

## **West Branch Comprehensive Plan Discussion Points**

### **Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting, 11/24/15**

1. This 11/24 meeting of the Commission provides an initial opportunity to review the City's Comprehensive Plan, with the intent over the next year or two to update and extend that plan. The process is envisioned to entail discussion among Commission members and staff, followed by public input sessions, responses to the public comments, and presentation before the City Council.
2. Some additions to the plan result from work of the Commission over the past few years, such as provision of a future land-use map. Further additions or changes might be desirable, such as providing a revised city map (revising page 3), or adding changed city plans or plans not included in the original comprehensive plan to the Comprehensive Plan's Appendices.
3. Statistical updates are desirable, using information from the American Community Survey (ACS), which is an ongoing survey published annually and replacing much of the information once obtained from the federal decennial Census. The latest releases from the survey were in September, covering 2014. (See <http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>. Change since the 2010 information presented in the current comprehensive plan is likely to be minor; for example, the population figure used on page 4 of the plan was 2,322 while the 2014 figure reported by the ACS is 2,349.)
4. It is recommended that the vision statement and goals section of the plan (Chapter 2) not be investigated for revision until after the Commission reviews the subsequent Chapters 5-12.
5. Chapter 3 presents "Smart Planning" principles and desirable planning elements from state legislation. Because there have been no legislative changes dealing with planning principles and elements since 2010, it is recommended that this Chapter remain unchanged.
6. An updated version of Chapter 4: Community Profile/Character is provided by Fuller, as assigned, following.
  - a. Page 16 cites the 10 peer cities used in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and provides an updated figure in Table 4.1 for population in 2013, based on an ACS 5-year average. The figure of 2,820 indicates large anticipated growth; however I believe it best to replace that figure with the most recently provided point estimate of 2,349 for 2014.

- b. The Commission is asked to consider the desirability of a change in the list of 10 peer cities described in the Chapter to provide a better match to West Branch. If the change in peers is made, Table 4.2, comparing those peer cities, requires revision. A discussion of such a revision, with the resultant table provided, follows (titled “West Branch Comprehensive Plan, Peer Cities Review”).
  - c. Table 4.3 on page 17 is titled “Population Project West Branch, 2020-2040.” Project should be changed to Projections. The trend-line analysis is questionable because our population in 2010 (and in 2014) exceeds the 2020 projection. I suspect the analysis was done incorrectly. I can redo the trend-line analysis, but have yet to do so. Possibly a revision using the relative proportion method, but using the percentage of West Branch’s population residing in Johnson County would provide a more accurate representation of what we should expect.
  - d. I have not been able to update page 18, as the data come from the 2010 Census and so far as I have uncovered are not updated by the ACS—but I will keep investigating.
  - e. Table 4.4, page 19 has been updated to 2014 but does not encompass revised peer cities. The revision to page 19 adds information about employment of West Branch residents, including how many residents work in the city—however the data need to be checked.
7. Updated 2014 data for Chapter 6 on Housing, pages 27 and 28, are also provided (see following). This covers through Table 6.5, but does not include Table 6.4 for which data are not available. The source is the ACS, so data ranges differ from 2012 Assessor data used in the earlier plan, but the ranges are the standard ones used nationally for comparability. Conclusions about affordability do not change. It is worth noting for discussion that vacancy rates were very low in the earlier plan and have declined even further since, to the markedly low level of 1% in 2013.
8. Chapter 9, Transportation was assigned to Fuller for review. As regards material on page 40, the East Central Iowa Council of Governments has a new transportation plan published in April, 2015 (see [http://www.ecicog.org/uploads/2/6/9/0/26907680/ptp\\_2016-2020\\_final.pdf](http://www.ecicog.org/uploads/2/6/9/0/26907680/ptp_2016-2020_final.pdf)). The plan was followed in July by a revised Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), see [http://www.ecicog.org/uploads/2/6/9/0/26907680/final\\_fy16-](http://www.ecicog.org/uploads/2/6/9/0/26907680/final_fy16-)

19 tip for submittal.pdf. Neither indicates much activity in Cedar County, just the following bridge replacement in 2016:

34188 [NBIS: 012380] BROS-8252(605)--8J-16 DOT Letting: 04/19/2016 0  
Project Total 1,300 0 0 0 1,300 TA West Branch In the city of West Branch, Over W.  
Branch of the Wapsinonic Creek 012380 Federal Aid 1,000 0 0 0 1,000 Final TIP  
Approved Bridge Rehabilitation -- Regional FA 0 0 0 0 0 --

There is also what I believe to be a nearby bike/ped bridge project in 2017:

34186 TAP-R-C016()--8T-16 0 Project Total 0 185 0 0 185 TA Cedar CCB On  
Hoover Trail Bridge, Over Wapsinonoc Creek -- Federal Aid 0 154 0 0 154 Final TIP  
Approved Ped/Bike Structures -- Regional FA 0 154 0 0 154 -

- a. Traffic volume and safety data on pages 41 and 42, and in maps on later pages, should be updated beyond 2010, but have not been as of this time.
- b. The safety information does not show crash severity, but severity information (deaths, injuries, property damage) would seem to be helpful. In an initial contact with the Iowa DOT one difficulty of updating is data that are distributed between two counties. Further exploration is needed.
- c. Recent journey-to-work data should be available by mode, but has not been gathered for addition to the section.
- d. Question for discussion: the current plan has no mention of "complete streets," yet the concept has seen wide-spread discussion throughout the country, including in Iowa.

For general information see

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>. For information from the Iowa Department of Public Health see <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/IDPHChannelsService/file.ashx?file=F9CC6D3C-C0E5-47BC-887A-FBFEB50B4A0F>. That information is attached. Cascade, comparable in size to West Branch, was the first municipality in Iowa to adopt a complete streets policy, in 2006. Iowa City's policy is found at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/registration/events/conferences/ascetransport/pdf/2014/ASCE%20presentation-knoche.pdf>. Nationally many more cities are joining in this trend; the most recent count is over 700 cities and states (at <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>).

# West Branch Comprehensive Plan

## Chapter 4: Community Profile/Character

### Community Profile

To understand where the future of a City is heading, it is good to examine its past. A community profile includes demographic information which includes: total population, gender, race, ancestry, age, employment, income, economy, education, housing and natural/cultural resources. The data presented should provide an overall picture of the community. These data are meant to provide a resource for City officials and the public in creating policy in the implementation of capital improvement projects, and in making business decisions.

Many of the data for this chapter comes from the 2010 Census, Iowa Workforce Department, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and from Iowa State University Extension. To show the relevance and significance of the data presented, comparisons are made between the City of West Branch and other areas, including Cedar County and other communities that are geographically and similarly comparable to the City of West Branch.

### Peer City Reasoning

Comparing the City of West Branch to peer cities in the State of Iowa with similar geographic and economic contexts helps will help identify the City's strengths and weaknesses relative to peer cities. The peer cities identified are Ackley, Bellevue, Clarksville, Columbus Junction, Durant, Mechanicsville, Nora Springs, Pleasantville, State Center, and Toledo.

### Population History and Characteristics

Examination of the population history reveals important changes in the personality and characteristics of West Branch. Table 4.1 summarizes the historical population change in West Branch. Table 4.2 includes a comparison with the cities of Ackley, Bellevue, Clarksville, Columbus Junction, Durant, Mechanicsville, Nora Springs, Pleasantville, State Center, and Toledo. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 indicate the following trends:

- West Branch population grew consistently between 1940 and 2013.
- Population increased by 28.9% between 2000 and 2013.

**Table 4.1 Historic Population Change in West Branch, 1880-2013**

| Year  | Population | Decade      | Percent Change between Decade (%) |
|-------|------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1880  | 501        |             |                                   |
| 1890  | 474        | 1880-1890   | -5.39%                            |
| 1900  | 647        | 1890-1900   | 36.50%                            |
| 1910  | 643        | 1900-1910   | -0.62%                            |
| 1920  | 688        | 1910-1920   | 7.00%                             |
| 1930  | 652        | 1920-1930   | -5.23%                            |
| 1940  | 719        | 1930-1940   | 10.28%                            |
| 1950  | 769        | 1940-1950   | 6.95%                             |
| 1960  | 1,053      | 1950-1960   | 36.93%                            |
| 1970  | 1,322      | 1960-1970   | 25.55%                            |
| 1980  | 1,867      | 1970-1980   | 41.23%                            |
| 1990  | 1,908      | 1980-1990   | 2.20%                             |
| 2000  | 2,188      | 1990-2000   | 14.68%                            |
| 2010  | 2,322      | 2000-2010   | 6.12%                             |
| 2013* | 2,820*     | (2010-2013) | 21.45%                            |

