

Joetown Village Plan 2014



Photograph courtesy of the Johnson County Historical Society

The Village of Joetown will continue to be a quiet, friendly, rural community. The village will protect agricultural land and manage growth through planned infill development that respects the village's historical character and follows the Johnson County Land Use Plan (2008).



Prepared by the Johnson County Planning and Zoning Department,
Johnson County, Iowa

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Joetown area residents who helped with this planning process. This plan could not have been created without your input.

Introduction

Per the 2008 Johnson County Land Use Plan (Appendix A), the following document, once discussed and revised, as necessary, will be submitted to the Johnson County Board of Supervisors to act as a guide for future development in the Village of Joetown. The Joetown Village Plan is the result of a joint effort between residents and County officials.

The goals of the Village Plan are consistent with the Johnson County Land Use Plan and the Joetown Village Vision Statement. The plan focuses upon maintaining the high quality of life that the current village residents enjoy, while also providing a framework for the future of the community.

Joetown Background Information

Location

The unincorporated village of Joetown is located in the southwest corner of Washington Township, which is located in the southwest corner of Johnson County, Iowa. The nearest population cluster is the village of Frytown, which is located approximately 3.5 miles northeast along Angle Road. Appendix B, Map 1, illustrates Joetown's location in Johnson County.

History¹

Despite being known as Joetown starting in the late 1800s, the village was originally called "Amish" on official Iowa maps and by the U.S. Post Office from 1857 to 1903. During the 1980s, the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) eliminated many small towns, including Joetown, from their official state map. Eventually, after being petitioned by a Joetown resident, the DOT put the village back on the state map in 1997. The origin of the name Joetown is mostly unknown, but the village might be named after Joe Holloway, who lived in Joetown in the 1860s. He owned the local hotel, and stories tell that the stage coach driver would often say, "Here we go to Joe's place."



¹ All historical information provided by the Johnson County Historical Society.

Joe Holloway's hotel, called the Holloway House, was located on Angle Road. During the Gold Rush, many travelers stopped at the Holloway House while passing through Joetown. The hotel was sold in 1888 by Joe's son and eventually taken down in 1890. Two years later, the Wahl House was built in the same location, by Charlie Yoder. It was host to many village events. In 1950, the Wahl House was sold and moved to Kalona, where it still stands today.

Joetown has been home to many different businesses, including a general store, lumberyard, saw mill, blacksmith shop, butcher shop, car garage, and watch repair. In the 1800s, the majority of the area's residents would go to the Joetown Store for supplies (Figure 2). In 1928, when Angle Road was regraded, a walkout basement was built, and the store was expanded. The store was then housed in the walkout basement with a residence on the top floor. Later, the store became home to Ironfoot Pottery and is now a private residence.

Figure 3, below, shows an aerial photograph of Joetown in 1978, since then, the subdivision on the east of the village was divided in the mid-1990s, and subsequently, has slowly been developed.

Demographics

Because Joetown currently does not have an established village boundary, demographic information will be based upon a ½ mile radius around Joetown's central point (on Chambers Avenue SW, just south of its intersection with Heim Strasze SW). The radius is illustrated in Appendix B, Map 2. Additionally, many of the demographic numbers in this plan are based upon the assumption that Joetown's population



Figure 2: Aerial view of Joetown in 1978. Photograph is courtesy of the Johnson County Historical Society.

characteristics are the same as those of Washington Township. The population of the village of Joetown is 117 people.²

Table 1 shows the population age characteristics of both Johnson County and Washington Township. In general, the population of Washington Township is older than that of Johnson County, as the median age of Washington Township's residents is 34.2 years while it is 29.3 for the county. This difference could be due to the high number of University of Iowa students who live in the county. Despite the median citizen being older in Washington Township than in the county, there is a greater percentage of children age 17 and younger in the township (32% of the population) than in the county (20 percent of the population). There is also a greater portion of residents age 75 years or older in Washington Township (6%) than in the county (4%). In

² Population was determined by multiplying the number of households within the ½ mile radius (39) by the average household size in Washington Township (3.0), according to the 2010 Census.

Johnson County, 38% of the population is between ages 18 and 35, while in Washington Township, only 19% is between ages 18 and 35.

