



# THE OSKALOOSA PLAN

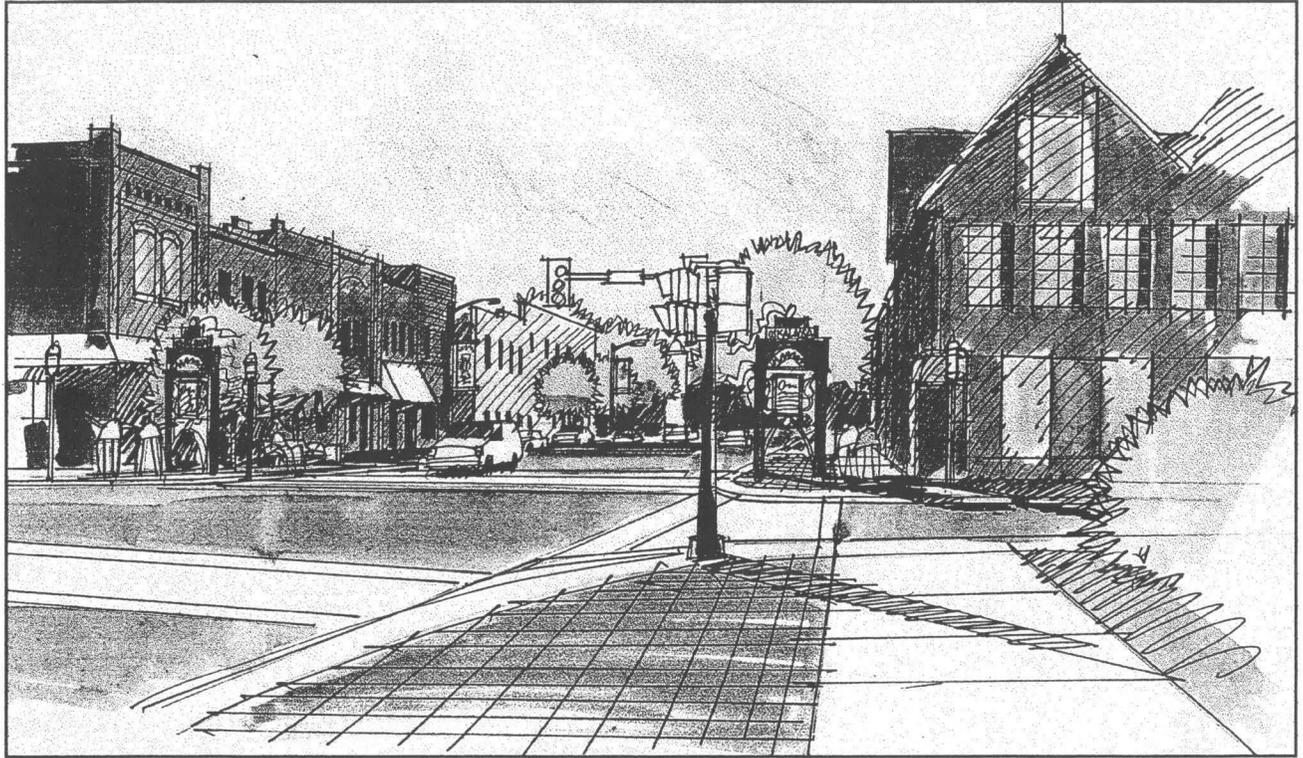
A Comprehensive Plan  
for the  
City of Oskaloosa, Iowa

March 6, 2000

**RDG**

**Renaissance Design Group**  
RDG Crose Gardner Shukert  
Town Planners  
Omaha and Des Moines





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# THE OSKALOOSA PLAN

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## Mayor

Thomas J. Rielly

## City Council

Jimmy Carter  
Eric Palmer  
Del Brackney  
Michael Stout  
Keith Garrett  
David Krutzfeldt  
Kellene Minter

## Planning and Zoning Commission

Tom Gay  
Donna Leech  
Dave Warwick  
Lynn Howard  
Sandra Boender  
Nick Messamer  
Joseph Caligiuri

## City Manager

Donald Sandor

## Public Works Director

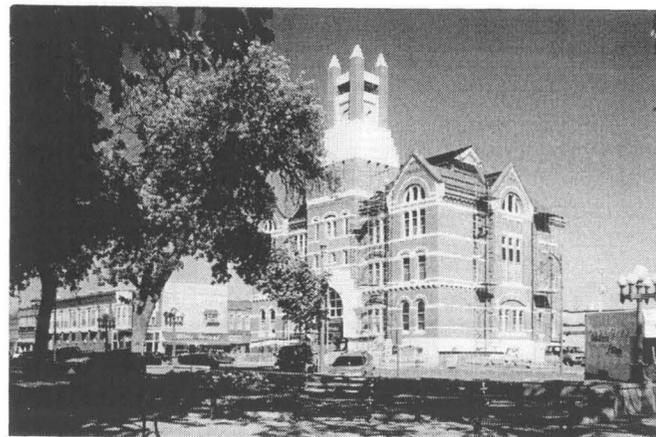
Larry Stevens

## Community Development Director

Randall Irwin

## Plan Steering Committee

Gary Engel	Keith Ponder	Robert Wersen
Gregg Drije	John Fallon	Dr. Tucker Lillis
Robert Lehman	David Ruter	John Barkett
Perry Thostenson	Richard Venter	Robert Nielsen
Randy Horn	Dennis Neff	Richard Emerson
Robert Lynn	Diane Crookham-	Robert DeCook
Jim Zimmerman	Johnson	Lance Grotwold
Dick Janousek	Charles Russell	Beryl Jones
Kelly Minter	Lynn Howard	Larry Stevens
Randall Irwin	John Fisher	



We would like to express our appreciation for the insight, participation, and patience of Donald Sandor, Randall Irwin, and Larry Stevens. The success of this plan owes a great deal to them. We are also grateful for the efforts and commitment of Oskaloosa's Planning and Zoning Commission, Mayor Thomas Rielly, and the members of the Planning Committee, all of whom help to make Oskaloosa a great community.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>An Introduction to the Oskaloosa Plan</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A Profile of Oskaloosa</b>	<b>7</b>
- Population History	7
- Population Projections	10
<b>Community Growth and Land Use</b>	<b>15</b>
- Goals	15
- Existing Land Use	17
- Land Use Projections	19
- City Development Concept: Basic Principles	25
- Land Use Plan	27
- <i>Existing Land Use</i>	<i>following 18</i>
- <i>Development Policy Zones</i>	<i>following 28</i>
- <i>Development Concept</i>	<i>following 30</i>
- <i>Oskaloosa Gateway Concept</i>	<i>following 38</i>
- <i>Future Land Use Plan</i>	<i>following 44</i>
<b>Mobility and the City Environment</b>	<b>51</b>
- Goals	52
- Structure of Street Network	53
- Street Capacity Analysis	54
- Transportation Plan	58
- <i>1994 Traffic Flow</i>	<i>following 54</i>
- <i>Transportation Plan Map: Freeway Bypass Option</i>	<i>following 60</i>
<b>A Green Network</b>	<b>69</b>
- Park System Goals	69
- Park Analysis and Needs	71
- Park Development Plan	77
- <i>Parks and Greenways Concept</i>	<i>following 84</i>

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Quality Public Services</b>	<b>87</b>
- Public Services Goals	87
- Public Facilities	88
- Wastewater System	100
- Storm Drainage	101
- Water Distribution System	101
- Solid Waste	102
- Infrastructure Priorities	103
- <i>Wastewater System Map</i>	<i>following 102</i>
<b>A Vital City Center</b>	<b>115</b>
- Goals	116
- Existing Conditions	118
- Land and Building Use	118
- Transportation and Circulation	119
- Parking	122
- Downtown Plan	125
- <i>Main Street Oskaloosa Plan</i>	<i>following 134</i>
<b>Housing and Neighborhoods</b>	<b>145</b>
- Housing and Neighborhood Goals	145
- Housing Characteristics	147
- Housing Conditions	148
- Housing and Neighborhood Strategies	150
<b>A Renewed Economy</b>	<b>157</b>
- Current Conditions	157
- Economic Development Directions	158

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE OSKALOOSA PLAN



**O**SKALOOSA has traditionally been the civic, commercial, and retail center of its surrounding area. The city now must place itself in a position to take advantage of a new era of growth, generated by a healthier regional economy and an increasing national interest in community quality.

The Oskaloosa Plan provides a comprehensive vision of the city's future, based on taking strategic actions to preserve the small city quality of life while taking full advantage of its growth potential.



Iowa's cities live in a changing social and economic environment. The City of Oskaloosa reached about 90% of its current population by the turn of the century. After about 90 years of near population stability, the city has begun to grow once again during the 1990s. As America enters the twenty-first century, many predict that the next focus of community growth will be the high-quality medium-sized town, with its combination of opportunities, values, and civic character. As Oskaloosa enters the next century, it finds itself with many of the prerequisites for growth. The city must position itself to take advantage of this new opportunity, while at the same time identifying and preserving those features which make the city uniquely attractive. *The objective of this comprehensive plan is to help Oskaloosa identify the policies and make the investments necessary to encourage growth while maintaining its unique community character.*

A comprehensive development plan has three fundamental purposes. These include:

- Providing an essential legal basis for land use regulation such as zoning and subdivision control,
- Presenting a unified and compelling vision for a community, derived from the aspirations of its citizens, and

## INTRODUCTION

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- Defining the specific actions necessary to fulfill that vision.

### THE LEGAL ROLE

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Communities prepare and adopt comprehensive plans for legal purposes. Section 409 of the Code of Iowa enables cities to adopt zoning and subdivision ordinances to promote the "health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the community." Land use regulations such as zoning ordinances recognize that people in a community live cooperatively and have certain responsibilities to one another. These regulations establish rules that govern how land is developed within a municipality and its extra-territorial jurisdiction.

However, in Iowa as in most other states, cities may not adopt land use ordinances without first adopting a comprehensive development plan. This requirement derives from the premise that land use decisions should not be arbitrary, but should follow an accepted and reasonable concept of how the city should grow. The Oskaloosa Plan provides the ongoing legal basis for the city's authority to regulate land use and development.

### THE COMMUNITY BUILDING ROLE

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A comprehensive development plan has an even more significant role in the growth of a community. The plan establishes a vision of Oskaloosa's future, based on the participation of residents in the planning of their community. This vision is particularly crucial at this time in the community's history, as problems such as economic development, infrastructure development and finance, and the maintenance of a unified community affect the city's character, central districts, and economic health. Beyond defining a vision, the plan presents a unified action program that will implement the city's goals. The plan is designed as a working document - a document that both defines the future and provides a working program for realizing the city's great potential.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

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The Oskaloosa Plan is the result of a planning process that involved citizens of the city to define its future. This process was coordinated by a Planning Coordinating Committee, representing a wide variety of interests in the community. The first part of the process involved a three-part strategic planning program, designed to assess the city's current position; establish visions and goals for Oskaloosa's twenty-year future; and consider an action program necessary to achieve that vision. Members of the community were invited to participate in the strategic planning process through a series of community workshops.

### COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

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Participants in the planning process were asked to define the most important issues and qualities of Oskaloosa.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR ISSUES

In assessing the city's situation, participants defined the most important issues that would face Oskaloosa within the next five to ten years. Participants identified the following issue areas as most crucial to the city:

- *Economic development*, including:

- Retention and growth of the retail community.
- Industrial development and job attraction.
- Quality of jobs.
- Opportunities to retain young people in the labor force.

- *Planning and growth-related issues*, including:

- Development around the Highway 163 loop.
- Overall plan and context for growth.
- Development in new and future annexed areas.
- Development quality at city entrances.

## INTRODUCTION

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- *Infrastructure and public facilities*, including:

- Infrastructure development.
- Elimination of truck traffic downtown.

- *Government*, including:

- Financial health.
- Debt levels.
- Efficiencies and tax levels.

- *Quality and affordability of housing*.

- *Education*, including:

- Quality of educational experience.
- Need for new elementary schools.

- *Improvement of recreational programs and facilities*.

### IDENTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

In addressing these vital issues, participants in the planning process identified the following as key community strengths:

- A sound educational system.
- William Penn College.
- People with a strong commitment to the community.
- The George Daily Trust, providing a source of financing for vital community projects.
- Good public services, including the expanded library.
- A positive quality of life.
- A strong, unified economic development agency, incorporating the Chamber and economic development corporation.
- A diverse economic and industrial base.
- A convenient location.
- Good regional recreational facilities.

On the other hand, participants identified the following issues as important liabilities or problems:

- A relatively old housing supply, experiencing

signs of deterioration.

- Lack of economic opportunity.
- Relative inability to attract young people.
- Lack of a shared vision.
- Negative community attitudes.
- Poor physical facilities and infrastructure.
- High city debt.
- A stagnant retail community.
- An aging population.
- Poor internal traffic flow and circulation.

### THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: APPROACH AND FORMAT

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The comprehensive plan presents a strategy-oriented approach to the future development of Oskaloosa. The plan includes eight chapters, corresponding to the city's most important physical development issues. Many of the traditional sections of a comprehensive plan, such as land use, housing, infrastructure, and transportation, recur throughout the plan, because of their impact on other areas. This enables the plan to tell the story of the city's future development and presents an integrated program for the city's growth.

### THEMES WITHIN THE OSKALOOSA PLAN

The overriding focus of the Oskaloosa Plan, based on the deliberations of the Planning Coordinating Committee and the results of the community workshops, is how to position the city to take advantage of new growth opportunities, while enhancing its traditional character. Such a plan should improve traffic mobility, housing opportunity, potential for business growth, and recreational activities while reinforcing Oskaloosa's traditional features and distinctive image and character. The ultimate goal is to create a unified, financially sound city that takes best advantage of its major growth opportunities. The chapters of the Oskaloosa Plan include:

- 1. A Profile of Oskaloosa**, presenting an analytical view of the city's people and economy.

## INTRODUCTION

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**2. Growth and Land Use** examines development demands and projects the amount of residential, commercial and industrial land needed for the next twenty years. It presents an inventory of existing land use patterns, along with detailed strategies to guide future growth in new development areas. This section presents a Development Concept which illustrates the basic principles for growth in the city and a Future Land Use Plan. These plans provide the frameworks which guide development of other important community systems. This section also includes recommendations for improved land development regulations, designed to promote quality development while providing flexibility and predictability for developers and builders.

**3. Transportation to Build Community** details the transportation framework needed to assure that as Oskaloosa grows, all parts of the city remain linked to one another and to the larger metropolitan region.

**4. A Green Network** describes Oskaloosa's parks and outdoor recreation facilities and establishes a concept for a "green network," a linked park system that provides an open space framework for the city.

**5. Quality Public Services** examines the quality of public facilities and infrastructure within Oskaloosa. Facilities discussed in this chapter include City Hall, the library, city maintenance shops, and public safety buildings serving fire protection and law enforcement. These facilities are vital to the city's ability to support growth and serve present and future residents. It includes a detailed assessment of each public facility and major infrastructure system and provides a program for infrastructure and facility development.

**6. A Vital City Center** proposes an innovative development program for the city's traditional center, a distinctive place that remains an active mixed use center. This theme analyzes downtown, and presents a multi-faceted downtown development program that includes the public environment, re-

development opportunities, and management strategies designed to improve the district's attractive environment.

**7. Housing and Neighborhoods** examines housing needs in Oskaloosa and proposes programs to address the ongoing health of Oskaloosa's residential areas.

**8. Economic Development**, considering economic development priorities and directions for Oskaloosa.

**9. Implementing the Plan** draws together the analysis and policies of the plan into a program for implementation. It summarizes the recommendations and development policies of the plan, and presents an Implementation Schedule, listing proposed projects and the time-frame for their completion.

# INTRODUCTION

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1



# A PROFILE OF OSKALOOSA:

## Major Population and Economic Factors



**O**SKALOOSA originally grew from a point on the 1835 Dragoon Trail, as part of an 1835 US Army effort to locate a new site for Fort Des Moines. On June 17, 1835, the Dragoons built a stockade at the present day intersection of D Street and High Avenue West. In 1844, William Canfield built a trading post on the Des Moines River and built the first house in the city. Railroad construction accelerated the growth of the townsite, as the Des Moines Valley railroad (later the Rock Island) reached the area in 1864. By 1870, Oskaloosa had achieved a population of about 3,200, making it the largest settlement in the surrounding area. The opening of coal mining in the surrounding area and the settlement of the rural environment around the city also secured its role as a significant regional center. The city's rapidly achieved a mature population of 9,200, about 90% of its current population level.

This section examines important demographic and regional trends that will affect Oskaloosa as it plans for its future.



### POPULATION HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

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Oskaloosa's early settlement and growth was largely based on four events or trends -- the completion of railroad service in 1864, the establishment of the Mahaska County seat, the opening of the surrounding area to coal mining, and the settlement of the rich agricultural trade area around the new city. This produced a trend toward rapid and steady population growth to the year 1900. This pattern was displayed by other south-central Iowa communities that benefitted from excellent railroad access, such as Ottumwa.

Oskaloosa's population reached a plateau of slow growth, which continued relatively unaffected by depression, wars, or other major national events. By 1950, the city's population stood at 11,124 and grew to a peak of 11,224 in 1970. Since then, the city's population declined slowly, with a steady aging of population and apparent out-migration of younger families. A 1996 population estimate places the city's current population at 10,594, or about the same as its 1990 level. An earlier, 1994 estimate displayed significant growth since 1990.

Table 1-1 tracks the population trajectory of Oskaloosa and other regional communities since 1930.

## POPULATION CHANGE

- Oskaloosa grew very slowly between 1930 and 1970. Since 1970, the city has experienced a slow population loss, which seems to have stabilized during the 1990s.

- Oskaloosa reached population maturity earlier than other towns in the immediate region, most notably Pella and Knoxville. Therefore, its population curve is that of a stable, mature town.

### POPULATION DYNAMICS

Population change in a community is explained by two factors:

- A comparison of births and deaths.
- Migration Patterns.
- Annexation.

These population projections use the cohort-survival method to develop projections. This technique “ages” the population to determine how many people of a given five-year cohort will survive to be counted within each subsequent five-year period. It also adds births, based on birth rates for individual child-bearing age cohorts developed by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. This information is used to compare predicted with actual population characteristics for Oskaloosa in 1990, illustrating population dynamics in the

city during the 1980s. It leads to the following conclusions:

- Oskaloosa experienced significant out-migration among younger adults during the 1980s. This was particularly evident among people aged 20 through 34 in 1980, underscoring concerns about economic opportunities failing to retain young people.

- Mature families (people ranging from 35 to 50 years in 1990) displayed a high level of stability.

- Seniors, most notably people over age 70 in 1980, were not attracted to Oskaloosa. This is unusual for a large regional trade center and may reflect a lack of senior housing opportunities.

### AGE CHARACTERISTICS

These changes in Oskaloosa’s population make-up led to the following changes in the overall age and household composition of the city's population:

- The median age of Oskaloosa’s population has risen during the 1980s, increasing from 33 in 1980 to 34.9 in 1990.

- Despite aging in the population, this relatively low rate of increase in median age reflects the lower than expected

**TABLE 1-1: POPULATION CHANGE: OSKALOOSA AND OTHER REGIONAL CITIES, 1930-1996**

	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1996 Est	% Change 1950-70	% Change 1970-90
Oskaloosa	10,123	11,024	11,124	11,053	11,224	10,989	10,600	10,594	+0.90	-5.56
Ottumwa	28,075	31,570	33,631	33,871	29,610	27,381	24,488	24,187	-11.96	-17.30
Pella	3,326	3,638	4,427	5,198	6,668	8,349	9,270	9,642	+50.62	+39.02
Knoxville	4,697	6,936	7,625	7,817	7,755	8,143	8,232	8,312	+1.70	+6.15
Newton	11,560	10,462	11,723	15,381	15,619	15,292	14,799	15,116	+33.23	-5.25
Des Moines	142,559	159,819	177,965	208,982	201,404	191,003	193,189	193,422	+13.17	-5.08
Indianola	3,488	4,123	5,145	7,062	8,852	10,843	11,340	12,574	+72.05	+28.11

Source: Census Services, Iowa State University

## POPULATION CHANGE

population of seniors in 1990.

- Oskaloosa continues to be a relatively young community, and an attractive living environment for families with young children.

- The size of Oskaloosa's households has remained rela-

tively steady during the last ten years, declining slightly to 2.33 in 1990 from 2.34 in 1980.

**TABLE 1-2: PREDICTED AND ACTUAL POPULATION, OSKALOOSA, 1980-1990**

	1980	1990	Change	%
Predicted Population (based on survival and birth rates)	10,989	11,241	+252	2.29
Actual Population	10,989	10,632	-357	-3.25

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1998.

**TABLE 1-3: PREDICTED AND ACTUAL POPULATION BY AGE COHORTS, 1980-1990**

Age Group	1980 actual	1990 pred.	1990 actual	(Actual) - (Pred)	% variance: actual/pred.
Under 5	745	795	738	-57	-7.17
5-9	679	775	744	-31	-4.00
10-14	682	742	722	-20	-2.70
15-19	932	677	735	+58	+8.57
20-24	1149	678	848	+170	+25.07
25-29	893	923	738	-185	-20.04
30-34	687	1135	798	-337	-29.69
35-39	505	881	742	-139	-15.78
40-44	415	676	617	-59	-8.73
45-49	423	494	496	+2	+0.40
50-54	554	401	408	+7	+1.75
55-59	633	401	389	-12	-2.99
60-64	591	509	509	0	0
65-69	587	555	587	+32	+5.77
70-74	427	484	511	+27	+5.58
75-79	383	428	413	-15	-3.50
80+	704	685	637	-58	-7.00
Total	10,989	11,241	10,632	-607	-5.42

## POPULATION CHANGE

**TABLE 1-4: POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 1990-2020**

	1990 (Actual)	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	% Change
No migration	10,632	10,650	10,688	10,720	10,737	10,756	10,775	1.17
-2% migration	10,632	10,544	10,475	10,401	10,313	10,229	10,144	-3.79
-4% migration	10,632	10,437	10,264	10,089	9,903	9,722	9,545	-8.56
+2% migration	10,632	10,757	10,909	11,155	11,172	11,304	11,438	6.32
+4% migration	10,632	10,863	11,342	11,376	11,622	11,875	12,134	11.69
+6% migration	10,632	10,970	11,339	11,714	12,084	12,469	12,866	17.28
+8% migration	10,632	11,076	11,560	12,058	12,560	13,086	13,633	23.08

Sources: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1998.

### POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Projecting the future size and makeup of Oskaloosa's population helps predict the future demographic character of the town. Future population for Oskaloosa is forecast by:

- Computing probable changes in the city's existing population.
- Using five migration models have been utilized, designed to be relevant to the city's likely potential for growth.

Table 1-4 displays the population projections for these various population scenarios in Oskaloosa. For further planning purposes, an "optimistic" growth scenario is selected, anticipating 8% in-migration per decade and producing a target year 2020 population of 13,633. This represents a twenty year growth rate of +23.08%, and is based on implementation of aggressive housing and economic development strategies.

## ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT FACTORS

### EMPLOYMENT

Major economic characteristics of Oskaloosa include the following:

- *The city's largest employment sectors are manufacturing and retail trade, together accounting for almost half of all employment in 1990.*
- *Oskaloosa's educational institutions are key job centers, accounting for almost 471 employees, over 10% of all jobs in the city.*
- *Oskaloosa is a center for employment in professions. Professional employees make up over 25% of the entire job base in the community.*

Table 1-7 displays Oskaloosa's largest non-public employers.

### TAXABLE RETAIL SALES

Retail trade was one of Oskaloosa's largest single employment sectors in 1990. It remains fundamental to the city's economy. Table 1-8 compares retail changes between 1985 and 1995 for comparable urban retail centers in the state. Sales between 1985 and 1990 grew by 10.36%, a relatively low rate when compared to other communities. Since 1990, sales grew at a healthier 21.20%, a growth rate more comparable, but still somewhat below, other regional retail centers.

**TABLE 1-5: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, OSKALOOSA, 1990**

Industry	Employed	%
Total Employed	4,637	100.00
Agriculture, mining	124	2.67
Construction	227	4.90
Manufacturing	1,257	27.11
Transportation	158	3.41
Communications/Utilities	40	0.86
Wholesale Trade	176	3.80
Retail Trade	893	19.26
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	155	3.34
Nonprofessional Services	344	7.42
Health Services	342	7.38
Education	470	10.14
Professional	360	7.76
Public Administration	91	1.96

**TABLE 1-6: HOUSEHOLD INCOME, OSKALOOSA, 1990**

Income Ranges	Households	%
Less than \$5,000	326	7.51
\$5,000-9,999	684	15.75
\$10,000-14,999	576	13.27
\$15,000-24,999	889	20.47
\$25,000-34,999	772	17.78
\$35,000-49,999	606	13.96
\$50,000-74,999	338	7.78
\$75,000-99,999	79	1.82
\$100,000-149,999	33	0.76
\$150,000 and Over	39	0.90
Median	\$21,568	

## ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT FACTORS

**TABLE 1-7: MAJOR EMPLOYERS, OSKALOOSA, 1996**

Employer	Industrial Classification	Estimated Employment
Clow Valve Company	Fabricated Metal	450
Musco Corp	Electronic & Other Electric	135
Cunningham, Inc.	Primary Metals	120
ITW Paslode Corporation	Industrial Machinery	100
Oskaloosa Food Products	Food and Kindred Products	100
Pepsi-Cola Bottling	Food and Kindred Products	100
Pella Products (New Sharon)	Apparel & Other Textiles	75
Panel Components Corp	Electronic & Other Electric	70
Productive Acres Manufacturing	Industrial Machinery	60
Pioneer HI-BRED	Food and Kindred Products	50
Carter's International Materials Handling	Industrial Machinery	50

**TABLE 1-7:  
TAXABLE RETAIL SALES, OSKALOOSA AND COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES, 1985-95**

Community	1985	1990	1995	% Change, 1985-90	% Change, 1990-95
Oskaloosa	95,055,950	104,899,928	127,138,259	10.36	21.20
Pella	45,019,106	61,419,766	82,245,781	36.43	33.91
Knoxville	49,845,001	56,474,280	72,371,752	13.30	28.79
Marshalltown	183,452,406	255,091,244	289,608,208	39.05	13.53
Des Moines					

## A PROFILE OF OSKALOOSA

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2



# COMMUNITY GROWTH AND LAND USE:

## Future Land Needs Land Use Patterns for Oskaloosa



**T**his chapter considers existing land use characteristics in Oskaloosa and projects the amount of additional land that will be needed to achieve the target population of 13,000 by the year 2020. It presents an overall land use concept based on the development principles set forth in Chapter Two of the Oskaloosa Plan.

### GOALS

In considering land use needs and patterns, Oskaloosa should:

■ **PROVIDE ADEQUATE LAND FOR PROJECTED AND POTENTIAL GROWTH.**

Land use projections should anticipate future growth needs and permit a reasonable amount of flexibility to accommodate possible changes in trends and provide adequate choice to developers. Land use planning should neither designate too little land for development, thereby inflating land costs, nor too much land, resulting in a loss of control over the development process.

## LAND USE PLANNING GOALS

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### ■ ASSURE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT CREATES THE GREATEST ADVANTAGES FOR BUILDING THE COMMUNITY.

The city should benefit from the vitality and energy created by development and investment. New growth areas should be established which will provide maximum advantages to all parts of the city. New growth should create excellent residential environments and help improve the city's existing residential and business neighborhoods. Development directions should enhance positive features of the city and provide incentives for improvement, rather than create new patterns which turn away from the existing fabric of the city.

### ■ ENCOURAGE THE CONSERVATION OF THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK.

Residential growth includes measures to rehabilitate and conserve Oskaloosa's supply of older homes. The housing condition survey completed by Mahaska Future View in 1996 and summarized in Chapter Eight indicates that about 11% of the city's housing stock requires major rehabilitation. Perhaps more significantly, over half of the city's housing is relatively old, but in stable condition. These basically sound homes represent a substantial housing resource that cannot be replaced at present costs. Moreover, the conservation of these units is vital to the health of traditional neighborhoods. In some cases, new housing development can support these rehabilitation efforts by offering choices for older and lower income persons to secure housing closely matched to their means and needs. Oskaloosa must provide new and existing housing opportunities to balance human needs and available housing.

### ■ ENCOURAGE ECONOMICAL EXTENSIONS OF AND IMPROVEMENTS TO INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES.

It makes sense to conserve limited public funds by promoting efficient growth patterns. A compact urban form helps accomplish this goal by using ex-

isting public facilities. Sites utilizing gravity flow sewers and incremental extensions of public utilities reduce development costs and long-term maintenance and capital expenses. Since most development in Oskaloosa is privately financed, incremental utility extensions also makes housing more affordable to buyers. If infrastructure is financed by the city, as it may be in certain cases, incremental extensions also mean that new development creates a larger return on public investment.

### ■ ASSURE THAT THE COMMUNITY GROWS IN A UNIFIED WAY.

As the city grows, it should grow in a way that maintains a basic unity between developing and established neighborhoods. This unity assures that residents of various parts of the city maintain common interests toward overall community development. Such a principle also avoids the development of enclaves that are separated from the rest of the community. Land use planning can help build a physical structure conducive to strengthening a sense of community by providing links and connections among parts of the community, and by relating new development to existing important community resources.

## EXISTING LAND USE

Table 2-1 summarizes current land uses in Oskaloosa and its jurisdiction based on a detailed 1997 field survey.

### RESIDENTIAL USES

Residential uses constitute Oskaloosa's largest land use categories, accounting for just under 36% of the city's developed land area. About 80% of residential land is taken up by urban density single-family residential development in the city and surrounding areas. Most of the balance is used for multi-family residential development.

Smaller multi-family buildings are scattered throughout established single-family neighborhoods, but are generally located within a north-south corridor bounded by Third Street on the east and the Union Pacific Railroad on the west. Multi-family development is distributed around downtown, near 11th and C Avenue East, and along South 11th Street. Mobile homes, a relatively small part of the city's housing supply, are located near Vanderwilt Park in the northwestern part of the city.

### COMMERCIAL USES

About 191 acres, or 6.6% of Oskaloosa's developed land area, is in commercial and office uses. Downtown Oskaloosa and the adjacent Penn Central Mall make up the largest single commercial concentration in the city, but represent a relatively small percentage of total commercial land development. Other major commercial areas include the former Highway 63 corridor (including Heartland Shopping Center), segments of the A Avenue corridor between Downtown and Highway 163 and 11th Street and old Highway 63, and other scattered locations.

### INDUSTRIAL USES

Industrial uses constitute a significant amount of total land development in Oskaloosa, making up about 185 acres, or 6.4% of the total development area. Most of this industrial land traditionally locat-

ed along the Union Pacific (former Chicago & North Western) and abandoned Rock Island Railroad corridors. More contemporary industrial development is located in the southeastern part of the city.

### CIVIC USES

Civic uses account for a substantial 19.1% of Oskaloosa's developed area, comprising about 553

**TABLE 2.1. EXISTING LAND USE DISTRIBUTION, OSKALOOSA, 1998**

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Urbanized Land
<b>Residential</b>	<b>1,035.72</b>	<b>35.79</b>
Rural Residential	153.11	5.29
Single-Family	819.87	28.33
2-4 Plex/Townhouse	17.35	0.60
Multi-Family	30.69	1.06
Mobile Homes	14.70	0.51
<b>Office/Commercial</b>	<b>191.96</b>	<b>6.64</b>
Office	18.77	0.65
Downtown	17.63	0.61
General Commercial	155.56	5.37
<b>Civic</b>	<b>553.20</b>	<b>19.12</b>
Park, Recreation, Open Space	182.15	6.29
Schools	88.17	3.05
Public Facilities and Utilities	56.30	1.95
Other Civic	226.58	7.83
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>185.03</b>	<b>6.39</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>734.37</b>	<b>25.38</b>
<b>Vacant Urban Land</b>	<b>193.37</b>	<b>6.68</b>
<b>Total Urbanized</b>	<b>2,893.65</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Agriculture/ Open	866.78	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,760.43</b>	

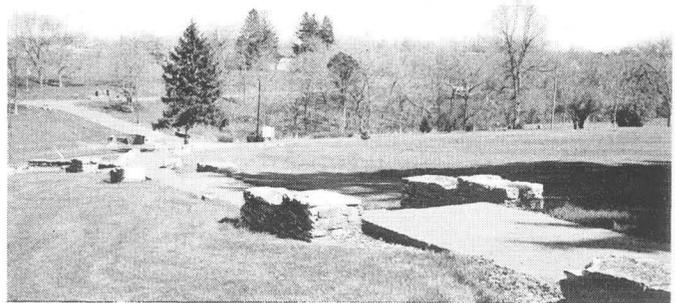
## EXISTING LAND USE

acres. Parks and recreational uses make up about one-third of this area. The largest recreational uses include Edmundson Park and FoxRun Golf Course. Other large civic uses include William Penn College, Forest Cemetery, the Mahaska County Fairgrounds, and Oskaloosa Community School's facilities.

### COMPARISONS WITH OTHER CITIES

A comparison of Oskaloosa's land use distribution with that of other communities offers additional insights into the city's growth patterns and its functional specializations. Considering all residential use types, Oskaloosa's residential density is typical for a sample of comparable communities in Iowa and Nebraska.

Oskaloosa ranks relatively high among this sample of cities for commercial land uses, comparing favorably to other highly developed regional trade centers. It has considerably more commercial acreage per capita than neighboring Pella, reflecting both Oskaloosa's relatively large commercial base and Pella's compact commercial configura-



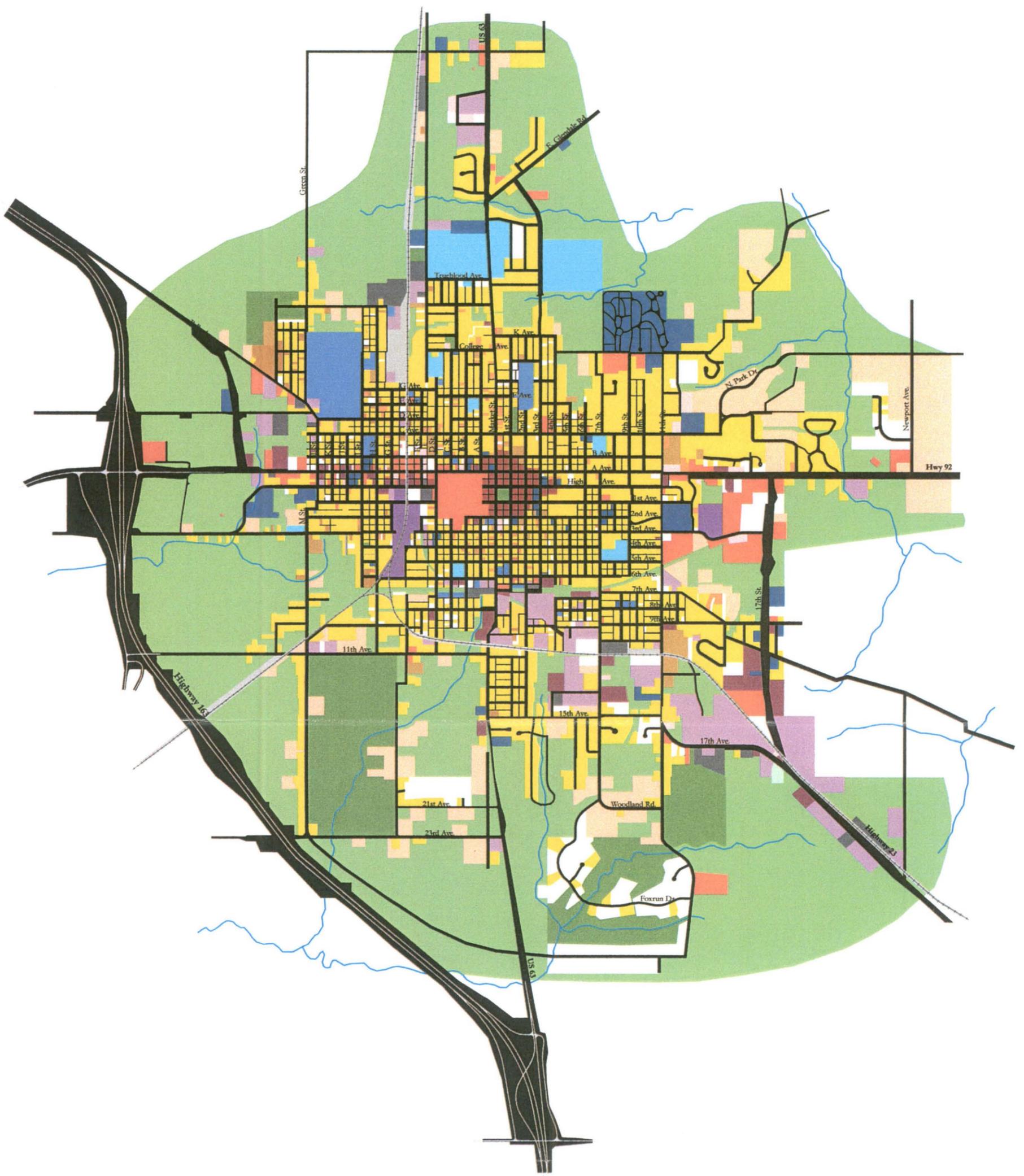
tion. Oskaloosa's proportion of civic uses is relatively high for comparable cities without major college campuses.

Overall density in Oskaloosa ranks around the median for comparable communities. Ultimately, compactness and efficiency of land use will be important features of development -- key characteristics that land use planning policy should preserve.

**TABLE 2.2. COMPARATIVE LAND USE BY PERCENTAGE OF URBANIZED AREA, OSKALOOSA AND SIX COMMUNITIES**

	% of Urbanized Area						
	Oskaloosa	Pella, IA (1997)	Marion, IA (1997)	Fremont, NE (1997)	Beatrice, NE (1992)	Kearney, NE (1995)	Nevada, IA (1997)
Residential	35.79	30.04	41.00	40.78	36.48	38.72	36.16
Commercial	6.64	2.80	4.96	6.71	8.35	8.33	3.50
Industrial	6.39	8.24	5.01	4.81	5.07	4.91	5.43
Civic	19.12	27.19	18.53	19.19	11.06	38.45	19.90
Transportation	25.38	24.57	23.21	25.92	25.94	23.42	32.18
Total Urbanized Area	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1998.



# Existing Land Use

## Oskaloosa, Iowa



RDG Crose Gardner Shukert  
Omaha and Des Moines

1/2 mile

### Existing Land Use

	Vacant		Automotive
	Agricultural/Open Space		Wholesale
	Rural Residential		General Industrial
	Single Family Residential		Warehousing/Distribution
	2-4 Plex Buildings		Salvage
	Multi-family Residential		Parks/Recreation
	Mobile Homes		Schools
	Office/Financial		Public Facilities/Utilities
	Downtown/Mixed Use		Other Civic Uses
	Commercial Use		



## LAND USE PROJECTIONS

**TABLE 2.3. COMPARATIVE LAND USE BY DEVELOPMENT DENSITY (ACRES/100 PEOPLE), OSKALOOSA AND SIX COMMUNITIES**

	Acres/100 People						
	Oskaloosa	Pella, IA (1997)	Marion, IA (1997)	Fremont, NE (1997)	Beatrice, NE (1992)	Kearney, NE (1995)	Nevada, IA (1997)
Residential	9.35	9.32	7.73	6.97	9.72	9.83	8.23
Commercial	1.73	0.87	0.93	1.14	2.23	2.11	0.80
Industrial	1.67	2.56	0.94	0.82	1.35	1.25	1.24
Civic	4.99	8.44	3.49	3.28	2.95	9.76	4.53
Transportation	6.63	7.62	4.38	4.43	6.91	5.95	7.32
Total Urbanized Area	26.13	31.03	18.85	17.08	26.65	25.39	22.76

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1998.

### RESIDENTIAL LAND PROJECTIONS

Forecasts of future land needs in Oskaloosa are based on population and development projections for the planning period up to the year 2020. Since 1990, Oskaloosa has added about 150 units to its supply, most of which have been single-family units. That level of development is somewhat below potential demand and translates to an extremely tight housing market in the city. Land use projections presented here forecast a target year 2020 population of 13,633 and a cumulative 30-year need for 2,021 units. This corresponds to an average annual production of 67 units.

Table 2-4 presents the projected housing demands through year 2020 for this scenario. The analysis is based on the following methods and assumptions:

- The basic method used in projecting annual demands is to compare the number of units needed in a given year (number of households plus projected vacancy rate) with the number of units

available during that year (housing supply during the year less the units that leave the housing supply and must be replaced).

- Household size in Oskaloosa is expected to decrease moderately during the twenty-year period. Average household size declined from 2.33 in 1990 to 2.29 in 1998. An average household size of 2.18 is projected for the year 2020.

- The city's non-household population (people in student dormitories, institutions, group quarters, or nursing homes) does not produce a demand for conventional housing. These forecasts project that 95.1% of Oskaloosa's people will reside in households, the same percentage as in 1990.

- Oskaloosa's vacancy rate in 1990 was 6.5%. The demand scenario proposes a moderate decrease to a 5% rate, often considered to be the ideal vacancy rate in a healthy market.

- The projection model assumes that about 20 units annually will be lost to demolition, redevelop-

# LAND USE PROJECTIONS

**TABLE 2.4. PROJECTED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT DEMAND, 1990-2020**

*First Ten Years, 1990-2000*

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
<b>Population</b>	10632	10721	10810	10898	10987	11076	11173	11270	11366	11463	11560
<b>Household Pop</b>	10109	10193	10278	10362	10447	10531	10623	10715	10807	10899	10991
<b>People/household</b>	2.3309	2.325	2.32	2.315	2.31	2.305	2.30	2.295	2.29	2.285	2.28
<b>Household demand</b>	4337	4384	4430	4476	4522	4569	4619	4669	4719	4770	4821
<b>Vacancy rate</b>	6.49	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.1	6.0	5.9	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.5
<b>Total unit needs</b>	4638	4684	4728	4772	4816	4860	4908	4956	5005	5053	5101
<b>Available from previous year</b>	Base	4638	4684	4728	4772	4816	4860	4908	4956	5005	5053
<b>Lost Units</b>		20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
<b>Total Units Available</b>		4618	4664	4708	4752	4796	4840	4888	4936	4985	5033
<b>Annual Need</b>		66	64	64	64	64	68	68	68	68	68
<b>Cumulative Need</b>		66	130	194	258	322	390	458	527	595	663

*Second Ten Years, 2000-2010*

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Population</b>	11660	11759	11859	11958	12058	12158	12259	12359	12460	12560
<b>Household Pop</b>	11086	11181	11275	11370	11465	11560	11656	11751	11847	11942
<b>People/household</b>	2.275	2.27	2.265	2.26	2.255	2.25	2.245	2.24	2.235	2.23
<b>Household demand</b>	4873	4925	4978	5031	5084	5138	5192	5246	5300	5355
<b>Vacancy rate</b>	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.1	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
<b>Total unit needs</b>	5151	5201	5251	5301	5352	5408	5465	5522	5579	5637
<b>Available from previous year</b>	5101	5151	5201	5251	5301	5352	5408	5465	5522	5579
<b>Lost Units</b>	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
<b>Total Units Available</b>	5091	5141	5191	5241	5291	5342	5398	5455	5512	5569
<b>Annual Need</b>	60	60	60	60	60	67	67	67	67	68
<b>Cumulative Need</b>	723	783	843	903	964	1030	1097	1164	1231	1299

## LAND USE PROJECTIONS

**TABLE 2.4. PROJECTED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT DEMAND, 1990-2020**

*Third Ten Years, 2010-2020*

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Population</b>	12665	12770	12876	12981	13086	13195	13305	13414	13524	13633
<b>Household Pop</b>	12042	12142	12242	12342	12442	12546	12650	12754	12858	12962
<b>People/household</b>	2.225	2.22	2.215	2.21	2.205	2.20	2.195	2.19	2.185	2.18
<b>Household demand</b>	5412	5469	5527	5585	5643	5703	5763	5824	5885	5946
<b>Vacancy rate</b>	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
<b>Total unit needs</b>	5697	5757	5818	5879	5940	6003	6067	6130	6195	6259
<b>Available from previous year</b>	5637	5697	5757	5818	5879	5940	6003	6067	6130	6195
<b>Lost Units</b>	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
<b>Total Units Available</b>	5627	5687	5747	5808	5869	5930	5993	6057	6120	6185
<b>Annual Need</b>	70	70	71	71	71	73	74	74	74	74
<b>Cumulative Need</b>	1369	1439	1510	1581	1652	1725	1799	1872	1947	2021

opment, or conversion to other uses.

