

Chapter 5

Land Use

5.1 Profile	97
5.2 Priorities: Land Use	104
5.3 Goals, Strategies, Action Steps & Land Use Tools	105
5.4 Implementation: Land Use	117



Land Use

5

JOHNSON COUNTY

While Johnson County has continued to experience tremendous population and developmental growth, many of the challenges addressed in the 2008 Land Use Plan are still relevant today. Balancing continued growth with the protection of the environment and preservation of agricultural lands has continued to be a very important issue to both the public and elected officials.

The regulatory barriers adopted to enact the vision of the 1998 and 2008 Land Use Plans have helped preserve agricultural land. The farmstead split rule, enacted December 1, 2000, limits the ability to subdivide an agricultural tract of land. The rule allows a farmer's family member to build a home on a lot adjacent lot to the existing farm so that they may continue the agricultural business.

The 2008 Land Use Plan sought to encourage higher-density residential housing and limit non-agricultural growth to the North Corridor Development Area (NCDA). While development mostly located in this area, subdivision designs continued to favor lower-density development. In this 2018 plan, the NCDA has been replaced by a Future Land Use Map that has detailed land use designations and focused development areas throughout the county.

This chapter reviews past land use and housing trends and establishes the future land use plan, including a Future Land Use Map (Map 3, page 111). This analysis is essential to the preparation of the future land use development guidelines, as well as transportation plans that will help guide future updates to Johnson County's development regulations.



PROFILE

EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY

Understanding the pattern of existing land use highlights potential challenges and opportunities for future development, as well as land preservation. Map 2 on page 100, titled “Existing Land Use” uses the Johnson County Assessor’s property class or land use designations (Table 5) from tax records to identify each parcel’s primary use as of 2016: agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and tax-exempt. Tax-exempt parcels are those owned by city, county, utility provider, or charitable organizations. Because of historic zonings and legal nonconforming uses, the tax classification of a parcel rather than the zoning classification serves as a more accurate indicator of the actual land use.

Agricultural Land Uses

Per the County Assessor’s classification, agriculture is the primary land use accounting for 72.7% of all land in Johnson County and 81.5% of unincorporated areas. Much of the unincorporated areas of Johnson County are, indeed, utilized for agricultural purposes with the exception of major park and wildlife areas (e.g. Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area, Coralville Reservoir, Lake Macbride, Kent Park).

Residential Land Uses

Only 7.2% of the unincorporated areas are utilized for residential purposes with an average lot size of 3.5 acres (Table 5). The highest density of residential housing is located within the then current North Corridor Development Area (NCDA). A total of 4,083 residential lots are located within the NCDA which accounts for over 55% of all residential lots throughout unincorporated Johnson County. The residential lots in the NCDA have an average lot size of 2.4 acres.

Figure 9 highlights residential trends for the amount of acres subdivided, the number of lots platted and the average size per lot between 2006 and 2016. The number of lots platted in 2016 was the lowest since 2011 and the third lowest since 2006. Similarly, the 170 total acres included in buildable lots is the fewest since 2011 and the second fewest over the study period. The average acres per lot have leveled off at just under 3.9 acres per lot from 2014 to 2016, which is the lowest average since 2001 (an outlier, at an average 2.8 acres per lot). The average acres per lot from 2006–2016 were 4.96 acres.

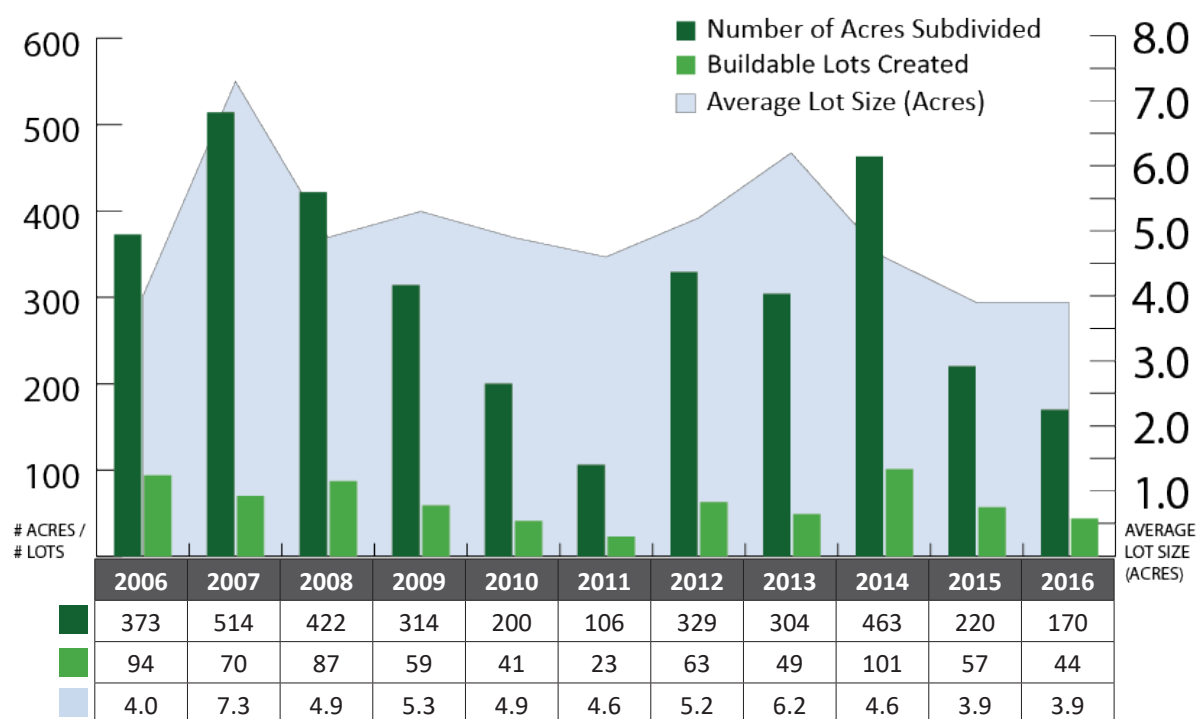
Multi-family parcels make up less than 1% of the unincorporated areas in Johnson County (Table 5). The majority of these properties consist of multiple lots available for lease to manufactured housing units.

