

JOHNSON COUNTY

Planning, Development and Sustainability Department

Annual Report 2022

Director's Welcome

2022 was a busy and productive year for PDS. We became fully staffed, including hiring two new planners and a new building inspector. I'm really glad they're on the team. Together, the team supported PDS's core missions in development review, permit issuance, inspections, code enforcement and sustainability.

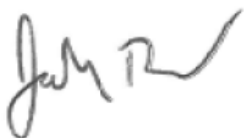
PDS realized over \$475,000 in revenue. Our service to the people of Johnson County isn't just in the increased number of inspections – hundreds more than even a few years ago – but also in promptness of scheduling, quality inspections, and follow-up to guarantee health, safety and welfare.

This past year we also took on new responsibilities in economic development, getting a plan adopted, advancing broadband goals and working with the new ICAD Rural Development Director. Sustainability covered new ground by launching a Soil Health Program and making great progress toward competing the first-ever countywide Greenhouse Gas inventory. And PDS continued to accomplish goals of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, initiated the Windham village planning effort, and completed important ordinance updates to include the new RE – Renewable Energy Zoning District.

Many of our projects involve cross-departmental collaboration or connections with external agencies. The Planning and Zoning Commission, the Board of Adjustment, and the Board of Appeals play important roles, and I want to thank the volunteer members for their time and service. This year's success is attributable to the collaboration and assistance these valued partnerships and volunteers bring.

Last, but not least, PDS redesigned our annual report. This streamlined version for 2022 provides all the important information and accomplishments in a more readable and user-friendly format. I'm very pleased to share the report with the Board of Supervisors, all county departments and offices, and the general public.

Respectfully,



Josh Busard

Planning

Comprehensive Plan Goals

- PDS updated policies and collaborated with other departments to meet the goals of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.
- 72 of 145 action steps have been met or are on-going projects.

Windham Village Plan

- Staff met with residents several times in 2022 to understand strengths and challenges of Windham, the last of nine villages to get a plan.
- The Windham Village Plan, including a vision statement, goals, and boundary, was finalized and adopted by the Board in spring 2023.

Renewable Energy District

- Following a six-month moratorium and a staff analysis of solar development, the Board approved adding the RE district to the UDO.
- This district allows utility-scale solar, battery energy storage systems, and other utility infrastructure, with appropriate safety and mitigation measures.

Economic Development Plan

- Adopted by the Board in 2022, the plan outlines 16 goals to support the unincorporated area, villages and smaller towns.
- PDS helped realize two goals, ICAD hire a Rural Economic Development Director and engaged consultants on a broadband needs study and is working on others.

