

E. Industrial Development and Employment

Key Findings

Well Paid Industrial Jobs Are a Fundamental Community Need

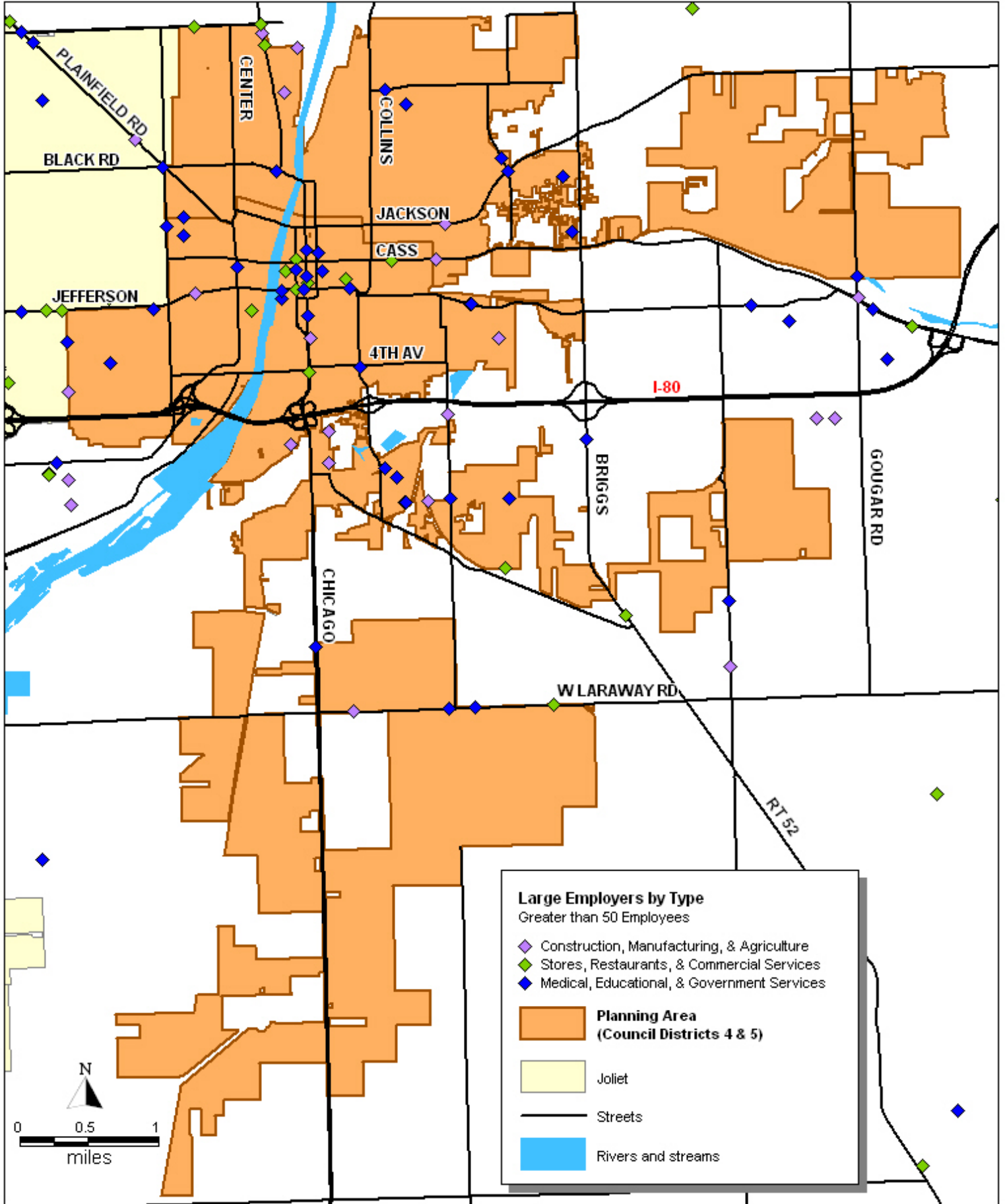
Historically Joliet thrived because of employment in heavy industry, where jobs that were frequently unionized paid enough to support a typical family with some surplus. The city's fortunes began to change in the 1970s as global economic pressures that impacted much of industrial America hit Joliet. During the early 1980s Joliet's unemployment rate rose to 26%.

The social consequences of such job losses in many American cities are described by Harvard sociologist William Julius Wilson in his book *When Work Disappears* in passages that mirror some interviewed stakeholders' descriptions of events in the Planning Area's most hard-hit neighborhoods during the 1980s. On a percentage basis, the most severe job losses occurred among minorities and the young. For young minority men role models of workers who made good livings as industrial employees became less relevant. As real and perceived options dwindled in some neighborhoods of the Planning Area drug addiction and crime became common, leading to the devastation of minority communities. A percentage of the population became criminalized, driving a negative cycle of unemployment.

More than thirty community stakeholders interviewed for the Quality of Life (QOL) Plan described such a process jolting through neighborhoods of the Planning Area in the 1980s and early 1990s. Since the mid 1990s the Planning Area has been recovering with the rest of Joliet, though not to the same degree. Employment levels are higher, crime rates lower than in the 1990s. Yet more than thirty community stakeholders have reported that addiction problems and their consequences linger along with an exaggerated perception held by many Joliet area residents that the Planning Area is a dangerous place.

Although employment levels in Joliet have generally been rising for more than ten years, more than twenty ministers or directors of social service agencies interviewed for the QOL Plan identified a shortage of jobs that pay a living wage and benefits as the root cause of problems ranging from inadequate food to lack of access to medical care, to marital stress and mental health problems. Some jobs, they report, are available, but jobs with salaries and benefits that will meet the needs of a household are scarce. This widely held impression is confirmed by the most recent *State of the Workforce* report of the Workforce Investment Board of Will County. This report found that between 1991 and 2001, the County-wide net increase in manufacturing jobs was only 992, while the increase in retail trade jobs over the same period was 8,737. In 2001 Manufacturing accounted for only 16% of all jobs in Will County but approximately 23% of payroll dollars. In contrast, Retail Trade in 2001 made up 22% of jobs in the County but only 12% of payrolls. The report points out as a major concern that "Many of the fastest growing jobs are relatively low wage and low skill."²¹

²¹ Workforce Investment Board of Will County, *State of the Workforce 2003*, October 2003, 5.



Some Growth Industries in Will County Offer Good Jobs

A somewhat more hopeful view of job growth in Will County is provided if we consider job growth data for the range of industrial categories provided in the *State of the Workforce 2003* cited above and summarized in the following table.

Table E-1. Will County Employment by Standard Industry Code (SIC)

Industry Sector	Numbers of Jobs			Job Growth	% All Jobs	% Wages
	1991	1996	2001	1991- 2001	2001	2001
Agriculture	979	1455	2351	1372	1.98%	1.00%
Mining	294	197	314	20	0.26%	0.50%
Construction	5793	9510	12487	6694	10.52%	13.00%
Manufacturing	18304	19170	19296	992	16.25%	23.00%
Transportation, Communications, Electric	6356	6389	8393	2037	7.07%	10.00%
Wholesale Trade	4062	5329	8393	4331	7.07%	11.00%
Retail Trade	17951	22574	26688	8737	22.48%	12.00%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	3495	4307	4328	833	3.65%	4.00%
Services	20930	29681	36465	15535	30.72%	25.50%
Non-Classifiable Establishments	66	45	0	-66	0.00%	0.00%
Total, All Sectors	78230	98657	118715	40485	100.00%	100.00%

Source: "State of the Workforce Report 2003", Workforce Investment Board of Will County

As this data indicates, job growth has been substantial in the fields of Wholesale Trade, Transportation & Utilities, and Construction, sectors in which contributions to payrolls are proportionately higher than the percentage of jobs in the labor force. This data is consistent with findings of the *Target Industry and Workforce Analysis* prepared by the Workforce Investment Board of Will County and the Will County Center for Economic Development (WCED), which identifies four major fast growth fields with quality jobs:²²

- *Medical Care*: Doctors and nurses were among 15 types of jobs in Will County ranked as “Top Opportunities” by the Workforce Investment Board based on an integrated consideration of the number of jobs in the field, projected growth in job numbers, and average annual wages. Additional positions for other medical professionals (such physical therapists and nutritionists) as well as positions for less highly trained workers such as nursing assistants, medical technicians, medical record clerks, and facility maintenance workers are also certainly available in medical facilities, although the numbers of such positions has not been counted or projected in Will County. National trends toward the aging of the population ensure growing need for medical services for the next generation. Joliet and the Planning Area are particularly rich in medical service employment and training opportunities with two regional hospitals, some 20 other medical facilities that employ more than fifty people, and entry level and advanced training programs for nurses.
- *Construction*: The 15 types of jobs that the Workforce Board ranks as “Top Opportunities” in Will County include: masons, carpenters, extraction workers, and construction managers. This is not a surprising finding in a county which has experienced 96% population growth

²² Workforce Investment Board of Will County and Will County Center for Economic Development, *Target Industry and Workforce Analysis*, prepared by Advisory Group, Cushman & Wakefield, Inc., January 2004.

since 1985 and added an average of 8 million square feet per year of industrial space between 2002 and 2004. While the pace of growth and construction in the Planning Area is slower than in Will County or Joliet as a whole, the Planning Area is surrounded by construction activity.