Tax-Exempt Land Uses

According to the County Assessor, parcels classified as tax-exempt are owned by city, county, utility provider, charitable organizations, or some other entity claiming partial or full exemption from property taxes. Areas classified as tax-exempt make up the largest nonresidential use, accounting for approximately 23,898 acres or 6.7% of the unincorporated areas of Johnson County (Table 5). The United States Army Corps of Engineers accounts for the largest amount of exempt land held: 18,783 acres (78.6%). Johnson County, holding 2,274 acres (9.5%), is the second-largest land owner of tax-exempt parcels. These exempt parcels held by the county are for uses such as Secondary Roads sheds, or public ground owned by the county Conservation Board.



Figure 9. Annual Subdivided Lots and Average Lot Size (2006-2016)



Source: Johnson County Planning, Development and Sustainability Department

Commercial & Industrial Land Uses

Commercial parcels make up the second-largest nonresidential land use with 674 parcels, but only account for 7,479 acres or 2.1% of the unincorporated areas (Table 5). These commercial parcels are primarily concentrated in the Iowa City and Coralville areas along the I-80 and I-380/218 corridors.

Only 14 parcels totaling 94.7 acres of land are classified as an industrial land use within the unincorporated areas of Johnson County. Nearly 40 acres of industrial land are located at the Farmers Hen House site south of the Village of Frytown with an additional 21 acres located at the Kalona Creamery site at the intersection of Highway 1 SW and 540th Street SW. The Syngenta Seed production facility located east/northeast of Lone Tree on Highway 22 SE accounts for an additional 30 acres.



Table 5. Existing Land Use Analysis: Johnson County Assessor's Primary Class, 2016 (Unincorporated)

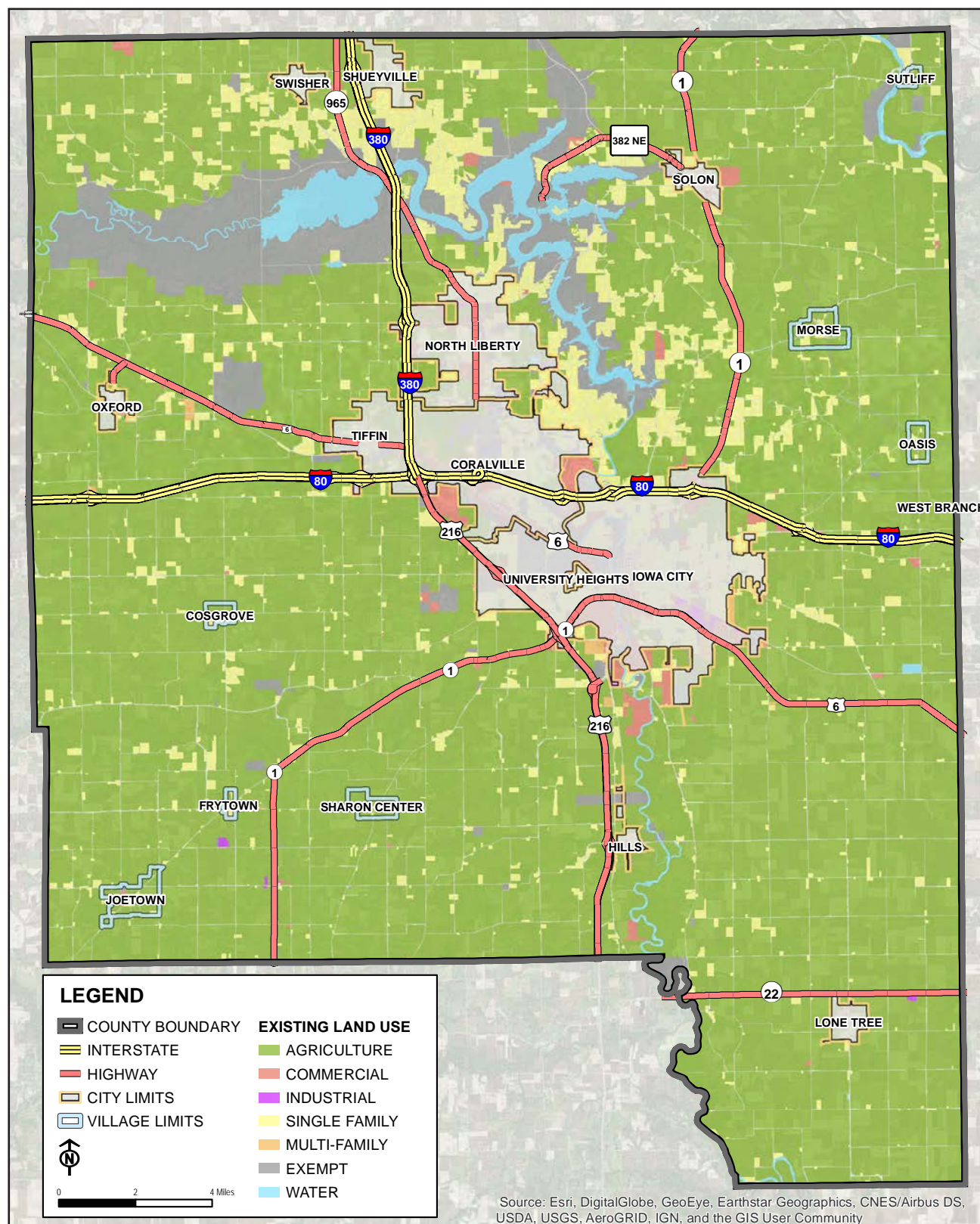
	Number of Parcels	Number of Acres	% of Total Area	% of Unincorp. Area	Average Parcel Size
PROPERTY CLASS					
Agricultural	10,247	289,720	72.7%	81.5%	28.3
Residential	7,407	25,745	6.5%	7.2%	3.5
Exempt*	517	23,898	6.0%	6.7%	46.2
Commercial	674	7,479	1.9%	2.1%	11.1
Multi-Family	13	358	0.1%	0.1%	27.5
Industrial	14	95	0.02%	0.03%	6.8
Water	37	8,317	2.1%	2.3%	NA
TOTAL	18,910	355,612	89.2%**	100.0%	NA
EXEMPTION SUBTYPE OVERLAY					
Forest Reserve- Agricultural	557	7,412	1.9%	2.1%	13.3
Forest Reserve- Residential	625	4,079	1.0%	1.1%	6.5
Native Preserve	4	16	***	***	3.9
Woodland Habitat	8	13	***	***	1.6
Wetland Preserve	4	19	***	***	4.8
TOTAL	1,198	11,538	2.9%	3.2%	NA
<p>* Described as parcels owned by a city, county, utility provider, charitable organizations or some other entity claiming partial or full exemption from property taxes.</p> <p>** The remaining 10.8% of land area is within the incorporated areas of Johnson County.</p> <p>*** Account for less than 0.1% of land area.</p>					

Data Source: Johnson County Assessor's Department

NOTE: Property class definitions can be found in Figure 13 of Appendix A (page 38).



