

2022



City of Mechanicsville Comprehensive Plan

Adopted: _____



Cover Page Photo: Downtown Mechanicsville Mural

Chapters

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Chapter 1. Introduction..... | 4 |
| Chapter 2. Community Vision..... | 6 |
| Chapter 3. Community Character..... | 8 |
| Chapter 4. Economic Development..... | 18 |
| Chapter 5. Housing..... | 26 |
| Chapter 6. Public Infrastructure..... | 30 |
| Chapter 7. Transportation..... | 35 |
| Chapter 8. Land Use..... | 41 |
| Chapter 9. Implementation..... | 47 |



Source: Rural Indexing Project

Chapter 1. Introduction

Community Overview

The City of Mechanicsville is a community of about 1,020 people as of the 2020 decennial census. It is located in the northwest corner of Cedar County. The city is located on US Highway 30 about ten miles east of the city of Mt. Vernon. Mechanicsville is about 25 miles east of Cedar Rapids, 30 miles northeast of Iowa City, 60 miles west of the Quad Cities, and 70 miles south west of Dubuque.

Purpose

The City of Mechanicsville Comprehensive Plan provides the City Council with a twenty-year guide for future decision making. The Comprehensive Plan establishes the community’s vision for the future and identifies a recommended set of actions that the community can take to realize that vision. The Comprehensive Plan focuses on all issues relevant to the development of the community, including land development, housing, economic growth, and infrastructure maintenance. The Comprehensive Plan is not a legal regulatory document. Instead, it is a roadmap for the future of the community that has been agreed upon by its citizens and leaders.

To achieve the vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, the community must actively work to incorporate the recommendations of the plan into its budgets, policies, and ordinances. Many of the recommendations listed in the plan will require additional research, analysis, public input, and consideration from the City Council before they can be implemented. When choosing how to implement the Comprehensive Plan, the City Council should consider all relevant factors and weigh the public good with the cost and impact on the community.

Once adopted, the Comprehensive Plan is not an infallible or unchangeable document. The plan should be updated every five to ten years, or when necessary, so that it continues to provide an accurate picture of how the community wishes to grow, develop, and prosper.



“Downtown Mechanicsville”

Iowa Smart Planning

The Iowa Smart Planning Act was signed into law by the Governor in 2010, as a way to guide and encourage the development of local comprehensive plans. The bill articulates ten smart planning principles and thirteen comprehensive plan elements for application in local comprehensive plan development and public decision making. These guidelines are intended to improve economic opportunities, preserve the natural environment, protect quality of life and ensure equitable decision-making processes. The Mechanicsville Comprehensive Plan addresses all Smart Planning principles and elements, but is organized in a way that best fits the City of Mechanicsville needs.

Iowa Smart Planning Principles



- Collaboration
- Efficiency, Transparency, and Consistency
- Clean, Renewable, and Efficient Energy
- Occupational Diversity
- Revitalization
- Housing Diversity
- Community Character
- Natural Resources and Agricultural Protection
- Sustainable Design
- Transportation Diversity

Comprehensive Planning Elements



- Public Participation
- Issues and Opportunities
- Land use
- Housing
- Public Infrastructure and Utilities
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Agricultural and Natural Resources
- Community Facilities
- Hazards
- Intergovernmental Collaboration
- Implementation

Chapter 2. Community Vision

Introduction

The purpose of the comprehensive plan is to present a vision for the future of all activities that affect the growth and development of the community. Community engagement is critical to the development of that vision and to the comprehensive planning process. Citizens of Mechanicsville played a key role in the creation of the Mechanicsville Comprehensive Plan. This chapter outlines Mechanicsville’s vision for the future and summarizes the community engagement process used to develop it.

Community Engagement

Planning and Zoning Commission

The Mechanicsville Planning and Zoning Commission, consisting of community members appointed by the City Council, was the primary contributor to the planning process. The Commission met throughout the process and all meetings were open to the public. At its meetings, the Commission reviewed plan progress, worked on vision statements, identified issues, and provided feedback on draft documents.

The Commission members served as representatives of the broader community. Early in the process, the Commission participated in feedback sessions to identify ideas for the future of the community. As the planning process moved forward the Commission’s role shifted to reviewing and providing feedback on draft chapters.

Community Survey

A community survey was used as a method for collecting community input for the Comprehensive Plan. The survey was conducted between October - November 2021. The online survey form was published on the ECIA website and distributed locally via the monthly water bill. A total of 143 people responded to the twenty-nine-question survey. Following the completion of the survey, the Commission used the results as a guide for developing the Comprehensive Plan. Please visit the Mechanicsville comprehensive plan website at https://ecia.org/Mechanicsville_Plan/

Vision and Development Principles

After considering all the input collected from the community through the planning process, the City of Mechanicsville and the Planning and Zoning Commission developed a vision for the future of the community.

Community Vision

“The City of Mechanicsville will work to improve the quality of life by maintaining existing housing, public space, and community resources. The community will embrace new opportunities that help enhance the town’s unique character and economic prospects.”

To help Mechanicsville achieve its vision for the future, the plan includes six development principles. The principles represent the most important topics that emerged through public input sessions and work with the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Improve Parks and Recreation

The existing park system in Mechanicsville is well maintained and popular among residents. Expansion and maintenance of the existing park system to help accommodate more recreational activities is a goal for the community. Park and recreation programs help improve the quality of life for residents and can be a source of affordable entertainment and engagement.

Increase Housing Options and Quality

Mechanicsville's housing stock is largely made up of single-family residential homes. The community has suggested that a more options such as apartments, condos, and multi family would help give residents more affordable options in the local housing market. Maintenance of existing housing units is also a high priority for the community.

Maintain Mechanicsville's Small-Town Character

Many residents have noted that Mechanicsville has always had a charming, small-town character that has helped create tight knit connection among residents. The community aims to maintain the social character of Mechanicsville as well as help new residents become quickly integrated into the existing social fabric.

Revitalize Downtown Mechanicsville and its Historic Assets

One of Mechanicsville's greatest assets is its historic downtown; it is the community's goal to create a downtown that is attractive and lively. To this end, maintenance of facades and commercial units is a high priority as well as attracting businesses that appeal to a broader demographic of residents.

Increase Development of Current and Future Businesses

Currently, there are very few businesses in the City of Mechanicsville and many residents seek out goods and services in surrounding towns. The community has made it a high priority to attract new businesses and retain existing businesses in Mechanicsville. This will help keep disposable income within the city and help improve the quality of life for residents. When considering businesses Mechanicsville's highest priority is attracting local businesses that contribute the most to the economy.

Attract New Residents and Retain Existing Population

Keeping and adding residents is very high priority for Mechanicsville, which has seen a steadily decreasing population over the last few decades. Adding more residents increases the possibility that private development will take interest in Mechanicsville and more amenities can be added to improve the quality of life for all residents.

Chapter 3. Community Character

Community character is often considered one of the most valuable assets that a town or city can have. Community character is generally determined by the people, events, landmarks, and other elements that make a place unique. These various aspects create a place that residents love to inhabit and draws tourists from around the country. While there is no specific formula that a town must follow to create or enhance its community character there are always a variety of strategies that can be pursued regardless of a towns size or other characteristics.

Creating a unique identity for the community is of utmost importance in an age where suburbanization has produced towns that look incredibly similar, with shopping malls, big box stores, and unadorned condominiums. Places that break this trend often see increases in outside capital, tourism, and quality of life for existing residents.

Through the input process, many residents mentioned that they would like to maintain Mechanicsville’s small-town character as well as leverage its existing cultural assets to create a unique sense of the place for the community. The goal of this chapter is to identify opportunities and build on the community’s unique characteristics so that clear goals can be made in pursuit of these ends.

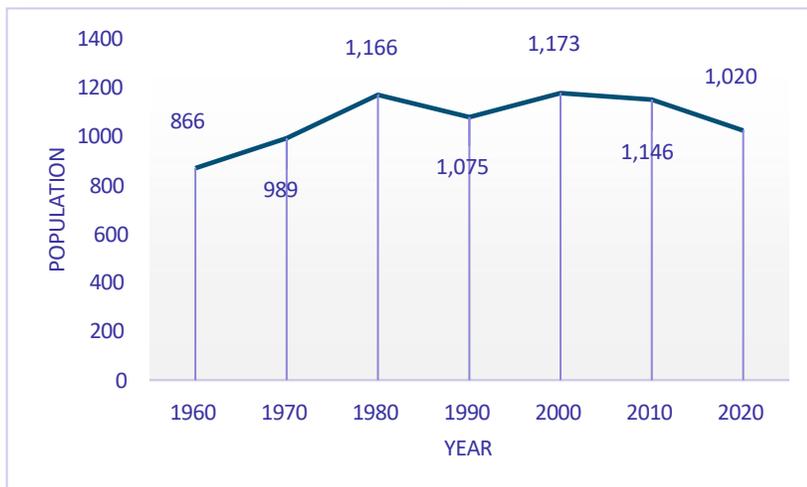
Population Demographics

A key aspect in understanding a city is understanding the people that inhabit it. This broad field of analysis is called demography which is the statistical study of human populations. Analysis of demographic information and understanding trends revealed by this information is crucial when trying to understand the community and planning for its future needs.

Population

Total population is one of the most important pieces of demographic information for a city. A basic count of people helps city leaders administer resources and strategically plan for the future, particularly in its delivery of services and infrastructure.

Figure 1. Mechanicsville Historical Population 1960-2020



Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial 1960-2020

Since 1960, Mechanicsville’s population has remained relatively stable, with its population peaking in the year 2000 at 1,173. It should be noted however, that the most recent census numbers have recorded a significant downward trend in population, mitigating this issue is a crucial goal in the planning process. All things considered, we can see these trends in the context of Mechanicsville’s history in Figure 1 and despite this recent downward trend the city is still at a net positive since 1960.

A lack of population growth is not an issue that is unique to Mechanicsville, rather it is a common problem facing many small communities across the nation. Across the United States we are seeing population consolidate in the larger metropolitan areas. Regionally, this consolidation is occurring in the Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Quad Cities, and Iowa City metropolitan areas.

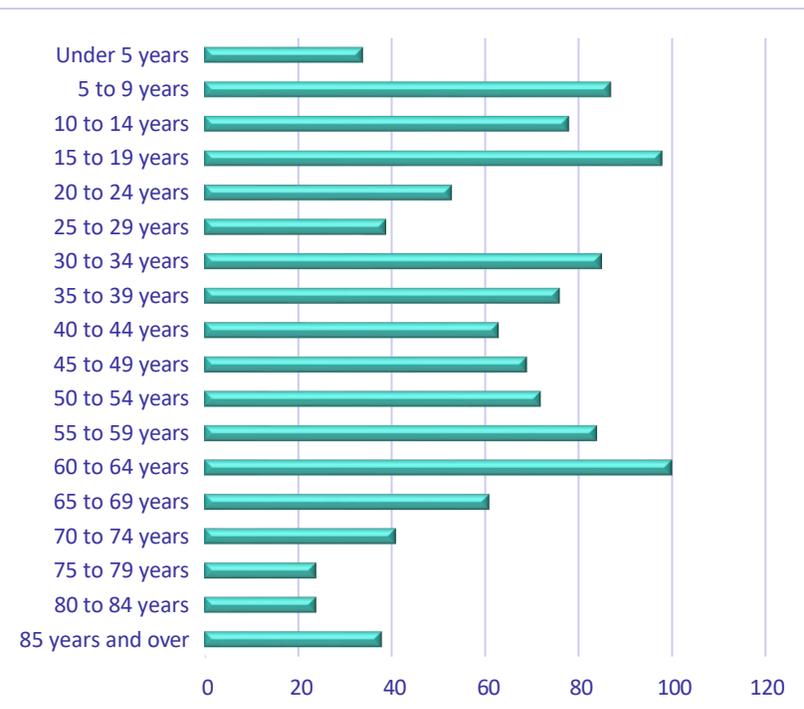
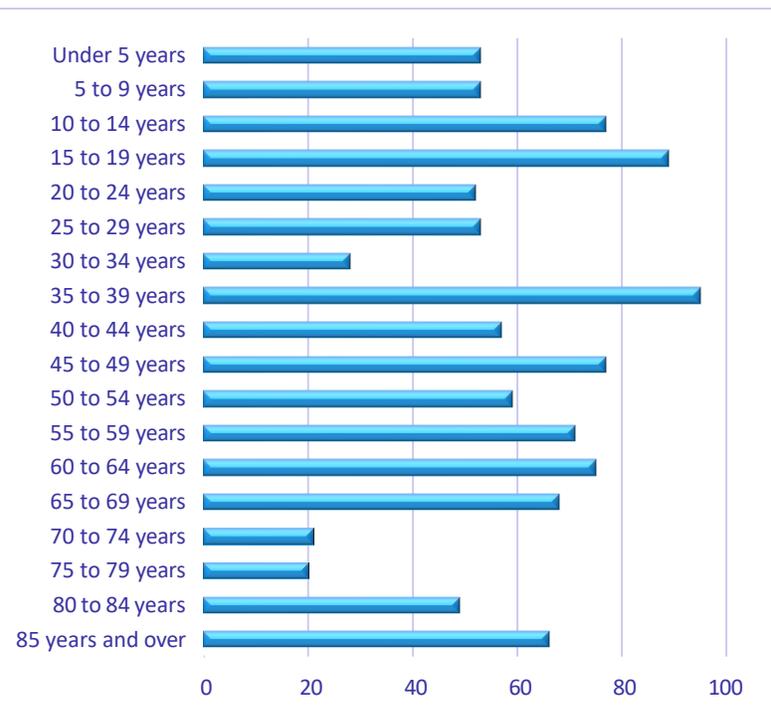
Population growth is a crucial step towards economic and social stability within a community. Population growth leads to increased demand for housing and local businesses which can help attract private capital. This generally leads to more amenities and a higher quality of life as the increased tax base give the local government more resources to deliver services and make improvements to infrastructure.

