



Plan Grinnell

A Comprehensive Plan

October 2024



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PlanGrinnell

About Plan Grinnell

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INTRODUCTION

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY'S FUTURE

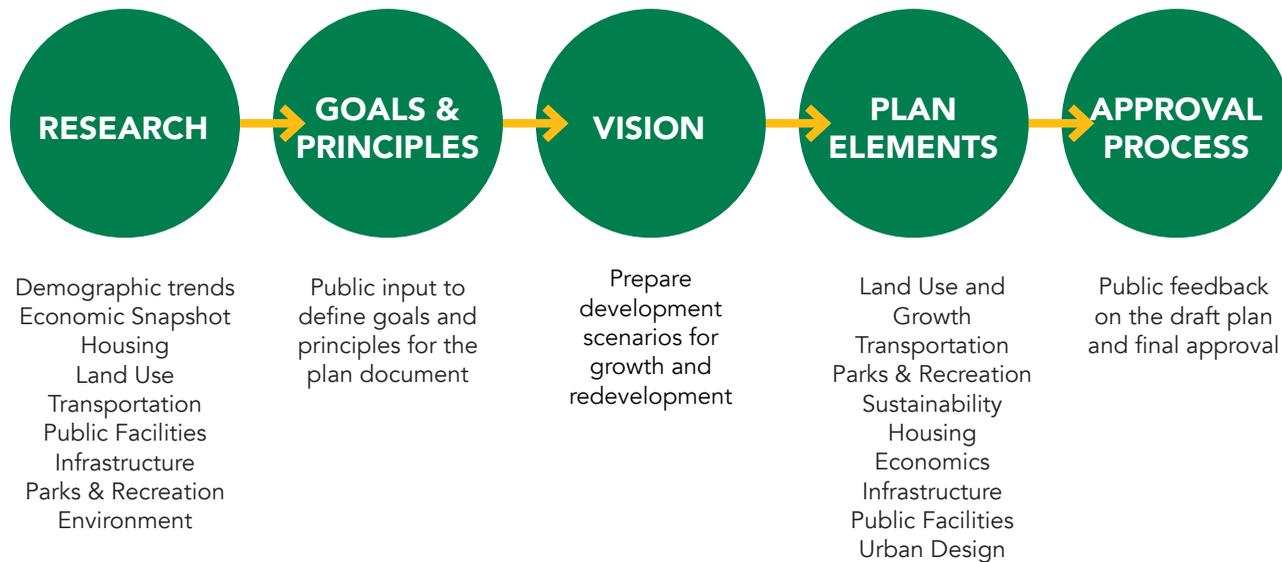
What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Plan Grinnell lays out a road map and vision for Grinnell's future in the next 10 to 20 years. The vision is a collaboration of residents' hopes and dreams alongside data and policy.

Grinnell strives to grow in a way that retains downtown at its core, is congruent with nature, and places it on the cutting edge. Grinnell residents want more affordable housing, beautiful entry ways, and a vibrant economy rooted in the community. Residents also want infrastructure that give them options in how to move between destinations.

The City of Grinnell completed its last comprehensive plan in 2004. The world has changed in many ways since then. Plan Grinnell seeks to build upon the success of the previous plan while meeting new realities and opportunities with innovative and common sense solutions.

Figure 1.1: Planning Process



WHY PLAN?

When cities have potholes to fill, parks to maintain, and traffic to keep moving, why take the time to plan?

- **Comprehensive plans are required by Iowa code Chapter 414 if municipalities want to regulate land use and development.** A comprehensive plan guides future development and land use decisions and ensures non-arbitrary decisions and continuity as City officials and staff change over time.
- **Plans allow a community to step back and observe where they have been and where they want to go.** It fosters discussions about larger ideals and for meaningful, actionable steps to take to reach those ideals.
- **Many competing interests are within a community.** Comprehensive planning allows for a balancing of these interests.



Central Park

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Overview of Public Input Process

The Grinnell community played an important role in developing the comprehensive plan. Residents, business owners, and employees shared their insights, lived experiences, and dreams for the future of their community during the planning process through various engagement settings.

- **Advisory Committee.** A group of stakeholders met four times throughout the process to provide direction, raise awareness about the project, and review the plan's content.
- **Listening Sessions.** A series of discussions were held with community stakeholders including real estate agents, bankers, business owners, local employers, and others.
- **Design Studio Open House.** The design studio focused on development concepts and beautification efforts. During the open house events, the public provided feedback on the emerging concepts.
- **The Website.** The website ensured information about the plan was readily available. The website advertised updates on the planning process and allowed residents to provide insight via an interactive web map and online survey.
- **Draft Plan Open Houses.** An open house was held at Drake Library for the public to review land use concepts and major elements of the plan.



Build a Better Grinnell

Grinnell has an active community with many residents and organizations striving to create the best Grinnell possible. Build a Better Grinnell is a community assessment and visioning process led by a Steering Committee made up of community members. Plan Grinnell worked alongside Build a Better Grinnell, to reduce duplications in public engagement efforts and to ensure each plan is pulling in the same direction.

OVER 250 PARTICIPANTS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PLANNING PROCESS!



Design Studio Recap



Advisory Committee Meeting



Design Studio Open House

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THEMES

Significant takeaways from each activity are summarized in this section. *These are not statistically valid results.*

Design Studios and Open House

- **Diversity of housing in each quadrant of the City.** Open house attendees wanted a diversity of housing types and price points built throughout Grinnell.
- **Beautification of the City's entryways and corridors.** The entryways of Highway 146 and Highway 6 create one's first impression of Grinnell. Beautification can enhance the image of Grinnell and attract people to the City center.
- **Traffic calming and better pedestrian environment.** Participants were concerned with fast traffic speeds. They were also concerned about the safety of pedestrians crossing main roads and children walking to school.

Listening Sessions

- **Increases in housing options.** Grinnell has limited new houses being built and most are custom houses. Being able to build housing at scale can increase affordability and options.
- **Beautification of entry corridors.** Central Grinnell is offset from Interstate 80 making the approach along Highway 146 extremely important to the experience residents and visitors have.
- **Pedestrian and bicycle safety.** Concerns, especially around crossing Highway 6 and 146, for pedestrians and bicyclists were expressed. Also, the ability to bicycle and walk safely to parks, schools, and other destinations was important to the groups.
- **Expansion of the economy.** To grow, Grinnell needs a combination of housing options, employment opportunities, and amenities. Finding ways to foster local business development and attract employers to the region were important for participants.

Survey: 129 responses

- **Affordable housing and available workforce** were the two most important issues to address according to survey responses.
- **Better street and utility improvements along with more job opportunities and growth** were the top two objectives for survey respondents.

What challenge is the most important to address in Grinnell?

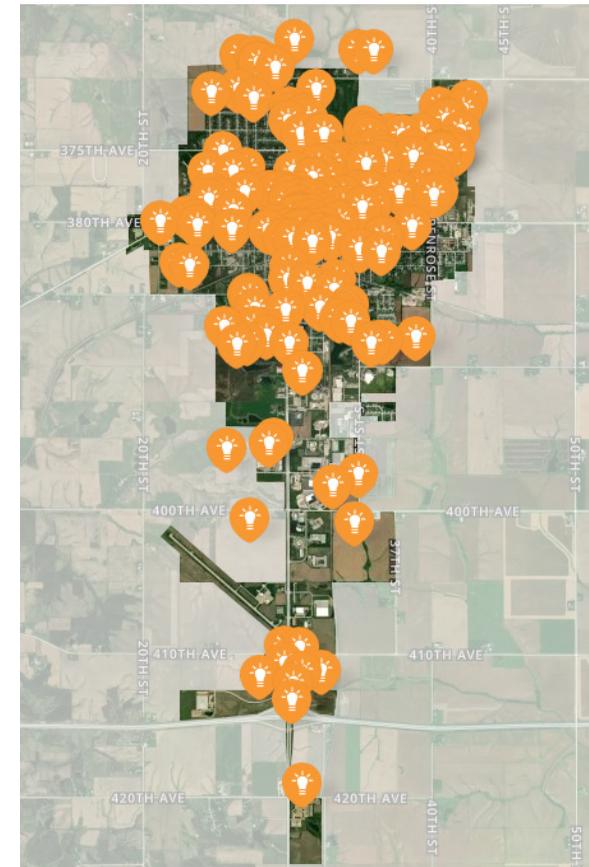
- **Affordable Housing.** 31.4%
- **Available Workforce.** 21.2%
- **Community Connection.** 11.0%
- **Sustainability and Climate Change.** 11.0%
- **Transportation.** 5.1%
- **Other (please specify).** 20.3%
More restaurants, jobs and businesses were the top written in responses.

What should Grinnell focus on most in the next 10 years? (choose your top 5)

- **Improving streets and infrastructure.** 60.8%
- **More job opportunity and growth.** 57.5%
- **More development and reuse of existing buildings.** 53.3%
- **More diverse housing options.** 43.3%
- **More tourism attractions (sports, arts, outdoors, recreation).** 41.7%
- **Better alternative transportation (transit, pedestrian/ bicycle safety).** 32.5%
- **Renewable energy projects.** 23.3%
- **Better parks and open spaces.** 18.3%
- **Other (*please specify).** 28.3%
More restaurants, improved school district, and things to do.

Interactive Map: 71 comments

- **Pedestrian and bicycle improvements to key destinations.** Crossing of 6th Avenue and further trail connections were mentioned.
- **Park improvements.** Improvements to and connections between Arbor Lake Park and Miller Park.
- **Redevelopment and revitalization of vacant storefronts and deteriorating housing.**
- **Rough roads and speeding challenges throughout the town** were mentioned.



Map 1.1: Interactive Map with Community Comments

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THEMES

Themes that emerged during the public input included:

Ensure streets connect to destinations

For Grinnell to grow its population and employment centers, it will need to extend key roads to allow for access to development areas.

- **Industrial and commercial land is available in the south.** However, a lack of roadways means many of these parcels are undevelopable. Road extensions will provide vehicles and trucks access to potential industrial and employment centers.

Improve traffic on Highway 146 and Highway 6

Grinnell has a strong arterial road network moving within City limits. However, these roads are too wide for the amount of traffic. Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) is currently exploring lane reduction options.

- **Wide roads are barriers for pedestrian.** The four lanes of traffic can be difficult for pedestrians and bicyclist to cross or move alongside.
- **Wide roads result in faster car speeds.** Wide travels lanes have been shown to increase vehicles speeds which reduces safety.

Connect trails and parks

Grinnell has wonderful parks and trails. Central Park, Arbor Lake Park, and Miller Park are true gems.

- **Connecting the trails network together increases usefulness.** The more places a trail connects to, the more reasons to use the trail.
- **Connect parks together via trails and on-street facilities.** Having connections between parks allows residents the ability to move between parks via active transportation.

Strengthen the image of Grinnell

Grinnell has a unique sense of place, especially around its central core. Finding ways to highlight this uniqueness and extend it towards the south side of town can enhance peoples' first impressions.

- **Highway 146 and Highway 6 offer opportunities for placemaking.** Highway 146, in particular, has a long commercial and industrial strip leading to the core of Grinnell. Placemaking and wayfinding can show the uniqueness of Grinnell to visitors on I-80 and Highway 6.

Offer housing options for all

Like much of the nation, Grinnell is in need of affordable, quality housing. To create more affordability, housing is going to need to have a smaller footprint than previous decades.

- **Unique Housing Options.** Grinnell attracts residents from all over the country and world. Many of these residents and potential residents are looking for smaller, unique housing options that are harder to find in Grinnell.
- **Creating a diversity of housing options to meet different price points for different incomes and lifestyles.**

Support industrial and commercial development

Grinnell has industrial and commercial spaces along Highway 146. Finding ways to expand current businesses, foster entrepreneurs, and attract new businesses will create more opportunities.

- **Creating alternative road access** will create more viable industrial and large scale commercial development in the southeast.
- **Increasing the number of affordable and high quality housing units** can make Grinnell attractive for employees and aid the expansion of businesses.
- **To attract new residents Grinnell needs both new jobs and housing.**



SMART PLANNING PRINCIPLES

WHY HAVE A PLAN AND HOW BEST TO USE IT?

Guidance

The comprehensive plan is a guiding document. The plan is not a step-by-step guide on how the next twenty years will unfold for Grinnell, but rather a framework for decision makers to approach new challenges and opportunities in a way that optimizes outcomes and adapts to new realities. Having a plan that incorporates the residents' vision and voice allows for consistency as City staff and officials change throughout the years. The plan can and should be updated as major changes occur.

Iowa Smart Planning Principles

Plan Grinnell bases all action items within the context of Iowa's Smart Planning Principles. Grinnell seeks to build a resilient and healthy future.



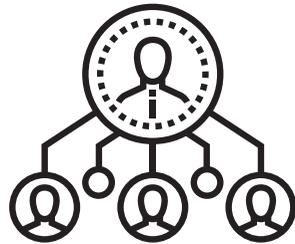
Natural Resources and Agricultural Protection

Grinnell aims to advance land use that keeps agricultural land intact and allows access to natural spaces.



Clean, Renewable, and Efficient Energy

Grinnell promotes land use and transportation design for minimal environmental impact.



Collaboration

Grinnell has many stakeholders, residents, thriving businesses, and a world-class college. Making sure they are involved in the process is embedded into this plan.



Revitalization

Grinnell will reinvest in its current infrastructure.



Sustainable Design

Grinnell will promote sustainable design and development at all scales.



Housing Diversity

Grinnell will encourage varied housing options to meet the diversity of residents' needs.



Efficiency, Transparency, and Consistency

Grinnell will provide equitable and reliable development guidelines and implementation.



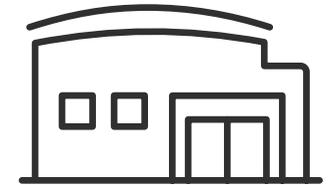
Occupational Diversity

Grinnell's economy will be diverse in response to future economic changes.



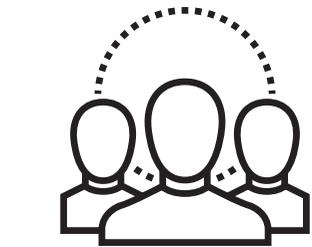
Transportation Diversity

Grinnell will develop systems that allow for diverse transportation options that promote health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Community Character

Grinnell will promote its uniqueness in architecture and culture.



Context Sensitivity

Grinnell's future has to be in context with its environment.

Land Use

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Population Trends

Land Use Trends & Features

Future Land Use

Annexation

POPULATION TRENDS

Population changes effect housing, land use, and services that will be needed in a community. The next two pages discuss population trends and projections that will influence the future land use of Grinnell.

Overall Population

- **Grinnell's population has steadily grown between 1960 and 2021.** Between 2000 and 2020, Grinnell saw a 5% growth.
- **Poweshiek County's population has experienced a slight decline between 1960 and 2021.** Between 2000 and 2020, Poweshiek County saw a -0.8% decline.

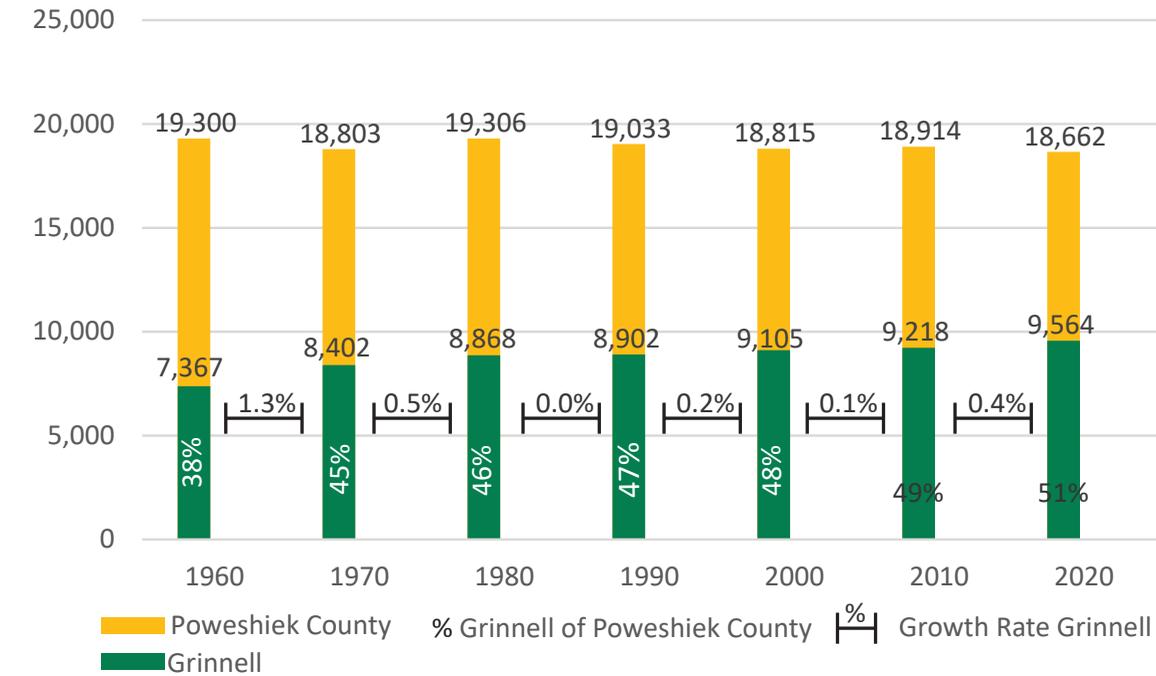


Figure 2.1: Grinnell and Poweshiek County Population

Aging Adult Population

Population by age and sex, as seen in Figure 2.2, indicates how Grinnell's population might change over time, with births and deaths influenced by the current age of residents.

- **Increasing older adults since 2000.** Grinnell is an attractive location to relocate for retirees. Factors such as quality of life, healthcare, and Grinnell College activities are pull factors.
- **Growing teenage population since 2000.**
- **Decreasing in those 25 to 50 years of age.** This is the prime starting and mid-career age groups that may explain why Grinnell's median income is lower than the State's median. This decreased population is associated with a decrease in children under 10.

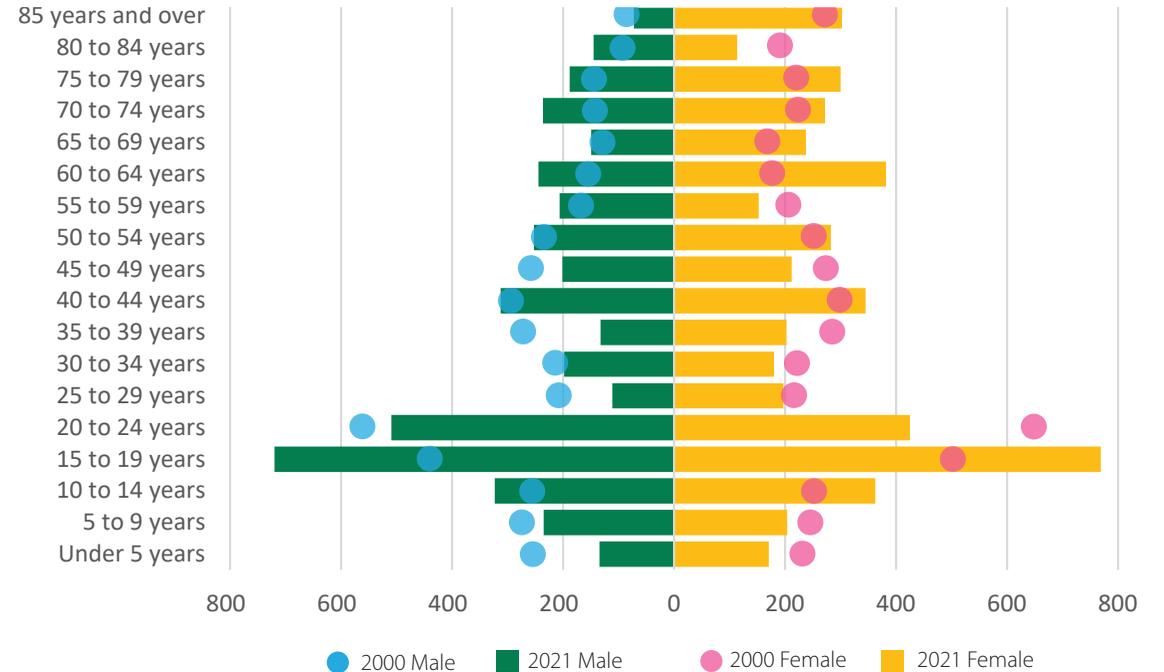


Figure 2.2: Population Pyramid (2021)

POPULATION TRENDS

GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Grinnell works within, and is influenced by external factors like the national economy and housing market. Having a plan that functions through different plausible scenarios allows Grinnell to respond in a way that provides the highest quality of life for residents given the current circumstances.

Planning for future land use considers two plausible population scenarios. These scenarios allow flexibility for leaders to make decisions based on current trends and development priorities. The future will see periods of high and low growth as factors evolve at the local and national scale.

Grinnell College Student Population

To better understand the City of Grinnell's population projection, segmenting out the population change of the non-college student residents is important. Between 2010 and 2020, City of Grinnell saw a 0.37% annual population increase. When looking at just the non-college student population, the City of Grinnell had 0.91% annual population growth. It is expected that this remaining population will continue to see growth.

TABLE 2.1: GRINNELL POPULATION

	2010	2020	Annual Growth Rate
Total Population	9,218	9,564	0.37%
Student Population (Group Quarter Population)	1,688	1,694	-
Remaining Population	7,530	7,870	0.44%

GRINNELL'S POPULATION MAY INCREASE BY ~ 2,000 RESIDENTS BETWEEN 2020 AND 2045

Figure 2.3: Population Scenarios Total Population

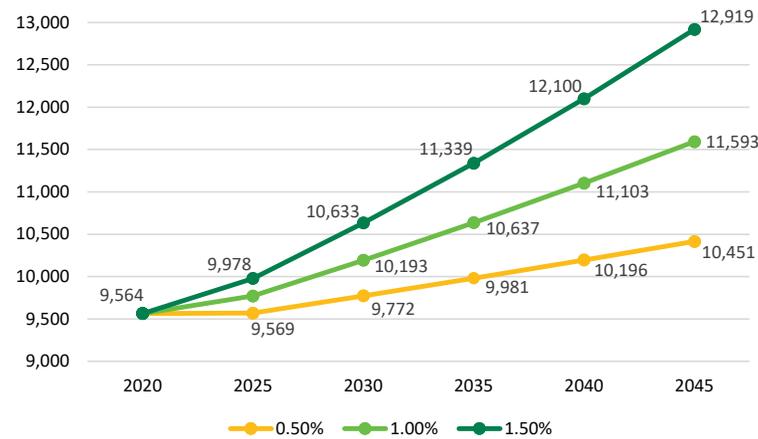


TABLE 2.2: POPULATION PROJECTION

Permanent Population	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
0.50% Annual Growth Rate	7,870	8,069	8,272	8,481	8,696	8,915
1.0% Annual Growth Rate	7,870	8,271	8,693	9,137	9,603	10,093
1.5% Annual Growth Rate	7,870	8,478	9,133	9,839	10,600	11,419
Permanent Population Plus Student	1,694	~1,500	~1,500	~1,500	~1,500	~1,500
0.5% Annual Growth Rate	9,564	9,569	9,772	9,981	10,196	10,451
1.0% Annual Growth Rate	9,564	9,771	10,193	10,637	11,103	11,593
1.5% Annual Growth Rate	9,564	9,978	10,633	11,339	12,100	12,919

Growth Scenarios

- **1.0% Annual Growth Rate Scenario.** In this scenario, Grinnell doubles it's growth rate amongst its non-college student population.
- **1.5% Annual Growth Rate Scenario.** In this scenario, Grinnell's non-college student population grows above its current growth rate being able to capture significant portions of the incommuting population. If this higher growth is achieved, Grinnell should revisit the plan more frequently.

These are not mutually exclusive scenarios for the entire planning horizon and should be reviewed as local and national trends evolve.

The Census Bureau population projection estimates the national population will continue to grow at an annual rate of roughly 0.32% a year until 2045.

LAND FEATURES

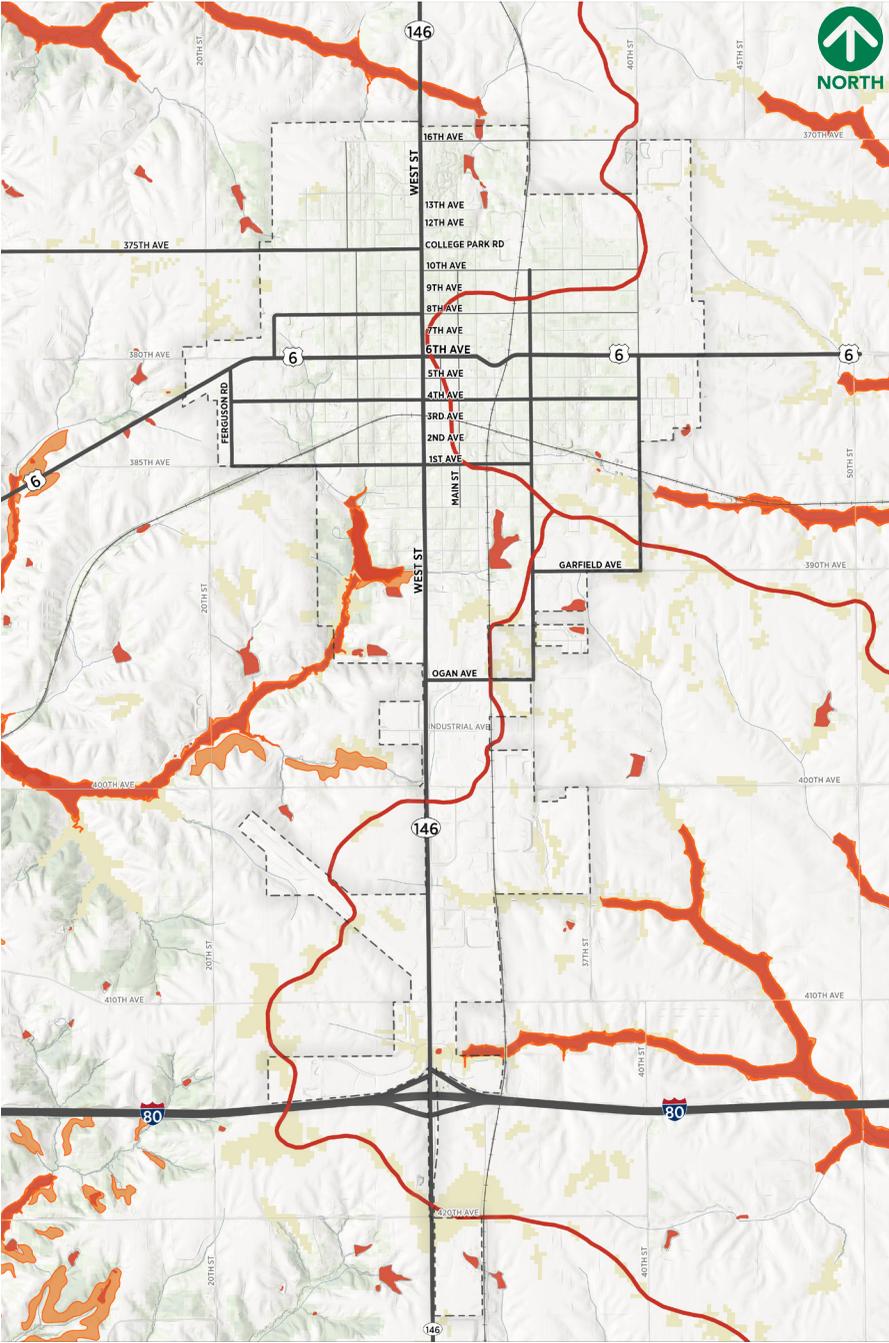
Development Suitability

Not all land is suitable for development. Development suitability considers the floodplain, wetlands, and steep slopes. Areas with these characteristics are best left undeveloped and reserved for preservation, recreation, or agriculture. The Future Land Use Map considers the suitability of land for development.

