
THE NORTH LIBERTY PLAN CITY OF NORTH LIBERTY, IOWA

2005 – 2025



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Prepared by the North Liberty Planning & Zoning Commission
with the East Central Iowa Council of Governments



For the City of North Liberty

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The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is not only to direct development policy for the City of North Liberty, but also to identify and recognize issues that have affected development in the past. It is on the basis of these issues and problems that directives will be established for developing a plan for North Liberty.

The initial effort in the planning process consisted of a community inventory that analyzed and evaluated all aspects of the physical, social, and economic character of the City. The City Inventory is organized into report form separate from the Comprehensive Plan and provides detailed descriptions and explanations of the problems and opportunities within the City. It contains the latest Census and demographic information to assist in determining trends within North Liberty.

A town meeting was held to insure that citizens were part of the planning process and had ample opportunity to voice their opinions. In addition, residents were able to submit comments and concerns via the North Liberty website. Finally, several public work-sessions with the Planning and Zoning Commission were held to compile the information and complete the Plan.

The four perspectives (city inventory, town meeting, comments from the website and the public work-sessions) will provide the informational base and community focus for the preparation of the Development Framework and Implementation aspects of the Comprehensive Plan.

Further, the Comprehensive Plan is organized into three distinct sections. The first is the Policy Plan. This section establishes the City's policies and goals with respect to future development. The Policy Plan is based on the four perspectives detailed above. The second section is the Development Framework. This section establishes the general physical planning ideals for the community, broken down into more detailed recommendations by neighborhood or planning district. The Development Framework also contains a Plan Implementation Schedule to monitor the progress of the Plan. This is a very important role of the update process that will be necessary to keep this document dynamic and up-to-date. The final section of the Plan is the separate City Inventory described above. This document should be used in concert with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

POLICY PLAN INTRODUCTION

The intent of the Policy Plan is to outline what the community desires to be accomplished relative to the physical environment. Secondly, the Policy Plan is intended to set forth guidelines as to how these desires are to be achieved. This chapter identifies general goals and supporting policies, based on the public input received during the planning process. These elements comprise a review and decision-making process and the basis upon which plans, programs and actions can be formulated and initiated as well as evaluated.

These goals and policies are the basic and fundamental plan for the development of North Liberty. In this regard, their purpose is to provide a decision-making framework to guide all public and private actions and development within the City.

The Policy Plan should not, however, be interpreted as an implementation programming of actions and responses. The Policy Plan is a guide that directs action on the part of the public and private sectors of the community when responding to needs, problems and opportunities. The function of work and issue programming is addressed later by the Development Framework, plus on an ongoing basis through legislative and administrative policies and programs (i.e. zoning code or subdivision ordinance).

In utilizing this element of the plan, it must be cautioned that the policies are to be considered and utilized collectively. While in some instances a single policy may define and outline a course of action or decision, it is more commonly the case that several policies apply to a given situation. Reactions to individual policies should therefore be tempered pending consideration of all applicable statements.

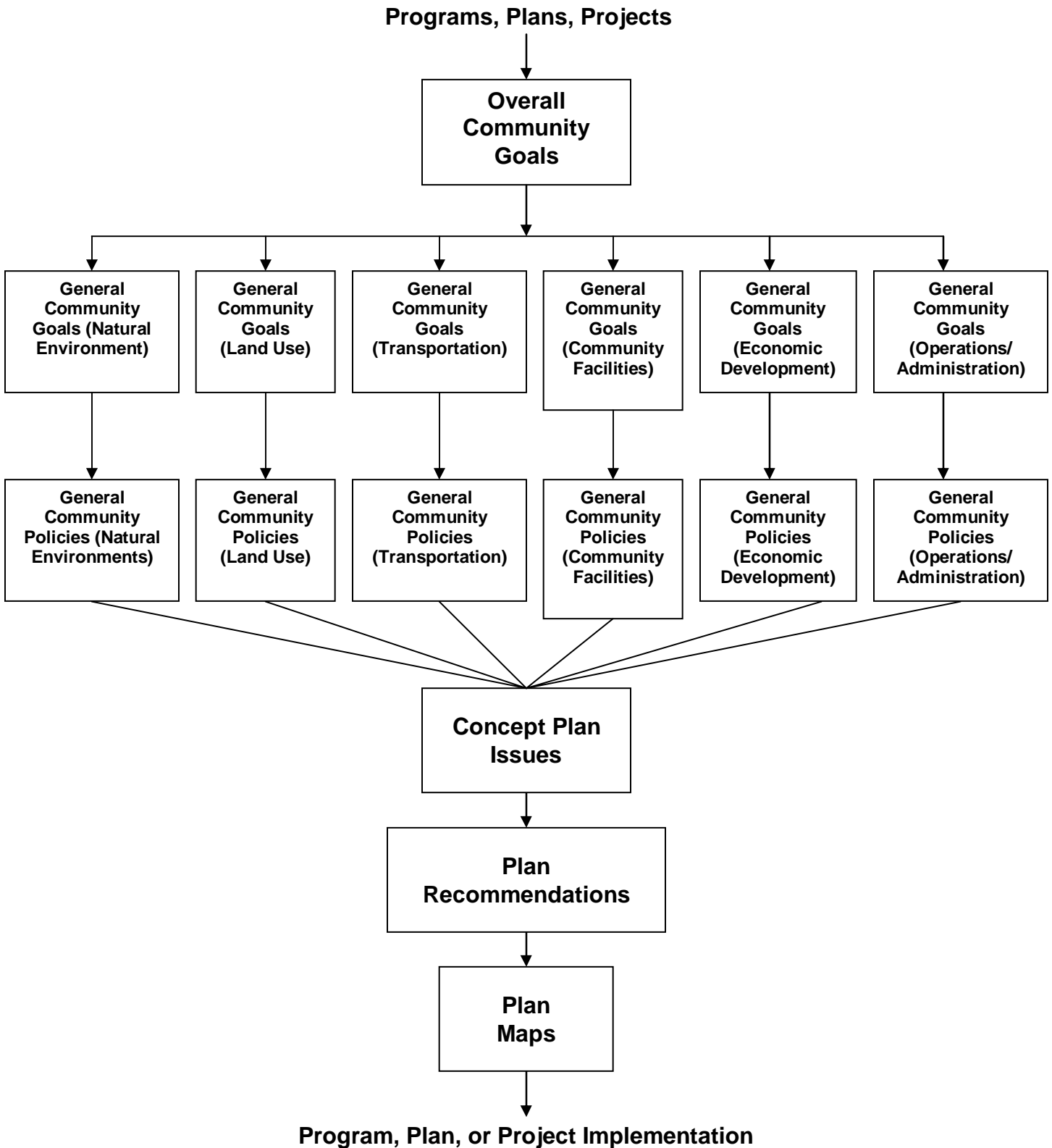
It should be noted that the Policy Plan is intended to be adaptable and flexible, and to be used as the basis for planning and decision-making in unanticipated situations that emerge. The Policy Plan should be updated and amended by modifying the policy statements to reflect new directions the City wants to take or by adding new statements that deal with new, unanticipated issues.

The terms utilized in this section are defined as follows:

Goals: Goals are generalized end products that will ultimately result in achieving the quality of life desired. Goals are often described using the terms “maintain”, “encourage”, “ensure”, “develop”, and “establish”.

Policies: Policies are the definite courses of action that lead toward goal achievement. Additionally, policies are guides for helping to make present and future decisions consistent with stated goals. Policies are described by using the phrase “shall be”. This gives policy statements a definitive meaning rather than one that is implied.

How to Use the Comprehensive Plan



OVERALL COMMUNITY GOALS

The role and function of local government is the improvement and maintenance of the community for an orderly, safe, productive and enhanced living and working environment for the individual. Within this context, the following is a list of basic fundamental goals that North Liberty is organized to achieve. The goals are intended to work together and should not be construed to have greater value over each other:

- **Encourage continued but orderly growth in North Liberty.**

In order to maintain a strong economic and social base for North Liberty, growth is viewed as positive. A need exists to balance and diversify development and related opportunities. This growth and diversification, however, needs to be accomplished in an orderly, organized and coordinated fashion. In addition, reference has been made to the value of North Liberty having a "small-town" atmosphere. Acknowledged is the fact that the actual size of the City will certainly increase with time. The features and amenities of a small town were stated, however, as primary attributes that should be maintained due to the positive image they express to the region. The City should address this desire, and identify ways in which the small city character can be preserved, while accommodating additional, orderly development.

- **Enhance and improve North Liberty's sense of community and self-identity.**

Factors such as sporadic development, physical barriers, and North Liberty's bedroom community function all serve to detract from the sense of community and cohesiveness. As a result, community identity is lacking within the City. A very strong opinion is found to exist that North Liberty needs to re-establish a physical community focus and related identity. Accomplishing such an objective is seen as benefiting the community's self image as well as the image perceived at a metropolitan and regional scale.

- **Provide a diversity of land use opportunities within the City, to ensure a wide range of employment and consumer options, as well as housing choices.**

The predominant urban land use type within the City is single-family residential, and this predominance will continue into the next decade. Support services, such as retail and employment opportunities, have only developed on a limited basis. As residential development increases, demand for consumer and employment opportunities will also increase. Furthermore, a significant amount of the residential development consists of starter-type housing. Alternative housing levels and styles, including low and high valued homes, are needed to provide a diversity of homeowners, varying in household size, age and financial means.

- **Maintain desirable community character, public health and safety, and economic vitality by ensuring that development that takes place in North Liberty is of premium quality and blends well with the natural, rural, and urban atmosphere of the community.**

North Liberty should pay special attention to a variety of development types and relationships, and base its plans for support systems and services upon those uses that attain optimal land use and harmony. The related ordinance controls should reflect and enforce the characteristics of development as specified in the plan. The City should provide for the development and maintenance of functional land use and structural patterns, and an orderly and functional transportation system to serve and connect, but not disrupt, various use concentrations. Moreover, the community should provide and properly maintain those resources, facilities and services essential for the protection of the health, safety and general welfare of the individual and community (water, sewer, police and fire protection) and necessary for improvement of the individual (schools, libraries, parks).

- **Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan, including long term and interim policies, promotes a responsible fiscal balance (revenue versus service costs) on an ongoing basis.**

As stated in the Introduction of this section, the Policy Plan is intended to outline the community's desires and set forth guidelines as to how these desires are to be achieved. These desires must be continually assessed in terms of value compared to costs incurred by the City for implementation. Indicators of value shall include, but not be limited to, potential revenue, image enhancement, and common good of the community.

General community goals have been factored a step further in order to establish a framework for North Liberty's strategic planning policies for specific topic areas, in the sections that follow. The specific topics are directly related to the issues that came out of the town meeting and other public input, and include:

- Natural Environment
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Community Facilities
- Economic Development
- Operations/Administration

1. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Environmental awareness was an important issue identified by community representatives during the Town Meeting. The unique environmental setting of North Liberty is an extremely valuable resource, and one of the area's major recreational and economic amenities. Preservation and protection of these assets is of primary importance to North Liberty and the surrounding area. Environmentally sensitive development will preserve the health and welfare of North Liberty citizens, attract a more diverse economic base and minimize the need for future public investments in clean up or beautification.

Specific target preservation areas include the Iowa River corridor, areas of steep slopes, existing vegetation, and natural drainageways. The policies and provisions of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as the City's Zoning, Subdivision and Environmentally Sensitive Areas Ordinances, are the vehicles through which North Liberty can protect defined environmentally sensitive areas within the municipal boundaries and surrounding extra-territorial jurisdiction area.

The following goals and policies are intended to address the entire extra territorial jurisdiction area for North Liberty.

1.1 Natural Environment Goals:

- 1.1.1 Protect all environmentally sensitive areas and unique physical features within the municipal boundaries and the extra territorial jurisdiction area.
- 1.1.2 Ensure that urban development and agricultural operations are compatible with features of the natural environment and can be accommodated without destroying environmental features and natural amenities.
- 1.1.3 Recognize the prevalence of prime agricultural lands in the formulation of development strategies.
- 1.1.4 Maintain and, where feasible, improve the natural and aesthetic quality of the region's water resources.
- 1.1.5 Protect ground water and soils from contamination and pollution resulting from urban or agricultural uses and correct problems where necessary.
- 1.1.6 Recognize limiting soil factors with respect to urban development suitability.
- 1.1.7 Protect areas of significant slopes in order to provide a safe environment and protection of water quality.

- 1.1.8 Ensure protection of existing forested areas and promote the restoration and planting of additional vegetation.
- 1.1.9 Provide protection for floodplains, storm drainage areas, and natural habitats within the municipal boundaries and the extra territorial jurisdiction area.
- 1.1.10 Prevent noise and air pollution and promote recycling and reuse of all resources.
- 1.1.11 Ensure that land uses adjacent to industrial activities and major highways are compatible with anticipated noise levels and air quality.

1.2 Natural Environment Policies: General

- 1.2.1 All activities in environmentally sensitive areas shall conform to local and state regulations.
- 1.2.2 Regulations shall be formulated and/or updated, and enforced in a fair and consistent manner to ensure the proper protection of identified natural resources within the municipal boundary and the surrounding jurisdiction area.
- 1.2.3 New development and the expansion of existing activities shall be restricted and regulated where environmental damage may result.
- 1.2.4 The use of concentrated and cluster development concepts shall be encouraged where protection of natural features is important to the community and vital to desirable development.
- 1.2.5 Where appropriate, environmentally sensitive areas shall be publicly controlled.

1.3 Natural Environment Policies: Prime Farmlands

- 1.3.1 Regulations shall be developed which manage growth and prevents premature utilization of prime agricultural lands.
- 1.3.2 Preserve contiguous agricultural lands in the extra-territorial area in order to maintain efficient farming practices, and minimize land use compatibility concerns.
- 1.3.3 Cluster development in agricultural areas to preserve contiguous farming activities.
- 1.3.4 Ensure that development within the City-limits is contiguous to existing development.

1.4 Natural Environment Policies: Lake/River Development

- 1.4.1 Major unique water features (rivers, creeks, and reservoirs) having functional and aesthetic value should be preserved and protected as perpetual community assets through purchase, dedication, protective or scenic easements, and/or the clustering of development to avoid encroachment and destruction of such features.
- 1.4.2 Integrate new development with the natural characteristics of the land through the preservation of attractive natural amenities (i.e., rivers, lakes, wooded areas, slopes, etc.).

1.5 Natural Environment Policies: Soils/Slopes

- 1.5.1 In areas of soils that have limitations for development, soil testing shall be performed to identify the soil correction measures necessary to insure safe and quality construction.
- 1.5.2 Drain tile around building foundations and streets may be required in soil areas characterized by moisture retention, high water tables, or perched water tables.
- 1.5.3 Sump pumps will be required in dwelling units with basements in all new subdivisions.
- 1.5.4 Sump pump collection lines, sump pump access to a storm sewer, or an approved drainageway will be required for all new subdivisions with basements.
- 1.5.5 Erosion control plans shall be required for all site grading to prevent erosion, dust, and soil sedimentation.
- 1.5.6 Restrict or prohibit development on slopes exceeding 12 percent. In instances where development on steep slopes is permitted, grading and erosion control plans must be provided which prevent erosion, dust, and soil sedimentation.

1.6 Natural Environment Policies: Vegetation

- 1.6.1 To the extent possible, existing stands of mature trees shall be preserved and protected from future development.
- 1.6.2 Programs designed to protect trees that are susceptible to disease will be promoted.
- 1.6.3 The location, type, and condition of existing vegetation shall be indicated in all development requests, and preservation of existing trees should be accomplished, wherever feasible.

1.6.4 New developments within the City and the surrounding jurisdiction area will be required to plant new trees according to City standards, particularly in areas where existing vegetation is removed.

1.6.5 City tree planting programs and plans are to be formulated and an aggressive implementation effort pursued.

1.7 Natural Environment Policies: Storm Water Management/Floodplain

1.7.1 Development within drainageways, floodplains, and other natural features that perform important environmental functions in their natural state, shall be restricted or prohibited.

1.7.2 Soil types associated with drainageways should be protected and preserved in order to channel flowage, control erosion, and prevent flooding.

1.7.3 Natural drainage patterns shall be preserved wherever feasible.

1.7.4 Require all new development to manage all on-site storm water generation on-site or contribute to a regional storm water facility as per the requirements of the City Engineer. This is to ensure that negative impacts will not occur with regard to downstream flooding or water quality.

1.7.5 Require grading and drainage plans as part of any new subdivision, commercial development, or industrial development. These plans must illustrate proposed drainage patterns, erosion control and plans for on-site storm water retention or contribute to a regional storm water facility dependent upon the City Engineer’s recommendations. If the City Engineer determines that the drainage for the development is going to contribute to a regional basin, there is no requirement for a drainage plan.

1.7.6 Continue to utilize the City’s floodplain regulations to regulate floodplain development. The intent of the floodplain regulations is to protect property and public safety from damage due to flooding.

1.7.7 Update floodplain study to establish new 100 year floodplain for the community.

1.8 Natural Environment Policies: Air and Noise Pollution

1.8.1 State and federal pollution regulations shall be incorporated into local policy when appropriate.

1.8.2 In areas of potential noise or air pollution, mitigating design approaches shall be utilized to reduce possible problems.

1.8.3 Programs shall be initiated, promoted, and supported which are aimed at reducing air and noise pollution.

1.9 Natural Environment Policies: Recycling/Solid Waste

1.9.1 Recycling programs that conserve natural resources shall be continued and promoted.

1.9.2 The City shall encourage waste reduction/separation practices to improve solid waste management.

1.9.3 The City shall consider a proposed project's waste generation potential and methods of waste reduction and material/energy conservation.

1.9.4 Solid waste that may damage the environment shall be treated to make it harmless before land disposal.

1.9.5 Commercial and industrial generators of solid waste shall be encouraged to adopt a program for waste, act voluntarily to evaluate their use of energy and raw materials, reduce consumption where technically and economically feasible, and adopt a program for commercial and industrial area recycling.

Tools to Administer Natural Environment Goals and Policies

- Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning Code
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Floodplain Ordinance
- Sensitive Areas Subdivision Design Standards
- North Liberty Municipal Design Standards
- Fringe-area Agreement with Johnson County

2. LAND USE

Land use goals create a vehicle to determine, organize, and define the character and intensity of activity in and around the City of North Liberty. The goals should address both existing and desirable future patterns of development.

In coordination with North Liberty's land use goals, the policies that are established will reflect comprehensive, but gradual improvements. It is understood that proposed land use changes will occur in incremental stages for the overall betterment of the community.

The following goals serve as a reference for planning and policy decisions.

