect water quality, and maintain a high quality of life for all residents.

Over the long-term, the Village should encourage new development that integrates stormwater management into the site to capture water where it falls. Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) – such as naturalized drainage and detention, permeable paving, rain gardens, and green roofs – use vegetation, soils, and natural processes to reduce flooding, purify stormwater runoff and recharge groundwater aquifers. At the same time, these practices provide additional benefits by improving air quality and public health, increasing habitat diversity and property values, and contributing to the community's visual image and identity.

The Village can also incentivize conservation design practices, which will help protect Peotone's natural resources. Conservation design encourages the clustering of homes and other development on smaller lots and protection of open space areas for recreation, habitat, stormwater management, carbon sequestration, and groundwater recharge and maintains scenic views.

In the short term, the Village can collect information on flooding in existing neighborhoods to understand which areas are impacted most and then explore the potential causes and solutions. Educating impacted residents on what they can do to improve property drainage and mitigate flooding is also important. The Center for Neighborhood Technology published educational resources to help homeowners and communities become more resilient to flooding.



The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is our region's comprehensive planning organization. The agency and its partners developed and are now implementing ON TO 2050, a long-range plan to help the seven counties and 284 communities of northeastern Illinois pursue strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues.

See cmap.illinois.gov for more information.



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