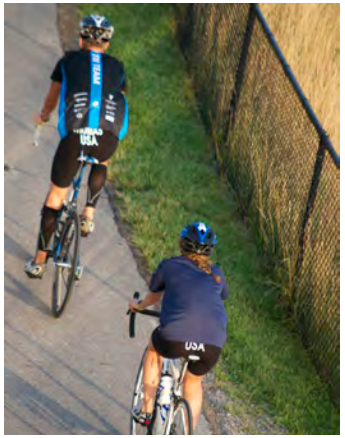
City of Pleasant Hill

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



ADOPTED NOVEMBER 24, 2015

RESOLUTION #112415-02

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE CITY OF PLEASANT HILL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, a Comprehensive Plan is a visioning and guiding document to assist decision makers on future development and infrastructure investments; and

WHEREAS, this Comprehensive Plan serves as an update to previous planning efforts and regular updates and revisions to the document should be anticipated in order to reflect market and demographic changes over time; and

WHEREAS, the City has considered all public input through a variety of input forums and also followed all state and local requirements including the Iowa Smart Planning Principles; and

WHEREAS, the City Council held a public hearing on November 24, 2015 regarding the City of Pleasant Hill Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and recommended approval;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of Pleasant Hill, Iowa, in Polk County, Iowa, has published notice and held a public hearing regarding the City of Pleasant Hill Comprehensive Plan;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Council has considered all public input along with state and local requirements including the Iowa Smart Planning Principles and hereby approves the City of Pleasant Hill Comprehensive Plan.

ADOPTED November 24, 2015.

Sara Kurovski, Mayor

ATTEST:

Dena Spooner, City Clerk/Finance Director

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Pleasant Hill Comprehensive Plan represents the collaboration of many individuals, agencies, or groups who share a commitment to the vision of the community. In addition to residents, business owners, and others who participated on behalf of the general public, the City would like to recognize the following individuals who played an important role in the drafting and adoption of the plan.

Elected Officials:

- Mayor Sara Kurovski
- Jeff Mullen
- Barb Malone
- Dean Cooper
- Mark Konrad
- Leonard Murray

Planning & Zoning Commission

- Mark Ackelson, Chair
- Beth Cooper
- Curt Gause
- Jan Higgins
- Tim Mallicoat
- Martha Miller
- Keith Williamson

Steering Committee

- Sara Kurovski, Mayor
- Mark Konrad
- Mark Ackelson
- Loren Lown
- J Elder
- Katherine Harrington
- Chad Johnson
- Dave Giildenzopf
- Aimee Staudt
- Bob Eisenlauer
- Darlene Carlson
- Mike Waterman

City Staff

- Donald Sandor, City Manager
- J. Benjamin Champ, Assistant City Manager/Community Development Director
- Madeline Sturms, Senior Planner

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Welcome to
Pleasant Hill

INTRODUCTION

Pleasant Hill is a community in transition. Traditionally a bedroom community on the eastern edge of the Des Moines Region, new commerce, employment, and housing are changing the local landscape. As growth continues to occur, the community needs a common vision to ensure local values are sustained and Pleasant Hill thrives as a healthy and desirable place to live.

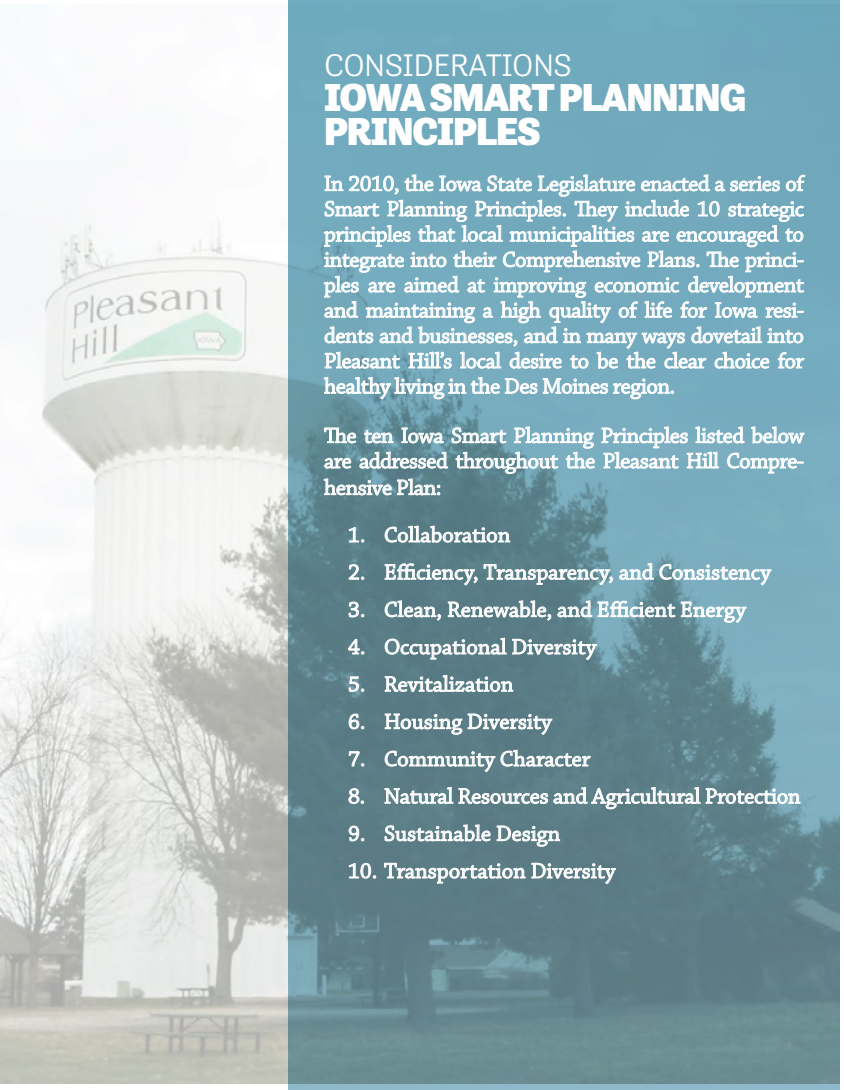
This Comprehensive Plan articulates the community vision and serves as a guide to future investment. It is a foundation for decision making related to land use and development, zoning, transportation and mobility, community facilities and services, environmental features, image and identity, and more.

The Comprehensive Plan is the culmination of a multi-step planning process and is based on detailed analysis of the Pleasant Hill community as well as extensive community outreach and engagement.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range policy document that guides growth and development for the next 15-20 years. It is a multi-faceted document that identifies appropriate types of investment that seeks to maintain and enhance the community's overall character, cultural identity, and natural assets.

The Plan should be used by City staff and elected officials, residents, business owners, and developers to inform development approval, regulations, capital improvements and infrastructure investments, and strategic partnerships. Most importantly, the Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic tool that represents the community's vision for Pleasant Hill.



CONSIDERATIONS

IOWA SMART PLANNING PRINCIPLES

In 2010, the Iowa State Legislature enacted a series of Smart Planning Principles. They include 10 strategic principles that local municipalities are encouraged to integrate into their Comprehensive Plans. The principles are aimed at improving economic development and maintaining a high quality of life for Iowa residents and businesses, and in many ways dovetail into Pleasant Hill's local desire to be the clear choice for healthy living in the Des Moines region.

The ten Iowa Smart Planning Principles listed below are addressed throughout the Pleasant Hill Comprehensive Plan:

1. Collaboration
2. Efficiency, Transparency, and Consistency
3. Clean, Renewable, and Efficient Energy
4. Occupational Diversity
5. Revitalization
6. Housing Diversity
7. Community Character
8. Natural Resources and Agricultural Protection
9. Sustainable Design
10. Transportation Diversity

Planning Process

The Pleasant Hill Comprehensive Plan is the result of a year-long, multifaceted process that included data collection and technical analysis, community outreach, visioning, plan development, and review and adoption. The planning process represents a unique approach that integrated the development of the Pleasant Hill Parks and Trails Master Plan. The plans were developed in parallel to ensure their key recommendations and findings complemented one another. The Comprehensive Plan process included the following 6 steps:

Project Initiation

In November 2014, meetings were held with City staff, elected and appointed officials, and the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) to begin the process. The CPAC was composed of a diverse group of community representatives, including City staff, residents, business owners, and elected and appointed officials. Throughout the process, the CPAC served as a sounding board in working with staff and planning consultants to identify key stakeholders, encourage public participation in the planning process, review preliminary analysis and recommendations, and, ultimately, endorse the draft Comprehensive Plan for public review and formal adoption.

Public Outreach

Citizen participation is the cornerstone of the Comprehensive Plan process. Outreach techniques included both traditional (face-to-face) activities and web-based tools to obtain the broadest levels of participation. Traditional outreach activities included community workshops and interviews with key stakeholders. Web-based tools included a project website, resident and business questionnaires, and sMap, an interactive mapping tool. This range of outreach activities was intended to maximize participation and communication between the City and residents, business owners, and community stakeholders.

Existing Conditions Analysis

This step included the analysis of existing conditions to identify issues and opportunities within the community. It was based on information provided by the City, feedback from community outreach, field reconnaissance, surveys, inventories, and technical analyses. The findings were summarized within the City of Pleasant Hill Existing Conditions Report, which was released in February 2015 and is on file with City staff.

Vision, Goals & Objectives

This step included a community workshop that invited citizens to put pen to paper and illustrate their vision for the future of Pleasant Hill. This helped establish an overall "vision" for the City of Pleasant Hill with regard to land use, parks, trails, and growth. Based on the vision and previous steps in the planning process, preliminary goals and objectives were prepared to identify a clear path for growth.

City-wide Plans & Subarea Plans

This step entailed the preparation of city-wide plans for land use and development, growth and annexation, transportation and mobility, open space and environmental features, community facilities, and community character. Sub-Area Plans for the University Avenue corridor were also created that allowed for more detailed recommendations, including priority and catalyst redevelopment sites, key public improvements, access and mobility recommendations, and urban design enhancements.

Plan Review & Adoption

Once the CPAC completed their review of the preliminary document, the Plan was made available to the public for review as part of a presentation to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Based on input from the community and the Commission, the final Comprehensive Plan was presented to and adopted by City Council.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Community Profile provides the foundation of understanding on which the Comprehensive Plan is built. It answers the question, "Where are we now?" to set a path for the future of Pleasant Hill.

The Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity to define the future of Pleasant Hill, but it must also recognize the community's role within a larger urban region and the plans and policies that have shaped the landscape over time. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan provides an overview of the history, market influences, existing characteristics, and policies that have defined the Pleasant Hill community.

Regional Setting

Pleasant Hill is located approximately six miles east from the heart of Downtown Des Moines. Situated in southeast Polk County, the City is bordered on the north by the City of Altoona, on the south by the Des Moines River, and to the west by the City of Des Moines. The community benefits from its location along Highway 163/University Avenue, a major commercial corridor, and the Highway 65 bypass. These major corridors provide easy access to Des Moines, the Des Moines Airport, and regional employment hubs.

Community History

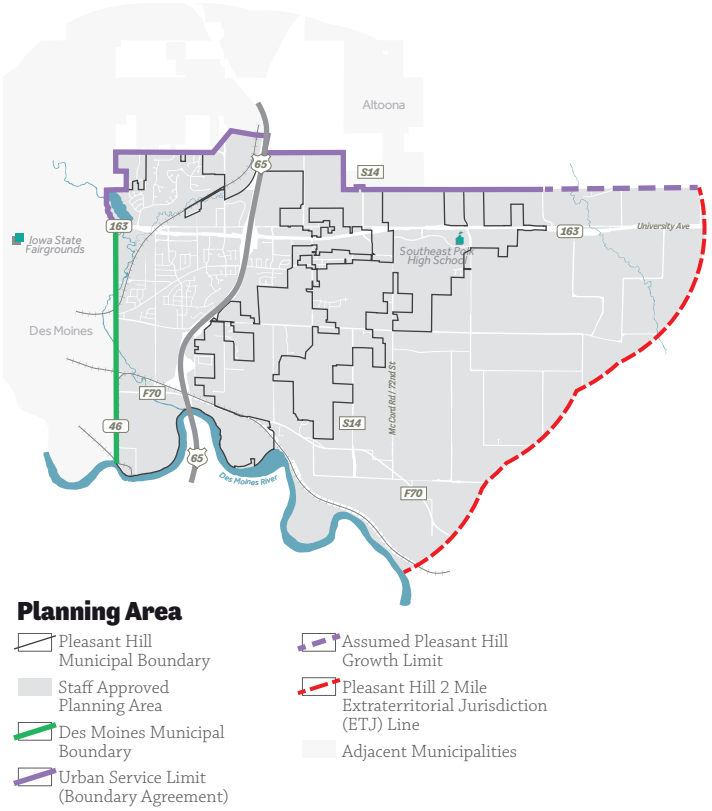
The City of Pleasant Hill incorporated in 1956, but its roots on the east side of Des Moines stretch back to the mid-1800s. Much of the Pleasant Hill area was settled in the 1850s as a result of the Scrip/Warrant Act of 1847 (9 Stat. 123), which bestowed warrants for 160 acres of land to veterans of the Mexican-American War. War veterans and their families established small agricultural operations or worked within the booming Des Moines mining industry. As the Century turned, the population slowly increased in the area that is now Pleasant Hill and a new school was built in 1946 to accommodate growth. While much of the Des Moines area experienced rapid development through the 20th Century, Pleasant Hill has continued to grow at a modest rate. To this day, the City maintains an identity as a bedroom community of east Des Moines.

Planning Jurisdiction & Boundary

A Comprehensive Plan addresses areas within the municipal boundaries of the City as well as unincorporated areas adjacent to the City. Iowa Code Section 414 allows a municipality to plan for areas up to two miles beyond the current corporate boundary. This "extraterritorial jurisdiction" cannot include land that is incorporated by other municipalities or areas designated as under the jurisdiction of another community through a formal boundary agreement.

Boundary Agreements

Boundary agreements between municipalities establish jurisdictional control and annexation powers over unincorporated land. These agreements help prevent conflict between communities over potential development and ensure adequate provision of infrastructure and services as development occurs. The City of Pleasant Hill has an existing boundary agreements with the City of Des Moines and the City of Altoona, which establishes a jurisdictional border running east-west roughly between SR 163/University Avenue and NE 27th Avenue.



Past Plans, Studies, and Reports

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the City's primary policy guide for the span of 15-20 years. It reflects planning that has already been completed and anticipated projects that will result in potential benefits or challenges. As a part of the Comprehensive Plan process, a review of plans and projects was conducted to assess what planning is still relevant, what may need to be modified, and how projects may help shape the future of the community.

Local Plans

CITY OF PLEASANT HILL COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN, PLANNING TOWARDS 2025 (2005)

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan created a vision for the community that focuses on enhancing the existing community and its environmental character. The Plan includes several goals regarding land use, population growth, housing, transportation, environment, education, economic development, public facilities, health and safety, parks and recreation, and implementation. Plan strategies are further detailed through a series of policy recommendations that include general land use, the establishment of a regional sports complex, and higher design and siting standards for development within the designated Conservation Overlay District.

PLEASANT HILL COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION TRAILS PLAN (1998)

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes an inventory of existing park facilities and provides recommendations for future park development to meet the needs of the City's growing population. Key to the Plan is the adoption of a "Green Street" policy, which would create park-like settings along select roadways throughout the City. Since the adoption of the Plan, the City has implemented many of the recommendations and several continue to be applicable today.

COPPER CREEK LAKE PARK (2005)

The Copper Creek Lake Park Master Plan is a highly illustrative and detailed plan for the design of Copper Creek Lake Park. The City acquired the 58-acre former quarry site in 2000, and has since transformed the area into a full service park with many amenities. As the park has increased in use and popularity, there is a desire for continued enhancement of the park.

FOUR MILE CREEK WATERSHED STUDY (2013)

In response to flooding in 2008 and 2010, the Four Mile Creek Watershed Study was commissioned to provide a hydraulic assessment and provide recommendations and analysis of future land use conditions, water quality, and opportunities for increased stormwater management. The watershed primarily covers the east side of Pleasant Hill. Recommendations include sustainable rural land and urban land management standards, increased stormwater detention, and protection of stream corridors.

HIGHWAY 163 CORRIDOR STUDY (2006)

This study is an analysis of the Highway 163 Corridor, which is a state highway that travels east-west through Pleasant Hill. The study relies heavily on population projections to understand growth trends and provide a base for recommendations. These recommendations include creating a "web" of local roads, applying a Complete Streets policy, and focusing development on the corridor that emphasizes density over specific uses.

Regional Plans

CAPITAL CROSSROADS STRATEGIC PLAN (2011)

The Capital Crossroads Strategic Plan is a five-year plan that covers the Greater Des Moines and Central Iowa Region. The plan is centered on the themes of "people, prosperity, and place," and uses three Guiding Principles: opportunity, talent, and sustainability. Under each principle, several goals and recommendations outline the key strategies to make the Capital Crossroads area a thriving and prosperous region.

THE TOMORROW PLAN (2013)

Released by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, The Tomorrow Plan provides a vision for the future of the greater Des Moines region. The Plan is a strategic document aimed at increasing regional sustainability with a focus on the economy, environment, public health, and intergovernmental cooperation. The Tomorrow Plan proposes several strategies and initiatives that will contribute to meeting Plan goals and identifies specific partners that can advance initiatives.

POLK 2030: POLK COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2006)

Polk 2030 is the County's long-range plan that seeks to foster growth, specifically in eastern and northern Polk County. The *Polk 2030* plan provides a long-term capital investment strategy, serves as a guide for land use policy decisions, offers strategies to improve quality of life, and promotes economic development. With regard to Pleasant Hill, land use designations in *Polk 2030* align with the future land uses within the *2005 Pleasant Hill Comprehensive Plan: Planning Towards 2025.*

DART FORWARD 2035 TRANSIT SERVICES PLAN (2011)

The *Dart Forward 2035 Transit Services Plan* outlines long-term strategies for transit growth and services within the greater Des Moines. Challenges faced by the transit agency include auto-centric and low density land uses, which can result in lower ridership, decreased farebox revenue, and the balance of ridership, service area, and frequency. Guiding principles include establishing a strong market base, increasing financial stability, reevaluating and adjusting the service network, and enhancing the customer experience.

COMMUNICATION MASTER PLAN FOR THE CENTRAL IOWA TRAILS (2006)

The *Communication Master Plan for the Central Iowa Trails* provides guidance for the design and implementation of information for trail users. The plan covers 15 municipalities and 5 conservation organizations within 12 counties. It provides standards for trail markers, directional signage, and information panels, which utilize a uniform design to distinguish trails within the central Iowa trail system.

SOUTHEAST CONNECTOR (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

Currently under construction, the Southeast Connector will provide a direct link between Downtown Des Moines and Pleasant Hill's southern Highway 65 interchange at Vandalia Road. In addition to increased regional mobility, the improvement will realign portions of Vandalia Road and Pleasant Hill Road, which could provide opportunities for new development near the interchange. Phase I is under construction and Phase II is expected to be completed by 2016. Phase II will extend Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway east from downtown Des Moines to SE 30th Street. Future phases to extend the roadway to Highway 65 in Pleasant Hill still require design, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, and project financing.

Market & Demographic Overview

An analysis of Pleasant Hill's demographic and market conditions was conducted to guide the planning process and provide the necessary background information for developing market-viable policy recommendations. The analysis focused on six topics: (1) population demographics, (2) employment, (3) housing, (4) retail, (5) office, and (6) industrial real estate. Each section presents and assesses current trends, note important market implications, and to the extent possible, make projections for future growth and development opportunities. Collectively, this information provides a snapshot of Pleasant Hill's current and projected competitive position within the Des Moines region.

Data for this study were acquired from a variety of sources, including the 2009-2013 American Community Survey (ACS), the 2010 U.S. Census, and ESRI Business Analyst, a nationally recognized provider of business and market data.

Population

Pleasant Hill has a growing population. Although the City is anticipated to increase in the total number of households, many of the households will need to accommodate an aging population.

- Between 2010 and 2019, the City is projected to grow by 9.4%, adding 830 residents.
- Growth in Pleasant Hill is slightly slower than the Des Moines-West Des Moines MSA (referred to as MSA), which is growing projected to grow by 15.1% during the same time period.
- The City's median age is projected to rise from 35.8 to 36.1 years by 2019, an increase of roughly 3% from 2010 (35.1 years).
- The largest population growth areas will be at the older end of the age spectrum (55-64 years, 65-74 years, and 75-84 years).
- The racial and ethnic composition remains relatively unchanged, with the white population remaining relatively unchanged, decreasing 2.7% from 89.9% (2014).
- Pleasant Hill is slightly less diverse than the entire MSA, which in 2014 was 85.9% white.

Demographic Summary (2010, 2014, 2019)

Pleasant Hill & Des Moines-West Des Moines MSA

Pleasant Hill	2010	2014	2019	Projected Change (2010-2019)	
Population	8,785	9,058	9,615	+830	+9.4%
Households	3,395	3,509	3,730	+335	+9.9%
Average Household Size	2.6	2.6	2.6	0	0%
Median Age	35.1	35.8	36.1	+1.0	+2.8%
Median Household Income	--	$75,923	$85,475	+$9,552*	+12.6%*
Des Moines-West Des Moines MSA					
Population	569,633	605,072	655,463	+85,830	+15.1%
Households	223,268	237,129	256,913	+33,645	+15.1%
Average Household Size	2.5	2.5	2.5	0	0%
Median Age	35.2	35.7	36.4	+1.2	+3.4%
Median Household Income	--	$61,240	$76,289	+$15,049*	+24.6%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates
**denotes change from 2014-2019 as 2010 data was unavailable*

Income

Incomes in Pleasant Hill are rising and Pleasant Hill is expected to remain wealthier than the overall MSA.

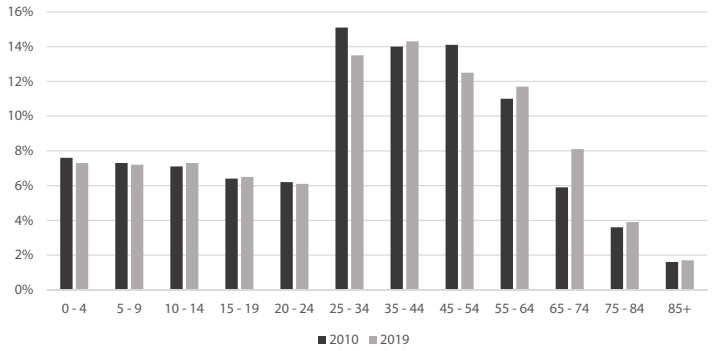
- Pleasant Hill's current (2014) median household income of $75,923 is projected to grow by nearly $10,000 to $85,475.
- Incomes in Pleasant Hill are projected to increase by a smaller amount over the next 5 years than the MSA (12.6% vs. 24.6%)
- Between 2014 and 2019, the percentage of households earning greater than $100,000 is projected to rise from 31.3% to 38.8%.

Demographic Implications

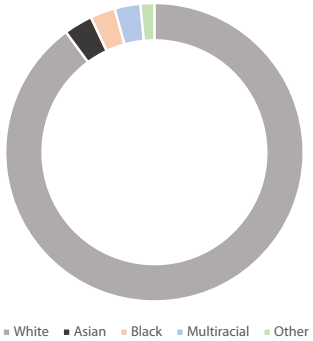
The projected 10% increase in population between 2010 and 2019 will increase demand for housing and retail, as well as require additional community services and infrastructure. The increased housing demand will also need to cater to the growth of the senior citizen population. Seniors may require a more age-friendly housing stock of multi-family, townhome, and senior living options, as well as accessible health and medical services and new senior services and programming.

Rising incomes may lead to higher demand for retail goods and services, facilitating small business growth. Additionally, higher income levels increase the ability to market Pleasant Hill to national retailers and developers, who often base the siting of new stores, restaurants, and housing units on income levels.

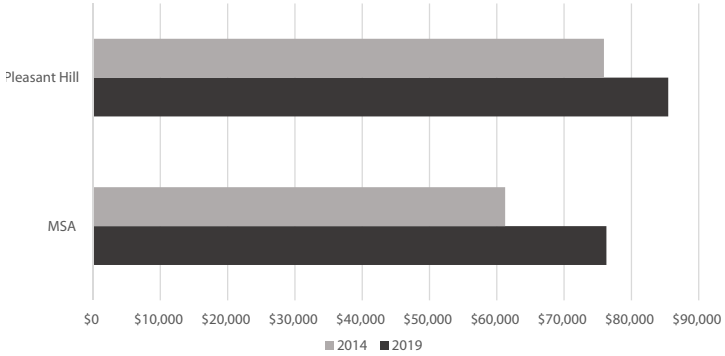
Age Distribution (2010, 2019)
Pleasant Hill



Racial Composition (2014)
Pleasant Hill



Median Household Income (2014, 2019)
Pleasant Hill & Des Moines-West DeMoines MSA



Employment

The number of jobs in Pleasant Hill has steadily risen, gaining roughly 200 new jobs between 2007 and 2011. Most of the City's jobs are located around University Avenue corridor between the City's western boundary and US Route 65 areas. However, the majority of residents generally commute to jobs elsewhere in the region, with nearly 5,000 residents commuting elsewhere to work and 2,000 non-residents commuting into Pleasant Hill for work.

- In 2011 (the most recent year with data available), the City contained 1,963 jobs.
- The State of Iowa's Workforce Information Network estimates that Region 11 of the state – which contains Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Polk, Story, and Warren counties – will collectively gain 66,620 jobs between 2012 and 2022.
- Given Pleasant Hill's local share of the Region 11's jobs, it can be estimated that the City could gain roughly 280 jobs by 2022.

Employment by Industry

Healthcare and retail are the City's dominant industries. Roughly 40% of the City's jobs are either in the Healthcare and Social Assistance or Retail Trade industries, with the remainder including Other Services (13.1%), Accommodation and Food Services (11.1%), and Construction (10.6%). The City contains very little white collar employment (e.g. Finance and Insurance, Real Estate, Management of Companies and Enterprises, etc.).

Major Employers

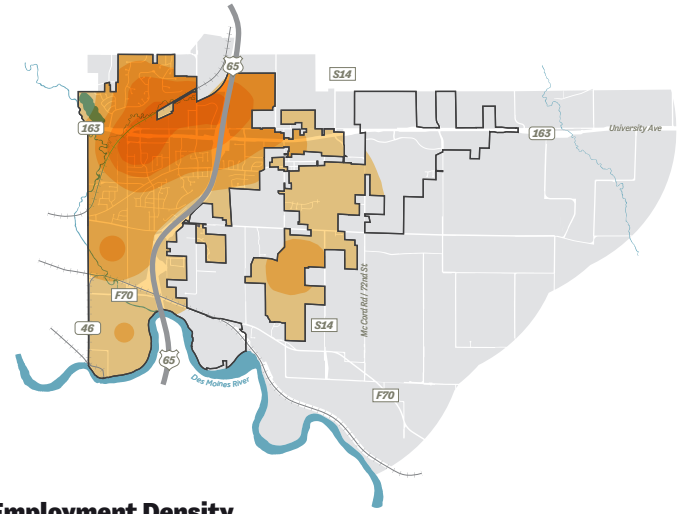
None of the region's 40 largest employers are located in Pleasant Hill. Major employers in the greater Des Moines region include many prominent national companies, including Wells Fargo, John Deere, and Nationwide insurance. Please refer to the accompanying table for more information.

Total Employment (2007-2011)

Pleasant Hill

	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
Total Primary Jobs	1,756	100.0%	1,590	100.0%	1,629	100.0%	2,013	100.0%	2,386	100.0%	1,963	100.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	2	0.1%	3	0.2%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Utilities	8	0.5%	27	1.7%	47	2.9%	21	1.0%	8	0.3%	7	0.4%
Construction	287	16.3%	221	13.9%	212	13.0%	162	8.0%	237	9.9%	209	10.6%
Manufacturing	132	7.5%	104	6.5%	108	6.6%	80	4.0%	88	3.7%	53	2.7%
Wholesale Trade	30	1.7%	37	2.3%	33	2.0%	28	1.4%	40	1.7%	45	2.3%
Retail Trade	263	15.0%	248	15.6%	256	15.7%	350	17.4%	376	15.8%	375	19.1%
Transportation and Warehousing	74	4.2%	63	4.0%	44	2.7%	34	1.7%	79	3.3%	54	2.8%
Information	25	1.4%	26	1.6%	27	1.7%	28	1.4%	2	0.1%	8	0.4%
Finance and Insurance	37	2.1%	41	2.6%	40	2.5%	41	2.0%	27	1.1%	40	2.0%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	21	1.2%	15	0.9%	12	0.7%	20	1.0%	18	0.8%	12	0.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	31	1.8%	36	2.3%	26	1.6%	16	0.8%	15	0.6%	19	1.0%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	14	0.9%	15	0.7%	15	0.6%	12	0.6%
Admin. & Support, Waste Mgmt. and Remediation	78	4.4%	53	3.3%	34	2.1%	66	3.3%	75	3.1%	56	2.9%
Educational Services	64	3.6%	38	2.4%	63	3.9%	282	14.0%	334	14.0%	97	4.9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	312	17.8%	322	20.3%	359	22.0%	448	22.3%	450	18.9%	401	20.4%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	18	1.0%	11	0.7%	25	1.5%	47	2.3%	48	2.0%	45	2.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	263	15.0%	227	14.3%	218	13.4%	242	12.0%	264	11.1%	218	11.1%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	63	3.6%	71	4.5%	58	3.6%	75	3.7%	251	10.5%	258	13.1%
Public Administration	48	2.7%	47	3.0%	53	3.3%	57	2.8%	59	2.5%	54	2.8%

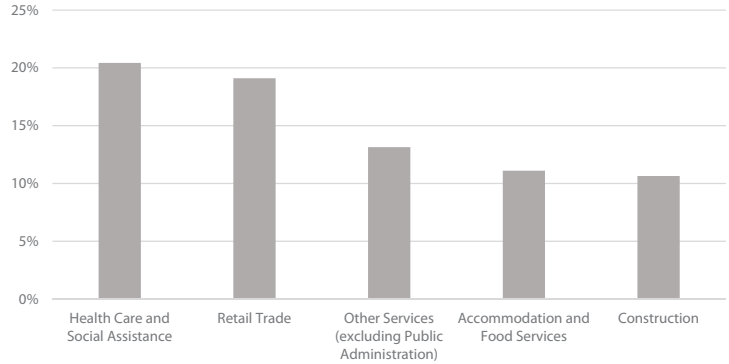
Source: U.S. Census "On the Map"; Houseal Lavigne Associates



Employment Density

- 5-51 Jobs/Sq. Mile
- 52-191 Jobs/Sq. Mile
- 192-424 Jobs/Sq. Mile
- 425-751 Jobs/Sq. Mile
- 757-1,170 Jobs/Sq. Mile

Top Five Industries (2011)
Pleasant Hill



Top 10 Major Employers (2014)

Greater Des Moines Region

Name	Location	Employees	Headquarters
Wells Fargo	Des Moines; West Des Moines	13,500	Y
Hy-Vee	West Des Moines	7,500	Y
Mercy Medical Center	Des Moines; West Des Moines	7,305	Y
UnityPoint Health	Des Moines; West Des Moines	6,329	N
Principal Financial Group	Des Moines	6,131	Y
Nationwide Insurance	Des Moines	4,300	Y
John Deere	Ankeny, Johnston, Urbandale	3,089	Y (Financial)
DuPont Pioneer	Johnston	3,000	Y
JBS USA	Marshalltown	2,300	N
Pella Corp	Pella	2,224	Y

Source: Greater Des Moines Partnership; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Labor Market Implications

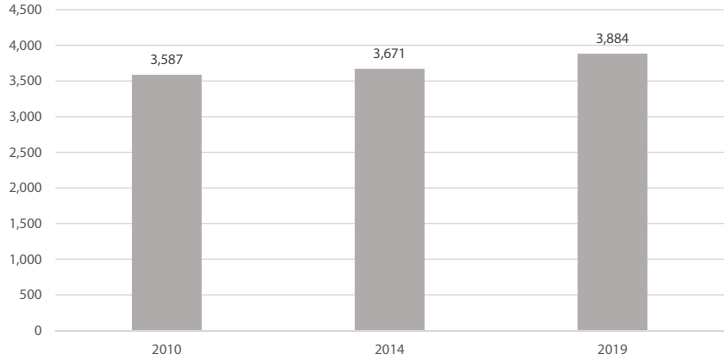
Pleasant Hill only contains 22 jobs per 100 residents, a relatively low ratio, but on par with many suburban communities and reflective of a bedroom community. Available land, favorable business climate and proximity to both Des Moines and major thoroughfares are significant assets. With the Des Moines region poised for further economic growth, Pleasant Hill is well positioned for attracting a variety of employers that can diversify the tax base and provide goods and services to its residents.

Housing Market Overview

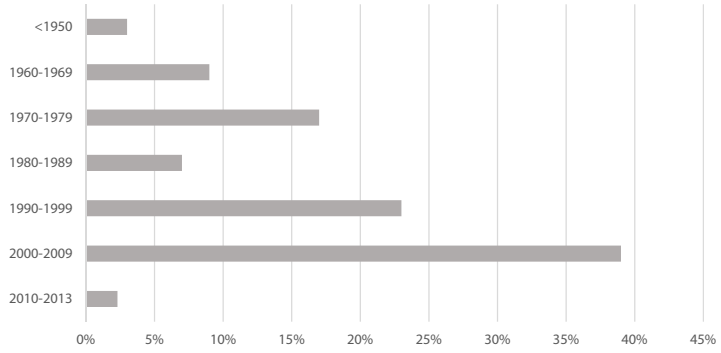
Pleasant Hill is experiencing steady growth in its housing market. Despite the economic downturn, the market in general has been stable and the City continues to see the number of housing units and values increase while vacancy rates remain low. The majority of units in the City are single family detached homes (63%), which are on average owner-occupied, three bedroom homes. A smaller number of owner occupied units consist of townhomes and condominiums for a total owner occupied percentage of 71%, with 24% of occupied housing units being rented.

- The City currently contains 3,671 housing units of which 3,509 (95%) are occupied.
- The vacancy rate for Housing units in Pleasant Hill is reported at approximately 4% of total units while the Des Moines MSA is 7%.
- Home values are rising with city's reporting median sales price as of January 1, 2015 at $174,000 for resale of existing homes and $257,000 for new construction.
- The City's housing stock is relatively new with nearly 70% of the City's housing stock constructed after 1980 and the highest percentage (39%) constructed between 2000 and 2009.

