

City of Shellsburg

2018 Comprehensive Plan



SHELLSBURG *Iowa*
THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Acknowledgements

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East Central Iowa Council of Governments

With special thanks to:

Shellsburg Planning Committee

The City of Shellsburg

The East Central Iowa Council of Governments is an intergovernmental council governed by a board of directors comprised of elected officials and private citizens. ECICOG was created to promote regional cooperation and to provide professional planning services to local governments in Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn and Washington Counties.

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Executive Summary

ECICOG, in partnership with the City of Shellsburg, provided coordination, planning and facilitation support and identified city-wide recommendations and strategies for the long-term growth and development of the city. Efforts focused on important opportunities to advance growth through the year 2040. These efforts included a community visioning process; the development of strategies addressing economic development and infrastructure; and a discussion of future housing issues and needs.

This document also contains information essential for future planning efforts in the city, including land use policies and objectives. It will serve as a coordinated guide for continued planning and development in order to manage growth and make the most efficient possible use of the city's resources, including the preparation of a zoning ordinance. It can also serve as a reference and guide to other research or grantsmanship carried out by city leaders for the general betterment of the community.

ECICOG appreciates the efforts of the Shellsburg Planning Committee members who have contributed their time and ideas to the formulation of this plan. Also, special thanks should go to many citizens of the community. Their input has made this document a pertinent and meaningful plan which represents the needs and desires of the people in and around Shellsburg.

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Introduction

Introduction

The Shellsburg Plan

This plan is intended to be a guide for the City of Shellsburg to coordinate growth and development over the course of the next twenty years. The plan is focused on the area within the current city limits and in the surrounding future growth boundaries outside the city.

The plan, utilizing Iowa's new Smart Growth principles and elements, includes an in-depth look at the City's population, housing, economic base, transportation, public and recreational facilities, physical infrastructure and current and future land uses. In addition, broad citywide goals are outlined and policy guidelines are recommended to achieve those goals. The plan, however, is not meant to be a strict blueprint, but rather a guide for officials in their decision-making.

This document looks twenty years into the future, and offers a framework for growth and development during that period. This plan is not a regulatory document, but a policy document. By considering the impact of future development well into the 21st century, a community direction can be established to guide the development of regulatory tools such as zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, housing and building codes and annexation procedures.

The plan has two fundamental purposes. First, it presents a unified vision for Shellsburg articulated from the hard work and participation of the citizens who devoted their time and effort toward creating this plan. Secondly, it provides the legal basis for land use regulation such as zoning and subdivision ordinances.



Shellsburg from above, 2017

Introduction

The Planning Process

Provisions should be made for amending this document as policies and data become outdated. This authority should be used with discretion, however, since much of its value can easily be lost through frequent or arbitrary changes. Amendments may be proposed by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the City Council, or by concerned citizens. Any proposal must always be referred to the zoning commission for consideration and recommendation to the Council.

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 entire planning area and ultimately the City of Shellsburg.

The goals and policies contained in this comprehensive plan will allow the city to manage the growth projected for Shellsburg while maintaining the existing character residents have come to enjoy.



Photo: City of Shellsburg

Introduction

How to Use This Document

It is recommended that the city identify someone to manage and lead implementation of action steps detailed in this plan and other actions as they are identified. It is important to have someone responsible for guiding ongoing future planning efforts. This overall coordinator should be the Zoning Administrator.

In addition to the overall coordinator, each of the strategies, initiatives or tools described will require someone who assumes ownership to ensure progress towards implementation. In most instances, it is beneficial to have someone who is familiar with the strategy, initiative or tool and able to work with appropriate entities needed to accomplish the work. A champion may be an individual or agency, although one person should be the designated coordinator for the city's future planning efforts.

It is also recommended that the entire plan be carefully reviewed annually to insure that the data and land use maps are updated. Policies may have to be updated as well. The review may be simple if the city has not grown in the years prior to the review or it may be more elaborate following a period of rapid growth or change. The results of the review and revision may very well mean changes in the zoning or subdivision ordinances or other developmental tools.

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 2018 Shellsburg Comprehensive Plan will provide flexibility for city officials and area residents in successfully planning for the future.

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Profile and Analysis

Profile and Analysis

Population Trends and Projections

A planning program for the physical development of a community must be based upon the requirements, both present and future, of the citizens living in the area. In order to establish what these requirements will be, it is necessary to know as accurately as possible how many people will be living in the area in the foreseeable future.

Precise predictions of future populations, of course, are not possible. However, a reasonable, reliable forecast can be made on the basis of past studies, population trends over the years, and current, observable patterns. This is essential in arriving at reasonable goals and objectives with respect to services and overall development.

The following section of the plan will review the City of Shellsburg's demographics and population.

Shellsburg Population Quick View

1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010
765	938	22.6%	983	4.8%

Source: U.S. Census

The U.S. Census is estimating that the population of Shellsburg in July 2016 lost population to 952 residents. This represents a 3.2% loss of population since 2010.

Profile and Analysis

Population Trends

Shellsburg saw its largest population growth between 1990 and 2000 – a nearly 23% growth spurt. The community continued modest growth into 2010 to reach its highest population total of 983 people. For a graphic illustration of this fact, please refer to the chart on the following page.

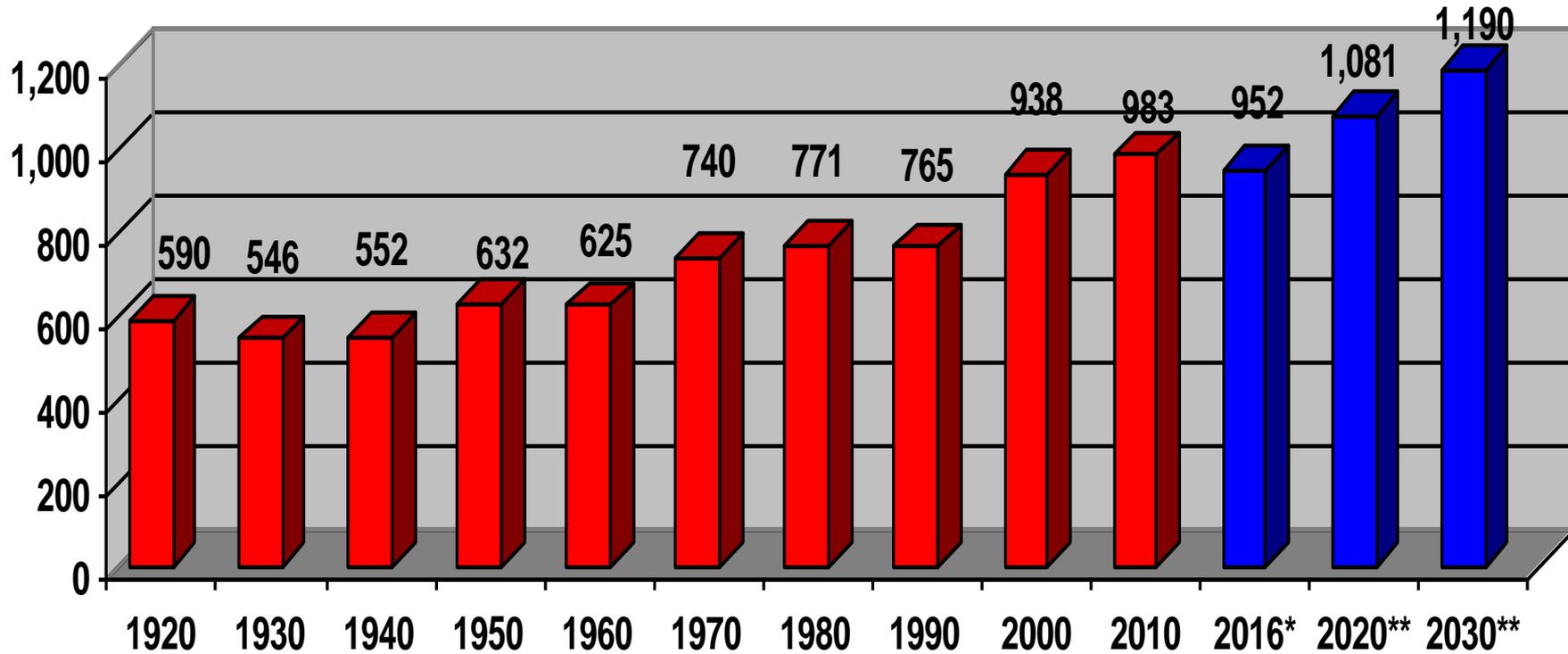
More recently, however, according to the 2016 U.S. Census estimate, Shellsburg realized a slight loss in population. Dropping from a high in 2010 of 983, the 2016 Census estimate shows a 3.2% decline to 952 people.

A different 2017 estimate was established based on building permit data from the city. Using 2.2 people per household and 12 new homes constructed since 2010, a 2017 estimated population was 1,010. This estimate is likely closer than the 2016 Census estimate.

The projected populations for 2020 and 2030 are shown on the chart and discussed later in the chapter. The population is expected to increase to 1,081 residents by 2020 and nearly 1,190 by 2030. Reasons for the rebound are discussed later, but include the Highway 100 bypass, expanded economic development efforts and a review of past population trends since 1920.

Profile and Analysis

Population Trends, City of Shellsburg (1920 – 2017)



Source: U.S. Census

* 2016 is a U.S. Census estimate

** 2020 and 2030 predictions are based on a 10% growth rate

Profile and Analysis

The population growth of Shellsburg during the 1990s and 2000s may be due in part to its location near the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area and the relative ease of access between the two cities. Land to the west of the metro area towards Shellsburg continued to develop through the 2010 census and, perhaps, spurred growth in Shellsburg for those wanting to live in a smaller community and have access to employment opportunities in the metro area.

