CITY OF DECORAH

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2011

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The comprehensive planning process documented in this plan began in 2010 when all 8 incorporated communities in the county, as well as Winneshiek County, passed a resolution entering into an intergovernmental agreement for the purpose of developing and updating comprehensive plans. The City of Decorah has gone through the comprehensive planning process in the past, most recently with a plan completed in 1992.

In May 2011 graduate students from the University of Iowa School of Urban & Regional Planning presented a Smart Planning Principles document to the City of Decorah. This plan has been an invaluable resource for the Comprehensive Planning Committee. A copy of this plan is available for the public at City Hall and at Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission.

Public Participation

Public participation is an important part of the comprehensive planning process. For a plan to develop, decision makers need to hear ideas, thoughts, and opinions from their citizens and stakeholders.

In an effort to help guide the planning process, the Planning Commission held two input sessions, which were publicized two weeks in advance in the local paper and posted on community boards. The public was invited to review the plan and the maps and provide any input or comments for the planning commission to consider. Both input sessions were held on July 19th at Decorah City Hall. The two sessions were held at different times to accommodate work schedules of all citizens. The first input session was held from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00p.m. and the second was held from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Comments and photos from the public input sessions can be found in Appendix C.

Purpose of the Plan

The City of Decorah's Comprehensive Plan is intended to assist local officials and community members as they make future decisions regarding growth, management, and preservation of the community. Decorah's plan was developed under the guidance of Iowa Smart Planning Legislation SF 2389. The plan is broken down into 10 elements. These include:

- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources
- Hazards
- Economic Development
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Land Use
- Implementation

Location

The City of Decorah is located in the center of Winneshiek County in Northeast Iowa near Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Upper Iowa River bisects the community on the east side, "original Decorah" from the community on the west side. In addition to being located on the Upper Iowa River, the City of Decorah is located on U.S. Highway 52 and Iowa Highway 9. Figure 1 shows an aerial photo of the Decorah area and Figure 2 illustrates the location of the city in relation to the county, region, and state.

History

Decorah was established as the county seat in 1851. The city was platted two years later in 1853. Decorah was named after Waukon-Decorah, a prominent Chief of the Winnebago Indian Tribe. Other Native American tribes that occupied the area were the Sauk, Fox, and Oneota.

Nine members of the William Day (1791-1860) family are credited with being the first settlers of Decorah, Iowa. History shows the Day family camped beside a spring, now known as Day Spring, and shortly began building. In March 1849, they were joined by the William Painter (1820-1902) family and by John Sutton Morse (1808-1887). It is stated that Day built the first Hotel, now known as Hotel Winneshiek, while Painter and Morse focused on milling in Decorah.

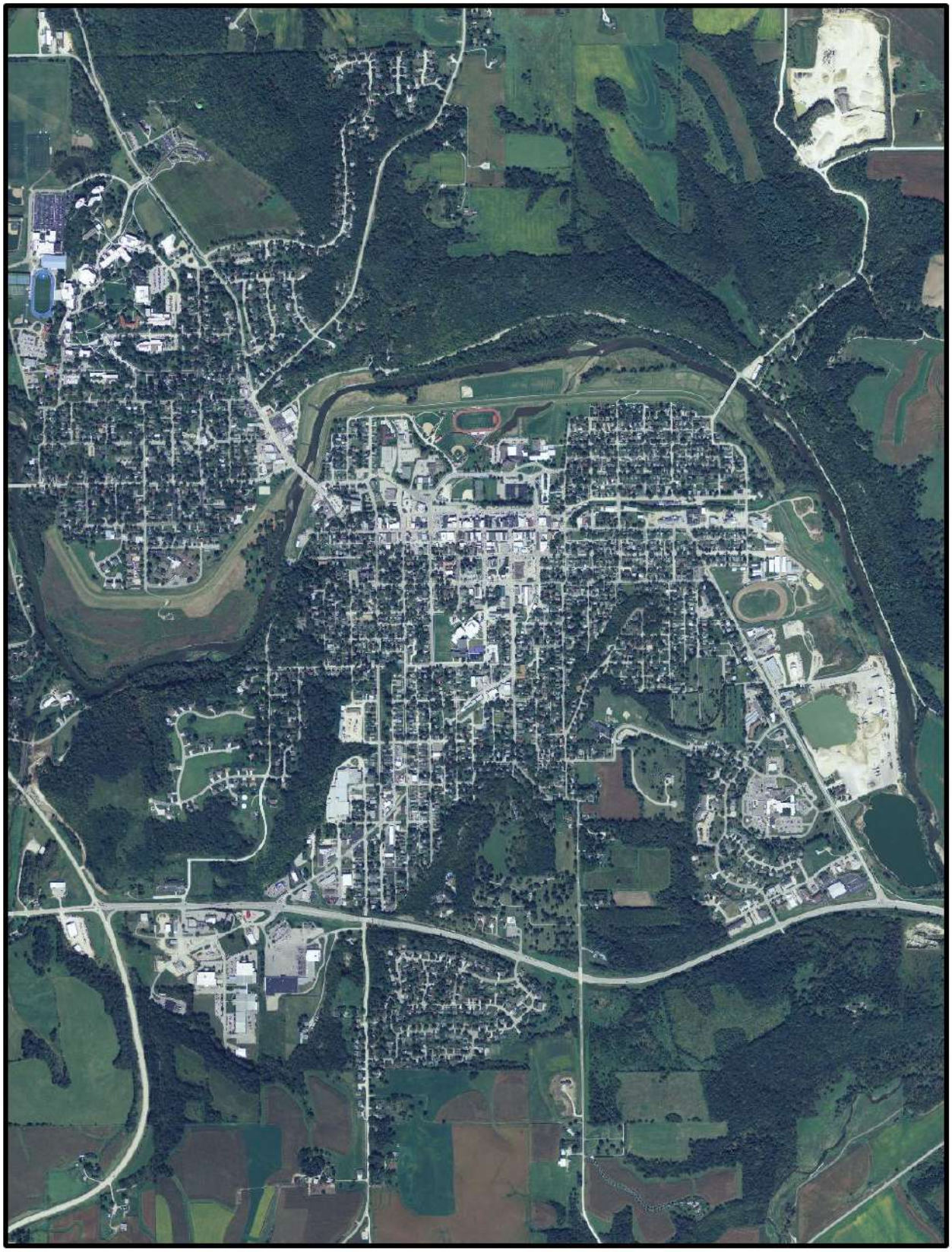
The railroad reached Decorah in 1869 and provided transportation for passengers and freight for nearly 100 years. Wagons and horse drawn coaches were the only other alternative for moving citizens and commercial goods. Railroad service ended in Decorah in February 1979.

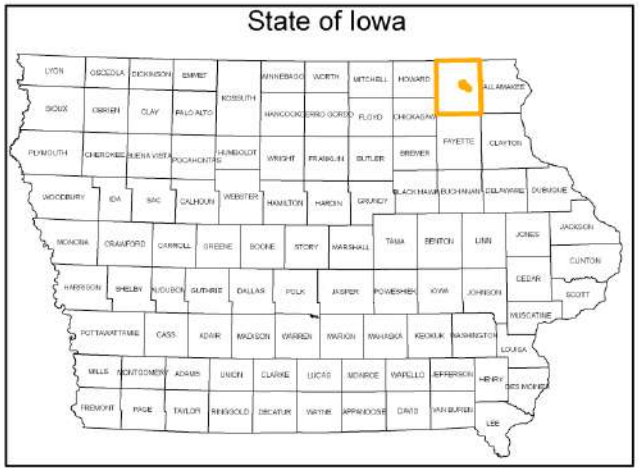
Although the settlement began in 1849, Decorah was not incorporated as a city until 1871. The small settlement was designated the county seat in 1851 and the first county courthouse was built in 1857. In 1903 the court house was replaced with today's present building. The jail, located near the courthouse, was built in 1887.

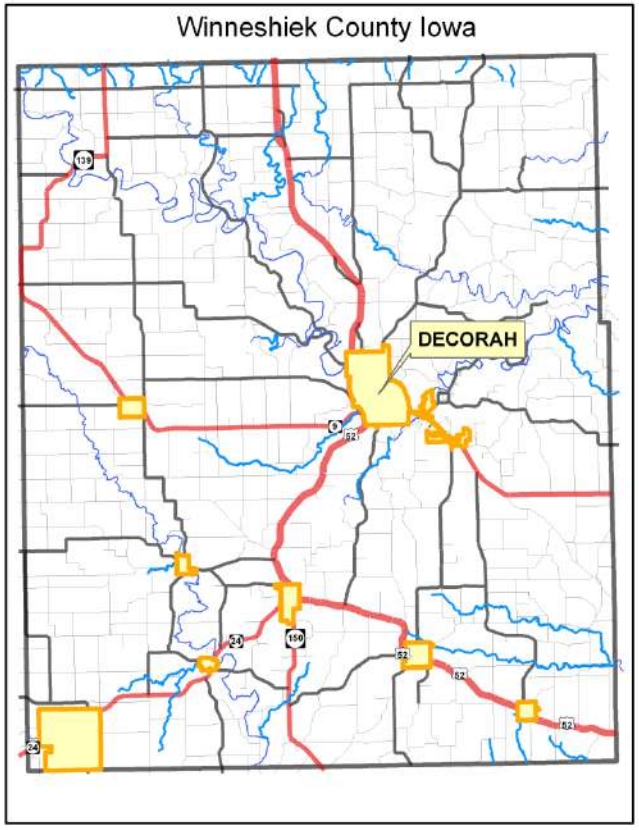
The first plat of the city, what is now known as "Original Decorah," was made in 1856. West Decorah, or the settlement on the other side of the Upper Iowa River, was incorporated in 1878, and legally recognized by a legislative act in 1894. The two settlements, Decorah and West Decorah, did not merge into a single unit until 1902.

Education was important to the community and its settlers as well. The Norwegian Luther College, a private four year liberal arts school, was established in Decorah in 1862 with the purchase of 32 acres for the college. The first building on campus was built in 1865.

Figure 1: Aerial Photo of Decorah







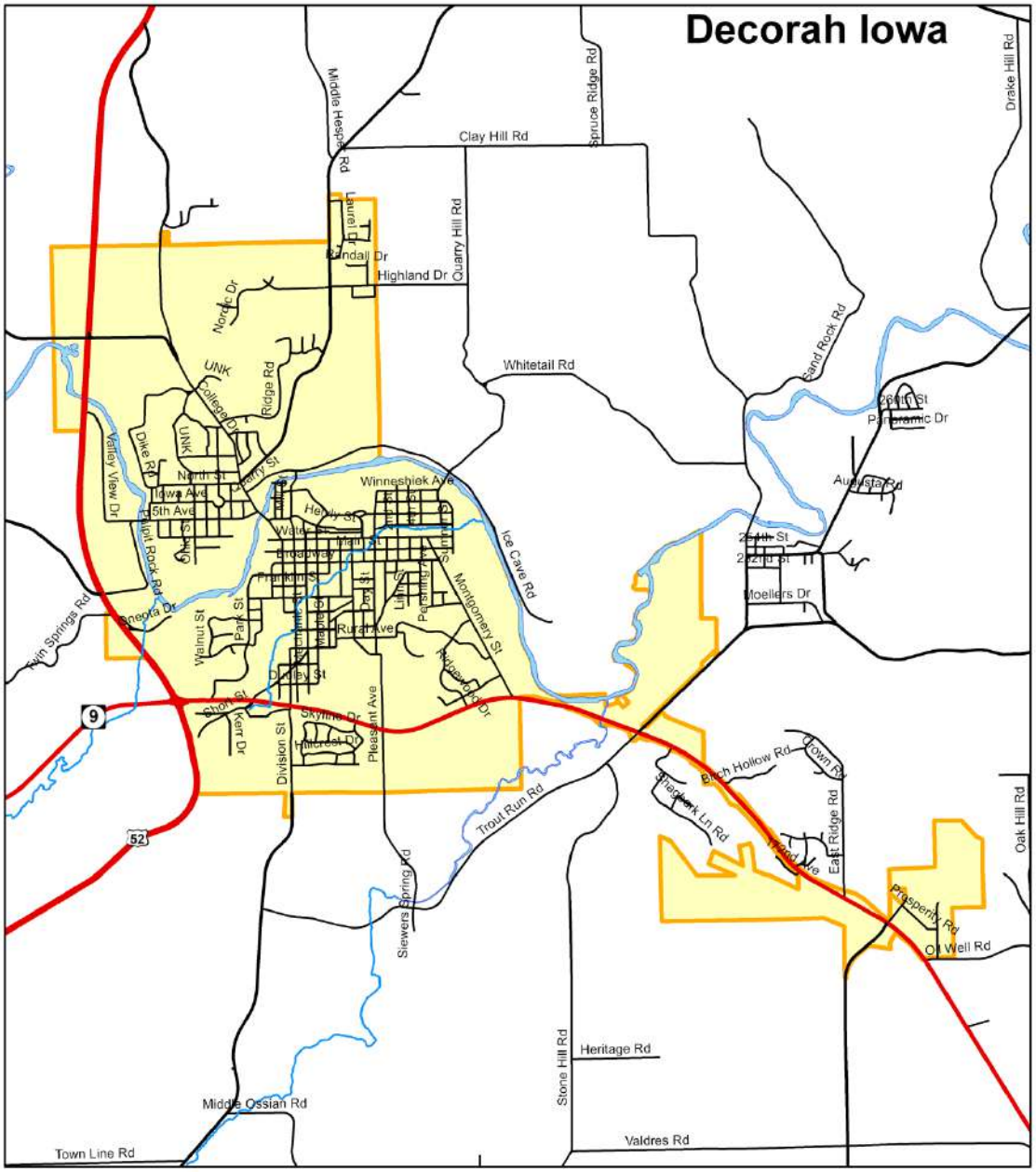


Figure 2 Location Map

CHAPTER 1: ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Photos above by Randy Uhl

1.1 Introduction

Development of Decorah's Comprehensive Plan begins with an overview of the community based on known information from the past to present and projections for the next 20 year planning horizon. This element gives an overview of demographic trends and background information including past, present, and future population; household and employment forecasts; demographic trends; age distribution; education and income levels; and employment characteristics.

All data prior to the year 2000 is from the U.S. Census, and some of the data after the year 2000 is also sourced from the Census. Recently the U.S. Census stopped using the long form and so the data available from the Census is less detailed than it was in the past. Therefore, we will transition to Community Survey Data which is compiled every 5 years and includes much of the data that had been on the long form of the Census. Community Survey Data is sample data and does not represent complete data for each household in the City of Decorah. Figure 3 shows the 2010 Census Tracts.

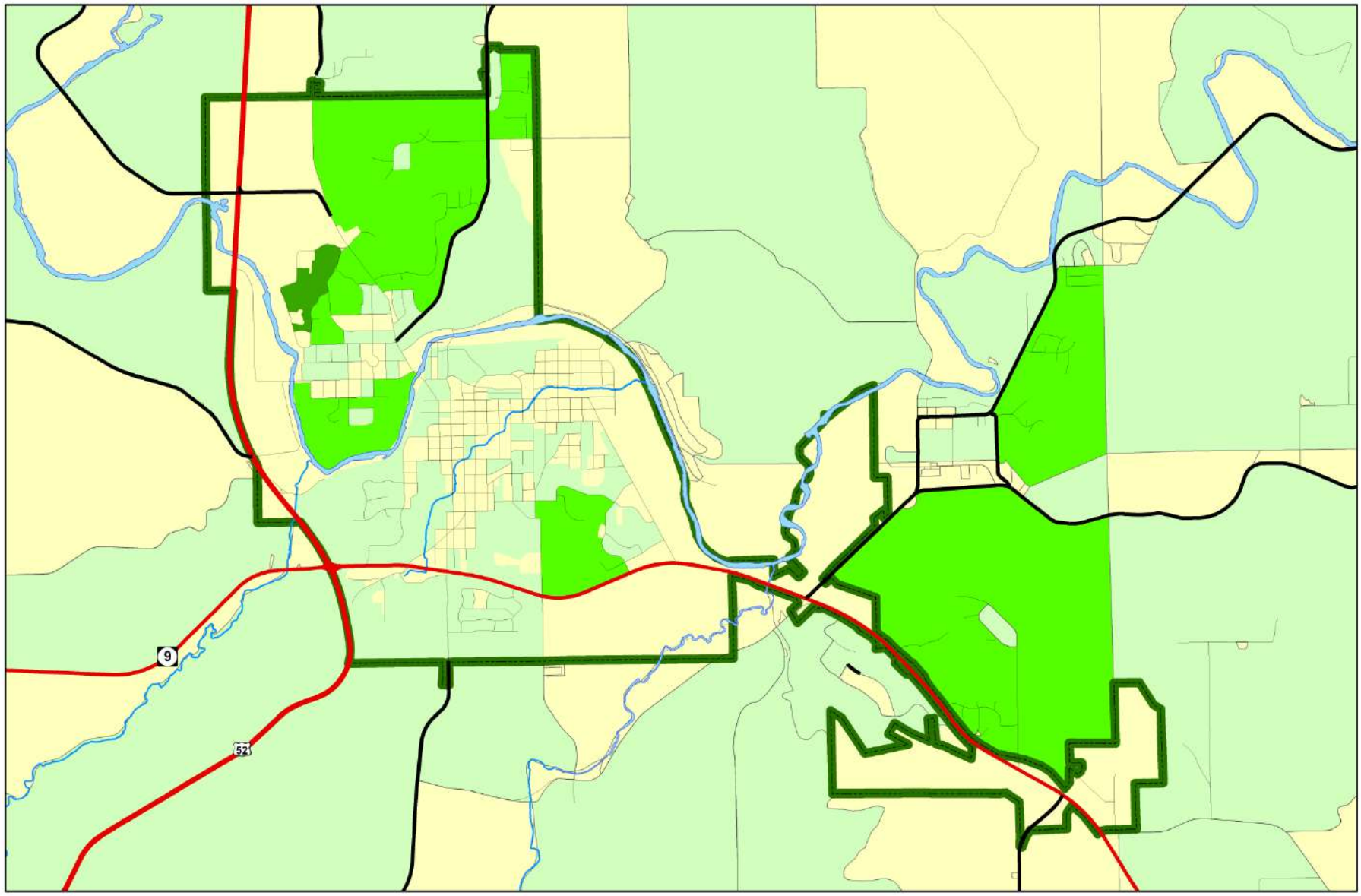


Figure 3 Census Tracts

Census Block Population 0 - 30 31 - 139 140 - 345 346 - 1180

1.2 Community Character

The City of Decorah exhibits a strong sense of place. The rugged limestone cliffs, abundant wildlife, clean streams and natural landscapes all add up to a scenic beauty that attracts many people who enjoy outdoor recreation, both passive and active. Another strong asset is the downtown business district, which showcases the vitality of the community and provides a gathering place that contributes to the city's identity. Decorah is home to varied architecture, and the eclectic mix adds visual interest and charm to the city. Other things that contribute to the character of Decorah are less tangible, like a strong work ethic, Norwegian heritage, and a close-knit community spirit. All these characteristics come together to define a community that is seen as a beautiful and healthy place to live, work, or visit.

1.3 Population Characteristics

The study of population within a Comprehensive Plan is important because it provides a statistical and historical profile of the community. This section of the Plan will provide a variety of information that describes demographic trends and projections compiled for the City of Decorah.

Population Trends

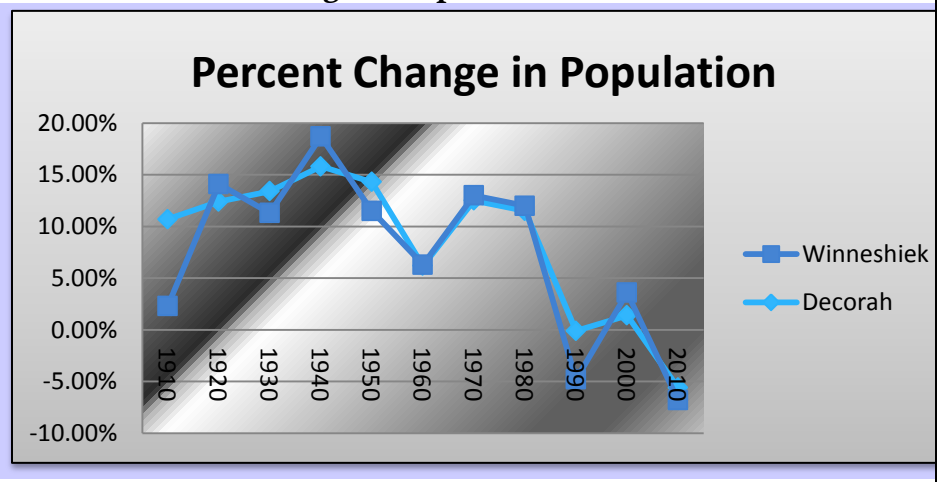
From 1900 to 1980, the City of Decorah's population had steadily risen. However, Decorah saw its population decrease in 1990 and 2010, and there was a minimal increase in 2000 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Historical Population Trends for the City of Decorah & Winneshiek County

Year	Decorah		Winneshiek County	
	Number	Percent Change	Number	Percent Change
1900	3,246	-	23,731	-
1910	3,592	10.70%	21,729	-8.40%
1920	4,039	12.40%	22,091	1.70%
1930	4,581	13.40%	21,630	-2.10%
1940	5,303	15.80%	22,263	2.90%
1950	6,060	14.30%	21,639	-2.80%
1960	6,435	6.20%	21,651	0.10%
1970	7,237	12.50%	21,758	0.50%
1980	8,068	11.50%	21,876	0.50%
1990	8,063	-0.10%	20,847	-4.70%
2000	8,172	1.40%	21,310	2.20%
2010	8,127	-5.6%	21,056	-1.20%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Chart 1: Percent Change in Population



Source: US Census

The chart to the left demonstrates the population changes in Decorah as compared to the County. It is of interest to note that in the last 60 years the county and city almost mirror each other in fluctuation, which may infer that Decorah's population change dramatically affects the county's population.

Table 2 shows the population figures for all of the incorporated communities in Winneshiek County, as well as for the total county and the State of Iowa. In general, this table indicates that half of the jurisdictions declined between 1970 and 1980 while the other half increased; All of the jurisdictions including the county and state declined between 1980 and 1990; some of the jurisdictions including the county and state grew between 1990 and 2000; and between 2000 and 2010 only one community increased in population while the rest, including the county, lost population.

Table 2: Population Trends of Selected Communities

Community	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Calmar	1,053	1,053	1,026	1,058	978
Castalia	210	188	177	175	173
Decorah	**7,237**	**8,068**	**8,063**	**8,172**	**8,127**
Fort Atkinson	339	374	367	389	349
Jackson Junction	106	94	87	60	58
Ossian	847	829	810	853	845
Ridgeway	218	308	295	293	315
Spillville	361	415	387	386	367
Winneshiek County	21,758	21,876	20,847	21,310	21,056
State of Iowa	2,825,368	2,913,808	2,776,755	2,926,324	3,046,355

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3 provides a detailed age breakdown of the city's population, as reported by the U.S. Census, and shows which age cohorts grew and which declined between 2000 and 2010. First, it is important to note that six cohorts increased and six cohorts decreased between the years shown. Second, the largest decrease was in the 35-44 age cohort, while the 55-64 age cohort experienced the greatest increase, both of which could be explained by the aging of the Baby Boomer generation. The largest age cohorts, 15-19 and 20-24, are a reflection of the impact Luther College has on the City of Decorah.

Table 3: Age Cohorts for the City of Decorah

Age Cohort (in years)	2000		2010		% Change
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	
Less than 5	284	3.5	306	3.8	7.7
5-9	298	3.6	334	4.1	12
10-14	361	4.4	318	3.9	-11.9
15-19	1,180	14.4	1,127	13.9	4.5
20-24	1,669	20.4	1,679	20.7	.6
25-34	640	7.8	632	7.7	-1.3
35-44	814	10.0	622	7.7	-23.6
45-54	830	10.2	765	9.4	-7.8
55-64	560	3.3	821	10.1	46.6
65-74	623	7.6	585	7.2	-6.1
75-84	580	7.1	572	7	-1.4
85+	333	4.1	366	4.5	9.9
Total	**8,172**	**100.0**	**8,127**	**100.0**	**-5.5**

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau

Population Projections

Tables 4 & 5 provide population projections or estimates for the City of Decorah based on different scenarios. These projections were made using historical population trends as their basis, and by no means do these projections express an exact population figure for the years 2020 and 2030. An explanation of each of the types of projections follows.

Other factors such as life expectancy, birth and death rates, education, economy and war all affect growth, but for the sake of simplicity we used http://www.metamorphosisalpha.com/ias/population.php population calculator. The growth percentage was calculated using the Constant Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) formula =((End Value/Start Value)^(1/(Periods - 1)) – 1

Table 4: Population Projection A: Based on a Population of 15,000 people by 2020

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Projection	8,647	9,200	9,789	10,415	11,082	11,791	12,546	13,349	14,203	15,112

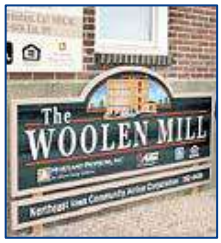
Year	Projection
2011	8,159
2012	8,192
2013	8,224
2014	8,257
2015	8,290
2016	8,324
2017	8,357
2018	8,390
2019	8,424
2020	8,457
2021	8,491
2022	8,525
2023	8,559
2024	8,594
2025	8,628
2026	8,663
2027	8,697
2028	8,732
2029	8,767
2030	8,802

Table 4 above is calculated starting with Decorah's future land use needs estimate of 15,000 people by the year 2020. Using a constant annual growth rate, Decorah would need to average 6.4% population growth per year over the next 10 years to reach that estimate. However, the actual growth rate has been 0.4% for the past three decades. Table 5, to the left, shows the population estimates for Decorah using a 0.4% growth rate. The 15,000 in population is a projection showing high rates of growth which could result from both annexation and development.

Table 5: Population Projection B: Based on the Growth Rate of the Previous 30 Years

Using an annual growth rate based on the last three decades which is 0.4%, Decorah is projected to reach a population of 8,802 by 2030.

CHAPTER 2: HOUSING



2.1 Introduction

Housing Characteristics are related to the social and economic conditions of a community's residents and are an important element of a comprehensive plan. Information in this element will provide data about the current housing stock, as well as identify significant changes in the number of housing units and other housing characteristics. The ability of a community to provide an adequate housing supply for all persons and income levels is key to its economic prosperity and the well-being of its inhabitants.

2.2 Existing Housing Characteristics

Occupancy Characteristics

In addition to reviewing population statistics, a Comprehensive Plan should review pertinent housing data as well. As is the case in most Iowa communities, the predominant type of housing unit in Decorah is the single-family home. Table 6 provides general housing information from the 1990, 2000, and 2010 Censuses. It is important to note that while the number of housing units, occupied and vacant, rose between 1980 and 2000, the number of persons per housing unit declined in all these years.

Table 6: General Housing Information for the City of Decorah

	1990	2000	2010
Total Persons	8,063	8,172	8,127
Total Housing Units	2,836	2,968	3,121
Occupied	2,702	2,819	2,855
Vacant	134	149	266
Persons Per Housing	2.8	2.8	2.6
Number of Households	2,702	2,819	2,855
Number of Families	1,646	1,563	1,527

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 7 provides a comparison of the total number of housing units between the same selected communities that were shown in Table 2. In reviewing this information, it is important to note that Decorah experienced the largest increase in the number of housing units between 2000 and 2010 which was 153 units. In addition, all but one community reported increases in the number of housing units in that same time period.

Table 7: Number of Housing Units in Selected Communities

Community	1990	2000	2010
Calmar	438	482	492
Castalia	83	81	84
Decorah	**2,836**	**2,968**	**3,121**
Fort Atkinson	166	169	170
Jackson Junction	32	24	23
Ossian	333	350	360
Ridgeway	127	137	147
Spillville	179	184	182
Winneshiek County	7,726	8,208	8,721
State of Iowa	1,143,669	1,232,511	1,336,417

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey (sample data)

As for the number of rental units, Table 8 shows this information for selected jurisdictions. Between 1990 and 2000, Decorah reported a slight increase of 3 rental units. However, between 2000 and 2010, the city reported an increase of 37 rental units. As is shown, not all of the other jurisdictions reported the same trends during this same time period.

Table 8: Number of Rental Occupied Units for Selected Communities

Community	1990	2000	*2010
Calmar	106	138	113
Castalia	16	20	7
Decorah	**1,025**	**1,028**	**1,065**
Fort Atkinson	30	33	22
Jackson Junction	13	5	9
Ossian	72	66	61
Ridgeway	40	34	84
Spillville	35	31	26
Winneshiek County	2,103	2,047	1,860
State of Iowa	318,948	317,857	304,318

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; * American Community Survey (sample data)

Median rental rates for selected communities are shown in Table 9. Specifically, the table shows that each of the selected jurisdictions, including Decorah, reported significant increases in their median rents between 1990, 2000, and 2010. The fact that the rentals rates have increased so dramatically, coupled with the fact that the number of rental units have also increased in Decorah, may indicate a demand for rental units in the city.

Table 9: Median Rent for Selected Communities

Community	1990	2000	*2010
Calmar	$256	$341	$492
Castalia	$225	$325	$131
Decorah	**$292**	**$410**	**$512**
Fort Atkinson	$288	$370	$667
Jackson Junction	$213	$325	$663
Ossian	$277	$339	$297
Ridgeway	$229	$270	$414
Spillville	$210	$238	$318
Winneshiek County	$276	$389	$499
State of Iowa	**$259**	**$470**	$607

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; * American Community Survey (sample data)

Housing Permits Issued

Table 10 provides a breakdown of building permits issued by the city over the last decade. Building permits are issued for the buildings themselves, and total units indicate the number of living quarters within those buildings.

Table 10: Building Permits

Type of Housing	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Single Family	21	15	12	10	21	19	13	11	5	5	2
Two Family	1	0	1	4	2	1	2	0	0	0	0
Three or Four Family	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Five or more Family	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total units	29	23	35	18	29	21	17	11	5	5	10

Residential Construction

The chart below shows the number of residences built in Decorah each year from 2000-2010. A housing boom is evident in the middle of the decade, with construction tapering off in more recent years.

Chart 2: Residential Construction in Decorah

Source: Winneshiek County Assessor

Home Value Characteristics

A breakdown of the 2000 and 2010 housing unit values for the city are shown in Table 11. In analyzing this information, the number of housing units in Decorah decreased 59 units between 2000 and 2010. Specifically, the number of units valued at under $50,000 - $99,999 has declined dramatically between 2000 and 2010. Conversely, the number of units valued between $100,000 -$299,999 increased significantly between the two dates shown.

Table 11: Value of Owner-Occupied Single Family Dwelling Units in Decorah

Unit Value Ranges	2000		*2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than	99	6.1	31	2.0
50,000-99,999	778	48.3	328	21.1
100,000-149,999	443	27.5	566	36.5
150,000-199,999	198	12.3	322	20.7
200,000-299,999	82	5.1	233	15
300,000-499,999	2	0.1	64	4.1
500,000 or more	9	0.6	8	.5
Total	**1,611**	**100.0**	**1,552**	**100.0**

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; * American Community Survey (sample data)

In addition the value of the units provides understanding of a community's housing stock and affordability. As in previous tables, Table 12 selects certain jurisdictions and compares their housing values. Decorah had the highest median housing value of the communities shown in 1990, and 2010. It is also important to underscore the fact that all but one of the communities' values increased between 1990, 2000 and 2010.

