



Adopted May 14, 2013

### The Iowa City Word Cloud

As part of the IC2030 process, Planners asked “What do you like best about Iowa City?” Participants in the workshop sessions contributed answers along with internet users who participated in a survey on the Good Ideas web page. All responses were entered into a special software program to generate the “word cloud” that appears on the front cover of this document. The larger or more prominently a word appears in the cloud is an indicator of how often it was mentioned in the comments of those who participate. The word is a graphic representation how it residents define their city—what they value and what makes it a good place to live.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	page 1
Community Vision Statement	page 7
Background	page 9
How We Grow	page 20
Land Use	page 24
Housing	page 28
Economic Development	page 31
Transportation	page 35
Environment & Resources	page 39
Parks and Open Space	page 45
Arts and Culture	page 49
Appendix	page 53

*Future Land Use Map*

*Fringe Area Map*

*Fringe Area Policy Agreement*

*Code Amendments*

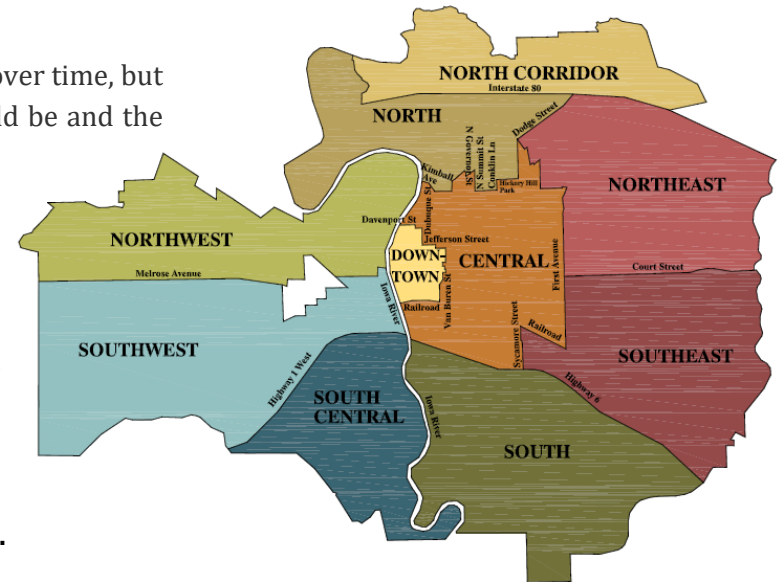
# Introduction

## What is the Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is often referred to as a roadmap for directing growth and change over time, but it is more than that. The plan describes a vision for the kind of community Iowa City should be and the steps necessary to get there.

### The Comprehensive Plan should . . .

- **Reflect shared community values and aspirations.**
- **Provide a broad set of goals and objectives for both preservation and change.**
- **Set a foundation for policies, strategies, and other actions.**
- **Articulate priorities—it is our community's “to-do” list.**
- **Build consensus and confidence about the future direction of our community.**



The “Beyond 2000” Plan, adopted in 1997, focused on creating a vital and attractive downtown, preserving the unique character of the community, protecting the natural environment, encouraging diverse housing and alternative forms of transportation, and ensuring neighborhood safety, character, and connectivity.

The 1997 Plan divided the city into ten “planning districts,” and called for the creation of detailed plans that would take into account the unique challenges and opportunities of each district, as well as the aspirations of the residents and business or property owners who live or work there. Since 1997, the City has worked with the community to complete plans for eight of the ten districts. The District Plans continue to be part of the Comprehensive Plan and reflect the shared vision and goals of the plan.

Plans for the North Corridor, which is located north of Interstate 80, and the Northwest District, much of which is owned by the University of Iowa, remain to be completed. The Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Master Plan was carried out simultaneously with this update and was adopted in January 2013. These plans are also considered part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Since adoption of the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, the City has completed plans for eight of its ten identified planning districts: Southwest, South Central, Downtown, South, North, North-east, Central and Southeast District. In addition, master plans for the Downtown and Riverfront Crossings and Towncrest have been completed. These adopted district and master plans are part of the Comprehensive Plan.





Photo of the Pedestrian Mall fountain © Jbeyer Photography, courtesy ICAD Group.

Public investments in Downtown Iowa City's Pedestrian Mall, including the playground and fountain adjacent to the Iowa City Public Library, have made this public space a popular destination for informal gatherings and play as well as a site for concerts and festivals.

## IC2030: Refining a Vision for the Next Twenty Years

The Iowa City 2030 (IC2030) planning process provided an opportunity for the Iowa City community to revisit the vision and goals of the 1997 Plan and assess our progress. The vision set forth in the 1997 Plan and woven through the eight completed District Plans led to many substantive policies and actions, including the following:

- A complete overhaul of the Zoning Code (2005) and Subdivision Regulations (2008).
- Adoption of a significant update to the Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan (2008).
- Designation of six historic districts: College Hill (1997), Longfellow (2002), Longfellow and Moffitt (2003), Brown Street -Ronalds expansion (2004), Northside-Gilbert & Linn (2009), Jefferson Street (2013).
- Investments in the Downtown Pedestrian Mall and support for the formation of the Downtown Business District.
- Changes in the City's alcohol policies.
- New occupancy limits and parking requirements for residential development in the Downtown.
- Design standards for multi-family buildings.
- Infill development of remaining Downtown Urban Renewal sites, including the Plaza Towers.
- Establishment of the UniverCity Neighborhood Partnership Program—a joint effort of the University of Iowa and the City of Iowa City to stabilize near campus neighborhoods.
- Adoption of the Metro Bicycle Master Plan (2009) and a Complete Streets Policy.
- Construction of McCollister Bridge connecting Mormon Trek Boulevard with Southeast Iowa City.
- Extensive additions to the Iowa River Corridor Trail, creating a continuous trail system from Iowa City to the Coralville Reservoir.
- Creation of the Court Hill Trail, running from Creekside Park through Scott Park.
- Establishment of Iowa City's fourth fire station, serving northeast Iowa City.
- Creation of the Public Art Program.

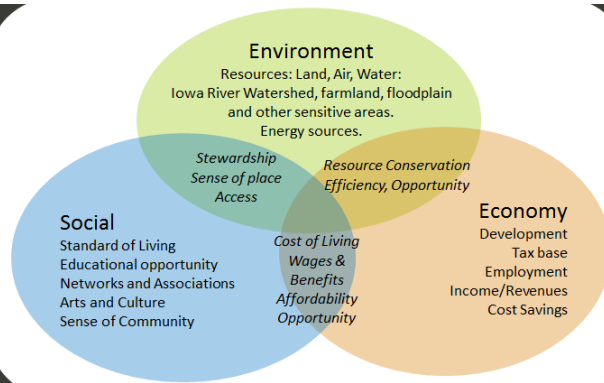
- Acquisition of Sand Lake and establishment of the Terry Trueblood Recreation Area with trail connections along the Iowa River.

While the values that define Iowa City have in most ways remained constant over the years, some new challenges and opportunities make a re-examination of the Comprehensive Plan particularly timely:

- Impacts from the 2008 flood on the Iowa River as well as opportunities for redevelopment of riverfront and adjacent areas.
- Changes in the housing market due to changing demographics (aging Baby Boomers, Gen Y).
- Crisis in the U.S. financial system.
- Continued growth of the University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College.
- Competition with surrounding communities for economic development and the resulting debate regarding the appropriate use of incentives, including Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- Growth in the school district and the strong support for neighborhood schools.
- Fluctuating cost of energy, including gasoline.
- Decreased federal and state funding.
- Concerns over global climate change and domestic energy security.
- Impacts and opportunities brought about by new technology, especially electronic communication and social media.
- Designation of Iowa City as a UNESCO City of Literature.
- Increasing interest and support for local food production.
- Increasing interest and support for energy and resource conservation, including alternative energy and green buildings.



The flood of 2008 has had a significant impact on planning for the future of Iowa City. The City has responded by strengthening floodplain regulations, and removing buildings at risk of flooding through the flood buyout program. Planning for the Riverfront Crossings District is also a direct response to the flood. The North Wastewater Treatment Facility will be relocated and replaced by a riverfront park that will help encourage redevelopment along both sides of the river between Highway 6 and the Downtown.



## Measuring Sustainability

An over-arching strategy for a sustainable community requires quantifiable targets and measurable goals. The Iowa City Sustainability Assessment, which is due to be released in Summer 2013, will set Iowa City on a path for establishing thoughtful strategies and measures to foster and achieve a more livable, viable, and equitable community.

Data for nearly 60 sustainability indicators have been compiled and analyzed as part of the assessment. These indicators focus on the economic, environmental, and resource management and social/cultural categories of sustainability. The Assessment will report meaningful and measurable information about the current status of the Iowa City community with respect to sustainability.

Comparisons between Iowa City, the state of Iowa, and national totals are provided for each indicator wherever data is available and applicable. A simplified rating system measures the status of each indicator in the community and allows us to assess whether Iowa City is within or exceeding the acceptable level, below the desired level, or unclassifiable due to complexity or other factors such as insufficient data.

## Focus on Sustainability

Sustainability can be defined many ways and means different things to different people. The IC2030 Plan uses a holistic definition of sustainability: “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The plan considers three inter-related factors that together create healthy and thriving communities: environment, economy, and society.

**Planning goals for the Riverfront Crossings District demonstrate this triangular relationship:**

**Environment:** In 2008 the Iowa River flood inundated properties in an area south of the Downtown. Preliminary plans for this area propose to move infrastructure and urban development, including Iowa City’s north wastewater treatment facility and other quasi-industrial uses, out of the floodplain and transform the riverfront into a public park and trail system that can better withstand floods.

**Society:** There is a desire by many Iowa City residents to establish a stronger connection with the Iowa River—to make the riverfront a focal point, gathering space, and recreational amenity for the entire community. Establishment of a public park along the will allow better access and views of the river from adjacent urban neighborhoods and the University campus.

**Economy:** Public investments to remove the wastewater treatment facility from the floodplain and to create a riverfront park will encourage private redevelopment of surrounding properties for higher and better uses. Encouraging the development of a new walkable urban neighborhood will help the city proactively respond to the shift in the housing market as Baby Boomers retire and the next boom generation (Gen Y) demands a more urban lifestyle. The proposed urban infill neighborhood presents a more efficient model of development by reinvesting in existing public infrastructure (streets, sewers, waterlines, rail lines, bus lines), rather than extending new roads and waterlines at the city’s edge.

The IC2030 Comprehensive Plan sets forth a vision and broad set of goals describing a more sustainable community. A forthcoming Sustainability Assessment will identify specific activities, measures, and indicators of progress that are essential to attaining these broad sustainability goals.

## Public Participation

Public input and support are integral to any planning effort. Beginning in 2009, as a part of post-flood recovery efforts, the City received a grant of technical assistance through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Smart Growth Assistance Program. Working with EPA representatives and private planning consultants, staff gathered input from stakeholders in the Riverfront Crossings area, including business and property owners. There is broad public support for this area to serve as an example of sustainable infill development that would take advantage of proximity to the University and Downtown and for shifting our approach to the riverfront and floodplain, treating these areas as essential open space resources that enhance urban development.

Building on this effort, the City competed for and was one of only five cities in the nation to receive a grant from the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, a joint initiative of the EPA, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). The grant aided the City in completing a more detailed plan for a sub-area of Riverfront Crossings, which included those areas most impacted by the 2008 flood. This initial planning effort received wide support from the community and led to an expanded planning effort to include both sides of the riverfront as well as the Downtown. This resulted in the Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Master Plan (adopted January, 2013).

Simultaneous with the above planning effort, staff held two public workshops—one on the east side of the river and one on the west—in February 2012. Participants were invited to re-examine the vision and goals of the 1997 plan and to review the progress that had been made in achieving those goals. Discussion focused on land use and growth, economic development, transportation, and environmental protection. Participants were also invited to engage in small group discussion focused on arts and culture, local foods and urban gardening, and energy conservation and recycling.

These workshops were supplemented with an extensive outreach and an on-line participation tool. The “Good Ideas,” campaign invited Iowa City residents to answer a brief survey and suggest ideas for how Iowa City could be improved. Ideas for improvement were posted on the Good Ideas web page where other respondents could vote to support any ideas they liked. This effort not only generated “good ideas” but fostered general support for establishing a shared vision for the future of the city.

There was much consistency in the input from the public workshops and the on-line survey. Both indicate a tension between the small-town character that people value and identify as being quintessentially Iowa City and the uncertainty that comes with change in a growing community. There is a strong and vocal de-

For a better Iowa City . . .



**When asked what they like best about Iowa City, participants in the on-line “Good Ideas” survey most often said:**

Small-town feel with big city attractions.

Distinctive and charming neighborhoods.

Ease of getting around town: walking, biking, and appreciation for bus transit.

Vibrant Downtown and Northside Marketplace.

Good schools: especially neighborhood schools.

Friendliness: opportunities to meet people.

City services: including Public Library, Senior Center, recreation centers, recycling.

Parks, trails, and public spaces, esp. Hickory Hill Park, City Park, and the Pedestrian Mall.

Locally-owned and independent businesses.

A lively and diverse arts and culture scene.

Great food: unique places to eat, emphasis on fine, ethnic, and healthy cuisine and local foods. Also, the Farmers Market.

Active and informed citizenry: people who care about and are committed to their community.

A diverse population: age, income, background, lifestyles.

Access to quality healthcare: UIHC and Mercy.





In addition to the IC2030 workshops and on-line survey, the IC2030 Plan draws from a decade of community input, including the following planning efforts:

- Towncrest Redevelopment Plan
- Iowa City District Plans (8 completed)
- Historic Preservation Plan
- Long-Range Transportation Plan
- Metro Bicycle Master Plan
- CITY STEPS: Iowa City's Five-Year Consolidated Plan for Housing, Jobs, and Services for Low-Income Residents
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Hazard Mitigation Plan

sire to preserve what is unique about Iowa City—older neighborhoods and buildings, independent and small businesses, the ease of accessibility in getting around town, and green space. At the same time, respondents express a desire for things that are supported by growth—arts and cultural offerings, diversity in our population, employment and business opportunities, redevelopment of the Riverfront Crossings and Towncrest Areas, etc. The question seems to be how and where to strike a balance between preservation and change.

Most participants asked for more of the things that they like: trails, tree-lined streets, bike facilities, parks and greenspace, and preservation of older neighborhoods. Many would like to see Iowa City's curbside recycling program expanded.

There is broad support for riverfront improvements—making our riverfront more attractive and accessible and a focal point for the entire community. Redevelopment of Towncrest and addressing the loss of the Von Maur department store at Sycamore Mall were also high on people's lists of needed improvements. Competition with Coralville and North Liberty due to over-use of tax increment financing (TIF) was also a concern, along with a desire for more support for Iowa City's schools.

There was a call for more diverse housing options, including more affordable housing options; more housing attractive to non-students in the Downtown area; and better quality buildings and architecture for apartments, condos, and townhomes throughout the community. Some respondents expressed concern over the concentration of low-income housing in certain neighborhoods.

Many participants value and wish to see greater support for small and independent businesses, entrepreneurs, and start-ups. Suggestions included affordable rents for small businesses and live-work units. Others see a need to attract some national chains to anchor or augment what Iowa City has to offer.

# Community Vision Statement

**Iowa City is an energetic and friendly community, renowned for its arts and culture, healthcare and education, and distinctive local businesses. The small-town character of our neighborhoods combined with the big-city vitality of our Downtown and university campus make Iowa City a unique and appealing place for people of all ages. These assets define our sense of place and are the foundation of our stable economy.**

We will strive to preserve and build upon these aspects of our community while supporting compatible growth and investment that contributes to the overall sustainability of Iowa City by:

- Fostering a resilient local economy that increases the tax base, stimulates job growth, and promotes the overall prosperity and progress of our people;
- Protecting and enhancing the environment and encouraging the responsible use of our natural and energy resources;
- Providing safe and efficient modes of travel for all in order to ensure the opportunity for full participation in community life and efficient use of resources;
- Creating attractive and affordable housing for all people—housing that is the foundation of healthy, safe, and diverse neighborhoods throughout our city;
- Fostering communication among owners, redevelopers, and occupants to mitigate the impact of redeveloping existing residential properties
- Promoting opportunities for civic engagement and human development for all who call Iowa City home; and
- Encouraging and supporting collaborative efforts with the University of Iowa, the Iowa City Community School District, Johnson County, and other neighboring jurisdictions for the mutual benefit of all communities.

*A shared community vision is the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. This vision statement was drawn from a number of public processes, including the IC2030 workshops, the Good Ideas web survey, recent district planning processes (including the Southeast District and Central District Plans), a series of workshops for the Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Master Plan, and from community responses to recent events, policy debates, and development activities, especially those in the central and near campus neighborhoods.*





# Background

## History: University Town

Iowa City was established in 1839 and became the territorial capital of Iowa in 1841, continuing as the state capital from 1846 until 1857. The original town plat, located on the east bank of the Iowa River, extended as far east as Governor Street and was bounded to the north and south by what are now Brown and Burlington Streets. The University of Iowa was founded in 1847 and, when the state capital of Iowa relocated to Des Moines, the capitol building became home to the University. Old Capitol, which now serves as a museum, remains a focal point for the community, marking where the city and campus meet. Its dome serves as a recognizable icon for both the City and University, whose history and development are inextricably linked to each other.

With immediate adjacency to the University of Iowa Pentacrest, Iowa City's Downtown has long been a locus of activity for the city and the region. For decades the Downtown flourished as an employment and retail center. During the 1970s and 1980s, Iowa City undertook significant urban renewal in the Downtown. Older commercial buildings and residential structures were cleared to make way for several major development projects, including Old Capitol Mall, the Plaza Centre One office building, the Sheraton Hotel, a new Iowa City Public Library (which was extensively renovated and expanded again in 2004), two new parking structures, and the Dubuque/College Street Pedestrian Mall.

While the opening of the Coral Ridge Mall in 1998 drew away several national retailers—most notably J.C. Penney from the Old Capitol Mall—Downtown Iowa City remains a bustling, walkable urban center. An eclectic mix of small businesses, shops, restaurants, and hotels along with the Iowa City Public Library, live music and theatre venues, and art galleries give the Downtown a distinct identity and 24/7 activity.

