

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Amended April 1, 2013

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2013 Update to the West Branch Comprehensive Plan is based upon the input from over four hundred community members who completed the West Branch Comprehensive Plan Public Input Survey and attended community input meetings. The City of West Branch is fortunate to have an engaged citizenry. These contributions from community members are greatly appreciated.

Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission devoted many volunteer hours to provide assistance to staff in order to develop a citizen participation process that would reflect the wishes of the community in the Comprehensive Plan. The City is indebted to their service throughout the development of the plan.

The process officially started on June 20, 2011 when the City Council approved an agreement with the East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) to assist the City of West Branch with updating the 1997 West Branch, Iowa Comprehensive Plan. Nicole Turpin, Regional Planning Coordinator with ECIA served as the lead on the project. Mark Schneider, Community Development and Public Services Director with ECIA, also provided technical assistance on the project.

2011 Mayor and City Council

Don Kessler, Mayor
Jim Oaks, Mayor Pro Tem
David Johnson
Dan O'Neil
Robert Sexton
Mark Worrell

2012 Mayor and City Council

Don Kessler, Mayor
Jim Oaks, Mayor Pro Tem
Jordan Ellyson
Colton Miller
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2013 Mayor and City Council

Mark Worrell, Mayor
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RESOLUTION NO. 1093

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE.

WHEREAS, West Branch residents and community members have provided detailed feedback on matters related to the health and prosperity of the West Branch Community through a community input survey; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council have met jointly to discuss the comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission has determined that the Plan meets the goals of providing a legal basis for land use regulation by analyzing existing conditions and developing growth goals and presenting a unified and compelling vision for the community which includes specific actions necessary to fulfill that vision; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission has recommended the approval of the West Branch Comprehensive Plan by the City Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of West Branch, Iowa, that the West Branch Comprehensive Plan Update is hereby adopted.

Passed and approved this 1st day of April, 2013.



Mark Worrell, Mayor

ATTEST:



Matt Muckler, City Administrator/Clerk

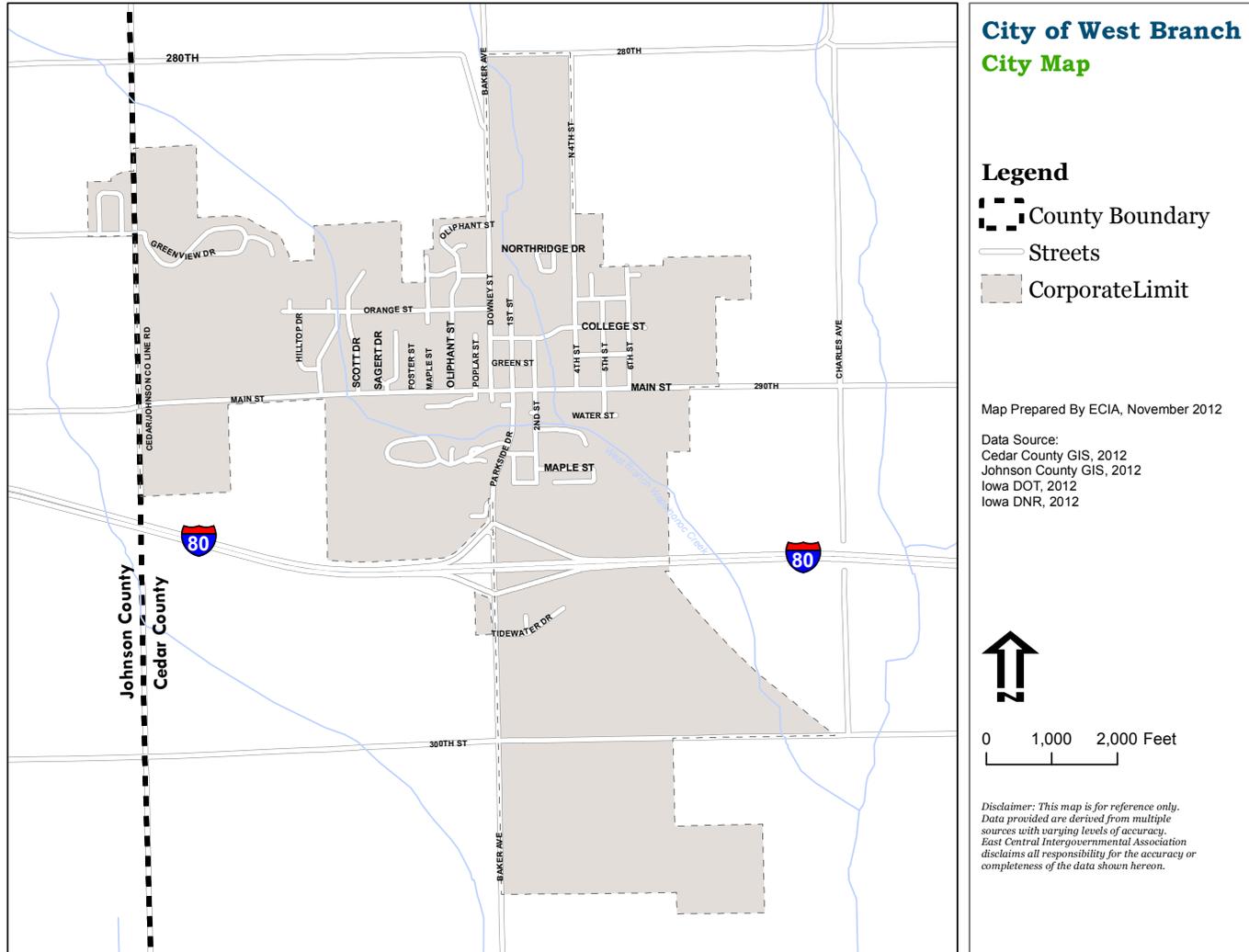
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WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 1.1



WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 1: Introduction

The City of West Branch comprehensive plan provides a guide for the future of the City. West Branch, with a 2010 census population of 2,322, is located on the western border of Cedar County and the eastern border of Johnson County in the State of Iowa. The comprehensive plan identifies issues and opportunities in such areas as land use, infrastructure, parks and recreation, economic development, and the use of environmental resources. The comprehensive plan also provides a road map for implementation to achieve a shared community vision.

Purpose of the Plan

The comprehensive planning process is designed to be a transparent public process in which citizens create a shared vision to promote the health and prosperity of the community. A comprehensive plan has two fundamental purposes: First, to provide a legal basis for land use regulation by analyzing existing conditions and developing growth goals. Second, to present a unified and compelling vision for a community and establish the specific actions necessary to fulfill that vision. The recommendations of the plan are designed to take advantage of West Branch's unique location, resources and heritage to build an optimal future for the citizens of West Branch.

Legal Role

Iowa Code 2003: Section 414.4 enables communities to plan. A municipality is empowered to plan future land uses within a 2-mile radius of its actual municipal boundaries. Where multiple municipal jurisdictions overlap, the authority is generally split at the half-way point between those municipal boundaries. However, municipalities often plan to the 2-mile radius limit even if there is an overlap. This is to indicate their desired land use pattern as a basis for boundary agreements, review of plans for unincorporated areas, and the reservation of public sites and open space corridors. If a city chooses to adopt zoning and subdivision ordinances, which recognize that people in a city live cooperatively and have certain responsibilities to coordinate and harmonize the uses of private property, the Iowa Code requires that these ordinances be in conformance with a comprehensive plan and its corresponding vision for the community's physical development. The West Branch Comprehensive Plan provides the legal basis for the city's authority to regulate land use and development. To maximize resources, the West Branch Comprehensive Plan will plan to existing City limits.

Community Vision

Comprehensive planning is important because it helps solve and avoid problems, meet the needs of the future, and realize new opportunities for the overall benefit of the entire community. A comprehensive plan helps achieve the community's vision of the future in accord with local priorities and resources. Many of the opportunities of the future may be beyond the current resources of the City or require conditions which do not exist at the time the plan is created. Comprehensive planning provides the basis for shaping the decisions within the City's control and for reacting effectively as changes occur through external factors.

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A complete comprehensive plan provides the framework for both public and private decision makers to choose end results that are in the best interest of the entire community. The foundation of the plan is based upon principals that make it valid regardless of the exact rate or extent of growth. Comprehensive planning can be vital in determining:

- The quality of life in the community;
- The character, health and accessibility of open space and natural resources;
- The degree to which storm water runoff is controlled from new development;
- The available revenues to support capital improvements and public services;
- The employment, housing, recreational and shopping desires of the community;
- The current and future demands on infrastructure and;
- The compatibility of development, especially that which occurs adjacent to existing or proposed residential land uses.

Public Involvement:

Public involvement is critical to building consensus in the planning process. If the full community is involved in the planning process the comprehensive plan is more likely to be applied. It is unrealistic that all ideas presented in the comprehensive plan will receive complete agreement. However, since West Branch's planning process was all inclusive and included a wide range of ideas and opinions, the comprehensive plan becomes a unifying element for decisions.

Public participation in West Branch's comprehensive plan was sought through a variety of measures. First, a community wide comprehensive plan informational meeting was held on July 18, 2011. This meeting was designed to inform the planning and zoning commission as well as residents about the purpose and importance of the comprehensive plan. A public input open house was held on October 12, 2011. It was designed so that participants could come and go in hope it would be convenient for participants and more input would be received. A community wide survey was conducted in late March and early April of 2012. Over 400 surveys were received. The survey results are in Appendix A.



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Chapter 2: Vision Statement, Goals & Objectives

Mission Statement: To maintain and enhance the City of West Branch as an historically significant community with a safe small-town, family atmosphere, whose financial and physical resources are managed wisely through policies and programs which assure the long term health and vitality of the community.

The comprehensive plan goals will help guide future development and growth within the planning boundaries of the City of West Branch. These goals and objectives are to be used for guidance for proposed development and redevelopment.

Goals are considered to be a series of guides to consistent and rational public and private decisions used in the development of our urban and rural lands. A goal is an ideal and expresses the purpose that underlies an action. As such, it is expressed in abstract terms and deals with subjective values. It is open to a variety of interpretations and must be interpreted using one's own individual system of values.

Whereas goals are abstract, specific ends must be attained in order to reach these goals. These ends are called objectives, and, unlike goals, can be measured to a certain specificity or standard. The objective is either reached, or it is not; it is a matter of fact, not a matter of opinion. The objectives of the plan take the form of policy recommendations.

Economic Development Goals:

Concentrate on retaining and expanding existing local business.

- i. Cooperate with business, educational institutions, community organizations, and government to provide information to local businesses.
 - a. Develop a business registration program, which includes an information packet, in conjunction with Main Street West Branch.
 - b. Develop a "Welcome West Branch" brochure for distribution to residents and visitors highlighting businesses in West Branch, in conjunction with Main Street West Branch.
- ii. Promote assistance to local firms in finding appropriate development sites for expansion.
 - a. Develop a "West Branch at a Glance" brochure for distribution to existing and potential businesses highlighting economic development facts about West Branch in conjunction with Main Street West Branch.
 - b. Work with Main Street West Branch to utilize the revolving loan fund to benefit local business expansion.

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- iii. Promote retaining existing manufacturing firms and facilitating their expansion.
 - a. The Mayor, Council, Administration and Main Street West Branch will engage with existing manufacturing firms to encourage growth.
 - b. The Mayor, Council, Administration and Main Street West Branch will engage with Iowa City Area Development (ICAD) to encourage the growth of existing manufacturing firms.
- iv. Encourage downtown revitalization and business development.
 - a. Provide community policing services in the downtown district, to include officers on foot, receiving feedback from business owners.
 - b. Work with Main Street West Branch and business owners to repair sidewalks in the Main Street business district.
 - c. Repave Downey Street from Wetherell to Main Street.
 - d. Work with the Historic Preservation Commission on enhancing the appearance of Heritage Square and other public downtown areas.
 - e. Work with Main Street West Branch to obtain new wayfinding signage.
 - f. Work with business owners, the National Historic Site and Main Street West Branch to identify parking solutions that will provide for both residents and commercial activity.
- v. Encourage diversified services and retail shopping.
 - a. Work with Main Street West Branch to bring in diversified services or retail establishments, such as a pharmacy, hardware store, a recreation/community center, an assisted living center, a grocery store, a laundromat and a family restaurant.
 - b. The park and recreation department is to expand activities for youth and teens.
 - c. Investigate the viability of a movie theater, pool, community-recreation-senior center, splash pool, adult education programs, shuttle service to Iowa City, and expanded trails.

Increase the number of firms by fostering local entrepreneurship.

- i. Cooperate with other agencies and institutions to identify programs and services to assist in the creation of new business in West Branch.
 - a. Examine a potential renewed partnership with Cedar County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDCO) and make a decision within the next two years on whether or not reengagement with CCEDCO would benefit West Branch.

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- b. The Mayor, Council, Administration and Main Street West Branch will engage with ICAD to encourage industrial park growth.
- ii. Support start-up businesses with both financial and technical assistance.
 - a. Work with Main Street West Branch and/or possible CCEDCO to provide training for start-up businesses.
 - b. Work with Main Street West Branch to utilize the revolving loan fund to the benefit of start-up businesses.

Promote vacant, development-ready land for industrial use.

- i. Market development-ready sites.
- ii. Evaluate potential future industrial sites.
- iii. Redevelop existing vacant, underutilized and brownfield properties for industrial development.

Housing Goals:

Promote preservation, rehabilitation and investment in our city housing stock and neighborhoods and improve housing opportunities.

- i. Encourage a range of affordable, accessible, and decent, safe and sanitary rental housing options throughout the city.
 - a. Work with ECIA on housing assistance programs appropriate for West Branch.
 - b. Encourage the work of non-profit entities such as Habitat for Humanity.
- ii. Provide for a variety of housing types, costs and locations.
- iii. Become more aggressive in attracting new residents to live in West Branch.
 - a. Work with Main Street West Branch to bring in diversified services or retail establishments, such as a pharmacy, hardware store, a recreation/community center, an assisted living center, a grocery store, laundromat and a family restaurant.
 - b. The park and recreation department will expand activities for youth and teens.
 - c. Investigate the viability of a movie theater, pool, community-recreation-senior center, splash pool, adult education programs, shuttle service to Iowa City, and expanded trails.



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Public Infrastructure and Service Goals:

Provide, maintain, and improve solid waste collection and disposal infrastructure and services.

- i. Strive to maintain efficient and effective solid waste collection.
 - a. Examine a new solid waste provision contract at the end of the current contract which runs through June of 2015.
 - b. Establish solid waste rates so that the service is self-supporting.

Provide, maintain, and improve a cost-effective, safe and functional surface transportation system.

- i. Support ongoing street reconstruction, rehabilitation, and maintenance overlay programs, ensuring the timely maintenance, repair and reconstruction of the city's streets and bridges.
 - a. Develop comprehensive CIP Plan to include street reconstruction and repair.
 - b. Increase the property tax levy to fund these improvements.
- ii. Seek alternative funding sources for construction and maintenance.
 - a. Consider the use of a local option sales tax for future projects.
 - b. Consider the use of tax increment financing for future projects in the industrial park.
 - c. Consider increasing the property tax levy to fund future projects.
- iii. Support extending the life and improving the quality of the city street system through preventative maintenance programs.
 - a. Continue seal coating.
 - b. Fix failing streets.
 - c. Perform in-house (Public Works Staff) work to repair a portion of the streets where appropriate.

Provide, maintain and improve a safe and functional sewer system.

- i. Support maintaining the integrity of the sewer system.
 - a. Complete the lift station.
 - b. Complete I-and-I phase I repairs.
 - c. Complete I-and-I studies on the remainder of the sewer system.
 - d. Complete I-and-I repairs identified in future studies on an ongoing basis.
 - e. Complete a wastewater treatment facilities plan that would meet increased contaminant requirements.
 - f. Complete sump pump inspections.

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- ii. Meet all local, state and federal regulations.
- iii. Identify existing and potential flood-prone problem areas, and alleviate with appropriate mitigation strategies, where possible.

Provide, maintain and improve a cost-effective, functional and self-supporting water system.

- i. Support maintaining the integrity of the water system.
 - a. Replace aging water mains and water mains smaller than 6 inches.
 - b. Make improvements to the water plant, including fencing around the existing plant.
- ii. Encourage efficient operation of the water system.
 - a. Investigate the need for abandoning or developing new wells.
- iii. Meet all local, state and federal water quality standards.



Promote the creation and adoption of a complete streets policy.

- i. Seek to become a bicycle-friendly community.

Promote cost-effective emergency services and facilities that enhance and protect the lives of residents

- i. Promote cooperation and coordination among emergency services agencies
 - a. Continue to develop positive partnerships between the police and fire departments.
 - b. Increase the partnership with National Park law enforcement.
- ii. Support provisions of responsive, high-quality emergency services
 - a. Hire an additional full-time police officer.
 - b. Increase the salaries of full-time police officers by 20%.
 - c. Fully fund the fire department's capital improvement plan.

Provide public facilities and services at levels which support a "desirable quality of life" for current and future residents.

- i. Provide facilities and services in locations compatible with planned uses, populations and needs.

Administration Goals:

Promote the fiscal soundness and viability of City government operations.

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- i. Continue using nonrecurring revenues only to fund nonrecurring expenditures.
- ii. Monitor changing conditions, trends and legislation appropriate to the City's fiscal position and promote the City's sound fiscal condition.
- iii. Minimize program costs by using sound purchasing practices.
- iv. Maintain adequate reserves to positively impact the City bond rating and provide flexibility to implement projects as opportunities occur.
- v. Use City Council goals and priorities to guide the budgeting process.

Operate municipal facilities and services in an accountable manner and encourage positive public relations with residents and others.

- i. Maintain and review administrative, management and personnel capacity for effective support and implementation of municipal services.
- ii. Pursue a variety of revenue sources to offset flat-line budgets as well as examine ways to reduce costs and increase fund balances for municipal facilities and services.

Provide adequately developed park areas and continue to develop a pedestrian/bicycle trail system that links the parks, historical, and natural resources of the City while providing opportunities for recreational activities.

Library Building Project Goals:

Determine the future location of the library.

- i. Work with FEH Associates and George Lawson Consulting to evaluate sites in West Branch and the surrounding area.
- ii. Select a site, acquire the property and achieve funding for library renovation or construction.

Achieve funding for library renovation or construction.

- i. Work with FEH Associates to construct designs for a future library.
- ii. Promote the library project among local social groups and community members.
- iii. Work with the Friends of the Library to conduct fundraising events.
- iv. Acquire grants and donations for building construction.
- v. Hire a professional fundraiser to assist in fundraising efforts (if needed).
- vi. Work to pass a bond referendum (if needed).

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Carry out renovation or construction.

- i. Work with FEH Associates to create site construction plans.
- ii. Conduct a bidding process to select the building contractor.
- iii. Hire a contractor to conduct the library renovation or construction.
- iv. Work with FEH Associates and selected contractors to conduct the building renovation or construction.

Land Use and Zoning Goals:

Encourage redevelopment opportunities to revitalize unused property.

- i. Encourage redevelopment or adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings and sites.
- ii. Promote infill development.
- iii. Promote affordable commercial space for small start-up, new or growing businesses.
- iv. Encourage reinvestment in our existing neighborhoods (i.e., smart growth).
- v. Consider incentives for smart growth.

Encourage cooperative effort between the City of West Branch, Cedar County, Johnson County and any other bodies or agencies involved with the planning, administration or enforcement of plans, codes, ordinances, regulations, etc., that are in effect in the West Branch area.

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Chapter 3: Smart Planning

The “Iowa Smart Planning Act” was signed into law in the spring of 2010, as a way to guide and encourage the development of local comprehensive plans. The bill articulates 10 Smart Planning Principles and 13 comprehensive plan elements for application in local comprehensive plan development and public decision making. These guidelines are intended to improve economic opportunities, preserve the natural environment, protect quality of life and ensure equitable decision-making processes.

The 10 Smart Planning Principles are as follows:

- **Collaboration:**
The comprehensive plan should have a proactive strategy to gain public participation from governmental, community and individual stakeholders, including those outside the jurisdiction in planning, zoning, development and, resource management deliberations, decision making and implementation processes.
- **Efficiency, Transparency and Consistency:**
The comprehensive planning process should be transparent. The decision making process should follow clearly defined standards, be consistent and documented.
- **Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy:**
Efforts to incorporate clean, renewable and efficient principals into design standards, ordinances and policies should be looked at and addressed in the comprehensive plan.
- **Occupational Diversity:**
Planning, zoning and development should promote increased diversity of employment, business opportunities, access to education and training, expanded entrepreneurial opportunities.
- **Revitalization:**
Facilitate the redevelopment and or reuse of established town centers and neighborhoods by promoting development that conserves land, protects historic resources, promotes pedestrian accessibility and integrated mixed uses of properties. Redevelopment and reuse of existing sites, structures and infrastructure is preferred over new construction in under developed areas.

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- **Housing Diversity:**
Promote a multitude of housing types, styles, and price ranges. Look at areas where rehabilitation might be a good fit and identify new housing developments close to existing transportation and employment centers.
- **Community Character:**
Identify the characteristics that make the city what it is. Then develop a strategy to promote activities and development that are consistent with the character and architectural style of the community.
- **Natural Resources & Agricultural Protection:**
Emphasize the protection, preservation and restoration of natural resources, agricultural land, cultural and historic landscapes while also looking to increase the availability of open spaces.
- **Sustainable Design:**
Promote developments, buildings and infrastructure that utilize green design and construction practices with the goal of conserving natural resources by reducing waste and pollution through efficient use of land, water, air, and energy.
- **Transportation Diversity:**
Promote expanded transportation options for residents of the community. Consideration should be given to transportation options and development that maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel and improve air quality.



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The 13 Comprehensive Planning Elements are as follows:

- Public Participation
- Issues and Opportunities
- Land Use
- Housing
- Public Infrastructure and Utilities
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Agricultural and Natural Resources
- Community Facilities
- Community Character
- Hazards
- Intergovernmental Collaboration
- Implementation

Currently there is no state funding for the creation of comprehensive plans or comprehensive plan updates for cities or counties in order to incorporate the ten smart planning principals or the thirteen comprehensive planning elements.



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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 come from the 2010 Census, Iowa Workforce Development, and 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 the peer cities identified in the Iowa State University Retail Sales Analysis and Report for West Branch, Iowa Fiscal Year 2011 can help identify the City's strengths and weaknesses relative to its peer cities. The cities used in the Retail Sales Analysis as peer cities are the cities of 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 from 1940 -2010
- Population increased 5.77% from 2000 to 2010

Table 4.1 Historic Population Change in West Branch, 1880-2010

Year	Population	Decade	Percent Change between Decade
1880	501		
1890	474	1880-1890	-5.70%
1900	647	1890-1900	26.74%
1910	643	1900-1910	-0.62%
1920	688	1910-1920	6.54%
1930	652	1920-1930	-5.52%
1940	719	1930-1940	9.32%
1950	769	1940-1950	6.50%
1960	1,053	1950-1960	26.97%
1970	1,322	1960-1970	20.35%
1980	1,867	1970-1980	29.19%
1990	1,908	1980-1990	2.15%
2000	2,188	1990-2000	12.80%
2010	2,322	2000-2010	5.77%

Source: U.S Census

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Table 4.2 Population Change for West Branch and Peer Cities, 1960-2010

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
West Branch	1,053	1,322	1,867	1,908	2,188	2,322
Ackley	1,731	1,794	1,900	1,696	1,809	1,589
Bellevue	2,181	2,336	2,450	2,239	2,350	2,191
Clarksville	1,328	1,360	1,424	1,382	1,441	1,439
Columbus Junction	1,016	1,205	1,429	1,616	1,900	1,899
Durant	1,266	1,472	1,583	1,549	1,677	1,832
Mechanicsville	866	989	1,166	1,075	1,173	1,146
Nora Springs	1,275	1,337	1,572	1,505	1,532	1,431
Pleasantville	1,025	1,297	1,531	1,536	1,539	1,694
State Center	1,142	1,232	1,292	1,248	1,349	1,468
Toledo	2,417	2,361	2,455	2,380	2,539	2,341

Source: U.S. Census

Population Projections

Population projections can help West Branch plan efficiently for future land use and community service needs. These projections are formed by first evaluating West Branch’s historic trends in population and then projecting these trends. The methods implemented to predict the future population of West Branch are:

1. Trend line analysis;
2. Relative proportion.

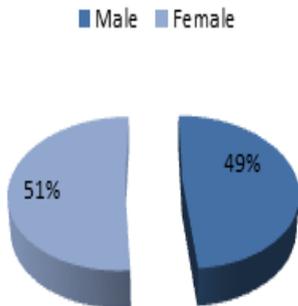
The trend-line analysis method utilizes the community’s historic census population figures to calculate a “best fit” trend line of past growth. Once the trend line is developed, it is then extended to show projected future growth. This method assumes that West Branch’s growth rate will continue at a rate similar to the past.

Table 4.3 Population Project West Branch, 2020-2040

	2020	2030	2040
Trend Line Analysis	2,227	2,374	2,521
Relative Proportion	2,370	2,422	2,469
Relative Proportion (Johnson County)	3,198	3,788	4,381

The relative proportion method assumes that the total population of a municipality can be projected based on the total population of its surrounding county. By using Woods and Poole population projections for Cedar County a ratio of West Branch’s Population to Cedar County’s population can be established. It was also asked by the

Figure 4.1: Gender by Percentage in West Branch



West Branch Planning and Zoning Commission to conduct the relative proportion method compared to Johnson County since a small portion of the City limits is in Johnson

County. Table 4.3 shows the results for the City of West Branch from the two methods.

Gender

As of the 2010 Census, West Branch’s population was 49% male and 51% female. These numbers are consistent with the majority of U.S. cities. Cedar County shows a similar division of male and female population with 49% male and 51% females according to the 2010 Census.

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

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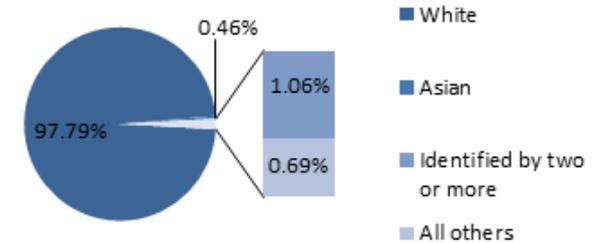
Race, Ancestry, Ethnicity, Age & Gender

Census data can show diversity within a population that is not always perceptible to the general public. The latest U.S. Census figures show West Branch’s population to be fairly homogenous in terms of race with 97% of the population identified as white. The highest racial minority are persons of two or more races or 1.29% of the population followed by African American at 0.43% of the population. Cedar County’s racial diversity is similarly situated to West Branch in that 97.79% of the population identified as white, two or more races was 1.06%, followed by Asian at 0.46%.

Ethnicity

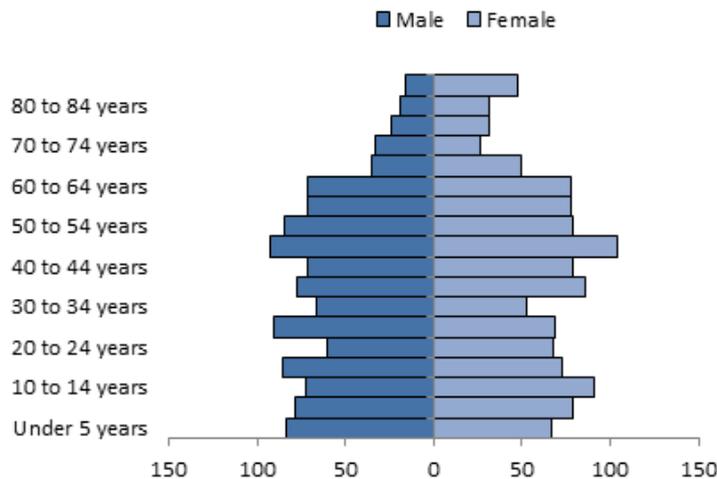
Respondents to the decennial census can indicate if they have Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. Persons identifying themselves as Hispanic or Latino can be of any race or ancestry. West Branch has a Hispanic/Latino population of 49 or 0.2% of the total population.

Figure 4.2 Race by % in West Branch



Source: 2010 Census

Figure 4.3 Population Pyramid for West Branch



Source: 2010 US Census

Age & Gender

The best evaluation of the population’s overall age is the median age. The U.S. Census Bureau defines median age as the “measure that divides the age distribution in a stated area into two equal parts: one-half of the population falling below the median value and one-half above the median value.” The higher the median age the older a population, and conversely, the lower the median age the younger the population. The U.S. Census Bureau data shows that the median age for West Branch has been steadily increasing from 29.0 in 1980 to 38.7 in 2010. Cedar County’s median has also been steadily increasing from 31.9 in 1980 to 42.4 in 2010.

The population figures provide an illustration of the age distribution within the City. On graphs of this type, younger communities will be wider at the base and narrower at the top. The opposite is true for older communities.

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Economy

A Retail Sales Analysis & Report for West Branch, Iowa Fiscal Year 2011 created by Iowa State University Department of Economics provides an extensive look at the retail activity occurring within West Branch. In fiscal year 2011 West Branch generated \$13,074,548 in real taxable sales. In comparison the ten peer cities ranged from \$7,769,448 to \$30,801,767 in real taxable sales for fiscal year 2011.