Table 12: Median Value of Specified Owner Occupied Units in Selected Communities

Community	1990	2000	*2010
Calmar	39,800	67,800	101,100
Castalia	25,800	39,600	78,600
Decorah	**58,000**	**96,000**	**138,700**
Fort Atkinson	38,100	70,300	72,900
Jackson Junction	23,800	101,800	67,900
Ossian	38,500	68,300	102,400
Ridgeway	31,800	55,800	89,100
Spillville	29,600	61,100	94,100
Winneshiek County	50,900	86,000	143,500
State of Iowa	45,500	82,500	115,800

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; * American Community Survey (sample data)

Housing Age Characteristics

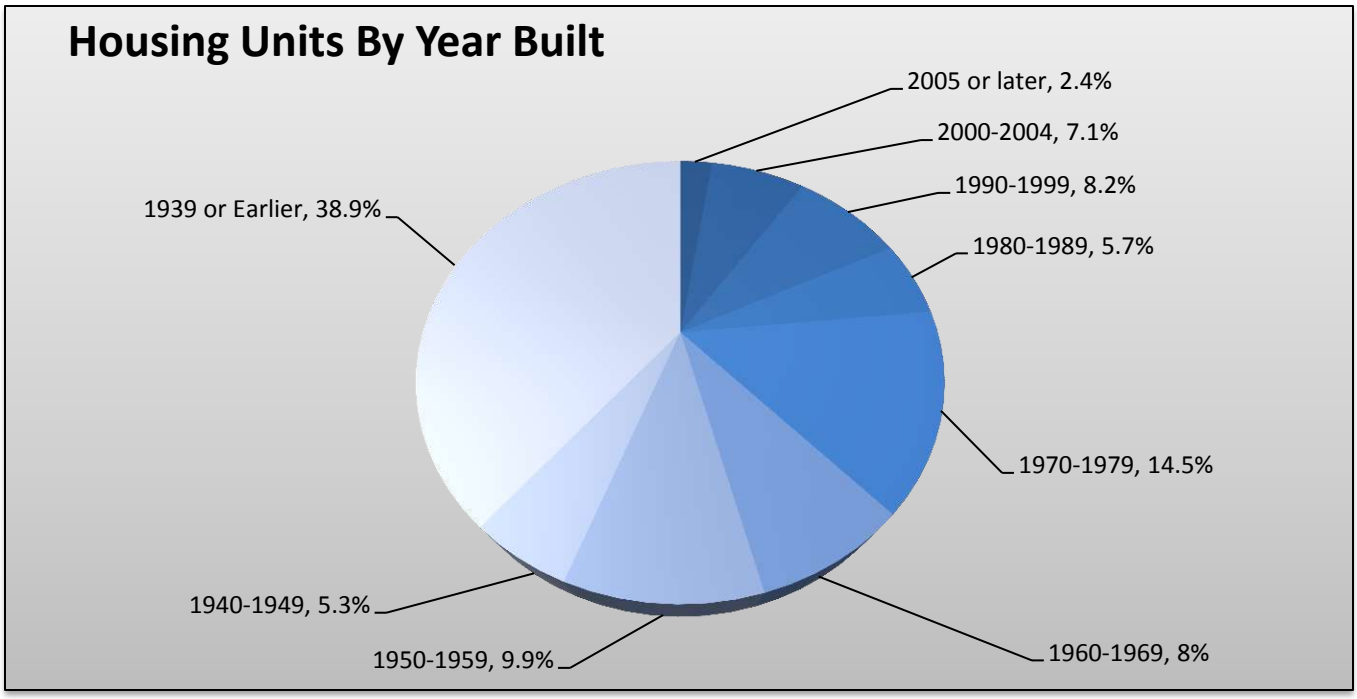
One factor that may provide insight into a community's housing stock is the actual age of the existing units. Table 13 and Chart C show the age, in Census-defined age categories, of existing housing units for Decorah, Winneshiek County, and the State of Iowa. Decorah has a slightly smaller percentage of houses built before 1940 than does Winneshiek County. Conversely, the city has a higher percentage of units that were constructed between 1940 and 1989.

Table 13: Age of Housing Units in 2010

Year Unit was Built	*Decorah		Winneshiek County Percent	State of Iowa Percent
	Number	Percent		
2005 – later	70	2.4	2.5	2.4
2000-2004	207	7.1	7.3	6.6
1990-1999	239	8.2	10.9	11
1980-1989	165	5.7	6.9	7.6
1970-1979	420	14.5	13.4	15.5
1960-1969	232	8.0	5.7	10.6
1950-1959	289	9.9	7.1	11.2
1940-1949	153	5.3	4.0	6.4
1939 - earlier	1,131	38.9	42.3	28.9
Total	2,906	100.0	100.0	100.0

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; * American Community Survey (sample data)

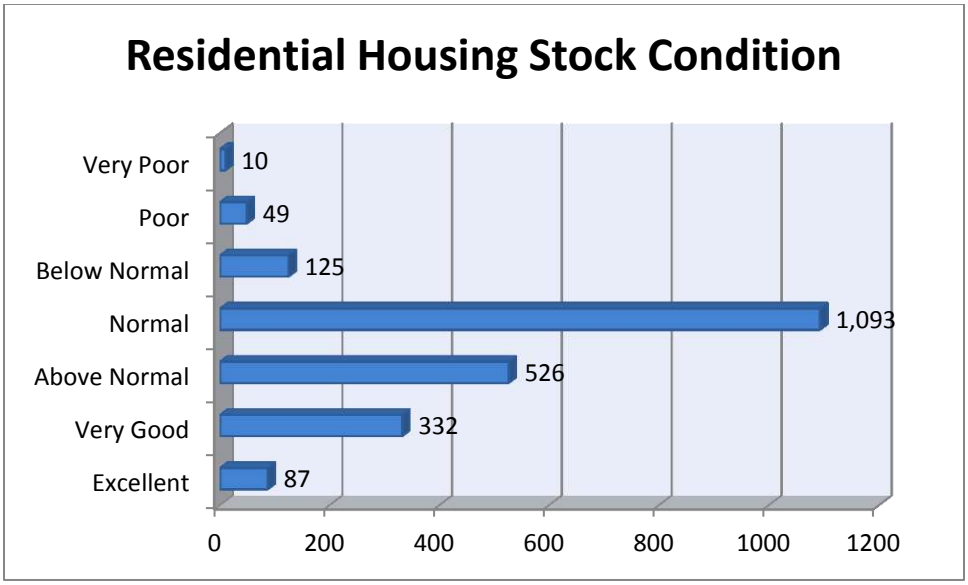
Chart 3: Housing Units by Year Built



Structural Characteristics

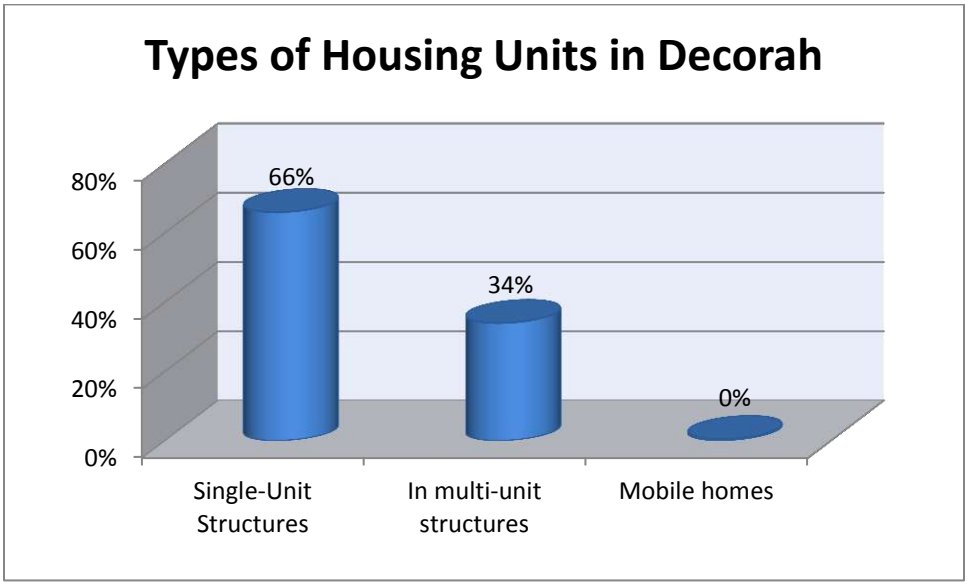
Decorah has 2,222 assessed residential properties (12 of those have no structure on the property). Chart D shows the condition of residential housing in Decorah as determined by the Winneshiek County Assessor. While most residences are in normal condition or better, 184 properties do not meet the minimum standards for normal condition of a residential structure.

Chart 4: Residential Housing Stock Condition



Source: Winneshiek County Assessor

Chart 5: Types of Housing Units in Decorah



Source: Community Survey (sample data) and U.S. Census Bureau

Using the community survey data, Decorah has roughly 2,900 housing units, 10 percent of which were vacant. Of the total housing units, 66 percent are single-unit structures, 34 percent are multi-unit structures, and less than 0.5 percent are mobile homes, as shown in Chart E.

2.3 Projected Housing Characteristics

Tables 14 &15 show the number of housing units that would be necessary to accommodate the population projections as calculated in Tables 4 & 5. The figures in Tables 14 &15 were determined by dividing the population projections in Table 4 by the persons per housing unit ratio of 2.6, which is documented in Table 6. In order to estimate the demand for future housing units in the community, it should be noted that there were 3,121 housing units reported by the Census Bureau in 2010. In addition to assuming that the persons per housing unit ratio (2.6) is suitable for making projections, this study also assumes that the figures in Tables 14 &15 are not affected by vacancy rates and that all of the units existing in 2010 are safe, habitable structures.

Table 14: Housing Unit Projections for the City of Decorah

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Population Projection	8,647	9,200	9,789	10,415	11,082	11,791	12,546	13,349	14,203	15,112
Housing Projection	3,326	3,538	3,765	4,005	4,262	4,535	4,825	5,134	5,463	5,812

Based on a Estimation of 15,000 people by 2020

Table 15: Population and Housing Projections to 2030

Year	Population Projection	Housing Projection
2011	8,159	3,138
2012	8,192	3,150
2013	8,224	3,163
2014	8,257	3,176
2015	8,290	3,188
2016	8,324	3,202
2017	8,357	3,214
2018	8,390	3,227
2019	8,424	3,240
2020	8,457	3,253
2021	8,491	3,266
2022	8,525	3,279
2023	8,559	3,292
2024	8,594	3,305
2025	8,628	3,318
2026	8,663	3,332
2027	8,697	3,345
2028	8,732	3,358
2029	8,767	3,372
2030	8,802	3,385

Based on the Growth Rate of the Previous 30 Years

2.4 Housing Programs

The City of Decorah utilizes several federal and state housing programs to serve its residents.

Section 8 Rental Assistance is HUD's federally funded program to provide rental assistance to low-income families to secure decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing in a non-discriminatory manner from the private rental market.

Homeless Assistance is provided through the Emergency Shelter Operating Grant and the Community Services Block Grant. This program provides cash assistance for rent, deposits and utilities. This program is administered through local Family Service offices.

Future Development
Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation (NEICAC) Housing is currently developing housing resources in all seven counties they serve. Their newest endeavor involved creating housing advisory committees in each county. These committee findings will be used to determine what is missing as part of each county's affordable housing scenario. NEICAC's Board of Directors will then evaluate these findings to guide the Housing program towards its next project.

NEICAC Rent to Own
These are three bedroom homes that are rented for one-three years by a first-time homebuyer family who meets the program's income guidelines. These homes are being built for families who are at an income level that does not exceed 60% of the local average monthly income (AMI). Then, after taking the required Homebuyer Education Classes, the renter can buy the home for about half the cost of construction. The construction cost for one of these homes is about $140,000.

Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)
Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) provides assistance to those individuals that without this assistance would be homeless. To qualify, household income must be 50% or less of the average median income for the county. Income is determined at current monthly gross income projected forward for 12 months. An application may be made through a Family Service office.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
LIHEAP is designed to aid qualifying low-income Iowa households (homeowners and renters) in the payment of a portion of their residential heating costs for the winter heating season, to encourage regular utility payments, to promote energy awareness and to encourage reduction of energy usage through energy efficiency, client education, and weatherization. All clients applying for this program will simultaneously be making an application for weatherization assistance as required by state law.

Northeast Iowa Regional Housing Trust Fund
The Trust fund allows the region to secure necessary resources and funding to address low income housing needs that are currently unassisted. Specifically, the Northeast Iowa Regional Housing Trust Fund is being formed to assist residents in the four-county region with incomes less than 80% of Iowa Statewide Median Family Income (MFI)

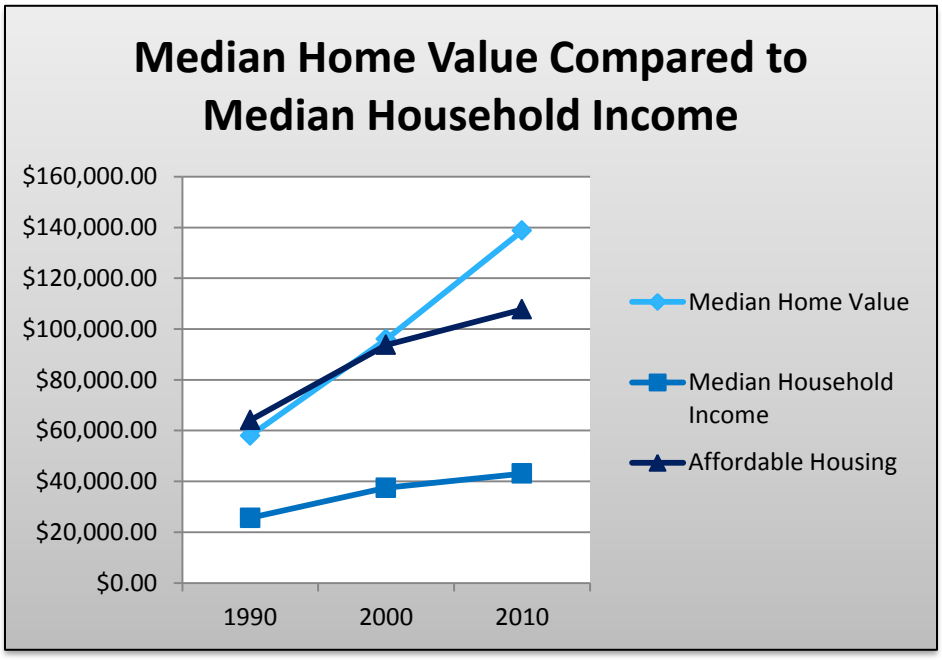
Weatherization Assistance Program
The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) provides many northeast Iowans with the means to remain in their homes in safety, comfort, and affordability. Services include a cost effectiveness energy audit, air leakage checks, insulation, and all combustion appliances inspection for repair and/or replacement. NEICAC's own crews provide all but appliance and furnace repair services.

2.5 Affordable and Accessible Housing

Public affordable housing

Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation which is housed in Decorah maintains two apartment complexes and one duplex specifically dedicated as affordable housing. The first apartment complex is Washington Court, a 16-unit senior apartment facility, built in 1998. This complex is a Low Income Tax Credit Housing development that caters to senior residents 55 years or older who meet certain income guidelines. The second apartment complex is Woolen Mill Apartments, a 15-unit multi-family project. This property is a renovated historical building in downtown Decorah and was opened in 2002. Current and potential tenants must meet certain income guidelines to be eligible. Ridgewood Duplex was built in 2006 and is a four unit duplex that is completely handicapped accessible and has on-site 24 hour/7 day a week support service.

Chart 6: Median Home Value Compared to Median Household Income



Source: Community Survey (sample data) and U.S. Census Bureau

The chart to the left identifies median home value and median household income. The definition of affordable housing is no more than 2.5 to 3 times your annual median household income (See Table 16); Decorah is at 3.2 times the median household income. This places Decorah in the moderately unaffordable range.

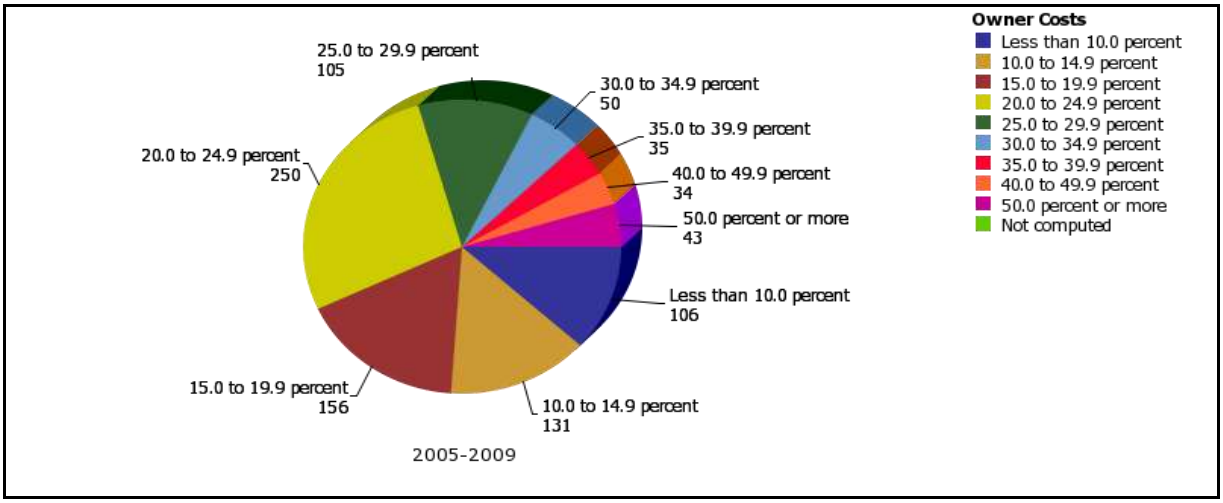
	1990	2000	2010
Median Home Value	$58,000.00	$96,000.00	$138,700.00
Median Household Income	$25,660.00	$37,485.00	$43,099.00
Affordable Housing	$64,150.00	$93,712.00	$129,297.00

Table 16: Housing Affordability Ratings Housing Affordability Ratings

Severely Unaffordable	5.1 or more
Seriously Unaffordable	4.1 - 5.0
Moderately Unaffordable	3.1 - 4.0
Affordable	3.0 or less

Source: Demographia

Chart 7: Monthly Owner Cost as a Percentage of Household Income



Source: Data and Pie chart from Iowa Data Center

Affordable housing can also be defined by the generally accepted definition of affordability being a household paying no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. Using the data above; of the 910 sample size, roughly 748 or 82% of Decorah residents have affordable housing.

http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/

Residential Sales Trends

The data on the following page shows residential sales trends over the past 10 years. The City of Decorah, along with the United States in general, experienced a rapid increase in both the sales price and volume of sales beginning in 2000 and peaking in 2006. This was followed by a rapid decrease in the number of sales, reaching a low for Decorah in 2009. It is interesting to note that the average sales price decreased slightly between 2006 and 2007 and more significantly between 2008 and 2009. The average sales price in 2010 was almost 1.4 times higher than the year 2000, and it appears a recovery from the housing crisis began in 2009.

DECORAH RESIDENTIAL
SALES TREND - YEARS: 2000-2010

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
# OF SALES	116	121	101	120	105	112	142	113	86	66	82
AVERAGE SALE PRICE	$ 99,780	$ 108,580	$ 110,540	$ 115,140	$ 119,040	$ 134,280	$ 137,680	$ 137,270	$ 143,980	$ 136,460	$ 139,560

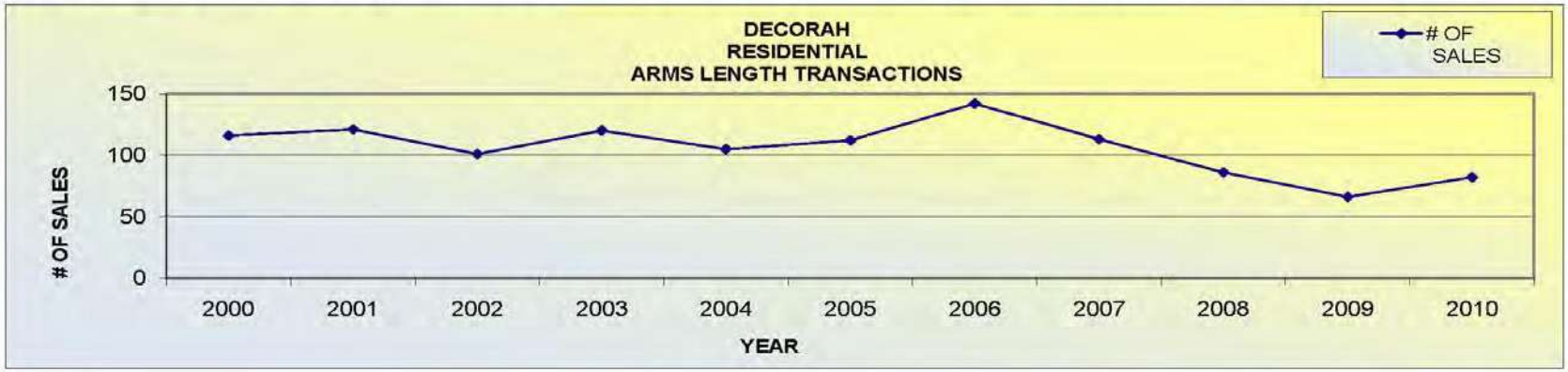


Table 17: Residential Sales Trends

Source: Winneshiek County Assessor

Chart 8: Residential ARMS Length Transactions

Chart 9: Residential Average Sale Price

2. 6 Housing Summary

The City of Decorah generally has an adequate supply of well-maintained dwellings to house its citizens. There are indications that homes in Decorah are just entering the moderately unaffordable range, with home sale prices and rent increases outpacing any increases in income. More diversity in housing types and more affordable housing are issues the city will work toward improving.

2.7 Housing Policies

- A variety in the type of housing construction should be encouraged and supported to meet the housing needs of the population. The housing mix should reflect anticipated trends to higher density development, and demands for affordable housing, while being compatible with existing residential density and development. Housing types may include apartments, townhouses, and single family dwellings, including manufactured housing and mobile homes.

- Any development in and around areas of the city meeting the criteria as a "historically significant area" should recognize and preserve the historic setting, architecture character and architectural design characteristics of the buildings and area of the city.
  a. The committee should define and develop identification criteria for what is "*historically significant areas*" and define "*and around*" with community's input during ordinance development.

- Abatement of air and noise pollution will be encouraged in residential areas.

- Appropriate buffering should be provided between residential and other land uses.

CHAPTER 3: TRANSPORTATION

Photos 2 and 4 above by Randy Uhl

3.1 Introduction

The transportation network is the backbone upon which a community bases its economy; access to resources and connection to other communities form a critical link to continued development and growth. Maintenance and repair, in addition to periodic additions and enhancement of this system, are essential for preserving connectivity for county residents, visitors, and businesses. Keeping pace with changes in transportation trends and network use is also essential to anticipate needed improvements and potential additions to the transportation network.

3.2 Inventory of Existing Transportation Facilities

Transportation facilities in the City of Decorah are basic facilities ranging from city roads to state highways, as well as a trails and sidewalks. Residents of Decorah rely on personal vehicles to meet most of their transportation needs. Decorah offers a fairly extensive trail and sidewalk system for a community of its size, giving residents safe access throughout the community. Other modes of transportation include private taxi service and a transit service provided by Northeast Iowa Community Action.

3.3 Functional Classification System

Chapter 306 of the Code of Iowa provides for the functional classification of all highways, roads, and streets in the state into categories according to the character of service they provide. The classification of streets and roads in each county is periodically updated to be current with city boundary changes and the function of the streets. The classification system serves as a basis for determining future priorities, funds distribution, and jurisdiction over the various highway, roads, and streets in the state.

Municipal streets are classified into three categories: the municipal arterial system, the municipal collector system, and the municipal service system. Municipal streets that provide continuity to the state primary and county secondary road systems are classified as extensions to these systems. These range from freeway-expressway, arterial, and arterial connectors to trunk and trunk collectors. Figure 4 shows the functional classification of streets and roads in the city and the planning area, as provided by the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT).

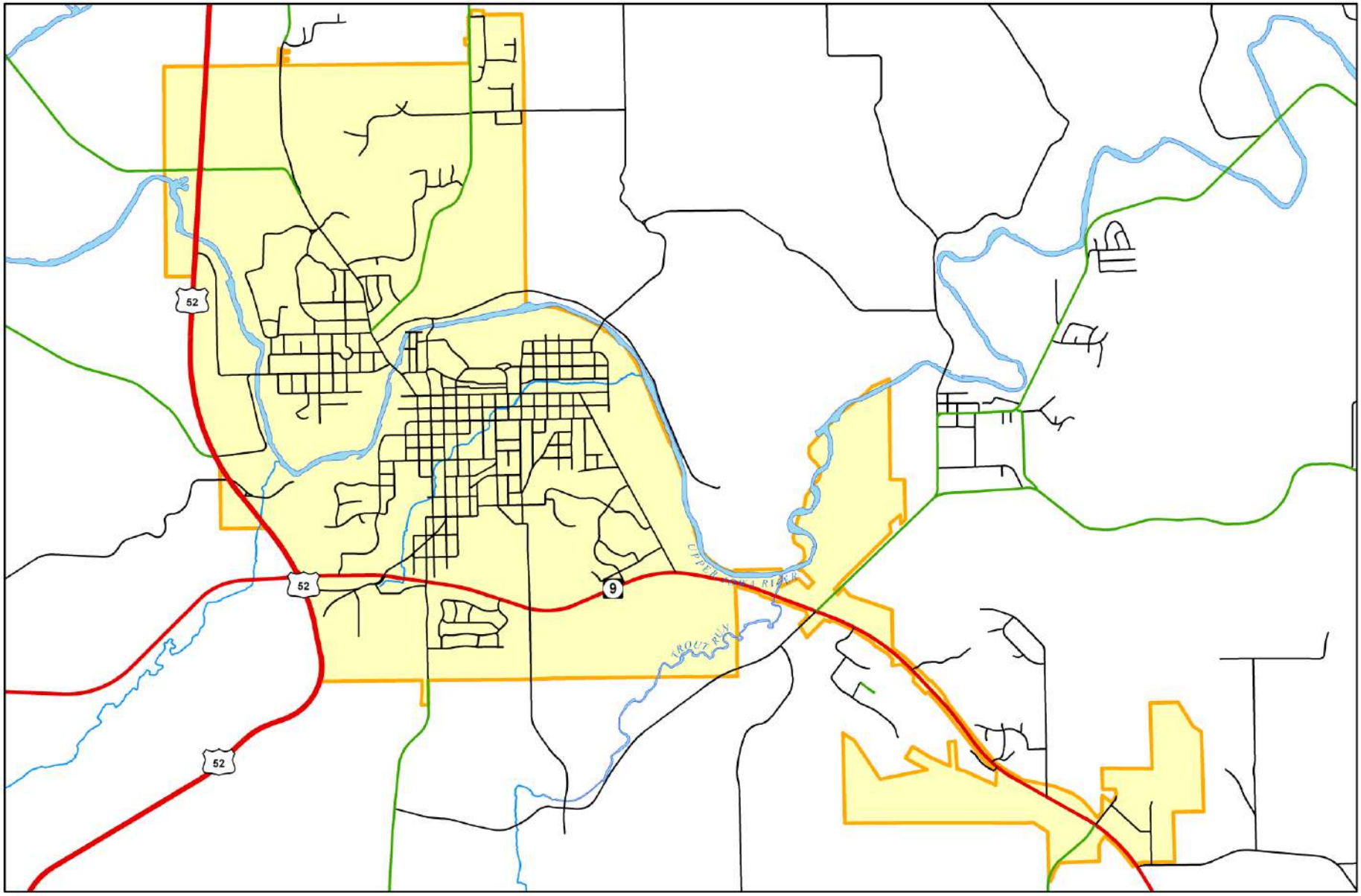


Figure 4 Federal Functions Classification

The freeway-expressway system includes those roads that connect and serve major urban and regional areas with high volume and long-distance traffic movements. There are no roads in the county or the city classified as part of the freeway-expressway system. The nearest freeway-expressway roads are I- 90 (54 miles), I-380 (82 miles) and I-35 (87 miles).

The arterial system includes those roads which connect minor arterials (arterial connectors) to the freeway-expressway system and serve long-distance movements of traffic. Minor arterials or arterial connectors include streets and roads which serve as major traffic carriers for short distances, providing connections to the arterial and freeway-expressway system. Highway 9 and 52, and Highway 150 located further to the south, are classified as part of the arterial system.

The trunk system includes county roads that serve principal traffic generators and connect such areas to other trunk roads and to the arterial and freeway-expressway systems. Trunk extensions in the city include Short Street, Mechanic Street, Locust Road, Water Street, Division Street, and segments of Pole Line Road, and College Drive. These streets function as a trunk extension of County Road W38. Other trunk roads in the planning area include County Roads W30 and A34 west of the city, and County Road W42 southeast of the city.

Several streets in the city have been designated as municipal arterials. These streets serve the principal local traffic generators and connect such areas to other municipal arterials and the primary road system. Municipal arterials include Montgomery Street, Water Street, Fifth Avenue, Pulpit Rock Road, Pole Line Road, Locust Road, Mechanic Street, Short Street, and College Drive.

The municipal collectors in the city and trunk collectors in the rural areas collect traffic from the local service streets and roads and connect to the arterial streets systems. As indicated in Figure 4, several north-south and east-west streets in the city are classified as collectors. County Road W38 located south of Decorah is classified as a trunk collector. County Roads W38, A52, and A64 serving the Freeport community are also classified as trunk collectors which collect and feed traffic to Highway 9.

The principal east-west municipal collectors in Decorah include Broadway Street, Railroad Avenue, and Pearl Street. The principal north-south municipal collectors are Washington Street, Division Street, College Drive, Pleasant Avenue, A52 (Old Stage Road), and Ravine Street. The remaining streets are classified as local service streets that provide access to adjoining properties and connect to the collector and arterial street systems.

3.4 Traffic Volumes

Traffic counts made by the IDOT in 2009 indicate that the most heavily traveled street in Decorah is Montgomery Street. The traffic volumes on this street varied from 9,700 at IA Highway 9 to 11,000 vehicles per day in the block located directly south of the intersection with E. Main Street. The principal arterial in Decorah is Highway 9, which according to the 2009 IDOT traffic counts, had average daily traffic volumes between 14,100 and 6,100 vehicles per day in the segment between the west corporate limits and Old Stage Road intersection. U.S. Highway 52 had average traffic volumes of almost 4,800 vehicles per day south of the intersection with Highway 9. Segments of Water Street and College Drive had traffic volumes of 7,700 and 10,100 vehicles per day respectively. Mechanic Street/Short Street had a high traffic volume of 8,300 vehicles per day. Other streets with relatively high traffic volumes include Fifth Avenue with 2,500 vehicles per day, Broadway Street with 4,300 vehicles per day, and Division Street with 1,910 vehicles per day.

Significant traffic count and pattern changes since the 1989 counts are primarily due to commercial development changes east of town. This has resulted in decreased traffic counts in the southwest area of Decorah, although the Short Street corridor traffic has continued to grow. Traffic east of Montgomery Street has approximately doubled over this period.

3.5 Streets

Chapter 306 of the Code of Iowa provides for the functional classification of all highways, roads, and streets in the state into categories according to the character of service they provide. The classification of streets and roads in each county is periodically updated to be current with city boundary changes and the function of the streets. The classification system serves as a basis for determining future priorities, funds distribution, and jurisdiction over various highways, roads, and streets in the state.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) also has a classification system which is similar to the state functional classification system. In addition, the U.S. DOT has established a classification of roads that are part of the Federal-Aid Eligible System. This system identifies routes qualified for financial aid allocated for improving that system.

The City of Decorah has 50.3 miles of surfaced streets open to traffic and approximately 2 additional miles of platted streets not open to traffic. 30.3 miles of surfaced streets are asphalt or asphalt over concrete. 17.4 miles of streets are concrete and the remainder are crushed rock, seal coat, or brick.

The pavement width of the streets in Decorah varies from 24 feet to 65 feet. Water Street in the central business district has a 46-foot pavement width. The predominant pavement width is in the range of 31 feet to 36 feet.

The original street system, which developed in a grid pattern, has predominantly 66-foot right-of-way. Broadway Street has an 80-foot right-of-way. The right-of-way width in west Decorah is predominantly 75 feet. Mechanic Street has a 66-foot right-of-way. Montgomery Street and Short Street have 66-foot and wider right-of-way.

Highways 9 and 52 have considerably greater right-of-way widths than municipal streets; varying from 300 feet to over 600 feet.

The subdivisions located in the northwest and south parts of the city have street right-of-way widths of 66-feet and pavement widths of 36-feet as required by Decorah's prior subdivision ordinances. More recent developments reflect the change to 60-foot right-of-way and 31-foot streets allowed as a result of the previous planning period policy changes. The pavement on local subdivision streets typically consist of 3-inches of asphaltic concrete over 8 to 10-inches of stone base.

