
The Washington County Comprehensive Plan



2008 Comprehensive Plan

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Prepared by the Washington County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
with the East Central Iowa Council of Governments



THE WASHINGTON COUNTY PLAN
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Table of Contents

	page
Acknowledgments	2
Table of Contents	3
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	4
The Washington County Plan	4
The Planning Process	4
Plan Implementation	5
CHAPTER 2 ISSUES AND CONCEPTS	7
The Town Meeting Process	7
Qualities and Concerns	10
CHAPTER 3 PROFILE AND ANALYSIS	11
Population Trends and Projections	11
Housing Characteristics and Needs	15
CHAPTER 4 TRANSPORTATION	17
Transportation System	17
Goals, Policies and Objectives	20
CHAPTER 5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	22
Economic Development	22
Goals, Policies and Objectives	23
CHAPTER 6 OUTDOOR RECREATION	25
Recreation, Parks, Trails and Green Space	25
Goals, Policies and Objectives	25
CHAPTER 7 HISTORICAL PRESERVATION	28
Historical Preservation	28
Goals, Policies and Objectives	28
CHAPTER 8 AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION	30
Preservation of Agricultural Land and Operations	30
Goals, Policies and Objectives	30
CHAPTER 9 LAND USE	33
Land Use	33
Future Land Use Recommendations	37
CHAPTER 10 IMPLEMENTATION	40
Plan Implementation	40
APPENDIX	41
Results of the Five Town Meetings	41
Glossary of Planning Terms	54
Notes	58

The East Central Iowa Council of Governments is an intergovernmental council governed by a board of directors comprised of elected officials and private citizens. ECICOG was created to promote regional cooperation and to provide professional planning services to local governments in Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn and Washington Counties.

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THE WASHINGTON COUNTY PLAN

This plan is intended to be a guide for Washington County to coordinate growth and development over the course of the next twenty years. The plan includes an in-depth look at the following:

- ❖ Population projections
- ❖ Housing data
- ❖ Economic data
- ❖ Transportation systems
- ❖ Recreational facilities
- ❖ Historical and agricultural preservation
- ❖ Current and future land uses

In addition, broad countywide goals are outlined and policies are recommended to achieve those goals. The plan, however, is not meant to be a strict blueprint. It should be used as a guide for County officials in their decision-making.

This document looks twenty years into the future, and offers a framework for growth and development during that period. This plan is not a regulatory document, but a policy document. By considering the impact of future development well into the 21st century, a direction can be established to guide the development of regulatory tools such as zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, housing and building codes and capital improvement plans.

The plan has two fundamental purposes. First, it presents a unified vision for Washington County articulated from the hard work and participation of the citizens who devoted their time and effort toward creating this plan. Secondly, it provides the legal basis for land use regulation such as zoning and subdivision ordinances.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Washington County Plan is the culmination of a planning process that involved citizens in and around the County in creating a future vision. The process was managed by the East Central Iowa Council of Governments through monthly public work-sessions.

The first part of the process involved gathering public comments through a series of town meetings held throughout the County. This process is detailed in Chapter Two of the plan.

Next, the Board of Supervisors created a Steering committee. Their first task was to assess the County's current position. This included the analysis of census data, population trends and housing issues. From there, public work-sessions were held to discuss issues impacting the County. The committee worked to establish goals and policies while drafting the plan.

P L A N I M P L E M E N T A T I O N

The plan establishes goals and policies for six specific issues related to growth and development within the County. An individual chapter of the plan details each issue. The goals and policies contained in the plan should be consulted for each decision made with regards to the growth and development of the County.

Goals are a description of a desired state of affairs for the County in the future. Goals are the broad public purposes toward which policies and programs are directed. Generally, more than one set of actions (objectives) may be required to achieve each goal. Policies are statements of government intent for which individual actions and decisions are evaluated. Of course, objectives are the individual accomplishments which, taken together, will enable the County to achieve stated goals.

For example, by developing road performance standards (an objective), the County will be able to respond to economic and housing developments in maintaining a safe and efficient transportation network (a goal).

Provisions should be made for amending this document as policies and data become outdated. This authority should be used with discretion, however, since much of the plan's value can be lost through frequent or arbitrary changes. Amendments may be proposed by the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors, or by concerned citizens. Any proposal for amending the plan should always be referred to the Planning Commission for consideration and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

It is also recommended that the entire plan be reviewed annually to insure that the data and land use map are updated. Policies may have to be updated as well. The review may be simple if the County has not grown in the year prior to the review or it may be more elaborate following a period of rapid growth or change. The results of the review and revision may very well mean changes in the County's other developmental tools such as their subdivision ordinance or zoning ordinance.

In addition, the plan should have a major revision every five years. This is to ensure that census data, policies and maps remain updated and applicable to the County's vision. Although this is a twenty-year plan, major trends can change after only five years.

The planning process should be an ongoing endeavor. The success of this plan will require the support of citizens as well as the Board of Supervisors. Cooperation from the public and private sectors will provide long-term benefits to the entire County and ultimately the region surrounding the County.

Successful counties do not just happen. They must be continually shaped and guided. New issues and opportunities will inevitably arise. While no plan could possibly foresee every issue, the goals and policies developed in the Washington County Comprehensive Plan will provide flexibility for county officials and area residents in successfully planning for the future.

THE TOWN MEETING PROCESS

The crucial element in any plan is ensuring that the wishes and hopes the residents hold for their community is represented in the content of the plan. If the plan does not accurately reflect the needs and desires of area residents, it will have little value.

The Washington County Comprehensive Plan Update Process utilized five town meetings to gather public input for the plan. The agenda for each meeting included a brief synopsis of what a plan is and what the update process will entail, as well as the public participation as described below. The town meetings were held at the beginning of the planning process for two reasons:

- ❖ The critical issues impacting the County are identified early in the process ensuring that appropriate problem identification occurs at the beginning;
- ❖ Public participation is crucial for creating an effective and appropriate plan. By having the town meetings at the beginning of the process, every resident has an opportunity to direct a future vision for the County.

The first town meeting was held in the City of Kalona. The session involved two small groups (8 people per group) identifying and prioritizing strengths that need to be maintained, as well as weaknesses that need to be addressed.

Each member of each small group individually identified his or her county strengths and weaknesses on a 3x5 note card. Then, within each group, all members listed those strengths and weaknesses on a large sheet of paper (many replies were similar between group members and were condensed into a single strength or weakness). At that point, each participant awarded points to prioritize the composite small group list of qualities and concerns using a 3-point value system. Three points were given to their highest priority; 2 points to the second highest priority and 1 point for their third highest priority. Totals were then added up to establish an overall prioritized listing for each small group's strengths and weaknesses.

Meetings were also held in Riverside, Washington, Brighton and Marr Park near Ainsworth. Each meeting had the same agenda. The results are listed in the appendix.

The following two pages contain a composite of each of the small group's prioritized positive qualities and future concerns¹.

¹This is only a composite of each group's priorities. Many of the positive qualities and future concerns were condensed into an over-all quality or concern that were deemed equal. This was based on ECICOG staff's interpretation and, while reflective of the overall priorities, may or may not reflect the individual priorities of the citizens present.

Strengths to be Maintained	Points
Highly productive agricultural land and productive agricultural base (grain and livestock)	97
Quality of Life (rural / small-town community values, welcoming, friendly)	67
Location (part of Iowa City MSA / easy access to Iowa City)	59
Recreational areas / parks	47
Good transportation background (highway / rail) and good roads (every road is within 3 miles of a paved road)	45
Quality people / morals, work ethic	38
Access to quality schools (educational systems)	24
Safe communities / good law enforcement	17
Diverse economy (manufacturing / tourism / professional / etc.) with potential for growth	16
Huge potential for bio-industry	15
Good, diverse, non-corrupt leadership / government / working for the people	12
People engaged in the community / pride / volunteering spirit	12
Strong environmental qualities / agriculture, wildlife, natural resources and people	12
Historic buildings / History in County	9
Diversity of people / cultural backgrounds / Amish community	8
Youth activities: 4H, FFA, church, County fair	8
Access to quality health care	7
No Zoning	6
Attractive / diverse landscapes	3
New housing development	3
Reasonable housing / cost of living / low taxes	3
Temperate climate	3
Lots of civic projects going on	2
Low county population	2
YMWCA, community center / Events at McCleery Auditorium	2
Growth	1
Media / radio, newspaper	1
Strong retirement community	1
Tourist attractions	1

Weaknesses to be Addressed	Points
Lack of industry (loss of jobs / manufacturing base / lack of diverse industry)	101
Loss of farmland to urban sprawl and scattered growth / conflict between agricultural and residential / environmental protection	70
Lack of overall planning to deal with change / lack of vision / unplanned growth	31
Taxes too high / too large of reliance on property taxes to finance local government and schools	26
Confinement buildings (too close to residences) / lack of control / not using matrix	21
Population drain of young people / lack of opportunities for youth	21
Hesitancy to change	20
Lack of care for water quality / environmental awareness	19
School sites / condition of schools / need updating	17
Large population and economic center near (drains jobs, etc.) / "living here, spending there"	15

Parochial view around the county / not open to diversity	14
No multi-use trails / expand recreation areas	12
Government follow through	11
Small cities struggling / Downtown businesses faltering / need to revitalize urban areas	11
Casino sucks money / taxes out	10
Lack of county zoning ordinance	8
Lack of historical preservation	8
Lack of infrastructure investment / hospital, library	8
County disjointed / Improve County politics (territorial vs. logical solution)	7
Housing needs for all economic levels	7
High school administration costs	6
Too many restrictions on agriculture	6
Utility infrastructure / rural water and high speed internet	6
Unsupported land values due to non-agricultural pressures	5
Failure to see self worth (community / personal)	4
Lack of good entertainment, restaurants, culture	4
Lack of intergovernmental communication	4
Lack of youth and elderly recreation in small towns	4
Empty, unkempt buildings	3
Lack of IDNR enforcement and education / enforcement of present regulations	3
Bedroom communities growing	2
Communities not working together	2
Lack of citizen participation in politics	2
Lack of diversity in agriculture	2
Lack of recycling	2
Road conditions	2
Corporate farms vs. small farms	1
Diversity of people (need common set of goals)	1
High age of work force	1
Lack of day care facilities	1
Lack of department stores	1
Lack of news coverage	1
Lack of public transportation	1
Law enforcement / drug labs, etc.	1
Low income people	1
Many residents disconnected	1
No County ordinance on "junk areas"	1
Not part of the Iowa City / Cedar Rapids Corridor (marketing)	1
Public meeting facilities (Brighton area)	1
State park not the draw it once was	1

QUALITIES AND CONCERNS

Washington County, located south of Johnson County and the Iowa City metro area, had a 2000 Census population of 20,670 residents. During the town meetings for the Comprehensive Plan, many residents felt the County's farmland and agricultural industry was its best asset. In addition, the small-town, friendly atmosphere created a quality of life worth maintaining.

These benefits, however, are being challenged by increased development and population growth throughout the County. As a result of this increased growth, many County residents want to preserve the small town feel and valuable agricultural land before it is lost. However, these and other residents recognize the importance of maintaining a proper level of new development to maintain the County's vitality. This provides the context for the challenges Washington County will face over the next 20 years.