\*Denotes that 2013 Population is from the 2013 5 Year ACS Average  
 Source: U.S. Census and 2013 American Community Survey

### West Branch Comprehensive Plan, Peer Cities Review

One consideration for the community of West Branch as it prepares to update its comprehensive plan is whether the “peer cities” used for comparison throughout the plan are the most effective communities to use for such comparison.

The most recent population data for the cities listed in Table 4.2, compared with the 2010 Census, are as follows:

|                   | 2014 population estimate | Population change from 2010 |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| West Branch       | 2349                     | Increase, +27               |
| Ackley            | 1550                     | Decrease, -39               |
| Bellevue          | 2167                     | Decrease, -24               |
| Clarksville       | 1419                     | Decrease, -20               |
| Columbus Junction | 1857                     | Decrease, -32               |
| Durant            | 1825                     | Decrease, -7                |
| Mechanicsville    | 1117                     | Decrease, -29               |
| Nora Springs      | 1402                     | Decrease, -29               |
| Pleasantville     | 1687                     | Decrease, -7                |
| State Center      | 1471                     | Increase, +3                |
| Toledo            | 2250                     | Decrease, -91               |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

As the table shows, the majority of these peer cities have a projected population decline between 2010 and 2014, while West Branch has a population increase. It is worth considering whether the list of peer cities should be revised to reflect a more balanced mix of communities experiencing modest population growth and decline — or even if West Branch might want to use comparable population growth as one of the criteria in selecting peer cities for comparison.

A geographic comparison of the location of these communities, meanwhile, reveals two outliers: Bellevue and Columbus Junction. While the other communities are similar to West Branch in the sense that they are small communities located within 10-20 miles of a substantially larger community and are situated on a major transportation route, Bellevue and Columbus Junction are comparatively more isolated.

In place of Bellevue and Columbus Junction, Madrid (located outside of Des Moines), Walcott (located outside of Davenport), and Lone Tree (located outside Iowa City) might make worthwhile additions to the list of peer cities. All three are comparably sized to West Branch and comparably situated in terms of proximity to larger communities and transportation routes. Their population data for 2014 are as follows:

|   | 2014<br>population<br>estimate | Population<br>change from<br>2010 |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Lone Tree                                       | 1408                           | Increase,<br>+108                 |
| Madrid  | 2553                           | Increase, +10                     |
| Walcott   | 1630                           | Increase, +1                      |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division |                                |                                   |

By carefully selecting peer cities, West Branch can establish a better basis of comparison for understanding factors like its own projected population growth. It may be that no revision to the current list is needed (or that revisions other than those proposed here make more sense) but a discussion about the basis on which peer cities are chosen could be worthwhile.

# West Branch Comprehensive Plan

## Economy

Approximately 1,553 residents of West Branch were employed in 2013. The 2013 labor force population was approximately 1,600 people. Approximately 97% of the labor force was employed in 2013. 91.2% of the labor force in West Branch does not work in West Branch. Only 95 people who live in West Branch work in West Branch. It is worth noting that more than 1,000 people came into West Branch to work in 2013.

Those who live in West Branch drive a multitude of places for work every day. Approximately 13.1% of the labor force population works in Iowa City. 8.1% of the labor force population works in West Branch. 5% of the labor force population works in Tipton. These three locations have the largest percent of the West Branch Labor Force.

A Retail Sales Analysis and Report for West Branch, Iowa Fiscal Year 2014 created by Iowa State University Department of Economics provides an extensive look at the retail activity occurring within West Branch. In fiscal year 2014 West Branch generated approximately \$13,550,120 in real taxable sales, an increase of more than 5% from the previous fiscal year.