Following the flood of 2008, which severely damaged portions of the University's arts campus on the west side of the river, the University turned its focus to the Downtown to temporarily house a number of programs, including the music department. Plans to permanently relocate the music school and recital hall to the corner of Burlington and Clinton Streets will enhance Downtown Iowa City's reputation as an arts and culture district and increase community access to University performances in a way that was not possible before. This artistic connection builds on the 2008 designation of Iowa City as a UNESCO City of Literature—the only U.S. City to hold this designation. This prestigious honor has forged a closer relationship between the city and the university and an appreciation of our shared destiny.



Photo © Greg Frieden, courtesy Iowa City Jazz Festival.

The Old Capitol building remains a focal point for the University of Iowa and the Iowa City community and symbolizes their shared history.

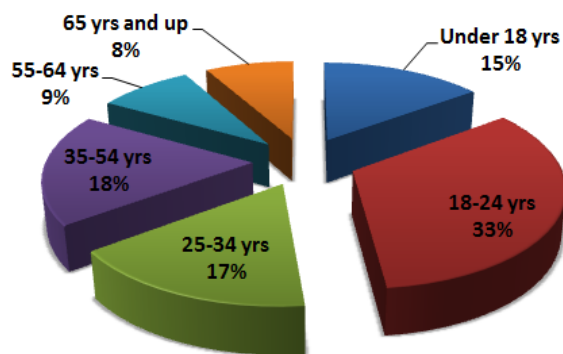


Photo courtesy of the University of Iowa.

College age residents and young adults comprise nearly half of Iowa City's population, with those between the ages of 18 and 24 accounting for 32.5% of the total population. From 2000 to 2012 this segment of the population grew by 10%.

### Percentage of Population in Selected Age Groups

Based on the 2010 U.S. Census



The flood recovery effort has drawn the city and University closer together, especially in planning for growth and expansion. The University is in the process of constructing its first new dormitory in more than forty years and has played an active role in advocating for safe off-campus housing and entertainment options for students, as well as stabilization and re-investment efforts in the near-campus neighborhoods. The UniverCity Neighborhood Partnership, a joint effort of the City and University, rehabilitates homes near campus to provide quality, affordable housing close to campus and Downtown. The University is an active participant in the City's planning efforts for the Riverfront Crossings and Downtown areas, encouraging opportunities for employees and others, including retirees, to live closer to the University and Downtown.

## Population

While many communities in Iowa and the rural Midwest are losing population, Iowa City continues to grow. According to the 2010 Census, Iowa City had a population of 67,862—a 9.1% increase over the 2000 Census. The Iowa City Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes Johnson and Washington Counties, was second only to Des Moines in population increase among Iowa metros.<sup>1</sup> Such growth is not a new trend: Iowa City's population has increased during every decade for the past century. Even during the Farm Crisis from 1980-1990, when the state as a whole experienced a decline in population, Iowa City grew by 18%. A linear projection model estimates that by 2030 the population of Iowa City will be approximately 84,000.

Higher education (the University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College), exerts a major influence on the demography of Iowa City. The student population of just under 31,000 (21,565 undergraduates) makes Iowa City's median age (25.4 years) young, especially for Iowa. Iowa City is also one of the most educated communities in the country: 95.7% of residents age 25-years and older have a high-school diploma; 59.9% of residents 25-years and older have a bachelor's degree or higher.

College age residents and young adults comprise nearly half of Iowa City's population, with those between the ages of 18 and 24 accounting for 32.5% of the total population. From 2000 to 2012 this segment of the population grew by 10% (from 20,438 persons to 22,708 persons). Meanwhile, the number of young adult residents aged 25-34 increased by 9.4% (from 10,218 to 11,183 persons), accounting for 12% of Iowa City's total population.<sup>2</sup>

1. "Iowa Population over 100 Years," by David J. Peters, Iowa State Extension, February 2011.

2. "American FactFinder," U.S. Census Bureau

Senior citizens and those approaching retirement age are by far the fastest growing age groups due to the aging Baby Boom generation and Iowa City’s allure as a regional retirement destination. Census data from 2000 to 2010 shows an 81% increase in the number of residents age 55 to 64, and a 26.5% increase in residents age 65 and over.

According to the 2010 Census, Iowa City experienced a decline in residents between the ages of 35 and 54 years of age—an age cohort that we might think of as the “family” years. The number of residents age 35 to 44 shows a decline of 13.5%, while the number of residents age 45 to 54 dropped by 6.9%. The only other group to experience a decline was the number of children 10-14 years of age, which dropped by 8%.

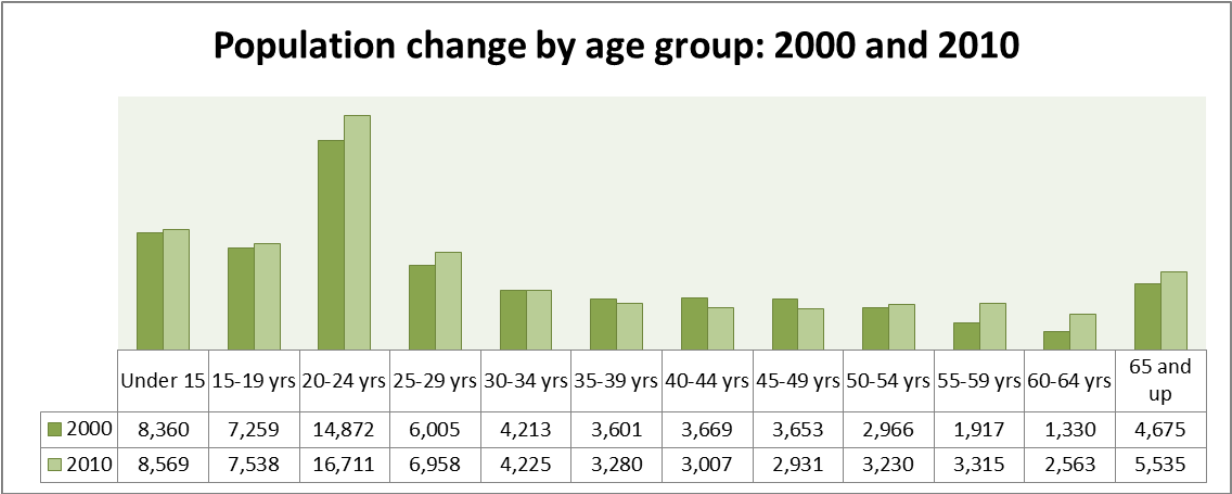
The 2010 Census shows that a full third of Iowa City households (9,488) consisted of single persons. Another 23% of households (6,426) are classified as non-family—that is people living together who are unrelated by birth or marriage. In Iowa City the average household size is 2.22 persons, just below the state (2.41) and national (2.58) averages. More than half of all households in Iowa City are renters.

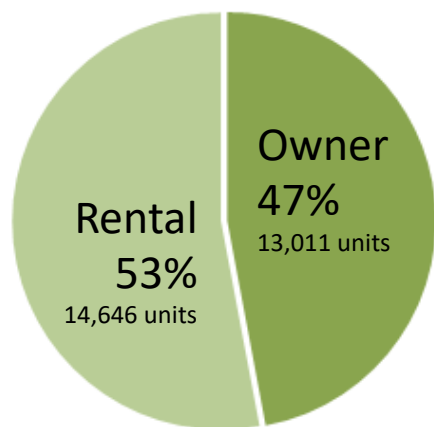
The growth in the number of young adults and seniors, along with the changing size and configuration of households, has important implications for future development. Iowa City is experiencing increasing demand for higher-density housing located in walkable neighborhoods, especially those close to downtown and campus, and for more housing options to accommodate seniors and empty-nesters. Meanwhile, stable neighborhoods with affordable housing and quality schools are essential to ensuring that Iowa City remains an attractive place for families with children.



Photo courtesy of the University of Iowa.

Senior Citizens and those approaching retirement age are the fastest growing age groups due to the aging Baby Boom generation and Iowa City’s allure as a retirement destination.





## Occupied Housing

According to the 2010 Census, more than half of all occupied housing units in Iowa City are rentals. \*

According to the 2010 Census there were 29,270 housing units in Iowa City. Of those, 27,657 were occupied.

The homeowner vacancy rate was 2.8%. This is comparable to the vacancy rate in the state of Iowa (2.0%) and in the U.S. (2.4%)

The rental vacancy rate was 4.1%. This is low when compared to the vacancy rate in the state of Iowa (8.5%) and in the U.S. (9.2%).

\*Housing unit refers to dwelling for an individual household, i.e. a house, or an apartment within a larger building.

## Housing

While unique forces contribute to a more resilient housing market than in most parts of the country, Iowa City was not immune to the recent national economic downturn. Likewise, new demographic trends, uncertainty in the financial sector, and concerns over the price of energy influence the demand for housing, as well as the type or style of housing being sought.

According to the 2010 Census, rental housing accounted for 53% of all occupied housing in Iowa City. Residents age 15-34 made up 73.1% of all renters, and one- or two-person households accounted for 72.6% of all rentals.<sup>3</sup> Small households are also typical for owner-occupied housing, with 65.5% consisting of one- or two- person households.

Median home value and median gross rent in Iowa City were the highest of any of the five most populous cities in the state.<sup>4</sup> Median home value in 2010 was estimated at \$188,000. Median gross rent was estimated at \$856. Housing prices outpaced income growth from 2000 to 2007. Meanwhile real median household income for Iowa City, which peaked in 2008 at \$54,466, dropped 11% by 2011.<sup>5</sup>

A growing percentage of Iowa City's population consists of students, young adults, retirees, and seniors. Housing trends for these populations point toward greater demand for homes, townhouses, condominiums, and apartments located in walkable urban neighborhoods such as those that exist and that are being contemplated in and around the Downtown, University Campus, and in other areas close to employment and recreation. Strong interest in the UniverCity Neighborhood Partnership Program; a significant increase in the pace of development of new homes in the Peninsula Neighborhood (despite the economic recession); continued reinvestment in and sales of homes, condominiums, and townhouses within walking distance of Downtown and the University campus; and continued construction of Downtown high-rise condominiums suggest there is increasing demand for higher-density, urban housing for people other than college students.

An overall growth strategy should take into account the trend toward infill development in areas such as the Riverfront Crossings and continued reinvestment in the city's existing housing stock to make these areas more affordable and attractive for families. Development of new neighborhoods should be designed as compact and walkable neighborhoods with a variety of housing types with access to public transit and within walking and biking distance to neighborhood schools and commercial services.

3. 2010 U.S. Census

4. 2010 American Community Survey (1-year estimates)

5. Department of Numbers website



The City has several affordable housing related documents including the 2015 Update to the Affordable Housing Market Analysis and the CITY STEPS Consolidated Plan, which document affordable housing issues and trends. These and future documents provide the basis for affordable housing-related discussions, policies and legislation

## Economy

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics July 2012 data, the Iowa City Metropolitan Area had the fifth lowest unemployment rate of any metro in the nation (4.2%). This is down from a high of 5.0% in 2009 at the peak of the national economic recession. Likewise, the state of Iowa has fared comparably well through the recession with an unemployment rate much lower than the national average.

The dominance of education, healthcare, and government sector jobs, which account for 45% of all jobs, has insulated the Iowa City economy from the significant negative economic impacts related to the national recession. The University of Iowa with its hospital and clinics is the City's largest employer with over 27,000 employees.<sup>5</sup> A number of major employers are also part of the education and healthcare industry: the Veterans Administration, Mercy Hospital and Clinics, American College Testing and NCS Pearson.

Occupational diversity is important to the economic health of the community. The City has taken steps to direct employment growth by identifying and zoning land to accommodate industrial, commercial, and office research uses in locations with appropriate transportation access and in proximity to compatible uses. The City has expanded the industrial area on the southeast side of Iowa City, in an area that provides the flat topography and ready access to rail and highways that industrial uses require. For firms that require close access to Interstate 80, lots will soon be available in the recently platted Moss Ridge Campus, an approximately 172-acre office park located at the Highway 1 (North Dodge Street) interchange with Interstate 80. The growing employment center that surrounds this interstate interchange is already home to a number of the City's major employers, including numerous medical and professional firms located in Northgate Corporate Park as well as ACT and NCS Pearson—education-based research and service firms that employ thousands of people.

One of the principal goals of the Comprehensive Plan is to foster an environment in the Downtown area that is attractive to new employers, especially professional, knowledge-based, and entrepreneurial firms and small businesses, cottage industries, artists and artisans that thrive on and expect urban amenities. One means of accomplishing this goal is to encourage the construction of Class A office space in new



Education and healthcare are the two largest employment sectors in Iowa City. The University of Iowa and its hospitals and clinics is the largest employer with more than 27,000 employees.

<sup>5</sup> University of Iowa Employment Profile, September 2012.



A concept for infill development in the West Riverfront Crossings District at the Intersection of Benton Street and Riverside Drive takes advantage of river views and the adjacent trail system.



A concept for streetscape improvements in Towncrest will provide an attractive pedestrian friendly entryway into this area that is proposed for mixed use development with an emphasis on office and medical uses in close proximity to schools, shopping, and public transit.

mixed-use buildings and the rehabilitation and re-use of under-utilized space within the existing historic mainstreet buildings. The combination of Class A office facilities, new Downtown living options, and proximity to educational facilities, diverse shopping, restaurants, and arts and performance venues will attract companies that seek creative work environments for their employees.

Thriving retail areas are essential for sustaining residential neighborhoods and employment centers. Businesses offering a variety of retail goods and services are concentrated in Downtown Iowa City, including the Northside Marketplace, and in designated commercial centers—Towncrest, Sycamore Mall, Walden Square on Mormon Trek Boulevard, and Old Towne Village at Scott Boulevard and Rochester Avenue—and along major commuter corridors, including Highways 1 and 6 and older commercial streets like Riverside Drive, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, and South Gilbert Street.

Urban infill areas, including Towncrest and Riverfront Crossings, have been targeted for redevelopment to create additional options for people to live close to employment and education centers, shopping, and healthcare. Transforming floodprone areas along the riverfront from quasi-industrial uses into a regional park in close proximity to the metro region's largest employment center, will create an ideal opportunity for redevelopment on both sides of the Iowa River. The City anticipates an increase in demand for higher density housing in the Riverfront Crossings District. As the residential population increases, local demand for neighborhood-serving retail shops, restaurants, and personal services will increase in Downtown and along Riverside Drive and South Gilbert Street. This increase in local market demand will help create a market incentive to transform the auto-oriented commercial strips along Riverside Drive and South Gilbert Street into walkable, urban streets. Ideally located as the primary street connection between Downtown Iowa City and the new riverfront park, Clinton Street may also see increased demand for urban commercial development. City investment in parks, riverfront recreational facilities, and pedestrian-oriented street infrastructure along with University investment in new music and arts facilities will create a catalyst for private development and increased economic activity in the Downtown area.

Since the economic recession, private lending has tightened and the City is receiving more requests to provide public financing for development projects. A slow economic recovery and tight financial markets will continue to prove a challenge for economic development efforts. In an effort to be fiscally responsible and sustainable, the City has instituted a more formalized evaluation of economic development projects to ensure that projects receiving public assistance are furthering the City's economic policy goals and have provided evidence that public assistance appropriate to ensure the project's success. To that end, the City has instituted a "gap analysis" requirement for most public assistance of private development. Through

gap analysis, the City ensures public money is provided only where private financing falls short. This “last money in” policy helps to assess whether taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly.

The City seeks to grow its commercial tax base through more aggressive marketing and outreach to new employers and businesses. The City’s incentive programs encourage the growth of higher paying jobs through policies that favor companies paying salaries above the median County wage (according to the U.S. Census, median household income in Johnson County from 2007-2011 was \$53,703). Community Development Block Grant Funds provide loans, forgivable loans, and grants to small businesses and start-ups that expand economic opportunity for low or moderate income persons through the creation and retention of jobs.

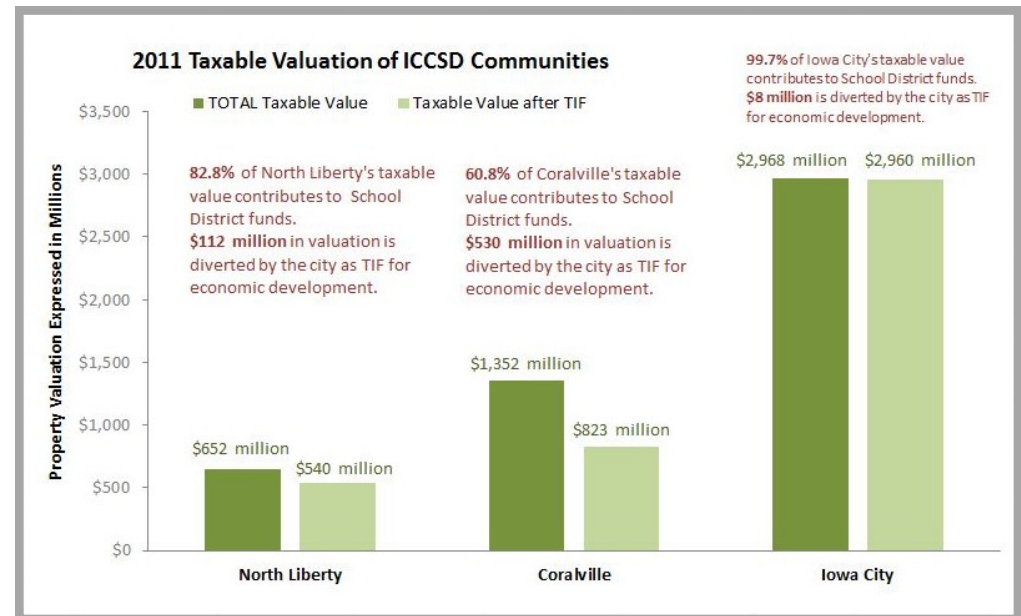
Other challenges remain. Economic competition, rather than collaboration, between neighboring towns in the metro area has become the norm. Over the past 10-15 years, Iowa City has lost retail and commercial establishments to neighboring communities, in part due to the lure of what many have characterized as excessive public assistance through the aggressive use of tax increment financing (TIF). Originally intended to facilitate the rehabilitation of blighted areas, TIF laws in Iowa were expanded in the 1980s to apply more broadly to spur economic development, the intention being to attract new employers from outside Iowa or assist start-up or expanding businesses. Unfortunately, TIF has increasingly been used to shift or attract existing businesses from one city to another within the same metropolitan area. The resulting migration of existing businesses within the Iowa City metro has negatively affected tax revenue not only for Iowa City but for the local school district and the County.

