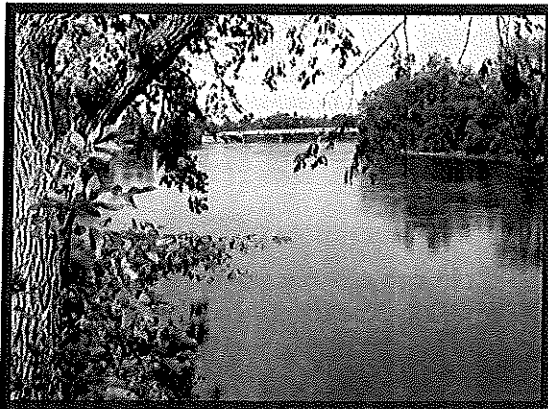


2011 COMPREHENSIVE SMART PLAN



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The Volunteer Citizen Planning Committee

Vinton Planning and Zoning Commission

The City of Vinton

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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Executive Summary

ECICOG, in partnership with the City of Vinton, provided coordination, planning and facilitation support and identified city-wide recommendations and strategies. Efforts focused on important opportunities to advance Vinton's growth through the year 2030. These efforts included a community visioning process; the development of strategies addressing business development and infrastructure; and a discussion of future housing and land use issues and needs.

In addition, this Comprehensive Smart Plan utilizes the State of Iowa Smart Planning legislation. The legislation, adopted by the State in 2010, established 10 Smart Planning principles and 13 smart planning elements which helped guide Vinton's planning process. A listing of where each smart planning principle and element are located in the plan can be found in the plan's appendix.

ECICOG appreciates the efforts of the Vinton Planning Committee members who have contributed their time and ideas to the formulation of this plan. Also, special thanks should go to many citizens of the community. Their input has made this document a pertinent and meaningful plan which represents the needs and desires of the people in and around the City. Finally, thanks to the Iowa Department of Economic Development for partial funding of this plan. They made it possible for the City to develop this critical tool.



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Introduction

Introduction

The Vinton Plan

This plan is intended to be a guide for the City of Vinton to coordinate growth and development over the course of the next twenty years. The plan is focused on the area within the current city limits and in the surrounding future growth boundary outside the city.

The plan, utilizing Iowa's new Smart Growth principles and elements, includes an in-depth look at the City's population, housing, economic base, transportation, public and recreational facilities, physical infrastructure and current and future land uses. In addition, broad citywide goals are outlined and policy guidelines are recommended to achieve those goals. The plan, however, is not meant to be a strict blueprint, but rather a guide for 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 community direction can be established to guide the development of regulatory tools such as zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, housing and building codes and annexation procedures.

The plan has two fundamental purposes. First, it presents a unified vision for Vinton 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.

Introduction

The Planning Process

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 its value can easily be lost through frequent or arbitrary changes. Amendments may be proposed by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the City Council, or by concerned citizens. Any proposal must always be referred to the zoning commission for consideration and recommendation to the Council.

It is also recommended that the entire plan be carefully reviewed annually to insure that the data and land use maps are updated. Policies may have to be updated as well. The review may be simple if the City has not grown in the years 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 zoning or subdivision ordinances or other developmental tools.

The planning process should be an ongoing endeavor. The success of this plan will require the support of citizens as well as the City Council. Cooperation from the public and private sectors will provide long-term benefits to the entire planning area and ultimately the City of Vinton.

Successful communities 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 strategies developed in the Vinton Comprehensive Smart Plan will provide flexibility for city officials and area residents in successfully planning for the future.

Introduction

How to Use This Document

It is recommended that the City identify someone to manage and lead implementation of action steps detailed in this Plan and other actions as they are identified. It is important to have someone responsible for guiding ongoing recovery and future planning efforts.

In addition to an overall coordinator, each of the strategies, initiatives or tools described will require someone who assumes ownership to ensure progress towards implementation. In most instances it is beneficial to have someone who is familiar with the strategy, initiative or tool and able to work with appropriate entities needed to accomplish the work. A champion may be an individual or agency, although one person should be the designated coordinator for the City's recovery and future planning efforts.

While the City of Vinton will be the primary user of this Plan, State and Federal partners in the long-term recovery effort may also use this document to assist in community recovery. Various State and Federal agencies may be key to acquiring needed funding to support recovery initiatives. This Plan may be instrumental in determining appropriate agency match and meeting funding eligibility criteria.

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Overview

Overview

A Brief History of Vinton

The City of Vinton began its history known as Northport in the mid-1800's. Initially an outpost for trading, it quickly became a support center for the burgeoning number of farmers who were taking advantage of the rich soil around the community.

Opportunities were numerous and businesses came to Vinton to establish processing factories for the farm products, open up retail storefronts, and provide technical assistance to area farmers. The town grew to a population of roughly 5,000 by the early 1900's.

The City weathered a variety of social/economic downturns and upturns during the early and mid 1900's. As Vinton and the nation emerged from the Great Depression and World War II, it resumed its role as a rural farming community and social hub of Benton County, largely due to its position as the County Seat.

Residents growing up during the 1940's and 1950's recall a vibrant and active downtown, several active factories including the Iowa Canning Company who hosted the Sweet Corn Day each Labor Day as well as the packing plant and other significant factories. The city had five farm implement dealerships, several grocery stores – many of which were small neighborhood stores, a J.C. Penney's and Sears, as well as a local daily newspaper. The Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School was active with many students from across the state living at the school during the year.



Overview

The 1980's saw the farm economy collapsed across the nation with many farmers in the area being forced to declare bankruptcy. In addition, I-380 from Iowa City to Waterloo was completed in 1985 and changed the traffic flow through Vinton. With Highway 218 no longer the primary thoroughfare between Cedar Rapids and Waterloo, businesses that relied on that traffic struggled, with many closing.

Citizens began to move much of their work and spending to the larger metro areas. This trend would intensify over the next 20 years. It was at the heart of this decade, 1985, that the Chamber of Commerce, attempting to deal with these issues, formed Vinton Unlimited with the purpose of attracting new business to town.

The 1990's saw a gradual but steady recovery for Vinton. During this time, the hospital was brought back under local control, a library bond issue passed, and the high school received an addition. By the end of the decade a new housing development was underway and a significant street renovation was taking place, providing the downtown retail district with a facelift and a renewed sense of hope and optimism. The downtown reconstruction project earned the city an "All -Star Award" from the Iowa League of Cities in 2000. Recently, the community supported the construction of a new high school that will see its first graduating class in May of 2008.

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City of Vinton Profile and Analysis

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.

The following section of the Plan will review the City of Vinton's growing population.

Vinton Population Quick View

| 1990 | 2000 | % Change 1990-2000 | 2010 | % Change 2000-2010 |
|-------|-------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|
| 5,103 | 5,102 | - 0.02% | 5,257 | 3.04% |

Source: U.S. Census

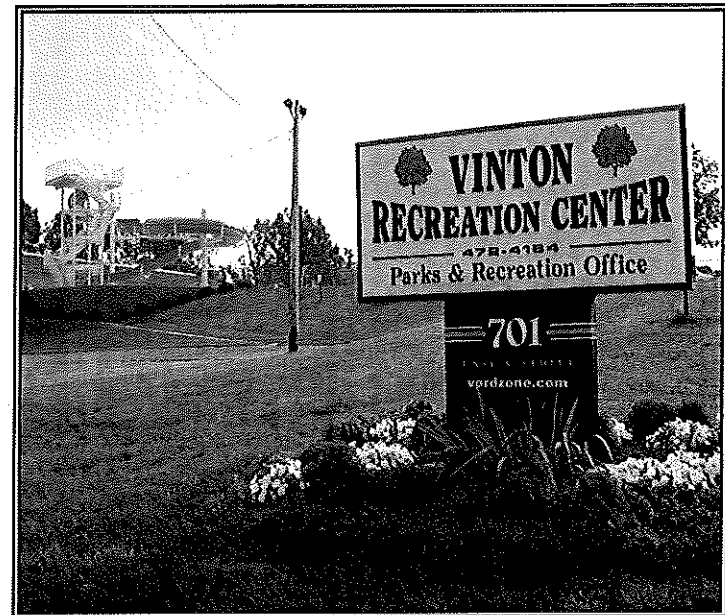
City of Vinton Profile and Analysis

Population Trends

The City of Vinton has seen flat to modest population growth since the 1950's. For a graphic illustration of this, please refer to the chart on the following page. However, the City has seen only two instances where there was a drop in population during any census taken since 1910 (the 1930 and 2000 census periods). Both drops in population were relatively minor. For example, between 1990 and 2000, the City's population dropped by one.

Most recently, according to the U.S. Census, Vinton realized a 3% increase in population from 2000 to 2010, bringing the City's population to 5,257. The City is likely to continue growing at or near 3% as discussed later in this Chapter.

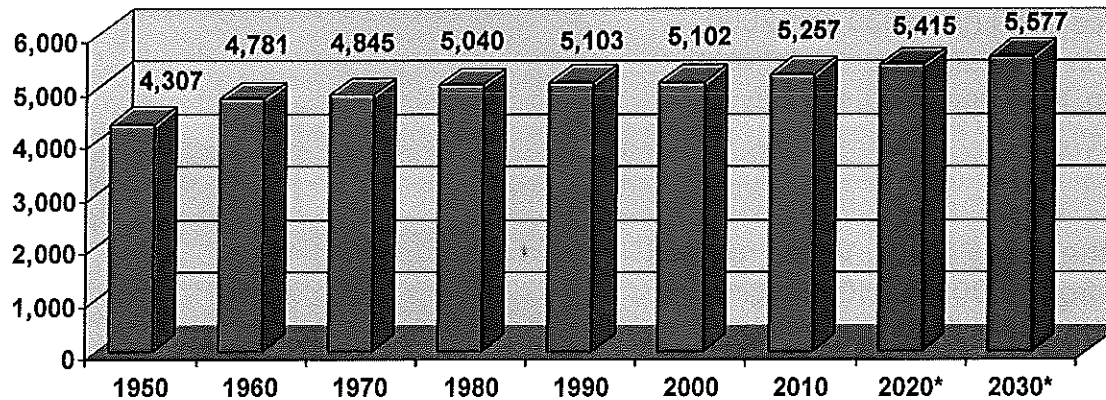
Even during the 1980s, the City's population increased. This is inconsistent with most communities in Iowa. That period was generally known as the Farm Crisis in the Midwest and most Iowa agricultural-based communities lost population during that time. However, Vinton's population continued to grow, showing a more diversified economy than many of Iowa's communities of the time.



City of Vinton Profile and Analysis

The projected populations for 2020 and 2030 are shown on the chart and discussed later in the Chapter. The population is expected to be near 5,415 residents by 2020 and near 5,577 by 2030.