2.1 Land Use Goals:

- 2.1.1 Develop and implement a cohesive, efficient land use pattern that ensures compatibility, functional relationships, and complementary adjacent activities among land uses.
- 2.1.2 Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan, including long term and interim policies, promotes a responsible fiscal balance (revenue versus service costs) on an ongoing basis.
- 2.1.3 Ensure land use allocations are balanced with economic market demands and service availability.
- 2.1.4 Establish and maintain an advantageous property tax situation and pursue a strengthened and sound tax base through a diversification of land uses, including commercial and industrial development, as well as a variety of residential options.
- 2.1.5 Property values are to be preserved and protected.
- 2.1.6 Prevent overcrowding and over-utilization of land. Also, prevent development that is not accompanied by a sufficient level of supportive services and facilities (utilities, parking, access, etc.).
- 2.1.7 Land use and development is to be compatible with features of the natural environment and is to be accommodated without destroying environmental features and natural amenities.
- 2.1.8 Provide for a logical extension of urban growth and related community services.
- 2.1.9 Ensure that public gathering places, schools, and other institutional uses are compatible and complementary to neighboring uses.

- 2.1.10 To the extent possible, encourage the development of a variety of dwelling unit types, styles and sizes and balanced housing stock to satisfy the needs, desires, and income levels of all people and household sizes.
- 2.1.11 Provide safe, convenient, attractive and accessible commercial and industrial development within North Liberty that is viable and responsive to the needs of the community and surrounding market area.
- 2.1.12 Promote the economic growth and development of the community with the City as an active participant in cooperation with the private sector.
- 2.1.13 Promote business park development in appropriate locations that encourage light industrial uses, offices, and commercial uses in an integrated design.
- 2.1.14 Maintain opportunities for industrial development and uses within the community and segregate them into harmonious and compatible use types.
- 2.1.15 Develop a land use plan that recognizes the prevalence of prime farmlands, prevents its premature utilization, and preserves contiguous farming activities where possible.

2.2 Land Use Policies: General

- 2.2.1 All development proposals shall be analyzed on an individual basis from a physical, economic and social standpoint to determine the most appropriate uses within the context of the community as a whole.
- 2.2.2 Development policies and regulations shall be applied consistently and uniformly.
- 2.2.3 An over-supply of one type or variety of development or use types shall be avoided to the extent possible.
- 2.2.4 Land use development shall be related to and reflect transportation needs, utility capabilities, desired development and community priorities.
- 2.2.5 A creative approach (as opposed to “traditional” subdivision design) to the use of land and related development is to be encouraged.
- 2.2.6 Property values shall be protected through the harmonious relationship of land uses, streets, natural features and the maintenance of properties.
- 2.2.7 The removal of land from the tax rolls should be considered only when it could be clearly demonstrated that such removal is in the public interest.

- 2.2.8 Public and institutional land uses and other non-tax paying uses shall be selectively located or discouraged from being located in areas highly suitable for commercial and other income producing properties, unless they serve to attract and enhance development potential.
- 2.2.9 Standards for building quality and value, especially for commercial and industrial uses, should be increased so as to enhance the community's character as well as tax base.
- 2.2.10 The community should be planned and developed on a neighborhood basis as determined by physical barriers and/or homogeneous land use characteristics and urban/rural development area boundaries.
- 2.2.11 Protect contiguous use districts (e.g., residential neighborhoods) from penetration by non-local traffic. Where through traffic problems are identified, correct such problems as opportunities arise.
- 2.2.12 High intensity commercial and service centers are to be supported by high density and medium density housing in close proximity.
- 2.2.13 Standards for development quality should be upgraded and established for all land uses to insure an enhancement of community character.
- 2.2.14 Growth and development control shall be accomplished by means of properly administered Zoning, Subdivision and Building/Property Maintenance Ordinances and follow up inspection and enforcement.
- 2.2.15 Land use development shall be planned so as not to isolate or create land-locked parcels.
- 2.2.16 All development should be accessed by improved public streets. The City shall limit developments that require private street access.
- 2.2.17 An aesthetically pleasing environment, free from excessive outdoor storage should guide the physical development of the community.
- 2.2.18 The attractiveness of the community shall be enhanced through a continuing program of civic beautification; tree planting; maintenance of property, buildings, and streets; and other measures that will promote an aesthetically pleasing environment.
- 2.2.19 Programs and incentives for continuing privately initiated property maintenance, improvements and energy conservation, and redevelopment of questionable land use shall be created and implemented.

- 2.2.20 Development on both a community-wide and project basis that facilitates energy resource conservation, yet maintains compatibility and relationships of uses is to be planned and encouraged.

2.3 Land Use Policies: Land Use Compatibility

- 2.3.1 Once established, geographic land use designations and related zoning classifications shall be changed only when it can be demonstrated that such modifications are in the best interest of the community on a long range perspective and such changes will maintain land use compatibility and pre-determined goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 2.3.2 Compatible uses and activities shall be concentrated and clustered into functionally related sub-units of the community.
- 2.3.3 Transitions between distinctly differing types of land uses shall be accomplished in an orderly fashion that does not create a negative (economic, social or physical) impact on adjoining properties.
- 2.3.4 Incompatible land uses shall be properly regulated and related so that conflicts are minimized through the use of physical barriers, distances, screens, sizing of building units, and/or proper physical orientation of lots and buildings.
- 2.3.5 Wherever possible, changes in types of land use shall occur either at center, or mid-block points so that similar uses front on the same street, or at borders of areas separated by major man-made or natural barriers.
- 2.3.6 Whenever possible, the impact of physical barriers shall be reduced to increase relationships between segregated areas and reinforce continuity and a sense of community.
- 2.3.7 Renewal, replacement and redevelopment of substandard and grossly incompatible development shall be accomplished through public action and private means.
- 2.3.8 Combine and integrate varying types of land use when compatible, complementary and increased efficiency and land utilization can be achieved.
- 2.3.9 Allow institutional facilities within zoning districts and neighborhoods in which they complement the surrounding uses and are compatible.

2.4 Land Use Policies: Residential

- 2.4.1 Plan and develop residential neighborhoods according to determined planning/development district boundaries.

- 2.4.2 Ensure that all new housing, including rental housing and housing for persons of low and moderate income, adheres to the highest possible standards of planning, design and construction.
- 2.4.3 Residential neighborhoods shall be protected from encroachment or intrusion of incompatible higher use types and by adequate buffering and separation from other residential as well as non-residential use categories.
- 2.4.4 The character of individual residential neighborhoods should be reinforced, maintained and upgraded.
- 2.4.5 Preserve and promote residential zoning districts that provide for lower value, starter homes as well as higher valued homes in order to increase housing diversity.
- 2.4.6 An over-supply of one type of housing or level of housing cost should be avoided. Diversified housing should be encouraged.
- 2.4.7 Housing styles and development techniques that conserve land and increase efficiency are to be encouraged.
- 2.4.8 Density shall be given equal consideration to lot size in planning for the community and in the review of development requests.
- 2.4.9 Integration of housing types or styles within a development shall be allowed when applicable as long as the total number of units conform to the prescribed density for the total development.
- 2.4.10 Innovation in residential subdivision design and housing development should be encouraged through the use of devices such as the cluster and planned unit development concepts.
- 2.4.11 Residential development should be protected from and located away from sources of adverse environmental impacts, including noise, air and visual pollution.
- 2.4.12 Substandard housing units shall be rehabilitated whenever possible and shall be removed when it is judged not economically feasible to correct deficiencies.
- 2.4.13 Commercial/industrial uses should be minimized within residential neighborhoods. Home occupations shall be allowed provided they maintain or do not interfere with the residential character of the neighborhood.

- 2.4.14 Violations of property maintenance that infringe upon residential neighborhood quality, pose public health and safety problems and threaten neighboring property values shall be aggressively eliminated.
- 2.4.15 New residential neighborhoods shall be adequately and appropriately landscaped according to community requirements as may be amended.
- 2.4.16 Provide for review, update and enforcement of zoning and subdivision standards to ensure high standards of planning and design.
- 2.4.17 Concentrate higher density, apartment-type housing in proximity to areas that offer a wide range of existing supportive services, commercial and recreational facilities.
- 2.4.18 Protect residential neighborhoods from penetration by through traffic. Major streets are to border and not penetrate neighborhoods, wherever possible.
- 2.4.19 All subdivisions shall be developed with consideration of connections to future subdivisions.
- 2.4.20 Provide high-density development with reasonable, but not necessarily direct, access to major thoroughfares.

2.5 Land Use Policies: Commercial - General

- 2.5.1 Efforts to achieve commercial development and redevelopment shall be encouraged and promoted.
- 2.5.2 Commercial areas shall be developed as cohesive, inter-related units with adequate off-street parking.
- 2.5.3 Where land use allocations are provided for long term market needs and absorption, interim uses shall be considered for such properties provided that such activities can exist in harmony with existing and proposed uses and that such uses will not serve as obstructions to planned activities and development.
- 2.5.4 Immediate, short-range market potential and demands for activities which are not suggested for a site or area by the Comprehensive Plan or allowed by the Zoning Ordinance shall not be the sole justification for a change in allowed activity.
- 2.5.5 When the opportunities arise, existing spot and uncoordinated commercial development shall be consolidated into more functional patterns.
- 2.5.6 Pre-determined development standards should be established and followed to insure the quality of development desired by the community.

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- 2.5.7 All service and commercial uses shall be adequately screened or buffered from any adjacent residential development.
 - 2.5.8 Commercial development shall be adequately landscaped in accordance with community requirements as may be amended.
 - 2.5.9 Safe and convenient pedestrian movement shall be accomplished within all service and commercial districts.
 - 2.5.10 When possible or when opportunities arise, major street access to service and commercial districts shall be at the periphery of the districts.
 - 2.5.11 Outdoor commercial storage and environmental quality maintenance should be strictly regulated and enforced.
 - 2.5.12 Signing of commercial service properties shall facilitate identification and business promotion and shall be in strict conformance with City ordinances. Signs shall be regulated by the City Zoning Ordinance.
 - 2.5.13 A commercial/industrial maintenance code shall be enacted and enforced to help insure that commercial and industrial development maintains community character on an ongoing basis.
- 2.6 Land Use Policies: Commercial - Central Commercial Area/Town Center Area**
- 2.6.1 The Central Commercial Area shall be safeguarded as a focal center of the community.
 - 2.6.2 On-street/off-street parking needs and requirements within the Central Commercial Area/Town Center Area shall be defined and delineated. Parking design will be evaluated emphasizing circulation ease and access control.
 - 2.6.3 The pedestrian circulation system shall be enhanced by improving sidewalks, ramp access, and street furniture. Pedestrian crossing conflicts with traffic and street intersections will be mitigated by providing proper demarcation and signage control.
 - 2.6.4 Primary access to the Central Commercial Area/Town Center Area shall be limited to major circulation corridors to minimize impacts upon the adjacent local street system.
 - 2.6.5 Compatible Central Commercial Area/Town Center Area development and redevelopment shall be emphasized by coordinating amenities and aesthetic devices in a complementary and defined manner.

- 2.6.6 An orderly transition between the Central Commercial Area/Town Center Area development and adjacent residential neighborhoods shall be established by introducing higher density residential or lower density commercial alternatives.
- 2.6.7 A cohesive image shall be established and maintained for the North Liberty Central Commercial Area/Town Center Area.

2.7 Land Use Policies: Commercial - Highway

- 2.7.1 Commercial development along Highway 965, selected locations along Penn Street, and adjacent to Interstate 380 shall comprise the secondary commercial districts of the City.
- 2.7.2 Commercial development along highways shall be respective and complementary to the commercial, service and governmental uses of the Central Commercial Area/Town Center Area.
- 2.7.3 Direct property access to highways shall be minimized, and accommodated via limited access points.
- 2.7.4 Commercial and service centers shall be developed as cohesive, highly interrelated and coordinated units with adequate off-street parking and appropriate regulated points of access.
- 2.7.5 Highway commercial development shall be located in areas of high vehicle accessibility.
- 2.7.6 Establish a pedestrian circulation system within the highway commercial districts. The system should connect major economic activity areas to residential neighborhoods, promote safe crossing of Highway 965, Penn Street and Cherry Street, and should be compatible with the overall transportation system.
- 2.7.7 Spot or premature commercial development shall be discouraged in favor of a unified development pattern.
- 2.7.8 Development of scattered open parcels along existing roads and highways shall be accomplished in a fashion that establishes functional development patterns (for example, utilizing shared access and parking, etc.).

2.8 Land Use Policies: Industrial

- 2.8.1 Existing industrial uses shall be retained and new industrial development shall be encouraged to locate in existing and proposed industrial parks and industrially zoned areas.

- 2.8.2 In determining future locations for industrial development, the City shall ensure that land use harmony is maintained, servicing capabilities (streets, utilities, etc.) are adequate and not over-extended, and long term development objectives and policies are achieved.
- 2.8.3 Traffic generated by industrial activity shall be prohibited from penetrating residential neighborhoods.
- 2.8.4 Existing industrial type activities within residential, commercial, and/or environmentally sensitive areas of the community shall be encouraged to locate in appropriate use type areas.
- 2.8.5 Existing and new industrial development shall not cause pollutants or contaminants to be emitted into the surrounding environment (including air, soils, ground water, drainageways, sanitary sewer and storm sewer) in excess of State and federal regulations.
- 2.8.6 Industrial areas shall be adequately screened and appropriately landscaped and designed according to City standards.
- 2.8.7 Efforts shall be undertaken to limit heavy/noisy industry to a specific area within current and future industrial zoning districts to reduce the impact of these industries on residential areas.
- 2.8.8 The Nuisance and Zoning codes shall be uniformly enforced to ensure proper upkeep and constant improvement of economic development areas.
- 2.8.9 Continued expansion of the City's industrial and commercial tax base shall be encouraged to assist in paying for needed services and in reducing tax impact on housing costs.
- 2.8.10 Industrial activities complementary to existing uses shall be identified and the development of such industries shall be promoted and facilitated.
- 2.8.11 Fiscal incentives shall be investigated and offered to attract new desired industries to North Liberty.
- 2.8.12 Industrial development shall be promoted which maximizes the return on city investments in public facilities and services.
- 2.8.13 Due consideration shall be given to all potential physical implications and services and facility demands (i.e., traffic generation, sewer and water demands, etc.) of any proposed industrial development.

- 2.8.14 Within economic capabilities, public services and facilities shall be provided to North Liberty industries to help ensure their satisfaction of locating within the community.
- 2.8.15 Signing within industrial areas shall facilitate ready business identification. Said signing shall be limited and comply with City Code.
- 2.8.16 High quality industrial development shall be promoted through the enforcement of the City's zoning performance standards.
- 2.8.17 Industrial site designs that integrate the facility with natural features of the land in an aesthetically attractive manner shall be encouraged.
- 2.8.18 Land use transition (i.e., buffering, separation) between differing land uses are to be utilized as required by the City in order to establish compatible land use patterns.

2.9 Land Use Policies: Agricultural

- 2.9.1 Any division of land in agricultural areas for the purposes of urban development shall be prohibited if such action does not provide for the efficient and timely extension of services and utilities.
- 2.9.2 Agricultural land use shall observe conservation practices that prevent erosion and preserve natural resources.
- 2.9.3 The keeping of animals shall be confined to the rural designated areas of the community or farming operations.
- 2.9.4 Zoning Ordinance provisions regulating development density and lot sizes in agricultural areas shall be formulated to avoid disruption of farming operations.
- 2.9.6 The subdivision of farmsteads and small parcels for farm family housing uses shall be strictly regulated so as not to create future land use problems.

Tools to Administer Land Use Goals and Policies

- Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning Code
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Fringe-area Agreement with Johnson County
- Building Maintenance Code
- Commercial / Industrial Maintenance Code
- Nuisance Ordinance

3. TRANSPORTATION

The adequacy of the City's transportation system was the overwhelming future concern addressed during the Town Meeting. Issues with the transportation system that were discussed included traffic flow, future road planning, public transportation, safety, lack of east-west throughways, and adequate access to new subdivisions.

The North Liberty transportation system is composed of differing modes that respond to the access needs of a community. Full attention is required to all modes within the system to ensure a balanced operation as well as a system that properly responds to the requirements of all individuals. Factors affecting transportation are the placement and type of uses and activities that generate service needs.

Within the context of the above considerations, the following goals and policies are provided for transportation planning and development.

3.1 Transportation Goals:

- 3.1.1 Approach transportation in a comprehensive manner, giving attention to all modes and related facilities.
- 3.1.2 Provide for the safe, efficient and convenient movement of people and goods by all modes of transportation.
- 3.1.3 Reduce the need for transportation facilities by combining or concentrating related land use activities when feasible.
- 3.1.4 Develop and maintain a traffic control system that conforms with existing laws, optimizes service provided to North Liberty residents, and minimize adverse impacts.
- 3.1.5 Develop and maintain a street system that is sensitive to homogeneous neighborhoods and activity areas.
- 3.1.6 Ensure that all public and private streets are constructed with the highest possible standards for safety and durability.
- 3.1.7 Provide sufficient off-street parking and loading facilities to meet the demands of all types of land uses.
- 3.1.8 Provide for the safe and convenient circulation needs of the pedestrian and the bicyclist.
- 3.1.9 Support the utilization and development of mass transit systems and other such measures that will minimize the need for individual automobile travel.

- 3.1.10 Develop a system of priorities for improving the various elements of the transportation system that are in need.
- 3.1.11 Connect new development with the existing community by maximizing mobility and connectivity and minimizing barriers.

3.2 Transportation Policies: General

- 3.2.1 All modes of transportation and related facilities should be treated as one system to be coordinated and related on a comprehensive basis.
- 3.2.2 Transportation facilities shall be planned to function in a manner compatible with adjacent land use. In those instances where the function of a transportation facility has changed over time to become incompatible with adjacent land use, a program shall be established to eliminate this incompatibility.
- 3.2.3 Transportation facilities shall be designed to conserve natural resources and minimize the total need for ongoing public investment.
- 3.2.4 A Capital Improvement Plan shall be prepared and annually updated for transportation facilities.
- 3.2.5 Transportation planning and implementation shall be coordinated with neighboring and affected jurisdictions.
- 3.2.6 The transportation system shall focus on activity centers within the community.
- 3.2.7 The mobility needs of all persons shall be considered in the planning and development of the transportation system.
- 3.2.8 Early and continuing citizen involvement shall be provided in transportation planning and implementation projects.
- 3.2.9 The regional highway system shall complement and facilitate local movements provided by local streets, bicycle trails and pedestrian facilities. A line of communication shall be maintained with county and state highway officials in order to ensure that planned improvements are consistent with the goals and objectives of the community.
- 3.2.10 New transportation facilities shall connect with the existing system with maximum mobility and connectivity in mind.