This interference in the free market has shifted and concentrated retail services at the edge of the metro area and away from the more densely populated residential neighborhoods, adding to urban sprawl. Subsidizing the movement of retail businesses from one jurisdiction to another has provided little benefit to residents in the metro area as a whole when compared to the costs incurred in public debt. Unfortunately, the public costs associated with excessive use of TIF have been largely hidden and are not well understood, but are likely to fall heavily on future generations.

In addition, potential changes in state property tax laws, including commercial property tax rollbacks and condo/co-oping of commer-



The use of TIF dollars to entice Von Maur to relocate from Iowa City to Coralville has prompted a re-examination of the real costs and benefits of economic development in the metro area.







McCollister Bridge, completed in 2009, is the first new roadway to be constructed over the Iowa River since the early 1960s. The bridge is part of McCollister Boulevard, an east-west arterial that will provide relief for Highway 6 to the north, connecting South Gilbert Street west to Mormon Trek Boulevard. Eventually the road will be extended east to Scott Boulevard, opening up residential development throughout south Iowa City.

cial apartments, have the potential to severely impact City tax revenue. These issues present serious challenges that can only be addressed through frank public discussion, education, and increased cooperation and collaboration between the various local and state government entities.

## Growth and Infrastructure

Iowa City's growth policy is an integral part of the Comprehensive Plan in the following ways:

- It defines a long-range planning boundary for Iowa City;
- It establishes when annexations should occur; and
- It establishes where the investment of public funds for infrastructure and improvements should occur (namely roads, water, and sewer).

The Growth Boundary defines the city's potential corporate limits—land that, for the purposes of long-range planning, is projected to serve the city's growth need for 30-40 years. Sanitary sewer and streets are the most expensive items of public infrastructure that must be provided to all new development within the City.

Land included in the growth area must have the potential to be connected to the sewer system, which is based on watershed boundaries. Guiding new developments to watersheds that can be served by gravity flow to the City's sewage treatment plant facility enables the most cost effective provision of this essential City service. The growth boundary is used when making decisions regarding the extension of infrastructure, the approval of subdivisions, the approval of agreements with other governmental jurisdictions regarding growth, and in response to annexation requests. In addition, the City coordinates with private utilities to ensure that areas proposed for development can be fully served.

A Public Works land inventory completed in 2008 indicates that Iowa City had more than 1,496 acres of vacant residential land within city limits, mostly in the South and Northeast District. The designated growth area contains an additional 3,095 acres of vacant residential land. Assuming that future residential development occurs at densities similar to recent development patterns, Iowa City could reach build out capacity in 2034. However, if residential development were to maximize current zoning capacity, Iowa City would not reach build out capacity until 2055. Neither of these assumptions accounts for the potential of infill development in areas like Riverfront Crossings and Towncrest. Infill development at higher densities would absorb some housing demand, thus conserving farmland and maximizing the use of infrastructure.

## Prioritization of Investment in Infrastructure

When the City prioritizes public investment in infrastructure and public amenities, improvements that serve properties within the corporate limits of Iowa City that further the City's policy of compact and contiguous growth, including urban infill development, should be given priority. This policy will guide decision-making for the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP is one of the most effective tools the City has to affect the timing and direction of growth, quality of life, the growth of basic industry, and the cost of housing. Historically the City invested in infrastructure to accommodate moderate growth rather than building infrastructure prior to development. In the future, City Council will use the CIP to effectively guide the location and timing of growth in the community through an annual review and prioritization of the CIP prior to the budget process.

While continued development of new neighborhoods and employment areas are anticipated in the City's growth area, a significant policy focus for the City is to accommodate growth to the extent possible by facilitating higher density urban infill development, such as in the Riverfront Crossings District, and through stabilization and revitalization efforts in existing neighborhoods and commercial areas, such as Downtown, Towncrest, and Sycamore Mall.

## Annexation Policy

Growth and development outside the corporate boundaries, within the long-range planning area and beyond, is influenced by the City through annexation and the Iowa City/Johnson County Fringe Area Agreement. Annexations occur primarily in response to petitions filed by the owners of property requesting to be annexed. Voluntary annexation is generally viewed positively when the following conditions exist:

1. The area under consideration falls within the long-range planning boundary;
2. Development in the area proposed for annexation will fulfill an identified need without imposing an undue financial burden on the City; or
3. Control of development is in the City's best interest.

Annexations will typically be achieved through voluntary means. Involuntary annexations, which are initiated by the City against a property owner's wishes, are considered only in extraordinary circumstances. As part of any proposed annexation or development, the City must evaluate the capacity of existing infrastructure, including streets, water, and sewer.



A community cannot grow without major investments in infrastructure, including water purification and waste water treatment. In 2011, Iowa City's water treatment facility provided an average of 5.54 million gallons of water per day to customers.



An aerial view of the eastern edge of Iowa City.

An important goal of Iowa City's Comprehensive Plan is to manage urban growth by encouraging compact and contiguous development. Contiguous development is more efficient since building on land that is adjacent to existing development and connecting into existing road and utility networks is cost and resource efficient and ensures that neighborhoods are not isolated. This saves money for developers, property owners, and taxpayers.

If the annexation is for residential development that will result in the creation of ten (10) or more new housing units, the development will support the City's goal of creating and maintaining the supply of affordable housing. Such support shall be based on providing affordable units equal to 10% of the total units in the annexed area with an assurance of long term affordability, preferably for a term of not less than 20 years. Income targets shall be consistent with the City's existing program requirements. How the development provides such support will vary depending on the particular circumstances of annexation, and may include, but is not limited to, transfer of lots/units to the City or an affordable housing provider; fee-in-lieu paid to the City's affordable housing fund; and/or participation in a state or federal housing program. In determining the most desirable option, preference shall be weighted toward options that help achieve better socio-economic balance among Iowa City neighborhoods and among schools in the Iowa City Community School District. An agreement committing the Owner/Developer to the affordable housing obligation, shall be required prior to annexation, and shall be further memorialized, if necessary, in a conditional zoning agreement.

## Fringe Area Agreement

State enabling legislation permits a city to regulate the subdivision of land within two miles of the City's corporate boundaries. This area is known as the urban fringe area. Counties that enact ordinances control the land uses permitted in this same area through zoning.

In the interest of managing growth and development in Iowa City's two-mile fringe area in a mutually acceptable manner, Johnson County and Iowa City have agreed on the appropriate land uses and standards for development. As Johnson County considers rezoning applications and Iowa City reviews subdivisions, their decisions will be governed by the Iowa City/Johnson County Fringe Area Policy Agreement.

The Agreement focuses exurban development in the area north of Iowa City, encourages development in Iowa City's growth area only upon annexation, and provides some incentive for the preservation of open space and environmentally sensitive features. The agreement has been working well to achieve the goals of both the City and County. Although it will be reviewed periodically for updates, the implementation of the Fringe Area Agreement will likely continue without significant changes. [See Fringe Area Map in the appendix to this document.]

## Growth and the Environment

Iowa City's vision for the future includes environmental protection as a basic tenet. This includes strong community support for the Sensitive Areas Ordinance (SAO). Growth and development should be managed such that the environmental quality of the community is not sacrificed. Measures should be taken in all private and public projects to ensure that any impacts on regulated environmental features are minimized.

The City's Sensitive Areas Inventory identifies the general location of woodlands, wetlands, regulated slopes, hydric soils, prairie remnants, stream corridors, and archaeological sites (See the appendix). Based on the information provided in the inventory, an ordinance was adopted in 1995 to provide protections for the identified environmentally sensitive areas. The ordinance requires consideration of environmental features during the development process and encourages construction that respects and protects natural areas. As the City continues to grow and redevelop, natural areas that contribute to the health and character of the city will be protected. The City should encourage subdivisions that not only preserve environmental areas but that incorporate them as assets in the overall development as private or public open space.

# How we grow

It is clear from planning workshops for the IC2030 update and various district plans, as well as public input regarding recent zoning and development applications, that people care deeply about how Iowa City grows. There is a tension between the sense of smallness and tradition that people value and identify as being uniquely Iowa City and the uncertainty that comes with change in a growing community. At the edge of the city, residents often view with consternation the development of agricultural land, woodlands, and open vistas. Likewise, residents of established neighborhoods near the downtown and campus feel threatened as the demand for rental housing (esp. short-term, student rentals) results in increased density or other changes that alter the character of neighborhoods.

As stated in the introduction to this plan, Iowa City's population has increased in every decade for the last century, even during the years of the Farm Crisis when the state lost population. People continue to relocate to Iowa City for the very things that attracted most current residents: access to high-quality jobs and education, a positive business environment, safe neighborhoods, exceptional healthcare, senior living options, and a lively arts and culture scene. The question is not whether Iowa City will grow, but rather how we will grow. The IC2030 Plan builds upon the 1997 Plan, including the District Plans, to support sustainable growth: development that preserves what is best about our community in terms of both built environment and undeveloped areas, while maintaining Iowa City as an attractive, safe, affordable, and accessible place to live.

## Creating and sustaining healthy neighborhoods

When asked what they like best about Iowa City, participants in an on-line survey and in planning workshops consistently describe a community that offers big-city culture and diversity with the charm and convenience of small-town living. The ease of getting around town and ready access to parks, schools, shopping, and healthcare are not by accident. Current City policies support the efficient use of land for new development by encouraging compact, contiguous development at the edge of the City while focusing greater urban density close to our employment centers, especially in the Downtown and near campus areas. Iowa City's Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations, along with the strategies contained in the District Plans, focus on the creation of neighborhoods that provide housing for a diverse population, a mix of land uses, public spaces that provide a focal point for the neighborhood, accessible open space for recreation and social interaction, integrated civic and commercial centers, and a network of streets that provide safe and efficient travel for cars, buses, bikes, and pedestrians.



A compact neighborhood in Iowa City's Southeast District.

### **Compact, contiguous neighborhood design benefits developers, homeowners, and taxpayers**

- Uses less land (slows outward growth of the city).
- Provides opportunities to preserve unique features of a site, such as natural areas, historic features, and open space that add character and amenity value to the new neighborhood.
- Less costly to construct and maintain public infrastructure—streets, water, sewer, other utilities.
- Less costly to provide public services—including transit, waste and recycling pick-up, snow removal, public safety and emergency response.



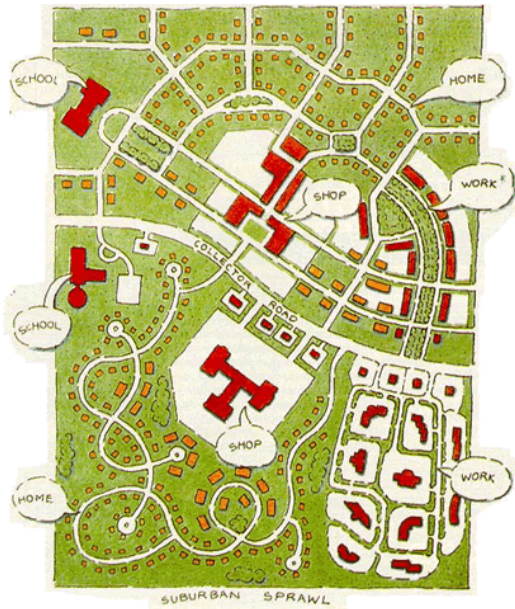


IMAGE courtesy U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

A well-planned neighborhood on the top half of the image, is contrasted with urban sprawl on the lower half of the image. Neighborhoods with connected street networks allow residents to move throughout their neighborhood with ease and to travel to nearby commercial or employment centers via multiple routes. A compact neighborhood with a well-connected street pattern also allows the community to provide utilities and services in the most efficient manner, which saves money for taxpayers.

What follows is a list of Iowa City's principles for creating and sustaining healthy neighborhoods. These principles are woven throughout Iowa City's eight completed District Plans, as well as the Master Plans for Towncrest and the Downtown and Riverfront Crossings:

**Preserve Historic Resources and Reinvest in Established Neighborhoods:** Adopting strategies to assure the stability and livability of Iowa City's historic and established neighborhoods helps to preserve the culture, history, and identity of Iowa City. Investing in the neighborhoods that are closest to major employers in the city preserves opportunities for people to live close to work, school, and shopping; promotes walking and bicycling; and reduces vehicle miles traveled. In addition, many established neighborhoods contain affordable housing options along walkable, tree-lined streets where City services and infrastructure are already in place and where neighborhood elementary schools and parks are the focal point of neighborhood activity and identity.

**Compatible Infill Development:** Quality infill development plays an important role in neighborhood reinvestment and may include rehabilitating existing structures or encouraging new development of vacant, blighted, or deteriorated property. Development of infill sites should add to the diversity of housing options without compromising neighborhood character or over-burdening infrastructure, including alleys and parking.

**Diversity of Housing Types:** A mix of housing types within a neighborhood provides residential opportunities for a variety of people, including singles, couples, families with children, and elderly persons. Integrating diverse housing sizes and types throughout the community increases the opportunity for people to live in the same neighborhood throughout the stages of life. A rich mix of housing within a neighborhood may include single-family homes on small and large lots, townhouses, duplexes, small apartment buildings, and zero-lot-line housing, as well as apartments in mixed-use buildings located in neighborhood commercial areas and the Downtown.

**Affordable Housing:** By allowing for a mix of housing types, moderately priced housing can be incorporated into a neighborhood, rather than segregated in one or two areas of the community. Small multi-family buildings can be incorporated on corner lots adjacent to arterial streets, and townhouses and duplex units can be mixed with single-family homes within a neighborhood. Apartments located above commercial businesses provide needed housing while increasing the local customer base for the commercial establishments.

**Neighborhood Schools:** Neighborhood schools, particularly elementary schools, are an integral part of healthy, sustainable neighborhoods. Schools serve not only as centers of education but as a focal point for

community gathering and neighborhood identity. In addition, the school grounds provide opportunities for exercise and recreation for neighborhood residents throughout the year. Neighborhood elementary schools have a symbiotic relationship with the surrounding neighborhood where the school is an essential element that contributes to the quality of life. This in turn contributes to the social connections, identity, safety, and well-being of the families whose children attend the school.

**Neighborhood Commercial Areas:** Neighborhood commercial areas can provide a focal point and gathering place for a neighborhood. The businesses within a neighborhood commercial center should provide shopping opportunities within convenient walking distance for the residents in the immediate area. The design of the neighborhood commercial center should have a pedestrian orientation with the stores placed close to the street, but with sufficient open space to allow for outdoor cafes and patios or landscaping. Parking should be located to the rear and sides of stores with additional parking on the street. Incorporating apartments above shops and reserving public open space are two ways to foster additional activity and vitality in a neighborhood commercial area. Some aspects of commercial development such as auto-oriented uses, parking lots, bright lights, and signage needed to be located, screened, or buffered so that they do not detract from nearby residential uses.

**Interconnected Street System:** Grid street systems help to reduce congestion by dispersing traffic, since there are multiple routes to get from point A to point B. In addition, by providing more direct routes, interconnected streets can reduce the vehicle miles traveled each day within a neighborhood, provide more direct walking and biking routes to neighborhood destinations, and reduce the cost of providing City services.

**Streets as More than Pavement:** Streets and the adjacent parkways and sidewalks can be enhanced and planned to encourage pedestrian activity. Street trees, benches, sidewalks, and attractive lighting along the street help create pleasant and safe public spaces for walking to neighborhood destinations and for socializing with neighbors. Streetscape amenities help establish a sense of distinction, identity, and security within a neighborhood. In residential neighborhoods, narrower street pavement widths slow traffic, reduce infrastructure costs, and allow for a more complete tree canopy over the street.

**Shallow Front Yard Setbacks:** Placing homes closer to the street allows more backyard space and room for garages and utilities if there is also an alley located behind the home. Shallow setbacks (15-20 feet is the code standard for residential uses) combined with narrower street pavement widths, create a more intimate pedestrian-scale public space along the street, which encourages walking and social interaction.



A concept design included in the Southwest District Plan shows a future neighborhood with public open space, trails, and commercial areas integrated into the neighborhood. Within the neighborhood there are opportunities for single-family housing as well as multi-family and townhomes. Woodland areas, are preserved as features that add value to the neighborhood and stormwater management creates a small lake that could serve as a neighborhood focal point.





Photo of Brookland Park. Parks provide a focal point for the surrounding neighborhood and an opportunity for social interaction and recreation.

**Narrower Lot Frontages:** Compact development makes efficient use of land and reduces costs associated with the provision and maintenance of public improvements, such as streets, sewers and water lines. This benefits developers and tax payers. Narrower lot frontages combined with smaller lots sizes reduces the overall cost of new housing construction, creating opportunities for more moderately priced housing.

**Use of Alleys:** Providing parking and utilities from a rear alley or private lane is particularly advantageous in neighborhoods with narrower lot frontages. This arrangement reduces driveway paving and interruptions to the sidewalk network, allows more room for front yard landscaping, and increases the availability of on-street parking for visitors. In addition, when garages are accessed from alleys, vehicular traffic and congestion on residential streets is reduced.

**Pedestrian/Bikeway Connections:** Important neighborhood destinations, such as parks, schools, bus stops, and neighborhood shopping centers should be readily accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists. This requires a continuous sidewalk system, strategically located trails, and on-street bicycle facilities. Bike routes that intersect with key neighborhood destinations may be aligned along neighborhood streets or constructed in stream buffer areas or within major sanitary sewer easements. A pleasant streetscape with trees and appropriate building setbacks and driveway separation creates an environment that is safe and appealing for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Parks, Trails and Open Space:** Neighborhood parks are small, one- to seven- acre open spaces that provide a focal point for informal gatherings and recreation within easy walking distance from most homes in the neighborhood. Neighborhood parks should be centrally located or situated adjacent to a school or a neighborhood commercial area and designed as an integral part of an interconnected system of open space with trails or wide sidewalks to connect neighborhood parks with larger community and regional parks. Preservation of sensitive areas, such as wetlands, woodlands, and stream corridors and their buffers, provides an opportunity to shape and enhance a neighborhood, while maintaining scenic and natural resources and wildlife habitat. Wherever possible, natural features, such as waterways and woodlands, should be incorporated as key amenities within parks and along trail systems.