In addition, concerns expressed during these meetings included several planning related issues. Many residents were concerned about sprawling, unplanned development and the County being able to properly manage projected population growth in appropriate areas.

The challenges facing Washington are the challenges many smaller counties face when confronted with the prospect of new development. How can growth continue without compromising the prime farmland and small-town atmosphere residents have come to expect and appreciate? This is an overriding issue the plan will address.

To that end, the Steering Committee looked at six important issues within the County and established goals and policies for each issue with regards to growth and development. Those issues form the backbone of the plan.

But first, County population and census data was analyzed in Chapter 3.

POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

A planning program for the physical development of a community must be based upon the requirements, both present and future, of the citizens living in the area. In order to establish what these requirements will be, it is necessary to know as accurately as possible how many people will be living in the area in the foreseeable future.

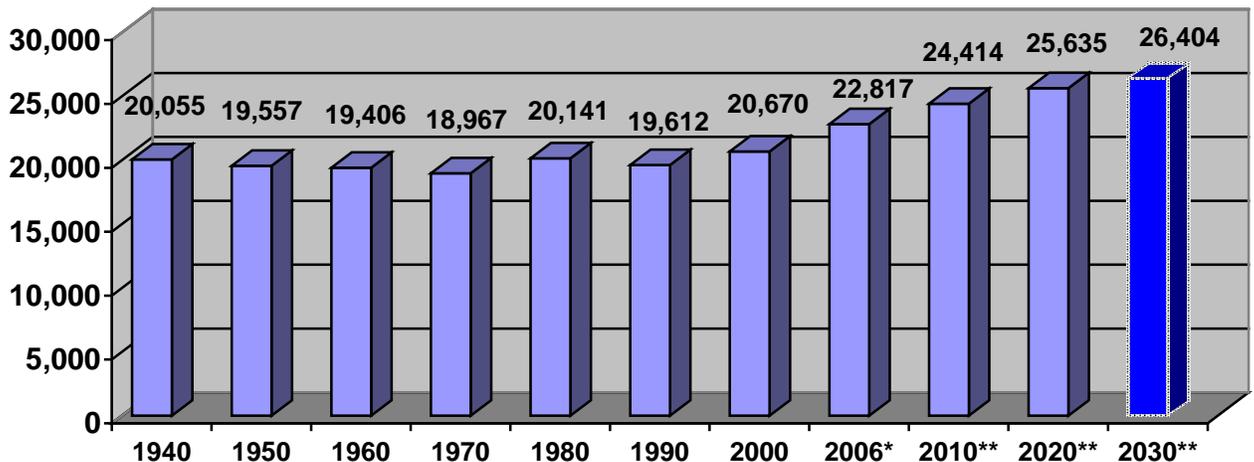
Precise predictions of future populations, of course, are not possible. However, a reasonable, reliable forecast can be made on the basis of past studies, population trends over the years, and current, observable patterns. This is essential in arriving at reasonable goals and objectives with respect to services and overall development.

Population Trends

Washington County’s population has been fairly steady since the early 1900’s. Only in the 1990’s has the population really increased substantially. For a graphic illustration of this fact, please refer to the Chart below.

According to the U.S. Census, Washington saw a 5.4 percent increase in population from 1990 to 2000 bringing the population to 20,670 people. The latest US Census estimate shows the County growing at a 10.4 percent rate from 2000 to 2006.

Washington County Population Trends (1940 - 2030)



Source: U.S. Census

* 2006 is an estimate

** Years 2010, 2020 and 2030 are projected numbers

Washington County Population Quick View

1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	2006 Estimate*	% Change 2000-2005
19,612	20,670	5.4%	22,817	10.4%

City	2000	2005 Estimate**	% Change 2000-2005
Ainsworth	524	546	4.2%
Brighton	687	693	0.9%
Coppock (part)	15	16	6.7%
Crawfordsville	295	306	3.7%
Kalona	2,293	2,486	8.4%
Riverside	928	961	3.6%
Washington	7,047	7,207	2.3%
Wellman	1,393	1,470	5.5%
West Chester	159	162	1.9%
Rural Washington County	7,329	7,610	3.8%

* 2006 County population estimate based on septic permits from Washington County Health Department July 2000 – June 2006. There were 656 septic permits issued between July 2000 and August 2006. Based on US Census data of 2.5 people per housing unit, that is the equivalent of approximately 1,640 new residents during that timeframe. This total also includes the estimated 506 new residents from 2000-2005 within incorporated cities in the County.

** 2005 City and rural population estimates are from US Census.

The table on the following page shows a 2005 Census estimate of Washington County's population. It is a breakdown of age cohorts in the County.

In 2005, according to the US Census estimate, Washington County has a substantial population over the age of 65. In addition, there is a large segment of the population between the ages of 40 – 54 (over 21% of the total population). If this age group stays in Washington County, in twenty years the County's population will be older in scope. Due to specialized housing, health care and transportation needs, this age group will continue to play a significant role in shaping the County's long-term future.

The County does consist of a relatively large percentage of school-aged residents. This total appears to have decreased since 2000, however. A decreasing school-aged population generally would indicate smaller population increases in the future.

**Percentage Of Total Population
(According to 2005 US Census Estimates)**

Total Population: 21,457 (2005 US Census estimate)

	2005	2000 (20,670 population)
0 – 4 years old	6.9% of total population	6.7% of total population
5 – 9	6.1%	7.4%
10 – 14	6.7%	7.4%
15 – 19	6.3%	6.9%
20 – 24	5.7%	4.7%
25 – 29	6.7%	5.2%
30 – 34	5.3%	6.0%
35 – 39	6.2%	7.6%
40 – 44	7.5%	8.0%
45 – 49	7.9%	7.1%
50 – 54	7.0%	6.3%
55 – 59	6.1%	4.8%
60 – 64	4.6%	4.1%
65 – 69	3.9%	4.0%
70 – 74	3.6%	3.8%
75 – 79	3.3%	3.8%
80+	6.2%	6.2%
School Age: 0 – 19	25.9%	28.4%
Labor Force: 20 – 64	57.1%	53.8%
Retired: 65+	17.0%	17.9%

Population Projections

Population projections should be used cautiously. Changes in local, state and national economies can have a profound affect on population counts. The rising cost of oil and natural gas could very well negatively impact the economy, making even the smaller percentage growth rates unattainable. It is likely, due to rising energy costs, that people will stay closer to where they work instead of driving long distances for employment. Even with easy transportation access from Iowa City to Washington County via Highway 218, it is likely that recent growth (residents from Johnson County wishing to live in a rural area while working in the Iowa City metropolitan area) will slow over the next decade. In addition, the trend has been for smaller families (people per housing unit) throughout the region as well as the State. This will impact development patterns across Washington County as well as the reason for the lower projected growth rates for the County.

The County’s population will likely continue to rise for reasons such as the new Casino and resort near the City of Riverside and the County’s location near the Iowa City metropolitan area. However, due to rising energy costs and smaller families, the growth rate should slow considerably.

The following three tables include different population projections for Washington County through the year 2030.

The first table below shows four percentage growth rates for comparison. It is unlikely that the County will be able to maintain large percentage growth rates (as shown by the 10% and 12% projections). As the population increases, large percentage changes are much more difficult. In addition, as mentioned, the economy, rising fuel and heating costs, and the amount of developable land will certainly play a role in how fast the County continues to grow. The 10 and 12 percent projections are shown in the unlikely event that dramatic growth rates will continue for the long-term. A three to five percent growth rate is deemed more accurate.

ECICOG Population Projections for Washington County

	2000	2006 Est.	2010	2020	2030
3 % Growth	20,670	22,817	23,502	24,207	24,933
5 % Growth	20,670	22,817	23,956	25,152	26,410
10 % Growth	20,670	22,817	25,099	27,609	30,370
12 % Growth	20,670	22,817	25,555	28,622	32,057

Source: ECICOG

The next table shows the likely population projection for the County. Between 2006 and 2010, the County may see a slight slow down in growth, but still realize approximately a 7% growth rate. That rate should slow to 3% for a projected population of 26,404 by the year 2030.

ECICOG Mixed Population Projections for Washington County

2000	2006 Est.	2010 (7% growth rate)	2020 (5%)	2030 (3%)
20,670	22,817	24,414	25,635	26,404

Source: ECICOG

The last table shows the Woods and Poole forecast for Washington County. Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. project county populations throughout the country. Their projections are consistent with a 3% growth rate.

Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. Population Projections for Washington County

2000	2010	2020	2030
20,670	21,977	23,072	24,401

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

Population Findings

- ❖ Barring any unforeseen significant change in the economic or social composition of the region, the population should maintain a three to five percent growth rate per decade. The County should plan on a population of 26,404 by the year 2030.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS

In addition to examining population trends, a look into the County's current housing situation must be taken in order to establish growth management strategies for the planning area. Housing development is crucial to a growing area. With implications in land use and infrastructure decisions, housing trends should be studied to establish adequate growth areas throughout the County.

Housing Analysis

Using the mixed rate growth projection, in development terms, the projected population increase is equivalent to approximately 3,587 new residents or 1,435 new housing units countywide by the year 2030. This represents an average annual construction rate of approximately 63 new units per year.

In 1990, there were 7,866 housing units in Washington County. By 2000, the census showed 8,543 housing units, an increase of 8.6 percent. This is consistent with the population growth during that time. According to the 2000 Census, there were 487 vacant housing units (5.7 percent). Five percent vacancy is considered healthy for a community. This allows market flexibility for area homeowners as well as an ability for the community to handle sudden population increases.

As mentioned previously, there were 656 new septic permits issued between July 2000 and August of 2006. That would place the current approximate number of housing units in the County at 9,199.

In addition, in 1990, the people per housing unit was 2.55. That number decreased for the year 2000 to 2.5. This number is projected to drop across the region. By the year 2030, Washington County is expected to have approximately 2.3 people per housing unit. Based on this figure and the mixed rate growth projection, Washington County should plan on needing a total of approximately 10,634 housing units by 2030.

Most of the new housing units will be located within the existing cities or annexed into the existing communities during that time.

Unincorporated County Housing Numbers

Based on historical trends, approximately four percent of the population increases have been in the unincorporated areas of the County. The last six years have seen even larger percentage growth increases in the unincorporated areas. It is estimated that approximately 7,876 residents live in rural Washington County (see the table below). However, as mentioned before, due to rising energy costs and smaller families, that number will likely drop going forward (3% by 2020 before leveling out at 2% by 2030).

Using a mixed rate growth projection for the unincorporated areas, it is projected that by 2030, there will be approximately 9,800 residents living in the unincorporated portion of the County. This means there will be approximately 831 new residents in the unincorporated part of the County by that time. Based on the people per housing unit

number, there will be a need for approximately 332 new housing units in the unincorporated area of the County. At a density of 1 unit per acre, the new units would require approximately 332 acres of land. At an average density of three acres per unit, it would require nearly 1,000 acres. At five acres per unit, it would require over 1,660 acres. 10 acres per unit would require 3,320 acres.

