



110 N. Poplar Street • PO Box 218 • West Branch, Iowa 52358
(319) 643-5888 • Fax (319) 643-2305 • www.westbranchiowa.org • city@westbranchiowa.org

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, March 26, 2019 • 7:00 p.m.
West Branch City Council Chambers, 110 N. Poplar St.
Council Quorum May Be Present

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approve Agenda/Move to action.
 - a. Approve minutes from the February 26, 2019 Special Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting.
4. Public Hearing/Non-Consent Agenda. /Move to action.
 - a. Comprehensive Plan – Approve Chapter 8, Public Infrastructure, Facilities and Finance. Move to action.
 - b. Comprehensive Plan Discussion – Chapter 11, Park & Recreation and Trails Plan Appendix
 - c. Discussion – Johnson County Fringe Area Agreement
5. City Staff Reports
6. Comments from Chair and Commission Members
7. Next regular Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Tuesday, May 28, 2019.
8. Adjourn

Planning & Zoning Commission Members: Chair John Fuller, Vice Chair Ryan Bowers, Sally Peck, Emilie Walsh, Tom Dean, Brad Bower, Vacant • **Zoning Administrator:** Terry Goerd • **Deputy City Clerk:** Leslie Brick
Mayor: Roger Laughlin • **Council Members:** Jordan Ellyson, Colton Miller, Brian Pierce, Nick Goodweiler, Jodee Stoolman
City Administrator/Clerk: Redmond Jones II • **Fire Chief:** Kevin Stoolman • **Police Chief:** Mike Horihan •
Public Works Director: Matt Goodale

(These minutes are not approved until the next Commission meeting.)

City of West Branch Special Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
February 26, 2019
West Branch City Council Chambers, 110 North Poplar Street

Chairperson John Fuller opened the Special Planning & Zoning Commission meeting at 7:00 p.m. welcoming the audience and following city staff; Zoning Administrator Terry Goerdts, Deputy City Clerk Leslie Brick, City Mayor Roger Laughlin, Administrator Redmond Jones, Fire Chief Kevin Stoolman and City Engineer Dave Schechinger. Commission members Emilie Walsh, Ryan Bowers, Tom Dean, Brad Bower and Sally Peck were present.

APPROVE AGENDA/CONSENT AGENDA/MOVE TO ACTION.

Approve the agenda for the February 26, 2019 Special Planning & Zoning meeting. /Move to action. Motion by Bowers, second by Dean to approve the agenda. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Approve minutes from the February 5, 2019 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. /Move to action. Motion by Walsh, second by Dean to approve the minutes. Motion carried on a voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING/NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Public Hearing – The Meadow’s Part 4, Rezoning R-1 to R-2, Lots 40-57

Fuller opened the public hearing at 7:02 p.m. Brian Boelk, Axiom Consultants described the request for additional R-2 rezoning in The Meadows, Part 4 as a need to meet the demand for more zero lot properties with the availability for walk-out lots. Mayor Laughlin said he was in favor of the request which will help grow West Branch and the school district. Fuller stated that the requests fits with the comprehensive plan to create additional housing. Dean also spoke in favor of the rezoning and said that this new section provides another access to town for residents of the Bickford and Greenview residents. Hearing no other comments, Fuller closed the public hearing at 7:04 p.m.

Approve rezoning of The Meadow’s - Part 4, R-1 to R-2, Lots 40-57. /Move to action.

Motion by Bowers, second by Dean to approve the rezoning request. AYES: Bowers, Dean, Fuller, Peck, Walsh, Bower. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Public Hearing – Rezoning A-1 to Planned Unit Development (Kofron property)

Fuller opened the public hearing at 7:05 p.m. Ron Amelong, MMS Consultants explained the concept of the planned unit development that will include a mix of duplexes, townhomes, hotel, small businesses, an independent living center and a couple of twelve plexes. The mix of housing will provide affordable homes for new homeowners and people down-sizing. In addition, the concept plans for approximately forty five percent greenspace and a walkable neighborhood. The commission said they supported the concept and that it will meet the needs of the community. Laughlin said he was very excited for this project and that it will be a great addition for the city. Goerdts said it was a good mix use of the site.

Approve rezoning of a Planned Unit Development (Kofron property). /Move to action.

Motion by Peck, second by Bowers to approve the rezoning request. AYES: Peck, Bowers, B. Bower, Walsh, Dean, Fuller. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Approve Northside First Addition, Parcel D Site Plan. /Move to action.

Brian Shay, developer stated he had made some changes from comments from the last commission meeting and said that a couple of residents had reached out to him. Shay said that the owners of Lynch’s 2nd Addition, lot 6 preferred fencing over vegetative screening and said he was not opposed to fencing three sides of the property line if needed. Schechinger said the apartment building on the north edge of the property is within five foot of the property line and felt that a fence would be more encroaching than

screening. Shay also addressed the drainage issues on the property. Re-grading on the south property line would direct water to the west ditch on N. Downey Street and a detention/retention pond would be added near building B to address the water on the north part of the property. Shay also addressed the Fire Chief's concern over parking on the private drive that could interfere with emergency vehicles. He said he was willing to make the drives a fire lane to prevent excess parking. He further stated that he plans to own at least fifty percent of the townhomes and would control the association which would be responsible for snow removal and mowing.

Dean and Peck raised their concerns regarding lack of sidewalks from the development to other city streets in order for children living in the development a safe route to school. The idea of installing a sidewalk between lots 5 and 6 was discussed, however the homeowner of lot 6 stated that the slope of the ground would cause a safety issue and questioned who would be responsible for maintaining it. Shay said that at this time, a sidewalk along N. Downey Street was impossible until the City urbanizes N. Downey. The commission agreed that a sidewalk connection from building A to buildings B & C was needed since the overflow parking was located at the north end of the property. Shay agreed to add an internal sidewalk connection on the property but could not commit to installing sidewalks on other residents' property. Shay said he was willing to do a sidewalk agreement with the City to install sidewalks in the right of way at a later date.

Fuller summarized the commission's three conditions for approval; an internal sidewalk connection will be added from building A to buildings B and C, provide abutting land owners fencing as requested, work with the City to create a parking enforcement agreement for the private drives.