Vinton Population Trends (1950 - 2000)



Source: U.S. Census

* Years 2020 and 2030 are projected numbers from ECICOG based on a 3 percent growth rate

The modest population growth of Vinton during the last ten years may be due in part to the city being the employment center of Benton County. Vinton is the largest city between Cedar Rapids and Waterloo. The four-lane Highway 30 makes access to the Cedar Rapids metro area easy. If energy prices retreat and the national economy recovers, growth from the metro area should continue to expand outward to cities like Vinton, Anamosa, Springville and Central City.

However, as energy and gas prices continue to increase dramatically, commuters may be less likely to move great distances from where they work. This factor alone may slow Vinton's future growth potential.

City of Vinton Profile and Analysis

Population Growth of Similar Sized Cities

There are several communities within the region that had similar populations and situations as Vinton. Each community is located within a short drive of the Cedar Rapids metro area. Since 1990, all five cities have experienced varying degrees of growth. See the table on the following page.

There are basically four types of cities within the region.

- 1) Large metro area cities (Cedar Rapids, Iowa City)
- 2) Cities directly adjacent to the metro areas (Robins, Fairfax, Ely, North Liberty, etc.)
- 3) Mid-size, stand-alone cities (Vinton, Anamosa, Washington, etc.)
- 4) Small, rural towns and villages (Garrison, Luzerne, Mount Auburn, etc.)

The cities located directly adjacent to Cedar Rapids, such as Ely, have experienced substantial growth during the 1990s and early 2000s. Population trends of this nature may come with substantial negative costs to a city, such as lack of housing space, loss of farm land, increased need for infrastructure and other services, and the extreme cost of those services, as well as the loss of the small-town character. Many other cities near the Cedar Rapids metro area have experienced growth rates in the upper teens and even more as well.

However, the City of Vinton, along with cities such as Anamosa, Manchester and Washington are all stand-alone cities. They are the employment centers of their respective counties. These cities have not seen the double and triple digit percentage growth rates like North Liberty and Fairfax have seen. But they have seen steady growth. Population increases between 5 and 10% are generally more manageable for communities. Many cities find it easier to plan and budget for infrastructure costs when the growth rate is in the 5% range.

City of Vinton Profile and Analysis

Population Trends of Similar Size Cities

| City | 1990 | 2000 | %Change | 2010 | %Change | County |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Anamosa | 5,100 | 5,494 | 8.8% | 5,533 | 2.2% | Jones |
| Monticello | 3,522 | 3,607 | 2.4% | 3,796 | 5.2% | Jones |
| Manchester | 5,137 | 5,257 | 2.3% | 5,179 | - 1.5% | Delaware |
| Washington | 7,074 | 7,047 | - 3.8% | 7,266 | 3.1% | Washington |
| Vinton | 5,103 | 5,102 | - 0.02% | 5,257 | 3.04% | Benton |

Source: U.S. Census

Demographics

Age Cohorts

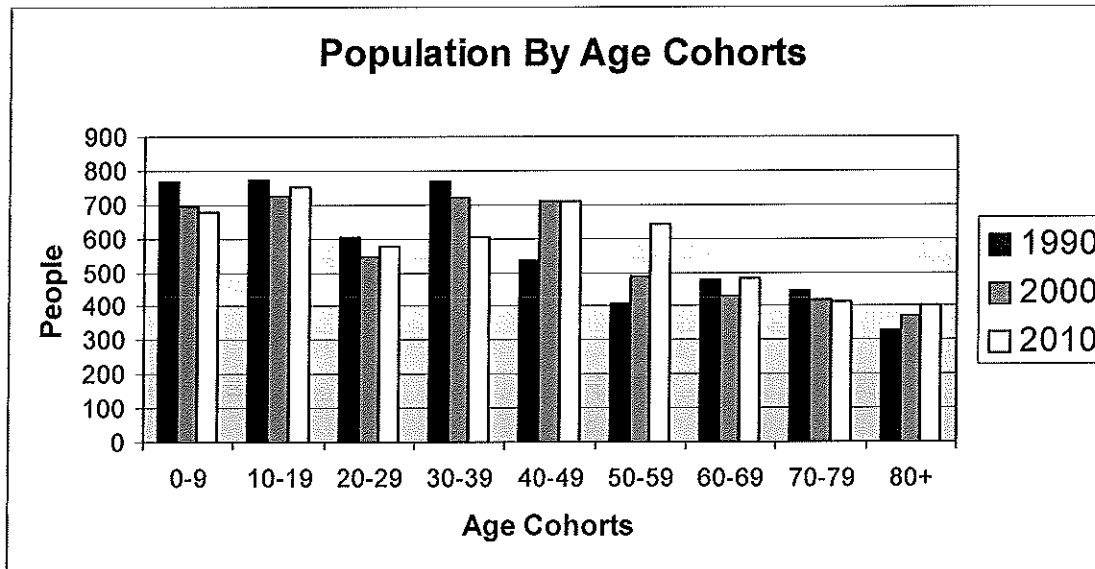
Population projections are used to plan appropriately for future growth and development. Breaking down the population by demographics is just as important to the planning process by showing the related demographical needs of the community.

As seen in the adjacent table, in 2010, Vinton had a fairly balanced age make-up with the median age of residents at 40.3. This follows regional trends with similar sized cities such as Anamosa with a median age of 39.6, Manchester with 41.1, Washington with 42.4, and Monticello with 43.3. Also, the median age of Vinton has increased at a higher rate than the state of Iowa. The cause of this may be associated with a variety of factors such as Vinton's rural base, aging farmers migrating to the city, or the aging baby boomer population.

| Median Age | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|------------|------|------|------|
| Vinton | 34.9 | 39.2 | 40.3 |
| Iowa | 34.0 | 37.9 | 38.1 |

Source: U.S. Census

City of Vinton Profile and Analysis



Source: U.S. Census

Looking at the changes in the age groups of Vinton, the increasing median age figures are supported by the increasing trend of the elderly population. This trend is seen as a generational fluctuation of baby boomers through the cohorts. Looking at each census year's figures separately, the baby boom peaks for 1990 in the 30-39 cohort, in 2000 this peak spreads to the 40-49 cohort, and in the 2010 figures the peak is in the 40-49 cohort spreading into the 50-59 cohort.

For the life of this comprehensive plan, the largest age group (aside from the 10-19 cohort), currently the 40-49 cohort, will continue to shift and by the end of the plan will exist in the 60-69 cohort. Another notable point is the decrease in population from 1990 to 2010 in the 0-9 age cohort. This supports the decreasing birth rate figure, and Vinton's decreasing school enrollment.

City of Vinton Profile and Analysis

Population Projections

As stated before, population projections can be used to plan for the appropriate level of services for future development. When used cautiously, population projections provide an estimate of future growth barring any unforeseen significant change in the economic or social composition of the community. With a sound population projection, a city can plan for infrastructure capacities, housing needs, and future land use requirements.

Vinton Population Projections

| | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | 2030 |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 0.5% Growth rate | 5,102 | 5,257 | 5,260 | 5,263 |
| 1% Growth rate | 5,102 | 5,257 | 5,310 | 5,363 |
| 3% Growth rate | 5,102 | 5,257 | 5,415 | 5,577 |
| 5% Growth rate | 5,102 | 5,257 | 5,520 | 5,796 |
| 10% Growth rate | 5,102 | 5,257 | 5,783 | 6,361 |

Source: ECICOG

The above table shows several population projections for Vinton. Five different projections are shown for comparison. In each projection, Vinton realizes generally slow and steady population growth. The percentage growth rates shown in the above table are between each census period (for example: 2010 to 2020).

City of Vinton Profile and Analysis

Growth trends of the last 20 years in the ECICOG region include high percentage residential growth in communities directly surrounding the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City metro areas, and slower growth rates farther from the major population and employment centers. These growth trends are expected to continue as energy and gas prices climb, making it less likely for people to live long distances from their place of employment. Because of this, Vinton's population is expected to maintain modest 3% growth through the year 2020 and on to 2030.

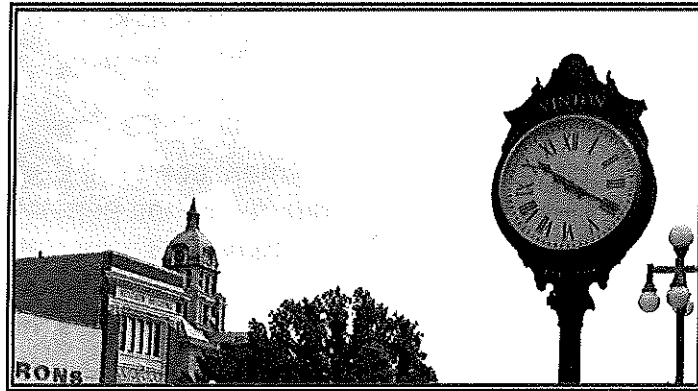
It is unlikely that the City will be able to maintain larger percentage growth rates, as shown by the 5% and 10% projections above. As the population increases, large percentage changes are much more difficult. In addition, the economy, rising fuel and heating costs, the amount of developable land and available community services (sewer, water, police, roads, etc.) will ultimately dictate how fast the City grows. As mentioned before, very large percentage growth rates can be a substantial burden on community services. Cities with 40 and 50% growth rates generally experience problems (i.e. provision of services, short-term budget shortages, etc.). The 5% and 10% projections are shown in the unlikely event that larger growth rates will happen over the long-term. It is very likely rising energy and fuel prices will slow housing construction in outlying areas and reduce the likelihood that commuters would be willing to drive long distances to work.

However, since the City of Vinton is the population and employment center of Benton County and requires less from the Cedar Rapids metro area than a typical bedroom community, the population should maintain modest growth through 2030, barring any significant change in the economic or social composition of the region. A population near 5,577 could be expected by 2030. For planning purposes, the three percent projection will be used throughout the document when discussing future infrastructure capacities, housing and land use needs.

City of Vinton Profile and Analysis

The Land Use portion of the plan will look at the amount of undeveloped land remaining within the City limits and examine possible appropriate future growth areas outside of the existing City boundaries to facilitate this future growth.

As stated before, 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 continue to negatively impact the economy, making even the smaller percentage growth rates unattainable. However, with the proximity to employment and retail centers, and available land and services, the City's population may be able to withstand small changes in the national economy and reach the plan's projected total of 5,577 by the year 2030.