A 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 2011 pull factor according to the Retail Sales Analysis & Report for West Branch, Iowa Fiscal Year 2011 is 0.53. In comparison Cedar County has a slightly lower pull factor of 0.46.

The table 4.4 shows how West Branch compares to the peer cities identified in the Retail Sales Analysis & Report.

Table 4.4 2011 Retail Sales Analysis Table		
City	Taxable Retail Sales Per Capita	Pull Factor
Ackley	\$5,533	0.55
Bellevue	\$7,471	0.53
Clarksville	\$3,884	0.53
Columbus Junction	\$5,572	0.53
Durant	\$8,525	0.53
Mechanicsville	\$3,022	0.53
Nora Springs	\$3,963	0.53
Pleasantville	\$2,930	0.53
State Center	\$4,265	0.53
Toledo	\$11,295	0.53
West Branch	\$5,599	0.53

Source: Retail Trade Analysis Report Fiscal Year 2011, West Branch

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Chapter 5: Land Use

The Iowa Land Use Planning Notebook defines land use planning as showing “the existing and proposed location, extent and intensity of development of land to be used in the future for varying types of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, educational and other public and private purposes or combination of purposes.” In other words, land use describes how and why the land is being used for a particular purpose. Existing land uses are those in place at the time the information was recorded or surveyed. Future land use addresses the desired use of land within the planning period and planning boundary. The West Branch Comprehensive Plan’s planning period is 20 years with a planning boundary of roughly the existing corporate limits.

The land use chapter provides the framework and statement of land use policy. The future land use map presented in this chapter provides guidance to local officials on the quality and character of the development that may take place within the next 20 years.

There are six types of land uses identified in the comprehensive plan. They are residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and open space, park and recreation and governmental. Residential land use is land that has a home or dwelling on it for the purpose of human habitation. Commercial land use is land used primarily for wholesale/retail sales, office use, professional services and business activities. Industrial facilities include manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale trade, construction and utilities. Institutional land use is defined as land dedicated for government buildings, schools, and cemeteries. Parks and recreation is land dedicated to parks and recreational facilities such multi-use trails. An agricultural land use is land used for agricultural production either crop or livestock production, or land that has been left as open space.

To plan what types of land use West Branch will need in the next 20 years it is important to understand what the existing conditions are. Map 5.1 shows the existing land use in West Branch. Table 5.1 provides a detailed breakdown of the existing land use by acres in the incorporated areas of the City of West Branch.

Table 5.1 Existing Land Use for West Branch in 2012		
Land Use Type	Total Acres	Percentage
Residential	358	28.9%
Commercial	313	25.3%
Industrial	90	7.3%
Institutional	212	17.1%
Agricultural and Open Space	219	17.7%
Park and Recreation	45	3.6%

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Future Land Use

Having a map of the anticipated future growth areas and expected future land uses allows for preferred future growth patterns to occur. This provides a guide for where development activities should occur to maximize the city's resources. Map 5.2 is the Future Land Use Map for the City of West Branch and displays the city's preferred future growth patterns and future land uses. In preparing for the future it is essential to identify ways to encourage, attract and/or retain residents. Ways to encourage long-term residents are:

- Retain and encourage locally owned businesses;
- Encourage home ownership;
- Provide a variety of housing options;
- Offer quality-of-life amenities, such as multi-use trails.

Table 5.2 provides a detailed breakdown of expected land use for the City of West Branch based on the future land use map developed from the public input surveys and meetings.



Table 5.2 Future Land Use for West Branch in 2032

Land Use Type	Total Acres	Percentage	Expected Acre Change 2012 - 2032
Residential	473	38.3%	115
Commercial	363	29.4%	50
Industrial	90	7.3%	0
Institutional	212	17.1%	0
Agricultural & Open Space	53	4.3%	-166
Parks and Recreation	45	3.6%	0

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Land Use Goals

The land use goals of the City of West Branch are meant to provide continuity on how land use matters are addressed over the next 20 years in the City of West Branch. Using these goals is a means to protect identified valuable resources and preserve what truly makes the City of West Branch a great place to live, work and play. The City should look into ways to incentivize redevelopment within the City of West Branch. For example, a housing rehabilitation pro-gram should be considered.

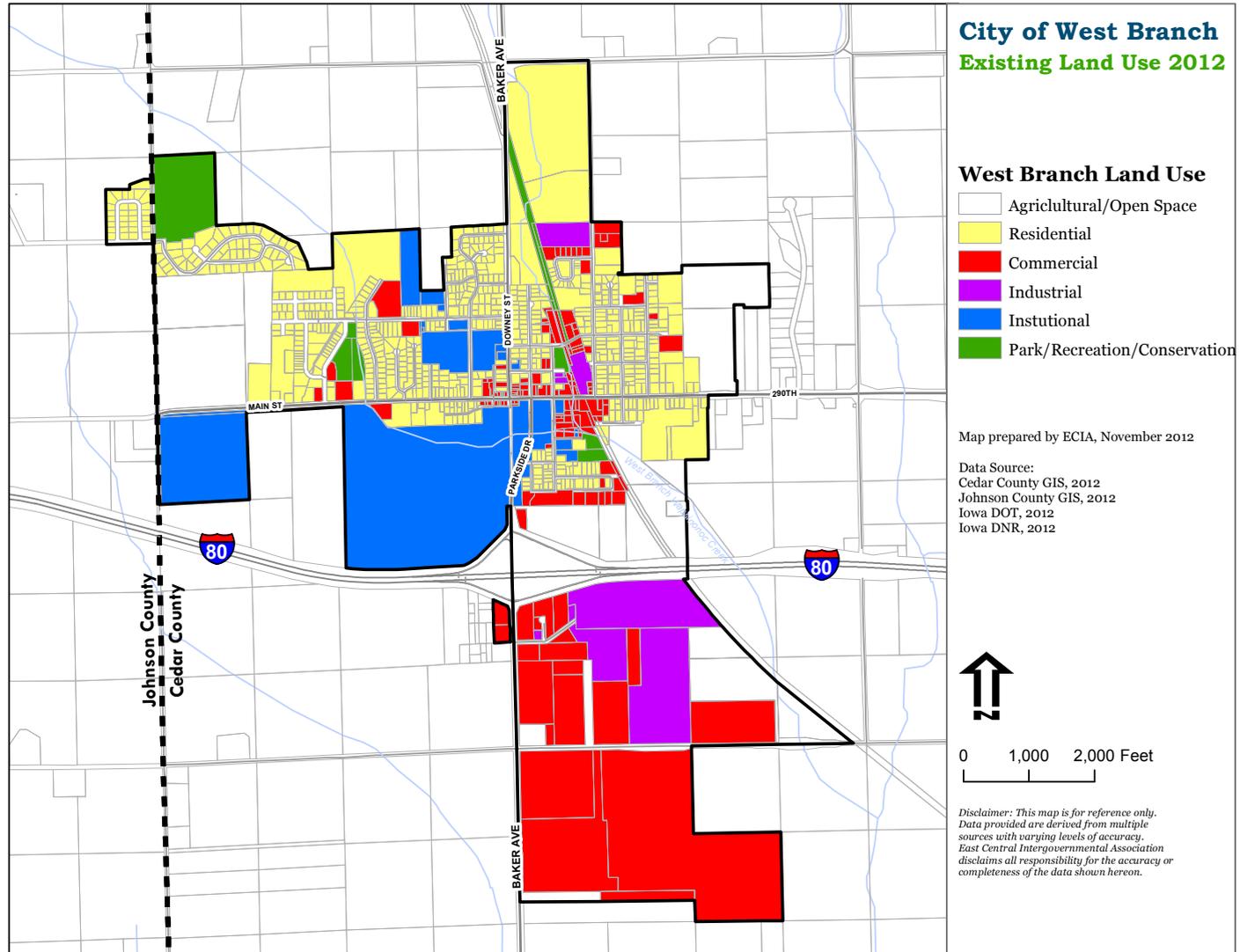
Other Items for Consideration

The public input survey found that respondents of the survey thought the City of West Branch needed more commercial uses (shopping, services, food/ beverage establishments, and offices). Land for natural areas, open space and wildlife habitat was found to be about right. Survey respondents believe there are too many condominium style residences. The survey also found that City of West Branch needed more was civic spaces (parks, pedestrian plazas, outdoor entertainment).



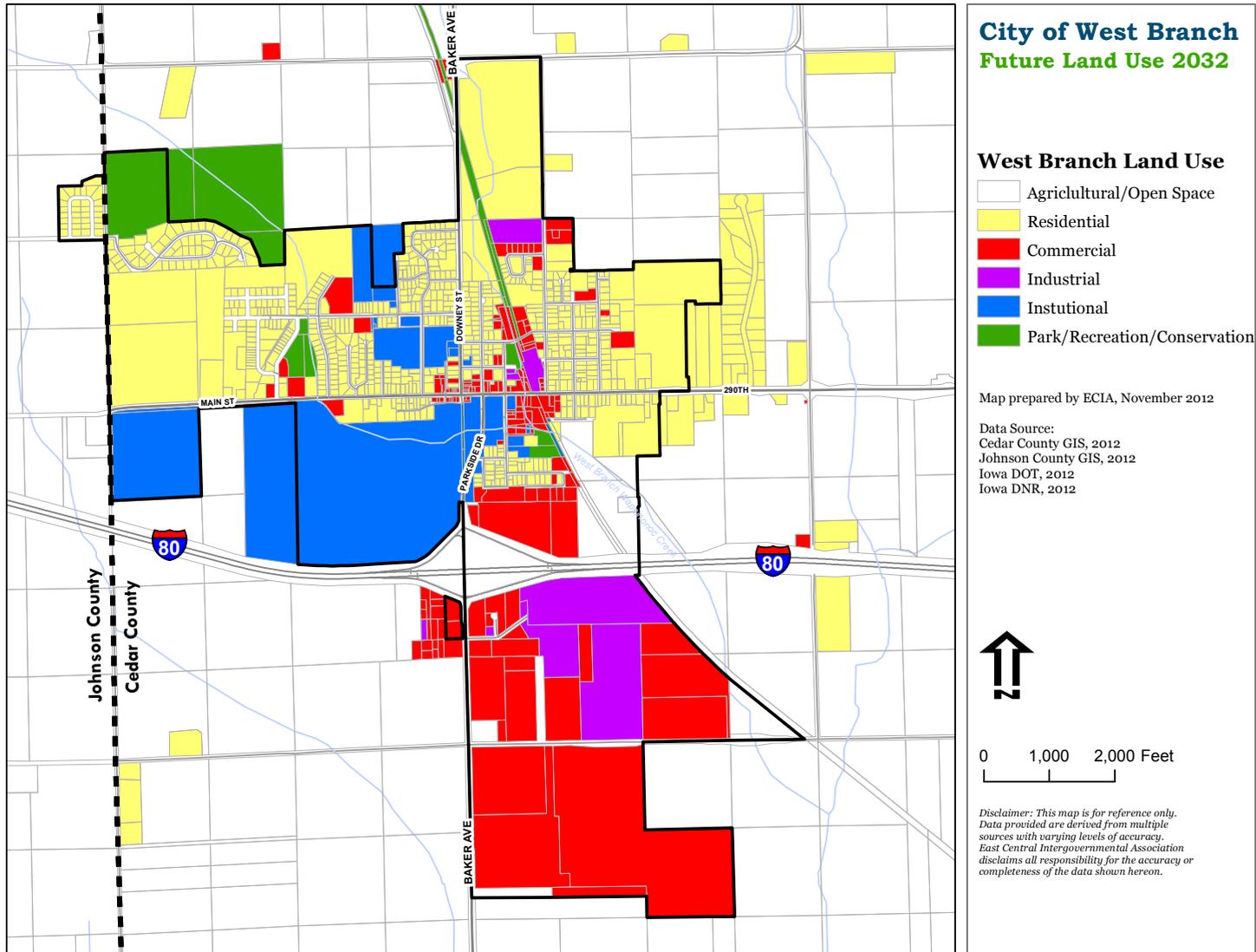
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Map 5.1
Existing Land Use in
West Branch (only
land use in the City
limits is shown)



WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 5.1
Future Land Use in
West Branch



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Chapter 6: Housing

Housing is the dominant form of development in West Branch. A significant amount of land in West Branch’s 2032 Land Use Plan is earmarked for residential use. The housing supply plays an important role in shaping the community. To a large degree, the size, form and type of housing units determine who lives in West Branch. The quality and character of West Branch’s neighborhoods plays an important role in shaping the identity of the community and its stature as a place to live.

Including housing policies and initiatives in the comprehensive plan is appropriate for two reasons. First, the housing needs of a community are not completely met by private market forces or through land use control. Community plans and ordinances create the framework for private land development, land development that is almost universally profit-driven. Private market forces need to be supplemented by programs and funding sources that bridge the financial gap for segments of the community that can’t afford market-rate housing. Accordingly, this chapter can help identify housing needs and provide a foundation for local decision making to guide residential development and redevelopment efforts in West Branch.

The second reason that housing is addressed in this plan is to meet the intent of recent Iowa Smart Planning legislation enacted by the Iowa Legislature. The Smart Planning legislation defines components that are suggested content for comprehensive plans. These components are presented as ten Smart Planning principles, one of which addresses housing. The housing principle addresses housing diversity. It states, “planning, zoning, development and resource management should encourage diversity in the types of available housing, support the rehabilitation of existing housing, and promote the location of housing near public transportation and employment centers.”

The legislation further states that when developing or amending a comprehensive plan, “objectives, policies and programs to further the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods and new residential neighborhoods and plans to ensure an adequate supply of housing that meets both the existing and forecasted housing demand. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may include an inventory and analysis of the local housing stock and may include specific information such as age, condition, type, market value, occupancy, and historical characteristics of all the housing within the municipality. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may identify specific policies and programs that promote the development of new housing and maintenance or rehabilitation of existing housing that provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of the residents of the municipality.”



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Characteristics of the Existing Housing Supply

Assessed Value

Table 6.1 shows the assessed value of residential properties in West Branch according to 2012 Cedar County and Johnson County Assessors data. Over 80% of West Branch’s housing has an assessed value between \$75,000 and \$200,000. Over 54% of the City’s housing is valued between \$100,000 and \$200,000, a range that is considered affordable for middle income households while there is over 26% of the housing valued below \$100,000 in the 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, generally have higher assessed values than properties lying in downtown and older areas of the City.

Table 6.1 Assessed Value of Housing		
Assessed Value	# of Units	Percentage
< \$75,000	56	7.66%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	141	19.29%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	228	31.19%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	169	23.12%
\$200,000 - \$249,999	85	11.63%
\$250,000 - \$299,999	39	5.34%
> \$300,000	13	1.78%

Year Built

With 75% of the total units in West Branch less than 50 years old the housing stock is considered relatively new (see Table 6.2). Over 26% of the City’s housing stock was built prior to 1960 with the majority of those, 18.2%, 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 2012, much, but not all, of West Branch’s new housing growth 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 wish to reside in West Branch.

Table 6.2 shows the distribution of housing units in the community by year of construction according to the 2010 Census data.

Table 6.2 Housing by Year Built		
Year Built	# of Units	Percent of Total
< 1940	197	18.2%
1940 - 1949	30	2.8%
1950 - 1959	58	5.4%
1960 - 1969	118	10.9%
1970 - 1979	203	18.8%
1980 - 1989	125	11.6%
1990 - 1990	186	17.2%
> 2000	163	15.1%

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Housing Types and Availability

The availability of affordable, high 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 77.6% 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 4.3% vacancy rate within West Branch was experienced in 2010. This is slightly lower than expected and may be even lower if homes for sale and rental units that have been rented but were vacant at the time of the census were included in this figure. West Branch’s figure 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, or the poor economy experienced in recent years with many households refinancing or households being hesitant to move in poor economic times.

Table 6.3 Owner-Occupied Housing Units						
	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Vacant	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
West Branch	735	77.6%	212	22.4%	43	4.3%
Cedar County	5,903	78.6%	1,608	21.4%	553	6.9%
Johnson County	31,299	59.4%	21,416	40.6%	3,252	5.8%
State of Iowa	880,635	72.1%	340,941	27.9%	114,841	8.6%

Table 6.4 shows the distribution of housing units in West Branch. The HUD vacancy standard is that 5% of the total housing units would be available for sale or rent. One would assume that the HUD vacancy standard would be equally reflected in the percent of owner occupied housing versus rental units in the community. (West Branch has 77.6% of its homes classified as owner-occupied and 22.4% as rental units. The Census shows that West Branch has 990 housing units. (The number is higher in 2012 due to additional units being constructed since the time of the Census.) Based on the HUD standard, West Branch should have 49 units available. Of the 49 units, 38 would be available for sale and 11 would be available for rent. The 2010 Census shows 14

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units available for rent, which is within a reasonable range of expectation. However, the 8 units available for sale are much lower than expected. The lack of houses for sale indicates a potential need for additional homes in the community. While there does not appear to be a need for rental units, options within rental units assuring the availability of independent living units should be examined to fill the vacancy need.

Table 6.4 Status of Housing Units, 2010						
	Owner	Renter	For Sale	For Rent	Seasonal	Other Vacant
West Branch	735	212	8	14	3	18
	77.6%	22.4%	0.8%	1.4%	0.3%	1.9%
Cedar County	5,903	1,608	99	95	47	312
	78.6%	21.4%	1.2%	1.2%	0.6%	3.8%
Johnson County	31,299	21,416	810	1,173	327	942
	59.4%	40.6%	1.4%	2.1%	0.6%	1.7%
State of Iowa	880,635	340,941	18,405	31,812	21,020	43,604
	72.1%	27.9%	1.4%	2.4%	1.6%	3.2%

Source 2010 Census

Table 6.5 details the property sales in West Branch during 2011. The vast majority of all property sales in West Branch within the City (91.43% of residential property sales) were for less than \$200,000 with a high percent of 34.29% of the sales being less than \$100,000. This further confirms prior data that the majority of the existing homes with lower values are in the Cedar County part of the City. (There was only one sale in the Johnson County portion of the City at \$147,000.) The lack of sales above \$250,000 indicates few of these sales were new construction as the majority of homes built today sell for \$200,000+. The significant percent of homes sold under \$100,000 likely indicates older, existing homes that are being sold and may further indicate the City's need to monitor housing quality to ensure the long-term integrity of its older neighborhood areas as previously noted.

Table 6.5 West Branch Deed Transfers in 2011								
Total Sales	Lots	\$0 - \$74,999	\$75,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000 - \$149,999	\$150,000 - \$199,999	\$200,000 - \$249,999	\$250,000 - \$299,999	> \$300,000
35	0	8	4	10	10	3	0	0
	0.0%	22.86%	11.43%	28.57%	28.57%	8.57%	0.0%	0.0%

Source Cedar and Johnson County Assessors

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In the community survey conducted for the comprehensive planning process, housing was an issue of concern to the residents, but not a major concern. The issues of highest importance were focused on property maintenance and lack of senior housing availability. Other areas of less concern included high purchase prices, lack of choice in moderate price ranges (move up housing units), and lack of affordable housing. These issues form the basis for the housing plan.

Traditional single-family detached housing has always been a strong component of the community's housing stock. Development in West Branch over the past ten years has been varied. The moderately priced housing units tend to be zero lot line, single-family attached units. The balances tend to be higher priced single-family detached units ranging from the upper \$100's to \$400,000. As the community looks forward to the next two decades, this comprehensive plan assumes that efforts will be made to maintain housing diversity. Future housing constructed in West Branch will either occur as infill housing in the developed portion of the community or new housing in the developing, west and northeast areas of the city. In infill situations, housing types will need to be compatible with surrounding housing types and lot sizes. In the developing area, more flexibility exists. The land use pattern in the community promotes housing diversity. However, it may require some effort on the part of the City to promote moderately priced single-family detached housing.

A Community of Well Maintained Housing

An analysis of the age of West Branch's housing stock revealed that a significant portion of the housing in the community was built before 1960. Homes that are over 50 years old tend to require more maintenance. The Comprehensive Plan surveys noted concerns about property maintenance. It is possible that some deteriorating housing units may be located in prominent locations. Such properties sometimes deteriorate and negatively impact the image of the community. In some cases, owners of property defer required maintenance due to a lack of funds or for other reasons. The City may consider implementing a property maintenance code and applying for grant funding to assist grant-eligible property owners. Efforts should also concentrate on property maintenance and enforcement in all areas of the City. Neighborhood deterioration due to abandoned vehicles, peeling paint, junk storage, etc. can be addressed with property maintenance standards.

Housing Development that Respects the Natural Environment

The City of West Branch has a topography that includes slopes and floodplains. Environmental regulations, such as the City's Floodplain Ordinance, strive to protect these features as distinct benefits for community "quality of life." In addition, a significant amount of land west of the city continues to be developed with large-lot single-family housing. This must be designed in a manner to preserve and protect natural features and preserve ag land to the extent possible. This estate residential area is expected to remain substantially less dense than the rest of the city, in part, because of the excessive costs associated with extending utilities to this area in the future. Also, the city is committed to preserving the existing character of the estate area through less intensive land development including Low Impact Design and other sustainable urban practices. These practices seek designs that will manage stormwater runoff, thereby reducing flooding and minimizing impacts on the development and neighboring properties to maintain the predevelopment status to the extent possible.

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Improvement of Linkages Between Housing and Employment and the Provision of Services to Residents

West Branch is a community with strong east-west transportation corridors. Interstate 80 is Iowa's most significant east-west roadway. Most of the commercial uses in the city have located along Interstate 80. Industrial employment is also in the south and northwest areas of the City. North-south connections across the city are more limited. Most employers are located in Iowa City which tends to cause a portion of residents to funnel out of the city for retail goods and services. As West Branch looks forward it must be realized that the City will remain a bedroom community to Iowa City and Cedar Rapids and strive to promote development that will set West Branch apart in terms of housing prices, types, etc., and promoting the quality of life and other benefits that exist in West Branch.



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Chapter 7: Economic Development

Economic Development involves every facet of the community, from parks and trails, to technology infrastructure, to strong leadership. West Branch must attend to all these facets in order to support existing businesses, maintain a quality workforce, and foster new economic ventures. Other chapters of this plan outline strategies for preserving natural resources, maintaining a diverse transportation network, providing quality recreational opportunities and public facilities, supporting a reliable infrastructure system, revitalizing existing neighborhoods, and developing land efficiently, profitably, and responsibly. All of these pieces fit together to form a strategy that will support a vibrant, enduring economy. These strategies contribute to the declared economic development goals of West Branch, which are outlined below.

CURRENT CONDITION

Residents of West Branch are fairly satisfied with the current appearance of their community, specifically with the downtown business district. Resident's opinions about the appearance of West Branch were gathered in a survey. Of the 401 surveys submitted, 84% (336) of respondents lived in West Branch while 65 respondents or 16% did not. The survey revealed that 64% of those surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that the City's appearance through tree plantings, flowers and landscaping is adequate. Survey respondents were also satisfied with the City's signage and Main Street facades (68%). The Design Committee as part of West Branch Main Street program strives to improve the physical appearance of the downtown district. The committee works on attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping. This work, along with other community efforts has resulted in a pleasant community appearance. Seventy-four percent of survey respondents reported that the City's efforts to preserve and enhance historic buildings are also thought to be adequate. This can partially be attributed to the National Historic District formed by the downtown buildings. Lastly, just under half (49%) of individuals responding to the survey reported that the City's building and zoning codes adequately maintain the character of the community.



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WEST BRANCH'S ECONOMIC GOALS

The economic development goals of West Branch were developed from the various public input methods. These goals are meant to foster economic growth through expansion of existing business and new economic partnerships.

Concentrate on retaining and expanding existing local business.

In tough economic times, retaining existing business becomes even more critical. Existing business retention and expansion is a crucial component in an overall economic development plan. National economic development studies have shown that 60-80% of future job growth results from the expansion of existing industries. While business retention and expansion may not be as glamorous as business attraction, it is a critical piece. The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) believes that business retention and expansion programs are best performed as a locally driven effort. West Branch has adopted the following goals to ensure the continued success of existing businesses:

Partnerships

Cooperate with business, educational institutions, community organizations, and government to provide information to local businesses.

Development Sites

Promote assistance to local firms in finding appropriate development sites for expansion.

Facilitation

Promote retaining existing manufacturing firms and facilitate their expansion.

Revitalization

Encourage downtown revitalization and business development.

Diversification

Encourage diversified retail shopping.



Increase the number of small firms by fostering local entrepreneurship.

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Locally grown, small firms have enormous growth potential. The Small Business Administration reports that small businesses represent 99.7% of all employers and provide approximately 75% of the net new jobs added to the economy. Growing local entrepreneurship will lead to homegrown small businesses in West Branch. Companies started by local entrepreneurs bring new wealth and economic growth to a community. Local entrepreneurs are also likely to remain, grow, and invest in the home community, thus cultivating businesses that are invested in the community. West Branch has adopted the following goals to ensure the continued success of existing business:

Partnerships

Cooperate with other agencies and institutions to identify programs and services to assist in the creation of new small business.

Financial and Technical Assistance

Promote support for start-up businesses with both financial and technical assistance.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Vibrant and Active Downtown Area

A vibrant and active downtown area is important to West Branch residents. Of the 401 survey respondents, 83% or 326 individuals reported that a vibrant downtown was very important or important. People want to be where they can live, work, and play. Fostering a vibrant and active downtown will require the continued success and expansion of local businesses, a multi-modal transportation system, and partnerships with area civic groups. Providing social activities in addition to ensuring the success of retail businesses will be important in coming years.

Incentives for Small Businesses

The Great Recession has had a significant effect on small businesses, specifically in terms of financing. Banks are making fewer loans to businesses and the loan amounts are also decreasing. According to the Small Business Administration, from 2007 to 2011 the number of loans to commercial and industrial small businesses fell 10% and the total dollars lent to this group declined by 13%. This further demonstrates the need for incentives and loan programs targeted at small businesses. Eighty-three percent of West Branch survey respondents reported that incentives for small businesses to improve their buildings and properties are very important or important. Currently, Main Street West Branch offers a revolving loan fund with 0% interest for loans amounting between \$500 and \$2000. Additional incentive and loan programs are available through the Small Business Association and other state and federal programs. Additional research should be conducted to determine if additional gap financing or incentives are needed to assist businesses in West Branch.

Sustainable or “Green” Community

Sustainability is defined by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the

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ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Long lasting sustainability requires a balance between the environment, social equity, and economic development. Sustainability or a “green” community was identified as very important or important to 71% of West Branch survey respondents. There are a number of tools West Branch can utilize to cultivate a culture of sustainability among West Branch residents and the business community. Planning is the first step towards a more sustainable community. ICLEI offers a number of tools for members including a Sustainability Planning Toolkit. East Central Inter-governmental Association also coordinates the Petal Project green business certification program. The program offers businesses a simple framework for saving money and resources while establishing a community-wide definition of a green business. Utilizing these programs and others can guide the West Branch sustainability plan. Green infrastructure programs such as the promotion of rain gardens should be developed to encourage the implementation of green infrastructure.

Diverse Shopping

A vibrant and active downtown area requires diverse shopping options. Sixty-one percent of West Branch survey respondents identified diverse shopping opportunities as very important or important. Attracting or growing from within diverse businesses will require the continued development of all of the goals listed above in addition to the availability of infrastructure. Recruiting and retaining these businesses will require constant communication with potential leads and existing business, access to incentives and financing, a vibrant downtown and citizens with a “buy local” mindset. Meeting this goal will require collaboration amongst business leaders, government officials, and other civic organizations.

Other:

Hoover Complex

Tourism is an area of economic development that the City of West Branch should capitalize on. West Branch is the birthplace of the 31st President of the United States, Herbert Hoover. West Branch is home to the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site and Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Museum. The Herbert Hoover National Historic Site tells the story of the 31st President by preserving historic buildings and landscape that commemorates his life and accomplishments. The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Museum visitors can learn about Herbert Hoover’s life and career through exhibits. The Library Museum has had nearly three million visitors since it opened over forty-years ago. That is approximately 75,000 visitors each year.



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Iowa City Area Development Group

The Iowa City Area Development Group (ICAD) works to the quality of its communities by serving businesses and economic development needs in the cities of Iowa City, Coralville, North Liberty, Solon, Tiffin, Tipton, the Amana Colonies, West Branch, Kalona, West Liberty and Johnson County. ICAD is an economic development resource to the City of West Branch. ICAD's purpose is to create, collaborate and lead regional economic development that will result in the creation and growth of companies, quality jobs and wealth.



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Chapter 8: Public Infrastructure and Utilities

This section provides an inventory and analysis of West Branch's infrastructure system, including water distribution and storage, sanitary sewer collection and treatment and storm water conveyance. Considerations for the growth of these systems are also covered.

Water System

The City of West Branch has 4 Silurian wells. Wells 1 and 2 have a capacity of 300 GPM each and Wells 3 and 4 and a capacity of 100 GPM each. However the total pumping capacity with all wells in operation is only 800 GPM. The City currently has aeration/detention tank that has a capacity of 500 GPM. The water system currently has three high service pumps. Only two of the three high service pumps run at one time, the other pump serves as back up. The treatment facility uses pressure filtration to remove iron. The treatment facility plant has two 8-foot diameter vertical pressure filters rated at 100 GPM each and one three cell horizontal pressure filter rated at 300 GPM. The City has two water towers. The first was built in 1970 and has a capacity of 250,000 gallons, the second water tower was built in 2006 and has a capacity of 300,000 gallons.