Motion by Walsh, second by Bowers to approve the Site Plan with conditions stated above. AYES: Walsh, Bowers, Fuller, B. Bower. NAYS: Dean, Peck. Motion carried.

Approve Cedar's Edge Final Plat. /Move to action.

Brian Boelk, Axiom Consultants presented the final plat on behalf of the developer (Jerry Sexton) and said that Sexton is requesting approval of the final plat before the public improvements have been installed so that he can close on lot 26 to allow that project to start. Boelk said Sexton will provide the city with a letter of credit for those public improvements as per Code requirements. Bowers asked why lots one through ten were now listed as Outlot A. Boelk explained that Outlot A is now part two of the development plan which consists of ten R-1 lots.

Motion by Bowers, second by Dean to approve the final plat. AYES: Bowers, Dean, B. Bower, Walsh, Peck, Fuller. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Comprehensive Plan – Approve Chapter 6 – Housing in West Branch. /Move to action.

Fuller said that comments received had incorporated into the document and was ready for commission approval.

Motion by Walsh, second by Dean to approve Chapter 6. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Comprehensive Plan discussion – Chapter 8, Public Infrastructure, Facilities and Finance

Fuller presented a copy of chapter 8 to the commission and asked for any additional comments to be forwarded to him so this could be approved at the next meeting. Fuller also said a draft of chapter 11, Parks and Recreation is being reviewed by the Parks and Recreation commission.

STAFF REPORTS:

No comments.

COMMENTS FROM CHAIR AND COMMISSION MEMBERS:

No comments from the commission.

Adjourn

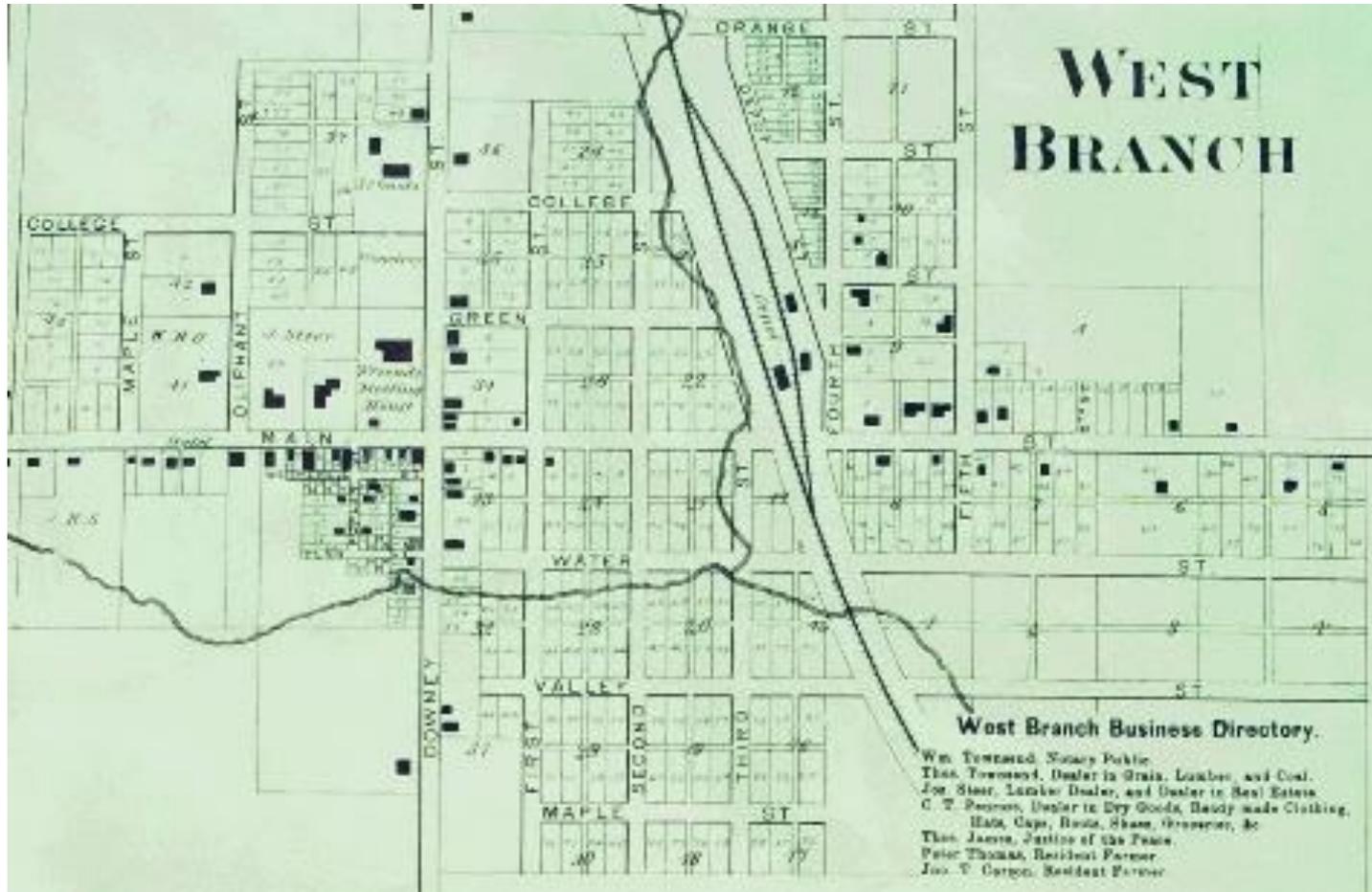
Motion by Walsh, second by Bowers to adjourn the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting at 8:26 p.m. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Submitted by:
Leslie Brick
Deputy City Clerk

WEST BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DRAFT Chapter 8: PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, UTILITIES, FACILITIES, AND FINANCE.

Picture 8.1. West Branch in 1872.



Source: 1872 Atlas of Cedar County Iowa¹

¹ Harrison & Warner, *Atlas of Cedar County Iowa*, Town maps (Marshalltown, Iowa: Harrison & Warner, 1872), Accessed November 10, 2018. See: <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/atlas/id/2895/show/2891/rec/1>.

Introduction.

