



# JOHNSON COUNTY PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

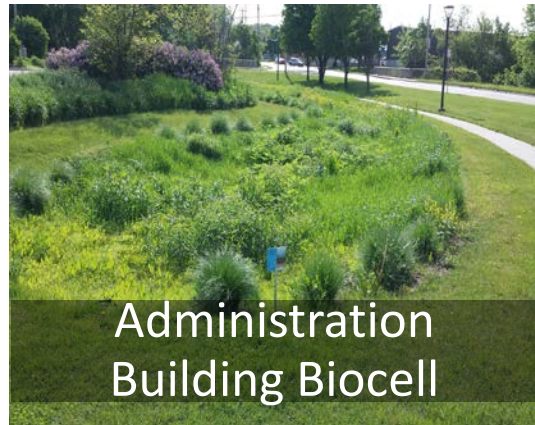
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## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017

913 S Dubuque Street, Suite 204, Iowa City, Iowa 52240



Bike to Work Month



Administration  
Building Biocell



Johnson County - Iowa River

# Johnson County Planning, Development and Sustainability

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## PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY DEPARTMENT

Johnson County Planning, Development and Sustainability (PDS) staff prepares a report annually, which is presented to the Board of Supervisors and the public. The report documents departmental activity and development patterns in unincorporated Johnson County. This report also describes staffing changes, building, rezoning, and platting activity in the county, departmental accomplishments, and more for the 2017 calendar year. Throughout the year, PDS maintained the same hours of operation, location, phone number, fax number and website:

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Location: Johnson County Administration Building, 913 S. Dubuque Street, Suite 204,  
Iowa City, Iowa 52240  
Phone: (319) 356-6083  
Fax: (319) 356-6084  
Website: [www.Johnson-County.com/Planning](http://www.Johnson-County.com/Planning)

### PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY STAFF



### STAFFING CHANGES

The PDS Department had a few staffing changes in 2017. Shanti Sellz, Local Food and Planning Specialist, and Kate Giannini, Soil and Water Conservation Coordinator, left the department in June and November, respectively. In December, two interns were hired: Kevin Englebert as Planning Intern and Emily Giovannetti as Sustainability Intern. Both started their employment in January 2018. Kasey Hutchinson was hired as Soil and Water Conservation Coordinator, starting in February 2018.

## **BOARDS COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES**

The PDS Department works directly with the Board of Supervisors and in 2017 also staffed five other boards and commissions that are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. We would like to thank the citizen volunteers who served on each board in 2017.

**Note: The following lists reflect service in 2017 and may not reflect current membership.**

### ***Board of Supervisors***

Janelle Rettig – Chair  
Mike Carberry  
Kurt M. Friese  
Lisa Green-Douglass  
Rod Sullivan

### ***Planning & Zoning Commission***

Mike Parker – Chair  
Terry Dahms  
Christine Rohret  
Sandra Steil  
Kathy Swenka

### ***Food Policy Council***

Wren Almita  
Lindsey Boerjan  
Jessica Burt Fogarty  
Brian Campbell  
Isla DeWald  
Catharine Found  
Michelle Kenyon

Mohamed Osman  
Stephen Trefz  
Anne Spencer  
Ashley Swank  
Rachel Vanderwerff  
Terry Wahls  
Steven Williams

### ***Board of Adjustment***

William Leefers – Chair  
Dave Parsons – Vice Chair  
Dawn Terrell – Secretary  
Candi Evans  
Randy Lackender

### ***Building Code of Appeals***

Dave Clark  
Mike Donohue  
Jane Hagedorn  
Doug Kohoutek  
George Swisher

### ***Comprehensive Plan Committee***

Jerry Anthony  
Thomas Anthony  
Barbara Beaumont  
Lindsey Boerjan  
Kathryn Dorsey  
Eldon Fouчек  
Kevin Hochstedler  
Jennifer Jordan  
Michelle Kenyon  
Aaron Klosterman  
Brad Kunkel

Lucie Laurian  
William Nusser  
Paul Rasch  
Tim Ruth  
Sandra Steil  
Dawn Terrell  
Miriam Timmer-Hackert  
William Waldie  
Jill Wenger  
Kristin Wildensee

# BUILDING PERMITS AND HOUSING STARTS

## BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED

The Building Services Division issues building permits and conducts inspections on all non-agriculturally exempt properties throughout unincorporated Johnson County. The division also issues permits and inspects new buildings in the municipalities of Swisher, Shueyville, and Oxford. In total, the Building Services inspection service area includes approximately 24,224 residents.<sup>1</sup>

In 2017, Building Services issued a total of 430 permits. Permits include the three trades (electrical, plumbing, and mechanical), permits for new dwellings or accessory structures, and permits for remodels to existing dwellings or outbuildings as well as other construction. The 430 permits issued is the third highest number of permits issued in a calendar year over the past 10 years. (2016 had the most permits in that time period.) The total value of the 430 permits issued in 2017 was \$31.4 million. In comparison, the average annual number of permits issued from 2006 to 2016 was 378, with an average total value before adjustment of \$33.2 million. Total fees collected from permits during 2017 equaled \$271,762.

Figure 1: Number of building permits issued, total estimated value of permits, and fees collected, 2008-2017

Year	Permits Issued	Total Value (millions of \$)	Fees Collected (\$)	Total Value Adjusted* (millions of \$)	Fees Collected Adjusted* (\$)
2008	284	35.19	210,523	40.88	244,571
2009	380	26.56	193,953	30.74	224,488
2010	319	24.20	188,546	28.12	219,042
2011	370	22.19	188,916	25.44	216,616
2012	458	37.17	316,317	41.93	356,819
2013	351	36.22	296,409	40.02	327,547
2014	386	34.15	266,026	36.79	286,582
2015	398	45.39	363,593	47.90	383,711
2016	459	37.42	307,535	38.54	316,684
2017	430	31.39	271,762	31.39	271,762

\*Adjustments calculated using Consumer Price Index, US City Average, Housing

Figure 1 shows number of permits, total value, and fees collected for each of the past 10 years. Total value of building permits in 2017 was slightly below average, ranking as the 7th highest year in the past 10 years. It was also the 7th highest after adjusting for inflation. Total fees collected for permits in 2017 saw a 12% decline from the 2016 calendar year and ranks 5th for annual fees collected since 2008.

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

## TYPES OF BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED

Electrical permits comprised the largest category of permits issued in 2017 at 95 permits of the 430 total permits. There were 126 total permits issued for the three trades (electrical, plumbing, and mechanical). Dwelling additions made up the second largest category, accounting for 87 permits.

Detached single-family houses accounted for the largest portion of total value among permits (47%) while commercial building permits accounted for the second largest portion of total value (18%). Figure 2 shows the number of permits issued for each permit type and associated total and average value by permit type.