Sanitary Sewer System

The City of West Branch sanitary sewer system is made up of a collection system, one sewage lift station located on the southeast part of the City and an aerated lagoon. The collection system consists of sanitary sewer pipe, manholes and sewer mains. Currently the system treats approximately 6,000,000 gallons of water per month in the lagoons. It should be noted that wetter years would cause the system to treat more gallons per month.

Storm water

Storm water is water (rain, melted snow, melted ice) collected at it "runs off" impervious surfaces, including buildings, roads, parking lots and fields. In the undeveloped portions of the City of West Branch, storm water naturally flows across the ground and is either absorbed by the ground or runs into creeks and streams. In the developed areas of the City, storm water is channeled across roofs, gutters, parking lots and streets: through pipes into local streams and creeks. Storm water management revolves around three main issues: drainage, water quality and flooding. Through public input sustainability and/or being a "green" community was important to many residents of West Branch. One way for the City to become more sustainable is to encourage "green" infrastructure in new and existing developments. Some "green" infrastructure items include urban forestry, permeable pavement, along with investigating alternatives to detention/retention basins and traditional storm water methods.

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Private Utility Service Providers

Table 8.1 Service Providers by Service	
Service	Service Provider
Electric	Alliant Energy & Linn County Rural Electric Cooperative (Greenview & Bickford Drive)
Gas	Alliant Energy
Phone	Liberty Communications
Cable	Liberty Communications & Mediacom
Garbage and Recycling	Johnson County Refuse

Alliant Energy Cooperation is an energy holding company providing electric and natural gas services to communities throughout Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota. Service is provided to more than 1.4 million customers and nearly 4,000 people are employed by Alliant Energy.

Linn County Rural Electric Cooperative organized on July 8, 1938 as a private, non-profit electric utility that is owned by the members it serves. It was established to provide electric service at the lowest price possible. Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative is headquartered in Marion, Iowa and membership covers homes, farms, and businesses in Linn, Johnson, Jones, Cedar and Benton Counties.

Liberty Communications is a local communications company that provides cable, telephone and internet service. Liberty Communications began as the West Liberty Telephone Company in 1899. In January of 1997 the name was changed to Liberty Communications. Liberty Communications

serves the Cities of West Branch and West Liberty.

Mediacom Communications is the nation's eighth largest cable television company. Mediacom's focus is providing cable, internet and phone service to America's smaller cities and towns. They serve over 1,500 communities nationwide and have a workforce over 4,400.

Johnson County Refuse provides garbage and recycling pickup every Friday in the City of West Branch. Johnson County Refuse is locally owned and operated and serves all of Johnson County and surrounding areas. Garbage that cannot be recycled must be placed in garbage bags or cans with a \$1.25 yellow sticker attached. Year round stickers can also be purchased. Curbside recycling is mandatory and a monthly \$4.75 fee is included on the monthly water and sewer bill. Each resident is provided with a green and red recycling bin. Currently service is not provided to apartment complexes.

Future Needs

The City of West Branch has been proactive in evaluating the future needs of its water and sanitary sewer systems. For a more detailed analysis of each system's future needs please view the West Branch, Iowa Water System Analysis Final Report November 6, 2002 and the Report on Sanitary Sewer Collection System Investigation – Study Area 1 City of West Branch, Iowa February, 2012.

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As the City continues to grow and regulations change both the water and sewer systems facility needs should be routinely studied to make sure they are keeping up with the needs of the City. The City should identify what would trigger a lagoon expansion or the need for a new lagoon which could cost the City \$1,300,000. This will help the City make facility improvements over time rather than reacting to a current crisis.

Updates

The City Council has recently approved several items related to the city's wastewater system. At their October 9th annual goal setting session, the Council adopted the following as their top three priorities for the coming year: 1) Make repairs to wastewater infrastructure identified in the I & I Study, 2) Continue I & I work (including additional phases of our I & I study), and 3) Construct a new lift station.

Lift Station

Resolutions 1036 (October 1st) and 1039 (October 15th) approved easement agreements with two land owners for construction of the new lift station and forced main project on their properties. The project will construct a new well structure adjacent to our existing lift station (just east of Beranek Park) with pumps capable of transporting our wastewater (even during heavy rain events) to our wastewater lagoon system, located south of the interstate, through a new forced main. The project includes a new control building and a generator to ensure our wastewater system continues to function in cases of power outages.

This project provides both public health and environmental benefits. In recent years, raw sewage has backed up into basements in West Branch. In an attempt to avoid sewer back-ups during heavy rain events, city staff has bypassed raw sewage out of our existing lift station and various sewer manholes onto the ground in these locations. With the addition of the generator, larger pumps and redundant pumps, the project will eliminate sewer back-ups and bypassing, therefore bringing our system more into compliance with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Table 8.2 Future Utility System Needs

Utility System	Need	Cost Inflated to 2012 dollars
Water	New Jordan Well	\$984,450
Water	Aeration/Detention Tank Improvements	\$142,382
Water	Vertical Pressure Filters	\$398,666
Water	300,000 gallon Elevated Storage Tank	\$1,016,171
Water	12" Water Main Looping	\$788,365
Sanitary Sewer	System Rehabilitation Phase 1	\$538,805
Sanitary Sewer	New Lift Station & Force Main	\$750,000 (\$1,200,000 current estimate)
Garbage/Recycling	Service Extended to Apartment Complexes	

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On September 17, 2012, the Council approved Resolution 1034, an engineering services agreement with Terracon to provide soil borings for the project. The soil borings and the last portion of design work are currently being completed. This project, estimated at \$750,000, will be put out to bid before the end of this year and is expected to be completed by this time next year. The project is expected to be paid for with a general obligation bond which will be paid back with sewer revenue. The Council will consider bonding options in the coming months.

I & I

In July of last year, the Council approved the first phase of our I & I study to identify manholes and sections of wastewater mains that need to be repaired or replaced. Over \$500,000 in needed repairs were identified in this first phase of the study. Initial repairs have been completed (for example, the project at the intersection of 5th and Main). More point repairs, as well as grouting and lining wastewater mains are needed and will be addressed with sewer funds. The Council will consider funding additional I & I work as a part of the upcoming bond issue.

Reducing I & I (that is, stormwater entering our wastewater system) saves sewer rate payers in two ways: 1) energy costs - when we reduce the amount of stormwater that enters the wastewater system, we reduce the need to pump it from our lift station to the lagoons, and 2) when we can document (to the DNR) reduced wastewater flows, we can design future treatment solutions with lower capacities, thereby saving future design, construction and maintenance costs.

Treatment

The City Council is also planning ahead for our future treatment needs. More stringent contaminant limitations are expected to be required in the future, especially for ammonia. On February 6th of this year, the Council held a work session to learn more about the Submerged Attached Growth Reactor (SAGR) process. A trip was made to Walker, IA earlier this month to visit their SAGR system. The SAGR system has already been approved by the DNR for use in Iowa to reduce ammonia levels.

The Council also adopted Resolution 1032 on September 17, 2012 approving the Bio-Dome wastewater treatment pilot study. The Bio-Dome process is currently seeking DNR approval. With these two emerging technologies, we are hopeful to avoid a mechanical wastewater treatment plant in the future. Both the SAGR and Bio-Dome systems are less expensive to construct and would cost sewer customers much less to operate and maintain than a mechanical plant.

Wastewater may not be an exciting policy topic, but it is one that is critical to our everyday lives. The investments we make in our wastewater infrastructure now will ensure that we provide for the public health, meet our commitment to the environment, save money for future ratepayers and allow us to grow as a community. These investments will be financed by our monthly sewer bills, not property taxes. Please feel free to stop by the City Office or call me at (319) 643-5888 for more information on these projects.

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Chapter 9: Transportation

The City of West Branch's transportation system is vital to everyday life within the region. Locally, the transportation system facilitates the movement of people and goods within the region. The system allows residents to get from their homes to employment, education, medical care, and shopping, and it allows people and goods to move in and out of the region. Connections to regional transportation networks allow businesses to import and export goods quickly and efficiently, and allow the region to compete in the global marketplace.

Along with the benefits from transportation, come unintended negative impacts. If left unchecked, pollution, noise, congestion, safety, and high maintenance costs can diminish quality of life for local residents. In addition, some segments of the population such as the disabled, the elderly, and low-income populations are not able to access the transportation system. Through this Comprehensive Plan, the City of West Branch will strive to provide efficient and affordable transportation to residents and businesses while striving to minimize negative impacts. The City of West Branch will work to provide diverse and interconnected modes of transportation, accessibility, safety, and improved environmental quality.

Transportation Planning

The City of West Branch coordinates with a regional transportation planning agency, Regional Planning Affiliation 8 (RPA 10). RPA 10 is a seven-county region that includes Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington counties. RPA 10 facilitates coordination among local, regional, state, and federal agencies on transportation issues and plans. RPA 10 is responsible for planning for the development of a seamless system for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods within and between modes of transportation including streets, highways, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, rail, water, and air.

The City of West Branch Comprehensive Plan provides an overview of the City's transportation system. More detailed transportation information is included in the RPA 10 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The RPA 10 LRTP focuses on transportation related issues over a 20-year period. In accordance with Iowa DOT recommendations, RPA 10 updates its LRTPs every five years. The LRTP provides an explanation of the area's current transportation trends, and a forecast of future transportation issues. Through the LRTP planning process, local residents create the vision and goals that will guide transportation investment within the region over the next 20 years. The RPA 10 LRTP and other transportation planning documents are available for download at www.ecicog.org.

Roadways

The predominant transportation system in West Branch is a network of streets and highways that carry cars and trucks. These roadways serve the circulation needs of local residents and visitors from outside the area. The following section describes the roadway system in the City in terms of functional classification, capacity, congestion, and safety.

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Functional Classification

Functional classification describes a roadway based on the type of service that it provides. Roadways provide two basic types of service: land access and mobility. The degree to which a roadway provides access and/or mobility determines its functional classification. The key to planning an efficient roadway system is finding the appropriate balance between mobility and accessibility. The following defines the functional classifications found in West Branch.

Map 9.1 displays West Branch roads by Functional Classification.

Principal Arterial roadways primarily serve a mobility function with minimal land access. The primary purpose of principal arterials is the rapid movement of people and goods for extended distances. Principal arterials are high capacity, high-speed roadways with restricted access. Currently there are no principal arterials located in the City of West Branch.

Minor Arterials interconnect with and augment principal arterials. Minor arterials within urban areas serve inter-community trips of moderate length. Although the primary purpose of the minor arterial is mobility, this functional class provides more access points and more land access than a principal arterial. Currently there are no principal arterials located in the City of West Branch.

Collector streets channel trips between the local street system and the arterials. Collectors serve a balance between mobility and land access. Parking and direct driveway access to the street are typically allowed on collectors. Collectors are usually wider, have higher capacity, and permit somewhat higher speeds than the local street network. Main Street in West Branch is a collector street.

Local Streets primarily provide local land access and offer the lowest level of mobility. Characteristics of local streets include uncontrolled intersections, posted speed limits of 25 miles per hour or less, and few restrictions on parking. Local streets include all streets not classified as principal arterial, minor arterial, or collector.

Traffic Volume

Traffic volume is an important measure for the transportation system. Understanding traffic volume helps engineers and transportation planners design a road system that is appropriate for the community. Traffic volume is measured in Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT). AADT is the total traffic volume on a road for a year divided by 365 days. Map 9.2 displays the AADT for West Branch area roads. The data used in Map 2 was collected by the Iowa DOT in 2010. Main Street and Parkside Drive are the most heavily traveled West Branch city streets with 4,070 and 3,900 AADT respectively. Interstate 80 has the highest traffic volume in the area with an AADT of 36,600.

Roadway Safety is an important consideration when planning for the future of the transportation system. Outdated or deteriorating infrastructure, high traffic volumes, or unsafe driver behavior are all potential causes of safety issues that can lead to serious injury or death. Transportation planners use crash data to identify areas on the road network where the number of crashes is higher than expected. Once identified, the local government can take action to correct the problem. Iowa Department of Transportation provides crash data for all counties in the state.

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Using data from 2008-2010, staff created maps to illustrate the distribution crashes. The maps are used identify locations experiencing more crashes than would normally be expected. See Map 9.3 for Iowa DOT crash data. During the three year time period 43 crashes occurred within city limits. The crash data shows that while the City is relatively safe, there are some problem areas. Injuries and fatalities from auto crashes can place a burden on local residents and can reduce the overall quality of life in the City. West Branch must continue to work with state and regional transportation staff to improve safety for its roadway users.

Transit

East Central Iowa (ECI) Transit provides demand-responsive rural transit service in the counties of Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington counties. ECICOG is responsible for administration, coordination, and planning of ECI Transit. ECICOG does not directly operate the transit service. ECICOG contracts with a transit service provider in each affiliated county. In Cedar County, River Bend Transit provides transit services. In Johnson County, transit services are provided by Johnson County SEATS.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Non-motorized transportation is a key component of a multi-modal transportation system. Good walking and biking facilities can improve quality of life by reducing the number of vehicles on the road, promoting an active lifestyle, attracting visitors to the area, and providing a low cost mode of transportation. In recent years, the City of West Branch has worked to integrate bike and pedestrian facilities into its transportation network. However, according to 2010 Census estimates, only 3.2% of the population walks to work, and only 0.47% rides a bike.¹

West Branch's bike and pedestrian facilities fall into two categories, separated and on-street facilities. A separated facility is a bikeway/walkway physically separated from motorized traffic by open space or barrier either in the highway right-of-way or in an independent right-of-way. Separated facilities are suitable for all pedestrians and bicyclists. In an on-street route, bicyclists share space with motorized vehicles. On-street routes can take several forms including bike lanes or shared roadways. In some cases, striping, signing, and pavement markings designate a portion of the roadway for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. In other cases, an on-street route signage indicates that the route is safe for bicyclists.

When planning a bicycling, hiking, and walking system, local governments should design a system that will accommodate as many users as possible. The system should take into consideration the differing abilities of the potential riders using the system. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) uses the following categories of bicycle users to assist in determining the impact that different facilities and roadway conditions will have on the bicyclist. Group A riders have the most experience, and are comfortable riding on most city streets. Group B bicyclists are less experienced and prefer riding on separated trails or low speed low traffic volume streets. Group C bicyclists are children. Children often use bicycles to get to school or recreation, but require well defined separation from motor vehicles.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey. http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_5YR_B08301&prodType=table

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Bicycle Federation of America estimates that out of nearly 100 million people in the United States that own bicycles, roughly 5 percent qualify as Group A bicyclists, with the remaining 95 percent as Group B and C bicyclists. See **Map 1.6** for the bike and pedestrian facilities in West Branch.

Safety – Improving bicycle and pedestrian safety will be a primary concern for West Branch. According to Iowa DOT, the state averages 5 bicyclist and 21 pedestrian fatalities each year. In West Branch, City injury hospitalization data shows bicycle and pedestrian accidents as one of the leading causes of injury and death for residents between the ages of 1 and 34. The Iowa DOT recommends the following to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety:

- Young children need supervision in the traffic environment.
- Children should learn bicycle and pedestrian safety from an early age.
- Wearing a helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85%.²

Distance – West Branch’s rural character means that walking or bicycling to a destination can be difficult because of the long distances involved. Local governments can help reduce travel distances by encouraging compact development that reduces sprawl and promotes land use patterns that create more walkable neighborhoods. Examples of this include conservation subdivisions, mixed-use development, and infill development.

Infrastructure – Incomplete infrastructure prevents many West Branch residents from walking and biking. Local governments can fill the gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network working to obtain funding for trails and other facilities, and by exploring new sidewalk or Complete Streets polices. Complete Streets are designed to allow pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit to travel safely alongside automobiles. West Branch communities should continue to work to improve the quality of its residents by supporting programs that make walking and biking safer and more convenient.

Freight
The efficient movement of goods is one of the keys to effective competition in the world market system. As a result, policy makers, industry specialists, and transportation planners have recognized that an efficient freight system is fundamental for economic development in West Branch. This section focuses on the three freight modes which are most active in the West Branch: truck, rail, and air. The freight modes are described separately, but the different modes are often used in combination, which is referred to as intermodal freight transport. Interstate 80 passes through West Branch. This highway provides a ground connection to the rest of Iowa, the region, and the nation. The rail system that passes through the region is also a valuable resource. Iowa Interstate Railroad operates an east west line that runs approximately 2.5 miles south of West Branch.

² Iowa Department of Public Health. 2002-2006 The University of Iowa Injury Prevention Research Center. <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/iprc/resources/reports/Cedar-County.pdf>

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Airport

The Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids provides commercial air transportation services for West Branch. Thirty-five daily departures include service from American, United, Delta and Allegiant Air. The Airport also features increasing cargo activity with Fed Ex, DHL, and UPS; and an active general aviation community. The Airport is owned by the City of Cedar Rapids and operated by the Cedar Rapids Airport Commission. The Airport is located between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City along Interstate 380.

The Quad City International Airport also provides commercial air transportation services for West Branch. The Quad City International Airport is located in Moline, Illinois and currently has four airlines serving 10 nonstop hubs or connecting cities. The airport is owned by Rock Island County and is operated by the Metropolitan Airport Authority. The airport also has cargo activity with Fed Ex, DHL and UPS. General aviation airports are located in Iowa City, Muscatine, and Tipton.

Intermodal Facility

Railroads through their connections with other transportation modes are involved in many intermodal traffic movements. Rail typically provides the long-haul portion of the movement and at the intermodal facility the freight is transferred to another mode for door-to-door delivery. The closest intermodal facility to the City of West Branch is located in West Liberty, Iowa. The Iowa Chicago and Eastern is the railroad that services this intermodal facility.

Transportation Projects

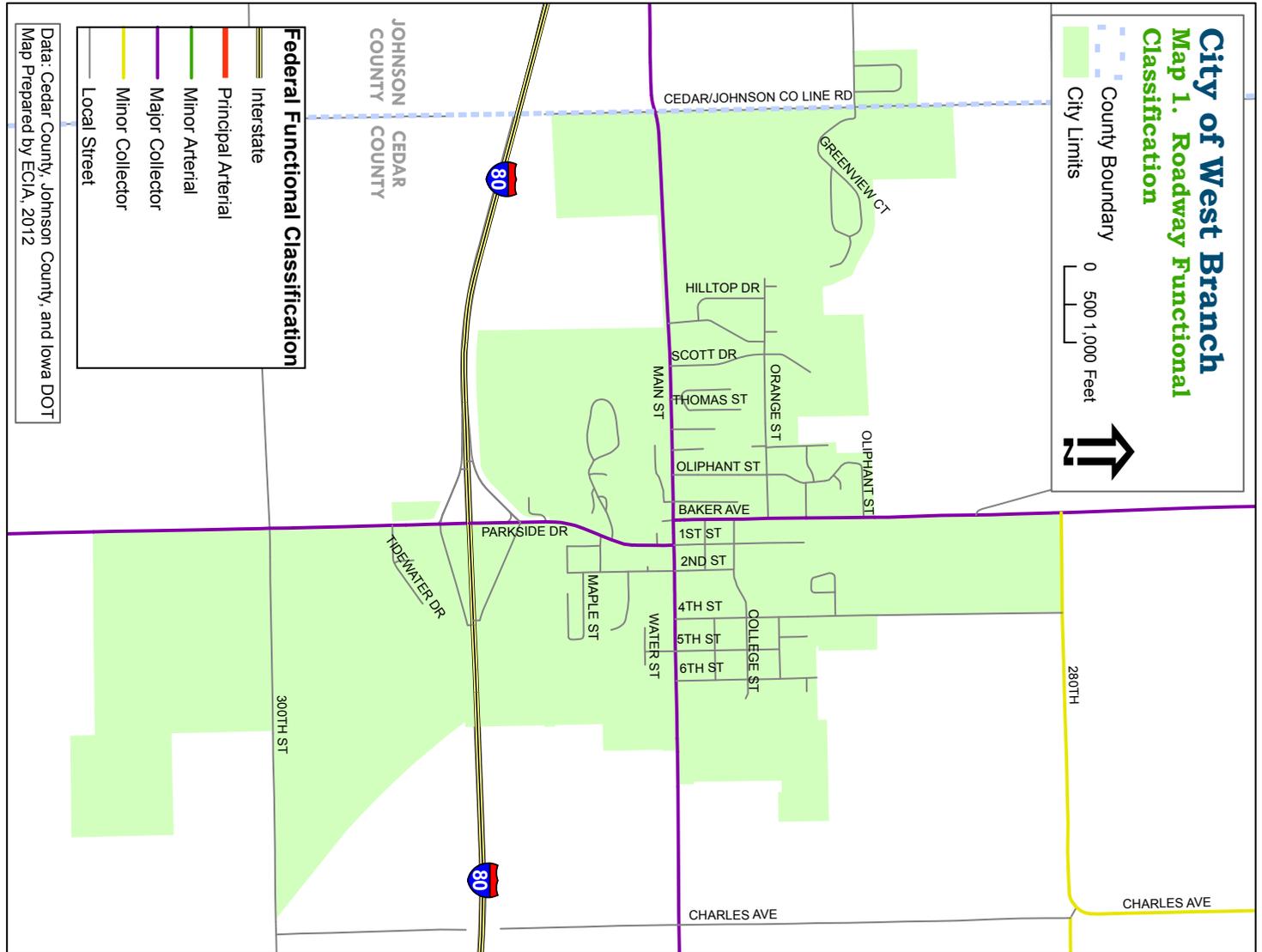
Transportation is extremely important to the citizens of West Branch. The primary transportation mode is vehicle travel on streets and roads. The public input survey found that the majority of residents supported the replacement of College Street Bridge followed by paving 4th Street and paving County Line Road. Sidewalks were the second mode of transportation used by citizens. Residents would like to see sidewalks throughout the entire community and identified the following areas that need sidewalk improvement: College Street Bridge, College Street, Poplar and Oliphant, downtown, Cedar Street, Johnson Street, and add missing sidewalks and address steps. Refer to appendix A for a detailed map of the street condition in the City of West Branch. This map should be used in identifying future street projects within the City.

Another project that needs to be identified is the connect between Pedersen Valley and Greenview. When the developers for the land that is currently in agriculture between Pedersen Valley and Greenview bring forward plans to develop this land into residential housing, the City Council should ensure that the developer provides a street connection between the two neighborhoods. This will provide for an increased public safety response time to residents in Greenview and provide for better circulation of traffic in this area. A majority of survey responses collected on this issue supported a connection between the two communities.



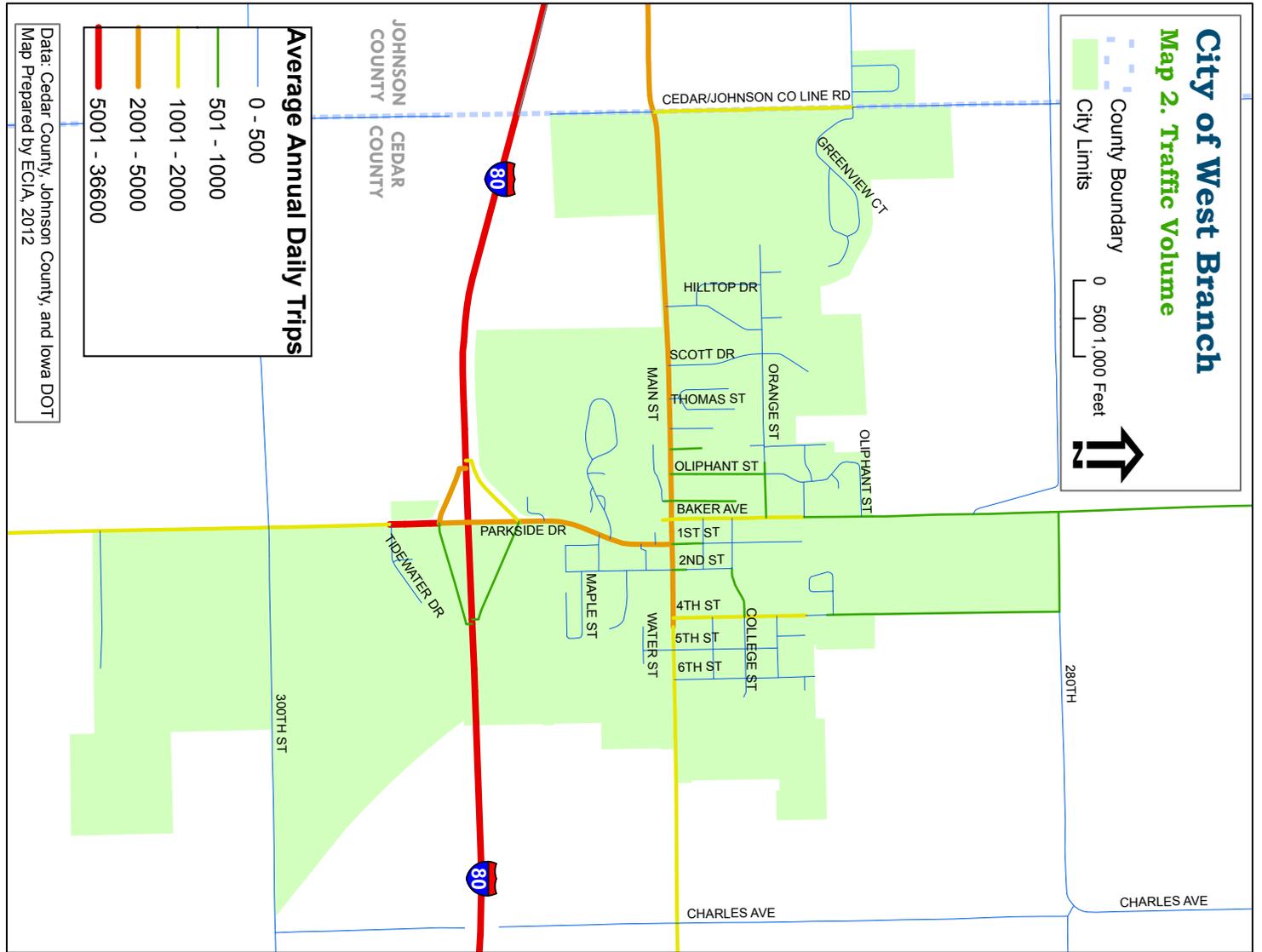
WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 9.1
West Branch Roads by
Functional Classification



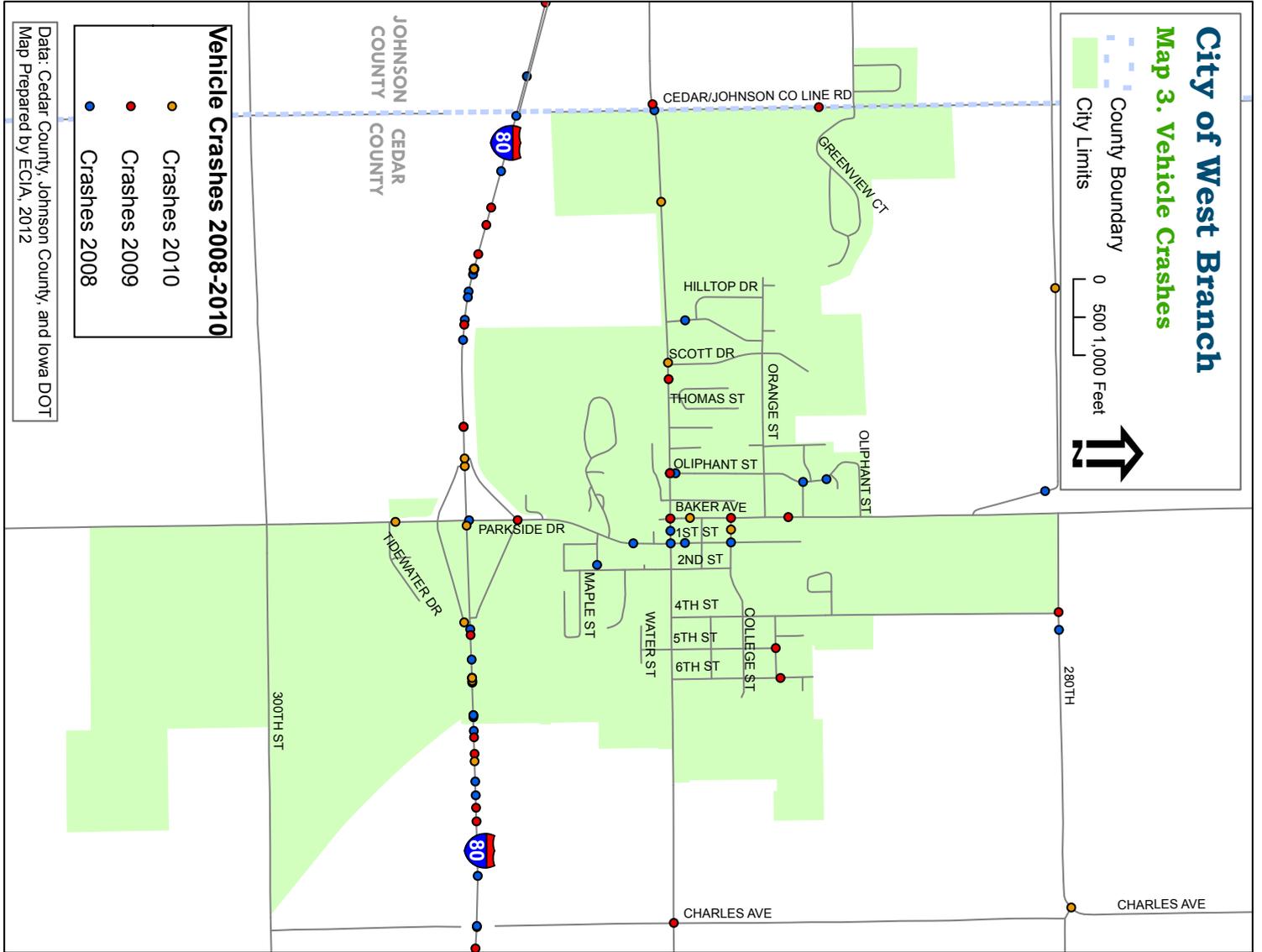
WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 9.2
AADT for West Branch
Area Roads



WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 9.3
IA DOT Crash Data



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Chapter 10: Hazards

Hazard Mitigation is critical to the comprehensive planning process, and hazard concerns are integrated throughout this document. In order to facilitate review of the West Branch plan for compliance with Iowa's smart planning grant parameters, this section uses the "safe growth audit questions" from the FEMA publication Hazard Mitigation: Integrating Best Practices into Planning as a framework to collect and present the hazard mitigation elements of this plan. The West Branch comprehensive plan focuses primarily on flooding issues for its hazard mitigation recommendations, as this is the hazard most likely to be affected by the decisions of the comprehensive plan (Namely, land use and environmental decisions.)

