

STORM LAKE 2030



**Draft Comprehensive Plan
September 5, 2023**

Storm Lake 2030

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Setting the Stage

Introduction

Overview

A comprehensive plan identifies the vision and goals of a community while acting as a guide and reference for a community's growth and development. It outlines changes of the landscape and built environment for many years into the future. A comprehensive plan also provides guidance on the implementation of a community's goals and focuses on sustainability, progress, and successful implementation. "*Storm Lake 2030: A Beacon for a Better Tomorrow*" is a living document meant to be continuously updated and edited to fit the everchanging needs of the community. The plan is intended to outline future land use and transportation patterns, the community's housing and amenity needs, and public and private partnerships for infrastructure investments.

Storm Lake's previous comprehensive plan was completed in 2013. Many things have changed since then, including the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the largest issues faced by the city in recent years. It serves as a reminder of what rapid changes can happen to communities. The comprehensive plan is an opportunity to help create a resilient, forward-thinking, and transformative plan for Storm Lake.

Storm Lake 2030: A Beacon for a Better Tomorrow begins with a historical context of Storm Lake, followed by the goals and aspirations for the community's long-term development. Individual chapters address land use, housing, public infrastructure, transportation, economic development, natural resources, parks and recreation, community character, and implementation strategies.

Iowa's Smart Planning Principles

Iowa's Smart Planning Legislation outlines the principles communities should follow in creating and updating comprehensive plans. These principles are listed below with information regarding how Storm Lake 2030 has implemented these standards.

1. Collaboration

Governmental, community, and individual stakeholders, including those outside the jurisdiction, are encouraged to be involved and provide comments during the deliberation of planning, zoning, development, and resource management decisions and during implementation of such decisions.

Storm Lake's Approach

Development of the plan focused on actively seeking input from a variety of stakeholders. Input was gathered throughout the process with community meetings, online surveys, focus groups, workshops, and a project website.

2. Efficiency, Transparency, and Consistency

Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should be undertaken to provide efficient, transparent, and consistent outcomes. Individuals, communities, regions, and governmental entities should share in the responsibility to promote the equitable distribution of development benefits and costs.

Storm Lake's Approach

Storm Lake 2030 builds upon previous plans and projects to carefully plan for the future. Information for and about the plan was widely available through a variety of sources to allow input from all community members. The policies within this plan have clear and direct information that reflects Storm Lake's vision for the future.

3. Clean, Renewable, and Efficient Energy

Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should be undertaken to promote clean and renewable energy use and increased energy efficiency.

Storm Lake's Approach

The plan looks at sustainability in multiple aspects. The physical characteristics of developments such as infill and redevelopment opportunities, increasing the quality of the existing housing stock, and increasing the mix of housing densities will lower Storm Lake's carbon footprint. Reducing the reliance on single occupancy gas power vehicles is vital. The plan looks at non-motorized travel and options involving a future less reliant on fossil fuel.

4. Occupational Diversity

Planning, zoning, development, and resource management 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.

Storm Lake's Approach

The community character of Storm Lake builds on the principle of inclusivity. The plan promotes diverse occupations within Storm Lake and looks to improve the retainment and attraction of jobs. The plan focuses on supporting and expanding businesses, entrepreneurial services, and training with area colleges and universities, along with building on the community's existing tourism and service base.

5. Revitalization

Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should facilitate 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. Remediation and reuse of existing sites, structures, and infrastructure is preferred over new construction in undeveloped areas.

Storm Lake's Approach

The plan encourages investment in underutilized sites within Storm Lake with policies and strategies aimed at increasing the vibrancy of the city. Downtown Storm Lake is an essential part of the community as the location of many local businesses. This plan incorporates information, policies, values, and strategies included in Storm Lake's 2022 Downtown Master Plan.

6. Housing Diversity

Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should encourage diversity in the types of available housing, support the rehabilitation of existing housing, and promote the location of housing near public transportation and employment centers.

Storm Lake's Approach

The Housing section of the plan focuses on the availability of diverse housing stock for all ages and price ranges. The housing stock must meet the needs of the growing and diverse community and increase the strength of community's built environment. The housing section includes on a housing stock assessment, identifies key infill development/redevelopment areas, and provides strategies for housing development.

7. Community Character

Planning, zoning, development, and resource management 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.

Storm Lake's Approach

Both the physical and non-physical aspects of Storm Lake are essential to its continued development. The plan looks at all areas of the public realm, focusing on corridors, gateways, and culturally significant areas and activities. The plan incorporates tourism and arts in Storm Lake, building on the year-round experience of festivals, artwork, and trails within the community.

8. Natural Resources and Agricultural Protection

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.

Storm Lake's Approach

Storm Lake is the most recognizable natural resource within the community. It is vital to protect natural resources and enhance the quality of greenspace. The plan inventories and assesses the existing parks and recreational facilities and provides recommendations on the preservation and enhancements of these facilities. The plan focuses on environmental stewardship and recommends ways to improve water quality and to protect the nature areas within Storm Lake.

9. Sustainable Design

Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should promote developments, buildings, and infrastructure that utilize sustainable design and construction standards and conserve natural resources by reducing waste and pollution through the efficient use of land, energy, water, air, and materials.

Storm Lake's Approach

Storm Lake's Comprehensive Plan encourages a sustainable land use pattern, infrastructure system, and built environment. Each section of the plan incorporates strategies promoting the

continued advancement of Storm Lake through sound economic and environmentally-friendly design.

10. Transportation Diversity

Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should promote expanded transportation options for residents of the community. Consideration should be given to transportation options that maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel, and improve air quality.

Storm Lake's Approach

The nature of transportation is constantly evolving with advancements in electric vehicles, changes in shipping patterns, and a renewed focus on non-motorized transportation. The plan highlights dangerous areas, the capacity of different roadways, and preparation for changes in transportation.

Community Participation

An update to a comprehensive plan does not change everything about the previous plan. Rather, the update builds on the previous planning efforts. It provides an opportunity to reevaluate the vision, goals and priorities, and set the course of the future in a new and positive direction. The community engagement process provides a platform to think big without the fiscal and physical limitations.

Process

The compilation of Storm Lake's comprehensive plan began in the Spring of 2022 and was completed **Insert Date**

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was established to guide the planning process. Committee members represented various institutions to provide perspective on different areas that help mold the city, including local businesses, institutional leaders, and community interest members such as schools and city staff. Five Steering Committee meetings were held overall to gather the necessary input from key areas and stakeholders in Storm Lake. The first meeting led a round of introductions with the team, provided an overview of what the comprehensive plan will entail and what to expect throughout the process. Other topics discussed were the project scope and approach that will be adopted, the visioning process, techniques and transformative projects (which drew on inputs from the committee members), and introduced the SWOT or Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat analysis for the city.

The second Steering Committee meeting gave a brief review of the comprehensive plan and SWOT analysis. Demographics, land use, housing and public engagement are aspects of the comprehensive plan process that were also discussed during the meeting. The land use section which looked at zoning, existing land uses, and future land uses offered an avenue to conduct an exercise to identify areas on the map to locate housing, commercial, open or green spaces, and industrial uses in Storm Lake. The Steering Committee members were given a preview of the project website which included the online survey and InputID™. The identified public engagements events and tools were also provided at the meeting.

At the third meeting, the Steering Committee reviewed the drafts of the introduction, demographics, land use, housing, and parks sections. Each section's goals were reviewed and discussed. The Steering Committee emphasized the common thread of broad goals outlined in the introduction should be carried through each section's goals and policies. The Steering Committee was given an overview of the economic development section and public engagement recaps of the pop-up meetings.

At its fourth and final meeting, the Steering Committee reviewed the complete draft of the Comprehensive Plan. The discussion focused on the Future Land Use map. The Steering Committee clarified the area directly adjacent to Storm Lake is park, and should remain as such. The Committee also looked at areas for commercial and industrial development. The Steering Committee recommended the plan move forward for public comment.

Public Open House

The city held a public open house at King's Pointe on September 12, 2023. **INSERT DETAILS**

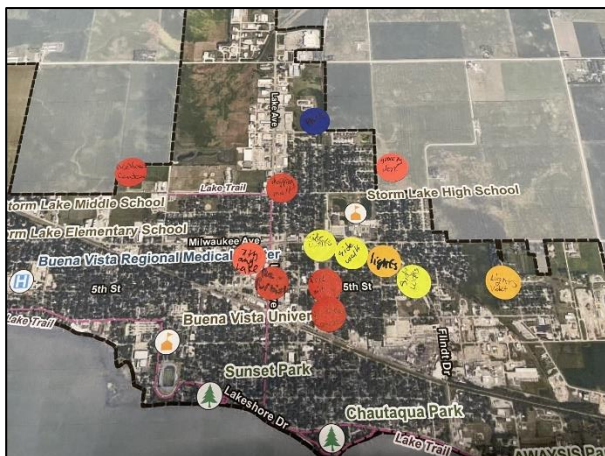
Focus Groups & Pop-Up Meetings

The Wood, Wine, and Blues Festival and the Meet the Mayor event allowed participants to visualize Storm Lake and identify where they would like it to go in the future. Maps of Storm Lake were displayed, and residents were encouraged to label places they liked and places they thought could be improved. Each person was asked what their personal vision was for Storm Lake and what should be done to help complete their vision. Surveys and Meeting-in-a-Box kits were handed out at each event.

The Wood, Wine, and Blues Festival had many members of the community eating local food and watching the quick carve event, in spite of the rainy weather conditions. The festival coincided with meet your teacher night, so many Storm Lake Community School District students walking along the trails to see their teachers also stopped by. Different interactive tools for community engagement such as giant Jenga with questions on pulled blocks, stickers where residents will be given the opportunity to place stickers on their favorite places in Storm Lake, and a price is right game where each person is given the opportunity to guess the existing percentages of major land uses within Storm Lake. We heard that residents wanted more affordable housing and retail opportunities, along with more recreation programs for youth.



Wood, Wine, and Blues Booth



Meet the Mayor Input Map

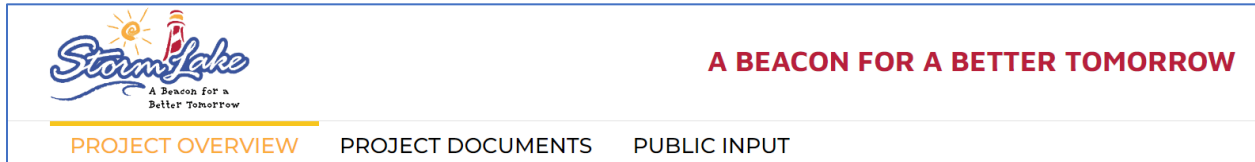
The Meet the Mayor event involved various Storm Lake department heads who were able to answer questions from the public about current priorities for Storm Lake and status updates. At this meeting, we heard a desire for better pedestrian amenities such as sidewalk and lighting, greater variety of park amenities such as accessible park equipment, a wellness center, dog park, and a pool, and wanting more initiatives for affordable housing and childcare.



Meet the Mayor, October 11, 2022

Websites and InputID

The project website contained all information related to the comprehensive plan. It explained what a comprehensive plan is, outlined strategic goals, included a link to the survey, and InputID™, an interactive mapping software which allows citizens to post comments describing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the City of Storm Lake.



Project Website

Survey

A community survey was posted on the City of Storm Lake’s website and on the comprehensive plan’s website in both English and Spanish. The overall results of the survey provided valuable input and insight into what the stakeholders were concerned about, what they valued, and their thoughts on what could and should improve in the city. There were 53 responses in total. Input from the survey is placed in relevant sections throughout the comprehensive plan, along with the full dataset in the appendix.

Community Background

Regional Setting

Storm Lake serves as the county seat and regional economic and cultural center for Buena Vista County and northwest Iowa. Located in the center of northwest Iowa, it is the second largest city in the Iowa Lakes Region encompassing Buena Vista, Dickinson, and Emmet counties. Storm Lake is located a few hours from Des Moines, Iowa, Omaha, Nebraska, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. It provides an estimated 75% of all employment opportunities in Buena Vista County due to its position as the county seat. Storm Lake is also home to Buena Vista University, ALWAYSIS Park, King's Pointe Waterpark Resort and Santa's Castle Holiday attraction.

History

Storm Lake is located in northwest Iowa, on the banks of its namesake, Storm Lake. It was incorporated in 1873. There are many different accounts about how Storm Lake gained its name. One story is about a trapper who experienced a severe storm; Storm Lake earned its name from their experience. Another, more romantic account claims two-star crossed lovers from opposed Native American bands paddled out for a secret rendezvous, only to be drowned when a storm blew in; the chief named the lake, Storm Lake.¹

A small settlement was started by pioneers in the late 1860s on the shores of Storm Lake. In 1870, the arrival of the railroad marked the official settlement of the community on the north shore of the lake. The city started off as an independent community supporting surrounding production of agriculture. The first census conducted in 1880 recorded a population of 1,000 in Storm Lake. Storm Lake has since continued its growth and now sits at 11,269 people as of 2020.

¹ <https://www.stormlake.org/532/Storm-Lake-History>
<http://www.stormlake.org/DocumentCenter/View/724>
<https://www.stormlake.org/>

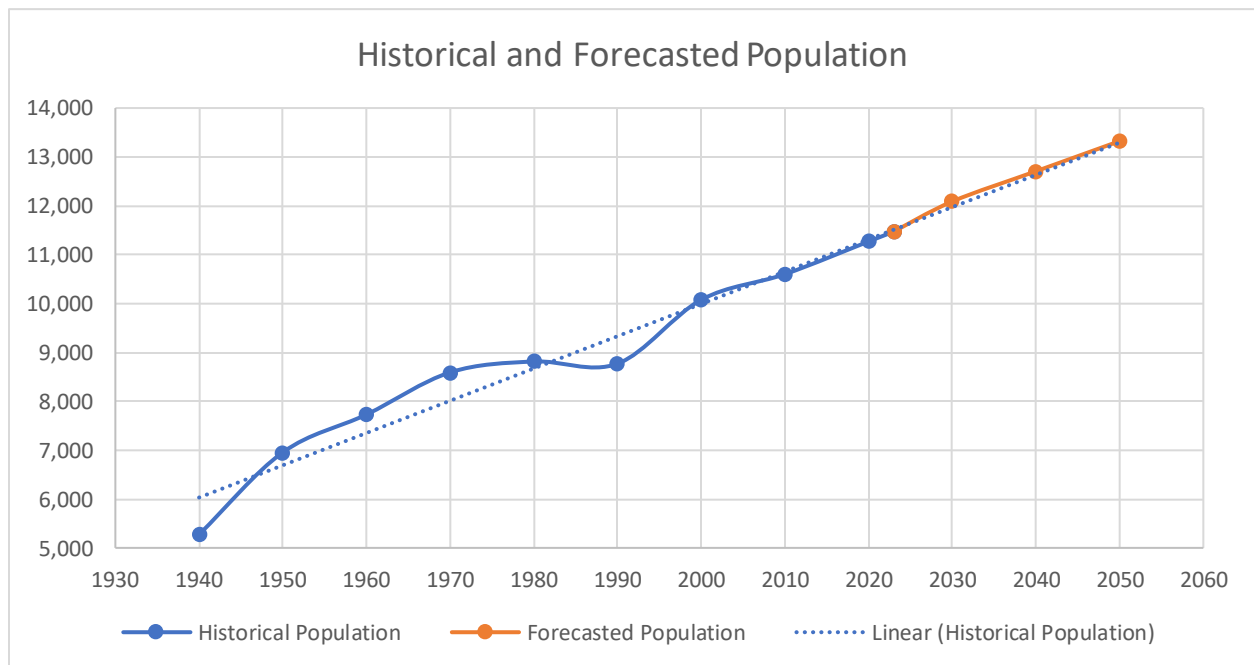
Demographics & Data Analysis

The following demographic data is primarily based on US Census data, along with other sources, including Esri Business Analyst and other city studies. Every ten years the U.S. Census completes a count of all households within the United States. Storm Lake has some concerns about the accuracy of the census data collected in the city. Issues affecting the census data collection included the compressed timeframe, collection during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the inability to contact many of the immigrant population of the city. All of these factors combined may have resulted in inaccurate data and projections. To accommodate these potential inaccuracies, we have made some adjustments to population estimates and projections based on the experience and perceptions of city officials.

Historical and Forecasted Population

For most of the 20th century, Storm Lake saw a gradual, positive increase in population. In 1990, however, there was a slight decline in population from 8,814 to 8,769 (-45) residents. A decade later, Storm Lake's population had increased by 1,307 people to hit the 10,000-mark in population. By 2020, the population of Storm Lake was more than 11,000, and by 2023, the estimated population is 11,470.

Storm Lake's population is projected to continue to increase to more than 12,000 people by 2030 and more than 13,000 people by 2050. Figure XX below identifies historical and forecasted



population from 1940 through 2050.

Household Size and Quantity

The number of households in Storm Lake has continued to increase, along with the population. The household size, or the average number of persons per households, also continues to increase.

	2000	2010	2020
Households	3,732	3,561	3,597
Person Per Household	2.69	2.76	2.94

General Community Demographics

As Storm Lake’s population has grown, the make-up of the community has also evolved. As of the 2020 census, Storm Lake was the most ethnically diverse community in the state; nearly 60% of the population and over 80% of the students in the Storm Lake school district identify as non-

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

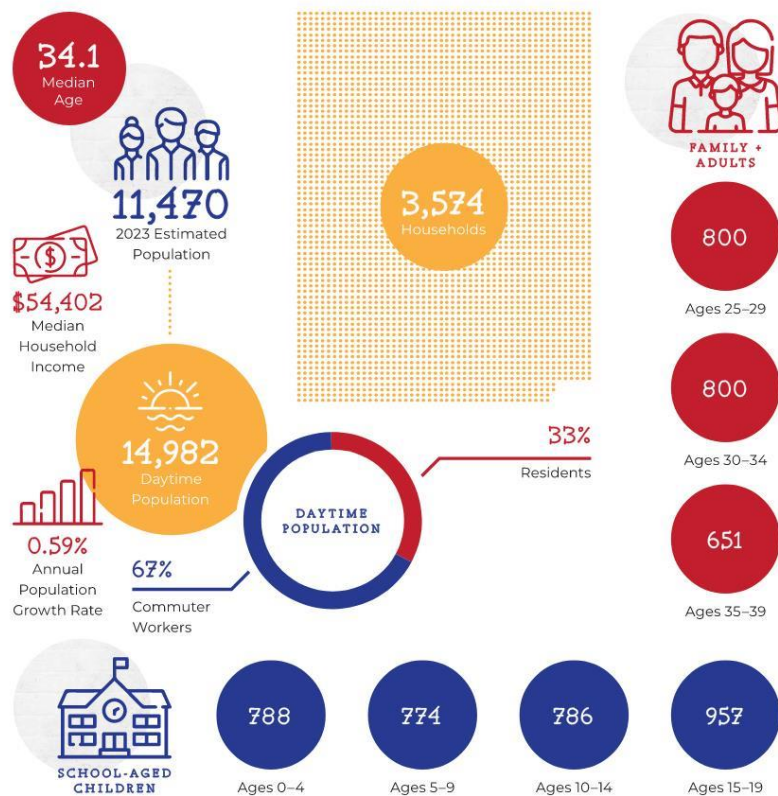
Storm Lake’s population grew from the 2000 census record of 10,076 to 11,269 in the 2020 census, with current population estimated at 11,470.

As of the 2020 census, Storm Lake was the most ethnically diverse city in Iowa, with over 60% of the population and over 80% of students in the community’s school district identifying as non-white.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 4.09 square miles.



- White (41.69%)
- Hispanic (39.53%)
- Black/African American (4.49%)
- American Indian/Alaska Native (0.72%)
- Asian (15.46%)
- Pacific Islander (4.10%)
- Other Race (19.56%)
- Two or More Races (13.98%)



white.

The following graphic illustrates other demographics in Storm Lake.

Note: This infographic is from the Downtown Master Plan. Look at creating a unique infographic for this plan.

Vision and Goals

A comprehensive plan establishes a vision for the city, provides policy guidance for growth and development, and contains action items directed at the city to implement the vision. The purpose of the vision statement is to inspire community members to work towards a common vision. A thoughtful vision statement is a key element to form a forward looking strategic framework that gives elected officials the long-term-comprehensive perspective necessary to make rational and disciplined decisions on community issues as they arise.

Vision Statement

The input gathered from the community was used to create the vision statement for the community. The vision statement illustrates the planned future of the City of Storm Lake. This essentially becomes the foundation of the community goals and aspirations and creates an environment in which the city has a focused priority it can continue to strive towards.

“Storm Lake is a vibrant, unique, and welcoming community that is an attractive place for living and workforce development. Storm Lake strives to continue developing healthy neighborhoods, parks, and amenities.”

Overall Plan Goals

Goal 1: Maintain vibrant, welcoming, and local character of the city and enhancing its aesthetic value.

Goal 2: Plan for areas of new growth.

Goal 3: Strive to create a more equitable and inclusive community.

Goal 4: Invest in local businesses to diversify the tax base.

Goal 5: Provide an efficient, safe, and connective transportation system that meets existing needs and accommodates future needs.

Goal 6: Encourage the most desirable and efficient use of land and enhancing the physical and economic viability of the city.

Goal 7: Provide adequate local infrastructure that serves existing and future development.

Goal 8: Foster a positive, interactive relationship with the public.

Goal 9: Provide for housing diversity throughout the City.

The Built Environment

Land Use

Overview

Land use, infrastructure, and related elements fit together within the geographic context of the City of Storm Lake. The land use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan provides direction and guidance for development and redevelopment in the city, including character, scale, and intensity. It also serves as a guide for new development and redevelopment investments within Storm Lake.

Comprehensive Plan Survey

According to survey responses, the four most significant challenges facing Storm Lake in the future are housing related. Specifically, 76.5% of respondents believe availability of housing is the most significant challenge for Storm Lake. Other significant challenges identified by respondents include housing options (68.6%), availability of rental housing (54.9%), and the cost of housing (45.1%).

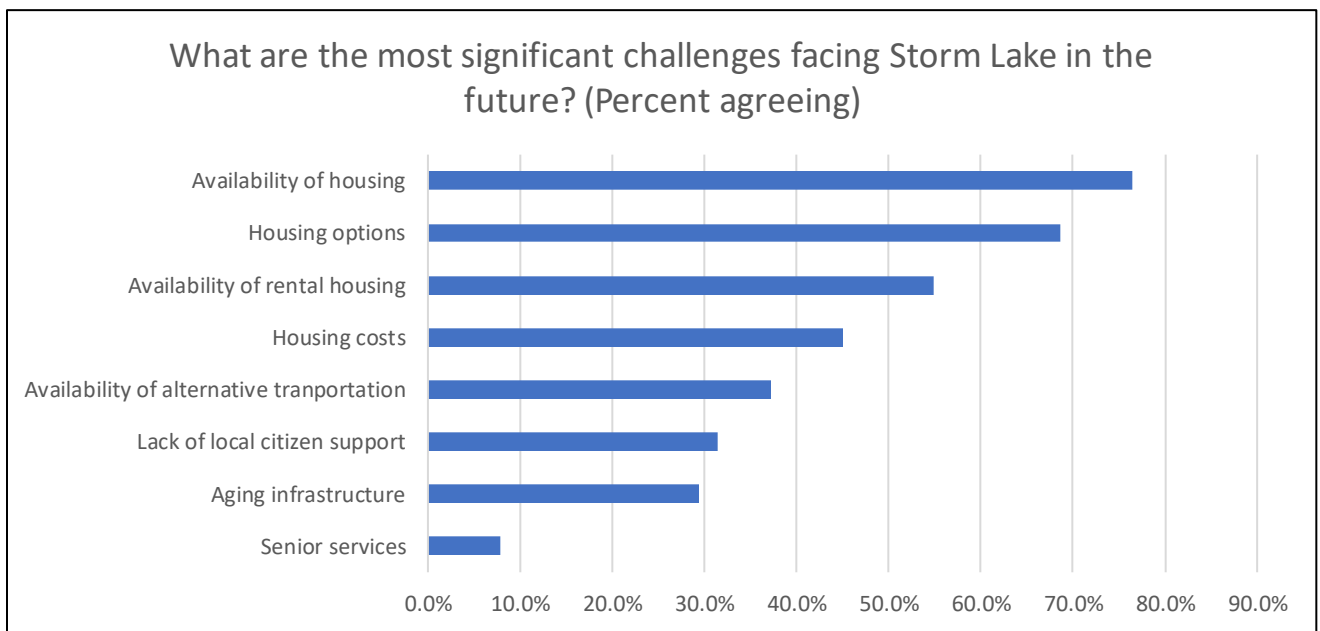


Figure 0.1 – Challenges Facing Storm Lake
Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

Respondents were asked to identify the three priorities most important to the future of Storm Lake. The three most common responses were:

1. Low density housing
2. Youth development
3. Parks and recreation.

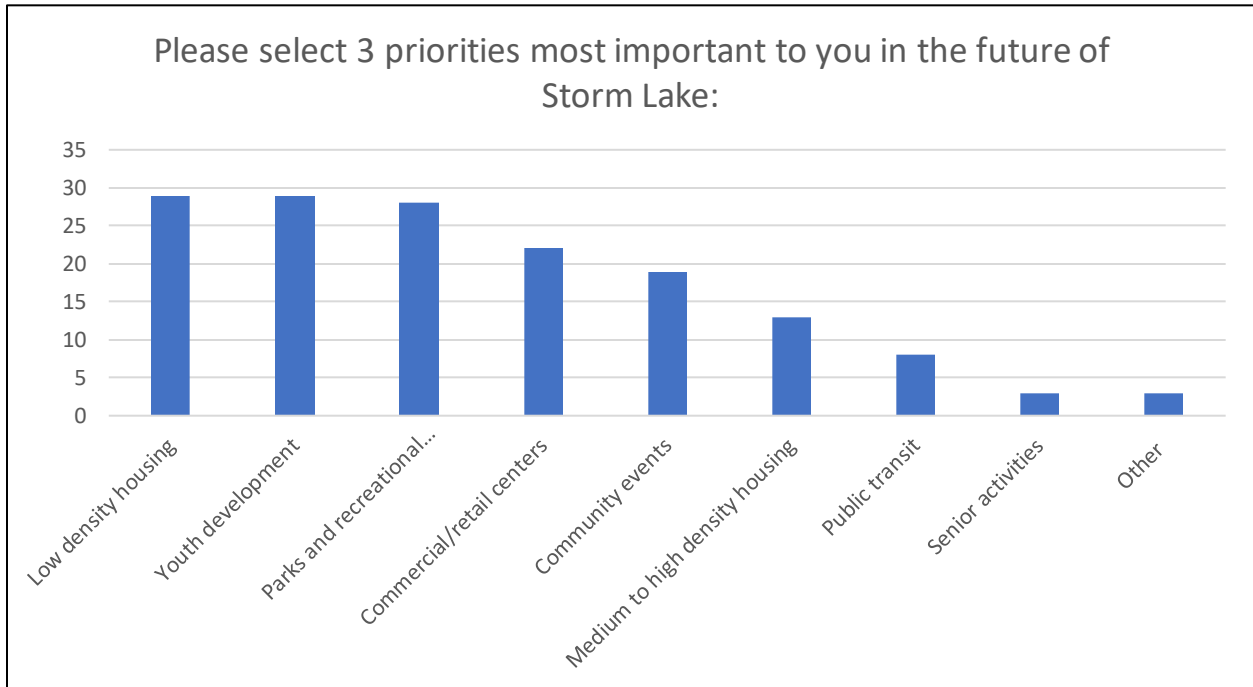


Figure 0.2 – Future Priorities
Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

Land Use Goals

2022 Strategic Plan

The City Council prioritized the following land use-related goals within its 2022 Strategic Plan:

High/Medium Priority

- Keep Building Houses (especially single-family dwellings)
- Grow the Community in an Outward Direction
- Develop a Recreation Plan for the Spoils Site

Low Priority

- Upgrade and Improve Distressed Properties (Infills)
- Implement recommendations from the Downtown Master Plan

Comprehensive Plan Goals

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use goals were created based on existing data, surveys, pop-up events, and the Storm Lake Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Goal 1: Establish the future of Storm Lake in a way that respects the community's historical context, offers a variety of land uses, is affordable, is sustainable, and improves Storm Lake's vibrancy and appeal.

- Preserve the existing institutions and housing within Storm Lake.
- Increase the amount of infill and greenfield housing development.

Goal 2: Continue efforts to improve Downtown Storm Lake's unique sense of place, economy, and social vibrancy.

- Allow for more flexible zoning in the downtown to promote stores and small businesses.
- Continue offering incentives to downtown businesses for remodeling and façade upgrades.
- Redevelop locations found in the downtown plan to allow for a more walkable and activated downtown.
- Implement the Downtown Master Plan

Goal 3: Encourage the development and redevelopment of areas with dilapidated or old structures and enhance community entrances.

- Carefully plan where changes in uses will take place in the future.
- Allow more housing development on the outer fringes of Storm Lake to help relieve housing pressure.
- Promote orderly development. Specifically, new developments occur adjacent to existing development or services (sewer and water).
- Promote development where infrastructure is present.

Goal 4: Build quality public places for the community.

- Create areas that promote community interaction through placemaking, such as plazas.

Developing the Land Use Plan

Land Use plans protect the health, safety, and welfare of a community and its residents. It prepares for future scenarios and ensures wise investment of public and private dollars by providing the framework for the growth and development of the community. It guides the character and intensity of development and supports strong residential neighborhoods, a thriving industrial base, a vibrant downtown core, prosperous commercial areas, and valued recreational opportunities.

The Land Use Plan consists of three elements.

- Existing Land Use provides a snapshot of the current land uses in Storm Lake.
- The Zoning Map identifies the current zoning designation of parcels within the city. The zoning designation may or may not align with the existing land use.
- Future Land Use provides a description and explanation of the character and qualities of each future land use designation. These descriptions provide the framework for evaluating land use decisions and guiding public actions. The Future Land Use Map shows how these land uses are assigned to each parcel of land in the current city limits and in planned growth areas.

Existing Land Uses

The Existing Land Use map shows how the land is presently being used. This can differ from the present zoning in different ways. In some cases, there are legal non-conforming uses that existed prior to the current zoning classification being put in place. This means that the current use can continue but cannot be expanded or changed unless the use is changed to comply with the present zoning classification.

Existing Land Use Categories

Agriculture

Agriculture is the dominant existing land use in Storm Lake with approximately 846 acres of land used actively. In the long term, most agricultural areas are expected to be replaced by urban development.

Parks and Open Space

These account for 413 acres of park land in Storm Lake. On the north side of Storm Lake, a popular trail for walking and jogging creates a connection for many residents to the city's older parks including Chautauqua and AWAY SIS Park.