Map 2. Existing Land Use: Assessor's Property Class (2016)



Data Source: Johnson County GIS Department



NATURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

This section reviews environmental and natural resource issues to identify opportunities and natural barriers to future development in Johnson County. The results help identify appropriate growth areas on the Future Land Use Map while avoiding slopes, floodplains, woodlands, and wetlands. Areas that limit development or are deemed to have high environmental value should be preserved or developed in a way to minimize damage to the existing environment.

Countywide maps for various natural and environmental conditions can be found in Appendix A.

Slope

The slope of the terrain affects the land uses applicable to a specific site (Map 3 in Appendix A). Grading of steep hillsides changes the character of the landscape and adds cost to a development project. Moreover, developing steep hillsides can increase erosion with the potential to pollute waterways and damage neighboring properties.

Soil Infiltration Rates

Soil infiltration rates measure the ability of water to move or infiltrate through the profile of the soil. Soils with slow infiltration rates can cause ponding, which decreases soil strength and causes soil to become highly erodible. High infiltration rates are generally desirable and provide natural on-site stormwater management and also present minimal barriers to installation of traditional wastewater systems.

Woodlands

Johnson County is home to many parks and woodland areas that are highly valued by residents and visitors. Protecting these forests is ecologically critical—providing wildlife habitat, scenic beauty, erosion control, and other intrinsic values.

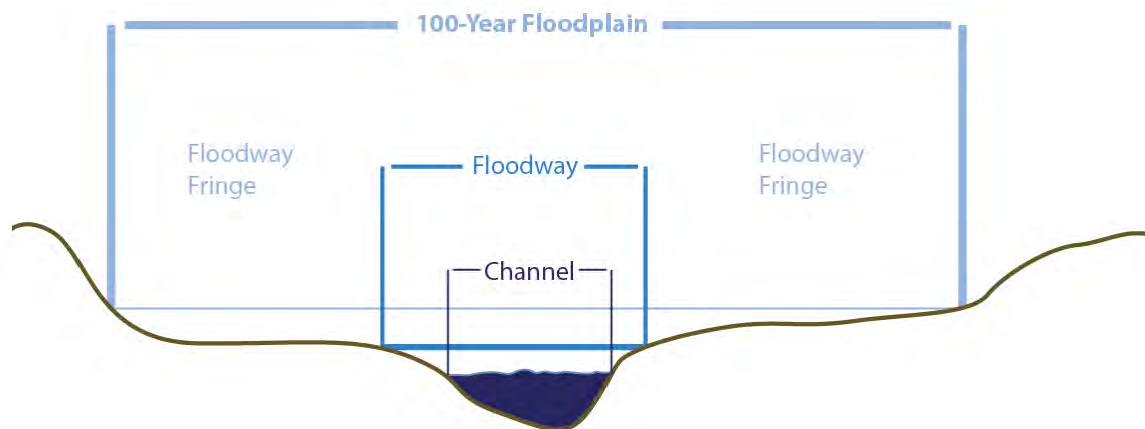


Floodway & Floodplains

Flood Hazard Areas represent another set of environmental issues that need to be considered and dealt with properly when determining future growth areas. As shown in the floodplain diagram (Figure 10), floodplains include the channel, the floodway, and the floodway fringe. The *floodway* includes the main channel of a stream or river and the additional area along the banks needed to convey the additional water flows during times of flooding. The *floodway fringe* is the area adjacent to the floodway, where floodwaters can be expected to pool and stand until flood levels recede. Thus, the floodway fringe are lands outside the floodway that are at or below the base flood elevation that store, but do not effectively convey, floodwaters. The floodway fringe and the floodway, taken together, make up the floodplain. The size of the floodplain changes based on the severity of the flood.

Federal, state, and local regulations require that additional permitting and design requirements be applied to any development in areas designated as a Special Flood Hazard Area. This is an area with a 1% chance of being inundated by a flood in any given year. The Special Flood Hazard Area should be used as a guide when determining development potential because this is the area in which FEMA requires additional regulation and design considerations for any new or substantially improved structures.

Figure 10. Flood Hazard Area Diagram



Source: JEO Consulting Group Inc.

The Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance contains floodplain development regulations to either limit or prevent development within the floodway and Special Flood Hazard Area. Development may be allowed in the Special Flood Hazard Area if the structure is elevated one foot above the designated flood level. Development within the floodway, however, is highly discouraged to eliminate any negative impact up-and-downstream. These property owners may also be required to purchase flood insurance by their mortgage lender. Preferred land uses for flood-prone areas include those with low damage potential such as agriculture, recreation, and open space.



HOUSING TRENDS

As has been noted, Johnson County is the second fastest-growing county in Iowa. In turn, the housing market is under pressure to accommodate new residents without inflating prices. As highlighted in Chapter 1 (Introduction), most of the population growth has occurred in the incorporated areas of the county, resulting in most new housing being built within and around these areas. Developing in the cities has been the county's preferred development pattern with the rural residential development directed toward the North Corridor Development Area as identified in the 2008 Land Use Plan.

To see detailed data about the Johnson County housing market, see Appendix A. Census data help identify future housing needs through an analysis of past and present trends in household characteristics, housing types, and housing values throughout urban and rural parts of the county. Some highlights from the census data include:

- 91% of housing in the unincorporated area is owner occupied.
- Half of the incorporated housing stock has been built since 1980, with one in four residential structures built in the 1990s.
- 36.3% of housing in the unincorporated areas is valued at over \$300,000, compared to 16.5% for the incorporated areas.
- 49% of renters in the unincorporated area pay less than 20% of their income toward housing, while 30.6% of rural renters are housing-cost burdened, paying greater than 30% of household income on rent.
- 579 building permits were issued for single-family dwellings in unincorporated Johnson County between 2008 and 2017.



Example of single-family housing found in the unincorporated areas of Johnson County.



[section 5.2]

PRIORITIES: LAND USE

This section (1) identifies priorities needed to guide future growth and development, (2) lists goals, strategies, and action steps, and (3) provides Land Use Tools including a Future Land Use Map with related tools and Future Land Use Development Guidelines. A major underlying concern is to ensure that land uses do not create conflict.