Table 1: Johnson County and Washington Township's population characteristics

	Johnson County		Washington Township	
	Population	%	Population	%
Total	130,882		1,200	
17 and younger	25,918	20%	384	32%
18 to 24	28,128	21%	105	9%
25 to 34	22,496	17%	119	10%
35 to 44	14,956	11%	127	11%
45 to 54	15,128	12%	188	16%
55 to 64	13,045	10%	138	12%
65 to 74	6,135	5%	67	6%
75 and older	5,076	4%	72	6%
Median Age	29.3		34.2	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

Household characteristics are shown in Table 2. Most likely due to the large college student population, Johnson County has a smaller percentage of its total households characterized as families (53%) than does Washington Township (82%). In Johnson County, there are almost as many nonfamily households as family households, while in Washington Township, there are few nonfamily households and many family households. Also, the average household is larger in Washington Township (3 persons) than in Johnson County (2.3 persons). Additionally, Washington Township has a greater percentage of households with children under 18 than does the county.

Table 2: Household characteristics for Johnson County and Washington Township

	Johnson County		Washington Township	
	#	%	#	%
Total Households	52,715		371	
Family Households	27,883	53%	303	82%
Nonfamily Households	24,832	47%	68	18%
Households With Children Under 18	13,161	25%	124	33%
Average Household Size	2.3		3	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

Johnson County and Washington Township vary greatly in housing type and quantity, as shown in Table 3. There are 55,967 housing units in the county and 401 of those are located in Washington Township. In both areas, most of the units are around 93% occupied. The two areas differ in the percent of rental housing compared to the percent of owner occupied housing. In Johnson County, approximately 41% of the housing units are rental, and in Washington Township, 24% of housing units are renter occupied. This difference is likely explained by the large number of student rental properties in Iowa City.

Table 3: Housing Unit Characteristics for Johnson County and Washington Township.

	Johnson County		Washington Township	
	#	%	#	%
Housing Units	55,967		401	
Occupied	52,715	94%	371	93%
Vacant units	3,252	6%	30	7%
Owner occupied	31,299	59%	282	76%
Renter occupied	21,416	41%	89	24%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

Land Use and Zoning

Joetown is located in an area of Johnson County where the predominant land use is agriculture. Despite that, many parcels within the 1/2 mile radius of Joetown are zoned for other uses, such as R – residential, C – commercial, and ML – light industrial. The majority of these parcels zoned other than agricultural are located within the 1/4 mile radius of Joetown. See Appendix B, Map 3, for the current Joetown Zoning Map.

There are a total of 43 parcels within the 1/2 mile radius that contain at least partial residential zoning. All but six sit entirely within the 1/4 mile radius.

Three parcels within Joetown’s 1/2 mile radius are zoned light industrial (ML). Light industrial zoning reserves land for uses other than residential, wind farms, and heavy industrial;³ however, the primary use on two of the three ML parcels is currently residential and are non-conforming.

In addition, Joetown contains three parcels with commercial zoning. Commercial zoning is reserved for a diverse range of generally low intensity businesses.⁴ In addition, three parcels contain highway commercial zoning, which allows higher traffic-producing businesses, such as gas stations and convenience stores.⁵

Infrastructure and Services

Joetown is served by two fire departments. The Kalona Fire department serves the majority of the village, including all areas east of Calkins Avenue. The Wellman Fire Department covers all areas west of Calkins Ave. A small portion of the 1/2 mile radius and much of the west portion of the 1 mile radius sit within the Wellman Fire Department territory.

Joetown is served by one public school district, the Mid-Prairie Community School District: Washington Township Elementary School is located about 1 mile northwest, on Angle Road, and the public middle school and high school are located to the southeast in the city of Kalona. In addition, the Iowa Mennonite School is located to the northeast of the village center.

Joetown’s law enforcement is provided by the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office. All roads that run through Joetown are maintained by the Johnson County Secondary Roads Department.

³ Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance 2004, 8:1.15
⁴ Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance 2004, 8:1.11
⁵ Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance 2004, 8:1.12

Public Meeting Process

Two public meetings allowed Joetown Residents to provide valuable feedback to county staff. The input was essential to develop Joetown village goals, vision statement, and village boundary. This draft plan will also be heard at the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors for formal approval. The following is a brief overview of each of the meetings.