- **Most residential neighborhoods have suitable land to expand.** In the near term, most residential neighborhoods can develop and avoid floodplains and steep slopes. This allows Grinnell to develop in a connected and efficient way.
- **Steep slopes to the west.** The area to the west of Grinnell's City limit has fairly steep slopes. Development on the western side will need to focus on the flatter areas and lower density options that are tailored to the topography.
- **Flatter area to the east.** The area to the east of Grinnell is significantly flatter than the western side. Long term (20 plus years) development could focus on expanding towards the east.
- **Streams and flood plains.** Streams appear throughout the area. Keeping development far enough back to avoid flooding will protect property along with giving streams and wetland ecosystems space.



Rolling Hills and Terrain to the West of Grinnell



Map 2.1: Development Suitability

-  Stream
-  Watershed Boundaries
-  Minor (Hydric Soils)
-  Higher (500-Year Floodplain and Steep Slopes)
-  Major (Wetlands, 100-Year Floodplain)

LAND USE TRENDS

Current land use trends informs future growth patterns and redevelopment.

Current Land Use

Grinnell's largest land use category is residential. At 32.1%, this is close to the average for Midwestern cities of similar population to Grinnell.

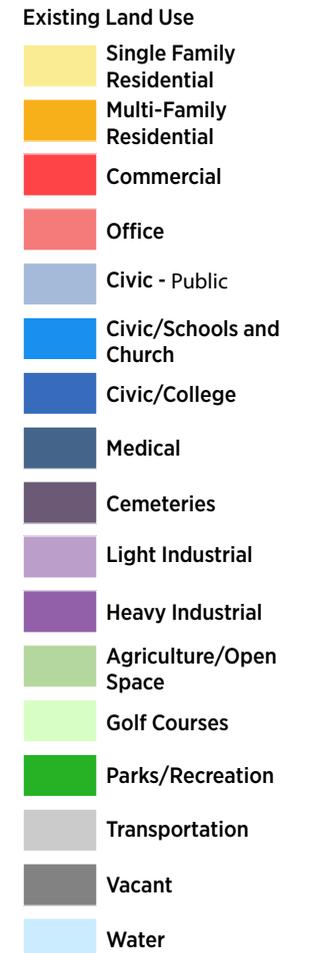
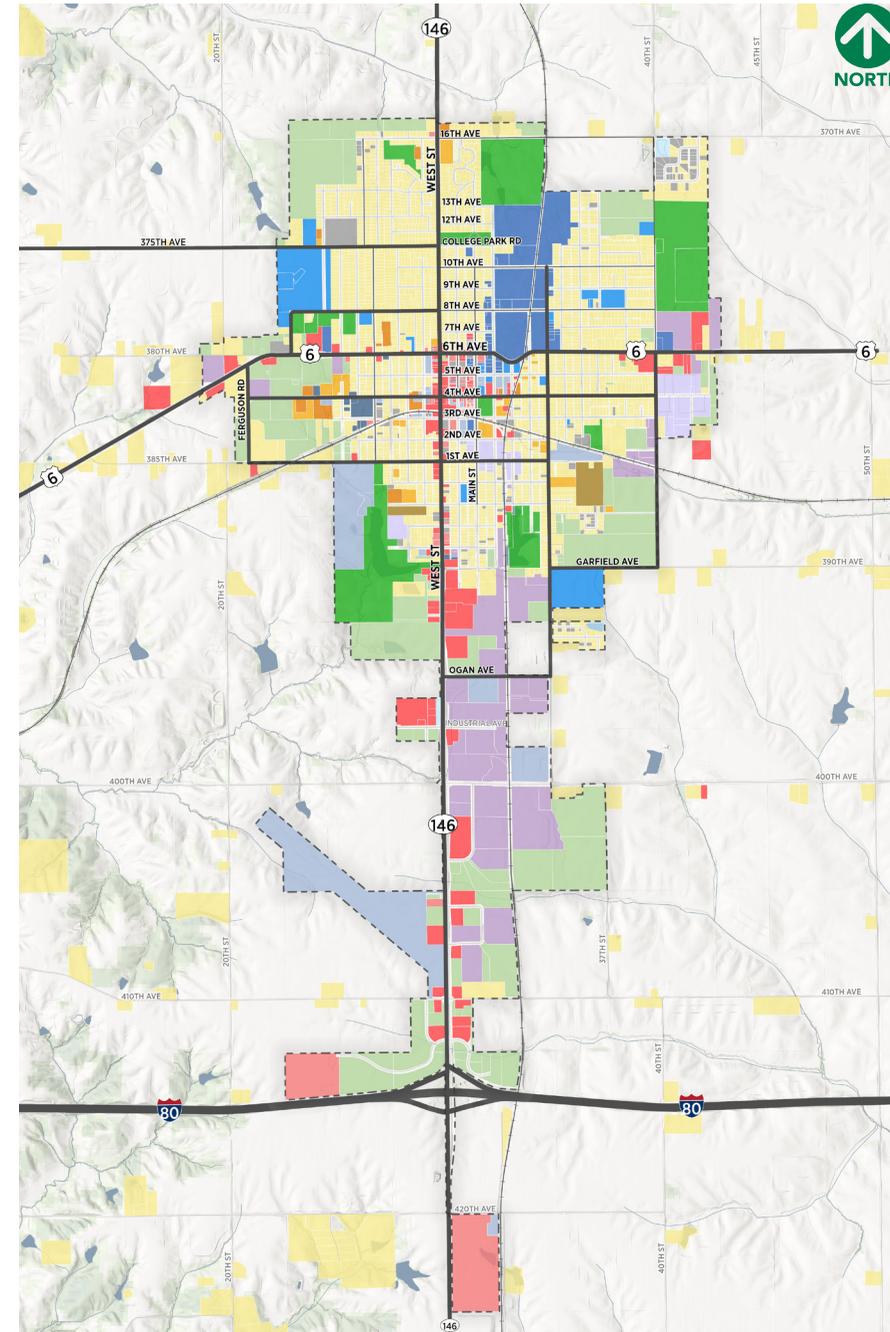
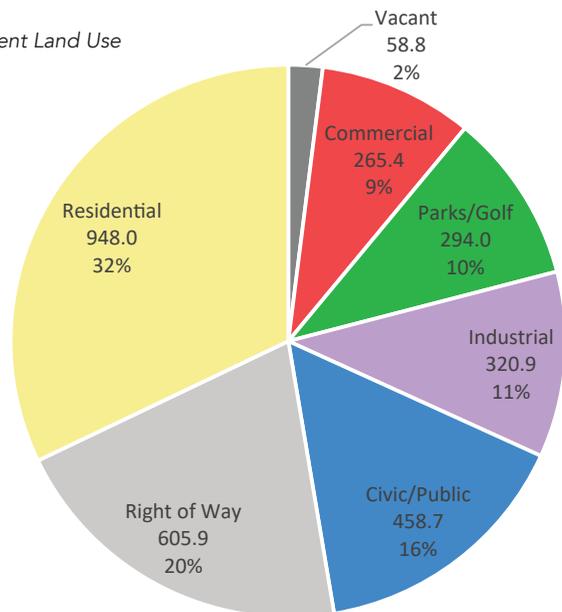
- 91.6% is low density residential
- 8.4% is medium to high density residential

Grinnell's industrial uses vary in size and are mainly clustered on the south end of West Street where there is easy access to I-80. Smaller clusters of industrial can be found along the east and west ends of Highway 6.

For future land planning purposes, there are 725.5 acres of vacant, open and agricultural space inside the existing City limits (219 acres which are improved and ready for development, mostly in the Certified Site for Brownell's Business Park). Centrally located undeveloped land should be prioritized for infill development. Infill projects can access existing infrastructure and can bring more tax revenue without significant infrastructure investments. Next, prioritized land for development should be undeveloped parcels adjacent to development to keep growth

contiguous.

Figure 2.4: Current Land Use



Map 2.2: Current Land Use 2022

FUTURE LAND USE DEMAND

This plan focuses on growth being contiguous to current development. This is the easiest method for extending infrastructure and maintains downtown as the center of the community. The Future Land Use Concept shows more acres than the projected need to allow for unexpected change and ensures flexibility as new circumstances occur. Note, a portion of the planning area must remain undeveloped based on floodplains, steep elevations, and other natural features.

How were base future land use growth areas calculated?

The growth areas are based on population projections and hard demand. Residential hard demand is calculated by keeping average household size similar to predict roughly how many housing units and how many acres of land are needed. The number of acres are then doubled to ensure we have land available since not all land will be available at once.

For commercial and industrial, the present ratio between land use to population is kept for the future land use projections. It is also doubled to ensure land is available as need be.

Residential planning through 2045

Residential intensity is measured in units per acre. If six units are built on an acre of land, the density of the site is 6 units per acre. The higher the density, the more units that can be served by infrastructure, decreasing the overall cost of development.

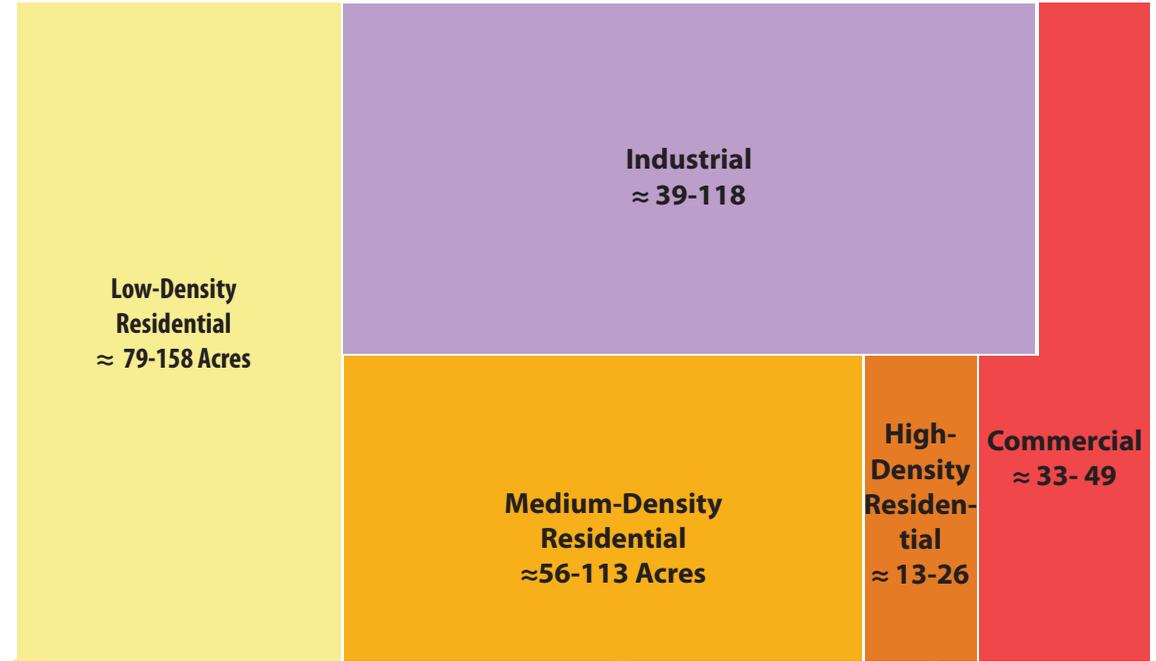


Figure 2.5: Future Land Use Demand (hard demand -1% growth rate)



Low-Density: Conventional Single-Family

- Percentage of Demand: 30%
- Units ≈ 243 - 399
- Gross Density: 3-6 units/acre



Medium-Density: Small Lot, Attached, & Townhome

- Percentage of Demand: 50%
- Units ≈ 406- 666
- Gross Density: 6-12 units/acre



High-Density: Townhome & Multi-family

- Percentage of Demand: 20%
- Units ≈ 162-266
- Gross Density: 12+ units/acre

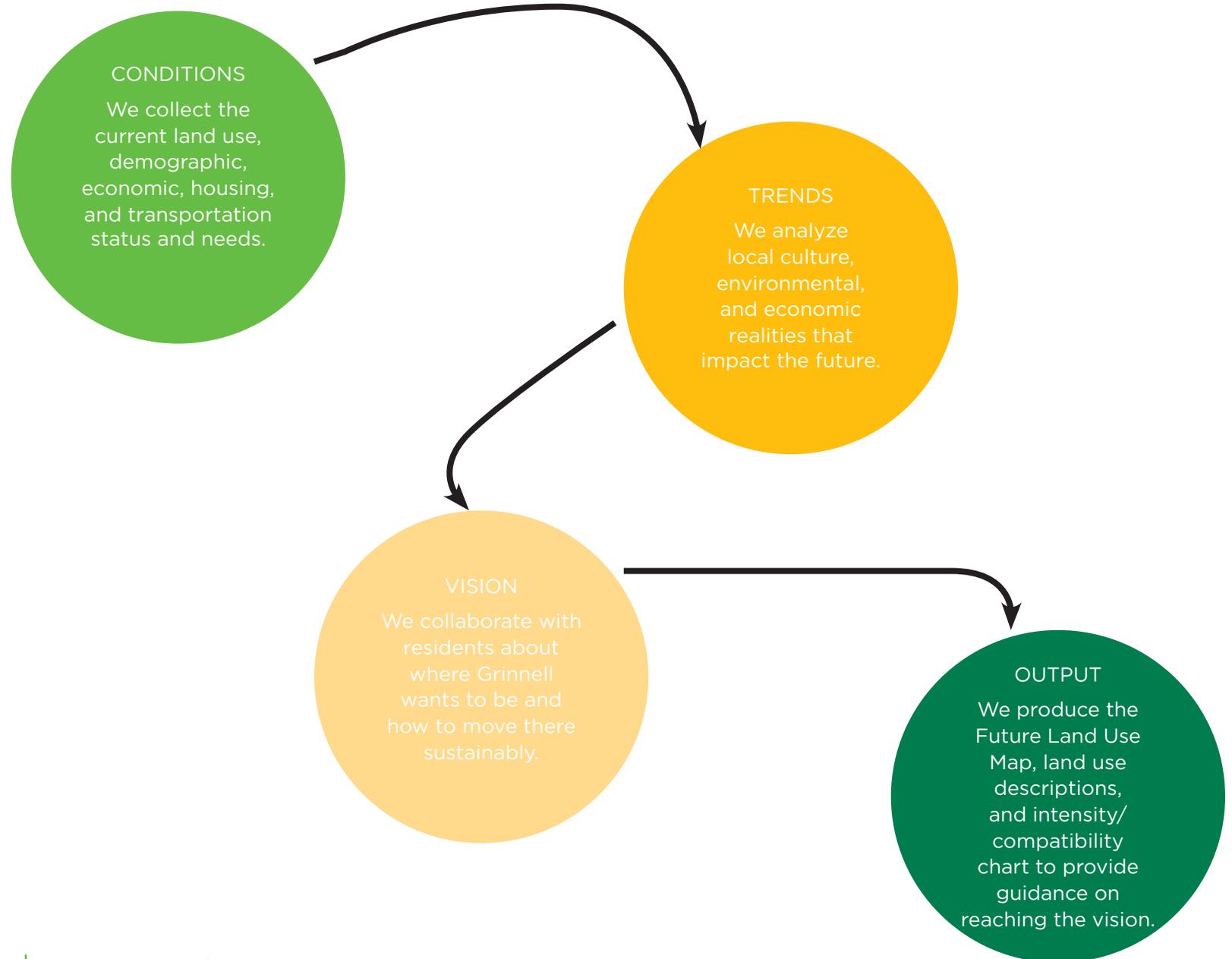
FUTURE LAND USE MAP

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP DO?

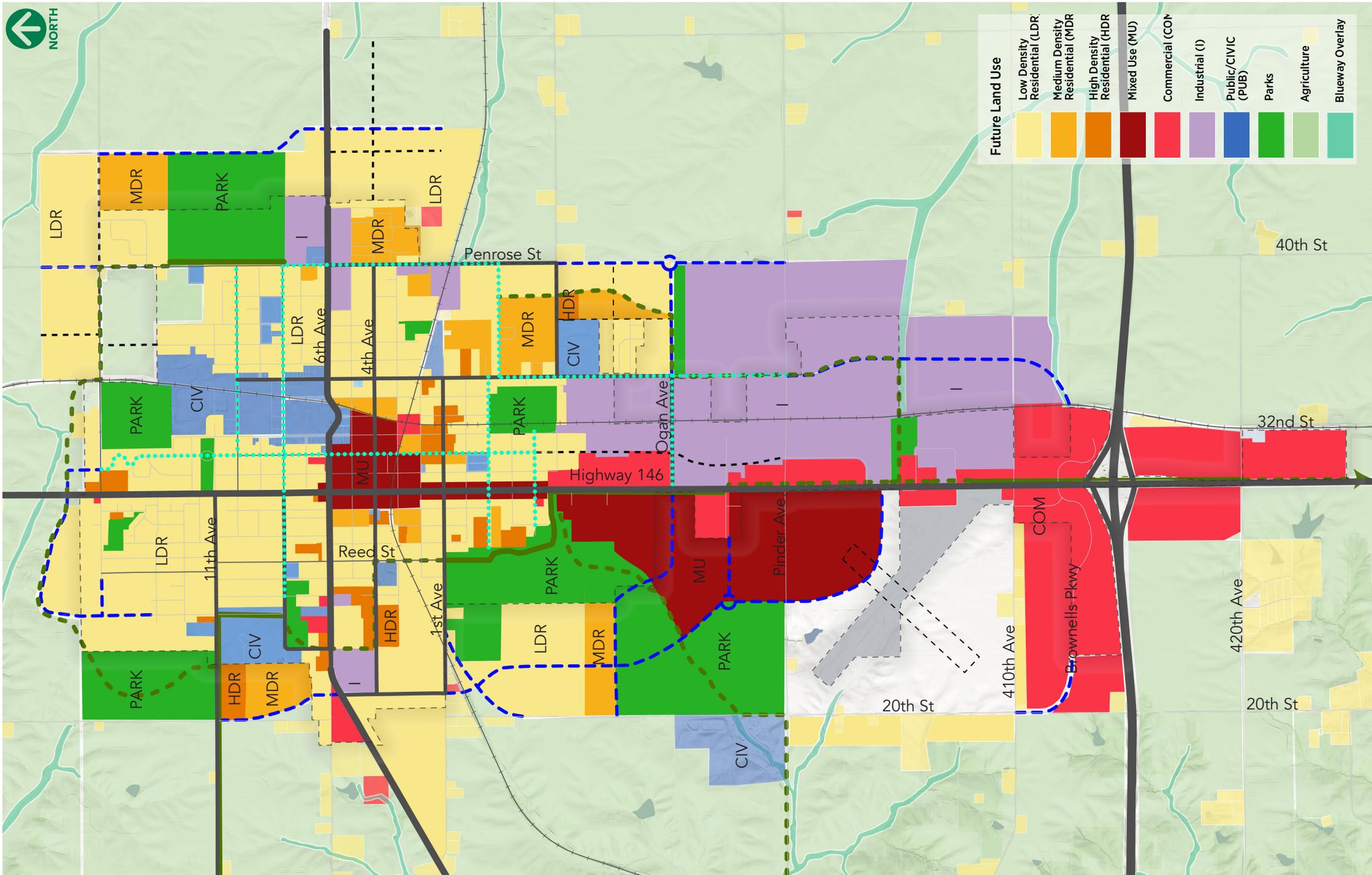
The Future Land Use Map is based on population projections, economic trends, and public input. It plans for more development than projected or needed to allow for flexibility, avoid a land shortage, and provide long-term planning scenarios.

Understanding the Map

- **Property Owners Decide.** The future land use map depicts new land uses for privately owned properties. The transition of these properties from their current use to the depicted use is expected to occur slowly over time in response to market demand as property owners voluntarily sell, develop, or change the use of their land.
- **Generalized Map.** The future land use map should be interpreted generally and is not intended to be rigid like the zoning map. The boundaries between land uses on the map are "fuzzy" lines showing approximate areas of transition. Trails, collector streets, and arterial streets indicate connections that need to be made, but the exact areas will be determined by engineering studies.
- **Basis for Land Use Decisions.** The future land use map should provide the basis for decisions by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the City Council, and private developers. The map is a critical part of the approval process for development proposals and zoning decisions.



| Figure 2.6: Future Land Use Process



Map 2.3: Future Land Use Map

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

The future land use categories describe how each category should function.

		Gross Density	Uses	Form	Compatibility
(AG) Agricultural		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 1 dwelling unit/20+ acres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farming and agriculture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No or limited City services due to its low density. Open space with environmental preservation. Agricultural zones should not be planned in areas where City services can be provided currently or in the near future. 	—
(RR) Rural Residential		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 2 dwelling units/acre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural residences and associated uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No or limited City services available due to its low density. Rural residential development should not be planned where City services can be provided currently or in the near future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street connections and layouts should be compatible with future developments and potential service expansions.
(P or OS) Parks & Trails		—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park shelters, ball fields, and golf courses should be complementary to the broader area's recreational purpose. Passive recreation like trails can be permitted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional parks and recreation areas along with open spaces for environmental preservation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal land impact. Intense recreational use should be commercial. Development abutting floodplains should provide stormwater management practice.
(PUB) Civic & Public		—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools, medical facilities, major campuses, cemeteries, landfills, water plants, and major utilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public and government facilities should have the same standards for site design and connectivity as any other private enterprise of similar intensity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permitted in different areas. Maintenance, operating facilities, and public works yards should be in or near industrial or undeveloped areas. General civic offices and education facilities would have fewer compatibility requirements.
(I or GI) General Industrial		—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intense uses with outdoor areas for storage, equipment and other operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic routes should enhance connectivity and efficiency. Higher impact industrial uses would require additional location considerations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower-density residential or schools should not be located in this use. Development adjacent to GI should be held to higher design standards for compatibility between uses.

**(LDR)
Low Density
Residential**



Gross Density

- 3-6 dwelling units/acre.

Uses

- Civic uses are generally allowed.
- Existing neighborhood-scale commercial uses can remain.
- Future nonresidential uses that serve the immediate neighborhood may be allowed.

Form

- Connectivity for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Overall framework and open space should create a neighborhood sense.
- Smaller lots and attached housing should be a transition to other densities and uses.
- Nonresidential uses placed along street intersections or as transition spaces for other uses.

Compatibility

- Compatible with most detached single-family housing.
- Higher density and traffic are directed to major streets and away from low density areas.

**(MDR)
Medium
Density
Residential**



- 6-12 dwelling units/acre.

- Limited medium-scale multi-family.
- Civic uses generally allowed.
- Existing neighborhood-scale commercial uses can remain.
- Future nonresidential uses serving immediate neighborhood may be allowed but must complement surrounding structures.

- Connect to commercial and civic uses while still providing a neighborhood sense.
- Common scale across structures and maintain the identity of individual units.

- Attached and detached single-family housing.
- Traffic and higher intensity of uses directed to higher traffic volume routes.
- Can start the transition into higher density or commercial uses.

**(HDR)
High
Density
Residential**



- 12+ dwelling units/acre.

- Attached and small-lot detached single-family housing.
- Civic uses are generally allowed.
- Neighborhood services like office and commercial are allowed but limited.

- Located at sites with access to major arterials and activity centers.
- Integrated into the fabric of nearby residential areas.
- High level of pedestrian access and connectivity.

- Traffic and other external effects are steered away from lower intensity uses.
- Landscaping, buffering, and screening should be implemented to minimize adverse effects.

**(MU)
Mixed Use**



- 7-12+ units/acre.

- Mix of complementary uses like multi-family housing, schools, mid-sized parks and churches, commercial, and mixed-use structures.
- Detached single-family not encouraged.
- Limited light industrial is permitted.

- High density and high connectivity transportation networks.
- Parks, plazas, and quality streetscapes should be more prevalent.

- Attention to traffic circulation, parking, site and building design, and on-site operations.
- Complementary uses in one structure or a smooth transition to different land use types, both with larger structures clustered around arterials.

**(COM)
Commercial**



—

- Office, retail, and service-oriented commercial, limited heavy industrial with outdoor storage and high-density residential.

- Freestanding structures, attached centers, and horizontal configurations.
- Consider the surrounding environment, provide pedestrian walkways and connections in parking areas and between properties, and maximize positive interactions between different uses.

- Located along arterial or collector streets, at higher intersections, and established commercial areas.
- Should feature unobtrusive monument signs, integrate landscaping into street frontages and site designs, minimize access points from major streets, and direct traffic away from residential areas.

LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

Compatibility Defined

One of the most important concerns in land use planning is the relationship between different uses and their relative compatibility with each other. In areas where densities are low, compatibility is usually achieved using spacing between buildings and by congregating similar uses together. This simple method is easy to administer and understand. However, it can lead to some undesirable conditions such as increased commute times and less walkable neighborhoods.

Compatibility in mixed-use districts can be attained in a more nuanced way by focusing more on the performance effects of various uses and designing land use regulations that allow for more integration of uses. If carefully done, the integration of uses can be achieved to create transportation efficiencies and walkable neighborhoods, all while preserving privacy, security, and aesthetics.

Grinnell's future land use districts vary in intensity so different methods are used to ensure they fit together. As areas become busier and more varied, the focus shifts from keeping similar uses together to managing things that directly address issues such as a noise, traffic, privacy, and aesthetics.

It is important to remember that while many areas allow mixing uses, it does not mean that every land use is appropriate everywhere. Location standards and compatibility requirements for higher impact uses are an important part of the land use system proposed in this plan. See compatibility chart on next page. Figure 2.7 shows a diagram of land use transitions and their compatibility.



| **Figure 2.7:** Land Use Compatibility Diagram

Future Land Use Districts Compatibility Criteria

The district compatibility descriptions provide a basis to inform development decisions and site requirements. Because Plan Grinnell promotes a mixing of uses in many areas and contexts, the following compatibility guides further clarify the level of design required between adjacent future land use districts. Creating new conflicts should be avoided moving forward. Existing conflicts should be encouraged to change over time as property turns over.

The compatibility of each pairing is rated 1 to 5 and described in more detail on the following page.

- 5: Completely compatible**
- 4: Basically compatible**
- 3: Potential conflicts**
- 2: Significant conflict**
- 1: Incompatible**

TABLE 2.3: FUTURE LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

	AG	P, OS	RR	LDR	MDR	HDR	MU	COM	I	CIV
Agriculture (AG)	-	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	*
Parks and Open Space (P) (OS)		-	4	4	5	5	5	4	**	**
Rural Residential (RR)**			-	5	4	3	3	3	2	*
Low-Density Residential (LDR)				-	5	4	3	2	1	*
Medium-Density Residential (MDR)					-	5	4	3	2	*
High-Density Residential (HDR)						-	5	3	2	*
Mixed-Use (MU)							-	4	2	*
Commercial (COM)								-	4	*
Industrial (I)									-	*
Civic (CIV)										-

* Case-by-case basis. Refer to the district that the proposed civic use most aligns with.

**Rural Residential is not a promoted use in the City of Grinnell's future land use

The compatibility of each pairing is rated 1 to 5:

- **5: Completely compatible.**
- **4: Basically compatible.** Traffic from higher intensity uses should be directed away from lower intensity uses. Building elements and scale should be consistent with surrounding development.
- **3: Potential conflicts.** Conflict may be resolved or minimized through project design. Traffic and other external effects should be directed away from lower intensity uses. Landscaping, buffering, and screening can be a method to minimize negative effects.
- **2: Significant conflict.** Major effects must be strongly mitigated to recent influences on adjacent uses. A site plan is preferred in all cases to assess project effect and define development design.
- **1: Incompatible.** In general, proposed uses with this level of conflict will not be permitted. Any development proposal requires a site plan and extensive documentation to prove that external effects are fully mitigated.

This chart should be used to elevate the compatibility between the proposed land use and existing land use

ANNEXATION POLICY

WHEN TO EXPAND?