PRIORITIES

Preserve Natural Resources

A persistent theme during the comprehensive plan process was the need to protect Johnson County's environmentally sensitive areas from residential growth. Key strategies to accomplish this goal include continuing to encourage growth in incorporated cities and villages, where infill potential is highest; strengthening the sensitive areas ordinance; and developing sustainable subdivision design regulations to ensure efficient development practices. In addition, the Future Land Use Map identifies areas for preservation and conservation-style development.

Conservation Subdivision Development

In support of preserving natural areas, conservation subdivision developments (CSDs) are another way to reduce negative impact of residential development in rural areas and preserve more open space and farmland. While there have been parcels rezoned to accommodate a CSD, no platting or development had been completed at the time this plan was published. The requirement to preserve 50% or more of the development as open space and install a DNR-regulated septic system has proven to be a high threshold for developers to reach. Revising wastewater requirements and/or bolstering incentives such as density bonuses may encourage developers to pursue this style of subdivision.

Rural Residential Development

The Future Land Use Map provides for rural residential development to accommodate population growth, while preserving environmentally sensitive and agriculturally productive areas of the county. A large portion of the most environmentally sensitive areas are already protected as part of Lake Macbride State Park and other parks and wildlife management areas; however, privately owned environmentally sensitive areas are still subject to development pressures.

Locating residential development near cities and encouraging interconnectedness of roads and trails should help reduce vehicles miles traveled and limit emissions while accommodating population growth. Residential growth should be located in areas designated for residential development on the future land use map.

Fringe Area Agreements (FAA)

The current Fringe Area Agreements have helped Johnson County coordinate development within the two-mile jurisdictional areas of incorporated cities. Changes to the county's Future Land Use Map and continuing development within the cities present the opportunity to review these agreements.



[section 5.3]

GOALS, STRATEGIES, ACTION STEPS & LAND USE TOOLS

All goals, strategies, and action steps were developed based on the priorities discussed above and the information collected through the public input process, input from the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC), and feedback from the Board of Supervisors. To see a summary of input (including survey results) regarding Land Use, please see Appendix B contained in Volume 2 of this plan.

This section also includes the Future Land Use Tools, which includes a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and Development Guidelines. Both are meant to guide future development in the county.

DEFINITION: Below are definitions of each term and how they will be used in the Implementation Plan section of the comprehensive plan.

- **Goal:** A desired outcome based on the values of the public and elected officials.
- **Strategy:** The approach you take to achieve a goal.
- **Action Step:** The specific steps you take to achieve a strategy.

FORMAT: Each goal (e.g. LND 1) is presented with corresponding strategies (e.g. Strategy 1, Strategy 2) and action steps (e.g. Action 1, Action 2).

LAND USE 1 – This is an example of a Goal's formatting.

Strategy 1 – This is an example of a Strategy's formatting.

Action 1 – This is an example of an Action Step's formatting.

Action 2 – This is an example of an Action Step's formatting.

Action 3 – This is an example of an Action Step's formatting.

LAND USE 1 – Promote and protect sustainable agricultural land uses in rural Johnson County.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE includes practices that satisfy the food and income requirements of farmers, provide people with a healthy and affordable diet, protect environmental quality and human health, and contribute to the vitality of rural and urban communities.

Strategy 1 – Advocate for agricultural preservation in all Fringe Area Agreements.

Action 1 – Pursue adoption of Fringe Area Agreements with cities where no agreement currently exists.

Action 2 – Within the fringe areas, advocate that areas not identified for city growth shall adhere to the county Future Land Use Map.

Action 3 – Update all existing Fringe Area Agreements within two years of adoption of the comprehensive plan and review Fringe Area Agreements every three years thereafter.

**Strategy 2 – Update Johnson County’s agricultural exemption policy.**

- Action 1 – Explore methods to expand agricultural exemption to smaller farming operations.
- Action 2 – Ensure that updated agricultural exemption policies do not become a method for siting CAFOs on small parcels.
- Action 3 – Ensure that updated agricultural exemption policies do not become a method for unplanned residential growth.
- Action 4 – Explore methods for limited residential development for small-scale agriculture.

Strategy 3 – Develop recommendations to alleviate conflicts between agricultural property owners and non-agricultural neighboring properties.

- Action 1 – Revise and distribute information on what to expect when moving to rural Johnson County.
- Action 2 – Explore creating “good neighbor” guidance that identifies strategies to avoid conflicts between different land uses.

*What are **GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICIES**? The decision to move from the city and live in rural areas may mean encountering unfamiliar sights, sounds, and smells. Good neighbor policies help to set expectations for residential households and adjacent agricultural uses, and how best to approach a conflict should it arise.*

Strategy 4 – Encourage and promote the use of on-field and edge-of-field best management practices for top soil and water quality protection.

- Action 1 – Staff will stay informed about resources to aid farmers seeking to implement best management practices.

Strategy 5 – Discourage concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in Johnson County.

- Action 1 – Continue to lobby the Iowa State Legislature to allow counties the ability to regulate CAFOs.
- Action 2 – Encourage and promote best management practices for CAFOs.
- Action 3 – Monitor and report the adverse environmental effects of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in Johnson County to appropriate agencies.

LAND USE 2 – Direct future residential development based on location and then site-specific criteria outlined in the Future Land Use Development Guidelines.**Strategy 1 – Support rezoning applications that comply with the Future Land Use Map and the Future Land Use Development guidelines.**

- Action 1 – Focus residential development in areas that comply with the Future Land Use Map.
- Action 2 – Review and potentially update the Future Land Use Map every five years after adoption.
- Action 3 – Develop a procedure for individual property owners to request a change to the Future Land Use Map.



Action 4 – Develop a procedure for combined rezoning, subdivision, and/or development applications.

Action 5 – Allow for flexibility in the zoning ordinance by adoption of planned unit development (PUD) zoning districts and overlay zones.

Strategy 2 – Support rezoning applications on parcels that meet the standards identified by the Future Land Use Development Guidelines.

Action 1 – Review and update Stormwater Standards at least every five years.

Action 2 – Review and update Sensitive Areas Ordinance (SAO) at least every five years.

Action 3 – Review and update the Road Performance Standards to consider factors such as safety, traffic volume, speed, traffic type, and other national standards.

Action 4 – Identify environmentally sensitive area criteria to protect natural areas and prevent conflicting land uses.

Strategy 3 – Continue use of existing Farmstead Split rule.

