



# City of Atlantic, Iowa Comprehensive Plan

Adopted: 2018

Southwest Iowa Planning Council



## CITY OF ATLANTIC

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## RESOLUTION

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A comprehensive plan is an official public document that sets forth the City's major policies concerning the future physical development of the community. The primary purposes of this plan are to generate goals for attaining a desirable development pattern and devise strategies and recommendations the city can follow to achieve these goals. Comprehensive plans are intended to address, at a minimum, the following development goals:

1. Protect economically productive areas.
2. Preserve cultural, historic, and archeological sites.
3. Encourage coordination and cooperation with nearby units of government.
4. Encourage land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal and utility costs.
5. Build community identity by revitalizing neighborhoods.
6. Provide an adequate supply of housing for individuals of all income levels throughout the community.
7. Provide adequate infrastructure and public services, and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
8. Promote the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities within the community.

## MISSION

Atlantic is a community rich in assets, including an attractive physical environment, a strong local economy and a good location. These advantages provide special opportunities for Atlantic as an activity and quality-of-life center for an entire region. The community's Mission is to define its future as it takes advantage of opportunities for improvement. This future shall grow development while maintaining the features of the community that make Atlantic distinctive.

9. Ensure that necessary resources such as power, water, and human capital, are available in enough supply so that the community is successful now and into the future.

The City of Atlantic Comprehensive Plan is adopted by ordinance of the City Council and should be used by City officials when revising and administering its zoning and other ordinances. The plan is designed to be a guiding vision so there is a consistent policy to follow with clear future goals for the residents of Atlantic.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PURPOSE

This comprehensive development plan for Atlantic has two fundamental purposes. The first provides an essential legal basis for land use regulation such as zoning and subdivision control. Second, a modern comprehensive plan presents a unified vision for a community, developed with input from citizens that establishes specific actions necessary to achieve that vision.

Communities undertake comprehensive planning to accomplish both specific and broad objectives. In Iowa, comprehensive plans are typically developed to perform one or more of the following functions:

- **Consensus Building** – the development of a sound plan necessitates broad public involvement. The very process can create new and productive links among individuals and groups. It is through these new communication channels that issues or problems can be resolved.
- **Goal Setting** – based on collective goals, the plan can act as the formal documentation and direction of the public's vision for future development and change.
- **Decision-Making Guide and Implementation** – economic development, public investment policies, and other expenditure decisions can be guided by a comprehensive plan. The principal effort in completing the plan is to ensure the final product includes policies and methods for achieving these outcomes. In doing so, the plan becomes a dynamic vehicle for action and decision-making.

The comprehensive plan should not be viewed as an ideal picture of the city at some distant point in the future. The very nature of community development involves gradual and incremental processes. No given date can accurately apply to goals, policies, and proposals expressed in the plan. As the circumstances change, the plan must be flexible enough to adapt.

Whether confronted with growth or decline, Atlantic will change. The hallmark of a successful business, family, or any other worthwhile ventures, is a framework for adapting to change. Therefore, we plan so that our limited resources will have the most impact on the quality of life. By choosing to follow an established direction, our efforts will provide safe and equitable opportunities for all citizens. The alternative is case-by-case, crisis-by-crisis decisions that reduce the value of everyone's efforts.

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## THE LEGAL ROLE

Communities prepare and adopt comprehensive plans to fulfill specific legal requirements. Section 414 of the Code of Iowa allows cities to adopt zoning and subdivision regulations to promote the “health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the community.” Land-use regulations such as zoning ordinances recognize that people in a community live cooperatively and have certain responsibilities to one another. These regulations establish rules that govern how land is developed within a municipality.

However, in Iowa as in most states, cities may not adopt land use ordinances without first adopting a comprehensive development plan. This requirement stems from the reality that in some communities in the past, not all land-use decisions were made with the best interests of the entire community and favored specific individuals to the detriment of others. By completing a comprehensive plan, the City demonstrates that its land-use decision-making is not arbitrary and has the best interests of the entire community in mind. This plan provides the legal basis for Atlantic to regulate land use and development.

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## THE COMMUNITY BUILDING ROLE

In addition to the legal role that a comprehensive plan plays, the plan has an even more significant role in improving the quality of life in the community. The plan establishes a picture of Atlantic's future, based on the participation of residents in the planning of their community. It goes beyond defining a vision to present a unified action plan that will implement the community's goals. The plan is designed as a working document, a document that both defines the future and provides a working program for realizing the city's great potential.

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## PLAN DEVELOPMENT

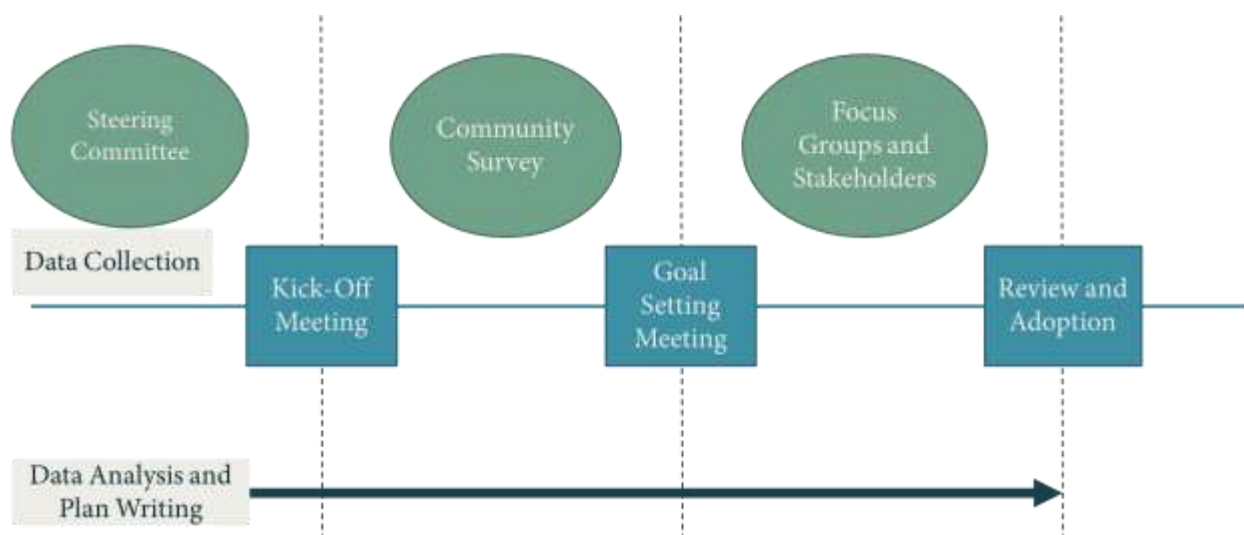
This plan was developed through both public participation and careful research. The first phase of plan

development involved gathering information to construct a comprehensive picture of the current conditions in Atlantic. This data was used to identify trends to better anticipate future conditions and needs. Much of this data was gathered from the US Census Bureau, also a great deal of information came from the City of Atlantic as well as other organizations in and around the city.

Once data was gathered and analyzed, a community survey was launched, and a series of public meetings were held to gather feedback from citizens and develop a set of goals for the city. These meetings were held at city hall and at other community events on a variety of evenings to give as many residents as possible an opportunity to attend at least one meeting. Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Zoning Board of adjustment, and the City Council were also sent individual invitations encouraging them to attend. A number of goals and objectives for the plan were identified in these sessions, which are discussed in more depth in the following sections.

After the initial public comment was gathered, the planners with Southwest Iowa Planning Council combined it with the research data and developed the first draft of the plan. This draft was presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission for their consideration and for public feedback. Following their review, SWIPCO staff revised the plan and brought it back to the Planning and Zoning Commission for approval. At this point the plan went on to the City Council, which held a series of public hearings on the plan.

Figure 1: Planning Process and Timeline



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## CONSENSUS BUILDING

One of the most important factors to consider is that the City of Atlantic's comprehensive plan is both a process and a product. Although broad representation by residents cannot guarantee the comprehensive plan will have unanimous support, it is essential to provide the opportunity to participate. A highly visible participation program is a critical component to the ultimate success of the plan.

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## COMMUNITY SURVEY

In an effort to garnish as much participation as possible, a brief community survey was mailed out to every residential address in the city. An electronic version of the survey was also available online throughout the entire planning process. Additionally, the planning team attended community events to share updates and gather feedback on the plan throughout the process.

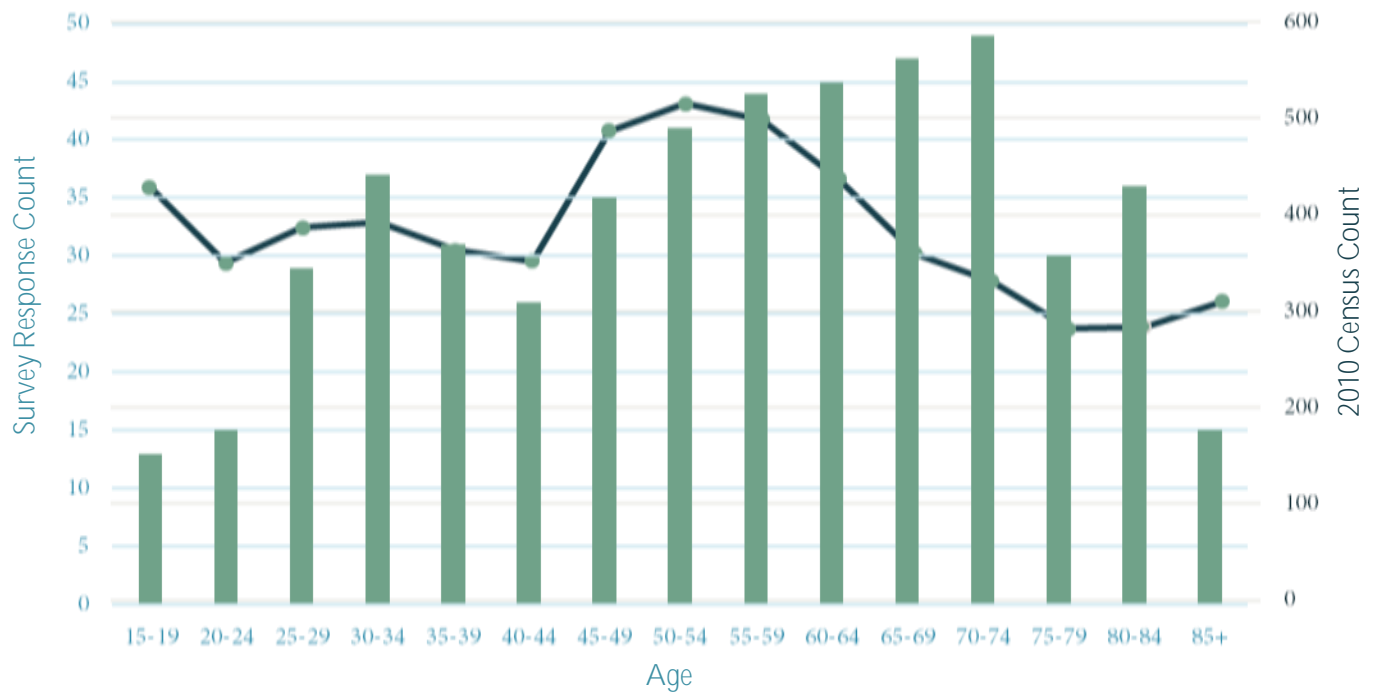
Community surveys were mailed out in July 2017 to residential addresses in the City of Atlantic. Updates and reminders were put out on social media through and other media outlets to remind people of the importance of completing and returning their survey. These surveys looked at a variety of topics and asked the recipient to give their feedback on each. Questions included topics such as the types of development that the community would support, current housing market, what the recipient likes most and least about Atlantic, gender, and occupation to name a few. Surveys were out for about a month before being collected to allow for adequate time for completion. A total of 515 survey responses were collected from the total 3,963 mailed out. The results of the survey will be called out in different chapters of the plan where it applies.

The following is a brief summary of the survey. There will be more specific discussion of the survey as it relates to topics in subsequent chapters.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The graph below shows the age distribution of the survey responders. The line represents the distribution of ages according to the U.S. Census. This was done to compare the distribution trend of the sample with the census. The graph below shows that there were more people ages 30-34 and over 60 represented by the survey than the 2010 census.

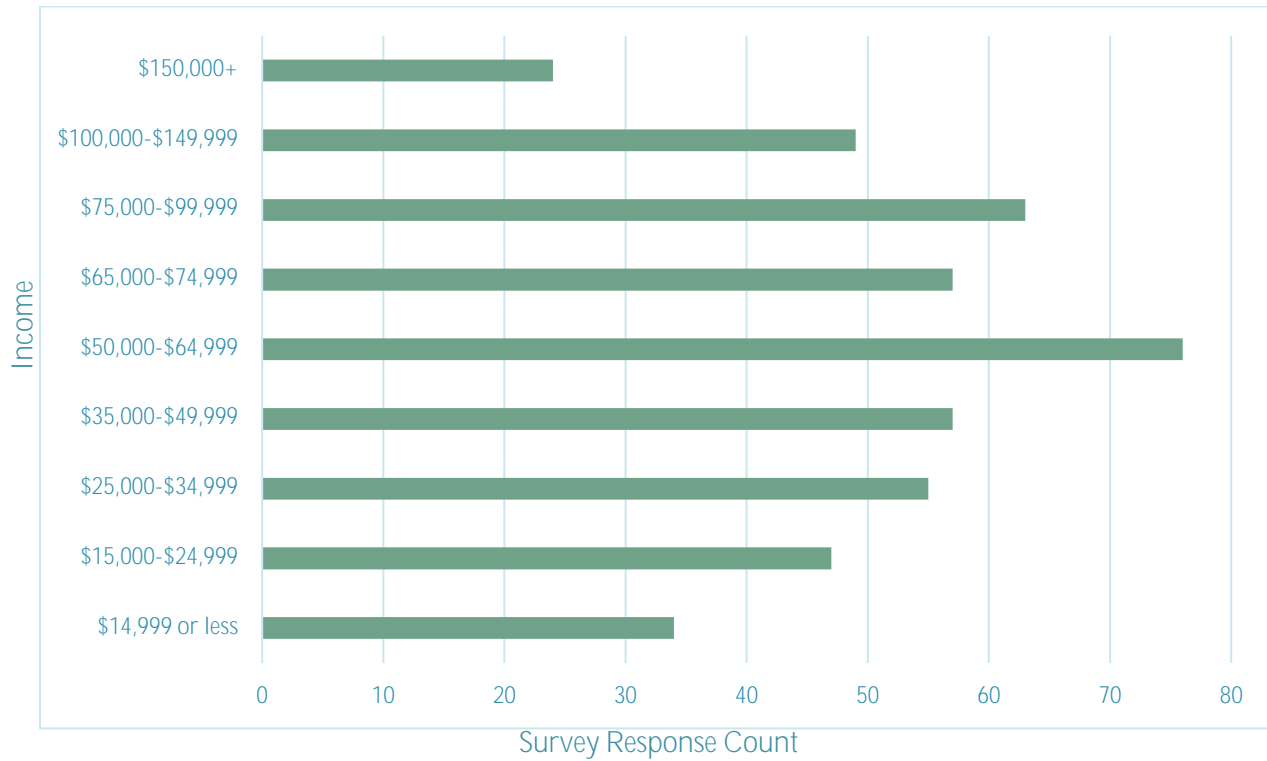
Figure 2 Age Distribution of Survey Respondents





The following graph shows income levels reported on the survey. When comparing the previous graph with the following, it can be noticed that the survey responses skewed more toward older and higher income level population.

Figure 3 Income Levels



Most of the survey respondents of the survey own their home and live in a single family house. The respondents that reported the ward in which they lived were evenly distributed. This means that there was an even distribution of respondents geographically throughout the community.

Figure 4 Owner Occupancy

### Rent/Own Your Home

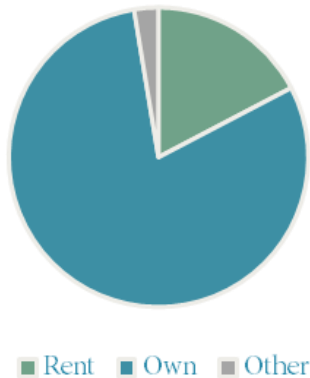
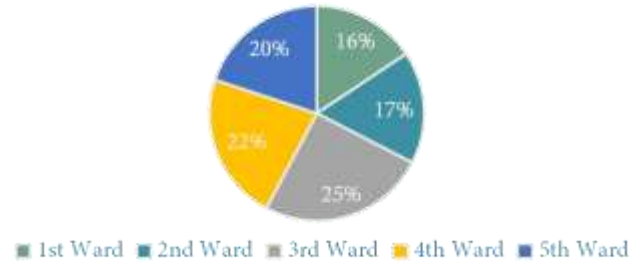


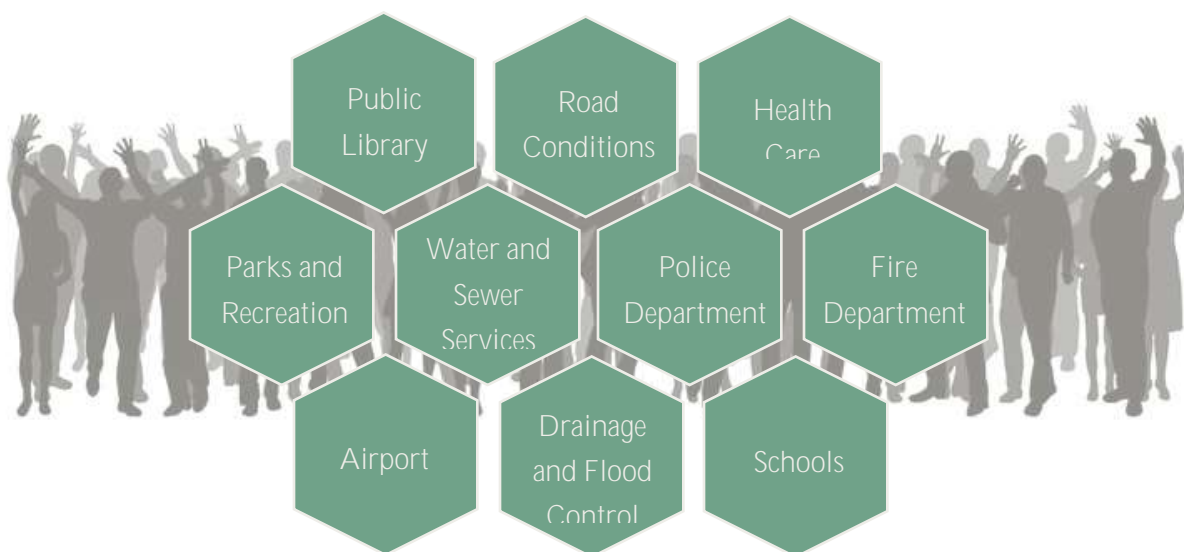
Figure 5 Ward Distribution

### Which Ward Do You Live In?



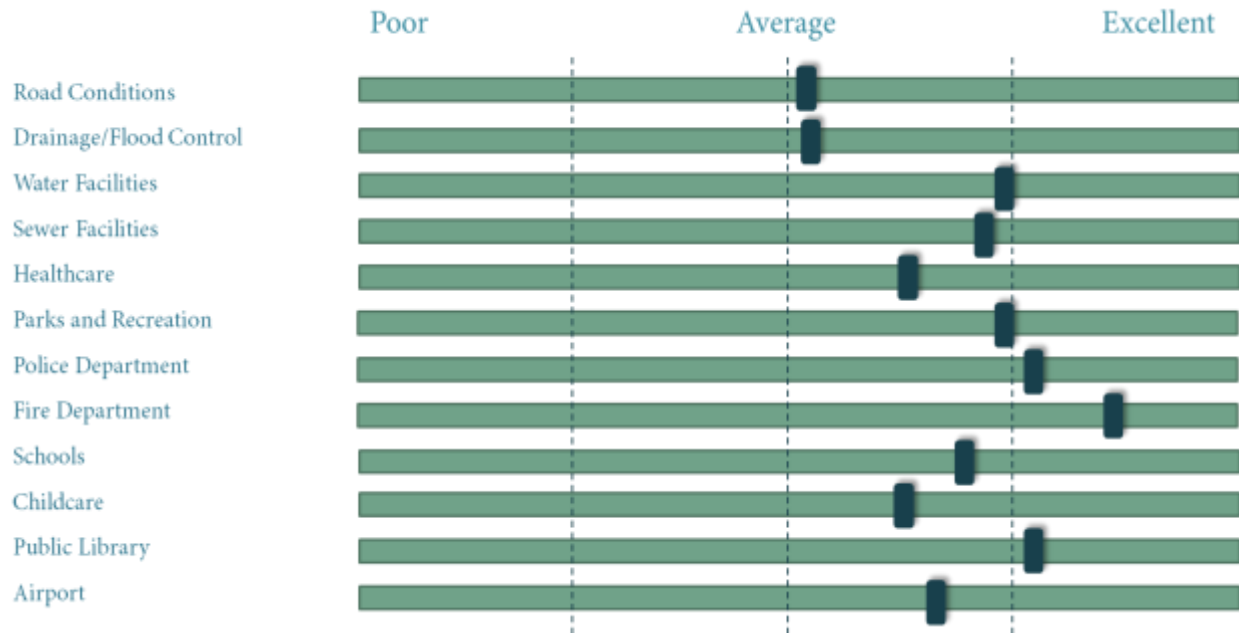
## PUBLIC FACILITIES RATING

Citizens were asked to rate various public services by giving each topic a score of excellent, good, average, fair, poor, or not sure. The categories were as follows:



When the scores were tallied, all of the categories ranked between average and excellent. The results indicated that the citizens of Atlantic are most satisfied with the fire and police departments and the public library. Road conditions and flood control ranked lowest of all the categories.

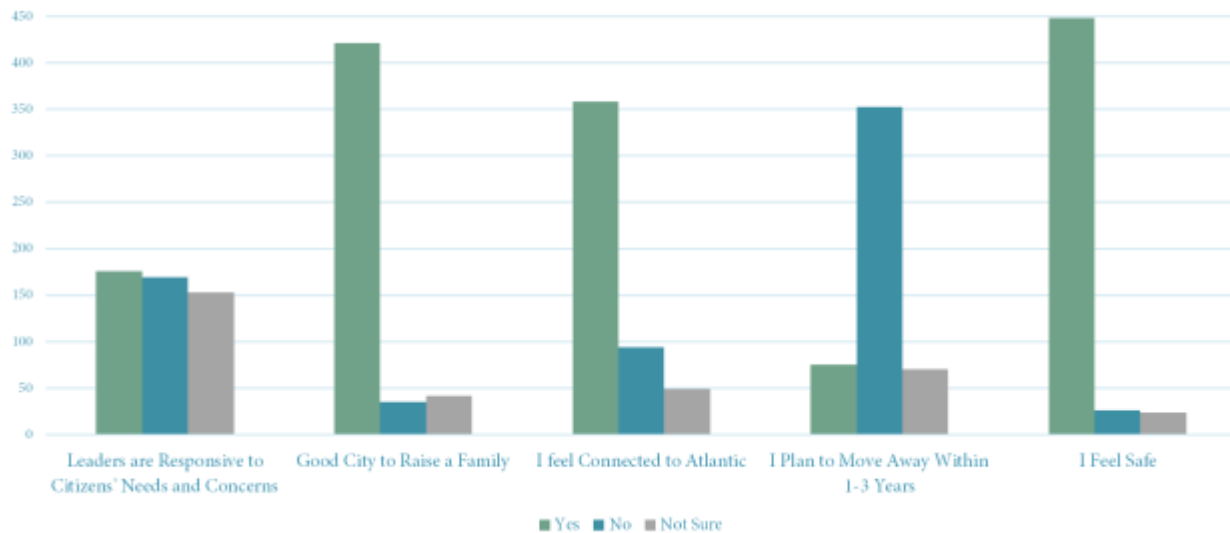
Figure 6 Satisfaction Ranking



## QUALITY OF LIFE

Another objective of the survey was to gauge overall feelings towards the community as a whole. The graph below shows overall very positive thoughts and feelings towards the community. Respondents feel safe and believe that Atlantic is a good city to raise a family. Most survey takers are not planning on moving away from Atlantic in the near future.

Figure 7 Quality of life



## PRODUCE IN THE PARK

In July 2017, the planning team attended Produce in the Park, a weekly farmer's market, social, and educational event, to gather more community input and provide updates to the public. SWIPCO provided different activities meant to engage all ages. One activity, geared mainly towards kids, was a large map of Atlantic with clipart images of buildings that could be moved around. The map was laminated which allowed for people to draw with dry erase markers as well. This activity had the most success and allowed for the children's opinions to be heard. Another activity, mainly for adults, was a large piece of paper that had popular responses from the community survey. People were given five stickers that they could place by statements they agreed with. The final activity was a large piece of paper that said "Atlantic is..." in the middle and allowed for people to complete the sentence. People of all ages participated in the activity and responses such as "home," "very exciting," and "beautiful" were gathered.