A city's pull factor is a measure that describes how well a community serves its population in terms of retail trade or the ability to attract business from beyond its borders. A pull factor of 1 indicates a community is serving 100% of its population's retail needs. A pull factor greater than 1 indicates that customers are being drawn from beyond the community's borders. The 2014 pull factor according to the Retail Sales Analysis and Report for West Branch Iowa Fiscal Year 2014 is 0.52. Cedar County's pull factor was 0.46 at that time. Table 4.4 shows how West Branch compares to the peer cities identified previously.

Among peer cities, West Branch ranks fourth in taxable retail sales per capita and sixth in pull factor ratio.

**Table 4.4 2014 Retail Sales Analysis Table**

| City  | Taxable Retail Sales Per Capita | Pull Factor |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------|
| West Branch   | \$5,796                         | 0.52        |
| Ackley  | \$5,333                         | 0.49        |
| Bellevue  | \$8,071                         | 0.72        |
| Clarksville   | \$3,394                         | 0.31        |
| Columbus Junction                                     | \$5,771                         | 0.57        |
| Durant  | \$10,609                        | 0.93        |
| Lone Tree   | \$1,762                         | 0.16        |
| Mechanicsville  | \$3,595                         | 0.33        |
| Nora Springs  | \$4,222                         | 0.37        |
| Pleasantville   | \$3,286                         | 0.30        |
| State Center  | \$5,675                         | 0.54        |
| Toledo  | \$13,031                        | 1.30        |
| Source: Retail Trade Analysis Report Fiscal Year 2014 |                                 |             |

## Assessed Value

Table 6.1 shows the assessed value of residential properties in West Branch according to 2013 American Community Survey data. Over 70% of West Branch’s housing has an assessed value between \$100,000 and \$300,000. Over 52% of the City’s housing is valued between \$100,000 and \$200,000, a range that is considered affordable for middle income households. There is over 27% of the housing valued below \$100,000, an affordable category for lower income households.

In most cases, the assessed value of a given home closely correlates to its age of construction. Residential units lying to the west in Johnson County and in the newer subdivisions in the Cedar County Side of West Branch have generally higher assessed values than properties lying in the downtown and older areas of the City. Residential units with the highest assessed values are concentrated.

| <b>Table 6.1 - West Branch Housing Value</b> |                   |                        |                |                                |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Estimate</b>                              | <b># of Units</b> | <b>Margin of Error</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Percent Margin of Error</b> |
| Less than \$50,000                           | 164               | +/-58                  | 20.0%          | +/- 6.6                        |
| \$50,000 - \$99,999                          | 63                | +/-35                  | 7.7%           | +/-4.3                         |
| \$100,000 - \$149,999                        | 212               | +/-59                  | 25.8%          | +/-6.2                         |
| \$150,000 - \$199,999                        | 222               | +/-66                  | 27.0%          | +/-7.0                         |
| \$200,000 - \$299,999                        | 147               | +/-61                  | 17.9%          | +/-7.1                         |
| \$300,000 - \$499,999                        | 13                | +/-13                  | 1.6%           | +/-1.6                         |
| \$500,000 - \$999,999                        | 0                 | +/-10                  | 0.0%           | +/-2.7                         |
| \$1,000,000 or more                          | 0                 | +/-10                  | 0.0%           | +/-2.7                         |

Source: 2013 American Community Survey

## Year Built

West Branch’s housing stock is relatively new with almost 70% of the total units being less than 50 years old, or constructed since 1960 (See Table 6.2). Over 30% of the City’s housing stock was built prior to 1960 with the majority of those, 23.3% being built before 1940. Homes constructed prior to 1960 will require increasing amounts of ongoing maintenance. The city will need to continually monitor overall housing quality to ensure the long-term integrity of its older neighborhood areas.

From 2000 to 2013, much, but not all, of West Branch’s new housing growth has occurred on the west side of town. This area is closer to Iowa City, making a shorter commute for citizens who work outside the City to the west but desire to reside in West Branch.