If the national and local economies continue to improve, growth in the metro area will likely continue to expand outward to cities like Shellsburg, Atkins, Central City and Center Point. Shellsburg may see additional residents due to the expansion of the Highway 100 bypass which runs west out of the Cedar Rapids metro area, connecting to Highway 30 – making an already short commute even shorter for Shellsburg residents. Also, as Shellsburg’s economic development efforts grow, there will likely be more employment locally, creating additional population growth.

However, if the national or local economies slow considerably or if gas prices increase dramatically, commuters may be less likely to move great distances from where they work. Unless Shellsburg’s economic development efforts bring more employment locally, this factor alone could slow Shellsburg’s future growth potential relative to larger cities with employment opportunities.

Population Growth of Similar Sized Cities

There are several communities within the region that had similar populations and situations as Shellsburg. Each community is located within a short drive of the Cedar Rapids or Iowa City metro area. Since 1990, all five cities have experienced varying degrees of growth (see the chart on page 16).

Profile and Analysis

There are basically four types of cities within the larger, six county region.

- 1) Large metro cities (Cedar Rapids, Iowa City)
- 2) Cities directly adjacent to the metro areas (Tiffin, Fairfax, Ely, Robins, etc.)
- 3) Mid-size, stand-alone cities (Mount Vernon, Vinton, Anamosa, Washington, etc.)
- 4) Small, rural towns and villages (Shellsburg, Garrison, Luzerne, Mount Auburn, etc.)

The cities located directly adjacent to Cedar Rapids or Iowa City, such as Fairfax and Tiffin, have experienced substantial growth during the 1990s and 2000s. Population trends of this nature can come with a negative cost to a city, such as lack of housing space, loss of farm land, increased need for infrastructure and other services, and the extreme cost of those services, as well as the potential loss of the small-town atmosphere many people enjoyed about their community. Some other cities near the Cedar Rapids metro area have experienced growth rates in the upper teens and more, such as Hiawatha and Center Point, or the Iowa City metro area like North Liberty or Coralville.

Cities such as Vinton, Anamosa and Washington are all stand-alone cities. They are the employment centers of their respective counties. These cities have not seen the double and triple digit percentage growth rates like North Liberty, Fairfax and Tiffin have seen. But they have had steady growth. Population increases between 5 and 10% are generally more likely for these communities throughout the region. Many cities find it easier to plan and budget for infrastructure costs when the growth rate is in the 5 to 10% range. When much larger growth rates are projected, it is imperative that the community has a plan for the logical extension of services to manage the growth.

Profile and Analysis

Shellsburg would be described as a small, rural community. The trend over the last three decades for many of these types of communities in Iowa is one of lost population. There are many reasons for this, but usually this type of community is some distance from a metro area, they generally lack major employment opportunities or there is a lack of activities for young families. Hence, the trend towards population decline.

There is a difference with Shellsburg, however. Its location near a major metro area suggests that any population decline should be relatively short lived. If the community actively promotes economic development and growth opportunities along with new activities for young families, future residential growth will likely happen, due to its location. This Comprehensive Plan will lay the groundwork for Shellsburg to capture that future growth.

Population Trends of Similar Sized Cities						
City	1990	2000	Change (%)	2010	Change (%)	County
Alburnett	459	559	21.8%	673	20.4%	Linn
Central City	1,063	1,157	8.8%	1,257	8.6%	Linn
Atkins	637	977	53.4%	1,670	70.9%	Benton
Springville	1,068	1,091	2.2%	1,074	-1.6%	Linn
Oxford	663	705	6.3%	807	14.4%	Johnson
Shellsburg	765	938	22.6%	983	4.8%	Benton

Source: U.S. Census

The one constant between most cities in the region experiencing growth is the link to the Cedar Rapids or Iowa City metro areas. There are a few exceptions – Springville, which is just east of the metro area, has slightly lost population, as shown above. Shellsburg’s expanded economic development efforts and link to Cedar Rapids should position the community for future growth.

Profile and Analysis

Population Projections

As stated before, population projections can be used to plan for the appropriate level of services for future development. When used cautiously, population projections provide an estimate of future growth barring any unforeseen significant change in the economic or social composition of the community. With a sound population projection, a city can plan for infrastructure capacities, housing needs, and future land use requirements.

City of Shellsburg Population Projections				
Projected Growth	2010	2016 (estimate)	2020	2030
5% Loss rate	983	952	933	886
2% Growth rate	983	952	1,003	1,023
5% Growth rate	983	952	1,032	1,083
10% Growth rate	983	952	1,081	1,190
35% Growth rate	983	952	1,327	1,792
Mixed growth rate	983	952	933	1,026

Source: ECICOG

The above table shows several population projections for Shellsburg. Six different scenarios are shown for comparison. The growth rates shown in the table represents the percentage increase per decade (between each census period). In each projection but the mixed growth rate, Shellsburg realizes population growth.

Profile and Analysis

Looking at the population data of Shellsburg (see chart on page 13) from every census since 1920 shows that after a decade of losing population (1930, 1960, 1990), it is followed with two decades of significant growth (1940 – 1950, 1970 – 1980, 2000 – 2010). If the 2017 estimate is correct and the city is currently losing population and if the corresponding 2020 Census does show a loss, based on past trends the city might expect growth in 2030 and 2040 by doing nothing at all but follow past trends.

Simply looking at regional trends of the last 20 years (high residential growth surrounding the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City metro areas, and growth of cities of similar size and location to Shellsburg in the ECICOG Planning Region), and the location of a major transportation corridor running near the city (Highway 100 bypass to Highway 30) connecting Shellsburg to Cedar Rapids and beyond, the population is expected to increase at rates around 10 percent per Census.

Building permit data from the city, discussed later in the plan, shows that 12 new homes have been built since 2010. Using this data to project the population, suggests that in 2017, the population was near 1,010.

As mentioned before, it is unlikely that the city will be able to maintain large percentage growth rates (as shown by the 35% projection above). As the population increases, large percentage changes are more difficult. In addition, the economy, rising fuel and heating costs, the amount of developable land and available community services (sewer, water, police, roads, etc.) will ultimately dictate how fast Shellsburg grows. Very large percentage growth rates can be a burden on community services. The 35% projection is shown in the unlikely event that extraordinary growth rates would continue over the long-term. It is possible rising energy and fuel prices will slow housing construction in outlying areas and reduce the likelihood that commuters would be willing to drive long distances to work.

Profile and Analysis

However, as mentioned before, barring any unforeseen significant change in the economic or social composition of the region, the population should realize a 10% growth rate through 2030. A population near 1,200 could be expected by that time. For planning purposes, the 10% projection will be used throughout the document when discussing future infrastructure capacities, housing and land use needs.

Land Use Implications

The Land Use portion of the plan will look at the amount of undeveloped land remaining within the city limits and examine possible appropriate future growth areas outside of the existing city boundaries to facilitate this future growth.

As stated before, population projections should be used cautiously. Changes in local, state and national economies can have a profound effect on population counts. The rising cost of oil and natural gas could very well negatively impact the economy, making even the lower percentage growth rates unattainable. However, with the proximity to employment and retail centers, major transportation routes and with future available land and services, the city's population may be able to withstand small changes in the national economy and reach the plan's projected total of nearly 1,200 by the year 2030.

Profile and Analysis

Demographics

Age Cohorts

Population projections are used to plan appropriately for future growth and development. Breaking down the population by demographics is just as important to the planning process by showing the related demographic needs of the community.

As seen in the table on the following page, in 2010, Shellsburg had a fairly balanced age make-up with the median age of residents at 44.6 according to the US Census. This is significantly older than the median age of the state of Iowa at 38.1, and Shellsburg is generally much older than the region as a whole. Part of this may be due to a lack of activities for younger families, as mentioned during the town meeting and with comments in the community-wide survey.

Although the median age is high, one bright spot is that the largest age group, based on percentage, is children under the age of ten at 10.7% of the population. In fact, children under the age of twenty make up over 22% of the population. The second largest group would be in the prime employment stage of life at 44 to 49 years of age at 9.6% of the population. The group between 40 to 54 years of age make up nearly 25% of the population. The smallest groups include those over 75 years of age.

These findings suggest that Shellsburg has attracted young adults and their families, in spite of the town meeting and survey results. The key is retaining the younger cohorts as they age, in addition to attracting new families.

Profile and Analysis

Age Cohorts	Male	Female	Total	%
0 to 9 years	59	46	105	10.7
10 to 14 years	33	25	58	5.9
15 to 19 years	32	27	59	6.0
20 to 24 years	23	21	44	4.5
25 to 29 years	29	21	50	5.1
30 to 34 years	31	32	63	6.4
35 to 39 years	21	28	49	5.0
40 to 44 years	32	37	69	7.0
45 to 49 years	51	43	94	9.6
50 to 54 years	34	45	79	8.0
55 to 59 years	38	30	68	6.9
60 to 64 years	24	31	55	5.6
65 to 69 years	25	32	57	5.8
70 to 74 years	19	13	32	3.3
75 to 79 years	9	18	27	2.7
80 to 84 years	11	10	21	2.1
85 years and over	6	47	53	5.4
Total	477	506	983	100.0

Source: U.S. Census

Looking at potential changes in the age groups of Shellsburg, in twenty years during the life of this plan, the largest adult age group will shift to the 60-74 group, marking a large shift into retirement age. This will likely have an impact on the housing needs of the community. Elderly housing was suggested in the survey as a significant need in the community now. In twenty years, it will be an even larger need.