One of the important regulatory tools that the City can use when managing growth is annexation. Iowa Law prescribes the process that communities can annex land. The Grinnell/Poweshiek County Fringe Area agreement should also be consulted. **Annexation policies should consider the following topics.**

Areas with Significant Preexisting Development.

Areas outside Grinnell with existing residential areas developed to urban densities (generally higher than two units per acre) should be considered for potential annexation. The City should use its subdivision controls, and evaluate using two-mile zoning, to limit and/or manage further development expansion around the City that would inhibit future growth and expansion of the City's boundaries.

Protect Future Growth Areas.

To allow the City to guide its growth and development more effectively, future growth areas may need to be managed through annexation. In Grinnell, these areas are mostly used for agriculture and are not currently expected to experience significant urban growth under county jurisdiction. Annexation will allow the City to guide development in a direction that will provide safe and healthy environments.

Availability of Public Services.

Public service issues can provide compelling reasons for annexation. Areas for consideration should include:

- Parcels that may become surrounded by City limits but would remain outside the City limits without annexation. In general, the City should avoid these situations.
- Areas that are served by municipal infrastructure. Grinnell's sewer and water system should not be extended without an annexation agreement.

Community Connectivity.

Establishing unified transportation and open space systems is an important factor when considering annexation.

Opportunistic Market Forces.

Opportunities may arise under changing market conditions for a new subdivision or commercial project at locations outside of City limits. These opportunities are a valid consideration for annexation to support overall job and population growth in Grinnell.

A Positive Cost Benefit Analysis.

The economic benefits of annexation, including projected tax revenues, should compensate for the additional cost of extending services to newly annexed areas. The review policy for annexation should include the following:

- Estimated cost impact and timetables for providing municipal services.
- The method by which the City plans to finance the extension and maintenance of municipal services.
- Identification of tax revenues from existing and probable future development in areas considered for annexation.
- Calculation of the added annual operating cost for urban services, including public safety, recreation, and utility services, offered within newly annexed areas.

Decisions about annexation should not be based solely on one of the considerations on this page.

All considerations should be evaluated and a plan in place to ensure development satisfies the goals and objectives of Plan Grinnell, including:

- Adjacency to existing infrastructure.
- Ability to fulfill a community need.
- A strategy to incorporate new civic and park uses if needed.
- Protection of environmental features.
- Ability to be reached by emergency services.
- Economic development opportunities.

ANNEXATION PROCESS

HOW IT HAPPENS

The annexation policy provides guidelines for decision making that minimize unnecessary conflicts and expenditures. Grinnell should consider the following procedure when annexation is deemed beneficial or necessary.

- 1. Pursue Voluntary Annexation.** Grinnell should use the “voluntary annexation” provisions of Iowa annexation law and should avoid annexing areas under “involuntary” procedures if possible. The drawbacks of involuntary annexations include:
 - A more complex annexation process.
 - Confrontation with landowners.
 - Susceptibility to court challenges, which add delays and expense.
 - Costly extension of City services is mandated within a short time period (3 years), even if development is not imminent.
 - It may be appropriate to pursue involuntary annexation for any areas already receiving City services.

In contrast, the benefits of voluntary annexation are:

- Allows the City to promote areas for development without having to install costly infrastructure ahead of that development. The annexation/infrastructure extension plan is required but becomes a negotiated process between the property owner, developer, and the City.
- Does not require the City to choose among potential annexation areas. Instead, the private market determines development timing and location.
- Simpler process, less controversial and generally more productive.

To make the voluntary annexation approach work, the City must:

- Enact Parts 2-6 of this process.
- If necessary, it may be appropriate to use involuntary

annexation (<20 percent of the total land area) to include areas of urban character as part of a larger voluntary annexation to create logical jurisdiction boundaries.

- 2. Initiate Outreach to Property Owners.** Initiate ongoing communication with interested owners in the annexation priority areas. Communicate the potential benefit of annexation priority areas including the extension of City services/infrastructure greatly enhances the development potential and maximizes its sale value.
- 3. Negotiate Development Agreements.** Development opportunities in the annexation priority areas should be pursued on a “negotiated development agreement” basis, with zoning, infrastructure extensions, and any applicable development incentives included in the negotiation process. The Future Land Use Map should serve as the guide for uses in the annexation areas.
- 4. Wait to Zone.** Annexation areas should not be zoned for future uses until the areas are voluntarily annexed and a negotiated development deal is accomplished. Discussion of appropriate zoning, consistent with the Future Land Use Map, should be a part of the negotiation process.
- 5. Place Priority on Contiguous Parcels.** Annexation priority should go to parcels contiguous to current City boundaries and not create islands, as required by Iowa law.
- 6. Continue Use of the 2-mile Extraterritorial Zoning and Subdivision Review under the provisions of Iowa law.** Iowa Code grants cities authority to review plats within the two-mile area outside the City boundaries when a local subdivision ordinance is in place.

IOWA ANNEXATION

The State of Iowa Legislative Code allows cities to annex land through a voluntary or involuntary process, detailed in Iowa Code Chapter 368. In all annexation procedures, the application must ensure the adequacy of services and that the annexation does not create an island.

- **Voluntary Annexation.** When not within two miles of another City, the voluntary annexation process is relatively easy and does not require review by the State City Development Board when all property owners agree to voluntarily annex. When the land owners of 80% or more of the area being annexed submit a voluntary annexation request to the City, then the application must be submitted to the State City Development Board. The City Council does not have to accept voluntary annexation request.
- **Involuntary Annexation.** When more than 20% of land owners oppose an annexation request, the involuntary annexation procedures in Iowa Code Chapter 368 apply. The process can be initiated by the City Council, the County Board of Supervisors, the Regional Planning Authority, or 5% of registered voters of the City. Several requirements must be met for involuntary annexation, multiple public notices, approval by the State City Development Board, and a City election.

Housing & Neighborhoods

3



CONTENTS

Housing Trends

Housing Projections

Goals and Strategies

HOUSING TRENDS

Houses and neighborhoods are the building blocks of the community. Ensuring quality, affordable housing for all is important for a strong quality of life. Creating policies, tools, and partnerships to build and maintain healthy housing and neighborhoods will make Grinnell a truly welcoming home for all residents.

Housing Occupancy

- **Increasing renter-occupied housing between 2010 and 2021 to 40.8%.**
 - There was an 11.5 percentage point increase in renters between 2010 and 2021.
 - In 2021, 1,536 housing units were renter occupied.
- **The vacancy rate has stayed low between 2010 and 2021.**
 - Grinnell's vacancy rate moved to 7.2% in 2021 from 5.4% in 2010.
 - A healthy vacancy rate is around 7%, allowing for movement in the market without too many vacant buildings to significantly impact the value of the buildings around them.
- **Increasing home values and rents.**
 - Median home value rose to \$151,000 in 2021 from \$113,000 in 2010.
- **Grinnell's median home value is above neighboring cities of Newton and Marshalltown's median home value in 2021**
 - Grinnell is slightly below Iowa's median value in 2021.
- **Median monthly rent rose to \$748 in 2021 from \$563 in 2010.**
 - 2021 median rents are slightly above Iowa's median.
- **High percentage of older home owners.**
 - In 2021, 40% of Grinnell owner-occupied households are 65 years of age and older compared to 31% for Iowa.
 - This low turnover rate does not allow houses to turn over creating an increased shortage of houses on the market and increasing their price.



Grinnell Renter Occupied
2021 - 40.8%
2010 - 29.3%

Iowa Renter Occupied
2021 - 28.1%
2010 - 27.9%



Grinnell Vacancy Rate
2021 - 7.2%
2010 - 5.4%

Iowa Vacancy Rate
2021 - 8.8%
2010 - 8.6%



Grinnell Owner Occupied
2021 - 59.2%
2010 - 70.7%

Iowa Owner Occupied
2021 - 71.9%
2010 - 76.0%

Mix of Housing Ages

- **41% of houses were built before 1960.**
- **32% of houses were built after 1980.**

Older housing tends to be some of the most affordable housing in a community. Having a diversity of housing ages helps residents and potential residents find housing that meets their financial and life style needs easier.



Grinnell Median Home Value
2021 - \$151,000
2010 - \$113,000

Iowa Median Home Value
2021 - \$160,700
2010 - \$119,200



Grinnell Median Rent
2021 - \$748
2010 - \$563

Iowa Median Rent
2021 - \$689
2010 - \$489

| Figure 3.1: Housing Market Data

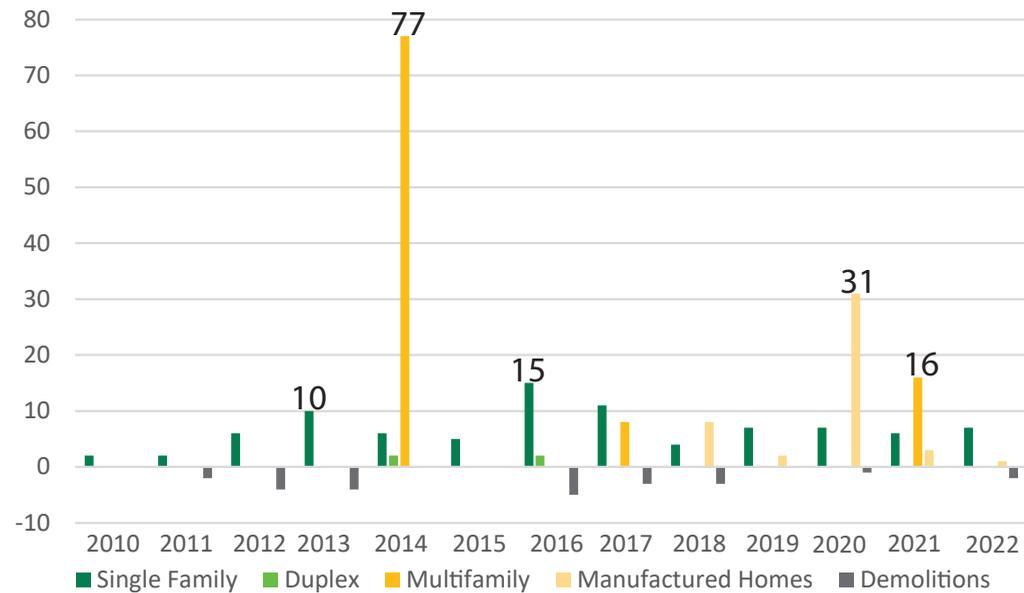


Figure 3.2: Housing Production by Year and Type of House

Steady Single Family Production

Grinnell's population has grown in the past decade, creating a greater demand in the housing market.

- **Steady production of single family housing has occurred.** A median of 6 single family houses were produced per year between 2010 and 2022.
- **Over 70 new multi-family units via the Spaulding Lofts project built in 2014.** Most new multi-family units have been built towards the edge of the City.
- **Few duplexes built between 2010 and 2022.** Duplex and triplex structures are part of a housing style called "missing middle". These housing styles often offer more

privacy and space than apartments and at a lower cost than single family residential.

- **Low demolition number between 2010 and 2021.** Low demolition numbers indicate strong housing quality and high demand for housing.

Cost Burdened

Cost burdened refers to households who pay over 30% of their income on mortgage, rent, or other housing cost. Being cost burdened can effect a persons' ability to pay for other necessities (food, clothing, and healthcare) or be able to save money.

- **In 2021, 49.8% of renters were cost burdened.** This is a 6.9 percentage point

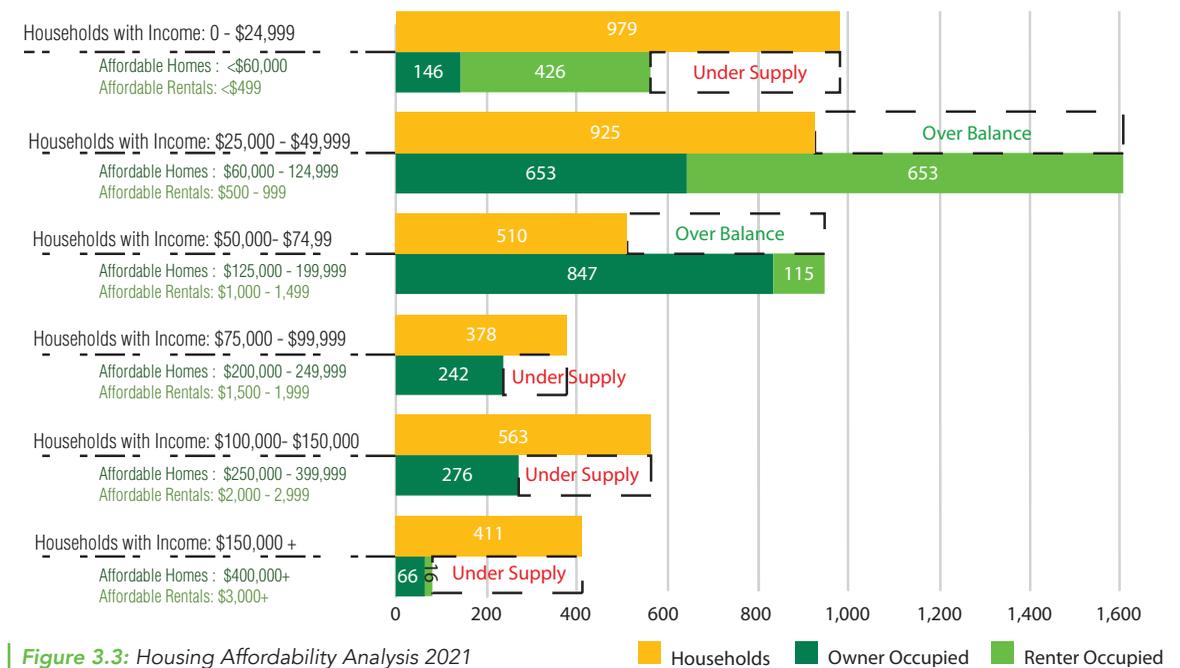


Figure 3.3: Housing Affordability Analysis 2021

decrease since 2010.

- **In 2021, 20.1% of owner-occupied households were cost burdened.** This is a 1.8 percentage point increase since 2010.

Housing Affordability

Figure 3.3 evaluates the number of housing units in different income ranges and the quantity by price of homes to meet household income levels.

- A positive balance indicates a surplus of housing within the affordability range of each respective income group, while a negative balance indicates a shortage.
- Housing shortages affect the lowest income households more because of their limited

choices.

- An affordable housing unit surplus exists for households earning between \$25,000 and \$74,999.
- This does not mean households earning above \$75,000 are without housing but rather that many are living in housing units below what they could reasonably afford. The result pushes those earning less into lower valued or lower quality housing.
- Increasing the supply of higher end housing can attract some higher income households to move out of their current more affordable house, therefore placing a more affordable unit on the market.

HOUSING PROJECTIONS

The population projection and housing demand analysis builds on trends identified in this document.

Two housing models were built to assess two different scenarios. The first is based on an increased 1.0% annual growth (Table 3.1). The second is based on an aspirational 1.5% annual growth (Table 3.2). Growth is shown higher than current history, because population growth needs housing to occur. Additionally, the following assumptions were made:

- The percentage of individuals not living in households (HH) (college, skilled nursing, and incarcerated) will remain stable through 2045.
- People Per Household (PPH) will see a slight increase as Grinnell builds more affordable and diverse housing types and attracts more families.
- The vacancy rate will remain stable at 7.1%. A 7% vacancy rate is generally considered a healthy rate that allows movement in the market while not bringing down surrounding property values.
- Units leave the market each year due to demolition or conversion to other uses. Grinnell's demolition numbers have historically been low and are not anticipated to increase.

Cumulative need of 844 housing units between 2020 and 2045

TABLE 3.1: HOUSING DEMAND MODEL, 1.0% ANNUAL GROWTH RATE

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	Total
Population at End of Period	9,564	10,002	10,460	10,940	11,441	11,965	
Household Population at End of Period	8,000	8,174	8,527	8,898	9,288	9,698	
Average People Per Household	2.13	2.14	2.14	2.15	2.15	2.15	
Household Demand at End of Period	3,756	3,828	3,984	4,148	4,320	4,856	
Project Vacancy Rate	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	
Unit Needs at End of Period	4,043	4,121	4,289	4,465	4,650	5,011	
Replacement Need (Total lost units)		9	9	5	5	5	33
Cumulative Need During Period		86	177	181	190	210	844
Average Annual Construction		17	35	36	38	42	34

TABLE 3.2: HOUSING DEMAND MODEL, 1.5% ANNUAL GROWTH RATE

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	Total
Population at End of Period	9,564	9,978	10,633	11,339	12,100	12,919	
Household Population at End of Period	8,000	8,347	8,895	9,485	10,122	10,807	
Average People Per Household	2.13	2.14	2.14	2.15	2.15	2.15	
Household Demand at End of Period	3,756	3,909	4,156	4,422	4,708	5,026	
Project Vacancy Rate	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	
Unit Needs at End of Period	4,043	4,208	4,474	4,760	5,068	5,411	
Replacement Need (Total lost units)		9	9	5	5	5	33
Cumulative Need During Period		173	275	291	313	348	1,403
Average Annual Construction		34	55	58	63	70	56

GOALS & STRATEGIES

MOVING FORWARD

INTRODUCTION

Housing and neighborhoods are the building blocks of the community. Ensuring quality, affordable housing for all is important for a strong quality of life. Creating policies, tools, and partnerships to create and maintain healthy housing and neighborhoods will make Grinnell a truly welcoming home for all residents.

The plan recommends the following policies and actions to begin reaching Plan Grinnell's goals. These are not comprehensive of all possible ways to reach the goals of Plan Grinnell. Policies and actions will also fall within other detailed plans, studies, regulations, and decisions in the community.

GOALS

- Have quality existing neighborhoods with support to encourage reinvestment, conservation, and enhancement of existing housing.
- Offer a range of housing types to accommodate workers and residents in all stages of life and income ranges.

POLICIES & ACTION STRATEGIES

1. Establish a Housing Development Fund.
2. Create a purchase-rehab-resale program.
3. Amend regulations to permit a variety of housing types.
4. Create micro-reinvestment and enhancement programs for the most vulnerable neighborhoods.
5. Develop policy and strategies for infill development, ensuring incentives match need/cost.
6. Continue implementation of rental registry and inspection.



Future residential development area is 962 acres

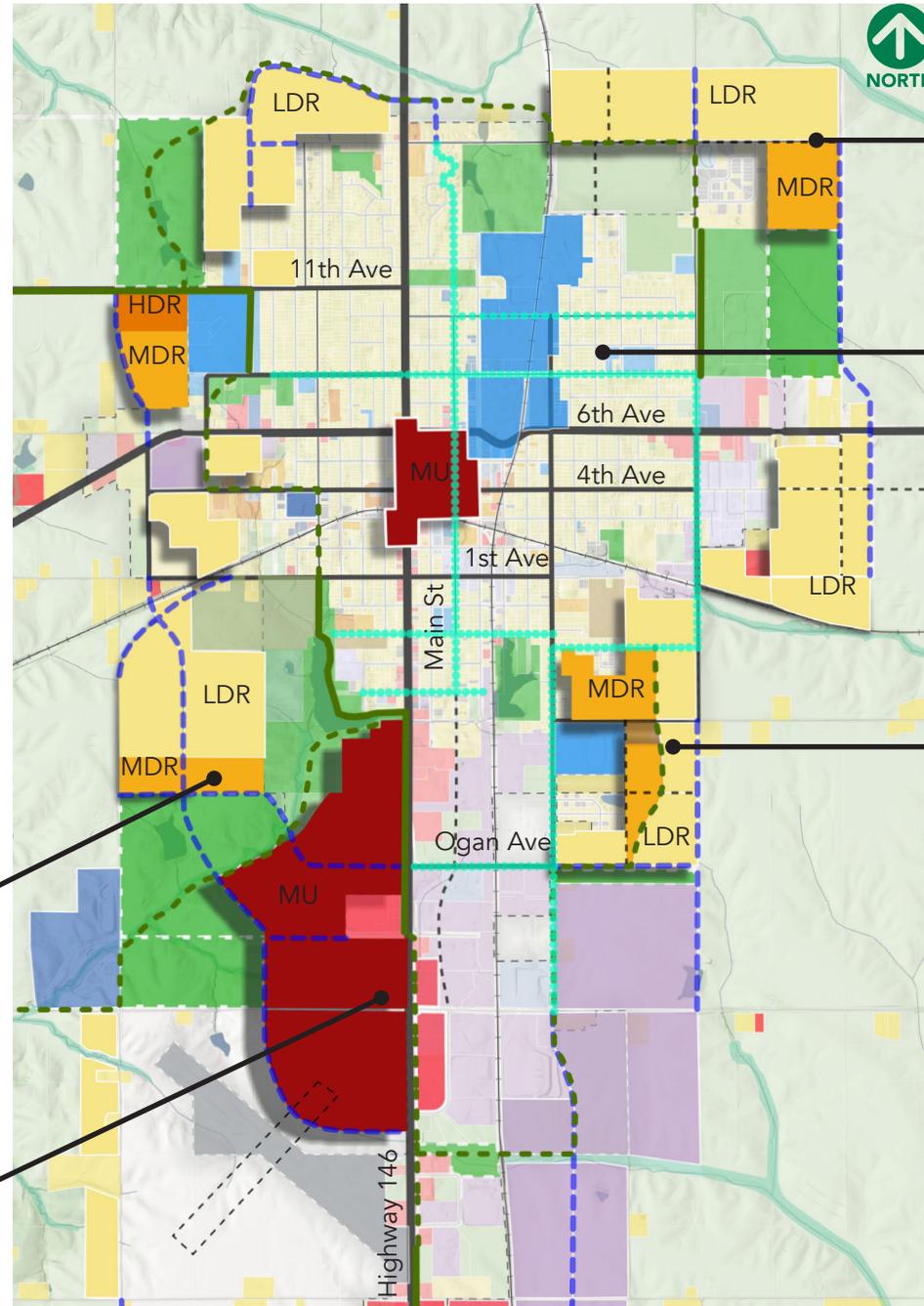
The 962 residential acres shown on the future land use map is over the demand calculated on page 16. This is because not all land will be available for development as private property owners decide whether to sell or not. The future land use also expands to logical places for future road extensions to create a future land use and future road map that is coherent.

Mix of development types in all areas:

- 30% conventional single family
- 25% small lot single family
- 20% "missing middle"
- 25% apartment

Concentric residential development keeps Downtown at the center

Mixed use housing opportunity



Map 3.1: Future Housing Neighborhoods

Contiguous development prevents leap frog development

Rehabilitate older housing

Diversity of housing styles should be implemented in each quadrant

- Low Density Residential (LDR)
- Medium Density Residential (MDR)
- High Density Residential (HDR)
- Mixed Use (MU)
- Commercial (COM)
- Industrial (I)
- Public/CIVIC (PUB)
- Parks
- Agriculture
- Blueway Overlay

HOUSING

1. Establish a Housing Development Fund.

Grinnell housing development has been slow with builders receiving financing for only a small number of parcels. Grinnell should explore approaches to financing housing developments. To avoid strains on public or organizational budgets, devoted funding pools are often the most secure and flexible to finance housing development projects. These funding pools are appropriate to allocate for gap financing on projects but can also facilitate other housing strategies.

- **Housing Development Fund.** A lending consortium pools together local funding, similar to an economic development fund, in order to share risk. It can begin as a cooperative venture among lending institutions active in the market to spread individual risk. Grinnell housing development has been slow as builders have only been able to receive financing for a very limited amount of houses at a time. A housing development fund makes sure not one banking institution is taking on the risk for a new project and allows a developer/builder more capacity therefore increasing the supply of housing units.

2. Create a Purchase-Rehab-Resale Program.

Older houses are the most affordable and sustainable houses. Purchase-Rehab-Resale programs purchase older houses in need of repairs, rehab them, and sell to a new owner making enough profit to move on and rehab the next home. Grinnell has a higher percentage of residents 65 years and older owning their own homes than the Iowa average. A Purchase-Rehab-Resale program could place liquidity in older homeowners' pockets and keep rehabbed housing more affordable to younger generations.



Cottage Style Housing in Grinnell

COMMUNITY BASED ACTION AND RISK SHARING

Risk sharing is a noted strategy and goal to address housing challenges in Grinnell. However, communities cannot simply wait around for development opportunities and developer interest. Residents and stakeholders within several communities in Iowa are recognizing the need to take action by pooling their own resources and expertise to act as the developers of new lots. Two examples are described below:

- **Fairfield, Iowa.** A group of local stakeholders combined equity stakes to act together as the developer and builder of 27+ townhomes and duplexes. Risk sharing included private equity, City TIF funds, tax abatement, and Iowa Workforce Housing Tax Credits. Units were priced between \$160k-\$220K.
- **Humbolt, Iowa.** Similar to development in Fairfield, local stakeholders pooled equity to finance 32 single-family and duplex units. The City helped share risk through TIF financing and tax abatement. Units are priced between \$230K-\$280K.

These are a couple examples of local action to share risk and start a grassroots, proactive effort to housing development. These projects were assisted in part by 571 Polson Developments, LLC.

For more information on these and similar projects in Iowa go to: <https://571polson.com/>

3. Amend regulations to permit a variety of housing types across the City.

Greater diversity in housing styles, types, and sizes allow people to better find a house that fits their budgets, stage of life, and lifestyles. Today, there is a growing interest in "non-traditional" housing types such as the Garden Cottages. The City's existing ordinance should consider the possibility of increasing the level of residential density in all zones.

Variety of Housing to Permit and Encourage in Grinnell

Small lot single family



Rowhouses



Apartment



Duplex



Townhouses



Downtown Living



Triplex



Small Apartments

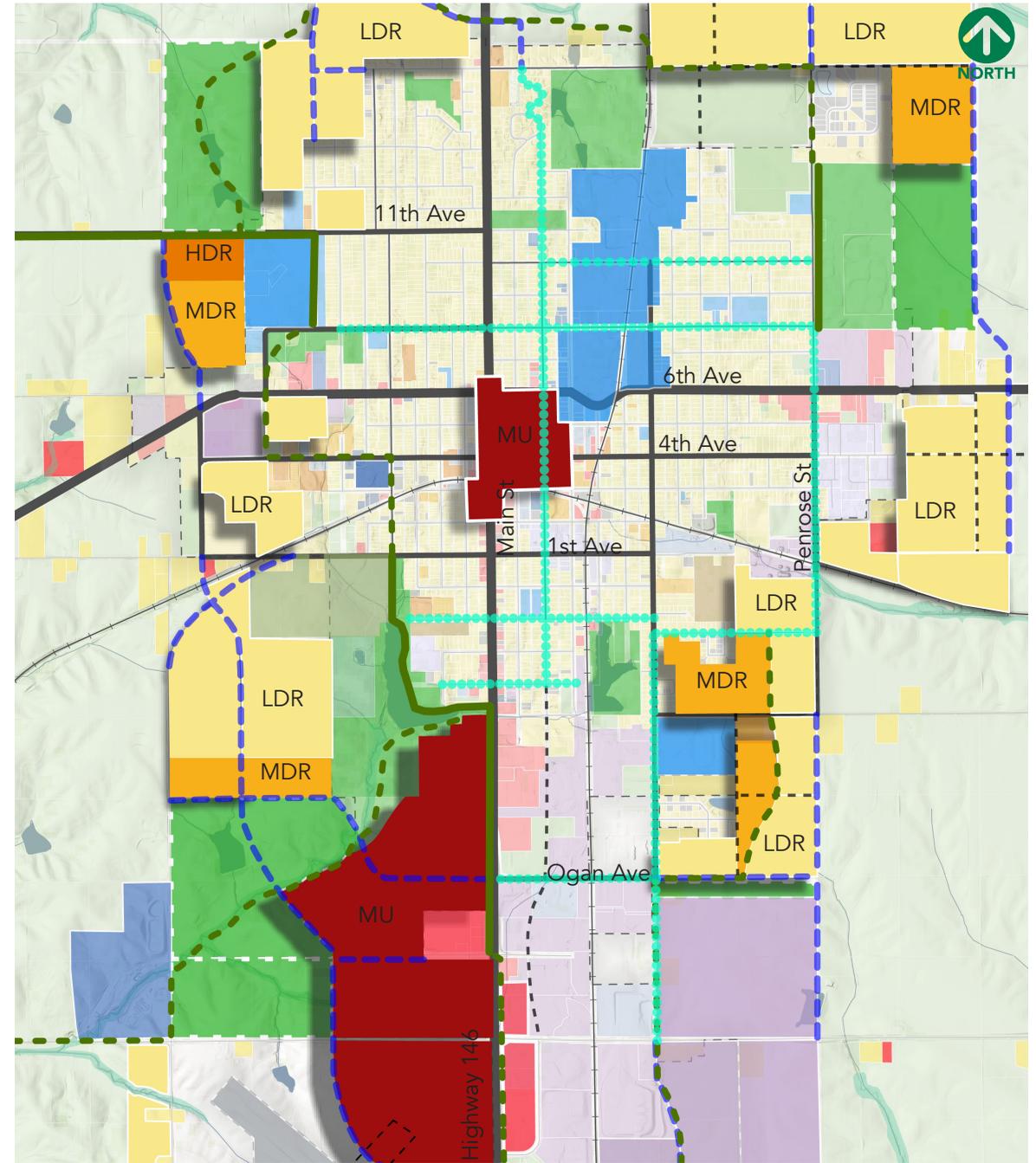


New Mixed-Use



Future Land Use

- Low Density Residential (LDR)
- Medium Density Residential (MDR)
- High Density Residential (HDR)
- Mixed Use (MU)



Map 3.2: Diversity of Housing Densities

4. Create a micro-reinvestment and enhancement program for the most vulnerable neighborhoods.

Grinnell has very strong neighborhoods and quality housing. However, ensuring pockets of disrepair do not become widespread is important. Targeted reinvestment funding for neighborhoods in need can be more effective than broad City-wide programs. Targeted reinvestment allows a neighborhood to see the results of new investment happening more easily than a City-wide program where the effects are diffused. Seeing the effectiveness can encourage private investment in the neighborhood. Over time, the City should rotate the micro reinvestment program to different neighborhoods to address issues for both owners and renters.