Single-Family Residential

Single-family residential uses in Storm Lake account for approximately 592 acres of the supply of land. Single-family residential development is found throughout the city.

Multi-Family Residential

Multi-family residential uses account for approximately 79 acres of land. The downtown core is the hub for most of the city's older multi-family residential housing.

Commercial

Commercial use includes retail, office, and service businesses. This accounts for 300 acres of Storm Lake's existing land use. Most concentrations of commercial uses are found in the Central Business District.

Industrial

Industrial land use in Storm Lake accounts for 205 acres of land. Storm Lake has a wide variety of industrial uses at various locations in the community. Most of the industrial uses in Storm Lake can be found in historic, corridor-oriented locations such as along the Canadian National railroad. Three concentrations of industrial uses primarily exist in Storm Lake. The two main employers in Storm Lake, Tyson Foods Inc., and Hillshire Brands, are situated close to the intersection of Flindt Drive and East 4th Street. A second area with industrial use can be found north of County Road C-49 (590th Street), in a development along the northern reaches of Lake Avenue known as the Bargloff Addition. The third industrial area can be found along Expansion Boulevard.

Public and Institutional

Public and institutional uses cover 320 acres of land including city- and other publicly-owned sites and buildings. Some of these sites and buildings include Buena Vista University, local public schools, and local parochial schools. This existing land use category also includes churches, private secondary schools, and the Buena Vista Regional Medical Center.

Public Right-of-Way

Public Right-of-Way existing land use category consists of 561 acres of land and is the second largest use in the city. This existing land use category includes public and private utilities, sidewalks, stormwater management infrastructure, landscaping, and other streetscape amenities.

Railroad

Land under the jurisdiction of the Canadian National Railroad make up 58 acres of Storm Lake. This includes tracks and specific railroad uses.

Vacant

This use consists of 57 acres. Previous uses vary greatly, but there are no current uses at the parcel.

Table of Existing Land Categories (Acres and Percentages)

Land Use	Acres	Percentages
Agriculture	846	24.5%
Parks and Open Space	413	12.0%
Single-Family Residential	592	17.1%
Multi-Family Residential	79	2.3%
Commercial	300	8.7%
Industrial	205	5.9%
Public and Institutional	320	9.3%
Public Right-of-Way	561	16.3%
Railroad	58	1.7%
Utility	21	0.6
Vacant	57	1.7%
Total	3452	100%

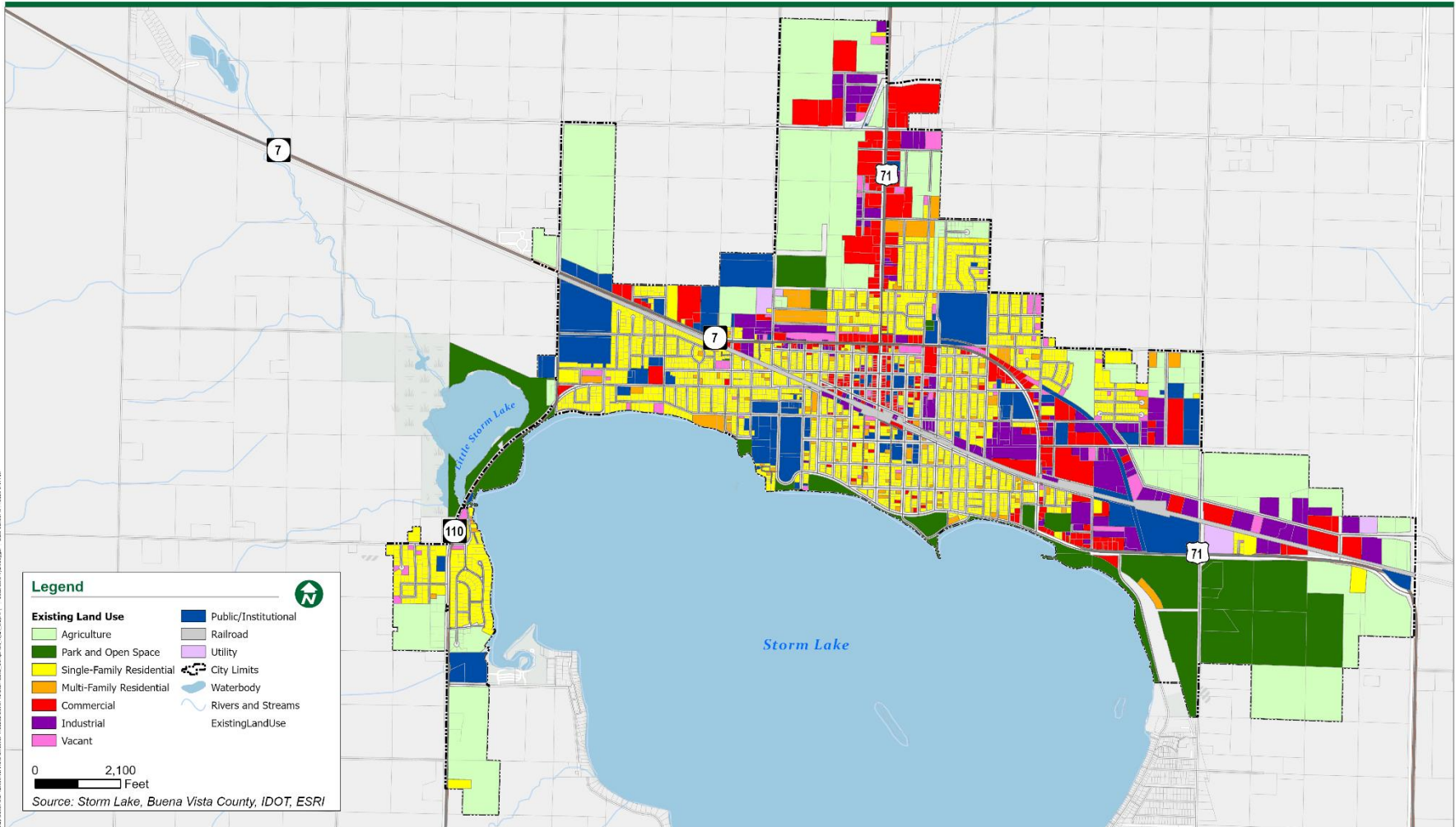


Figure 0.3 – Existing Land Use
Source: Storm Lake GIS Data

The Zoning Map

A property's future land use designation and current zoning designation are two separate classification types. The Zoning Map establishes a zoning district classification for each parcel of land, and the Zoning Ordinance regulates what can and cannot be built on a parcel. Zoning not only regulates land use, but also regulates building height, size, setbacks from property boundaries, and other provisions associated with the specific development/redevelopment of a parcel. These regulations remain in place from the time the Zoning Ordinance is adopted by the city until the Zoning Ordinance is changed, or until the specific classification on the Zoning Map is changed.

Current City Zoning Definitions

RES: Reserve - The Reserve District serves as a temporary zone for annexed areas into the city that do not have plans for development.

R-1: Low Density Residential - The Low-Density Residential District is intended to provide for low density residential neighborhoods, characterized by single-family dwellings on larger lots.

R-2: Low Medium Density Residential - The Low Medium Density Residential District is intended to provide for low to medium-density residential neighborhoods, characterized predominantly by single family dwellings on moderately sized lots. It may also incorporate some multi-family residential uses with lower densities.

R-3: Medium Density Residential - The Medium Density Residential District is intended to provide locations primarily for medium density housing, with supporting and appropriate community facilities. The predominant housing pattern consists of small lot single family and attached townhome/rowhouse units.

R-4: High Density Residential - The High-Density Residential District is intended to provide locations primarily for multi-family housing, characterized by stacked (3-4 story) apartment or condominium type housing.

IN-1: Public Services - The Public Services District is intended to accommodate uses which are available to or are necessary to serve the general public and are located throughout the community.

IN-2: Institutional Facilities - The Institutional Facilities District reserves areas for educational and religious purposes in a campus setting.

IN-3: Hospital Medical Facilities - The Hospital Medical Facilities District accommodates commercial and professional uses associated with the community's role as a regional medical center.

PO: Park, Recreation, and Open Space - The Park, Recreation, and Open Space District accommodates areas for recreation, recreational uses, and open space.

LC: Limited Commercial - The Limited Commercial District reserves areas for offices and a limited variety of low-impact commercial facilities serving the needs of residents in surrounding residential areas.

CC: Community Commercial - The Community Commercial District is intended for commercial facilities serving the needs of markets ranging from neighborhoods to the overall region.

CBD: Central Business District - The Central Business District provides appropriate development regulations, including mixed uses, to strengthen Downtown Storm Lake's role as a center for trade, service, and civic life.

LI: Limited Industrial - The Limited Industrial District reserves areas for industrial and office uses that have limited effects on the environment.

GI: General Industrial - The General Industrial District contains a variety of industrial uses with may have greater, significant external effects on the area.

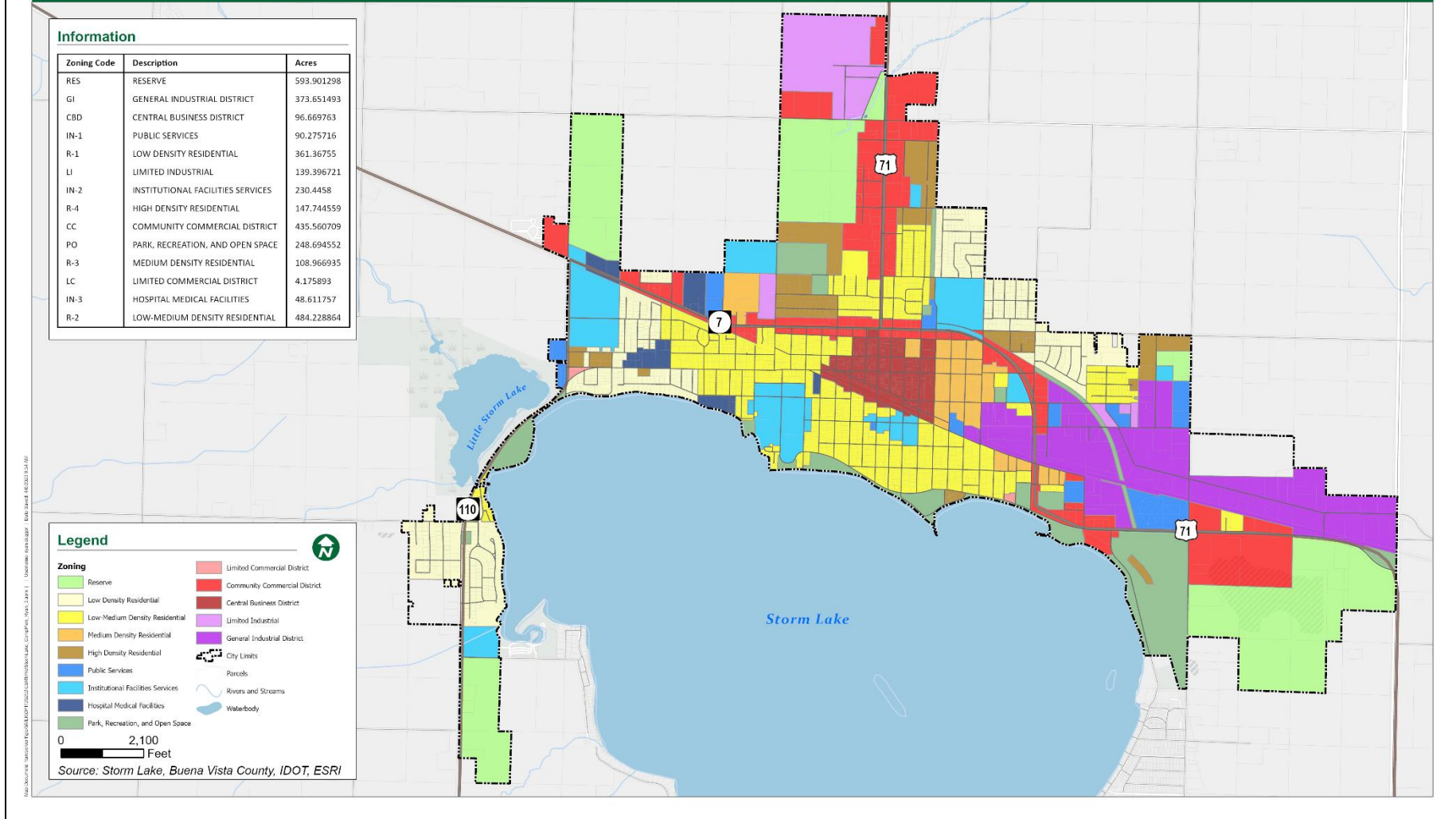


Figure 0.4 – Zoning Map
Source: Storm Lake GIS

Future Land Uses

Future land use designation identifies the ultimate land use deemed most appropriate for the property. The Future Land Use map is intended to be a picture of the ultimate, long term land use the city sees for the site. This may not align with the current land use or even zoning on the property. For example, there may be an existing land use, such as a mining operation, that is not the ideal future land use, but is unlikely to change in the next 10-20 years. However, the future land use map may designate this parcel for its ultimate use.

The Future Land Use map was developed based on careful consideration of social needs, population projections, housing and commercial trends, market information, and economic needs. This information allows the city to determine the types of land uses needed to meet future needs, the amount of land needed for each type of use, and where those uses are best located. The map is intended to be flexible and should be periodically reviewed and updated in response to changing conditions within the City of Storm Lake.

Future Land Use Categories

Parks & Open Space

This land use category identifies planned areas for developed and undeveloped recreational use or managed for passive and active natural resources and open space.

Residential

This category is predominantly detached single-family homes that have low to moderate density housing. Dwellings are generally under three stories with private driveways and open space.

Urban Residential

This land use category allows for moderate density with a mixture of detached single-family, duplex housing, townhomes, and senior housing. These areas transition from neighborhood and downtown mixed uses and allow for a shift from higher intensity uses to lower intensity uses.

Neighborhood Mixed Use

This category occurs primarily along arterial roadways radiating out of the center of Storm Lake's downtown. The land use category allows for a mixture of moderate density housing (detached single-family, townhomes attached single-family, and duplex housing units) and small-scale commercial businesses.

Downtown Mixed Use

This category covers Storm Lake's downtown and allows for moderate to high intensity housing such as apartments and condominiums, commercial businesses, and entertainment uses. Within this category, buildings placed close together promote high activity, economic vitality, and walkability.

Highway Commercial & Industrial

This land use category allows for a wide variety of businesses in terms of size, scale, and types of commercial and industrial uses that are best suited near a highway. These areas are traditionally located away from residential areas.

Industrial

This land use category allows for manufacturing, assembling, warehousing, and related uses located in areas with adequate access to infrastructure. Industrial use is typically removed from residential areas to avoid potential conflicts with noise, light pollution, traffic, and other nuisances.

Institutional

This land use category allows for government uses, public services, and institutional related uses.

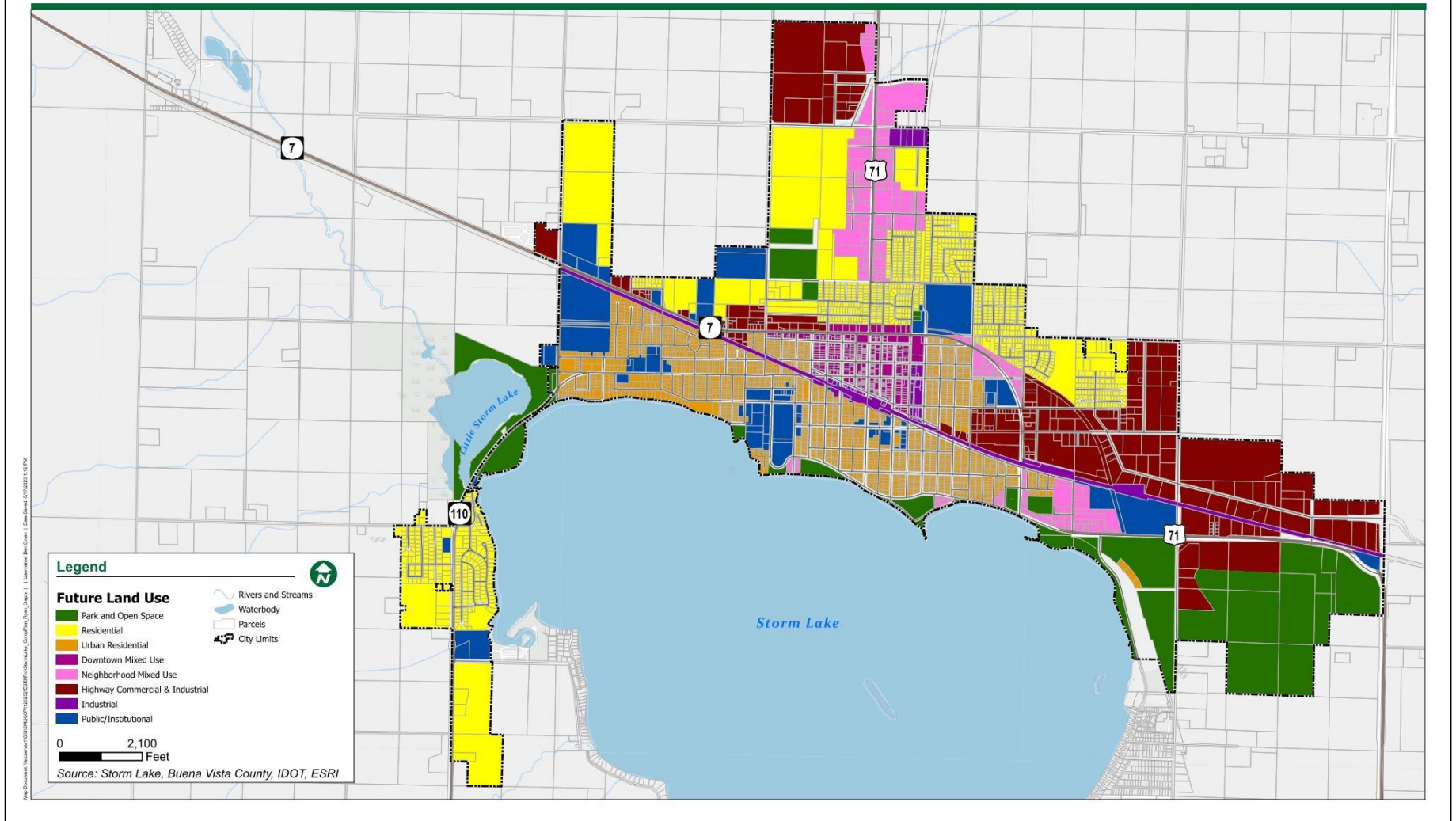


Figure 0.5 – Future Land Use Map
Source: Storm Lake GIS

Table of Future Land Use Categories (Acres and Percentages)

Land Use	Acres	Percentages
Parks & Open Space	513	14.5%
Single-Family Residential	725	20.5%
Urban Residential	351	9.9%
Neighborhood Mixed Use	198	5.6%
Downtown Mixed Use	62	1.8%
Highway Commercial & Industrial	671	19.0%
Industrial	82	2.3%
Public/Institutional	297	8.4%
Public Right-of-Way	561	15.9%
Railroad	58	1.6%
Utility	21	0.6%
Total	3539	100%

City Growth

Storm Lake is currently facing a shortage of housing, along with an ever-increasing cost of housing. While the lack of housing supply certainly impacts the cost of housing, there are several other factors contributing to the higher cost of housing in Storm Lake. Storm Lake is a lake community which often translates to higher home prices, even for homes not located directly on the lake. Storm Lake is also home to Buena Vista University and a branch of Iowa Central Community College. The need to accommodate student housing tends to impact the cost of housing in a community. Finally, building material and labor costs have increased dramatically since COVID. These costs have heavily contributed to increased housing costs.

To accommodate housing needs, the Future Land Use map has designated much of the current agricultural land for residential uses. To combat rising housing and development costs, the city is taking a number of steps, including ensuring development takes place in an orderly pattern that takes advantage of existing infrastructure to make it more efficient and cost-effective. Storm Lake is also prioritizing redevelopment and infill projects and greenfield development projects continuous with the existing development.

Downtown

Storm Lake's downtown is the heart of the city with shopping and amenities located along Lake Avenue and Erie Street. The Future Land Use map designates a specific area for Downtown Mixed Uses to protect and enhance the downtown area. Storm Lake has completed a downtown master plan to explore how to best enhance existing features and amenities, improve streetscapes, and better connect downtown to adjacent neighborhoods.



Downtown Master Plan Study Area (ISG)

Creating Complete Neighborhoods

In the past, many cities were deliberately planned and designed to separate different uses as much as possible. The intent was to keep residential areas (and the people who live there) away from nuisances such as loud noises and foul smells. These restrictions have also been applied to many frequently used locations such as grocery stores or post offices, making it more difficult for residents to easily complete daily tasks.

In Storm Lake, the location of residential neighborhoods was often driven by proximity to the packing plants. Many workers, both historically and currently, preferred housing locations allowing them to walk to work. The location of the railroad in Storm Lake also influenced the location of residential areas.

Neighborhoods are the basic building blocks that make up Storm Lake. They provide essential services, foster community interaction, and establish the community's character. Neighborhood character is a combination of architecture, historic or cultural resources, community members, unique geography or topography, local services, and community facilities located within an area.

Creating complete neighborhoods is consistent with Land Use Goal 1 to "establish the future of Storm Lake in a way that respects the community's historical context, offers a variety of land uses, is affordable, is sustainable, and improves Storm Lake's vibrancy and appeal." Strategies to create and maintain complete neighborhoods include:

- Promote preservation of unique or culturally significant items in each neighborhood;
- Create new amenities.
- Develop a list and mapping of key neighborhood amenities. The list will identify where certain amenities should be preserved and new investments should be made.
- Allow small scale commercial development in all neighborhoods to allow for essential services to be located near everyone. Tools such as zoning, site design and building size can allow compatible, mixed land uses throughout the city.

Key neighborhood amenities may include:

- Grocery Store
- Green Space
- Employment
- Retail
- Healthy food
- Sidewalk
- Bike Paths
- Affordable Housing
- Serves All Ages



Key Corridors



Key corridors are both linear roadways (and pathways) connecting places and key places where goods and services are exchanged. Corridors must balance mobility, livability, and economic output. Storm Lake has many corridors vital to neighborhoods in all these aspects.

When asked in the survey if the aesthetic quality of street corridors in Storm Lake creates a pleasant experience for walking, biking or driving, 35.3% agreed, 49.0% were neutral, and 15.7% disagreed.

The following corridors have been identified as needing more in-depth analysis. These analyses will evaluate neighborhood connectivity improvements and how to promote more complete neighborhoods.

- Lake Avenue
- 5th Street
- Lakeshore Drive
- Flindt Drive

Housing and Neighborhoods

Overview

Housing is a critical part of every community. The existence of a wide range of housing options is key to economic growth. Businesses need workers in order to thrive and grow; and those workers in turn need a range of housing options. Quality housing also helps to anchor and support neighborhoods. Finally, housing provides a critical foundation for individual health, well-being and educational success. This matters because healthier and more educated residents benefit a city's economy by forming a more robust and productive workforce.

Housing and Neighborhoods explores current and past housing trends, and historical information, to identify how Storm Lake will grow its housing market. This section will review where current housing is situated, the types of housing currently available, and future needs. Considerations for future housing development in Storm include the cost of housing within the city, the different housing environments faced by renters versus owners, and the types of housing the community wants in the future. Housing goals were created based on existing data, surveys, pop-up events, and the Storm Lake Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee recommendations.

Comprehensive Plan Survey

Respondents to the Comprehensive Plan survey recognized the importance of housing choice in the city. When asked if “there is an adequate supply of quality housing choices for people of all ages and incomes,” 85% of respondents disagreed. When asked to indicate if they agreed, disagreed, or were neutral about the need for various types of housing, respondents agreed on the need for more single family housing (88%), more affordable housing (85%) and more rental housing (78%). Figure 0.1 indicates the survey responses to housing needs.

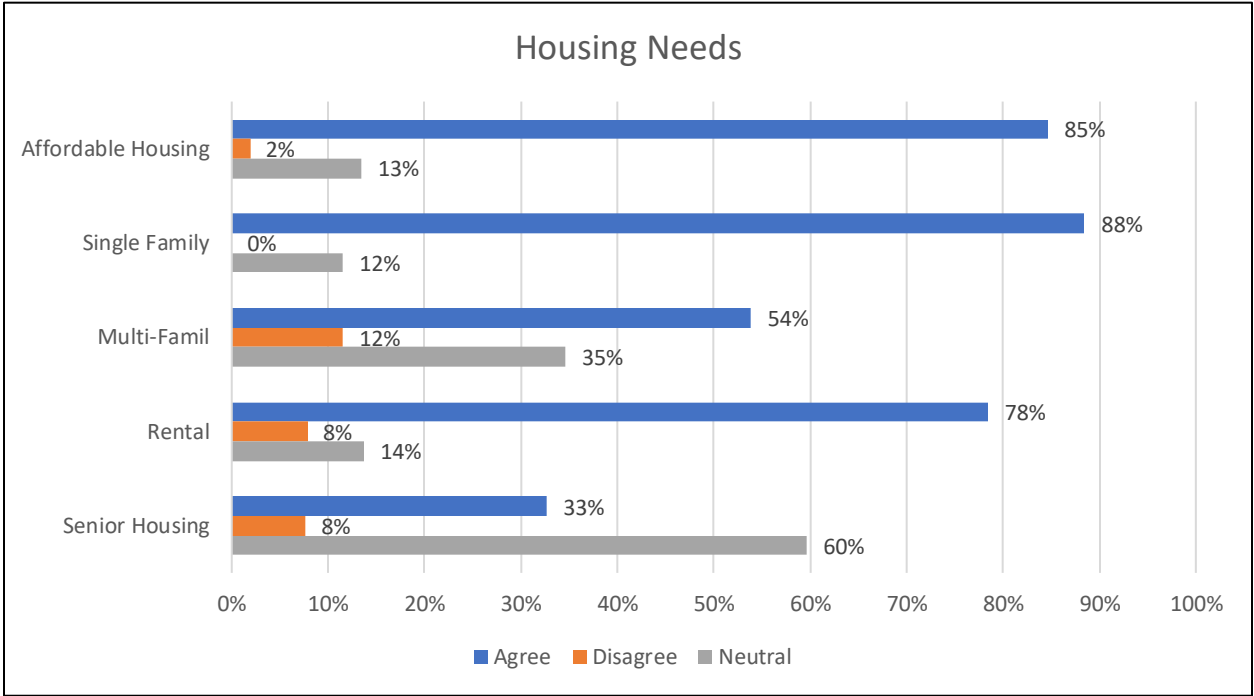


Figure 0.1 – Housing Needs
 Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

The survey also identified the top two significant factors influencing current housing location as the proximity to school or work and affordability.

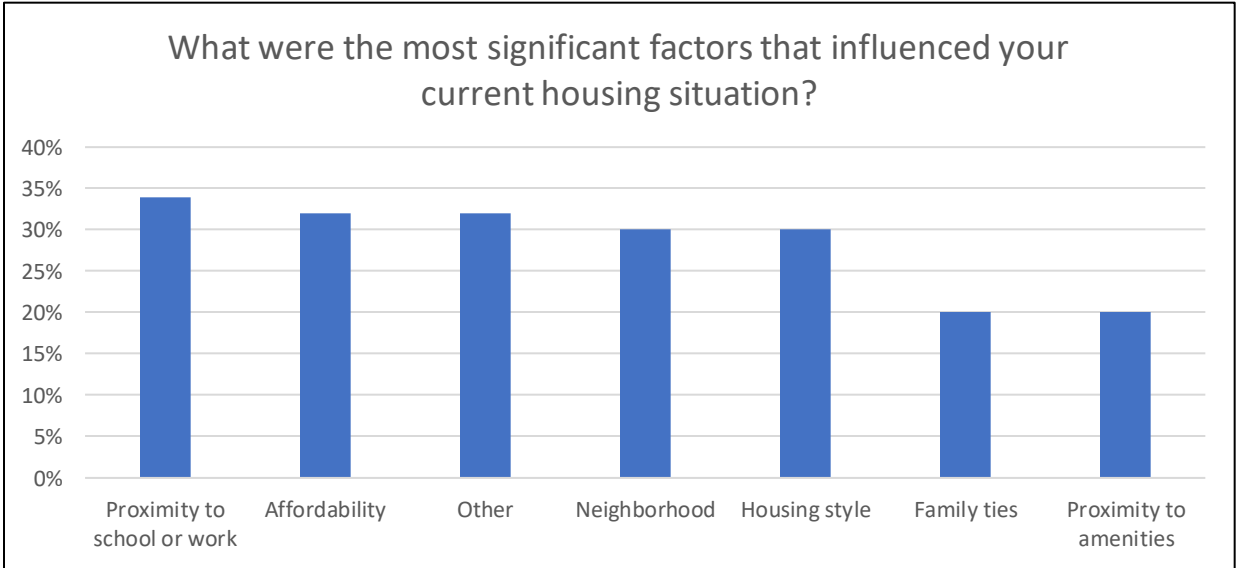


Figure 0.2 – Factors Influencing Housing Choice
 Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

Housing and Neighborhood Goals

[2022 Strategic Plan](#)

The City Council prioritized the following housing-related goals within its 2022 Strategic Plan:

- Keep Building Houses (especially single-family dwellings)

- Explore New Incentives
- Examine Properties for Potential Redevelopment (e.g., refer to Downtown Master Plan)
- Upgrade and Improve Distressed Properties (Infills)
- Utilize (and Enhance) the Nuisance Abatement Fund
- Grow the Community in an Outward Direction
- Utilize the FDA Loan Fund

Comprehensive Plan Goals

The Comprehensive Plan Housing and Neighborhood goals were created based on existing data, surveys, pop-up events, and the Storm Lake Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Goal 1: Provide an array of housing options to attract and retain households, residents, and families of varying sizes, ages, diversities, cultures, incomes, and needs.

- Develop new housing types to meet the needs of residents.
- Improve existing housing stock to meet the needs of contemporary residents, homeowners, and renters alike.
- Encourage infill and redevelopment projects while maintaining the integrity of neighborhoods and adherence to zoning requirements.
- Update zoning code to allow “missing middle” housing by right in all residential zones.
- Prioritize accessibility in existing and new housing to allow residents to age in place.

Goal 2: Improve Storm Lake's reputation as a place with solid, appealing neighborhoods.

- Promote the use of design elements to create more connectivity and appeal in the neighborhoods of Storm Lake. Such design elements include landscaping to create safer streets which in turn facilitates social interaction between neighbors and enhances neighborhood character.
- Foster neighborhood pride.
- Cultivate neighborhoods as distinctive places and celebrate unique features.
- Enhance the “public realm” through beautification and safety improvements.
- Continue using code enforcement to keep track of distressed properties and move the properties towards compliance.