If the city cannot attract additional younger families, the population of Shellsburg will continue to increase in median age during the life of this plan. Services and programs the community offers may need to reflect the changing demographics. Services such as senior housing and wellness facilities should play a larger role in the future development of the community.

However, if during the life of this plan, more young families move into the community, Shellsburg's median age will drop and would be another reason to suggest population increases are likely during the next twenty years.

Profile and Analysis

Population Findings

- Steady population increases since 1990. Accounting for the census error in 2000, Shellsburg has grown over 16% between 2000 and 2010.
- Median age in 2010 is significantly higher than the state of Iowa.
- Median age is anticipated to decrease slightly as the population is expected to grow due to metro area development and Shellsburg expanded economic development activities.
- The city's population increase between 2000 – 2010 (4.8%) is lower than the average in the ECICOG region (8 percent).
- The population is expected to be near 1,080 residents when the next census (2020) is released.
- Shellsburg should prepare for an estimated population of near 1,200 residents by the year 2030 or the equivalent of approximately 215 new residents between 2010 and 2030. Housing, infrastructure and land use needs throughout the plan will be based on this projection.

Profile and Analysis

Housing Analysis

In addition to examining population trends and demographics, a look into the city's current and future housing needs must be taken in order to establish growth management strategies for the planning area. Housing development is crucial to a growing community, with implications in land use and infrastructure decisions, housing trends should be studied to establish adequate growth areas in and around the community.

According to the Census, the number of housing units in 2010 stood at 455. Since the 2010 Census, as of April of 2018, there have been 12 new houses built, bringing the total number of units, according to the city, to 467. In development terms, the projected population increase (at the 10% growth rate per census and 2.2 people per housing unit) is equivalent to 99 new housing units between the year 2010 and 2030. This represents an average annual construction rate of nearly 5 new units per year. For comparison, since 2010, the city has been averaging nearly two new units a year.

At the current allowable density of approximately 3 units per acre, the new units would require approximately 33 acres of land (this does not account for the rights-of-way for streets and other utilities). As a general rule, 10 percent of developed land is consumed by rights-of-way. This makes an additional 3.3 acres of land to be used for streets and other utilities to serve the projected residential needs. All told, it is projected that approximately 36 acres of land would be needed to account for new residential development in Shellsburg by 2030 (see the Land Use Chapter of this plan for further explanation of this total as well as land use needs for park, commercial and industrial land uses).

Profile and Analysis



Building Permit Data

The housing permit data supplied by the City of Shellsburg shows that 12 homes have been built since 2010, or an average rate of 1.7 per year. A 10% growth rate suggests that the average number of units built per year would be approximately five.

Housing Data

By 2000, the Census showed 370 housing units in Shellsburg. The 2010 Census data shows a population of 983 people and 455 housing units in Shellsburg, or over a 23% increase in housing units from 2000. This is not consistent with the 4.8% population growth during this time, suggesting a higher vacancy rate and a lower average household size in 2010. According to the Census, the 2010 vacancy rate in the city was 5.9% compared to 3.8% in 2000.

Vacancy rates between 3 and 6% are considered healthy for a community as it allows for flexibility for area homeowners as well as an ability for the city to handle sudden population increases.

Profile and Analysis

Housing Data

With regards to the average household size, it has gone down since 2000. In 2000, the Census showed the average household size was 2.57 people per housing unit. That number decreased significantly in 2010 to 2.24. Generally, this number has been decreasing throughout the region as families are trending smaller due to the aging population. The average household size is expected to continue to drop across the region as well as in Shellsburg. Shellsburg should have approximately 2.2 people per housing unit by the year 2030.

Based on this figure and the population projection, Shellsburg should plan on needing approximately 99 new housing units between 2010 and 2030 to bring the overall total to nearly 554 units.



Profile and Analysis

New Housing Development

When new housing development occurs, it should, wherever possible, occur as infill development within the existing city limits. As such, new development should be connected to the existing community through efficient transportation patterns and appropriate design. All too often, new development occurs on the outskirts of a community and has no viable connection to the existing town, thus creating wholly separate communities both physically and socially.

As infill possibilities are exhausted, development should then occur incrementally, or contiguous to existing development. This new development should be located within the future growth area as shown on the future land use map. The future growth area should be easily served by infrastructure and also limit negative environmental or agricultural impacts. Growth of this nature will reduce capital outlay and maintenance costs to the city by allowing short, economical extensions of municipal infrastructure (sewer, water, street, sidewalk, etc.) which serve the new neighborhoods. Incremental housing growth will also save open land and areas better suited for agricultural or other use.



Photo: City of Shellsburg

Profile and Analysis

In addition, Shellsburg should ensure that appropriate recreational opportunities grow as new housing is developed. The number and location of neighborhood parks should keep pace with new construction. As new housing developments are planned, the city should ensure that common “green space” is included in each new neighborhood. Because recreation opportunities are a major influence on a family’s decision on where to live, expanded recreation opportunities should be a priority for Shellsburg.

To encourage walkability, main connections to the city’s trail and sidewalk system and to the major commercial areas as well as to city activity points (elementary school, parks, Pearl Street, etc.) should be required. Infill development should be encouraged to diminish the impact of sprawl and promote connectivity.

Recreation goals and the objectives to meet those goals will be discussed later in the plan. The infrastructure and land use implications of this population target and housing analysis will be discussed in chapters on Infrastructure and Land Use.



Profile and Analysis

Housing Findings

- Average household size in 2010 was 2.57. That number is expected to drop by 2030 to 2.2.
- A 10% growth rate is equivalent to approximately 99 new homes between 2010 and 2030 or approximately 5 per year.
- The number of new homes by 2030 would require approximately 37 acres of land.
- There were 455 housing units in Shellsburg in 2010. Based on building permit data, as of April of 2018, there have been 12 new housing units built in the city bringing the total number to approximately 467 housing units.
- In 2010, according to the Census, there were 27 vacant housing units in the city. This represents a vacancy rate of 5.9%. This rate is generally considered healthy for a community as it allows for flexibility for area homeowners as well as an ability for the city to handle sudden population increases.
- The city will require approximately 554 housing units by 2030.

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Economic Development

Economic Development

Introduction

The City of Shellsburg has a small commercial and industrial base. Based on comments from the recent town meeting, residents felt Pearl Street – the city’s main downtown street – was a positive asset for the community. In fact, downtown businesses were ranked as the highest positive quality in Shellsburg according to the residents taking part in the town meeting.

However, for years, few new commercial establishments have located within the city limits. Traditionally, Shellsburg has been thought of as a “bedroom” community to the neighboring Cedar Rapids metro area. During that time, economic development may have been seen as something best left to the metro area.

However, attracting new business was an important issue for Shellsburg residents in the recent town meeting and community-wide survey. In fact, nearly 68% of respondents agreed that Shellsburg should be more proactive in bringing in business development. Also, economic development was in the top five most important issues for the community with other issues including “maintain and improve local streets”, “maintain small-town atmosphere”, “maintain local police force” and “improve appearance of community”. That residential support should provide the framework to grow Shellsburg’s economic development potential.



Economic Development

Strengths and Weaknesses

Located just outside of the Cedar Rapids metro area, Shellsburg has many opportunities regarding economic development. With the Highway 100 bypass going through to the southeast of the community, it will make an already relatively short trip to the metro area even shorter.

Access to major transportation routes (Highway 100 bypass), busy downtown area, community support, and access to amenities such as an elementary school, trails and entertainment opportunities are but a few of Shellsburg's marketable strengths. The city should utilize its strengths when creating a brand for marketing purposes.

Yet, in order to foster a growing business community, there are always hurdles to overcome. In many cases, these hurdles are easily addressed through land use policies or simple directives from the City Council. However, some issues that are critical to economic development are equally important to other community elements such as infrastructure or transportation. These issues will be addressed throughout this comprehensive plan. Some of the difficulties Shellsburg will face with regards to expanding economic development include:

- ❖ Lack of developable land within and near the community
- ❖ Water and sewer infrastructure not available along prime development areas
- ❖ Lack of community identity / Shellsburg's reputation
- ❖ Lack of parking near downtown
- ❖ Limited funding available
- ❖ Typical resident of Shellsburg works in Cedar Rapids and has children in Vinton schools – a lot of driving

Economic Development

1) Empower Local Economic Development Group

Shellsburg already has a community group poised to take on economic development issues – the Shellsburg Area Community Group. The City Council should empower this group to promote economic development growth in the community. Business and city leaders can work together to identify and complete projects, such as groundbreaking for a new business venture that demonstrates success. Success builds credibility and energy and attracts new businesses into the community. This economic development group should work with other area and regional economic development teams to market Shellsburg’s potential. The group should be established through the available resident talent pool to build Shellsburg’s economic development potential.

2) Promote Shellsburg to the Region

With close proximity to the Cedar Rapids metro area and its friendly atmosphere, Shellsburg can draw people and businesses to visit and locate within the city. Opportunities exist to market the quality of life, amenities and unique character to a growing and vibrant regional market. The city should create a website for economic development marketing. The newly empowered economic development group should work closely with the Benton Development Group and the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance to market Shellsburg to the region. Because if economic development is one thing, it is marketing.

3) Generate a Strategic Plan for Business Development

Some challenges, such as lack of major transportation access, and generating room for business growth require more detailed planning and coordination. A strategic plan will clarify goals, policies and objectives and create a working plan for implementation. A plan identifies needed resources and can increase confidence of potential project funders or investors. The newly created economic development group should be instrumental in creating this strategic plan.