5. Develop policies and strategies for infill development, ensuring incentives match needs/cost.

Grinnell has had residential demolitions throughout the years. Demolitions often result in a vacant lot. A portion of the new housing option to accommodate population growth should happen on these vacant infill lots. Infill development takes advantage of existing infrastructure, can increase property values, stabilizes neighborhoods, and helps vacant lots not become an issue.

- **Identify infill properties and areas within the existing built-up area.** Focus on sites that are:
 - *Vacant and buildable.*
 - *Underutilized or sporadically developed.*
 - *Occupied by unnecessary parking, storage yards, or other paved areas.*
 - *Blighting influence in neighborhoods.*
- **Identify strategies for consolidating ownership of vacant lots in older neighborhoods.** One of the largest hurdles to transformative infill development is the assembly of land or lots to create economy of scale for development. Most developers/builders do not have the capital, time, or resources to assemble lots from multiple property owners. In areas with a concentration of infill sites or just one large infill, property acquisition and preparation by the City could be a first step.
- **Establish incentives for development of vacant lots.** The City should identify barriers to the development of vacant lots, especially in target neighborhoods. With the lack of developers working in Grinnell, this could mean selling lots at a discount or giving them for free to for-profit or nonprofit developers to encourage development.

6. Continue implementation of rental registry and inspection program.

Rentals make up a significant portion of residents. Having high quality and safe rentals plays an important role in the housing market by giving residents a more affordable option than ownership and allows new residents time to settle into the community before buying a house. In 2019, Grinnell adopted a rental registry and inspection program to ensure Grinnell renters have a safe housing environment. Grinnell should continue tracking the success of the program and make adjustment as necessary.

Transportation

4

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Current Conditions

Goals & Strategies

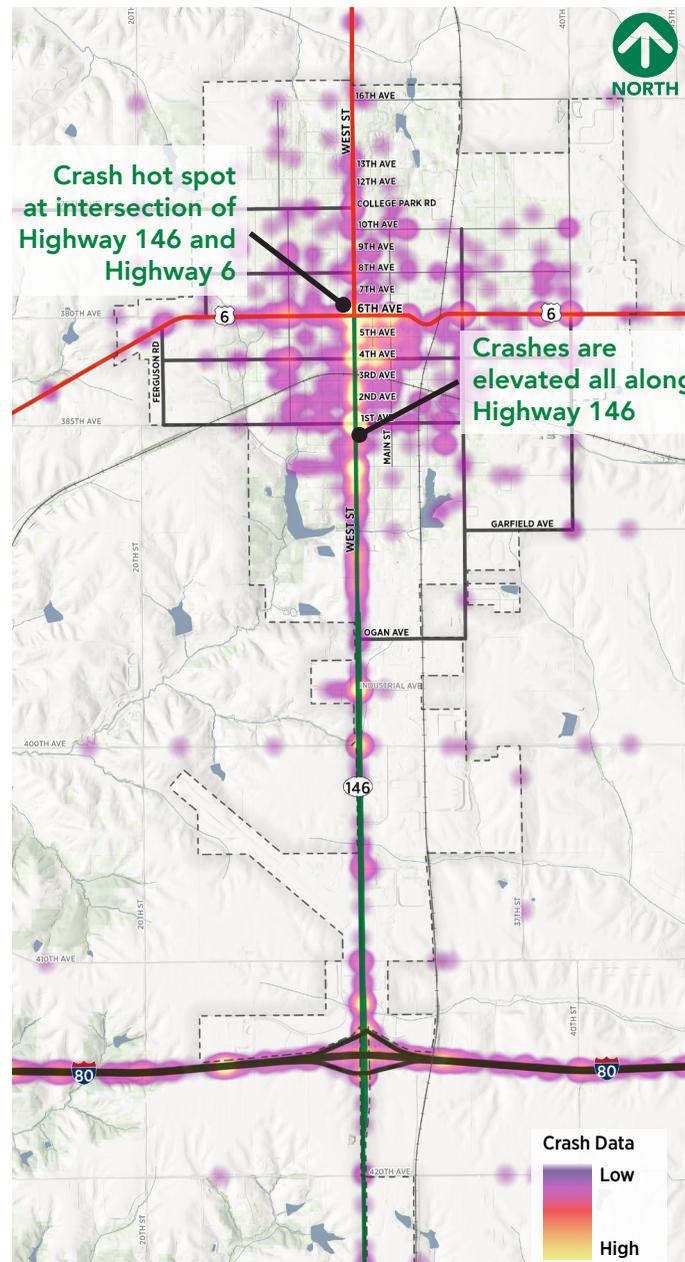
CURRENT CONDITIONS

TRANSPORTATION

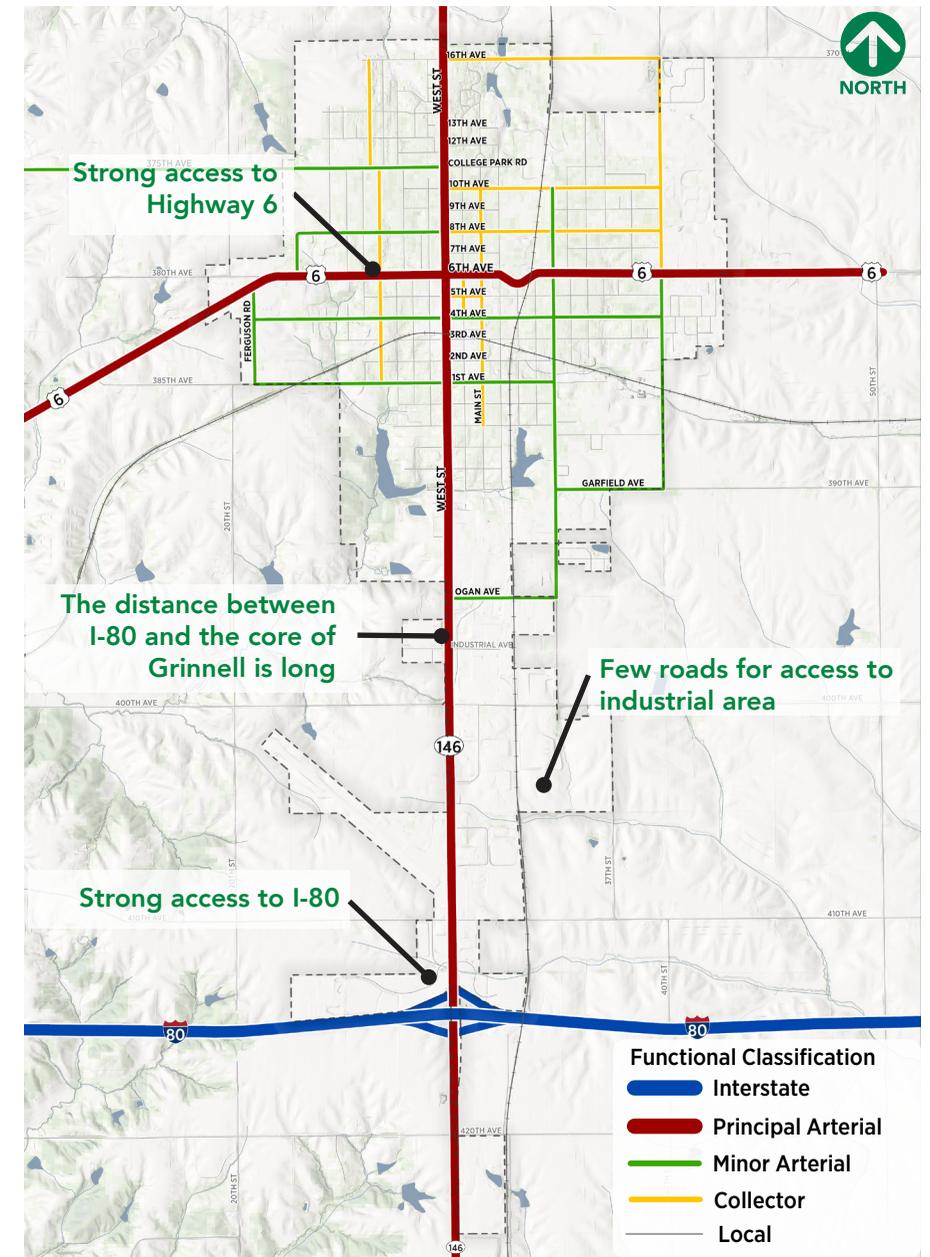
Roadway Network

Movement of people and goods to and within Grinnell is essential for community function and growth. Plan Grinnell provides a transportation network that offers mobility choices to destinations across the City. Grinnell is located along Interstate 80 and Highways 6 and 146, as well as being crossed by two railroad tracks. These transportation options can bring people and commerce to Grinnell.

- **The main population center of Grinnell is located north of Interstate 80.** A 2.5 mile narrow strip of commercial and industrial land creates a physical and visual barrier between Interstate 80 and the core of the City.
- **Highway 6 creates a north and south division in central Grinnell.** There are current studies with the Iowa DOT to look into lane reduction to make safer pedestrian crossings and smoother traffic flow for vehicles.
- **The highest concentration of crashes happens along 146 and Highway 6.** The proposed lane reduction on Highway 6 can reduce the number of crashes in Grinnell.
- **Grinnell's flat topography lends itself to walking, bicycling, and other alternative forms of transportation.** Gaps in the sidewalk and trail network along with major street crossings hamper pedestrian activity.
- **Street expansion is needed to allow for new development in Grinnell.** Street expansion would create better connections between arterial roads to improve safety and traffic, allow flow around the outskirts of Grinnell, and also provide better access to I-80 and Highway 6. Streets needed for long term expansion are shown later in this chapter.



Map 4.1: Traffic Crash Hot Spots



Map 4.2: Functional Classification

CURRENT CONDITIONS

TRANSPORTATION

Sidewalks

Grinnell's flat topography, small scale, and relatively low traffic volumes makes walking a viable option.

- **The sidewalk network has missing connections throughout.** Completing the sidewalk network will allow pedestrians more viable options for mobility within the City.
- **Ensuring quality sidewalks and curb cuts increases the accessibility for all residents.** Accessible sidewalks and curb cuts allow individuals of all abilities to better use the infrastructure.

Trails

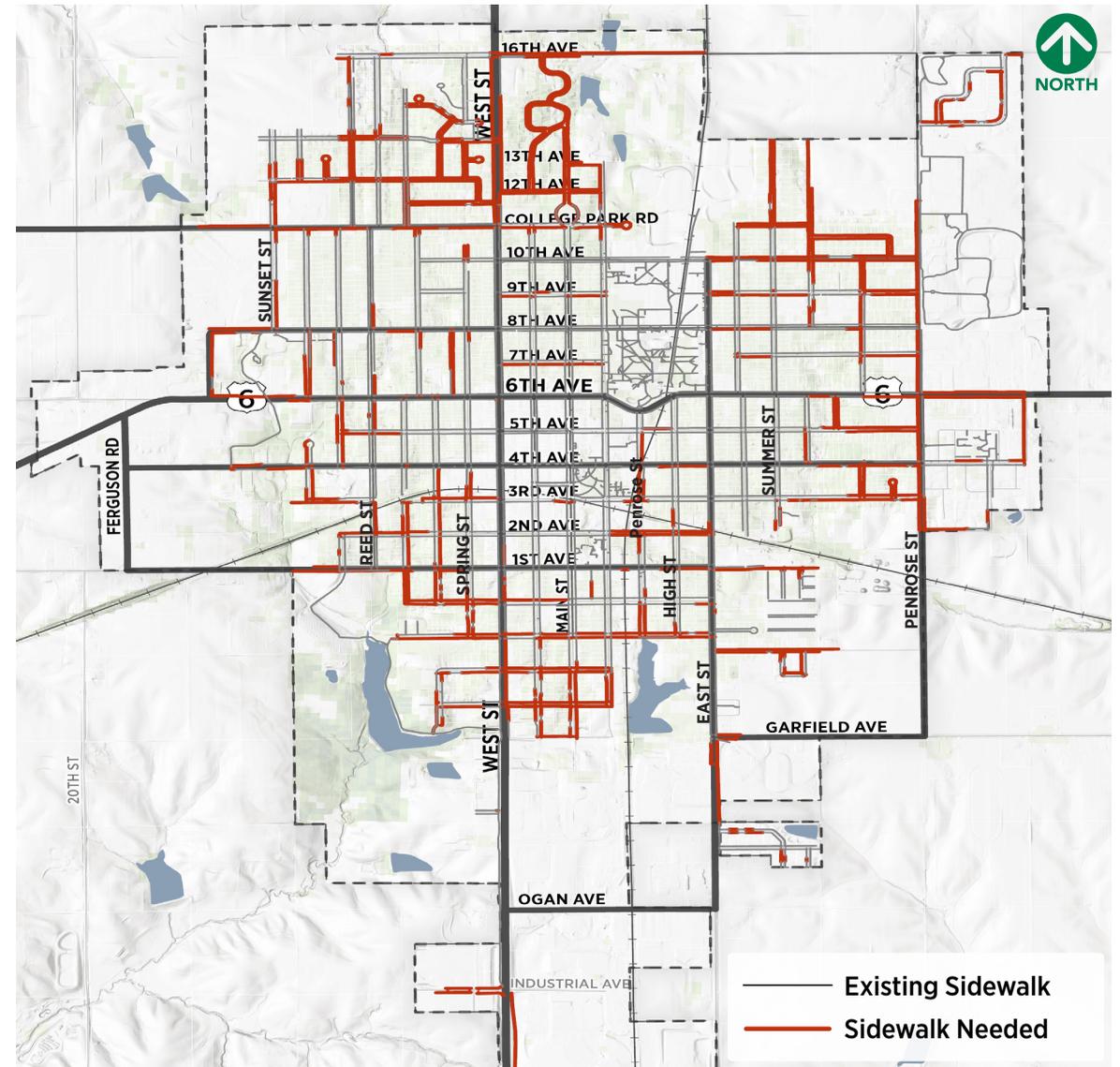
- **Grinnell has a trail along the west side of the City, moving from Industrial Avenue all the way to Rock Creek State Park.** Extending the trail network to encircle the the City allows more residents safe and easy access to the trails. It also connects the trail to more community spaces.
- **Trails have an ability to connect to various centers of the community.** Ensuring strong wayfinding is done along the trail can aid trail users in understanding where to go and how long it will take them.
- **For more information on trails, check out the Parks and Recreation Chapter**



Arbor Lake Trail



Trail Along 11th Avenue



Map 4.3: Gaps in the Sidewalk Network

GOALS & STRATEGIES

MOVING FORWARD

INTRODUCTION

Transportation is the lifeblood of a community. Transportation infrastructure allows children to walk to school, workers to commute, and goods to be moved. Ensuring Grinnell's future transportation infrastructure is planned for can ensure everyone can move smoothly in the future.

GOALS

- **Maintain and grow a safe, comfortable, and connected multi-modal network with planned extensions of pedestrian, bicycle, and micro-mobility facilities.**
- **Safe and comfortable access to neighborhood cores, parks, and other activity areas for all abilities.**

POLICIES & ACTION STRATEGIES

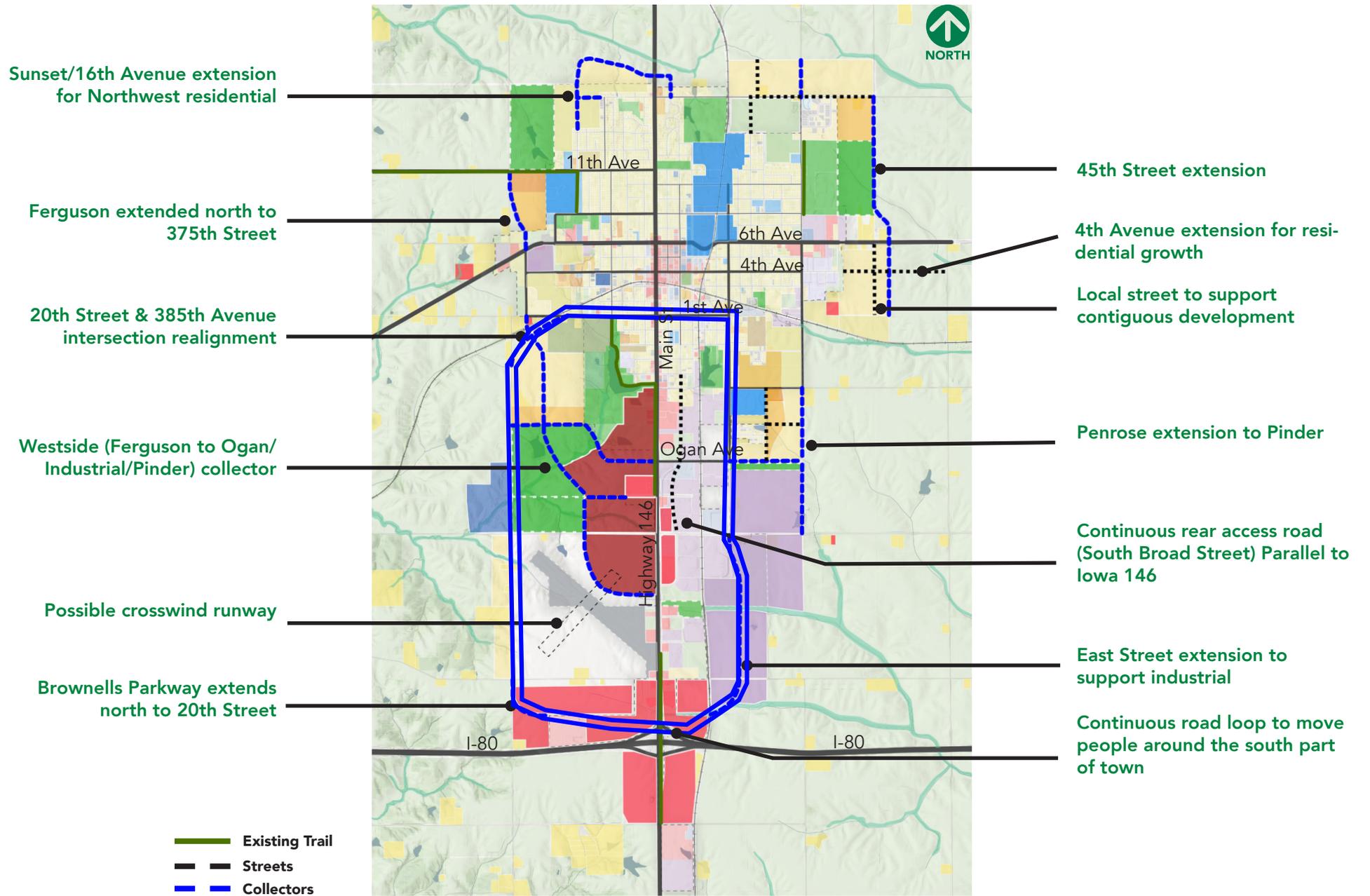
1. **Prepare for future road extensions.**
2. **Implement the lane reduction proposal on Highway 146 and Highway 6.**
3. **Bolster a complete street network and infrastructure.**
4. **Implement a cost sharing program to help fund missing sidewalk links.**
5. **Increase the number of bicycle parking spaces.**
6. **Identify public/private partnerships to prepare for new transportation modes such as micro-mobility.**



1. Prepare for future road extensions.

Grinnell must plan for future road expansions to allow for growth. Some of these road expansions might not take place within the next twenty years, but the City should aim to make sure new development does not take away the possibility of future road expansion.

- **Ogan Avenue.** Extend to the west.
- **Industrial Avenue.** Extend to the west.
- **Ferguson Road.** Extend to the south to Highway 6 and and north to 375th Ave.
- **Brownells Parkway.** Extend north to 20th Street.
- **Broad Street.** Extend south to Ogan Avenue.
- **45th Street Extend south.**
- **4th Avenue.** Extend east to 50th Street.
- **East Street.** Extend south to 410th Avenue.



Map 4.4: Future Transportation Network

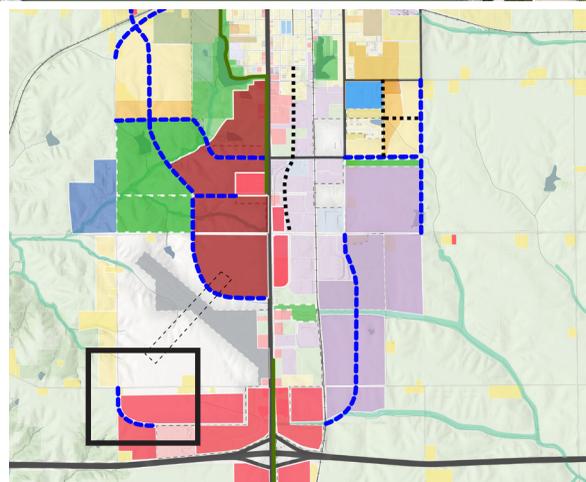


Figure 4.1: Brownells Parkway



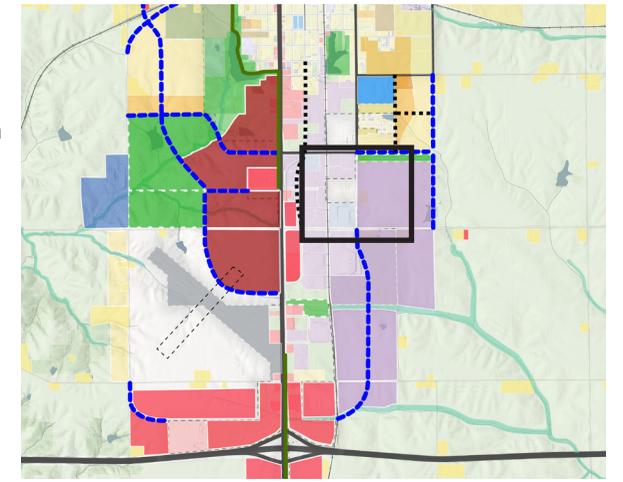
Figure 4.2: Broad Street

- Brownells Parkway Extension.** The area around Brownells Parkway has potential for further commercial/industrial development. Ensuring the ability to extend Brownells Parkway to connect with 20th Street at the 410 Avenue Intersection can ensure further development has space to grow. The road extension also provides new residential areas to the north the ability to access Interstate 80.



Map 4.5: Inset map of Brownells Parkway Extension

- Broad Street Extension to Ogan Avenue.** Extending Broad Street to Ogan Avenue can open the area to further industrial growth.

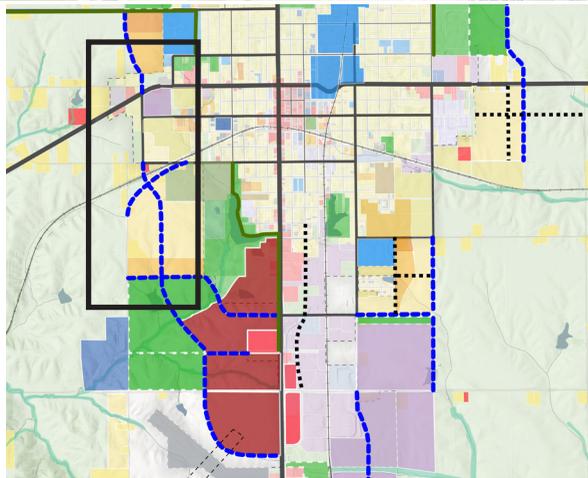


Map 4.6: Inset map of Broad Street Extension



Figure 4.3: Intersection of 6th Avenue and Ferguson Road

- Northwest Proposed Road Extension.** Creation and extension of arterial roads to Grinnell's west will open opportunities for residential and commercial development. Realigning roads to eliminate sharp shifts or abrupt changes can create safer, smoother traffic flow and improve intersections as development increases traffic on these roads.

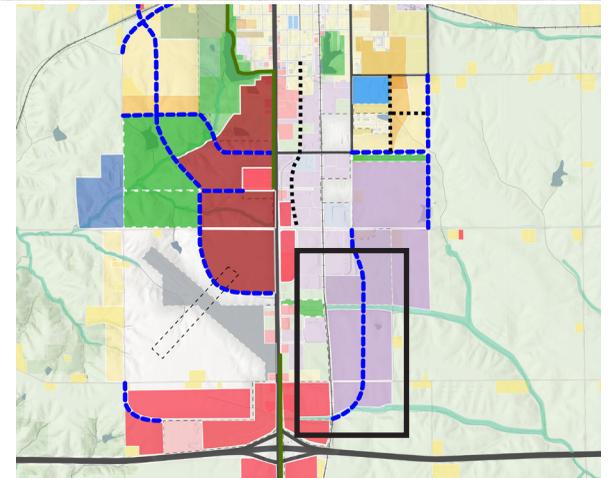


Map 4.7: Inset map of Northwest Road Extension



Figure 4.4: Pinder Avenue - Proposed Complete Street

- East Street Extension.** Creation and extension of arterial roads to Grinnell's east will open industrial development opportunities.



Map 4.8: Inset map of East Street Extension



Figure 4.5: Highway 146 - Proposed Lane Reduction & Pedestrian Improvements



Figure 4.6: 6th Avenue - Proposed Lane Reduction & Pedestrian Improvements

2. Implement lane reduction proposal on Highway 146 and Highway 6.

Residents expressed concern about crossing Highway 146 and Highway 6. Lane reduction, currently being studied by the Iowa Department of Transportation, can address this issue. Lane reduction from four lanes to three lanes (two drive lanes, one turn lane) is becoming common across Iowa on underutilized four lane roads. According to the Iowa DOT, 4 - 3 lane conversions have been shown to reduce crashes by about half. The extra space on the road from the lane reduction can be used to improve walkability, bikeability, and parking.