3.3 Transportation Policies: Streets and Highways

- 3.3.1 All street system facilities are to be planned, designed and developed according to the highest standards, giving due consideration to both land use and overall transportation goals and policies as well as safety.
- 3.3.2 Vehicular access onto all types of expressways, arterials, and collectors shall be minimized and limited ensuring adequate distance between intersections and utilization of appropriate traffic control methods and devices.
- 3.3.3 Wherever possible, access to property shall be prohibited from major streets (expressways, arterials, and collectors). Detached access roads are to provide access for properties “fronting” such streets and roads.
- 3.3.4 All residential streets shall be categorized per function and those serving as low volume carriers shall be designed to prevent penetration of through traffic and shall properly direct traffic to collector or arterial streets.
- 3.3.5 Where feasible, parking on arterials and major collector streets shall be prohibited.
- 3.3.6 Any on-street parking that conflicts with moving traffic or creates hazards shall be prevented and eliminated.
- 3.3.7 In those areas where incomplete street facilities exist, action shall be taken to plan, design and develop a street system which reflects the highest standards and relate land use to transportation needs and policies. Action shall be taken to reserve required rights-of-way to prevent additional costs and difficulties.
- 3.3.8 All new streets, whether public or private, shall be constructed of asphalt or concrete material and concrete curb and gutter.
- 3.3.9 A program to improve existing substandard streets and to improve hazardous and poorly designed intersections and access points shall be established and implemented to upgrade such streets to new street construction standards.
- 3.3.10 Street improvements shall be related to surrounding land development in order to avoid interrupted or inadequate access to individual properties and businesses.
- 3.3.11 The amount of land devoted to streets and the number of street miles within the community shall be minimized to the extent possible.
- 3.3.12 Maximum street safety shall be achieved through the appropriate use of street lighting and sign controls.

- 3.3.13 Standards and controls for business and advertising signing and lighting shall be strictly enforced in order to prevent driver distraction and potential hazards.
- 3.3.14 Proper signing and visibility shall be required for grade railroad crossings.
- 3.3.15 Provisions for other transportation modes, i.e., bicycles, pedestrians, park and ride, etc., shall be included in street and highway improvement plans.
- 3.3.16 Review and revise design and construction standards for streets, outlined in the City Subdivision Ordinance and the North Liberty Municipal Design Standards, to ensure they reflect state of the art technologies in safety and durability.

3.4 Transportation Policies: Parking

- 3.4.1 Any new development or expansion of existing development shall include adequate off-street parking. Parking requirements imposed shall be constantly reviewed and studied to ensure supply is reflective of demand.
- 3.4.2 Parking facilities should be developed so as to conserve land, promote joint use and minimize conflicts with vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
- 3.4.3 Parking lot access to public streets shall be limited to the functional minimum.
- 3.4.4 Parking shall be designed to avoiding irregular and inefficient parking lots.
- 3.4.5 Screening and landscaping for off-street parking areas should be required, according to City standards.
- 3.4.6 Park and ride facilities shall be pursued to encourage alternate modes of transportation.

3.5 Transportation Policies: Loading

- 3.5.1 Ensure that all new multi-family, commercial, and industrial developments provide adequate off-street loading facilities.
- 3.5.2 Wherever possible, segregate loading facilities from parking areas to minimize traffic conflicts.
- 3.5.3 Adequately screen and landscape loading facilities from adjacent properties and public rights-of-way according to City standards.

3.6 Transportation Policies: Pedestrian/Bicycle

- 3.6.1 Pedestrians and bicyclists should be afforded rights-of-way separated from

motorized traffic along arterial and higher classified streets. When physically and/or economically feasible, pedestrian and bicycle traffic will be separated.

- 3.6.3 Adequate lighting, outdoor furniture, and other necessary pedestrian appurtenances should be provided in all urbanized areas of heavy pedestrian movement.
- 3.6.3 Continue to promote and enhance the City sidewalk and trail system through sidewalk programs and requirements.
- 3.6.4 Give trail development priority to the following areas:
 - a. Along major streets that have the most direct access to trail destinations.
 - b. Where they will serve the most intensely used commuter designations.
 - c. Within existing and proposed parks and playfields.
 - d. Within appropriate new park development.
 - e. Where they will link together separate portions of North Liberty's sidewalk and trail system with each other and North Liberty's trail system to other communities.
- 3.6.5 Streets designated as secondary arterials shall be designed to prevent unregulated pedestrian and bicycle crossings and protect pedestrian and bicycle movement paralleling traffic.
- 3.6.6 Facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists shall be provided in conjunction with street improvement projects.
- 3.6.7 New development shall be encouraged to respect the pedestrian/bicycle system and where possible to contribute to the rights-of-way and development costs.
- 3.6.8 Cooperate with state, regional, and county agencies in the formulation of a Comprehensive trails system and to eliminate duplication of facilities.

3.7 Transportation Policies: Mass Transit

- 3.7.1 Cooperate with other governmental jurisdictions and the University of Iowa in efforts to create markets and introduce transit or para-transit service on the local scale.

- 3.7.2 Promote, where economically feasible, transit and para-transit services and facilities to meet the basic transportation needs of persons (especially the elderly and handicapped) who cannot use automobile transportation.
- 3.7.3 Encourage the development of transit routes to multiple activity centers.

Tools to Administer Transportation Goals and Policies

- Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning Code
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Fringe-area Agreement with Johnson County
- North Liberty Municipal Design Standards
- Master Transportation Plan
- Master Trail System Plan

4. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities include those lands, buildings, services and systems that are provided on a public or semi-public basis in the interest of, or benefit to, the residents of the community. Such facilities typically include public utilities, parks, open space, and administrative services. Their importance should not be under-estimated in that they are offered as a necessity for sustaining life within the urban environment and are, therefore, a major determinant of the quality and safety of urban living.

Maintaining quality community services and facilities while experiencing major population increases was an issue many residents addressed during the Town Meeting. Sustainable growth of these important facilities must be carefully planned and implemented during the life of this plan.

In addition, public utilities are an important factor in regulating development patterns within the City. To discourage sprawling or premature development, the City should continue to require that all public utilities be in place (i.e., sanitary sewer, water, storm sewer) prior to subdivision approvals.

The following goals and policies are to serve as guides for the planning, implementation, and maintenance of community facilities and services.

4.1 Community Facility Goals:

- 4.1.1 Ensure the provision and maintenance of facilities and services necessary to meet the needs and interests of the community.
- 4.1.2 Plan and provide public facilities and services in a coordinated and cost effective manner that is consistent with the nature of development and possible pending problems within the community.
- 4.1.3 Minimize costs and undue further investment for public facilities and services by encouraging full utilization of existing and available service system elements.
- 4.1.4 Ensure the provision of public utilities that safeguard the natural environment.
- 4.1.5 Ensure adequate distribution and provide for safe, easy access to all facilities and services within the community.
- 4.1.6 Coordinate facilities and services on a joint use basis between governmental units.
- 4.1.7 Plan and design public systems, such as storm drainage, water supply and sanitary sewer along with their private extensions, as well as parks, community centers and the like, in a comprehensive manner, to utilize existing natural

environmental conditions to the fullest extent so as to minimize the cost of developing public systems.

- 4.1.8 Minimize the impact of non-local facilities that cross or are located in the community or extra territorial jurisdictional area.

4.2 Community Facilities Policies: Public Utilities

- 4.2.1 Demand for urban services should be anticipated, and to the extent possible, controlled, to facilitate the orderly and fiscally responsible extension of service systems.
- 4.2.2 Easements for utility systems shall be required and located according to uniform standards, providing access for maintenance and repair and minimizing disruption of other activities or area.
- 4.2.3 All public, as well as private sewer and water utility systems shall be constantly monitored and maintained to assure a safe and high quality standard of service on an ongoing basis.
- 4.2.4 Underground installation of all new utility services shall be required and when economically feasible, the conversion of existing overhead systems to underground systems shall be encouraged and promoted.
- 4.2.5 Coordination among all utility improvement programs shall be required.
- 4.2.6 All treatment of sewage shall comply with state standards with regards to quality of discharge.
- 4.2.7 Cooperation and coordination between governmental units should be promoted and encouraged in the provision of public utilities and services.
- 4.2.8 Runoff should be managed to protect the ground water recharge areas.
- 4.2.9 Soil types associated with drainageways shall be protected and preserved in order to channel flowage, and control erosion.
- 4.2.10 Natural drainage shall be preserved to the extent possible in order to minimize storm sewer costs.
- 4.2.11 The City's Comprehensive Storm Drainage Plan shall be implemented. This plan utilizes detention pond areas, natural drainageways, and preserves natural drainage to the extent possible in order to minimize storm sewer costs. Overland storm drainage shall be emphasized where practicable.

4.2.12 A Capital Improvement Plan for all public utilities shall be prepared and annually updated.

4.2.13 Any non-local utility lines and essential service facilities to be located in the community or jurisdictional area shall be routed in such a fashion as to minimize impact upon existing as well as future development.

4.3 Community Facilities Policies: Governmental Buildings, Facilities and Services

4.3.1 Cooperation and coordination between governmental units shall be promoted and encouraged in the provision of public facilities and services.

4.3.2 The full utilization of investments in public facilities and services shall be achieved prior to making new public investments.

4.3.3 Public facilities and services shall be located and centralized so as to offer ease of access and minimal response time.

4.3.4 Public facilities shall be designed to enhance community identity and recognition and located so that they serve as a community and neighborhood focus..

4.3.5 All public facilities shall be developed, improved and maintained according to the highest adopted standards of design and performance to serve as examples for private development.

4.3.6 Design and maintain all public buildings to be resistant to crimes against person and property while maximizing ease of use by the public.

4.3.7 Public facilities shall be adequately screened, landscaped, and buffered to minimize their impact on surrounding uses and enhance the community and area in which they are located.

4.3.8 Public structures and civic facilities shall be considered to accommodate changing community needs and demands.

4.3.9 Cooperation and coordination with the Iowa City and Clear Creek-Amana School Districts shall be promoted and encouraged to ensure continued quality service and distribution of facilities which address physical barriers within the community.

4.3.10 Coordination with the local School Boards regarding anticipated growth and expansion plans for future School facilities shall be promoted and encouraged.

4.4 Community Facilities Policies: Park and Open Space Recreation

- 4.4.1 Adequate neighborhood and community recreational facilities shall be provided and maintained for the enjoyment and use of North Liberty residents.
- 4.4.2 Within each recreation system classification, capital improvements to individual facilities (i.e., neighborhood parks) should be gauged on the basis of relative need for developed park facilities.
- 4.4.3 Recreation open space improvements shall be planned and updated annually in accordance with capital improvement planning and location.
- 4.4.4 The establishment of a Comprehensive Park System Plan shall be considered to facilitate park management and coordinate future park development.
- 4.4.5 All parks should be designed and maintained with proper lighting, landscaping, shelter design, etc., to ensure a high degree of personal and property safety and convenience.
- 4.4.6 Continual citizen participation shall be encouraged in the planning, development and operation of recreational open space.
- 4.4.7 The provision of an appropriate balance between active, passive and cultural recreational areas and activities, which offer a year round program of activities tailored to the needs of the total population throughout the community, should be maintained and further encouraged.
- 4.4.8 Usable open space suitable for recreational activities or connected to existing or proposed City or regional facilities should be provided by all types of residential developments.
- 4.4.9 Surveys or studies may be undertaken on a periodic basis to analyze the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the community recreation program.
- 4.4.10 A trail system shall be created which provides for separation of motorized and non-motorized recreational activities.
- 4.4.11 Parks and open space shall be developed and improved to take advantage of natural community features.
- 4.4.12 Where necessary, park and open space areas shall be screened, fenced, or buffered for the safety and protection of the user.
- 4.4.13 Neighborhood and community scale recreational facilities shall be located to provide safe and easy access to users.

- 4.4.14 Adequate parking shall be provided to serve major park and recreation facilities.
- 4.4.15 Maintain cooperative agreements with the School District for provisions of recreational open space areas and services.
- 4.4.16 Park and open space facilities are to be planned and developed in coordination with similar services of the surrounding region and the Johnson County area as a whole.

Tools to Administer Community Facilities Goals and Policies

- Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning Code
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Fringe-area Agreement with Johnson County
- North Liberty Municipal Design Standards
- Master Transportation Plan
- Master Park System Plan
- Master Trail System Plan
- Master Water Distribution Plan
- Master Sanitary Sewer Plan
- Comprehensive Storm Drainage Plan

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development issues ranked very high with participants in the Town Meeting. The business friendly atmosphere was the highest-ranking positive quality for the community. In addition, Town Meeting participants expressed concern over the lack of larger businesses in the community for employment and tax base. There was also concern over the limited space for industrial expansion.

Maintaining a proper balance of commercial and industrial uses in relationship with a solid residential base is important to establishing a healthy tax base within the community. The following goals and policies are to serve as a reference for economic development in North Liberty.

5.1 Economic Development Goals:

- 5.1.1 Maintain and improve the quality and value of North Liberty's industrial and commercial development.
- 5.1.2 Existing and established businesses within the City are to be recognized and their needs and interests are to be part of a comprehensive economic development effort.
- 5.1.3 Preserve and promote local employment opportunities within the City.
- 5.1.4 Increase North Liberty's per capita tax capacity by diversifying the tax base.
- 5.1.5 Attract private sector development through an aggressive program of promotion for commercial and industrial areas in North Liberty.
- 5.1.6 Capitalize on existing City and area assets and amenities as a means of enhancing the community's economic viability.
- 5.1.7 Support economic development programs and projects that maintain and improve North Liberty's environmental quality.
- 5.1.8 Utilize public assistance programs, such as tax increment financing, for developments that meet the City's long range planning objectives and provide an equitable benefit to City investment.

5.2 Economic Development: General Policies

- 5.2.1 Maintain an open, competitive market where all elements of each sector have a fair and equitable opportunity for participation.

- 5.2.2 Plan and establish a development pattern which provides suitable efficient and harmonious placement and distribution of land use and transportation activities and which prevent physical blight and decay.
- 5.2.3 Maintain a stable economy through the establishment of a diversified economic base.
- 5.2.4 Achieve a balanced supply and demand through the promotion of those economic functions for which there exists sufficient productive resources and available consumer markets.
- 5.2.5 Continue to maintain and expand the City's employment base in order to provide both living and working opportunities for North Liberty residents.
- 5.2.6 The City should work closely with business and higher education organizations on programs to promote job retention and creation in the City.
- 5.2.7 Promote the establishment of industries and businesses from varied fields and specialties in order to take full advantage of North Liberty's diverse labor force and to provide a broad based business environment.
- 5.2.8 Promote economic development projects that assist in the redevelopment and/or restoration of substandard and deteriorating property within the City.
- 5.2.9 Promote private and public efforts aimed at preserving and restoring properties with historic and cultural significance in the community.

5.3 Economic Development: Tax Base Policies

- 5.3.1 Continue to maintain and expand the City's retail, service and industrial tax base to assist in paying for needed services and in reducing tax impact on residential properties.
- 5.3.2 Aggressively promote and attract new development that will contribute positively to the City's financial capabilities.
- 5.3.3 Establish industrial and commercial performance standards to ensure high quality, high valued development.
- 5.3.4 Preserve property values through code enforcement in order to promote upkeep and maintenance of commercial and industrial areas.
- 5.3.5 Monitor existing business operations in the City and where appropriate, provide them with assistance for maintenance and expansion of their operations.

5.4 Economic Development: Industrial/Commercial Promotion Policies

- 5.4.1 Encourage property owners of vacant land to actively pursue development that is consistent with the long range planning objectives of the City.
- 5.4.2 The City should encourage leadership by the business community for economic development.
- 5.4.3 Release news stories to local newspapers and applicable real estate periodicals concerning North Liberty planning and development objectives.
- 5.4.4 Attend inter-community, regional and statewide economic development expositions to disseminate information about North Liberty development opportunities and to solicit development interest.
- 5.4.5 Maintain a contact person or committee for prospective developers to contact for development information about North Liberty.
- 5.4.6 Continue supporting a body or group which actively makes contacts with new development interests and follows up and assists where possible in attracting them to the community. Such groups may include North Liberty Development, Iowa City Area Development (ICAD) and Priority One.
- 5.4.7 Update the accessible database of North Liberty development information for dissemination to perspective developers in conjunction with Priority One and Iowa City Area Development Group. Continue to provide site, building and city information for development areas on the state-wide Location One Information System (LOIS).
- 5.4.8 Work with business interests presently existing in the City on plans and programs for expansion and enhancement.
- 5.4.9 Identify and promote economic development which makes full use of recreational market opportunities which result from the area's natural amenities.
- 5.4.10 Identify and promote economic development which takes full advantage of market opportunities afforded by the major transportation corridors such as Interstate 380/Saints Highway and Highway 965.
- 5.4.11 The City should work to retain and attract businesses that are compatible with a clean environment.
- 5.4.12 The City guidelines for public investment should be supportive of environmental quality as well as economic development.

5.4.13 Utilize tax increment financing as well as any and all public and private programs that are available to assist new and existing businesses in the community.

Tools to Administer Economic Development Goals and Policies

- Comprehensive Plan
- Economic Development Plan
- Zoning Code
- Fringe-area Agreement with Johnson County
- Building Maintenance Code
- Commercial / Industrial Maintenance Code
- Nuisance Ordinance
- Tax Increment Financing
- State and Federal Grant and Loan Opportunities
- Industrial and Commercial Performance Standards
- City's Website

6. OPERATIONS / ADMINISTRATION

As a consequence of the implementation aspects and orientation of the North Liberty Comprehensive Plan, operational and administrative goals and policies are of a prime concern. All people involved need to have a clear understanding of how development and redevelopment in the City will be achieved. To this end, the following is the operational and administrative goals and policies.

6.1 Operations and Administration Goals:

- 6.1.1 Promote private development and civic projects that enhance the community's image on a regional basis, as well as improve the sense of community identity within the City.
- 6.1.2 Ensure that all development and/or redevelopment that occurs in the community is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan and related ordinances should be amended as necessary to reflect changing community needs and priorities.
- 6.1.3 Allocate, to the extent possible, administrative and improvement costs to those activities generating the demand or utilizing the service.
- 6.1.4 Promote a responsible fiscal balance on an ongoing basis.
- 6.1.5 Facilitate City involvement when economically feasible in redevelopment efforts initiated by private interests.
- 6.1.6 Ensure that existing ordinances meet modern standards and needs of the area.
- 6.1.7 Provide opportunities for active and direct participation and involvement of residents, business people, and property owners within community development project areas.
- 6.1.8 Maintain the general citizen awareness of the purpose, plans and accomplishments of all redevelopment and development projects.
- 6.1.9 Monitor future development within the extra-territorial jurisdiction area to ensure such developments are consistent with long-term goals and objectives of the City.
- 6.1.10 Ensure that all land use and transportation policies and decisions are consistent with providing quality and timely emergency services to all residents of the City.