Economic Development

Economic Development Goals and Policies

Preserve and enhance the Downtown District

- ❖ Protect, encourage and promote small businesses along Pearl Street
- ❖ Continue with Pearl Street improvements
- ❖ Resolve lack of parking issues in the Downtown District
- ❖ Promote and encourage businesses outside of the Downtown District that do not detract from small businesses along Pearl Street and the Downtown District
- ❖ Maintain small town atmosphere

Empower Local Economic Development Group

- ❖ Provide funding
- ❖ Engage available resident talent pool to support economic development
- ❖ Establish duties and responsibilities for group
- ❖ Utilize group to promote business growth within the community

Generate a Strategic Plan for Business Development

- ❖ Apply for state, federal and MPO grants
- ❖ Utilize local economic development group for creation of plan

Economic Development

Promote Shellsburg to the Region

- ❖ Establish a brand for marketing Shellsburg
- ❖ Establish an economic development website for Shellsburg
- ❖ Work with the Benton Development Group and the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance
- ❖ Work with the East Central Iowa Council of Governments through the region's Comprehensive Regional Development Strategy document

Foster a Growing and Diverse Business Community

- ❖ Encourage local benefactors to invest in the community
- ❖ Provide space and infrastructure for business location and expansion
- ❖ Explore the creation of a Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID)
- ❖ Offer appropriate incentives such as small business grants or tax rebates
- ❖ Update public infrastructure (streets, water, sidewalks, and parks) to promote economic development
- ❖ Work with area economic development groups to market Shellsburg's economic development opportunities
- ❖ Better utilization of City's website for branding and marketing of Shellsburg's economic development opportunities
- ❖ Utilize future land use map to plan for appropriate economic development growth areas as well as protect future residential growth areas

Infrastructure

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Infrastructure

Infrastructure

Introduction

This section of the plan presents an inventory and evaluation of the city's infrastructure facilities. The primary infrastructure for Shellsburg includes the systems for water distribution, sanitary sewer, storm sewer collection and transportation.

The city should encourage the preservation of viable existing infrastructure and promote the economical extension of new infrastructure and services. It is wise to conserve limited public funds by promoting efficient growth patterns. Extension of Shellsburg's infrastructure to new, appropriate development areas is a priority for the city. Economic development opportunities will rely on new extensions of sanitary sewer and water lines. Extension of these services into the city's economic development growth areas should be a priority.

To implement specific goals in this section of the plan, the city should not only rely on municipal funds, but utilize the development tools such as TIF and connection fees to fund infrastructure, redevelopment and economic development projects, where practical. Although a listing of the city's infrastructure is contained in this plan, it should not be construed to replace the day-to-day maintenance and operation of the city's infrastructure. It is intended to provide a framework for the future growth of the overall system.

Infrastructure Systems

Water System

Based on population projections during the planning period, with an average per capita water usage of 100 GPD, the projected average day water demand would be approximately 120,000 GPD to ensure adequate fire protection and water supply for the community. Peak demand may reach 200,000 GPD. Currently the city has 70,000 in elevated storage capacity and 214,000 in ground storage capacity. With the new water plant, the city appears to have capacity to meet the projected demands during the life of the plan.



Future Water System Recommendations

- ❖ Continue to monitor water use and revise projections as needed
- ❖ Study need for a back up well to assist main well should need arise
- ❖ Establish a Capital Improvements Plan for a detailed schedule of water system repairs, maintenance and capital costs

Infrastructure

Sanitary Sewer System

The city has a relatively new waste water treatment plant, built in the early 2000s. This should provide adequate service for the life of this plan.

The condition and efficiency of many of the city's sewer lines are a growing concern. Many of the lines are older and deteriorating. An infrastructure priority during the life of this plan will be to systematically repair and replace old sewer lines within the community.

In addition, many areas of the community that would make positive future growth areas are not readily served by sewer lines. The city should study these areas and work to expand the sewer system into these growth areas over time to assist with new development.

Future Sewer System Recommendations

- ❖ Repair and replace sanitary service lines within the community
- ❖ Study future growth areas for expansion of sewer lines to assist with development
- ❖ Establish a Capital Improvements Plan for a detailed schedule of sewer system repairs and maintenance.

Infrastructure

Storm Sewer System

The city's storm sewer system primarily consists of open ditches and culverts throughout the community. As Shellsburg continues to grow, storm water management will become a greater concern for the city and its residents. State and Federal regulations also continue to increase with respect to managing storm water and associated erosion control.

All new developments should be required to provide storm water management facilities (i.e. drainage basins and other tools to assist with storm water runoff) to reduce potential adverse impacts due to flooding associated with the increased impervious areas development brings. In order to function properly, these facilities need regular maintenance, which can be both expensive and time consuming. Shellsburg should continue to review policies on storm water management practices to ensure that they are both effective and in accordance with current state regulations. Consideration should be given to such things as developing fewer and larger regional detention basins and requiring other practices that promote storm water infiltration (in lieu of or in addition to constructing small detention basins) such as rain gardens and amended soils.

Many surrounding communities have now adopted, or are currently considering, a storm water utility to help fund development and maintenance of these facilities. Shellsburg should consider if this is a feasible revenue source, particular as larger commercial properties are developed.

Over the course of the planning period, Shellsburg should monitor storm water drainage problems within the existing community and correct the problems as necessary. Storm water drainage issues were mentioned many times in the city-wide survey responses.

Infrastructure

Street System

The future street system of Shellsburg should be planned and developed on the basis of meeting future land use needs. A well-planned road system will be cost effective, as well as provide for the efficient movement of pedestrian and emergency traffic. The improvements to existing streets and the structure of proposed streets should be determined by addressing such issues as parking needs, sub-base soil types, traffic volumes and types, required speeds to reduce congestion and land use of adjacent properties.

For Shellsburg to grow successfully, new development, including new transportation routes, must be directed to achieve city land use goals and improve cross-community mobility. The city must maintain street continuity and convenient access to new neighborhoods, as well. Shellsburg is theoretically split in half due to the Railroad running east and west through the community. This limits the connectivity of the community and can be important when emergency vehicles need to cross the city. Therefore, it is important that new developments are linked to the existing community through connector streets, sidewalks or trails (see future trails shown on the Future Land Use Map on page 67).

The future street map of Shellsburg, as shown on the Future Land Use Map, is a conceptual plan for the logical extension of the street system around the community. The map is intended to be a guide for development and not a rigid blueprint. Traffic generators and traffic volume, as well as cross-city mobility should influence the development of future streets in Shellsburg.

As shown on the map, Shellsburg should plan on the creation of new streets the flow into new development areas and connect with the existing community. Note that only new collector streets and major extensions of current streets are shown on the Future Street Map. Minor collector and local streets should be planned to coordinate with the new major routes during the development process.

Infrastructure

Shellsburg has primarily two types of streets in the community: Collector and Local - they are defined in the appendix of this plan. The community does not have a traditional arterial street (highway, interstate or road which handles large amounts of traffic).

The streets identified as collector roadways (Main Street, 32nd Avenue) are primarily meant to serve through traffic. As adjacent land develops, so too will the demand for access onto these roadways. In order to preserve the capacity of the existing roadway network, it is important that accesses be strictly limited in both spacing and type. New accesses to major collector roadways should generally be limited. Exceptions may be made for certain private entrances that generate significant volumes of traffic and meet the required access spacing. Unless otherwise justified by a traffic study and approved by the City Engineer, access spacing for new access points along major arterial routes should be limited.

Future Street Projects

As shown on the Future Land Use Map, there are streets that the city should look at extending to assist with cross-city mobility and encouraging future development. Street extension priorities include:

- ❖ Pearl Street north into 32nd Avenue and extended into the future growth area
- ❖ Autumn Street east extended to 32nd Avenue
- ❖ Grand Avenue south and extended into the future growth area
- ❖ An east west running collector from Northgate development to the extended 32nd Avenue
- ❖ 2019 Pearl Street improvements on west side

Infrastructure

Sidewalks and Trails

Currently, the city has a growing, but incomplete sidewalk and trail system. A sidewalk system contributes to the ease of walking and daily interaction among neighbors. Sidewalks are also necessary to provide safe passage for pedestrians throughout a community. During the planning period, Shellsburg should strive to continue development of a sidewalk system which encompasses the entire community for walkability, safety and recreational opportunities.

Current design standards mandate that sidewalks be constructed in new subdivisions. City policies should generally include sidewalk construction to be included with reconstructed roadways. Over time, the city should work with property owners and extend the system throughout any area of town currently unserved by sidewalks. Other portions of existing sidewalks which are in disrepair should be fixed through a routine maintenance program. Besides being a nuisance, unkempt sidewalks are a health and safety issue. In addition, the application of ADA accessibility standards, as they relate to sidewalk facilities, has changed since some of the older portions of sidewalk were constructed. The city should work to bring older sections of sidewalk up to current requirements. Shellsburg should follow the trails and sidewalk map for specific, planned projects.

Trails are another popular attraction for growing communities. Trails are discussed more prominently in the next chapter of the plan. However, the Future Land Use Map shows proposed locations of a future trail system in Shellsburg.



Photo: City of Shellsburg

Infrastructure

Infrastructure Analysis

There are a variety of funding sources to assist and finance the development and improvement of the City's infrastructure system. For sewer and water projects, there are several grant and loan programs from the Iowa Departments of Economic Development and Natural Resources, including the CDBG, PFSA and SRF. For the transportation system, these sources would include: Road Use Tax fund, STP and TAP funding for eligible routes (allocated through the MPO), RISE grant and loan funds for economic development projects, and other categorical grant programs. The city should explore alternate grant programs to meet local needs.

In addition, the city should continue to modify and update its five year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). The CIP helps coordinate capital costs and financing while working towards the long term goals of the community.