**Buffer Residential Development from Incompatible Uses:** To help assure the long-term livability of neighborhoods, provide sufficient buffers between residential development and land uses and activities, such as the waste water treatment plant, Interstate 80 and Highway 218, and the landfill.

**Public Safety:** Iowa City works to ensure public safety throughout the community. The establishment of Fire Station 4, the Police Substation at Pepperwood Plaza, and cooperative efforts with neighborhood groups, schools, and the University of Iowa demonstrate this commitment. Resources are directed toward education, crime prevention, and enforcement to enhance the quality of life in Iowa City.

# Land Use

## Vision:

Iowa City guides development and growth in order to make wise and efficient use of land and infrastructure. In order to create a quality living environment for all area residents, the City will protect and promote the character and integrity of existing neighborhoods, while encouraging new development that is designed in a manner that is efficient and sustainable, compatible with and connected to surrounding development, and sensitive to its environmental context. Future development should adhere to the City's neighborhood principles for compact and contiguous development.

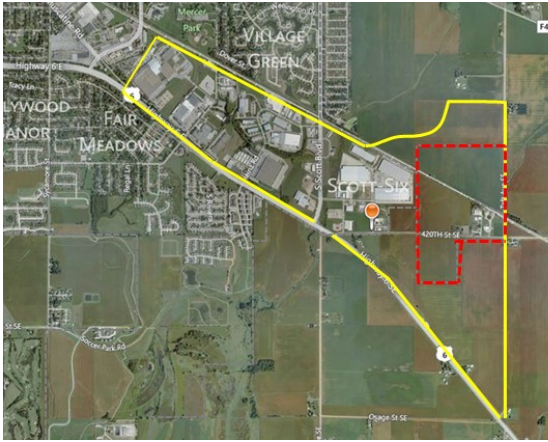
## Land Use Goals and Strategies:

**Encourage compact, efficient development that is contiguous and connected to existing neighborhoods to reduce the cost of extending infrastructure and services and to preserve farmland and open space at the edge of the city.**

- Focus growth within the Iowa City urban growth area by using the City's extra-territorial review powers to discourage sprawl and preserve prime farmland.
- Guide development away from sensitive environmental areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, flood hazard areas, and streams.
- Recognize the important relationship between transportation and land use by requiring new neighborhoods to be designed in a manner that contributes to the larger interconnected street pattern of the city and that provides for safe, efficient and orderly movement of vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic.
- Blocks should be limited in size and be laid out in a pattern that ensures the connectivity of streets, provides for efficient provision of public and safety services, and establishes efficient and logical routes between residences and non-residential destinations and public gathering places.
- Identify areas and properties that are appropriate for infill development.
- Ensure that infill development is compatible and complementary to the surrounding neighborhood.



Iowa City requires all new subdivisions to connect into existing street networks and to provide opportunities to link into future developments by building stub streets. This not only builds continuity and connection for neighborhood residents, but allows for better traffic flow and more efficient provision of sewer, water and City services, including fire fighting and police protection, waste and recycling collection, and transit.



Iowa City's principal industrial area is located in the area between Highway 6, Scott Boulevard, and the Iowa Interstate Railroad. Industrial uses require large parcels on flat land with proximity to highway and rail. The yellow line shows future growth of the Industrial zone; the area in red is a recently added section of industrial property that is being marketed to firms associated with wind energy.

**Plan for commercial development in defined commercial nodes, including small-scale neighborhood commercial centers.**

- Use the District Plans to identify appropriate commercial nodes and zone accordingly to focus commercial development to meet the needs of present and future population.
- Discourage linear strip commercial development that discourages walking and biking and does not contribute to the development of compact, urban neighborhoods;
- Provide appropriate transitions between high and low-density development and between commercial areas and residential zones.

**Focus industrial development on land suitable for industrial use with good access to rail and highways, but buffered from residential neighborhoods.**

- Identify, zone, and preserve land for industrial uses in areas with ready access to rail and highways.
- Ensure adequate roads and other infrastructure that will attract new employers to the community.
- Plan for appropriate transitions between residential neighborhoods and higher intensity commercial to ensure the long-term health of neighborhoods.
- Provide adequate buffer areas between residential areas and intensive industrial activity to mitigate any negative externalities, such as noise, odors, dust, and vibrations.

**Maintain a strong and accessible Downtown that is pedestrian-oriented with a strong and distinctive cultural, commercial, and residential character.**

- Encourage continued investment in the Downtown to assure its place as the center of arts, culture, entertainment, commercial, and civic activity within the city and the metro area.
- Promote growth and development in the Riverfront Crossings District in a manner that increases its residential appeal and enhances the commercial viability of the Downtown.
- Preserve the historic, mainstreet character of the Downtown, while encouraging appropriate infill development to enhance the economic viability and residential diversity of the area.

**Continue to protect our community's historical, environmental, and aesthetic assets.**

- Develop strategies to encourage the protection of natural areas and historic features and support the enhancement of areas that can serve as assets and/or amenities for adjacent development.
- Use City projects, such as the riverfront redevelopment, as an opportunity to demonstrate the appropriate relationship between development and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Continue support for the Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan, the Sensitive Areas Ordinance, and Open Space requirements.
- Preserve and enhance the entranceways to the city. Consider the appearance of new development from major entranceways at the time of rezoning.

**Review zoning and annexation of undeveloped areas to plan for the development of sustainable and livable neighborhoods.**

- Zone for neighborhood development in conjunction with annexation.
- Continue coordinated efforts with surrounding municipal governments to plan for future growth and development.



Historic preservation policies have not only helped to save some of Iowa City's most historic buildings, but have also allowed creative re-use of buildings like the Park House Hotel at the corner of South Dubuque and Jefferson Street and the Carnegie Library at the Corner of South Linn and College Streets. Historic Districts have helped preserve the distinctive architecture of entire neighborhoods as varied as the elegant homes of Woodlawn at the east end of Iowa Avenue to the eclectic stone cottages of the Moffitt District.



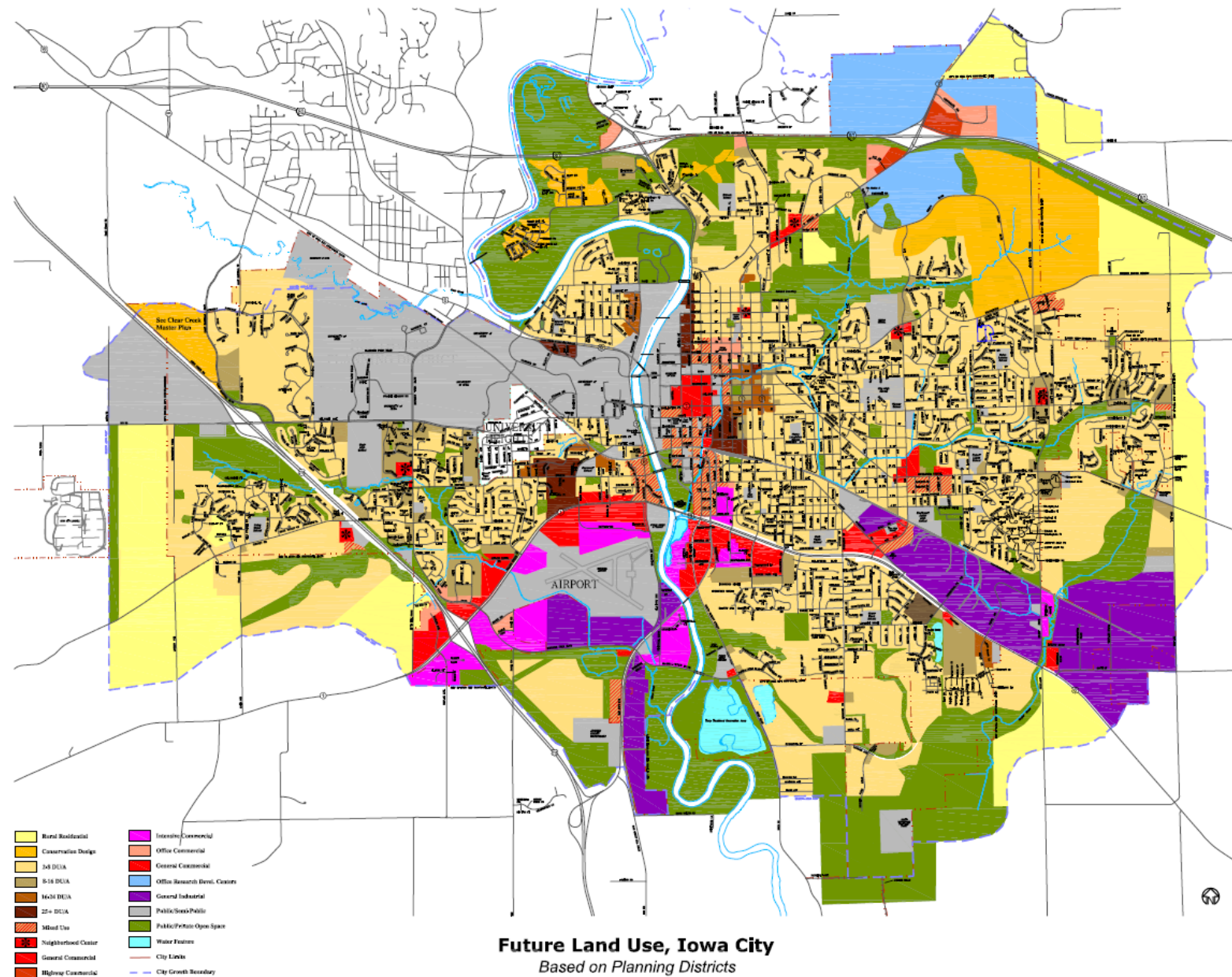
The land use map is intended to serve as a general guide for persons making decisions regarding the development of land within Iowa City. The map indicates appropriate land uses and density of development in relationship to available infrastructure, City services, environmental conditions, and surrounding land uses. The map must be viewed in the context of the overall Comprehensive Plan. Where District Plans have been adopted, more detail regarding specific locations and properties may be found in the District Plan.

In addition to the District Plans, the neighborhood design principles, beginning on page 19, should be considered when interpreting the land use map. For example, if a property is located at the intersection of a collector and an arterial street, the neighborhood design concepts indicate that alternatives to single-family development, i.e. neighborhood commercial or multi-family development, may be appropriate.

Areas that are shown as Rural Residential are areas that are not projected to have the utilities necessary for urban development in the foreseeable future or are areas that have sensitive environmental features that preclude development at urban densities. As infrastructure is extended, appropriate land uses or restrictions will need to be evaluated.

Conservation design is appropriate in areas containing steep slopes, woodlands, stream corridors, and other sensitive features and balance the protection of sensitive natural features with the development rights of property owners. By clustering development on more buildable portions of the property, natural areas can be preserved. Building sites are identified to take advantage of the views of the preserved land, and streets are designed to access the properties in a manner that minimizes disturbance of natural areas. The resulting subdivision has more compact areas of development, but less paving and more open space when compared to conventional development.

## Future Land Use Map



A larger version of this map is available on page 51 of this document or by request from the Dept. of Planning and Community Development.

# Housing

## Vision:

Iowa City is a community of neighborhoods with safe, attractive, and affordable housing options to serve residents throughout their lifetimes. To this end, the City of Iowa City will support policies that preserve and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods while encouraging diverse and affordable housing options in all neighborhoods—new and old.

## Housing Goals and strategies:

### Encourage a diversity of housing options in all neighborhoods.

- Ensure a mix of housing types within each neighborhood, to provide options for households of all types (singles, families, retirees, etc.) and people of all incomes.
- Encourage development on smaller lots that conserve land and allow for more affordable single-family housing options.
- Strive to create a healthy balance of rental and owner-occupied housing in all neighborhoods.
- Identify and support infill development and redevelopment opportunities in areas where services and infrastructure are already in place.
- Concentrate new development in areas contiguous to existing neighborhoods where it is most cost effective to extend infrastructure and services.
- Encourage projects that attract long-term residents to Downtown, Riverfront Crossings, and the University Impact Zone.
- Encourage publicly and privately developed dormitory-style housing for University students in areas close to the University campus, but away from single-family neighborhoods.
- Ensure that dormitory-style housing for University students includes recreational and open space amenities that provide for a safe and healthy student living environment.
- Promote housing design and features that allow people to age in place, such as universal design.
- Encourage green building techniques and promote energy efficiency in all housing.



Neighborhoods should provide a variety of housing options to serve people throughout the various stages of life: single working people, families, and seniors.





The UniverCity Neighborhood Partnership purchases and renovates rental properties in areas near the Downtown and Campus. These homes are then resold as affordable owner-occupied housing. The goal is to achieve a healthier balance of owner-occupied and rental properties in near-campus neighborhoods that still retain a single-family character.

### **Improve and maintain housing stock in established neighborhoods.**

- Continue to support and promote programs that fund or provide low-interest loans for housing maintenance or rehabilitation such as the General Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (GRIP), the Targeted Neighborhood Improvement Program (TARP), and the UniverCity Neighborhood Partnership.
- Encourage the improvement or re-development of substandard multi-family housing.
- Identify areas within established neighborhoods where infill development would be appropriate.

### **Maintain and improve the safety of all housing.**

- Enforce building and housing codes.
- Review existing codes for consistency with the goal to provide safe housing, re-evaluating provisions that have no apparent basis in safety.
- Update codes to accommodate the use of new technology and construction techniques.
- Explore Home Energy Rating Standards for new construction and significant remodel/rehabilitation projects.

### **Preserve the integrity of existing neighborhoods and the historic nature of older neighborhoods.**

- Develop neighborhood plans that help ensure a balance of housing types, especially in older parts of the city.
- Support the Historic Preservation Commission's efforts to meet its goals.
- Support housing rehabilitation programs and re-invest in housing in existing neighborhoods.

### **Mitigate impact of large scale residential development**

- Mitigate the impact of redevelopment on occupants of proposed projects involving the remodeling or reconstruction of existing multi-family residential dwellings by fostering communication between property owners and occupants through sufficient notice requirements, and encouraging the developer to create thoughtful transition plans that seek to accommodate the relocation needs of current occupants.



**Support sustainability initiatives to create more energy efficient development.**

- Support programs to improve the efficiency and environmental sustainability of housing.
- Support compact, contiguous development to ensure the efficient use of land and to enhance opportunities for alternatives to commuting by car.

# Economic Development

## Vision:

Iowa City strives to build a resilient economy that grows the tax base and supports a high quality of life for our community. Iowa City's economic development efforts focus on attracting long-term investment and creating quality jobs, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, and supporting opportunities for growth and prosperity for all people.

## Economic Development Goals & Strategies:

**Increase and diversify the property tax base by encouraging the retention and expansion of existing businesses and attracting businesses that have growth potential and are compatible with Iowa City's economy.**

- Target industrial and business sectors that align with Iowa City's economic strengths, including biotechnology, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, information technology, education services, and renewable energy.
- Enhance and expand the City's online economic development presence, providing businesses with easy access to resources and information about economic development in Iowa City.
- Provide an attractive economic environment with a streamlined, business-friendly culture by making regulatory and permitting processes clear, predictable, and coordinated.

**Provide an environment that supports quality employment and living wages and that enhances workforce skills and educational levels.**

- Encourage higher-skilled and higher-paying jobs through programs and policies that favor companies paying salaries above the median wage in Johnson County.
- Support small business start-ups and expansions that expand job opportunities for low and moderate income persons through programs such as the City's Economic Development Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds.



Aerial view of the Moss Ridge Development property, located to the west of the NCS Pearson campus.

The Moss Ridge Development is a proposed 172-acre class A office park to be located west of NCS Pearson. The will expand Iowa City's Office Research Park zone, adding to a major employment center at the Interstate 80 and Highway 1 intersection.



Photo of an office in Busy Coworking located above the Chait Galleries in downtown Iowa City.

Encouraging entrepreneurship and small start-up businesses is an important economic goal of the Comprehensive Plan. To that end the City of Iowa City has provided support for two coworking offices: Busy Coworking and the Iowa City Area Development Group's IC Colab. For a membership fee, entrepreneurs get access to offices, conference rooms, wi-fi, printing, and photocopying on an as-needed basis. Coworking also provides unique opportunities for networking and collaboration between businesses.

- Support workforce development, including job training programs and initiatives for business development.
- Work to achieve universal access to broadband service, ensuring that all households and businesses have access to reliable, affordable telecommunication services throughout Iowa City

#### **Encourage a healthy mix of independent, locally-owned businesses and national businesses.**

- Support efforts of locally-owned and independent businesses to organize and promote themselves through "buy local" and similar campaigns.
- Establish strategies to retain and encourage growth of existing locally-owned businesses.
- Recognize that small, and independently owned, local businesses are integral to Iowa City's "brand" and sense of identity.
- Strategically recruit new retail and commercial business that can serve as anchors for Iowa City's commercial centers as well as those that provide goods or services not currently available in the community.

#### **Support entrepreneurial activity and promote an economic culture of innovation and collaboration among entrepreneurs and existing businesses.**

- Continue support for co-working spaces, live-work spaces, mixed-use developments, and other innovative office environments.
- Promote Iowa City's creative economy, including its arts and culture, and support development, particularly in Downtown and Riverfront Crossings, of unique nodes of economic activity, such as artist communities or high-tech business incubator spaces.
- Establish strategies to secure next-generation, state-of-the-art broadband and infrastructure.
- Encourage strong collaborative relationships among entrepreneurs and existing businesses through networking events, City staff-initiated connections, and other private efforts.

#### **Improve the environmental and economic health of the community through efficient use of resources.**

- Encourage new business development in existing core or neighborhood commercial areas.
- Support projects that provide opportunities for workers to live close to their place of employment

through programs such as the UniverCity Neighborhood Partnership.