Meeting One

The first public meeting for the Village of Joetown planning process was held on June 24, 2014, at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, 1408 540th Street SW, Kalona, IA 52247. Twenty-four area residents attended and participated in the meeting. County Supervisors John Etheredge and Rod Sullivan as well as County Planning and Zoning staff, Rick Dvorak, Administrator; Josh Busard, Assistant Planner; Becky Soglin, Sustainability Assistant; and Mitchell Brouse, Intern; attended and facilitated the meeting.

Supervisors Etheredge and Sullivan explained the goals of village planning and described its potential effects on Joetown, including the purpose of defining a village boundary. They also answered participant questions. Most questions regarded the purpose of village planning, implications of a boundary, and the potential benefits and risks of Joetown Village planning.

Josh reviewed the 2008 Land Use Plan, Joetown history, village demographics, and guided a group discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of Joetown. The participant responses regarding strengths and weaknesses were recorded and incorporated into the vision statement and goal statement development process (Appendix C).

Meeting Two

The second public meeting for the Village of Joetown planning process was held on August 12, 2014, at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, 1408 540th Street, Kalona, IA 52247. Twenty-two area residents attended and contributed to the meeting. County Supervisors John Etheredge and Rod Sullivan as well as County Planning and Zoning staff, Josh Busard, Assistant Planner; Becky Soglin, Sustainability Assistant; and Mitchell Brouse, Intern; attended and participated in the meeting's discussion.

Supervisor Sullivan opened and outlined the goals of the meeting. Josh gave a quick overview of the first public meeting, including reviewing the village strengths and weaknesses that were identified by the first meeting participants and used to create goal and vision statements.

Josh then introduced the draft goal statements, the draft vision statement, and two draft village boundaries, and asked for participant feedback. The group discussed the statements, and ultimately, no changes were made to the goal or vision statements. Next, the group discussed the village boundary, and the group consensus was to include Washington Township Elementary School within it and possibly a commercial property to the southwest, as requested by the property owner. The updated draft boundary consisted of approximately 815 acres (see Map 1).

Village of Joetown Goals

Quality of Life

Maintain the community's rural lifestyle.

Work to create a park or community area and continue to build upon the village's strong sense of community.

Preserve the community's sense of history.

Growth

Support planned, intentional development.

Promote village-level commercial development.

Promote single-family residential developments on small, adjacent lots that preserve open space and agricultural land (clustered-type development).

Shared well and wastewater systems shall be preferred.

Infrastructure and Services

Improve road and trail infrastructure to allow safer walking routes throughout the village.

Improve traffic control and/or enforcement along Angle Road SW, along 540th Street SW, and at the intersection of those two roads.

Develop a park or central community gathering area for public use (possible gift of land to the Johnson County Conservation Board).