Figure 6.2 shows distribution of housing units in the community by year of construction.

| <b>Build Year</b> | <b># of Units</b> | <b>Margin of Error</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Percent Margin of Error</b> |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 2010 or later     | 42                | +/-47                  | 3.8%           | +/-4.2                         |
| 2000 - 2009       | 187               | +/-66                  | 16.7%          | +/-5.9                         |
| 1990 - 1999       | 222               | +/-73                  | 19.8%          | +/-6.2                         |
| 1980 - 1989       | 79                | +/-40                  | 7.1%           | +/-3.5                         |
| 1970 - 1979       | 138               | +/-49                  | 12.3%          | +/-4.5                         |
| 1960 - 1969       | 113               | +/-53                  | 10.1%          | +/-4.7                         |
| 1950 - 1959       | 34                | +/-24                  | 3.0%           | +/-2.1                         |
| 1940 - 1949       | 44                | +/-47                  | 3.9%           | +/-4.1                         |
| 1939 or earlier   | 261               | +/-87                  | 23.3%          | +/-6.8                         |

Source: 2013 American Community Survey

## Housing Types and Availability

The availability of affordable, quality housing is an important factor in a community's ability to maintain, expand, or develop a healthy economy. The availability of housing can be an important location factor for new industries when considering a community. A community that is better prepared to meet these needs may have an edge in attracting new development, along with retaining current residents. Housing must be made available for the low-to-moderate income households, the first-time home buyer, residents looking to upgrade homes within the community, and for those looking to move to or retire in the community.

Table 6.3 provides an inventory of the types of housing located in West Branch, Cedar and Johnson Counties, and the State of Iowa. Owner-occupied housing is by far the dominant form of housing within West Branch, accounting for 74% of the total. This is consistent with Cedar County and the State of Iowa. The higher percentages of owner-occupied housing tends to be an indication of a traditional county, which is expected in a more rural area. The lower percentage in Johnson County is attributed to the high demand for rental units with the transient university student population. A 1% vacancy rate within West Branch was experienced in 2013. This is lower than expected. West Branch is lower than the 5% the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers to be a normal vacancy rate. This vacancy rate may be the result of the traditional nature of residents.

| <b>Place</b>          | <b>Owner-Occupied</b> |          | <b>Renter-Occupied</b> |          | <b>Vacant</b> |          |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|------------------------|----------|---------------|----------|
|                       | <b>Number</b>         | <b>%</b> | <b>Number</b>          | <b>%</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>%</b> |
| <b>West Branch</b>    | 821                   | 74.0%    | 288                    | 26.0%    | 11            | 1.0%     |
| <b>Cedar County</b>   | 6,040                 | 78.8%    | 1,625                  | 21.2%    | 399           | 4.9%     |
| <b>Johnson County</b> | 32,220                | 59.7%    | 21,785                 | 40.3%    | 2,538         | 4.5%     |
| <b>State of Iowa</b>  | 885,942               | 72.2%    | 340,605                | 27.8%    | 114,454       | 8.5%     |

Source: 2013 American Community Survey

**Table 6.5 - West Branch Deed Transfers in 2014 (Cedar County Only)**

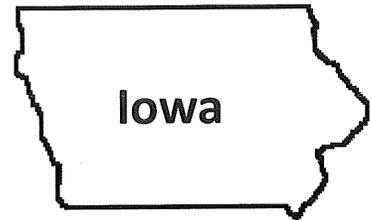
| Total Sales                   | \$0           | \$75,000      | \$100,000      | \$150,000      | \$200,000      | \$250,000      | More than \$300,000 |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
|                               | -<br>\$74,999 | -<br>\$99,999 | -<br>\$149,999 | -<br>\$199,999 | -<br>\$249,999 | -<br>\$299,999 |                     |
| 51                            | 19<br>37.3%   | 4<br>7.8%     | 9<br>17.6%     | 13<br>25.5%    | 1<br>2.0%      | 4<br>7.8%      | 1<br>2.0%           |
| Source: Cedar County Assessor |               |               |                |                |                |                |                     |

