

Johnson County

2018 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

VOLUME 3: MID-TERM UPDATE 2024



Adopted: April 11, 2024



RESOLUTION NO. 04-11-24-02

**RESOLUTION APPROVING AMENDMENTS TO THE JOHNSON COUNTY 2018
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO ADD A THIRD VOLUME CONTAINING A MID-TERM
UPDATE**

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors adopted the current comprehensive plan, known as the Johnson County 2018 Comprehensive Plan, on May 17, 2018 (the 2018 Comprehensive Plan); and

WHEREAS, the 2018 Comprehensive Plan calls for a detailed review every five years; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors has initiated an update to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan to add a third volume containing a mid-term update addressing changes to the plan's key issues and priorities, adding goals, strategies, and action steps in the four existing topic areas of Sustainability, Local Economy, Infrastructure and Amenities, and Land Use, and providing an updated Implementation table; and

WHEREAS, the County Planning and Zoning Commission, having studied said amendments including holding a public hearing thereon on March 18, 2024, recommends that the proposed amendments to the Johnson County 2018 Comprehensive Plan be approved;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA, that the amendments to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan attached hereto, and included in the online agenda packet for the meeting of the Board of Supervisors held on April 11, 2024, copies of which can be obtained at the Johnson County Planning, Development and Sustainability Office, the Johnson County Auditor's Office, or at www.johnsoncountyiowa.gov, are hereby adopted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning, Development, and Sustainability Director be directed to update the 2018 Comprehensive Plan accordingly.

It was moved by Green-Douglas and seconded by Green the Resolution be adopted this 11th day of April, 2024.

Roll Call: Fixmer-Oraiz Aye Green Aye Green-Douglas Aye Porter Aye Sullivan Aye

Rod Sullivan
Rod Sullivan, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors

4/11/24
Date

ATTEST:

Travis Weipert
Travis Weipert, Auditor
Johnson County, Iowa

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to members of the public who provided input on this update through open houses, surveys, and public hearings, and to the Board of Supervisors and the Planning and Zoning Commission for their leadership during the update process. This update reflects your collective vision for Johnson County.

Board of Supervisors

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Goals Overview

Sustainability

- SUST 1: Support and implement sustainability strategies that preserve natural resources.
- SUST 2: Develop and/or coordinate with local and regional hazard mitigation, resiliency, and climate change planning.
- SUST 3: Support affordable and equitable access to quality housing.
- SUST 4: Support and advance green energy efficiency, resource conservation, and renewable energy programs.
- SUST 5: Prioritize green building and sustainable development practices for existing and future residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- SUST 6: Remain a leader in sustainable and resilient facilities, operations, and infrastructure.
- SUST 7: Ensure provision of potable (drinkable) water to support existing and proposed development.*

Local Economy

- ECON 1: Foster a diverse and resilient local economy.
- ECON 2: Ensure that new and expanding commercial and industrial uses will follow the county's adopted Economic Development Plan.
- ECON 3: Encourage sustainable agricultural activities.
- ECON 4: Provide opportunities for sustainable commercial and industrial activities that enhance livability and are compatible with surrounding land uses.

Infrastructure and Amenities

- INF 1: Develop well-connected recreational parks, public open/natural spaces, and trails throughout the county.
- INF 2: Utilize existing infrastructure and adopt green infrastructure practices.
- INF 3: Make transportation, land use, and infrastructure decisions that encourage a reduction in auto-dependent travel.
- INF 4: Support environmental, cultural, and historic elements in the planning and design of future infrastructure.
- INF 5: Support amenities that enhance livability and quality of life.

Land Use

- LND 1: Promote and protect sustainable agricultural land uses in rural Johnson County.
- LND 2: Direct future residential development based on location and then site-specific criteria outlined in the Future Land Use Development Guidelines.
- LND 3: Direct future commercial and industrial development based on location and then site-specific criteria.
- LND 4: Coordinate land use planning with and between local governments to achieve mutually beneficial development policies.
- LND 5: Continue to protect and improve Johnson County's natural resources: land, water, and air.
- LND 6: Foster equitable access to safe and affordable housing throughout Johnson County.*

*New goal as of this mid-term update.

Welcome and Overview

The Johnson County Board of Supervisors, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Planning, Development and Sustainability staff are pleased to provide this *Johnson County 2018 Comprehensive Plan Volume 3: Mid-Term Update 2024*. Several new key issues, priorities, goals, strategies, and action steps were developed based on input received during the six-month update process described below.

This update builds on the work that began with plan adoption in 2018. Volume 3 accounts for the successes and challenges that we, as the Johnson County community, have experienced since 2018. It describes what we aim to address and accomplish in the next five years. As stated in 2018, the comprehensive plan will continue to provide a basis for balancing rapid population growth with the preservation of agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas.

The update process resulted in adopting **three new key issues and seven new priorities**. All prior key issues remain, although two are no longer a focus. Similarly, some 2018 priorities were renewed and/or updated, and others were de-emphasized. These additions and revisions were made to ensure the plan aligns with completed work, changing needs, and the current vision for the county. Some of the priorities from 2018 were de-emphasized due to certain changes in State Code that limited local control. The corresponding goals remain in the plan, but are no longer the focus of policy and work plans.

The update process also added **two new goals, 12 new strategies, and 40 new actions**. The new key issues and priorities inform these additions and strengthen existing goals and related efforts.

Guide to Volume 3: Mid-Term Update

Volume 3 includes chapters corresponding to those found in Volume 1, which are Introduction, Sustainability, Local Economy, Infrastructure and Amenities, Land Use, and Implementation. Volume 2 contains appendices related to Volume 1. All volumes are available electronically at johnsoncountyiowa.gov/compplan and in printed form at the County Planning, Development and Sustainability Department office. Please note that “the County” (capitalized) refers to the local government as a governing and service entity, including its elected officials and staff, while “the county” (lowercase) refers to the county as the place where people live, work, own property, etc.

The [Implementation Table](#) (p. 27) in this update provides the status of goals, strategies, and action steps from Volume 1 of the plan and incorporates all the *new* goals, strategies, and action steps. The Implementation Table is used to guide decision-making, direct County initiatives, and develop work plans.

Public Input

This plan update involved a six-month inclusive planning process. Activities included two joint public work sessions of the Board of Supervisors and the Planning and Zoning Commission, three open-house public input sessions held in three different areas of the county in October 2023, and an online public survey, which recorded 129 responses. The survey was available in four languages: Arabic, English, French, and Spanish. Publicity efforts included press releases, social media, and website updates. Public hearings were held in March and April 2024 for plan review and adoption.

Successes

Implementing the 2018 plan brought about numerous advances and positive change in Johnson County. Highlighted below are just some of these successes. The [Implementation Table](#) (p. 27) shows all completed endeavors as well as in progress/ongoing or not yet completed activities.

Adoption of the 2020 Unified Development Ordinance followed 2018 key issues and priorities and led to these plan-supported changes:

- Limited the size of new residential parcels, realizing the goal of increasing residential density through efficient land use and provision of services.
- Provided clarity and better mechanisms for ensuring compliance with sensitive area and stormwater regulations to preserve environmentally sensitive land.
- Established an agricultural exemption determination process that more closely aligns with State Code requirements so that farms of all sizes and types can take advantage of the exemption.
- Expanded options for rural and agricultural tourism to support value-added agricultural activities, local food, and small farm operations.
- Expanded and diversified permitting options to allow flexibility for sustainable commercial development in the County's economic development areas.

The *2018 Comprehensive Plan* also provided direction for these accomplishments:

- Completed the County's first-ever countywide greenhouse gas inventory to establish a framework for setting goals for emissions reductions.
- Adopted utility-scale solar and battery storage regulations that support the responsible deployment of renewable energy technologies in Johnson County.
- Prepared and adopted the [2022 Johnson County, Iowa, Economic Development Plan: Opportunities for the Unincorporated Area, Villages and Smaller Towns](#) to provide more explicit direction on county economic development efforts.
- Facilitated the significant expansion of broadband internet infrastructure in the rural areas to improve quality of life, resiliency, and economic development efforts.

Trends and Opportunities

Since 2018, Johnson County has experienced its share of challenges—from a global pandemic to inflation to extreme weather and disasters such as the 2020 derecho. The county also continued to experience a rapidly increasing population, growing by 16.8% from 130,882 residents in 2010 to 152,854 in 2020. We remain one of the fastest-growing counties in Iowa, with associated impacts on housing costs, infrastructure needs, desire for recreational space and parks, and development pressure on agricultural and environmentally sensitive land.



Johnson County's population has, as expected for one of the fastest growing counties in Iowa, continued to increase. In 2020 the county had **152,854 residents**.

There has been a **28% increase in median housing value** since 2018 (from \$216,900 to \$277,800).



Six County Conservation parks have opened since 2018, adding a total of 672 acres of public land.



The proportion of cost-burdened households (defined as paying 30% or more of income for rent) **rose from 30.6% in 2015 to 53% in 2021**.



The number of annual electric vehicle registrations in Johnson County nearly **doubled in two years**, from 587 in 2020 to 1,077 in 2022.

91.4% of cropland within Johnson County was in production in 2022.

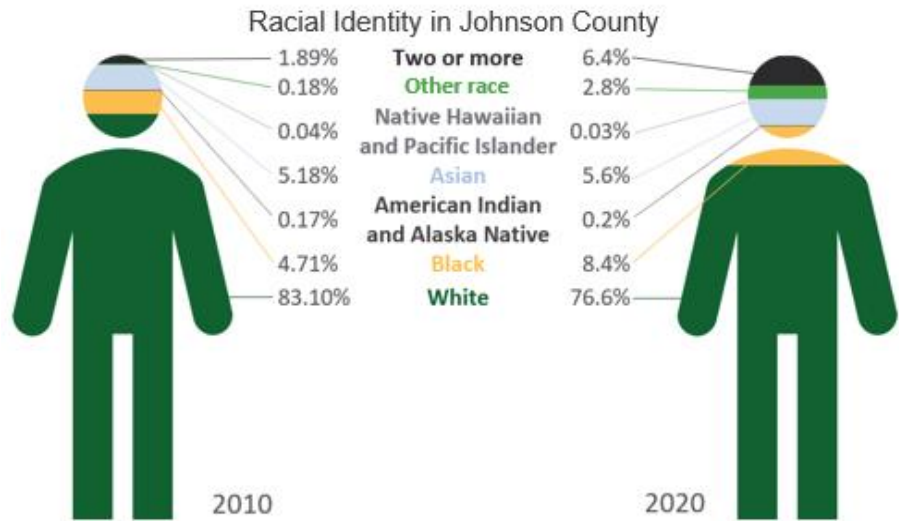


From 2010 to 2020, there was a **28% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions** countywide.



Sources (clockwise from top): U.S. Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census; Johnson County Conservation; Iowa DOT Electric Vehicle Supplemental Fee Reports; Johnson County (Iowa) Community (Countywide) Greenhouse Gas Inventories: 2010 Baseline and 2020; USDA 2022 Census of Agriculture; U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS five-year estimates; U.S. Census Bureau 2018 and 2022 ACS five-year estimates

Our population is also diversifying. The most recent U.S. Census data shows that non-white-identifying persons made the county home at a faster rate than people identifying as being white only. Johnson County seeks to be a place where current residents keep their roots as well as a welcoming place to newcomers, including immigrants. With this plan update, we can help create a community where all residents have opportunity to live their best lives.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census

Key Issues

A desire to expand upon successes, address ongoing and anticipated challenges, and leverage opportunities prompted the addition of three new key issues: **Equity and Opportunity**, **Resiliency**, and **Rural Economic Development**. Of the five key issues established in the 2018 plan, three key issues were renewed and/or updated and two were de-emphasized in this update. (The origin year appears in parentheses after each key issue below.)

The new key issues, along with those that are still relevant from 2018, are a common thread throughout all four topic chapters. Thus, this update carries forward many of the goals, strategies, and action steps that have not yet been accomplished, while setting new goals with appropriate strategies and action steps that will support a resilient economy, access to safe and equitable housing, and mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. **The overall plan focus continues to be balancing population growth with preserving agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas.**

Equity and Opportunity (2024)

A major theme of the *2022 Johnson County, Iowa, Economic Development Plan: Opportunities for the Unincorporated Area, Villages and Smaller Towns* is equitable economic opportunity, meaning the County should promote action and investment that provide opportunities for all Johnson County residents. Specifically, the County should help reduce barriers and support programs that increase opportunity for underestimated communities. The plan also identifies where we can increase engagement with community plans and organizations working on equity-based change.

Access to affordable and reliable broadband internet across the county is crucial to local engagement and leveraging our interconnected world. Advancing broadband goals will reduce barriers for emerging entrepreneurs and help residents pursue online education or access healthcare through telemedicine.

This plan also adds a goal on safe and equitable access to housing, including County involvement in regional affordable housing efforts. To protect residents' and visitors' health, safety, and welfare, the goal supports new housing being built to baseline safety standards and rental housing being maintained to minimum safety standards.

Resiliency (2024)

Resiliency, or resilience, is the ability to withstand or bounce back from difficulties and stressors. COVID-19, periods of economic stress, extreme weather events (e.g. August 2020 derecho), and climate change make the need for resiliency clear. Supporting and empowering the public—especially vulnerable residents—is crucial. Planning and sustainability efforts in collaboration with others are needed to foster countywide resiliency. Partners can include County departments such as Public Health, Conservation, and Social Services; the Emergency Management Agency; nonprofit organizations; and institutions.

A resilient economy includes high-speed internet access for rural residents to work, attend school, and seek medical care remotely. Reliable and accessible broadband is also essential to support businesses in rural areas and the small towns. In addition, maintaining and right-sizing infrastructure helps the County, businesses, and residents avoid the worst impacts from disasters and extreme weather.

The availability of a variety of housing types at different cost points will help insulate against external shocks to the local housing market. It is also crucial to require developers to consider not only the impacts of new development on the environment, but also the impacts of extreme events on those new developments. Avoiding floodplains will minimize damage to structures during flood events and help

mitigate damage to neighboring properties. In addition, controlling stormwater runoff and protecting wetlands lessens the peak flow of large storm events and eases downstream flooding.

Rural Economic Development (2024)

The County formalized its growing focus on rural economic development by adopting the *2022 Johnson County, Iowa, Economic Development Plan: Opportunities for the Unincorporated Area, Villages and Smaller Towns*. This new economic development plan, supported by this update, includes recommendations for action that augment previous comprehensive planning efforts and spur new efforts.