*Figure 2: Types of permits issued, total estimated value and fees collected, 2017*

Permit Type	Count	Value	Average Value
Accessory Building (New or Addition)	62	2,972,439	47,943
Accessory Building Alteration/Repair	3	42,195	14,065
Commercial Alteration/Repair	2	25,083	12,542
Commercial Building (New or Addition)	20	5,535,705	276,785
Dwelling Addition	87	3,775,541	43,397
Dwelling Alteration/Repair	31	1,307,592	42,180
Dwelling, Multi-Family	5	1,715,000	343,000
Dwelling, Single Family (New)	38	14,742,147	387,951
Mobile Home	10	312,102	55,601
Pool or Hot Tub	10	541,248	54,125
Solar Panel	21	299,629	14,268
Structure Other Than Buildings (All Others)	12	57,590	4,799
Special Inspection Permit	3	-	-
Electrical	95	-	-
Plumbing	7	-	-
Mechanical	24	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>31,389,637</b>	<b>72,999</b>

Of the 430 permits issued by Johnson County in 2017, 50 permits were issued in the cities of Oxford, Shueyville, and Swisher. Figure 3 shows the breakdown of permits in the three cities.

*Figure 3: Types and number of permits issued in Oxford, Shueyville, and Swisher in, 2017*

City	Building	Plumbing	Electrical	Mechanical	Total
Oxford	6	6	2	1	15
Shueyville	12	0	2	1	15
Swisher	18	1	1	0	20

## HOUSING STARTS

The majority of permitted construction that occurs in unincorporated areas of Johnson County consists of single-family housing. Evaluating the number of single-family and manufactured housing starts over time can be useful in evaluating temporal development trends, especially in areas that see primarily residential development. Housing starts can be tracked in Johnson County using building permit data. It is important to note that because permits are not issued on agriculturally-exempt farms (A-Agriculturally zoned parcels, 40 acres or larger), building permit data does not include construction of every new single-family home in unincorporated Johnson County.

During the 2017 calendar year, permits were issued for 48 single-family and manufactured housing starts in the unincorporated areas<sup>2</sup>: 38 for new single-family dwellings and 10 for manufactured homes. The 48 single-family and manufactured home permits represent the second lowest number of permits issued for new housing units in a calendar year since 2008. For comparison, the average number of new homes per year from 2008 to 2016 was 59.

Figure 4 shows the number of permits issued for new single-family and manufactured homes, their estimated construction value, and their values adjusted for inflation for 2008–2017. Inflation adjustments were calculated using the consumer price index for housing in the average United States city.

*Figure 4: Permits issued for single-family and manufactured dwellings, total estimated value, and average value, 2008-2017*

Year	New Dwelling Units <sup>1</sup>	Total Value (millions of \$)	Total Value Adjusted <sup>2</sup> (millions of \$)	Average Value (\$)	Avg. Adjusted to Present Value <sup>2</sup> (\$)
2008	53	13.46	15.64	253,984	295,062
2009	56	14.25	16.50	254,513	294,582
2010	41	14.12	16.40	344,307	399,996
2011	39	13.09	15.01	335,616	384,826
2012	65	21.83	24.62	335,818	378,817
2013	72	25.69	28.39	356,783	394,264
2014	50	18.59	20.02	371,702	400,424
2015	74	26.47	27.94	357,709	377,501
2016	81	24.76	25.50	305,665	314,758
2017	48	15.05	15.05	313,630	313,630
<sup>1</sup> Includes both detached and attached single-family homes					
<sup>2</sup> Adjustments calculated using Consumer Price Index, US City Average, Housing					

<sup>2</sup> Five permits were also issued for multi-family dwelling units.

The total estimated value of permits issued for new dwelling units in 2017 was \$15.1 million, which averages \$313,630 per dwelling. This value ranks near the middle for average dwelling value over the past decade. The average estimated value of permits underrates the value of new single-family dwellings since 10 of the 48 permits were issued for manufactured homes. A manufactured home’s total value is frequently below \$50,000 when new and often has a classified construction value of \$1.00 if it was relocated to or within the county. Excluding the 10 manufactured home permits, the 38 single-family dwelling units have a much higher average value of \$387,951.

## REZONING AND PLATTING ACTIVITY

### REZONING

In the 2017 calendar year, 20 rezoning applications were submitted to the PDS Department. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved 17 of the rezoning applications in 2017, one was withdrawn by the applicant, and the BOS denied two applications. The rezoning requests approved in 2017 comprised a total of 111 acres, which is a slight uptick from the 96 acres that were rezoned in 2016. Figure 5 summarizes the acreages that were included in 2017 rezoning applications.

Of the 17 total approved requests, two were approved via a Conditional Zoning Agreement (CZA). CZAs are agreements between the Board of Supervisors and the applicant and place special conditions on the land being rezoned. However, the request that rezoned the most acres in 2017 was approved without a CZA. That request rezoned 24.51 acres from R-Residential to A-Agricultural, five acres from R-Residential to R5-Residential, and three from R-Residential to R3-Residential. The rezoning was located in the North Corridor Development Area along the east side of Sugar Bottom Road NE. The second largest rezoning request had an associated CZA and rezoned 10.64 acres from A-Agricultural to ML – Heavy Industrial and 4.40 acres from A-Agricultural to R-Residential. That rezoning request was initiated, in part, to bring a parcel into zoning compliance.

Figure 5: Acres and classifications of rezoned land in 2017 (aggregate zoning classification changes)

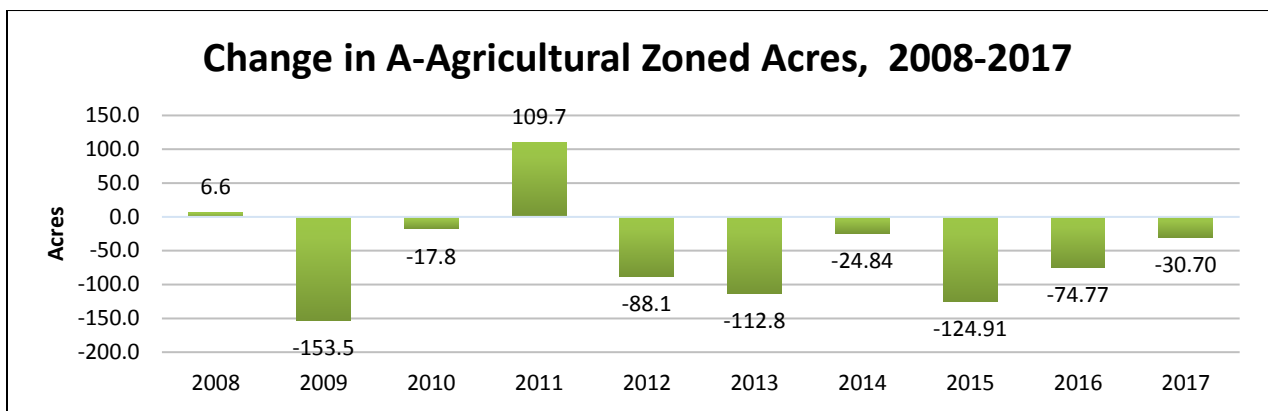
From	To	Acres
Agricultural (A)	Residential (R)	19.01
Agricultural (A)	Residential (R3)	14.57
Agricultural (A)	Residential (R10)	9.00
Agricultural (A)	Commercial Highway (CH)	6.97
Agricultural (A)	Heavy Industrial (ML)	10.64
Commercial (C)	Residential (R)	11.00
Highway Commercial (CH)	Residential (R)	0.46
Residential (R)	Agricultural (A)	29.49
Residential (R)	Residential (R3)	4.00
Residential (R)	Residential (R5)	5.00
Residential (R)	Residential (R10)	1.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>111.14</b>



Of the 17 rezoning requests approved in 2017, eight either uniformly zoned a property that had multiple zoning designations, or corrected a legal non-conforming use, thereby bringing the property into compliance with the Unified Development Ordinance. Five approved requests changed zoning to allow future development. One approved request was located in the Village of Joetown, and five were located in the North Corridor Development Area.