# Complete Streets

## Benefits, Design Elements, Community Resources

### What are *Complete Streets*?

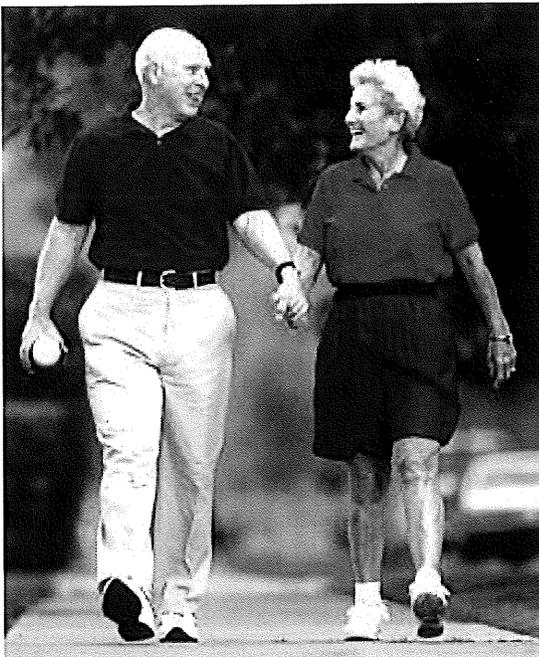
*Complete Streets* refer to the practice of planning, designing, operating and maintaining roadways with all modes of transportation and all users in mind. Not only are drivers considered, but also those who walk, bike or use public transit. *Complete Streets* support pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities. Streets that are “complete” move all people conveniently and safely. Over time, a network of *Complete Streets* can be established in a community providing safe transportation options and opportunities for physical activity.



### Why should Iowa communities have *Complete Streets*?

#### For Health:

*Complete Streets provide opportunities for walking and biking which help citizens stay active and prevent chronic disease.*



- Over 30% of adult Iowans are obese making them at greater risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancers.<sup>1</sup>
- Physical inactivity is linked to increased risk of chronic disease, anxiety and depression, plus bone and muscular problems. Only 48% of adult Iowans get the recommended amount of aerobic physical activity.<sup>2,3,4</sup>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends changes to the physical environment as a strategy to prevent obesity.<sup>5</sup>
- States with the highest levels of bicycling and walking generally have lower levels of obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes and have the greatest percentage of adults who meet the physical activity guidelines.<sup>6</sup>

# COMPLETE STREETS

## For Safety:

*Complete Streets help reduce traffic fatalities and injuries.*

- 14% of all U.S. traffic fatalities are pedestrians or bicyclists.<sup>6</sup>
- The Iowa Department of Transportation (2012) reported 454 pedestrian-motor vehicle and 441 bicycle-motor vehicle crashes resulting in an injury or fatality.<sup>7</sup>
- Slower speeds improve pedestrian safety. Eighty percent of pedestrians hit by a car traveling 40 mph will die. The fatality rate drops to 5% for pedestrians hit by a car traveling 20 mph.<sup>8</sup> All road users benefit from slower speeds.<sup>8</sup>
- Medians, bike lanes, and wider sidewalks are effective at reducing traffic speed. One study reported that pedestrians were 28% less likely to be injured on a street with raised medians, sidewalks, and safe intersections.<sup>9</sup>

## For the Economy:

*Complete Streets are good for the economy.*

- Iowa commuter and recreational cyclists save healthcare dollars plus generate direct and indirect economic benefits.<sup>10</sup>
- Safer, easily-accessible main streets can revitalize rural and urban communities.<sup>8</sup>
- Walkable neighborhoods, those with sidewalks, trails, even trees, can increase home values.<sup>8</sup>



Mount Ayr, IA



## For Equity:

*Complete Streets provide travel options and improve safety for at-risk populations including children, older adults, and people with disabilities.*

- Nationally, today only 16% of children walk to school compared to 48% of children in 1969.<sup>11</sup>
- Among older Americans who do not drive, more than half stay home on a given day due to a lack of transportation options.<sup>8</sup>
- Nearly one in five Americans suffers from hearing loss, vision loss, or mobility issues.

*Complete Streets elements (e.g. curb cuts, longer crossing pedestrian signals, sidewalk access to bus stops and other destinations) facilitate travel for people with disabilities.<sup>8</sup>*



Decorah, IA, [www.markfenton.com](http://www.markfenton.com)

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (BRFSS 2012). [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

<sup>2</sup> Johns Hopkins Medicine Health Library. [www.hopkinsmedicine.org](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org)

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Physical Activity Statistics. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

<sup>5</sup> *Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States.* [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

<sup>6</sup> *Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2012 Benchmarking Report.*

[www.peoplepoweredmovement.org](http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org)

<sup>7</sup> [www.iowadot.gov](http://www.iowadot.gov)

<sup>8</sup> [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org)

<sup>9</sup> [www.healthypartners.org](http://www.healthypartners.org)

<sup>10</sup> Economic and Health Benefits of Bicycling in Iowa.