The age of existing street surfacing still in use varies considerably from the pre-1930 period on segments of Main Street, Broadway Street, and Mechanic Street to new streets that have been developed in the recent subdivisions. Many of the older streets are Portland cement concrete that have been overlaid with asphaltic concrete. During the 1970s and early 1980s many streets were paved with asphaltic concrete over stone base. Many of these streets are located in west Decorah, and in the southwest and northeast parts of east Decorah.

Decorah has an ongoing street improvement program of paving unpaved streets and resurfacing and replacing existing pavement in the city.

Over 95% of city streets are hard surfaced. A considerable number of street miles have been resurfaced or repaved during the previous planning period due in large part to a one cent local option sales tax adopted at the beginning of that period. Major street reconstruction during that time has included a majority of the downtown street system including Water Street and many adjoining side streets.

New streets added during the planning period include those annexed east along Highway 9, Decorah Business Park streets, and Park Street extension along with those in new developments.

The city continues to reconstruct many of the major arterial streets, as much of this system was originally state highway built in the 1920s. This will include Short Street north and south of IA Highway #9, College Drive north, Industrial Drive, and most of the remainder of Water Street. Other major streets expected to require significant reconstruction during the planning period include Heivly Street, Locust Road, Pole Line Road, and Ice Cave Road.

Table 18: Street Surfacing

Surfacing	Miles	Percent
Portland Cement Concrete	17.38	29.72%
Asphalt Over Stone Base	25.46	43.54%
Portland Cement Concrete with Asphalt Overlay	5.85	10.00%
Oil and Chips over Stone Base	0.75	1.28%
Brick	0.12	0.21%
Brick with Asphalt Overlay	0.19	0.32%
Crushed Rock	0.44	0.75%
Platted, Not Open to Traffic (Undeveloped)	1.59	2.72%
State / U.S. Highways	6.7	11.46%
TOTAL	**58.48**	**100.00%**

Source: Erdman Engineering

3.6 Traffic Controls

There are 13 signaled intersections in Decorah. Seven of the traffic signals are located along Water Street in the central business district. Other signaled intersections include College Drive at Fifth Avenue and Heivly Street, and the intersections of IA Highway 9 and at Old Stage Road/Trout Run Road, and Short Street. All signaled intersections with the exception of the highway intersections are interconnected and master controlled at the Law Enforcement Center. The highway intersections may also eventually be interconnected via a Fiber Optic Network project presently under development.

Justification of traffic signals is based on the volume of traffic on major and minor streets, and also on pedestrian traffic, in accordance with provisions outlined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). As the traffic volumes increase and traffic patterns change with future development or redevelopment of areas in Decorah, additional signalization of street intersections may be required. Currently intersection congestion and accident histories do not appear to support additional signals. The intersection of College Drive at Locust Road may be the eventual exception to this.

Most of the other street intersections in Decorah are controlled by two-way or four-way stop and yield signs. Traffic control with stop signs generally provides for traffic movement along the principal streets leading to the central business district. The installation of traffic signs is based on design criteria established in the MUTCD.

Street signage is currently under review and inventory updating per new Federal signage mandates which are to be implemented from 2012 thru 2015.

Street Department

The City of Decorah Street Department is responsible for 58.48 miles of streets (see Table 17) and 7.2 miles of alleys, as well as many parking lots in the downtown area. The Street Department is located at 108 Railroad Avenue, and the duties of the streets department are listed below.

Duties of the Street Department

- Repair minor street damage and pot holes
- Repair and replace curbing
- Maintain ditches in right-of-way
- Install and maintain all city street signs and pavement markings
- Clean streets with a street sweeper
- Maintain storm water intakes
- Maintain Dry Run Flood Control Project-including mowing, removing encroaching vegetation, and removing excessive sediment buildup
- Discharge interior ponding waters during periods of high river stages
- Clean-up and remove storm damage to trees
- Operate the Yard Waste Site - including recycling yard waste into compost and processing brush and small tree limbs into wood chips for use by anyone

Street Department's Major Equipment:

- Two Motor Graders
- Two End Loaders
- Single Axle Dump Trucks
- Tractor and Disc Mower
- Street Sweeper
- Brush Chipper
- Bucket Truck
- ½ Ton Pickups
- Spray Patcher
- Snow Blower
- 12" Tractor-Driven Flood Pumps

3.7 Modes of Transportation

Railroad

Although there are no railroads in the City of Decorah, The Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern (DM&E) Rail Line serves the southern portion of Winneshiek County. This cargo train passes through the towns of Castalia, Ossian, Calmar, Fort Atkinson and Jackson Junction. There is no passenger train service available nearby.

Air Transportation

The Decorah Municipal Airport, a general utility airport which is classified as a Class B II Airport, is located southeast of the city along Highway 9. The airport is owned by the city and sits on 154 acres. The airport has one operational runway, Runway 11/29, which is 4,000 feet long by 75 feet wide and constructed of concrete. The concrete strength is 28,000 pounds single wheel loading. The runway is lighted with medium intensity runway lights (MIRL), and a runway-end identification light (REIL) at both thresholds, and has basic runway markings. There is a non-precision instrument approach on Runway 29. Other buildings at the airport include 16 rental hangars, and the airport also provides jet fuel and aviation gas for purchase and a full-time Fixed Base Operator. There are approximately 25 aircraft operations per day or 9,000 operations each year. Of this total, 55% is local general aviation and 45% is transient general aviation. The airport has 25 aircrafts based on the field, with 24 single engine planes, and one Ultralight.

http://www.airnav.com/airport/KDEH

Public Transportation/Mass Transit

Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation – Northeast Regional Transit (NRT) is the designated Regional Public Transit System providing transportation services to the general public in the five-county northeastern corner of Iowa. With a fleet of 52 vehicles, of which 48 vehicles are ADA handicapped accessible, NRT provides the only form of public transportation available in five of the seven counties served by NRT. The Transit is a curb-to-curb public transit service, which means the driver will pick up and drop off at curbside. Riders needing additional assistance may request door-to-door service, which means the driver will be available to assist the rider to and from the main entry door and the transit vehicle.

The City of Decorah provides $14,000 to NRT to assist with discounting Hometown Taxi rides for any Decorah resident 60 years or older. NRT also puts $14,000 toward this effort, bringing the total available to subsidize elderly riders in Decorah to $28,000 each year. Hometown Taxi delivers monthly rider log sheets by category totals to NRT and NRT pays out $1.50 per elderly ride to Hometown. In addition, another organization in Decorah, the Depot, a faith-based organization, pays NRT $7,000.00 to assist with granting $1.00 off any ride that Hometown gives to any person with a disability. An elderly person with a disability can only claim the elderly subsidy and not the disability subsidy.

Private Transportation

There are several private taxi companies in Decorah, including Q- King Taxi, Hometown Taxi, and Sarge and Marge Taxi. Some of these offer reduced rates for senior citizens, students and handicapped people. Service for long-distance regional travel, nights and holidays are provided through some of these companies. Hawkeye Stages is a charter bus company operating in Decorah serving tour groups.

Multi-Use Trails

The residents of the Decorah area are fortunate to have access to a growing network of recreational trails, as is shown in Figure 5. Currently, there are 12 miles of paved trails and 15 miles of off-road trails, which were host to the first mountain bike race in the state of Iowa. Decorah is in the process of finishing the extension of the Trout Run Trail, which forms a circular scenic path around the City of Decorah.

Decorah has a fairly extensive sidewalk system that has been maintained and improved through a series of public and private activities. These include a property owner notification program for maintenance requirements, city cost sharing considerations for needs beyond the nominally required widths and parameters, conversion to current ADA standards for crosswalks in construction projects, and the addition of walks in previously unserved areas. The long range objective is to provide consistent sidewalk facilities throughout the city to the extent possible.

Since the previous planning period a considerable change has occurred in regard to recreational trail facilities. Prior to this the city did have some bicycle-oriented facilities in paths along College Drive from the bridge to the swimming pool and along Montgomery Street. An initial independent recreational trail was constructed along Oneota Drive (Dug Road) and the Upper Iowa River north of downtown to Wold Park in the 1990's. This facility was a two mile 8-foot wide asphalt path that is presently being expanded into an 11 mile paved loop around the south half of the Decorah area.

The final portions of the loop are expected to be constructed in 2011-2012. Along with this are extensive trail links to other destinations such as the campground and college (Fifth Avenue) and the eastern commercial district (Walmart area). A second step in encouraging utilization of the trail will be the networking of sidewalk access links. These have already begun or are in the planning stage in areas such as the high school and downtown.

There is potential and interest in expansion of the system to include Freeport area access, Prairie Farmer Trail access, expanded Luther area access, and additional facilities including a possible trail head.

In addition to the paved trails, an extensive off-road unpaved trail system has also been developed in the Van Peenen Park and surrounding areas.

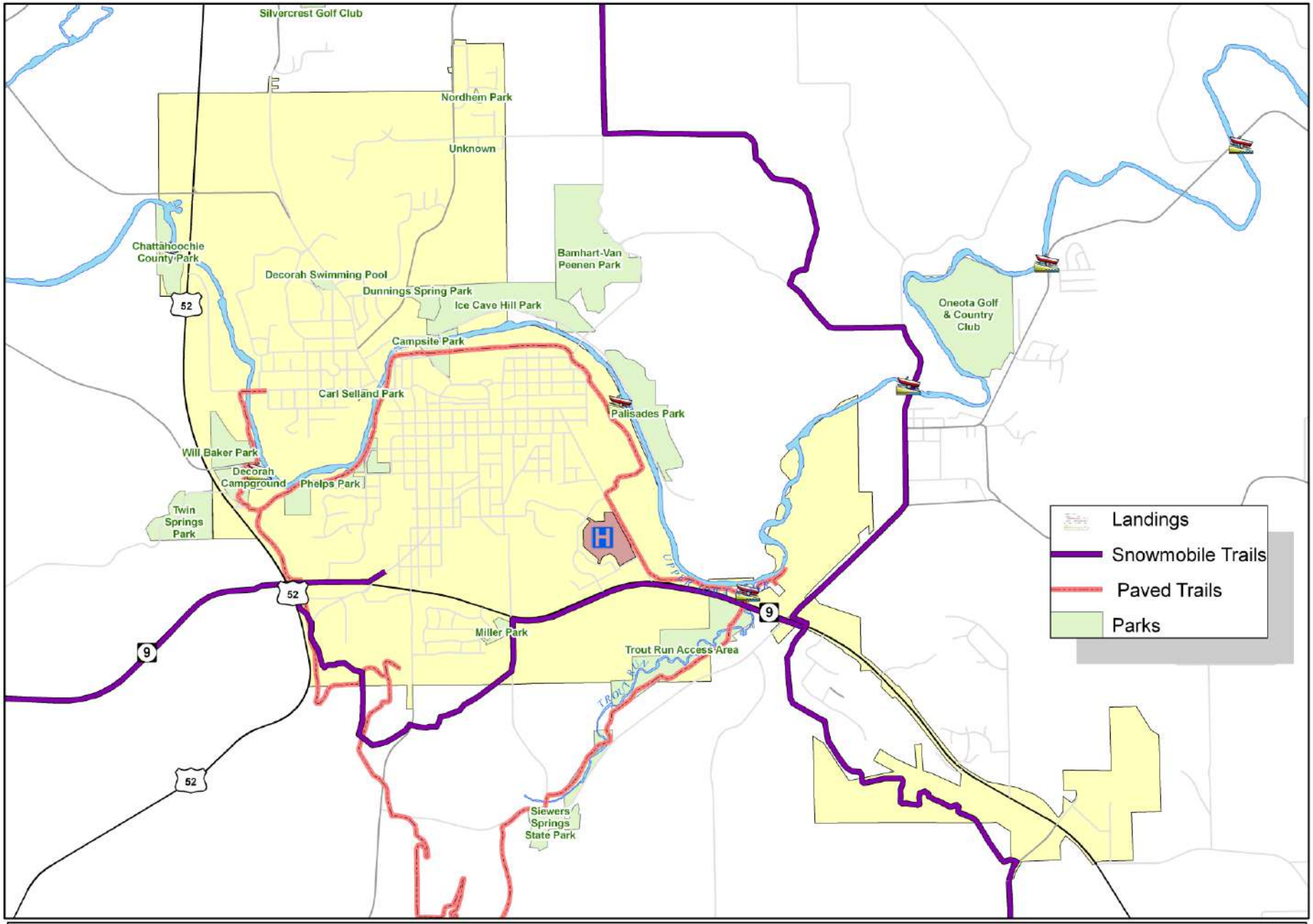


Figure 5 Recreational Trails & Landings

3.8 Summary of Existing Transportation Plans

State, regional, and county agencies have developed guidance and improvement schedules for roadways and infrastructure under their responsibility. It is important that the City of Decorah and these agencies continue to communicate on proposed implementation schedules and coordinate local and regional activities. State, regional, and county plans are identified below.

20 Year Regional Transportation Development Plan

The Transportation Development Plan represents a 20 year plan to encourage and promote the development of transportation systems embracing various modes of transportation in a manner that will serve communities and counties in our region as well as the entire state efficiently and effectively.

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a four-year financial program that describes the schedule for obligating federal funds to state and local projects which are identified by local communities and counties. The TIP contains funding information for all modes of transportation including highways and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) as well as transit capital and operating costs. State, regional and local transportation agencies update the program each year to reflect priority projects in the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP).

State of Iowa Transportation Plan

The State develops a long-range statewide transportation plan, with a minimum 20-year forecast period at the time of adoption, which provides for the development and implementation of the multimodal transportation system for the State.

3.9 Transportation Summary

The City of Decorah's recreational trail system is above average and is an asset to the community. In general the transportation system is adequate and serves the needs of the community. One area with room for improvement is increased public transportation. Like almost all communities, maintenance and repair of the transportation infrastructure is a priority and requires the most resources.

3.10 Transportation Policies

- The major street plan should be maintained in a way that is integrated with the regional street system and reflects major traffic generators and adjacent land-use patterns.

- Standards for major and local streets should be developed and enforced in the subdivision ordinance and city standard specifications to insure adequate right-of-way, pavement width, street access, and dedication of street right-of-way prior to development. Statewide Urban Design and specifications (SUDAS) guidelines should be considered for planning and construction.

- Provision of frontage drives and limited access along Highways 9 and 52 that provide for adequate traffic control and land-use development should be encouraged.

- Residential areas and residential local service streets should be protected from the impact of industrial traffic by enforcement of truck routes in the city, to the greatest extent possible.

- The street improvement program priorities should generally be based on existing and future traffic volumes based on land use projections and street maintenance evaluations.

- Alternative traffic routes between the outlying areas and the city should be considered as traffic volumes warrant.

- Various options regarding mass transit to serve Decorah should be explored, including the development of a regional transportation center.

- Continued improvements and development at the Decorah Municipal Airport should be in accordance with an updated airport master plan. The development of a regional airport should be considered.

- Use of the airport by commuter aircraft should be promoted.

- Streets should be planned with consideration for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. This should include new development as well as street redevelopment.

- Access Management for major streets should be encouraged and implemented and utilize SUDAS guidelines as a reference for new and existing streets.

CHAPTER 4: UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Photos above by Randy Uhl

4.1 Introduction

Community facilities are buildings, lands, services, and programs that serve the public, such as parks, schools, police and fire protection, health care facilities, solid waste and recycling facilities, and libraries. This element identifies and evaluates existing utilities and community facilities serving the City of Decorah. Understanding the location, use, and capacity of community facilities and utilities is an important consideration when planning for the future. Water and wastewater treatment systems are municipally owned and operated. Alliant Energy provides electrical service and Black Hills Energy provides natural gas service.

Luther College is in the process of installing a 1.6 megawatt wind turbine projected to produce 5.2 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year. This will provide approximately one-third of the college's annual electricity consumption.

4.2 Sanitary Sewer Service

The existing sanitary sewage system is municipally owned and operated. The system, made up of laterals, trunk, and outfall sewers, conveys the wastewater to wastewater treatment plant for treatment and discharge to the Upper Iowa River, east of Decorah.

The sewer system is made up of 8, 10, 12, 15, 18, 24 and 30-inch pipes and three pumping lift stations. The pumping lift stations serve the extreme northwest and north parts of the developed city. Figure 11 shows the major trunk and outfall sewers of the Decorah, and the Freeport Water and Sanitary Sewer District systems.

Major improvements to the sewerage system were made from 1984 to 1986, when the new wastewater treatment plant, the 18-inch and 30-inch trunk, and the 30-inch outfall sewers were built. Several pumping lift stations and the previous wastewater treatment facility were eliminated.

The majority of the original sewer system built in 1919 and 1920 consists of vitrified clay pipe. The trunk and outfall sewers from the 1985 project are reinforced concrete pipe. Generally sewers constructed since about 1990 on are PVC.

The unincorporated Freeport community is served by the Freeport Water and Sanitary Sewer District. The original sanitary sewer system of the district was constructed in the period between 1984 and 1986. The sewers of the district vary in size from 8-inch to 10-inch diameter pipe. The wastewater from the district is treated by the Decorah wastewater treatment facility per a City/County 28E agreement.

The city continues to review sewers due to age of the original system and capacities related to growth. A larger trunk sewer has been planned in phases to serve southeast Decorah as growth and redevelopment occurs in this area. The same is true for a future bypass of Locust Road sewers directly to the main trunk sewer via Quarry Street. Industrial, business, and residential growth has also resulted in planned trunk sewer extensions east to the Decorah Business Park / Airport areas.

Waste Water Treatment Facility

The existing wastewater treatment facility, built in the period between 1984 and 1986, is an activated sludge, secondary treatment facility. The plant consists of a pumping station, grit removal facility, two primary clarifiers, three aeration basins, three final clarifiers and a chlorinator. The sludge is processed in two anaerobic digesters where it is stabilized and then applied on nearby farm land. In 2004, the plant underwent several improvements that included, ultraviolet disinfection, new main pumping station equipment including controls, new ventilation equipment, and a new one million gallon biosolids storage tank. The cost of the improvements was approximately $1,400,000 and financed through a State Revolving Fund Loan.

The facility is design to treat an average wet weather flow (wet month) of 4.92 million gallons per day (mgpd), and a peak hourly wet weather flow of 6.9 mgpd. The design parameters for the treatment facility are listed on the following page:

Average Wet Weather Flow:	4.92 mgpd
Maximum Wet Weather Flow:	5.43 mgpd
Peak Hourly Wet Weather Flow (peak day):	6.90 mpgd
Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD_5):	3,900 pounds per day (ppd) (average)
Suspended Solids:	3,600 ppd (average)

During the 2010 calendar year, the average raw water influent rate to the plant was 1.3 mgpd, and the maximum influent rate was 3.6 mgpd. The effluent discharge to the Upper

Iowa River must meet the following concentration limits as established by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR):

Carbonaceous BOD_5:	**25 Mg/1 30 day (average)**
Total Suspended Solids (TSS):	**30 Mg/1 30 day (average)**

Mg/1 – milligrams

The treatment facility has now been in operation since 1986. Upgrades in both treatment technology and requirements have resulted in improvements made to date as noted. Upcoming needed improvements include the replacement of many of the mechanical components of the plant as they reach the end of their useful life. Advances in computerization or control systems may also prove advantageous in upgrade systems.

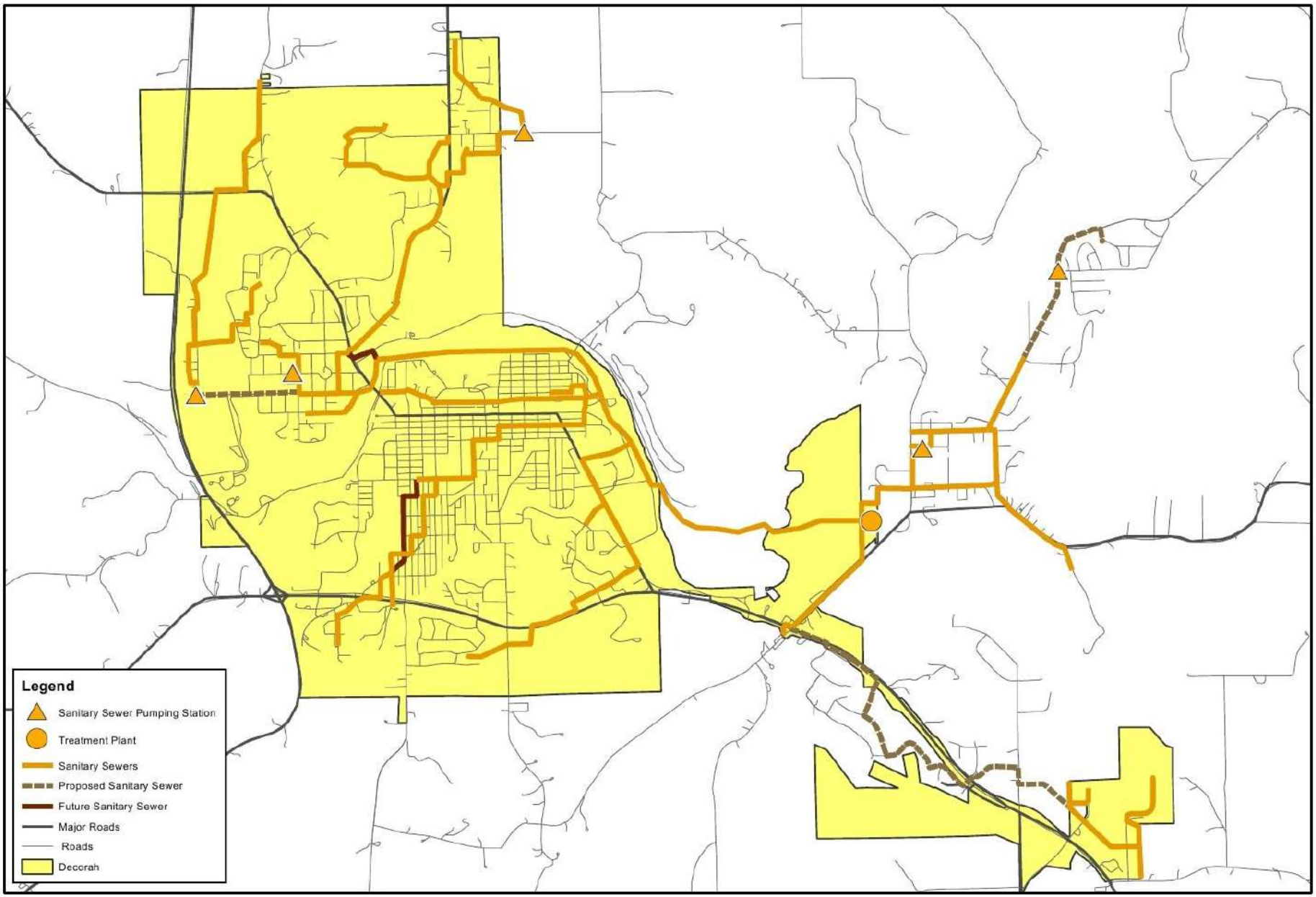


Figure 6 Sanitary Sewer

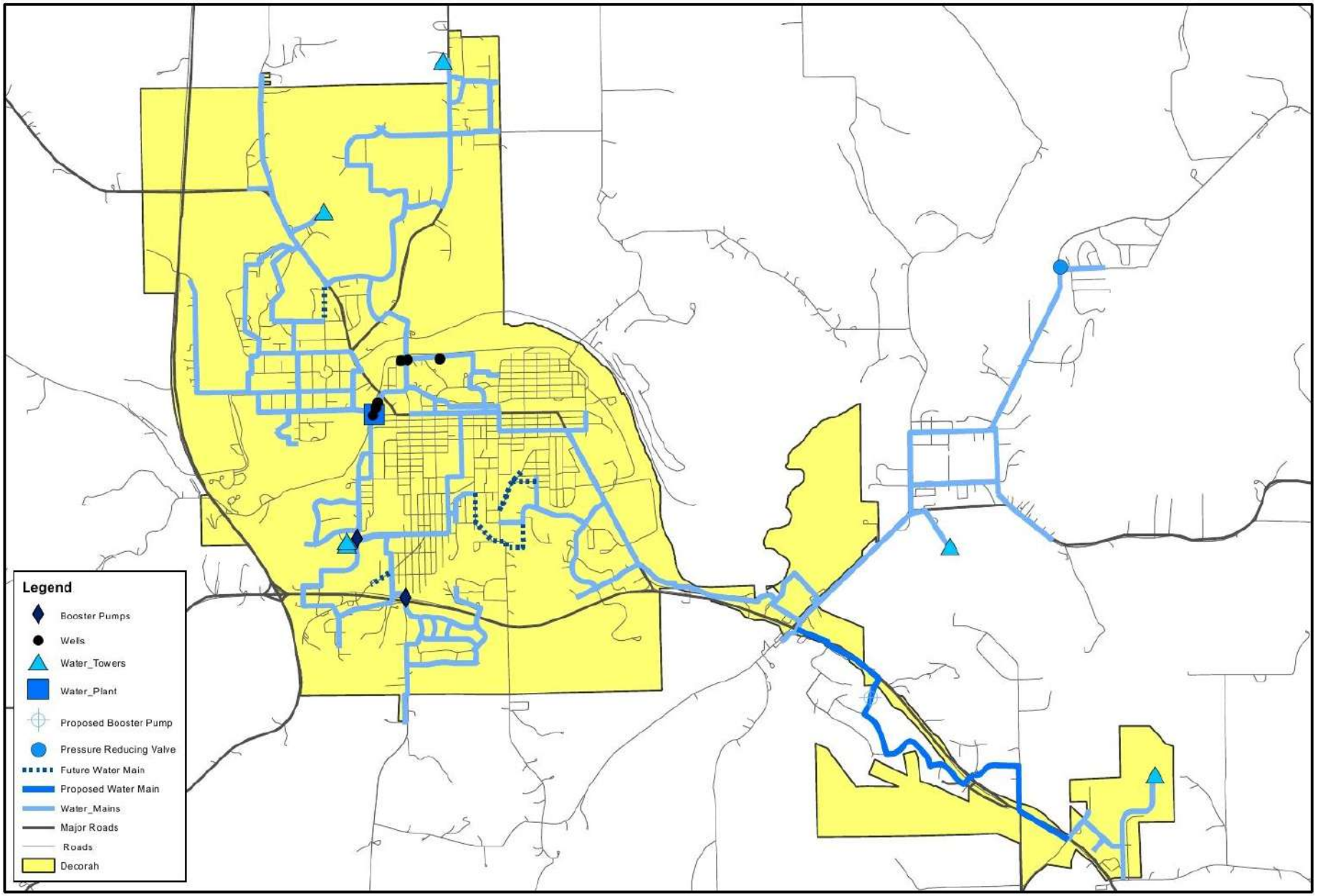


Figure 7 Water Service Infrastructure

4.3 Water Supply

The water system consisting of water supply, treatment, storage, and distribution system is municipally owned and operated.

The existing Decorah water supply is from six shallow wells. The wells range in depth from 56 feet to 78 feet. The wells were built in the period from 1949 to 1979. The total pumping capacity of the wells is 3.4 million gallons per day (mgpd). The city pumps water at an average of 1 mgpd. See the Table below for Water Source (Well) Information. Water treatment is limited to chlorination and fluoridation.

Table 19: Water Source (Well) Information

Well Number	Year Established	Location	Depth	Capacity (gpm)	Capacity (gpd)
1	1949	West end of Water Street	56	350	504,000
2	1958	North of water plant along levee	59	400	576,000
3	1962	North of water plant along levee	63	250	360,000
5*	1967	East side of Mill Street	78	425	612,000
6	1972	West side of Mill Street	78	440	633,000
7	1979	Along levee near athletic track	70	460	662,000

Source: Decorah Utilities Water Operations Report *(There is no Well No. 4)

The Decorah Water Storage system includes four storage reservoirs; three are ground storage and one is elevated storage. Two ground storage tanks, 353,600 gallons and 368,890 gallons, are located off Park Street in the southwest part of the city. These reservoirs were built in 1882 and 1935 respectively. The third ground storage tank is a 750,000 gallon tank located east of Luther College off of College Drive. A 100,000 gallon elevated storage tank is located in the extreme north part of the city west of Locust Road. The College Drive and Locust Road storage tanks were constructed in 1979. A fifth storage tank (150,000 gallons) in the Decorah Business Park is scheduled to go online in 2012 or 2013. Other booster pumped pressure systems serve the Minowa Heights area and the Ronan tanks area. See the Water Storage Information Table below:

Table 20: Water Storage Information

Storage Number	Year Constructed	Type/Location	Capacity
1	1882	Ground Storage – Ronan #1	353,600
2	1935	Ground Storage – Ronan #2	368,890
3	1978	Ground Storage - Freeport System	250,000
4	1979	Ground Storage – College Drive	750,000
5	1979	Elevated Tank – West of Locust Road	100,000
6	2010	Elevated Tank – Decorah Business Park	150,000

Source: Decorah Utilities Water Operations Report

The Decorah water distribution system includes over 60 miles of cast-iron and ductile-iron mains that range in size from 2-inch to 16-inch pipe. The distribution systems consists primarily of 4-inch, 6-inch, and 8-inch mains, which are fed from the wells and storage tanks with 8-inch to 16-inch mains. The original system of mostly 4-inch, 6-inch and 8-inch cast-iron mains was built in 1882. The overall system includes over 700 valves and 350 fire hydrants. Figure 7 shows the primary distribution system of 8-inch and larger mains.

Water demand has steadily declined over the past planning period due to loss of several water dependent industries, equipment conservation improvements in other high volume industries, as well as Luther College, as shown on the following Table:

Table 21: Average Daily Water Demand

Year	Average Daily Pumpage in Gallons
1995	1,285,465
2000	1,242,511
2005	1,009,256
2010	950,371

Total water pumped for 2010 was 346,885,367 gallons. The average daily demand for water was 950,371 gallons with the highest daily usage being 1,546,034 gallons.

The amount of unaccounted water (the difference between the amount of water pumped to the system and the amount of water actually used or sold) is approximately 15 percent. The city continues to investigate ways to reduce this amount. Unaccounted water is considered excessive at 20 percent.

The city also owns and operates the Decorah Business Park Water system. This is presently a separate pressure system operating on a 100 gallons per minute (gpm) well system. This well will be eliminated when the water main extension and booster system supply the new 150,000 gallon elevated storage tank in 2012 or 2013.

The Freeport area is served by the Freeport Water and Sanitary Sewer District system. This system, composed of 6-inch, 8-inch, and 10-inch diameter mains, serves the developed parts of the Freeport area. The water supply includes a deep well located near Wellington Place. The pumping capacity of the well is 200 (gpm).

The city continues to make water main improvements to provide better service and fire protection as well as to replace older mains in conjunction with related street projects. Generally adequate water pressure and volumes serve the community well. Planned improvements continue to emphasize replacement of older mains, valves, hydrants and other fixtures.

Prior to the planning period emphasis has been on distribution and fire protection improvements in downtown and school areas. Future improvements anticipated will need to include the Short Street commercial and industrial corridors, growth areas, upsizing of undersized mains, and investigating additional independent well capacity for the west side of town for emergency purposes in the event of flooding.

4.4 Stormwater Management

Storm Sewer System

The storm sewer system in Decorah consists of both open channel and drainage ways, and storm sewers. The storm sewers include box culverts for streets crossing Dry Run and a limited system of over 17 miles of storm sewers and intakes. The storm sewers were primarily developed in conjunction with the paving of curb and gutter streets. The storm sewer system has expanded as the city has developed. Most of the surface runoff follows paved streets sloping towards the Dry Run and the Upper Iowa River. Storm sewers, consisting of short reaches, and culverts, drain isolated low-lying areas primarily to Dry Run and the Upper Iowa River.

The adequacy of the existing interior storm sewer system to convey surface runoff is not known. As a minimum, the existing system should be improved to convey runoff from storm events of a two-year recurrence. New storm sewers have been developed as part of new subdivisions to convey runoff from a 10-year storm event, although the existing city subdivision ordinance does not address a storm sewer requirement. A two-year storm has a 50% chance of occurrence, and a 10-year storm has 10% chance of occurrence in any given year. Open channel drainage systems including culverts should have the capacity to convey surface runoff from a 50 to 100-year recurrence.

Many existing storm sewer issues which result in more frequent street flooding and other similar problems have been addressed with projects during the previous planning period.