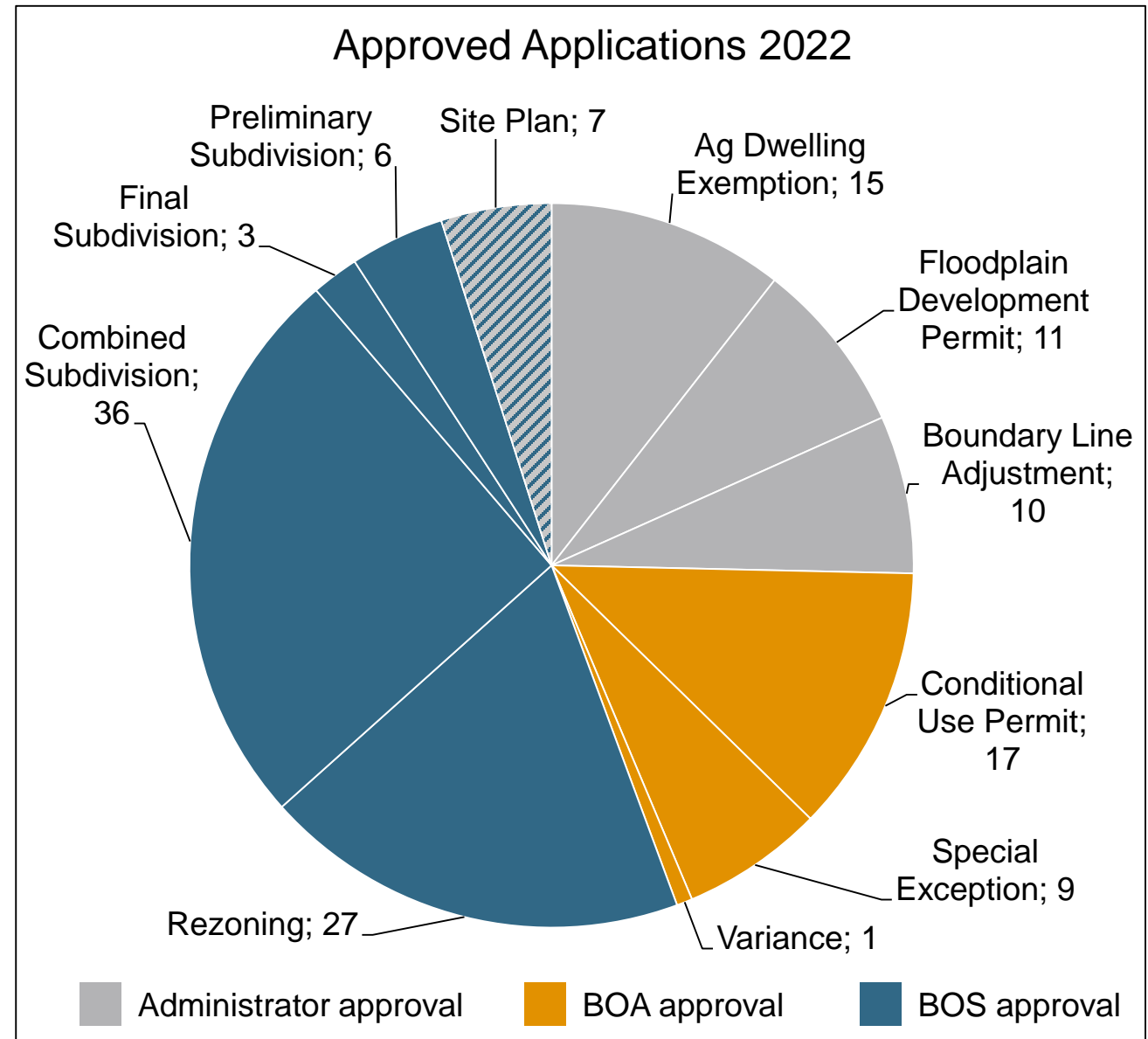
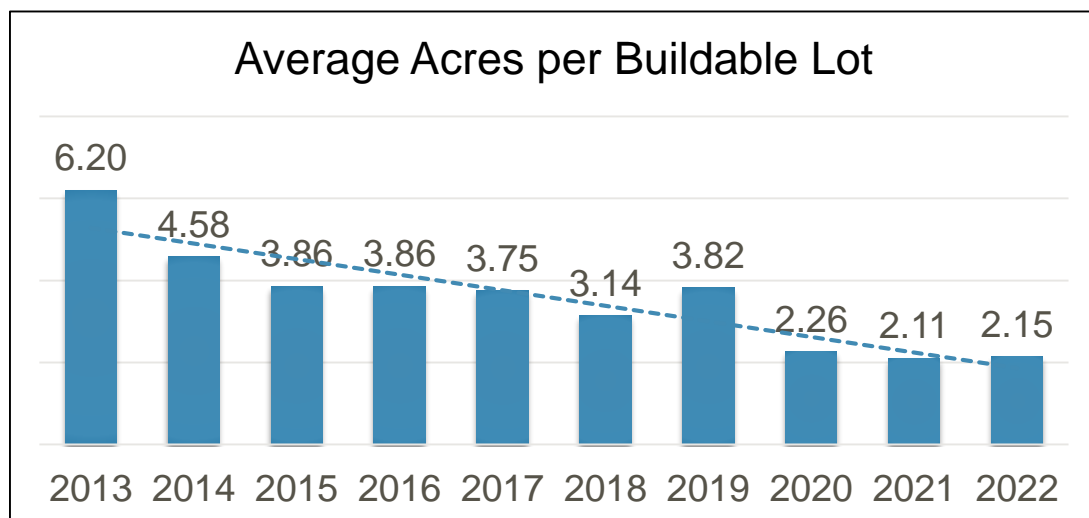
Planning

Rezoning

27 of 28 submitted rezoning applications were approved in 2022, resulting in nearly 17 acres of environmental preservation zoning, 72 acres of potential residential development, and the smallest net loss of agricultural zoning in the past five years.