City of Vinton Profile and Analysis

Population Findings

- ❖ Slow and steady population increases since 1950 as seen with 155 new residents from 2000 to 2010.
- ❖ Median age increasing from 34.9 in 1990 to 40.3 in 2010. This is increasing at a higher rate than the state of Iowa.
- ❖ The median age increase will continue to increase as the large 40-49 cohort ages during the life of the plan. This age group will move into the 60-69 cohort by the end of the 20 year.
- ❖ Decreasing numbers in the 0-9 age cohort support the decreasing birth rate and declining school enrollment figures.
- ❖ The City's population increase since 1990 is significantly lower than the average in the ECICOG region (8%). This is due primarily to several communities experiencing substantial growth (double and triple digit percentage growth rates) during this time.
- ❖ The population is expected to be near 5,400 residents by when the next census (2020) data is released.
- ❖ Vinton should prepare for a population of near 5,577 residents by the year 2030 or the equivalent of approximately 320 new residents between 2010 and 2030. Housing, infrastructure and land use needs throughout the plan will be based on this projection.

Housing Characteristics and Needs

Housing Analysis

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

In development terms, the projected population increase (at the 3% growth rate per census) is equivalent to approximately 142 new housing units by the year 2030. This represents an average annual construction rate of nearly eight new units per year. At the current allowable density of approximately 3 units per acre, the new units would require approximately 47 acres of land (this does not account for the rights-of-way for streets and other utilities). As a general rule, 10 percent of developed land is consumed by rights-of-way. This makes an additional five acres of land to be used for streets and other utilities to serve the projected residential needs. **All told, it is projected that 52 acres of land will be needed to account for new residential development in Vinton over the next twenty years.**

Using an "infill-first" development strategy, it is likely that the vast majority of new housing growth will develop within the existing City limits. This is discussed in the Land Use Chapter. If the City should grow at rates higher than 3%, the following table shows the projected residential land needs.

| | 2010 | 2020 | 2030 | Projected New Dwelling Unit / Residential Acre Needs |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| 5% Growth Rate | 5,257 | 5,520 | 5,796 | 238 units / 80 acres |
| 10% Growth Rate | 5,257 | 5,783 | 6,361 | 488 units / 163 acres |
| 15% Growth Rate | 5,257 | 6,046 | 6,953 | 750 units / 250 acres |

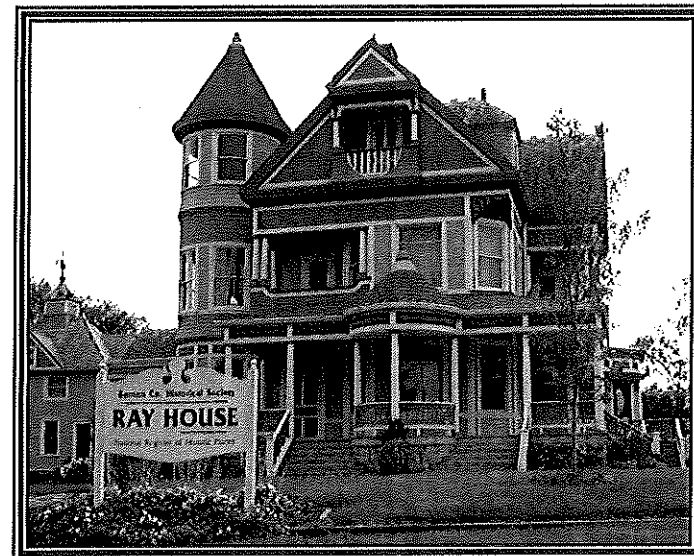
Source: ECICOG

Housing Characteristics and Needs

In 1990, there were 2,089 housing units in Vinton. By 2000, the Census showed 2,227 housing units, an increase of nearly 7 percent. This is inconsistent with the population growth during that time. Vinton actually lost population during this time, therefore creating a higher vacancy rate by 2000. The 2010 Census data shows a population of 5,257 meaning as of 2010, there are now 2,299 housing units in Vinton, or a 3% increase from 2000. This is consistent with the 3% population growth during this time.

According to the 2000 Census, there were 111 vacant housing units (5%). Comparably, the 2010 Census documented 112 vacant units (5%). Around five percent vacancy is considered healthy for a community. This allows market flexibility for area homeowners, as well as an ability for the City to handle sudden population increases. Of the 112 vacant units in 2010, 35% were rental units, and 65% were units vacated by owner.

In 1980 and 1990, the average household size was 2.43. That number decreased for the year 2000 to 2.34, and in 2010 to 2.33. Generally, this number has been decreasing throughout the region as families are trending smaller. The average household size is expected to continue to drop across the region. By the year 2030, Vinton is expected to have approximately 2.26 people per housing unit. Based on this figure and the population projection, Vinton should plan on needing approximately 142 new housing units by 2030 to bring the overall total to approximately 2,441 units



Housing Characteristics and Needs

New Housing Development

When new housing development occurs, it should, wherever possible occur as infill development within the existing City limits. As infill possibilities are exhausted, development should then occur incrementally, or contiguous to existing development. Growth of this nature will reduce capital outlay and maintenance costs to the City by allowing short, economical extensions of municipal infrastructure (sewer, water, street, sidewalk, etc.) which serve the new neighborhoods. Incremental housing growth will also save open land and areas better suited for agricultural or other use.

As residential development occurs, the City should insure that each new growth area can reasonably flow into the existing community. To encourage walkability, main connections to the City's trail and sidewalk system and to the downtown area as well as to city access points should be required. Infill development should be encouraged to diminish the impact of sprawl and encourage walkability.

In addition, the City should ensure that appropriate recreational opportunities grow as new housing is developed. The number and location of neighborhood parks should keep pace with new construction. As new housing developments are planned, the city should ensure that common "green space" is included in each new neighborhood. Because recreation opportunities are a major influence on a family's decision on where to live, expanded recreation opportunities should be a priority for Vinton.

Recreation goals and the objectives to meet those goals will be discussed in another Chapter (Recreation and Natural Resources). The infrastructure and land use implications of this population target and housing needs assessment will be discussed in Chapters on Infrastructure and Land Use.

Housing Characteristics and Needs

Housing Findings

- ❖ Average household size in 2010 was 2.33. That number is expected to decrease to 2.26 by 2030.
- ❖ A three percent growth rate is equivalent to approximately 142 new homes between 2010 and 2030 or approximately eight new units per year.
- ❖ The number of new homes by 2030 would require 52 acres of land.
- ❖ There were approximately 2,299 housing units in Vinton in 2010. Based on building permit data, since April 1, 2010 there have been 9 new housing units built in the City bringing the total number of houses to approximately 2,308 housing units in Vinton.
- ❖ The City will require approximately 2,441 housing units by 2030.

Envisioning a New Vinton

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Envisioning a New Vinton

Recovery

Following the Flood of 2008, much of the City along the river was damaged. This included multiple residential units and several downtown businesses. However, every resident, business, public service and official was profoundly affected. Despite the severity of the disaster, self-sufficient homeowners and local property owners spent months repairing homes and buildings with help from hundreds of volunteers. Notwithstanding the losses, the community identified the flood as an event that opened doors and brought the community together as never before. The determination to thrive is evident in the Recovery Vision the community identified for its long-term recovery from the disaster.

Community Involvement

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. Therefore, Vinton utilized a town meeting to gather public input for the plan.

This town meeting was an interactive planning session held on May 3, 2011 with 21 residents taking part to identify a future vision for the area. The session involved three small groups identifying and prioritizing positive qualities that need to be maintained, as well as future concerns of the city that need to be addressed. This exercise was held at the beginning of the planning process for two reasons:

- ❖ The critical elements for the future vision are identified early in the process ensuring that appropriate problem identification occurs at the very beginning;
- ❖ Public participation is crucial for creating an effective and appropriate plan. By having a town meeting at the beginning of the process, every resident had an opportunity to direct a future vision for the planning area.

Envisioning a New Vinton

Each member of each small group individually identified his or her positive qualities of the community and future challenges on a 3x5 note card. Then, within each group, all members listed those qualities and concerns on a large sheet of paper (many responses were similar between group members and were condensed into a single quality or concern). At that point, each participant awarded points to prioritize the composite small group list of qualities and concerns using a three point value system. Three points were given to their highest priority; two points to the second highest priority and one point for their third highest priority. Totals were then added up to establish an overall prioritized listing for each small group's qualities and concerns.

The Plan's appendix contains a listing of each small group's identified qualities and concerns. From this data, key themes were established as shown on the following page.

In addition to the town meeting, the City administered a community-wide survey in April and May of 2011. Results of the survey are contained in the Plan's appendix. All told, there were 296 surveys completed – a tremendous response rate.

Envisioning a New Vinton

Articulating a Vision

From comments generated through the town meeting and the community-wide survey, residents came to consensus on several key themes for the future of Vinton:

- ❖ Preserve Vinton's family-friendly quality of life.
- ❖ Preserve Vinton's outdoor activities and recreation opportunities along the scenic Cedar River, in City parks and walking trails.
- ❖ Preserve Vinton's viable downtown with businesses and amenities that draws visitors from outside the City and provides goods and services for residents.
- ❖ Redevelop under-utilized, distressed areas of the City.
- ❖ Prepare and protect citizens from damages due to flooding.

Nearly every goal, objective and strategy in this plan will try to forward the implementation of these key themes.

Envisioning a New Vinton

Sector Goals and Strategies

Developing and articulating a vision is an important first step toward, and lays a foundation for a community's long-term recovery from a disaster. The City of Vinton applied their recovery vision to identify themes, goals, objectives and critical strategies using the following framework for recovery:

- ❖ Goals define scope, direction or intent and intended outcomes.
- ❖ Objectives identify what will be accomplished.
- ❖ Strategies articulate how goals and objectives are achieved and relate to vision.
- ❖ Assets are strengths, qualities or features with potential to create value.
- ❖ Challenges are obstacles that must be overcome to achieve goals.
- ❖ Implementing strategies to accomplish objectives requires Action Steps.

This section provides strategies, policies and action steps for six (6) community sectors:

- ❖ Economic Development
- ❖ Infrastructure, Recreation and Natural Resources
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Land Use
- ❖ Natural Hazards
- ❖ Administration

Economic Development

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Assets, Goals, and Opportunities - 34

Goals, Objectives and Strategies - 36

Economic Development

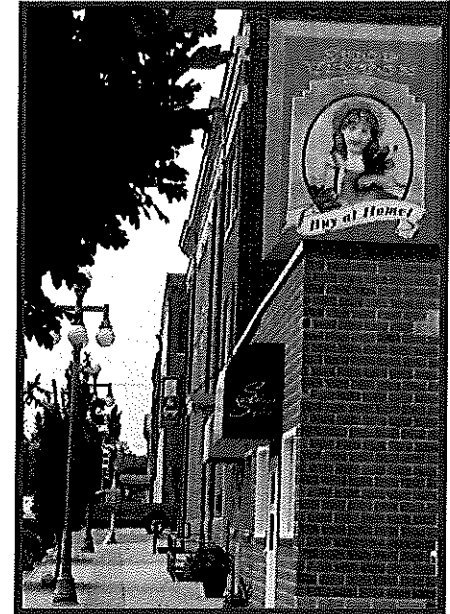
Background

A strong economic development program ensures a healthy community. Following the circulation of money entering and exiting a community can determine if a community's economy is healthy. Ideally a surplus of "new" money is entering the community over the amount of money leaving a community, while the amount spent within the community is constant or increasing. Vinton utilizes the non-profit organization Vinton Unlimited which is a combined economic development group and Chamber of Commerce.