The 2013 West Branch Comprehensive Plan dealt with public infrastructure and utilities in Chapter 8 and public and community facilities in Chapter 12. This updated chapter combines those two chapters and also includes city finance.

High quality and dependable basic public services, such as clean water and reliable sewer and stormwater management services, are essential to West Branch's future success. Cost-effective and dependable services improve the quality of life, as well as affordability, and make West Branch a more attractive place in which to live and do business. Well-built and well-maintained facilities also help the City recover from damaging natural events and emergencies. In addition, the City's public facilities and services can help create a vibrant place to live and work.

The West Branch public facility system provides water, sewer, parks, and civic services. Public facilities include the varied, extensive, and growing network of streets and pipes. In addition, several parks and natural areas help provide access for recreation, as well as stormwater and flood management. Public services include police, fire, and emergency response. Access to internet, electricity, natural gas, refuse and recycling services is essential for households and businesses.

The maintenance and operation of a complex system of services requires the collective and coordinated effort of multiple entities and regulated utilities to provide these necessities for West Branch. This chapter provides a list of goals and objectives for public facilities, followed by information on the existing situation plus recommended actions.

Picture 8.2. West Branch Public Library.



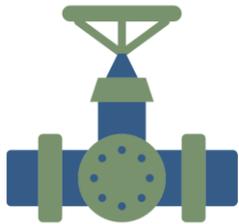
Source: West Branch Public Library Facebook Page.
<https://www.facebook.com/WestBranchPublicLibrary>. Accessed Nov., 2018.

Picture 8.3. West Branch Fire Department.



Source: Google Maps. Accessed Nov., 2018.

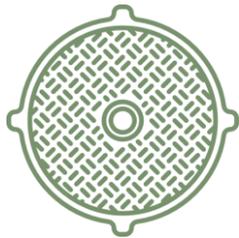
Goal 1: Provide public facilities, service investments, and operations that improve service equity, support economic prosperity, and enhance human and environmental health.



Objectives

- 1.1 Provide public facilities and services to alleviate potential service deficiencies and meet-level-of service standards for all, including individuals, businesses, and property owners.
- 1.2 In areas of the city that are not expected to grow significantly, but have existing deficiencies, invest to reduce disparity and improve livability.
- 1.3 In areas of the city that lack basic public services and have significant growth potential, invest to enhance neighborhoods, maintain affordability, and accommodate growth.
- 1.4 In areas of the city that are not expected to grow significantly and already have access to complete public services, invest primarily to maintain existing facilities and services and retain livability.
- 1.5 Invest in public facility systems to maintain and improve system capacity, resolve service deficiencies, and properly manage assets.
- 1.6 Establish, improve, and maintain public facilities and services at levels appropriate to support land-use patterns, population densities, and anticipated growth.

Goal 2: Ensure water, wastewater, and stormwater systems are managed, conveyed, and/or treated to protect public health, safety, and the environment, and to meet the needs of the community on an equitable, efficient, and sustainable basis.



Objectives

- 2.1 Manage wastewater and stormwater systems in ways that meet federal and state regulations. Use watershed health as a guide, and treat the entire watershed as an interconnected hydrologic system.
- 2.2 Evaluate future needs for wastewater treatment and plan facility improvements to meet expected population demands and Iowa DNR requirements.
- 2.3 Ensure private sewage treatment systems and septic systems demonstrate that all necessary state and county permits are obtained and they function properly.
- 2.4 Prioritize sewer system extensions or repairs in areas that are already developed and where health hazards exist.
- 2.5 Prevent pollution and reduce the need for waste water treatment capacity through land use programs and public facility investments that manage pollution as close to its source as practical.
- 2.6 Implement green infrastructure, such as landscaping, rain gardens, bio-swales, trees, and natural areas to assist stormwater management. Promote investments, education, and community stewardship to reduce the impact of stormwater discharge on water and habitat quality of streams and rivers.

Goal 3: Review and update the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) annually and produce a new plan every five years to help coordinate capital costs and financing, while working towards the long term goals of the community.



Objectives

- 3.1 Maintain long-term capital improvement programs that balance acquisition and construction of new infrastructure and public facilities with maintenance and operations of existing infrastructure and facilities.
- 3.2 Implement the CIP passed in 2015 for FY 2016 to FY 2020. Encourage directors from each city department and the city administrator to thoroughly review the CIP annually.
- 3.3 Department directors effectively manage a two year CIP that includes funded and unfunded projects. This allows the City to program key investments to accomplish community goals.
- 3.4 Partner with other nearby cities to share the cost of expensive personnel. For example, if a waste-water treatment plant is required in West Branch, perhaps technical and management staff could be shared with a nearby city which currently operates a sludge and waste-water treatment facility.
- 3.5 Encourage the preservation of viable existing infrastructure and promote the economical extension of new infrastructure and services.
- 3.6 Support cost-effective management practices to deliver services and facilities to residents. Utilize a variety of funding mechanisms to ensure an equitable sharing of the costs of investing in and maintaining the City's public facilities.

Public Infrastructure.

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

Water System.

The City of West Branch provides water to businesses and residents by tapping four wells - three in the Silurian aquifer and one in the Jordan aquifer. The three wells in the Silurian aquifer have capacity of 425 gallons per minute (GPM), 340 GPM, and 45 GPM. The well in the Jordan aquifer has a capacity of 700 GPM. Therefore, the total pumping capacity with all wells in operation is 1,510 GPM.

West Branch's treatment facility plant has two 8-foot-diameter vertical pressure filters rated at 100 GPM each and one 3-cell horizontal pressure filter rated at 300 GPM. The treatment facility uses pressure filtration to remove iron.

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.

In 2019, the City had two aeration/detention tanks with a capacity of 470 and 1,040 GPM. The water system currently has 3 high service pumps. Only 2 of the 3 pumps run at a time while the other pump serves as a back-up.

Picture 8.4. West Branch Water Tower on Orange Street.



Source: <http://www.dalejtravis.com>. Accessed Nov., 2018.

Sanitary Sewer System.