6.1.11 Ensure that all emergency services within the City have the highest level of communication equipment and that the lines of communication are established among service providers.

6.2 Operations and Administration Policies: General

6.2.1 Annually review the Comprehensive Plan on a formal basis to ensure that it is current and reflective of the community's interest and changing needs.

6.2.2 Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan, including long-term and interim policies, promotes a responsible fiscal balance (revenue versus service costs) on an ongoing basis.

6.2.3 Annually review the Zoning Ordinance and related development codes and design standards and policies on a formal basis to ensure maintenance of the most advanced standards and provision and full compliance with legislative requirements.

6.2.4 Monitor federal and state programs and the possibility of assisting the City with implementing the Comprehensive Plan and meeting the needs of the community.

6.2.5 Monitor legislative changes and new requirements in ordinance and city control responsibilities, notably in the area of environmental protection and development management authority.

6.2.6 Prepare and annually update a Capital Improvement Plan for the management, programming, and budgeting of capital needs.

6.2.7 Ensure that all development proposals are adequately considered to determine all economic, physical, social and service demand implications and that sufficient time is provided for thorough analysis and decision-making.

6.2.8 Ensure that all analysis and basis for decision-making on development proposals is thoroughly substantiated and documented.

6.2.9 Formulate and implement a system which continues to use the City's impact fees which assigns the City's costs for development proposal review to the potentially benefiting property owner rather than having the City as a whole, assume the burden.

6.2.10 Use special assessments or tap on fees in assigning costs for public improvements to benefiting parties.

- 6.2.11 Require land dedication, easements and other such requirements at time of subdivision and/or development to insure the physical capability for necessary public/semi-public utilities and improvements.
- 6.2.12 On far-reaching and complex developments, utilize professional advise and recommendation to assist with related decision-making.
- 6.2.13 Maintain communication and promote continued coordination between the City and neighboring and related governmental jurisdictions.
- 6.2.14 Annually review and analyze the City’s financial position and debt service to ensure proper fiscal programming and management.

6.3 Operations and Administration: Community Image and Identity Policies

- 6.3.1 Promote private development of the highest quality to increase North Liberty’s attractiveness in the regional market.
- 6.3.2 Establish development performance standards that ensure attractive commercial and industrial areas.
- 6.3.3 Concentrate commercial development to promote identity and pedestrian circulation.
- 6.3.4 Give due consideration to community and neighborhood identity in the siting of public facilities.
- 6.3.5 Develop a public trails and open space system which connects areas of the City and promotes pedestrian and bicycle transportation.
- 6.3.6 Promote private and public efforts aimed at preservation of North Liberty’s historic structures and places to enhance City image and identity.

6.4 Operations and Administration: Codes and Ordinances Policies

- Development:

- 6.4.1 Any development or expansion of facilities shall result in full compliance with current ordinance standards.
- 6.4.2 Compliance may, upon City Council approval, be phased over a limited time period pursuant to an established schedule. If phasing is to occur, a security deposit shall be posted by the developer/property owner to insure compliance with ordinance standards.

6.4.3 The terms and conditions of all project/development approval shall require the completion of a developer's agreement and a subdivider agreement.

- Zoning:

6.4.4 Until area plans are established and adopted, zoning of the area will remain as currently established and updated on a parcel-by-parcel request basis.

6.4.5 Approval of rezoning within development and redevelopment areas shall be contingent upon the proposed district and allowable uses conforming to the Comprehensive Plan and applicable area plans.

6.4.6 The provisions of the Zoning Ordinance shall be constantly reviewed, updated and adhered to for ensuring a response to the changing needs of development and redevelopment areas.

- Subdivision:

6.4.7 The provisions of the Subdivision Ordinance shall be constantly reviewed, updated and adhered to for ensuring a response to the changing needs of development and redevelopment areas.

6.4.8 State enabling legislation shall be pursued which facilitates expanded City control of development and related requirements.

- North Liberty Municipal Design Standards:

6.4.9 Ordinances shall be updated and enforced to improve the image and identity of the area.

6.4.10 Performance standards that provide for attractive and well functioning residential, commercial and industrial development shall be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance.

6.4.11 Whenever changes in existing uses occur, they shall be brought into immediate conformance with design guidelines unless an extension can be justified over a limited period of time and conformity is assured through some type of acceptable financial security.

6.4.12 Once established, provisions and concepts of design guideline regulations shall be constantly monitored and updated to insure a response to the changing needs of the project area and improved techniques and standards of design excellence.

- Property Maintenance:

- 6.4.13 Ordinances shall be formulated and established which govern the minimum and proper maintenance of private property within development and redevelopment areas.
- 6.4.14 Once established, the provision of maintenance ordinances shall be constantly reviewed and updated to ensure a response to the changing needs of development and redevelopment areas and standards of living and environmental quality.
- 6.4.15 Property maintenance regulations shall be applied to all types of uses within development and redevelopment areas.

6.5 Operations and Administration: Public Participation Policies

- 6.5.1 Establish a program for the direct involvement and input of area residents, business persons and owners in the planning and implementation of any development or redevelopment project in the City.
- 6.5.2 Utilize existing business and civic organizations as a means of communicating and informing project area landowners and tenants, and the general citizenry of area plans and accomplishments.
- 6.5.3 Prior to formal public hearings, hold informational meetings with project area residents, business people, and property owners on a neighborhood or sub-unit basis to advise them of area plans and recommendations and seek their options and comments.
- 6.5.4 Hold formal public hearings on area plans and projects with prior notice to all citizens in the community.
- 6.5.5 Utilize the City newsletter on a continuing basis to keep the general citizenry informed and updated on plans and accomplishments in the City.
- 6.5.6 Make use of all public media, notably area newspapers, the local access channel, and the City's web site as a means to keep citizens informed of all redevelopment projects.
- 6.5.7 Enlist specialized expertise that can contribute to the area plans from individuals of the community at large.

6.6 Operations and Administration: Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction Area/Annexation Policies

- 6.6.1 Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan addresses issues and strategies related to the surrounding extra-territorial jurisdiction area as well as the incorporated boundaries of North Liberty.
- 6.6.2 Wherever possible, apply all natural environment, land use, transportation and community facility policies to the extra-territorial jurisdiction area.
- 6.6.3 Exercise the authority for the City to review and approve all development proposals within the extra-territorial jurisdiction area.
- 6.6.4 Enforce all development standards adopted by the City when reviewing and approving development plans within the extra-territorial jurisdiction area. Development standards may also be considered within the development agreement.
- 6.6.5 Coordinate a fringe-area agreement with Johnson County to ensure that the long term goals and objectives of both governmental jurisdictions are compatible regarding the extra-territorial jurisdiction area.
- 6.6.6 Work with property owners to attempt to eliminate existing “islands” of unincorporated land within the City as directed by the State of Iowa.
- 6.6.7 Review all annexation requests by property owners to ensure the annexation is in the best interest of the City.
- 6.6.8 Monitor and evaluate annexation plans of adjacent communities to ensure future development in the region is of maximum benefit to the City.

Tools to Administer Operations and Administration Goals and Policies

- Comprehensive Plan
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Zoning Code
- Fringe-area Agreement with Johnson County
- Building Maintenance Codes
- Commercial / Industrial Maintenance Code
- City’s Website and newsletter

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK INTRODUCTION

The Development Framework describes the physical plan for the community. It further defines and establishes direction for the basic elements that comprise and influence the community. In the case of North Liberty and the surrounding extra-territorial jurisdiction area, these categorical elements are the natural environment, land use, transportation, and community facilities.

This section of the Plan is divided into four parts: the Concept Plan, Planning Districts, Implementation Schedule and Update Schedule.

The Concept Plan represents the general physical planning ideals for the community. This section provides guidelines for how specific policies presented within the Policy Plan may be applied.

The Planning Districts section presents more detailed recommendations by neighborhood or planning district. These “area” plans combine the categorical elements in a specific geographic setting.

The Implementation and Update Schedules provides a schedule for each of the Plan’s recommendations and summarizes the actions proposed by the plan. The action is then given a specific time frame for implementation, along with potential funding sources. In this way, the schedule can be used to monitor the progress of the plan. In addition, this section establishes when and how the plan should be updated and amended.

In total, the Development Framework, in conjunction with the Policy Plan, provides the basic and fundamental management tool for guiding and managing change and improvement within the community.

THE CONCEPT PLAN

The Concept Plan revolves around five issues: 1) Community Image and Identity, 2) Natural Resources and Environment, 3) Land Use Plan, 4) Transportation Plan, and 5) Community Facilities Plan. The concepts and recommendations discussed herein should be used in concert with the goals and policies established earlier in the plan.

1. COMMUNITY IMAGE AND IDENTITY

In order to strengthen and enhance the City's image and self-identity, it is essential that a sense of community is established.

North Liberty's basic character is that of a small, but growing community. Residents of the City have stated that the features and amenities that comprise North Liberty's "small city" character should be preserved and maintained even though the actual population continues to increase.

There are two fundamental elements of "small city" character. They are residential neighborhoods, and a central community focus.

Previous residential development has resulted in neighborhoods being developed as individual units. These units respond to physical features and barriers. Within the "original town" area, these neighborhoods respond well to adjacent neighborhoods. More recent development, however, has not related as well to adjacent neighborhoods, particularly with layout, street connections, and a mixture of uses.

A central concept of the Development Framework should be the establishment of a strong relationship for each neighborhood within itself, as well as to adjoining neighborhoods, the community, and the entire region. This means ensuring new developments are connected to the existing community, through an inter-connected street system and sidewalks and trails. The City should ensure new developments are not separated from the existing community.

The main community focus within North Liberty has in the past been the original Central Business District (CBD) located in the Dubuque Street/Cherry Street area. This area and the surrounding neighborhoods contain a number of features that symbolize the community's earlier days. This district and the "old town" area features have provided a strong focus for North Liberty that greatly enhances small city character.

Commercial development in recent years, however, has responded to changing transportation patterns and related more closely to Highway 965 and Interstate 380 than the Central Business District. This has somewhat diluted the community focus. In an attempt to take advantage of the commercial opportunities afforded by Highway 965 and Interstate 380, while preserving and enhancing the original Central Business District and the original town area, the City has choreographed the development of a central commercial area near the intersection of Highway 965 and Penn Street, along the Cherry Street extension.

In addition, the City is developing a streetscape plan that creates a link between the commercial center and the original Central Business District, as well as a revitalization of the CBD as the "town center". The implementation of these plans will result in a Central Commercial Area that will provide a unified focus for the community. This

planned unified commercial center, along with the redevelopment of the original CBD, and the inclusion of community facilities such as the City Hall/Fire Station, and community center will further enhance the small city character of North Liberty.

The Development Framework emphasizes neighborhood planning with the use of planning districts that focus on smaller neighborhood areas. Through the formulation of these districts, the ultimate land use concept will focus on improving the regional image of the City.

In addition, community activities and preservation of their natural and cultural amenities are important factors in enhancing the community's image. Many opportunities exist for the inclusion of well planned modest and up-scale residential neighborhoods, expanded commercial and industrial and business park areas with high quality development standards, interconnecting park and trail facilities for multiple user types, and educational/cultural activities for community residents. Improvements in these areas should be explored and implemented to the greatest extent possible.

2. NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Natural environment areas are of prime importance to the community. Besides serving as aesthetic amenities that enhance the quality of life in the area, they perform important ecological roles. Natural areas often act as buffers or barriers in determining the extent and direction of development and growth. Therefore, it is necessary that special consideration be given to these areas in formulating North Liberty's Comprehensive Plan.

Environmentally sensitive areas include those characterized by prime farming soils, steep slopes, forested areas, soil limitations, floodplains and rivers/creeks as defined in the City's Sensitive Areas Subdivision Design Standards resolution. Residents have expressed concerns with the preservation and enhancement of these features within the City limits, as well as the extra-territorial jurisdiction area.

In addition, the City Inventory document defines specific areas of concern with soil suitability, steep slopes, floodplains, significant mass vegetation, and prime farmland in and around North Liberty. The City should utilize the Inventory when updating specific land use tools, such as the Zoning, Subdivision and Environmentally Sensitive Areas Ordinances, as well as the Capital Improvement Plan.

2.1 Soil Suitability

Careful consideration must be given to the limiting soil factors present on a site prior to approval of development requests. Due to the prevalence of changing soils within the City limits and the extra territorial jurisdiction area, each development request should be subject to specific review by the City Engineer. At any time during the review process, or during actual construction, if a site under study is found to contain soils presenting development limitations, methods to correct or overcome these limitations should be done in accordance with the Uniform Building Code standards and state regulations.

Another requirement that the City enforces in response to the prevalence of sub-soil wetness is the requirement of all buildings constructed with basements to provide adequate sump pumps and a sump pump collection system for the new subdivision to remove moisture from the building. The City must continue to review and update its existing requirements in respect to site drainage, to help eliminate future flooding concerns.

2.2 Water Quality

A central feature within the North Liberty area is the Iowa River, and the reservoirs that have been created along the river. Coralville Lake and Lake MacBride were created in part to control flooding downstream on the Iowa River. Secondary benefits of the lakes include recreation, wildlife habitat, and improved water quality. These amenities have served to increase urban development in the area and enhance North Liberty's quality

of life. As such, protection of these resources is an important goal.

A substantial amount of residential development has occurred within the Iowa river corridor, particularly within Iowa City and Coralville jurisdiction areas consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan. Urban services are not provided to these developments; as such, private wells and on-site septic systems are used to service the development. On-site septic systems within the river and creek corridors present concerns with their potentially harmful effects on water quality. The County has adopted policies and standards regarding such development. The City should also review all development requests within its extra territorial jurisdictional area to ensure adequate provisions for on-site septic systems are being implemented. In addition, the City should take an active role in subsequent inspections and pumping requirements for these developments. These reviews and inspections are in the best interest of North Liberty, as they will serve to protect the area's natural amenities and safeguard against massive septic system failure in the North Liberty area. Such a failure may result in the costly extension of utilities to service failed infrastructure.

New industrial development also raises concerns with water quality in the North Liberty area. Residents have expressed concern over the potential that new industrial development could pose pollution and/or environmental concerns. This is particularly important with water quality because of the valuable ecological and recreational aspects of these features within the North Liberty area. The City must carefully review industrial development requests within the City to ensure protection of the region's water quality. In addition, site development of industrial uses should consider drainage patterns, ground water elevation, and other features that may impact water quality.

2.3 Erosion Control and Steep Slopes

Despite lacking significant slopes within the City limits, North Liberty must address the issues associated with steep slopes located within the extra-territorial jurisdiction area. Although the County has adopted policies regarding such development, the City may also wish to review these proposals.

As development continues throughout the region, it is important that appropriate erosion control measures are undertaken. Within natural drainageways, the preservation of natural vegetation should be encouraged. This is of utmost importance in that vegetation protects the soil from erosion.

To the extent possible, the placement of houses and roads upon steep slopes should be avoided. Generally, with steeper slopes, there is a greater possibility of erosion hazard. Because of gravity and reduced friction between soil particles, it takes less energy to dislodge and transport soil. Grading plans for residential subdivisions must be carefully reviewed to eliminate excessive grading practices and if necessary, reduce the amount of allowed units to preserve slopes and vegetation.

As a means of minimizing the environmental impact of development requests in these areas, the City should include an evaluation of slopes on subject properties. Factors to

be considered are: 1) percentage of grade, and 2) surface soil type. Generally, slopes exceeding 12 percent should be examined for any potential environmental impact that might occur as a result of a proposed development. However, depending on the soil types involved, lesser slopes may also require attention.

Any development on land containing slopes in excess of 12 percent grade should be required to supply soil tests for review by the City Engineer. Furthermore, as current City standards require, applicable developments should submit an “erosion control plan” which would detail intended specific methods of erosion control.

2.4 Vegetation

With the exception of the hilly areas within the Iowa River and Muddy Creek corridor, the North Liberty area is void of significant tree massings. Because wooded and natural areas provide a unique character and a highly desirable amenity for both residential and recreational development, efforts should be made to retain, to the extent possible, existing vegetation. Additionally, the City should continue its efforts promoting tree planting and preservation programs as well as efforts to require mandatory tree planting within all new subdivisions, both within the City limits and the extra territorial jurisdiction area.

2.5 Floodplain and Stormwater Management

The Muddy Creek drainageway is utilized to accommodate storm water runoff from the City’s urban development. As the City has grown, the number and severity of high water situations along this drainageway has also increased. This raises concern with potential flooding within North Liberty and in downstream communities. Additionally, some drainage problems exist within the older portions of the community as a result of surface water runoff and sump pump discharge.

As a means of protecting the public health and safety, and to minimize property damage and pollution from floodwaters, the City and Johnson County have established Floodplain Overlay Districts. As a result, all development proposals which lie within the designated floodplain district should conform to a specific set of regulations and should be subject to additional review by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, in the event of any proposed alteration of a watercourse. Failure to comply with state and federal standards for floodplain management will result in North Liberty area residents being unable to obtain Federal Flood Insurance.

In response to increased runoff resulting from urban development, the City has adopted a Comprehensive Storm Water Management Plan. This plan addresses stormwater retention practices for new developments, the utilization of natural drainageways, and drainage issues related to existing development.

In addition, the City should prepare a floodplain study to establish a new 100-year floodplain for the community.

2.6 Air and Noise Pollution

Residents have expressed concern over the potential that new industrial development could pose pollution and/or other environmental concerns. In order to alleviate such concerns, careful consideration should be given in allocating land zoned for heavy industrial development. In addition, all new commercial and industrial development, including expansions, should comply with existing state and federal pollution emission standards. Careful review of such proposals, including an analysis of the pollution potential, should be conducted.

2.7 Prime Farmland

Prime farmlands cover almost the entire North Liberty area, with the exception of the Iowa River corridor. The prevalence of prime farmland suggests that agriculture will continue to be an important land use within the City and throughout the region. The rate of development and the demand for land make the preservation of agriculture land an unrealistic objective within the actual City boundaries and future growth areas of the City. However, prime farmland outside of established future growth areas should be protected and preserved.

An important aspect of the Comprehensive Plan is the concentration and staging of urban development to avoid premature elimination of prime farmland. Concentrating urban activities and focusing on infill development will aid in preserving contiguous farming operations on prime farmland. This will result in minimizing land use conflicts and maintaining the economic viability of farming operations.

Another effort to protect prime farmlands is to limit residential development opportunities within agricultural zoning districts. Residential development should be limited to one dwelling unit per 40 acres. While the density of one per 40 should be observed, the minimum lot size of residential properties in agricultural zoned areas should allow parcels that are a minimum of one acre in size and a maximum of ten acres, with the balance of the property preserved as open space or protected agricultural activities. In addition, a deed restriction should be placed over parcels that have exercised these division rights. This will ensure that further development will not take place on the property unless it is rezoned.