Infrastructure Goals and Policies

The following policy statements are intended to provide the City of Shellsburg with guidance on infrastructure and public facilities issues:

Future Water System Recommendations

- ❖ Continue to monitor water use and revise projections as needed
- ❖ Study need for a back up well to assist main well should need arise
- ❖ Establish a Capital Improvements Plan for a detailed schedule of water system repairs, maintenance and capital costs

Infrastructure

Future Sewer System Recommendations

- ❖ Repair and replace sanitary service lines within the community
- ❖ Study future growth areas for expansion of sewer lines to assist with development
- ❖ Establish a Capital Improvements Plan for a detailed schedule of sewer system repairs and maintenance

Encourage the preservation of viable existing infrastructure

- ❖ Monitor storm water drainage problems within the community and correct as necessary
- ❖ Consider storm water management fees to pay for critical infrastructure projects
- ❖ Utilize State and Federal grant and loan assistance for infrastructure improvements

Promote the economical extension of new infrastructure and services

- ❖ Expand infrastructure systems into the economic development growth areas
- ❖ Ensure adequate infrastructure capacities for long-term potential growth
- ❖ Ensure adequate water pressure for fire protection (study recommended improvements including new source connections)
- ❖ Link new growth and development to the existing community and economic development growth areas
- ❖ Create a sidewalk and trail system which encompasses the entire community

Infrastructure



Photo: City of Shellsburg

Parks and Recreation

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Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation

Green Space and Park System Plan

Parks and public green space are vitally important to cities and their overall quality of life. They help contribute to a city's character with friendly, open environments. In addition, they also provide important active and passive recreational resources. The following section examines the city's park and recreational system, including all city-owned and operated facilities. In addition, this section will provide a vision for Shellsburg's open space and park system.

Increased recreational opportunities ranked high in the community-wide survey and town meetings for this plan. The maintenance of these public spaces and their extension into new sections of the community should be part of Shellsburg's future. As the city grows and takes advantage of new development opportunities, its park system will become important to unite the new residents with the established community.

Additionally, as Shellsburg grows, there will be a substantial need to expand public recreational activities. Families in the community will look to the city to provide safe and accessible services for both children and adults. New park areas can be established through provisions in the city's subdivision ordinance requiring park or open space in each new subdivision. The development of recreational facilities should include large park and open space areas with active recreational opportunities, along with small, neighborhood parks as defined later in this chapter.



Parks and Recreation

Park System Vision

A goal for Shellsburg's park system should be a network of open spaces which impact all parts of the community, connecting old and new neighborhoods with one another and with major activity centers. This vision would bridge barriers that otherwise might separate parts of the city from one another.

To accomplish this, the city should create a networked system of trails and sidewalks throughout the community. A system of this nature would link parks, neighborhoods and activity centers by a continuous system of trails, sidewalks and environmental corridors. Future trail possibilities are shown on the Future Land Use Map. As Shellsburg grows, new subdivisions should be linked to this trail or sidewalk system. The trail network could include on-street bikeways, trails through parks and school grounds, designated city sidewalks, and abandoned railroad right-of-way.

Because recreational trails are heavily used and involve only moderate costs to develop and maintain, they are one of the most cost efficient recreational investments a community can make. The City of Shellsburg, Benton County, the state Departments of Natural Resources, Transportation and Economic Development, along with private sponsors and developers could each play a role in creating a community-wide network of trails.

Parks and Recreation

In addition to linking Shellsburg parks and activity centers with trails and sidewalks, the city should also integrate new regional parks and open space into the community. As shown in the Land Use chapter of this plan, the city will need to create approximately eight acres of new park space to accommodate the population growth projected within the next 20 years. The new, regional parks should be linked to the city's trail and sidewalk system. The concept of a linked pedestrian system, connecting neighborhoods, natural areas and parks, schools, and activity centers would help establish a unified community.



Perhaps even more importantly, small neighborhood parks should be incorporated into each new subdivision. These areas, generally an acre or smaller, would provide open space for residents of each new subdivision. While they would not feature ball fields and other active recreational opportunities like the larger regional parks, the small, neighborhood parks would provide space for playgrounds, to run around and perhaps even a neighborhood picnic spot. These parks should also connect to the city's regional trail and sidewalk system.

Parks and Recreation

Park System Summary

Currently, the city's park system is just short of meeting the population's demand for recreation areas. The community-wide survey show favorable support for increased recreational opportunities in the city. As Shellsburg's population continues to grow, new parks and recreational activities must keep pace with development. It is the city's goal to create a network of both larger and small neighborhood parks and open space throughout the community. Then, the new parks should be linked to the existing sections of town by trails and/or sidewalks.

To assure adequate youth recreational opportunities, the city should designate a portion of each new regional park for active recreation. This includes neighborhood ball fields and practice fields for youth sports leagues.

Recreation opportunities will continue to influence a family's decision on where to live. Unfortunately, many communities pay limited attention to the recreational needs of its residents. Imaginative recreational opportunities can be both low cost and limited maintenance to the community. In turn, this investment should retain current residents and promote future growth. Expanded recreation opportunities should be a priority for Shellsburg.

Land Use

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Land Use

Land Use

Introduction

This chapter of the plan is focused on land use, both existing and future, within and around the City of Shellsburg. The intent is to provide a framework to guide and direct new development in the planning area. This should ensure that future development is consistent with the goals of the plan and paced in such a way as to not outstrip the city's ability to provide proper services.

The Land Use Plan is divided into two sections. The first describes useful tools for managing land use; the final section describes future policy directions in land use including the official Shellsburg Future Land Use Map.

Land Use Tools

Zoning and subdivision ordinances are two common regulatory land use tools for cities and counties to enforce community standards. Ordinances of this nature enable the implementation and enforcement of the policies and provisions contained in a comprehensive plan.

In any growing region, development pressures are usually the strongest at the edge of an already developed area. When allowed to go unregulated, this development pressure often causes undesirable results. The city, however, can utilize this plan to logically identify where appropriate growth areas should be planned for and use zoning and subdivision controls to guarantee the sound development of the city. The Land Use Chapter of the Shellsburg Plan will serve as a guide for future revisions of the city's development tools.

Land Use

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning is the most important tool to implement a comprehensive plan. This method works by regulating various aspects of how land may be used. Zoning's name is derived from dividing areas of a city into zones, or districts. Certain uses of land are permitted in each zone according to specific standards recommended by the planning and zoning commission and adopted by the City Council.

At the time of this plan's adoption, Shellsburg does not have a zoning ordinance in place. It is recommended that the city adopt a zoning ordinance to assist with future growth and help protect property values as the city develops. There are many resources to assist the community when preparing a zoning ordinance, including Iowa State University Extension's annual Planning and Zoning workshops as well as the East Central Iowa Council of Governments. It is recommended that the city send its staff, volunteers and elected officials to training workshops during this process.

In order to properly implement a zoning ordinance, the City Council will need to appoint a five member Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z), a five member Board of Adjustment (BoA) and utilize the services of a Zoning Administrator. In many small towns, the zoning administrator is the City Clerk or even the public works coordinator. The P&Z and BoA should both adopt administrative rules to codify the roles and responsibilities of these important volunteer boards.

The zoning ordinance is then prepared by the P&Z with any assistance necessary by agencies such as the East Central Iowa Council of Governments or a private planning consultant. The ordinance does not have to be a burdensome legal document. It can be short, with appropriate rules and regulations to help protect property values and provide consistent guidelines to promote city betterment. As with any ordinance, it is important during its preparation that the city utilize its city attorney for legal advice prior to its adoption along with utilizing any professional assistance as may be necessary to ensure a quality, local zoning ordinance.

Land Use

Subdivision Ordinance

A subdivision ordinance is a tool the city uses to enforce standards so that land subdivision occurs in a beneficial manner. The platting requirements in the Shellsburg subdivision ordinance specify the criteria for subdividing land throughout the community. Simply put, subdivision is a process in which land is legally described and is converted into building lots. It involves the division of a tract of land into smaller parcels and usually involves the creation of streets and other infrastructure improvements such as water and sewer systems, sidewalks, and street lighting. The subdivision ordinance is a very effective tool for enforcing growth policies.

Shellsburg should review and update its subdivision ordinance to be consistent with the goals and objectives contained in this Plan.

Annexation

Cities generally annex land to provide areas for growth, or for a particular public benefit such as managing land development around the city. For example, the city may desire to annex land at major entrances into the community to manage and/or influence the type of land uses that may develop there. Annexation may also occur if a municipality desires to prepare the area for development. The annexation process generally occurs when it is in the public interest to maintain local management over a parcel or tract of land. Annexation may be achieved voluntarily or involuntarily (with or without the explicit consent or request of the land owner).

Annexation for the City of Shellsburg will likely be needed during the life of this plan due to the projected growth rate and location of future growth areas. When considering annexation, the city must be able to pay for the services required by the residents in the new territory. Because residential land does not necessarily “pay for itself,” meaning the money received through property taxes may not be enough to pay for the services required, the fiscal context of annexation should be carefully examined. Services may include sewer, water, snow removal, road maintenance, police, and fire protection, garbage removal, and other costs generally associated with city services.

Land Use

The benefits of properly planned annexation include coherence and efficiency in the development of a community. Through orderly planned annexation, growth would then be encouraged in areas where services could be most readily extended, therefore minimizing costs.

In addition, proper public input from citizens of the city and the areas to be annexed must be sought. The city should establish an annexation committee (this could even be the city's Economic Development committee) to foster communication with landowners located within the growth areas. This committee would work with neighboring property owners to ensure that the owner's plans for the property are being met and that voluntary annexation will occur within the scope of the comprehensive plan.