Like many other small communities in Iowa, West Branch operates an aerated lagoon to treat wastewater prior to discharge into a nearby stream. The West Branch sanitary sewer system is made up of a collection system, a sewage lift station located in 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 between 6,000,000 gallons and 14,000,000 gallons of water per month in the lagoons. The City has been proactive in evaluating the future needs of its water and sanitary sewer systems.

While the current system is operating as intended, there are new state and federal standards that require the City to extend operations beyond current technological limits.² In August, 2017, the Iowa DNR gave West Branch a 52 month notice to design, finance, and construct a wastewater treatment facility that will address high amounts of ammonia, nitrogen, and e. coli in the city's wastewater discharge.³ Initial project costs were estimated at roughly \$5 million.⁴

In fall of 2017, the City established a Wastewater Task Group to evaluate available options to resolve the issue presented by the Iowa DNR. The purpose of the taskforce is to review the current state of operations, research new processes and/or infrastructure to meet state water quality standards, and provide a recommendation to City Council.⁵

Picture 8.5. Wastewater Treatment Lagoons Aerial.



Source: Google Maps. Accessed Nov., 2018.

Picture 8.6. Wastewater Treatment Lagoons Sideview.



Source: 2017 State of the City Address. Accessed Nov., 2018.

² Redmond Jones II and Mayor Roger Laughlin, "West Branch: State of the City" (Event at Community State Bank: City of West Branch, November 8, 2017), Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://westbranchiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/State-of-the-City-2017.pptx-Autosaved.pdf>.

³ City Administrator, "City Administrator's Report 8/21/2017," Report to City Council (West Branch: City of West Branch, August 21, 2017), Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://westbranchiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/City-Council-Update-08212017-1.pdf>.

⁴ Ibid.

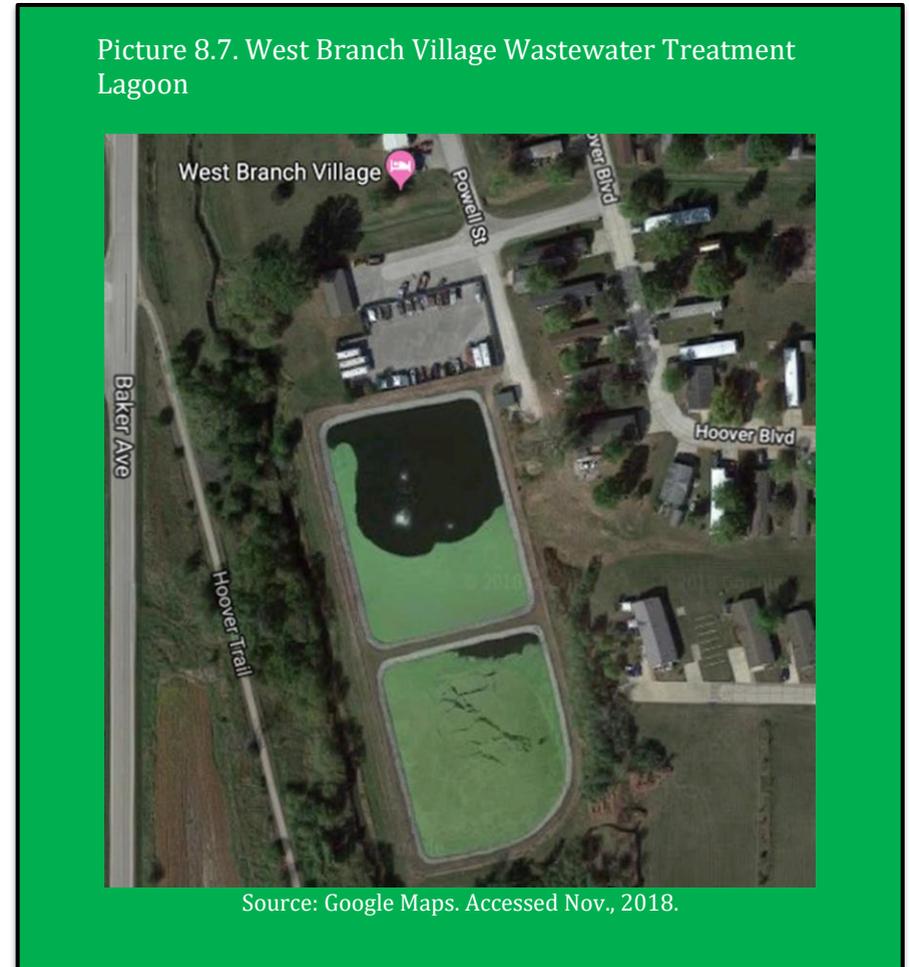
⁵ City Administrator, "City Administrator's Report 10/16/2017," Report to City Council (West Branch: City of West Branch, October 16, 2017), Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://westbranchiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/City-Administrators-Report-10162017.pdf>.

The Task Group will strive to identify alternative solutions and financing strategies, participate in pilot case studies, and create Iowa DNR compliance strategies. Processes and facilities which emphasize reuse, ecological benefits, and revenue generation are preferred.⁶ The Task Group expects there will be cost savings from an alternative wastewater treatment process, such as a Revolving Algal Biofilm treatment system available through Gross-Wen Technologies⁷, in comparison to another alternative, an Aero-mod Wastewater Treatment Plant. It is expected the facility planning process will verify the assumption that an alternative lagoon process is more cost-effective. The deadline to satisfy the Iowa DNR permit requirement is 12/31/2021.

In addition, city consultant V&K Engineering is preparing a Wastewater Treatment Facility Plan. This plan will determine which process is financially viable and effective in meeting state requirements.⁸ V&K Engineering has indicated the current lagoon system is operating at or over capacity. As such, any alternative wastewater process would require a projected \$1 million cost to add an additional lagoon.⁹

The West Branch Village Mobile Home Community has its own wastewater treatment facility. The requirement for the City to expand its wastewater treatment may provide an opportunity to merge this treatment lagoon with the City facility. Currently, the Village is one of the largest water customers in West Branch.

Recommendation: Evaluate creative funding and practical system solutions to address the regulations imposed by the Iowa DNR to provide increased health, safety, and welfare for residents today and future generations.



⁶ City Administrator, “City Administrator’s Report 7/9/2018,” Report to City Council (West Branch: City of West Branch, July 9, 2018), Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://westbranchiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/City-Administrators-Report-7092018.pdf>.