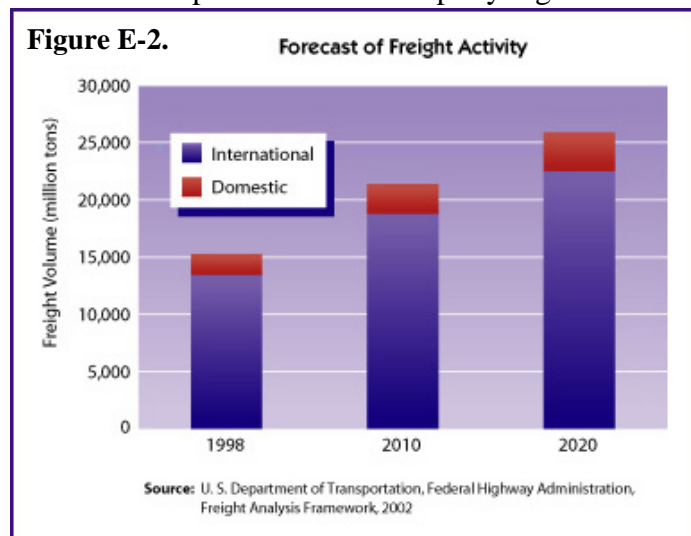
- *Manufacturing:* Although the net number of manufacturing jobs in Will County has been relatively flat, this flat line of total employment masks a pattern of rapid job decline in some industrial sectors and increase in others. The *Wage & Salary Survey* conducted by the Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association and WCED in 2006 shows that manufacturing businesses provide some jobs with wages of \$20 to \$30 per hour for skilled trades people and for technicians with limited but specific training. These businesses also provide jobs for such positions as general production machine operators and assemblers with wages in the range of \$12 to \$18 per hour. Along with growth in some manufacturing businesses, a rising need to replace retiring skilled workers is creating some well paid industrial employment opportunities.²³
- *Logistics:* Some of the good job growth that the *State of the Workforce* reported in the fields Wholesale Trade and Transportation reflect the growing phenomena of the logistics industry in Will County, which requires a distinct discussion in the picture of Employment and Industrial Development for the Planning Area.

Logistics Opens a New Industrial Economy

Logistics Growth

Logistics involves all the operations through which goods are sourced, transported, and distributed. The logistics arms of large corporations are frequently becoming more important within their organizations and making new investments. A growing number of companies are competing to perform the logistics functions of other corporations as “third party logistics” providers.

Companies are investing in logistics because there is a large and rapidly growing market to be served in this field. The U.S. Department of Transportation has recorded that the volume of freight moved in America has been rising steadily for the past two decades and is projected to grow by more than 80% between the years 2000 and 2020.²⁴ Besides sheer volume, demands for efficiency and reliability in logistics movements also continue to



²³ Three Rivers Manufacturer's Association and Will County Center for Economic Development, *Wage and Salary Survey*, prepared by the Employers' Association, July 2006.

²⁴ U.S. Department of Transportation, *Freight Analysis*, Federal Highway Administration, Freight Management and Operations, 2002. http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight_analysis/index.htm.

rise steadily. These pressures grow from fundamental trends in the world economy as more products are produced thousands of miles away from the places where they are used and as virtually all modern manufacturing and distribution systems adopt just-in-time production and stocking techniques.

Logistics Links to Diverse Industrial Activities

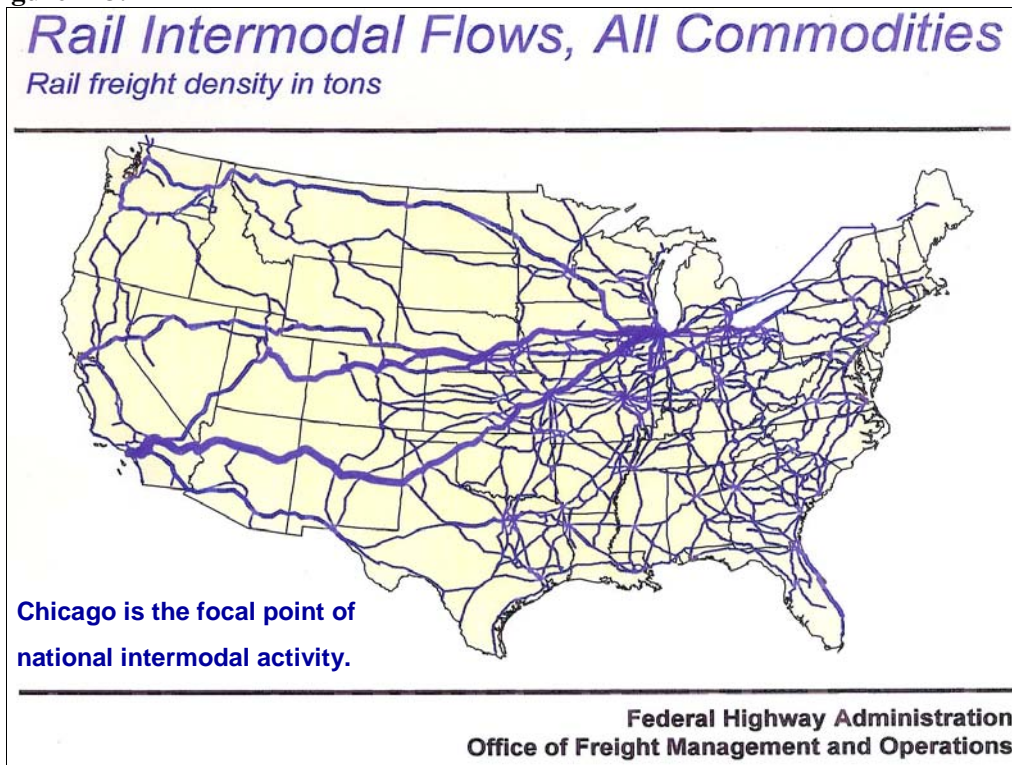
Besides moving products efficiently and reliably logistics businesses perform increasingly broad functions in finishing or assembling goods for final distribution. For example, the Potlatch Paper Company in Elwood takes paper rolls that are compressed for shipping and processes them into household tissue products. The IntraCore company, based in Utah, assembles computer hardware from components and distributes the products to retail outlets and mail order customers. In catalogs of logistics companies today firms are listed by services they provide that include: repackaging, fulfillment, and assembly.

In the new world economy built around international supply chains a growing range of industrial businesses find advantage in locating near intermodal freight terminals and the logistics and other industrial companies that tend to cluster there. For example, Logistics Park was built adjacent to the new intermodal freight terminal of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad in Elwood. Logistics Park opened in 2002, and now approximately 3,000 people work there, performing product distribution and processing functions. In the more mature logistics environment of Chicago, a recent consultant study commissioned by the City government found that intermodal terminals were critical to retaining or adding approximately 15,000 jobs because a broad range of manufacturing, wholesale, and distribution companies wanted to locate near these terminals.

Metropolitan Chicago & Will County as Logistics Centers

These patterns of freight volume growth, logistics industry development, and the attraction of freight centers are important to the Chicago area and Will County particularly because this is the freight hub of North America. Goods that move more than 500 miles (for example to the Midwest from any ocean port) are usually shipped by train and then reloaded onto trucks for local delivery. Metropolitan Chicago is the only place where all six of North America's major railroad networks meet. So Chicago is the primary place in which goods can practically be transferred from one rail system to another or lifted onto trucks for delivery anywhere in the Midwest. In the intermodal movement of freight, metropolitan Chicago is the third busiest port in the world. And Will County is on the busiest of all railroad routes leading into Chicago (the trunk line from the Port of Los Angeles). Will County is also the nexus of the most heavily traveled east-west and north-south expressways running through the middle of the county. Furthermore, because Will County has had more greenfield land than any other county in the Chicago area, it has offered economical sites for the new intermodal terminals, large warehouses and linked industrial parks that the new supply chain economy demands.

Figure E-3.



Wages & Salaries in the Logistics Businesses

So Logistics Park in Elwood is burgeoning and warehouse and distribution centers are springing up along I-55 and I-80 as a consequence of far reaching economic trends that are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The Will County *Wage & Salary Survey*, noted earlier, provides detailed information that describes the types of jobs that the logistics industry brings.