In 1990, about 75% of Oskaloosa's housing stock was single-family. While single-family detached units will remain dominant, future housing trends suggest that:

- Higher-density housing forms that maintain single-family characteristics (single-family attached and townhouse configurations) will grow in popularity, accommodating an aging "baby-boomer" and empty-nest population.
- Affordable housing development will generally take the form of townhouse and multi-family development.
- Mobile homes will be a relatively small component of Oskaloosa's housing supply. Manufactured housing on permanent foundations is categorized as single-family housing.

Based on these trends and the existing distribution of housing types in Oskaloosa, the following allocation of housing is proposed to describe the new

development market between 1997 and 2020:

- 60% single-family detached
- 10% urban family housing, including single-family attached, duplex, and townhouse housing.
- 25% multiple-family housing.
- 5% mobile homes.

### REQUIRED RESIDENTIAL AREA

Residential land projections estimate the amount of land that will be needed to accommodate growth to the year 2020. Projections are based on the following assumptions:

- Average gross housing densities are assigned for various housing types. The projected allocation of each unit type, divided by the estimated average gross density, produces the amount of land needed to accommodate each housing type.
- Land designated in the land use plan for residential development over the planning period should be equal to twice the area that new growth actually needs. This is necessary to preserve competitive land pricing.

## LAND USE PROJECTIONS

Table 2-5 presents the amount of new area that will be required for additional development. Annual actual absorption of residential land will be in the range of 16 acres annually. Using the rule of designating land at a rate of two times the "hard demand," this suggests a total reservation of land for residential development of about 734 acres to the year 2020.

### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Commercial growth is a significant part of Oskaloosa's economic development strategy and is considered from a policy perspective later in this document. The *Retail Market Analysis for Oskaloosa, Iowa*, completed in 1997 by Marketek, Inc., projects a potential five-year demand for up to 412,000 square feet of new retail space. This plan is not a comprehensive retail market analysis. However, it is important to provide adequate commercial space to meet future market needs.

Two methods are used to help project commercial land needs:

- *A population service relationship.* This method relates commercial growth to population projections. It assumes that the absolute amount of com-

mercial land per 100 people will remain relatively constant and that new commercial development will grow in proportion to population growth.

- *Residential use proportion.* This assumes a constant relationship between the amount of land used for residential and commercial purposes, thereby relating commercial growth directly to residential development rates.

- *Historical absorption,* assuming that the amount of land absorbed annually in the past will continue into the future. Because of the increased amount of space used by typical auto-oriented commercial development, this method tends to overstate demand for new area.

Table 2-6 compares the results of these three methods. In order to provide a range of sites, the land use plan should designate about 1.5 times the hard demand for commercial ground. The historical trend method suggests a need for about 107 acres of additional commercial space between 1997 and 2020, while the population service and residential ratio methods indicate a hard need for 40 to 60 acres. Table 2-6 includes a potential commercial area factor, based on computing the capacity of a given area of land using a floor area

**TABLE 2.5. REQUIRED RESIDENTIAL LAND, 1997-2020**

Housing Type	%	1997-2000	2001-2010	2011-2020	Total	Gross Density (units/acre)	Actual Land Need (Acres)	Designated Land (Acres)
Single-Family	60	277	346	391	1,014	3.50	290	579
Urban Family	10	46	58	65	169	6.00	28	56
Multiple-Family	25	116	144	163	423	12.00	35	70
Mobile Home	5	23	29	33	85	6.00	14	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>1,690</b>		<b>367</b>	<b>734</b>

## LAND USE PROJECTIONS

ratio or FAR (the ratio of building area to site area) of 0.25. The residential use ratio method provides adequate designated land area for just under one million square feet of commercial space and a hard demand for about 650,000 square feet. This is relatively consistent with the recommendations of the Marketek report, extended over the entire planning period. Therefore, the land use plan should designate about 90 acres of land for future commercial development.

### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The need for industrial land is as directly related to population growth as commercial, making it much more difficult to predict. A single major corporate decision can dramatically increase (or decrease) the projected industrial demand in a community. In addition, a decision by the city to pursue industrial development aggressively can affect industrial land needs.

Nevertheless, the projection methods used to predict commercial demand may also be used to approximate industrial needs. Table 2-7 presents in-

dustrial use projections based on the the population proportion and residential use ratio methods discussed in the previous section. because of changes in the tabulation of industrial land between 1983 and 1997, the historical trend method is unreliable. A comparison of the 1983 and 1997 land use inventories reveals a decrease in the amount of industrial land. This is accounted for by the termination of marginal industries and reductions in the number of active railroad lines through the city in that period. Oskaloosa's industrial base in 1997 is generally stronger and more compact than that of fifteen years ago.

These forecasting techniques suggest a hard demand for between 41 and 65 acres of industrial land between 1997 and 2020. Because industrial uses are highly space intensive, the land use plan should designate between two and three times the hard demand. This indicates an allowance for about 150 acres of new industrial space in the city.

The character of industrial development has changed significantly in contemporary land devel-

**TABLE 2.6. REQUIRED COMMERCIAL LAND, 1998-2020**

	1998	2020	Hard Need	Designated Land Area	Potential Commercial SF (FAR = 0.25)
<b>POPULATION PROPORTION</b>					
Projected Population	11173	13633			
Comm Use/ 100 res.	1.56	1.56			
Commercial Land Need(A)	173.19	212.67	39	60	653,400
<b>RESIDENTIAL USE PROPORTION</b>					
Projected Residential Land (A)	1037	1403			
Comm Land/ Res Land Ratio	0.167	0.167			
Commercial Land Need (A)	173.19	234.06	61	91	990,990
<b>HISTORICAL TREND METHOD</b>					
Average Annual Absorption, 1983-1997	4.64	4.64			
Commercial Land Need	173.19	279.91	107	160	1,742,400

## LAND USE PROJECTIONS

opment practice. Increasingly, industrial development takes place within the context of a business park, combining office, warehousing, and light industrial development within planned developments. In contrast to traditional heavy industries, business parks involve careful design controls, including good landscaping, controlled signage, and building facade design standards.

### SUMMARY

The analysis contained within this section indicates that the following land needs for Oskaloosa between 1997 and 2020. These projections are based on an optimistic growth projection, suggesting an in-migration rate of 8% per decade and a year 2020 population of 13,633.

### *Residential Land Needs*

Hard Demand: 367 acres  
 - Single-Family: 290 acres  
 - Urban-Family: 28 acres  
 - Multi-Family: 35 acres  
 - Mobile Homes: 14 acres

The Land Use Plan should designate about twice this much area for residential purposes.

### *Commercial Land Needs*

Hard Demand: 60 acres  
 Designated Land: 90 acres

### *Industrial Land Needs*

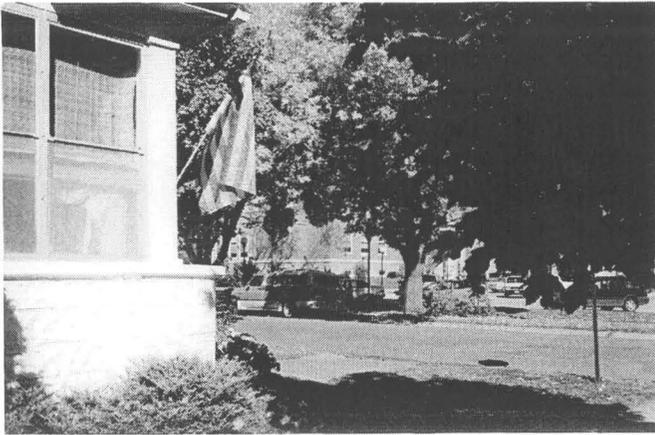
Hard Demand: 43-65 acres  
 Designated Land: 150 acres

**TABLE 2.7. REQUIRED INDUSTRIAL LAND, 1998-2020**

POPULATION PROPORTION	1998	2020	Hard Need	Designated Land Area	Potential Commercial SF (FAR = 0.15)
Projected Population	11173	13633			
Comm Use/ 100 res.	1.67	1.67			
Commercial Land Need(A)	185.03	227.67	43	129	843,000
<b>RESIDENTIAL USE PROPORTION</b>					
Projected Residential Land (A)	1037	1403			
Comm Land/ Res Land Ratio	0.178	0.178			
Commercial Land Need (A)	185.03	250.33	65	195	1,274,130
<b>HISTORICAL TREND METHOD</b>					
Average Annual Absorption, 1983-1997	(1.14)	---			
Commercial Land Need	185.03	---			

## THE CITY DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT: BASIC PRINCIPLES

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The City Development Concept provides an overall structure to individual land use, annexation, and public facility development decisions. These principles fall into three categories:

- *General Principles*, describing overriding rules and assumptions guiding development policy.
- *Framework Principles*, addressing such key ingredients of community structure as transportation and open space systems.
- *Redevelopment Policies*, establishing areas of specific development focus.

The Land Use Policies presented in the succeeding pages illustrate and expand on these basic principles, which grow out of Oskaloosa's unique community characteristics.



### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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#### ■ CONCENTRIC DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

Oskaloosa's residential development should be distributed around the city, with residential growth occurring to the northwest, northeast, west, and southwest. The circulation and open space systems should act as unifying factors which link growth areas to one another and to established parts of the city.

#### ■ MANAGED GROWTH

Areas programmed for growth should be related to overall land demand in the development market. Development policy should provide adequate choice while still providing for orderly, managed development and infrastructure extensions.

#### ■ A UNIFIED COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK

A basic, continuous framework of streets and open spaces should be pre-planned to maintain linkages between the traditional city and newly developing areas. The transportation system serving new areas should encourage the concept of planned, concentric growth.

#### ■ GROWTH WITH THE LAND

The city's topography and drainage patterns have helped define past development. Future development should also reflect the patterns of the land, using drainage corridors and creeks as greenways

## THE CITY DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT: BASIC PRINCIPLES

creating a linked open space system and connecting the city's neighborhoods.

### FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

#### ■ A CONTINUOUS STREET NETWORK

As it grows, the city should maintain an improved street network, providing better options for movement around the community. This network should serve both new and established areas.

#### ■ GREENWAY SYSTEM

The city should develop a continuous park and greenway system that touches all parts of the city and provides links to major attractions and activity centers. Development in Oskaloosa should include significant park reservations, related to the greenway network, designed to complement Edmundson Park.

#### ■ PARK DEVELOPMENT

Oskaloosa should complement its existing parks with new facilities, providing good geographic distribution of park service. These facilities should be located in large, community-scale open spaces, linked to neighborhoods by a trail and greenway network.

#### ■ COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT NODES

Oskaloosa should provide a range of designated commercial development sites, each with a specifically defined function.

#### ■ INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Oskaloosa should use improved transportation access and land resources to create major opportunities for new industrial development. Industrial growth should occur in the southeastern part of the city, including development of a quality business park near FoxRun. It should be complemented by new industrial/business park development related to the new four-lane Highway 163.

### REDEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

#### ■ DOWNTOWN OSKALOOSA

The traditional city center of Oskaloosa should continue to grow as a vital mixed use nucleus, combining services, specialty retailing, housing, and civic uses in a unique and historic setting. The city center should be envisioned as an expanded district, with a core composed of the traditional town square district and Penn Central Mall. The center should be linked to surrounding neighborhoods by civic streets and redevelopment projects.

#### ■ WESTSIDE VILLAGE

Oskaloosa should undertake major redevelopment of the central salvage yard and industrial district, generally between D and G Streets from High to 6th Avenues. The project should be envisioned as an urban village, related to Downtown and including affordable housing, parks, limited commercial development, greenway links, and improved traffic circulation.

#### ■ A AVENUE: OSKALOOSA GATEWAY

The A Avenue commercial corridor should be upgraded as a Main Street through the community, providing improved lighting, landscaping, pedestrian accommodations, signage, and building development. In addition, the functional aspects of A Avenue should be improved through strategic parking development and better access management.

## THE LAND USE PLAN



**T**his section presents land use strategies that will enable Oskaloosa to plan successfully for projected growth. Overall development patterns should reinforce the functional and aesthetic values of a compact city. In Oskaloosa, this implies that new development should be contiguous to existing city infrastructure, and designed to provide a high degree of pedestrian and vehicular mobility. The city's growth program should:

- Designate growth areas for residential development, designed to provide the appropriate amount of land for urban conversion.
- Ensure that new development maintains continuity and linkages among neighborhoods.
- Encourage adequate commercial growth to respond to potential market needs in Oskaloosa, supportable by the city's service systems.
- Provide adequate land to support an economic development program that capitalizes on Oskaloosa's resources.



- Promote the strategic redevelopment of centrally located parts of the city to appropriate, contemporary land uses.

The components of this program include:

- ADEQUATE LAND SUPPLY
- COMPACT DEVELOPMENT PATTERN
- GROWTH CENTERS
- STRATEGIC CENTRAL CORRIDOR
- OSKALOOSA GATEWAY
- GREENWAY SYSTEM
- EQUITABLE FACILITIES AMONG CITY QUADRANTS
- COMMERCIAL NODES
- INDUSTRIAL GROWTH AREAS

Each component of land use policy is described below. The Land Use Plan maps the concepts presented in these policies and recommendations.

## ADEQUATE LAND SUPPLY

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### OSKALOOSA SHOULD DESIGNATE ENOUGH LAND FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT TO MEET A YEAR 2020 POPULATION TARGET OF 13,500 PEOPLE.

Tables 2-5, 2-6, and 2-7 display the amount of land needed for residential, commercial, and industrial uses to serve a target population of 13,500. These proposed land supplies approximate the demand closely enough to allow managed growth, while providing adequate choices of sites to developers. The Oskaloosa Land Use Plan proposes three major development zones, implementing the concept outlined in the Development Principles.

- *The Existing City.* This area corresponds to the 1999 corporate limits of Oskaloosa. Development policies in this area should focus on the upgrading of existing development, use of vacant or under-used sites, and redevelopment of blighting or obsolete land uses.

- *The Urban Development Zone.* This area corresponds to the projected land needs for the city between 1997 and 2020. Development in this area should incorporate full urban services. Therefore, development within this zone should not include low-density residential development utilizing well and septic systems. Areas within the Urban development Zone should be incorporated into the city over the next 20 to 25 years as development occurs. The specific growth centers for urban development are presented later in this section.

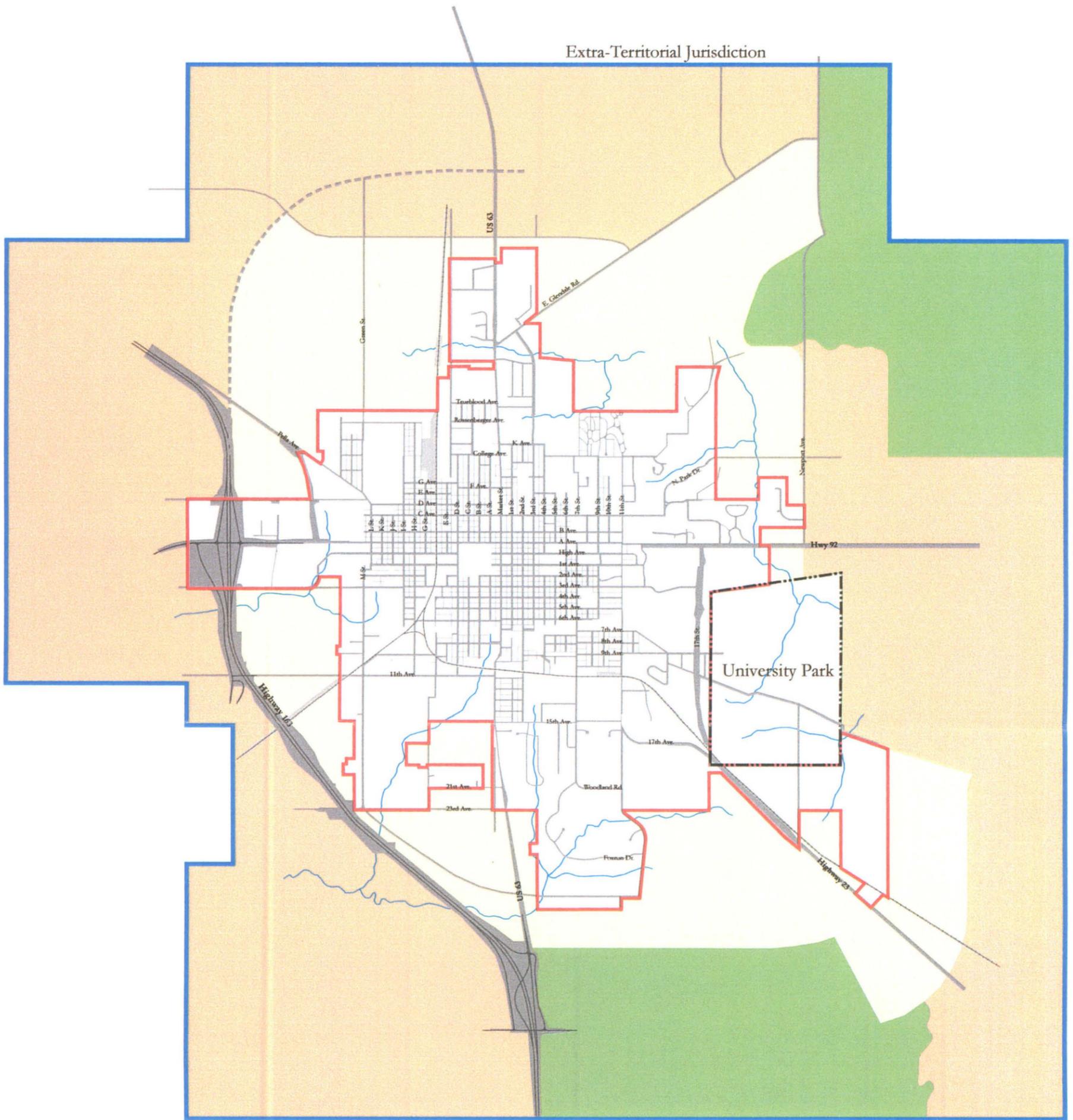


Some growth within the Urban Development Zone may be built out to lower densities than those found in conventional subdivision development. Major environmental features, such as waterways, wooded areas, and steep slopes, should be maintained as open space. Projects which maintain these features should be rewarded with higher densities on developable sites to achieve overall urban densities.

- *The Urban Reserve Zone.* This corresponds to areas that can be served by municipal utilities in the long term, but are unlikely to be developed until after the year 2020. This area should generally be preserved in current agricultural and open space use, with extension of urban services programmed in the long-term future. Any development that occurs in this area should be designed to avoid conflicts with future urban growth. When residential development takes place in this area, it should generally be restricted to very low densities that can later be further developed to urban densities when the timing is appropriate. Permitted residential densities in the Urban Reserve Zone are two units for each 40 acres of land, or 32 units per square mile. Higher density developments may be permitted in clusters where a compensating amount of land is reserved in agricultural, open space, or other rural uses. Urban Reserve Zones include:

- Areas within Oskaloosa's extra-territorial jurisdiction to the north and west of the Urban Devel-

Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction



# Development Policy Zones

## Oskaloosa, Iowa



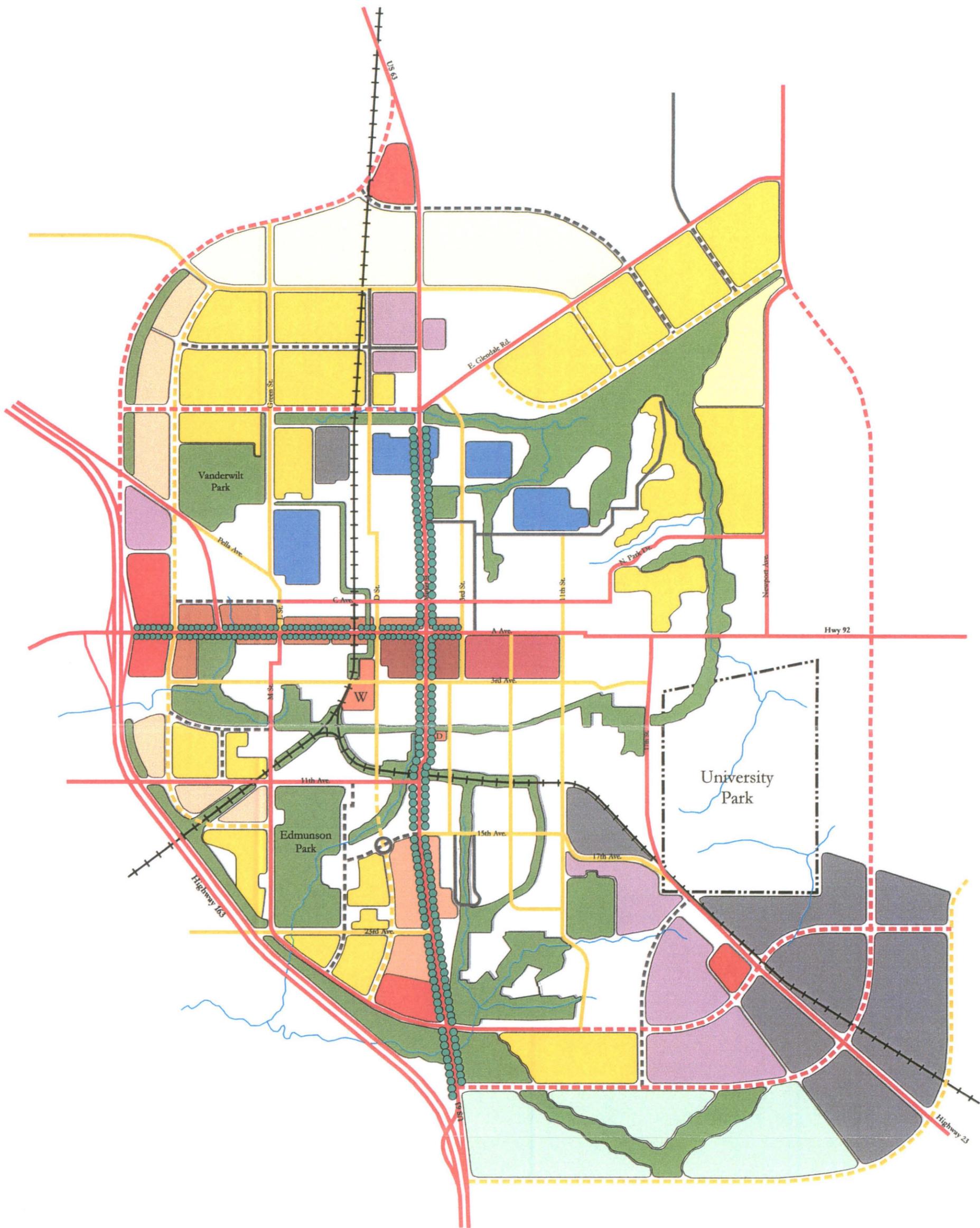
RDG Crose Gardner Shukert  
Omaha and Des Moines

1/2 mile

### Legend

-  Existing City
-  Urban Development Zone
-  Conservation Residential Zone
-  Development Reserve Zone





# Development Concept

## Oskaloosa, Iowa



**RDG** Crose Gardner Shukert  
Omaha and Des Moines

1/2 mile

### Legend

Urban Reserve	Business Park
Urban Residential	Industrial
Conservation Residential	Parks/Open Space
High Density Residential	Major Civic Uses
Downtown	Arterials
Historic District	Proposed Arterials
Oskaloosa Gateway Mixed Use	Collection Streets
Westside Village Redevelopment	Proposed Collection Streets
Depot District Redevelopment	Other Links
Commercial	Proposed Other Links
Mixed Use	Corridor Enhancement



## GROWTH CENTERS

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### **OSKALOOSA WILL ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK OF GROWTH CENTERS CONNECTED TO ONE ANOTHER BY COLLECTOR STREETS AND GREENWAYS, DESIGNED TO CREATE BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS AND IMPROVED LINKAGES.**

The Development Principles defined in Chapter Two are designed to accommodate necessary growth while strengthening the overall community character. These principles can be realized by conceiving of the city's growth areas as distinct growth centers, each providing a balance of development types and community services as essential parts of the whole, and each requiring community investments and features that create desirable living environments.

The challenging topography of the Spring Creek corridor tends to limit economic urban development on the eastern side of the city. The Development Concept directs residential growth to the southern and northern parts of the city. The Growth Center concept defines these development areas as definable neighborhoods, connected to one another by collector streets and greenways. Attributes of the Growth Centers include:

- A mixture of housing types and lot sizes.
- Organization of new neighborhoods around traditional street patterns, often including a community boulevard that links civic, educational and

park facilities.

- Dedication of new neighborhood parks, trails and ballfield areas, designed as central open spaces that are focuses of the neighborhood.
- Development of higher-density residential and limited commercial, service, and civic uses at nodes along boulevards and open spaces.
- Care in establishing setbacks, landscaping, and streetscape standards along boulevards to ensure the appearance of a traditional community promenade.

The elements of these systems are woven throughout the themes of this plan.

The four Growth Centers include:

- *South Central Growth Center.*

This area is generally centered around the Market Street corridor south of 11th Avenue, bordering Edmundson Park on the west and the South Highway 163 Loop on the south. It includes the Marje Addition, a mixed use residential development south of 15th Avenue and east of Market Street. Edmundson Park is a major amenity for this growth area. Elements of the framework to support this growth center include:

- Extending D Street to the south as a neighborhood collector.
- Developing a collector street roughly parallel to Highway 163, from the terminus of M Street at the southwest corner of Edmundson Park east to South Market Street. This connects to a collector right-of-way dedicated as part of the FoxRun development.
- Establishing an east-west greenway corridor between Edmundson Park and Marje Addition to FoxRun.

Land uses in the growth center are predominately residential, with mixed use office, limited commercial, and multi-family development proposed along Market Street from 15th Avenue south to

## GROWTH CENTERS

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the wastewater treatment facility; and commercial development at the Highway 163/63 junction.

### • Southeast Growth Center.

This growth center completes development in the FoxRun area at the southeastern edge of Oskaloosa and includes substantial industrial and business park growth along the Highway 23 corridor southeast of University Park. The FoxRun golf course and existing trail provides a major recreational amenity for the growth center. The Development Concept anticipates residential development continuing in FoxRun and extending east of 11th Avenue. In addition, infill residential development would occur between 15th and Woodland Avenues.

The golf course and adjacent high-end residential development provides an excellent opportunity for business park and industrial development served by Highway 23 and the Union Pacific corridor southeast of the city of University Park. Business park growth, featuring flexible buildings combining light industry, office, and limited warehouse and distribution uses, should generally be west of Highway 23, with sites for general industry occurring on the east side of the highway. Elements of the framework to support this growth center include:

- Improving the south collector on the south edge of FoxRun, and extending this north into a 35th Street corridor.
- Developing a south to northeast "belt" roadway, joining Newport Avenue on the northeastern part of the jurisdiction and providing a continuous eastside route linking residential growth on the northeast part of the city with major employment centers on the southeast.
- Developing a local circulator system to serve a southeast business park.
- Connect the FoxRun trail to Edmundson Park.

### • West Growth Center

The West Growth Center includes land between M Street, the old Highway 163 corridor, and the South Highway 163 loop. Elements of the framework that serve this growth center include:

- Development of a collector loop from Edmundson Park roughly parallel to the Highway 163 bypass and ultimately extending to North Market Street. This collector is designed to link major development areas together and to provide local service for commercial development.
- Reservation of hilly areas between 3rd and 6th Avenues as open space, potentially providing for passive uses.
- Providing a major community entrance at the Highway 163/ A Avenue interchange, along with upgraded streetscape and sign control treatment of A Avenue.
- Establishing a local street grid to support new residential neighborhoods.
- Extending a trail along Beacon Road to the village of Beacon and the proposed Mahaska Heritage Trail.
- Implementing the Oskaloosa Gateway program for upgrading the A Avenue corridor. The plan includes extending B and C Avenues west to open undeveloped areas in the central-west part of Oskaloosa.
- Extending the developing circulator road parallel to the bypass. This road, about 1,000 feet east of the bypass route, has been constructed between 3rd Avenue and a point north of Highway 92.

South of 3rd Avenue, residential land uses will predominate in this growth center. Multi-family development may occur along the proposed collector loop, bordered by new Highway 163. A small neighborhood commercial development is appropriate in a node at the intersection of the

## GROWTH CENTERS

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collector loop and Beacon Road. Major commercial development, linked to the A Avenue corridor, is recommended at the Highway 163/A Avenue interchange. Industrial and business park development should be located north of A Avenue to old Highway 163.

### • Northwest Growth Center

This growth center provides for additional residential land in an arc between Old Highway 163 and North Market Street. It is centered around Vanderwilt Park and links the western part of the city back to William Penn College. Major amenities for the area include the college, Mahaska County Fairgrounds, and Vanderwilt Park.

Major elements of the framework needed to serve this growth center include:

- Developing a North Bypass Loop between Highway 163 and Highway 63 north, providing a Highway 63 route around the city. The north segment of this loop may be a two-lane roadway with access limited to four points.
- Developing a collector circulation system to serve new development in the growth center. Components include a westward extension of Glendale Road to the north bypass; a circulator paralleling the north bypass; an additional north-side collector; and incorporation of Green Street as a major north-south collector route.
- Expansion and development of Vanderwilt Park, including construction of a community center in the park.
- Extension of a greenway along the Spring Creek tributary, roughly parallel to the proposed Glendale Road extension.

The Development Concept proposes mixed residential uses in this growth center. Business park development should continue along North Market Street around the Panel Components facility west to D Street.

### • Northeast Growth Center

This development area continues residential development established during the late 1970s and 1980s. It includes land south of Glendale Road north of Spring Creek. Elements of the development framework for this growth center include:

- Improvement and routing of Glendale Road as a connection to Newport Avenue.
- Implementing a collector and local street grid to serve the development area between Glendale Road and the Spring Creek area.
- Developing a Spring Creek Preserve incorporating the creek and wooded and sloped areas around it. The preserve should incorporate an area with more gentle topography into a third community-scale park. The entire preserve becomes an integral part of the citywide greenway system.
- Developing a trail linking the northeast neighborhood to Oskaloosa High School.
- Developing a 35th Street corridor as an eastside collector, connecting the neighborhood to emerging employment centers on the southeast part of the city.

The land use concept for the area calls for a "village center," featuring multi-family housing and neighborhood services at a central location, linking Glendale Road with the Spring Creek preserve. Surrounding land uses will be single-family residential.

## STRATEGIC CENTRAL CORRIDOR

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### OSKALOOSA SHOULD FOCUS ATTENTION ON DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF ITS STRATEGIC CENTRAL CORRIDOR, EXTENDING FROM THE NEW HIGHWAY 163 INTERCHANGE TO DOWNTOWN.

A Avenue (Highway 92) is Oskaloosa's major east-west corridor and is the major link between the key west entrance into the city and Downtown. This central corridor will become even more critical with the completion of the Highway 163 interchange on the west edge of town. Currently, A Avenue is a relatively low-density commercial strip from Old Highway 163 to Downtown. Some residential uses exist on the south side of the street. Penn Central Mall, Oskaloosa's major regional mall, is located between D Street and Downtown and anchors the city's central retail and civic district.

The north-south Union Pacific Railroad crosses A Avenue at F Street and defines an increasingly obsolescent industrial corridor. This industrial area includes approximately six square blocks of salvage yards, some of which are in marginal use and may be available for redevelopment. This industrial corridor, visible from the city's main east-west axis, one block from its regional shopping mall, and adjacent to residential neighborhoods, should be a major focus for redevelopment.

Redevelopment of the central corridor is a fundamental land use principle for Oskaloosa, initially presented in the Development Principles section and addressed more fully in Chapter Seven of the plan. The plan views the corridor as a single connected district, linking the community's heart to its main entrance. Land use redirection around the corridor includes:

- *Significant commercial development at the Highway 163/92 interchange.* This is a likely site for future regional retailing because of its excellent automobile access. New commercial development at this location should be treated as a gateway that leads visitors into Oskaloosa. Commercial development



should be served by a collector loop that avoids traffic interference with through traffic.

- *Enhancement of the A Avenue urban corridor,* with an improved streetscape, better sign and landscape standards, and redevelopment of underused sites and buildings. Guiding principles for this corridor enhancement are provided in the next section.

- *Redevelopment of salvage yards along the F Street railroad line, as envisioned by the Westside Village project.* This urban village concept includes affordable housing, parks, limited commercial development, greenway links, and improved traffic circulation. It is designed to replace a liability with an important housing resource to reinforce downtown retailing.

- *Replanning of the Penn Central Mall environment,* to upgrade pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation around the mall, and improve its connection to Downtown Oskaloosa. Details of this replanning are presented in Chapter Seven, "A Vital City Center."

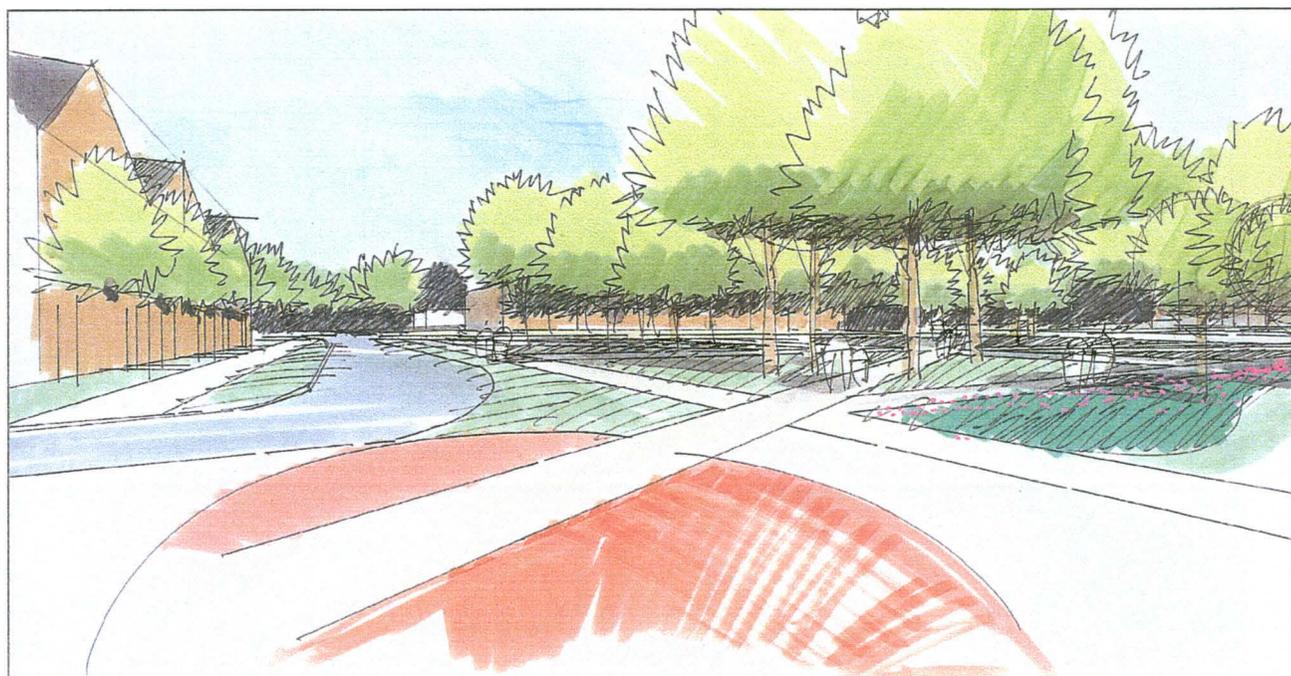
- *Implementing a Downtown revitalization program.* This concept is discussed in detail in Chapter Seven, "A Vital City Center."

## STRATEGIC CENTRAL CORRIDOR



*Left: Conceptual site plan.*

*Above: Existing industrial sites along the central corridor.*



### **WESTSIDE VILLAGE**

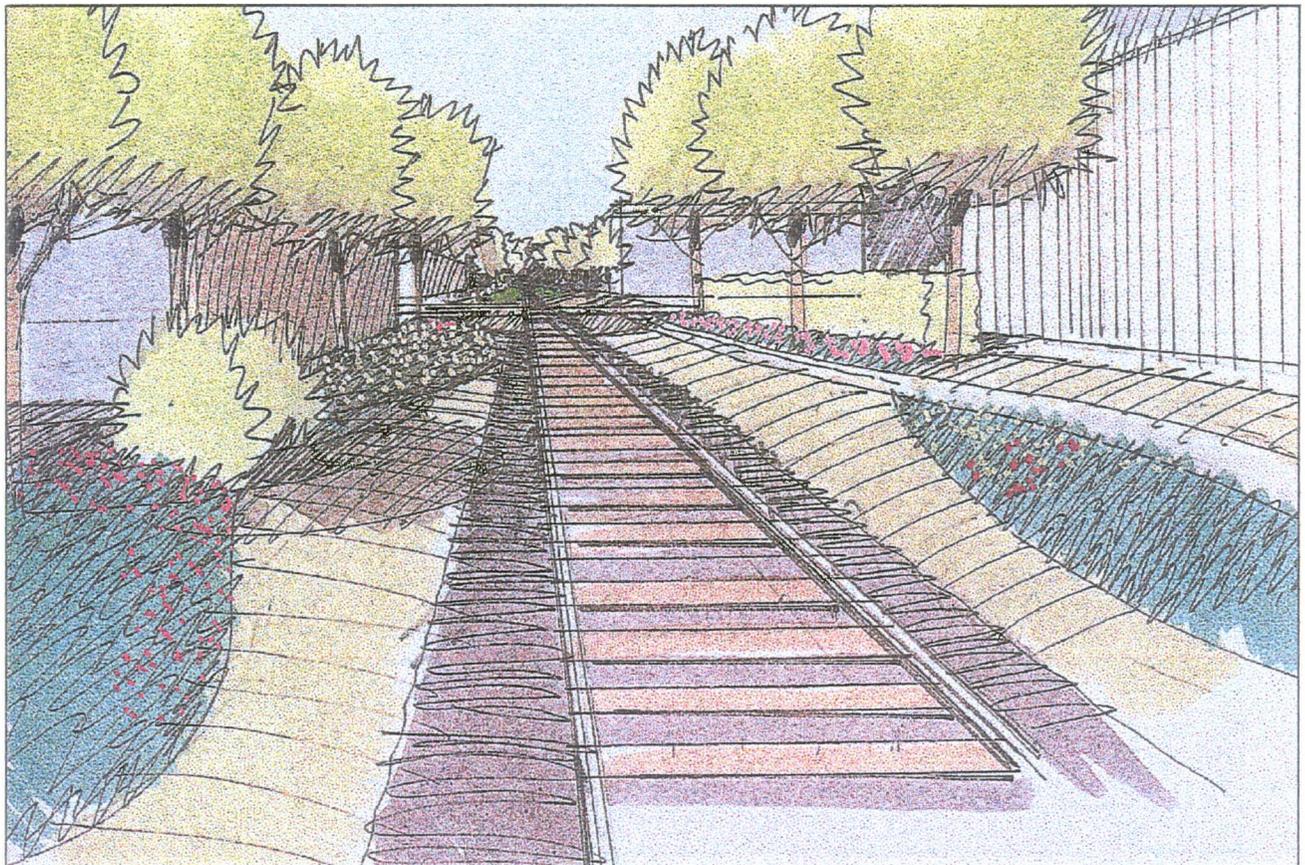
The Westside Village concept calls for replacing blighted industrial and salvage yard sites along the central corridor with a new neighborhood of single-family attached, urban residences. A central green is a key element of the new neighborhood, which can provide over 100 new homes. The site is integrated into the proposed Oskaloosa greenway system, linking it to both Edmundson and Vanderwilt Parks.

## STRATEGIC CENTRAL CORRIDOR

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*Above: The Union Pacific right-of-way north of A Avenue.*



### **UNION PACIFIC CORRIDOR**

The concept for the Central Corridor includes landscaping along the Union Pacific Railroad corridor that runs north and south at approximately F Street. This can help give the corridor the appearance of a linear park and reduce its impact on surrounding neighborhoods. In some locations, the railroad corridor is integrated into the proposed greenway system.

## OSKALOOSA GATEWAY

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### **OSKALOOSA SHOULD IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM ALONG A AVENUE, IMPROVING THE APPEARANCE AND FUNCTION OF THIS KEY COMMUNITY CORRIDOR.**

A Avenue between the Highway 163 interchange and 3rd Street is the city's primary commercial corridor, hosting a variety of retail, service, and office uses and linking Penn Central Mall and the Main Street district with the city's main entrance. Many businesses and institutions in this corridor have significant development plans. Yet, frequent access points and sometimes inadequate parking create traffic conflicts; pedestrians are poorly accommodated; and the corridor's lack of landscaping and general appearance provide at best an undistinguished gateway to the city.

In order to address these issues, the City commissioned the Oskaloosa Gateway Plan, prepared in 1998 by RDG Crose Gardner Shukert. This plan proposes a specific plan for the enhancement of the A Avenue corridor, based on a series of meetings and individual design sessions with property owners in the corridor. The plan's principles include the following:

- *A Avenue will remain at its current width, with a street channel varying between 44 and 48 feet.* This provides a four-lane undivided facility.
- *In general, new sidewalks will be established and set back ten feet from the back of curb.* This pattern generally requires dedication of an additional five feet of right-of-way on both sides of the street. In most cases, this dedication does not affect the function or parking supply of adjacent businesses. The ten-foot setback provides room for a two-foot maintenance strip behind the curb and eight feet of landscaping. This setback provides room for snow removal and creates an opportunity for uniform landscaping and lighting. It also creates safer pedestrian environment than the current sidewalks, typically built within two to three feet of the back of the curb.

- *Contrasting paving patterns should be used at intersection crossings and at drives and curb cuts.* Contrast can be made by using stamped concrete or another contrasting surface.

- *In exchange for additional dedication, landscaping requirements on private property bordering sidewalk right-of-way should be waived.* In the tight urban setting of A Avenue, requiring both a sidewalk setback and landscaping in private streetyards can affect the usability of adjacent property. The benefits of the sidewalk setback outweighs the benefits of street-yard landscaping. Of course, where possible, the city should encourage maximum landscaping behind the property line.

- *Access points should be consolidated wherever possible, with access focused at mid-block alleys and cross-streets.* Where permitted by function, the width of curb cuts should also be reduced. These measures can reduce traffic friction and improve sidewalk continuity.

- *Improved sign standards should be adopted and replacement of obsolete signs encouraged.* Some signs along the street represent major investments and will remain in place. Others are obsolete and will require replacement. Sign standards should encourage a consistent design vocabulary, make extensive use of ground or monument signs, and may include an identifying logo for the A Avenue corridor.