- **Reduced lane widths**
 - Increase safety for vehicle drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists
 - Lower vehicle speeds
- **Provide opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure enhancements**
 - Curb bump outs
 - Increased sidewalk widths (potentially enough for a shared use path)
 - Bicycle Lane



Figure 4.7: Potential Highway 146 Lane Reduction



Figure 4.8: Washington Avenue - Proposed Complete Street



Figure 4.9: Marvin Avenue - Proposed Complete Street

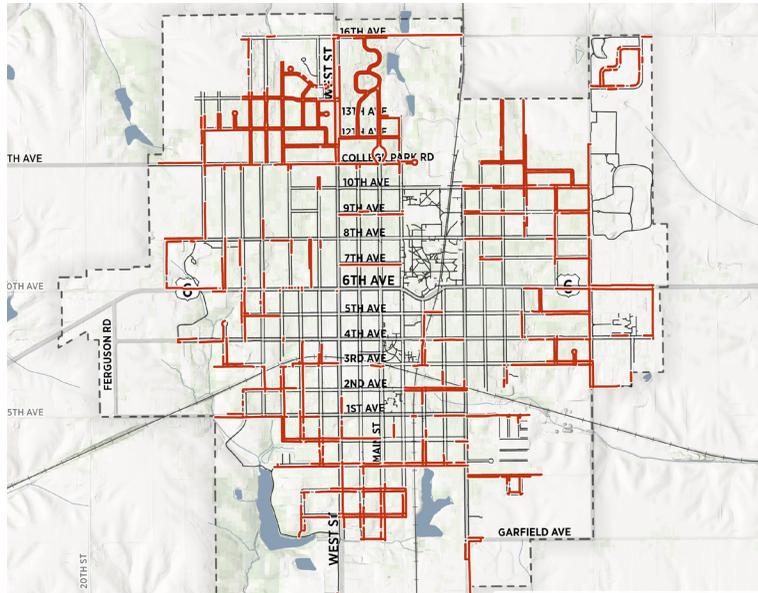
3. Bolster complete street network and infrastructure.

Residents expressed an interest in better active transportation options. Complete streets are roadways designed with multiple transportation options in mind. This allows bicyclists, pedestrians, and other micro-mobility users to safely use the street. Grinnell has several bicycle lanes and advisory bicycle routes. Ensuring upkeep of the striping and way-finding signage can keep the streets safer for all.

- **Washington Avenue.** Connects Arbor Lake Park to Miller Park.
- **Marvin Avenue.** Can provide an alternative way to connect Arbor Lake Park to Miller Park.
- **East Street.** Connect Miller Park and the core of Grinnell to Industrial jobs in the southern section of the City.
- **Penrose Avenue.** Connect Ahrens Park to southeast neighborhoods.
- **8th Avenue.** Provides an east to west connection on the north side of Grinnell. It also moves through the Grinnell College campus.
- **10th Avenue.** Provides an east to west connection on the north side of Grinnell. It also provides a connection through the Grinnell College campus.



Figure 4.10: Marvin Ave. - Potential Complete Street Treatment



Map 4.9: Gaps in the Sidewalk Network

— Existing Sidewalk
 — Sidewalk Needed

4. Implement a cost sharing program to help fund missing sidewalk links.

Sidewalk gaps influence the walkability of an area. Gaps in sidewalks reduce accessibility for residents, especially for younger and older residents and those with disabilities. Working towards a viable monetary solution to fill in the missing sidewalk gaps will make the City more walkable and accessible for all residents.



Overfilled Bicycle Rack Downtown Grinnell

5. Increase the number of bicycle parking.

When cyclists arrive at their destination, having quality bicycle parking nearby is necessary. High quality and safe bicycle parking should allow for two points of contact between the bicycle frame and the bicycle rack. Bicycle racks can be enhanced with local colors and artwork to add aesthetic value to the area. Communities with colleges have a higher number of students who rely on bicycling and walking to destinations.



Electric Car Charging Station

6. Identify public/private partnerships to prepare for new transportation modes such as micro-transit.

Not every resident or college student has access to a car. Grinnell has several public transportation options such as the PeopleRides and Grinnell College Local Shuttle. Identifying public/private partnerships to further enhance these transportation services is key. Accentuating the public transportation services with current and future micro-mobility (e-bikes and e-scooters) enhances the ability to move around town in an efficient way.

Parks & Recreation

5

CONTENTS

Current Conditions

Goals & Strategies



CURRENT CONDITIONS

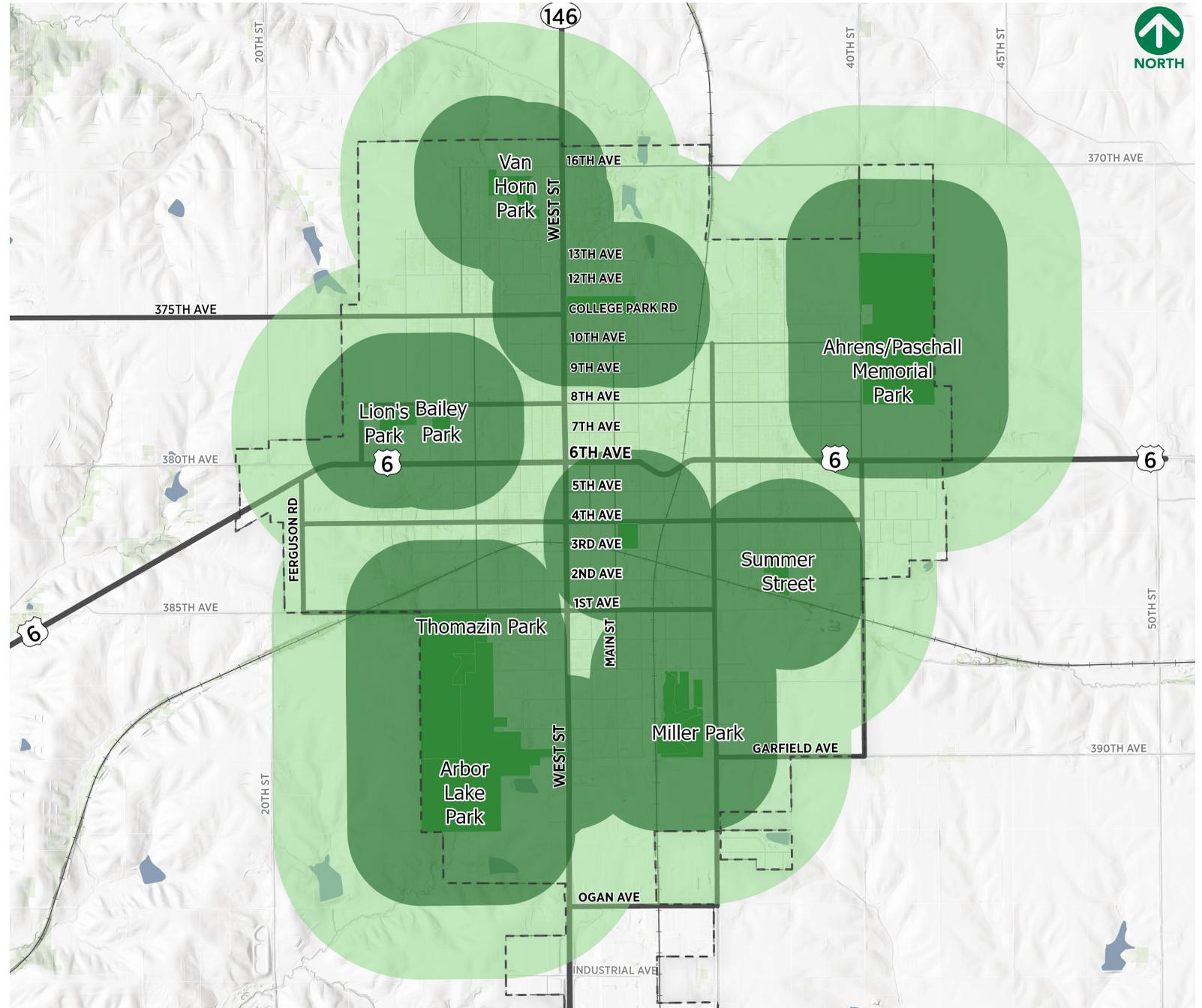
PARKS & RECREATION

Parks and recreation areas are essential for providing a community with a high quality of life. Spaces providing opportunities for exercise, relaxation, socialization, and connections to nature are needed.

Residents have Strong Access to Parks

Grinnell has eight traditional parks, one sports complex, and one special use area distributed throughout the northern side of the City. Access to parks is important, not only for physical and mental health, but the social well-being of a community. A quarter-mile to a half-mile is the range that residents are likely to access a park by walking or bicycling. Grinnell's entire population is covered within the half-mile buffer. Several portions of the City are not covered by a quarter mile buffer. The majority of the area not covered by the quarter mile buffer is on either side of Grinnell College. Residents in this area could access the Grinnell College campus with its ample greenspace.

Overall, the City is above the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards for acres of park space per 1,000 residents. The City is below the NRPA Community Style Park recommendations but still has a diversity of park choices and recreation options.



Map 5.1: Parks with Quarter and Half Mile Buffers

CURRENT CONDITIONS

PARKS & RECREATION

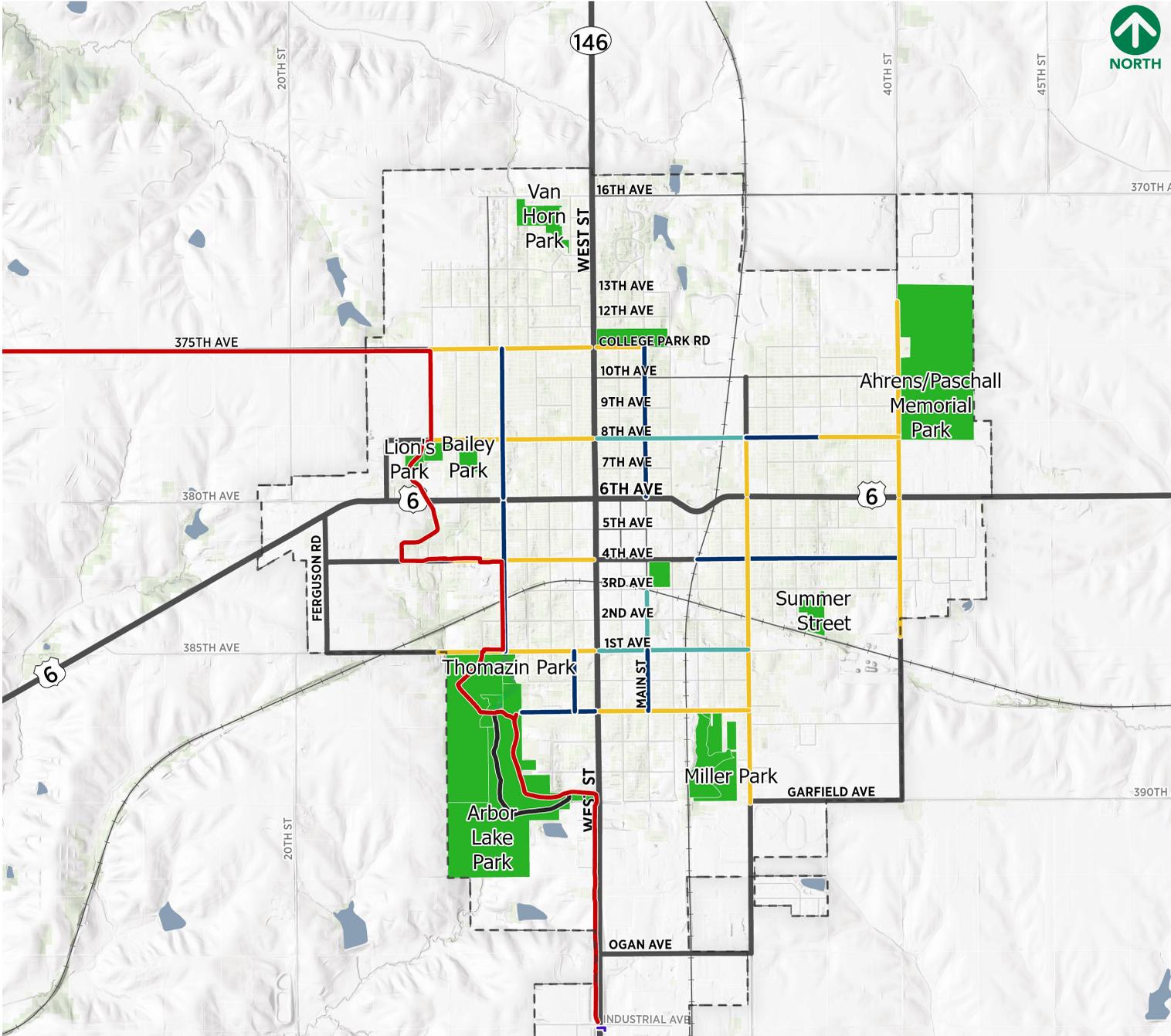
Trails & Pathways

Grinnell has several park trails and a strong regional trail leading to Rock Creek State Park. Finding ways to provide on and off-street bicycle and trail connections between the trails, parks, downtown, Grinnell College, and other major destinations can expand access and opportunities for outdoor activity.



Trail Along Arbor Lake

- Existing
- Gravel
- Alternate No Parking Bike Route
- No Parking Bike Lane
- No Parking Bike Route
- Parks



Map 5.2: Trails and On-Street Facilities

GOALS & STRATEGIES

MOVING FORWARD

INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreational areas are essential for providing a community with a high quality of life. Spaces that provide opportunities for exercise, relaxation, socialization, and connections to nature are needed and should be accessible to all.

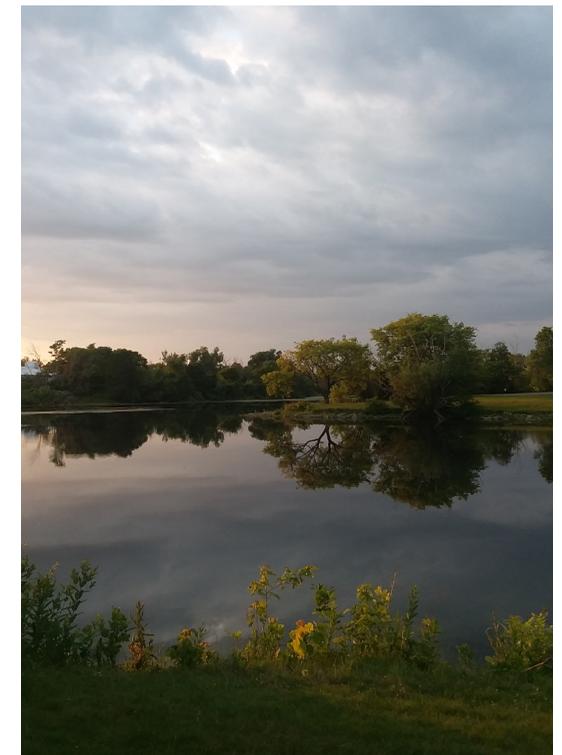
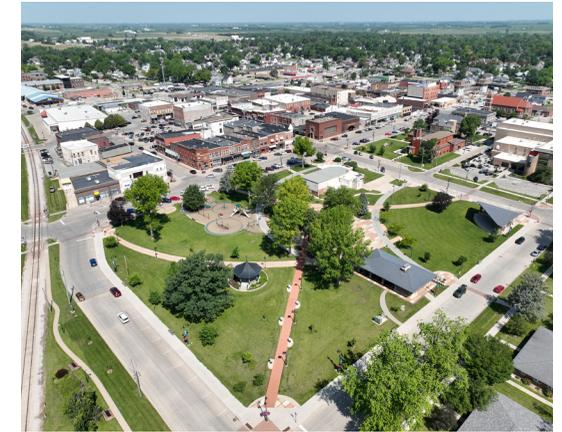
The plan recommends the following policies and actions to begin reaching Plan Grinnell's goals. These are not comprehensive of all possible ways to reach the goals of Plan Grinnell. Policies and actions will also fall within other detailed plans, studies, regulations, and decisions in the community.

GOALS

- The recreational system will develop to serve the overall community and its changing needs.
- Natural areas, parks, and open spaces will be maintained and connected using trails as the primary routes.
- Parks, recreational facilities, and programming will be accessible.

POLICIES & ACTION STRATEGIES

1. Invest and update existing parks to create more accessibility and serve changing needs.
 - a. Create a natural park extension of Arbor Lake.
 - b. Plan for expansion opportunities of Miller Park to the west.
2. Continue to implement and refine Prairie Park along Highway 146.
3. Create neighborhood parks within new housing developments.
4. Establish Blueways to protect natural drainageways and steep terrain for its ecosystem services.
5. Complete the recreational trail loop.



Future Parks

Grinnell looks to provide access to parks in all areas of town. A diversity of parks and open spaces provide varied recreation opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

The future land use map indicates several key themes:

- **Distribute parks around the City.** Currently parks are spread throughout Grinnell, allowing residents to be relatively close to park access. As Grinnell expands, park development should be distributed to ensure all residents remain close to park access.
- **Diversity of passive and active spaces.** Parks should be a combination of low intensity passive uses along with more intense recreational and sporting uses.
- **Protect environmentally sensitive spaces.** Using passive park spaces works well for protecting environmentally sensitive spaces such as steep hills, wetlands, and drainage areas.
- **Connect parks by pathways.** Having parks connect to each other ensures people can move between parks on foot or bicycle and can extend the feeling of a park.

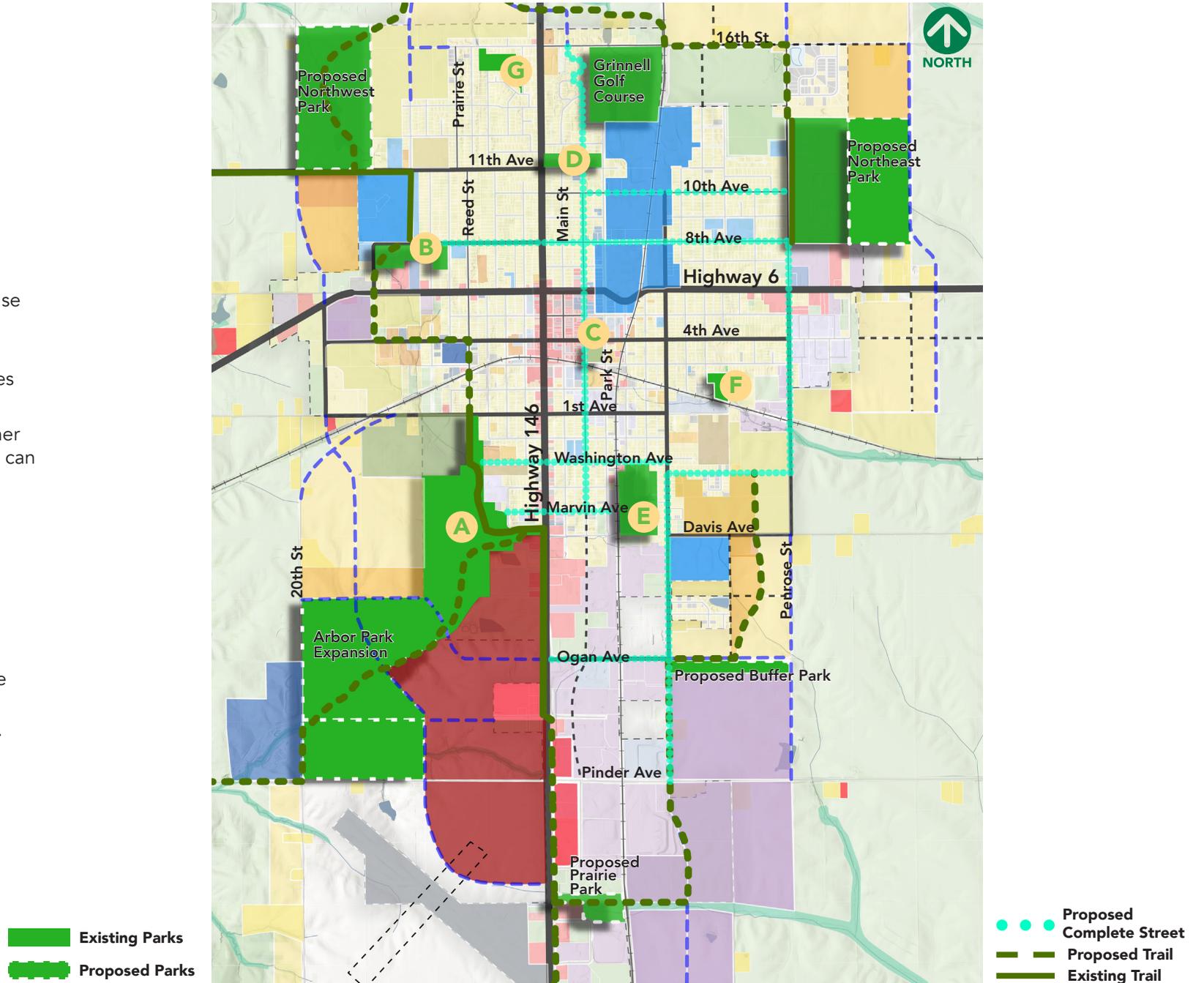
1. Invest and update existing parks to create more accessibility and serve changing needs.

Existing parks are crucial components of existing neighborhoods as spaces for relaxation, exercise, and social interactions.

Parks are like houses; if taken care of and updated occasionally, they can last and be well used for a long time. When parks become in disrepair, people don't want to live next to them, the space becomes unappealing to visitors, and facilities can become unsafe.

The following pages indicate enhancements that should be considered and planned for.

- A. Arbor Lake Park
- B. Bailey Park & Lion's Park
- C. Central Park
- D. Merrill Park
- E. Miller Park
- F. Summer Street Park
- G. Van Horn Park



Map 5.3: Current and Proposed Parks Map

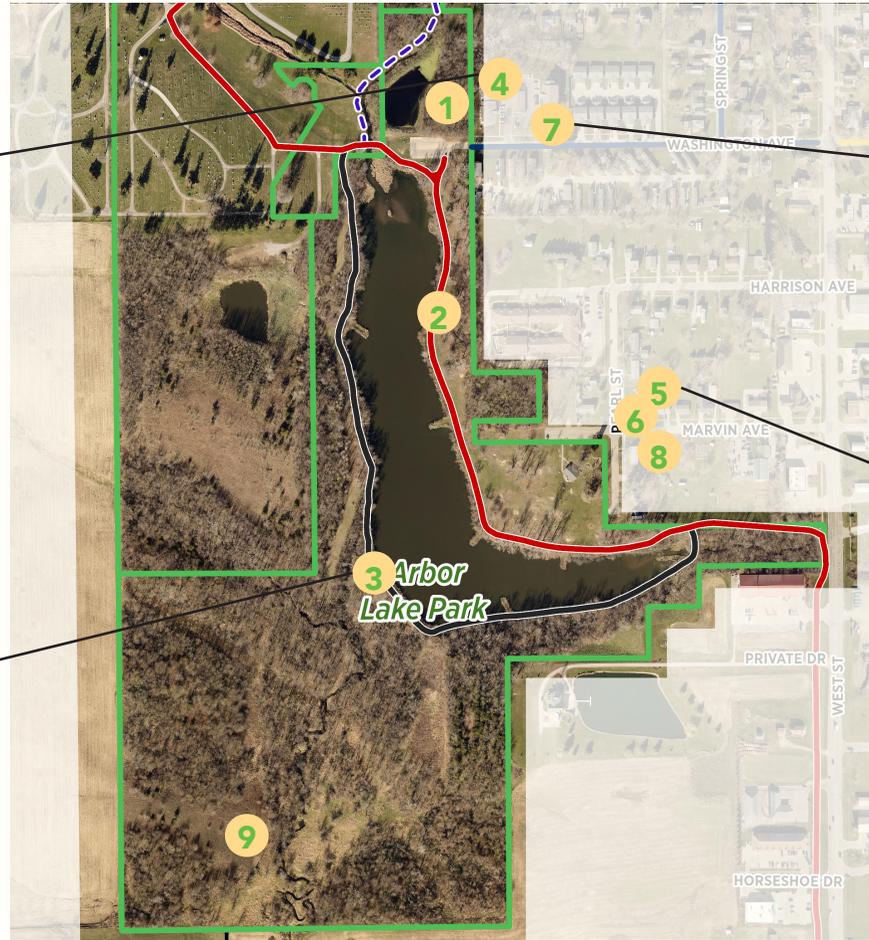
A ARBOR LAKE



Canoe/Kayak Access



Natural Trails Area



Trailhead



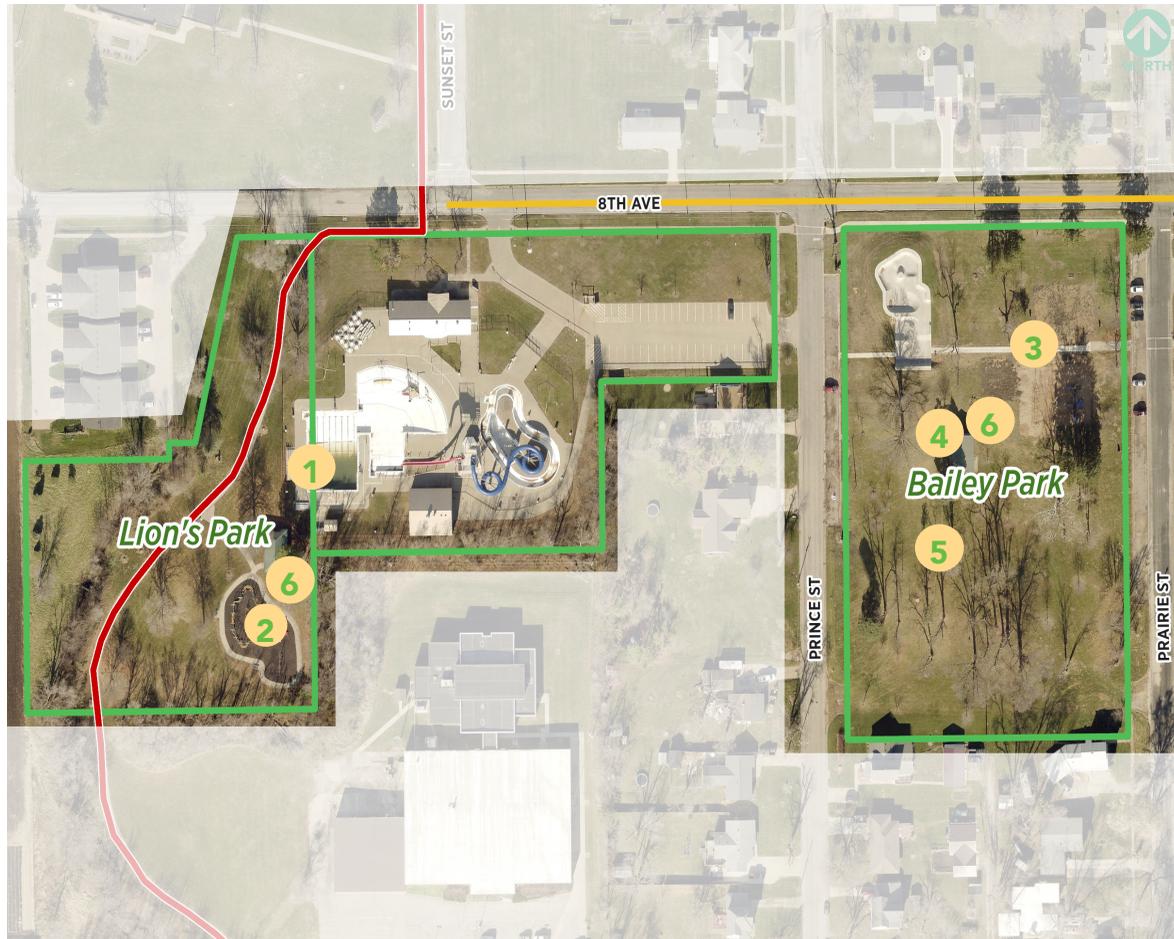
Playground Equipment



- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Trail
- Gravel Trail
- Alt. No Parking Bike Route
- No Parking Bike Lane
- Parks

1. Dam and lake restoration
2. Pave gravel trail on the west side
3. Add natural paths throughout woodland area
4. Add canoe/kayak access
5. New playground
6. Natural amphitheater on hillside west of shelter
7. Create trailhead with restroom facility, bike repair station, and wayfinding signage
8. Path between bicycle trail and shelter
9. Initiate a master plan to expand Arbor Lake Park to the southwest.