⁷ City Administrator, “City Administrator’s Report 7/23/2018,” Report to City Council (West Branch: City of West Branch, July 23, 2018), Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://westbranchiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/City-Administrators-Report-7232018.pdf>.

⁸ City Administrator.

⁹ City Administrator, “City Administrator’s Report 7/9/2018.”

Picture 8.8. Rain Garden Example.



Source: www.epa.gov/soakuptherain. Accessed Nov., 2018.

Picture 8.9. Bio Swale Example.



Source: www.iowastormwater.org. Accessed Dec., 2018.

Storm Water.

Storm water is water (which comes in the form of rain, melted snow, or melted ice) collected as 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 surface 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 and into pipes which discharge into local streams and creeks.

Storm water management revolves around three main issues: drainage, water quality, and flooding. Public input during the 2013 Comprehensive Plan recognized sustainability and/or being a “green” community as an important value 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.

One of the most practical solutions to stop storm water pollutants being carried into the streams is to manage the run off as close to the source as possible. There are several methods which percolate storm water back into the soil, such as rain gardens, bio swales, planter boxes, permeable pavements, and green roofs. These methods provide practical solutions while also providing attractive vegetation and landscaping.

The City implemented a storm water utility fee beginning July 1, 2014. The City uses the fee to administer the construction and operation of the utility system, including capital improvements designated in the comprehensive drainage plan.

Recommendation: Pursue educational opportunities, grants, and partnerships to encourage residents and businesses to adopt green infrastructure that protects the watershed by limiting stormwater pollution runoff.

Private Utility Providers.

The services available in West Branch in 2019 for natural gas, electricity, phone, internet, and cable television are summarized below.

Table 8.1.
Service Providers by Service in West Branch

Service	Service Provider
Electricity	Alliant Energy Linn County Rural Electric Cooperative Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative Moxie Solar Eagle Point Solar
Natural Gas	Alliant Energy
Phone, Cable, Internet	Liberty Communications Mediacom Communications

Electricity and Natural Gas.

Alliant Energy Cooperation is an energy holding company providing electric and natural gas services to communities throughout Iowa and Wisconsin. They serve 900,000 electric customers, 410,000 natural gas customers, and have approximately 4,000 employees.¹⁰ Alliant is the main service provider in West Branch.

Two other suppliers serve West Branch customers. 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. It serves more than 28,000 members in portion of six counties in eastern Iowa.¹¹ Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative is an electric utility headquartered in Marion, Iowa and owned by the members it serves. It was established more than 80 years ago to provide electric services at cost. It serves more than 14,000 members in nine counties in eastern Iowa.¹²

Solar.

The Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) worked with Johnson County and six partner cities to host a group solar buy in 2018. This leverages the power of volume purchasing, which significantly reduces the up-front costs of installing solar.¹³ The group buy was open to all Johnson County and West Branch homeowners and the solar installer for this program was Moxie Solar. A total of seven arrays were installed in West Branch through the program, including six residential and one commercial.¹⁴ Moxie was founded in 2008 to bring new energy options to Iowa and has completed over 500 projects. Their mission is to provide the financial and environmental benefits of solar power to farms, homes, and businesses.¹⁵

¹⁰ Alliant Energy, "2017 Annual Report," Annual Report, 2017, Accessed November 2, 2018. <https://www.alliantenergy.com/AboutAlliantEnergy/AnnualReport>.

¹¹ Linn County REC, "Cooperative Information: About Us," Linn County Rural Electric Cooperative, 2018, Accessed October 5, 2018. <https://www.linncountyrec.com/your-cooperative/cooperative-information/>.

¹² Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, "Cooperative Profile," Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, July 10, 2013, Accessed October 5, 2018. <http://www.mvec.com/home/cooperative-profile>.

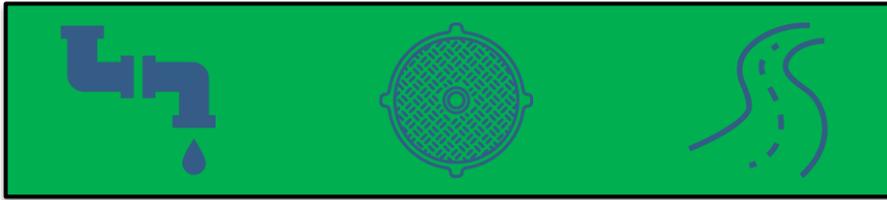
¹³ Grow Solar, "Solarize Johnson County," Grow Solar: A Midwest Partnership to Move Markets, 2018, Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://www.growsolar.org/solarize-johnson-county/about/>.

¹⁴ Peter Murphy, Midwest Renewable Energy Association, Phone Call, January 4, 2019.

¹⁵ Moxie Solar, "Moxie Solar: The Leading Solar Provider in the Midwest," Moxie Solar, 2018, Accessed November 3, 2018. <https://moxiesolar.com/about/>.

Phone, Internet, Cable.

Two firms supply phone, internet, and cable services to West Branch residents: Liberty Communications and Mediacom. Liberty provides cable, telephone, and internet service to West Branch and West Liberty. Liberty Communications began as the West Liberty Telephone Company in 1899. In January of 1997 the name was changed to Liberty Communications.¹⁶ Mediacom Communications is the nation's fifth largest cable television company. Mediacom's focus is providing cable, internet and phone service to America's smaller cities and towns. They serve customers in 22 states and have a workforce over 4,600.¹⁷



Capital Improvement Plan.

The city's first Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) covering FY 2016 to FY 2020 was adopted in February, 2015, approximately two years after recommendations in the most recent Comprehensive Plan (2013). The two basic components of a CIP are to identify projects and the estimated costs of each, then develop method(s) to pay for each project. A CIP links together the City's comprehensive plan and its annual budget.

The City has completed numerous capital improvement projects in recent years. For example, all four of the capital improvement projects for FY 2015-2016, which were street and intersection improvements, are completed. In addition, the City has completed two of the five phases of repairs to the sanitary sewer system. The third phase was in progress as of 2019.

Several projects are either in progress or slated for the near future. The park at Pederson Valley (now Cubby Park) is currently under construction and expected to open by summer of 2019. The College Street bridge replacement is expected to begin in early 2019.