Total Housing Units (2010, 2014, 2019)
Pleasant Hill



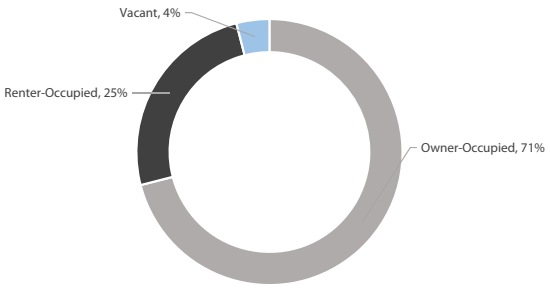
Housing Age (<1950 - 2013)
Pleasant Hill



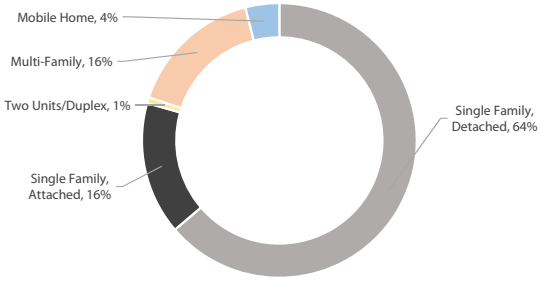
Housing Market Implications

Overall, the City has a high quality and stable housing market. The majority of housing in the City is owner occupied single-family homes, with fewer options for rental and/or multi-family product. Pleasant Hill continues to be a destination for new home construction, although at a smaller scale, in terms of volume, than neighboring communities such as Altoona and Ankeny. A significant driver for construction in Pleasant Hill is the quality of the Southeast Polk School District, which has a significant impact on the marketability of Pleasant Hill homes.

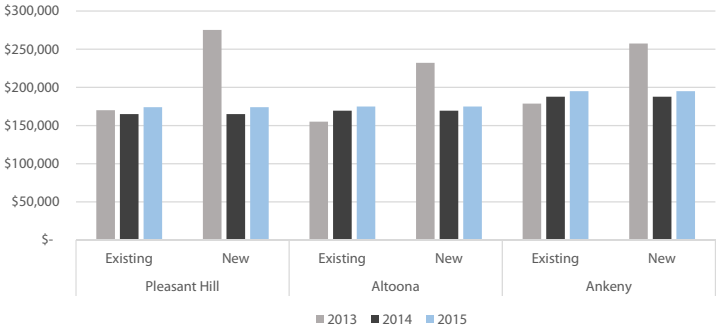
Housing by Tenure (2009-2013 Avg.)
Pleasant Hill



Housing by Type (2009-2013 Avg.)
Pleasant Hill



Average Sales Price of Existing & New Construction Homes (2013, 2014, 2015)
Pleasant Hill, Altoona, & Ankeny



Retail Market Overview

Pleasant Hill currently contains an estimated 47 retail and restaurant establishments: 36 retail trade stores and 11 restaurants and bars. Most of the City's retail uses are located along University Avenue. Nevertheless, Pleasant Hill sits in the midst of a variety of retail hubs in surrounding communities. These existing concentrations of retail in the cities of Altoona and Des Moines compete with the Pleasant Hill retail market and may attract consumers and developers away from the City.

Retail Market Implications

Data indicate that Pleasant Hill experiences "leakage," or that consumers are spending money outside of the Pleasant Hill area, in the categories of Healthcare and Personal Care Stores and Clothing and Clothing Accessory. Furthermore Pleasant Hill looks to have the most retail potential in the categories of Motor Vehicles & Parts Dealers, Clothing & Clothing Accessory Stores, Furniture & Home Furnishing Stores, and Food Services & Drinking Places. From a regional perspective, most categories within a 15-minute drive in pleasant are oversupplied ("surplus") given the high concentration of existing retail in the region.

Retail Gap Analysis Summary (2014)

Pleasant Hill: Intersection of University Avenue & Highway 65

Summary Demographics	5 Minute Drivetime	10 Minute Drivetime	15 Minute Drivetime
Population	10,781	70,652	181,362
Households	4,121	26,516	68,878
Median Disposable Income	$54,247	$44,556	$38,345
Per Capita Income	$30,122	$25,096	$22,472

Overview	5 Minute Drivetime	10 Minute Drivetime	15 Minute Drivetime
Total Retail Gap	$3.3	$3.4	-$453.6
Total Retail Trade	$1.6	-$5.6	-$426.3
Total Food & Drink	$1.6	$9.0	-$27.3

Retail Gap by Industry Group	Retail Gap ($Million)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*	Retail Gap ($Million)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*	Retail Gap ($Million)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	$8.9	--	$53.2	--	$36.1	--
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	$2.0	5,014	$11.0	27,408	$6.4	15,957
Electronics & Appliance Stores	$2.6	6,399	$0.4	916	-$32.1	-80,153
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	-$8.2	-20,388	-$31.7	-79,313	-$55.8	-139,603
Food & Beverage Stores	-$8.9	-22,141	-$16.1	-40,166	-$157.1	-392,749
Health & Personal Care Stores	$5.8	14,577	$4.4	10,919	-$37.4	-93,478
Gasoline Stations	$2.2	--	-$46.5	--	-$165.7	--
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	$6.4	16,063	$33.0	82,423	$43.2	108,061
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	$1.6	4,008	$7.7	19,138	-$10.3	-25,690
General Merchandise Stores	-$15.3	-38,258	-$46.6	-116,462	-$91.7	-229,201
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	-$0.1	-214	$4.1	10,344	$4.3	10,671
Nonstore Retailers	$4.5	11,150	$21.6	54,072	$33.8	84,513
Food Services & Drinking Places	$1.6	4,118	$9.0	22,534	-$27.3	-68,313

**Potential is based on an average sales of $400/sq. ft. Motor Vehicles & Parts Dealers and Gas Stations are not included in this calculation.*

Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Office Market Overview

The Des Moines regional office market contains roughly 13.7 million square feet of competitive office space. In comparing 2014 to previous years, the market is trending in a positive direction with vacancy declining to less than 15% between 2013 and 2014. Pleasant Hill is part of the Northeast suburban regional office market as defined by CBRE and, in addition to Pleasant Hill, includes Altoona, Eastern Saylor Township and Delaware Township. The Pleasant Hill/Northeast submarket, contains the least amount of total square footage in the market area with approximately 400,000 square feet of rentable space. According to CBRE, the submarket does not have any buildings that could be classified as "Class A"; the majority of space is classified as "Class C". This does not necessarily represent a void in the market as much as the lack of demand and potential for higher end office space in this area. While the Northeast submarket vacancy rate mirrors that of the greater region, it is actually experiencing declining occupancy whereas other segments of the market are experiencing increases. The Northeast submarket was the only market area to not experience positive absorption in 2014.

Office Market Implications

While market conditions are improving throughout the larger market area, a significant amount of square footage remains available. While large scale speculative office development is unlikely in the near to mid-term, the Pleasant Hill market could see some new office space in the form of professional office space integrated into a larger commercial site that includes retail and service uses or as a standalone "build to suit" for a specific end user or company. Demand for "flex" space in the market could also offset some of the vacancy in office market for space which can be retrofitted and used for other uses.

Office Inventory (2012, 2013, 2014)

Greater Des Moines Area

	2012	2013	2014
West Des Moines	7,564,959	7,564,954	7,601,386
Central Business District	5,398,782	4,964,960	4,964,960
Northwest Des Moines	592,748	592,748	592,748
Northeast Des Moines	94,340	94,340	101,148
Southeast Des Moines	181,968	181,968	181,968
Ankeney	310,243	310,243	331,701
Greater Market Area	14,143,035	13,709,749	13,775,016

All numbers are in square feet

Source: CBRE; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Office Occupancy (2012, 2013, 2014)

Greater Des Moines Area

	2012	2013	2014
West Des Moines	83.7%	84.4%	86.1%
Central Business District	73.0%	79.3%	82.0%
Northwest Des Moines	86.1%	81.4%	85.2%
Northeast Des Moines	87.4%	87.4%	81.1%
Southeast Des Moines	85.9%	83.0%	87.7%
Ankeney	84.3%	89.6%	89.5%
Greater Market Area	79.7%	82.5%	84.6%

Source: CBRE; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Industrial Market Overview

This section summarizes conditions and trends in Des Moines regional market and the northeast local submarket. Properties and market sectors contained in this analysis include manufacturing, warehouse, distribution and related industries and uses.

Like the office market, the Des Moines area is broken out into six submarkets with Pleasant Hill situated in the Northeast submarket. The Des Moines regional industrial market contains 31.7 million square feet of rentable warehouse/distribution space and approximately 13.3 million square feet of manufacturing space. Unlike the office market, the northeast submarket comprises the largest supply of industrial space in the Des Moines region. This is in large part due to the availability of land and easy interstate access. The region in general is performing very well with little vacancy in both the manufacturing and warehouse/distribution markets.

Industrial Market Implications

With occupancy levels exceeding 95% and new square footage being added, the Northeast industrial market is doing very well. However, it still remains, very competitive and existing and future development will need to provide the most current amenities and infrastructure to compete. The Metro East Industrial Park in particular provides a significant catalyst and opportunity for Pleasant Hill to compete for business and employment opportunities. In fact, the quick rate at which available parcels in the Metro East Industrial Park have been acquired and developed indicates demand for the new Commerce Park Development. Given the likely soft demand for regional retail and office, this represents the City's best opportunity to diversify the economy and provide fiscal balance offsetting reliance on residential property taxes.

Industrial Occupancy - Manufacturing (2012, 2013, 2014)

Greater Des Moines Area

	2012	2013	2014
West Des Moines	94.6%	94.3%	99.1%
Central Business District	85.3%	76.1%	78.8%
Northwest Des Moines	94.0%	90.7%	90.7%
Northeast Des Moines	98.4%	98.4%	98.5%
Southeast Des Moines	83.9%	88.4%	98.9%
Ankeney	99.8%	99.9%	100.0%
Greater Market Area	95.7%	95.7%	98.0%

Source: CBRE; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Industrial Occupancy - Warehousing (2012, 2013, 2014)

Greater Des Moines Area

	2012	2013	2014
West Des Moines	93.4%	93.1%	94.6%
Central Business District	61.8%	66.0%	69.5%
Northwest Des Moines	84.8%	90.7%	94.5%
Northeast Des Moines	92.3%	92.3%	97.9%
Southeast Des Moines	93.4%	94.0%	93.1%
Ankeney	90.1%	95.8%	97.7%
Greater Market Area	90.4%	91.6%	94.8%

Source: CBRE; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Existing Land Use & Development

This section includes observations and analysis of the existing land use and development patterns in Pleasant Hill, as well as zoning, development regulations, and infill opportunities. Much of the information was gathered through field reconnaissance taken in November 2014.

Development Influences

Pleasant Hill's growth pattern has been shaped by several key characteristics:

- The Des Moines River and Four Mile Creek define the western and southern edges of the community.
- Major roadways, including University Avenue and Highway 65, divide Pleasant Hill into four quadrants.
- The southwest quadrant includes the oldest neighborhoods in Pleasant Hill, and is bound by University Avenue, Highway 65, and Four Mile Creek.
- The two eastern quadrants are experiencing varied levels of growth and include a mix of agricultural, residential, and institutional uses.
- The northwest quadrant includes recent industrial development and Copper Creek, a contemporary subdivision, lake and golf course built on a former quarry site.
- The southwestern extent of the community includes heavy industrial uses along the Des Moines River, including Magellan Pipeline and MidAmerican Energy.

Zoning & Development Controls

Development controls for the City of Pleasant Hill are contained within 11 chapters of the municipal code (Chapters 165-175). These controls define permitted uses and development characteristics in various portions of the community, including development intensity, bulk and scale, signs, landscaping, and architectural standards. They also establish the procedures for design review and permitting. The following summarizes the key finding from a thorough review of the current code.

Organization

The overall organization of Chapters 165-175 is not intuitive. Chapters, or sections of chapters, could be reordered to more logically reflect the information needed by applicants, staff, and approving bodies. The current zoning chapters could also be greatly simplified through the use of tables, graphics, and flowcharts.

Zoning Districts

Chapter 167 of the Code of Ordinances establishes 19 zoning districts. Of 19 zoning districts, eight are dedicated to residential areas and only 15 are used on the City's official Zoning Map. It may be possible to eliminate or condense some zoning districts where nuances related to density, housing character, or other aspects of new development could be addressed through Planned Unit Development, as most recent developments are being approved through this process.

Landscaping

Chapter 168 of the Code of Ordinances establishes landscaping and open space requirements for development in Pleasant Hill. Generally, this chapter is adequate for addressing open space and landscaping. However, the chapter does not include a list of required, preferred, or prohibited types of plant species. This can be critical in maintaining plant diversity that support resiliency to climate change, disease and infestation, and foster on-site stormwater management and ground water quality.

Off-street Parking and Loading

Chapter 169 of the Code of Ordinances establishes regulations related to the amount and design of off-street parking and loading facilities. Generally, required parking capacity is high compared to other similar communities. For example, one stall per 200 square feet of retail space is required while a typical suburban standard is one stall per 250 or 300 square feet of retail space.) Additionally, the current code does not allow for shared parking.

Signs

Chapter 170 of the Code of Ordinances establishes regulations related to the sign type, size, and location. Current sign regulations prohibit billboards, flashing signs, and animated signs, which helps preserve the character of the community that many enjoy. However, building sign regulations for commercial and industrial districts (Section 170.12.2) do not include a maximum sign area, allowing especially large industrial or commercial sites to have an excessively large sign. Revision and simplification of the sign ordinance would provide increased clarification.

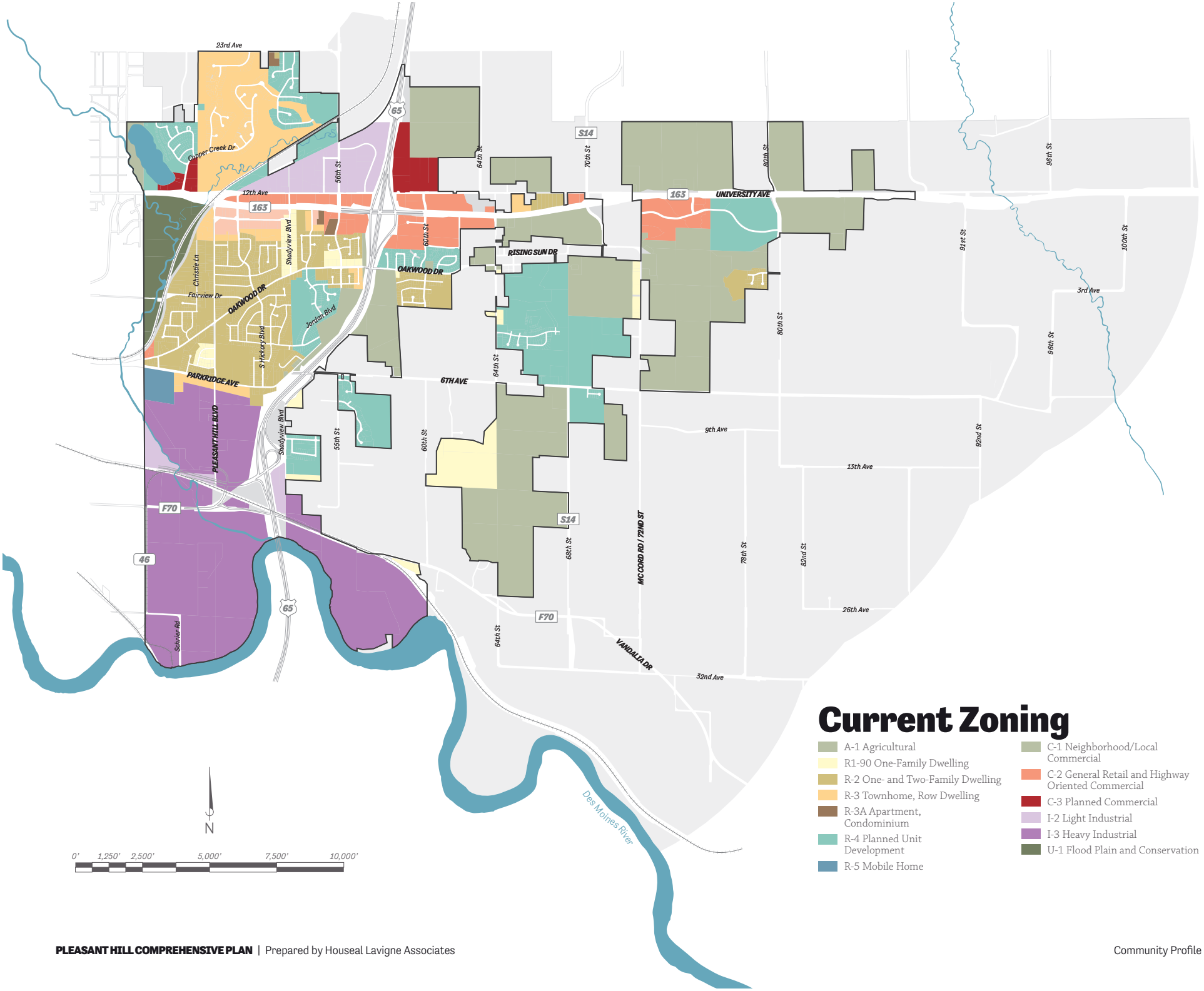
Other Regulations

Chapter 172 of the Code of Ordinances establishes standards related to the dedication of parkland. However, the standards do not provide the City with guidance on the location of parkland to ensure that it is of reasonable benefit to current or future residents.

Chapter 173 of the Code of Ordinances establishes architectural standards for residential and commercial development. The standards are effective in ensuring building materials are compatible, but offer little guidance regarding style, massing, transparency, and other important design elements.

Chapter 174 of the Code of Ordinances establishes standards related to conservation design. However, the requirements of this chapter are optional. There may be instances where conservation design could be required, based on the size of a development, its location relative to known environmental assets, projects supported by municipal incentives, or other potential triggers.

Chapter 175 of the Code of Ordinances establishes standards related to the subdivision of land. The regulations of this chapter are typical of a community like Pleasant Hill. However, this chapter could more effectively address issues in new growth areas by establishing thresholds that would require compliance with Chapter 174 Conservation Design Regulations.


23rd Ave
Copper Creek Dr
12th Ave
163
65
56th St
64th St
70th St
80th St
96th St
S14
UNIVERSITY AVE
91st St
100th St
3rd Ave
Christie Ln
Shadyview Blvd
60th St
RISING SUN DR
OAKWOOD DR
Fairview Dr
Jordan Blvd
S Hickory Blvd
PARKRIDGE AVE
6TH AVE
PLEASANT HILL BLVD
55th St
9th Ave
92nd St
13th Ave
F70
46
68th St
MCCORD RD / 72ND ST
78th St
82nd St
26th Ave
Schriver Rd
VANDALIA DR
32nd Ave
Des Moines River
N
0' 1,250' 2,500' 5,000' 7,500' 10,000'
Current Zoning
A-1 Agricultural
R1-90 One-Family Dwelling
R-2 One- and Two-Family Dwelling
R-3 Townhome, Row Dwelling
R-3A Apartment, Condominium
R-4 Planned Unit Development
R-5 Mobile Home
C-1 Neighborhood/Local Commercial
C-2 General Retail and Highway Oriented Commercial
C-3 Planned Commercial
I-2 Light Industrial
I-3 Heavy Industrial
U-1 Flood Plain and Conservation

Existing Land Use

The City of Pleasant Hill is comprised a variety of land uses that serve to influence future land uses. The Comprehensive Plan process included an analysis of Pleasant Hill's existing land uses, which served to inform the Land Use Plan.

Rural Residential

The Rural Residential category includes single family homes that are set on large lots. Rural residential areas are low density in nature, with many parcels including large undeveloped areas and/or agricultural uses. These typically are not part of a planned subdivision, but rather have been developed individually over time.

Single Family

The Single Family land use category includes detached, single-unit residential structures. Single family homes are generally owner-occupied, but may include rental houses. The density of this category varies with lot sizes ranging from 8,750 SF to 12,000 SF; however, they are significantly denser than the Rural Residential land use category.

Single Family Attached

This land use category includes homes that are typically connected horizontally, sharing a common wall. Units have private entrances and can be multiple stories, but units are not stacked vertically. Examples of single-family attached units include the multi-story single- and double-loaded townhomes.

Multi-Family

The Multi-family residential category include structures that contain multiple dwelling units. Units can be stacked horizontally and vertically, sharing common amenities such as hallways and entrances. Pleasant Hill includes a range of multi-family structures that vary in scale and design.

Manufactured Homes

Manufactured homes, also known as mobile homes, include homes built on a semi-permanent chassis that can be transportable. Pleasant Hill contains one manufactured home park located on the south side of Parkridge Avenue.

Commercial

Commercial land uses include service businesses and retail stores, offices, restaurants, and entertainment venues. This category also includes professional and medical offices. Commercial uses may be clustered within a shopping center or as standalone structures.

Light Industrial

The Light Industrial category includes uses that include light manufacturing and assembly, storage and distribution, low intensity fabrication operations, and intense commercial service uses. Uses tend to generate limited impacts to surrounding uses, but may create visual impacts.

Heavy Industrial

Heavy Industrial land uses are generally larger scale and may include the processing of oil and chemicals, refineries, mining, and industrial machinery. These uses may have significant visual, noise, or environmental impacts on adjacent areas.

Public/Semi-Public

The Public/Semi-Public category includes governmental, educational, and religious land uses. Government uses includes offices and facilities that are publicly-owned and relate to the operation of the City or other agencies or forms of local government. Educational uses include elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, other local K-12 educational institutions, and the Pleasant Hill Public Library. Religious uses include facilities used by a congregation for gathering and worship.

Parks & Open Space

Parks and open space uses include sites or facilities that are open to the public and include either passive or active recreational amenities. The category include parks that are operated by the Pleasant Hill Park & Recreation Department and trail rights-of-way. It also includes open space areas that, although not designated as an official park, contains features such as woods, wetlands, bodies of water, challenging topography, etc.

Agriculture

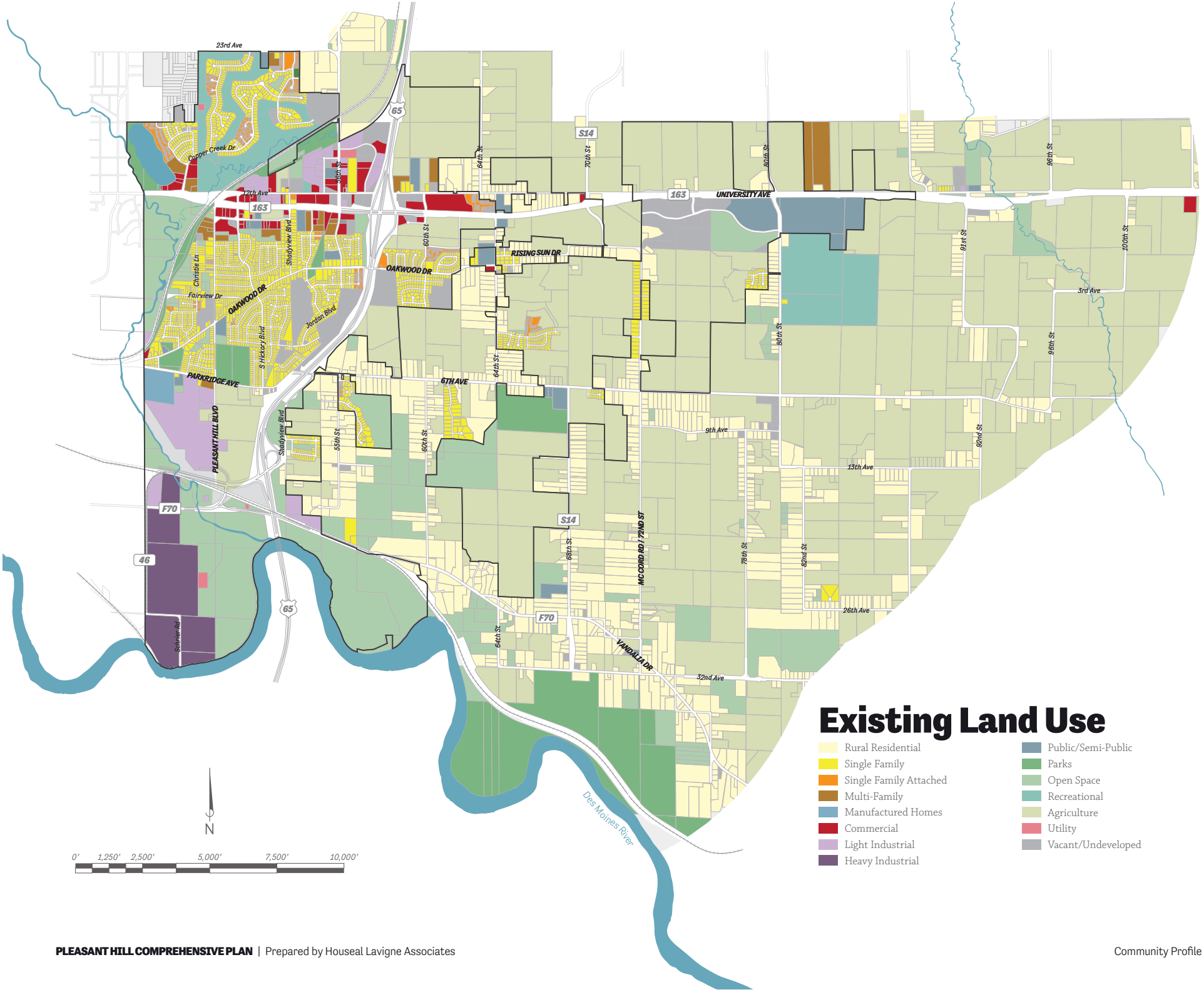
Agriculture land uses include parcels that are primarily used for the production of crops, livestock or other agricultural products. The planning area includes a significant amount of active agriculture both within the City's municipal boundaries and in its unincorporated planning jurisdiction. It should be noted that when parcels are annexed into the City, they are generally agricultural uses and zoned as such.

Utility

Utility uses include sites and facilities that accommodate critical infrastructure, wastewater treatment sites, water towers, power generation and substations, and electrical support towers.

Vacant/Undeveloped

Vacant and Undeveloped land uses include parcels that contain empty lots that can reasonably be considered available for redevelopment.


Existing Land Use
Rural Residential
Single Family
Single Family Attached
Multi-Family
Manufactured Homes
Commercial
Light Industrial
Heavy Industrial
Public/Semi-Public
Parks
Open Space
Recreational
Agriculture
Utility
Vacant/Undeveloped
N
0' 1,250' 2,500' 5,000' 7,500' 10,000'
Des Moines River
23rd Ave
Copper Creek Dr
12th Ave
163
65
S14
F70
46
UNIVERSITY AVE
RISING SUN DR
OAKWOOD DR
6TH AVE
PARKRIDGE AVE
PLEASANT HILL BLVD
MC COOKS RD / 72nd ST
VANDALIA DR
Shadyview Blvd
S Hickory Blvd
Jordan Blvd
Christie Ln
Fairview Dr
Schriver Rd
55th St
60th St
64th St
68th St
70th St
78th St
80th St
82nd St
91st St
96th St
100th St
3rd Ave
9th Ave
13th Ave
26th Ave
32nd Ave

EXIT

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Community Outreach chapter offers a summary of the input provided by members of the Pleasant Hill community. It ensures that the Comprehensive Plan mirrors the community's vision for the City.

A robust outreach program was undertaken during the planning process to gather the input of residents, business owners, and stakeholder regarding the issues, opportunities, and assets of the community. These activities were used to gather initial input, establish a vision, and ultimately review preliminary plan recommendations. Outreach efforts included both face-to-face traditional outreach efforts as well as a range of online feedback forums to gather as much input as possible and ensure both plans serve as a true reflection of the Pleasant Hill Community.

Traditional Outreach Events

Community Plan Advisory Committee Workshop

In November 2014, members of the Pleasant Hill Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) convened to kick-off the planning process. The kick-off workshop provided an introduction into the Comprehensive Plan process, review of the overall scope of work for the project, and an estimated project timeline. Although the workshop was directed toward members of the CPAC, the meeting was open to the public.

Community Workshop

In December 2014, 32 members of the Pleasant Hill community attended a public workshop to discuss the Comprehensive Plan and Parks & Trails Master Plan. Participants included a mix of residents, community leaders, business owners, and City staff. The interactive workshop was the first of several public outreach events, and was used to identify the most important issues and concerns facing the City, discuss potential actions, and reinforce the City's strengths and assets.

Business Workshop

Members of the Pleasant Hill business community convened at City Hall in December 2014 to discuss the Comprehensive Plan. Approximately 20 attendees including business owners, property owners, business representatives, and City staff and leadership discussed the issues facing the City's business climate and potential solutions to support local investment.

Key Person Interviews

Confidential one-on-one interviews were conducted with several people who represent a wide ranging cross section of the community. These interviews provided in-depth and detailed insight into the existing conditions and opportunities within Pleasant Hill. These key person interviews were conducted in December 2014.

Do-It-Yourself Workshops

As a part of the community outreach process, interested community and resident groups were provided Do-It-Yourself (DIY) questionnaire kits to complete and discuss. Several DIY workshops were held throughout the community, providing additional input and feedback for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.

Priority Issues & Concerns

Several common themes emerged as various forms of outreach were conducted. The paragraphs below describe the recurring issues and potential solutions that were discussed among community members.

Municipal Boundaries

The City's current municipal boundary is an erratic line in the eastern and southeastern portions of the community. Participants throughout the outreach process cited a need to "clean up" the City boundary to reflect a more regular and predictable area for development and regulatory control.

Potential Strategies

Several participants suggested the starting point is to create better relationships with unincorporated residents. Other suggestions included educating unincorporated residents of the value of city service and benefits to voluntarily annex or, alternatively, forcible annexation.

Economic Development

Concerns regarding economic development in Pleasant Hill include the lack of commercial growth and need to recruit businesses that would offer well-paying employment. Participants discussed the need to develop commercial business parks that would support local jobs. Business owners also cited the need to develop commercial business parks because they would add to the City's consumer base and support local retail. Some participants noted that the recent litigation against the City is stymieing positive economic growth.

Potential Strategies

Strategies to recruit new businesses and employers to the community included lowering property taxes, easing the rigidity of the sign ordinance, and working with developers to construct business and office parks. Several participants suggested zoning more land for light and heavy industrial uses to recruit employers that would provide steady and high-paying jobs. Others suggested that the City work to create "shovel-ready" sites to ease the development and construction process. One suggestion included enacting a "Shop Local" campaign to support the City's existing businesses.

Retail and Business Diversity

Both residents and business owners cited a need for increased retail options and a greater range of businesses to provide local goods and services. Currently, residents must drive north to the neighboring municipality of Altoona to shop. While residents do not want to emulate the scale or design of commercial areas in Altoona, they identified the need for similar stores and services in Pleasant Hill.

Potential Strategies

Strategies focused on recruiting new retail businesses to Pleasant Hill, including having a clear plan and direction for the 163 corridor to target key businesses and the continued use of TIF and tax abatement to recruit and maintain businesses. Specific recommendations included creating a business park at NE 60th/163 to include a hotel, restaurants, and national brand retail stores. Several participants cited the need to support the construction of more housing to support local retail businesses.

Need for a Downtown

The City of Pleasant Hill lacks a clearly defined downtown area. City Hall, the Library, other civic offices, and some commercial businesses are located within a condensed area on Maple Drive, which is most akin to a typical downtown. Nevertheless, the majority of the City's commercial businesses are spread along the length of University Avenue. Residents and businesses owners alike discussed the desire to create a central retail district that could host community events and have both a local and regional draw.

Potential Strategies

Participants were split as to where a downtown in Pleasant Hill should be located. The majority of respondents suggested that the City redevelop either Maple Drive or 12th Street to serve as a "Main Street," while other participants suggested creating a new city center east of Highway 65. The common theme between these strategies was the importance of making a walkable, pedestrian-friendly center that could accommodate community and cultural events.

Image & Identity

Many participants discussed the lack of community identity. It was noted that the outside perception of Pleasant Hill is generally positive, but not distinct from other Des Moines suburbs. Many respondents suggested better marketing of Pleasant Hill to external audiences. Similarly, others expressed interest in implementing beautification initiatives throughout Pleasant Hill, with a focus on University Avenue as the gateway into the City.

Potential Strategies

Participants suggested the City spend money on a consultant that can promote a new image, identity, and direction for Pleasant Hill. This could be in tandem with creation of "gateway" streets similar to Fleur Drive in Des Moines. Many participants suggested general clean-up of commercial corridors, which includes the redevelopment of the White Water and The Driller sites, commercial building maintenance, and landscaping improvements.

Transportation

Pleasant Hill residents noted that the community has little traffic. Nevertheless, they cited the need for a second east-west thoroughfare, as University Avenue can get congested during peak traffic periods. Several residents and business owners mentioned the limited hours of operation and service of the one DART route that provides public transit between Pleasant Hill and Des Moines. Parents of school-aged children identified the need for safe walking and biking routes to Southeast Polk Schools. Pleasant Hill lacks sufficient sidewalks and trails to access the City without a car, especially with regard to crossing University Avenue. It was also noted that the City's at-grade railroad crossings pose safety concerns and create traffic delays.

Potential Strategies

To address congestion and increase east-west access, participants recommended that Meacham Drive be fully built out. New roadways should include sidewalks, and sidewalks and safe crossings should be added to University Avenue. To increase pedestrian and bicycle safety and provide an alternative transportation to get kids to school, several participants suggested the City initiate a safe routes to school program.

Infrastructure

It was recognized that Pleasant Hill has a good infrastructure system, but participants noted that the City lacks a fiber network for fast, high-quality internet. In addition, while the City has a trunk line that runs the length of Pleasant Hill, some participants noted that not all parcels are connected to the city-wide sewer system.

Potential Strategies

Some respondents felt the City should not build unnecessary infrastructure to undeveloped areas, while others wanted to the City to provide sewer and wastewater throughout the community in anticipation of new development. Several participants suggested the City install fiber lines below University Avenue on the eastern end of town to cater to existing and potential new businesses along the corridor. A final recommendation to improve infrastructure included providing free wireless throughout the City.

Parks & Recreation

Participants were concerned with the lack of available sport facilities within the community. Many residents stated that they frequently go to other communities to participate in youth sports. Several respondents would like to make better use of existing facilities, such as Copper Creek Lake, while others felt the community needed a large, multi-team sport, indoor-outdoor facility. In particular, participants would like a large aquatic facility for recreation and competitive swimming, pickle ball courts, and multiple fields that could accommodate soccer, football, ultimate Frisbee, and rugby.