Subdivisions

45 subdivisions were approved, platting 126 buildable lots and 56 outlots. With the second smallest average buildable lot size ever, the 1.99-acre limit for lots in the R-Residential district is moving development towards the preferred 1-acre residential density outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.



Planning

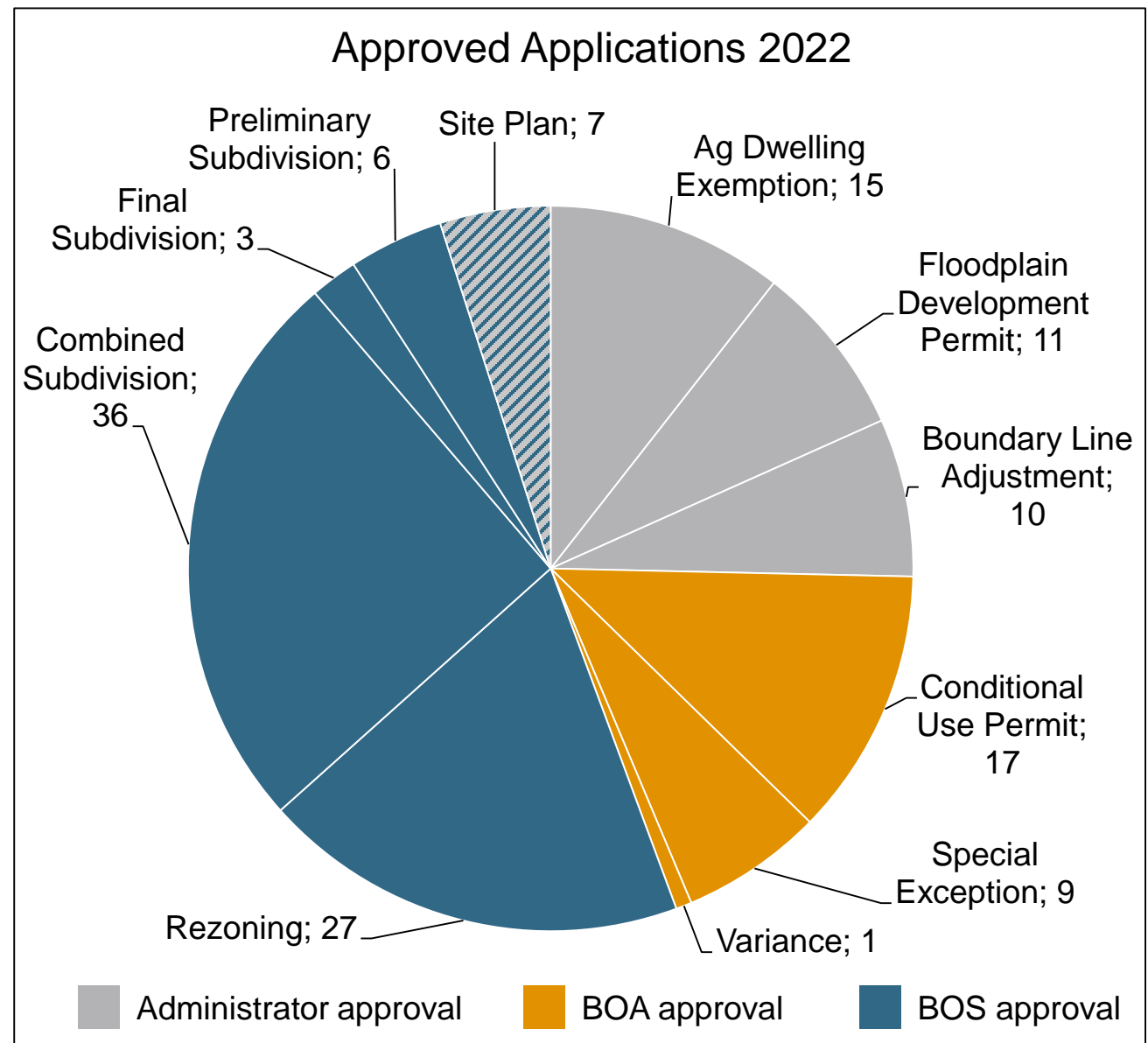
Other Applications

The Board of Adjustment (BOA) approved applications for 10 of 11 exceptions to zoning regulations and 17 of 17 conditional use permits (including seven home businesses and seven Auxiliary Dwelling Units).