Action 1 – Explore limiting the size and number of agricultural outlots.

Action 2 – Review and revise language as subdivision rules are updated.

LAND USE 3 – Direct future commercial and industrial development based on location and then site-specific criteria.

Strategy 1 – Encourage commercial and industrial development within the cities and the Urban Growth Areas.

Action 1 – Discuss and coordinate development activities as part of Fringe Area Agreement negotiations.

Action 2 – Encourage new commercial and industrial development to sites that can be served by municipal water and sanitary sewer.

Strategy 2 – Support appropriate commercial and industrial development that complies with the Future Land Use Map.

Action 1 – Review and update commercial and industrial land use areas every five years.

Action 2 – Identify vacant or underutilized parcels zoned commercial and/or industrial within the unincorporated areas of Johnson County.

Strategy 3 – Develop overlay and other commercial and industrial zones to allow more flexibility in rural commercial development.

Action 1 – Develop criteria for where commercial and industrial overlay zones are appropriate.

Action 2 – Develop criteria for where neighborhood commercial uses are appropriate.

Action 3 – Develop criteria for where agritourism uses are appropriate.



LAND USE 4 – Coordinate land use planning with and between local governments to achieve mutually beneficial development policies.

Strategy 1 – Work with individual cities to update Fringe Area Agreements.

- Action 1 – Pursue adoption of Fringe Area Agreements for cities where no agreement currently exists.
- Action 2 – Advocate for the urban growth area of each Fringe Area Agreement to identify areas that may be developed within the next five or fewer years.
- Action 3 – Ensure that areas outside of the urban growth area comply with the county Comprehensive Plan.
- Action 4 – Pursue Fringe Area Agreements that will allow the Board of Supervisors to comment on city development applications that may impact the unincorporated areas (e.g. roads, safety, stormwater management, etc.).
- Action 5 – Review and update all existing Fringe Area Agreements in accordance with the fringe area agreement schedule contained in Appendix A of this plan.

Strategy 2 – Work with cities and school districts to pursue collaborative growth strategies for mutual benefit.

- Action 1 – Serve as a resource for the community, city staff, and other organizations regarding regional planning issues.
- Action 2 – Pursue regional, multijurisdictional intergovernmental agreements.

Strategy 3 – Advocate for stormwater management and sensitive areas preservation when annexation occurs.

Strategy 4 – Discourage the creation of “unincorporated islands.”

*What are **UNINCORPORATED ISLANDS**? An island is a pocket of unincorporated land that is substantially surrounded by a city. This is the result of annexation by a city when they want to incorporate a parcel of land but not the entire area contiguous to their current city boundary. In order to meet state code, the island parcel must be connected to the county by a 40-foot strip of land.*

LAND USE 5 – Continue to protect and improve Johnson County’s natural resources: land, water, and air.

Strategy 1 – Begin to identify and evaluate all critical and sensitive environmental features in Johnson County.

- Action 1 – Establish criteria to evaluate these areas.
- Action 2 – Coordinate with cities to map sensitive features countywide.



Strategy 2 – Encourage agricultural uses to utilize best management practices and observe conservation practices that prevent erosion and preserve natural resources.

Action 1 – Ensure staff stay informed of the best management practices and available conservation programs to assist with funding and public education.

Action 2 – Promote the use of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), or similar programs.

The **CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)** is a land conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10–15 years in length. The long-term goal of the program is to reestablish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

The **AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM (ACEP)** provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve working agricultural lands and complete wetland restoration and protection projects.



FUTURE LAND USE TOOLS

The Future Land Use component of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on the physical development of the unincorporated areas of Johnson County. In addition to the goals, strategies and actions outlined above, the component includes important future land use tools: Future Land Use Map (with category and zoning compatibility tools) and Future Land Use Development Guidelines.

Comprehensive plans generally project 20 years into the future. The Future Land Use Tools assist Johnson County decision makers in determining the appropriate type and location of future development. The tools were developed based on these criteria:

- The current use of land within the county;
- The desired types of growth, including location of growth and areas to preserve;
- Physical characteristics, as well as strengths and constraints of future growth; and
- Current population and economic trends affecting the county.

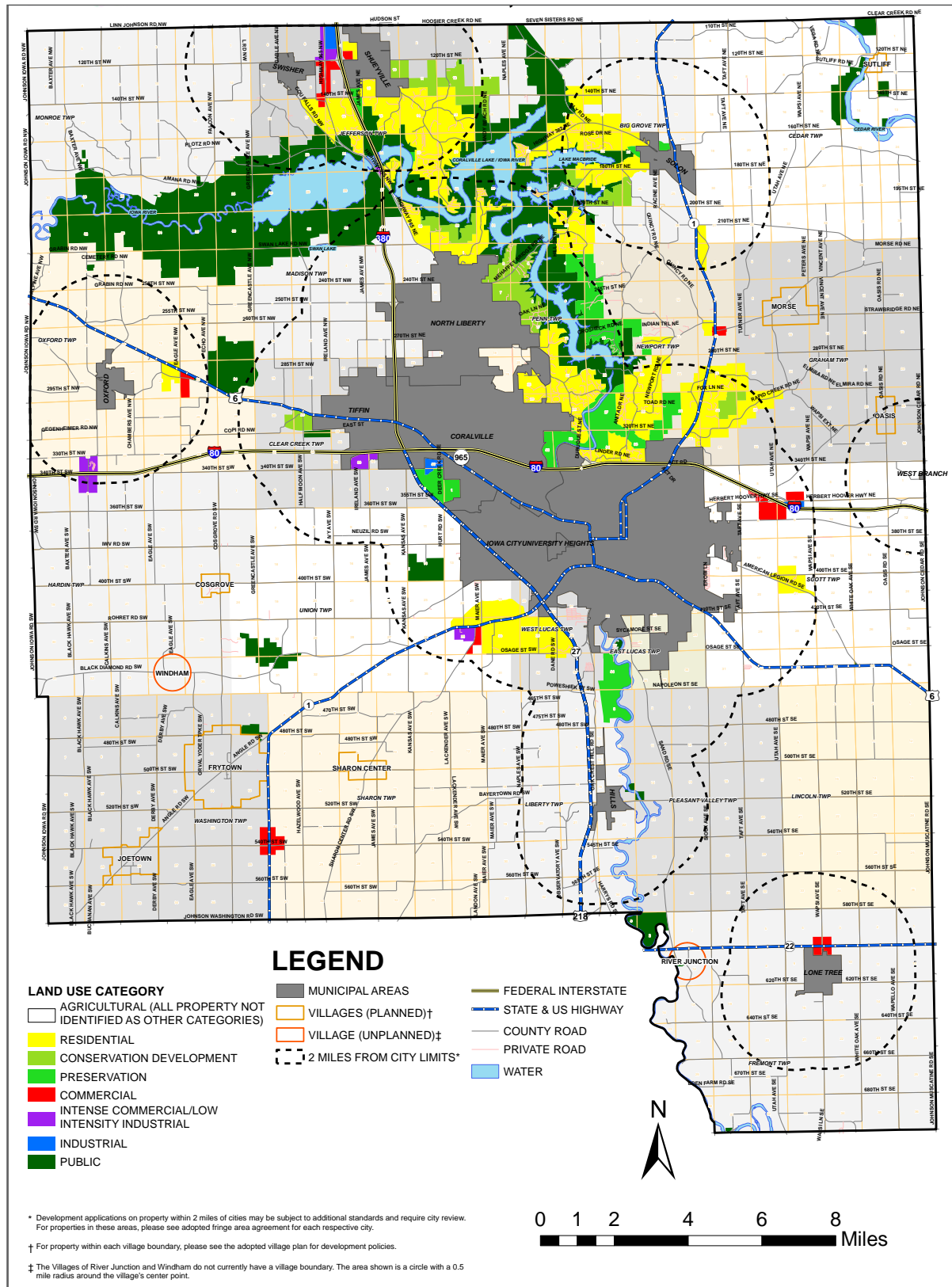
The Future Land Use tools can promote both compatible and complementary development. As growth occurs in Johnson County, these tools should be evaluated and updated to align with the values of the county.