A net total of nearly 30 agriculturally zoned acres was rezoned to non-agricultural zoning districts in 2017, a decline from the 74 acres rezoned in 2016. Additionally, the 30-acre total is significantly smaller than the average of 51 acres over the past 10 years (Figure 6). Thirteen of the 30 acres rezoned from the A-Agricultural zone increased the residential density on the affected parcels.

Figure 6: Change in A-Agricultural zoned property in Johnson County, 2008-2017



## PLATTING

The Board of Supervisors heard and approved 30 applications for subdivisions in 2017. Of the 30 applications, 11 were farmstead splits, 14 were for either final plats or for combined preliminary and final plats, and five were for preliminary plats. Three subdivision applications were submitted to the PDS Department and subsequently withdrawn by the applicants. The 14 non-farmstead split final plats that were approved consist of 22 buildable lots and five non-buildable outlots. The farmstead splits that were approved consist of 11 buildable lots and two non-buildable outlots. The preliminary plats that were approved consist of 19 buildable lots and nine non-buildable outlots. Figure 7 summarizes the approved subdivisions, including the number of lots and acres.

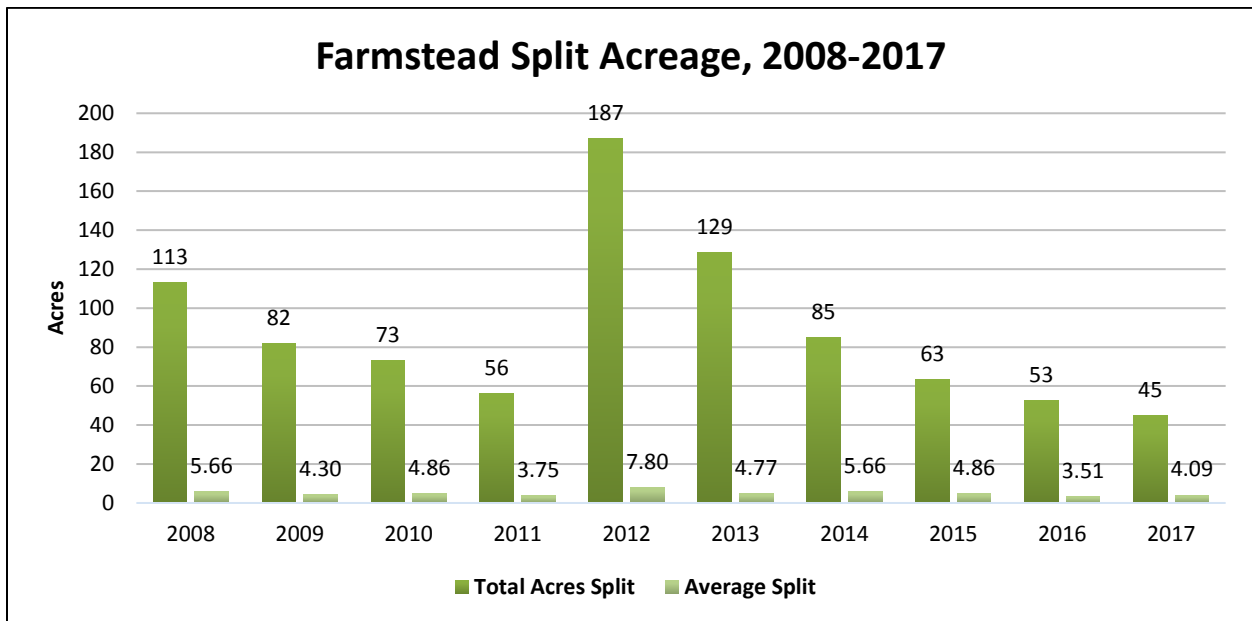
Figure 7: Summary of approved plats in 2017, including number of lots, outlots and acreage

Subdivision Type	Count	Residential		Non-Residential		Outlots	
		Lots	Acres	Lots	Acres	Outlots	Acres
Farmstead Split	11	11	40.5	0	0.0	2	4.0
Final Plat and Combined Plat	14	22	60.6	5	86.1	11	75.3
Preliminary Plat	5	19	27.2	0	0.0	9	55.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>48*</b>	<b>123.4*</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>19*</b>	<b>130.1*</b>

\*These numbers are lower than their column totals in order to avoid double counting lots that were both preliminarily and final platted at separate times in 2017.

The total of 11 farmstead splits approved in 2017 represents a decrease from 2016, when 15 were approved. Additionally, only two outlots comprising a total of 4.0 acres were included as part of the 11 farmsteads splits. One effect of the infrequent and small outlots is that the average split size of 4.09 acres is the second smallest, and the total number of acres split were the fewest since the adoption of the current farmstead split ordinance (Figure 8). The largest single split approved in 2017 was smaller than in the recent past: 5.00 acres compared to 5.29 acres in 2016 and 14.7 acres in 2015. Staff suspects that requiring stormwater management and sensitive areas analysis on all subdivisions may have contributed to the limited number of outlots and the smaller split size.

Figure 8: Total and average acreage included in farmstead splits, including lots and outlots, 2008-2017

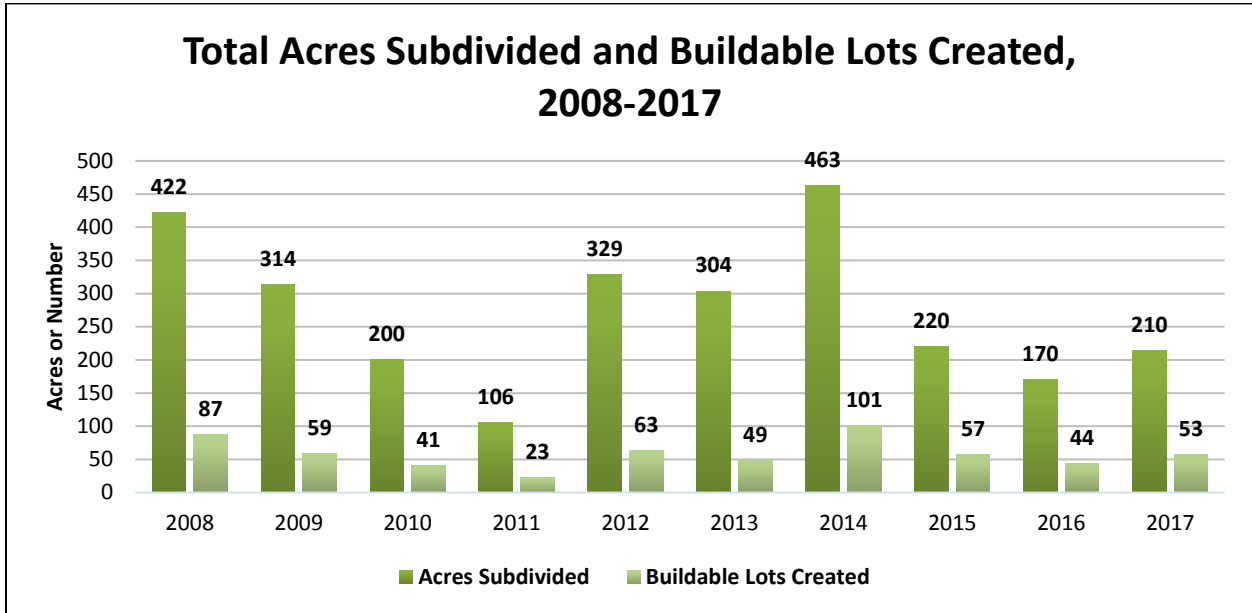


Over the past 10 years, 174 farmstead splits have been approved by the Board of Supervisors. Those splits contained 886 acres (both lots and outlots), which is an average of 5.09 acres per split.