Goal 3: Encourage environmentally conscious new construction and renovation of housing.

- Encourage the use of high quality, robust and energy efficient materials in renovations and new construction to promote reduced energy utilization, resource efficiency, indoor environmental quality, and water conservation.
- Educate the public about preserving neighborhoods and housing stocks.
- Place an adequate number of parks near dense housing developments and supply them with proper recreation programming.

Current Housing

Housing Occupancy

Nearly 94% of housing units within Storm Lake are occupied which is slightly higher when compared to the state and national averages of 90.3% and 91.2% respectively. Vacant units in Storm Lake make up 6.4% of the total housing units. The State of Iowa and United States both have vacant housing units at 8.8% and 9.7 percent. This shows housing occupancy within Storm Lake is higher than that of both the current state and national averages. The local pressure on the housing market in Storm Lake is a direct result of the lack of vacant housing within Storm Lake and the fact that Storm Lake is a regional employment center.

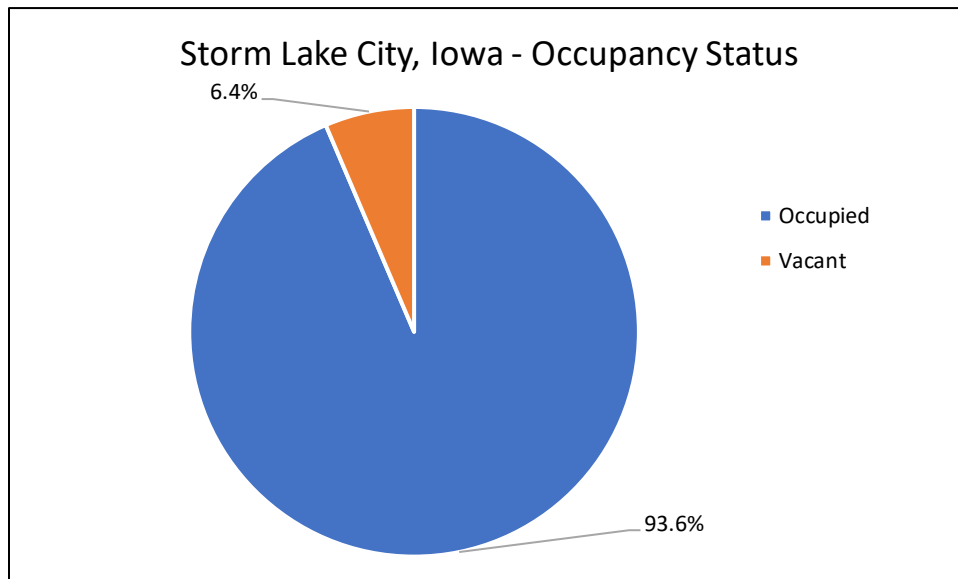


Figure 0.1 – Housing Occupancy
Source: US Census Data

Housing Types



The dominant housing type in Storm Lake are single-family homes, which makes up 58.6% of the housing stock in the city. There are other types of housing units found in Storm Lake ranging from 1-unit attached homes such as townhomes to 20 or more-unit dwellings. These other housing types, however, do not have a strong presence within the community. The second largest housing type consists of multifamily buildings with 20 or more-units; these units are 10% of the housing type in Storm Lake.

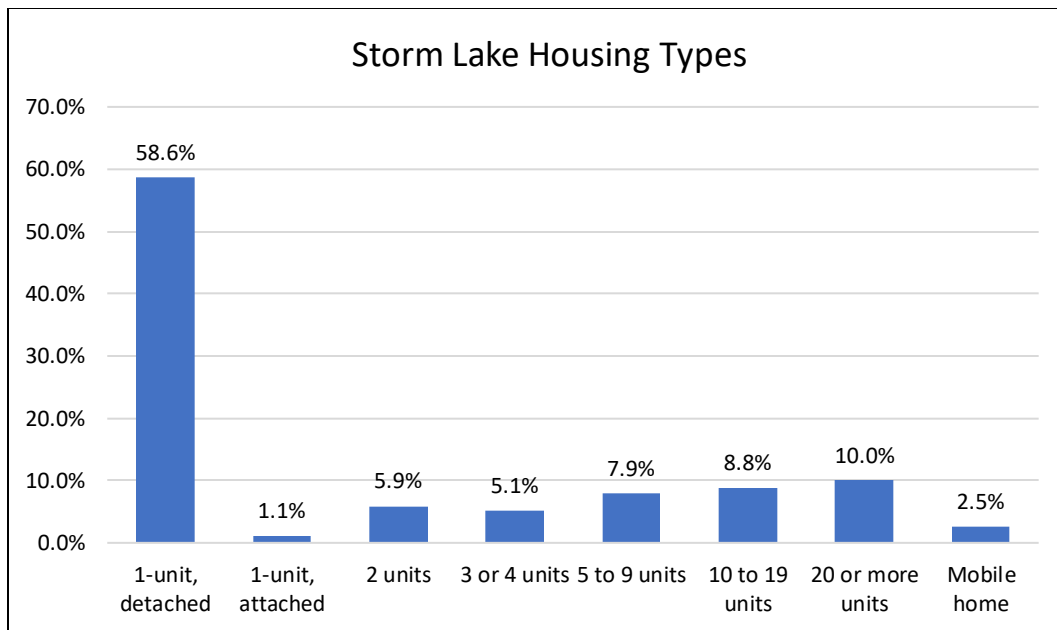


Figure 0.2 – Housing Types
Source: US Census Data

Year Built

A majority of Storm Lake’s housing stock was built before 1979. This coincides closely with the State of Iowa and Buena Vista County housing stocks. Homes built between 1970 and 1979 make up 21% of the housing stock in Storm Lake. Since 1980, new home construction has slowed down. Only 28.3% of Storm Lake’s housing stock is younger than 40 years old. The majority of the housing stock is older than 40 years old which may lead to lower utility efficiency and increased need for rehabilitation due to age.

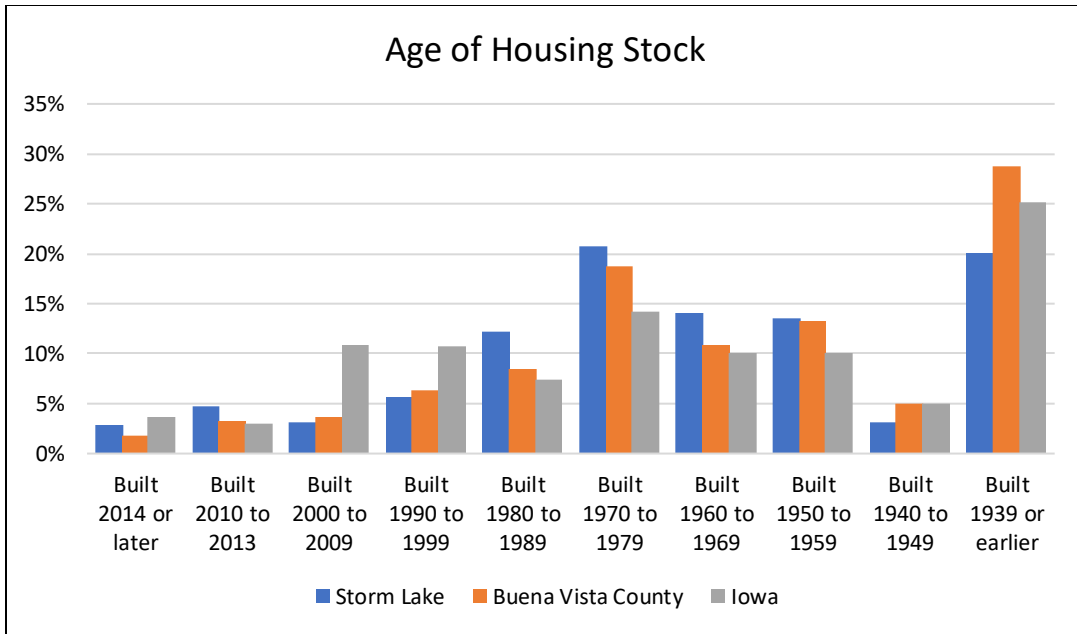


Figure 0.3 – Age of Housing Stock
Source: US Census Data

Housing Tenure

Storm Lake’s housing is almost equally split between owners and renters with 50.8% being owner occupied and 49.2% being renter occupied. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of respondents to the comprehensive plan survey agree more rental housing is needed.

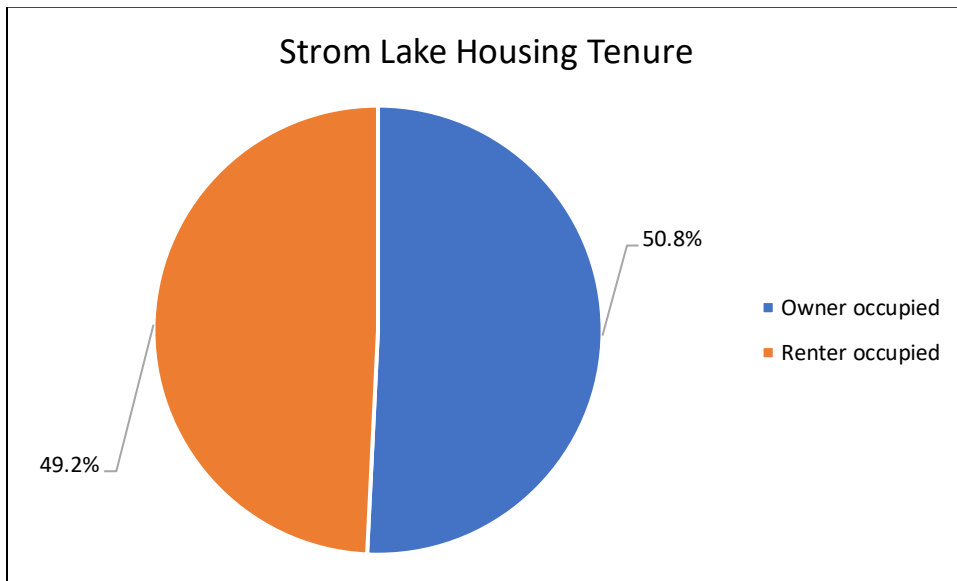


Figure 0.4 – Housing Tenure
Source: US Census

Housing Value

The median housing value in Storm Lake is approximately \$163,000 which is about 20% lower than the median housing value of \$194,756 in Iowa.

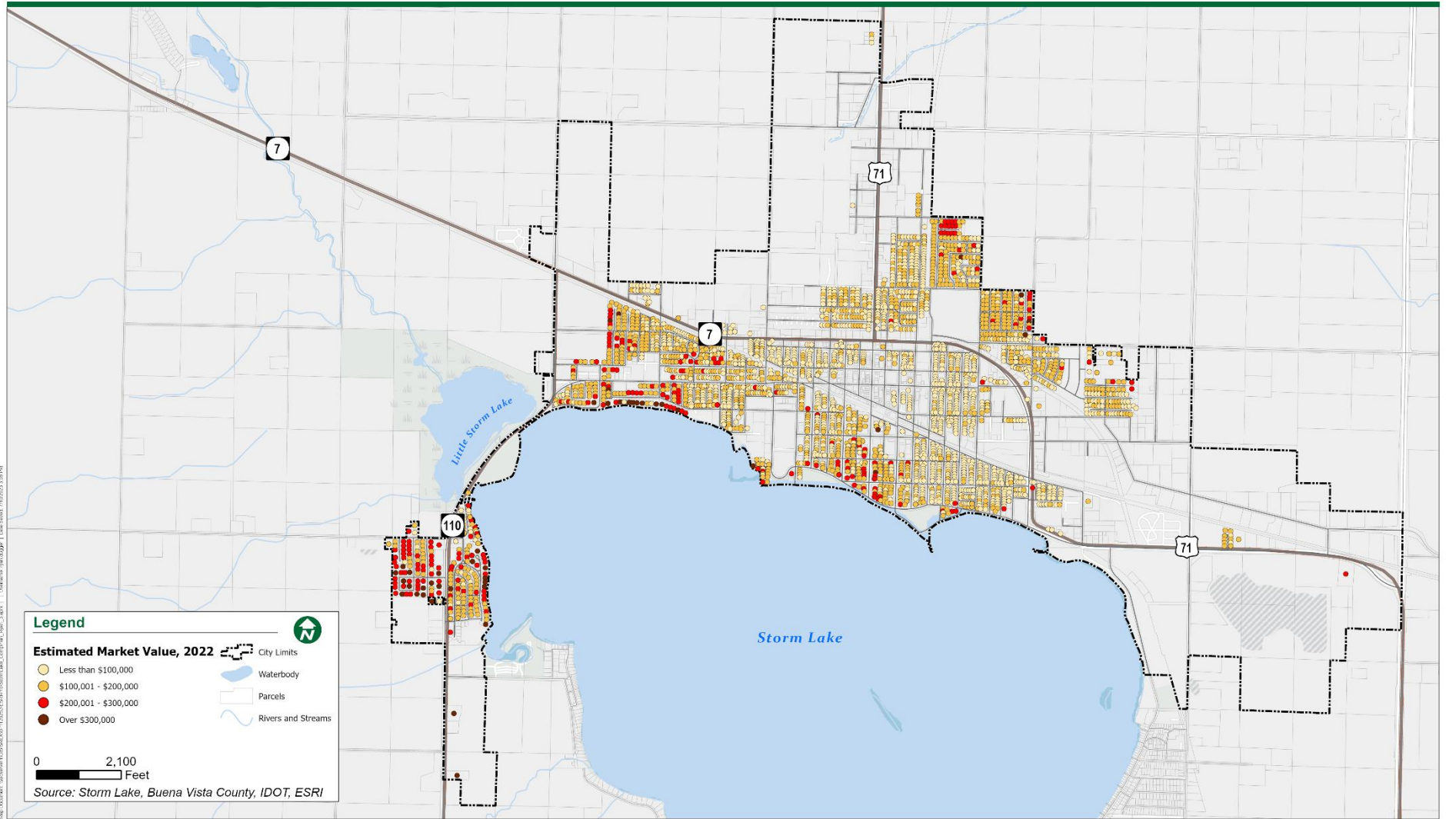


Figure 0.5 – Housing Values
Source: Buena Vista County Parcel Data

Monthly Housing Costs

Eighty-two percent (82%) of renters in Storm Lake pay under \$1,000 a month in housing costs, whereas only 38.8% of homeowners pay under \$1,000. More than 71% of homeowners pay less than \$1,500 a month in total housing costs. Even with the relatively lower amount of monthly rent, 31.6% of renters pay over 30% of their income into housing costs. Only 18.5% of homeowners with a mortgage pay over 30% of their income into housing costs.

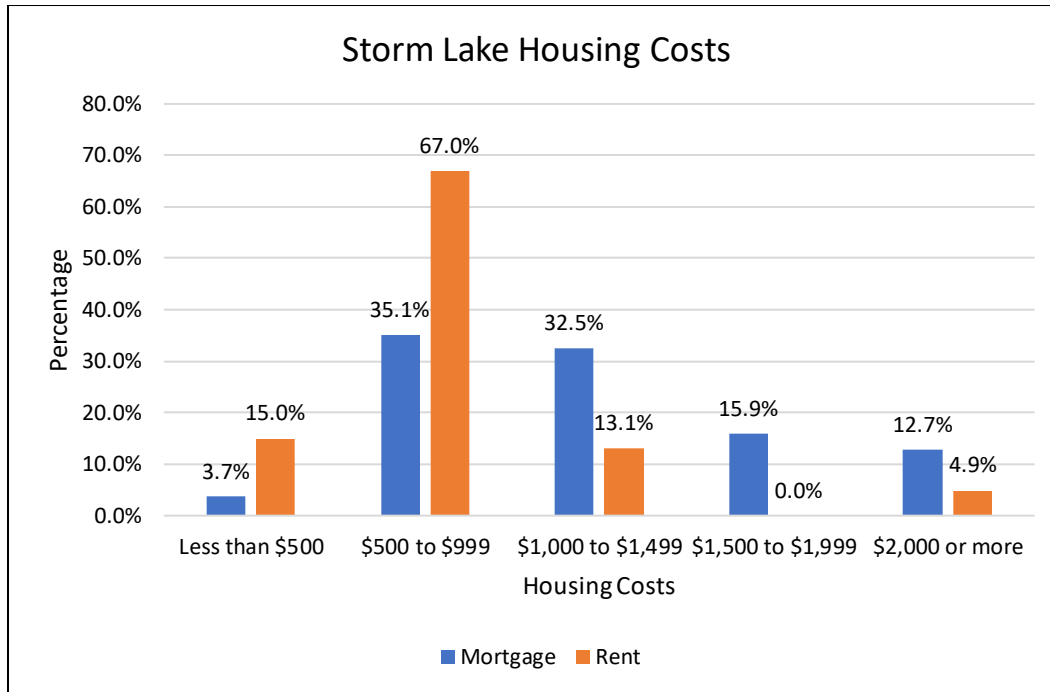


Figure 0.6 – Housing Costs
Source: US Census

Housing Cost Burden

Housing cost burden identifies the number of people who spend more than 30% of their income on housing alone. This factors in the amount of income left after housing costs are taken care of. Approximately 31.6% of both homeowners and renters are cost burdened in Storm Lake, spending more than 30% of their income on housing and its associated costs.

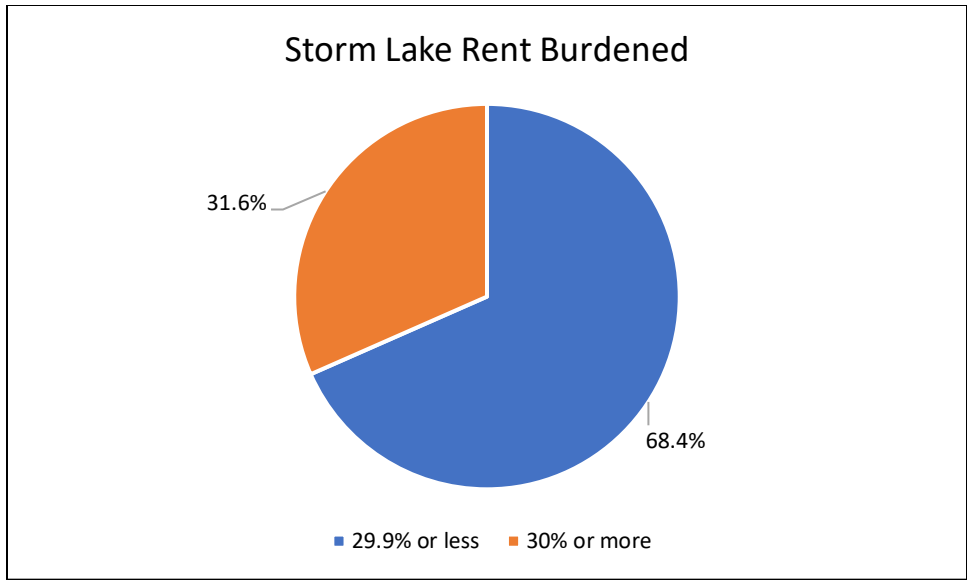
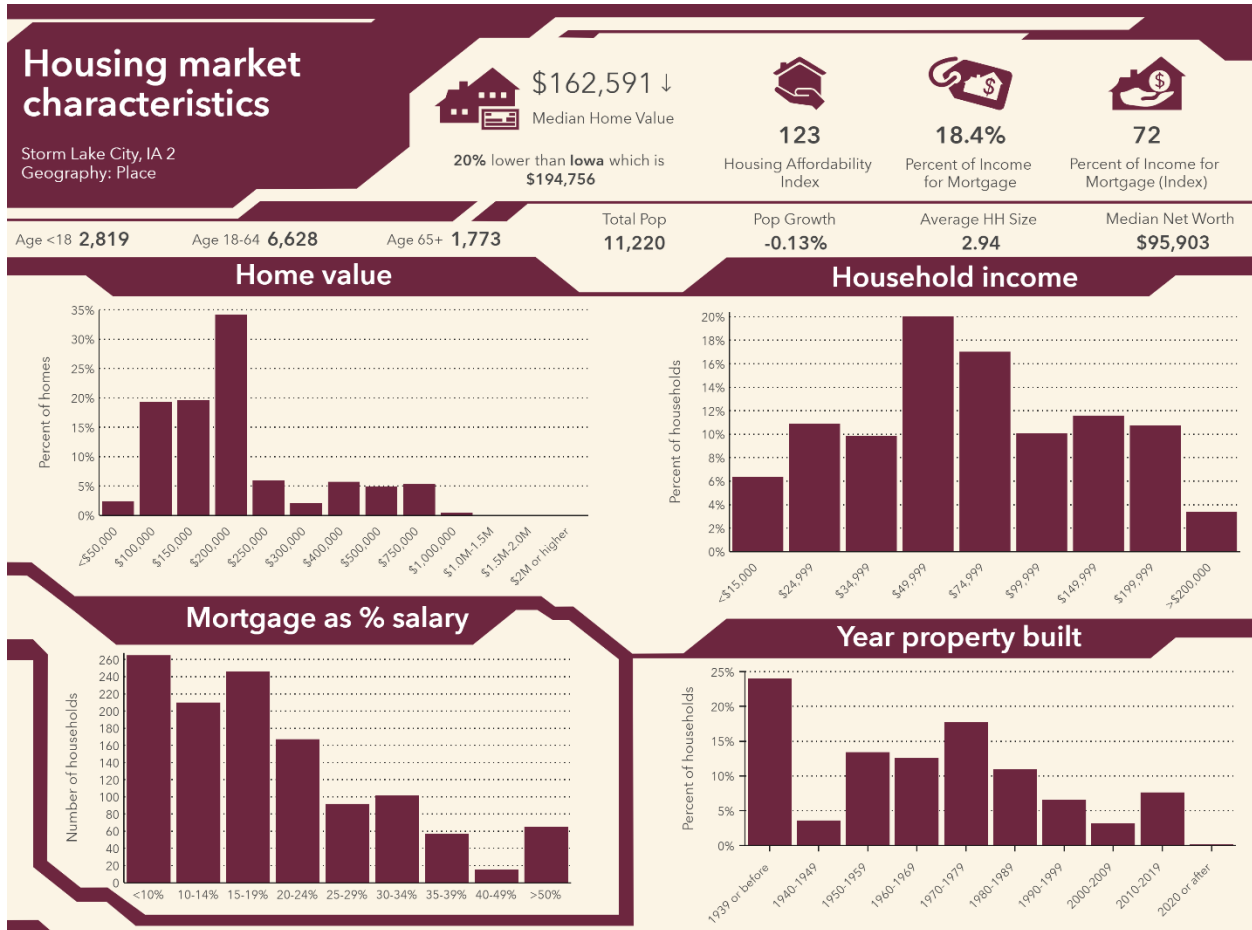
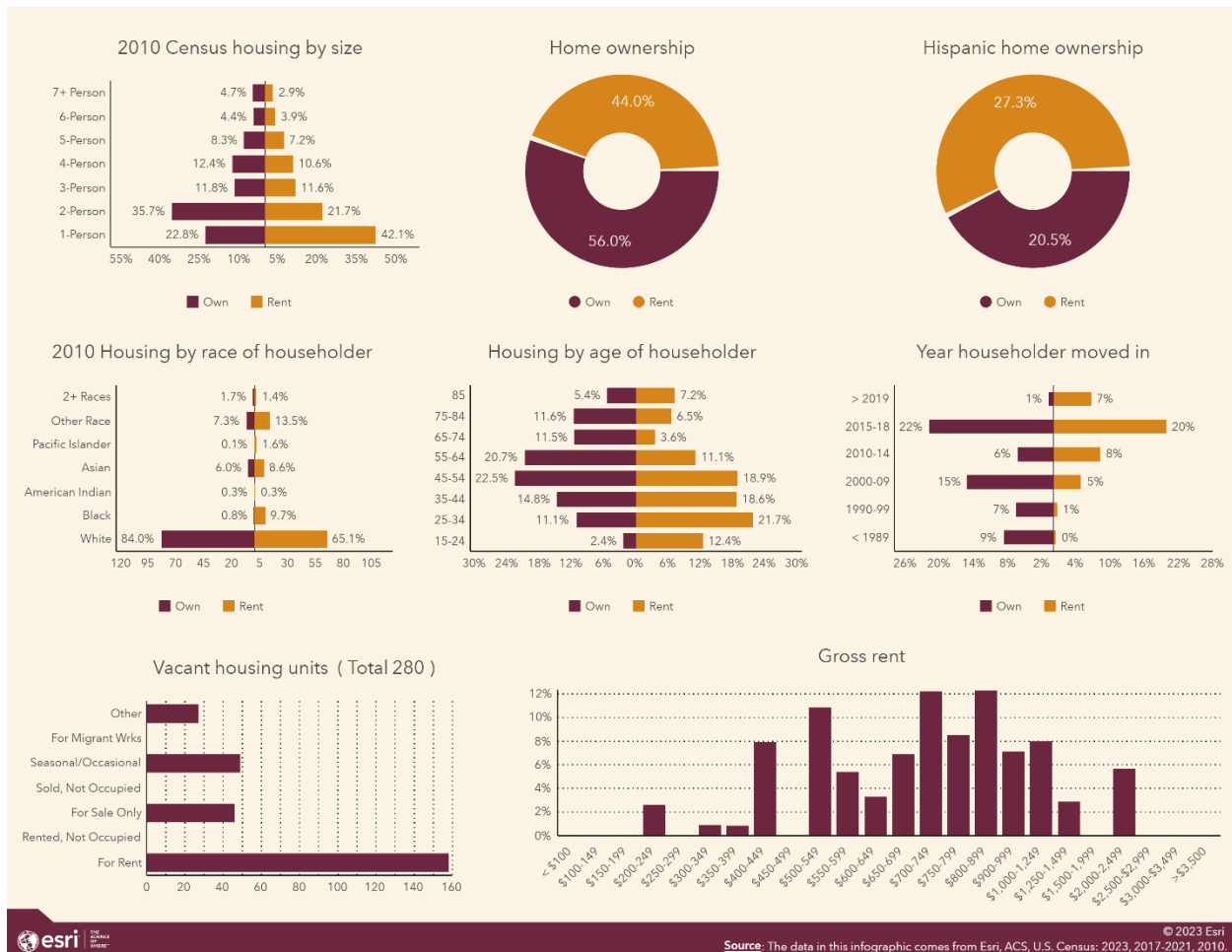


Figure 0.7 – Rent Burdened Households
Source: US Census

NOTE: MANY OF THE ABOVE STATISTICS CAN BE SHOWN IN AN INFOGRAPHIC SIMILAR TO WHAT IS SHOWN BELOW. INPUT ON PREFERENCES WOULD BE APPRECIATED





Future Housing Needs

To sufficiently provide housing for anticipated growth, Storm Lake will need to continue to protect and grow its housing stock. Over the last several decades, the national average household size has decreased; however, this is not the case in Storm Lake, where the average household size is increasing. Presuming this trend continues, Storm Lake should anticipate an average household size just under three people per household over the coming decades.

	2010	2020	2023	2030	2040	2050
Population	10,600	11,269	11,470	12,088	12,706	13,324
Households	3,561	3,597	3,579	3,647	4,322	4,352
Average Household Size (persons per unit)	2.76	2.94	2.94	2.94	2.94	2.94

To accommodate growth, Storm Lake will need to see construction of about 27 housing units per year through 2050 just to maintain its existing rate of growth. By way of comparison, between 2015 and 2022, an average of 32 new units per year were constructed in Storm Lake. The table below identifies new residential building permits.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2012	2022	Average/Year
SF/TH Units	4	3	7	16	8	15	9	5	8
Multifamily					6	32	98	72	52
Total	4	3	7	16	14	47	107	77	34

Figure 0.8 – Storm Lake Building Permits
Source: City of Storm Lake

In the last 5 years, a significant number of multifamily housing units have been built. This trend will need to continue in order for Storm Lake to reach its population projections.

Continued city growth is closely connected to its ability to protect and grow its housing stock, creating options for people of all ages, ability, and incomes to live in Storm Lake. The Future Land Use Map designates 44.6% of the land in Storm Lake for residential uses. While much of this is developed, the plan provides for growth and infill development. Additionally, there is potential for areas currently outside of the city limits to be annexed and developed with new residential units.

Missing Middle Housing

Many municipalities are looking towards missing middle housing to help provide affordability for their communities. Missing middle housing, as shown in the graphic below, are small scale multi-family developments, traditionally between 2-4 units per building. These developments have many of the advantages of a single family home, but are often less expensive to build per square foot than traditional single family homes, thus reducing the cost per unit. The survey found 84.3% of respondents believe more affordable housing options are needed; the construction of middle housing can be a good way to develop affordable housing. More than 58% of housing within Storm Lake is single-family detached housing, and 12.1% are single-family attached in 4-unit buildings.

Missing middle housing options can look similar to traditional single family homes and are often the same size or smaller. For instance, a 2,000 square foot four-bedroom, two bath single family house could instead be two 1,000 square foot units in the same footprint. One way to promote the development of missing middle housing and increase infill development is through the modernization of the zoning code to allow these housing types by right throughout the city. Focusing on infill housing in developed areas of the community can also increase the tax base with minimal increases on infrastructure.



Aging in Place

According to the US Census, Storm Lake has a higher percentage of occupied housing units than both state and national averages. This makes it very difficult for aging members of the community to find smaller housing units within Storm Lake. Many will be forced to look for housing outside the community, or to simply never downsize. Nearly 90% of seniors want to stay in their own homes as they age, because they don't want to leave their community and support system.¹ The American Association of Retired People, or AARP, have five main housing principles.²

1. Secure Affordability - communities should offer a range of housing sizes and types located across neighborhoods. Adequate subsidies should be available for all who qualify.
2. Ensure Equity - affordable, accessible, high-quality housing should be available to people of all incomes and backgrounds, including those from groups that historically have faced discrimination. Policies should be developed and implemented that alleviate the impact of past discriminatory housing practices.
3. Prioritize Accessibility - housing should be designed for people of all ages and ability levels, including those with disabilities. This empowers community residents to age in their homes and communities as well as live in the setting of their choice.
4. Ensure Health & Safety - housing should be designed and maintained to ensure the health and safety of all residents, including older adults.
5. Foster Service Delivery in Housing - older adults should have access to convenient home- and community-based services to allow them to remain safely in their homes and communities as their needs change.

Storm Lake's housing goals are very similar to these principles.