The efforts to minimize the impact of hazards in West Branch should be evaluated annually and be considered an on-going effort. The questions below will help the City of West Branch address and identify ways to minimize devastation from hazards.

Land Use

Does the future land-use map clearly identify natural-hazard areas?

Map 10.1 shows the planned future land use with the current floodplain. Development should be discouraged in the floodplain.

Do the land-use policies discourage development or redevelopment within natural-hazard areas?

Yes, as described above, existing structures in the floodplain areas are noted and mitigation continues to be processed through an ongoing cost-benefit analysis.

Does the plan provide adequate space for expected future growth in areas located outside of natural-hazard areas?

Map 10.2 shows the planned future land use for the City of West Branch. With redevelopment of existing sites and looking at infill lots as the first priority of development there is adequate land outside of natural-hazard areas for development

Transportation

Does the transportation plan limit access to hazard areas?

Yes. The transportation plan does not encourage access to hazardous area. For example, any new roads and streets proposed for growth areas would be discouraged not to enter the floodplain, but rather would access higher ground.

Is transportation policy used to guide growth to safe locations?

Yes. Proposed new roads would connect to areas of town that have areas of non-hazard land available for development. Providing access to these areas will encourage development in safe areas. The West Branch floodplain ordinance stipulated that subdivisions should have means of access during flood.

Are movement systems designed to function under disaster conditions (e.g., evacuation)?

Yes. One of the primary features of the set of proposed transportation changes (Chapter 10) is the provision of multiple access routes to all developed areas, and accommodation of multiple modes of transportation, including auto, bike, and pedestrian. By limiting single access

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

developments (such as dead-end cul-de-sacs), the proposed system allows for greater evacuation possibilities. Most new growth areas have multiple street outlets and all new growth areas have at least one proposed street connection to the existing street network that does not cross a floodplain. A more connected street system also makes safety services such as ambulance/fire service more efficient. Providing multiple mode choices improves safety by allowing options for evacuation and mobility during disaster conditions, particularly for those without vehicles. Proposed street extensions also reduce the load on existing streets, which increases mobility for safety purposes such as ambulance/fire service and other emergency services.

Environmental Management

Are environmental systems that protect development from hazards identified and mapped?

Yes. 10.1 shows floodplains and wetlands. These areas contribute to the natural drainage system that can help prevent flooding in developed areas by moving and dispersing storm water properly.

Do environmental policies provide incentives to development that is located outside of protective ecosystems?

Yes. The future land use map (Map 10.2) located new development in areas outside of protective ecosystems and shows areas inside those ecosystems as non-developable (greenways). This map is presented as a guide for the planning and zoning commission and city council in deciding where new development should be allowed. Additionally, the City of West Branch floodplain ordinance places restriction on development in the floodplain.

Public Safety

Are the goals and politics of the comprehensive plan related to those of the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plan?

Yes. The goals and policies of the comprehensive plan are in agreement with the 2011 Cedar County, Iowa Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). The comprehensive plan primarily addresses floodplain issues, as this is the hazard most likely to be affected by the decisions of the comprehensive plan (namely, land use and environmental decisions). The land use plan and storm-water plans in this document correlate directly to several mitigation actions identified in the Cedar County HMP that are fully outlined on the following page. Cedar County in general, has had significant issues with flooding in the past decade and many of the County's mitigation goals are related to flooding, which in turn become crucial to this comprehensive plan in terms of zoning, construction, roads and watershed preservation and restoration. Other factors that correlate from the HMP to the comprehensive plan are in terms of necessary safety systems that relate to mitigation, such as fire and safety personnel, systems and equipment.

Is safety explicitly included in the plan's growth and development policies?

Yes. Public Safety facility development is covered in chapter 13, while safety concerns regarding natural hazards are referenced as part of the "Comprehensive Planning Principles" and "preservation of Natural Areas" in chapter 5.

Does the monitoring and implementation section of the plan cover safe-growth objectives?

Yes. Chapter 14 outlines a plan and broad timeline for implementation of the safe-growth objectives, including: new residential developments con-

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nect well to existing neighborhoods, and guide growth to non-hazard areas of the city. Chapter 14 also provides possible funding sources to help the City of West Branch accomplish these goals.

Other Hazards

While avoiding floodplain development is one of the biggest hazard prevention the City of West Branch can do, being aware of other hazards is important too. Even though there is little the City of West Branch can do to prevent natural disasters caused from tornadoes, windstorms, hailstorms, and thunder and lightning being aware of these hazards and having a storm preparedness plan in place can reduce the chaos if such a storm strikes the City of West Branch. The City should also be aware of manmade hazards from brownfields, and interstate highway for example. Having an understanding of these potential hazards and having a response plan in place if such a hazard occurs can limit the destruction caused by these manmade hazards. An investigation of possible brownfield sites in the City could be done so the City has a better understanding of where these potential hazards are. For a comprehensive look at all the potential hazards the City of West Branch could be exposed to please refer to the Cedar County, Iowa Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan January 2011.

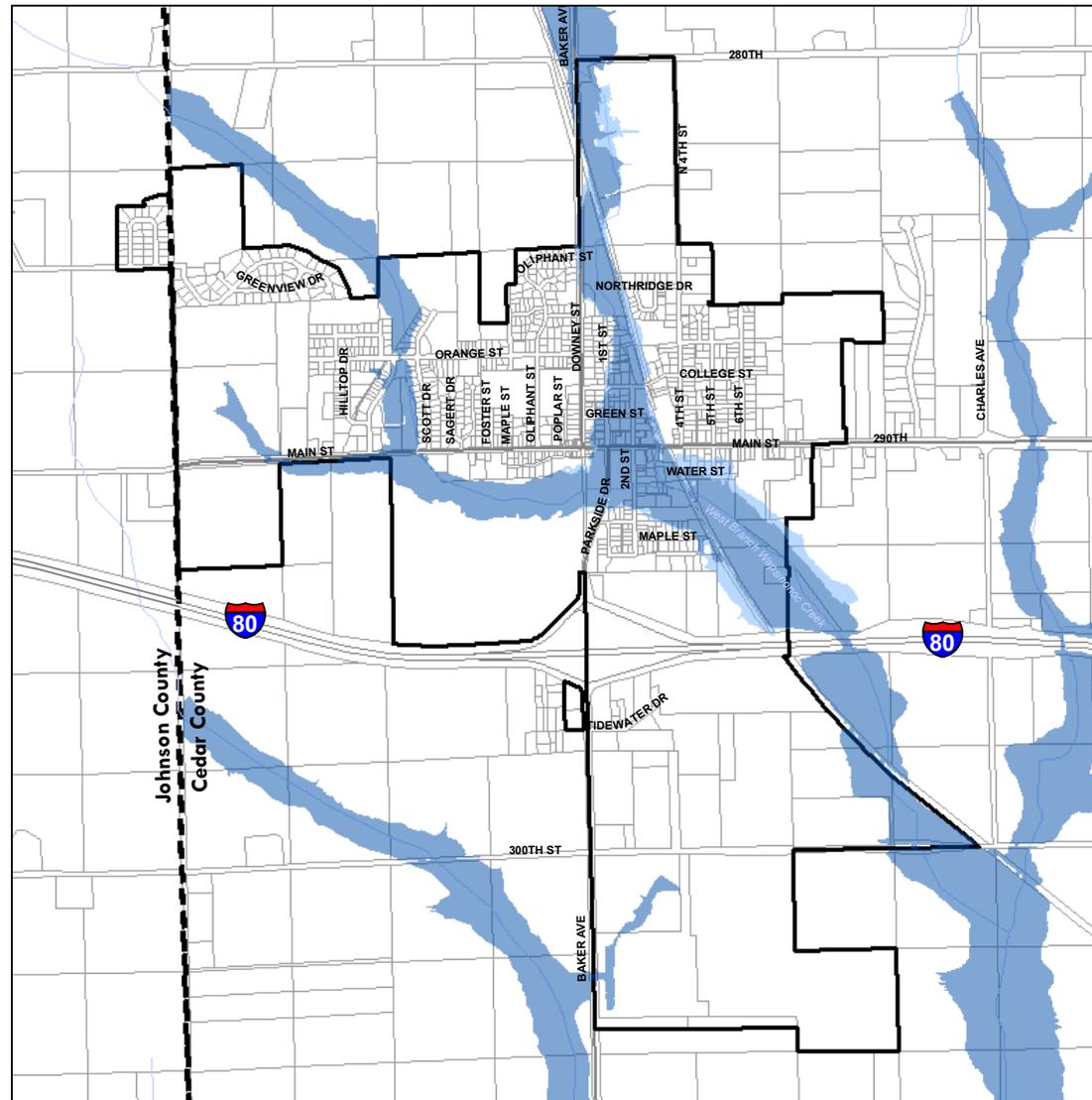
SPECIFIC ACTION STEPS FOR HAZARD MITIGATION FROM THE CEDAR COUNTY MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN INCLUDED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- **Storm Water System and Drainage Improvements** – these improvements can serve to more effectively convey runoff within cities and towns, preventing interior localized flooding. May also reduce the risk of illness/disease by eliminating standing water.
- **Stream Bank Stabilization/Grade Control Structures/Channel Improvements** – which can serve to more effectively protect structures, increase conveyance, prevent down cutting, and provide flooding benefits.
- **Drainage Study/Storm Water Master Plan** – Protective steps to identify all potential problems/issues can lead to effectively addressing improvements and prioritizing the projects to improve conditions. These improvements can serve to more effectively convey runoff within jurisdictions, preventing interior localized flooding resulting in damages. This ensures that the most beneficial projects are done first and could possibly eliminate the need for others.
- **Flood-prone Property Acquisition** – Voluntary acquisition and demolition of properties prone to flooding will reduce the general threat of flooding for communities. Additionally, this can provide flood insurance benefits to those communities within the NFIP.
- **Drainage Districts** – Improve land for agricultural and sanitary purposes on a regional basis.

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 10.4
Flood Risk

- Regulation and Enforcement and Updates**
Ensures that no new structures built will be vulnerable to flooding. Reducing damages and health risks associated with flooding.
- Floodplain Management**
Continue compliance with the NFIP. Good standing enables participants to apply for PDM and HMGP cost-share.
- Civil Service Improvements** – Having appropriate and up to date equipment along with adequately trained and numbered personnel increases safety and reduces the risk of damage.



City of West Branch Flood Risk

Flood Risk

- 1 % Annual Chance of Flooding
- 0.2 % Annual Chance of Flooding
- Minimal Flood Risk

Map prepared by ECIA, November 2012

Data Source:
Cedar County GIS, 2012
Johnson County GIS, 2012
Iowa DOT, 2012
FEMA, 2011
Iowa DNR, 2012

This map is not to be used for insurance purposes. For insurance purposes, please refer to the FIRM or FHBM for the community.

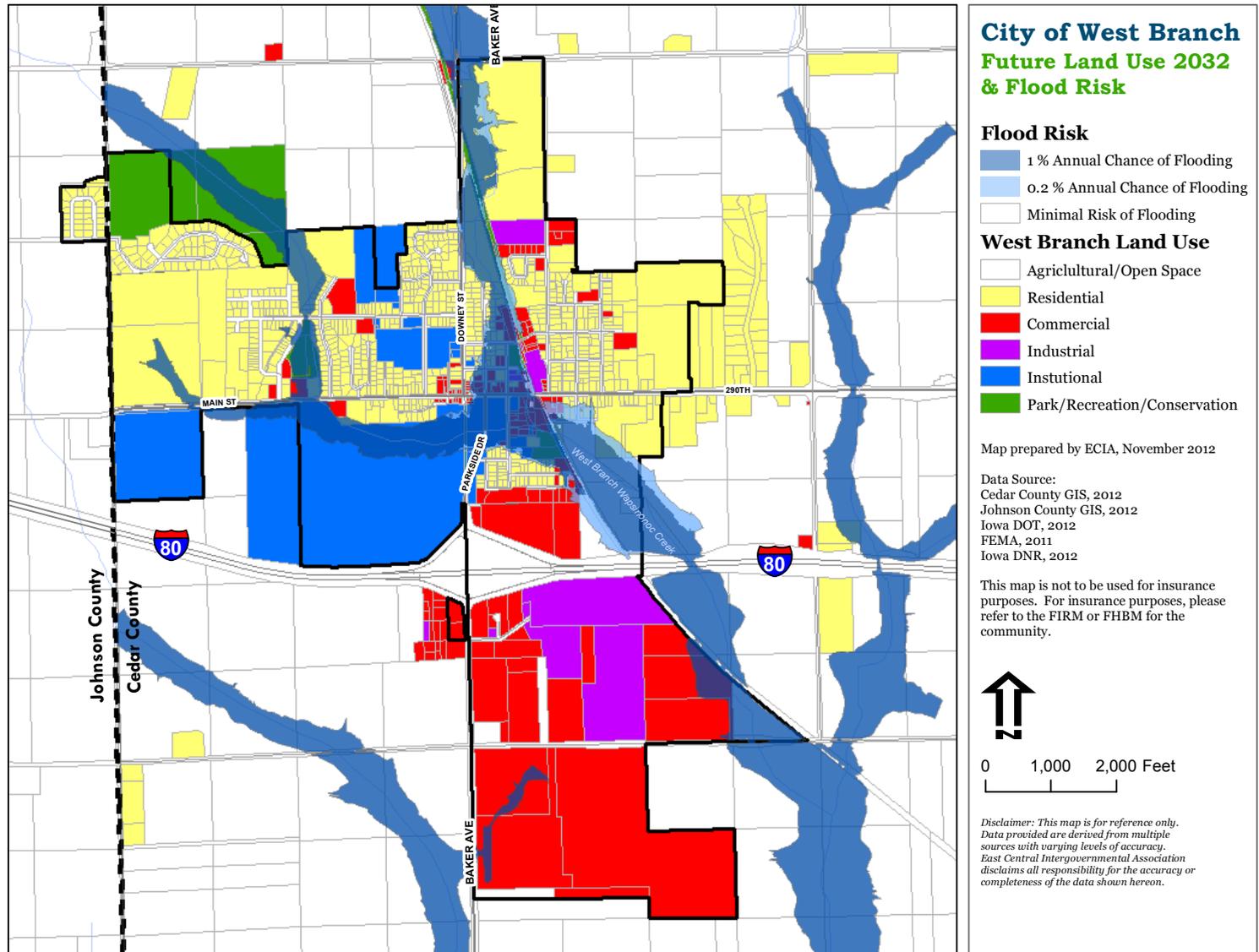


0 1,000 2,000 Feet

Disclaimer: This map is for reference only. Data provided are derived from multiple sources with varying levels of accuracy. East Central Intergovernmental Association disclaims all responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the data shown hereon.

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 10.2
Future Land Use with
Flood Risk



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Chapter 11: Parks, Recreational Facilities and Programs

Parks, recreational facilities and programs are vital components to a community's quality of life. Active living or the integration of physical activity into daily life is becoming increasingly popular. Walking, bicycling and hiking are the most popular ways to participate in active living. Providing facilities that support an active living have a variety of social, health, economic, and environmental benefits. These benefits include: improved quality of life, improved livability (which is a positive factor in attracting new residents, businesses and workers), and reduced energy consumption.

Community Input

The initial public input meeting held received the following public responses:

Parks:

- Not a very bicycle/pedestrian friendly community
- Existing parks need to be upgraded
- More amenities at parks
- More green space
- Overall good diversity in parks
- Existing parks are well cared for

Recreation:

- More outdoor recreational opportunities needed
- Need a recreational center
- Water activities needed
- Overall excellent variety of recreational opportunities present

Trail System:

- More trails needed
- Connectivity between existing trails needed
- Existing system provides nice trails and plenty of places to bicycle and walk



WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Facility Analysis

This chapter examines the City of West Branch's existing park and recreational system, including all city-owned and operated recreation areas and other parks with public access. The following components are looked at:

- Current levels of service in the existing park system
- Gaps in service coverage
- An inventory of existing parks

Park facilities are evaluated according to the following standards:

- Park Classification: Facilities are classified according to size of the area they serve.
- Geographic Distribution: The service radius of each park is analyzed to determine if gaps in service area exist.
- Population Service Standards (NRPA): The existing system is analyzed according to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards for park and recreational facilities.



WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Existing Park System Overview:

The City currently has three existing parks: Beranek Park, Wapsi Creek Park and Lions Field along with the Hoover Trail. Table 11.1 lists West Branch’s park facilities by NRPA category and map 11.1 shows the location of the three existing parks. Here is an overview of the existing park system:

- 10.15 acres of parkland in West Branch (excluding West Branch Community Schools facilities)
- # acres including the West Branch Community School facilities
- Approximately 4.37 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents (excluding West Branch Community Schools facilities)

Park Classifications:

A uniform classification system is used to examine the existing parks and future park needs. The plan uses standards for mini parks, neighborhood parks and community parks to assess the adequacy of both existing and future facilities. The following is a summary of each park category.

Mini Parks

Description: Fulfill opens space needs or provide niche recreation opportunities.

Location criteria: A service radius size of less than ¼ mile

Size criteria: Less than 1 acre

Neighborhood Parks

Description: The basic unit of the park system that serves as the recreational focus of the neighborhood. Focus of neighborhood parks is on informal active and passive recreations.

Location criteria: ¼ to ½ mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.

Size criteria: Between 6 to 8 acres for cities 1,000 to 25,000 in population

Standard: 5 acres per 1,000 people

NRPA standard: Is 2.0 acres per 1,000 people. With 8.45 acres of neighborhood parks West Branch meets this standard at 3.64 acres of parkland per 1,000 people.

School Parks

Description: Combining parks with school sites can fulfill space requirements for other classes of parks such as neighborhood, community, sport complex and special use.

Location criteria: Determined by the location of the school.

Size criteria: Variable

Table 11.1 Park System Analysis						
Facility	Location	Total Acres	Playground Areas	Playing Fields	Courts	Amenities
Mini Parks						
Wapsi Creek Park	2 nd Street	1.7	Yes	No	No	Shelter, Bathroom and Water Play Feature
Neighborhood Parks						
Beranek Park		5.05	Yes	No	Basketball Court, 2 Sand Volleyball Courts	Bathroom and Shelter
Lions Field	Pedersen Street	3.4	Yes	Soccer Field	No	Bathroom, Water Fountain
Greenways and Linear Trail Connections						
Hoover Trail		1 mile				

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Community Parks/Sports Complex

Description: Serves a broader purpose than neighborhood parks. The focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs as well as preserving unique open space. Consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer sites.

Location criteria: Determined by the quantity and usability of the site.

Size criteria: Between 30 to 80 acres

Standard: 5 acres per 1,000 people

NRPA standard: Is 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 people. At this time the City of West Branch does not have any parks in this category.

Natural Resource Areas

Description: Land that is set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscape, open space and visual aesthetics.

Location criteria: Depends on the resource availability and opportunity.

Size Criteria: Variable

Greenways and Linear Trail Connections

Description: Land used to effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment.

Location Criteria: Depends on resource and availability and opportunity

Size criteria: Variable

Private Park and Recreation Facilities

Description: Parks and recreation facilities that are privately owned yet contribute to the public park system. Private facilities can offer either indoor or outdoor recreation opportunities, usually on a membership or fee basis.

Location criteria: Variable, depends on specific use.

Size criteria: Variable



WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Indoor Park/Recreation Facility

Description: Indoor recreational facility that is open to the general public and operated by a public entity.

Location criteria: Located on sites with convenient transportation access.

Size criteria: Variable

Level of Service

Recreational opportunities are becoming increasingly important factors in keeping existing residents as well as attracting new residents and businesses to the community. The projected 2030 population for the City of West Branch is 2,374. Table 11.2 identifies additional park and recreational space needed to accommodate this increased population. The park and recreational needs for the City of West Branch for 2032 are as follows:

- If the population stays as projected the City should have sufficient neighborhood parks to accommodate the population of 2,374.
- A community park/sports complex should be added to comply with the NRPA standard. This is also supported by the community wide survey where 185 survey participants stated more park space and facilities are needed.

Several factors must be considered when determining a community's future park land needs, including gaps in service coverage and new community demands. Please note that this analysis does not cover physical factors such as geographic location of parks, accessibility, service area and park facilities.

Geographic Distribution

Park and recreational facilities should be equally distributed throughout the City to provide accessibility by all residents. Map 11.2 shows the location of West Branch's park locations along with the service radius of each park. West Branch currently only has mini and neighborhood parks. A mini park has a service area of ¼ mile while a neighborhood park's service area ranges from ¼ mile to ½ mile.

Table 11.2 Future Park Systems Needs				
Park Type	Existing	Acres per 1,000 Residents	2030 Need* (Existing Level of Service)	Additional Parkland Needed
Neighborhood Parks	8.45	3.64	3.55	0
Community Parks	0	11.6 to 18.6	11.9 to 19.0	11.9
Mini Parks	1.7	0.7	0.7	0
Total Park and Recreation Area	10.15	4.34	16.15	11.9
*2030 West Branch Population Projection of 2,374				

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Population Service Standards

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) establishes standards for park and recreational facilities based on population. Table 11.3 provides a summary of park facilities based on these standards. Projections of future park facility needs based on 2030 population projection are included in the evaluation. Major findings include:

- West Branch has a higher than average supply of playground equipment and picnic shelters.

Park Site Assessment

Beranek Park

Overall condition: good

Proposed Improvements:

- 1) Park Path Improvements: seal coat the current path and develop a path that is handicapped accessible between the shelter and restroom facilities.
- 2). Benches and picnic tables: replace benches and wooden picnic tables and replace with new benches on permanent slab and new picnic tables.

Lions Field

Overall condition: good

Proposed Improvements:

- 1). Update playground equipment
- 2). Bathroom project
- 3). Multi-purpose field development

Wapsi Creek Park

Overall condition: good

Proposed Improvements:

- 1). Playground equipment: purchase independent play features such as a climbing wall, slide, swing and outdoor fitness equipment.
- 2). Shelter and bathroom facilities: build an outdoor shelter and restroom facility. The shelter should include a drinking fountain, grill and picnic tables.

Table 11.3 Park and Recreation Service in Relation to Population						
Facility Type	NRPA Standard	Existing Quantity	Present Need	2010 Surplus (Deficit)	2030 Need	2030 Surplus (Deficit)
Baseball Fields	1 per 3,000		0	0		
Softball Fields	1 per 3,000		0	0		
Basketball Courts	1 per 5,000	1	0	1	0	0
Football Fields	1 per 20,000					
Soccer Fields	1 per 10,000	1	0	0	0	0
Golf Course	9 hole 1 per 25,000					
Picnic Shelters	1 per 2,000	3	0	1	0	0
Playgrounds	1 per 2,000	3	0	1	0	0
Running Track	1 per 20,000					
Swimming Pools	1 per 20,000	0	0	0	0	0
Tennis Courts	1 per 2,000					
Sand Volleyball Courts	1 per 5,000	1	0	1	0	0

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- 3) Parking lot: Pave a parking area to serve as trail head parking.
- 4). Water feature: Develop a splash pad.
- 5). Turf establishment: Initial seeding has been completed, however reseeding and raking of rocks will need to occur until a solid turf has been established.

Trails:

Existing system: good

Proposed Improvements: Please refer to the West Branch Community Trails Plan located in appendix B.

Communtiy Center

Proposed Improvements: Design and build a community center complex that includes spaces for outdoor recreation. The desired facility would include at least a two court gym, walking track, meeting space, fitness rooms, office space, adequate parking and possibly a banquet facility. Refer to the Community Center Site Study for more detail on this project.

Proposed Improvement Costs:

Table 11.4 Proposed Improvement Costs		
Park	Project	Cost
Beranek	Path Improvement	\$2,500
Beranek	Parking Lot Improvement	N/A
Beranek	Improved Lighting at the Sand Volleyball Courts	N/A
Beranek	Benches and Picnic Tables	\$2,800+
Lions Field	Multi-purpose Field Development	\$1,000
Lions Field	Bathroom and Water Fountain	\$20,000
Lions Field	Playground Equipment	\$2,500
Wapsi Creek	Site Cleanup and Turf Establishment	\$22,000
Wapsi Creek	Parking	\$15,000
Wapsi Creek	Grills for Shelter	\$1,000
Wapsi Creek	Restroom Facility and Water Fountain	\$20,000
Wapsi Creek	Water Feature	\$100,000
Wapsi Creek	Playground/Fitness Equipment	\$15,000
Community Center	Design and build a community center	Undetermined

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

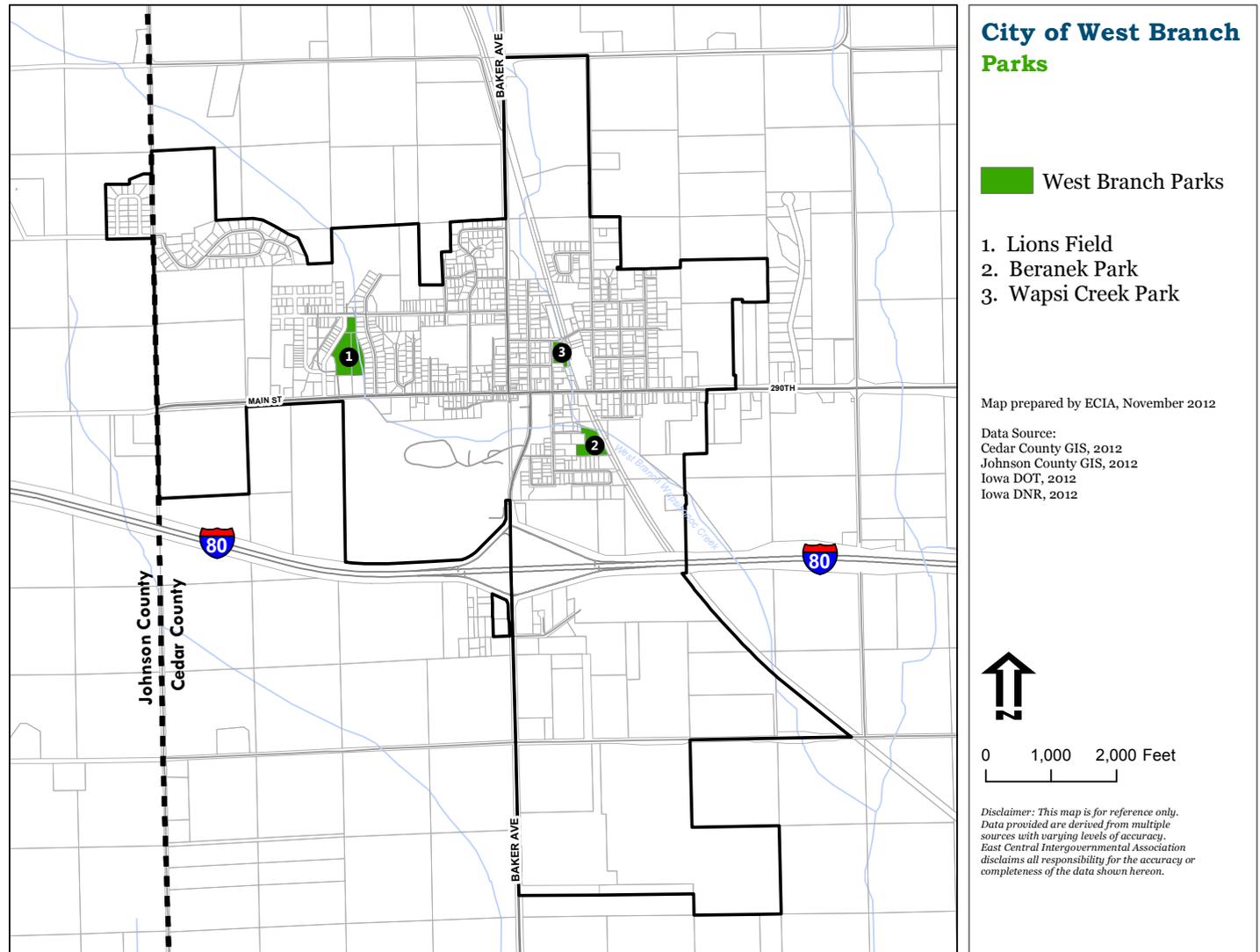
Other items for consideration:

City Council should direct the Planning and Zoning Commission to evaluate and propose an amendment to the Subdivision Ordinance requiring 5% of use-able subdivided land or its value be turned over to the City of West Branch for park development.