Administrator approvals, which streamline the application process and provide more flexibility for development, made up 24% of the applications in 2022.

Sensitive Areas Protected by the UDO:

Critical wildlife habitat	Floodplain and floodway	Historic properties
Wetlands	Prairie and prairie remnants	Woodlands
Savanna and savanna remnants	Significant slopes	Stream corridors, watercourses, and surface water

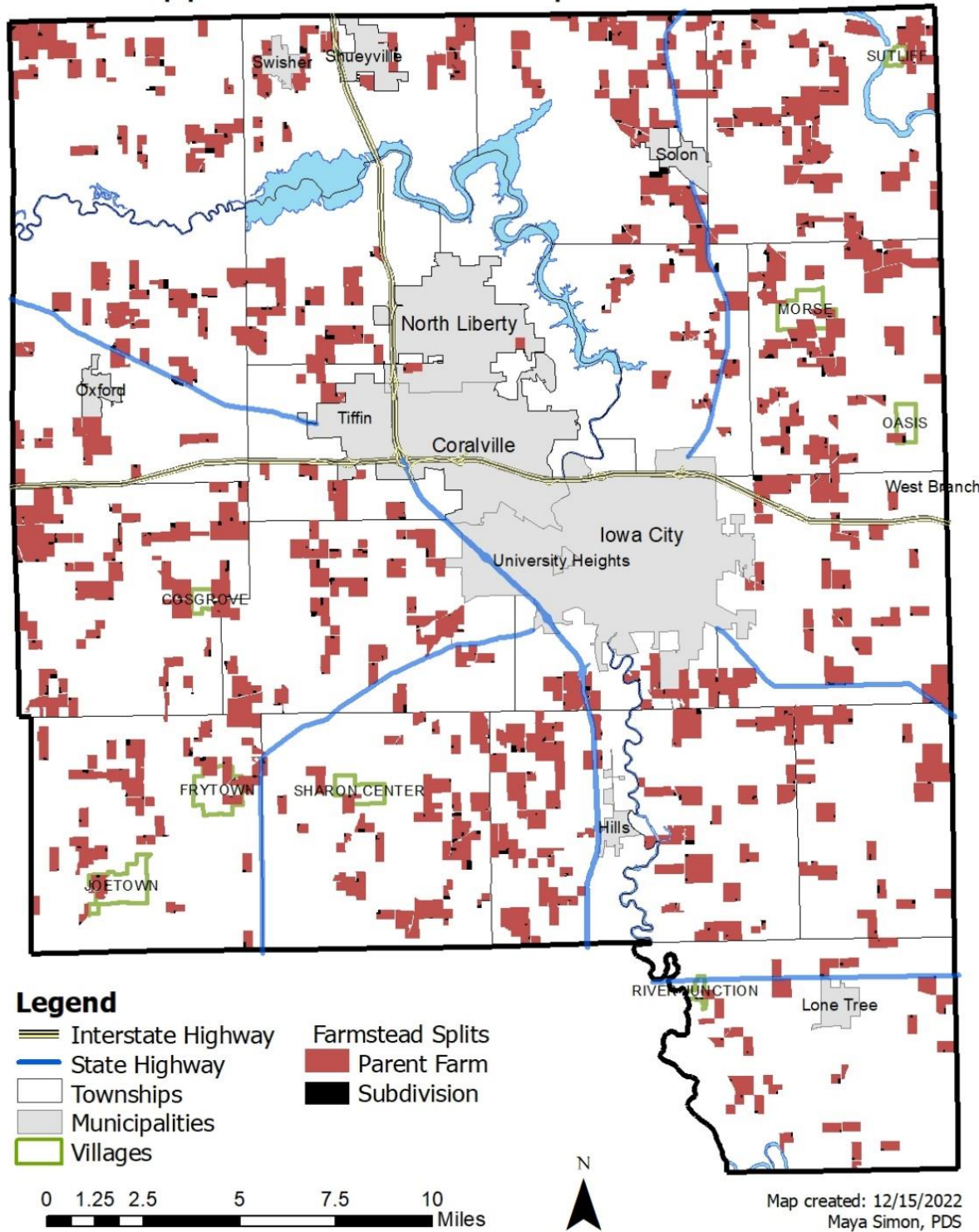


Environmental Protection

The Soil and Water Conservation Coordinator reviewed a total of 47 waiver requests and reports for Sensitive Areas, effectively preserving the environmental features found. 11 Stormwater Management reports were also reviewed, mitigating increased runoff from new development.