Assets, Goals, and Opportunities

This section of the plan identifies Vinton's current assets and areas of improvement. Vinton Unlimited is an asset to the community with their goal to promote Vinton as a place to live, work, shop and play. One way this has been done is with the mural walk through the central business district. The murals promote shopping locally.

One of the largest assets to Vinton in terms of economic development is the revitalized downtown district that hosts numerous small businesses and opportunities. Vinton's central business district is one of the better downtown's in the region, with full storefronts and bustling activity. One way to bring more attention to this asset is to tie other areas of commerce in the City with the downtown. These areas for improvement include the 4th street corridor from downtown to Highway 218. Revitalizing the 4th street corridor would attract Highway 218 traffic that otherwise would not be drawn to the downtown district. Currently the City has tax abatements in place for the 218 corridor and the industrial park to promote economic development. It is recommended that the 4th street corridor also be placed under such abatement to promote redevelopment.



Economic Development

[insert map of Vinton's TIF and Tax abatement areas]

Economic Development

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Residents identified business development as vital to the community's long-term future. They emphasized a need to promote Vinton's downtown vitality, business growth and more local shopping choices. To address these needs, community members and business owners identified goals and supporting objectives to promote business development.

Goals

- ❖ Increase City's tax base and retail sales tax receipts.
- ❖ Promote a variety of businesses and employers in Vinton.
- ❖ Promote and maintain the Central Business District vitality.
- ❖ Redevelop Highway 218 business corridor.
- ❖ Redevelop 4th Street business corridor.

Objectives

- ❖ Attract and retain a diverse portfolio of businesses and employers.
- ❖ Provide space and infrastructure for business expansion and location.
- ❖ Attract customers from beyond Vinton.
- ❖ Connect Highway 218 business corridor with the Central Business District via 4th Street Corridor redevelopment.
- ❖ Connect Highway 218 business corridor with the Industrial Park.

Economic Development

Objectives (continued)

- ❖ Ensure housing opportunities are available for prospective business and industry.
- ❖ Assist Braille School Campus with economic development initiatives.
- ❖ Support Vinton Airport's role in boosting the City's economic development potential.
- ❖ Enhance industrial park as a place to locate new business and industry and meet the needs of existing industries.
- ❖ Support the railroad's role in boosting the City's economic development potential.
- ❖ Provide a variety of educational opportunities to all residents to prepare for career and college readiness.

Strategies

- ❖ Collaborate with Vinton Unlimited and other economic development organizations to identify, attract and retain businesses that would diversify the commerce of Vinton.
- ❖ Provide incentives to attract and retain a diverse range of employers (i.e. continued tax abatement and TIF programs).
- ❖ Partner with Vinton Shellsburg schools, Kirkwood Community College and other educational providers to enhance educational opportunities for area residents.
- ❖ Establish TIF and tax abatement district along the 4th Street Redevelopment Corridor.
- ❖ Promote and support the East Central Iowa Council of Governments Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) for business and industry.

Infrastructure, Recreation, And Natural Resources

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Infrastructure, Recreation, and Natural Resources

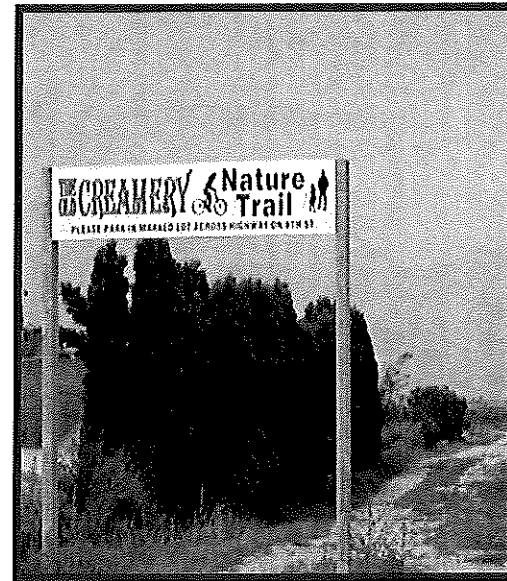
Background

A community's infrastructure includes its physical assets, both natural and human built. Natural infrastructure provides services and recreational opportunities. Wetlands, for example, absorb and filter storm water. Rivers and woodlands provide boating and hiking opportunities. Human built infrastructure includes roads, sewer and water systems and public facilities such as a fire station and City Hall.

Natural disasters often severely impact infrastructure. The Flood of 2008 severely damaged key public buildings, disrupting City government and public safety functions.

Natural Environment

The Cedar River floodplain poses threats, but also has potential to provide flood mitigation, such as water infiltration, as well as offer outdoor recreation opportunities. Flooding has raised awareness about the importance of this natural infrastructure. The City has identified a need to improve connections to the river and offer residents a multitude of recreational opportunities such as expanded parks and walking trails.



Infrastructure, Recreation, and Natural Resources

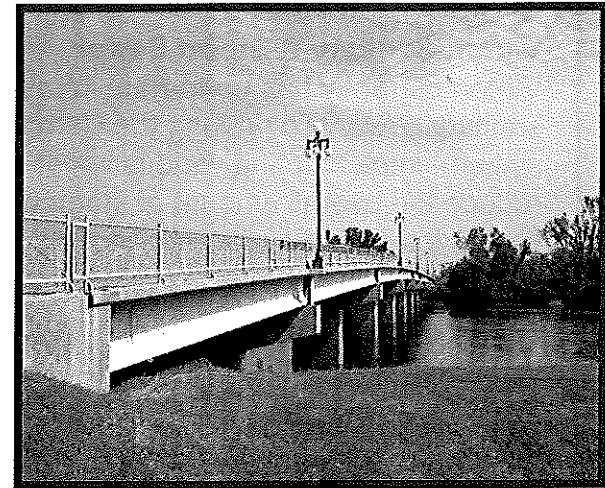
Community Infrastructure

This section of the Plan presents an inventory and evaluation of the City's infrastructure facilities. The primary infrastructure for Vinton includes the systems for water distribution, sanitary sewer, storm sewer collection, and transportation. This Plan should not be construed to replace the day-to-day maintenance and operation of the City's infrastructure. It is intended to provide a framework for the future growth of the overall system.

As mentioned throughout the plan, the City should encourage the preservation of viable existing infrastructure and promote the economical extension of new infrastructure and services through compact, contiguous, infill development. It is wise to conserve limited public funds by promoting efficient growth patterns. A community benefits from compact growth. When development occurs incrementally, contiguous to the edge of existing development, the town grows in a unified way.

A compact urban form helps accomplish this goal by using existing public facilities and infrastructure. For example, new developments should utilize existing water and sewer lines with short incremental extensions of public utilities. This reduces development costs and long-term maintenance and capital expenses.

To implement specific goals in this section of the plan, the City should not only rely on municipal funds, but utilize the development tools listed in the plan to fund infrastructure, re-development and economic development projects.



Infrastructure, Recreation, and Natural Resources

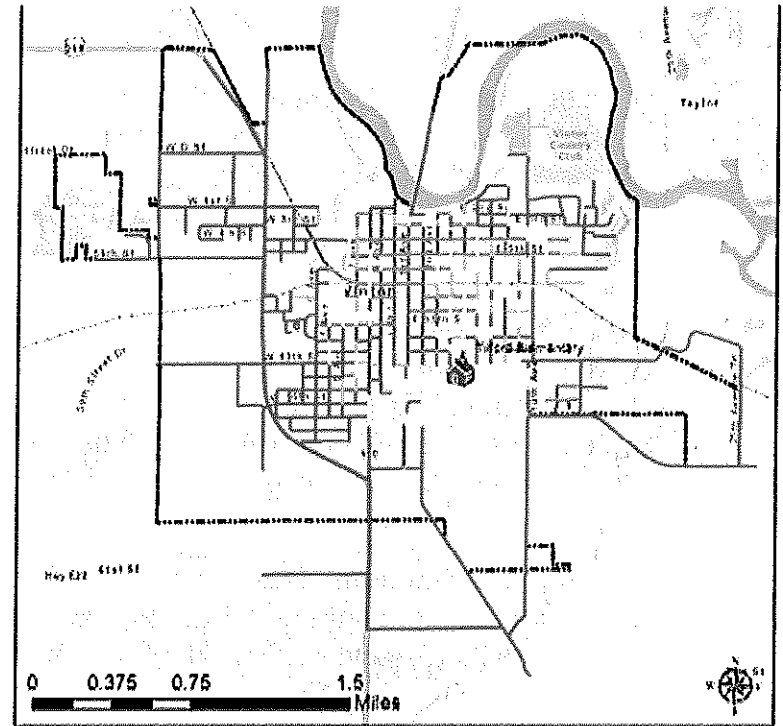
Only Tilford?
no MS or HS?

Sidewalks

The state of sidewalks in Vinton was brought up by residents in the community-wide survey as a concern. Sidewalks play an important role in a community by allowing an active transportation option. The state of Iowa has a program called Safe Routes to School. This program had individuals equipped with GPS evaluate the sidewalks throughout Vinton. This study can be seen in the adjacent map. Areas of interest from residents included the area along and west of highway 218 with growing housing needs and lack of sidewalks. Some of these areas are being addressed with the proposed trail system. The other areas could be addressed with Safe Routes to School funding.

Water, Sanitary & Storm Sewer

Vinton currently has up-to-date infrastructure for water and sanitary sewer. To prolong the life and use of the storm water system, implementing various water mitigation efforts can reduce the overall amount of storm water in the sewers. Examples of these practices include rain barrels, rain gardens, and bio-swells.



Legend
School City Boundary Both Sides One Side Incomplete None

Map Source: Safe Routes to School, <http://www.i-walk.org/pdf/Vinton.pdf>

Rain gardens can be utilized both by residents and the city to temporarily collect storm water before natural infiltration. On streets without curbs, or with curb cuts, rain gardens can be strategically placed to collect storm water. Sites like these are much more financially feasible than pavement correction in areas where water otherwise sits on the road. With a curb cut water can be diverted to a depressed area for infiltration.

Infrastructure, Recreation, and Natural Resources

Transportation

Currently, Vinton residents utilize sidewalks, bike trails, golf carts, vehicles, and public transportation. For public transportation options the City uses the Benton County Transportation System and a car service to and from the airport. Other transportation options the city does not have include a city bus system and taxis. These options appear to have no market in Vinton large enough to support business. The city does have ordinances that allow for a taxi service to be established.