The tools are presented in the following order:

- **Future Land Use Map (Map 3)**, which identifies appropriate land uses throughout the county
- **Future Land Use Categories**, which define the land use categories shown on the map
- **Zoning Compatibility Matrix**, used to identify appropriate zoning classifications for each of the above categories
- **Future Land Use Development Guidelines**, which outline site-specific criteria to consider for the different zoning districts



Map 3. Johnson County Future Land Use Map (2017)



PROFILE

PRIORITIES

GOALS

IMPLEMENTATION



Future Land Use Categories

Future Land Use Categories provide a means for describing preferred uses of land within the county and serve as a basis for zoning decisions. The following are definitions for each future land use category on the map:

Agricultural

Typical uses include land devoted to agriculture, including crop production and animal husbandry, and very limited residential development to include farmstead splits and small farm development. This land use category may also include areas of land significantly impacted by wetlands or floodplain and areas of steep topography or natural tree cover or other sensitive areas preserved as open space. Limited residential development may be allowed on a case-by-case basis (rezoning a maximum of 2 acres to allow no more than one dwelling) if all elements in the Future Land Use Development Guidelines are achieved. Residential development should be associated with food production or be consistent with the historic use of the property and area.

The intent of allowing limited residential development is to allow the Board of Supervisors to correct legal non-conforming uses and zoning packages where the established use of the property is residential, and also create a mechanism to allow for small farm development that does not otherwise qualify for agricultural exemption. Rezoning that result in the creation of residential development that does not reflect the agricultural nature of this category should not be approved.

Residential

This land use category is dominated by single-family detached dwellings with a preferred density of 1 unit per acre or denser. This category may also include single-family dwelling units that are attached horizontally to one or more units, typically referred to as duplexes, townhomes, and row-houses, and multifamily dwelling units attached both horizontally and vertically with two or more dwelling units, typically referred to as apartments or condominiums. Areas zoned for residential shall be limited to locations that can support and accommodate the designated residential densities. Lots should include public or private street frontage and driveway access. Development may further include residential clustered developments; religious, educational, and institutional uses and structures; child day care centers; and public and private parks and recreational areas and structures.

Preservation

This land use category is intended for property that has valuable environmental amenities, including floodplain, wetlands, woodlands, or other sensitive features, but also poses opportunities for considerate development. Very limited residential development (maximum one dwelling and 2 acres) that maximizes preservation of sensitive features may be appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

Conservation Development

This land use category is intended for property that has valuable environmental amenities, including floodplain, wetlands, woodlands, or other sensitive features. Any development that occurs in this land use category should be in accordance with the cluster subdivision design and protect sensitive features by placing at least 50% of the property into open space.

Commercial

This land use category is for retail, service, office, and other traffic-generating commercial uses. The category is restricted to areas that have the infrastructure to support the traffic and utility demands of these uses. Site and building design should include features to minimize negative impacts from noise, light, and traffic.



Intense Commercial/Low-Intensity Industrial

This land use category is for uses equal to or more intense than those allowed in the commercial land use category, but limited to low-intensity industrial uses. These can include high-intensity commercial uses including oversized equipment; high traffic-generating uses including event centers and vehicle and equipment sales; and those with a limited manufacturing component, such as distilleries, and breweries. These uses should be limited to locations that have the public infrastructure necessary to support the traffic and utility demands of these uses.

Industrial

This land use category allows for manufacturing and other potentially noxious land uses. Site sizes can range from small single-user building lots to large facilities. Industrial uses are generally located away from residential areas. Areas reserved for this type of land use are typically not compatible with other areas of lower-intensity use.

Public

This category includes land owned and used by local, state, and federal governments, including educational, environmental, operational, and recreational uses.

Village

This category includes the county's unincorporated villages, which have developed in harmony with agricultural land uses and often provide services to the agricultural community. These settlements may have developed around a church, post office, or commercial enterprise. Typically, development in unincorporated villages is served by private water and sewage disposal systems and has a greater density than is found throughout rural and agricultural areas. Development in these areas should be in accordance with any adopted village plans.

City Fringe

Fringe Areas are city and county joint planning areas designed to protect the interests of the municipalities, their growth areas, and areas of the county immediately outside city growth areas. State statute grants cities the authority to review subdivisions within an area up to two miles beyond their corporate boundaries to facilitate orderly and compatible development in the adjacent areas. Fringe Areas are typically administered through a 28E Agreement between the city and county. Development in these areas will be in accordance with the adopted Fringe Area Agreement.