Potential Strategies

Participants suggested that the City host winter-themed events and activities such as ice skating and cross country skiing. Respondents suggested creating a regional park and recreational facility around the lakes south of SE 6th Avenue, and others suggested further developing the Des Moines River for recreational use. Residents noted that the community would greatly benefit from increased recreational activities, which should include the City providing additional programming for sports teams and leagues that cater to all ages.

Trails

Participants were quick to acknowledge the benefits of the existing trails in Pleasant Hill; however, several noted that the existing system lacks connectivity to the regional trail network. Furthermore the existing trails do not access key destinations within town such as Southeast Polk Schools.

Potential Strategies

Recommendations and projects suggested by the community include connect Pleasant Hill to the Metro Trail System, which includes connections to Downtown Des Moines and Altoona. There should be a trail that connects Southeast Polk High and Junior High to the City to Altoona to enhance access to school and recreational facilities. It was also suggested that the City construct paved trailheads and parking areas.

Community Strengths & Assets

Participants were asked to identify the City's primary assets that should be celebrated, maintained, and enhanced. Community members reinforced the assets that make Pleasant Hill a great place to live, work, and recreate. Responses include:

- Tremendous amount of natural and open space areas
- The strength of the City lies within its people
- Location and access (easy to get to downtown Des Moines, airport, etc.)
- Great schools
- Safe community
- The City is financially sound
- Pattern of incremental growth
- Community involvement
- Development potential (good lot sizes, location, transportation)
- Water resources
- Unified decision-makers
- Small-town charm
- Strong Chamber of Commerce
- Areas available for growth
- Citizens see the need for change
- Not a lot of lot assembly required for development
- Lots of opportunity: the City is an "empty canvas"

Online Outreach

In addition to traditional outreach events and activities, the Comprehensive Plan process included several web-based tools for public participation. These included a project website, online questionnaires, and an interactive mapping tool. The summaries below represent the feedback received prior to the drafting of the Existing Conditions Report.

Project Website & Social Media

The project team created a website for the Comprehensive Plan and Parks and Trails Master Plan. The website provides information about the Plans and the process, project updates, links to download material, as well as links to the resident questionnaire, business questionnaire, and sMap, an interactive mapping tool.

Resident Questionnaire

The project website included a link to an online resident questionnaire about life in Pleasant Hill. The survey included questions regarding the condition of housing, education, transportation, and public facilities and services; what residents would and would not like to see in Pleasant Hill; and what residents perceive the to be the City's greatest strengths and challenges. During the course of the planning process, 124 residents completed the questionnaire.

Respondents to the resident questionnaire ranged from residents that have lived in the City for more than 30 years to those who have lived in the community for less than a year. Their ages ranged from 18-74 years old, and the majority have completed some form of higher education. People moved to the City for a variety of reasons including job opportunities, the regional location of Pleasant Hill, the quality of housing, or a personal connection to the community. Nearly half of respondents who work commute to Downtown Des Moines by private automobile.

Respondents cited Pleasant Hill's residential neighborhoods, quality of housing, and small-town character as the greatest advantages to living in the City, while job opportunities, arts and culture, and available shopping were noted as the biggest disadvantages. K-12 education and municipal services and facilities received high ratings; however, the availability of cultural and recreational facilities received fair to poor ratings. The availability of employment opportunities and retail options, as well as poorly maintained and vacant properties, were cited as the biggest threats to the quality of life in Pleasant Hill. Generally, respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of life in Pleasant Hill and believe it will be a better place in the next 5 years.

To make Pleasant Hill a better place, the majority of survey respondents would like to see more retail shops, restaurants, entertainment venues, and professional offices. Development that respondents felt should be discouraged include gas stations and apartment buildings. A sentiment that came through within the comments section can best be summarized through one respondent's message: "I'm hopeful that Pleasant Hill can always maintain that small town atmosphere, [with] better access to our natural areas, more trails connecting our neighborhoods, spaces around the City for community activities, spaces that connect us to each other and our abundant natural resources, spaces that we can entertain family and friends, activities and places for us to get to know our neighbors."

Business Questionnaire

An online questionnaire targeted at Pleasant Hill businesses was also available on the project website. The survey was launched in November 2014 and received a total of 14 respondents. All respondents represented businesses that are located on the 163 corridor and ranged from new businesses (one year old or less) to well established businesses (10 years or more).

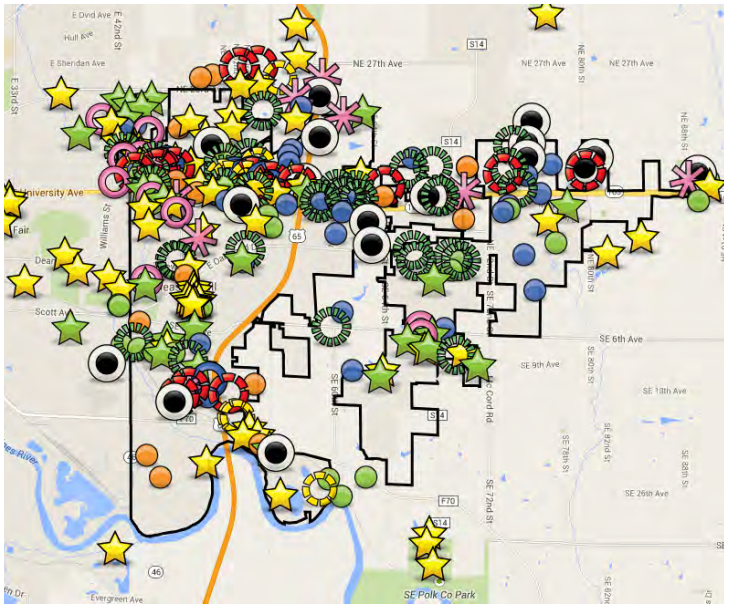
Most business owners would like to remain in Pleasant Hill, but noted a lack of cultural activities and events to bring potential customers to the community. Business owners would welcome new businesses to the community, particularly restaurants, retail shops, and entertainment venues. And although business owners feel well-informed about what is happening in the City, the majority feel that the City is not adequately addressing business concerns.

Recommendations to improve the business climate include receiving City and other financial assistance with business start-up costs. The City should also recruit anchor businesses to help support the smaller, local businesses. One respondent noted that the sign ordinance could be eased to increase business visibility, while another wrote that the City should be more proactive with regard to code enforcement to improve the overall appearance of commercial areas.

sMap

sMap is an interactive, online mapping tool that allows users to make place-based recommendations. Users created 21 unique maps with 285 points. Users identified Copper Creek Lake, Doanes Park, and other natural areas of the City as community assets, and suggested locations throughout the City for potential new parks. Users would like to see development occur along University Avenue, with many points focusing on the southeast corner of University and 60th Street. Users also identified Maple Drive and 12th Avenue as sites for a potential downtown or more commercial, office, and small business development.

Regarding transportation and mobility, University Avenue received the most points with users citing difficult crossings. This applies to automobile traffic, but more specifically to the dangerous nature of pedestrian and bicycle crossings. The entrance to Copper Creek is also identified as a difficult and dangerous intersection. As roadways are built in undeveloped areas, several users suggested incorporating trails and safe trail connections during the construction process. This includes linking existing trails to the SE Connector as it is built out.



Community Assets

Of Pleasant Hill's many community assets, the majority of points centered on the City's parks and natural areas. Nearly a dozen points identified Copper Creek Lake as a major community asset, while Doanes Park included a large number points. The City's trails (Gay Lee Wilson) and topography are called out as assets, along with the City's proximity to the State Fairgrounds and Yellow Banks County Park.

Development Priority Sites

Users identified 32 development priority sites. Several points were clustered north of University Avenue with suggestions to create a "Main Street" or downtown, commercial development. A large number of points were placed along University, just east of the bypass that consider the location a "prime development" site for commercial uses. Other points called for additional residential development that included infill housing within more established neighborhoods as well throughout the planning area.

Problematic Intersections

The majority of the problematic intersections identified include those that intersect with University Avenue. Issues include trucks running traffic lights, and dangerous crossing conditions for pedestrians throughout the length of the corridor. Three maps called out the Vandalia Road and Bypass intersection as an area that should accommodate cyclists and pedestrians with the construction of the Southeast Connector.

Public Safety Concerns

Public safety concerns within the community are generally related to transportation. In particular, the map indicated a need for more sidewalks throughout the community and specifically, safer crossing conditions for pedestrians and cyclists at University Ave. and Copper Creek Dr., University Ave. and Hickory Blvd., University Ave. and 56th St., University Ave. and 60th St., University Ave. and 64th St., and Rising Sun and 72nd St.

Undesirable Use

Three of the Undesirable Use points identified the abandoned water park on University Avenue. The two additional points requested more retail near the movie theater and the need to redevelop the 12th Street corridor.

Key Transit Destinations

Key Transit Destination points, aside from a suggestion that transit should access the whole City, should focus on serving the multi-family housing units along Pleasant Hill Boulevard. Additional points suggested a park-and-ride location near Copper Creek and a commuter train that would connect the City to downtown Des Moines.

Desired Use/ Development

This category included 31 points that provided suggestion for potential development, with a focus on increasing retail development at Copper Creek, public-private development near City Hall, and commercial development on University to the east and west of Highway 65.

Poor Appearance

Poor appearance points were predominantly clustered to the north side of University Avenue between 56th Street and Hickory Boulevard. Another point addressed the need to landscape the median between Four Mile to the Hy-Vee stop sign, and another suggested changing an agricultural land use to commercial or residential.

Pleasant
Hill
IOWA

VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Vision, Goals, and Objectives serve as the cornerstone of the consensus building process and identify a path for future growth and development. They are based on feedback from the community outreach activities to answer the question, "Where are we going?"

The vision statement articulates the desired characteristics of Pleasant Hill after successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. It is intended to capture input received from the community and reflect the collective vision for Pleasant Hill's future. The vision statement is written as a retrospective to provide an understanding of what Pleasant Hill could be 15 years into the future.

In 2030...

Pleasant Hill has emerged as the jewel of the east Des Moines region. Responsible growth, bikability and walkability, thriving environmental areas, recreation, and its agricultural heritage make Pleasant Hill the embodiment of a healthy community. The high quality of life for residents is a result of quality housing, scenic natural features, quality schools, and a strong sense of community. The City has embraced community health and wellness, which are evident in the many trails, community gardens, and agricultural urbanism initiatives. The range of community amenities continues to draw new residents and businesses to Pleasant Hill to live, work, and play.

Residents and visitors are welcomed to the community by prominent gateway signs at both ends of University Avenue. These signs, along with well-designed wayfinding signage, define the character of Pleasant Hill and guide people to local destinations. Streetscaping along the length of University Avenue/Highway 163 stitches the west and east ends of the City together as a cohesive community with a distinct and attractive identity.

Coming east from Des Moines, the thriving Copper Creek neighborhood is highlighted by Copper Creek Lake and Park. The site is home to the Copper Creek Triathlon and hosts year-round community events. Today, Copper Creek serves as a model for a place that blends local commerce, quality housing, recreation, and the environment into a sustainable neighborhood.

After crossing Four Mile Creek and the Gay Lea Wilson Trail, University Avenue opens to an emerging Town Center. City Hall and the Pleasant Hill Public Library anchor a vibrant mixed-used district that spans the length of Maple Drive. Quality multi-family buildings help support retail shops, boutiques, and restaurants. Wide sidewalks and trail connections provide safe and convenient access to the downtown neighborhood, which also features a civic gathering space for community events.

North of University Avenue, Sloans Way and Metro Drive have developed as a center for light industry and professional offices. Underused uses on 12th Avenue have been relocated or redeveloped as commercial retail stores and offices, enhancing the University Avenue corridor. Throughout this area, trucks, bike and pedestrians, and commercial traffic are managed in a safe and efficient way, and new connections to the Gay Lea Wilson Trail have been established.

Areas East of Highway 65 have transformed into a regional hub for commercial and entertainment uses. Large, name-brand retailers and hotels line the completed extension of Meacham Drive. With convenient access from Highway 65, this area draws local and regional visitors who come to shop or enjoy year-round activities at a new community event space.

Meacham Drive includes a trail that leads to the Southeast Polk School campus. Students, parents, and staff enjoy safe and efficient driving and bicycling to school. A more robust trail network now connects the school campus to new neighborhoods in Pleasant Hill and Altoona.

The school and areas to the south of University Avenue have begun to fill in with new residential subdivisions that include attractive single family homes and townhouses, allowing young families to move to Pleasant Hill and seniors to remain in the community. Pleasant Hill neighborhoods include homes that exemplify the character of the community and include lush landscaping and a healthy tree canopy, which create a community that is both more beautiful and sustainable.

Along the Des Moines River, Yellow Banks Park continues to draw campers and wildlife enthusiasts. The park complements Pleasant Hill's many natural areas that have been preserved as development has occurred. Better stormwater management has increased the water quality of the Des Moines River, and additional access points have increased the river's usage. The City's natural setting continues to be a draw for residents and visitors. This, along with a wealth of community activities and services, has allowed Pleasant Hill to emerge as an attractive asset to the entire Des Moines region.

Goals & Objectives

Goals and objectives serve as the framework for the Pleasant Hill Comprehensive Plan. They support the vision statement by providing more detailed guidance and strategies.

Goals describe end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range, and represent an end to be sought, although they may never be fully attained.

Objectives are more specific actions that advance the overall goals. They provide more detailed and measurable strategies for planning action.

The goals and objectives presented below are based on input from the Pleasant Hill community, Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, and City staff. They are organized under the following categories:

- Growth & Annexation
- Housing & Neighborhoods
- Commercial & Industrial Areas
- Community Sustainability & Environment
- Transportation & Mobility
- Parks and Open Space
- Community Facilities & Infrastructure
- Image & Identity
- Implementation

Growth & Annexation

Goal

Manage growth and annexation in a manner that maintains quality municipal services, the fiscal and environmental health of the community, and local character through collaboration with the Polk County, the City of Altoona, and residents.

Objectives

- Coordinate future growth with Polk County and the City of Altoona to determine infrastructure and service needs.
- Utilize regulations and strategic infrastructure development to ensure future growth maximizes the effectiveness of public services.
- Pursue annexation of unincorporated areas that currently benefit from municipal services but do not offset the cost of provisions.
- Work with property owners to strategically annex undeveloped areas that could potentially benefit from City infrastructure and services and help fulfill the community's vision for future growth.

Housing & Neighborhoods

Goal

Provide quality neighborhoods with a range of housing choices through the preservation and enhancement of existing residential areas, and the development of new subdivisions that reflect the character of Pleasant Hill and the needs of a range of potential users.

Objectives

- Encourage new housing development on infill sites and areas adjacent to existing development.
- Prioritize residential development within areas served by existing city services and infrastructure.
- Support the maintenance of existing neighborhoods through active code enforcement.
- Encourage housing that caters to a range of ages and incomes that allow residents to age in place.
- Promote housing types and architectural styles that support and enhance Pleasant Hill's established quality character.
- Support the preservation of rural large-lot estates as new subdivisions emerge in undeveloped areas.
- Identify opportunities for local bicycle and pedestrian connections to existing residential development, the Gay Lea Wilson Trail, and nearby commercial and civic uses.
- Utilize zoning amendments and incentives to support housing reinvestment within the Des Moines Public Schools boundary to increase competitiveness.
- Ensure new residential subdivisions and developments preserve existing natural areas that include large tree stands, wooded areas, steep slopes, and other environmental features.

Commercial & Industrial Areas

Goal

Expand Pleasant Hill's economic health through the development of industry and commerce, and establish distinctive commercial areas throughout the community that are local and regional destinations.

Objectives

- Assess the viability of commercial development around the Southeast Connector interchange given environmental and infrastructure influences.
- Utilize zoning regulations, development incentives and design standards to revitalize Maple Drive and surrounding areas as a Town Center that includes civic, commercial, and residential uses.
- Amend zoning regulations and invest in infrastructure to support the development of the Meacham Drive corridor to support regional commercial and entertainment uses.
- Utilize local incentives and programs such as facade improvement, tax abatement, density bonuses, and other targeted sector recruitment tools to foster desired growth and development.
- Assist in the redevelopment or relocation of incompatible and obsolete commercial and industrial sites on University Avenue.
- Work with property owners to support the build-out of Sloans Way and Metro Drive as an industrial and office district.
- Coordinate with the Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce and Eastern Polk Regional Development, Inc. to identify opportunities for public/private partnerships, funding strategies, and business recruitment programs.
- Allow flexibility for various uses in emerging commercial areas, so long as impacts on surrounding areas are mitigated.
- Work with property owners to create distinct commercial areas, such as the Copper Creek Business District, Town Center, Metro East/Sloans Way Industrial Triangle, and East Side Entertainment District, through development standards, marketing, and recruiting.
- Utilize zoning and incentives to encourage development of new commercial and business park areas at 75th Street to accommodate demand and overflow from the Metro East Industrial Park.

Parks & Open Space

Goal

Create a comprehensive parks, recreation, trails and open space system that addresses the needs of all Pleasant Hill residents, builds upon local partnerships, strengthens Pleasant Hill as a destination from surrounding communities, and supports citizen health and and identity.

Objectives

- Implement the Parks and Trails Master Plan in order to address day-to-day maintenance, programs, new facilities, and other specific actions and investments.
- Develop a comprehensive system of trails that effectively links the community internally and provides connections to regional trail systems.
- Require new development to preserve important environmental features or open spaces.
- Amend development regulations to require local, usable park spaces as a component to new residential subdivisions and revise parkland dedication policies to effectively provide for the development of neighborhood parks.
- Utilize Planned Unit Development review to implement new public spaces as a component of large-scale commercial development.
- Support the development of a new private recreational facility that will meet the evolving demands of Pleasant Hill residents and host events that would draw visitors from other portions of the region and state.
- Support the continued growth of youth soccer and baseball in the community and continue to look for opportunities to partner with other communities and organizations to efficiently provide facilities.
- Enhance access to the Des Moines River for water-based recreation, hiking, camping, and other low-impact activities.
- Develop an outdoor civic space in the traditional core of Pleasant Hill that could host markets, concerts, festivals, and other community-oriented events.
- As growth occurs east of Highway 65, develop a civic space that could support public events and operate in conjunction with the Southeast Polk High School, potential recreational facility, emerging commercial areas, and new residential neighborhoods.
- Improve access to parks and trails through wayfinding, roadway markers, public parking, attractive trailheads, and proximity to nearby land uses that generate demand.
- Support and expand the Pleasant Hill Community Garden and other community-supported agriculture in other parts of the community.
- Develop an expanded offering of recreational programming that meets the demand of residents of all ages in Pleasant Hill.
- Continue to coordinate with the Southeast Polk School District, Des Moines Public Schools, City of Altoona, City of Des Moines, Polk County and other partners to provide a comprehensive selection of facilities and programs available to Pleasant Hill residents.
- Implement a web-based registration and payment system in order to enhance user access to local recreational programming.

Community Sustainability & Environment

Goal

Create a healthier and more sustainable local and regional environment through policies, collaboration, and actions focused on the preservation and enhancement of key waterways, sensitive terrain, continuous floodways and interconnected wetlands, and forestry resources.

Objectives

- Assess and if necessary refine zoning and subdivision regulations that require appropriate buffers along waterways and floodplains, and establish a program to support property owners in maintaining them as natural areas that support natural ecosystems and storm water management.
- Develop consistent policies for the ownership and management of conservation areas by the City of Pleasant Hill and create key partnerships with organizations such as Polk County Conservation Board and National Resource Conservation Service.
- Amend development regulations to ensure that mature trees are preserved or replaced as new growth occurs.
- Require the planting of trees in new residential subdivisions and as a component of commercial site design.
- Utilize development regulations and strategic infrastructure investment to protect and preserve areas with erodible slopes, especially where erosion or soil runoff can have significant impact on waterways.
- Work with local schools, advocacy groups, and other partners to increase awareness and education about the environmental benefits of Pleasant Hill's natural resources such Des Moines River, Four Mile Creek, Copper Creek Lake, and other important natural areas.
- Promote regional storm water detention strategies and identify opportunities for public parks and open spaces that can include regional storm water detention areas.
- Modify development regulations to support healthy community initiatives such as urban agriculture, community gardens, bicycle and pedestrian mobility, etc.
- Support the development of a model project that can demonstrate best practices in sustainable design and serve as a regional educational tool for residents, students, and developers.
- Build on existing efforts including the Tomorrow Plan and Capital Crossroads to establish and implement regional strategies related to sustainable growth and development.
- Collaborate with the Polk County Conservation Board, City of Altoona, City of Des Moines, Des Moines Area MPO, and other local or regional forms of government to implement regional sustainability initiatives.

Transportation & Mobility

Goal

Foster a transportation network that safely and efficiently accommodates all transportation modes to enable economic growth, regional competitiveness, and active lifestyles throughout Pleasant Hill.

Objectives

- Create local and regional trail connections and trailheads that align with planned trail rights-of-way.
- Adopt a Complete Streets policy to support roadway design that accommodates all transportation modes and users.
- Work with the Iowa Department of Transportation to prioritize the development of safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle crossings on University Avenue.
- Work with the Iowa Department of Transportation to upgrade traffic signal technologies on University Avenue to include real-time dynamic phasing and effectively manage traffic flow and volume.
- Build out Meacham as an east-west corridor parallel to University Avenue to support future commercial uses.
- As the community grows, work with DART and local service or housing providers to expand transit service and fill transportation service gaps.
- Prohibit the development of private residential streets so that the City can manage maintenance, connectivity, and other important matters.
- Require property owners and developers to integrate trails into new developments with connectivity to the larger trail system.
- Require bicycle infrastructure as part of commercial developments to encourage and support non-motorized transportation.
- Utilize development regulations to ensure pedestrian access and connectivity between public sidewalks and building entrances.
- Manage curb cuts access along commercial corridors to increase traffic flow and reduce conflict points.
- Encourage cross-access between adjacent commercial uses.
- Explore design and funding options for a bike and pedestrian overpass from the north side of University Avenue to the Southeast Polk School campus.

Community Facilities & Infrastructure

Goal

Ensure quality and well-maintained community facilities and services that accommodate the existing population and future growth through collaboration, key partnerships, and strategic infrastructure planning.

Objectives

- Identify opportunities for a multi-functional, indoor community center.
- Identify strategic partnerships with the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, area colleges, and local employers to coordinate workforce development and curriculum.
- Work with the Police Department and Fire Department to assess the needs for new facilities, vehicles, staff, or technologies to ensure public safety responsiveness as the community grows.
- Work with the Fire Department to locate future service facilities based on anticipated land uses identified in the Land Use Plan.
- Maintain and enhance intergovernmental and community-wide communication.
- Ensure City of Pleasant Hill facilities accommodate staff and equipment, which may include a new City Hall in accordance with findings from a space needs study, to provide efficient services for the community.
- Support programs and services that aim to bridge the gap between the two school districts within Pleasant Hill.
- Work with Mercy Medical Center to assess land use and expansion needs as the community grows.
- Determine the feasibility of community-wide, high-speed telecommunications infrastructure.
- Establish a capital plan for infrastructure that will support the growth of industry and commerce along the University Avenue corridor.
- Perform routine maintenance and replacement of infrastructure to provide optimal levels of service.
- Work with Des Moines Water Works to upgrade water services in rural areas to accommodate fire protection and industrial users as growth occurs.
- Explore the creation of a stormwater utility to manage the maintenance and expansion of the stormwater collection system and treat stormwater before it is released into local waterways.
- Coordinate with the Des Moines Metropolitan Wastewater Reclamation District to maintain sanitary sewer service and expand service into anticipated growth areas.

Image & Identity

Goal

Establish a distinct identity for Pleasant Hill that is exemplified through its natural areas, the built environment, and community events.

Objectives

- Continue to work with the Iowa Department of Transportation to develop and implement streetscape improvements on University Avenue.
- Implement an industrial district streetscape on 56th Street.
- Install a gateway element on University Avenue to welcome residents and visitors entering from the east side of Pleasant Hill.
- Foster a community identity of health and wellness through targeted partnerships and initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles, urban agriculture, and local food systems.
- Develop and launch a regional branding campaign to distinguish Pleasant Hill from Des Moines and other surrounding communities.
- Develop a community identity that highlights healthy community and urban agriculture initiatives.
- Create and implement a street tree infill planting program to enhance the character of existing commercial and residential areas.
- Develop and adopt commercial design standards in key areas such as the Town Center and the University Avenue corridor.
- Support the installation of public art in civic spaces to enhance local pride.
- Utilize municipal investment and private/public partnerships to develop civic spaces throughout the community that can host local and regional events.

Implementation

Goal

Maximize the effectiveness of local government in achieving local and regional objectives.

Objectives

- Develop and implement a comprehensive economic development program that addresses targeted types of development, necessary capital improvements, funding and incentive programs, key opportunity sites, marketing and branding, local workforce development, and other strategies and initiatives.
- Amend and revise the code of ordinances to address user friendliness, signage and landscaping requirements, conservation design applicability, commercial and residential design standards, and tree preservation regulations.
- Coordinate plan implementation efforts with Polk County, City of Altoona, City of Des Moines, Iowa DOT, State of Iowa, the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, and other agencies and organizations in order to maximize the use of resources on overlapping projects.
- Utilize TIF financing, tax abatement, and other financial incentive programs to carry out development actions.
- Develop a comprehensive public outreach approach that will continue to engage citizens of all ages and abilities.
- Develop and launch a web-based application that allows for online program registration, application submittals, and information gathering for city programs and services.

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LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan is the framework that guides future land use, growth and development within Pleasant Hill and its planning jurisdiction. It serves to provide city leaders, staff, and the entire community a resource to make informed decisions with regard to development proposals, subdivisions, and zoning. The Land Use Plan supports the community's vision for a healthy and responsible growth and investment in both established areas and new growth areas.

Land use and development in Pleasant Hill is influenced by a variety of factors. Historically, the community's rich soil made it a prime location for agricultural production, while the Des Moines River, local creeks, and varied landscape dictate the location of certain types of land use. The City's proximity to Des Moines and the University Avenue and Highway 65 corridors will continue to play significant roles as the City grows.

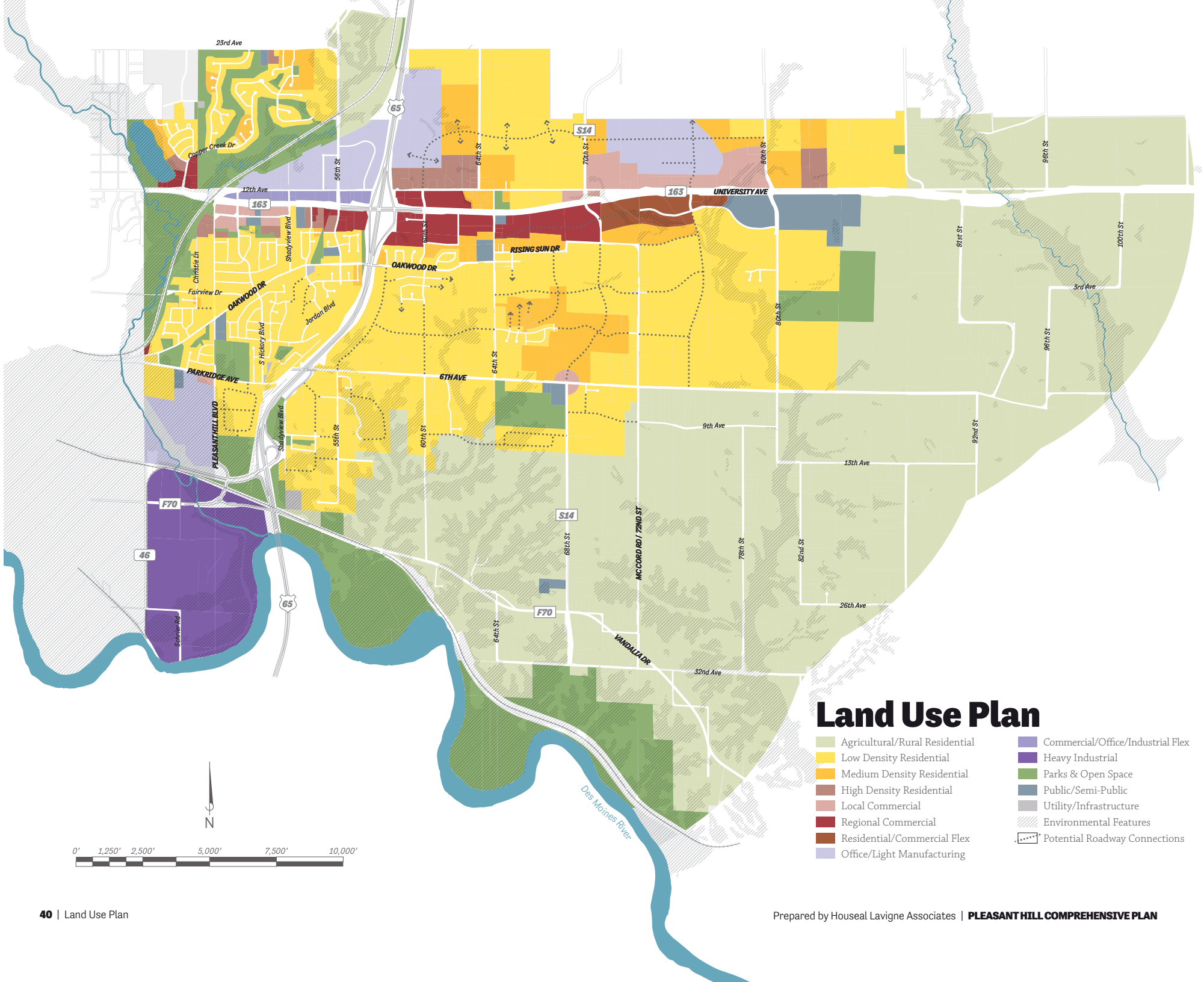
The Land Use Plan guides future land use to take advantage of the City's environmental features and leverage the transportation network, creating a well-balanced development pattern. While the Land Use Plan does not change or alter zoning, it should direct future development and decision making, which may require formal zoning amendments and revisions.

Land Use Categories

The following section describes the future land uses for the City of Pleasant Hill. These are intended to balance commercial, housing, employment and transportation growth and demand. The uses consider the existing land use pattern of the City and capitalize on the University Avenue corridor and Highway 65.

The Land Use Plan designates every parcel under one of the following thirteen (13) land use categories:

- Agricultural/Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Residential/Commercial Flex
- Local Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Office/Light Manufacturing
- Commercial/Office/Industrial Flex
- Heavy Industrial
- Parks & Open Space
- Public/Semi-Public
- Utility/Infrastructure


Land Use Plan
Agricultural/Rural Residential
Low Density Residential
Medium Density Residential
High Density Residential
Local Commercial
Regional Commercial
Residential/Commercial Flex
Office/Light Manufacturing
Commercial/Office/Industrial Flex
Heavy Industrial
Parks & Open Space
Public/Semi-Public
Utility/Infrastructure
Environmental Features
Potential Roadway Connections
N
0' 1,250' 2,500' 5,000' 7,500' 10,000'
23rd Ave
Copper Creek Dr
12th Ave
163
65
S14
F70
46
UNIVERSITY AVE
RISING SUN DR
OAKWOOD DR
PARKRIDGE AVE
6TH AVE
PLEASANT HILL BLVD
MCCORD RD / 72ND ST
VANDALIA DR
Des Moines River
Fairview Dr
Christie Ln
Shadyview Blvd
S Hickory Blvd
Jordan Blvd
Schrier Rd
56th St
60th St
64th St
68th St
70th St
78th St
80th St
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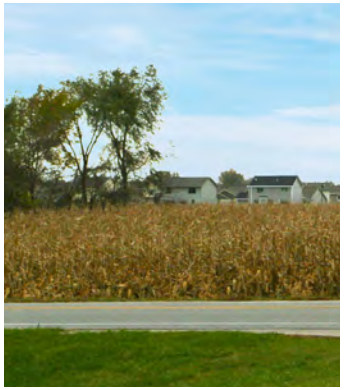
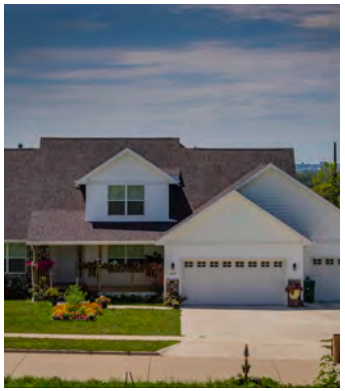
91st St
92nd St
96th St
100th St
9th Ave
13th Ave
26th Ave
32nd Ave
3rd Ave



Agricultural/Rural Residential

The Agricultural/Rural Residential category includes parcels that are used for crop production, livestock or other agricultural products, also including adjacent residential areas characterized by single family homes set on large lots. As Pleasant Hill grows, these areas should remain the lowest priority for more dense housing and commercial uses.



Low Density Residential

The Low Density Residential land use category includes detached, single-unit residential structures, although these areas may include small amounts of attached single-family housing. Single family homes are, and should remain, the predominant residential land use in Pleasant Hill.

Medium Density Residential

The Medium Density Residential category includes housing units such as townhomes, duplexes, and other housing types that are connected horizontally, share a common wall, and have direct access to outside from each unit. This category may also include single family homes that are arranged on small lots, and serves as a transitional use between low and high density residential areas.

High Density Residential

The High Density Residential category includes multi-family structures that contain multiple dwelling units that are stacked horizontally and vertically such as apartments, condominiums, and senior housing complexes. They typically share common amenities such as hallways and entrances. High density residential areas in Pleasant Hill are typically concentrated near retail areas, open spaces, and other amenities.

Residential/ Commercial Flex

The Residential/Commercial Flex land use category may include residential and/or commercial uses. The exact use will be dependent upon development opportunities. Nevertheless, future development should exemplify the established character of Pleasant Hill and include attractive landscaping and pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

Local Commercial

Local Commercial land uses include retail stores, service uses, restaurants, and other commercial uses that cater to the everyday needs of Pleasant Hill residents. These uses may be clustered within a shopping center or as stand-alone structures. Although commercial uses are the predominant use, these areas may include multi-family housing as a component of development. Local commercial structures should be of a size and scale compatible with adjacent residential areas and be easily accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Regional Commercial

The Regional Commercial category includes retail and entertainment uses that serve the Pleasant Hill community and also draw a customer base from other parts of the Des Moines region. Regional Commercial land uses leverage large parcels and access to University Avenue and Highway 65 to support lifestyle centers, anchor retail and big box stores, and entertainment venues.