Fifty-three buildable lots were preliminarily or final platted in 2017, including farmstead splits and non-farmstead split subdivisions (Figure 9). Of the 53 newly platted lots, 48 are buildable for residential purposes, while three are intended for commercial use and two for industrial use. The 53 lots platted in 2017 is about average for an annual total over the past 10 years.

The 53 lots include 209.5 acres, which is close to the median total acres in buildable lots over the past 10 years. The buildable lot size in 2017 averaged around 4.0 acres per lot, which is consistent with the recent average platted lot size that has leveled off at just under 3.9 acres in the last three years. In contrast, the average acres per lot from 1998 to 2014 was 5.33 acres. The recent decrease in average lot size may again be due to requiring sensitive areas and stormwater compliance. The following graph details yearly trends in total acres subdivided and the creation of buildable lots.

Figure 9: Total acres and buildable lots platted in all subdivisions, 2008-2017



Figures 10 and 11 on the following pages show the locations of all subdivisions that were approved in Johnson County in 2017. The figures also show all farmstead splits that have been approved since the adoption of the most recent farmstead split ordinance in 2000. Since December 2000, 45,793 acres have been placed in agricultural preservation as a result of farmstead splits.

Figure 10: Subdivisions approved in 2016, separated by subdivisions and farmstead splits

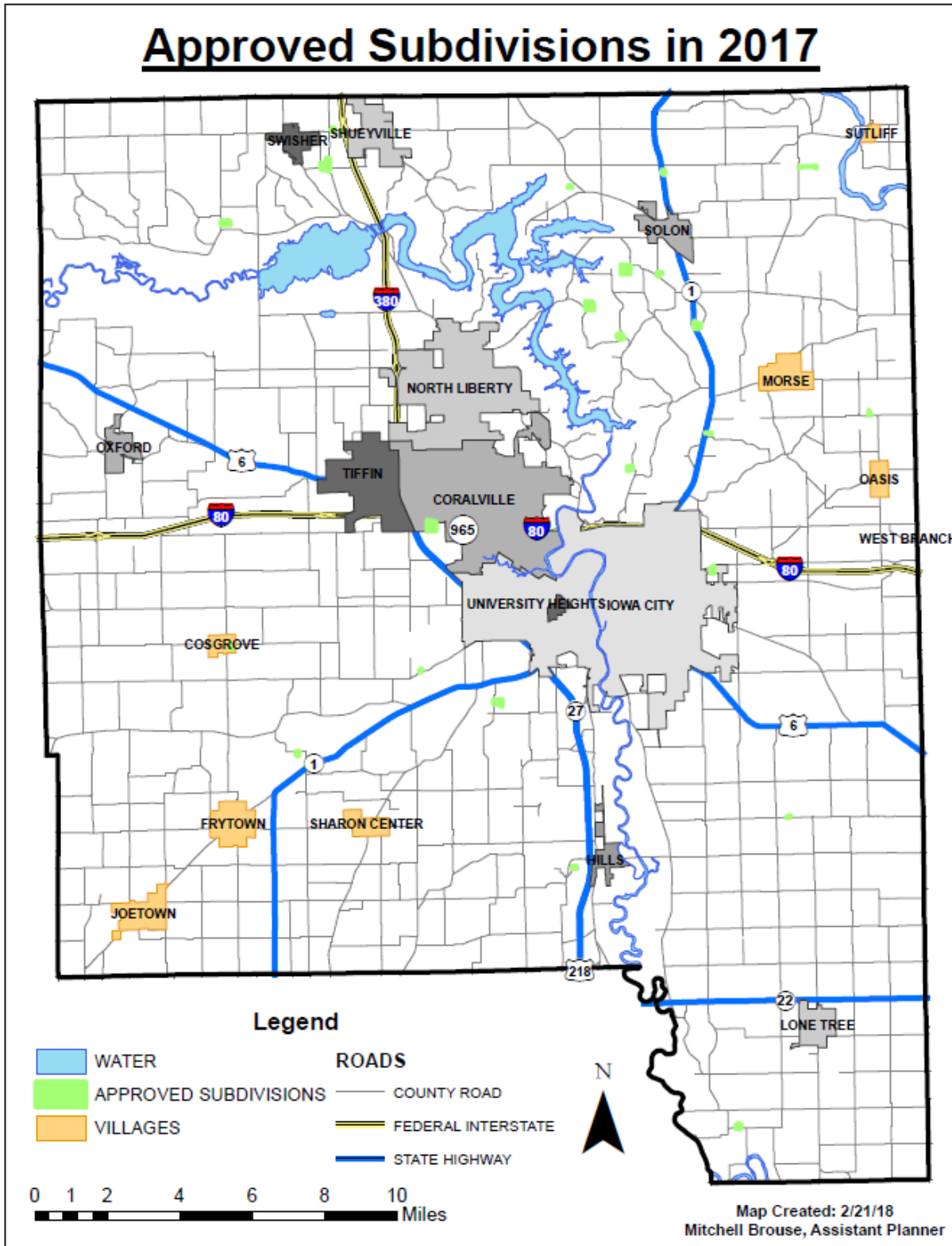
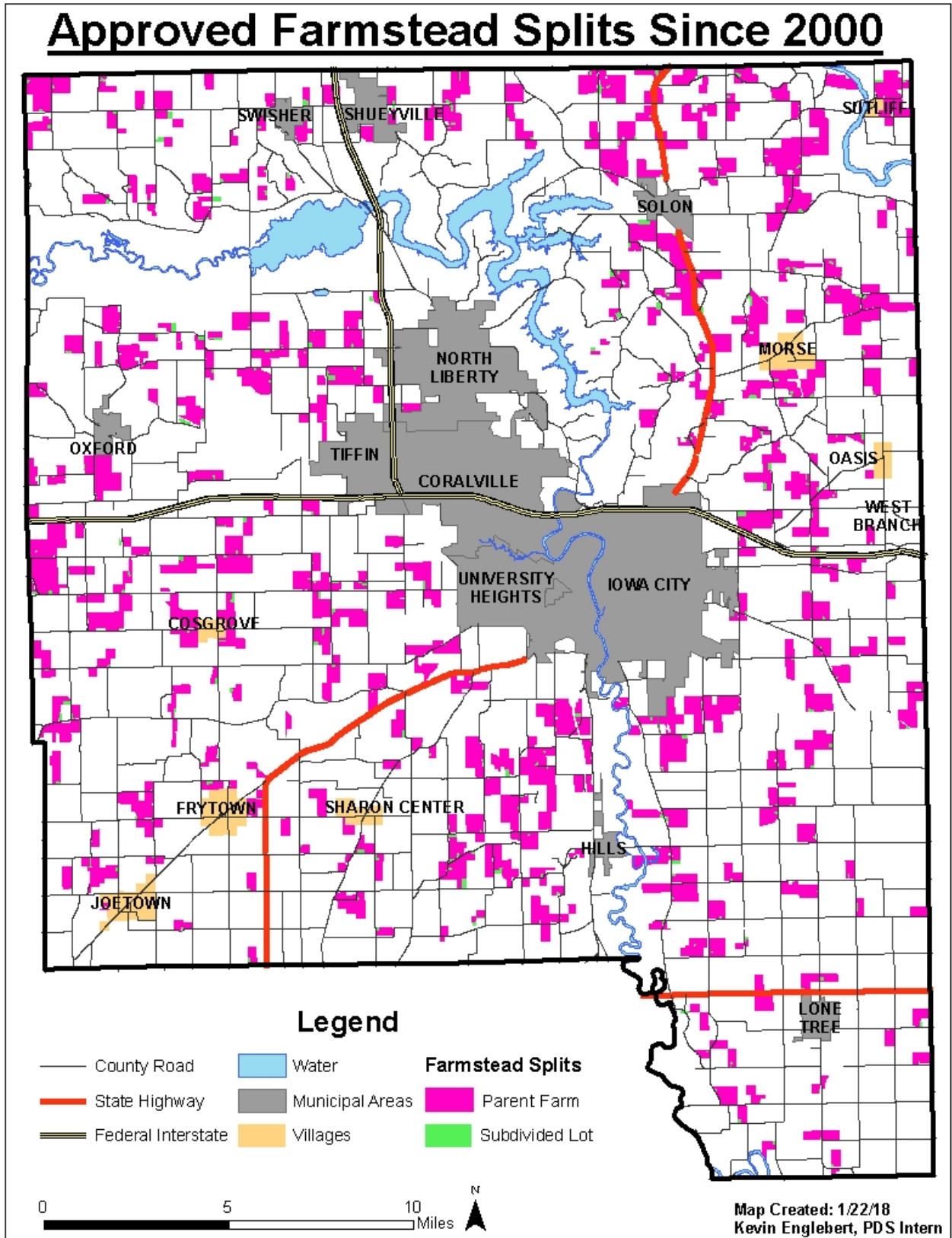