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

In November 2017, the planning team hosted four meetings that were focused on certain topics. The topics included: public safety and emergency management, housing and economic development, community interests, and transportation and utilities. During the meetings a SWOT analysis was conducted to define the most important strengths and weaknesses of Atlantic.

### 1. Community Interests

INTERNAL	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YMCA/ Parks and recreation</li> <li>• Healthy Cass County– collaboration</li> <li>• Cass County Health System offers a variety of services</li> <li>• Chamber events</li> <li>• Weekly farmer’s market</li> <li>• Library</li> <li>• Extension</li> <li>• Rotary and other community service organizations</li> <li>• School-community relations</li> <li>• Large number of organized youth activities and programs</li> <li>• Community meals, food pantry, back pack program addressing hunger</li> <li>• Ann Wickman Childhood Development Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging , leadership, volunteer, funding participation</li> <li>• Outdoor pool needs improvements but lacks funding</li> <li>• Looking ahead —&gt; aging infrastructure needing maintenance</li> </ul>
EXTERNAL	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care is always changing– need to look forward to keep up and stay ahead</li> <li>• Future workforce attraction and providing training and growth opportunities</li> <li>• Shop local for goods, entertainment, and health care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media promotes a sedentary lifestyle and lack of real community engagement.</li> <li>• Youth lack real world communication skills (soft skills)</li> <li>• Omaha and Des Moines are close destinations for people to “get out of town to have fun” may miss out on events in town</li> <li>• Declining grant funding</li> </ul>

## 2. Housing and Economic Development

INTERNAL	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balanced economy (ag-manufacturing, etc.)</li> <li>Quality of workforce</li> <li>Senior services and housing</li> <li>Geographic location (relation to urban centers)</li> <li>Strong downtown with mix of uses including retail</li> <li>Airport and location in region</li> <li>YMCA and Child Development Center</li> <li>Planning and zoning of the city</li> <li>Parks and recreation</li> <li>Best kept secret -&gt; hub of Southwest Iowa</li> <li>Cass County Community Center</li> <li>Two 18 hole golf courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of larger “family friendly” rentals</li> <li>Lack of land availability for large lots for new upper income housing</li> <li>Lack of skilled workers in some sectors</li> <li>Change-averse culture/ not as progressive</li> <li>Off interstate location</li> <li>Lack of large meeting/conference space</li> </ul>
EXTERNAL	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Declining popularity of big box retailers and malls. Main street is coming back</li> <li>Debt repayment assistance for students loans to attract young professionals</li> <li>Iowa Western program expansion</li> <li>Technology/internet/work-from home is on the rise</li> <li>Increase apprenticeships and on-job training</li> <li>Becoming a regional destination and capitalizing on the regional draws (Walnut, Elk Horn, etc.)</li> <li>Conference destination</li> <li>Air B&amp;B/ Short term rentals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-commerce (downtown retail)</li> <li>Demographics/ aging population/ loss of community wealth</li> <li>Student debt decreases purchasing power of young professionals</li> <li>(Perceived) Declining work ethic, especially among younger population</li> </ul>

## 3. Public Safety and Emergency Management

INTERNAL	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust from citizens</li> <li>• Fire– strong funding pool</li> <li>• Good training programs</li> <li>• Beneficial public safety programs</li> <li>• Cooperation/collaboration</li> <li>• “CLEAN” group</li> <li>• YMCA facility– safe place for kids and public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMS– Lack of volunteers</li> <li>• Lack of succession planning and officer training</li> <li>• Gathering people for co-training</li> <li>• Poor general public awareness and preparedness of wide spread disaster/ attacks</li> <li>• YMCA– no back up power</li> </ul>
EXTERNAL	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional hospitals communicating about “drug shopping”</li> <li>• Increase awareness/better practices to combat opioid epidemic</li> <li>• SW Iowa Mental Health/ Zion is based in Atlantic and offers programs to community and schools</li> <li>• “regionalism” county-wide shared resources and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional commitment (hours, cost, etc.) of training volunteers and maintaining certifications</li> <li>• Police– judicial ruling are weak but out of local control</li> <li>• Aging population=more funding and resources needed</li> <li>• Terrorism and heightened security needs</li> <li>• Untreated mental health issues are on the rise (lack of facilities and infrastructure)</li> </ul>

## 4. Transportation and Utilities

INTERNAL	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atlantic Municipal Utilities</li> <li>• Roads in great shape</li> <li>• Airport is an asset</li> <li>• Local utility with quick response</li> <li>• SWITA is visible in region and based in Atlantic</li> <li>• Rail freight including industries that rely on rail (ie Ethanol Plant)</li> <li>• Relatively calm traffic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storm water– Bull Creek</li> <li>• Need for additional airplane hangers</li> <li>• Connections to trails</li> <li>• Need for bike lane on Chestnut</li> <li>• Remaining sidewalk gaps need addressed (ie South of 22nd)</li> <li>• Washington Elementary, 14th St drop-off/pick up is dangerous</li> <li>• Lack of school bus in town</li> </ul>
EXTERNAL	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking school Bus (SRTS)</li> <li>• Taxi/Transit service expansion especially to fill gaps from cuts to Medicaid</li> <li>• Regional trail connections</li> <li>• With new hangers at airport, opportunity for new business to base here</li> <li>• Opportunity to bring back med helicopter service to Atlantic (improve medical transportation and jobs)</li> <li>• Internet commission</li> <li>• Draw for recreational travel, kayaking, white water, sky diving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy politics (coal) Coal is used quite a bit because it is economical</li> <li>• Changes to Medicaid regarding transportation for people with disabilities</li> <li>• Increase truck traffic due to Ethanol Plant</li> </ul>



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## GOAL SETTING

Then goals and actions were identified by the meeting participants. These meetings were beneficial for the planning process and gathered input from a variety of sectors and organizations in the community. The complete list of goals can be found in Chapter 7. Goals fell into one of nine categories:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Annexation and Growth              | 6. Neighborhood and Business Enhancement     |
| 2. Downtown and Historic Preservation | 7. Parks and Recreation                      |
| 3. Future Land Use                    | 8. Public Facilities, Services, and Programs |
| 4. Housing                            | 9. Transportation                            |
| 5. Infrastructure                     |  |

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## DECISION MAKING GUIDE AND IMPLEMENTATION

There are two basic ways in which the comprehensive plan's **policies can be effectively** implemented. First, regulatory codes and ordinances are required to ensure compliance with established standards. Second, the more general policies of the comprehensive plan may be implemented by developing more precise public plans (e.g., capital improvement plans, outdoor recreation plans, etc.). The plan can also be used as supporting documentation for grant and loan applications to other public and private entities.

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## PLAN DOCUMENT

The comprehensive plan presents a strategy-oriented approach to the future development of Atlantic. The plan includes seven **chapters, corresponding to the city's most important physical development issues.**

The plan considered issues that correspond to the traditional elements of a comprehensive plan (land use, transportation, quality of life, housing, and infrastructure) which enables the plan to assist with managing development and investment within a planned city development concept.

1. The introduction is the Profile of Atlantic **which presents an analytical view of Atlantic's people, economy, and position within its region.**
2. Development and Land Use, analyzes development demands and projects the amount of available and/or needed residential, commercial, and industrial land for the next twenty years. It

presents an inventory of existing land use patterns, along with detailed strategies to guide future development in the city.

3. Quality Public Services, examines the quality of public facilities and infrastructure within **Atlantic. These facilities are vital to the City's ability to support** economic development and serve present and future residents.
4. Mobility for All, considers transportation networks for all system users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit-riders, and motorists) and relates mobility needs to other development objectives.
5. A Recreational Lifestyle, **describes Atlantic's parks and sports facilities, and outdoor recreation** as a way of life for its residents. It presents improvement plans for new and existing parks and **trails, to be integrated into the City's** development, housing, and regional tourism efforts.
6. A City of Strong Neighborhoods, projects housing demand characteristics and presents a coordinated housing and community development strategy for the City.
7. Goals and Implementation, draws together the analysis and policies of the plan into a program for implementation. It summarizes the recommendations and development policies of the plan, and presents an Implementation Schedule, listing proposed projects and the time frame for their completion.

# Chapter 1

## A Profile of Atlantic

This chapter examines important demographic and regional trends that should be considered as Atlantic plans for its future. This analysis looks at the community's population and demographic dynamics, including an examination of the city's future population size and composition based on recent trends. In addition, it analyzes important regional issues that affect the quality of the city's environment.

Atlantic lies along the East Nishnabotna River among the rolling fields and hills of southwest Iowa. The city of Atlantic is roughly halfway between two large metropolitan areas. Omaha, Nebraska is roughly an hour's drive to the west and Des Moines, Iowa is about the same distance to the east. Interstate 80 and numerous state and federal highways, along with the Iowa Interstate Railroad, provide convenient access to these metropolitan areas for passengers and freight as they pass through Atlantic.

Vision (Aspirational Statement): *Atlantic is well situated for growth in the 21st century. Outstanding people, a great location, and a quality of life second to none all combine to make Atlantic one of the most attractive small communities in the Midwest. Atlantic is well connected to the rest of the country and the world through first class transportation and telecommunications infrastructure. Atlantic firms do business all over the world, while its residents enjoy the safety and friendliness of small town life.*

## DEVELOPMENT AND TOWNBUILDING PATTERNS

This section considers the special physical features and characteristics that help make Atlantic a distinctive environment, providing a base for further growth during the next twenty years.

### THE RIVER AND THE FLOODPLAIN

Atlantic is defined by the Nishnabotna floodplain and developed in the uplands above the plain. The Rock Island Railroad, when originally laid out, was in the floodplain at the base of these uplands. This assured that the railroad would form the north edge of the city, and that downtown Atlantic, located around the railroad station, would grow at the north edge of the city. This coincidence of floodplain and railroad also determined the linear nature of Downtown Atlantic, as the business district penetrated up the hill into the center of the old town. Similarly, the East Nishnabotna floodplain formed the western boundary of the city, an edge roughly traced by the US Highway 6.

### TOPOGRAPHY

In contrast to the broad, flat expanse of the Nishnabotna floodplain, Atlantic itself is characterized by a relatively hilly topography. The townsite generally sloped up to the east and south, with a secondary drainage pattern running from the northwest to the southeast. Further south, this topography resolves into the rolling pattern of moderate grades characteristic of western Iowa. This southern area was the focus of the city's development since 1960.

### THE ROCK ISLAND RAILROAD

The Rock Island Railroad, extended through Atlantic during the 1880s, was instrumental to the development of western Iowa towns. It was especially significant to Atlantic, halfway between Omaha and Des Moines on this strategic line to Chicago. This central location produced a small switching yard at Atlantic and provided significant passenger business as well. As in many communities, the railroad and depot location generated much of the city's original form, symbolized by the location of the train station at the foot of Chestnut Street, Atlantic's downtown main street.

### TRANSPORTATION CROSSROADS

In addition to the railroad, Atlantic developed at the crossing of two principal highways-east west

Highway 6, the original Chicago-Denver highway, and north south Highway 71, extending south to Kansas City. This crossroads location helped draw auto-oriented commercial development to the eastern part of the city along Highway 6.

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#### THE CITY PLAN AND THE 10<sup>TH</sup> STREET BREAK

Atlantic's street layout is interesting for its clear demarcation between original and contemporary development. North of 10th Street, Atlantic is platted as a regular grid of square blocks, 300 feet on a side. This grid, laid out without regard to topography, provided a high degree of street continuity. However, south of 10th Street, the grid breaks up into smaller, incremental development pods with curvilinear streets and several cul-de-sacs and single entrance loops. As a result, only 22nd Street provides east-west continuity south of 10th Street between Highways 71 and 6.

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#### CHESTNUT STREET AND THE SURVEYOR'S GRID

Typical of Midwestern towns, the original Homestead Act grid underlies much of Atlantic's urban fabric. The major streets of many of these towns are original section line roads. In the case of Atlantic, the Rock Island depot was located at the intersection of the railroad and the street that followed this line became Chestnut Street, Atlantic's principal community street. Community streets grow into centers of urban life, linking neighborhoods together and, at their best becoming life lines of the community that transcend any one type of movement. They are a characteristic of traditional community development and urban form. Frequently, community streets are lined with historical houses, activity centers, main street commercial development, and major institutions. Chestnut Street, following this pattern, remains such a special corridor, rich with history and with major community features.

## POPULATION, HISTORY, AND CHARACTERISTICS

Population history and characteristics help to explain and give an overview of a community. This section presents important changes in the characteristics and dynamics of Atlantic's population over the past decades.

Atlantic is the county seat and largest city in Cass County, Iowa. Except for a drop in population after the turn of the 20th century, Atlantic experienced steady growth during the early and mid-1900s. Unlike many communities in the area, Atlantic gained population during the Great Depression of the 1930s and continued a pattern of steady growth

until sometime in the 1970s or 1980s when the population reached its high-water mark. By the 1980s, decades of changes in farming had led to a decline in the number of people needed in the agriculture sector and a gradual migration from the countryside into cities and towns began. Atlantic's population at the 1980 Census was 7,789.

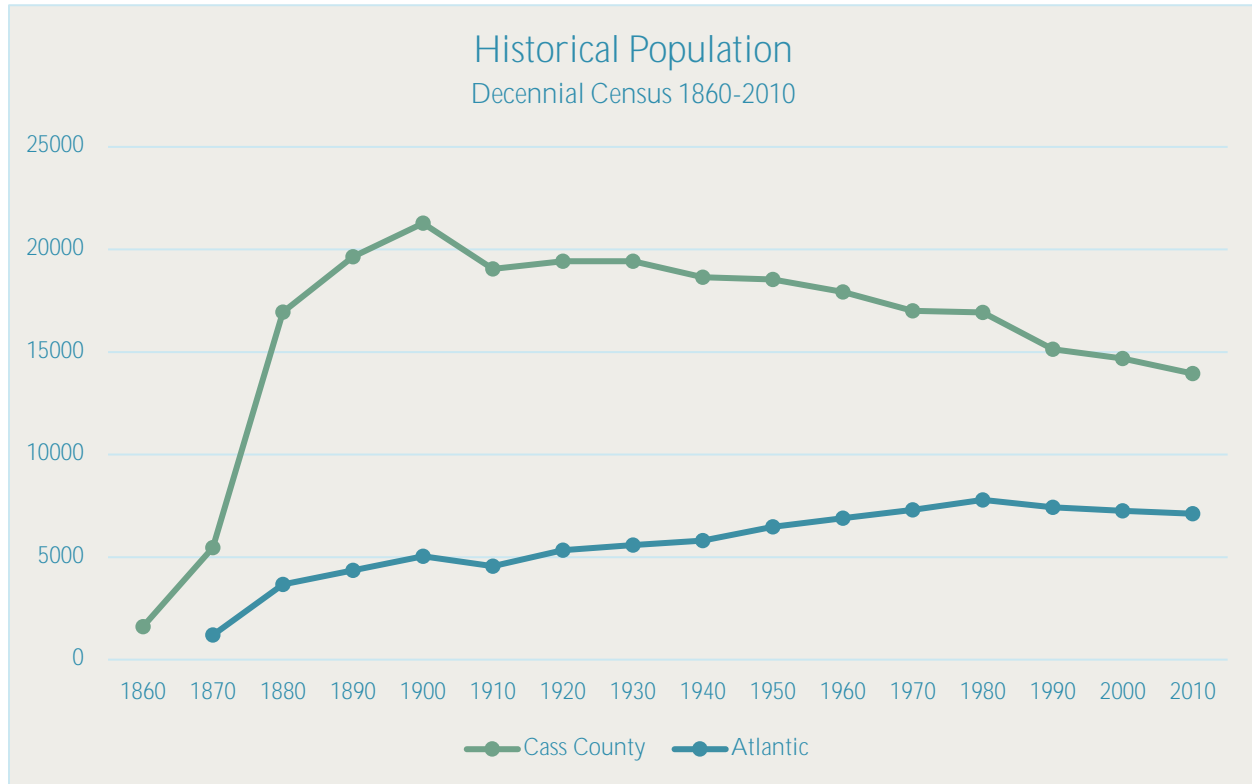
The 2010 Census put Atlantic's population at 7,112. Like many Iowa communities, Atlantic's population has seen its ups and downs, generally reflecting the local farm economy and overall national and global trends.

The population of Cass County peaked in 1900, when there were 21,274 people in the county—most of whom lived on small farms. Today there are about 13,157 (2016) people in the County and drastically fewer farms—from 2,395 in 1900 to 703 in 2012. Its location along the Nishnabotna River and Troublesome Creek provides excellent farmland. Atlantic's early settlement coincided with the agricultural settlement of the Southwest Iowa region during the mid to late 1800s.

Figure 8 Early Illustration of Atlantic



Figure 9 Historic Population



## DYNAMICS AND MIGRATION

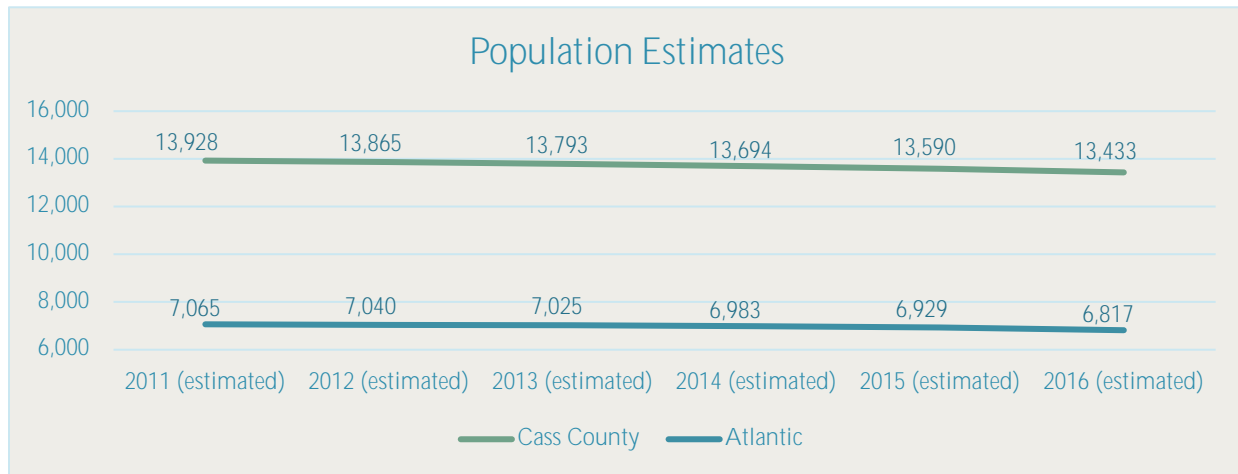
The analysis and projection of future population form the basis for a significant number of planning decisions. Measures of the size and density of various subgroups within a city's population determine the level of demand for existing and future facilities and identify potential community opportunities and threats. Therefore, before Atlantic determines future development it must review the demographics of those that live there. This section on demographics discusses and compares data concerning population, income, and employment.

Accurately projecting the future population of a community can be difficult, especially for smaller communities; however, using previous population data along with input from City of Atlantic officials and technical professionals, several future population scenarios can be identified.

Typically, when projecting future populations for a community of this size, which has the potential for growth, a negative growth rate will not be used. Many times, a flat growth rate, or no growth, will be estimated if the City feels like the population will remain relatively stable over the study period. In other

situations, the City wants to be sure that the infrastructure would be able to service the community if it were to experience growth in population. The assumption of this plan is that Atlantic will grow to a population of 8,000 by 2035.

Figure 10 US Census Bureau Population Estimates (ACS 2011-2016)



Source: American Community Survey 2011-2016

Population change in a town is explained by three basic factors:

1. *Natural Growth or Decline.* If more people are born in a community than die, the population of the town should increase. Therefore, a city with more population in younger age groups (particularly with people in childbearing or family formation years) will tend to grow. Similarly, if people live longer they stay in the population longer.
2. *Migration patterns.* During any given period, people are moving in and out of an area. If more people come to the city than leave, its population will tend to increase. A community that is building new housing may be experiencing in-migration, redistribution of current resident populations, or a combination of both.
3. *Annexation.* Annexation of large residential populations increases a **municipality's** population. Population increase due to annexation may not reflect broader regional trends.

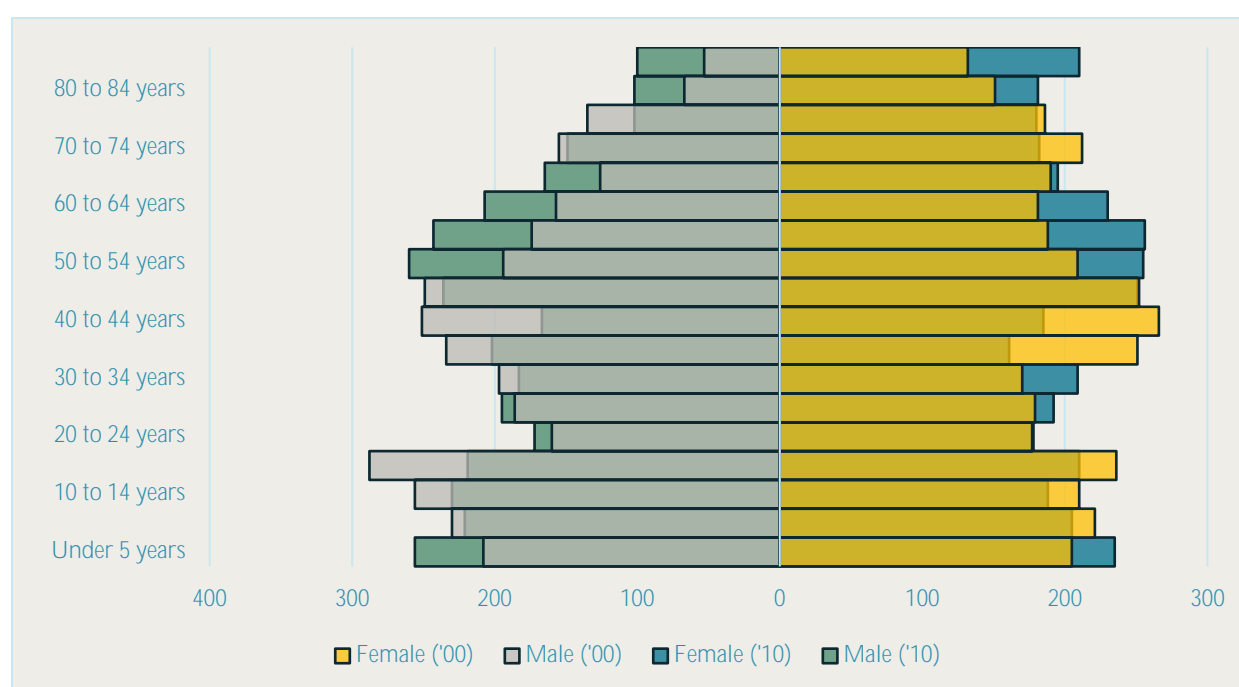


Table 1 Population Change 2000- 2016

	2000	2010	2016 (estimated)	% Change 2000- 2010	% Change 2010- 2016
Atlantic	7,257	7,112	6,817	-2.00%	-6.37%
Cass County	14,684	13,956	13,157	-4.96%	-5.73%

Source: U.S. Census 2010, American Community Survey 2016

Figure 11 Population Pyramid by Age and Gender Cohorts (2000 &amp; 2010 US Census)



Like many communities across Iowa, Atlantic loses young adults to attend college and begin careers. However, some of these residents return to the community. **Improving Atlantic's ability** to attract young professionals will be a priority for the community in the coming years. **The majority of Atlantic's** population are people in the middle of life and evidence shows they are staying in the community. As they age, it is imperative that Atlantic provide services and amenities for its older residents that would like to be able to age in place. From the chart above, **it can be concluded that from 2000 to 2010, Atlantic's** population from 30-45 stayed in the community, they are in a different age category now. What it also shows, is that the city did not gain more people in that age category to replace the aging population.

In summary, Atlantic's age distribution indicates that:

- Atlantic continues to be an attractive living environment for families with young children.
- Atlantic needs to ensure that future out-migration among those 25 to 44 does not occur to a high degree by providing additional economic opportunities to not only provide higher education and/or training opportunities, but also increase economic opportunities for young professionals exiting a college or university setting.
- Despite out-migration of young adults 20-30 during the 2000s, those over 30 have either returned or have been attracted to the city to start families.
- The number of adults aged 50-65 has remained steady during the 2000s despite a loss among adults aged 50 to 55. A decline in these cohorts of peak income earners has important implications on the local economy.

## ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Economic prosperity is critical to the vitality of a community. Economic development is the process by which a community organizes and then applies its energies toward creating the type of business climate that will foster the retention and expansion of existing businesses, attract new businesses, and develop new business ventures, all in appropriate **support of the community's quality-of-life** goals. Success in economic development requires partnerships among government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. It is the goal of the community to maintain existing businesses and develop diverse business and industry that not only provide more and/or better jobs for residents, but also greater economic choice and new opportunities for entertainment and social activities.

## LABOR FORCE ANALYSIS

Atlantic's primary employment sector is educational services, and health care and social assistance (24.9%). Retail trades (17.9%) and manufacturing (13.3%) are the next highest sectors. This section examines various economic characteristics and dynamics of Atlantic's population, in order to establish a basis for economic planning.

Table 2 Percent Employed by Industry

Employment by Industry				
Industry	City of Atlantic		Cass County	
	Employed	%	Employed	%
<b>Total Employed</b>	<b>3,431</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,712</b>	<b>100%</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	85	2.5%	502	7.5%
Construction	306	8.9%	575	8.6%
Manufacturing	458	13.3%	898	13.4%
Wholesale trade	89	2.6%	190	2.8%
Retail trade	614	17.9%	976	14.5%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	179	5.2%	365	5.4%
Information	63	1.8%	101	1.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	157	4.6%	259	3.9%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	178	5.2%	344	5.1%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	855	24.9%	1641	24.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	184	5.4%	367	5.5%
Other services (except public administration)	213	6.2%	362	5.4%
Public administration	50	1.5%	132	2.0%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2016

The following table shows the total number of Atlantic residents in each age group that are legally able to work in 2016. The table then examines those numbers by showing the percentage of each age group that can work, the percentage of each age group that do work, and what the unemployment rate is for each.

Table 3 Employment Statistics

Atlantic, Iowa				
Age	Total	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment/Population Ratio	Unemployment rate
<b>Population 16 years and over</b>	5,587	62.5%	61.4%	1.7%
16 to 19 years	313	42.8%	36.1%	15.7%
20 to 24 years	404	84.4%	84.4%	0.0%
25 to 29 years	328	88.1%	88.1%	0.0%
30 to 34 years	502	81.5%	79.1%	2.9%
35 to 44 years	593	92.1%	90.4%	1.8%
45 to 54 years	843	78.5%	76.5%	2.6%
55 to 59 years	528	78.8%	78.8%	0.0%
60 to 64 years	535	72.9%	72.9%	0.0%
65 to 74 years	665	36.2%	36.2%	0.0%
75 years and over	876	7.2%	7.2%	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2016

Table 4 Employment by Occupation for the Civilian Employed Population

Industry	City of Atlantic		Cass County
	Employed	%	Atlantic Employment Share of County Wide Employment by Industry
<b>Total Employed</b>	3,431		
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	859	25.0%	45%
Service occupations	668	19.5%	55%
Sales and office occupations	840	24.5%	56%
Natural resources, construction and maintenance	380	11.1%	48%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	684	19.9%	53%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2016

The table above compares the employment makeup of Atlantic's residents with those of Cass County for 2016. This information indicates that most Atlantic residents were employed in educational/health services, retail trade, manufacturing, and construction. The most significant difference between the city

and the county is in agricultural occupations. While few Atlantic residents are involved in agricultural operations, a higher percentage of Cass County is involved in agriculture.

From 1990 to 2000 there was a transition that occurred where the largest percentage of residents in the city and county that were employed went from retail trade to educational/health services. This is still true today. However, from 2000 to 2016 manufacturing employment has decreased from 21.1% of the employment to now 13.3% of the employment in Atlantic. In the period between 2000 and 2016, the retail industry surpassed the manufacturing industry.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Individual and household incomes can be **indicators of a community's economic health**. Incomes in rural Iowa tend to be lower than national averages. However, the cost of living is often considered lower as well, so those with lower incomes many times have more buying power with their wages than higher paid individuals in urban areas. Unfortunately, those in rural communities also tend to travel farther for work than their urban counterparts. Increases in transportation costs will have a greater negative impact in rural America than in metropolitan areas.

Table 5 Cost of Living Factors 2016

Cost of Living Factors					
	Population	Median Household Income	Median Rent	Median Home Value	Mean Travel Time to Work (minutes)
<b>Atlantic</b>	6,817	\$ 40,290	\$ 605	\$ 92,000	13.8
<b>Knoxville</b>	7,236	\$ 41,727	\$ 575	\$ 93,800	20.0
<b>Creston</b>	7,877	\$ 43,137	\$ 575	\$ 83,100	15.3
<b>Sioux Center</b>	7,370	\$ 70,703	\$ 731	\$ 186,000	10.8
<b>Iowa</b>	3,106,589	\$ 54,570	\$ 715	\$ 132,800	18.9

Atlantic's income distribution and employment characteristics suggest that future residential and economic development efforts should be concentrated on continuing to attract employers in the manufacturing and service sectors as well as the professional and managerial sectors.

Table 6 Household Income

Income Distribution for Households by Percentage								
	Under \$10,000	\$10,000- \$14,999	\$15,000- \$24,999	\$25,000- \$34,999	\$35,000- \$49,999	\$50,000- \$74,999	Over \$75,000	2015 Median HH Income
Atlantic	7.5%	4.0%	20.5%	14.8%	17.0%	17.5%	18.7%	\$37,397.00
Cass County	6.3%	5.2%	15.8%	12.5%	18.4%	19.1%	22.8%	\$43,750.00
Iowa	6.2%	5.1%	10.5%	10.6%	14.4%	20.0%	33.1%	\$53,183.00

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2015

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Economic prosperity includes retail, business, industrial, and job creation/expansion. A good indicator of the economic prosperity of a community is the commercial development it experiences. With more options for retail in a community, there is a higher chance that residents will choose to shop locally keeping their money in the community. Along with retail, development of office space could increase the number of higher paying jobs to the area. Atlantic is fortunate in that it has a significant amount of available space to develop retail, commercial, and industrial opportunities within the city.

The data suggests that residents of Atlantic are willing to spend their dollars locally. The table below shows that Atlantic residents purchase more local retail goods than the state on average. Atlantic is also compared with three other cities of similar size.

Table 7 Real Average Sales Per Capita

	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
State of Iowa	11,809	11,935	12,331	12,490	12,413
Cass County	10,507	10,936	11,135	11,804	11,641
Atlantic	17,182	17,808	18,139	19,417	19,355
Creston	14,861	14,408	14,963	15,151	14,842
Knoxville	13,452	13,377	14,019	14,334	14,657
Sioux Center	19,298	19,905	20,434	20,931	20,664

Source: Iowa State University, Iowa Community Indicators Program 2017

The annual taxable retail sales in Atlantic have been gradually increasing over the last five years. When compared to cities of similar size, Atlantic's taxable retail sales is towards the higher end. This means that Atlantic sells more taxable goods than other cities which provides a solid tax base for the community. In addition, the following table shows that Atlantic makes up the majority of Cass County's taxable retail sales with nearly 84% coming from Atlantic.

Table 8 Annual Taxable Retail Sales (in millions)

	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
State of Iowa	36,398	36,970	38,374	39,028	38,956
Cass County	143.3	147.4	148.9	156.6	153.2
Atlantic	119.7	122.6	123.2	130.4	128.4
Creston	117.2	113.8	117.6	118.5	115.7
Knoxville	97.5	96.8	101.1	103.5	105.7
Sioux Center	139.6	145.4	150.9	155.9	155.4

Source: Iowa State University, Iowa Community Indicators Program 2017

# Chapter 2

## Development and Land Use

This chapter examines development demands and projects the amount of residential, commercial, and industrial land needed for the next twenty years. It presents an inventory of existing land use patterns, along with detailed strategies to guide future growth in new development areas.



## LAND USE

Atlantic's land use is a core component of the comprehensive plan document. It establishes a development vision to accommodate future growth, maintain and enhance the quality of existing development, and provide a sound basis for public and private decisions, including infrastructure investments. The land use plan will provide a physical framework for recommendations in subsequent chapters in this document.

This section of the document provides the tools and principles to guide future land use and development, described below.

### TOOLS FOR LAND USE

1. Use the 10 Principles of Future Land Use and Development as criteria for making land use decisions, such as reviewing new subdivision proposals.
2. Preserve sensitive natural areas from development, using the development suitability map as a guide.
3. Use the future land use map to guide all land use decisions, such as subdivision review or re-zoning.
4. Base all annexation decisions on the six-point annexation strategy and the annexation map.

### PRINCIPLES OF FUTURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Encourage compact, contiguous, and fiscally responsible development

Contiguous and compact development will help preserve Atlantic's **small**-town character by growing the city in a walkable, neighborhood-focused pattern. This type of development also reduces costly infrastructure extensions such as water, sewer and roads by developing on under-utilized infill properties or in strategic areas adjacent to existing development. Compact, contiguous development minimizes travel distances, helps preserve open spaces and farm land, and encourages development that is "human-scale" rather than designed solely for the car.

2. Promote infill development

Infill development supports the economic and social value of Atlantic's existing neighborhoods by promoting investment in established areas rather than solely at the fringe. Infill development helps make full use of existing infrastructure, thus limiting unnecessary expansions and their associated expense. Such development should respect the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

### 3. Preserve sensitive environmental features

Preserving key natural areas protects plant and animal habitats, increases property value for adjacent development, enhances and connects the park system, and reduces flash-flooding by providing natural storm water drainage. A network of natural areas enhances community character, makes Atlantic more attractive to new residents, and protects wetlands, hydric soils, floodplains, drainage-ways, and wooded areas.

### 4. Promote diverse housing choices

Residents and workers of Atlantic have expressed a clear desire for more diverse housing options, at prices that more people can afford. At the same time, housing needs and preferences are diversifying. While there continues to be interest in traditional single-family homes in suburban development, there is also a growing preference, especially with the baby boomer and Millennial generations, for lower maintenance option homes and multi-family housing. Atlantic can increase its appeal to potential residents by promoting housing options for a diverse population.

### 5. Plan for community amenities such as parks and schools

Parks, open spaces, schools, and other public places can serve as neighborhood focal points that promote community activity, personal interaction, and a sense of place. Atlantic's **parks and open spaces** serve as an attraction for potential residents and encourage new development around their perimeter.

### 6. Provide a multi-modal, continuous transportation network

A network of streets, bikeways, and pedestrian paths should provide connectivity throughout Atlantic and accommodate a diverse set of mobility needs and preferences. Street networks should provide well connected routes that make both private travel and public service provision more efficient.

### 7. Enhance public safety and minimize hazard risk

Land use decisions have a wide variety of effects on public safety and hazard mitigation. Preserving floodplains and natural drainage-ways to manage storm water minimizes the risk of injury and property damage due to flooding. A well-connected and multi-modal transportation network promotes better emergency service provision and evacuation routes in case of large-scale hazards. A mixture of land uses **within neighborhoods** enhances security by creating activity and “eyes on the street” throughout the day.

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#### 8. Develop balanced neighborhoods that provide options

Balanced neighborhoods provide residents with easy access to a variety of places to live, shop, work, play and engage in community life. Mixing compatible uses, such as a corner store or school in a residential neighborhood, creates dynamic and resilient communities that promote efficiency in infrastructure provision and travel times. Balanced neighborhoods provide a variety of housing options, access to open space, and contain activity centers such as parks, schools, civic centers, or commercial areas that are well connected to surrounding neighborhoods. Appropriate transitions should be made between higher intensity uses, such as industry, and lower intensity uses, such as homes.

#### 9. Use public investments to promote private development

Atlantic's **public investments in streets, water, sewer, parks and schools can be leveraged to promote private investments.** When strategically located, a new park or school can inspire private residential development, while targeted infrastructure improvements can attract new industry.

#### 10. Make decisions in a transparent and collaborative manner

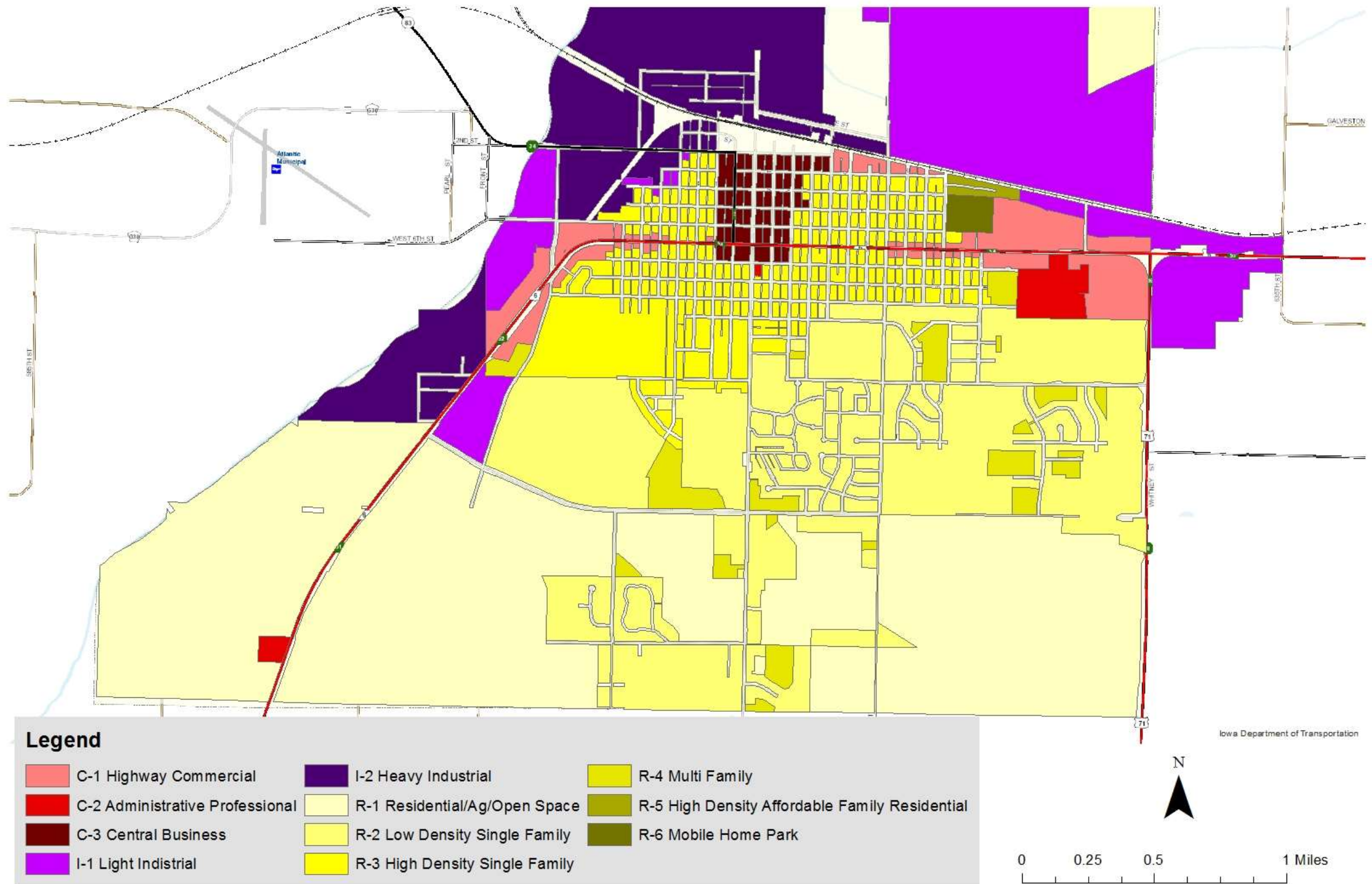
Land use and environmental decisions should be made through a transparent process, with opportunity for input from all citizens and affected entities, such as the county, neighboring towns or the school district. Creation and implementation of land use decisions should be a shared responsibility that promotes the equitable distribution of development benefits and costs.

## EXISTING LAND USE

The current zoning map classifies parcels of land in Atlantic according to their use. The land use categories are described in the table below and a photo-guide is provided below to determine if proposed developments are compatible with existing uses.



Figure 12 Current Zoning Map





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## COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Highway Commercial Development: Highway commercial district includes uses such as retail, offices, sales and display rooms, and can have residential dwellings. The purpose is to provide neighborhood shopping areas in convenient locations outside of the downtown area for automobile-oriented building development. Much of this zone is located along major streets and highways through town to allow for increased traffic and integration with residential areas. Currently, the majority of this district lies along 7<sup>th</sup> Street towards the East and West sides of town. The most ideal location for development of this district would be along 7<sup>th</sup> Street continuing through town.

Administrative/Professional Business Development: Administrative/professional business development includes uses such as medical offices, hospitals, multiple dwellings, and other similar uses that have limited contact with the public, do not manufacture, display, or sell products. Ideal expansion for this area would be in the flat area along 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Highway 6 on the West side of town.

Central Business Development: The central business district is located in the downtown area along Chestnut Street. Businesses in this district may include retail, restaurants, offices, hotels, and residential dwellings. Unlike other districts, the central business district is confined to one area, but it may grow outward from Chestnut Street as demand increases. Currently, there are approximately 28 blocks included in this district from 8<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and the railroad. Ideal development for this area would continue outwards towards Cedar Street and Maple Street.

Downtown Development: Historic downtown stretches 4 blocks from the intersection of 6th and Chestnut to the railroad and Chestnut and provides a variety of businesses, restaurants, apartments, and other services. With the street-scaping improvements that have taken place here, the area appeals to pedestrians, promotes walkability, and provides an aesthetically appealing location for businesses. The downtown area is different than others since it must grow contiguously. Even with this restricted growth, there is still a great amount of opportunity as there are a number of vacant storefronts that can be filled by new businesses.



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## INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

One of the main drivers of good employment in Atlantic is industrial growth. The community should work closely with its development partners to focus resources toward retention and expansion of existing industrial development and recruit new to Atlantic.

**Light Industrial Development:** Light industrial development includes firms such as call centers, clothing manufacturers, laboratories, and other businesses that do not generate a large amount of truck traffic, do not create offensive pollution, and whose inputs and products are relatively safe to locate close to population centers. Some of the most developable land in Atlantic is in a flat area along 1st Street close to existing retail areas and other light industrial firms. However, this area is difficult to reach by truck traffic and heavy industry should not be encouraged in this part of town.

**Medium to Heavy Industrial Development:** Medium to heavy industrial firms are those that generally employ a large number of workers, have processes that are incompatible with residential development (such as noise or odors), and have a large amount of vehicular traffic. However, due to flood plain issues and the fact that much of the community does not have the road network to allow for heavy truck traffic, industrial development may be limited to areas southwest and northeast of town.

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## RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

**Residential/Agricultural/Open Space Development:** This zone promotes single family dwellings on large lots or farmsteads, agricultural usage that does not produce offensive pollution, parks/recreational areas, and schools. Any land annexed by the city is automatically put into this zoning category until it is decided on how to develop it. This means that a majority of the undeveloped land along the southern edge of town is currently in this category.

**Low Density Single Family Residential Development:** The low density single family residential district can include single family detached dwellings, parks/recreational areas, schools, churches, and libraries. This area is meant to promote single family dwellings while controlling the density and maintaining adequate open space. Much of the land between 14<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street is currently zoned for this low density and in years to come, land south of 22<sup>nd</sup> Street will likely be added as it comes time to develop new housing.

High Density Single Family Residential Development: Single and two-family dwellings along with parks/recreational areas, schools, churches, libraries, and home businesses are allowed in this district. The addition of two family dwellings in this area promotes a slightly higher density of residents while continuing to provide an adequate amount of open space. A large portion of the current residential areas located around the center of the town are zoned for this high density residential development. In this district, there are a number of vacant lots where infill development could take place such as 9<sup>th</sup> and Locust, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Cedar, and 6<sup>th</sup> and Oak to name a few. This is where the largest amount of development should take place in this district due to the reduced infrastructure costs.

Multiple Family Residential Development: This area allows for all the previously mentioned uses along with 3 and 4-unit dwellings, apartments, condominiums and townhouses. This allows for high density living and can only be developed in areas where streets and utilities can accommodate for such usage. The best place for this type of development would be south of 14<sup>th</sup> Street in the newer area of town. This way streets and utilities can be built to accommodate higher density.

High Density Affordable Family Residential Development: The affordable housing district allows for a higher density development of single and two-family dwellings by using smaller lot sizes. This type of development is appealing to young families and can encourage more families who are just starting to move to Atlantic. There is currently only one area for this district and that is east of Mulberry Street along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Place. There is a desire for affordable housing for families in the area so future development of this district is needed. Ideal locations would be around 3<sup>rd</sup> and Spruce or south of 22<sup>nd</sup> where lots have not been parceled out yet.

Mobile Home Park District: Mobile homes, modular homes, recreation and services for the residents of the park, and day care centers are allowed in this district. These districts can only be developed in locations where it does not affect current subdivisions or residential density which makes it difficult to find locations for new development of this type.

Table 9 Land Use Categories and Characteristics

Land Use Category	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
Agriculture & Ag Residential	Agriculture or conservation will remain the principal use.	Urban encroachment, including large lot subdivisions, should be discouraged.
	Can be used as a holding zone until extension of city infrastructure	Areas may be designated for conservation, including floodplains and steep topography
	Extremely low residential densities, typically below 1 unit per 20 acres, may be permitted. This would include homes located on farms.	Commonly zoned as A1 (Agricultural) or Rural Residential (RR)
Preserve	Areas that should be preserved as natural, green space.	Should follow environmental features.
	These areas are primarily defined by the floodplains, but also include some areas acting as buffers between incompatible land uses.	Should be pre-designated in development areas.
		Can be incorporated into the city's trail system when appropriate.
Low Density (Single Family) Residential	Restrictive land uses, emphasizing single family detached development. Innovative single family forms may be permitted with special review.	Density is 1 to 4 units per acre, although these areas may include some single family attached projects with densities up to 6 units per acre in small areas
	Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses.	Should be insulated from adverse environmental effects, including noise, smell, air pollution, and light pollution.
	Manufactured units with certification from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (post-1976 units) that comply with other criteria in the State statute may be treated as conventional single family construction.	Should provide a framework of streets and open spaces.
		Developments will be provided with full municipal services.
		Commonly zoned as A1 (Agricultural) or Rural Residential (RR)
Medium Density Residential	Restrictive land uses, emphasizing housing.	Density is 4 to 12 units per acre.
	May incorporate a mix of housing types, including single family detached, single family attached, and townhouse uses.	Developments should generally have articulated design that maintains identity of individual units.
		Tend to locate in clusters but should include linkages to other aspects of the community.
	Limited multifamily development may be permitted with special review and criteria	Innovative design should be encouraged in new projects.
		Projects at this density may be incorporated in a limited way into single family neighborhoods.

	Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses.	May be incorporated into mixed use projects and planned areas.
		Commonly zoned as R2 (Two-Family Residential) or R3 (Multiple-Family Residential)
High Density Residential	Allows multifamily and compatible civic uses	Density is 12 units per acre or higher
		Locate at sites with access to major amenities or activity centers
		Avoid creation of isolated compounds. Should be integrated into the fabric of nearby residential areas, while avoiding adverse traffic impacts on low density uses
	Allows integration of limited office and convenience commercial within primarily residential areas	Traffic should have direct access to collector or arterial streets to avoid overloading local streets
		Can be developed near lower intensity uses or in mixed use developments with development review
		Attractive landscape standards should be applied
		Commonly zoned as R3 (Multiple-Family Residential)
Parks	Traditional park and recreation areas including passive and active recreation uses.	Parks should be centrally located with easy access for both pedestrian and auto users.
		Residents should be within approximately a half mile of a neighborhood park.
		<b>All parks should be connected through the city's trail and open space system.</b>
Civic and Public	Includes schools, churches, community centers, cemeteries, publicly-owned buildings and other public facilities that act as centers of community activity.	May be permitted in a number of different areas, including residential areas.
		Individual review of proposals requires an assessment of operating characteristics, project design, and traffic management.
		Commonly allowed in areas zoned for residential (R1, R2, R3) or institutional (INS).
Commercial	Includes a variety of commercial and office uses.	Located on arterials, at intersections, or in established commercial areas.
		Should supply an adjacent amount of off-street parking

	May allow residential units above commercial development, and may incorporate planned residential uses, typically at higher densities.	Traffic systems should provide alternative routes and good internal traffic flow
		Negative effects on surrounding residential areas should be limited by location and buffering
	Serves as focus of retail activity.	Good landscaping and restrictive signage standards should be maintained
	Can include freestanding commercial uses and shopping centers on larger lots.	Should provide good pedestrian/bicycle access to adjacent neighborhoods. Commonly zoned as CC (Community Commercial)
Downtown Mixed Use	Traditional downtown district includes mix of uses, primarily commercial, office, and upper level residential.	Establishes mixed use pattern in the traditional city center.
	Should be the primary focus of major civic uses, including government, cultural services, and other civic facilities.	District may expand with appropriately designed adjacent projects that respect pedestrian scale, design patterns and setbacks within the district.
	Developments outside the center of the city <b>should be encouraged to have “downtown”</b> characteristics, including mixed use buildings and an emphasis on pedestrian scale.	Historic preservation is a significant value.
		Good pedestrian and bicycle links should be provided to surrounding residential areas. Zoned as CBD (Commercial - Central Business District)
Light Industrial/Office	Light Industrial areas may combine office, business parks, and warehouse uses. These areas can also include supporting commercial activity.	Signage, landscaping, and design standards should be established, with more restrictive controls for locations nearer to low intensity uses.
		Uses that involve substantial peak traffic should locate near major arterials and regional highways and provide multiple access points.
	Includes uses that do not generate noticeable external effects.	Commonly zoned as M1 (Limited/Light Industrial)
General Industrial & Utilities	Provides for a range of industrial enterprises, including those with significant external effects.	General industrial sites should be well-buffered from less intensive uses.
		Sites should have direct access to major regional transportation facilities, without passing through residential or commercial areas.
	Includes facilities with industrial operating characteristics, including public utilities, maintenance facilities, and public works yards.	Developments with major external effects should be subject to review. Commonly zoned as M2 (Heavy Industrial)

## FUTURE LAND USE

As Atlantic grows, new land will be developed to accommodate housing, commercial, industrial and other uses. The planning team identified growth areas based on environmental features, the existing land use pattern, infrastructure capacity and market trends. The Development Area maps show proposed uses for the preferred growth areas. The maps show approximately the amount of land needed to accommodate 2035 population projections and focuses on areas that are most strategic for shorter term growth.