There are some projects which have fallen in priority due to lack of funding. For example, extensive renovations to Town Hall, estimated at \$400,000 for FY 2018-2019, have been deemphasized in favor of basic upkeep and maintenance. In addition, the plans for Cubby Park do not yet call for a recreation center and new library.

Recommendation: The Capital Improvement Plan should be thoroughly reviewed and updated on an annual basis by City administration and department directors. The ideal time to update the CIP is in October or November of each year prior to the preparation of the next city budget. Basic upkeep and maintenance projects should be balanced with long-term projects and goals.

¹⁶ Liberty Communications, "Communities Served," Liberty Communications, 2018, Accessed November 10, 2018. See: <http://www.libertycommunications.com/index.php/history>.

¹⁷ Mediacom Communications Corporation, "Mediacom Communications Corporation," Mediacom, 2018, Accessed November 10, 2018. See: <https://mediacomcable.com/about/rocco-commisso>.

Infiltration & Inflow (I&I).

Reducing I & I, or storm water entering the wastewater system, saves sewer rate payers in two ways. First, by reducing the amount of storm water that enters the wastewater system, the amount of wastewater which needs to be pumped from the lift station to the lagoons is lessened. This results in large energy costs savings associated with operating the pump. Second, documenting reduced wastewater flows to the Iowa DNR regulators allows cost savings on future treatment solutions. The design of future treatment systems can be created for lower capacities, which saves design, construction, operating, and maintenance costs.

I&I work continues in West Branch. In fiscal year 2018, approximately 6,000 feet of sewer lines were lined. This is the second phase of five phases.

City Facilities.

The City of West Branch operates a wide variety of facilities to carry out services for the residents. West Branch manages and maintains the following buildings and facilities:

- Fire Station (105 S. Second Street)
- Public Works (338 Cookson Drive)
- Town Hall Municipal Building (113 N. 1st Street)
- City Offices (110 N. Poplar Street)
- Cemetery Building (N. Maple Street)
- Public Library (300 N. Downey Street)
- Several parks and recreation facilities (see Chapter 11)

Picture 8.10. West Branch Public Works Department.



Source: www.westbranchiowa.org. Accessed Nov., 2018.

Picture 8.11. West Branch City Hall.



Source: www.westbranchiowa.org. Accessed Nov., 2018.

City Finances.

Financial resources will be needed to continue existing programs and services as well implement many of the strategies outlined in the Capital Improvement Plan. Within the City of West Branch’s Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget, the major budget categories and amounts for expenses and revenues are listed below:

Expenditures:

- Public Safety = \$761,642
- Public Works = \$396,053
- Culture and Recreation = \$626,113
- Community and Economic Development = \$66,960
- General Government = \$186,341
- Debt Service = \$1,063,762
- Capital Projects = \$4,747,000
- Business Type Propriety = \$740,136
- Total Transfers Out = \$870,185

Total = \$9,458,192

Revenues:

- Taxes Levied on Property = \$1,737,833
- TIF Revenues = \$406,058
- Other City Taxes = \$196,570
- Licenses and Permits = \$39,500
- Use of Money and Property = \$7,000
- Intergovernmental = \$1,384,539
- Charges for Fees and Services = \$1,092,375
- Miscellaneous = \$36,250
- Proceeds of Debt and Capital Asset Sales = \$1,035,185

Total = \$5,935,310

Total revenues and other income are \$5.9 million while total expenditures and fund transfers out are \$9.5 million. The full budget summary is in Table 8.6 below. Thus, in FY 2019, it is estimated expenses will exceed revenues by just over \$3.5 million.¹⁸ This is largely due to the \$4.7 million allocated to capital projects in the FY 2019 budget. The amount allocated to capital projects in FY 2018 and FY 2017 was \$1.0 million and \$1.7 million respectively. Capital projects represented 60.5% of Total Government Activities Expenditures in FY 2019. This is an increase from 22.3% in FY 2018 and 35.4% in FY 2017.

¹⁸ Iowa Department of Management, “Adoption of Budget and Certification of City Taxes” (West Branch, Iowa, March 5, 2018), November 15, 2018. https://dom.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2018/08/WEST_BRANCH19.pdf.

Property Tax Rates.

The total regular property tax rate for the City of West Branch for the FY 2018-2019 budget was \$13.09246 per \$1,000 in value.¹⁹ This is a \$0.50 increase per \$1,000 in valuation over prior year. All contributing rates are summarized in Table 8.2. This is based on property tax valuations as of January 1, 2017.

Total property tax revenue was \$1.7 million. Total taxable valuation was just over \$130 million for regular property. The tax levy rate per \$1,000 valuation of agricultural land was 3.000375¢.

Water and Sewer Fees.

The City passed an increase in City water fees to be phased in over several years from 2012 to 2016. The objective was to raise sufficient revenue for the water fund and sewer fund to be financially self-sufficient. The user is billed the same amount for sewer and water use fees. Water rates increased as displayed in Table 8.3 to the right. From 2012 to 2016, the rate increased by \$2.56 per 1,000 gallons in total.

The water and sewer fund are not entirely self sufficient. The water fund borrowed \$139,000 from the general fund for repairs in FY 2017-2018.

Table 8.2. - City Property Tax Levy		
Property Tax Rates for FY 2018-2019		
Levy	Property Tax Dollars	Rate per \$1,000
General - \$8.10 Limit	\$ 1,055,520	\$ 8.10000
City-Owned Civic Center	\$ 15,233	\$ 0.11690
Insurance	\$ 44,605	\$ 0.34230
Support Local Emergency Mgmt Com	\$ 8,418	\$ 0.06460
Emergency	\$ 35,183	\$ 0.26999
Employee Benefits	\$ 279,514	\$ 2.14498
Debt Service	\$ 297,688	\$ 2.05369
Total Regular Tax Rate		\$13.09246

Source: Iowa Department of Management

Table 8.3. - City Water Rates		
Rate Increases by Year		
Charge per 1,000 Gallons	Effective Date	
\$ 4.59	6/20/2006	
\$ 5.23	7/1/2012	
\$ 5.87	7/1/2013	
\$ 6.51	7/1/2014	
\$ 7.15	7/1/2015	
\$ 7.79	7/1/2016	

Source: City of West Branch

¹⁹ Iowa Department of Management, "City of West Branch Certification of Property Tax Rates for FY 2018/2019 Budgets" (Department of Management, June 11, 2018), Accessed November 10, 2018. https://dom.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2018/07/citycertifications_fy2018-2019.pdf.