Key recommendations in the plan include increasing access to services such as broadband, fostering partnerships with local organizations such as Greater Iowa City to promote rural Johnson County and the small towns, and leveraging a variety of funding sources to create a diverse and resilient local economy outside the metro area.

Agricultural Land and Natural Areas Preservation (2018)

As a rapidly and consistently growing county, Johnson County experiences non-agricultural development pressures that many counties in Iowa do not experience. While the majority of that growth is happening within the cities, the growth also presents challenges to comprehensive planning for the unincorporated area. Land preservation is a prominent feature throughout this plan—from the guidance in State Code section 335.5 to preserve the availability of agricultural land to Johnson County’s ordinances directed at sensitive area protection and stormwater management. The need to balance the preservation of agriculturally and environmentally valuable areas with the growth pressure of many thriving communities impacts all areas of this plan.

Development Areas (2018)

Johnson County has been proactive in preserving rural agricultural land from the pressures of urban residential sprawl for nearly 45 years. One successful strategy in Johnson County has been establishing a clearly delineated development area to which to direct new rural housing. By 1979 the County identified an area, termed the North Corridor Development Area (NCDA), where residential growth was considered appropriate. The area was generally bounded by Highway 965 on the west, Highway 1 and Sugar Bottom Road on the east, extending north from the city limits of Iowa City and Coralville, and east of North Liberty to Solon and Shueyville and including all or parts of Big Grove, Jefferson, Newport, and Penn townships ([map in Volume 2, Appendix A, p. 8](#)). The NCDA was designated as the formal residential growth area in both the 1998 and 2008 Land Use Plans.

The 2018 comprehensive planning process carefully considered whether other parts of the county outside the NCDA were appropriate for non-agricultural growth. The Future Land Use Map included in [Volume 1, Chapter 5 \(p. 111\)](#) identifies growth areas for this plan; while there is overlap with the NCDA, not all previous growth areas are included as part of the Future Land Use Map. As the county continues to grow and change, the Future Land Use Map needs to continue to support the County’s development vision. This includes monitoring existing growth areas to ensure they can accommodate the types of development called for in this plan as well as potentially identifying new growth areas to support or enable growth where appropriate.

Rural and Agricultural Tourism (2018)

Rural and agricultural tourism, or agritourism, allows farm owners or operators to generate supplemental income by bringing visitors to a property to experience a working farm or other rural agricultural use. Agritourism can include farm stands or shops, self-pick orchards, farm stays, tours, on-farm classes, fairs, festivals, orchards, pumpkin patches, corn mazes, Christmas tree farms, wineries, youth camps, hunting or fishing, and more. Typically, the intensity of these uses is more commercial in nature than traditional agriculture, and can present planning challenges by increasing traffic in areas not traditionally accustomed to accommodating it. Johnson County currently has several agritourism businesses operating under home business or other commercial permits, and serving residents and visitors alike. There has been increased interest in agricultural tourism from other property owners whose operations are in parts of the county where current regulations do not support commercial or other high-intensity uses. The desire to expand Johnson County's tourism industry by capitalizing on rural properties and uses requires careful consideration to ensure that the additional strain on rural infrastructure can be addressed in a way that adequately protects the interests of surrounding land owners and the health and safety of the general public.

Fringe Area Development (2018)

This key issue has been de-emphasized. Between 2018 and 2023, PDS staff worked with interested local municipalities to update or adopt fringe area agreements. The County does not anticipate any new agreements or major updates in the next five years, but will work with any city that initiates discussions to update or adopt fringe area agreements. Refer to [Volume 1, section 1.5 \(pp. 23-24\)](#) for the original text of this key issue.

Farming and the Agricultural Exemption (2018)

This key issue has been de-emphasized. In 2020 and 2021, the County amended the UDO to provide greater flexibility for agricultural exemption, focusing on use rather than size while still limiting residential sprawl and protecting farmland. These new exemption guidelines meet the goals of the *2018 Comprehensive Plan*, so this item is no longer a key issue. Refer to [Volume 1, Section 1.5 \(p. 24\)](#) for the original text of this key issue.

Sustainability is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Chapter 2 highlights the new and existing priorities that relate to sustainability initiatives already in place and future practices.

The County considers sustainability in internal operations and external-facing efforts. Environmental concerns such as flooding, drought, natural resource protection, and greenhouse gas emissions reduction are among the considerations. Sustainability is not a stand-alone topic in life or in this plan; aspects of it are also addressed in the key issues, other priorities, and topic chapters.

Priorities

Two priorities were added to the Sustainability chapter, and all three priorities from 2018 were renewed and/or updated. (The origin year appears in parentheses after each priority.) As noted in the Introduction of this volume, updates to priorities were determined based on public input as well as feedback from the Board of Supervisors and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation, and Action (2024)

Climate change is one reason communities need to be resilient, linking to the new key issue of Resiliency. Climate change action also relates to the Environmental Disaster Resiliency priority (below) as more frequent and severe natural disasters such as the 2020 derecho affect Johnson County. At the same time, climate change impacts everyday living for residents and businesses. The federal *Fifth National Climate Assessment*, [Chapter 24](#), describes effects in the Midwest on agriculture, ecosystems, culture, health, infrastructure and water. Many of these effects will occur in Johnson County.

Climate change action addresses such issues as energy use, changing risks of pests or disease, and materials used in homes and structures. Effective action includes community outreach, collaboration on mitigation and adaptation efforts, and leveraging funding opportunities such as the Inflation Reduction Act. Economic impacts of climate change must also be considered in decision-making, for example, as growing seasons may affect recreation and agritourism (in positive and/or negative ways) or the expected increase of pollen sickens more people with asthma or allergies.

Mitigation and adaptation are important tools in climate action planning. Mitigation is avoiding the unmanageable, while adaptation is managing the unavoidable. When it comes to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, mitigating means reducing emissions to try to avoid increased temperatures and related climate effects. Adaptation comes into play when, for example, we cannot dial down regular extreme heat, which affects living things and infrastructure. It can be dangerous to be outdoors, or even indoors if a home is not properly cooled. Economic effects may include cancelled events and the need for alternative sites to host activities. High heat is an example of how climate change affects people differently, based on health, livelihood, income-level, and housing or lack thereof. In 2021, following the EcoAdapt adaptation training for County operations, the County adopted a heat safety policy for staff.

Potable Water Resources (2024)

Sufficient potable (clean drinking) water is essential to maintain a healthy community and allow for planful development. The Johnson County area includes several aquifers, which are rock or unconsolidated sediment that contains and transmits water to wells, where it can be accessed for drinking water. The availability of well water is crucial to households, businesses, and agricultural operations in the unincorporated and rural areas. One of the most important aquifers in Johnson County is the Silurian Aquifer. In 2022, the County engaged the U.S. Geological Survey to study this aquifer and help determine how to maintain it as a viable resource. Studies like this will be key to decision-making on protecting potable water resources.

Preserve Natural Resources (2018)

A theme throughout many conversations was the need to preserve Johnson County's environmentally sensitive areas and farmland from sprawl or unwanted residential growth in the rural areas of Johnson County. Key strategies to accomplish this goal are to look within recognized growth areas in the unincorporated area, the incorporated cities and unincorporated villages to identify development areas that minimize or, in some cases, eliminate opportunities for sprawl elsewhere. Redevelopment on infill lots within cities can also accomplish this goal; however, the County has no jurisdiction over development in the cities.

Environmental Disaster Resiliency (2018)

Over the years, Johnson County has experienced flooding, drought, and other environmental hazards that have impacted lives of many residents. Putting appropriate planning and zoning policies in place can reduce the impact of these events on structures and people. To that end, the County has implemented many policies; however, they must be updated on a regular basis in response to new information and the changing environment.

Leader in Sustainable Practices (2018)

Johnson County local government provides soil and water quality services to homeowners and businesses, and guidance on solar installations. The County supports expanded renewable energy production, including both private and utility-scale solar and wind, to reduce dependency on fossil fuels. Grant programs provide funding and technical assistance for nonprofit groups to complete energy efficiencies and other projects. However, there is opportunity to increase public awareness and education about sustainability as the County models best management practices. Creating new partnerships and seeking out new ways to share the benefits of these programs can help accomplish this outreach.

Goals, Strategies & Action Steps: Overview

Nearly every goal in the Sustainability chapter benefited from the addition of new strategies or action steps, and a seventh goal was added. Goal 5 and its supporting strategies and action steps were not changed. This section describes the essential changes and highlights the motivation for making them. (Changes reflecting the passage of time and minor updates are not outlined here.)

SUST 1 – *Support and implement sustainability strategies that preserve natural resources.*

Addition of Strategy 4: **Ensure compliance with requirements to preserve sensitive areas and maintain stormwater facilities.** The new strategy supports the priority to preserve natural resources and reflects needs inspired by the Climate Change priority. Since the plan was adopted in 2018, compliance tools and legal mechanisms were put in place. Now, the new strategy and its two accompanying action steps, with a focus on site visits, can ensure requirements and agreements are being followed.

SUST 2 – *Develop and/or coordinate with local and regional hazard mitigation, resiliency, and climate change planning.*

Addition of Strategy 4: **Protect and engage residents and businesses, especially vulnerable communities, on climate action and resiliency.** The new strategy and its two action steps reflect the new key issues of Equity and Opportunity and Resiliency. The action steps also incorporate sustainability-specific priorities related to environmental disasters and climate change, especially the need for collaboration.

SUST 3 – *Support affordable and equitable access to quality housing.*

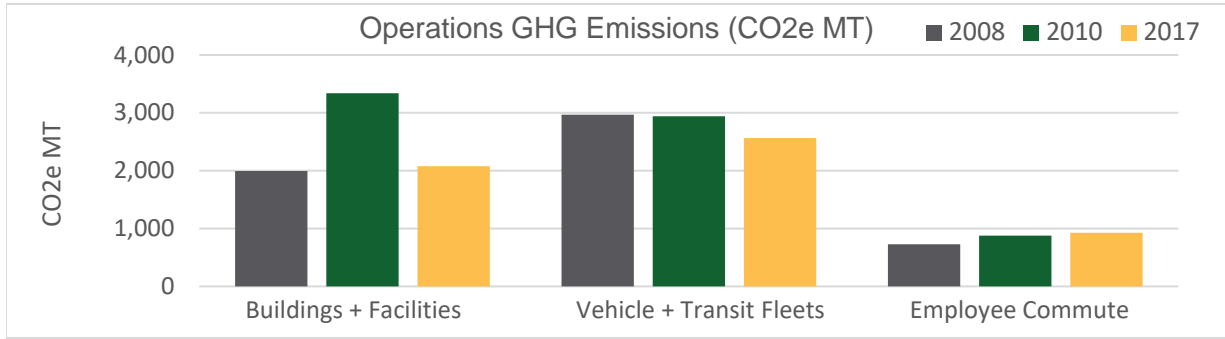
Strategy 2 in this goal was strengthened by changing “consider” to “establish” so that it states **establish a rental housing inspection and licensing program for the unincorporated area.** Since the plan was adopted in 2018, Planning, Development and Sustainability staff researched program possibilities. As a result, the County is now more prepared to make this program a reality. A housing-related priority and goal have been added to the [Land Use chapter](#) to further address housing needs (refer to pp. 25-26 of this update for more information). In addition, the built environment, specifically housing, is one of four priorities in the [Johnson County Community Health Improvement Plan 2023–2028](#).

SUST 4 – *Support and advance energy efficiency, resource conservation, and renewable energy programs, policies, and uses.*

Addition of Strategy 4: **Address appropriate new and emerging energy and sustainability technologies.** Energy provision and security are fast-developing fields and part of climate change and resiliency solutions. Two new action steps point to learning about changes and acting as needed.

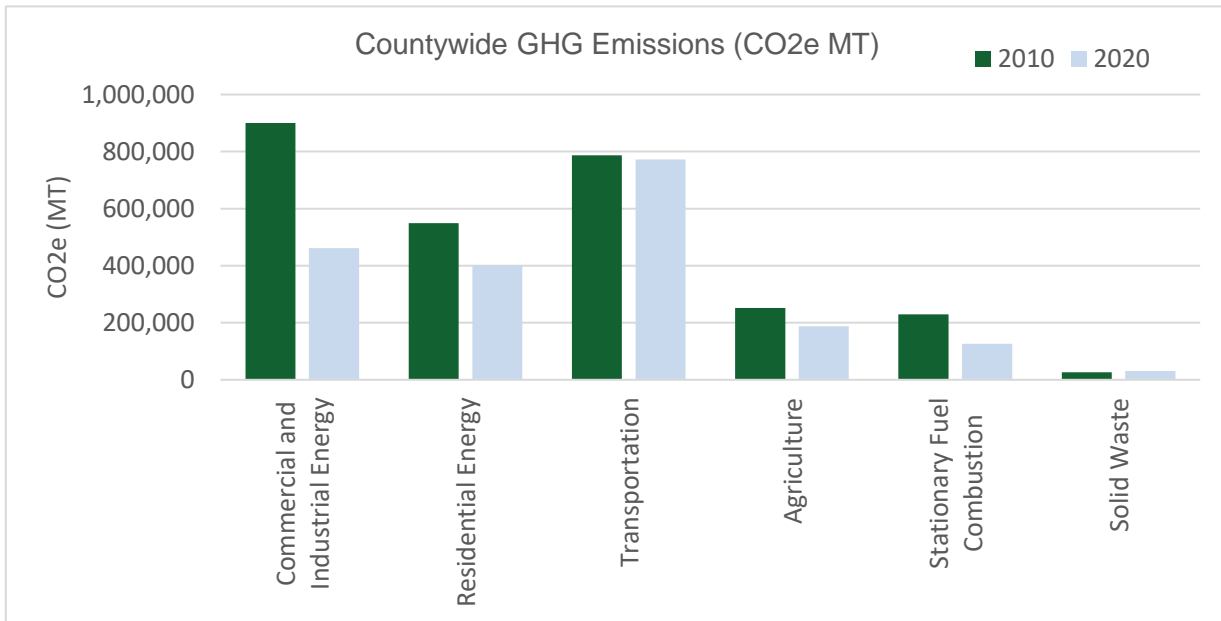
SUST 6 – *Remain a leader in sustainable and resilient facilities, operations, and infrastructure.*

Goal 6 was slightly modified, replacing “green” with “sustainable and resilient,” to account for the new Resiliency key issue and Climate Change priority. The addition of three action steps to Strategies 1 and 2 highlights the need to **measure and set reduction targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and work towards those intentional goals** (both operations and countywide). There is also a new action step to **conduct a county fleet study**.