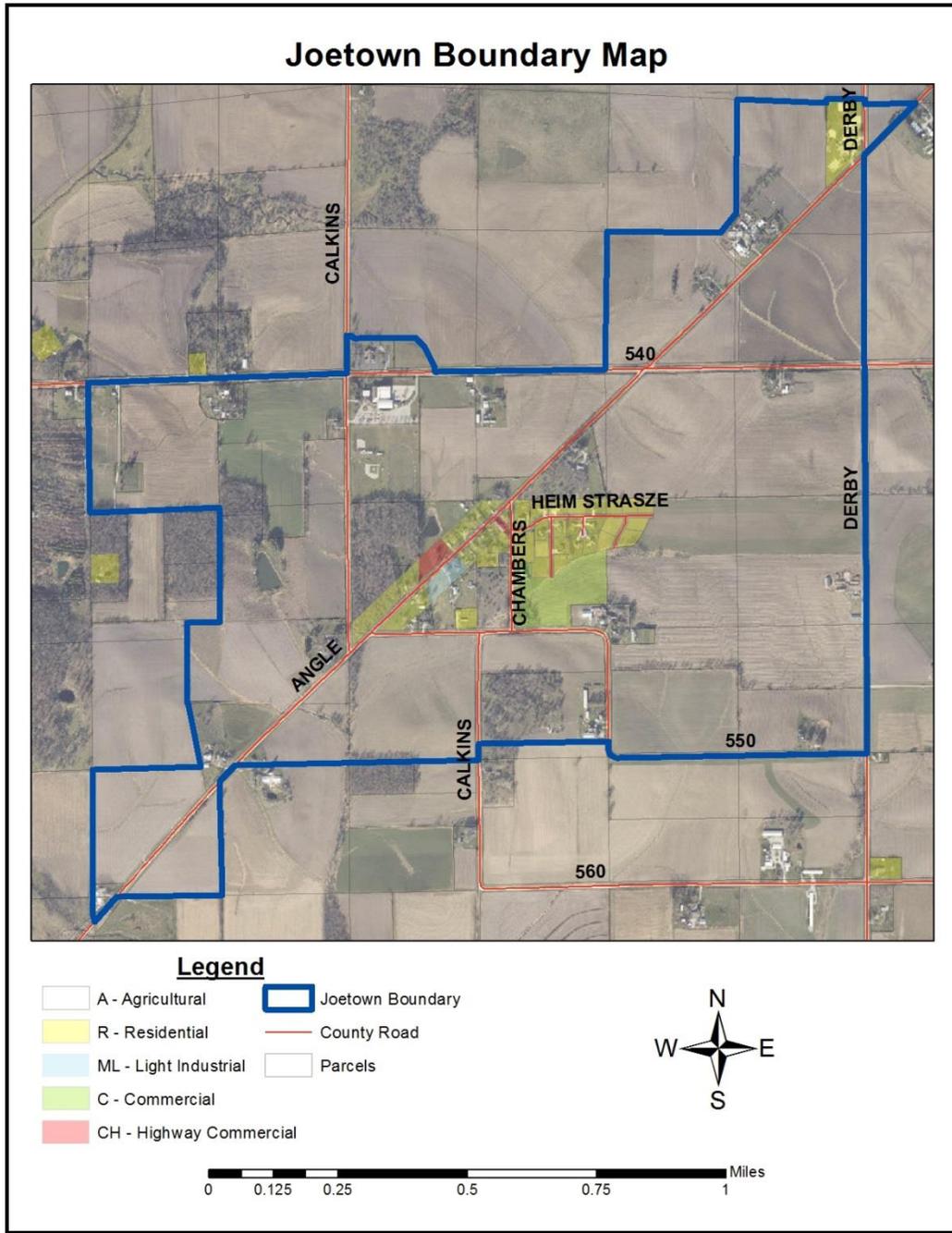
Village of Joetown Vision Statement

The Village of Joetown will continue to be a quiet, friendly, rural community. The village will protect agricultural land and manage growth through planned infill development that respects the village's historical character and follows the Johnson County Land Use Plan (2008).

Joetown Village Boundary

The Joetown Village boundary is made up of 20 quarter-quarter sections and is approximately 815 acres (Map 1). It contains the Washington Township Elementary School at the intersection of Angle Road SW and Derby Avenue SW. Any development application on land within the boundary will be considered more favorably if in compliance with the stated goals and adopted vision statement for the Village of Joetown. It is important to note that this boundary does not change any current zoning designations or land uses, both inside and outside the village.