Storm Water Fees.

The City implemented a storm water utility fee beginning July 1, 2014 at the rate of \$2.00 per month per equivalent residential unit (ERU). The rate increased to \$3.00 per ERU by 2018. In FY 2017 total revenue from the storm water utility was \$49,800 while total expenditure was \$65,823. The revenue has been used for storm-water-related projects, such as for storm-water-pipe replacement on Main Street and 1st Street and analysis of streams south of town with the USGS. In the future, this funding may be allocated to widening and maintaining stream banks which will allow storm water to discharge more quickly and thereby alleviate flooding in town, such as at the fire department building.

Annual Revenue and Expenditure		
Fiscal Year	Expenditure	Revenue
2016-2017	\$ 65,823	\$ 49,800
2015-2016	\$ 74,292	\$ 45,605
2014-2015	\$ 19,666	\$ 35,427

Source: City of West Branch

Peer Cities.

It is useful to compare West Branch property tax levies and city utility rates with peer cities to identify any key differences. In addition, these cities may be useful resources for city administration to share ideas and perhaps resources. During this analysis, it was identified that the City of Roland is also exploring options to expand their wastewater treatment facility due to DNR compliance requirements. As demonstrated in Table 8.5. below, West Branch continues to have one of the lowest property tax levies among its peer cities.

Charges for Water, Sewer, Stormwater Utility, Property Taxes, Garbage, and Recycling									
	Water Greater of Charge per 1,000 Gallons or Minimum Charge	Sewer Greater of Charge per 1,000 Gallons or Minimum Charge	Stormwater Utility Charge	City Property Tax Levy	School Property Tax Levy	Consolidated Property Tax Levy	Garbage	Recycling	
Durant	\$ 18.54	\$ 45.09	NA	\$14.77977	\$10.65976	\$ 32.87573	\$19.00 Large \$17.00 Small	Free	
Earlham	\$ 24.21	\$ 19.09	\$ 3.00	\$12.99288	\$16.74933	\$ 39.70000	\$ 16.83	Free	
Mitchellville	\$ 19.15	\$ 10.57	NA	\$13.83465	\$19.48372	\$ 41.80005	\$ 10.10	\$ 3.00	
Roland	\$ 13.70	\$ 19.78	NA	\$11.01829	\$14.27149	\$ 32.08326	\$ 18.00	NA	
Tiffin	\$ 12.50	\$ 24.25	\$3 Residents \$5 Businesses	\$11.80205	\$16.95949	\$ 36.61639	\$13.50 Large \$11.50 Small	\$ 5.50	
Tipton	\$ 18.16	\$ 18.16	\$ 5.00	\$13.71054	\$12.12238	\$ 32.31184	\$22.25 Large \$18.25 Small	Free	
Wilton	\$ 15.51	\$ 22.57	NA	\$14.24170	\$14.81696	\$ 37.73289	\$ 13.00	Free	
West Branch	\$ 13.25	\$ 13.25	\$ 3.00	\$13.09246	\$13.75022	\$ 32.10178	Sticker System*	\$ 4.75	

Note: Water, Sewer, Stormwater, Garbage, and Recycling charges are all collected monthly. Property tax levies are all annual based on January 1st property valuation.
*Residents purchase stickers for weekly garbage collection. Each sticker cost \$1.25. A 20 gallon bag requires one sticker while a 35 gallon can requires two stickers.

FY 2018-2019 Budget.

Table 8.6. City Budget.

West Branch Budget Summary for FY Beginning July 1, 2018 and Ending June 30, 2019.

(A)	(B)	GENERAL (C)	SPECIAL REVENUES (D)	TIF SPECIAL REVENUES (E)	DEBT SERVICE (F)	CAPITAL PROJECTS (G)	PERMANENT (H)	PROPRIETARY (I)	BUDGET 2019 (J)	RE-ESTIMATED 2018 (K)	ACTUAL 2017 (L)
Revenues & Other Financing Sources											
Taxes Levied on Property	1	1,125,448	314,697		297,688	0			1,737,833	1,635,553	1,613,353
Less: Uncollected Property Taxes-Levy Year	2	0	0		0	0			0	0	0
Net Current Property Taxes	3	1,125,448	314,697		297,688	0			1,737,833	1,635,553	1,613,353
Delinquent Property Taxes	4	0	0		0	0			0	0	0
TIF Revenues	5			406,058					406,058	250,000	152,449
Other City Taxes	6	10,914	183,057		2,599	0			196,570	196,308	271,648
Licenses & Permits	7	39,500	0					0	39,500	41,897	25,159
Use of Money and Property	8	7,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,000	4,150	19,289
Intergovernmental	9	269,865	296,793	0	14,281	803,600			1,384,539	645,407	597,068
Charges for Fees & Service	10	97,375	0		0	0	0	995,000	1,092,375	1,082,074	1,041,547
Special Assessments	11	0	0		0	0		0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	12	34,250	0		0	0	2,000	0	36,250	40,910	148,647
Sub-Total Revenues	13	1,584,352	794,547	406,058	314,568	803,600	2,000	995,000	4,900,125	3,896,299	3,869,160
Other Financing Sources:											
Total Transfers In	14	74,606	32,104	0	763,475	0	0	0	870,185	828,159	889,326
Proceeds of Debt	15	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	4,200,000	1,886,751
Proceeds of Capital Asset Sales	16	165,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	165,000	0	7,576
Total Revenues and Other Sources	17	1,823,958	826,651	406,058	1,078,043	803,600	2,000	995,000	5,935,310	8,924,458	6,652,813
Expenditures & Other Financing Uses											
Public Safety	18	658,052	103,590	0			0		761,642	1,334,740	592,082
Public Works	19	127,575	268,478	0			0		396,053	475,000	467,682
Health and Social Services	20	0	0	0			0		0	0	0
Culture and Recreation	21	536,109	90,004	0			0		626,113	644,765	610,792
Community and Economic Development	22	66,960	0	0			0		66,960	87,770	655,123
General Government	23	168,151	18,190	0			0		186,341	193,317	273,886
Debt Service	24	0	0	0	1,063,762		0		1,063,762	741,571	532,538
Capital Projects	25	0	0	0		4,747,000	0		4,747,000	1,000,000	1,716,035
Total Government Activities Expenditures	26	1,556,847	480,262	0	1,063,762	4,747,000	0		7,847,871	4,477,163	4,848,138
Business Type Proprietary: Enterprise & ISF	27							740,136	740,136	1,244,435	669,566
Total Gov & Bus Type Expenditures	28	1,556,847	480,262	0	1,063,762	4,747,000	0	740,136	8,588,007	5,721,598	5,517,704
Total Transfers Out	29	32,104	251,415	423,263	0	0	0	163,403	870,185	828,159	889,326
Total ALL Expenditures/Fund Transfers Out	30	1,588,951	731,677	423,263	1,063,762	4,747,000	0	903,539	9,458,192	6,549,757	6,407,030
Excess Revenues & Other Sources Over (Under) Expenditures/Transfers Out	31 32	235,007	94,974	-17,205	14,281	-3,943,400	2,000	91,461	-3,522,882	2,374,701	245,783
Beginning Fund Balance July 1	33	539,869	171,556	104,481	897	3,988,628	164,919	2,514	4,972,864	2,598,163	2,352,380
Ending Fund Balance June 30	34	774,876	266,530	87,276	15,178	45,228	166,919	93,975	1,449,982	4,972,864	2,598,163