Source: Johnson County Operations Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Update 2017

Past County operations and community GHG inventories show some positive trends as indicated, respectively, by the graphs shown. Still, there is work to be done. Energy efficiency and conservation, electrical vehicle use, and renewable energy and battery storage are all potential GHG mitigating actions, and some will also function as adaptative responses to climate change.



Source: Johnson County Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventories: 2010 Baseline and 2020

SUST 7 – Ensure provision of potable (drinkable) water to support existing and proposed development.

Strategy 1: **Consider the findings of the Silurian Aquifer Study in policy-making and development review, including industrial uses.**

Strategy 2: **Explore incentives or policies that reduce nonpoint source pollution.**

Provision of potable water is necessary in the daily life of residents and crucial to many business operations. This new goal and its two supporting strategies are driven by the new priority on Potable Water Resources. The first strategy, regarding Silurian Aquifer Study findings, will have both near- and longer-term implications for fostering resiliency and sustainable developments. The second strategy, on reducing nonpoint source pollution, relates to herbicides and pesticides used on residential, commercial, and industrial properties.

Local Economy

3

Chapter 3 focuses on strategies to ensure that Johnson County develops in an economically sustainable manner. In 2018, commercial and industrial growth was focused into cities, which house the largest employers of Johnson County including the University of Iowa, UI Health Care, and the Veterans Administration. Since then, the County has worked to expand opportunities and make regulations flexible to encourage small-scale commercial operations in rural areas.

With the adoption of the *2022 Economic Development Plan*, the County renewed support for agriculture, agritourism, and local foods. The *2022 Economic Development Plan* also promotes broadband access, partnerships with regional organizations and the smaller cities, investment in infrastructure, and developing a resilient economy.

Priorities

Two priorities were added to the Local Economy chapter, three priorities from 2018 were renewed and/or updated, and two were de-emphasized. (The origin year appears in parentheses after each priority.) As noted in the Introduction of this volume, updates to priorities were determined based on public input as well as feedback from the Board of Supervisors and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Johnson County Economic Development Plan (2024)

Recognizing the need to provide economic support and opportunities in rural areas in addition to opportunities in the urban centers, Johnson County adopted a stand-alone plan: the *2022 Johnson County, Iowa, Economic Development Plan: Opportunities for the Unincorporated Area, Villages and Smaller Towns*. The plan includes 16 recommendations in five topic areas: agriculture, agritourism, and local foods; broadband; economic development leadership; housing, infrastructure, partnerships, and resource deployment; and sustainability and resilience. Those topics mirror other key issues and priorities in this plan. Johnson County economic development efforts should focus on implementing the recommendations of the *2022 Economic Development Plan*.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (2024)

Johnson County is home to a variety of unique communities that contribute to a strong local economy. In return, the County promotes equitable economic development. This means considering the specific needs of our residents, such as the Amish and Mennonite communities, new farmers, and people whose primary language is not English. The County can provide programs and partner with local organizations to support small farm operations, underrepresented business owners, quality job opportunities in rural areas, and access to services such as childcare and broadband internet.

Equitable Economic Development

This comprehensive plan update follows the *2022 Economic Development Plan*, which defines equitable economic development as “...the belief that all communities have the right to exist in a pollution-free, inclusive and just economic environment that is free from persistent and systemic discrimination.”

Agricultural Economy (2018)

First, and foremost, supporting the agricultural economy is key to the future success of Johnson County. There has been an emphasis on using sustainable agricultural practices as the preferred method of growing food in Johnson County. The County hopes to encourage greater use of best management practices, such as buffer strips and other sustainability practices, to limit excess nutrients from entering local waterways.

Support for Local Food and Agritourism (2018)

Continuing the theme of agriculture, support for local foods in Johnson County is very strong. However, many local food producers face challenges unique to Johnson County when getting their agricultural operations started. While a small segment of the population, this group of farmers is important to the production of local produce and other products that many Johnson County residents say they want. Changes to the zoning code could alleviate some of these barriers and open new economic opportunities through agritourism, benefiting these farmers as well as the county as a whole. Additional County support can be provided through creating a local foods plan, supporting dedicated rural economic development staffing, and pursuing partnerships with local organizations already doing this type of work.

Commercial and Industrial Development (2018)

Johnson County has long held the belief that higher intensity commercial and industrial development should be located in or adjacent to cities, in areas where facilities can be served by utilities and are near the local workforce. This sentiment remains; however, there is increasing interest in siting lower intensity nonresidential uses in rural areas such as near existing commercial or industrial uses, unincorporated villages, or major intersections, and within the two-mile fringe areas of the incorporated cities. Since 2018, interest has grown in exploring ways to encourage rural economic development that considers available infrastructure, employee quality of life, and impacts of climate change and other uncertainties.

Agricultural Exemption (2018)

In 2020 and 2021, the County amended the Unified Development Ordinance to provide greater flexibility for agricultural exemption, focusing on use rather than size while still limiting residential sprawl and protecting farmland. These new exemption guidelines meet goals of the *2018 Comprehensive Plan*, so this item is no longer a priority for Johnson County. Related information on agricultural exemption is referenced in a key issue from 2018 that has been de-emphasized.

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) (2018)

Since 2018, there has been little interest from the state in allowing local regulation of CAFOs. With no change on the horizon, the County's focus is better spent growing other aspects of a diverse and resilient local economy. As a result, this item is also no longer a priority for Johnson County. The Board of Supervisors may continue to advocate for state legislative changes when appropriate.

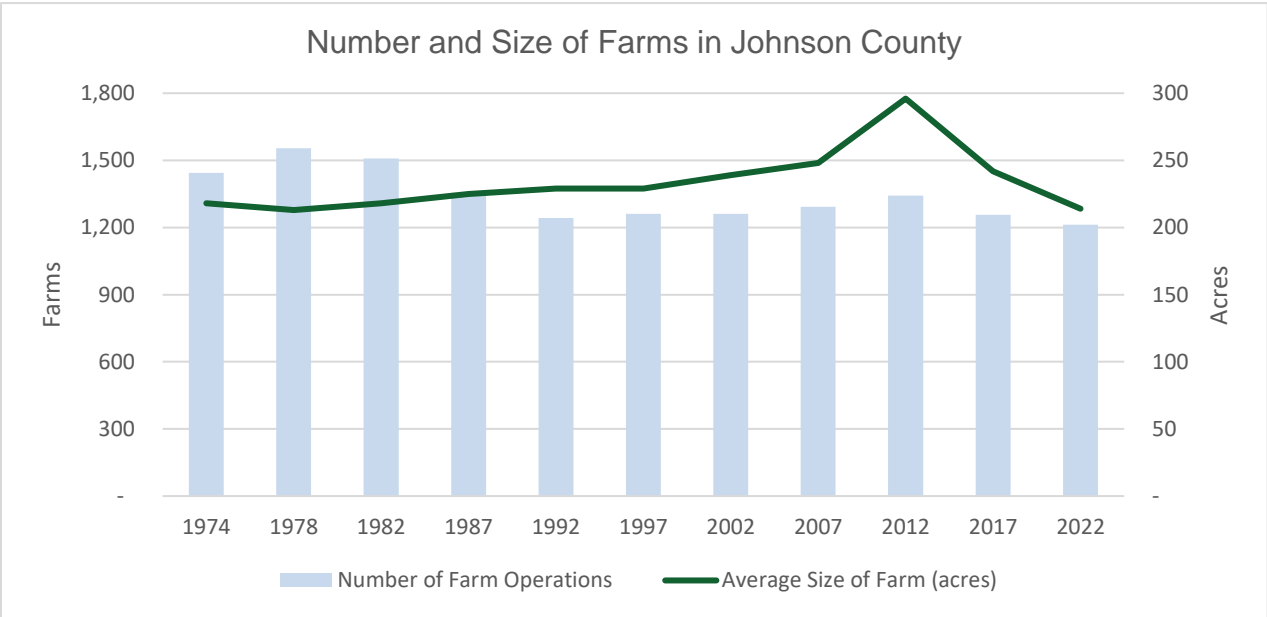
Goals, Strategies & Action Steps: Overview

All four goals in Local Economy have new strategies or action steps to support new key issues and priorities. No new goals were added. This section describes the essential additions and highlights the motivation for adding them. (Changes reflecting the passage of time and minor updates are not outlined here.)

ECON 1 – Foster a diverse and resilient local economy.

Addition of two action steps to *Strategy 1: Support industries that complement and enhance the existing local economy*. The action steps are to **pursue a study on local job shifts** and **utilize funding for structure rehabilitation**. The steps will contribute to an economy that can handle extreme events such as floods or high heat. These resiliency action steps are also recommendations within the *2022 Economic Development Plan*.

Addition of two action steps to Strategies 2 and 4 to **provide assistance to rural businesses** and **create programs to support underrepresented businesses owners**, and a new Strategy 5 to **utilize regional economic development plans**. These changes reflect the new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion priority and Equity and Opportunity key issue. The latest USDA Census of Agriculture (2022) shows an overall trend of farms consolidating into fewer operations in Johnson County, with a recent reduction in average farm size (graph below). Local assistance is needed to help our small farms, supporting businesses, and rural services thrive.



Source: USDA Censuses of Agriculture

ECON 2 – Ensure that new and expanding commercial and industrial uses will follow the county’s adopted Economic Development Plan.

Addition of Strategy 3: **Implement the recommendations of the 2022 Johnson County, Iowa, Economic Development Plan: Opportunities for the Unincorporated Area, Villages and Smaller Towns**. Now that the County has a stand-alone plan for economic development, this strategy reinforces our commitment to carry it out.

ECON 3 – *Encourage sustainable agricultural activities.*

Addition of an action step to *Strategy 3: Promote and support local food and small farm operations*. The new action step targets **alleviating food insecurity through existing partnerships and County facilities**.

When the local food network provides everyone access to healthy, affordable food, residents are healthier and can focus on more than basic needs. Additionally, using resources within Johnson County to address food insecurity makes the local economy more resilient to regional shocks and global events. Addressing food security is highlighted in the *2022 Economic Development Plan* and is one of four priorities in the [Johnson County Public Health Community Improvement Plan 2023–2028](#).

ECON 4 – *Provide opportunities for sustainable commercial and industrial activities that enhance livability and are compatible with surrounding land uses.*

New action steps under Strategy 1 and Strategy 3 direct the County, respectively, to **review Site Plan regulations** and **explore unique funding opportunities for economic development**, promoting the new Rural Economic Development key issue.

An action step was added to Strategy 2, regarding large-scale commercial and industrial development. The action step reflects that the Silurian Aquifer Study may find that sustainable economic development must **consider available water resources when siting new industrial uses**. This action step is related to a new priority and goal on potable water in the Sustainability chapter.

Infrastructure and Amenities

4

Johnson County local government does not provide public water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, telephonic, or internet infrastructure, leaving the provision of such utilities to the individual homeowner, site developer, or private industry. The existing County public road network is maintained by Johnson County Secondary Roads, while building connections to the existing public road network remains the responsibility of private developers. Through development guidelines, Johnson County provides minimum standards for private infrastructure provisions related to commercial and residential development. Public amenities such as parks and recreational trails are provided and maintained by the County Conservation Department for residents and visitors. In addition, County support of grant applications by public and private organizations helps promote the expansion of infrastructure and amenities including parks, trails, and broadband internet connectivity.

Priorities

One priority was added to the Infrastructure and Amenities chapter, while the four priorities from 2018 were renewed and/or updated. (The origin year appears in parentheses after each priority.) As noted in the Introduction of this volume, updates to priorities were determined based on public input as well as feedback from the Board of Supervisors and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Transportation Alternatives (2024)

Public input and information from area employers indicates a desire to increase transportation options beyond the use of single-passenger vehicles. Doing so may increase the accessibility of the county to all individuals while also increasing economic opportunities, worker retention, and environmental sustainability. Transportation alternatives include the use of human- or electric-powered machines such as bicycles and scooters; public or mass transportation such as buses or vanpools; and walking or running. While many county roads do not include sidewalk infrastructure that is common in urban areas, County support for alternative transportation may take many forms including, but not limited to, grant support, trail creation and maintenance, operating or improving existing mass transit or on demand systems, and supporting the creation of commuting facilities for those traveling from rural to urban areas or vice versa.

Connectivity (Physical and Digital Connections) (2018)

Public safety is a top concern of Johnson County, and connectivity issues such as long dead-end roads with no secondary outlet pose a challenge to public safety providers. While this is a problem across Johnson County's rural road system, the areas north of the metro have the most issues. This difference is in part due to the geographical impediments present in these areas, including the Coralville Reservoir, steep slopes, and the preservation of sensitive areas. The 2020 Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) included revisions to require stub-outs to adjoining properties, thereby increasing connectivity as the private road network expands due to development.

While this priority will continue to focus on the connectivity of safe physical infrastructure, consideration is added for digital connections in rural areas (broadband internet access and availability). Since the 2018 plan was adopted, both the importance of and societal demand for reliable, fast broadband internet

connectivity for work, school, and healthcare have increased. Support to digitally connect county residents and businesses is recognized as a priority concern in this update.

Provision of Infrastructure and Utilities (2018)

Potable water and wastewater systems are site specific. While energy and telecommunication utilities are provided by private companies or cooperatives, the County encourages the development of forward-thinking infrastructure such as utility-scale solar and universally available high-speed internet in Johnson County. The County's role in permitting and reviewing these elements is twofold: 1) to assure existing services can be made available to new buildable lots, per county and state law, for public health, safety and welfare; and 2) to support applications that seek to responsibly establish or expand these infrastructure and utility facilities in the county.

Road Performance Standards (2018)

The current Road Performance Standards (RPS) have been both successful and challenging. They have ensured that existing road conditions are considered before allowing additional development and subsequent traffic, but the standards in place at the time of the Comprehensive Plan adoption in 2018 may have restricted development in recognized growth areas.