Map 1: Joetown Village Boundary Map



Appendix A: Johnson County Land Use Plan—Village Excerpt

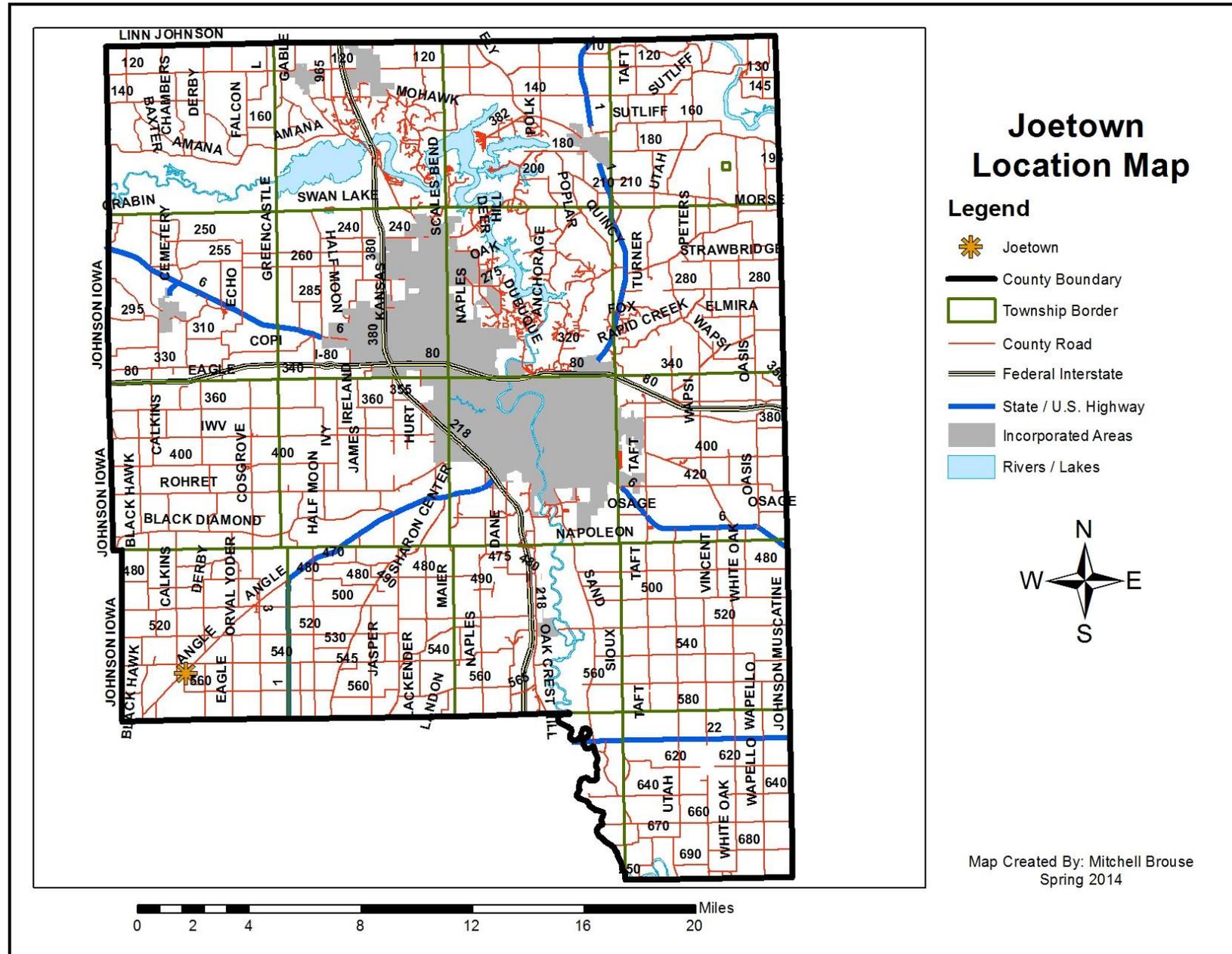
The Johnson County Land Use Plan outlines its policies for Unincorporated Villages and the creation of village-area development plans. The following is an excerpt from the Land Use Plan which is available in its entirety on the Johnson County Planning and Zoning website:

3. Unincorporated Villages (Page 15)

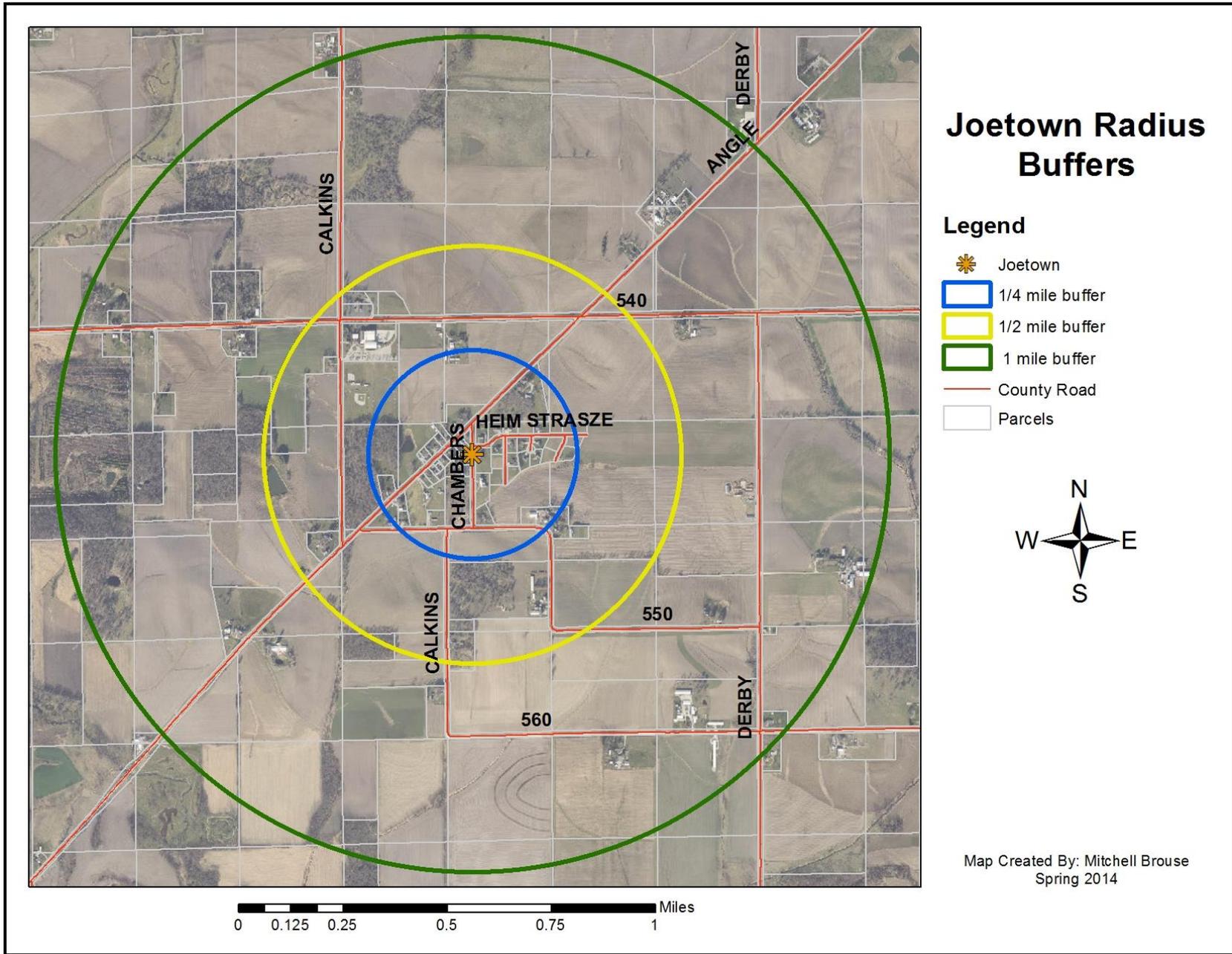
3.1 Create village-area plans which will detail a vision for the desired level of growth and development to occur in the future. As part of the village-planning process, the County should:

- a) Develop geographical growth areas for villages.
- b) Consider the resultant impacts of additional development within floodplains and to other environmentally sensitive areas.
- c) Encourage sustainability within villages by promoting mixed-use developments that foster live/work arrangements which are appropriate for the village-area being considered.
- d) Clustered subdivision design shall be the preferred type of residential development style within the village areas.
- e) Zoning classifications within the village areas shall be at a density that is appropriate and consistent with existing and historical patterns. The preferred zoning classed for residential development would be those with the highest densities.