Atlantic is considered a regional commerce center in a larger agricultural district of Cass County. Accordingly, the City regards itself as an urbanized area. While the preservation of agricultural land is important to Iowa and the nation, the City considers this to be the charge of the County Board of Supervisors in the unincorporated areas of Cass County. The City of Atlantic's primary objective is to maintain a thriving and productive urbanized area for its residents. The conversion of agricultural uses to residential, commercial or industrial uses is to be expected and encouraged.

The Future Land Use Map is considered to be a guiding tool for the Planning & Zoning Commission. The emphasis is on development and minimizing the conflicts arising from opposing land uses. The issue of appropriate residential density is not something that is addressed within the map and it is understood that Atlantic has found subdivisions of diverse residential densities has enhanced value to the community without generating social conflict or strain on infrastructure. This is expected to continue over the next decade as new development is considered. Rezoning from different densities within larger districts of similar uses is expected to occur as needs and opportunities present themselves and that the Planning & Zoning Commission shall carefully review these factors during the rezoning process. Important points about the land use maps

### 1. PROPERTY OWNERS DECIDE

The maps depict new land uses for privately owned properties. The transition of these properties from their current use to the depicted use is expected to occur over time, in response to market demands, as property owners voluntarily sell, develop, or change the use of their land.

### 2. GENERALIZED MAP

The Future Land Use map should be interpreted generally and is not intended to provide the specificity or the rigidity of a zoning map or engineering document. The map should provide guidance for:

- Generalized land use locations and transitions: The boundaries between land uses on the map are “fuzzy” lines and are meant to show approximate areas for transition, rather than rigid boundaries. Minor variations in land use, such as a small civic use

on a residential block, are not reflected in this generalized map, but may still be permitted per zoning regulations.

- Collector and Arterial Street connections: Critical arterial and collector street connections are specified on this map, though the exact routes will depend on detailed engineering studies. Local streets will be determined as development occurs. See Chapter 4: Transportation.

### 3. GUIDE FOR LAND USE DECISIONS

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The Future Land Use map will guide the land use and development decisions of the Planning & Zoning Commission and the City Council. The map should guide the approval process for development proposals and zoning decisions and be updated as new developments occur.



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## FUTURE LAND USE

The following future land use map outlines a number of areas for future public and private development within the City of Atlantic along with an area of possible future annexation. Under this comprehensive plan, very little if any land would need to be annexed into the city. This plan seeks to make the most of the existing land and resources of the city but also addresses an area most suitable for future annexation if needed. The future land use map is based on the development principles.

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### RESIDENTIAL

As Atlantic grows and residential development becomes in demand, infill development should be a high priority. This development would include housing rehabilitation, new construction on empty lots, and new multifamily developments on larger lots. An example of infill development can be found in below. Infill development has many benefits in communities such as increased vitality in neighborhoods, more walkable areas, preservation of surrounding natural environment, reduction in costs associated with expanding infrastructure, and more. For residents looking for new housing and as the demand for new homes increases, the preferred residential growth areas are primarily south of Atlantic or within city limits, with access to existing infrastructure and amenities such as parks and schools. Chapter 6 discusses plans for these residential growth areas in detail.

Figure 13 Residential Infill Development



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### COMMERCIAL



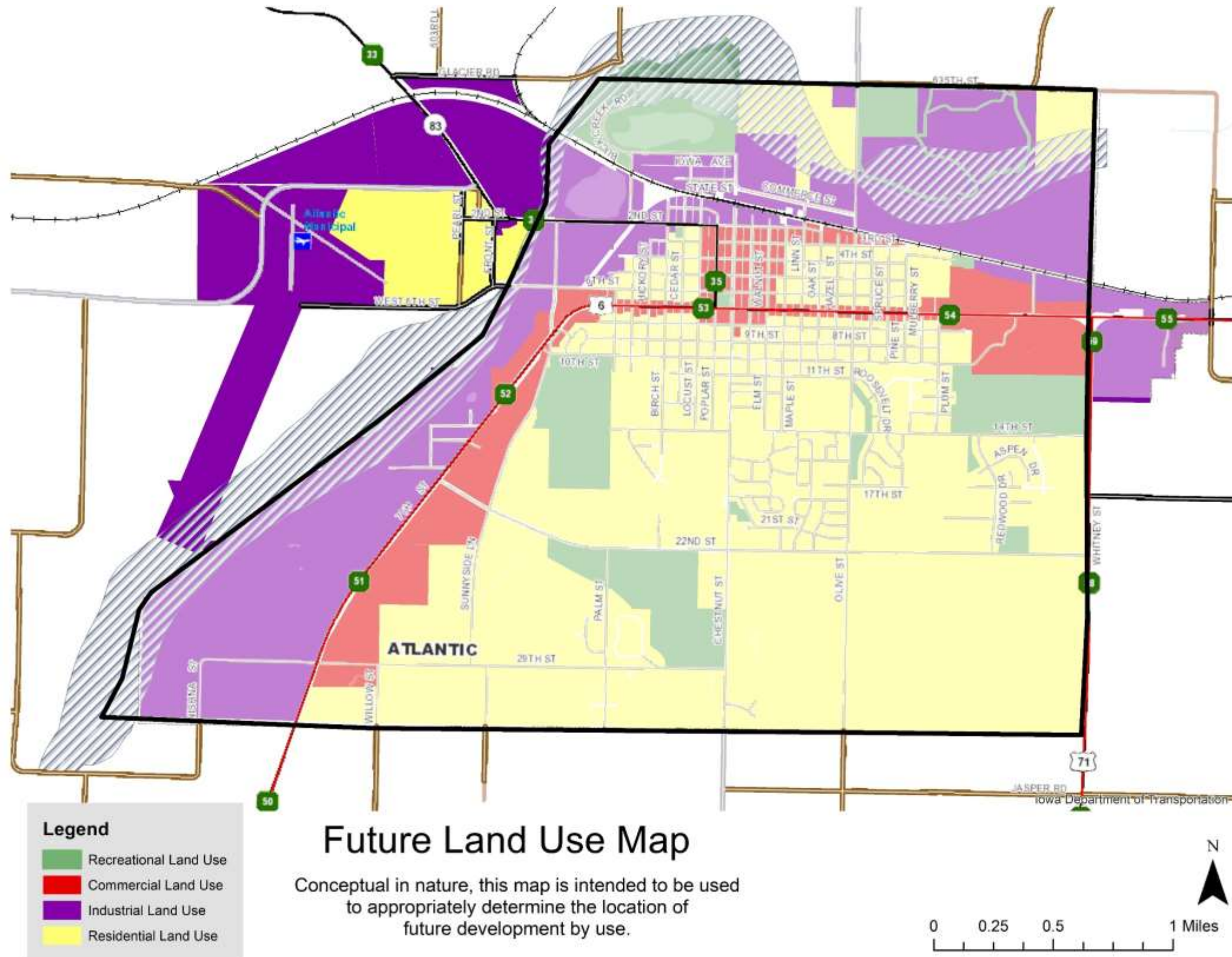
Commercial areas often consist of retail and office uses with the option for mixed-use buildings. Mixed-use buildings in Atlantic are readily found in the downtown area and consist of a building with a business located in the ground level and another use, such as residential apartments, located on the upper level. These commercial uses provide jobs, services, and retail options for residents and visitors. Commercial zones will continue to grow around existing hubs of commercial activity along 7<sup>th</sup> street, downtown, and highway 6 on the edges of Atlantic.

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## INDUSTRIAL

Industrial uses are those that often times produce negative externalities such as pollution, noise, or foul smells. Because of this, industrial areas should not be mixed in among residential areas. Industrial uses often require a large amount of truck traffic and need to be located along streets that can handle an increased amount of traffic. Examples of industrial uses would be factories, construction companies, or mining. A major positive aspect of industrial uses is that they typically employ a large number of people at a decent wage.

Figure 14 Future Land Use Map

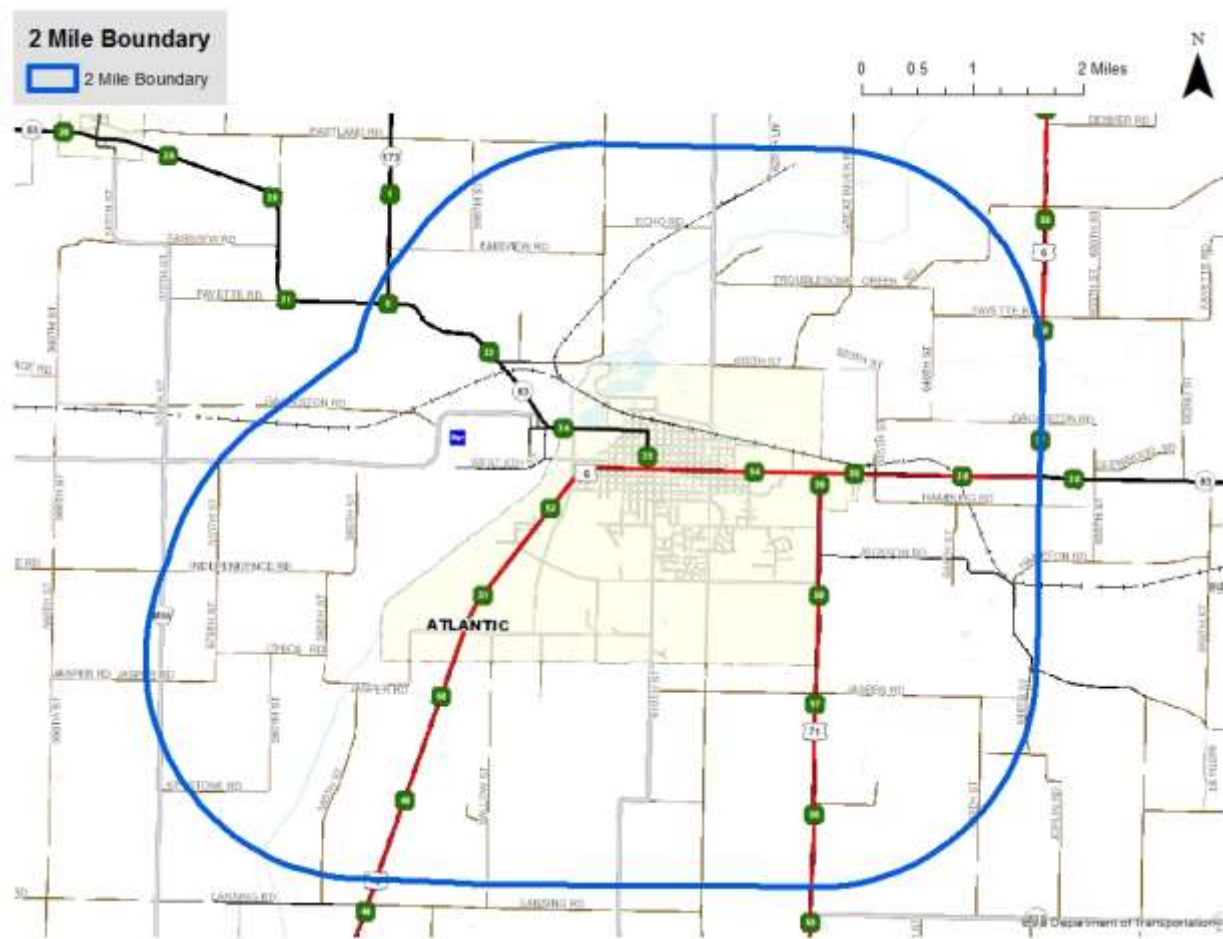




## TWO-MILE PLANNING AREA

To protect Atlantic's future development potential, the city also needs to influence land use patterns in the areas surrounding Atlantic. State of Iowa statutes recognize this need and allow municipalities to extend their subdivision and zoning powers into the unincorporated areas within two miles of their corporate boundaries if the county does not have a zoning ordinance in effect. Cass County has a zoning ordinance in force, which limits the city's zoning powers within this area. The city can, however, influence the county's actions with regard to subdivision development in the two-mile planning area. Like other Iowa cities, Atlantic could establish a joint city-county committee to review current zoning and rezoning requests within the two-mile planning area. While the city cannot directly control development within the two-mile planning area, it can influence where and how it occurs by extending city utilities and working with county officials to ensure that development in the two-mile planning area is consistent with the city's goals and priorities.

Figure 15 Two-Mile Boundary





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## ANNEXATION

If the city should need more land to accommodate growth, the following strategies should be used. Whether it is for the purpose of residential, commercial, or industrial land uses the rules of annexation apply. The city should look towards the future and anticipate the need to annex land as it can be a process that takes time. It should be a proactive yet conservative measure.

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### VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION

Atlantic should use the “voluntary annexation” provisions of Iowa annexation law (including the 80/20 rule, see below) and should avoid if possible annexing areas under “involuntary” procedures. The drawbacks of involuntary annexations include:

- More complex annexation process
- Confrontation with land owners
- Susceptibility to court challenges, which add delays and expense
- Costly extension of city services are mandated within a short time period, even if development is not imminent

In contrast, the benefits of voluntary annexation are:

- Allows city to promote areas for development without having to install costly infrastructure ahead of that development. The annexation/infrastructure extension plan becomes a negotiated process between the property owner, developer, and the city.
- Does not require the city to “pick winners and losers” among potential annexation areas. Instead, the private market determines development timing and location.
- Simpler process, less controversial

To make the voluntary annexation approach work the city must:

- Enact this strategy
- If necessary, use the 80/20 rule for voluntary annexation, which allows land to be annexed with 80% of the property owners in favor of the annexation. While full consent from property owners is ideal, there may be situations where the 80/20 rule is necessary to follow state laws.

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### 1. INITIATE OUTREACH TO PROPERTY OWNERS

Initiate ongoing communication with owners of properties in the annexation priority areas. Communicate the potential benefit of annexation: The extension of city services/infrastructure greatly enhances the development potential of the land and maximizes its sale value.

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## 2. NEGOTIATE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

Development opportunities in the annexation priority areas should be pursued on a “negotiated development agreement” basis, with zoning, infrastructure extensions, and any applicable development incentives as part of the negotiation process. The Future Land Use Map should serve as the guide for uses within the annexation areas.

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## 3. WAIT TO ZONE

Annexation areas should not be zoned for future uses until the areas are voluntarily annexed and a negotiated development deal is accomplished. Discussion of appropriate zoning, consistent with the Future Land Use Map, should be a part of the negotiation process.

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## 4. PRIORITIZE CONTIGUOUS PARCELS

Annexation priority should go to parcels contiguous to current city boundaries. It is not recommended to annex property that is not contiguous to current city property, and would not be permitted by state law in most circumstances.

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## 5. CONTINUE USE OF EXTRA-TERRITORIAL ZONING AND SUBDIVISION REVIEW

Growth areas are zoned as Agriculture to keep the land as farmland or open space until there is demand to develop to another use. Development should be discouraged in these areas. Until a clear plan is in place, such development could inhibit efficient growth of the city in the future.





# Chapter 3

## Quality Public Services

At the heart of a good community are quality public services. These basic services include things such as water, sanitation, schools, and emergency personnel. Public services improve quality of life, health, and safety for all residents.

Some services such as water, sewer, storm water management, electricity, telecommunications, and solid waste removal are services so basic that some residents don't even think about life without them. Others such as schools, medical centers, and emergency responders are ones that are mentioned more frequently in conversation. Even though some services are more widely discussed, all of them are equally important to improving Atlantic.



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities such as the library are important facet of Atlantic's **quality of life**. The city should continue its support of these institutions by reviewing their needs on an annual basis as part of the Capital Improvements Planning process.

### PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Atlantic Public Library is a department of the city. Membership increased from 5,119 in 2015 to 5,124 in 2016. The library houses over 42,000 items from books, audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, and VHS along with

#### Atlantic Library Mission Statement

THE ATLANTIC PUBLIC LIBRARY SPARKS THE COMMUNITY THROUGH PROGRAMS, OUTREACH, AND OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDING LITERACY RESOURCES TO ENHANCE PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND SATISFY CURIOSITY.

14 computers for public use. Programs, services, and events for children, teens, and adults are also provided by staff and over 170 volunteers.

The library operates on a little over \$300,000 annual budget. The budget changes from year to year depending on private donations, grants, and city/county contribution.

	2015		2016	
<b>Income</b>	\$	303,573	\$	335,298
<b>Expenses</b>	\$	376,046	\$	271,490

In February 2017, the Board of Trustees of the Atlantic Public Library invited community members to **serve on a Strategic Planning Committee that would envision the city's future and explore the role the library would play to make that vision reality**. Committee members participated in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of Atlantic. Then, they focused on services the library could provide to improve the community. Each participant voted, identifying which of the eighteen service responses would be most beneficial to Atlantic. The Library Board then analyzed these results and identified the following service responses to focus on for strategic planning:

- Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services
- Create Young Readers: Emergent Literacy
- Learn to Read and Write: Adult and Family Literacy
- Make Career Choices: Job and Career Development
- Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

Income	2015	2016	Change
City	\$ 261,456	\$ 259,078	\$ (2,378)
County	\$ 13,000	\$ 14,000	\$ 1,000
Contracts	\$ 560	\$ 560	\$ -
State	\$ 6,096	\$ 5,929	\$ (167)
Grants	\$ 1,290	\$ 1,298	\$ 8
Gifts	\$ 13,407	\$ 39,375	\$ 25,968
Fees	\$ 7,054	\$ 8,298	\$ 1,244
Restitution	\$ 710	\$ 6,760	\$ 6,050
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 303,573</b>	<b>\$ 335,298</b>	<b>\$ 31,725</b>

Figure 16 Atlantic Public Library



## SENIOR CENTER

Seniors in Atlantic have a center downtown for gatherings and activities such as puzzles and card games. This location also serves as a meeting area for quilting groups, the Lions Club, and can be rented out for special occasions such as graduations or training. Along with activities, the senior center serves noon time

meals Tuesday through Friday, which are catered in by Valley Services, providing convenient and nutritional meals to seniors. To further insure proper maintenance, services, and promotion of the senior center, they City of Atlantic's senior center should work towards becoming a nationally accredited senior center. The National Senior Center Accreditation Program is offered through the National Council of Aging's (NCOA) National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC). Currently, there are nine accredited senior centers in the State of Iowa.

Along with the senior center, senior activities can be found through Heritage House in Atlantic. Heritage House is situated on a multi acre campus and offers independent, assisted, and long term care living arrangements for seniors. This senior living campus offers amenities such as a walking trail, library, salon, coffee shop, fitness classes, monthly activities and more.

The NISHNA Valley Family YMCA in Atlantic is another excellent resource for fitness related senior activities. The YMCA offers discounted rates for seniors giving them affordable access to fitness classes and exercise equipment in a safe, clean environment. There are several classes geared towards older adults or those with mobility issues such as the Silver Sneaker Circuit, Water Arthritis, Chair Yoga, and Aqua Fusion. Classes such as these allow older adults to remain physically active in a social setting and improve their physical and mental health to live happier, longer lives.

## WATER SYSTEM

A municipal water system provides two essential services to the community. The service that is most commonly associated with the municipal water system is providing domestic, commercial and industrial water for everyday use by the consumers. This function requires that water be chemically and bacteriologically safe for consumption. Also, the supply, pumping, distribution and storage facilities must be capable of delivering sufficient quantities of water to meet the user's demands at an acceptable pressure.

Another extremely important, but less commonly used function of the water system is fire protection. Fire protection requires that the supply, pumping, distribution, and storage facilities be capable of delivering large volumes of water to a specific site in the system at an acceptable pressure. Even though the annual total volume of water that is required for firefighting is small, the instantaneous fire flow demand may be very large during periods of need and often governs the design of some of the components of a water system.

Atlantic's water system is operated by Atlantic Municipal Utilities (AMU). The system is supplied by 9 wells. AMU added to the existing water treatment system in the early 1990s and this system is reported to

be in good to excellent condition. Water storage facilities include two elevated water storage facilities and additional ground storage.

The demand for more and better-quality water is increasing, which means the necessity for improved water management must also increase. Water is a finite resource that cannot be manufactured. Every effort must be employed to maintain the high quality of water necessary to meet the demands for domestic, industrial, and agricultural uses. It should be the objective of AMU to develop the most economical and best quality water supply possible to meet the needs of its users.

Table 10 2018 Water Rates

Rates for Water Service Within the Corporate Limits of Atlantic	
Customers shall be billed a flat customer charge, which shall be based upon the size of their water meter, as follows:	
Meter Size	Charge
5/8 inch	\$9.25
3/4 inch	\$10.10
1 inch	\$12.80
1.5 inch	\$16.65
2 inch	\$26.80
3 inch	\$99.90
4 inch	\$128.50
6 inch	\$189.15
Additionally, customers shall be billed for all water used, at the following rates:	
First 15,000 gallons @	\$3.80/1000 gals.
Next 15,000 gallons @	\$3.55/1000 gals.
First 100,000 gallons @	\$3.25/1000 gals.
Over 130,000 gallons @	\$2.60/1000 gals.
Rates for Water Service Outside the Corporate Limits of Atlantic	
Customers shall be billed a flat customer charge, which shall be based upon the size of their water meter, as follows:	
Meter Size	Charge
5/8 inch	\$11.65
3/4 inch	\$12.50
1 inch	\$16.05
1.5 inch	\$20.80
2 inch	\$30.30
3 inch	\$124.95
4 inch	\$160.65
6 inch	\$236.75
Additionally, customers shall be billed for all water used, at the following rates:	
First 15,000 gallons @	\$4.70/1000 gals.
Next 15,000 gallons @	\$4.50/1000 gals.
First 100,000 gallons @	\$4.05/1000 gals.
Over 130,000 gallons @	\$3.25/1000 gals.

\*Subject to change

## ISSUES AND NEEDS

Water management is a means of determining deficiencies in present practices and systems, and it is important in recognizing potential deficiencies. This can be used to propose solutions to problems before **they become serious. As the city grows and changes, it must continue to meet the “10 State Standards”** and other regulations which will ensure safe drinking water and fire protection.

There are several issues that must be considered for reliability of the system, especially the water supply:

- How does the capacity of the supply relate to overall water usage? Average usage is 800,000 to 900,000 gallons/day, water treatment plant able to produce 3 million gallons/day.
- What conditions exist during a high flow demand period with the largest well unavailable? Since AMU has 9 wells, having a well or two out of service at the same time has never been a problem.
- What is the reliability of the water system without its normal power supply? The water wells **and treatment facility are located adjacent to AMU’s electric power plant site which has a backup generator available for emergencies.**

The water supply for the City of Atlantic should be a high priority and concern in future planning. In 1997, the AMU wellfield was taken out of row crop production and a Wellhead Protection Area was developed. The Water Supply for Atlantic has been and will continue to be a high priority for AMU. AMU Board of Trustees has approved a Source Water Protection Plan with the help from IDNR. The quality and quantity of water provided in a community greatly affects living conditions and desirability of potential future investment or residents. Quality water in adequate amounts is essential for domestic use, industrial purposes, and fire protection.

## SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

Intelligent management of water resources is greatly affected by the proper or improper disposal of wastes. Water is a limited resource and must be used and reused many times. Therefore, it is extremely important that all wastewater is properly treated to sustain life.

The **wastewater treatment facility in Atlantic was upgraded in 1989. The system’s capacity is 4,650,000 gallons per day with daily averages of 800,000 gallons per day.** Under current usage, the wastewater treatment facility is well below system capacity and would be capable of handling additional demand (this is not true during storms, however, as capacity is generally exceeded).