The City Council should consider establishing a new “Friends of the West Branch Parks” non-profit organization. This organization would be recognized as an eligible tax deduction and shall have as its goal as assisting the City of West Branch in acquiring and developing park and recreation opportunities. The “Friends of the West Branch Parks” would engage in fund raising, public education, and solicitation of endowments, donations and bequests.

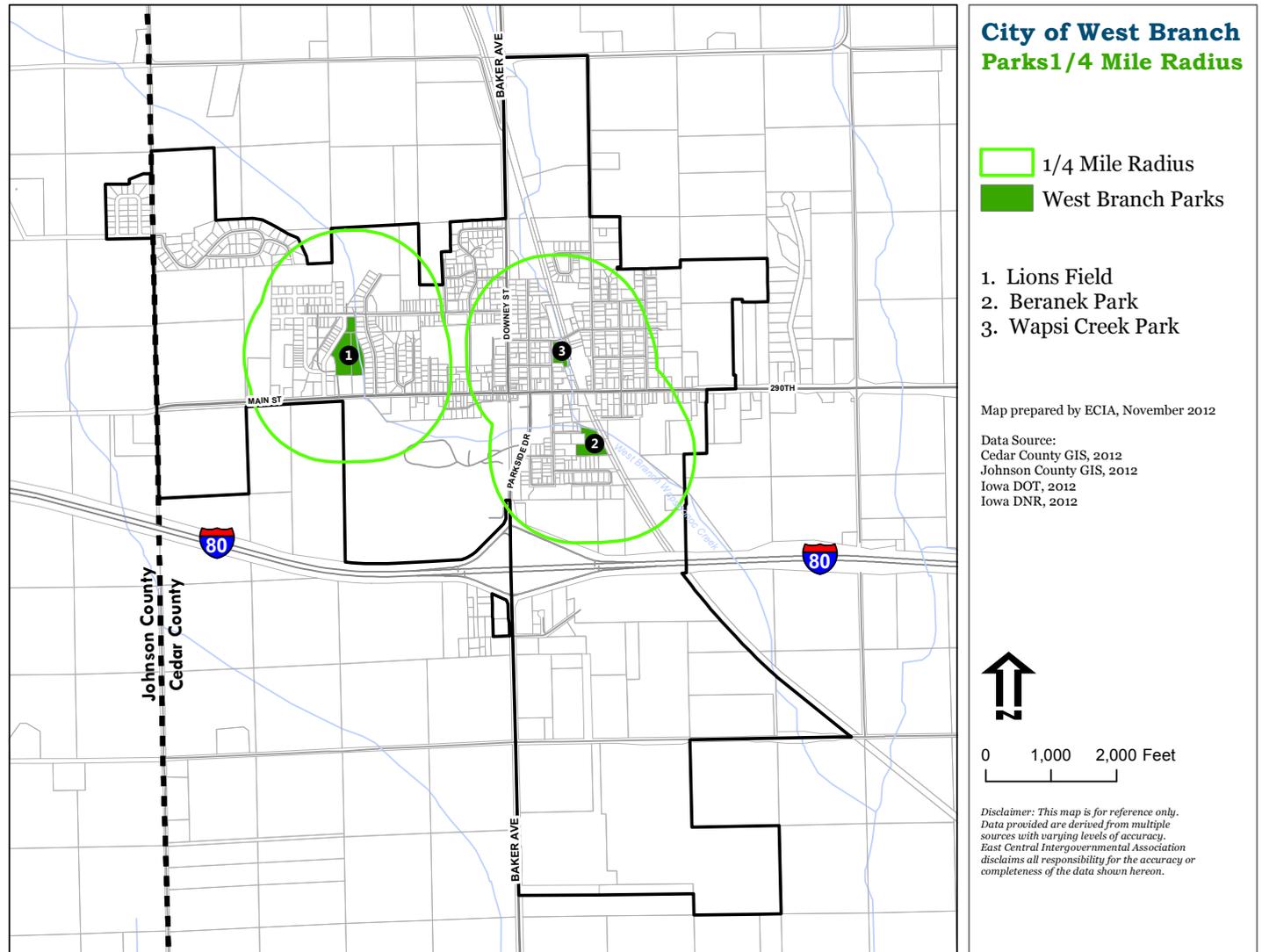
WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 11.1
Existing Parks



WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Map 11.2
Existing Parks with 1/4
Mile Radius



WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 12: Public and Community Facilities and Finance

West Branch City Offices	
Location	110 N Poplar Street
Functions	City Hall
Age	Built in 1962
Size	2400 Square Feet
Features	City Offices, Council Chamber, Cable Access
Facility Condition	Good
Challenges	HVAC System, Lack of Storage
Short-term Needs	New roof, landscaping, new parking lot
Medium-term Needs	Maintenance
Long-term Needs	Maintenance

West Branch Cemetery Building	
Location	N Maple Street
Functions	Maintenance and storage
Age	Greater than 10 years old
Size	952 square feet
Features	Open bays
Facility Condition	Good
Challenges	N/A
Short-term Needs	Water and electricity into the building
Medium-term Needs	Maintenance
Long-term Needs	Maintenance

The City of West Branch provides a wide variety of services to their citizens. An inventory and evaluation of the public and community facilities has been conducted and presented below.

West Branch Library	
Location	300 Downey Street
Functions	Public library
Age	19 years, opened in 1993
Size	5,000 square feet
Features	Community room and library staff offices
Facility Condition	Good
Challenges	Facility is constrained by properties and landscape on each side. Facility is built on fill from two former schools and content of the land under the building is unknown - depressions have formed on the west side of the building on two occasions. Approach on east side is steep and somewhat inaccessible.
Short-term Needs	Replacement of building mechanicals, interior and exterior paint and replacement of interior carpeting
Medium-term Needs	Replacement and/or repair of broken steps and handrails on east side of building
Long-term Needs	Per library study larger library facility

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

West Branch Fire Station	
Location	105 S Second Street
Functions	Fire Station & Police Station
Age	49 years, constructed in 1963
Size	12,000 square feet, plus meeting rooms and police department offices
Features	Open bays to house seven fire department vehicles, meeting rooms, and police department offices
Facility Condition	Good
Challenges	N/A
Short-term Needs	Exterior painting and back-up generator
Medium-term Needs	Maintenance
Long-term Needs	Maintenance

West Branch Public Works Building	
Location	338 Cookson Drive
Functions	Maintenance and storage
Age	7 years, constructed in 2006
Size	11,250 square feet
Features	Heated bay, wash bay, cold storage area and office/laboratory space
Facility Condition	Good
Challenges	N/A
Short-term Needs	Installation of concrete floor in the cold storage area and installation of concrete parking lot along east side of building
Medium-term Needs	Maintenance
Long-term Needs	Maintenance

West Branch Town Hall/Community Hall/Municipal Building	
Location	201 East Main Street
Functions	Multipurpose, meeting space, exercise classes and private events
Age	74 years, constructed in 1938
Size	8,250 square feet
Features	Kitchen, chairs and tables
Facility Condition	Good
Challenges	Only one bathroom, handicap lift outside is frequently broken, only access into the building is by stairs
Short-term Needs	Handicap accessible ramp or lift and outdoor work
Medium-term Needs	Maintenance
Long-term Needs	Maintenance

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Finance

Financial resources will be needed to continue existing programs and services as well implement many of strategies outlined in the comprehensive plan. Within the City of West Branch's fiscal year 2013 budget, the major budget categories included:

- Public safety
- Public works
- Health and social services
- Culture and recreation
- Community and economic development
- General government

The total expenditures budgeted for FY2013 (July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013) was \$2,973,008. Revenue sources for fiscal FY2013 are property taxes, tif, other city taxes, licenses and permits, use of money and property, grants, charges for fees and services, special assessments and other funding sources. The total revenue for FY2013 for the City of West Branch was \$5,178,123.

As identified above the City of West Branch has a number of existing financial commitments in order to conduct its daily operations and maintenance. The planned and proposed projects for improved and new facilities outlined in the comprehensive plan can be sizable and costly to implement. The City should continue with its capital improvement program to continue to priorities projects for implementation. West Branch should annually conduct a goal setting session and develop an equipment replacement schedule. These activities can expand over several years for project prioritization. A list of potential funding sources is included in Chapter 14.

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 13: Intergovernmental Relations/Collaboration and Image

As the City of West Branch continues to develop and grow community leaders are encouraged to improve interagency, intergovernmental cooperation and coordination between local groups, organizations, state, and federal agencies and governments. The City of West Branch should periodically review existing and potential intergovernmental agreements to provide more efficient cost-effective public services. It is suggested that the City of West Branch maintain communication with the cities located within the Cedar and Johnson Counties as well as the counties. Communication should also be maintained with local, state and federal governments, organizations through conversations, meetings, associations, membership, and other forms that promote cooperation and further community goals.

The City of West Branch participates in a variety of intergovernmental activities including by not limited to:

- West Branch Community School District
- Cedar County Economic Development Commission
- East Central Intergovernmental Association
- Main Street West Branch Iowa
- Iowa City Area Development

The need for intergovernmental collaboration opportunities are increasing as local funding is stretched further and further and state and federal funding becomes more and more competitive. One area that should be explored is the development of joint purchasing. Communities could go out to bid together on items, which will save money with bulk pricing and with bid specification development. Items that may be eligible for joint purchasing could be, but are not limited to office supplies or road maintenance supplies such as salt or sand.

Image

The vision statement is a description of the image residents wish to project regarding the City of West Branch. As mentioned in Chapter 2 the vision for West Branch is building upon our heritage as a means to success. West Branch will succeed in this endeavor through strategic new development and through the protection of viable cultural resources. Through the public input survey many of the participants agreed that the community's appearance was adequate. Being a sustainable or "green" community was important. When asked why you choose to live in the City of West Branch the number one response was because of the small town atmosphere. Therefore the City should concentrate on maintaining the small town atmosphere as it grows and built on existing sustainability efforts as a means to the City's future success.

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Marketing

A community marketing strategy or public relations plan is suggested to communicate the visions of West Branch. Updating of the existing city website should be considered to include steps on how the City of West Branch is planning on attaining the community's vision. This would provide a 24/7 public information forum for the city.

Controls

Community image and its appearance can be enhanced through a review of existing municipal ordinances. While the majority of survey participants agreed that City's current building and zoning codes are adequate to maintain the character of the community, many written comments expressed a concern that they needed to be enforced. Another area that can help with maintaining the community's charter and image would be to implement a building and residential revitalization or rehabilitation program.



WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 14: Issues and Opportunities and Strategies and Mechanisms for Plan Implementation

The West Branch Comprehensive Plan is a road map of what it is that the City of West Branch will need over the next 20 years. The implementation of the visions and actions presented in the previous thirteen chapters should be completed through a realistic program that is compatible with the available resources. This section will address the issues and opportunities of implementing the goals and objectives and address scheduling, potential funding sources, and plan maintenance and support.

Issues and Opportunities

Before the goals can be achieved it is best to evaluate the issues or hurdles and the opportunities or benefits of implementation. By doing this, decision makers will have a clear understanding of the undertaking they will have to implement the goals. Table 14.1 list goals and issues and opportunities associated with each goal.

Table 14.1 Issues and Opportunities		
Goal	Issue	Opportunities
Concentrate on retaining and expanding local businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Access to employees •Aging population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Economic stability
Increase number of small firms by fostering local entrepreneurship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Finding office space •Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Partnerships –Kirkwood, UI, ISU, etc. •Bring more people to West Branch
Promote vacant, development-ready land for industrial use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Land •Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Diversification of industry •Bring more development to West Branch
Provide, maintain, and improve solid waste collection and disposal infrastructure and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding •Changing rules and regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Recycling •Sustainable community •Quality of life
Provide, maintain, and improve a cost-effective, safe and functional surface transportation system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding •Development of a maintenance program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Better streets •Reduced accidents
Provide, maintain and improve a safe and functional storm sewer system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sustainable community
Provide, maintain and improve cost-effective, functional and self-supporting sanitary sewer and water pollution control systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding •Changing rules and regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Quality of life •Sustainable community

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 14.1 Issues and Opportunities

Goal	Issue	Opportunities
Provide, maintain and improve a cost-effective, functional and self-supporting water system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding •Changing rules and regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Quality of life •Sustainable community
Promote the creation and adoption of a complete streets policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding •A change in mindset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Quality of life •Sustainable Community •Enhanced transportation system
Promote cost-effective emergency services and facilities that enhance and protect the lives of residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding •Availability of trained staff •Changing regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Quality of life •Safe community
Provide public facilities and services at levels which support a “desirable quality of life” for current and future residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding •Changing Rules and Regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tourism •Stabilize /increase in population
Promote the fiscal soundness and viability of City government operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Property tax rates •Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Balanced budget •City savings
Operate municipal facilities and services in an accountable manner and encourage positive public relations with residents and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sustainable community •Community understanding •Quality of life
Provide adequate developed park areas and continue to develop a pedestrian/ bicycle trail system that links the parks, historical, and natural resources of the City while providing opportunities for recreational activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Initial funding •Ongoing funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tourism •Quality of life •Increased population
Determine future location of library.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Needs analysis study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Better facility •Quality of life
Achieve funding for library renovation or construction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Useable facility
Carry out renovation or construction of library.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Better facility •Quality of life
Encourage cooperative effort between the City of West Branch, Cedar County and Johnson County and any other bodies or agencies involved with planning, administration or enforcement of plans, codes, ordinances, regulations, etc. that are in effect in the West Branch area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Coordination •Change in mindset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Partnerships •Reduce City expenses

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Achieving the Goals

To achieve the goals outlined in this plan West Branch should look to the objectives as action steps to realizing the goals of the plan. The previous chapters provide a detailed analysis of the chapter subject area and what specific items or action steps are needed to achieve the goals of the plan. This chapter addresses the scheduling of the action steps outline in previous chapters, plan maintenance and plan support.

Plan Scheduling: summarizes the policies and actions proposed in previous chapters and presents projected time frames for the implementation of these recommendations.

Plan Maintenance: outlines the process for maintaining the plan and evaluating the progress in meeting the plan’s goals.

Plan Support: identifies potential funding sources that can assist in the implementation of the objectives and action steps.

Plan Scheduling

Throughout the planning process goal, objectives and action steps to achieve the goals and objectives were identified. Table 14.2 provides a timeline on when items needs to be addressed. Recommendations are classified into the following categories: on-going, short-term, medium-term and long-term. Short-term indicates that implementation should occur within the next five years, while medium-term is five to ten years and long-term is ten to twenty years.

Table 14.2 Schedule

Table 14.2 Schedule				
Goal: Concentrate on retaining and expanding local business.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Build partnerships: Cooperate with business, education institutions, community organizations, and government to provide information to local businesses.	X – keeping the partnerships	X – establishing the partnerships		
Develop business license program, which includes information packet, in conjunction with Main Street West Branch.		X		
Develop “Welcome West Branch” brochure for distribution to residents and visitors highlighting businesses in West Branch, in conjunction with Main Street West Branch.		X		
Development sites: Promote assistance to local firms in finding appropriate development sites for expansion.	X			

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 14.2 Schedule

Goal: Concentrate on retaining and expanding local business.

Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Work with Main Street West Branch to utilize revolving loan fund to benefit local business expansion.	X			
Facilitation: Promote retaining existing manufacturing firms and facilitate their expansion.	X			
Mayor, Council, Administration and Main Street West Branch to engage with existing manufacturing firms to encourage growth.	X			
Mayor, Council, Administration and Main Street West Branch to engage with ICAD to encourage growth of existing manufacturing firms.	X			
Revitalization: Encourage downtown revitalization and business development.	X			
Provide community policing services in the downtown district, to include officers on foot, receiving feedback from business owners.	X			
Work with Main Street West Branch and business owners to repair sidewalks in the Main Street business district.	X			
Repave Downey Street from Wetherell to Main Street.		X		
Work with the Historic Preservation Commission on enhancing the appearance of Heritage Square and other public downtown areas.	X			
Work with Main Street West Branch to obtain new way finding signage.		X		
Work with business owners, the National Historic Site and Main Street West Branch to identify parking solutions that will provide both residents and commercial activity.	X			
Diversification: Encourage diversified retail shopping.	X			
Work with Main Street West Branch to bring in diversified services or retail establishments, including a pharmacy, hardware store, a recreation/community center, an assisted living center, a grocery store, laundromat and a family restaurant.		X		

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 14.2 Schedule

Goal: Increase the number of firms by foster local entrepreneurship.

Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Partnerships: Cooperate with other agencies and institutions to identify programs and services to assist in the creation of new small business.		X		
Examine a potential renewed partnership with Cedar County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDCO) and make a decision within the next two years on whether or not reengagement with CCEDCO would benefit West Branch.		X		
Mayor, Council, Administration and Main Street West Branch to engage with ICAD to encourage industrial park growth.	X			
Financial & Technical Assistance: Promote support for start-up businesses with both financial and technical assistance.		X		
Support start-up businesses with both financial and technical assistance.	X			
Work with Main Street West Branch and/or possible CCEDCO to provide training for start-up businesses.	X			
Work with Main Street West Branch to utilize revolving loan fund to benefit of start-up businesses.	X			
Promote vacant, development-ready land for industrial use.	X			
Market development-ready sites.	X			
Evaluate potential future industrial sites.	X			
Redevelop existing vacant, underutilized and brownfield properties for industrial development.				

Goal: Promote the preservation, rehabilitation, and investment in the housing stock and neighborhoods

Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Encourage a range of affordable, accessible, and decent, safe and sanitary rental housing options throughout the city.	X			
Work with ECIA on housing assistance programs appropriate for West Branch.	X			
Provide a variety of housing types, costs and locations.	X			

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 14.2 Schedule

Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Become more aggressive in attracting new residents to live in West Branch.	X			
Work with Main Street West Branch to bring in diversified services or retail establishments, including a pharmacy, hardware store, a recreation/community center, an assisted living center, a grocery store, laundromat, and a family restaurant.	X			
Park and recreation department to expand activities for youth and teens.		X		
Investigate the viability of a movie theater, pool, community-recreation-senior center, splash pool, adult education programs, shuttle service to Iowa City, and expanded trails.		X		
Goal: Provide, maintain, and improve solid waste collection and disposal infrastructure and services.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Strive to maintain efficient and effectiveness of solid waste collection system.	X			
Examine new solid waste provisions contract at the end of the current contract which runs through June of 2015.		X		
Increase solid waste rates so that the service is self-supporting.	X			
Goal: Provide, maintain, and improve a cost-effective, safe and functional surface transportation system.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Support ongoing street reconstruction, rehabilitation, and maintenance programs, ensuring the timely maintenance, repair and reconstruction of the city's streets and bridges.	X			
Develop comprehensive CIP Plan to include street reconstruction and repair.	X			
Increase property tax levy to fund these improvements.		X		
Goal: Promote the preservation, rehabilitation, and investment in the housing stock and neighborhoods				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Encourage a range of affordable, accessible, and decent, safe and sanitary rental housing options throughout the city.	X			
Work with ECIA on housing assistance programs appropriate for West Branch.	X			
Provide a variety of housing types, costs and locations.	X			

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 14.2 Schedule

Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Become more aggressive in attracting new residents to live in West Branch.	X			
Work with Main Street West Branch to bring in diversified services or retail establishments, including a pharmacy, hardware store, a recreation/community center, an assisted living center, a grocery store, Laundromat and a family restaurant.	X			
Park and recreation department to expand activities for youth and teens.		X		
Investigate the viability of a movie theater, pool, community-recreation-senior center, splash pool, adult education programs, shuttle service to Iowa City, and expanded trails.		X		
Goal: Provide, maintain, and improve solid waste collection and disposal infrastructure and services.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Strive to maintain efficient and effectiveness of solid waste collection system.	X			
Examine new solid waste provisions contract at the end of the current contract which runs through June of 2015.		X		
Increase solid waste rates so that the service is self-supporting.	X			
Goal: Provide, maintain, and improve a cost-effective, safe and functional surface transportation system.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Support ongoing street reconstruction, rehabilitation, and maintenance programs, ensuring the timely maintenance, repair and reconstruction of the city's streets and bridges.	X			
Develop comprehensive CIP Plan to include street reconstruction and repair.	X			
Increase property tax levy to fund these improvements.		X		
Seek alternative funding sources for construction and maintenance.	X			
Consider use of local option sales tax for future projects.		X		
Consider use of TIF for future projects in the industrial park.		X		
Consider increasing property tax levy to fund future projects.		X		
Support extending the life and improving the quality of the city street system through preventative maintenance programs.	X			

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 14.2 Schedule

Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Continue seal coating.	X			
Fix failing streets.	X			
In-house (Public Works Staff) work to repair portion of streets where appropriate.	X			
Goal: Provide, maintain and improve a safe and functional storm sewer system.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Support maintaining the integrity of the storm sewer system.	X			
Complete lift station.		X		
Complete I and I phase I repairs.		X		
Complete I and I studies on the remainder of the sewer system.		X		
Complete I and I repairs identified in future studies on an ongoing basis.	X			
Complete wastewater treatment facilities plan that would meet increased contaminant requirements.		X		
Complete sump pump inspections.		X		
Meet all local, state and federal regulations.	X			
Identify existing and potential flood prone problem areas, and alleviate with appropriate mitigation strategies, where possible.	X			
Goal: Provide, maintain and improve a cost-effective, functional and self-supporting water system.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Support maintaining the integrity of the water system.	X			
Replacing aging water mains and water mains smaller than 6 inches.		X		
Make improvements to water plant, including fencing around existing plant.		X		
Encourage efficient operation of water system.		X		
Investigate the need for abandoning or developing new wells.		X		
Meet all local, state and federal water quality standards.	X			

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 14.2 Schedule

Table 14.2 Schedule				
Goal: Promote the creation and adoption of a complete streets policy.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Adoption of a complete streets policy.		X		
Goal: Promote cost-effective emergency services and facilities that enhance and protect the lives of residents.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Promote cooperation and coordination among emergency services agencies.	X			
Continue to develop positive partnerships between police and fire.	X			
Increase the partnership with the National Park law enforcement.	X			
Support provisions of responsive, high quality emergency services.	X			
Hire additional full-time police officer.		X		
Increase the salaries of full-time police officers by 20%.		X		
Fully fund the fire department’s capital improvement plan.	X			
Goal: Provide public facilities and services at levels which support a “desirable quality of life” for current and future residents.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Provide facilities and services in locations compatible with planned uses, population and needs.	X			
Implement the proposed park facility improvements outlined in Chapter 11.		X		X
Goal: Promote the fiscal soundness and viability of City government operations.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Continue using nonrecurring revenues only to fund nonrecurring expenditures.	X			
Monitor changing conditions, trends and legislation appropriate to the City’s fiscal position and promote the City’s sound fiscal condition.	X			
Minimize program costs by using sound purchasing practices.	X			
Maintain adequate reserves to positively impact the City bond rating and provide flexibility to implement projects as opportunities occur.	X			

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 14.2 Schedule

Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Use City Council goals and priorities to guide the budgeting process.	X			
Operate municipal facilities and services in an accountable manner and encourage positive public relations with residents and others.	X			
Maintain and review administrative, management and personnel capacity for effective support and implementation of municipal services.	X			
Pursue a variety of revenue sources to offset flat-line budget as well as examine ways to reduce costs and increase fund balances for municipal facilities and services.	X			
Provide adequately developed park areas and continue to develop a pedestrian/bicycle trail system that links the parks, historical and natural resources of the City while providing opportunities for recreational activities.	X			
Goal: Determine future location of the library.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Work with FEH Associates and George Lawson Consulting to evaluate sites in West Branch and surround area.		X		
Select site and acquire the property and achieve funding for library renovation or construction.		X		
Goal: Achieve funding for library renovation or construction.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Work with FEH Associates to construct designs for future library.		X		
Promote library project among local social groups and community.		X		
Work with the Friends of the Library to conduct fundraising events.		X		
Acquire grants and donations for building construction.		X		
Hire a professional fundraiser to assist in fundraising efforts (if needed).		X		
Work to pass a bond referendum (if needed).		X		

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 14.2 Schedule

Goal: Carry out renovation or construction.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Work with FEH Associates to create site construction plans.			X	
Conduct bidding process to select the building contractor.			X	
Hire contractor to conduct the library renovation or construction.			X	
Work with FEH Associates and selected contractors to conduct the building renovation.			X	
Goal: Encourage redevelopment opportunities to revitalize unused property.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Encourage redevelopment or adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings and sites.	X			
Promote infill development.	X			
Promote affordable commercial space for small start-up, new or growing businesses.	X			
Encourage reinvestment in our existing neighborhood (i.e., smart growth).	X			
Consider incentives for smart growth.	X			
Goal: Encourage cooperative effort between the City of West Branch, Cedar County, Johnson County and any other bodies or agencies involved with the planning, administration or enforcement of plans, codes, ordinances, regulations, etc., that are in effect in the West Branch area.				
Action Item	On-Going	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Establish partnerships	X			

Plan Maintenance

The West Branch Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a long-range plan and many of the recommendations will require funding and continuous support. The City of West Branch should refer to the comprehensive plan to develop annual improvement programs and budgets. An annual evaluation of the plan should be conducted. Land use developments, plan implementations and changes that should be made to the comprehensive plan should be reviewed and reported back to elected officials annually.

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Potential Funding Sources

Many of the goals, objectives and action steps identified will require outside funding sources to make them a reality. Table 14.3 contains a listing of potential funding sources available. Since funding sources change this list should not be viewed as the ultimate listing and should be reviewed and modified each fiscal year.