Figure 3: All farmstead splits approved since the adoption of the farmstead split ordinance in 2000



## **OTHER APPLICATION APPROVALS**

In addition to issuing building permits and reviewing subdivision and rezoning applications for the unincorporated areas of Johnson County, PDS issues permits for floodplain development, approves boundary line adjustments, and oversees other development applications. The following section outlines other permit and development activities in 2017. Figure 12 provides a summary of each application type and the fees collected.

### **VARIANCES**

The Board of Adjustment (BOA) rules on all requests to vary bulk regulations such as yard setback regulations. In 2017, the BOA received 20 requests for yard setback variances. The Board approved 19 of these requests, and PDS staff subsequently issued building permits relating to the applications.

### **CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS**

The Board of Adjustment issues Conditional Use Permits (CUP) to allow uses such as home businesses, special events, and utility substations. In 2017, the BOA received and approved requests for 19 CUPs. Of the 19 permits, nine were issued for special events including Camp Euforia, Gazebo at the Green, Celebration Barn, and Geyer's Pizza Oven. Four permits were issued for home businesses, two for landscaping businesses, one for a private school, and one to allow mining and mineral extraction.

### **BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENTS**

The PDS Director approves Boundary Line Adjustments (BLA). BLAs transfer small portions of property between adjacent parcels without creating or eliminating platted lots. In 2017, 10 BLAs were approved by the director and recorded.

### **SITE PLAN REVIEW**

Site Plan Review is required prior to issuance of a building permit to develop any commercial- or industrial-zoned parcel. In 2017, the PDS Department received seven applications for site plan review. The Board of Supervisors approved five, and two applications were pending at the end of 2017. The five approved site plans included a ready-mix concrete plant, a storage warehouse, an addition to a commercial structure, a fuel depot, and a concrete and asphalt recycling plant.

### **FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT PERMITS**

The PDS Department issues permits for all development that occurs within the Special Flood Hazard Areas (commonly known as the 1% annual chance area or 100-year floodplain). In 2017, 13 floodplain development permits were issued in Johnson County. Unlike with building permits, floodplain development permits regulate all development on a site, including grading, excavating, and filling in addition to the erection or modification of structures.

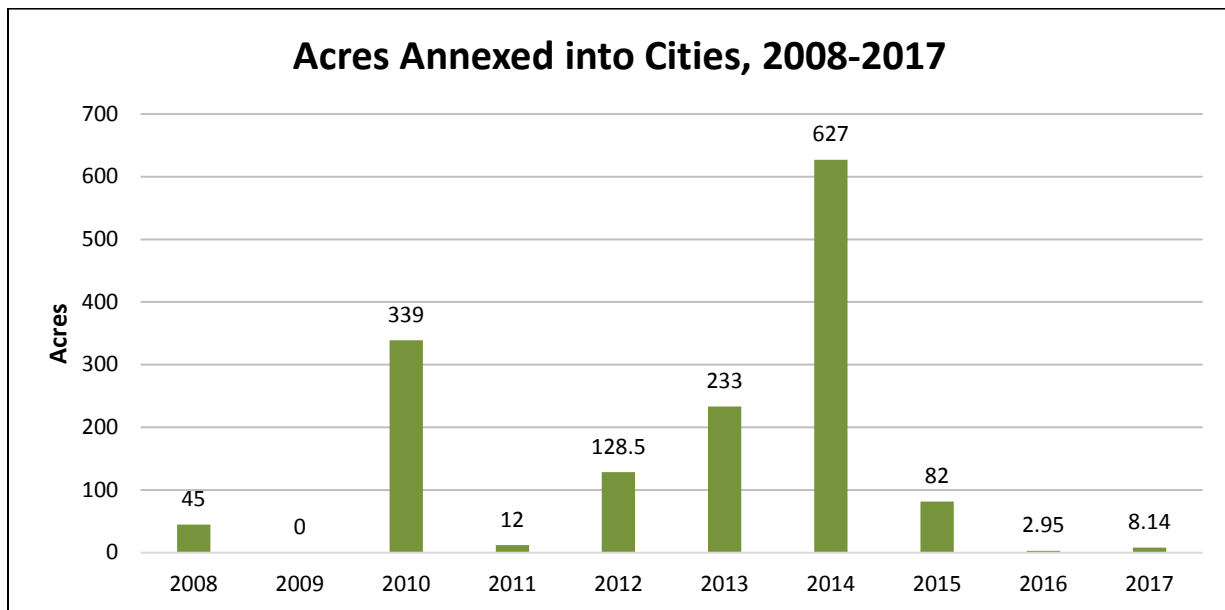
Figure 42: Other permits issued or reviews completed by PDS, including fees collected

Type of Permit	Submitted	Approved	Fee (\$)	Total Fees Collected (\$)
Variance	20	19	175	3,500
Conditional Use Permit	19	19	250	4,750
Boundary Line Adjustment	10	7	75	750
Site Plan Review	7	5	250	1,750
Floodplain Development Permits	13	13	10	130

## ANNEXATIONS

In 2017, a total of 8.14 acres were annexed from the unincorporated areas of Johnson County into the various municipalities (Figure 13). The 8.14 acres, an increase from 2.95 acres in 2016, is the second smallest number of acres annexed since 2009, when no annexations occurred.