- The sanitary sewer collection system is primarily gravity flow with three lift stations on the fringes of the community. The collection system is deemed as adequate with an infiltration/inflow problem. The City has implemented an annual sanitary sewer rehabilitation program to replace failed and/or deteriorated sewer lines.

- A monthly charge for sanitary sewer services based on water usage is currently in place for every lot, parcel of real estate, or premises within the City. The charges are \$28.50 (minimum monthly bill) for the first 3,000 gallons and \$5.80 for each 1,000 gallons after that.
- The wastewater treatment facility is entirely within the floodplain and has been infiltrated by flooding in the past. Due to new environmental regulations, the City is no longer allowed to let untreated water into adjacent East Nishnabotna River when flooding occurs that is beyond the capacity of the plant. In order to handle the amount of water brought on by flooding and to meet new Department of Natural Resources regulations, a new wastewater treatment facility will be built.

## STORM WATER SYSTEM

**Monitoring of the city's storm sewer system will be necessary over the life of this plan.** The city has experienced some challenges with the storm water system including the capacity of Bull Creek where the water drains to and the tunnel beneath the downtown area which is undersized for the current needs. The city is anticipating some system improvements to be done within the next 5 years and larger projects farther into the future.

While anticipating these improvements, the City of Atlantic should consider implementing some more sustainable options for storm water management. These sustainable practices could be green roof tops, permeable pavements, rain gardens, or increased vegetation to name a few. These sustainable practices help to reduce runoff and improve water quality while maintaining the natural water cycle.

The following images are examples of some sustainable storm water management practices. Green rooftops are rooftops that feature gardens or vegetation to collect rainwater. This then allows for the collected rainwater to evaporate naturally back into the atmosphere without collecting pollution. Permeable surfaces, unlike impermeable surfaces like asphalt or concrete, allow for water to go through them into the ground below. This replenishes ground water and reduces runoff caused by impermeable surfaces. Rain gardens are simply landscaped areas that feature vegetation mainly along city streets or sidewalks. Rain gardens not only allow for water to pass naturally into the ground below, but also add an aesthetically pleasing feature to the environment.

Figure 17 Green Rooftop in Ottumwa Iowa



SWIPCO 2017

Figure 18 Permeable Surfaces



[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

Figure 19 Rain Garden



[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

An excellent example of implementation of sustainable storm water management practices can be found in the Bee Branch Watershed in Dubuque. The Bee Branch Creek Greenway is a storm water management area that doubles as a park area for residents and visitors. The City of Dubuque restored nearly one mile of creek that had once been there years ago. This allows for rain water to be naturally carried out of the City and into the Mississippi River instead of saturating the ground and causing flooding for residents. Many amenities were added to the restored creek area to allow for recreational by residents such as multi-use trails, fishing, benches, lighting, outdoor amphitheater, and scenic overlooks.



Figure 20 Bee Branch Creek Greenway



[www.cityofdubuque.com](http://www.cityofdubuque.com)

## SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

The Cass County Landfill and Recycling center accepts landfill disposal and recyclable materials including household hazardous waste and e-waste. The landfill is run by the Cass County Environmental Control Agency which is a 28(E) governmental entity made up of representatives from Cass County. The Cass County Landfill is a balefill facility which means solid waste is unloaded inside the building, baled, and then transferred to the working face of the landfill to be covered. This method increases the life of the landfill, increases compaction rates, eliminates blowing litter, and eliminates the effects of weather on the compacting operations.

## ELECTRIC UTILITY

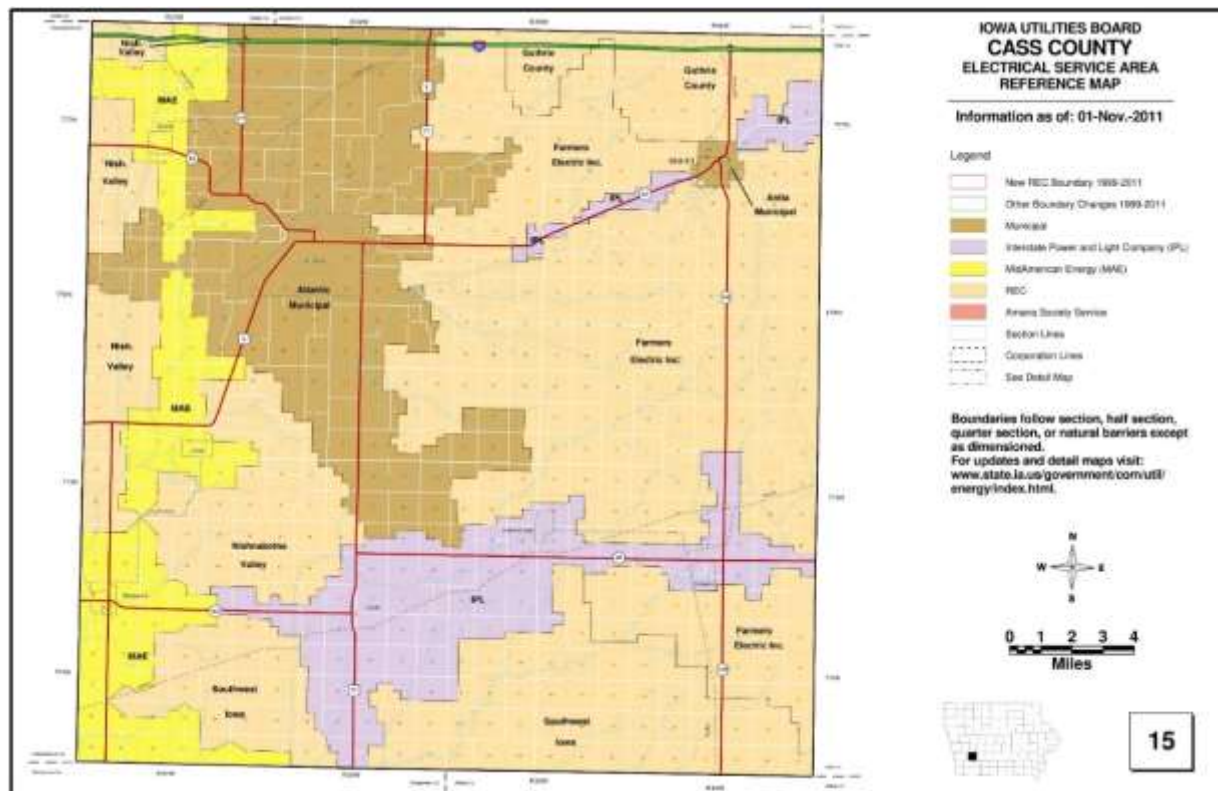
Atlantic Municipal Utilities (AMU) is a publicly owned, not-for-profit electric system that provides electric service to Atlantic residents and businesses. AMU provides electric service to approximately 5,000 electric customers in the Atlantic area using a variety of sources including coal-power from Council Bluffs, hydroelectric from the Missouri River and generators located in Atlantic. AMU has a board which consists of five members, a chairman, vice chairman, and three trustees. These members are appointed by the mayor and serve staggered six-year terms. According to a study done by the American Public Power Association, AMU has some of the lowest rates in Iowa. This is not only good for the residents, but it is attractive to businesses and industries who are looking to start up.

Table 11 2018 Electric Rates

Rates for Electric Service Within the Corporate Limits of Atlantic	
Residential Service	
Winter Rate (October-April)	Summer Rate (May-September)
\$8.70 base rate per month plus,	\$8.70 base rate per month, plus
\$0.0697 per kWh	\$0.0768 per kWh
\$15.75 additional charge if Three Phase	\$15.75 additional charge if Three Phase
Residential All-Electric Service	
Winter Rate (October-April)	Summer Rate (May-September)
\$18.00 base rate per month, plus	\$18.00 base rate per month
\$0.0444 per kWh	\$0.0768 per kWh
\$15.70 additional charge if Three Phase	\$15.75 additional charge if Three Phase
Residential Supplemental Electric Heat Service	
Winter Rate (October-April)	Summer Rate (May-September)
\$25.60 base rate per month, plus	\$8.70 base rate per month, plus
\$0.0487 per kWh	\$0.0768 per kWh
\$15.70 additional charge if Three Phase	\$15.75 additional charge if Three Phase
Rates for Electric Service Outside the Corporate Limits of Atlantic	
Rural Residential Service	
Winter Rate (October-April)	Summer Rate (May-September)
\$19.20 base charge per month, plus	\$19.20 base charge per month, plus
\$0.0930 per kWh	\$0.1000 per kWh
\$15.70 additional charge if Three Phase	\$15.70 additional charge if Three Phase
Rural Residential All-Electric Service	
Winter Rate (October-April)	Summer Rate (May-September)
\$25.60 base rate per month, plus	\$19.20 base rate per month, plus
\$0.0466 per kWh	\$0.1000 per kWh
\$15.70 additional charge if Three Phase	\$15.70 additional charge if Three Phase
Rural Residential Supplemental Electric Heat Service	
Winter Rate (October-April)	Summer Rate (May-September)
\$33.20 base rate per month, plus	\$19.20 base charge per month, plus
\$0.0517 per kWh	\$0.1000 per kWh
\$15.70 additional charge if Three Phase	\$15.70 additional charge if Three Phase

\*Subject to change.

Figure 21 Electrical Service Area Boundaries



## MEDICAL AND HOSPITALS

Cass County Health System (CCHS) is a regional healthcare provider located in Atlantic, Iowa. CCHS brings together medical providers, clinics and a full-service hospital to provide a well-coordinated, comprehensive local healthcare system. With more than 360 staff members, the health system is the largest employer in the county.

As a critical access hospital, Cass County Memorial Hospital has 25 acute and swing beds and 4 distinct behavioral health beds. The health system has over 30 physicians and advanced practice clinicians in addition to more than 20 visiting specialists. Specialty clinics include oncology, radiology, urology, cardiology, pulmonology, allergy, neurology, pain management, dermatology, vascular surgery, and ophthalmology.

In addition to the full-service hospital, CCHS includes Eye Associates, Southwest Iowa Surgery, Senior Life Solutions, Cass County Public Health, and four rural health clinics (Atlantic Medical Center, Anita Medical Center, Griswold Medical Center, and Massena Medical Center).

CCHS has top of line equipment and facilities including additions in the past few years to Inpatient Services, Emergency Department and Surgical Services. Nearly all existing space has been recently remodeled to create updated areas for rehabilitation services, respiratory care, hospital pharmacy, wound, ostomy continence care, and specialty clinics. Diagnostic imaging was expanded to include an in-house MRI suite in addition to a new CT scanner and 3D mammography. Atlantic Medical Center was expanded to house podiatry, obstetrics and gynecology clinicians as well as additional space for primary care services.

In addition to Cass County Health System, the city also supports several independent health, chiropractic, eye, and dental clinics. There are also three assisted living facilities.

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency service is vital to the welfare and safety of the community. The level of this service varies greatly from community to community, based in part, upon its size and population level. It is common that the level of this service changes as the community grows.

The City of Atlantic adopted the Cass County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015. The overall goal of the plan is to identify potential hazards that could affect the county and each community for the purposes of mitigation planning. It is important to note that the focus of mitigation is on reducing long-term risks of damage or threats to public health and safety caused by natural hazards and their effects. The plan is updated every five years and approved by the State of Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management and FEMA. It is highly encouraged and recommended that hazard mitigation plans are integrated into other planning mechanisms by the city.

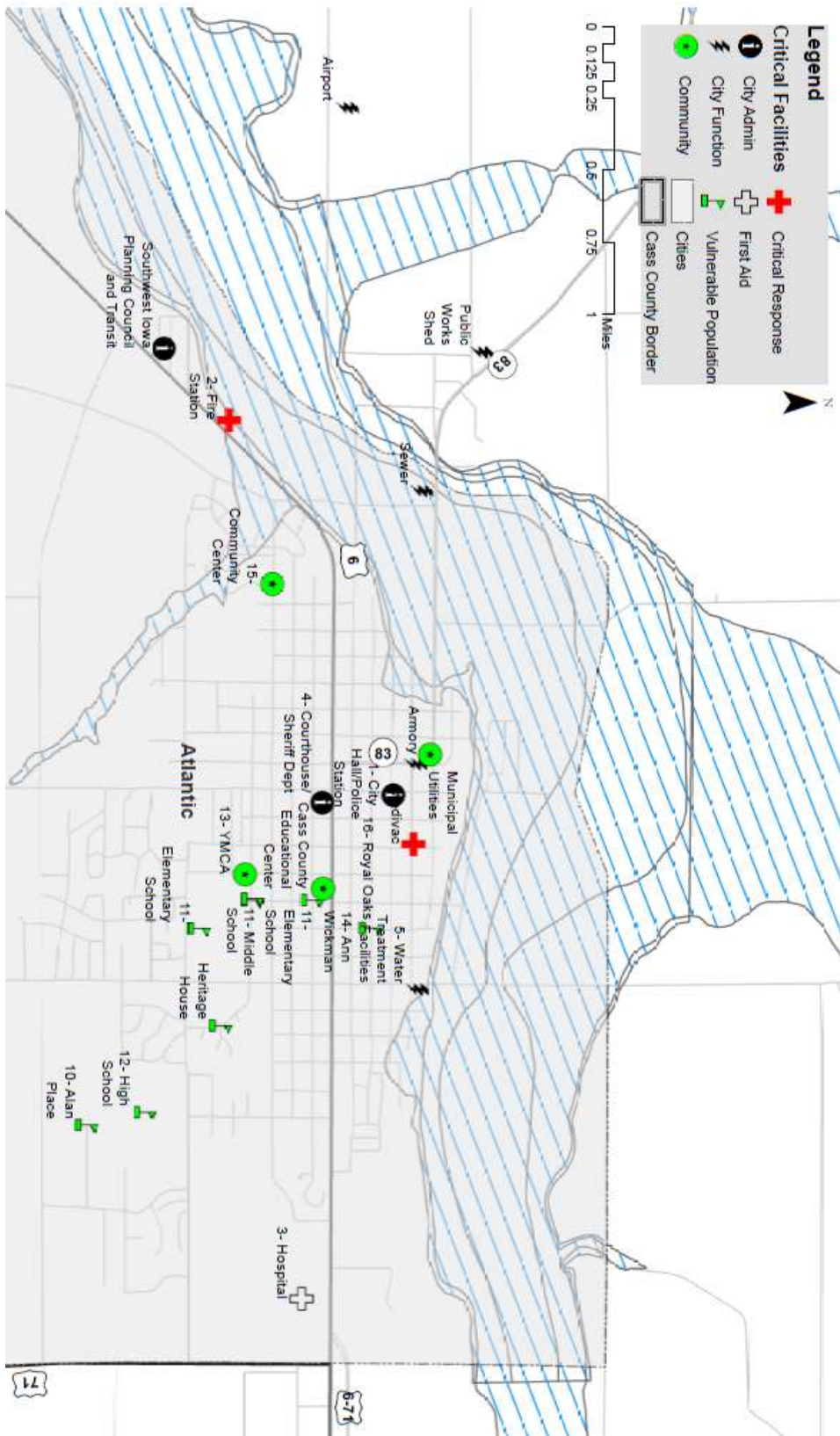
In the plan, critical facilities were identified and mapped. The table and figure below show the critical facilities that were chosen by the Atlantic hazard mitigation planning committee.

Table 12 Critical Facilities

Name or Description of Asset	Number on Map	Critical Facilities	Vulnerable Populations	Economic Assets	Social Considerations	Historic/Other Considerations
		X	X	X	X	X
City Hall/ Police Station	1	x				
Fire Station	2	x				
Hospital	3	x				
Courthouse/Sheriff/911 Center	4	x				
Wastewater Treatment Plant	5	x				
AMU	6	x				
Water Tower	7	x				
Water Tower	8	x				
Heritage House	9		x			
Allen Place/ Atlantic Housing and Rehab	10		x			
Washington/ Schuler/ Atlantic Middle School	11		x			
Atlantic High School	12		x			
YMCA	13		x		x	
Ann Wickman Center	14		x			
Cass Co Community Center	15				x	
Royal Oaks	16		x			



Figure 22 Critical Facility Map



The following are the actions the City of Atlantic identified to accomplish or continue in the following five years after the plan was adopted. These action items are organized under the three goals of the plan which are:

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GOAL #1 – PROTECT THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CASS COUNTY CITIZENS WHILE REDUCING OR ELIMINATING PROPERTY LOSSES, ECONOMIC COSTS, AND DAMAGE TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CAUSED BY A DISASTER.

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Objective #1: Reduce effects of adverse weather by improving disaster preparedness.

- The City will meet with fire, police, streets departments to discuss need.
- Establish standards and methods that protect power lines and infrastructure from potential risks. The city will begin to bury powerlines. This is a long-term goal for the city. They will partner with utilities.

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GOAL #2 – ENSURE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY ARE NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DISRUPTED BY DISASTERS.

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Objective #1: Ensure public facilities are available and operational during a disaster or hazard event.

- The City will maintain 28-E agreements with surrounding communities. Jurisdictions: Griswold, Cass County, Sheriff's office.
- Construct a Red Cross certified and FEMA approved safe room in a public facility.

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GOAL #3 – EXPAND PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ENCOURAGE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION TO BUILD A MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITY AGAINST ALL HAZARDS.

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Objective #1: Protect health, safety and quality of life of Cass County residents by ensuring effective response to all hazards.

- The city will provide training to emergency response personnel.
- The City will appoint Incident Manager and make sure they are known to all officials.
- The City will ensure all mechanisms for early warning of hazards are properly functioning.

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Atlantic Police Department consists of seven patrolmen, two lieutenants, two sergeants and the Chief of Police. The department is supported and assisted by a unit of reserve officers. Two secretaries / dispatchers take calls as well as organize and distribute the massive amounts of paperwork generated by the officers. The Atlantic Police Department has no specialty units, officers must be proficient in all areas of law enforcement. Many officers do have special training in specific areas, which is utilized when the need arises.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

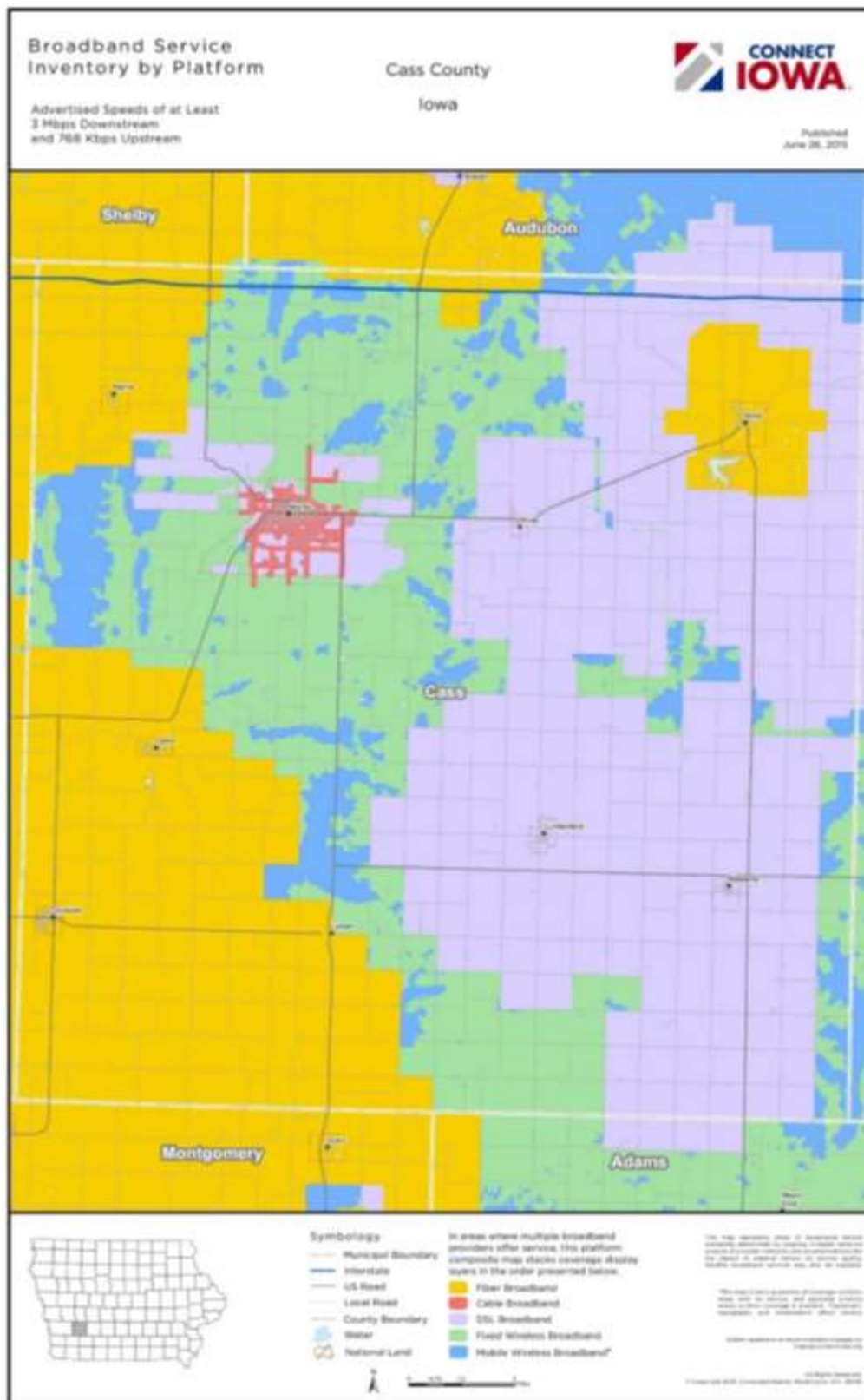
Atlantic fire and rescue was founded in 1877 and was originally called the Phoenix Engine Company. Since then, it has grown and changed names. Now, the department consists of 40 volunteers, 3 of which are also paid engineers. The department also consists of ten different vehicles from pumper trucks, grass fire vehicles and a rescue vehicle. These volunteers along with the fleet of vehicles serves Atlantic with any firefighting and rescue needs.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Being able to connect to the internet is becoming increasingly important for business, industry, and residents. Companies are relying on the internet more for the functionality of their business. Also telecommuting to work is an option for some people to work from home. There are several levels of internet speed, the fastest being fiber broadband. Currently, according to the broadband service inventory map for Cass County, all of the city of Atlantic is in the cable broadband category. This shows that there is room for improvement with the broadband services provided.



Figure 23 Broadband Service Inventory



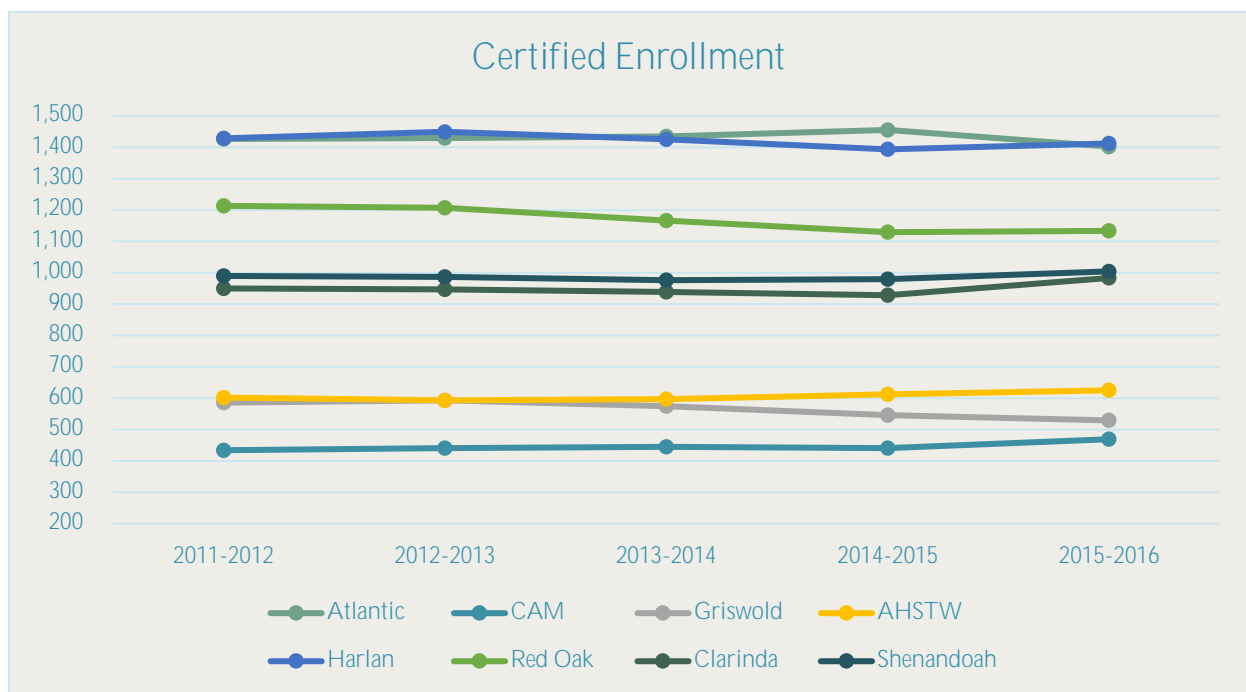
## SCHOOLS

The quality of educational opportunities is a critical part of quality of life and economic development for any community. There are 4 licensed daycare centers in Atlantic. Parents also rely on in-home daycare providers. The children of Atlantic attend school in the Atlantic Community School District. All school buildings are located in town. It is estimated that there are 21 homeschool families in the community which is a sizeable number represented. Excluding preschoolers, approximately 19 percent of the population is school age.