Obviously, the larger the lots that are approved, the more acres of land it would require. In addition, that does not include rights-of-way for streets and other utilities. As a general rule, 10 percent of developed land is consumed by rights-of-way. So, for example, if the average new lot size in the County is ten acres, it would require approximately 3,320 acres of land plus 332 acres for utilities and streets for a total of 3,652 acres of land converted to residential use. The Future Land Use section of the plan will also detail potential recreation, open space, commercial and industrial land needs by the year 2030.

Rural Population of Washington County

2000	2006*	2010 (4% growth rate)	2020 (3%)	2030 (2%)
7,329	8,969	9,328	9,608	9,800

* Estimate based on septic permits issued between July 2000 and August 2006

T R A N S P O R T A T I O N S Y S T E M

The Transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan identifies issues facing the County with regards to transportation and establishes goals, policies and objectives to address those issues. A well-planned road system must provide for the efficient movement of pedestrian and emergency traffic. The improvements to existing roads and the structure of proposed roads should be determined by addressing such issues as traffic volumes and types, required speeds to reduce congestion and land use of adjacent properties.

System expansions must be within the fiscal means of the County and should provide the flexibility to evolve as needs and technology change. The location and design of new facilities should be integrated into the fabric of the community, while protecting the character of individual neighborhoods and the County as a whole.

Transportation planning is an ongoing process that should be flexible, comprehensive and open to public participation.

County Road Data (Miles and Surface Type)

Surface Type	Cities	County	State	Totals	Percentage
Earth	-	90.1	-	90.1	8%
Gravel	-	666.4	-	666.4	58%
Asphalt 2-lane	75	17.9	46.6	139.5	12%
Asphalt 4-lane	-	-	2.5	2.5	0%
Concrete 2-lane	60	136	27.3	223.3	19%
Concrete 4-lane	-	-	26	26	2%
Totals	135	910.4	102.4	1,147.8	100%

Source: Washington County Secondary Roads

The above table shows there are nearly 1,150 miles of roadway within the County. The County has jurisdiction for nearly 80% of that roadway, or just over 910 miles. Of the County’s jurisdiction, nearly 85% of the roads are unpaved.

Washington County should provide a roadway system consisting of a hierarchy of roads designed to facilitate the movement of traffic to, from, and through the County. The following functional use of roads are standards to be applied as development occurs:

Arterial: These roadways serve through traffic between activity centers and connect to major traffic generators. The primary function of arterials is to convey through traffic. Expressways, interstates and major highways are all arterial roads. Examples in the County: Highway 218, Highway 1, Highway 92, and Highway 22.

Collector: These roadways provide a link from local streets and residential areas to higher classified routes. The primary function of collector routes is to serve through traffic. Providing access to properties is a secondary function. Examples in the County: County Roads G18, G26, G36, G52, G62, W2, W47, W55, W61

Local: These roadways collect traffic from local subdivision roads and carry vehicles to adjacent neighborhoods and arterial and collector roads. The primary purpose of local roads is to provide direct access to properties. Local roads consist of the remaining and unlisted roadways throughout the County. They can include paved, chip seal, gravel and even dirt roads.

Commuting Patterns

The overwhelming majority of the labor force in Washington County, as well as in other counties throughout the State commute to work on a daily basis. In fact, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, over 91 percent of Washington County workers did not work at home. This has in large part determined travel patterns and traffic volumes on regional and local transportation networks, and, consequently, helps to determine the need for transportation facilities.

U.S. Census data for 2000 indicates that there were 10,618 workers (16 years and older) in Washington County. Of those, 6,567 (61.8%) worked within the County, and the remaining, 4,051 (38.2%) worked outside of the County. For 2000, there were an additional 1,566 workers who lived outside Washington County who commuted into the County to work. Of these 1,566 workers, 1,410 reside in the six counties that are contiguous with Washington County. Contiguous counties include Henry, Iowa, Jefferson, Johnson, Keokuk, and Louisa. These counties account for 90 percent of those commuting into Washington County for the purpose of work.

The daily commuters traveling in and out of the County for employment may have the greatest impact on the transportation network within Washington County.

Means of Transportation Modes to Work

Private automobiles are the dominant transportation mode in Washington County. Although this percentage is lower than three other counties in Region Ten, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, over 72 percent of Washington County workers reported that they drive to work in a car, truck or van alone. Nearly 14 percent reportedly carpooled to work and only 4 percent of Washington County workers walked to work. Less than one percent utilized public transportation.

Means of Transportation Modes to Work – Workers 16 years and Over

County	Total	Car, Truck or Van – Drove Alone	Car, Truck or Van – Carpooled	Public Transit	Walked	Other *	Worked at Home	Mean travel time to work in minutes
Washington	10,618	7,690 (72.4%)	1,455 (13.7%)	39 (0.4%)	392 (3.7%)	89 (0.8%)	953 (9.0%)	21.6
Benton	12,641	9,721 (76.9%)	1,726 (13.7%)	44 (0.3%)	307 (2.4%)	45 (0.4%)	798 (6.3%)	25.0
Iowa	8,211	5,858 (71.3%)	1,387 (16.9%)	7 (0.1%)	313 (3.8%)	49 (0.6%)	597 (7.3%)	21.7
Johnson	63,087	43,005 (68.2%)	7,111 (11.3%)	3,355 (5.3%)	6,306 (10.0%)	1,385 (2.2%)	1,925 (3.1%)	17.7
Jones	9,614	7,407 (77.0%)	1,060 (11.0%)	2 (0.0%)	386 (4.0%)	48 (0.5%)	711 (7.4%)	24.5
Linn	102,234	84,089 (82.3%)	10,544 (10.3%)	1,155 (1.1%)	2,707 (2.6%)	741 (0.7%)	2,998 (2.9%)	17.8
State of Iowa		78.6%	10.8%	1.0%	4.0%	0.9%	4.7%	18.5

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

*Note: Other includes bicycle, motorcycle and any other unlisted transportation

Travel Time to Work

Transportation modes, road conditions and places of work decide travel times. Assuming private automobiles are the transportation mode, 1-9 minutes of travel time would be within or near the city limits of the respective worker. This travel time would also be within walking or bicycling distance. Travel times longer than 10 minutes indicate workers that are leaving their immediate area for work.

The table below shows the number of workers in Washington County and the travel time to their place of employment. Approximately 48 percent of workers in Washington County travel less than 20 minutes to their place of work, while nearly 30 percent travel more than 30 minutes. A travel time of thirty minutes or more may be indicative of the time it takes to travel from the City of Washington to the Iowa City metropolitan area. A travel time of sixty minutes or more may be indicative of the time it takes to travel from the City of Washington to the Cedar Rapids or Davenport metropolitan areas.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the mean travel time was calculated to be 21.6 minutes for Washington County workers. This distance of travel is likely indicative of the travel time from the growing parts of the County (Northwest area along Highway 218) to the Iowa City metropolitan area.

With rising oil and gas prices, it is likely that residents will begin to live closer to where they work. It may also mean that alternative forms of transportation will become more popular in Washington County. The County should continue to support public transportation as an alternative transportation mode. This will ultimately reduce traffic volume on the regional transportation network, enhance safety and protect the environment.

Travel Times to Work – Workers 16 Years and Older

County	Total	1 – 9 minutes	10 – 19 minutes	20 – 29 minutes	30 – 39 minutes	40 – 59 minutes	60 – 89 minutes	90 and above
Washington	10,618	2,989 (28.2%)	2,094 (19.7%)	1,464 (13.8%)	1,537 (14.5%)	1,176 (11.1%)	240 (2.3%)	131 (1.2%)
State of Iowa		25.3%	35.3%	17.1%	9.1%	5.1%	2.0%	1.4%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Issues

The County’s transportation system received high marks during the public town meeting phase of the planning process – one of the major strengths of the County. One issue that the public identified was the lack of multi-use trails within the County. Other issues identified by the County engineer include shifting from establishing new projects to the maintenance of the existing transportation system; being able to respond to economic and housing development; and safety issues with the system.

The following goals, policies and objectives will ultimately address these issues.

Transportation Goals:

1. Maintain a safe and efficient transportation network.
2. Respond to economic growth and housing development.

Transportation Policies:

1. Encourage the growth of public and alternate modes of transportation (carpooling, minibus).
2. Preserve the integrity of the present and future arterial and collector system.
3. Promote land use that is congruent with the capacity and location of the existing transportation network.
4. Maintain the existing roadway construction and classification standards.

5. Maintain rural roadways in a manner that minimizes capital expense while providing for adequate local transportation needs.
6. Promote multi-modal transportation corridors that include biking, hiking and all-purpose trails, where appropriate.

Transportation Objectives:

1. Maintain a systematic program of County highway improvements based on traffic demand and changes in land use and traffic patterns.
2. Develop criteria for an access control policy (limit driveway numbers on high traffic roads).
3. Develop street standards for the evaluation of subdivision developments on dirt and gravel service roads that feed the subdivision (when to upgrade roads, who designs, who pays).
4. Develop County Road Performance Standards (for upgrading roadways based on traffic volumes).
5. Implement select construction setback restrictions along high growth roadway corridors.
6. Implement the Comprehensive Trails Plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This section of the Comprehensive Plan identifies the economic development issues facing the County. Issues related to economic development ranked number one during the town meeting portion of the planning process. The loss of manufacturing jobs and lack of industry diversity within the County was considered the largest weakness to be addressed.

There is a public perception within the County that there has been a loss of jobs due to some recent closings. However, as shown by the table below, there has actually been an increase of jobs and the labor force is growing faster than population growth. Also, the unemployment rate remains very low.

Annual Averages (Not Seasonally Adjusted) – part 1

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Resident Civilian Labor Force	10,680	10,960	11,160	11,210	11,180	11,530	11,410	11,230	11,140
Resident Unemployed	360	400	370	340	350	420	340	280	270
Percent Unemployed	3.4	3.7	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.7	3.0	2.5	2.4
Resident Total Employment	10,320	10,560	10,790	10,860	10,820	11,110	11,070	10,950	10,870

Source: Iowa Workforce Development

Annual Averages (Not Seasonally Adjusted) – part 2

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Resident Civilian Labor Force	11,040	11,600	12,290	11,920	12,400	12,500	12,600
Resident Unemployed	220	310	400	450	600	500	400
Percent Unemployed	2.0	2.7	3.2	3.8	4.7	4.0	3.3
Resident Total Employment	10,810	11,290	11,890	11,470	11,800	12,000	12,200

Source: Iowa Workforce Development

Retail Sales

The table below reports retail sales statistics for Washington County for a six-year period between 1998 – 2003. The table also includes the county ‘pull factor’ which shows the relative strength of the retail sector in the county. The pull factor is derived by dividing the county per capita retail sales by the state per capita retail sales. Pull factors greater than one represent retail strength, while pull factors less than one show sector weakness.