3. LAND USE PLAN

Based upon the foundation established in the Policy Plan, the Land Use Plan section provides the framework to guide and direct future community growth and improvement. The Land Use Plan is a narrative and graphic description that provides the background and rationale for land use designations as represented on the Future Land Use Map.

The Land Use Plan section is divided into two parts. The first part describes the basic concepts that will impact North Liberty's future development. The final part describes general land use plan elements including a discussion of the overall land use map, future directions for residential, commercial and industrial development, and specific plans and programs affecting individual planning districts within the community.

In addition, the separate City Inventory provides the basis for North Liberty's Comprehensive Plan, including discussion on the previous planning history, population and land development projections, and past land development patterns that serve as the basis for this Plan.

Land Use Plan Concepts

The basic physical concepts included in the land use portion of the Development Framework encompass a number of separate, yet interrelated elements: 1) the neighborhood as the basic foundation of the community, 2) the Central Commercial Area and the original Central Business District as the focal point for which the individual neighborhoods form the "community", 3) the highway commercial center as a major tax-base providing complementary commercial uses to the Central Commercial Area, 4) the industrial park as the major supporting tax base to provide employment opportunities to area residents, 5) the preservation of contiguous farming activities from premature elimination, 6) land use transition, a method of ensuring compatibility between land uses, and 7) future growth areas, the corridors that define potential growth areas for the City.

3.1 The Neighborhood

North Liberty is a freestanding growth center with a distinct small city character surrounded by rural townships. The City's residential development is largely low-density single family, although alternative housing types do exist and have continued to expand, including apartments, townhouses, and mobile homes. Overall residential distribution consists of a variety of concentrations oriented to the old town area with newer residential development expanding primarily outward from the existing City limits. Smaller groups of dwellings, including farm homes, are spread throughout the community at very low density.

Given the City's long history, residential development has no particular format, and has been designed to include grid platting, curvilinear and even cul-de-sac street patterns. This attention to traffic consideration is coupled with a fundamental consideration for natural and man-made barriers which tend to help delineate and organize neighborhoods. Finally, the overall neighborhood orientation is set in terms of amenities and services which function as a focus for neighborhood activity. Park land, open space, and school facilities are primary within this group and contribute substantially to the creation of a desirable residential environment within the community.

In that the community's neighborhoods have developed as units, maintenance and enhancement of the desirability and attractiveness of these neighborhoods will be essential in the future. The development of remaining open land should be accomplished in a manner that respects the integrity of existing neighborhoods, as new neighborhoods and other land use areas are created.

3.2 The Central Commercial Area

The development of the Central Commercial Area provides an excellent focal point for the community. The proposal takes advantage of commercial opportunities afforded by Highway 965, and connects the Town Center Area via a proposed streetscape along Cherry Street. The commercial development that has been established along Cherry Street (professional service, governmental facilities) is the foundation of the Central Commercial Area. Future development in this area should include retail and additional professional/service commercial land use.

These elements can be utilized and expanded upon to achieve a vital, integrated "Central Commercial Area", encompassing major retail, service, cultural, entertainment, and government uses in the future yet retaining the City's overall small town feel.

3.3 Highway Commercial

Due to the high visibility and access afforded by Highway 965 and Interstate 380, land surrounding these corridors have become prime for highway commercial development. Because the areas are highly visible, area development should be of a level of quality that projects a positive City image. One method of ensuring quality development in the highway commercial areas is via the adoption and enforcement of performance standards. In addition, the City should continue to use its site plan ordinance to review potential development in these areas.

3.4 Industrial and Business Park

North Liberty has significant areas of usable and highly accessible land for light industrial and business park development with services readily available to accommodate growth through the year 2010. Conceptual planning will be aimed at providing expanded zones of industrial and business park development that emphasize high quality building and site design. This concept underscores the importance of achieving a well-integrated employment center and additional tax base within the City.

While emphasizing existing industrially zoned areas for new development in the near future, the community must recognize the opportunity for additional industrial areas afforded by the interstate. Flexibility therefore needs to be exercised in the cautious expansion of industrial land. Recognizing land demand and service costs related to industrial expansion is a strong consideration in the implementation of this conceptual element.

3.5 Agricultural Preservation

North Liberty's largest land use is agricultural activity, due to the prevalence of prime farmlands located within the City limits as well as the extra-territorial jurisdiction area. As development increases within the community, adjacent farming activities may be disrupted by the encroaching urban development.

While agricultural activities in the City and surrounding area will continue well into the future, the preservation of agriculture land use within the City boundaries is not viewed as a realistic objective. Future urban development should be concentrated in a manner that preserves contiguous farming activities and minimizes potential conflicts. Such a concept would reduce costs associated with development, and help maintain the economic viability of farming practices.

However, prime farmland outside of the City boundary and established future growth areas should be protected and preserved.

3.6 Land Use Transition

The intensity of land uses should decrease as one moves away from an activity center. In North Liberty, such a relation should be encouraged around the Central Commercial Area, the I-380 interchange area, the Penn Street and Highway 965 corridors, and the City's industrial centers. Generally, these activity centers should be surrounded by medium/high density residential development, which in turn should be surrounded by lower density residential development.

As stated in the Policy Plan, transitions between distinctly differing types of land uses should be accomplished so that conflicts are minimized. Typically, land use conflicts may be minimized through the use of physical barriers, distances, screens, and/or proper physical orientation of lots and buildings.

3.7 Future Growth Areas

North Liberty should establish future growth corridors that define potential growth areas outside of the existing City boundaries. The corridors, as shown on the Future Land Use Map and in the Planning Districts portion of the plan, can be generally described as where development outside of the City limits should be directed. This land can also be called Urban Service Areas or areas that define the geographical limit of government-supplied public facilities and services.

The future growth areas of the City should include land that is easily serviceable with public facilities and transportation infrastructure and is best suited for development. Growth areas should not contain land defined as environmentally sensitive or prime

farmland.

Generally, future annexation should be limited to land within the future growth area.

General Land Use Plan Elements

The Land Use Plan takes projected growth rates, land absorption, and applicable City policies and formulates a description of desirable locations for future land uses. The plan maps, when used in conjunction with land use narrative and ordinances, provide a description of future land uses within the community and the extra-territorial jurisdiction area. The residential densities that are proposed within the Land Use Plan represent density (number of dwelling units per acre) as opposed to actual housing types.

The Future Land Use Map should serve as a graphic guide in assessing development requests and how they affect or relate to the desired land use in the community. The graphics are emphasized to be general in nature. No hard and fast delineation of borders between use types is typically intended. The maps are conceptual presentations that are to serve as a guide. Specific development proposals and related land use decisions, while generally directed by the Future Land Use Map, are to be based primarily upon the goals and policies established as part of the Policy Plan chapter.

In the sections that follow, the specific land use categories of rural, residential, commercial, and industrial land are described. To aid in the detailed analysis of land use, North Liberty and its extra-territorial jurisdiction area have been divided into six planning districts. The narrative description of existing and proposed uses and specific goals within the planning districts are presented in the last portion of the Development Framework.

Rural and Agricultural Uses

The overwhelming prevalence of farmland and the projected urban land absorptions suggest that agriculture will continue to be an important land use throughout the region. As such, an important aspect of the Comprehensive Plan is avoiding premature or “sprawling” development through the concentration and staging of urban growth. Concentrating urban activities and focusing on infill development will aid in preserving contiguous farming operations. This will result in minimizing land use conflicts and maintaining the economic viability of farming operations. At the same time, urban sprawl may be avoided and utility services may be extended in a manner that is economically feasible.

Guidelines for determining what types of land would qualify as premature for development and undesirable for urban infrastructure are as follows:

1. Lack of adequate stormwater drainage capacity.

2. Lack of an adequate or safe water supply.
3. Lack of adequate access, roads or highways to serve the subdivision or development.
4. Lack of adequate sewage disposal facilities.
5. Lack of adequate public support facilities (i.e., parks and recreation, police and fire protection, etc.).
6. Development that is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
7. Development that is inconsistent with environmental protection policies.

Another effort to protect agricultural uses is limited residential development rights within agricultural zoning districts. Residential development should be limited to one dwelling unit per 40 acres in agricultural zoned areas if clustered development is allowed. A deed restriction should be placed over parcels that have exercised these division rights. This will ensure that further development will not take place on the property unless it is rezoned. Up-to-date on-site sewage system regulations should also be applied to ensure septic systems function properly.

Residential Uses

The Policy Plan promotes the development of a diversified housing stock that is affordable to a wide range of incomes. The plan also establishes guidelines to protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment or intrusion of incompatible, higher intensity uses through the use of buffers and appropriate land use transitions. In order to facilitate this differentiation in use intensities, the Land Use Plan divides residential development by density, as opposed to housing type. The Zoning Ordinance should address housing types within each area. Low-density residential represents zero to four dwelling units per acre, medium density represents four to eight dwelling units per acre, and high density residential represents eight or more dwelling units per acre. This categorization addresses the concentration of development and its impact on the transportation system and community facilities.

This density, as contrasted to a housing type approach of the Land Use Plan, is intended to allow the City flexibility in the planning and development of residential areas. In locations where a transition from non-residential to residential use takes place, the opportunity exists to utilize a variety of housing types and designs to accomplish harmonious land use. The plan's guiding criteria of density is to be applied over a broad area, which may result in higher densities in the area of immediate land use change to lower densities in other parts of a development area. As such, the "average" density is the determining factor.

Of primary importance is to ensure that the future growth of the City represents a logical extension of the existing urban area. New development should occur as infill between existing areas of development, or in a contiguous outwardly radiating fashion. This

results in a concentrated development pattern that can be economically and efficiently serviced with municipal utilities. Such development should also be limited and phased to properly respond to the conditions of the local real estate market.

Residential Uses: Low Density Residential

Residential uses are the City’s most predominant urban land use, taking up approximately 30 percent of the total land area in the City. Low-density, single-family residential land uses take up an estimated 2 percent of North Liberty’s total land area.

The older single-family residential area is concentrated within what is referred to as the “original” town. The balance of the residential development in the City has developed in a more sporadic development pattern, with residential land being interspersed within agricultural and vacant lands.

Generally, immediate attention should be paid to infilling existing vacant areas and sites between established neighborhoods. This may include the rehabilitation, and perhaps redevelopment, of selected sites that are poorly maintained and present health hazards, or which offer an incompatible transition of land uses.

Residential Uses: Medium Density Residential

Medium-density dwelling units, defined as four to seven dwelling units per acre, account for approximately 16 percent of North Liberty’s total land area. This development consists of duplexes and single-family attached homes (zero lot line units) scattered throughout the City. There is also one medium-density planned area development for elderly housing within the City and two mobile home parks.

North Liberty’s medium density development offers affordable housing to residents of the City, and in particular, for the City’s young population. Many of these medium-density units are available for rental in addition to ownership.

Medium density development may provide another important function as a transitional land use between low-density residential areas and commercial and industrial land use areas. Medium density residential, particularly two-family dwellings, townhomes, and small apartments is a land use, which with proper site development, such as agricultural compatibility, landscaping, and open space, may be placed adjacent to single-family residential areas to produce the desired transition sequence.

Existing medium-density housing, however, has not been developed in this fashion. These units are frequently interspersed within single-family subdivisions, or are concentrated along cul-de-sacs in residential neighborhoods. This raises concerns with compatibility standards and traffic levels. Such issues must be fully considered in the future siting of medium-density housing.

Residential Uses: High-Density Residential

High-density residential development, defined as eight or more dwelling units per acre, consumes approximately 14 percent of North Liberty's total land area. These developments are scattered throughout the City, with the greatest concentration being located just west of Highway 965 along Sugar Creek Lane. The condominium apartments adjacent to the Quail Creek Golf Course are the single largest high-density development in the City.

High-density residential uses should typically be located in close proximity to the Central Commercial Area or other commercial areas to take full advantage of the services provided in these areas. In addition, high-density housing developments help provide the needed customer base for commercial land uses.

Although generally near commercial areas within the City, concerns over the location of recent high-density developments were repeatedly expressed in the public comments. Some of these developments have been located near or within single-family neighborhoods, raising concerns with land use compatibility, building height and size compatibility as well as concerns regarding traffic levels. The City should carefully locate these areas and with proper transition from other residential land uses, review the district provisions and performance standards for high-density residential development.

Future considerations should also be given to promoting additional elderly housing within the City. Although less than 5 percent of the City's population in 2000 was 65 years of age or older, elderly housing should be a priority in the future due to the large number of current residents between the age of 35 and 55. North Liberty should encourage multiple-family elderly housing in appropriate locations designated for high-density residential use. These locations should be afforded convenient access and should be in close proximity to commercial areas in order to conveniently serve elderly residents.

Commercial Uses

Existing commercial development presently accounts for 15 percent of the City's total land use. This percentage is up considerably over the last 10 years. These retail and service facilities are scattered throughout the City with the greatest concentrations being located along Penn Street, along Highway 965, the historic CBD, and on the southeast corner of the Dubuque Street and Zeller Street intersection.

Commercial Uses: Central Commercial Area

Community representatives and the public have identified a fundamental goal of preserving and enhancing the Town Center Area. In order to accomplish this goal, the City has developed a Central Commercial Area. This area is located near the intersection of Highway 965 and Penn Street. The development of the Cherry Street Center area includes professional services and banking, as well as a community center. The plan for the area will also incorporate the original CBD via the extension of streetscape elements and a pedestrian connection down Cherry Street.

It is anticipated that continued development along west Cherry Street and the Penn

Street/Highway 965 intersection will continue to focus on professional and specialty services as well as government facilities.

While a service focus, as opposed to a retail focus, may be more appropriate for the Central Commercial Area along Cherry Street, the western portion of the proposed Central Commercial Area will benefit from Highway 965 and the intersection of Penn Street. As such, retail establishments may be able to successfully compete in this location.

The Central Commercial Area has been developed and will continue to be developed, in part, to provide a focal point for the community and to preserve North Liberty's "small city" character. The City's plans for the original CBD and its connection to the Central Commercial Area reinforces these goals. The plans feature landscaping enhancements, a pedestrian walkway and streetscape elements that would be utilized down Cherry Street, connecting to the Town Center Area. This area located at the intersection of Cherry Street, Dubuque Street and Front Street would be redeveloped as a pedestrian/community oriented space. Plans for the area include establishing safe intersections, public open space and meeting areas, and limited commercial development with the goal of preserving the character of the area.

Commercial Uses: Central Commercial Area Building and Design Guidelines

Building design guidelines are included here to assist in the redevelopment direction of existing structures, as well as the design and construction of new buildings. The objective is to promote high quality design and architecture that helps create the atmosphere that will unify the Central Commercial Area. It should not be construed, however, as an attempt to make everything look the same. The structures in the City reflect varying architectural periods and styles that create an attractive diversity in North Liberty's built environment. The following is a list of guidelines that the City should consider as policy directives in its Central Business District planning:

1. Existing buildings should be renovated or rehabilitated wherever possible. Demolition should be used as a last resort in redevelopment efforts.
2. Building materials on new construction should be sensitive to the existing architecture. Utilize the site plan ordinance to ensure compatibility.
3. The City should initiate an architectural design and review advisory board for Central Commercial Area buildings.
4. Canopies and awnings should reflect the architectural style of the buildings.
5. Attention should be paid to window and door openings. Openings provide one of the greatest opportunities for design variation and emphasis.

Commercial Uses: Highway 965 Corridor

With continued residential growth in North Liberty, the need for retail goods and services will increase. North Liberty should plan to utilize its location along Highway 965 to establish an attractive and concentrated retail service and office commercial area.

The City should avoid strip development, or development that consists of small commercial buildings. Rather, the City should promote commercial development in designated centers and commercial “nodes” that not only offer higher efficiency in land use and development, but also offer a higher level of aesthetics.

Access and safety are major issues related to commercial development along Highway 965. Although there are access restrictions on the highway, there are concerns with the number of access points that already exist. In order to allow continued commercial development along the highway, while minimizing access points, a commercial use access road system should be developed to service adjacent development.

With the highway also acting as the “gateway” to the City, it is important that commercial development in this area maintain high standards of quality. Future highway commercial development should feature unified building standards, attractive comprehensive landscape and beautification plans for the corridor, and controlled parking, loading and street service. The City should consider improvements in the proposed commercial area to minimize confusion and numerous access points into and out of the area that would become a cause of traffic problems. The City should plan now to allow for the market potential and implement commercial land use policies and guidelines as the future market warrants.

The following is a list of standards that the City should consider when promoting a cohesive and integrated highway commercial center.

1. Exterior materials should be of a similar quality finish on all sides of the building.
2. All buildings should be served by underground electric and telephone distribution facilities.
3. Outside storage should be fully screened from public rights-of-way and residential zones.
4. Transformers, vaults, or similar switching transmission devices should be screened from public view. Rooftop or ground mounted mechanical equipment should be screened.
5. Lighting and landscaping plans for all developments in North Liberty should be approved by the City prior to issuance of a building permit.
6. City ordinances for parking and signage should be strictly adhered to.

7. Integrate building and site design to accent any natural features of the site (such as floodplains or wooded areas).
8. Vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic should be accommodated.

Commercial development that is anticipated along Highway 965 should reflect these quality standards. The City should insist on a quality highway commercial development that is compatible with nearby residential area. Hours of operation should be considered and established to help the center coexist peacefully with adjacent residential neighborhoods. Landscaping should be to the maximum standards required for commercial areas, and quality screening techniques should be used to reduce possible negative impacts on existing and future adjacent residential development.

Commercial Uses: Interstate 380 Interchange and Kansas Avenue Corridor

As growth continues in the North Liberty region, the demand for office and retail commercial development will increase. The gradual increase in demand, coupled with the gradual extension of utilities into the area, will determine the appropriate time of development as well as the appropriate type and amount of commercial uses.

The City should continue the planning process for an additional interchange at the intersection of I-380 and Forevergreen Road. Forevergreen Road has been identified as a collector roadway that is 2 miles south of the Penn Street interchange and is 2 miles from the I-380/I-80 interchange. The land use plan should reflect land uses that are appropriate for this future intersection. Uses, as shown on the Future Land Use Map, could include highway commercial and adequately transitioned residential uses.

In addition, the City should consider an appropriate mix of higher-density residential uses and office/commercial uses in the Kansas Avenue corridor which extends between the existing and planned interchanges, and to the north of Penn Street. High visibility from the I-380 corridor presents an excellent opportunity to introduce high-quality office and commercial uses in this “front door” area, that may serve both the external demand associated with the I-380 proximity and access and the internal demand generated by substantial recent and planned residential development in the area. To serve this function, the development quality should be very high.