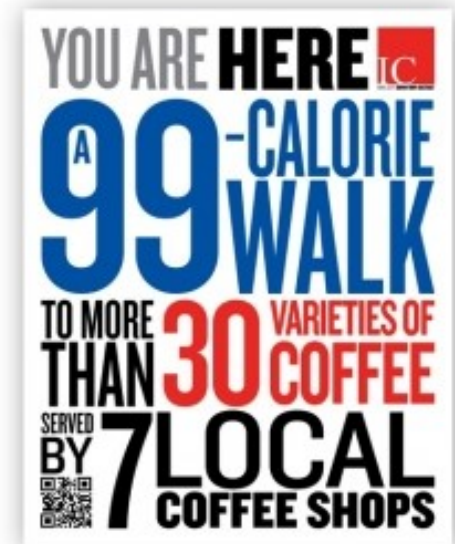
- Support the development of the Iowa City Industrial Park as a hub for renewable energy companies and other industrial operations, and promote appropriate development in the City's other designated urban renewal areas, including: City-University Project I, Northgate Corporate Park, Sycamore & First Avenue, Lower Muscatine Road & Highway 6, Industrial Park Road, Heinz Road, Highway 6, Moss Green, Towncrest, and Riverfront Crossings.
- Encourage sustainable development practices, such as stormwater best management practices and construction of energy-efficient buildings that meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.
- Support efforts to expand local food production.

**Continue collaboration with other local organizations to promote economic development in Iowa City.**

- Continue to support and work with Iowa City Area Development (ICAD) as the lead economic development agency in the area.
- Coordinate with the University of Iowa, the Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce, the Iowa City Downtown District, and other organizations to attract new businesses and grow existing businesses.
- Recognize Iowa City's arts and cultural offerings as an important resource to attract business and recruit employees to Iowa City.

**Consider judicious use of financial incentives and programs to achieve the economic development goals listed above.**

- Use objective measurement tools to evaluate public financing requests.
- Focus incentives on designated urban renewal areas.
- Concentrate incentives on businesses that create jobs that elevate the county median wage and provide multiplier effects in the local economy.
- Provide for and facilitate the timely review by the Economic Development Committee and the City Council of requests for financial incentives.
- When in competition to retain existing or attract new business, ensure that incentives provided are appropriate and justifiable.



The Iowa City Downtown District (ICDD) was established in 2012 and is supported by a special tax assessment that was supported by the business and property owners in the Downtown and Northside Marketplace. The ICDD promotes the District by coordinating events and programs, improving the efficiency of services, and providing small business support and marketing. The poster above is part of ICDD campaign to encourage walking in the District and to call attention to the Downtown's contributions to sustainability.





# Transportation

## Vision:

The City of Iowa City is committed to providing a transportation system that offers safe and efficient modes of travel for all users while balancing the need to protect our social and natural environment.

## Transportation Goals and Strategies:

### **Accommodate all modes of transportation on the street system.**

- Design arterial streets as “complete streets” where all modes of transportation are considered, including private motorized vehicles, transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists as required by the City’s adopted Complete Streets Policy.
- Require sidewalks on both sides of city streets.
- Continue the existing sidewalk infill program to close gaps in the sidewalk network.
- Construct capacity improvements where appropriate for the street system.
- Perform preventative maintenance to ensure overall system preservation.

### **Encourage walking and bicycling.**

- Encourage pedestrian-oriented development and attractive and functional streetscapes that make it safe, convenient, and comfortable to walk.
- Work with the Iowa City Community School District to provide safe routes to schools.
- Provide crosswalks and pedestrian signals where appropriate.
- Provide on-street bicycle accommodations where appropriate—focusing on areas identified in the adopted Metropolitan Bicycle Master Plan.
- Provide separated trails where appropriate—focusing on areas identified in the adopted Metropolitan Bicycle Master Plan.
- Provide other bicycle infrastructure projects where appropriate—focusing on areas identified in the adopted Metropolitan Bicycle Master Plan.



Photo courtesy of the Press Citizen: photo by Brad Parsons.

The Burlington Street Bridge is a vital artery in Iowa City’s transportation system and provides the most direct connection between east and west Iowa City. But for cyclists it is a daunting challenge. Bike advocates and transportation planners are working on a way to make this corridor a safe and appealing part of the bicycle network.



The transit systems of Iowa City, Coralville, and the University of Iowa Cambus now have a coordinated, GPS-based information system called Bus on the Go (or BONGO for short). Bongo provides real-time passenger information that allows riders to find current bus locations as well as predictions for upcoming bus arrivals via a smart phone, text message, web, or telephone.

The system is designed to make transit use more efficient and convenient—no more standing out in the cold waiting for a bus that is running behind schedule.

### **Promote use of public transit.**

- Continue to monitor transit on-time performance.
- Ensure adequate levels of transit service during peak travel periods.
- Continue to maintain and upgrade transit capital equipment as necessary.
- Explore innovative ideas to increase transit ridership – like implementing the ‘Bus On The Go’ information system.
- Continue and augment marketing campaigns to encourage bus ridership.
- Continue to support efforts to secure Amtrak rail service in the central Iowa corridor.
- Implement and promote a car-sharing program.
- Explore opportunities to develop a local light rail system along the CRANDIC rail line.

### **Maximize the safety and efficiency of the transportation network.**

- Continue to evaluate traffic signals on a five-year cycle.
- Ensure that all street signs meet retro-reflective requirements for nighttime visibility.
- Continue to coordinate transit routes and programs with Coralville Transit and the University of Iowa Cambus system.
- Continue to identify high collision locations and employ strategies to reduce the occurrence and severity of those collisions.
- Collaborate with neighboring communities on transportation projects with regional benefits.
- Implement techniques outlined in the City’s adopted traffic calming program where appropriate.

### **Maximize mobility for the elderly and persons with disabilities.**

- Ensure that sidewalks, trails, curb ramps, traffic control devices, street markings, and parking facilities accommodate the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- Continue provision of complimentary paratransit service .
- Continue to provide lift equipment for all public transit vehicles .
- Use appropriate font and text size on street signage to ensure maximum readability.

### **Encourage economic vitality through transportation innovation and investment.**

- Encourage capital transportation investment that promotes access to major employment centers.
- Construct municipal parking structures in convenient locations to promote and preserve the pedestrian-oriented character of central city commercial areas, including Downtown, Northside Marketplace, and Riverfront Crossings.
- Design municipal parking structures in a manner that will not interrupt the pedestrian environment, i.e. by constructing residential or storefront liner buildings with ancillary uses such as day-care centers and workforce housing.
- Preserve Downtown on-street parking for short-term users by encouraging the use of structured parking facilities for long-term parking.



Completed in 2005, the Court Street Transportation Center is a 600-space parking garage and Iowa City's first formal park-and-ride facility for commuters. The building includes a new inter-city bus terminal and route stops for Iowa City Transit and the University of Iowa CAMBUS. Bicycle lockers and covered bike parking are also provided. The facility is designed with active street level uses—commercial liner buildings include a childcare center and restaurant. In 2010, lighting in the facility was updated with LEDs (light-emitting diodes). LEDs have a lifespan that is three times that of conventional lighting and with reduced energy costs, the lights will pay for themselves.





# Environment, Energy, & Resources

Over the years, Iowa City has made a significant commitment to preserving natural resources—especially land and water. Current land use policies emphasize compact and contiguous development; include incentives for small lot development that discourage sprawl; and a planned development process that provides flexibility for clustered development to preserve sensitive features and open space. Our Sensitive Areas Ordinance identifies and protects natural features—woodlands, wetlands, stream corridors, prairies, and slopes. Efforts by community members have led directly to the preservation of a number of unique natural areas— Ryerson’s Woods, Hickory Hill Park, and Sand Prairie Park, to name a few.

Subdivision regulations require that developers plan for how stormwater will drain from the area. In some situations stormwater is required to be retained on site in basins. In other cases, the run-off from urban development drains to a regional system, such as the Sycamore Greenway. In a number of subdivisions, buffer areas required along urban streams are set aside as private open space and include trails that provide connections between neighborhoods.

Subdivision regulations also encourage efficient transportation and provision of services by limiting block lengths and requiring a well-connected street pattern that provides multiple routes through and between neighborhoods. Cul-de-sacs are discouraged. Shade trees and sidewalks are required along all new public streets. The City’s adopted “Complete Streets Policy” ensures that all public rights-of-way are built to accommodate all modes of transportation. Ongoing efforts to improve the City street network for cyclists have resulted in a Bicycle Friendly designation by the League of American Bicyclists.

In 2007, the Iowa River was named one of America’s “Most Endangered Rivers.” This dubious designation, followed by the record-setting flood of 2008, spurred the community to rethink its relationship with the river. Since 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has worked actively with the City of Iowa City and the University of Iowa on projects to enhance the riverfront, both for recreational purposes and to improve water quality, fish habitat, riverbank stability, and safety. The Riverfront Crossings Master Plan calls for the transformation of a significant portion of the riverfront from a flood-prone industrial area to a new regional park that can better absorb future floodwaters while providing a focal point for a new transit-oriented, mixed-use neighborhood located adjacent to Downtown Iowa City and the University of Iowa campus.



Iowa City’s Eastside Recycling and Environmental Education Center provides a site for the public to reuse and recycle materials and to learn about waste, stormwater, energy, and green building. The center is home to the Friends of Historic Preservation’s Salvage Barn and Habitat for Humanity’s ReStore, two non-profit programs that salvage and redistribute reusable building materials and furnishings.



Above: Iowa City Recycling Coordinator Jennifer Jordan shows off Iowa City's "Community Compost." Photo Courtesy of Sustainability at Iowa.

Iowa City has expanded its composting program, which now includes yard waste and commercial food waste composting. The pre-consumer food waste composting program began in 2007 as a project proposed by students from the Civil and Environmental Engineering and Sustainable Systems class and is now offered to commercial kitchens throughout Iowa City. University of Iowa engineering students are now working on a program for post-consumer food waste that could divert as much as 350 tons of food waste into compost each year.

The City has also made great strides with a number of other environmental sustainability initiatives, including the expansion of the recycling and composting programs. The City collects more than 2,000 tons of recyclables annually through the curbside program and collection sites; another 2,000 tons are collected at the City Carton collection center on Benton Street. The Furniture Project, Rummage in the Ramp, Habitat for Humanity's ReStore, and Friends of Historic Preservation's Salvage Barn collect furniture and reusable construction materials for re-use. Recycling is now integrated into many community events as well, including three of the Summer of the Arts events in Downtown Iowa City. Twice-a-year pharmaceutical collection events provide safe disposal for about 250 pounds of unused prescription drugs, and the household hazardous waste facility at the landfill has one of the highest user rates in Iowa, diverting approximately 60,000 pounds of hazardous waste from the landfill each year. Most recently the Food Scrap Program, which began with the University of Iowa in 2007, was expanded to include three commercial customers (Regina School, New Pioneer Food Co-op, and the University of Iowa's Burge and Hillcrest Food Service), diverting approximately 10 tons of compostable food scraps per month.

In 2007 Iowa City signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, and in 2008 became a member of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), an association of more than 1200 local governments from 70 countries dedicated to sustainable development. Soon after, Iowa City became the first city in Iowa to complete a community-wide and municipal operations greenhouse gas inventory. While City staff are working on a plan that will set goals and measures for future energy conservation and greenhouse gas emissions, what follows is a list of a few efforts that have already been undertaken to reduce resource and energy use:

- Iowa City's traffic lights are LED, using about half of the electricity of standard lights. LED lights in municipal parking ramps save approximately \$50,000 per year in energy costs.
- Operational changes at Iowa City's wastewater treatment facilities have reduced energy use by 13% over the last 2 years. The plant also uses biogas in place of some natural gas to heat the aerobic digesters.
- The Water Division (drinking water) has reduced its energy use by 15% over the last 2 years by operational changes alone.
- The Iowa City Landfill has reduced greenhouse gases by two-thirds by capping and flaring methane. The Iowa City Landfill hopes to partner with the University to substitute methane from the landfill for natural gas at the Oakdale Campus.
- The following City facilities meet LEED standards: Fire Station 2 (geothermal), Fire Station 4

(geothermal and biocells for stormwater management), and the Environmental and Recycling Center (geothermal, solar, and wind energy, pervious pavement, a green roof, a living wall, and biocells with native plants along the creek).

- Iowa City offers paperless utility billing and on-line payment and registration for a variety of programs. The City is also in the process of converting to an electronic process for building and subdivision applications—something that will reduce expenses and paper waste for developers and builders as well as the City.

The actions and programs described above signify the commitment the City has made to manage resources and minimize greenhouse gas emissions. It is not only the environment that benefits from these efforts, but also the City's bottom-line, as many of these improvements create financial savings.

## Vision:

The people of Iowa City value the unique natural heritage of our area and are committed to environmental protection and wise resource management that contributes to our quality of life and long-term sustainability. Iowa City will grow by following patterns of compact development that emphasize pedestrian access and that preserve sensitive ecological features, critical wildlife habitats, natural terrain, and future green space. We will be wise in our expansion of infrastructure, ensuring the efficient and effective provision of waste treatment, water purification, stormwater management, transportation, and delivery of services. We will work cooperatively to expand energy conservation, waste reduction, and recycling in both the public and private sector.



Above: Iowa City's Fire Station #2 (top) and #4 (bottom), both LEED certified buildings.

Fire Station #2 on the west side of Iowa City and Fire Station #4 on the city's northeast side, incorporated geothermal heating and cooling systems and recycled construction materials to achieve LEED Gold Standard. Lights in both stations work on motion sensors, and Fire Station #4 makes use of bio-swales for stormwater infiltration.





Because multi-family buildings with more than four units rely on private haulers for their solid waste removal, four out of five households in Iowa City do not have access to curbside recycling.

In 2012, the Iowa City Landfill and Recycling Center implemented a pilot recycling program for multi-family apartments and condominiums in Iowa City. Five apartment complexes and condominium associations were selected to participate. Based on the findings from the pilot, a Best Management Practices Manual was created to offer recommendations for apartment and condominium recycling. Private recycling services are readily available and affordable in the Iowa City area and City staff can help representatives from the multi-family and condominium community work through the logistics of implementing a recycling program for their residents.

## Environmental Goals & Strategies:

### **Recognize the essential role our land use policies play in preserving natural resources and reducing energy consumption.**

- Continue to support Iowa City's adopted principles for creating healthy and sustainable neighborhoods as described in the growth section of this Comprehensive Plan.
- Encourage compact, efficient development that reduces the cost of extending and maintaining infrastructure and services.
- Support preservation of valuable farmland, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Discourage sprawl by promoting small-lot and infill development.
- Raise awareness of the environmental benefits of urban development that makes efficient use of land and infrastructure and that reduces reliance on cars for transportation.

### **Identify, preserve, and enhance environmentally sensitive areas and publicly-owned natural areas.**

- Continue enforcement of the Sensitive Areas Ordinance.
- Maintain natural areas by controlling invasive species, using prescribed fire when necessary, and adhering to management plans.
- Discourage or prohibit the planting of invasive exotic plant species by the City, other public agencies, and property owners.

### **Work to protect and enhance our watersheds, floodplains, wetlands, and greenways.**

- Continue to monitor water quality of local streams through the IOWATER program.
- Promote regional stormwater management systems and cooperate with local agencies regarding watershed issues and the creation of a regional stormwater management plan.
- Assess and map physical properties of local streams in cooperation with the University of Iowa.
- Continue to incorporate greenways into the open space system and the bikeways network.
- Partner with private property owners to initiate "Best Management Practices" and creek maintenance funding programs to engage the public in sustainable watershed projects.
- Provide opportunities to engage volunteers in river cleanups and creek maintenance events.

**Ensure quality of the public water supply, thorough wastewater treatment, and stormwater best management practices.**

- Continue to supply clean, healthy drinking water to citizens complying with all Safe Drinking Water Act Standards.
- Treat wastewater to comply with established Clean Water Act standards.
- Utilize preventative measures to keep costs down and reduce sewer overflows.
- Continue to develop and manage plans to reduce the discharge of pollutants carried by storm water into our local waterways to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.

**Reduce the use of lawn chemicals and fertilizers.**

- Reduce the use of chemicals applied by City departments where practical.
- Promote education regarding alternatives to residential lawn chemicals and fertilizers.

**Promote and provide sustainable resource management for all materials going into the Iowa City Landfill.**

- Expand organics collection in the community for processing into compost.
- Work to reduce hazardous waste in the community by encouraging environmentally benign alternatives.
- Continue hazardous waste collection at the Iowa City Landfill and Recycling Center.
- Expand recycling opportunities to all residents, businesses, and community institutions.

**Continue to track, measure, and reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.**

- Monitor and update municipal energy use, costs, and emissions.
- Identify and seek opportunities to reduce costs and energy use (including paper, water, etc.) in municipal operations.
- Monitor community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.
- Provide public education to residents, businesses, and industry to promote water and energy efficiency, recycling, and other resource conservation efforts.
- Identify and seek opportunities to create incentives for the private sector (including residential and commercial sectors) to increase energy efficiency and emission reductions through funding and building code mechanisms.



Photo of a residential rain garden. Photo courtesy Backyard Abundance.

The City Engineering Department has developed a Best Management Practice (BMP) Program that provides financial assistance for property owners to install systems that address stormwater quality. The program is intended to help cover the costs of materials such as plantings, soil, rock, pavement, as well as the costs of installation.

The goals of the program are to improve the quality of stormwater runoff and reduce the amount of pollution entering the City's storm sewer system and waterways. Projects range from rain gardens and bio-retention cells to rain barrels and pervious pavement. The program has a limited amount of funds and the reimbursement is based on the available funding at that time.

**Raise awareness and expand opportunities for waste reduction, energy efficiency, stormwater management and other environmental issues.**

- Continue public events that encourage sustainable and environment-friendly practices, such as rain barrel and compost bin sales, pharmaceutical pick-ups, and household hazardous waste collections.
- Strengthen relationships with and among environmental and neighborhood groups to partner in the development of educational programming and to expand participation in conservation efforts.