As the City's main public transportation option, the Benton County Transportation system provides rides as-needed as a handicap-accessible, public transit system throughout Benton County and into adjoining counties. It was expressed during the public meetings for the plan that residents are not fully aware of or fully utilize this service. To address this, the Board of Supervisors should work with Benton County Transportation to determine if other types of services are needed. Additional goals should include identifying these service gaps and determining if extending services would be cost effective.

Another transportation related issue raised by Vinton residents in the community-wide survey was parking issues with downtown. Vinton currently offers various parking options with either on-street parking or the public parking lot on 4th Street. Vinton could look into designating a courthouse specific lot in the adjoining blocks to the Northeast and East. This would provide parking spaces to people parking for court cases, or other courthouse services, and would free more spaces closer to downtown businesses. Another parking option would include changing the public parking lot to a single entrance and redesigning the parking spaces orientation. This would allow more vehicles to utilize the parking lot when needed.

In addition to parking complaints, the largest issue in the community-wide survey was the street conditions in the City. Establishing a Capital Improvements Plan would outline a timeline of street maintenance along with other improvements. With the Capital Improvement Plan as a public document this would help show residents when certain roads are scheduled for improvement, and ease the concern about Vinton streets.

Infrastructure, Recreation, and Natural Resources

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Based on input gathered during the planning process, the following goals and objectives were developed.

Goals

- ❖ Promote preservation, restoration, and protection of agricultural, natural resources, open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas.
- ❖ Promote multi-modal transportation options for residents of Vinton that are safe, efficient and economical.
- ❖ Improve and maintain infrastructure within city limits.

Objectives

- ❖ Encourage the restoration and preservation of natural resources, open space and environmentally sensitive land.
- ❖ Avoid development of and damage to resources and land that is fragile, scarce, or otherwise deemed inappropriate for development.
- ❖ Maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel, and improve air quality with a variety of transportation options.
- ❖ Provide safe connections to regional trails and activity centers where appropriate.
- ❖ Upgrade well traveled roads to become complete streets with sidewalks, storm sewer and appropriate infrastructure.
- ❖ Promote mixed-use development, especially downtown, with ordinances that promote 2nd story residential dwellings.

Infrastructure, Recreation, and Natural Resources

Strategies

- ❖ Identify and prioritize areas for protection, restoration, or preservation, and seek funding to enable such actions.
- ❖ Create a Capital Improvements Plan for a detailed schedule of street system projects and maintenance.
- ❖ Create a Storm Water Management plan to enhance storm water management in Vinton.
- ❖ Establish storm water mitigation efforts throughout the community such as rain barrels, rain gardens, bio-swells, etc.
- ❖ Create a program to offer rain barrels to Vinton residents.
- ❖ Work with Benton County to increase access to mass-transit within Vinton.
- ❖ Apply for Safe Routes to School grants to fund sidewalk improvement/construction



Housing

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Housing

Housing

Background

After the 2008 flood, Vinton residents rolled up their sleeves and began making needed repairs to their homes and the community. In July of 2011 Vinton again demonstrated their resilience after straight-line winds of 80 to 130 miles per hour damaged numerous homes and leveled about half of the city's trees.

The damage from the trees and debris to the housing can still be witnessed. In a windshield land use survey completed in September 2011, a large number of homes in Vinton seemed to need some level of rehabilitation and/or repair. To preserve the community's appearance and character the City should work with residents to promote rehabilitation of these housing units to foster neighborhood pride. This can be done through programs like the Community Development Block Grant and through other various state and federal resources.

Establishing neighborhood pride promotes ownership of the area, and this ownership provides benefits to both residents and the City. When a neighbor improves their housing appearance it increases the value not only of their home, but of surrounding homes. This improvement/repair to the appearance can motivate surrounding residents to start repairs. Residents living in a well-maintained neighborhood tend to have a greater affiliation or ownership of the area, which keeps them motivated to keep up repairs, maintenance and appearance.

The need for affordable housing for seniors and others is a critical issue as the City moves forward with its long-term recovery and comprehensive planning. It will be important to connect with state and regional resources to meet special housing needs.

Because of the need for a variety of housing types, Vinton should encourage housing diversity through a broad spectrum of affordability and categories. This includes senior housing, 2nd floor residential units downtown, and both single and multi-family units.

Housing

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goals

- ❖ Encourage diversity in the types of housing available to all Vinton residents.
- ❖ Support the rehabilitation of existing housing.
- ❖ Support the revitalization of Vinton's neighborhoods.
- ❖ Promote new residential development within Vinton.

Objectives

- ❖ Establish and encourage in-fill development areas where appropriate.
- ❖ Utilize incremental design (compact and contiguous growth), where appropriate, when approving new development that focuses on the reuse of existing sites and infrastructure.
- ❖ Utilize State and regional resources to meet Vinton's housing needs.
- ❖ Promote upkeep, self-reliance and cohesiveness in Vinton neighborhoods.
- ❖ Encourage affordable independent and dependant senior housing options.
- ❖ Promote mixed-use development, especially downtown, with ordinances that promote 2nd story residential dwellings.

Housing

Strategies

- ❖ Apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) housing rehab funds.
- ❖ Review zoning ordinance to allow standards promoting housing diversity.
- ❖ Market development potential of unused 2nd story floors downtown as residential units.
- ❖ Encourage neighborhood associations in which residents can become better acquainted, resolve neighborhood issues, open up communications with the City and build a better sense of community.
- ❖ Promote and support the East Central Iowa Housing Trust Fund.

Land Use

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Land Use

Background

This chapter of the Plan is focused on land use, both existing and future, within and around the City of Vinton. The intent is to provide a framework to guide and direct new development in the planning area. This should ensure that future development is consistent with the goals of the plan and paced in such a way as to not outstrip the City's ability to provide proper services.

The Land Use Plan is divided into two sections. The first describes useful tools for managing land use; the second section describes future policy directions in land use including the official Vinton Future Land Use Map and discussion about the City's redevelopment opportunities.

Land Use Tools

Zoning and subdivision ordinances are two common regulatory land use tools for cities and counties to enforce community standards. Ordinances of this nature enable the implementation and enforcement of the policies and provisions contained in a comprehensive plan.

In any growing region, development pressures are usually the strongest at the edge of an already developed area. When allowed to go unregulated, this development pressure often causes undesirable results. The City, however, can utilize this plan to logically identify where appropriate growth areas should be planned for and use zoning and subdivision controls to guarantee the sound development of the City. The Land Use Chapter of the Vinton Plan will serve as a guide for future revisions of the City's development tools.

Land Use

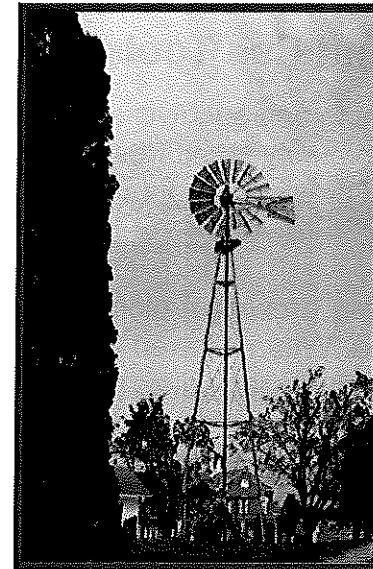
Zoning Ordinance

Zoning is the most important tool to implement a comprehensive plan. This method works by regulating various aspects of how land may be used. Zoning's name is derived from dividing areas of a city into zones, or districts. Certain uses of land are permitted in each zone according to specific standards set by the planning and zoning commission and adopted by the City Council.

Vinton has a zoning ordinance currently in place. After the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, the zoning ordinance should be thoroughly reviewed and updated annually to ensure the standards are working in conjunction with the goals and objectives contained in this Plan.

Specific issues the City should address in the zoning ordinance update include:

- ❖ Housing diversity options
- ❖ Compact, contiguous subdivision design requirements
- ❖ Low impact development standards
- ❖ Renewable energy options and standards
- ❖ Review zoning map to ensure consistency with the plan



Land Use

Subdivision Ordinance

A subdivision ordinance is a tool the City uses to enforce standards so that land subdivision occurs in a beneficial manner. The platting requirements in the Vinton subdivision ordinance specify the criteria for subdividing land throughout the community. Simply put, subdivision is a process in which land is legally described and is converted into building 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 street lighting. The subdivision ordinance is a very effective tool for enforcing growth policies.

The subdivision ordinance is also the tool cities use to require open space and park dedications in new developments. By including the requirement to devote open space in the ordinance, developers must include open space in any plans for new development. The open space could then be maintained by the neighborhood or homeowner association or the City.

Vinton should update its subdivision ordinance to be consistent with the goals and objectives contained in this Plan. Specific issues the City should address in the subdivision ordinance update include:

- ❖ Open space and park dedication requirements
- ❖ Compact, contiguous subdivision design requirements
- ❖ Requirements for sidewalks and pedestrian or bike trails
- ❖ Revise City cul-de-sac policies
- ❖ Language to protect existing mature trees and unique natural features
- ❖ Requirements addressing stormwater run-off

Land Use

Additional Planning Tools

In addition to the zoning and subdivision ordinances, the City has other options when planning for future growth. A fringe-area agreement with the county is another very important tool a city can use to coordinate growth management policies and manage future development (see the City County Strategic Growth Plan Chapter for Vinton's fringe-area agreement with Benton County). In addition, a growing city such as Vinton should have annexation policies in place to facilitate the annexation process when the need arises. The following describe fringe-area agreements and annexation policies.

Annexation

Cities generally annex land to provide areas for growth, or for a particular public benefit such as managing land development around the city. For example, the city may desire to annex land at major entrances into the community to manage and/or influence the type of land uses that may develop there. Annexation may also occur if a municipality desires to prepare the area for development. The annexation process generally occurs when it is in the public interest to maintain local management over a parcel or tract of land. Annexation may be achieved voluntarily or involuntarily (with or without the explicit consent or request of the land owner).

Limited annexation for the City of Vinton may be needed during the life of this plan due to projected growth and the desire to move away from flood prone land. When annexation becomes necessary, a comprehensive study should be completed. The City must be able to pay for the services required by the residents in the new territory. Because residential land does not necessarily "pay for itself," meaning the money received through property taxes may not be enough to pay for the services required, the fiscal context of annexation should be carefully examined. Services may include sewer, water, snow removal, road maintenance, police, and fire protection, garbage removal, and other costs generally associated with city services.

Land Use

The benefits of properly planned annexation include coherence and efficiency in the development of a community. Through orderly planned annexation, growth would then be encouraged in areas where services could be most readily extended, therefore minimizing costs.

The following are general policies of Vinton with respect to annexation. However, as mentioned throughout the Plan, the City should use every opportunity to promote infill growth to limit the impact on sprawling development.

- ❖ To gather proper public input and seek the use of voluntary annexations.