Office/Light Manufacturing

The Office/Light Manufacturing category includes low-intensity light manufacturing, assembly, and fabrication operations; storage and distribution; and professional offices. In Pleasant Hill these uses should be developed in planned manufacturing business and office parks that limit impacts to surrounding areas and convey a professional image for the Pleasant Hill community.

Commercial/Office/ Industrial Flex

The Commercial/Office/Industrial Flex category includes uses within both the Local Commercial and Office/Light Industrial categories. These areas are intended to provide flexibility in response to changing market conditions. These areas are unique in that a wide range of land uses are deemed equally appropriate.

Heavy Industrial

Heavy Industrial land uses include the large scale assembly of goods, refinement of oil and chemicals, mining, and materials processing. These uses are a valuable source of employment and contribute to the local tax base. Pleasant Hill's only heavy industrial land use area is located near the Des Moines River and should remain to the south of the Norfolk Southern Railway lines to limit visual, noise, and environmental impacts to the community.

Parks & Open Space

Parks and Open Space uses include sites or facilities that are open to the public including passive or active recreational amenities. It also includes open space areas that, although not designated as official parkland, contain features such as woods, wetlands, bodies of water, or extreme topography that are important components of the local environment or are unsuitable for development.

Public/ Semi-Public

The Public/Semi-Public category includes governmental, educational, and religious land uses. Government uses includes offices and facilities that are publicly-owned and relate to the operation of the City or other agencies or forms of local government. Educational uses include elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, other local K-12 educational institutions, and the Pleasant Hill Public Library. Religious uses include facilities used by congregations for gathering and worship.

Utility/ Infrastructure

Utility and Infrastructure uses include sites and facilities that accommodate critical infrastructure, wastewater treatment sites, water towers, power generation and transmission, and transportation.

CONSIDERATIONS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Pleasant Hill has a unique topography that presents a diverse range of environmental features. These features contribute to the natural beauty of Pleasant Hill, but also serve as important development influences.

The Des Moines River, Four Mile Creek, Spring Creek, and Mud Creek form riparian corridors with associated floodplains and wetlands. The City features heavily wooded areas atop rolling hills and several steep slopes with grades that range from 14-25%. As future growth occurs, development should consider these factors on a site-by-site basis in order to mitigate negative impacts on the environment and minimize flooding, erosion, and other impacts on development.

CONSIDERATIONS
URBAN AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is an important part of Pleasant Hill's history. As such, the City should embrace this identity through urban agriculture initiatives. Urban agriculture can be defined as the production of food for personal consumption, education, donation, or sale and includes associated physical and organizational infrastructure, policies, and programs within urban, suburban, and rural built environments. Several land use categories listed within this chapter provide opportunities to reinforce this aspect of the City's identity while also serving as community building tools.

Residential Areas Plan

The Residential Areas Plan supplements the Land Use Plan with more detailed recommendations for housing and neighborhoods. It is intended to provide a balance of housing types in vibrant, healthy neighborhoods that serve residents at all stages of life.

Pleasant Hill has a range of housing options throughout the City that includes single family homes, townhomes, and multi-family apartment buildings. The majority of the City's housing stock is relatively new and with its unique natural amenities and regional accessibility, the City is poised for increased residential growth.

Neighborhood Preservation

The vast majority of Pleasant Hill housing stock is in excellent condition, with home values anticipated to rise over the next several years. In order to maintain home values and the residential character of Pleasant Hill, the City should implement the following actions:

- Continue to enforce all building, housing, nuisance, weed, and landscaping codes to ensure residential properties are well-maintained.
- Work with local neighborhood groups and home owners associations to proactively address issues affecting Pleasant Hill neighborhoods.
- Ensure infill development reflects the scale and character of existing residential neighborhoods.
- Establish a tree planting and replacement program to increase the tree canopy in already developed subdivisions and address trees removed due to the Emerald Ash Borer.

Residential Areas Plan

- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Neighborhood Preservation
- Priority Development
- Long-Term Estate/Redevelopment
- Environmental Features
- Potential Roadway Connections

N

0' 1,250' 2,500' 5,000' 7,500' 10,000'

CONSIDERATIONS

RESIDENTIAL STREETSCAPE DESIGN

The design of local Pleasant Hill streets greatly contributes to the overall image of the community as well as defines neighborhood identity. The City's older residential neighborhoods have full, tree-lined parkways that separate pedestrian walkways from the street.

Newer residential subdivisions, however, generally lack street trees, with most landscaping and trees having been installed by individual property owners. This has an effect on the overall image of the City, putting it at odds with its identity as a place that values nature and environmental features. To preserve and enhance the character of residential neighborhoods, the City should consider the following:

- Encourage private tree planting to enhance Pleasant Hill's tree canopy.
- Work with subdivision developers to design infrastructure and roadway rights-of-way to accommodate trees within the parkway.
- Utilize decorative street signs and street lighting to create unique and distinguishable neighborhoods.
- Reinforce neighborhood identity by supporting or requiring the installation of subdivision entry signs and decorative landscaping.

Neighborhood Revitalization

While nearly 70% of the City's housing stock was constructed after 1980, several areas of the City include older homes that lack the amenities generally sought by new home buyers. Many of these homes fall within Des Moines Public School District boundaries, and as new families move to the community for its quality public education, preference is often given to homes located within the Southeast Polk County School District. The City should consider the following actions to revitalize these neighborhoods and make homes within these areas more competitive with the rest of the Pleasant Hill community.

- Amend the zoning ordinance to allow smaller residential lots (approximately 75' in width or less) to have smaller setbacks and/or greater lot coverage that would support expansion or rehabilitation with modern housing amenities.
- Implement tax incentives that would encourage owner-occupancy and rehabilitation in areas most at-risk of deterioration or obsolescence.
- Prioritize streetscape and infrastructure improvements to increase the marketability of older neighborhoods.
- Adopt a property maintenance code.

Priority Development Areas

Although other Des Moines area cities have outpaced Pleasant Hill, the City continues to be a destination for new home construction. The population in Pleasant Hill is projected to increase 10% between 2010 and 2019, which will be a steady source of housing demand. Pleasant Hill includes several large tracts of undeveloped agricultural land near established residential neighborhoods. In many cases, recent development has created stub streets to connect to future development. These areas should be targeted as priority development areas to ensure new residential growth occurs in a managed and incremental manner. To achieve this goal, the City should consider the following policies:

- Prioritize residential growth adjacent to existing development to leverage existing infrastructure and avoid leap-frog development.
- Ensure infill residential development complements the character and architectural design of adjacent neighborhoods.
- Require new developments to connect to existing stub streets to extend the existing vehicular and pedestrian network.
- Require conformance with Chapter 174 Conservation Design Regulations of the City's zoning ordinance and allow opportunities for clustered density to minimize impacts on floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and wooded areas.
- Require new subdivisions to integrate trail corridors and usable open spaces.
- Require new subdivisions to provide designated "safe routes" to nearby amenities, and to other safe routes in surrounding subdivisions.
- Increase the number of required trees and encourage tree planting on residential parkways where appropriate.

Long-term Estate/ Development

Parcels identified as priority development areas should accommodate projected population growth for the next 15-20 years. However, in addition to these large agricultural areas, there are several rural estates that could be part of the housing redevelopment market. Over time, property owners in these areas could either choose to preserve their existing properties, helping to maintain Pleasant Hill's rural character within a growing residential landscape, or allow their lots to be redeveloped with new subdivisions, providing for additional housing infill. As a City policy, these estates should not be considered priority redevelopment areas; however, should property owners choose to make their lots available for redevelopment, new subdivisions should reflect the principles established for priority development areas.

General Housing Objectives

The policies previously described in the Residential Areas Plan apply to specific geographic areas in the City. There are several objectives, however, that should be considered as any residential investment occurs. These include the following:

Strategic Growth

Given future population projections and the City's convenient access from Des Moines, Pleasant Hill is well-positioned to capture new residential growth and development. For the City to remain fiscally sound while accommodating residential development, it should implement the following:

- Prioritize investment in rehabilitation and new development in areas already served by city services and infrastructure.
- Coordinate closely among City departments and other service providers to anticipate new residential development and address potential impacts to services and infrastructure.
- Work with Polk County to strategically annex future growth areas so that the City can maintain regulatory jurisdiction over areas that will directly impact municipal services and infrastructure.

Housing Diversity

Pleasant Hill has a balanced mix of housing options with opportunities for home ownership and a healthy rental market. Although single family homes should remain the dominant housing type within the community, the City should consider changing demographics and market shifts as it approves new housing developments. To encourage a diverse housing stock, the City should implement the following:

- Work closely with residential developers to integrate small single-family and assisted living units into new developments to respond to the community's growing senior population.
- Work with developers and home builders to provide single-family homes that cater to a range of incomes and family sizes.
- Allow for more dense residential development near retail centers, office and light manufacturing areas, and other areas of commerce and employment.

Conservation Design

Pleasant Hill has a wealth of natural features that contribute to community character and identity. As development occurs, the City should seek to preserve the health of its environmental features. Chapter 174 Conservation Design Regulations of the City's zoning ordinance is a voluntary tool applied to residential developments to encourage the preservation of natural areas.

To increase the application of these regulations, the City should consider implementing the following:

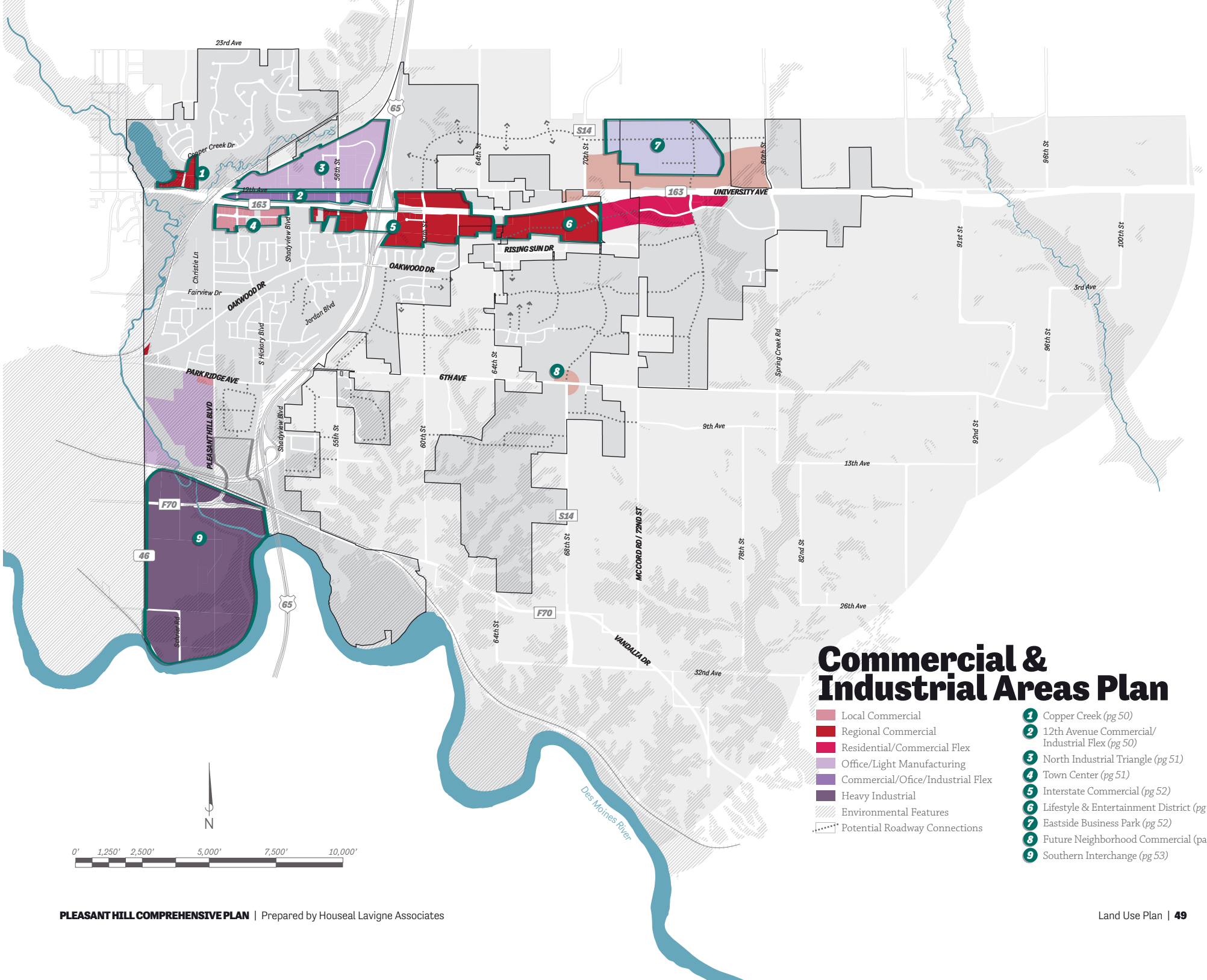
- Work with Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Polk County, and other state and local agencies to inventory all potentially significant environmental, historic, and cultural resources in the Pleasant Hill area.
- Require all residential development to conform to Chapter 174, and modify zoning regulations to allow for cluster development that maintains overall permitted density and preserves valuable natural or cultural resources.

Commercial & Industrial Areas Plan

The Commercial and Industrial Areas Plan supplements the Land Use Plan with more detailed recommendations aimed at growing a healthy economy and employment base. The Plan establishes distinctive commercial and industrial areas throughout the community that serve as local and regional retail and employment destinations.

Pleasant Hill is a community in transition. Traditionally a bedroom community to Des Moines, increased commerce and industry is slowly changing the City's landscape and making it a more self-supporting economy. Pleasant Hill has a variety of commercial, light manufacturing, and industrial areas that provide important local services, support local employment, and help define the character of Pleasant Hill.

The Commercial and Industrial Areas Plan provides specific recommendations for the City's retail, service, and employment areas aimed at fostering future growth, development, and redevelopment that reflects the desired character of Pleasant Hill. The Plan strives to diversify the existing commercial base to meet the everyday needs of the community, draw customers from the regional market area, and contribute to a more vibrant local economy.



Commercial & Industrial Areas Plan

- Local Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Residential/Commercial Flex
- Office/Light Manufacturing
- Commercial/Ofice/Industrial Flex
- Heavy Industrial
- Environmental Features
- Potential Roadway Connections

1. Copper Creek *(pg 50)*
2. 12th Avenue Commercial/ Industrial Flex *(pg 50)*
3. North Industrial Triangle *(pg 51)*
4. Town Center *(pg 51)*
5. Interstate Commercial *(pg 52)*
6. Lifestyle & Entertainment District *(pg 52)*
7. Eastside Business Park *(pg 52)*
8. Future Neighborhood Commercial (page 53)
9. Southern Interchange *(pg 53)*

CONSIDERATIONS

UNIVERSITY AVENUE/ HIGHWAY 163 STREETSCAPE DESIGN

The University Avenue corridor is a critical factor in how Pleasant Hill is viewed by residents and the greater Des Moines region. Classified as a Principal Arterial roadway, the chief priority of the corridor is the quick and efficient movement of vehicles, giving little regard to cyclists, pedestrians, or overall aesthetics. While decorative lighting and banners have improved the look of the corridor, University Avenue has the potential to serve as a roadway that not only moves vehicular traffic, but also serves as an economic development driver that reflects the community's character. To capitalize on the corridor's potential, the City should consider the following:

- Work with the Iowa Department of Transportation to establish a streetscape enhancement program that improves the 163 corridor through the addition of sidewalks and sidepaths and landscaping elements.
- Work with the Iowa Department of Transportation to improve pedestrian safety at crossings along 163.
- Work with property owners to increase natural screening on parcels that abut University Avenue.
- Prioritize streetscape improvements near existing commercial that lies between the western border of Pleasant Hill and Highway 65 Bypass.

Copper Creek

The Copper Creek commercial district is a positive example of commercial development in Pleasant Hill. The commercial area is sited at the southern entrance of the larger Copper Creek development that includes an 18-hole golf course, senior living facility, and single family homes. Copper Creek Lake is a key asset to the commercial area, with several businesses orienting outdoor seating toward the water. This node represents the primary gateway to Pleasant Hill from Des Moines. To ensure the continued success of this area, the City should:

- Continue to host public events at Copper Creek Park and Copper Creek Lake, such as the Copper Creek Triathlon.
- Continue to work with property owners to maximize uses that take advantage of Copper Creek Lake.
- Improve trail and pedestrian crossings across Copper Creek Drive.
- Work with property owners to provide direct lake trail access from commercial businesses.
- Identify potential public uses for the property south of University Avenue for activities and amenities that support commerce in the Copper Creek commercial area.

12th Avenue Commercial/ Industrial Flex

The south side of 12th Avenue presents an assortment of land uses, including single family homes, restaurants, offices, industry, and a vacant water park, among others. With access and visibility from University Avenue, this stretch of land has the potential to transform into a thriving business district that includes offices, business parks, retail, and service commercial businesses. Alternatively, the area is also suitable for light industrial uses. The 12th Avenue Commercial/Industrial Flex area should be flexible from a land use perspective in order to accommodate a range of potential uses.

To ensure a vibrant commercial and/or industrial area, the City should implement the following:

- Utilize Planned Unit Development as a tool to provide flexibility and creativity in new development.
- Adopt an amortization schedule to require landscaping and attractive fences to screen existing land uses that present visual, noise, and environmental impacts.
- Actively work to secure funding and identify redevelopment opportunities for the former water park site.
- Establish design standards that would include decorative landscaping, screening, and building design and result in an attractive frontage for the entire length of University Avenue.
- Work with Iowa DOT to enhance non-motorized access across University Avenue.
- Work with property and business owners to mitigate impacts to the Des Moines River.

North Industrial Triangle

The North Industrial Triangle area, located north of 12th Avenue and west of Highway 65, is emerging as a light industrial district. Light manufacturing and distribution facilities, along with several commercial businesses, are developing along Metro East Drive and Sloans Way. To support the development of the North Triangle as a thriving light industrial district, the City should implement the following:

- Prioritize the infill of undeveloped properties in the Metro East Industrial Park.
- Minimize the impacts of existing and future uses on the Four Mile Creek East and Gay Lea Wilson Trail greenway through buffering and stormwater management.
- Require screening of the outdoor storage of materials and products.
- Implement building and landscaping standards to create an attractive and professional district from view of Highway 65.
- Designate formal truck routes to direct multi-axle vehicles to specific roads in order to minimize traffic impacts on local streets.

Town Center

A common concern noted by residents was that Pleasant Hill lacks a physical and cultural heart. Located along Maple Drive, the Town Center commercial area provides an opportunity to serve as the "soul" of the community. The City should consider the following policies to develop Maple Drive as a town center. (More detailed recommendations can be found in the Subarea Plan.)

- Prioritize the attraction of uses that support a vibrant town center, such as restaurants, retailers, and services that create foot traffic throughout the day and week.
- Encourage investment in civic uses and residential development that serve as anchors and increase support for local businesses.
- Develop and construct streetscape improvements that give the Maple Drive corridor a unique local identity and pedestrian-friendly aesthetic.
- Modify zoning to require development with a stronger focus on pedestrian and bicycle mobility and comfort.
- Support the creation of a Town Center business group that would support maintenance of public areas, streetscape and public art installations, and marketing of local services and events.

SIDEWALK ZONES

CONSIDERATIONS

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR STREETSCAPE DESIGN

Commercial areas within the City have a variety of land uses and desired future development. As the City's commercial areas continue to develop, the character of the corresponding corridors will have significant impact on the image and identity of the City. The scale and intensity of commercial streetscape improvements will vary throughout the City; however, as the City's commercial areas develop and grow, consideration should be given to the following recommendations:

- As new commercial streets are constructed, design roadways with equal consideration for automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian mobility and access.
- Integrate street furniture such as benches, trash receptacles, and bollards, to define commercial districts and create a cohesive feel.
- Require a minimum of 5-foot sidewalks and utilize sidewalk design that includes four distinct zones: frontage zone, pedestrian zone, furniture/utility zone, and curb zone.
- Design roadways to keep traffic speeds low to increase commercial business visibility and pedestrian safety.
- Review and amend sign regulations as appropriate to require signage that is attractive, integrated into building and landscape design, and consistent with the desired character of individual commercial corridors.
- Develop commercial building design guidelines to ensure future development is sited, scaled, and utilizes specific materials to reflect the desired character of the community.

Interstate Commercial

Interstate Commercial areas capitalize on the regional access provided by University Avenue and Highway 65 interchange. Parcels within the area are suitable for large anchor retailers, big box stores, and professional and medical offices. To foster growth and development in these areas, the City should:

- Work with developers and property owners to provide cross-access between commercial sites.
- Complete the Meacham Drive extension to increase east-west access parallel to University Avenue.
- Require new development to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian access throughout the area and to adjacent developments.
- Establish design standards for the University Avenue corridor to ensure that character is compatible with recent City streetscape investment.
- Ensure that new commercial development maintains appropriate buffers from emerging residential areas.

Lifestyle & Entertainment District

Given the access provided by University Avenue and large parcels of developable land, this area of Pleasant Hill has the potential to accommodate a regional lifestyle center and entertainment district. Lifestyle centers are outdoor retail centers that feature fashion apparel, restaurants, and related service commercial uses. Lifestyle centers are well-integrated into urban fabric, utilizing creative streetscapes to form a safe, pedestrian-oriented environment. These centers can integrate theaters, hotels, and outdoor public spaces to host events and cultural activities.

To promote a regional retail hub, the City should consider implementing the following:

- Work with Eastern Polk Regional Development and the Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce to market available land and identify potential development partners.
- Establish a vision for a regional entertainment complex with the potential to attract investors and patrons from throughout the region and state.
- Utilize the PUD process to establish and implement a development concept that includes unique, pedestrian-oriented commercial development, integrated open space, and other amenities that would serve local demand and complement a major entertainment attraction.
- Integrate public open space to act as a community anchor and event space on the east side of the City.
- Utilize the planned Meacham Drive extension as a means of access from nearby residential areas and surrounding future commercial development.
- Attract uses that would serve as a complement to the student population at Southeast Polk High School, emerging office development, and other existing and future land uses.

Eastside Business Park

The Eastside Business Park area benefits from access to University Avenue and proximity to Highway 65. Uses may include light manufacturing, distribution, or professional offices. Given its proximity to Southeast Polk Schools, future development of this site should be designed with consideration of existing land uses. To maximize opportunity while recognizing the site's proximity to local schools, the City should implement the following policies:

- Restrict truck traffic to controlled access points on University Avenue that would channel freight directly and efficiently to Highway 65.
- Require significant landscaped buffers around the perimeter of light manufacturing uses.
- Adopt design standards that will result in a "professional campus" setting, such as unified signage, landscaping, and building design.
- Integrate multi-modal trails that could provide access to employment and safe through-traffic between adjacent neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Future Neighborhood Commercial

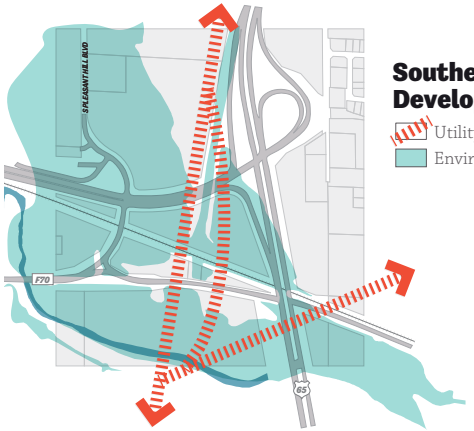
As arterial and connector roadways are constructed to increase access to new residential developments in southeast Pleasant Hill, there will be an emerging need for local commercial goods and services. To ensure new local commercial areas serve as community amenities, the City should implement the following:

- Require natural buffers and screening to provide physical separation between commercial and residential land uses.
- Require new sidewalks to be installed on collector and arterial streets that provide pedestrian access to residential areas.
- Require on-site sidewalks for commercial development that provide safe access between the public right-of-way and building entrances.
- Ensure new developments complement surrounding residential character through the use of attractive materials and architectural details.
- Require buildings to be oriented toward the street and parking is accessed in a logical manner.
- Encourage cross-access between adjacent commercial sites to minimize traffic conflicts on public streets.

Southern Interchange

The future Highway 65 and Southeast Connector interchange area appears to provide an ideal location for future commercial development, as the planned interchange will increase traffic in the southern area of Pleasant Hill. However, available development sites provide challenges with regard to floodplain elevations and utility rights-of-way. To assess the highest and best use of these sites, the City should consider the following recommendations:

- Work with local utilities and industrial tenants to inventory and map all above- and below-grade infrastructure in the area.
- Assess the cost viability of mitigating floodplains in the area in order to support commercial development.
- Work with property owners and potential developers to determine if environmental areas can be used as public amenities that would support commercial development.
- Identify opportunities for trail corridors that would link the area to the Gay Lea Wilson Trail, Doanes Park, Yellow Banks Park, and nearby residential areas.



Southeast Connector Development Constraints

Utility Contraints

Environmental Constraints

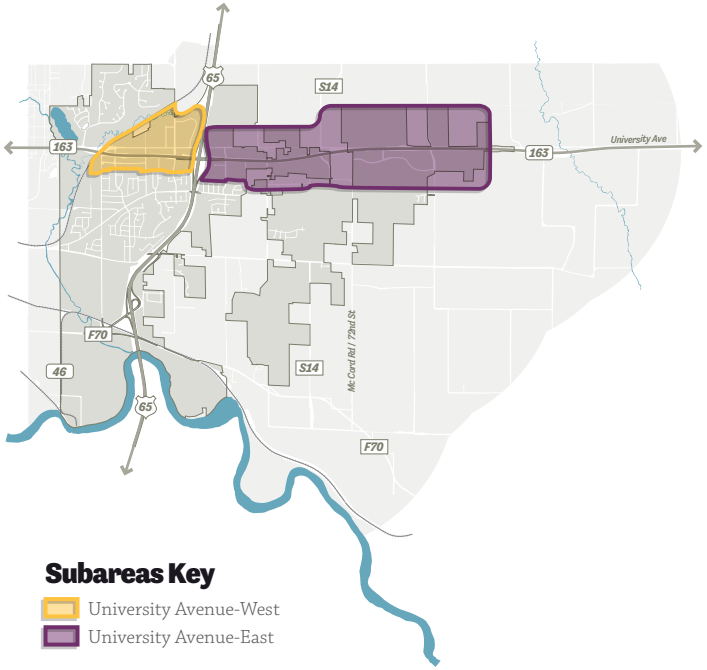
SUBAREA PLANS

The Subarea Plans consist of two specific areas along the University Avenue corridor. These plans supplement the Land Use Plan, Residential Areas Plan, and Commercial and Industrial Areas Plan with specific recommendations regarding key sites and development opportunities.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan includes subarea plans that describe in more detail how development ought to occur along the University Avenue corridor. Recommendations are more specific and relevant to individual sites, and paint a more tangible picture of what the corridor should look like as development occurs over time.

The corridor is broken up into two subarea plans; University Avenue-West and University Avenue-East. The two areas, divided by the Highway 65 interchange, vary greatly in terms of existing land use and development, opportunities for investment of different scale, and constraints related to available land and market potential.

The University Avenue corridor varies greatly from west to east. West of Highway 65, its largely built-out pattern establishes clear commercial, industrial, government, and residential areas. East of Highway 65, large undeveloped tracts are less defined by existing development and more by market potential University Avenue subareas.



OPPORTUNITIES & INFLUENCES

University Avenue-West

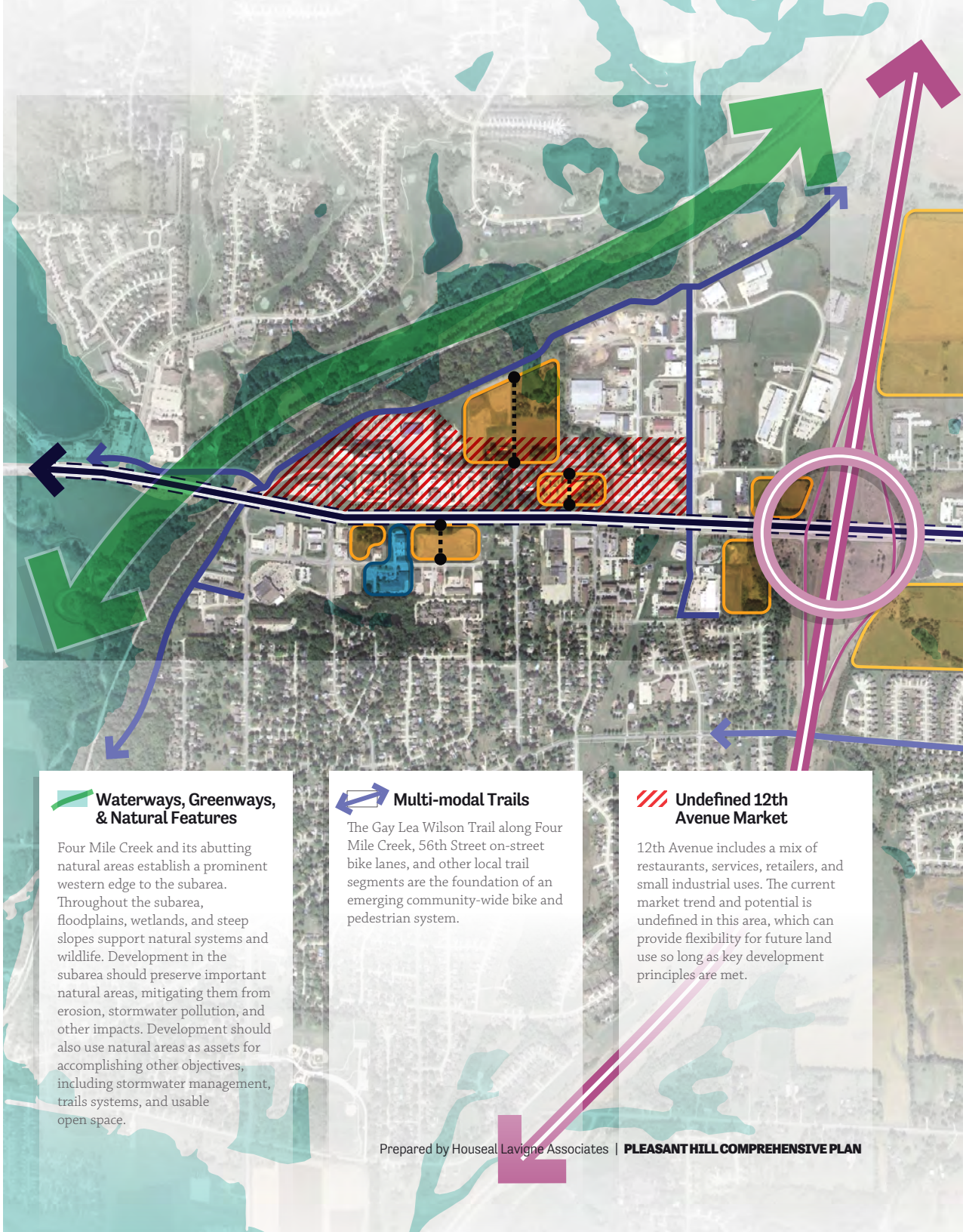
The western portion of University Avenue between Four Mile Creek and Highway 65 represents the traditional center of Pleasant Hill. This area consists of several municipal functions, local retail, restaurants, multi-family development, and industrial uses. The University Avenue-West Subarea Plan establishes a vision aimed at achieving the following goals:

- Creating a logical land use pattern that minimizes conflicts between incompatible uses
- Maximizing the opportunities provided by vacant or obsolete developments
- Incorporating civic open space that can act as the focal point for public events and identity
- Creating a walkable environment that is well connected to nearby traditional neighborhoods
- Establishing an attractive point of entry to the heart of Pleasant Hill

University Avenue-East

The eastern portion of University Avenue between Highway 65 and the Southeast Polk educational campus represents two distinct characteristics of Pleasant Hill; opportunity for new growth, and the community's traditional rural character. The area includes large tracts of agriculture, emerging subdivisions, rural estates, corridor commerce, and important institutions. The University Avenue-East Subarea Plan establishes a vision aimed at achieving the following goals:

- Balancing opportunities for new growth with preservation of the community's rural charm
- Accommodating in an appropriate fashion new commercial and employment-based development around key infrastructure
- Preserving important natural and environmental features
- Maximizing available land for entertainment and destination uses that cannot be accommodated elsewhere in Pleasant Hill
- Aligning future land use and development with realistic market potential



Waterways, Greenways, & Natural Features

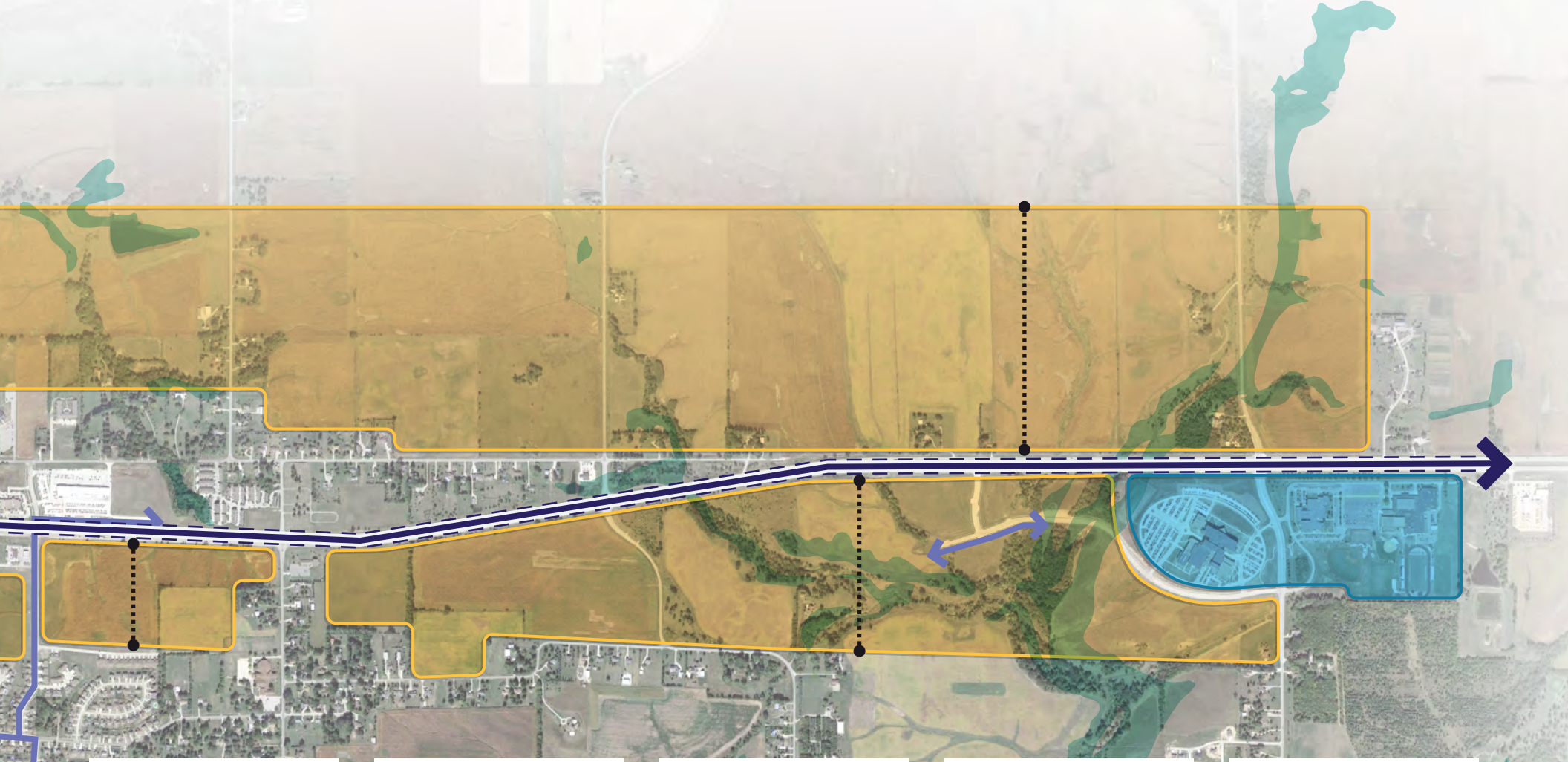
Four Mile Creek and its abutting natural areas establish a prominent western edge to the subarea. Throughout the subarea, floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes support natural systems and wildlife. Development in the subarea should preserve important natural areas, mitigating them from erosion, stormwater pollution, and other impacts. Development should also use natural areas as assets for accomplishing other objectives, including stormwater management, trails systems, and usable open space.