B BAILEY PARK & LION'S PARK



C CENTRAL PARK



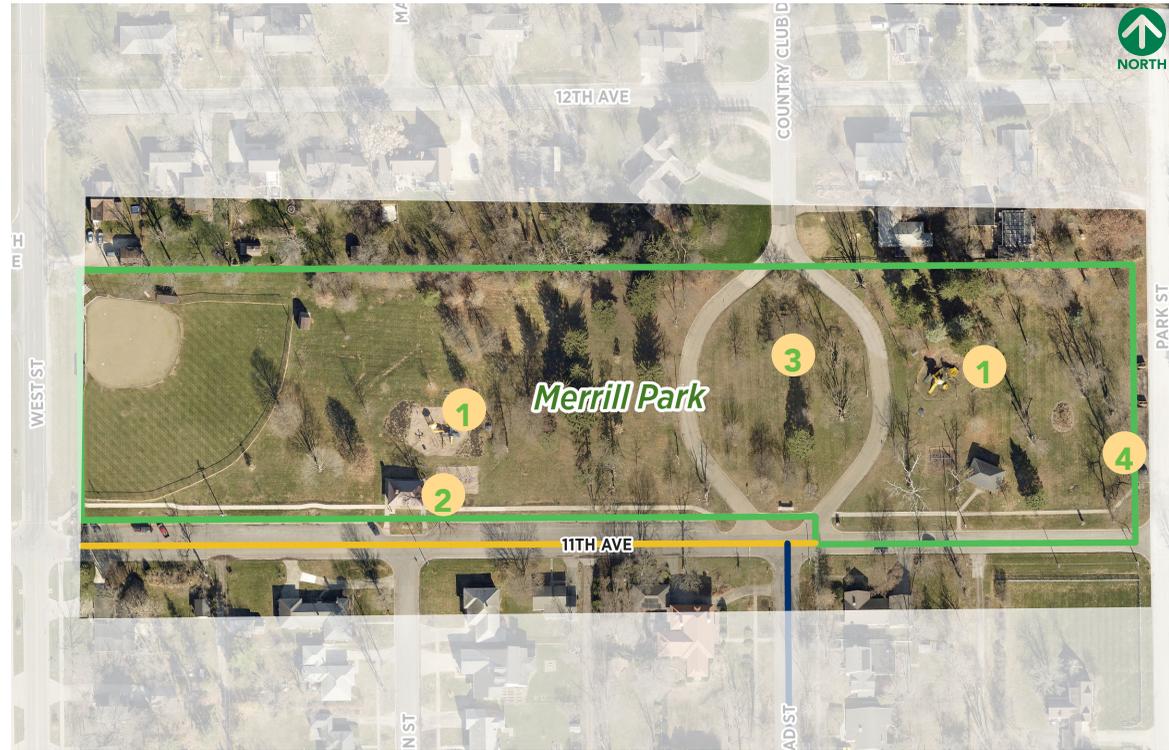
-  Existing Trail
-  No Parking Bike Lane
-  Parks

1. Trim trees behind the Aquatic Center
2. Find ways to make the play equipment more visible and connected to the Aquatic Center
3. Additional play equipment
4. New shelter with ADA accessible restrooms
5. Walking path in interior of park
6. Add restrooms and potable water external to the aquatic center in each park

-  Parks

1. Update Veterans Memorial
2. Inclusive play equipment
3. Upgrade electric hook up for events and holiday lights

D MERRILL PARK



-  Alt. No Parking Bike Route
-  No Parking Bike Lane
-  Parks

1. Update playgrounds with inclusive features
2. Accessible restroom facilities
3. Enhanced landscaping in oval
4. Update small parking lot

E MILLER PARK



-  No Parking Bike Lane
-  Parks

1. Landscaping area
2. Lake restoration needed
3. Walkways into the park
4. Accessible bathroom on north side
5. Small play feature on the north side
6. New playground with equipment for ages 2-5
7. New shelter and accessible bathrooms
8. Expand Miller Park to the west to encompass Park Street
9. More visible signage at Park's entrances

F SUMMER STREET PARK



 Parks

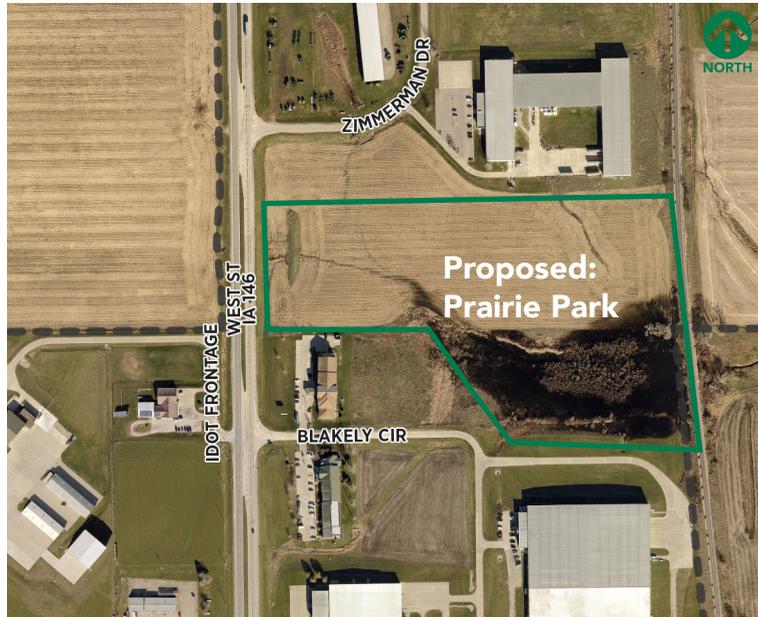
1. Update natural play area
2. Study ways to differentiate and create its uniqueness
3. Add restrooms and potable water
4. Incorporate native plants to help reduce mowing cost

G VAN HORN PARK



 Parks

1. Add pickleball courts
2. Renovate basketball court
3. Add accessible restroom facilities
4. Additional parking at end of Spencer Street
5. Study best use of additional green spaces
6. Small shade shelter



Map 5.4: Proposed Prairie Park

2. Continue to implement and refine proposed Prairie Park along Highway 146.

Prairie Park is being developed between Blakely Circle and Zimmerman Drive. This will turn a hard-to-develop piece of property into a restored prairie. This restored prairie can encourage biodiversity and create a unique park setting for Grinnell residents and visitors between I 80 and the core of Grinnell. Grinnell should watch and adjust Prairie Park as necessary to help develop the park's prairie ecosystem.

As the recreational trail is extended, Prairie Park would provide a good trailhead in the south.



Summer Street Park

3. Create neighborhood parks within new housing development.

Residents expressed interest in being able to walk to parks. Neighborhood parks are smaller parks easily accessible by foot from the surrounding neighborhoods. Having neighborhood parks distributed throughout new growth areas allows neighbors to easily walk to them.

- **Neighborhood park locations should emphasize external connectivity.** New parks should be in areas that encourage bicycle and pedestrian access and have strong street access. Strong access to parks creates a more accessible and open environment for park users.



Merrill Park

- **Focus on spatial distribution to allow all new neighborhoods to be within walkable distance of a neighborhood park.** Neighborhood parks are best activated when neighbors are able to easily walk to them.
- **Create a neighborhood park near Ogan Avenue and east of East Street.** This neighborhood park will provide park access to neighborhoods north of it and provide a buffer between the neighborhoods and industrial area to the south.



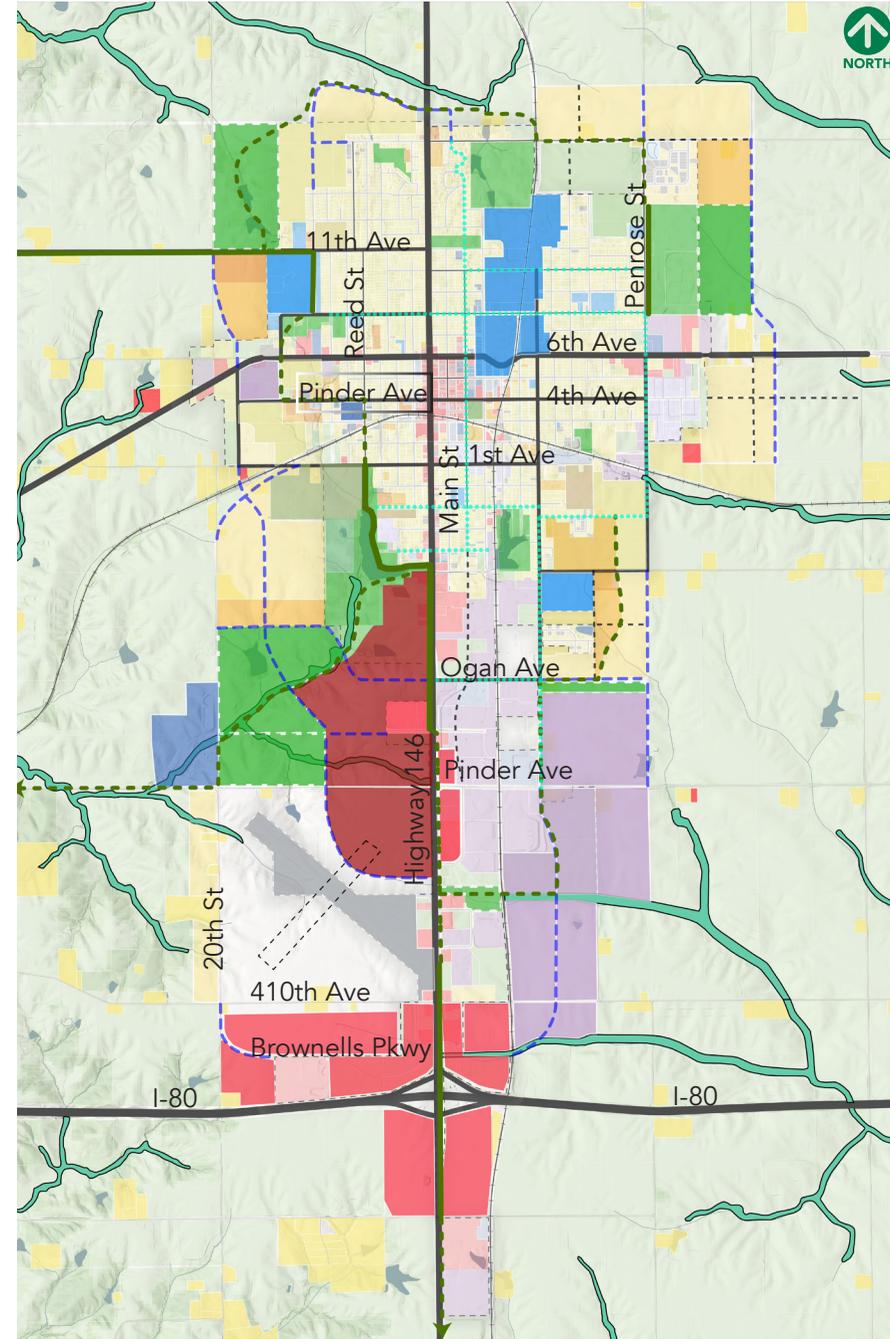
Drainageways East of Grinnell

4. Establish "Blueways" to protect natural drainage ways and steep slopes.

Blueways are policy areas established to protect streams, wetlands, and drainage areas. These Blueways might not be designated floodplains, but are still a great way to improve stormwater management, protect property, and create corridors for trail connectivity. A small buffer should be added to the drainage way to provide protection and space for trail linkages. Many of these buffers are identified on the future land use map, but changing climate and water patterns may expand or create new areas for blueways needs over time.

Implementation Tools

- **Conservation Easements.** These are legal mechanisms for landowners to place voluntary restriction on the future use of their land.
- **Public Acquisition.** In certain instances, the City may have the opportunity to acquire land in sensitive flood or drainage areas.
- **Subdivision Regulations.** Regulations can require buffers, typically maintained in out-lots that work with vegetation to improve water quality and water management.

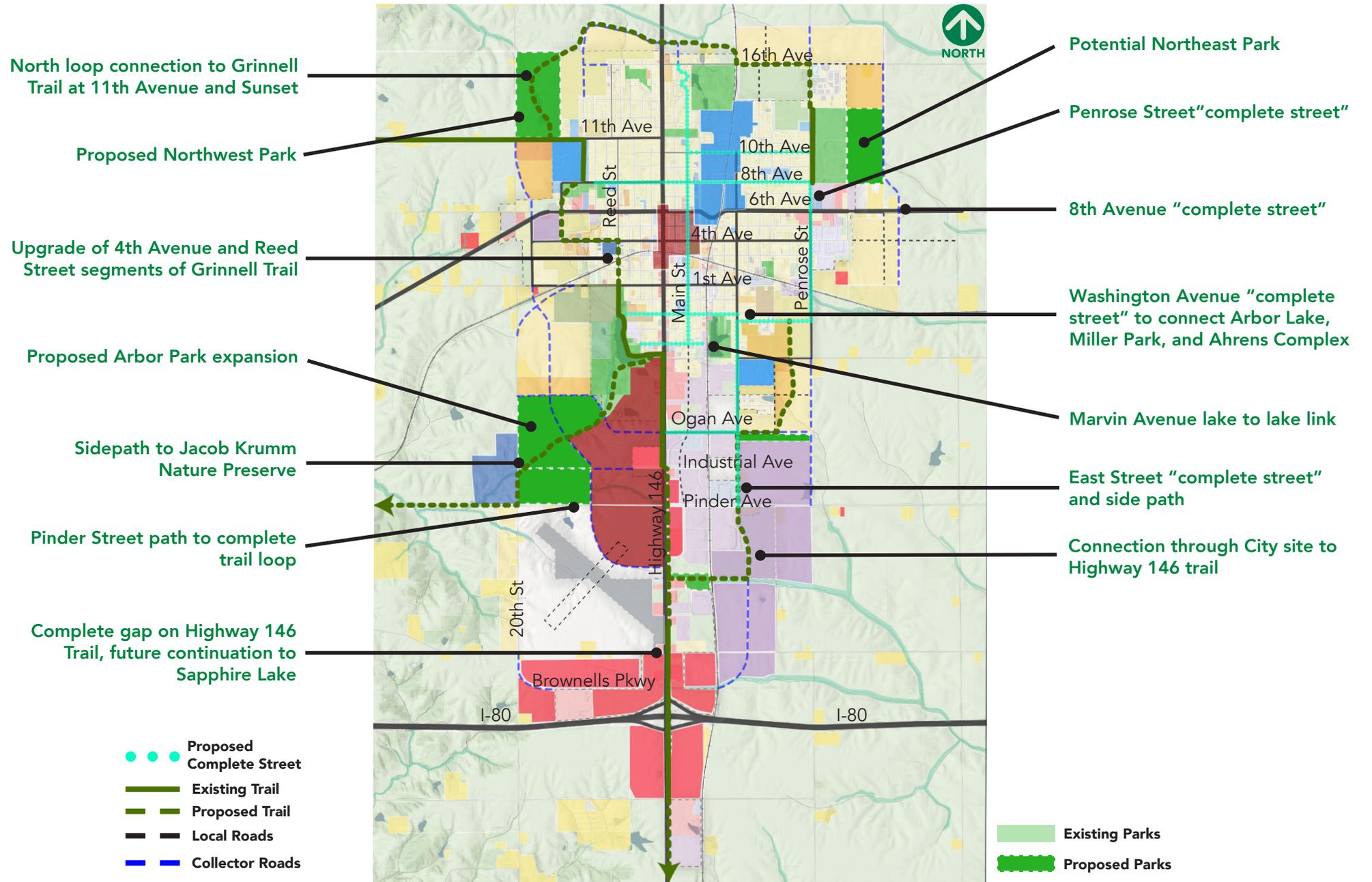


Map 5.5: Blueway Overlay

 Blueway Overlay

5. Complete the recreation trail loop.

- Active transportation allows people to move by their own energy and provides the users with a low cost, healthy way to travel. Trails are some of the safest and most well-liked active transportation infrastructure.
- Throughout the public engagement process, residents were interested in being able to bicycle and walk between parks. Grinnell's existing trail network outlines the western side of the City.
- Completing the loop to encompass the other sides makes accessing the trail system from anywhere in the City easier.
- Creating links between off-street trails and on-street bicycle facilities will provide many benefits.
- Focusing on connections across major streets, to schools, and through parks will allow residents to move around smoothly.



Map 5.6: Potential Recreation Trail Loop

Economic Development

6

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Goals & Strategies

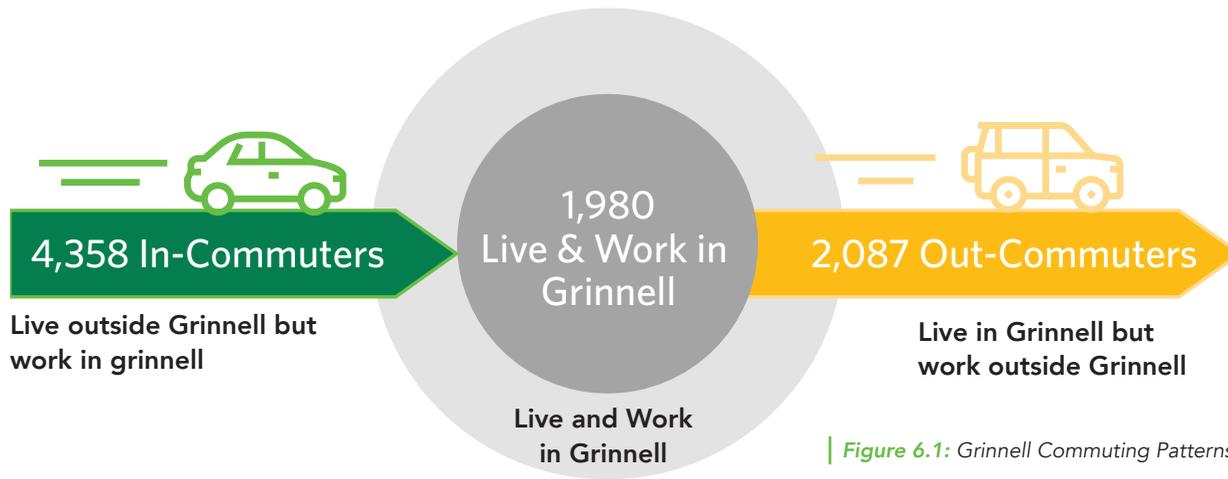


CURRENT CONDITIONS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The economy is important to support Grinnell. The economy is always shifting and is impacted by state, national, and global trends such as inflation and global supply chains. This plan supports both traditional economic development initiatives (recruiting, retaining, and promoting spaces for businesses) along with new ones that focus on quality of life projects to foster a more inviting, resilient, and diverse economy.



| Figure 6.1: Grinnell Commuting Patterns 2021

Workforce and Commute Times

Commuting patterns indicate an overall strong local economy, with some commuting leakage to surrounding communities.

- **Strong in-commuting numbers in 2021**
 - Over 2,000 more people commuted into Grinnell than Grinnell residents commuted out for work.
 - » Grinnell has many job opportunities drawing commuters but comparatively high housing prices keep people from moving to Grinnell.

- **For Grinnell residents, about equal number live and work in Grinnell as commute elsewhere for work**
 - This indicates that Grinnell has a high quality of life; but to afford it, one must work for higher paying jobs outside of the community.
 - 48.7% of Grinnell residents work within Grinnell in 2021. The second and third highest cities of employment are:
 - » 3.6% work in Des Moines, IA
 - » 3.5% work in Newton, IA



OPPORTUNITIES

Grinnell has opportunities to promote growth of the population and economy.

- **Quality of life.** Strong in-commuting workforce
 - Grinnell can capture a percentage of in-commuting workforce by providing affordable housing, quality K-12 education, and constantly increasing the quality of life to create an attractive place to live, work, and play.
- **Grinnell College.**
 - Students at Grinnell College bring a vibrancy and innovation that liberal arts colleges are known for.
 - Create opportunities to further engage and retain students, alumni, and retirees.

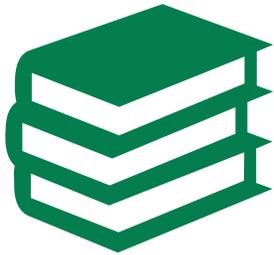
CURRENT CONDITIONS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Employment Sectors

In 2021, Grinnell's economy employed over 5,000 people in a diverse range of sectors. The top three largest employee sectors are shown below.

EDUCATION



- **803 employees**
2021
- **29.7%** *2021*
- **19.4%** *2010*

- The education sector has seen a significant increase in employees between 2010 and 2021.
 - Education employment has increased by 10.3 percentage points between 2010 and 2021.
 - Education employed 803 people in 2021 compared to 452 in 2010.

MANUFACTURING



- **383 employees**
2021
- **14.2%** *2021*
- **19.0%** *2010*

- Manufacturing has seen a slight decline in employment between 2010 and 2021.
 - Between 2010 and 2021 there was a 4.9 percentage point decrease in the percentage of workers employed in manufacturing.
 - In 2021, approximately 383 people were employed in manufacturing compared to 444 in 2010.

HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL SERVICES



- **361 employees**
2021
- **13.4%** *2021*
- **11.6%** *2010*

- Healthcare and Social Services have both increased slightly between 2010 and 2021.
 - Healthcare and social services experienced a 1.8 percentage point increase.
 - In 2021, approximately 361 people were employed in healthcare and social services compared to 270 in 2010.

| Figure 6.2: Top employment sectors 2021 (ACS 2021, Census Bureau)

GOALS & STRATEGIES

MOVING FORWARD

INTRODUCTION

An impactful way for Grinnell to boost economic activity within its community is to harness the strengths already present and implement infrastructure to allow greater accessibility to growth areas. Grinnell can attract and retain talent by creating an environment where people and businesses want to stay, invest, and thrive in.

Grinnell's economy has the potential to grow in the coming years by encouraging more businesses, retaining college students in the community, and boosting the housing availability for the workforce population.

GOALS

- Promote economic development in sectors that will do well in Grinnell.
- Attract people and events with historical features in downtown Grinnell.
- Redevelop existing buildings to maintain community charm.

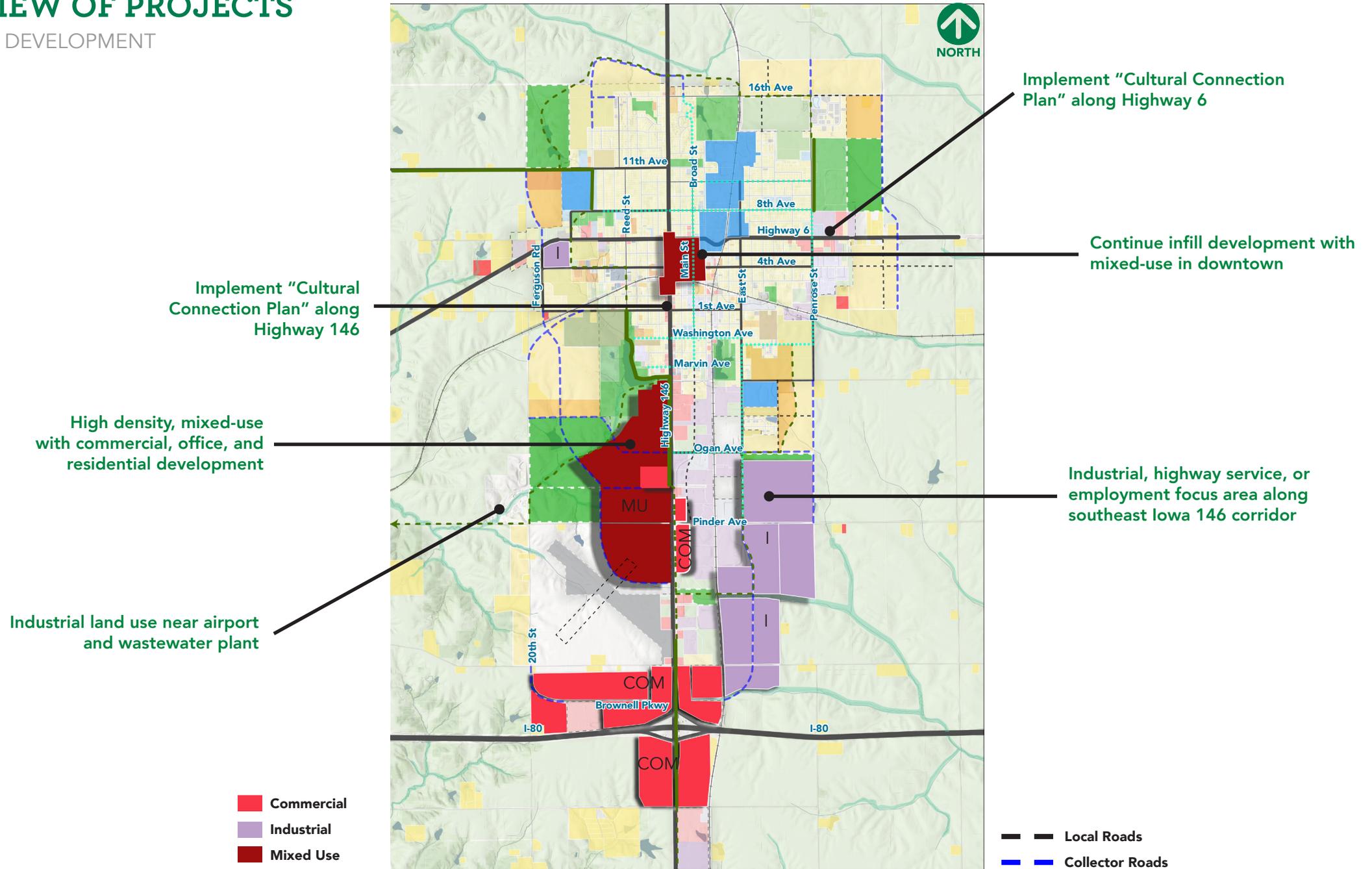
POLICIES & ACTION STRATEGIES

1. Maintain and support growth in Grinnell's industrial base at strategic locations with access to efficient transportation and expansion opportunities.
2. Continue to advance relevant strategies from the 2019 Grinnell Cultural Connection Plan to promote beautified entryways to Grinnell.
3. Develop a unique mixed-use center around West Industrial Avenue.
4. Promote thoughtful development along the I-80 interchange.
5. Create an action plan for providing sustained services for residents in need.
6. Redevelop opportunities to maximize prime opportunity sites.



OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

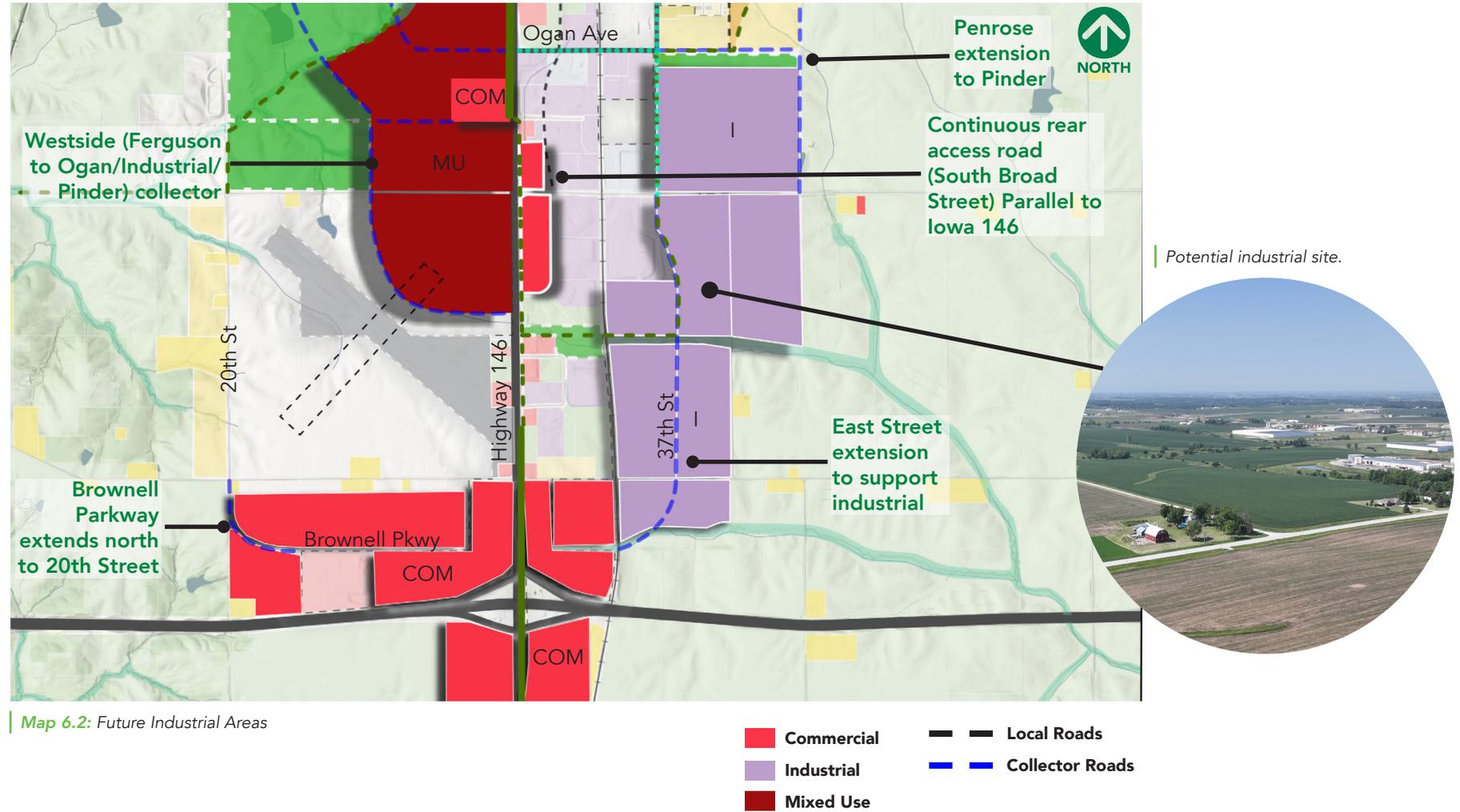


Map 6.1: Proposed Economic Development Projects

1. Maintain and support growth in Grinnell's industrial base at strategic locations with access to efficient transportation and expansion opportunities.

Grinnell's strong industrial base should continue to be supported. The City should guide industrial development in strategic locations where businesses can access efficient transportation with minimal impact on residential neighborhoods. The growth of industrial areas in Grinnell should be concentrated in the southeast side of Highway 146.

The future land use map provides industrial areas with opportunities for businesses to expand as needed. Keeping land available for road expansion will assure the future transportation network can be built to provide access to make these locations viable in the future.

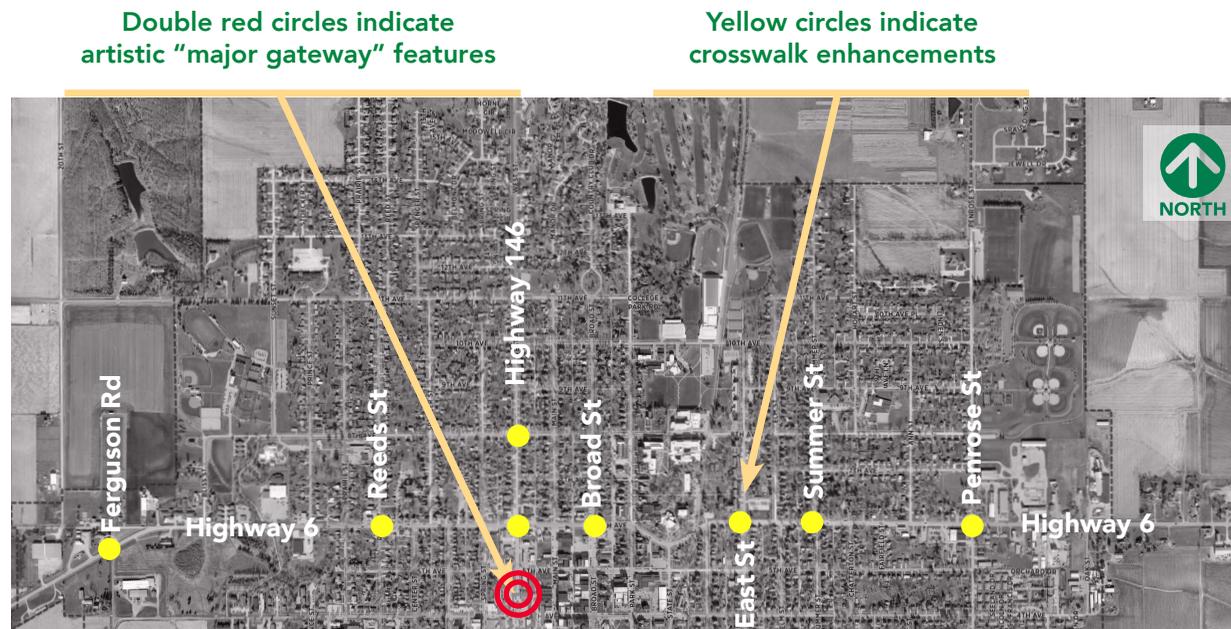


2. Continue to advance relevant strategies from the 2019 Grinnell Cultural Connection Plan to promote beautified entryways to Grinnell.

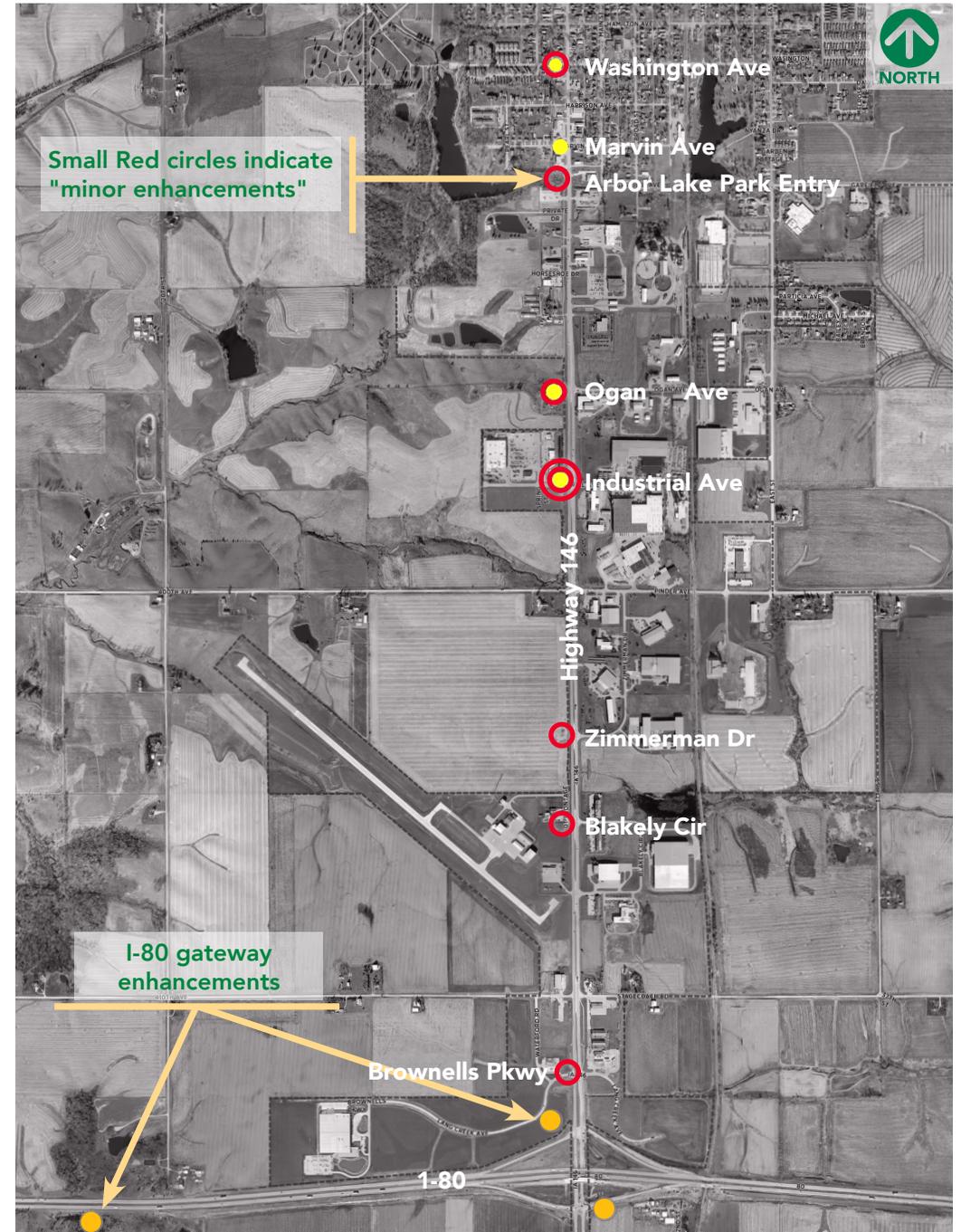
Grinnell should continue to look to its 2019 Grinnell Cultural Connection Plan and hold progress updates on the program theme implementation.

The Cultural Connection Plan 2019 update worked to identify a series of community improvement projects. A main focus from the Cultural Connection Update that carries strongly into the comprehensive plan is placemaking along Highway 146 and Highway 6. Placemaking along these corridors was brought up in public engagement.

Grinnell’s entryways and entry corridors are important and placemaking can set a positive tone and draw people off the interstate and highway into downtown and Grinnell College. The Cultural Connection plan lays out a series of art enhancements that draw one towards downtown. Further public engagement could be done to restart placemaking along Highway 146 and Highway 6.



Map 6.3: Proposed Beautification Locations



Map 6.4: Proposed Beautification Locations

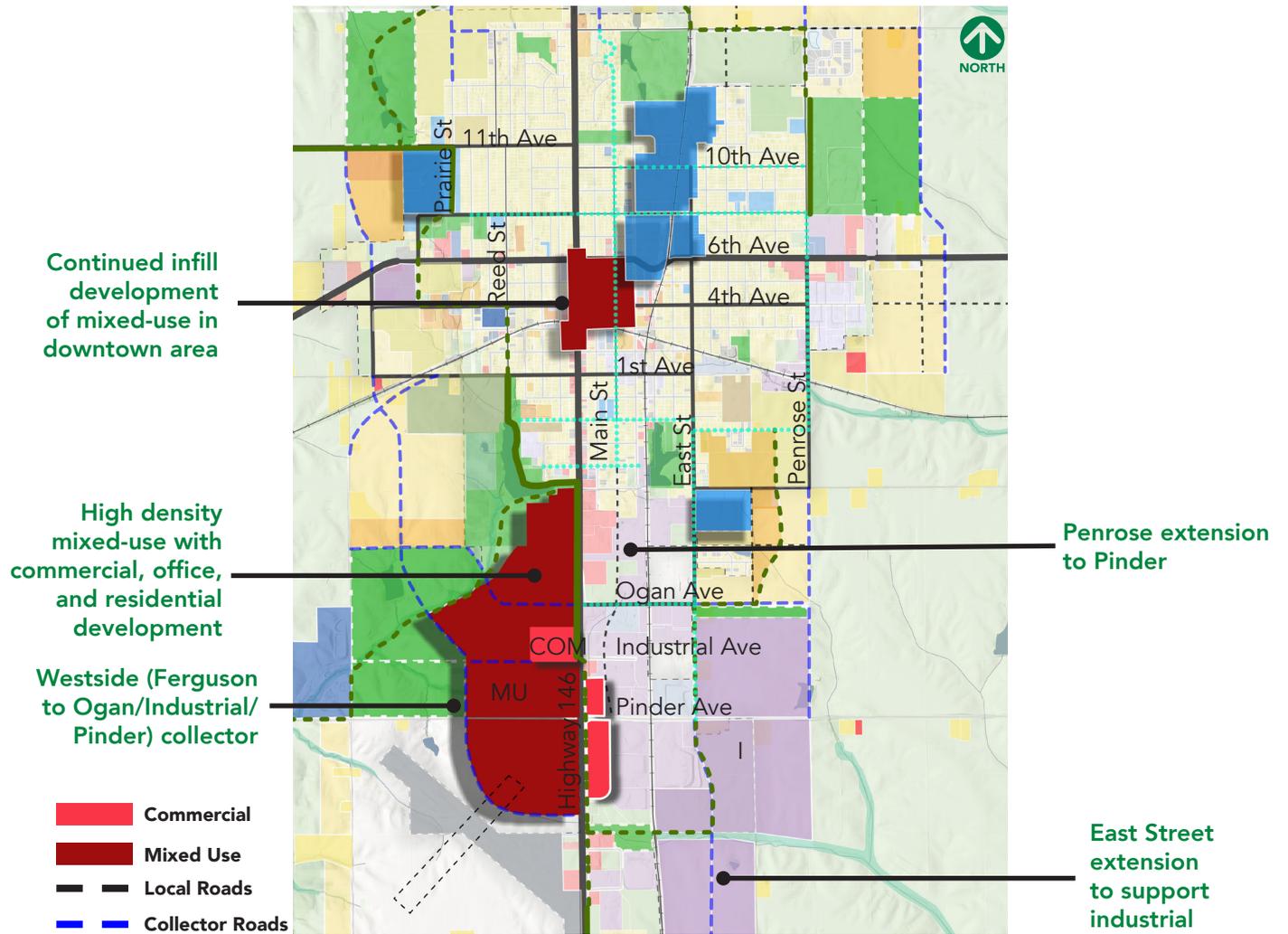
3. Develop a unique mixed-use center around West Industrial Avenue.

Mixed-use areas are a significant focus on the Future Land Use map. Public engagement indicated people wanted more walkability and integration of complementary uses which encourage activity at various times of day, increasing the security, walkability, vitality, and number of people using public spaces.

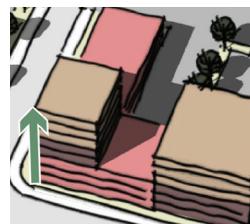
A new mixed-use area is starting to come into existence on the west side of Industrial Avenue with apartments going up next to Walmart and the other commercial businesses. A mix of commercial, office, and residential spaces should be promoted along with quality active transportation infrastructure, neighborhood parks, and public arts to make it a vibrant, livable environment.

- **Orient commercial and residential development toward each other to mitigate congestion.** Strategic development of multiple uses can lower traffic in areas and create infrastructure for active transportation.
- **Create walkable and pedestrian-friendly systems through human-centered design.** This creates a well-connected community where residents can access essential locations. Incorporating Grinnell's trail systems can further encourage multi-modal and active transportation methods.

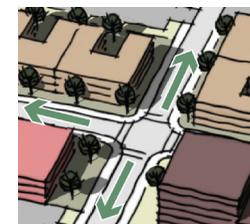
- **Amending zoning ordinances that limit development to one type can increase the opportunities to travel without a personal vehicle.** The commercial areas along Highway 146 can incorporate light residential use since work and other essential locations are nearby with potential trail access for alternative modes of transportation.
 - Encourage more businesses and horizontal mixed-use development in the Walmart commercial complex. Characteristics of horizontal mixed use is having multiple uses beside one another. Buildings are often kept to similar size and height to maintain the same feel despite different uses.
 - Vertical mixed-use can be implemented where upper story residential units are above commercial or office space.



Map 6.5: Mixed-Use Area



Vertical Mixed Use Development means that different uses are located in the same building.



Horizontal Mixed Use Development means that different uses are housed in different buildings but are related to each other.

Figure 6.2 Mixed Use Scenarios

4. Promote thoughtful development along the I-80 interchange.

The immediate vicinity of the I-80 interchange contains relatively little development around it. Thoughtful development can attract drivers off I-80 to spend money in Grinnell. This can also fill the entryway with more vibrancy, positively impacting peoples' first impressions of Grinnell. Ensuring the interchange has wayfinding guides visitors towards central Grinnell attractions is essential (see the Grinnell Cultural Connections Plan for details on how this might function).



Sign: A Northbound

Figure 6.3: Wayfinding draws visitors attention to various locations in Grinnell

Figure 6.4: Example of what an entryway sign into Grinnell could look like

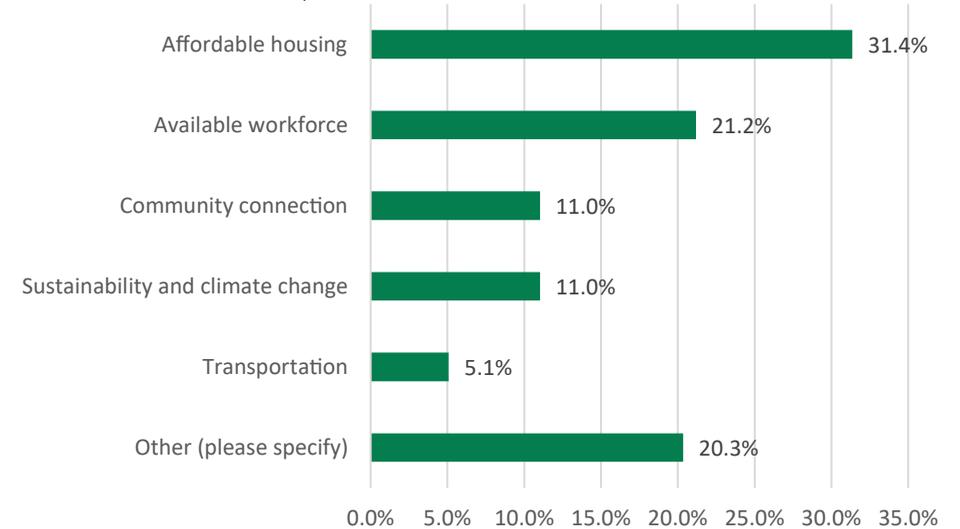


5. Create action plan for providing sustained services for residents in need.

Grinnell residents, like many Americans, face a rising cost of living. Creating a plan to make sure the most vulnerable of populations are considered can ensure all residents are on the path for a prosperous future.

The community survey responses indicate that residents would like to see a higher emphasis on affordable housing options. Finding solutions for more affordable housing should be a priority when creating the action plan.

Figure 6.5 What challenge is the most important to address in Grinnell?



CREATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As the economy has shifted, a strong segment of the working population is choosing a location where they can have a high quality of life and then finding employment afterwards. Recreation, housing, and arts are great ways to increase the quality of life and attract economic development.

- Recreation
- Housing
- Arts & Culture

6. Redevelop opportunities to maximize prime opportunity sites.

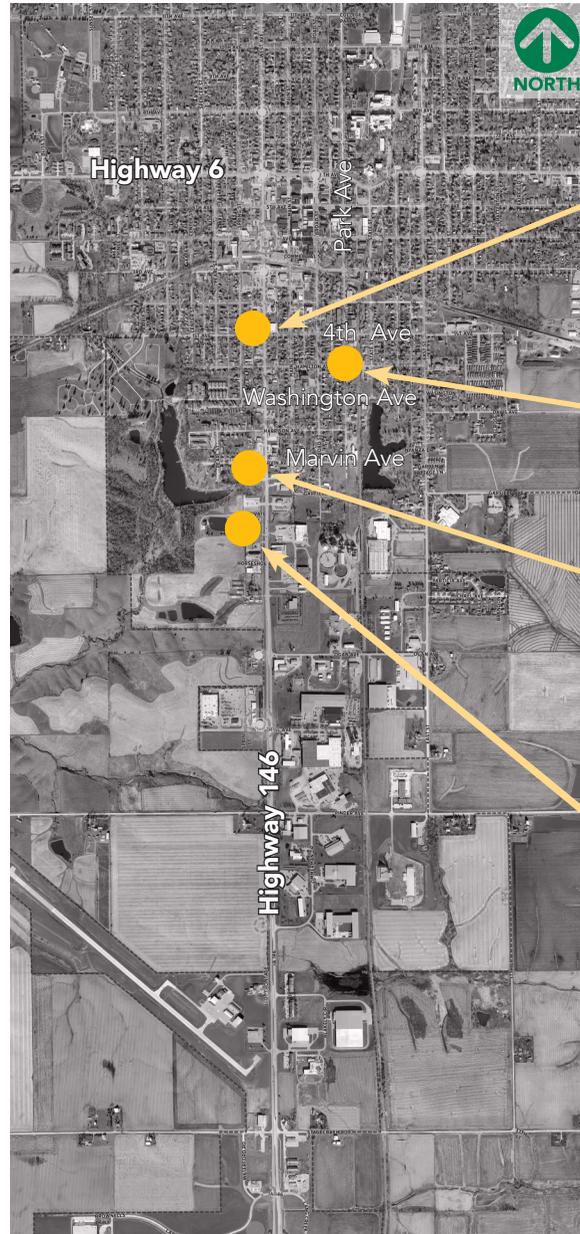
Grinnell has few undeveloped parcels within its central core. However, certain sites should be considered subject to change. The areas shown on Map 6.6, are clusters of buildings showing dilapidation or areas of high importance that a different land use would be more attractive. As with any land use decision, private property owners make decisions. Therefore, the transitions of these properties from their current use to the depicted use is expected to occur slowly over time in response to market demands, as property owners voluntarily sell, develop, or change the use of their land.

- **Edges of downtown.** Several sites subject to change are along the edges of downtown. Updating these sites to more urban styles creates a stronger edge of downtown and additional vibrancy.
 - *Maintain the historic features in the downtown commercial district while encouraging economic activity. Repurpose vacant or abandoned buildings for upper-story residential along with*

office, retail, and other commercial uses. Reusing current infrastructure maintains the community's aesthetics and draws people in. Capitalize on historic preservation programs to revitalize empty downtown buildings.

» *Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits are applicable to historic buildings registered on the National Register of Historic Places*

- **Highway 146.** Highway 146 has several vacant commercial spaces. Redeveloping these sites can create business opportunities and make the Highway 146 corridor more attractive to move along.
- **Highway 6.** Highway 6 presents similar opportunities as Highway 146. Vacant and underutilized parcels should be redeveloped to higher intensity uses.



Map 6.6: Redevelopment clusters.

4th Ave and Spring St.
Redevelop as residential or vertical mixed use

3rd Ave and Park St.
Redevelop as residential or vertical mixed use

Harrison Ave and West St.
Redevelop as residential

Private Dr. and West St.
Redevelop as residential

TAX CREDIT PROGRAMS

CASE STUDY: Palace Hotel

The Palace Hotel was constructed in 1892 and was individually listed in the National Register in 1990 as the First Thurston County Courthouse. The project included a full building rehabilitation for mixed use commercial and residential.

Location: 400 Main St, Pender, NE

- Project Management: Local Residents
- Federal Tax Credit: \$1.5 Million
- State Historic Tax Credit: \$1 Million
- Started: 2015
- Completed: 2018



Before



After

Public Facilities

7

CONTENTS

Goals & Strategies

Conditions & Needs



GOALS & STRATEGIES

MOVING FORWARD

INTRODUCTION

Community support involves all things that enable a City to function efficiently. While not flashy, these services, facilities, and infrastructure are crucial to pursuing other parts of Plan Grinnell.

The plan recommends the following actions to reach the Plan Grinnell Goals. These are not comprehensive of all possible ways to reach the Vision and Goals of Plan Grinnell however, these provide a base that is necessary to reach the other goals.