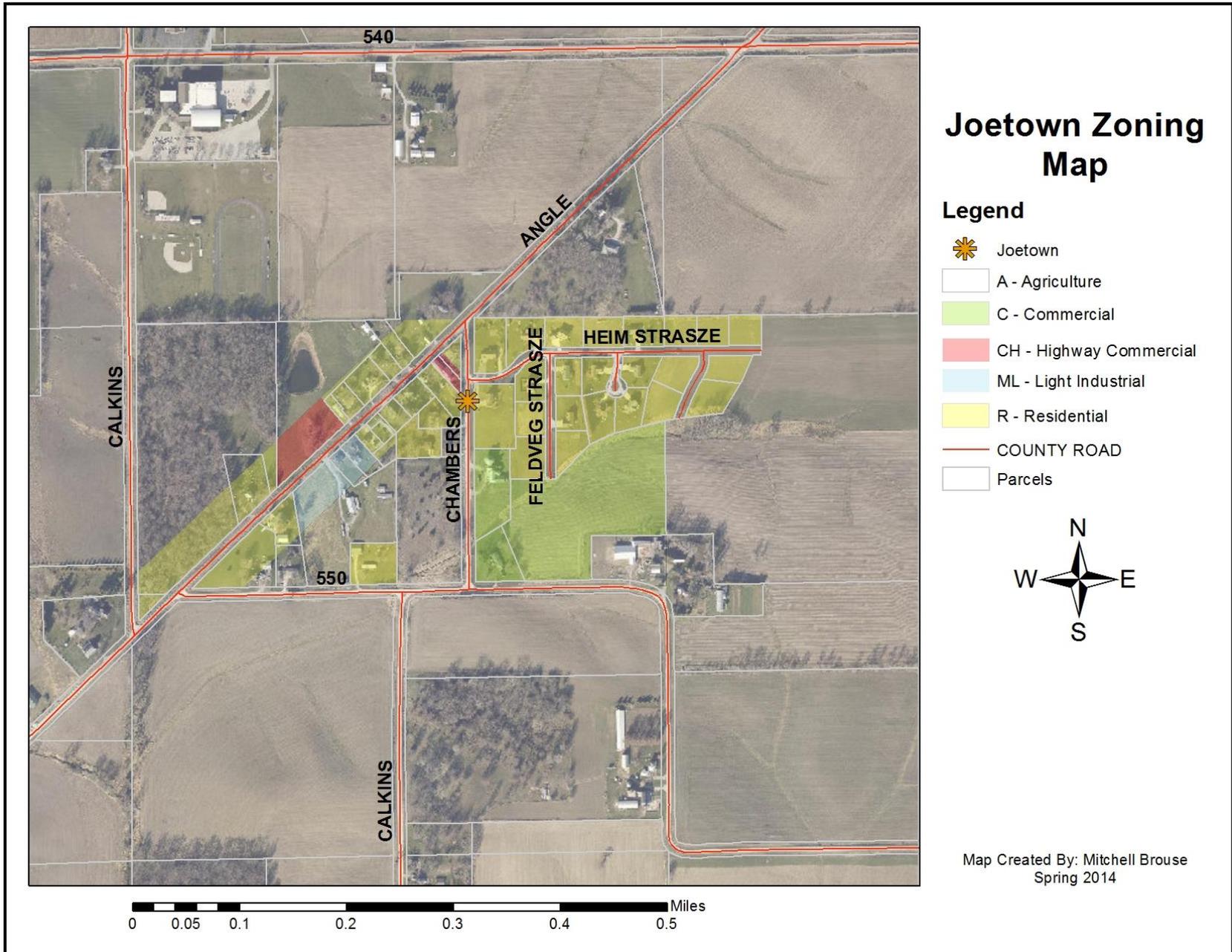
Appendix B: Maps
 Map 2: Joetown Location Map



Map 3: Joetown 1/4 Mile, 1/2 Mile, and 1 Mile Buffers



Map 4: Current Joetown Zoning Map



Appendix C: Strengths and Weaknesses

Joetown's strengths and weaknesses shared at the first planning meeting by participants. Both are listed in the order shared by those participants.

STRENGTHS:

- Very Stable Community
- Low growth
- Familiarity
- Safety
- Quiet
- Not in the city, but still near people
- Not too much happening here
- Hard surface road
- Easy access to cities
- Lower property tax
- Fewer restrictions than the city
- Good schools
- Good neighbors
- Sense of history
- Lots of wildlife and nature
- Prompt snowplowing (on the hard surface road)
- Pretty good telecommunications (fiber optic)
- Great electricity coop
- Kalona address (recognizable)

WEAKNESSES:

- More hard surface road
- Limited snowplowing (on the gravel road)
- No cable television
- No in town store
- No rural water
- No community sewer
- No natural gas
- No community gathering area
- Unsafe drivers (speeding, running stop signs)
- No community tornado shelter
- Not enough paved walking paths
- No centerline on paved road