Fiscal Year	Total Retail Sales (in millions)	Number of Retail Firms	Sales Per Firm	Per Capita Sales	Pull Factor
2003	\$123.99	761	\$162,927	\$5,875	0.60
2002	\$119.95	820	\$146,373	\$5,711	6.59
2001	\$121.02	849	\$142,497	\$5,855	0.60
2000	\$122.66	840	\$146,107	\$5,934	0.63
1999	\$120.10	860	\$139,727	\$5,728	0.62
1998	\$111.30	865	\$128,673	\$5,326	0.60

Per capita Personal Income

In 2002, Washington County had a per capita personal income of \$27,607. This total ranked 20th in the state out of ninety-nine counties. The 2002 total reflected an increase in per capita personal income of 2.1 percent from 2001. In 1992, the County's per capita personal income was \$18,586 and ranked 24th in the state. The average annual growth rate of per capita personal income in the county between 1992 and 2002 was 4.0 percent. The state's average was 4.1 percent.

The median household income in Washington County for the year 2000 was \$39,103.

Issues

Being part of the defined Iowa City Metro Area has helped grow the labor force. According to the Washington Economic Development Group, over 25 percent of the Washington County labor force works in Johnson County. Being in the Iowa City Metro Area has potentially increased the real estate values within Washington County. This increase in real estate values, coupled with the scarcity of available land ready for development, has greatly increased the price of land within the County. This has a negative impact on potential development proposals due to the high costs.

Issues facing the County with regard to economic development include a lack of available land within the County for industrial or commercial expansion. Many counties in the region have established industrial parks with major transportation access (four-lane highway, rail, etc.) with available utilities for the purpose of industrial or commercial expansion.

Another high priority discussed during the town meeting phase was the promotion of bio-energy within the County. The recent construction of a major bio-diesel plant as well as several proposed ethanol plants have created an atmosphere where Washington County could take the lead in the fast growing bio-energy field. This would entail a higher level of County investment in economic development issues.

The following goals, policies and objectives will ultimately address these issues.

Economic Development Goals:

1. Increase the commercial and industrial tax base of the County.

2. Create and retain quality employment opportunities for County residents.

Economic Development Policies:

1. Ensure that the County's transportation infrastructure (highways, roads, rail, airports, pipelines, etc.) are maintained, improved and used to their potential.
2. Encourage economic development opportunities that support primary agricultural operations within the County and identify, preserve and promote specialized crop areas within the County such as organic farms and ISO9000 certified farms.
3. Minimize conflicts and incompatibilities between commercial and industrial uses and non-commercial and industrial land uses.
4. Identify, preserve and promote specialized development zones for industrial and commercial expansion.
5. Promote and develop opportunities for bio-energy firms to locate within the County.

Economic Development Objectives:

1. Increase County investment in Economic Development.
2. Work with the State government for expanded Enterprise Zones within the County.
3. Develop criteria such as industrial Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or other economic development incentives including revolving loan funds or other tax packages.
4. Establish a site and take the lead in the development of an industrial park within the County.
5. Utilize future development opportunities around all U.S. 218 interchanges to their maximum potential.
6. Establish fringe-area agreements with the local communities within the County to better address economic development.
7. Ensure that sufficient, affordable land is available for industrial or commercial expansion within the County.

RECREATION, PARKS, TRAILS AND GREEN SPACE

Washington County residents have a strong connection to the land and the outdoor recreational opportunities available within the County. They see our natural, rural setting as a very important aspect in their quality of life. The need to protect and enhance these opportunities was expressed at the local comprehensive planning public meetings and in state wide comprehensive recreational use surveys. The diversity of woodlands, streams, grasslands, rolling topography, agricultural operations and a mix of rural and urban living spaces contribute to Washington County's character.

Washington County's unique environmental character can be maintained and enhanced through a continuing effort of planned development and wise use of our land resources. The quality and availability of recreational opportunities will influence family decisions on where to live, as well as, support company or business plans to locate or remain in this County.

Rural residential housing is recognized as an important cultural and economic influence in Washington County. It is essential that this type of development be structured and planned so that they minimize environmental and esthetic impacts.

Bicycle and walking trails provide a unique opportunity to connect the Counties citizens to the rural setting and natural areas. Trails combine the benefits of personal exercise with the leisure time to enjoy the outdoors and relax with family and friends.

The Washington County Comprehensive plan will establish goals, objectives and policies that can implement our vision, sustain our land ethic, and maintain our unique character.

Outdoor Recreation Goals:

1. Provide exceptional land based recreational opportunities for current and future residents.
2. Provide a system of public and private open spaces throughout the County that enhances the rural setting and the recreational amenities.
3. Protect and preserve Washington County natural resources. Examples would be floodplains, woodlands, wetlands, prairies, streams, agricultural land, rare and endangered flora and fauna, and grasslands.

4. Provide public and private facilities and services that support a desirable quality of life and maintain the rural character of Washington County.
5. Provide a natural environment with recreational potential that supports the local economy.

Outdoor Recreation Policies:

1. Inventory and map the County's natural areas to show current managed land and designate sensitive areas.
2. Coordinate the various recreation and environmental stakeholders within the County to facilitate the planning and development of our land heritage. Examples for inclusion are Washington County Conservation Board, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, area schools, town councils, agricultural organizations, extended living homes, Washington Community Y, and city park boards.
3. Protect the County's natural areas and rural setting from inappropriate and unplanned development.
4. Recognize the value of stream corridor and county roadway systems that support riparian habitat and diverse vegetation, fish and wildlife species.
5. Develop a trail system that utilizes the green belt corridors, abandoned railways, roadways, and purchased or easement right of ways.
6. Recognize the importance of conservation planning in subdivision design for protection of open spaces and the rural setting.
7. Encourage the use of planned development sites and the Conservation Design Framework concept to facilitate efficient use of green space, road systems and utilities.
8. Provide a system of bicycle and pedestrian trails throughout the County that connect cities, parks, natural areas and other activity areas.

Outdoor Recreation Objectives:

1. Establish a land use and recreation committee to oversee rural planning and development.
2. Establish a system of green belts along all rivers and streams.

3. Establish and utilize a comprehensive trail plan for access, management and maintenance of the County's trail system.
4. Establish a County wide roadside management plan.
5. Utilize subdivision planning, land purchase and conservation easements to protect and enhance recreational potential.
6. Utilize rural development site standards to dedicate neighborhood parks and/or open spaces to be held in common by the homeowners.
7. Develop a conservation of natural areas standard in the County Subdivision Ordinance.
8. Develop setback standards to protect sensitive natural areas, agricultural operations, rural development sites, and managed public areas.

Note: The County should include the Conservation Design Framework as a guideline for subdivision planning.

An example of Conservation Design Framework appendage is given below¹.

Conventional development

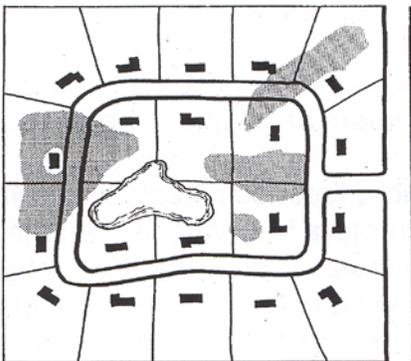


Figure A (rated by 25% as "rural")

44 acre parcel
20 lots (2 acres each)
No open space
No pond access except from four lots

Conservation Development

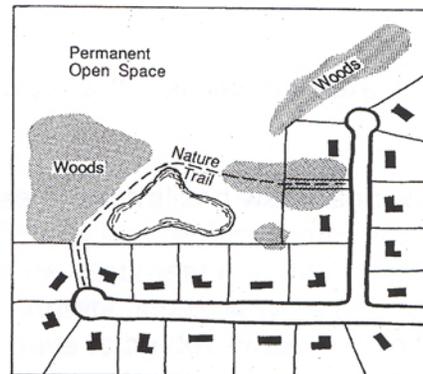


Figure B (rated by 75% as "rural")

44 acre parcel
20 lots (3/4 acre each)
25 acres of open space
Pond access for all residents

The Conservation Design Framework incorporates the desire for rural housing development with the concept of natural areas to enhance the quality of life in the rural setting. Figure A represents the large lot idea type of development that many people associate with current rural housing. It fragments the natural areas and increases the cost of infrastructure. Figure B represents an alternative approach that utilizes the natural landscape features to enhance the rural atmosphere and maintain a balance between houses and common recreation areas.

¹Taken from **Rural by Design: Maintaining Small Town Character**, Randall Arendt, 1994

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

The Washington County Historical Preservation Commission is a five-member board charged with preserving and protecting the county's special heritage. The commission's duties include supervising historical sites within the County, initiating and recommending properties for designation as historic landmarks on the National Register of Historic Places, preserving the County's rural cemeteries, and providing tours and educational materials to the public in regard to the County's rich history.

Issues

Washington County should strive to preserve and protect its historical landmarks. But the County's Historical Preservation Commission is more than simply preserving history. There are clear economic advantages for the County in protecting its past. Washington County should capitalize on the tourism that is created through people visiting historic sites.

In addition, the Historic Preservation Commission should be involved in the review of new developments in the County. Whenever a development proposal is submitted to the County, part of the review process should include comment by the Historic Preservation Commission. This will enable the Commission to stay informed of the County's growth as well as assist them in the preservation of important historical resources.

The following goals, policies and objectives will ultimately address these issues.

Historical Preservation Goals:

1. Preserve and protect the County's historical landmarks.
2. Integrate historical preservation into the County's planning program.
3. Promote the economic importance of historic preservation within the County.
4. Continue to educate citizens about historical preservation.

Historical Preservation Policies:

1. The Historic Preservation Commission should review and make recommendations on proposed development within the County.
2. The Historic Preservation Commission should suggest which historic resources could be incorporated into proposed development.

Historical Preservation Objectives:

1. Initiate and recommend properties for designation as historic landmarks.
2. Provide information to the public about the County's preservation program, historic resources and cultural history.
3. Provide a GIS database of historical landmarks.
4. Develop a historic preservation archive.
5. Integrate the economic benefits of cultural and historical preservation into economic development.

PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND AND OPERATIONS

The Agricultural section of the Comprehensive Plan identifies issues facing the County with regards to the preservation of agricultural land and establishes goals, policies and objectives to address those issues. Each year, agriculture in Washington County generates over \$159 million dollars and employs almost 1,400 people. Agriculture is clearly the largest employer in Washington County.

Issues

According to the National Agricultural Statistical Service, in the last year, the County has lost over 1,200 acres of agricultural cropland. This includes land converted to residential, other agricultural land (hog farms, etc.) and other uses not including cropland. The concern is that conversion of agricultural land to other uses will slowly erode the valuable agricultural base of the County both in the production of raw materials and value-added products. During the five public meetings, Washington County residents stressed the importance of the productive farmland and agricultural base within the County. In addition, residents wanted strong policies that support the preservation of agricultural land and operations.

In addition, the rural lifestyle in the County was part of the top two ranking strengths at these land use public meetings (along with the highly productive farmland and operations). The agricultural way of life is important to County residents. Conversion of agricultural land to other uses raised the concern that family farms and agriculture will slowly diminish as agricultural land is rezoned to residential or other types of development. Non-agricultural uses interspersed throughout productive agricultural areas generally have a detrimental effect on the vitality of the agricultural economy. For property owners in the immediate vicinity, the result may be a lack of reinvestment for agricultural use and, eventually, sale of the property, often for speculation.