Figure 53: Total acres annexed each year from 2008 to 2017



## 2017 DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

### PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

#### *Amendments to the Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance*

The PDS Department developed two ordinance amendments to the Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that were subsequently adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2017.

- On May 18, 2017, the Board of Supervisors approved an amendment to the UDO to permit solar energy systems as an accessory use in all zoning districts. The ordinance is intended to encourage the use of non-carbon based energy generation throughout Johnson County. The new ordinance also assisted the County's application for SolSmart designation (more information below).
- On September 28, 2017, the Board of Supervisors approved an amendment to the UDO to limit the sale of consumer fireworks to the MH – Heavy Industrial District in response to a change in State Code.

#### *Comprehensive Plan*

During summer 2016 the PDS Department developed a request for proposals (RFP), which was subsequently issued by the Board of Supervisors, to hire a consulting firm to assist in developing the first Johnson County Comprehensive Plan. The plan will update the current Johnson County Land Use Plan and add even more information regarding housing, sustainability, economic development, local foods, and other topics. The Board of Supervisors entered into a contract with JEO Consulting Group Inc. and Confluence to develop the plan in fall 2016, and many plan update activities took place in 2017. The Johnson County 2018 Comprehensive Plan is being considered for adoption in spring 2018.

PDS staff, with JEO and Confluence held five public input meetings in late winter 2017 to gather community comments:

1. February 7, 2017 – Lone Tree Community Center
2. February 16, 2017 – Kent Park
3. February 22, 2017 – Solon High School
4. February 28, 2017 – Stringtown Grocery
5. March 6, 2017 – Iowa City Public Library

Several focus groups also met in the spring to discuss the plan including the local Farm Bureau, Johnson County Food Policy Council, ag-tourism proprietors, builders, developers, and realtors, the Sustainability Working Group, and the Conservation Board user group. In addition to the input meetings and focus groups, the Board of Supervisors and the Comprehensive Plan Committee each met eight times to review the Comprehensive Plan in 2017. A public comment period was held from November 28 to December 15, to solicit feedback on the plan, including an open house hosted by PDS staff on December 5, 2017. Drafts of the plan were made available to the public at the plan website ([www.Jocoplan.com](http://www.Jocoplan.com)) throughout the process, which continued into 2018.



### ***New Permit Software and Credit Cards***

PDS staff, in collaboration with the IT Department, Public Health Department, and the Treasurer's Office, worked on the configuration and implementation of new permitting software which went live in September 2017. The software has improved functionality over previous software and allows the department to accept fee payment by credit card. The public has indicated that they appreciate the option to use a credit card to pay fees.

### **SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN TEAM**

The Sustainability Division works on policy and projects and helps carry out the Board of Supervisors' strategic goals on sustainability. Sustainability staff also collaborate with the County's Green Team to offer public education opportunities. Positions within this division include the Sustainability Coordinator and the Soil and Water Conservation Coordinator.

### ***Thinking Globally and Acting Locally***

In June 2017 the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to support the Paris Climate Agreement, which aims to prevent global temperatures from rising. Sustainability staff researched and adapted the resolution from [We Are Still In](#).

Sustainability and the County's Social Services Department collaborated on the second round of the **Sustainability Grants Program for Nonprofits**. Four social services organizations were approved for funding and technical assistance. Projects included new furnaces for the Crisis Center and new LED lights for the Domestic Violence Intervention Program. The participating organizations used existing MidAmerican Energy audits or completed new ones as the basis for their projects.

### ***Energy Efficiency and Green Buildings***

The Sustainability Coordinator secured rebates for energy efficiency measures: **\$201,088** for improvements to the HVAC system in the Health and Human Services Building, and **\$98,308** for the new Ambulance Service and Medical Examiner Facility. These rebates brought the total amount of MidAmerican Energy rebates earned by the County since 2013 to **\$500,741**.

In 2017, the **Sustainability and Energy Reinvestment Fund** supported a rejuvenated bioswale at the Admin Building, water bottle filler stations, and 10% of the cost of a green vehicle (Prius) for the County's shared fleet. The Board of Supervisors created the fund in 2014 to use energy rebates, and occasionally seed money, to support green County projects.

### ***Renewable Energy***

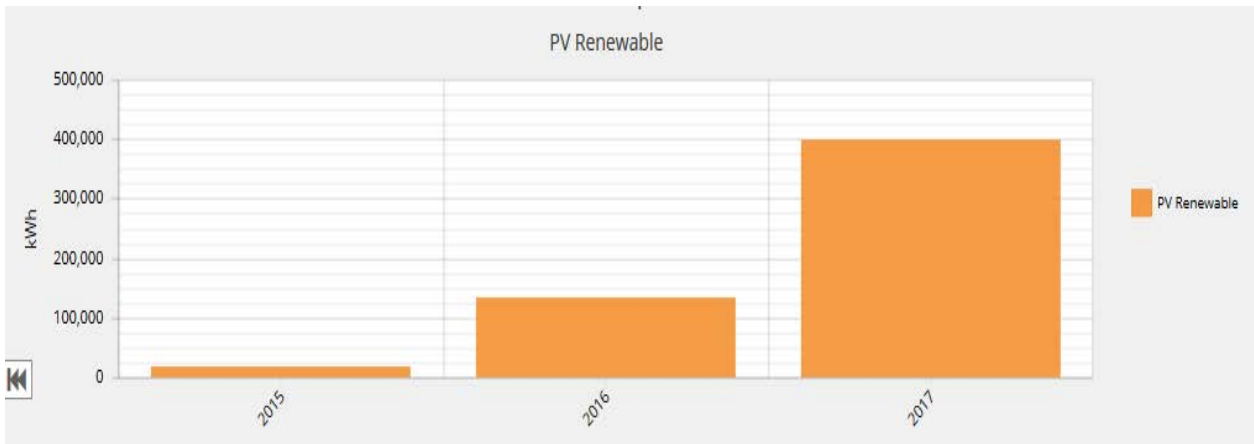
PDS staff helped the County earn a [SolSMART Gold community designation](#) for making it faster, easier and more affordable for residents in the unincorporated areas to use solar for their homes or businesses, and easier for solar companies



to complete the permitting process. Johnson County was the first county in Iowa and the Midwest to earn the Gold Community designation.

In 2017, the County had four solar arrays operating—two at the West Campus and two at the Downtown campus—for a total of **330 kW**, which is equivalent to serving the electrical energy needs of about 40 homes annually. The amount of on-site solar energy available to County facilities nearly tripled from 135,227 kWh in 2016 to 400,988 kWh in 2017 (Figure 14). In addition, the Sustainability Coordinator played a major role in soliciting **solar array bids** for the new Ambulance Service and Medical Examiner Facility.

*Figure 14: On-site solar energy generation for Johnson County buildings. Source: County data in Iowa B3 Benchmarking program.*



In late 2017, staff began a new County partnership with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association to launch a **Solarize Johnson County** effort. The program, which will roll out in April 2018, will provide homeowners with an opportunity to purchase solar for their home at an affordable cost through a group-buy.



### ***Bicycle Friendly Business Gold Award for Downtown Campus***



In spring 2017 the Administration Building, Health and Human Services Building, and nearly completed Ambulance and Medical Examiner Facility earned gold designation from the League of American Bicyclists for accessible bicycle racks as well as educational events such as Bike to Work Month and One Less Car efforts. Sustainability staff worked with the Wellness Program to complete requirements and the award application.