Industrial

Currently, North Liberty has seen only light industrial development uses. These uses include light manufacturing and processing, lumber yards, research and development, warehousing, mini-storage, and transport operations. Industrial use constitutes 14 percent of the City’s land use.

A consensus among City officials is that industrial use locations should be predetermined based on site suitability. Many areas have already been zoned industrial and have services readily available to accommodate growth through the year 2010. Industrial development should be promoted and accommodated, to the extent possible, within the boundaries of these existing industrially zoned areas.

The City, however, needs to be flexible in this approach as the primary objective is to achieve enhanced economic development status for the community. Situations may arise where presently zoned land is not available for sale or is not suited for a proposed new use. In such cases, the City should consider the opportunity for additional industrial areas afforded by the interstate. Such development would be contingent on future demand, and the extension of urban services.

The Future Land Use Map identifies the eventual phasing out or redevelopment of spot industrial properties located within the City's central growth area. This will minimize compatibility concerns and allow for more appropriate uses in these locations.

For both existing and new industrial development, regulations should be developed and maintained with criteria regarding: building appearance and materials; screening of outside storage areas; screening of off-street parking facilities; use of landscaping; and proper handling of environmentally sensitive areas.

Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction Area

The area surrounding North Liberty is governed by the Johnson County Rural Land Use Plan and Unified Development Ordinance. However, pursuant to Iowa state law, the City of North Liberty may extend its platting and subdivision controls two miles beyond its borders. The City has review authority and the right to require development in this area to meet City requirements and specifications. In addition, North Liberty and Johnson County are working towards completing a fringe-area agreement in which the City and County work together in the establishment of zoning and design standards, growth areas, and an overall land use map. This opportunity allows the City to monitor and regulate development outside the City that could impact land uses and services within North Liberty and which, at some point in the future, may be incorporated into the City.

As identified within the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Ordinance, significant amounts of environmentally sensitive areas are located within the extra territorial jurisdiction area. The western areas are characterized with a predominance of prime farmlands, while the river corridor is characterized by steep slopes, vegetation, and valuable water resources. Therefore, development within the jurisdiction area should be carefully reviewed by the City and County to ensure that these issues are adequately addressed in accordance with strategies outlined in this Plan and any future agreement between the City and County. As shown on the Future Land Use Map and in the Planning Districts section, the City has established a future growth area within the extra-territorial jurisdiction area. This area will be the primary extra-territorial growth area for the City. Future annexation should generally be limited to this area.

It is essential that the City scrutinize development proposals in the extra-territorial area to ensure they represent a logical staging of growth in order to preserve farmlands and minimize service costs. Furthermore, areas immediately adjacent to North Liberty's corporate borders should not be allowed to develop unless the property is located in the Future Growth Area and annexed by the City and utilities are extended. The guidelines

for determining premature development, as outlined previously within this Comprehensive Plan, should be considered in reviewing these development proposals. Any development that does occur within the extra-territorial jurisdiction area should be subject to all design and performance standards required for similar development within the City limits.

Development requests for land uses outside of the Future Growth Area are discouraged and must be carefully reviewed by the City to ensure the long-range goals and objectives of North Liberty are being met. Although this Plan does not promote additional development outside of the Future Growth Area, any development that is approved should be subject to all design and performance standards identified previously in this Plan.

Development Regulations

Implementation of the Proposed Land Use Plan will be primarily accomplished through the City’s development regulations, especially the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. If the current city development regulations are found to be lacking, out of date, or at odds with the policy recommendations of this Plan, implementing revisions or amendments to them should be undertaken to ensure the City has the level of control it desires in these matters.

Total Land Area by Land Use Type, 2005		
Land Use Type	Percentage of land area	Total Acres
Single-Family Residential	18	690
Medium-Density Residential	5	170
High-Density Residential	6	210
Mobile Homes	4	160
Commercial	4	155
Industrial	6	208
Public	11	398
Agricultural or Interim Development	28	1,040
Vacant	19	730
Total	100	3,761

Source: East Central Iowa Council of Governments, City of North Liberty

4. TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Transportation Plan is based upon a total transportation system and how it relates to and serves the land use patterns within the community. The transportation system encompasses several modes of transportation that include but are not exclusive to automobile, pedestrian and bicycle, and to a certain extent, rail, mass transit.

The transportation system serves to tie together the various land use activities in the community. This section of the Plan describes the relationship between transportation and land uses.

A key physical element in the Development Framework is transportation. Specific components include a desired compatibility between various transportation modes (i.e., automobile, rail, mass transit, pedestrian, etc.) and recognition of the roadway classification system as the network that provides the primary connection between the various geographic areas of the community and beyond.

4.1 Compatibility of Modes

It is important that all of the City's various transportation modes - automobile, mass transit, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, etc. - are able to coexist in a safe and functional manner. To ensure such coexistence, the planning of one specific mode of travel should recognize other overlaying modes and acknowledge potential impacts upon the other transportation systems.

4.2 Functional Classification of Roadways

Functional classification refers to the role each roadway should perform before determining street widths, speed limits, intersection controls or other design features. Functional classifications will be used in North Liberty's road network as a comprehensive planning tool used to determine the number of access points which should be permitted on major roads, and the design and relationship of local roads to other county and state highway systems. The following is the general classification of North Liberty's roadways (refer to the Master Transportation Plan Map for additional details):

- Expressway (Interstates, freeways, expressways)
- Major/Minor Arterial (Highways, major streets)
- Collector (Main streets, avenues)
- Local (Neighborhood streets, alleys)

Generally, trip length and speed is greater on the primary arterials and decreases down the list. Generally, access is greater at the local street and decreases up the list.

Functional Classification of Roadways: Expressway

Interstate 380, located just west of North Liberty, provides a high level of mobility

between cities. Direct access to the interstate from the City has been of great benefit in the steady growth and development of North Liberty.

Functional Classification of Roadways: Major / Minor Arterials

Major arterials collect and distribute traffic to and from major activity centers, collector streets and expressways. There have been several concerns with safety, accessibility, and segregation of the community along the City's major arterial: the Highway 965 corridor. Numerous access points created through the years by development along the highway have resulted in several traffic accidents and significant safety concerns due to the complicated vehicular movements along a high-speed roadway. In addition, there are concerns regarding pedestrian crossing of the highway. Highway 965 is a major gateway to the City. Improvements in the design of this corridor are critical towards removing the highway as a community-dividing element and improving the City's image.

In addition, Penn Street is an east-west roadway providing an important link between the City and Interstate 380. Access along this roadway should be extremely limited, and allowed only for large developments. As urban development expands along in this area, the City must closely monitor and regulate the development.

Minor arterials function in the same manner as major arterials only with smaller traffic counts. Important minor arterials in North Liberty include Dubuque Street, Forevergreen Road and Jones Boulevard.

Functional Classification of Roadways: Collector

Collector streets serve to connect neighborhoods with activity centers or the arterial street system. The planned extension of the City's collector street system (as shown on the Mater Transportation Plan Map) should be incorporated into future development proposals. Direct lot access from the listed collector streets should be discouraged.

An additional concept that should be considered within the City's developing transportation system is the establishment of a series of minor-collector streets. Such streets typically lie within the interior of developing areas and are designed to assist in the overall functioning of traffic movements within projected development areas.

Functional Classification of Roadways: Local Streets and Alleys

Local streets serve to provide direct lot access to individual land uses. A number of the existing local roads within the older portions of the City are designed below contemporary standards, creating functioning and safety concerns. The City should identify problem areas and establish a system to prioritize the needed improvements. Subsequently, these roadways should be updated to contemporary standards as warranted.

Some of the older subdivided areas of development contain dead-end or incomplete road systems that complicate development and do not provide access to neighboring or future development.

In order to resolve these issues with future development, proper consideration of the

street system and layout is essential while reviewing proposed plats. Natural features, such as topography and drainageways, as well as coordination with adjacent plats, and logical street extensions into undeveloped areas, must all be evaluated and addressed within proposals.

Municipal design standards for North Liberty do not permit alleys in new residential subdivisions. The City may consider the use of alleys in designs where goals of higher density residential land use is desired. In new commercial/industrial developments, alleys should only be used as a last resort as a means of accessing off-street loading facilities.

Alleys were common throughout the “original town” portion of the City. Where possible, alleys should be vacated when their existence is no longer required. In such cases, however, the City should simultaneously preserve drainage and utility easements. In those instances where a rear lot, secondary means of access is still required, alleys should be updated to modern standards with paving and related maintenance.

4.3 Pedestrian/Bicycle Trails

At present, although there has been a significant improvement due to the City’s sidewalk program, the pedestrian walkways in North Liberty do not form a comprehensive system of pedestrian connections. However, support for additional trailways is strong, as evidenced by the town meeting and internet surveys.

A well-designed trail system can serve to unify a community and enhance the City’s image and identity within the region. An effective trails system serves to link important destinations within the City and surrounding region, through the use of public right-of-way along collector and arterials, streets, and along environmentally sensitive areas such as drainageways.

The City’s Subdivision Ordinance requires a four-foot wide concrete sidewalk be installed in all developments. While this sidewalk system provides for pedestrian movement within neighborhoods, travel into other portions of the City and along major streets is much more limited. Furthermore, these sidewalks are designed to accommodate primarily pedestrian traffic, making bicycle traffic hazardous.

In order to produce a well-planned and efficient system of bicycle and pedestrian movement throughout the City and surrounding region, a comprehensive trails system plan should be developed and maintained in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan. Although the trails plan may closely parallel the Master Transportation Plan Map, it focuses specifically on the needs of the non-motorized transportation modes (i.e., pedestrian and bicycle). In identifying potential trail corridors, the plan should take the following factors into consideration:

1. Trails should link user destinations such as residential areas, commercial/civic areas, and parks.

2. Arterial and collector streets provide the most direct routes to these destinations.
3. Street right-of-way provides available area for trail development. In addition, trail construction in conjunction with road improvements results in lower overall construction costs.
4. Crossings at thoroughfares can be better accommodated with traffic controls that exist or are planned with the development of thoroughfares.
5. Trails provide a positive user experience when developed along positive natural amenities such as natural drainageways.
6. Drainage easements and floodplains provide undevelopable land that can be utilized as trail corridors.

The proposed trails plan should connect to and integrate sidewalk systems within the various residential neighborhoods and serve to provide safe access to various activity centers such as the Central Commercial Area, the elementary schools, and community parks. In addition, the importance of providing designated crossings in order to reduce the impact of Highway 965 should be a high priority goal of the City's.

As illustrated on the Master Trail System Map, trail segments have been proposed in locations that offer direct and convenient pedestrian connections between City activity centers and the surrounding region, while striving to minimize neighborhood disruptions. The map is conceptual in nature. However, whenever possible, the proposed trails should be incorporated into future developments.

5. COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

Community facilities include those lands, buildings, services and systems that are provided on a public or semi-public basis in the interest of or benefit to the residents of the community. Their importance should not be under-estimated in that they are offered as a major contributor to the quality of life and safety within the urban environment.

In order to enhance the quality of life within North Liberty, it is fundamental that adequate community facilities are provided for its residents. Commonly provided facilities include parks, open space, administrative offices, police/fire protection, and public utilities.

Government buildings and facilities such as parks play a major role in providing the necessary community amenities and in projecting a positive image of the City. These facilities reflect North Liberty's concern and dedication in providing its residents with a quality living environment, where recreational opportunities are abundant and a high standard of living is projected.

Public utilities are also an important factor in regulating development of particular areas of the City. Requiring that utilities are present prior to subdivision approval can prevent "leap frog" or premature development.

5.1 Parks and Recreation

A comprehensive park plan that addresses location and programming of parklands does not currently exist. Through the fulfillment of a park plan, the park and recreation system can be utilized to promote a quality living environment. In development of a comprehensive park system, there are three types of parks the City must consider in the future:

1. **Community Parks:** These parks would provide facilities for more intensive recreational activities, such as tennis courts, ballfields, swimming pools, and ice skating rinks.
2. **Neighborhood Parks:** These parks could be much smaller in size than the community parks, and only provide limited recreational offerings for children such as practice fields, multi-purpose courts and playground equipment.
3. **Passive-Preservation Parks:** These parks are set in natural areas of the community where preservation of the natural environment is the primary emphasis. Hiking trails, wildlife sanctuaries and picnic facilities would be among the primary uses of such a park facility, which in turn would benefit the natural wildlife of the area and nature enthusiasts.

The existing park facilities, as well as future parkland acquisition and development, must be considered within this framework. This hierarchy of park types allows for the appropriate distribution of facilities throughout the City, as well as consideration for park access and location.

5.2 Public Utilities

As the City experiences new development and growth, a primary concern will be the extension of utilities and the demand such growth produces. The extension of such facilities should occur in a planned, logical order to ensure sewer and water extensions are made with a maximum amount of cost efficiency as compared to the number of buildings or lots served. Expansion of the systems should proceed out from the existing system where development is occurring adjacent to existing land uses.

Sprawling development occurs when cities construct utilities wherever developers choose to locate subdivisions. Areas of land are left vacant between existing land uses and new development. The extension of sewer and water systems through these vacant areas cannot be financially supported where no residence or land uses are present. This type of situation should be avoided in the future to the extent possible to minimize unnecessary City expenditures and prevent premature development. The City has begun to use special assessments or tap on fees in assigning costs for public improvements to benefiting parties.

Public Utilities: Sanitary Sewer

The City's long-term sanitary sewer plans are shown on the Sanitary Sewer Master Plan Map.

As stated previously within this report, concern exists as to the potential for septic system failure within the residential development along the Iowa River. The significant amount of development within the river corridor that utilizes on-site septic systems greatly increases the threat of ground water contamination within the area. The City should take an active role in reviewing and inspecting all future residential development within this river corridor to ensure adequate on-site septic systems are being implemented and maintained. This regulation is in the best interest of North Liberty as it protects against massive septic system failure in the North Liberty area. Such a failure may result in the costly extension of utilities to service failed developments. Furthermore, the City should consider long range planning efforts which provide for the eventual expansion of utilities to the river corridor area through a logical staging of growth within the City and surrounding extra territorial jurisdiction area.

Public Utilities: Water System

The City's long-term water system plans are shown on the Water Distribution System Master Plan Map.

The existing water system functions adequately at present, however, the rapid growth of the community will require careful planning to ensure future and current needs.

In addition, the City is eliminating the dead-end water mains that currently exist along the system by creating a complete loop system. This loop system would eliminate the problems that will occur with a main break that would shut down water supply to those persons down stream of the water flows.

Public Utilities: Storm Drainage

The City's long-term storm drainage plans are shown on the Storm Water / Clean Water Master Plan Map. This plan not only addresses storm water retention practices for new developments, but also addresses utilizing natural drainageways and drainage issues related to existing development. Further, in the last five years, the City has been reviewing subdivisions for compliance with the area-wide drainage plan for storm water, erosion control and sump pump requirements.

PLANNING DISTRICTS INTRODUCTION

To facilitate detailed examination of all areas of the community, including the extra-territorial jurisdiction area, the region has been divided into six planning districts. Considering North Liberty's municipal boundary at present is subject to frequent changes, the district plans take into account adjacent property that is not currently within the corporate limits.

The location of these planning districts is illustrated on the maps that follow, as well as being described below. The following section of the Development Framework details existing and recommended development for each individual district. The district boundaries were established using the location of similar land uses and physical barriers.

The maps that accompany the text of each planning district are conceptual, but should be used as the official future land use map of the City. Deviations from these maps are to be expected. When a proposal for development and/or redevelopment is encountered within a specific district, the primary criteria for evaluating the proposals are the goals, policies and recommendations as contained within the Plan. The Plan or maps may have to be updated as well. In such cases, please refer to the Plan Update Schedule of this document.

In addition, the City's zoning code should be utilized to implement the recommendations contained herein. It may mean that permitted uses and bulk requirements such as setbacks and lot sizes should be reviewed and updated as necessary to protect goals and recommendations of the planning districts.

District 1 generally occupies the northwest corner of the City and includes the interstate interchange area and the extra-territorial jurisdiction area to the northwest of the current City limits. The majority of the City's future industrial development area is located in this district. However, the dominant current land use remains agricultural.

District 2 is located in the north, central portion of North Liberty. The northern boundary stops at the Iowa River corridor. The district also includes portions of the Town Center area, as well as substantial commercial and industrial uses. The northern extra-territorial jurisdiction area in this district contains a primary future residential growth corridor for the City.

District 3 occupies the northeastern corner of the City. The district extends into the extra-territorial jurisdiction area to the Iowa River. The district is dominated by the Iowa River corridor and numerous environmentally sensitive areas. The district does contain a portion of the Town Center area and a future residential growth area extending east out of the existing City boundary.

District 4 is located in the southwest portion of the City. This district includes the area to the south of Penn Street and generally to the west of Kansas Avenue, and includes the extra-territorial jurisdiction areas to the south and west. This district has experienced little urban development and is dominated by prime farmlands.

District 5 generally occupies the south, central portion of the City. The southern boundary of this district stops at the City of Coralville. This district includes the Quail Creek Golf Course and is generally residential in nature mixed with small commercial areas.

District 6 contains the southeastern portion of the City, with boundaries extending to the Iowa River corridor to the east and to the proposed growth boundary between North Liberty and Coralville in the south. The dominant current land use is rural/agricultural with significant environmentally sensitive areas closer to the river corridor. This district contains the primary future residential growth area of North Liberty.

Planning District 1

District 1 represents the northwest portion of the City and extra-territorial area. At present, only a small portion of the overall planning district is within the current City limits. As the district map illustrates, the current City limit only covers the southeast portion of the district, around the interstate intersection. The remainder of the planning district is comprised of the City's northwest extra-territorial jurisdiction area.

North Liberty's current two-mile jurisdiction area boundary is shown on the map. The planning district's boundary, as shown, does not extend beyond the Iowa River and into the northwest portion of the two-mile area. While this land is within a two-mile radius of North Liberty, the river serves as a barrier that provides a logical division for review authority. Urban development should not occur outside of the planning district boundary.

The majority of the district is generally flat and free of environmentally sensitive areas except within the Iowa River corridor where steep slopes and vegetation exist. The river corridor contains a number of natural features that may limit future development. These features include steep slopes and existing vegetation. Development within this river corridor must occur in a manner that preserves these valuable resources and allows the natural features to be maintained as attractive amenities. Therefore, the City, in conjunction with Johnson County, must review development proposals within the two-mile area to ensure these issues are being adequately addressed in accordance with the strategies outlined in the Plan.