The following are general policies of Shellsburg with respect to annexation:

- ❖ To gather proper public input and seek the use of voluntary annexation.
- ❖ To annex areas of land within the designated Growth Areas
- ❖ To annex areas where it is clearly desirable to square out boundaries for the purpose of greater efficiency or economy in providing municipal services
- ❖ To annex areas where annexation is determined to be in the best interest of the City and the owners of the annexed property
- ❖ To consider topography, water and drainage conditions, current land use, cost to City, and other features such as prime agricultural land when annexation is proposed

Future Directions in Land Use

This section of the plan will focus on the land use characteristics needed to support the projected population increase through the year 2030. In addition, it will project the community's probable housing demand and land requirements during the planning period.

For Shellsburg to accommodate growth successfully, it must determine the character of that growth and assure that it enhances rather than alters the sense of the community. In addition, the city must have adequate land available for the projected growth. Land use projections should anticipate future growth needs and permit a reasonable amount of flexibility to accommodate possible changes in trends.

As mentioned before, a community benefits from compact growth. When development occurs incrementally, contiguous to the edge of existing development, a town grows in a unified way. This method of incremental growth reduces costs associated with public infrastructure extensions (sewer, water, transportation), and allows for the efficient movement of pedestrians and emergency vehicles.

Land Use Projections

Past trends in land development rates provide guidance in determining how much land will be needed to accommodate future growth in Shellsburg (see the table on page 58). Projecting population, housing, and development trends of the last twenty years to 2030 would suggest 36 acres of additional residential land would be needed. This additional land would accommodate the community's anticipated housing needs up to the year 2030.

Land Use

As shown on the Future Land Use Map, the City's Growth Areas contains over 400 acres of potential residential land. Much of this land is either not ready for development (no infrastructure; not ready to sell) or is on undevelopable land (steep slopes; wooded; wetland). Therefore, the actually developable amount of acres is far less than 400. Still, this will provide the city with flexibility over the long-term should unanticipated, rapid growth occur.

Commercial and industrial land needs are more difficult to project. If the city aggressively pursues commercial or industrial development, possible projections could be skewed. Commercial and industrial development supplies cities with the resources necessary to provide services to the city's residents. It is important to provide a proper amount of land for business uses to serve the expected population. This includes promoting appropriate areas for commercial and industrial development.

For future recreation and open space needs, the Shellsburg Plan projects the city's future population at approximately 1,200 residents in 2030. This represents about 555 housing units by the end of the planning period – nearly 100 more units than the current housing stock. Based on a park dedication standard of 0.05 acres per unit, there should be approximately 30 acres of park and recreational space by 2030. Currently, there are three main parks in Shellsburg and a 17 acre natural area for a total of about 22 acres of park space. The City should look at creating an additional 8 acres by 2030.

As a general rule, 10 percent of developed land is consumed by rights-of-way; this includes space for the public utilities and infrastructure needed to serve each new development. That right-of-way number is included in the chart on the next page.

Land Use

Projected Land Use Needs by 2030, City of Shellsburg

Land Use	Projected Additional Needs (Acres)	
Residential	36	
Commercial / industrial	40	
Park/natural areas and open space	8	
Total Land Needs	84 acres	

Source: East Central Iowa Council of Governments

The above table displays the projected land use needs for Shellsburg by the year 2030. The total suggests over 80 acres of land will be needed to support the projected population increase. Future development outside the current city limits should be directed into the appropriate Future Growth areas as shown on the Future Land Use Map, using compact, contiguous development patterns. This approach will help to ensure cost-effective, efficient development that benefits the entire region.

Land Use

Future Growth Areas

The future growth areas for the City of Shellsburg are designated on the Future Land Use Map. They are split into three distinct phases. The first phase contains the city's primary growth area during the life of this plan. This area is within the current city limits and extends north. It is contiguous to existing development. It also has access to city water and sewer making it a prime development area.

Phase 2 is on the city's northwest side and just outside of the current city limits. The area does have access to city water and would be an extension of an existing development. Phase 3 is a long term growth area for the city and located just outside of the current city limits in three different areas. Although it is near existing development, it would be difficult to easily serve with water and sewer and should be considered as an area to develop when the first two phases are complete. They are shown on the map to provide flexibility should the city's population grows faster than projected.

If, during the life of this plan, trends or priorities change, the city should update its future growth area to include new annexation possibilities. By staying within the primary growth areas, the city will protect valuable environmentally sensitive ground and prime farmland from unwanted development, while meeting projected land use needs.

Also, as the city grows to the east, it may be important to work with the City of Palo in establishing a future boundary agreement, showing annexation boundaries for both cities.

Land Use

Future Land Use Recommendations

The following recommendations are listed in no particular order, and are presented as a guide for city officials in making decisions about future land use in Shellsburg. These recommendations correspond to the Future Land Use Map and respective growth areas.

Single-family development: The primary residential development in Shellsburg will likely be single-family development. The city-wide survey of residents suggested that the city should focus on starter single-family development to attract younger families. This housing type is recommended throughout the future growth area as shown as Residential on the Future Land Use Map.

In addition, any infill development within the built community, should focus first on single-family dwelling units. They could be located on vacant and already platted lots within the existing community wherever possible as well as within new development within the existing city-limits. In addition, the city should allow dilapidated houses to be razed and new housing development to take its place. Any new house should fit within the fabric of the existing neighborhood.

Multi-family development: Specific areas for multi-family development are not shown on the Future Land Use Map. However, appropriate mixed-use residential development can be an asset to a community.

With that in mind, the following general policies will help foster multi-family development throughout the residential growth areas:

- 1) Higher density multi-family residential development should buffer lower density single-family residential development from higher impact commercial or industrial uses.
- 2) Higher density multi-family residential development should buffer lower density single-family residential development from collector streets.

Land Use

Commercial development. This land use type should occur in three general areas of the city and correspond to the specific areas as shown on the Future Land Use Map:

- 1) Central Business District: uses of this natural should fit well within the established fabric of Pearl Street and the surrounding areas. Retail, restaurants, and other office type uses should be priorities in the central business district.
- 2) Commercial Street Area: Neighborhood scale business should be promoted within the context of this area. This development should generally be limited in size and operation to insure compatibility with adjacent residential neighborhoods. Uses in this area could include hardware stores, larger retail, agricultural uses and other uses that are generally accessed by vehicle.
- 3) Main Street West Area. This commercial / industrial corridor is located west of the current city limits and would provide an area for larger commercial and industrial uses. Larger retail, agricultural and trucking and other production type uses that are accessed only by vehicles would be the primary uses in this area.

Industrial development. This land use should occur within the confines of the Main Street West area as shown on the Future Land Use Map and discussed above. That area is intended to take advantage of Main Street and 32nd Avenue for easy transportation access. Shellsburg should ensure, through appropriate zoning standards that existing and future industrial use does not negatively impact surrounding uses.

Gateways. There are two major gateway entrances into Shellsburg as shown on the map. Care should be taken when growth is proposed in these areas to ensure quality development and uncluttered appearances. Attractive welcome signs should be coordinated in these areas to promote Shellsburg.

Land Use

The following are proposed land use policies that should be consulted when reviewing potential new developments within the City of Shellsburg:

- **Utilize compact, incremental development.** This development approach utilizes compact, contiguous, growth to maintain the small-town feel through traffic patterns, trails and sidewalks. When new development occurs, it should, wherever possible occur incrementally, or contiguous to existing development. This will have an effect of connecting parts of the older section of the community to the new developments.

Growth of this nature will reduce capital outlay and maintenance costs to the city by allowing short, economical extensions of municipal infrastructure (sewer, water, street, sidewalk, etc.) which serve the new neighborhoods. Incremental growth will also save open land and areas better suited for agricultural or other use. The city should ensure that each new development can reasonably flow into the existing community. This maintains street continuity as well as creating a sense of community between new development and the existing city.

Tools: Comprehensive Plan and future land use map, Zoning ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance

Key Players: City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Administrator

Land Use

- **Provide community recreational and open space.** This will lead to the protection of open space in and around the city as well as providing neighborhood recreation opportunities. In addition, the city should focus on preserving significant natural features of the landscape as permanent, common open space, including park space and trails along creeks and streams.

Current development patterns can lead to the degradation of the area's natural environment by subdividing all property into private lots. The city should ensure that open space and recreational areas are preserved and that future development is consistent with the small town feel of the city.

Tools: Land Use Plan, Subdivision Ordinance

Key Players: City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Engineer

- **Ensure proper storm drainage.** Each new development impacts existing development with storm water run-off. The city must ensure each new development disposes of storm water run-off through properly planned storm sewers, culverts and/or on site drainage ponds so as to have no impact with existing developments. In addition, there is currently a push to incorporate innovative "green" methods of storm water drainage that utilize rain gardens and other techniques to reduce storm water run-off.

Tools: Subdivision Ordinance, Design Standards

Key Players: City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Administrator, City Engineer, Public Works Coordinator

Land Use

- **Encourage pedestrian/bike trails and greenway linkages to existing trail systems.** Providing for the quality of life of Shellsburg residents should be a high priority of the city. Not only does an attractive trail system provide recreational opportunities for existing residents, it attracts new families as well. Shellsburg could start by requiring new developments to include trails, where appropriate, that could link up to existing trail systems in the county or a planned trail system within the city. The planned trail system within the city should link activity centers such as the school, parks and neighborhoods.

In addition, sidewalks also play an important role in pedestrian movement and daily interaction among neighbors. The city should continue to require that all new developments contain sidewalks for safety and recreational purposes that can be extended into any future or existing development as well as any potential trail system.

Tools: Design Standards, Subdivision Ordinance, Comprehensive Plan

Key Players: City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Engineer, Trail Groups

- **The transportation system should connect neighborhoods to one another.** Isolated subdivisions should be avoided by encouraging the use of alternatives to cul-de-sacs. Streets and sidewalks should connect with existing neighborhoods to maintain street continuity as well as creating a sense of community between new development and the existing city. In addition, convenient access to main activity centers should be provided.