Age

According to U.S. census estimates, Mechanicsville’s population has been growing younger on average, which is a positive trend. The 2010-2014 estimates generated by the American Community Survey shows a median

Figure 2. 2010-2014 Estimated Age

Figure 3. 2015-2019 Estimated Age



age of 43.1, and the 2015-2019 estimates resulted in a median age of 41.3 in Mechanicsville. This could be due to a number of factors, but since there is also a decrease in total population in this time period, this trend could be explained by the elderly population moving away to be closer to amenities/services/family that are located in the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area.

The large population between the ages 55 and 73 in the 2019 estimates, and the age group between 50 and 68 in the 2014 estimates represents the Baby Boomer generation. This large demographic group is going to be in high demand of medical services and other amenities, and this may trigger a dramatic decline in population as they move to be closer to these services.

Population Trends

As previously indicated, these demographic estimates play a large role in constructing long-term development strategies, particularly in regards to attraction and expansion. While there is a positive trend of an increasingly young population this comes with the potential of losing a large, aging segment of the city's population. That being said there is always opportunities for a community to grow based on a steady inward-migration.

Population Impacts on Housing

Population trends affect housing trends in a number of ways, it can impact household size, overall demand, and housing types. Older populations may not want or cannot utilize large single-family homes. They may instead opt for more accessible single floor plans or even apartments where maintenance needs are largely covered by a landlord. The large demographic between 20 and 34 years of age may also need small starter homes or apartments before they start families in a large residence. It is crucial for these housing needs to be addressed so that residents of all stages of life have housing options that suit their needs so that population loss does not occur.

Quality of Life

While housing is a good addition to a complete development strategy, it should not be the sole focus of a plan. People often make decisions on where they are to live based on less tangible things such as quality of life or the general feeling of a community. The most common reason people move is simply where they work, but people often commute in excess of 45 minutes if they feel that a particular town has a high quality of life.

Things that improve the quality of life include a unique town identity, engaging community programs, amenities, well-kept streets and houses, and great public spaces, among other qualities. These qualities help a community differentiate itself from other towns and may increase attraction and retention of residents. The other positive aspect is that many of these qualities can be improved at a very low cost to the city and its residents.

Active Resident Recruitment

In addition to incremental improvements, cities can also engage in “active resident recruitment”. This strategy lets cities take a more aggressive marketing approach in engaging with potential residents. These programs are often associated with business recruitment, but similar strategies of direct marketing can be utilized by cities to help promote their town and highlight the aspects that set it apart from other communities. University of Minnesota Extension has conducted on rural migration and resident recruitment. The researchers have compiled a list of resident recruitment strategies implemented by various communities.

- Working with local community organizations like the community club or other groups to involve new residents and match up their talents and passions with community needs.
- Organizing volunteers to welcome new people to the community. This could be as simple as taking new residents out to lunch as a way to welcome them to the community and learn about their interests and talents
- Building housing for the elderly to free up single-family homes, which would then be matched with young families moving to the community.
- Offering newcomers free passes to municipal recreation facilities, discounts from local merchants, and several months' free utility service.
- Courting alumni at school reunions by informing them of retiring businesses and homes for sale.
- Use marketing to promote the positive aspects of living in a small community like Mechanicsville vs. living in a larger city.
- Ensure that high-quality childcare opportunities are available and affordable to all residents.

Please visit University of Minnesota extension at <https://extension.umn.edu/community-development> for more information.

Community Events and Organizations

Throughout the year Mechanicsville hosts events that are attended by many community residents and visitors. These community events not only improve the quality of life for residents, and helps bring money into local businesses. Most events held in Mechanicsville are organized by community groups and volunteers.

Memorial Day

The Mechanicsville American Legion and Auxiliary conduct a number of events on the week of Memorial Day. These include laying poppies at the cemetery to honor deceased soldiers, a flag ceremony, and a community program held at the Mechanicsville cemetery. This event is concluded by a ceremony where the flags are taken down.

Trunk or Treat

During Halloween the neighboring cities of Mechanicsville, Stanwood, and Clarence put together a trunk or treat event that is sponsored by each city and the Main Street Iowa program. In each town residents will all park in one location and decorate their cars with Halloween themed items. Kids will dress up in their Halloween costumes and visit each car which will provide candy and other Halloween goodies.

Lions Club July 4th Pork Chop Lunch

On July 4th, the Mechanicsville Lions club organizes a pork chop lunch for the community. This event accompanies other July 4th events that occur in Mechanicsville and surrounding towns.

Mechanicsville Fire & Ambulance Volunteers/Fireworks at Dusk

The Mechanicsville fire and ambulance volunteers host a number of fundraising events throughout the year and the funds go towards a firework display on July 4th. This event relies solely on community donations which are largely generated through events like the Mechanicsville Fire and Ambulance volunteers pancake breakfast; where the volunteers host a pancake breakfast for the community, and all profits go towards the firework show in July.

Bingo

Bingo is a regularly scheduled event that is popular with many residents in Mechanicsville. It is held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday at the senior dining center. Before bingo begins, there is a community meal at 4:00.

Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony

In November, 2021 the community decided to rekindle an old tradition of lighting up a Christmas tree on December 5th at the Memorial Park. Festivities before the tree lighting included, cookies, caroling, holiday drinks at a local restaurant, family photos, and a letter drop off to Santa.

Hometown Pride - Keep Iowa Beautiful Committee

The KIB program awarded \$125,000 to 14 communities Mechanicsville and surrounding communities in 2021. The Hometown Pride – KIB committee has 14 members and meets at the American Legion Hall. This citizen led committee is focusing on a number of beautification projects around Mechanicsville. These projects include: Replacing Park equipment, creating a parks master plan, fixing park drainage issues, a new pavilion, connecting trails to parks, and increased signage around town. So far, the projects that the committee has helped complete include park restoration projects, cleanup events, and movies in the park.

Churches

Religious organizations are an important part of the Mechanicsville community. The city is home to St. Mary's Catholic Church, First United Methodist Mechanicsville, Living Hope Bible Church and the Presbyterian Church.

Library

The Mechanicsville public library located on 218 E. First Street has continued to have an incredibly positive impact on the community, and numerous residents cite the library's programs as being especially beneficial during the COVID-19 pandemic. The library offers educational programs for all ages, career resources, game nights, and many other programs throughout the year.

Parks and Recreation

Mechanicsville has always taken pride in providing recreational opportunities for the community. The City of Mechanicsville maintains three parks in the city. The first is a small park located off of the Lincoln Highway by the water tower called East End Park. This East End Park has a small covered pavilion, two benches, a merry-go-round, swings, slide, jungle gym, and a balance beam. The second park that Mechanicsville has is the Cruses Park, this is the largest park in the city; Cruses Park has a large pavilion, multiple slides, swings, merry-go-round, and benches. The last park that is located in Mechanicsville is the baseball park that is east of Mechanicsville Elementary School which contains two baseball fields. Through the Keep Iowa Beautiful Grant, a citizen committee was formed that will help direct money towards park improvements and trail expansions, among other projects.



Playground at Cruses Park on W 2nd Street, Mechanicsville

Arts and History

Public Art & Landmarks

Public art is a great way to affordably and meaningfully establish a unique and culturally active place and can be used by communities to gain cultural, social, and economic value. Public art can create civic icons that attract tourism and, in some cases, can spur new community traditions. Public art can also serve to transform everyday places like clinics, town halls, parks, or blank retail storefronts into vivid expressions of culture and creativity. One of the most notable pieces of art in the city of Mechanicsville is the “Heaven Amongst the Cedars” street mural, located at 300 E 1st St. Another piece of art that means a great deal to the community is the Doughboy statue that is located in Rose Hill Cemetery in Mechanicsville. The Doughboy statues were dedicated to the men who fought in World War 1 and were originally designed by a E.M. Viquesney. The Mechanicsville Doughboy was ordered in 1929 and still stands today as one of only two that are located in the state of Iowa.

Community History

Mechanicsville has had a long history dating back to 1836 when the town was settled by a group originating from Ohio and Pennsylvania. This original settlement was roughly a mile and a half northwest of where the city is currently located. Around 1850 settlers moved south to the current city located where the land was deemed more suitable for building. A man by the name of Dr. Dorwart received more than 40 acres of native American land which was used to join existing land which combined totaled the 120 acres that make up the town’s footprint today. The early residents of Mechanicsville were largely carpenters, mason, and wheelwrights, so thus the townspeople decided that the name “Mechanics” and -ville would be a fitting description of the town.

The first school was opened in the winter of 1850 by a teacher named Miss Stearns. The first election in Mechanicsville was held on April 6, 1868 with a total of 147 votes being cast resulting in the election of the first mayor, T.C. McClelland. Around this time a number of secular fraternal organizations and non-secular religious institutions were established, including the Presbyterian Society, Methodist Episcopal Church, Patmos Lodge, and the Odd Fellows’ Lodge, among others.



Doughboy Statue, Rose Hill Cemetery

Between 1867 and 1870 a number of fires occurred in the city limits of Mechanicsville resulting in the destruction of a general merchandise store, tenement house, a large clothing merchant, and a local tavern. Since the city's earliest days, it never had any large factories or manufacturing facilities, but it did have a large number of agricultural supply merchants, an opera house, artists, professionals, and various other artisans that supported its economic growth. In 1858, the first passenger train car arrived in Mechanicsville resulting in some of the first out of town visitors that the town had received. In the 1930s the population and economy of Mechanicsville diminished significantly, most likely due to Great Depression. Following World War II, the population returned to its pre-depression numbers of roughly 850 residents. The population and local economy have fluctuated since the late 1990s to the level that it currently stands today.

Historic Preservation

Preserving and celebrating Mechanicsville's unique historical background was identified as an important objective for residents. Interest in the community's history has increased to the point where the community decided to create a formal history center. As of May 2022, the Mechanicsville, Iowa History Center became an official 501 C3 non-profit organization. Often historic features can be economically generative assets, whether it be an historic downtown or a single landmark. There are many potential incentives and programs at the federal, state, and local level that can help with identifying, re-using, and rehabilitating historic structures and areas. Organizations such as the Mechanicsville History Center will have an important role to play in making sure the history of the community is preserved and incorporated in future developments throughout the town.

Historic Structures and Sites

In Mechanicsville, there are 11 sites that have been identified as being archeological sites and at least one historic site. This list is not always comprehensive nor does it always mean that they are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, nonetheless older structures with significant character regardless of historical significance can be incredibly useful assets to a community. Even if they are not listed on the national historic register there are still programs that can help communities rehabilitate and improve these assets. Many of these archeological sites may no longer contain the original structures, but they may aid in uncovering important local history, which may be used to help improve local character and create a heightened sense of place.



“Amos Miller House,
Mechanicsville”

State of Iowa Historic Development Programs

The state of Iowa provides a variety of economic development programs, many of them provide options for remediating historic downtowns, structures, and landmarks.

Community Catalyst Building Remediation

The Community Catalyst Building Remediation (CCBR) program provided by the state, assists communities with the redevelopment or rehabilitation of buildings to stimulate economic growth or reinvestment in the community. Funding is available on annual availability and the maximum grant awarded is \$100,000. The program stipulates that 40% of the funds available each cycle is to be awarded to cities with populations under 1,500. These funds are to be used for the rehabilitation of one commercial building per community or two adjacent buildings who share owners.

Historic Preservation Tax Credits

This program offers tax credits to developers who sensitively rehabilitate historic buildings. The state of Iowa offers this tax credit program to ensure character-defining features and spaces of buildings are retained to help create distinct and vibrant communities. The state income tax credit is for up to 25% of the qualified rehabilitation expenditures associated with the project. A variety of structures can meet the qualifications of this program; it must meet one of the following: it is on the National Register of Historic Places, contributes to the significance of a historic district, is designated as a local landmark by city or county ordinance, or is a barn constructed before 1937. This demonstrates the flexibility of this program, but is not an exhaustive list of requirements. For more information visit iowaeda.com.

Main Street Iowa

The Main Street Iowa program administered by the state of Iowa, works with a select group of communities that successfully complete a competitive application process and commit to exceptionally high standards for downtown economic development. The main street approach helps communities capitalize on unique identity, assets and character of their historic commercial districts. Assistance from the Main Street Team includes training workshops, architectural and design assistance, business assistance, and a number of other technical assistance opportunities.

These programs are not representative of all options at the state level, but represent a summary of programs that may be utilized.