Source: Iowa Department of Management²⁰

²⁰ Iowa Department of Management, "Adoption of Budget and Certification of City Taxes."

Debt Capacity.

The General Obligation (GO) debt limit ranged from \$10.1 million in FY 2017-2018 to an anticipated almost \$12 million for FY 2022-2023. The remaining GO debt capacity is projected to increase from \$1.7 million in FY 2017-2018 to \$7.9 million in FY 2022-2023. The projections are displayed in Table 8.7 below.

Table 8.7. City Debt Capacity.						
West Branch General Obligation Debt Capacity.						
	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23
Property Valuation at 100% (Actual/Projected)	\$202,291,560	\$216,856,596	\$222,287,236	\$227,844,417	\$233,540,527	\$239,379,040
Statutory GO Debt Limit at 5% of 100% Value	\$10,114,578	\$10,843,280	\$11,114,362	\$11,392,221	\$11,677,026	\$11,968,952
Remaining GO Debt Capacity (Not Obligated)	\$1,747,905	\$3,335,864	\$4,442,362	\$5,564,221	\$6,718,026	\$7,893,952
Source: City Council Agenda Packet November 19, 2018, Speer Financial Inc.						

Recommendation: Provide cost-effective management practices to deliver services and facilities to residents. Utilize a variety of funding mechanisms to ensure an equitable sharing of the costs of investing in and maintaining the City's public facilities.

References.

- Alliant Energy. "2017 Annual Report." Annual Report, 2017. Accessed November 2, 2018. <https://www.alliantenergy.com/AboutAlliantEnergy/AnnualReport>.
- City Administrator. "City Administrator's Report 7/9/2018." Report to City Council. West Branch: City of West Branch, July 9, 2018. Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://westbranchiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/City-Administrators-Report-7092018.pdf>.
- . "City Administrator's Report 7/23/2018." Report to City Council. West Branch: City of West Branch, July 23, 2018. Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://westbranchiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/City-Administrators-Report-7232018.pdf>.
- . "City Administrator's Report 8/21/2017." Report to City Council. West Branch: City of West Branch, August 21, 2017. Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://westbranchiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/City-Council-Update-08212017-1.pdf>.
- . "City Administrator's Report 10/16/2017." Report to City Council. West Branch: City of West Branch, October 16, 2017. Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://westbranchiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/City-Administrators-Report-10162017.pdf>.
- Grow Solar. "Solarize Johnson County." Grow Solar: A Midwest Partnership to Move Markets, 2018. Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://www.growsolar.org/solarize-johnson-county/about/>.
- Harrison & Warner. "Atlas of Cedar County Iowa." Town maps. Marshalltown, Iowa: Harrison & Warner, 1872. Accessed November 10, 2018. See: <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/atlases/id/2895/show/2891/rec/1>.
- Iowa Department of Management. "Adoption of Budget and Certification of City Taxes." West Branch, Iowa, March 5, 2018. November 15, 2018. https://dom.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2018/08/WEST_BRANCH19.pdf.
- . "City of West Branch Certification of Property Tax Rates for FY 2018/2019 Budgets." Department of Management, June 11, 2018. Accessed November 10, 2018. https://dom.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2018/07/citycertifications_fy2018-2019.pdf.
- Jones II, Redmond, and Mayor Roger Laughlin. "West Branch: State of the City." Event at Community State Bank: City of West Branch, November 8, 2017. Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://westbranchiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/State-of-the-City-2017.pptx-Autosaved.pdf>.
- Liberty Communications. "Communities Served." Liberty Communications, 2018. Accessed November 10, 2018. See: <http://www.libertycommunications.com/index.php/history>.
- Linn County REC. "Cooperative Information: About Us." Linn County Rural Electric Cooperative, 2018. Accessed October 5, 2018. <https://www.linncountyrec.com/your-cooperative/cooperative-information/>.
- Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative. "Cooperative Profile." Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, July 10, 2013. Accessed October 5, 2018. <http://www.mvec.com/home/cooperative-profile>.
- Mediacom Communications Corporation. "Mediacom Communications Corporation." Mediacom, 2018. Accessed November 10, 2018. See: <https://mediacomcable.com/about/rocco-commisso>.
- Moxie Solar. "Moxie Solar: The Leading Solar Provider in the Midwest." Moxie Solar, 2018. Accessed November 3, 2018. <https://moxiesolar.com/about/>.
- Murphy, Peter. Midwest Renewable Energy Association. Phone Call, January 4, 2019.