Tools: Comprehensive Plan, Subdivision Ordinance

Key Players: City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Administrator

Land Use

Land Use Map

The future land use map is generalized, but indicates the relative size, and location of land required to accommodate future growth. This map should be consulted prior to any decision regarding a proposed development or a request for a change in zoning. Doing so adds validity to the Planning and Zoning Commission's and City Council's decisions when considering planning requests. This review, along with adopted procedural requirements of the Commission and Council, and those in the Code of Iowa, should assist the city when faced with a legal confrontation about zoning and land use decisions.

The Future Land Use Map contains the following land use designations for the future development of the City of Shellsburg:

Residential: This includes all uses of land for residential dwelling, including single-family and multi-family developments. Policies for specific locations of multi-family developments are on page 60.

Commercial: This category includes future commercial businesses around the community - where products, goods or services are sold and exchanged. Included are retail stores, business offices, service stations, amusement, food and other service establishments. These commercial uses are generally larger uses, supported by collector or arterial traffic.

Industrial: This category includes future industrial uses that involve the application of labor to materials to produce a product that is not normally sold to the ultimate consumer on the premises.

Park: This category includes property that serves the recreational needs of the residents of Shellsburg. This includes land that is maintained, generally, in its natural state, landscaped or otherwise, for recreational use.

Land Use Plan Analysis

This plan is intended to guide new development well into the 21st century. Its broad goals and objectives reflect the consensus of the Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council, and the citizens in and around Shellsburg. The policy directions are to serve as a general guideline for more specific action undertaken by the residents and government of the City. These recommendations look several years into the future with the expectation that periodic updates will need to be done to reflect changes in the City and the region.



Photo: City of Shellsburg

The city should be reminded that this plan does not establish any new ordinance or legislative mandate. The goals and policies contained in the plan 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.

Land use maps inserted here-----

Implementation and Administration

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Implementation and Administration

Implementation and Administration

Administration Background

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. However, if properly used, the policies and goals contained in the plan should provide the city with the flexibility to ensure each development fits with the overall vision of the community.

The goals, objectives and strategies on the following pages should reflect the day-to-day administration of Shellsburg. The planning process should be an ongoing endeavor. The success of this plan will require the support of city residents as well as the City Council. Cooperation from the public and private sectors will allow implementation of the goals and objectives that will provide long-term benefits to the entire city.



Unity Point Clinic groundbreaking. Photo from the City of Shellsburg

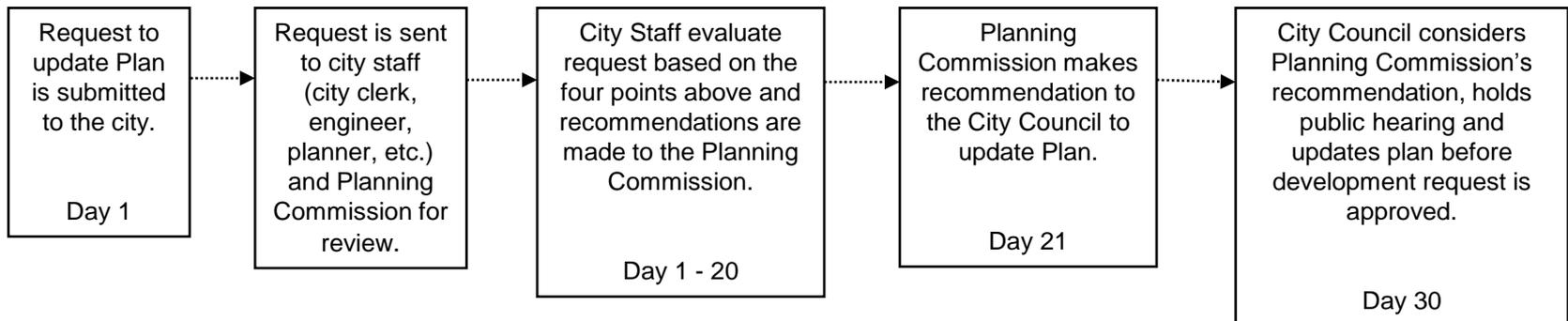
Implementation and Administration

Development Review

As mentioned, the plan should be used as a guide for future growth. However, 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:

- ❖ Consider overall city goals
- ❖ Consider general city objectives and strategies
- ❖ 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 Shellsburg, 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:



Implementation and Administration

Administration Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Based on input gathered during the planning process, the following goals, objectives and strategies were developed for the administration of the city.

Goals

- ❖ Promote collaboration between all private and public parties during planning and regulation creation
- ❖ Promote transparency, efficiency and consistent outcomes in all planning endeavors
- ❖ Encourage and utilize public participation during the creation or revision of planning regulations

Objectives

- ❖ Facilitate an environment that allows cooperative work among governmental, community and individual stakeholders during the planning and regulation process
- ❖ Plan for the projected needs of the community and provide governmental facilities to meet these needs
- ❖ Seek additional input and collaboration with regional development groups, Benton County and other local governments
- ❖ Provide advance notification to stakeholders regarding planning and regulation creation

Implementation and Administration

Implementation

Responsibility for adopting and implementing future planning initiatives remains with the community guided by its civic and elected leadership. Generally the following principles guide implementation priorities:

- ❖ Focus on strategies, initiatives and projects that will have the most impact on the community when completed.
- ❖ Move forward on strategies, initiatives and projects that can be completed quickly, have significant public support or have available funding. Completion of these initiatives or projects creates significant visibility and helps solidify community and political support for continued projects.

It is important to note that this plan does not establish any new ordinance or legislative mandate. The goals and policies contained in the plan 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 action steps contained in the plan.

This section 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. The schedule does not list ongoing policies or day-to-day actions the city should continuously undertake (i.e. maintenance of the city's street system). In this way, the schedule can be used to monitor the progress of the Plan. This is an important role of the update process that will be necessary to keep this document dynamic and up-to-date.

Implementation and Administration

Plan and Administration Sector						
Action	Ongoing	By 2020	By 2025	By 2030	Funding Options	Leadership / Action Coordinator
City Council and P&Z to meet annually to review plan goals and policies.	❖				General Funds Zoning Fees	City Council Planning & Zoning Commission
Plan for approximately 555 housing units.				❖		City Council Planning & Zoning Commission
Plan for a population of approximately 1,200 by 2030.				❖		City Council Planning & Zoning Commission
Update the city's website for expanded community-wide benefit and economic development potential		❖			General Funds Local Business Donations	City Council Economic Development Group

Implementation and Administration

Economic Development Sector						
Action	Ongoing	By 2020	By 2025	By 2030	Funding Options	Leadership / Action Coordinator
Create local economic development group		❖			Grants Donations	City Council
Market Shellsburg and available business opportunities to the region.	❖				General Funds Local Business Donations	Ec. Dev. Group City Council
Offer appropriate incentives for businesses (i.e. tax rebates, small grants)	❖				General Funds Local Business Donations	Ec. Dev. Group City Council
Adopt a Strategic Economic Development Plan		❖			General Funds Local Business	Ec. Dev. Group Business Leaders City Council

Implementation and Administration

Economic Development Sector						
Action	Ongoing	By 2020	By 2025	By 2030	Funding Options	Leadership / Action Coordinator
Establish a brand for marketing Shellsburg		❖			Grants Donations	City Council Ec. Dev. Group
Establish economic development website for Shellsburg		❖			General Funds Local Business Donations	Ec. Dev. Group City Council
Preserve and enhance the downtown district	❖				General Funds Local Business Grants	Ec. Dev. Group Business Leaders City Council
Work with the Benton Development Group and the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance	❖				General Funds Local Business Donations	Ec. Dev. Group Business Leaders City Council

Implementation and Administration

Infrastructure Sector						
Action	Ongoing	By 2020	By 2025	By 2030	Funding Options	Leadership / Action Coordinator
Extend infrastructure systems into appropriate economic development growth areas	❖				General Funds G.O. bonds Revenue bonds	City Council City Engineer
Plan for recommended water and sewer system improvements				❖	General Funds	City Council City Engineer
Address parking issues in the Central Business District			❖		General Funds G.O. bonds Grants	City Council City Engineer Property owners
Implement city's sidewalk and trail system plan				❖	General Funds G.O. bonds Grants Donations	City Council City Engineer Property owners

Implementation and Administration

Infrastructure Sector						
Action	Ongoing	By 2020	By 2025	By 2030	Funding Options	Leadership / Action Coordinator
Consider regional detention basins for stormwater management	❖				General Funds G.O. bonds Stormwater management fees	City Council City Engineer
Extend future streets as shown on page 41				❖	General Funds G.O. bonds TIF funds Developers	City Council City Engineer
Link new development to the existing community and economic development growth areas through planned street, sidewalk and trail extensions	❖				General Funds Developers TIF funds	City Council City Engineer Developers
Repair and replace deteriorated sanitary sewer lines within the city				❖	General Funds G.O. bonds TIF funds	City Council City Engineer

Implementation and Administration

Parks and Recreation Sector						
Action	Ongoing	By 2020	By 2025	By 2030	Funding Options	Leadership / Action Coordinator
Focus on the creation of several small, neighborhood park areas, where appropriate as subdivisions are proposed	❖				General Funds Developers	City Council Local developers
Develop 8 acres of new park space within the community				❖	General Funds G.O. bonds Grants Donations	City Council Local developers Planning & Zoning Commission
Promote walkability with expanded trail and sidewalk opportunities	❖				General Funds Grants Donations	City Council Local developers Planning & Zoning Commission

Implementation and Administration

Land Use Sector						
Action	Ongoing	By 2020	By 2025	By 2030	Funding Options	Leadership / Action Coordinator
Create and implement a zoning ordinance.		❖			General funds	Planning & Zoning Commission City Council
Focus new growth and annexations in the Future Growth Areas on the Future Land Use Map.	❖					City Council Planning & Zoning Commission
Support single-family residential development in appropriate locations as the primary residential development type	❖				Developers	City Council Planning & Zoning Commission Developers
Establish a growth boundary and annexation agreement with the City of Palo			❖		General funds	City Council Planning & Zoning Commission

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Appendix

Glossary of Terms

Aesthetic: The perception of elements in the natural or created environment that are pleasing to the eye.