Certified Local Governments

The Certified Local Government Program is a unique partnership between local, state, and federal government to help communities save irreplaceable historic character. Through the certification process, local governments make a commitment to historic preservation by passing local legislation and establishing a historic preservation commission. The commission advises the local elected officials on matters related to historic preservation and undertakes special projects in the community. Acceptance into the Certified Local Government Program makes a community eligible for funding, training, technical assistance, and access to a network of other preservation minded communities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to guide the City of Mechanicsville in strengthening the elements that make the city a unique and wonderful place.

Community Character

- Identify and enhance the elements that give the community its sense of place and unique identity.
- Leverage the city's unique traditions, landscape, historic elements, and contributions from artists for economic development, community marketing, and resident attraction and retention.
- Utilize and update existing historic structures in a manner that maintains their outward character, but is adapted to current economic conditions and local needs.

Arts and Recreation

- Support continuing improvement programs for park and recreation areas.
- Encourage extracurricular educational programs that help engage the youth with the city in the form of beautification projects, art installations, gardening, and engagement that promotes an active citizenry.
- Look for opportunities to expand the City's collection of public art.

Community History

- Support continuing efforts to record Mechanicsville's history through the Mechanicsville History Center.
- Establish a welcoming committee that helps integrate new residents into the social fabric of the community after they move in.

Community Connections

- Encourage city residents to participate in community beautification through community clean-up events, gardening clubs, friend groups, and other volunteer opportunities.
- Emphasize and celebrate individual and group contributions to the everyday maintenance of the city.
- Work with community organizations to provide festivals and events that bring the community together

Chapter 4. Economic Development

A vibrant regional and local economy is necessary for a community’s long-term success, many of the goals outlined in this document will be better realized if there is strong economic foundation that underpins them. Good jobs that pay well, help employees develop transferable skills, and that help provide local amenities improve the overall quality of life of residents. This chapter describes current economic conditions in Mechanicsville and identifies the organizations, projects, and policies that will help the community address issues of employment, industry, and commerce in an effective way.

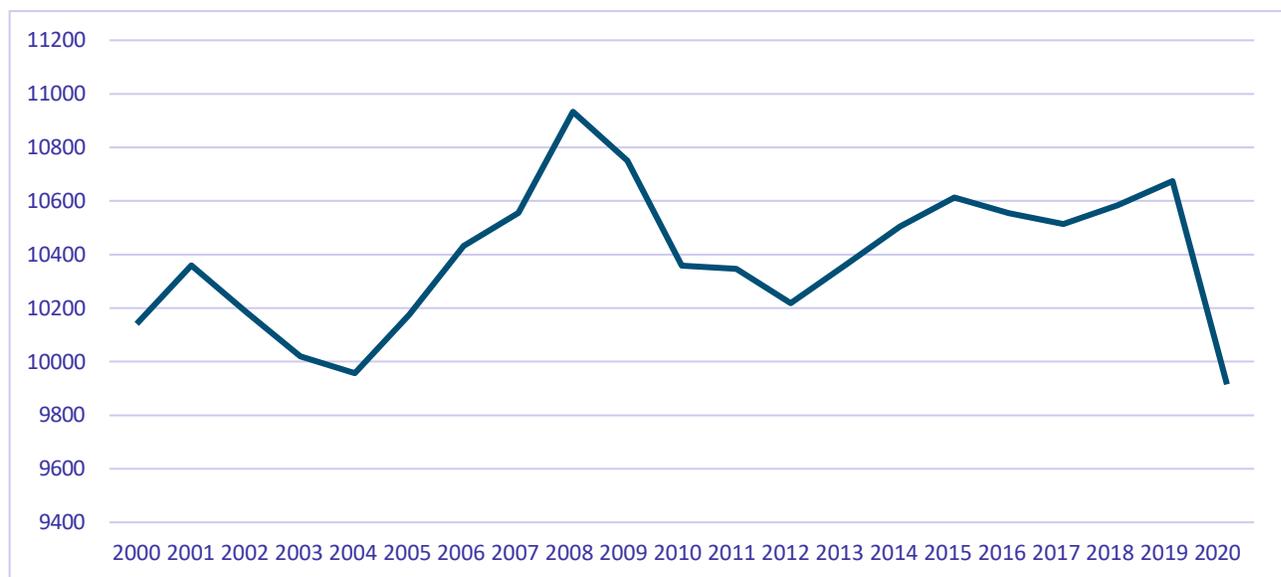
Economic Indicators

The information presented in this section provides a snapshot of current economic conditions in Mechanicsville and the surrounding area.

Employment

Since 2000, Cedar County has seen a great deal of variability in annual employment, many of these extreme shocks to the employment figures can be attributed to external factors such as the 2008 housing crisis and Covid as of recently. Both of these shocks affected lower income production occupations, material moving, and construction occupations which make up nearly 30% of all workers in the county, according to ACS 2019 data. Figure 3 charts the annual employment for Cedar County from 2000-2020, the largest number of employed individuals was 10,933 in 2008 and the lowest period has been 2020 where the employment numbers fell to 9,915 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 3. Annual Average employment, Cedar County 2000-2020



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

In addition to annual employment statistics, it is important to zoom into the monthly trends in employment. In figure 4, we can see that over the last few years there has been larger variability in the employment numbers, this is mostly due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The employment numbers in Cedar County have not yet climbed back to the place they were at previously in 2019. This reduction in overall employment highlights the larger impact of the pandemic on counties that have a high median age; Cedar County has a median age of 42.7 which is higher than many of the surrounding jurisdictions including Muscatine, Clinton, and Linn counties.

Workers that were closer to retirement or more vulnerable to disease took an opportunity to exit the workforce and smaller, demographically older towns like those in Cedar County have been struggling to attract young workers to replace the previous generation. For this reason, it is crucial for housing and economic development issues to be aligned, if there are no housing options for the young or elderly who would like to downsize then it will be difficult to grow the economy in the long run. Further discussion of housing strategies will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this document.

Figure 4. Monthly employment, Cedar County 2019-2021

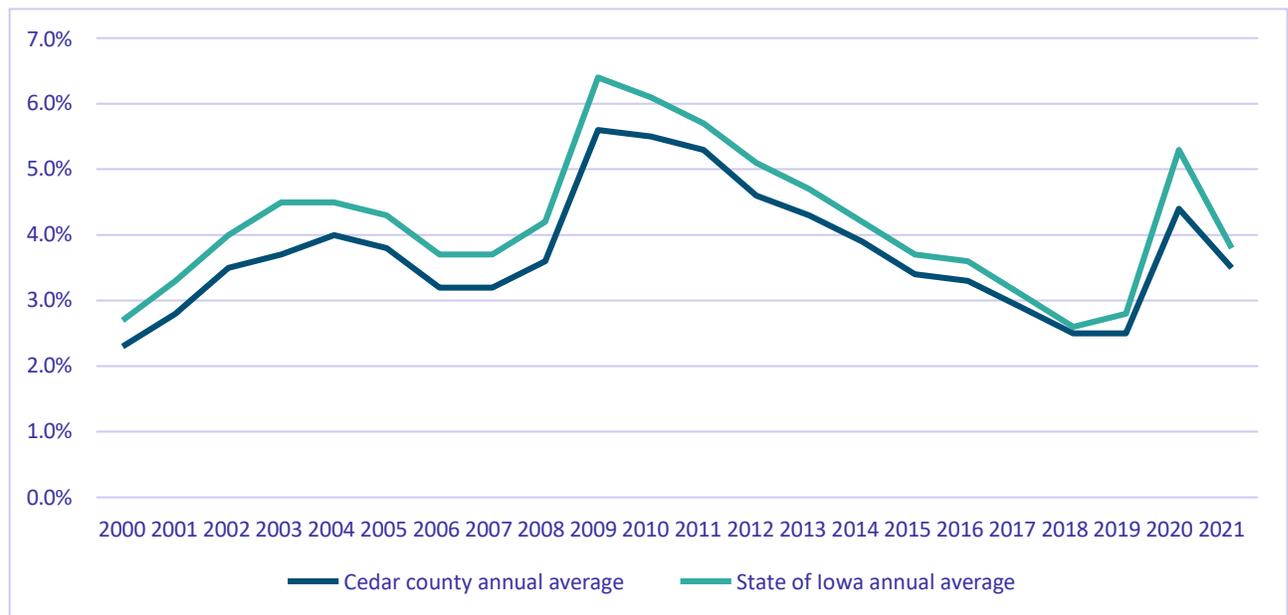


Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Cedar County has fluctuated over the years mirroring state wide trends. Still, Cedar County has maintained a lower unemployment rate on average when compared to the state of Iowa as a whole. Unemployment spiked during the housing crisis and subsequent recession in 2008, at this point unemployment spiked to 5.6%. From 2009, unemployment decreased to 2.6% before it would spike again due to COVID-19. Figure 4 charts both the Cedar County and State of Iowa unemployment rates from 2000 – 2021.

Figure 5. Annual Unemployment, Cedar County 2000-2021



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

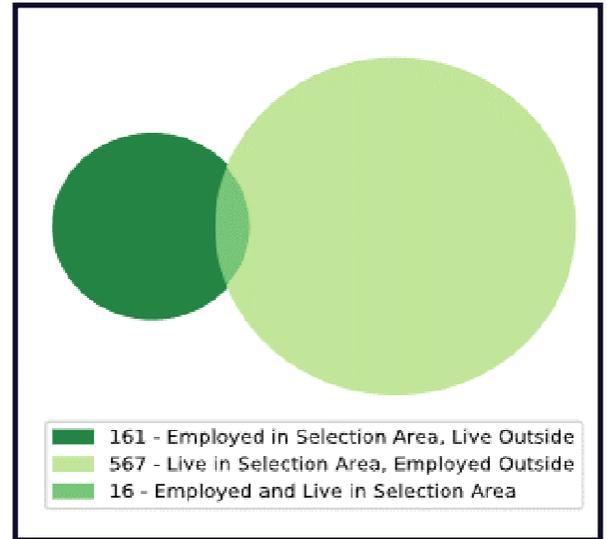
Commuting

The relationship between where people live and where they work is a significant issue that impacts economic development, transportation, and housing. People choose where to live based on a variety of complex emotional and economic reasons that are unique to each individual or family. Still, the location of an individual’s work and transportation to work are incredibly important factors that influence where a person or family choose to live. Understanding regional commuting patterns will help Mechanicsville map out its future land use patterns and guide the City’s future policy decisions.

Since Mechanicsville is a smaller community, many of the workers that live in Mechanicsville commute to nearby communities for work. Figure 5 shows the number of individuals that live in Mechanicsville and work elsewhere which is 567, and the dark green circle indicates the number that work in Mechanicsville but live outside of it. The overlapping portion of the circles illustrates the minority of individuals who live and work in Mechanicsville.

Figure 6 shows that many people that work in Mechanicsville live in near Cedar Rapids. However, the vast majority are scattered in rural towns in the surrounding area. Most residents who don't work in Mechanicsville are employed in the larger metropolitan areas of Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, and the Quad Cities.

Figure 5. Mechanicsville Worker Flows



Source: U.S. Census Bureau's OnTheMap, ACS 2019
<http://onthemap.ces.census.gov>

Figure 6. Home Location of Workers that Work in Mechanicsville

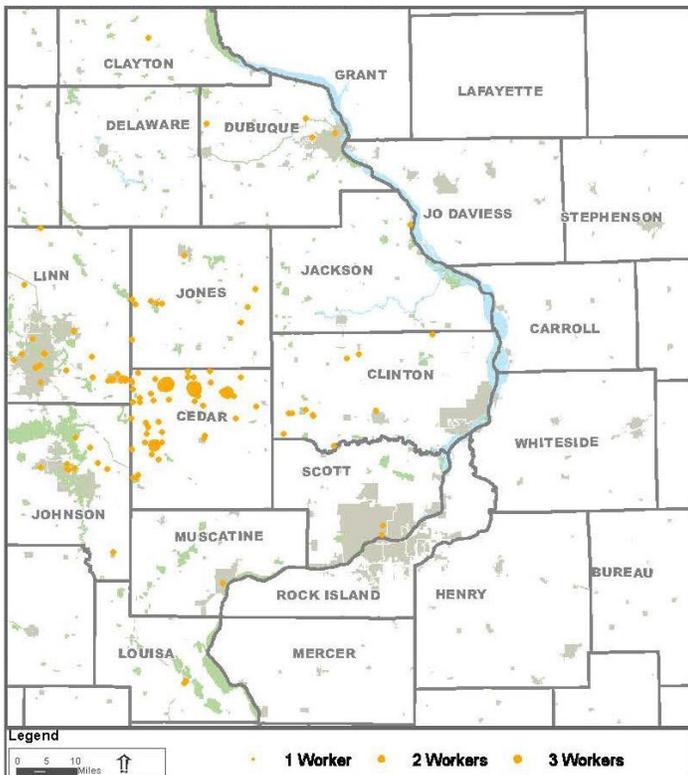
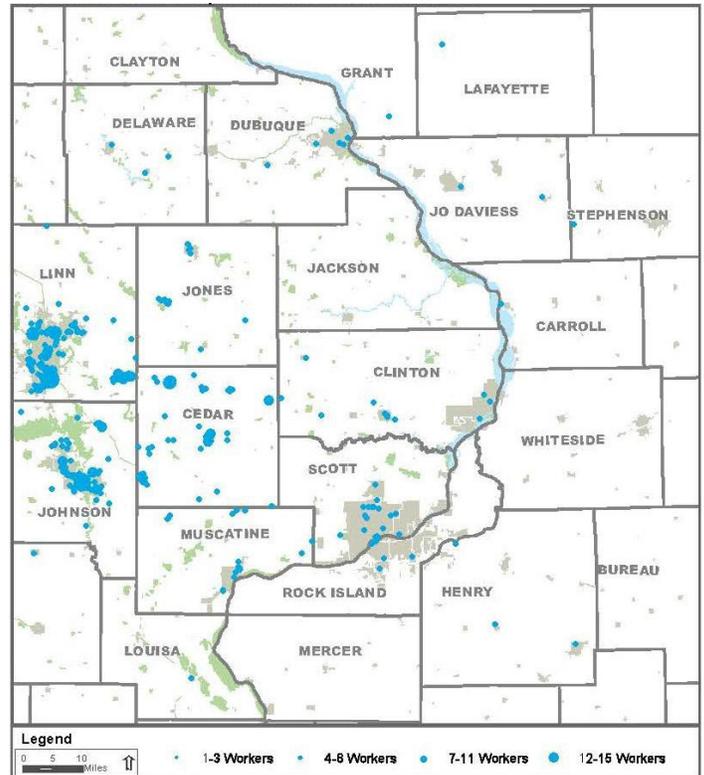