Table 14.3 Potential Funding Sources					
Source	Administrator	Description	Deadline	Funding	Match Requirement
Community Attraction and Tourism Program	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Projects that promote recreational, cultural, educational or entertainment attractions	January 15 April 15 July 15 October 15	\$5 million	Encouraged
Community Attraction and Tourism Program Marketing	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Marketing of Vision Iowa CAT and RECAT Projects	November 4	\$100,000, maximum grant \$15,000	50%
River Enhancement Community Attraction and Tourism Program	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Help with projects that create recreational and entertainment attractions that connect with and enhance a river, lake or river corridor	October 15	Varies	25%
Community Development Block Grant	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Public Facilities, Housing and Community Facilities Projects	November December January	Varies	Encouraged
Enhancement Program	Iowa Department of Transportation	Projects must meet at least 1 of the 10 categories	October 1	\$4,500,000 Minimum project \$10,000	30%
Federal Recreational Trails Program	Iowa Department of Transportation	Recreational Trails	October 1	\$1.25 million	20%
State Recreational Trails Program	Iowa Department of Transportation	Recreational Trails	July 1	\$2 million	25%

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Table 14.3 Potential Funding Sources

Source	Administrator	Description	Deadline	Funding	Match Requirement
Highway Bridge Program	Iowa Department of Transportation	Replacement or rehabilitation of structurally deficient or functionally obsolete bridges	October 1	\$1 million	20%
Home Fund	Iowa Finance Authority	Provide decent affordable housing to lower-income households	Varies	\$15 million	25%
Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program	Iowa Department of Transportation	Projects that will help meet national ambient air quality standards	October 1	\$4.5 million, minimum \$20,000 per project	20%
Land & Water Conservation Fund	Iowa Department of Natural Resources	Outdoor recreation area development and acquisition	March 15		50%
Living Roadway Trust Fund	Iowa Department of Transportation	Roadside vegetation management programs	June 1		20%
Pedestrian Curb Ramp Construction	Iowa Department of Transportation	Assists City's with complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act on primary roads	Accepted year round	Maximum of \$250,000 per city per year	45%
Public Facilities Set-Aside Program	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Sanitary sewer system, water system, streets, storm sewers, rail lines and airport improvements for Cities under 50,000 population, 51% of the persons benefiting must be low or moderate income	Accepted year round		50%
Resource Enhancement and Protection	Iowa Department of Natural Resources	Enhancement and protection of the state's natural and cultural resources	Varies		Varies by grant category
Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy	Iowa Department of Transportation	Economic development projects through construction or improvements of Iowa roads	February 1 September 1 Immediate opportunities accepted all year	\$11 million for cities and \$5.5 million for counties	Local: 50% Immediate: 20%

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

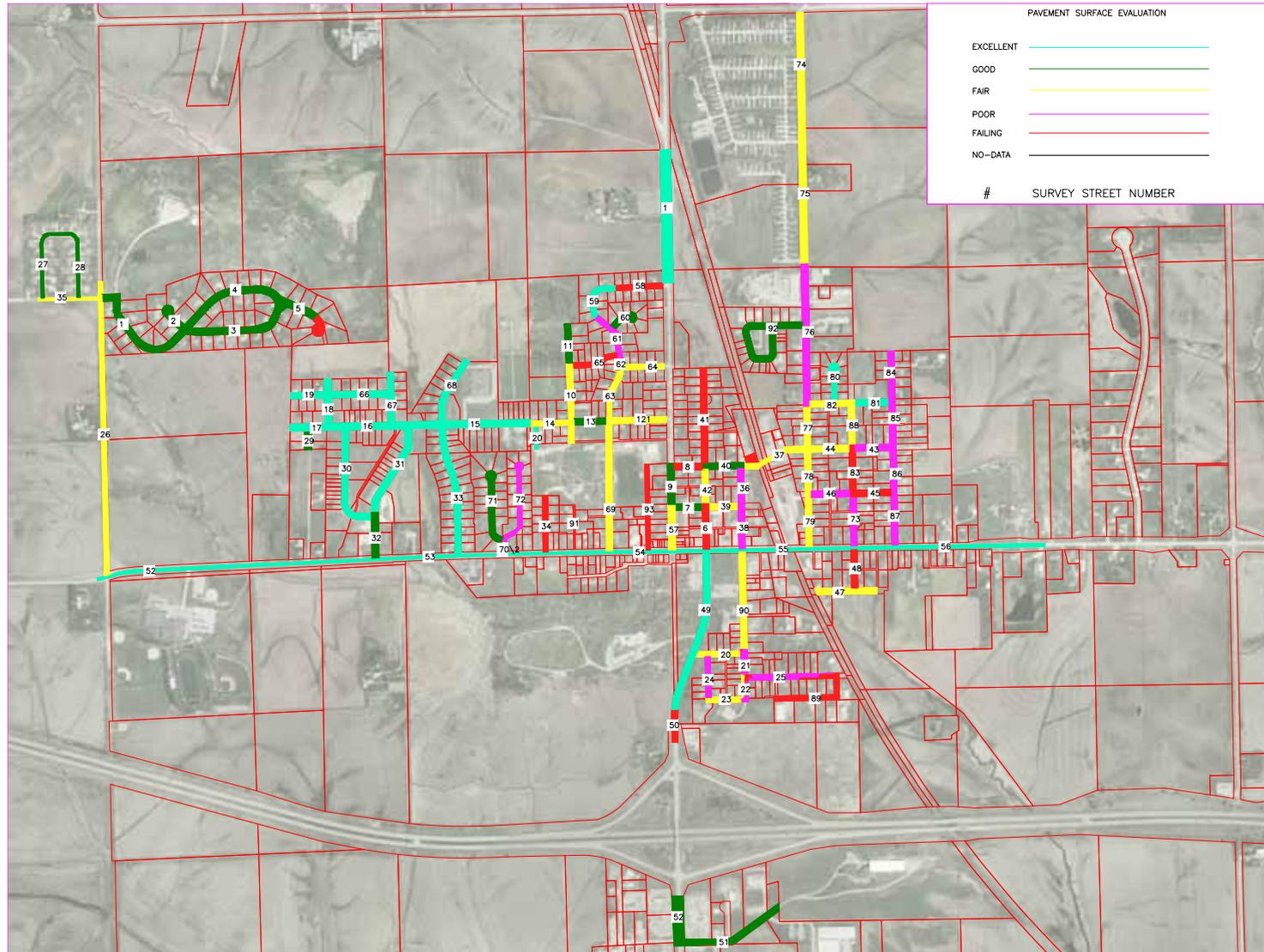
Table 14.3 Potential Funding Sources

Source	Administrator	Description	Deadline	Funding	Match Requirement
Safe Routes to School	Iowa Department of Transportation	Education or construction projects that help promote walking or bicycling to school	October 1	\$1.5 million	Encouraged
Section 42 Low Income Housing Tax Credit	HUD	Multi-family housing development for low and moderate-income families	N/A	N/A	N/A
Surface Transportation Program	Iowa Department of Transportation	Road, bridge, transit, bicycle/pedestrian projects and planning activities	Counties are notified by DOT, Cities need to submit a letter by October 1	\$2,100,000	20%
Tax Increment Financing	Reduction or elimination of property taxes for a set period of time on new improvements to property	Available for commercial, industrial or residential developments	N/A	N/A	N/A
Traffic Safety Improvement Program	Iowa Department of Transportation	Traffic safety improvement projects or studies	June 15	\$5.4 million \$500,000 per project maximum	
Urban-State Traffic Engineering Program (U-Step)	Iowa Department of Transportation	Solve traffic operation and safety problems on primary roads	Accepted year round	\$200,000 for spot improvements \$400,000 for linear improvements	45%

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

APPENDIX A STREET CONIDTION MAP

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

APPENDIX B

WEST BRANCH COMMUNITY TRAILS PLAN

West Branch Community Trails Plan

West Branch Community Trails Plan

West Branch Community Trails Plan

“A Heritage for Success”

City of West Branch
110 N Poplar Street
West Branch, Iowa 52358
319-643-5888

Trails Committee

Mellissa Russell, Parks & Recreation Department
Bill Schreier, Resident
Rod Ness, Director, Main Street
Jennie Embee, Resident
Caroline Harold, School Board Member
Andy Asell, Resident
Nate Steele, Resident
Cheryl Schreier, Former Superintendent, Hoover NHS
Mark Worrell, City Council Member
Don Kessler, Mayor

Partners:

National Park Service - Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
Main Street Program- West Branch, Iowa
West Branch Public Schools
Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum (NARA)
Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association (Hoover Association)
Federal Highways Administration
Iowa Department of Transportation
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Iowa Bicycle Coalition
Bicyclists of Iowa City
Cedar County Conservation Board
Johnson County Conservation Board
Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
East Central Intergovernmental Association (Dubuque, Iowa)
Hawkeye Hikers (Iowa City Walking Club - American Volkssport Association)
Eastern Iowa Tourism Association
Cedar County Federation
Johnson County Federation



Plan Prepared by: West Branch
Community Trails Ad hoc
Committee with assistance from
Mary Hanson, Rivers Trails and
Conservation Assistance, National
Park Service

West Branch Community Trails Plan

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West Branch Community Trails Plan

Introduction

West Branch offers the benefits of a small town, but is close enough to larger cities to provide additional opportunities and attractions. It has a quality school system, businesses that provide local employment, and is the site of a national park, Herbert Hoover National Historical Site. To maintain this positive and progressive position, city officials with the support of local citizens have created a community trail plan. This trail plan introduces a potential asset for West Branch's future.

Communities of all sizes throughout the United States have found trails and the preservation of open space can make their communities more attractive. Being pro-active, the West Branch city and residents have looked at what is possible and logical for their specific community. Each section of trail has been considered for safety, alternative transportation, and recreation. The challenges will include funding, especially in this trying economic period. Also, the problem of access is typical for a community trail plan where development has already occurred. West Branch does have the advantage and example of the Hoover Nature Trail. It is already a positive feature for the city and this plan includes extending this part of the American Discovery Trail. This plan will also prepare West Branch to link with trails from the region further benefiting the city.

The West Branch City Council passed a resolution to create an ad-hoc committee to explore potential trail sites and to make recommendations to the city. The committee looked at potential trail sites throughout the community and held public meetings in May 2010 to discuss ideas with residents.

This community trail plan is the results of all this hard work. The final goal of this group is to see the plan become part of the city's comprehensive city plan that guides future growth and development of the community.

This report is conceptual plan of the optimal locations for trails in West Branch for commuting, safety and recreation. The trails are presented in sections to highlight details and priorities. The final layout of any specific trail will be determined by the City Council and designed by a qualified engineer. The implementation of this trail plan is the responsibility of the City Council and as they determine the optimal actions to take as opportunities present themselves.

West Branch Community Trails Plan



West Branch Community Trails Vision:

West Branch will have a great trail system and green spaces linking the community, enhancing the lives of residents, and attracting more visitors to enjoy our community.

Trail Planning Principles:

- 1. The trails will be accessible to all residents and visitors to the region.*
- 2. The trails will be a multi-partnership effort to accomplish our goals.*
- 3. The trails will represent the local region by being sensitive to the cultural, physical, and environmental conditions unique to the West Branch community.*
- 4. When possible we will use environmental sustainable designs and materials.*

West Branch Community Trails Plan

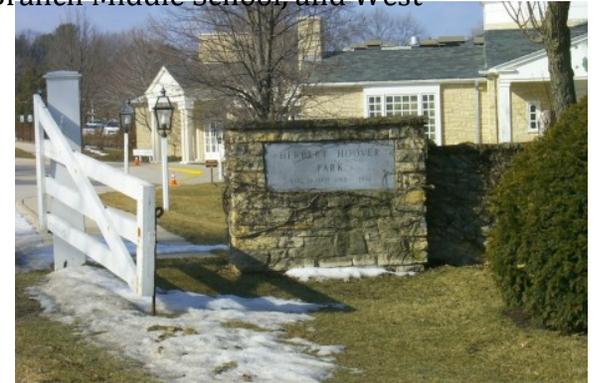
Background



West Branch Iowa is located in central, eastern Iowa along the Wapsinonoc Creek, which flows into the Iowa River. It is in Cedar County, ten minutes east of Iowa City and 2 hours east of Des Moines.

The population is approximately 2,500 residents. The community supports a strong downtown and business sector and is one of 36 Main Street Iowa programs. The main industries include a major distribution center, plastic production and the construction of wind turbine assembly plant. The community has three schools: Herbert Hoover Elementary, West Branch Middle School, and West Branch High School.

The area was first settled by Quakers in the 1800s from Ohio. The city was also a stop along the Underground Railroad. The most famous resident was the 31st President, Herbert Hoover. His birth site and related buildings make up the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site managed by the National Park Service. There are other historical buildings and homes in the city, including the Hoover Presidential Library and Museum.



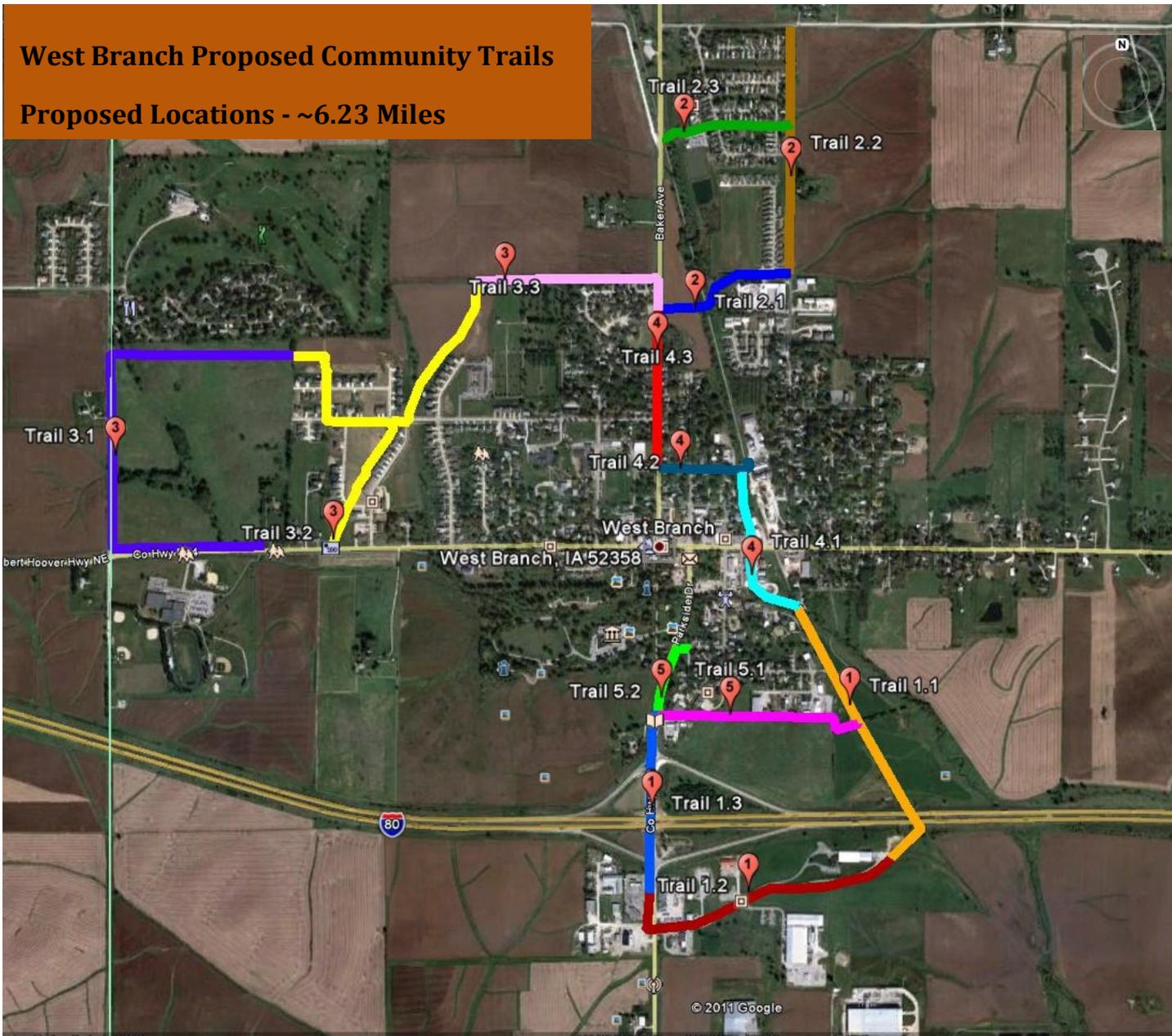
The Hoover Nature Trail was the main trail in West Branch. It is part of the American Discovery Trail¹. It has been a popular amenity in the community. There are some existing trails and sidewalks, but there is a need for a logical linking of trails to schools, businesses and tourist sites.



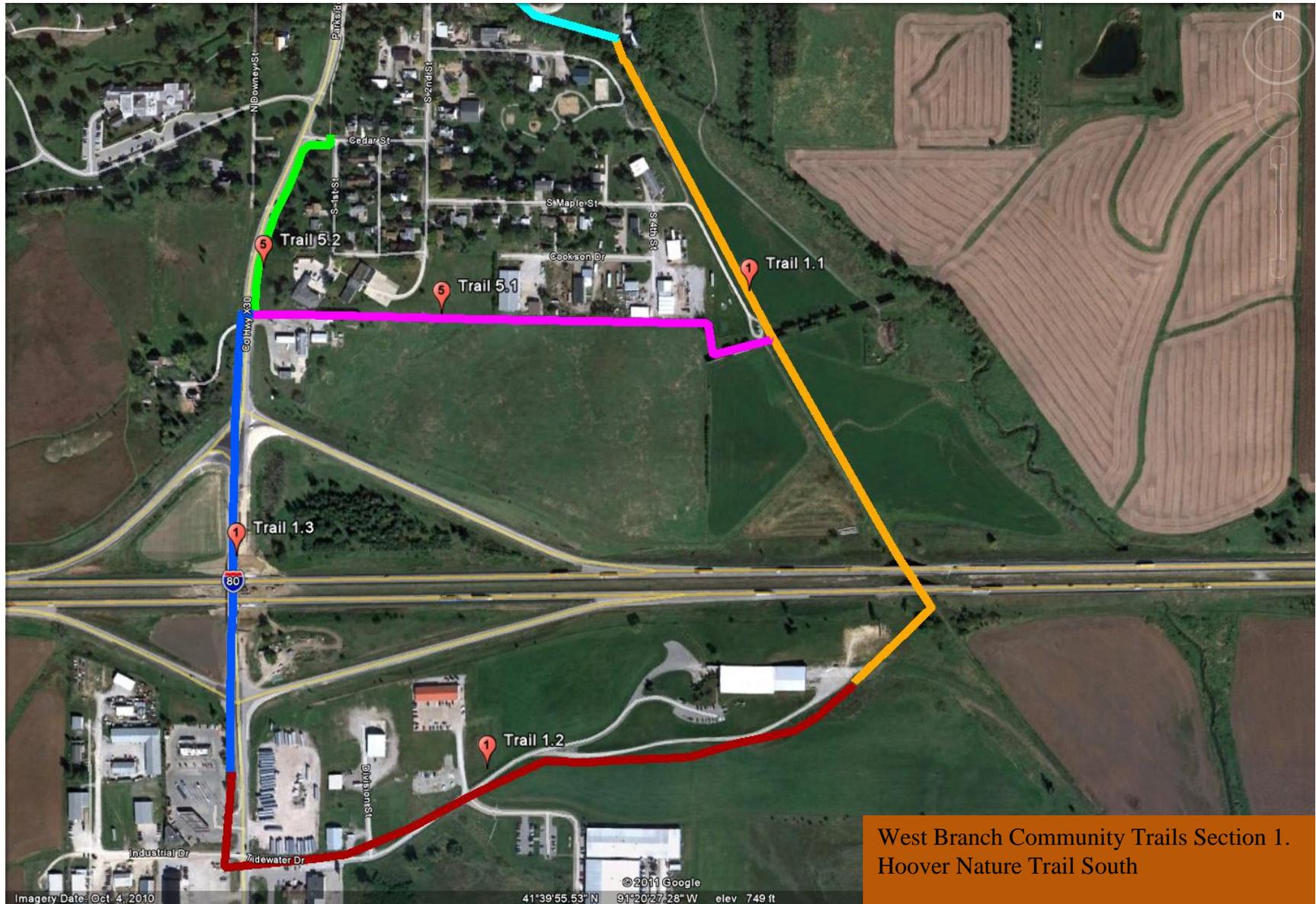
Trail planning fits in with the state's Iowa In Motion Plan (<http://www.iowadot.gov/iowainmotion/state.html>). Bicycle and Pedestrian section can be found on pages 33-37. Neighboring community, Iowa City has planned to link with West Branch on the Hoover Highway. This plan will be a comprehensive trail plan to provide recreational and alternative transportation opportunities.

¹ American Discovery Trail – Iowa, <http://www.discoverytrail.org/states/iowa/index.html>

West Branch Community Trails Plan



West Branch Community Trails Plan



West Branch Community Trails Plan

Trails Section 1. Hoover Nature Trail South & Links – ~1.45 miles

Section 1.1 - Continue Hoover Nature Trail south from Beranek Park to south of Interstate 80

Section 1.2 - From Hoover Nature Trail to Baker Ave (motel and fast food area), include safe pedestrian crossings

Section 1.3 - North along Hwy 30, crossing I-80 on pedestrian lane on west side of overpass

Future county or state plans can include continuing Hoover Nature Trail south to West Liberty if land access is available



West Branch Community Trails Plan

Issues & Ideas:

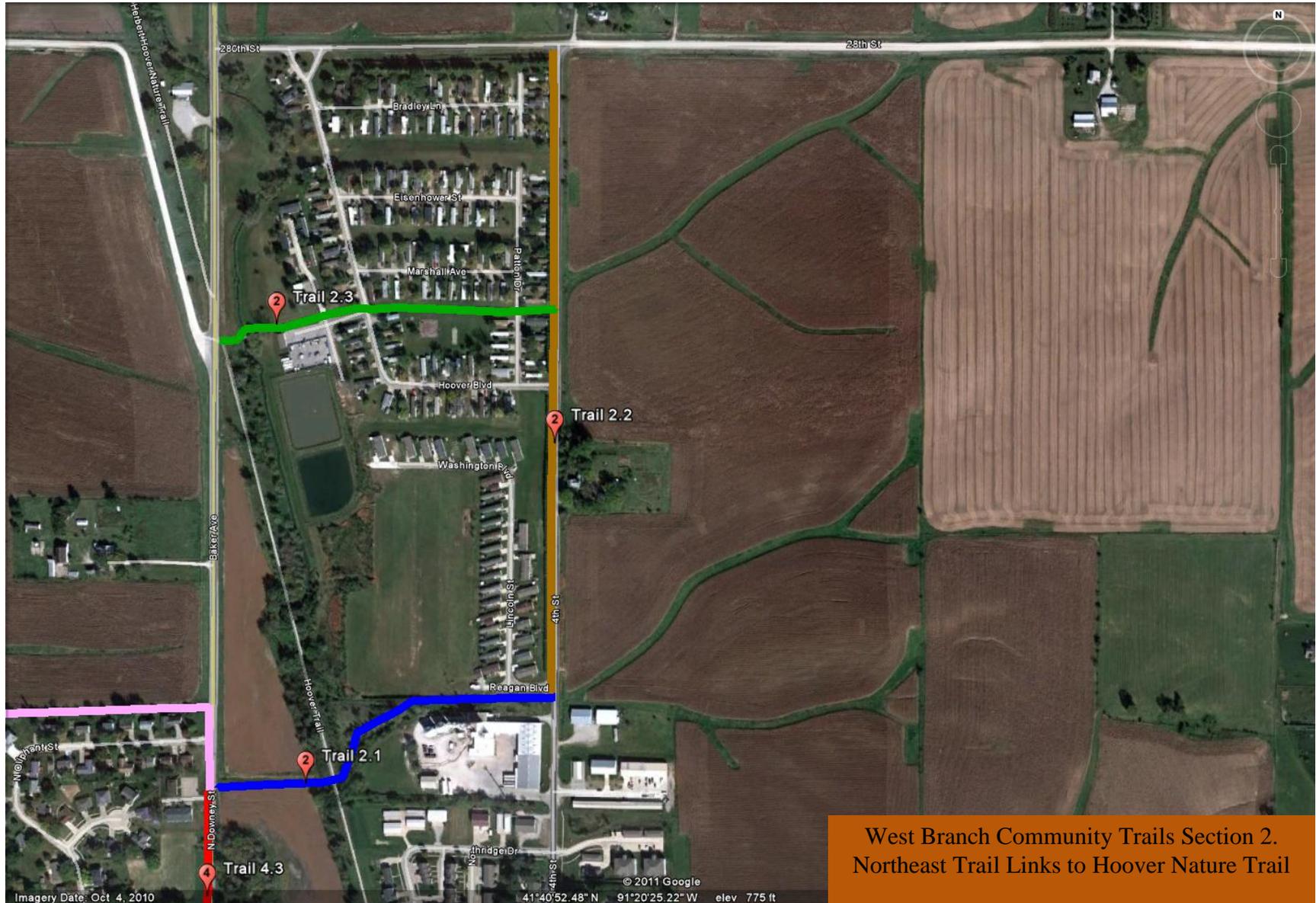
- Will need to research width and ownership of land along the abandoned railbed
- When crossing the Interstate entrance and exit lanes, trail will need safety controls (warning lights and pedestrian crossing markings).
- Develop promotions on using trails for alternative transportation and health
- Create safety messages and events

Examples:

1. Passive barrier to make trail users stop before continuing through intersections.
2. Low barrier to separate trail from train tracks, highways, and busy roads.
3. Trail alongside a highway using trees as the barrier.
4. Trail lanes on an Interstate in Missouri. - <http://mobikefed.org/2006/05/bicycle-paths-on-interstate-freeway.php>.
5. Trail in an industrial area.



West Branch Community Trails Plan



West Branch Community Trails Plan

Trails Section 2. Northeast - ~1.27 Miles

- Section 2.1 - Trail link from N Downey St, across Hoover Nature Trails to 4th Street along Reagan Boulevard
- Section 2.2 - Build trail parallel with 4th Street from Reagan Boulevard north to 280th Road
- Section 2.3 - Create a trail link from 4th Street to Hoover Nature Trail along open space between Eisenhower Street and Bradley Lane

Issues and Ideas

- Pedestrian bridges across drainage ditch east of Hoover Nature Trail can be constructed out of wooden building materials. This can be an Eagle Scout project or youth project.
- Future development to the north and east can tie in with these trails creating effective loops and links to future developments
- Develop educational and promotional programs to encourage children to use trails to school

Examples:

1. Basic bridge structure from using a railroad flat car as the bridge base. Grant Wood Trail, Jones County, Iowa
2. Young boy on trail with underpass.
3. Wooden bridge or boardwalk with low edge. Safe for low crossings.



West Branch Community Trails Plan



West Branch Community Trails Plan

Trails Section 3. Northwest School Trails & Links - ~2.15 Miles

- Section 3.1 - West Trail - from West Branch High School on West Main Street to County Line Road north to south side of golf course development, east between residential developments, south to tie in with trail through residential area
- Section 3.2 - Central Trail - from existing trail to the high school, across Main Street at approximately 800 feet from the high school property line
- Section 3.3 - North Trail - from north central trail across northern side of current development to North Downey Street.

Issues & Ideas:

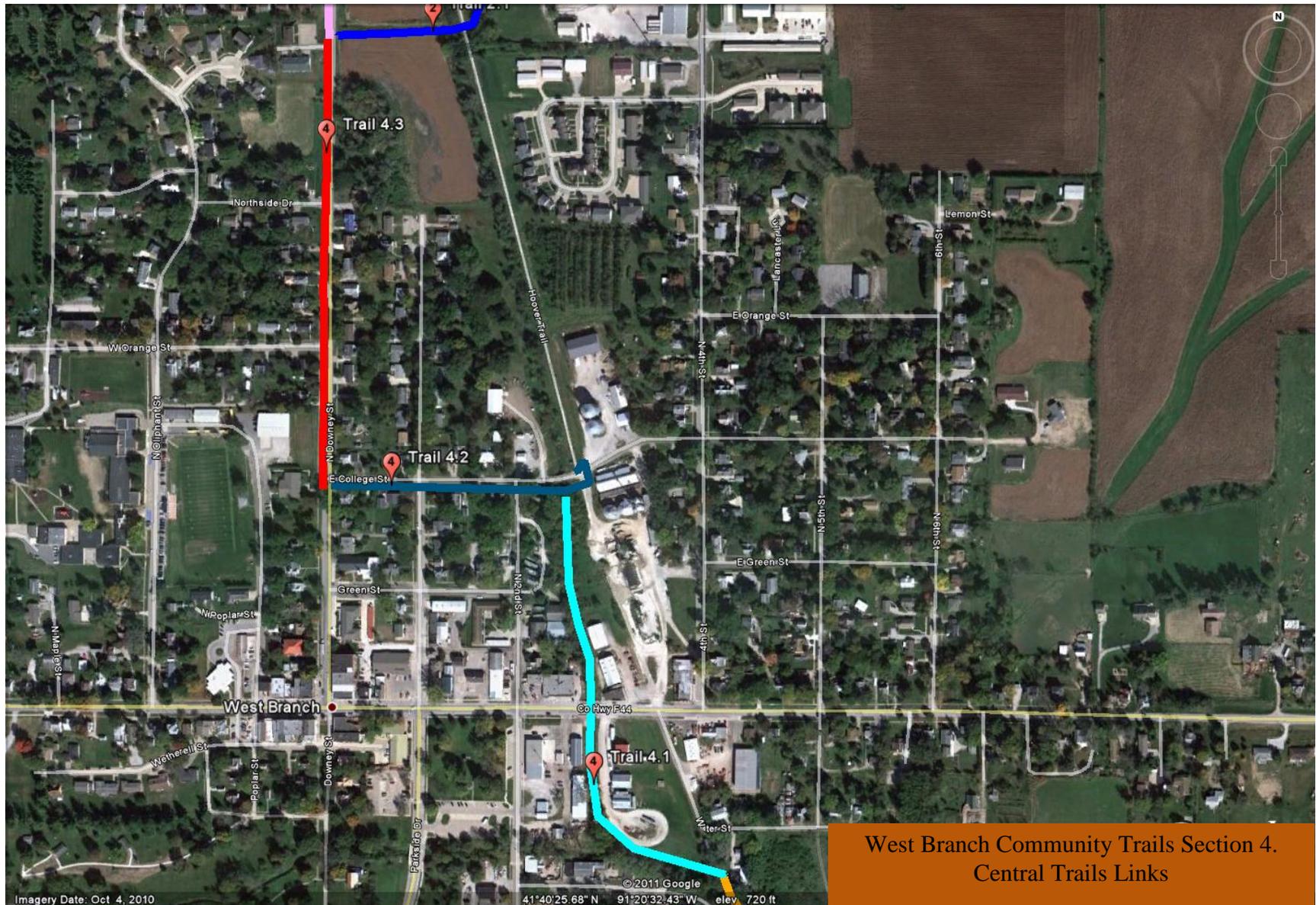
- Need to keep trails direct to school so students want to use them.
- Place street crossings where they have the highest visibility
- Use flashing warning lights and signs to alert vehicles of trail crossings
- Pedestrian crossing 'hump' which makes pedestrians more visible, slows down vehicles, but not as harsh as road bump

Examples

1. Trail between houses and a street.
2. Trail signs, informational, but could have been designed and laid out better.
3. Trail street crossing with traffic 'hump'.



West Branch Community Trails Plan



West Branch Community Trails Plan

Trails Section 4, Central Trail Links - ~.80 Miles

Section 4.1 – Continue Hoover Nature Trail from College Street following creek or Second Street linking to Beranek Park and continuing south.

Section 4.2 – Build trail along College Street from Hoover Nature Trail to North Downey Street

- Potential for future trailhead at Second and East College Streets. Make parking lot surface with pervious materials to reduce run-off into creek. Amenities can include parking, water, and information kiosk.
- New pedestrian bridge separate from the current road bridge on College Street north of where it crosses drainage creek.
- Pedestrian crossing on East College and Second Streets with warning light and raised street surface.