[www.peoplepoweredmovement.org](http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org)

<sup>11</sup> [www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

# COMPLETE STREETS

## Examples of *Complete Street* elements

*Complete Streets* are designed uniquely for each community. Not all *Complete Streets* within a community will have the same level of accommodation for all users. *Complete Streets* may also vary from rural to urban communities. Urban *Complete Streets* may have bike lanes, pedestrian crossing signals, median islands, and covered, easily accessible bus stops. Rural *Complete Streets* may be complete with a paved shoulder, proper signage, or an adjacent multiuse path. Some rural streets have light vehicular traffic and need no modification. Even when a street requires no additional improvements, it should be evaluated in the context of the entire community transportation system.



**Polk City, IA**  
A main road was scheduled for re-pavement - a perfect time to add bike lanes on both sides.



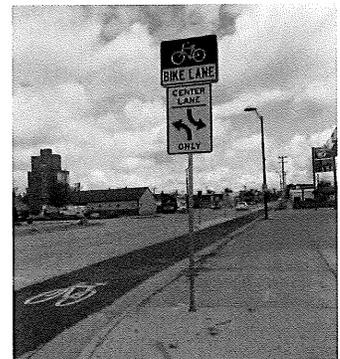
**Keosauqua, IA**  
A bicycle and pedestrian warning sign was added to a frequented street with no sidewalks.



**Conrad, IA**  
A sidewalk en route to the high school was retrofitted with a curb cut and detectable warning.



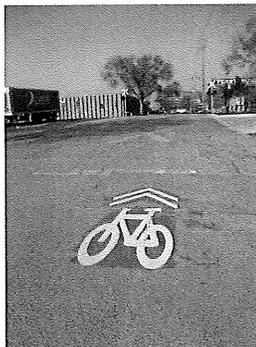
**Madrid, IA**  
A paved shoulder provides space for a bicyclist.



**Sibley, IA**  
A bike lane was added to a main road through town.



**Des Moines, IA**  
Ingersoll Avenue underwent a "road diet", converting four lanes to three lanes, adding bike lanes.



**Cedar Rapids, IA**  
A bike sharrows is a pavement marking used to encourage sharing the road.



**Des Moines, IA**  
Curb bump-outs shorten the distance pedestrians must cross.

## COMPLETE STREETS

### How can a community “Complete” its streets?

Communities wanting to ensure that all users are considered in the construction, repair, and maintenance of a street often adopt a *Complete Streets* policy. A policy will provide consistency in transportation practices over time. *Complete Streets* policies can exist in a variety of forms and be initiated by state, county, regional, city governments or transportation agencies. The National Complete Streets Coalition identified nine Iowa communities with *Complete Streets* policies ([www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org), Sept. 2013):

- Cascade
- Cedar Falls
- Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - Cedar Rapids area
- Des Moines
- Dubuque
- Iowa City
- Johnson County Council of Governments
- Waterloo
- Bi-State Regional Transportation Commission - Quad Cities area



Several resources exist for communities in writing *Complete Streets* policies. Smart Growth America’s *Complete Streets Local Policy Workbook* helps communities decide which policy type is most appropriate and provides sample policy language. Communities may find it reassuring to know that an ideal policy allows for exceptions and design flexibility. The Iowa Department of Transportation is developing a state-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Long-Range Plan (Fall 2014) that can be a model for local community policies.

### **Complete Streets Resources**

***Complete Streets Local Policy Workbook.*** Smart Growth America and National Complete Streets Coalition. [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org)

***Complete Streets Policy Analysis.*** Smart Growth America and National Complete Streets Coalition. [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org)

***Model Laws and Resolutions: Complete Streets.*** ChangeLab Solutions. [www.changelabsolutions.org](http://www.changelabsolutions.org)

***Transportation and Health Toolkit.*** American Public Health Association. [www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org)

***Complete Streets Strategies to Increase Bicycling and Walking.*** Iowa Bicycle Coalition. [www.iowabicyclecoalition.org](http://www.iowabicyclecoalition.org)

***Costs for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Infrastructure Improvements: A Resource for Researchers, Engineers, Planners, and the General Public.*** Active Living Research. [www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org)

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