Road Performance Standards were updated in the 2020 Unified Development Ordinance (UDO); however, there may still be room for updating the standards to better reflect current state and federal traffic design and safety guidelines. Doing so should help balance growth demands with the necessity of maintaining safety on rural roads. Reviewing traffic patterns within areas designated for non-agricultural uses on the Future Land Use Map may help the Board of Supervisors prioritize future road projects.

Trails to the Future (2018)

Trails are a high priority for many Johnson County residents. Not only do trails provide a quality-of-life amenity, but trails also create better connectivity among rural subdivisions and provide another means of transportation for a growing group of people who choose to commute by bicycle. The connectivity, amenity, and economic benefits offered by a robust trail network are worth pursuing.

Goals, Strategies & Action Steps: Overview

Three goals in the Infrastructure and Amenities chapter benefited from the addition of new strategies or action steps, while two other goals remained unchanged. This section describes the essential changes and highlights the motivation for making them. (Changes reflecting the passage of time and minor updates are not outlined here.)

INF 2 – Utilize existing infrastructure and adopt green infrastructure practices.

An action step was added to Strategy 1, which relates to inter-departmental coordination. The action step aims to **focus on resiliency and sustainable growth** by considering both the amount and the type of infrastructure required as the county grows.

Two action steps were added to Strategy 3, which addresses regional transportation and long-range planning, to **help reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) through appropriate siting of employment centers** and to **maximize road infrastructure resiliency**. Fully realizing the potential of existing multi-modal connectivity increases the opportunity for commuting modes other than single-occupancy vehicles, which are still the dominant form of commuting (see table below).

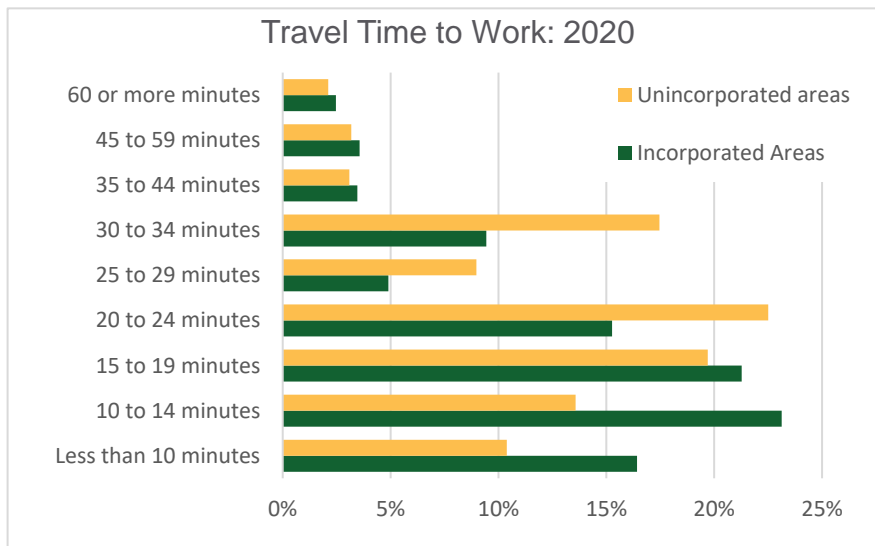
Worker Counts and Commuting Mode Shares: 2020	Incorporated	Unincorporated	Johnson County	Iowa
Workers 16 years and older	67,471	13,905	81,376	1,583,657
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK				
Car, truck, or van – Drove alone	67.52%	76.19%	69.00%	80.20%
Car, truck, or van – Carpooled	8.29%	8.35%	8.30%	8.00%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	5.63%	0.75%	4.80%	0.90%
Walked	9.43%	2.83%	8.30%	3.10%
Bicycle	1.83%	1.05%	1.70%	0.40%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	1.24%	1.60%	1.30%	0.90%
Worked from home	6.14%	8.84%	6.60%	6.40%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020 ACS five-year estimates

INF 3 – Make transportation, land use, and infrastructure decisions that encourage a reduction in auto-dependent travel.

An action step was added to existing *Strategy 1: Promote safe use of the county’s public road network by all users*. The new action step recognizes that not all Johnson County residents can easily walk, bike, or ride due to a visible or invisible disability and/or because of lack of infrastructure where they would like to travel. **Supporting the County’s mobility coordination efforts** promotes greater equity and transportation access for all residents.

Two action steps were added to existing *Strategy 2: Support development that will reduce vehicle miles traveled*. While the county has an extensive network of trails, further **emphasis on siting new trail opportunities that link housing, services, and employment opportunities** will provide the infrastructure needed to encourage alternative transportation modes.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020 ACS five-year estimates

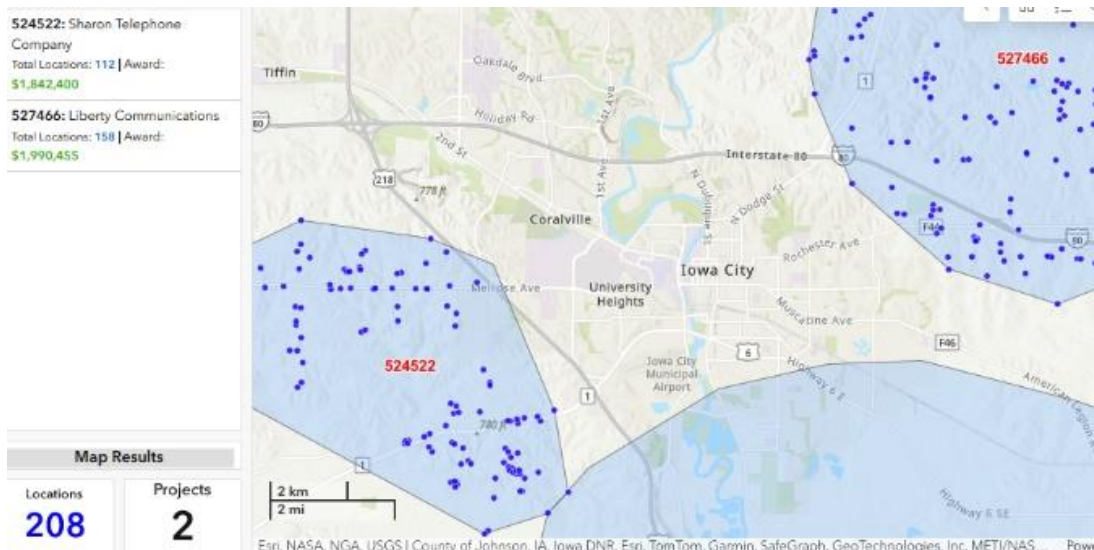
Commuting time as measured in 2020 persists in being longer for residents in the unincorporated area (mean of 22.6 minutes) than for the metro area (mean of 19.4 minutes). Facilitating the **creation of commuting lots through zoning code changes** may encourage ride-sharing opportunities for rural residents to access employment and amenities in the incorporated areas.

INF 5 – Support amenities that enhance livability and quality of life.

Three action steps were added to existing *Strategy 4: Consider improvements to communication infrastructure and access to technology in coordination with economic development goals.*

Two of the action steps strengthen private expansion of the broadband network by **supporting the efforts of local providers** and the **appropriate use of right-of-way for broadband**. A third action step helps prioritize **internet education, access, and affordability programs**. These changes reflect the updated priority on Digital Connections and the new Equity and Resiliency key issues. During the COVID-19 pandemic, increased online connectivity provided opportunities for remote work, school, and healthcare, all of which made the difference between a vibrant resilient community and one more susceptible to natural and man-made shocks.

Increasing access to high-speed internet within the County is also a goal within the *2022 Economic Development Plan*. Through a competitive state program, the County received Broadband Intervention Zone status for three areas, with two ranked among the 10 highest areas statewide in need of high-speed internet. The designations helped local providers win competitive grants for broadband expansion, as shown by the map (below).



Broadband expansion grant (NOFA 8) locations in Johnson County. Source: www.ocio.iow.gov

Two action steps were added to *Strategy 6*, which relates to renewable energy use. In support of the newly identified key issue of Resiliency and the priority of Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation, and Action, the new actions focus on **incentive programs for equitable access to renewable energy sources** and the **deployment of varied, resilient energy production**. Reducing reliance on any one energy source makes a supply disruption less likely.

Addition of *Strategy 7: Support the expansion of transportation options that reduce greenhouse gas emissions*, and two action steps to support the new strategy. While action steps in other goals encourage alternative transportation modes, individuals will likely choose to continue operating personal vehicles for their mobility needs. As such, the two new action steps promote infrastructure accommodations in the form of **electric vehicle charging stations** and **funding opportunities** for those looking to transition from fossil fuel burning vehicles. The new strategy and action steps foster climate change action in Johnson County.

Chapter 5 guides future residential, commercial, and industrial growth by informing development and zoning decisions within the County’s jurisdiction (i.e. the areas outside the incorporated cities). The goals in this section are tied very closely to the Future Land Use Tools (Map, Zoning Compatibility Matrix, and Development Guidelines) found in [Volume 1 starting on p. 110](#). This chapter identifies the type of development acceptable in different locations as well as strategies to balance accommodating growth demands with the protection of the agricultural and environmental integrity of Johnson County.

Priorities

Two priorities were added to the Land Use chapter, two priorities from 2018 were renewed and/or updated, and two priorities from 2018 were de-emphasized. (The origin year appears in parentheses after each priority.) As noted in the Introduction of this volume, updates to priorities were determined based on public input as well as feedback from the Board of Supervisors and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Equitable Access to Safe and Affordable Housing (2024)

Many Johnson County residents face obstacles to finding affordable and safe housing. Housing affordability and safety are separate but related issues. Residents should have access to homes that they can afford, which is often defined as paying less than 30% of income towards housing costs. At the same time, housing costs should not come at the expense of personal safety and well-being, including the ability to afford appropriate heating and cooling or live in a structurally sound building. In addition, residents may have to choose between paying rent or a mortgage and purchasing food or medicine. While the County may be limited in its ability to directly spur the construction of new housing, making these issues a priority in land use decisions can help address housing concerns of residents.

The County approaches the issue of safe and affordable housing in many ways. For example, Social Services produced a report in 2023 on housing affordability, the County annually contributes to the Johnson County Housing Trust Fund, and Public Health prioritized housing in the [Johnson County Community Health Improvement Plan 2023–2028](#). From a planning and development perspective, the County can use regulation and policy to facilitate new housing in the unincorporated area (where appropriate) and engage with cities and local non-profit groups to increase the supply of affordable housing units within corporate limits. In addition to addressing supply, the County should work to improve the quality and safety of existing and future housing stock. Continued enforcement of the County’s building inspection program—as well as adoption and implementation of a rental housing inspection program—will help ensure housing stock meets minimum standards for the safety and wellbeing of occupants.

Rural Economic Development (2024)

Growth, stability, and resiliency of the local economy in the unincorporated area and small towns has become a focus within the county in the past five years. While some businesses and industries need access to city infrastructure, others are better sited in the sparsely populated unincorporated area. Supporting rural businesses outside the main urban center can also help improve the stability of Johnson County’s small towns and unincorporated villages.

Since 2018, Johnson County local government has undertaken planning efforts focused on rural economic development, culminating in the adoption of the *2022 Johnson County, Iowa, Economic Development Plan: Opportunities for the Unincorporated Area, Villages and Smaller Towns*. Integrating the County's rural economic development goals in future land use decisions is an important contributing factor to the success of that plan as well as this comprehensive plan. Direct, yet general, references to the goals and policies outlined in the *2022 Economic Development Plan* will give the County the greatest flexibility to frame land use decisions in a way that promotes implementation of that plan.

Preserve Natural Resources (2018)

A persistent theme during the comprehensive plan process in 2018 and in the five years since has been the need to protect Johnson County's environmentally sensitive areas from residential growth. Key strategies to accomplish this goal include continuing to encourage growth in incorporated cities and villages, where infill potential is highest; strengthening the sensitive areas ordinance; and developing sustainable subdivision design regulations to ensure efficient development practices. In addition, the Future Land Use Map identifies areas for preservation and conservation-style development. While many of these goals have been met through ordinance update (see Conservation Subdivision Development priority below), preservation of natural resources remains a fundamental priority for the County and will continue to be a focus moving forward.

Rural Residential Development (2018)

The Future Land Use Map provides for rural residential development to accommodate population growth, while preserving environmentally sensitive and agriculturally productive areas of the county. A large portion of the most environmentally sensitive areas are already protected as part of Lake Macbride State Park and other parks and wildlife management areas; however, privately owned environmentally sensitive areas are still subject to development pressures. The Future Land Use Tools have proven effective at directing growth and managing the impacts of that growth since 2018.

Because the vast majority of rural growth seen in Johnson County is residential in nature, continued focus on rural residential development is important. Locating residential development near cities and encouraging interconnectedness of roads and trails should help reduce vehicles miles traveled and limit both air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions while accommodating population growth. Residential growth should be located in areas designated for residential development on the Future Land Use Map.

Conservation Subdivision Development (2018)

In 2020 the County amended the Unified Development Ordinance to incorporate several regulations to encourage conservation development designs, including maximum lot sizes, density and lot size bonuses, and strengthened protections for environmentally sensitive areas. These changes have proven successful at shifting the development patterns towards a more compact design that provides density within development areas and preserves open space. Updating the zoning, subdivision, and environmental regulations met many goals related to conservation subdivision development outlined in the *2018 Comprehensive Plan*, so the County's focus is better spent pursuing goals in other aspects of land use.

Fringe Area Agreements (2018)

Since 2018, new fringe area agreements have been adopted with seven of the 14 communities that have extraterritorial review area (also known as "fringe area") in Johnson County. The other seven cities have indicated that they are not interested in updating (or entering into new) fringe area agreements with the County at this time. As the County does not anticipate any new agreements or major updates in the next five years, this item is no longer a priority.

Goals, Strategies & Action Steps: Overview

Three of the five existing goals in the Land Use chapter have new strategies or action steps to support key issues and priorities in this plan. A sixth goal was added to directly address the new priority of Equitable Access to Safe and Affordable Housing. Goals 1 and 2 and their supporting strategies and action steps remain unchanged. This section describes the essential changes and highlights the motivation for making them. (Changes reflecting the passage of time and minor updates are not outlined here.)

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

Addition of an action step under Strategy 2, which relates to siting commercial and industrial development, to **encourage development in accordance with recently adopted economic development plans**. In addition to planning efforts that resulted in the *2022 Economic Development Plan*, efforts by other groups in the community have focused on equity and inclusion in economic development. This action step provides overt support for development proposals that align with these other adopted plans and policies.

