

# Geographical Perspective

Nauvoo Comprehensive Plan 2009

## *Looking Forward While Respecting the Past*



Nauvoo sits on the banks of the Mississippi River in Hancock County. It is located approximately 270 miles southwest of Chicago, 190 miles north of St. Louis and 120 miles south of the Quad Cities. Illinois Route 96, also known as the Great River Road, runs through Nauvoo, connecting the town to Keokuk, Iowa to the south and Fort Madison to the north. The nearest four-lane divided Highway is 336 in Carthage, 25 miles to the south, and Interstate I-74 in Galesburg, 75 miles to the northeast. The finalization of the Avenue of the Saints interstate in Iowa will bring access to within 15 miles of Nauvoo. A four-lane highway, 336 has just been opened connecting Quincy to Macomb and will eventually extend to Peoria, Illinois.

Nauvoo is located in what is commonly referred to as west-central Illinois. The physical landscape of the region is generally flat, with some gently rolling hills and sudden breaks where valleys have been carved by tributaries of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers.

The local landscape has largely been shaped by glacial activity. Watersheds split the area with the west fork of the Lamoine River draining the eastern portion of Hancock County into the Illinois River and eventually the Mississippi River. Southern Hancock County drains into Bear Creek before the water enters the Mississippi River.

The soils in Hancock County are a valuable resource and are one reason why farming in the area is successful. Most of the land is level to gently sloping, with minimal erosion. Most soil is silt loam, with some clay loam present as well. Part of Hancock County consists of alluvial flood areas, where the Mississippi River deposits nutrient-rich sediment. The water table is generally close to the surface. There are coal deposits in the area, and several mines operated in Hancock County during the 19th century. No mining has occurred in more than half a century. No deposits of oil or natural gas have been found in Hancock County.

The average annual precipitation in western Illinois ranges from 34 to 36 inches per year. Precipitation is due mainly to the interaction of warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico with cooler and drier air from Canada. The average annual snowfall is 25 inches, while the number of days with snowfall greater than an inch averaging seven to eight per winter. The average winter temperature in Hancock County is 26 degrees Fahrenheit while the average summer temperature is 73 degrees Fahrenheit.

Two transcontinental rail lines, owned and operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe, cross through west-central Illinois and into Iowa. Amtrak uses both lines to provide rail service throughout the region. The nearest passenger service is in Fort Madison, Iowa, 11 miles to the north, and in Macomb, approximately 50 miles to the east.