Figure 7. Work Location of Workers that Live in Mechanicsville



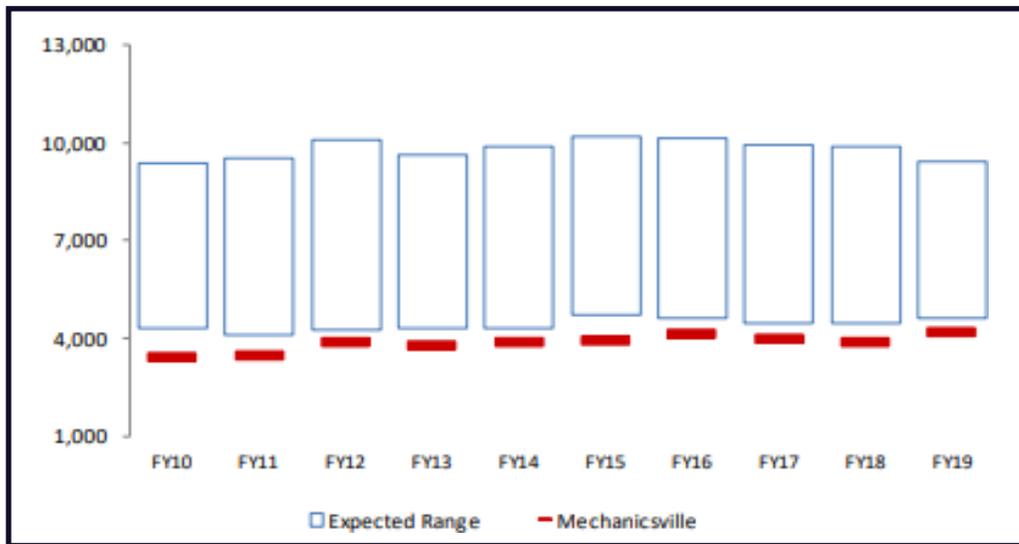
Source: U.S. Census Bureau's OnTheMap <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov>

Retail

Retail sales are an important measure of economic activity in a community, and many people consider access to retail business like shops and restaurants as central to their quality of life. Through the Mechanicsville Community Survey, residents expressed a desire for more retail options in the community.

Iowa State University Extension produces annual Retail sales reports for every community in the state. The chart compares sales level in Mechanicsville to expected values based on sales in similar sized cities in Iowa. The blue rectangle illustrates the range of expected values and the red lines show actual per capita sales in Mechanicsville. From 2010-2019 Mechanicsville's retail sales were below the expected range during every fiscal year.

Figure 8. Mechanicsville Expected and Actual Sales Per Capita 2010-2019



Source: Iowa State University Extension

Retail sales struggles are not unique to the Mechanicsville, many smaller communities struggle with maintaining a successful retail community. The city's location creates an especially difficult environment for retail. Larger nearby cities, like Cedar Rapids, the Quad Cities, and Iowa City, draw in retail sales from smaller surrounding rural communities. With a large number of workers commuting out of the city for work, Mechanicsville's residents have many options for shopping outside the community.

Improving economic conditions in Mechanicsville will take hard work, but incremental economic improvements may help elevate the quality of life and economic performance of Mechanicsville while maintaining the characteristics that make it a unique community. There is room for improvement, and many things residents mentioned in the community survey like restaurants, bars, small grocery stores, could be possible through incremental improvements that strengthen the community over time.

Future Economic Development Priorities

The City of Mechanicsville’s business community is important for the city’s future development. While the city will not be looking to bring in new businesses on a large scale, it should be prepared to react to any opportunities that come up. In the future, the city may be approached by an existing business that is looking to expand or relocate within the community, an entrepreneur looking to start a business, or a business might be interested in relocating to Mechanicsville. In all of these cases, if the business is a fit for the community, the city should be prepared to act and assist the business. The future priorities in this section will help Mechanicsville encourage economic growth in the community.

Identify partners and collaborations

Engaging in partnerships with local businesses, government institutions, non-profits, and other entities can help enhance business ecosystem within Mechanicsville. Collaborating with nearby cities on events, tourist attractions, civic associations, and education opportunities can help bring additional resources towards mutual issues of economic development. Shared events like Trunk or Treat can help attract larger audiences and aid in making connections with residents in nearby towns.

Maintain Infrastructure

Mechanicsville can also encourage economic growth by ensuring that its infrastructure is kept in good working condition. Maintenance of streets, water, and sewer infrastructure will be critical for future business development. Long term planning for infrastructure maintenance can help the community have high quality infrastructure along with affordable usage rates and property taxes that are attractive to business. When considering new developments, the city should make sure that the budget not only allows for initial costs of infrastructure, but the long-term maintenance costs as well.

Create More Commercial Space

Downtown Mechanicsville has a number of vacant commercial units, many of these units are in need of façade repairs and require the removal of debris before they can be fully utilized. If a commercial space is available, but needs some work, the local organizations could consider creating programs to assist property owners in making repairs, or help coordinate volunteers to help clean the property up. The State of Iowa also makes funding available through programs like the Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program. The program assists communities with the redevelopment, rehabilitation, or deconstruction of buildings to promote economic growth or reinvestment in the community. It is also important to identify areas where new commercial development could take place, even if no land is available currently, it is important to plan in advance where these developments may take place so that new opportunities can be taken as they arise.

Identify and Market Downtown

One of Mechanicsville’s most valuable assets is its historic downtown and the city should work towards marketing it as such. Signage that is visible from major roads such Highway 30 can help attract visitors and establish the downtown as a destination. Including information on Mechanicsville’s downtown on the website, event materials, and other outreach materials is critical towards marketing Mechanicsville’s downtown.

Improve and Maintain Community Appearance

Businesses may be more willing to invest in a community, if the community is willing to invest in its appearance. Keep Iowa Beautiful and other community groups have organized volunteers to take on community beautification projects. State programs like the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Derelict Building Program could also help the community address neglected buildings that have sat vacant for more than six months.

Support Entrepreneurship

While it is critical to create the space for private development, it is equally as important to cultivate the human capital that is required to build businesses. Extracurricular programs through the local school and library may be effective means for helping build the knowledge that is required for individuals to realize new business ventures. There are a number of existing economic institutions that are able to provide resources and guidance for individuals who are seeking to start businesses, these include the Cedar County Economic Development Commission and the Iowa SBDC program which has a location in Cedar Rapids.

Economic Development Partners

The City of Mechanicsville partners with several public and private organizations to help improve the local and regional economy. These organizations provide aid to small businesses, administer state and federal programs, and help create and implement effective local policies to foster economic growth and prosperity.

Cedar County Economic Development Commission

The Cedar County Economic Development Commission (CCEDC) works with the City of Mechanicsville to deliver a number of economic development services. These include resources for small business start-up, revolving loan funds, financial assistance, and local economic development. Through the CCEDC the Mechanicsville Economic Development Company has been actively serving the community for over 50 years.

East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA)

ECIA manages a number of economic development programs. ECIA Business Growth Inc., a non-profit corporation formed in 1982, provides low-interest loans to businesses for expansion that creates new or retains current jobs. Business Growth, Inc. operates business loan programs including the SBA 504 Program and a Regional Revolving Loan Fund. Since 1983, the ECIA Business Growth Board of Directors has approved 283 loans totaling \$84,038,699, resulting in the creation or retention of 4,917 jobs.

Potential Economic Development Partners

Iowa Economic Development Authority

The Iowa Economic Development Authority's (IEDA) mission is to strengthen economic and community vitality by building partnerships and leveraging resources to make Iowa the choice for people and business. Through two main divisions – business development and community development – IEDA administers several state and federal programs to meet its goals of assisting individuals, communities and businesses.

Iowa Small Business Development Center

The Iowa Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has multiple location around Iowa including one in Cedar Rapids. The Iowa SBDC offers free counseling services for individuals looking to start a business or grow an existing one. The SBDC offers additional guidance including training programs, cyber security information for small businesses, and a number of other resources.

Recommendations

- Assist local businesses in finding development sites for expansion.
- Support construction and maintenance of infrastructure that supports economic development including housing, transportation, and utility systems.
- Support construction of homes needed to house workers.
- Attract new residents and retain existing residents by continuing to improve quality of life in the community.
- Encourage revitalization and redevelopment of downtown buildings.
- Seek out educational opportunities that serve to aid the development of local entrepreneurs.
- Help connect local entrepreneurs with financial resources.
- Create new partnerships with other local governments to create events and clubs that serve citizens of Mechanicsville as well as those who live in nearby towns.
- Add signage to direct people to Downtown Mechanicsville.
- Continue to promote community through the city's website and Facebook page.
- Use the city's location along US Highway 30 as an opportunity for future business development.
- Identify areas for commercial development in the City's future land use map.

Chapter 5. Housing

Housing is a fundamental need for all people, and is a critical consideration in community planning efforts. Housing is many individuals' largest source of personal wealth and is often the largest investment that a person will make. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2020 housing made up nearly 35% of consumer spending. Housing has a large impact on the individual quality of life within a community. Where people live affects who their friends are, where their children go to school, job opportunities, and many other aspects of daily life.

Housing is an issue that is incredibly important to local governments. In many cities, housing can account for 50% of land uses, and residential property tax revenues make up a large portion of local government budgets. Because of its high level of importance, housing affects all of the elements that are listed in this plan. The costs of many of the public services that people require are highly associated with the number and density of home within a municipality. Infrastructure such as roads, water, and electricity are all examples of public services that are influenced by housing. Individual travel behavior is greatly affected by where people live, and as a result, housing and transportation planning must be closely coordinated.

Housing serves an important role in the regional economy, as it affects an employers' ability to attract and retain high quality employees. If housing costs are too high or if supply is limited, employers may see workers leave the area to find places with a lower cost of living. The housing sector also employs many workers within the region. Builders, lenders, construction workers, lawyers, real estate brokers all play important roles in the regional economy.

Quality housing is one of the core foundations of a stable and prosperous community. If community planning efforts are to be effective; they must integrate a community's housing policies. The objective of this chapter is to encourage the development of a housing stock that offers a variety of options that can serve individuals and families at all stages of their lives.



Homes in Mechanicsville

Housing Trends

The US Census Bureau provides information on housing through the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey (ACS). The following tables from the Census and from the City and County depict the most important aspects of housing in the City of Mechanicsville.

Housing Occupancy

As of the 2020 Census, the City of Mechanicsville had 488 housing units, a decrease of 8 units from the 2010 Census. Still, this is an overall 9 unit increase from 2000. Of the 488 units that are currently constructed 459 of them are occupied and 29 are vacant. Mechanicsville’s vacancy rate of 6% is slightly lower than the average for the state of Iowa which was 9% as of the 2020 Decennial Census. It should be noted that there may be a larger margin of error in census data that is taken from communities with smaller populations such as Mechanicsville, so there may be a small difference in these figures and what the actual housing occupancy and tenure is in Mechanicsville.

| | 2000 | | 2010 | | 2019*Estimate | |
|------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|---------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total Housing Units | 479 | -- | 496 | -- | 463 | -- |
| Occupied Housing Units | 452 | 94% | 471 | 95% | 417 | 90% |
| Vacant Housing Units | 27 | 6% | 25 | 5% | 46 | 10% |

US Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2000, 2010, ACS Estimates 2019

Housing Tenure

Of the 417 occupied housing units in Mechanicsville in 2019, 351 were owner occupied and 66 were renter occupied. Overall, the percentage of renters has decreased only slightly over the last two decades. When compared with Cedar County and the State of Iowa, Mechanicsville has lower rates of renter-occupied housing. Using 2019 estimates, rentals made up 19% of Cedar County occupied housing units. The state of Iowa renters accounted for 29% of occupied units. Table 2 includes Mechanicsville’s housing tenure data.