- ❖ To annex areas of land within the designated Future Growth Areas.

- ❖ To annex areas where it is clearly desirable to square out boundaries for the purpose of greater efficiency or economy in providing municipal services.

- ❖ To annex areas where annexation is determined to be in the best interest of the City and the owners of the annexed property.

- ❖ To consider topography, water and drainage conditions, current land use, cost to City, and other features such as prime agricultural land when annexation is proposed.

Land Use

Future Directions in Land Use

This section of the Comprehensive Plan will focus on the land use characteristics needed to support the projected population increase through the year 2030. In addition, it will estimate the community's probable housing demand and land requirements during the planning period.

For Vinton to accommodate growth successfully, it must determine the character of that growth and assure that it enhances rather than alters the sense of the community. In addition, the City must 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 possible changes in trends.

Future growth in Vinton should enhance walkability by focusing development, wherever possible, within the existing City boundaries. **Infill development should be the primary development pattern of the City of Vinton.** This development pattern strengthens communities and neighborhoods. Instead of establishing a new neighborhood on a far edge of the city, thereby separating it from the existing community, infill development would connect the new with the existing. In addition, it also reduces capital expenses by utilizing existing infrastructure. Also, by developing within the existing City limits, land better suited for agricultural use surrounding the City is protected.

As mentioned, a community benefits from compact growth. When development occurs incrementally, contiguous to existing development, a town grows in a unified way. This method of incremental growth reduces costs associated with public infrastructure extensions (sewer, water, transportation), and allows for the efficient movement of pedestrians and emergency vehicles.

Land Use

Land Use Projections

Past trends in land development rates provide guidance in determining how much land will be needed to accommodate future growth in Vinton (see the following table). Projecting population, housing, and development trends of the last twenty years to the next would suggest 52 acres of additional residential land would be needed. This additional land would accommodate the community's anticipated housing needs up to the year 2030. Based on existing platted/developable land within the City, the vast majority of new housing development will fit within the existing City limits.

Commercial and industrial land needs are more difficult to project. If the City aggressively pursues commercial or industrial development, possible projections could be skewed. Commercial and industrial development supplies cities with the resources necessary to provide services to the city's 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 in the Redevelopment Opportunities section of this Chapter, there are approximately 15 undeveloped acres appropriate for commercial use within the City as well as 25 acres that could be redeveloped for industrial uses. That means, the City should plan for an additional 40 acres of land for future commercial and industrial uses as a realistic benchmark.

For future recreation and open space needs, the Vinton Plan projects the City's future population at approximately 5,577 residents in 2030. This represents about 142 additional housing units during the planning period. Based on a park dedication standard of 0.05 acres per unit, future growth will require the dedication of over seven additional acres of park and recreational space in the next twenty years.

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 10 acres of land to be used for streets and other utilities in future developments.

Land Use

Projected Year 2030 Additional Land Use Needs, City of Vinton

| Land Use | Projected Additional Needs (Acres) |
|---|---|
| Residential | 47 |
| Commercial | 15 |
| Industrial | 25 |
| Park/natural areas and open space | 7 |
| Projected rights-of-way for streets and other utilities | 9 |
| Total Land Needs | 103 acres |

Source: East Central Iowa Council of Governments

The above table displays the projected land use needs for Vinton for the next twenty years. The total suggests 103 acres of additional land will be needed to support the projected population increase. As of 2011, there is approximately 80 developable acres within the City limits as well as 25 acres of land that could be redeveloped within the City limits. It is clear that there is a substantial amount of land available within the City limits to support projected growth through the year 2030. Every attempt should be made to focus new development within the existing City limits during the planning period.

However, due to market conditions, if a development is proposed outside of the City's boundaries, it should only occur if directed into the Future Growth Area as shown on the Future Land Use Map, using compact, contiguous development patterns. This approach will help to ensure cost-effective, efficient development that benefits the entire region.

Land Use

Future Growth Areas

The future growth area for the City of Vinton is designated on the Future Land Use Map. This area should be used as the starting point for planning during the fringe-area agreement process with Benton County. This corridor includes the likely growth area of the City during and after the life of this plan. It also defines the geographical limit of government-supplied public facilities and services. It can be generally described as where future development around the City should be directed.

It is likely that the City will not need to utilize the future growth areas to accommodate appropriate future development during the life of this Plan – there is available land within the City’s boundary to support new growth. However, any land to be annexed for future growth should be located within the City’s Future Growth corridor, as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

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

In addition, the City should create a development team, made up of public officials and private citizens, to address future growth concerns should a major influx of new development occur within the community. This team should partner with the state and private industry and be ready to act when a substantial new development is willing to build in Vinton. Duties of this team might include long-range planning, marketing the City’s shovel ready projects and ensuring an appropriate amount of land is available for future development.

Land Use

Redevelopment Opportunities

A land use survey was completed for the City of Vinton during the planning process. During this survey, it was established that there were approximately 47 properties that were vacant and potentially developable within the City limits. The vast majority of empty lots in the community were zoned residential. That is nearly 15 developable acres for future infill residential growth. Also, there are three areas within the city limits that are prime future residential areas that amount to approximately 50 developable acres.

There were potentially 15 undeveloped acres in the industrial park. In addition, there are approximately 25 acres of under-utilized properties that should be redeveloped as new commercial. Under-utilized properties include vacant, run-down or property or buildings that have gone into disrepair. Redevelopment opportunities for the City are shown on the Future Land Use Map and include the redevelopment corridors along Highway 218 and 4th Street.

Currently, there are approximately 105 acres in the City that has the potential for development or redevelopment.

Land Use

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Based on input gathered during the planning process, the following goals, objectives and strategies were developed for the appropriate development of Vinton.

Goals

- ❖ Promote an “Infill-First” development strategy, but not to the exclusion of new subdivision growth.
- ❖ Develop Vinton consistent with the community’s charm, architectural style, and physical character .
- ❖ Maintain Vinton’s quality of life.
- ❖ Ensure future development and redevelopment enhances Vinton’s character.
- ❖ Protect and preserve the natural areas of the community, surrounding agricultural land and environmentally sensitive areas.

Objectives

- ❖ Promote backyard and community gardens that fit sensibly within the urban site.
- ❖ Avoid development of inappropriate sites and damage to or loss of fragile and scarce environmental resources.
- ❖ Continue to enhance the vitality of the Central Business District.
- ❖ Utilize incremental design (compact and contiguous growth), where appropriate, when approving new development that focuses on the reuse of existing sites and infrastructure.
- ❖ Conserve natural resources by reducing waste and pollution through efficient use of land, energy, water, air, and materials.

Land Use

Strategies

- ❖ City ordinances should not inhibit reasonable urban agricultural activities.
- ❖ Seek funding to enable protection and preservation of natural areas in the community.
- ❖ Establish sustainable development regulations within the City's zoning and subdivision ordinance including infill development policies, efficient transportation patterns, mixed-use developments, green building practices and walkability standards.
- ❖ Redevelopment opportunity should be prioritized by the property's location to infrastructure, potential to enhance Vinton's character and the creation of a viable contiguous, mixed-use development.

Land Use

[insert the following maps: current land use; future land use; flood plain/development constraints]

Natural Hazards

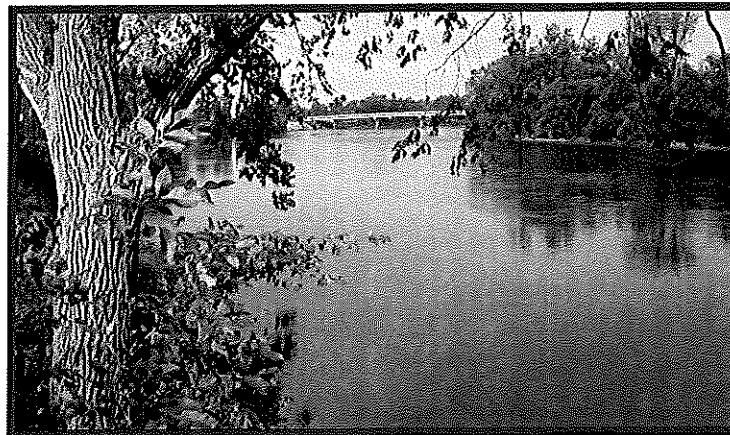
Natural Hazards

Natural Hazards

NATURAL HAZARDS

In the past few years, Vinton has witnessed the damage natural hazards can unleash on a community whether it's flooding or straight-line winds. To reduce the impact of these hazards, and other natural hazards, cities should plan. Typically, plans of this nature are local hazard mitigation plans. Vinton's hazard mitigation plan will be superseded by the multi-jurisdictional plan that is currently being completed at the county level. Upon completion of this multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan the city should work towards the established goals and integrate features of the plan into this comprehensive plan.

[Will utilize goals from the city's existing hazard mitigation plan as well as from the future multi-jurisdictional plan]



Administration

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Administration

Background

Once the plan has been adopted, the City 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 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 City with the flexibility to ensure each development fits with the overall vision of the community.

The goals, objectives and strategies on the following pages reflect the day-to-day administration of the City. The planning process should be an ongoing endeavor. The success of this plan will require the support of City residents as well as the City Council. Cooperation from the public and private sectors will allow implementation of the goals and objectives that will provide long-term benefits to the entire City.



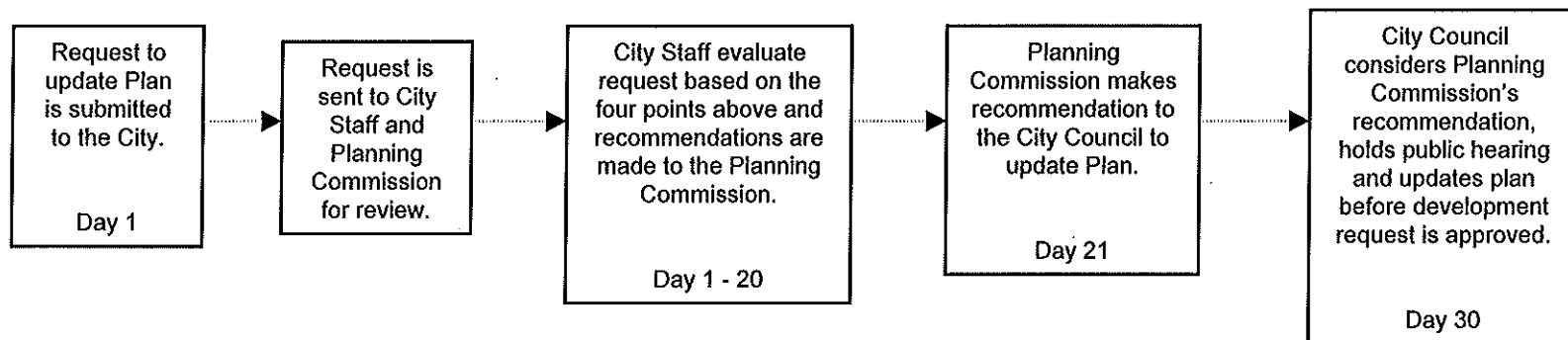
Administration

Development Review

Since the plan should be used as a guide for future growth, some developments will inevitably differ from the vision of the plan. In such cases, the plan may need to be updated. When reviewing all development proposals, the criteria for evaluation, is as follows:

- ❖ Consider Iowa's smart planning principles
- ❖ Consider overall City goals
- ❖ Consider general City objectives and strategies
- ❖ Plan Maps

Every attempt shall be made to satisfy the above criteria. However, if a development proposal cannot satisfy all of the criteria, yet is still deemed worthy to benefit the City, the Plan will need to be amended before the development proposal is approved. Because a request to amend the plan will likely occur during the development proposal review process, both actions may occur simultaneously. The City should establish a fee schedule for reviewing Plan Update Requests. The following is the Plan update process:



Administration

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Based on input gathered during the planning process, the following goals, objectives and strategies were developed for the administration of the City.