Among the larger of these include the reconstruction of the downtown Water Street storm sewers, the Day Spring Lane storm sewer and roof drainage collection system, Division Street Improvements, Painter Street Improvements, and Charlie Miller Drive storm sewer bypass.

Additional future improvements are planned for problem areas including Short Street north of Iowa Highway 9 and Heivly Street.

The city does not have a comprehensive detention/retention storm water management policy. Efforts have been made to begin encouraging runoff alternatives such as permeable pavers where feasible. Recently such projects have been constructed at Luther College and Water Street Plaza.

4.6 Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facilities

Solid Waste

Sharps Trucking, also known as Malcom Enterprises, and Shimek Roll-Off & Sanitation Services are privately owned companies available to provide waste removal services in the City of Decorah. Refuse is collected once per week for residential customers and up to five times per week for commercial customers in Decorah. Residential customers pay for service on a monthly basis and commercial customers may either use the weekly collection system or rent a dumpster. Solid waste collection is not provided by the city.

Yard Waste Collection

The yard waste site is located on Trout Run Road one-quarter mile south of Highway 9. The city operates a yard waste site from April through November. Materials that are accepted include: leaves, grass clippings, trees, and branches at no charge.

Recycling

A privately operated company is available to provide curbside recycling services with pick up on the first and third weeks of the month. Private curbside recycling collection is not currently regulated by the city. There is also several collection points for drop-off recycling throughout Decorah as well as the Recycling Center located in Freeport. The city provides land for the placement of the recycling bins that are maintained and operated by Winneshiek County.

4.7 Communication Infrastructure

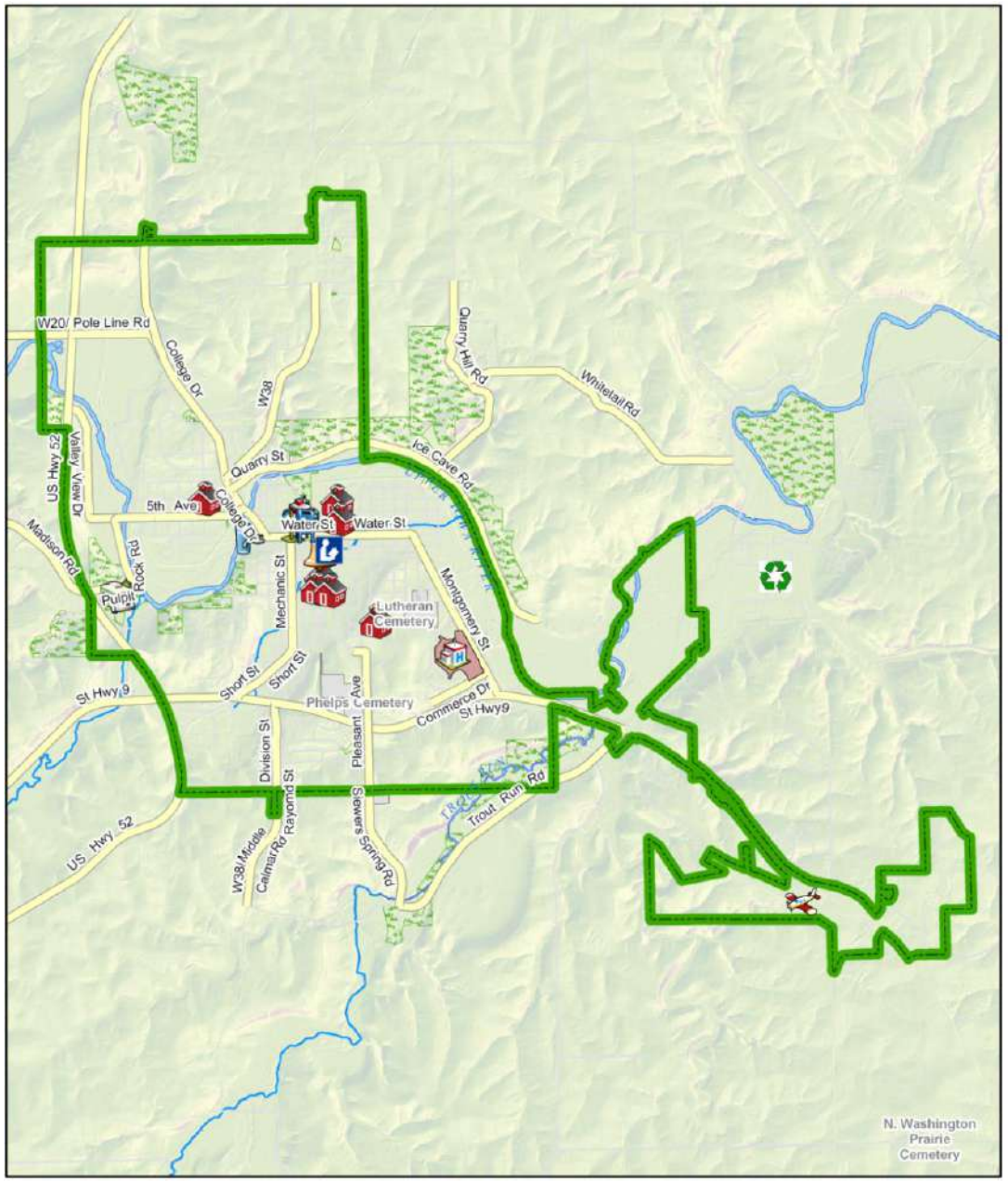
In the City of Decorah multiple companies are available to provide land line and cellular communication. Access to wireless communication facilities is becoming more and more

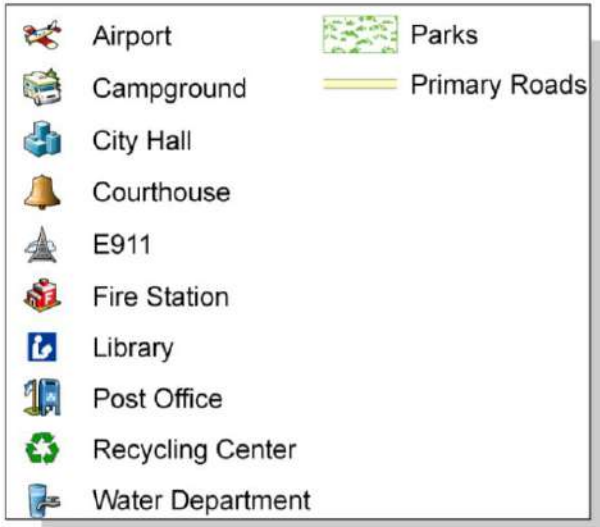
important. In response to this, the Decorah Library currently offers wireless internet. High-speed internet service is adequate and is available through DSL, cable, and satellite throughout the city. The city has three radio stations, no television station and one cellular tower. The Federal Communications Act of 1996 increased the need for many local governments to examine their zoning ordinances to make sure they do not discriminate against cellular communication in land use and zoning decisions. Decorah has enacted a Telecommunications Tower Ordinance within the Zoning Code under Chapter 17.136. This Ordinance, which complies with the FCC Act of 1996, requires that telecommunication towers follow specific guidelines before permits are approved for the erection of such towers.

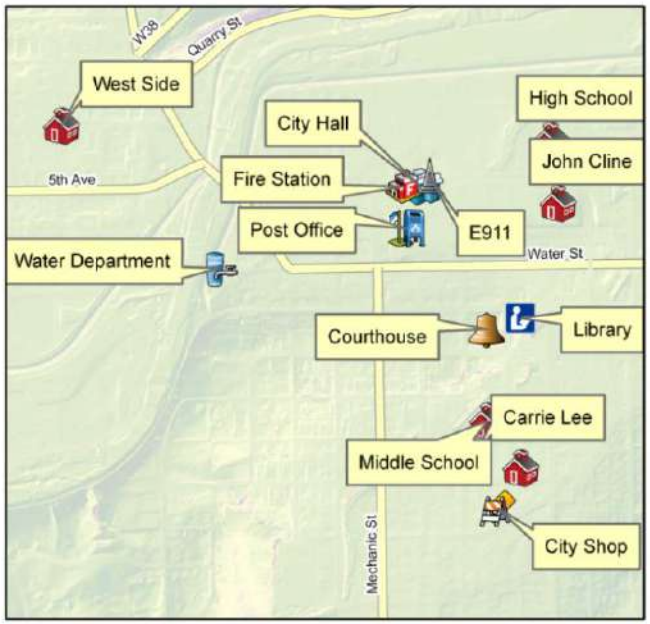
Fiber Optics

The City of Decorah has recently entered into a 28E agreement with Winneshiek County, Decorah School District, Luther College, Winneshiek Medical Center and Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission to create a consortium known as "Metro Net." The purpose of this organization is to develop a fiber optic network in the city. Following several years of planning, this intergovernmental initiative was spurred on as a result of a successful Broadband Technologies and Opportunities Program Grant funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

This grant, which is in conjunction with the Iowa Communications Network (ICN), will link seventeen public facilities. Additionally, the consortium will pursue opportunities to lease fiber optic cable to other interested parties following the completion of the fiber optic cable connections to the public facilities. The lease arrangements, known as Indefeasible Rights to Use or IRU's, will create partnerships to offset maintenance costs and ultimately enhance opportunities to expand this system.







Downtown

Figure 8 Public Facilities

4.8 Community Facilities

Community Facilities is a term used as a broad reference to describe those assets which provide a wide range of services to a city. Some examples are City Hall, the Fire Department, schools, and parks. Figure 8 illustrates the location of various community facilities.

Churches

There are several churches located in Decorah, serving a broad variety of faiths.

Cemeteries

The City of Decorah is home to several cemeteries. Lutheran Cemetery is located on Moen Street, and both St. Benedict's Cemetery and Phelps Cemetery are located on Pleasant Avenue. There are also two cemeteries in the Freeport area.

Libraries

The Decorah Public Library is located at 202 Winnebago St. The library was built in 1910 as a post office. In 1997 an addition was added to the east side of the building. The library has 21 staff members and three meeting rooms that accommodated 3,174 individuals in 2009. The library holds programs for children, teens, and adults; in 2009, 7,304 people attended these programs. The library includes 79,500 items consisting of books, periodicals, and other nonprofit items. During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, the library had a total circulation of 158,813 items and 16,487 registered borrowers. The library offers wireless internet and 20 public access computers.

Law Enforcement

The Decorah Police Department has twelve full-time sworn officers, a full-time E911 Support Services Supervisor, five full-time dispatchers, one part-time dispatcher and 1 full-time clerical/dispatcher. In 2010 the Decorah Police Department received 3638 calls for service. The Decorah Communications Center processed 46,214 calls. The Police Department is located in the Decorah Law Enforcement Center at 400 Claiborne Drive as is shown in Figure 8.

The police department is a member of the 18 agency Northeast Iowa Narcotics Task Force, the State of Iowa Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Iowa Narcotics Officer Association and the Iowa DARE Officers Association.

Future considerations for the department are enhancements to the communications center such as computer aided dispatching and mobile data terminals in patrol cars.

Fire Department

Fire protection is provided by the Decorah Fire Department, which consists of 35 volunteers, including the chief, two assistant chiefs, four captains and one training officer. Most members are Firefighter and Hazardous Materials Operation certified. The Department has one station, located at 400 Claiborne Drive which is shown in Figure 8.

The Decorah Fire Department is comprised of a maximum 35 volunteer members. The membership includes almost all Firefighter I certified Firefighters, as well as being Hazardous Materials operations certified. The City of Decorah and the Decorah Rural Fire Protective association have a Fire Agreement that provides service to both the city and rural residents. The Decorah Fire Department has twelve pieces of fire apparatus, including (3) Class 1 pumpers, (1) 75 ft. Quint, (2) Rural Tankers, (2) Grass fire pickups, (1) Jaws mini-pumper, (1) Jaws / multipurpose rig, (1) Rescue / operations rig, a rescue boat, Rapid Deployment Craft and a utility ATV. The fire department has three full time engineers who rotate every 24 hours. The full time engineers maintain all the fire apparatus daily. They also notify the volunteers of fires within the Decorah Fire Department district, (some 212 square miles for fire and 370 square miles for rescue) and provide station tours for Fire Prevention. The engineers also answer the alarms many businesses have for fire. The city of Decorah has an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 5 in the city and the rural area of a 5-9.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Hospitals

The Winneshiek Medical Center was established in 1914 as the Decorah Hospital. There have been numerous additions and modernizations to keep the hospital current with new equipment and technology. In 1957, the hospital changed its name to honor its first donor, William Smith. In 1969, the Smith Memorial Hospital dissolved its ownership and donated the facility to Winneshiek County. The Winneshiek County Memorial Hospital built on a new site further south at 901 Montgomery Street (see Figure 8), which opened in 1971. In 2001, the hospital expanded its vision to include a wider geographic area and offering of services and became known as the Winneshiek Medical Center. In 2008, a major remodel was completed, which included the expansion of radiology and laboratory facilities. The nonprofit hospital has 83 beds and provides inpatient and outpatient services. The hospital serves Decorah, Winneshiek County, and the surrounding counties. Ambulance service is provided from this facility. The hospital currently employs over 400 people, making it the third largest employer in Winneshiek County.

Winneshiek Medical Center (WMC) is a comprehensive health care organization serving residents of northeast Iowa and southeast Minnesota. WMC is a county - owned critical access hospital, governed by an elected, seven-member Board of Trustees.
Winneshiek Medical Center Specialties

Behavioral health
Family Medicine
Orthopedics
Internal Medicine
Otorhinolaryngology
Pediatric dermatology
Midwifery
General surgery
Podiatry
Hospitalist
Radiology
Audiology
Urology

Clinics

Decorah is home to several clinics and other medical providers. These include but are not limited to general care physicians, dental clinics, orthodontics, eye clinics, podiatry, behavioral health, and physical therapy.

Gundersen Lutheran - Decorah Clinic
1830 State Hwy. 9
Decorah, IA 52101

Specialty services:

Allergy
Audiology
Behavioral Health
Cardiology
Dermatology
Diabetes Education
Endocrinology
General Surgery
Nephrology
Neurology – Movement Disorders
Nutrition Therapy
OB/GYN
Oncology

Ophthalmology	Pediatric Surgery	Radiology
Otolaryngology (Ears, Nose, Throat)	Consults	Rheumatology
	Podiatry	Urology

Gundersen Lutheran Eye Clinic - Decorah
1830 State Hwy. 9
Decorah, IA 52101

Gundersen Lutheran Orthodontics - Decorah
202 West Main Street
Decorah, IA 52101

Gundersen Lutheran Podiatry - Decorah
1830 State Hwy. 9
Decorah, IA 52101

Gundersen Lutheran Behavioral Health – Decorah
1830 State Hwy 9
Decorah, IA 52101

Services include:

- Evaluation and medication management of psychiatric conditions in adults, children and teens.
- Individual psychotherapy
- Marital therapy

Child and Senior Care Services

Decorah offers several options for senior care ranging from minimum assistance to full-time medical care. Barthell Order of Eastern Star Nursing Home is located west of the hospital along Ridgewood Drive. Barthell OES also operates the Arlin Falck Assisted Living facility and two independent senior living facilities in the same location. Aase Haugen Homes, Inc. is a long term and skilled nursing facility on the west side of Decorah. There is a special Memory Care facility and assisted living is available. Wellington Place, formerly known as Oneota Riverview Care Facility, is located in the Freeport area. Both assisted living and nursing home care are available. Oneota Village is an assisted living facility on Ohio Street. Vennehjem is a senior living facility for those 55 years and above, with services available, located on Nordic Drive.

Licensed child care is provided by five early care and education organizations. Sunflower Child Care Center is the largest child care center in the city. Northeast Iowa Montesorri School, Nisse Preschool and Kids Place, NEICAC: Decorah Child Development Center and Kinderhaus also provide care for area children. Several in-home childcare providers are also available.

PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

City Parks

The Parks and Recreation Department operates and manages the Decorah Park System; it currently employs 7 full time staff members. The Park System, which encompasses more than 503.1 acres (as shown in table 21) , consists of 15 sites including parks, recreation areas, public green spaces, over 15 miles of off-road recreation trails, and a leisure concept swimming pool.

Table 22: Parks and Recreation Acreages

Name	Acres
Will Baker Park	11
Decorah Municipal Pool & Park	5.7
Carl Selland Wayside Park	2.5
Phelps Park	56
Dunning's Springs Park	13
Ice Cave Hill Park	102
Barbara Barnhart Van Peenen Park	120
Palisades Park	105
Wold Park	3
Mary Christopher Park	0.5
City Ball Fields and Tennis Courts	6
Miller Park	5.9
Nordheim Park	1.5
Twin Springs Park	48
Decorah Campground	23

Source: Decorah Parks and Recreation

- Will Baker Park is located in the Southwest part of the city, adjoining the Decorah Campground to the south. This park, encompassing 11 acres of bluffs area, includes a scenic overlook and historical marker, hiking trails and a canoe landing. Other facilities provided are playground equipment and a picnic area with shelters and restrooms.
- Twin Springs Park, a nature area with a creek meandering through it to the Upper Iowa River, includes a picnic area and hiking and cross-country ski trails. The creek is also used for fishing.
- Decorah Campground, located in the southwest part of the city, includes a picnic area with restrooms, a playground, a canoe landing area, and a camping area.
- Decorah Municipal Pool and Park is located in northwest part of the city adjoining Luther College. In addition to the pool, the park includes a playground, picnic area, volleyball court, and a historical marker.
- Carl Selland Wayside Park is located in the west part of Decorah adjoining the floodplain of the Upper Iowa River. The 2.5-acre park includes a picnic area with restrooms, a small ball diamond, an ice skating rink, and a historical marker.

- Phelps Park, including 56 acres, is located along the bluffs of the Upper Iowa River in the west part of Decorah. The park includes a variety of recreational facilities. A playground, picnic area with shelter and restrooms, a park cabin, and a band shell are provided in the park. Other facilities include hiking trails, playground diamond, volleyball court, a scenic overlook, brick kiln, decorative fountain and a historical marker.
- Dunning's Spring Park and Ice Cave Hill Park, consisting of 115 acres, are nature preserves with limited recreational development. The parks include hiking trails, cross-country ski trails, picnic areas, and the Ice Cave. The parks include bluffs located along the north side of the Upper Iowa River.
- Barbara Barnhart Van Peenan Park, including 120 acres, is a nature preserve limited to hiking trails and a cross-country ski trail. The park is located northeast of Decorah in the unincorporated county.
- Palisades Park, also located along the bluffs of the Upper Iowa River, covers 105 acres. The park includes a picnic area with restrooms, hiking trails, a cross-country ski trail, and a scenic overlook.
- Wold Park, a 3-acre park, is located along Sumner Street in the northeast part of the city. The park includes a picnic area, a volleyball court, and a historical marker.
- Mary Christopher Park, a 0.5-acre park, is located northeast of the intersection of Water Street and First Street. The park includes a picnic area with restrooms, horseshoe pits, a shuffleboard court, and a historical marker.
- Miller Park, a 5.9-acre neighborhood park serves primarily the residential area located south of Highway 9. The park includes playground equipment, a picnic area, and a playground diamond.
- Nordheim Park, a 1.5-acrepark, located in the extreme northeast part of the city, serves the residential area developed along the Locust Road corridor. The park includes playground equipment, a picnic area, and a playground.
- City Ball Diamonds and Tennis Courts are located along Claiborne Drive in the vicinity of the high school and the elementary school. This recreation area includes two ball diamonds with bleachers and four tennis courts.

In addition to the above parks, Decorah operates the Nor Ski Runs. Luther College owns the land of the Nor Ski Runs and the city has a long-term lease to use the facility.

Recreation

In addition to the recreational opportunities provided by the city, there are other opportunities available to the residents of Decorah. First, the Upper Iowa River itself is a recreational asset to the residents of Decorah. Currently, the river provides fishing, canoeing and kayaking opportunities. Other recreational facilities provided in Decorah and the planning area includes two privately-owned golf courses and one public course. Silvercrest Golf and Country Club, a 9-hole course, is located north of Decorah and the Oneota Golf and Country Club, an 18-hole course, is located just north of Freeport. A 9-hole public golf course, Country View, is located northeast of Decorah.

County Parks

Winneshiek County manages over 300 acres of park land consisting of 17 parks. County parks located in Decorah and the planning area include Chattahoochie Park, Trout Run, and Freeport Park.

- Chattahoochie Park is located along the bluffs overlooking the Upper Iowa River just west of Highway 52. The park includes a canoe access and a picnic area with restrooms.
- Trout Run Access Area is located in the southeast part of Decorah along the Trout Run, which meanders through the park and discharges into the Upper Iowa River north of Highway 9. The park provides access to the Trout Run for trout fishing. A scenic bridge is located north of Highway 9.
- Freeport Park is located in Freeport and serves the unincorporated community and the surrounding area.

State Parks

Siewers Spring State Park, located south of Decorah, is the only state park located within the planning area. The principal facility in the park is the Siewers Spring Trout Hatchery which produces more than 100,000 trout used to stock northern and western parts of Iowa streams. The site where the hatchery now stands had been in the past a 50-acre farm, a furniture factory, a woolen textile mill, and a grain mill.

East of the two-mile planning area, there are several state-owned access points to the Upper Iowa River.

EDUCATION

Decorah is served by the Decorah Community School District. The district covers an area covering approximately 184 square miles of the northeast and central part of Winneshiek County. The district operates a high school, a junior high school, and two elementary schools. During the 2010 school year, there were 1,664 students enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade in the Decorah Community School District. Most of the students enrolled in the district's schools are from Decorah.

In addition to the above, there are 120 students enrolled in a parochial school (St. Benedict's School), 39 students enrolled at West Side Early Childhood Center and 47 students that are homeschooled.

The senior high school (Thomas Roberts High School) is located in the northeast part of the city north of Claiborne Drive. This building houses grades 9-12. The school was originally built as an elementary school in 1954 and converted to a high school. The high school has several additions that were built in 1962, 1968, 1974, and 1987. The current enrollment as of the 2010-2011 school year was approximately 647 students. The city has recently passed

an adoption to remodel the school and this should be coordinated in more detail as this plan is updated in the future.

The junior high school is located at 405 Winnebago Street. The building was built in 2006 using a structural steel frame, steel joist roof structure, a metal roof deck and an EIFS exterior finish. Some of the interior details of the relatively new building are Athletic Courts, Break Room, Cafeteria, Classrooms, Communications, Computer, Dining, Dressing/Changing, Food Preparation, Food Storage, Gymnasium, Kitchen, Library, Locker Room, Maintenance, Mechanical Room, Media Center, Meeting Room, Offices, Restrooms, and Science Room. The junior high school includes grades 7 through 9, with a total enrollment in 2010-2001 school year of approximately 456 students.

The elementary school (John Cline Elementary School) was built in 1962 with an addition in 1968. The elementary school is located south of Claiborne Street across from the high school. During the 2009 -2010 school year there were 340 students enrolled in kindergarten through third grade. Current improvements underway include remodeling and addition of 13 classrooms.

The second elementary school (Carrie Lee Middle School) is located at 210 Vernon Street. This school was built in 1939, with an addition in 1954. The school includes 10 classrooms and a gymnasium for kindergarten through third grade. Current enrollment at the school is approximately 221 students. The school is in the process of being remodeled and one classroom will be added.

West Side Early Childhood Center is located on Center Street and teaches early childhood special education and pre-kindergarten classes.

St. Benedict's School is a Roman Catholic school which includes classrooms for first through eighth grade. Enrollment at St. Benedicts School for the 2009-2010 school year was 120 students.

There are several options for preschool in Decorah, including NEI Montessori School, Nisse Preschool, and Sunflower Preschool.

Decorah Community School District

The Decorah Community School District currently operates five facilities. Table 23 shows the current enrollment by facility in the District.

Table 23: Decorah Community School District Current Enrollment by Building

	Grades	Enrollment
Homeschooling	K-12	47
St. Benedict School	PK-8	120
West Side Early Childhood	ECSE-PK	39
John Cline Elementary	K-2	340
Carrie Lee Elementary	3-4	221
Elementary & Homeschool		767
Decorah Middle School	5-8	456
Decorah High School	9-12	647
Total		**1,870**

Source: Decorah Community School District
*includes all Special ED and open enrolled students

In terms of enrollment projections for the school district, the Iowa Department of Education (DOE) projects that the district will continue to see a decline in the number of students over the next couple of years. Smaller family size may be a factor in the declining enrollment projections put forth by the DOE shown in Table 24.

Table 24: Decorah/North Winneshiek Community School District Enrollment Projections

Year	K	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	G10	G11	G12	Total
2011-2012	169	124	141	127	140	126	137	121	152	143	157	162	145	**1844**
2012-2013	153	142	127	144	128	139	130	137	124	168	144	154	167	**1857**
2013-2014	185	128	146	130	145	127	143	130	141	137	169	141	160	**1882**
2014-2015	154	156	131	149	131	144	131	144	134	155	138	166	147	**1880**
2015-2016	162	130	160	135	150	130	149	131	148	148	156	135	171	**1905**

Source: Iowa Department of Education

Higher Education

Luther College, a four-year, coeducational, liberal arts college, is located in the northwest part of Decorah. The college was established in a vacant parsonage near La Crosse, Wisconsin in 1861 and transferred to Decorah in 1862. The first main building was constructed on the campus in 1865.

The college campus consists of approximately 945 acres, of which 195 acres comprise the main campus. The main campus includes several classroom buildings, a library, administrative offices, student housing, and athletic facilities. A new 71,777 square foot building named Sampson Hoffland Science Building was recently built, Valder Hall has been recently renovated, and future plans include the construction of a new indoor swimming pool.

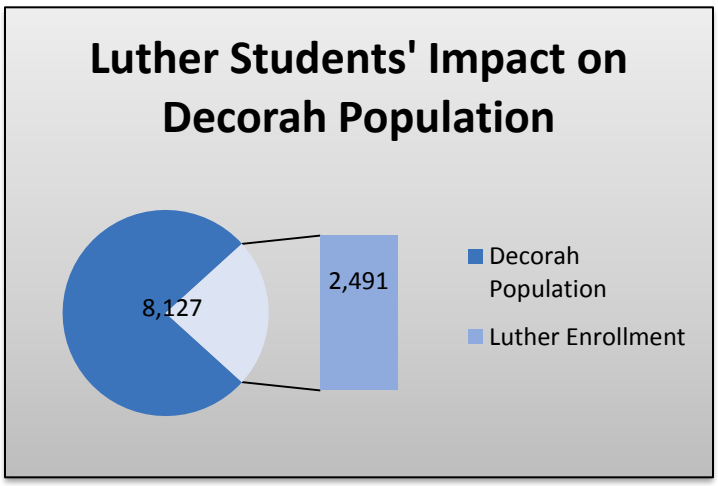
Luther College is primarily a residential college, it houses students in a variety of settings, including apartments, townhouses, residence halls and residential houses in neighborhoods surrounding the college. During the 2009-2010 school year Luther housed 2,150 students in campus housing, with approximately 110 to 150 students residing of-campus annually.

During 2010 Luther College reported 2,491 students enrolled for the Fall Semester. The student enrollment at Luther College has been stable over the last several years. Since 2006, the enrollment has varied from a low of 2,423 in 2008, to a high of 2,519 in 2006. See Table 25 for a detailed breakdown of these figures.

Table 25: Luther College Student Enrollment Trends for a Five-Year Period

Year	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Special	Total
2006	638	586	586	602	92	**2,504**
2007	670	595	543	588	80	**2,476**
2008	631	592	583	541	76	**2,423**
2009	667	579	593	595	85	**2,519**
2010	607	611	543	635	85	**2,491**

Source: Luther College



Luther College has a large impact on the City of Decorah. The Chart to the left shows that of the 8,127 total residents of Decorah, 2,491 of these are Luther students, making Luther College students 23% of the total population of Decorah.

Nearby Secondary Education

Decorah's location is within reasonable commuting distance, approximately 12 miles, to Northeast Iowa Community College located in Calmar, Iowa. Upper Iowa University, a four year private college, is approximately 36 miles from Decorah.

Winneshiek County Fairgrounds

The Winneshiek County Fairgrounds, encompassing approximately 9.5 acres, is located in the northeast of part of east Decorah, just east of Montgomery Street. The fairgrounds include 23 buildings and a one-quarter-mile dirt track. The buildings consist of a grandstand, a community building, exhibit halls, and cattle, sheep and swine barns.

The County fair was originally established in 1878 and is held annually during the summer. The annual attendance for the four-day event is over 17,000.

During the rest of the year, the buildings are used for storage. The community building is used year-round for sales, meetings, auctions, reunions, and other community activities. The dirt track, known as the Upper Iowa Speedway, is used for races during the summer months.

Winneshiek County Courthouse

Winneshiek County was organized after the state legislature passed an enabling legislation in 1847. The county was named in honor of a Winnebago chief. The original courthouse was built in 1858, and a jail in 1878. The existing courthouse was built in 1903-1904. The courthouse, built of buff Bedford stone, includes three stories. The courthouse houses administrative offices for the various county departments including the assessor, auditor, treasurer, recorder, county engineer, and county supervisor as well as other county facilities.

City Hall

The city hall is located north of the central business district, along Claiborne Street. The city hall, built in 1961, houses the offices of the city manager, mayor, Parks and Recreation Department, the council chambers, the police department, and the fire department. A new addition of approximately 8,000 square feet was built in 1991 to house the police department. City hall was remodeled in 1993, and with those improvements has met the city's needs since that time.

4.9 Utilities & Community Facilities Summary

The City of Decorah enjoys outstanding public facilities that add to the quality of life of its residents. Together with the Decorah Community and Luther College, the community offers a variety of recreational, artistic and cultural opportunities to the public. In addition, the city's police, fire rescue and medical services are first rate. It should be noted that the community should strive to maintain and improve these services through the dedication of

resources. Decorah's utility infrastructure meets the city's needs at this time, and plans are continually made for expansion, repair and upgrades as needed.

4.10 Utilities & Community Facilities Policies

Utilities

- Coordination of the immediate and long range plans of the wastewater treatment and sanitary sewer system with the land-use plan and policies will be encouraged and implemented.

- A detailed water system plan addressing current and projected needs for production, storage, treatment, transmission and distribution should be developed. The plan should address both domestic and fire flows, and should be developed in conjunction with the land use plan.

- The water supply wells should be protected from extraneous surface contamination.

- City standard specifications for street and utility improvements should be developed to provide uniform design of utilities and streets.

- Storm drainage system design criteria should be developed in accordance with the land use policies and plan to serve as a guide for developers and the city to improve storm drainage systems. The storm sewers in areas subject to future development by sub dividers should be designed to accommodate runoff from storm events of a 10-year recurrence.

- Recycling of solid waste and safe methods for disposal of toxic waste should be promoted.

Parks

- A detailed written plan should be established that will reflect development, maintenance, and orderly growth of area trails, parks, recreation activities and community facilities.

- A system of neighborhood parks that serve existing and future residential areas should be developed in accordance with the parks and recreation plan.

- The system of bikeways and trails that links parks, recreation areas and schools with residential areas should be further developed in the Decorah area.

- The local trail system should be expanded and integrated with county and regional trail systems to enhance connectivity and multi-modal use.

- Cooperative efforts with all public entities, governmental agencies and surrounding municipalities; including schools, college, and counties including Winneshiek, regarding planning and development of recreational facilities and programs and joint use of facilities should be encouraged and continued.

- Public park dedication standards for developers should be established.

Schools

- Future needs of area school districts and colleges will be coordinated and incorporated into this plan.

Community Facilities

- Future needs of the Decorah Fire Department will be coordinated in accordance with the standards of the Insurance Service Office (ISO) and this plan.

- Relocation and potential consolidation of city facilities should be considered during the planning period.
- The city library should be recognized as a vital part of this community and overall maintenance and operations should be supported.

- Development of a community center should be encouraged.

- The Vesterheim Museum should be recognized as a vital part of this community and the city should participate in a cooperative and coordinated planning process in support of the Museum's integration and development in its existing downtown area.

CHAPTER 5: NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Photos above by Randy Uhl

5.1 Introduction

This element includes an inventory and analysis of the natural, agricultural, and cultural resources in the City of Decorah. Within the following narrative, various components of the community resource base are examined at a broad level or "planning scale". The purpose of this examination is to provide the community with the necessary information to make informed decisions about future growth and development.