NORTH CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AREA: *The North Corridor Development Area (NCDA) is not included as a future land use category and is not shown on the Future Land Use Map. This previous land use development area has been replaced by the more specific Future Land Use Categories (pages 112-113 and first column in Figure 11) and Future Land Use Map (Map 3) created for this plan.*

*This plan also references to the **NORTH CORRIDOR**, which is a general term, referring to the portion of the county north of Iowa City between Solon and Shueyville.*



Zoning Compatibility Matrix

The following matrix identifies which zoning districts are appropriate in each Future Land Use Category. In the compatible zoning matrix below, a “●” indicates the identified zoning district is **compatible** with the corresponding land use category, and an “○” indicates the identified zoning district **may be compatible** with the corresponding land use category and will need further site-specific review using another tool (the Land Use Development Guidelines). Blank squares indicate the zoning district is **not** compatible with the corresponding land use category.

INSTRUCTIONS: First, use the map to identify the Future Land Use Category attributed to a particular parcel. Second, find that use category in the first column of the matrix. Third, follow that row across to identify the Compatible Zoning options for that parcel.

Figure 11. Future Land Use Compatible Zoning Matrix

Future Land Use Categories	Compatible Zoning												
	A - Agricultural	AR - Agricultural Residential	R - Residential	RC - Rural Conservation	RMF - Residential Multi-Family	RMH - Manufactured Housing Residential	C - Commercial	CH - Highway Commercial	C-AG - Agri-Business	AWDRR - Agricultural, Solid Waste Disposal and Environmental Resource Reclamation	ML - Light Industrial	MH - Heavy Industrial	P - Public
Agricultural	●	○	○						○				●
Residential	●	●	●	●	●	●	○						●
Commercial	○						●	●	●				●
Intense Commercial/Low-Intensity Industrial	●						●	●	●		○	○	●
Industrial	○								●	●	●	●	●
Conservation Development	●		○	●									●
Preservation	●		○										●
Public	○												●
Village*	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
City Fringe**	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●

● = Compatible
○ = Potentially Compatible
[blank] = Not Compatible

* All development within villages should comply with adopted village plan.

** All development within two miles of any city may be subject to city review and should comply with any adopted fringe area agreement.



Future Land Use Development Guidelines

In addition to conforming with the recommendations of the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Compatibility Matrix, all rezoning and development proposals should follow the Land Use Development Guidelines (key below; guidelines on the next page).

The table identifies development elements that should be considered before taking these actions: amending the Future Land Use Map, approving a rezoning, or approving a development application for any parcel in the county.

“●” indicates the listed development element is **required** for the corresponding zoning district.

“○” indicates the listed development element is **recommended or encouraged** for the corresponding zoning district, but not required.

Blank squares indicate the identified development element is **not required** or recommended for the corresponding zoning district.

Figure 12. Future Land Use Development Guidelines

Development Elements	Zoning Districts												
	A - Agricultural	AR - Agricultural Residential	R - Residential	RC - Rural Conservation	RMF - Residential Multi-Family	RMH - Manufactured Housing Residential	C - Commercial	CH - Highway Commercial	C-AG - Agri-Business	AWDRR - Agricultural, Solid Waste Disposal and Environmental Resource Reclamation	ML - Light Industrial	MH - Heavy Industrial	P - Public
	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
		○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
		○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
		○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○

● = Required Development Element

○ = Recommended Development Element

[blank] = Not a Required Development Element





IMPLEMENTATION: LAND USE

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

The implementation table presents the strategies and action steps developed for each of the plan elements: Sustainability, Local Economy, Infrastructure and Amenities, and Land Use. There are three components in each table: Strategy/Action Step, Timeframe, and Collaborating Partners.

Goals, Strategies & Action Steps

The goals, strategies, and action steps presented are the same as those presented earlier in this chapter under “Priorities and Goals.”

Timeframe

An approximate timeframe to complete each action step was determined by staff evaluation. This evaluation considered existing or future funding capacity, expertise and technical capacity of existing staff, and the potential for acquiring additional expertise or technical capacity. The assigned timeframes are estimates; it may take less or more time for any given action step to be completed. Here are the four timeframes:

- Ongoing: Existing strategies that are on a regular cycle or will continue
- Short-term: < 2 years
- Mid-term: 2 to 5 years
- Long-term: > 5 years

Collaborating Partners

Implementation of the plan strategies involves the actions and decisions of entities other than county government. The success of the comprehensive plan’s vision is dependent on the County’s ability to identify these partners, reach out, and maintain Ongoing communication and coordination. The implementation tables identify suggested collaborating partners; additional organizations may be identified over time, and partners that are not listed are not excluded from future collaboration. For policy and ordinance development, there will be ample opportunity for input through public hearings and meetings.

The following key works for all implementation tables; some abbreviations may not appear in every chapter:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • BOS: Johnson County Board of Supervisors | • I-DOT: Iowa Department of Transportation |
| • CSD: Community School Districts | • IT: Johnson County Information Technology |
| • CVB: Iowa City/Coralville Convention & Visitors Bureau | • MPOJC: Metropolitan Planning Organization of Johnson County |
| • ECICOG: East Central Iowa Council of Governments | • NRCS: Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| • EMA: Johnson County Emergency Management Agency | • PDS: Johnson County Planning, Development & Sustainability |
| • FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency | • SEATS: Johnson County SEATS Paratransit |
| • FSA: Farm Service Agency | • SWCD: Johnson County Soil & Water Conservation District |
| • ICAD: Iowa City Area Development Group | • WMA: Watershed Management Authorities |
| • IDNR: Iowa Department of Natural Resources | |



LND 1 – Promote and protect sustainable agricultural land uses in rural Johnson County.		
STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS
Strategy 1 – Advocate for agricultural preservation in all Fringe Area Agreements.		
Action 1 – Pursue adoption of Fringe Area Agreements with cities where no agreement currently exists.	Short-term	PDS, cities
Action 2 – Within the fringe areas, advocate that areas not identified for city growth shall adhere to the county Future Land Use Map.	Mid-term/ Ongoing	PDS, cities
Action 3 – Update all existing Fringe Area Agreements within two years of adoption of the comprehensive plan and review Fringe Area Agreements every three years thereafter.	Mid-term/ Ongoing	PDS, cities
Strategy 2 – Update Johnson County’s agricultural exemption policy.		
Action 1 – Explore methods to expand agricultural exemption to smaller farming operations.	Short-term	PDS, agricultural/ farmer organizations, environmental groups
Action 2 – Ensure that updated agricultural exemption policies do not become a method for siting CAFOs on small parcels.	Short-term/ Ongoing	PDS
Action 3 – Ensure that updated agricultural exemption policies do not become a method for unplanned residential growth.	Short-term/ Ongoing	PDS
Action 4 – Explore methods for limited residential development for small-scale agriculture.	Short-term	PDS
Strategy 3 – Develop recommendations to alleviate conflicts between agricultural property owners and non-agricultural neighboring properties.		
Action 1 – Revise and distribute information on what to expect when moving to rural Johnson County.	Mid-term	BOS, PDS, Public Health, Secondary Roads
Action 2 – Explore creating “good neighbor” guidance that identifies strategies to avoid conflicts between different land uses.	Mid-term	PDS
Strategy 4 – Encourage and promote the use of on-field and edge-of-field best management practices for top soil and water quality protection.		
Action 1 – Staff will stay informed about resources to aid farmers seeking to implement best management practices.	Ongoing	PDS, FSA, SWCD
Strategy 5 – Discourage concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in Johnson County.		
Action 1 – Continue to lobby the Iowa State Legislature to allow counties the ability to regulate CAFOs.	Ongoing	BOS



STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS
Action 2 – Encourage and promote best management practices for CAFOs.	Ongoing	BOS, agricultural/farmer organizations, environmental groups
Action 3 – Monitor and report the adverse environmental effects of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in Johnson County to appropriate agencies.	Ongoing	BOS, Conservation, NRCS
LND 2 – Direct future residential development based on location and then site-specific criteria outlined in the Future Land Use Development Guidelines.		
STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS
Strategy 1 – Support rezoning applications that comply with the Future Land Use Map and the Future Land Use Development Guidelines.		
Action 1 – Focus residential development in areas that comply with the Future Land Use Map.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS
Action 2 – Review and potentially update the Future Land Use Map every five years after adoption.	Mid-term	BOS, PDS
Action 3 – Develop a procedure for individual property owners to request a change to the Future Land Use Map.	Short-term	PDS
Action 4 – Develop a procedure for combined rezoning, subdivision, and/or development applications.	Short-term	PDS
Action 5 – Allow for flexibility in the zoning ordinance by adoption of planned unit development (PUD) zoning districts and overlay zones.	Short-term	PDS
Strategy 2 – Support rezoning applications on parcels that meet the standards identified by the Future Land Use Development Guidelines.		
Action 1 – Review and update Stormwater Standards at least every five years.	Mid-term	PDS
Action 2 – Review and update Sensitive Areas Ordinance (SAO) at least every five years.	Mid-term	PDS
Action 3 – Review and update the Road Performance Standards to consider factors such as safety, traffic volume, speed, traffic type, and other national standards.	Short-term	PDS, Secondary Roads
Action 4 – Identify environmentally sensitive area criteria to protect natural areas and prevent conflicting land uses.	Mid-term	PDS, Conservation, NRCS



STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS
Strategy 3 – Continue use of existing Farmstead Split rule.		
Action 1 – Explore limiting the size and number of agricultural outlots.	Short-term	PDS
Action 2 – Review and revise language as subdivision rules are updated.	Short-term	PDS
LND 3 – Direct future commercial and industrial development based on location and then site-specific criteria.		
STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS
Strategy 1 – Encourage commercial and industrial development within the cities and the Urban Growth Areas.		
Action 1 – Discuss and coordinate development activities as part of Fringe Area Agreement negotiations.	Mid-term/ Ongoing	PDS, cities
Action 2 – Encourage new commercial and industrial development to sites that can be served by municipal water and sanitary sewer.	Ongoing	PDS, cities, ICAD
Strategy 2 – Support appropriate commercial and industrial development that complies with the Future Land Use Map.		
Action 1 – Review and update commercial and industrial land use areas every five years.	Mid-term	PDS
Action 2 – Identify vacant or underutilized parcels zoned commercial and/or industrial within the unincorporated areas of Johnson County.	Short-term	PDS
Strategy 3 – Develop overlay and other commercial and industrial zones to allow more flexibility in rural commercial development.		
Action 1 – Develop criteria for where commercial and industrial overlay zones are appropriate.	Short-term	PDS
Action 2 – Develop criteria for where neighborhood commercial uses are appropriate.	Short-term	PDS
Action 3 – Develop criteria for where agritourism uses are appropriate.	Short-term	PDS
LND 4 – Coordinate land use planning with and between local governments to achieve mutually beneficial development policies.		
STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS
Strategy 1 – Work with individual cities to update Fringe Area Agreements.		
Action 1 – Pursue adoption of Fringe Area Agreements for cities where no agreement currently exists.	Short-term	PDS, cities
Action 2 – Advocate for the urban growth area of each Fringe Area Agreement to identify areas that may be developed within the next five or fewer years.	Mid-term	PDS, cities



STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS
Action 3 – Ensure that areas outside of the urban growth area comply with the county Comprehensive Plan.	Ongoing	PDS, cities
Action 4 – Pursue Fringe Area Agreements that will allow the Board of Supervisors to comment on city development applications that may impact the unincorporated areas (e.g. roads, safety, stormwater management, etc.).	Mid-term	BOS, PDS, cities
Action 5 – Review and update all existing Fringe Area Agreements in accordance with the fringe area agreement schedule contained in Appendix A of this plan.	Short-term	BOS, PDS, cities
Strategy 2 – Work with cities and school districts to pursue collaborative growth strategies for mutual benefit.		
Action 1 – Serve as a resource for the community, city staff, and other organizations regarding regional planning issues.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS
Action 2 – Pursue regional, multijurisdictional intergovernmental agreements.	Long-term/ Ongoing	BOS, PDS, MPOJC, cities, school districts, ECICOG
Strategy 3 – Advocate for stormwater management and sensitive areas preservation when annexation occurs.		
Strategy 4 – Discourage the creation of “unincorporated islands.”		
LND 5 – Continue to protect and improve Johnson County’s natural resources: land, water, and air.		
STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS
Strategy 1 – Begin to identify and evaluate all critical and sensitive environmental features in Johnson County.		
Action 1 – Establish criteria to evaluate these areas.	Long-term	PDS, Conservation, NRCS
Action 2 – Coordinate with cities to map sensitive features countywide.	Long-term	PDS, cities, GIS, NRCS
Strategy 2 – Encourage agricultural uses to utilize best management practices and observe conservation practices that prevent erosion and preserve natural resources.		
Action 1 – Ensure staff stay informed of the best management practices and available conservation programs to assist with funding and public education.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS
Action 2 – Promote the use of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), or similar programs.	Ongoing	PDS, NRCS

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