## ***Soil and Water Conservation (SWC)***

The SWC Coordinator completed multiple reviews of stormwater management plans and sensitive areas reports for development projects throughout the county. The SWC Coordinator managed Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) construction projects consisting of wetlands, ponds, urban practices, and grade stabilization structures.

Sustainability staff ensured the **bioretention cell at the Administration Building** was rejuvenated with appropriate plantings and design (right). The cell helps protect water quality by capturing and breaking down pollutants. The bioretention cell also helps slow down stormwater runoff.



In addition, the SWC Coordinator, in conjunction with the Johnson County Soil and Water District, applied for, received, and managed a **\$50,000 Urban Agriculture Conservation Program award** from the National Association of Conservation Districts. The grant will enable the implementation of recommended conservation practices and drainage infrastructure at the Historic Poor Farm. The grant will also allow for extensive soil testing protocol, and the testing results will be used to aid farmers in improving soil health throughout the world.

## ***Additional Outreach and Engagement***

Sustainability staff gave presentations on solar for the Kiwanis Club and the Iowa State Association of Counties, on sustainability careers for the University of Iowa, and on neighborhood water quality for the Iowa Water Conference. The Sustainability Coordinator also participated in an environmental and sustainability fair at the Kirkwood Community College Iowa City campus and hosted quarterly [Sustainability Working Group of Johnson County](#) meetings.

The **Green Team** hosted many well-attended events and activities for the public and staff:

- **Bike-to-Work Week**, including commuter breakfast for the public and an interdepartmental friendly competition for the One Less Car Trophy, which encourages staff to walk, bike, take the bus, or carpool to work
- **Earth Week** water quality education with the Public Health Department and seedling exchange events with the Wellness Program.
- **Additional talks and interactive activities** made possible by volunteer speakers and hosts:
  - Tiny Houses, with Greg Johnson
  - Reducing Your Carbon Footprint, with Green Iowa Americorps
  - How to Put Your Bike on the Bus, with City of Iowa City
  - Bicycle Safety, with Bicyclists of Iowa City
  - Bicycle Trails, with Johnson County Conservation Department
  - Fix-A-Flat Training, with local bike shops
  - Green Alternatives to Traditional Burial, with Medical Examiner's Office

## **Local Foods**

In January 2017, the Local Foods and Planning Specialist continued collaboration with the **University of Iowa Obermann Center for Advanced Studies Winter Leadership Institute**. After a site visit to the Johnson County Historic Poor Farm, and work in small groups, the Fellows proposed ideas for publicly engaged research and teaching projects that could be enacted at the site. The Board of Supervisors wanted the project to focus on organic, conservation farming. In March 2017, the fellows shared their vision for the farm through an open discussion with the foods specialist and others at the Iowa City Public Library. The event included a film screening of *Taking It to the Streets: Ten Years of the Obermann Graduate Institute*, produced by filmmaker Anna Swanson.

HBK Engineering completed a site analysis for **The Johnson County Historic Poor Farm**, focusing on three contributing historic buildings, current land uses, and previous planning efforts. For Phase Two, completed in 2017, the consultants set a timeline and action steps related to concept development. **GROW Johnson County** was the lease-holder for a portion of the acres at the farm. In 2017, they donated 27,500 pounds of produce to local pantries and non-profit organizations such as Table to Table, more than doubling the 2016 production of 12,000 pounds. **Iowa Valley Global Food Project** also participated at the farm in 2017.

The **Food Policy Council**, a volunteer community-led group that engages open community dialogue pertaining to food and agriculture practices in the county, worked with the Iowa City Farmers Market to co-host a **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Fair** in March 2017 at the Robert A. Lee Recreation Center in Iowa City. Community members learned from local farmers about CSA shares and local community food systems. A CSA purchase allows direct access to fresh, locally produced foods grown through a purchase of a “share” of the produce. The council also hosted a **booth at the county fair** in July in addition to hosting monthly regular meetings, with which PDS staff assisted.

## **STAFF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

All staff members in the Planning, Development, and Sustainability Department completed training in diversity, computer safety, general safety and sexual harassment in the year 2017.

### ***Josh Busard, Director***

- Maintained three certifications, AICP, LEED-AP, CFM.
- Attended the USGBC GreenBuild Conference in November 2017.
- Attended the American Planning Association National Conference in April 2017.
- Attended the American Planning Association Upper Midwest Conference in October 2017.
- Attended the Iowa Water Conference in March 2017.
- Presented with Supervisor Carberry and Becky Soglin at the Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) conference in August 2017.
- Presented at the Iowa City Chamber of Commerce Community Leadership Program Agricultural Day and at Government Day.
- Continued to serve as legislative liaison on the County Planning & Zoning Officials ISAC Affiliate executive committee.

### ***Nate Mueller, Assistant Director***

- Maintained CFM certification.
- Attended the Iowa Water Conference in March 2017.
- Attended ICE - Customer Experience training presented by Linn County in April 2017.
- Attended Mental Health First Aid training in April 2017.
- Attended Spring CoZO (ISAC) Conference in May 2017.
- Attended ISAC Annual Conference in August 2017.
- Attended Funding the Beginning Farmer event hosted by FSA and Hills Bank in August 2017.
- Served as professional liaison and advisor to a graduate student group at the University of Iowa School of Urban and Regional Planning.
- Attended the American Planning Association Upper Midwest Conference in October 2017.
- Continued to serve as a district representative on the County Planning & Zoning Officials ISAC Affiliate executive committee.

### ***Mitchell Brouse, Assistant Planner***

- Maintained CFM certification.
- Became a Certified Floodplain Manager in September 2016.
- Attended ESRI Users Conference in July 2017.
- Attended the Iowa APA Planning Conference in October 2017.
- Attended the IFSMA Fall Conference in October 2017.
- Presented to a first-year seminar class for the University of Iowa School of Urban and Regional Planning program about Johnson County planning practices.

***Becky Soglin, Sustainability Coordinator***

- Presented at and attended the Iowa Water Conference in March 2017 and annual meeting of the Iowa State Association of Counties (with Josh Busard) in August 2017.
- Attended Heartland Sustainability Directors and Growing Sustainable Communities conferences.
- Earned credits towards LEED Green Associate credential renewal (due in 2018).
- Completed webinars/workshops on pictometry, social media, and grants.
- Presented to graduate students in the University of Iowa School of Urban and Regional Planning program about Johnson County planning practices and group projects.

***Neil Bombei, Lead Building Inspector***

- Attended several meetings for the Iowa Association of Building Officials and currently serves as Secretary on the IABO executive board.
- Served on the Johnson County Safety Committee.
- Attended the Hawkeye on Safety Training Event in Coralville.
- Attended ICE training in Cedar Rapids focused on handling hostile customers.
- Registered a total of 21 hours of continuing education credits.

***Bret McLaughlin, Senior Combination Inspector***

- Attended a full week of training from 2017 Colorado Chapter Education Institute.
- Attended the Hawkeye on Safety Training Event in Coralville.
- Attended ICE training in Cedar Rapids focused on handling hostile customers.
- Maintained 11 certifications.
- Registered a total of 38 hours of continuing education credits.