Planning

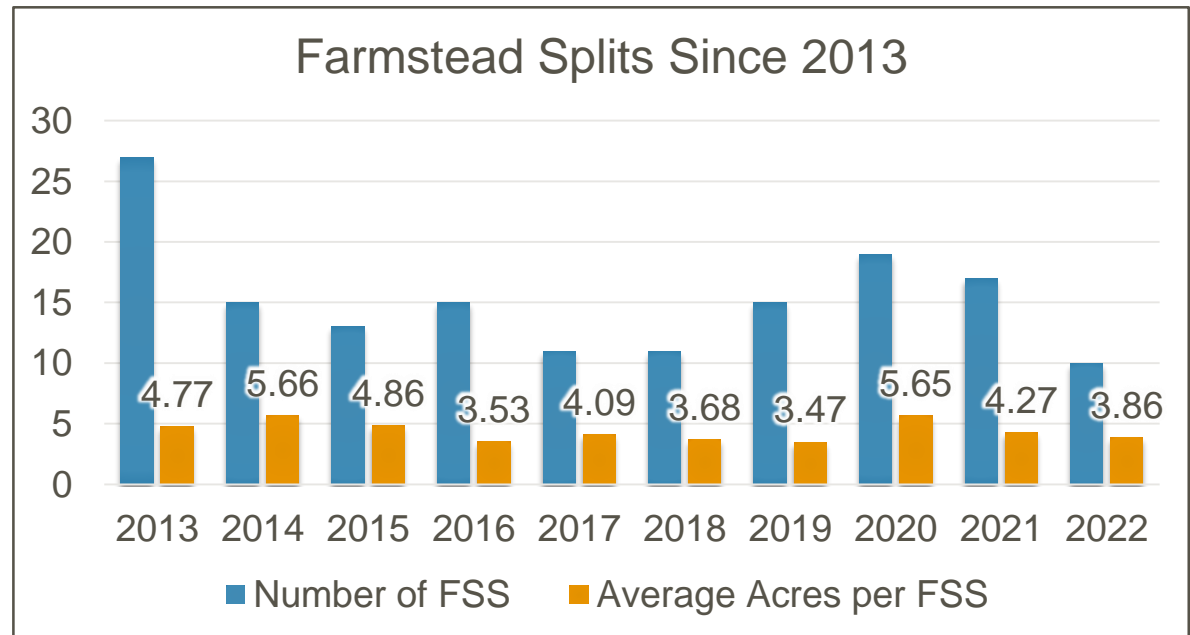
Approved Farmstead Splits Since 2000



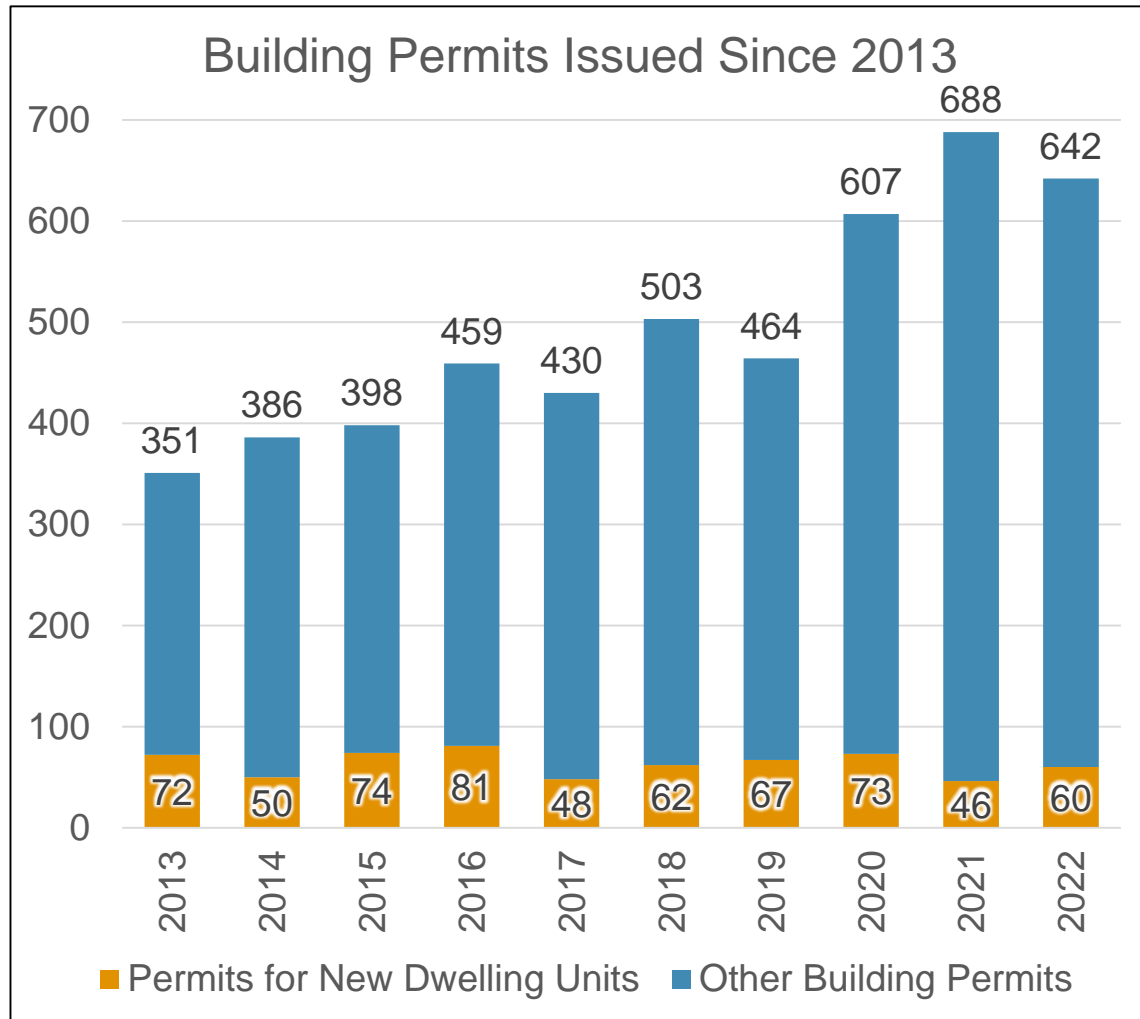
Farmstead Splits

Johnson County has approved 450 farmstead splits (FSS) since 2000, with an average of 4.40 acres per split. In 2022, 10 FSS were approved. This is the lowest number in the 22 years that FSS have existed, owing in part to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan and 2020 UDO updates which allow residential rezoning and subdivisions around existing homes on properties outside of residential growth areas.

Farmstead Splits Since 2013



Development



Building Permits

The number of building permits issued in 2022 continued a jump in number which began in 2020, a result of many combined factors. The majority of permits in 2022 were for electrical work (27%), followed by accessory buildings and dwelling additions (11% each). 60 new houses were permitted, which is consistent with the 10-year average of 63.3.

Code Enforcement

PDS pursues code enforcement cases for properties which are in violation of the UDO to protect neighboring properties and ensure the safety of the general public. Since the creation of the Code Enforcement Inspector position in 2020, 213 of 256 cases (83%) have been closed. Many issues remain ongoing, and it can take several months for PDS to work with a property owner towards compliance or take legal action.