Due to the ease of access, visibility, connection and proximity to Interstate 380, 80 and the Penn Street interchange, future industrial and commercial uses should be encouraged in this district, as shown on the map. A large area has been identified as future industrial development, west of I-380. The industrial area is generally contingent on the results of a future sewer study to establish the boundaries of possible municipal services to the area. Development requests in this area must be carefully analyzed to ensure they are not premature, or result in an inefficient extension of urban services. Any requests for industrial development located outside the municipal boundary should require annexation prior to approval.

West of the future industrial area includes a large agricultural land protection area. This area contains large contiguous tracks of prime farmland. Urban development in this area, as shown on the map, is discouraged.

Rural residential development in areas to the west of Interstate 380 should be limited to one dwelling unit per 40 acres. While the density of one per 40 should be observed, the minimum lot size of residential properties in agricultural zoned areas should allow parcels that are a minimum of one acre in size and a maximum of ten acres, with the balance of the property preserved as open space or protected agricultural activities. In addition, a deed restriction should be placed over parcels that have exercised these division rights. This will ensure that further development will not take place on the property unless it is rezoned.

The district also proposes residential development in the northern portion of the district, just east of the interstate. The Plan recommends higher density residential along the interstate corridor and generally lower density residential moving away from the interstate. It is essential that the City study all development requests in this area to ensure they represent a logical staging of residential growth, in order to efficiently provide services and to ensure a preservation of prime farmlands and sensitive lands within the district. Any requests for residential development located outside the municipal boundary should require annexation prior to approval.

The southeast corner of the district contains a commercial corridor along Penn Street. Penn Street is the gateway to the City from Interstate 380 and is an important link to North Liberty. The City should limit access points along this roadway, as well as plan for coordinated lighting and landscaping. A welcoming gateway entrance can create a considerable positive image for the City of North Liberty.

The potential exists for compatibility problems within the district where industrial and commercial development directly abuts residential areas. In response to this concern, the City must utilize its buffer yard Ordinance that requires adequate landscape screening between incompatible uses.

The overall timing of urban development in the district is contingent on a number of critical factors. These factors include market demand, the northwest future sewer study area and the fiscally responsible extension of utilities and services. In order for development to be a positive and beneficial element in the community, these factors must be allowed to dictate the appropriate timing and extent of urban development within the district.

Planning District 1 Recommendations

1. Urban development should not occur outside of the planning district's boundary.
2. Development requests in environmentally sensitive areas within the district should be carefully reviewed by the City to ensure protective measures are being taken consistent with strategies outlined in the Plan.
3. Ensure the retention of natural features and significant topography during the development process.
4. Industrial development should be carefully staged within the district and incorporated into the City in order to ensure logical extension of urban services, resulting in fiscally responsible development. In addition, a sewer study should be performed to ensure adequate service for future industrial use.
5. Urban development in the agricultural area of this district should be discouraged. Any development should be limited to rural residential development (One unit per 40 acres).

6. Single-family residential development should be accommodated within the district as shown on the map in areas where urban services can logically be extended. Such developments should be incorporated into North Liberty prior to approval. Development should be higher density residential along the interstate corridor and generally lower density residential moving away from the interstate.
7. Where incompatible land uses are adjacent to one another, adequate buffering should be provided.
8. The commercial area along Penn Street should be developed with the understanding that Penn Street is a major gateway to the City. Setback and building design requirements as well as unified lighting and landscaping should be prepared for the Penn Street corridor as a gateway to the City.
9. Access along Penn Street and Highway 965 should be extremely limited due to their arterial status.
10. Incorporate planned arterial and collector streets as well as planned trails into future development proposals as necessary.

Planning District 1 Future Land Use Map

Planning District 2

This district is located in the north, central portion of North Liberty. The northern boundary stops along the Iowa River corridor. The district contains a healthy mix of current and proposed land uses, including portions of the Town Center area, as well as substantial commercial and industrial uses. In addition, the northern extra-territorial jurisdiction area contains a primary future residential growth corridor for the City.

North Liberty's current two-mile jurisdiction area boundary can be seen on the map. The planning district's boundary, as shown, does not extend beyond the Iowa River and into the northern portion of the two-mile area. While this land is within a two-mile radius of the City, the river serves as a barrier that provides a logical division for review authority. Urban development should not occur outside of the planning district boundary.

As in Planning District 1, the river corridor contains a number of natural features that may limit development, including steep slopes, and existing vegetation. Future development within this river corridor must occur in a manner that preserves these valuable resources and allows the natural features to be maintained as attractive amenities. Therefore, the City, in conjunction with Johnson County, must review development proposals within the two-mile jurisdiction area to ensure these issues are being adequately addressed in accordance with the strategies outlined in the Plan.

This district serves as a primary residential growth area for the City. The growth will likely occur on either side of Highway 965 as shown on the map. The Plan recommends low-density residential throughout the northern undeveloped portion of the future growth area. Medium-density residential use is proposed for the remainder of the District, except for the proposed residential growth area south of Penn Street, which should be higher density to promote infill development within and near existing subdivisions.

It is essential that the City study all development requests in this area to ensure they represent a logical staging of residential growth, in order to efficiently provide services and to ensure a preservation of prime farmlands and sensitive lands within the district. In addition, all development requests should be incorporated into the City via annexation. The most prevalent land use type recommended is single-family residential.

The extension of Jones Boulevard, as well as an additional collector roadway to the east, is included in the Master Transportation Plan. The Transportation Plan also identified Jones Boulevard as a minor arterial within the district. Access onto these roads should be discouraged.

The extension of Jones Boulevard should enhance the commercial and industrial development potential in this district. The potential exists for compatibility problems within the district where industrial and commercial development directly abuts residential areas. In response to this concern, the City must utilize its buffer yard Ordinance that requires adequate landscape screening between incompatible uses.

Portions of the Town Center area are located in the southern section of the district. This

commercial area benefits from access to Penn Street and Highway 965. As discussed within the land use section of this Plan, infill development should focus on government facilities, professional, and specialty services which do not benefit significantly from highway exposure. The development of this Central Commercial Area will provide a focal point for the community and aid in preserving "small city" character. The Land Use Plan establishes guidelines for building and design in the Town Center Area that should be followed.

Redevelopment efforts should be aimed at providing compatible uses surrounding the Town Center Area that preserve the existing residential character and yet create a link between the commercial uses.

Additional proposed commercial development within the district includes highway commercial uses along Highway 965. Any proposed use should benefit from highway exposure and not compete with the Town Center commercial uses. It is essential that the City study all development requests in this area to ensure they represent a logical staging of commercial growth and should be incorporated into the City, in order to efficiently provide services and to ensure a preservation of prime farmlands in this district.

Within District 2, consideration should be given to providing a number of pedestrian/ bicycle trails along major traffic carriers. As shown on the Master Trail Systems Plan, on-street trail locations have been placed in a manner that allows neighborhoods a direct and logical route to activity generators, specifically neighborhood parks and the Town Center area. These trails should be incorporated into future development proposals as necessary.

Planning District 2 Recommendations

1. Urban development should not occur outside of the planning district boundary.
2. Development requests in environmentally sensitive areas within the district should be carefully reviewed by the City to ensure protective measures are being taken consistent with strategies outlined in the Plan.
3. Low-density residential is recommended in the northern undeveloped portion of the future growth area. Residential growth near the river corridor should be low-density and carefully planned to ensure the preservation of sensitive lands within the district. Medium-density residential use is proposed for the remainder of the District, except for the proposed residential growth area south of Penn Street, which should be higher density to promote infill development within and near existing subdivisions. The most prevalent land use type recommended is single-family residential.
4. Future urban development should be staged and annexed into the City in order to allow efficient extension of urban services, and preservation of contiguous

farming activities.

5. Ensure the retention of natural features and significant topography during the development process.
6. Direct lot access along Jones Boulevard should be discouraged in the future.
7. New development within the Town Center commercial area that meets the standards established in this Plan should be encouraged where appropriate. Specific proposals and plans should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for appropriateness, compatibility, and compliance with City/area standards. Improvements should include walking, lighting, landscaping improvements that also help to tie together the residential neighborhoods that abut the commercial area.
8. Any urban development should be annexed into North Liberty prior to approval to allow for the proper extension of utilities.
9. Trails should be provided within the district to provide necessary pedestrian/bicycle connections to other areas of the City.
10. Incorporate planned arterial and collector streets as well as planned trails into future development proposals as necessary.

Planning District 2 Land Use Map

Planning District 3

This district includes the northeastern corner of the City and the extra-territorial jurisdiction limits that extend to the Iowa River corridor.

The Iowa River and the environmentally sensitive land that accompanies the river dominate the district. However, the district has a healthy mix of industrial, Town Center commercial and residential development. The residential development in the district consists of an older residential area and several newly developed areas.

As in Districts 1 and 2, this district's boundary, as shown, does not extend beyond the Iowa River and into the northeastern portion of the two-mile area. While this land is within a two-mile radius of the City, the river serves as a barrier that provides a logical division for review authority. Urban development should not occur outside of the planning district boundary.

As the district map illustrates, the vast majority of undeveloped land is proposed for future residential development. This development should be staged in a fashion that allows a logical expansion of the City's utilities, and connects to the existing street network. The staging of residential growth in the district will help preserve contiguous farming activities until urban development is appropriate. Any requests for residential development located outside the municipal boundary should require annexation prior to approval.

The proposed residential growth should be **low**-density in nature to reduce potential traffic and environmental problems and carefully planned to ensure the preservation of sensitive lands within the district. **In addition, strong consideration should be given to connecting new neighborhoods in this district with a series of trails and sidewalks. Proposed trails should be incorporated into future development proposals to ensure the inter-connectedness of each neighborhood.**

Industrial uses are proposed in this district east of Highway 965 and north of Penn Street. The potential exists for compatibility problems within the district where industrial and commercial development directly abuts residential areas. In response to this concern, the City must utilize its buffer yard Ordinance that requires adequate landscape screening between incompatible uses.

The Transportation Plan identifies Penn Street as a major arterial, Dubuque Street as a minor arterial and Front Street as collector street within the district. Although existing residential development access these roads directly, future development should be discouraged from direct access on these streets.

Significant current land uses in the district are Penn Meadows Park and Penn Elementary School. Penn Meadows Park has been expanded to include additional recreational features such as additional ball fields. These public/semi-public uses are a valuable asset to the community. Future development in the district should take advantage of these amenities to the greatest extent possible.

As mentioned above, strong consideration should be given to providing pedestrian and bicycle trails throughout District 3. As shown on the Master Trail System Plan, trails have been proposed to link Penn Meadows Park and Penn Elementary School with other activity centers and neighborhoods within the City. These connections are particularly critical within District 3 because the park and school are important destinations for all residents of the City and should be incorporated into future development proposals as necessary. **Equally important, however, is the need to connect future neighborhoods with each other through the proposed trail system.**

Planning District 3 Recommendations

1. Urban development should not occur outside of the planning district boundary.
2. Residential development within the district should be staged to provide a logical extension of urban services and to preserve contiguous farming activities and sensitive lands until urban development is appropriate. Any requests for residential development located outside the municipal boundary should require annexation prior to approval.
3. Future residential growth in the district should be **low**-density and carefully planned to ensure the preservation of sensitive lands within the district.
4. Ensure the retention of natural features and significant topography during the development process.
5. In order to achieve land use compatibility the City should buffer the proposed industrial land uses and provide an internal street system for the area to avoid truck traffic through residential neighborhoods.
6. Direct lot access along Penn Street, Front Street, and Dubuque Street should be discouraged in the future.
7. The Dubuque/Penn/Front Street area should evolve into a medium- to high-density land use area. Existing single-family homes must be protected from this change and transition with appropriate sized housing, setbacks and landscape screening.
8. Consideration should be given to providing pedestrian/bicycle trails **throughout the** district. These trails would provide connections to Penn Meadows Park and Penn Elementary School from other neighborhoods in North Liberty, **as well as providing important connections to future neighborhoods within the district.**
9. Incorporate planned arterial and collector streets as well as planned trails into future development proposals as necessary.

Planning District 3 Land Use Map

Planning District 4

District 4 is located in the southwest portion of the City. The district generally contains land west of Kansas Avenue and north of the Cities of Tiffin and Coralville. Very little of the land is currently in the City limits, however.

The district consists of substantial rural and agricultural use, with very little urban development. The existing agricultural character is indicative of the prime farmlands found throughout the district. As stated within the Plan, preservation of prime farmlands from premature development is dependent on the logical staging of urban growth in order to preserve contiguous farming activities in an economically viable fashion. Any urban development should be annexed into North Liberty prior to approval to allow for the proper extension of utilities.

The majority of land within the extra-territorial jurisdiction limits of the City on the west side of Interstate 380 has been identified as agricultural land use on the map. The City should work with Johnson County through development review to ensure this area remains rural in nature. Development in this area should be discouraged.

As in District 1, rural residential development in areas to the west of Interstate 380 should be limited to one dwelling unit per 40 acres. While the density of one per 40 should be observed, the minimum lot size of residential properties in agricultural zoned areas should allow parcels that are a minimum of one acre in size and a maximum of ten acres, with the balance of the property preserved as open space or protected agricultural activities. In addition, a deed restriction should be placed over parcels that have exercised these division rights. This will ensure that further development will not take place on the property unless it is rezoned.

Office/commercial developments, as well as medium- and high-density residential development are recommended as transitional land use east of Interstate 380 as shown on the map. This area will be afforded convenient access to the interstate.

The Iowa Department of Transportation has a proposal to construct an interchange at Forevergreen Road and I-380. This would be included in the southern boundary of District 4. Due to the proposed land uses in District 1 (connecting this district to the north) and the ease of access, visibility, connection and proximity to Interstate 380 and 80, future industrial and commercial uses should be encouraged in this district, as shown on the map. A proper access road system should be planned to service the adjacent proposed commercial and industrial sites with the interstate interchange.

As shown on the map, a large area has been identified as future industrial development. The industrial area is generally contingent on the results of a future sewer study to establish the boundaries of possible municipal services to the area. Development requests in this area must be carefully analyzed to ensure they are not premature, or result in an inefficient extension of urban services. Any requests for industrial development located outside the municipal boundary should require annexation prior to approval.

The Transportation Plan identifies Forevergreen Road as a minor arterial and 270th Street as a collector street. Future direct lot access to these roads should be discouraged.

The staging of urban development in this district is essential in order to avoid costly extensions of urban services across undeveloped land, and the disruption of contiguous agricultural activities. Any future development should be carefully planned and incorporated into the City before approval.

Planning District 4 Recommendations

1. Any urban development should be annexed into North Liberty prior to approval to allow for the proper extension of utilities.
2. Agricultural land should be protected from development by the staging of growth and deed restrictions. Urban development in the agricultural area of this district should be discouraged. Any development should be limited to rural residential development (One unit per 40 acres).
3. Office/commercial development and medium- and high-density residential development is recommended as transitional land use east of Interstate 380 as shown on the map.
4. The proposed interstate intersection on Forevergreen Road and I-380 should be developed with commercial land use when the land becomes available and there is sufficient market demand.
5. A proper access road system should be planned to service the adjacent commercial and industrial sites on the west side of the interstate to connect with the proposed interchange.
6. Industrial development should be carefully staged within the district in order to ensure logical extension of urban services, resulting in fiscally responsible development. In addition, a sewer study should be performed to ensure adequate service for future industrial use.
7. Future direct lot access onto Forevergreen Road and 270th Street is discouraged.
8. Where incompatible land uses are adjacent to one another, adequate buffering should be provided.
9. Incorporate planned arterial and collector streets as well as planned trails into future development proposals as necessary.
10. Ensure the retention of natural features and significant topography during the

development process.

Planning District 4 Land Use Map

Planning District 5

District 5 generally occupies the south, central portion of the City, with the southern boundary stopping at the City of Coralville.

The Quail Creek Golf Course is the most prominent urban land use in the district. Other existing urban land uses include medium- and high-density residential concentrated near and north of the golf course. Limited commercial operations exist along Highway 965 and in spot locations within the district.

The map for District 5 proposes the majority of undeveloped land as future residential use. This use should be low- and medium-density single- and multi-family residential. Development should concentrate first on infilling vacant land within and adjacent to existing subdivisions. Future plans include completing the extension of a water main along Jones Boulevard from Forevergreen Road to Penn Street. Future residential development in this area should be a priority within the district in order to capitalize on this public investment.

The map identifies a future extension of the Central Commercial Area along Highway 965 and north of the golf course. With its visibility, this area will become increasingly important over time as the Town Center commercial area to the north takes shape.

The map also proposes commercial development within the district south of the golf course along Highway 965. Commercial uses along the highway should be more dependent on highway exposure than the uses proposed for the Town Center commercial area in order to avoid competition between the two areas. Additionally, the map proposes expanding the commercial area south of Forevergreen Road, along the Coralville border. These developments should be designed as cohesive commercial "nodes" which minimize access points onto Highway 965 and Forevergreen Road and offer a high level of design amenities that guarantee quality performance and aesthetics.

The Quail Creek Golf Course is located west of Highway 965. The area currently includes a nine-hole golf course, driving range, and clubhouse. It is anticipated that an expansion will occur in the future, which would provide an additional nine holes immediately south of the existing course, as shown on the map. The course offers an attractive recreational amenity for the entire community and offers the opportunity to provide attractive larger lot residential, as well as commercial office development abutting the golf course property.

Quail Ridge Park is one of the few parks west of Highway 965 at present. Due to the physical barrier the highway represents, provision of additional parkland in this area is a priority. As development in the district increases, particularly in the southern portions of the district, consideration will have to be given to providing additional parkland within the district.

The Transportation Plan identifies Forevergreen Road and Jones Boulevard as minor

arterials and 270th Street as a collector street. Future direct lot access to these roads should be discouraged. As development increases, additional north-south collector streets will be needed. The Master Transportation Plan illustrates where these streets may occur and should be incorporated into future development proposals as necessary.

The Transportation Plan also identified Highway 965 as a major arterial. In an effort to limit access points along this highway, access roadways should be developed to service adjacent commercial development. The implementation of these access roads should correspond to development of the highway commercial area.

In order to reduce the barrier created by Highway 965, serious consideration should be given to trails within District 5. As shown on the Master Trails System Plan, these trail corridors should occur along major traffic routes and provides connection from the district to important activity centers and should be incorporated into future development proposals as necessary.

Planning District 5 Recommendations

1. Residential development should concentrate first on infilling vacant land within and adjacent to existing subdivisions. This use should be low- and medium-density single- and multi-family residential.
2. The opportunity for larger, higher value development around Quail Creek Golf Course and its proposed expansion should be explored as a means of diversifying North Liberty's housing stock. As residential development demand increases westward toward the interstate and utilities are extended, smaller sized, medium-density single-family development is recommended.
3. The area in the northeast corner of the district, designated as commercial land use, should be a future extension of the City's Town Center commercial area with district guidelines for building and design and a unified community focus.
4. Commercial development along Highway 965 and south of Forevergreen Road in the district should be highway oriented in nature so as not to directly compete with the Town Center commercial area. Access points along the Highway and Forevergreen road should be minimized.
5. The continued development of Quail Ridge Park, providing additional recreational alternatives, is encouraged. As development increases, the need for additional parkland in the district should be explored.
6. An access road system should be established to service development adjacent to Highway 965 within the district.