Section 4.3 - Trail along North Downey Street that will connect with future trails on north side of city.

Issues & Ideas

- Include fencing along trail corridor and businesses, but leave openings so employees can easily access trails for health and commuting.
- Install flashing lights and signs at trail crossings to make street crossings safer for children.
- Use hump style street crossing on College Street to make pedestrians more visible.
- Use curves in trails, landscaping, or fencing to slow trail users down at intersections.
- Ideally, the Hoover Nature Trail would continue south along creek. Explore expanding green space along drainage areas and creeks to allow flooding waters to flow rather than sweeping through city. Use creek corridor for trail and to increase pervious surfaces and

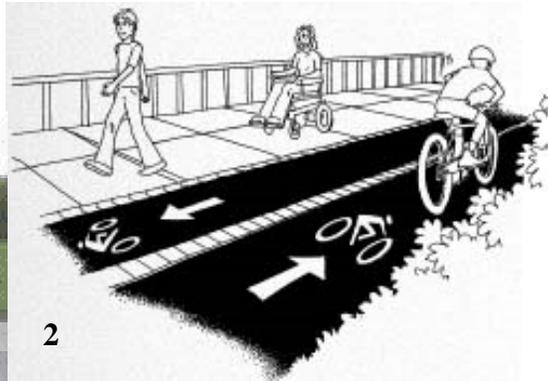


West Branch Community Trails Plan

greenspace to reduce stormwater run-off. This will also create a buffer between the drainage area and businesses. This could reduce public costs for stormwater infrastructure and buffer incompatible city uses (<http://www.planning.org/cityparks/briefingpapers/greeninfrastructure.htm>).

Examples

1. Pedestrian street crossing marked with white bars.
2. Mark trails well - <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/sidewalk2/sidewalks214.htm>
3. Trail user on a city street marked with bike lane in Madison, WI. Good option in older neighborhoods that have sidewalks.



West Branch Community Trails Plan

Example of Combining Flood Control and Trails

County Turns Flood Control Corridor into Trail - Oct 1, 2000 12:00 PM, American City & County Staff, Arizona

To the untrained eye, the 26-mile maintenance road bordering a Maricopa County, Ariz., flood control channel does not look like anything special. But to Maricopa County officials, it looks like a place to hike, ride bikes and horses, play soccer, and watch fireworks.

"The opportunities for this corridor are boundless," says Mike Ellegood, chief engineer and general manager of the district. "Electric companies use the roads along their installations for recreation. There is no reason why people shouldn't be able to enjoy ours. County residents paid for these roads with their taxes."

The county's decision to turn the maintenance road into a trail came on the heels of a study that determined the floodway was incapable of holding enough stormwater. It was clear that basins would be needed to control some of the excess.

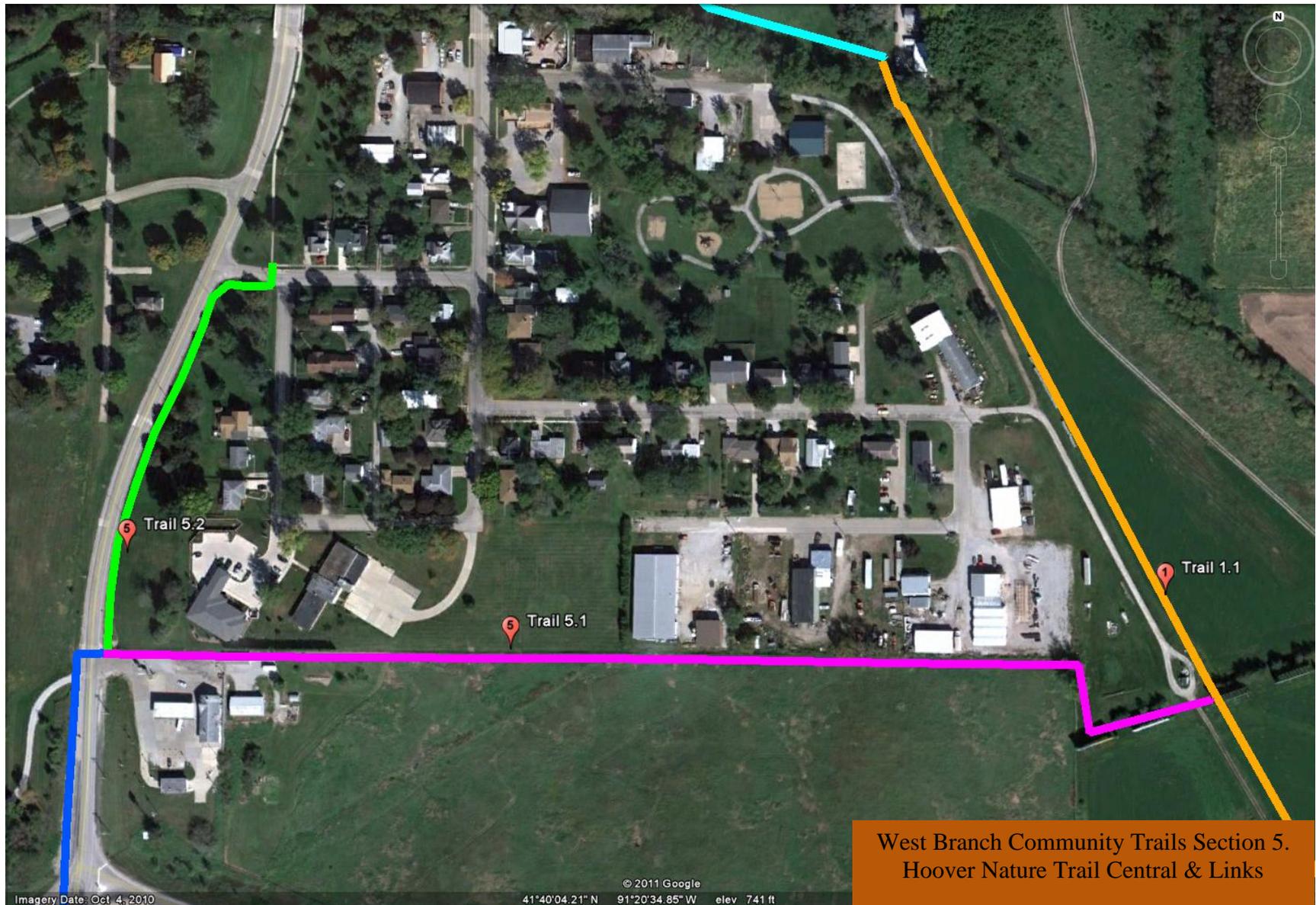
The basins eventually would become major features of the corridor. For example, the town of Gilbert plans to convert its 300-acre basin into a park that can be used for community celebrations.

Four cities - Mesa, Gilbert, Chandler and Queen Creek - are located along the corridor. Additionally, two golf courses have been built along the floodway. They help absorb and channel some of the water. Plans for the construction of more courses are in the works, as are plans for the construction of soccer fields, Frisbee golf courses, rollerblading facilities and wildlife habitats.

"Public polls continue to show that valley residents are extremely concerned about preserving open space and providing recreation opportunities," says Mark Schnepf, a trail advocate and former Queen Creek mayor.

"As the valley continues to develop, it is important that we make the most of our open space," says Maricopa County Supervisor Fulton Brock, who serves as chairman of the Maricopa County Trail Commission. "We hope to make the corridor so beautiful that people will want to have their homes face it, like they do with golf courses." Brock's colleague, County Supervisor Don Stapley, says the corridor could become an economic engine for the four communities adjacent to the floodway. "The corridor could become a landmark for the East Valley," he says. "It could attract new, small businesses and provide incentives to larger companies [looking to relocate]."

West Branch Community Trails Plan



West Branch Community Trails Plan

Trails Section 5. Hoover Nature Trail Central & Links - ~.55 Miles

Section 5.1 - Trail link from new section of Hoover Nature Trail along south side of properties bordering Cookson Drive to east side of Downey Drive

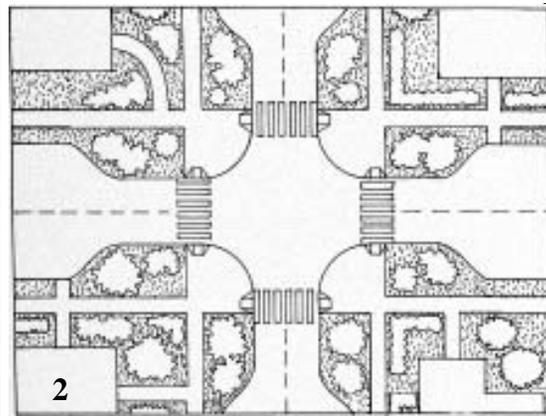
Section 5.2 - Downey Drive to Parkside Drive, then tie-in with existing trail on National Park Service property.

Issues & Ideas

- Another option would be following Second Street with a marked bike lane marked to link downtown and NPS areas.
- Use passive traffic calming to make trail and road intersections safer.
- Highlight the entrance of the city with greenspace and a trail.

Examples

1. Trail and residence with a fence.
2. Curb extensions to slow traffic at intersections. Narrowing the view slow drivers down as they approach an intersection. (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/sidewalk2/sidewalks209.htm>)
3. Businessman biking to work at a marked street crossing with barrier to prevent vehicles on trail.



West Branch Community Trails Plan

Benefits of Trails –

For more information on economic benefits of trails in Iowa:

"Implementing Trail-Based Economic Development Programs," Iowa Trails 2000.

"Local Community Planning for Bicyclists and Pedestrians," Iowa Trails 2000.

Trails have been acknowledged through research and experience as an attractive community amenity. A good trail system enhances the quality of life for residents increasing opportunities for physical activities, social interaction, and creating new economic opportunities. A trail provides a safe alternative for children to be active and to travel to school. Trails are part of a national effort to reduce childhood obesity. Having safe routes connecting schools, parks, houses, and public facilities makes it easier to get children active.

Trails can provide that one more attraction to keep visitors longer in the community. When visitors stay longer, especially, if their trip is multiple days, their visit increases the opportunities to make purchases, increasing local business revenues. Financially, communities benefit when new businesses are created to provide services to trail users. The city and state also benefit when sales and lodging taxes are collected from out-of-state and out-of-region visitors.

How Trails Benefit a Community: Economic Impacts of Bicycling Tourism

Des Moines Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI)

The Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI) is an event sponsored by the Des Moines Register since 1973. The Annual Bicycle Ride has become, in some cases, the largest economic impact event for towns and cities in the state.

Due to the popularity of the event and the large number of registrants, a lottery was established to selected applications for ridership limiting the number of participants to 8,500 with an additional 1,500-day riders for each of the consecutive 6 days of the event. In 2007, alone, more than 800 applications (over the 8,500 rider limit) were received. Since its inception, there have been more than 255,650 riders covering 15,535 miles at RAGBRAI. Seven hundred sixty one (761) Iowa towns or 78% of all towns in Iowa have enjoyed substantial economic impacts due to RAGBRAI since the first event in 1973.

Promoting trail use for health improves the health and mental well-being of residents of all age groups and physical ability. The Centers for Disease Control have found people will use trail for the health benefits if there is a trail close to their residents. Easy access especially benefits older women and children.

A well placed trail system becomes a new option for commuting to school and work. In West Branch distances, especially by bike, are not so far that residents can walk or bike from one side of the city to another in a short time. The added benefit is to reduce reliance on motorized vehicles and less expenditure on fuel for transportation.

West Branch Community Trails Plan

Ten Reasons to Include Trails in Your Development

1. It will make projects more marketable. April 2000 survey of 2000 recent homebuyers (National Association of Homebuilders and National Association of Realtors) indicated walking/jogging and bike trails second from the top of the "important to very important" amenity list-- behind highway access. According to Gopal Ahluwalia, NAHB Director of Research, trails consistently rank in the top five important amenities in making purchase decisions.

--www.nahb.com/news/smartsurvey2002.htm

A 1994 survey by American Lives, Inc. conducted for a group of large volume homebuilders showed that 77.7% of consumers surveyed ranked significant natural open space as a "must-deliver" category, second behind low traffic and quiet. Plenty of walking and biking paths ranked next highest. Buyers also said they would pay extra for "wilderness areas with the flora and fauna that existed prior to the development" --*Denver Post 1/10/95*

Similar surveys show property values higher in areas proximate to trails and greenways. For example 6% more near, but not immediately next to, Seattle's Burke Gilman Trail. Ken Caryl Ranch, Colorado (4145 Homes) 9000 Acre Project, 6000 set aside as open space. Dozens of miles of multi-use and primitive trails, trails link to amenities, and metro-wide system create 7% to 15%+ lot premiums. *Cited in National Geographic --Sandy Rozeboom, Rose and Company*

2. Trails can help increase the number of lot sales while conserving resources. Redfeather Ridge by Midfirst, Glenwood Springs, CO increased the number of sellable lots by conserving open space, providing trails and by clustering housing. Number of lots increased from 64 to 149. There are countless other examples nationwide. --*Jeff Vogel, DHN Design Corporation*

3. Trails can expand and diversify the golf course community market. 23% to 25% of homebuyers in golf course communities are golfers. Many are also seeking open space and outdoor recreation benefits. Both spouses make a home buying decision and only one may be a golfer. --*Phone discussions with Denver-area designers. Opportunity to create a multi-benefit golf course with wildlife habitat, visual benefits and conservation values. --Jeff Vogel*

4. Trails help meet compliance requirements. Floodplains, floodplain storage compensation, wetlands and other types of conservation areas can be enhanced as amenities with landscaping, trails and other improvements. The Mentor Graphics office complex near Portland, OR is a good example of a wetland set aside as an amenity, increasing market value of units facing the open space. A number of states allow marketing of wetland areas as compensation for filling wetlands. The Metropolitan Sewerage District (Louisville, KY) is exploring the creation of flood compensation "banks" where floodplain set aside as part of a development can be marketed within the watershed to compensate loss of flood storage capacity elsewhere.

5. Trails can help reduce impact fees and exaction costs. With the growth of organized team sports there is an increasing trend toward locating sports fields in community parks, regional parks and other venues. There are also indications of a growing desire to limit "park space" in residential development to more "passive" uses such as open space, trails, greenways and small neighborhood parks. These are less costly to build and maintain. This approach may also help promote a broader financing strategy and funding source allocation for the more costly active and team sports park facilities. (Continued on Next Page)

West Branch Community Trails Plan

Ten Reasons to Include Trails in Your Development, cont.

6. Homebuilder and homebuyer may realize direct economic and tax benefits. "Market appreciation rates for cluster housing with associated open space can be equal to those for conventionally developed housing types." A study, in Amherst and Concord, Massachusetts, found that clustered housing with open space appreciated at a higher rate than conventionally designed subdivisions. The clustered homes in Amherst appreciated at an average annual rate of 22%, compared to an increase of 19.5% for the more conventional subdivision. The home-buyer, speaking in dollar terms through the marketplace, appears to have demonstrated a greater desire for a home with access and proximity to permanently protected land, than for one located on a bigger lot, but without open-space." --*Jeff Lacy, August 1990*

"An Examination of Market Appreciation for Clustered Housing with Permanently Protected Open Space." A study of the enhancement value of 8,535 acres of wetlands in Massachusetts's Charles River Basin found that properties abutting the wetlands were valued \$400 more than non-abutting properties, and that each acre of wetland added \$150 in value to adjacent properties. A survey of 15 appraisers and realtors yielded the estimate that each acre of wetlands contributes \$480 to the value of an abutting parcel of property. --*Thibodeau and Ostro (1981)*

7. Trails promote physical activity, fitness, and health. Studies in association with The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that 64% of the U.S. population is clinically overweight with over 31% obese. This condition is directly tied to lack of physical activity resulting in increased heart disease, cancer, diabetes, anxiety, depression and other costly health problems.

Providing nearby trails and walkways offers a significant option for regular physical activity that can lower rates of obesity and health care costs. This strengthens the market for communities and business centers with such amenities with an anticipated growing demand by both homebuyers and employers who want to reduce health care costs. --*USA Today 10/9/02*

Increased participation in moderate physical activity by the 88 million inactive Americans could reduce medical costs by \$76 Billion --*Pratt et al, 2000*

8. Trails help improve a company's image. Companies that build projects with well planned and executed trail amenities, conservation and open space benefits, stand a better chance of being recognized as environmentally-friendly developers which may help facilitate and reduce public-relations costs of project approvals.

9. Trails enhance the marketability of the locale (town, city, resort destination). Pittsburgh faced with mass exodus of skilled workers and professionals after the failure of the steel market in late 1970s redeveloped its riverfront with trails and greenways that spun off adjacent development. It has since seen a re-emergence of its economy and has moved up in rank to one of the top 5 best cities in the U.S to raise a family (Readers Digest). Chattanooga, TN implemented a similar renaissance. --*City of Pittsburgh, Mayor's Office*

A 2002 reader survey by the Kansas City Star ranked creation of a regional trail and greenway network at the top of the list in 15 desired public investments over and above police buildings, zoo, stadium improvements, etc. --*KC Star 1/20/2002*

10. Trail and greenways tend to compete better in tight economies. During the last economic slowdown in Denver in the 1980s the most successful projects incorporated trails and greenways. Examples include Highlands Ranch, Stonegate and Green Valley Ranch that outperformed other communities in the metro area. --*S. Robert August Company, Denver, CO*

Health & Trails

The Burden of Obesity in Iowa

A Report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA 30333, USA
Iowa's estimated 2007 total population is almost 3 million with 2.2 million adults. Of those adults, approximately 37% are considered overweight and another 28% are considered obese, according to 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data. Problems are also seen in factors related to obesity and other chronic diseases.
Approximately one-in-five Iowa adults report no leisure time physical activity over the past month.
Only one-in-five adults report eating fruits and vegetables five or more times a day.
Also, the National Immunization Survey shows that Iowa is not meeting any of the five Healthy People 2010 goals for breastfeeding based on children born in 2005.

The problem is not limited to adults alone. Approximately 11% of Iowa youth (9th–12th grades) are considered obese and another 13% are considered overweight, according to 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data.

- Only half of Iowa youth are meeting current physical activity recommendation levels.
- Only 19% eat fruits and vegetables five or more times a day.
- One quarter watch three or more hours of television a day.
- Almost one third drink at least one non-diet soda each day.
- Obesity also affects the state's economy. In Iowa, the medical costs associated with adult obesity were \$783 million in 2003 dollars.

Trails Cheaper than Medical Costs

A 2002 study completed in Lincoln, Nebraska, showed the average cost per user across all the trails in the study was \$235. This figure is much lower than the economic benefit of physical activity. A conservative estimate of direct medical cost savings from physical activity was \$330 per person in 1987. Using a 5% inflation rate, this savings is about \$622 in 2002, nearly 3 times as high as the trail cost. The study concluded developing trails may be a cost-effective means to promote physical activity.

Guijing Wang, PhD, et al.,. *Health Cost Analysis of the Built Environment: The Case of Bike and Pedestrian Trails in Lincoln, Nebraska*. Am J Public Health. 2004 April; 94(4): 549–553.

West Branch Community Trails Plan



What is Iowa Doing about Obesity?

The state has combined state and federal funding to develop a community wellness grant opportunity. Many communities have been funded so far: 28 in 2006, and 24 new communities in 2008–2009. Community projects include activities such as: creating wellness centers to provide access to information, holding lifestyle challenges for community residents to lose weight, building community trails, or getting local grocers to label healthy food choices.

Iowans Fit for Life piloted an intervention project in 12 rural Iowa elementary schools. This project is testing and evaluating various combinations of interventions such as the Free Fruit and Vegetable Program (USDA) and an Iowa Department of Public Health school and community program (Pick a Better Snack and ACT). The Pick a Better Snack program has been implemented in multiple states and is now directly connected to USDA's Free Fruit and Vegetable Program.

Iowa passed the Healthy Kids Act, which is set to be implemented in 2010. This legislation requires that every student get 30 minutes of physical activity each day, schools should comply with nutrition content standards for foods sold/provided on school grounds, and Area Education Agencies should employ or contract with a licensed dietician.

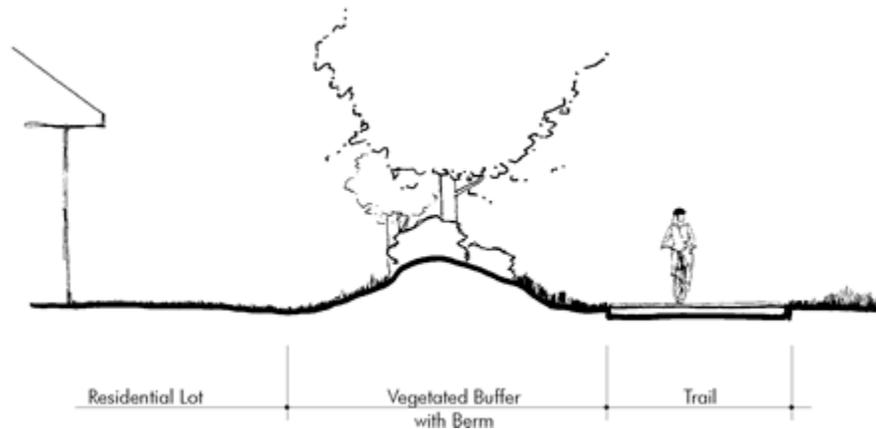
Through these activities, Iowa and CDC are addressing obesity by creating places where Iowa residents can make healthy choices about nutrition and physical activity.

For more information: Dennis Haney, Program Coordinator, Iowa Department of Public Health
Telephone: 515-281-7501, Fax: 515-281-4913, E-mail: ghaney@idph.state.ia.us , Web site: <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/iowansfitforlife/>

Design and Construction

Iowa Trails 2000 is the statewide recreational trails plan. It provides information on all topics related to trails including design guidelines.

The trail will be open to all age groups so young children to senior citizens could be using the trails at the same time. Design consideration will be given on trail width, line of site, surface firmness, lighting, and many other topics. Accessibility for widest range of users will be the goal. Accessibility information is available from the National Center on Accessibility (<http://www.indiana.edu/~nca/monographs/Accessible-Trails.pdf>).



Visual Buffering of a Trail and a Residence

Specific trail designs, surfaces and amenities will depend upon the specific site of that section of trail. Within the city limits it is recommended to have a ten-foot concrete surface trail. Trails in more rural areas can be finely crushed limestone. The main user groups will be walkers, runners, and bicyclers. Other trail use could include roller blades, skates, and horseback riding.

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Trail Construction Cost Estimates (Based Upon Estimate from Iowa Trails 2000, Chapter 5. Iowa DOT)

A variety of trail designs can be used to meet the need for the community. Cost, level of anticipated use, and conditions must be balanced to guide the engineering design.

- Concrete is the recommended surface material for typical community trails within the city limits. Depending on the level of use, 8-10 feet wide trails are optimal. Concrete with a 4 inch depth on the majority of the trail and 6 inch deep base at road crossings will minimize maintenance and assure a long life for the trails.
- Right-of Way Acquisition will vary drastically depending upon the situation of land ownership. Ideally, new trails are planned on land already owned by the city, but the city can purchase trail corridors or include dedication of trails in the same category as park land and development infrastructure.
- Bridge costs can vary on conditions, height, and type of bridge required to meet the needs of the trail users. Estimated cost of a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge will range from \$51 for a boardwalk to \$150 square foot for steel structure with wood decking.

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Trail Construction Unit Cost Estimates Iowa Trails 2000, Chapter 5. Iowa DOT

Trail Element	Unit	Price per Unit (2009 est)
Clearing and grubbing	Acre	\$2,550.00
Grading for hard-surfaced trails	Mile	\$3,800.00
Grading for natural-surfaced trails	Mile	\$3,200.00
Granular surfacing	Sq. ft.	\$0.50
Granular subbase	Sq. ft.	\$0.50
Asphalt surfacing	Sq. ft.	\$1.30
Concrete	Sq. ft.	\$3.00
Seeding/mulching	Acre	\$2,040.00
Other costs (drainage/signage/support services)	Mile	10% of trail cost
Planning	Mile	2% of trail cost
Preliminary design	Mile	2% of trail cost
Construction documents	Mile	5% of trail cost
Construction services	Mile	5% of trail cost
Administration	Mile	5% of trail cost

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Trail Management and Maintenance

- Properly constructed trails should last 20-30 years.
- The State of Iowa has reported the average annual cost of trail maintenance is \$1,500 for any surface. This amount should be budgeted each year, but is used over the life of the trail.
- A trail is considered a linear park and is typically part of the city's parks system. Management of the trails will fall under the supervision of either the city parks or maintenance departments depending on the size of the community.
- Volunteers can provide some of the maintenance. The city should provide guidance and training to assure volunteers understand what is needed and for their safety.
 - Adopt a trail section program where citizens are allowed to pick-up trash on a specific section of trail or do light maintenance. Each section of trail could have a sign recognizing the volunteers for that section.
 - Annual cleanups on 'Take Pride in America Day', National Trails Day, during the City-wide Cleanup Day, or before Hometown Days
 - Students and youth groups could use clearing trails as part of their community service requirements
- Native grasses, trees, and shrubs should be used to minimize the need for water and care of the landscape.
- On trail segments in the city, 'sell' or 'adopt out' portions of the trails for individuals or groups to landscape. Provide flower boxes or beds and create a competition to see who can have the most attractive section of trail. The city would have requirements and restriction on what can or must be done.

List of routine maintenance activities:

- Yearly facility evaluation to determine the need for minor repairs:
- Removing encroaching vegetation
- Mowing
- Map/signage updates
- Trash removal/litter clean-up
- Flood or rain damage repair: silt clean up, culvert clean out, etc.
- Patching, minor re-grading, or concrete panel replacement
- Planting, pruning, and general landscaping

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Examples

1. Youth group planting trees and shrubs along a trail.
2. Trail sign reminding people to pick up after their dogs.
3. An 'adopted' flowerbed along a trail buffering the trail from a private yard.



West Branch Community Trails Plan

Interpretation

West Branch has the unique history of being the birthplace of the 31st President Herbert Hoover. The community can use this opportunity to highlight the historical features of the community along the trails using waysides, kiosks, and historical walking tours.

Trails can also be used in promoting health and wellness for local residents. Local hospitals and health departments can create programs using the trails.

Liability

The trail system is part of the city assets and would be covered under the same position as any city park. Regular inspections and maintenance with records showing these actions would provide support.

The plan is for the trails to be on city property or obtain easements. If there are easements over private properties, the city takes on the liability, but there is also a law related to private landowners who allow recreational activities on their property. They are covered by the Iowa Recreational Use Statute.

<http://www.nationalaglawcenter.org/assets/recreationaluse/iowa.pdf>



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Funding

The goal is for a community to build a trail system that is an asset to the community. Obtaining funds for building a trail system is critically important. Due to the initial expense, trails are typically built in phases. Funds for building trails should be included in the city budget each year. This account can grow until the city is ready to finance a trail construction project. The funds can also be leveraged to gain other funding. It can be available as the cash match for grants.

- Quality materials and concrete trail surfaces will minimize future maintenance requirements.
- Well designed landscaping that enhances and blends with the local neighborhoods will provide an appealing experience for users.
- Use community or private foundation grants and donations to match federal funds.
- Ask professional engineers, designers, and excavation and construction companies to contribute their services as a donation or in-kind service to secure grants and to provide an important step in trail construction.
- Volunteers can assist in some trail construction activities
- Solicit donations for materials and equipment to use as in-kind contributions that can be used as part of the communities grant match.
- Hold fundraisers
 - Buy a brick, tree, bench, section of trail, etc
 - Have a fun walk or bike event
 - Have trail 'sponsorships' with businesses or private citizens being allowed to name the trail
- There are multiple sources of federal funds, but each has specific requirements. Review each funding source carefully to assure your request matches the grant requirements. Work with each funder to build funding opportunities.
 - State Recreational Trails Program, Iowa Department of Transportation
 - National Recreational Trails Fund, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrail.htm>)
 - Federal Transportation Enhancements Program (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/TE.htm>)
 -
 - Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant (<http://www.state.ia.us/government/dnr>)
 - US Fish & Wildlife Community Grant Program
 - Environmental Protection Agency's 5-Star Grant, Watershed Grants, Environmental Education Grants



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- Iowa's Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (<http://www.iowadnr.gov/reap/index.html>)
- Corporation foundations
- Pheasants Forever grants

More background information related to funding trails:

Article from American Trails (www.americantrails.org)

Funding Sources for Greenway Projects

Contributed by the Apple Country Greenway Commission (Henderson County, North Carolina), which was formed in December, 1999 to create a master plan for a greenways system; and the Roanoke Valley, Virginia Greenway Plan.

The greenway funding opportunities cited below are applicable to organizations and agencies throughout the U.S. that are seeking funding. The most common method for funding greenways is to combine local, public sector and private sector funds with funds from state, federal and additional private-sector sources. Many communities involved with greenway implementation are choosing to leverage local money as a match for outside funding sources, in essence multiplying their resources.