Neighborhood Design

The City of Storm Lake is largely comprised of residential neighborhoods. Two of the goals of this plan include "Provide an array of housing options to attract and retain households, residents, and families of varying sizes, ages, diversities, cultures, incomes, and needs" and "Improve Storm Lake's reputation as a place with solid, appealing neighborhoods."

¹ <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/aging/1/overview>

² <https://policybook.aarp.org/policy-book/housing/aarp-housing-principles>

Neighborhood design can have different forms, from traditional (grid street patterns) to suburban (larger lots on cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets) to conservation or cluster (cluster lots to preserve open space and natural features). In any design, what makes these neighborhoods livable and sustainable is the ability to connect to other areas through trails and sidewalks., and the ability to access open space and play areas through walking or biking. Zoning and subdivision ordinances requiring, whenever possible, street connections, sidewalks, consideration for natural features, and the provision of open space will further facilitate sustainable and accessible neighborhoods.

INSERT EXAMPLES OF NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN HERE

Transportation

Overview

Transportation provides safe and efficient access to neighborhoods, commercial and employment districts, institutions, and recreational facilities and opportunities. Road networks and street systems should be designed to handle changing traffic demands. Identifying those needs and demands is an essential part of the transportation chapter of a comprehensive plan. A successful transportation system, however, is multimodal, and includes automobile, freight, bicycle, and pedestrian systems. The transportation chapter describes how each of these systems function separately and in unison.

Comprehensive Plan Survey

The top priorities identified by survey respondents were winter roadway maintenance, roadway maintenance in general, bicycle and pedestrian safety, public transit options, and roadway safety in general.

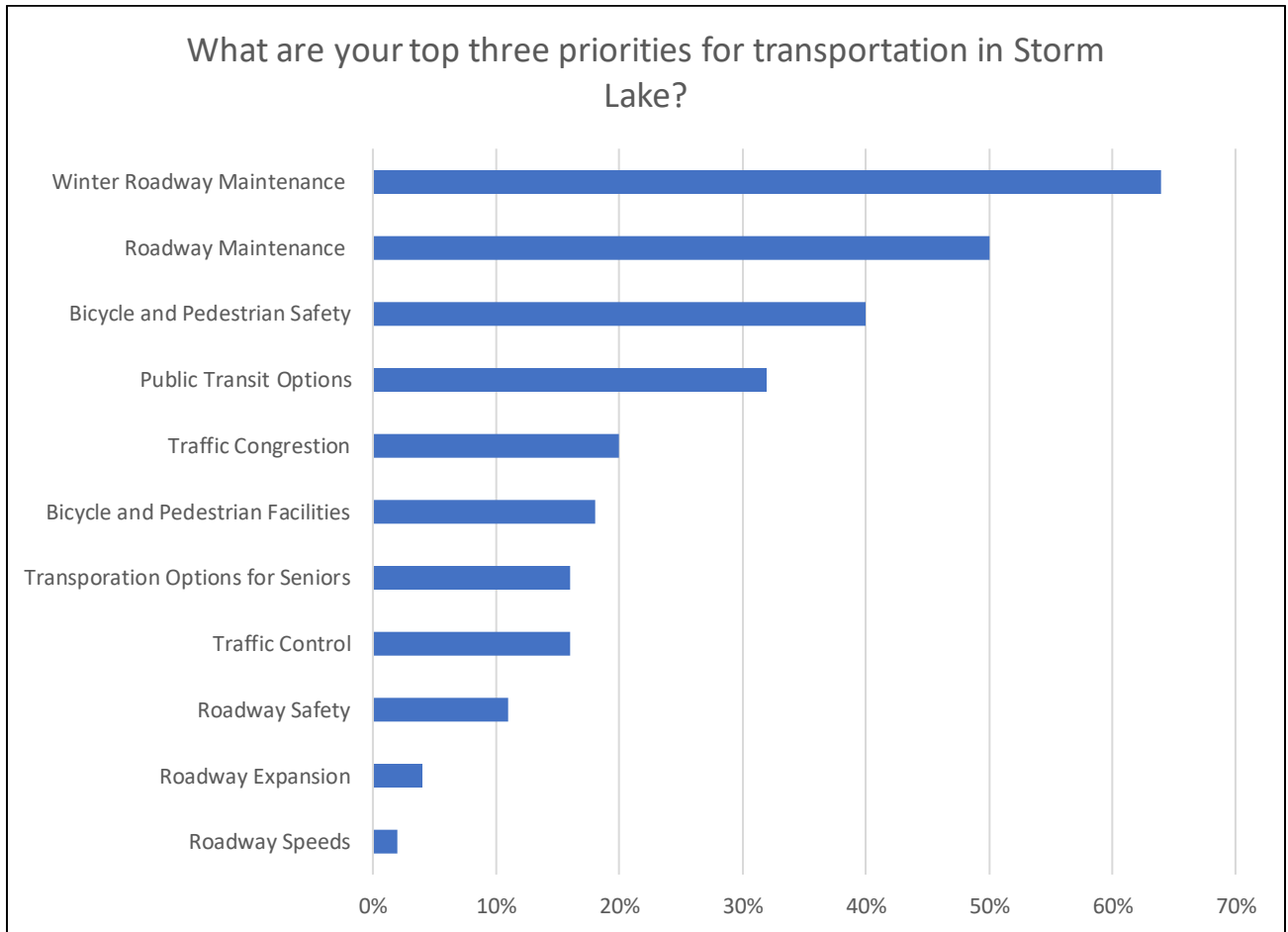


Figure 0.1 – Transportation Priorities
Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

Only 12% of respondents agreed there were adequate transportation options for all community members; 50% of respondents were neutral, while 38% disagreed.

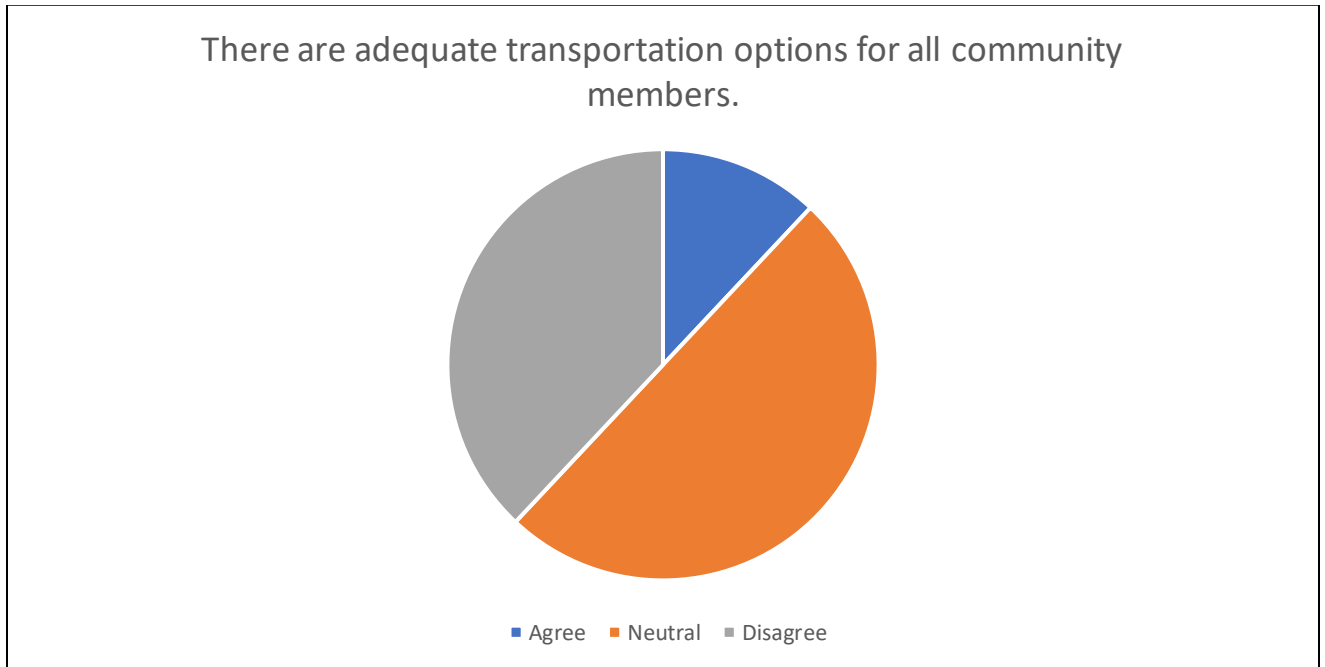


Figure 0.2 – Transportation Options
Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

More than 25% of respondents thought Storm Lake’s roads are in good condition, while 27.5% disagreed and 47.1% were neutral on the subject.

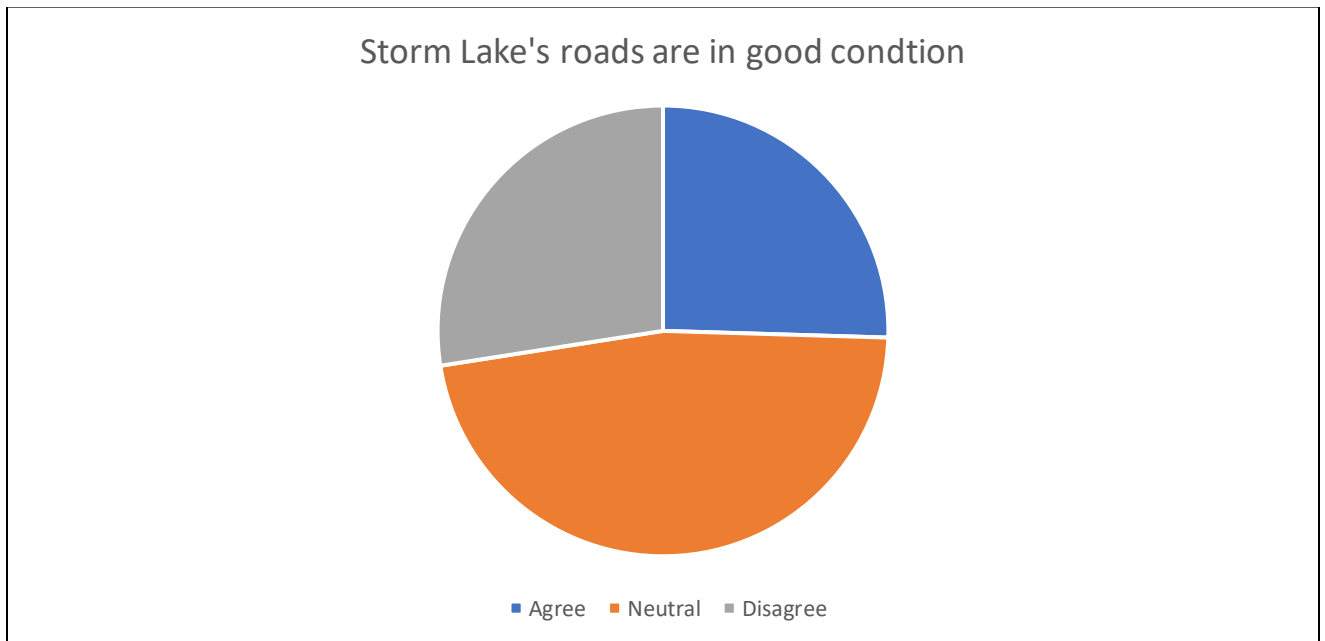


Figure 0.3 – Road Condition
Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

Transportation Goals

Strategic Plan Goals

The goals outlined in the 2022 Strategic Plan relating to transportation are to:

- Continue Trail Connections and Enhancements
- Update the Sign Ordinance, Improve Wayfinding

Comprehensive Plan Goals

The goals identified in the comprehensive plan are a result of feedback from the community and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Goal 1: Effectively and safely move traffic and people through and around the City.

- Focus on improving the operation of key intersections and critical road sections.
- Continue promoting connectivity of roadways and local street networks, so that are multiple connections and direct routes in lieu of cul-de-sacs, looping streets, and dead-end streets.
- Follow access management guidelines and reduce curb cuts to allow for safer and more efficient traffic flow, and bike and pedestrian safety.
- Manage access to the roadway network to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety, reduce crashes, maximize traffic flow, and support strong and vital business districts.

Goal 2: Proactively assess current facility needs and evaluate future needs.

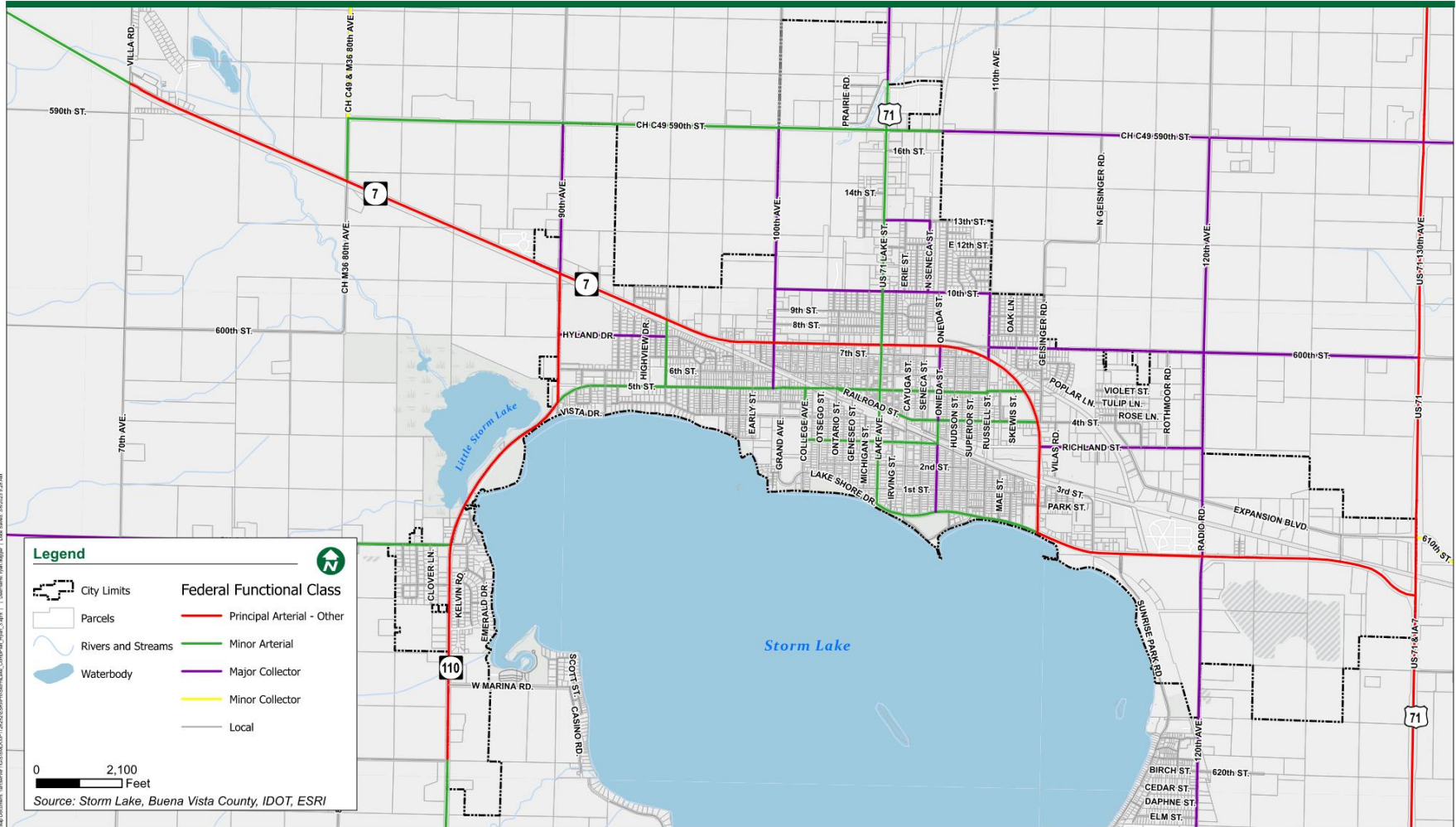
- Continue using a pavement management system for repairing, resurfacing, and rehabilitating existing local roads in the city.
- Prioritize filling in gaps in network before upgrading existing infrastructure network.
- Proactively seek out state funding to support maintenance and planned growth.
- Regularly evaluate roadway width and adjust roadway configurations as opportunities or needs arise.
- Upgrade airport zoning overlays to meet existing airport standards.
- Ensure all infrastructure is installed properly and up to design standards.
- Ensure investments are fiscally sound and maximize financial resources.

Goal 3: Create a multi-modal transportation system that provides a safe and efficient means of movement through the community.

- Promote the expansion of the existing trail system.
- Support efforts to provide additional transit opportunities, both public and private, in Storm Lake.
- When infill development occurs, ensure connective infrastructure for safe and comfortable walking and biking between destinations.
- Provide pedestrians and other non-motorized vehicles with links to existing trail systems.
- Educate citizens about proper use of trails, shared-use paths, and bikes on general roadways.

Functional Classification

Road networks are designed using hierarchies to indicate streets that collect and distribute traffic safely and efficiently. Roads are assigned their functional categories based on the primary roles they play. Some provide access to residents and businesses while others serve mobility needs which, in turn, allows the flow of traffic through and within the community. Storm Lake's roads and streets have been classified under the functional system of road networks and includes arterials, collectors, and local streets.



Arterials

These roads primarily serve major activity centers including commercial corridors or districts and provide connections to the regional or state road system. Arterials usually carry most traffic entering and leaving urban areas. Access onto arterials is controlled or limited to allow for high volumes of traffic and high speeds. Arterials that can be found in Storm Lake include the following: West Milwaukee Avenue (Highway 7), Flindt Drive (Highway 7), East Lakeshore Drive (Highway 7), East Milwaukee Avenue (600th Street), North Lake Avenue, Abner Bell Road (Highway 110) and Radio Road (120th Avenue).

Collectors

Collectors are major and minor roads that serve as a connection between local streets and arterials. They sometimes perform the function of both. They are spaced at intervals to collect traffic from local roads and bring developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road. They tend to provide services to the remaining connected communities. Collector streets in Storm Lake include the following:

Lakeshore Drive (east of Flindt drive), Expansion Boulevard, Richland Street, East 4th Street/ Railroad Street, East 5th Street, West 5th Street, Hyland Drive, West/East 10th Street, West/East 13th Street, West/East 16th Street, Northwestern Drive, Vestal Street (100th Avenue), College Avenue, Lake Avenue (downtown), Seneca Street (north of East 10th Street), Oneida Street (south of East 10th Street), Russel Street, Geisinger Road and Gilbert Street.



Local Streets

All other public roads are classified as local streets which provide direct access to properties, and carry the lowest traffic volumes at the lowest speeds. They are not typically identified on functional classification maps.

Table 6.1 defines specific standards for streets in the various functional classifications.

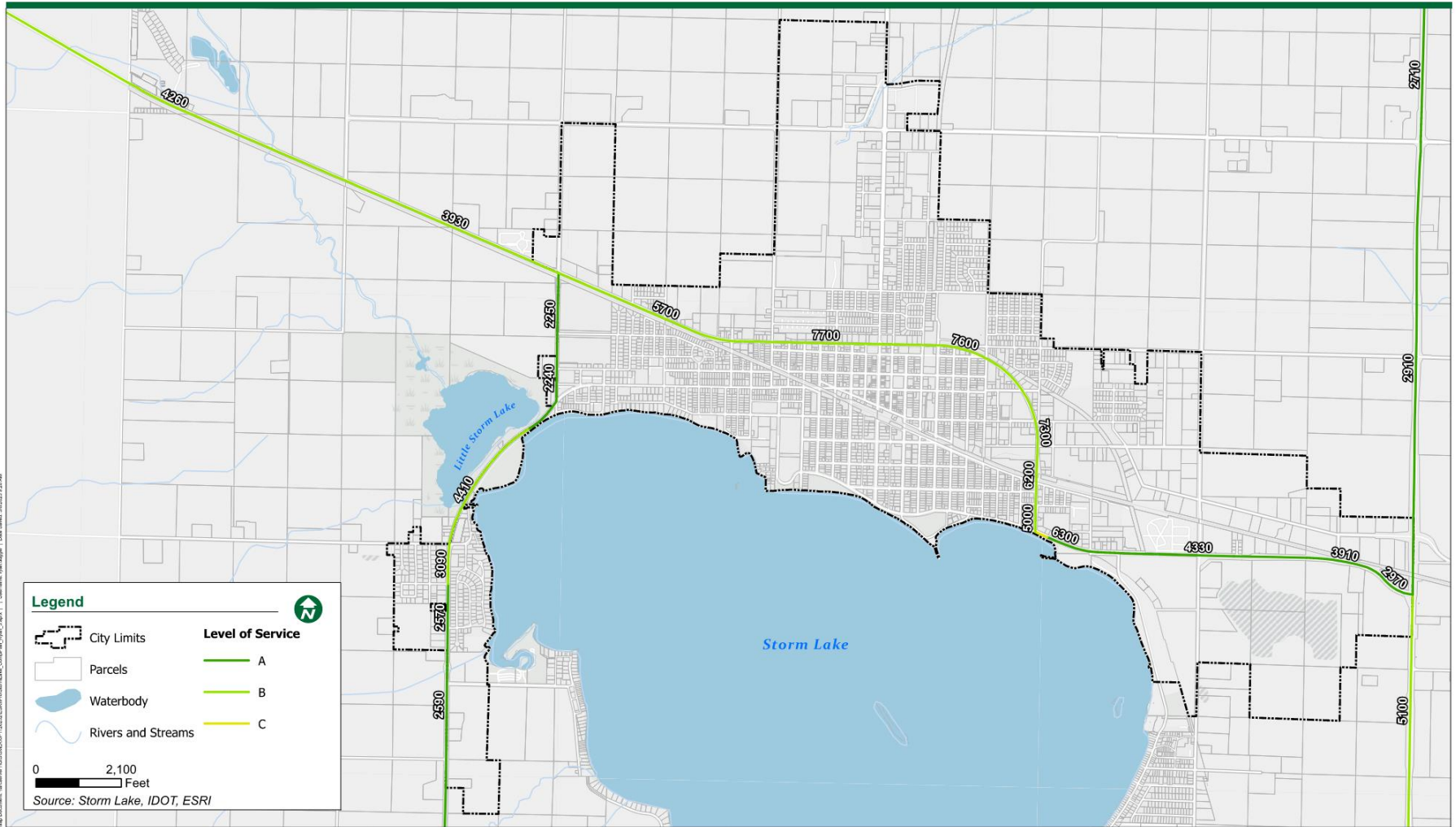
	Arterial	Collector	Local
Location	At neighborhood edges	On edges or within neighborhoods	Within neighborhoods
Property access to street	Limited	Spaced access	Direct Access
Traffic control	Signals & stops signs where warranted	Signals & stop signs where warranted	Traffic control/calming where warranted
On-street parking	Not permitted	Restricted by width	Restricted by width
Land Use Connections	Intercity	Connects neighborhoods	Connects blocks
Systems connections	To arterials	To arterials/ collectors	To collectors/locals
Service performed	Long trips	Within city – links to rural county	Short trips within city

Traffic volume (trips/day)	3,000-10,000	500-3,000	<500
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Annual Average Daily Traffic Count

The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) map shows traffic volumes for major thoroughfares in Storm Lake. AADT takes a mean number of expected vehicles traveling on any given road section on a day though the year. The Level of Service (LOS) classification, shown in the map below is an example of how traffic will be on most days, but does not take into account turning interactions or dwelling time at intersections. According to the AADT volumes, traffic is at A or B level of service on all major roadways in Storm Lake. The LOS can be broken down into the following categories:

- A – Free Flow
- B – Reasonably Free Flow
- C – Stable Flow, or Near Free Flow
- D – Approaching Unstable Flow
- E – Unstable Flow, Operating at Capacity
- F – Forced or Breakdown Flow



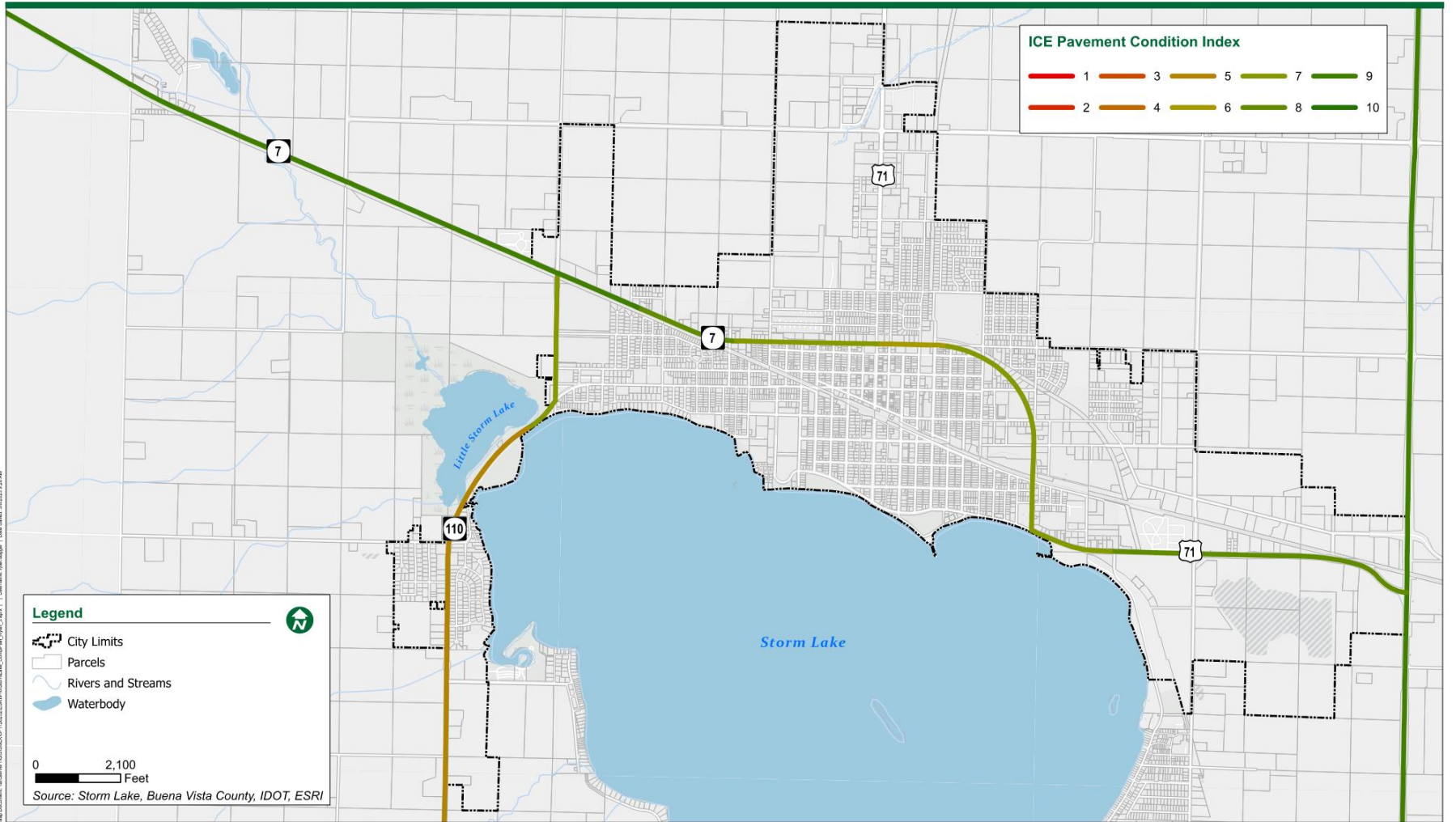
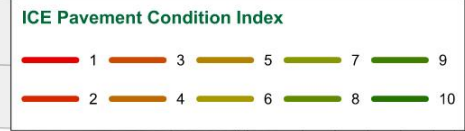
Freight

Since Storm Lake's main employment industry is manufacturing, it is fair to say many of the industries in the city require large semi-trucks. In order to solve issues of noise and slow-moving trucks, the city must work hand-in-hand with the industries. The presence of Tyson Foods, a company predominantly engaged in meat packing and the significant agricultural sector, requires roads to handle truck and tractor traffic to accommodate trips from farms to marketplaces.

Pavement Conditions

The Pavement Condition Index is a numerical index used to indicate the general condition of a pavement section. Assigning each segment of road a numerical value assists a community in prioritizing road maintenance and replacement projects.

The Iowa Department of Transportation's Systems Planning Bureau developed its own tool to measure the most recent known performance and condition data related to the roadway network. This tool generates a composite rating that is calculated from the weighted scores of seven different criteria. The map below illustrates the value assigned to state highways in and around the City of Storm Lake.



Sidewalks

Storm Lake has an extensive network of sidewalks in the older neighborhoods, but the more recently developed neighborhoods are lacking in sidewalks. There has been an increasing preference to have more neighborhoods with sidewalks that connect to the trails. Missing sidewalks in some neighborhoods and lack of lighting discourage people from walking and don't allow parts of the public realm to be accessible.

Storm Lake has adopted a Sidewalk Inspection Program to ensure pedestrian pathways are maintained. This program also helps to alert property owners when sidewalks need improvements. The program also highlights the responsibility of the adjoining property owners to maintain the sidewalk adjacent to or in front of their property. The [Sidewalk Inspection Program](#) specifies the purpose, inspection process and inspection violations.

Cycling



Transportation networks with safe cycling systems promote public health, provide affordable transportation options, and reduce environmental concerns associated with automotive use. Ease of safe travel, regardless of mode, plays a large role in the overall success of mobility city wide.

The existing dedicated off-road cycling system is primarily along Storm Lake, but there are some gaps that require on-street riding. Two of the 2022 strategic plan priorities are wayfinding and increased trail connections. It is vital to continue expanding the trail system around Storm Lake, to complete missing connections along the lake, and to continue making on-street or off-street connections North-South off the lake. The North-South connections, such as the proposed North Central shared use path, allow safe active transportation within neighborhoods and can eventually connect to the broader trail network by the lake.

Public Transit

Limited ridership and the fiscal challenge involved in running a public transit in a small community are the primary reason there are limited public transit opportunities in Storm Lake. There is a private taxi service in Storm Lake provided by Storm Lake Cab and a regional non-profit transit service, Regional Transit Authorities (RIDES), which maintains a Hub in Storm Lake and provides taxi like service. Storm Lake maintains a coupon fund of 4,000 coupons that provide a \$1 discount for riders who complete their journey within Storm Lake City limits. Rising gas prices, college population and a large immigrant population brings the opportunity to expand the existing transit service.