- *Parking improvements should be incorporated into the corridor, in some cases making "parking streets" out of intersecting north-south streets.* These improvements can help replace existing unsafe or unsightly conditions, including backing movements into the A Avenue channel. The concept of parking streets provides diagonal or perpendicular parking on side streets, effectively allowing these streets to function as off-street parking facilities. This can help relocate parking from building front yards and improve both safety and the corridor's parking supply.

## OSKALOOSA GATEWAY

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- *The design of the public environment should include features which provide a consistent theme for the corridor.*

These components include landscape materials, modern lighting which complements historic lighting in the town center district, street furniture, and graphics. The plan also anticipates construction of a gateway arch at the Union Pacific Railroad crossing, providing a major feature along the corridor and helping to mark the railroad crossing for traffic safety. This arch may incorporate a pedestrian crossing over the street.

- *Single-family residential land uses should be phased out in this commercial mixed use corridor.* In general, the few remaining single-family sites along A Avenue are difficult to maintain and are in relatively poor condition. Redevelopment programs should acquire these properties and sell them for redevelopment. In some cases, these parcels can provide expanded parking for nearby commercial or office uses; in other instances, they provide sites large enough for new commercial or office development.

- *The city should encourage significant development on available large parcels of ground.* These include the possibility of business park or office development on the Oskaloosa Herald property west of the newspaper building, the "Country Corner" site east of old Highway 163; and other locations along the street.

- *Ravines and drainageways can provide significant open space and image-building resources along the corridor.* These include development of a retention lake between the Onthanks and Country Corner sites, providing a major amenity for both properties; and improvement of drainageways and wetlands areas west of L Street.

- *The corridor project should include development of new roads where necessary to open additional areas for development and relieve pressure on A Avenue.* Probable street developments includes:

- Extensions of B and C Avenues west of L Street to provide alternative routes for commer-

cial development and churches on the north side of the street. This extension also opens new areas north of A Avenue for development.

- A frontage road extension of the current Oskaloosa *Herald* access to Old Highway 163. This helps relieve growing congestion at the intersection of the existing frontage road and A Avenue.

# OSKALOOSA GATEWAY



## A AVENUE VIEW LOOKING WEST TOWARD 2ND STREET

Sidewalk setbacks, a stamped concrete maintenance strip, greenway, and new lighting can help unify A Avenue as a commercial district.



## GATEWAY CORRIDOR AT E STREET

Access drive consolidations preserve good access to corridor businesses while minimizing traffic friction and conflict with pedestrians. Walks to major businesses should act as extensions of the street.

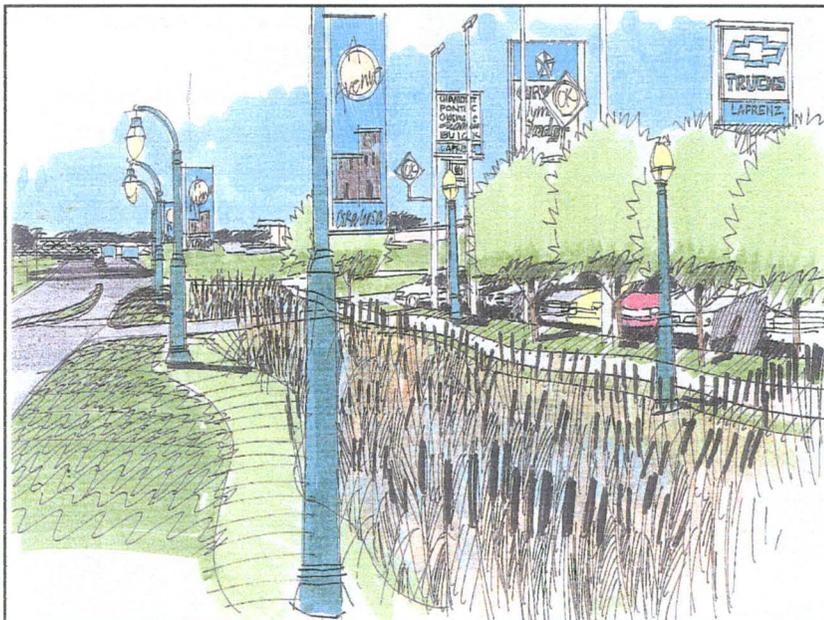


# OSKALOOSA GATEWAY



## RAILROAD ARCH

This signature feature marks the Union Pacific crossing, increasing its visibility and defining the gateway characteristics of A Avenue.



## ROADSIDE WETLANDS

A wetlands area along the western part of the corridor can provide an attractive west entrance to the city and a front lawn for area businesses.



**North Side: Bethel Baptist Access to Highway 163**

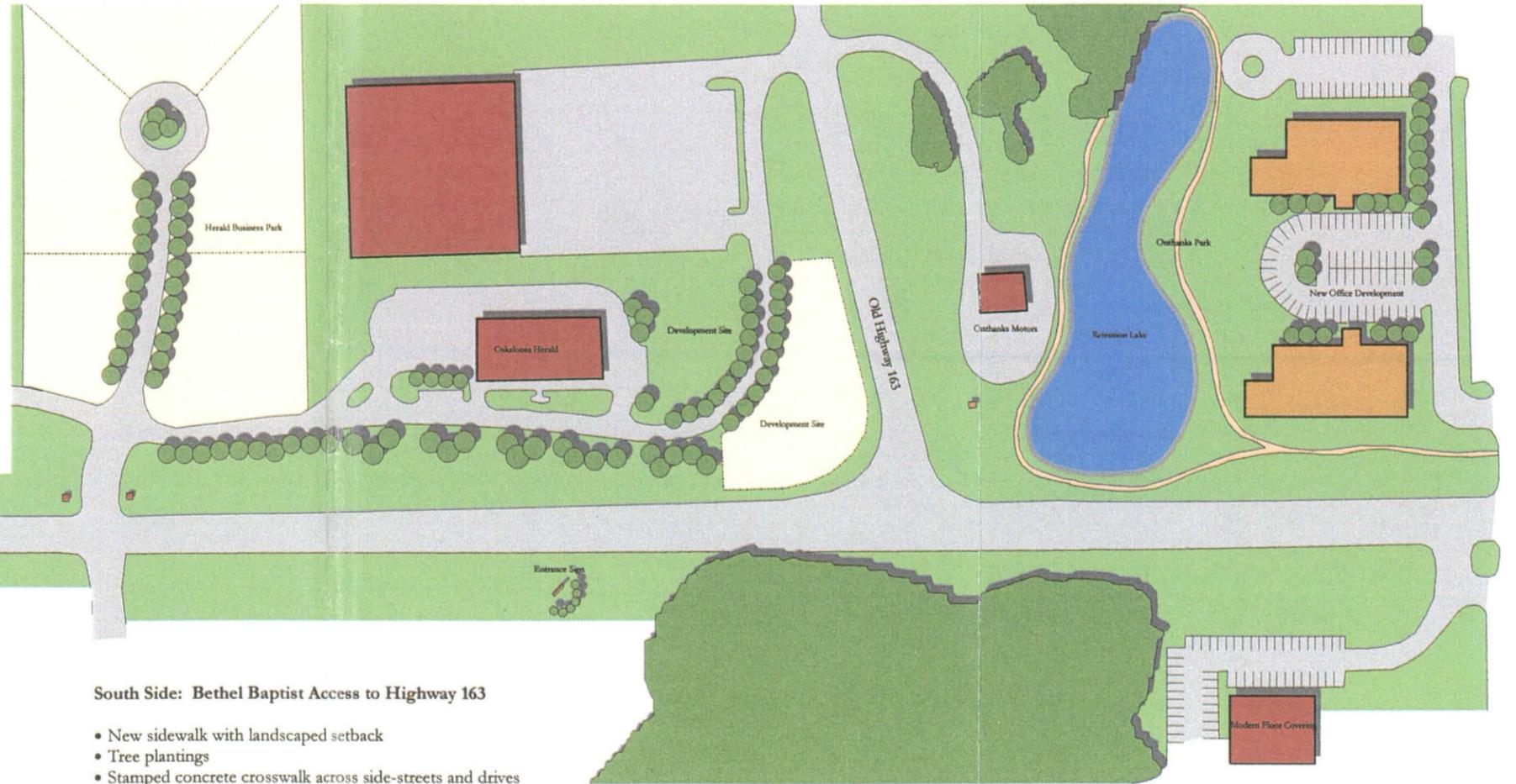
- Wetlands restoration
- Trail development
- Upgraded Lafrenz access
- New roadway lighting
- Stamped concrete on trail at major drive crossing
- Enhanced Onthanks sign

**Private Improvements**

- New office park at Country Corner site
- Herald Business park and commercial sites between old Highway 163 and the bypass

**Future**

- "Onthanks Park" lake and development
- C Avenue extension to Lafrenz drive



**South Side: Bethel Baptist Access to Highway 163**

- New sidewalk with landscaped setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across side-streets and drives
- New roadway lighting
- Consolidation of Modern Floor Coverings and Oskaloosa Motel curb cuts
- Entrance sign



**OSKALOOSA GATEWAY PLAN**  
Highway 163 to Lafrenz Access

**RDG** Crose Gardner Shukert  
Landscape Architecture, Planning & Urban Design  
Omaha and Des Moines



**North Side: L Street to Bethel Church Access**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Access improvements at Bethel Baptist Church

**Private Improvements**

- Completion of Earl May project
- Development of drive through system for Bethel Baptist

**Future Public**

- Extension of B Avenue west of L Street. Funding through special assessments and other funding sources

**North Side: K Street to L Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Access improvement to Davis Insurance
- Consolidation of car wash and car dealership access points

**Private Improvements**

- Reconfiguration of Davis Insurance lot

**North Side: J Street to K Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Improved N-S alley
- New parking lot north of alley
- Neighborhood buffer park
- J Street "parking street"
- K Street "parking street"

**North Side: I Street to J Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets and drives
- Improvement of north to east alley turning radius
- Landscaped front yard at Iowa Auto Parts
- J Street "parking street"

**Private Improvements**

- Minor changes to Oskaloosa Chiropractic Clinic front yards
- Improved CITGO parking area



**South Side: L Street to Bethel Church Access**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Consolidation of old Earl May curb cut

**Private Improvements**

- Redevelopment of old Earl May and adjacent sites

**South Side: K Street to L Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Redevelopment at SW corner of K Street and A Avenue with 4,000 SF building and new parking
- Curb cut consolidation at alley
- Replacement parking for Fred's mufflers and landscape of front yard

**Private Improvements**

- New development at K Street and A Avenue
- Mike's Brakes parking reconfiguration

**South Side: J Street to K Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Consolidation of Kwik-Lube curb cuts
- K Street "parking street"

**Private Improvements**

- New parking adjacent to or in conjunction with Dairy Queen site
- Plaza or open space at Dairy Queen

**South Side: I Street to J Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting

**Private Improvements**

- Fellowship Bible Church expansion project



**OSKALOOSA GATEWAY PLAN**  
Lafrenz Access to I Street

**RDG** Crose Gardner Shukert  
Landscape Architecture, Planning & Urban Design  
Omaha and Des Moines



**North Side: H Street to I Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets, and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting

**North Side: G Street to H Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Improvement of midblock access

**Private Improvements**

- Improvement of Pro Real Estate/Heil Insurance parking

**North Side: E Street to G Street**

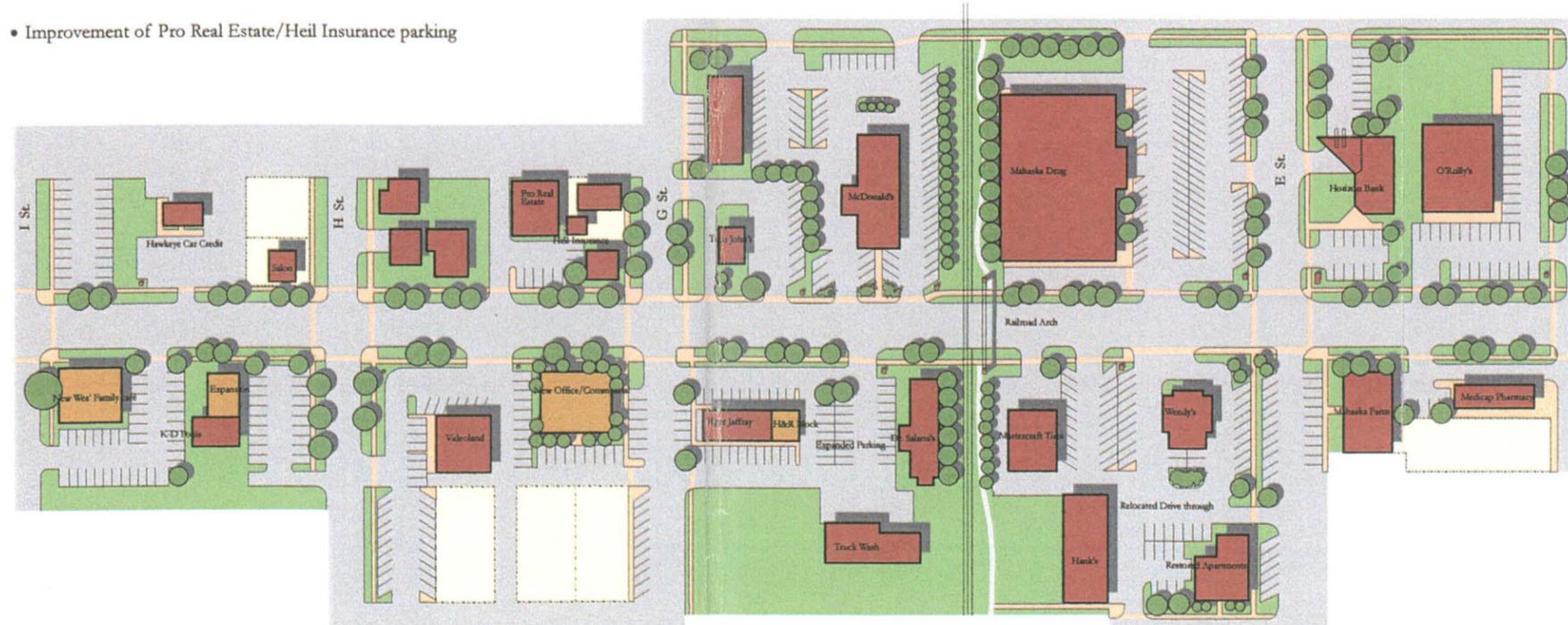
- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback in most places
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Consolidation of Mahaska Drug access into one three-lane access on A Avenue
- Railroad corridor landscaping
- Railroad Archway
- Replacement of E Street curb return with landscaping

**Private Improvements**

- Improvement of Mahaska Drug lot
- Development of urban sidewalk and Mahaska Drug facade

**North Side: D Street to E Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting



**South Side: H Street to I Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across intersecting streets, and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting

**Private Improvements**

- Parking improvements at corner of A and H Street
- Expansion of K-D Pools site
- Expansion of new Wes' Family café

**South Side: G Street to H Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets and drives
- Redevelopment site at G Street/property acquisition
- G Street "parking street"

**Private Improvements**

- Redevelopment project, supporting up to 10,000 SF
- Private parking development

**South Side: E Street to G Street**

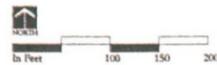
- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback in most places
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Railroad corridor landscaping
- E Street "parking street"
- Property acquisition to expand and improve parking quantity and flow
- G Street "parking street"

**Private Improvements**

- Relocation of Wendy's drive-through
- Historic apartment restoration
- Expansion and parking improvements at Piper Jaffray and Dr. Salami's

**South Side: D Street to E Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting
- Consolidation of Medicap pharmacy access, channelization of traffic flow



**OSKALOOSA GATEWAY PLAN**  
I Street to D Street

**RDG** Crose Gardner Shukert  
Landscape Architecture, Planning & Urban Design  
Omaha and Des Moines



**North Side: B Street to C Street**

- Elimination of Liquor Store curb cut
- Consolidation of access points at mid block
- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets, and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting
- New parking lot adjacent to Liquor store
- Landscaping in front of Liquor store
- Redesign of alleys to provide stacking space for Mahaska State Bank drive-through

**Private Improvements**

- Improvement of bank drive through, lengthening drive aisle
- Liquor Store improvement

**North Side: C Street to D Street**

- Consolidation of access points at mid block
- New sidewalk with 10-foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets, and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting

**North Side: Market Street to A Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Crosswalks on A Avenue
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting

**Private Improvements**

- Expansion/improvement of Central United Methodist
- Parking lot expansion
- Land conveyance to church by site with Downtown parking agreement

**North Side: 1st Street to Market Street**

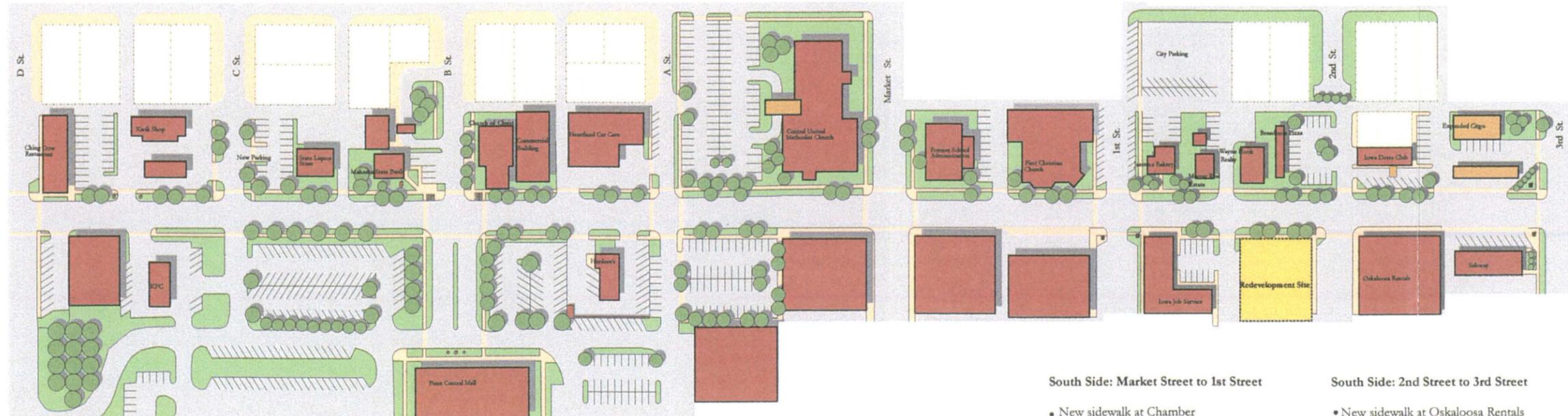
- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Consolidation of curb cuts to alley
- Improved corner node at 1st Street
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting

**Private Improvements**

- Restoration of former School Administration building
- Expansion and improvements of First Christian Church

**North Side: 1st Street to 2nd Street**

- Public parking combining 2nd Street and Bredeaux lot (17 stalls)
- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across 'A' Avenue
- Landscaping in front of Jaarsma Bakery
- Removal of 1st Street drive
- Additional parking along 1st Street
- Rebuilt 1st Street sidewalk
- Improved corner node at 1st Street



**North Side: 2nd Street to 3rd Street**

- Entrance feature at 3rd Street
- Reconfigure CITGO curb cut
- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped Concrete crosswalk across A Avenue, intersecting streets, and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting

**Private Improvements**

- New CITGO development
- Covered drive up for Iowa Dress Company
- New parking off alley

**South Side: B Street to D Street**

- Improvement of KFC, parking exit
- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting

**Private Improvements**

- Improvement of Mall parking and circulation

**South Side: A Street to B Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting

**Private Improvements**

- Redesign of Penn Central Mall parking and circulation system

**South Side: Market Street to A Street**

- New sidewalk at corner
- New sidewalks with 10 foot setback
- Redesigned parking lot with access opposite A Street as parking plaza
- Urban sidewalks with rear facades
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting

**Private Improvements**

- Upgrades of rear facade design

**South Side: 1st Street to 2nd Street**

- New sidewalk with 10 foot setback
- Tree plantings
- Consolidation of curb cuts to alley
- New downtown sidewalk at Job Service
- Improved corner nodes at 1st Street
- Downtown entrance feature at 1st Street

**South Side: Market Street to 1st Street**

- New sidewalk at Chamber
- New apron with stamped sidewalk path
- Improved corner node at 1st Street
- Downtown entrance feature at 1st Street
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across intersecting streets and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting

**South Side: 2nd Street to 3rd Street**

- New sidewalk at Oskaloosa Rentals
- New apron and embedded walk at Subway
- Entrance node and feature
- Stamped concrete crosswalk across intersecting streets, and drives
- New roadway and pedestrian scale lighting

**Private Improvements**

- Improvement of Subway building



**OSKALOOSA GATEWAY PLAN**  
D Street to 3rd Street

RDG Crose Gardner Shukert  
Landscape Architecture, Planning & Urban Design  
Omaha and Des Moines



## GREENWAY AND PARK SYSTEM

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**A CONTINUOUS GREENWAY SYSTEM SHOULD BE CREATED IN OSKALOOSA TO PROVIDE GOOD PARK SERVICE TO RESIDENTS AND CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS AND ACTIVITY CENTERS TOGETHER.**

A continuous greenway and open space system is a fundamental principle of the development concept and land use plan. Such a system is necessary to augment Oskaloosa's two existing community parks, Edmundson and Vanderwilt. It organizes individual growth centers and links them to one another and to the established city. Parks are also closely connected with proposed redevelopment projects.

Key components of the system include:

- *A greenway loop, composed of major segments of*

the abandoned Rock Island Railroad corridor along 7th Avenue, Spring Creek and the north Spring Creek tributary. This loop includes Vanderwilt Park.

- *The proposed Oskaloosa Recreational Trail, connecting FoxRun, Edmundson Park, and Vanderwilt Park using drainageways and on-street routes.*
- *An expansion of Vanderwilt Park.*
- *Natural and wilderness preserves for passive recreation along Spring Creek and in ravine areas on the west side of town south of A Avenue.*

This system is considered in more detail in Chapter Five.

## EQUITABLE FACILITIES AMONG CITY QUADRANTS

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### OSKALOOSA'S PUBLIC FACILITIES SHOULD SERVE ITS GROWTH AREAS EQUITABLY TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY GROWTH OBJECTIVES.

Oskaloosa should balance the development of its public facilities and amenities with its population, assigning parks, schools and other amenities to each city quadrant and growth center in equitable proportion with the number of people who live there. Public facility improvements are needed to ensure continued viability of each neighborhood. Detailed park and recreation proposals are discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

The Land Use Plan proposes reservation of land necessary to accommodate these required public facilities.

#### ■ Recreational Facilities

Development of new open space and recreational facilities are important to the orderly, balanced development of the city. Proposed park developments for each growth center are summarized under the principle GROWTH CENTERS and GREENWAY SYSTEM. The addition of about 100 acres of community parkland is envisioned in the growth projections of the Oskaloosa Plan. Park facilities should be developed on the basis of Level of Service standards established by the city.

#### ■ Public School Facilities

Oskaloosa's public school system is embarked on a policy of consolidating its current system of six elementary school buildings into three, three-section facilities. Current plans will established upgraded elementary centers on the east side at Webster School, on the west side in a new facility, and at a third, north site. Additional growth late in the planning period may require an additional elementary site to serve the northeast and northwest growth centers, depending on the speed of development in that sector of the city.



#### ■ Community Recreation Complex

A community recreation facility, including water recreation, wellness center, and other facilities is a significant community priority. This facility should be developed on a site associated with the greenway system, permitting safe access for users from all parts of the community. A recommended location for this facility is an expanded Vanderwilt Park.

## COMMERCIAL NODES

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### OSKALOOSA'S NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LOCATED WITHIN WELL-DEFINED NODES OR DISTRICTS, EACH WITH A UNIQUE AND COMPLEMENTARY ROLE.

Commercial uses are important both economically and as centers for community activity. In order to maximize its twin business and city-building roles, commercial growth should occur in specific nodes or districts, each with a specialized function. Together, these nodes will furnish the equivalent of 90 acres of new commercial sites for Oskaloosa to the year 2020.

Commercial strategies are linked to the function that different commercial areas fill for the city. This plan envisions a hierarchy of commercial areas, with distinct roles to play. Growth of each area will result from a combination of new construction, public improvements, changes to land and building use, conversions and redevelopment, and improved zoning and subdivision processes and regulations. Zoning regulations, specifically, should be precise enough to describe the specific roles of proposed commercial districts.

#### Major Commercial Districts

Oskaloosa's major regional commercial center will be its traditional Downtown district and adjacent Penn Central Mall. A critical area of community policy will be maintaining the primacy of this district, bounded by D Street, 2nd Street, 3rd Avenue, and A Avenue.

Other major commercial districts anticipated by the Land Use Plan include:

- The Highway 163/A Avenue interchange. Currently undeveloped, this will become a point of maximum access for customers within Oskaloosa's market region. Probable uses include major "big box" retailing and traveler and automotive services.
- The A Avenue corridor, continuing to accom-

modate a variety of community-based businesses and services. redesign of this corridor is necessary to establish a strong linkage between the interchange and the center of the city.

- *A Avenue and Highway 23.* This area currently accommodates auto-oriented, "big box" retailing. Some of this development may migrate to the westside interchange over time.

#### Secondary Commercial Areas

While most development in Oskaloosa will be concentrated in these major commercial districts, other areas should accommodate limited commercial uses. These areas will accommodate neighborhood services and complement the city's three major commercial centers. They include:

- *Neighborhood Service Nodes.* These sites provide limited convenience and neighborhood services on sites that are appropriately located in growth areas. Potential neighborhood service nodes, related to growth centers, include:
  - The Northeast "village center," along Glendale Road in that proposed growth center.
  - A site along Beacon Road, near the proposed collector loop paralleling the new Highway 163 alignment.
  - A site on South Market Street, associated with Marje Addition and enhanced existing retailing along South Market at 7th Avenue. This may be associated with development of the historic Rock Island depot.
- *New Highway Services.* Highway services are proposed at the south Highway 163/63 interchange.

## INDUSTRIAL GROWTH AREAS

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### **OSKALOOSA SHOULD USE ITS FAVORABLE TRANSPORTATION ACCESS TO GENERATE NEW SITES FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Economic development efforts in Oskaloosa should take maximum advantage of the community's primary assets -- its quality of life and vastly improved regional transportation access with the completion of the Highway 163 expressway.

The land use plan proposes expansion of Oskaloosa's existing patterns of industrial development. Industrial park development should expand in the southeast part of the city, linked back to Highway 63/163 by the projected south arterial. The plan proposes business park development east of the FoxRun area, designed to take advantage of the nearby golf course amenity and provide a buffer between high cost residential development and the Old Highway 63 industrial corridor.

Other major industrial and business park locations recommended in the Land Use Plan include:

- A North Business Park, expanding the Panel Components site from North Market Street to E Street. Office and business park development in this area would benefit from a north loop route, taking Highway 63 around the city to the northwest.
- Expansion of existing industry along the north segment of the Union Pacific, north of the current

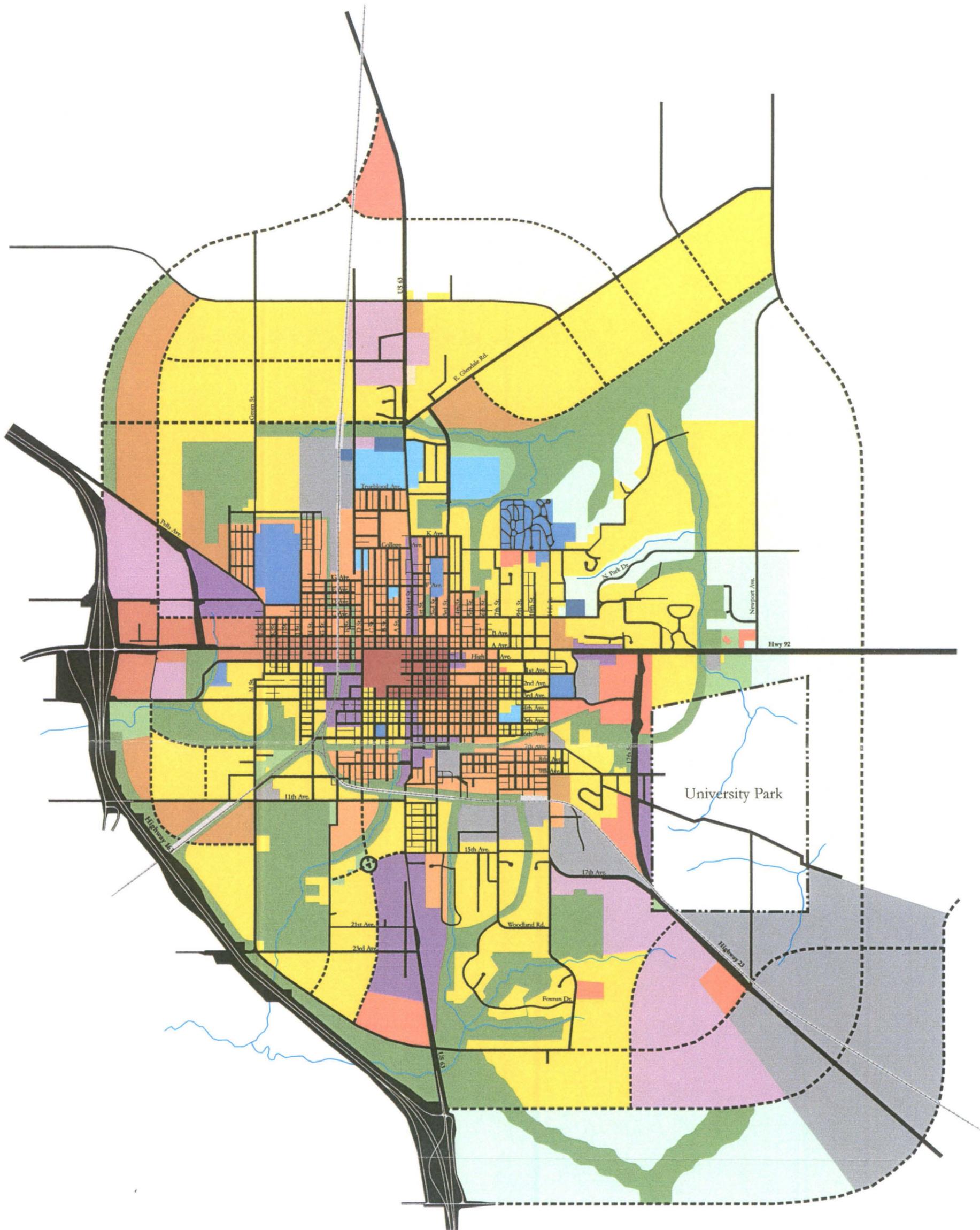
yard.

- An industrial site north of A Avenue between Pella Avenue and the new Highway 163. This site enjoys excellent road access.

Development policies which support high quality industrial development include:

- Promoting master planning for industrial and business park projects, relating buildings to one another and providing common parking and pedestrian plans.
- Enacting land use regulations that limit development to office, research uses, and appropriate industrial uses at sensitive locations.
- Integrating industrial parks into the city's planned recreation trails and open space system.

Industrial development should reserve some areas for enterprises that may relocate out of central city railroad corridors. Over the long term, industrial uses should locate outside of these areas, into contemporary industrial districts proposed in the plan.



# Future Land Use

## Oskaloosa, Iowa



RDG Crose Gardner Shukert  
Omaha and Des Moines

1/2 mile

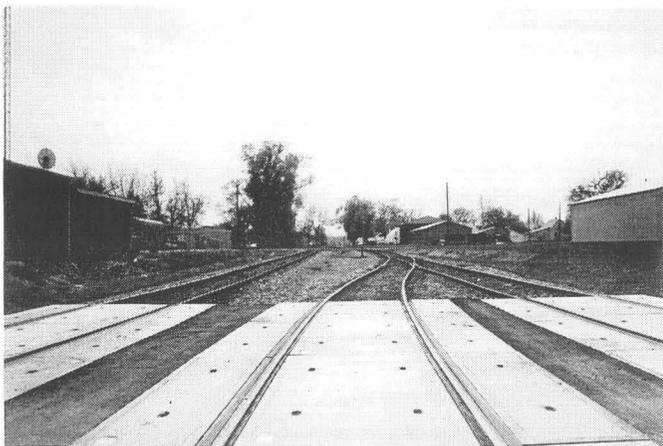
### Legend

	Development Reserve		Business Park
	Conservation Residential		Industrial
	Urban Residential		Parks/Recreation
	Medium Density Residential		Civic Uses
	High Density Residential		Schools
	Downtown		Agricultural/Open Space
	Mixed Use		
	Oskaloosa Gateway Special District		
	Commercial		



## FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION MAKING

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**OSKALOOSA'S FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND POLICIES SHOULD PROVIDE BOTH GUIDANCE AND FLEXIBILITY TO DECISION MAKERS IN THE LAND USE PROCESS.**

A Future Land Use Plan provides a development vision for the city that guides participants in the process of community building. However, it cannot anticipate the design or specific situation of every rezoning application. Therefore, the plan should not be taken as a literal, lot-by-lot prescription of how land is to be utilized. Rather, it provides a context that helps decision-makers, including city administrative officials, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council, make logical decisions which implement the plan's overall principles.

The Land Use Plan establishes a number of categories of land uses, some of which provide for single primary uses while others encourage mixed uses. Two tables are included in this section to help approving agencies interpret the intentions of the land use plan. Table 2-8 presents and defines the various categories proposed in the plan and establishes criteria for their application.

## FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION MAKING

**TABLE 2.8. LAND USE PLAN CATEGORIES AND USE CRITERIA**

Land Use Category	Use Characteristics	Features and Locational Criteria
<b>Agriculture and Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally in agricultural or open space use.</li> <li>• Agriculture will remain the principal use during the planning period.</li> <li>• Extension of urban services is unlikely during the foreseeable future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These areas should remain in primary agriculture use. Urban encroachment, including large lot subdivisions, should be discouraged.</li> <li>• Primary uses through the planning period will remain agricultural.</li> </ul>
<b>Urban Reserve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally in agricultural or open space use.</li> <li>• Areas may be in the path of future urban development after the planning horizon contained in this plan.</li> <li>• Very low density residential uses may be located in the area. Outside of clusters, density should not exceed 32 units per square mile.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These areas should be reserved for long-term urban development.</li> <li>• Primary uses through the planning period will remain agricultural.</li> <li>• Any interim large lot residential development should avoid obstructions to future urban development.</li> </ul>
<b>Conservation Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrictive land uses, emphasizing housing and open space.</li> <li>• Civic uses may be allowed with special use permission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies to wooded and/or hilly environments in the eastern part of the planning area.</li> <li>• Development regulations should promote reservation of water and common open space and design of projects to take best advantage of open space resources.</li> <li>• Gross densities will generally be less than one unit per acre, although lot clustering may produce smaller individual lots.</li> </ul>
<b>Single-Family Residential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrictive land uses, emphasizing single-family detached development, although unconventional single-family forms may be permitted with special review.</li> <li>• Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary uses within residential growth centers.</li> <li>• Should be insulated from adverse environmental effects, including noise, smell, air pollution, and light pollution.</li> <li>• Should provide a framework of streets and open spaces.</li> <li>• Typical densities range from 1 to 6 units per acre.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate-Density Residential/Urban Residential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrictive land uses, emphasizing housing.</li> <li>• May incorporate a mix of housing types, including single-family detached, single-family attached, and townhouse uses.</li> <li>• Limited multi-family development may be permitted with special review and criteria</li> <li>• Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies to established neighborhoods of the city which have diverse housing types, and in developing areas that incorporate a mix of development.</li> <li>• Developments should generally have articulated scale and maintain identity of individual units.</li> <li>• Develop in projects with adequate size to provide full services.</li> <li>• Tend to locate in complexes, but should include linkages to other aspects of the community.</li> <li>• Typical maximum density is 6 to 10 units per acre.</li> <li>• Innovative design should be encouraged in new</li> </ul>

# FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION MAKING

**TABLE 2.8. LAND USE PLAN CATEGORIES AND USE CRITERIA**

Land Use Category	uses. Use Characteristics	projects. Features and Locational Criteria
<b>Mobile Homes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodates mobile homes which are not classified under Iowa State law as “manufactured housing,</li> <li>• Single-family, small lot settings within planned mobile home parks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop in projects with adequate size to provide full services.</li> <li>• Tend to locate in complexes, but should include linkages to other aspects of the community.</li> <li>• Typical maximum density is 8 units per acre.</li> <li>• A new zoning district and updated regulations should be established to govern development of mobile home facilities.</li> <li>• Development proposals always require Planned Development designations.</li> </ul>
<b>High-Density Residential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows multi-family and compatible civic uses.</li> <li>• Allows integration of limited office and convenience commercial within primarily residential areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate at sites with access to major amenities or activity centers.</li> <li>• Should be integrated into the fabric of nearby residential areas, while avoiding adverse traffic and visual impacts on low-density uses.</li> <li>• Traffic should have direct access to collector or arterial streets to avoid overloading local streets.</li> <li>• Developments should avoid creation of compounds.</li> <li>• Attractive landscape standards should be applied.</li> <li>• Typical density is in excess of 10 units per acre.</li> </ul>
<b>Mixed Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporates a mix of residential, office, and limited commercial uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies to urban corridors, including Market Street and A avenue.</li> <li>• Also applies to planned areas in new districts which incorporate an urban mix of residential, office, and commercial uses.</li> <li>• Developments should emphasize relationships among parts.</li> <li>• Pedestrian traffic should be encouraged and neighborhood scale retained when applicable.</li> <li>• Projects should avoid large expanses of parking visible from major streets.</li> <li>• Special performance incentives should apply along the A Avenue corridor.</li> </ul>
<b>Limited Commercial/ Neighborhood Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes a range of low-impact commercial uses, providing a variety of neighborhood services.</li> <li>• Includes low to moderate building and impervious coverage.</li> <li>• May include office or office park development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be located at intersections of major or collector streets.</li> <li>• Should avoid a “four corners” configuration, except within neighborhood business districts.</li> <li>• Uses should be limited in terms of operational effects.</li> <li>• Good landscaping and restrictive signage standards should be maintained.</li> <li>• Good pedestrian/bicycle connections should be provided into surrounding areas.</li> <li>• The dominance of automobiles should be moderated by project design.</li> </ul>

# FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION MAKING

**TABLE 2.8. LAND USE PLAN CATEGORIES AND USE CRITERIA**

Land Use Category	Use Characteristics	Features and Locational Characteristics
<b>Commercial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes a variety of commercial uses.</li> <li>• Establishes larger buildings and parking facilities than Limited Commercial uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be located at intersections of arterials or other major streets.</li> <li>• Should avoid a “four corners” configuration.</li> <li>• Traffic systems should provide alternative routes and good internal traffic flow.</li> <li>• Negative effects on surrounding residential areas should be limited.</li> <li>• Good landscaping and restrictive signage standards should be maintained.</li> <li>• Good pedestrian/bicycle connections should be provided into surrounding residential service areas.</li> <li>• Buffering from surrounding uses may be required.</li> <li>• Special development requirements may apply at gateway districts, such as major interchanges.</li> </ul>
<b>Downtown Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional downtown district of Oskaloosa.</li> <li>• Includes mix of uses, primarily commercial, office, upper level residential, and warehousing/industrial uses.</li> <li>• Primary focus of major civic uses, including government, cultural services, and other civic facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes mixed use pattern in the traditional city center.</li> <li>• Recognizes current development patterns without permitting undesirable land uses.</li> <li>• District may expand with development of appropriately designed adjacent projects.</li> <li>• New projects should respect pedestrian scale and design patterns and setbacks within the overall district.</li> <li>• Historic preservation is a significant value.</li> </ul>
<b>Limited Industrial/ Business Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited industrial provides for uses which do not generate noticeable external effects.</li> <li>• Business parks may combine office and light industrial/research uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited industrial uses may be located near office, commercial, and, with appropriate development standards, some residential areas.</li> <li>• Strict control over signage, landscaping, and design is necessary for locations nearer to low intensity uses.</li> <li>• A new district for business parks, including office and office/distribution uses with good development and signage standards should be implemented.</li> </ul>
<b>General Industrial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General industrial provides for a range of industrial enterprises, including those with significant external effects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General industrial sites should be well-buffered from less intensive use.</li> <li>• Sites should have direct access to major regional transportation facilities, without passing through residential or commercial areas.</li> <li>• Developments with major external effects should be subject to Planned Development review.</li> </ul>

# FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION MAKING

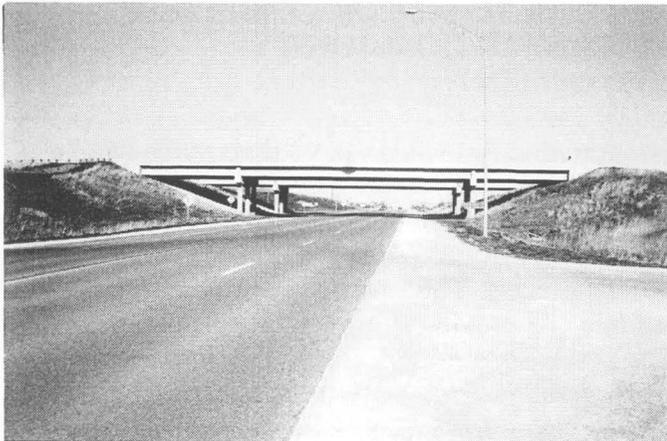
**TABLE 2.8. LAND USE PLAN CATEGORIES AND USE CRITERIA**

Land Use Category	Use Characteristics	Features and Locational Criteria
Civic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes schools, churches, libraries, and other public facilities that act as centers of community activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be permitted in a number of different areas, including residential areas.</li> <li>• Individual review of proposals requires an assessment of operating characteristics, project design, and traffic management.</li> </ul>
Public Facilities and Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes facilities with industrial operating characteristics, including public utilities, maintenance facilities, and public works yards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial operating characteristics should be controlled according to same standards as industrial uses.</li> <li>• When possible, should generally be located in industrial areas.</li> </ul>



# MOBILITY AND THE CITY ENVIRONMENT:

## A Transportation System that Meets Development Objectives



**O**SKALOOSA'S BASIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM is a grid system, designed to distribute traffic throughout the city. This transportation network is defined by two major cross axes, east-west A Avenue (Iowa Highway 92) and north-south Market Street (US Highway 63). The completion of the four-lane Highway 163 to the Des Moines metropolitan area and around the southwest quadrant of the city also has major transportation benefits that must be supported through future transportation planning policy.

However, features such as topography and past and present railroad corridors interrupt Oskaloosa's street continuity. The Union Pacific Railroad line through the city accommodates relatively moderate-volume, low-speed traffic, but lacks grade separations and delays traffic at certain times during the day. As the city grows, its transportation system must continue to provide good local circulation around and through town, and accommodate regional traffic needs. In addition, transportation is an im-

portant formative element of the future city -- the concepts identified in the future land use plan require support from the transportation network. Finally, Oskaloosa's streets and public rights-of-way account for over 25% of the city's land area, making them the city's most extensive public properties. Therefore, streets provide important public spaces in communities, and must be thought of as a key part of the public environment. Their appearance and condition has a major impact on the health and value of private property throughout the city.

This chapter is designed to provide Oskaloosa with a transportation system concept that:

- Solves existing and emerging circulation problems.
- Unifies various parts of the city, assuring that the community grows together as it grows larger.
- Helps to define desirable development patterns and land uses.
- Links Oskaloosa's activity and employment centers together.

## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM GOALS

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- Maintains the quality of the urban environment and the economic health of its components.

As Oskaloosa grows and changes, its transportation system should:

### ■ PROVIDE FOR THE SAFE AND CONVENIENT MOVEMENT OF ALL RESIDENTS.

Safety is a fundamental consideration for all elements of a transportation system. Transportation conflicts and a mixture of turning movements create traffic "friction" that slows travel and increases the probabilities of accidents, a particular challenge in urban corridors such as A Avenue. A traffic system that sorts out these varied demands and provides alternatives will become a safer and more expeditious system.

In addition, the community should serve the needs of a growing number of pedestrians and bicyclists and help insure their safety as well. Oskaloosa's topography and relatively easy access throughout town lends itself to bicycle and pedestrian travel. In addition, the presence of a significant college campus, William Penn College on the north side of town, also increases the number of people in town using bicycles for basic transportation. This chapter will address these concerns, provide solutions for identified problems and suggest direction for future needs that will emerge from community change.

### ■ ASSURE THAT THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS ADEQUATE TO MEET THE DEMANDS PLACED UPON IT.

In Oskaloosa, capacity and congestion issues are significant issues in certain places. These issues are especially significant along the two major highway corridors and most evident at the intersection of these corridors at A Avenue and Market Street. Here, frequent turning movements, include heavy truck traffic, compound traffic conflicts and congestion.

### ■ USE THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK TO SUPPORT DESIRABLE PATTERNS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

Transportation systems do more than move people from one place to another. They also form the structure of the community and are a very important implementation tool in the comprehensive planning process. The reservation of transportation corridors will provide structure for new development in the city, and will channel growth into areas that can be provided with public services. In addition, transportation availability determines the location of major activity centers.

### ■ DEVELOP A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT RESPECTS STREETS AS IMPORTANT FEATURES WITHIN THE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT.

Streets in cities have traditionally been important parts of the public environment. Many of Oskaloosa's streets have a scale, quality, and landscaped environment that make them important features of the cityscape. Streets with a civic quality to them include A Avenue, Market Street, C Avenue, and High Avenue. However, contemporary street design often does not address the public character of streets, instead treating them solely as conduits for cars. Streets should be conceived as community corridors that can create special places and add rather than detract from their surrounding neighborhoods.

## THE EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

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This section examines important elements of the transportation system that will assist in developing specific projects and policies. It discusses the structure of the city's street system and the role that its individual parts play.

### THE STRUCTURE OF THE STREET NETWORK

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Oskaloosa's street system grew from its original grid, generated from the crossroads of present-day A Avenue and Market Street. The city's initial platted grid of 256.5 foot square blocks is defined by B Avenue on the north, 5th Avenue on the south, I Street on the west, and 7th Street on the east. The main diagonal trade route to Des Moines became Highway 163, entering the city on the western edge.

A grid street pattern continued to the north and south with later development, usually characterized by longer blocks. More contemporary development on the north and south edges of the city, along with curvilinear patterns following topography in the hills east of the city, break the basic symmetry of the grid pattern.

Streets in Oskaloosa can be placed in the following functional classifications:

- *Expressways.* Expressways and regional arterials generally include divided road sections with limited median cuts and access points. The new Highway 163 is classified as an expressway, and will provide grade-separated access to Oskaloosa. These access points include the A Avenue (Highway 92) interchange and the south interchange with US Highway 63.

- *Major Arterials.* These roads serve regional needs and connect major activity centers. Major arterials in Oskaloosa include:

- A Avenue (Iowa Highway 92)
- Market Street (US Highway 63)
- 17th Street (Iowa Highway 23)

- *Other Arterials.* These major streets connect with and complement the major arterial system by linking major activity centers and connecting various parts of the city together. As a rule, these streets are spaced at 0.5 to 1.0 mile intervals in developed urban areas. Oskaloosa currently lacks streets within this classification.

- *Collectors.* The collector system links neighborhoods together and connects them to arterials and activity centers. Collectors are designed for relatively low speeds (30 mph and below) and provide unlimited local access. Collectors in the Oskaloosa system follow:

#### East-West

- Glendale Road
- C Avenue
- High Avenue, interrupted by Penn Central Mall in central Oskaloosa.
- 3rd Avenue east of Penn Central Mall.
- 6th Avenue
- 11th Avenue (Beacon Road)
- 15th/17th Avenue

#### North-South

- M Street, interrupted north of Edmundson Park by the Union Pacific line.
- D Street south of G Avenue.
- E Street north of G Avenue.
- 2nd Street from C Avenue to 15th Street.
- South 7th Street.
- 11th Street south from Forest Cemetery

Typical street right-of-ways in Oskaloosa are 66 feet, accommodating two lane roadways. Streets that were platted as part of the traditional city center (High Avenue, 1st Avenue, Market Street, and 1st Street have an 80 foot right-of-way. In addition, state and federal highway routes on the edges of town (including A Avenue west of L Street and east of 11th Street, and 17th Street south of A Avenue) have wider rights-of-way. Some contemporary subdivisions use 50 to 60 foot rights-of-way for local streets.

Most streets in Oskaloosa provide two through

## THE EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

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lanes. Multi-lane facilities include:

- A Avenue (Highway 92). A Avenue is a four-lane, undivided channel through most of the city, to a point just east of 11th Street. Here, the highway widens to a four-lane divided facility with a narrow median.
- Market Street (Highway 63). Market Street is a four lane undivided facility from the north city limits through Downtown. It narrows to two lanes south of 3rd Avenue and widens again briefly to four lanes under the Union Pacific overpass north of 11th Street. In 1997, the Iowa Department of Transportation began plan development for the upgrading of this corridor.
- 17th Street has a channelized intersection at A Avenue, but narrows to a two-lane section.

### TRAFFIC VOLUMES

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The most recent available traffic volume counts were completed in -- by the Iowa Department of Transportation. These counts lead to the following conclusions:

- The heaviest loads in Oskaloosa's street system occur along the A Avenue and Market Street corridors. Average daily traffic (ADT) was recorded at 8,500 vehicles per day (vpd) entering Oskaloosa from the west on A Avenue. Maximum volumes on A Avenue through central Oskaloosa were approximately 13,000 vpd.
- Traffic volumes on Market Street through Central Oskaloosa were measured at about 9,000 vpd in 1994. These levels fall to the south of 15th Avenue and north of the city.
- Traffic on South 17th Street is approximately 6,000 vpd.

Traffic volumes are likely to change as a result of the rerouting of Highway 63 through Oskaloosa and the completion of the South Highway 163



loop. Before 1997, US Highway 63 was routed along Market Street south to A Avenue, east on A Avenue to 17th Street, and south on 17th Street out of the city. The 1997 reroute uses Market Street through the city to the Highway 163 interchange.

The completion of the Highway 163 loop will have a greater impact on traffic. This route will permit westbound to southbound traffic to skirt the city, and may relieve congestion on A Avenue and South Market Street. Highway 63 traffic will remain essentially unchanged through the city center.

Traffic levels on other streets are generally below 5,000 vpd.

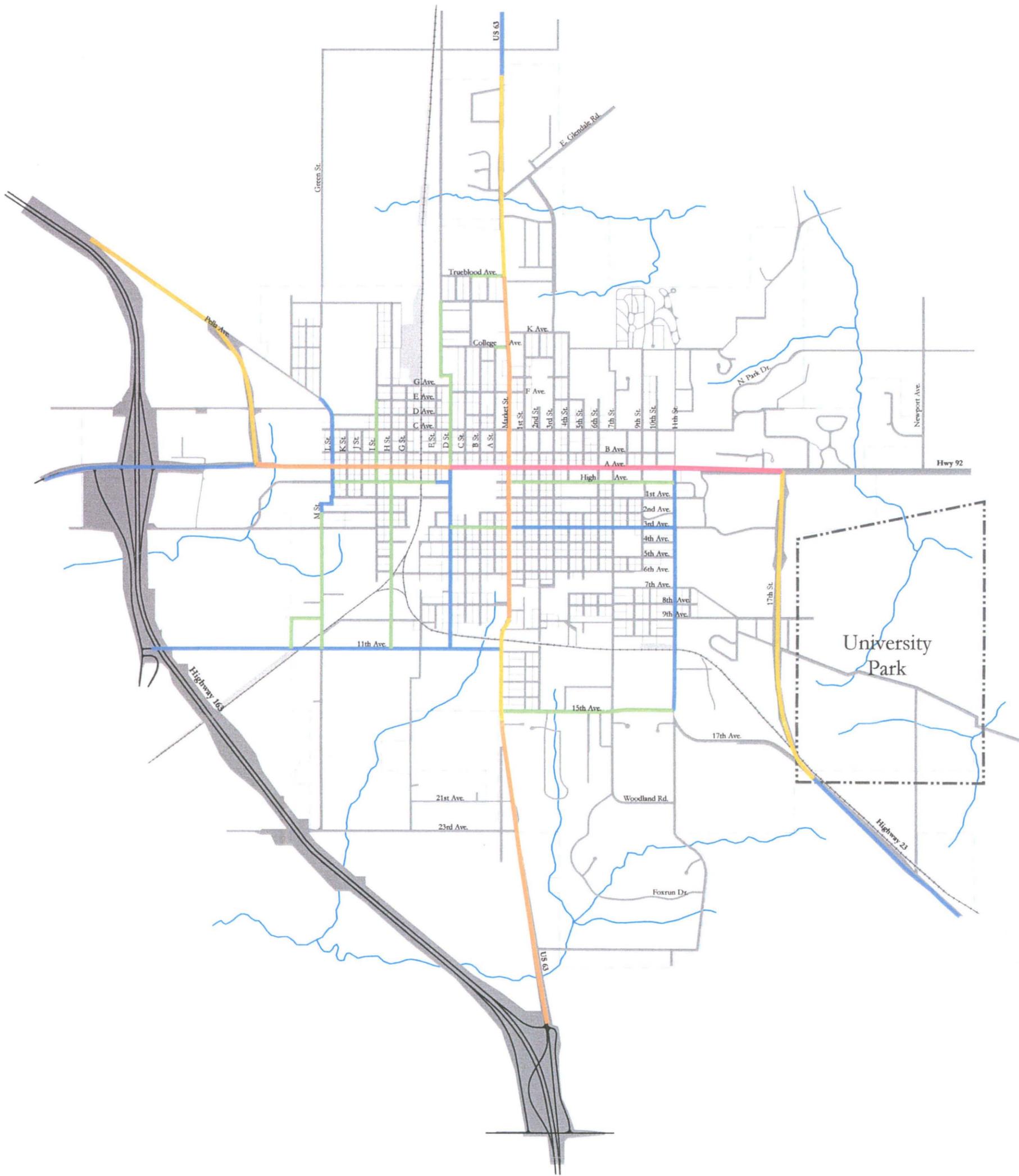
### CAPACITY ANALYSIS

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A capacity analysis compares the traffic volumes on a street segment with the design traffic capacity of that segment. The ratio of volume over capacity (V/C) corresponds to a "level of service" (LOS), which describes the quality of traffic flow.

### MEASURES OF LEVELS OF SERVICE (LOS)

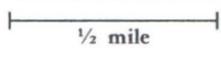
System performance of a streets is evaluated using a criterion called the "level of service" or LOS. LOS is a qualitative measure that examines such factors as speed, travel time, traffic interruptions,



# 1994 Traffic Flow

## Oskaloosa, Iowa

 **RDG Crose Gardner Shukert**  
Omaha and Des Moines

 NORTH  
 1/2 mile

**Vehicles Per Day**

	10,000 +
	7,500 - 10,000
	5,000 - 7,500
	2,500 - 5,000
	1,000 - 2,500



## THE EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

**TABLE 4.1. TYPICAL TRAFFIC CAPACITY BY FACILITY TYPE**

	Capacity at LOS "C" (vpd)	
	CBD Setting	Non-CBD
<b>Major Arterials</b>		
2-Lane	9,400	10,400
2-Lane with Turn Lanes	12,800	14,000
4-Lane	21,000	23,300
4-Lane with Turn Lanes	23,800	26,500
<b>Other Arterials</b>		
2-Lane	7,500	8,400
2-Lane with Turn Lanes	8,600	9,400
4-Lane	16,900	18,700
4-Lane with Turn Lanes	18,800	20,900
<b>Collectors</b>		
2-Lane	5,800	6,500
2-Lane with Turn Lanes	7,800	8,600
4-Lane	13,000	14,500
4-Lane with Turn Lanes	14,600	16,300

Source: HDR, Inc.

freedom of maneuvering, safety, convenience, and operating costs of a road under specific volume conditions. A ratio of volume to capacity (that is how much traffic the street carries divided by how much traffic the street was designed to carry) provides a short method for determining LOS. LOS categories are described as follows:

- **LOS A:** This describes free-flowing operation. Vehicles face few impediments in maneuvering. The driver has a high level of physical and psychological comfort. Minor accidents or breakdowns cause little interruption in the traffic stream. LOS A corresponds to a volume/capacity ratio of 0 to 0.60.
- **LOS B:** This condition is a reasonably free-flowing operation. Maneuvering ability is slightly restricted, but ease of movement remains high. LOS B corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.60 to 0.70.

- **LOS C:** This level provides stable operation. Traffic flows approach the range in which increases in traffic will degrade service. Minor incidents can be absorbed, but a local slow-down of traffic will result. In urban settings, LOS C is a good level of service to work toward. It corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.70 to 0.80.

- **LOS D:** This level borders on an unstable traffic flow. Small traffic increases produce substantial service deterioration. Maneuverability is limited and comfort levels are reduced. LOS D represents a V/C ratio of 0.80 to 0.90. LOS D is frequently used as a compromise standard in dense urban settings.

- **LOS E:** LOS E represents typical operation at full design capacity of a street. Operations are extremely unstable, because there is little margin for error in the traffic stream. LOS E corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.90 to 1.00.

- **LOS F:** LOS F is a breakdown in the system. Such conditions exist when queues form behind a breakdown or congestion point. This condition occurs when traffic exceeds the design capacity of the street.

### STREET PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The capacity analysis indicates that Oskaloosa's street system functions at LOS "C" or better. However, some specific problems along the arterial system exist, including:

- **Congestion at the A Avenue and Market Street intersection.** While this intersection functions adequately from a statistical perspective, the amount of truck traffic at the intersection creates temporary congestion problems. These are caused by truck traffic which accelerates slowly at the signalized intersection; and truck traffic turning between Highway 92 and Highway 63. The problem is worsened by the Downtown setting of this intersection, with commercial buildings built on the property line. Turning traffic occasionally

## THE EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

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damages neighboring buildings.

- *Traffic friction along A Avenue.* This trafficway, the city's only through east-west corridor, mixes regional and local traffic. The traffic flow is interrupted by frequent turning movements into driveways of neighboring commercial businesses. The lack of a center left-turn lane creates additional traffic conflicts.

### STREET NETWORK ISSUES

Discontinuities in Oskaloosa's local street system channels much local and inter-neighborhood traffic onto the arterial system. Significant problems include:

- *Lack of east-west continuity on the north side of town.* The city lacks an east-west collector that crosses North Market Street north of C Avenue. Because of land use patterns, the first opportunity for such a collector is north of the William Penn College campus.

- *Lack of east-west continuity south of A Avenue.* Penn Central Mall and railroad alignments prevent connections between east and west sides of Oskaloosa between A Avenue and 6th Avenue. Offsets compromise 6th Avenue's ability to function as a collector street.

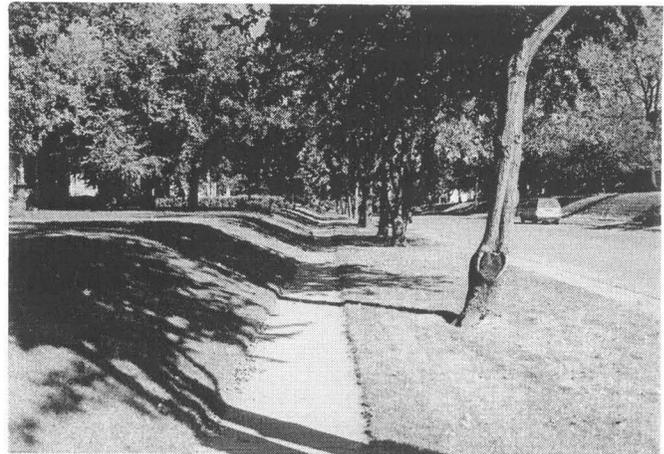
- *Poor north-south street continuity in the southwest part of the city.* Here again, topographic issues and railroad alignments have impeded street continuity.

### OTHER TRANSPORTATION MODES

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#### SIDEWALKS

Oskaloosa maintains a relatively complete sidewalk system within its traditional grid. The city maintains an annual sidewalk replacement program, until recently funded at about \$20,000 annually. This program provides front-end financing for sidewalk replacement, the costs of which are then



assessed to adjacent property owners. The city has also completed a survey of accessible intersection ramps along Highways 92, 63, and 137 (A Avenue and Market Street). The study identified 101 ramps that were constructed during 1997. Gradual adaptation of major pedestrian corridors to full accessibility will be an important priority for Oskaloosa's pedestrian system.

#### TRAILS AND BICYCLE TRANSIT

While Oskaloosa has significant opportunities for potential trail development, implementation is in its early stages. The FoxRun subdivision includes an eight-foot sidewalk trail parallel along FoxRun Drive. Initial planning is in place for the Oskaloosa Recreation Trail, connecting the FoxRun subdivision in southeast Oskaloosa with Vanderwilt Park in the northwest part of the city by a combination of on- and off-street routes. An important component of this plan is the proposed development of the Marje Addition east of Market Street and south of 15th Avenue East. A drainage corridor through the addition is planned for development as a greenway, providing an integral connection between FoxRun and Edmundson Park.

### CONCLUSIONS

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This analysis suggests that:

- Major existing traffic problems in Oskaloosa oc-

## THE EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

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cur at the Market and A Avenue intersection and along A Avenue. These problems are caused more by mixing of traffic streams than by capacity problems. The developed nature of these corridors, which include areas of special community character, limit the ability to increase street capacity. Therefore, transportation and land use policies which increase the number of route alternatives and divert some trips away from the central corridors are advisable. The completion of the Highway 163 corridor may help divert regional trips from the center of the city.

- Oskaloosa has relative poor local and collector street continuity, setting parts of the city apart from one another and directing substantial local traffic onto the A Avenue and Market Street corridors.

- Expansion of non-motorized transportation facilities in Oskaloosa can help complement the automobile for certain recreational and commercial trips.



## THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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**T**he transportation program for Oskaloosa should meet current and future mobility needs while enhancing the character of the city's urban environment. This general policy includes:

- Improving traffic circulation on arterial streets.
- Maintaining a functional system of local collector streets that distributes people around the city without using arterials.
- Reducing traffic friction and safety conflicts along A Avenue and Market Street.
- Developing a continuous network to accommodate non-automobile transportation.
- Developing street corridors which serve other community and economic development objectives, including leading visitors from regional approach routes to major commercial and cultural destinations within the community.



The components of this program include:

- **STREET CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM**
- **NORTH LOOP**
- **STREET CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**
- **LONG-RANGE CIRCULATION SYSTEM**
- **CONTINUITY IN GROWTH AREAS**
- **STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACES**
- **STREET AND SIDEWALK REPAIR PROGRAM**
- **PEDESTRIAN AND TRAIL SYSTEM**
- **COMMUNITY GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS**

## STREET CLASSIFICATIONS

### **OSKALOOSA SHOULD DEFINE THE ROLES OF VARIOUS STREETS WITHIN ITS TRAFFIC SYSTEM.**

The Street Classification Plan defines the various functions that major street segments have in the Oskaloosa system, and establishes the city's TEA-21 eligible system. Classifications include:

- *Expressways:*
  - Highway 163 between the corporate limits and the Highway 63 interchange
- *Major Arterials*
  - Proposed North Highway 63 Bypass
  - A Avenue
  - Market Street (Present Highway 63)
  - 17th Street (Highway 23)
- *Other (Local) Arterials*
  - C Avenue
  - 3rd Avenue
  - 11th Avenue (Beacon Road)
  - Glendale Road with a west extension
  - 11th Street
  - Circumferential loop, including Pella Avenue, L Street, M Street, and a south connector between Highways 23 and 63 (267th Street).
  - Newport Avenue
  - Eastside belt route from Highway 63 to Newport Avenue. (35th Street)
- *Collectors*
  - West side collector loop paralleling the proposed North Bypass
  - J Avenue
  - High Avenue
  - 6th Avenue
  - 15th Avenue
  - North 3rd Street
  - South 7th Street
  - North E/South D Street
  - South F Street

The projects necessary to complete this system are presented under the principle LONG-TERM CIRCULATION SYSTEM.

## NORTH BYPASS

### **OSKALOOSA SHOULD PROPOSE DEVELOPMENT OF A NORTH HIGHWAY 63 BYPASS.**

One of Oskaloosa's most significant transportation problems is the mixing of heavy regional truck traffic, local and through automobile traffic, and pedestrians in the city center. In addition, the presence of heavy truck traffic on Market Street through downtown affects the environment of this historic central district. The South Highway 163 Loop should eventually ease this problem by providing a bypass route for traffic from Highway 92 west to Highway 63 south.

The ultimate solution to these problems will be extension of a North Bypass from the north edge of the city to a junction with the new Highway 163. This will route truck traffic using Highway 63 around the city on the west, avoiding traffic conflicts along A Avenue and reducing truck use of Market Street through the center of town. The North Bypass may be developed as a two-lane facility with a very limited number of at-grade access points. These accesses represent intersections of the planned arterial/collector system with the bypass route.

This project should be combined with efforts to establish the Highway 163/92 interchange as a gateway to the city and to upgrade A Avenue as an attractive community corridor. These concepts are described later in this section.

## LONG-RANGE CIRCULATION SYSTEM

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### OSKALOOSA SHOULD IMPLEMENT A LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE TRAFFIC SYSTEM FOR THE YEAR 2020.

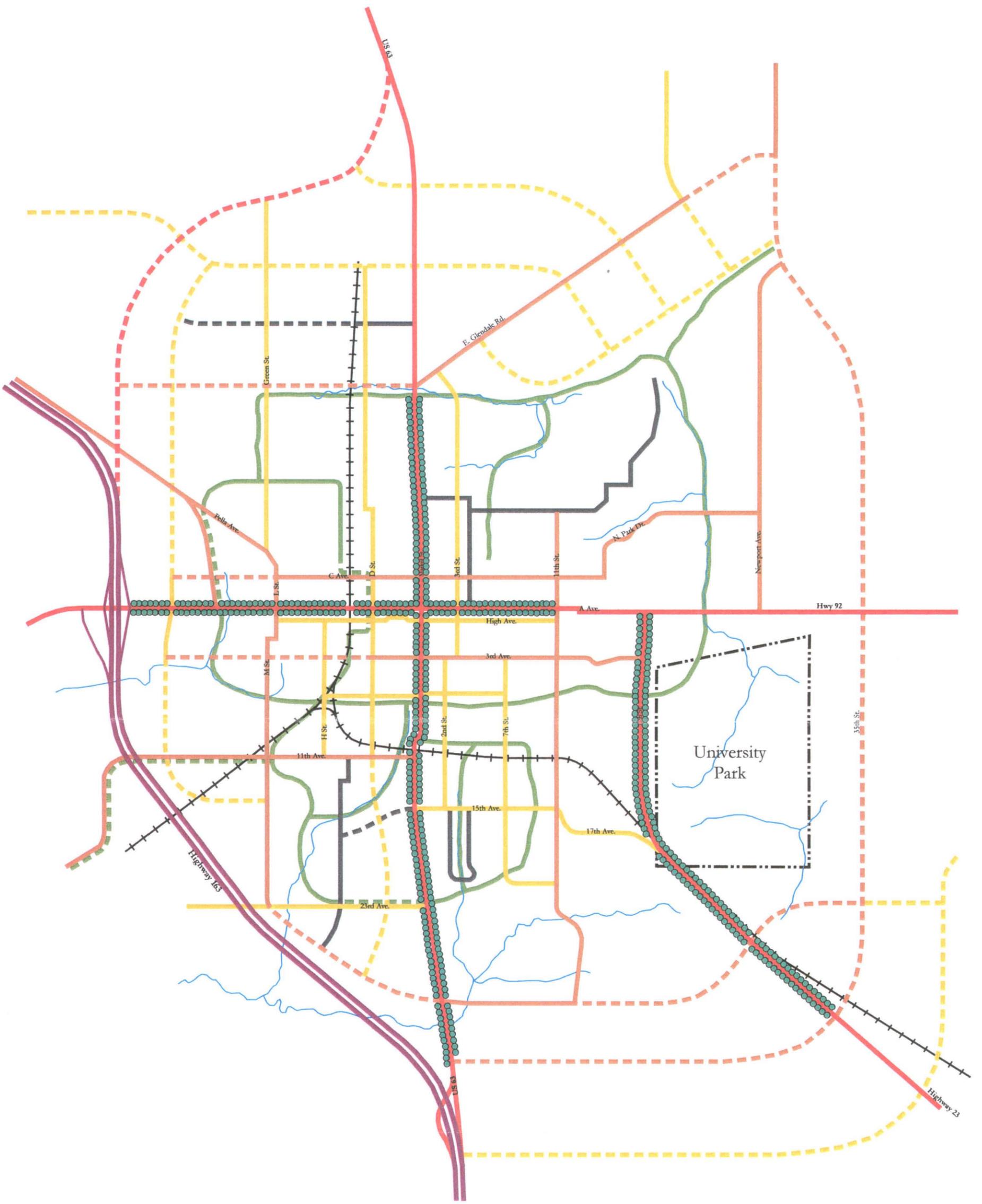
The completion of the four-lane Highway 163, and the twin needs to serve new growth areas and improve street network continuity require a longer range perspective in transportation system planning. Transportation must be related to land use and the need to provide better linkages among the various parts of the city. Key components of the planned transportation system include:

- *The proposed North Bypass*, linking the Highway 163 loop around the city to the west with Highway 63 north of Oskaloosa.
- *A southwest to east circumferential circulator*, composed of L and M Streets south of Pella Avenue and continuing east parallel to the new Highway 163 and along right-of-way reserved as part of the FoxRun development. This loop would extend to the proposed South 35th Street arterial in the extreme southeast part of the city and would serve major residential and business park growth areas.
- *An eastside belt incorporating a 35th Street alignment around University Park*. This belt route would link Highways 63 and 23 south of the city at approximately 267th Street and turn north across Highway 23 as 35th Street. It would extend north to join Newport Avenue in the northeast part of the Urban Development Zone, providing a connection between new residential areas in this sector and developing employment centers in the southeast part of the city.
- *A north circulator system, including a road parallel to Highway 163 north of 11th Avenue and including a westward extension of Glendale Road*. This alignment would serve residential growth areas projected for the northeast part of the city. This provides connections between the northeast side of the city and westside neighborhoods. In addition, it provides an alternative route to Market Street and A

Avenue to the Highway 163 interchange as well as local access to uses that develop along the bypass corridor.

- *An extension of D Street with development to the south*, providing a continuous north-south local collector.
- *An extension of 3rd Avenue as a continuous east-west collector* with the redevelopment of the salvage yard area in west central Oskaloosa.
- *An extension of 15th Avenue from South Market to South F Street*.
- *Improvement of South F Street on the eastern edge of Edmundson Park*.
- *A grade-separated crossing over the north-south UP line*. Relatively slow-moving train traffic, coupled with prospects of increased traffic on this rail line are making east-west travel increasingly difficult. During the planning period, the City should investigate the feasibility and potential alignment of a grade separation over this railroad. In addition to improved traffic flow, benefits of a crossing include improved public safety response and neighborhood unification. Any alignment must be designed to have minimum impact on existing neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- *Roadway and environmental improvements to the A Avenue and Market Street corridors*. The eventual development of a regional loop system provides an opportunity to change the design characteristics of Oskaloosa's principal cross axes, A Avenue and Market Street. Anticipated projects include improved pedestrian accommodations, lighting, landscaping, graphics, and signage.

Several of these projects involve major federal expenditures and are part of the regional highway system. As such, major initiatives during the next five years will involve incorporating them into the Iowa Department of Transportation's highway development program. Other projects involve platting and improving rights-of-way with adjacent development or as part of redevelopment projects.



# Transportation Plan

## Oskaloosa, Iowa



**RDG** Crose Gardner Shukert  
Omaha and Des Moines

1/2 mile

### Legend

Expressways/Freeways	Proposed Collector Streets
Existing Major (Regional) Arterials	Existing Other Connector Streets
Proposed Major Arterials	Proposed Other Connector Streets
Existing Minor Arterials	Enhancement Corridors
Proposed Minor Arterials	Trail Corridors
Existing Collector Streets	On-Street Trail Corridors



## STREET CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

### **OSKALOOSA SHOULD EXECUTE ITS SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM STREET CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM.**

The transportation planning and implementation program for Oskaloosa presented in this plan has a two-fold dimension -- short-term maintenance and incremental enhancements to the circulation system; and long-term transportation planning and system development to serve projected community growth and provide unified access as envisioned by the City Development Concept. Maintenance of an ongoing street enhancement program is vital to meeting the goals of the transportation plan.

Between 1998 and 2002, the city plans to spend about \$2.7 million for street construction. The largest share of these projected projects include the grading, draining, and paving of major roadway segments. These projects are funded by a combination of sources, including Federal aid through the ISTEA or successor transportation programs, special assessments, general obligation bonds, Road Use Tax funds, and other sources. The largest projects scheduled in the city's CIP for construction between 1999 and 2002 include:

- 8th Avenue West, Market to D Streets (1999)
- North I Street, G to M Avenues (2000)
- South 2nd Streets, 9th to 15th Avenues (2000)
- 11th Avenue East (2000)
- 3rd Avenue East, 1st to 7th Streets (2001)
- South 11th Street, South of Woodland to Fox Run (2002)
- North H Street, G to M Avenues (2002)

Medium-term projects for construction between 2002 and 2007 include:

- 15th Avenue East from Market to 11th Streets.
- Edmundson Drive from 11th Avenue to 23rd Avenue.
- 9th Avenue West from H to M Streets.
- 2nd Avenue West from G to M Streets.
- J Avenue East from 4th to 9th Streets.
- South F Street from 8th to 11th Avenues.
- North I Street from A to G Avenues.



## CONTINUITY IN GROWTH AREAS

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### **NEW GROWTH AREAS IN OSKALOOSA SHOULD BE SERVED BY CONTINUOUS STREET NETWORKS THAT ARE LINKED TO ESTABLISHED PARTS OF THE CITY.**

Oskaloosa's traditional city neighborhoods were built along a street grid of continuous, relatively closely spaced streets. Later development maintained the grid, but provided larger block spacing. The grid pattern generally disperses traffic by providing a number of alternative routes in and out of residential neighborhoods.

The incremental nature of contemporary subdivision development usually fails to pre-designate major collector routes. As a result, connections rarely emerge and traffic concentrates on a relatively few collector streets and arterials. In Oskaloosa, with its relative lack of east-west through corridors, this problem cuts off developing areas east and west of the railroad corridor and to some extent the Mall from one another.

Additionally, a pattern of discontinuous streets, designed only to meet the needs of an individual subdivision, can create enclaves that separate neighborhoods from one another and from the fabric of the traditional town.

The Development Concept and Transportation Plan indicates a system of suggested local collectors through development areas. While final routes may not follow these lines, the general collector corridors should be maintained with new development activity. In addition, while contemporary subdivisions often do not use closely-spaced street grids, streets in newly developing areas should maintain the positive features of these grids -- alternative routes through neighborhoods, connections to other residential areas, a network of local streets linked to collectors, and avoidance of long cul-de-sacs.



## STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACES

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### MAJOR STREETS IN OSKALOOSA SHOULD HAVE MULTIPLE USES, BECOMING GREEN CORRIDORS THAT LINK THE "ROOMS" OF THE GROWING CITY.

In addition to moving vehicular traffic, streets are also important public spaces, providing the front yards for homes and businesses. Yet, cities rarely consider this quality in street design. Those cities, such as Minneapolis, that historically considered the public quality of streets have produced environments of special distinction and value.

Key elements of the transportation system of Oskaloosa should also transcend their traffic moving function and become links of a parkway system, providing structure to the community and adding value to the properties and neighborhoods around them. Each Growth Center includes a "parkway" street, intended as common ground and a promenade for the neighborhood. Special attributes of these streets include:

- *Features such as ornamental lighting, landscaped medians, and additional greenway width and landscaping.* Boulevard sections may or may not be divided roads. In areas where a single street channel is used, greenway setbacks should be expanded.
- *Parallel facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.* This often includes wider than standard sidewalks on at least one side of the street to accommodate both

pedestrians and recreational users. Paths may include gentle curves and street furniture to provide interest and accommodations for users.

- *Connections between major activity centers.* Neighborhood parks in developing areas should be expanded green areas along the parkways. The parkways become linear parks, leading people between new and old parts of the community.
- *They are designed for local traffic moving at slow to moderate speeds, rather than becoming high speed routes.* Thus, parking is allowed along parkways and houses can front on them. They are designed as public spaces and thrive on residential features such as porches and front doors.

- *They emerge organically out of the fabric of traditional and new neighborhoods, linking them together.* In new areas, they become the structuring elements for new features and neighborhood amenities. As a result, the parkway concept becomes a critical determinant of community land use patterns and design.

The parkways in new areas are central features for growing neighborhoods. However, existing streets have characteristics and linkages which also require similar treatment. These streets include:

- C Avenue, connecting the eastside hills, two school sites, the hospital, stadium, YMCA, and fairgrounds.
- An upgraded 3rd Avenue.
- High Avenue.
- 1st Avenue East

Market Street and A Avenue, as critical highway corridors, share these characteristics but also have special strategic requirements.

## SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

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### OSKALOOSA SHOULD CONTINUE ITS ACTIVE STREET AND SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR PROGRAMS

Oskaloosa maintains an aggressive program to maintain its current street network in good operating conditions. Major operating programs include:

- **Roadway Maintenance.** This program provides for seal coating, street patching, pavement marking, and alley maintenance. Annual expenditures for roadway maintenance during the planning period will range from \$450,000 to \$500,000 in 1997 dollars.
- **Snow and Ice Control.** Oskaloosa spent about \$60,000 during FY 1996 on snow removal.
- **Traffic signs and signals.** Expenditures for replacement of faded or obsolete traffic signs were about \$25,000 in FY 1996. In addition, the city replaced traffic signal controllers in the Downtown district during the year.
- **Street Sweeping.** Expenditures for street cleaning were about \$20,000 during FY 1996.

In addition, the city maintains an annual sidewalk replacement program, until recently funded at about \$20,000 annually. This program provides front-end financing for sidewalk replacement, the costs of which are then assessed to adjacent property owners.

These vital maintenance programs should be funded on a continuing basis, working off an up-to-date database of street and sidewalk conditions.

## TRAIL SYSTEM

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### OSKALOOSA SHOULD MAINTAIN A CONTINUOUS PEDESTRIAN NETWORK TO COMPLEMENT THE STREET SYSTEM.

A multi-use trail and walkway stem can complement automobile trips by providing a good environment for non-motorized transportation. The trail aspects of the system are described in more detail in Chapter Five of this plan. The system includes several levels of facilities:

- *Off-Street Trails*, providing exclusive paths separated from parallel streets. The major off-street trail links would include:
  - The Greenway Loop, utilizing Spring Creek and tributary drainageways, greenways parallel to planned streets, and available segments of the Rock Island corridor.
  - Off-street segments of the Oskaloosa Recreation Trail, including drainageways, low-use or abandoned railroad segments and Edmundson Park.
- *On-Street Trails*, providing trail facilities parallel to streets. These trails generally include a wide, multi-use sidewalk, and are proposed for :
  - Boulevards and parkways in growth areas.
  - The existing FoxRun Trail.
  - Greenways proposed along new streets.
  - Beacon Road, to connect Oskaloosa to the proposed Mahaska Heritage Trail.
- *Share-the-Road segments and sidewalks*, including designated routes for pedestrian and bicycle use. This includes on-street segments of the Oskaloosa Recreational Trail connecting Edmundson and Vanderwilt Parks.

## COMMUNITY GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS

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### OSKALOOSA SHOULD UPGRADE THE DESIGN OF ITS MAJOR COMMUNITY CORRIDORS – A AVENUE AND MARKET STREET – TO BECOME ATTRACTIVE GATEWAYS INTO TOWN.

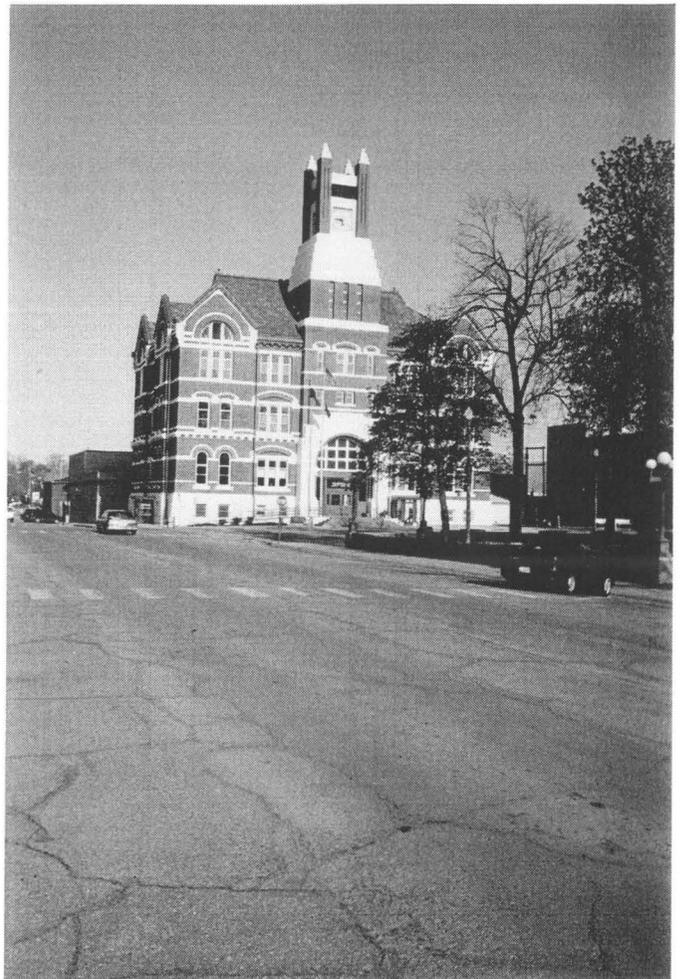
The emergence of a peripheral expressway system in Oskaloosa makes the character of the main routes into the city center -- A Avenue and Market Street -- particularly important. The ability of these corridors to direct visitors into the city's main retail district will be particularly important to economic development strategies. In addition, a street design improvement program can improve the functionality of these corridors. Major highway development programs which divert truck traffic to peripheral routes provides an opportunity to change the character of these key corridors.

As of 1998, the city is involved in major efforts to address these key corridors. These include the incorporation of an enhancements program into the Market Street South upgrading project and the preparation of the Oskaloosa Gateway Plan for the A Avenue corridor. The objectives of these plans are to improve the character and function of these major roadways and reduce their dividing effects in the community. Elements of these programs should include:

- *Minimizing impact on surrounding properties.* The Market Street South project is considering a three-lane section to reduce effects on adjacent businesses and houses, while the Oskaloosa Gateway Plan envisions maintaining A Avenue within its current street channel.
- *Improvement of sidewalks and installation of banners and improved, glare-free lighting.*
- *An effective landscaping and sign control program, that moves toward restricting signage in the roadway corridor to monument or attached signs.*
- *Where possible, consolidation of access points to reduce the number of curb cuts and traffic conflicts.* This requires a carefully coordinated effort with area busi-

nesses.

- *Upgrading of the north-south railroad corridor as it crosses A Avenue.* This corridor creates a visual link to the proposed Westside Village project.
- *Definition of community entrance with community signs and entrance features at the two entrance interchanges.* This may include reservation of land and construction of visitors centers at these locations.
- *Development of thematic directional signage, leading visitors to major community attractions.* These may include such well-known features as Downtown Oskaloosa, the Courthouse, William Penn College, the Nelson Pioneer Farm, and more difficult to find resources, such as Oskaloosa's two Frank Lloyd Wright-designed houses.



## COMMUNITY GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS

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### MARKET STREET SOUTH

The use of graphics, improved lighting, sidewalk improvements, and landscaping along South Market, together with improvement as a standard three-lane facility, can improve both the appearance and safety of this key north-south highway.

# MOBILITY AND THE CITY ENVIRONMENT

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4



# A GREEN NETWORK

## An Open Space System for Oskaloosa



Oskaloosa's residents enjoy access to local and regional park facilities, making parks a vital component of community life. While the local park system includes only three properties, each has a unique quality. The largest, Edmundson Park, is one of Iowa's finest municipal open spaces. Oskaloosa's City Square, highlighted by its historic bandstand, helps define the traditional center of the city and provides a unique focus for the historic town center. In addition, the 366 acre Lake Keomah State Park is only five miles east of the city and provides a superb facility for fishing, boating, swimming, camping, and hiking. The Mahaska County Conservation Board administers an array of excellent nature refuges and recreation areas, including Russell Wildlife Area, Quercus Wilderness area, Maskunkya Marsh, and other sites. Regional open space is a major contributor to Oskaloosa's community quality. This section addresses the future of this system, particularly in relationship to Oskaloosa's future open space and facility needs.



### GOALS

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To enhance its facilities and continue to use its open space system as a central element contributing to community quality, the City of Oskaloosa should:

■ **CREATE A LINKED PARK NETWORK OF GREENWAYS AND BOULEVARDS THAT CONNECT OPEN SPACES, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND ACTIVITY CENTERS.**

Such a network can help define the city and provides convenient access to its park and open space resources. It is particularly important in Oskaloosa, with a single dominant park facility that requires citywide access. The development of a linked park system has several benefits, including:

- accommodating recreational activities that display some of the highest levels of participation, including bicycling, walking/hiking, and cross-country skiing.
- increasing safe access to recreational facilities by non-motorized modes, and increasing the service coverage of existing outdoor recreation facilities.
- providing linkages among various parts of the city.

## GOALS

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### ■ PROVIDE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF NEWLY DEVELOPING AREAS.

Despite its large park, Oskaloosa should provide neighborhood and community parks in growth areas, as well as other recreational experiences, such as nature interpretation, resource conservation, trail systems, and other passive activities. It is vitally important to set aside quality park land during the planning stages of new residential developments. Planning of these neighborhood park spaces should ensure safe, convenient, and desirable pedestrian access from neighborhoods to parks. In addition, parks should fit within the framework of the greenway concept.

### ■ IMPLEMENT A PARK MODEL BASED ON COMMUNITY PARKS LINKED TO ALL PARTS OF THE CITY BY GREENWAYS.

Oskaloosa's park development model should capitalize on large open spaces, linked to neighborhoods by a greenway system. Edmundson is a large, unique urban open space. In addition, current plans to expand Vanderwilt Park and develop a community center there will elevate this park to major community status. Given its investment in large, multi-use parks, Oskaloosa will not be able to afford to maintain a system of small neighborhood parks.

Nevertheless, this model calls for equitable access to major facilities. Currently, active recreation is concentrated at Edmundson Park, in the extreme southwest part of the city. The Development Concept calls for using this park as a centerpiece for new residential growth. However, Oskaloosa's ability to ensure balanced growth requires distribution of activities in other parts of town.