In order to retain agriculture as a viable industry, it is the goal of the Washington County Land Use Plan to proactively protect and preserve agricultural land and agricultural operations. In addition, the County should encourage the growth of agricultural opportunities such as increasing livestock or the emerging bio-fuels industry. In short, the County should seek to expand agricultural operations to continue to be a State leader in farming operations.

The following goals, policies and objectives will ultimately address these issues.

Ag Land Preservation Goals:

1. Promote and protect agriculture as the primary use of land in rural Washington County.

2. Preserve agricultural land and agricultural operations including land used in livestock production.
3. Support the maintenance and expansion of agricultural activities.

Ag Land Preservation Policies:

1. Encourage multigenerational family farming operations.
2. Minimize conflicts and incompatibilities between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses.
3. Discourage non-farm development on areas identified on the Future Land Use Map as agricultural.
4. Encourage compatible mixed-uses which support agricultural operations.

Ag Land Preservation Objectives:

1. To protect agricultural farmland and operations, new development in the unincorporated areas of the County should:
 - a. Locate within two miles of an existing city, or
 - b. Locate contiguous to existing like development, or
 - c. Locate within the established growth areas as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

For the purpose of this plan, new development shall include both subdivisions and individual homes.

2. Establish minimum setback distances for new development from farming operations.
3. Investigate use of Urban Growth Boundaries with local communities to reduce conflicts between agriculture and non-agricultural land uses.
4. Establish fringe-area agreements with the local communities within and adjacent to the County to better address the preservation of agriculture and minimize conflicts between farming and non-farm uses.
5. Encourage soil conservation practices.

6. Monitor the amount of agricultural land that is converted into and out of agricultural uses.
7. Identify, preserve and promote specialized crop areas within the County, for example as organic farms and ISO9000 certified farms.
8. Explore ordinances for the protection of agricultural operations.

LAND USE

This chapter of the Plan is focused on land use within Washington County. The purpose of the chapter is to serve as a guide for the County's development tools and the future direction in land use. It will provide a framework to guide and direct new development. This will insure that future development is consistent with the goals of the overall plan. Future development needs to be paced in such a way that it does not outstrip the County's ability to provide services.

The County can utilize this plan to logically identify where appropriate growth areas should be located and use specific tools to guide the development. Development pressures are usually the strongest at the edge of an already developed area. If allowed to go unregulated, this growth pressure can cause undesirable results. Undesirable results include: sprawling development, loss of farmland and open space.

The Land Use chapter is divided into two parts. The first describes useful tools for managing land use development. The second part describes the future policy directions for land use development. A land use map is provided to show the results of the Committee's planning efforts.

Land Use Tools

Common regulatory land use tools for cities and counties to implement their development standards are:

- ❖ Zoning Ordinances
- ❖ Subdivision Ordinances
- ❖ Fringe-Area Agreements
- ❖ Capital Improvement Planning

Ordinances and agreements of this nature enable the enforcement of the policies and provisions contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning is generally the most common tool to implement a comprehensive plan. The following section offers a brief description of zoning techniques to allow County officials an option when deciding on what tools they can use to implement the plan.

Zoning's name is derived from dividing areas of a local government into zones, or districts. Certain uses of land are permitted in each zone according to specific standards adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The Committee has identified several planning objectives where zoning can be helpful.

The following may be achieved through zoning:

- ❖ Conserving and protecting property values by preventing incompatible land uses from locating in a certain area.
- ❖ Encouraging efficient and orderly development patterns.
- ❖ Facilitating adequate public investment in improvements.
- ❖ Preserving the availability of prime farmland, parks and open space.

A variety of appropriate regulations may be adopted to help achieve these objectives. Examples of these regulations are:

- ❖ Land uses permitted within specific districts
- ❖ Population densities within specific districts
- ❖ Setback distances for specific land uses.

Washington County currently does not have a zoning ordinance. After the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, the County should consider the adoption of such an ordinance. If the County should adopt zoning, it must work in conjunction with the goals and policies contained in this Plan.

Subdivision Ordinance

A subdivision ordinance is an effective tool for local government to enforce standards so that land subdivision occurs in a beneficial manner. Washington County currently has a subdivision ordinance. Platting requirements in this ordinance specify the criteria for subdividing land throughout the County. Simply put, subdivision is a process in which land is legally described and is converted into buildable lots. It involves the division of a tract of land into smaller parcels and usually involves the creation of streets and other infrastructure improvements such as water and sewer systems, sidewalks, and open space. The subdivision ordinance is a very effective tool for enforcing growth policies.

Again, this ordinance should be consistent with the goals and policies contained in this Plan.

Fringe-Area Agreements

Fringe-Area agreements lead to cooperative planning for the sound development of the entire County. A municipality with a subdivision ordinance has the right to review plats within two miles of its boundaries. A fringe-area agreement between the city and the County would be necessary to coordinate subdivision standards within the two-mile Fringe-Area.

It is recommended that once this Plan is adopted, the County begin working with area cities in establishing fringe-area agreements to maximize the planning benefit to the County, city and surrounding areas. Within each agreement, there should be areas

around the city that are agreed upon which indicate future city growth areas and areas which should be protected, such as prime farmland or environmentally sensitive land. Then, within each area, the city and county would agree on which development standards (city or county) should be used. For example, in an established future growth area of a city, it might be appropriate to allow city zoning and subdivision standards be used when reviewing proposed developments. Since it is very likely that future development in the city's growth area would eventually be annexed into the city, the development should occur with city standards.

Having a fringe-area agreement in place assists in the planning process and allows potential developers to understand what is required of them. The fringe-area agreement planning process should include several public hearings to maximize the input received from county residents.

Capital Improvement Plans

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a legal document formulated by the County Board of Supervisors to implement the planning, scheduling and financing of large construction projects and purchasing major pieces of equipment. A CIP is another tool for the County to help implement the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan. The CIP describes in detail the projects that are to be accomplished; then provides the blueprint that is needed to select those projects and lists the funds that will be authorized in the County's annual budget.

There are several differences between a comprehensive plan and a CIP. A comprehensive plan looks twenty years into the future and lists possible improvement projects for the community. A comprehensive plan contains very broad policy statements on the direction the County wishes to take.

A CIP, on the other hand, is shorter in range (5 years) and is very focused in nature. It will list each project the County wishes to accomplish during the time-period and list the funding that will be authorized to implement that project. The CIP is then updated every year.

Washington County should consider utilizing a Capital Improvements Plan for the following reasons:

- ❖ Systematic evaluation of potential projects
- ❖ Coordinate capital costs and financing
- ❖ Improve economic development efforts
- ❖ Encourage more efficient government
- ❖ Work towards long-term goals of the County

Future Directions in Washington County Land Use

Washington County can successfully accommodate growth as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan by determining the character of that growth and assuring that growth enhances rather than alters the sense of the community. The County must plan to have adequate land available for the projected growth. Land use projections should anticipate future growth needs and permit a reasonable amount of flexibility to accommodate future changes.

This section of the plan will focus on the land use characteristics needed to support the projected population increase through the year 2030. It will project the County's probable housing demand and land requirements during the planning period.

Land Use Projections

Past trends in land development rates provide guidance in determining how much land will be needed to accommodate future growth in Washington (see the following table). Projecting population, housing, and development trends of the last twenty years to 2030 would suggest 3,320 acres of additional residential land would be needed within the County. That number is based on the population projection established earlier in the plan and the amount of housing required. This additional land would accommodate the County's anticipated housing needs up to the year 2030.

Commercial and industrial land needs are more difficult to project. If the County aggressively pursues commercial or industrial development, possible projections could be skewed. Commercial and industrial development supplies local governments with the resources necessary to provide services to its residents. It is important to provide a proper amount of land for business uses to serve the expected population. This includes promoting appropriate areas for commercial and industrial development as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

For future recreation and open space needs, the Plan projects the County's future population at approximately 26,500 residents in 2030. This represents about 10,600 housing units in the County by 2030 (including cities). Based on a park dedication standard of 0.05 acres per unit, there should be at least 530 acres of active park and recreation space in the County. Currently, there are over 2,200 acres within the County. Much of the 2,200 acres includes land in a natural state and does not represent active recreational park acres.

Plus, as a general rule, 10 percent of developed land is consumed by rights-of-way; this includes space for the public utilities and infrastructure needed to serve each new development. This makes an additional 350 acres of land to be used for streets and other utilities in future developments.

Projected Land Use Needs, Washington County - 2030

Land Use	Projected Additional Needs (Acres)
Residential	3,320
Commercial / Industrial	200
Park/natural areas and open space	100
Projected rights-of-way for streets and other utilities	350
Total Land Needs	3,970 acres

Source: East Central Iowa Council of Governments

The above table displays the projected land use needs for the County by the year 2030. The total suggests 3,970 acres of additional land will be needed in the unincorporated areas of the County to support the projected population increase.

Future development within the unincorporated portion of the County should be directed into the specific growth areas as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Future Growth Areas

The future growth areas for Washington County are designated on the Future Land Use Map. These corridors include the likely growth areas of the County during and after the life of this plan. It can be generally described as where future development around the County should be directed.

If, during the life of this plan, trends or priorities change, the County should update its future growth areas. The change should also be made to fringe-area agreements, as well. By staying within the future growth areas, the County will protect valuable environmentally sensitive ground and prime farmland from unwanted development, while meeting projected land use needs.

Future Land Use Recommendations

The following recommendations are listed in no particular order, and are presented as a guide for County officials in making decisions about future land use in Washington County. These recommendations correspond to the Future Land Use Map.

1. Focus growth near existing incorporated communities and within established growth areas.
2. Encourage incremental, contiguous development within established growth areas.
3. Adopt Fringe-Area Agreements with incorporated cities within Washington County and those cities in other counties whose two-mile areas enter Washington County.

4. Where appropriate, provide community recreational and open space within new developments.
5. Encourage pedestrian/bike trails and greenway linkages to existing trail systems and from development to development.
6. Protect and preserve the County's natural resources when reviewing and approving development proposals.
7. Protect and preserve agriculture and agricultural operations when reviewing and approving development proposals.
8. Protect and preserve the quality of the County's groundwater when reviewing and approving development proposals.
9. Encourage compatible mixed-uses which support agricultural operations.
10. Ensure that development regulations are reflective of and proportional to a real need.
11. Equitably balance the rights of property owners with responsibilities to adjacent property owners and the County at large.

❖ **Single-family development:** The primary residential development in Washington County will likely be single-family development. Single-family development may include houses built within a subdivision or individual houses built on single parcels within the County. This housing type should be focused in the Future Growth Areas as designated on the Future Land Use Map.

❖ **Multi-family development:** Specific areas for multi-family development are not shown on the Future Land Use Map. Market conditions will dictate the placement of multi-family development within the designated future residential areas. Multi-family housing can be used to buffer lower density single-family housing from commercial, industrial and roadway developments. The higher density multi-family housing should be encouraged to locate within or adjacent to incorporated cities to take advantage of existing infrastructure.

❖ **Commercial and Industrial development.** This land use should occur in three general areas of the County as shown on the Future Land Use Map:

1. At the intersection of Highway 218 and G36.
2. Near the intersection of Highway 218 and the cities of Ainsworth and Crawfordsville.