Addition of Strategy 4: **Implement the recommendations of the 2022 Johnson County, Iowa, Economic Development Plan: Opportunities for the Unincorporated Area, Villages and Smaller Towns**. Now that the County has a stand-alone plan for economic development, this strategy reinforces the County's commitment to carry it out.

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

Addition of one action step under Strategy 2 to **explore assisting smaller towns in administrating their development regulations**. The *2022 Economic Development Plan* addresses not only rural development, but also the success of the small towns in Johnson County. Exploring arrangements to share resources between the County and our smaller towns—many of which have limited staff resources—could benefit all residents.

LND 5 – Continue to protect and improve Johnson County's natural resources: land, water, and air.

Addition of Strategy 4: **Discourage development designs that propose sensitive areas impacts beyond what is necessary to reasonably develop a property**. Protecting environmentally sensitive areas in the County has been a priority of the Board of Supervisors for nearly 20 years, as reflected in key issues and priorities in this plan.

LND 6 – Foster equitable access to safe and affordable housing throughout Johnson County.

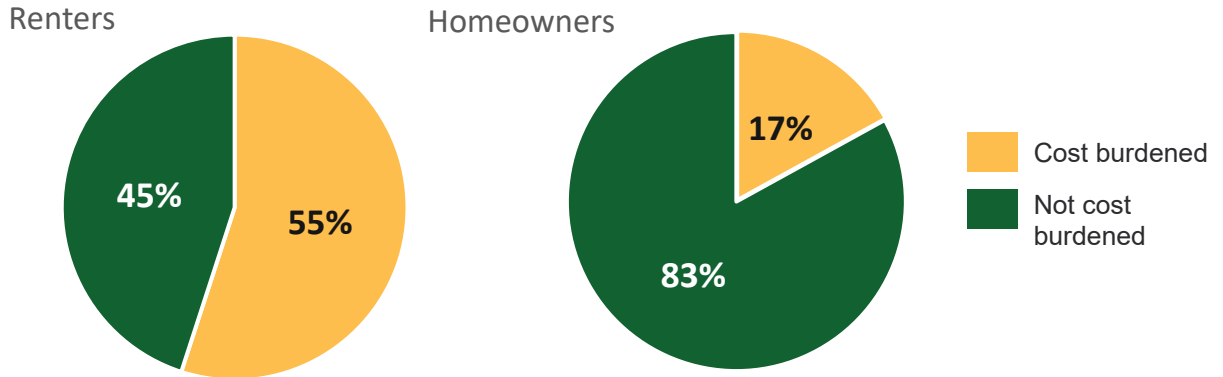
This new goal and two supporting strategies reflect the key issues of Equity and Opportunity and Resiliency, and the land use priority of Equitable Access to Safe and Affordable Housing.

Addition of Strategy 1: **Promote safe housing**. To increase safe housing for all residents, four action steps under Strategy 1 aim to keep code compliance robust, promote building code compliance throughout the county, implement a permitting program to ensure rental units meet a minimum standard, and promote the siting of new dwellings in environmentally safe areas.

Addition of Strategy 2: **Support programs that expand options for affordable housing.** Four action steps in this strategy support the provision of affordable housing. Specifically, they direct the County to develop a housing action plan, improve manufactured housing stock, review regulations around auxiliary dwelling units, and explore new funding opportunities.

As shown by the figures below, a majority of renters (55%) and nearly one in five homeowners (17%) in the county are cost-burdened by their housing, meaning they pay more than 30% of their income on rent/mortgage and utilities.

Housing Cost Burden for Renters and Homeowners in Johnson County (2023)



Source: National Low-Income Housing Coalition 2023; Johnson County Affordable Housing Report 2023

The new housing goal under Land Use is also supported by Sustainability Goal 3, which calls for engagement on regional efforts with the cities, community groups, and agencies working on affordable housing in the county. Affordable housing is more successful when it can be located near transit, employment, education, and services, which are predominately within incorporated areas. Collaborating with our cities and community partners on affordable housing development within the cities will provide better outcomes for residents.

Implementation

6

The Implementation Table is organized by topic: Sustainability, Local Economy, Infrastructure and Amenities, and Land Use. For each goal within a topic, the table details five components: Strategy/Action Step, Timeframe, Collaborating Partners, Mid-Term Status, and Mid-Term Status Specifics.

Goals, Strategies, and Action Steps

The Implementation Table includes the goals, strategies, and action steps from Volume 1 as well as the new goals, strategies, and action steps added to support the key issues and priorities in this update.

Timeframe

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

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

Collaborating Partners

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

Mid-Term Status

In 2023, PDS staff completed the mid-term evaluation of each action step and stand-alone strategy. The review considered policy, program, and Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) updates and additions, changes in State Code, and other relevant activities or events that occurred during the first five years of the *2018 Comprehensive Plan*. Statuses, which are listed and defined below, were assigned to each action step and stand-alone strategy.

- *Ongoing*: 2018 actions that are continuous or in progress
- *Met*: 2018 actions that have been completed (a few statuses are variations of "met" due to special circumstances)
- *Not met*: 2018 actions that have not yet been completed
- *No longer applicable*: 2018 actions that are no longer a focus
- *New*: strategies and action steps inspired by the key issues and priorities added in this update

Mid-Term Status Specifics

The mid-term status is briefly explained for each action step and stand-alone strategy from 2018. The specifics highlight what was accomplished, work in progress, or why the item was not completed.

Table Key

The following key applies to the entire Implementation Table; some abbreviations may not appear in every chapter:

BOS: Johnson County Board of Supervisors

CSD: Community School Districts

CVB: Iowa City/Coralville Convention & Visitors Bureau

ECICOG: East Central Iowa Council of Governments

EMA: Johnson County Emergency Management Agency

FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency

FSA: Farm Service Agency

Greater IC: Greater Iowa City (includes the former ICAD)

GIS: Johnson County Geographic Information System staff

IDNR: Iowa Department of Natural Resources

I-DOT: Iowa Department of Transportation

IEDA: Iowa Economic Development Authority

IT: Johnson County Information Technology

JCPH: Johnson County Public Health

MPOJC: Metropolitan Planning Organization of Johnson County

NRCS: Natural Resources Conservation Service

OCIO: Office of the Chief Information Officer

PDS: Johnson County Planning, Development and Sustainability

SEATS: Johnson County SEATS Paratransit

SWCD: Johnson County Soil and Water Conservation District

UDO: Johnson County Unified Development Ordinance

USDA: U.S. Department of Agriculture

WMA: Watershed Management Authority

Chapter 2: Sustainability

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
SUST 1 – Support and implement sustainability strategies that preserve natural resources.				
Strategy 1 – Revise development permitting procedures to improve on-site resource protection.				
Action 1 – Create topsoil preservation rules.	Short-term	PDS, NRCS, SWCD	Met	The 2020 UDO requires developers to keep topsoil on site.
Action 2 – Update soil erosion control regulations to require erosion control on certain building permits for new structures.	Mid-term	PDS, NRCS, SWCD	Met	The 2020 UDO requires this type of erosion control.
Action 3 – Create an inspection procedure for sensitive areas, stormwater, topsoil preservation, and soil erosion control for all development sites.	Short-term	PDS, NRCS, SWCD	Met	Staff implemented internal procedures for tracking and monitoring development sites.
Strategy 2 – Foster the development of watershed and water quality plans.				
Action 1 – Continue to participate in Watershed Management Authorities and collaborate with local experts.	Ongoing	BOS, Various WMAs, Iowa Flood Center	Met and ongoing	The County completed the Iowa Watershed Approach Project through the Clear Creek Watershed Coalition and continues to participate; continues to participate in the English River WMA; and created and participates in the Middle Iowa WMA.
Action 2 – Incorporate best management practices into stormwater management.	Short-term	PDS, NRCS, SWCD	Met and ongoing	The 2020 UDO stormwater management regulations are tied to the Iowa Stormwater Management Manual.
Strategy 3 – Support and encourage a sustainable agricultural system by working with partners.				
Action 1 – Encourage in-field and edge-of-field best management practices on lands used for row crop production.	Ongoing	PDS, NRCS, SWCD	No longer applicable	The responsibility shifted to the Johnson County Soil and Water Conservation District.
Strategy 4 – Ensure compliance with requirements to preserve sensitive areas and maintain stormwater facilities.				
Action 1 – Conduct site visits to ensure adherence to preservation outlot requirements and conservation easement agreements.	Ongoing	PDS	<i>New</i>	
Action 1 – Conduct routine inspections of stormwater facilities to ensure adherence to maintenance agreements.	Ongoing	PDS	<i>New</i>	

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
SUST 2 – Develop and/or coordinate with local and regional hazard mitigation, resiliency, and climate change planning.				
Strategy 1 – Review and help update the current <i>Johnson County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan</i>.				
Action 1 – Consider how the plan’s requirements affect other county goals.	Short-term	BOS, PDS, EMA	Met	The hazard mitigation plan goals were considered during floodplain buyouts (2019+), adaptation training (2021), and economic development planning (2022+).
Action 2 – Promote greater coordination between the County, city governments, and other organizations.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, EMA, cities, ECICOG, CSD	Met and ongoing	The 2019–2024 five-year plan was adopted with input from PDS.
Action 3 – Contribute to and comply with future plans as they are created.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, EMA, ECICOG	Met and ongoing	PDS will engage on the update to create the 2025–2029 plan.
Action 4 – Integrate future hazard mitigation plan findings and policies into plans and projects related to land use, transportation, climate change, sustainability, natural and cultural resource protection, watershed management, and economic development.	Mid-term	BOS, PDS, EMA, Secondary Roads, Conservation	Met and ongoing	Plan findings informed the EcoAdapt Adaptation Workshop 2021 and report, the <i>2022 Economic Development Plan</i> , and the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. The plan also aided creation and work of watershed consortiums. The Conservation Department acquired and restored floodplains along the Cedar and Iowa rivers, improving natural abilities to infiltrate flood water, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat.
Strategy 2 – Discourage development in flood-prone areas.				
Action 1 – Use, and educate the public about, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) digital Flood Hazard Maps and local floodplain regulations.	Ongoing	PDS, IDNR, EMA, FEMA	Met and ongoing	PDS alerted the public to upcoming FEMA map and regulation changes.
Action 2 – Consider updates to the Floodplain Development Regulations to improve protection from flood damage.	Mid-term	PDS, IDNR, EMA	Met	Floodplain regulations were updated to include fill requirements so that even if no structure is involved, there is less impact. This update followed the IDNR model ordinance.
Action 3 – Adopt the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) latest model floodplain ordinance with considerations specific to Johnson County.	Short-term	PDS, IDNR, EMA	Met	See Action 2 above.
Action 4 – Establish best management practices.	Mid-term	PDS, IDNR, EMA	Met	See Action 2 above.
Action 5 – Consider membership in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) or equivalent program.	Mid-term	PDS, IDNR, EMA	Not met	The benefits of NFIP membership do not currently outweigh costs. Thus, this action step was revised from “secure” to “consider.”