While Atlantic's K-12 schools operate independent of the city, they are critical partners in moving Atlantic forward and their continued success will help achieve the goals of this plan. During the comprehensive plan process, residents expressed that the partnership between the school and the City was one of the primary strengths of the Atlantic community.

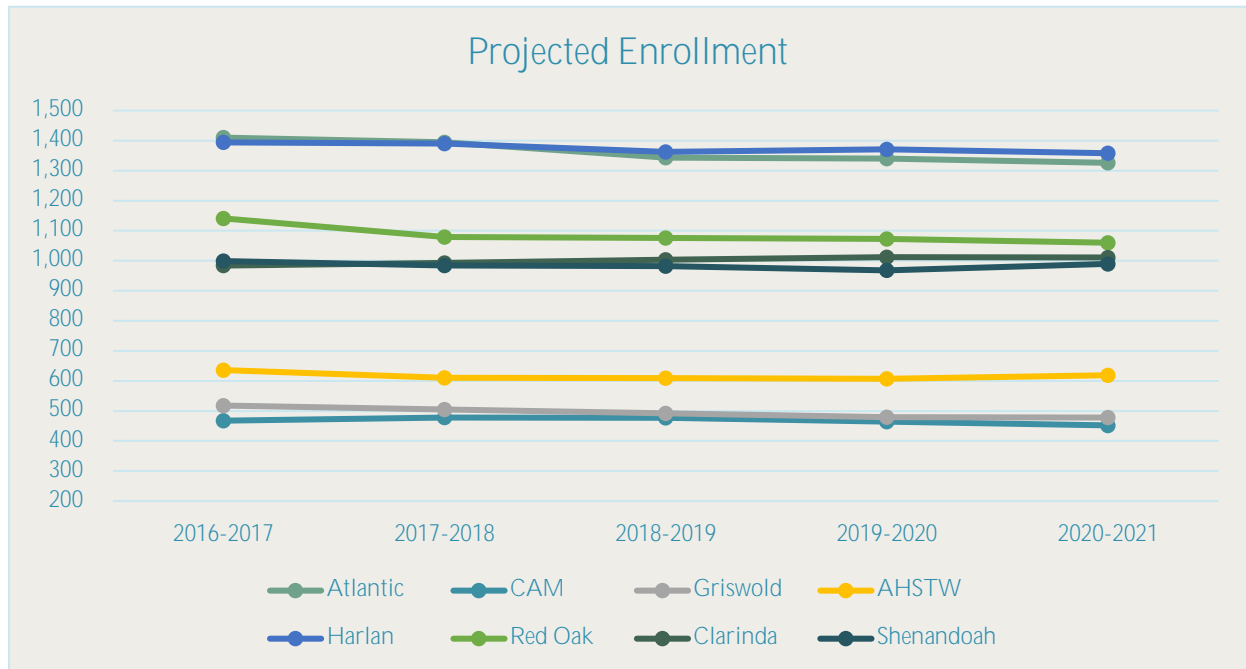
Atlantic's school district, when compared to surrounding districts, is one of the largest. The certified enrollment of Atlantic had been increasing up until the 2014-2015 school year when it began to decrease.

Figure 24 School District Certified Enrollment



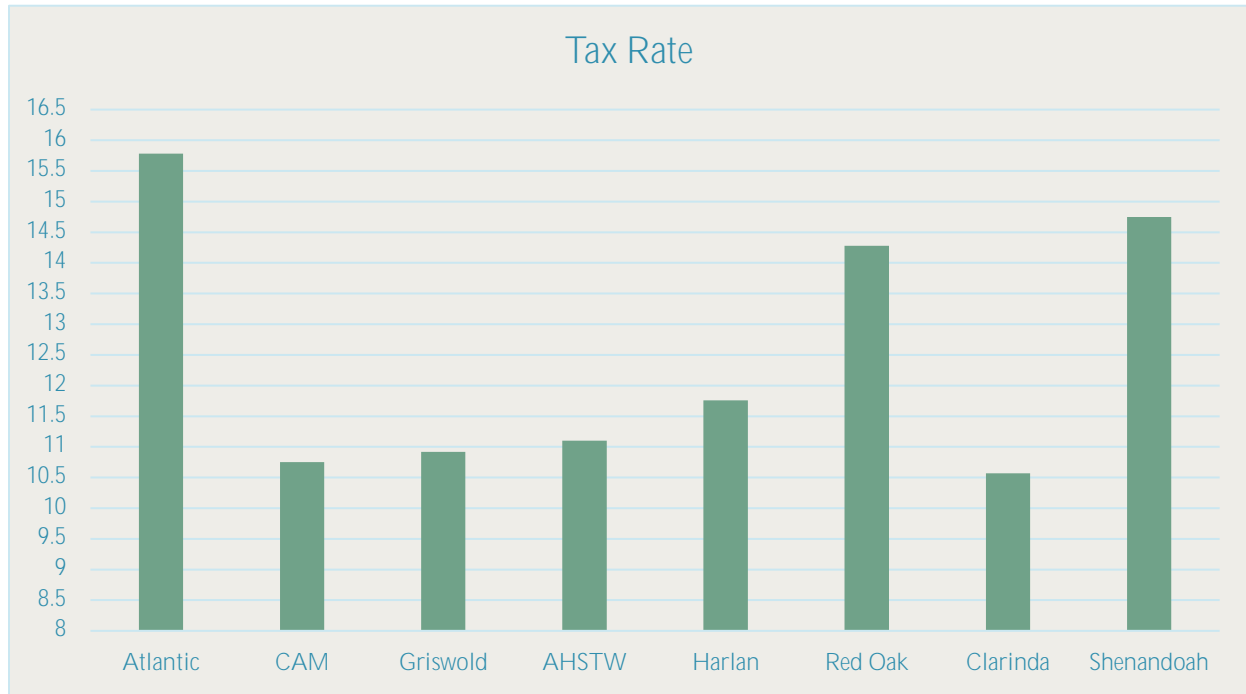
The projected enrollment for many of the surrounding school districts, including Atlantic, show a decline in enrollment. It is projected that Atlantic will remain between 1,300 and 1,400 students.

Figure 25 Projected School Enrollment



When comparing the tax rate of the surrounding school districts, Atlantic has invested one of the highest amounts of tax dollars in their school district for fiscal year 2017. The amount that tax payers have allocated for the school equals about \$6,595 per student. Atlantic School District employs 7 full time administrators and 107 full time teachers.

Figure 26 School Tax Rate



# Chapter 4

## Mobility for All

Offering a variety of transportation choices—safe, convenient, and comfortable mobility for people walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving—is vital to ensuring high quality of life and economic health for any town. Not only does transportation play an active role in residents’ **physical and mental wellbeing**, but also in ensuring residents’ economic wellbeing by providing access to jobs, attracting new businesses, and bringing tourism dollars into the community.

Like all American cities, **Atlantic’s development patterns** have catered predominantly to automobile drivers since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sometimes neglecting, discouraging, and even endangering people who utilize, or wish to utilize, other modes of transportation. Decades of automobile-centric development patterns, though, have yielded a large and relatively well-connected street network within the city. Streets and roadways are generally well-maintained and most of Atlantic’s neighborhoods feature at least some walking facilities. Sidewalk infrastructure in some areas of the city, however, is sometimes decades old and in need of repair, replacement, or other improvements such as ADA-compliant ramps and signals, while some more recently developed areas lack sidewalks either partially or altogether.

Coinciding with—and perhaps brought about by—the rise of the Millennials as America’s largest demographic cohort, there has been an increase in awareness and demand for high-quality transportation facilities that enable, and even encourage, walking and bicycling for shorter trips.

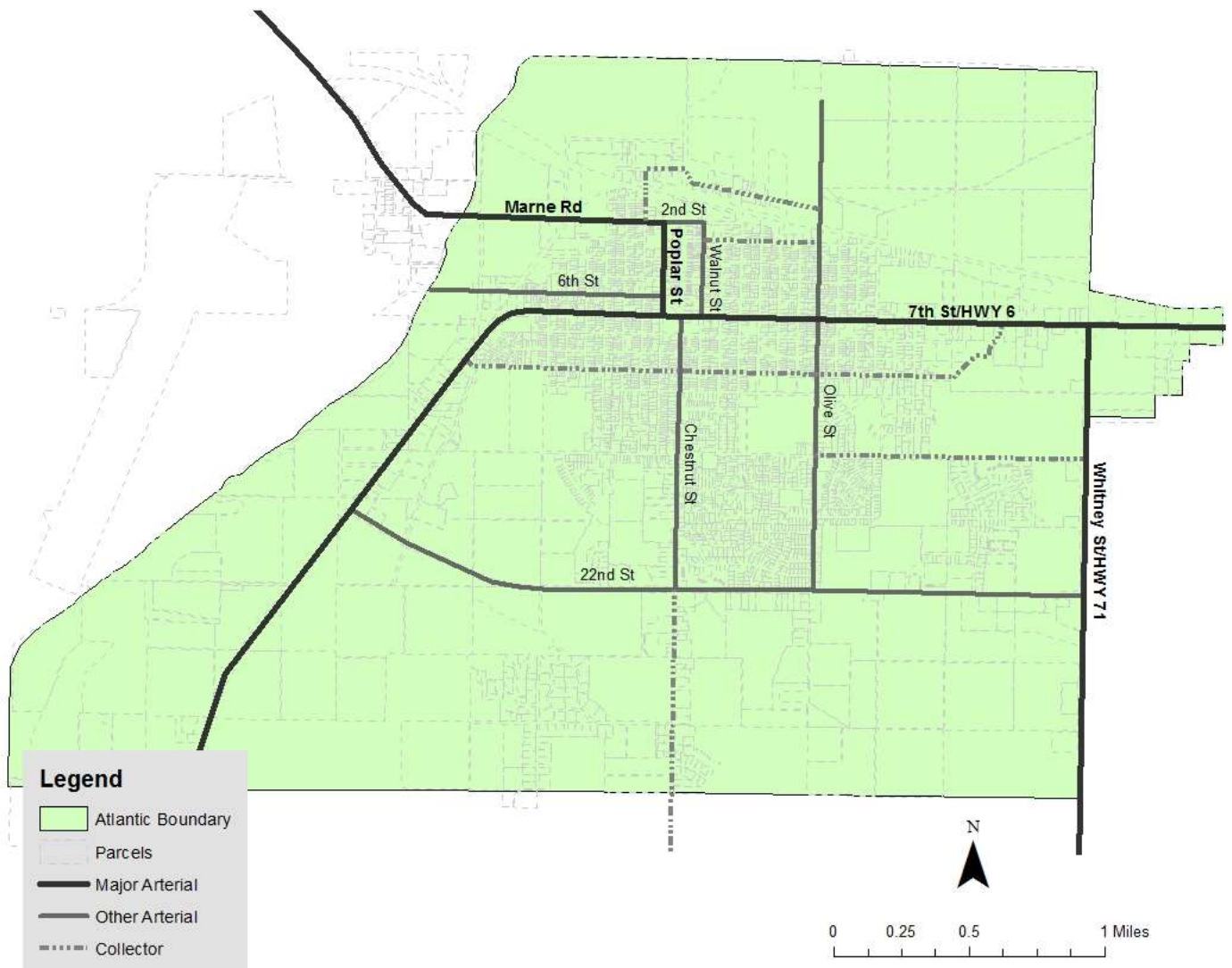
In an effort to serve current residents, as well as attract new residents including young families, the City must not only continue to maintain its current streets, sidewalks, and trails in a state of good repair, but actively look for and implement best practices for increasing safety and connectivity for all transportation modes through its operations and maintenance practices, and by designing new and reconstructed facilities with all transportation system users in mind.

By accommodating people of all ages and abilities, **Atlantic’s transportation system** can serve current residents, attract new residents interested in an active lifestyle, and enable older residents to age in place with dignity by providing safe and convenient alternatives to driving.

## TRANSPORTATION TODAY

The city's **system of roads** is vital in moving goods and services throughout the region. Roadways are classified by their use and the volume of traffic they can handle. Principal arterials and major or minor collector roads, such as those listed below, are responsible for moving traffic throughout the region as well as to adjacent communities and consist of mainly state highways and interstates. They are designed to move traffic quickly over medium to long distances. Within the network of these highways and interstates are local roads that allow access to the smaller communities and rural homes and businesses located within the county as well as make up the network of roadways within the cities. These roads are vital to a smaller population, though equally important to the communities that they are located in. A number of state highways cross intersect in the city connecting it with adjacent counties and providing quick access to surrounding local communities.

Figure 27 Road Classification



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## MAJOR ARTERIALS

These roads serve regional needs and connect major activity centers. Congestion and safety problems emerge when major arterials also are called upon to move local trips, such as trips to shopping facilities. This occurs in the absence of connected street networks, which provide alternative routes.

Atlantic is the intersection of three highways in Cass County. Two of which can be used to access Interstate 80.

- Interstate 80 – I-80 follows an east-west route along the northern edge of the county. While Atlantic is not located on I-80 but is located within 10 miles of it which is a crucial transportation route for access to and from the city and is highly utilized by truck traffic shipping goods across the state and the country.
- US Highway 6 (7<sup>th</sup> Street) – This east-west highway enters Cass County from the northeast corner. US Highway 6 diverges from I-80 once it reaches the center of the county and heads south where it shares a two-lane road with US Highway 71. It turns west again on the eastern edge of Atlantic, **diverging from US 71 and heading straight through Atlantic's commercial corridor.** Once on the western side of town, US 6 turns southwest until it reaches the middle latitude of the county. Once there, it turns west again and exits Cass County into Pottawattamie County.
- US Highway 71 – This highway cuts across Cass County north to south. It enters the county from the middle of the northern boundary and heads south where it almost immediately joins US Highway 6. US 71 and US 6 share a road until they reach State Highway 83. From there all three highways share a road and head west for 2 miles until they reach the northeastern edge of Atlantic. From there US 71 branches off from the other two highways and heads south again passing through the unincorporated town of Lyman before exiting the county.
- State Highway 83 – This highway is an east-west highway that begins in downtown Anita. From Anita, it travels in a southwestern direction through Wiota until it meets US 6/US 71 just east of Atlantic. From there it heads west through Atlantic sharing the road with US 6 and US 71. US 6 branches off to the south after two miles, but US 71 continues to share the road with Highway 83 until Poplar Street in Atlantic where Highway 83 branches off northward for about a mile until it reaches Marne Road. Once it reaches Marne Road it turns west again and heads northwesterly, passing through Marne before it exits the county in the northwest corner.

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## OTHER ARTERIALS

These major streets connect with and complement the major arterial system by linking major activity centers and connecting various parts of the city together. In Atlantic, north-south streets tend to be named for trees and east-west streets tend to be numbered. Atlantic streets in the category include:

- Chestnut Street
- Walnut Street
- Olive Street
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- 6<sup>th</sup> Street
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Street

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## COLLECTORS

The collector system links neighborhoods together and connects them to arterials and activity centers. Collectors run within residential areas and distribute trips from arterials to their ultimate destinations. They also collect traffic from a neighborhood's local streets and channel it to arterials. Examples of collectors in Atlantic's current system include:

- Commerce Street
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
- 10<sup>th</sup> Street
- 14<sup>th</sup> Street
- South Chestnut Street

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## LOCAL STREETS

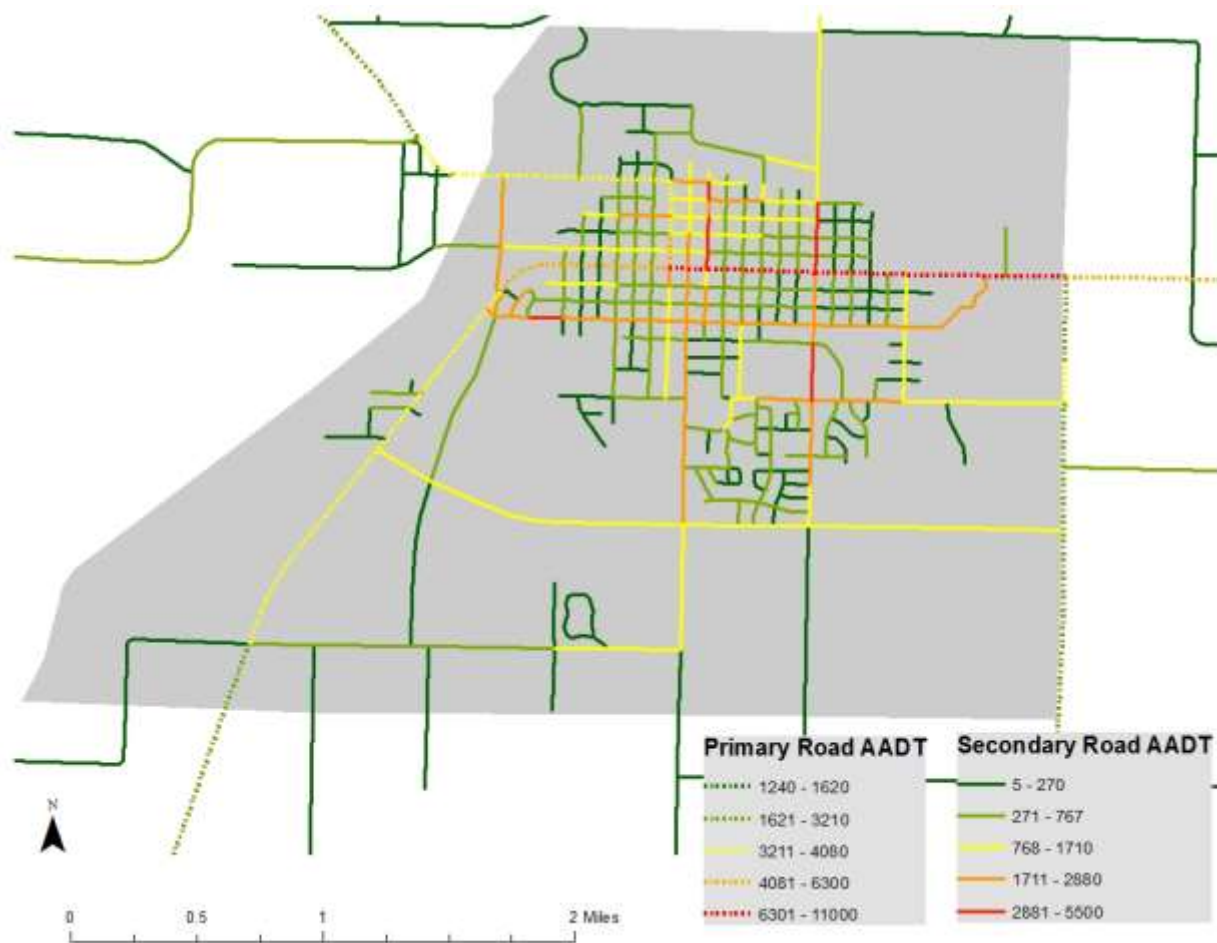
Local streets serve individual properties within residential or commercial areas. They provide direct low-speed access for relatively short trips. Local streets may include cul-de-sacs, which should not exceed 300 feet in length. Numerous cul-de-sacs in the western and southern part of the city often limit access to other parts of the city.



## ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT)

The annual average daily traffic count is an important measurement utilized for evaluating, classifying, maintaining, and improving roads. This statistic is typically obtained by counting traffic on a section of road either manually or by a traffic counter for either a continuous year or a short period. This number is then calculated out to equal the average count for any given day during that year. Below is the AADT for roads in Atlantic for 2016.

Figure 28 Annual Average Daily Traffic for Atlantic 2016



## COMMUTING

Atlantic is situated about an hour from the Omaha and Des Moines metro areas to the west and east, respectively. US Census Bureau data indicate that only about 4% of Atlantic residents are driving an hour or more to work. The vast majority of residents continue to work in Atlantic or its surrounding region, with 85% commuting to work in under a half an hour and 60% in less than 15 minutes. For a resident who lives and works in Atlantic, the maximum possible commute time for a driver is only about 11 minutes. Additionally, the geographic area of Atlantic is such that commuting distances within the city are often conducive to walking and bicycling.

Table 13 Travel Time to Work

Travel Time to Work by Percentage of Population				
Travel Time to Work	2010	2012	2014	2015
Less than 10 minutes	39.9%	40.5%	40.4%	40.0%
10 to 14 minutes	20.4%	19.9%	17.2%	15.8%
15 to 19 minutes	11.4%	10.3%	10.0%	10.2%
20 to 24 minutes	9.7%	9.2%	10.6%	12.2%
25 to 29 minutes	4.1%	3.7%	4.5%	5.2%
30 to 34 minutes	7.7%	8.0%	7.8%	6.4%
35 to 44 minutes	1.5%	3.0%	3.6%	4.1%
45 to 59 minutes	3.5%	2.1%	2.2%	1.7%
60 or more minutes	1.8%	3.4%	3.7%	4.3%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	14.7	15.6	16.8	17.6

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2010, 2012, 2014

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) provides various public transportation services to the Atlantic and surrounding areas. School and preschool routes are available to take children to and from school along with the Summer Fun Bus which transports school aged children during the summer to activities. There are several different work routes, including day programs, for employees to get to their jobs in Atlantic or the surrounding area. A route is available between Council Bluffs and Atlantic for students enrolled in Iowa Western Community College's Design Technology program. SWITA also provides taxi service within the city limits of Atlantic seven days a week. SWITA provides non-emergency medical transportation both in and outside of Atlantic. There are services available for elderly riders, age 60 and above, which include a weekly shopping trip and the summer Produce in the Park events. Other special trips are scheduled by calling the SWITA office. The cost for each service varies, and most route-specific details can be found on the SWIPCO website. SWITA can provide services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,

depending on driver availability. Transportation needs are constantly changing, and SWITA strives to adapt with them and reduce transportation barriers. All SWITA routes and services are open to the public.

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## AIRPORT

The Atlantic Municipal Airport is a general aviation facility with two runways capable of supporting light business jets. Expansion of the airport and upgrades could go a long way in making the Atlantic Airport a strong amenity for current and future businesses.

## TRANSPORTATION OPPORTUNITIES

This section is designed to provide the city with a city design concept and transportation system that fills varied roles for Atlantic. The overall assumption of this chapter is that land use policies and major transportation improvements in Atlantic must:

- Address transportation issues that result from Atlantic's position in the regional traffic system;
- Provide enhanced movement around the city;
- Link neighborhoods and community features together

As Atlantic's combined pattern of land use and transportation systems develops it must follow the basic principles of streets.

---

## BASIC PRINCIPLES OF STREETS

A street is not merely a strip of concrete between two curbs. A street consists of the entire right-of-way, which may include sidewalks, greenspace in medians and between curb and sidewalk, marked and unmarked crosswalks, and space dedicated to bicyclists. With this in mind, Atlantic should build and maintain its streets according to the following principles.

### Enhance Connectivity

New streets should line up with and tie into the existing street grid, connecting new development to existing neighborhoods and commercial areas at multiple points, and provide multiple options to access developed areas using different modes of transportation—walking, bicycling, driving, and transit where available.

**Overall the city's system has developed in a continuous fashion. However, a heavy reliance on 7<sup>th</sup> street creates both congestion and safety problems. A major goal of the plan must be to create an overall system that reduces or eliminates these conflicts.**

### Serve all Users

Streets should provide safe, convenient, and comfortable mobility options for people of all ages and abilities—people walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving. **Atlantic’s physical layout and size makes traveling around the city by means other than cars a possibility.** The city’s pedestrian system should provide good access for all to major features in the city.

In cities and towns, streets that embody this concept—sometimes called “Complete Streets”—typically include sidewalks, enhanced pedestrian crossings, paved multi-use paths or side paths, bicycle lanes, bicycle pavement markings and signage, and traffic calming such as curb extensions, narrower motor-vehicle travel lanes, and lower speed limits.