Aviation

Storm Lake Municipal Airport is located outside of the city limits, southwest of the City. The airport is primarily used for business owners, agricultural sprayers, and recreational pilots for smaller aircraft. There are currently 36 based aircraft at the airport. There is an A/D building that has a hangar for Fixed Base Operators, three public T-hangars, one public conventional hangar,



three private hangars, and six tie-downs. There are three runways. The primary runway is 17/35, a concrete runway 5,000 feet long by 75 feet wide. Runway 13/31 is a concrete runway 3,035 feet long by 50 feet wide. Runway 6/24 is a turf runway 1,962 feet long by 95 feet wide. See [appendix X](#) for the 2017 Storm Lake Airport Master Plan.

Future Transportation Projects

Trunk Highway 7 and Lake Avenue through the City of Storm Lake are undivided, high-speed roadways that separate several low to moderate-income neighborhoods from the northern Storm Lake shoreline, the commercial areas in downtown, and key existing and future recreational areas south of the city. Both roadways are major activity hubs within the city, hosting a variety of retail, business, recreational, and nature amenities for Storm Lake residents and visitors. The city is aware of the transportation barrier that these roadways create, especially for vulnerable roadway users like pedestrians and bicyclists. The city has committed to studying ways the barriers can be addressed using public input and Complete Streets policies and strategies.

Addressing these barriers is highly supported by the local community. The proposed project was initially presented at the Comprehensive Plan open house on September 12, 2023. The city plans to continue to ask for public feedback on the project.

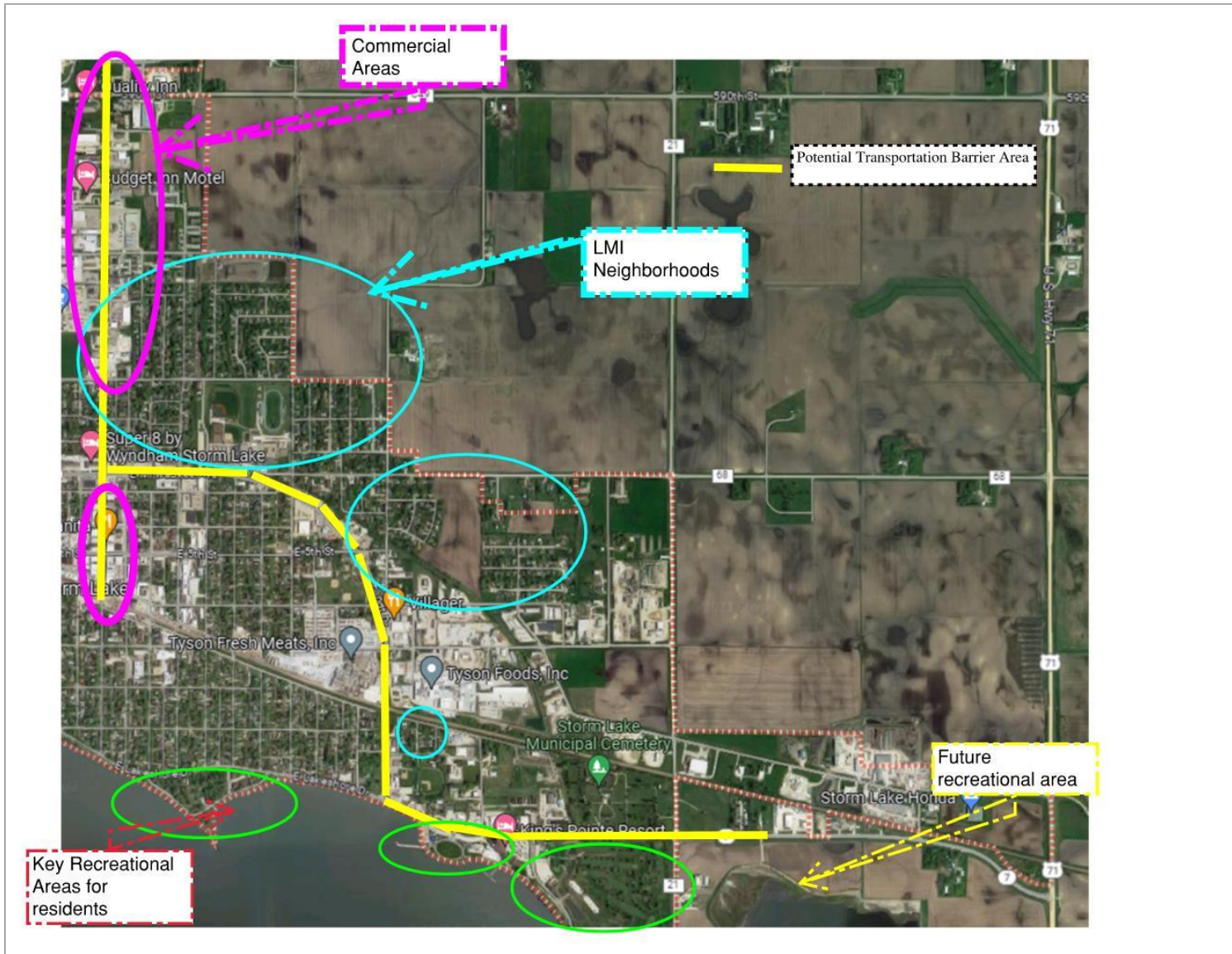


Figure 0.4 – Highway 7 and Lake Avenue General Concept Discussion Map

Source: City of Storm Lake and Bolton & Menk

Future Transportation Projects Matrix

The City of Storm Lake has identified roadway improvements and other future transportation projects to consider over the next several years. The tables below outlines the current transportation funding document. It is important to note the costs are estimates and may change over time.

Roadway Resurfacing Plan			
Project Name	DOT Funding Cost*	Non-DOT Funding Cost*	Overview
Vestal Street Roadway and Utility Improvements	\$3,442,000	\$1,592,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, and watermain improvements from 5 th Street to 10 th Street.
East 4 th Street Improvements	\$3,135,000	\$2,099,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and watermain improvements from Cayuga Street to Flindt Road.
Oneida Street Improvements	\$2,280,000	\$1,638,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and watermain improvements from Bair Street to Lakeshore Drive.
Hyland & Northwestern Drive Improvements	\$2,522,000	\$1,063,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and watermain improvements from Angier Drive to Sunset Drive.
5 th Street Improvements	\$2,232,000	\$1,127,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and watermain improvements from Ontario Street to Erie Street.
Seneca Street & 13 th Street Improvements	\$1,660,000	\$1,105,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and watermain improvements from Erie Street to 12 th Street.
Milwaukee Avenue & Russell Street Improvements	\$2,250,000	\$1,506,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and watermain improvements from Flindt Road to Geisinger Road.
Lake Avenue Improvements 1	\$1,094,000	\$509,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and watermain improvements from Lake Avenue to 8 th Street.
College Avenue Improvements	\$1,094,000	\$509,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and watermain improvements from Lake Avenue to 8 th Street.
Lake Avenue Improvements 2	\$649,000	\$364,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and watermain improvements from Bair Street to Railroad Street.
10 th Street Improvements	\$817,000	\$548,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and watermain improvements from Erie Street to Seneca Street.
5 th Street Improvements	\$1,281,000	\$765,000	Street, sidewalk, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and watermain improvements from Russell Street to Flindt Road.

**All cost estimates come directly from previous studies and may have changed since publication.*

Future Transportation Projects

Project Name	Project Type	Type	Cost*	Overview
90th Street Reconstruction and Utility Extension	Future Project	Utility & Transportation	TBD	Multiple options exist for extending sanitary sewers, watermains, and storm sewers. Variables include the side of watermain, 8" or 10" and if storm sewers are designed. Option 1: 90th Street with 8" Watermain Option 2: 90th Street with 10" Watermain Option 3: 590th Street with 8" Watermain Option 4: 590th Street with 10" Watermain
Evergreen Ave Improvements	Future Project	Transportation	\$230,800	Sidewalk improvements centering along Evergreen Ave, including improved pedestrian ramps, adding missing sidewalk, and stub outs of evergreen into 10th St.
East Central Trails	Future Project	Transportation	\$1,018,300	Two phases of trails, trail lighting, and minor sewer upgrades that follow the rail ROW. Phase 1: Geisnger Rd to Richland St. Phase 2: Richland St. to Lakeshore Dr.
Memorial Road Improvements	Future Project	Transportation	\$2,769,194	Memorial road replacement from East 3rd To Lakeshore Dr. with forcemain replacement, replacement and extension of 8" sanitary sewer, and storm sewer upgrades.
Airport Master Plan	Future Project	Transportation	TBD	Extension of Runway 17/35 upgraded lighting system and construction of a full parallel taxiway. Extension of runway 13/31, relocate an additional 210 feet of threshold, installation of approach path indicators and construction of a full parallel taxiway. Expand to include 11 more tie-down spaces, add T-anger space, and update airport zoning to address the changes to each runway identified.
Radio Road Access Road	Future Project?	Utility & Transportation	\$157,716	The addition of an access road, sanitary sewer extension and watermain updates on the dredge spoil site.
Airport Layout	Complete ?	Transportation	TBD	Upgrades to the airport runways as outlined in the airport master plan.
Infrastructure Management Plan	Future Project	Utility & Transportation	\$23,100,000	Implement an on-going pavement maintenance and rehabilitation program, implement a sanitary sewer rehabilitation program, implement a street and utility reconstruction program, update the water distribution model, develop a sanitary sewer collection model.
North Central Shared Use Path	Future Project	Transportation	TBD	Add onto the existing trail system that will run along Seneca up to 590th St.
Lake Avenue and Trunk Highway 7 Transportation	Future Project	Planning & Transportation	TBD	Major transportation barriers exist between residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and recreational areas in Storm Lake. The city recognizes the need to connect low to moderate-

Barrier Elimination
Project

income neighborhoods on the northeast side of Trunk Highway 7 to the economic and cultural destinations of Downtown and the northern Storm Lake shoreline. Existing transportation barriers will be addressed using Complete Streets policies and strategies.

**All cost estimates come directly from previous studies and may have changed since publication.*

Public Infrastructure and Facilities

Overview

The Infrastructure and Facilities chapter delves into the existing utility systems and future planning efforts for aging infrastructure and potential future growth and development. Public utilities that provide water resources and sanitation collection are essential in community life and future community development. In the City of Storm Lake, a small amount of potential residential growth has been identified during this planning period, though the primary immediate focus on utility infrastructure is identifying what exists and possible deficiencies within the public utility systems.

The City of Storm Lake is responsible for providing and maintaining the public water supply, sanitary sewer and storm water management. Other utilities, such as gas and electricity, are an important part of the city’s development and infrastructure. However, these services are provided and maintained by a variety of private companies.

This chapter will analyze existing conditions, existing capacity, and assess future needs of the water, sewer, and storm drainage utilities. The primary goal of this plan is to establish local policies, standards, and guidelines to guide major utility investments and policy decisions.

Broadly defined, public infrastructure and facilities also include other public services, including public safety (police and fire) and city buildings. This chapter includes a brief description of those facilities. The parks facilities are discussed in [Chapter X](#).

Comprehensive Plan Survey

The comprehensive plan survey asked residents to rate the quality of various public utilities. Not all utilities are provided by the city; however, the survey asked respondents to rate both city utilities and other utilities, such as gas and electric. A majority of respondents rated the overall quality of publicly provided services as good or excellent. The chart below illustrates the responses.

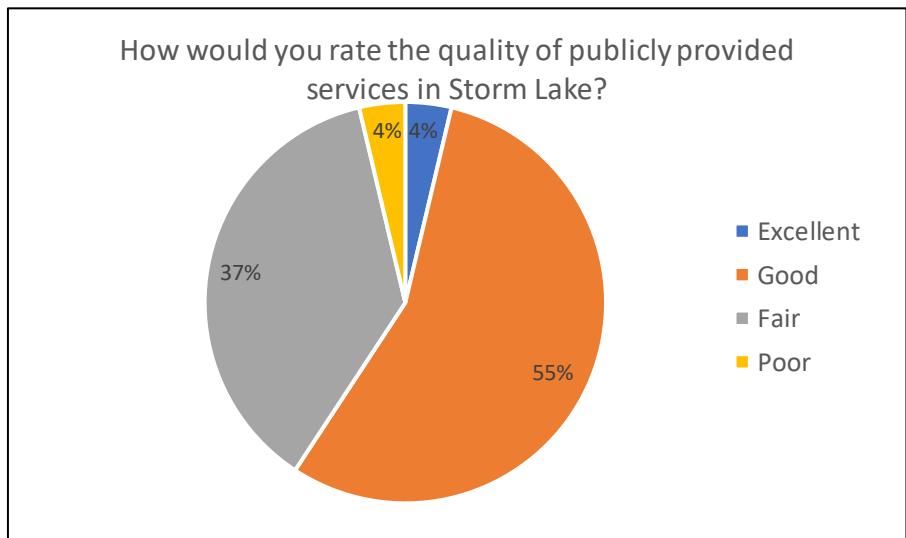


Figure 0.1 – How Would You Rate the Quality of Publicly Provided Services
Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

Infrastructure and Facilities Goals

2022 Strategic Plan

The City Council goals outlined in its 2022 Strategic Plan relating to infrastructure are to:

High/Medium Priority

- Keep Building Houses (especially single-family dwellings)
- Grow the Community in an Outward Direction
- Pursue Water Regionalization Efforts
- Reinforce Storm Lake as a Safe Community

Low Priority

- Upgrade and Improve Distressed Properties (Infills)
- Implement Recommendations from the Downtown Master Plan

Comprehensive Plan Goals

The Comprehensive Plan goals are based on existing data, surveys, pop-up events, and the Storm Lake Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The Infrastructure and Facilities goals emphasize the management and maintenance of public systems. Proper management of infrastructure is a key to efficiently and cost-effectively maintaining the system.

Goal 1: Rehabilitate or replace aging infrastructure within the sanitary collection system, water distribution system, and water supply.

- Rehabilitate or replace sanitary collection system to reduce inflow and infiltration (I&I).
- Replace undersized watermain and cast-iron pipes to reduce watermain breaks and increase fire flow capacity.
- Provide watermain looping for systems supply redundancy and a water balanced system.
- Eliminate long shared services for both water supply and sanitation collection.
- Increase water production capabilities to serve current and future water supply demands.
- Minimize water system losses and promote water reuse to lower water supply demand.
- Regularly update the Storm Lake Infrastructure Management Plan.
- Couple roadway improvements with utility upgrades when possible.

Goal 2: Effectively manage, maintain, and improve the existing stormwater management system to support the existing systems and any potential growth within the Community.

- Identify areas prone to flooding and improve drainage systems within these areas.
- Provide stormwater drainage systems that enhance the natural environment.
- Promote low impact development features where possible.

Goal 3: Solidify partnerships and policies regarding sewer and water systems.

- Maintain the existing system integrity.
- Ensure that all systems meet State and Federal requirements.
- Develop a sanitary sewer collection model.

- Address future system needs using a regional perspective and partner with other jurisdictions to achieve shared utility goals.

Water Supply and Distribution

Storm Lake’s water system currently serves the City of Storm Lake, as well as several consecutive systems, including the City of Lakeside, Lake Creek Homeowners Association, the City of Truesdale, and homes outside of municipal boundaries. The current estimated population served is 12,503 and the region is expected to continue to grow in the coming years.

In addition to the residential needs, the City serves as the home to two large industrial users, a pork processing plant and a turkey processing plant. These two industries are the top two water users and use approximately 70-80% of the water produced by the water system each year. They are also a major source of employment and economic growth within the area.

The City’s existing water source consists of 10 wells. The City is currently in the process of constructing two additional wells to replace two existing wells at the end of their useful lives. The following table summarizes the well characteristics:

Summary of Existing Well System				
Well	Year Drilled	Well Depth	Aquifer	Capacity
Well 3*	1949	110 ft	Pleistocene	0 gpm
Well 4	1959	1,690 ft	Jordan	600 gpm
Well 7	1968	110 ft	Pleistocene	600 gpm
Well 8	1969	89 ft	Pleistocene	600 gpm
Well 11	1972	90 ft	Pleistocene	350 gpm
Well 14	1988	464 ft	Dakota	1,000 gpm
Well 15	1990	488 ft	Dakota	700 gpm
Well 18	2007	96 ft	Pleistocene	600 gpm
Well 19	2010	115 ft	Alluvial	350 gpm
Well 20	2015	497 ft	Dakota	1,100 gpm
Well 21*	2022	110 ft expected	Alluvial	--
Well 22*	2023	490 ft expect	Dakota	--
Total Capacity				5,900 gpm
Maximum Usable Capacity				4,600 gpm
Firm Usable Capacity				3,500 gpm
*Well 3 is out of service due to age and equipment issues. Wells 21 and 22 are under construction and are intended to replace Wells 3 and 15 which are at the end of their useful lives. Their flow rate is not included in the current capacity calculation.				

The table below shows the City’s available source capacity compared to projected demands.

Capacity and Projected Drought Demand⁽¹⁾	
Existing Firm Usable Capacity	3,500 gpm
Existing Peak Day Demand	5,783 gpm
Historical Peak Day Drought Demand ⁽²⁾	5,006 gpm (drought periods 2011-2021)
Projected Peak Day Demand	7,200 gpm
Projected Peak Day Drought Demand	6,207 gpm
⁽¹⁾ All gpm flowrates calculated assume a 20-hour pump run time to allow pumps time to rest and aquifers time to recharge. ⁽²⁾ Peak day drought demand is lower than peak day non-drought demand due to conservation measures in place during drought periods.	

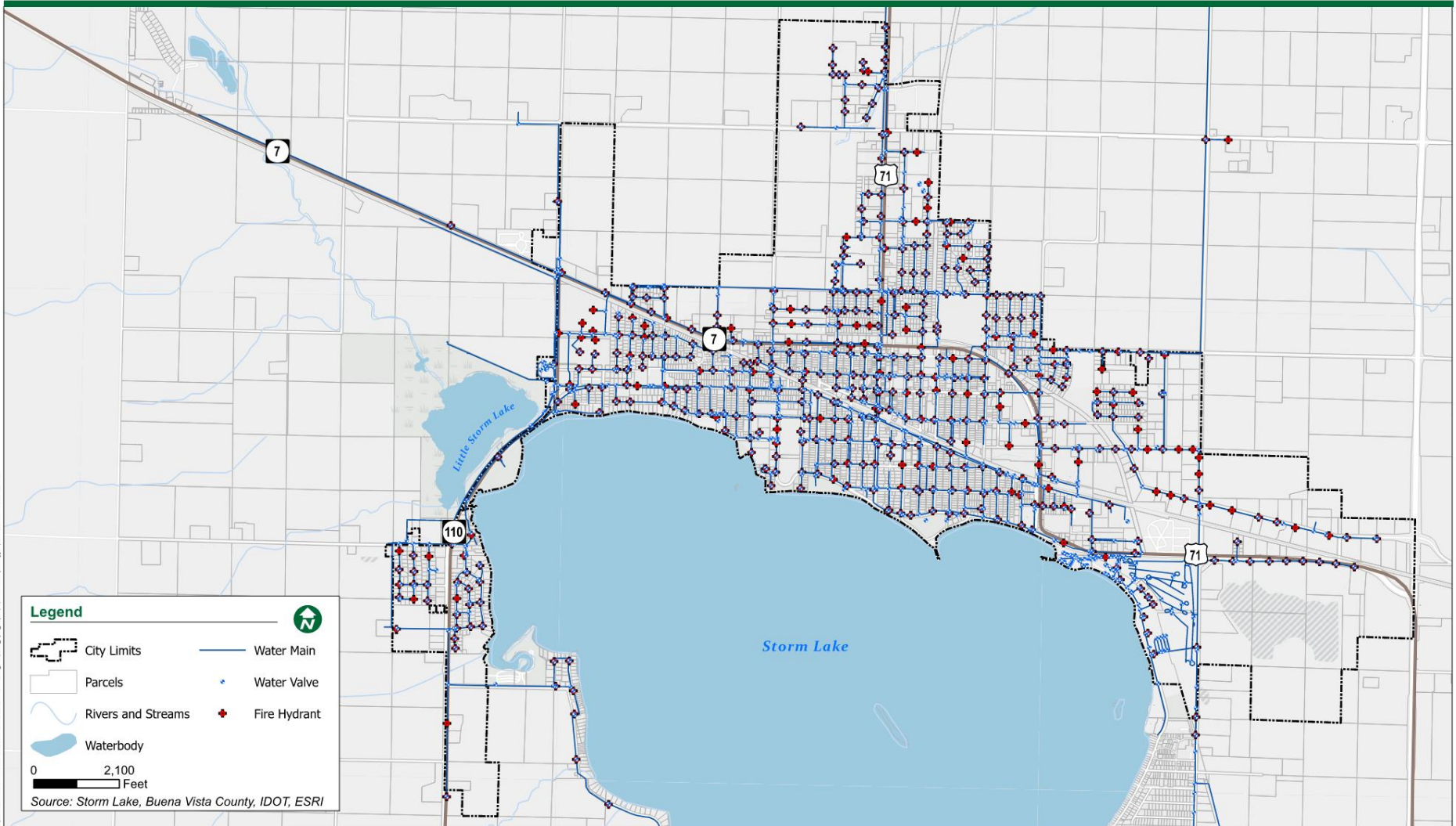
All wells are pumped to water treatment facility. The City of Storm Lake’s existing water treatment plant is designed to provide safe, palatable drinking water in accordance with regulations created by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and enforced by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The City’s current water treatment goals include reducing hardness to 250-300 mg/L as CaCO₃ (to meet industrial customer goals), meeting all National Primary Drinking Water Standards, and meeting Secondary Drinking Water Goals for iron and manganese.

The City’s water infrastructure system also currently includes two ground storage reservoirs at the water treatment facility and three elevated water storage tanks. Clearwell 1 was constructed in 1978 and Clearwell 2 was constructed in 1980. These ground storage reservoirs combine to provide 1.675 MG water storage at the water treatment facility. Tower 1 is located south of the Ontario Street and 5th Street intersection in the City’s downtown. It has a 750,000 gallon capacity and was constructed in 1956. Tower 2 has a 500,000 gallon capacity and was constructed in 1974. It is located approximately 1,000 feet south of Milwaukee Avenue in the eastern portion of the community. Tower 4 is located in the western portion of the City and south of the West Lake Estates development. It has a 500,000 gallon capacity and was constructed in 1991. The City’s storage capacity is currently sufficient to meet their needs and the IDNR’s storage capacity requirements.

The City’s water distribution system consists of approximately 228,200 linear feet of pipe sizes ranging from 1” to 18” and composed of plastic, cast iron, ductile iron, and copper materials. Over half of the system (approximately 144,700 linear feet) is comprised of pipes which are 6” or smaller in diameter.

The City generally has two trunk water mains which supply water to the majority of the City, ultimately conveying potable water to Tower 2. The primary trunk consists of an 18” cast iron main which generally traverses the community from the water treatment facility at the west end of the City along 10th Street, Geisinger Road, East Milwaukee Avenue, and Rothmoor Road to Tower 2. The secondary trunk consists of a 12” main comprised of plastic and cast-iron segments. This water main traverses the community from the water treatment facility on the City’s west side along 5th Street, 3rd Street, and Richland Street to Tower 2.

Nearly 218,400 linear feet of the system is believed to be original, with approximately 127,900 of these original mains being composed of cast iron. Based on the age of the structures served by cast iron mains coupled with the predominant vintage of cast iron use within the United States, it is concluded that the original cast iron pipes were primarily installed between 1900 and 1960. The cast iron portion of the system has also been observed to contain lead packed joints. The City should implement within its capital improvements plan the replacement of the aging water distribution system, specifically focusing on the cast iron and undersized watermains.



Sanitary Sewer System

The City of Storm Lake’s sanitary system serves the cities of Storm Lake and Lakeside, which had a combined population of 11,969 at the 2020 Census and have had continued growth since 1990. Wastewater in the City of Storm Lake is generated from residential, commercial, and industrial users. Current significant industrial users (SIU) include Buena Vista County Solid Waste Commission, Tyson Foods (two meat processing facilities), and Meridian Manufacturing. Wastewater flows are also affected by the inflow and infiltration (I&I) in the system. Inflow refers to stormwater that enters the wastewater system during rain events, through things like manholes or sump pumps. Infiltration is when groundwater enters the wastewater system through cracks or leaking pipes and manholes. Wastewater flows are dependent on the time of day, day of the week, season, and weather conditions.



With the variable nature of wastewater flows, several different flow types are evaluated to design or improve facilities. These include Average Dry Weather (ADW), Average Wet Weather (AWW), Maximum Wet Weather (MWW), and Peak Hourly Wet Weather (PHWW) flow.

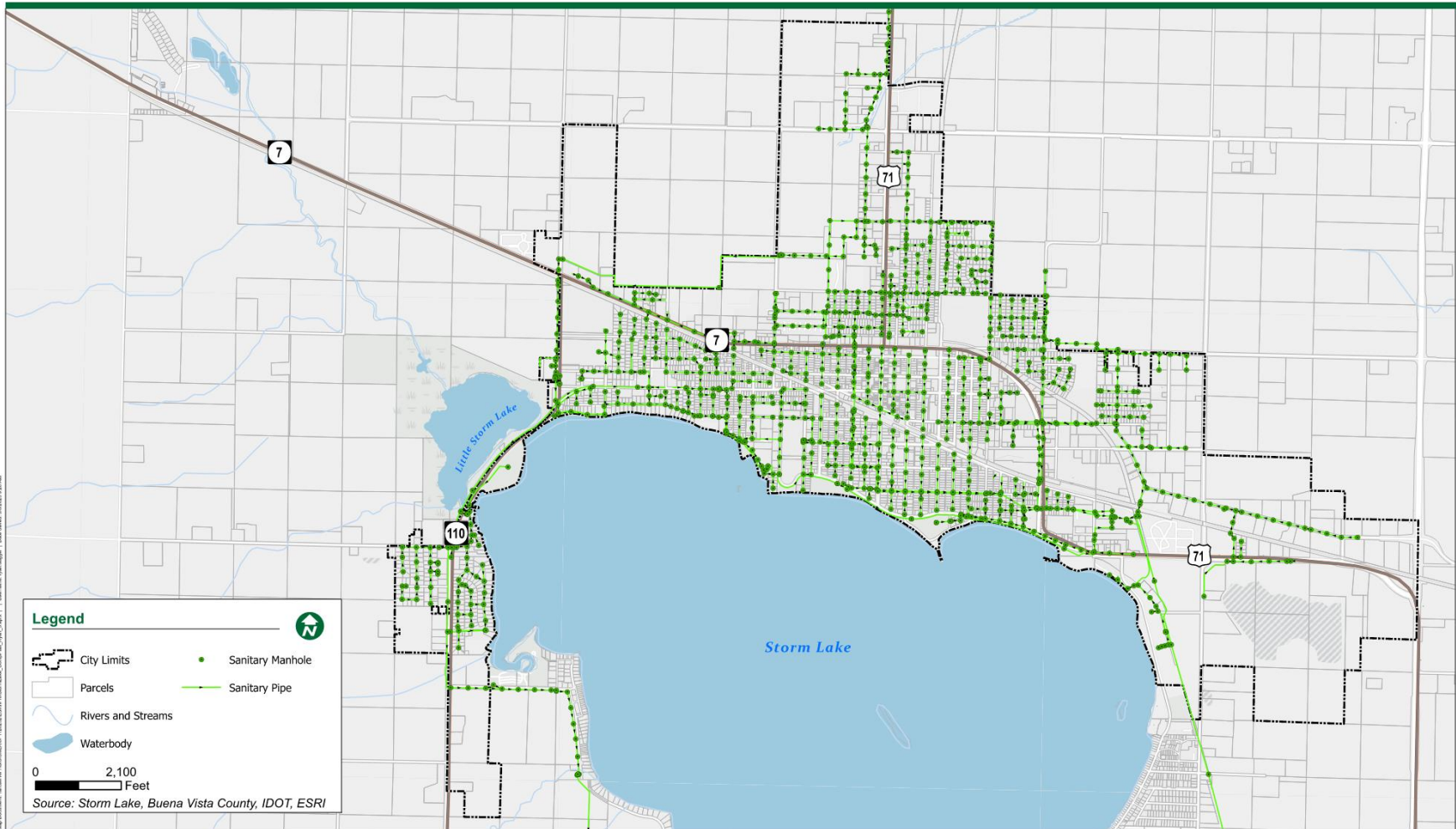
The City of Storm Lake’s wastewater treatment facility was constructed in 1984. The existing facility is an activated sludge system with UV disinfection. Since its original construction, improvements were completed in 2009, 2013, and 2014. Major improvements in 2013 included: a new 21-million-gallon equalization basin, headworks building, grit removal and grit washing system, rotating cylindrical plate screen, flow meters, conversion of intrachannel clarifiers to aeration basins, new aeration equipment, two new final clarifiers, and a standby generator. The addition of a UV disinfection system occurred in 2014. The wastewater treatment facility with the following characteristics:

Wastewater Treatment Facility Characteristics	
Average Dry Weather Flow (mgd)	2.30
Average Wet Weather Flow, AWW (mgd)	6.45
Peak Hourly Wet Weather Flow (mgd)	25.0
Carbonaceous Biochemical Oxygen Demand, CBOD5 (lbs/day)	6,480
Total Suspended Solids, TSS (lbs/day)	7,972
Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen, TKN (lbs/day)	1,293

It is expected that the wastewater treatment facility is in adequate condition and does not need immediate improvements. The City should continue monitoring the condition of the treatment facility and its ability to achieve current and future wastewater treatment standards.

The existing sanitary collection system is comprised of approximately 270,000 linear feet of pipe sizes ranging from 8 to 30-inch diameter pipe and composed of vitrified clay pipe (VCP), steel, and plastic pipe materials. Additionally, the system contains 17 lift stations with approximately 70,000 linear feet of forcemain pipe ranging from 2 to 24 inch diameter pipe and composed of cast iron and plastic materials. It is estimated that approximately 80% of the sanitary mainline pipe is VCP. VCP is susceptible to infiltration through deteriorated joints, as well as cracks and broken pipe segments. The existing collection system is susceptible to excessive inflow and infiltration. For this reason, infiltration of groundwater into VCP sanitary mains and services is expected to be a significant source of clear-water into the system. The City should implement within its capital improvements plan the replacement of the aging sanitary collection system. Replacing the aged VCP pipe will reduce clear-water entering the system and can reduce cost of treatment as well as minimizing sewer backups into private property.





Storm Water

Most Iowa cities have existing pipe networks that were only designed to relieve ponding in the original plat. These stormwater systems were not designed with effects to downstream properties in mind. At the time of construction, the goal was to provide efficient and cost effective removal of stormwater runoff from developed areas. Within the City of Storm Lake, this resulted in the construction of stormwater pipes that ultimately convey runoff to the North Racoon River. The community is essentially split into two independent watersheds by the Canadian National Railroad, with the parts to the north and east draining to Poor Farm Creek and eventually to the North Racoon River. Areas to the east and south drain to Storm Lake which outfalls to Outlet Creek and ultimately the North Racoon River.