- Basic positions in logistics operations include jobs for skilled fork lift operators, material handlers, and maintenance workers that pay wages in the range of \$12 to \$18 per hour.
- Because logistics businesses are service providers that must cope with seasonal and irregular variations in their clients' shipping volumes, they employ temporary laborers who perform unskilled material handling and are sometimes certified for more skilled tasks such as fork lift operation. These workers are paid in the range \$9 to \$12 per hour.
- Logistics companies also employ salaried workers for functions that include customer service, inventory management, dispatching, and shipping supervision. Their compensation ranges from \$33,000 to \$53,000 per year, with most positions in the middle of this range; warehouse and plant management positions pay more. Staffing patterns indicate that salaried specialist and supervisory positions are staffed more heavily than in some manufacturing operations in order to provide deep knowledge of timing and customer service requirements. Staffing patterns and the comments of logistics managers interviewed for the Plan also indicate that movement between hourly labor and salaried positions is common. Logistics can provide a wide career ladder as well as attracting other industrial businesses to industrial development areas, such as the I-80 Corridor in the Planning Area.

Table E-2. Data on Selected Staff Positions in Will County Logistics Businesses

Position Type	Type of Company	Numer of Companies	Number of Employees	Base Pay						
				Average	Weighted Average	Interquartile Ranges			Average Actuals	
						25th	Median	75th	Lowest	Highest
1 Worker, Maintenance in Logistics and Distribution	Logistics	6	17	\$18.79	\$18.27	\$17.69	\$19.90	\$20.80	\$17.65	\$19.96
2 Clerk, Shipping & Receiving	Logistics	6	40	\$12.55	\$12.92	\$12.35	\$12.95	\$13.76	\$11.74	\$14.27
3 Material Handler - Skilled in Logistics and Distribution	Logistics	10	392	\$13.48	\$13.69	\$11.85	\$13.06	\$16.91	\$12.01	\$14.07
4 Material Handler - Unskilled/Picker/Packer in Logistics and Distribution	Temp	5	231	\$8.77	\$8.63	\$8.25	\$8.50	\$8.58	\$7.90	\$10.25
5 Coordinator, Inventory in Logistics and Distribution	Logistics	9	18	\$37,576	\$36,272	\$28,454	\$39,770	\$41,825	\$36,203	\$39,138
6 Dispatcher/Planner/ Scheduler in Logistics and Distribution	Logistics	10	56	\$41,477	\$40,451	\$25,948	\$45,115	\$46,731	\$37,729	\$46,610
7 Representative, Customer Service in Logistics and Distribution	Logistics	10	82	\$32,465	\$33,649	\$25,542	\$27,963	\$44,287	\$28,386	\$40,652
8 Supervisor, Receiving/Shipping/Warehouse in Logistics	Logistics	9	43	\$49,677	\$48,602	\$43,800	\$48,491	\$53,394	\$45,487	\$56,733

Source: *Economic Development Wage & Salary Survey*, Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association and Will County Center for Economic Development, 2006

(A detailed analysis of information about the logistics industry and its current positions and future in Will County is provided in Appendix E.)

The City of Joliet's South Side Comprehensive Plan Could Deliver the Benefits of the New Industrial Economy to the Planning Area

In February 2007 the City of Joliet unveiled its comprehensive plan for the portion of the city south of the I-80 Expressway and Zurich Road, including 4,220 acres that currently lies within Joliet and approximately 16,000 acres of surrounding unincorporated land which the City is prepared to annex.²⁵ The City's plan would preserve land along the waterways of this territory as nature and recreation areas. It would retain and modestly add to existing residential areas and establish a commercial corridor for local convenience shopping. It also sets standards for the orderly and environmentally sustainable development of the area.

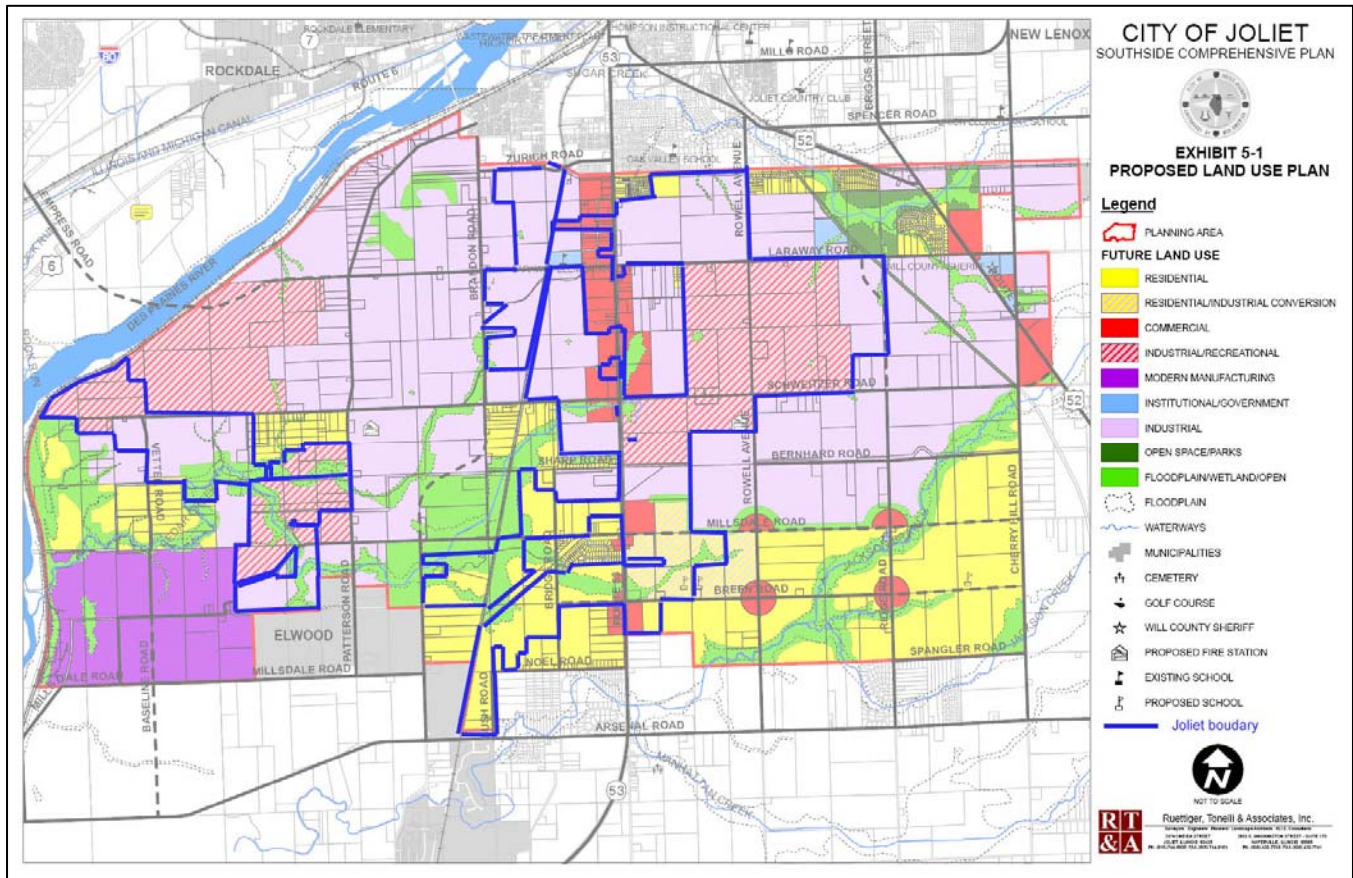
But the essence of the *South Side Comprehensive Plan* is to establish a series of industrial parks on current agricultural land encompassing some 12,000 acres, intended primarily for logistics and related light industrial and distribution uses. As the plan points out, this new area of Joliet is well suited for such use. It would extend to the now burgeoning intermodal logistics center of Elwood. It is effectively at the junction of the I-80 and I-55 Expressways, and it is served by freight rail lines and the Des Plaines River with its barge traffic. Finally, new industrial development here would have immediate access to the large and under-employed labor force of the Planning Area. Given these assets, it is difficult to imagine a location better suited to the development of a new industrial complex based on the fast-growth logistics industry. At full

²⁵ City of Joliet, *South Side Comprehensive Plan*, February 2007.

capacity a logistics-industrial development of the proposed scale would employ over 10,000 workers.

Implementation of the South Side Comprehensive Plan would fundamentally change the strategic position of the Planning Area. The Area would become the working class neighborhood virtually adjacent to one of the region’s largest industrial hubs. If the development is carried out with thoughtful inclusion of the local workforce, it could restore much of the prosperity lost when Joliet’s older industrial base contracted in the 1970s and 80s.

Figure E-4. Southside Comprehensive Plan Proposed Land Uses



*From City of Joliet *Southside Comprehensive Plan*, February 2007 with current Joliet boundary superimposed.