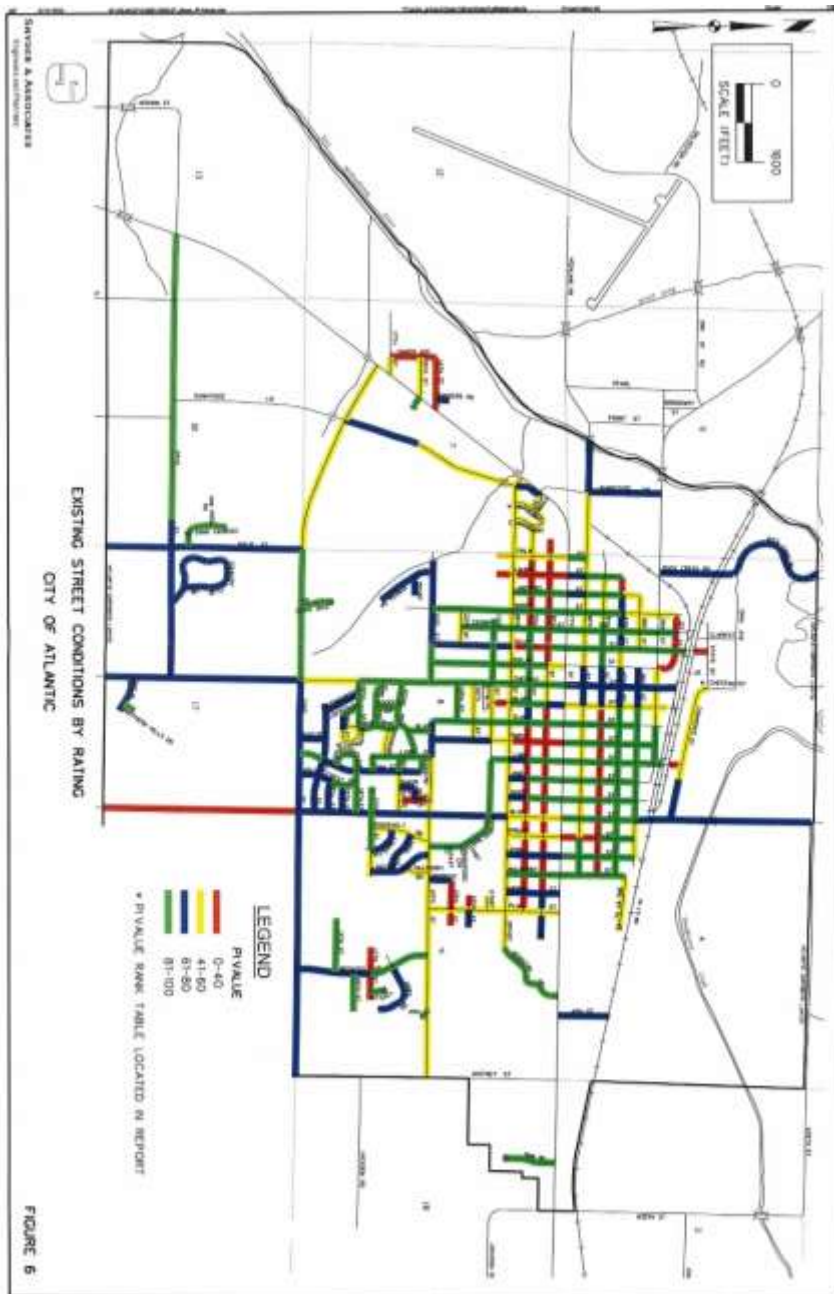
### Promote Atlantic

Streets are Atlantic’s **largest public space**. They should be designed in a way that reflects and enhances the pride that Atlantic residents feel in their community. Streets provide the first impression for many visitors and have a daily impact on how residents view their community. Landscaping, street furniture, public art, green boulevards and other attractive street features should be considered an investment in community character and quality of life, as well as a tool to promote tourism and economic development.

## STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Atlantic's streets and trails require ongoing funding and maintenance. The City has had the condition of all streets in Atlantic surveyed to identify priority improvement projects. The City should continue to prioritize projects and establish a funding schedule on an annual basis. Street improvement resources should be directed toward the areas identified as deficient in the City's comprehensive street condition survey, which follows. A higher PI value in the map below indicates a road with a better rating.

Figure 29 Road Condition Rating 2016



## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

**Trails:** Trails are off-street paths that serve pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation.

**Bike Route and Complete Streets:** Preferred bicycle routes identifies existing and proposed streets that are good choices for bicyclists, due to their relatively low traffic and access to popular community destinations. These bike routes should be designated using pavement markings and signs. Future streets that are designated as bike routes could potentially include bike lanes or side paths if appropriate.

Figure 30 2nd Street Bike Lane



**Sidewalks:** Sidewalks are the center piece of the pedestrian transportation network, which also includes street crossings, curb ramps, signals, etc. Atlantic overall has a well-connected sidewalk network, though there are still gaps in connectivity and infrastructure that has fallen into disrepair. The network must be maintained **and expanded to meet residents' needs**. As a general policy:

- New streets should provide ADA-compliant sidewalks on both sides of the street, especially new collectors and arterials.
- Existing streets should provide ADA-compliant sidewalk on at least one side of the street.

Sidewalk construction and upgrades on existing streets are often done piecemeal over time in conjunction with other street or infrastructure projects. However, the City may elect a more aggressive approach where correcting deficiencies in connectivity, condition, or ADA compliance of pedestrian infrastructure is considered an urgent quality-of-life priority.

The City should implement site-plan standards for pedestrian access and provision of bicycle racks for new development and should place bicycle racks in rights of way it owns and maintains, such as sidewalks throughout the downtown area, schools, and parks. To encourage existing businesses to add bicycle racks and appropriate pedestrian connections to their properties, the City should consider incentives such as cost matching and tax abatement.



# Chapter 5

## A Recreational Lifestyle

Atlantic is currently well-served with community and neighborhood parks and new amenities and improvements to those parks are underway. It is the goal of this chapter to define a plan that will guide the City of Atlantic to ensure that a quality park and recreation system becomes an integral part of the community. Outdoor recreation is critical for maintaining and improving the health and quality of life for residents. Having a variety of recreational activities is more appealing to residents and will produce a more attractive and healthy community.

## PARKS TODAY

Outdoor recreation and open space adds to the quality of life in a community. It enhances the attractiveness of a community, as well as fosters a sense of civic pride. An adequate supply of areas, facilities, and activities to accommodate public recreational needs promotes the general health, welfare, and safety of the community and its citizens.

Atlantic has a variety of parks and recreational opportunities nearby. Below is a description of the parks in the city.

Figure 31 Current Park and Recreation Locations





Sunnyside Park is the largest park in Atlantic with over 50 acres of land and around 1,000 trees. This park features 3 playgrounds, a swimming pool, basketball courts, pickleball courts, tennis courts, softball field, a skate park, an 18-hole disc golf course and more.

Figure 32 Sunnyside Park



The Schildberg Recreational Area is another key asset to the parks and recreation in the area. The area is home to 3 large quarry lakes, paved trails, unleashed Dog Park, and an area for camping. This recreational area continues to be mentioned by residents as an area for great improvement and opportunities.

Figure 33 Schildberg Recreational Area and Dog Park



The City Park is located in the center of Atlantic just south of Downtown. It features an abundance of open space, a shelter, benches, restrooms, historic log cabin, and Veterans War Memorial. Since City Park is located in the heart of Atlantic, it serves as a space for many of the town's events and festivals held year-round.

Figure 34 City Park



Along with the larger, more well know parks of the area, there are several smaller parks scattered throughout the city. Cedar Park was built in 1976 and is located between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street along Cedar Street. It features play equipment for children, a shelter, grills, and seating areas. East Ridge Park is located along 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and has a trail with natural grasses and flowers. Located at 16<sup>th</sup> and Olive Street at the end of the Bull Creek Pathway is Harl-Holt Park which features play equipment, a shelter, basketball court, and a large amount of open green space. Mollett Park is located at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Place and has a small playground with a large amount of open green space. Located just steps away from the high school is Nishna Park which is a large green space with a small playground. Pellet Park is located at 18<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut Street and has a new playground for children and a large open green space.

Along with these parks, Atlantic also has the Little League Sports Complex north of town on Olive Street. The sports complex features 8 ball diamonds, 2 football/soccer fields, and a new playground area. Bull Creek Pathway is another recreational asset to the city. It is a hard surface trail that runs from Harl-Holt Park to 10<sup>th</sup> Street and travels near the middle and high school. Atlantic is also home to two different 18-hole golf courses, the Nishna Hills Golf Club and the Atlantic Golf and Country Club.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Building upon work previously done in Atlantic, the comprehensive plan will incorporate the goals of current efforts and long-term plans and follow the following park development policies.

- Envisions a linked park system, molding Atlantic's future open space system into a green network that unites the community and makes each major park the territory for everyone.
- Allows the park system to grow with the city.
- Proposed new centers for recreation, which are integrated into a greenway system.
- Provides recreational facilities needed to meet community priorities.

Opportunities for parks and open space in Atlantic include incorporating a trail system to increase connectivity to the city's amenities, continued development of Schildberg's Recreational Area, and improvement and expansion of Sunnyside Park and its amenities.

Figure 35 Sunnyside Park

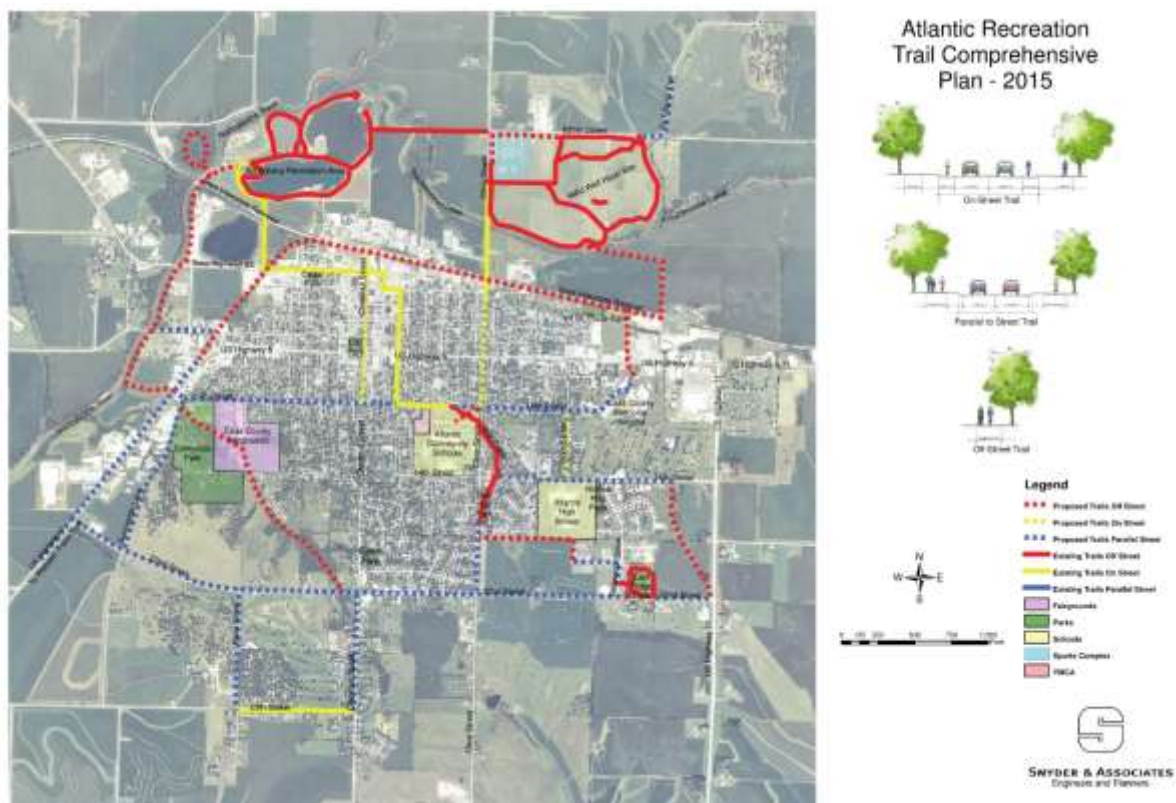




## TRAILS

A common community goal is to foster an increase in healthy living through an active trail system for biking and walking throughout the town of Atlantic. Recreational options such as bike trails tie in directly with the previous chapter on mobility. Promoting development of trails and pathways for pedestrian use helps to connect the residents to their surrounds while also encouraging increased physical activity. Currently, Atlantic has many options for on street and off-street trails to provide options for residents. Below is a map of the current and proposed trails in Atlantic. Based on information gathered from the community survey, there is a desire by residents for more trails and for existing trails to connect with other trails. For example, the expansion of Schildberg recreation trails will eventually connect to a regional multiuse trail called the T-Bone Trail.

Figure 36 Potential Trails



## PUBLIC ART

Public art gives the community an opportunity to express its personality. Art offers much more than visual interest within our communities. Well planned and integrated public art helps reinforce community identity, add the beauty of color and texture, celebrate history, and educate the public. Successful projects catalyze new ideas as well as economic development; art stimulates the marketplace and helps sustain businesses.

Public art provides a vibrancy that encourages community engagement and personal support, positively influencing civic pride and participation. It generates long term impact and should be incorporated within community revitalization and sustainability initiatives adopted by Atlantic.

Exhibit 1 Coca-Cola Mural



Exhibit 2 Veteran's Memorial in City Park



Exhibit 3 Girl Scout Silhouettes



Exhibit 4 Coca-Cola Mural





# Chapter 6

## A City of Strong Neighborhoods

Quality and affordable housing is one of the biggest factors leading to growth in a community. To have a good housing stock, there must be a variety of options including size, price, and location. Atlantic must be able to appeal to residents of all ages and places in life to attract new residents to grow and retain current ones.

In order to better assess what the current state of the housing stock in Atlantic, a housing condition survey was conducted. This survey ranked the outside condition of every residential unit in Atlantic. By doing this, it was apparent that most houses are in “Good” or “Fair” condition. The survey also revealed that there are a significant number of vacant lots between houses that could be utilized for infill development.

**This section describes Atlantic’s current housing climate and identifies opportunities for future development. Strategies should be used to ensure the housing stock is maintained and new development is planned in a manner that is efficient and appealing.**

## HOUSING TODAY

One of the keys to a healthy housing stock, and a healthy community, is to have a wide variety of housing options. It is more likely that a community will retain residents if there are available options for all stages of life. Likewise, having a diverse, housing stock with affordable options enables more people to own a home, which increases the overall financial security of the community.

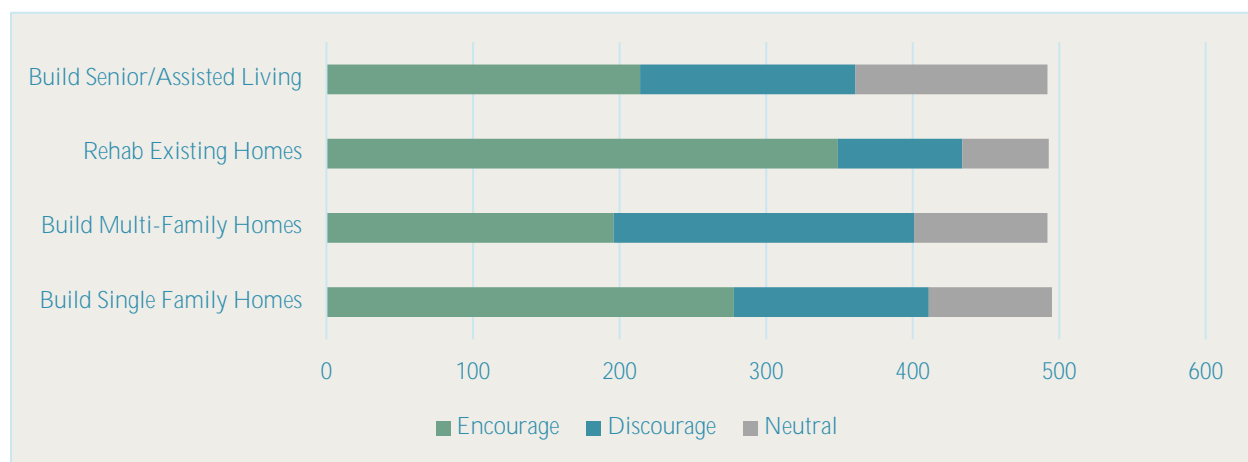
Housing is typically grouped into the following categories:

- Owner Occupied Single Family Homes
- Renter Occupied Single Family Homes
- Multi-family Properties (rentals and condos)
- Independent Living Senior Housing
- Assisted Living Senior Housing
- Nursing Homes
- Institutional Housing

During the planning process, residents responding to the community wide survey identified a number of strengths in the Atlantic housing market. These include, safe and friendly neighborhoods, relatively low property taxes, and incentives to build new homes. However, a number of weaknesses were noted as well. These include limited housing choices, low quality rental options, aging housing stock, and lack of code enforcement or building inspection.

In light of these strengths and weaknesses, a number of opportunities for housing growth were identified. Overall, residents thought there were many opportunities for in-fill development on existing lots and for new development on land adjacent to existing neighborhoods. The low cost of living and proximity to many amenities were also seen as incentives for growth. Survey respondents indicated that rehabbing existing homes should be encouraged. Access to government programs, such as the Community Development Block Grant for housing, is seen as a positive step toward housing rehabilitation, particularly for low to moderate income households.

Figure 37 Preferred Types of Housing Development



Source: Atlantic Community Survey 2017

## OCCUPANCY

The largest category of housing is owner occupied single family homes. In Atlantic, almost three fourths of the population live in single family, owner occupied residences, this is typical of most Iowa towns. In Atlantic, as is common elsewhere, home ownership is much more common for people in the middle years of their life, and less common for those starting out or in their senior years. As new housing is proposed, a mix of owner occupied and renter occupied units will help to ensure enough housing choice in the community. The community survey asked for respondents to report their household size. 47% of respondents, the majority said they have a 2-person household. The next highest category was a single-person household at 21%. The average household size of the survey respondents is 2.45 people. The demographic data in the survey was significantly similar to the US Census data as indicated in the table below.

Table 14 Household Make-up

Households by Type	Total Households	Percent Family Households	Percent Non-Family Households	Percent Householder living alone	Average Household Size	Average Family Size
Atlantic	3,137	61%	39%	34%	2.21	2.8

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2016

The majority of respondents to the community survey indicated they lived in owner occupied, single family homes. Single-family home dwellers made up 82% of the responders and 80% reported to own their home while 17% rent. A very small portion (3%) chose “other” neither owning or renting.

Table 15 Home Ownership and Median Rent

	# Occupied	# Owned	% Owned	Rented	% Rented	Median Rent
Atlantic	3,230	2,173	67.3	1,057	32.7	\$ 512.00
Cass County	6,081	4,367	71.8	1,714	28.2	\$ 531.00
State of Iowa	1,223,509	888,331	72.6	335,178	27.4	\$ 655.00

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2016



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## CONDITION

As a part of the data collection process for this comprehensive plan, SWIPCO conducted a housing condition survey. The planning team rated every residential unit based on exterior condition. Components were observed such as roof, window, siding, and doors to come up with an overall score. Excellent (1) condition equates to a house in pristine condition, no wear visible. Good (2) condition is a well-maintained house with little to no improvements needed. Fair (3) condition homes need 1-2 major repairs and a poor (4) condition home would require more than 2 major repairs. Dilapidated (5) homes appear to be beyond repair. It was also noted where vacant lots are located.

The exhibits below are illustrative of houses that fall into each category.



This survey found that the vast majority of homes are in good or fair condition. The city should work with property owners and the Southwest Iowa Housing Trust fund and other agencies to identify assistance to rehabilitate or replace any substandard housing. Another strategy that is strongly encouraged is developing a rental inspection program to increase the quality and livability of rental units.

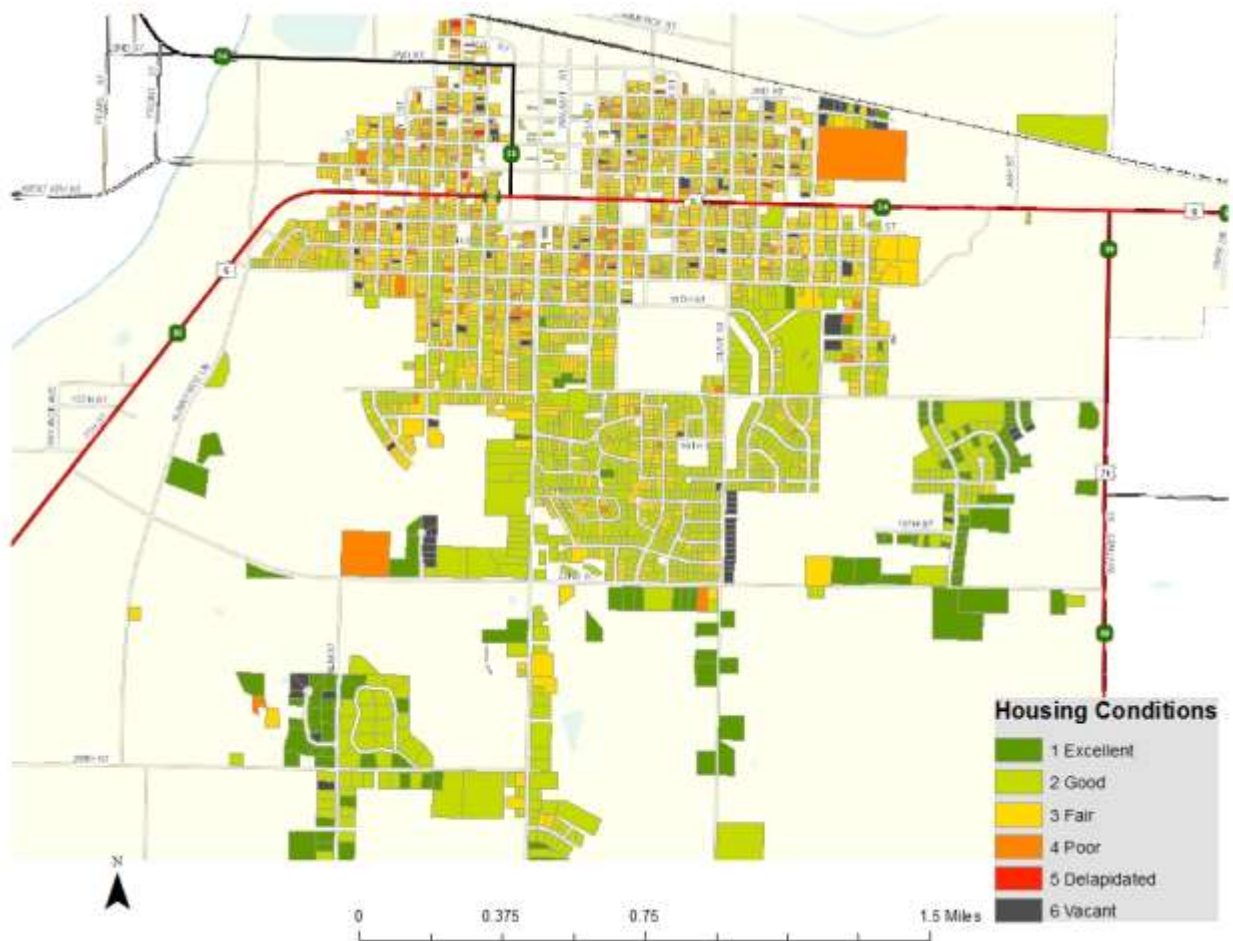
Table 16 Housing Condition Count

Condition	Number of Each Rank	Percentage of Each
1-Excellent	162	5.86%
2-Good	1191	43.09%
3-Fair	1132	40.96%
4-Poor	162	5.86%
5-Dilapidated	11	0.40%
6-Vacant lot	97	3.51%

Source: SWIPCO Housing Condition Survey 2017

The homes rated fair and poor appeared to be concentrated in specific neighborhoods. These neighborhoods correlate with the neighborhoods with the older housing stock.

Figure 38 Housing Condition Map



Source: SWIPCO Housing Condition Survey 2017

## AGE

Of the total housing units, a high percentage were built prior to 1939. This poses a major challenge to the city to ensure that these older homes are safe, efficient, and maintained. Older homes are often harder to maintain and less energy efficient. That is not to say that an old house needs to be replaced, it just increases the likelihood that it may experience problems and require more maintenance in the near future.