# Parks and Open Space

The City of Iowa City manages more than 1,600 acres of parkland/open space. This includes 42 developed parks with 45 park shelters, 31 playgrounds, 43 athletic fields, and over six miles of nature trails. Park amenities reflect the diversity of Iowa City's population and its varied interests and recreational pursuits, including community garden plots; tennis, basketball, and bocce courts; off-leash dog parks; neighborhood splash pads; an outdoor swimming pool; vintage carnival rides; a Shakespearean theatre; a skateboard park; a boat launch; and an 18-hole disk golf course.

Iowa City's Neighborhood Open Space Plan (adopted in 1993) is intended to ensure that all neighborhoods have access to parkland for active recreation, relaxation, and as a focal point for neighborhood activity and social interaction. Each District Plan considers the appropriate future locations of roadways, development, and open space. As subdivisions are proposed, developers are required to dedicate land or fees to contribute to the development of parks within the open space district. Participants in the Comprehensive and District Planning processes expressed strong support for continuation of the Neighborhood Open Space Plan.

Regional or city-wide parks and the Iowa River Corridor Trail System are also priorities for the community. Many of our community parks are located in flood-prone areas. Peninsula Park, Waterworks Park, Lower City Park, and the Terry Trueblood Recreation Area at Sand Lake are all good examples of floodplains that serve as public parks. Scott Park and a large portion of Hickory Hill Park are areas set aside for flood control along Ralston Creek. Others, such as Ryerson's Woods and Sand Prairie Park, encompass unique environmental features in order to preserve our natural heritage. Again, district planning allows a unique opportunity to identify areas with qualities or features that could be preserved as parkland. The Riverfront Crossings Plan calls for property in the floodplain along the Iowa River to be set aside as a community park that in turn will enhance the potential for private development in the surrounding area.

While the City has achieved many of its goals in setting aside open space and developing parks, areas within the Central Planning District and Downtown do not have adequate open space. The Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Master Plan identifies a number of opportunities to improve access to open space for these densely populated neighborhoods. The Central District Plan looks to pocket parks and alternative green spaces, such as areas within the right-of-way and along Ralston Creek.

*The Comprehensive Plan document adopted in 1997 included goals and objectives regarding recreation programs as well as parks. In 2007, the Parks and Recreation Department completed a Master Plan that drew on extensive community input and addressed in considerable detail subjects including programming, park acquisition and maintenance, funding, and communications. Because the IC2030 update principally focuses on land use and economic development, the goals and objectives listed below address parks only. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will continue to guide recreational programming and facilities planning as well as general operational aspects of the Parks and Recreation Department.*





Above: concept for a riverfront park from the Riverfront Crossings Plan.

An important goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that all neighborhoods have adequate open space. Nowhere is this more of a challenge than in Iowa City's most densely built neighborhoods, close to Downtown and the University. The centerpiece of the Riverfront Crossings Plan is to return floodable areas along the Iowa River to open space use. Funding will be needed to design and construct an attractive and functional park that contributes to the overall redevelopment potential of the area. The Riverfront Crossings Master Plan proposes the implementation of a fee structure so that as properties are rezoned for more dense urban uses, they contribute to the park development.

Meanwhile ongoing maintenance and management of parks and other open spaces is a continual challenge. An ever expanding park system with its diversity of uses and management requirements has strained the Parks Department's staff and operating budget. The 2007 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, provides action steps for addressing the need for additional funding and staff.

## Vision:

Attractive and accessible parks and open space are essential features of a healthy and sustainable community and make Iowa City a more desirable place to live. Iowa City supports the continued development of parks and open space that cultivate a sense of place and social connection, enhance surrounding development and property values, expand opportunities to improve the health and fitness of our residents, and preserve unique features and environmentally sensitive lands.

## Parks and Open Space Goals and Strategies:

**Work proactively to ensure adequate and appropriate parks and open space to serve new neighborhoods and for infill development in central and downtown neighborhoods.**

- Identify land appropriate for public parks and trail connections before property is subdivided or development is proposed.
- Allow transfer of development rights and planned developments in order to preserve sensitive features or to guide development around desirable park land or open space.
- Develop a system for collecting open space fees as land is re-zoned for higher density development in the Central Planning and Downtown Districts—areas that are underserved by parks and open space. Such fees would be used for the acquisition and improvement of parkland within the district where the rezoning occurs.
- Include and emphasize green components in all street improvement projects, especially along arterials and at major intersections and entranceways to the city.
- Formulate incentives or other means to encourage construction of functional private open space for high-density multi-family and mixed-use developments.

### **Improve overall access to and awareness of parks.**

- Ensure that future parks have visibility and access from the street.
- Discourage parks that are surrounded by private property; encourage development of parks with single-loaded street access.
- Provide sidewalk access to all parks and ensure that amenities within the park are served by walkways and trails.
- Provide bicycle parking at all parks and recreation facilities.
- Identify and plan for the development of trail connections as part of all new development.
- Provide sufficient parking at all parks in order to serve people with disabilities.
- Make handicap accessibility a priority for playgrounds and other park amenities, including bathrooms, water fountains, trails, etc.

### **Build public awareness of Iowa City's park and trail system.**

- Prioritize the design and implementation of a wayfinding system, providing signage and maps to guide people to parks.
- Implement an on-line map system to help users locate parks and park amenities.
- Work to create a system of bike and pedestrian connections to all parks via trails or other rights-of-way.
- Continue to promote parks with public events such as social events, history or tree walks, outdoor movie nights, etc.

### **Build partnerships with community organizations, including the University of Iowa and community schools, to take advantage of existing facilities, share new facilities, and expand programs and services to the community.**

- Partner with the school district in developing school playgrounds that also serve the surrounding neighborhood as parkland.
- Expand access to and awareness of community garden plots in neighborhoods.
- Work with developers and homeowners associations to raise awareness of shared private open space within new developments to ensure that all neighbors have access and also to encourage the best use and maintenance of this shared property.



Community groups, non-profits, and neighborhood volunteers play an important role in planning, maintaining, and advocating for public parks. Above, Americorps volunteers work with the Friends of Hickory Hill Park to rebuild trails in Hickory Hill Park, and with Community Build in Wetherby Park to create and edible maze designed by Fred Meyer of Backyard Abundance.



Reconnecting the city with its river was perhaps the most widely supported goal articulated during the planning process. Riverfront improvements are a centerpiece of the Riverfront Crossings plan, but were also called for in the IC2030 Planning sessions and in the online Good Ideas campaign.

Progress on the riverfront is already being made. In 2012 the Environmental Protection Agency awarded a \$60,000 Urban Waters Grant to the City of Iowa City for planning and design to modify the Burlington Street dam. These improvements to the dam could create recreation opportunities such as whitewater rafting and boating, as well as improve water quality, fish habitat, and riverbank stability.

- Promote volunteer activities and community support to maintain parks and trails and raise awareness of recreational opportunities and public and private open space.
- Identify alternative funding sources to support ongoing maintenance of our parks system.

#### **Improve awareness of and access to Iowa City's creeks and the Iowa River.**

- Make the Iowa River a focal point for Iowa City.
- Recognize Iowa City's creeks and the Iowa River as valuable green assets and vital natural systems.
- Encourage restoration of Iowa City's creeks and the Iowa River on both public and private land to create a more natural and attractive stream corridor.
- Identify opportunities to acquire land or easements to allow to access to our creeks and riverfront.
- Create access points for visual and physical access to the creeks and river.

#### **Work with residents and other partners to ensure adequate funding for public parks.**

- Identify opportunities to increase community support and revenue for parks, including various fees as recommended in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Seek alternative funding, including grants, philanthropic donations, sponsorships, general fundraising efforts, etc.
- Collaborate with developers, homeowners associations, neighborhood organizations, and volunteer groups to develop and maintain parks and trails.

## Arts and Culture

**Iowa City is a small city with big-city arts and culture.** At no time is this more evident than during the summer when Iowa City comes alive with the Summer Concert Series, Artsfest and Jazzfest, the University of Iowa's Summer Writing Festival, Riverside Theatre's Shakespeare Festival, the Iowa City Farmer's Market, and the Outdoor Movie Series. Add to this year-round offerings of local galleries, restaurants, theatres, and entertainment venues as well as the Public Library and the University of Iowa and it is understandable why more than one attendee at planning workshops made the statement: *There is almost too much going on—I find it hard to choose!*

In recognition of our community's substantial support for arts and culture, the state of Iowa awarded Iowa City a unique cultural distinction with the designation of two cultural districts: The Old Capitol Cultural District and the Iowa River Cultural District. In 2008, the United Nations designated Iowa City as the world's third City of Literature after Edinburgh, Scotland and Melbourne, Australia. The University of Iowa Writers Workshop along with the University of Iowa's departments of Dance, Music, Theatre, Art, and Film, help foster a widespread appreciation for creative expression. When the 2008 flood severely damaged the arts campus—closing the facilities for the School of Music, Hancher Performing Arts Center, and University of Museum of Art—the community rallied, finding new spaces within the Downtown and elsewhere for hosting performances and housing exhibits. In doing so, the community has become even more engaged with the arts. Plans for replacing UI arts facilities will bring the Music School and its performance halls to Downtown Iowa City. There is discussion about relocating the Museum of Art within the Downtown as well.

Arts and culture also play an important role in sustaining the local economy. A 2011 study by Americans for the Arts found that nonprofit arts and culture generated \$79.8 million in total economic activity within the Iowa Cultural Corridor in 2010, where Iowa City and Cedar Rapids are the dominant players. "Within the corridor study area, nonprofit arts and culture organizations support 2,761 full-time equivalent jobs. That figure amounts to \$52.4 million in household income to local residents and delivers \$7.4 million in local and state government revenue." (Arts & Economic Prosperity IV, 2011 Americans for the Arts.)

As we move forward with planning for the future, Iowa City should continue to recognize the important role that arts and culture plays in making Iowa City a distinctive and attractive place to live and do business.



Photo by Dan Williamson © Iowa City Press Citizen.

The free Friday Night Concert Series, which runs from late Spring into early Fall, draws huge crowds, including families with children, to the Pedestrian Mall in Downtown Iowa City. Participants in the planning workshops and the on-line Good Ideas survey listed the concert series and the Pedestrian Mall as two of their favorite things about Iowa City.





Installed in Downtown Iowa City in the winter of 2012, Tree Huggers was a public art project brought together knitters of all ages and abilities from across the community. In all, 135 trees were outfitted in designs that attracted widespread attention in the media and, as its organizers intended, added a little color and fun to an otherwise long, gray season.

## Vision:

Iowa City is defined by its flourishing arts and culture scene. We recognize the important role that arts and culture play in engaging our increasingly diverse population. We seek to promote arts and cultural programs and projects that educate, entertain, and inspire the public and that preserve cultural heritage and enhance economic development.

## Arts & Culture Goals and Strategies:

### **Recognize the economic development potential of Arts and Culture for Iowa City.**

- Increase visibility and awareness of Arts and Culture programs.
- Explore opportunities for new Arts and Culture venues that will attract visitors to Iowa City.
- Work with the Iowa City/ Coralville tourism board on new opportunities to promote Iowa City as an arts and culture destination.
- Work with the University of Iowa, the Iowa City Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown District to raise awareness of Iowa City's arts and culture scene in recruitment efforts.

### **Support Arts and Culture programs that reflect and serve Iowa City's changing demographics.**

- Seek the participation of diverse populations (e.g. young and old) when developing cultural programs.
- Seek representation of diverse populations on the Public Arts Committee.
- Develop an Arts and Culture plan that includes all neighborhoods.
- Continue to provide opportunities for Neighborhood Art.

### **Work to increase funding for Arts and Culture programs.**

- Identify grants and private donations for Arts and Culture projects and programs.
- Explore new funding sources for Arts and Culture projects and programs such as Hotel/Motel tax revenue, crowd funding, a "percent for art" ordinance, and new grant funding.

**Develop partnerships that build community support for and access to Arts and Culture.**

- Collaborate with the University to promote development of venues that provide students with alternatives to alcohol use.
- Collaborate with the school district, businesses, and other organizations to expand the reach of Arts and Culture resources in our community.
- Explore the creation of a community arts center with A Home for the Arts (AHA) or other organizations.
- Support non-profits involved in arts programming, such as the City of Literature and Summer of the Arts.



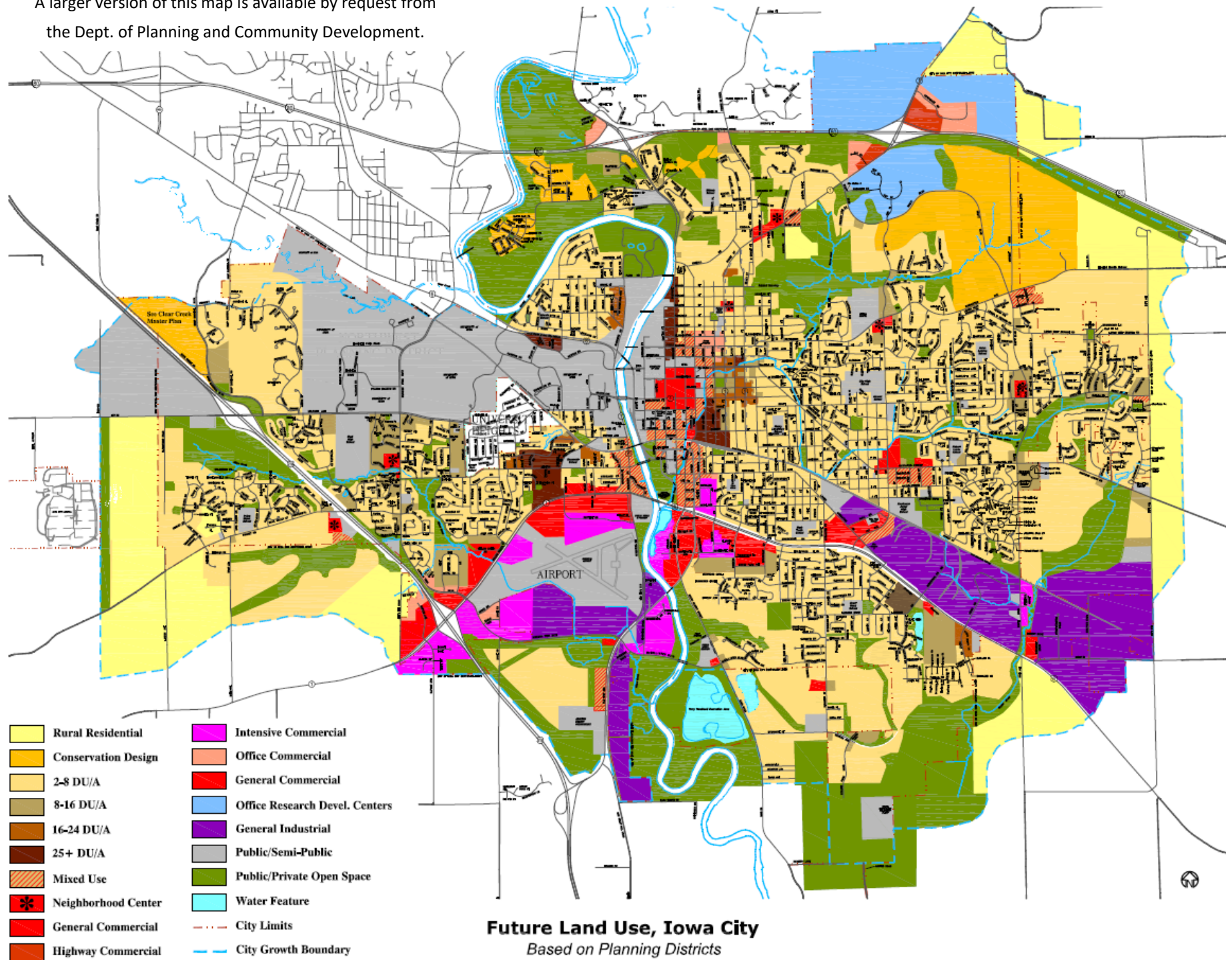
Public art projects, such as the Iowa City Literary Walk celebrate Iowa City's unique culture. Above, a bronze panel installed in the sidewalk along Iowa Avenue celebrates the work of Paul Engle, long-time director the world renowned Iowa Writers Workshop and founder of the International Writing Program at Iowa.



Iowa City's designation as a world City of Literature has brought much attention to the important role that the arts play in Iowa City's history and culture.