Goals

- ❖ Promote collaboration between all private and public parties during planning and regulation creation.
- ❖ Promote transparency, efficiency and consistent outcomes in all planning endeavors.
- ❖ Encourage and utilize public participation during the creation or revision of planning regulations.
- ❖ Provide adequate government facilities for the community.
- ❖ Increase joint planning and decision-making with other municipalities or government entities.
- ❖ Promote clean and renewable energy use and increased energy efficiency.

Objectives

- ❖ Facilitate an environment that allows cooperative work among governmental, community and individual stakeholders during the planning and regulation process.
- ❖ City policies shall encourage the equitable distribution of benefits and costs among its residents.
- ❖ Vinton officials shall conduct business with the utmost degree of transparency possible, allowing for comprehensive public understanding of municipal operations.
- ❖ Plan for the projected needs of the community and provide governmental facilities to meet these needs.
- ❖ Develop, maintain, and promote inter-governmental collaboration for planning efforts.

Administration

Strategies

- ❖ Provide adequately advance notification to stakeholders regarding planning and regulation creation.
- ❖ Seek additional input and collaboration with the local school districts, Benton Development Group, Vinton Unlimited, as well as townships surrounding the city.
- ❖ Collaborate with Benton County regarding the City's future growth within the two-mile fringe area.
- ❖ Engage in benefit-cost analysis when appropriate weighing the full range of costs and benefits for all segments of the population.
- ❖ Document the public participation during city and public interactions and make these documents, along with other planning documents available electronically and/or hardcopies.
- ❖ Establish a capital improvements plan for financing and developing projected governmental facilities.
- ❖ Utilize proven green building practices in all future government facilities, where appropriate.
- ❖ Promote residential installation and use of alternative energy.

Implementation

Implementation

Implementation

Responsibility for adopting and implementing recovery strategies, initiatives and future planning initiatives remains with the community guided by its civic and elected leadership. Generally the following principles guide implementation priorities:

- ❖ Focus on strategies, initiatives and projects that will have the most impact on the community when completed.
- ❖ Move forward on strategies, initiatives and projects that can be completed quickly, have significant public support or have available funding. Completion of these initiatives or projects creates significant visibility for recovery and helps solidify community and political support for continued recovery activities.

It is important to note 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, such as the zoning and subdivision ordinances. While adoption of this plan does not commit the City to any specific recommendations, it should commit the City to actions that are consistent with the policy guidelines and action steps contained in the plan.

This section presents an implementation schedule for the recommendations, summarizing the actions proposed by the plan. Each action is listed generally in the order presented in the plan. The action is then given a specific time frame for implementation. Each dot is representative of a completion date. The schedule does not list ongoing policies or day-to-day actions the City should continuously undertake (i.e. maintenance of the City's street system).

In this way, the schedule can be used to monitor the progress of the plan. This is an important role of the update process that will be necessary to keep this document dynamic and up-to-date.

Implementation

| Plan Administration Sector | | | | | | |
|--|---------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--|
| Action | Ongoing | Within 5 years | Within 10 years | Within 20 years | Funding Options | Leadership / Action Coordinator |
| City Council and P&Z to meet annually to review plan goals and policies. | ❖ | | | | General Funds Zoning Fees | City Council Planning & Zoning Commission |
| Plan for 2,441 housing units. | | | | ❖ | | City Council Planning & Zoning Commission |
| Plan for a population of 5,577. | | | | ❖ | | City Council Planning & Zoning Commission |

Implementation

| Economic Development Sector | | | | | | |
|--|---------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|--|
| Action | Ongoing | Within 5 years | Within 10 years | Within 20 years | Funding Options | Leadership / Action Coordinator |
| Enhance highway 218 & 4 th street business corridors through space and infrastructure Improvements. | | | ❖ | | Developers G.O. Bonds Grants Donations | City Council City Engineer Vinton Unlimited |
| Market Vinton and available business opportunities to the region. | ❖ | | | | General Funds Local Business | Vinton Unlimited City Council |
| Strengthen Vinton Unlimited. | | ❖ | | | General Funds Local Business | Vinton Unlimited Business Leaders City Council |

Implementation

| Natural Environment and Infrastructure Sector | | | | | | |
|---|---------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|---|
| Action | Ongoing | Within 5 years | Within 10 years | Within 20 years | Funding Options | Leadership / Action Coordinator |
| Promote walkability of Vinton with expanded sidewalk & trail options. | ❖ | | | | Developers G.O. Bonds Grants Donations | City Council City Engineer Planning & Zoning Commission |
| Utilize proven green building practices in all future government facilities | ❖ | | | | Grants G.O. Bonds | City Council City Engineer |
| Implement the master trail plan. | | | | ❖ | General Funds Grants TIF | City Engineer Parks & Rec. Board City Council |
| Create a low-impact development ordinance including stormwater retention, bioswales, etc. | | | ❖ | | General Funds | City Council City Engineer Planning & Zoning Commission |

Implementation

| Natural Environment and Infrastructure Sector | | | | | | |
|---|---------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Action | Ongoing | Within 5 years | Within 10 years | Within 20 years | Funding Options | Leadership / Action Coordinator |
| Create a Capital Improvements Plan for a detailed schedule of street system projects and maintenance. | | ❖ | | | General Funds | City Council City Engineer Planning & Zoning Commission |
| Create a Storm Water Management plan to establish timelines, practices, and community programs for stormwater management. | | | ❖ | | General Funds | City Council City Engineer Planning & Zoning Commission |
| Apply for Safe Routes to School grants for construction and improvement of sidewalks. | | ❖ | | | Safe Route to School Grant | VSCD Board City Council |
| Construct a series of rain gardens to ease storm-water run-off. Educate public on rain gardens effects and benefits. | | | | ❖ | General Funds Grants TIF | City Engineer Parks & Rec. Board City Council |

Implementation

| Housing Sector | | | | | | |
|--|---------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--|
| Action | Ongoing | Within 5 years | Within 10 years | Within 20 years | Funding Options | Leadership / Action Coordinator |
| Establish and promote programs for the rehabilitation of housing units. | | | ❖ | | Grants-CDBG General Funds | City Council Planning & Zoning Commission |
| Update zoning ordinance to ensure regulations allow housing diversity. | | ❖ | | | General Funds | Planning & Zoning Commission |
| Promote senior housing oriented development with density, or other development bonuses in zoning code. | | ❖ | | | General Funds | Planning & Zoning Commission |

Implementation

| Land Use Sector | | | | | | |
|--|---------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| Action | Ongoing | Within 5 years | Within 10 years | Within 20 years | Funding Options | Leadership / Action Coordinator |
| Update zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure consistency with the new comprehensive plan. | | ❖ | | | General Funds | Planning & Zoning Commission |
| Encourage infill development as primary development strategy. | ❖ | | | | Developers | |
| After developable land within the existing city limits has been exhausted, focus new growth in the Future Growth Area. | | | | ❖ | | City Council Planning & Zoning Commission |
| Establish a redevelopment committee to identify problems & solutions, and create a plan for the 218 and 4 th St business corridors. | | | ❖ | | General Funds | City Council Planning & Zoning Commission |

Implementation

| Natural Hazard Sector | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Action | Ongoing | Within 6 years | Within 10 years | Within 20 years | Funding Options | Leadership / Action Coordinator |
| | ❖ | | | | | |
| | ❖ | | | | | |
| | ❖ | | | | | |
| | ❖ | | | | | |
| | ❖ | | | | | |
| | ❖ | | | | | |

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Plan Appendix

Glossary of Terms

Affordable Housing: Housing is considered affordable when a household pays less than 30 percent of its gross monthly income for housing cost, including utilities.

Aesthetic: The perception of elements in the natural or created environment that are pleasing to the eye.

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 City's 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.

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Density: The number of housing units or structures allowed per unit of land. In Vinton, current allowable density is approximately three housing units per acre.

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 the City. The corridors, as shown on the Future Land Use Map, can be generally described as where development outside of the 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.

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.

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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 Vinton and Benton County might create an intergovernmental 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*

Mixed-Use District: The development of a tract of land with a variety of complementary and integrated uses in a compact urban form. Mixed use within Vinton could include a combination of properly planned single- and multi-family residential and light, neighborhood commercial uses to ensure compatibility between each use.

Multi-modal Transportation: A term for the variety of transportation types, including motor vehicles, mass-transit, and pedestrian oriented (i.e. walking and bicycling).

Plan Appendix

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.

Neighborhood Commercial: Small-scale business activity that is limited in size and operation to insure compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods and uses. It is generally within walking distance to local residential neighborhoods.

Objective: Individual accomplishments which, taken together, will enable the city 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 Vinton 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: The area specifically shown on the Future Land Use Map contained in this plan. It can be generally described as all the land within the corporate boundaries of Vinton, as well as all the land within two miles surrounding the community. This is the area that directly influences the character, services and facilities of the City of Vinton. This area may be amended from time to time as the city physically grows.

Planning Period: The period for which the projections and the goals and objectives of this plan were made (from the year 2012 to 2030).

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, Benton, Jones, Benton, and Washington, which are served by the planning agency East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG).

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

Setback: The distance between the permitted structure and the lot line. In Vinton, the setback is regulated for the front, rear and side yards of principal and accessory uses.

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 Vinton 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 City 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 the 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.