Table 17 Age of Homes

	Atlantic, IA		Cass County, IA	
Year Built	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total	3,462		6,559	
Built 2014 or later	27	0.0%	-	0.0%
Built 2010 to 2013	4	0.0%	25	0.4%
Built 2000 to 2009	260	7.5%	390	5.9%
Built 1990 to 1999	157	4.5%	320	4.9%
Built 1980 to 1989	344	9.9%	476	7.3%
Built 1970 to 1979	407	11.8%	738	11.3%
Built 1960 to 1969	527	15.2%	835	12.7%
Built 1950 to 1959	447	12.9%	735	11.2%
Built 1940 to 1949	253	7.3%	465	7.1%
Built 1939 or earlier	1,067	30.8%	2,575	39.3%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey and City of Atlantic 2017

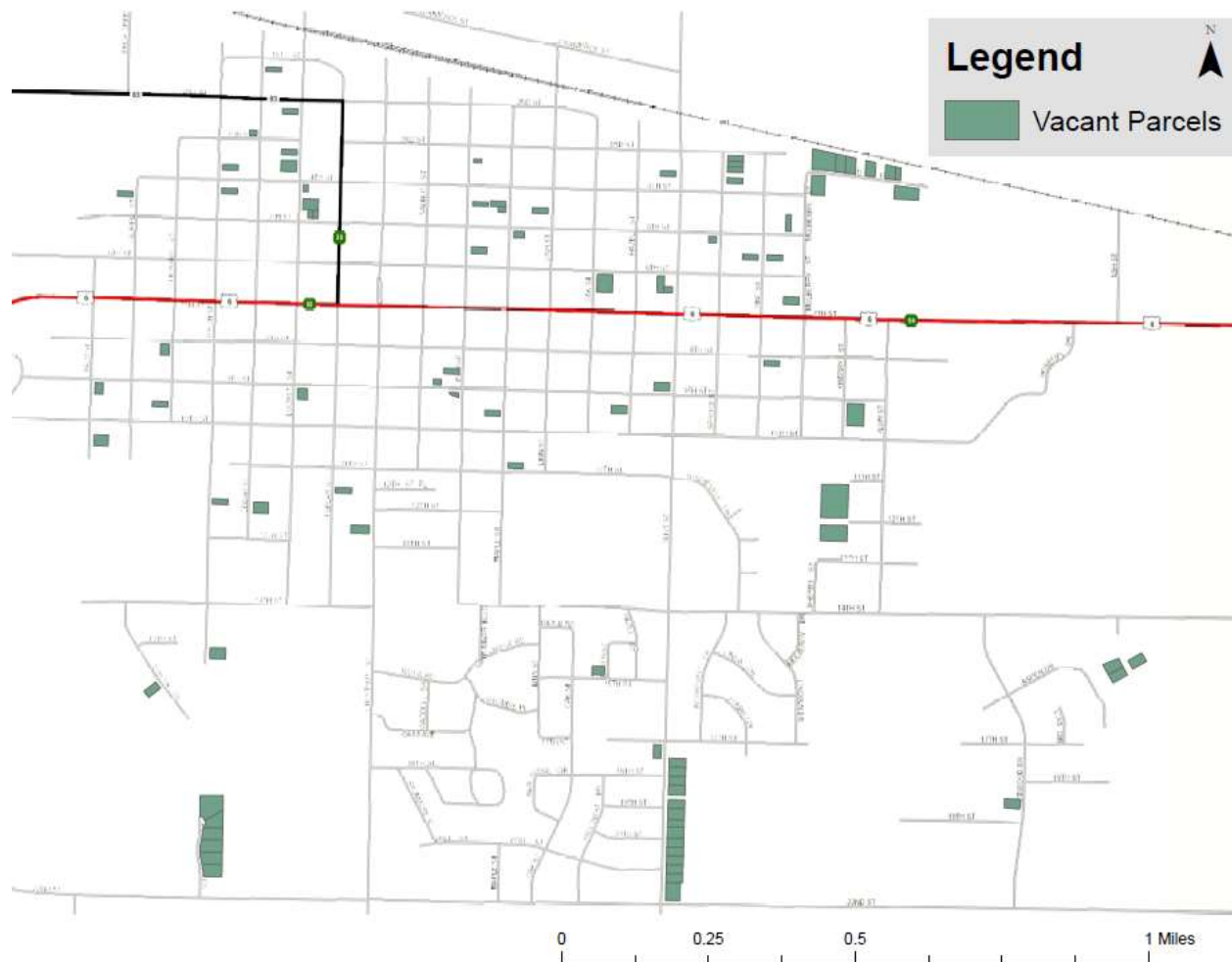
## HOUSING OPPORTUNITY AREAS

As the housing stock in Atlantic ages, affordable residential housing and continued rehabilitated efforts will become increasingly important. There are programs, such as the Community Development Block Grant, that can assist with this type of development. In many cases, new construction development should first be considered on existing lots within neighborhoods. However, if Atlantic is to grow much beyond its current population, new housing must be constructed. To be affordable, areas for medium density residential development, such as duplexes, small apartment complexes, town homes, and small single-family homes must be made available. The city should promote the use of workforce housing tax credits for new construction of affordable homes.

**Infill Development:** The greatest opportunity for future housing in Atlantic at the lowest cost comes from infill development. For Atlantic to continue to develop, a good housing stock with a variety of housing options is vital. Infill development is the building of new houses on vacant lots located in existing neighborhoods. This reduces the cost and impact of development since there is not a need to run new utilities to reach the house. There are several vacant lots scattered throughout

town that could be used for new housing development for either single or multiple family housing. The city offers a tax abatement program for new construction or rehabilitation south of 14th street for 100% on the first \$75,000 of added value for a period of five years. New construction or rehabilitation north of 14th street would receive 100% on all added value for a period of five years.

Figure 39 Vacant Residential Land



Low/Medium Density Residential Development: Just as the demand for affordable housing will grow as the existing housing stock ages, there is also a demand for single family homes with larger sized lots. This type of development is currently occurring in the south and southeast portion of Atlantic and this plan designates that area for continued low to medium density residential growth.



Downtown Mixed-Use District: There is a growing trend nationally toward building developments that mix residential and commercial land uses. This is done to create walkable communities with a healthy mix of services and amenities. Downtown Atlantic was built for this a century before such development became popular under the term “New Urbanism”. Policies need to be in place in the downtown area to protect and promote the character of the neighborhood while encouraging residents and businesses to locate downtown.

Figure 40 Mixed Use Building- The Whitney (2017)





# Chapter 7

## Goals and Implementation

Broad public support and involvement is a prerequisite to the development and use of virtually any implementation policy or program. To maintain support the city must carry on a vigorous and continuing program of discussion, education, and participation. Moreover, people who are in a position to understand the needs of the city and ways of meeting those needs must take the initiative to stimulate the interest and understanding necessary to assure that support is generated and actions are executed by the proper parties.

To produce the levels of consensus required, vigorous and continuing public involvement is required in such areas as:

- Detailing of plans and proposals to clarify their impact on specific areas, groups, and individuals;
- Development of specified implementation activities and organization arrangements; and
- Continual monitoring and interpretation of the plan.

## GOALS

Goals are general statements concerning an aspect of the City's desired ultimate physical, social and/or economic environment. These goals will set the tone for development decisions in terms of the citizens' desired quality of life. Multiple objectives were identified for each goal. Objectives express the kinds of action that are necessary to achieve the stated goals without assigning responsibility to any specific action. Ultimately, the city will have to assign responsibility to departments or individuals to implement plans designed to achieve these goals.

Through the planning process, nine categories of goals were identified, and goals were established. The goal setting was done by groups of community members who met during the four topic meetings. The topics included: community interests, housing and economic development, public safety and emergency management, and utilities and transportation. During the topic meetings the discussion led to the following categories which came up in multiple meetings.

The categories are as follows:

1. Annexation and growth
2. Downtown and historic preservation
3. Future land use
4. Housing
5. Infrastructure
6. Neighborhood and business enhancement
7. Parks and recreation
8. Public facilities and services
9. Transportation

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### ANNEXATION AND GROWTH GOAL 1

Encourage growth, quality development, and redevelopment within the existing City limits of Atlantic in order to utilize existing infrastructure.

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### ANNEXATION AND GROWTH OBJECTIVES

- Employ various growth management strategies and implementation measures for different areas of the city, such as Downtown, core neighborhoods, infill development areas, and low-density residential areas.
- Target infill development in key areas and establish development criteria for each area.
- **Identify vacant tracts within the City's corporate limits suitable for industries and businesses that would enhance Atlantic's economic development.**



- Prioritize development of areas where there are vacant lots serviceable by existing sewer and water utilities.
- Encourage and facilitate development in areas where existing infrastructure is underutilized.
- **Coordinate the City's housing strategy with growth management objectives.**
- Encourage the use of Planned Development Zoning to facilitate innovative projects. Utilize development concepts such as “new urbanism” and “traditional neighborhood design (TND)”.

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## ANNEXATION AND GROWTH GOAL 2

Ensure orderly and timely City expansion through targeted annexation, efficient utility provision, and consistent development policies.

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### ANNEXATION AND GROWTH OBJECTIVES

- Tailor the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to implement growth management strategies.
- Establish a policy of encouraging new development to locate within the City (since there is adequate vacant land within the City limits currently).
- In accordance with the anticipated land uses designated in the Comprehensive Plan, prioritize and schedule infrastructure/utility extensions.
- Develop a comprehensive annexation strategy that identifies and prioritizes areas for future City expansion based upon established criteria; an example of such criteria would be land that is located along major roadways.

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## DOWNTOWN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOAL 1

Provide opportunities for preserving the City's unique history through maintaining and enhancing Downtown Atlantic and other historic areas.

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### DOWNTOWN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES

- Concentrate on Downtown as a unique area of Atlantic, and plan accordingly for appropriate land uses, parking areas, pedestrian and bike facilities, etc.; identify ways in which Downtown can be enhanced and improved.
- Reinforce the existing downtown areas as a central focal point and activity center for the community, thereby increasing opportunities for social interaction among residents, commerce **and tourism. Atlantic's downtown area should serve as a central place to shop, eat, conduct business, relax, or be entertained.**
- Develop a marketing program for Downtown to ensure that residents and visitors are aware of what Downtown Atlantic has to offer.
- **Reactivate the city's status as a Certified Local Government in order to continue historic preservation efforts within the downtown.**

- Work with the objectives established under the Iowa Main Street Program, a program that could recognized Downtown Atlantic.
- Establish incentives, such as a special financing district, special electric rates, and tax-reduction programs, for businesses that locate within the Downtown area.
- Identify the types of land uses, such as office, retail and limited residential, that would be beneficial for the Downtown area.
- Apply to IEDA for CDBG Downtown Revitalization programs.
- Establish design guidelines, such as façade criteria and building maintenance, that would ensure the compatibility of new development or redevelopment.
- Investigate ways in which to implement design guidelines, such as through the creation of an overlay district and/or a revised Central Business District.
- Establish incentives that would encourage developers to preserve and renovate significant structures that contribute to the historic character of Atlantic.
- Identify ways in which public and private entities can work together to meet the goals and objectives herein.

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## FUTURE LAND USE GOAL 1

Encourage the most desirable and efficient use of land while enhancing the physical, economic, and cultural environment of Atlantic.

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## LAND USE OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that local land use policies encourage appropriate areas, both in terms of access and adjacency, for the development of nonresidential uses.
- Establish standards related to the development of nonresidential uses in order to ensure a positive visual perception of Atlantic along major thoroughfares, specifically U.S. Highway 71, 83, and Highway 6, and 7<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Establish land use policies to encourage new commercial and industrial development within existing commercial and industrial areas.
- Establish land use policies (Article 23 within the Zoning Ordinance) to encourage the area along 7th Street to become a high-quality retail and light commercial corridor that would enhance Atlantic, both economically and visually. **Currently the city's zoning ordinance requires "a minimum of thirty (30) percent of the building wall surface that faces any street shall consist of stucco, natural wood siding, brick or other materials with similar texture and appearance. Areas for glazing or overhead doors (or similar doors for vehicle entrances only) shall be excluded from the total wall area in making this determination."**

- Ensure that Atlantic’s land use policies encourage a balance of land uses such that there are adequate areas for nonresidential uses that will provide the essential tax base needed for the City to support existing and future residents.
- Ensure that the regulatory policies within the City’s Zoning Ordinance and related map are consistent with current City needs and desires.
- Identify specific land uses that are needed to serve the citizens of and visitors to Atlantic, such as healthcare-related land uses, hotels, recreation, and retail; establish ways in which the City can proactively attract these identified land uses.
- Review, and if necessary revise, the City’s Zoning Ordinance to ensure that high standards are required for new development, both residential and nonresidential along highways and major roads (Article 23). Also, the city should consider adopting and enforcing the International Building Code.
- Review, and if necessary revise, the City’s Zoning Ordinance to ensure that there is adequate diversity provided for in terms of single-family housing stock.
- Ensure that new development enhances the quality of life in Atlantic.
- Ensure that new development, both residential and nonresidential, will be compatible with existing land uses in terms of use, density, building heights, scale, and offsite effects.

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## HOUSING GOAL 1

Provide for housing diversity throughout the City.

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### HOUSING OBJECTIVES

- Review the City’s policies related to two-family and multiple-family housing, including zoning regulations, market need, potential effects on land use compatibility, traffic generation, and aesthetics to ensure the demand (or lack of) is adequately met.
- Ensure that there is adequate variety in terms of housing types within the City that will meet the affordable housing needs of all income and age levels.
- Establish strategies for encouraging new single-family residential development.
- Ensure that the City’s Zoning Ordinance provides for an adequate range of lot sizes for new development; maintain the majority of the City’s current single-family zoning districts.
- Establish areas within the City that would be appropriate for zero-lot line residences (e.g. townhomes, row houses, etc.) in order to meet the desire for low maintenance properties.

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## HOUSING GOAL 2

Protect the integrity of existing and future neighborhoods by ensuring that existing neighborhoods are maintained to a high standard and by ensuring that new neighborhoods are initially developed to a high standard.

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## HOUSING OBJECTIVES

- Recognize the value of existing older neighborhoods to the character of Atlantic by implementing policies, such as proactive code enforcement, that will support their long-term viability, marketability, and attractiveness.
- Wherever possible, retrofit existing neighborhoods with pedestrian connections; require new residential areas to have pedestrian access through them and to existing neighborhoods.
- Establish infill policies for previously developed residential areas to ensure that new housing makes a positive contribution to and is compatible with the overall area.
- Identify specific housing improvement policies and opportunities for residential areas in the northern part of the City and areas with higher concentration of rental properties. The International Property Maintenance Code is a widely accepted standard.
- Ensure that new residential areas are developed to a high standard by reviewing, and revising if necessary, the existing standards for residential development.
- Promote home ownership and long-term residency.
- Promote incentives and strengthen programs to assist economically distressed owner-occupants in meeting housing code requirements.

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## INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL 1

Provide adequate local infrastructure such that existing and future development can be served.

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## INFRASTRUCTURE OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that the City of Atlantic has adequate clean water and rights to water to provide for future growth.
- Ensure that there is adequate water and electricity available to serve existing areas and new development by proactively maintaining infrastructure systems.
- Address Bull Creek Stormwater issues in the next 5 years.
- Encourage new development to occur within areas that are already served by necessary public utility and infrastructure systems (e.g., water supply, storm drainage, etc.), or where systems can be realistically expanded.
- Develop a Technology Working Group with business leaders with other experts and interested individuals to help identify needs and opportunities for increased internet speeds and connectivity.

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## NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUSINESS ENHANCEMENT GOAL 1

Reinforce the City's image and identity as a community of excellence for residents and businesses through quality urban design practices.

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## NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUSINESS ENHANCEMENT OBJECTIVES

- Continue efforts to instill a stronger sense of civic pride by encouraging involvement in public decision-making and by soliciting citizen input.
- **Consider the development of streetscape/urban design guidelines to enhance the community's** visual and aesthetic appeal, including guidelines pertaining to landscaping, signage, building facades, entryway treatments, special streetscape amenities, sidewalks, and screening.
- Investigate the feasibility of City funding participation to improve the appearance of existing businesses along major thoroughfares; examples of City participation include matching grant programs and infrastructure improvements.
- Create gateways at principal entry points into the City of Atlantic and develop a design theme that is used throughout the community to create a sense of unity, identity, and cohesion for both residents and visitors.
- Encourage public/private participation and cooperation in beautification efforts. Explore assistance that may be available from private/volunteer groups to contribute to urban design-related projects and to help maintain enhanced public areas (e.g., public art, street medians, small landscaped areas, etc.).
- Use the development review process to evaluate private projects and their contributions to the **City's image** and quality of life initiatives.
- Increase enforcement of municipal codes and regulations pertaining to property maintenance, upkeep and appearance (e.g., mowing high grass and weeds, removal of clutter and inoperative vehicles, etc.).
- **Ensure that the City's** land use policies and Zoning Ordinance provisions include requirements for high quality new nonresidential development; ensure that land use policies are consistent with these objectives.

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## PARKS AND RECREATION GOAL 1

Maintain a comprehensive system of parks, trails, and open spaces that meet the needs of all age groups within Atlantic.

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## PARKS AND RECREATION OBJECTIVES

- Complete a citywide trail system that connects parks, neighborhoods, municipal facilities, and schools, thereby creating a more pedestrian-friendly community.
- Require new residential development to incorporate pedestrian access through the new development and to adjacent areas, wherever applicable.
- Continue exploring new recreational and social opportunities for all age groups.

- Improve existing or create new playing fields that would better serve the needs of local and regional recreational organizations.
- Continue to maintain and improve Schildberg recreation area including adding connections to the city.
- Make improvements to existing park areas and increasing maintenance on a consistent basis.
- Market the Atlantic Sports Park for tourism and as a revenue source for the City.
- Address parking issues (expand parking) at the baseball fields and other park facilities as use increases.

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## PARKS AND RECREATION GOAL 2

Provide funding for a comprehensive system of parks, trails, and open spaces, including the outdoor aquatics center and the YMCA.

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### PARKS AND RECREATION OBJECTIVES

- Create Capital Improvements Program to specifically fund the creation and maintenance of parks, trails, and open spaces.
- Consider requiring park/open space dedication during the development review process; adopt a Park Dedication Ordinance to achieve this.
- Apply for park grants with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.
- Work together with Cass County to apply for grant funds for T-bone trail connection in next 1-4 years
- Work in conjunction with the Atlantic School District on park projects, including land acquisition, playgrounds, and maintenance.
- Continue strategic planning to keep funding streams open and identify new funding and program opportunities for the YMCA facility. The YMCA is a valued community asset that requires maintenance and renovations in order to keep current.
- Seek funding to upgrade and maintain the Sunnyside Pool. Create public engagement and education opportunities in order to generate public buy-in before proposing to raise taxes to fund the facility.

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## PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND PROGRAMS GOAL 1

Foster a positive, interactive relationship with the public, and encourage citizen involvement.

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### PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND PROGRAMS OBJECTIVES

- Foster a relationship and coordinate applicable City activities with the Atlantic School District.

- Recognize that the quality of the local school district is related to economic development opportunities and the ability of the City to provide a positive employment base for its citizenry on an on-going basis.
- Recognize the library as a community partner for education and outreach.
- Ensure funding and support for the library continues.
- Increase public notification system enrollment campaigns.
- Increase public education on emergency situations (communication, by stander training, response, awareness).
- Recruit additional volunteers with a focus on sustainable longevity.
- When fiscally possible after other funding sources are secured, the City should attempt to reduce the local tax rate.

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## PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND PROGRAMS GOAL 2

Ensure that public services and facilities will adequately serve the needs of residents and businesses within the City of Atlantic, and that such services and facilities are adaptable to future growth.

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## PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND PROGRAMS OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that there is sufficient police and fire protection for current residents and ensure that the City remains aware of necessary increases in staff and/or related resources (e.g., police cars, fire engines, etc.) to enable such protection for future residents.
- Seek funds for emergency response training in order to decrease the start-up costs for new volunteers to get certified and to provide increased training.
- Become more proactive with the idea of rural coverage and explore county-wide approach for fire, EMS, police.
- Define standards for adequate response/service levels for public services and facilities, such as the following:
  - Municipal government;
  - Police and fire protection;
  - Recreational opportunities;
  - Utilities/infrastructure and solid waste management.
- Promote the relationship of the Atlantic Municipal Airport in relation to economic development and utilize it as an economic development tool.
- Evaluate and improve ground and air medical transportation.
- Maximize partnering efforts with Iowa Western Community College to expand course offerings.
- Encourage Iowa Western Community College continue to match courses with the needs of the community's businesses and industries.

## TRANSPORTATION GOAL 1

Provide an efficient, safe and connective transportation system that is coordinated with existing needs and with plans for future growth; this system should be economical and responsive to adjacent land uses.

### TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES

- Work closely with Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) and the regional transportation planning organization (RPA 13) to ensure that regional transportation issues, especially those that directly affect Atlantic are addressed with City input.
- Ensure that the following concerns are addressed when making decisions regarding transportation within the City:
  - Regional transportation,
  - Roadway integrity (i.e., ensuring mobility),
  - Roadway maintenance,
  - Adequate access to public transportation (to and from Atlantic, and to and from land uses and residential subdivisions within Atlantic),
  - Connections between existing roadways,
  - Neighborhood traffic concerns,
  - Signalization, and
  - Impact of various types of land uses (i.e., trip generation and parking needs).
- Investigate ways in which the development community can assist in protecting the integrity of roadways in Atlantic.
- Ensure that a positive image of Atlantic is reflected within major transportation corridors.
- Ensure that local roadways can accommodate increases in traffic, and that local intersections are adequate.
- Investigate ways in which alternative transportation facilities in and around Downtown Atlantic can be added or improved.

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Capital improvement planning for Atlantic of needed public improvements, should be done on a 5-year **planning basis. Planning should be based on an analysis of the city's present and future needs, its assets, and its liabilities. It should also take into account the city's financial capabilities, as well as past bonding practices and improvements purchased.**

A capital improvement plan serves as a guide to construct or maintain various public facilities that provide the city with services such as water, sewers, streets, parks, schools, and other public facilities. It is the primary means of achieving the goals set forth in the community facilities plan and facilitates the continuation of a public works program from one administration to the next.



The plan permits the city council, as well as other agencies and individuals, to view the total needs of the **community rather than only a small segment of the city's needs. An awareness of proposed improvements** by various public agencies fosters orderly community growth and helps coordinate the efforts of those agencies.

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## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING

In preparing a capital improvement program, the following should be taken into consideration:

1. The long-range goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan must be taken into account when scheduling major public improvements, particularly those that will have direct bearing on the future physical development of the community.
2. Priorities must be based on the benefits received. Projects that benefit the community as a whole should be given higher priority than those that benefit only a small segment of the population. Project priorities are affected by their cost and their relationship to the **community's total needs.**
3. The proposed project must be within the financial capabilities of the community. Because of the cost involved, it may be necessary to finance certain improvements over a period of several years or to utilize various available methods of financing including state and federal funds where applicable.

One of the most important services provided by city administration is long-term planning. Capital planning covers all the major physical assets of the City, major equipment, parks, streets, alleys, sewer system, wastewater system and plant. The City possesses at least \$48 million dollars in streets alone all of which needs maintenance and upkeep. **It is the city's firm belief that planning involves sustainability and good stewardship.**

It is the city's job to **ensure tax dollars are spent responsibly. When the city goes through it's annual CIP,** several questions are asked and answered by city administration, department heads, and consultants such as **the city's engineer. The city prioritizes projects** and outlines a funding strategy that strives to avoid raising taxes or incurring debt.

The CIP is arranged by the following categories:

- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Civil Defense
- Animal Control
- Airport
- Library
- Parks and Recreation

- Finance and Administration
- Street Department

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE AND ANNUAL AMENDMENTS

Periodic review and updating of the plan is critical to the ongoing planning success. This includes evaluating relevant goals for the city. To maintain both public and private sector confidence, evaluate the effectiveness of current planning activities, and make mid-plan corrections on the use of city resources, the plan must be used and treated as a living document.

After adoption of the comprehensive plan, opportunities should be provided to identify any changes in conditions that would impact elements or policies of the plan. It is important that information pertaining to population and economic changes are reflected in updates to the plan. It is also important to review **recommended policies and their relevance to the city's long-term growth**. A review of the plan should be done annually.

When changes for the plan are proposed, a public hearing must be held and include the following:

1. Provide citizens or developers an opportunity to present possible changes to the plan;
2. Identify any changes in the status of projects called for in the plan; and
3. Bring forth any issues or identify any changes in conditions, which may impact the validity of the plan.

There should be a plan update after the current plan is in use for 5 years. The update process could include a forecast to a new target year, analysis of the alternate land use plans, and possible evaluation of alternate formats for the plan. The annual plan review, specified above, will accommodate any necessary revisions that may arise during the years prior to the next update.

It is anticipated that each year, during the annual plan review, individuals and groups may come forward with proposals to amend the plan. Those proposals should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Also, it is recommended that all submitted proposals be reviewed at the end of the year to analyze their cumulative impact on the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan amendment process should adhere to the adoption process specified in Iowa Statutes and should provide for organized participation and involvement of interested citizens.

## CODE REVISIONS

Iowa Code requires that communities update their Code of Ordinances at least every 5 years. As these are updated and new codes are added, or others amended or deleted, they should take into account the comprehensive plan and the impact the codes had or will have on land use.

NOTES