5.2 Natural Resources

Climate

Decorah's climate is continental in nature, and is characterized by four distinct seasons, as well as a wide variety in temperature and precipitation. Decorah averages 32.09 inches of rain per year, the US average is 37. Snowfall is 38.7 inches; the average US city gets 25 inches of snow per year. The average high temperature is 54.8 degrees and the average low is 34.2 degrees each year.

Topography

The City of Decorah is situated within the Upper Iowa River Basin. The city and the planning area are drained by the Upper Iowa River and its tributaries. Except the areas that are protected by the levees, most of the bottomlands of the Upper Iowa River are subject to flooding. The protective levees around developed parts of the city were constructed by the U.S. Corps of Engineers in the mid-1950s.

The topography of the city varies from relatively level areas along the bottomlands to steep side slopes along the drainage courses. The elevation difference in the planning area between the high points on the plateau and low point of the bottomlands is almost 400 feet.

Most of the developed areas of the city are located primarily on the nearly level to moderately undulating land of the bottomlands and side slopes, as shown on Figure 9.

The limestone outcroppings in the uplands and the sand and gravel deposits in the bottomlands have resulted in numerous quarrying operations in the city and the planning area. Parts of the uplands and the steep side slopes are densely wooded. The City of Decorah and Winneshiek County are known for the aesthetic qualities of natural features including caves, underground springs, trout streams and scenic areas, and for recreation facilities that have been developed. These features are all assets to Decorah and the surrounding area.

The City of Decorah is located in a geologic area known as the Paleozoic Plateau, or Driftless Area. Another geologic term often used to refer to Decorah is karst topography, which is characterized by caves and cave systems, disappearing streams, blind valleys, underground streams, sinkholes, springs, and cold streams. Karst topography presents some challenges and special requirements in terms of environmental protection, with the potential for water pollution being one of the top concerns.

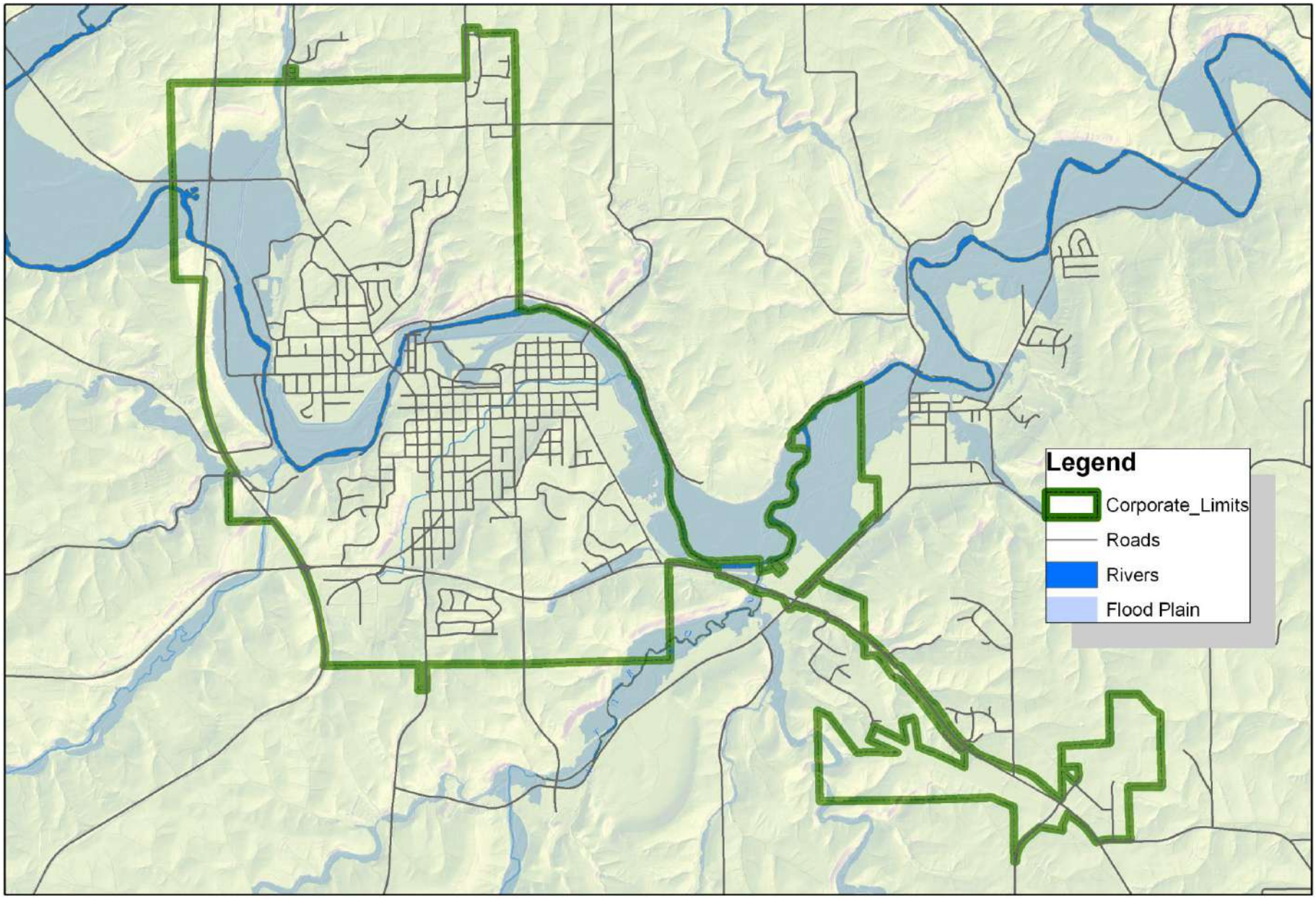


Figure 9 Topography

Soils

An inventory of soils in Winneshiek County was completed and published in the report by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2007. Winneshiek County soils were formed in loess, glacial till, alluvium, and organic parent materials.

Combinations of soil types form patterns which are known as associations. Soil associations include two or more soil types. Soil types in combination with other factors such as topography, drainage, vegetation and erosion identify the characteristic of each soil. Soil classifications generally apply to a depth of approximately five feet. The principal soil association in the Decorah area is the Steep Rock Land-Dubuque-Dorchester Association.

Soils of this association are composed of steep rock land; moderately steep, shallow, silty soils; and nearly level to sloping silty and loamy soils. Soils in Decorah include predominantly Terril Loam, Waukegan Loam, Fayette silt loam, Dorchester silt loam, and Winneshiek loam. The Terril soils are found primarily in the central part of the city on relatively level slopes along the Dry Run. The Waukegan and Winneshiek soils, found along the uplands, and Dorchester soils, found along the bottomlands, are predominant in the west part of Decorah. The Fayette silt loam is predominant in the southwest and north parts of the city on the uplands. Soils such as Dorchester and Terril, located along the bottomlands of the Upper Iowa River, are subject to severe wetness and flooding.

The side slopes of the bluffs have been designated in the soil survey as steep rock land. Most of Palisades Park, Dunning's Spring Park, and Ice Cave Hill Park are included in this designation.

A generalized summary of the soil limitations for urban development, excerpted from the soils report, is summarized in Table 26.

Table 26: Limitations for Urban Development due to Soil Type

Soil Symbol	Soil Series	Building Site Development	Sanitary Facilities*	Construction Material (Borrow)
De	Dorchester	Severe subject to flooding	Severe subject to flooding	Fair to Poor
Te	Terril	Moderate	Slight Except in drainage ways	Fair to Poor
Fa	Fayette	Moderate	Slight	Fair
Wk	Winneshiek	None if on bedrock	Moderate to severe	Fair
Wd	Waukegan	Slight	Slight	Fair

Source: Soil Survey, Winneshiek County, Iowa; SCS, 1968.
*Includes septic tank absorption fields, sewage lagoons, and sanitary landfill facilities.

Soils in the planning area include primarily Fayette silt loam and Down silt loam in the uplands and sides slopes and Dorchester silt loam in the bottomlands. Steep rock land is common along the side slopes of drainage courses.

The Winneshiek County Soil Survey Report Supplement indicated that the Dorchester soils, when not subject to flooding, and Down, Fayette, and Terril soils on level-to-moderate slopes are highly productive for crops. The Corn Suitability Ratings (CSR) for these soils range from 83 to 90 based on an index level of 100 and are shown on Figure 10. The 100 index level represents soils that have no physical limitations for continual row cropping.

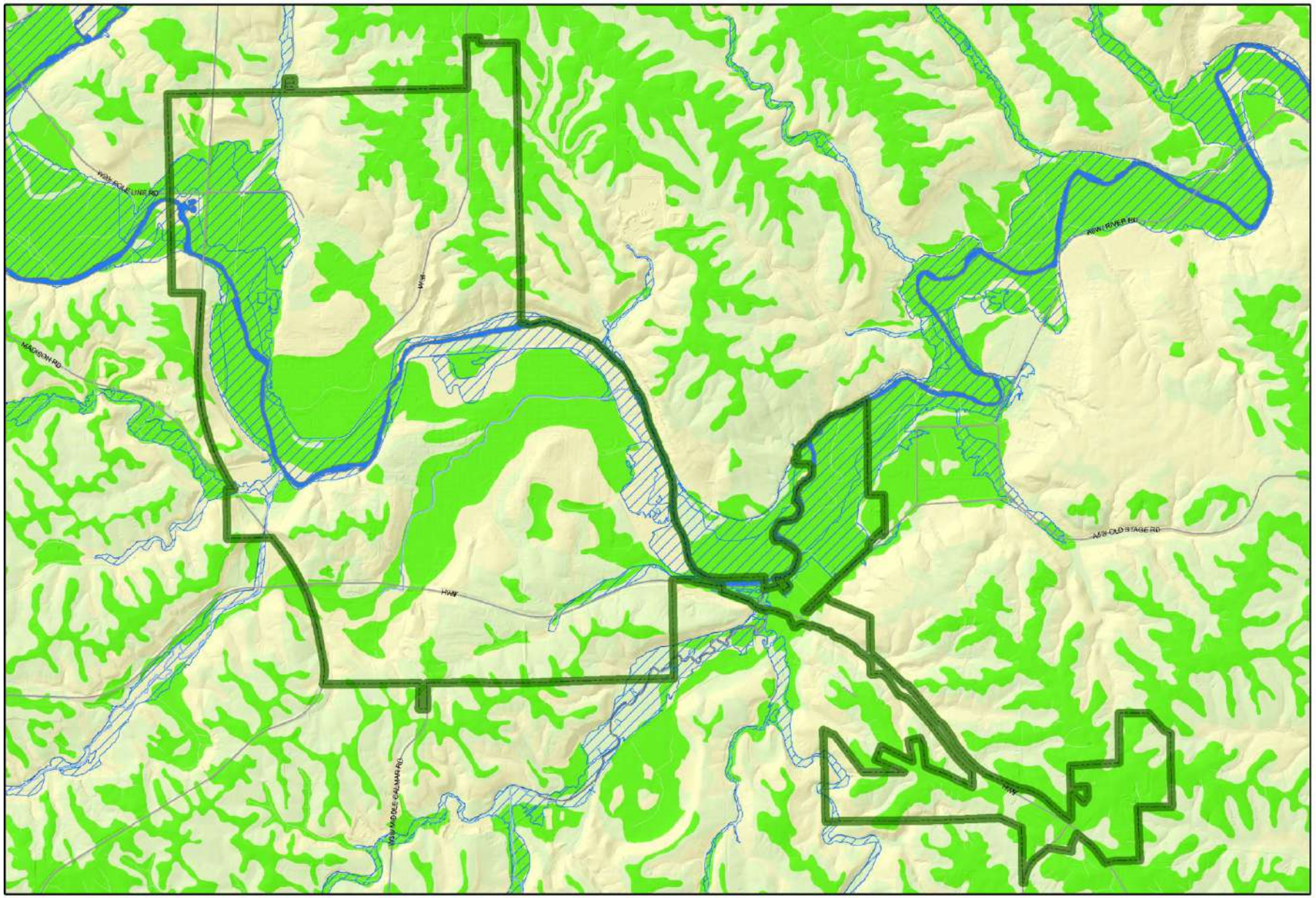


Figure 10 Soils

Soil Rating Poor 0 - 33 CSR | Fair 33 - 64 CSR | Good 65 - 95 CSR

SURFACE WATER RESOURCES AND WETLANDS

Water is an important resource for all communities, and it is an especially evident one for the City of Decorah in its rivers, streams, and springs.

Rivers in the Planning Area:

- Upper Iowa River is known for its excellent canoeing, fishing and tubing
- Dry Run Creek is located on the west edge of Decorah.
- Coon Creek drains into the Upper Iowa River west of Decorah. This stream is not stocked in June, July and August due to warm water temperatures.
- Trout River is a beautiful trout stream east of Decorah. It has access on both State and private land.
- Trout Run is located immediately south of Decorah. This stream starts at scenic Siewers Springs which provides water for the Iowa DNR Decorah Trout Hatchery. The hatchery rears trout which are stocked into area streams. Trout Run provides excellent fishing opportunities.
- Twin Springs lies just west of Decorah and has a wide range of camping facilities.
- Canoe Creek lies north of Decorah and is a good stream to fish in the Spring and Fall. Canoe is not stocked in June, July or August due to warm water temperatures. Much of the access on Canoe Creek is provided by private landowners.

Watersheds

Decorah is in the Upper Iowa Watershed. The Upper Iowa River watershed is a 1,005 square mile watershed recognized by the EPA and the State of Iowa in the Unified Watershed Assessment as a Priority Watershed. A diagram of the watersheds in the Decorah area is shown in Figure 11.

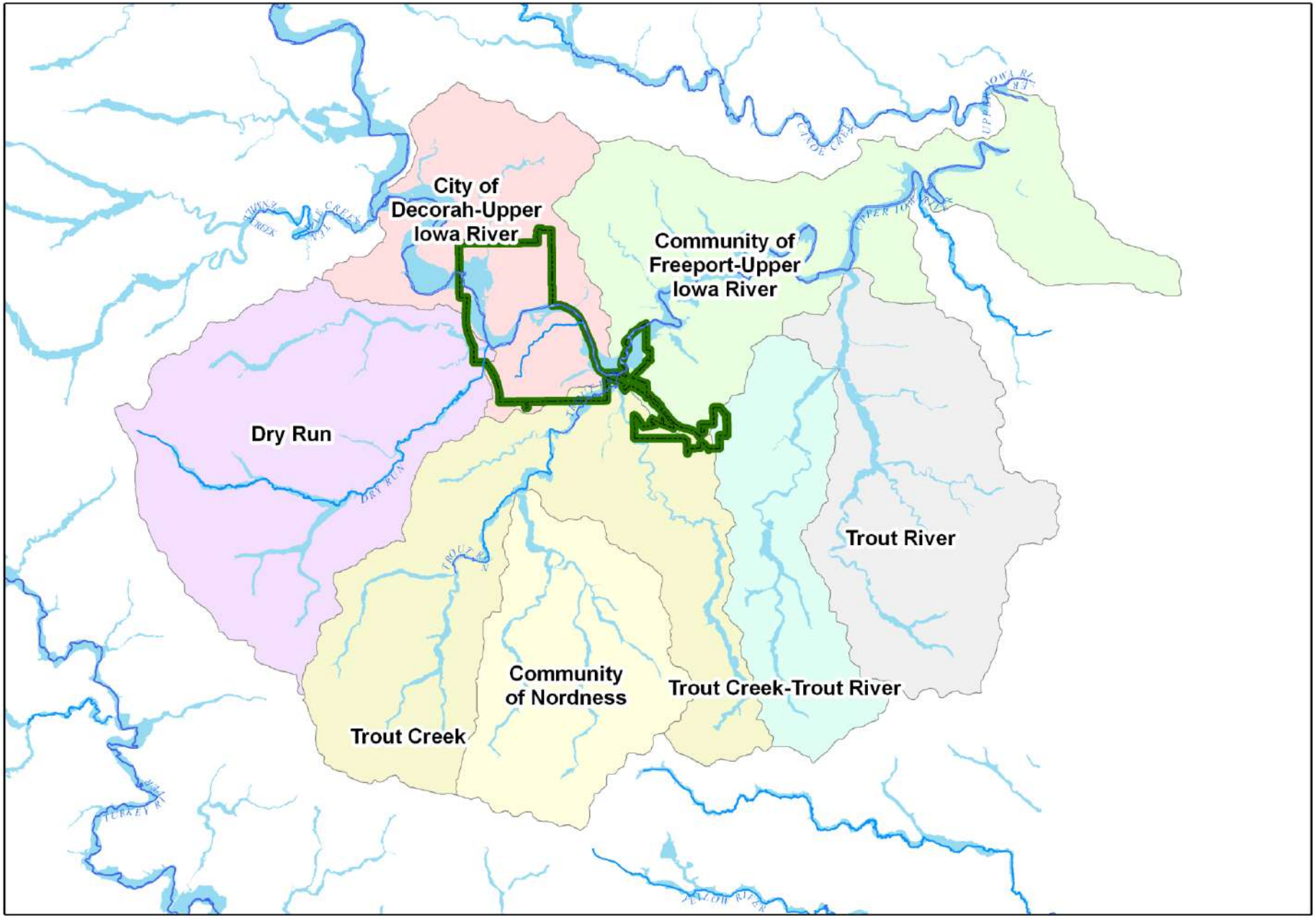


Figure 11 Watersheds

5.3 Agricultural Resources

The City of Decorah currently has 1,673 acres or 38% of its land in agricultural use. Going forward and as noted in the future land use map, Decorah has identified prime farm land with corn suitability ratings of 65 or higher and has marked those areas with the intention of considering prime farmland in future land use decisions.

5.4 Cultural and Historic Resources

Museums

Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, at 523 West Water Street, houses over 24,000 artifacts, which include large samplings from the fine, decorative, and folk arts, and the tools and machinery of early agriculture, lumbering, and other immigrant industries.

Porter House Museum illustrates the life and times of its owners, Adelbert and Grace Porter, with their personal furnishings, collections, art work, photographs, and library. The museum is located at 401 West Broadway Street.

The Luther College Fine Arts Collection has over 1,500 works including paintings, drawings, prints, photography, sculpture, assemblages, textiles, ceramics, and utilitarian objects. The museum is located at 700 College Drive in the Preus Library.

Arts

Decorah is well-known as a regional center for the arts and for artists. As the home of many professional artists, Decorah is well represented in an annual Northeast Iowa Studio Tour. In addition to the many performing arts and music performances offered by Luther College, there are also several other local stage productions and music on offer for the public to enjoy.

Historic Preservation

Decorah has an established Historic Preservation Commission. The National Historic Preservation Act was passed by Congress in 1966. The Act pledged Federal matching funds for historic preservation, authorized the National Register of Historical Places, and provided a measure of legal protection for registered properties. Decorah and Winneshiek County have several sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including those listed in Table 27.

Table 27: Historic Places in Decorah

Historic Site	Location
Birdsall Lime Kiln	NE of Decorah
Broadway-Phelps Park Historic District	West Broadway from Winnebago St. to Park Dr.
Cooley-Whitney House	305 Grove St.
Decorah East Side Elementary and Middle School	210 Vernon St.
Decorah Ice Cave	Ice Cave Rd.
Decorah Woolen Mill	107 Court St.
Ellsworth-Porter House	401 W. Broadway
Horn House	NW of Decorah
Jacobson Farm	SE of Decorah on Rt. 1
Koren Library	SE of Decorah
Locust School	N of Decorah
Luther College Farm	Luther College campus
Miller, Norris, House	118 N. Mill St.
Painter-Bernatz Mill	200 N. Mill St.
Steyer Bridge	Oneota Rd. off US 52
Steyer Opera House	102--104 W. Water St.
Ten Mile Creek Bridge	Happy hollow Rd. over Ten Mile Cr.
Washington Prairie Methodist Church	Luther College campus

http://www.smalltowngems.com/browsetowns/iowa/decorah/decorahiahistoricsites.html

In addition, there are a number of historical places that have been identified in Decorah by the Winneshiek County Historical Society. These range from the old post office (present public library) to several churches, the pool house, and the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum.

Broadway-Phelps Park Historic District has been established including Phelps Park, the 300 through 700 blocks of West Broadway, and the 300 block of Upper Broadway. The district includes a variety of old houses of Midwestern architecture, together with some of Gothic Revival and Italianate styles of architecture.

Winneshiek County has established a historic preservation ordinance and created a historic preservation commission to be able to participate in the certified local government program of preservation historic places. The program, among other things, enables the county to obtain federal funds administered by the State of Iowa for historic preservation activities.

Resources for Historic Preservation

The Decorah and Winneshiek County Historical Society protects, collects, preserves and promotes the written, oral and tangible items of historical importance and to cooperate with other organizations to accomplish common goals.

Iowa's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is part of the State Historical Society of Iowa, a division within the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. Its mission is to identify, preserve, and protect Iowa's historic resources.

5.5 Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources Protection Programs

There are many programs in place to assist with the protection of natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. A few examples of the opportunities available are the Watershed Protection Program, Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Iowa Water Quality Loan Fund, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP). The Decorah area is an excellent candidate for many of these programs because of the unique and fragile nature of the ecosystem, therefore many of the programs listed are currently being utilized. Natural, agricultural and cultural resources protection programs are discussed in further detail in the Comprehensive Plan for Winneshiek County.

5.6 Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources Summary

The City of Decorah has an abundance of natural resources, ranging from rivers, streams and springs to limestone bluffs, woodlands, prairies and abundant wildlife. These natural resources are important to the local economy through tourism and recreation as well as limestone quarry operations.

Agriculture occupies a surprising amount of acreage within the City of Decorah, often in areas subject to flooding. The city recognizes that the rich soil that makes farming so successful here is a resource to be protected.

Cultural activities are an important aspect of the City of Decorah. Historic preservation is actively pursued when appropriate, and actions will be taken to ensure that preservation of historic properties becomes an integral part of the site development process. The arts community is thriving in the Decorah area, with visual arts, performing arts and music performances all well-represented. Vesterheim is a high-quality museum and is an asset to the city.

5.7 Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources Policies

- The preservation and protection of historical and archaeological sites and environmentally sensitive areas should be continued.

- The steep rock land, limestone outcroppings, and other scenic landscapes should continue to be preserved through acquisition, easements and other methods.

- Dry Run, the principal drainage channel through the developed part of Decorah, should be improved and maintained as open space through residentially developed areas and enclosed only where necessary due to extension of streets and commercial and industrial development in the central business district.

CHAPTER 6: HAZARDS

Photos above by Inspire(d) Media

6.1 Introduction

The City of Decorah Hazard Mitigation Plan Update was officially adopted, per resolution of the Decorah City Council, on April 5, 2010. Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission assisted the city in the preparation of the document after a grant funded from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Iowa Homeland Security and Management Division was secured. Decorah Community School District, Jackson Junction, Spillville, Fort Atkinson, Calmar, Ossian, Castalia, Ridgeway, and the unincorporated areas were all a part of the Hazard Mitigation plan. The plan makes an objective analysis of what hazards present a risk to the community, records what mitigation measures have been historically implemented to combat those risks, and finally lays out a number of action steps that could be pursued in order to make the city a safer place to live, work, and visit.

6.2 Flooding

The Upper Iowa River has a profound impact on development in Decorah. Specifically, development in the floodways, as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is prohibited. Figure 12 is a FEMA created Digital Flood Insurance Map (DFIRM). Decorah has experienced severe flooding from the Upper Iowa River resulting in property damage to homes and businesses. The four largest floods on the Upper Iowa River at Decorah occurred in 1941, 1961, 1993 and 2008, for which the estimated peak discharges were 27,200 cubic feet per second (ft3/s), 20,200 ft3/s, 20,500 ft3/s, and 34,100 ft3/s respectively.

6.3 Flood Control

The primary system of flood control in the city is from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Dry Run Flood Control project. Additional locally constructed levees include those along Valley View Drive and Luther College.

The existing USACE project was authorized by the Flood Control Act approved June 22, 1936, and modified by the Flood Control Act approved August 18, 1941. The project provides for diversion of Dry Run into the Upper Iowa River by means of an earth dike across Dry Run one mile southwest of Decorah and a diversion channel 3,200 feet in length through high ground to the Upper Iowa River in Decorah (locally known as "The Cut"). The project was designed to provide protection for areas within the city limits of Decorah against the maximum probable flood on Dry Run and against a flood on the Upper Iowa River equivalent to about twice the maximum flood of record. The project was completed on December 9, 1950 and turned over to local interests on January 12, 1951.

Surface drainage, from the various sub-drainage areas in the city, is conveyed through the levees by a system of culverts. The culverts vary in size from 30-inch to 84-inch diameter pipes. All the culverts have flap gates to prevent high flood water from the Upper Iowa River backing into the protected interior areas of Decorah.

In the 1977 study report, the USACE proposed to improve the interior drainage by identifying areas of backwater flooding, and establishing easements near the levee, by providing sluice gates at all outlets to the river, and by providing three pumping stations at central locations along the levee. Three pumping stations, the Dry Run pumping station, the Roberts Lake pumping station, and the Ice Cave Road pumping station were recommended to pump accumulated backwater over the levee when the flap gates are closed during periods of flooding on the Upper Iowa River. The proposed improvements were not implemented due to USACE Benefit Cost Analysis and lack of funding.

During the prior planning period at least two major flood events occurred including the new record flood of 2008, exceeding the previous record flood of 1941. Other significant local, state and national flood events resulted in many changes related to the Decorah Flood Control System.

Included among these are a more comprehensive levee safety and inspection program administered through the USACE, remapping of 100 year and 500 year flood plains by FEMA, a USGS Flood Plain Study initiated by the city, and an extensive evaluation of current levee conditions through a Levee Accreditation Study conducted by the city and consultants as required by FEMA.

In addition to this the city joined the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in 2008.

6.2 Hazards Summary

Flooding is the primary hazard for the City of Decorah, and significant effort has been put forth recently to improve Decorah's preparedness in the event of another major flood. Additional hazards of concern are tornados, winter storms, and other severe weather events.

6.3 Hazards Policies

- The protection of the floodplains of the Upper Iowa River, Dry Run, Trout Run Creek and other tributary stream channels, and embankments from incompatible development will be given high priority.

- Storm drainage easements for Dry Run and other drainage channels and storm sewers should be established.

- An ordinance more restrictive than the requirements of the NFIP should be considered that addresses development within established flood limits. This ordinance should be established using the City's accepted flood map. Full or partial prohibition should be considered for development in wetland and flood limit areas.

The Hazard Policies below are taken from the Mitigation Action Worksheets, Winneshiek County, 2011. The Mitigation Action Worksheets are available in full in the Winneshiek County Comprehensive Plan.

- Establish and maintain well-equipped and well-trained emergency response capabilities with active partnerships

- Provide increased flood mitigation efforts and enhancements, including levees

- Purchase, install, upgrade, and maintain warning and alert notification equipment and/or system(s)

- Purchase, upgrade, maintain and implement compatible regional interoperable portable mobile communications systems

- Develop, upgrade, enhance, and protect infrastructure, and/or critical facilities

- Purchase and install generator(s) and additional power supply equipment

- Encourage pre-disaster planning, providing awareness and education of hazards to the public and potential resources for assistance

- Create and maintain a communication network for rainfall and flood gauge reporting along water sources

- Establish and stock community shelter location(s), designing and constructing if [additional] site(s) sought

- Develop and enhance technology resources

- Construct and stock FEMA-compliant tornado safe room(s)

- Develop, implement, and keep current city, county, school, fire station, and other regional planning documents; maximize code/ordinance enhancement and enforcement

- Purchase, install, maintain, and upgrade fiber optic cable, equipment and related technology to allow for reliable movement of communication and data

- Promote Winneshiek County Multi-Jurisdiction (MJ-9) Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan to the public

- Provide increased awareness to National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) participation, encouraging [continued] participation

- Develop and construct safer routes for all traffic modes including, the education of residents on the maximization of these routes

- Acquisition and demolition of damaged structure(s) and property

- Evaluate sinkholes through engineering studies and implement appropriate safety protocols

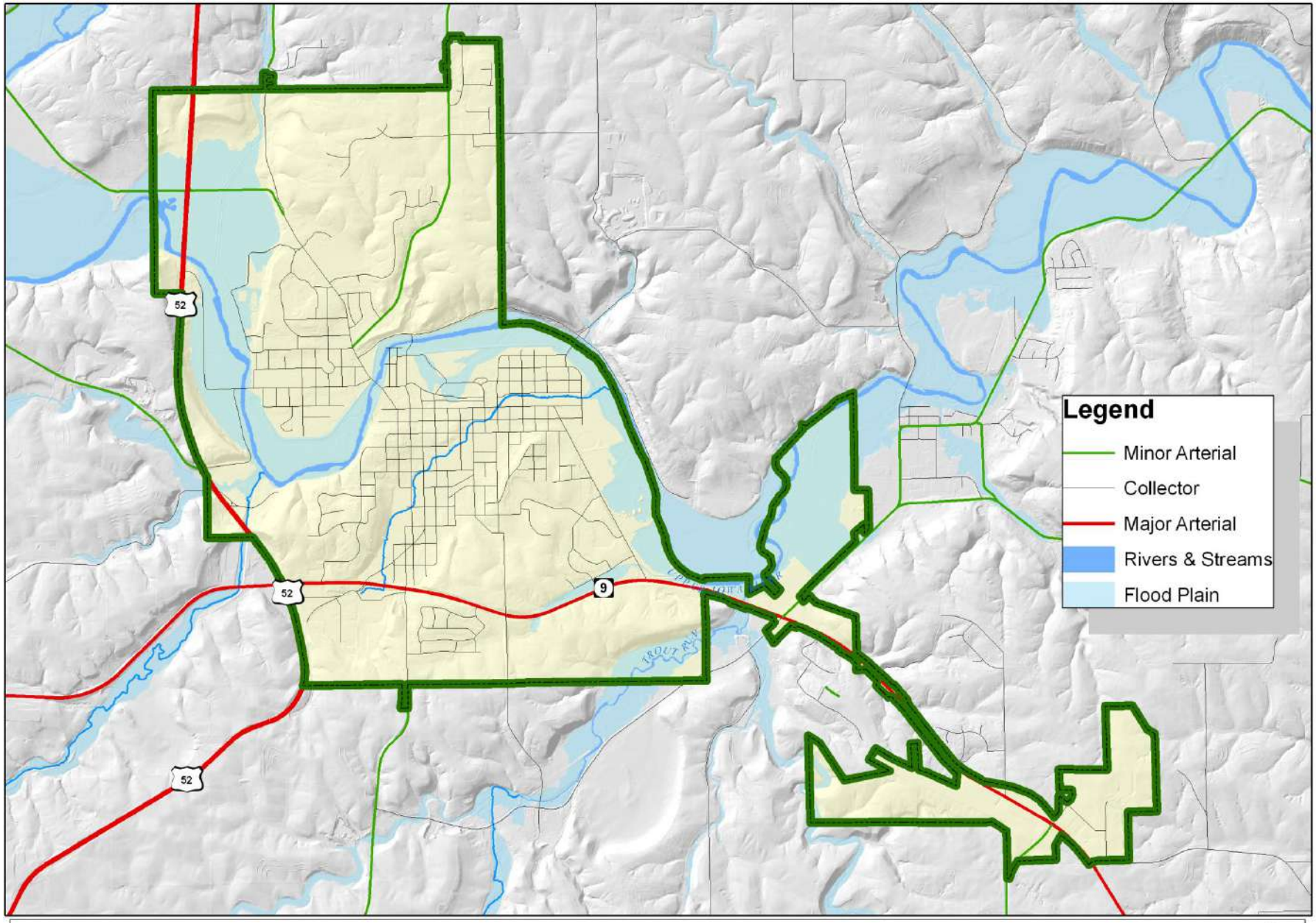


Figure 12 Floodplains

CHAPTER 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

First two photos by Randy Uhl

7.1 Introduction

Several characteristics of the population, the labor force, and the economic base of the City of Decorah play a major role in its economic development and will be discussed in this element.

7.2 Education

One factor that may influence income and employment is education. The following table compares the levels of education for Decorah and Winneshiek residents for 2010. As one might expect for a college community, residents of Decorah reported higher attained levels of education, by percentage, than the overall profile for Winneshiek County.