Local advocates and government staff should pursue a variety of funding sources for land acquisition and greenway construction. A greenway program that relies on limited funding sources may one day come to a grinding halt should these sources dry up. The following list of sources is divided into:

Local and State Funding Sources

Bond Referendums for Greenways. Communities across the nation have successfully placed on local ballots propositions to support greenway development. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, NC area passed four consecutive referendums that generated more than \$3 million for greenways. Guilford County, NC passed a referendum in 1986 that appropriated \$1.6 million for development of a specific greenway corridor. In Cheyenne, Wyoming, a greenway bond referendum was used to fund the first three miles of local greenways. Residents throughout the United States have consistently placed a high value on local greenway development and voted to raise their own taxes in support of greenway implementation.

Greenway Funding through Local Capital Improvement Plans. Perhaps the true measure of local government commitment to greenways is a yearly appropriation for trail development in the Capital Improvements Program. In Raleigh, NC, greenways

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continue to be built and maintained, year after year, due to a dedicated source of annual funding (administered through the Parks and Recreation Department). In addition, the City of Raleigh's Real Estate Department has its own line item budget for greenway land acquisition.

Greenway Trust Fund. Another strategy used by several communities is the creation of a trust fund for land acquisition and facility development that is administered by a private greenway advocacy group, or by a local greenway commission. A trust fund can aid in the acquisition of large parcels of high-priority properties that may be lost if not acquired by private sector initiative. Money may be contributed to the trust fund from a variety of sources, including the municipal and county general funds, private grants, and gifts.

Local Private-Sector Funding. Local industries and private businesses may agree to provide support for greenway development through one or more of the following methods:

- Donations of cash to a specific greenway segment
- Donations of services by large corporations to reduce the cost of greenway implementation, including equipment and labor to construct and install elements of a specific greenway
- Reductions in the cost of materials purchased from local businesses that support greenway implementation and can supply essential products for facility development

One example of a successful endeavor of this type is the Swift Creek Recycled Greenway in Cary, NC. A total of \$40,000 in donated construction materials and labor made this trail an award-winning demonstration project. This method of raising funds requires a great deal of staff coordination. (Note: Some materials used in the "recycled trail" were considered waste materials by local industries!)

Adopt-A-Trail Programs. These are typically small grant programs that fund new construction, repair/renovation, maps, trail brochures, facilities (bike racks, picnic areas, birding equipment).

State Departments of Transportation. Many states are the local administrators of federal funding from the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) – see more info below, under Federal Funding Sources.

Community Development Block Grants. Through its State CDBG Program, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides States with annual direct grants, which they in turn award to smaller communities and rural

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areas for use in revitalizing neighborhoods, expanding affordable housing and economic opportunities, and/or improving community facilities and services. See more info and link below, under Federal Funding Sources.

State Water Management Funds. Funds established to protect or improve water quality could apply to a greenways/trails project if a strong link exists between the development of a greenway and the adjacent/nearby water quality. Possible uses of these funds include: purchase critical strips of land along rivers and streams for protection which could then also be used for greenways; develop educational materials, displays; or for storm water management.

Volunteer Assistance and Small-Scale Donation Programs

Greenway Sponsors. A sponsorship program for greenway amenities allows for smaller donations to be received both from individuals and businesses. The program must be well planned and organized, with design standards and associated costs established for each amenity. Project elements that may be funded can include mile markers, call boxes, benches, trash receptacles, entry signage and billboards, and picnic areas.



Volunteer Work. Community volunteers may help with greenway construction, as well as conduct fundraisers. Organizations which might be mobilized for volunteer work include the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the Sierra Club, biking and trail clubs, birding clubs, and local civic clubs.

A case in point is the volunteer greenway program in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The Greater Cheyenne Greenway has motivated an impressive amount of community support and volunteer work. The program has the unusual problem of having to insist that volunteers wait to begin landscaping the trail until construction was completed. A manual for greenway volunteers was developed in 1994 to guide and regulate volunteer work. The manual includes a description of appropriate volunteer efforts, request forms, waiver and release forms, and a completion form (volunteers are asked to summarize their accomplishments).

To better organize volunteer activity, Cheyenne developed an “Adopt-a-Spot” program. Participants who adopt a segment of trail are responsible for periodic trash pick-up, but can also install landscaping, prune trailside vegetation, develop wildlife enhancement projects, and install site amenities. All improvements must be consistent with the greenway development plan and must be approved by the local greenway coordinator. Adopt-a-Spot volunteers are allowed to display their names on a small sign along the adopted section of greenway.

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Volunteers included the Boy Scouts of America, the Southeastern Wyoming Mental Health Center, and F. E. Warren Air Force Base. Cheyenne's Job Training Partnership Program became involved in building trailside benches and picnic tables. School groups raised funds to build trail amenities. Other volunteers participated in a stream bank improvement project, donating labor and materials.

Estate Donations. Wills, estates and trusts may be also dedicated to the appropriate agency for use in developing and/or operating the greenway system.

“Buy-a-Foot” Programs. “Buy-a-Foot” programs have been successful in raising funds and awareness for trail and greenway projects within North Carolina. Under local initiatives, citizens are encouraged to purchase one linear foot of the greenway by donating the cost of construction. An excellent example of a successful endeavor is the High Point Greenway “Buy-a-Foot” campaign, in which linear greenway “feet” were sold at a cost of \$25/ foot. Those who donated were given a greenway T-shirt and a certificate. This project provided over \$5,000 in funds.

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Organizations that Support Trails

Iowa Bicycle Coalition - <http://www.iowabicyclecoalition.org>

Bike Iowa - <http://www.bikeiowa.com>

The Discovery Trail - <http://www.discoverytrail.org>

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation <http://www.discoverytrail.org>

American Trails – <http://americantrails.org>

National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance – <http://npg.gov/rtca>

Trail Funding in Iowa

Federal Recreational Trails Program

- **Intent of Program** - To provide and maintain motorized and non-motorized recreational trails and trail-related projects (trailheads, kiosks, lighting, etc.).
- **Who is Eligible to Request Funding** - Public agencies, non-profit organizations and private organizations (and/or individuals) are eligible to sponsor. Private sponsorship will require a public agency co-sponsor.
- **Qualifications for Funding** - Minimum 20 percent match is required. Trails resulting from successful applications must be maintained as a public facility for a minimum of 20 years.
- **Type of Submittal Required** - Application forms are available from the Iowa Department of Transportation, and at: http://www.iowadot.gov/systems_planning/fedstate_rectrails.htm
- **Type of Approval Required** - Iowa DOT recommendation; Iowa Transportation Commission approval. FHWA environmental concurrence is required. Projects must conform to federal funding requirements.
- **Program's Annual Funding Level** - Approximately \$1,250,000.
- **Application Deadline** - October 1

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State Recreational Trails Program

- **Intent of Program** - To fund public recreational trails
- **Who is Eligible to Request Funding** - State agencies, counties or cities and non-profit organizations may sponsor applications.
- **Qualifications for Funding** - Minimum 25 percent local match is required. Volunteer services and other state grants are not eligible as matching funds. Proposed projects must be a part of a local, area-wide, regional or statewide trail plan. Trails resulting from successful applications must be maintained as a public facility for a minimum of 20 years.
- **Type of Submittal Required** - Application forms are available from the Iowa Department of Transportation, and at: http://www.iowadot.gov/systems_planning/fedstate_rectrails.htm
- **Application Deadline** - July 1
- **Special Project Requirements**
- Design must be approved by the Iowa DOT. The applicant must have an approved permit from the Iowa DOT resident maintenance engineer to perform any work within the state right-of-way.
- **Type of Approval Required** - DOT staff recommendations with Iowa Transportation Commission approval.
- **Program's Annual Funding Level** - Approximately \$2,000,000

For more information contact: Yvonne Diller, Program Manager, Email: Yvonne.diller@dot.iowa.gov, Phone: 515-239-1252

Federal Transportation Enhancement Program

Intent of Program - To fund enhancement or preservation activities of transportation related projects. Activities fall into the following categories: trails and bikeways, historic and archaeological, or scenic and environmental.

Who is Eligible to Request Funding - Public agencies and private non-profit organizations (and/or individuals) are eligible to sponsor. Private sponsorship will require a public agency co-sponsor.

Qualifications for Funding - Minimum 30 percent local match is required for statewide enhancements; 20 percent or more local match is required for regional enhancement projects as determined by RPA or MPO policies. Enhancements must have a direct relationship to the existing or planned surface transportation facilities. Projects or areas served by enhancement activities must fit one or more of the following categories:

- facilities for pedestrians and bicycles;
- safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists;

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- acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites;
- scenic or historic highway programs (including the provision of tourist and welcome center sites);
- landscaping and other scenic beautification;
- historic preservation;
- rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals);
- preservation of abandoned railway corridors, including the conversion and use of those corridors for pedestrian or bicycle trails;
- control and removal of outdoor advertising;
- archaeological planning and research;
- mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff or to reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity; or
- transportation museums.

NOTE: This list is all inclusive; a project must fit into one or more of the categories to be eligible for funding.

Type of Submittal Required - Depending on regional or statewide impact of the project, applications can be submitted to either the Iowa Department of Transportation or the appropriate RPA or MPO. Statewide projects are those that go beyond regional or metropolitan boundaries, enhance the state transportation system, benefit state tourism, or are consistent with statewide planning. *Statewide* projects require filing of an application on a form provided by the DOT. Applications are available from the Iowa DOT, and at: http://www.iowadot.gov/systems_planning/trans_enhance.htm
Contact the appropriate RPA/MPO for application requirements for regional (non-statewide) projects.

Application Amount - Minimum/Maximum: In order to offset administrative costs, minimum total project size for statewide enhancements will normally be \$100,000. RPAs and MPOs may have different guidelines for regional/metropolitan applications.

Application Deadline: October 1 for statewide project applications. RPAs and MPOs may have different deadlines for regional/metropolitan applications.

Special Project Requirements: Federal Highway Administration environmental concurrence is required. Right-of-way activities must comply with applicable federal and state laws. Plans and specifications must be prepared by an Iowa licensed professional engineer/architect/landscape architect. If federal-aid dollars are used for a consulting engineer/architect/ landscape architect, the Federal-Aid Consultant Selection Process must be used. Approval by Iowa DOT for plans and specifications is required.

Type of Approval Required - RPAs/MPOs select regional (non-statewide) projects for funding. DOT staff make recommendations to the Iowa Transportation Commission for funding of statewide projects. The Commission makes final awards for funding.

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Program's Annual Funding Level - Approximately \$4.5 million for statewide projects. Approximately \$4.5 million for regional projects.

More Information/Applications

Iowa Department of Transportation

Office of Systems Planning

800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010

Phone: 515-239-1621 or 515-239-1369

Email: nancy.anania@dot.iowa.gov or troy.siefert@dot.iowa.gov

Other Federal Government Funding Sources

Some Federal programs offer financial aid for projects that aim to improve community infrastructure, transportation, housing and recreation programs. Some of the Federal programs that can be used to support the development of greenway systems include:

[The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century \(TEA-21\)](#). The primary source of federal funding for greenways is through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). There are many sections of the Act that support the development of bicycle and pedestrian transportation corridors. Information related to the creation of greenway systems changes each year. Visit

http://www.iowadot.gov/local_systems/publications/im/lpa_ims.htm and

http://www.iowadot.gov/systems_planning/trans_enhance.htm for the most up-to-date information.

[Community Development Block Grant Program \(CDBG\)](http://www.iowadnr.gov/watersecurity/files/IABlockGrant.pdf) <http://www.iowadnr.gov/watersecurity/files/IABlockGrant.pdf>. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offers financial grants to communities for neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and improvements to community facilities and services, especially in low and moderate-income areas. Several communities have used HUD funds to develop greenways, including the Boscobel Heights' "Safe Walk" Greenway in Nashville, Tennessee.

[Land and Water Conservation Fund \(LWCF\) Grants](http://www.iowadnr.gov/grants/landwater.html) <http://www.iowadnr.gov/grants/landwater.html> This Federal funding source was established in 1965 to provide "close-to-home" park and recreation opportunities to residents throughout the United States. Money for the fund comes from the sale or lease of nonrenewable resources, primarily federal offshore oil and gas leases and surplus federal land sales. LWCF grants can be used by communities to build a variety of parks and recreation facilities, including trails and greenways.

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LWCF funds are distributed to states by the National Park Service to the states annually. Communities must match LWCF grants with 50-percent of the local project costs through in-kind services or cash. All projects funded by LWCF grants must be used exclusively for recreation purposes, in perpetuity.

Conservation Reserve Program. The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), through its Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, provides payments to farm owners and operators to place highly erodible or environmentally sensitive landscapes into a 10-15 year conservation contract. The participant, in return for annual payments during this period, agrees to implement a conservation plan approved by the local conservation district for converting sensitive lands to less intensive uses. Individuals, associations, corporations, estates, trusts, cities, counties and other entities are eligible for this program. Funds from this program can be used to fund the maintenance of open space and non-public-use greenways, along bodies of water and ridgelines.

Wetlands Reserve Program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides direct payments to private landowners who agree to place sensitive wetlands under permanent easements. This program can be used to fund the protection of open space and greenways within riparian corridors.

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention (Small Watersheds) Grants. The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) provides funding to state and local agencies or nonprofit organizations authorized to carry out, maintain and operate watershed improvements involving less than 250,000 acres. The NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to eligible projects to improve watershed protection, flood prevention, sedimentation control, public water-based fish and wildlife enhancements, and recreation planning. The NRCS requires a 50-percent local match for public recreation, and fish and wildlife projects.

Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program. The USDA provides small grants of up to \$10,000 to communities for the purchase of trees to plant along city streets and for greenways and parks. To qualify for this program, a community must pledge to develop a street-tree inventory, a municipal tree ordinance, a tree commission, committee or department, and an urban forestry-management plan.

Small Business Tree-Planting Program. The Small Business Administration provides small grants of up to \$10,000 to purchase trees for planting along streets and within parks or greenways. Grants are used to develop contracts with local businesses for the plantings.

Economic Development Grants for Public Works and Development of Facilities. The U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA), provides grants to states, counties and cities designated as redevelopment areas by EDA for

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public works projects that can include developing trails and greenway facilities. There is a 30-percent local match required, except in severely distressed areas where federal contribution can reach 80 percent.

National Recreational Trails Program. These grants are available to government and non-profit agencies, for amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000, for the building of a trail or piece of a trail. It is a reimbursement grant program (sponsor must fund 100% of the project up front) and requires a 20% local match. This is an annual program, with an application deadline at the end of January. The available funds are split such that 30% goes towards motorized trails, 30% to non-motorized trails, and 40% is discretionary for trail construction.

Design Arts Program. The National Endowment for the Arts provides grants to states and local agencies, individuals and nonprofit organizations for projects that incorporate urban design, historic preservation, planning, architecture, landscape architecture and other community improvement activities, including greenway development. Grants to organizations and agencies must be matched by a 50-percent local contribution. Agencies can receive up to \$50,000.

Grants through Private Foundations and Corporations

Many communities have solicited greenway funding from a variety of private foundations and other conservation-minded benefactors. Some grants are:

American Greenways Eastman Kodak Awards. The Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program has teamed with the Eastman Kodak Corporation and the National Geographic Society to award small grants (\$250 to \$2000) to stimulate the planning, design and development of greenways. http://www.conservationfund.org/kodak_awards

REI Environmental Grants. Recreational Equipment Incorporated awards grants to nonprofit organizations interested in protecting and enhancing natural resources for outdoor recreation (<http://www.rei.com/aboutrei/grants02.html>). The company calls on its employees to nominate organizations for these grants, ranging from \$500 to \$8,000, which can be used for the following:

- Protect lands and waterways and make these resources accessible to more people
- Better utilize or preserve natural resources for recreation
- Increase access to outdoor activities
- Encourage involvement in muscle-powered recreation

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- Promote safe participation in outdoor muscle-powered recreation, and proper care for outdoor resources

Coors Pure Water 2000 Grants (<http://www.coors.com/community/philanthropy.asp>). Coors Brewing Company and its affiliated distributors provide funding and in-kind services to grassroots organizations that are working to solve local, regional and national water-related problems. Coors provides grants, ranging from a few hundred dollars to \$50,000, for projects such as river cleanups, aquatic habitat improvements, water quality monitoring, wetlands protection, pollution prevention, water education efforts, groundwater protection, water conservation and fisheries.

World Wildlife Fund Innovative Grants Program (<http://www.worldwildlife.org/home-full.html>). This organization awards small grants to local, regional and statewide nonprofit organizations to help implement innovative strategies for the conservation of natural resources. Grants are offered to support projects that accomplish one or more of the following: (1) conserve wetlands; (2) protect endangered species; (3) preserve migratory birds; (4) conserve coastal resources; and (5) establish and sustain protected natural areas, such as greenways.

Innovative grants can help pay for the administrative costs for projects including planning, technical assistance, legal and other costs to facilitate the acquisition of critical lands; retaining consultants and other experts; and preparing visual presentations and brochures or other conservation activities. The maximum award for a single grant is \$10,000.

Bikes Belong (<http://bikesbelong.org/site/page.cfm?PageID=21>). Bikes Belong Coalition is sponsored by members of the American Bicycle Industry. The grant program is a national discretionary program with a small budget, to help communities build TEA-21-funded projects. They like to fund high-profile projects and like regional coalitions. An application must be supported by the local bicycle dealers (letters of support should be attached). Bikes Belong also offers advice and information on how to get more people on bikes. Government and non-profit agencies are eligible and no match is required. The maximum amount for a grant proposal is \$10,000. Applications may be submitted at any time and are reviewed as they are received.

Steelcase Foundation (<http://www.steelcase.com/en/Pages/Homepage.aspx>). Steelcase Foundation grants are restricted to locally sponsored projects in areas where there are Steelcase Inc. manufacturing plants. In general, Steelcase does not wish to be the sole funder supporting a program. Grants are also only made to non-profit organizations. It does support educational and environmental projects, and is particularly interested in helping the disadvantaged, disabled, young and elderly improve the quality of their lives. Applications may be submitted anytime and are considered by the Trustees four times a year.

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Wal-Mart Foundation. This foundation supports local community and environmental activities and educational programs for children (among other things). An organization needs to work with the local store manager to discuss application. Wal-Mart Foundation only funds 501(c)3 organizations.

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State of Iowa Recreational Use Statutes

STATE OF IOWA

IA ST § 461C.1

Current with immediately effective legislation signed as of 4/29/2010 from the 2010 Reg.Sess.

461C.1. Purpose The purpose of this chapter is to encourage private owners of land to make land and water areas available to the public for recreational purposes and for urban deer control by limiting an owner's liability toward persons entering onto the owner's property for such purposes. 461C.2. Definitions As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. "Charge" means any consideration, the admission price or fee asked in return for invitation or permission to enter or go upon the land.
 2. "Holder" means the possessor of a fee interest, a tenant, lessee, occupant or person in control of the premises; provided, however, holder shall not mean the state of Iowa, its political subdivisions, or any public body or any agencies, departments, boards, or commissions thereof.
 3. "Land" means private land located in a municipality including abandoned or inactive surface mines, caves, and land used for agricultural purposes, including marshlands, timber, grasslands and the privately owned roads, water, water courses, private ways and buildings, structures and machinery or equipment appurtenant thereto.
 4. "Municipality" means any city or county in the state.
 5. "Recreational purpose" means the following or any combination thereof: Hunting, trapping, horseback riding, fishing, swimming, boating, camping, picnicking, hiking, pleasure driving, motorcycling, nature study, water skiing, snowmobiling, other summer and winter sports, and viewing or enjoying historical, archaeological, scenic, or scientific sites while going to and from or actually engaged therein.
 6. "Urban deer control" means deer hunting with a bow and arrow on private land in a municipality, without charge, as authorized by a municipal ordinance, for the purpose of reducing or stabilizing an urban deer population in the municipality.
- 461C.3. Liability of owner limited Except as specifically recognized by or provided in section 461C.6, an owner of land owes no duty of care to keep the premises safe for entry or use by others for recreational purposes or urban deer control, or to give any warning of

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a dangerous condition, use, structure, or activity on such premises to persons entering for such purposes. 461C.4. Users not invitees or licensees Except as specifically recognized by or provided in section 461C.6, a holder of land who either directly or indirectly invites or permits without charge any person to use such property for recreational purposes or urban deer control does not thereby:

1. Extend any assurance that the premises are safe for any purpose.
2. Confer upon such person the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom the duty of care is owed.
3. Assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property caused by an act or omission of such persons.

461C.5. Duties and liabilities of owner of leased land

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the provisions of sections 461C.3 and 461C.4 shall be deemed applicable to the duties and liability of an owner of land leased, or any interest or right therein transferred to, or the subject of any agreement with, the United States or any agency thereof, or the state or any agency or subdivision thereof, for recreational purposes or urban deer control. 461C.6. When liability lies against owner Nothing in this chapter limits in any way any liability which otherwise exists:

1. For willful or malicious failure to guard or warn against a dangerous condition, use, structure, or activity.
2. For injury suffered in any case where the owner of land charges the person or persons who enter or go on the land for the recreational use thereof or for deer hunting, except that in the case of land or any interest or right therein, leased or transferred to, or the subject of any agreement with, the United States or any agency thereof or the state or any agency thereof or subdivision thereof, any consideration received by the holder for such lease, interest, right or agreement shall not be deemed a charge within the meaning of this section.

461C.7. Construction of law Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to:

1. Create a duty of care or ground of liability for injury to persons or property.
2. Relieve any person using the land of another for recreational purposes or urban deer control from any obligation which the person may have in the absence of this chapter to exercise care in the use of such land and in the person's activities thereon, or from the legal consequences of failure to employ such care.
3. Amend, repeal or modify the common law doctrine of attractive nuisance.

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

APPENDIX C

WEST BRANCH Public Input Survey Results

West Branch Comprehensive Plan Public Input Survey Results – 401 surveys submitted

I am a West Branch resident: 336

I am not a West Branch resident: 65

1). What are your opinions about the current appearance of the West Branch community?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. The City's appearance through tree plantings, flowers and landscaping is adequate.	35	218	30	102	12
b. The City's signage and Main Street façades are adequate.	40	231	39	74	10
c. The City's efforts to preserve and enhance historic preservation are adequate.	64	229	38	54	10
d. The City's building and zoning codes to maintain the character of the community are adequate.	33	163	109	61	27

Comments: enforce codes, area around Interstate 80 needs improvement, revitalize and rehabilitate buildings and houses

2. How do each of the following affect your quality of life in West Branch?

	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	No Opinion
Many Diverse Shopping Opportunities	68	169	135	15
Vibrant and Active Downtown Area	112	214	57	8
Incentives for Small Businesses to Improve their Buildings/Properties	123	200	49	18
Sustainable or "Green" Community	91	183	93	20
Sidewalks	193	161	38	2
Bicycle Paths/Bikeways	196	143	42	10
Road Repair and Maintenance	240	143	8	2
Sewer and Water	225	147	9	10

Comments: incentives for businesses, water quality, sidewalks, need more businesses

3. How would you prefer the City of West Branch spend public funds for transportation improvements over the next 10 – 20 years?

	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority	No Opinion
Sidewalks	208	124	55	5
Trails	76	135	164	13
Streets	232	130	20	7
Other: _college street, intersection of Johnson and Cedar, school bus, shuttle service to Iowa City	9	14	0	1

4. What types of services or retail establishments would you like to be located closer to your home or elsewhere in the City of West Branch?

	Closer to Home	In the City		Closer to Home	In the City
Pharmacy	68	202	Clothing Store	67	81
Assisted Living Center	63	170	Florist	48	143
Convenience Store/Gas Station	65	137	Recreation/Community Center	71	189
Book Store	63	94	Bakery	58	143
Hotel	59	122	Deli	53	118
Hardware Store	68	194	Laundromat	57	153
Grocery Store	59	169	Dry Cleaner	55	93
Health Club/Fitness Center	68	134	Restaurant, if yes what kind: family restaurant	38	151
Entertainment	63	135	Bank	45	116
Specialty Stores	55	100	Big Box Store	65	68
Other: banquet hall, in city food delivery, feed store, movie theater, dollar store	61	115	Other: _____		

5. Do you agree that the following services adequately meet the needs of the residents?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Police Protection	165	183	18	19	4
Fire Protection	235	128	11	9	1
Services provided at City Office (water bills, pet licensing, building permits, etc.)	115	202	48	9	6
Snow Removal	146	189	19	10	6
Street Sweeping	85	201	52	32	7
Street Repair and Maintenance	39	181	39	87	25
Activities for Senior Citizens	8	50	190	98	29
Activities for Adults	10	69	127	126	37
Activities for Teenagers	9	49	113	125	77
Activities for Youth	25	92	91	98	64
Library Services	121	193	41	25	3
Parks (Lion's Field, Baranek Park)	58	182	68	54	9
Park and Recreation Programs	38	151	90	68	25
Trails	39	131	90	76	23

6. Please list new services, or improvements to existing services, that you think should be provided for residents?
Sidewalks, shuttle service to Iowa City, trails, community-recreation-senior center

7. What kinds of municipal, social, or educational facilities are not currently located in Town, but should be?
More activities for youth and teens, pool, movie theater, community-recreation-senior center, splash pool and adult education programs

8. Based on your observations of the City of West Branch as it is now, what is your opinion of the amount of land devoted to each of the following types of uses?

	Too Much	About Right	Need More	No Opinion	I Don't Know
Single Family Residential Homes	5	234	69	34	19
Condominium Residences	60	175	53	56	18
Commercial Uses (shopping, services, food/beverage establishments, offices)	3	122	200	31	9
Mixed Use Development (commercial and residential uses)	11	134	93	92	22
Hotel and Motel Units	7	125	135	88	12
Natural Areas, Open Space and Wildlife Habitat	23	180	109	45	9
Apartment Buildings	34	155	92	105	20
Civic Spaces (parks, pedestrian plazas, outdoor entertainment)	16	141	174	34	7
Elderly/Assisted Living Facilities	9	114	143	57	24

9. Should the City enhance its code and other ordinances? Yes (97) or No (160)
 If yes what area(s): Sidewalks, enforce existing codes, review and update existing codes, less restrictive codes, property maintenance

10. What are your opinions about the park and recreational services in the City?

	Agree	Disagree	I Don't Know
There are enough recreational facilities for families	108	209	45
There are enough programs and services for teens and children	74	214	77
There are enough programs and services for senior citizens	48	167	148
There are enough organized activities for singles and adults	59	196	105
The facilities are adequately maintained	189	86	80
More park space and facilities are needed	185	130	46
The existing trail system is adequate	186	130	50
The existing trail system is adequately maintained	211	75	78
More trails are needed	151	147	64

11. Is there a specific area in the City where safety should be improved for pedestrians? Yes (210) or No (92)
 If yes, where: College Street Bridge, College Street, Poplar & Oliphant, add sidewalks where they are missing, Downtown, Cedar Street, Johnson Street, steps

12. What are the most important housing problems in the City? (Please indicate a maximum of three reasons, ranking them from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important)

	1	2	3
Not enough rental	45	51	48
Property maintenance	94	65	32
High purchase prices	56	68	39
Not enough housing for single people	35	45	46
Not enough housing for young couples/families	43	63	45
Not enough senior housing	76	39	57
Not enough choice in moderate price ranges	51	97	53
Not enough affordable housing	55	58	51
Other:	7	7	13

13. Why do you choose to live in the City of West Branch? (Please indicate a maximum of three reasons, ranking them from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important)

	1	2	3		1	2	3
Lived here all my life	57	16	49	Small town atmosphere	99	74	61
Family and friends nearby	77	36	37	Scenic beauty	19	39	36
Convenience of services	10	31	43	Proximity to Iowa City	92	81	43
Close to work	64	38	56	Housing availability or cost	29	49	47
Quality of schools	69	59	33	Hoover Library and National Park	13	21	63
Other:	31	30	39				

14. Would you support extending the 1% local option sales tax to pay (or help pay) for the following projects?

	Strongly Support	Support	No Opinion	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Replacement of College Street Bridge	94	122	49	49	45
Paving Project on 4 th Street	49	83	116	65	45
Paving Project on County Line Road	33	79	118	70	49
Purchase of a New Street sweeper or Snowplow	32	78	108	89	53
Other Street Repair and Maintenance	57	156	70	42	31
Main Street Landscaping	40	103	67	87	52
Library Expansion	70	117	51	68	51
New Community Center	102	97	39	44	53
Trail Improvements	59	80	75	78	62
Capital improvements in our Parks	40	106	93	64	52

15. Would you support the city borrowing funds to pay for the following projects?

	Strongly Support	Support	No Opinion	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Replacement of College Street Bridge	67	126	51	67	49
Paving Project on 4 th Street	29	80	119	91	43
Paving Project on County Line Road	22	77	110	92	47
Purchase of a New Street sweeper or Snowplow	19	79	89	108	54
Other Street Repair and Maintenance	40	134	76	69	30
Main Street Landscaping	30	60	71	107	92
Library Expansion	57	97	62	80	54
New Community Center	110	88	42	59	53
Trail Improvements	36	102	67	115	70
Capital Improvements in our Parks	21	67	75	103	59

16. Do you think the city should establish a road between Pederson Valley and Greenview (from Greenview Drive in Pedersen Valley to Greenview Circle)? Yes (207) or No (112)

Why: Developers responsibility, safety traffic concerns, or need walk/bike path