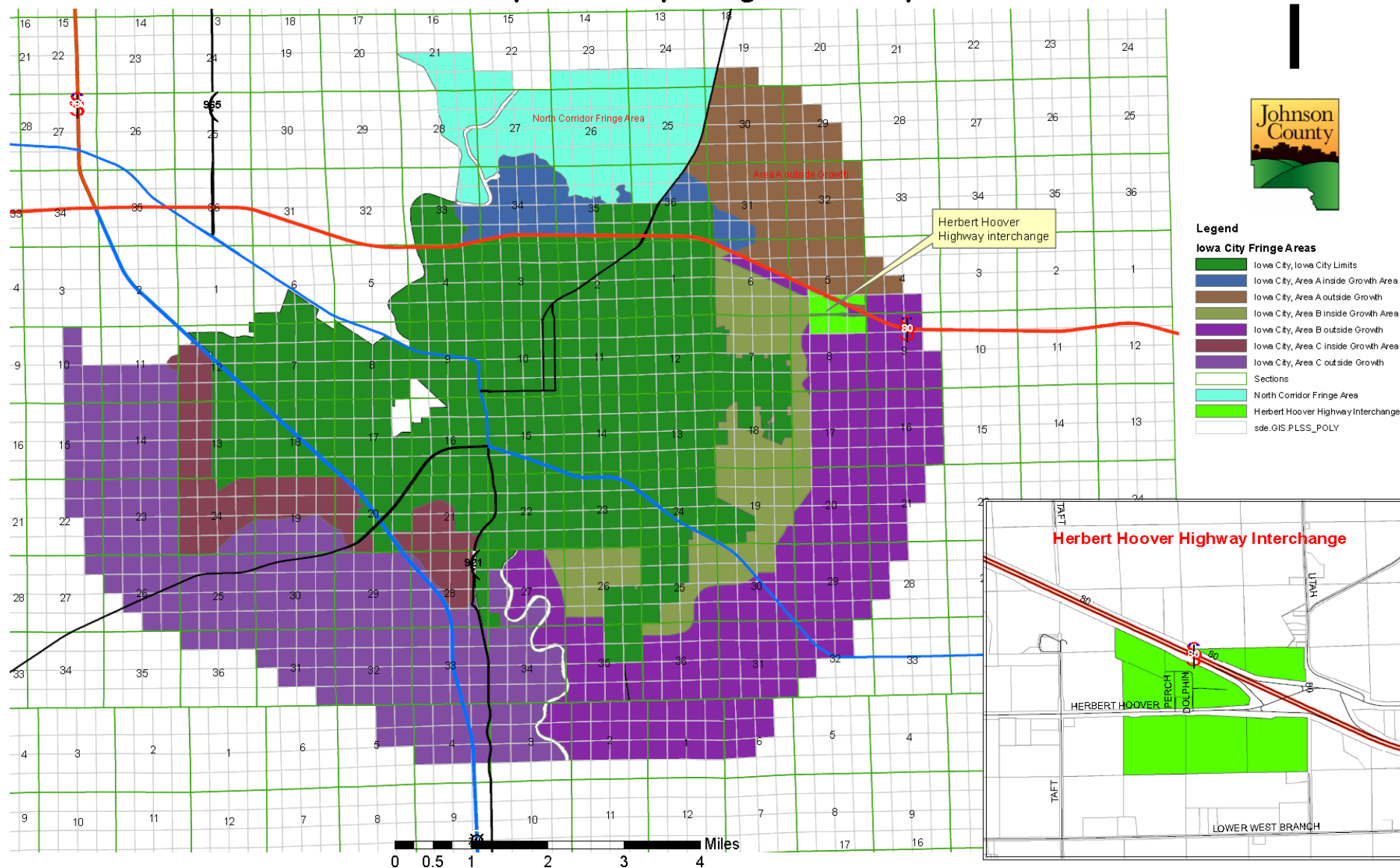
A larger version of this map is available by request from the Dept. of Planning and Community Development.







# Johnson County/Iowa City Fringe Area Map 2006





**FRINGE AREA POLICY AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN JOHNSON COUNTY AND IOWA CITY**

WHEREAS, Chapter 354, Code of Iowa (2005) allows the City of Iowa City to establish an extraterritorial area, known as the fringe area, within two miles of the city boundaries for the purpose of reviewing and approving subdivisions; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 354 further grants the City the authority to require that subdivisions within the fringe area adhere to the City's subdivision standards and conditions, unless the City establishes alternative standards and conditions for review and approval of subdivisions via a 28E agreement between the City and the County; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 28E of the Code of Iowa (2005) enables two or more local governments to enter into agreements to cooperate for their mutual advantage; and

WHEREAS, the Johnson County Land Use Plan adopted December 31, 1998 calls for the preparation and adoption of development plans and agreements between the County and the City regarding the municipality and its environment; and

WHEREAS, the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan Update adopted in December, 1997 outlines the extent of urban development expected within the next 20 years; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of Johnson County (the "County") and the City of Iowa City (the "City") to establish policies for the orderly growth and development within the City's fringe area; and

WHEREAS, Johnson County and the City of Iowa City mutually agree that such policies are necessary to more effectively and economically provide services for future growth and development and to protect and preserve the fringe area's natural resources and its environmentally sensitive features.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION I. FRINGE AREA DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

The parties accept and agree to the following development policies regarding annexation, zoning, and subdivision review for the Iowa City fringe area as authorized by Chapter 354, Code of Iowa (2005).

**Purpose:**

The Fringe Area Policy Agreement is intended to provide for orderly and efficient development patterns appropriate to a non-urbanized area, protect and preserve the fringe area's natural resources and environmentally sensitive features, direct development to areas with physical characteristics which can accommodate development, and effectively and economically provide services for future growth and development.

In light of these objectives, the City and the County examined the development capabilities of the Iowa City fringe area and determined that development within this fringe area is to occur in accordance with a) the Land Use Plan attached to this Agreement, b) development standards contained in Section B of this agreement, and c) the fringe area development policies contained in Section C of this Agreement. The development policies of this Agreement are intended to be consistent with the policies of the adopted Johnson County Land Use Plan and the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan.



A. Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan, attached to this Agreement as Attachment 1, illustrates the land use patterns for the fringe area.

B. Development Standards

The following general standards apply to unincorporated development in the fringe area.

1. Discourage development in areas which conflict with the Johnson County Land Use Plan which considers CSR (Corn Suitability Rating), high water table, wetlands, floodplain, non-erodible soil, and road suitability.
2. Protect the public health by requiring developers to meet or exceed minimum standards for water and wastewater systems in all developments within the Iowa City Fringe Area pursuant to Johnson County Public Health Department Regulations.
3. Encourage cluster development which preserves large tracts of open space including environmentally sensitive areas and farm land, results in compact development which requires less infrastructure, and is more efficient for provision of services.

C. Fringe Area Development Policies

The parties agree to apply the following fringe area development policies.

**FRINGE AREA A**

1. Land within Iowa City's Growth Area. Land in Area A which is presently zoned for residential development, and within Iowa City's growth area, may develop in conformance with existing zoning, provided subdivisions and development projects shall conform to City Urban Design standards contained in Title 14, Chapter 7 of the City Code of Iowa City, including but not limited to City specifications for streets and roads, sanitary sewer lines, stormwater management facilities and water lines. Developments which are approved prior to annexation shall be required to be served by a package sanitary sewage treatment plant and common wells, with sanitary sewer and water collection and distribution systems which are constructed to City standards and can be connected to municipal systems upon annexation.

Subdivisions and development projects which are approved prior to annexation shall be required to be cluster developments with a minimum of 50% of the development designated as an outlot for open space, agriculture, or future development upon annexation.

Prior to annexation, any zoning changes in Iowa City's projected growth area shall be consistent with the City's adopted land use plan.

2. Land outside Iowa City's Growth Area but in the County's North Corridor. Residential uses are the preferred use in this area. Any re-zonings in this area will be considered on the basis of conformity with the Johnson County Land Use Plan and other related policies. On a case-by-case basis, proposals to rezone land in this area to RS-3 (one dwelling unit per three acres of lot area) may be considered. RS zoning will be considered if the application to rezone includes a concept plan showing a minimum of 50% of the property designated as an outlot for open space or agriculture. Development must comply with City Rural Design standards contained in Appendix A. On the balance of land outside the North Corridor, agricultural uses are preferred.

3. Any development on property governed by the Iowa City/Coralville Agreement Providing for Future Annexations and Extraterritorial Review of Subdivision Plats (Sept. 1999) shall be consistent with said agreement. Such agreement shall take precedence over this Fringe Area Policy Agreement.
4. If land is annexed within Fringe Area A, the City agrees that it will not automatically extend its fringe area authority to review and approve all subdivisions, which it exercises pursuant to Iowa Code §354.9 and Title 14, Chapter 7 of the City Code of the City of Iowa City, Iowa. The City will review the extension of its fringe area as a result of annexation on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Johnson County.

## **FRINGE AREA B**

As set forth in Iowa City's adopted growth policy, the City will likely annex land within one mile of Iowa City to the east and within two miles of Iowa City to the south in the short-range. It is therefore consistent with the purpose of this agreement that rural subdivisions within these areas of high annexation potential be required to meet City Urban Design Standards contained in Appendix A.

1. Land within Iowa City's Growth Area. As applications are received to develop land contiguous to and within the growth limits of the city, the City will give favorable consideration to the voluntary annexation of this land and its development at an urban density in conformance with the City's adopted land use plan.

Prior to annexation, any zoning changes in Iowa City's projected growth area shall also be consistent with the City's adopted land use plan.

Subdivisions and development projects within Iowa City's projected growth area shall conform to City Urban Design Standards contained in Title 14, Chapter 7 of the City Code of Iowa City, including but not limited to City specifications for streets and roads, sanitary sewer lines, stormwater management facilities and water lines. Developments which are approved prior to annexation shall be required to be served by a package sanitary sewage treatment plant and common wells with sanitary sewer and water collection and distribution systems which are constructed to City standards and can be connected to municipal systems upon annexation.

Subdivisions and development projects which are approved prior to annexation shall be required to be cluster developments with a minimum of 50% of the development designated as an outlot for open space, agriculture, or future development upon annexation.

2. Land outside Iowa City's Growth Area. On the balance of land in Area B that lies outside Iowa City's projected growth area, agricultural uses are preferred. Until otherwise changed by amending this agreement, this area shall be restricted to those uses consistent with a Rural/Agricultural area as indicated in the Johnson County Land Use Plan, and as designated for a Rural/Agricultural area in chapter 8:1.6. Class A District of the Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance as amended. Farmstead splits are permitted per Chapter 8:1.6.1.4.c of the Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance.

Given the existence of commercially zoned property and the demand for commercial uses at the I-80/Herbert Hoover Highway Interchange, rezonings to County CH-Highway Commercial District of property abutting the interchange, as shown on the attached fringe area map, will be considered. However, the only uses that will be allowed will be: Auto and truck oriented uses, Hotels, motels, and convention facilities, Office buildings and

studios, restaurants, and any accessory use normally associated with the permitted principal use. All existing commercially zoned property and any properties rezoned to CH-Highway Commercial shall be subject to the City's and the County's Site Plan Review Requirements with the most restrictive standards applying in instances where the two standards differ.

3. Upon annexation of land within Fringe Area B, the City agrees that it will not automatically extend its fringe area authority to review and approve all subdivisions, which it exercises pursuant to Iowa Code §354.9 and Title 14, Chapter 7 of the City Code of the City of Iowa City, Iowa. The City will review the extension of its fringe area as a result of annexation on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Johnson County.

## FRINGE AREA C

1. Land within Iowa City's Growth Area. Land in Area C, which is presently zoned for residential development and within Iowa City's growth area, may develop in conformance with existing zoning, provided subdivisions and development projects shall conform to City Urban Design standards contained in Title 14, Chapter 7 of the City Code of Iowa City, including but not limited to City specifications for streets and roads, sanitary sewer lines, stormwater management facilities and water lines. Developments which are approved prior to annexation shall be required to be served by a package sanitary sewage treatment plant and common wells with sanitary sewer and water collection and distribution systems which are constructed to City standards and can be connected to municipal systems upon annexation.

Subdivisions and development projects which are approved prior to annexation shall be required to be cluster developments with a minimum of 50% of the development designated as an outlot for open space, agriculture, or future development upon annexation.

Upon annexation to Iowa City, commercial and/or industrial development is encouraged south and southwest of the Iowa City Municipal Airport as shown on the attached Land Use Plan and in the portion of Section 20 of West Lucas Township that is located in the east and south quadrants of the Highway 1 and Highway 218 interchange. It is consistent with the purpose of this agreement not to approve commercial and/or industrial developments within this area prior to annexation. As stated in the Johnson County Land Use Plan, commercial and/or industrial development will be encouraged to locate in the interchanges of paved roads. Commercial and/or industrial development will be discouraged in all other areas of Fringe Area C.

As applications are received to develop land contiguous to Iowa City and within this portion of the City's growth area, the City will give favorable consideration to the voluntary annexation of this land and its development for uses consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

2. Land outside Iowa City's Growth Area. In the portions of Area C which are not within Iowa City's growth area and which are zoned for non-farm development, development may occur in conformance with Johnson County's Unified Development Ordinance and City Rural Design Standards. Until otherwise changed by amending this agreement, this area shall be restricted to those uses consistent with a Rural/Agricultural area as indicated in the Johnson County Land Use Plan, and as designated for a Rural/Agricultural area in Chapter 8:1.6 Class A District of the Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance as amended. Farmstead splits are permitted per Chapter 8:1.6.1.4.c of the Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance.

3. Upon annexation of land within Fringe Area C, the City agrees that it will not automatically extend its fringe area authority to review and approve all subdivisions, which it exercises pursuant to Iowa Code §354.9 and Title 14, Chapter 7 of the City Code of the City of Iowa City, Iowa. The City will review the extension of its fringe area as a result of annexation on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Johnson County.

## **SECTION II. PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS**

Any regulations in the Fringe Area Agreement will not interfere with the Right to Farm, as contained in the Code of Iowa Chapter 335.2, Farms Exempt; and as noted in the Johnson County Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 8.2, Protecting Agricultural Operations.

## **SECTION III. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

As a rule, zoning regulation is the county's prerogative if a county has adopted a zoning ordinance. The City, however, exercises authority over subdivision regulation in a city's fringe area. Annexation is also primarily under exclusive rule of cities. Each of these activities, however, affects both jurisdictions and produces a clear need for coordination and joint administration. To that end, the City of Iowa City and Johnson County agree to the following procedures for administration of land use regulations.

### **A. Zoning Regulation:**

1. Zoning regulation for all unincorporated territory will remain under the authority of the Johnson County Zoning Ordinance and the provisions of Chapter 335, Code of Iowa (2005), the enabling legislation for the County's zoning powers.
2. Pursuant to Section 8:1.23 of the Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance, any person may request a variance to the lot area regulations of the zoning ordinance or appeal the decision of any officer of the County as that decision relates to enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance.
3. The County will forward each request for rezoning of property within the Fringe Areas specified in this Agreement to the City for review and comment prior to the public hearing before the County Planning and Zoning Commission. Any zoning change will conform with the policies identified for the Area in which the property is located.
4. Properties zoned for a classification which is inconsistent with this Agreement, at the time this Agreement is executed, shall retain the rights under that zoning, unless and until such zoning is changed through due process.

### **B. Subdivision Regulation:**

1. Subdivision of land within Iowa City's fringe area will be required to conform to either City Rural Design Standards or the City Urban Design Standards in accordance with the policies specified in this Agreement.
2. Persons wishing to subdivide land within the fringe area specified in this Agreement shall be required to simultaneously file a subdivision application with both the City and the County. The City and the County shall coordinate the processing of the application to ensure concurrent review by both the City Planning and Zoning Commission and the County Planning and Zoning Commission.
3. Subdivisions of land into fewer than three lots will continue to be regulated by the County.



**C. Development projects not requiring subdivision:**

Any development projects larger than 2 acres within the City's growth area shall be subject to review by both the City and the County in accordance with the procedural requirements of each jurisdiction.

**D. Annexation:**

1. Iowa City will annex territory only in accordance with the policy statements specified in this Agreement.
2. The City will, upon receipt, forward applications requesting annexation or severance (de-annexation) of property within the fringe area specified in this Agreement to the County for review and comment prior to consideration by the Iowa City Planning and Zoning Commission.
3. As appropriate and necessary, the City may extend the two-mile extraterritorial subdivision plat review area. Prior to any such extension, the City will forward to the County a proposal which includes the extension of the City's plat review authority for any distance up to the two mile limit provided by State law. The County will have a specified time within which to respond in affirmative agreement, negatively or with an alternative proposal. The City will take the County's response under advisement when determining the extension of extraterritorial review.

**E. Conflict Resolution:**

If the City and County are in conflict over a proposed subdivision, rezoning application, or annexation that may violate this agreement, a review committee, comprised of members of the City Council, Board of Supervisors and staff, shall be established to negotiate a resolution prior to final action being taken by either body to subdivide, rezone, or annex property.

**SECTION IV. AGREEMENT REVIEW**

At any time during the term of this Agreement, either the Chair of the Johnson County Board of Supervisors or the Mayor of the City of Iowa City may initiate review of the policies of this Agreement by contacting the other party to this Agreement. Both parties to this Agreement shall consider modifications of this Agreement, as appropriate.

**SECTION V. EFFECTIVE PERIOD**

This Agreement shall become effective upon acceptance and execution by the parties, and shall be in effect for five (5) years after the date of execution of this Agreement. This Agreement shall be automatically renewed unless the County or the City objects to such renewal prior to the renewal date.

**SECTION VI. RECORDATION**

This Agreement shall be filed with the Secretary of the State of Iowa, and with the Johnson County Recorder in compliance with Chapter 28E, Code of Iowa (2005).

Dated this 12th day of October, 2006.

JOHNSON COUNTY

By: Mike Lehman  
Chairperson, Board of Supervisors

Approved by:  
A. B. Cypell  
County Attorney's Office

Attest: Tom Shuck  
County Auditor

Dated this 13<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2006

CORPORATE SEAL

CITY OF IOWA CITY

By: Paul Wilson  
Mayor

Attest: Marian K. Kan  
City Clerk

CORPORATE SEAL

Approved by:

McT... 10/3/06  
City Attorney's Office

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Land Use Map for the Iowa City Fringe Area.
2. Appendix A: Definition of Standards

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Definition of Standards**

#### City Urban Design Standards:

Those standards enumerated in Title 14, Chapter 7 of the City Code of Iowa City which the City imposes on any subdivision within the corporate limits of Iowa City.

#### City Rural Design Standards:

##### 1.0 Streets

- 1.1 Streets shall be designed for a minimum surface width of 22 feet. Curb and gutter will not be required.
- 1.2 The right-of-way for local streets without curb and gutter shall be 60 feet to enable retrofit of sewer, water, and sidewalk in the future as necessary; otherwise, the right-of-way for local streets with curb and gutter and storm sewer shall be 50 feet. The right-of-way for arterial, industrial, and collector streets for the developed area shall be determined in conjunction with the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- 1.3 The maximum street grade for local streets shall be 12%.
- 1.4 The pavement cross section for all pavements will be a 2% parabolic crown. This cross slope is equivalent to 1/4-inch per foot.
- 1.5 The pavement slab shall be constructed of a 6" rolled stone base and a 22-foot wide chipseal surface.
- 1.6 Minimum corner radii shall be 20 feet.
- 1.7 The minimum ditch grade shall be 1.0%. In addition, it will be necessary to place a 12-inch diameter (minimum) culvert, either reinforced concrete pipe or corrugated metal pipe, through all drive approaches constructed over a drainage ditch. The exact size of pipe required will be a function of the area to be drained.
- 1.8 Drive approaches shall be hard surfaced within the right-of-way.