Cause of Code Enforcement Cases:

Violating building code	Threat to health, safety, and general welfare	Violating rental housing code
Unpermitted home business	Unpermitted development in the floodplain	Unpermitted grading and soil erosion
Junk on property	Non-compliant signs	Violating CUP conditions of approval

Sustainability



Soil Health Program

Initiated in 2022, this program provides financial incentive to residents in the unincorporated area and smaller towns to implement soil quality restoration on private property. The process combines deep-tine aeration and addition of compost on lawns to reduce stormwater runoff while greening up grass.



Watershed Coordination

In cooperation with the Iowa DNR, PDS initiated the effort to establish a Middle Iowa River Watershed Management Authority (WMA), bringing together partner organizations from 12 counties to work toward shared watershed planning and goals. The Soil and Water Conservation Coordinator also continued to serve as a board member for the Creek Watershed Coalition and the English River WMAs, both of which will close out Iowa Watershed Approach projects and funding in 2023.



Greenhouse Gas Inventory

With external partners, the Sustainability Coordinator began work on the County's first-ever communitywide inventory of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The final report will be presented in April 2023. The findings on the emission trajectories in different sectors from 2010 to 2020 will help the County identify actions to help reduce GHGs.



County Adaptation and Resiliency

Drawing on the 2021 EcoAdapt workshop and report, PDS coordinated the prioritization of adaptation and resilience recommendations for County operations. The concepts were presented to the Board of Supervisors for future action.

2023 Department Goals

Rental permitting with new online portal

- Implement new online permitting software to streamline the application and review process.
- Adopt a rental housing code created by PDS.
- Develop a program for rental inspections and permitting.

Comprehensive Plan mid-term review

- Carry out the five-year detailed Comprehensive Plan review with input from the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board.
- Propose amendments to address changing circumstances and reflect progress on goals.

Foster economic development

- Continue implementing the goals of the Economic Development Plan to support the unincorporated area and small towns.
- Complete the broadband needs study and begin implementing strategies to increase coverage.

Collaborate on environmental protection

- Provide County representation to outside organizations, including leadership for the creation of a Middle Iowa River WMA.
- Adopt new flood maps released by FEMA.
- Continue leveraging grant funds for energy efficiency and sustainability.

Department Information

Staffing

In 2022, Luke McClanahan and David Tornow left PDS. Joe Wilensky was hired in June, Maya Simon (former Planning Intern) in July, and Dom Perneti in August.

Staff invested in professional development by attending a total of 18 local and national conferences, obtaining and renewing 59 professional certifications, and participating in several safety, DEI, and other relevant trainings. PDS employees also served on numerous boards and committees connected with their positions.

Josh Busard, *Director*, AICP, CFM, LEED-AP

Nathan Mueller, *Assistant Director*, AICP, CFM

Neil Bombei
Senior Building Inspector

Joseph Wilensky,
Assistant Planner
AICP

Becky Soglin
Sustainability Coordinator
CC-P, LEED Green Associate

Nancy Rockensies
Secretary II

Bret McLaughlin
Senior Combination Inspector

Maya Simon
Assistant Planner

Kasey Hutchinson
Soil and Water Conservation Coordinator

Julia Dodds
Clerk II

Dominic Perneti
Combination Inspector

Jeff Huff
Zoning Aide

Brandon Davis
Code Enforcement Inspector II

Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday

Location: 913 S Dubuque St, Iowa City, Iowa

Website: www.johnsoncountyiowa.gov/pds

Phone: (319) 356-6083, **Fax:** (319) 356-6084

2022 Boards and Commissions

Board of Supervisors

Jon Green, Lisa Green-Douglass, Pat Heiden, Royceann Porter (2022 Chair), Rod Sullivan

Planning and Zoning Commission

Rebecca Frantz, Kimberly Friese, Erin Hazen, Mike Parker (2022 Chair), Andrew Philbrick

Board of Adjustment

Richard Donahue, Jim Martinek, Perry Ross, Kathleen Sluka, Dawn Terrell (2022 Chair)

Building Code Board of Appeals

Dave Clark, Mike Donahue, Tristian Gingerich, Doug Kohoutek, Wade Long