Multi-modal Trails

The Gay Lea Wilson Trail along Four Mile Creek, 56th Street on-street bike lanes, and other local trail segments are the foundation of an emerging community-wide bike and pedestrian system.

Undefined 12th Avenue Market

12th Avenue includes a mix of restaurants, services, retailers, and small industrial uses. The current market trend and potential is undefined in this area, which can provide flexibility for future land use so long as key development principles are met.



Room for Growth

There are several vacant, underutilized, or obsolete properties throughout the subarea. In the short-term, they may be seen as having negative impacts on the community. These provide the opportunity for infill development or large-scale growth that can catalyze transformation of the area.

US 65

Access to US 65 at University Avenue expands the market draw of the subarea. Though access directly from University Avenue may be limited, the visibility of several sites provides a greater scope of potential uses.

Deep Development Blocks

Key redevelopment blocks vary in depth from 340' to 375' west of US 65 and up to 2,000' east of US 65. This allows different parts of the corridor to accommodate several development formats that can include layered frontage and multi-use programs.

University Avenue Pedestrian Barrier

University Avenue is difficult to cross for pedestrians and bicyclists due to high traffic volumes and travel speeds. This limits access to goods and services, jobs, and open spaces from surrounding residential areas.

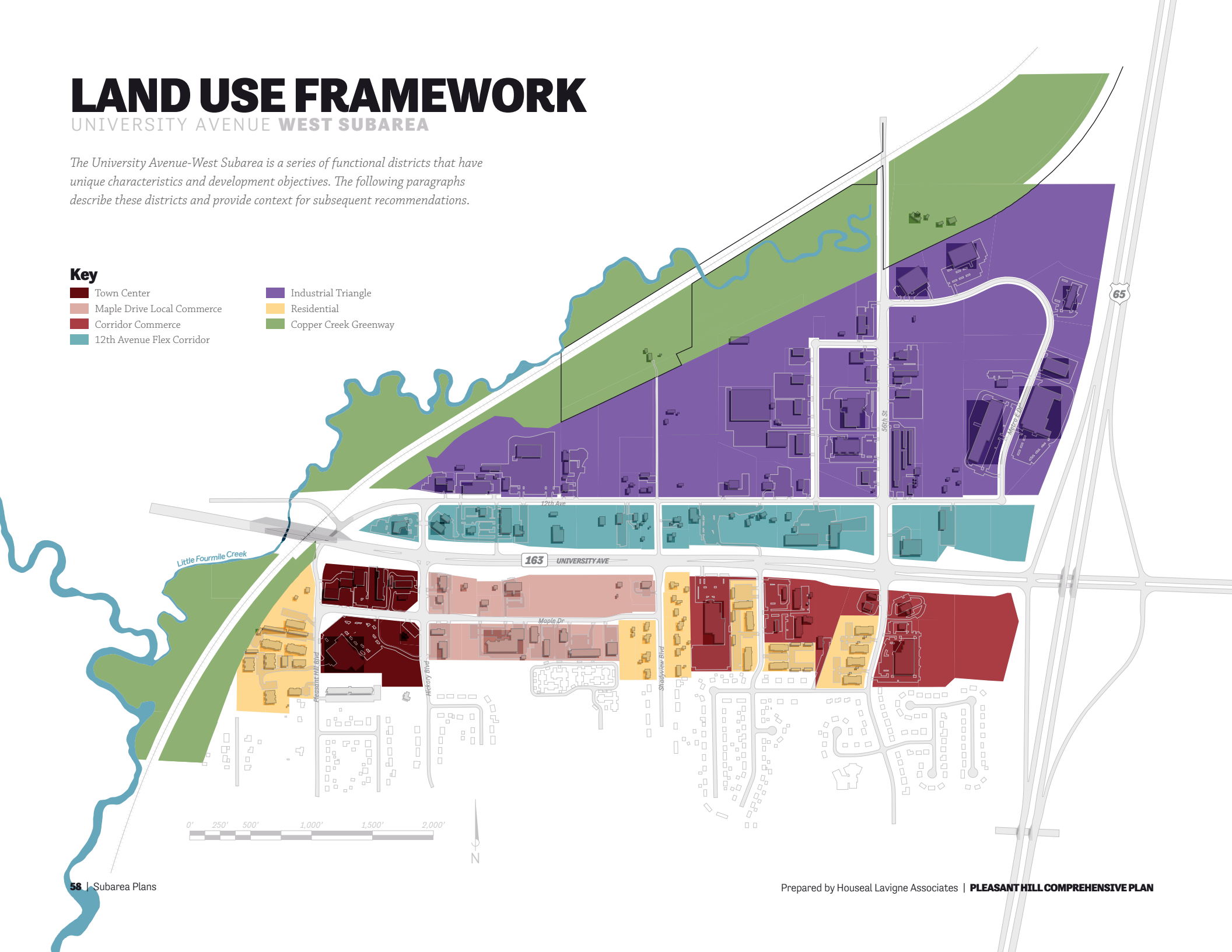
Major Civic & Institutional Uses

Government offices, health care centers, and educational facilities are strung along the University Avenue corridor. These anchors provide the foundation for commerce, employment, housing, community-building, and public gathering.

LAND USE FRAMEWORK

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

The University Avenue-West Subarea is a series of functional districts that have unique characteristics and development objectives. The following paragraphs describe these districts and provide context for subsequent recommendations.



LAND USE FRAMEWORK

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

Town Center

The Town Center should be concentrated on Maple Drive between Pleasant Hill Boulevard and Hickory Boulevard. This area should prioritize pedestrian comfort and orientation. Buildings should be located along the front property line, and parking areas should be screened with decorative fencing and landscaping. Uses should include retail, restaurants, office, and upper floor residences that create a vibrant environment. This area should also include a civic gathering space that can host outdoor events.

Maple Drive

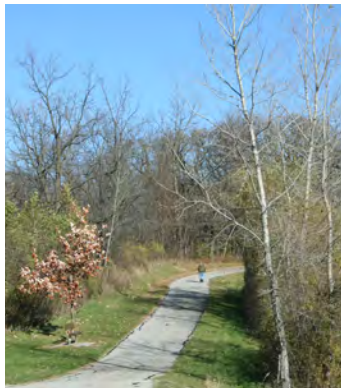
The Maple Drive corridor should cater to uses that support the Town Center. Offices, retail, services, and government facilities should coexist in a consistent built character. Development should accommodate pedestrians and create a walkable connection to the Town Center. Parking areas should be interconnected between development sites and screened from view of the public street. North of Maple Drive, deep lots should include secondary retail or office development that creates an attractive frontage along University Avenue.

12th Avenue Flex Corridor

Lots between 12th Avenue and University Avenue should allow for a broad range of commercial uses, including retail, restaurants, professional services, and low-impact industry. Regardless of the type of use on a given lot, development should include pedestrian connections where appropriate, screened parking lots and storage areas, and attractive building and site design from University Avenue. Any manufacturing or assembly operations should take place inside buildings, and freight traffic should be minimized.

Industrial Triangle

Areas north of 12th Avenue and on Metro East Drive should continue to host light industrial and professional office uses. Such development should integrate consistent signage and landscaping to create an "Industrial Triangle" district that is attractive from University Avenue and Highway 65. Freight traffic into and out of the district should be managed to minimize impacts on University Avenue and nearby residential areas.



Four Mile Creek East Greenway

The Four Mile Creek Greenway should continue to provide several benefits to the subarea, including the preservation of important environmental assets, buffering from the Copper Creek neighborhood, and multi-modal mobility. Nearby development should mitigate the impacts of stormwater runoff and air pollution, and integrate extensions of the greenway that would reinforce its presence in urban parts of the subarea.

KEY OPPORTUNITY SITES

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

The University Avenue-West Subarea includes several vacant, underutilized, or obsolete sites that could act as catalysts for future investment. The City should work with property owners to identify development opportunities as they emerge. Such development should be guided by the following concepts.

Key

- New Development Site
- Redevelopment Site
- Adaptive Reuse Site

KEY OPPORTUNITY SITES

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

1 This site provides the opportunity for redevelopment that can accommodate multi-family housing or a mix of commercial uses and residences. Development should anchor the west end of the Town Center area, and integrate towers, attractive materials, façade transparency, and other elements that make it an attractive "book end" from Maple Drive. Development should also provide access to the Gay Lea Wilson Trail.

2 This site includes several marginal or underutilized retail buildings. The site should be redeveloped with buildings and uses that reflect the desired Town Center character. Restaurants and retailers should be located along the Maple Drive frontage, with sidewalk seating and displays adding to the vibrancy of the area. The depth of the site allows for office or secondary retail development that would create an attractive façade along University Avenue. Parking for all uses can be located toward the center of the site.

3 This site includes the existing grocery store and large parking lot. In the short-term, the grocery store is a desired use in this area; however, should the opportunity arise, the building could be reused as a civic complex that would accommodate growing municipal operations. Excess parking areas could be transformed into a civic plaza that could host public events.

4 This vacant site includes a prominent corner lot and outlying parking area. This site could be developed with commercial uses compatible with the Town Center character. Building orientation, outdoor seating, and specific tenants should complement the potential long-term civic plaza space.

5 This site includes remnant rural residences surrounded by more contemporary office and commercial development. Redevelopment of this site should include compatible commercial uses, and sites should be configured to tie directly into surrounding parking areas. To the extent possible, trees located along University Avenue should be preserved in order to screen uses from the primary arterial.

6 This vacant lot provides a substantial opportunity for the east end of the Town Center area. Development should include retail, service,or office uses, as well as mixed-use residential uses, along the Maple Drive frontage, and the character of development should be consistent with the core of Town Center. The north portion of the site could accommodate secondary commercial or office development that creates an attractive façade along University Avenue. Parking should be located toward the interior of the site, and should link to the adjacent City Hall site.

7 This site includes auto service uses and a partially vacant shopping center. Redevelopment of this site should include retail, restaurant, service use, or residential mixed uses fronting on Maple Drive, and should reflect the future Town Center character. Parking should be located to the rear of the site, and a substantial buffer should be provided along residential development to the south. Pedestrian links to the residential areas should be provided in order to enhance access to commercial and civic uses along the Maple Drive corridor.

8 & **9**
These sites include large undeveloped parcels that could host industrial uses as part of the Industrial Triangle area. Both sites benefit from access to 12th Avenue and Shadyview Boulevard, and should use these roads to manage truck traffic impacts. These lots could be consolidated to create a larger redevelopment parcel; however, north-south trail access should be maintained between 12th Avenue and the Gay Lea Wilson Trail.

10
This site includes the vacant water park and residences bound by 12th Avenue, University Avenue, and Shadyview Boulevard. Given the undefined market trend for various land uses in this area, this site could accommodate light industrial retail, restaurant, service, or professional office uses. Regardless of the ultimate uses on this site, development should aim to minimize impacts on surrounding uses and maximize benefits to the community. The University Avenue frontage should be heavily landscaped and include attractive facades. The existing Sherrylynn Boulevard access point should be preserved, and direct access to the Fareway development to the east should be provided. Finally, any truck traffic should utilize 12th Avenue and 56th Street to access University Avenue and Highway 65.

11
This site includes the University Avenue frontage of a lot with an existing curb cut from the arterial corridor. Development on this lot could include retail, service, or small office uses, and should provide direct connections to the gas station to the east.

12
This site includes an undeveloped parcel east of the bowling alley commercial center. Because the site lies above a major gas line, it is not suitable for development; however, it should be well-maintained with attractive landscaping and integrate a gateway feature.

13 This site currently includes Kane Manufacturing, Inc. As the 12th Avenue Flex Corridor continues to develop, this prominent site presents a future redevelopment opportunity. The southwest corner of this site should establish a strong corner through quality architectural and landscaping features that have a contextual tie to the University Avenue corridor and serve as a gateway to the Metro East Industrial Park.

14 This site includes undeveloped land accessed from 12th Avenue and Metro East Drive. This site could accommodate a variety of potential uses, including light industrial, professional office, services, or a hotel that benefits from surrounding industry and visibility from Highway 65. The southeast portion of this site should be preserved for a prominent gateway feature that would announce entry to Pleasant Hill from southbound Highway 65.

15 This deep site includes a remnant farmstead located among an emerging industrial office park. Development of this lot should include light industrial or professional office uses. Given the configuration of the lot and the overhead utility corridor running through it, the northern portion of the site may be best suited for a detention facility that would allow for more intensive development in other parts of the industrial park.

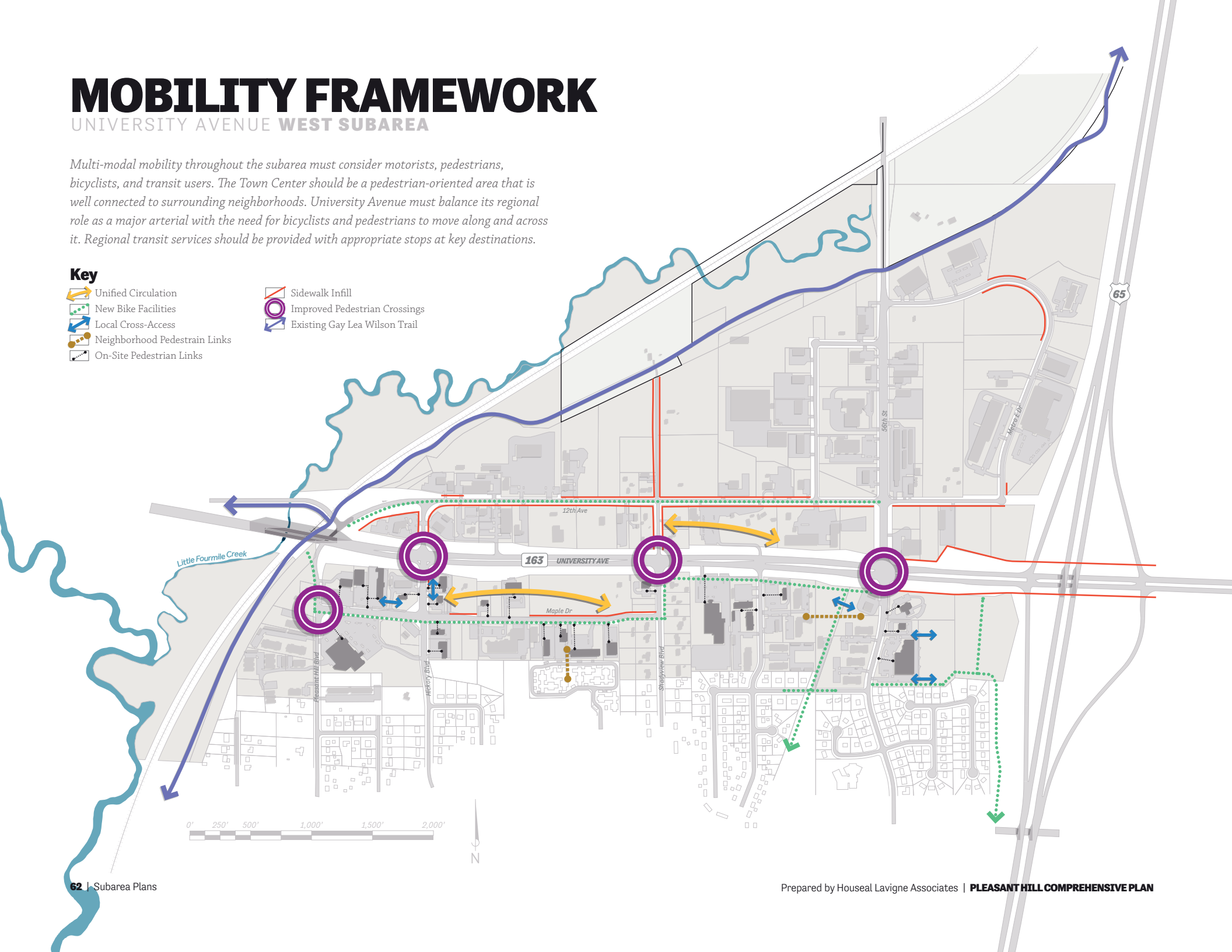
MOBILITY FRAMEWORK

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

Multi-modal mobility throughout the subarea must consider motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. The Town Center should be a pedestrian-oriented area that is well connected to surrounding neighborhoods. University Avenue must balance its regional role as a major arterial with the need for bicyclists and pedestrians to move along and across it. Regional transit services should be provided with appropriate stops at key destinations.

Key

- Unified Circulation
- New Bike Facilities
- Local Cross-Access
- Neighborhood Pedestrain Links
- On-Site Pedestrian Links
- Sidewalk Infill
- Improved Pedestrian Crossings
- Existing Gay Lea Wilson Trail



MOBILITY FRAMEWORK

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

Local Cross-Access

There are several existing developments with adjacent parking lots that do not connect. The City should encourage cross-access between these parking areas in order to reduce vehicular conflicts on public streets and support the reduction or consolidation of curb cuts.

New Bike Facilities

New bike facilities should be provided that create a "loop" throughout the subarea and link to nearby neighborhoods. 12th Avenue and Maple Drive could accommodate on-street bike lanes, and the existing utility corridor could accommodate a bike trail that would extend the 56th Street facility to the south and connect to neighborhoods and Doanes Park. New development near the Highway 65 interchange should integrate trails that provide access to University Avenue and areas east of Highway 65.

Improved Pedestrian Crossings

The primary impediment to pedestrian mobility through the subarea is difficulty crossing University Avenue. The City should work with the Iowa DOT to upgrade crossings to include well-marked crosswalks, pedestrian countdown signals, vehicle warning systems, and modified signal phasing. Also, the intersection of Pleasant Hill Boulevard and Maple Drive should be improved with pedestrian crossings as urban design and streetscape improvements are made.

Neighborhood Pedestrian Links

Where possible, development should provide pedestrian links to surrounding neighborhoods. Currently, the best opportunity for this exists between the multi-family development southeast of the fire station and development along the south side of Maple Drive. However, other opportunities should be explored as development occurs.

Sidewalk Infill

There are several streets in the subarea that have gaps in the sidewalk network. Some, like those on Metro East Drive, will be addressed as development occurs. Others, such as 12th Avenue and University Avenue between 56th Street and Highway 65, require full installations to enhance mobility throughout the area and to other portions of Pleasant Hill.

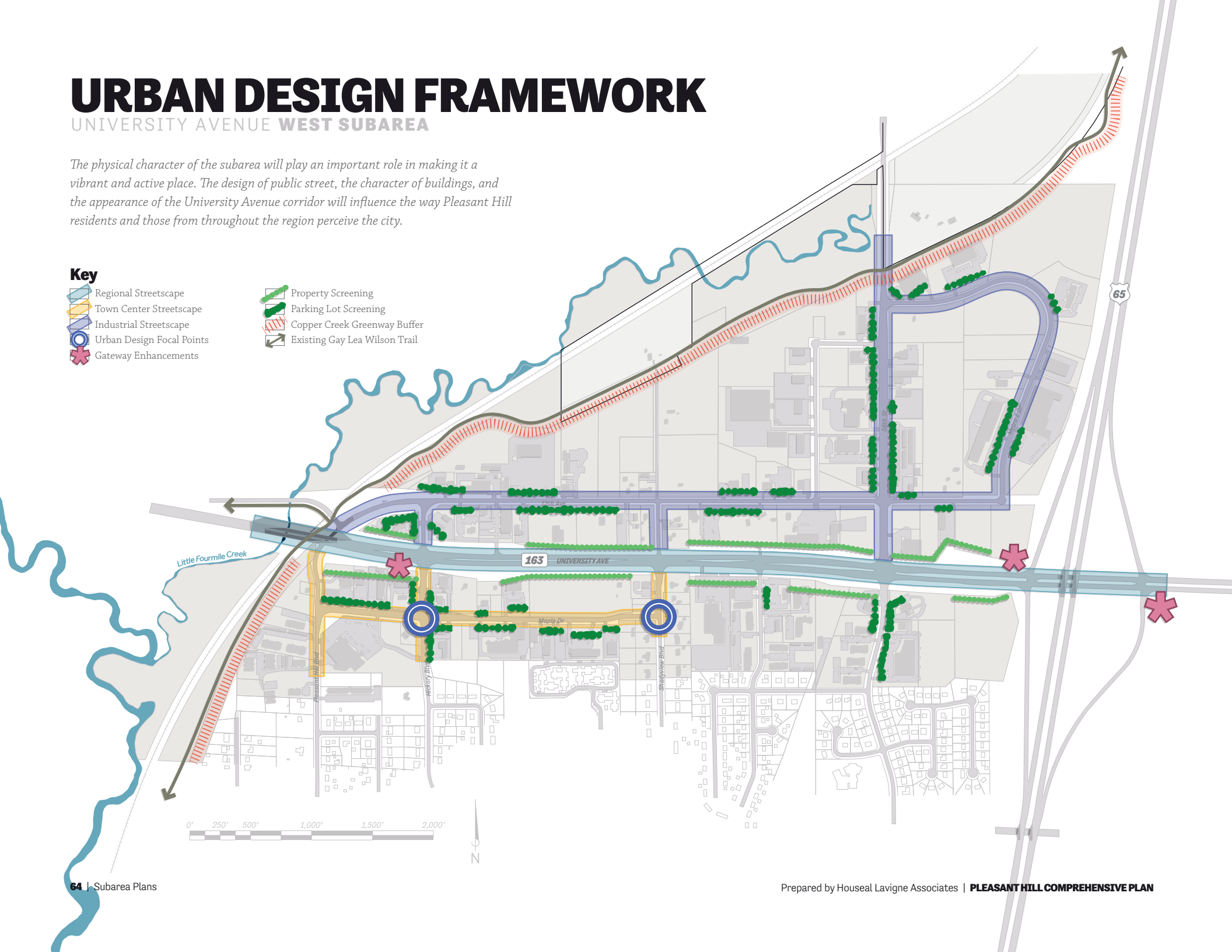
On-site Pedestrian Links

Several existing developments lack pedestrian links between the public sidewalk and building entrances. The City should work with property owners to retrofit these developments with sidewalks or pedestrian areas through parking lots designated with striping, decorative pavers, landscaping, and signage. All future development should be required to provide direct pedestrian connections.

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

The physical character of the subarea will play an important role in making it a vibrant and active place. The design of public street, the character of buildings, and the appearance of the University Avenue corridor will influence the way Pleasant Hill residents and those from throughout the region perceive the city.



URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

University Avenue Streetscape

University Avenue accommodates about 20,000 vehicles per day and is the primary point of entry into Pleasant Hill. The City should work with the Iowa DOT to implement a gateway streetscape program that includes sculptural lighting, public art, and a decorative ribbon wall that would screen the backside of adjacent development and complement recent investment in new street lighting.

Industrial Triangle Streetscape

The City should work with property owners north of University Avenue to establish an industrial streetscape program for 12th Avenue, 56th Street, and Metro East Drive. This program should include elements that reflect the industrial nature of the area and convey a sense of innovation.

Town Center Streetscape

The City should implement a Town Center streetscape program along Maple Drive and intersecting streets. This program could consist of pedestrian-scale lighting, banners, planters, and other elements. The program should also integrate benches, bike racks, and small plazas. To complement the streetscape palette, the City should adopt standards for sidewalk commercial activity, such as café seating and retail displays.

Arterial Landscaping

Private development along University Avenue should include decorative landscaping that improves the aesthetic character of the corridor and screens uses oriented toward 12th Avenue and Maple Drive. Landscaping should include ornamental trees and seasonal flowers, and could provide gaps where building facades are designed to relate to University Avenue.

Parking Lot Screening

Throughout the subarea, several parking lots abut public streets and create an unattractive visual character. The City should require all parking lots visible from public streets to be screened with decorative landscaping and/or fencing. Generally, existing development should be able to accommodate this, and new development can integrate it into preliminary site design.

Urban Design Focal Points

Urban design focal points should be used to call attention to important spaces along Maple Drive. They should convey a sense of arrival into the Town Center, and include decorative pavers, landscaping, and public art. They could also include civic spaces that would create the framework for surrounding development.

Gateways

The City should establish attractive and modern gateways along University Avenue. At Hickory Boulevard, the existing gateway elements should be enhanced to reflect the University Avenue and Town Center streetscape programs, as well as the recently installed gateway elements at University Avenue and Four Mile Creek. At the Highway 65 interchange, the City should work with the Iowa DOT and local property owners to identify an appropriate site for a more substantial gateway that would mark entry into the community.

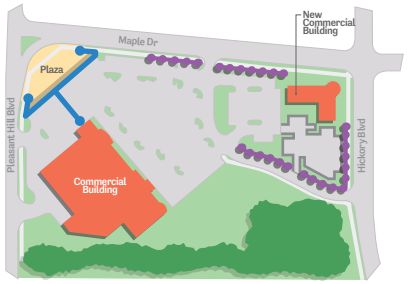
Four Mile Creek East Greenway Buffer

The Four Mile Creek East Greenway supports an important natural resource and includes the Gay Lea Wilson Trail. Development along the greenway should be buffered to minimize the impacts of industrial activity and stormwater runoff. The City should work with property owners to identify opportunities for connections to the trail network based on their ability to provide access to local employment, commerce, and civic facilities.

TOWN CENTER-SOUTH ALTERNATIVES

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

The southern block of the Town Center – bound by Maple Drive, Pleasant Hill Boulevard, and Hickory Boulevard – offers the potential for different developments based on the long-term viability of existing uses and the need for investment in a new civic facility. The following alternatives illustrate options for this block. It should be noted that the final development concept could be a hybrid of these alternatives, incorporating key elements that meet the vision for a Town Center that satisfies multiple objectives.



Alternative 1: Sustained Commercial Uses

This alternative assumes that the existing building, currently used as a Hy-Vee grocery store, remains as a commercial use. In this case, a plaza should be developed at the corner of Maple Drive and Pleasant Hill Boulevard on what is currently unused land. A pedestrian connection should be provided between the new plaza and the commercial building. At Maple Drive and Hickory Boulevard, an undeveloped portion of the bock could accommodate a new commercial building with parking accessed from the current grocery store driveway. The edges of the parking areas should be screened by decorative landscaping and/or masonry walls.

Alternative 2: Civic Campus Re-use

This alternative utilizes much of the footprint of the existing commercial building, but assumes that the grocery stores no longer occupies the site. The building could be adapted for a civic facility based on the Pleasant Hill Civic Campus Needs Study, and would include City administrative functions, the Chamber of Commerce, Community Center, and Public Library. The northwestern corner of the site could include a plaza similar to Alternative 1 above, and the northeastern portion of the site could accommodate an outdoor event space with a small performance shelter and lawn.

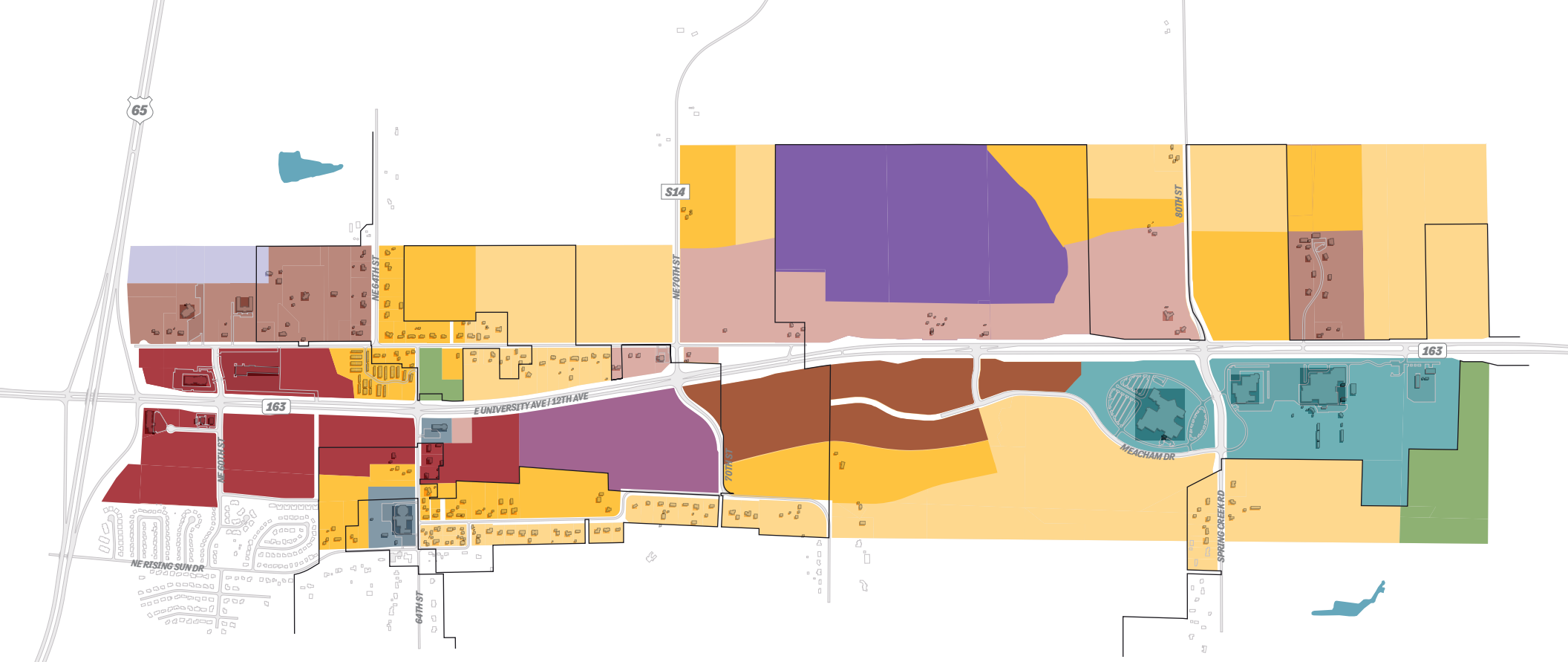
Alternative 3: Traditional Mixed-use and Housing

This alternative illustrates the potential of the site of the existing building is redeveloped entirely. Commercial or mixed-use development would line Maple Drive similar to what is proposed for the north side of the street. The existing commercial driveway from Hickory Boulevard would be extended as a street to Pleasant Hill Boulevard. This would provide access to rear parking areas for the commercial area, and support new townhouses in the southwestern portion of the site. Portions of the commercial development along Maple Drive could be removed to accommodate a public open space.

TOWN CENTER CORE

KEY IMPROVEMENTS

1. **University Avenue Frontage and Streetscape.** Development along University Avenue should include attractive facades, private screening and landscaping, and public streetscaping that creates an attractive image for Pleasant Hill.
2. **Internal Parking Area.** Centralized parking should be located toward the center of the block, with access provided from intersection side streets.
3. **Maple Drive Development.** Development along Maple Drive should create a walkable and attractive environment, including buildings along the front property line, transparent facades, pedestrian-scale signage, and interesting building massing and detail.
4. **Pedestrian Pass-throughs.** Pedestrian pass-throughs and/or plazas should be used to provide access between parking and Maple Drive, and to create outdoor spaces that can be used by local commercial uses.
5. **Intersection Improvements.** Decorative pavers, planters, unique lighting, and small sculptures should be used to identify prominent locations with the Town Center and provide an attractive "front door" from other parts of Pleasant Hill.
6. **Decorative Streetscape.** Streetscape elements should reinforce the pedestrian nature of the Town Center and support shopping, socializing, and public gathering.
7. **Town Center Terminus.** Development at the west end of Maple Drive should include prominent building massing and architecture that is representative of the Town Center area.
8. **Local Roadway Access.** A new roadway south of Maple Drive would provide access to commercial parking areas and new townhouses, and act as a transition between the Town Center and new neighborhood.
9. **New Residential Development.** The area south of the Town Center can accommodate new townhouses that provide additional housing choice, create greater density near the Town Center, and build upon multi-family areas west of Pleasant Hill Boulevard.



LAND USE FRAMEWORK

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **EAST SUBAREA**

0' 500' 1,000' 2,000' 3,000' 4,000'

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The University Avenue-East Subarea is in many ways a blank slate ready to accommodate new growth. Development should build upon existing anchors and emerging opportunities to continue Pleasant Hill's evolution into a full-service community. This page describes the land use framework within the subarea.

Key

- Agriculture & Open Space
- Single Family Detached
- Single Family Attached
- Multi-family
- Local Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Residential/Commercial Flex
- Entertainment/Lifestyle Center
- Office/Light Manufacturing Campus
- Educational Campus
- Institutions

LAND USE FRAMEWORK

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

Agriculture & Open Space

Agriculture and open space areas include lots that should remain undeveloped. As development in other areas occurs over time, local parks and open spaces should be provided in order to maximize neighborhood access to recreation.