Table 28: Educational Attainment for Persons 25 Years of Age and Older in 2010

Category	Decorah		Winneshiek County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 9th Grade	261	6.5	700	5.4
9th to 12th Grade, No	131	3.2	490	3.8
High School Graduate,	1,270	31.5	4,758	36.7
Some College, No	746	18.5	2,224	17.1
Associate Degree	229	5.7	1,330	10.2
Bachelor's Degree	895	22.2	2,320	17.9
Graduate or	503	12.5	1,158	8.9
Total	**4,035**	**100.0**	**12,980**	**100.0**

Source: American Community Survey (sample data)

7.3 Labor Force

Table 29: Unemployment Rate Trends by Year (Annual Rate)

Community	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Winneshiek County	2.7%	2.9%	3.6%	4.2%	4.4%	4.2%	3.6%	3.7%	4.5%	5.8%	5.6%
State of Iowa	2.8%	3.3%	3.9%	4.4%	4.6%	4.3%	3.7%	3.7%	4.4%	6%	6.1%

Source: Iowa Workforce Development

Employment by Industry

Table 30: Top Employers of Decorah

Employer Name	Industry Product or Service	Employed
Luther College	Higher Education	640
Infastech	Engineering and manufacturing of drill screws and fasteners	460
Winneshiek Medical Center	Health Care	430
Bruening Rock Products	Construction	375
Wal-Mart	Retail Sales	350
Rockwell Collins	communication and aviation electronics	220
Decorah Community Schools	K-12 Education	250
Pinnacle Financial	Debt Collection Services	220
Northeast Iowa Community Action	Non-Profit Social Services	190
Aase Haugen Homes	Elderly Care	190

7.4 Economic Base

According to the figures shown in Table 31, Decorah's leading industries are: Educational, Health, and Social Services; Art, Entertainment, and Recreation; and Retail Trade. The three largest industries for all of Winneshiek County are the same with the exception of Art, Entertainment, and Recreation which is replaced with Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Mining. Specifically, the Educational, Health and Social Services statistics reflect that the Decorah Community school system, Luther College, Winneshiek Medical Center, and Winneshiek County social services are large employers in Decorah. Manufacturing employment is comprised of workers in the city's industrial park, the Kerr Drive area, as well as other manufacturers located in neighboring communities.

Table 31: Economic Base of Decorah and Winneshiek County in 2010

Category	Decorah		Winneshiek County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Mining	70	1.7	1,170	10.1
Construction	163	3.9	841	7.3
Manufacturing	406	9.8	1,608	13.9
Wholesale Trade	83	2.0	270	2.3
Retail Trade	434	10.5	1,175	10.1
Transportation, Warehousing, and	71	1.7	401	3.5
Information	44	1.1	81	0.7
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental	125	3.0	441	3.8
Professional and Scientific	170	4.1	453	3.9
Educational, Health, and Social Services	1,885	45.4	3,605	31.1
Art, Entertainment, and Recreation	500	12.0	883	7.6
Other Services	150	3.6	420	3.6
Public Administration	52	1.3	242	2.1
Total Employed Persons	**4,153**	**100.1**	**15,209**	**100.0**

Source: American Community Survey (sample data)

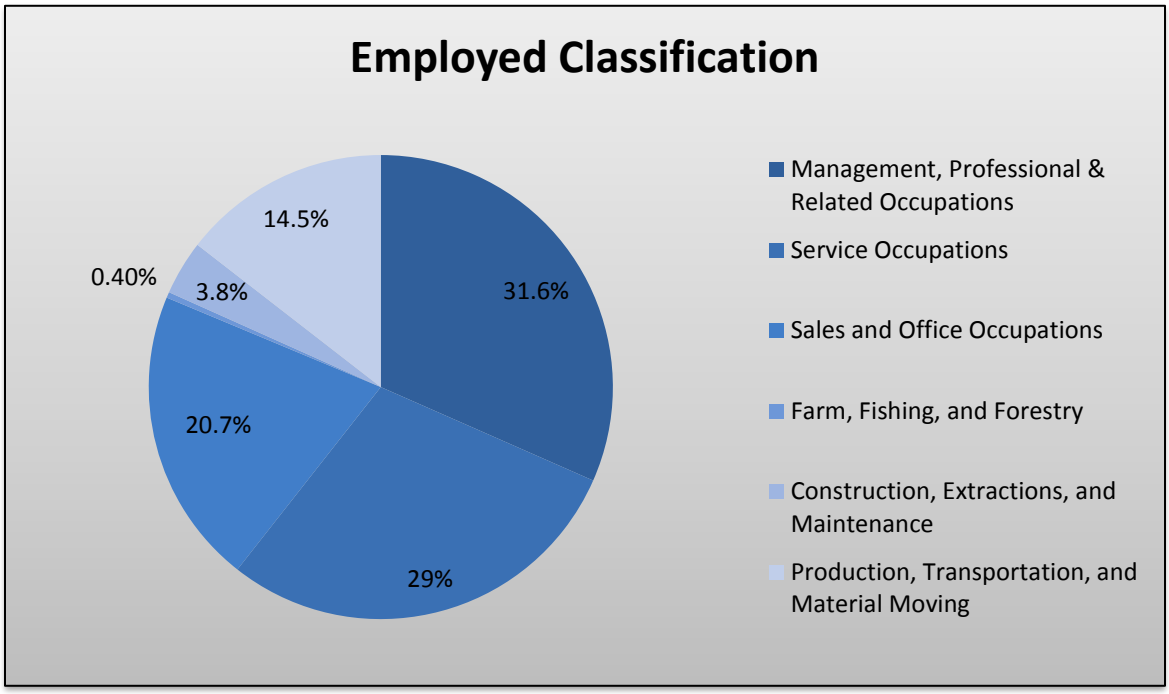
Table 32 classifies employees into general employment categories. The largest categories in the city, as well as Winneshiek County as a whole, are: Management, Professional, and Related Occupations; Service Occupation is second for Decorah while Sales and Office Occupation is the county's second largest category. The third occupation for the city is Sales and Office Occupations, while the county has service occupations ranked third. Of note is that from 2000 to 2010 Decorah had significant changes in Management, Professional & Related which decreased from 39% in 2000 to 31.6% in 2010. During that same tenure; Service Occupation increased from 20.5% in 2000 to 29% in 2010.

Table 32: Occupation Classification of Persons Employed in 2010

Industrial Description	Decorah		Winneshiek County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Management, Professional &	1,312	31.6	3,867	33.4
Service Occupations	1,206	29.0	2,147	18.5
Sales and Office Occupations	861	20.7	2,369	20.4
Farm, Fishing, and Forestry	16	.4	334	2.9
Construction, Extractions, and	157	3.8	903	7.8
Production, Transportation, and	601	14.5	1,970	17.0
Total Employed Persons	**4,153**	**100.0**	**11,590**	**100.0**

Source: American Community Survey (sample data)

Chart 10: Employed Classification



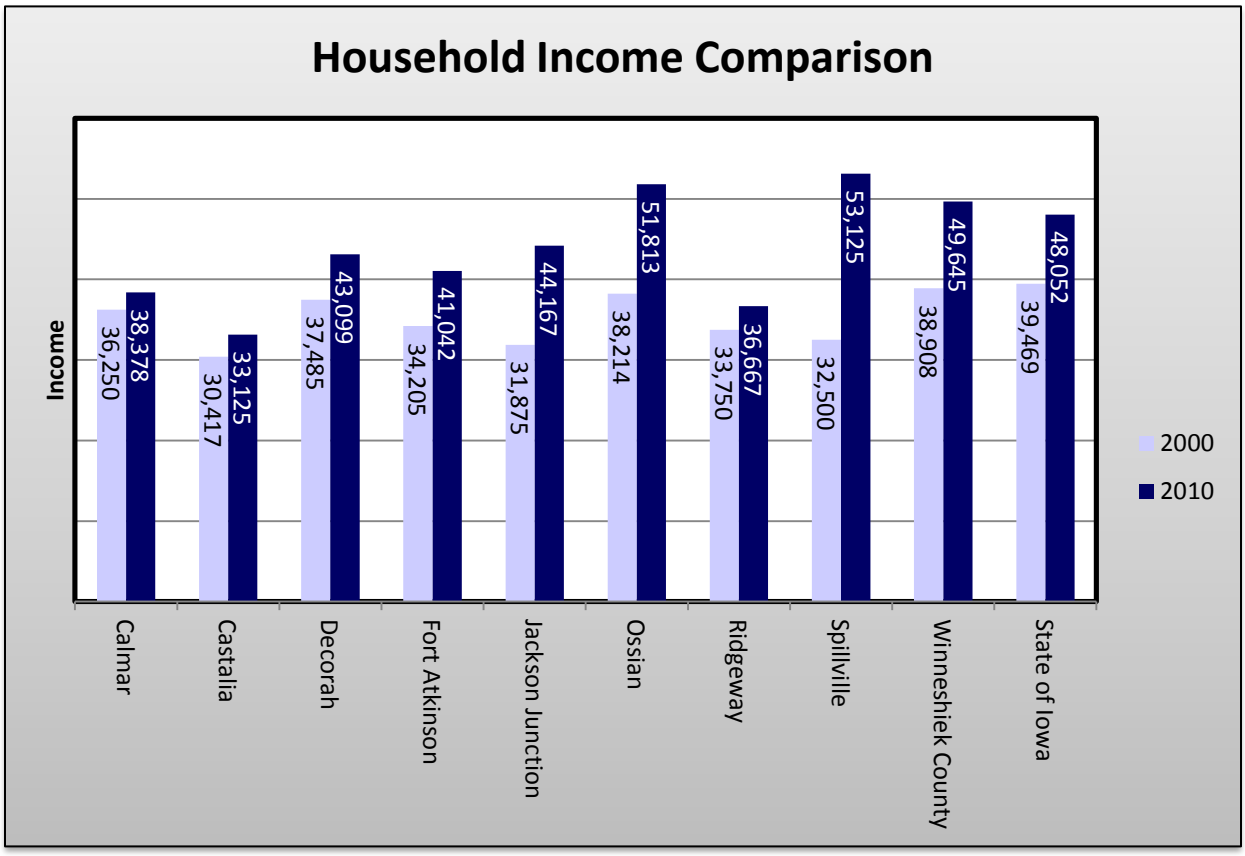
Median household and per capita income levels for selected jurisdictions are provided in Table 33. Decorah statistics, according to the Census Bureau, are near the top of the communities shown. In comparison to the County and State in 2010, the city had a lower per capita income and median income.

Table 33: Per Capita and Median Household Income for Selected Communities

Community	Per Capita Income		Median Household Income	
	2000	2010	2000	*2010
Calmar	17,958	19,489	36,250	38,378
Castalia	17,228	20,465	30,417	33,125
Decorah	**16,351**	**19,551**	**37,485**	**43,099**
Fort Atkinson	14,702	23,650	34,205	41,042
Jackson	15,824	26,249	31,875	44,167
Ossian	16,490	23,291	38,214	51,813
Ridgeway	15,206	19,317	33,750	36,667
Spillville	15,674	37,392	32,500	53,125
Winneshiek	17,047	24,161	38,908	49,645
State of Iowa	19,674	25,060	39,469	48,052

Source: U.S. Iowa Data Center and *American Community Survey (sample data)

Chart 11: Household Income Comparison



While all communities experienced income growth over the decade, Decorah had the fifth highest increase out of all 8 incorporated communities.

The Economic Census, which provides additional economic data, is taken every five years in years ending in "2" and "7". The reason we review this information is because the Economic Census provides more detailed economic statistics for both the city and the county.

Table 34 shows retail trade statistics for Decorah and Winneshiek County for the last two Economic Censuses. It is important to point out that the number of establishments, receipts, annual payroll, and the number of paid employees all increased for the City of Decorah between 2002 and 2007. However, Winneshiek County as a whole has not had the same results. The County increased its receipts and annual payroll, while declining in number of establishments and paid employees during this five-year time period.

Table 34: Retail Trade for Selected Communities

2002				
Geographic Area	**Number of Establishments**	**Receipts ($1,000)**	**Annual Payroll**	**Paid Employees**
Decorah	85	107,179	11,233	800
Winneshiek	133	211,273	22,612	1,288
2007				
Geographic Area	**Number of Establishments**	**Receipts ($1,000)**	**Annual Payroll**	**Paid Employees**
Decorah	88	211,831	19,174	978
Winneshiek	129	289,636	24,739	1,221

Source: Census of Retail Trade and Economic Census

Manufacturing industry statistics for Decorah and Winneshiek County are illustrated in Table 35. As is shown in Tables 31 and 32, these industries play an important role in the economies of each jurisdiction. According to the table, the city and county statistics follow the same trends from 2002 to 2007. Specifically, the number of establishments, annual payroll, and number of paid employees rose for this time period. (Receipts for the City of Decorah were not provided for 2007)

Table 35: Manufacturing Industries for Selected Communities

2002				
Geographic Area	**Number of Establishments**	**Receipts ($1,000)**	**Annual Payroll**	**Paid Employees**
Decorah	12	185,310	32,602	1,117
Winneshiek	28	237,461	51,004	1,693
2007				
Geographic Area	**Number of Establishments**	**Receipts ($1,000)**	**Annual Payroll ($1,000)**	**Paid Employees**
Decorah	17	-	41,239	1,290
Winneshiek	31	288,679	58,049	1,721

Source: Census of Manufacturing and Economic Census

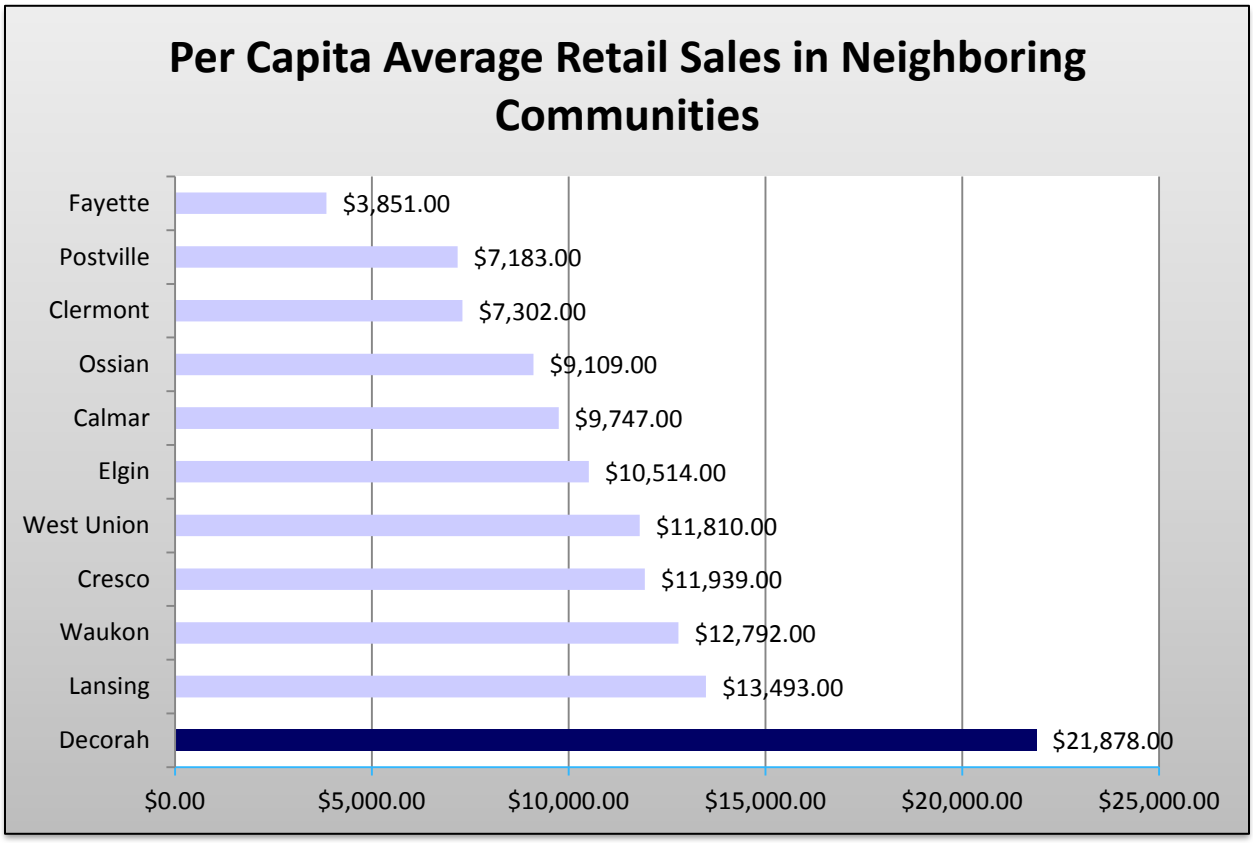
Table 36 provides more detailed information regarding wholesale trade activities in Decorah and Winneshiek County. Wholesale trade, by Census definition, includes businesses such as: furniture and home furnishing suppliers; lumber and other construction material suppliers; electrical goods and supplies; hardware, plumbing, and heating equipment; farm grown products; chemical and petroleum products; and paper product suppliers. As is shown in this table, both the City of Decorah and the county experienced a decline in the number of establishments between 2002 and 2007. Wholesale trade sales reported in the county increased, while the City of Decorah experienced an overall slight decline in sales. Finally, the city reported decreases in annual payroll and employees, while the county reported a rise in annual payroll and number of employees during the same period of time.

Table 36: Wholesale Trade for Selected Communities

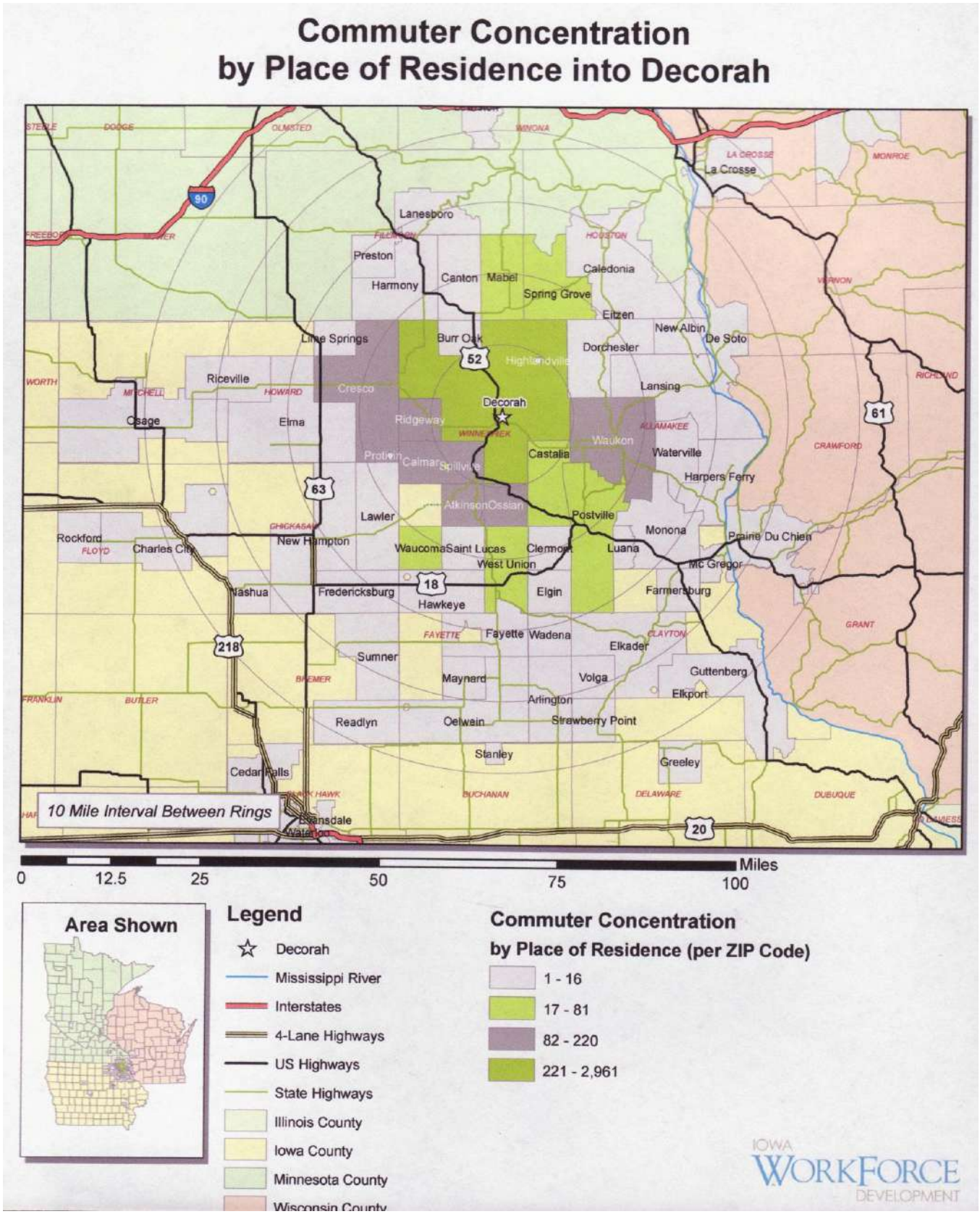
2002				
Geographic Area	**Number of Establishments**	**Sales ($1,000)**	**Annual Payroll ($1,000)**	**Number of Employees**
Decorah	15	27,744	4,203	124
Winneshiek	34	109,018	8,418	276
2007				
Geographic Area	**Number of Establishments**	**Sales ($1,000)**	**Annual Payroll ($1,000)**	**Number of Employees**
Decorah	13	27,680	3,706	86
Winneshiek	30	167,268	9,586	259

Source: Census of Wholesale Trade and Economic Census

Chart 12: Per Capita Average Retail Sales in Neighboring Communities



Fiscal Year 2009 per capita sales values for the 10 nearest communities of 500 or more in population from ISU http://www.recap.iastate.edu/retail/files/retail_1919405.pdf



Source: Iowa Workforce Development

7.5 Decorah Financials

Table 37 shows the expenditures and fund balance for Decorah for six years. Expenditures appear to fluctuate slightly over the years, most likely due to special projects. In terms of overall financial picture, it is important to note that revenue exceeded expenditures in 2010.

Table 37: Expenditure and Fund Balance Trends: Annual Financial Reports

Expense Category	Fiscal Year 2005	Fiscal Year 2006	Fiscal Year 2007	Fiscal Year 2008	Fiscal Year 2009	Fiscal Year 2010	Fiscal Year 2011
Public Safety	1,344,337	1,520,696	1,740,259	1,629,989	2,125,159	2,006,817	1,774,008
Public Works	902,888	1,024,826	1,511,453	1,129,185	1,624,645	1,338,937	2,005,301
Health & Social Services	10,450	35,450	58,129	17,129	21,129	66,129	30,364
Cultural& Recreational	1,166,582	1,344,336	1,524,002	1,460,900	1,470,421	1,510,890	1,691,172
Comm.& Econ Development	231,172	700,127	217,523	527,711	548,858	520,341	521,912
General Govt.	307,528	361,078	423,002	399,515	404,611	458,324	820,762
Debt Services	796,624	859,651	589,345	199,815	199,813	221,283	199,815
Capital Projects	703,766	1,928,195	1,894,600	2,986,116	1,657,137	1,306,728	1,426,795
Business Type Enterprises	2,302,311	1,610,204	2,197,589	1,757,737	1,754,596	1,924,049	1,504,693
Subtotal	7,765,658	9,384,563	10,155,902	10,108,097	9,806,369	9,353,498	9,974,822
Transfers out/other	102,655	199,408	201,886	30,000	89,531	170,806	190,422
Total	7,868,313	9,583,971	10,357,788	10,138,097	9,895,900	9,524,304	10,165,244
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	382,312	-1,472,069	568,681	-996,082	294,995	-589,936	394,044

Beginning Fund Balance July 1st of the previous Year	5,821,112	6,203,423	4,731,354	5,300,035	4,303,953	4,598,951	4,791,403
Ending Fund Balance June 30th of that year	6,203,424	4,731,354	10,936,469	4,303,953	4,598,951	4,791,403	4,397,359

Source: City of Decorah Annual Reports

Table 38: Revenue Trends in the City's Annual Financial Reports

Source	Fiscal Year 2005	Fiscal Year 2006	Fiscal Year 2007	Fiscal Year 2008	Fiscal Year 2009	Fiscal Year 2010	Fiscal Year 2011
Property Tax	2,556,954	2,606,399	2,724,908	2,714,709	2,899,406	2,943,629	3,322,518
Tax Increment	238,260	211,567	122,968	412,756	359,342	587,060	309,909
Other City Taxes	1,027,055	997,290	1,154,453	1,092,355	1,163,545	1,107,732	1,186,261
Use of Money and	129,106	168,282	218,846	169,812	99,716	89,581	56,583
Licenses and Permits	25,287	24,350	30,759	30,370	27,451	25,825	31,256
Intergovernmental	1,706,837	2,008,239	1,905,775	1,989,983	1,913,765	2,061,147	2,112,544
Charges for Services	1,617,126	1,610,740	1,638,620	1,678,864	1,883,272	1,814,306	1,859,485
Miscellaneous/Spec.	342,714	293,598	789,342	1,012,325	926,809	916,670	689,615
Other Financing Sources	504,631	191,437	2,138,912	10,841	831,058		12,607
Subtotal	8,147,970	8,111,902	10,724,583	9,112,015	10,101,364	9,716,756	9,500,778
Transfers In	102,655		201,866	30,000	89,531	170,806	190,422
Total	**8,250,625**	**8,111,902**	**10,926,469**	**9,142,015**	**10,190,895**	**9,716,756**	**9,771,200**

Source: City of Decorah Annual Reports

Table 39: General Obligation Bond Indebtedness Repayment Schedule (Includes TIF)

Fiscal Year	Annual Principal	Annual Interest	Total Annual
2010	492,562	151,495	644,057
2011	513,214	130,926	644,140
2012	534,324	103,101	637,425
2013	448,900	80,564	529,464
2014	358,000	64,516	422,516
2015 and Beyond	1,466,000	116,080	1,582,080
Total	**3,813,000**	**646,682**	**4,459,682**

Source: City of Decorah

Table 40: General Obligation Bond Debt Analysis

Actual Assessed Valuation, Including Agricultural Land	456,428,197
Bonding Capacity (5% of Actual Assessed Valuation)	22,821,410
Outstanding Debt (General Obligation and TIF Debt) as of June	2,805,997
Unused Bonding Capacity	20,015,413
Percent Bonding Capacity Used	12.29
Percent Bonding Capacity Unused	87.71

Table 41: Decorah Property Tax Rate Trends for the Last Ten Fiscal Years

Fiscal Year	City of Decorah Levies	School District Levies	Winneshiek County Levies	Northeast Iowa Community College Levies	Total Tax Levy
2000	11.94677	13.15674	4.77349	.56995	32.15346
2001	11.77868	13.00120	6.92011	.57072	33.54356
2002	11.80528	13.16969	6.52857	.57507	33.27837
2003	11.74032	12.99554	6.37992	.57791	33.00115
2004	12.42092	14.93752	6.26276	.59804	35.59876
2005	12.42896	15.29597	6.56222	.60517	36.12785
2006	12.42744	15.62743	6.54306	.61127	36.41512
2007	12.42477	15.47141	6.53266	.61270	36.20613
2008	12.42144	15.39369	6.60676	.55714	36.17020
2009	12.42986	15.83816	7.44968	.99471	37.86942
2010	12.54483	15.82718	7.18782	1.03532	37.68107

Note: Amounts shown above represent the tax rate per $1,000 of taxable valuation.
Source: City of Decorah

Economic Resources

There are many programs at the federal, state, and regional level that can help Decorah and its residents in supporting new business growth and expansion. Below is a list of programs available to all residents of Winneshiek County. Any interest should be directed to the Winneshiek County Economic Development.

RESOURCES FOR IOWA ENTREPRENEURS

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE RESOURCES FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Iowa Department of Economic Development
www.iowalifechanging.com
- Business License Information Center
- Guide to Structuring Your New Business
- Information Technology Training Program
- Management Talent Recruitment Program

Iowa Entrepreneur Network
www.iowaentrepreneur.com
- Best practices, investment resources, links

My Entre Net
www.myentre.net
- Online community of entrepreneurs and resources
- Dream Big Grow Here (www.dreambiggrowhere.com)

Iowa Secretary of State
www.sos.state.ia.us
- Legal forms of ownership/registration

Iowa Department of Revenue & Finance
www.iowa.gov/tax
- Business tax registration and filing

Iowa Small Business Development Centers
www.iowasbdc.org (15 locations in Iowa)
- Business Counseling
- Training and Workshops

John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Centers
- Drake University (www.cbpa.drake.edu/entrep/pappajohn)
- Iowa State University (www.isupjcenter.org)
- North Iowa Area Community College (www.niacc.edu/pappajohn)
- University of Iowa (www.iowajpec.org)
  - Jacobson Institute for Youth Entrepreneurship (www.jacobsoninstitute.org)
- University of Northern Iowa www.jpec.org

Iowa Business Accelerators
www.iowalifechanging.com/Business/business_growth.aspx
- Cedar Rapids (www.edcinc.org)
- Davenport/Quad Cities (www.newenturesinc.com)
- Des Moines (www.bizci.org)
- Iowa Lakes Corridor (www.lakescorridor.com/work/entrepreneurship)
- Mason City (www.niacc.edu/pappajohn/accelrator.html)
- Southwest Iowa (www.Enterprisingiowans.com)

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Iowa Department of Economic Development
www.iowalifechanging.com
- Grow Iowa Values Program
- Demonstration Fund
- Information Technology Joint Venture Fund
- Iowa Student Internship Program
- Supply Chain Development Program
- Infrastructure Assistance Program
- Entrepreneurial Assistance Fund
- Iowa Self-Employment (ISE)
- Targeted Small Business Program (TSB)
- Export Trade Assistance Program (ETAP)
- Tax Incentives – Business & Investor
- Technology Cooperative Program

Pappajohn Iowa Business Plan Competition
www.iowabusinessplancompetition.com

Venture & Equity Funds in Iowa
www.iowalifechanging.com/business/equity_funds.aspx

USDA Rural Development Business & Cooperative Programs
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ia/rbs.html

Small Business Administration
www.sba.gov
- Loan guarantee programs, technical and disaster assistance, advocacy

Renew Rural Iowa/Iowa Farm Bureau
www.renewruraliowa.com
- Business development, education, financial and technical resources

Wellmark Community Venture Capital Fund
Regional Application Centers
- Iowa State University (www.isupjcenter.org/assistance/technology/wellmark)
- University of Iowa (www.iowajpec.org/business.wellmark.cfm)
- University of Northern Iowa (www.jpec.org/wellmark.htm)
- North Iowa Area Comm. College (www.niacc.edu/pappajohn/financing.html)

Community Vitality Center/ISU Extension
www.cvcia.org
- Community Demonstration Mini Grants

Iowa Foundation for Microenterprise & Community Vitality
- IowaMicroLoan (www.iowamicroloan.org)

Iowa Small Business Loan Program
www.isbloan.org

10/4/10

From Winneshiek County Economic Development

7.6 Tourism Impact to the Local Economy

Tourism has a great impact on the local economy; the Iowa Tourism Office estimated the economic impact of tourism for Winneshiek County in 2002 at over $17 million. People from all over the country travel to Decorah and the surrounding area for visits and vacations.

7.7 Economic Development Programs and Organizations

Tax Incentives in Decorah

Decorah offers Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and tax abatement incentives, there have been 16 Urban Revitalization or Urban Renewal Districts created in Decorah. Some, such as the Urban Revitalization district for the C-3 area, have been renewed after their expiration. The city has established criteria as well as an application process for projects that may be assisted by one of these economic development tools. Some examples include infrastructure improvements at the Decorah Business Park; Fareway Store relocation assistance; and Residential (Riverwalk Subdivisions) assistance for public infrastructure through a rebateable TIF). Examples of projects assisted by tax abatement include: Westside Dental Clinic; Steyer Opera House (Hotel Winneshiek); Lensing Motors; Latham Furniture; Northeast Iowa Community Action for the Woolen Mill and Washington Ct Apts; and A&J Petersburg Office Building.

Tax Incentives in Winneshiek County

Both the City of Decorah and Winneshiek County offer tax abatement in select situations to assist a new or expanding business in making improvements to their property. When taxes are abated, the property owner continues to pay taxes on the property at the rate before improvements are made to that property. The increased amount of taxes is abated for a set period of time.