Amenity: A natural or created feature that enhances the aesthetic quality, visual appeal or makes more attractive a particular property, place or area.

Annexation: To incorporate a land area currently outside of the existing city limits into a municipality, with a resulting expansion in the boundaries of the municipality.

Arterial Street: See *Street System Hierarchy*

Buffering: The Plan calls for buffering between different land uses to minimize negative impacts. Buffering can include open space, landscaped areas, fences, walls, berms or any combination thereof to physically separate or screen one use or property from another. In designing buffers, the city's zoning ordinance should allow flexibility for the type and size of the buffer.

Built Environment: Artificially created fixed elements, such as buildings, structures, devices and surfaces, which together create the physical character of an area.

Capital Improvements Plan: A local government's timetable or schedule of all future capital improvements to be carried out during a specific period and generally listed in order of priority, with cost estimates and sources of financing each project. A typical capital improvements plan is a five-year program. A capital improvement is generally a major construction project or the acquisition of large, expensive equipment.

Circulation: Systems and structures for the movement of people, goods, water, sewage, air or power by such means as sidewalks, trails, streets, highways, waterways, towers, pipes and conduits.

Collector Street: See *Street System Hierarchy*

Contiguous: Having a common boundary, next to, abutting or touching an adjoining property.

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Density: The number of housing units or structures allowed per unit of land. In Shellsburg, current allowable density is approximately three housing units per acre or less.

Design Standards: A set of guidelines defining parameters to be followed in site and/or building design and development. Can also be used to define standards for infrastructure improvements as well.

Development: The physical construction of buildings and/or the preparation of land. Development activities include: subdivision of land; construction or alternation of structures, roads, utilities and other facilities; installation of septic systems; grading; and clearing of natural vegetative cover (with the exception of agricultural activities).

Environmentally Sensitive Land: An area with one or more of the following characteristics: (1) steep slopes, (2) flood plain, (3) soils with high water tables including wetlands and wetlands transition areas, (4) soils that are highly erodible or subject to erosion, (5) land incapable of meeting percolation requirements, (6) stream or river corridor, (7) mature stands of native vegetation, and (8) habitats of endangered species.

Floodplain: The land area on either side of the banks of a waterway subject to flooding.

Fringe-area agreements: See *Intergovernmental Agreement*

Future Growth Area: The corridors that define the potential growth area for the city. The corridors, as shown on the Future Land Use Map, can be generally described as where development outside of the City limits should be directed. Also called Urban Service Areas or areas that define the geographical limit of government-supplied public facilities and services.

Goal: Description of a desired state of affairs for the community in the future. Goals are the broad public purposes toward which policies and programs are directed. Generally, more than one set of actions (objectives) may be required to achieve each goal.

Green Space: See *Open Space*

Growth Management: A wide-range of techniques used in combination to manage or influence the amount, type, location, density, timing and/or rate of growth. Growth management objectives often form the backbone of a comprehensive plan. Techniques used to execute growth management policies may include: zoning and subdivision ordinances, capital improvements, and designation of future growth or urban service boundaries.

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IDNR: The Iowa Department Of Natural Resources

IDOT: The Iowa Department of Transportation

IEDA: The Iowa Economic Development Authority

Incremental Design: Method of development to maintain small town atmosphere and reducing sprawl by utilizing compact, contiguous growth to existing development.

Infrastructure: Public services and facilities needed to sustain residential, commercial, industrial and all other types of development activities. Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to sewage disposal systems, water supply systems, drainage systems, roads, parks, sidewalks, trails, schools, libraries, fire, police, emergency, medical facilities and public works facilities.

Intergovernmental Agreement (28E Agreement): A legal document binding two or more governmental units or agencies to act in certain, cooperative ways. The term is most often used in a planning context to refer to shared or delegated responsibility to review development proposals and/or to recognize adopted plans and policies of the governmental units or agencies. For example, the City of Shellsburg and Benton County might create an intergovernmental agreement which requires each entity to provide materials on development proposals within certain geographic areas for the other entity to review and comment upon. Also called fringe-area agreements.

Issues: Points of debate, discussion or dispute in the community that are identified in the plan and are dealt with by the plan's goals, policies and objectives.

Land Use: A description of how land is occupied or utilized. Land use types typically include: various types of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and public uses.

Local Street: See *Street System Hierarchy*

Mixed-Use District: The development of a tract of land with a variety of complementary and integrated uses in a compact urban form. Mixed use within Shellsburg could include a combination of properly planned commercial and light industrial uses to ensure compatibility between each use.

Multi-modal Transportation: A term for the variety of transportation types, including motor vehicles, mass-transit, and pedestrian oriented (i.e. walking and bicycling).

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Neighborhood: An area of a community with characteristics that distinguish it from other areas that may include distinct ethnic or economic characteristics, housing types, or boundaries defined by physical barriers such as a major highway or river.

Neighborhood Commercial: Small-scale business activity that is limited in size and operation to insure compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods and uses. It is generally within walking distance to local residential neighborhoods.

Objective: Individual accomplishments which, taken together, will enable the city to achieve stated goals.

Open Space: Any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purposes of (1) the preservation of natural resources, (2) outdoor recreation (active or passive), or (3) public health or safety. Land used for the managed production of resources (farming, etc.) is not considered open space for the purpose of this plan.

Plan: The formulation and graphic representation of the means to reach a desired end, as well as the act of preparing a plan (community input, research and analysis). The Shellsburg Plan is a written and graphic analysis of a desirable and feasible pattern of growth with goals and objectives to best serve the residents of the community. This plan is based on the input of the community and upon data and extensive research.

Planning Area: The area specifically shown on the Future Land Use Map contained in this plan. It can be generally described as all the land within the corporate boundaries of Shellsburg, as well as all the land within two miles surrounding the community. This is the area that directly influences the character, services and facilities of the City of Shellsburg. This area may be amended from time to time as the city physically grows.

Planning Period: The period for which the projections and the goals and objectives of this plan were made (from the year 2018 to 2030).

Policy: Statements of government intent for which individual actions and decisions are evaluated.

Region: The region designated by the Iowa Legislature as State Planning Area 10. This region consists of six contiguous counties in eastern Iowa, including: Benton, Iowa, Linn, Jones, Johnson, and Washington, which are served by the planning agency East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG).

Appendix

Sense of Place: The characteristics of a location that make it readily recognizable as being unique and different from its surroundings.

Setback: The distance between the permitted structure and the lot line. In Shellsburg, the setback is regulated for the front, rear and side yards of principal and accessory uses.

Smart Planning: The State of Iowa has adopted Smart Planning principles and elements that cities and counties should consider when preparing plans and reviewing development proposals.

Strategy: Tasks that may be taken to achieve stated goals and policies.

Streetscape: All the elements that constitute the physical makeup of a street and that, as a group, define its character, including building frontage, paving, street furniture, landscaping (trees and other plantings), awnings and marquees, signs and lighting.

Street System Hierarchy: The Shellsburg street system generally consists of three functional uses of streets: Arterial, Collector and Local streets. Arterial Streets provide a continuous route for the movement of large volumes of through-traffic across and beyond the city and between high traffic generation points. Collector Streets provide movement of traffic between arterial streets as well as providing limited access to abutting property. Local streets serve as a means of access to abutting property.

Urban Design: The process of organizing the contextual elements of the built environment such that the end result will be a place with its own character or identity. Also, urban design can be described as planning the development of the built environment in a comprehensive manner to achieve a unified, functional, efficient and appealing physical setting.

Urban Sprawl: Uncontrolled growth, usually low-density in nature, in previously rural areas and some distance from existing development and infrastructure.

Use: The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, moved, altered, and/or enlarged in accordance with the zoning ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use categories.

Zoning: The delineation of districts and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings.

Appendix

Community Input 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.

Therefore, the City of Shellsburg held a town meeting to attract public input for the city's first comprehensive plan. The meeting was held on Thursday, October 26, 2017. There was tremendous attendance at the event with nearly 90 residents taking part.

The meeting was an interactive planning session with the residents taking part to begin to identify a future vision for the community. The session involved breaking into small groups identifying and prioritizing positive qualities that need to be maintained, as well as future concerns or challenges that need to be addressed. This exercise was held at the beginning of the planning 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.

The results of the town meeting were used by the planning committee to assist them in the formulation of this plan. Because of the amount of data received during the three town meetings, the results are not included in this document. They will be made available at city hall and on the city's website. Many thanks to all those that took part in the town meetings.

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In addition, a survey was sent out to every address in the community along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the survey. All told, it was sent to over 400 addresses with 158 surveys returned. This represents nearly a 40% response rate – a tremendous response, indicating the value Shellsburg residents place on planning.

Due to the voluminous nature of the survey results and the written public comments gathered in the survey, they are not being included in the plan. The survey results and all public comments will be made available at city hall and on the city's website. The information gathered from the survey was instrumental in the creation of this comprehensive plan. ECICOG thanks all the respondents who are a large part of this plan.

Appendix

Notes