Single Family Detached/ Low Density Neighborhood

Large low-density residential areas are interwoven between commercial and institutional uses. Development in these areas should consist of single family detached homes and reflect the character of Pleasant Hill and balance new growth with preservation of the rural character of the community. Neighborhoods should be adequately buffered from other uses, but should include logical roadway and trail connections to enhance access to local goods, services, and jobs.

Single-Family Attached/ Medium Density Neighborhood

Townhomes or small multi-family development should be developed in medium-density residential areas. These areas are located adjacent to commercial nodes in order to maximize local market potential and resident access to goods and services. These developments should be designed to reflect traditional neighborhood character with streets and buildings oriented to avoid isolated or internalized developments.

Multi-Family/ High Density Neighborhood

Small and large multi-family development should be located among low- and medium-density residential areas, within close proximity of the City's educational campus. Large multi-family development should reflect the character of surrounding structures and include pedestrian and non-motorized connections to adjacent neighborhoods while maintaining well-landscaped buffers.

Local Commercial

Local commercial on the north side of University Avenue is intended to serve the surrounding residential neighborhoods with everyday goods and services. Retail and commercial development should be sited to maximize shared parking and reduce curb cuts through shared access points. The local commercial structures should include attractive design elements and integrate trails and pedestrian connections to allow for safe non-motorized access from adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Regional Commercial

The eastern half of the University Avenue/Highway 65 interchange represents the greatest opportunity for commercial development that would serve a regional market. Large tracts of land, a high level of access, and recent commercial and hotel development are setting the stage for long-term commerce that could include big-box retailers, franchise tenants, restaurants, and other services.

Residential/ Commercial Flex

This portion of the subarea could develop as either medium to high-density residential, or as commercial depending upon the success of adjacent development. While the primary commercial activity should be concentrated west toward the Highway 65 interchange, this area could capture spin-off commerce resulting from the potential entertainment/lifestyle center development described below.

Entertainment/ Lifestyle Center

This portion of the subarea can accommodate a major destination complex that includes an entertainment or athletic facility and a multi-use lifestyle center. This could be the regional entertainment district for the eastern Des Moines region and could include retail shopping, dining, entertainment and theater options, hotels, and housing arranged in an attractive and walkable environment.

Office/Light Manufacturing Campus

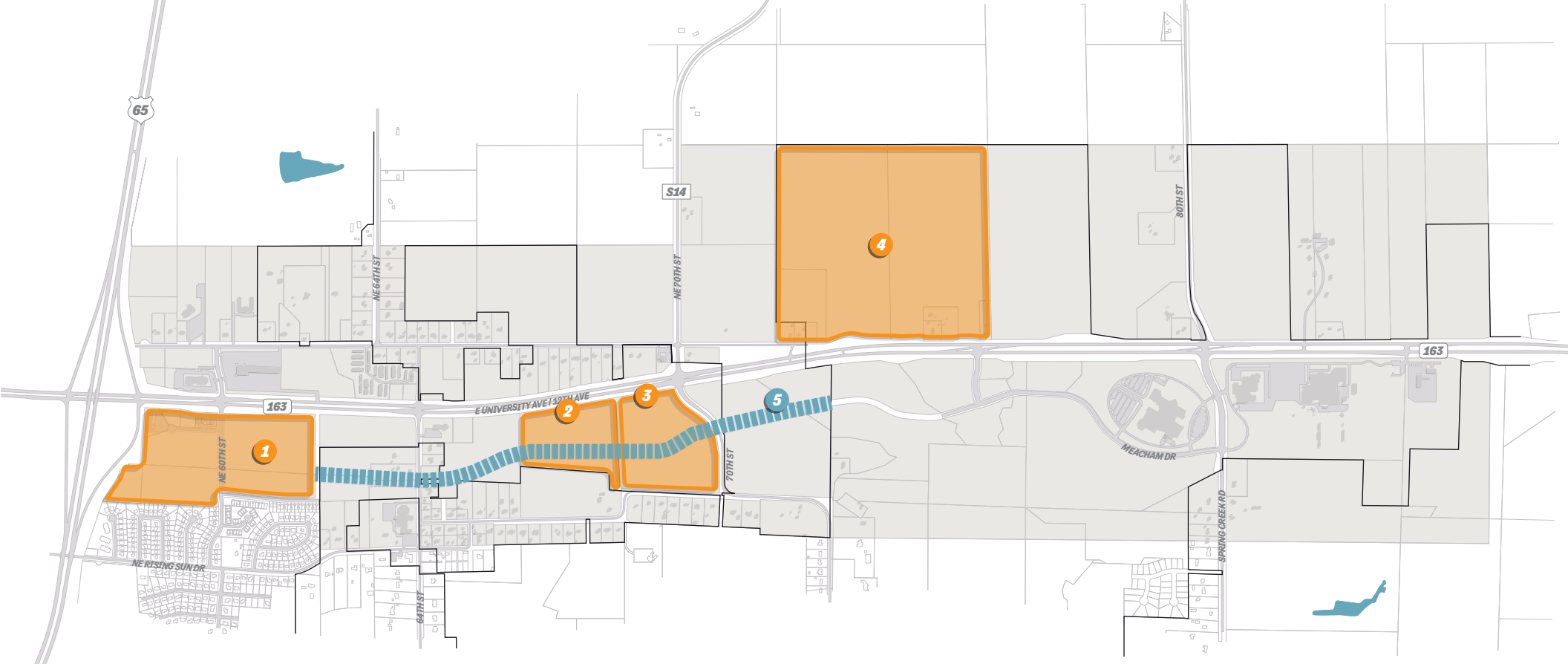
This area should take advantage of recent infrastructure investment and access to University Avenue , and available land near the Highway 65 interchange. Development should include substantial buffers against surrounding uses, prohibit circulation through residential areas, include multi-modal trails, and minimize traffic conflicts along University Avenue.

Educational Campus

The educational campus includes the Southeast Polk High School, Junior High School, Spring Creek Sixth Grade Center, and administrative offices. The campus is well-established and is unlikely to see significant change. As the surrounding areas develop, the campus should accommodate bike and pedestrian connections to neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Institutions

Institutional areas include large religious facilities in the subarea. These should be sustained over time and appropriately integrated into new residential through buffers, traffic management, and trail access.



KEY CATALYST PROJECTS

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **EAST SUBAREA**

0' 500' 1,000' 2,000' 3,000' 4,000'

N

While much of the University Avenue-East subarea could experience potential growth, there are several key projects that, if implemented, would offer the greatest potential of catalyzing other investment. The following improvements should be considered priorities as the City implements the recommendations of this plan.

Key

- New Development Site
- Meacham Drive Extension

KEY CATALYST PROJECTS

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

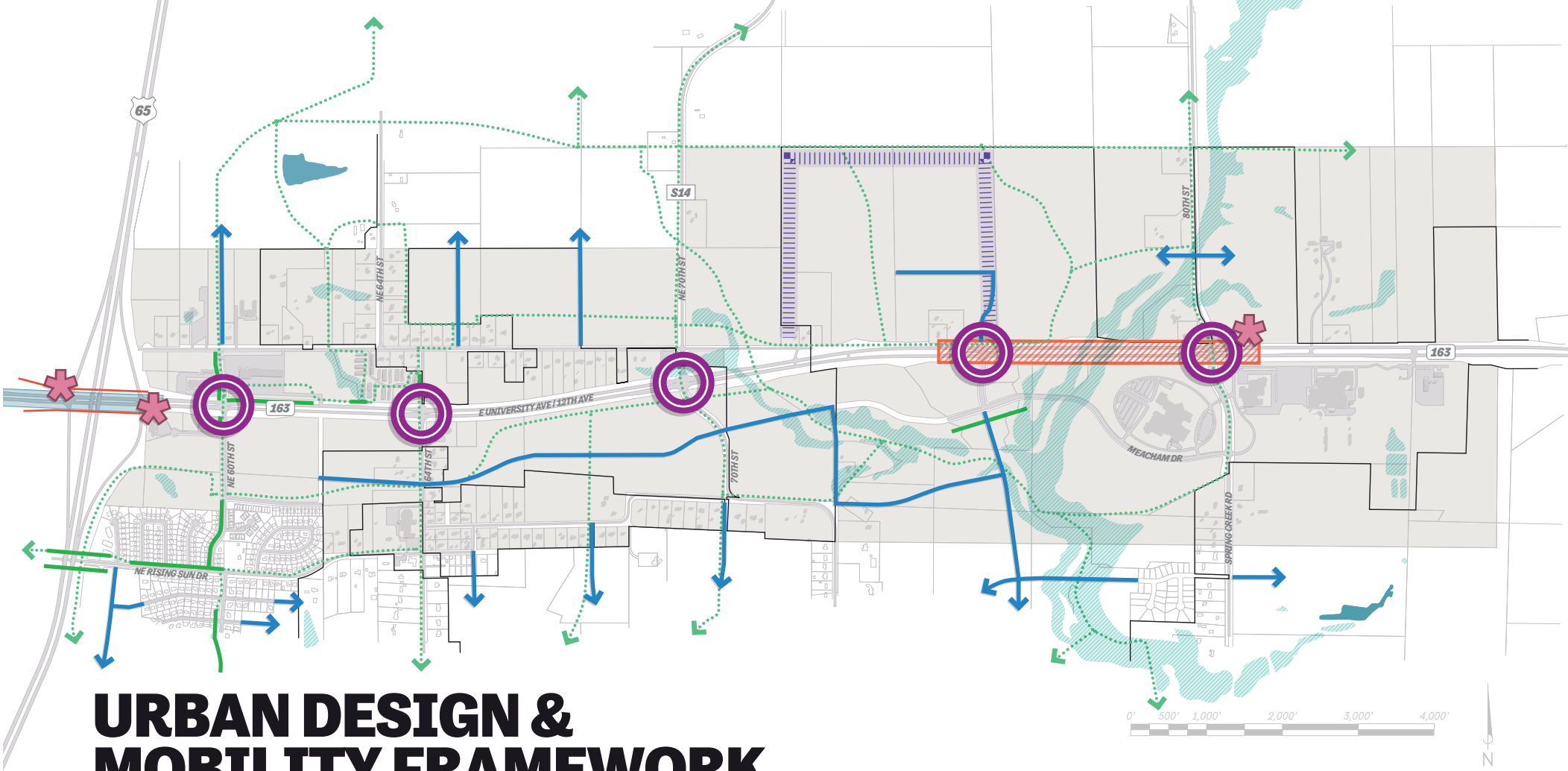
1 Sites immediately adjacent to the Highway 65 interchange should be the focus of big-box retail that has a regional draw. Outlot development should front on University Avenue and Morning Star Court, and morning Star Court should be extended to the east to provide additional access to large commercial sites.

2 The entertainment complex is the anchor that can create additional commercial market potential to the west along University Avenue. This development should be highly visible from eastbound University Avenue, and tie directly into the proposed lifestyle center to the east so patrons can enjoy both as part of the same experience.

3 The lifestyle center should be a pedestrian-friendly, attractive environment oriented around streets that connect to the entertainment complex and surrounding neighborhoods. Parking should be provided on the periphery or on-street, and should be screened from view from University Avenue and adjacent neighborhoods.

4 The office/light manufacturing campus should serve minor assembly operations and corporate office uses. The design of the campus should include attractive buildings, decorative landscaping, local open spaces, and employee amenities. Truck traffic generated from the site should include time restrictions for access and operations, reducing anticipated impacts on Southeast Polk School facilities and neighborhoods to the east.

5 Meacham Drive should serve as an east-west spine that connects and provides access to development south of University Avenue. The new roadway should tie to commercial and residential collectors and local streets, and include a decorative streetscape that establishes the character of the eastern portion of Pleasant Hill.



URBAN DESIGN & MOBILITY FRAMEWORK

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **EAST SUBAREA**

As development occurs in this subarea, there are several supporting improvements that should be implemented. While these may not be considered catalyst projects, they are critical in creating a highly-functional subarea that maximizes development potential and benefits to the Pleasant Hill community.

Key

- Planned Roadways
- Development Buffer
- Existing Trails
- Planned Trails (As per Parks & Trails Master Plan)
- Gateway Enhancements
- Potential Improved Pedestrian Crossings
- Regional Streetscape
- Bike/Pedestrian Bridge Zone
- Greenway Preservation

URBAN DESIGN & MOBILITY FRAMEWORK

UNIVERSITY AVENUE **WEST SUBAREA**

Local Roadway Connections

Local roadway connections should be provided throughout the subarea. Roadways should be extensions of existing stub streets or established rights-of-way, and should provide regular access to Meacham Drive and intersecting streets.

Planned Trail Network

Commercial, light manufacturing and residential development should accommodate new trails as they are implemented. Trails could include dedicated facilities, sidepaths, or on-street lanes on lower-speed residential and commercial roadways.

Intersection Improvements

The City should work with the Iowa DOT to upgrade signalized crossings at University Avenue to include well-marked crosswalks, pedestrian countdown signals, vehicle warning systems, and modified signal phasing. New development should provide safe pedestrian crossings at all intersections, and the design of Meacham Drive should include bumpouts, refuge islands, and other techniques that reduce crossing distance and enhance pedestrian safety. A crossing study should be conducted in partnership with Iowa DOT to prioritize intersection improvement projects and determine the most effective treatments that allow for safe pedestrian crossings and efficient movement of vehicles.

Bike & Pedestrian Bridge

A new bike and pedestrian bridge near the Southeast Polk School campus would enhance student safety while crossing University Avenue. The bridge should be located based on the alignment of planned trails, and could be designed serve as the eastern gateway into Pleasant Hill.

Sidewalk Network

All development should include comprehensive sidewalk networks along public streets, and continuous pedestrian access between public sidewalks and building entrances.

Development Buffer

A substantial buffer should be provided around the office/light manufacturing campus. The buffer should include detention areas, heavy tree plantings, berms, and other landscape elements that fully mitigate noise, light, vibration, and other impacts from higher intensity land uses on nearby neighborhoods.

Gateways

Gateway elements should be located at either end of the subarea. The southeast quadrant of the Highway 65/University Avenue interchange should accommodate a gateway feature that is similar to one recommended for the northwest quadrant. The eastern gateway could be a stand-along feature, or could be integrated into a decorative design of the recommended bike and pedestrian bridge near the Southeast Polk School campus.

Greenway & Tree Preservation

Throughout the subarea, development should aim to preserve greenway corridors and wooded areas. Floodplains, streams, wetlands, and other features should be maintained in order to support local ecosystems and manage stormwater. Development should include buffers and clustering to mitigate any impacts on these areas.

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Pleasant Hill's transportation system is comprised of a network of highways, roads, trails, and sidewalks that accommodate many user types in a variety of ways. The ability to travel with ease and safety throughout the community, regardless of transportation mode, is a fundamental aspect of the quality of life and long-term health of the Pleasant Hill Community.

The Transportation & Mobility chapter aims to make travel to and throughout the community safe and efficient, while allowing for ease of access to neighborhoods, commercial areas, and employment opportunities. Strengthening a transportation network that supports walking and bicycling access to neighborhoods, schools, jobs, parks and other amenities is critical to maintaining the environmental and physical health of the community.

Planned Projects & Improvements

The *Mobilizing Tomorrow* long range transportation plan (LRTP) produced by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) provides both near- and long-term planning within and around Pleasant Hill.

Mobilizing Tomorrow includes projects that are "fiscally constrained," which indicates that projects are in preliminary planning phases but no funding has been identified for their engineering or construction. Fiscally constrained projects in Pleasant Hill include a future roadway to connect SE 70th Street south to SE 68th Street and widening Highway 65 from two to four lanes.

The most significant project includes the southeast connector. The LRTP also includes "Illustrative" projects that have been identified as necessary future infrastructure improvements but have not undergone preliminary planning.

As LRTP projects are implemented within the Pleasant Hill planning area, the City should work closely with the MPO to ensure that they align with local goals and objectives. This includes, but is not limited to:

- ***Enhancing multi-modal transportation options.*** Where feasible, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure should be integrated with roadway projects, and public transportation alignments and facilities should be considered.
- ***Preserving the rural character.*** Roadways should be designed to reinforce the rural character of Pleasant Hill through the integration of greenways, shoulders, and other design features.
- ***Improving local and regional environmental assets.*** Protect environmentally-sensitive areas and mitigate any potential negative impacts caused by roadway improvement or construction projects.
- ***Furthering the health, safety, and well-being of residents.*** Roadways should be designed to consider both efficiency and safety. Trails, pedestrian crossings, view triangles, and other elements should be considered priorities along with traffic flow and efficiency.

Long Range Transportation Projects

Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Agency/ Project Type	LRTP ID	Sponsor	Project	Description	Termini 1	Termini 2	Cost
MPO Fiscally constrained	393	Pleasant Hill	Future Roadway Connecting SE 70th to SE 68th	Construction of a future roadway	SE 70th St and Rising Sun Drive	SE 68th St and SE 6th Ave	$3,163,000
MPO Fiscally constrained (2025-2034)	241	Des Moines/ Pleasant Hill	SE Connector	New 2 lane roadway	SE 30th St	Highway 65	$72,038,000
MPO Fiscally constrained (2035-2050)	242	Des Moines/ Pleasant Hill	SE Connector	Widen 2 to 4 Lanes	SE 30th St	Highway 65	$37,322,000
Iowa DOT Fiscally constrained (2035-2050)	357	Iowa DOT	Highway 65 Widening	Widen Highway 65 from four lanes to six lanes	W. Jct IA 5	I-80	$338,561,000
Illustrative	388	Pleasant Hill/ Iowa DOT	Construction of NE 75th St	New road or roadway extension	SR 163 1200 ft north	Pleasant Hill/ Iowa DOT	$3,083,000
Illustrative	389	Pleasant Hill	Roadway connection to SE 55th	New road or roadway extension			$523,000
Illustrative	390	Pleasant Hill	Reconstruction of S Shadyview Blvd	Improvement to existing road (e.g. replacement, widening, improve alignment, conversion, etc.)	SE 6th	2900 feet south of SE 6th Ave	$1,669,000
Illustrative	391	Pleasant Hill	Overlay of Fairview	Maintenance to existing road (e.g. overlays, milland-overlay, diamond grading, etc.)	Pleasant Hill Blvd.	West corporate limits of Pleasant Hill	$505,000
Illustrative	392	Pleasant Hill	Overlay of Pleasant Hill Boulevard	Maintenance to existing road (e.g. overlays, milland-overlay, diamond grading, etc.)	Solinda Drive	Maple Drive	$280,000
Illustrative	395	Pleasant Hill	Reconstruction of Parkridge Avenue	Maintenance to existing road (e.g. overlays, milland-overlay, diamond grading, etc.)	Pleasant Hill Blvd.	S Shadyview Boulevard	$3,962,000
Illustrative	396	Pleasant Hill	Overlay of Oakwood	Maintenance to existing road (e.g. overlays, milland-overlay, diamond grading, etc.)	Scott Ave.	Pleasant Hill Boulevard	$1,037,000

Roadways

Functional Classification

Roadways in Pleasant Hill are categorized into a standardized system of functional classifications. Designed by the federal government, this classification system helps government officials, planners and engineers understand the role and responsibility of different roadways and the types of investments needed. Furthermore, the functional classifications help determine the level of mobility and land access based on traffic volume and design. The City's roadways have been designated by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Authority (DMAMPO) into four functional classifications: principal arterials, minor arterials, major collectors and local roads.

It is anticipated that the LRTP projects identified in *Mobilizing Tomorrow* will effectively manage increased traffic and regional mobility in Pleasant Hill. However, as development occurs in Pleasant Hill and in other portions of the eastern Des Moines region, the City should work closely with the MPO to assess roadway congestion and consider upgrades to functional classifications.

Traffic Projections

According to the Des Moines Area MPO, traffic volumes in Polk County, as measured in Total Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), increased only by 2.25% between 2005-2010. However, since 2010, VMTs have made a downward trend as more Des Moines area residents are incorporating walking, cycling, and public transportation. Despite current trends that indicate Polk County residents are driving less, with the projected population growth, roadway traffic is anticipated to steadily increase.

To ensure Pleasant Hill roads meet the required capacity for projected traffic growth, the City should consider the following:

- Work with the Iowa DOT to make roadway capacity improvements as necessitated by traffic volumes.
- Conduct regular traffic counts of local roadways to monitor use and proactively prepare improvement plans.
- Coordinate with the MPO and Iowa DOT to make them aware of potential or approved residential, commercial, or industrial subdivisions hat have the potential to increase car or truck traffic.
- Implement dynamic traffic signal phasing technology to maximize efficiency based on real-time traffic conditions.

CONSIDERATIONS
COMMUNITY GATEWAYS

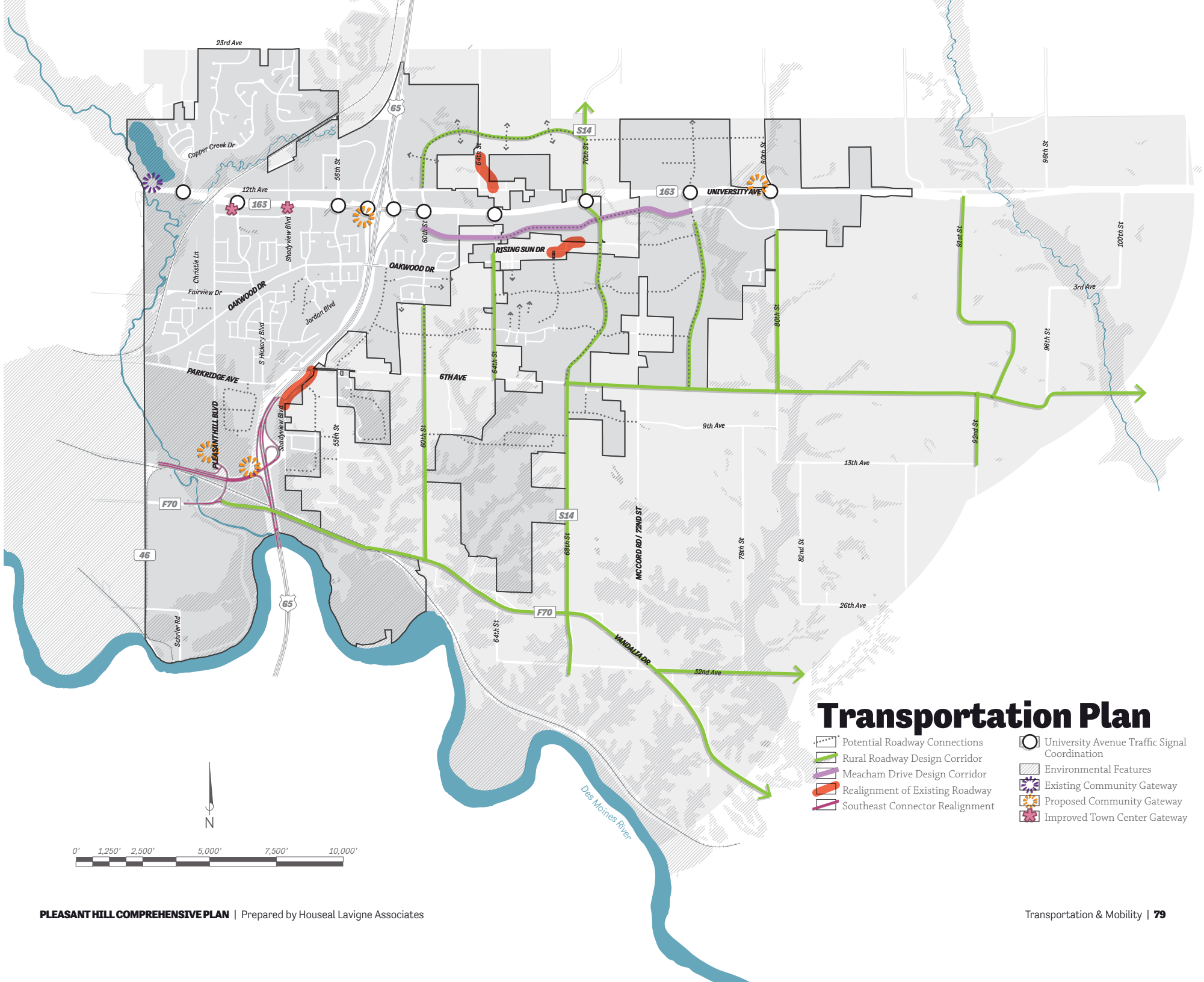
Gateways welcome travelers to a community and help establish its overall identity. Pleasant Hill recently invested in a large community gateway sign that welcomes those traveling east from Des Moines on University Avenue, as well as two gateways signs on the southwest and southeast corners of University Avenue and Hickory Avenue. To build upon this investment, the City should:

- **Install a community gateway on University Avenue on the eastern edge of the city, perhaps as part of a pedestrian overpass improvement.**
- **Similar to the western gateway, integrate the city's logo into existing and new gateway signs.**
- **Install gateway signs near the Highway 65 Bypass off-ramps to mark entry into the Pleasant Hill community.**

Local Roadway Improvement Projects

The 2015 Pleasant Hill Capital Improvements Program (CIP) includes future capital projects for a five-year span. Aside from roadway maintenance and resurfacing projects, the City should consider several key strategies as it implements the following roadway improvement projects:

- As development occurs, the City should develop plans and work with property owners to realign Rising Sun Drive. The existing alignment of Rising Sun Drive near its intersection with NE 70th Street includes two sharp horizontal curves. Realignment of this street would better accommodate increased traffic volumes and reduce potential safety concerns.
- South Shadyview Boulevard is an aging rural road with substandard vertical curves along the alignment. It is also a long dead-end street that now serves a new housing development on the south end. The City has plans to both improve the geometric deficiencies of Shadyview Boulevard and to extend Destiny Lane to SE 55th Street to provide secondary access to the new subdivisions.
- Work with Iowa DOT to implement real-time dynamic signal phasing technology along University Avenue that maximize vehicular travel efficiency.
- Create public awareness about the benefits and proper use of roundabouts prior to the construction of the NE 70th Street and Meacham Drive roundabout.


Transportation Plan
Potential Roadway Connections
Rural Roadway Design Corridor
Meacham Drive Design Corridor
Realignment of Existing Roadway
Southeast Connector Realignment
University Avenue Traffic Signal Coordination
Environmental Features
Existing Community Gateway
Proposed Community Gateway
Improved Town Center Gateway
N
0' 1,250' 2,500' 5,000' 7,500' 10,000'
23rd Ave
Copper Creek Dr
12th Ave
163
65
S14
F70
46
56th St
60th St
64th St
70th St
80th St
91st St
96th St
100th St
UNIVERSITY AVE
RISING SUN DR
OAKWOOD DR
Christie Ln
Fairview Dr
Shadyview Blvd
Jordan Blvd
S Hickory Blvd
PARKRIDGE AVE
PLEASANT HILL BLVD
6TH AVE
3rd Ave
9th Ave
13th Ave
26th Ave
32nd Ave
92nd St
MCCORD RD / 72ND ST
78th St
82nd St
VANDALIA DR
Schrier Rd
Des Moines River

Local Extensions and Connections

The Transportation Plan illustrates future roadway extensions and connections that should be constructed as development occurs. It also shows potential extensions of existing streets to increase overall connectivity within the City. The alignments shown on the map serve as representations of the types and general area of future roadways and do not necessarily reflect planned roadway alignments. As such, as the future roadway connections are planned, the following should be considered:

- The City should discourage or prohibit residential developments with cul-de-sacs that limit connectivity. Newer residential developments should emulate older neighborhoods that maintain a better connected grid pattern for increased access and movement.
- Local roadway alignments should avoid natural areas and environmental features such as large tree stands and areas prone to flooding.
- Local roadways should maximize connectivity to collectors and arterials, especially where they offer connectivity across major barriers such rivers and creeks, Highway 65, and rail corridors.

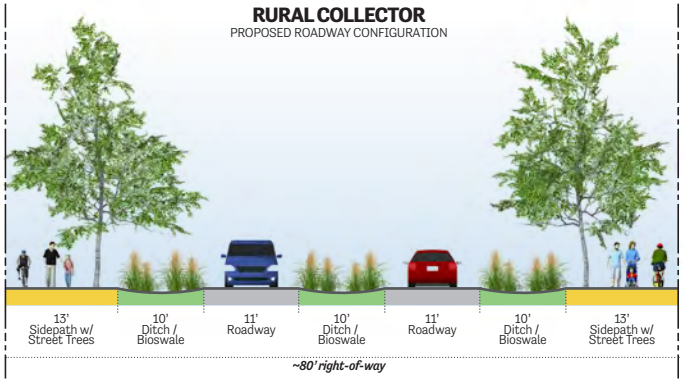
Roadway Design Standards

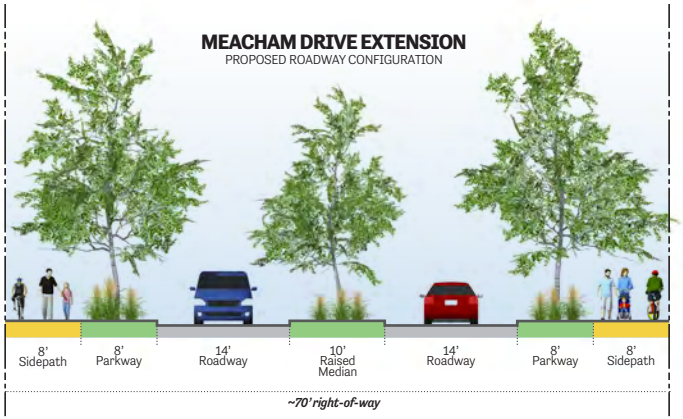
Pleasant Hill should aim to balance new growth with its traditional identity. To that point, roadways should be designed to both maximize mobility and maintain the rural character of the community. The City should establish rural roadway design standards for new arterials and collectors under their jurisdiction, recognizing that new growth areas should preserve natural landscaping and terrain. An example of this is 70th Street, which according to this Plan should be extended south between Meacham Drive and SE 6th Avenue. This would become the spine that serves development on the east side, and should be considered a priority character rural roadway. Rural roadways should include the following elements where appropriate:

- Sidepaths providing bike and pedestrian access to destinations and land uses throughout the planning area.
- Natural shoulders that include native landscaping and act as a buffer from adjacent land uses and stormwater collection areas for roadway runoff.
- Natural medians that include native landscaping.
- Meandering alignments that provide attractive views and reflect the rolling terrain in the community's new growth areas.

The planned extension of Meacham Drive will make it a prominent east-west corridor in Pleasant Hill's new growth area. It will be the primary means of access to significant retail development, entertainment uses, and the Southeast Polk High School and Middle School campus. As such, it should be designed as a signature corridor that conveys a unique and distinct character for Pleasant Hill. Potential roadway design elements include:

- Decorative streetscaping that is consistent with lighting and landscaping required of future development.
- A decorative median that allows for additional landscaping and reinforces points of access to local development.
- Wayfinding signs that direct motorists to major destinations along the corridor.
- Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations that maximize multi-modal access to local land uses.



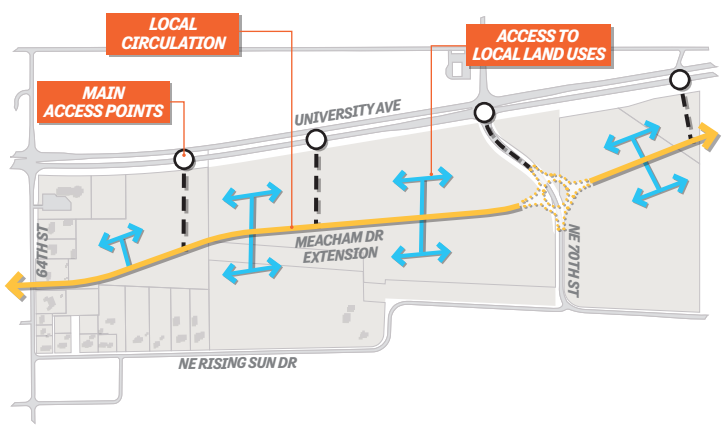


Access Management

Current development in Pleasant Hill generally does a good job of managing access. Typically, arterials distribute traffic to collectors, and individual land uses are provided access from collectors or local streets. (A good example of this is University Avenue providing access to Maple Drive through signalized intersections. Drivers can then utilize curb cuts on Maple Drive to access uses that front University Avenue.) This decreases potential high-speed traffic conflict points and maximizes the efficiency of regional roadways.

In order to further enhance access and safety in developed areas and ensure that new growth areas are as efficient as possible, the City should implement the following strategies:

- Encourage or require existing and future development to provide cross-access between adjacent parking areas through connected drive aisles or planned circulator streets.
- Where possible, remove excess curb cuts that create gaps in the pedestrian network and increase traffic conflict points.
- Implement a roadway access model east of Highway 65 that funnels traffic from University Avenue to Meacham Drive through less frequent intersections, then to local land uses through controlled access points or side streets.



CONSIDERATIONS

WAYFINDING SIGNS

Wayfinding signs serve as directional guides to places of interest within the community. By utilizing consistent design and placement, these signs can contribute to a community's overall image and identity. The Gay Lea Wilson Trail includes directional signage as envisioned in the Communication Master Plan for the Central Iowa Trails; however, this is part of a regional trail communications plan that should remain distinct from Pleasant Hill wayfinding efforts. To create a distinct wayfinding program that achieves both functional and aesthetic objectives, the city should:

- Install wayfinding signs along University Avenue and Vandalia Road that direct visitors to community assets, including City Hall, the Pleasant Hill Public Library, Doanes Park, Yellow Banks Park, and others.
- Ensure wayfinding signs integrate similar aesthetic elements as community gateways.
- Design and install Pleasant Hill bicycle wayfinding signs that are distinct from Central Iowa Trails markers and directional signage.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility

Bicycle and pedestrian mobility throughout Pleasant Hill supports both access to destinations and community health. Connections to the Central Iowa Trail network provide access to the regional system, while several local segments serve as the foundation for a future local network. The sidewalk network is well established in older parts of the community, and new subdivisions are expanding the network as Pleasant Hill grows. The recommendations in this section identifies ways that the City can maximize the benefits of non-motorized mobility and increase access to parks, schools, commercial areas, jobs, and other local and regional amenities.