IowaMicroLoan

IowaMicroLoan is a program created to help Iowans realize their goal of achieving business success when there is a solid idea, team, and commitment to make it work. IowaMicroLoan was created for those microbusinesses that are considered on the fringe of risk-bearing capacity for most traditional financial institutions.

Revolving Loan Funds

Funding is offered to new or expanding businesses via the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and the Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) offered through Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission in Postville. These loans are available to businesses for which credit is not otherwise available on terms and conditions that permit completion of proposed business activities.

New Business Start-up Packets

Winneshiek County Development Inc. (WCDI) can assist retail and service start-up businesses with packets that include the following:

- Local, regional and state contact information
- Possible incentives
- Ways to organize your business (sole proprietorship, partnership, C Corporation, S Corporation, Limited Liability Company)
- Business License Information Center – a clearinghouse for Iowa business requirements
- Websites of interest to businesses

Community Economic Betterment Account (CEBA)

The CEBA program provides financial assistance to companies that create new employment opportunities and/or retain existing jobs, and make new capital investment in Iowa. The amount of funding is based, in part, on the number of jobs to be created/retained. Funds are provided in the form of loans and forgivable loans.

Economic Development Set-Aside Program (EDSA)

The EDSA program provides financial assistance to companies that create new employment opportunities and/or retain existing jobs, and make new capital investment in Iowa. The amount of funding is based, in part, on the number of jobs to be created/retained. Funds are provided in the form of loans and forgivable loans. At least 51 percent of the created/retained employment opportunities must be made available to individuals presently earning wages defined as low-and-moderate income.

Value-Added Products and Processes Financial Assistance Program (VAAPFAP)

The Value-Added Agricultural Products and Processes Financial Assistance Program seeks to increase the innovative utilization of Iowa's agricultural commodities. It accomplishes this by investing in the development of new agri-products and new processing technologies. Financial assistance is provided in the form of loans and forgivable loans.

New Jobs and Income Program (NJIP)

The Iowa New Jobs and Income Program provides a package of tax credits and exemptions to businesses making a capital investment of at least $11.4 million and creating 50 or more jobs meeting wage and benefit targets. Qualifying businesses participating in NJIP receive substantial benefits.

Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (260E)

The Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program provides customized classroom instruction, on-the-job training and other training activities for employees in newly created jobs. An employer may be reimbursed up to 50 percent of new employees' wages for on-the-job training. All training is customized to the company's special needs. Community colleges finance the program by the sale of tax-exempt bonds that are repaid by the tax revenue

generated by the salaries and capital invested to support the new jobs. As a result company profits are not used to repay the bonds.

Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE)

RISE is an Iowa Department of Transportation program designed to promote economic development through construction of roads and streets. Money comes from a 1.55-cent gas tax.

There are two elements: competitive, which provides up to 50 percent funding; and immediate opportunity, which provides up to 80 percent funding. Decorah Jobs received a $377,265 RISE grant in 2000 to pay for half of the construction costs of Sweet Parkway Road.

Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG)

The REDLG program provides no interest loans up to $450,000 to promote economic development projects. The money is provided to rural electric cooperatives that in turn relend funds for local projects. Decorah Jobs received $262,000 in REDLG loans in 2001 ($240,000) and 2002 ($22,000.)

Iowa Targeted Small Business Program

This program is designed to help women, minorities and the disabled overcome some of the major hurdles of starting or growing a small business in Iowa.

7.8 Economic Development Summary

In general, the City of Decorah enjoys a measure of success in regard to economic development. Like all communities in this period of economic struggle, there are challenges, but Decorah's economic outlook is better than many other comparable communities. One of Decorah's challenges is finding a balance between attracting a diversity of industry and manufacturing while also protecting sensitive environmental areas. Revitalization of abandoned or underutilized properties within the city limits is an area for improvement.

7.9 Economic Development Policies

- Continued efforts to maintain and improve the central business district and contiguous business districts as the principal retail center of the city will be encouraged and supported.

- Consider the extension of the C3 design standard to other business districts, continued revitalization, development, and expansion of the central business district, including building front improvement programs, provisions for off-street parking,

and improvements to the appearances of buildings, traffic circulation, and landscaping.

- Programs that require flexibility and innovation, regarding renewal and redevelopment of existing poorly developed commercial areas in the central business district and other areas in the city, will receive favorable consideration and support through establishment of urban renewal districts, tax increment financing (TIF), and other development programs and standards.

- Preservation of *historically significant* buildings and structures *in all commercial areas of the city* will be encouraged and supported.
  a. The committee should encourage the definition and identification for criteria of historically significant (as stated in residential) areas and consider community's input.

CHAPTER 8: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Photos above by Randy Uhl

8.1 Introduction

Intergovernmental cooperation involves working with neighboring communities, school districts and agencies to understand how their future planning and development activity may impact the City of Decorah and vice versa. At a minimum, this should involve sharing information about the City of Decorah plan with neighboring communities and agencies sharing their plans and initiatives with the City of Decorah.

8.2 Adjacent Governmental Units

The City of Decorah and Winneshiek County have collaborated and continue to cooperate on several undertakings. Decorah cooperates with nearby towns, school districts, state agencies and regional agencies and will continue to do so.

8.3 Intergovernmental Comprehensive Planning Process

All 8 incorporated communities in the county, as well as Winneshiek County, passed a resolution entering into an intergovernmental agreement for the purpose of developing and updating comprehensive plans.

8.4 Agreements with Neighboring or Overlapping Jurisdictions

The City of Decorah has formal agreements with neighboring or overlapping jurisdictions and will continue to encourage these whenever they are mutually beneficial. One example is the City/County 28E agreement with Winneshiek County where the wastewater from the Freeport district is treated by the Decorah wastewater treatment facility. Another example is the 28E agreement with Winneshiek County, Decorah School District, Luther College, Winneshiek Medical Center and Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission to form "Metro Net" to develop a fiber optic network in the city.

8.5 Intergovernmental Cooperation Summary

The City of Decorah has a history of collaboration with Winneshiek County, the surrounding municipalities, and other entities. Future collaboration should be encouraged and strengthened, as this increases efficient use of resources.

8.6 Intergovernmental Cooperation Policies

- The coordination of urban development in the immediate planning area adjoining the city limits with Winneshiek County should be encouraged and supported.
- Coordination and cooperative efforts should be maintained with Winneshiek County, to control and encourage preservation of agricultural land not needed for urban development.
- Coordination and cooperative efforts should be maintained with Winneshiek County regarding annexation of areas required for controlled development and growth of the city.

CHAPTER 9: LAND USE

Photo by Randy Uhl

Photo by decorahnews.com

9.1 Introduction

This element provides an examination of the existing land use pattern and development requirements and a proposed future land use scenario in the City of Decorah.

This update of the Future Land Use Plan Element of the 1990 Decorah Comprehensive Plan has been prepared to assist Decorah in guiding activities for improving the city, as well as to assist in accommodating new growth and development. A primary purpose of the Future Land Use Plan Element is to insure protection of existing conforming uses and future development from encroachment by incompatible uses. This protection benefits residents, landowners, developers and investors alike.

The Future Land Use Plan Element outlines the principles and performance standards to be followed for the control and distribution of land development intensity and population densities. Existing land uses are evaluated, and the proposed distribution, location, and extent of future land uses are designated. The principles and standards for implementing the Future Land Use Plan are specifically defined in the city's land development regulations; the zoning code and subdivision regulations. The land development regulations are the foremost means of implementing the guidelines in the Decorah Comprehensive Plan and controlling the uses of land in the city.

9.2 Land Use Issues

Decorah's location nestled in the bluff lands of Northeast Iowa and the Iowa River that flows through the city makes land use somewhat limited. As Decorah continues to grow it will need to identify areas to expand while dealing with the environmental constraints that make this community a beautiful place to live and visit.

9.3 Existing Land Use Inventory

The existing land use of Decorah is illustrated in Figure 15 as well as Table 42. The largest existing land use category in the city is agriculture. It compromises over 1,673 acres, or 37.8 percent, of the city's land area. After agriculture uses, the next largest categories, by area, are commercial uses, residential uses, industrial uses, and unknown which includes uses such as right of way or streets, city land use, religious uses, and any other non-taxable use.

Table 42: Land Use Acreages

Land Use	Acreage	Percent
Agricultural	1,673	37.8
Commercial	1,081	24.0
Industrial	52	1.8
Residential	1,026	23.2
Unknown	585	13.2
Total	**4,417**	**100.0**

Source: Winneshiek County GIS/Assessor

Within those areas classified as non-agricultural uses, the largest land use, by area, is the commercial classification. Commercial uses consist of 24.5 percent or 1,081 acres of the 4,417 total acres that make up the City of Decorah. Residential use is slightly less than commercial use in terms of acreage as it currently encompasses 1,026 acres or 23.2 percent of total acreage. "Unknown use" which includes any non-taxed land uses is 585 acres or 13.2 percent of total land use. Industrial use is the smallest of the city's land use and compromises 1.8 percent or 52 acres.

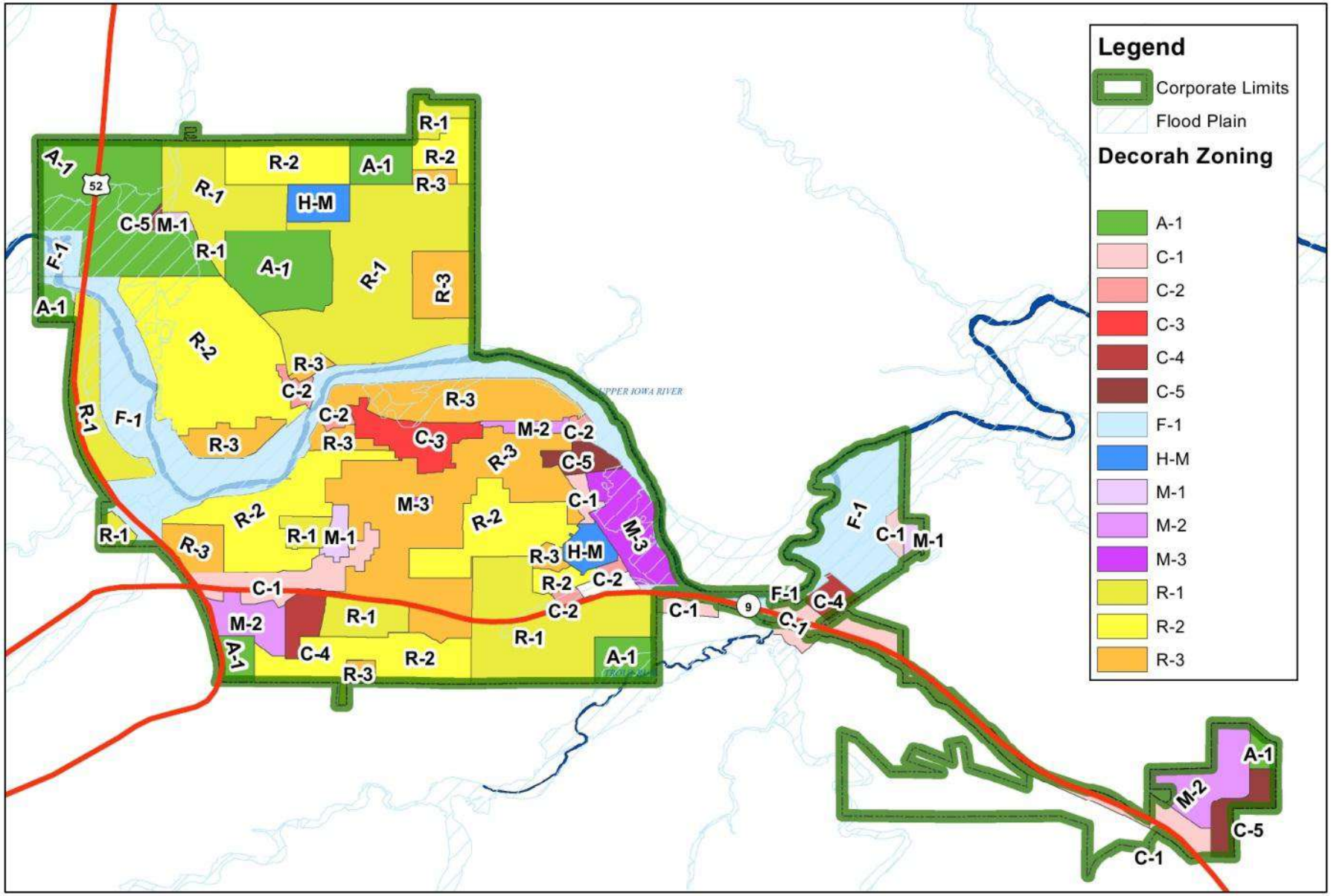


Figure 13 Zoning

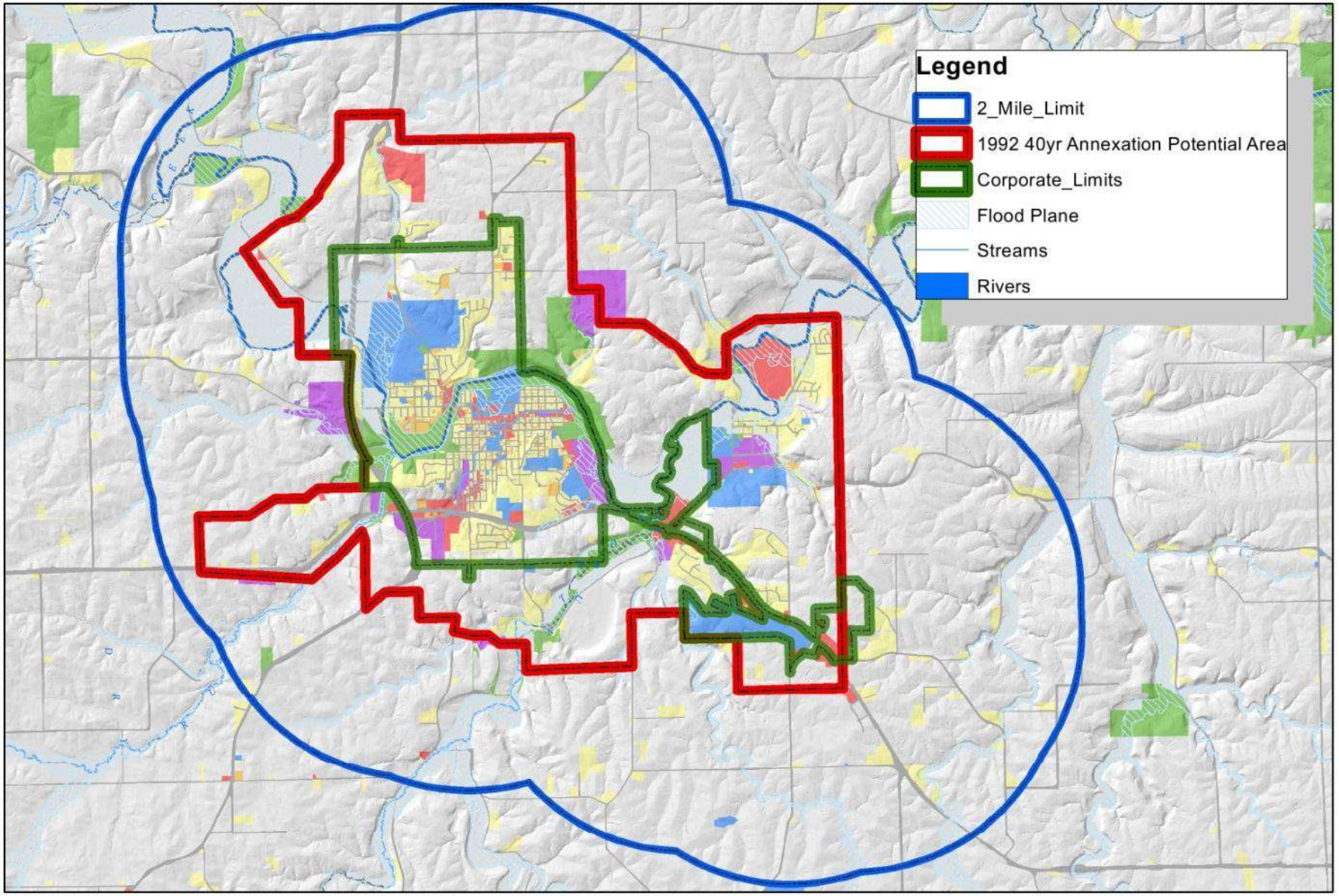


Figure 14 Current land Use

Land Use Classification

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Low Density Residential
- Moderate to High Density Residential
- Park-Rec-Conservation

9.4 Land Use and Development Requirements

The City of Decorah's Municipal Code addresses land use and development requirements in detail. The Code is available to the public and can be viewed on-line at http://www.decorahia.org/code/AABANNER%20-%20Banner%20Page.HTM

The primary chapters of the Municipal Code related to land use and development requirements include the Zoning Code and the Subdivision Code.

9.5 Future Land Use

In addition to the land use goals, objectives, and policies, the City of Decorah utilizes a Future Land Use Map to guide future growth and development. The Map, as provided in Figure 15, offers a graphical view of anticipated, potential, or future land use development for the entire community. General descriptions of the land use classifications shown on the Future Land Use Map are as follows:

COMMERCIAL

RSC – Retail Service Commercial
(C-2) Neighborhood convenience and service centers providing limited commercial, personal and professional services

HC- Highway Commercial
(C-1) Commercial business oriented to accommodate both the local consumer and the automobile-traveling public

OPC – Office Park Commercial
(C-5) Professional and business offices compatible with established residential areas

INDUSTRIAL

LI- Light Industrial
(M-1) Manufacturing, industrial and warehousing uses with structures generally one or two stories in height, large lots, landscaped grounds and ample provision for off-street parking and loading spaces

LDI- Limited Industrial
(M-2) Developments of medium industrial nature

GI- General Industrial
(M-3) Heavy industrial with few restrictions on use

RESIDENTIAL

LDR- R 1 Low Density Residential
(R-1) Low density developments of single-family detached homes

MDR- R 2 Medium Density Residential
(R-2) Medium density developments of buildings with 2-4 dwelling units per structure

HDR- R 3 High Density Residential
(R-3) High density developments of more than 4 dwelling units per structure

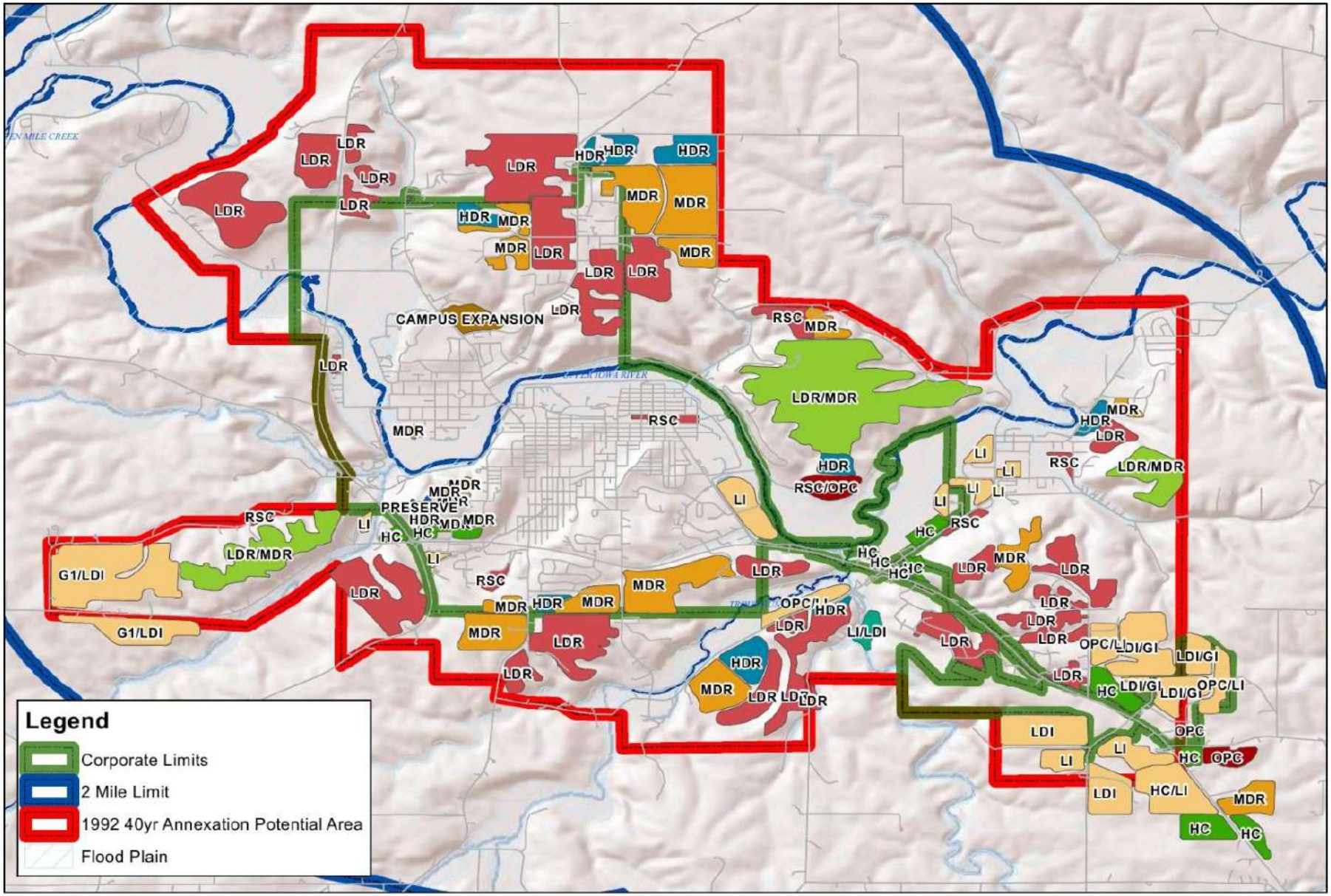


Figure 15 Future Land Use

9.6 Land Use Summary

The City of Decorah's Land Use is driven in many ways by the Upper Iowa River and the limestone bluffs. This is both a constraint and an opportunity, because while the steep terrain and floodplains cause limitations for development, those same constraints also help ensure that open space and natural areas remain intact. The challenge for the City of Decorah is to identify appropriate locations for expansion that have access to public utilities, are at lower risk for flooding, have appropriate soils and terrain, and do not encroach on areas of dense tree coverage or high CSR ratings.

As the City of Decorah continues to plan for growth it must consider the cost that accompanies it. City amenities will need to be extended, land will need to be developed, and infrastructure may need to be expanded. Care should be taken that the cost of these expansions and extensions is balanced with the funds to offset the costs incurred.

9.7 Land Use Policies

- Solar access rights and energy conservation are encouraged in the review process of subdivision plats and site plans.
- Preservation of wetlands in accordance with state and federal regulations will be implemented in the review process of subdivision plats and site plans.
- Tree replacement and preservation guidelines should be improved and incorporated in the subdivision and site plan ordinances.
- Future land use needs will be developed based on a population estimate of 15,000 by the year 2020.
- Controlled urban development will be encouraged to extend outward from developed area to insure the orderly growth of Decorah.
- Coordination and cooperative efforts will be maintained with Winneshiek County to control development outside and encourage it to occur in the city.
- The voluntary annexation process should be encouraged to the extent possible. Consideration should be given to involuntary annexation of certain areas with potential for development, and to enhance orderly development and compatible land use as expressed through the policies and land-use plan.
- Areas within the two-mile limit with potential for urban development should be considered for annexation to the city during the planning period.
- City-owned land such should be considered for annexation to the city.

- Large bulk commercial uses, and general highway related service uses, should be encouraged to locate along Highway 9, in the Decorah Business Park, and in Freeport in areas suitable for that type of development. Unless planned, commercial and industrial development along Highway 52 should be discouraged to protect conservation of open spaces and retain the visual aesthetics of this gateway entrance and corridor into the community.

- Additional site plan standards and regulations should be adopted and enforced, as part of the zoning, including a defined gateway ordinance, to improve visual quality of commercial development and redevelopment, traffic circulation, and compatibility with adjoining land uses.

- To minimize congestion and improve traffic movements, cluster commercial development should be encouraged, in lieu of strip development, along major streets.

- Development of light industrial uses within planned industrial parks should be encouraged and promoted.

- All residential and certain commercial land uses should be prohibited from areas that are set aside for future industrial development.

- Development of planned industrial parks should be encouraged in areas suitable for industrial development.

- Buffers in the form of natural barriers of streams and wooded areas, landscaping and screening should be provided when industrial uses adjoin residential and other incompatible uses.

- An ordinance defining mixed use and sustainable development should be encouraged.

- Density of residential development should be related to the physical characteristics of the area, including topography and soils, and the availability of municipal utilities. The following densities are considered to meet these criteria:

Areas that are served by municipal sanitary sewer and water systems or the equivalent:

Low Density:	6-8 persons per gross acre 3-4 housing units per gross acre Typical net lot size- 10,000 square feet
Medium Density:	8-12 persons per gross acre 4-6 housing units per gross acre Typical net lot size- 8,000 square feet
High Density:	14-32 persons per gross acre

7-16 housing units per gross acre
Typical net lot size- 4,500 square feet

Areas that are served by the municipal water system only:

Low Density: 4 – 6 persons per gross acre
2 – 3 housing units per gross acre
Typical net lot size – 18,000 square feet

Areas that are not served by municipal utility systems or the equivalent:

Low Density: 2 – 4 persons per gross acre
1 – 2 housing units per gross acre
Typical net lot size – 22,000 square feet

Areas that are designated for agricultural use, residential reserve & acreage development:

Low Density: 2 persons per 10 gross acres
1 unit per 10 gross acres
Typical net lot size – 10 acres

- Residential development, such as a planned unit development (PUD), should be encouraged to provide flexibility and better utilization and preservation of land; particularly in areas where soils, topography and tree cover are limiting factors.

- Development of vacant land within the existing and future corporate limits will have a high priority in meeting future land-use demand.

- Potential historic and archaeological sites should be identified in the development and redevelopment of publicly and privately owned land and structures. Standards should be provided in subdivision regulations and site plan regulations that require the identification of the historical or archaeological potential of sites and structures.

- The Decorah Historic Preservation Commission should be consulted for consideration and integration of historic preservation opportunities in Decorah.

CHAPTER 10: IMPLEMENTATION

Photo of the Upper Iowa River by Randy Uhl

10.1 Introduction

The purpose of the implementation element is to explain how this plan will be implemented to achieve the desired outcomes (goals, objectives, etc.) as set forth by the City of Decorah. The City of Decorah Comprehensive Plan addresses many important components critical to sustaining a healthy community while preserving the area's natural resources and history. As change is inevitable, the plan may need to be amended in the future to appropriately reflect those changes. This element includes a table of all the policies highlighted in each previous element of the plan, with a timeframe for those actions. In this way, this element serves as the master "to do" list for implementing the plan.

Time Frame

This category assigns approximate timeframes for strategies to begin implementation. Some strategies will take a significant amount of time for completion, so this category only indicates start times.

> Underway – Started as the comprehensive plan was being drafted
> Immediately – Should start as soon as possible after plan adoption
> 0 to 2 years
> 2 to 5 years
> Beyond 5 years
> Ongoing

Decorah Planning & Zoning will be instrumental for implementing many of the strategies. However, they cannot act alone and this category lists partners who will be crucial to success. (The top agency listed in this category is the lead organization on the strategy. This is usually the Decorah Planning & Zoning.) Abbreviations used are:

DPZ- Decorah Planning & Zoning
DA – Decorah Administration
DPD- Decorah Police Department
DFD- Decorah Fire Department
DSD- Decorah Streets Department
DED- Decorah Economic Development
DWD- Decorah Water Department
DWW- Decorah Waste Water
DCM- Decorah Chamber of Commerce
DE- Decorah Engineering
DHP- Decorah Historical Preservation
DCC- Decorah City Council
DTB- Decorah Tree Board
DMAB- Decorah Municipal Airport Board
WC- Winneshiek County
DPP- Decorah Parks & Recreation
DSD- Decorah School District
LC- Luther College
DLB- Decorah Library Board
COD-City of Decorah
WCR – Winneshiek County Residents
DCR- Decorah City Residents
VM- Vesterheim Museum

Resource Needs

The categories described below take into account both direct expenditures and staff time costs.

- "Minimum" resource needs indicate that the implementation of the strategy would likely take less than $10,000 in direct expenditures and could be accomplished within the schedules of existing staff and/or volunteers of the responsible parties.

- "Moderate" resource needs indicate that the implementation of the strategy would take more than $10,000 and less than $50,000 in direct expenditures and would require some coordination between agencies and increased staff time.

- "Significant" resource needs indicate that implementation of the strategy would take more than $50,000 in direct expenditures and would require significant coordination between agencies and significant staff time.