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Strategy 3 – Create a climate action and resiliency plan.				
Action 1 – Coordinate efforts with existing plans and efforts of incorporated areas.	Mid-term	BOS, PDS, cities, EMA	Ongoing	While no formal action and resiliency plan has been written, greenhouse gas emissions reports in 2018 and 2023 included recommended actions. County Sustainability staff have also increased coordination with Iowa City, other towns, and the Eastern Iowa EV Implementation Group.
Action 2 – Identify key stakeholders and partners for plan development and implementation.	Mid-term	BOS, PDS, cities, EMA, ECICOG	Ongoing	Efforts to create a regional climate action plan began in 2023 through the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant process led by ECICOG.
Action 3 – Coordinate as appropriate with state, national, and international plans and initiatives.	Mid-term	BOS, PDS, cities, EMA	Ongoing	In addition to the activity described above, PDS began work in 2023 on a federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant.
Strategy 4 – Protect and engage residents and businesses, especially vulnerable communities, on climate action and resiliency.			<i>New</i>	
Action 1 – Collaborate with Johnson County Public Health and other agencies on overlapping concerns related to climate change and resiliency.	Ongoing	PDS, JCPH, Social Services	<i>New</i>	
Action 2 – Consider how climate will impact jobs, the economy, and equitable access to resources when making policy and programmatic decisions.	Ongoing	PDS, JCPH, Social Services, Greater IC	<i>New</i>	
SUST 3 – Support affordable and equitable access to quality housing.				
Strategy 1 – Promote a variety of housing options.				
Action 1 – Encourage, where appropriate, higher density and multifamily housing by using incentives such as density bonuses.	Short-term	PDS, Livable Communities Advisory Committee, Housing Trust Fund	Met	The 2020 UDO includes density bonuses within several zoning districts.
Action 2 – Support efforts to develop affordable rental and owner-occupied housing.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, local housing experts	Ongoing	PDS drafted a rental code, which needs to be discussed and formally adopted. Adopting a rental code requires purchasing or developing a new online permitting system in order to track rental permits.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Action 3 – Participate in and/or conduct regional housing studies to identify housing needs.	Mid-Term/ Ongoing	BOS, PDS, local housing experts, MPOJC	Ongoing	Completing a quality housing study will require funding. A new action step (within a new goal) in Land Use supports this effort, as does the <i>2022 Economic Development Plan</i> .
Action 4 – Consider how housing options relate to coordinated land use goals and transportation in this comprehensive plan.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, local housing experts, MPOJC	Ongoing	Options were considered in the development guidelines for applications.
Action 5 – Adopt and/or develop regulations that accommodate a wider variety of housing types.	Short-term/ Ongoing	BOS, PDS, local housing experts	Met	The 2020 UDO included regulations supporting a wider variety of housing types.
Strategy 2 – Establish a rental housing inspection and licensing program for the unincorporated area.				
Action 1 – Review best management practices.	Mid-term	PDS, cities, rural landlords	Met	PDS researched and drafted a rental housing code. See SUST 3, Strategy 1, Actions 2 and 3 for more information.
Action 2 – Dedicate financial resources to fund, if adopted.	Ongoing	BOS, rural landlords	Not met	This action depends on adoption of the inspection and licensing program.
SUST 4 – Support and advance energy efficiency, resource conservation, and renewable energy programs, policies, and uses.				
Strategy 1 – Continue partnerships with nonprofit organizations to improve their operations.			Met and ongoing	The Sustainability Grants Program for Nonprofits funded 15 energy efficiency projects from 2018 to 2023. In 2023, PDS assisted the BOS ARPA-based grants program. The County continues to offer opportunities.
Strategy 2 – Continue to be a resource to the community on sustainable practices.				
Action 1 – Complete website enhancements to better promote available services.	Ongoing	PDS, IT	Met and ongoing	The website was updated by 2019. The County website moved to a new platform in mid-2021, and content had to be rebuilt. Further updates are now in progress.
Action 2 – Provide educational events.	Ongoing	Multiple	Met and ongoing	From 2018 to 2023, PDS offered more than 40 events for the public and staff on topics such as soil health, energy reduction, and bicycling.
Action 3 – Establish other programs through partnerships with cities, the University of Iowa, community school districts, and other organizations.	Ongoing	Multiple	Met and ongoing	PDS offered three solar group buys through partnerships, adding nearly 1.6 MW of solar to 240 households. The Soil Health Program launched in 2023, serving nearly 40 households in its first year. Collaboration with Iowa City expanded energy audits to residents throughout the county in early 2024.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Strategy 3 – Support the development of utility-scale solar in Johnson County.				
Action 1 – Identify and mitigate barriers to the appropriate development and use of energy efficiency, energy conservation, and renewable energy, including utility-scale solar.	Ongoing	PDS, energy experts	Met	PDS staff engaged with peers as well as conservation, planning, and energy experts to understand issues, and continue to remain at the forefront of advances.
Action 2 – Incorporate best practices into programs, policies, and code.	Ongoing	PDS, BOS	Met	The utility-scale solar regulations were updated in 2021 and 2022. A battery energy storage ordinance—believed to be the first in the state—was adopted in 2021.
Action 3 – Ensure consideration of natural resource and agricultural protection.	Ongoing	PDS, NCRS, SWCD	Met	UDO amendments in 2021 and 2022 updated regulations for utility-scale solar energy facilities, including requiring a more robust vegetative management, agricultural impact mitigation, and decommissioning and site reclamation planning.
Strategy 4 – Address appropriate new and emerging energy and sustainability technologies.			<i>New</i>	
Action 1 – Learn about advances, opportunities, and regulations, and educate others.	Ongoing	PDS, BOS	<i>New</i>	
Action 2 – Consider updates to the Unified Development Ordinance.	Ongoing	PDS, BOS	<i>New</i>	
SUST 5 – Prioritize green building and sustainable development practices for existing and future residential, commercial, and industrial development.				
Strategy 1 – Require the most up-to-date building code standards.				
Action 1 – Adopt the most current International Building Code (IBC).	Ongoing	PDS	Ongoing	This code is updated every three years.
Strategy 2 – Ensure new development conforms to adopted sustainable development standards.				
Action 1 – Create and use a Sustainable Subdivision Design Ordinance to make development decisions.	Short-term	PDS	Met through other means	The 2020 UDO accomplishes the intent of this action through lot size and stormwater and sensitive areas standards.
Action 2 – Revise other standards to reflect sustainable practices.	Short-term	PDS	Met and ongoing	Per the 2020 UDO, a Stormwater Quality Improvement Plan now applies to building permits. Grading permits are applied to larger scale utility projects.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Strategy 3 – Provide incentives for green development.				
Action 1 – Encourage voluntary practices such as open space preservation, renewable energy, and affordable housing through best practices such as density bonuses.	Ongoing	PDS	Met and ongoing	Density bonuses are an option in the 2020 UDO. PDS hosted solar group buys in three different years. Incentives are available through the Soil Health Program initiated in 2023. Utility-scale solar regulations were clarified.
Strategy 4 – Revise ordinances to strongly encourage on-site protection and discourage off-site mitigation of sensitive areas.			Met	The 2020 UDO sensitive area requirements were revised to meet this strategy.
SUST 6 – Remain a leader in sustainable and resilient facilities, operations, and infrastructure.				
Strategy 1 – Continue to reduce the environmental impact of Johnson County facilities and operational practices.				
Action 1 – Enact management policies to introduce and advance practices.	Mid-term	BOS, PDS, Facilities	Met and ongoing	Sustainable purchasing provisions were added to the County's internal procurement policy in 2020.
Action 2 – Continue to coordinate with the capital improvement plans and follow the Sustainability Capital Standards Process or subsequent policies.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Facilities	Met and ongoing	This process was followed for the GuideLink Center, structures at the Historic Poor Farm, and the Administration Building remodel. The intent is to review and update the process in 2024–25.
Action 3 – Initiate and maintain energy and resource conservation and efficiency practices.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Facilities	Met and ongoing	Building projects have been enrolled in green building and/or utility energy guidance and incentive programs. The virtual Surplus Supply Store for County employee resources became in-person, reducing costs and keeping items out of the landfill.
Action 4 – Adopt sustainable infrastructure practices on county road and parking projects.	Ongoing/ Mid-term	BOS, PDS, Secondary Roads, Facilities	Partially met	PDS reached out to residents regarding flood storage and damage opportunities.
Action 5 – Continue to utilize solar power and consider other renewables for county facilities.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Facilities	Met and ongoing	On-site solar was added to the GuideLink Center and to several Conservation sites.
Action 6 – Promote non-single occupancy vehicle use such as mass transit, carpooling, bicycling, etc.	Ongoing	BOS, SEATS, PDS, Social Services	Ongoing	In 2022, the Downtown Campus again earned four-year Bicycle Friendly Business Gold status. Staff benefit from annual programming, newsletter stories, and the discounted bus commuter program.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Action 7 – Conduct periodic operational greenhouse gas emissions inventories and set reduction goals and follow-up actions.	Ongoing	PDS, SEATS/Fleet	<i>New</i>	
Action 8 – Pursue an operational fleet study.	Short-term	PDS, SEATS/Fleet	<i>New</i>	
Strategy 2 – Coordinate efforts with local organizations, institutions, and agencies.				
Action 1 – Continue to work with groups such as the Sustainability Working Group of Johnson County (SWJGC).	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Better Together, Greater IC	Met and ongoing	Led by PDS, SWGJC meets quarterly every year. PDS engaged with the UI and ECICOG as well. The County has representatives on Better Together and works with Greater IC.
Action 2 – Provide employee and public education events such as Earth Week and Bike Month.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, JCPH	Met and ongoing	From 2018 to 2023, PDS offered more than 40 events for the public and staff. Staff also hosted tables at events such as Prairie Preview and farmers' markets.
Action 3 – Help complete regional greenhouse gas emissions inventories and related goal-setting and reduction efforts.	Mid-term/ Ongoing	PDS, cities, ECICOG	<i>New</i>	
SUST 7 – Ensure provision of potable (drinkable) water to support existing and proposed development.				
Strategy 1 – Consider the findings of the Silurian Aquifer Study in policy-making and development review, including industrial uses.			<i>New</i>	
Strategy 2 – Explore incentives or policies that reduce nonpoint source pollution.			<i>New</i>	

Chapter 3: Local Economy

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
ECON 1 – Foster a diverse and resilient local economy.				
Strategy 1 – Support industries that complement and enhance the existing local economy.				
Action 1 – Identify targeted industries that support a livable wage and a clean energy economy.	Long-term	BOS, cities, Greater IC	Not met	The 2022 Economic Development Plan identifies industries for growth, but it does not include a full industry analysis.
Action 2 – Pursue a study on local job shifts and industry changes due to climate change and potential hazards such as epidemics.	Long-term	BOS, Greater IC	New	
Action 3 – Leverage local, state, and federal incentives to promote rehabilitation and resiliency of buildings.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Finance	New	
Strategy 2 – Accommodate rural businesses that provide employment and consumer opportunities that improve the livability of Johnson County in appropriate areas.				
Action 1 – Develop agritourism zoning regulations to allow greater flexibility for value-added agriculture activities.	Short-term	PDS	Met	The 2020 UDO includes an Agritourism district that allows value-added activities on active farms. County response to State Code changes in 2021 led to agricultural experiences being allowed by right in the Agricultural district.
Action 2 – Develop neighborhood commercial zoning regulations to allow low-intensity commercial activities.	Short-term	PDS	No longer applicable	The 2020 UDO included a marked expansion in the flexibility of siting and growing small businesses as home industries instead of creating a dedicated neighborhood commercial zoning district.
Action 3 – Support efforts to expand telecommunication infrastructure for rural areas (e.g. high-speed Internet).	Ongoing	PDS, Secondary Roads, telecom providers, OCIO	Ongoing	The County commissioned a broadband needs study, earned Broadband Intervention Zone status for three areas, and met with providers applying for grants.
Action 4 – Support the local food industry in Johnson County.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Food Policy Council	Ongoing	BOS staff work with the County's Food Policy Council to support the local food industry.
Action 5 – Provide assistance to rural businesses, entrepreneurs, and the smaller towns, as directed in the 2022 Johnson County, Iowa, Economic Development Plan.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Greater IC	New	

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Strategy 3 – Promote the county’s natural amenities and livable communities to attract new economic activities.				
Action 1 – Use economic development and tourism promotion organizations as a resource to promote Johnson County.	Ongoing	BOS, cities, Greater IC, CVB, Better Together	Ongoing	The Director of Rural Development, a joint position between Johnson County and Greater IC, formed an agritourism networking group.
Action 2 – Highlight quality-of-life rankings and other awards on the Johnson County website.	Ongoing	BOS, IT	Not met	This item has not been a priority for communications staff as other local entities work to promote awards.
Action 3 – Partner with local cities and regional entities to promote and recruit targeted industrial clusters that benefit the local economy and support the quality of life in Johnson County.	Long-term	BOS, cities, Greater IC	Not met	With the <i>2022 Economic Development Plan</i> , there is renewed interest in creating regional economic initiatives.
Strategy 4 – Encourage partnerships between business and educational institutions to advance job skills and promote labor retention.				
Action 1 – Explore using County facilities as resource centers to connect businesses with local experts.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Greater IC, CSD, Food Policy Council	Ongoing	The Johnson County Historic Poor Farm has event space for local businesses. County staff from BOS, PDS, and JCPH serve as connections between experts and resources.
Action 2 – Promote the resources provided by the University of Iowa, Kirkwood Community College, and other major institutions to attract and retain businesses.	Ongoing	BOS, cities, Greater IC, U-Iowa, Kirkwood	Ongoing	The County has developed internship and training programs with the University of Iowa.
Action 2 – Coordinate with community school districts in the county to provide and promote educational opportunities for primary and secondary students.	Ongoing	CSD	Ongoing	The County launched a Registered Apprenticeship Program in 2023 to connect youth with job training for in-demand fields.
Action 4 – Support programs to incubate and grow underestimated businesses.	Ongoing	BOS	<i>New</i>	
Strategy 5 – Pursue recommendations of regional economic development plans and organizations, including the <i>Inclusive Economic Development Plan in Johnson County, Greater Iowa City, and Better Together 2030</i>.			<i>New</i>	

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
ECON 2 – Ensure that new and expanding commercial and industrial uses will follow the county’s adopted Economic Development Plan.				
Strategy 1 – Update and maintain an Economic Development Plan for unincorporated Johnson County.				
Action 1 – Clearly define County’s role in economic development.	Mid-term	BOS	Met	The <i>2022 Economic Development Plan</i> addresses the County's role.
Action 2 – Include Economic Development Areas in the Future Land Use Map.	Short-term	PDS	Met	This plan includes a FLUM which identifies areas for commercial and industrial growth.
Action 3 – Obtain a Target Industry Analysis.	Long-term	Greater IC	Not met	The <i>2022 Economic Development Plan</i> identifies industries for growth, but it does not include a full industry analysis.
Strategy 2 – Regularly review and update the Economic Development Plan and its policies.				
Action 1 – Review economic development best management practices and economic development areas on the Future Land Use Map at least every five years upon adoption.	Mid-term/ Ongoing	PDS	Ongoing	Along with a process for the public to request a FLUM Amendment, review of the FLUM will follow this update to the <i>2018 Comprehensive Plan</i> text.
Strategy 3 – Implement the recommendations of the <i>2022 Johnson County, Iowa, Economic Development Plan: Opportunities for the Unincorporated Area, Villages and Smaller Towns.</i>				
			<i>New</i>	
ECON 3 – Encourage sustainable agricultural activities.				
Strategy 1 – Explore methods to accommodate smaller farming operations.			Met	The 2020 UDO included overhauled agricultural exemption policies that made exemption for small operations possible.
Strategy 2 – Support farmers who wish to maintain and expand agricultural activities in accordance with the goals of this plan.				
Action 1 – Support local, state, and federal programs designed to assist sustainable farming operations.	Ongoing	BOS, USDA, NRCS, IDNR, FSA, agricultural/ farmer organizations	Ongoing	County staff stay informed on sustainable farming programs and share information with the public.
Action 2 – Support conservation and natural resource management programs.	Ongoing	BOS, Conservation, NRCS	Ongoing	County staff stay informed on resource management programs and share information with the public.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Strategy 3 – Promote and support local food and small farm operations.				
Action 1 – Continue to provide staff support for local food and agritourism activities.	Short-term/ Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Food Policy Council	Met	BOS staff work with the County's Food Policy Council to support the local food industry. An agritourism networking group was created by Greater IC's Director of Rural Development.
Action 2 – Continue to support resident engagement to improve discussion and action on food and agricultural initiatives in Johnson County.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Food Policy Council	Ongoing	County staff maintain relationships with the local food and agricultural community.
Action 3 – Support efforts to develop infrastructure and programs that encourage public institutions, restaurants, and other entities to purchase more locally grown food.	Mid-term	BOS, PDS, Food Policy Council	Ongoing	BOS staff work with the County's Food Policy Council to support the local food industry. The County funds several nonprofits focused on expanding access to local food.
Action 4 – Explore flexible zoning regulations to encourage local food production.	Mid-term	PDS, Food Policy Council	Met	Under the new agricultural exemption definition, smaller and more diverse farms are eligible for exemption. The 2020 UDO also included an Agritourism zoning district, Small Farmstead zoning district, and animal slaughter-processing opportunities.
Action 5 – Explore food hub and food enterprise options that include food processing, packaging, and storage.	Long-term	BOS, PDS, Food Council, Greater IC	Met	Both the <i>2022 Economic Development Plan</i> and the <i>Historic Poor Farm Master Plan</i> have explored the feasibility of a community kitchen facility.
Action 6 – Collaborate with cities to encourage food production opportunities, such as community gardens, within city limits.	Ongoing	cities, Food Policy Council	Ongoing	The County funds several nonprofits focused on expanding access to local food.
Action 7 – Employ County facilities and existing partnerships to address food insecurity.	Ongoing	JCPH, Food Policy Council	<i>New</i>	
Strategy 4 – Support the development of utility-scale solar in Johnson County.			Ongoing	The 2020 UDO and subsequent amendments clearly define the pathways and regulations for utility-scale solar projects.
ECON 4 – Provide opportunities for sustainable commercial and industrial activities that enhance livability and are compatible with surrounding land uses.				
Strategy 1 – Revise the Site Plan review process to address varying levels of intensity.				
Action 1 – Incorporate scalable rules for size and intensity in Site Plan review to allow for appropriate review of smaller developments.	Short-term	PDS	Met	The 2020 UDO includes tiered Site Plan regulations for commercial and industrial uses.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Action 2 – Create and use a matrix to provide multiple ways to achieve compliance with Site Plan regulations.	Short-term	PDS	No longer applicable	Rather than a matrix system, a tiered approach based on zoning and existing level of development provides flexibility for Site Plan compliance.
Action 3 – Review Site Plan regulations and consider updates to encourage rural commercial development.	Short-term/ Ongoing	PDS	<i>New</i>	
Strategy 2 – Direct large-scale commercial and industrial development projects to the cities and Urban Growth Areas, where utilities, services, transportation, and other infrastructure are (or can be) readily available.				
Action 1 – Coordinate with local and regional business and economic development organizations.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, cities, Greater IC	Ongoing	Funding for a PDS Economic Development Planner has been allocated. A Director of Rural Development position within Greater IC was created and filled in 2022.
Action 2 – Consider the findings of the Silurian Aquifer Study in policy-making and development review, including industrial uses.	Short-term	BOS, PDS, JCPH	<i>New</i>	
Strategy 3 – Direct smaller-scale, less-intensive commercial and industrial development projects to cities, unincorporated villages, or economic development areas as identified in the Future Land Use Map (Volume 1, Chapter 5 Land Use).				
Action 1 – Identify and review development opportunities within the unincorporated villages.	Short-term	PDS	Met	The Board has adopted a sub-plan for all unincorporated villages in Johnson County, as of March 2023.
Action 2 – Engage residents and update village plans accordingly.	Mid-term	BOS, PDS, village communities	Met	The Board has adopted a sub-plan for all unincorporated villages in Johnson County, as of March 2023.
Action 3 – Utilize local, state, and federal incentives such as tax increment financing and urban revitalization to promote appropriate economic development.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, IEDA, Finance	<i>New</i>	