Bicycle Network Improvements

Improvements to the community's bicycle network are described in detail and should be guided by the Pleasant Hill Parks and Trails Master Plan. Generally, the Parks and Trails Master Plan covers the following topics related to bicycle mobility:

- Minimum design standards for various types of bicycle facilities.
- The role of Complete Streets in supporting bicycle mobility.
- Opportunities and priorities for trail extensions and trailheads.
- Connectivity to parks, natural areas, and civic uses.
- Tools and policies that can help implement the vision for trails in Pleasant Hill.

To support the recommendations of the Parks and Trails Master Plan, the City should:

- Work with developers to establish easements for trail corridors through future development areas.
- Preserve the right-of-way necessary to accommodate bicycle facilities as a component of roadway design.
- Amend zoning regulations to require bicycle parking for developments with appropriate uses and if a minimum size.
- Coordinate with Des Moines, and other partners to establish connections to regional trail segments and destinations.

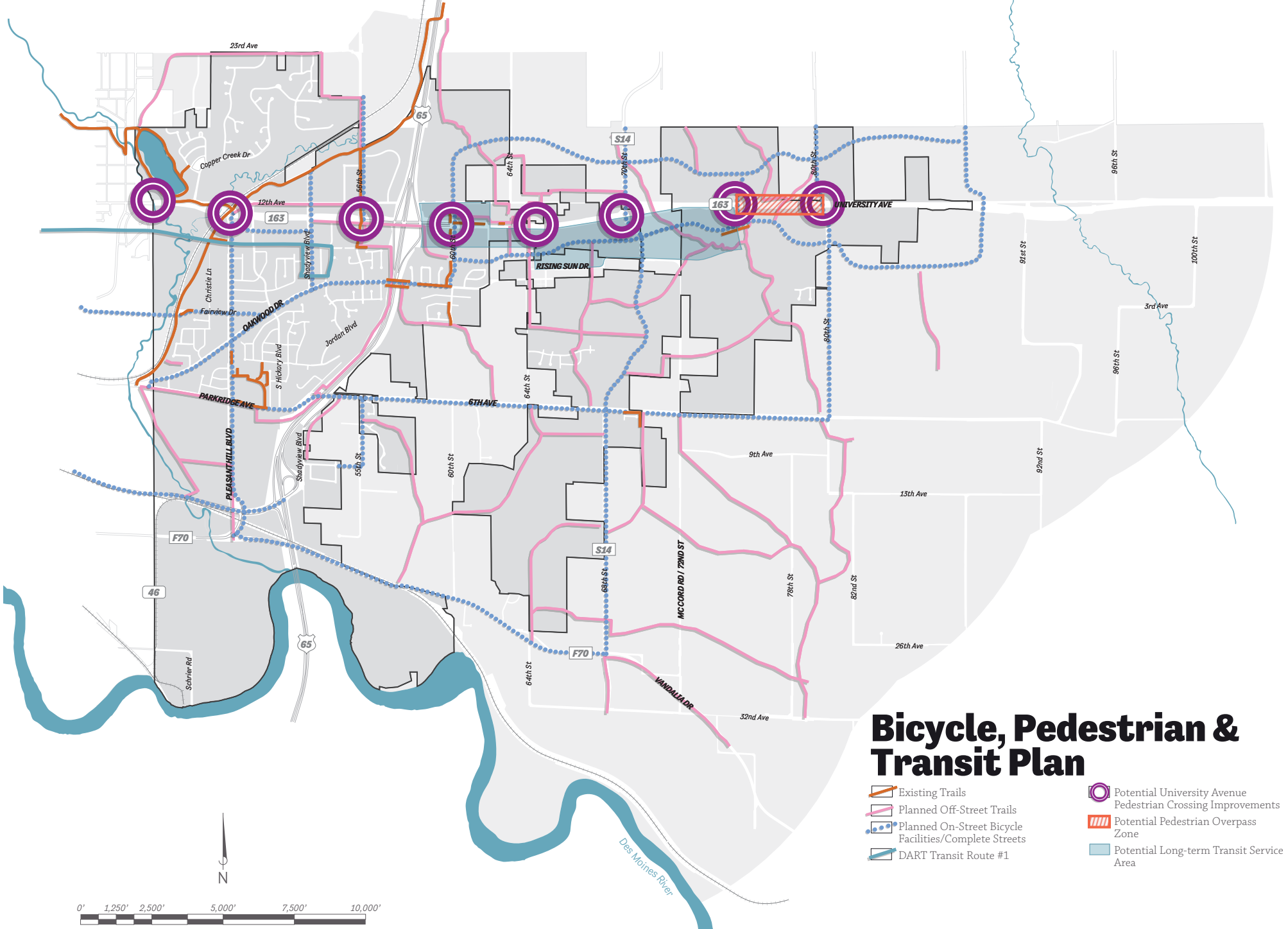
Complete Streets Policy

Based on existing development and the vision articulated in this Comprehensive Plan, Pleasant Hill has many current and planned areas where bicycle and pedestrian mobility will be an important element. One way to ensure that such mobility remains a priority is to adopt a Complete Streets policy. Complete Streets is an approach to transportation planning and design that considers the needs of all user – motorists, transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists. A formal policy would ensure that appropriate priority will be given to sidewalks, bike lanes, transit facilities and infrastructure, and the design of the private realm is key areas of the community. Policies that spell out a community's Complete Streets commitment can be used to leverage additional funding for projects and can be used as supporting documentation for Complete Streets projects on state and county roads. The Des Moines Area MPO is in the process of developing a program that will support the implementation of Complete Streets projects through regional funding.

Complete Streets policies can take a variety of forms, including ordinances, resolutions, and plans. The *Mobilizing Tomorrow* LRTP offers sample Complete Street policies that Pleasant Hill can utilize as a template. To encourage a variety of transportation options, the City should consider the following:

- Adopt a Complete Streets policy.
- Ensure future plans integrate the adopted Complete Streets policy
- Require capital projects to meet adopted Complete Streets policy standards as a contingency for development and funding approval.

Bicycle, Pedestrian & Transit Plan



University Avenue Pedestrian Improvements

University Avenue (Iowa 163) is the City's primary east-west thoroughfare, which carries between 14,000 and 20,400 vehicles per day. The roadway is controlled by the Iowa DOT, making collaboration between the City of Pleasant Hill and the Department of Transportation a critical component for future improvements.

University Avenue provides both opportunities and barriers to pedestrian mobility. It offers continuous east-west access through Pleasant Hill, and can support intersecting streets and trails that provide access to surrounding commercial areas and neighborhoods, as well as access to Des Moines across Four Mile Creek . However, the roadway is difficult to cross and generally unsafe to travel along. To maximize the potential benefits of University Avenue, the City should implement the following improvements.

Sidewalks and Trail Segments

Where possible, east-west bicycle and pedestrian traffic should be funneled to other streets that parallel University Avenue, such as Maple Drive, 12th Avenue, and Meacham Drive. However, at locations where University Avenue provides connections, such as the Highway 65 underpass, a sidepath should be provided. Sidepaths along University Avenue should include the following characteristics:

- 10' wide minimum cross-section to accommodate two-way bike traffic.
- Landscaped or walled buffer separating bicyclists and pedestrians from University Avenue traffic.
- Trail connections and ADA-compliant crossings at intersecting streets.

A trail connection should also be considered on University Avenue where it crosses Four Mile Creek. Given the anticipated expense of this project and Iowa DOT jurisdiction of the roadway and bridge, the City should work with the DOT to establish the project on the long-range transportation improvement plan in order to identify long-term funding opportunities.

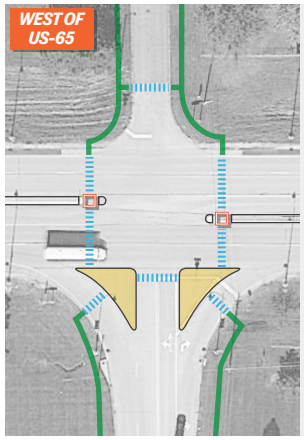
Crossing Improvements

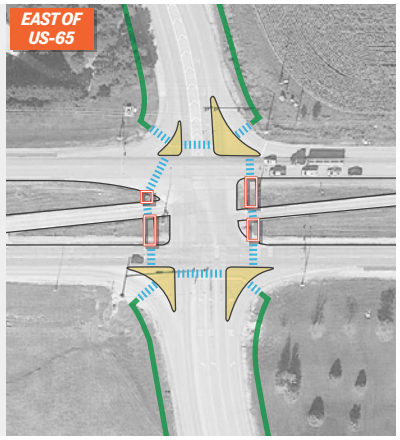
University Avenue can be difficult for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross between areas north and south of the roadway. At all existing and future signalized intersections, the City should work with the Iowa DOT to implement the following improvements:

- Highly visible crosswalks.
- Pedestrian countdown timers.
- User-activated warning signals or flashers.
- Refuge islands in the roadway median that provide a waiting area when crossing long cross-sections.
- Pork chop islands that reduce the continuous crossing distances.
- Modified signal phasing to accommodate pedestrian crossing times.

A detailed analysis of current and future crossings should be conducted to determine the following:

- Locations where pedestrian traffic is heaviest based on surrounding land uses and multi-modal context.
- Specific types of improvements needed at each crossing location.
- Incremental improvements that can be done in the short-term.
- Phasing based on surrounding development.





Bicycle and Pedestrian Overpass

The eastern end of University Avenue in Pleasant Hill includes the Southeast Polk High School and Middle School Campus, and is envisioned for long-term residential development as the community grows. As described earlier in this section, University Avenue is a difficult and unsafe corridor to cross. Given the emerging development in this area, along with the fact that Southeast Polk Schools serve portions of Altoona that are close enough for students to bike to, the City should work with the Iowa DOT to assess the feasibility of a bicycle and pedestrian overpass.

As locations and design alternatives are identified, the following should be considered:

- The overpass should take advantage of existing terrain to minimize ramping necessary to provide clearance over University Avenue.
- Any vertical ramping should be as safe and conducive as possible for cyclists and wheelchair users.
- The overpass should tie as directly as possible into local and regional trail networks providing access to Altoona, Meacham Drive, and other destinations.
- The overpass should be designed as an attractive gateway element to Pleasant Hill, including decorative lighting, a distinctive structural design, and signage identifying Pleasant Hill.

Public Transit

The Des Moines Area Regional Transportation system (DART) operates one fixed-route bus line through Pleasant Hill. Route 1 – Fairgrounds connects Pleasant Hill to Altoona, the Polk County Fairgrounds, and Downtown Des Moines. The DART Forward 2035 Transit Service plan called for increased frequency of the route in the first year of plan implementation (2012); however, residents still cited a need for extended weekday and weekend service hours.

To ensure Pleasant Hill residents have access to reliable and more frequent public transportation, the City should consider the following:

- Work with DART to assess current and long-term ridership needs along Route 1 and adjust service accordingly.
- Monitor the progress of development on University Avenue east of Highway 65 to determine when ridership potential exists to extend Route 1 service east toward Southeast Polk County High School.
- Work with local businesses and organizations to develop local public/private transit partnerships to supplement existing DART service with a local circulator. Potential partners may include senior housing facilities, school districts, and healthcare providers.
- Ensure DART stops include safe and efficient pedestrian access and are well-served by local trails and/or trail connections.

Freight

Freight traffic is a critical component of local industry in Pleasant Hill. While industrial uses tend to be isolated from residential and commercial areas, their traffic impacts can be felt along trucking and rail corridors. This section includes recommendations intended to support local industry while mitigating impacts on other Pleasant Hill citizens.

Designated Truck Routes

University Avenue (Iowa 163) and Highway 65 are the only roadways in Pleasant Hill that function as truck routes, as they do not have any restrictions for large truck traffic and provide continuous regional travel while avoiding residential areas. As the area continues to grow and new commercial and industrial land uses develop along both Highway 65 and University Avenue, truck traffic will likely increase. However, should the Des Moines transload facility—a rail port that takes advantage of a Des Moines site where the Union Pacific Railroad, Iowa Interstate Railroad, BNSF, and Southeast Connector converge—be constructed, studies indicate that truck traffic may actually be reduced based on anticipated truck to rail diversion shipments. Nevertheless, the City should have the following strategies in place to address existing and future truck traffic:

- Designate truck routes and hours of truck operation for roadways that service future industrial growth areas as they develop (as designated under the Land Use Plan).
- Strictly enforce truck route compliance, especially where residential areas are most at risk from the impacts of truck traffic.

Rail Corridors

The Iowa Interstate Railroad and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad both run rail lines through the City of Pleasant Hill. These corridors result in a total of five at-grade crossings. Current rail delays near the Southside Heavy Industrial District caused by the at-grade crossing of the BNSF rail line at Vandalia Road and Pleasant Hill Boulevard will be alleviated through the Southeast Connector project. The remaining four at-grade crossings do not cause significant delays at present; however, the future Des Moines transload facility may increase rail traffic.
To ensure these railroad crossings function to allow for unimpeded transportation, the City should consider the following:

- Monitor rail traffic and impacts to local vehicular traffic, and where necessary, designate alternative routes to sustain mobility between different parts of the community.
- Work with BNSF and IIR to install crossing arms and other safety measures at all at-grade crossings in the City.
- Work with railroad operators and the community to establish Quiet Zones to limit excessive noise pollution from train horns.

CITY HALL
Pleasant Hill

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Community Facilities chapter is intended to offer strategies to maintain and enhance existing community facilities through collaboration, key partnerships, and strategic planning.

Community facilities support a high quality of life in Pleasant Hill by providing critical services administered by the City of Pleasant Hill, Fire Department, Police Department, Pleasant Hill Public Library, schools, and other providers. It should be noted that the majority of providers are not under the purview of the city; therefore, recommendations stress the importance of collaborative strategies to accomplish community goals.

Local Government

Facilities

As the city has grown, several city departments have expanded operations to separate structures and locations. Having the same department operate from separate facilities creates challenges related to communication and redundancy, and requires the maintenance and upkeep of several structures.

To increase efficiency and ensure City of Pleasant Hill facilities can accommodate future staff and equipment growth, the city should consider the following actions:

- Centralize the Public Works Department and supporting equipment at a single, updated facility.
- Combine the Parks and Recreation Department maintenance facilities at a single, updated location based on the recommendations of the Parks and Trails Master Plan.
- In the short-term, upgrade and modernize City Hall to accommodate new staff as city programs and services expand.
- In the long-term, monitor opportunities to relocate City Hall and other municipal operations to a central civic complex, potentially including City Hall, parks and recreation administration, the Public Library, fire station, and police station. Ideally, such a facility would be located along Maple Drive and provide a central location for public events in the traditional core of the community.

CONSIDERATIONS

THE PLEASANT HILL BRAND

Pleasant Hill has an established brand and logo that is generally well-incorporated into town communications. The "Grow. Play. Live." tagline accompanies the City logo and has also been incorporated in the design of bike racks at Copper Creek. As Pleasant Hill continues to evolve, so too should the branding of the City. To further strengthen the brand of Pleasant Hill and ensure it reflects the community's vision, the City should consider the following:

- Periodically review the established brand to ensure it reflects the current and desired identity of Pleasant Hill as a community committed to the health of its residents, environment, and economy.
- Utilize the slogan and brand in all Pleasant Hill communications in order to create a consistent and identifiable "calling card" for the community.
- Work with the Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce and Eastern Polk Regional Development Incorporated to deliver a consistent Pleasant Hill brand to the rest of the region, state and country.

Communication

Recent municipal leadership has created a positive, cooperative working relationship between the City of Pleasant Hill and Polk County. Online outreach and social media have improved relations with the public, allowing them to be more connected and engaged with the city. Pleasant Hill should strive to maintain and enhance intergovernmental and community-wide communication and cooperation through the following actions:

- Develop and launch an online system that allows for program registration, service requests, and other web-based tools to increase community interaction and access of public services.
- Continue to work closely with Polk County, the City of Altoona, and other government agencies and organizations to coordinate future plan and services.

Community Center

As Pleasant Hill has continued to grow, residents and business owners have identified the need for a multi-functional, indoor community center. Doanes Park Youth Center serves many community needs, but it lacks the square footage, ceiling clearance, and parking capacity to host a variety of large public and private events that may include meetings, banquets, and live music. The city should identify opportunities for a community center, with consideration of the following:

- Consider opportunities to co-locate a facility with other public investments described in the Parks and Trails Master Plan.
- Identify potential community center sites that are compatible with existing and future land uses.
- Determine funding and partnership options that may include public-private partnerships, site acquisition and assembly assistance, and financial incentives.
- Ensure a future facility integrates safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle access to surrounding neighborhoods.

Pleasant Hill Public Library

The Pleasant Hill Public Library, originally opened in 1982, has experienced increased usage and demand for additional space as the population has grown. Library officials anticipate demand to continue to increase as the city expands. To address these needs, the City of Pleasant Hill should consider the following actions:

- Support the Pleasant Hill Public Library through coordinated services, community meeting space, and events.
- Ensure the library is accessible and well connected to adjacent neighborhoods through the creation of a walking path that connects the Cottages of Pleasant Hill to Maple Drive.
- Work with library officials to monitor facility usage to plan for expansion and upgrades as the community grows.

Education

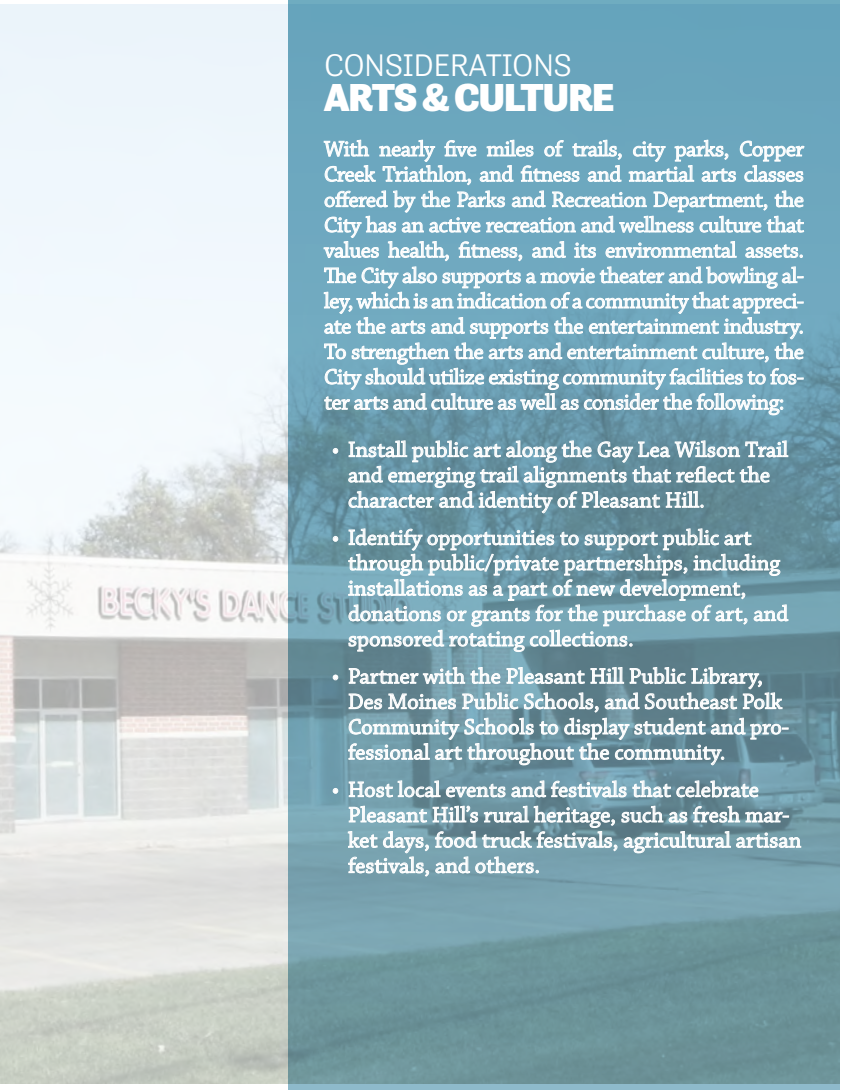
The presence of two school districts—Southeast Polk County Community School District and Des Moines Public Schools—creates a perceived divide within the Pleasant Hill community. While district boundaries are not anticipated to change, focus should be directed at strengthening the relationship between residents within the Pleasant Hill community. In order to bridge the gap between the two districts, the city should consider the following actions:

- Work with Des Moines Public Schools and Southeast Polk Community School District to create unified school calendars.
- Create a city-sponsored academic award program that recognizes outstanding achievement by local students.
- Regularly communicate with the Des Moines Public Schools and Southeast Polk Community School District to stay abreast of potential campus expansions and increased service needs.
- Work with United Way of Central Iowa to expand Academic Support Labs to Pleasant Hill schools to maintain and increase academic performance and increase human capital.

Workforce & Continuing Education

Community residents and stakeholders identified the need to foster employment growth and opportunities within the community. Strategic partnerships with the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, area colleges, and local employers provide opportunities to coordinate workforce development programs and format curricula to respond to local employment needs. Recommendations aimed at facilitating the creation of such programs include:

- Pursue joint grant funding with local schools and workforce organizations to support the creation of local workforce and entrepreneurship programs.
- Support the use of the Pleasant Hill Public Library and municipal spaces for programs and services.
- Support a mentorship program between local businesses and students to provide professional experience.
- Work with Central Iowa Works to coordinate career pathways to provide skills training required by local businesses.



CONSIDERATIONS
ARTS & CULTURE

With nearly five miles of trails, city parks, Copper Creek Triathlon, and fitness and martial arts classes offered by the Parks and Recreation Department, the City has an active recreation and wellness culture that values health, fitness, and its environmental assets. The City also supports a movie theater and bowling alley, which is an indication of a community that appreciate the arts and supports the entertainment industry. To strengthen the arts and entertainment culture, the City should utilize existing community facilities to foster arts and culture as well as consider the following:

- Install public art along the Gay Lea Wilson Trail and emerging trail alignments that reflect the character and identity of Pleasant Hill.
- Identify opportunities to support public art through public/private partnerships, including installations as a part of new development, donations or grants for the purchase of art, and sponsored rotating collections.
- Partner with the Pleasant Hill Public Library, Des Moines Public Schools, and Southeast Polk Community Schools to display student and professional art throughout the community.
- Host local events and festivals that celebrate Pleasant Hill's rural heritage, such as fresh market days, food truck festivals, agricultural artisan festivals, and others.

Public Safety

Despite continued growth, the City of Pleasant Hill continues to benefit from low crime rates as a result of the quality services provided by the Pleasant Hill Police and Fire Departments. To maintain this high level of service, the city should work closely with the Police Department and Fire Department to ensure public safety responsiveness as the community grows. Strategies include the following:

- Work with the Pleasant Hill Police Department, Polk County Sheriff's Office, and City of Altoona Police Department to determine potential service areas based on anticipated annexation and future development areas identified in the Land Use Plan.
- Continue to involve the Police and Fire Departments during development review to ensure new developments can safely accommodate emergency equipment and roadways provide sufficient access and connectivity.
- As improvements occur to public safety departments, coordinate technological upgrades to ensure interdepartmental communication.

Fire Department

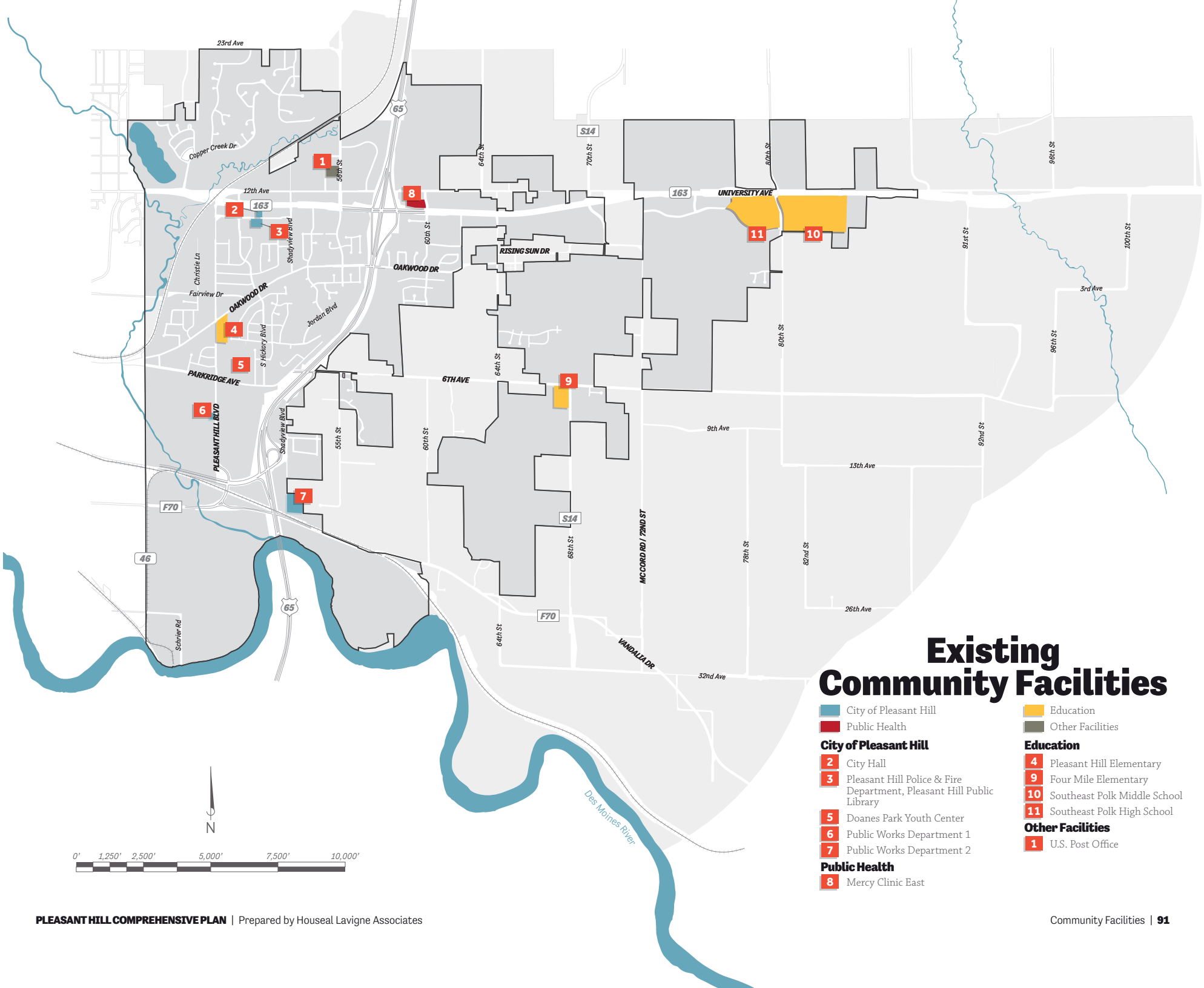
While there is no need to expand or upgrade the current fire station facility on Maple Drive, as development occurs and the population grows, an expanded coverage area may impact levels of service. Over time, development pressures could result in the need for an additional station. The City should work closely with the Fire Department to locate future service facilities based on anticipated land uses identified in the Land Use Plan. Recommendations include:

- Monitor the need and develop a new fire station on the city's east side as the City and its service requirements expand.
- Identify potential sites to preserve land for a new fire station.
- As subdivision of large tracts of land occurs, ensure a regular network of arterials and collectors are in place to support community-wide mobility.

Healthcare

Medical facilities such as Mercy Clinic East not only provide local healthcare services, but also have the potential to employ many high-paying, skilled workers and help drive the local economy. As an important community asset, the city should support the Mercy Medical Center by assessing and accommodating land use and expansion needs as the community grows. Recommendations include:

- Regularly communicate with Mercy Clinic East to stay informed about expansion plans and service needs.
- Improve pedestrian access on University Avenue at Highway 65 and across University Avenue at 60th Street to allow for safe access to the medical center.
- Work with DART to assess demand and provide service coverage to the medical center.



Existing Community Facilities

City of Pleasant Hill
Public Health
Education
Other Facilities

City of Pleasant Hill

2 City Hall
3 Pleasant Hill Police & Fire Department, Pleasant Hill Public Library
5 Doanes Park Youth Center
6 Public Works Department 1
7 Public Works Department 2

Public Health

8 Mercy Clinic East

Education

4 Pleasant Hill Elementary
9 Four Mile Elementary
10 Southeast Polk Middle School
11 Southeast Polk High School

Other Facilities

1 U.S. Post Office

Oak Hill
PARK

PARKS, OPEN SPACE & ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The Parks, Open Space, and Environmental Features Plan addresses the importance of valued recreational and natural assets. It provides a broader policy context to support the recommendations presented in the ***City of Pleasant Hill Parks and Trails Master Plan*** and aims to create a thriving and healthy community.

Pleasant Hill has a unique variety of active parks, passive open spaces, and natural features that support local health and help define the character of the community. The assets play a critical role in shaping a community's quality of life. Parks and recreational activities provide opportunities for social interaction, promote health and wellness, and support appreciation of nature and the environment. The presence of rivers, woodlands and streams strengthens biodiversity, beautifies the landscape and supports healthy lifestyles.

Park Classification & Level of Service

Parks are designed to help meet the recreational needs of the community by offering varying amenities that appeal to and serve the needs of many different segments of the population. By organization parks under specific classifications, which outlines the appropriate size, service area, and amenities, future parks can be designed to adequately meet the needs of the growing Pleasant Hill community.

Park Types

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood parks are the basic unit of the park system and serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. They should serve an area within a ¼ to ½-mile radius and typically include a playground, ball field or basketball court and some sort of pedestrian infrastructure. Neighborhood parks in Pleasant Hill range in size from .2 acres to 30 acres, with 5 to 10 acres being deemed sufficient.

Special Use

Special use parks are those in which the use is focused on a single or specialized purpose. These include Copper Creek Golf Course, Toad Valley Golf Course, and the Sleepy Hollow Sports Park.

Community Park

Community parks are larger than neighborhood parks, with a typical size of at least 30 acres. These parks are intended to serve several neighborhoods and typically provide recreational facilities that require more space than is generally available in neighborhood parks. They should serve an area between ½ mile to a 3-mile radius.

Natural Resource Area

Natural areas consist of land set aside for the preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics. Size and location of these areas is generally determined by resource availability and opportunity. Natural areas tend to include trails, picnic areas, signage and other amenities to attract and educate visitors.

Urban Agriculture

In addition to defining the identity of Pleasant Hill, a distributed network of community gardens and urban agricultural activities throughout the City can promote sustainability, local food production, and civic interaction. The existing community garden on Maple Drive should continue to be supported. Locations for additional community gardens, school gardens, community-supported agriculture (CSA) facilities, and other agricultural urbanism practices throughout the City should be selected carefully based on neighborhood interest and need. The City should partner with local neighborhood organizations as well as explore higher education partnerships and programs such as the Iowa State University Community Design Lab.

Park Service Areas & Proposed Parks

Given the range of park sizes and uses, Pleasant Hill has a variety of facilities that meet many of the recreational needs of residents. However, given the designated park service area standards, the City has several residential neighborhoods that lack nearby access to local parks. While a new 76-acre community park, located south of Four Mile Elementary School, will provide increased access to parkland and recreational opportunities, the City should continue to seek opportunities for additional neighborhood and community parks as they become available. This includes utilizing and/or revising the Parkland Dedication Ordinance, as well as working with developers and owners of future development ground to find appropriate park locations.

To ensure Pleasant Hill residents have sufficient access to local parks and recreational opportunities, the City should consider the following actions:

- Consider a range of high quality sites as land becomes available in underserved areas as opportunities for future parkland acquisitions.
- Review and revise the Park Land Dedication Ordinance and the rules used to administer the Ordinance to ensure parkland dedication meets the needs of the growing community and provides options for in lieu of dedication.
- Consider new park development in the northeast and southwest quadrants of the City to take advantage of existing environmental features.
- Expand and prioritize park improvements and alterations according to the ***City of Pleasant Hill Parks and Trails Master Plan.***

Pleasant Hill Parks & Open Space

NAME	OPERATOR	CLASSIFICATION	SIZE (ACRES)
Dar-Mar Park	City of Pleasant Hill	Mini-Park	0.5
Oak Hill Park	City of Pleasant Hill	Mini-Park	2.0
Sunset Park	City of Pleasant Hill	Mini-Park	2.4
Sunrise Park	City of Pleasant Hill	Neighborhood Park	7.0
Copper Creek Lake Park	City of Pleasant Hill	Community Park	65.5
Doanes Park	City of Pleasant Hill	Community Park	41.1
Community Gardens	City of Pleasant Hill	Special Use	0.8
Des Moines River Boat Ramp	City of Pleasant Hill	Special Use	22.0
Sleepy Hollow Sports Park	Private	Special Use	58.0
Copper Creek Golf Course	Private	Special Use	194.0
Toad Valley Public Golf Course	Private	Special Use	145
Undeveloped Park Land	South East Polk Schools	Open Space	53.0
Undeveloped Park Land	City of Pleasant Hill	Open Space	76.0
Undeveloped Park Land	City of Pleasant Hill	Open Space	7.6
Christie Open Space	Polk County Conservation	Open Space	9.0
Gay Lea Wilson Trail Open Space	City of Pleasant Hill / Polk County Conservation	Open Space	46.1
Oakwood Cemetery	City of Pleasant Hill	Non-Park/Open Space	12.4
Yellow Banks County Park	Polk County Conservation	Natural Resource Area	517.0
TOTAL			**1259.4**

Sports & Recreational Facilities

The City of Pleasant Hill has active participation in youth sports and recreational activities. The Pleasant Hill Parks and Recreation Department has limited programming; however, it is supplemented by partnerships with local youth sport providers. Many of these local programs utilize City of Pleasant Hill facilities and those of neighboring municipalities; which, with continued partnership and maintenance, will continue to meet the needs of local recreational programs. Nevertheless, as the City continue to grow, there may be additional need to develop additional sports facilities, programs, and an aquatic facility.

To adequately accommodate youth sports and recreational facility needs, the City should consider the following recommendations:

- Continue to utilize existing youth sports facilities; however, monitor the use and changing needs for additional baseball and soccer fields and identify opportunities for future youth facilities as the City grows and acquires additional parkland.
- Continue to partner with local youth sports program providers to provide local sports opportunities for city youth and adults.
- Install splash pads of various sizes and complexity as a cost-effective approach to areas for water play.
- Work with the Des Moines Public schools to negotiate an agreement that would allow residents within the school district access and use of the Altoona Campus and Altoona Aquatics Center.
- Expand existing partnerships with the City of Altoona, the Southeast Polk School District, and Des Moines Schools to provide gymnasium access and recreational programming for residents; and explore the feasibility of a new, modern recreation center in Pleasant Hill.