***David Tornow, Building Inspector I***

- Attended a full week of training from the Upper Great Plain Region III in Minneapolis.
- Obtained certification as a Residential Building Code Inspector.
- Attended the Hawkeye on Safety Training Event in Coralville.
- Attended ICE training focused on handling hostile customers in Cedar Rapids.
- Attended the Iowa Association of Electrical Inspectors spring meeting and served on the IAIEI board.
- Registered a total of 41 hours of continuing education credits.

## 2018 DEPARTMENT PLANS

This section highlights initiatives or new projects for 2018. The lists do not include all goals, tasks, and responsibilities the department will maintain or pursue throughout the year.

### PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

#### *Johnson County Comprehensive Plan*

PDS staff plans to finish the process of creating the Johnson County Comprehensive Plan. At the time of this annual report publication, the plan was tentatively scheduled for public hearing at the following meetings:

1. February 12, 2018 – Public Hearing Session with P&Z Commission
2. February 28, 2018 – Continued Public Hearing and P&Z Commission action
3. April 12, 2018 – Public Hearing with BOS

#### *Ordinance Amendments*

After completion of the Comprehensive Plan, staff intends to begin planning an update of the Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Staff would like to ensure that the revised UDO furthers the goals identified in the new comprehensive plan.

- PDS staff plans to further develop and advance an Agri-Tourism Zoning District that will allow value-added agricultural related activities to take place in certain areas.
- Staff hopes to develop an amendment that will require builders to replace the topsoil on building sites and use soil erosion control best practices throughout the construction process.
- PDS staff will also work with the County Attorney's Office to implement a deliberate code enforcement procedure that will first seek voluntary compliance.

#### *Community Rating System (CRS)*

PDS staff will begin preliminary work to become a CRS Community, a status that will result in reduced Flood Insurance premiums for residents in the unincorporated areas of Johnson County.

### SUSTAINABILITY

#### *Energy, Renewables and Green Buildings*

- With Midwest Renewable Energy Association, host Solarize Johnson County, a program for homeowners to install solar at homes more affordably through a group-buy program in 2018.
- The Sustainability Coordinator, with the assistance of an intern, will conduct a Greenhouse Gas Inventory.
- In collaboration with the Facilities Department, the Sustainability Coordinator will ensure that the solar array is installed on the Ambulance Service and Medical Examiner Facility and that the building earns a LEED certification.

- The PDS Department will contribute to sustainability and stormwater elements of Historic Poor Farm Master Planning.

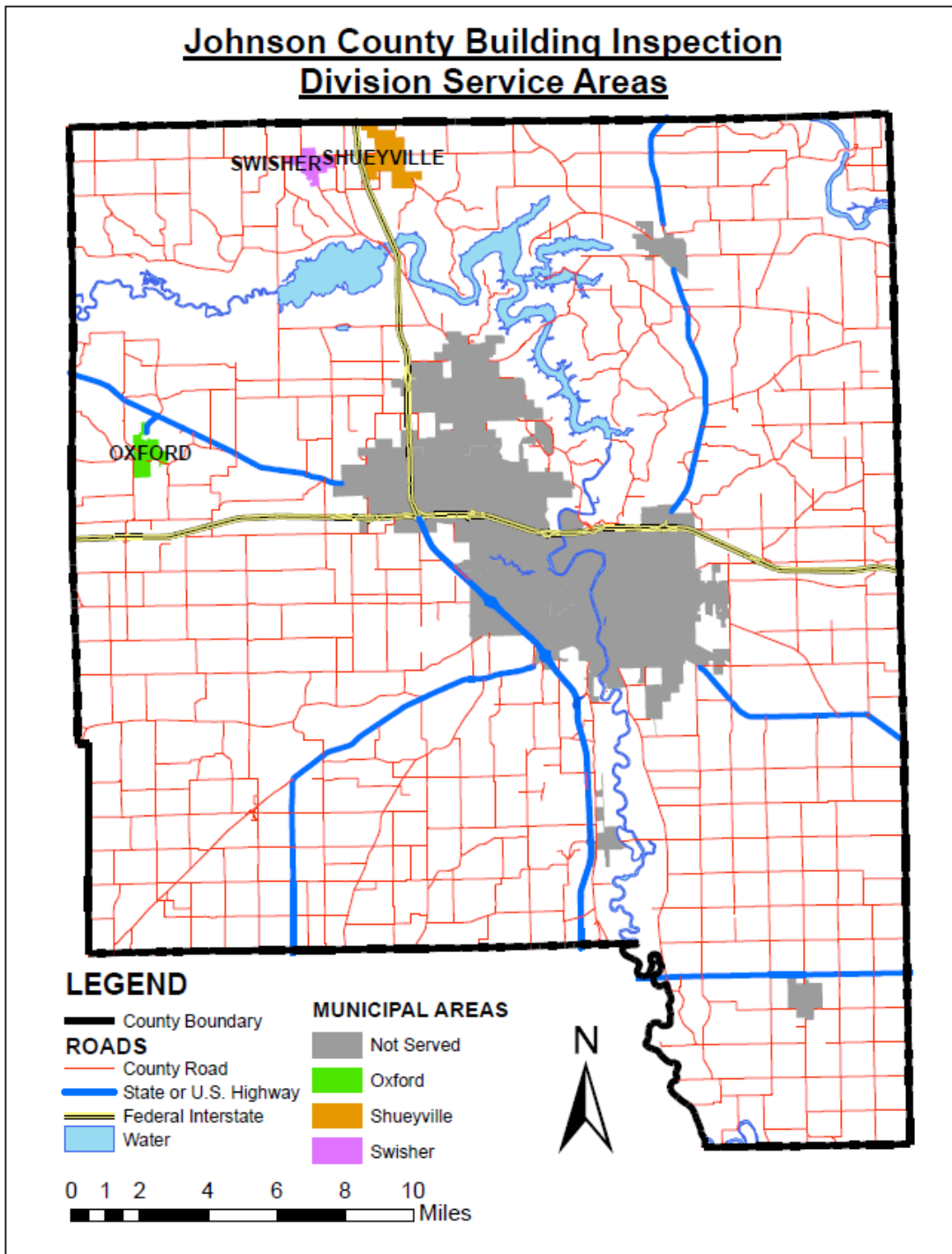
### ***Soil and Water Conservation***

- The SWC Coordinator will manage HUD-Clear Creek Watershed Coalition Project.
- The SWC Coordinator will investigate and address topsoil requirements and improving storm water and erosion control regulations.
- Complete individual property stormwater plans.
- Continue and enhance educational outreach program.
- Continue partnerships to develop strategies for helping producers implement soil health techniques and meet goals of the nutrient reduction strategy.
- Improve Storm Water inspection processes for compliance.



Appendices

APPENDIX A: BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION INSPECTION AREAS



## APPENDIX B: JOHNSON COUNTY ZONING DISTRICTS, ADOPTED IN 2004

Abbreviation	Zoning District
A	Agricultural
AR	Agricultural Residential
AWDRR	Agricultural, Solid Waste Disposal and Environmental Resource Reclamation District
C	Commercial
CH	Highway Commercial
C-AG	Agri-Business
ML	Light Industrial
MH	Heavy Industrial
P	Public
R, R3, R5, R10, R20	Residential
RMF	Multi-Family Residential
RMH	Manufactured Housing Residential
RTF	Two-Family Residential
RUA, RUB	Urban Residential
RC	Rural Conservation

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