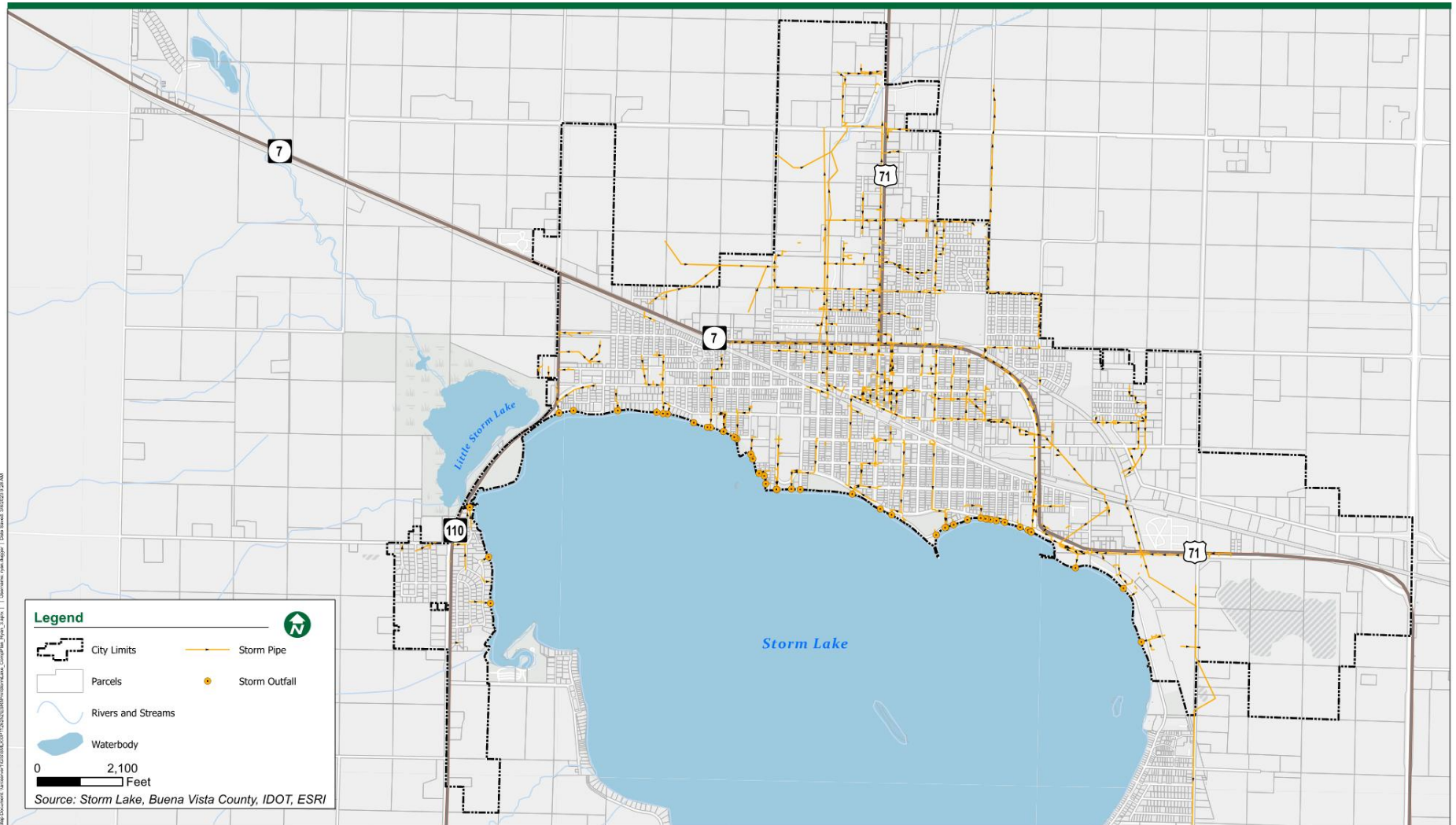
Based on the existing storm system, the effects of unmitigated growth can cause flooding of downstream systems. One of the best methods of mitigating the effects of growth is through the construction of stormwater retention basins. These basins are designed to store excess runoff at elevations where there is no adjacent property damage. The runoff is stored until the existing storm sewer can take it away. Studies have shown that these basins not only provide flood protection but can also help to remove stormwater pollutants.

The City currently has approximately 100 stormwater ponds and raingardens as part of the stormwater system. Additional stormwater ponds and infiltration practices should be considered for rate control and water quality in areas of new development and redevelopment. It should be noted, there are soils throughout the City that are clayey and do not promote infiltration. Other BMPs, such as filtration basins, may be necessary to achieve rate control and water quality in those areas.

The existing storm sewer system within Storm Lake is comprised of generally 10 to 72-inch diameter pipe, along with various ditches and channels that convey water to Poor Farm Creek or Storm Lake. Pipe materials vary greatly and include metal (CMP or DIP), plastic (PVC), and concrete (RCP). Much of the storm water system is undersized. It is recommended that the City consider providing a storm sewer network capable of providing a level of service that accommodates the 10-year storm event for all new development and redevelopment. Such a system would be able to sufficiently drain the 10-year event with minimal to no ponding in the streets. Beyond a 10-year event, intermittent ponding could be anticipated. Simultaneously, it is also recommended that the storm sewer network be able to provide a level of protection accommodating the 100-year storm. The level of protection could be achieved by providing detention ponds and emergency overflow pathways as well as other methods to minimize the likelihood of a 100-year event causing flooding to businesses and residential properties. It is suggested that such consideration be evaluated each time a street is to be reconstructed.

In 1987, the US Congress amended the Clean Water Act to include stormwater pollution and directed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to initiate rulemaking. The first round of EPA rules were implemented in 1991 when NPDES Phase I permits were required for all cities exceeding 100,000 in population. Phase II was implemented in 2003 and targeted all cities with populations exceeding 10,000. In 2008, the Phase II rulemaking expanded the list of targeted cities to include cities with populations exceeding 5,000 and that discharge into an impaired water. The

Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) assumed responsibility for implementing the rules and issuing all Phase II permits. The NPDES Phase II rules apply to all construction disturbances of one acre or more. As part of a larger urban region, the City of Storm Lake is recognized as an MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) municipality and must comply with the NPDES Phase II rules. The City is in compliance with the permit criteria and have created a storm water prevention and management plan for the community. To continue achieving compliance, the City likewise should continue to incorporate various measures which enhance water quality and minimize water runoff quantity. The City should consider periodically revisiting its stormwater utility fee structure to generate revenue for the implementation of improvements.



Facilities Overview

An important part of any city is the facilities and services it provides to its residents, businesses and visitors. This section focuses on three of the most important facilities in Storm Lake: Public Safety, the Library, and City Hall.

Public Safety

The public safety department of Storm Lake comprises the fire, police, emergency management, animal control, and park ranger operations. The police and fire services are in the downtown area. To provide safety and emergency services to areas close to the community and Highway 71 users, the city works together with the county and local institutions in serving those needs.

Respondents to the Comprehensive Plan survey overwhelmingly described the quality of public safety services in Storm Lake as excellent or good.

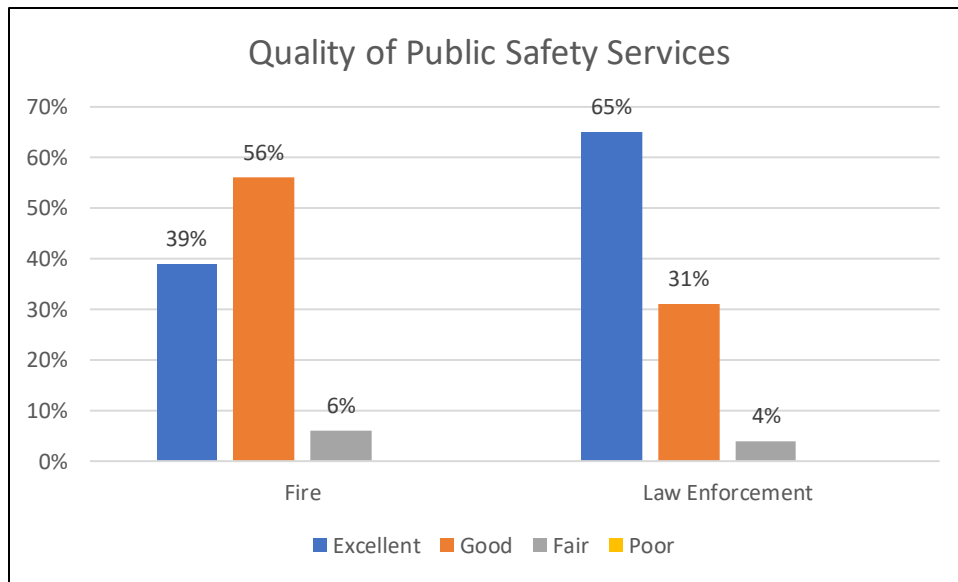


Figure 0.2 – Quality of Public Safety Services
Source: Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

Police

Sworn officers, civilian community service officers, managerial personnel, and administrative support staff make up the police force. All five of the public safety department's branches are supported administratively by the offices located in the public safety building. The department has an authorized strength of 19 sworn officers, which break down by rank as follows: one (1) Assistant police chief, two (2) Detectives, one (1) K-9 patrol officer, four (4) Lieutenants, nine (9) Patrol officers, one (1) police chief, and one (1) school resource officer.

Fire

Residents of Storm Lake City and the townships that surround it can get emergency response services from the Fire Department. These services include fire prevention, fire response, hazardous

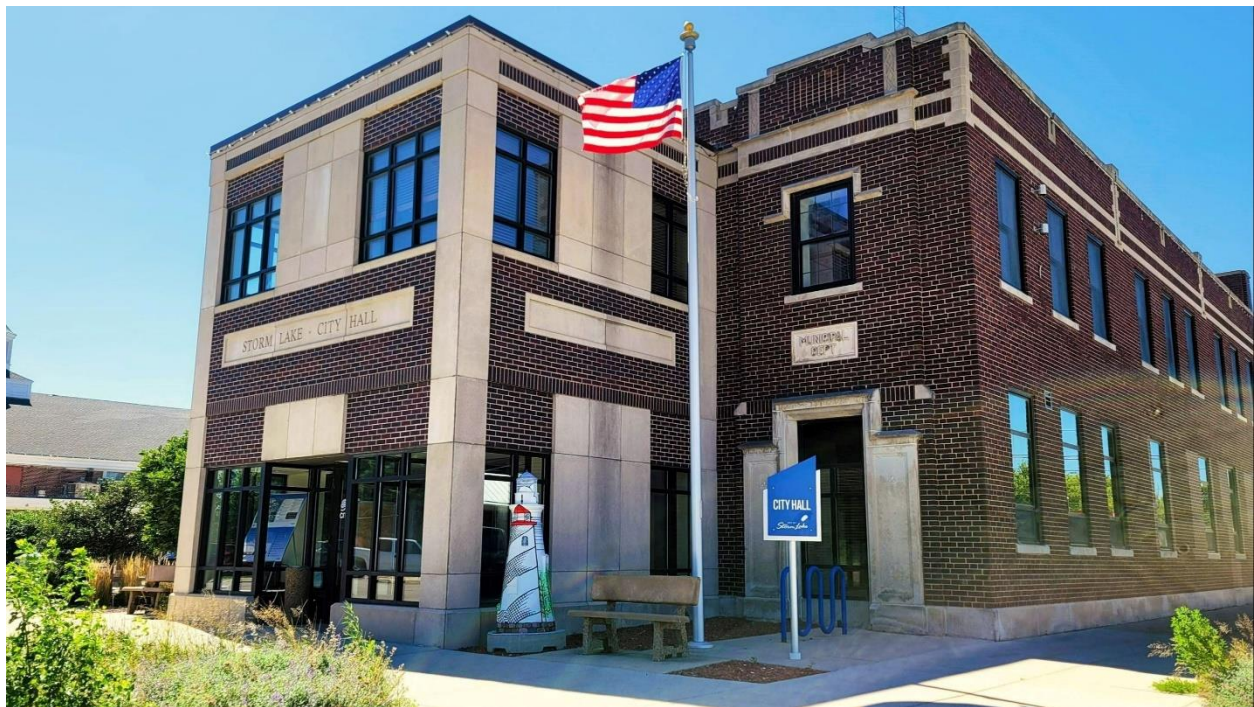
materials, inspections, and rescue operations. The fire department also assists the Building Department with rental inspections. The fire department in Storm Lake include 31 paid on-call fire fighters, a full-time fire chief, and a full-time fire fighter.

Public Library

The library which currently sits at an approximately 9,350 square feet, provides a library catalog circulation, a meeting space and is home to the Witter Art Gallery. The library currently has 6 members on staff. Aside the provision of books the library provides several other services to the public which include library cards, wireless hotspot, inter-library loan, faxes, scans and copies, public computers, home delivery and a meeting room. The section for the library on the website also provides eBooks and audio options.

City Hall

Storm Lake City Hall is the center of city government. Located in downtown Storm Lake, City Hall provides access to staff and services provided by the city, such as administration, building inspections, utility billing, business information and many more. City Council and other community meetings are held in the Council chambers at City Hall.



*Figure 0.3 – Storm Lake City Hall
Source: City of Storm Lake Website*

The Economic Environment

Economic Development

Overview

Storm Lake aims to create positive economic benefits and opportunities that will create more amenities for the community, its residents, and visitors and tourists. This is in line with creating a thriving community that others can move to for comfortable living and work.

This chapter looks at the existing economic conditions in Storm Lake, which provides the basis for locating businesses and industries within the community. The existing conditions contribute to the recommendations about economic development and future endeavors. These also help show market realities, which, in turn, informs the city about what kind of businesses or industries they would like to see spring up or would like to attract.

Economic Development Goals

2022 Strategic Plan

The City Council goals outlined in its 2022 Strategic Plan relating to economic development are to:

High/Medium Priority

- Keep Building Houses (especially single-family dwellings)
- Grow the Community in an Outward Direction
- Update the Sign Ordinance, Improve Wayfinding

Low Priority

- Upgrade and Improve Distressed Properties (Infills)
- Implement Recommendations from the Downtown Master Plan
- Develop Apprenticeship Programs
- Identify Jobs for Young People to Keep them in Storm Lake
- Solicit Assistance from the University for Marketing Help

Comprehensive Plan Goals

When it comes to the economic goals, the Comprehensive Plan emphasizes goals that will help generate and attain economic benefits and possibilities for the city. Storm Lake is a major employment area for all of Buena Vista County and within the Iowa Lakes Corridor region. These goals help realize the overall vision of the city and take into context the overall larger region. The objectives that will fuel the expansion of the city are shown by the recommendations.

Goal 1: Support and expand the City's existing economic base.

- Ensure city processes and regulations related to land development, permits, and construction are easy to understand.
- Work with existing businesses to maintain or expand their current sites or relocate to more appropriate sites.
- Increase the amount of workforce housing within Storm Lake.

- Continue developing and improving the downtown core.
- Leverage the railroad that runs through town to attract development.

Goal 2: Provide adequate land and infrastructure to make locations within Storm Lake attractive to future businesses.

- Ensure an adequate supply of land for business locations and target new areas for businesses in the Land Use Plan.
- Plan for and expand public utilities and streets when needed and when appropriately financially feasible.
- Increase the number of retail and restaurant options within the City.

Goal 3: Provide an environment that supports the successful and continued employment of all residents.

- Provide business financing options for new or struggling businesses.
- Plan for the development and integration of transit services and housing options in the community while also maintaining other supports required to ensure the success of business and labor.
- Work with Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation to attract and retain businesses.
- Study the existing childcare deficiencies and provide incentives to lower the price of childcare and increase the number of providers.

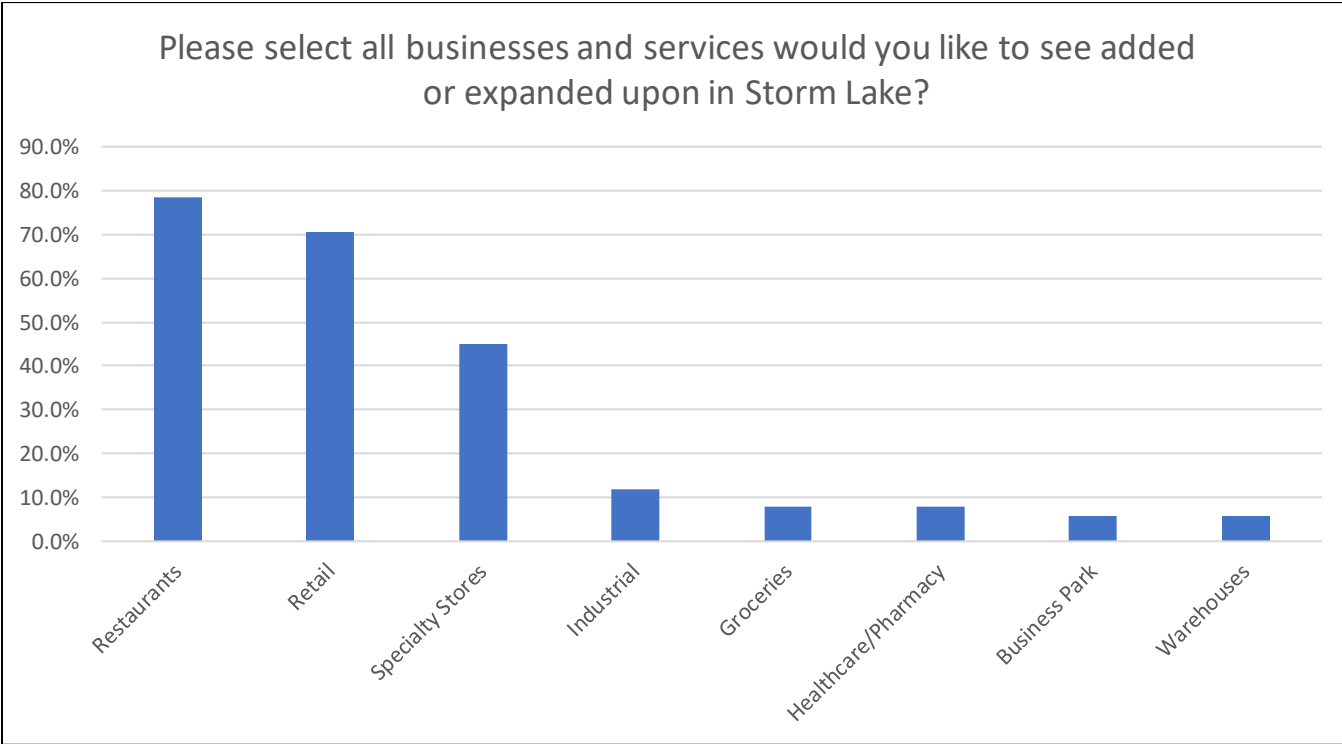
Comprehensive Plan Survey

Commercial Additions

The survey found there is a large desire for an increase in retail and restaurants within Storm Lake. Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents said they shop for goods online, 22% shop downtown, 38% shop in commercial areas outside of downtown, and 4% said they shop outside of Storm Lake. When asked what types of businesses and services should be added the top two choices were restaurants and retail stores at 78.4% and 70.6% respectively.



*Figure 0.1 – Where do you shop for goods and services
Source: Comprehensive Plan Community Survey*



*Figure 0.2 – Businesses to be added or expanded
Source: Comprehensive Plan Community*

Childcare

The survey found only 2% of respondents believe there are adequate childcare options in Storm Lake. Nearly 16% were neutral and 82.3% thought there weren't adequate childcare options. The City of Storm Lake received a Rural Child Care Market Study Grant to analyze this issue. The study will provide a needs assessment of existing conditions and a roadmap to address the current deficiency. The tools include ways for local community groups and childcare organizations to obtain grants, feasibility for a childcare center, expansion of existing facilities, and ways to support in-home providers.

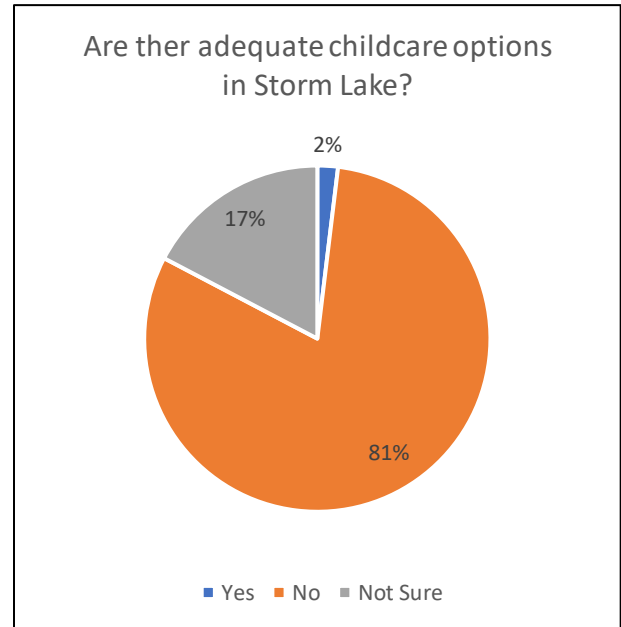
The analysis is scheduled to begin in August, 2023, with a final report and strategic plan in early 2024.

Current Conditions

The following paragraphs provide data on several factors influencing economic development in the city. The data included in this section is derived from a variety of sources, including US Census Data, Esri ArcGIS Business Analyst, and the Storm Lake, Iowa, Laborshed Area Study prepared by Iowa Workforce Development. In some cases, there is conflicting data. The reasons for these conflicts are discussed below.

Employment Overview

Figure 5.1 is an infographic showing a general overview of employment in Storm Lake. The infographic is generally based on US Census data. As noted earlier, Storm Lake has some concerns about the accuracy of the census data collected in the city. Issues affecting the census data collection included the compressed timeframe, collection during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the inability to contact many of the immigrant population of the city. All of these factors combined may have resulted in inaccurate data and projections. The data depicting a high percentage of those without a high school diploma appears to be particularly inaccurate. The 2022 Storm Lake Area Laborshed Study indicates only 3.9% of employed workers have less than a high school diploma.



Source: Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

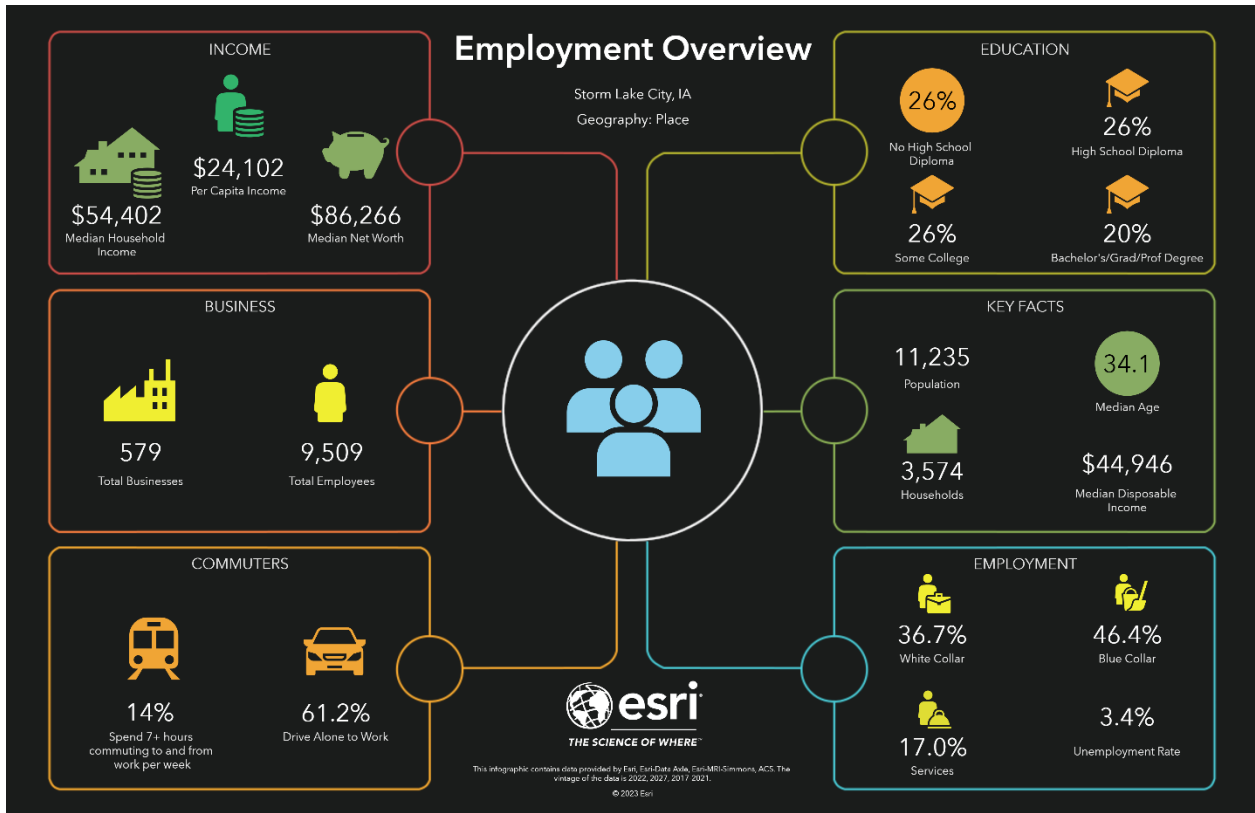


Figure 0.4
Source: Esri ArcGIS Business Analyst

Occupations

Figure 5.2 looks at the jobs held by Storm Lake residents 16 years and older in comparison to those held by all employees. All employees includes both residents and those who commute to work from outside the city. The single largest occupation category in Storm Lake is manufacturing, which employs 53% of residents and 47.5% of all employees.

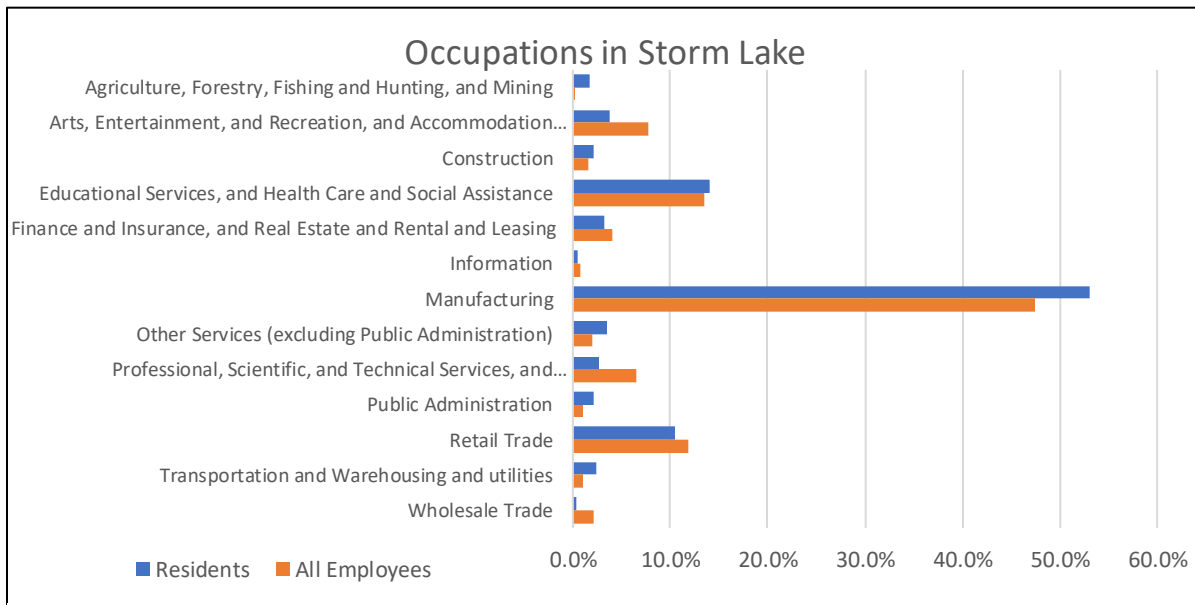


Figure 0.5: Occupations in Storm Lake Comparing Residents and All Employees
Source: US Census and OnTheMap

Employment by Age Group

In 2022, Storm Lake had an estimated overall unemployment rate of 3.4% which is slightly higher than the state average of 3% but consistent with the overall US unemployment rate. A low unemployment rate means more people have jobs and are working, but it may also mean there are fewer workers available to fill job openings.

The unemployment rate measures the share of workers in the labor force who do not currently have a job but are actively looking for work. Unemployment rates are often measured in age groups to separate those new to the workforce (ages 16-24) and those who are more established in the workforce. In general, the unemployment rate is usually higher for the younger population. This is true in Storm Lake, where the unemployment rate for the 16-24 age group is 6%, while in the 25-54 age group it is 3.5 % and 1.9% in the 55-64 age group.

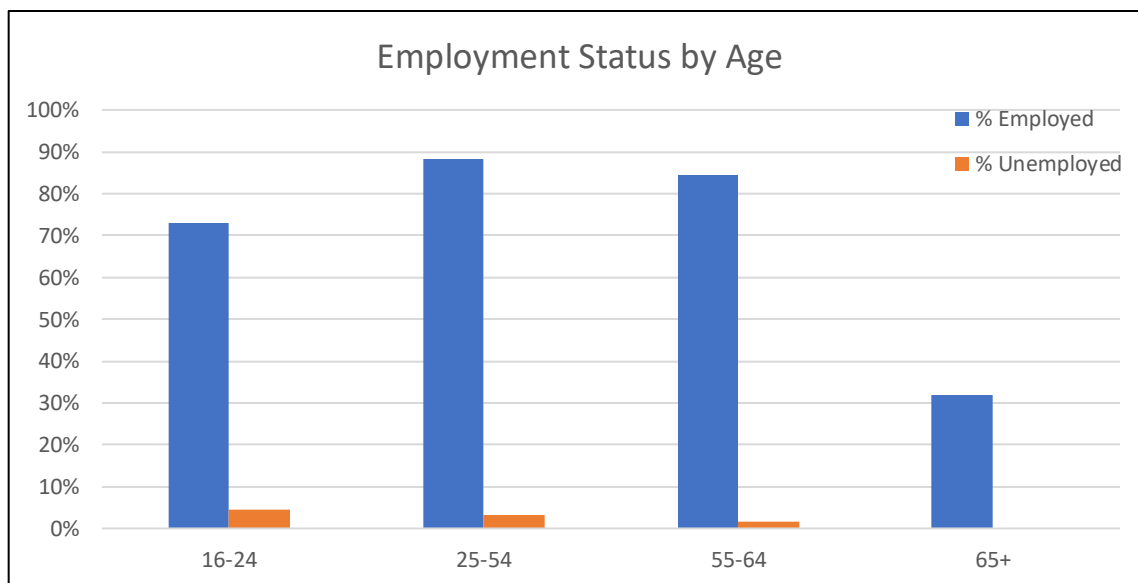


Figure 0.6 – 2022 Employment by Age Group
Source: Esri ArcGIS Business Analyst

Industry Sector with Location Quotient

The table below uses a location quotient (LQ) to compare the concentration of business and industry within Storm Lake to the concentration in Buena Vista County. If an LQ is equal to 1, then the industry has the same share of its area employment as it does in the county. An LQ greater than 1 indicates an industry with a greater share of the Storm Lake employment than is the case countywide.

The location quotient is often utilized to illustrate surpluses and leakages in a market area. In this case, Buena Vista County is considered the market area and Storm Lake is compared to the overall market area. The City of Storm Lake has a relative advantage in the sectors of manufacturing, retail trade, information, arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services, and other services, except Public Administration.

Table 5.1 Industry Sector					
Industry	Storm Lake		Buena Vista County		Location Quotient
	Employed	Percent	Employed	Percent	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	59	1.7%	544	7.8%	0.22
Construction	73	2.1%	316	4.6%	0.47
Manufacturing	1822	53.0%	2672	38.5%	1.38
Wholesale trade	12	0.3%	161	2.3%	0.15
Retail trade	361	10.5%	666	9.6%	1.09
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	82	2.4%	305	4.4%	0.54
Information	18	0.5%	25	0.4%	1.45
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	110	3.2%	302	4.4%	0.74
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	93	2.7%	248	3.6%	0.76
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	482	14.0%	1151	16.6%	0.85
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	130	3.8%	186	2.7%	1.41
Other services, except public administration	121	3.5%	226	3.3%	1.08
Public administration	72	2.1%	132	1.9%	1.10
Total Full-time employed	3435	100.0%	6934	100.0%	1.00

Place of Employment (On the Map)

The majority of Storm Lake residents work within Storm Lake. Furthermore, more people commute to work in Storm Lake than leave the city for work. Figure 5.4 illustrates the inflow and outflow of workers in Storm Lake. The arrows do not reflect the direction of travel; rather they illustrate the numbers commuting into and out of the city, and those workers who both live and work in Storm Lake.

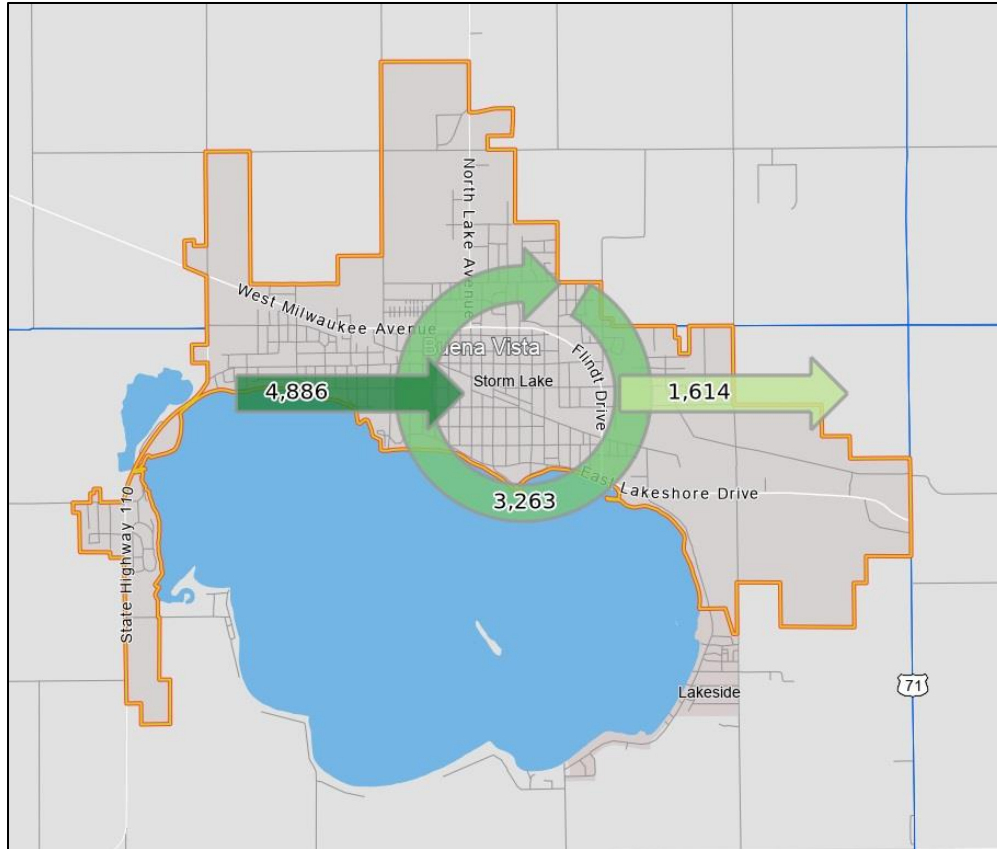


Figure 0.7– Inflow/Outflow Analysis
 Source: OnTheMap (US Census), 2020

The Storm Lake Laborshed Study also indicates 68% of Storm Lake’s workforce live and work in Storm Lake, while 32 % of Storm Lake’s workforce live outside of Storm Lake.

Commuting Time

Figure 5.5 shows the travel time of residents of Storm Lake. This defines the time they take to get to work within and outside of the city. The ideal commute time has been said to be 16 minutes, any time taken beyond that could be considered counterproductive for individuals and workplaces. Approximately 63.9% of residents take less than 10 minutes to travel to work. Roughly 1.5% of Storm Lake residents take 60 or more minutes to get to work. According to the Storm Lake Laborshed Analysis, 93% of Storm Lake’s workforce live within 24 miles of the city.

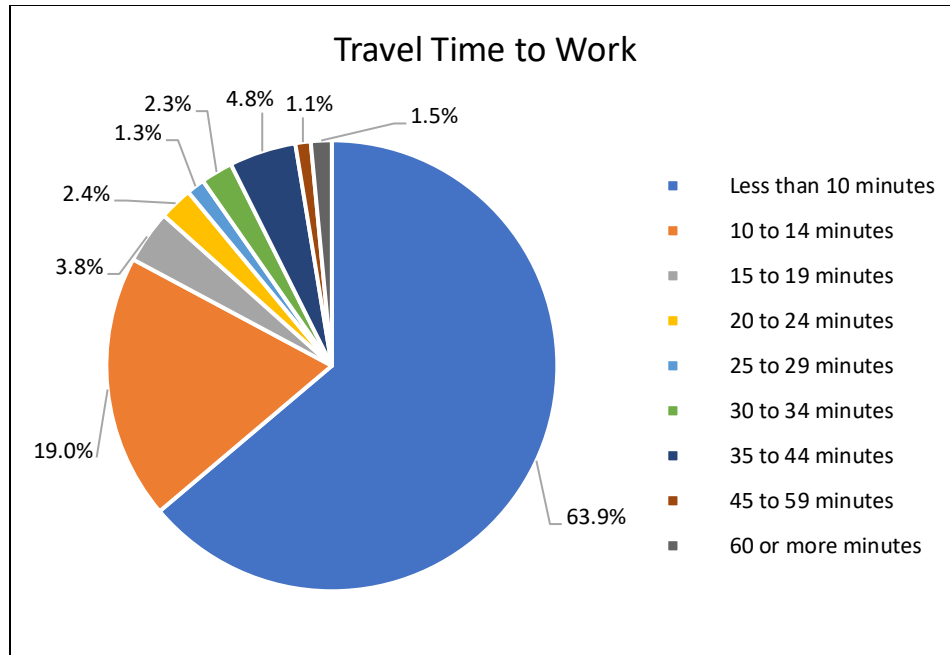


Figure 0.8 – Travel Time to Work
 Source: US Census, 2020 American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates

Storm Lake Laborshed Area Study

The Iowa Workforce Development released the Storm Lake, Iowa, Laborshed Area Study in 2022. It is a supply-side labor availability study based upon current commuting patterns which are not restricted by political boundaries such as county or state lines. The Laborshed Study reports the workforce characteristics that are unique to Storm Lake’s Laborshed area including: employment status; likeliness to change or accept employment; occupation & industry; job search resources used; current & desired wages and benefits; age; education; and distance willing to travel for work, among others.

The Storm Lake laborshed includes an area much larger than Storm Lake, as shown in Figure 5.6.

A copy of this study is available at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/laborshed-studies>.

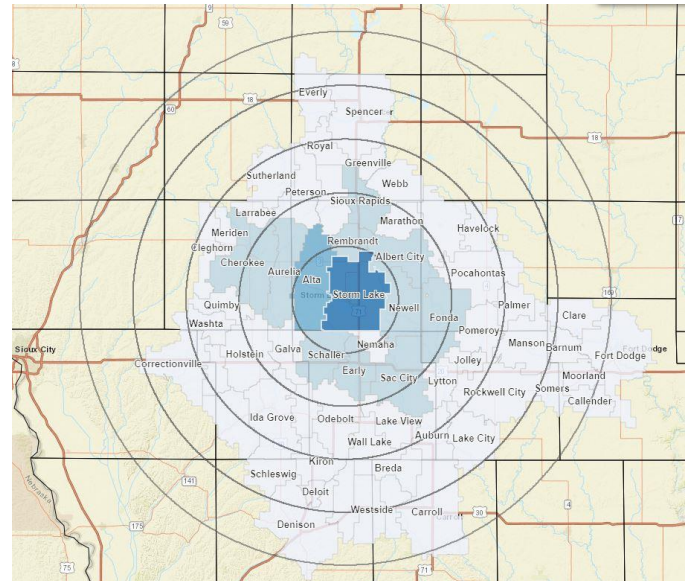


Figure 0.9 – Storm Lake Laborshed Area
 Source: Iowa Workforce Development

Downtown Storm Lake

Downtown

Storm Lake’s downtown is the heart of the city with shopping and amenities located along Lake Avenue and Erie Street. The Future Land Use map designates a specific area for Downtown Mixed Uses to protect and enhance the downtown area. Storm Lake has completed a downtown master plan to explore how to best enhance existing features and amenities, improve streetscapes, and better connect downtown to adjacent neighborhoods.



Figure 0.10 – Downtown Master Plan Before & After Visualization
Source: City of Storm Lake Website

The downtown has many assets, including the Storm Lake Library, Witter Gallery Plaza, City Hall, and the County Courthouse. These spaces draw in community members and enhance the downtown. There are also vacant and underutilized parcels, such as the vacant properties along Railroad Street, the Meta Bank building, and the West 6th and Michigan Street parcel. The downtown plan found that community members desire the following amenities downtown:

- Entertainment and Community Spaces
- Façade Improvements
- Lighting Improvements
- Parking Considerations
- Plantings
- Public Art
- Retail
- Restaurants
- Housing
- Seating
- Bike Racks
- Trash Receptacles
- Streetscape Improvements
- Walkability
- Connectivity
- Wayfinding

Economic Development Partners

The Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation is Storm Lake's economic partner. The Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation is a regional development organization that works primarily within the four county region of Buena Vista, Clay, Dickenson, and Emmet. The city and Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation work in tandem to advance the amount and quality of business development within the region.



Attracting Business



Storm Lake currently works through the typical economic development approach of proactively contacting companies that are seeking business sites. These recruitment efforts often include ways to incentivize the company to come to the community. This approach often turns into a race to the bottom with limited gains made for the municipality that gets the company.

Establishing a local business retention and expansion program can help Storm Lake's economy thrive. Existing research shows local companies generate much higher economic value to their local community than national chain stores which transfer money out of the community. Potential barriers that Storm Lake can help local business owners overcome are management expertise, marketing, branding, and workforce training.

The typical economic development approach will continue to be an appropriate tool to attract businesses in Storm Lake. There are also other types of tools the city may find useful, especially if used in conjunction with other incentives. Storm Lake can utilize its strengths to attract new businesses and retain existing businesses. For example, the city could establish partnerships with Buena Vista University to develop job training programs. The city could also consider programs to address the lack of childcare, an issue facing communities nationwide.

The Natural Environment

Parks, Recreation, and Trails

Overview

Parks are a great addition to communities: they provide necessary space for activities and are vital to a community’s quality of life; they play a role in the economic development of a community; and parks and open spaces provide recreational opportunities while ultimately contributing to the environmental health of communities. When maintained properly, parks, recreational facilities, and trail systems are a great community asset.

The goals for Parks, Recreation and Trails were created based on existing data, surveys, pop-up events, and recommendations from the Storm Lake Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Comprehensive Plan Survey

The comprehensive plan survey found that 72.5% of respondents believe Storm Lake’s existing parks and trails meet their daily recreational needs. When asked how often they use Storm Lake’s parks or open space the most common response (41.5%) was every few weeks.

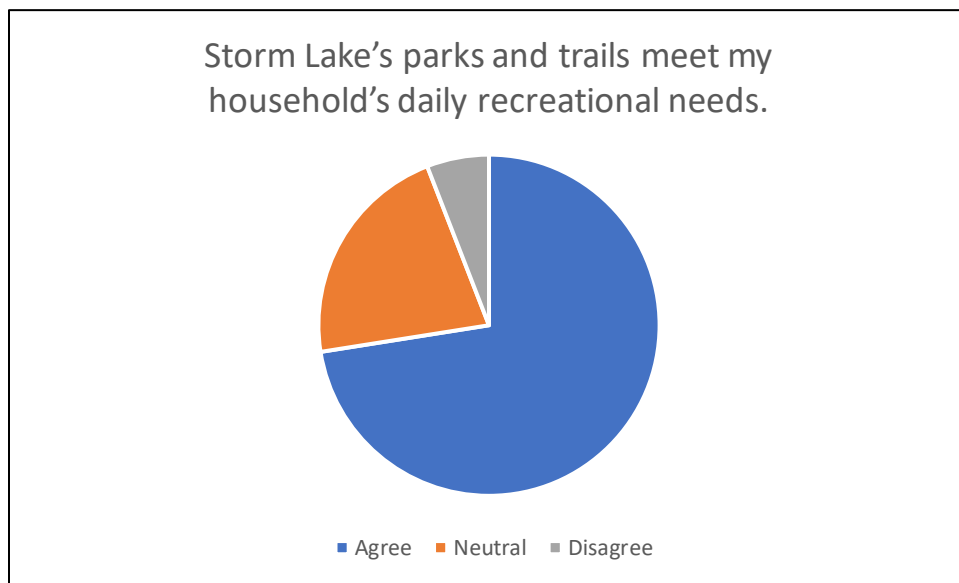


Figure 0.1 – Parks and Trails Meet Needs
Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

Park, Recreation and Trails Goals

The goals outlined in the 2022 Strategic Plan relating to recreation are to:

- Develop a Recreation Plan for the Spoils Site
- Initiate a Recreation Feasibility Study
- Market City Properties for Sale
- Investigate New Pickle Ball Courts
- Solicit Assistance from the University for Marketing Help
- Pursue More Indoor Soccer Facilities
- Continue Trail Connections and Enhancements
- Update the Sign Ordinance, Improve Wayfinding

The goals for Parks, Recreation and Trails were created based on existing data, surveys, pop-up events, and recommendations from the Storm Lake Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Goal 1: Ensure parks meet the needs of the diverse Storm Lake population and strengthen the image of the city as a premier destination. Identify areas where neighborhood parks & larger parks should be placed.

- Provide park facilities that range in types and sizes to accommodate a wide variety of recreational activities.
- Continuously evaluate and analyze the relevancy of park amenities and recreational programming within Storm Lake.
- Create a plan that will better connect Storm Lake to state parks and wildlife management areas to provide better recreational opportunities for its community members.
- Periodically survey community preferences and needs regarding parks and recreation. Using this information, update CIP programs, the comprehensive plan, and strategic plan to reflect the needs of the community.
- Ensure park equipment is ADA accessible and allows for the elderly to be able to access it in its entirety.

Goal 2: Maintain an environmentally and economically sustainable park, recreation, and trail system that meets the needs of current and future residents and visitors.

- Promote the linkage of open space and natural resources.
- Acquire land in natural areas to contribute to maintaining high quality natural resources.
- Encourage environmental awareness among citizens.
- Expand Storm Lake's tree canopy and update regulations to promote the addition of more trees.
- Ensure that parks and recreation facilities are built in the most cost efficient manner and coordinated with other city projects.

Goal 3: Park improvements shall respond to the needs and preferences of a diverse community. This includes accommodating people of different ages, cultures, abilities, and incomes.

- Continue adding park land so all residents are within a 15 minute walk of a park.

Goal 4: Provide a safe, convenient, and comprehensive trail and sidewalk system that supports walking and bicycling for both recreation and transportation.

- Continue the Storm Lake Trail to the west to connect to Frank Starr Park.
- Map out future locations for parks and trails.
- Develop parks and open space near commercial areas, residential areas and the university to link areas together with parks.
- Parks should be integrated into the city’s bike and pedestrian system.

Existing Parks and Trails

Storm Lake currently has eleven city parks, four public school sites, and two private school sites. The city has one private recreation area called the Field of Dreams.

AWAYSIS Park

AWAYSIS Park is located on the shore of Storm Lake to the west of King’s Pointe Resort. It has a family playground, swimming beach, picnic area, an open shelter, and a lighthouse to add to its uniqueness. Within AWAYSIS is Kolb Gardens, a flower garden in memory of Robert Kolb. There is an off-street trail located along the edge of the lake with on-street connections to Lakeshore Drive and Sunrise Road.

Chautauqua Park

Chautauqua Park, Storm Lake’s largest park by area, is located on the north shore of the lake. Chautauqua Park contains a veteran’s monument, U.S Navy fighting ship anchor, tennis courts, basketball court, playground, mini-pitch, public restroom, and an enclosed shelter house.

Circle Park

Circle Park is located south of the Buena Vista University. The park has a picnic area, park benches, a dock, and an off-street trail at the shore.

Emerald Park

Emerald Park is located on the western edge of Storm Lake near Frank Starr Park, and has a multipurpose court, tennis courts, play equipment, and tables.

Field of Dreams

Field of Dreams is a private non-profit sports complex that hosts a variety of youth recreation including flag football, baseball, and soccer.

Frank Starr Park

This park lies on the west shore of the lake along Highway 110. It is one of the larger parks found in Storm Lake. Its amenities include a playground, an open shelter, restrooms, sand volleyball court, butterfly garden, and an ADA accessible public dock. The Storm Lake Trail runs along the lake front and near Highway 110.



*Figure 0.4 – Chautauqua Park
Source: City of Storm Lake*

[Oscar Bauman Park](#)

Oscar Bauman is a small park along Highway 110 near Frank Starr Park which has benches and a lakefront trail.

[Radio Park](#)

Radio Park is located at the intersection of Flindt Drive and Lakeshore Drive across from the lake. This park features playground equipment and an area for open space for outdoor recreation. It also has a large detention pond for storm water runoff.

[Seneca Park](#)

It is located just north of the police station. It has a playground, picnic area, and the Hoop Dreams basketball court.

[Scout Park](#)

Scout Park is located west of the Buena Vista University along the lake. The park has a swimming beach, a picnic area, a playground, public restrooms, and public docks. The University also maintains an ice-skating rink during the winter.

[Storm Lake Trail](#)

Storm Lake Trail runs along Storm Lake and connect Circle Park with the town of Lakeside.

[Sunrise Park](#)

Sunrise Park is located along the east shore of the lake. The park has a disc golf course, boat ramp, and picnic tables along the lake. The park has a volleyball court, boat ramp, fish cleaning station, lake trail, open shelter, picnic area, playground, public docks, and public restrooms. Across from the park, is the Sunrise Campground to the west and Sunrise Golf Course to the north.

[Sunset Park](#)

Sunset Park is home to the Heritage Tree Museum as well as a band shell and public dock.

[West Ninth Street Park](#)

West Ninth Street Park is primarily used to host youth baseball games, but also includes a playground and a picnic area.

Table 3.1 – Park and Amenities

Amenities & Features	AWAYSIS	Chautauqua	Circle	Emerald	Frank Starr	Radio	Scout	Seneca	Sunset	West 9th	Sunrise
Bandshell									X		
Baseball Diamond										X	
Basketball Court		X		X							
Boat Ramp											X
Boat Rentals	X										
Butterfly Garden					X						
Campground											X
Concessions	X										
Disc Golf											X
Detention Pond						X					
Enclosed/All Season Shelter		X									
Fish Cleaning Station											X
Lake Trail	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Open Shelter	X				X						X
Picnic Area	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Picnic Shelter											
Playground	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Docks		X	X		X		X		X		X
Public Restrooms	X	X			X		X		X		X
Swimming Beach	X										
Tennis Courts		X		X							
Tree Museum									X		
Volleyball					X						X

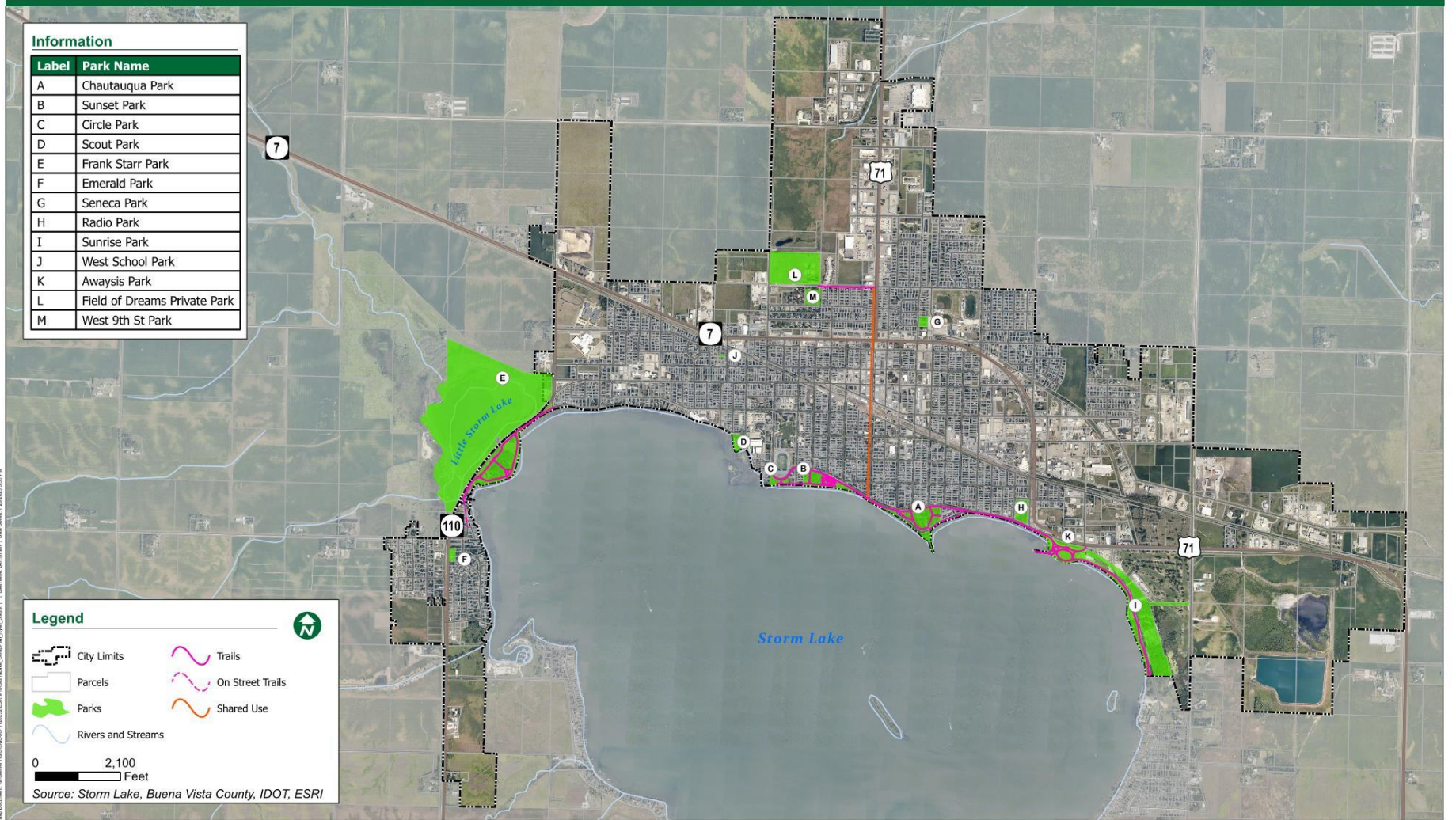
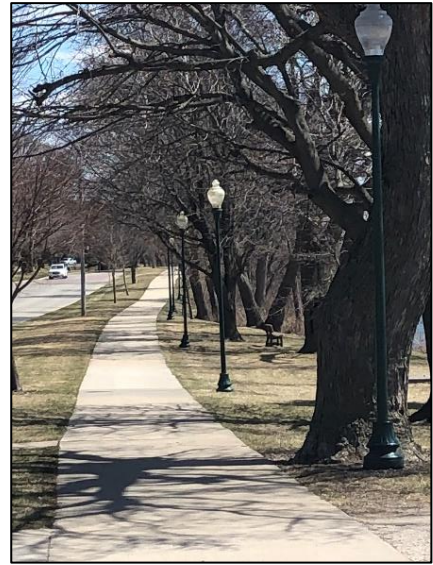


Figure 0.5 – Existing Parks and Trails
Source: City of Storm Lake

Trail Expansions

Trails were a common theme identified within the survey and community engagement. The trail system is primarily around the lake with few shared use paths located elsewhere in the city. The lake paths are also not completely continuous and have various breaks throughout. There are plans for trails being built off the lake including the East Central Trail and the North Central Shared Use path.



*Figure 0.7 – City Trail
Source: City of Storm Lake*

Natural Resources

Overview



The most prominent natural feature in Storm Lake is the lake, but there are other natural resources, such as plants and animal habitats, located around Storm Lake. Wildlife, water, and soil do not recognize political boundaries, and as such, it is vital a regional approach be taken on the natural environment. The value of conservation of water resources, green spaces, and wildlife can be seen in economic, ecological, cultural, health, and recreational benefits.

This section outlines existing natural resources within Storm Lake, strategies which lessen the impact of future development to natural resources, and actions that can be implemented to increase the vitality of natural land through conservation and protection. Future growth of the region can have significant impacts on the natural areas in and around Storm Lake. Investing in green infrastructure, infill development, biodiversity, and wildlife habitats can mitigate potential impacts.

Natural Resource Goals

2022 Strategic Plan

The City Council goals outlined in its 2022 Strategic Plan relating to natural resources are to:

High/Medium Priority

- Pursue Water Regionalization Efforts
- Develop a Recreation Plan for the Spoils Site

Low Priority

- Upgrade and Improve Distressed Properties

Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan goals are based on existing data, surveys, pop-up events, and the Storm Lake Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The Comprehensive Plan Natural Resources goals emphasize conservation and sustainability, which are consistent with the overall vision to develop healthy neighborhoods and parks. These goals will help generate multiple benefits, both environmental and economic, by attracting residents and visitors.

Goal 1: Promote sustainable resource management and a quality natural environment within and surrounding Storm Lake.

- Prioritize investments that protect undeveloped land and critical plant and animal habitats.
- Update watershed management policies and practices to minimize flooding and reduce environmental impacts such as sediment deposition.

- Restore sensitive land such as flood-prone areas, wildlife habitats, viewsheds, and wetlands to their natural state.
- Create a network of open space hubs serving humans and wildlife along and between streams and other corridors.
- Communicate the economic benefits of green infrastructure and an ecologically sensitive approach to planning and development.

Goal 2: Strive towards creating an environmentally and economically sustainable built environment throughout the city and region.

- Upgrade existing lake access points with additional amenities including boating access, and, where feasible, create additional lake access points.
- Increase tree canopy throughout the city, targeting main corridors, key gateways, and community gathering places.
- Preserve functional green spaces.

Goal 3: Improve sustainability on city projects and facilities through investments and policies.

- Identify and prioritize investments in green infrastructure as part of transportation and other infrastructure projects.
- Develop metrics to assess the impact of projects and the impacts of investment in sustainability on city projects and financial benefits.
- Coordinate policies and investment across jurisdictions regionally.
- Review land use codes and add policies/incentive to promote low impact development.
- Assess the feasibility and ecological impact of burying electrical utilities.
- Evaluate projects to ensure impacts do not adversely impact any segment of the population/

Goal 4: Create productive green assets from existing brownfields or underutilized land.

- Develop programs to sensitively reuse brownfields and underutilized properties.
- Advocate for the reduction in impervious surfaces.

Natural Resource Projects – Past, Present and Future

Storm Lake is very active in promoting environmental sustainability. Currently, Storm Lake owns/operates nearly 100 rain gardens/bioreactors. The city recently completed a dredging project in Storm Lake, has adopted and implemented a regionally-robust stormwater management ordinance, and is active in the North Racoon Watershed Management Coalition. In February, 2022, the city completed the Dredge Spoil Site Master Plan Study, to develop a recreation master plan for the dredge site, more fully described in Chapter 3.



The city continues to plan projects focusing on sustainable practices and managing its natural resources, including consideration of water reuse, water regionalization, and other related measures to lessen the water draw from available aquifers.

The Social Environment

Community Character

Overview

The City of Storm Lake can be seen in many different lights. Storm Lake is an economic hub in northwestern Iowa and Buena Vista County. Storm Lake is a vacation getaway with resorts and an expansive park system. Storm Lake is a diverse community which works to make all feel included. Storm Lake is a connection of neighborhoods with a vibrant downtown. Each of these elements combine together to give Storm Lake its unique identity within Iowa.

The concept of a community character can be found in both the built environment and in the interactions between individuals. It is often difficult to measure how the character of the community changes, but in this section the city has made efforts to do so.

Comprehensive Plan Survey

The survey asked, “what is your favorite component about Storm Lake?” Responses Most respondents (26%) chose parks and trails. Diversity (22%) and community character (8%) were the next most frequent responses.