### ■ PROVIDE AN EQUITABLE MECHANISM FOR ESTABLISHING SERVICE STANDARDS IN GROWTH AREAS AND FINANCING PARK ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT.

The reservation and development of new park areas in developing areas is a major challenge for a growing city. The establishment of service standards was once based on national norms, but are increasingly predicated on levels of local service. These establish a basis for park dedications and assessments in developing areas. Park system finance should be based on a benefit principle, apportioning costs based on who benefits from specific projects.

### ■ CAPITALIZE ON THE REGIONAL RECREATION AMENITIES.

The larger metropolitan region is rich in recreational resources, including Lake Keomah and Mahaska County parks. Oskaloosa's open space system should promote access to these important regional resources and connect them to the city's parks.

### ■ BALANCE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL PEOPLE OF OSKALOOSA.

The City should maintain a balance between active and passive recreation. Edmundson Park, Lake Keomah, and the county parks provide major resources for passive recreation. Similar areas should be designated within future parks, and important natural resources such as the Spring Creek corridor can be used to strengthen environmental values in the city's park system.

### ■ USE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES TO ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD REINVESTMENT AND TO HELP TO DEFINE OSKALOOSA'S URBAN FORM.

Parks and open spaces can help to provide structure for a growing community. In traditional towns, the green or commons was a focus for both civic life and community amenity. Park development can have equal value for contemporary development, adding a public aspect to life in new residential areas.

## PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY ANALYSIS

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This section examines the city's park and recreation system and includes city-owned and operated recreational areas.

Tables 4-1 and 4-2 summarize the parks and facilities included in this evaluation. The accompanying map locates the city's current parks and recreation areas, and provides a basis for the recommended park improvement program in this plan.

Facilities are evaluated in four ways:

- *Facilities by Classification.* Parks are classified into different categories to determine the level and area they should serve.

- *Facilities Relating to Overall Population Service Standards.*

- *Geographical Distribution.* The service radius of each facility is analyzed to identify geographical gaps in service.

### Facilities by Classification

In order to systemically analyze the park system, Oskaloosa's municipal recreation and open space areas are classified as follows:

*Overall Open Space:* Oskaloosa's public park system contains approximately 175 acres, excluding the private FoxRun Golf Course. Traditional park area standards recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) suggest one acre of parkland per 100 residents. Current practice establishes a level of service (LOS) standard based on the amount of park area currently provided by the community and an evaluation of its adequacy. Assuming a 1996 Census estimated population of 10,600, Based on this, Oskaloosa's ration of 1.68 acres per 100 residents exceeds the traditional standard. Maintaining the same level of service, Oskaloosa will need to serve its year 2020 target population of 13,600 with the current LOS, Oskaloosa will have a need for about 50 acres of additional open space.

*Mini-Parks:* Mini-Parks generally address specific recreation or open space needs. Generally, these parks are less than one acre in size and have a service radius below 0.25 miles. The city has three mini-parks, all of which are privately developed and maintained. These include Lamson Jaycee Playground in the northwest part of town, Keating Jaycees Park, and Friends Church Park west of William Penn College. In addition, the 1.5 acre City Square Park, while larger than the others, fills the special open space function of a mini-park. The total area of these open spaces is 2.3 acres.

*Neighborhood Parks:* Neighborhood parks are considered the basic unit of a community park system and provide a recreational and social focus for residential areas. Neighborhood parks desirably provide space for informal active and passive recreational activities. A typical "menu" of facilities in a neighborhood park includes:

- informal softball and baseball fields.
- open grass areas or unstructured open spaces.
- picnicking areas.
- playgrounds.
- basketball and tennis courts.
- exercise trails.

The typical service radius for neighborhood parks is usually 0.50 mile. Neighborhood parks adequate in size to accommodate the requisite facilities often contain a minimum of five acres; 5 to 10 acres is generally considered optimal. Oskaloosa has one park, Vanderwilt, that meets neighborhood park standards. Because of its size and range of facilities (including four softball diamonds), Vanderwilt Park also has characteristics of a community park. In addition, the city's elementary school sites, distributed throughout the city, have some of the service characteristics of neighborhood parks.

*Community Parks:* These include areas of diverse use and environmental quality. Such parks meet community-based recreation needs and may preserve significant natural areas and often include areas suited for intense recreational facilities. Typi-

## PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY ANALYSIS

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cal criteria for community parks include:

- adequate size to accommodate activities associated with neighborhood parks, but with space for additional activity.
- a special attraction that draws people from a larger area, such as a swimming pool, pond or lake, ice skating rink, trails, special environmental or cultural features, or specialized sports complexes.

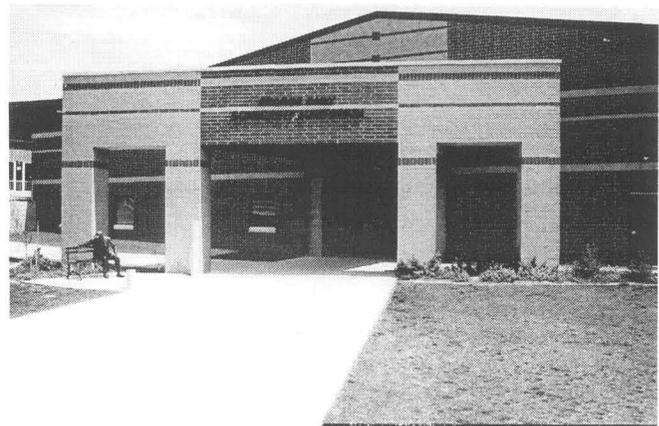
Community parks generally contain between 10 and 50 acres (more typically 30 to 50 acres) and serve a variety of needs. The typical service radius of a community park is approximately 1 to 2 miles. Oskaloosa's Edmundson Park, at 158 acres, is a large community park and features a variety of facilities. Traditional NRPA guidelines for community park area, call for 5 to 8 acres per 1,000; statistically, Edmundson Park provides enough community park space to meet the city's future population needs.

*Public School Sites.* Public school sites often provide neighborhood park type facilities to complement the city's park system. Oskaloosa's six elementary school sites function as neighborhood playgrounds. The Oskaloosa High School also provides facilities which are open to the public on a limited basis.

*Regional Parks.* Regional parks provide special environments or features that serve as attractions for the entire metropolitan area. These facilities include Lake Keomah, a state park located six miles east of the city, and Mahaska County park properties.

*Other Park and Recreation Facilities.* In addition to municipal park and recreational facilities, a number of other resources contribute to the array of services offered to residents of the city. The most significant of these include:

- The Mahaska County YMCA/YWCA. This major facility includes a double gym, indoor swimming pool, nautilus room, weight room, rac-



quetball court, and health club.

- *William Penn College.* The campus includes three tennis courts and a baseball diamond.
- *FoxRun Golf Course.* This development expanded the nine-hole, private Elmhurst Country Club to an 18-hole facility.
- *George Dailey Community Auditorium.* This excellent new performing arts and events facility was opened in 1997 at the Oskaloosa High School campus.

Table 5-1 summarizes Oskaloosa's park system for type of park and summarizes available facilities. Table 5-2 examines present levels of service and future needs to accommodate projected population.

### FACILITIES BY GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

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While Oskaloosa exceeds traditional national standards for park area, geographic distribution of facilities is a major problem for the system. In order to assess park service areas, the following service radii were utilized:

- 2 miles for community parks (Edmundson Park).
- 0.5 miles for neighborhood parks (Vanderwilt Park and the neighborhood service component of Edmundson Park).

# PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY ANALYSIS

**TABLE 4.1. PARK FACILITIES IN OSKALOOSA**

<u>Parks by Type and Location</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Facilities</u>	<u>Potential Facility Needs</u>
<b>MINI-PARK</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally less than one acre</li> <li>• Addresses limited, isolated, or unique recreational or open space needs.</li> </ul>			
<b>Lamson Jaycee Playground</b> K Street and D Avenue	0.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Shelter</li> </ul>	
<b>Keating Jaycees Park</b>	0.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> </ul>	
<b>Friends Church Park</b> (private) Penn Boulevard and College Avenue	0.80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Picnic area</li> </ul>	
<b>City Square</b> 10th Street and 7th Avenue	1.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signature downtown square.</li> <li>• Bandstand</li> <li>• Benches</li> </ul>	
<b>Total Mini-Park Area</b>	<b>2.71</b>		
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally 5 to 10 acres; may be larger depending on nature of site and facilities.</li> <li>• Basic unit of park system.</li> <li>• Provides recreational and social focus for neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Focuses on informal active and passive recreation.</li> <li>• Typical service area is 0.5 mile if uninterrupted by barriers.</li> </ul>			
<b>Vanderwilt Park</b> Santa Clara Street and M Avenue	17.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 lighted ball diamonds</li> <li>• 2 lighted tennis courts</li> <li>• Horseshoe pits</li> <li>• Picnic shelter</li> <li>• Large metal storage building, originally built as a community center.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional site area for unstructured play and recreation.</li> <li>• Improved parking.</li> <li>• Repair or replacement of community center building.</li> <li>• Improved pedestrian access.</li> <li>• Upgraded site landscaping.</li> </ul>
<b>Total Neighborhood Park Area</b>	<b>17.00</b>		

# PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY ANALYSIS

**TABLE 4.1. PARK FACILITIES IN OSKALOOSA**

<u>Parks by Type and Location</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Facilities</u>	<u>Potential Facility Needs</u>
<b>COMMUNITY PARKS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally 10 to 50 acres, depending on facilities; more typically 30 to 50 acres.</li> <li>• Includes neighborhood park menu of facilities, but serves larger purpose.</li> <li>• Meets community-wide recreational needs, and includes special facilities.</li> <li>• May include special natural environments.</li> <li>• Often, a major community image feature.</li> <li>• Typical service area is 1 to 2 miles.</li> </ul>			
<b>Edmundson Park</b> Southwest of M Avenue and 11th Street	158.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unstructured open space</li> <li>• Baseball diamond</li> <li>• 2 softball diamonds</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Shelters</li> <li>• Picnic area</li> <li>• 18-hole municipal golf course</li> <li>• Swimming pool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming pool rehabilitation or replacement.</li> <li>• Improved vehicular and trail access.</li> </ul>
<b>Total Community Park Area</b>	158.0		

**TABLE 4.2. PARK NEEDS BASED ON FUTURE POPULATION GROWTH**

<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Existing Acreage</b>	<b>Existing Acres Per 1,000 Residents</b>	<b>Future Needs Based on Local LOS Standards</b>	<b>Future Needs Based on NRPA Guidelines</b>
Total Open Space	177.7	16.80	50.4	30
Mini-Parks	2.7	---		
Neighborhood Parks	17.0	1.60	4.8	10
Community Parks	158.0	14.9	44.7	20

## PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY ANALYSIS

Based on this analysis:

- Most of built-up Oskaloosa is adequately served by community parks. However, areas north of William Penn College, which include the future northeast and northwest growth centers) and east of 11th Street are outside of Edmundson park's service radius.
- Most of the city is inadequately served by neighborhood parks. Edmundson Park as a neighborhood park serves limited areas of development west of South Market Street and south of 5th Avenue. Vanderwilt's service area is limited to neighborhoods north of D Avenue and west of the railroad corridor.

The geographic service situation improves if elementary school sites are included as park facilities. This analysis assumes that the largest of the school sites, Webster School, provides a 0.5 mile service radius and that the smaller sites serve a 0.25 mile radius. If school sites are included, the following areas remain unserved by neighborhood parks:

- Significant portions of central Oskaloosa, mostly between 2nd Street and J Street between 4th Avenue and A Avenue.
- Much of southeast Oskaloosa, east of South Market and south of the UP right-of-way.
- The north side of the city, generally north of College Avenue.

### PARK AND RECREATION NEEDS SURVEY RESULTS

In May, 1996, the city completed a Recreation Survey, completed by 323 participants. The survey indicated:

- A high level of need for improved swimming and picnic facilities.
- Significant, but relatively focused support for improved soccer service.

- High priorities for improvement of existing basketball, tennis, and sand volleyball facilities.
- Highest priority for trail development among facilities which do not currently exist in the city.
- Significant support for ice-skating, water recreation, and miniature golf facilities.

Major recreational service and facility priorities identified during the comprehensive planning process include:

- Programming and development of a central recreational complex, with a high degree of accessibility to all users. Highest facility priority for such a complex is a new water recreation facility, providing both indoor and outdoor accommodations. Other possible components of a facility program may include a wellness center, stadium, and ice skating area.
- Hiring of a city recreation director. A job description for this position was developed by the Park Board in April, 1996.
- Development of a comprehensive park and greenway system, providing trail and greenway links to major park facilities and linking parks, neighborhoods, and activity centers.

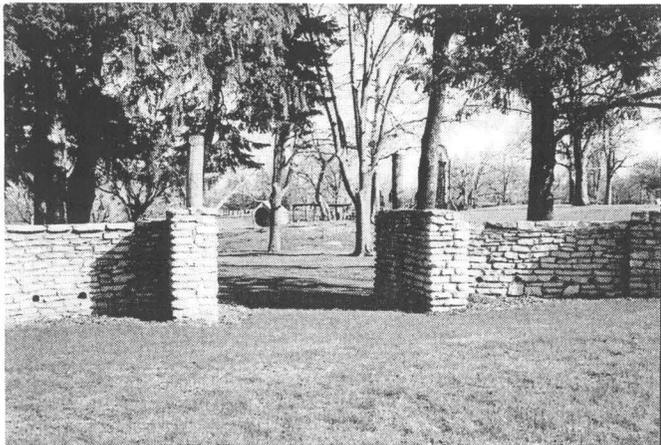
### MAJOR PARK DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Oskaloosa's park system includes two signature facilities -- Edmundson Park, a major community park with regional recreational characteristics, and the City Square, a classical town square. In addition, Vanderwilt Park accommodates heavy recreational use. However, major park development issues exist, including:

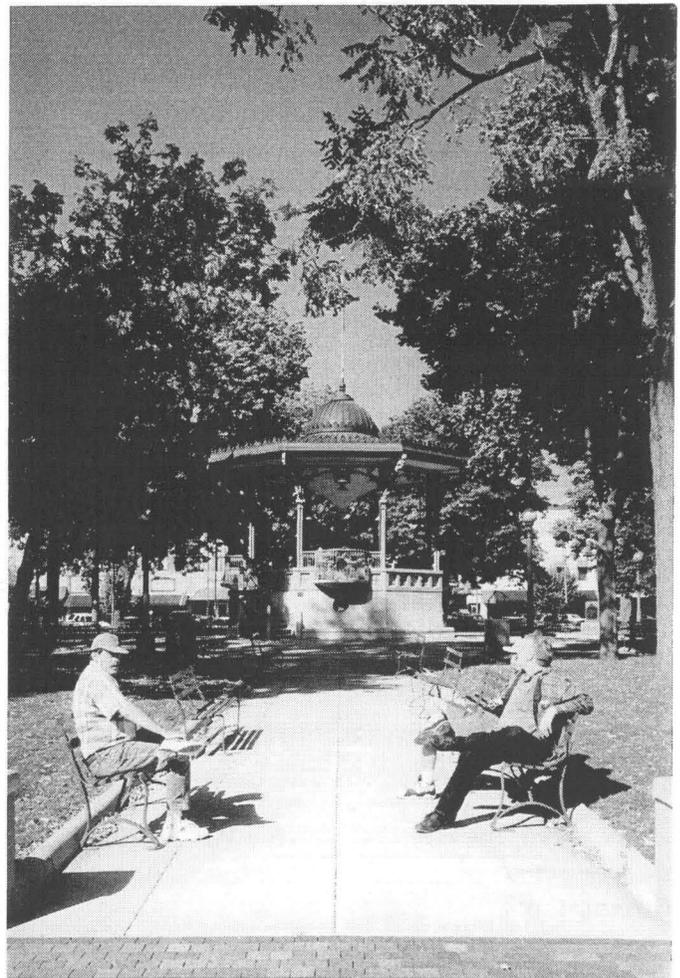
- Location of both major parks on the edges of town and remote from the densest areas of residential development.

## PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY ANALYSIS

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- Relatively poor coverage of most parts of the city by neighborhood parks.
- Incremental upgrading of existing park facilities, most notably Vanderwilt Park.
- The need to rehabilitate or replace the city's primary outdoor water recreation facility, the Edmundson Park Pool, and for facilities for soccer, ice skating, basketball, tennis, and volleyball.
- Growth and financing of parks to serve projected growth areas. Probable population growth will require development of about 50 acres of parks. This area, combined with the geographic distribution of growth, will require one community park and at least two neighborhood parks.
- Evolution of a trails and greenway system to connect existing and future parks. Elements of a linked trail system are beginning to develop in Oskaloosa, with the completion of the FoxRun Trail and the integration of the Marje Addition into a trail and greenway network connecting FoxRun, Edmundson Park, and Vanderwilt Park.
- Use of park and open space amenities to support other community development and neighborhood revitalization efforts. This strategy views park facilities as major amenities that support other neighborhood development efforts, such as the redevelopment of the central corridor.



## THE PARK AND RECREATION PLAN

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**T**his section presents strategies designed to enhance the park system's status as a leading community feature. The overall concept:

- Envisions a linked park system, molding Oskaloosa's open space system into a green network that unites the community and makes each major park the territory of everyone in the city.
- Allows the park system to grow with the community.
- Proposes a new community park, associated with an important environmental corridor, along with neighborhood parks adequate to meet or exceed future needs.
- Provide recreational facilities needed to meet community priorities.
- Links Oskaloosa's park system into the regional recreation network.



The components of this program include:

- **PARK DEVELOPMENT POLICY:  
CONNECTED LARGE PARKS**
- **GREEN NETWORK**
- **PARKSITE ENHANCEMENT  
PROGRAM AND VANDERWILT  
PARK**
- **SPRING CREEK COMMUNITY  
PARK RESERVATION**
- **NEIGHBORHOOD PARK DE-  
VELOPMENT PROGRAM**
- **COMMUNITY PARK FINANCE  
MECHANISM**
- **RECREATION FACILITIES**
- **JOINT USE SCHOOL SITES**
- **REGIONAL RECREATIONAL  
LINKAGES**

## **PARK DEVELOPMENT POLICY: CONNECTED LARGE PARKS**

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### **PARK DEVELOPMENT IN OSKALOOSA WILL BE BASED ON TWO LARGE MULTI-USE PARKS, LINKED TO ALL OTHER PARTS OF THE CITY BY A GREENWAY AND TRAIL NETWORK.**

Several models of park development strategies are available to guide future park planning in communities. The most familiar of these models anticipates a hierarchy of parks, ranging from small mini-parks and neighborhood parks which serve the walking distance needs of individual residential areas through larger community and regional scale parks, providing service to the entire community and, occasionally, the surrounding region.

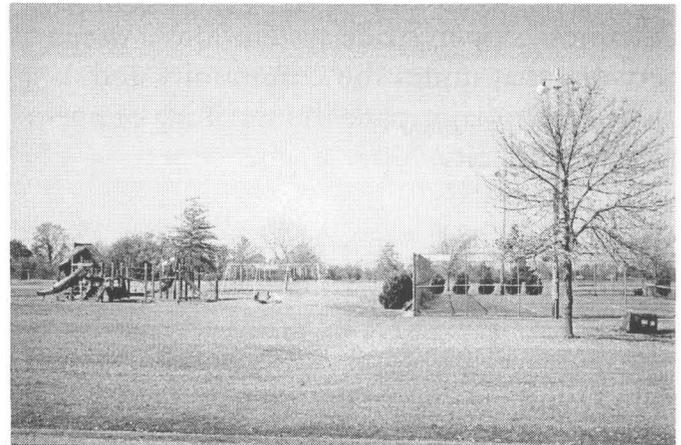
Oskaloosa's park system, dominated in area by the 158 acre Edmundson Park and containing two major open spaces, has traditionally followed a different model -- utilization of a small number of large, fully-equipped multi-use facilities. Indeed, attempting to impose a hierarchical model with dispersed neighborhood parks would be both expensive for the city and require costly changes in the deployment of maintenance resources.

Therefore, the appropriate park development policy for Oskaloosa relies on maximizing use of large, multi-use parks and linking these facilities to other parts of the city through a trails and greenway system. This policy in effect extends the influence of the large parks through the entire community. Elements of this overall policy include:

- Maintaining Edmundson Park as a signature park for the community, and continuing to rehabilitate and upgrade its facilities as needed.
- Expanding Vanderwilt Park into a community park, comparable to Edmundson as a signature community facility. Vanderwilt Park, expanded to community park status, should include at least one unique facility that attracts users from all parts of the city. This facility is likely to be a major community recreation center.
- Developing a trail and greenway system that pro-

vides safe pedestrian and bicycle routes to Edmundson and Vanderwilt Parks from most residential areas of Oskaloosa. Some of these pathways may also include designated on-street routes. Such routes should include barrier free, continuous sidewalks and signs advising motorists and bicyclists to "share the road."

- Developing playgrounds and small recreational nodes at strategic areas along the greenway system. These nodes can provide some of the characteristics of stand-alone neighborhood parks, including access to playgrounds for small children and parents.
- Utilizing school sites to provide neighborhood-based recreation that complements the major park and greenway system.



## GREEN NETWORK

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### **OSKALOOSA'S PARK SYSTEM SHOULD BE A NETWORK OF PARKS, CONNECTED BY CONTINUOUS GREEN CORRIDORS DEFINED BY TRAILS, GREENWAYS, BOULEVARDS, AND CIVIC STREETS.**

A linked greenway system merges parks and open spaces into all parts of the life and development of the city, and is fundamental to implementing a park development policy based on two large facilities. The concept of a Green Loop using the Spring Creek and Rock Island corridors as the main legs of an open space system is one of the basic principles of the Oskaloosa Plan and is the core of the open space network. The components of the city's greenway system will include its existing and future parks, and major linear open space links, such as trails and civic streets. Major green space linkages will include:

- *The proposed "Green Loop."* The main components of this system include:
  - The Spring Creek and Spring Creek north tributary, defining the loop on the north and east between Vanderwilt Park and University Park.
  - Available segments of the former Rock Island right-of-way to the west side of the city.
  - A westside leg using either the proposed Oskaloosa Recreational Trail, with on- and off-street links to Vanderwilt Park; or drainageways on the west side to Vanderwilt Park.
- *The Oskaloosa Recreational Trail*, connecting the FoxRun Trail to a greenway running through Marje Addition and extending west to Edmundson Park. The trail then follows street or railroad right-of-way to the Westside Village redevelopment site, and continues north along street or railroad right-of-way to Vanderwilt Park.

Other potential greenway routes should be monitored by the city for potential availability. These include the east-west Union Pacific route between

10th and 11th Avenue. Possible joint rail-trail use of the north-south corridor is also desirable, and make up important elements of the overall greenway plan.

The open space system also anticipates greenway development along key new streets developed as part of residential growth. These include:

- *The Glendale extension* west of North Market, as part of the Northwest Growth Center. This provides a connection from Spring Creek and North Market Street to Vanderwilt Park.
- *Connections between residential development in the Northeast Growth Center and the Spring Creek greenway corridor.*
- *The proposed 30th Street connection around the east side of the urban area*, from Newport Avenue on the north to the Highway 23/63 connector on the south.
- The proposed collector parallel to Highway 163 between A Avenue and Vanderwilt Park.

The greenway network is enhanced by joint use streets that accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic in their design. These streets include:

- A Avenue
- C Avenue
- Market Street
- D and E Streets north of A Avenue
- 3rd Street
- D Street extended south.
- High Avenue through the potential historic district to 11th Street.
- 11th Street between C Avenue and the Rock Island right-of-way.

The Park and Greenway System Plan illustrates this open space network, designed to link most neighborhoods and features of the city together.

## **PARKSITE ENHANCEMENTS/VANDERWILT PARK**

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**OSKALOOSA SHOULD IMPLEMENT A REGULARLY BUDGETED, INCREMENTAL PROGRAM OF PARK SITE IMPROVEMENTS AND UPGRADES AT ITS EXISTING PARKS. VANDERWILT PARK IS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY FOR THIS PARK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.**

Continued investment in Oskaloosa's existing park system will maintain its status as a major community asset. The parksite enhancement program is an incremental process, based on a needs assessment completed by the city's Parks Department.

The highest priority for facility upgrade is Vanderwilt Park. The city anticipates completing a major expansion and enhancement of Vanderwilt as a key component of its active recreational program. Elements of the Vanderwilt Park enhancement program include::

- Substantial park expansion. Two major adjacent properties are available to accommodate park expansion, including:

- an approximately 32 acre parcel west of the current park and north of Pella Avenue.

- an approximately 76 acre parcel north of the existing park.

Adding these two sites to Vanderwilt's existing 17

acres will produce a 125 acre open space, comparable in size to Edmundson Park.

- A new community recreation center. The Vanderwilt Park expansion will provide space for a new community recreation center. The programming of such a facility should utilize a participatory planning process, using community demands to identify needed facilities.

- Additional site area for unstructured play and recreation.

- Improved parking.

- Improved pedestrian and bicycle access. Oskaloosa's park development policy, based on the development of large multi-purpose open spaces requires excellent supporting access from all parts of the city.

- Upgraded site landscaping.

Parksite enhancements and rehabilitation should be funded on a regular, predictable basis. A city needs assessment can establish multi-year priorities and assure all residents that parks within their neighborhoods will provide a uniform level of excellent service.

## SPRING CREEK COMMUNITY PARK RESERVATION

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### **WITHIN A SPRING CREEK PRESERVE, OSKALOOSA SHOULD RESERVE LAND FOR A NEW COMMUNITY PARK TO SERVE LONG TERM PARK NEEDS FOR THE NORTHEAST SECTOR OF THE CITY.**

Oskaloosa's Edmundson Park is a true community facility in terms of both size and range of facilities. Its 158 acres size is sufficient to accommodate the city's space needs for community park facilities, although a significant part of that area is occupied by the golf course. Similarly, Vanderwilt Park, following expansion and development will provide a major 125 acre facility serving the northern part of Oskaloosa. Edmundson and Vanderwilt Parks, complemented by the proposed greenway system, will meet the city's anticipated park and open space needs during the twenty year planning period.

The Development Concept presented earlier in this plan anticipates substantial growth in the northeastern quadrant of the region, north of Spring Creek and east of North Market Street. Transportation access to this growth area is largely provided by Glendale Road and the proposed Newport Avenue/30th Street eastside arterial. This area may require development of a future neighborhood or community level park to serve local recreational needs. Such a park would avoid the barrier presented by North Market Street to use of Vanderwilt Park by children and families.

Preservation of the Spring Creek corridor as part of the "Green Loop" greenway is integral to the park and open space plan. The primary uses of this greenway are trail development, passive recreation, habitat, and limited uses related to the natural environment. In addition, the city should reserve an adequate amount of land in or adjacent to this greenway to accommodate informal, active recreation. While development of this area is not anticipated during the planning period, its acquisition will provide the city with the flexibility to respond to future recreational demands as they

emerge.

The portion of the Spring Creek Park proposed for active recreation should include:

- Direct access from the greenway and trail system, and a location along the creek corridor between Market Street and Newport Avenue.
- A minimum size of 20 to 25 acres.
- A link to Oskaloosa High School and Forest Cemetery.
- Resources for both active and passive recreation.

The Spring Creek community park will provide general benefits to both local residents and citizens of Oskaloosa at large. Therefore, financing should include public sources (such as general obligation bonds, grants, and other programs), the potential use of benefit fees through which development directly benefitted by the park contributes to financing its ultimate development, and private sources. Public financing is most appropriate for those features which have broad citywide benefits, including open space preservation and acquisition, trail development, and park features which are unique in the community and complement the elements of the city's other large parks.



## NEIGHBORHOOD PARK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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### WHEN DEVELOPED, NEW NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS IN OSKALOOSA SHOULD EITHER DEVELOP AS NODES ALONG THE GREENWAY SYSTEM.

The Oskaloosa park concept is based on maximizing use of the city's two major open spaces -- Edmundson and Vanderwilt Parks -- by developing them as signature facilities connected to neighborhoods by a greenway system. This concept does not include location of small neighborhood parks in the center of residential growth areas. However, some opportunities for local service parks present themselves as the city develops and, in some cases, redevelops.

Neighborhood park policy for Oskaloosa should identify:

- The range of facilities typically included in a neighborhood park.
- Size and location criteria.

#### *Menu of Facilities*

Neighborhood parks may provide different resources and features, depending on their individual location and design characteristics. However, neighborhood parks should normally contain the following facilities:

- Softball and/or baseball field available for informal play.
- Playground.
- Court facilities, including tennis, volleyball, and basketball. Single locations need not provide all facilities.
- Open grass area for unstructured recreation.
- Fitness trail or walks, as well as links to the over-all trail system.
- Picnic tables or small shelter.
- Special features to distinguish individual parks.

This park program requires a minimum of five acres.

#### *Location and Site Development Standards*

- Most neighborhood park land should be outside of floodways, lakes or other bodies of water, areas with steep slopes, or other areas that are not adaptable to the basic menu of facilities.
- Neighborhood parks should form a single parcel of land, unless the city determines that two separate sites linked by a functional greenway will provide a high level of service.
- Neighborhood parks should be visible and physically accessible to residents in the service area. Frequently, this includes substantial public street frontage or "urban square" configuration where the park is ringed by public streets or greenways. Parks with street exposure reinforce the quality of the public environment, creating neighborhoods that repeat the civility and public life of traditional neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood design should make parks focal points of the development. Street patterns should lead naturally to neighborhood parks.
- As part of a greenway network, neighborhood parks should be linked to the system and, through it, to one another.

The growth concept identifies the following sites as desirable for neighborhood park and greenway development:

- A greenway proposed along a drainage corridor in the Marje Addition.
- A future neighborhood park integrated into the Spring Creek greenway system.
- A neighborhood park incorporated into the Westside Village proposal on salvage sites in the center of town.
- Neighborhood recreation facilities along proposed greenways.

## COMMUNITY PARK FINANCE

**IN ORDER TO FINANCE ACQUISITION OF APPROPRIATELY SIZED PARKS, OSKALOOSA SHOULD ESTABLISH A PARK ACQUISITION FUND, FINANCED ALONG WITH NEW SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT.**

A mechanism to finance community park acquisition is required to ensure the reservation of well-located and appropriately sized open spaces. Park acquisition may take place through one of two devices: dedication of appropriate parcels by developers or a payment in lieu of dedication to acquire other parksites. A "benefit fee" approach to park financing must trace expenditures to the direct benefit of those areas that are paying the fee. The obligation for land dedication (or payment in lieu of dedication) is a function of:

- Acres in the development.
- Development capacity established by the development's zoning.
- Number of people per unit in Oskaloosa (2.33 according to the 1990 census).
- The city's desirable level of service standard in acres of park area per 1,000 people.

The park finance system should be implemented through the city's land development ordinances. It provides an equitable way to finance acquisition of appropriate parks consistent with the principles of the comprehensive plan.

In addition, Oskaloosa may consider the use of dedicated revenue sources, such as the proceeds of a Local Option Sales Tax, to finance park acquisition and facility development.

## NEW RECREATION FACILITIES

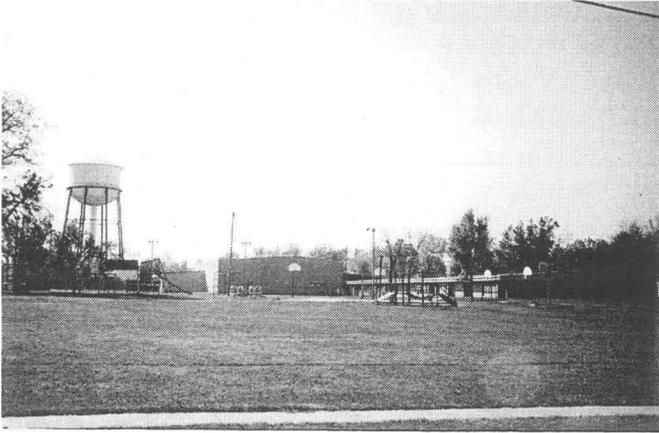
**OSKALOOSA SHOULD BEGIN DEVELOPMENT OF MAJOR RECREATION FACILITIES IDENTIFIED AS KEY COMMUNITY NEEDS.**

These major facilities include:

- *Water recreation.* The Edmundson Park Pool, originally constructed during the 1930s, requires major rehabilitation or replacement. The city should consider development of a contemporary leisure pool, combining traditional water recreation with new features such as a sand beach, zero-depth entry, and other amenities. Oskaloosa's status as a regional trade and economic center will allow it to market this facility to a wider region. Edmundson Park, with convenient access to Highway 163 and adjacent to Beacon Road, is an excellent location for a new facility. However, other sites, including integration into the Westside Village redevelopment, may also be attractive.
- *Soccer facilities.* A soccer field should be incorporated into a new community park.
- *Basketball, tennis, and volleyball courts.* These facility needs should be integrated into the design of new community and neighborhood parks as they are developed.
- *Recreation complex.* While a new water recreation facility is the city's greatest major facility need, other potential priorities include ice skating, a wellness center, and a new community stadium. The concept of a community recreation center should be explored and a program established as part of a participatory planning process. The expanded Vanderwilt Park provides an excellent potential site for this facility.

## **JOINT USE SCHOOL SITES**

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**OSKALOOSA SHOULD IDENTIFY JOINT SCHOOL/PARK OPPORTUNITIES AT NEW SCHOOL SITES AND MAINTAIN RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT APPROPRIATE EXISTING SITES.**

The use of school sites for neighborhood recreation is a vital part of Oskaloosa's park service network. The school district's school development program calls for consolidation of the city's six elementary schools into three, three-unit facilities. One of these, Webster School, is large enough to accommodate expansion. A new west side school is also a high priority. These neighborhood school sites should be adequately sized to permit joint use as neighborhood parks. This may involve cost-sharing arrangements between the city and the school district. Another alternative may be reservation of vacated school sites for park and recreation purposes. In highly developed areas, close cooperation between city and school district will help assure an improved level of neighborhood park service.

School sites should also be selected which have a relationship to the city's proposed greenway system and a central location in neighborhood design.

## **REGIONAL LINKAGES**

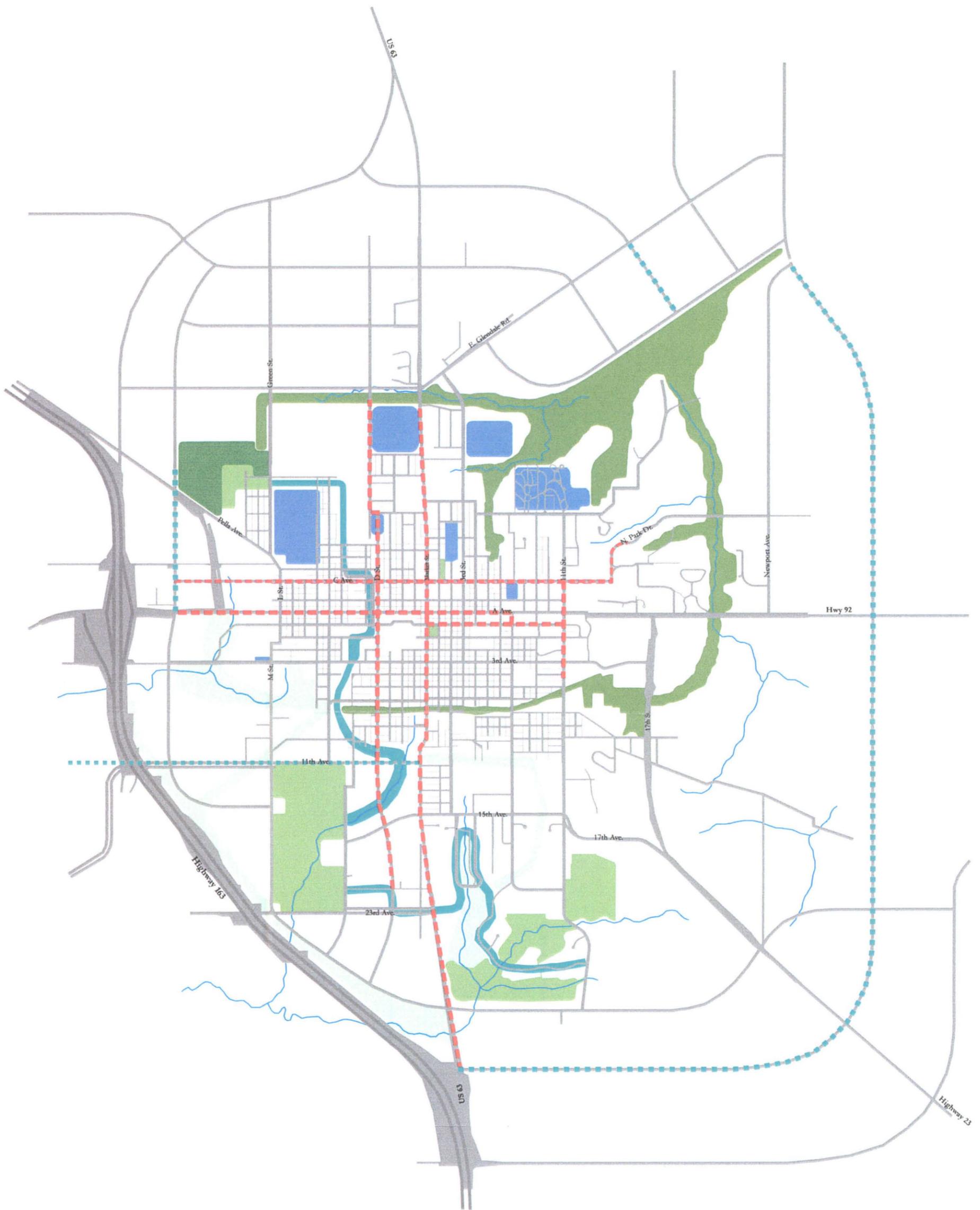
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**OSKALOOSA SHOULD ENCOURAGE GREENWAY AND TRAIL LINKAGES TO REGIONAL RECREATIONAL RESOURCES**

Trails can be developed along major roads to link the city and its park system to major regional recreational resources, effectively making them part of the city's open space system. Two potential initiatives include:

- A trail link east to Lake Keomah State Park.
- Encouragement for development of the Mahaska Heritage Trail, proposed along the Des Moines River west from Eveland Access. A plan for this trail and its interpretation was completed for the Mahaska County Conservation Board in 1996. The most direct trail route from Oskaloosa utilizes Beacon Road.



# Parks and Greenway Concept

## Oskaloosa, Iowa



RDG Crose Gardner Shukert  
Omaha and Des Moines

1/2 mile

### Legend

- Existing Parks and Recreations Areas
- Major Civic Uses
- Park Expansions
- Oskaloosa Recreation Trail
- "Green Loop" Trail and Greenway
- Other Proposed Greenway and Open Space
- On Street / Roadside Trails
- Enhanced Corridors



## A GREEN NETWORK

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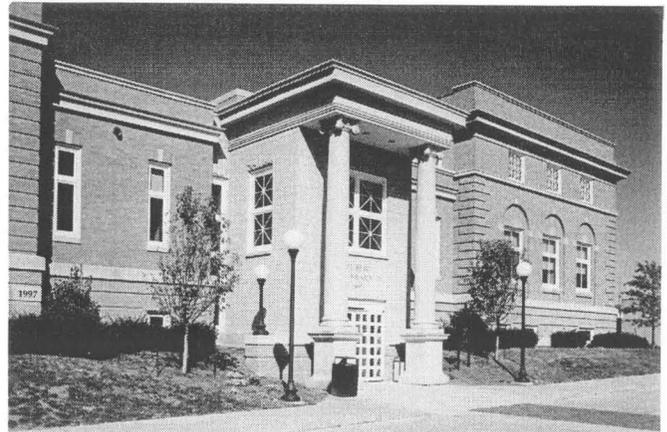


5



# QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES:

## An Assessment of Infrastructure and Public Facilities



**O**skaloosa's capital facilities represent major community investments, essential to support the life and growth of the community.

Residents' satisfaction with their community is tied closely to their experiences and perceptions of these basic resources. This part of the Oskaloosa Plan evaluates operation of public facilities and infrastructure, assesses their physical condition, and suggests policies and actions which will help the city maintain quality services and respond to future demands for service and infrastructure extensions.

### GOALS

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In continuing to provide good municipal service to its taxpayers and users, Oskaloosa will:

- ASSURE THAT UTILITIES SYSTEMS CAN MEET CAPACITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY DEMANDS.
- MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF OSKALOOSA'S PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE MOST ECONOMICAL WAY POSSIBLE.

- SEEK THE GREATEST POSSIBLE EFFICIENCIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF FACILITIES.
- REHABILITATE AGING INFRASTRUCTURE TO MAINTAIN THE QUALITY SERVICE LEVELS EXPECTED BY RESIDENTS.
- ESTABLISH AN EQUITABLE METHOD OF FINANCING FUTURE UTILITY EXTENSIONS.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES

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This section examines the current conditions of Oskaloosa's public facilities, and infrastructure systems. Table 5-1 provides a full inventory of public facilities in the city. Public facilities include buildings and structures that are used in meeting municipal responsibilities for public services.

### CITY HALL

Oskaloosa's City Hall, located at 220 South Market Street in Downtown, is an 11,000 square foot building built in 1911 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1992, after considerable study, the city decided to maintain municipal offices in the structure. An elevator was installed in the building in 1992, making its three levels accessible to disabled people.

In January, 1997, the Police Department moved to new quarters in the Mahaska County Law Enforcement Center. As a result, less than 50% of the building's assignable area is currently being utilized. This move creates an opportunity to rehabilitate City Hall into a more modern, functional facility. Specific issues include:

- The need to reprogram space vacated by the Police Department. Current plans propose the relocation of the City Engineer and Building Inspection Departments into this space, improving efficiency and communication and providing customers with one stop service.

- Major building systems, including HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems.
- Upgrade and rehabilitation needs throughout the structure, including window replacement and interior rehabilitation consistent with historic standards.

In 1998, the city retained OPN Architects of Cedar Rapids to prepare a building use and rehabilitation plan. The plan proposes:

- Replacement of the current low-pressure boiler and window air conditioning units with a high efficiency modular boiler and DX cooling system.
- Replacement of the building's obsolete plumbing system with low-flow fixtures consistent with ADA requirements.
- Installation of new wiring and lighting to meet present and future computer needs and provide efficient illumination consistent in design with the building's historic character.
- Historically appropriate interior rehabilitation.

Estimated project cost is \$900,000 in current (1999) dollars, including consultant fees.

### LIBRARY

A comprehensive rehabilitation and expansion of the city's historic Carnegie Library was completed in July, 1997. The resulting facility will provide a state-of-the-art library for Oskaloosa and surrounding areas. The facility expansion and operations are being funded through a Local Option Sales Tax. The sales tax is scheduled to expire in nine years without future re-authorization by the voters. A challenge for the city during the planning period will involve developing alternatives to Local Option Sales Tax funding to finance continued library development and operations.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES

### MAHASKA COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

Oskaloosa's Police Department relocated to the new Law Enforcement Center in January, 1997. This facility will satisfy police space needs for an estimated twenty years.

### FIRE STATION

Oskaloosa's fire department operates from a 7,500 square foot facility adjacent to City Hall in Downtown. The building dates from 1909 and 1911, and provides three vehicle storage bays. Office, training, and dormitory facilities are located on the building's second floor. An additional building to the east of the original facility provides additional storage for three vehicles and associated equipment.