CONSIDERATIONS

LOCAL & REGIONAL IDENTITY

Pleasant Hill residents showcase a great amount of pride for their hometown. With the abundance of natural areas, trails, and access to the Des Moines River, one resident referred to the City as the "Gem of East Des Moines." Nevertheless, the city is often considered a neighborhood of east Des Moines, or it is grouped together with other eastern suburbs with no clear distinction. In order to strengthen both the local identity and regional image of Pleasant Hill, the city should implement the following actions:

- **Develop a formal marketing and outreach plan to communicate the Pleasant Hill brand and identity on a local and regional level.**
- **Continuously highlight the natural and recreational assets of Pleasant Hill to ensure conflict with regard to future development does not overshadow the image of the city.**

CONSIDERATIONS
COMMUNITY EVENTS

Much of a community's culture and identity is shaped by the events and spaces that bring neighbors together. Residents have repeatedly noted the need for additional community events as well as the need for a central gathering venue to host them. To emphasis the "Play" aspect of the "Grow. Play. Live." slogan, the city should consider the following actions:

Identify opportunities for a community and event center (see ***Chapter 7: Community Facilities***).

Continue to host and encourage more health and sports events such as the Copper Creek Triathlon and Springtime Hill Climb.

Partner with private and religious organizations to utilize community venues for public events.

Program year-round public events to engage the community throughout all seasons.

Use City Hall, public facilities, and their accompanying parking lots as event and performance venues.

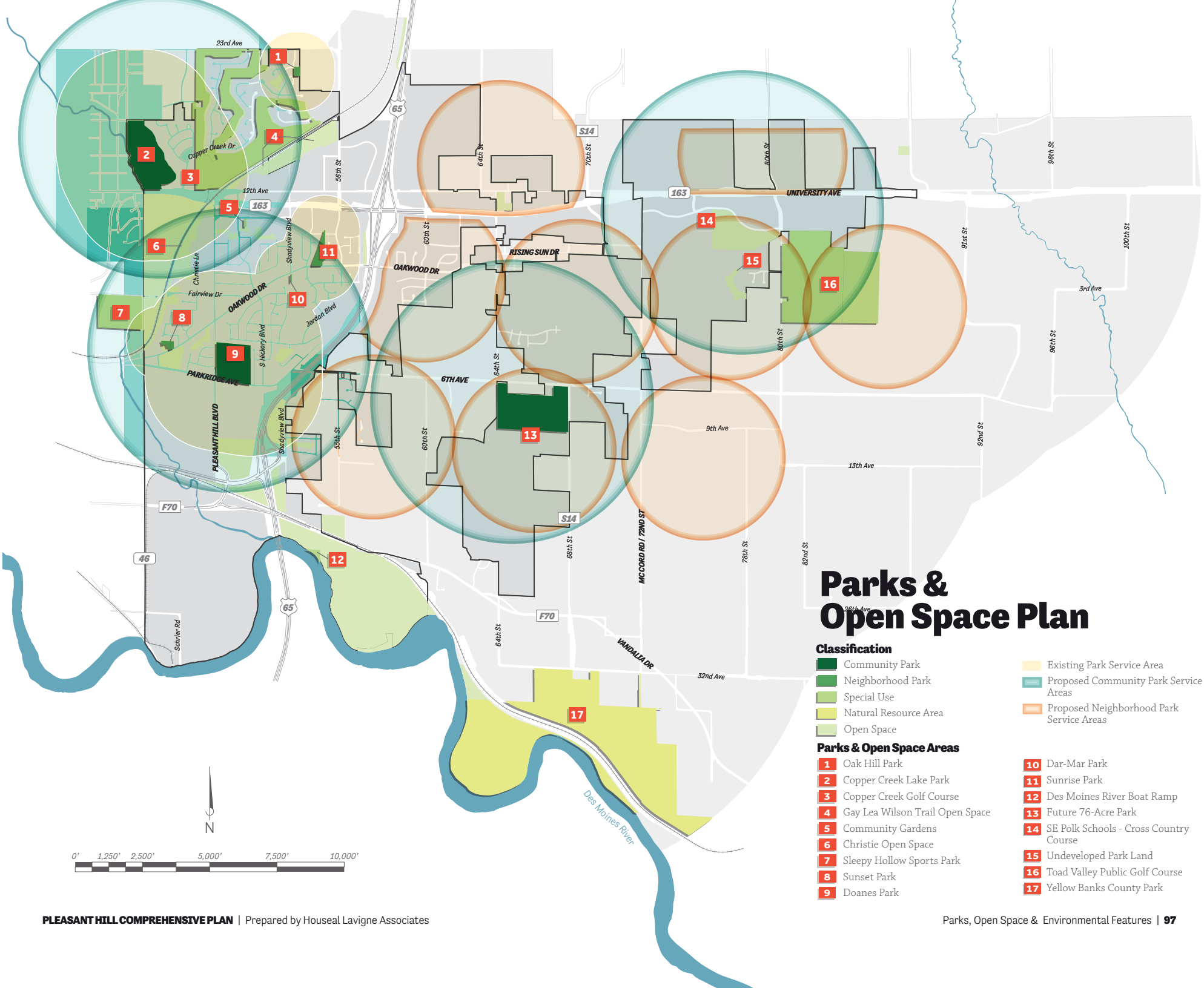
Community Gathering Spaces

Parks and open space areas serve as ideal settings for community gathering spaces. Public gathering spaces provide opportunities for social interaction and community building. In addition, these areas help to define local identity. Examples of existing community gathering spaces include the Pleasant Hill Community Garden and Copper Creek Lake Park. These spaces are key assets to the community, but could be expanded upon to increase the number and variety of users.

A new dog park is a potential community gathering place identified by the Pleasant Hill community as a priority. In addition, a large community event space that can host festivals, live music, and other community events was identified as a key need for the community. More detail about a potential community and civic gathering space can be found as part of the Town Center concept in ***Chapter 5: Subarea Plans***.

To increase opportunities for community gathering facilities, the City should consider the following actions:

- Construct a dog park as a component of the new 76-acre park and explore opportunities for additional dog parks in other parts of the community.
- Continue to support the community garden on Maple Drive and explore additional locations for community gardens throughout Pleasant Hill based on neighborhood interest and need.
- Continue to utilize Copper Creek Lake Park for year-round activities and events.
- Should the opportunity present itself, redevelop the Hy-Vee building and site as a civic complex that would accommodate a civic plaza that could host public events as well as municipal operations.



Parks & Open Space Plan

Classification

- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Special Use
- Natural Resource Area
- Open Space
- Existing Park Service Area
- Proposed Community Park Service Areas
- Proposed Neighborhood Park Service Areas

Parks & Open Space Areas

1. Oak Hill Park
2. Copper Creek Lake Park
3. Copper Creek Golf Course
4. Gay Lea Wilson Trail Open Space
5. Community Gardens
6. Christie Open Space
7. Sleepy Hollow Sports Park
8. Sunset Park
9. Doanes Park
10. Dar-Mar Park
11. Sunrise Park
12. Des Moines River Boat Ramp
13. Future 76-Acre Park
14. SE Polk Schools - Cross Country Course
15. Undeveloped Park Land
16. Toad Valley Public Golf Course
17. Yellow Banks County Park

Open Space & Natural Resources

Open spaces are a natural and cultural resource to Pleasant Hill, helping to define its character, support local wildlife, promote resident and environmental health, and manage water resources. Open space in the City is considered land or water areas that are intentionally acquired for preservation through ownership or easements, are publicly regulated, and can be used for either passive or active recreation such as greenways. Typical open space in Iowa includes environmental features such as forested areas, green space between subdivisions, floodplains, wetlands, water bodies, stream corridors and park areas.

The health and preservation of open space areas directly affect the quality of life and environmental integrity of the community and region. As such, the City should play a key role in open space identification and conservation.

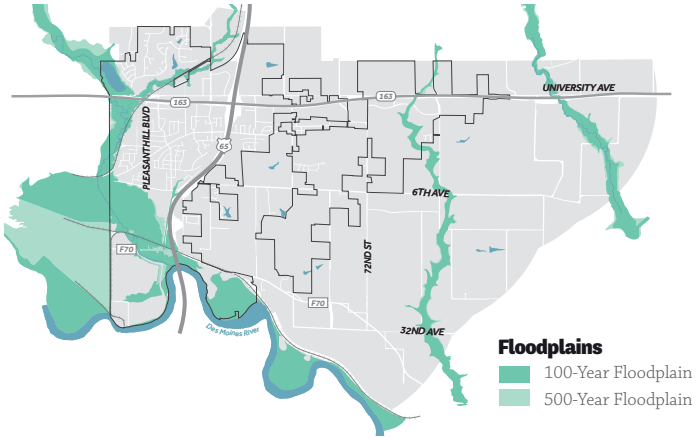
In order to expand and preserve open space areas in Pleasant Hill, the City should consider implementing the following recommendations:

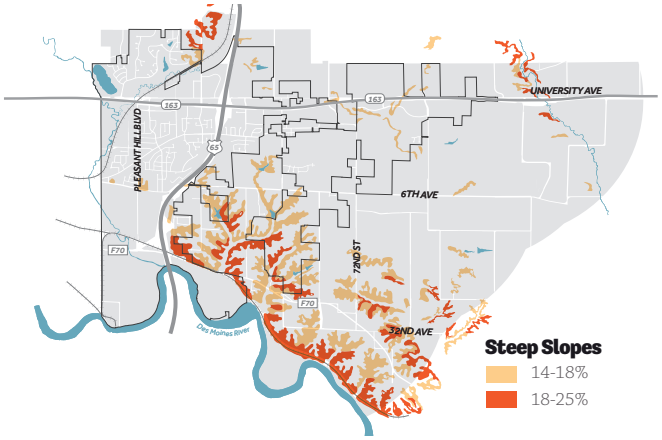
- Identify critical natural resource areas and protect them through acquisition, development regulations, and partnership with the Polk County Conservation Board and other local organizations.
- Utilize the Stream Buffer Protection and Management Ordinance to acquire, maintain, and enhance a system of fully functional greenways throughout the City.
- Partner with and educate property owners regarding the benefits of preserving functioning greenways throughout the community.
- Modify the Stream Buffer Protection and Management ordinance to encourage City-owned open space parcels that are contiguous and contribute to larger open space areas.

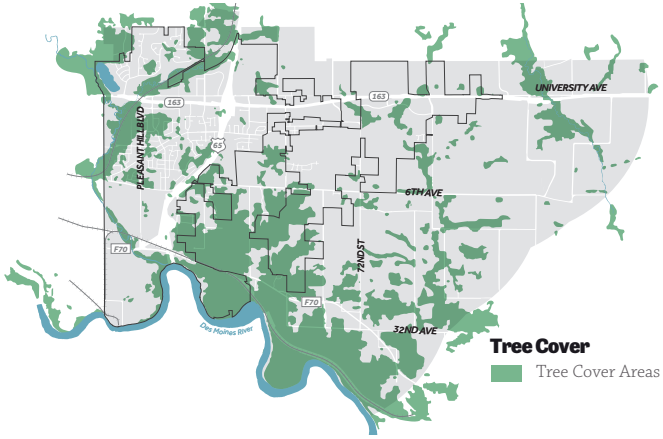
Des Moines River

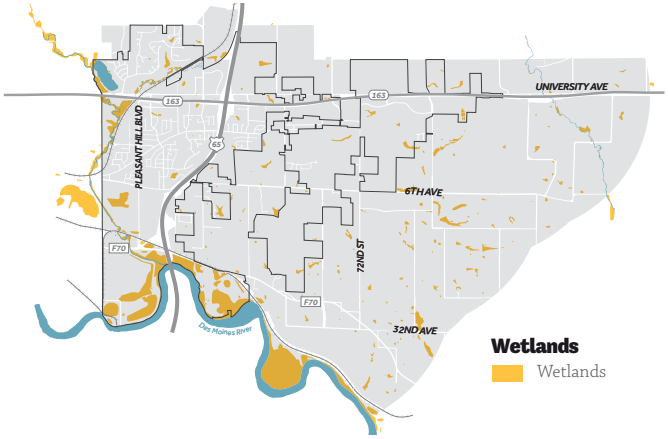
The Des Moines River serves as natural resource and community asset. As a designated water trail through Pleasant Hill and the northern potions of Yellow Banks Park, the River provides a unique recreational experience. Only two public accesses to the river exist within the community: the Des Moines River Boat Ramp and the Yellow Banks Boat Ramp. The City should consider the following strategies to increase connections to the Des Moines River:

- Limit development in flood prone areas and demonstrating best practices in floodplain management
- Prioritize acquisition and protection of natural resource areas associated with the river.
- Develop additional river access points and trails that engage the river.
- Identify opportunities to capitalize on the water trail designation with ideas related to engaging water trail users in the community.


UNIVERSITY AVE
PLEASANT HILL BLVD
6TH AVE
72ND ST
32ND AVE
Des Moines River
Floodplains
100-Year Floodplain
500-Year Floodplain


UNIVERSITY AVE
PLEASANT HILL BLVD
6TH AVE
72ND ST
32ND AVE
Des Moines River
Steep Slopes
14-18%
18-25%


UNIVERSITY AVE
PLEASANT HILL BLVD
6TH AVE
72ND ST
32ND AVE
Des Moines River
Tree Cover
Tree Cover Areas


UNIVERSITY AVE
PLEASANT HILL BLVD
6TH AVE
72ND ST
32ND AVE
Des Moines River
Wetlands
Wetlands

Pleasant
Hill

IMPLEMENTATION

The City of Pleasant Hill Comprehensive Plan includes policies and recommendations that are intended to realize the vision established by the community.

In order to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the Plan, the City must take advantage of the tools at its disposal. This chapter identifies what those tools are, and describes how they can be used in partnership with local stakeholders in order to put the Comprehensive Plan into action.

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will require a proactive approach by City staff, local partners, and the community. Strategies and recommendations listed within the plan will require various types of investment and human and social capital to achieve the community's vision for Pleasant Hill.

Adopt & Use the Plan Daily

The Comprehensive Plan should serve as the official policy document for the City of Pleasant Hill. As such, the Plan should be formally adopted by City Council and used on a regular basis. The Comprehensive Plan should be used to evaluate and guide future land use and development decisions. It should be referenced by City staff, council members, and commissioners; each of whom should have a copy. In addition, copies of the Plan should be made available for public reference at City Hall and the Pleasant Hill Public Library in hard copy format, as well as accessible via the City's website.

Develop an Action Agenda

The Comprehensive Plan includes more than 200 separate recommendations. The City should develop an "action agenda" to highlight the improvements, projects, and activities to be undertaken after Plan adoption. First, each recommendation should be put into one of two categories: policies or actions. Polices are positions or regulations that the City should adopt and enforce, using administrative procedures, ordinances, and/or incentives. Policies can be established "in-house" with City officials and resources. Actions include specific capital or administrative projects that the City should undertake, and often require proactive external activity and interaction with a variety of parties. Second, the City should prioritize each project or activity, including a suggested date of completion. Third, the City should assign the tasks to staff and the appropriate parties as well as work to secure funding. Finally, the City should ensure there are adequate internal staff to implement action agenda items. The action agenda should be updated annually to reflect milestones and accomplishments.

Review the Zoning Ordinance & Development Regulations

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth policies regarding the use of land within the City and establishes guidelines for the quality, character, and intensity of new development in the years ahead. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan should be followed by a review and update of the Pleasant Hill Zoning Ordinance. Zoning is one of the most important tools for implementation and should reflect the policies within the Plan through the use of various development controls and subdivision regulations. The Plan's policies and guidelines should greatly assist the City in formulating new zoning and development code regulations that can better reflect the unique needs and aspirations of the Pleasant Hill community.

District Structure and Standards

The current code establishes 19 zoning districts, including eight residential districts. It is recommended that these be reviewed and condensed into fewer residential districts. The current districts account for minor variations in development characteristics that could be managed within a new district's scale and bulk standards without compromising the character of certain portions of the community.

It is also recommended that the U-1 (Flood Plain and Conservation) District be eliminated, and its requirements be included in general development regulations applicable to all portions of the community. The intent of the current district is to preserve designated natural areas. Redefining these requirements as general development standards will allow this to continue, and will also ensure that natural amenities are preserved in areas designated as residential, commercial or industrial zones. (In other words, all development will be required to conform where important natural features exist, regardless of their base zoning designation.)

In order to reflect the Town Center concept included in the Comprehensive Plan, it is recommended that a new commercial district be formed. This district should explicitly permit mixed-use, minimize required front and side yard setbacks, and be referenced by other sections that will require unique development standards for the pedestrian-oriented environment, such as parking, sidewalk retail and seating, signage, and others.

Map

Once zoning districts are condensed or eliminated, it is recommended that a comprehensive map amendment be completed. The map amendment should ensure that new district boundaries and regulations allow for the continuance of desired development and set the stage for new development according to the Future Land Use Plan. The zoning map should also be used to prioritize growth in adjacent areas rather than permit development in outlying areas that will strain municipal infrastructure and services.

Open Spaces

Chapter 174 of the Code of Ordinances establishes standards related to conservation design, including the clustering of development to avoid natural areas, dedicated open spaces to protect areas and provide on-site stormwater management, the use of best management practices to maintain the environmental integrity of critical areas, and on-site pedestrian safety and mobility. It is recommended that some or all of these requirements be incorporated with the requirements of the U-1 (Flood Plain and Conservation) District as general development standards applicable to all properties where natural elements exist.

It is also recommended that the City amend its approach to the use of open space dedications to ensure that they either 1) result in usable and contiguous open space for the occupants of a certain area, or 2) relate to part of a larger natural system that extends beyond the subject property. The current open space ordinance has resulted in isolated pockets of open space that are difficult to maintain, do not necessarily act to preserve larger natural systems, and do not allow for continuous greenways that support migration or trails.

Zoning Structure

The current zoning ordinance is structured in 11 separate chapters of the City Code. This can result in confusion or a potential applicant being unaware of the full set of regulations applicable to their property. The current regulations should be combined into one chapter with the following sections in order to make development requirements and procedures easier to understand for property owners, developers, designers, City staff, and elected and appointed officials:

- Authority, Intent, and Applicability
- Establishment of Zoning Districts
- Residential District Standards
- Commercial District Standards
- Industrial District Standards
- General Development Standards
- Use Standards
- Parking and Loading Standards
- Landscaping Standards
- Sign Standards
- Non-Conformities
- Definitions
- Applications and Procedures

Other Development Standards

Regulations tied to each base zoning district are supplemented by several other chapters that include requirements applicable to all development, regardless of its base zoning district designation. The following recommendations relate to these sections of the zoning ordinance.

General Regulations are currently included in Chapter 166 and address accessory buildings, fences and walls, lot characteristics, and non-conformities. It is recommended that regulations related to non-conformities be separated into their own section. Also, general regulations should be added for characteristics that are expected to emerge as implementation of the Comprehensive Plan occurs. These include use of the public sidewalk in the Town Center for café seating or sidewalk retail, permitted encroachments for balconies, porches or other structures, drive-thru facilities, on-site pedestrian and bicycle amenities, telecommunication towers, and others.

Chapter 168 includes landscaping standards for development. These standards are generally appropriate for existing development. However, it is recommended that specific standards be established for future development in the Town Center that may include minimal or no setbacks and a greater building intensity that may not be able to accommodate landscaped areas. It is also recommended that the section include a list of prohibited and permitted landscape species. Selected species should be reflective of the desired character, minimize maintenance and water usage, and increase resiliency to disease and local climate change.

Parking standards are provided in Chapter 169 of the City Code. The regulations adequately address parking lot screening and buffering, especially in conjunction with the landscaping requirements of Chapter 168. However, required parking capacity is high compared to similar communities. The current requirement of one stall per 200 square feet of retail space is excessive, and could be lowered to one stall per 250 or 300 square feet of retail space. A more aggressive approach would be to eliminate the on-site parking requirement, knowing that developers will provide parking that meets the needs of potential tenants without the City requiring spaces above and beyond that would use additional land and create more stormwater runoff. In addition, the City should explore the use of parking maximums, rather than minimums, to prevent developers from constructing excessively large surface parking lots. Parking maximums can be applied on an individual site basis or over a defined district. This chapter should also allow for shared parking or remote parking, especially in areas where the design of the environment is intended to be more pedestrian oriented, such as the Town Center.

Chapter 170 of the Code of Ordinances establishes regulations related to the sign type, size, and location. In order to ensure that signage remains compatible with development, additional standards related to maximum sign area should be adopted. Currently, permitted sign area is regulated only as a percentage of overall façade area. Regulations should include maximum sign areas per sign type in various districts, or overall permitted sign area for a lot. Sign regulation should also recognize unique area, such as the Town Center, where the built character is a priority. In these areas, special consideration should be given to prohibited sign types, size, location on a building, and orientation toward pedestrians.

Municipal Design Standards

While zoning regulations dictate the nature of development on private properties, the City uses its own municipal standards for the design of streets and infrastructure. It is critical that these standards reflect the intent of the Comprehensive Plan. The City should review it design and engineering standards as they relate to roadway standards, including right-of-way width, curb-to-curb dimensions, crosswalks, curb ramps, turning radii, and other characteristics. The City should also review infrastructure practices and, where appropriate, integrate standards for "green" infrastructure, such as bioswales, municipal detention facilities, and other elements that ease the burden on traditional infrastructure and maintain the integrity of Pleasant Hill's natural environment.

Foster Inter-agency Cooperation

Much of the Comprehensive Plan relies upon intergovernmental partnerships for successful implementation. The City should continue to maintain existing partnership as well as spearhead new partnerships and relationships with local and regional organizations. This includes regularly communicating with both the Southeast Polk County Community Schools and Des Moines Public Schools, coordination with IDOT, the Des Moines Area MPO and other regional agencies, engaging the Police and Fire Departments, and partnering with the Chamber of Commerce, among other organizations.

Evaluate & Update the Plan Regularly

Cities are dynamic in nature and must adapt to shifts in market, demographics, and regional influences. As such, the Comprehensive Plan should reflect changes in the community and address new issues or concerns that arise post-adoption. In addition to proposals to amend the Plan as changes occur, the City should periodically review the Plan in its entirety, with a systematic review of the document every two to three years. Routine examination of the Plan ensures that the goals and policies continue to reflect community needs and aspirations. In addition, yearly review done in conjunction with the preparation of the City's annual budget and capital improvement program will further support the implementation of Plan recommendations.

Identify & Pursue Funding

Many of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations can be implemented through administrative and policy decisions or traditionally funded programs. However, other projects may require special technical and/or financial assistance. The City should explore a wide range of local, state, and federal programs that may be available for use and regularly identify new opportunities as they become available.

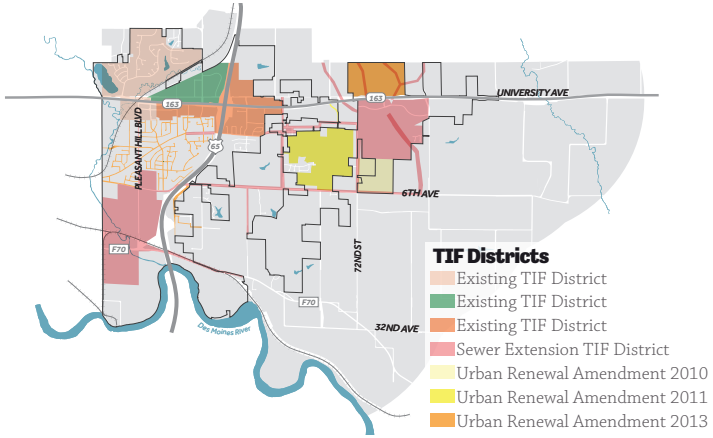
Funding Sources

The funding sources identified below provide a range of potential sources to implement the Comprehensive Plan; however, they are not inclusive and should be closely scrutinized to understand application deadlines and eligibility requirements.

Economic Development

Tax Incremental Financing/Urban Renewal Areas

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) provides the opportunities for the funding of certain kinds of improvements within a specific geographic area as property tax revenue increases. That increase in tax revenue, or increment, over the base year of the TIF can be leveraged for infrastructure improvements, property acquisition, improvements to existing development, and related allocations.



City councils or county board of supervisors may use the additional property tax to:

- Finance direct grants or loans to the business.
- Offset the costs of public improvements or provision of utilities to serve the new private development.
- Provide the local match for federal or state economic development assistance programs.

Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District

Iowa Code Chapter 36 §386 governs Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement Districts (SSMID). A SSMID can be created in a municipality if at least 25% of all property owners in a proposed district are in favor and the SSMID is approved via city ordinance. The SSMID sets the rate of minimum tax to be levied on property owners, and the funds are then used for the maintaining and improving areas and properties within the district. Only land that is zoned as commercial or industrial are eligible to form or be a member of a SSMID.

High Quality Jobs Program

The High Quality Jobs Program administered by the State of Iowa offers tax credits to eligible businesses to off-set the cost of locating, expanding, or modernizing an Iowa facility. Businesses must be a non-retail or non-service business and meet a variety of wage and benefit requirements. Incentives provided include a mixture of tax credits, exemptions, or refunds, such as a property tax exemption of up to 100% of the value added to the property for 20 years or a refund of state sales, service, or use taxes paid to contractors during construction.

New Market Tax Credits

The U.S. Congress established the New Market Tax Credits (NMTC program) in 2000 to encourage new investment in businesses and real estate projects located in underserved areas. Criteria for such areas include census tracts with high unemployment, low incomes, and significant out-migration. Individual and corporate investors receive a tax credit on their federal income tax return in exchange for making investments in federally-designated financial institutions called Community Development Entities (CDEs). CDEs, in turn, develop projects in low-income areas. The credit equals 39% of the original investment and is allocated over seven years. To learn more about the NMTC Program in Iowa, contact the Iowa Business Growth Company, administer of the Iowa program.

Innovation Fund Tax Credit

The Innovation Fund Tax Credit program was created to stimulate venture capital investment in innovative Iowa businesses. Individual investors can receive tax credits equal to 25 percent of an equity investment in a certified Innovation Fund. In turn, those certified Innovation Funds make investments in promising early-stage companies that have a principal place of business in the state of Iowa. Innovative businesses can include, but are not limited to, businesses engaged in advanced manufacturing, biosciences and information technology. The total amount of tax credits available for investment in Innovation Funds is $8 million this fiscal year.

Transportation

Road, Street and Bridge Programs

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

In the past, these funds have been allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for all roadway and roadway related items. Projects in this funding category have required a local sponsor and have been selected based on, among other factors, a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided by the project among other factors.

IOWA CLEAN AIR ATTAINMENT PROGRAM (ICAAP)

Administered by Iowa DOT, the ICAAP funding is awarded on a statewide competitive application basis. The federal funds are awarded to those projects with the highest potential for reducing transportation-related congestion and air pollution. Project applications may be submitted by cities, counties, public transit agencies, and state and federal agencies. Private nonprofit organizations and individuals who wish to apply for funding must have a public agency as a co-sponsor. Typical funding ratio for the ICAAP program is 80% Iowa DOT funds with a 20% local match.

COUNTY AND CITY BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION FUND

This funds the construction or replacement of public roadway bridges. Iowa counties and cities are eligible for this funding. The qualifications for funding include:

- A local match of 20 percent is required (80 percent state funding).
- Replacement and rehabilitation candidates must be classified as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete according to federal guidelines.
- Replacement and rehabilitation candidates must have a sufficiency rating of 80 or less and average daily traffic of at least 25 vehicles

IDOT RISE PROGRAM

The Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) program is administered by the Iowa DOT and promotes economic development in Iowa through the establishment, construction, improvement, and maintenance of roads and streets that provide highway access to key economic development assets such as industrial development sites, urban centers, points of shipment or processing of products, trucking terminals and shipping centers, or tourist locations.

Project activities or costs eligible for RISE funding, and which may be counted as part of the non–RISE participation in immediate opportunity and local development roadway projects, include only the following:

- Roadway resurfacing, rehabilitation, modernization, upgrading, reconstruction or initial construction, including grading and drainage, paving, erosion control, pavement overlays, and shoulder widening and stabilization;

- Bridge and culvert repair, modernization, replacement or initial construction;
- Roadway intersection and interchange improvements including warranted traffic signalization when it is integral to the improvement;
- Right–of–way purchase;
- Construction or improvement of motorist rest areas, welcome centers, and information centers;
- Design engineering costs and construction inspection costs associated with RISE–financed projects;
- County and city bond principal and interest payments associated with RISE projects. No financing expenses incurred prior to funding commitment shall be eligible, and;
- Storm drainage and storm sewer costs to the extent needed for draining the roadway.

URBAN-STATE TRAFFIC ENGINEERING PROGRAM (U-STEP)

The intent of this Iowa DOT program is to solve traffic operation and safety problems on primary roads in Iowa cities. Qualifications for funding:

- The city must engineer and administer the project.
- Improvements must involve a municipal extension of a primary road. The two types of projects eligible are spot improvements and linear improvements (spot improvements are those limited to single locations; linear improvements are those which span two or more intersections).
- City match is 45% of the construction cost (55% state-funded).
- An engineering analysis of the problem area is required.
- Iowa Traffic Engineering Assistance Program (TEAP) can be used for analysis.

HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM - SECONDARY (HSIP - SECONDARY PROGRAM)

This federally-funded program was established to fund low-cost, systemic safety improvements on rural roads (also known as the Secondary Road System) that meet certain criteria regarding safety. Iowa counties may apply. The key focus of the program would be to reduce lane departure crashes. In addition, the program will promote systemic implementation of safety countermeasures. The systemic approach installs countermeasures along an entire corridor, in lieu of treating only a problem location. For example, a project could be developed to address curve crash issues on roadways of a certain classification or type. Systemic projects could include many miles across a county, and even include neighboring counties or multiple counties.

TRAFFIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Traffic Safety Improvement Program, also known as "TSIP," "Traffic Safety Funds," "TSF," or "Half-Percent," provides funding for traffic safety improvements or studies on any public roads under county, city or state jurisdiction. Eligible projects will fall into one of three categories:

- Construction or improvement of traffic safety and operations at a specific site with an accident history;
- Purchase of materials for installation of new traffic control devices such as signs or signals, or replacement of obsolete signs or signals; or
- Transportation safety research, studies or public information initiatives such as sign inventory, work zone safety and accident data.

Railroads

HIGHWAY-RAILROAD CROSSING SAFETY PROGRAM

This federally funded program improves the safety of public highway-railroad grade crossings. Railroad companies and public jurisdictions are eligible for this funding. The qualifications for funding include:

- 10 percent non-federal match required (from the railroad company and/or public road jurisdiction)
- Inclusion of crossing location on a prioritized list of projects. Priorities are determined through a benefit cost analysis that takes into consideration the extent of vehicle and train traffic at the crossing, speed of trains, certain characteristics of the crossing, effectiveness of the proposed improvement, estimated cost of the improvement and other factors. Generally, those crossings with a high probability for a serious crash with a proposed improvement anticipated to be effective and cost efficient will receive the highest priority.

HIGHWAY-RAILROAD CROSSING SURFACE REPAIR FUND

This program assists railroad companies and public road jurisdictions with rebuilding railroad grade crossing surfaces in Iowa. Railroad companies – or other private entities that own a railroad track – and public road jurisdictions can apply for this funding.

- 20% railroad match
- 20% public road jurisdiction match
- 60% this funding program

Both the railroad and the public road jurisdiction must enter into a project agreement with the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Active Transportation

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS)

SRTS is an effort to increase safety and promote walking and bicycling to school through the 5Es: engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation. SRTS projects are eligible for funding through MAP-21's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). TAP funding was delegated to Iowa metropolitan planning agencies throughout the state. The City of Pleasant Hill can apply for SRTS funding through the TAP application via the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Parks & Trails

Federal Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) was included in the most recent MAP-21 extension and provides and maintains motorized and non-motorized recreational trails and trail-related projects. RTP is funded through the Federal Highway Trust Fund and administered by individual states. Public agencies, non-profits, and private organizations are eligible to sponsor projects; however, non-profit and private sponsorship will require a public agency co-sponsor. Qualifications for funding include a minimum 20% match and trails resulting from successful applications must be maintained as a public facility for a minimum of 20 years.

Iowa State Recreational Trails Fund

The Iowa Department of Transportation administers funding for recreational trail projects that allow for the use, enjoyment, and participation of the public. Eligible projects must be part of a local, regional, or state-wide plan and be open to the public. Projects must be matched at least 25% and funding can be used for land acquisition costs, trail surfacing, bridge and culvert repair, intersection improvements, and trail amenities such as restrooms, educational displays, and lighting.

Conservation

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants are available to cities, counties and school districts to be used for outdoor recreation projects. Projects require a 50% match and are taken under perpetuity by the National Park Service and must only be used for outdoor recreational purposes. Development and renovation projects must be maintained for a period of 25 years or the life of the manufactured goods. LWCF grants are managed by the IDNR and assistance ceilings are established by population.

More specific, statewide grants supporting conservation and recreation in Iowa can be found on Iowa's DNR website and include the following list:

- All-Terrain Vehicle Grant Program
- Educational Grants
- Fish Habitat Promotion For County Conservation Boards
- Iowa Water Trails Mini Grants
- Low-Head Dam Public Hazard Program
- Land And Water Conservation Fund
- REAP City Parks And Open Spaces Grant Program
- REAP Conservation Education
- REAP County Conservation Grant Program
- Snowmobile Trail Grant Program
- Solid Waste Alternatives Program
- State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Water Recreation Access Cost-Share Program
- Watershed Improvement Grants
- Wildlife Habitat With Local Entities Grant Program

Image & Identity

DOT/DNR Fund – Roadside Beautification

The intent of this fund is roadside beautification of primary system corridors with plant materials. Any tax-levying body is eligible to receive these funds, and the site must be on primary highway right-of-way, including primary highway extensions. Participation is limited to the cost of materials and installation of seed or live plants.

Living Roadway Trust Fund – Gateway Enhancement

This program implements Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management programs (IRVM) on city, county or state rights of-way or publicly owned areas adjacent to traveled roadways. Categories of eligible projects are as follows: roadside inventories; gateway enhancement plantings for city, county and state locations; education/training; research/demonstration; roadside enhancement; seed propagation; and special equipment.

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

The Leopold Center's Competitive Grants Program is open to all Iowa educational and non-profit organizations for Iowa-based agricultural and research projects. Each year, the Center selects new research and demonstration projects to fund. A request for pre-proposals is issued in June of each year for funding in the next calendar year. The City of Pleasant Hill should identify non-profit organization and educational institutions to partner with to pursue grant applications to develop urban agriculture and local food system demonstration projects.