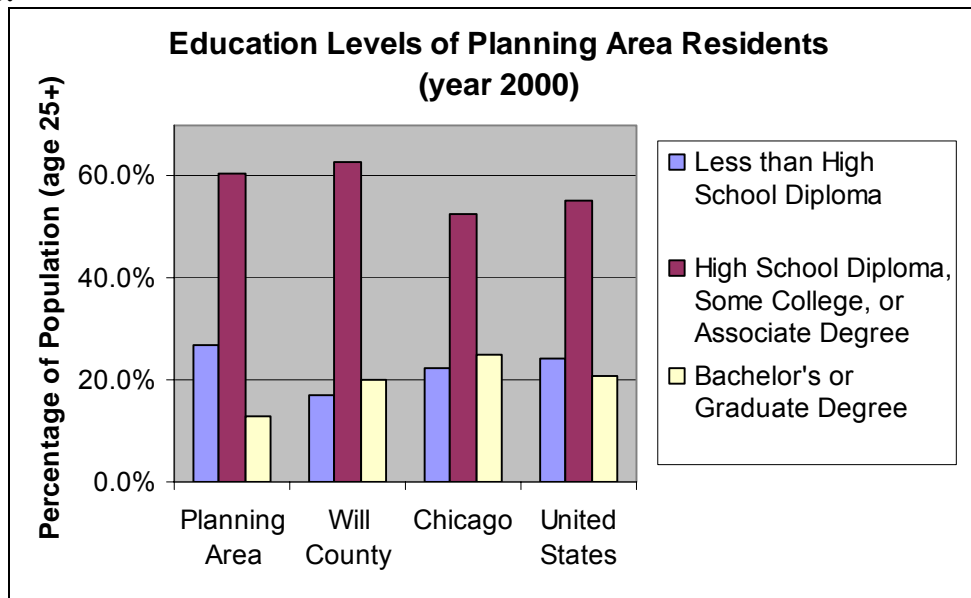
Some Planning Area Neighborhoods Contain High Percentages of Residents Who Face Challenges in the Job Market

It is notable that ordinary positions in three of the four identified growth sectors with good jobs in Joliet fall into the classification of “production jobs,” a category that includes craft, repair, operator, fabricator, or laborer jobs. In 2003, production jobs accounted for 29% of all jobs in Will County compared to just 24% in the Chicago region and 26% in the U.S. So in the immediate future as in the present, Will County will have a disproportionately large number of production jobs, as opposed to professional, administrative, or service jobs. Production jobs usually do not require a college degree, but to obtain skills and certifications that can make such

jobs relatively secure and well-paid, high school educations or associate degrees are often required.

The educational requirements of production jobs match well with the educational levels of the Will County Workforce. Per the accompanying chart, Will County workers are more likely than workers in all of metropolitan Chicago or in the U.S. to have high school, some college, or an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. Will County workers are less likely to be college graduates or high school drop outs. This pattern helps to explain why the overall unemployment rate in Will County is a moderately low 5.3% and why Will County is an attractive location for many industrial businesses.

Figure E-5.

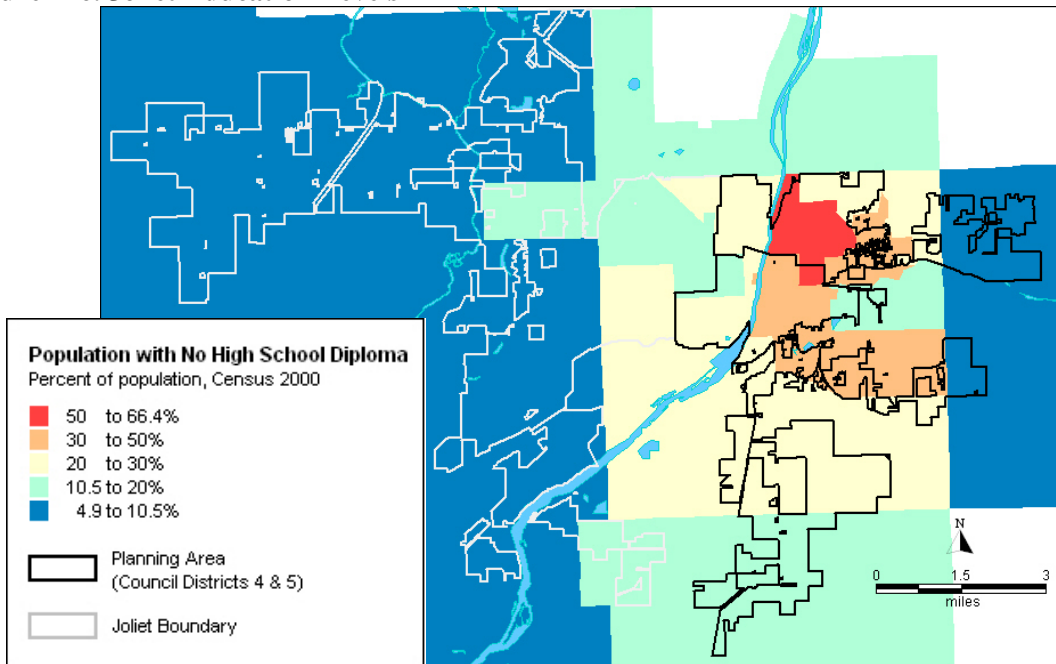


* Source: Data for Will County, Chicago metropolitan area, and the United States are 2002 projections done by Claritas from 2000 data. Planning area data is from the 2000 Census, aggregated for tracts that intersect the planning area.

However, the workforce of the Planning Area, and particularly the population of some Planning Area neighborhoods, has a higher high school drop out rate and lower levels of high school diploma or associate degree holders than the county norm. Given this level of educational attainment, it is not surprising that the current unemployment rate of the Planning Area at 8.5%, more than 50% higher than the overall rate for the city of Joliet (5.5%) or of Will County (4.3%).²⁶ As the accompanying maps indicate, those Planning Area residents who have lower levels of education and those who are unemployed are concentrated in some Planning Area neighborhoods. African-American or Hispanic ethnic minorities are the majority populations in these neighborhoods.

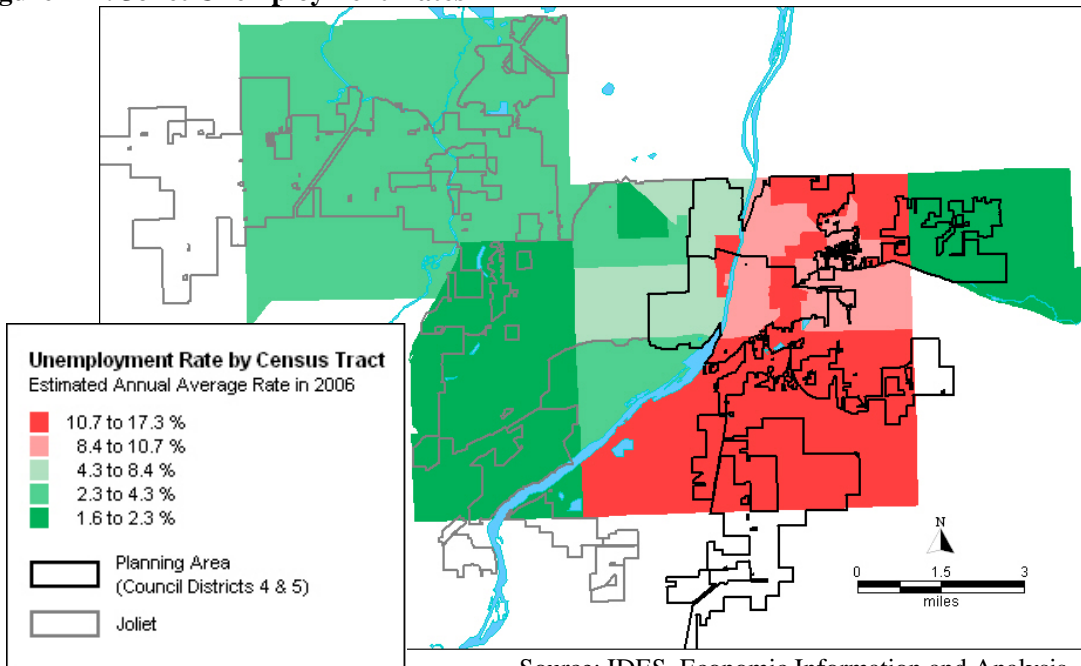
²⁶ Planning Area and Joliet numbers are 2006 projected unemployment rates from Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Economic Information and Analysis, 2007; data for the Planning Area is the average for the Census tracts covering the area. Will County data is from the 2006 Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) published by IDES, <http://lmi.ides.state.il.us/laus/lausmenu.htm>.

Figure E-6. Joliet Education Levels



Source: Census 2000

Figure E-7. Joliet Unemployment Rates

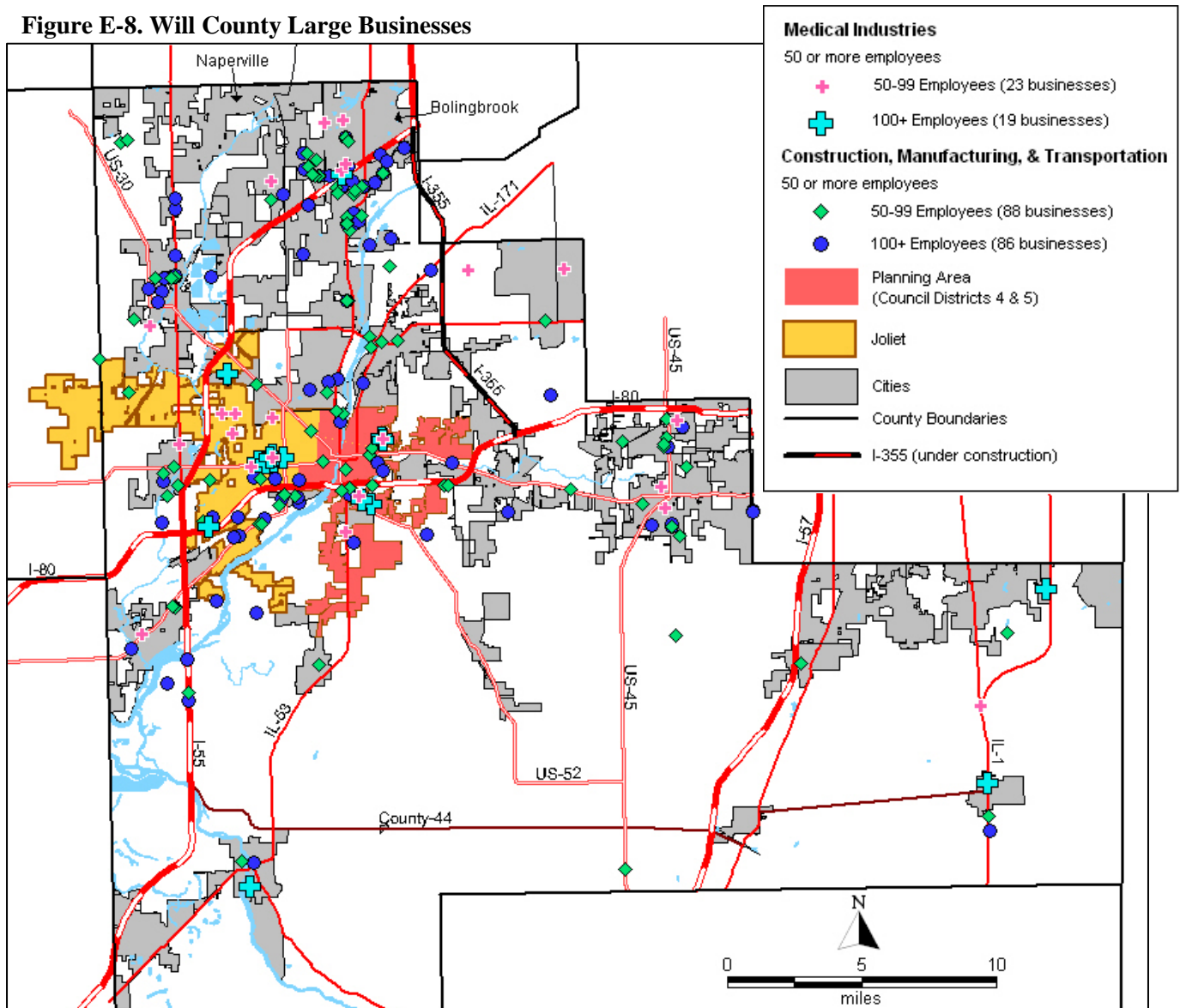


Source: IDES, Economic Information and Analysis

In the Transportation section of this plan, when neighborhoods with low car ownership were mapped, generally the same neighborhoods were identified. As the Transportation section of this plan notes, the Planning Area does not contain many large employers other than public agencies and educational institutions. The Planning Area is a predominantly residential community from which workers must commute. This reality is also illustrated in the accompanying map, which shows employers of fifty or more workers in the growth industries discussed above: medical

care, construction, manufacturing, and logistics. While significant medical care employers and a scattering of construction and logistics employers are found in the Planning Area, opportunities for production work are concentrated along the I-55 expressway corridor and in more developed portions of the I-80 corridor. Even to reach jobs in Joliet along I-80, many workers in the Planning Area need to use public transportation.

Figure E-8. Will County Large Businesses



Source: US Business database, ReferenceUSA, 2007.

Another factor that impedes job readiness is simple poverty. If residents are unemployed or working at minimum wage positions they may have no resources to train for, find, or support themselves during the start of a new job. Job training programs with even modest fees may be inaccessible to impoverished residents. The lack of a car in a community with limited public transportation service is one example of an impediment to work created by poverty.

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Earlier we noted that more than 30 interviewed community stakeholders described patterns of drug addiction and crime that rose in the wake of high unemployment in the 1980s and linger today; these stakeholders were speaking primarily of the same neighborhoods that face high levels of unemployment. Neither the Department of Corrections nor any health agency maintains public records that would allow us to determine the concentrations of ex-offenders or persons suffering from drug addiction in specific neighborhoods. However, nationally criminal backgrounds and drug addiction are highly correlated with conditions of low educational attainment, unemployment and poverty. So it is likely that Joliet stakeholders are correct in thinking that residents with criminal records and/or drug addiction problems are concentrated in Planning Area neighborhoods where unemployment and high school drop out rates are disproportionately high.

When community leaders speak of the enormous road blocks to employment that drug addiction or a criminal record constitute they are not exaggerating. A 2006 national survey of employers found that 84% of employers use drug testing to screen job applicants; 39% randomly test current employees, and over 50% test employees that they have any reason to suspect may be taking drugs. Researchers estimate that 70% of the national population that take illicit drugs are employed, but the probability that a person can have a stable work life and take drugs appears to be small and shrinking.²⁷

Ex-offenders also face long odds in securing employment. National research finds that 60% of ex-offenders are unemployed one year after release. And a survey of employers in 5 major cities found that 65% of employers maintain a blanket policy of never hiring ex-offenders. State and Federal programs, including substantial tax credits, exist to encourage employers to hire ex-offenders, and several not-for-profit and faith-based organizations in Joliet join the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) in seeking links to employment for ex-offenders, but they face an uphill struggle.²⁸

A Network of Institutions Is Striving to Link Workers with Well-Paid Industrial Jobs in the Joliet Area

In addition to industrial conditions and the needs of neighborhoods, an important aspect of employment and industrial development in the Planning Area is the work being done to establish more quality jobs in the Joliet region and give residents access to these jobs through education, counseling, and referrals.

The **Will County Center for Economic Development (WCED)** is a not-for-profit organization that has been widely recognized for its effectiveness in performing its core mission of attracting and retaining jobs in Will County. The WCED's general strategy of establishing teams to build on the county's areas of strength is reflected in two corporate membership organizations that it has established:

²⁷ 2006 survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, reported in "Job Applicant? Expect a Drug Test," *The Ledger*, Lakeland, Florida, 6 February 2007.

²⁸ Joan Petasilia, "When Prisoner Return to the Community: Political, Economic and Social Consequences," paper from Executive Sessions on Sentencing and Corrections, National Institute of Justice, November 2000.

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- The *Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association (TRMA)* provides manufacturers with a channel through which they may contribute to public policies and programs. The “Workforce Education Committee” of TRMA seeks to improve K-12 education throughout Will County and to facilitate connections between the county’s workforce and employers.
- The *Transportation & Logistics Council* is an association that helps to plan and execute WCED’s aggressive agenda for capitalizing on Will County’s freight transportation assets. This agenda includes:
 - “Branding” Will County as a “Global Trans Center” in the WCED’s systematic promotions
 - Championing adoption of a high-investment, long-term transportation plan that features expressway extensions and enhancements designed to preserve Will County’s relatively low traffic congestion (a key logistics advantage) for another generation
 - Proactively tackling problem issues for the logistics industry, such as the storage of empty cargo containers, through model ordinances

A new Recruitment Committee of the Transportation and Logistics Council is seeking to form relationships with Will County educators to inform them of job opportunities in this industry.

The WCED works closely with the City of Joliet in its economic development efforts including the redevelopment of downtown Joliet and the location of industrial businesses. WCED’s support will be valuable to the City as it works to implement the South Side Comprehensive Plan, creating new jobs in the I-80 Corridor and the southern portion of Planning Area.

The **Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry** is the primary network of retail, service, and smaller business owners in the Joliet area. Through its small business development services the Chamber stimulates job creation in a large segment of the Joliet area’s economy and helps to provide a career ladder into small business ownership.

The **Three Rivers Education for Employment System (TREES)** operates in keeping with the “Education and Employment Systems” program established by the Illinois State Board of Education to coordinate technical education in an extensive area under local leadership. In the Will County area, TREES operates through the joint agreement of 18 High Schools, 2 Area Career Centers, and Joliet Junior College. TREES maintains mutual knowledge and agreements on coverage over a broad swath of programs, including several that are critical to readiness for employment in the Planning Area.