The fire station, along with city hall, requires significant programming consideration and probable capital expenditure during the planning period. Problems experienced by the present facility include:

- Outdated heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems, and plumbing, and electrical systems.
- Inadequate space to house all equipment under one roof.
- Inadequate living accommodations for fire fighters.
- Need for upgrades of communications equipment.

Previous plans anticipated the adaptation of the Public Works facility at 804 South D Street for the Fire Department. However, this project did not take place. Oskaloosa should complete a planning study to determine the most efficient method of meeting current and future Fire Department needs. Options include rehabilitation of current facilities, adaptation and reuse of the existing Public Works facility, or construction of a new building. Probable cost of a new 10,000 square foot fire facility is in the range of \$700,000 to \$800,000.



### WATER DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

The Water Department occupies an obsolescent office facility in the downtown district at 2nd Avenue and 1st Street. Relocation of these offices should be considered in master planning efforts for both City Hall and the Public Works Department. New Water Department offices may be incorporated into a Joint Use Center including Public Works and Fire Department facilities.

### PUBLIC WORKS STREET SHOP AND YARD

The Street Maintenance facility, at 804 South D Street, includes two principal buildings -- a one story masonry structure containing three truck bays and offices; and an attached "pole" building, constructed during the 1950s, providing offices and two storage bays. Adjacent to the east is a salt storage building and open street yard. Lack of storage and maintenance space are key issues for this facility. In addition, the facility lacks adequate office and storage space. The pole building lacks central heat and adequate ventilation. In 1998, the city improved this situation with the construction of a 7,200 square foot unheated storage building across C Street to the east of the main facility. In spite of this project, the site continues to experience several problems, including:

## PUBLIC FACILITIES

- the land use conflict of a facility with industrial operating characteristics in a primarily residential area.
- relatively poor administrative accommodations.
- a limited site with relatively little room for growth.

Previous plans considered the possible purchase of a former County maintenance shop site; however, this project did not proceed. The city should initiate a planning study to determine the best utilization of the D Street site during the planning period. Such a study may be part of a comprehensive facility programming study, also considering space needs for municipal offices and the Fire Department. The 1998 city hall utilization plan recommended incorporating the Engineering and Building Inspection offices in space vacated by the Police Department in City Hall. Another alternative may be development of a Joint Use Center, incorporating both fire and public works facilities.

### PARKS MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

The Park Department operates out of several structures, located in Edmundson Park. The newest is a maintenance office/shop that was added on to an existing storage shed in 1996. This metal sided structure is heated and contains two offices, a restroom, a vehicle maintenance bay, and storage.

The existing storage shed is an unheated one story metal sided structure. It has one bay and is used for the storage of big and small miscellaneous equipment. Attached to this structure is a three bay metal storage shed. This shed has a gravel floor and is open on one side. Various vehicles are stored in this building, as well as all of the park benches during the winter. In addition to these structures, the Park Department shares several sheds with the golf course.

The Parks Department's primary maintenance facility need is an additional storage building.

### OTHER PARKS FACILITIES



Park issues are discussed in detail in Chapter Five. However, two parks facilities have significant public service implications: the Edmundson Park pool and golf course.

#### • *Municipal Pool*

This 75 X 150 foot pool was constructed in 1937. Structures at the site include a stone bathhouse with a flat roof and two low diving platforms. The pool area is surrounded by a security fence. The swimming pool underwent a minor renovation in 1984. Improvements were made to both the bathhouse and pool at this time. The basic shell of the pool is in relatively good condition.

In 1998-99, the city retained Kuehl and Payer of Storm Lake to complete an analysis of the pool and prepare recommendations for rehabilitation or replacement. Major findings and deficiencies at the facility include:

- Inadequate water turnover and lack of sufficient skimming capability.
- An excessive amount of the pool area with deep water, inhibiting use and creating operating inefficiencies.
- Recirculation and filtration systems in need of replacement.
- Inefficient floor planning and rehabilitation needs in the bathhouse.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES

The study considered two potential options, providing minimum improvements necessary to meet current Health Department standards and upgrading the facility to contemporary Family Aquatic Center status. The cost of the rehabilitation option was estimated at about \$400,000 and included replacement of basic systems and the pool's concrete deck. The Aquatic Center option proposed demolition of the existing pool and construction at the Edmundson Park site of a contemporary water park facility. The engineers estimated the cost of this alternative at \$1.65 million. An additional alternative retrofits the basically sound pool shell into a contemporary facility that has many of the features of an aquatic park. The projected cost of this option is about \$1 million.

The pool study also included recommendations for bathhouse improvements, including a new roof, floor plan reconfiguration, replacement of plumbing and electrical systems, interior painting, and exterior cleaning and tuckpointing. The cost of this rehabilitation program is estimated at \$261,000. Finally, the study recommends reconstruction of the park access road to the pool area and construction of a 42-stall parking lot, at an estimated cost of \$138,000.

### • *Golf Course*

This 18-hole golf course is operated by the City of Oskaloosa. The facility includes:

- Grass greens
- Irrigated course.
- Clubhouse.
- Various course-related buildings used for storage, and restrooms.

The clubhouse consists of a steel sided structure that was constructed in the mid-1980s. It contains a pro shop, snack bar, and restrooms. The structure is heated during the winter. The clubhouse is in very good condition. The pro's living quarters are also in good condition, but need cosmetic repairs, including new carpeting.

The maintenance office/shop is new and in excel-



lent condition. The storage and equipment sheds are all in good condition, but filled to capacity.

## OSKALOOSA MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

The Oskaloosa Municipal Airport is owned by the City of Oskaloosa and administered by the Oskaloosa Municipal Airport Commission. It is located about 13 miles southeast of the city along Highway 63. The airport was given to the city for public use by the federal government and contains approximately 560 acres.

In 1996, the Oskaloosa Airport Commission approved an airport layout plan. This plan must be approved before funding can be obtained for improvements. Major projects anticipated during the planning period include maintenance and incremental upgrading of airport structures and rehabilitation of concrete runways. Current runways appear adequate to meet current and future demands for corporate and general aviation travel.

TABLE 5-1: PUBLIC FACILITIES INVENTORY

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>1. City Hall</b> 220 S. Market Street; NEC S. Market Street and 2nd Avenue.</p>	<p>Masonry, three level structure built in 1911. The 11,000 sq. ft. structure formerly housed city administrative offices and the Police Department. In January of 1997 the Police Department moved to new facilities, leaving only the city administrative offices.</p> <p>The building design raises the first floor, which contains the City Manager's Office and City Clerk's office, one-half level above the ground. The Housing Department, public restrooms, and old jail cells are located in the basement and the City Council Chambers are located on the third level. Public parking is provided on adjacent streets.</p> <p>Access to all three levels is provided by stairs and an elevator. The elevator was installed in the early 1990's, and makes the entire structure accessible to disabled persons.</p>	<p>City Hall is conveniently located in the heart of downtown. As such, it serves the important civic and social functions of the community.</p> <p>With the departure of the Police Department, approximately two-thirds of the structure is vacant. Proposed use for the vacated space includes the City Engineer and Building Inspection offices.</p> <p>The structure is beginning to show signs of deterioration, and is in need of a complete renovation. Windows are in very poor condition, the structure does not contain central air, and both the plumbing and electrical systems need to be upgraded.</p> <p>The city's preferred option for the building is modernization and increased efficiency of the historically important structure.</p>	<p>Continue routine maintenance of the structure.</p> <p>In 1998, the city retained OPN Architects to complete a building reuse plan. Primary work elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installation of a new, efficient HVAC system.</li> <li>• Rewiring of the building to accommodate computer needs and eliminate surface conduits and other installations which affect the historic integrity of the building.</li> <li>• Installation of efficient area lighting in an historically appropriate design.</li> <li>• Interior rehabilitation and space retrofit.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 5-1: PUBLIC FACILITIES INVENTORY**

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>2. Public Library</b> 301 S. Market Street; SWC S. Market Street and 3rd Avenue.</p>	<p>The library is a three story masonry structure that consists of a 1902 Carnegie Library and an addition that opened in July of 1997. The existing library was totally renovated at the time the addition was constructed.</p> <p>The structure is conveniently located on the southwestern edge of downtown. All three floors and public spaces in the building are accessible to disabled persons. Handicapped accessible restrooms are also available on all three floors.</p> <p>The lower level of the library contains the main circulation desk, children's areas, the youth computer lab, reading areas, and a staff work area.</p> <p>The main floor contains the main adult area and stacks, the reference desk, reading rooms, computer lab, A/V holdings, study carols, and Director's office.</p> <p>The 3rd level contains a large meeting room (seats 85), the Iowa Computer Network room, and a genealogy room.</p> <p>A local sales tax option funded the renovation, addition, and operation of the library. When this tax option expires (in 9 years), a new funding source will be necessary to continue library operations.</p>	<p>The structure was completely renovated and re-opened in mid-1997. It is in excellent condition and contains state-of-the-art technology and advancements.</p> <p>The library is centrally located and is heavily utilized. It has a collection of 50,000 - 52,000 items. In 1996, the library had a circulation of 164,000, with 12,000 registered users.</p> <p>The local sales tax option that financed the renovation and operation will expire in 9 years. Before this occurs, a new source of funding for the library should be secured. This is all the more important in light of extremely small annual book budgets and limited staff.</p>	<p>Perform routine maintenance of the facility.</p> <p>Identify additional source of funding for library operations.</p>

TABLE 5-1: PUBLIC FACILITIES INVENTORY

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>3. Mahaska County Law Enforcement Center.</b> 214 High Avenue East; SWC High Avenue East and S. Second Street.</p>	<p>The Oskaloosa Police Department is located in the Mahaska County Law Enforcement Center, which also houses the Mahaska County Sheriff's Office, the 911 Communications Center, and jail. The Law Enforcement Center is a 3 level (including basement) concrete and masonry structure that was constructed in 1996. The Police Department relocated from City Hall to this new facility in January of 1997.</p> <p>The Police Department is located in the basement and 2nd floor of the Law Enforcement Center. Twenty-four hour access is provided by stairs and an elevator, making this facility fully handicapped accessible.</p> <p>Access into the Police Department is through a secured entrance in the basement. The basement contains a reception area, various offices, a conference room, a multi-purpose room, storage rooms, a work-out room, locker rooms, and a break room. The 2nd floor contains the city investigator's office, interview rooms, and evidence room/lockers.</p> <p>The Law Enforcement Center also has an indoor garage for use by the Police Department. This facility is used for washing and maintaining police vehicles. The remaining police vehicles are parked on the street.</p>	<p>The Law Enforcement Center is in excellent condition. Its central location is adjacent to the county courthouse and helps provides rapid response to the entire community. Housing the county's various law enforcement agencies and 911 Communications Center under one roof appears to be working very well.</p> <p>The additional space provided by this new facility will allow the Police Department to meet its space needs for the next 20 years.</p> <p>Indoor garage space is limited to the washing and maintenance of police vehicles. Additional heated garage space for police vehicles should be considered.</p>	<p>Continue routine facility maintenance.</p> <p>Conduct a planning exercise to examine the addition of heated indoor garage space for police vehicles.</p> <p>Use results of the planning exercise to identify and design needed physical changes.</p>

**TABLE 5-1: PUBLIC FACILITIES INVENTORY**

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>4. Fire Station</b> 220 S. Market Street; NEC S. Market Street and 2nd Avenue.</p>	<p>A three story masonry structure located adjacent to City Hall. The structure was constructed in 2 phases, with the original two stories being constructed in 1909. The 3rd floor and hose tower(along with City hall) were constructed in 1911 . The entire structure contains approximately 7,500 sq. ft.</p> <p>The Oskaloosa Fire Department provides fire protection to the City of Oskaloosa, as well as the smaller communities of University Park, Beacon, and Kenwood Village. In addition, mutual aid agreements have been made with the county.</p> <p>The first floor of the fire station contains 3 vehicle storage bays. The second floor contains an office, kitchen, dormitory, day room, locker room, and small classroom. The third floor houses the City Band Room, where the city band practices and stores its equipment.</p> <p>The Fire Department has a second storage facility (the Farner building) located across the alley to the east. This masonry structure (which also houses the Water Department and an apartment) is two stories in height. The first floor has one bay that is used for vehicle storage (3 vehicles). In addition, the first floor is used for storing the 50' ladder and for the storage of hazardous materials related items. The second floor is used for general storage.</p>	<p>The Fire Station is well located to serve the entire City of Oskaloosa. The building is structurally sound but in need of a major renovation. The heating, plumbing, and electrical systems are all outdated. Air conditioning in the station consists of two individual window units that are located on the 2nd floor.</p> <p>Lack of space is the primary concern. The station does not contain enough room to house all of its necessary equipment under one roof. Vehicles are kept in two separate locations and the station lacks training facilities.</p> <p>Full-time firefighters lack adequate living quarters. In addition, the department's communications equipment (ranging from radios to telephones to computers) is inadequate.</p> <p>The second storage facility is structurally sound but it too needs to be renovated. Specifically, major cosmetic repairs need to be made to the structure's southern exterior wall.</p>	<p>Perform routine maintenance as needed.</p> <p>Conduct a planning study to evaluate future options for the Fire Station, perhaps in conjunction with those occurring for City Hall.</p>

**TABLE 5-1: PUBLIC FACILITIES INVENTORY**

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>5. Public Works Street Shop</b> 804 S. D Street; East side of D Street between 6th Avenue and 8th Avenue.</p>	<p>The Street Shop consists of two connected structures. The oldest structure is a single story masonry building that contains three truck bays and four offices. Attached to the rear of this structure is a single story wood pole and aluminum skin building. This building was constructed in the mid-1950s and contains three offices and two bays where trucks are stacked end to end. The Street Shop structure also includes restrooms and a break room for employees. Parking is provided on-site.</p> <p>The only significant changes to the structure since it was constructed occurred in 1979. At this time the offices were expanded and remodeled.</p>	<p>The original masonry structure is in good condition but the pole building is becoming deteriorated. It lacks central heat and becomes choked with exhaust fumes when vehicles in the adjacent truck bays are started.</p> <p>Lack of space is a major concern. Additional vehicle bays are needed, as is work space for the mechanics. In addition, storage space for small tools, parts, and hazardous materials is needed.</p> <p>Engineering needs additional office space and storage space. The quality of office and administrative space is generally poor.</p>	<p>Continue routine maintenance.</p> <p>Conduct a planning study to determine future options for a new Public Works/Street Facility</p> <p>Use results of the planning exercise to identify and design the recommended option.</p>
<p><b>6. Public Works Street Yard</b> 804 S. C Street; East Side of C Street between 6th Avenue and 8th Avenue.</p>	<p>The approximately 1.1 acre site is located immediately to the east of the Street Shop. The yard contains a wood pole and aluminum skin salt storage building. In addition, the unpaved yard area is used for the storage of miscellaneous items and is surrounded by a security fence.</p>	<p>The salt storage building is in fair condition.</p> <p>The yard's size is adequate to meet the apparent needs of the department.</p>	<p>Continue routine maintenance.</p> <p>A new 7,200 square foot unheated storage building was built in 1998.</p>

**TABLE 5-1: PUBLIC FACILITIES INVENTORY**

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>7. Park Department</b>                      Located in Edmundson Park; SE of S. "M" Street and Eleventh Avenue West.</p>	<p>The Park Department facilities include several structures. The newest is a maintenance office/shop that was added on to an existing storage shed in 1996. This metal sided structure is heated and contains 2 offices, a rest-room, a vehicle maintenance bay, and storage.</p> <p>The existing storage shed is an unheated one story metal sided structure. It has one bay and is used for the storage of big and small miscellaneous equipment.</p> <p>Attached to this structure is a three bay metal storage shed. This shed has a gravel floor and is open on one side. Various vehicles are stored in this building, as well as all of the park benches during the winter. In addition to these structures, the Park Department shares several sheds with the golf course.</p>	<p>The maintenance office/shop is brand new and in excellent condition. All of the storage sheds (including those shared with the golf course) are in relatively good condition.</p> <p>The Park Department's storage sheds are filled to capacity. The department needs additional indoor storage space for big and small equipment.</p> <p>Specifically, the department needs a 35' X 40' storage shed (with three bays and overhead doors) for each park.</p>	<p>Continue routine maintenance.</p> <p>Designate funds for the storage sheds in the Capital Improvement program.</p>
<p><b>8. Municipal Pool</b>                      Located in Edmundson Park; SE of S. "M" Street and Eleventh Avenue West.</p>	<p>This 75' X 150' pool was constructed in 1937. Structures at the site include a stone bathhouse with a flat roof and two low diving platforms. The pool area is surrounded by a security fence.</p> <p>The swimming pool underwent a minor renovation in 1984. Improvements were made to both the bathhouse and pool at this time.</p>	<p>The swimming facility is in good condition. The walls of the pool need to be resurfaced because they are rough and do not hold paint. In addition, all circulation pipes, gutter, pumps, and valves need to be replaced.</p> <p>A 1999 consulting study found the basic shell of the pool in relatively good condition, but found several deficiencies, including poor recirculation and filtration systems, user and operating inefficiencies created by the large area of deep water, deterioration of basic systems, and a need for bathhouse rehabilitation. The study identified three options, including a limited rehabilitation option, replacement on site with a contemporary water park, and adaptation of the existing pool as a water park.</p>	<p>Continue routine maintenance of the current pool.</p> <p>Implement the modified water park option, using the sound structure of the existing pool as the foundation for building a contemporary water leisure facility. Include bathhouse rehabilitation and reconstruction of access road and parking into the overall project.</p>

TABLE 5-1: PUBLIC FACILITIES INVENTORY

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>9. Edmundson Golf Course</b> Public facility located within Edmundson Park; SE of S. "M" Street and Eleventh Avenue W.</p>	<p>An 18-hole golf course operated by the City of Oskaloosa. The facility includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grass greens</li> <li>• Irrigated course.</li> <li>• Clubhouse.</li> <li>• Various course-related buildings used for storage, and restrooms.</li> </ul> <p>The clubhouse consists of a steel sided structure that was constructed in the mid-1980s. It contains a pro shop, snack bar, and restrooms. The structure is heated during the winter.</p> <p>The clubhouse is attached to the golf pro's living quarters. The living quarters is a two story masonry house that was constructed in the late 1800s. The house contains the living area for the golf pro and his family. A new roof was added to the structure in 1996.</p> <p>The golf course shares the previously mentioned maintenance office/shop with the Park Department. In addition, the course utilizes several storage and equipment sheds, some of which are also shared with the Park Department. Golf carts are stored in three separate sheds, and the golf pro can park his vehicle in a two car garage that was constructed in the mid-1980s.</p> <p>Additional structures on the golf course include two restrooms and a pump house.</p>	<p>The clubhouse is in very good condition. The pro's living quarters are also in good condition, but need cosmetic repairs, including new carpeting.</p> <p>The maintenance office/shop is new and in excellent condition. The storage and equipment sheds are all in good condition, but filled to capacity.</p> <p>The three golf cart storage sheds, as well as the two car garage used by the golf pro, are also in good physical condition. In addition, they contain sufficient space for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>The two restrooms that are located on the course are in good condition, and the pump house was constructed in 1996.</p>	<p>Continue to perform routine maintenance to course structures.</p> <p>Designate funds in the Capital Improvement Program for cosmetic improvements to the golf pro's living quarters.</p> <p>Examine future storage and equipment shed space needs, perhaps in conjunction with the Park Department.</p> <p>Construct new storage structures based on the result of the study.</p>

**TABLE 5-1: PUBLIC FACILITIES INVENTORY**

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>10. Oskaloosa Municipal Airport</b></p>	<p>The Oskaloosa Municipal Airport is owned by the City of Oskaloosa and administered by the Oskaloosa Municipal Airport Commission. It is located about 13 miles southeast of the city along Highway 63. The airport was given to the city for public use by the federal government and contains approximately 560 acres.</p> <p>The general utility facility has two paved runways. Runway 13-31 is 4,000 feet in length and has a VOR/DME approach procedure. Runway 4-22 is 2,000 feet in length and has a non-directional beacon (NDB) approach.</p> <p>The airport has a wooden terminal building that houses airport operations and a waiting room. It also has a large maintenance hangar, a large metal sided aircraft storage hangar, 22 steel "T" hangars, and one private hangar.</p> <p>The Oskaloosa Municipal Airport has no scheduled air service. The majority of the activity at the airport is business related. The two largest users of the airport are Musco Corporation and Mahaska Bottling.</p>	<p>At 560 acres, the Oskaloosa Municipal Airport contains sufficient acreage for the foreseeable future. It is located 13 miles south of the city and has experienced no development pressure.</p> <p>All of the structures that are located at the airport are old, but well maintained and in good condition. No new or renovated facilities are needed at this time.</p> <p>The airport's two runways are long enough to meet current and anticipated demand. The existing concrete paving is old and is beginning to show signs of deterioration.</p>	<p>Continue routine maintenance of structures.</p> <p>Rehabilitate concrete runway paving.</p>

## INFRASTRUCTURE

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This section evaluates the city's existing infrastructure systems. These include the systems for sanitary sewer, stormwater drainage and storm sewers, water distribution and storage, and operations for the collection, recycling and disposal of solid waste flow capacity between the college and community schools. Tables 6-2 through 6-5 provides a complete assessment of and recommendations for the city's infrastructure systems. Key findings and projects in progress are summarized below.

### SANITARY SEWER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEM

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Oskaloosa operates two wastewater facilities, both of which are in the process of substantial upgrades. The Southwest plant, utilizing activated sludge technology, received major upgrades that were completed in November, 1995. These improvements included expansion of the aeration portion of the treatment process, replacement of the return activated sludge pumps to increase capacity, replacement of chlorination equipment, and construction of a force main to use treated effluent for golf course irrigation.

Improvements at the Northeast plant, a trickling filter facility, will occur during 1997. These improvements will include upgrades to the storm water holding pond, final clarification, final pumps, and raw pumps, and installation of a bar screen rake. This project is designed to meet new ammonia removal standards and provide other opera-

tional improvements. This \$1.3 million construction program will complete planned improvements to the wastewater plants.

Aspects of the wastewater collection system pose continued challenges for the city. Key issues include:

- Continued deterioration of parts of the sanitary sewer system, requiring ongoing rehabilitation and replacement.
- Reconstruction of trunk mains to the Southwest Plant to eliminate surcharge and infiltration.
- Maintenance of the system of five lift stations and reconstruction of the South M Street lift station.
- Construction of sanitary sewers to serve developing areas in the area of the Highway 92/163 interchange. Plans and specifications have been developed for service to this area, consisting of a system of lift stations and both force mains and gravity flow sewers. The estimated cost of improvements to serve 100 acres is \$658,000. A portion of the system serving the east side of the interchange will be constructed in 1997 at a cost of about \$250,000. Service to the west side of the interchange will be constructed at a later date, as demand warrants.
- Additional improvements to reduce inflow into the sanitary system. Major improvements to outfall sewers have helped eliminate infiltration and surcharging of the collection system. Nevertheless, extraneous flows continue to enter the system, and will require additional improvements in the form of relief sewers and rehabilitation.
- Addressing major deterioration problems plague the older lines in the existing system on a systematic basis.
- Future extensions of the system, like that to the west bypass, to accommodate community growth. Some extensions will require gravity flow lines, force mains, and lift stations.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

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### STORM DRAINAGE

Oskaloosa's storm water management system is generally in good condition, the result of implementation of most recommendations of a 1980 study of the storm sewer system. Several specific projects are in progress to address specific problems, including:

- The 1996 construction of a new culvert under F Street south of the Edmundson Park swimming pool.
- Construction of curb and gutter in 1996 along 21st Avenue and South F Street in the Golfview subdivision.
- Reconstruction of 1,000 feet of deteriorated storm sewer along High Avenue West and west of L Street. The Engineering Department has completed preliminary engineering for the project. Estimated cost of the project is \$50,000.

Remaining issues include:

- Storm drainage on North 2nd from C Avenue to the community stadium.
- Management of surface drainage in areas without public easements or ownership. The city should designate key drainageways and negotiate easements for maintenance with property owners. Some drainageways provide opportunities for joint

storm drainage and recreational development. Subdivisions that incorporate major drainageways should dedicate these corridors for utility and recreational use.

- E Street/Penn Boulevard storm drainage north of K Avenue.
- On-site management of storm water as part of the project approval and subdivision process.
- Storm drainage in the Heartland Square Mall area.
- Continued enforcement of ordinances and regulations dealing with floodplain development., using Oskaloosa's zoning and land use authority to limit permanent settlement and subdivision in flood-prone areas near Spring Creek and Muchakinock Creek. Promote expanded recreational use of floodplain corridors.

### WATER SYSTEM

In 1996, the City directed Garden and Associates, Ltd. to complete a preliminary evaluation of its water distribution system. The Garden report evaluated existing storage and pumping facilities and the distribution system, and included recommendations and cost estimates for improvements. The report forms the basis for capital improvement programming. The city's existing water system consists of a series of shallow wells located along the South Skunk River, a water treatment plant, 10- to 20-inch diameter transmission mains from the water plant to the distribution system, two elevated storage tanks, and the distribution system itself. A summary of recommended improvements follows.

- *Storage and High Service Pumps*
  - Installation of an altitude valve at the South Tower to allow for full utilization of the North Tower.
  - Installation of two vertical turbine pumps over

## INFRASTRUCTURE

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the existing clear well attached to the water plant, along with piping and electrical controls for automatic operation of high service pumps and the elevated towers.

- Installation of a new master meter to measure water quantities more accurately.

- *Distribution System*

- Incremental water main improvement projects to improve fire flows to recommended standards.

- Major distribution projects. Total estimated cost in 1997 dollars is indicated in parentheses:

Priority I: West End Water main to serve the city's West Development Area. (\$1,250,000)  
The West End Main was completed in 1997.

Priority II: South Market Street and Golfview to FoxRun. (\$382,150), scheduled for development in 2002-2003.

Priority III: South 11th Street, 15th Avenue East, and the North Industrial Area. (\$459,100)  
The 15th Avenue main is scheduled for construction in 2000-2001 at a projected cost of \$186,000.

Priority IV: Carbonado Road and C Avenue East & North 4th Street. (\$563,900) The Carbonado Road main is scheduled for construction in 2001-2002 at an estimated cost of \$298,000.

Priority V: 3rd Avenue East and L Street (\$424,800).

Based on the Garden report and other local needs, the Oskaloosa Water Department has developed an eight-year capital program, programming major investments through 2004. The program anticipated total investments of \$3,570,500, including the completed West End Main. In addition to the recommendations of the Garden report, the Water Department program anticipates

new well development in 2003-04.

## SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

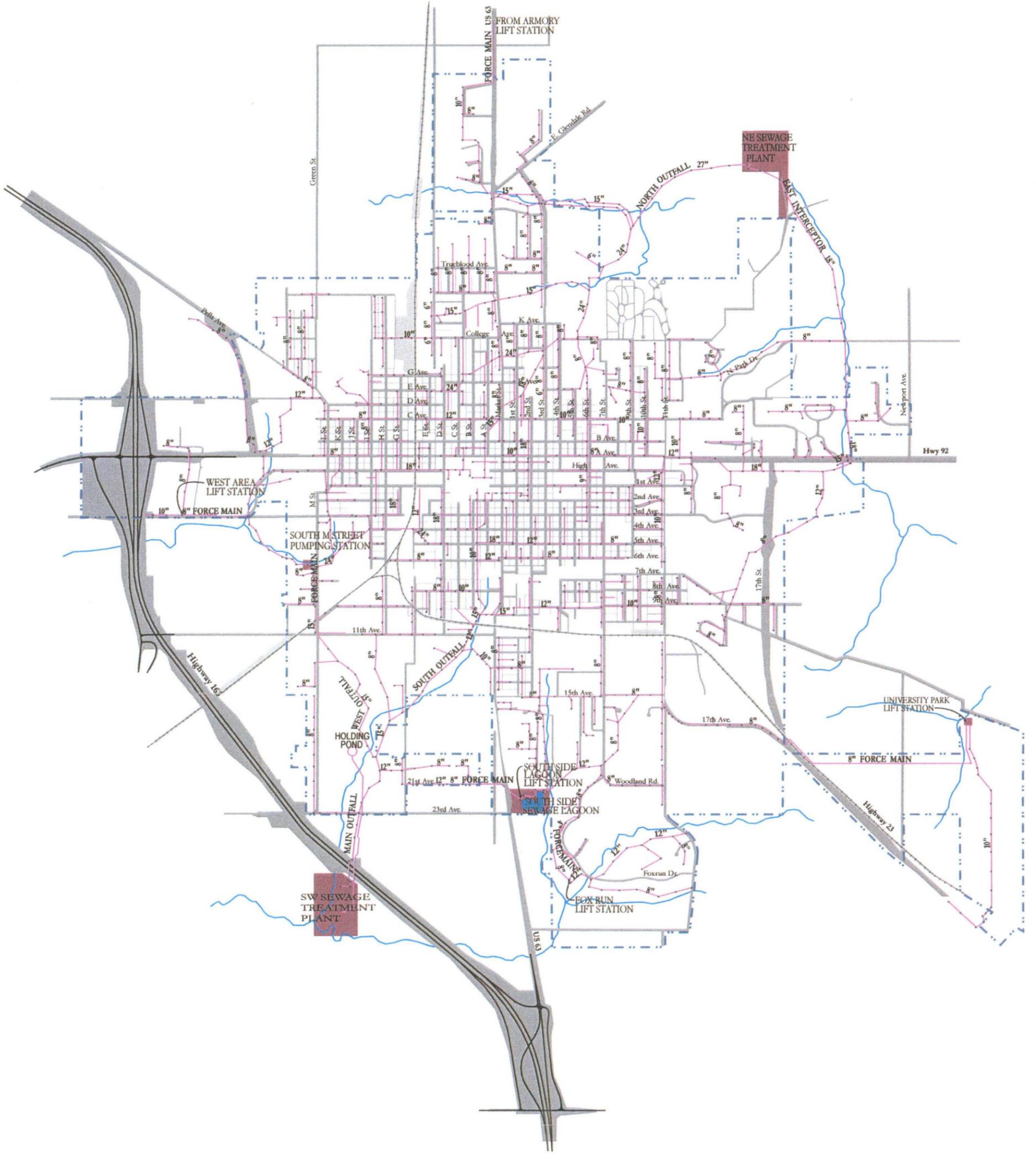
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Residents and businesses in Oskaloosa can select one of seven independently licensed haulers in the city for the collection of solid waste. These haulers collect at curbside for residences and from refuse containers for businesses. Residential collections occur once per week, and residents are required to provide their own refuse containers.

All solid waste is transported directly to the Mahaska County Landfill. This landfill is operated by the Mahaska County Solid Waste Management Commission, and is located south of the city on Highway 63. Oskaloosa has greatly succeeded in the critical area of recycling. The Mahaska County Landfill has reduced the amount of solid waste entering its landfill by 52%. This is the largest reduction in waste for any county in the State of Iowa.

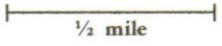
Despite this success, additional efforts can expand recycling further. Potential directions include:

- Community educational programs.
- Requiring local haulers to provide recycling bins for their residential customers. In addition, the independent hauler's trucks should be fitted with separate receptacles for different recycleable items.
- Using composted yard waste as a mulch/soil conditioner in parks.



# Sewer Map

## Oskaloosa, Iowa


**RDG** Crose Gardner Shukert  
 Omaha and Des Moines  

 1/2 mile

NORTH



**TABLE 5-2: WASTEWATER SYSTEM**

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>1. Sanitary Sewer System</b></p>	<p>Oskaloosa is served by three gravity flow sewage systems. The northeast system flows to the Northeast Treatment Plant and is served by 27-inch (North Outfall) and 15-inch (East Outfall) diameter outfall sewers and a system of trunk and lateral sewers that vary in size from 6 inches to 15 inches in diameter. This system, which includes about 26 miles of sewer, was originally constructed in the 1920s and 1930s of vitrified clay pipe. More recent additions to the system are constructed out of reinforced concrete pipe.</p> <p>The southwest system flows to the Southwest Treatment Plant and is served by a 24 inch diameter outfall sewer and trunk and lateral sewers that range in size from 8 inches to 15 inches. This system, which includes about 20 miles of sewer, was originally constructed in the 1920s and 1930s of vitrified clay pipe.</p> <p>The southeast system flows to the South Side Lagoons, which serve primarily for equalization, and then on to the Southwest Plant. The system consists primarily of 8 inch diameter pipe and was built during the 1960s. The system, which serves an industrial area, includes about 4 miles of sewer.</p> <p>Existing development outside the city is served by individual septic tank systems.</p>	<p>Most major collection system improvements proposed in the five phase Wastewater Treatment Facility Plan have been completed. This includes replacing the outfall sewer to the Northeast Treatment Plant and the reconstruction of the trunk mains that lead to the Southwest Treatment Plant.</p> <p>These improvements have helped eliminate infiltration and surcharging of the collection system. Nevertheless, extraneous flows continue to enter the system, and will require additional improvements in the form of relief sewers and rehabilitation.</p> <p>In addition, major deterioration problems plague the older lines in the existing system. These will cause future operational and financial problems, and result in the need for major collection system improvements in the future.</p> <p>Extension of the system, like that to the west bypass, will require gravity flow lines, force mains, and lift stations.</p>	<p>Replace older sewer as needed.</p> <p>Televise sanitary sewer lines as problems become evident.</p> <p>Budget funds to rehabilitate lines and eliminate sources of inflow from the sewage collection system.</p> <p>Undertake a house-by-house inspection program to identify sources of inflow into the sanitary system.</p>

**TABLE 5-2: WASTEWATER SYSTEM**

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<b>2. Sanitary Sewer Lift Stations</b>	The City operates and maintains six underground sanitary sewer pumping stations at the following locations:	Routine maintenance is performed by the city under the advisement of the City Engineer.	Continue regular maintenance program.
<b>Municipal Lift Stations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="470 443 995 527">1. M Street: Located along M Street in the vicinity of the abandoned Rock Island railroad tracks.</li> <li data-bbox="470 561 995 646">2. South Side Lagoon: Located near the intersection of Highway 63 and 21st Avenue West.</li> <li data-bbox="470 680 995 764">3. Industrial: Located in the industrial park on Burlington Road, east of University park.</li> <li data-bbox="470 799 995 883">4. Armory: Located on the National Guard Armory site, approximately one mile north of the city on highway 63.</li> <li data-bbox="470 917 995 1002">5. Northeast: Located at the Northeast treatment Plant.</li> <li data-bbox="470 1036 995 1044">6. FoxRun: Located in the new FoxRun Subdivision.</li> </ol>	<p data-bbox="1020 415 1451 618">The FoxRun lift station is the newest of the six, and was constructed in 1996. The Armory, Industrial, Northeast, and South Side Lagoon lift stations were constructed between 1975 and 1993. These lift stations are generally in good operating condition.</p> <p data-bbox="1020 652 1451 761">The original M Street Lift Station was built in the 1930s and modified and improved in 1973. This lift station is in need of reconstruction.</p> <p data-bbox="1020 795 1451 959">The city is constructing a new lift station in the development area on the east side of the Highway 163 interchange. A second lift station will be constructed on the west side of this interchange in the near future.</p>	<p data-bbox="1465 358 1906 415">Complete planned improvements to the M Street Lift Station.</p> <p data-bbox="1465 449 1906 529">Construct a new lift station located in the new development area on the west side of the Highway 163 interchange.</p>

**TABLE 5-2: WASTEWATER SYSTEM**

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>3. Wastewater Treatment Facility</b></p>	<p>The City of Oskaloosa has three wastewater treatment facilities. The Northeast Sewage Treatment Plant, a trickling filter plant that provides secondary treatment and disinfection of effluent, serves the northeast area of the city. The plant is designed to treat an average daily wastewater flow of .783 million gallons per day (mgd). The plant was originally constructed in the 1930s, and was renovated in 1974.</p> <p>The Southwest Treatment Plant is an activated sludge plant with digesters that provides secondary treatment and disinfection. The plant, which was placed in operation in 1974, serves the southwest part of the city and was designed to treat an average daily wastewater flow of .745 mgd. This plant also treats the effluent from the South Side Lagoons, which is pumped to a 12-inch diameter gravity sewer that is a tributary to the outfall sewer serving this plant. Sludge from the plant is land applied.</p> <p>The South Side Lagoons serve the southeast part of the city, which is primarily industrial in nature. This treatment facility is an aerated lagoon system which was originally constructed in 1964 and improved in 1974. The lagoons are now used primarily for equalization of the system.</p>	<p>The Wastewater Treatment Facility Plan recommended five phases of improvements to the treatment plants. These improvements were proposed to improve operational and maintenance aspects, as well as certain EPA-mandated upgrades.</p> <p>All of the designated improvements have been made to the Southwest Treatment Plant. Phase V improvements are now being completed at the Northeast Treatment Plant. This includes the installation of an influent bar screen rake and a biologic upgrade to meet ammonia removal standards.</p> <p>When work is completed at the Northeast Plant, all planned improvements will be completed. Both treatment plants will be in excellent shape for the remainder of the planning period.</p> <p>In the future, it will be necessary to provide additional capacity at the Northeast Plant. In addition, this plant will require a bio-tower that will provide plastic trickling media instead of rock.</p>	<p>Continue routine physical maintenance of treatment plants and lagoons.</p> <p>Study the timing and phasing of future improvements to the Northeast Plant, including increased capacity and a bio-tower.</p> <p>Based on results of study, make designated improvements to the Northeast Plant.</p>

TABLE 5-3: STORM WATER SYSTEM

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
1. Drainage Topography and Floodplains	<p>The City of Oskaloosa is located on a broad plateau that separates the South Skunk River basin and the Des Moines River basin. The South Skunk River is located north of the city and flows from northwest to southeast. The river drains the northeast section of the city.</p> <p>The Des Moines River is located south of the city and also flows from northwest to southeast. This river drains the southwest section of the city.</p> <p>The topography of Oskaloosa is varied. The developed area of the city is located on level to moderately undulating land on the plateau, as well as along ridge lines that separate the smaller watersheds. Slopes along the smaller creeks can be fairly steep. The elevation within Oskaloosa ranges nearly 120 feet from the highest point on the plateau to the lowest point along creek bottoms.</p> <p>Drainage within Oskaloosa generally flows one of two directions. Run-off from the northeast one-half of the city flows northeasterly via tributaries to Spring Creek or Painter Creek and then on to the South Skunk River. Run-off from the southwest one-half of the city flows southwesterly via tributaries to Muchakinock Creek or Little Muchakinock Creek and then on to the Des Moines River.</p>	<p>The threat of flooding in Oskaloosa is relatively minor. Street flooding is an isolated occurrence, and usually occurs during extremely heavy rainfall events.</p> <p>Within the developed portion of the city, the 100-year flood boundary (as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency) comes in contact with the city in several locations. Fortunately, the locations where this occurs are relatively undeveloped.</p> <p>As the City of Oskaloosa continues to grow, new development will encroach on the 100-year flood boundary. This will occur in several locations, including tributaries to Spring Creek and Muchakinock Creek.</p> <p>In order to prevent future flooding, Oskaloosa should continue to implement a sound, effective floodplain management program and develop a positive working relationship with FEMA.</p>	<p>Continue to enforce ordinances and regulations dealing with floodplain development.</p> <p>Use Oskaloosa's zoning and land use authority to limit permanent settlement and subdivision in flood-prone areas near Spring Creek and Muchakinock Creek.</p> <p>Promote expanded recreational use of floodplain corridors.</p>

**TABLE 5-3: STORM WATER SYSTEM**

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>2. Storm Sewer System</b></p>	<p>Oskaloosa’s network of storm sewers and open channel drainageways conveys stormwater into various tributaries of one of two main watershed basins. Stormwater from developed areas in the northeast one-half of the city is conveyed to Spring Creek and then on to the South Skunk River. Stormwater from developed areas in the southwest one-half of the city is conveyed to Muchakinock Creek and then on to the Des Moines River.</p> <p>Oskaloosa’s storm sewer system was developed in conjunction with construction of the city’s original streets, and was expanded as the city grew. The majority of the original storm sewers are constructed of vitrified clay. More recent additions to the system include reinforced concrete and corrugated metal pipe.</p> <p>Oskaloosa’s storm sewers range in size from ten inches to sixty inches in diameter, with the majority of the pipe in the system ranging from twelve inches to twenty-one inches in diameter.</p>	<p>All developed areas of Oskaloosa rely heavily on pipes to collect surface drainage from streets and convey stormwater to cross-city lines which outlet into tributaries of the two watershed basins.</p> <p>Oskaloosa has experienced localized problems with its stormwater conveyance system. Several storm sewers and intakes are inadequate to convey flows generated by heavy rainfall events. In addition, several have accumulated debris and silt or collapsed. This has resulted in a reduction of the system’s capacity and/or minor street flooding.</p> <p>The most pressing problem exists on High Avenue West. This 1000’ storm sewer is severely deteriorated and needs to be reconstructed. Another deteriorated segment is located on N. 2nd Street from High Avenue to the stadium. One half of this 30-inch storm sewer was replaced in 1996, with the remaining portion to be replaced within five years.</p>	<p>Reconstruct High Avenue West storm sewer.</p> <p>Reconstruct the remaining segment of the N. 2nd Street storm sewer.</p> <p>Identify projects to increase capacity and rate of conveyance of storm sewers, or provide additional stormwater retention capacity.</p> <p>Continue to maintain and clean intakes and storm sewers of debris and silt.</p>

TABLE 5-4: WATER SYSTEM

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
1. City Water Supply Wells and Treatment Plant	<p>Oskaloosa relies upon groundwater for its source of water. Ten wells have been established on the south side of the Skunk River, approximately 4 miles north of the city. These wells are 50 feet in depth and tap into the alluvial aquifer. These wells pump between 350 and 500 gallons per minute (gpm), and include:</p> <p>Two wells that were constructed in 1996.</p> <p>Two wells that were constructed in 1994.</p> <p>Two wells that were constructed in 1989.</p> <p>Four wells that were constructed in the mid-1970s.</p> <p>Water from the wells is transferred to the water treatment plant, which was originally constructed in 1887 and has been expanded and upgraded several times, the most recent being in the late 1970s/early 1980s.</p> <p>The facility is a conventional treatment plant and incorporates limestone softening, filtration, and disinfecting of the water. In 1997 the water treatment plant had a capacity of 3 million gallons per day (mgd), and an average daily demand of 1.1 mgd.</p>	<p>The water supply is perhaps Oskaloosa's most important public asset. The water distribution system has been strengthened over the last several years to meet growing needs.</p> <p>The ten wells are operational and in good condition. Preventative maintenance and cleaning is performed on an on-going basis. Nevertheless, iron build-up will result in the need to replace some of the existing wells in the long term future.</p> <p>Long range plans call for construction of a 2,000 foot well to the Jordan aquifer. This well will supplement the existing wells and provide a source of exceptionally pure water.</p> <p>The city has purchased 50 acres on the north side of the Skunk River. This land will be used for well field expansion in the future.</p> <p>The city's water treatment plant has been upgraded and is in very good condition.</p>	<p>Continue routine cleaning and preventative maintenance of the existing city wells.</p> <p>Due to iron build-up, replace existing wells as necessary.</p> <p>Construct additional wells on the north side of the river as they become necessary.</p>