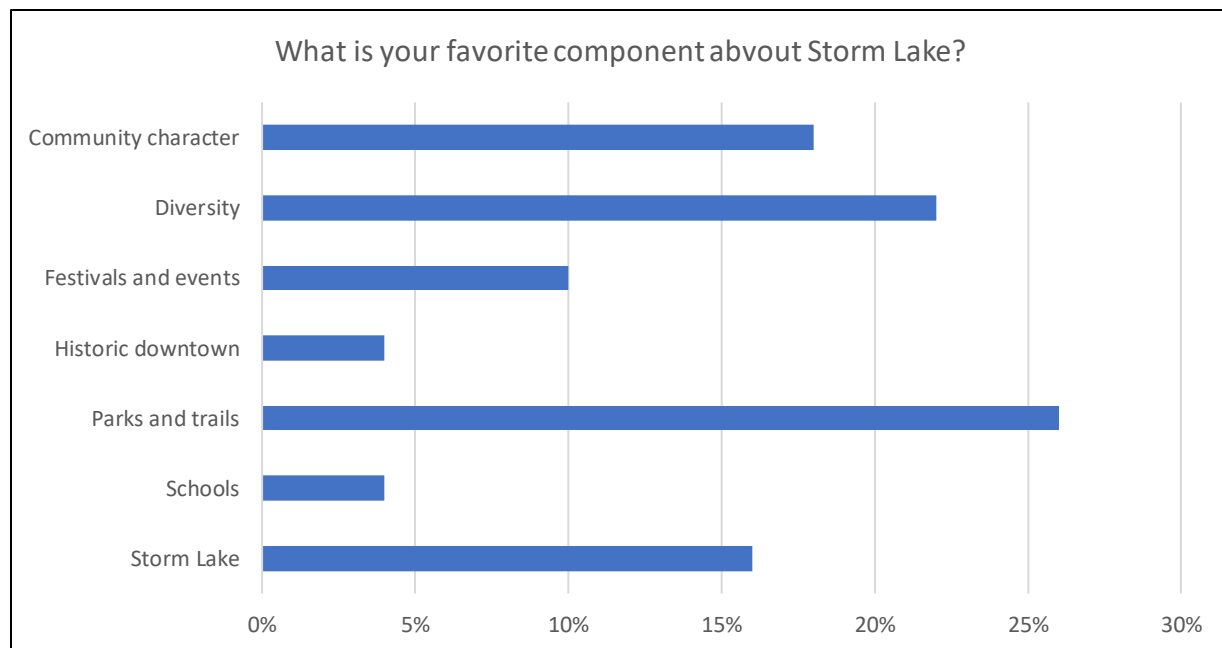


Figure 0.1 – Favorite Component of Storm Lake
Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

The survey asked if respondents felt welcome and/or safe in the community. The vast majority of respondents always or often felt both welcome and safe, while 15% sometimes felt welcome and safe. Only 4% rarely felt welcome, and no one responded they never felt welcome and safe.

When asked if Storm Lake has an inclusive and diverse community and treats everyone with respect and dignity, 50% agreed, 32% were neutral, and 18% disagreed.

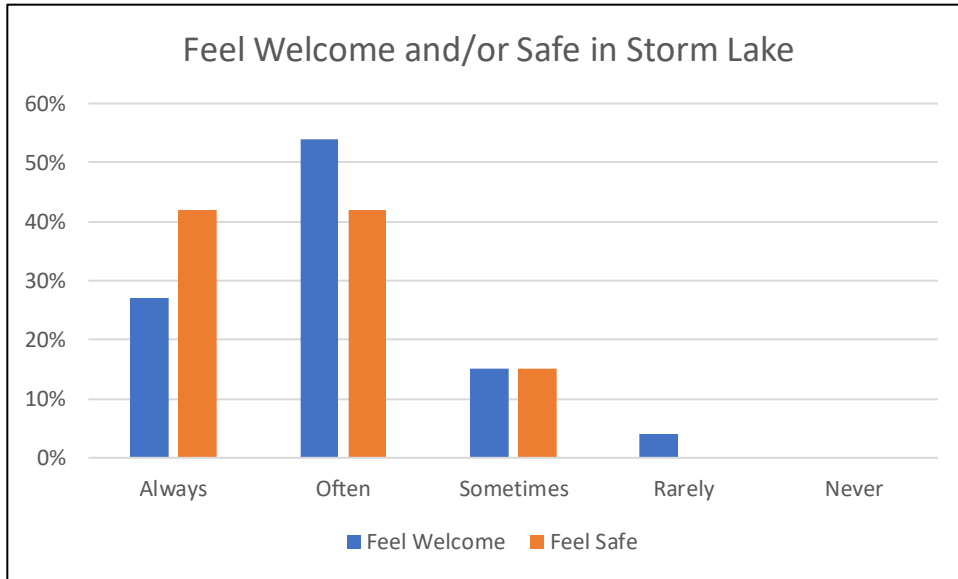


Figure 0.2 – Feeling Welcome and/or Safe
Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

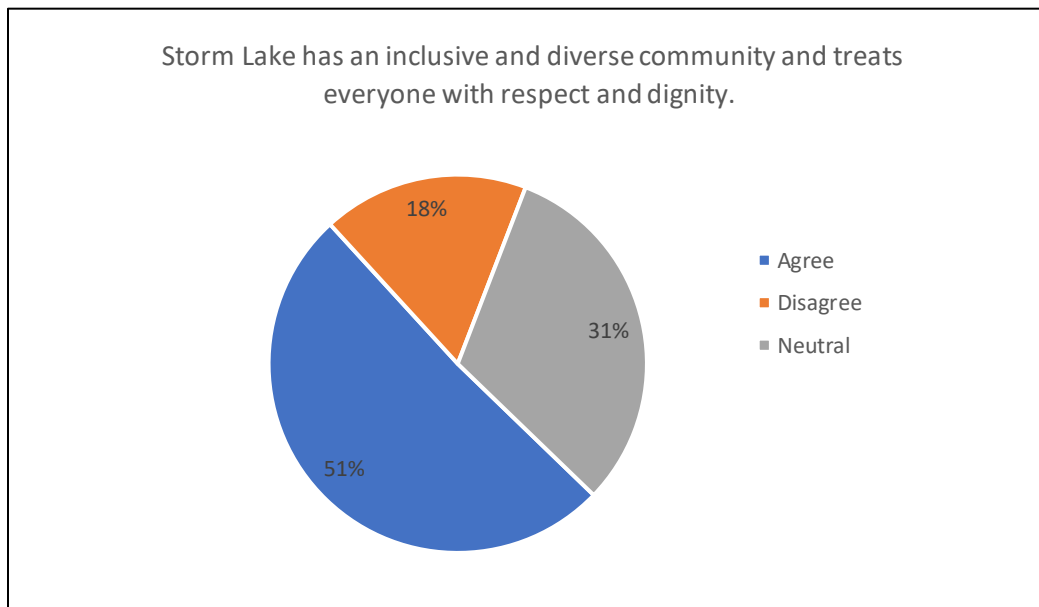


Figure 0.3 – Inclusiveness
Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey

Community Character Goals

2022 Strategic Plan

The goals outlined in the 2022 Strategic Plan relating to community character are to:

- Redefine the Downtown Business District
- Improve and Expand Community Outreach Efforts
- Strengthen and Enhance Public Information Efforts
- Support Neighborhood Night Outs

Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan goals were created based off existing data, surveys, pop-up events, and the Storm Lake Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Goal 1: Support a strong, connected, inclusive vision for the city.

- Prioritize participation in public events and processes for all residents.
- Maintain a system of public places and events that allow for more interaction between community members.
- Celebrate, respect, and represent the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of the city.
- Seek to address any disparities in outcomes through dedicated resources and partnerships.

Goal 2: Strengthen the built environment and increase the design and amenities of the city.

- Increase tree canopy throughout the city, targeting main corridors, key gateways, and community gathering places.
- Include public art as elements of public projects, including infrastructure projects.
- Maintain and improve existing public infrastructure, buildings, equipment, and parks.
- Identify facility and infrastructure needs associated with future development.

Goal 3: Invest in people within Storm Lake.

- Identify and prioritize investments in people where there are critical gaps using work programs.
- Pursue initiatives and opportunities that direct more resources to affordable housing.
- Support work opportunities for nontraditional employees, including youth and seniors.
- Assist small businesses with affordable commercial space and connecting them with job seekers.

Goal 4: Curb incorrect perceptions of the city.

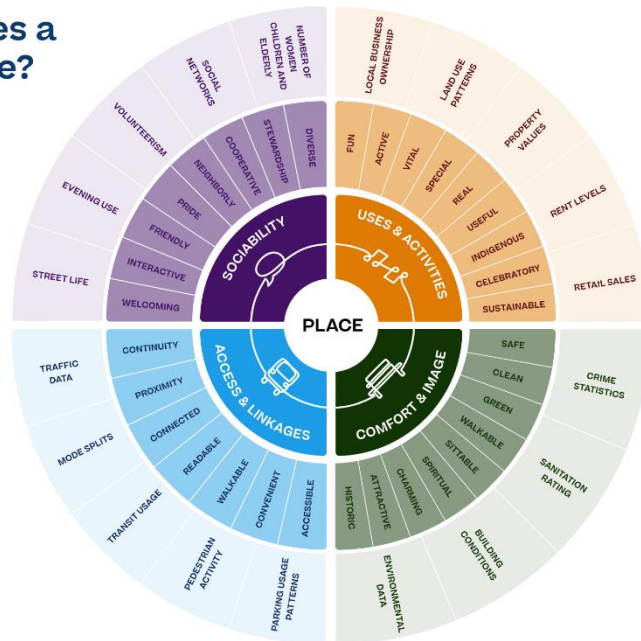
- Continue to promote transparency of community investment.
- Educate residents regarding current outcomes within the city.
- Support the presence of an educational system that meets the needs of students, future job seekers, and lifelong learning.

Placemaking

Placemaking is a broad term often defined as a reimagining of public spaces to be the active centers of a community; akin to thinking of a house as a home. Placemaking is different than just quality urban design; it takes a community-based look at the public realm, such as an underutilized plaza or parking lot, and works to maximize the shared value.

What Makes a Great Place?

Project
for Public
Spaces



Constructing and reinforcing community identity happens at every layer of development. Each project, development, or key intersection is a stage in which to communicate your brand to residents and visitors. Well-maintained planting areas, public art, streetscape materiality, lighting, and wayfinding all total up and contribute to the sense of place. Telling the story of your community and reinforcing that message in overt and subtle ways is the art of creating a sense of place.

Tourism

Overview

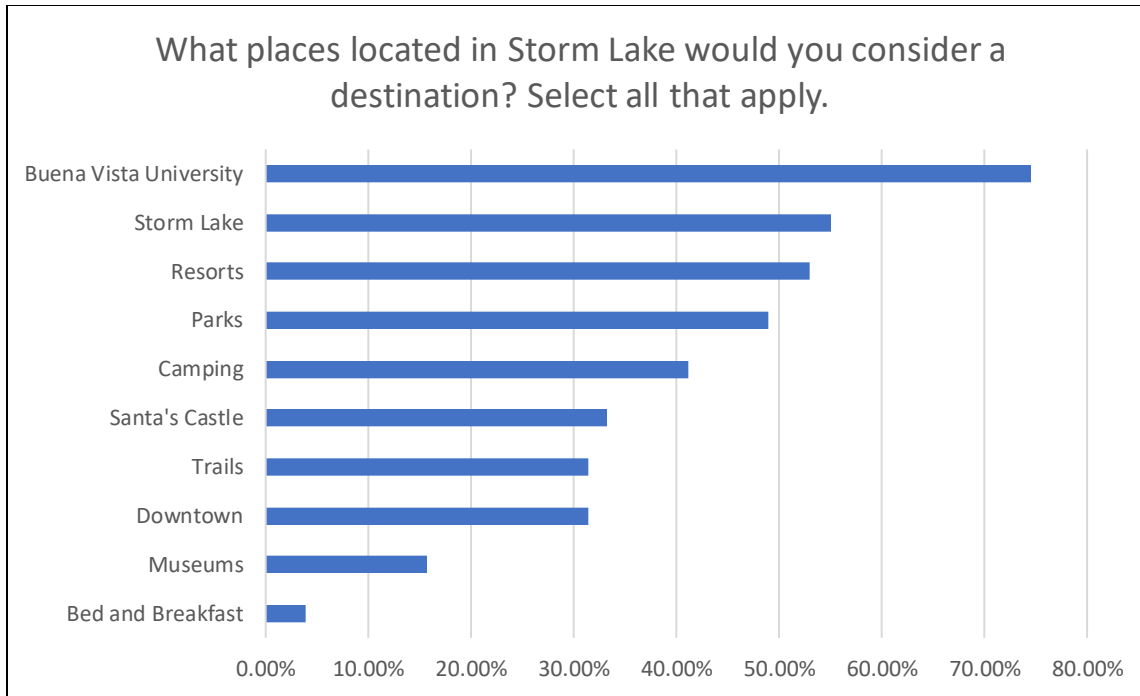
Tourism covers a wide range of activities for Storm Lake including leisure, shopping, and business. Storm Lake is exceptional in that it has a wonderful waterfront and unique resort destinations within the city. As a whole tourism is often resilient; however, the tourism industry is also fragile due to market fluctuations on the local level and, as seen recently during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a result of public health events. It is important for the city to not only focus on the needs of visitors, but also to evaluate how new tourist attractions will affect residents. A community driver approach incorporating concepts of sound economics, natural and cultural resource stewardship is critical to developing plans for tourism. To be successful, tourism projects and investments must have buy-in from the community, most importantly the businesses and local entrepreneurs that create and contribute to the tourism within Storm Lake.



This section identifies existing tourism within Storm Lake and outlines strategies for continued improvement of the sector within the city.

Comprehensive Plan Survey

Respondents to the survey identified the biggest destinations in Storm Lake as Buena Vista University, the lake, resorts and parks.



*Figure 0.1 – Destination Places
Source: Comprehensive Plan Survey*

Tourism Goals

2022 Strategic Plan

The goals outlined in the 2022 Strategic Plan relating to tourism are:

- Implement Recommendations from the Downtown Master Plan
- Redefine the Downtown Business District
- Develop a Recreation Plan for the Spoils Site
- Update the City’s Web Site
- Focus on Quality over Quantity
- Upgrade and Improve Distressed Properties
- Solicit Assistance from the University for Marketing Help

Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan goals were created based off existing data, surveys, pop-up events, and the Storm Lake Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Goal 1: Continue making downtown a more vibrant and attractive location.

- Prioritize investments outlined in the downtown masterplan.
- Increase the size of sidewalks along heavily trafficked areas.
- Slow automobile speeds, and promote alternate modes of travel.
- Create quick build placemaking strategies and create long-term implementation for well-liked projects.

- Promote the development of vacant and brownfield sites within downtown.

Goal 2: Utilize existing environmental assets.

- Fully connect the trail along the lake front and develop branches of the trail into downtown.
- Create more access points to the lake and upgrade existing access points with additional amenities including boating access.
- Increase the amount of water based programming.
- Complete the dredge spoil site plan and create a vibrant gateway to Storm Lake.

Goal 3: Increase tourism based infrastructure.

- Work with Buena Vista University to increase programs designed for college students.
- Support existing tourism based businesses with marketing and infrastructure beautification.
- Develop a tourism master plan.
- Increase the availability of key attractions and assets such as restaurants, cultural attractions, recreational amenities, shopping, and restrooms.
- Create a beautification plan to formalize improvements to gateways to the city, public art, streetscape improvements, urban furniture, lighting, and sustainability.
- Keep the Storm Lake visitor's section of website updated with current events.
- Continue working with Storm Lake United and Buena Vista University for marketing and promotion.

Existing Tourist Attractions

[Beaches](#)

Storm Lake beaches include the beaches in Sunrise park and AWAYSIS park, and the Bel Air beach that allows for leisure, fishing, and swimming.

[Buena Vista Historical Society and Museum](#)

The Buena Vista Historical Society and Museum has information and items about Buena Vista County's history.

[Buena Vista University](#)

Buena Vista University is a cultural hub within Storm Lake. The university hosts a variety of events throughout the year and the students bring a wave of activity to the city.

[Chainsaw Wood Sculptures](#)

Throughout Storm Lake parks and downtown there are many different wood carvings. Many are completed at the annual Wood, Wine, and Blues festival which holds wood carving competition.

[The Harker House](#)

The 1875 Victorian house has been preserved. Tours of the house highlight accounts of the United States Civil War.

[King's Pointe Waterpark & Resort](#)

King's Pointe offers indoor and outdoor water parks, and dining. The resort is located within walking distance to beaches, mini-golf, disc golf, and a nine-hole golf course.

[Lighthouses](#)

Throughout Storm Lake painted seven-foot-tall lighthouses can be found, along with larger lighthouses located at the Highway 71 city entrance, Scout Park, and AWAYSIS beach.

[Living Heritage Tree Museum](#)

The Living Heritage Tree Museum has over fifty trees with connections from around the world.

[Parks](#)

Storm Lake has a variety of parks spread out in the city.

[Santa's Castle](#)

Santa's Castle is a seasonal store with a wide assortment of antique and new Christmas merchandise.

[Sunrise Campground](#)

The sunrise campground offers cottages, RVs spots, and primitive camping near the lake. The campground hosts a golf course, fishing, and is within walking distant of King's Pointe Waterpark, mini golf, disc golf, sand volleyball, and public beaches.

[Witter Gallery](#)

The Witter Galley is an exhibition hall within Storm Lake that has permanent art exhibits and host rotating galleries free to the public year round.

Wayfinding

Community wayfinding signage is generally a system of signs intended to direct tourists and other users to key civic, cultural, visitor and recreational attractions (or other destinations) within a city, district or downtown area. These signs can be designed and intended for use by both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, with sizing and design varying depending on the intended user group. Often, people think of directional sign panels when they think of wayfinding, but other components of a comprehensive wayfinding package may include entrance signs, gateway monuments, trail signage, parking signs, informational kiosks, interpretive signage, banners, park signs, and more.

Wayfinding is key for navigation and providing a tourist with a welcome and comfort and they begin to explore your community. Identifying when you are in a community is important. Utilizing an effective system, or family of signage, will welcome, direct, and reassure visitors to all the key amenities you wish to share.

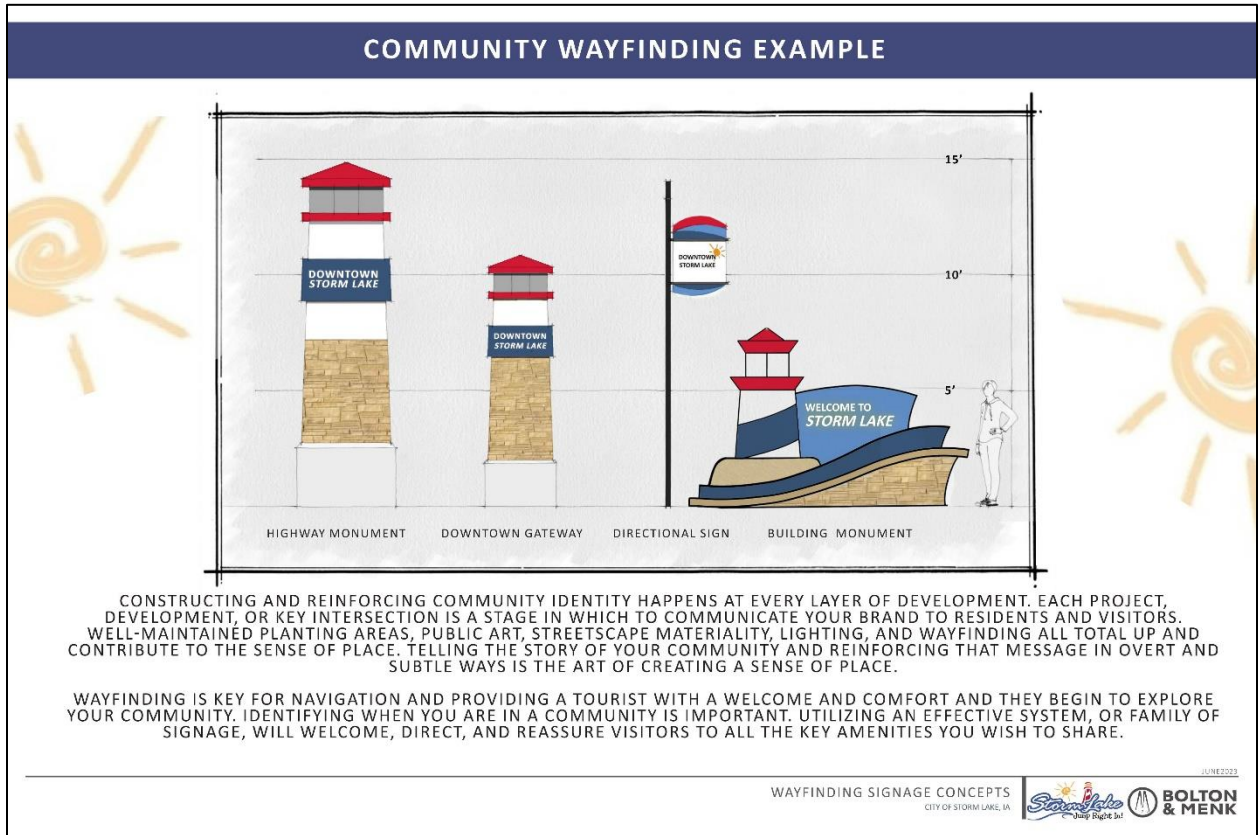


Figure 0.2 – Community Wayfinding Example
Source: Bolton & Menk

Implementing the Plan

Implementation

Overview

The Comprehensive plan creates a vision for the City of Storm Lake and guides land use and infrastructure improvements so the city can meet the community's future needs. However, the vision can only be realized if the plan is used. Tools to implement the plan will vary in that some will be reactive such as zoning and subdivision ordinances that guide private developments and others will be proactive, such as the city's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for undertaking public improvement projects.

Implementation of the Plan is a process involving both short term and long-term steps. Implementation will occur in three ways: as a guiding tool for decision-making, as a marketing and funding tool and as a to-do list. This process ensures zoning, subdivisions and other regulatory methods are up to date and effectively used. The Action Plan establishes priorities and timelines for specific tasks and actions. Since some actions can have definitive start and end points, while other do not, the creation of a 'report card' aids in tracking the progress of the actions and overall plan on an annual basis.

Action Plan

Implementing the vision and goals of the comprehensive plan requires an action plan, and the coordination and investments of many stakeholders. This gives citizens and officials clear goals and steps to completing what is outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The Action Plan's Implementation Matrix presents a concise summary of the goals along with specific action steps, organized by chapter. The table includes:

Goals: A restatement of the specific goal.

Action Step: Specific action items intended to help meet the goals.

Timeline: The timeline is divided into 4 categories: Short-Term, Mid-Term, Long-Term, and Ongoing. The applied categories indicate when the action item might begin and is advisory in nature.

Short-Term: Actions that should be initiated within 1-2 years.

Mid-Term: Actions that should be initiated within 3-5 years.

Long-Term: Actions that should be initiated within 5-10 years, or more.

Ongoing: Actions that should be initiated immediately and that will require constant periodic attention.

The Action Plan will be updated regularly as part of other city processes, such as annual budgeting or project prioritization sessions. The Implementation Matrix Worksheets are intended to be flexible and adaptable over short periods, so changes to these sections do not require a formal amendment to the comprehensive plan. The goals, however, are high-level, long-term goals. Changes to the specific goals will require an amendment to the overall plan.

Implementation Matrix

Table 10.1 Implementation Matrix		
Goals	Action Steps	Timeline
Land Use		
Establish the future of Storm Lake in a way that respects the community's historical context, offers a variety of land uses, is affordable, is sustainable, and improves Storm Lake's vibrancy and appeal.	Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the city's single-family housing stock using city programs that incentivize upkeep and maintenance of private property.	Ongoing
	Encourage new development in infill areas.	Ongoing
	Promote development where infrastructure is present.	Ongoing
Continue efforts to improve Downtown Storm Lake's unique sense of place, economy, and social vibrancy.	Implement the Downtown Master Plan.	Mid-Term
	Review the zoning ordinance to allow more flexibility in development in the downtown.	Short-Term
Build quality public places for the community.	Create areas that promote community interaction through placemaking, such as plazas and pocket parks.	Long-Term
Housing		
Provide an array of housing options to attract and retain households, residents and families of varying sizes, ages, diversities, incomes, and needs.	Update existing housing regulations to allow for a greater diversity of housing types.	Mid-Term
	Update zoning code to allow "missing middle" housing by right in all residential zones.	Mid-Term
Improve Storm Lake's reputation as a place with solid, appealing neighborhoods.	Promote the use of design elements to create more connectivity and appeal in the neighborhoods of Storm Lake.	Ongoing
	Enforce existing standards for housing and yard maintenance.	Ongoing
Encourage environmentally conscious new construction and renovation of housing.	Consider incentives to utilize high quality, robust and energy efficient materials in renovations and new construction.	Long-Term
	Produce education materials about construction and maintenance.	Short-Term
	Ensure new development includes new parks, or is located near existing parks.	Ongoing
Transportation		
Effectively and safely move traffic and people through and around the City.	Maintain an annual improvements program to improve key intersections and critical road sections.	Ongoing

	Require new development connect with existing street networks .	Ongoing
	Partner with IDOT on maintenance and improvements on state-run roadways.	Long-Term
Proactively assess current transportation facility needs and evaluate future needs.	Maintain a pavement management system for repairing, resurfacing, and rehabilitating existing local roads in the city.	Ongoing
	As new transportation projects are considered, prioritize filling in the gaps and missing linkages in the New transportation network.	Ongoing
	Proactively seek out county and state funding to support maintenance and planned growth.	Short-Term
	Review subdivision ordinance requirements as they pertain to roadway width and configurations.	Long-Term
Create a multi-modal transportation system that provides a safe and efficient means of movement through the community.	Include trails and sidewalks with new street projects where feasible.	Mid-Term
	Look for transit opportunities, both public and private, in Storm Lake.	Long-Term
	Expand bike and pedestrian trails that route from residential uses to destinations such as schools, parks, or commercial corridors.	Mid-Term
Parks, Recreation and Trails		
Ensure parks meet the needs of the diverse Storm Lake population and strengthen the image of the city as a premier destination. Identify areas where neighborhood parks & larger parks should be placed.	Review the need for new park facilities with all new development.	Long-Term
	Initiate a recreation feasibility study.	Mid-Term
	Inventory existing park equipment to ensure it is ADA compliant.	Long-Term
Maintain an environmentally and economically sustainable park, recreation, and trail system that meets the needs of current and future residents and visitors.	Develop educational materials and programs to foster environmental awareness among citizens.	Mid-Term
	Review existing tree planting and preservation policies to promote the addition of more trees.	Short-Term
Park improvements shall respond to the needs and preferences of a diverse community. This includes accommodating people of	Develop a park master plan to identify the need for additional parks as development occurs.	Long-Term
	Pursue the creation of pocket parks and community gardens throughout the city.	Mid-Term

different ages, cultures, abilities, and incomes.		
Provide a safe, convenient, and comprehensive trail and sidewalk system that supports walking and bicycling for both recreation and transportation.	Continue the Storm Lake Trail to the west to connect to Frank Starr Park.	Mid-Term
Public Infrastructure and Facilities		
Rehabilitate or replace aging infrastructure within the sanitary collection system, water distribution system, and water supply.	Develop a program to identify and reduce inflow and infiltration (I&I).	Mid-Term
	Maintain an annual capital improvement program to replace and upgrade sanitary sewer and water systems.	Ongoing
	Require watermain looping with new development.	Ongoing
	Regularly update the Storm Lake Infrastructure Management Plan.	Ongoing
	Couple roadway improvements with utility upgrades when possible.	Ongoing
Effectively manage, maintain, and improve the existing stormwater management system to support the existing systems and any potential growth within the Community.	Map areas prone to flooding and improve drainage systems within these areas.	Mid-Term
	Promote low impact development features where possible.	Ongoing
Solidify partnerships and policies regarding sewer and water systems.	Continue to monitor the existing system to maintain its integrity.	Ongoing
	Ensure that all systems meet State and Federal requirements.	Ongoing
	Develop a sanitary sewer collection model.	Mid-Term
Economic Development		
Support and expand the City's existing economic base.	Review existing city processes and regulations related to land development, permits, and construction to identify changes that will make requirements easy to understand.	Mid-Term
	Develop an improvement incentive program to assist existing businesses with maintaining or expanding their current sites.	Mid-Term
	Identify suitable locations for workforce housing within Storm Lake.	Long-Term
Provide adequate land and infrastructure to make locations within Storm Lake attractive to future businesses.	Review Future Land Use map and Zoning Map to ensure an adequate supply of land for business locations and target new areas for businesses in the Land Use Plan.	Ongoing

	Identify where utilities and streets should be expanded.	Ongoing
Provide an environment that supports the successful and continued employment of all residents.	Develop an incubator program to assist new or struggling businesses.	Mid-Term
	Partner with Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation to attract and retain businesses.	Short-Term
Tourism		
Continue making downtown a more vibrant and attractive location.	Implement the downtown master plan.	Mid-Term
Utilize existing environmental assets	Fully connect the trail along the lake front and develop branches of the trail into downtown.	Long-Term
	Identify potential new access points to the lake.	Long-Term
	Implement the dredge spoil site plan and create a vibrant gateway to Storm Lake.	Long-Term
Increase tourism based infrastructure	Partner with Buena Vista University to increase programs designed for college students.	Short-Term
	Develop a wayfinding plan to direct visitors to key attractions and amenities.	Mid-Term
	Develop a tourism master plan.	Long-Term
Natural Resources		
Promote sustainable resource management and a quality natural environment within and surrounding Storm Lake.	Inventory critical plant and animal habitats.	Mid-Term
	Review and update watershed management policies and practices to minimize flooding and reduce environmental impacts such as sediment deposition.	Short-Term
	Develop a capital improvement program to fund restoration of flood-prone areas, wildlife habitats, viewsheds, and wetlands to their natural state.	Long-Term
Strive towards creating an environmentally and economically sustainable built environment throughout the city and region	Create a capital improvement program to upgrade existing lake access points with additional amenities including boating access.	Mid-Term
Improve sustainability on city projects and facilities through investments and policies	Identify and prioritize investments in green infrastructure as part of transportation and other infrastructure projects.	Short-Term
	Develop metrics to assess the impact of projects and the impacts of investment in	Short-Term

	sustainability on city projects and financial benefits.	
	Review land use codes and add policies/incentive to promote low impact development.	Mid-Term
Create productive green assets from existing brownfields or underutilized land.	Develop programs to sensitively reuse brownfields and underutilized properties.	Long-Term
	Review city regulations to help reduce impervious surface.	Long-Term
Community Character		
Support a strong, connected, inclusive vision for the city	Advertise and promote public events in multiple languages to encourage broad participation.	Short-Term
	Develop a placemaking master plan.	Mid-Term
Strengthen the built environment and increase design amenities in the city	Look at the possibility of including public art in all public projects	Long-Term
	Review the potential for additional landscaping as part of infrastructure projects	On-Going
Invest in people in Storm Lake	Look for grants and other incentives and opportunities to increase affordable housing.	Long-Term
Curb incorrect perceptions of the city	Create educational materials to explain city investment projects	Short-Term