- *Education to Careers* and the *21st Century Kids Club*: “Education to Careers” is a federally funded initiative in which local organizations cultivate work readiness in youngsters beginning in grammar school. The “21st Century Kids Club” is the popular embodiment of Education to Careers in Joliet. In the Kids Club, third to eighth grade children receive daily after school tutoring and exposure to a variety of careers. Through several sites in the Planning Area (each of which has a waiting list) Kids Club serves approximately 450 children per year and has served over 2,000 children during the last 8 years, the large majority of whom have been Planning Area residents.
- *Joliet Township High School (JTHS) Central Campus Career Academies*: As discussed in the Education section of this Plan, the career academies offer high school students the opportunity to build their math, reading, and problem solving skills in the context of

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programs that prepare them directly for careers as skilled trades people or technicians. Ironically, JTHS's status as a school under "Academic Warning List" restrict some under-performing students from enrolling in career academy courses until they demonstrate basic math and reading competencies, with the effect that these students are barred from learning experiences that would be more engaging for them, leading them to sometimes drop out of school in frustration. Despite these problems, the JTHS career academies provide a broad road to well-paid employment that is open to the majority of young people in the Planning Area.

- *Union Trades Program:* JTHS offers another program in collaboration with several unions, through which students spend the summer working as assistants to active union members. This is a rewarding program for the 6 to 12 carefully selected students who are allowed to participate each summer, but unless the program is expanded it will have little impact on the employment picture of the Planning Area.

Joliet Junior College (JJC) is the primary institution for preparing Will County area residents to enter well-paid employment through skilled labor. JJC works with adults at all levels of their preparation for employment.

- *JJC's Adult and Family Services Division* offers adults an opportunity to make up for basic educational deficits through its Adult Basic Education (ABE) program. JJC also provides classroom and on-line instruction to complete a high school education through the General Education Development (GED) program. English as Second Language (ESL) instruction is available in community centers as well as JJC's downtown campus, giving immigrants an important tool in their efforts to find alternatives to very low paid labor.
- *Technical Education:* JJC confers associate degrees or certificates in over 40 technical specializations including each of the four fields identified by research as sectors in which good jobs are being created in Will County: nursing and medical service technologies, building construction specializations, industrial production and industrial maintenance, and more recently truck driving and warehouse operations.
- The *Business and Industry Training Program* of JJC designs and conducts training programs under contract to companies that need to hire workers for these jobs or augment the training of current workers. During the last several years this program has earned \$1 - \$2 million/year in training fees (of which approximately 50% was reimbursed by the State of Illinois per the State's standard practice for qualified worker training programs). For the last several years JJC's Business & Industry Training Program has also trained approximately 150 to 200 new workers per year, placing them in jobs that pay \$40,000 to \$60,000 per year. The program is promoted by the Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association and other business networks, and all of the corporate members of these networks receive quarterly mailings on the Business & Industry Training Program. The question about this valuable program is how it could be expanded to connect more Planning Area residents to good jobs.

Workforce Investment Board of Will County: As the institution responsible for the allocation of federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds in Will County, the Workforce Board plays a central role in setting policy and coordinating job training and placement services. The Workforce Board has made policy decisions to support the development of jobs that pay a living wage, rather than all types of employment. It helped fund the research that identified industries

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with quality job creation potential and supported initiatives to place county residents in these industries. For example, the Workforce Board has striven to create a “One-Stop Workforce System” in which public agencies working in partnership meet the training and job placement needs of Will County residents in one seamless system. Within this system:

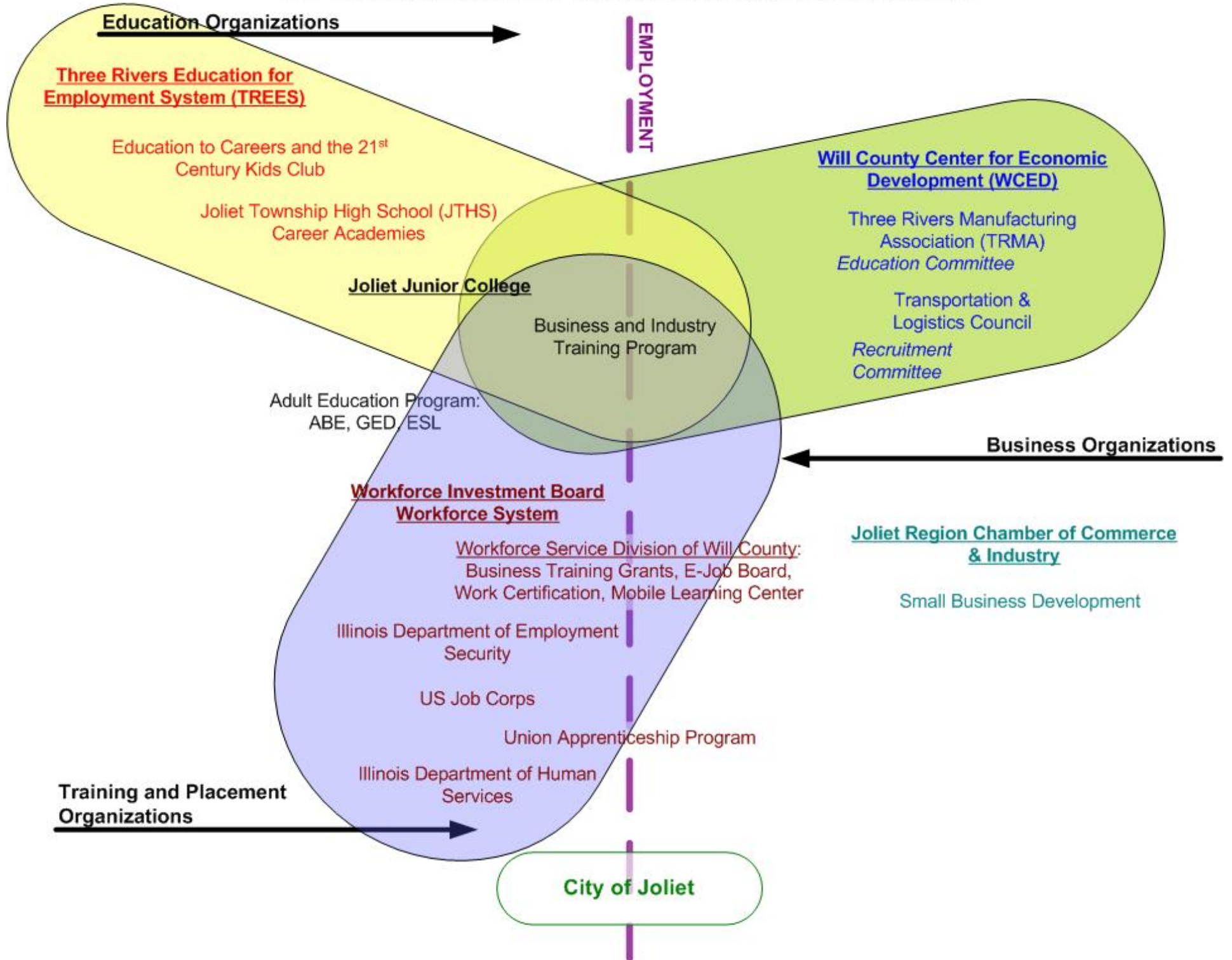
- *JJC* has the primary responsibility to educate workers for productive employment as discussed above.
- *Workforce Service Division of Will County*: This office executes and promotes many of the Workforce Board’s direct services to employers and job seekers including:
 - “Local Business Grants for Employee Training” which supplement public funds for companies to directly train new workers who are paid a living wage.
 - An on-line matching service for area job seekers and employers
 - A Mobile Learning Center, a staffed mobile office with internet access that extends information and counseling into neighborhoods
 - A Worker Certification program that assures employers that all referred job candidates have completed a work readiness course conducted by JJC which covers fundamental issues for all employees such as appropriate dress, timeliness, and consideration of an employer’s perspective.
- *Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)*, besides administering the unemployment compensation program, this agency has a comprehensive responsibility to help all job seekers in the county find employment. IDES performs this function by cultivating relationships with local employers (using the business networks noted above) and providing information, evaluation, and counseling services at IDES’ downtown Joliet office.
- *Federal Job Corps* operates a Joliet office that provides personalized, intensive skill development and work readiness training for 280 young people at any given time. Job Corps members are pursuing a one-to-two year program that will give them certified knowledge and experience in construction, medical service or other specializations.
- *Union Apprenticeship Programs*: Unions in skilled production and construction trades offer apprenticeship programs that are important pathways into well-paid employment. Several unions are represented in the governing structure of the Workforce Board. Unfortunately a number of unions face flat or declining membership as skilled trade work has been outsourced from the factories of major unionized employers and as cheaper non-union labor has become increasingly competitive. An example of a union that bucks these trends and enjoys growing membership in Will County is the Pipe Fitters Union, whose members generally work in the construction of large buildings.
- *Illinois Department of Human Services* provides tailored services for job seekers with disabilities through its Office of Rehabilitation Services and some economic assistance for those seeking work or newly hired through its program of “Temporary Assistance for Needy Families”.