GOALS

- **Responsibly invest in public facilities and infrastructure that strategically encourages private sector investment, reinvestment, job creation, and high quality of life.**
- **Be transparent and inclusive in collaborating with residents, businesses, and partners.**
- **Growth patterns support efficient and cost-effective delivery of emergency services.**

POLICIES & ACTION STRATEGIES

1. **Construct a new Water Storage Tower with enough capacity to meet Iowa DNR recommendations.**
2. **Be fiscally responsible with funds for routine maintenance and repair to avoid higher cost to resident in the future.**



CITY OF GRINNELL FACILITY IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE

Facility	Condition	Ongoing	Within 10 years	Beyond 10 years	Needs
New Water Storage Tower	Insufficient water storage capacity		x		The current water tower has insufficient storage capacity to meet Iowa DNR recommendations.
Be fiscally responsible with funds for routine maintenance and repair to avoid higher cost to residents in the future.		x			

Implementation

8

CONTENTS

Implementation Tables



IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Policy/Strategy	Type	Priority/Schedule	Partners
HOUSING			
Establish a Housing Development Fund.	Capital/Policy	High Priority	City of Grinnell, Business Community, Pow I-80, Poweshiek County
Create a purchase-rehab-resale program.	Policy/Action	High Priority	City of Grinnell, Business/Developer Community
Amend regulations to permit a variety of housing types.	Policy	Highest Priority	City of Grinnell
Create a micro-reinvestment and enhancement program for the most vulnerable neighborhoods.	Active	High Priority	City of Grinnell
Develop policy and strategies for infill development, ensuring incentive match need/cost.	Policy	High Priority	City of Grinnell, Pow I-80, Poweshiek County
Continue implementation of rental registry and inspection.	Policy	Ongoing	City of Grinnell
Transportation			
Prepare for future road extensions.	Capital	Ongoing	City of Grinnell
Implement land reduction proposal on Highway 146 and Highway 6.	Action	Priority	Iowa DOT
Bolster a complete street network and infrastructure.	Action	Highest Priority	City of Grinnell
Implement cost sharing program to help fund mission sidewalk links.	Policy/Capital	Highest Priority	City of Grinnell
Identify public/private partnerships to prepare for new transportation such as micro-mobility.	Action	Priority	City of Grinnell, Grinnell College, Business Community, Pow I-80, Poweshiek County
Increase number of bicycle racks.	Action	Highest Priority	City of Grinnell, Business Community
Parks & Recreation			
Invest and update existing parks to create more accessibility and serve changing needs.	Action/Capital	Ongoing	City of Grinnell
Create a natural park extension of Arbor Lake.	Capital	High Priority	City of Grinnell
Plan for opportunities to expand Miller Park to the west.	Capital	High Priority	City of Grinnell
Implement idea for Prairie Park along Highway 146.	Capital	High Priority	City of Grinnell
Create neighborhood parks within new housing development.	Policy/Action	Ongoing	City of Grinnell, Developers

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Policy/Strategy	Type	Time Frame	Partners		
Parks & Recreation Continued					
Establish Blueways to protect natural drainage ways and steep terrain for its ecosystem services.	Policy	Highest Priority	City of Grinnell		
Complete the recreational trail loop.	Action/Capital	High Priority	City of Grinnell		
Economic Development					
Maintain and support growth in Grinnell's industrial base at strategic location with access to efficient transportation and expansion opportunities.	Capital	Ongoing	City of Grinnell		
Continue to advance relevant strategies from the 2019 Grinnell Cultural Connection Plan to promote a beautified entry way to Grinnell.	Action	Highest Priority	City of Grinnell, Iowa DOT		
Develop a unique mixed-use center around East Industrial Avenue.	Policy	High Priority	City of Grinnell		
Promote thoughtful development along the I-80 Interchange.	Policy	Highest Priority	City of Grinnell		
Create an action plan for providing sustained services for Grinnellians in need.	Action	Ongoing	City of Grinnell, Grinnell nonprofit		
Redevelop opportunities to maximize prime opportunity sites.	Policy/Action	Highest Priority	City of Grinnell		
Public Facilities					
New Water Storage Tower	Capital	Highest Priority	City of Grinnell		
Be fiscally responsible with funds for routine maintenance and repair to avoid higher cost to residents in the future.	Policy	Ongoing	City of Grinnell		
Public Facilities	Condition	Ongoing	Within 10 years	Beyond 10 years	Needs
New water storage tower	Insufficient water storage capacity		x		The current water tower has insufficient storage capacity to meet Iowa DNR recommendations.
Be fiscally responsible with funds for routine maintenance and repair to avoid higher cost to residents in the future.		x			



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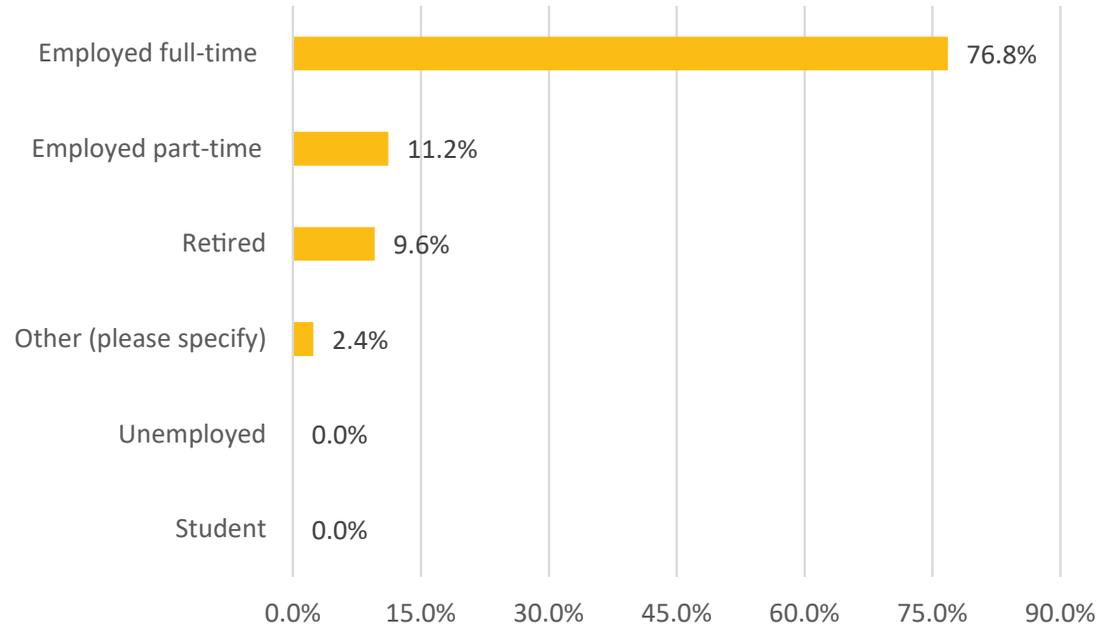
Appendix

Community Survey Results, 2023

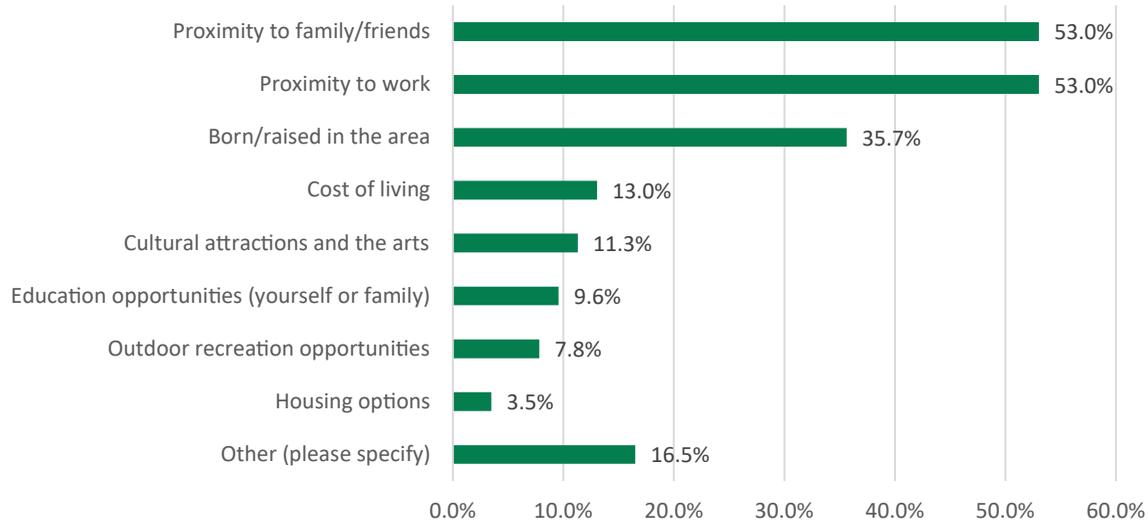


SURVEY RESULTS

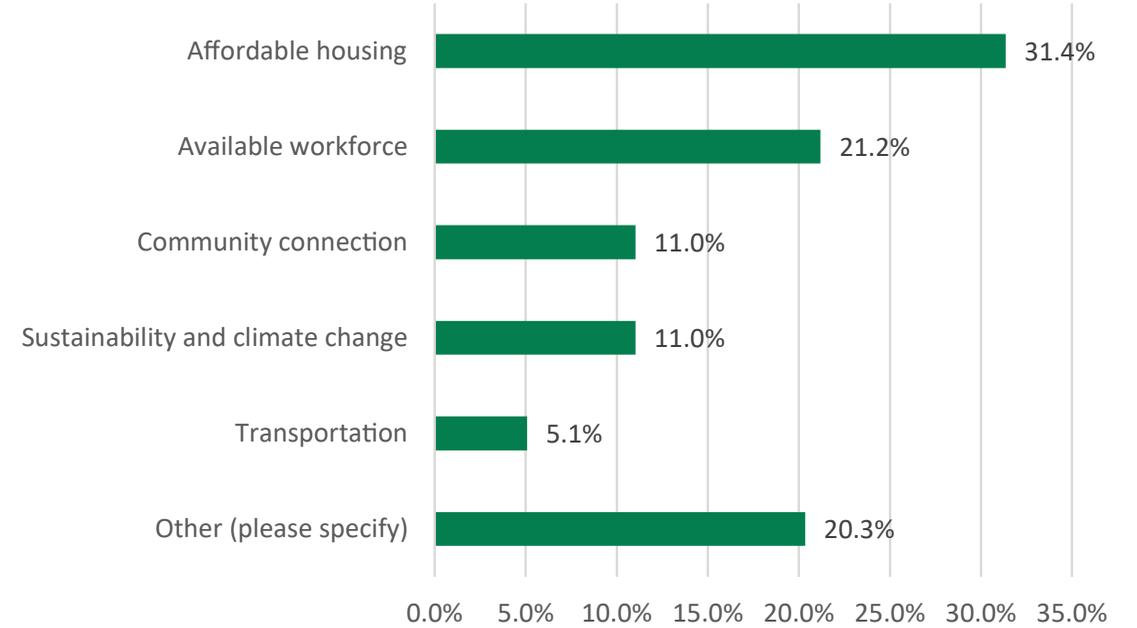
Question 3: What is your employment status?



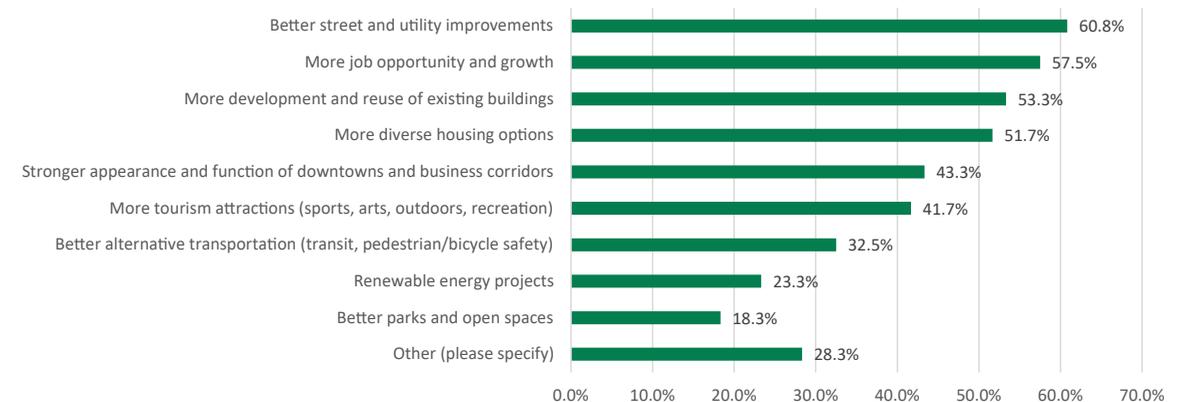
Question 4: Why do you choose to live in Grinnell?



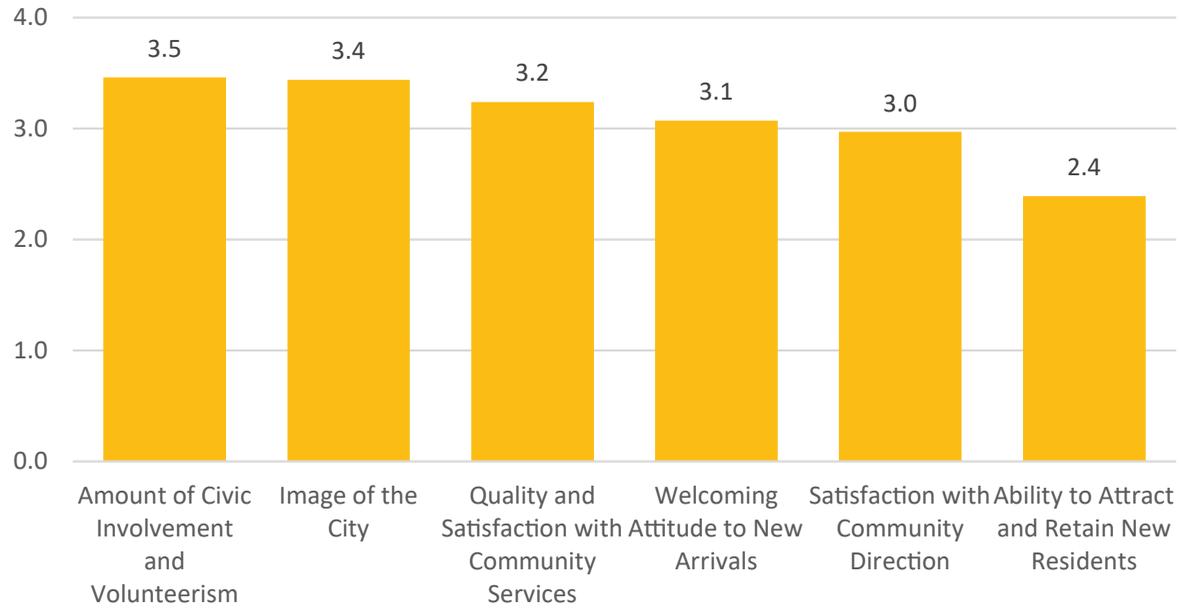
Question 5: What challenge is the most important to address in Grinnell?



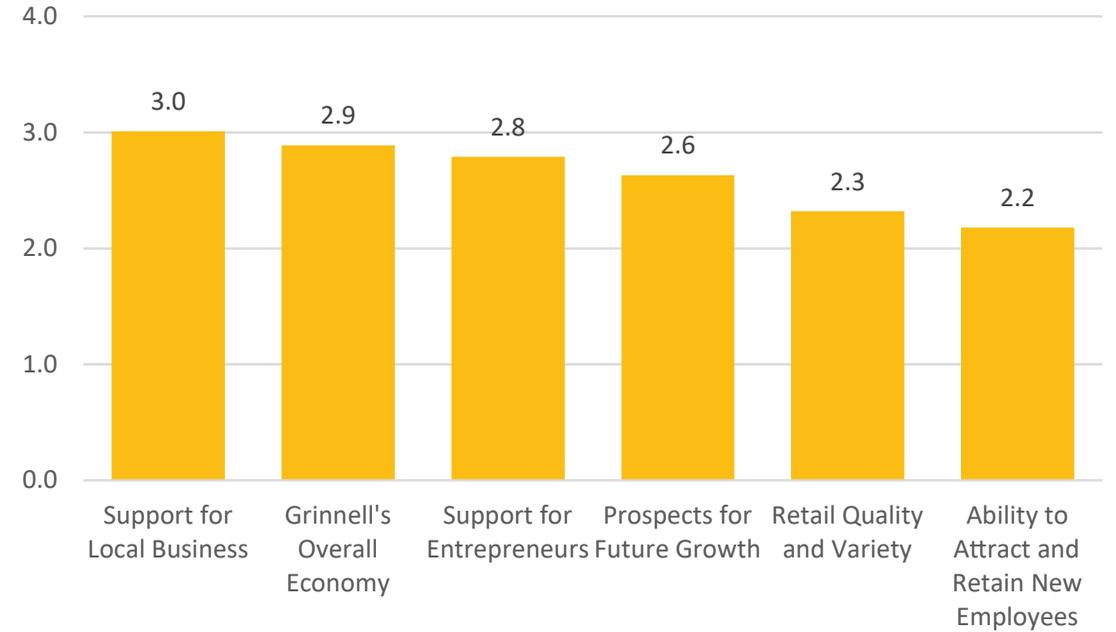
Question 6: What should Grinnell focus on most in the next 10 years?



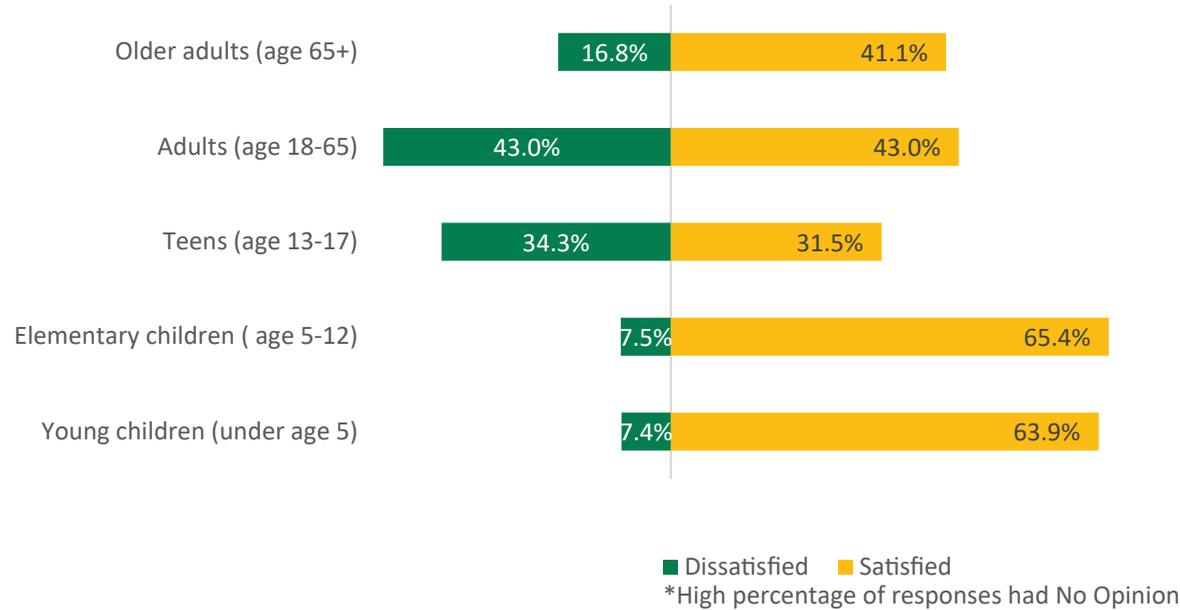
Question 7: On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being poor and 5 being excellent), how would you rate Grinnell in regards to community image and values? (Weighted average)



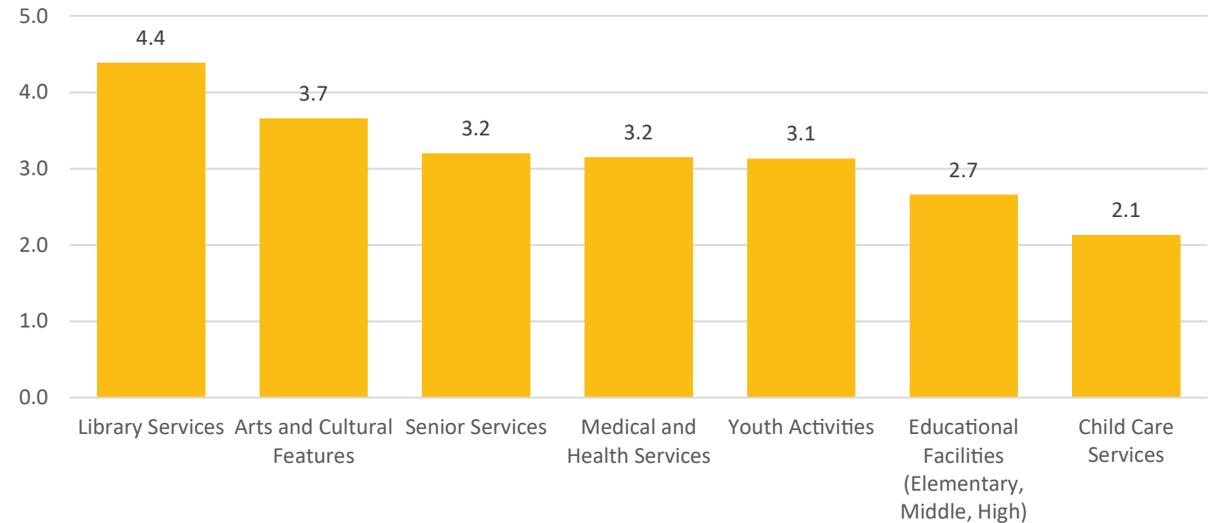
Question 9: On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being poor and 5 being excellent), how would you rate Grinnell in regards to the economy? (Weighted average)



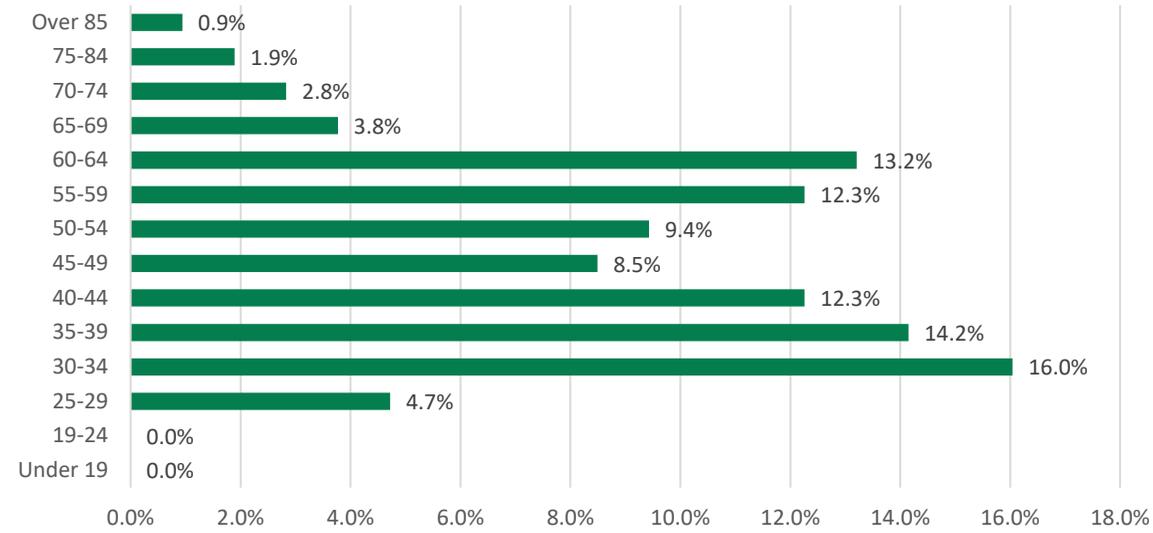
Question 8: Rate your satisfaction with recreational opportunities for the following groups.



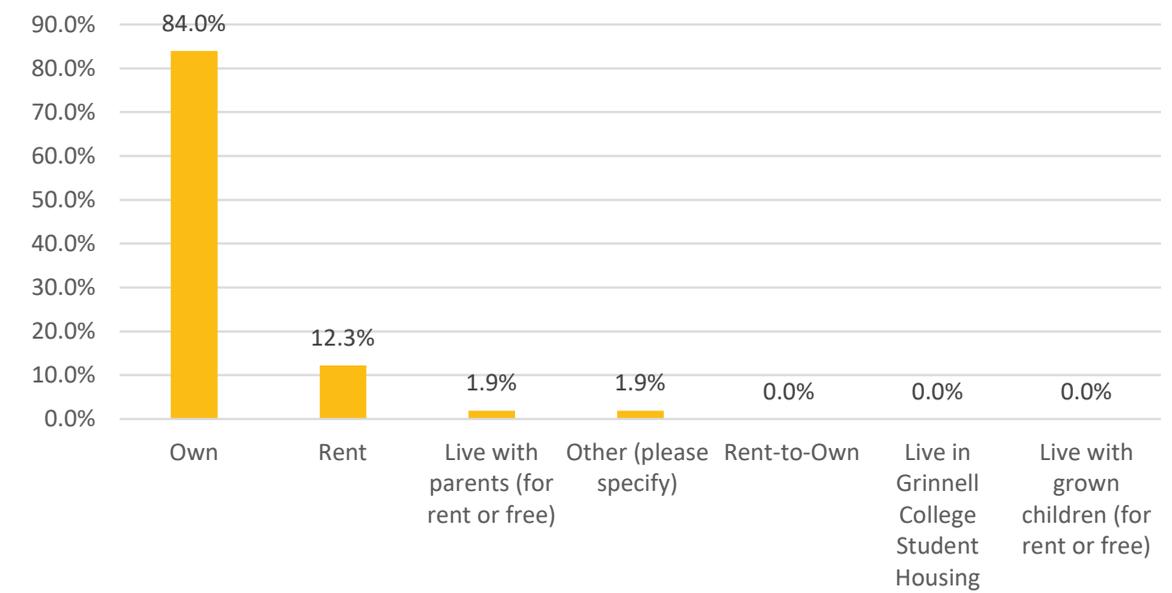
Question 10: On a scale of 1 to 5 (one being poor and 5 being excellent), how would you rate Grinnell in regards to other community services? (Weighted average)



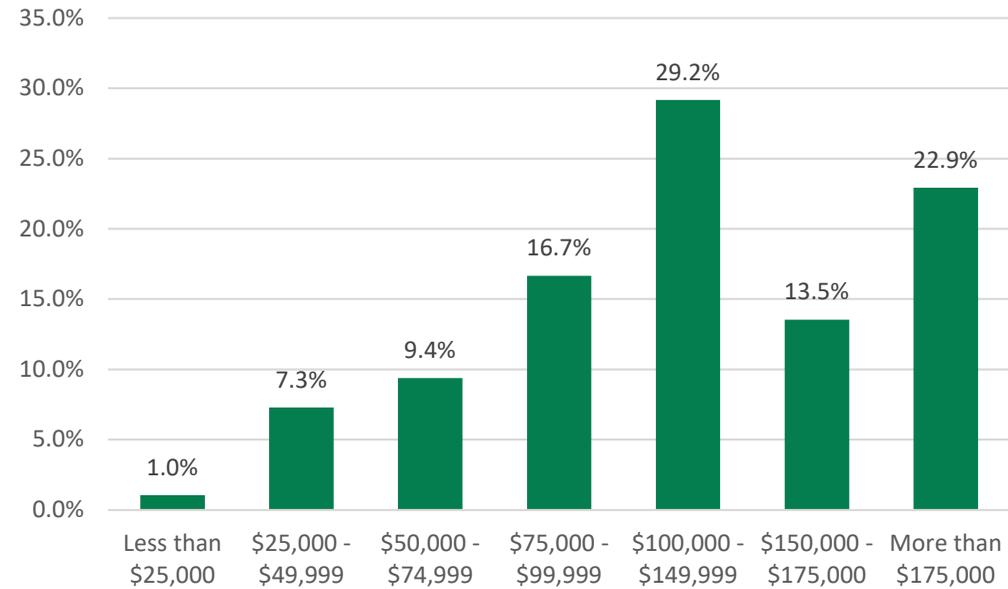
Question 12: How old are you?



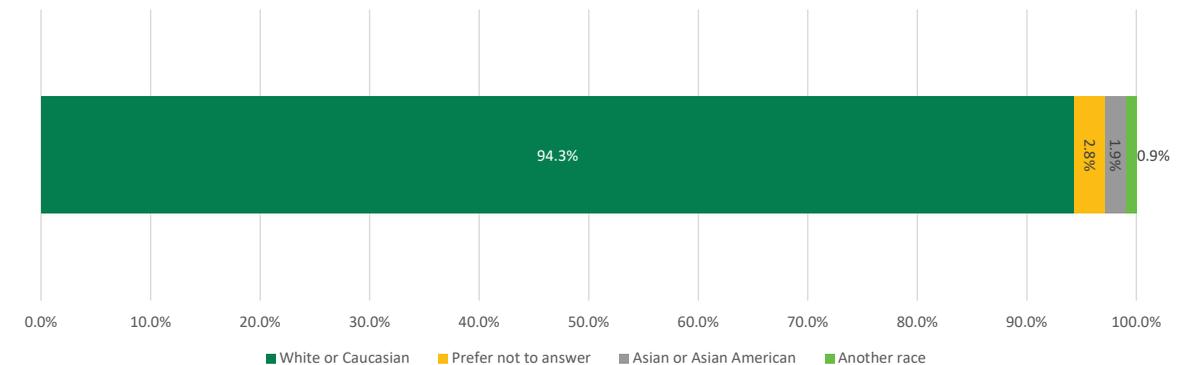
Question 14: Do you own or rent your home?



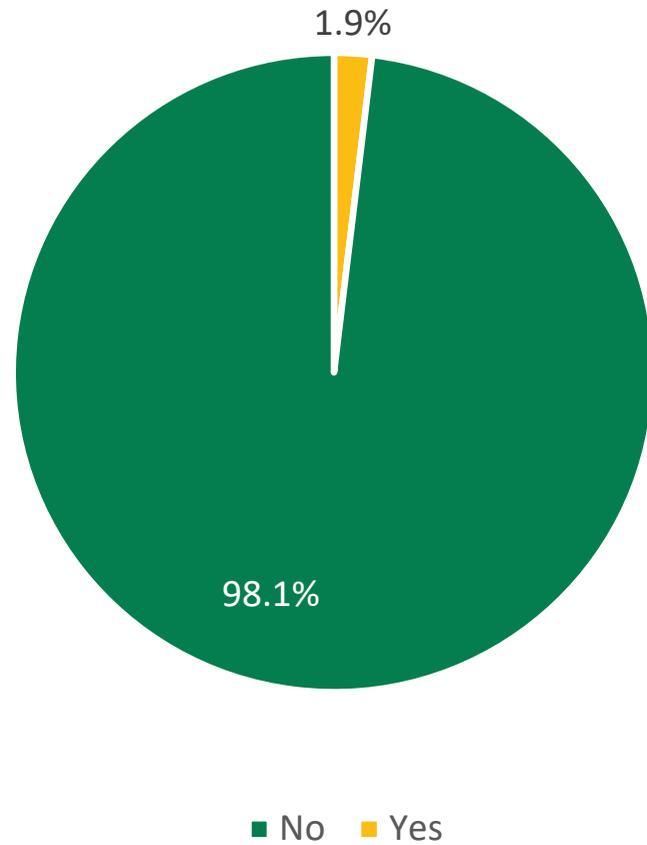
Question 13: What is the total annual income of all residents living in your household? (Optional)



Question 15: What is your race (check all that apply)?



Question 16: Are you Hispanic or Latino?



OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Question 1: What is the ZIP Code where you live? (Open Ended)

87% - 50112

Question 1: What is the ZIP Code where you work? (Open Ended)

92% - 50112

Question 11: What final thoughts do you want to share about Grinnell? (Open Ended)



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