Chapter 4: Infrastructure and Amenities

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
INF 1 – Develop well-connected recreational parks, public open/natural spaces, and trails throughout the county.				
Strategy 1 – Improve connectivity between subdivisions, open space, and destinations that generate traffic.				
Action 1 – Identify and map opportunities to create greater connectivity between existing developments.	Mid-term	PDS, MPOJC, Secondary Roads	Ongoing	The 2020 UDO requires road connections to adjoining properties (i.e. stub-outs).
Action 2 – Support local and regional trail plans.	Ongoing	PDS, MPOJC, ECICOG, Secondary Roads, Conservation	Ongoing	Since 2018, the Conservation Department has added 672 acres of park lands and 4.6 miles of trails. In addition, 6.3 miles of designated bike lanes were added in the county.
Action 3 – Continue to serve on and work with existing area and regional trails committees.	Ongoing	PDS, MPOJC, ECICOG, Secondary Roads, Conservation	Ongoing	PDS staff and other Johnson County officials and staff serve on countywide and regional trail commissions.
Action 4 – Facilitate improvements recommended by water trail plans.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, IDNR, Conservation, local paddling groups, IA Water Trails Assoc.	Ongoing	The Conservation Department manages several access points and campgrounds along the Iowa Water Trail (Iowa River) as well as the Cedar River.
INF 2 – Utilize existing infrastructure and adopt green infrastructure practices.				
Strategy 1 – Coordinate development policies with road improvement and maintenance plans.				
Action 1 – Have planning staff participate in the annual review of the <i>Johnson County Secondary Roads Five-Year Plan</i> .	Short-term	PDS, Secondary Roads	Ongoing	PDS staff have annually reviewed the five-year plan and provided feedback to Secondary Roads.
Action 2 – Review and update the existing Road Performance Standards to consider factors such as safety, volume, speed, traffic type, and other national standards.	Ongoing	PDS, Secondary Roads	Met	The 2020 UDO included revisions to the County's Road Performance Standards (RPS), including updating allowable trip volumes and generation values.
Action 3 – Identify and consider projects to optimize the use of existing public infrastructure.	Short-term	PDS, Secondary Roads	Ongoing	As shown in the RPS, the capacity limits of existing roads are continually evaluated. In addition, the appropriateness of subdivisions on existing roadways is a key part of subdivision application review.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Action 4 – Consider growth areas on the Future Land Use Map when making infrastructure maintenance and expansion decisions.	Ongoing	PDS, BOS, Secondary Roads, Conservation	<i>New</i>	
Strategy 2 – Encourage the use of green infrastructure.				
Action 1 – Identify opportunities to use green infrastructure instead of traditional practices.	Long-term	PDS, Secondary Roads	Ongoing	Secondary Roads is using green infrastructure through the Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management program.
Action 2 – Explore potential incentives such as density bonuses.	Short-term	PDS	Met	The 2020 UDO provides for density bonuses within several residential districts.
Strategy 3 – Coordinate with regional transportation investments and long-range transportation plans.				
Action 1 – Actively participate in local and regional planning activities.	Ongoing	PDS, cities, MPOJC, ECICOG	Ongoing	PDS actively consults with ECICOG, MPOJC, and local cities through the Fringe Area Agreements and other means.
Action 2 – Encourage employment centers to locate in areas with multi-modal connectivity.	Long-term	Greater IC, PDS, Secondary Roads	<i>New</i>	
Action 3 – Consider any needed changes to existing and future road network to promote network resiliency.	Long-term	PDS, BOS, Secondary Roads, EMA	<i>New</i>	
INF 3 – Make transportation, land use, and infrastructure decisions that encourage a reduction in auto-dependent travel.				
Strategy 1 – Promote safe use of the county's public road network by all users.				
Action 1 – Identify best management practices for rural road systems.	Mid-term	Secondary Roads	Ongoing	Secondary Roads manages the existing road network within Johnson County and conducts annual reviews of maintenance and expansion needs.
Action 2 – Consider complete street features as appropriate for higher density areas.	Short-term	Secondary Roads	No longer applicable	Complete street infrastructure is more appropriate for incorporated areas. Through a Fringe Area Agreement, a city could require that a subdivision in a fringe area follow city design standards.
Action 3 – Provide appropriate multimodal signage on highways and other major roads with extended shoulders.	Mid-term	Secondary Roads	Ongoing	Public-facing Johnson County GIS maps show the location of multimodal facilities. Secondary Roads posts the signs.
Action 4 – Support the County's transportation mobility coordination efforts.	Mid-term	PDS, BOS, Social Services, SEATS, MPOJC	<i>New</i>	

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Strategy 2 – Support development that will reduce vehicle miles traveled.				
Action 1 – Require connectivity plans for new subdivisions, showing intended connections to the existing and planned trail and road network.	Short-term	PDS, Secondary Roads	Met and ongoing	The UDO requires that development plans show connections to the road network and adjoining properties. Connection opportunities to local trail networks are more limited, but Secondary Roads can consider links when coordinating road projects.
Action 2 – Update the subdivision regulations to require connectivity plans and limit the creation of cul-de-sac and dead-end roads unless impractical.	Short-term	PDS	Met	The 2020 UDO requires road connections to adjoining properties (i.e. stub-outs).
Action 3 – Add requirements for sidewalks and trail connectivity to the subdivision regulations.	Short-term	PDS	No longer applicable	County infrastructure provision does not include sidewalks.
Action 4 – Support the siting of trail projects that increase connections to homes, services, and businesses in addition to recreational opportunities.	Long-term	PDS, Secondary Roads, Conservation	<i>New</i>	
Action 5 – Explore ordinance amendments for commuter parking.	Short-term	PDS, Secondary Roads, SEATS	<i>New</i>	
INF 4 – Support environmental, cultural, and historic elements in the planning and design of future infrastructure.				
Strategy 1 – Protect and raise awareness of environmental amenities and character of the county.				
Action 1 – Develop an ordinance that balances scenic road features, safety requirements, and Secondary Road plans.	Long-term	BOS, PDS, Secondary Roads	No longer applicable	Secondary Roads restricts their review of road features to safety and maintenance requirements rather than aesthetic considerations.
Action 2 – Establish criteria to identify environmental, cultural, and historic elements.	Long-term	PDS, Conservation, NRCS, State Archaeologist	Met	The UDO includes archaeology survey and sensitive areas survey requirements for subdivision applications, site planning, and conditional use permit applications.
Action 3 – Work with the Iowa Department of Transportation to develop watershed educational standards including roadway signage.	Long-term	PDS, Secondary Roads, I-DOT, ECICOG	Ongoing	This action requires coordination among the I-DOT, ECICOG and other COGs, and Secondary Roads because watersheds extend beyond County jurisdictional boundaries.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
INF 5 – Support amenities that enhance livability and quality of life.				
Strategy 1 – Support the Johnson County Conservation Strategic Plan.				
Action 1 – Consider revisions to align zoning ordinance and other County policies.	Short-term	BOS, PDS, Conservation	No longer applicable	This goal is no longer applicable because the Johnson County Conservation Board is exempt from county zoning.
Strategy 2 – Promote livability initiatives across all Johnson County departments.				
Action 1 – Encourage livability initiatives within all administrative activities across all Johnson County departments.	Ongoing	BOS	Ongoing	The 2020 UDO included the addition of auxiliary dwelling unit requirements. A potential update to the County's rental code would promote affordable and safe housing.
Strategy 3 – Support appropriate special events and activities across Johnson County.				
Action 1 – Establish new or promote existing central events calendar.	Ongoing	BOS, IT	Ongoing	This action item has not been accomplished and will need direction by the Board of Supervisors. Board communications staff promote local events.
Action 2 – Consider grant incentives and programs that support and develop events or activities that benefit the county.	Long-term	BOS	Met and ongoing	Recent or current County programs that support this goal include a residential soil health program, solar group buys, grant support for nonprofits to build capacity, and farm-to-table dinner experiences.
Strategy 4 – Consider improvements to communication infrastructure and access to technology in coordination with economic development goals.			Met and ongoing	The County commissioned a broadband needs study, earned Broadband Intervention Zone status for three areas, and met with providers applying for grants.
Action 1 – Support broadband grant applications from local service providers.	Short-term	PDS, BOS, Secondary Roads, Local broadband providers	<i>New</i>	
Action 2 – Facilitate use of County right-of-way for broadband infrastructure improvements and installations.	Short-term	PDS, BOS, Secondary Roads, Local broadband providers	<i>New</i>	
Action 3 – Support technology education, access, and affordability programs.	Mid-term	OCIO, BOS, Local broadband providers, CSD	<i>New</i>	

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Strategy 5 – Become a leader in food system infrastructure.				
Action 1 – Develop and adopt a countywide food system plan.	Short-term	BOS, PDS, Food Policy Council	Ongoing	<i>A Food Policy Council Strategic Plan was created and updated in April 2023.</i>
Action 2 – Explore options to utilize existing infrastructure and build new infrastructure that supports the local food system (e.g. food hub, distribution centers, etc.).	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Food Policy Council, Greater IC	Ongoing	The Historic Poor Farm includes opportunities for food production and distribution. The 2020 UDO added an Agritourism zoning district, a Small Farmstead zoning district, and animal slaughter-processing opportunities.
Strategy 6 – Support the development of renewable energy in Johnson County, including both private and utility-scale solar and wind.			Ongoing	The Renewable Energy zoning district was created, and solar as an accessory use was added in all residential and agricultural zoning districts.
Action 1 – Promote new and existing incentive programs for equitable access to renewable energy deployment.	Mid-term	PDS, BOS	<i>New</i>	
Action 2 – Promote resiliency in local energy production and provision.	Long-term	PDS, BOS, utilities	<i>New</i>	
Strategy 7 – Support the expansion of transportation options that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.			<i>New</i>	
Action 1 – Explore amendments to Site Plan regulations to support electric vehicle (EV) charging networks.	Short-term	PDS	<i>New</i>	
Action 2 – Explore funding opportunities for transportation modes that reduce fuel use and/or greenhouse gas emissions.	Mid-term	PDS, BOS, SEATS, MPOJC	<i>New</i>	

Chapter 5: Land Use

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
LND 1 – Promote and protect sustainable agricultural land uses in rural Johnson County.				
Strategy 1 – Advocate for agricultural preservation in all Fringe Area Agreements.				
Action 1 – Pursue adoption of Fringe Area Agreements with cities where no agreement currently exists.	Short-term	PDS, cities	Met	PDS has worked with Iowa City, North Liberty, Oxford, Shueyville, Solon, Swisher, and Cedar Rapids to create or update Fringe Area Agreements. PDS has approached the other cities with extraterritorial review areas in Johnson County to discuss creating or updating fringe agreements.
Action 2 – Within the fringe areas, advocate that areas not identified for city growth shall adhere to the county Future Land Use Map.	Mid-term/ Ongoing	PDS, cities	Met and ongoing	PDS successfully negotiated that development in the non-city growth area in all updated fringe area agreements shall follow the County's FLUM and other development regulations in the UDO.
Action 3 – Update all existing Fringe Area Agreements within two years of adoption of the comprehensive plan and review Fringe Area Agreements every three years thereafter.	Mid-term/ Ongoing	PDS, cities	No longer applicable	Following engagement with the cities involved, the consensus was that a two-year window was too short. PDS staff will continue to review existing Fringe Area Agreements every three years to determine if renewed conversations with a city are appropriate.
Strategy 2 – Update Johnson County’s agricultural exemption policy.				
Action 1 – Explore methods to expand agricultural exemption to smaller farming operations.	Short-term	PDS, agricultural/ farmer organizations, environmental groups	Met	The 2020 UDO included overhauled agricultural exemption policies that made exemption for small operations possible.
Action 2 – Ensure that updated agricultural exemption policies do not become a method for siting CAFOs on small parcels.	Short-term/ Ongoing	PDS	No longer applicable	The siting and permitting of CAFOs is under the jurisdiction of the IDNR.
Action 3 – Ensure that updated agricultural exemption policies do not become a method for unplanned residential growth.	Short-term/ Ongoing	PDS	Met	The County has not seen significant unplanned residential growth as result of revised agricultural exemption policies and State Code changes related to exemption.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Action 4 – Explore methods for limited residential development for small-scale agriculture.	Short-term	PDS	Met	The 2020 UDO included a Small Farmstead zoning district, as well as revised agricultural exemption policies that made exemption for small operations possible.
Strategy 3 – Develop recommendations to alleviate conflicts between agricultural property owners and non-agricultural neighboring properties.				
Action 1 – Revise and distribute information on what to expect when moving to rural Johnson County.	Mid-term	BOS, PDS, JCPH, Secondary Roads	Not met	This has been a low priority as documented conflicts have been minimal. There may be staff capacity to develop and distribute information in the future.
Action 2 – Explore creating “good neighbor” guidance that identifies strategies to avoid conflicts between different land uses.	Mid-term	PDS	Not met	This has been a low priority as documented conflicts have been minimal. There may be staff capacity to develop and distribute information in the future.
Strategy 4 – Encourage and promote the use of on-field and edge-of-field best management practices for top soil and water quality protection.				
Action 1 – Ensure staff stay informed about resources to aid farmers seeking to implement best management practices.	Ongoing	PDS, FSA, SWCD	Ongoing	County staff attend webinars and other training opportunities about BMPs. Staff also maintain working relationships with other agencies and direct individuals to these other departments as necessary.
Strategy 5 – Discourage concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in Johnson County.				
Action 1 – Continue to lobby the Iowa State Legislature to allow counties the ability to regulate CAFOs.	Ongoing	BOS	Ongoing	The Board of Supervisors continues to advocate and lobby at the state level for preserved and expanded local control.
Action 2 – Encourage and promote best management practices for CAFOs.	Ongoing	BOS, agricultural/ farmer organizations, environmental groups	Ongoing	The design review for proposed CAFOs is under the jurisdiction of the IDNR. Where applicable, the County encourages best management practices for CAFOs.
Action 3 – Monitor and report the adverse environmental effects of CAFOs in Johnson County to appropriate agencies.	Ongoing	BOS, Conservation, NRCS	No longer applicable	The County does not have the scientific professionals on staff to adequately monitor environmental effects of CAFOs. County staff pass along any CAFO-related complaints we receive or notice to the IDNR for follow-up.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
LND 2 – Direct future residential development based on location and then site-specific criteria outlined in the Future Land Use Development Guidelines.				
Strategy 1 – Support rezoning applications that comply with the Future Land Use Map and the Future Land Use Development Guidelines.				
Action 1 – Focus residential development in areas that comply with the Future Land Use Map.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS	Met and ongoing	PDS staff ensure compliance with the FLUM when reviewing zoning requests.
Action 2 – Review and potentially update the Future Land Use Map every five years after adoption.	Mid-term	BOS, PDS	Met	Review of the FLUM will follow this update to the <i>2018 Comprehensive Plan</i> text.
Action 3 – Develop a procedure for individual property owners to request a change to the Future Land Use Map.	Short-term	PDS	Met	PDS staff created policies and procedures in 2019 for the public to request changes to the FLUM. There have been eight FLUM amendment requests filed as of 2023.
Action 4 – Develop a procedure for combined rezoning, subdivision, and/or development applications.	Short-term	PDS	Not met	This has been a low priority as applications for rezoning and subdivision can run concurrently, and the administrative changes needed to facilitate a combined application outweigh any time-savings from having a combined application.
Action 5 – Allow for flexibility in the zoning ordinance by adoption of planned unit development (PUD) zoning districts and overlay zones.	Short-term	PDS	Not met	This has been a low priority because all development proposals have utilized flexibility offered by the 2020 UDO.
Strategy 2 – Support rezoning applications on parcels that meet the standards identified by the Future Land Use Development Guidelines.				
Action 1 – Review and update Stormwater Standards at least every five years.	Mid-term	PDS	Met	The 2020 UDO, and amendments in 2021 and 2023, included significant revisions to the County's stormwater management regulations.
Action 2 – Review and update Sensitive Areas Ordinance (SAO) at least every five years.	Mid-term	PDS	Met	The 2020 UDO, and amendments in 2021 and 2023, included significant revisions to the County's sensitive areas regulations.
Action 3 – Review and update the Road Performance Standards to consider factors such as safety, traffic volume, speed, traffic type, and other national standards.	Short-term	PDS, Secondary Roads	Met	The 2020 UDO included revisions to the County's Road Performance Standards, including updating allowable trip volumes and generation values.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Action 4 – Identify environmentally sensitive area criteria to protect natural areas and prevent conflicting land uses.	Mid-term	PDS, Conservation, NRCS	Met	The 2020 UDO, and amendments in 2021 and 2023, included significant revisions to the County's sensitive areas regulations, including the creation of an Environmental Resource Preservation zoning district, preservation outlots, and a conservation easement.
Strategy 3 – Continue use of existing Farmstead Split rule.				
Action 1 – Explore limiting the size and number of agricultural outlots.	Short-term	PDS	Met	The 2020 UDO included restrictions on the size and number of agricultural outlots in farmstead splits.
Action 2 – Review and revise language as subdivision rules are updated.	Short-term	PDS	Met	PDS applies the larger subdivision regulations to farmstead splits. Farmstead split language is updated as appropriate when subdivision regulations are updated.
LND 3 – Direct future commercial and industrial development based on location and then site-specific criteria.				
Strategy 1 – Encourage commercial and industrial development within the cities and the Urban Growth Areas.				
Action 1 – Discuss and coordinate development activities as part of Fringe Area Agreement negotiations.	Mid-term/ Ongoing	PDS, cities	Met and ongoing	PDS has discussed coordination of development activities as part of all Fringe Area Agreement negotiations since 2018.
Action 2 – Encourage new commercial and industrial development to sites that can be served by municipal water and sanitary sewer.	Ongoing	PDS, cities, Greater IC	Ongoing	PDS staff direct developers interested in accessing municipal infrastructure for a county development to the appropriate city department for requests and coordination.
Strategy 2 – Support appropriate commercial and industrial development that complies with the Future Land Use Map.				
Action 1 – Review and update commercial and industrial land use areas every five years.	Mid-term	PDS	Met	Review of the FLUM will follow this text update. Commercial and industrial growth areas were also reviewed in the <i>2022 Economic Development Plan</i> .
Action 2 – Identify vacant or underutilized parcels zoned commercial and/or industrial within the unincorporated area of Johnson County.	Short-term	PDS	Met	Strategic commercial and industrial growth areas were reviewed in the <i>2022 Economic Development Plan</i> .

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Action 3 – Encourage development of underutilized parcels in accordance with the goals of the <i>2022 Johnson County, Iowa, Economic Development Plan</i> and other adopted policies.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, Greater IC, Better Together, cities	<i>New</i>	
Strategy 3 – Develop overlay and other commercial and industrial zones to allow more flexibility in rural commercial development.				
Action 1 – Develop criteria for where commercial and industrial overlay zones are appropriate.	Short-term	PDS	Not met	This has been low priority as the administrative overhead and changes needed to facilitate overlay zoning districts outweigh possible benefits.
Action 2 – Develop criteria for where neighborhood commercial uses are appropriate.	Short-term	PDS	No longer applicable	The 2020 UDO included a marked expansion in the flexibility of siting and growing small businesses as home industries instead of creating a dedicated neighborhood commercial zoning district.
Action 3 – Develop criteria for where agritourism uses are appropriate.	Short-term	PDS	Met	The 2020 UDO included an Agritourism zoning district, as well as flexibility of siting and growing small businesses as home industries. Changes in state and local code related to agricultural experiences also expanded access to agritourism.
Strategy 4 – Implement the recommendations of the <i>2022 Johnson County, Iowa, Economic Development Plan: Opportunities for the Unincorporated Area, Villages and Smaller Towns.</i>			<i>New</i>	
LND 4 – Coordinate land use planning with and between local governments to achieve mutually beneficial development policies.				
Strategy 1 – Work with individual cities to update Fringe Area Agreements.				
Action 1 – Pursue adoption of Fringe Area Agreements for cities where no agreement currently exists.	Short-term	PDS, cities	Met	PDS has worked with Iowa City, North Liberty, Oxford, Shueyville, Solon, Swisher, and Cedar Rapids to create or update Fringe Area Agreements. PDS has approached the other cities with extraterritorial review areas in Johnson County to discuss creating or updating fringe agreements.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Action 2 – Advocate for the urban growth area of each Fringe Area Agreement to identify areas that may be developed within the next five or fewer years.	Mid-term	PDS, cities	Met	PDS has advocated strongly for the city growth or control areas of new or updated Fringe Area Agreements to be closely tied to growth areas identified in the city's own comprehensive plan.
Action 3 – Ensure that areas outside of the urban growth area comply with the county comprehensive plan.	Ongoing	PDS, cities	Met	PDS successfully negotiated that developments in the non-city growth area in all updated Fringe Area Agreements shall follow the County's FLUM and other development regulations in the UDO.
Action 4 – Pursue Fringe Area Agreements that will allow the Board of Supervisors to comment on city development applications that may impact the unincorporated area (e.g. roads, safety, stormwater management, etc.).	Mid-term	BOS, PDS, cities	Met	PDS has advocated for reciprocal comment authority for the Board of Supervisors on city projects as Fringe Area Agreements have been created or renegotiated.
Action 5 – Review and update all existing Fringe Area Agreements in accordance with the fringe area agreement schedule contained in Volume 2: Appendix A of this plan.	Short-term	BOS, PDS, cities	Met	All agreements were reviewed in accordance with the schedule and updated where the city desired to do so.
Strategy 2 – Work with cities and school districts to pursue collaborative growth strategies for mutual benefit.				
Action 1 – Serve as a resource for the community, city staff, and other organizations regarding regional planning issues.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS	Met and ongoing	PDS staff routinely answer questions or provide professional input to neighboring jurisdictions and community groups on regional planning issues.
Action 2 – Pursue regional, multijurisdictional intergovernmental agreements.	Long-term/ Ongoing	BOS, PDS, MPOJC, cities, CSD, ECICOG	Ongoing	PDS staff are part of several multijurisdictional intergovernmental agreements, including the joint Fringe Area Agreement with Swisher and Cedar Rapids, the Middle Iowa WMA, the English River WMA, and the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant.
Action 3 – Explore arrangements with smaller cities to assist in administrating their development regulations.	Short-term	PDS, cities, BOS	<i>New</i>	
Strategy 3 – Advocate for stormwater management and sensitive areas preservation when annexation occurs.			Met and ongoing	PDS staff have advocated, to the extent possible, for stormwater management and sensitive areas protection following annexation.

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
Strategy 4 – Discourage the creation of “unincorporated islands.”			No longer applicable	State Code prohibits the creation of unincorporated islands when cities annex land. Annexation is entirely under the purview of the annexing city, with review by the State's City Development Board.
LND 5 – Continue to protect and improve Johnson County’s natural resources: land, water, and air.				
Strategy 1 – Begin to identify and evaluate all critical and sensitive environmental features in Johnson County.				
Action 1 – Establish criteria to evaluate these areas.	Long-term	PDS, Conservation, NRCS	Met	The 2020 UDO, and amendments in 2021 and 2023, included significant revisions to the County's sensitive areas regulations related to evaluation and protection of sensitive areas.
Action 2 – Coordinate with cities to map sensitive features countywide.	Long-term	PDS, cities, GIS, NRCS	No longer applicable	This mapping is done one development at a time. There has not been financial or programmatic support to undertake a countywide mapping initiative.
Strategy 2 – Encourage agricultural uses to utilize best management practices and observe conservation practices that prevent erosion and preserve natural resources.				
Action 1 – Ensure staff stay informed of the best management practices and available conservation programs to assist with funding and public education.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS	Ongoing	County staff attend webinars and other training opportunities about BMPs. Staff also maintain working relationships with other agencies and direct individuals to these other departments as necessary.
Action 2 – Promote the use of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), or similar programs.	Ongoing	PDS, NRCS	Ongoing	Where appropriate, PDS staff will promote placing land in preservation programs over development.
Strategy 3 – Ensure consideration of natural resource and agricultural protection while supporting the development of renewable energy in Johnson County, including both private and utility-scale solar and wind.			Met	UDO amendments in 2021 and 2022 updated regulations for utility-scale solar energy facilities, including requiring more robust vegetative management, agricultural impact mitigation, and decommissioning and site reclamation planning.
Strategy 4 – Discourage development designs that propose sensitive areas impacts beyond what is necessary to reasonably develop a property.			New	

STRATEGY/ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	COLLABORATING PARTNERS	MID-TERM STATUS	MID-TERM STATUS SPECIFICS
LND 6 – Foster equitable access to safe and affordable housing throughout Johnson County.				
Strategy 1 – Promote safe housing.			<i>New</i>	
Action 1 – Continue to implement, refine, and enforce a building code and inspection program.	Ongoing	PDS, State Electrical Inspector	<i>New</i>	
Action 2 – Offer building inspection services to Johnson County’s smaller towns.	Ongoing	PDS, cities	<i>New</i>	
Action 3 – Develop, implement, and enforce a rental housing code and inspection program.	Short-term	PDS, rural landlords	<i>New</i>	
Action 4 – Discourage development in areas prone to environmental hazards such as floods and subsidence.	Ongoing	PDS	<i>New</i>	
Strategy 2 – Support programs that expand options for affordable housing.			<i>New</i>	
Action 1 – Support development of an affordable housing action plan.	Mid-term	BOS, Housing Trust Fund, cities, local housing experts	<i>New</i>	
Action 2 – Support improvement of existing manufactured housing communities and structures.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, manufactured housing community owners	<i>New</i>	
Action 3 – Promote affordable housing options such as auxiliary dwelling units and quality manufactured housing stock.	Ongoing	BOS, PDS, manufactured housing community owners	<i>New</i>	
Action 4 – Explore using tools such as tax increment financing to promote affordable housing.	Short-term	BOS, PDS, IEDA, Finance, Auditor	<i>New</i>	