The overall picture of employment training and placement programs in Will County is a complex network in which business organizations reach out to institutions that provide basic and technical education in an effort to ensure an ample workforce of skilled job applicants and employees. At the same time public and private organizations network with each other in order to provide complimentary services and with business associations in order to understand market needs and

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build referral relationships. This picture of interlocking organizational efforts is illustrated in the accompanying conceptual map.

The Will County System for Employment Education and Placement



Remaining Challenges and Gaps Remain in Workforce Development: Despite the thoughtful, professional efforts of Will County business organizations, the Workforce Board with its partner organizations, and local governments, serious challenges and gaps remain in systematic efforts to create an effective worker training and placement system in Will County, including the Planning Area. These concerns were raised in discussions with stakeholders who are familiar with at least some aspects of current employment education and placement systems and reinforced by the comments of residents in community meetings. They are discussed most efficiently in regard to proposals by which they can be resolved.

Proposals

Capturing the large potential benefits of industrial development for employment and the overall quality of life in the Planning Area requires two basic proposals regarding (1) Development of new industrial parks and (2) Enhancement of Will County's technical education and workforce systems. Both of these proposals would leverage not only the fixed assets of the Joliet region but the momentum of the region's development institutions.

Proposals for Industrial Development and Employment will be carried out most effectively by a partnership of the City and the organized community working with the Workforce Investment Board of Will County, and other institutional partners. To take part in this partnership the community will need to be represented by an entity that can make plans and carry out programs. Other sections of the Plan discuss and propose the formation of a Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC) as the type of entity that might best act for the organized community. A CDC would be an appropriate type of organization to carry out the community's role in the following proposals.

1. Build New Industrial Parks as Proposed in the City of Joliet's South Side Comprehensive Plan with Optimal Job Growth and Environmental Sustainability for Planning Area Residents.

The City of Joliet should continue to be responsible for the development of the South Side industrial parks and the implementation of this proposal with the support of the WCED and a volunteer committee including members of the Planning Area CDC. The City should establish an Industrial Planning Committee that should include: Staff of the WCED, a liaison member of the Three Rivers Manufacturers' Association, a liaison member of the Transportation and Logistics Council, faculty of the University of St. Francis and Lewis University who have expertise in logistics and related real estate and industrial development, a liaison member of the "Community Employment Task Force" (discussed in regard to this plan's second major proposal for Employment & Industrial Development.) The Industrial Planning Committee should assist the City in carrying out the tasks proposed in the following paragraphs. The Committee should meet monthly during the first year of the project and should meet regularly for the foreseeable future, although meetings after Year 1 may be less frequent. The Committee should not obviate the City's need to engage consultants for specific assignments but may assist the City in identifying and selecting optimal consultants. The City and its advisors should:

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- Identify optimal areas for industrial parks which the City may choose to prioritize for annexation, for the creation of Tax Increment Finance or other special districts, or for acquisition to ensure site control.
- While remaining open to entrepreneurial proposals from industrial developers, identify prospective developers who have a record of successful, large scale, environmentally sustainable, and logistics-oriented industrial developments, and issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to these developers. Establish a cadre of qualified developers who may respond to Requests for Proposals (RFP) for specific projects.
- Guide the selection of end users of industrial parks to include logistics companies that follow a business strategy of high capital investment per worker or manufacturing companies that derive particular advantage from locations near freight transportation infrastructure or concentrations of logistics providers. Draft detailed criteria for the selection of end users and list specific companies to approach as prospects for relocation in the new industrial parks.
- Establish industrial parks under development as Foreign Trade Zones (FTZ) in order to provide federal tax incentives for end users that are processors of imported materials/parts/products.
- Capitalize on the City's commitment to develop new industrial parks to the highest environmental standards by adopting standards that are consistent with its *South Side Development Plan* and with the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for industrial developments. By meeting these standards property owners could obtain (LEED) certifications for their projects. Such certification would ensure the long-term value of properties and assure end users and community residents of the high environmental quality of the parks.
- In area industrial park planning give particular consideration to new freight transportation infrastructure that would:
 - Contain truck traffic on highways dedicated to the service of industrial parks, and seek a new entrance & exit on I-80 primarily for truck traffic.
 - Provide bicycle path access from the Planning Area north of I-80 to industrial parks.
- Review potential new developments as they are proposed with the Industrial Planning Committee.

Anticipate a need to spend \$50,000 to \$150,000 over the next two years, for consultants to assist in carrying out the tasks summarized above for Proposal 1. The specific tasks to be performed for these fees cannot be anticipated until the Industrial Planning Committee is convened and the volunteer expertise available from the Committee and the organizations represented on it is known. Other costs entailed in the development of industrial parks are not estimated here although such costs include: allocated time of Planning Department personnel; fees to establish special area designations and public infrastructure improvements at development sites, which may be packaged with project development costs.

2. Increase the number of Planning Area residents who obtain good jobs through existing training and placement programs by implementing the recommendations of a new Community Employment Task Force.

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Findings presented in regard to neighborhood conditions in this section of the Plan show how problems linked to unemployment or poorly paid employment reinforce each other and cluster in some Planning Area neighborhoods. Most of the problems with obtaining adequate employment that stakeholders or community residents described to QOL consultants reflected difficulties that residents of lower income neighborhoods are especially likely to suffer. So the QOL Plan proposes that the Workforce Investment Board compliment its other operations with a neighborhood-based approach to meeting the needs of those who currently are not participating successfully in the technical education and workforce development systems of the county.

In this approach the Workforce Investment Board would establish a “Community Employment Task Force” charged to develop a set of recommendations for increasing the number of adults who have jobs with livable wages living in census tracts that now suffer Joliet’s highest levels of unemployment or employment for wages that do not adequately support a household. The Community Employment Taskforce would then monitor the implementation of its recommendations.

The proposed Community Employment Task Force (CETF) should include:

- Two or more members of the Workforce Investment Board;
- Representatives of two or more of the partner organizations of the Workforce System, including the Illinois Department of Employment Security;
- At least one liaison member each of the Three Rivers Manufacturers’ Association, the Transportation & Logistics Council, and the Social Services Council;
- Representatives of at least two of the institutions that are members of the TREES network including Joliet Township High School and Joliet Junior College (JJC);
- At least one representative each of the governments the city of Joliet and of Will County;
- Faculty of Lewis University, University of St. Francis, and JJC with expertise on technical education and workforce development issues;
- At least two members recommended by the Planning Area Community Development Corporation (CDC).

Some issues that the CETF should consider were brought to the attention of QOL Plan consultants by stakeholders who are familiar with the technical education or workforce development systems of Will County or by community residents speaking in public meetings. These issues are summarized in the following paragraphs, along with suggested solutions. The CETF should develop recommendations to the Workforce Investment Board regarding each of the issues summarized below and other issues that task force members think are relevant their mission.

Limited Avenues to Good Jobs: Some of the most promising programs in employment education such as the JTHS summer program to expose students to trade union work and the JJC Business and Industry Training program, give workers direct exposure or entry into well-paid jobs. Unfortunately these programs serve only dozens rather than hundreds or thousands of aspiring workers. Other programs prepare prospective residents to work in fields that are creating jobs with living wages, but without assurance that program graduates will find work for compensation that will sustain a household. These limitations highlight needs to create more quality jobs in the Joliet area and to establish close communications between employers who

need qualified workers and training institutions. *The CETF should review the networking and outreach mechanisms between institutions that provide technical education for prospective workers and businesses that need workers with assured specific skills and recommend measures that will ensure a full and immediate exchange of information when technical training courses are considered or labor needs are identified.*

Geographically Based Rosters of Qualified Workers: Through its general records and on-line matching service, the Workforce Services Division of Will County maintains retrievable lists of workers with skills demonstrated by certification or work history. *The CETF should ensure that with the permission of each worker, such lists should be retrievable with reference to the home neighborhood of the worker as well as by other criteria. Such lists should be used as tools in discussions with employers considering locations in Will County. For example, a company considering a location in a new industrial park on the southeast side of Joliet, could be shown a list of hundreds of available workers, certified in the skills the employer requires, living within two miles of its proposed location. The development of such lists should be actively supported by community leaders who want to support the argument for employers to locate in their respective immediate neighborhoods.*

Time and Costs of Training for the Job Seeker: Tuition at JJC is now \$73/credit hour, a cost of several hundred dollars per semester for an ambitious worker taking say two courses per semester. This seemingly modest cost is heavy for workers who are unemployed or earning less than the cost of living at minimum wage employment. This cost is felt at a community level where many residents are not pursuing further education, as in high-unemployment neighborhoods of the Planning Area. *The CETF should evaluate alternative means of reducing the costs of technical education for aspiring workers who cannot realistically meet these costs without serious financial hardship. Alternatives to be considered in evaluation include: a sliding scale in technical education fees; a technical education scholarship program for local residents who meet a mean test; the payment of fees with “forgivable loans” that would be repaid when the worker finds employment for which he or she trained; a program through which work training grants and/or tax credits could be transferred to employers when they hire a trained worker.*

Possible Declines in On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs: Some stakeholders in the Workforce System believe they have observed a decline in the number of employers who provide meaningful OJT, despite training incentives offered by the State and the Workforce Board. The perceived decline in OJT is particularly for positions with compensation in the lower range of jobs that pay livable wages, \$25,000 to \$40,000/year.