Table 2. Mechanicsville Housing Tenure

| | 2000 | | 2010 | | 2019*Estimate | |
|------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|---------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total Occupied Housing Units | 452 | -- | 471 | -- | 417 | -- |
| Owner Occupied | 354 | 78% | 402 | 85% | 351 | 84% |
| Renter Occupied | 98 | 22% | 69 | 15% | 66 | 16% |

US Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2000, 2010, ACS Estimates 2019

New Housing Construction

New housing construction will be incredibly important to Mechanicsville's future. While the city may not be expecting any rapid growth in the short term, it must make housing and construction a priority if the city wants to maintain the existing population. The City may have to consider building new units to replace older deteriorating units. New construction will also be a priority in Mechanicsville if the city wishes to add a larger variety of household types to better suit a wider range of demographics.

In recent years very little new construction has occurred within Mechanicsville. In the last 10 years only 9 homes have been built. Previous to that, the last large residential development that occurred in Mechanicsville was the Sandberg development in the NE corner of town which occurred in the late 80s/90s. There are about 5-6 lots that are still to be sold/developed from that project. The city also received grants for housing rehab through ECIA which resulted in the rehab of 10 houses for \$24,999 per house.

If the City wishes to encourage more new housing construction, it has a variety of options available. The State of Iowa has several programs to help cities construct more housing. Examples of state programs include the Iowa Finance Authority's Workforce Housing Loan and Iowa Economic Development Authority's workforce housing tax credit program. The City also has the ability to use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to finance housing related projects. Ultimately, many successful housing projects employ a combination of funding sources and are the result of partnerships between the city, state government, private investors, and local economic development agencies. One particular issue in the case of Mechanicsville is that is bounded by agricultural property in all directions. Owners of these properties have not been interested in selling or developing their land which limits the City's ability to grow. That being said, it is incredibly important to plan ahead and be ready in the event that the property owner does eventually wish to sell his/her property.

Housing Varieties

Senior Housing

Demographic data shows that the Baby Boomers, which make up a large segment of the City's population, are now reaching retirement age. As this trend continues, older residents will make up a larger portion of the population, and as a result, Mechanicsville will need to consider the needs of this population in future housing plans. Mechanicsville residents have identified a need for additional senior housing through the community survey. Many of the community's older residents would prefer to stay in Mechanicsville rather than move to another town. Many seniors are no longer able to utilize their entire house due to disability, so it's useful to have smaller, single-story options that are ADA accessible.

Young Adult Housing

Another important demographic for housing is young adults, many survey respondents wished there were more options for young families who have little need for a large single-family home. Making sure that there are affordable, smaller housing options in addition to single family housing helps to give individuals and families options during all stages of their lives.

Housing Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to guide the City of Mechanicsville in providing safe affordable housing for all residents of the City.

- Encourage a housing stock that offers a variety of options for all stages of life.
- Identify strategies to help cultivate public/private partnerships to help incentivize development in Mechanicsville.
- Support the creation of new housing needed to help the community maintain its population.
- Support housing redevelopment in existing vacant or underutilized structures such as upper floors of downtown buildings.
- Develop an inventory of vacant and underutilized properties.
- Encourage maintenance and rehabilitation of existing homes in Mechanicsville.
- Support community volunteer efforts to assist those in need with home maintenance tasks.
- Identify areas for future housing development in the City's future land use map.
- Encourage infill housing development on existing vacant lots in the city's existing neighborhoods.
- Support the development of quality, affordable owner and rental housing.
- Support the development of housing for the elderly.
- Start a positive dialogue with agricultural property to discuss why housing is an important issue to the City of Mechanicsville's ability to grow and prosper.

Chapter 6. Public Infrastructure and Facilities

Public infrastructure and facilities are a critical component of a comprehensive plan and key aspect for long term strategic planning within a city. Infrastructure related to water supply, electricity, natural gas, are a necessary requirement if new developments are to occur within the City. Facilities generally include city-owned structures such as fire departments, schools, and water treatment plants. Land that has access to municipal utilities is much easier to develop and has a higher value than land that does not have access. High quality facilities also have the ability to improve the quality of life within a municipality; conversely, low quality facilities may decrease the quality of life significantly by negatively impacting the health of residents, continuity of service, and economic standing of the City and its residents. High quality infrastructure and facilities are also a key factor for potential businesses and residents who are choosing where to locate.

The City of Mechanicsville manages much of the community's infrastructure, but important facilities are also managed by other government agencies and private businesses. In Mechanicsville, community facilities are a source of community pride as volunteers play a large role in providing Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

This chapter will provide an introduction to Mechanicsville's public infrastructure and facilities; furthermore, it will explore how these systems impact the community's potential for growth and development. This chapter includes an inventory of infrastructure and facilities and provides a list of recommendations that will help the City provide the highest quality community facilities to its residents in the future.

Public Infrastructure and Utilities

Water

A typical municipal water supply and distribution system contains four basic components: a water source, filtration and treatment, water pressure and storage tank, and local distribution pipes. Water treatment reduces undesirable contaminants to acceptable levels and provides water with an improved chemical balance. The treated water is pumped from the treatment source to a water storage tank. Water storage tanks are usually elevated water towers or reservoirs, the purpose of which is to provide pressure to water throughout the system. After the water leaves the storage tank, a system of underground pipes delivers the water to homes and businesses. According to the Iowa Geological Survey there are 2 municipal wells within Mechanicsville that serve as water sources; these wells are labeled Well #2 and Well #3. Well #2 is located near City Hall on North Jackson Street, it was originally drilled in July, 1962 and is 455 feet deep. Well #3 is located near East End Park and was drilled in July, 1967 and also has a depth of 455 feet. Mechanicsville also has two Elevated Storage Tanks one near the east end of Mechanicsville, which has a storage capacity of 150,000 gallons of water, and the second tower near City Hall has a capacity of 50,000 gallons. The capacity of the water system is 150,000 gallons per day and an average consumption of 80,000 gallons per day.



Mechanicsville City Hall Water Tower

Wastewater

Most city wastewater treatment facilities collect wastewater through a system of pipes that are engineered to let waste flow by the force of gravity towards a waste treatment plant. Often, gravity flow is not possible for certain areas of a city, in that case, a lift station may be required to pump the wastewater uphill. Once the waste reaches the treatment plant, it must be separated into solids (sludge) and liquids (effluent). Sludge is often disposed of in a way that is economical and safe for the environment, and the effluent is discharged into a flowing stream or river, if it meets water quality standards.

The City's sewage treatment plant was originally constructed in 1987 as a two-cell aerated lagoon system. In 2005, a quiescent cell was constructed, converting the treatment facility to a 3-cell system. To reach IDNR compliance regarding Ammonia and E.coli levels, the City of Mechanicsville-

constructed an enhanced treatment aerated lagoon plant in 2022. The SAGR treatment system that Mechanicsville selected makes it one of the most sophisticated facilities in the state, as only 11 other facilities in Iowa are using a SAGR system. The average load of the sewage treatment system is 167,687 gallons per day with a maximum load of 2,269,000 gallons per day.

Electricity

Alliant Energy provides electricity and natural gas service to most residents within the City of Mechanicsville. Residential electricity rates in Mechanicsville were most recently estimated to be 12.82¢/kWh which was 18.48% greater than the Iowa average rate of 10.82¢/kWh. The average commercial electricity rate in Mechanicsville is 11.2¢/kWh which is 39.83% greater than the Iowa average rate of 8.01¢/kWh. Residential natural gas price in Mechanicsville averaged \$12.65 per thousand cubic feet in December 2021. This was approximately 3.7% less than the U.S. average rate of \$13.13 per thousand cubic feet for residential customers. The industrial natural gas prices in December 2021 averaged \$9.17 per thousand cubic feet which was 36.1% more than the average rate \$6.74 per thousand cubic feet in the United States as a whole.

Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling

The City of Mechanicsville provides curbside garbage and contracts out recycling collection to Oveson Refuse & Recycling, which collects once a week on Mondays.

Telephone, Internet, and Cable

A critical issue facing rural communities is gaining access to high-speed internet. High quality internet access is incredibly important to the quality of life and competitiveness of communities operating in an increasingly connected world. Mechanicsville Telephone Company offers Internet and cable services. High-speed fiber optic internet infrastructure has recently been extended to the City of Mechanicsville via the Mechanicsville Telephone Company, which also provides service to Lisbon and Mount Vernon.

Community Facilities

Law Enforcement

The City of Mechanicsville maintain its own police department for law enforcement services. In 2022 the police department employed one sworn officer.

Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services

Mechanicsville also maintains its own volunteer Fire and EMS department, which share a single station attached to city hall. There are roughly 25 volunteer firefighters and 8 volunteer EMS members. The department serves all of Mechanicsville and helps aid surrounding communities in Cedar County. The response times for Fire/EMS average less than 5 minutes within Mechanicsville. The department owns two ambulances and two fire engines.



Mechanicsville Fire Department

Emergency Communications

Cedar County Emergency Management Agency receives 911 and non-emergency calls for all of cedar county. The calls are then dispatched out to each of the EMS, law enforcement, and fire agencies that serve the county. The Cedar County Emergency Management office is located at 1410 Cedar St, Tipton, and it has 2 full time staff.

Schools

The North Cedar Community School District provides K-12 education, and it serves 700 students from Clarence, Lowden, Mechanicsville, and Stanwood. The district contains one Junior/Senior high school, two elementary schools, district offices, and a football/track complex. As its namesake suggests, Mechanicsville Elementary is located within the City of Mechanicsville and serves children in preschool through sixth grade.

Infrastructure Maintenance

All infrastructure and public facilities whether it is a road, bridge, or sidewalk has a life cycle. As development occurs, new water and sewer pipes, street, and electrical lines are installed to serve it. This new infrastructure will remain in service for many years, but over time it will deteriorate and eventually need to be replaced. Replacement is inevitable and is the most expensive part of the infrastructure life cycle. However, municipalities can maximize the lifespan of their infrastructure through investments in routine maintenance. A city that defers routine maintenance will often save money in the short term, but it will likely pay significantly more in the long run for emergency repairs and eventual reconstruction as the infrastructure deteriorates at a faster pace.

Capital Improvements Program

The City can plan for future infrastructure maintenance projects by identifying and prioritizing them in its Capital Improvements Program (CIP). The CIP is a tool for scheduling, planning, and financing large construction projects and major pieces of equipment. The CIP is a written document that links together the City's comprehensive plan with its annual budget.

The City uses its CIP process to identify needed infrastructure projects and rank them based on their importance to the community. Once the projects are ranked, the City uses the CIP to develop its annual budget, identify project funding sources such as grant or loan programs, and to set rates for utilities like water and sewer.

The goal of the CIP is to inform the City Council's decision-making process by providing the big picture view of all projects. Without a CIP, the City Council would be aware of the need for many capital projects, but they would likely have questions about how to pay for them, when to construct them, and how to prioritize them. The City of Mechanicsville should consider creating a CIP that is up to date with the Comprehensive Plan. Once created a CIP should be updated on an annual basis, this gives the opportunity to add, revise, or remove projects from the CIP.

Public Infrastructure and Facilities Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to guide the City of Mechanicsville in providing high quality infrastructure and facilities for all residents of the city.

Public Infrastructure and Facilities

- Begin/update the City's Capital Improvement Program on an annual basis.
- Invest in infrastructure projects that yield private sector investments that can sustain the long-term costs of infrastructure.

-
- Perform routine maintenance and support ongoing improvements that will extend the life of infrastructure systems.
 - Encourage development and redevelopment that take advantage of existing infrastructure and assets.
 - Plan for, build, and improve infrastructure systems to meet anticipated growth and development needs.

Public Safety

- Monitor public safety facilities, equipment, and procedures to ensure that adequate service is provided.
- Encourage cooperation and resource sharing among local public safety agencies.
- Coordinate with local police and fire departments to ensure that new developments can be served by existing facilities and equipment.

Educational Facilities

- Coordinate with local school and Cedar County education institutions to provide adequate educational facilities and improve educational opportunities for students.
- Identify opportunities and partnerships with organizations such as the Mechanicsville Public Library to serve adult learners.
- Communicate with local schools to ensure that a proposed development can be served by existing educational facilities.

Chapter 7. Transportation

Transportation is an incredibly important facet of a city; it impacts where people live, how they get to work, how goods flow in and out of a city, and overall quality of life. Transportation also connects people and goods to other communities; businesses import products and raw materials from outside the region, and export goods and commodities to other regions. Connects to regional transportation networks allow businesses to conduct these transactions quickly and efficiently. The goal of this chapter is to determine policies and best practices that will result in more efficient and affordable transportation to residents and businesses in the City of Mechanicsville.

Local City Streets

Mechanicsville’s local street network is separate from County or State roads; maintenance and construction are the responsibility of the municipality. The City of Mechanicsville’s Street network within city limits is approximately 8.2 miles long. The majority of the street system has an asphalt surface while some newer roads such as Cottage Dr have a PCC (Portland Cement Concrete) surface. A minority of roads at the edge of the city boundaries are gravel roads.

Continued street maintenance will be one of Mechanicsville’s most important transportation priorities. Regular maintenance protects the community’s investment in its streets by preventing deterioration and extending its useful life. Well maintained streets support the economy, quality of life, and health of a community because they help residents get to their destinations safely and efficiently.

Pavement Quality

The Pavement Condition Index (PCI) is a standard measurement employed by the Iowa department of transportation that helps classify roads by the quality of the pavement using the roughness of the road as the primary variable. Generally, a PCI of between 0-25 indicates a seriously damaged or failing road, 26-55 is poor, and a score above 55 is fair or good quality. Figure 9, shows the PCI scores of the local roads throughout Mechanicsville, color codes denote the priority level rather than the category that they would technically classify under. The majority of streets in Mechanicsville are between poor and fair quality; however, there are

Figure 9. Pavement Condition Index, Mechanicsville



Source: Iowa DOT, 2022

a number of streets in the western portion of town that should be considered high priorities for maintenance or replacement, these are marked in red in Figure 9.

Pavement Type

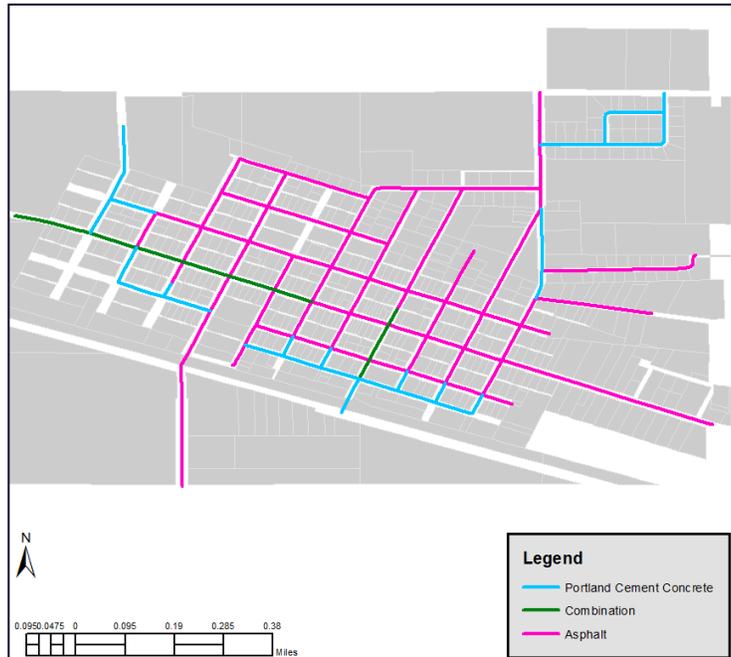
There is a multitude of methods and materials that can be used to construct and surface roads. Each material offers a variety of benefits as well as unique drawbacks. The two most common material that are used in Mechanicsville are Asphalt and Concrete, the characteristics of each will be discussed below.

Asphalt Pavement

Approximately 5.8 miles of Mechanicsville’s roads are asphalt, this makes up 71% of the local road system located within the municipal boundaries. Asphalt pavement has a number of positive characteristics, it is generally cheaper than concrete, offers better skid resistance, and is easier to maintain compared to concrete.

Asphalt, like other road materials, has a variety of unique distresses that occur over natural the lifecycle of the road. Two of the most common

Figure 10. Pavement Type, Mechanicsville



Source: Iowa DOT, 2022

issues that face asphalt roads are Alligator cracks and bleeding. Alligator cracks can occur for a variety of reasons, but the most common reasons are either poor drainage or too much loading on the structure. If alligator cracks are not repaired early enough potholes and pavement disintegration will occur. Bleeding is another common issue that occurs in asphalt roads. This occurs when a film of asphalt binder rises to the surface of the pavement, which results in slippery surface when conditions are wet and sticky when it is dry.

Concrete Pavement

Concrete pavement makes up roughly 1.7 miles (20%) of Mechanicsville’s local road system. Concrete roads of many advantages including a longer lifespan and less maintenance when compared to asphalt pavement. However, concrete is often more expensive than asphalt, and it is more difficult to repair and install.

Most of the distresses that are unique to concrete are due to the fact that concrete is not a very flexible material like asphalt. Extreme temperature, high pressure, and surface movement can all lead to various forms of cracking. Corner breaks are one of the most common issues that occur in concrete. Corner breaks occur when high loads are combined with support failures. Scaling is another form of distress that is marked by a network of hairline cracks which extend through the upper surface of the concrete. Usually improper construction, poor aggregate, and natural freeze/thaw cycles can cause this. Repairing concrete pavement often requires replacing the entire concrete slab, which is time consuming and expensive.

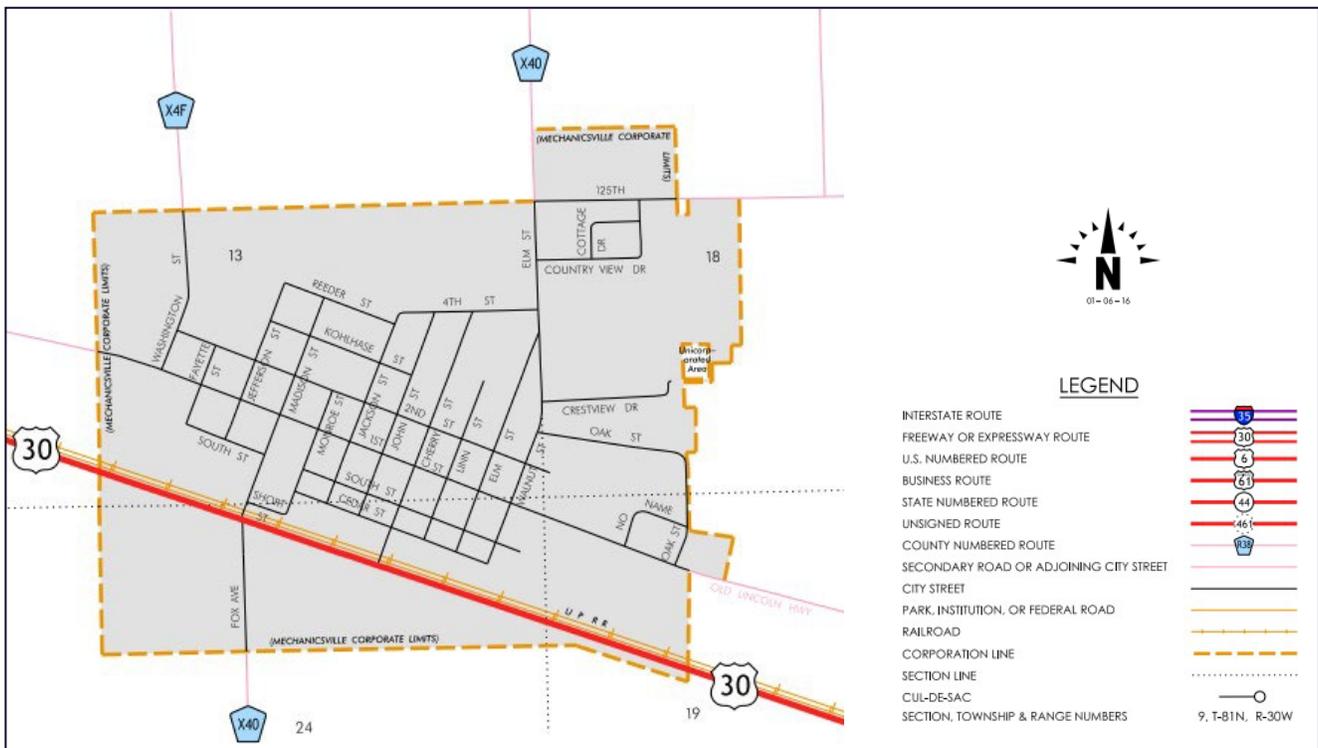
Highways

Mechanicsville is directly located on US Highway 30, this provided an important connection to neighboring communities and to federal/state highways such as Interstate 380, US Highway 61, and Iowa 1. US Highway 30 is critical to the future growth of Mechanicsville; a large majority of Mechanicsville residents commute to Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, and other locations using Highway 30. Not only is this important for commuter travel, but also for industrial operations, such as farmers and other local businesses. Speed and safety of highways factor heavily in business calculation, so it is important the Highway 30 is a high-quality road. Highway 30 also provides connections to amenities located in larger cities, easy access to grocery stores, malls, and other retail shops helps rural communities maintain a high quality of life. Highway 30 is maintained by the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Farm to Market Roads

In addition to US Highway 30, Mechanicsville is connected to nearby communities by a system of regional highways that include Farm to Market Roads and other secondary roads. A Farm to Market Road is a road that is used to connect agricultural areas to distribution centers in nearby cities. Many residents of Mechanicsville work in farming and other associated agricultural industries, making Farm to Market routes a topic of critical importance to the health of the local economy. The primary Farm to Market Roads through Mechanicsville are X-40 and X-4F; it is important that the maintenance of these routes is prioritized, as they significantly impact the local economy.

Figure 11. Road Classifications, Mechanicsville



Source: Iowa DOT, 2022

Regional Coordination

Highways are integral to the future of Mechanicsville; however, these roads are maintained by external agencies like the Iowa Department of Transportation and Cedar County. Due to this, the City of Mechanicsville will have to actively work with these agencies to maintain these highways and other critical connections.

The City of Mechanicsville can coordinate on regional transportation projects through Regional Planning Affiliation 10 (RPA 10). Mechanicsville is a member of RPA 10, an organization that facilitates regional coordination for transportation projects. RPA 10 covers a 7-county region including Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington counties. RPA 10 is governed by a policy board made up of representatives of its member cities, counties, and regional transportation agencies. Mechanicsville shares a RPA 10 Policy Board Representative with other small cities in Cedar county. Participation in the RPA 10 policy board gives Mechanicsville access to transportation funding and allows the community to have a seat at the table for discussion of regionally significant transportation projects.

Public Transit

River Bend Transit (RBT) provides transit services to the City of Mechanicsville. RBT is one of sixteen regional transit systems in the state of Iowa and is a non-profit service organization. RBT's services are open and available to the general public. RBT vehicles are fully equipped with lifts or ramps to assist entry, and drivers specialize in serving people with disabilities. RBT's regular operating time frame is from 5:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

RBT's fares vary depending on which county the ride starts and where the rider is traveling, or if a rider is using a contracted service. Prices for seniors age 60+ and disabled individuals are lower than prices for the general public. RBT has identified specific days for each county to commute to desirable destinations. Table 3 summarizes RBT's services in Cedar County.

Table 3. River Bend Transit Cedar County Services

| Service | Days | Seniors (60+) or person with disabilities- Round Trip Suggested Donation | Established Fare for General Public |
|-----------------|----------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Tipton | M,W,Th | \$3.00 | \$8.00 |
| Iowa City | T, Th, F | \$6.50 | \$11.50 |
| Cedar Rapids | Th | \$6.50 | \$11.50 |
| Davenport | Th | \$6.50 | \$11.50 |
| Out of County | | \$6.50 | \$11.50 |
| In-Town Service | | \$1.50 | \$6.50 |
| County Service | | \$3.00 | \$8.00 |

Source: River Bend Transit

Bicycle and Pedestrians

Walking and biking are important modes of transportation for Mechanicsville, particularly for trips within the city. Walking and biking can provide transportation for those who are unable to drive or don't have access to a car. Choosing to walk or bike instead of driving can save money, improve air quality, and improve physical

health. Increasingly, younger generations are putting a higher value on bicycle and pedestrian transportation; so, investing in this infrastructure may be a useful strategy for resident recruitment and attraction.

Existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities can be classified into three categories: trails, on-street bicycle routes, and sidewalks. The following section provides a description of each.

Trails

Most trails in the area are classified as multi-use trails. These trails typically are concrete, asphalt, or packed crushed rock and usually between 8 feet and 10 feet wide. Multi-use trails are physically separated from motorized traffic by an open space or barrier and can be in an independent right of way or within a roadway right-of-way. Multi-use trails usually accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians are suitable for most age groups and abilities. It should be noted that Mechanicsville is currently working on a walking path that surrounds the elementary school.

In addition to multi-use trails, the community could also look at trails that are geared to more specific types of uses including hiking and mountain biking. These specific-use trails are almost always used for recreation and are usually unpaved, steeper, and narrower than a multi-use trail, and as a result, may require a relatively higher level of physical ability.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are an important part of the pedestrian network. Sidewalks provide necessary walking connections to homes, businesses, transit services, and other activities.

Many streets in Mechanicsville have sidewalks, but some gaps exist in the sidewalk network. In some cases, sidewalks do not exist, in others the sidewalks are there but pedestrians are deterred by an unsafe crossing of a busy street. Sidewalk maintenance can also be an issue. Unlike trails or city streets, private property owners usually maintain sidewalks, and owners can vary greatly in their ability or desire to maintain sidewalks. Private ownership somewhat limits the City's ability to address gaps in the sidewalk network. But the City does have options available to improve the sidewalk network.

- Inventory the sidewalk network and identify critical gaps and safety issues.
- Work with property owners to address sidewalks issues.
- Install safety improvements at crossings if needed.

Railroad

Rail transportation has been an important aspect to Mechanicsville's early development, going back to the mid-1800s when Northwestern Railroad first gained possession of the land required to build the original rail lines. The Northwestern Railroad was eventually consolidated into Union Pacific Railroad (UP), which currently operates the lines that run through Mechanicsville. The tracks that run through the city are part of the UP main line that provides a direct route between Chicago and the west coast. This freight is a critical connection for businesses in the region and beyond, but it also may create challenges for the community.

Railroad issues can range from minor inconveniences like noise from passing trains or being stuck waiting at a crossing, to more serious concerns like crossing safety, emergency response planning for derailments, or assuring emergency vehicles access if a crossing is blocked by a train.

In Cedar County, railroad safety planning is joint effort between cities, the sheriff's department, the Cedar County Emergency Management, and the railroad. Planning efforts of these agencies are documented in the

2021 Cedar County, Iowa Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan includes a number of recommendations aimed at reducing the risk posed from railroad incidents as well as other events like natural disasters.

In the past there have been a number of safety issues and accidents at the railroad crossings in Mechanicsville. However, UP and the City have been able to implement a number of safety improvements since 2011, when a number of significant accidents occurred. The City of Mechanicsville should continue to work with UP and emergency management officials to ensure a balance between railroad safety, community safety, and quality of life.

Transportation Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to guide the City of Mechanicsville in providing safe high-quality transportation for all residents of the City.

Transportation Planning Process

- Continue to work with outside agencies such as Cedar County, the Iowa Department of Transportation, and Regional Planning Affiliation 10 to maintain regional highway connections
- Participate in the Highway 30 Coalition to collaborate with other municipalities on future developments regarding Highway 30.
- Continue to look for opportunities to fund transportation infrastructure projects through state and federal programs.

Transportation Safety

- Continue to actively participate in the Cedar County Hazard Mitigation Planning process; identify and mitigate safety issues relating to the city's transportation infrastructure.

Roads and Bridges

- Evaluate the City's street system and plan future street maintenance projects through a Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Public Transportation

- Coordinate with River Bend Transit to improve public service in the Mechanicsville area

Bicycle and Pedestrian

- Create a more complete bicycle and pedestrian network through the development of trails, on-street bicycle routes, and sidewalks.
- Improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians by adding improvements to on-street bicycle routes and improving street crossings.
- Sidewalk maintenance to help keep sidewalks safe and accessible for the entire community.

Railroad

- Continue to work with Union Pacific and emergency management officials to ensure a balance between railroad safety, community safety, and quality of life.

Chapter 8. Land use

Land use planning is one of the most important tools that local governments have at their disposal. Creating a future land use plan allows the city to ensure that adequate land is available to allow the community to grow and meet its future development goals. Additionally, land use planning encourages orderly development of land that allows the City to provide services in the most efficient way possible.

The Future Land Use Map serves as a guide for future zoning, subdivision, and annexation decisions. A good future land use map provides consistency and predictability in the decision-making process that encourages and protects investment in the community.

The goal of this chapter is to help the City of Mechanicsville plan for future development by developing land use policies that promote economic development, good quality of life, and allow the City to provide services in the most efficient manner possible over the long term.

Land Development Tools

Mechanicsville has a number of regulatory tools available to promote orderly land development. Zoning and subdivision ordinances give the community the ability to establish land use patterns that are logical, orderly, and attractive. Sound planning enforced by effective development codes provides the key to a well-planned city. The City can use its zoning and subdivision codes to effectively enforce its planning efforts so public resources can be expended more efficiently.

Zoning

Combined with the comprehensive plan, the City uses zoning to establish an orderly land use pattern. Following the comprehensive plan, the city of Mechanicsville may update their existing zoning ordinance to better reflect current economic conditions and community priorities. The zoning ordinance divides the city into districts and defines how property within those districts can be used. Zoning assigns compatible uses to the same district and separates incompatible uses. Zoning also controls the height and bulk of structures and separation between buildings.

Subdivision Regulations

The City of Mechanicsville regulates land development through a subdivision ordinance. The City's subdivision ordinance establishes rules for how land is divided and developed from vacant property into residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Regulating how land is divided allows the City to ensure that all new developments meet minimum safety and infrastructure standards for streets, utilities, and drainage.

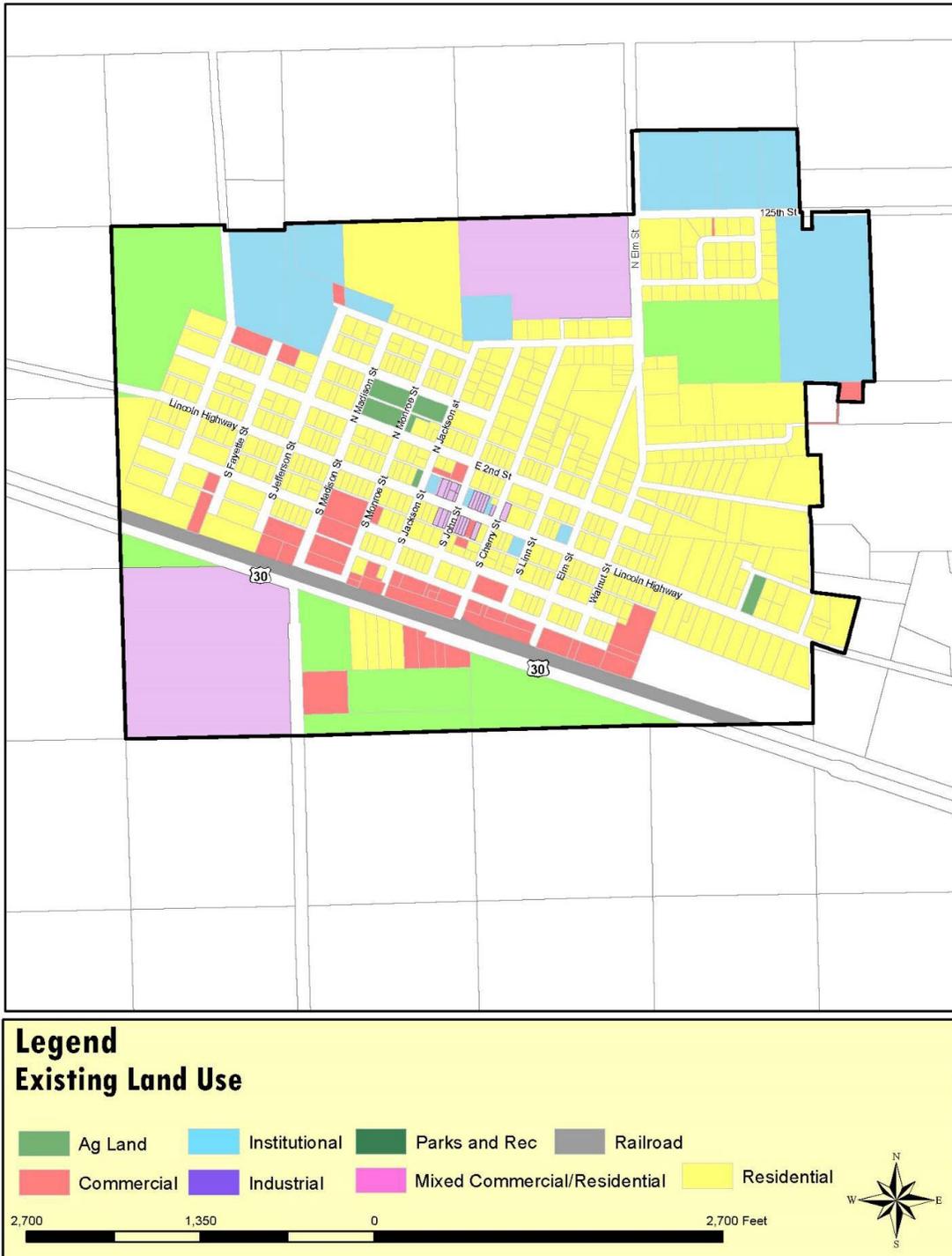
Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Iowa planning and development Code gives cities that have adopted subdivision ordinances the option to review subdivision plats that are located within two miles of their city boundaries. If a property owner within two miles of the city wishes to subdivide their land, they must apply to both the city and county for approval. Mechanicsville has the opportunity to use its extraterritorial subdivision review authority to help promote efficient and orderly development around the edge of the city by ensuring that future rural development will be built to city standards.

Existing Land Use

Developing Mechanicsville’s Future Land Use Map begins with an evaluation of existing land uses within the community. Figure.12 maps the City of Mechanicsville’s existing land use.

Figure 12. Mechanicsville Existing Land Use Map



Land Use Priorities

Throughout the planning process several land use priorities emerged that were used to guide the development of the Future Land Use Map.

Identify Appropriate Areas for New Growth

New land development is necessary for quality of life and economic vitality. However, it is equally important that new growth occurs in appropriate locations and in an orderly manner. The City must carefully analyze conditions and consider the type of development that is most appropriate at a given location. Considerations regarding infrastructure, topography, and surrounding uses should be made when carrying out this analysis.

The future land use map represents the first step in the process of identifying the appropriate type of growth for site across the community. The map provides a conceptual development guide based on a high-level analysis of existing conditions. The map serves as a general guide, but how each parcel is developed will ultimately be determined by a more specific assessment of the development proposal and site conditions that occurs during the zoning and subdivision review process.

Invest in Downtown Mechanicsville

Mechanicsville should not only consider areas of expansion, but also how existing assets could be developed in the future. Mechanicsville's downtown is a unique asset that should be maintained and adapted to reflect current economic realities. Continued investment in infrastructure, maintenance, building rehabilitation, and infill development conveys to visitors and residents that Mechanicsville is valuable and cared for. In turn, this may help build positive momentum within the community, as neighbors will be more likely to invest in their properties once they see others doing the same. Identifying potential development sites is the first step to neighborhood investment. Existing vacant lots and buildings, empty storefronts, neighborhood parks, homes that need repair, and local streets could all be opportunities for investment.

Mixed Land uses

Many common land use tools, like zoning, are based on separating incompatible uses. In some cases, mixing land uses can make a community a more vibrant and economically productive place. Downtown Mechanicsville is a great example of a mixed-use area as there are residential, office space, restaurants, and retail all within close proximity. When planning new developments, it is important to consider whether or not the uses really are incompatible, and if there is an opportunity to allow appropriate mixing of different yet compatible land uses.

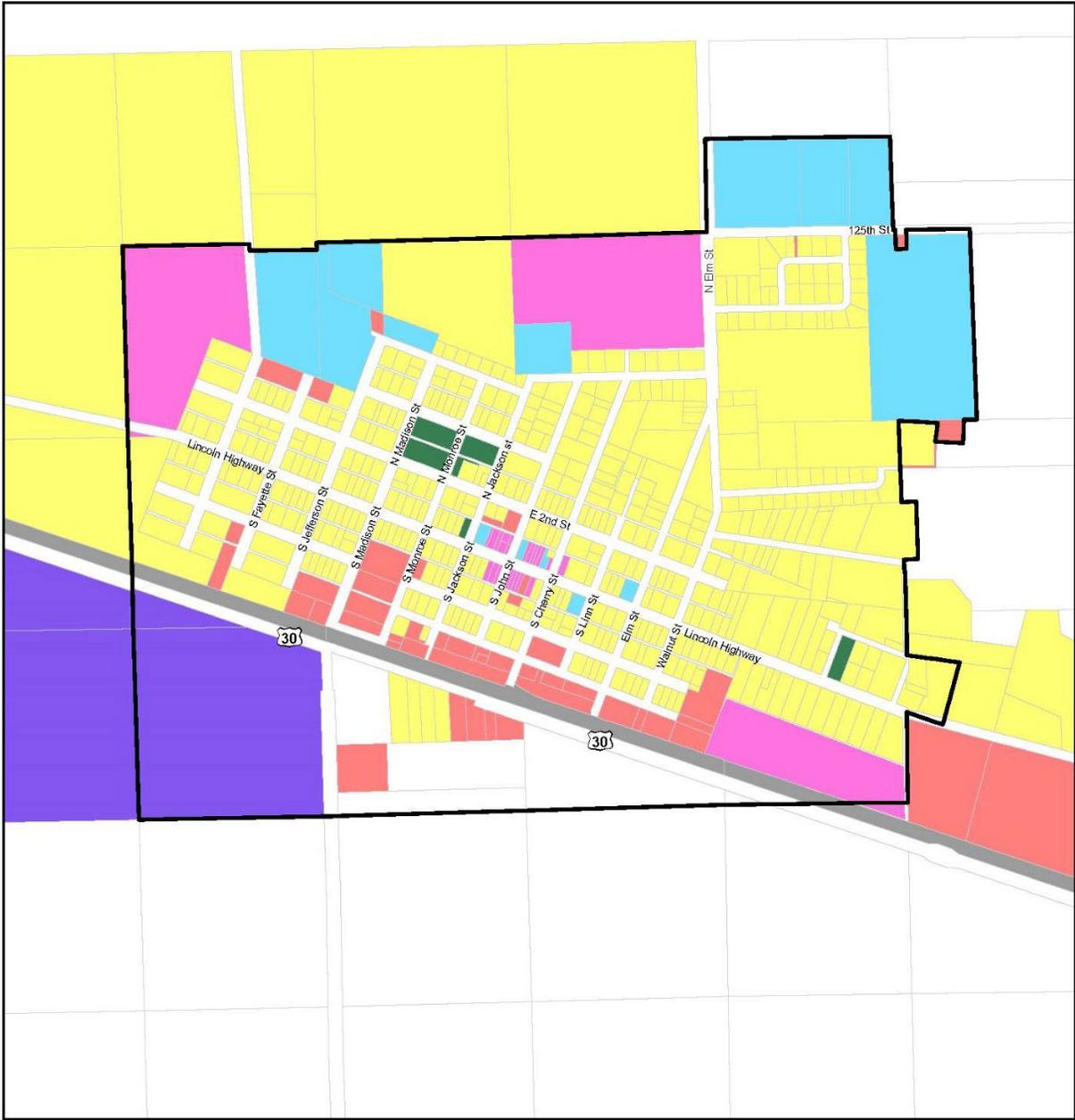
Protect Natural Resources

Rural communities like Mechanicsville are often defined by their connection to the natural landscape that surrounds them. As the city grows, the community will have to decide how to best preserve their natural resources, while maintaining a dynamic economy. Farmland, forests, and other natural areas play a vital role in defining a community's sense of place, and should be conserved if the community believes they are of value. By engaging in strategic planning, a community can identify what land will be used to accommodate growth and what land should be conserved.

Future Land Use

Through the comprehensive planning process the City of Mechanicsville has developed a future land use map that will serve as a guide for the future development of the city. The Future Land Use Map in Figure 13 is a development concept that provides a general guide for future development. The City should review the future land use map regularly and update the map as conditions change. Ultimately, land shown in the map is expected to transition from its existing use to its future use based on market conditions and when the property owner chooses to sell, subdivide, or develop their land.

Figure 13. Mechanicsville Future Land Use Map



Legend
Future Land Use

| | | | |
|------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Ag Land | Institutional | Parks and Rec | Railroad |
| Commercial | Industrial | Mixed Recreational/Commercial | Residential |

3,000 1,500 0 3,000 Feet

Future Land Use Categories

- **Agriculture** Includes farms and land used for agricultural purposes.
- **Single-Family Residential** includes low density single and two-family homes with open lawns. The area also includes parks, religious and educational facilities, on and off-street trails, and interconnected streets with sidewalks.
- **Institutional** includes facilities that serve an educational, governmental, medical, religious, or charitable purpose.
- **Commercial** areas include a variety of businesses that provide residents with desired goods and services.
- **Mixed Commercial and Residential** Properties that include a combination of residential and commercial uses.
- **Industrial /Manufacturing** provides space for a variety of uses associated with manufacturing, assembling, fabrication, warehousing, wholesaling, and commercial services.

Land Use Recommendations

Update Future Land Use Map

- Review the Future Land Use Map every five years to ensure that it reflects current community priorities and development conditions.
- Review and amend the Future Land Use Map if economic conditions change dramatically.
- Following the adoption of the comprehensive plan, review and update the zoning ordinance to make sure that it reflects community priorities.

Align Land Use with Economic Priorities

- Provide adequate amounts of land for a variety of commercial uses based on current and future needs based on economic trends.
- Review zoning ordinance to make sure that mixed land uses are included to create more economically productive areas.
- Encourage continued reinvestment and redevelopment in Downtown Mechanicsville.
- Promote the retention and expansion of existing, and attraction of new, industrial development opportunities in suitable locations.

Promote Principles of Community Design in Developments

- Ensure that adjacent land uses are compatible with regard to such factors as smoke, noise, odor, traffic, activity, and appearance.
- Plan for conservation areas that provide recreation opportunities and protect important environmental resources.

Chapter 9. Implementation

Plan Implementation

Through the comprehensive planning process, the City of Mechanicsville has developed a vision for the future of the community. On its own, the vision contained in the Comprehensive Plan has no legal authority; it is merely an agreed upon road map for the future of the community. The Comprehensive Plan serves as a call to action for the City of Mechanicsville and its partners within the community to take the community’s vision and make it a reality.

Comprehensive Plan Review

As part of the implementation process, the City of Mechanicsville should review and evaluate the Comprehensive Plan on an annual basis. In its evaluation the City should review the recommendations included in the plan, decide if they are still relevant based on current conditions, and make adjustments as necessary. The City should also evaluate progress on recommended actions and consider more substantial review of the plan after five years.

Recommendations

To achieve its vision, the community must actively work to put the recommendations of the comprehensive plan into action. To do this, the Comprehensive Plan establishes an implementation plan for 2040. The recommendations from each plan chapter have been organized into a table that identifies the name of the action to be taken, the project partners, and a general timeline for completion. Projects are organized by chapter and topic.

Partners

The Mechanicsville Comprehensive Plan establishes a vision for the entire community. With a community wide focus, partnerships are critical for implementation. For all recommended actions it is assumed that the City Council and city staff will have at least some involvement in implementation. The implementation table lists entities like city departments, advisory committees, and outside organizations that the City can work with to help it achieve the community’s goals. A list of partners with their full names is provided after the table.

Timelines

Project timelines have been classified as short term (less than one year), medium-term (one to five years), long-term (more than five years), or ongoing. Projects with an ongoing timeline are those projects that require continuous action and do not have a specific end date.

Project Timelines: S=Short-term (less than one year) | M=Medium-term (one to five years) | L=Long-term (more than five years) | O=Ongoing (requires continuous action)

| 2040 Recommendations | Partners | Time |
|---|---|------|
| Chapter 3. Community Character | | |
| Identify and enhance the elements that give the community its sense of place and unique identity. | Hometown Pride (KIB) | S |
| Leverage the city's unique traditions, landscape, historic elements, and contributions from artists for economic development, community marketing, and resident attraction and retention. | Hometown Pride (KIB). Community Historic Society | O |
| Utilize and update existing historic structures in a manner that maintains their outward character, but is adapted to current economic conditions and local needs. | Private builders, property owners, realtors | M |
| Support continuing improvement programs for park and recreation areas | Keep Iowa Beautiful | S |
| Encourage extracurricular educational programs that help engage the youth with the city in the form of beautification projects, art installations, gardening, and engagement that promotes an active citizenry. | North Cedar Community School District, Keep Iowa Beautiful | M |
| Look for opportunities to expand the City's collection of public art. | University of Iowa Design School | M |
| Establish a community organization that is dedicated to communicating and recording Mechanicsville's history. | City of Mechanicsville library, Mechanicsville History Center | S |
| Establish a welcoming committee that helps integrate new residents into the social fabric of the community after they move in. | City staff | O |
| Encourage city residents to participate in community beautification through community clean-up events, gardening clubs, friend groups, and other volunteer opportunities. | City staff, Keep Iowa Beautiful | O |
| Emphasize and celebrate individual and group contributions to the everyday maintenance of the city. | City staff | O |
| Work with community organizations to provide festivals and events that bring the community together. | Hometown Pride, Lions Club, Volunteer Clubs and Groups, American Legion | O |
| Chapter 4. Economic Development | | |
| Assist local businesses in finding development sites for expansion. | City Staff | O |
| Support construction and maintenance of infrastructure that supports economic development including housing, transportation, and utility systems. | Private Builders, RPA 10 | O |
| Support construction of homes needed to house workers. | Private builders, Iowa Economic Development Authority | O |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Attract new residents and retain existing residents by continuing to improve quality of life in the community. | Iowa Economic Development Authority | O |
| Encourage revitalization and redevelopment of downtown buildings. | City Staff, Existing Property owners, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Private Developers | L |
| Seek out educational opportunities that serve to aid the development of local entrepreneurs. | Kirkwood Community College | O |
| Help connect local entrepreneurs with financial resources. | Small Business Development Center | O |
| Create new partnerships with other local governments to create events and clubs that serve citizens of Mechanicsville as well as those who live in nearby towns. | City of Stanwood, City of Clarence, City of Mt. Vernon | M |
| Add signage to direct people to Downtown Mechanicsville. | City staff | S |
| Continue to promote community through the city's website and Facebook page. | City staff | O |
| Use the city's location along US Highway 30 as an opportunity for future business development. | City staff, Private Developers | L |
| Identify areas for commercial development in the City's future land use map. | P&Z Committee, City staff | M |
| Chapter 5. Housing | | |
| Encourage a housing stock that offers a variety of options for all stages of life. | City staff, ECIA, Private Developers | M |
| Identify strategies to help cultivate public/private partnerships to help incentivize development in Mechanicsville. | City staff, Private Developers | O |
| Support the creation of new housing needed to help the community maintain its population. | City staff, ECIA, Private Developers | O |
| Support housing redevelopment in existing vacant or underutilized structures such as upper floors of downtown buildings. | Downtown Mechanicsville Land owners, City Staff | M |
| Develop an inventory of vacant and underutilized properties. | City staff | S |
| Encourage maintenance and rehabilitation of existing homes in Mechanicsville. | City staff, General Public | M |
| Support community volunteer efforts to assist those in need with home maintenance tasks. | City Staff, General Public | M |
| Identify areas for future housing development in the City's future land use map. | City staff, City Council, P&Z Committee, General Public | O |
| Encourage infill housing development on existing vacant lots in the city's existing neighborhoods. | City staff, City Council, P&Z Committee, Property Owners | L |
| Support the development of quality, affordable owner and rental housing. | City staff, City Council, P&Z Committee, Private Developers | L |
| Support the development of housing for the elderly. | City staff, City Council, P&Z Committee, Property | O |

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| | Owners | |
| Start a positive dialogue with agricultural property to discuss why housing is an important issue to the City of Mechanicsville's ability to grow and prosper. | City staff, City Council, P&Z Committee, Property Owners | M |
| Chapter 6. Public Infrastructure and Facilities | | |
| Begin/update the City's Capital Improvement Program on an annual basis. | City staff, City Council, P&Z Committee, General Public | O |
| Invest in infrastructure projects that yield private sector investments that can sustain the long-term costs of infrastructure. | City staff, City Council, | L |
| Perform routine maintenance and support ongoing improvements that will extend the life of infrastructure systems. | City staff, City Council, | O |
| Encourage development and redevelopment that take advantage of existing infrastructure and assets. | City staff, City Council, | L |
| Plan for, build, and improve infrastructure systems to meet anticipated growth and development needs. | City staff, City Council, | O |
| Monitor public safety facilities, equipment, and procedures to ensure that adequate service is provided. | City staff, City Council, | O |
| Encourage cooperation and resource sharing among local public safety agencies. | Cedar County Emergency Management, City of Mechanicsville PD, City of Mechanicsville Fire Dept, City Staff | L |
| Coordinate with local police and fire departments to ensure that new developments can be served by existing facilities and equipment. | Cedar County Emergency Management, City of Mechanicsville PD, City of Mechanicsville Fire Dept, City Staff | O |
| Coordinate with local school and Cedar County education institutions to provide adequate educational facilities and improve educational opportunities for students. | North Cedar Community School District, Cedar/Jones Early Childhood | O |
| Identify opportunities and partnerships with organizations such as the Mechanicsville Public Library to serve adult learners. | Mechanicsville Public Library | S |
| Communicate with local schools to ensure that a proposed development can be served by existing educational facilities. | Mechanicsville Public Library | O |
| Chapter 7. Transportation | | |
| Continue to work with outside agencies such as Cedar County, the Iowa Department of Transportation, and Regional Planning Affiliation 10 to maintain regional highway connections. | Cedar County, Iowa Department of Transportation, Regional Planning Affiliation 10 | O |
| Participate in the Highway 30 Coalition to collaborate with other municipalities on future developments regarding Highway 30. | Highway 30 Coalition, Iowa Department of Transportation | S |
| Continue to look for opportunities to fund transportation infrastructure projects through state and federal programs. | Iowa Department of Transportations, Iowa | O |

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| | Economic Development Authority | |
| Continue to actively participate in the Cedar County Hazard Mitigation Planning process; identify and mitigate safety issues relating to the city's transportation infrastructure. | Cedar County EMA, City Staff | O |
| Evaluate the City's Street system and plan future street maintenance projects through a Capital Improvement Program (CIP). | City Staff, City Council | L |
| Coordinate with River Bend Transit to improve public service in the Mechanicsville area | River Bend Transit | M |
| Create a more complete bicycle and pedestrian network through the development of trails, on-street bicycle routes, and sidewalks. | City Staff, City Council, ECIA | L |
| Improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians by adding improvements to on-street bicycle routes and improving street crossings. | City Staff, City Council, ECIA | M |
| Sidewalk maintenance to help keep sidewalks safe and accessible for the entire community. | City Staff, City Council | M |
| Continue to work with Union Pacific and emergency management officials to ensure a balance between railroad safety, community safety, and quality of life. | Cedar County EMA, Union Pacific | S |
| Chapter 8. Land use | | |
| Review the Future Land Use Map every five years to ensure that it reflects current community priorities and development conditions. | City Staff, P/Z committee | O |
| Review and amend the Future Land Use Map if economic conditions change dramatically. | City Staff, P/Z committee | O |
| Following the adoption of the comprehensive plan, review and update the zoning ordinance to make sure that it reflects community priorities. | City Staff, P/Z committee | O |
| Provide adequate amounts of land for a variety of commercial uses based on current and future needs as well as economic trends. | City Staff, P/Z committee | O |
| Review zoning ordinance to make sure that mixed land uses are included to create more economically productive areas. | City Staff, P/Z committee | L |
| Encourage continued reinvestment and redevelopment in Downtown Mechanicsville. | City Staff, P/Z committee, Property Owners | L |
| Promote the retention and expansion of existing, and attraction of new, industrial development opportunities in suitable locations. | City Staff, P/Z committee, Private Developers | O |
| Ensure that adjacent land uses are compatible with regard to such factors as smoke, noise, odor, traffic, activity, and appearance. | City Staff, ECIA | O |
| Plan for conservation areas that provide recreation opportunities and protect important environmental resources. | KIB, City Staff | M |