3. Within incorporated cities that can handle the increased infrastructure required of commercial and industrial development.

Future Land Use Map

Based on the information contained in the Comprehensive Plan, a Future Land Use Map was established. The future land use map is generalized, but indicates the relative size, location and densities of land required to accommodate future growth. This map should be consulted prior to any decision regarding a proposed development. Doing so adds validity to the Board of Supervisor's decisions when considering planning requests.

The Future Land Use Map contains the following land use designations for the future development of Washington County:

Residential: This includes all uses of land for residential dwelling, including single-family and multi-family developments. In most cases, market conditions will likely dictate whether single-family or multi-family or a mix of both will be developed.

Commercial and Industrial: This category includes future commercial and industrial businesses where products, goods or services are sold and exchanged (commercial) or the application of labor to materials to produce a product that is not normally sold to the ultimate consumer on the premises (industrial).

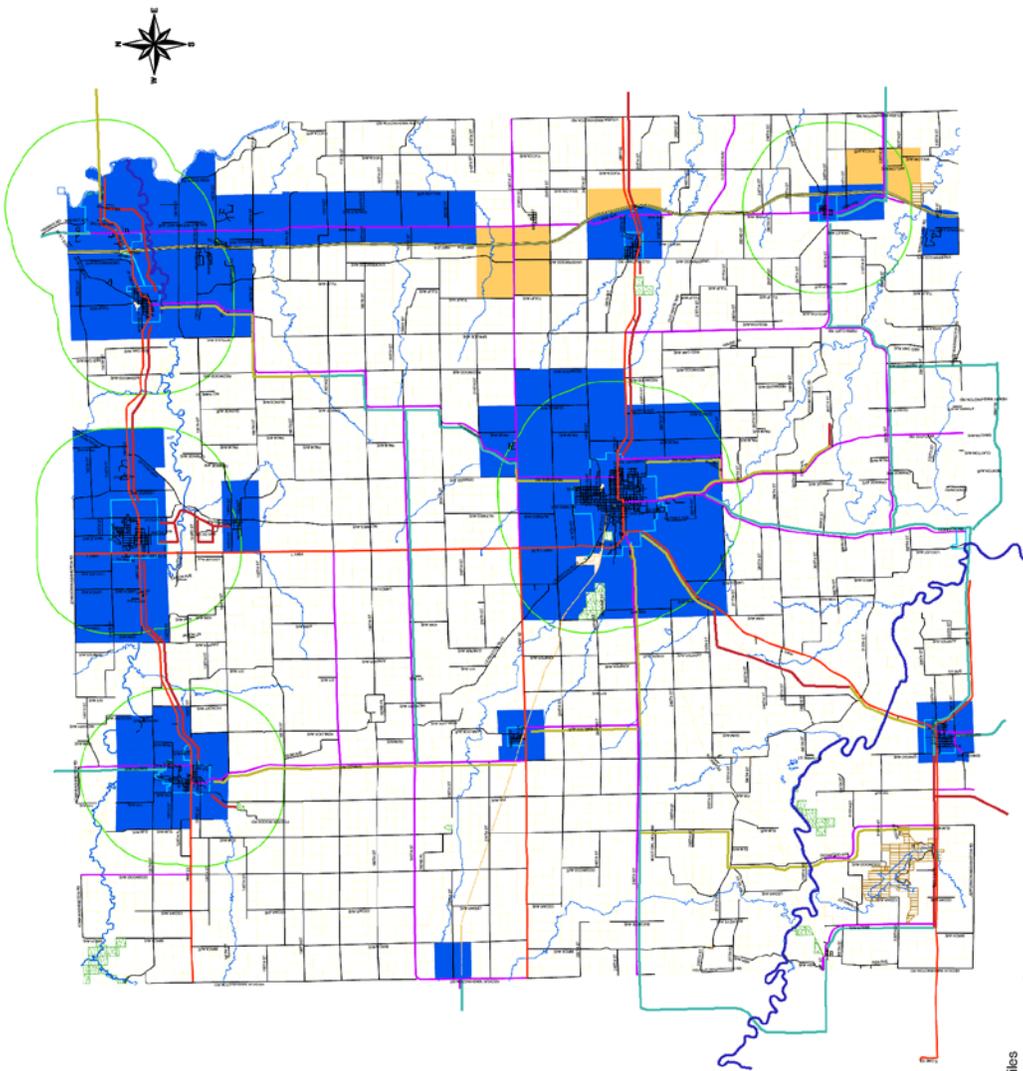
Park and Recreation: This category includes property (both public and private) that serve the recreational needs of County residents. This includes land that is maintained, generally, in its natural state, landscaped or otherwise, for recreational use.

Government: This category includes all land and buildings owned by governmental agencies within the county (city, county, state, federal, board of education).

Open Space and Agricultural: Open space includes public and private ground that includes woodlots, stream corridors, wetlands and conservation reserve land. These open spaces may represent agricultural land that is not used for row crops, pasture or intensive livestock production. Agricultural land includes land used for farming, row crops, and pasture or livestock production.

The map included in this plan is for planning purposes only. A larger version of the map is available in the Secondary Roads Department.

Washington County Future Land Use



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Legend

Residential	Divided Road	County Parcels
Commercial/Industrial	County Paved	County Parks
Agricultural	State Paved	State Parcels
Waterways	County	Corporation Limits
	Eot Ramps	2-Mile Buffer of Corporation Limits

County Trails

Trail - On Road
Trail - Paved Shoulder
Trail - Separate
Trail - Water

P L A N I M P L E M E N T A T I O N

The County should be reminded that this plan does not establish any new ordinance or legislative mandate. The goals and policies contained in the plan are to be used as a guide for local officials in decision making and implementing specific developmental tools. While adoption of this plan does not commit the County to any specific recommendations, it should commit the County to actions that are consistent with the policy guidelines and the plan itself.

Its broad goals and objectives reflect the consensus of the Steering Committee, Planning and Use Commission, the Board of Supervisors and the citizens in and around Washington County. The policy directions are to serve as a general guideline for more specific action undertaken by the residents and government of the County.

These recommendations look twenty years into the future with the expectation that periodic updates will need to be done to reflect changes in the County and the region.

The success of this plan will require the support of County residents as well as the Board of Supervisors. Cooperation from the public and private sectors will allow implementation of the recommendations that will provide long-term benefits to the entire region.

A Word of Caution...

Once the plan has been adopted, the County should make every attempt to put the plan to work. However, no plan could possibly foresee every issue that will arise during the planning period. Therefore, the plan should be used simply as a guide for growth and development. Some developments will inevitably differ from the vision of the plan. However, if properly used, the policies and goals contained in the plan should provide the County with the flexibility to ensure each development fits with the overall vision of the community.

RESULTS OF THE FIVE TOWN MEETINGS

Meeting Number 1: City of Kalona

Group #1: Strengths to be maintained

Highly productive agricultural land	14 points
Quality of Life	6
Vital agricultural production base (grain / livestock)	6
Diversity of people	4
Huge potential for bio-industry	4
Recreational areas	4
Good Roads	2
Good schools (educational systems)	2
Mostly honest and trustworthy people	2
Rural / small community environment	2
Good government (non-corrupt)	1
Population with strong work ethic	1
Diversity of land	0
Easy access to Iowa City	0

Group #1: Weaknesses to be addressed

Population drain of young people	12 points
Lack of a plan to deal with the change to more urban (residential) county	8
Lack of county zoning ordinance	8
Housing needs for all economic levels	6
Lack of industry (loss of jobs / manufacturing)	5
Loss of farmland to urban sprawl	3
Taxes too high	3
Large population center near (drains jobs, etc.)	2
Hesitancy to change	1
Diversity of people (need common set of goals)	0

Group #2: Strengths to be maintained

Location, location, location	9 points
Part of Iowa City MSA	9
Safe communities	8
Good transportation background (highway / rail)	7
Diverse economy (manufacturing / tourism / professional / etc.)	6
People engaged in the community / pride	6
Strong agricultural sector (farms and services)	6
Growth in job opportunities	2

Lots of civic projects going on	2
75 CSR	0
Attractive landscapes	0
Diverse cultural backgrounds	0
Diversity in leadership	0
Good basis with river	0
Old fashioned community values	0
Temperate climate	0
Welcoming	0

Group #2: Weaknesses to be addressed

Parochial view around the county	9 points
Lack of manufacturing base	7
Scattered growth	7
Future conflict between agriculture and residential	6
County disjointed	5
Failure to see self worth (community / personal)	4
No true planning	4
Opportunities for youth	2
Lack of vision	0
Many residents disconnected	0
State park not the draw it once was	0

The following is a composite of all the group’s prioritized strengths and weaknesses of Meeting #1. This is only a composite of each group’s priorities. Many of the strengths and weaknesses were similar from group to group and were condensed into an over-all strength or weakness that was deemed equal. This was based on ECICOG staff’s interpretation and, while reflective of the overall priorities, may or may not reflect the individual priorities of the citizens present.

Meeting #1: Strengths to be maintained	Points
Highly productive agricultural land and productive agricultural base (grain and livestock)	26
Location (part of Iowa City MSA / easy access to Iowa City)	20
Good transportation background (highway / rail) and good roads	9
Quality of Life (rural / small community values)	9
Diverse economy (manufacturing / tourism / professional / etc.) with potential for growth	8
Safe communities	8
People engaged in the community / pride	6
Diversity of people / cultural backgrounds	5
Huge potential for bio-industry	4
Recreational areas	4
Attractive / diverse landscapes	2
Good, diverse, non-corrupt leadership / government	2
Good schools (educational systems)	2

Lots of civic projects going on	2
Mostly honest and trustworthy people	2
Population with strong work ethic	1
Temperate climate	1
Welcoming	1

Meeting #1: Weaknesses to be Addressed	Points
Loss of farmland to urban sprawl and scattered growth / conflict between agricultural and residential	16
Population drain of young people / lack of opportunities for youth	14
Lack planning to deal with change / lack of vision	13
Lack of industry (loss of jobs / manufacturing base)	12
Parochial view around the county	9
Lack of county zoning ordinance	8
Housing needs for all economic levels	6
County disjointed	5
Failure to see self worth (community / personal)	4
Taxes too high	3
Large population center near (drains jobs, etc.)	2
Diversity of people (need common set of goals)	1
Hesitancy to change	1
Many residents disconnected	1
State park not the draw it once was	1

The second town meeting was held in the City of Riverside on June 1, 2006 with approximately 17 residents taking part to identify issues impacting the County. The session involved two small groups (about 8 people per group) identifying and prioritizing strengths that need to be maintained, as well as weaknesses that need to be addressed. The same format was used as in the first town meeting.