If this perception is correct, the decline puts more pressure on aspiring workers who must use limited free hours and pay tuition fees for training they might hope to receive on the job. *The CETF should conduct a survey of employers to determine whether or not the availability of OJT is declining. The CETF should review the effectiveness of outreach measures through which employers are informed of State tax credits, Workforce Board grants and other training incentives. The CETF should consider methods through which employers could conduct effective OJT that met standards for public incentives for minimal cost and the feasibility of consulting with employers on the establishment of such programs.*

Endorsement of Transportation Proposals: The Transportation section of the QOL Plan recognizes that reliable transportation to work is a major obstacle to employment in the Planning Area, particularly in some neighborhoods with high percentages of households that do not own a car or include more than one adult but own only one car. The Plan makes systematic proposals for the improvement of public transportation services that would create viable commuting alternatives for Planning Area workers. *The CETF should review and hopefully endorse the QOL Plan's proposals for transportation including: endorsement of Pace's fully funded proposals for the improvement of fixed route bus services in Will County; the addition of a small bus circulator service linking fixed routes and major destinations within the Planning Area; the creation of an extensive van pool system with robust connections between Planning Area neighborhoods and Will County Job Centers; endorsement of major transportation proposals including the Will County Blue Print for Transportation and the Star Line, provided that these proposals include support for public transportation to job centers.*

Use of Temporary Labor: Some stakeholders and residents perceive a growing use of temporary laborers, supplied through contractors, to perform tasks that were performed by entry level employees. The temporary worker, in this perception, is in a worse position than an entry level worker because he or she lacks job security and benefits, and may be barred by contract from taking a permanent job at a site where he or she performed well. Some managers of temporary labor services maintain that steady workers in their systems may receive training that enhances their qualifications (e.g., the certification of workers as forklift operators) and that steady workers may receive wage increases and benefits and are not necessarily barred from taking permanent positions at assigned job sites. *The CETF should establish a dialog that includes companies that regularly contract for temporary labor, temporary service contractors, and temporary workers. As an outcome of this dialog, the CETF should recommend measures through which incentives and/or regulations could be established to make the role of temporary labor in Will County as constructive as possible, i.e., a system that does not replace permanent entry level positions in conventional employment and gives workers a path to increased job security, wages, benefits, and certified skills.*

More Flexible Standards for Worker Certification: The Workforce Board requires all job seekers who benefit from its programs to complete a basic work readiness course, taught by JJC staff, which discusses issues such as appropriate dress, timeliness, and an employer's perspective. Stakeholders and residents who are familiar with this course have suggested that it should be required of a narrower group of applicants, because its instruction is unnecessary for some job seekers (e.g., adults who have been laid off after working for twenty years) and prolongs the job searches of these workers during days when they are living on inadequate workers compensation benefits and savings. *The CETF should consider and probably propose a procedure through some workers could be "certified" as work-ready through a test and interview rather than the more time consuming completion of a course.*

Gaps and Breaks in Financial Support Programs: Stakeholders and residents report that some of the support programs available to prospective workers in training or new workers are incomplete and gapped, like a road that is paved for a block with stretches of rough ground before and after. For example, parents in work training programs may receive child care benefits that do not continue while the newly trained worker seeks employment or establishes him or

herself in a job. Besides disappointing aspiring workers, funding programs with such abrupt breaks may be unwise uses of public funds, since they incur expenditures without achieving desired results. *The CETF should examine the “path” of funding for programs to support worker training and placement and recommend funding adjustments that will give new workers better opportunities to make transitions.*

Employment for Ex-Offenders: The findings regarding neighborhood level problems in this section of the QOL Plan summarize how ex-offenders frequently face blanket policies and more subtle biases against their employment. As ex-offenders come to represent a significant part of the population of some neighborhoods, their problem becomes the community’s problem. *The CETF should establish a dialog with social service organizations in the Planning Area that assist ex-offenders, some representative ex-offenders, and employers regarding this topic. As a result of this dialog the CETF should recommend a program that may include: systematic expunging of criminal records when possible, enrollment of ex-offenders in programs that will train and certify them in marketable skills, a Workforce System “Certification” attesting to an ex-offenders achievement of certain milestones that should justify an employer’s confidence, documentation and active promotions of “good stories” describing the careers of model ex-offenders, active promotion of tax credits available for the employment of ex-offenders, honorary recognition in the community and the workplace of ex-offenders who achieve defined milestones, honorary recognition of employers who hire ex-offenders in keeping with an explicit policy.*

Outreach, Referral, Tracking, and Community Engagement: Community residents participating in public meetings and professional stakeholders commonly recommended the creation of programs for employment education and job placement that already exist in Will County systems. Also community leaders such as ministers and counselors or administrators of social service programs frequently try to make job referrals of individuals through informal networks or cold calling, without reference to the networks established by the TREES or the Workforce Investment Board. At one level, these suggestions and referral patterns represent a simple lack of awareness, which is not surprising, considering that the existing systems are complex, even when they are represented by attractive public information tools such as the web sites of the JJC or the Workforce Services Division of Will County. Lack of complete understanding of a system may be compounded with a lack of confidence in it. At least five clergy or other community leaders interviewed for the Plan expressed skepticism that residents referred to workforce agencies would receive useful assistance. Only if community leaders and a fair sampling of residents understand and trust the workforce system agencies will the community consistently refer prospective workers to the services they need and appropriately support individual clients in their efforts to take specific career building steps. *The CETF should consider and recommend a series of steps that the TREES and Workforce System partners should take to instill a deep level of awareness and confidence in their work in the community, particularly in neighborhoods with high levels of unemployment. These measures might include: workshops with leaders of churches, community organizations, and social service programs; events to celebrate the achievements of program graduates and new workers; appointment of an ombudsman who can follow up responses to individual referrals and serve as a regular source of information to community organizations about training and workforce issues and programs.*

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The CETF should meet monthly, or more frequently, for a year to formulate recommendations on all of the issues noted above to the Workforce Investment Board and its partner organizations. (The CETF may well form subcommittees to address a number of these issues that are relatively complex.) In subsequent years the CETF should continue to meet regularly, perhaps quarterly, to monitor progress in the implementation of its recommendations. To carry out this ambitious agenda, the CETF will need to be staffed by a professional(s) with strong analytical and communications skills who will devote 50% to 100% of a full-time employee’s effort to this work. After the year of recommendation development, the staffing of the CETF should become a secondary responsibility, probably requiring less than 20% of the time of a qualified professional. Staff responsibilities might be shared between an employee of the Workforce Division of Will County and a Planning Area CDC employee, which could provide a combination of deep experience in the local system and fresh perspective to this work.

An appropriate budget for the CETF would be in the range of \$60,000 to \$90,000, for personnel and direct expenses, in Year 1 followed by subsequent expenses of \$8,000 to \$15,000 per year.

Proposals Summary					
Short term (0-3 years) and Long term (3+ years)	Responsibility	Priority	Completion Date	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
1) Build industrial parks on Joliet’s south side, per the City’s comprehensive plan, with optimal job creation and environmental sustainability: Establish Industrial Planning Committee including St. Francis & Lewis U faculty/ Prioritize development areas/ Establish pool of qualified developers/ Identify optimal end user companies/ Establish park area as a Foreign Trade Zone/ Adopt LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Standard for site design	City of Joliet, Will County Center for Economic Development, Planning Area community organization, possibly a Community Development Corporation (CDC)	1	Area Develop Planning Years 1-2 Project Planning & Execution Years 3 – 20	\$50,000 to \$150,000+ Recovered Project Costs	City of Joliet
2) Increase the number of Planning Area residents who obtain good jobs through existing training & employment programs by implementing recommendations of a new	Workforce Investment Board of Will County and partner organizations including:		Year 1: Form Policies Years 2-4 Implement	Year 1 \$60,000 to \$90,000 Years 2-4 \$8,000 to	Workforce Investment Board, federal Workforce Investment Act funds

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<p>Community Employment Task Force. Recommend and implement programs to: Increase outreach of work training programs to employers/ Create community-based rosters of qualified workers/ Mitigate job training costs for workers/ Increase on-the-job training programs/ Define a constructive role for Temporary Labor/ Smooth gaps in financial support for new workers/ Increase Employment of ex-offenders/ Establish outreach, referral tracking & community engagement</p>	<p>Joliet Junior College and the Illinois Department of Employment Security & Planning Area CDC</p>		<p>programs</p>	<p>\$15,000 annually + Cost to Taskforce recommendations, to be estimated</p>	
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