Strategy	Time Frame	Lead Agency/ Partner(s)	Resources
The major street plan should be maintained that is integrated with the regional street system and reflects major traffic generators and adjacent land-use patterns.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE, DSD	Minimum
Standards for major and local streets should be developed and enforced in the subdivision ordinance and city standard specifications to insure adequate right-of-way, pavement width, street access, and dedication of street right-of-way prior to development. SUDAS guidelines should be considered for planning and construction.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE	Minimum
Provision of frontage drives and limited access along Highways 9 and 52 to provide for adequate traffic control and land-use development should be encouraged.	Ongoing	DPZ,	Minimum
Residential areas and residential local service streets should be protected from the impact of industrial traffic by enforcement of truck routes in the city, to the greatest extent possible.	Ongoing	DPD	Minimum
The street improvement program priorities should generally be based on existing and future traffic volumes based on land use projections and street maintenance evaluations.	Ongoing	DPZ,	Minimum
Alternative traffic routes between the outlying areas and the city should be considered as traffic volumes warrant.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE	Moderate
Various options regarding mass transit to serve Decorah should be explored, including the development of a regional transportation center.	Ongoing	DCR, COD, DED, DE	Moderate-Significant

Continued improvements and development at the Decorah Municipal Airport should be in accordance with an updated airport master plan.	0-2 yrs	DMAB, DED, COD, DCR	Moderate
The development of a regional airport should be considered.	Ongoing		Significant
Use of the airport by commuter aircraft should be promoted.	Ongoing	DMAB	Minimum
Streets should be planned with consideration for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. This should include new development as well as street redevelopment.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE	Moderate-Significant
Access management for major streets should be encouraged and implemented and utilize SUDAS guidelines as a reference for new and existing streets.	Immediately	DPZ, DE	Minimum
A detailed written plan should be established that will reflect development, maintenance, and orderly growth of area trails, parks, recreation activities and community facilities.	0-2 yrs	DPR	Minimum-Moderate
A system of neighborhood parks that serve existing and future residential areas should be developed in accordance with the parks and recreation plan.	Beyond 5 years	DPR,DPZ	Minimum-Moderate
The system of bikeways and trails that links parks, recreation areas and schools with residential areas should be further developed in the Decorah area.	Immediately	DPR,DPZ, DSD, DE	Moderate-Significant
The local trail system should be expanded and integrated with county and regional trail systems -- to enhance connectivity and multi-modal use.	2-5 years	DPZ, WC, DE, DA	Moderate-Significant

Cooperative efforts with all public entities, governmental agencies and surrounding municipalities; including schools, college, and counties including Winneshiek, regarding planning and development of recreational facilities and programs and joint use of facilities should be encouraged and continued.	Ongoing	COD, DPR, DA	Minimum
Public park dedication standards for developers should be established.	Immediately	DPZ	Minimum
Future needs of area school districts and colleges will be coordinated and incorporated into this plan.	Immediately	DSD, LC, DA	Minimum-Significant
Future needs of the Decorah Fire Department will be coordinated in accordance with the standards of the Insurance Service Office (ISO) and this plan.	Ongoing	DFD, DCC	Minimum-Moderate
Relocation and potential consolidation of city facilities should be considered during the planning period.	Ongoing	COD	Minimum-Significant
The city library should be recognized as a vital part of this community and overall maintenance and operations should be supported.	Ongoing	DCC, DLB,	Minimum-Moderate
Development of a community center should be encouraged.	Ongoing	COD	Significant
The Vesterheim Museum should be recognized as a vital part of this community and the city should participate in a cooperative and coordinated planning process in support of the Museum's integration and development in its existing downtown area.	Ongoing	DCC, DPZ, VM	Minimum
Coordination of the immediate and long range plans of the wastewater treatment and sanitary sewer system with the land-use plan and policies will be encouraged and implemented.	Ongoing	DWW, DPZ, DE	Minimum-Significant

A detailed water system plan addressing current and projected needs for production, storage, treatment, transmission and distribution should be developed. The plan should address both domestic and fire flows, and should be developed in conjunction with the land use plan.	2 to 5 years	DWD, DE,	Moderate-Significant
The water supply wells should be protected from extraneous surface contamination.	Ongoing	DWD	Moderate-Significant
City standard specifications for street and utility improvements should be developed to provide uniform design of utilities and streets.	2 to 5 years	DPZ, DE	Minimum-Moderate
Storm drainage system design criteria should be developed in accordance with the land use policies and plan to serve as a guide for developers and the city to improve storm drainage systems. The storm sewers in areas subject to future development by sub dividers should be designed to accommodate runoff from storm events of a 10-year recurrence.	Beyond 5 years	DPZ, DE, DCC	Minimum-Moderate
An ordinance should be considered that addresses development within established flood limits. This ordinance should be established using the city's accepted flood map. Full or partial prohibition should be considered for development in wetland and flood limit areas.	0 to 2 years	DPZ, DE	Minimum
Recycling of solid waste and safe methods for disposal of toxic waste should be promoted.	Ongoing	DCC, DWD	Minimum
The preservation and protection of historical and archaeological sites and environmentally sensitive areas should be continued.	Ongoing	DHP, DE	Minimum

Potential historic and archaeological areas should be identified in the development and redevelopment of publicly and privately owned land and structures. Standards should be provided in subdivision regulations and site plan regulations that require the identification of the historical or archaeological potential of sites and structures.	Ongoing	DPZ, DHP	Minimum
The Decorah Historic Preservation Commission should be consulted for consideration and integration of historic preservation opportunities in Decorah.	Ongoing	DPZ, DHP	Minimum
Abatement of air and noise pollution will be encouraged in residential areas.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
Solar access rights and energy conservation are encouraged in the review process of subdivision plats and site plans.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
Appropriate buffering should be provided between residential and other land uses.	Ongoing	DPZ, DA	Minimum
Preservation of wetlands in accordance with state and federal regulations will be implemented in the review process of subdivision plats and site plans.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE	Minimum
Tree replacement and preservation guidelines should be improved and incorporated in the subdivision and site plan ordinances.	Ongoing	DPZ, DTB	Minimum
The coordination of urban development in the immediate planning area adjoining the city limits with Winneshiek County should be encouraged and supported.	Ongoing	DPZ, WC, DA	Minimum

The protection of the floodplains of the Upper Iowa River, Dry Run, Trout Run Creek and other tributary stream channels, and embankments from incompatible development will be given high priority.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
The steep rock land, limestone outcroppings, and other scenic landscapes should continue to be preserved through acquisition, of easements and other methods.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum-Significant
Dry Run, the principal drainage channel through the developed part of Decorah should be improved and maintained as open space through residentially developed areas and enclosed only where necessary due to extension of streets and commercial and industrial development in the central business district.	Immediately	DPZ, DE	Minimum
Storm drainage easements for Dry Run and other drainage channels and storm sewers should be established.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE	Moderate
Future land use needs will be developed based on a population estimate of 15,000 by the year 2020.	Immediately	DPZ	Minimum
Controlled urban development will be encouraged to extend outward from developed area to insure the orderly growth of Decorah.	Immediately	DPZ,DCC,	Minimum
Coordination and cooperative efforts will be maintained with Winneshiek County to control development outside and encourage it to occur in the city.	Ongoing	DPZ, DCC, WC	Minimum
Development of vacant land within the existing and future corporate limits will have a high priority in meeting future land-use demand.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum

Density of residential development should be related to the physical characteristics of the area, including topography and soils, and the availability of municipal utilities. See principles for further guidance.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
A variety in the type of housing construction should be encouraged and supported to meet the housing needs of the population. The housing mix should reflect anticipated trends to higher density development, and demands for affordable housing, while being compatible with existing residential density and development. Housing types may include apartments, townhouses, and single family dwellings, including manufactured housing and mobile homes.	Ongoing	DPZ, DCC	Minimum
Residential development, such as a planned unit development (PUD), should be encouraged to provide flexibility and better utilization and preservation of land; particularly in areas where soils, topography and tree cover are limiting factors.	Ongoing	DPZ, DCC	Minimum
Coordination and cooperative efforts should be maintained with Winneshiek County, to control and encourage preservation of agricultural land not needed for urban development.	Ongoing	DPZ, DCC	Minimum
Any development in and around areas of the city meeting the criteria as a historically significant area should recognize and preserve the historic setting, architecture character and architectural design characteristics of the buildings and area of the city.	Ongoing	DPZ, DHP	Minimum

The committee should encourage the definition and identification for criteria of "*historically significant areas*" and define "*and around*" with community's input.	Immediately	DHP, DCC	
Continued efforts to maintain and improve the central business district and contiguous business districts as the principal retail center of the city will be encouraged and supported.	Ongoing	DPZ, DED,	Minimum-Moderate
Consider the extension of the C3 design standard to other business district, continued revitalization, development, and expansion of the central business district, including building front improvement programs, provisions for off-street parking, and improvements to the appearances of buildings, traffic circulation, and landscaping.	2 to 5 years	DPZ, DCC	Minimum
Programs that require flexibility and innovation, regarding renewal and redevelopment of existing poorly developed commercial areas in the central business district and other areas in the city, will receive favorable consideration and support through establishment of urban renewal districts, tax increment financing (TIF), and other development programs and standards.	Ongoing	DPZ, DED, DCC	Minimum-Moderate
Large bulk commercial uses, and general highway related service uses, should be encouraged to locate along Highway 9, in the Decorah Business Park, and in Freeport in areas suitable for that type of development. Unless planned, commercial and industrial development along Highway 52 should be discouraged to protect conservation of open spaces and retain the visual aesthetics of this gateway entrance and corridor into the community.	Immediately	DPZ, DCC	Minimum

Additional site plan standards and regulations should be adopted and enforced, as part of the zoning, including a defined gateway ordinance, to improve visual quality of commercial development and redevelopment, traffic circulation, and compatibility with adjoining land uses.	Immediately	DPZ, DCC	Minimum
Preservation of *historically significant* buildings and structures *in all commercial areas of the city* will be encouraged and supported.	Immediately	DPZ, DHP, DCR, DCC	Minimum
The committee should encourage the definition and identification for criteria of historically significant areas and consider community's input.	Immediately	DPZ, DHP, DCR	Minimum
To minimize congestion and improve traffic movements, cluster commercial development should be encouraged, in lieu of strip development, along major streets.	Ongoing	DPZ, DA, DE	Minimum
Development of light industrial uses within planned industrial parks should be encouraged and promoted.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
All residential and certain commercial land uses should be prohibited from areas that are set aside for future industrial development.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
Development of planned industrial parks should be encouraged in areas suitable for industrial development.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
Buffers in the form of natural barriers of streams and wooded areas, landscaping and screening should be provided when industrial uses adjoin residential and other incompatible uses.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
An ordinance defining mixed use and sustainable development should be encouraged.	0 to 2 years	DPZ	Minimum

The voluntary annexation process should be encouraged to the extent possible. Consideration should be given to involuntary annexation of certain areas with potential for development, and to enhance orderly development and compatible land use as expressed through the policies and land-use plan.	Ongoing	DPZ, WCR	Minimum-Significant
Areas within the two-mile limit with potential for urban development should be considered for annexation to the city during the planning period.	Ongoing	DPZ, WC	Minimum-Significant
City-owned land such should be considered for annexation to the city.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum-Significant
Coordination and cooperative efforts should be maintained with Winneshiek County regarding annexation of areas required for controlled development and growth of the city.	Ongoing	DPZ, WC	Minimum

10.2 Plan Adoption

The City of Decorah's Comprehensive Smart Plan was reviewed by the public on December 5, 2011 The City Council reviewed the plan and voted to adopt Decorah's Comprehensive Smart Plan on December 19, 2011.

10.3 Integration and Consistency

It is important that all elements of the plan be integrated and made consistent. As a result of the comprehensive plan being developed in a coordinated and simultaneous effort, the planning process has ensured that the development and review of each element is consistent with the others; and based on that analysis, there are no known inconsistencies between the planning elements. Furthermore, Decorah has and will continue to work with Winneshiek county in updating its Comprehensive Plan which will help guide the entire County in its future planning needs.

10.4 Measurement of Plan Progress

As part of the comprehensive planning process, a number of goals, objectives and actions were developed that when implemented are intended to build stronger relationships and give direction to the city board and its residents. Many of the objectives are long term, while some can be accomplished in the next couple of years.

To help the city in measuring progress of the comprehensive plan, a table of action statements has been created that identify the action, key parties, timeframes, and possible funding requirements to accomplish those actions. The identified actions will provide guidance to the plan commission which can measure the progress of achieving implementation of the comprehensive plan. It is recommended that the plan be continually reviewed by the city boards as copies will be available at each meeting location.

10.5 Plan Monitoring, Amendments, and Updates

The City of Decorah Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a living document. Over time, social and economic conditions and values tend to change. The comprehensive plan should be updated periodically to reflect these changes. Systematic, periodic updates will ensure that not only the statistical data is current but also the plan's goals, policies, and action reflect the current situation and modern needs. It is recommended the plan be reviewed for consistency every five years, with a major update planned every 20 years.

CHAPTER 11: SMART PLANNING PRINCIPLES

11.1 Introduction

The smart planning principles outlined in this chapter apply to the entire comprehensive planning process as a whole. The use of the following ten smart planning principles is intended to produce greater economic opportunity, enhance environmental integrity, improve public health outcomes, and safeguard Decorah's quality of life. The principles also address the need for fair and equitable decision-making processes.

11.2 Collaboration

Everyone is encouraged to be involved and provide comment during the decision making process and during implementation of such decisions. This includes governments, communities and individuals, both residing in the community and those from outside the community. Decorah will strive to develop and implement a strategy to facilitate such participation. In cases where jurisdictions overlap, Decorah will work together with those entities to reach their common goals.

11.3 Efficiency, Transparency and Consistency

The City of Decorah strives to be efficient in all aspects of its operations, promoting good stewardship of the community's resources and the taxpayers' money. The city promotes transparency to make the governing of the community accessible to the general public with consistent outcomes that seek to put into action the equitable distribution of development benefits and costs.

11.4 Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy

The City of Decorah encourages clean and renewable energy use and increased energy efficiency wherever possible in both public and private development.

11.5 Occupational Diversity

Decorah should promote increased diversity of employment and business opportunities, promote access to education and training, expand entrepreneurial opportunities, and

promote the establishment of businesses in locations near existing housing, infrastructure, and transportation.

11.6 Revitalization

Decorah encourages the revitalization of established town centers and neighborhoods by promoting development that conserves land, protects historic resources, promotes pedestrian accessibility, and integrates different uses of property. Infill development is preferred over new construction in undeveloped and outlying areas. (See 9.6 Land Use Policies)

11.7 Housing Diversity

Decorah should encourage diversity in the types of available housing, support the rehabilitation of existing housing, and promote the location of housing near employment centers, colleges and any future public transportation systems.

11.8 Community Character

Decorah should promote activities and development that are consistent with the character and architectural style of the community and should respond to local values regarding the physical character of the community. (See 9.6 Land Use Policies)

11.9 Natural Resources and Agricultural Protection

The City of Decorah places a high priority on natural resources and agricultural protection, recognizing that they are a primary component of its community character. Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should emphasize protection, preservation, and restoration of natural resources, agricultural land, and cultural and historic landscapes, and should increase the availability of open spaces and recreational facilities.

11.10 Sustainable Design

The City of Decorah promotes sustainable design and construction standards in developments, buildings and infrastructure. Every effort should be made to conserve natural resources by reducing waste and pollution through efficient use of land, energy, water, air, and materials. These principles are evident in the land use policies (see 9.6) promoting solar access rights and energy conservation.

11.11 Transportation Diversity

The City of Decorah encourages transportation options that maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel, and improve air quality. The city enjoys many benefits from the extensive system of recreational trails already in place. Transportation policy (see section 3.9) encourages expanded use of the airport, directs the exploration of mass transit options, and encourages accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. ACCOMPLISHED: Goals from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

- ✓ A neighborhood park to serve the southeast part of the residential area in Decorah and a neighborhood park to serve the Freeport area should be developed during the planning period.

- ✓ Replacement or renovation of the East Side Elementary School should be considered during the planning period.

- ✓ Standards for erosion control and erosion control plans are encouraged in the review process of subdivision plats and site plans.

- ✓ The Freeport water system should be interconnected with the Decorah water system to improve flows and water quality of the two systems.

Appendix B. Points of Interest for Future Land Use Suggestions or Changes

Locate the correlating number on the Future Land Use map (Page 127), with notes and explanation on the page below.

* Changed = was classified in 1992 plan and is being recommended for change
+Added = New area that was not part of the 1992 future land use map
1. + McCaffrey's restaurant recently built and now reflects Retail Service Commercial.
2. * Prior intended use was Industrial, with single family homes built to reflect change to Residential.
3. * J.B. Holland Construction and surrounding area modified from Industrial to Light Industrial.
4. * N.W. corner of Hwy 9/52 intersection – Hovden property from Commercial to Hwy/Commercial.
5. + S.W. corner of 9/52 intersection – potential for Low Density Residential expansion.
6. + South of old Wal-Mart - changed from High Density Commercial to Medium Density Residential.
7. + Originally General Industrial designated, and added Low, Medium, and High Density Residential consideration to this area taking into account the proximity to the scenic resources of the river, trail, rolling bluffs and near parks and fish hatchery.
8. * Changed from Limited Industrial to Light Industrial to match and follow current logical growth trend.
9. * Near Brynsaas new building off Hwy 9 (by Lifetime Gutter/Auction building), changed from Light Industrial to Highway Commercial to reflect current development trend and compatibility.
10. + Added as Medium Density Residential near the existing Hickory Hills development.
11. * Reduction in Freeport Area- Respecting Flood Plain due to frequency and magnitude of flood events in past 15 years, recognizing and respecting Mother Nature.
12. * Changed from Retail Service Commercial to Light Industrial by Kerndt Building and Storage in Freeport.
13. * Changed from Ag to Medium Density Residential by "Old Salvage Yard" past Freeport.
14. + Howdy Hills - Extension "Up Top" through current development to top of hill for LDR/MDR.
15. + Business Park Additions include Light Industrial, General Industrial and Office Park.
16. * Was in the past planned for High Density Residential, but more realistically reconsidered for Highway Commercial in recent planning discussions.
17. + Current growth along this road over the bridge by Olson Explosives and next to Decorah Electric includes Light Industrial to Limited Industrial.
18. + More consideration for development around Vennehjem which could accommodate High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential or Low Density Residential (single family units).
19. * This area on Montgomery/Water street currently industrial, and could be Retail Service Commercial with the right developer.

COMMERCIAL
RSC – Retail Service Commercial
HC- Highway Commercial
OPC – Office Park Commercial

INDUSTRIAL
LI- Light Industrial
LDI- Limited Industrial
GI- General Industrial

RESIDENTIAL
LDR- R 1 Low Density Residential
MDR- R 2 Medium Density Residential
HDR- R 3 High Density Residential

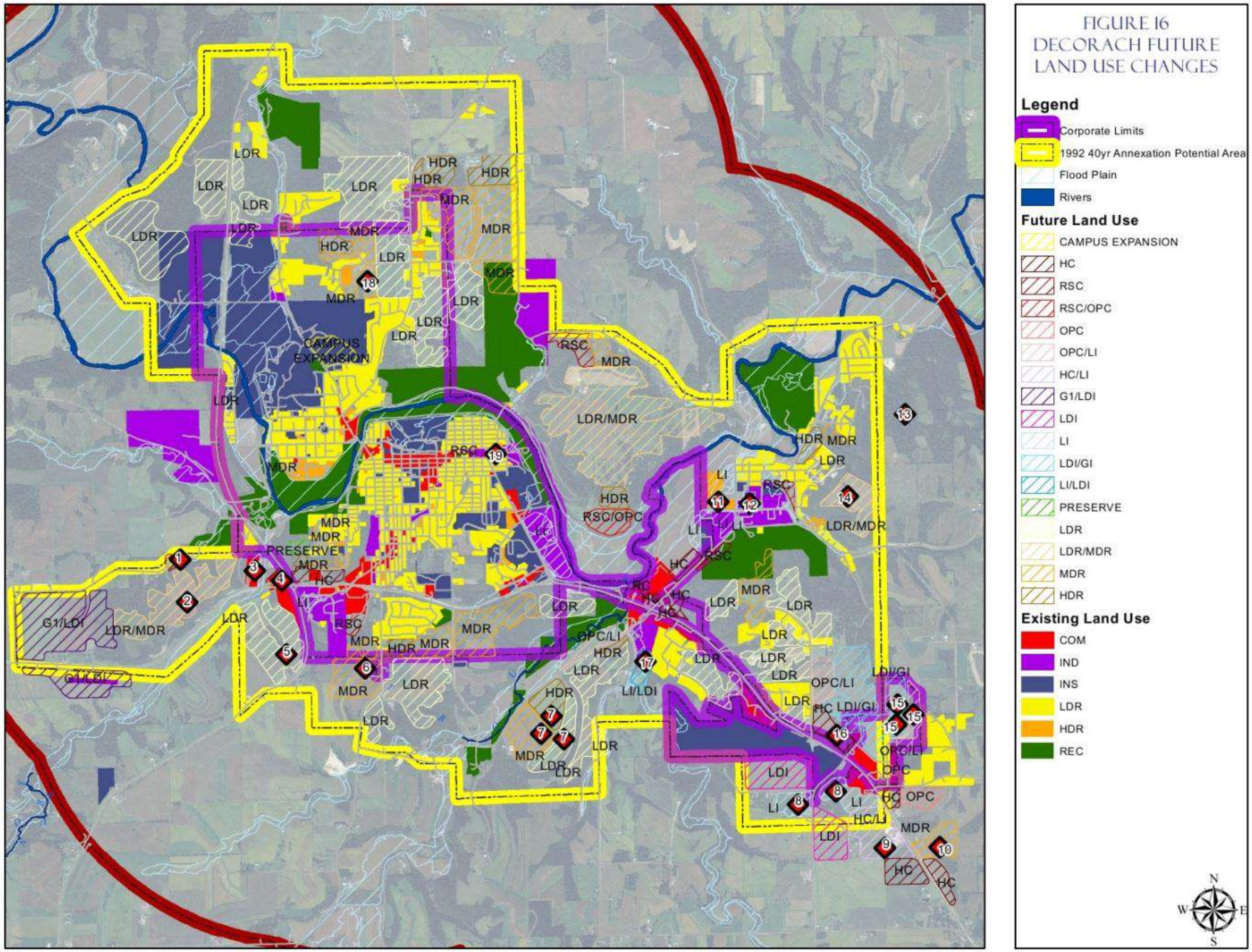


FIGURE 16
DECORACH FUTURE
LAND USE CHANGES
Legend
Corporate Limits
1992 40yr Annexation Potential Area
Flood Plain
Rivers
Future Land Use
CAMPUS EXPANSION
HC
RSC
RSC/OPC
OPC
OPC/LI
HC/LI
G1/LDI
LDI
LI
LDI/GI
LI/LDI
PRESERVE
LDR
LDR/MDR
MDR
HDR
Existing Land Use
COM
IND
INS
LDR
HDR
REC
N
W
E
S

Appendix C. Public Input Meeting Comments and Photos

- I'm concerned about high density housing out of town (County). I think housing needs to be constructed in town so that there is easy access to grocery stores, especially. We need to zone farm land for continuing ag use.

- Three things-

1. The low –density residential lots are so large + numerous. The world is changing quickly; awareness about climate change + a quickly changing economy would indicate that we encourage smaller houses, which would sit on smaller lots. A side benefit of this action is that we preserve more far land + recreational land.
2. As we continue this planning, let's make sure to provide pedestrian access from all new neighborhoods to downtown.
3. Is it wise to place high-density residential so far out; I've seen it in Postville, and it ends up looking like they're stuffing the poor away and out of sight.

- The area south of Mound Street homes is zoned moderate to high density and we feel it should be low density residential.
- Maps get copies on line
- When does a home business (B&B) become a commercial business in a residential area? When the owner/resident/ B&B operator moves out and hires help to come to check customers in and make their breakfast? When they move out to make more bedrooms available for more income, more bedroom than there is off-street parking for a "business" like this? When an owner/B&B operators buys another and another house to run multiple B&B house businesses?

Public Hearing Comments

Comments on proposed Decorah Comprehensive Plan in regard to
Future Land Use of Riverwalk Subdivision (low area on West Side near levee):

Many residents of Mound Street and the Riverwalk Subdivision are concerned that the proposed Decorah Comprehensive Plan would facilitate efforts to shoe-horn a high density residential development into their neighborhood. HDR development within that area would be inharmonious with the neighborhood, would unduly increase traffic on a lengthy cul-de-sac, would unnecessarily place additional people and property at risk in the event of a severe flood event, and would breach promises to neighbors concerning the extent of development.

A map labeled "Figure 15 Future Land Use" appears at page 105 of the Draft Plan. A similar map also appears at page 126 of the Draft Plan, and is labeled "Appendix B. Future Land Use Changes." Both of these maps show the Riverwalk Subdivision area with a future land use designation of "HDR" or "High Density Residential." The HDR designation of Riverwalk Subdivison should be deleted or amended to MDR for the reasons explained below:

High Density Residential is defined at page107 of the draft plan as "High density developments of more than 4 dwelling units per structure." Medium Density Residential is defined as "Medium density developments of buildings with 2-4 units per structure."

Northern Iowa Development Corporation (NIDC) previously obtained site plan approval for development of 46 condominium units, all of which were to be placed in buildings with 2-4 units per structure. The 2000 site plan approval and TIF approval followed intensive negotiations between NIDC, the City, and neighboring residents, which resulted in promises to constrain the nature and scope of development in this area. The improvements which Riverwalk illustrated in its 2000 site plan and promised to implement in consideration of the TIF funding it received would therefore result in medium density residential development as defined in the Draft Plan. The "Future Land Use" map, as drafted, endorses a breach of past promises made to Mound Street neighbors and Riverwalk condo purchasers.

Current members of the Council are familiar with the repeated controversies involving the development of the Riverwalk area over the past 12 years -- some council members have had a longer breadth of experience than others. As Council members retire in future years, the Council will lose its collective memories of past promises and agreements. It is important that this City Council leave in place a "Future Land Use" map which accurately portrays the long term planning promised and found appropriate for Riverwalk – a map which would not encourage NIDC's successors to seek high density development which would breach past agreements.

The history of this area, as it relates to an appropriate future land use designation for Riverwalk is briefly summarized below:

In 1999, NIDC presented a proposal for development of the area in question, promising no outdoor parking lots, a trail system proposed to connect to local and city trails, a property tax yield of $1,152,000, and enlarged open space areas.

On February 15, 2000, the site plan was approved by the City Council subject to conditions including conditions which the Planning and Zoning had earlier recommended. The City Council's conditions included provision for rain run-off from a 100-year event, and provision for a maintenance bond for replacement of shrubbery.

NIDC then moved into negotiations for TIF financing. (Council minutes from April 18, 2000 to December 4, 2000.) During that period, the City Council encouraged the developer to include neighboring property owners in meetings and discussions which ultimately lead to an agreement to amend the site plan so as to make the project more aesthetically pleasing to the neighbors.

The agreement reached as a result of the Neighborhood meetings included the elimination of Dwelling #12 and the scaling back of Dwelling #13 on the site plan. The resulting site plan involved 2-story buildings no larger than 4-plexes, separated by ample green space.

In consideration of the promise to develop this area in the scaled-back manner promised pursuant to the amended site plan, the City agreed to provide a $416,132 TIF rebate of taxes to help finance the project. The Development Agreement was signed by the City and NIDC on January 5, 2001, states that the Developer will install certain improvements, and states that "This Agreement shall inure to the benefit of and be binding upon the successors and assigns of the parties."

When the TIF pursuant to the amended site plan was approved on December 4, 2000, the final plat for the area was also approved by the city council. Attached to the final plat were covenants and restrictions in which the owners made promises, including the following:

> "1. The owners of the property shall be required to maintain and replace, any and all trees and shrubbery initially placed on the property by the developer. (The site plan contained detailed provisions for placement of trees and shrubbery throughout Riverwalk.)
> 2. The above lots are to be used only for the development of multi-family residences…
> 5. A perpetual easement is reserved for utility installation and maintenance, drainage and bicycle and walking trails as shown on the attached plat."

After the site plan was amended to accommodate the concerns of the Mound Street neighbors, and after the TIF was approved, NIDC unsuccessfully attempted to amend the site plan in August and November of 2001 to allow a triplex to be constructed where a duplex is shown on the site plan. At that time Councilperson Wanless stated the development agreement was approved because neighbors had agreed on the current site plan. The Council unanimously denied the request.

In July of 2005, NIDC again requested an amendment to the site plan, to enable construction of additional units. The minutes state: "Councilperson Wanless stated that this issue revolves around the fact that City participation was approved based on the agreement reached at that time and is concerned about this request for additional units." Again all council members voted to deny the changes.

In the summer of 2008, severe flooding came close to topping Decorah's levee, forcing massive evacuations, sometimes over flooded streets. The 2008 flood also illustrated another problem: When the river is in flood and the flood gates are closed, all stormwater falling on the West Side flows down to the interior of the levee, where it is trapped and floods property near the levee until the backwater can be pumped over the levee. In 2008, the storage capacity of stormwater detention areas interior to the West Side levee was proven deficient, as was Decorah's ability to promptly pump storm drainage over the levee.

On February 7, 2011, a new owner of the undeveloped portion of Riverwalk asked the City Council to vacate easements and to approve a new site plan calling for development of a large assisted living facility on Riverwalk rather than completing the condominium site plan approved in 2000. The City Council once again unanimously denied the request. More recently, another developer has proposed the development of a large apartment complex in this area.

In summary, if this Council were to adopt the Draft Plan without first correcting Riverwalk's "Future Land Use" designation, it would leave a terrible legacy for future city planners deciding Riverwalk development requests over the next 20 years. The draft Plan, if not amended, would place all future City Councils in a dilemma each time HDR development is requested in Riverwalk -- either disregard Decorah's 2011 "Future Land Use" map endorsing HDR development, or disregard the City's past promises negotiated with neighbors.

I would therefore encourage the City Council to amend the Comprehensive Plan to delete the HDR designation of the Riverwalk Subdivision as shown on the maps at pages 105 and 126, and to substitute a designation of MDR.

Comments on proposed Decorah Comprehensive Plan:

Page 11 of the Draft plan approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission contains a table labeled: **"Table 4. Population Projection A: Based on a goal of 15,000 people by 2020."** Table 4 projects the Decorah population swelling to 15,112 by 2020, a near doubling in 9 years. (The same page projects that if Decorah continues to grow at its normal rate of growth, its population will grow from 8,159 to 8,457 during that time.)

For reasons explained below, 6.4% population growth should not be a city "goal." The City Council should clarify that point before adopting the Comprehensive Plan. The Draft plan contains the following explanation of table 4:

> "Table 4 above is calculated starting with Decorah's future land use needs estimate of 15,000 people by the year 2020. Using a constant annual growth rate, Decorah would need to average 6.4% population growth per year over the next 10 years to reach that estimate. However, the actual growth rate has been 0.4% for the past three decades. Table 5, to the left, shows the population estimates for Decorah using a 0.4% growth rate."

If these projections are extended for 40 years, we can visualize whether the 6.4% growth rate "goal" for Decorah is smart and sustainable, or whether a continuation of the present 0.4% rate might be a better way to preserve our city's high quality of life. Here is such a projection:

	0.4% growth (Table 5)	6.4% growth (Table 4)		0.4% growth (Table 5)	6.4% growth (Table 4)
2011	8,159	8,647	2031	8,837	29,902
2012	8,192	9,200	2032	8,872	31,816
2013	8,224	9,789	2033	8,908	33,852
2014	8,257	10,416	2034	8,944	36,018
2015	8,290	11,082	2035	8,979	38,323
2016	8,323	11,792	2036	9,015	40,776
2017	8,357	12,546	2037	9,051	43,386
2018	8,390	13,349	2038	9,088	46,163
2019	8,424	14,204	2039	9,124	49,117
2020	8,457	15,113	2040	9,160	52,260
2021	8,491	16,080	2041	9,197	55,605
2022	8,525	17,109	2042	9,234	59,164
2023	8,559	18,204	2043	9,271	62,950
2024	8,594	19,369	2044	9,308	66,979
2025	8,628	20,609	2045	9,345	71,266
2026	8,662	21,928	2046	9,382	75,827
2027	8,697	23,331	2047	9,420	80,680
2028	8,732	24,824	2048	9,458	85,843
2029	8,767	26,413	2049	9,496	91,337
2030	8,802	28,103	**2050**	**9,533**	**97,183**

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines a "goal" as **"the end toward which effort is directed."** A comprehensive plan "goal" of 6.4% growth begs two questions: Would the City of Decorah, and its residents, benefit from government efforts to double our population in 9 years, perhaps through taxpayer subsidies for private development? Or would Decorah residents be better served by maintaining its past policy of relying on the forces of the free market to build the city at normal historical rates, within reasonable zoning restraints aimed at preserving Decorah's environment and high quality of life?

A Comprehensive Plan statement that 6.4% growth is a Decorah "goal" would inevitably be used to promote development which does not make sense or conflicts with other parts of the Plan. Development of high density housing which is not in harmony with a surrounding neighborhood, or development of a sensitive area such as a flood plain are just two examples of unwise development which might be justified by reference to a 6.4% growth "goal."

The City should remember that over-development can cause unintended problems. If the population of Decorah rapidly doubles, how might that affect crime rates, traffic congestion, water quality, and other quality of life issues? Recently, too-rapid development of housing in many cities (e.g. Las Vegas) resulted in a housing bubble which collapsed, causing the value of all housing stock in the city to plummet. As a result, many families found themselves underwater on their mortgages, unable to sell their property, and facing foreclosure.

If government efforts to promote rapid population growth in Decorah would not improve the quality of life of its residents, why should we articulate such growth as a goal in our Comprehensive Plan? Instead, we should encourage a continuation of the gradual growth which has enabled us to meet our needs without sacrificing our environment and high quality of life.

At the October 10, 2011 hearing, members of the P & Z explained that Table 4 was not really a "goal" but was rather a projection based on the highest rate of growth which could realistically be expected in the City of Decorah, especially after accounting for the impact of extensive annexation of areas surrounding Decorah which are already experiencing substantial development. The P & Z further explained the City should plan for the possibility of high rates of growth when installing new infrastructure improvements such as sewer and water. By planning for possible future population growth, the city can make sure that it will not need to go back and reinstall larger diameter sewer and water pipes to accommodate future needs. The P & Z commission also pointed out that future annexation of nearby areas into the city of Decorah, including outlying areas already served by Decorah sewer and water, would result in an automatic population increase even without the rapid new growth and development implied by Table 4. Although the P & Z explanation makes sense, if that is only purpose of Table 4, it should be labeled as a projection rather than as a goal and better explained.

In summary, I would encourage the City Council to amend the Comprehensive Plan to state: "Table 4. Population Projection A: Based on 15,000 people by 2020."

I also encourage the Council to add the following explanation: "Table 4 is not a goal, but is rather a projection showing high rates of growth which could result from both annexation and development."

My wife and I have been before the P and Z for about 11 years now concerning the land south of Mound Street, which includes the Riverwalk Condominiums.

We recommend that the zoning be changed from R-3 to R-2. We feel that R-3 allows building that is not in harmony with the neighborhood. According to the City Code, that is an issue to be considered.

Even though the area is not in a designated flood plain, it is a natural drainage area. High density construction would prevent that drainage. Do you really know what impact that will have on the entire area and east to the basketball court?

The area is located next to the dike. Again, high density construction may have some negative impact. We feel that's a big risk.

There is one ingress and egress. High density building could pose a safety issue with traffic and emergency vehicles.

In summary, we feel now is the time to change the zoning in this area from R-3 to R-2

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City Government & Services