7. Trails should be provided within the district to provide necessary pedestrian/bicycle connections to other areas of the City.
8. Incorporate planned arterial and collector streets as well as planned trails into future development proposals as necessary.
9. Ensure the retention of natural features and significant topography during the development process.

Planning District 5 Land Use Map

Planning District 6

District 6 contains the southeastern portion of the City, with boundaries extending to the Iowa River corridor to the east and to the proposed growth boundary between North Liberty and Coralville in the south. About one third of the district is currently located within the existing City limits.

As with Districts 1, 2 and 3, this district's boundary, as shown, does not extend beyond the Iowa River and into the eastern portion of the two-mile area. While this land is within a two-mile radius of the City, the river serves as a barrier that provides a logical division for review authority. Urban development should not occur outside of the planning district boundary.

The dominant current land use is agricultural with significant environmentally sensitive areas closer to the river corridor. Urban development, with the exception of a few spot locations, is restricted to the west side of the district. Medium-density residential development is the dominant urban land use. Lesser quantities of spot commercial uses and public land uses are also present within the district.

The Muddy Creek drainageway provides a valuable role in storm water management. Preservation of the drainageway and its adjacent 100-year floodplain is essential in protecting public safety and welfare, as well as preserving water quality downstream. Future development in the district should recognize this drainageway and accommodate its preservation. Furthermore, development should be restricted within the floodplain in accordance with the City's floodplain regulations.

As shown on the map, residential development is proposed east of the current City limits. This is the primary future residential growth area of North Liberty. Because of the proximity to the CRANDIC Railroad line, existing mobile home residential lots, and existing/future collector streets, the Plan recommends low-density residential land uses just east of Front Street and in undeveloped areas of District 6. Residential growth near the river corridor should be low-density and carefully planned to ensure the preservation of sensitive lands within the district. The most prevalent land use type recommended is single-family residential. Any future urban development proposed outside the municipal boundaries should be staged and incorporated into the City in order to provide the logical extension of urban services.

Consideration should be given to providing both inexpensive, starter homes as well as larger, higher valued single-family development within the district. The prevalence of natural features and significant topography make this area an ideal location for residential development. As discussed in the Natural Environment Plan, care needs to be given to retain the existing land features, particularly along the Muddy Creek drainageway, which provides an attractive amenity.

Due to the rapid growth of North Liberty and the number of young families moving into the community, the City feels it is necessary to locate a future high school within the City. Because District 6 is the primary residential growth area, a future school site would

be appropriate. Any future school site would be located in the extra-territorial jurisdiction area. Once it is sited, it should be annexed into the City for proper urban services.

Future highway commercial development is proposed along Highway 965, north and south of Forevergreen Road as shown on the map. This large area of property will allow for a highway commercial area that has significant visibility, and yet allow for inward vehicular maneuvering without affecting traffic along Highway 965. As stated within the Plan, commercial uses along the highway should be more dependent on highway exposure than the uses proposed for the Town Center commercial area in order to avoid competition between the two. Typical uses would include retail merchandising, office space, convenience goods and food service. This development would provide convenient retail development for the surrounding future residential areas.

The City's Transportation Plan identifies Dubuque Street and Highway 965 as major arterials. No additional access points for private developments or public roads should be provided along these roads within District 6. Highway 965 is an essential commercial corridor in the City of North Liberty. This corridor should be redeveloped to be a representative focus within the City with intersection redesign, turning lanes, and amenities that may include lighting and landscaping and possibly a center median.

Forevergreen Road is classified as a minor arterial and Zeller Street and Front Street are existing collector streets within the district. Another collector street, Golf View Drive, exists between Highway 965 and the CRANDIC Railroad line. The Transportation Plan proposes the extension of this road eastward to Front Street. Completion of this collector street would facilitate east-west movement through the district. Prior to any extension of the roadway, the existing Golf View Drive should be improved to meet City construction and access requirements. Another east/west collector street should be added between Golf View Drive and Forevergreen Road, as shown on the Master Transportation Map. This road should be extended to Front Street and form an intersection at Ashley Court. These extensions should be incorporated into future development proposals as necessary. Future direct lot access onto these collector streets should be discouraged.

The Muddy Creek drainageway, which bisects the district, provides an undevelopable corridor that may be incorporated into the City's future bike trail and trail system. The City should explore the provision of trails along this natural feature and along the major traffic carriers in the district. These trails should be incorporated into future development proposals as necessary and will provide connections from the district's neighborhoods to activity centers such as the Town Central commercial area, Schools, and Quail Creek Golf Course. As development increases, the need for additional parkland in the district should be explored, as well.

Because the Planning boundaries of this District extend beyond the existing City limits and abut proposed growth boundaries of the City of Coralville, North Liberty should immediately work with Coralville to update the future growth boundary between the two cities. The growth boundary agreement acts as an official agreement between North

Liberty and Coralville in determining where growth for each city would stop. The updated growth boundary should be based on each city's ability to serve the area with appropriate, affordable infrastructure in a timely manner.

Planning District 6 Recommendations

1. Urban development should not occur outside of the planning district boundary.
2. The Muddy Creek drainageway and accompanying floodplain should be protected from development in accordance with the Natural Environment Plan.
3. Low-density residential land uses are recommended east of Front Street and in undeveloped areas of District 6. Residential growth near the river corridor should be low-density and carefully planned to ensure the preservation of sensitive lands within the district. The most prevalent land use type recommended is single-family residential.
4. Future urban development should be staged and annexed into the City in order to allow efficient extension of urban services, and preservation of contiguous farming activities.
5. Ensure the retention of natural features and significant topography during the development process.
6. Plan for a future high school site within the district. Any future school site would be located in the extra-territorial jurisdiction area. Once it is sited, it should be annexed into the City.
7. Access points for private development or public roads should be discouraged along the major arterials within the district. The commercial corridor should be treated as a focal point of North Liberty with improvements and amenities that are representative of the City.
8. Future direct lot access should be discouraged along minor arterials and collector streets.
9. A collector street should be extended eastward to Dubuque Street in order to facilitate east-west movement through the district. Additionally, the street should be improved in accordance with City standards in conjunction with the collector street extension.
10. The City should explore the provision of trails along the Muddy Creek drainageway and the major traffic carriers within the district, as part of an overall Trails System Plan.
11. As development increases, consideration should be given to providing additional

parkland within the district.

12. Incorporate planned arterial and collector streets as well as planned trails into future development proposals as necessary.
13. Work with the City of Coralville to establish a future growth boundary between the two cities. The future growth boundary will establish where growth for each city would stop. The boundary should be based on each city's ability to serve the area with appropriate, affordable infrastructure in a timely manner.

Planning District 6 Land Use Map

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

It is important to note the plan does not establish any new ordinance or legislative mandate. The goals and policies contained herein are to be used as a guide for local officials in decision making and implementing specific developmental tools, such as the zoning and subdivision ordinances. While adoption of this plan does not commit the City to any specific recommendations, it should commit the City to actions that are consistent with the policy guidelines and the plan itself.

This section of the plan presents an implementation schedule for the recommendations, summarizing the actions proposed by the plan. Each action is listed generally in the order presented in the plan. The action is then given a specific time frame for implementation. Each dot is representative of a completion date. However, the schedule does not list ongoing policies or day-to-day actions the City should continuously undertake (i.e. maintenance of the City's water or sewer system).

In this way, the schedule can be used to monitor the progress of the plan. This is a very important role of the update process that will be necessary to keep this document dynamic and up-to-date.

The implementation schedule is on the following page.

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Action	Within 2 Years	Within 5 Years	Within 10 Years	Within 15 Years	Within 20 Years	Funding options
Plan for a population of over 15,000					•	
Review and update City's zoning and subdivision ordinances to conform with the Comprehensive Plan.	•					General Funds
Update Floodplain study to establish new 100-year floodplain.	•					General Funds, Grant Funds
Develop accessible database of North Liberty development information for dissemination to prospective developers.		•				General Funds
Streetscape Plan		•				General Funds
Integrate a network of trails and open spaces through the community.					•	Developers, Grant funds, G.O. Bonds, General Funds
Establish new park and recreation space within the City.			•			TIF, G.O. Bonds, General Funds
Eliminate the "dead-end" water mains by creating a complete loop system.		•				User Fees, G.O. Bonds
NW and SW area Sewer studies	•					General Funds
Work with the City of Coralville to establish a future growth boundary between the two cities in Planning District 6	•					General Funds

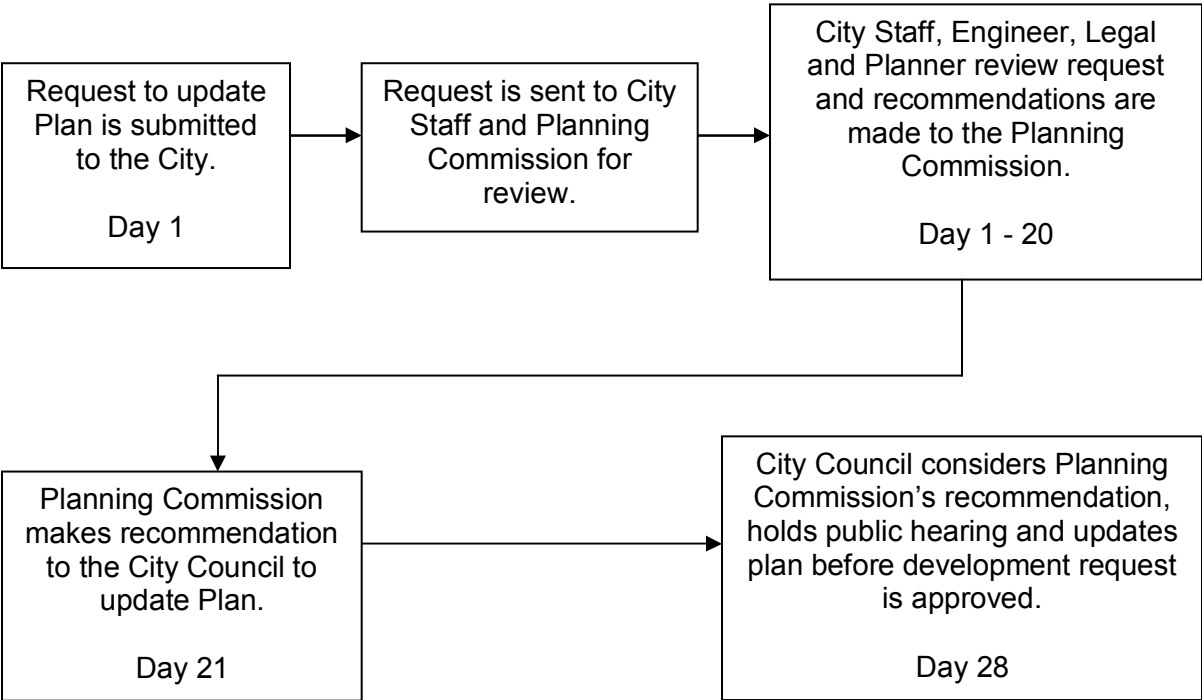
PLAN UPDATE SCHEDULE

Once the plan has been adopted, the City should make every attempt to put the plan to work. However, no plan could possibly foresee every issue that will arise during the planning period. Therefore, the plan should be used as a guide for growth and development. Some developments will inevitably differ from the vision of the plan. In such cases, the plan may need to be updated.

When reviewing all development proposals, the criteria for evaluation, is as follows:

- Overall Community Goals
- General Community Goals and policies
- District Recommendations
- Plan Maps

Every attempt shall be made to satisfy the above criteria. However, if a development proposal cannot satisfy all of the criteria, yet is still deemed worthy to benefit the community, the Plan will need to be amended before the development proposal is approved. Because a request to amend the plan will likely occur during the development proposal review process, both actions may occur simultaneously. The City should establish a fee schedule for reviewing Plan Update Requests. The following is the Plan update process:



Opportunities to table the request for further review may occur during the process. Should this happen, the update process should take no longer than 3 months. The City

should make every attempt to expedite this process.

In addition, the plan should be reviewed annually to ensure that the goals, policies, recommendations and maps are reflective of the latest trends in the community. The Planning Commission should meet with the City Council on an annual basis to review the year's development proposals to ensure they are meeting the intent of the Plan and that the Plan is working properly with the City's other development tools, such as the zoning and subdivision ordinance. This is especially important during periods of rapid growth.

The results of the annual review may very well mean changes in the zoning or subdivision ordinances or other developmental tools.

The planning process should be an ongoing endeavor. The success of this plan will require the support of citizens as well as the City Council. Cooperation from the public and private sectors will provide long-term benefits to the City of North Liberty.

Successful communities do not just happen. They must be continually shaped and guided. New issues and opportunities will inevitably arise. While no plan could possibly foresee every issue, the goals and strategies developed in the North Liberty Comprehensive Plan will provide flexibility for city officials and area residents in successfully planning for the future.

APPENDIX

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Maps to be inserted here

Town Meeting Results

The crucial element in any plan is ensuring that the wishes and hopes the residents hold for their community is represented in the content of the plan. If the plan does not accurately reflect the needs and desires of area residents, it will have little value.

This town meeting was an interactive planning session with nearly fifteen residents taking part to identify a future vision for the area. The session involved two small groups (7-8 people per group) identifying and prioritizing positive qualities that need to be maintained, as well as future concerns of the city that need to be addressed. This exercise was held at the beginning of the process for two reasons:

- The critical elements for the future vision are identified early in the process ensuring that appropriate problem identification occurs at the very beginning;
- Public participation is crucial for creating an effective and appropriate plan. By having a town meeting at the beginning of the process, every resident has an opportunity to direct a future vision for the planning area.

Each member of each small group individually identified his or her positive qualities and future concerns on a 3x5 note card. Then, within each group, all members listed those qualities and concerns on a large sheet of paper (many replies were similar between group members and were condensed into a single quality or concern). At that point, each participant awarded points to prioritize the composite small group list of qualities and concerns using a 3-point value system. Three points were given to their highest priority; 2 points to the second highest priority and 1 point for their third highest priority. Totals were then added up to establish an overall prioritized listing for each small group's qualities and concerns.

Group #1: Positive Qualities to be Maintained

Small business orientation	7 points
Good recreational opportunities for all ages	6
Well-developed infrastructure	6
Safety	5
Proximity to larger metro areas	4
Content population	3
Housing diversity	3
Amount of free area to develop	1
Increasing property values	1
Nice neighborhoods	
Small town atmosphere	

Group #1 (continued)**Group #1: Future Challenges/Concerns to be Addressed**

Adequacy of transportation system including public transportation	9 points
Increasing demands on public safety	5
Lack of east-west throughways	4
Lack of visual appeal and décor (lack of interesting architecture)	3
Limited industrial areas	3
Growing too fast	2
Mixing uses	2
Providing sewer and other infrastructure	2
Consistency in planning and zoning decisions	1
Developing outlying areas before areas closer in	1
Distance to and lack of middle and high schools	1
Lack of larger businesses (employment and tax base)	1
Too many multi-family homes	1
Taxes	1
Adequate access to new subdivisions	
Coordinated planning with neighboring communities	

Group #2: Positive Qualities to be Maintained

Business friendly	13 points
Public facilities (community center, recreational facilities/parks)	11
Environmental awareness	9
Housing (appearance, availability, affordable, rentals)	4
Access to services	3
Fire department	2
Small town community appearance	2
Location and access to Iowa City/Cedar Rapids	1
Topography	1
Youthful	

Group #2 (continued)**Group #2: Future Challenges/Concerns to be Addressed**

Transportation (traffic flow, road planning, speed limits, safety on 965/Scales Bend	9 points
Sustainable growth (maintain city services, community food system)	7
Competition from Coralville (more industry, diverse tax base)	6
Expansion of recreational trails/park use (dog park)	6
School district (ICCSA and Clear Creek High School)	4
Pedestrian access/bicycle and trail access	3
Local workforce base	2
Options for residents to use local businesses and services	2
Preserving agricultural and farm land	2
Public participation in community	2
High end and affordable housing	1
Senior services	1
Appearance of 965/Penn	
Differentiate North Liberty from other communities	
Downtown/town center area: Cherry Street	
Police density	

The following page contains a composite of all the group's prioritized positive qualities and future concerns. This is only a composite of each group's priorities. Many of the positive qualities and future concerns were condensed into an over-all quality or concern that were deemed equal. This was based on ECICOG staff's interpretation and, while reflective of the overall priorities, may or may not reflect the individual priorities of the citizens present.

Positive Qualities to be Maintained	Points
Business friendly (small business oriented)	21
Access to services and quality public facilities (community center, recreational facilities for all ages, parks)	20
Environmental awareness	9
Housing diversity (appearance, availability, affordable, rentals)	7
Well developed infrastructure	6
Proximity to larger metro areas (Iowa City/Cedar Rapids)	5
Safe	5
Content populations	3
Fire department	2
Small town atmosphere	2
Amount of free areas to develop	1
Increasing property values	1
Topography	1
Nice neighborhoods	
Youthful	

Future Concerns/Challenges to be Addressed	Points
Adequacy of transportation system (traffic flow, road planning, speed limits, public transportation, safety, lack of east-west throughways, adequate access to new subdivisions)	22
Sustainable growth (maintain city services, increasing demands on public safety, providing sewer and other infrastructure, growing too fast)	16
Lack of larger businesses for employment and tax base (limited industrial areas, options for residents to use local business and services, maintaining the local workforce base)	14
Expansion of recreational opportunities and park use (including dog park) as well as pedestrian access and bicycle and trail access	9
Distance to and lack of middle and high schools	5
Lack of visual appeal and décor (appearance of 965/Penn and mixing uses)	5
Preserving agricultural and farm land (developing outlying areas before areas closer in)	3
Housing (high end and affordable, too many multi-family homes)	2
Public participation in the community	2
Consistency in planning and zoning decisions	1
Senior services	1
Taxes	1
Coordinated planning with neighboring communities	
Differentiate North Liberty from other communities	
Downtown/town center area: Cherry Street	
Police density	

**North Libery Land Use Plan
2005 Comprehensive Plan**

Major Streets

- Collector
- Collector Proposed
- Minor Arterial
- Minor Arterial Proposed
- Major Arterial
- Expressway
- Expressway Proposed

Land Use Policy

- Agricultural
- Parks & Recreation
- Residential
- Public
- Commercial with Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial

