



May 16, 2007

Dear Fellow Citizen:

Last fall, work began in earnest on a 20-Year Vision and 5-Year Strategic Plan for the City of Fort Dodge and extended community. During a series of public input meetings held in every part of the city, citizens like you voiced hundreds of concerns, hopes and ideas for the future of our community. As a result of those meetings, a number of priority topics on growth and development were identified for policy development and action planning.

Since last fall, your ENVISION 2030 Steering Committee has discussed growth issues identified at local area meetings, and has guided the development of policies and actions in more than 60 topic areas. The results of this work to date are presented in the document following this letter. Make no mistake—the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision represents a huge undertaking, requiring consensus building among many different interests and stakeholders. The intent is to create a shared vision for our area to preserve our natural and cultural heritage and to give appropriate directed options for growth and development. With the adoption and implementation of the ENVISION 2030 vision, we have an opportunity to demonstrate that citizens, businesses and elected officials are committed to working together for the best possible future for our area.

Now, it is time once again to consult with you, our fellow citizens. We have planned the following opportunities for you to get involved in reviewing and discussing the draft plan:

**Review the Plan at Your Local Library:** Hard copies have been placed in the Fort Dodge Public Library for your information and evaluation.

**Review the Plan Online at the City of Fort Dodge Web Site:** Beginning immediately, this draft document has been posted on the City of Fort Dodge website at [www.fortdodgeiowa.org](http://www.fortdodgeiowa.org).

**Send an E-Mail:** Comments on the draft document may be returned via e-mail to the ENVISION 2030 Steering Committee at the following address: [info@theslatergroup.net](mailto:info@theslatergroup.net). Comments will be compiled and forwarded to the 2030 Task Force and other officials.

**Write a Letter:** You or your organization may wish to forward comments in writing to the Steering Committee at the following address: *Roger Slater, 2030 Project Manager, The Slater Group, LLC, 4595 Towne Lake Parkway, Building 300, Suite 150, Woodstock, Georgia 30189*

**Attend an Open Information Session:** *Open Information Sessions* will be held at the City of Fort Dodge Public Library on Tuesday, May 22, 2007 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. and on Wednesday, May 23, 2007 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. These sessions are open to the public for review and comment on the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision.

Please take advantage of these opportunities to get involved! Become knowledgeable about the draft visioning document and how the final version is to be used. We look forward to hearing your views.

Sincerely,

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City of Fort Dodge  
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Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501  
515-573-7144

Draft: For Review Only

*Envision 2030*  
**FORT DODGE** IOWA

20-Year Vision



4595 Towne Lake Parkway  
Building 300, Suite 150  
Woodstock, GA 30189

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**YOUR ENVISION 2030 STEERING COMMITTEE**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>REPRESENTING</b>
Tom Tibbitts	Trinity Health Systems
Bob Paxton	Iowa Central Community College
Linda Brock	Fort Dodge Public Schools
Sister Delores Hannon	St. Edmond Catholic School
Kraig Barber	First State Bank
John Kramer	Webster County Development
Kim Motl	Webster County Courthouse
Matt Bemrich	City Council
Jane Burselson	City Council
Young Professional – Derick Anderson	McClure Engineering
Young Professional – Pat Leiting	Carpet World
Mayor Terry Lutz	City of Fort Dodge
Amy Bruno	McClure Engineering
Laurie Hagey	United Way
James Crean	First American Bank
Barb Michaels	Girl Scouts of Lakota Council
Jim Kesterson	Kesterson Appraisal
Rich Peterson	Parks & Rec Department
Jim Kersten	Iowa Central Community College
Laurie Hendricks	Iowa Central Community College
Dr. Martha Hoard	
Gene Madson	



**YOUR CITY OFFICIALS****Mayor Terry Lutz****City Manager David R. Fierke****Council Members–At Large****Jane Burleson  
Matt Bemrich  
Richard Inman****Council Members–By Ward****Ward One  
Curt Olson****Ward Two  
Don Wilson****Ward Three  
Cynthia Litwiller****Ward Four  
Dan Payne****YOUR CITY DEPARTMENT LEADERS****David R Fierke  
Nancy Rork  
Lori Branderhorst  
Maurice Breen  
Rhonda Chambers  
Penny Clayton  
Al Dorothy  
Doug Utley  
John Horrell  
Larry Koeninger  
Dave Odor  
Dennis Plautz  
Eldon Rossow  
Maggie Skove  
John Webster****City Manager  
Executive Assistant to the Mayor & City Manager  
Parks & Recreation Director  
City Attorney  
FD Regional Airport Director  
City Clerk Finance Director  
Public Works Superintendent  
Acting Police Chief  
Water Plant Supervisor  
FD Public Library Director  
Computer & GIS Specialist (Engineering)  
Business Affairs/Community Development Director  
City Engineer  
Blanden Memorial Art Museum Director  
Fire Chief**

## PREAMBLE

The City of Fort Dodge will be much different in the year 2030 than it is now. It has a choice: to become a dynamic, thriving and vibrant community that is a full partner in a global society and economy or to be like many other communities in Iowa and the United States who chose not to change and who have passed their point of recovery. To be successful communities must proactively make bold changes to reinvent themselves.

The City Council of Fort Dodge recognized the impact of the changes taking place and implemented a process to successfully make the city and surrounding communities progressive participants in the global age. Although no one can accurately predict what life will be like in 2030, everyone can look at the past 20 years and realize that unless efforts are made to dramatically influence the future in a positive way, history will only repeat itself and the City of Fort Dodge will once again be negatively impacted.

The City Council has chosen to provide bold leadership by envisioning a desired future for the city and extended community. No longer waiting to react, city leaders are committed to the development of a strategic vision and plan for direction and implementation. Initial steps of the plan provided citizens an opportunity to change the form of city government to make it more responsive to the citizens. Working together the citizens and city leaders have taken bold steps to formalize and professionalize the management of city government.

In order to position the city to move quickly toward community and economic development and vitality, city leadership has commissioned studies in several areas. In an effort to cooperatively work with the extended community, they have formed new relationships with other governments focusing on what is best for the region. Their first steps toward broader cooperation have included funding and support of the Webster County Development Authority, providing access to utilities for the new Development Park, and supporting recruitment of the ethanol industry located in Webster County.

ENVISION 2030 is another bold step on part of the Mayor and City Council which has provided the opportunity for citizens of Fort Dodge and extended community to participate in a process that will result in a shared vision for the future City of Fort Dodge. As a step in the implementation of that vision, they have provided resources to develop the city's first five-year strategic plan to accomplish the portion of the vision for which the city is responsible.

ENVISION 2030 began in fall of 2006 with a situational analysis of major geographic areas: (1) global, (2) national, (3) regional, (4) community, and (5) City of Fort Dodge. Information was reviewed to determine the current impact on the City of Fort Dodge and in the year 2030.

Information was obtained through research of public documents and web sites, personal interviews, surveys, and focus groups held throughout the city.

The following were used as benchmarks to compare information about the City of Fort Dodge: (1) State of Iowa, (2) Webster County, Iowa, (3) Iowa City, Iowa, (4) Mason City, Iowa, (5) Grand Island, Nebraska, and (6) LaGrange, Georgia. (Note: The city of LaGrange, Georgia is recognized as a national leader in economic development. While at the same approximate population as Fort Dodge it is very different in demographic makeup. LaGrange has used its diversity to its advantage. Through philanthropic, public and private enterprise working together, the city is currently

reinventing itself for the future. The other benchmark areas were chosen because of location, achievement and similarities.)

The study gathered input from city residents as well as from county, regional, and state leaders and involved and engaged them in planning the city's future. Residents were asked to share ideas on how to make Fort Dodge the best place in America to live, work, stay and play for the next 20+ years. A vision was developed for Fort Dodge that will position the city as the "ideal" city and enable the community to implement plans as a result of the Envision 2030 process.

A descriptive vision of life in the City of Fort Dodge from the perspective of someone living in Fort Dodge in the year 2030 was developed. This vision creates a word picture of the desired future for the city and addresses many different aspects of life in the city and surrounding communities. It gives leaders a tool to guide their decisions now and into the future.

Before presenting ENVISION 2030 recommended policies and strategies, one must understand terminology used in the plan, as well as how each segment of the community will be expected to implement the plan. Information that follows will assist in citizens and leaders understanding the document.

The ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision contains three types of statements to guide decisions. To use the plan effectively the role of each of these types of statements must be understood:

**(1) Vision Statements describe a future condition** the way we would like to see it. They are the foundation for Policies and Strategies. One of the best ways to identify supportive Policies and Strategies is to understand the intent of the ENVISION 2030 Vision Statement and look for ways to make it happen.

**(2) Policies are officially adopted positions of local government** with regard to preferred or required courses of action. Their primary purpose is to provide guidance to decisions and actions today. When a policy is applied, it does not go away. Policies can and should be used over and over again in support of ENVISION 2030 Vision Statements. There are typically several policy statements for each vision area.

**(3) Strategies are a to-do-list of things that could be done** in support of the implementation of ENVISION 2030 Vision Statements and Policies. Unlike a vision or policy, once a strategy is completed, it goes away; it gets checked off the list and monitored. Strategies may be considered as potential work program items for implementation by local government in the coming fiscal year or subsequent fiscal years. It should not be expected that all implementation items can be completed in the first fiscal year. Priorities must be chosen. There are typically several implementation actions for each vision area.

## Words With Special Meaning

Certain key words are used frequently in policy statements. The following glossary is intended to convey specific meaning of these key words as used in ENVISION 2030 Policy and Strategy Statements:

- a.) adequate: sufficient to achieve the intended purpose or prevent harm
- b.) allow, authorize, permit: official action to let something happen
- c.) control: to regulate or direct
- d.) discourage: to not favor; to dissuade
- e.) encourage: to favor or foster (also see support)
- f.) may: provides the option, but not required; permissive
- g.) preferred: the favored course among alternatives but does not preclude other options
- h.) prohibit: not allowed, period; to totally prevent
- i.) promote: to proactively encourage, to take positive steps
- j.) reasonable, reasonably: practical, just enough to do the job; not extreme
- k.) require: to mandate something
- l.) shall: mandatory, not optional; a more formal term for “will”
- m.) should: preferred or recommended but not mandatory
- n.) significant: important; determined by quantity or relative impact
- o.) support: to foster; may imply financial support

## How to Use the Plan Policies and Strategies

Policies contained in the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision have been designed for regular use in guiding public decisions as well as in providing information for private decisions. As officially adopted policies, they are to be used primarily in creating and managing growth and development and as a foundation for decisions on local government facilities and services. The following paragraphs detail how various parties involved in local decision-making may use the policies and implementation strategies set forth in the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision.

### As Used by Local Government Staff

Reviewing Development Proposals—Local government staff should consult the Policies in reviewing development proposals that may fall under local government authority. Such development proposals would typically include rezoning requests, subdivision reviews, site plan reviews, driveway permits, special use permits, sign permits, and the like. All Policies and Strategies are given a unique identification number allowing them to be referenced by “chapter and verse” in staff recommendations.

Suggesting Changes in Local Government Services—Local government staff should consult the Policies and Strategies before making recommendations about changes in local government facilities and services. Recommendations to be presented to the local government manager or elected body should first be evaluated according to their consistency with the adopted policies. For example, the city’s Business Affairs and Community Growth Department should review development proposals with regard to how well they match up with the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision policies and strategies on transportation, housing, community appearance, and so forth.

All local government department heads should periodically review the policies and implementation strategies, becoming familiar with their content. This is especially important during preparation of the development of the 5-year strategic plan, annual work plans and proposed budget request for each department.

#### **As Used by Departments and Appointed Boards and Commissions**

Before their regular meetings, members of appointed boards and commissions should review proposed agenda items in light of the adopted ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision policies and strategies.

#### **As Used by Elected Officials**

City Council members should draw their own conclusions as to the consistency of a particular action or proposal with the policies and strategies of the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision. In their authority to rezone properties, approve proposed developments as well as changes in local government facilities and services, elected officials have the final word on the actions of local government. As customary, the elected body should take into account and weigh the interpretation of policy and strategies as provided by all interested parties, the local government staff, and appropriate appointed boards and commissions. Decisions on programs and capital improvement expenditures are also made with greater confidence when they can be evaluated for consistency with the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision. Over time, a track record of policy interpretation forms a reliable foundation for decision making.

#### **As Used by Development Interests**

Developers, property owners, builders and others involved in the development community should consult the policies and strategies when formulating their own development plans. By making their plans consistent with the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision, chances of plan approval should increase, thereby minimizing guesswork, time and money. The quality of plans drawn up for review may also improve if the developer knows that the effort put into the design is more apt to pay off.

#### **As Used by the General Public**

Residents of the City of Fort Dodge and extended community can and should reference the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision when speaking in favor or in opposition to a particular proposal before appointed and elected boards and commissions.

## INTRODUCTION

*How does the City of Fort Dodge and expanded community once again become a “Destination Place”? And what will be required to “Empower” the city to transform itself into a vibrant destination for both visitors and people seeking to relocate their families and businesses?*

The City of Fort Dodge has experienced several transformations within its history. It was originally a destination place serving as frontier fort providing protection and a hub for frontier commerce. The fertile soil provided the base for the community’s first transformation into the agrarian age. Later came mining operations and the invention of gypsum which is used in almost every residential and commercial structure in America. As America’s population grew and the demand for food increased, Fort Dodge became a major meat packing and food producing center. The City of Fort Dodge grew to become one of the most thriving commerce and transportation centers in the Midwest with large numbers of trains traveling through the city each day.

As the country transitioned from the agrarian age into the industrial age and processes became more automated, the industries supporting the booming economy in Fort Dodge began to adopt new technologies that brought major changes within industry and the city. Meat packing plants relocated to other areas of the country. Automation made its most significant impact on farming; the one industry that had been a part of Fort Dodge since its founding.

Agriculture, once a labor intensive industry, used automation to reduce the labor force while at the same time increasing production. The result was devastating to what was keeping many local rural communities alive and fueling Fort Dodge’s commerce centers. It began a trend that continues today and has had the most negative impact on not only the City of Fort Dodge, but all of Iowa and the Midwest. The reduction in need for labor to produce farm products began a migration from the farm to city life. In 1960, for the first time in the history of America, there were more people living in the city and suburbs than on farms.

This movement of people from rural America to the suburbs continues today and is projected to continue to play a major role in the economy of every state. The initial movement was toward the industrial northeast; however, with the retirement of the majority of the baby boomers within the next few years it has been projected that 90 percent of the population will live within the Southeast. The shift in population will be from the Snow Belt to the Sun Belt. This is even more disturbing news for Iowa because the population of Iowa is aging faster than other parts of the country due to the continued exodus of young people looking for employment.

Compounding current challenges is the fact that America has transitioned through the Industrial Age and Information Age, and is now struggling with the event of the Global Age. This is one of the most important transformations that has impacted America, the City of Fort Dodge and surrounding communities. It is predicted that transformation of the Global Age will arrive more quickly and cause more change to the structure of American life than all past transformations.

## **New Economic Development Formula**

The formula for community and economic development has changed. In the past, competition for economic development, for the most part, was viewed as competition with other communities within America. Today and in the future, Fort Dodge is competing with communities around the world that have more abundant supplies of skilled labor, natural resources, and better quality of life. Add to this less regulations, lower wages, workers with strong work ethics, and we find the challenges of the future have become different and more difficult.

In the past industries were recruited because they brought higher paying jobs and expanded the tax base for the community. A community competing with other American communities could attract an industry if it had a inexpensive labor force, utilities, and access to major transportation routes and incentives. Due to today's globally competitive environment communities are providing so many things to lure a company to the area that any expansion in the tax base has been lost. Today's global manufacturing industry relocation market demands a very aggressive approach.

The secondary benefit of plant locations was the people who came to the community. In today's environment that has all changed. People have become the target of relocation. The new economic development is more focused on personal contributions and wealth of individuals than the companies or businesses themselves.

The current level of support for development of new industry and relocation of existing industry by the City of Fort Dodge and the Webster County Development Authority should be continued and expanded. It serves as the first line of offense to attract new businesses and industries and the first line of defense to protect existing ones.

Directly relocating people to the community has become the most promising economic development strategy for many communities. In addition to the people that relocate due to traditional plant relocations, many cities and communities are targeting active retirees, knowledge workers, creative workers, and people who are relocating away from the danger of recurring natural disasters. Of equal importance is the emphasis being placed on retaining those already living in the community.

A key to success is to attract a large enough number of a targeted group to make the changes that must be made in order to attract and accommodate them cost effectively. It has been stated that for each new retired couple that moves into a community four jobs will be impacted or created. Add to this the increase in property value, tax base and exchange of currency within the community and the benefits of directly recruiting people become attractive.

Another key component of the new formula for community and economic development includes making something happen by creating opportunities. Just as cities provide industrial parks, utilities and other incentives to attract industry, they must create what attracts targeted groups of people. The preparation and implementation of the correct mix of economic and community development activities should be planned and prioritized. Proactive and even aggressive marketing, recruiting, and implementation of the approved policies and strategies are appropriate given the current set of circumstances the city finds itself in.

Many communities have achieved community and economic development recovery and success through synergy created by the three P's (philanthropy, private enterprise, and public funding) proactively working together. It often takes the resources provided by all three to position a project to competitively compete. Many states and communities have pooled private and philanthropic dollars to create something that could be outsourced to private enterprise to operate. In many cases this can turn existing public owned property in need of repair into an attraction that produces revenue as well as an attraction to draw additional dollars into the community.

The knowledge worker, a term coined by Peter Drucker in 1959, is one who works primarily with information or one who develops and uses knowledge in the workplace. Creative worker was coined by Dr. Richard Florida in his book "The Rise of The Creative Class." Knowledge and creative workers add value to what exists or create new. Knowledge workers are people who have knowledge and skills working with information. The creative worker creates meaningful new forms.

They are employed in many different types of jobs in many different occupations. A common thread is their ability to multi-task and deal with large amounts of information. They are not usually location bound like a worker in a manufacturing plant. However, they come with special sets of requirements that communities must provide before they will relocate. Many, if not all of the things that they require are things that are good for everyone and in turn bring a higher quality of life for everyone.

The new knowledge-based economy and creative-based economy are based on different factors than the manufacturing-based economy. Traditionally, to be competitive in relocation of a plant the community would offer the owners incentives to choose their community. To attract people today communities have to develop a different set of incentives. They are looking for cultural, social, and technological amenities and climates in which they feel they can be and do their best.

Another targeted group of people are called day trippers. They are people who will travel to a location to experience a unique restaurant, shopping experience, museum, or other attraction. People who go out of Fort Dodge to shop or to another town's aquatic center are considered to be day trippers. The challenge for any community is to become a destination to which people travel to experience something that is available and often unique. Multiple destinations within the city or extended community are desired so people with different interests will be attracted to the area. Their positive visit to the city and extended community provides a major source for marketing the community.

Health care and social services and the current manufacturing jobs within the community provide the City of Fort Dodge and the extended communities a good employment foundation to build upon. Reinventing the community to attract and sustain active retirees, senior citizens, knowledge workers and creative workers will only enhance the ability of existing employers to maintain and recruit new employees and improve the quality of life for everyone.

To competitively compete in the new world of economic development, the City of Fort Dodge must assess its situation and determine which group or groups present the best opportunities. The City of Fort Dodge and the extended community should start with its own set of strengths to meet each group's different requirements. Each group expects something much better than what they will be leaving. To be successful, the City of Fort Dodge and extended community must expect much more of itself to create a future for 2030 and beyond.



## PART I: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

America's position as economic leader is being threatened by massive changes taking place throughout the world. For over 200 hundred years America has been a leader in innovation, industrialization, automation, education and economic prosperity. Many of the things that have prevented some countries from competing have changed, opening the way for massive changes in other countries. The dramatic elimination of the Berlin Wall symbolized the coming changes to take place in Europe, the old Soviet Union, Russia, China, India, and many other parts of the world. The Information Age has provided the key ingredient for personal innovation that has been missing for so many years in countries that were not open societies. As countries become more aligned with a democratic form of government and a capitalistic based economy, their ability to compete worldwide will be enhanced.

Changes over the past ten years toward global competition are expected to continue and be compounded by events taking place throughout the world. An aging population will negatively impact the workforce of most developed countries including the United States. Slower population growth will compound the aging population to a point that some countries will find themselves in crisis for skilled and professional workers. This will increase the dependency on immigration to provide the labor force required to sustain the economy.

The supply of natural resources will be dwarfed by the change in access to those resources. Fresh water is predicted to be one of the most critical natural resources in short supply. Changes in climates and the expanded use of water to irrigate farms in both the developed and developing countries will cause additional stress on the supply of fresh water. China, for example, is building the largest water reservoir in the world and diverting rivers that supply water to other countries in the Far East to meet their country's current and future needs. In America, water supplies and rights to existing sources of fresh water have become the subject of lawsuits between states, farmers and cities.

Safety and security will become an ever increasing concern for people throughout the world and especially for Americans both abroad and within our borders. Another major attack within the borders of America is expected to take place. The increase in the "radical" population both outside and within Islamic dominated countries will cause many additional changes and challenges. Compounding these changes are the ever changing political aspirations of political leaders of both large and small countries in Central and South America. With the majority of the population within America located within a few miles of the coastline and in densely populated cities, a major attack or detonation of a "dirty bomb" could dramatically change the geographic and demographic makeup of the country's population. Given a choice, people will live where they feel safe and secure.

Traditional manufacturing will always follow the cheapest source of labor. America was the center of manufacturing due to the ability of the industrial Northeast to pull cheap labor from the farms of the South and Midwest. Once the endless supply of people was exhausted and the cost of the current workforce increased due to salary and benefit packages, manufacturing in America could not compete with cheaper and equally skilled workforces in other countries.

Additionally, America has begun to lose its most valuable monopoly that has sustained its growth for over 200 years: the ability to create and innovate faster than other countries can copy or imitate has been the engine that has sustained America's dominance. The most educated country in the

world combined with the best minds from all over the world positioned and sustained America's role as a world leader. America's most precious resource, human invention, is being threatened by other countries that once prided themselves in eliminating the "thinkers". China, India, Russia and many other countries are changing their position on the importance of education in general and specifically on science and math to position themselves as competitors for new and innovative ideas and inventions.

Quality of life around the world has always made America and Europe a desirable place for people to relocate. However, living conditions are changing for those in other countries who are educated and skilled. America has supplemented its own pool of scientists and engineers with graduates from the Orient, India and other countries who did not value their expertise and did not offer a sustaining quality of life. With positive changes taking place in many of the once depressed countries people can obtain an education at home and remain in their country. Many of the people who once came to America for an education and employment are now returning to their homeland and in many cases obtaining employment in the same type job they had in America. Living conditions have improved to the point that things once only offered in America are provided around the world and often for much less. For example, many countries are as "wired" as America.

## Global

The global age presents many challenges that have never been faced in the history of America and the world. Although the United States currently is the most powerful military in the world, it is faced with the possibility of not remaining the most powerful economical power in the world. Major events that are having an impact on globalization include: (1) formation of the European Union, (2) break up of the Soviet Union, (3) China and India moving toward a capitalistic economy, (4) the spread of radical religious groups, and (5) slowness of Americans to change. The following projections and facts about a few of the countries provide an indication of the current trends and what impact they could have on America, Iowa and Fort Dodge:

- According to the United Nations study (2002), Japan is graying so rapidly that it needs over 600,000 immigrants every year until 2050 just to keep its workforce stable. Should this happen, nearly one third of Japan's population will be from overseas.
- A 2004 European Commission estimate is that between 2010 and 2030, at current immigration rates, the European Union workforce faces an overall decline of 20 million people.
- The 25 percent of the population in China with the highest IQ's is greater than the total population of North America, and in India it's the top 28 percent. They have more honors kids than America has kids.
- China will soon become the number one English speaking country in the world.
- If you took every single job in the U.S. today and shipped it to China, China would still have a labor surplus.
- About 40 percent of China's exports go to the United States.
- India is the world's fourth largest economy.
- By 2034, India will be the most populous country on Earth, with 1.6 billion people.

- India's middle class is already larger than the entire population of the United States.
- India is the home to the biggest youth population on earth: 600 million people are under the age of 25.
- 72,000,000 cell phones will be sold in India in 2007.
- India has edged past the United States to become the second-most-preferred destination for foreign direct investment after China.
- In 1991, Indians purchased 150,000 automobiles; in 2007 they are expected to purchase 10 million.
- By 2008, India's total pool of qualified graduates will be more than twice as large as China's.
- By 2015, an estimated 3.5 million white-collar U.S. jobs will be offshored.
- In 2007, there are 2.2 million Indian Americans, a number expected to double every decade.
- Twenty-nine percent of India's population speaks English—that's 350 million people.

## National

Like many other developed countries, America is faced with having to make yet another transformation. Unlike past events, America is not the leader causing the transformation. Until now, the rest of the world has had to adjust to the advances America's innovation and invention have caused. The changes taking place in the world today are not controlled or desired by most of the people in America. However, as in the past, America can succeed if it chooses to focus its ability to create and innovate on itself and invent the America of the future. Low skilled, low paying manufacturing jobs and middle management jobs were some of the first victims of the increased global competition. A majority of middle class blue collar type jobs have gone to other countries and are soon to be followed by many white collar jobs. Agriculture is feeling the competition from South America and other countries. It is a national problem and regardless of the area of the United States, the challenges, hopes and fears of people are much the same.

- 70 million baby boomers, some highly skilled, will exit the workforce over the next 18 years, with only 40 million workers coming in.
- Today in America there are too many people trained for the wrong jobs.
- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that in 2010 that the economy will support about 167 million jobs, but the population will be able to fill only 157 million of them not factoring in the education and training gap.
- Professional specialty occupations are projected to grow by 5.2 million new jobs by 2008.
- Jobs in occupations that require technical certificate, degrees, or apprenticeship will increase at a faster rate than all other categories as the technology revolution spreads to even more jobs.
- The top 10 in-demand jobs in 2010 didn't exist in 2004. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that today's learner will have 10-14 jobs by the age of 38.
- It took television 13 years to acquire 50 million users; the Internet took only five.

## Regional

Iowa and the Midwest have been devastated by the loss of population and the aging of the remaining population. Community and economic development has continually eroded away much in the same way that poor farming techniques allowed the soil to erode in years past. Without an implemented solution that will reverse current trends, the condition of the region will reach its point of no recovery.

The region has many assets and strengths to build upon. With a new focus on alternative fuels, the ready corn supply has provided yet another opportunity for the region to reinvent itself and diversify its economic base. Value added agriculture and bio-sciences are two areas in which the region can distinguish itself.

With a decline in the regional economy, the aging of population, outward migration, and the impending surge in retirees, the available labor force will continue to be an issue. These factors have a compounding impact on quality of life issues that are important to people who might wish to relocate to Fort Dodge.

## Community

The city and extended community of Fort Dodge have always served as a focal point of commerce for people living within the northwest part of Iowa. It was once a destination point for hundreds of people who lived in the more rural areas of the region. Today, the city is often passed by in search of other destinations. As a result, many of the establishments and different parts of town are showing the result of neglect.

Included in factors impacting the city are the reduction in surrounding population and changing transportation habits of the people. In the past, a trip to town would be planned only to be executed on Saturday or Sunday. Today, people travel hundreds of miles without any planning just to experience a new restaurant, art museum, shopping or other normal activity.

The once vibrant business and retail hub has aged and not kept pace with changes in the purchasing demands of the current generation of “emotion” buyers. Much of Fort Dodge retail has been directed at addressing “need” buyers. The difference is if you need something you will most often shop in one of the comparable local stores. However, because emotion buying is often attached to brand names rather than product, without the correct driver brands shoppers will travel out of town to find said brands.

Most emotion purchases are influenced by children and teenagers, and young adults. Currently, emotion driver clothing brands include but are not limited to: Abercrombie & Fitch, GAP, Old Navy, Limited Two, American Eagle Outfitters, Victoria’s Secret, Banana Republic, Guess, and Ann Taylor. As a result of adults taking their children shopping, they too shop out of town, further reducing the traffic in local stores.

## City of Fort Dodge

The way the City of Fort Dodge governs has recently undergone a transformation to that of a Mayor leader and a City Council that governs. Prior to this transition, the city was, for the most part, run by the Mayor with input from the City Council. An experienced city manager has been employed to provide day to day management of city government. As part of this project the city is developing a five-year strategic plan. This strategic plan will be the first step toward implementation of a new vision for the city.

City Hall is located in a strategic position within the heart of the city; however, the interior of City Hall is in need of repair and modernization. The facility was constructed based on a government design without the type and level of automation used today. A more modern designed facility with the use of information technology will allow city government to use space and technology for more efficiency and provide citizens with greater services and access of public records and information.

Due to increased inflation, cost, lack of additional revenues, and a decreasing tax base, the city is operating on a below sustaining level budget. Services continue to be reduced and visible needs are not addressed due to a lack of revenues. As an example, street conditions are most often mentioned as being in critical condition. Additional funding and resources must be created to sustain the current level of services. Growth will require additional funding.

There has not been a management culture within city government that encouraged the development of strategic plans or studies to chart direction and strategies. Many studies and planning activities critical to the success of the city have been left to be funded by private sources. Current and additional planning studies will be required and should be funded by the government as a part of the normal budgeting process.

Critical to the revitalization and development of communities is support and financing from the three Ps (Private Enterprise, Philanthropic Funding and Public Funding). Currently there is not visible support by either the public or philanthropic sectors to entice and support public enterprise's investment in the city and extended communities. There is a large number of organizations and volunteers within the city and extended community. However, there is not a culture of giving within the community.

Maintenance of city-owned property has been one of the areas hardest hit by budget reductions. This is most evident in recreation areas such as Oleson Park and government buildings such as City Hall and the Karl King Band Shell. These facilities are often the first and last impression of the City of Fort Dodge that many visitors have.

The city has many other unique activities that are not being taken full advantage of in the marketing of the city. The Harlan and Hazel Rogers Ballpark Complex, Iowa Central Community College, Trinity Regional Medical Center and Friendship Haven are only a few assets that have the potential of making the City of Fort Dodge once again a "Destination City" for the Midwest.

## **Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats**

### **(SWOT ANALYSIS)**

Following is a representative list of assumptions, observations and perceptions that serve as a basis for the development of a comprehensive vision and plan for the City of Fort Dodge and its expanded community:

### **EDUCATION**

#### **Strengths**

- Local educational organizations continue to have community and parental involvement and support in Fort Dodge.
- Both public and private school systems serve the citizens of the city and extended community.
- School systems experience family and community support and involvement.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of diversity in culture and population puts students at a disadvantage in living and working in a global economy and society.
- Educational systems are negatively impacted by inability of Fort Dodge to attract and sustain middle and higher income young families.
- Lack of instruction in foreign customs and languages (English as a second language, Mandarin, Chinese, Arabic, and Spanish) places students at a disadvantage in a global society and economy.
- Reduction in K-12 enrollment in the past years has resulted in budget reductions within the school systems.

#### **Opportunities**

- Demonstrate to the nearly 5,000 students who attend colleges within the city limits each year a sense of welcome, hospitality, or appreciation for their contribution to the local economy and quality of life.
- Greater need for articulation and sharing of intellectual and teaching resources between college and school systems.
- Science and math knowledge will increasingly be important in future job market.

#### **Threats**

- Increasing demand for higher quality education will continue during times of budget and population reductions.
- A large percentage of public school students are on reduced lunches indicating poverty is high.
- All students are at risk: Drugs – Divorce – Distractions.
- Educational systems are at risk due to lack of employment opportunities within the community.

## **ENTERTAINMENT**

### *Culture and Heritage*

#### **Strengths**

- The Fort Dodge Public Library
- Blanden Memorial Art Museum
- The city's frontier beginning and rich history
- Many different organizations that support cultural and heritage activities.
- A strong sense of community volunteerism is demonstrated.
- Downtown is appropriate for development of a creative economy.
- Local heritage and history has potential for tourism when packaged and marketed correctly.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of coordination and cooperation among non-government non-profits leaves some under staffed and under funded.
- Lack of fundraising expertise limits support for non-government non-profits.
- Lack of venture funding for expansion of the local creative economy.

#### **Opportunities**

- Artist incubators, studios, and theaters are potential uses of many existing older buildings.
- There are many talented individuals within the community to become supporters.

#### **Threats**

- Current availability of cultural and heritage opportunities are not effectively marketed outside the city.
- A decreasing and aging population puts sustaining culture activities and opportunities at risk from lack of available leadership, participation, and/or support.

### *Restaurants*

#### **Strengths**

- Quality of service and food.
- A variety of chain-type restaurants.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Different experiences and expectations cause some to be dissatisfied with type and quality of local restaurant experiences.
- There is not a destination or signature restaurant within the city or expanded community that draw people from out of the area.
- Common theme menus offer little diversity.

**Opportunities**

- Provide non smoking restaurants.
- Provide outside seating cafes, coffee shops, or restaurants.
- Development of a fine dining experience.

**Threats**

- Ambiance of fine dining signature restaurant is missing.
- Dining for the experience does not happen.
- Increasing preference and expectation of customers.

**Recreation****Strengths**

- School and recreation department sports are the major activity sources for youth.
- Fort Dodge has two types of recreational activities:
  - active recreation which requires the individual to participate in the creation and performance of the activity;
  - passive recreation which requires the person to experience the creation and/or delivery of activities by others

**Weaknesses**

- Adults travel to shop as a passive recreation activity.
- Winter months eliminate or greatly reduce most outdoor recreational opportunities currently offered.
- Lack of sidewalks and bicycle friendly streets makes it difficult to access recreation, retail and dining by the young and older population.
- Walking trails, horse back riding, bike riding and other planned recreational activities lack from community action and follow through and support to make them a reality.
- Access to recreational activities is an issue for people of all ages.
- Signature and destination boat races, softball tournaments and other social and cultural events are not currently seen as economic development opportunities and supported or marketed by community.

**Opportunities**

- Recreation should be targeted at children, youth, young adults, adults, active retirees, and senior citizens.
- Most recreational activities are active recreation that focuses on children and youth.
- Access to recreational activities is an issue for people of all ages.
- The Des Moines River provides one of the most accessible and immediate opportunities for expansion of recreational activities;
- Signature and destination boat races, softball tournaments and other social and cultural



events are not seen as economic development opportunities and supported or marketed by community;

- Targeting active retirement age people as a component of a comprehensive economic development strategy requires a focus on senior recreation different than, and in addition to, traditional senior center activities;
- Day tripping is a community focused activity that active retirees and seniors enjoy.
- Larger numbers of active retirees participate in traditional sports and recreational age grouped leagues (softball, baseball, golf, tennis, etc).
- Very limited recreational activities outside of Fort Dodge.

### **Threats**

- There are limited social opportunities for people who live within the community.
- The limited ambiance and diversity of restaurants negatively impact the attraction of recreational dining.
- Recreational activities continue to be eliminated or reduced as plans of expansion are discussed.
- Limited designation retail locations limits shopping and day tripping recreation.
- The condition of Oleson Park and the zoo does not project a safe and attractive environment.
- Inability of city to properly maintain facilities such as the Karl King Band Shell.
- Inability of the 3 Ps (private, public, and philanthropic) to work together to successfully support and complete projects such as the Karl King Band Shell restoration.

## **ENTREPRENEURIAL**

### *For the Knowledge Worker*

#### **Strengths**

- The city has a major commercial carrier providing service at the airport.
- The city is located within an hour and a half of a major airport.
- The city is located within 20 minutes of a major interstate.
- There are several facilities available for small businesses.
- Schools are rated highly.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of diversity in housing.
- City is not viewed as progressive.
- Most city and community services are rated only fair to good.
- Lack of appreciation for diversity in people and customs.
- Traditional educational programs and offerings due to limited funds.

**Opportunities**

- Expansion of the hospital and Friendship Haven will bring additional knowledge workers.
- Expansion of educational system and Iowa Central will bring additional knowledge workers.

**Threats**

- Lack of diversity in dining and leisure activities for young adults and adults.
- Lack of global perspective.
- Appearance and condition of city and extended community.
- Limited venture and small business financing.
- Reputation of city as unsafe.

***For the Creative Worker*****Strengths**

- Several facilities within the downtown available to be transformed into creative shops and galleries.
- Well-established interest in the arts and culture within the community.
- Very strong sense of volunteerism and involvement within the local organizations.
- Blanden Memorial Art Museum.
- Several older homes.
- Support of performing arts by Iowa Central.
- Fort Dodge Public Library.

**Weaknesses**

- Volunteer supporters are aging.
- Not viewed as having an economic impact.
- Downtown area not attractive.
- Lack of overall coordination and cooperation between different support groups.

**Opportunities**

- Downtown has several facilities that could provide housing above shops and galleries.
- Expansion of existing theater and art groups.

**Threats**

- Lack of attention in developing city into destination place for the arts and culture.
- Limited venture and small business financing.

## *Agriculture*

### **Strengths**

- Creates many different agriculture-related jobs throughout the community.
- Provides raw materials for alternative energy sources and a new economic development opportunity.
- An abundant supply of high quality farm land.

### **Weaknesses**

- Potential loss or reduction of agriculture due to lack of available and willing workers.
- Agriculture as a source of direct employment continues to be threatened.
- Automation of farming operations continue to reduce the number of persons employed in field.

### **Opportunities**

- Many different areas that could be explored.
- Value-added agriculture provides additional opportunities for economic development.

### **Threats**

- The aging population of farmers will soon create a transfer of ownership of many farms.
- Outward migration continues to negatively impact employment opportunities and livelihood of farming as a number one provider of resources and employment.
- Foreign competition and diplomacy through economic development concessions are a threat to existing farming subsidies.

## *Retail*

### **Strengths**

- Known as a retail center.
- Retail is a large, lower wage employer in this area.

### **Weaknesses**

- Fort Dodge retail addresses need-based shopping.
- Lack of specialty shops.

### **Opportunities**

- Shopping will continue to be a recreation and emotion activity.
- Parent shopping habits are influenced by pre-teen and teens
- Development of downtown into a “waking” retail mall of specialty shops and name brand stores.

### **Threats**

- Outward migration of population.
- Loss of higher wage jobs.
- Reduction in disposable income.

- Greater competition.
- Lack of attention and support to retail sector.
- Fort Dodge retail is not targeted at trend or specialty buyers and young adults.
- Vacant stores in town and mall presents a negative picture of Fort Dodge retail.

### ***Employment***

#### **Strengths**

- Economic development's key sustainable ingredient is people with a strong work ethic like that demonstrated in Fort Dodge.
- Iowa Central Community College.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Current quality of life conditions within the city and extended community are putting existing business and industry at risk.
- Resistance to include foreign workers prevents some types of businesses and industries from locating in the area.
- A reliance only on traditional economic development sectors will limit economic development opportunity.
- Fort Dodge is late entering the economic development competition.
- For the past 46 years the same economic development strategy has been deployed with marginal success.
- There has been less than an aggressive and collaborative effort toward community and economic development which has placed the city and extended community in a less than competitive position.

#### **Opportunities**

- Professional positions are critical to community balance, survival and sustainability.
- Energy and bio-technology fields present temporary opportunity for local agriculture.
- The development of the community's creative economy is an opportunity area.
- Majority of new jobs will be created through small business and entrepreneurial efforts of individuals.
- Alternative economic development strategies will become more important to job and opportunity creation.

#### **Threats**

- Existing industries are at risk from global competition automation, relocation, and/or consolidation.
- Quality of life conditions negatively impact business and industry's ability to attract and sustain a globally competitive workforce.

- Job types and forecast for the region:
  - High skill, medium wage, and low numbers of employee jobs available;
  - Low skill, medium wage, large numbers of employee jobs are being eliminated;
  - Low skill, low wages, high numbers of employee jobs are available in the service sector.
- Sustaining existing small businesses—preventing them from becoming at risk—must be a focus.
- The citizens have watched the changes within the community taking place and responded with a retreating strategy by cutting budgets, services, staff and expectations to maintain a diminishing quality of life.
- Once thriving rural communities became what are referred to as a silo community. Often all that remains of once thriving communities are a grain silo, a few older houses and a gas and store combination.
- The expectation of quality of life by those people who remained changed to accept less and to “make do”.
- Large number of people has left the area.
- Lack of aggressive steps to reverse outward migration.
- Lack of aggressive steps to diversify economy.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### ***Population***

#### **Strengths**

- The current population of Fort Dodge has a strong sense of community and strong work ethic.
- The population of the city has grown slightly.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Large number of single parents.
- Lack of diversity.
- The population includes a large percentage of people who are at or below poverty level.
- Aging population.
- Many citizens need to be retrained.
- Many citizens are not willing or able to be retrained.

#### **Opportunities**

- Three ways to increase population include: (1) birth, (2) immigration, (3) relocation.
- The number one ingredient required for economic and community progress is more people.
- Increased demand for medical services and assisted living arrangements.

- Greater need for accessibility and mobility for citizens and active retirees.
- Greater access to retail, cultural and recreational activities.
- Limited day tripping opportunities are available for retirees.

**Threats**

- Population reduction in small town/communities will threaten community commerce and retail.
- Continued outward migration of seniors will have a negative economic impact.
- The majority of the supporters of the arts and cultural activities within the community are aging.
- Continued loss of population either by aging or through job migration.
- In 1960 the number of persons living on a farm shifted to the suburbs of other cities and will not be reversed.
- The world is much different than it has ever been, but a pale comparison to the changes that are predicted to take place within the next 20 years.

**Health Care****Strengths**

- Friendship Haven
- Trinity Regional Medical Center
- Health Care and Social Services Providers

**Weaknesses**

- Increasing cost of health care limits use of services by some elderly and financially stressed persons.
- Shortage of health care workers.
- Fort Dodge does not currently offer many of the amenities desired by health care and other knowledge workers.

**Opportunities**

- Fort Dodge has the potential of developing into a health care and social services destination.
- Expanding need for birth to death medical and social services.

**Threats**

- Reduction in employment benefits negatively impacts usage of medical services.
- Retirees without retirement packages and health insurance will stress the current system.
- Aging medical staff and allied health workers will negatively impact availability of workforce.
- Shortage of health specialists will become a crisis within Iowa.

## *Safety and Security*

### **Strengths**

- Perceived quality of Emergency Medical Response projects a sense of security.
- Dedicated professional public safety employees.

### **Weaknesses**

- Activities to eliminate the perception of a crime problem are different than those required to eliminate crime and have not been addressed.
- Crime is not eliminated, just moved to places of incarceration or other neighborhoods.

### **Opportunities**

- Sense of safety and security is very important to quality of life and community and economic development.
- As the world becomes more dangerous the importance of being safe and secure increases.
- As one ages, a greater importance is placed on being safe and secure.
- Most senior citizens do not currently live in the area where their children live which places their safety and security as a very high priority for themselves and their children.
- Safety and security are of most concern for those who are responsible for the young and older citizens.
- Crime's two greatest enemies are visibility and attention.
- Providing crime visibility and attention requires admitting and dealing with crime.

### **Threats**

- Many factors impact a person's perception of being safe and secure
- Perception of a crime problem does not diminish in direct correlation to the elimination of crime
- Crime data may not be entered the same way across all communities, but it is read and analyzed the same way by everyone
- Lack of crime does not mean people perceive they are safe and secure
- Perceived quality of life is in reverse to increase in perception of lack of safe and secure environment
- A pandemic would potentially devastate the medical employees, city employees, citizens and extended community

## *Emergency Prevention and Response*

### **Strengths**

- City is located in the middle of the country, away from population centers or military installation.
- Safety and security is a priority of city government.

**Weaknesses**

- Many people never think about a major event (tornado, terrorist attack, pandemic) taking place in Fort Dodge and fewer have thought about what should or would be done and their part in that response
- The lack of recurring natural or man-made disasters places people in the Midwest at a disadvantage for realizing the need for preparation of a major event.
- Tornadoes present a danger.
- City and county law enforcement are housed in the same facility.

**Opportunities**

- With proper preparation, Fort Dodge's location, quality of life, and safe and secure environment could serve as a draw for people who are looking for an alternative place to live.
- People are moving from the coastal areas due to a lack of feeling safe and secure.
- A plan for multiple types of events is necessary but could also be promoted as a part of an overall theme of quality of life.
- Business and industry are very concerned about their exposure and security to maintain business continuity.
- Fort Dodge could market itself as an ideal setting for companies to establish their primary information and computer centers and/or their backup centers.
- Fort Dodge has many opportunities for people who have been impacted by or are trying to limit their exposure to terrorist type events and natural events.
- Fort Dodge is not a likely target for a direct hit based on current targeted profiles however, current profiles are usable only to the extent that the behavior of the perpetrator does not change.
- Underground mining tunnels could provide a secure fresh water supply for emergency use.

**Threats**

- A terrorist attack would cause massive disruption of movement and activities.
- An event that causes large scale impact on day-to-day activities with continued impact on safety, security and quality of life from that point forward (pandemic, dirty bomb, water and food contamination) could cause major shifts in the location of populations away from densely populated areas, thereby impacting rural areas.
- A relative small event could create massive disruption to the feeling of safety and security of the citizens in a rural community.



## **ENERGY**

### **Strengths**

- The region has an abundance of land for wind farms and the production of raw materials for bio-mass and ethanol.
- Area has been chosen for expansion of value added agriculture such as alternative fuels and bio-science.

### **Weaknesses**

- City and extended community is dependent on energy generated from fossil fuels.
- City is dependent on market price without alternative sources.

### **Opportunities**

- Alternative energy sources (wind, ethanol) could reduce the dependence on gasoline, fuel oil, diesel, and natural gas.
- The city can obtain some fuel from bio-mass production and methane gas generated by solid waste.

### **Threats**

- Business, industry, farming, and citizens are becoming ever more concerned about energy and fuel cost.
- Supply and cost of traditional fuels threatens the region's competitiveness.

## PART II: VISION STATEMENTS

### Introduction

Residents of the City of Fort Dodge were asked to share ideas on how to continue making Fort Dodge the best place in America to live, work, stay and play for the next 20+ years. The ENVISION 2030 community visioning and planning project was designed to gather input from the city's 25,000+ residents, as well as input from county, regional, and state leaders. The visioning effort included one-on-one meetings, community focus group meetings, surveys, and statistical research on the City of Fort Dodge and other benchmark communities. The process was designed to be inclusive with input and participation from citizens. Complete and successful implementation could position the city as the "Destination City" of the Midwest.

The first phase began in fall of 2006 with interviews and collecting research data on Fort Dodge and other benchmark communities. An analysis was made of global, national and regional information.

The second phase included open focus group sessions and employee awareness meetings that provided an opportunity for citizens and employees to participate in the visioning and planning process. These meetings were held early on in the planning process to allow the public to identify priority subjects for development and implementation. Input received at these meetings lead directly to the formulation of Envision 2030 vision statements.

The third phase included development of vision statements. The vision statements, in turn, provided the foundation for policy and strategy development and implementation recommendations.

### **E<sup>5th</sup> POWER<sup>®</sup>**

The Slater Group, LLC, has developed a unique formula for positioning the city to be able to competitively compete in a global society and economy. The formula is **E<sup>5th</sup> POWER<sup>®</sup>** and includes the following five areas: (1) Education, (2) Entertainment, (3) Environment, (4) Entrepreneurial and (5) Energy. By implementing recommendations in the five areas, and the synergy created with these areas working together, the City of Fort Dodge can transform itself into a vibrant city built on a renewable, sustainable, and globally competitive economic and community development model for the year 2030. The city and extended community can once again become a "Destination Place" and "Empowered" to address challenges of the future

*The Vision Statements, Policies and Strategies of the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision follow. It is important to remember that Vision Statements are written as if it is 20 to 25 years from now and we are looking back at what came about as a result of the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision, adopted in 2007.*

*The Vision Statements, Policies and Strategies were developed based on, to a large extent, the suggestions and recommendations provided by citizens of Fort Dodge and extended community by way of focus groups, surveys and interviews. The inclusion or exclusion of any individual or organization does not indicate their support or lack of support, agreement, disagreement, or involvement in the development of the vision policies or strategies.*

## **A.1: GLOBAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ORIENTED SCHOOLS**

### **Vision Statement**

The number one attraction for families moving to the city and extended community is the quality and reputation of the educational systems and the preparation they provide students for the global economy and society. All the educational organizations, the citizens and the community working together, implemented a unique educational system that begins with Pre-K and extends through college and beyond. At a minimum, all students are assured they will graduate from high school and college if they actively participate. Incentives and disincentives are so strong that parents and students cannot afford not to take advantage of the program. In fact, there are waiting lists at all levels of both the private and public schools and Iowa Central Community College.

In the summer months students go to school during the normal hours, but from late Fall until April, evening and Saturday School is provided. Math, science and the study of different languages, cultures, and customs are a major focus of the entire school experience. A student develops a global perspective and a mastery of one of three languages in addition to English (Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, Spanish), and mastery of over two hundred words and phrases in the other. Many classes are taught by persons living in their native countries through the use of information technology.

Regardless of where a person moves from, they are assured that their cultures and customs are understood and appreciated by the citizens of Fort Dodge and extended community. They and their children will become Americans and a part of the American culture. Free naturalization classes to obtain citizenship and English as a second language classes are provided to all through the school systems and Iowa Central Community College. Companies are relocating their corporate offices to Fort Dodge because of their ability to attract and support their international operations and the quality of life for their American based international employees.

All student organizations and youth organizations have as their number one priority the academic success of every student. Students receive additional support in their traditional studies if needed. No student is allowed to dropout without massive intervention both from the educational organizations, youth organizations, citizens and legal systems. Without this focus on education, the community would have not been able to develop and sustain the diverse workforce of the future that led to the relocation of families and businesses to Fort Dodge and the extended community.

Iowa Central Community College has led the way in the development of a global workforce. By providing alternative instructional delivery methods, the college provides a global education in Iowa and around the world. As a broker for educational services, local students are able to enroll in any college in the world and be supported at Iowa Central. The on campus collegiate experience has created a waiting list for students desiring to live on campus and within the surrounding community. The college has continued to support the activities within the community through their expansion of a major sports complex, equestrian center, support for community sports and support for the visual and performing arts and many others. The college has led the way in creating a climate supportive of diversity in race, cultures and customs. The college has continued to develop cutting edge programs and has lead the way in attracting value added agriculture and bio-science to the area. In addition, the college has focused on the development of an active retiree workforce by providing opportunities for training, employment, and recreational activities.

## **B.1: EXPANDED PARKS AND RECREATION—THE MIDWEST’S ONLY “BOARD WALK”**

### **Vision Statement**

The Midwest’s Only “Board Walk” has been developed into one of the most diverse and expansive system of parks, events, attractions, recreation, entertainment and cultural venues in the country. It is considered to be a part of the most diverse recreation “Destination Place” in the nation. The “Board Walk” refers to a system of venues that reaches from south of Highway 20 to north of the Harlan Rogers Sports Complex and includes activities like Frontier Days, Dragon Boat Races on Badger Lake, and the Skydivers Couchfreak Boogie.

The Des Moines River and Lizard Creek served as the focal point for the development. The “Board Walk” has been constructed along the east side of the Des Moines River. Artist galleries, sidewalk cafes coffee shops, restaurants, souvenir shops, game rooms and tourist focused activities are reminiscent of the Atlantic City Board Walk. There is even a train museum connected to a working train yard and rail.

New investment in the river corridor has complemented the revitalization of “Downtown Center”. As the image and appearance of the river corridor has been upgraded, new residential and business development expanded in the area.

As a result of the city owning the majority of the property on the east side of the river and leasing it to private enterprises, the preservation of the river is secure and the condition and continued attractiveness of all the facilities is assured. Growth and construction was planned to preserve a 250 to 1000 feet easement on each side of the river to preserve the natural beauty and conditions of the river unless exceptions were made in compliance with the planned development of the “Board Walk”.

Special consideration was given to ensure a person could walk, ride a bike, a horse, or golf cart to all attractions from south of Highway 20 to the most northern part past the Harlan Rogers Sports Complex. It includes over 23 parks, 24 tennis courts, and several golf courses. However, if there is a need for a faster mode of transportation, there is a free tram system that travels to all major locations along the “Board Walk” complex.

Lighted trails, emergency call stations, video monitored surveillance, police on bicycles, and an army of “Board Walkers” (active retirees) monitor and patrol to create the safest and most family friendly place in America.

Regardless of the interest, there is something for everyone. Some of the activities include canoeing, rafting, kayaking, tube floating, fishing, swimming, wading and the Midwest’s only “sandy beach”, which is a part of one of the inner city lakes created for additional fresh water supply for the community. A fish hatchery produces fish that are placed in the river to provide a variety of challenges and opportunities for even the most committed angler throughout the year.

A huge indoor “Aquatic and Recreation Center”, which is a part of the “Board Walk”, also has facilities for ice skating and other Winter sports and activities. The Winter snow, frozen river and Aquatic Center enables the “Board Walk” to be transformed into a “Winter Wonderland” where

“Christmas On The River” brings people from all over the Midwest to shop, listen to the music, taste the holiday delights and view lights at the “Board Walk”, “Downtown Center”, and Kennedy Park. The children, youth and young adults are busy skate boarding, swimming, ice skating, playing hockey, hiking, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, mountain biking, and enjoying many other events.

The Des Moines River and Lizard Creek “Board Walk” development and the “Downtown Center” is seamlessly connected and complements the redesigned “Downtown Center” of off site parking, loft apartments, artist galleries, sidewalk cafes, shops, library, museums, restaurants, and green spaces. As part of the entertainment, the “Downtown Sounds” are a mixture of different types of music being performed by both seasoned performers and students from Iowa Central’s Creative and Performing Arts department that includes programs in commercial music, sound technology, and performing arts technology and the most prestigious country and bluegrass music program. On any given trip through the “Downtown Center” you can hear sounds that range from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to Bill Monroe.

Concerts are held nightly at the Karl King Band Shell that provide the most experienced as well as newcomers the opportunity to play on one of the most famous and modern outdoor stages in America. The Fort Dodge Area Symphony Orchestra and Karl King Municipal Band along with the Fort Dodge Coral Society, Sonshine Singers, Civic Glee Club, Harmony Bridge and the Lizard Creek Blues Society all contribute to the city’s “*Music for Everyone*” theme.

A “walking” bridge connects both sides of the Des Moines River with the island located in the middle of the Des Moines River. The bridge provides residents and those who work and visit on the west side of the river direct access to “Downtown Center”. The Island has become a focal point for sitting and relaxing and other social events such as parties, receptions and weddings.

An important extension of the “Board Walk” is Iowa Central Community College’s Equestrian Center located on the south side of the “Board Walk”. The donation twenty years ago of a facility, by a Fort Dodge family to Iowa Central Community College, served as the basis for what has become the most extensive equestrian center in the Midwest, if not America. Activities take place year round from the riding of the many miles of connected trails along the Des Moines River, to Brushy Creek and through out the region to the more challenging Steeple Chase held each spring. When the arena is not being used for local and National Barrel racing, cutting horse and the many other types of competitions, it is home to the most popular rodeo events in the Midwest. The center was developed with connecting preparation areas, stables, and supply areas. Parking and hook-up spaces for the hundreds of travel trailers, horse trailers necessary to support the participants from all 48 states and Canada that the events attract were strategically located to provide access to the equestrian center and the many other venues within the area. Additional facilities have been constructed to house and train horses belonging to people from Des Moines, Omaha, Chicago and other parts of the country. The care and training has developed into a nationally recognized program to train jockeys, horse trainers and other equestrian professions.

The Fort Museum and Fort Trading Post was relocated adjacent to the new “Visitors Welcome Center” located at the east entrance to the city at Highway 20. The Museum expanded to cover the frontier history of the Midwest in addition to that of Fort Dodge. And with the Old Fort Museum’s reinvention of the “Cardiff Giant” legend, most visitors take in a tour of the adjacent “Gypsum Mining Museum” where people actually go into an underground mine to see where and how gypsum was originally mined. The relocation of the Old Fort Museum provided space for expansion of their

exhibits and parking and provided space for the expansion of Friendship Haven, Trinity Medical Center and the completion of Iowa Central's sports complex.

The Gypsum City Off-Highway Vehicle Park is connected to the "Board Walk" through a network of trails and walking paths. It, along with Mineral City Speedway, has developed into a motor sports fan's dream. In addition to the multiple motor bike, stock car and go cart races held at the facilities, Fort Dodge has become the place to be for all types of motor racing, shows, and motorcycle rallies. Car, truck, farm tractor and many other types of shows and competitions are held throughout the year.

The north side of the "Board Walk" complex is bordered by Kennedy Park and the Harlan Rogers Sports Complex that has, within itself, gained national recognition as the most premier ball complex in America. Beginning as a unique softball complex, the center developed into a "Major League Model" that supports multiple types of ball and recreational activities for all ages. A major addition has been recreational activities for active retirees and seniors. The facility is connected to different parts of the city through the network of trails that support bikes, walking and golf cart type vehicles. Public transportation and the TRAM connect the center through out the city and extended community.

As the City of Fort Dodge has grown, more green space, park and recreation facilities have been added to meet resident's need for smaller neighborhood parks close at hand, within walking distance of residential areas. Many new parks include active recreation facilities for youth, such as soccer, softball, and multipurpose fields. Park facilities have addressed the active and passive recreation preferences of active retirees and seniors. The developed and connected system of walking and biking trails runs adjacent to the Des Moines River and its tributaries, as well as within available utility corridors. This "greenway" system can be accessed from many parts of the community, and connects numerous schools, parks, open spaces and neighborhoods. Numerous smaller park and open space areas have been created as part of routine development approval processes. Many recreation facilities have been developed in cooperation with schools. The development of additional community recreation parks and green spaces provide residents an alternative to the "Board Walk" events".

## **C.1: A MORE DIVERSIFIED LOCAL ECONOMY**

### **Vision Statement**

The local economic base of the City of Fort Dodge and extended community has grown and diversified significantly. New and expanded large and small businesses and industries have brought better paying jobs, requiring higher levels of education and training. Local educational institutions have responded with courses and curriculums custom tailored to meet education and training needs. Young workers in the City of Fort Dodge can find excellent, lifelong career opportunities without ever leaving the area. While workers in retail and manufacturing employment continue to be an important part of the local economy, other types of work have expanded, including health care, information services, and professional and technical services. One of the most visible changes to the local economy is the huge impact that tourism and specifically recreation has had. The City is known to be the home for health, knowledge and creative workers, and the most diverse and well planned tourist attractions and events in the Midwest.

The City of Fort Dodge and extended community is known as one of the most connected cities in the United States. Free broadband access to the internet is provided to everyone for educational, information and business use. A set amount of bandwidth is assigned to each subscriber that can be expanded for a fee. Wireless access is provided through out the downtown area which makes sitting at one of the outside cafes and using the computer to work a popular activity for the knowledge workers. Small businesses are encouraged and assisted in the development of Web sites and Internet marketing. Fort Dodge is known as one of the most active centers for import and export activities through the use of the Internet. The positive climate for small business development and support and access to the world through the Internet make this the hottest community in the Midwest for doing business overseas.

## **C2: ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY APPEARANCE & IMAGE**

### **Vision Statement**

Visitors to the City of Fort Dodge are impressed by the attractive green spaces, trees and floral throughout the communities, roadways and major streets serving the area. Twenty years has passed since volunteers took on beautification of the city as a passion. Their actions and leadership caused the City to take a very proactive approach to the “extreme makeover” and maintaining the beauty of the city. Already a participant in the “Tree City USA<sup>®</sup>” program for 24 years, the citizens and city expanded the quality and quantity of trees to make the City the most forested town in the Midwest. The “America in Bloom” program was added and the City has won national recognition for the past 20 years at that organization’s annual conference. America in Bloom judges evaluate communities on the following eight criteria and the City of Fort Dodge has excelled in almost every area each year. The criteria include:

- Floral Displays
- Environmental Awareness
- Landscaped Areas
- Tidiness
- Urban Forestry
- Heritage Preservation
- Turf and Groundcovers
- Community Involvement

Community leaders navigated a careful course, allowing for shopping and services convenient to nearby residential areas, while protecting these same areas from incompatible commercial encroachment. Local development regulations have controlled the types of services allowed near residential areas, as well as their size and physical design. Strict enforcement of regulations concerning junked vehicles and dilapidated structures has cleared the area of these eyesores, and helped foster a positive image. Previously vacant commercial and industrial buildings have been renovated and adapted for use as cultural facilities, retail enterprises, office and institutional use,

innovative housing, and as small business development centers. Those that were not have been removed and returned to “greenspace”.

Policies have been implemented to prevent indiscriminate abandonment and prolonged vacancies of “big boxes” left behind for “bigger boxes”. New and rehabilitated commercial buildings exhibit distinctive architectural design, well-groomed landscaping, and attractive signage. Major urban corridors are lined with plentiful street trees, attractive landscaping, understated signage, and architecturally appealing buildings. Both urban and rural roadsides are free of clutter and litter. Most new developments have placed electric, cable and other utility lines underground. Some older developed areas have had existing overhead wires placed underground as redevelopment opportunities have allowed. Residents throughout the City have developed a renewed pride in the upkeep of their homes and businesses. Area citizens place a high value on the unique history of their community, as reflected in efforts to preserve historic buildings and places.

### **C.3: VIBRANT DOWNTOWN CENTER**

#### **Vision Statement**

The past two decades have seen renewed interest in the unique value and heritage of the downtown area. Older buildings have been either transformed into green spaces, new facilities or rehabilitated and adaptively reused for a wide range of shopping, dining, working, and cultural attractions. As a part of the master development plan of the Des Moines River and Lizard Creek “Boardwalk” development, the Downtown area known as “Downtown Center” is seamlessly connected to the river development and provides residential, green space, retail and restaurants for citizens and visitors. A connecting bridge for walking and golf carts provides access across the Des Moines River that enables the Downtown Center to benefit from the continued development of the active retiree, seniors citizens and health and social services provided by Friendship Haven, Trinity Medical Center and Iowa Central Community College.

The Downtown Center has benefited from its revival as the social and cultural heart of the community. People are naturally drawn to the area by its historic character and beauty, and the scale of the buildings and public spaces. Several buildings provide loft apartments and studios for artists that have moved to experience the amenities needed to sustain their creative ability.

Other buildings have been transformed into small dinner theaters where plays and dance is a regular part of the menu item. A central theater large enough to hold a welcoming crowd provided space for the locally produced and performed entertainment. As a complement to the Downtown Center theater is the large professional theater at Iowa Central Community College where on and off Broadway Productions are provided.

Renewed interests in Downtown Center have repopulated the central locations, providing financial support to merchants and twenty-four hour security for downtown area visitors. Government has been proactive in creating the physical, financial, and regulatory environment especially conducive to business development in these areas.

Downtown Center serves as the heart of the expanding culture and creative economy in the area. Streets are filled with people sitting at sidewalk cafes and coffee shops working on their computers



via the “City Wireless Network”. Twenty years ago it would have been amazing to watch someone work “in India” while they are sitting in Fort Dodge. Today it is the way most work knowledge oriented work is done.

Artist studios, galleries and shops are full of people looking, buying and wishing. “Downtown Sounds” fill the air with the most diverse types of music, comedy and theater. The Downtown Sounds theme of “Music for Everyone” has everyone in the City involved in local performances of music and theater. From the Karl King Band concerts to the Fort Dodge/Webster County Folk Life Play, that is held each year using real true life stories from Fort Dodge and Webster County and with local citizens as cast members. It's held in conjunction with Ft. Dodge Days and brings tourists from through out the Midwest. There is music, drama, and comedy, with a special blend that entertains folks of all ages. The plays are professionally written and directed and there is a new production each year, which keeps tourists coming back to Fort Dodge for these extraordinary performances. The economic benefits to this creative community have been tremendous.

## **D.1: A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **Vision Statement**

One of the wisest things that the City did, two decades ago, was to ensure the adequate supply and security of fresh water for the City and extended community. The in city lakes and major area lakes and reservoirs constructed along with the utilization of abandoned mining shafts to create a system of underground water cisterns provides one of the most attractive incentives for people wishing to relocate to Fort Dodge. The lakes provide additional recreational and housing development opportunities. The underground storage facility provides additional water for geothermal needs and water for livestock production and manufacturing. It also provides a water supply secure from terrorist and other sources of contamination. In anticipation of the Federal and State governments placing restrictions on new or expanded use of fresh water as part of a national water conservation program, the City's additional sources have reduced the dependency on the city's bored wells and increased capacity. The lakes and underground cisterns are replenished each year from the excess flow of the Des Moines River and Lizard Creek and the snow removed from parking lots and streets each year. The sale of the City's excess capacity of fresh water to other water district suppliers has proven to be a revenue source for further development of the system of lakes, reservoirs and underground water cisterns.

To further protect the water supply, the city supported the development of bio-mass as an alternative energy source to help eliminate the waste from reaching the water table and water supplies. Each resident and business owner participated in a tree planting program that has resulted in the most beautiful forested community in the Midwest. The additional foliage has reduced the erosion of the soil into the streams and water supplies and provides food and shelter for a variety of abundant wildlife. It also serves as a natural weather break for the community. The natural appearance of all the streams has been preserved through easements on both sides of each stream. Different types of native and sport fish are raised in a fishery and set free in the streams to entice tourist and fishing, camping, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, and other types of water activities.

The City has worked with other governments to minimize adverse impacts to the region's air and water quality. Growth policies and development standards have reduced automobile dependency; many area residents are able to walk or bicycle to most daily activities. Cluster developments, walkable neighborhoods and nearby services are designed to generate less traffic and require shorter distances to shop or work.

Streams and drainage ways passing through the City receive less storm water runoff and pollution due, in part, to policies on low impact design, tree preservation, protection of wetlands, landscaped parking areas, and vegetated buffer strips adjoining stream channels and roadsides. New and expanding industries in the City are known to be good environmental stewards. Solid waste levels have been substantially reduced through conservation and recycling efforts.

## **D.2: CITIZENS ACTIVE AND INVOLVED**

### **Vision Statement**

Area citizens show a keen interest in the affairs of their local government. There is a can-do spirit driven by civic pride and revealed through broad community involvement. Local governing boards and committees have no shortage of interested, qualified people willing to serve. Area citizens are heavily involved in civic clubs and organizations; volunteerism is a constant source of energy as it is poured into the institutions and organizations that work to improve the area. Local government officials routinely seek the views of their constituents on growth and development issues. During the development review process, great emphasis is placed on effective communication and consensus among all parties, including elected officials, planning board members, other local advisory boards, the developer, local government staff, and the public.

## **D.3: PRESERVED OPEN SPACE, RURAL CHARACTER AND COMPATIBLE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Vision Statement**

The City is known for its parks, open spaces, trees, pedestrian and bicycle trails. Connectivity of the streets, trails and open spaces enables the entire city to sever as a park. Growth management policies have directed new development away from prime agricultural areas, significant open spaces, and environmentally sensitive lands. The City of Fort Dodge has worked effectively to place urban infrastructure within or adjoining existing urban areas. Urban services, such as centralized water and sewer, roads, schools and parks, have been strategically placed to facilitate compact, contiguous growth, rather than promoting leapfrog developments in the midst of productive farmland. New development has been encouraged to occur in the form of full service, mixed use communities, rather than a series of unrelated, single use,

Community leaders have navigated a careful course, allowing for shopping and services convenient to nearby residential areas, while protecting these same areas from incompatible commercial encroachment. Local development regulations have controlled the types of services allowed near residential areas, as well as their size and physical design. New and rehabilitated commercial

buildings exhibit well-groomed landscaping, and attractive signage, oftentimes with a distinctive architectural design. Previously vacant commercial and industrial buildings have been renovated and adapted for use as cultural facilities, retail enterprises, office and institutional use, innovative housing, and as small business development centers. Policies have been implemented to prevent indiscriminate abandonment and prolonged vacancies of “big boxes” left behind for “bigger boxes”. All properties, facilities and parking areas are maintained to an attractive appearance level or removed and returned to greenspace at the owner’s expense.

#### **D.4: INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS WELL MANAGED GROWTH**

##### **Vision Statement**

Working from the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision, government and service providers have coordinated their policies and actions to direct new growth where it can best be served. The location of new development has been carefully coordinated with area plans for infrastructure, including transportation, water and sewer services, stormwater management, schools, parks and open space. Better and more quality-conscious development standards are applied consistently throughout the city, resulting in higher quality developments. Utilities are shown to be adequate and in place prior to the occupancy of the new developments they serve. Sewer services have been strategically employed to encourage urban level growth where it can best be accommodated. Advanced planning has allowed future school and park sites to be located and acquired ahead of their need. Planned highway corridors have been identified and mapped to ensure their protection during the development process. Similarly, future greenway corridors have been identified so that they may be incorporated into the design of new developments.

A citywide stormwater management plan has anticipated necessary drainage and retention facilities as various areas have been developed. All parts of the infrastructure have been repaired or replaced and maintained. Streets and roads are repaired or replaced and maintained. The placement of infrastructure under streets and roads has been avoided or corrected to eliminate damage to street surfaces and interruption of traffic. Infrastructure is located beneath side walks as they are added during neighborhood retrofits or during new construction. Power lines have been located underground in all new construction and as older facilities are renovated or replaced.

#### **D.5: A FRIENDLY AND BALANCED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

##### **Vision Statement**

The City of Fort Dodge worked proactively with Webster County and the Iowa State Department of Transportation toward a balanced, multi-modal and citizen friendly transportation system. An efficient system of streets and roads, improved mass transit services, as well as more sidewalks, trails and bicycling facilities have proven to be critical components of the quality of community life and economic development. Advanced planning and follow-through has resulted in an efficient system of pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets and highways, and a well-connected network of sidewalks, trails and bike paths. It has become common practice for all road improvements to include pedestrian sidewalks, bike lanes and well designed cross walks. New public and private

developments include sidewalks and bikeway connections. Mixed use and urban level developments have been employed to encourage walkability. The public transportation system is serving the needs of senior citizens and others who cannot or choose not to drive a car. All roads have been paved; existing roads are well maintained. The important connectors to major transportation routes have been completed and serve positive draw to the city.

The city continues to be the hub for commercial transportation. Design of streets and roads include extra off event parking for tour busses and transfer trucks, larger turning radius for busses and transfer trucks, turning lanes and easy recovery areas for busses and truckers who find they are going into restricted areas.

The airport serves an expanding customer base of private, corporate and commercial customers. Area around the airport was reserved for aviation related uses and businesses. Housed at the airport is the state's most advanced aircraft repair and reconditioning center.

## **D.6: QUALITY HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Vision Statement**

The City of Fort Dodge communities offer a multitude of quality housing choices, including a predominance of single-family homes, but also truly urban housing forms such as townhouses, condominiums, lofts and apartments. Housing has been developed to meet the different preferences of active retirees, seniors, health and social services workers, creative workers, and knowledge workers with a focus on the creation of a sense of community. New neighborhoods are often developed with a neighborhood school being the central feature along with compatible neighborhood services. Because services are close at hand, such neighborhoods encourage walking and reduce auto dependency. Consistent zoning practices have protected existing and planned neighborhoods from incompatible, large scale, commercial development.

Affordable housing needs have been met in greater measure by smaller accessory garage apartments, granny flats, lofts and apartments over shops or small clusters of multifamily housing. Older existing neighborhoods have experienced an extreme makeover and with city codes in place property and buildings have remained attractive and an attraction to the city or have been removed and returned to greenspace. Vacant lots are attractively maintained by the owner or converted to city property. All neighborhoods, schools, recreation venues, parks, Friendship Haven, "Downtown Central" have been connected to the Des Moines River Trail Network and its tributary walkways, bikeways, and greenspaces.

## **D.7: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AND EFFICIENCY**

### **Vision Statement**

Twenty years ago, the leaders of the City of Fort Dodge realized that their future rest with the future of the citizens and communities within the region. They implemented a culture and policy of inclusion and sharing rather than exclusion when it came to community and economic development.

A sincere and continued effort to work with and assist other communities in accomplishing their vision and plans for growth continues today. The collective growth within the county and region has benefited everyone. Each community has been assisted in developing their own unique attractions that are jointly marketed to targeted areas around the world to attract tourist and residents. “Day tripping” tourists have become an important source for community and economic development throughout the region. With each community developing one or more unique attractions, the region has created an endless list of “Destination Places” that attract tourist and makes the region one of the most interesting places to live, work, play and stay. All of this resulted in communities and governments working together to successfully compete with the world instead of themselves.

Local communities, regional governments and organizations and the City of Fort Dodge have joined forces on many fronts to address matters of common interest. These matters include, for example: economic development, growth management, transportation, water and sewer services, open space preservation, and environmental quality, among others. Some local government services have been consolidated for efficiency and improved service. Other government functions have remained separate and coordinated. All local governments have benefited from an expanding tax base and cost effective innovations in service delivery. A renewed focus on frequent, effective communication between local government leaders and area residents has greatly enhanced decision making in the region.

## **D.8: SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR ALL**

### **Vision Statement**

Personal safety and security became very important to many people throughout the United States. As the population grew older, active retirees and senior citizens became attracted to the safe and secure environment provided by the City of Fort Dodge and extended community. The City of Fort Dodge and extended community became the number one place in America for active retirees and senior citizens partly because of the safety and security provided. As the city grew, local area law enforcement agencies, fire departments, emergency medical officials, district attorneys, judges and government employees operated with a common goal of bringing an enormous amount of attention and visibility to suspected crime centers and perpetrators. This resulted in the movement of those who commit crime to other parts of the country or to places of incarceration.

Area public safety personnel operate from substations closer to the populations they serve to become especially attuned to the issues and problems unique to each area of the city and extended community. Neighborhood watches and the use of active retirees to monitor streets, recreation areas and downtown have created a safe environment throughout the city. All public safety services have been continually upgraded in terms of communications capability, equipment, personnel, and advanced planning. By working together, area citizens and public safety officials have dramatically increased the sense of safety and security and reduced instances of violence and crime and enhanced fire protection and emergency medical services.

## **D.9: ACTIVE RETIREES AND SENIOR CITIZENS RECRUITED AND WELL SERVED**

### **Vision Statement**

As a result of the city targeting active retirees and senior adults as a source of economic development, the active retiree and senior citizen population of the City of Fort Dodge has significantly grown. Public and private services responded to meet the needs of this important group. As active retirees and seniors have sought and found ways to maintain their mobility and quality of life, they have recognized the City of Fort Dodge as the most accessible, mobile, and safest and entertaining city in the Midwest. An efficient system of friendly streets and highways and a well-connected network of sidewalks, trails, walkways, bike, cart paths, and public and private transit services fulfill a critical need and sets the city apart from all others.

Many new forms of housing have been created allowing active retirees and seniors to live close to the services they require and providing a greater amount of independence and quality of life. In addition to traditional senior citizen housing, many active retirees and seniors choose to live in independent living or assisted living housing, and accessory housing close to an extended family, providing for the right balance between independent and assisted living. Recreation and other enrichment activities for active retirees and seniors have become a large part of community recreation programs. Convenient access to health care, assisted living and social services has required the establishment of regional “one-stop” senior citizen centers at strategic locations in the city. The development of “Downtown Center” and the cultural, dining, shopping and entertainment found there provides an endless list of things to experience.

## **E.1: SUSTAINABLE TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY**

### **Vision Statement**

The continued growth in population and expanded of the use of energy by developing economies and the United States has caused the cost of energy to become a major concern. Transportation habits and business cost are impacted on a daily basis.

The City of Fort Dodge has a national reputation for the cleanest and least expensive sustainable energy in the United States. The City of Fort Dodge invested in storage and additional access to traditional fossil fuel energy sources. The city’s investment in alternative energy to supplement fossil fuel sources has provided the city with both a source of energy and a sustainable revenue source for the city. The city’s wind farm produces electricity that provides energy for all government facilities with the excess sold to citizens at reduced rates. The pedestrian friendly design of communities, streets and trails and bike paths within streets has allowed citizens to reduce the amount automobile use. The use of geothermal, solar and “Green” construction techniques in new and refurbished developments has reduced the peak demand for fuel oil, natural gas and electricity. Solar energy provides the majority of the street lighting after the implementation of new energy efficient lights, motion sensitive light switches and the reduced use of street lights. Other energy conservation measures have reduced the need for energy significantly. The use by the city of bio-diesel and

ethanol as fuel sources for all equipment and vehicles has reduced the dependency on gasoline. The city also utilizes methane gas from local bio-mass production and from the local solid waste landfills.

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## **PART III: POLICY AND STRATEGY STATEMENTS**

### **EDUCATION**

#### **A.1: GLOBAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ORIENTED SCHOOLS**

##### **Vision Statement**

The number one attraction for families moving to the city and extended community is the quality and reputation of the educational systems and the preparation they provide students for the global economy and society. All the educational organizations, the citizens and the community working together, implemented a unique educational system that begins with Pre-K and extends through college and beyond. At a minimum, all students are assured they will graduate from high school and college if they actively participate. Incentives and disincentives are so strong that parents and students cannot afford not to take advantage of the program. In fact, there are waiting lists at all levels of both the private and public schools and Iowa Central Community College.

In the summer months students go to school during the normal hours, but from late Fall until April, evening and Saturday School is provided. Math, science and the study of different languages, cultures, and customs are a major focus of the entire school experience. A student develops a global perspective and a mastery of one of three languages in addition to English (Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, Spanish), and mastery of over two hundred words and phrases in the other. Many classes are taught by persons living in their native countries through the use of information technology.

Regardless of where a person moves from, they are assured that their cultures and customs are understood and appreciated by the citizens of Fort Dodge and extended community. They and their children will become Americans and a part of the American culture. Free naturalization classes to obtain citizenship and English as a second language classes are provided to all through the school systems and Iowa Central Community College. Companies are relocating their corporate offices to Fort Dodge because of their ability to attract and support their international operations and the quality of life for their American based international employees.

All student organizations and youth organizations have as their number one priority the academic success of every student. Students receive additional support in their traditional studies if needed. No student is allowed to dropout without massive intervention both from the educational organizations, youth organizations, citizens and legal systems. Without this focus on education, the community would have not been able to develop and sustain the diverse workforce of the future that led to the relocation of families and businesses to Fort Dodge and the extended community.

Iowa Central Community College has led the way in the development of a global workforce. By providing alternative instructional delivery methods, the college provides a global education in Iowa and around the world. As a broker for educational services, local students are able to enroll in any college in the world and be supported at Iowa Central. The on campus collegiate experience has created a waiting list for students desiring to live on campus and within the surrounding community. The college has continued to support the activities within the community through their expansion of a major sports complex, equestrian center, support for community sports and support for the visual



and performing arts and many others. The college has led the way in creating a climate supportive of diversity in race, cultures and customs. The college has continued to develop cutting edge programs and has lead the way in attracting value added agriculture and bio-science to the area. In addition, the college has focused on the development of an active retiree workforce by providing opportunities for training, employment, and recreational activities.

## **POLICIES FOR VISION A.1: GLOBAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ORIENTED SCHOOLS**

Policy A.1.1: A well trained and educated citizenry is the cornerstone to growth and prosperity of the community and shall be encouraged and supported through the policies of the city.

Policy A.1.2: In a global economy and society the ability to live in Fort Dodge while working any where in the world is critical. Encouraging diversity and addressing the needs of a diverse population shall be a component of existing and future planning and development.

Policy A.1.3: Advanced planning for the location of new public schools shall be supported. School locations should serve to reinforce desirable growth patterns rather than promoting sprawl. New elementary school locations shall be viewed as a cornerstone of the neighborhoods they are intended to serve.

Policy A.1.4: Offers of land for location of new schools shall be encouraged, particularly in conjunction with related neighborhood development. Acceptance of such properties shall be based on approved location- and design-related criteria.

Policy A.1.5: School campuses shall be designed to allow safe, pedestrian access from adjacent neighborhoods. Travel corridors within 1.5 miles of all public schools shall be a priority for construction of sidewalks, bike paths and pedestrian trails.

Policy A.1.6: Site planning for traffic management and safety in the vicinity of public schools shall be a priority.

Policy A.1.7: The co-location and joint development of school facilities in conjunction with other community facilities and services shall be encouraged. Co-located facilities and services may include but not be limited to park and recreation facilities, senior centers, health clinics, and libraries.

Policy: A.1.8: The contribution of higher education and to the development of a globally competent workforce and community shall be recognized and supported.

## **STRATEGIES FOR VISION A.1: GLOBAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ORIENTED SCHOOLS**

Strategy A1.1: Education should be encouraged to prepare a School Master 20 Year Plan with input on growth and development concerns from the City of Fort Dodge. The 20-year plan should address issues related to developing a global competent society and workforce and target suitable areas for land acquisition and be updated every five years.

Strategy A1.2: The City of Fort Dodge should consider preparing, adopting, and funding its own capital improvement plan to include funding for the construction of pedestrian and bicycle trails and facilities within 1.5 miles of public schools in its jurisdiction. These should be connected to the city parks and the Des Moines river trail network.

Strategy A1.3: Prepare a study of alternatives for paying for school modernization and construction based on the demand for school space created by new development.

Strategy A1.4: Include consideration for co-location of schools with park and recreation facilities when preparing the next master park and recreation and trail plan.

Strategy A1.5: In cooperation with public and private schools, prepare school location and design criteria for the placement and site development of community-oriented schools, to include priorities for safe pedestrian and bicycle access, transit use, neighborhood connectivity, infrastructure availability, and environmental compatibility.

Strategy A1.6: Provide diversity and intercultural training for all city employees.

## ENTERTAINMENT

### **B.1: EXPANDED PARKS AND RECREATION—THE MIDWEST’S ONLY “BOARD WALK”**

#### **Vision Statement**

The Midwest’s Only “Board Walk” has been developed into one of the most diverse and expansive system of parks, events, attractions, recreation, entertainment and cultural venues in the country. It is considered to be a part of the most diverse recreation “Destination Place” in the nation. The “Board Walk” refers to a system of venues that reaches from south of Highway 20 to north of the Harlan Rogers Sports Complex and includes activities like Frontier Days, Dragon Boat Races on Badger Lake, and the Skydivers Couchfreak Boogie.

The Des Moines River and Lizard Creek served as the focal point for the development. The “Board Walk” has been constructed along the east side of the Des Moines River. Artist galleries, sidewalk cafes coffee shops, restaurants, souvenir shops, game rooms and tourist focused activities are reminiscent of the Atlantic City Board Walk. There is even a train museum connected to a working train yard and rail.

New investment in the river corridor has complemented the revitalization of “Downtown Center”. As the image and appearance of the river corridor has been upgraded, new residential and business development expanded in the area.

As a result of the city owning the majority of the property on the east side of the river and leasing it to private enterprises, the preservation of the river is secure and the condition and continued

attractiveness of all the facilities is assured. Growth and construction was planned to preserve a 250 to 1000 feet easement on each side of the river to preserve the natural beauty and conditions of the river unless exceptions were made in compliance with the planned development of the “Board Walk”.

Special consideration was given to ensure a person could walk, ride a bike, a horse, or golf cart to all attractions from south of Highway 20 to the most northern part past the Harlan Rogers Sports Complex. It includes over 23 parks, 24 tennis courts, and several golf courses. However, if there is a need for a faster mode of transportation, there is a free tram system that travels to all major locations along the “Board Walk” complex.

Lighted trails, emergency call stations, video monitored surveillance, police on bicycles, and an army of “Board Walkers” (active retirees) monitor and patrol to create the safest and most family friendly place in America.

Regardless of the interest, there is something for everyone. Some of the activities include canoeing, rafting, kayaking, tube floating, fishing, swimming, wading and the Midwest’s only “sandy beach”, which is a part of one of the inner city lakes created for additional fresh water supply for the community. A fish hatchery produces fish that are placed in the river to provide a variety of challenges and opportunities for even the most committed angler throughout the year.

A huge indoor “Aquatic and Recreation Center”, which is a part of the “Board Walk”, also has facilities for ice skating and other Winter sports and activities. The Winter snow, frozen river and Aquatic Center enables the “Board Walk” to be transformed into a “Winter Wonderland” where “Christmas On The River” brings people from all over the Midwest to shop, listen to the music, taste the holiday delights and view lights at the “Board Walk”, “Downtown Center”, and Kennedy Park. The children, youth and young adults are busy skate boarding, swimming, ice skating, playing hockey, hiking, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, mountain biking, and enjoying many other events.

The Des Moines River and Lizard Creek “Board Walk” development and the “Downtown Center” is seamlessly connected and complements the redesigned “Downtown Center” of off site parking, loft apartments, artist galleries, sidewalk cafes, shops, library, museums, restaurants, and green spaces. As part of the entertainment, the “Downtown Sounds” are a mixture of different types of music being performed by both seasoned performers and students from Iowa Central’s Creative and Performing Arts department that includes programs in commercial music, sound technology, and performing arts technology and the most prestigious country and bluegrass music program. On any given trip through the “Downtown Center” you can hear sounds that range from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to Bill Monroe.

Concerts are held nightly at the Karl King Band Shell that provide the most experienced as well as newcomers the opportunity to play on one of the most famous and modern outdoor stages in America. The Fort Dodge Area Symphony Orchestra and Karl King Municipal Band along with the Fort Dodge Coral Society, Sonshine Singers, Civic Glee Club, Harmony Bridge and the Lizard Creek Blues Society all contribute to the city’s “*Music for Everyone*” theme.

A “walking” bridge connects both sides of the Des Moines River with the island located in the middle of the Des Moines River. The bridge provides residents and those who work and visit on the

west side of the river direct access to “Downtown Center”. The Island has become a focal point for sitting and relaxing and other social events such as parties, receptions and weddings.

An important extension of the “Board Walk” is Iowa Central Community College’s Equestrian Center located on the south side of the “Board Walk”. The donation twenty years ago of a facility, by a Fort Dodge family to Iowa Central Community College, served as the basis for what has become the most extensive equestrian center in the Midwest, if not America. Activities take place year round from the riding of the many miles of connected trails along the Des Moines River, to Brushy Creek and through out the region to the more challenging Steeple Chase held each spring. When the arena is not being used for local and National Barrel racing, cutting horse and the many other types of competitions, it is home to the most popular rodeo events in the Midwest. The center was developed with connecting preparation areas, stables, and supply areas. Parking and hook-up spaces for the hundreds of travel trailers, horse trailers necessary to support the participants from all 48 states and Canada that the events attract were strategically located to provide access to the equestrian center and the many other venues within the area. Additional facilities have been constructed to house and train horses belonging to people from Des Moines, Omaha, Chicago and other parts of the country. The care and training has developed into a nationally recognized program to train jockeys, horse trainers and other equestrian professions.

The Fort Museum and Fort Trading Post was relocated adjacent to the new “Visitors Welcome Center” located at the east entrance to the city at Highway 20. The Museum expanded to cover the frontier history of the Midwest in addition to that of Fort Dodge. And with the Old Fort Museum’s reinvention of the “Cardiff Giant” legend, most visitors take in a tour of the adjacent “Gypsum Mining Museum” where people actually go into an underground mine to see where and how gypsum was originally mined. The relocation of the Old Fort Museum provided space for expansion of their exhibits and parking and provided space for the expansion of Friendship Haven, Trinity Medical Center and the completion of Iowa Central’s sports complex.

The Gypsum City Off-Highway Vehicle Park is connected to the “Board Walk” through a network of trails and walking paths. It, along with Mineral City Speedway, has developed into a motor sports fan’s dream. In addition to the multiple motor bike, stock car and go cart races held at the facilities, Fort Dodge has become the place to be for all types of motor racing, shows, and motorcycle rallies. Car, truck, farm tractor and many other types of shows and competitions are held throughout the year.

The north side of the “Board Walk” complex is bordered by Kennedy Park and the Harlan Rogers Sports Complex that has, within itself, gained national recognition as the most premier ball complex in America. Beginning as a unique softball complex, the center developed into a “Major League Model” that supports multiple types of ball and recreational activities for all ages. A major addition has been recreational activities for active retirees and seniors. The facility is connected to different parts of the city through the network of trails that support bikes, walking and golf cart type vehicles. Public transportation and the TRAM connect the center through out the city and extended community.

As the City of Fort Dodge has grown, more green space, park and recreation facilities have been added to meet resident’s need for smaller neighborhood parks close at hand, within walking distance of residential areas. Many new parks include active recreation facilities for youth, such as soccer, softball, and multipurpose fields. Park facilities have addressed the active and passive recreation preferences of active retirees and seniors. The developed and connected system of walking and

biking trails runs adjacent to the Des Moines River and its tributaries, as well as within available utility corridors. This “greenway” system can be accessed from many parts of the community, and connects numerous schools, parks, open spaces and neighborhoods. Numerous smaller park and open space areas have been created as part of routine development approval processes. Many recreation facilities have been developed in cooperation with schools. The development of additional community recreation parks and green spaces provide residents an alternative to the “Board Walk” events”.

## **POLICIES FOR VISION B.1: EXPANDED PARKS AND RECREATION**

Policy B.1.1: Parks and recreation development shall be emphasized as being vital to the City of Fort Dodge as a great community with a high quality of life that can attract new businesses and industry to the area.

Policy B.1.2: Parks shall be located and designed according to population density and needs of the people residing within the most likely park service area. Special attention shall be given to the unique needs of elderly and physically and mentally challenged citizens.

Policy B.1.3: Efforts to develop a system of open space greenways and hiking trails to connect residential areas with schools, parks, service areas, downtown and cultural areas shall be a priority. Natural corridors such as streams and floodplains, and man-made corridors such as utility and transportation rights-of-way and easements shall be strategically employed.

Policy B.1.4: The underutilized value of the Des Moines River and its tributaries shall be capitalized upon by the development of these resources into a unique recreation and nature attraction.

Policy B.1.5: Smaller parks shall be encouraged in existing and proposed neighborhoods to meet the needs of small children and to encourage social interaction and mutual support among families.

Policy B.1.6: Neighborhood parks should be located with exposure to residences, businesses and other activities, where informal observation and oversight can provide enhanced security to park properties.

Policy B.1.7: New residential development should provide for adequate open space and recreation areas in proportion to the demand created by the development. Acreage or funding may be determined according to local criteria.

Policy B.1.8: In addition to developer support for parks development, the city shall seek a consistent, on-going source of funding for parks improvements and maintenance.

Policy B.1.9: The co-location and joint development of park facilities in cooperation with institutions such as colleges, public schools, other federal, state and local government agencies, as well as private and non-profit interests, shall be supported.

Policy B.1.10: Cooperative public-private arrangements, such as increased privatization and volunteerism, for the development, programming, and maintenance of park and recreation facilities shall be explored and encouraged.

Policy B.1.11: Recognizing the important role of the Des Moines River and its tributaries to the natural and economic heritage of the region, policies and actions shall support conservation while allowing for strategic, environmentally sensitive development of the resource.

Policy B.1.12: A Des Moines River corridor conservation and development plan shall be prepared and periodically updated setting forth priority goals and objectives as well as development standards. The river corridor plan should be developed, adopted and implemented.

Policy B.1.13: Development within the Des Moines River corridor, including its tributaries, should respect and capitalize upon the conservation of natural resources, the influence of the river on the development of the region, cultural diversity, opportunities for exercise and outdoor recreation, heritage-oriented entertainment, and public-private partnerships with local and major businesses.

Policy B.1.14: Landforms and landscaping associated with development shall be sensitive to the natural and scenic quality of the river and adjoining lands.

Policy B.1.15: A buffer of indigenous vegetation shall be maintained and supplemented as necessary along the riverbank to filter runoff and sustain the environmental and visual quality of the river corridor. The depth of the buffer from the river's edge shall be determined primarily by ecological considerations, as they influence the long-term economic viability of the resource.

Policy B.1.16: Preservation of significant natural heritage areas along the Des Moines River and its tributaries shall be a priority.

Policy B.1.17: Infill development between the "Downtown Center" and the Des Moines River should be encouraged as a means to create an economic opportunity and activity corridor connecting the two areas.

Policy B.1.18: Continued development of the Des Moines River Trail shall be supported. All opportunities to increase the length of the Des Moines River Trail shall be considered.

Policy B.1.19: Walkways, pedestrian ways, bikeways and greenways shall be developed that connect the city parks, schools, recreation venues, "Downtown Center", neighborhoods, and the "Board Walk" to the Des Moines River Trail.

Policy B.1.20: Parking areas, roadways and other automobile-oriented facilities shall be located and designed so as to be generally screened from the surface of the river and from adjoining trails. A scenic river drive and overlook may be designed to allow for occasional views of the river, without calling attention to the roadway.

Policy B.1.21: Improved boating access facilities shall be a priority for increasing public access to the Des Moines River and its tributaries.

## STRATEGIES FOR VISION B.1: EXPANDED PARKS AND RECREATION

Strategy B.1.1: Incorporate the City Parks and Recreation Master Plan into the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision by reference.

Strategy B.1.2: Prepare a greenways, walkways, bikeways, horse riding trails master plan for the entire city and extended community. Make the Des Moines River a central feature of the master plan. Develop major feeders and methods and mechanisms to preserve and protect natural and man-made corridors for future pedestrian and boating use. Develop guidelines and design standards for pedestrian and boating trails.

Strategy B.1.3: Work with Webster and other Counties and extended communities on the development of the master plan.

Strategy B.1.4: Work with the State of Iowa and Webster County to preserve land parcels that will provide recreation opportunities, extend the Des Moines Trail Network, and also protect the continued viability of the City of Fort Dodge.

Strategy B.1.5: Amend subdivision regulations or other appropriate ordinances to allow for a proportionate fee in lieu of land dedication.

Strategy B.1.6: Develop criteria for determining the adequacy of acreage to be accepted from developers for parks and/or open space. Establish routine procedures for deeding ownership of dedicated land to the city.

Strategy B.1.7: Authorize a mechanism by which developers with property on a planned pedestrian way may donate land and develop the trail as a means of meeting some or all of their open space requirements. Set appropriate standards for trail development.

Strategy B.1.8: Expand parks to include a walking trail that connects to inner city trails, walkways and the Des Moines Trail network. Include additional walkways, security lighting, small existing picnic shelters/with grills, benches, trash receptacles, outdoor amphitheaters, softball/baseball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, fences along park property, and additional landscaping and restroom/concession facilities.

Strategy B.1.9: As part of the Des Moines Trail Network Plan:

- a.) Map environmentally significant natural, scenic, and historic sites.
- b.) Prepare a development analysis of the Des Moines Trail Network to delineate developable areas according to environmental suitability (soils, slopes, flooding, etc.) the feasibility of providing infrastructure (vehicular, utilities, etc.) and locational suitability.
- c.) Define a Des Moines Trail Network Development Zone for priority economic development and investment. Identify several strategic locations within the development zone for particular development opportunities based on a market study.
- d.) Develop guidelines and design standards for the Des Moines Trail Network Development Zone.

- e.) Develop guidelines and design standards for the Des Moines River Trail Network and all “tributary trails” connecting to it.
- f.) Identify land for acquisition in fee simple and/or easements along the banks of the Des Moines River to expand the Des Moines River Trail Network.
- g.) Identify properties located along the banks of the Des Moines River that would be suitable for development of a riverfront park and/or greenway system in conjunction with the Des Moines River Trail Network.
- h.) Identify and pursue funding sources for installing and upgrading facilities along the Des Moines River Trail Network.
- i.) Identify opportunities for pedestrian access between the Des Moines Trail Network and targeted areas.
- j.) Using landscape visualization and analysis techniques identify the best location for development of a scenic river drive and overlook.
- k.) Identify opportunities for the placement of visible access markers of the Des Moines Trail Network Development on all major highway entrances into the city.
- l.) Seek the input, support and cooperation of other organizations, agencies and authorities that could be advocates of the river.
- m.) Seek corporate sponsors, private enterprise, and private gifts as sources of funding for key development opportunities.
- n.) Identify mechanisms for marketing the Des Moines River Trail Network as a tourist/recreation destination.

Strategy B.1.10: To help protect the environmental integrity and water quality of the Des Moines River:

- a.) Prepare a study identifying the required buffer width(s) from the River’s edge based on ecological considerations, topography, slope, soils, etc.
- b.) Develop a public sector\ non profit land acquisition strategy for critical environmentally significant lands in the river corridor.
- c.) Zone critical lands for conservation-compatible land uses.
- d.) Develop an educational and voluntary cooperation program whereby adjacent property owners pledge to be good custodians of their property and the river.

Strategy B.1.11: To increase awareness of the opportunities available from this regional asset:

- a.) Include an educational component with the Des Moines River Trail Network development emphasizing its unique environments, historic sites and scenic beauty.
- b.) Develop the entire Des Moines River Trail Network and hold an annual river trail run that highlights major points along the river, the ecosystem, and significant features.



## ENTREPRENEURIAL

### C.1: A MORE DIVERSIFIED LOCAL ECONOMY

#### Vision Statement

The local economic base of the City of Fort Dodge and extended community has grown and diversified significantly. New and expanded large and small businesses and industries have brought better paying jobs, requiring higher levels of education and training. Local educational institutions have responded with courses and curriculums custom tailored to meet education and training needs. Young workers in the City of Fort Dodge can find excellent, lifelong career opportunities without ever leaving the area. While workers in retail trade and manufacturing employment continue to be an important part of the local economy, other types of work have expanded, including health care, information services, professional and technical services. One of the most visible changes to the local economy is the huge impact that tourism and specifically recreation has had. The city is known to be the home for health, knowledge and creative workers, and the most diverse and well planned tourist attractions and events in the Midwest.

The City of Fort Dodge and extended community is known as one of the most connected cities in the United States. Free broadband access to the internet is provided to everyone for educational, information and business use. A set amount of bandwidth is assigned to each subscriber that can be expanded for a fee. Wireless access is provided through out the downtown area which makes sitting at one of the outside cafes and using the computer to work a popular activity for the knowledge workers. Small businesses are encouraged and assisted in the development of Web sites and Internet marketing. Fort Dodge is known as one of the most active centers for import and export activities through the use of the Internet. The positive climate for small business development and support and access to the world through the Internet make this the hottest community in the Midwest for doing business overseas.

#### POLICIES FOR VISION C.1: A MORE DIVERSIFIED LOCAL ECONOMY

Policy C.1.1: With the majority of new jobs being created by small business, the expansion of existing small businesses and the start up of new small businesses shall be a critical component of the city's economic development effort.

Policy C1.2: Recreational, art and culture tourism shall be encouraged and developed.

Policy C1.3: An emphasis shall be placed on the diversification of the economy through the development and expansion of tourism, knowledge and creative economies.

Policy C1.4: The current economy should be expanded through further development of the health and social services, manufacturing, and alternative fuels.

Policy C.1.5: The rehabilitation, reuse, or removal of currently unused or underutilized structures, sites and infrastructure shall be accomplished.

Policy C.1.6: City government shall be an active participant, facilitator and partner in the creation of large and small business and industrial development opportunities capitalizing upon the unique human and economic resources of the area.

Policy C.1.7: Economic development efforts shall protect, enhance and encourage a high quality of life, image and cultural amenities as critical factors in business retention, recruitment and economic growth.

Policy C.1.8: Educational institutions should focus on training and retraining students and workers with knowledge and skill sets geared to the global economy and society.

Policy C.1.9: The identification, restoration and active use of structures, monuments, and sites of historic significance shall be encouraged as a means of enhancing their economic and cultural value.

Policy C.1.10: New and expanding large and small businesses and industries shall be encouraged that: 1) diversify the economy, 2) train and employ a more highly skilled work force and 3) increase incomes.

Policy C.1.11: Opportunities to link the City of Fort Dodge economy to surrounding communities and counties shall be actively pursued.

Policy C.1.12: Economic development incentives shall be periodically identified, evaluated and implemented to encourage appropriate and desirable growth and development within the region.

Policy C.1.13: City government shall encourage a public service and regulatory environment conducive to economic development, provided that environmental quality, public health and safety considerations are not compromised.

Policy C.1.14: Appropriate opportunity sites for manufacturing and new technology enterprises shall be identified and protected through appropriate zoning. such sites shall be based upon factors such as transportation access, availability of utilities, compatibility with nearby land uses, soil conditions, drainage, and other considerations.

Policy C.1.15: Activities that bring new people and businesses to the area, including special events, sports tournaments, tourism and convention activities shall be encouraged and supported.

## **STRATEGIES FOR VISION C.1: A MORE DIVERSIFIED LOCAL ECONOMY**

Strategy C.1.1: Create and maintain an up-to-date inventory of opportunity sites for business and industry development, to include existing buildings suitable for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.

Strategy C.1.2: Identify sources and/or establish mechanisms for funding economic development incentives.

Strategy C.1.3: Support the aggressive efforts of other agencies and organizations to expand existing large and small businesses and recruit new businesses.

Strategy C.1.4: Support the development and implementation of a “Retiree Force Program”, which seeks to match the talents of active retirees with employment opportunities in the area, thereby retaining a valuable talent pool for economic growth.

Strategy C.1.5: Expand the development and support for the tourism potential, including infrastructure necessary to host major meeting, convention, sporting and recreational events.

Strategy C.1.6: Establish an aggressive small and micro business recruiting and development presence within the region.

Strategy C.1.7: Advertise the abundant water resources, steady stream of capable workers, strategic location along I-35 and Highway 20, affordable housing, 2 and 4 year colleges, cultural diversity, active retirement living, and quality health care as key business advantages to locate in the City of Fort Dodge.

Strategy C.1.8: Conduct a review of zoning and infrastructure to identify and/or confirm appropriate sites for business and manufacturing and new technology enterprises.

Strategy C.1.9: Conduct a review of building codes to ensure that all structures and properties are maintained and add to the attraction of new residents, businesses, industry and the health and safety of the community.

Strategy C.1.10: Complete a branding and marketing study and aggressively market the city to identified target markets and population centers.

Strategy C.1.11: Create and support an aggressive organization to create a robust and diversified knowledge, creative and tourist economies by targeting active retirees, seniors, health care and social services workers, artist, craftsmen, retailers, and small business owners.

Strategy C.1.12: Inventory the educational, recreational, creative, cultural, entertainment, housing, and tourist attractions and develop marketing materials and implement marketing strategies targeting families, active retirees, knowledge, and creative worker populations.

## **C2: ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY APPEARANCE & IMAGE**

### **Vision Statement**

Visitors to the City of Fort Dodge are impressed by the attractive green spaces, trees and floral throughout the communities, roadways and major streets serving the area. Twenty years has passed since volunteers took on beautification of the city as a passion. Their actions and leadership caused the city to take a very proactive approach to the “extreme makeover” and maintaining the beauty of the city. Already a participant in the “Tree City USA®” program for 24 years, the citizens and city expanded the quality and quantity of trees to make the city the most forested town in the Midwest. The “America in Bloom” program was added and the city has won national recognition for the past 20 years at that organization’s annual conference. America in Bloom judges evaluate communities on the following eight criteria and the City of Fort Dodge has excelled in almost every area each year. The criteria include:

- Floral Displays
- Environmental Awareness
- Landscaped Areas
- Tidiness
- Urban Forestry
- Heritage Preservation
- Turf and Groundcovers
- Community Involvement

Community leaders navigated a careful course, allowing for shopping and services convenient to nearby residential areas, while protecting these same areas from incompatible commercial encroachment. Local development regulations have controlled the types of services allowed near residential areas, as well as their size and physical design. Strict enforcement of regulations concerning junked vehicles and dilapidated structures has cleared the area of these eyesores, and helped foster a positive image. Previously vacant commercial and industrial buildings have been renovated and adapted for use as cultural facilities, retail enterprises, office and institutional use, innovative housing, and as small business development centers. Those that were not have been removed and returned to “greenspace”.

Policies have been implemented to prevent indiscriminate abandonment and prolonged vacancies of “big boxes” left behind for “bigger boxes”. New and rehabilitated commercial buildings exhibit distinctive architectural design, well-groomed landscaping, and attractive signage. Major urban corridors are lined with plentiful street trees, attractive landscaping, understated signage, and architecturally appealing buildings. Both urban and rural roadsides are free of clutter and litter. Most new developments have placed electric, cable and other utility lines underground. Some older developed areas have had existing overhead wires placed underground as redevelopment opportunities have allowed. Residents throughout the city have developed a renewed pride in the upkeep of their homes and businesses. Area citizens place a high value on the unique history of their community, as reflected in efforts to preserve historic buildings and places.

## **POLICIES FOR VISION C.2: ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY APPEARANCE & IMAGE**

Policy C.2.1: The important economic, tourism, and community image benefits of attractive major travel corridors through the area shall be recognized. Such entryway corridors shall receive priority attention for improved appearance and development standards, including landscaping, signage, tree preservation, underground utilities, streetlights, and sidewalks.

Policy C.2.2: Billboards shall be prohibited along newly constructed thoroughfares. Additional billboards along existing major thoroughfares shall be limited.

Policy C.2.3: Landscape improvements at existing and new commercial developments, particularly as related to breaking up and softening the appearance of expansive parking areas, shall be encouraged.

Policy C.2.4: The inappropriate use of manufactured homes for storage, or their abandonment without proper disposal, shall be prohibited. Short-term storage in tractor-trailers or storage containers may be authorized.

Policy C.2.5: Proper code enforcement shall be employed to deal with the attractiveness and public health and safety issues of abandoned and/or neglected commercial and residential properties.

Policy C.2.6: New development, redevelopment, rehabilitation and maintenance of structures and sites should be consistent and supportive of the neighborhood and architectural context of designated neighborhood conservation area. A neighborhood conservation area may be designated upon agreement with neighborhood property owners that the character of the area warrants protection from incompatible development. Rules governing development review in a conservation area serve a purpose similar to private restrictive covenants where no such covenants exist. Such rules are less restrictive than those found in a locally designated historic district.

Policy C.2.7: The significance of street trees in providing visual relief, summer cooling, improved air quality and livability shall be recognized through public policies to encourage their planting and maintenance. Highest priority shall be given to gateway travel corridors and urban centers. Programs urging voluntary efforts by property owners shall be preferred. Power companies shall be encouraged not to butcher trees under or near power lines.

Policy C.2.8: Sign regulations and standards shall be reviewed and periodically updated to enhance community identity and create a high quality business image.

Policy C.2.9: Littering of public streets and roadside properties, whether from “litterbugs”, drivers of poorly covered trucks, or persons blowing debris onto the street, shall not be tolerated regardless of who or what caused the problem. Property owners shall be responsible and required to keep their property free of trash, debris, and in good and attractive condition. Those who would abuse the local environment and denigrate the image the city shall be held accountable through community service programs and enforcement of laws.

Policy C.2.10: The placement of utility wires underground shall be required in all new public and private developments. Existing overhead utilities should be relocated to underground locations when redevelopment or new construction affords the opportunity and where high visibility justifies the cost.

Policy C.2.11: The implementation of a citywide “Wireless Broadband Internet Network” should be developed and provided to support the development of the “Knowledge Economy”, residents and visitors. The placement of communication and other towers in the City of Fort Dodge shall be monitored through the use of the special use permitting process. Their design and location shall continue to be regulated as necessary.

Policy C.2.12: The city shall not permit the establishment and operation of unlicensed junkyards. Similarly, junked, inoperable or unlicensed vehicles shall not be permitted to remain in locations visible from any public right of way, except as may be specifically permitted within an approved junkyard.

Policy C.2.13: Clear cutting of trees (except those grown for timber) shall not be permitted without advance notice and just cause. Developers of commercial property and multi-family residential property shall demonstrate a good faith effort to incorporate existing trees into their site designs. Incentives and disincentives may be used to encourage appropriate site development.

## **STRATEGIES FOR VISION C.2: ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY APPEARANCE & IMAGE**

Strategy C.2.1: Designate roadways into the city that serve as gateway corridors. Map them and then rank them by priority.

Strategy C.2.2: Authorize and approve design and streetscape standards for gateway corridors in close cooperation with gateway corridor property owners. Do this in the order of each corridor's priority.

Strategy C.2.3: Initiate voluntary gateway enhancement programs in close cooperation with gateway corridor property owners.

Strategy C.2.4: Complete and implement the recommendation of the "Corridor Study" currently being developed.

Strategy C.2.5: Amend the zoning ordinance to require street trees or other appropriate vegetation, along designated gateway corridors.

Strategy C.2.6: Prepare or update a landscape ordinance and design guidelines setting forth rules for tree removal and tree preservation, planting and maintenance. Set forth rules to address clear cutting in different land use activities.

Strategy C.2.7: Create a market brand and unique identifier strategy for the heart of each neighborhood and community. This may include, but not be limited to logos, banners, signage, light fixtures, canopies, street furniture, etc.

Strategy C.2.8: Develop and adopt guidelines for commercial signage.

Strategy C.2.9: Review existing sign regulations and revise to enhance the visual image.

Strategy C.2.10: Seek funding from grants, foundations and public-private partnerships for visual art.

Strategy C.2.11: Earmark funds to relocate overhead utilities underground in critical, highly visible locations.

Strategy C.2.12: Each neighborhood and community is encouraged to participate and in the TREE CITY USA and the AMERICA IN BLOOM programs.

Strategy C.2.13: Prepare a street tree planting and maintenance booklet.

Strategy C.2.14: Expand the use of the courts for littering and other property safety and appearance-related code violations.

Strategy C.2.15: Review the entire code enforcement system and adjust personnel, budget and other tools as needed to address priority appearance issues.

Strategy C.2.16: Identify several potential neighborhood conservation areas. Educate neighborhoods and encourage participation in conservation initiatives. Prepare neighborhood conservation plans in the order of each neighborhood's readiness to proceed.

### **C.3: VIBRANT DOWNTOWN CENTER**

#### **Vision Statement**

The past two decades have seen renewed interest in the unique value and heritage of the downtown area. Older buildings have been either transformed into green spaces, new facilities or rehabilitated and adaptively reused for a wide range of shopping, dining, working, and cultural attractions. As a part of the master development plan of the Des Moines River and Lizard Creek "Boardwalk" development, the Downtown area known as "Downtown Center" is seamlessly connected to the river development and provides residential, green space, retail and restaurants for citizens and visitors. A connecting bridge for walking and golf carts provides access across the Des Moines River that enables the Downtown Center to benefit from the continued development of the active retiree, seniors citizens and health and social services provided by Friendship Haven, Trinity Medical Center and Iowa Central Community College.

The Downtown Center has benefited from its revival as the social and cultural heart of the community. People are naturally drawn to the area by its historic character and beauty, and the scale of the buildings and public spaces. Several buildings provide loft apartments and studios for artists that have moved to experience the amenities needed to sustain their creative ability.

Other buildings have been transformed into small dinner theaters where plays and dance is a regular part of the menu item. A central theater large enough to hold a welcoming crowd provided space for the locally produced and performed entertainment. As a complement to the Downtown Center theater is the large professional theater at Iowa Central Community College where on and off Broadway Productions are provided.

Renewed interests in Downtown Center have repopulated the central locations, providing financial support to merchants and twenty-four hour security for downtown area visitors. Government has been proactive in creating the physical, financial, and regulatory environment especially conducive to business development in these areas.

Downtown Center serves as the heart of the expanding culture and creative economy in the area. Streets are filled with people sitting at sidewalk cafes and coffee shops working on their computers via the "City Wireless Network". Twenty years ago it would have been amazing to watch someone work "in India" while they are sitting in Fort Dodge. Today it is the way most work knowledge oriented work is done.

Artist studios, galleries and shops are full of people looking, buying and wishing. "Downtown Sounds" fill the air with the most diverse types of music, comedy and theater. The Downtown Sounds theme of "Music for Everyone" has everyone in the city involved in local performances of music and theater. From the Karl King Band concerts to the Fort Dodge/Webster County Folk Life Play, that is held each year using real true life stories from Fort Dodge and Webster County and with local citizens as cast members. It's held in conjunction with Ft. Dodge Days and brings

tourists from through out the Midwest. There is music, drama, and comedy, with a special blend that entertains folks of all ages. The plays are professionally written and directed and there is a new production each year, which keeps tourists coming back to Fort Dodge for these extraordinary performances. The economic benefits to this creative community have been tremendous.

### **POLICIES FOR VISION C.3: VIBRANT DOWNTOWN CENTER**

Policy C.3.1: Primary entryway corridors into “Downtown Center” shall continue to receive priority for visual enhancements, employing special development standards, public investment, and community involvement to facilitate constructive change.

Policy C.3.2: A compatible, diverse mixture of retail, office, institutional, residential, dining, services, and public open space shall be encouraged.

Policy C.3.3: The role of the city’s “Downtown Center” meeting places and focus for cultural, the arts, entertainment and recreational activities shall be supported as priority.

Policy C.3.4: The preservation, rehabilitation and appropriate adaptive reuse of historic and other desirable downtown properties shall be encouraged. Rehabilitations shall respect the original architecture and fabric of the building and site. Destruction or demolition of desirable older structures shall be avoided when possible.

Policy C.3.5: Pedestrian oriented streetscape improvements including, but not limited to sidewalks, street trees, landscaping, street lights, street furniture, trash receptacles, and signs shall be made to create and maintain an environment attractive to investment.

Policy C.3.6 “Downtown Center” circulation systems shall balance the needs of pedestrians, private vehicles, public transit services, and train traffic.

Policy C.3.7: Efforts to direct new and expanding businesses to compatible locations in downtown areas shall be encouraged.

Policy C.3.8: The city and county shall maintain a tangible presence in “Downtown Center” through the location of city and county offices there. Other local, state and federal governments shall also be encouraged to maintain similar commitments.

Policy C.3.9: Cooperative planning and economic development efforts between local governments to enhance the economic and social well being of historic commercial districts shall be encouraged.

Policy C.3.10: Development and redevelopment of downtown area properties shall support the architectural and historic context so important to the economic success of the area. The intent shall be to create a unique environment and identity not found in other places.

Policy C.3.11: Efforts to maximize the use of the public space of the sidewalk so as to enliven the downtown street space are generally supported. Such use shall be balanced against public safety and other issues as may affect pedestrian movement and other proper uses of the street right of way.



Policy C.3.12: A variety of housing types and price ranges shall be encouraged in and adjoining the commercial business district. Such housing shall be at densities in keeping with a downtown location and compatible with nearby properties. Public-private partnerships to encourage downtown area housing shall be supported.

Policy C.3.13: The revitalization of neighborhoods near “Downtown Center” shall be recognized as a key to the long-term economic success of downtown.

Policy C.3.14: New adjacent and off street parking facilities serving the “Downtown Center” and “Board Walk” may be developed as needed in concert with additional investment opportunities. Such facilities shall be located and designed so as to complement and enhance the aesthetic and functional fabric of the “Downtown Center”.

Policy C.3.15: Appropriate infill development, particularly on sites where previous buildings once stood and now present a “missing tooth” in the streetscape, shall be encouraged.

Policy C.3.16: Strategic linkages between “Downtown Center” and other recreational, community, and economic centers or amenities shall be established and supported.

Policy C.3.17: The network of walkways and trails should provide everyone in the city easy access and regress to the “Downtown Center”.

### **STRATEGIES FOR VISION C.3: VIBRANT DOWNTOWN CENTER**

Strategy C.3.1: Establish a planning and management program to address appearance and traffic management issues on roads leading to “Downtown Center”.

Strategy C.3.2: Delineate the area of town that will be considered the “Downtown Center” area.

Strategy C.3.3: Prepare specific “Downtown Center” redevelopment plans for each part, including recommendations for development of a specific economic niche.

Strategy C.3.4: Prepare streetscape plans for each part of the downtown area, including plans for the development of sidewalks, street trees, lighting and other improvements as necessary.

Strategy C.3.5: Develop a public awareness program concerning minor low cost measures that can be undertaken to improve the visual appearance of each property.

Strategy C.3.6: Evaluate the condition of existing neighborhoods in the vicinity of downtown areas. Based on this evaluation, implement actions needed for improvements or support for each neighborhood.

Strategy C.3.7: Implement a program designed to develop preservation-based economic development strategies to increase the vitality of the cultural, historic and downtown commercial district.

Strategy C.3.8: Complete the corridor study and implement the recommendations.

Strategy C.3.9: Use bicycle and pedestrian plans as a starting point for detailed circulation plans within the city and downtown.

Strategy C.3.10: Relocate City Hall into either a new facility downtown or a remodeled existing one that meets the needs of both a modern government and the public.

Strategy C.3.11: Expand the Blanden Memorial Art Museum into the newly renovated former City Hall.

Strategy C.3.12: As other historic homes become available within the Blanden Memorial Art Museum area, purchase and preserve them for cultural and historic activities including the further expansion of the Blanden Memorial Art Museum.

Strategy C.3.13: Recruit emotion buying retail stores such as Abercrombie & Fitch, GAP, Old Navy, Limited Two, American Eagle Outfitters, Victoria's Secret, Banana Republic, Guess, and Ann Taylor to locate in "Downtown Center" to expand the retail sector into a destination place for the city.

Strategy C.3.14: Establish adjacent perimeter parking and off-street parking and redirect traffic away from "Downtown Center" to create a pedestrian only shopping, cultural, entertainment and park environment that connects to the Des Moines River and "Board Walk" Complex.

## ENVIRONMENT

### D.1: A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

#### Vision Statement

One of the wisest things that the city did, two decades ago, was to ensure the adequate supply and security of fresh water for the city and extended community. The in city lakes and major area lakes and reservoirs constructed along with the utilization of abandoned mining shafts to create a system of underground water cisterns provides one of the most attractive incentives for people wishing to relocate to Fort Dodge. The lakes provide additional recreational and housing development opportunities. The underground storage facility provides additional water for geothermal needs and water for livestock production and manufacturing. It also provides a water supply secure from terrorist and other sources of contamination. In anticipation of the Federal and State governments placing restrictions on new or expanded use of fresh water as part of a national water conservation program, the city's additional sources have reduced the dependency on the city's bored wells and increased capacity. The lakes and underground cisterns are replenished each year from the excess flow of the Des Moines River and Lizard Creek and the snow removed from parking lots and streets each year. The sale of the city's excess capacity of fresh water to other water district suppliers has proven to be a revenue source for further development of the system of lakes, reservoirs and underground water cisterns.

To further protect the water supply, the city supported the development of bio-mass as an alternative energy source to help eliminate the waste from reaching the water table and water

supplies. Each resident and business owner participated in a tree planting program that has resulted in the most beautiful forested community in the Midwest. The additional foliage has reduced the erosion of the soil into the streams and water supplies and provides food and shelter for a variety of abundant wildlife. It also serves as a natural weather break for the community. The natural appearance of all the streams has been preserved through easements on both sides of each stream. Different types of native and sport fish are raised in a fishery and set free in the streams to entice tourist and fishing, camping, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, and other types of water activities.

The city has worked with other governments to minimize adverse impacts to the region's air and water quality. Growth policies and development standards have reduced automobile dependency; many area residents are able to walk or bicycle to most daily activities. Cluster developments, walkable neighborhoods and nearby services are designed to generate less traffic and require shorter distances to shop or work.

Streams and drainage ways passing through the City receive less storm water runoff and pollution due, in part, to policies on low impact design, tree preservation, protection of wetlands, landscaped parking areas, and vegetated buffer strips adjoining stream channels and roadsides. New and expanding industries in the City are known to be good environmental stewards. Solid waste levels have been substantially reduced through conservation and recycling efforts.

## **POLICIES FOR VISION D.1: A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Policy D.1.1: The city shall plan for development of communities that are walkable and pedestrian-friendly, and less dependent on the individual automobile.

Policy D.1.2: Compact, mixed use developments shall be encouraged so as to facilitate walking, biking and transit options.

Policy D.1.3: Higher density residential development should be designed to be compatible with opportunities for public transit services.

Policy D.1.4: Runoff and drainage from development shall be of a quality and quantity as near to natural conditions as possible.

Policy D.1.5: Site plans for commercial and multi-family development should demonstrate a good faith effort to preserve the natural features of the site, including existing topography and significant existing vegetation (i.e. avoid clear cutting)

Policy D.1.6: A combination of incentives and disincentives to protect existing trees and/or require the replacement of trees removed for development should be implemented.

Policy D.1.7: The environmental benefits of low impact development, including the use of vegetated roadside drainage swales, shall be achieved through planning and site development. Requirements for curb and gutter shall be reserved to urban level development that is served by stormwater collection.

Policy D.1.8: Local governments shall require the retention of a vegetated riparian buffer (natural or planted) along all creeks, rivers, lakes and other non-privately held water bodies in the City of Fort Dodge.

Policy D.1.9: Large parking lots shall have landscaped planting islands and perimeter buffer strips and may use other materials and design technologies to intercept and absorb runoff from the parking surface. Parking requirements shall be carefully gauged by land use so as not to create excessive paved surface areas.

Policy D.1.10: Development activities in the 100-year floodplain shall be carefully controlled. If development must occur, low intensity uses such as open space, recreation and adequately buffered agricultural activities shall be preferred.

Policy D.1.11: Local economic development and industrial recruitment efforts shall focus on businesses and industries that have a clean air and water quality impact.

Policy D.1.12: The city shall encourage the construction of energy efficient structures, including the use of “Green Building” (i.e. using renewable material and energy resources) design.

Policy D.1.13: The city shall continue to pursue a variety of solid waste reduction strategies, including educational programming on waste prevention, recycling and reuse.

Policy D.1.14: The city shall encourage residential composting and mulching.

Policy D.1.15: Land uses that, by nature, pose a higher risk of surface and groundwater contamination shall be located in areas less susceptible to such contamination. Such uses might include, for example, junk yards, landfills, chemical storage, etc.

## **STRATEGIES FOR VISION D.1: A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Strategy D.1.1: Prepare and apply design standards for pedestrian friendly circulation within commercial and residential areas.

Strategy D.1.2: Seek funding sources to provide sidewalks, bikeways and pedestrian friendly amenities on area streets.

Strategy D.1.3: Prepare a citywide comprehensive drainage and flood management plan, including public and private actions in support of plan implementation. Prepare sub-area plans as a follow-on activity to identify specific actions needed in other areas. Seek ways to maintain drainage districts created by past actions.

Strategy D.1.4: Develop ordinances and regulations for improving and maintaining the stormwater drainage system throughout the city. Require newly created drainage systems or drainage districts, whether public or private, to have a permanent mechanism in place for the on-going maintenance of such systems or districts.

Strategy D.1.5: Prepare a tree preservation ordinance clearly identifying those situations where varying degrees of tree removal shall be allowed and/or tree replacement shall be required. The intent of such an ordinance shall be to prevent unnecessary clear cutting of development sites.

Strategy D.1.6: Prepare ordinance amendments setting forth design standards for planting islands and perimeter landscaping designed to absorb stormwater runoff from parking lots.

Strategy D.1.7: Map significant environmental corridors and other lands in the city and prepare management plans to reserve their integrity.

Strategy D.1.8: Develop a more intense education program locally on the importance of recycling and the cessation of littering and dumping.

Strategy D.1.9: Develop an urban forestry program for the City of Fort Dodge.

Strategy D.1.10: Establish a clean corporate citizen award campaign.

Strategy D.1.11: Establish an inter-jurisdictional task force to agree upon riparian buffer standards throughout the county adjoining area streams, lakes, ponds, and other non-privately held water bodies.

Strategy D.1.12: Re-examine parking requirements in local ordinances with an eye toward reducing parking spaces for some types of uses. The intent would be to avoid excessive parking requirements while minimizing the amount of impervious surface area and volume of stormwater runoff.

## **D.2: CITIZENS ACTIVE AND INVOLVED**

### **Vision Statement**

Area citizens show a keen interest in the affairs of their local government. There is a can-do spirit driven by civic pride and revealed through broad community involvement. Local governing boards and committees have no shortage of interested, qualified people willing to serve. Area citizens are heavily involved in civic clubs and organizations; volunteerism is a constant source of energy as it is poured into the institutions and organizations that work to improve the area. Local government officials routinely seek the views of their constituents on growth and development issues. During the development review process, great emphasis is placed on effective communication and consensus among all parties, including elected officials, planning board members, other local advisory boards, the developer, local government staff, and the public.

### **POLICIES FOR VISION D.2: CITIZENS ACTIVE AND INVOLVED**

Policy D.2.1: City boards and commissions should be roughly representative of the constituent voting population of the planning area (e.g. youth, minorities, income groups, geography, etc.)

Policy D.2.2: Public involvement shall be encouraged in decisions on land use and development by making the public aware of proposed developments at the earliest lawful opportunity, as well as fostering communication between developers and the general public.

Policy D.2.3: Neighborhood and special area planning shall be encouraged to foster public involvement in the preparation of closely tailored, action-oriented special area plans and improvements. Public participation should be a central, on-going feature of such plans.

Policy D.2.4: The City of Fort Dodge website should have quick links to all other local governments in the county to facilitate convenient access to public information by area citizens.

## **STRATEGIES FOR VISION D.2: CITIZENS ACTIVE AND INVOLVED**

Strategy D.2.1: The City of Fort Dodge website should be designed to direct residents to the correct government information for their location by using the resident's address and/or zip code.

Strategy D.2.2: The city's website should have a permanent feature identifying opportunities for greater citizen involvement in city affairs. Openings on appointed boards and committees should be identified along with information concerning the duties of each board or committee. Opportunities for employment or to volunteer for local government service programs should also be identified.

Strategy D.2.3: Prepare an assessment of the demographic composition of appointed boards and committees throughout the city. Compare the composition of these boards to their constituent populations. Set flexible goals to make appointments that roughly approximate the demographics of the area each board serves.

Strategy D.2.4: When preparing the planning process for any new planning initiative, design the scope of work around key opportunities for citizen input.

Strategy D.2.5: Evaluate how the Internet, newspapers, radio, and cable television might be better employed to inform area citizens of the activities and programs of the city, as well as decisions made by their elected officials.

Strategy D.2.6: Authorize a random survey of citizen preferences concerning services and priorities of city government. Re-administer the survey every other year to track changes in citizen priorities.

Strategy D.2.7: Establish an orientation video for new citizens to the area, viewable on the city's website and/or cable television familiarizing new comers to city services and identifying opportunities to get involved.

### **D.3: PRESERVED OPEN SPACE, RURAL CHARACTER AND COMPATIBLE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Vision Statement**

The city is known for its parks, open spaces, trees, pedestrian and bicycle trails. Connectivity of the streets, trails and open spaces enables the entire city to sever as a park. Growth management policies have directed new development away from prime agricultural areas, significant open spaces, and environmentally sensitive lands. The City of Fort Dodge has worked effectively to place urban infrastructure within or adjoining existing urban areas. Urban services, such as centralized water and sewer, roads, schools and parks, have been strategically placed to facilitate compact, contiguous growth, rather than promoting leapfrog developments in the midst of productive farmland. New development has been encouraged to occur in the form of full service, mixed use communities, rather than a series of unrelated, single use,

Community leaders have navigated a careful course, allowing for shopping and services convenient to nearby residential areas, while protecting these same areas from incompatible commercial encroachment. Local development regulations have controlled the types of services allowed near residential areas, as well as their size and physical design. New and rehabilitated commercial buildings exhibit well-groomed landscaping, and attractive signage, oftentimes with a distinctive architectural design. Previously vacant commercial and industrial buildings have been renovated and adapted for use as cultural facilities, retail enterprises, office and institutional use, innovative housing, and as small business development centers. Policies have been implemented to prevent indiscriminate abandonment and prolonged vacancies of “big boxes” left behind for “bigger boxes”. All properties, facilities and parking areas are maintained to an attractive appearance level or removed and returned to greenspace at the owner’s expense.

#### **POLICIES FOR VISION D.3: PRESERVED OPEN SPACE, RURAL CHARACTER AND COMPATIBLE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Policy D.3.1: An urban area shall be identified and mapped where urban level development and redevelopment is to be especially encouraged and where a full range of urban services, including centralized water and sewer, as well as stormwater management services, are already available or can be provided in a timely, cost effective manner.

Policy D.3.2: An urban fringe area shall be identified and mapped where urban level development and redevelopment is to be accommodated and where a full range of urban services, including centralized water and sewer, as well as stormwater management services, can be provided within the next 10 to 15 years.

Policy D.3.3: Rural areas shall be identified and mapped where development at a non-urban density is to be encouraged and where on-site sewer services (i.e. septic tanks) are most appropriate.

Policy D.3.4: Community areas shall be identified and mapped to include where a mixture of community level land uses is to be encouraged to help meet the housing, shopping and employment needs of residents.

Policy D.3.5: Conservation areas shall be identified and mapped to include 100 year floodplains, riparian buffers along streams, Natural Heritage Areas, critical wildlife habitat, public parks, and other significant, limited or irreplaceable natural areas. Development, if any, should be limited and attentive to the protection of environmental features.

Policy D.3.6: Urban level development standards shall be developed and applied within the urban and urban fringe areas (e.g. sidewalks, streetlights, storm water improvements, etc.). Such standards may be modified when site-specific conditions warrant a more environmentally sensitive, low impact approach. Allowances may also be made for historic areas.

Policy D.3.7: Rural level development standards shall be developed and applied within the sub-urban fringe and rural areas of the city (e.g. no curb and gutter, no streetlights, etc.).

Policy D.3.8: Regardless of location on the growth strategy map, new development should occur at densities appropriate for the site. Density factors shall include whether the site is within an environmentally sensitive area, the type of sewage treatment available, the topography and drainage of the site, the capacity of transportation facilities serving the site, the proximity of the site to other existing services, and other relevant factors.

Policy D.3.9: New development and infill development shall be especially encouraged in locations where a full range of urban services and infrastructure (i.e. schools, fire stations, water and sewer facilities, parks, and roads) is already in place, and where the public sector will not incur the full cost for building new facilities to serve the area.

Policy D.3.10: Local government policies shall seek to conserve rural area agricultural lands having a high productive potential for appropriate agricultural use.

Policy D.3.11: Actions concerning infrastructure (e.g. schools, parks, utilities) and regulations shall direct new development first to targeted growth areas rather than “leapfrogging” to locations in the midst of farmland and green space.

Policy D.3.12: Environmentally sensitive areas shall be identified and managed so as to protect them from incompatible land uses.

Policy D.3.13: Floodprone areas shall be conserved for the valuable open space, environmental and flood hazard benefits they provide and shall be managed for suitable land use activities.

Policy D.3.14: All park and recreation master plans shall include open space, trees, greenways and natural areas as key components.

Policy D.3.15: Conservation easements shall be promoted as a means of providing appropriate open space areas and corridors for public use, while also providing tax benefits to the donor.

Policy D.3.16: All land that is set aside for open space shall be managed by a community association, non-profit organization, government authority or other suitable entity.

Policy D.3.17: Cluster development shall be encouraged as an environmentally sound, economically cost effective, and visually attractive alternative to large lot subdivisions. Cluster development allows



the most suitable part of a land tract to be developed, leaving the unsuitable part (wetlands, poor soils, flood prone, etc.) in permanent open space.

Policy D3.18: Taxpayer investment in major roadways shall be protected by prohibiting uncontrolled strip development along the area's important traffic moving arteries. Beyond traffic considerations, the quality of development adjoining the area's travel corridors should have a positive influence on community image, appearance and economic development.

Policy D3.19: The rezoning residentially zoned land to commercial zoning solely because it adjoins a major highway or street shall be avoided. Proper design and/or buffering has shown that land tracts adjoining major streets can be properly developed for residential use.

Policy D.3.20: Office and institutional development may be encouraged to locate as a transitional land use between residential areas and activities of higher intensity, including major highways. Existing residences fronting on a once quiet roadway, now intensively traveled, may be candidates for conversion to office and institutional uses.

Policy D.3.21: To disperse traffic loads and allow for regional access, large-scale commercial development (i.e. regional shopping, distribution centers, major manufacturing, etc.) should be located at or near major intersections.

Policy D.3.22: Smaller scale commercial development should be clustered in "nodal" locations convenient to surrounding residential areas. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be installed along all streets leading to such commercial nodes.

Policy D.3.23: The consolidation of commercial driveways onto major streets and the connection of adjacent parking lots, so as to minimize unsafe turning movements into and out of the flow of traffic, shall be encouraged.

Policy D.3.24: Businesses shall be encouraged to replace existing, non-conforming signage with updated, conforming signage.

Policy D.3.25: The pedestrian-oriented character and architectural integrity of older commercial areas shall be preserved and strengthened.

Policy D.3.26: Off-street parking requirements for older or specially designed commercial areas may be reduced in light of compensating factors such as on-street parking, and walking or transit access.

Policy D.3.27: The preservation, rehabilitation and appropriate adaptive reuse of older commercial areas shall be encouraged. Incentives may be employed for reutilizing existing commercial properties before rezoning additional land for commercial development.

Policy D.3.28: When a new business moves into a vacated business location, previously expansive, un-landscaped or under landscaped parking areas should be up-fitted with appropriate planting islands and perimeter landscaping.

Policy D.3.29: New or redeveloped commercial properties shall be designed and maintained so as to be compatible with the area in which they are located. Design standards for a large commercial

development adjoining a major street may be different than design standards for a smaller commercial property serving a residential area.

Policy D.3.30: The preferred design of commercial properties shall be: (1) buildings pulled up to the street so as to enclose the streetspace (2) parking to the side or rear and (3) windowed walls oriented toward public rights of way. Other design alternatives are also acceptable, so long as they fit in with the area in which they are located.

Policy D.3.31: Large commercial developments shall be adequately buffered from nearby residential areas. Buffering may include but not be limited to landscaping, berms, fences and walls as well as less intensive transitional land uses (e.g. office and institutional development, parks and open space, cemetery, etc.)

Policy D.3.32: When “big box” retail stores relocate to another “bigger box” location in the community, the company is strongly encouraged to find new occupants and make arrangements for the on-going maintenance of the building.

Policy D.3.33: Special design standards for big box retail stores shall be established so as to avoid accepting the “Anywhere USA” standard, minimal building design.

Policy D. 3.34: All facilities, properties, and parking areas shall be maintained to a safe and attractive level or removed and returned to greenspace at cost to the owner.

### **STRATEGY FOR VISION D.3: PRESERVED OPEN SPACE, RURAL CHARACTER AND COMPATIBLE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Strategy D3.1: Create development standards for application in the City of Fort Dodge. Involve all interested public and private sector interests in the creation of the standards as follows:

- Urban Development Standards for existing urban areas and properties within the Urban and Urban Fringe Areas. Include exceptions for environmentally sensitive or constrained sites.
- Rural Development Standards for properties not in an incorporated area and not within the Urban or Urban Fringe Areas.
- Small Town Development Standards as may be necessary to accommodate particular small town areas.
- Historic Area Development Standards and criteria for exceptions to more modern standards that would destroy the character of older areas.

Strategy D.3.2. Adopt and print a development standards booklet describing in both text and illustrations, the standards established under Strategy D3.1 above.

Strategy D.3.3: Establish specific criteria in area zoning ordinances for approving higher density development.

Strategy D.3.4: Identify and adopt incentives for encouraging infill development on sites where urban services are already in place.

Strategy D.3.5: All new developments should address their connectivity to other pedestrian and bicycle friendly areas, trails and the development of parks, green space and the preservation of trees.

Strategy D.3.6: Prepare an inventory of environmentally sensitive areas and determine their associated values worth protecting. Use this information to determine appropriate land use activities for these areas and to prepare appropriate management tools.

Strategy D.3.7: Acquire and distribute or prepare, as necessary, informational material concerning the dedication of conservation easements and the tax advantages available to property owners.

Strategy D.3.8: Prepare a cluster development provision for inclusion in all zoning ordinances. Include criteria that identify the most appropriate locations and situations in which to apply the cluster development concept.

Strategy D.3.9 Prepare an open space and greenway master plan for all of the City of Fort Dodge.

Strategy D.3.10: The city should establish additional tools, as well as a reliable, long term funding mechanism for the acquisition of open space to keep pace with area growth and development.

Strategy D.3.11: Provide for low density zoning for areas outside the urban services area.

Strategy D.3.12: Prepare an inventory and accounting of existing commercially zoned land and vacant buildings with an eye toward future commercial development needs and preferred development patterns.

Strategy D.3.13. Prepare design standards for new commercial development at two scales—large-scale automobile-oriented development and smaller scale pedestrian-oriented/neighborhood commercial development.

Strategy D.3.14: Prepare special neighborhood level plans for areas undergoing a transition from residential to commercial development and the reverse.

Strategy D.3.15: Reexamine parking requirements for older commercial areas or specially designed new commercial areas.

Strategy D.3.16: Identify possible incentives to encourage the revitalization and reuse of existing commercial properties.

Strategy D.3.17: Prepare ordinance amendments setting forth requirements for the up-fitting the landscaping and design of existing expansive parking areas upon redevelopment of the property.

Strategy D.3.18: Reexamine buffering standards between commercial and residential development.

Strategy D.3.19: Prepare ordinance amendments setting forth requirements for the continued maintenance of all facilities, property, and parking areas to an attractive level or their return to greenspace at the cost of the owners.

## **D.4: INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS WELL MANAGED GROWTH**

### **Vision Statement**

Working from the ENVISION 2030 20-Year Vision, government and service providers have coordinated their policies and actions to direct new growth where it can best be served. The location of new development has been carefully coordinated with area plans for infrastructure, including transportation, water and sewer services, stormwater management, schools, parks and open space. Better and more quality-conscious development standards are applied consistently throughout the city, resulting in higher quality developments. Utilities are shown to be adequate and in place prior to the occupancy of the new developments they serve. Sewer services have been strategically employed to encourage urban level growth where it can best be accommodated. Advanced planning has allowed future school and park sites to be located and acquired ahead of their need. Planned highway corridors have been identified and mapped to ensure their protection during the development process. Similarly, future greenway corridors have been identified so that they may be incorporated into the design of new developments.

A citywide stormwater management plan has anticipated necessary drainage and retention facilities as various areas have been developed. All parts of the infrastructure have been repaired or replaced and maintained. Streets and roads are repaired or replaced and maintained. The placement of infrastructure under streets and roads has been avoided or corrected to eliminate damage to street surfaces and interruption of traffic. Infrastructure is located beneath side walks as they are added during neighborhood retrofits or during new construction. Power lines have been located underground in all new construction and as older facilities are renovated or replaced.

### **POLICIES FOR VISION D.4: INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS WELL MANAGED GROWTH**

Policy D.4.1: Recognizing that infrastructure has a powerful influence on growth and development, the availability of infrastructure (along with other factors) should determine where development will occur in the city, rather than the other way around.

Policy D.4.2: Advanced planning for all infrastructure facilities shall be supported and routinely updated. Facilities benefited by advanced planning shall include, at minimum, schools, health care, residential areas, roads, water, sewer, stormwater management, parks, recreation, and greenways.

Policy D.4.3: Development intensity should be matched, generally, with the availability of infrastructure. There will be locations, however, where infrastructure alone cannot make up for poor soils, inadequate topography (drainage), or other overriding factors.

Policy D.4.4: The City of Fort Dodge supports the provision of centralized water, storage throughout the city and county.

Policy D.4.5: Centralized sewage collection and treatment should be focused on a designated service area where sewer lines can be properly located and sized to serve a carefully projected customer base.

Policy D.4.6: Generally, infrastructure with excess capacity should be utilized first before spending additional monies to install and maintain new infrastructure elsewhere. Incentives may be necessary to direct new development and redevelopment to locations with excess infrastructure capacity.

Policy D.4.7: Adequate utilities infrastructure (water supply, sewage collection and treatment capacity, stormwater management, etc.) must be in place before the new development it serves may be occupied.

Policy D.4.8: New infrastructure shall not be placed in areas where it would encourage development incompatible with the ENVISION 2030 Vision, thereby jeopardizing this important economic driver in the region.

Policy D.4.9: New infrastructure shall not be placed in areas where it would encourage sprawling or scattered development in outlying rural areas. Exceptions may be made for major economic development initiatives, or a need to address an imminent public health emergency.

Policy D.4.10: Webster County shall be included in all major infrastructure planning locally. This will be especially important as Webster County and surrounding local communities seek mutually beneficial opportunities to enhance services.

Policy D.4.11: Additional raw water storage reserves shall be developed by utilizing existing lakes, creating inner city lakes, area reservoirs, and underground storage.

#### **STRATEGY FOR VISION D.4: INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS WELL MANAGED GROWTH**

Strategy D.4.1: Continue to support the Education Master Plan; offer input on future school locations relative to area growth and development objectives.

Strategy D.4.2: Continue to develop, support, fund and implement key transportation projects.

Strategy D.4.3: Develop and support area plans for the provision of water availability, storage, and services throughout the city and county.

Strategy D.4.4: Prepare a Stormwater Master Plan for the City of Fort Dodge.

Strategy D.4.5: Prepare a Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the City of Fort Dodge.

Strategy D.4.6: Prepare a Greenway, Trail, Walkway, Bikeway and Cart Trail Master Plan for the City of Fort Dodge.

Strategy D.4.7: Based on information contained in each of the various infrastructure master plans, prepare a Summary Needs Assessment For Infrastructure throughout the city. Review capital improvement plans from all organizations in light of the needs assessment. Update all capital improvement plans as appropriate.

Strategy D.4.8: Based on information contained in each of the infrastructure master plans, prepare maps showing the adequacy of infrastructure facilities throughout the city and extended community. Update them continuously. Develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, linking development approvals to the adequacy of infrastructure by location.

Strategy D.4.9: Prepare an in-house study evaluating various development incentives (both financial and non-financial) that might be employed to encourage growth to locate where existing infrastructure has excess capacity.

Strategy D.4.10: Include representatives of Webster County in all local advanced planning initiatives for infrastructure development. Continue their presence on the ENVISION 2030 Steering and Planning Committees.

Strategy D.4.11: The installation of infrastructure and determination of land use types near Webster County should be reviewed for consistency with the Webster County Plan.

## **D.5: A FRIENDLY AND BALANCED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

### **Vision Statement**

The City of Fort Dodge worked proactively with Webster County and the Iowa State Department of Transportation toward a balanced, multi-modal and citizen friendly transportation system. An efficient system of streets and roads, improved mass transit services, as well as more sidewalks, trails and bicycling facilities have proven to be critical components of the quality of community life and economic development. Advanced planning and follow-through has resulted in an efficient system of pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets and highways, and a well-connected network of sidewalks, trails and bike paths. It has become common practice for all road improvements to include pedestrian sidewalks, bike lanes and well designed cross walks. New public and private developments include sidewalks and bikeway connections. Mixed use and urban level developments have been employed to encourage walkability. The public transportation system is serving the needs of senior citizens and others who cannot or choose not to drive a car. All roads have been paved; existing roads are well maintained. The important connectors to major transportation routes have been completed and serve positive draw to the city.

The city continues to be the hub for commercial transportation. Design of streets and roads include extra off event parking for tour busses and transfer trucks, larger turning radius for busses and transfer trucks, turning lanes and easy recovery areas for busses and truckers who find they are going into restricted areas.

The airport serves an expanding customer base of private, corporate and commercial customers. Area around the airport was reserved for aviation related uses and businesses. Housed at the airport is the state's most advanced aircraft repair and reconditioning center.

## **POLICIES FOR VISION D.5: A BALANCED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

Policy D.5.1: Opportunities to enhance regional transportation connections between the city and other parts of the state and region shall be supported.

Policy D.5.2: Opportunities to enhance air passenger service at Fort Dodge Regional Airport shall be encouraged and supported. Land uses such as industrial development, warehousing and distribution shall be the preferred development activities on lands influenced by airport impacts (e.g. noise and safety issues).

Policy D.5.3: Pedestrian and bikeway facilities shall be encouraged as energy-efficient, healthful, and environmentally sound alternatives to the automobile. All future road construction and expansion within the city shall consider opportunities for bikeways and pedestrian ways within the project.

Policy D.5.4: Communities shall be designated and transformed into pedestrian friendly through redevelopment, new development standards and public improvements.

Policy D.5.5: As new neighborhoods are developed, at least two points of access/egress should be provided. The secondary access/egress may be gated with a breakaway wall but should allow for passage of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Policy D.5.6: The mobility needs of all citizens shall be recognized through the provision of transportation alternatives to the automobile.

Policy D.5.7: A city and area-wide trail, bikeway and pedestrian way network should be developed, funded, and implemented as a priority of the city's transportation plan.

Policy D.5.8: Access to the area's major roadways shall be managed so as to preserve the intended purpose of the highway and to protect the investment of taxpayer dollars used to build the facility. Methods may include, for example, limited driveway access, minimum lot frontages, the use of service roads and parallel access roads, connections between adjoining parking lots, etc.

Policy D.5.9: The completion of the extension of Highway 20 shall be supported as a priority highway improvement project for the City of Fort Dodge.

## **STRATEGIES FOR VISION D.5: A BALANCED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

Strategy D.5.1: Re-examine the regional transportation plan in light of growth. (For the past 20 years, the City of Fort Dodge has been essentially a declining to stable population with little or no growth.)

Strategy D.5.2: Develop, fund and implement the city's portion of the area-wide trail, bikeway, and pedestrian way master plan.

Strategy D.5.3: In keeping with a new trail, bikeway and pedestrian master plan, require sidewalks, trails and bike lanes as part of street construction standards for new developments and

redevelopments in locations identified by the plan. Allow for narrower automobile travelways in conjunction with bike lanes on lightly traveled residential streets.

Strategy D.5.4: Reexamine area development standards to evaluate the need for improved pedestrian systems (sidewalks, greenways, etc.) in residential developments.

Strategy D.5.5: Seek funding sources to provide sidewalks, trash receptacles, street furniture, lighting, etc. to improve pedestrian-oriented areas.

Strategy D.5.6: Reexamine area development standards to require bus shelters or, at a minimum, bus pull offs in new higher density recreational, residential and commercial developments.

Strategy D.5.7: Continue to support development standards that require parking lot connections and shared driveway access for commercial developments whenever possible.

## **D.6: QUALITY HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Vision Statement**

The City of Fort Dodge communities offer a multitude of quality housing choices, including a predominance of single-family homes, but also truly urban housing forms such as townhouses, condominiums, lofts and apartments. Housing has been developed to meet the different preferences of active retirees, seniors, health and social services workers, creative workers, and knowledge workers with a focus on the creation of a sense of community. New neighborhoods are often developed with a neighborhood school being the central feature along with compatible neighborhood services. Because services are close at hand, such neighborhoods encourage walking and reduce auto dependency. Consistent zoning practices have protected existing and planned neighborhoods from incompatible, large scale, commercial development.

Affordable housing needs have been met in greater measure by smaller accessory garage apartments, granny flats, lofts and apartments over shops or small clusters of multifamily housing. Older existing neighborhoods have experienced an extreme makeover and with city codes in place property and buildings have remained attractive and an attraction to the city or have been removed and returned to greenspace. Vacant lots are attractively maintained by the owner or converted to city property. All neighborhoods, schools, recreation venues, parks, Friendship Haven, "Downtown Central" have been connected to the Des Moines River Trail Network and its tributary walkways, bikeways, and greenspaces.

### **POLICIES FOR VISION D.6: QUALITY HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Policy D.6.1: A variety of housing types in locations consistent with their characteristics and level of services required shall be accommodated.



Policy D.6.2: Factors used to determine preferred locations for large multi-family developments shall include: close proximity to employment and shopping centers, access to major thoroughfares and transit systems, the availability of public services and facilities, storm water management issues, access, to the network of trails, bikeways and walkways, and compatibility with adjacent areas and land uses.

Policy D.6.3: Access to higher intensity development shall generally not be permitted through an area of lower intensity development. For example, access to a large multi-family development, major new park facility, or other large traffic generator shall not be permitted through a single-family residential area.

Policy D.6.4: Affordable housing needs shall be met through an array of rental and home ownership options including apartments, townhouses, granny flats, carriage houses (garage apartments), single family site built homes, and accessory living units.

Policy D.6.5: The particular housing preferences and needs of active retirees, senior citizens and the disabled shall be recognized in policies and actions regarding residential development.

Policy D.6.6: Incentives may be provided for infill development and the rehabilitation of existing housing already provided with urban services to acknowledge the lower service and infrastructure costs to the taxpayer. However, development requiring the expansion of services and infrastructure may be required to assist in the cost of such service expansions

Policy D.6.7: Innovative and flexible land planning and development practices shall be encouraged to create neighborhoods which provide walkways, trails, bikeways, greenspaces and better safeguard land, water, energy and historic resources.

Policy D.6.8: Existing neighborhoods shall be protected from encroachment by incompatible land uses. At the same time, convenient services designed to be compatible with nearby residential uses may be permitted at an appropriate level of design and scale.

Policy D.6.9: New infill development shall be architecturally compatible with existing structures, landscape features and the streetscape within its vicinity. Efforts by neighborhood associations to establish their own standards for development compatibility shall be encouraged.

Policy D.6.10: Residential areas that have become completely infused or surrounded by nonresidential uses may undergo an orderly conversion to higher density residential development or other compatible land uses.

Policy D.6.11: Housing throughout the city shall be required to meet or exceed minimum housing and nuisance abatement standards to eliminate unlawful activity and blight. Individual structures that have declined to levels beyond reasonable rehabilitation and repair shall be removed so as not to adversely affect the economic health of other nearby structures. All vacant lots shall be cleared of trash and maintain an attractive appearance.

Policy D.6.12: Proposed residential development that would expose residents to the harmful effects of incompatible development or to environmental hazards shall be prohibited.

Policy D.6.13: All forms of housing development should be discouraged from “leapfrogging” into the countryside, thereby destroying the rural character of the county, breaking up large farmland areas, and making the provision of urban services more costly to taxpayers.

Policy D.6.14: Detailed neighborhood and small area planning shall be supported so as to encourage greater resident involvement and closer attention to area specific issues and needs.

Policy D.6.15: Compact, full service neighborhoods offering a compatible mixture of appropriately scaled and designed structures (homes, schools, churches, parks, shopping and services, etc.) and less dependency on the automobile, shall be encouraged.

Policy D.6.16: Manufactured home parks and manufactured home placements shall be limited.

Policy D.6.17: To preserve the traffic moving function of the area’s major travel ways, prevent traffic accidents and avoid land locking interior land parcels for economic development, residential and commercial strip development along major roadways shall be discouraged.

Policy D.6.18: Residential development may be encouraged to back up to major roadways, provided that adequate buffering (attractive berms, walls, significant vegetation, etc.) is provided along rear property lines adjoining the roadway. Buffering shall be visually opaque and provide for substantial noise deadening.

## **STRATEGIES FOR VISION D.6: QUALITY HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Strategy D.6.1: Examine area zoning ordinances concerning new provisions that would encourage the development of housing suitable for active retirees, senior citizens or disabled persons and consider removing provisions that might discourage the same.

Strategy D.6.2: Create incentives for infill development on sites with urban services already in place.

Strategy D.6.3: Establish that new developments requiring the expansion of schools, fire stations, utilities, roads and parks shall help provide for the cost of building such facilities, rather than the general taxpayer.

Strategy D.6.4: Establish design criteria for neighborhood services convenient to nearby residential areas.

Strategy D.6.5: Examine area zoning ordinances concerning provisions governing the placement and design of day care facilities in residential areas. Approval of such facilities in residential areas should require that standards be met to ensure compatibility.

Strategy D.6.6: Identify areas that would benefit from a special area plan. Rank them in order of priority, including which area appears most interested in getting involved in such an effort.

Strategy D.6.7: Reexamine standards for manufactured home parks and manufactured home placements as to their adequacy.

Strategy D.6.8: Re-examine subdivision regulations to discourage single-family lots and individual driveways from fronting on and having direct access to major roadways.

## **D.7: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AND EFFICIENCY**

### **Vision Statement**

Twenty years ago, the leaders of the City of Fort Dodge realized that their future rest with the future of the citizens and communities within the region. They implemented a culture and policy of inclusion and sharing rather than exclusion when it came to community and economic development. A sincere and continued effort to work with and assist other communities in accomplishing their vision and plans for growth continues today. The collective growth within the county and region has benefited everyone. Each community has been assisted in developing their own unique attractions that are jointly marketed to targeted areas around the world to attract tourist and residents. “Day tripping” tourists have become an important source for community and economic development throughout the region. With each community developing one or more unique attractions, the region has created an endless list of “Destination Places” that attract tourist and makes the region one of the most interesting places to live, work, play and stay. All of this resulted in communities and governments working together to successfully compete with the world instead of themselves.

Local communities, regional governments and organizations and the City of Fort Dodge have joined forces on many fronts to address matters of common interest. These matters include, for example: economic development, growth management, transportation, water and sewer services, open space preservation, and environmental quality, among others. Some local government services have been consolidated for efficiency and improved service. Other government functions have remained separate and coordinated. All local governments have benefited from an expanding tax base and cost effective innovations in service delivery. A renewed focus on frequent, effective communication between local government leaders and area residents has greatly enhanced decision making in the region.

### **POLICIES FOR VISION D.7: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION & EFFICIENCY**

Policy D.7.1: The city shall participate and support on-going intergovernmental sharing of information and services, planning on issues of common concern, including land use and development, housing, transportation, utilities, environmental management, economic development, law enforcement, emergency management, education, and recreation and tourism, among others.

Policy D.7.2: Multi-jurisdictional plans for infrastructure and services (e.g. transportation, recreation) shall be jointly prepared and periodically updated as area conditions change.

Policy D.7.3: Public and private sector efforts to plan for and promote the region as a coherent whole, including coordination with adjoining counties, shall be supported. At the same time, the unique identity and character of individual communities within the region shall be respected.

Policy D.7.4: Opportunities for consolidation of services shall be continually evaluated, particularly with regard to potential operational efficiencies and cost savings.

Policy D.7.5: Multi-jurisdictional boards and committees shall be supported as they evaluate and recommend improvements in the delivery of government services and infrastructure.

Policy D.7.6: Joint meetings, routinely held, shall be supported to allow elected and appointed board members, as well as key support staff, to better coordinate the planning and delivery of government services.

Policy D.7.7: All long range planning efforts shall be coordinated through an integrated joint planning committee. Countywide representation on the board shall be assured through either membership on the board or through inter-local agreements.

Policy D.7.8: The ENVISION 2030 Vision shall be employed as a central document for on-going joint discussions and planning efforts. Elected and appointed officials, as well as local government staff, should use the ENVISION 2030 Vision to facilitate discussion and action on issues of mutual concern.

## **STRATEGIES FOR VISION D.7: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AND EFFICIENCY**

Strategy D.7.1: All participating local governments should provide staffing and support to a Joint Planning Committee to share information and coordinate strategic plans to accomplish the ENVISION 2030 Vision.

Strategy D.7.2: As soon as possible after adoption of the ENVISION 2030 Vision, hold a joint meeting of key local government staff and officials to discuss the initial coordinated use of the policies and strategies.

Strategy D.7.3: Within six months after adoption of the ENVISION 2030 Vision, hold a joint meeting of key local government staff and officials to discuss progress on the ENVISION 2030 Vision with respect to routine use of the policies and implementation actions.

Strategy D.7.4: Within one year after adopting the ENVISION 2030 Vision, hold a joint meeting of local government staff and elected officials to discuss progress on the ENVISION 2030 Vision with respect to routine use of the policies and implementation actions. Continue meeting every six months for five years.

Strategy D.7.5: Update the implementation strategies section of the ENVISION 2030 Vision annually in January of each year, leading to the work program and budget setting process of each city department.

Strategy D.7.6: Continue the progress made in recent years with regard to improved planning coordination between Webster County and the City of Fort Dodge.

Strategy D.7.8: The City of Fort Dodge and Webster County should continue to address the joint coordination of community and economic development, services, and planning.

Strategy D.7.9: The joint support and participation with the Webster County Development organization should be continued and expanded when appropriate and feasible. The support of existing businesses and industries and the expansion, recruitment and development of new ones should continue to serve as the cornerstone of the county and city's community and economic development strategy.

## **D.8: SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR ALL**

### **Vision Statement**

Personal safety and security became very important to many people throughout the United States. As the population grew older, active retirees and senior citizens became attracted to the safe and secure environment provided by the City of Fort Dodge and extended community. The City of Fort Dodge and extended community became the number one place in America for active retirees and senior citizens partly because of the safety and security provided. As the city grew, local area law enforcement agencies, fire departments, emergency medical officials, district attorneys, judges and government employees operated with a common goal of bringing an enormous amount of attention and visibility to suspected crime centers and perpetrators. This resulted in the movement of those who commit crime to other parts of the country or to places of incarceration.

Area public safety personnel operate from substations closer to the populations they serve to become especially attuned to the issues and problems unique to each area of the city and extended community. Neighborhood watches and the use of active retirees to monitor streets, recreation areas and downtown have created a safe environment throughout the city. All public safety services have been continually upgraded in terms of communications capability, equipment, personnel, and advanced planning. By working together, area citizens and public safety officials have dramatically increased the sense of safety and security and reduced instances of violence and crime and enhanced fire protection and emergency medical services.

### **POLICIES FOR VISION D.8: SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR ALL**

Policy D.8.1: Development patterns and housing choices that support community policing and defensible space principles, e.g. mixed use development, defined public and private spaces, useful front porches, appropriate lighting, etc., shall be encouraged.

Policy D.8.2: Public-private partnerships such as neighborhood watch, that enable neighborhood groups to effectively partner with law enforcement agencies in preventing crime, shall be supported.

Policy D.8.3: The shared use of private and public buildings and facilities (county, municipal, other) shall be encouraged to allow public safety services (substations) to be located closer to the people and properties they serve.

Policy D.8.4: As an alternative to shared, fixed base substations, mobile law enforcement substations may be supported to allow law enforcement personnel to locate close to crime trouble spots.

Policy D.8.5: Incentive programs may be employed to encourage Public Safety personnel to live in selected neighborhoods.

Policy D.8.6: Public Safety classes and programs shall be offered in senior centers, recreation sites and community buildings throughout the city.

Policy D.8.7: The full resources of the city and extended community shall be used to bring enormous and unwanted attention and visibility to identified crime areas and perpetrators to the point that they stop their inappropriate activities, are incarcerated or leave the area.

Policy D.8.8: The city shall work cooperatively with other governmental agencies to create and maintain a safe and secure environment for all residents and businesses.

### **STRATEGIES FOR VISION D.8: SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR ALL**

Strategy D.8.1: Create an inventory of public buildings and facilities and equipment that may be suitable for the location of a community-policing substation and increased visibility. Compare these locations with high crime areas and potential patrol areas.

Strategy D.8.2: Purchase and equip one or more mobile law enforcement substations (trailers) that can be moved about the city in response to high crime locations and to bring attention and visibility.

Strategy D.8.3: Explore the technical feasibility and cost of enabling emergency vehicles to pre-empt traffic signal systems for faster response times.

Strategy D.8.4: Support a routine schedule (i.e. every 3 years) for evaluating the technical components, area coverage, and staffing needs of the police department, fire department, emergency response units, emergency medical services and the 911 system and emergency communications network and their ability to respond to different staged major events. Utilize the findings to further market the city's safe and secure environment.

Strategy D.8.5: Offer incentives (e.g. reduced trash collection fee?) for neighborhoods to organize and participate in the Neighborhood Watch program.

Strategy D.8.6: Develop and implement the police program authorizing paid "civilian" personnel to complete on-the scene traffic reports and non-personal injury complaints, thereby freeing up sworn officers on the police force to attend to other duties.

Strategy D.8.7: Implement and maintain a proactive information, educational and marketing campaign directed at eliminating the negative perception about the safety and security of the city and positioning the city as the safest place in the Midwest.

Strategy D.8.8: Provide ongoing training to the police, fire and emergency personnel to ensure the safety and security of all citizens are in the hands of the most proactive, friendly and best trained professionals.

Strategy D.8.9: Purchase radios and other communication equipment that enable law enforcement, fire department, emergency response, emergency medical and utility employees, from different agencies and government entities, to communicate with each other.

Strategy D.8.10: Develop train and deploy safety and security monitoring force consisting of active retirees to patrol, walkways, recreation areas, parks, trails, and the “Downtown Center”.

Strategy D.8.11: Implement a “Citizen Watch” program that is supported by a system of emergency call centers and surveillance cameras throughout the trails, bikeways, parks and recreational areas as well as strategic locations in the city that are directly connected to the police department and other active retiree staffed monitoring stations and other locations so that citizens can monitor while doing other activities such as eating at a restaurant.

Strategy D.8.12: Establish and support a “Neighbor to Neighbor” program that is staff by active retirees, seniors and other volunteer organizations that ensure each senior citizen will be communicated with each day by telephone.

Strategy D.8.13: Demonstrate a proactive and overwhelming show of force toward acts of crime.

## **D.9: ACTIVE RETIREES AND SENIOR CITIZENS RECRUITED AND WELL SERVED**

### **Vision Statement**

As a result of the city targeting active retirees and senior adults as a source of economic development, the active retiree and senior citizen population of the City of Fort Dodge has significantly grown. Public and private services responded to meet the needs of this important group. As active retirees and seniors have sought and found ways to maintain their mobility and quality of life, they have recognized the City of Fort Dodge as the most accessible, mobile, and safest and entertaining city in the Midwest. An efficient system of friendly streets and highways and a well-connected network of sidewalks, trails, walkways, bike, cart paths, and public and private transit services fulfill a critical need and sets the city apart from all others.

Many new forms of housing have been created allowing active retirees and seniors to live close to the services they require and providing a greater amount of independence and quality of life. In addition to traditional senior citizen housing, many active retirees and seniors choose to live in independent living or assisted living housing, and accessory housing close to an extended family, providing for the right balance between independent and assisted living. Recreation and other enrichment activities for active retirees and seniors have become a large part of community recreation programs. Convenient access to health care, assisted living and social services has required the establishment of regional “one-stop” senior citizen centers at strategic locations in the city. The development of “Downtown Center” and the cultural, dining, shopping and entertainment found there provides an endless list of things to experience.

## **POLICIES FOR VISION D.9: ACTIVE RETIREES AND SENIOR CITIZENS RECRUITED AND WELL SERVED**

Policy D.9.1: Local governments shall encourage development patterns and housing choices that allow for cost-effective and convenient transportation options for active retirees, senior citizens, including walking, biking, golf carts, and transit services shall be encouraged.

Policy D.9.2: Continue support for a coordinated program of recreation, health care, and social services to active retirees, senior citizens, through partnerships of public, private, non-profit, charitable and faith-based organizations.

Policy D.9.3: Mixed use developments that provide housing suitable for active retirees and senior citizens should be encouraged. Such mixed uses might include basic services such as food and drug stores, as well as health care providers.

Policy D.9.4: A variety of housing types and prices suitable for active retirees and senior citizens should be planned and developed. Included among these options should be accessory housing forms that allow seniors to live near or adjacent to family in some newly developed neighborhoods shall be encouraged.

Policy D.9.5: Given the rapidly growing active retiree and senior citizen population, priority shall be given to the expansion of cultural, recreation, and other services, in such a way that the delivery of such services can be made more accessible.

Policy D.9.6: Recreation programming shall include leisure activities suitable for people of all ages, including both indoor and outdoor pursuits. Parks and other common areas shall be accessible to individuals with varied disabilities. Active participation type recreation and sports activities and leagues for active retirees and senior citizens shall be a part of the recreational programming.

Policy D.9.7: Public spaces known to be frequented by active retirees and senior citizens should be fitted with design features that are elder friendly, such as convenient parking, drinking water, benches, trash receptacles, curb cuts and ramps, signalized crosswalks, and handrails.

Policy D.9.8: The special public safety and crime prevention needs of senior citizens shall be recognized as a priority in public safety and law enforcement activities.

## **STRATEGIES FOR VISION D.9: ACTIVE RETIREES AND SENIOR CITIZENS RECRUITED AND WELL SERVED**

Strategy D.9.1: Create an inventory of services and opportunities that encourages independence and quality of life for active retirees and senior citizens. Use the inventory to market these services to current residents and potential newcomers.

Strategy D.9.2: Initiate partnerships between local government, businesses, non-profits and educational institutions to promote the development of livable and senior friendly community amenities.



Strategy D.9.3: Commission an active retiree and senior center(s) activities, space and needs study with cost estimates and funding opportunities.

Strategy D.9.4: Establish special anti-scam and neighborhood watch programs in local law enforcement efforts.

Strategy D.9.5: Include consideration of active retiree and senior citizen needs when preparing special area plans, corridor studies, park plans, etc.

Strategy D.9.6: Amend local land use ordinances to create one or more new zoning districts where accessory housing is permitted as part of a new development, allowing senior citizens to live in an extended family situation. (It is not recommended that accessory housing be added to properties in an existing neighborhood, unless already permitted within the applicable zoning district.)

Strategy D.9.7: Develop, fund and implement an aggressive marketing campaign targeting retirees and those planning for retirement for the purpose of recruiting them to remain or move to Fort Dodge and the extended community.

Strategy D.9.8: Identify employment opportunities for active retirees and senior citizens and encourage both private and public sectors to expand these opportunities.

Strategy D.9.9: Make the development of walkways, trails, bikeways, and golf cart paths around the east side of the Des Moines River and Lizard Creek and connecting to the west side “Downtown Center” a priority.

Strategy D.9.10: Relocate the Old Fort Museum to provide for additional expansion of Friendship Haven, Iowa Central Community College, and Trinity Medical Center.

## **ENERGY**

### **E.1: SUSTAINABLE TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY**

#### **Vision Statement**

The continued growth in population and expanded use of energy by developing economies and the United States has caused the cost of energy to become a major concern. Transportation habits and business cost are impacted on a daily basis. The City of Fort Dodge has a national reputation for the cleanest and least expensive sustainable energy in the United States. The City of Fort Dodge invested in storage and additional access to traditional fossil fuel energy sources. The city's investment in alternative energy to supplement fossil fuel sources has provided the city with both a source of energy and a sustainable revenue source for the city. The city's wind farm produces electricity that provides energy for all government facilities with the excess sold to citizens at reduced rates.

The pedestrian friendly design of communities, streets and trails and bike paths within streets has allowed citizens to reduce the amount of automobile use. The use of geothermal, solar and “Green”

construction techniques in new and refurbished developments has reduced the peak demand for fuel oil, natural gas and electricity. Solar energy provides the majority of the street lighting after the implementation of new energy efficient lights, motion sensitive light switches and the reduced use of street lights. Other energy conservation measures have reduced the need for energy significantly. The use by the city of bio-diesel and ethanol as fuel sources for all equipment and vehicles has reduced the dependency on gasoline. The city also utilizes methane gas from local bio-mass production and from the local solid waste landfills.

## **POLICIES FOR VISION E.1: SUSTAINABLE TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY**

Policy E.1.1: Expansion of alternative energy development within the region shall be supported.

Policy E.1.2: Building and development codes that encourage energy conservation and the use of alternative energy sources shall be supported.

Policy E.1.3: The planning and implementation of pedestrian friendly streets and roads, sidewalks, walkways, trails, bikeways, golf cart paths shall be a priority.

Policy E.1.4: Energy conservation and the use of alternative energy sources shall be supported.

## **STRATEGIES FOR E.1: SUSTAINABLE TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY**

Strategy E.1.1: In cooperation with other public organizations, conduct a study to determine the feasibility and cost of creating and maintaining a fleet of vehicles and equipment using alternative fuel sources.

Strategy E.1.2: Reexamine the placement of street lighting in new and existing developments to maximize coverage and at the same time conserving energy.

Strategy E.1.3: Implement a lighted outdoor business sign curfew to reduce the use of energy.

Strategy E.1.4: Conduct an information campaign on ways to reduce the use of energy at home and at work.

Strategy E.1.5: As existing vehicles are replaced or additional ones are purchased include options available for the use of fuels other than gasoline and diesel.

Strategy E.1.6: Implement as a priority, a system of pedestrian friendly streets and roads, sidewalks, walkways, trails, bikeways, and golf cart paths.

Strategy E.1.7: Reduce the traffic congestion at busy intersections.

Strategy E.1.8: With other government, public and private organizations, businesses and industries, conduct a feasibility study to determine the potential of creating and operating a wind farm as a source of energy and revenue.

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