Plan Appendix

Matrix of Smart Planning Principles and Elements

Location of Planning Principles Within the Plan

| Principles | Plan Page # | Brief Description |
|---|-------------|------------------------|
| Collaboration | | |
| Efficiency, Transparency and Consistency | | |
| Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy | | |
| Occupational Diversity | | Expand on more in plan |
| Revitalization | | |
| Housing Diversity | | |
| Community Character | | |
| Natural Resources and Agricultural Protection | | |
| Sustainable Design | | |
| Transportation Diversity | | |

Plan Appendix – Community Survey

Vinton Community Survey Summary

The following are the results of the community-wide survey that was administered in April & May 2011. Comments to each of the questions can be read in the attached appendix. These results represent 296 household surveys with roughly 6% of respondents in the 20-29 age range, 13% in the 31-40 age range, 9% in the 41-50 cohort, 25% in the 51-60 cohort, and 47% of respondents noted ages of 61+. With almost 75% of respondents aged 51 years or older the responses to the survey don't accurately represent Vinton's age demographics. Since the age spectrum was not equally represented this should be taken into consideration when evaluating the results.

Question #1: Rank the following items in the order of importance you would place upon them for being accomplished by the city. Use a "1" to indicate the most important, a "2" for the second most important, and a "3" for third most important.

Table 1 – Ranked Items of Importance

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | # of Respondents |
|---|-----|----|----|------------------|
| Local street maintenance/improvements | 130 | 57 | 33 | 220 |
| Econ Development | 88 | 47 | 58 | 193 |
| Correct storm water drainage problems | 18 | 50 | 31 | 99 |
| Improving appearance of community | 16 | 29 | 34 | 79 |
| Planning for future growth in appropriate areas | 5 | 32 | 30 | 67 |
| Devl multi-purpose bike and ped trails | 14 | 16 | 24 | 54 |
| Maintaining small town atmosphere | 8 | 20 | 24 | 52 |
| Making river a bigger part of community | 2 | 12 | 19 | 33 |
| Rec. opportunities | 7 | 8 | 15 | 30 |
| Increasing housing opportunities | 2 | 6 | 12 | 20 |
| Extending water/sewer to outlying areas | 1 | 5 | 9 | 15 |

Local street maintenance/improvements is by far the most important issue from Question 1. It received the highest ranking for both number 1 and number 2 issues. Correcting storm drainage problems and economic development each received high remarks and are the other highest ranked issues.

Plan Appendix – Town Hall Meeting

Group 2 - Challenges

- Lack of restaurants – 14 votes
- Lack of jobs – 8 votes
- Aging infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) – 6 votes
- Many of our best and brightest go away for college, don't return – 5 votes
- Lack of downtown parking – 4 votes
- Balance of small community v. growing/changing – 3 votes

Group 2 - Positives

- Large enough to provide many amenities as larger communities on a smaller scale–20 votes
- Viable downtown – 12 votes
- City services (police, fire) – 3 votes
- People are passionate about town – 3 votes

Group 3 – Challenges

- Lack of a complete spectrum of housing – 11 votes
- Declining retail sales tax receipts – 9 votes
- Planning for green space / bike path & funding – 5 votes
- Declining school enrollment – 4 votes
- Small industrial tax base (jobs) – 3 votes
- Street repair / Improvements – 3 votes
- Sewer system repair – 3 votes
- Adequate funding for future needs – 3 votes

Group 3 – Positives

- Excellent schools – 11 votes
- Excellent hospital and healthcare – 8 votes
- Excellent theater (movies/live plays) – 5 votes
- Excellent recreation facilities – 4 votes
- Braille school (Americorps) – 4 votes
- City infrastructure, adequate – 4 votes
- Generally friendly atmosphere – 3 votes

Plan Appendix – Town Hall Meeting

Town Hall Meeting

Town Hall Meeting Summarization

With 21 Vinton residents conversing in 3 groups some common themes arose about the challenges and positives of Vinton. Looking at challenges first the issues of greatest concern include housing development, lack of jobs, and issues with infrastructure. Other notable challenges include the lack of restaurants and the declining retail sales.

Looking at the positives of Vinton the most common theme that arose was that Vinton is able to provide big town amenities within a small town atmosphere. These amenities include the viable downtown, the broad spectrum of stores, the hospital, schools, Palace theatre, and recreational services and opportunities. The small town atmosphere positives included the friendliness of the community and its residents and Vinton's ability to be self-contained. Below are the individual groups responses that received at least 3 votes from within the group.

Group 1 - Challenges

- Jobs – 14 votes
- Housing Development – 4 votes
 - lower cost housing
- Empty Storefronts – 5 votes
 - incentives for building renovation
- Streets/ Infrastructure – 4 votes
 - sidewalks
- Population Growth – 3 votes
 - younger – Parents with families
 - older citizens not engaged
- Restaurants – 3 votes

Group 1 - Positives

- Stores for most needs – 20 votes
- Self-contained (hospital, stores, schools) – 6 votes
- Friendliness of community – 5 votes
- giving spirit
- Positive to be so close to cultural events – 3 votes
 - theatre, sporting events, concerts
- Recreation department – 3 votes
- Good place to raise families – 3 votes
 - all kinds of activities

Plan Appendix

Location of Planning Principles Within the Plan

| Principles | Plan Page # | Brief Description |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Public Participation | 29-30 | |
| Local Characteristics | | |
| Land Use | | |
| Housing | | |
| Infrastructure | | |
| Transportation | | |
| Economic Development | | |
| Agricultural and Natural Resources | | |
| Government Facilities | | |
| Quality of Life | | |
| Natural Hazards | | |
| Joint Planning Efforts | | |
| Implementation | | |

Plan Appendix – Community Survey

Question #2: Rank the following items in the order of least importance you would place upon them for being accomplished by the city. Use a “1” to indicate the least important, a “2” for the second least important, and a “3” for third most important.

Table 2 – Ranked Items of Least Importance

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | # of Respondents |
|---|----|----|----|------------------|
| Making the river a bigger part of community | 69 | 65 | 38 | 172 |
| Devl multi-purpose bike and ped trails | 70 | 42 | 32 | 144 |
| Rec. opportunities | 35 | 35 | 50 | 120 |
| Extending water/sewer to outlying areas | 37 | 41 | 31 | 109 |
| Maintaining small town atmosphere | 29 | 28 | 36 | 93 |
| Increasing housing opportunities | 15 | 25 | 35 | 75 |
| Improving appearance of community | 9 | 16 | 13 | 38 |
| Planning future growth in appropriate areas | 5 | 9 | 19 | 33 |
| Correct storm water drainage problems | 6 | 13 | 8 | 27 |
| Econ Development | 4 | 7 | 6 | 17 |
| Local street maintenance/improvements | 4 | 3 | 4 | 11 |

Making the river a bigger part of the community received overall the most votes for least importance. Individually though the issue of developing a multi-purpose bike and pedestrian trail was ranked least important in excess of making the river a bigger part of the community by 1 vote. Other least important issues include recreation opportunities and extending water/sewer to outlying areas.

Plan Appendix – Community Survey

Question #3: How significant a problem is each of the following?

Table 3 – Significant Issues

| Problem | Very Significant | Significant | Not significant | Number Of Respondents |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Street maintenance | 63% | 30% | 7% | 286 |
| Under-utilized properties (vacant store fronts) | 39% | 47% | 14% | 282 |
| Storm water flooding | 36% | 46% | 18% | 280 |
| General appearance of residential areas | 29% | 50% | 21% | 285 |
| General appearance of commercial areas | 26% | 44% | 29% | 282 |
| General appearance of downtown | 25% | 44% | 32% | 280 |
| Downtown parking | 21% | 40% | 38% | 284 |
| Lack of sidewalks | 18% | 41% | 42% | 280 |
| Cost of housing | 16% | 43% | 41% | 281 |
| Housing availability | 15% | 43% | 42% | 281 |
| Location of new development | 14% | 45% | 40% | 277 |
| Lack of a connecting trail system | 10% | 23% | 67% | 282 |

This question asked respondents to either mark an issue as very significant, significant, or not significant. From Table 3, the most significant issue is street maintenance. Then the next significant issues are under-utilized properties and storm water flooding. The least important item is the lack of a connecting trail system. The number of respondents is generally consistent for each problem.

Plan Appendix – Community Survey

Question #4: In general, how restrictive or permissive do you believe the city's approach is toward controlling growth and development?

Table 4 – Vinton's Level of Permitting Growth and Development

| City's Approach | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------|
| Very Restrictive | 12% |
| Restrictive | 19% |
| Balanced | 30% |
| Permissive | 5% |
| Very Permissive | 2% |
| Don't know/ No Opinion | 32% |

Many respondents either did not have an opinion or did not know how permissive or restrictive the city's approach is toward controlling growth and development. Of the people that did have an opinion, many people believed that the city has a balanced approach to growth. Also, from the people who responded that the city was either restrictive or permissive, they generally viewed the city as restrictive when it comes to growth.

Question #5: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Table 5 – Respondents Views on Statements

| Statement | Agree | Disagree | Not Sure | Number Of Respondents |
|--|-------|----------|----------|-----------------------|
| Vinton should promote industrial development | 82% | 6% | 12% | 283 |
| Vinton population growth should continue | 81% | 4% | 15% | 283 |
| Vinton should promote additional opportunities at the Braille school | 79% | 6% | 15% | 285 |
| Vinton needs more commercial development | 76% | 7% | 17% | 285 |
| Vinton should promote increased residential growth | 64% | 7% | 29% | 276 |
| Vinton should promote the preservation of prime agricultural land | 59% | 13% | 28% | 282 |
| Vinton should improve downtown | 46% | 25% | 29% | 279 |
| Vinton needs more diverse housing options | 42% | 28% | 30% | 282 |

Plan Appendix – Community Survey

With question #5, respondents marked whether they agreed or disagreed with a statement or responded that they were not sure about their view. From Table 5, the three most agreed upon statements are; that Vinton should promote industrial development, that Vinton population growth should continue, and that Vinton should promote additional opportunities at the Braille School. All of the statements were agreed upon more than they were disagreed with. The two statements that were either disagreed with or people were not sure of were that Vinton needs more diverse housing opportunities and that Vinton should improve downtown.

Question #6: Check any of the following housing types the city should encourage to develop in the future.

Table 6 – Ranking Future Housing Types

| Housing Type | Respondents |
|--|-------------|
| Moderately priced single-family homes | 186 |
| Senior citizen housing / assisted living | 152 |
| Starter single-family homes | 136 |
| Town homes / condominiums | 82 |
| Apartments | 78 |
| 2nd story housing downtown | 64 |
| Duplex | 45 |
| High value single-family homes | 29 |

The above question asked respondents to determine which types of housing the city should encourage. Table 6 shows the single most desired housing type for Vinton is moderately priced single-family homes. The next most sought after type is senior citizen housing/assisted living. The two types of housing that are the least wanted are duplexes and high value single-family homes.

Question #7: Please list what type of retail business / commercial types should the city encourage to develop in the future.

This question received 183 responses, which can be read in the survey appendix available at City Hall. The most common answers to this question included restaurants, grocery stores, and clothing / shoe stores.

Plan Appendix

Notes