##### 2.0 Water Distribution System

- 2.1 Well(s) shall conform to the requirements of the Johnson County Health Department and the distribution system, if installed, (water main) shall be either ductile cast iron pipe (ANSI A21.50 manufactured in accordance with ANSI A21.50) or poly vinyl chloride pipe (PVC-ASTM D1784, Type 1, Grade 1, 200 psi design stress and SDR of 17 or less).
- 2.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Developer's Engineer to establish a fire rating for the area being developed. Prior to plat approval, there shall be a letter of transmittal from the appropriate Fire Protection District approving spacing, location, number of fire hydrants, size of mains, pressure, etc.
- 2.3 Connection to the City of Iowa City Water Distribution System is subject to City Council consideration based on availability. Generally, annexation is a criterion which must be met.

### 3.0 Sanitary Sewer

All methods of sanitation shall conform to the 1989 Johnson County Board of Health Rules and Regulations Governing On-site Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems and to the 1990 Iowa City Wastewater Treatment and Disposal System Policy.

### 4.0 Storm Sewers

- 4.1 With the exception of developments located in the Old Man's Creek watershed, the City Storm Water Management Ordinance shall apply to new developments located outside the City limits of Iowa City but within the City's area of extraterritorial jurisdiction.
- 4.2 All storm sewers shall conform to revised Section VII (Storm Sewers) of the Design Standards for Public Works Improvements in Iowa City, Iowa.
- 4.3 Culverts shall be a minimum of 12 inches in diameter; either reinforced concrete pipe or corrugated metal pipe (minimum gauge 18 and corrugations 2' x 1/2", 20" x 1/2", and 3"x1") shall be used. Culverts shall conform to the Standard Specifications for Highway and Bridge Construction, Series of 1977. Minimum cover over the top of culvert shall be six inches.

### 5.0 Underground Utilities

- 5.1 Whenever a subdivision shall be laid out such that a new street is required, telephone and electric utilities shall be underground. It is not intended that small subdivisions which would use an existing county road would follow this requirement since overhead utilities are probably directly adjacent to the property.



RESOLUTION NO. 16-129

**A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO CHANGE THE LAND USE DESIGNATION FROM RESIDENTIAL 2-8 DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE TO OFFICE COMMERCIAL FOR PROPERTY LOCATED NORTH OF MELROSE AVENUE AND EAST OF CAMP CARDINAL BOULEVARD (CPA16-00001).**

WHEREAS, Saint Andrew Presbyterian Church has requested that the land use designation for the property north of Melrose Avenue and east of Camp Cardinal Boulevard be changed from 2-8 Dwelling Units per Acre to Office Commercial in the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan

WHEREAS, the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan serves as a land-use planning guide by illustrating and describing the location and configuration of appropriate land uses throughout the City, provides notification to the public regarding intended uses of land; and illustrates the long range growth area limit for the City; and

WHEREAS, if circumstances change and/or additional information or factors come to light, a change to the Comprehensive Plan may be in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, evidence must be shown the proposed amendment will be compatible with other policies of the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the subject property is at the intersection of Camp Cardinal Boulevard and Melrose Avenue, with close proximity to Highway 218, located in the Northwest District of the City; and

WHEREAS, the general principles of the Comprehensive Plan encourage buffers between residential development and major highways; and

WHEREAS, office uses are less sensitive than residential uses to highway noise and could benefit from the visibility and high traffic counts of this location; and

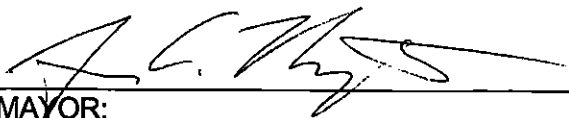
WHEREAS, the Iowa City Zoning Code recognizes Office Commercial (CO-1) zone as an appropriate zone near residential neighborhoods and an appropriate transition to more intense uses; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed this amendment and unanimously determined that circumstances have changed to the extent that an amendment to the comprehensive plan is warranted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IOWA CITY, IOWA, THAT:


1. It is in the public interest to update the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map to respond to changes in circumstances in the Northwest District of the City.
2. The land use designation for the property north of Melrose Avenue and east of Camp Cardinal Boulevard shall be changed from 2-8 Dwelling Units per Acre to Office Commercial in the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan.

Passed and approved this 3rd day of May, 2016

  
MAYOR:

ATTEST:   
CITY CLERK

Approved by:

  
City Attorney's Office 4/20/16

Resolution No. 16-129  
Page 2

It was moved by Botchway and seconded by Dickens the  
Resolution be adopted, and upon roll call there were:

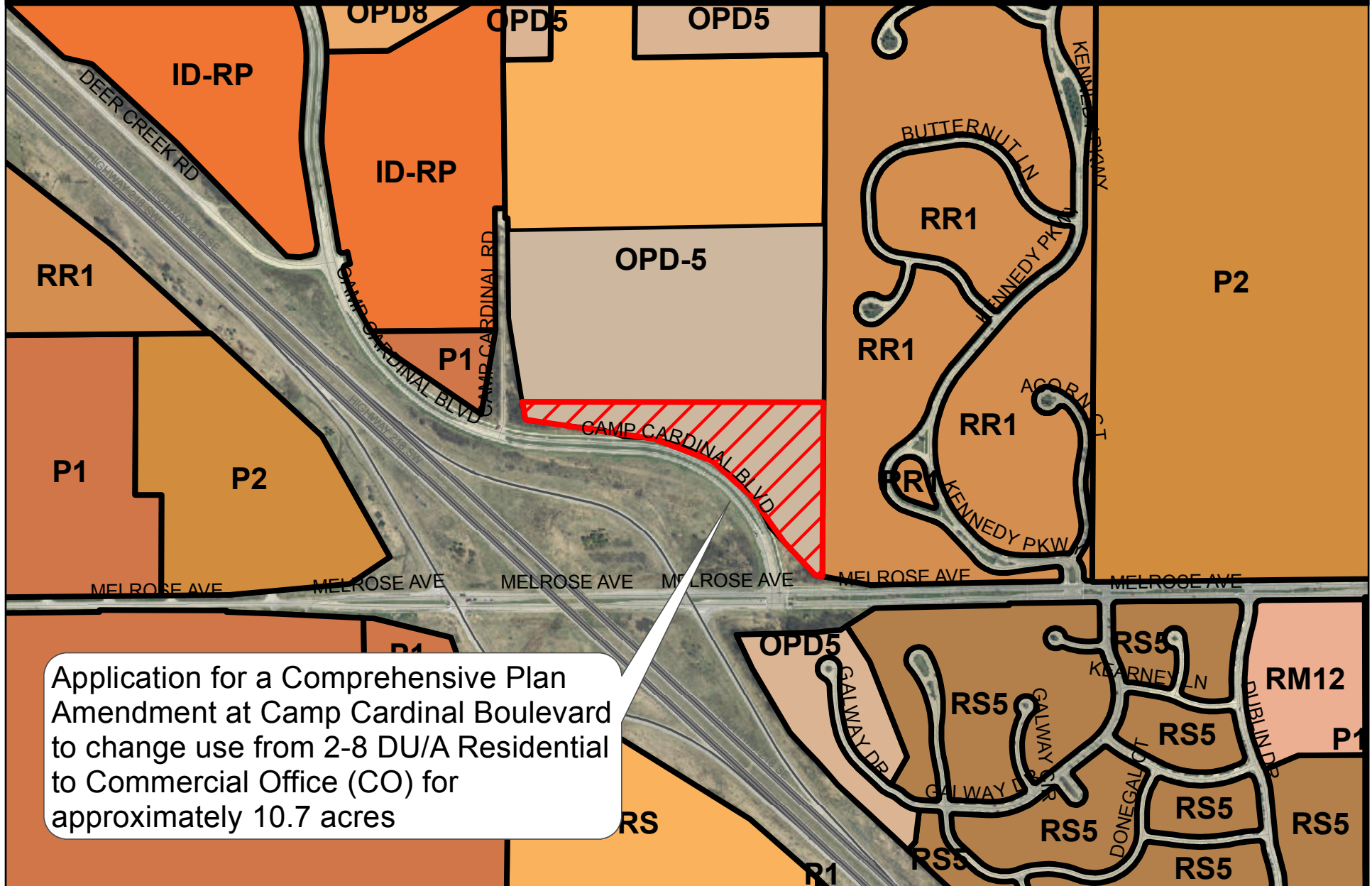
AYES:	NAYS:	ABSENT:	ABSTAIN:	
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Botchway
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Cole
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Dickens
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Mims
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Taylor
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Thomas
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Throgmorton



**CPA16-00001**  
**St. Andrew's**

Prepared by: Marti Wolf  
Date Prepared: March 2016

0 800 1,600 Feet



Application for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment at Camp Cardinal Boulevard to change use from 2-8 DU/A Residential to Commercial Office (CO) for approximately 10.7 acres

Prepared by: Marti Wolf, Planning Intern, 410 E. Washington St, Iowa City, IA; 319-356-5230 (CPA16-00003)

RESOLUTION NO. 17-25

**A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE IOWA CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO CHANGE THE LAND USE DESIGNATION FROM RESIDENTIAL 2-8 DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE TO RESIDENTIAL 8-16 DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF CAMP CARDINAL ROAD AND CAMP CARDINAL BOULEVARD. (CPA16-00003)**

WHEREAS, the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan serves as a land-use planning guide by illustrating and describing the location and configuration of appropriate land uses throughout the City, provides notification to the public regarding intended uses of land; and illustrates the long range growth area limit for the City; and

WHEREAS, if circumstances change and/or additional information or factors come to light, a change to the Comprehensive Plan may be in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, TSB Investments LLP, on behalf of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, the property owner, has requested that the land use designation for the property located at the northeast corner of Camp Cardinal Road and Camp Cardinal Boulevard (shown on the attached map) be changed from Residential 2-8 dwelling units per acre to Residential 8-16 dwelling units per acre; and

WHEREAS; the area surrounding the property has undergone significant change in character since the land use designations of the 1989 Comprehensive Plan were implemented; and

WHEREAS, Camp Cardinal Road is a collector street and Camp Cardinal Boulevard is an arterial street; and

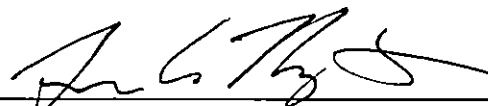
WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map states that alternatives to single-family development, including multifamily residential, may be appropriate at the intersection of collector and arterial streets; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed this amendment and determined that circumstances have changed to the extent that an amendment to the comprehensive plan to designate the subject property as appropriate for residential development at a density of 8-16 dwelling units per acre is warranted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IOWA CITY, IOWA, THAT:

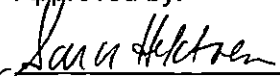
**The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map is amended to designate  
Lot 2, St. Andrew Presbyterian Church – Part One as residential 8-16  
dwelling units per acre.**

Passed and approved this 17th day of January, 2017.

  
MAYOR:

ATTEST:   
CITY CLERK

Approved by:

  
City Attorney's Office

1/10/17

Resolution No. 17-25

Page 2

It was moved by Botchway and seconded by Thomas the  
Resolution be adopted, and upon roll call there were:

AYES:	NAYS:	ABSENT:	ABSTAIN:	
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Botchway
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Cole
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Dickens
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Mims
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Taylor
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Thomas
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Throgmorton



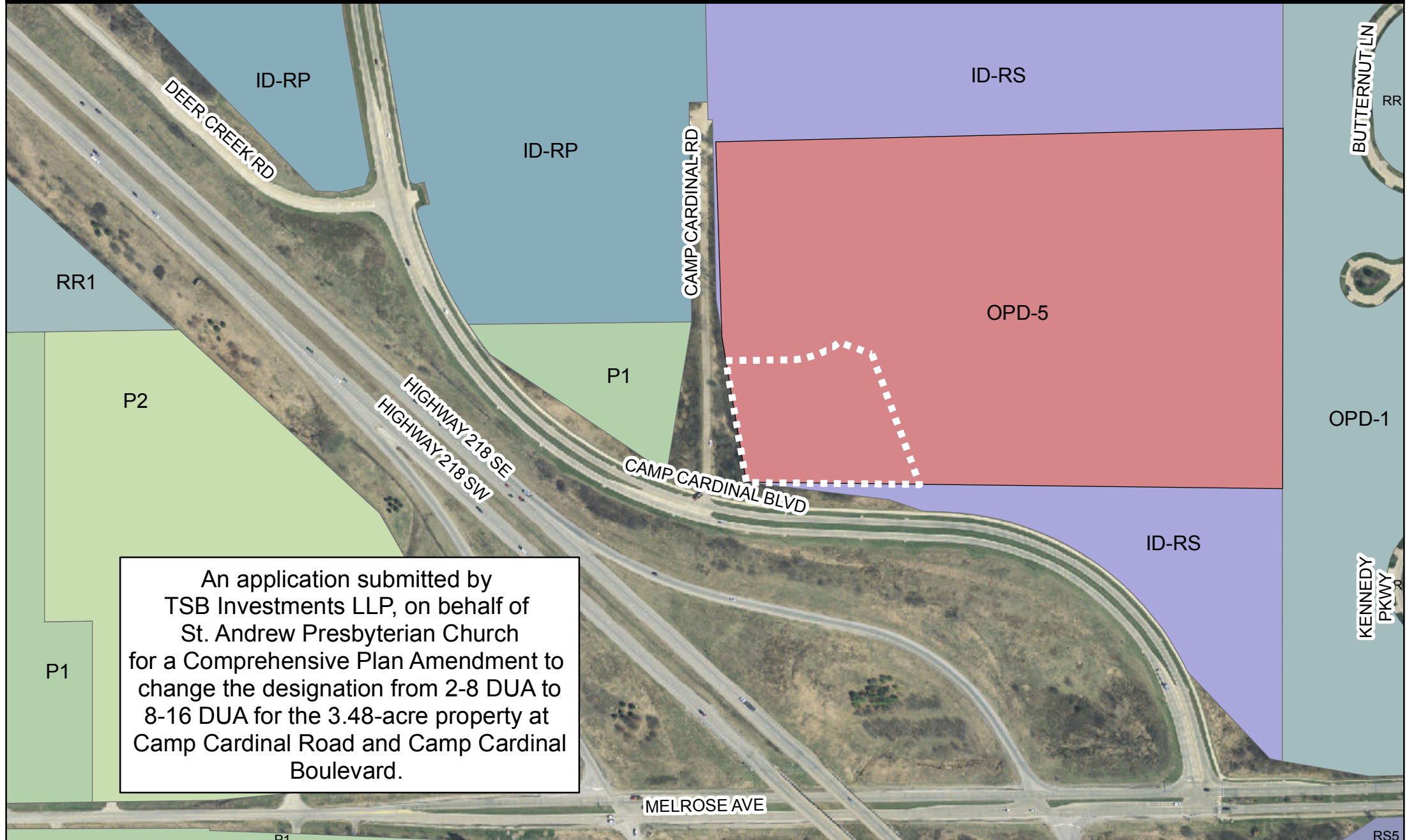


0 0.0275 0.055 0.11 Miles

# CPA16-00003 St. Andrew Presbyterian Church



Prepared By: Marti Wolf  
Date Prepared: September 2016



An application submitted by  
TSB Investments LLP, on behalf of  
St. Andrew Presbyterian Church  
for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to  
change the designation from 2-8 DUA to  
8-16 DUA for the 3.48-acre property at  
Camp Cardinal Road and Camp Cardinal  
Boulevard.

RESOLUTION NO. 20-210

**Resolution amending Iowa City's Comprehensive Plan to change the future land use designation from Public/Private Open Space to General Commercial for the property located north of Camp Cardinal Boulevard and west of Camp Cardinal Road (CPA20-0001).**

Whereas, MMS Consultants, on behalf of Jon Harding, have requested that the future land use designation for the property north of Camp Cardinal Boulevard and west of Camp Cardinal Road be changed from Public/Private Open Space to General Commercial in the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan; and

Whereas, the Comprehensive Plan serves as a land-use planning guide by illustrating and describing the location and configuration of appropriate land uses throughout the City, provides notification to the public regarding intended uses of land; and illustrates the long-range growth area limit for the City; and

Whereas, if circumstances change and/or additional information or factors come to light, a change to the Comprehensive Plan may be in the public interest; and

Whereas, evidence must be shown the proposed amendment will be compatible with other policies of the Comprehensive Plan; and

Whereas, the subject property was sold to Jon Harding by Johnson County in 2014; and

Whereas, the general principles of the Comprehensive Plan encourage buffers between residential development and major highways, and support appropriate transitions between high and low-density development and commercial and residential land uses; and

Whereas, the Comprehensive Plan discourages sprawl by promoting infill development and preserving environmentally sensitive areas by enforcing the Sensitive Areas Ordinance; and

Whereas, commercial uses are less sensitive than residential uses to highway noise and could benefit from the visibility and high traffic counts of this location; and

Whereas, General Commercial uses are an appropriate transition with multi-family dwellings and institutional uses; and

Whereas, the property is required to meet the requirements of the Sensitive Areas Ordinance; and

Whereas, the Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed this amendment at their meeting on August 6, 2020 and determined that circumstances changed to the extent that an amendment to the comprehensive plan is warranted and the proposed amendment is compatible with other policies or provisions of the comprehensive plan.

Now, Therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Iowa City, Iowa, that:

1. It is in the public interest to update the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map to respond to changes in circumstances in the City.
2. The proposed amendment is compatible with other policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

3. The land use designation for Parcel #1112476001, north of Camp Cardinal Boulevard and west of Camp Cardinal Road, shall be changed from Public/Private Open Space to General Commercial in the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan.

Passed and approved this 1st day of September, 2020.

Bruce Teague  
Mayor:

Attest: Kellie K. Guehling  
City Clerk

Eleanor M. O'Neil  
City Attorney's Office  
(Sara Greenwood Hektoen – 08/27/2020)

Resolution No. 20-210  
Page 3

It was moved by Salih and seconded by Mims the  
Resolution be adopted, and upon roll call there were:

AYES:	NAYS:	ABSENT:	
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Bergus
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Mims
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Salih
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Taylor
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Teague
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Thomas
<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	Weiner





0 0.035 0.07 0.14 Miles

# CPA20-01 - Harding Event Center North of Camp Cardinal Blvd, West of Camp Cardinal Road.



Prepared By: Joshua Engelbrecht  
Date Prepared: June 2020