Group #1: Strengths to be maintained

Quality of life / safe, small-town atmosphere	13 points
Infrastructure / road system (every road is within 3 miles of paved road)	10
Location / Iowa City corridor, Mississippi River, Highways 213 / 380	7
Quality people / morals, work ethic	6
Education / access to opportunities, part of culture	5
Growth	1
Culture / Amish	
Environment / clean air	
Quality land / efficient use	
Reasonable housing / cost of living	
Taxes	

Group #1: Weaknesses to be addressed

Loss of local factory jobs / lack of diverse industry	16 points
Living here / spending there	10
Reactive planning vs. proactive planning	5
Lack of youth and elderly recreation in small towns	4

Utility infrastructure / rural water and high speed internet	3
Vision for environmental protection	3
Improve County politics (territorial vs. logical solution)	1
Agriculture vs. residential	
Territorial	

Group #2: Strengths to be maintained

Good work ethic / hard working people	10
Good quality of life	7
No zoning	6
Schools / good to excellent	6
Mostly honest people	4
World's most productive agricultural land	4
Parks	3
Location / easy access to large cities	2
Diversity of land uses (agricultural to residential)	
Good road conditions	
Historic buildings	
History in County	
Rural setting	

Group #2: Weaknesses to be addressed

Better planning for agriculture ground	10 points
Very little manufacturing industry	8
Too many unused buildings	7
Confinement buildings (too close to residences)	5
Taxes	4
Lack of overall planning (rural and urban / sprawl)	3
People not open to diversity	3
Lack of recycling	2
Lack of public transportation	
No multi-use trails	
Road conditions	

The following is a composite of all the group's prioritized strengths and weaknesses of Meeting #2. This is only a composite of each group's priorities. Many of the strengths and weaknesses were similar from group to group and were condensed into an over-all strength or weakness that was deemed equal. This was based on ECICOG staff's interpretation and, while reflective of the overall priorities, may or may not reflect the individual priorities of the citizens present.

Meeting #2: Strengths to be maintained	Points
Quality of life / safe, rural, small-town atmosphere	21
Quality people / morals, work ethic	20

Access to quality education	11
Infrastructure / road system (every road is within 3 miles of paved road)	10
Location / easy access to large cities	9
No zoning	6
World's most productive agricultural land	5
Parks	3
Historic buildings / History in County	2
Reasonable housing / cost of living / low taxes	2
Culture / Amish	1
Diversity of land uses (agricultural to residential)	1
Environment / clean air	1
Growth	1

Meeting #2: Weaknesses to be Addressed	Points
Loss of local factory jobs / lack of diverse industry	31
Lack of overall planning / agriculture vs. residential / sprawl	18
Living here / spending there	10
Confinement buildings (too close to residences)	5
Lack of youth and elderly recreation in small towns	4
Taxes	4
People not open to diversity	3
Utility infrastructure / rural water and high speed internet	3
Vision for environmental protection	3
Improve County politics (territorial vs. logical solution)	2
Lack of recycling	2
Lack of public transportation	1
No multi-use trails	1
Road conditions	1

The third town meeting was held in the City of Washington on June 5, 2006 with approximately 13 residents taking part to identify issues impacting the County. The session involved two small groups (about 7 people per group) identifying and prioritizing strengths that need to be maintained, as well as weaknesses that need to be addressed. The same format was used as in the first town meeting.

Group #1: Strengths to be maintained

Some of the world's most productive agricultural land	9 points
Strong livestock industry	8
Rural / small town balance	6
Lifestyle / quality of life – safe	4
Centralized between larger cities	2
Industrious, friendly people	2
Opportunity for growth	2
Quality educational opportunities	1
Recreational opportunities / parks	1

Honest, efficient local government	0
Interstate transportation system	0
Strong retirement community	0
Tourist attractions	0
Varied business and industry	0

Group #1: Weaknesses to be addressed

Huge reliance on property taxes to finance local government and schools	9 points
Unplanned and unregulated housing development	7
Afraid of change	4
Lack of industry	4
School sites	4
Empty, unkempt buildings	3
Lack of control of confinement systems	2
Lack of good paying jobs	2
Expand recreational areas	1
Lack of historical preservation	1
High age of work force	0

Group #2: Strengths to be maintained

Roads and infrastructure / buildings, accessibility	9 points
Resource – people / hard work ethics, morals, cooperation	6
Educational quality / commitment of parents, teachers	5
Environment / recreation, state and local parks	5
Location	5
Volunteering community	5
Health care / local to world class	4
Great quality agricultural land	3
Available potential for industrial growth	0
Diversity in age and cultures	0
Willingness	0

Group #2: Weaknesses to be addressed

Follow through	11 points
Resistance to change	11
Lack of care for water quality / environmental awareness	9
Vision to take a chance	3
Lack of citizen participation in politics	2
Location – economic drain to nearby larger counties / live-in community	2
Utilities – cable, telephone, rural water	2
Lack of local commitment to shop	1
Uncontrolled growth	1
Limited manufactured products	0

The following is a composite of all the group's prioritized strengths and weaknesses of Meeting #3. This is only a composite of each group's priorities. Many of the strengths and weaknesses were similar from group to group and were condensed into an over-all strength or weakness that was deemed equal. This was based on ECICOG staff's interpretation and, while reflective of the overall priorities, may or may not reflect the individual priorities of the citizens present.

Meeting #3: Strengths to be maintained	Points
Productive agricultural land and strong livestock industry	20
Lifestyle / quality of life – rural, small town balance, safe	10
Roads and infrastructure / interstate system	10
Quality people / hard work ethics, morals, cooperation	8
Location between larger cities	7
Quality educational opportunities	6
Recreational opportunities / parks	6
Willingness to volunteer	6
Quality health care	4
Opportunity for industrial growth	3
Diversity in age and cultures	1
Honest, efficient local government	1
Strong retirement community	1
Tourist attractions	1
Varied business and industry	1

Meeting #3: Weaknesses to be Addressed	Points
Resistance to change / vision to take a chance	18
Government follow through	11
Huge reliance on property taxes to finance local government and schools	9
Lack of care for water quality / environmental awareness	9
Unplanned and unregulated development	8
Lack of industry and good paying jobs	7
School sites	4
Empty, unkempt buildings	3
Lack of commitment to shop locally / economic drain to nearby larger counties	3
Lack of citizen participation in politics	2
Lack of control of confinement systems	2
Utilities – cable, telephone, rural water	2
Expand recreational areas	1
High age of work force	1
Lack of historical preservation	1

The fourth town meeting was held in the City of Brighton on June 12, 2006 with approximately 18 residents taking part to identify issues impacting the County. The session involved two small groups (about 9 people per group) identifying and prioritizing strengths that need to be maintained, as well as weaknesses that need to be addressed. The same format was used as in the first town meeting.

Group #1: Strengths to be maintained

State and County parks / outdoor recreation	10 points
Government works for the people	8
Youth activities: 4H, FFA, church	7
Location, location, location: near larger cities, Mississippi River – export recreation	6
Safe communities	5
Good school system	4
Great agriculture	4
History / strong, proud	4
Biofuel potential	3
Infrastructure: good roads, fire departments	3
Access to Iowa City hospital	
Affordable housing / elderly care and housing	
Climate	
Diversity of cities in County	
Friendly, neighborly environment	
Health services / hospital, first responders	
Work ethic	
YM/WCA, community center	

Group #1: Weaknesses to be addressed

No bike / hiking trail	8 points
Not much industry / jobs	8
Uncontrolled growth (north gain / south loss) / loss of agricultural land	8
Schools need updating	6
No control of livestock industry (matrix)	5
Small cities struggling	5
Young adults exit (lack of jobs / ideas leave)	5
Casino sucks money / taxes out	2
Communities not working together	2
Lack of promotion of recreational areas	2
Afraid of change / tradition	1
Corporate farms vs. small farms	1
Not carrying through with plans	1
Downtown businesses faltering	
Lack of infrastructure / hospital, library	
Lack of news coverage	
No County ordinance on “junk areas”	

Group #2: Strengths to be maintained

Parks / outdoor recreational areas	11 points
Residents / quality people	6
Close to Iowa City (shopping, health care, sports, university)	4
Fire department / first responders	4
Good law enforcement	4
Strategically located near the Avenue of the Saints and I-80	4
Breadbasket of the world	2
County fair and 4H youth programs	1

Diversity of businesses
 Events at McCleery Auditorium
 Kirkwood facility / education / self development

Group #2: Weaknesses to be addressed

Loss of medium paying jobs / industry	15 points
Number of confinement units / regulations	6
Lack of good entertainment, restaurants, culture	4
Lack of IDNR enforcement and education / enforcement of present regulations	3
Condition of school and educators	2
Supervisors do not use matrix when considering confinement applications	2
Lack of department stores	1
Some County roads in disrepair	1
Homogenous / stereotype	
Lack of day care facilities	
Lack of historical preservation	
Parochial view of each area	
Public meeting facilities (Brighton area)	

The following is a composite of all the group's prioritized strengths and weaknesses of Meeting #4. This is only a composite of each group's priorities. Many of the strengths and weaknesses were similar from group to group and were condensed into an over-all strength or weakness that was deemed equal. This was based on ECICOG staff's interpretation and, while reflective of the overall priorities, may or may not reflect the individual priorities of the citizens present.

Meeting #4: Strengths to be maintained	Points
Parks / outdoor recreational areas	21
Location near shopping, health care, sports, university, interstates, recreation	14
Safe communities / good law enforcement	9
Government works for the people	8
Youth activities: 4H, FFA, church, County fair	8
Infrastructure: good roads, fire departments / first responders	7
Residents / quality people / good work ethic	7
Great agriculture / Breadbasket of the world	6
Good school systems / Kirkwood facility / education / self development	4
History / strong, proud	4
Biofuel potential	3
Access to Iowa City hospital / Health services / hospital, first responders	2
YMWCA, community center / Events at McCleery Auditorium	2
Affordable housing / elderly care and housing	1
Climate	1
Diversity of businesses	1
Diversity of cities in County	1
Friendly, neighborly environment	1

Meeting #4: Weaknesses to be Addressed	Points
Loss of medium paying jobs / industry	23
Number of confinement units / regulations / not using the matrix	13
No bike / hiking trails / Lack of promotion of recreational areas	10
Condition of schools / need updating	8
Uncontrolled growth (north gain / south loss) / loss of agricultural land	8
Small cities struggling / Downtown businesses faltering	6
Young adults exit (lack of jobs / ideas leave)	5
Lack of good entertainment, restaurants, culture	4
Lack of IDNR enforcement and education / enforcement of present regulations	3
Casino sucks money / taxes out	2
Communities not working together	2
Homogenous / Parochial view of each area	2
Afraid of change / tradition	1
Corporate farms vs. small farms	1
Lack of day care facilities	1
Lack of department stores	1
Lack of historical preservation	1
Lack of infrastructure / hospital, library	1
Lack of news coverage	1
No County ordinance on "junk areas"	1
Not carrying through with plans	1
Public meeting facilities (Brighton area)	1
Some County roads in disrepair	1

The final town meeting was held at the County's Marr Park near Ainsworth on June 26, 2006 with approximately 25 residents taking part to identify issues impacting the County. The session involved two small groups (about 12 people per group) identifying and prioritizing strengths that need to be maintained, as well as weaknesses that need to be addressed. The same format was used as in the first town meeting.

Group #1: Strengths to be maintained

Community values / friendly people, variety of churches, safe, health care	19 points
Agricultural qualities / most productive	15
Parks – city / county	10
Infrastructure / roads, rail, electrical, water	6
Environmental qualities	5
Historical / county history, buildings, preservation	3
New housing development	3
Cultural / mostly honest people, diversity, Amish, farmers market	2
Educational opportunities	1
Location, location, location	1
Small communities / rural setting	1
Media / radio, newspaper	
Stable families / many generations	

Group #1: Weaknesses to be addressed

Preserving agricultural ground / orderly housing development, reduce sprawl	21 points
Jobs / need more high quality, lack of diversity in industry, need to assist industry development	20
Agricultural impact on environment	6
Education slipping / county wide-school system, consolidation	5
Historical preservation / need progress	4
Taxes / property tax dependant	4
Bedroom communities growing	2
Infrastructure / lack of investment, rural water	2
The casino / how to handle it	2
Community isolation	
Grow retail, industry, services	
Law enforcement / drug labs, etc.	

Group #2: Strengths to be maintained

Good soil quality and farmland	17 points
Livestock industry	8
Potential for bio-fuels	8
Proximity to population centers, culture, education, health care	8
Strong environmentally / agriculture, wildlife, natural resources and people	7
Good transportation	3
Caring, compassionate community	2
Diverse work-force	2
Low county population	2
Climate	
County hospital	
Good county officials	
Good recreation opportunities	

Group #2: Weaknesses to be addressed

Unorganized development	11 points
Lack of industry	7
Casino / loss of capital	6
High school administration costs	6
Reliance on property tax to fund infrastructure	6
Too many restrictions on agriculture	6
Need to revitalize urban areas	5
Unsupported land values due to non-agricultural pressures	5
Cost of supplying services	3
Lack of intergovernmental communication	3
Water quality	3
Concern for historical preservation (buildings and people)	2
Conflict between rural and urban areas	2
Lack of diversity in agriculture	2

Out-migration of youth and industry	2
Poor planning on how to deliver services	2
Housing available for all economic levels	1
Not part of the Iowa City / Cedar Rapids Corridor (marketing)	1
Air quality / confinements too close to town	
Availability of technology to rural areas (internet)	
Low income people	

The following is a composite of all the group's prioritized strengths and weaknesses of Meeting #5. This is only a composite of each group's priorities. Many of the strengths and weaknesses were similar from group to group and were condensed into an over-all strength or weakness that was deemed equal. This was based on ECICOG staff's interpretation and, while reflective of the overall priorities, may or may not reflect the individual priorities of the citizens present.

Meeting #5: Strengths to be maintained	Points
Good soil quality, farmland and livestock industry	40
Small town community values, friendly, caring, honest, diverse, stable	25
Strong environmental qualities / agriculture, wildlife, natural resources and people	12
Good recreation opportunities	11
Good infrastructure / roads, rail electrical, water	9
Good location / proximity to population centers, education, health care, culture	9
Potential for bio-fuels	8
Historical / county history, buildings, preservation	3
New housing development	3
Diverse work-force	2
Low county population	2
Climate	1
County hospital	1
Good county officials	1
Good school systems / educational opportunities	1
Media / radio, newspaper	1

Meeting #5: Weaknesses to be Addressed	Points
Preserving agricultural ground / conflict between rural and urban / reducing sprawl through orderly housing development	34
Need for more high quality jobs / assist industry development	28
Environmental qualities due to agricultural uses / air and water qualities	10
Property tax dependant	10
The casino / how to handle it and the loss of capital	8
Lack of investment of infrastructure / high cost, poor planning / rural water	7
High school administration costs	6
Historical preservation / need progress	6
Too many restrictions on agriculture	6
Education slipping / county wide-school system, consolidation	5
Need to revitalize urban areas	5
Unsupported land values due to non-agricultural pressures	5

Lack of intergovernmental communication	4
Bedroom communities growing	2
Lack of diversity in agriculture	2
Out-migration of youth and industry	2
Availability of technology to rural areas (internet)	1
Housing available for all economic levels	1
Law enforcement / drug labs, etc.	1
Low income people	1
Not part of the Iowa City / Cedar Rapids Corridor (marketing)	1

G L O S S A R Y O F P L A N N I N G T E R M S

Amenity: A natural or created feature that enhances the aesthetic quality, visual appeal or makes more attractive a particular property, place or area.

Annexation: To incorporate a land area currently outside of the existing city limits into a municipality, with a resulting expansion in the boundaries of the municipality.

Arterial Street: See *Street System Hierarchy*

Buffering: The Plan calls for buffering between different land uses to minimize negative impacts. Buffering can include open space, landscaped areas, fences, walls, berms or any combination thereof to physically separate or screen one use or property from another. In designing buffers, the County's subdivision and/or zoning ordinance should allow flexibility for the type and size of the buffer.

Built Environment: Artificially created fixed elements, such as buildings, structures, devices and surfaces, which together create the physical character of an area.

Capital Improvements Plan: A local government's timetable or schedule of all future capital improvements to be carried out during a specific period and generally listed in order of priority, with cost estimates and sources of financing each project. A typical capital improvements plan is a five-year program. A capital improvement is generally a major construction project or the acquisition of large, expensive equipment.

Circulation: Systems and structures for the movement of people, goods, water, sewage, air or power by such means as sidewalks, trails, streets, highways, waterways, towers, pipes and conduits.

Collector Street: See *Street System Hierarchy*

Contiguous: Having a common boundary, next to, abutting or touching an adjoining property.

Density: The number of housing units or structures allowed per unit of land.

Design Standards: A set of guidelines defining parameters to be followed in site and/or building design and development. Can also be used to define standards for infrastructure improvements as well.

Development: The physical construction of buildings and/or the preparation of land. Development activities include: subdivision of land; construction or alternation of structures, roads, utilities and other facilities; installation of septic systems; grading; and clearing of natural vegetative cover (with the exception of agricultural activities).

Environmentally Sensitive Land: An area with one or more of the following characteristics: (1) steep slopes, (2) flood plain, (3) soils with high water tables including

wetlands and wetlands transition areas, (4) soils that are highly erodible or subject to erosion, (5) land incapable of meeting percolation requirements, (6) stream or river corridor, (7) mature stands of native vegetation, and (8) habitats of endangered species.

Floodplain: The land area on either side of the banks of a waterway subject to flooding.

Fringe-area agreements: See *Intergovernmental Agreement*

Future Growth Area: The corridors that define the potential growth area for a city or county. The corridors can be generally described as where development outside of city limits should be directed. Also called Urban Service Areas or areas that define the geographical limit of government-supplied public facilities and services.

Goal: Description of a desired state of affairs for the community in the future. Goals are the broad public purposes toward which policies and programs are directed. Generally, more than one set of actions (objectives) may be required to achieve each goal.

Greenbelt: A greenbelt could be described as an open area that may be maintained in a natural state or used as a buffer between land uses. Also, it could be a linear open space along a natural corridor (such as a riverfront, stream valley, ridge line) that connects parks, natural reserves, and populated areas. Finally, it could be a natural or landscaped course for pedestrian travel.

Green Space: See *Open Space*

Growth Management: A wide-range of techniques used in combination to manage or influence the amount, type, location, density, timing and/or rate of growth. Growth management objectives often form the backbone of a comprehensive plan. Techniques used to execute growth management policies may include: zoning and subdivision ordinances, capital improvements, and designation of future growth or urban service boundaries.

IDED: The Iowa Department Of Economic Development

IDNR: The Iowa Department Of Natural Resources

IDOT: The Iowa Department of Transportation

Incremental Design: Method of development to maintain small town atmosphere and reducing sprawl by utilizing compact, contiguous growth to existing development.

Infrastructure: Public services and facilities needed to sustain residential, commercial, industrial and all other types of development activities. Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to sewage disposal systems, water supply systems, drainage systems, roads, parks, sidewalks, trails, schools, libraries, fire, police, emergency, medical facilities and public works facilities.

Intergovernmental Agreement: (28E Agreement) A legal document binding two or more governmental units or agencies to act in certain, cooperative ways. The term is most often used in a planning context to refer to shared or delegated responsibility to review development proposals and/or to recognize adopted plans and policies of the

governmental units or agencies. For example, the City of Washington and Washington County may adopt an agreement which requires each entity to provide materials on development proposals within certain geographic areas for the other entity to review and comment upon. Also called fringe-area agreements.

Issues: Points of debate, discussion or dispute in the community that are identified in the plan and are dealt with by the plan's goals, policies and objectives.

Land Use: A description of how land is occupied or utilized. Land use types typically include: various types of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and public uses.

Local Street: See *Street System Hierarchy*

Neighborhood: An area of a community with characteristics that distinguish it from other areas that may include distinct ethnic or economic characteristics, housing types, or boundaries defined by physical barriers such as a major highway or river.

Objective: Individual accomplishments which, taken together, will enable the county to achieve stated goals.

Open Space: Any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purposes of (1) the preservation of natural resources, (2) outdoor recreation (active or passive), or (3) public health or safety. Land used for the managed production of resources (farming, etc.) is not considered open space for the purpose of this plan.

Plan: The formulation and graphic representation of the means to reach a desired end, as well as the act of preparing a plan (community input, research and analysis). The Washington County Plan is a written and graphic analysis of a desirable and feasible pattern of growth with goals and objectives to best serve the residents of the community. This plan is based on the input of the community and upon data and extensive research.

Planning Area: It can be generally described as all the land within Washington County, minus incorporated cities.

Planning Period: The period for which the projections and the goals and objectives of this plan were made (from the year 2008 to 2028).

Policy: Statements of government intent for which individual actions and decisions are evaluated.

Region: The region designated by the Iowa Legislature as State Planning Area 10. This region consists of six contiguous counties in eastern Iowa, including: Benton, Iowa, Linn, Jones, Linn, and Washington, which are served by the planning agency East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG).

Sense of Place: The characteristics of a location that make it readily recognizable as being unique and different from its surroundings.

Strategy: Tasks that may be taken to achieve stated goals and policies.

Streetscape: All the elements that constitute the physical makeup of a street and that, as a group, define its character, including building frontage, paving, street furniture, landscaping (trees and other plantings), awnings and marquees, signs and lighting.

Street System Hierarchy: The Washington County street system generally consists of three functional uses of streets: Arterial, Collector and Local streets. Arterial Streets provide a continuous route for the movement of large volumes of through-traffic across and beyond the County and between high traffic generation points. Collector Streets provide movement of traffic between arterial streets as well as providing limited access to abutting property. Local streets serve as a means of access to abutting property.

Urban Design: The process of organizing the contextual elements of the built environment such that the end result will be a place with its own character or identity. Also, urban design can be described as planning the development of the built environment in a comprehensive manner to achieve a unified, functional, efficient and appealing physical setting.

Urban Service Area: *See Future Growth Area.*

Urban Sprawl: Uncontrolled growth, usually low-density in nature, in previously rural areas and some distance from existing development and infrastructure.

Use: The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, moved, altered, and/or enlarged in accordance with any future zoning ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use categories.

Zoning: The delineation of districts and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings. It should be made clear that the Washington County Plan is NOT zoning. Zoning is a tool to help implement the plan.

N O T E S