**TABLE 5-4: WATER SYSTEM**

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>2. Water Storage Reservoirs</b></p>	<p>Water flows from the water treatment plant to the city’s water storage reservoirs. Oskaloosa has three of these reservoirs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear well that is located at the water treatment plant. This reservoir is located under ground and was constructed out of concrete. It was built in 1980 and can hold 1.2 million gallons of water.</li> <li>• An elevated water storage reservoir that was constructed in 1930. This storage reservoir can hold 400,000 gallons of water and is located in the northwest part of the city, north of G Avenue.</li> <li>• An elevated water storage reservoir that was constructed in 1957. This storage reservoir can hold 500,000 gallons of water and is located in the industrial area south of 8th Avenue.</li> </ul>	<p>The clear well that is located at the water treatment plant is relatively new and is constructed out of concrete. It is in very good condition.</p> <p>The two elevated water storage reservoirs are in excellent condition. Both of the towers are constructed out of steel and have an epoxy coating on their interior. Alternating every other year, one of the two towers is drained, washed, inspected, and then refilled.</p> <p>The city has adequate pressure and fire flows. The water storage capacity is adequate to meet future needs.</p>	<p>Continue regular cleaning and preventative maintenance of the water storage reservoirs.</p> <p>Monitor the future need to develop new storage facilities on the east side of the city.</p>

TABLE 5-4: WATER SYSTEM

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<b>3. Water Mains</b>	<p>The existing system of water mains ranges from 4 inches to 20 inches in diameter. The mains are constructed out of materials ranging from cast iron to plastic.</p>	<p>The water system is professionally maintained and operated by a Board of Trustees.</p>	<p>The City should follow the previously mentioned study and systematically replace problem and undersized mains as the need arises.</p>
	<p>Generally, the entire developed area of Oskaloosa is served by the water main system. The city has approximately 75 to 80 miles of water mains. The oldest mains are located in the central core of the city, with newer mains spreading out from there.</p>	<p>Overall, adequate transmission volumes and fire flows exist throughout the community. No pressure problems are evident.</p>	<p>Continue routine cleaning and preventative maintenance of the distribution system.</p>
	<p>In recent years, the city has been upgrading lines in trouble spots with new and larger transmission mains. These main projects have improved pressure and delivery within the city's water system.</p>	<p>As with any water system, mains in the older sections of town are deteriorated and in need of replacement. When necessary, these mains are replaced "in-house."</p>	<p>Design new housing development in Oskaloosa to provide any necessary main extensions.</p>
	<p>New housing development in Oskaloosa will require incremental extension of water mains. These extensions can be installed during the course of normal subdivision and construction.</p>	<p>A local engineering firm has recently completed a study that sets priorities for trouble areas. This study will encourage the systematic replacement of deteriorated water mains.</p>	<p>Establish the City as a vendor of water to unincorporated areas that are in conformance with the City's land use and zoning policies.</p>
	<p>The Oskaloosa water system also serves University Park and Beacon. These communities are served by 6 inch and 4 inch mains. Parts of the unincorporated County are also served by the water system.</p>		

**TABLE 5-5: SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SYSTEM**

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
<p><b>1. Solid Waste Collection</b></p>	<p>Residents and businesses in Oskaloosa can select one of seven independently licensed haulers in the city for the collection of solid waste. These haulers collect at curbside for residences and from refuse containers for businesses. Residential collections occur once per week, and residents are required to provide their own refuse containers.</p> <p>All solid waste is transported directly to the Mahaska County Landfill. This landfill is operated by the Mahaska County Solid Waste Management Commission, and is located south of the city on Highway 63.</p> <p>All licensed haulers provide some sort of recycling services to their customers. Several haulers include this service in their monthly charges, while others make it an additional fee. Recyclable goods are transported to the recycling center, where they processed. The recycling center accepts newspaper, tin cans, glass, plastic, and cardboard.</p> <p>Yard waste is also accepted by the landfill. Tree branches and limbs are chipped on site and used as cover for the landfill.</p>	<p>There is a nationwide movement to manage and reduce waste streams to extend the life of landfill facilities. Often, public awareness of solid waste issues is increased by personal, hands-on participation in recycling.</p> <p>Oskaloosa has greatly succeeded in this area. The Mahaska County Landfill has reduced the amount of solid waste entering its landfill by 52%. This is the largest reduction in waste for any county in the State of Iowa.</p> <p>Even though the Mahaska County Landfill has a secure capacity to accept large volumes of future waste, more can be done. Yard wastes are responsible for a large volume of the local waste stream. These wastes could be separated and composted, thus reducing refuse costs and extending the lifetime of the landfill facility.</p>	<p>Oskaloosa should involve its citizens in a city-wide awareness effort to emphasize the environmental benefits of recycling and waste reduction.</p> <p>Oskaloosa should require its local haulers to provide individual recycling bins for their residential customers. In addition, the independent hauler's trucks should be fitted with separate receptacles for different recyclable items.</p> <p>Oskaloosa should consider using composted yard waste as a mulch/soil conditioner in parks.</p>

TABLE 5-5: SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SYSTEM

Facility/ Location	Description	Evaluation	Recommendation
2. Solid Waste Landfill Operations	<p>Collection of solid waste is currently provided by seven independently licensed haulers which transport refuse to the Mahaska County Landfill. The landfill, located south of the city on Highway 137, is operated by the Mahaska County Solid Waste Management Commission.</p> <p>The Mahaska County landfill has a life expectancy of approximately 25 years. When the landfill reaches capacity, the Commission will be able to utilize additional land that it owns surrounding the existing landfill. This should add several years of life to the existing location.</p> <p>The landfill charges \$16.25 per ton of solid waste. This is the most economical fee in the State of Iowa. As a result, the landfill accepts solid waste from outside the county, and charges accordingly.</p> <p>The landfill employs three full-time employees and a scale attendant. All of the equipment operated by the employees has been updated and is in very good condition.</p> <p>Three structures are located at the landfill. The landfill office is in poor condition, while the shop, which is used for mechanical work and equipment storage, is in fair condition. The scales are new and are in very good condition.</p>	<p>At present levels, the Mahaska County Landfill should have adequate capacity to operate for at least 25 years. When the landfill reaches capacity, the landfill commission owns adjacent property which can be used for expansion.</p> <p>Area residents and businesses should be able to depend on the county landfill to meet future needs. Nevertheless, the city and county should continue to monitor the capacity of the landfill to meet the community's waste disposal needs. Because the landfill is run economically, it is likely that it will accept an increasing share of "imported garbage" in the future.</p> <p>Equipment used in landfill operations is new and in good condition, and should last through the planning period. The landfill office is in poor condition and is expected to be replaced in 1997.</p>	<p>The city should continue efforts to reduce the volume of the community's waste stream, to avoid sending unnecessary solid wastes to the landfill.</p> <p>The city should play a positive role and encourage conservation and recycling.</p> <p>Continue routine maintenance of equipment and structures located at the landfill.</p> <p>Make necessary improvements to the shop facility located at the landfill.</p>

# QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

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6



# A VITAL CITY CENTER

## A Downtown District that Builds Community



**D**owntowns occupy a particular place of importance within cities and towns. They are a unique to their individual communities - no downtown looks exactly like any other downtown. Because of this relationship, people often measure the health of their city by the health of their traditional business center.

Oskaloosa's Downtown district clearly serves this central role. The district, including the adjacent Penn Central Mall, is the entire market area's largest single, compact concentration of commercial development - a place where the tradition of long-standing businesses mix with new enterprises, and an historic town square district combines with a contemporary regional mall. Downtown is also a critical mixed use center, a focus for business, civic life, and entertainment, situated within some of Iowa's best historic Main Street structures.

Downtown Oskaloosa is also vital to the city's economy. The city has traditionally been the dominant retail center in its market area. Its taxable sales per capita are the highest of its region, evidence of the community's positive balance of



trade. Indeed, the importance of retailing to the city's economy is evidenced by the commissioning of a Retail Market Analysis by the Oskaloosa Area Chamber and Development Group, completed by Marketek, Inc. in 1997. The continued health of the central district is a critical investment in the financial future of the city.

Yet, many believe that Downtown Oskaloosa's economic balance is fragile, given the opening in 1998 of the Highway 163 expressway to Des Moines. The increase in regional mobility that the new highway offers makes it easier for shoppers to come to Oskaloosa, but also makes it easier for local and regional customers to shop in competitive markets. In addition, the highway interchange can attract large-scale regional retailers that may be seen to be in competition with the city center.

Despite these, Downtown Oskaloosa is an essentially strong district that can benefit from strong private action and beneficial public policies and investments. In addition, the district's unique physical environment, placed into the context of an overall community development plan, can be both a major local and regional attraction. This section of the plan is designed to provide a realistic development program for the downtown area that will enable it to continue and expand its role as a vital center for many kinds of activity.

## GOALS

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### GOALS

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Downtown Oskaloosa can maintain and strengthen its role as a mixed use center, a place that combines shopping, working, civic life, and living in a vital, richly textured way. The district should be alive with people, and use its distinctive environment to best advantage.

To position itself to meet the district's future needs, the city should:

#### ■ STRENGTHEN DOWNTOWN'S ROLE AS A "FLAGSHIP" DISTRICT FOR THE CITY.

Downtown Oskaloosa is a psychological focus for the city. Historic city policy has been to establish this central focus, whether through the 1991 restoration of the City Square or the decision to develop a regional shopping mall adjacent to Downtown rather than on the edge of the city. Indeed, Downtown's image is bound up with that of the entire community. Downtown should maintain its role as a source of pride and vitality, a center that people in the city and around the region like to visit for enjoyment, commerce, and cultural enrichment.

#### ■ MAINTAIN AND EXPAND A MIX OF USES AND ACTIVITIES.

In spite of dramatic changes in retailing, Downtown Oskaloosa has maintained its place as an active retail center. This has clearly occurred because of the decision to "expand" the traditional downtown with the development of Penn Central Mall. While some "big-box" retailers located in the Heartland Center area on South 17th Street, the mall included two major department stores and one large grocery store. A key to the continued evolution of Downtown Oskaloosa will be to complement a traditional large retail base with new uses. Downtown should be a place that provides settings for many kinds of activities, including, but not limited to, the traditional focus on general retailing.

Life in a city center is a delicate ballet that includes vehicles, pedestrians, places for activity, streetscape, historic structures, windows on the street, and other features. Downtown Oskaloosa is a lively place, active with commercial life during the day and maintaining a high level of evening activity. The strengthening of the district should continue to build on the intrinsic character of the district - its pedestrian scale, beautiful town square, and historic character. It should introduce some of these characteristics into those parts of the district that lack them.

#### ■ STRENGTHEN THE DOWNTOWN RETAIL ENVIRONMENT.

In many communities, the role of Downtown has changed from one of primary retailing in pre-auto era days to one of specialty retailing, small business, and service activities. Downtown Oskaloosa is different from this, and maintains a high degree of diversity. It has many small enterprises and indeed acts as an incubator for small business, but also includes major anchor retailing. This combination of commercial uses helps to secure the district's continuing role as the city's primary commercial center. Oskaloosa completed a street landscaping project and City Square restoration that have helped create an attractive district. Further improvements in the public environment can further improve the district's business environment and strengthen its attraction for shoppers and other users, as well as repair damage sustained by street trees during the October, 1997 storm.

#### ■ INCREASE THE ECONOMIC REWARDS OF BUILDING OWNERSHIP IN DOWNTOWN OSKALOOSA.

Any investment must provide a reasonable rate of return to its investor. This rule is equally relevant to Downtown properties. Older buildings are often fully amortized, avoiding debt service costs that tend to increase rents. However, upper levels of buildings in Oskaloosa are frequently vacant or bring limited revenue. As a result, property owners

## GOALS

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receive a relatively low return on investment. In addition, further investment, involving rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, or bringing structures into compliance with contemporary codes or federal regulations, may seem unattractive to building owners.

When owners can expect a good return on downtown property, investment similarly increases. Therefore, the downtown development strategy must provide reasonable economic rewards to the district's property owners.

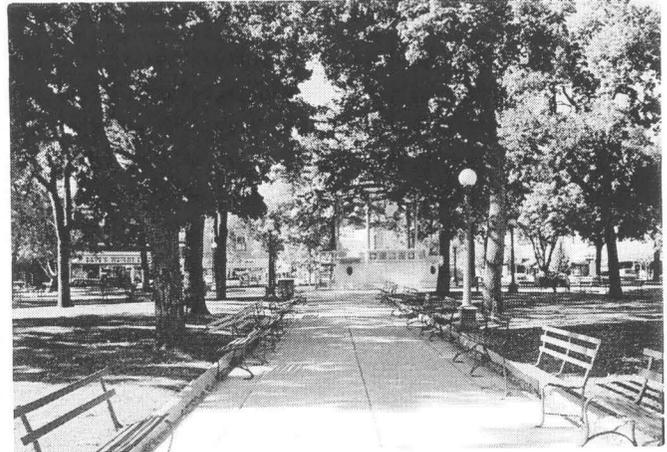
### ■ PRESERVE THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND HISTORIC INTEGRITY OF DOWNTOWN OSKALOOSA.

The historic value of the city's town center and its role as a symbol of the character of Oskaloosa require measures to preserve and rehabilitate historic buildings. Historic preservation is a major element of Downtown's revitalization strategy, evidenced by the city's participation in the Iowa Main Street program.

### ■ IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE INTENSITY OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITY IN DOWNTOWN OSKALOOSA.

Downtowns are made of people and community life as surely as they are of buildings. Downtown Oskaloosa must be alive with people and activity. Some aspects of this life are physical - the district must provide an attractive and pleasant environment for its users; and should provide settings for events and programs. Other aspects are programmatic - providing attractions that attract people to the area.

Downtown has both significant assets and liabilities. It has two major public squares, the historic City Square and an indoor "public square" at Penn Central Mall. However, the traditional downtown and Mall are weakly connected and a



clash between the automobile scale of the Mall and the pedestrian scale of Downtown create confusing circulation patterns and difficult pedestrian access. In addition, the presence of heavy truck traffic on Market Street adversely affects the downtown commercial environment. Downtown can provide a public environment that can both accommodate auto access and be a pleasant and attractive place for people outside of their cars.

### ■ ENCOURAGE A VIEW OF DOWNTOWN AS PART OF A COMMUNITY SYSTEM OF RELATED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

A downtown strategy is part of an overall community development program of linked projects. In a critical way, Downtown, the Mall, and the A Avenue and Market Street corridors should be viewed as a large, linked central district that connects the heart of the city to its major peripheral approach routes. This strategy for Downtown, then, extends beyond the boundaries of a traditional Main Street district, to incorporate other major community development opportunities.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

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This section analyzes existing conditions in Downtown Oskaloosa, providing a basis for developing a downtown development program. This discussion considers the following features:

- Building and Land Use.
- Historic Characteristics.
- Transportation and Circulation.
- Parking Analysis.

### LAND AND BUILDING USE

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The Building Use Map illustrates the distribution of uses in Downtown Oskaloosa, while Table 6.1 tabulates building use in the Downtown district.. The traditional downtown district is a classical “town square” district, with major retailing uses oriented around City Square. Retailing uses continue west along High Avenue and 1st Avenue, which now terminate in Penn Central Mall’s east parking lots. Mahaska County Courthouse dominates the square’s east edge, while historic, mainly two-story buildings define the other edges. Civic uses are generally located around the edges of the core retail area. Thus, the library and City Hall are located on the south edge of downtown; and major church facilities are found around the northern and eastern edges, transitioning into surrounding residential areas. Penn Central Mall is developed on what were originally nine city blocks between A and D Streets and A and 2nd Avenues. Some contemporary commercial uses, including the Penn Central Theater, Fareway and Goodyear stores, are located across 2nd Avenue from the Mall.

### BUILDING USE PATTERNS

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The traditional downtown district, defined by A Street, 3rd Avenue, A Avenue and both sides of 2nd Street, includes about 870,000 square feet of space, about 55% of which is at street level. About 189,000 square feet is in commercial (retail, services, automotive, or entertainment/hospitality) uses. Penn Central Mall adds about 282,000 square feet. Of this, 187,400 square feet is in commercial or

common space; the balance is accounted for by the now vacant K-Mart store, some of which is in industrial use. This information leads to the following conclusions:

- *Downtown Oskaloosa has a relatively low vacancy rate.* While overall vacancy is about 14% of floor area, first floor vacancy in the district is currently only about 1%.. Upper level vacancy is estimated at about 29%, relatively low for comparable communities.

- *Downtown has a relatively high level of retail uses.* Retailing encompasses about 31.25% of first-floor space, or about 150,000 square feet in the traditional downtown. Including the Mall, the district has about 340,000 square feet of retail area. When other consumer commercial space is factored in, Downtown Oskaloosa has the retail space of a small regional shopping center.

- *The city center has a large amount of office space.* Downtown Oskaloosa has about 160,000 square feet of office space. About 80% of this office space is located at first floor level.

- *Entertainment uses are appropriately represented in Downtown Oskaloosa.* These uses (which include restaurants, bars, and other hospitality uses) represent about 2.8% of first floor building area, but about 10% of all commercial use. This is relatively consistent with the share of consumer spending for food and drink away from home.

### HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS

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Historically sympathetic reinvestment can be an important revitalization element in a Downtown program because of the availability of tax credits for certified projects. In addition to economic advantages, historic importance adds distinctive themes to a downtown development program. The town square district of Downtown Oskaloosa is judged eligible for listing on the National register of Historic Places. Table 7-2 displays an assessment of buildings within the traditional down-

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

**TABLE 6-1: BUILDING OCCUPANCY IN DOWNTOWN OSKALOOSA**

Use	First Floor		Upper Floors		Total	
	Area	%	Area	%	Area	%
<b>Building Use</b> (Excluding Penn Central Mall)						
Retail	149,500	31.25	4,800	1.23	154,300	17.73
Office	123,425	25.80	30,175	7.70	153,600	17.65
Services	21,650	4.53	7,600	1.94	29,250	3.36
Auto Sales/Service	4,600	0.96	0	0	4,600	0.53
Restaurants/Entertainment	13,425	2.81	7,800	1.99	21,225	2.44
Civic	117,975	24.66	70,200	17.92	188,175	21.62
Residential	20,225	4.23	122,650	31.31	142,875	16.42
Industrial/Wholesale	17,600	3.68	30,400	7.76	48,000	5.52
Vacant or Storage	5,200	1.09	113,350	28.93	118,500	13.62
Under Construction	4,800	1.00	4,800	1.23	9,600	1.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>478,400</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>391,775</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>870,175</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1998.

town district defined above. The district includes 112 buildings, of which 56, or 50% were considered to be worthy of individual National Register listings or strongly contributing to the character of a potential Register district. Of these, 25 structures, or 22%, are clearly worthy of individual National Register listing; another 31 buildings have major historic significance and may be eligible for individual nomination. Other buildings rated as having "background significance" received that rating because of unsympathetic but reversible alterations, including metal facades and similar modernization.

### TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

This section considers the operation of Downtown

Oskaloosa's regional and local transportation system.

#### REGIONAL ACCESS

The city of Oskaloosa is served by four principal inter-regional highway routes: Iowa Highway 163, linking Oskaloosa to the Des Moines metro area, north-south US Highway 63, east-west Iowa Highway 92, and Iowa Highway 23. Highways 63 and 92 form the Market Street and A Avenue intersection at the north entrance to the traditional city center. Highway 163 interchanges with A Avenue on the west edge of the city and Market Street on the south edge. Therefore, A Avenue from the west and Market Street from the south form dominant approach routes into the city center.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

TABLE 6-2: HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

Block	Location	Total Structures	Significance Rating			
			1	2	3	4
1	A Ave to alley north of A Ave.; "A" St. to Market St.	2	1	0	1	0
2	A Ave to alley north of A Ave; Market St. to First St.	3	2	0	0	1
3	A Ave to High Ave.; "A" St. to Market St.	11	3	3	3	2
4	A Ave to High Ave.; Market St. to First St.	16	3	5	3	5
5	A Ave to High Ave.; First St. to Second St.	10	1	4	4	1
6	A Ave to High Ave.; Second St. to Third St.	10	0	1	6	3
7	High Ave. to First Ave.; "A" St. to Market St.	12	3	4	4	1
8	High Ave. to First Ave.; Market St. to First St.	1	1	0	0	0
9	High Ave. to First Ave.; First St. to Second St.	7	1	2	2	2
10	High Ave. to First Ave.; Second St. to Third St.	6	2	0	1	3
11	First Ave. to Second Ave.; "A" St. to Market	3	0	2	0	1
12	First Ave. to Second Ave.; Market to First St.	13	3	4	5	1
13	First Ave. to Second Ave.; First to Second St.	6	0	3	2	1
14	First Ave. to Second Ave.; Second to Third St.	6	2	3	1	0
15	Second Ave. to alley south of Second Ave.; "A" St. to Market St.	3	2	0	0	1
16	Second Ave. to alley south of Second Ave.; Market St. to First St.	1	0	0	0	1
17	Second Ave. to alley south of Second Ave.; First St. to Second St.	2	1	0	0	1
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>112</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>24</b>

### Rating System:

- 1: Quality eligible for individual National Register district.
- 2: Contributing building to a National Register district.
- 3: Background building.
- 4: New, extensively modified, or not historic.

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1998.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### DISTRICT CIRCULATION

Downtown Oskaloosa is served by a grid of streets. This grid is interrupted by the Penn Central Mall “superblock,” which blocks or diverts local access between A Avenue, 3rd Avenue, Market Street, and D Street.

- *Arterial streets* serving the district include A Avenue (Iowa 92) on the north and Market Street (US 63) through the district. A Avenue is a four lane undivided section without left-turn lanes within a 66-foot right-of-way. Traffic volumes on A Avenue through the downtown were about 13,000 vehicles per day (vpd) in 1994, within the street’s design capacity. As discussed earlier, truck movements and friction between local and regional traffic affect the performance of this corridor.

Market Street provides a four-lane, undivided section with parallel parking on both sides through the central district. Traffic volumes along Market Street in the downtown area range from 8,000 to 9,000 vehicles per day, again within the design capacity of the street. However, truck traffic on the street reduces its operational quality and creates conflicts with the Downtown pedestrian environment.

- *The local street grid.* The downtown district provides a regular local street grid east of Market Street. However, Penn Central Mall interrupts this pattern, and channels traffic onto surrounding through streets -- A Avenue, 3rd Avenue, Market Street, and D Street. Redesign of 2nd Street with the K-Mart expansion to the Mall established an indirect flow on that street. Because of the distance between through streets, local traffic frequently uses parking and drive aisles within the Mall for through movements. This creates further traffic conflicts, and weakens the pedestrian connection between downtown and the Mall.

### PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

Each street in the traditional downtown district has continuous sidewalks. Streets around the



square are planted with Bradford pear street trees, many of which were seriously damaged during an ice storm in October, 1997. Corner nodes have been constructed at the High Avenue and 1st Avenue intersections with Market Street, reducing the crossing distance for the cross streets and protecting diagonal parking on those streets.

In common with vehicular circulation, pedestrian connections between the traditional downtown district and the Mall are relatively weak. The sidewalk along the north side of 1st Avenue leads to a pedestrian Mall entrance. However, High Avenue sidewalks terminate in the east parking lot and loading dock area. The sidewalk on the north side of 2nd Avenue similarly is terminated by parking areas and drive aisles. Finally, internal mall access is not permitted between the Hy-Vee store on the west side of the Mall and the balance of the center.

### CONCLUSIONS

This review of the Downtown Oskaloosa circulation system leads to the following conclusions:

- The major regional expressway route to Oskaloosa from Des Moines and Ottumwa bypasses the district with the completion of the Highway 163 expressway. This underscores the importance of A Avenue and Market Street as critical approach routes. This requires implementation of a well-planned directional information program, leading visitors from major entrances and route decision

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

points to the center of the downtown district. It also requires that the approach corridors be viewed as important design districts.

- Truck traffic on Market Street through Downtown hurts the area's attractiveness to pedestrians and local traffic.
- Local traffic circulation is seriously compromised by the Penn Central Mall superblock. Because of this, many people use the mall's parking lot and drive aisles for local traffic circulation.
- Pedestrian links between the town square district and the Mall are poorly defined.

## PARKING

As in any business district, adequacy is a key issue for Downtown Oskaloosa. Table 6.3 inventories the parking supply of Downtown Oskaloosa on a block-by-block basis. Excluding Mall parking, the district provides 937 parking spaces, of which 519 or 55% are located on street.

### PARKING ADEQUACY ANALYSIS

Table 7.4 analyzes the adequacy of parking for the traditional downtown district. This analysis is completed by:

- Establishing a target parking standard for various

**TABLE 6-3: PARKING SUPPLY IN DOWNTOWN OSKALOOSA**

Block	Location	On-Street Parking	Public Parking Lot	Private/Reserved Parking Lot
1	A Ave. to alley north of A Ave.; "A" St. to Market St.	8	0	0
2	A Ave. to alley north of A Ave.; Market St. to First St.	6	0	0
3	A Ave. to High Ave.; "A" St. to Market St.	16	51	0
4	A Ave. to High Ave.; Market St. to First St.	32	0	9
5	A Ave. to High Ave.; First St. to Second St.	43	0	14
6	A Ave. to High Ave.; Second St. to Third St.	40	0	20
7	High Ave. to First Ave.; "A" St. to Market St.	33	0	0
8	High Ave. to First Ave.; Market St. to First St.	57	0	0
9	High Ave. to First Ave.; First St. to Second St.	79	0	30
10	High Ave. to First Ave.; Second St. to Third St.	48	43	23
11	First Ave. to Second Ave.; "A" St. to Market St.	33	133	6
12	First Ave. to Second Ave.; Market St. to First St.	45	21	0
13	First Ave. to Second Ave.; First St. to Second St.	46	37	0
14	First Ave. to Second Ave.; Second St. to Third St.	43	0	0
15	Second Ave. to alley south of Second Ave.; "A" St. to Market St.	8	0	0
16	Second Ave. to alley south of Second Ave.; Market St. to First St.	11	0	0
17	Second Ave. to alley south of Second Ave.; First St. to Second St.	32	0	31
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>519</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>133</b>

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1998.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

uses in Downtown. Parking requirements in a downtown district are substantially less than those in auto-oriented strip or highway commercial development. Greater pedestrian access and the ability of one stall to serve multiple destinations contributes to this decrease. Overall parking requirements for uses are calculated by multiplying the parking standard by the total area of that use.

- This overall requirement is reduced by applying a mixed use factor, equal to 20% of the otherwise required parking for retail, office/civic, entertainment, and service uses. This reduction is appropriate because different uses in downtown generate peak demand at different times. For example, office and governmental uses require the most parking during normal office hours on Monday through Friday; restaurants generate major demand at noon and during evenings; and retail uses experience highest demand on weekends.

Based on this analysis, peak parking demand throughout the traditional district is 1,398 stalls, or about 461 stalls more than the existing supply. This shortage will not create serious problems during most times, but can create a parking deficit at peak periods. It is significantly less serious because of the availability of parking at the neighboring Mall. The substitution of vacancy and industrial use at the former K-Mart facility produces a surplus at the mall site of about 400 stalls.

## CONCLUSIONS

This analysis of parking resources in Downtown Oskaloosa indicates that:

- *Downtown experiences a moderate shortage of parking.* This shortage is equal to about 30% of peak demand. However, this shortage essentially disappears when surplus Mall parking is factored. While this does not present a severe problem during most

**TABLE 6-4: PARKING SUPPLY ANALYSIS, DOWNTOWN OSKALOOSA**

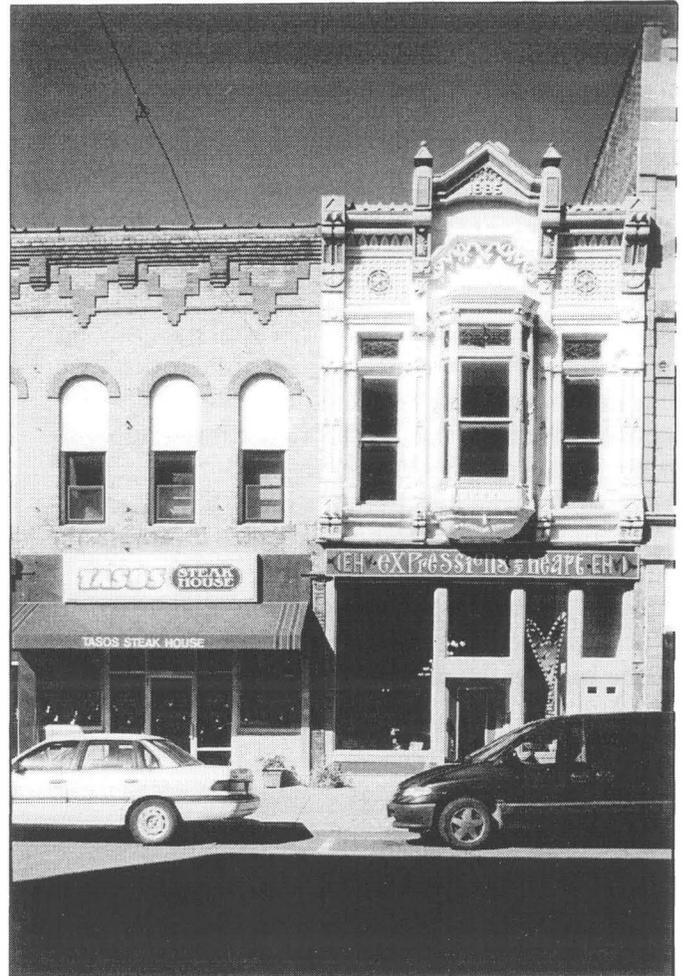
Use	Spaces/1,000 SF	Area (SF)	Parking Requirement
<b>Commercial*</b>	2.5	163,900	410
<b>Office</b>	2.5	159,600	399
<b>Civic</b>	2	188,175	376
<b>Services</b>	3	29,250	88
<b>Hospitality</b>	5	21,225	106
<b>Auto</b>	4	4,600	18
<b>Industrial</b>	1.5	42,000	63
<b>Residential</b>	1.5	142,875	214
<b>Existing Total</b>		<b>751,625</b>	<b>1,674</b>
<i>Surplus Supply</i>			
<b>Mixed Use Factors</b>			
Commercial	20% reduction		(82)
Offices and Civic	20% reduction		(155)
Hospitality	20% reduction		(21)
Services	20% reduction		(18)
<b>Mixed Use Adjustment</b>			<b>276</b>
<b>Projected Need</b>			<b>1,398</b>
<b>Existing Supply</b>			<b>937</b>
<i>Deficit</i>			<b>461</b>

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

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times, it can produce:

- Competition for primary parking spaces with most convenient access to district businesses.
- Periods of parking shortages during peak seasons.
- District parking policy must make most efficient use of available parking resources. These include:
  - In a competitive situation, reserving the most convenient parking in the district for customers.
  - Seeking opportunities for new parking development.
  - Assuring that new projects that increase parking demand also contribute to the district's overall parking inventory.



## THE DOWNTOWN OSKALOOSA PLAN

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**T**his section presents a program for the continued development of central Oskaloosa. While the centerpiece of the program addresses the public and development environment, the plan goes beyond capital projects to address a variety of aspects of the presentation of Oskaloosa's downtown district to customers.

### FUNDAMENTAL FINDINGS

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- *Downtown is the Oskaloosa market area's largest retail concentration.* The district (including Penn Central Mall) has about 350,000 square feet of retail and commercial space. This reinforces Oskaloosa's role as the market area's predominant commercial center. Maintaining this investment and status is a vital community priority.
- *Downtown's key strengths are its historic building stock, special character, human qualities, and the inclusion of a major regional mall within its boundaries.* A downtown strategy should build on this foundation of small-town, hometown quality, a counterpoint to the mass retailing of some competitive commercial areas in and outside of the city.
- *Downtown has strong first floor occupancy and diverse uses.* Upper levels of buildings are a major reservoir for development, but currently exhibit relatively low use. These upper levels are an economic drain on property owners if undeveloped.
- *Circulation and parking are significant challenges in*



*Downtown Oskaloosa.* Key regional access routes from the major regional freeway, Highway 163, are clear but need strengthening. The Mall, while a major asset for the district, has blocked easy vehicular and pedestrian circulation within and through the district.

- Oskaloosa is facing a window of opportunity as regional transportation and land use patterns begin to change. The replacement of the congested Highway 163 by a four-lane expressway facility makes it easier to get both to and out of Oskaloosa. In addition, the A Avenue/Highway 163 intersection could have an impact on the distribution of commercial land uses in the city. Downtown has an exciting, but limited, window of opportunity to position itself to take advantage of this improved regional access.

### TARGET MARKETS FOR DOWNTOWN OSKALOOSA

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The framing of a development strategy depends on defining three retail market segments:

*The primary market* includes people who live within a five mile radius of Downtown. These customers will generally shop in Oskaloosa if all other things are equal. Issues which speak to the needs of these local consumers include:

- The quality of local goods and services.
- The ability of the area to offer a reasonable varie-

## THE DOWNTOWN OSKALOOSA PLAN

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ty of businesses at competitive prices.

- Convenient operating hours.
- A shopping experience, including a physical environment, that is competitive with other shopping alternatives.

The secondary market adds people who live up to fifteen miles away from Oskaloosa. Two significant commercial centers, Pella to the northwest and Knoxville to the west, fall just outside this region. These customers have significant choices in the central Iowa area. Issues which speak to the demands of consumers in the secondary market include:

- The same issues of quality, pricing, variety, and service that are important to the primary market.
- Cooperative promotion and advertising. For shoppers seeking basic items from a greater distance, clustering of businesses, allowing people to accomplish more with a single trip, becomes a positive value. As a result, shopping center type marketing becomes a priority.
- The quality of the shopping experience, including an attractive environment and convenient access and parking.
- Special attractions, including specialty retailing and services.

The tertiary market adds people who live within a 60-mile radius of the city center. These shoppers have many choices, including the metropolitan Des Moines market. Instead, the tertiary market, with a significant number of high income households spending on discretionary items, have characteristics of a tourism market. Issues that are important to this potential market group include:

- Tourism or visitor promotion materials and activities, including special attractions.
- Specialty retailing and services
- A high quality physical environment and shopping experience, capitalizing on the affinity of shoppers for traditional communities.
- Convenient access and parking, along with effective “wayfinding” information, leading consumers to the destination.

- Focus on historic themes and interpretation.
- New non-retail market niches. Downtown Oskaloosa includes substantial buildings that lend themselves to upper level office and residential uses.

### COMPONENTS OF THE DOWNTOWN STRATEGY

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A comprehensive strategy for Downtown Oskaloosa includes six key components, designed to address the specific market targets just presented:

- ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE, considering the basic administrative and promotional structure for Downtown.
- OUTWARD-DIRECTED MARKETING, addressing marketing programs and focuses.
- RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF NICHE BUSINESSES, addressing the variety of businesses offered Downtown.
- THE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT, considering the quality of the district’s physical setting and the experience that it offers to customers.
- IMPROVED LOCAL CIRCULATION, addressing patterns of circulation and vehicle accommodation in the downtown district.
- PROJECT DEVELOPMENT, considering programs to capitalize on existing building resources and to develop new projects. These include related projects that are connected to, but are outside, the literal boundaries of Downtown Oskaloosa.

## ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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Downtowns in the twenty-first century must view themselves as shopping centers if they are to succeed as retail entities. Where business districts once saw themselves as geographic concentrations of individual businesses, now they must become unified and cooperative parts of a larger whole. The sidewalks of downtown are equivalent to the mall of a shopping center; events and promotions must be managed in concert, just as they are in a single regional center. The downtown must become the shopping destination as much as any individual business.

Given this philosophy, Oskaloosa brings major organizational resources to the table:

- Part of Downtown is a shopping mall and operates under centralized management. Increasingly, the traditional downtown and Penn Central Mall must be viewed as a unified shopping area, rather than two separate centers.
- The Oskaloosa Area Chamber and Development Group, created in 1996, incorporated the city's Main Street organization, Chamber of Commerce, and economic development corporation, under a single, action-oriented umbrella.

### BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

Downtown Oskaloosa should organize a district-wide management organization, under the overall umbrella of the Oskaloosa Area Chamber and Development Group, to administer major cooperative programs in the business district. The most important part of the organization's efforts will be marketing and promotional events. Some directions for the partnership include:

- *A Program of Activities and Events*, providing an ongoing series of attractions that bring people into the center.
- *Marketing and Management Programs*, developing and gaining wide distribution of advertising materials to add the district to Oskaloosa's list of significant visitor attractions.
- *Establishing Uniform Service Standards and Store Hours*, establishing a uniform service mission for Downtown, defining the district as an area in which customers can expect personalized, knowledgeable attention.
- *Business Recruitment*, defining business targets and actively recruiting individuals or businesses to fill these identified niches.

### UNIFIED SERVICE STANDARDS

Personalized, individual service is part of Downtown's competitive advantage. The district's businesses should formalize this ethos of service by developing a mission statement and unified service standards. It should work with constituent members to draft this statement, post it in each Downtown business, and present it to employees. These standards should communicate the dedication of businesses to providing a superior level of customer service and should be part of marketing and promotional materials.

The service standards should be backed up by uniform internal policies which deal with such issues as customer service, cross-referrals to other busi-

## ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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nesses, and reservation of the most convenient parking for customers.

### UNIFORM HOURS

In common with mall businesses, business owners in the town square should consider instituting uniform shopping hours designed for the convenience of customers. Since an increasing number of households are two-earner families, shopping during normal, Monday through Friday business hours has been in decline for a number of years. In addition, the ability to attract discretionary, "tourist" shoppers from longer distances requires significant weekend hours.

Maintaining expanded hours is particularly challenging in a downtown district, where many small businesses are owner operated. Business owners also want to be home with families during evenings and weekends. However, competitive businesses must maintain competitive hours, and be available when visitors come to town.

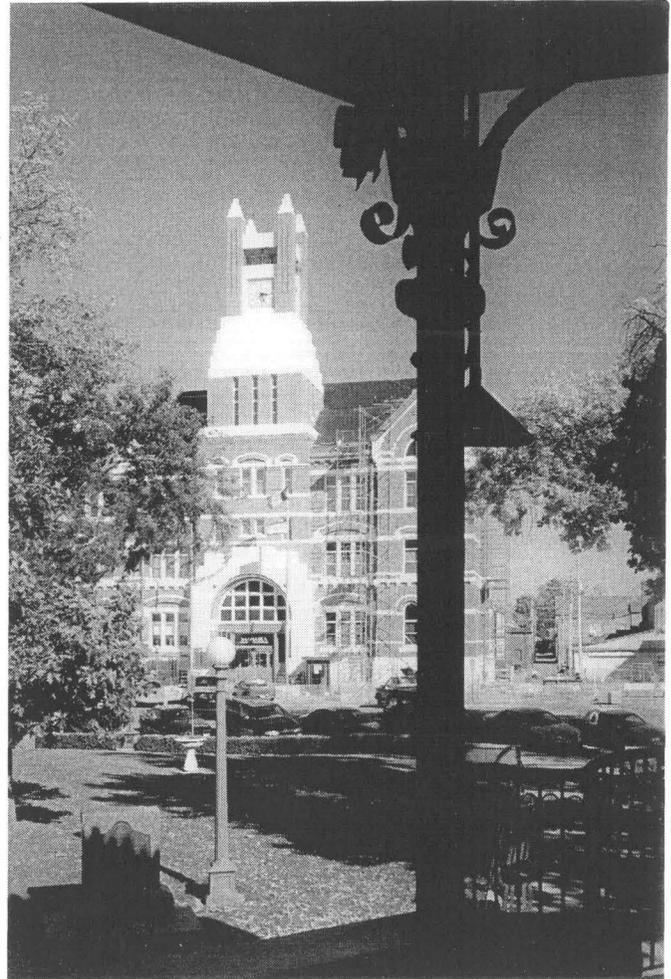
### PROMOTIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Downtown Oskaloosa should maintain a complete schedule of promotions and special events. Some events such as the Lighted Christmas Parade, have already attracted regional note. The City Square with its bandstand is an ideal base of a program of special events, designed to make shopping in Oskaloosa a distinctive and ultimately fun experience.

Directions for an events program include:

- *Implementing additional special events*, making Downtown Oskaloosa a regional attraction on weekends.
- *Advertising special events to metropolitan markets* with publicity event calendars and providing a promotional budget for media campaigns.
- *Expanding retail around special areas of concentration in the district* -- antiques, home furnishings, specialty stores, and restaurants.

- *Increasing events that make use of local talents*, such as art shows, concerts, and theatrical productions.



## OUTWARD-DIRECTED MARKETING

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The importance of secondary and tertiary market areas to Oskaloosa's traditional retail role in the region requires a continued emphasis on marketing outside of the city's limits. Actions which can guide such a marketing program follow.

### MARKETING PENETRATION

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MainStreet Oskaloosa should design and implement a continuing marketing campaign, directed toward people who live within a 15 to 60-mile radius of the downtown district. The goal of the program should be to increase the basic awareness of the district as a distinctive place and to promote special attractions. Elements of this campaign may include:

- Use of print media with specific appeal to the retail target market of discretionary, mobile consumers.
- Use of new technology, such as the Internet. a website could have significant appeal to an affluent retail constituency.
- Careful use of outdoor advertising, located in unobtrusive settings, to convey a message of quality and town character.
- Targeted contacts with special interests and populations -- senior bus tour organizers, railroad and historic interest groups, antique collectors, and arts groups.

### NICHE RETAILING AND SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS

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Oskaloosa should focus on the development of unique features and attractions that provide regional consumers with unusual experiences. These should enhance existing features and themes of the city, and include:

- *Agricultural heritage.*
- *Architectural distinction.*
- *Regional history and recreation.*
- *Antiques and specialty retailing.*

New businesses should serve the local market, while taking advantage of the presence of regional shoppers. Specific business focuses should include:

- *Restaurants.* Restaurants are a primary feature of specialty districts.
- *Specialty retailing.* Associated retailing includes art and crafts galleries, clothing, toys and children's goods, and other specialties.

Strategies for business development are discussed under the theme BUSINESS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

### DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

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A regionally-based marketing strategy should include clear and attractive directional information to the city center. This is especially important in Oskaloosa, where consumers must be led from peripheral interchanges on Highway 163. A strong environmental graphics program accomplishes two objectives:

- It reinforces awareness of the district to travelers through the area. While this may not divert these trips into downtown, it may help create a future visit.
- It provides clear direction to people who intend to visit Downtown, providing both useful information and a positive impression.

The city and downtown district should develop and implement a high quality directional graphics program, building on a Downtown logo. The program should intercept travelers at the two interchanges and route decision points. The wayfinding program should also mark and preserve major approach routes with attractive signs and banners.

In addition, the A Avenue and South Market Street corridors should be viewed as extensions of Downtown. Corridor improvement projects,

## OUTWARD-DIRECTED MARKETING

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such as those proposed by the Oskaloosa Gateway Plan, include street landscaping, graphics, and lighting. These can help strengthen both the aesthetic and business environment along these vital corridors.

Within the Downtown district itself, signs should lead visitors to major destinations, including parking facilities. The colors, themes, symbols, and typefaces used in the directional program should be consistent throughout the district.

### THEMING

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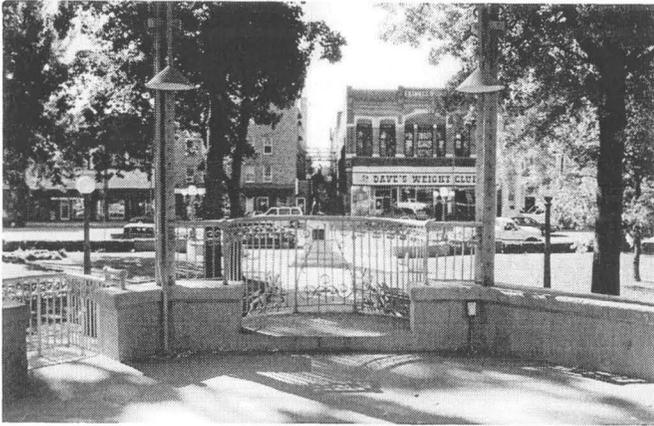
Downtown Oskaloosa should identify and market specific themes and images that grow out of the character of the district. This imagery should help frame other initiatives, including promotions, special events, graphics, and even the design of development projects. Based on the strengths and his-

tory of the district, probable themes include:

- *History and historic preservation*, capitalizing on the city's distinctive and unique building stock.
- *Railroad heritage*, making linkages to the proposed development area around the Rock Island depot.
- *Small town character*, capitalizing on the sense of community and civic scale that is lacking in the sprawl and homogeneity of decentralizing metropolitan areas.

## RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF NICHE BUSINESSES

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The key to continued economic development in Downtown Oskaloosa is the creation of an environment that sustains existing businesses and nurtures new enterprise. This is especially important to aid in the transition of businesses, as long-time business people age and retire. The life of the district goes beyond any one individual's business life. One of Oskaloosa's greatest assets is its diverse base of established businesses, many of which enjoy a regional customer base. As a district that includes both a shopping mall and a traditional downtown, Downtown Oskaloosa combines large national businesses with local and regional retailers. These two pillars are both essential to the success of the Downtown district. Therefore, business development strategies must address both retention and growth of existing businesses and the recruitment and development of businesses new to the area. Strategies that address these issues follow.

### GROWTH OF ESTABLISHED BUSINESS

Policies should be implemented which reinforce existing businesses and create conditions that encourage their continued competitiveness and prosperity. Specific actions include:

- Periodic visits by the downtown management group to understand the specific needs and conditions of established businesses.
- Establishing promotions that highlight clusters of traditional businesses, such as home furnishings,



clothing, jewelry and gifts, and other areas of specialization. These promotions should include salutes to long-standing businesses to recognize their long-term commitment to the city center.

- Improvement of the overall business environment, including the physical setting and ease of use by customers.

### BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

A second ingredient of an enterprise development strategy is the recruitment of new businesses. A recruitment strategy is analogous to the marketing efforts of shopping center management agencies at shopping center exhibitions and through direct marketing. A recruitment program should:

- Define specific recruitment targets, based on observed business gaps. Based on the three tiered market segmentation discussed in the market study section of this plan, business targets appropriate to Downtown Oskaloosa may include:
  - Eating places, including specialty restaurants and food stores.
  - Art and crafts galleries.
  - Gifts and jewelry.
  - Quality clothing stores.
  - Children's stores, including clothing, toys, and books.
  - Music stores.

## RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF NICHE BUSINESSES

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- Developing a fact sheet on potential markets in the Downtown district as a marketing piece for recruitment. The piece should include information on the progress and growth of business in the district. The fact sheet may grow to a newsletter format, circulated on a regular basis to regional businesses targeted for recruitment.
- Personally approaching recruitment targets through a partnership including the OACDG and local business participants.
- Completing development projects that will expand potential markets and create retail space for new businesses. Downtown's current low first-floor vacancy rate provides relatively little accommodation for businesses new to town.

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

An important value of downtown districts is their ability to incubate new retail businesses. Because many of their buildings are fully amortized and no longer service debt, downtowns often offer lower rents than more conventional, auto-oriented shopping centers.

A retail business incubation strategy can help diversify Downtown's business environment by creating a fertile ground for new enterprise. Elements of a business incubation program include:

- *A retail incubator space.* This would utilize an available, underused building as a multi-tenant development, providing a supportive environment for new businesses. This may be developed on a "festival marketplace" model. A portion of Penn Central Mall could be redeveloped or added to for this purpose. An ideal festival market location should have exterior exposure, enlivening the mall facades and helping to improve the linkage between downtown's two segmented centers.
- *A retail enterprise assistance program,* involving established downtown businesses in a program to advise and mentor new businesses. This is based on

the model of the Small Business Administration's Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) program.

- *A venture capital fund,* providing limited start-up capital assistance to new businesses which satisfy the district's business recruitment and development targets. Fund investments are injected as loans or equity investments, structured to allow the fund a proportionate share of future profits.
- *Use of pushcarts and street vendors.* These add color and interest to the streets while providing low-cost business opportunities to new entrepreneurs. The downtown management organization may own and lease the pushcarts to ensure uniform standards and prevent competition to established storefronts.
- *The RACI MainStreet Revolving Loan Fund.* This program provides low-interest financing for building improvements in the City Square Commercial Historic District. Loans up to \$5,000 may be used for property acquisition, building renovation and associated costs, furnishings and fixtures, and employment training costs. As such, the program encourages both new business starts and capital improvements. Funding for the program is from the Racing Association of Central Iowa.

## THE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT



Downtown Oskaloosa's sidewalk and streetscape environments and the interior mall of Penn Central Mall play the same role -- they make up the connecting fabric between businesses and are the public spaces where people move, see, and are seen. The district should see these public environments as connected and related, both needing continued rejuvenation, upgrading, and connectedness.

Downtown's most visible and important environmental resource is its incomparable City Square, a signature feature for the entire district. Downtown Oskaloosa has also done street landscaping around the square, along with corner node development at the intersections of High and 1st Avenues with Market Street. However, damage to street trees and the strategic need to reposition Downtown Oskaloosa as a regional shopping center make renewed investment in the quality of the

public environment an important priority. The components of this program follow.

### ATTRACTIVE, RENEWED STREETSCAPE

In 1998, Main Street Iowa and RDG Crose Gardner Shukert completed a document entitled Main Street Oskaloosa: Toward a Unified Central Retail District. This plan establishes a comprehensive streetscape renewal program, which the city should proceed to implement. The Main Street plan proposes the following streetscape concepts for Oskaloosa's traditional city square district:

#### • Basic Streetscape Design

The current streetscape design obscures storefronts and creates large, unprogrammed areas off the sidewalks. The new streetscape should include the following features:

## THE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT

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- *Concentration of landscaping along High Avenue, First Street and First Avenue at intersections.* Street trees along those streets opposite the square should ultimately be removed with the development of new sidewalks. The extensive green space provided by the square makes street landscaping on opposite streets less important. Intersection landscaping provides accents and sidewalk amenities that help extend the green across the surrounding streets. Street trees should be retained along Market Street, and are necessary to provide a separation between the high traffic of that regional arterial and the pedestrian domain of the sidewalk.

- *Corner nodes at the four intersections should be retained, but reconstructed at reduced size.* Corner nodes should be retained or developed at:

- All four corners of High Avenue and Market Street.
- The northwest, northeast, and southeast corners of First Avenue and Market Street.
- The northwest corner of High Avenue and First Street.
- The southwest corner of First Street and First Avenue.

Scaled back corner nodes provide additional on-street diagonal parking. The corner nodes should provide an accessible ramp and a contained landscaped area enclosed by an ornamental metal railing. Redesigned corner nodes should improve the drainage profile and eliminate existing drainage grates at the street curb lines.

- *New sidewalks should be installed in the traditional district, ultimately encompassing:*

- First Street and Market Street from A Avenue to 2nd Avenue.
- High Avenue and First Avenue from the Mall to 2nd Street.

Basic sidewalk paving should be concrete following a straightforward joint pattern. A brick pattern accent should be used at the base of street lighting fixtures. This pattern should be derived from an

ornamental accent pattern used in the square, providing a visual link between the street and the central green.

### • Street Lighting

Street lighting fixtures should be installed that reflect the lines and character of the globe lights in the square. A typical blockface will include six fixtures.

### • Defined Crossing Areas

Crosswalks and pedestrian areas in streets should be defined with a contrasting paving treatment. This contrast may be supplied by using concrete to contrast with asphalt paving. Additionally, a stamped concrete material may be used to strengthen contrast. On the eastern corners of the square, which lack corner nodes, this surface should be used to define a pedestrian crossing domain.

### • Entrance Features

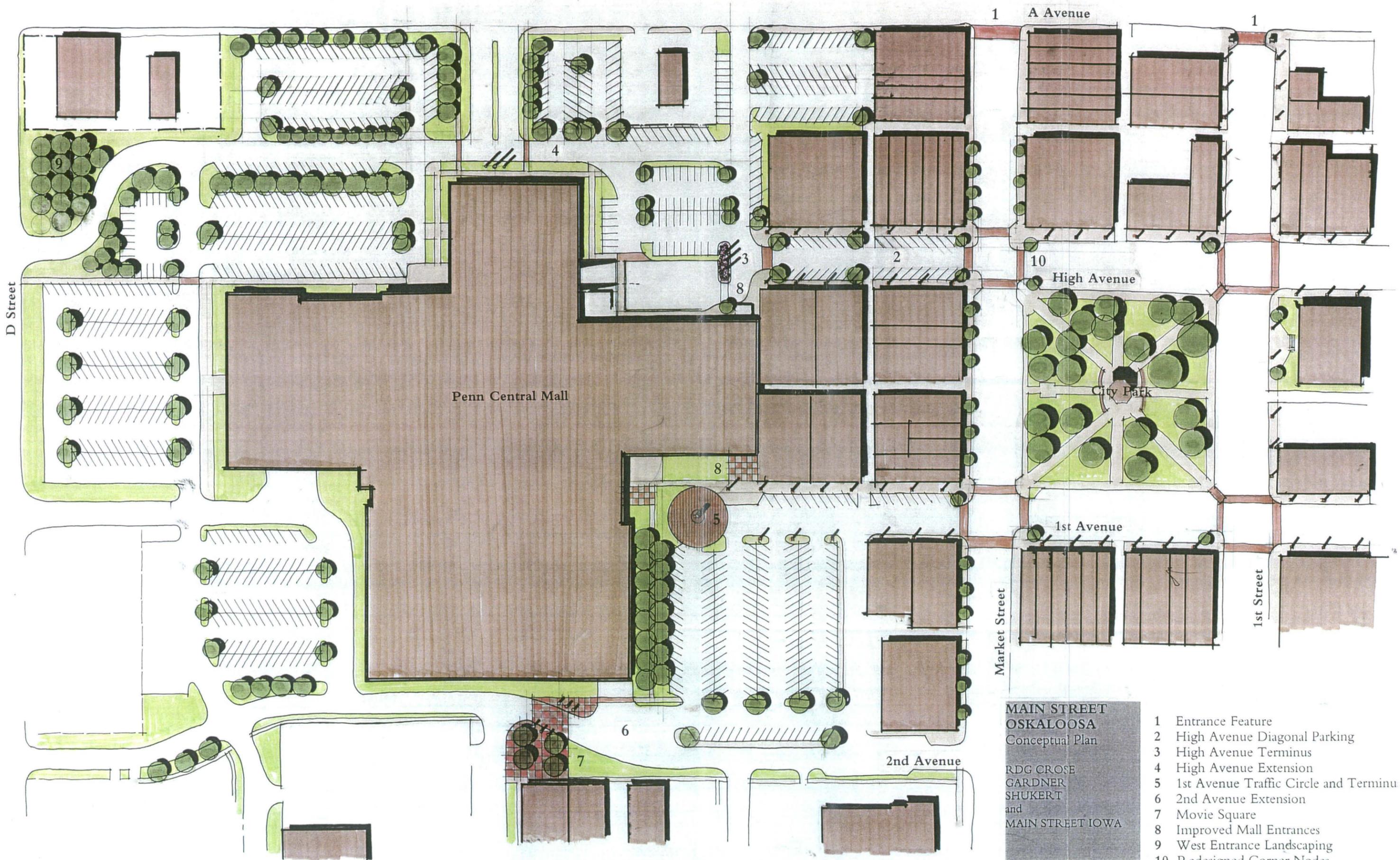
An entrance feature should be considered at the First and A Avenue and the Market and A Avenue entrances into the Downtown district. A node to accommodate the entrance feature should be provided at the First Street intersection.

### • High Avenue Parking

Sidewalks and street dimensions along High Avenue between Market Street and the Mall should be modified to accommodate diagonal parking on both sides of the street. This requires narrowing sidewalk width to between ten and twelve feet, along with reconstruction of curb lines.

### Individual Projects

Landscaping behind the sidewalk line should be provided at specific locations where buffering or softening of adjacent parking is required. An example is the parking area between the Water department Building and City Hall along 2nd Avenue.



**MAIN STREET  
OSKALOOSA**  
 Conceptual Plan  
 RDG CROSE  
 GARDNER  
 SHUKERT  
 and  
 MAIN STREET IOWA

- 1 Entrance Feature
- 2 High Avenue Diagonal Parking
- 3 High Avenue Terminus
- 4 High Avenue Extension
- 5 1st Avenue Traffic Circle and Terminus
- 6 2nd Avenue Extension
- 7 Movie Square
- 8 Improved Mall Entrances
- 9 West Entrance Landscaping
- 10 Redesigned Corner Nodes



## THE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT: RENEWED STREETScape



### ENTRANCE FEATURES.

Entrance features and graphics at major entrances to Downtown from A Avenue help mark the entrance to the district from the gateway corridor. A node may be extended on the west side of Market Street to protect neighboring buildings from turning truck traffic.



### CORNER NODE.

Corner nodes should be reconstructed and, at places, reduced in size. This reduced node at Market and High provides pedestrian safety and amenity, while resolving drainage problems and increasing parking. Nodes include a landscaped area defined by ornamental metalwork and street furniture. Landscaping along the street is concentrated at the nodes.



## THE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT: DOWNTOWN/MALL CONNECTIONS



**HIGH AVENUE.** High Avenue provides an opportunity for additional parking and improved linkages between Downtown and the Mall. The street concept includes diagonal parking on each side, along with moderately narrowed sidewalks. A vertical feature at the terminus of High Avenue marks the Mall's pedestrian entrance.



**FIRST AVENUE ENTRANCE AND TRAFFIC CIRCLE** A vertical feature, recalling the form of the bandstand, terminates First Avenue at the Mall and marks the south entrance to the shopping center's public space. Improved landscaping and lighting tie this entrance to the downtown streetscape. Removal of the fenced area east of the Musco building allows the continuation of a landscaped sidewalk south to 2nd Avenue.



## THE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT

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### CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOWN SQUARE AND THE MALL

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A Main Street Oskaloosa development plan should increase the unity between Downtown's two major shopping components -- Penn Central Mall and the traditional city square district. The plan recommends the following concepts to assure that these two major resources work together as a unified district.

#### • *Street Terminations*

High Avenue and First Avenue, two principal retail streets of the city square district, terminate unceremoniously at the Mall. Elements should be developed that appropriately terminate these streets, mark pedestrian entrances, and manage traffic flow:

- High Avenue currently terminates in the loading dock of the JC Penney store at the Mall. A landscape area with flagpoles or other vertical elements should terminate this street, screening the loading area and channelling traffic more effectively through the Mall.

- 1st Avenue terminates in the former outdoor goods area of the Mall's original K-Mart store, now serving as a manufacturing facility for Musco. A traffic circle and vertical feature, recalling some of the forms of the bandstand in the city square, is proposed.

#### • *Pedestrian Entrances and Circulation around the Mall*

Sidewalks on the north side of 1st Avenue and south side of High Avenue lead to pedestrian entrances to the Mall's common spaces. The plan calls for upgrading these entrances with improved lighting, landscape, and paving features. Currently, pedestrian access around the Mall building beyond those entrances is virtually non-existent. Appropriate steps include:

- Defining a path from the High Avenue entrance

along the north side of the Mall which then turns north in front of the loading docks and ramp. While a curbed sidewalk cannot be established here, a contrasting paving surface (such as stamped concrete) on grade can define a pedestrian zone. This treatment should extend to the sidewalk surrounding the JC Penney's store.

- Establishing a landscaped sidewalk beyond the 1st Avenue entrance and south along the Musco facility to 2nd Avenue. The empty fenced outdoor area should be removed and replaced by the sidewalk and landscaping.

#### • *Mall Facades*

Penn Central Mall is an attractive buildings that uses high quality materials. However, secondary delivery entrances to mall shops are relatively unattractive, but are highly visible. Appropriate actions include:

- Repainting delivery doors and replacing the current stencilled store names with names in an attractive typeface.
- Providing awnings over delivery entrances.

These minor improvements would vastly improve the image of the building along newly established pedestrian ways.

## IMPROVED LOCAL CIRCULATION

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The movement of people and goods to and through a consumer environment is an important element of shopping center planning. Policies and actions that address the key issues of parking and circulation in Downtown Oskaloosa follow.

### TRUCK TRAFFIC REROUTE

Unusually heavy truck traffic on Market Street has a highly negative effect on the Downtown shopping environment. The completion of Highway 163's south loop will remove some of these movements. However, completion of a north portion of this loop will complete the job, providing north-south access on US 63 that avoids downtown. The city should begin steps to place this project within the Iowa Department of Transportation's long-term plan.

### LOCAL CIRCULATION IN THE MALL AREA

Penn Central Mall's interruption of natural local traffic flow results in traffic using drive aisles and parking lots for what should be street circulation. This creates traffic hazards as through traffic negotiates blind corners and creates conflicts with pedestrians.

As a result, the traffic system around the mall should be redesigned. Components of this program include:

#### *• High Avenue Continuity*

Because of the superblock nature of the Mall, a substantial amount of local traffic cuts through the Mall's parking lots. The heaviest movements occur on the link between High Avenue east of the Mall and west of D Street. This route literally surrounds the building, creating blind corners and separating parking from major mall entrances. This separation, in turn, creates several conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

The Mall's circulation and parking design should be reconfigured by diverting traffic to the north at the east boundary of the Mall property. Traffic then turns westward along a new street, which curves back to High Avenue at the Mall's western edge. This new street should be designed like a continuation of a downtown street, with landscaping, pedestrian ways, and diagonal parking at some locations. This design permits the location of primary Mall parking adjacent to the building, a desirable configuration; it also increases the Mall's parking supply. A major landscaped area can be provided at the High Avenue and D Street entrance.

## THE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT: HIGH AVENUE CONNECTIONS



**HIGH AVENUE REAR FACADES.** The back facades of buildings on the north side of High Avenue present the first view of Downtown from major highway approaches. These facades and surrounding parking areas should be upgraded to connect the gateway corridor to Downtown. The adjacent alley serves dual uses for building service and pedestrians, linking parking to rear entries.



**HIGH AVENUE CONTINUITY.** The plan calls for reconfiguring the Mall's parking to define High Avenue as a continuous street through the parking areas. This realignment allows the Mall to relocate parking adjacent to its entrances and avoids the current separation of parking and entrances by a busy trafficway. Landscape features and lighting should tie the street back to its downtown context.



## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Downtown Oskaloosa has a superb collection of historic buildings, many of which present opportunities for expanded use. In addition, areas around the district have several major development opportunities which can create new business. Policies and project concepts which address the building fabric of downtown are presented in this section. It is important to note that some of the project's discussed in this section are concepts, intended to open possibilities.

### BUILDING RESTORATION AND REUSE

Historic buildings are one of Downtown Oskaloosa's most important resources, giving the area its unique character. Building preservation and restoration must be near the top of a list of important downtown development actions. This strategy becomes especially important when a consistent marketing theme for the district is regional and local heritage.

In addition, Oskaloosa's historic buildings are a vast reservoir of development potential. Currently, the downtown core has about 113,000 square feet of vacant or underused upper level space. If 50% of this space were developed and earning \$6 per square foot annually, an additional \$336,000 of annual revenues would be realized by downtown properties.

Components of a building restoration and reuse strategy for Downtown include:

- *Maintenance of Design Standards.* Design standards for the modification and rehabilitation of historically important buildings should be adopted. Standards should be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation.
- *Adoption of a Conservation Code.* Standards and codes for new construction do not apply literally to rehabilitation and adaptive reuse. New construction standards sometimes burden historic projects with high costs that are not necessary to preserve life safety, jeopardizing the feasibility of worthy projects. Consequently, the Uniform



Building Code and other model code organizations have developed conservation codes, which accommodate the special challenges of historically sympathetic rehabilitation. Oskaloosa should review and adopt such a conservation code as part of its building code.

- *Upper Floor Rehabilitation.* Adaptive reuse of upper floors, primarily for office and residential purposes, adds substantial development. Residential growth, in particular, adds a new role for the district as a residential neighborhood. An upper floor reuse program is dependent on sympathetic building codes, availability of financing, and support facilities such as parking.

### FINANCING FOR HISTORIC REHABILITATION AND ADAPTIVE REUSE

Project financing is a particular challenge because market rents in a downtown district are often inadequate to service debt and provide a return on investment. As a result, an incentive financing program should be implemented to encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse. The program may include:

- *A cooperative rehabilitation fund for storefront rehabilitation and sign improvements,* assembled by local financial institutions. The fund would provide loans at some level below prime rates for qualified property owners. All storefront rehabilitation funded under this program must comply with the

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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district's adopted design standards, or reverse the effects of early storefront "modernization." The RACI MainStreet Revolving Loan Fund meets a portion of this need. However, its loan ceiling of \$5,000 may be too low for some major restoration and rehabilitation projects.

• *Aggressive use of financing techniques that encourage adaptive reuse, including:*

- the Historic Tax Credit, providing a 20% tax credit on passive income for investors in historic rehabilitation of income-producing property. The credit is available to national Register-eligible districts or buildings.

- the Section 42 Low Income Housing Tax Credit. This provides a 4% or 9% investment tax credit to limited partnership investors in housing developments for low and moderate-income renters. This program is effective in raising equity for projects which produce upper-level housing in commercial buildings.

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) or HOME funds. These funds are administered by the Iowa Department of Economic Development. CDBG/HOME funds can provide "gap" financing, filling the gap between the amount of debt that a project can support and the development cost of the project. These funds can be structured as low interest loans, subordinated to the first mortgage; repayment of these loans is considered



to be program income and can be reused for other projects.

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF). TIF uses added (or incremental) tax revenues created by the added real property value of a redevelopment project to finance a portion of project-related costs.

### WESTSIDE VILLAGE

The Westside Village concept calls for the redevelopment of the industrial corridor generally along the Union Pacific between High Avenue and 6th Avenue. Most of this site is used for salvage or other industrial purposes. Any reuse is contingent on feasible environmental clean-up.

The concept includes:

• Development of an urban neighborhood between High and 3rd Avenues, designed around an urban square. The project provides for about 96 townhouse and apartment units. The project is linked back to Downtown along High Avenue and 2nd Avenue.

• Development of a neighborhood park between 3rd and 6th Avenues, providing accommodations for soccer and other active recreational uses. This part of the site is adjacent to the proposed Rock Island Bikeway, part of the Green Loop proposed in Chapter Five.

Development of a new in-city neighborhood

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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strengthens downtown by increasing the number of people living adjacent to the central district.

### ROCK ISLAND DEPOT

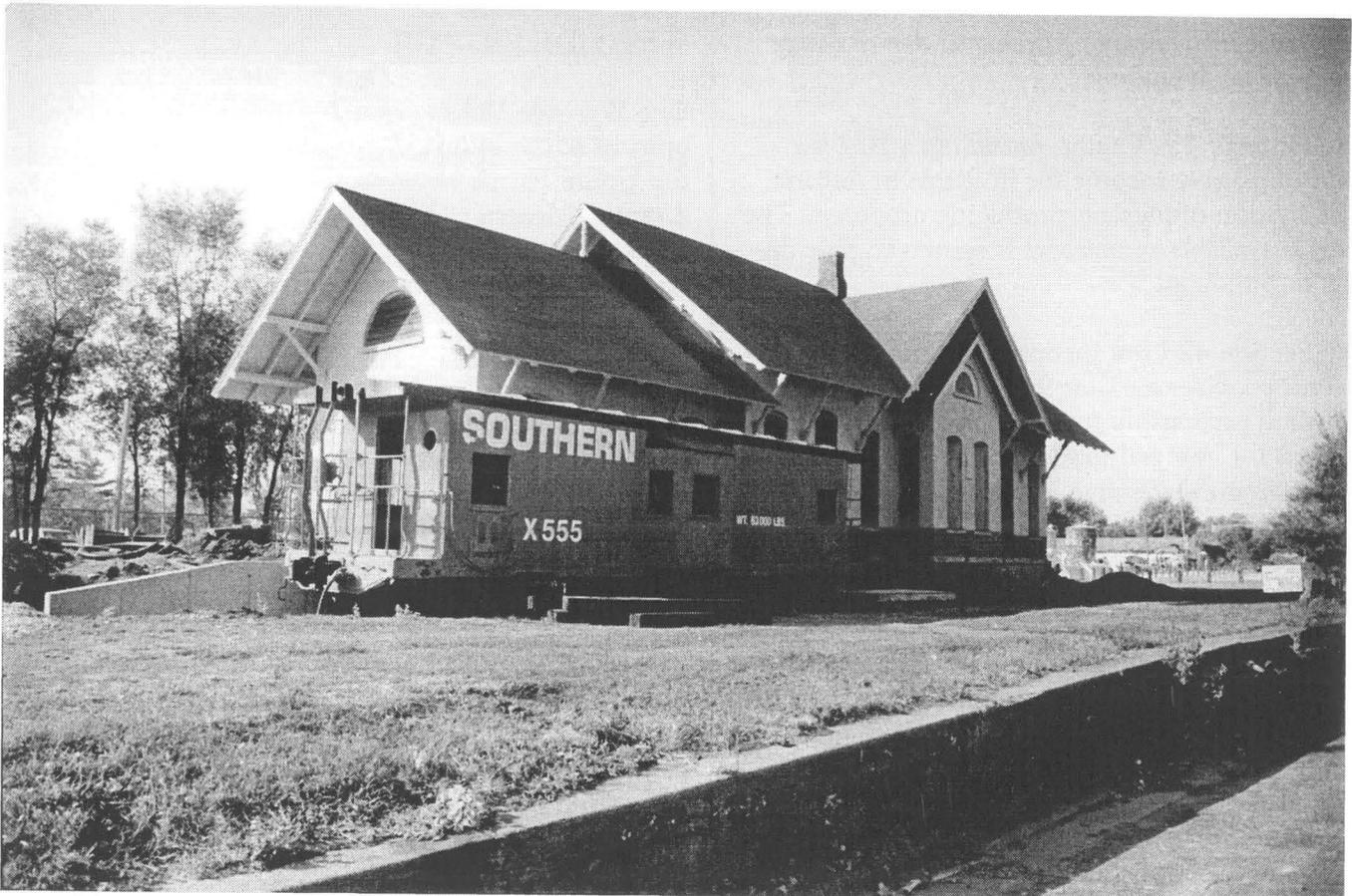
This project calls for the commercial or civic restoration of the historic Rock Island depot, between 1st and 2nd Street on Rock Island Avenue. Components of this project include:

- Restoration of the depot, and appropriate interpretive signage and information.
- Development of a public open space or mini-park around the depot and adjacent to the proposed Rock Island Bikeway.
- Strengthening of neighborhood retail development between the depot and South Market Street.

Small-scale commercial buildings in the depot area reinforce the attractive urban scale of this neighborhood. This includes a landscaped link to the street from the depot area.

- Corridor design upgrade along South Market Street to Downtown. This corridor improvement is included in short-range IDOT plans. The design should include elements consistent with those used in the center of Downtown.

The project provides an opportunity to extend the reach of Downtown into neighborhoods to the south. It also provides a connection between the Green Loop and a restored Downtown district.



# PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



*Left: Historic Rock Island Depot.  
Right: Surrounding local businesses.*



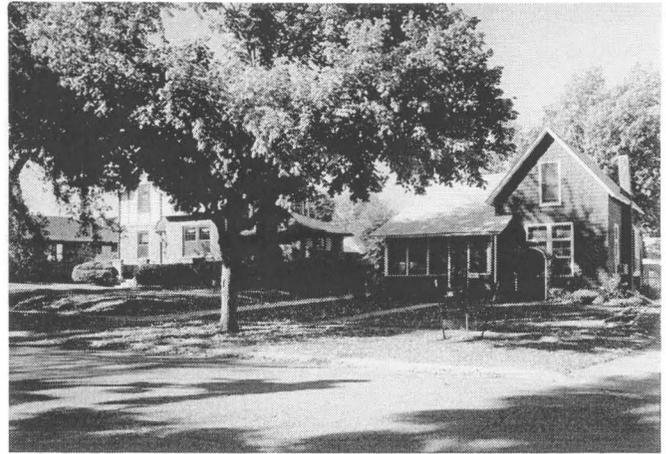
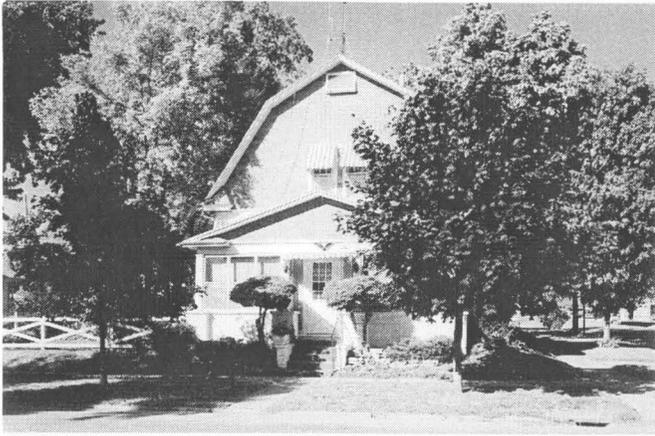
## ROCK ISLAND DEPOT

Restoration of the Rock Island Depot should include development of public open space around the structure and strengthening of neighboring commercial development linking the depot to South Market Street. This district may develop as a significant activity node along the planned greenway system.



# HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS:

## An Assessment of Housing Patterns



**O**SKALOOSA'S existing and future housing stock is critical to the city's future growth and development.

The city's housing supply represents its single largest cumulative capital investment. Housing policy has been recognized as a major city issue, leading to publication in 1996 of the *Mahaska County Housing Needs Assessment* by Mahaska Future View. This chapter considers housing and neighborhood conditions and establishes a program to improve housing and neighborhood quality.

This chapter examines issues in Oskaloosa's housing market and reviews housing conditions. Basic goals for neighborhood-based policies are presented in this section.

### GOALS

These goals begin with the assumption that Oskaloosa's neighborhoods have special, unique qualities that demand individualized actions to:

■ **CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT IN OSKALOOSA THAT OFFERS BETTER HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.**

The city's growth during the 1990s has placed pressure on the housing market, reducing the supply of vacancy units and limiting housing choices for many residents. Even with substantial new housing construction, the city struggles to meet the affordable housing needs of seniors, young families, and long-time residents seeking to better their own housing situations.

■ **BUILD AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH ALLOWS PEOPLE FROM ALL PARTS OF THE CITY TO PARTICIPATE IN ITS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.**

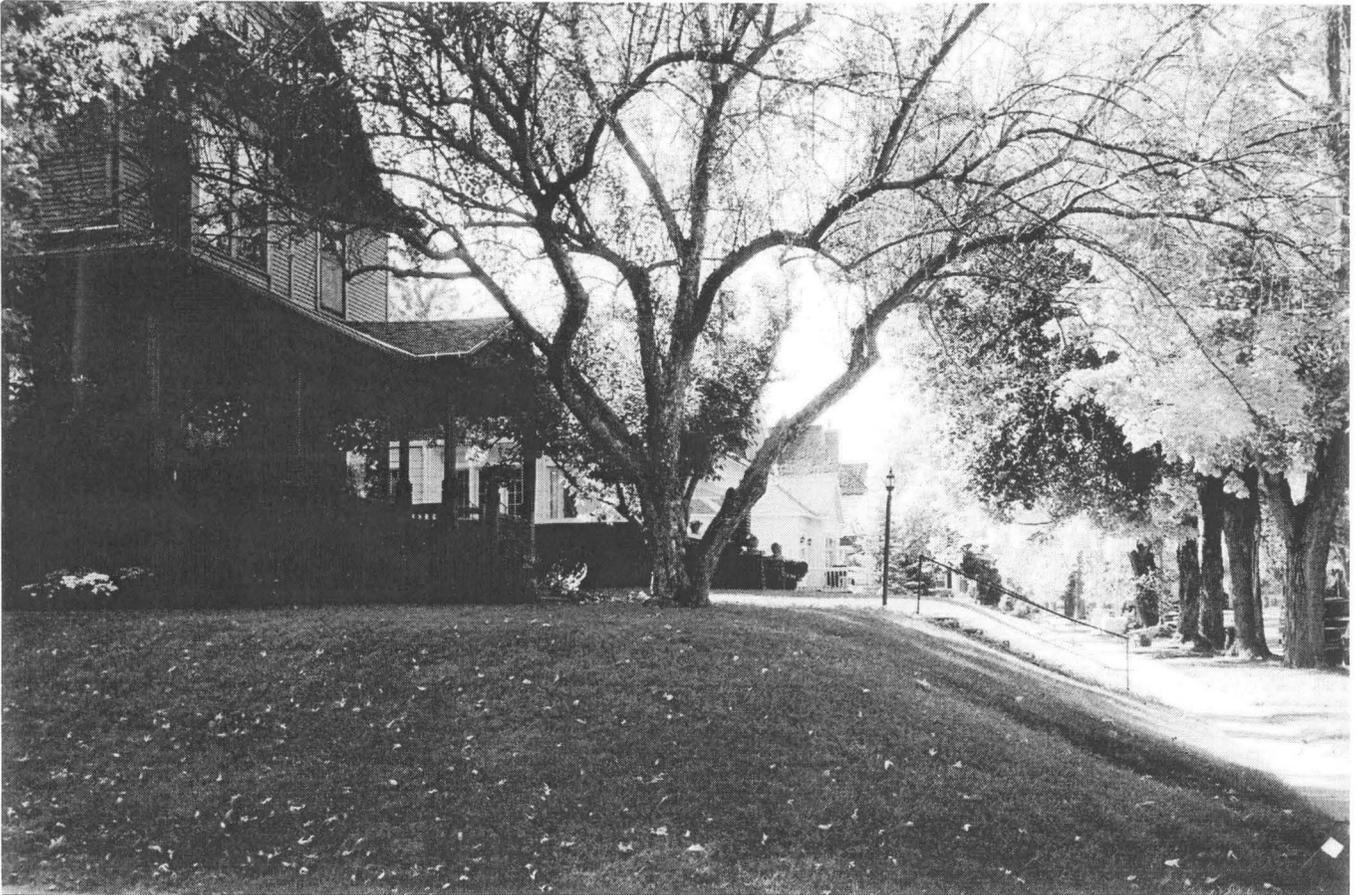
As programs are implemented which change or improve the physical form of the city, it is critical to keep in mind the process that must be present to get the job done. Planning and city improvement is as much about people participating in decision making as it is about physical improvements. Neighborhoods that are strong usually have a nucleus of residents who understand the importance of citizen participation in making communities work.

■ **CREATE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THAT WILL UNITE NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE CITY.**

Strengthening cooperation and involvement of residents throughout the city must include the

## GOALS

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creation of physical connections that develop subdivisions into neighborhoods of the city.

■ **ASSURE THAT EACH NEIGHBORHOOD PROVIDES A GOOD RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ITS RESIDENTS.**

A good residential neighborhood provides high quality schools, churches, day care facilities, parks, and cultural facilities to support the city's living environment. One of the most fundamental services a city can provide is to protect housing areas from major intrusions and hazards. Deteriorated streets, traffic problems, poor property maintenance, poor pedestrian circulation, and code violations can diminish the living quality that neighborhoods offer. These conditions interfere with resident's enjoyment of their own property, reduce property values, and make neighborhood rejuvenation more difficult. Thus,

neighborhood policies must accentuate the positive aspects of a neighborhood, and seek to reduce negative or deteriorating influences.

## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

This discussion will examine housing value and physical characteristics of Oskaloosa's housing stock.

### HOUSING OCCUPANCY AND TENURE

Table 7-1 compares changes in housing occupancy for Oskaloosa. Between 1980 and 1990, the city actually lost 139 housing units. The city's vacancy rate decreased slightly during that period, from about 6.7% in 1980 to 6.5% in 1990. Overall owner-occupancy dropped by 189 units during this economically difficult decade for the community.

Table 7-2 illustrates the composition of Oskaloosa's housing stock, as reported in the 1990 Census. About 74% of all housing units were in single-family structures.

### HOUSING VALUES AND RENTAL RATES

Housing values increased only moderately in Oskaloosa during the 1980s. In 1990, owner-occupied housing in the city exhibited a median value of \$36,700, an increase of only 13.6% during the decade of the 1980s. The city's median contract rent was also relatively low, but increased at a rate comparable to that of other cities between

1980 and 1990.

### CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY IN OSKALOOSA

Table 7-3 illustrates the city building permit activity since 1990. In the years immediately following the 1990 Census, 201 housing units were developed, including 131 conventional single family homes and 70 multi-family units. Single-family home construction occurred primarily in southern part of the city.

Five development projects have developed in Oskaloosa since 1990. These include:

- Golfview, in the southwest part of the city near Edmundson Park. Phase I includes 21 lots, with capacity for another 30 lots.
- Maple Woods, in far northeast Oskaloosa. Phase One provides 18 lots, with a capacity for 31 in later phases.
- FoxRun in southeast Oskaloosa, with 68 lots.
- Overview Plat II in southwest Oskaloosa, with 10 lots.
- Marje Addition in south-central Oskaloosa, a mixed use development with 19 single-family detached, 26 single-family attached lots, and multi-family sites.

**TABLE 7-1: CHANGES IN KEY HOUSING OCCUPANCY INDICATORS, 1980-1990**

	1980	1990	Change 1980-90	% Change 1980-90
Total Housing Units	4,777	4,638	-139	-2.91
Owner Occupied Units	3,011	2,822	-189	-6.28
% Owner Occupied	63.03	60.85	--	--
Renter Occupied Units	1,447	1,515	+68	+4.70
% Renter Occupied	32.45	32.66	--	--
Vacant Units	319	301	-18	-5.98
Vacancy Rate	6.68	6.49	--	--
Median Value	\$32,300	\$36,700	+\$4,400	+13.62
Median Contract Rent	\$152	\$221	+\$69	+45.39

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

**TABLE 7-2: COMPOSITION OF HOUSING STOCK BY BUILDING TYPE, 1980-1990**

Number of Units in Structure	All Units 1980	All Units 1990	Occupied Only 1990	Change 1980-90
1-Family Detached	3,497	3,421	3,266	-76
1-Family Attached/Other	43	24	24	-19
2-unit	313	257	222	-56
3-4 units	333	310	250	-23
Over 5 units	485	437	397	-48
Mobile Home Units	106	160	149	+54
Other		29	29	+29
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>4,777</b>	<b>4,638</b>	<b>4,337</b>	<b>-189</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

### HOUSING CONDITIONS

The *Mahaska County Housing Needs Assessment* included a house-by-house condition survey. A total of 3,749 units were surveyed, of which 1,295, or 34.54% were judged to be in very good or excellent condition. The largest group, 2,033 or 54.23%, was categorized in fair condition, while 421 units, or 11.23% were in marginal or deteriorated condition. Neighborhoods exhibiting the greatest need for rehabilitation were generally located west of Market Street and south of F Avenue. A significant part of this area is affected by the north-south Union Pacific corridor and associated industrial and salvage uses.

### HOUSING NEEDS

Mahaska FutureView's *Mahaska County Housing Needs Assessment* included an assessment of community housing needs, indicating the following short-term demands:

- The study projected a need for 690 housing units in Oskaloosa to the year 2000, based on a projected year 2000 population of 11,400. This is estimated to produce a total housing supply of 5,137 units by the year 2000.

- Of the total required housing supply, 1,687 (or 33%) should be rental units. Of these, 1,048 units

should accommodate low and moderate income households.

- Of the total required housing supply, 3,450 (or 67%) should be owner-occupied units. Of these, 1,048 units should accommodate low and moderate income households.

Housing demand projections presented in Chapter Three for long-term growth in Oskaloosa suggest a similar level of housing need. The comprehensive plan indicates a cumulative need for 2,021 units between 1990 and 2020, or an annual average of 67 units. Between 1990 and 1998, the city

**TABLE 7-3: HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, 1990-97**

Year	1-Family Units	Multi- Family Units*	Total Units
1998	21	88	109
1997	23	24	47
1996	30	4	34
1995	16	26	42
1994	20	16	36
1993	26	28	54
1992	27	0	27
1991	22	0	22
1990	20	0	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>411</b>

Source: City of Oskaloosa

## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

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has produced a net gain of about 350 units, in contrast to a demand for about 527 units. This suggests a deficit of about 177 units between 1990 and 1998. This deficit reflects the very low vacancy rate of habitable housing experienced in the city. This deficit, combined with projected demand between 1999 and 2010 indicates that Oskaloosa has a demand for about 950 new and replacement housing units to the year 2010.

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

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In order to address housing and neighborhood development issues, Oskaloosa has implemented the following programs:

- *Oskaloosa Municipal Housing Agency.* OMHA administers 100 Section 8 Existing Housing Certificates, 66 Section 8 Existing Housing Vouchers, and has a program management agreement on the 30-unit Section 8 New Construction Inglenook development.
- *West Side Revitalization Area.* The first MFV housing assessment in 1990 resulted in a neighborhood revitalization effort targeted to parts of the west side. This project resulted in 20 rehabilitated units and the new construction of 11 single-family houses and 2 duplexes, replacing 16 dilapidated houses in the area.
- *Tax Abatement and Tax Increment Financing.* The City implemented a citywide residential tax abatement program in March, 1991. In 1996, tax increment financing was used to finance public improvements associated with the FoxRun development. These improvements included sanitary sewer extension and improvement of South 11th Street along the development.
- *Oskaloosa LHAP No-Interest Loan Program.* This program provides subordinated no-interest loans with a ten-year term for up to \$3,500, targeted toward moderate-income first time buyers of new or existing housing in the city. Loan proceeds may be used for downpayments or payment of closing costs.

- *Demolition Assistance Program.* This program provides up to \$4,000 in forgivable loans to assist owners with the demolition of dilapidated structures. The loan is forgivable if the owner makes replacement improvements at least equal in value to that of the demolished building.

### SUMMARY

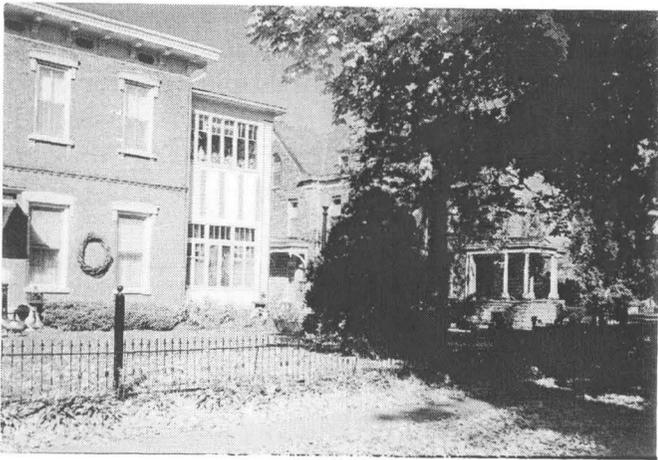
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An analysis of Oskaloosa's housing characteristics reveals that:

- Between 1980 and 1990, the city lost 189 units from its housing supply. Oskaloosa's home ownership rate remained relatively constant, above the 60% mark.
- Over 70% of all housing units are in single-family structures.
- The city's vacancy rate decreased slightly between 1980 and 1990
- Oskaloosa's housing values increased relatively slowly during the 1980s, although this trend may have changed.
- Since 1990, about 201 housing units were built including 131 single family and 70 multi-family units.
- About 2/3 of the single family supply of housing is in fair or poor condition. These problems are concentrated in the city's pre-World War II housing stock, and exist mainly in neighborhoods in the western half of the city.

## HOUSING POLICIES FOR OSKALOOSA

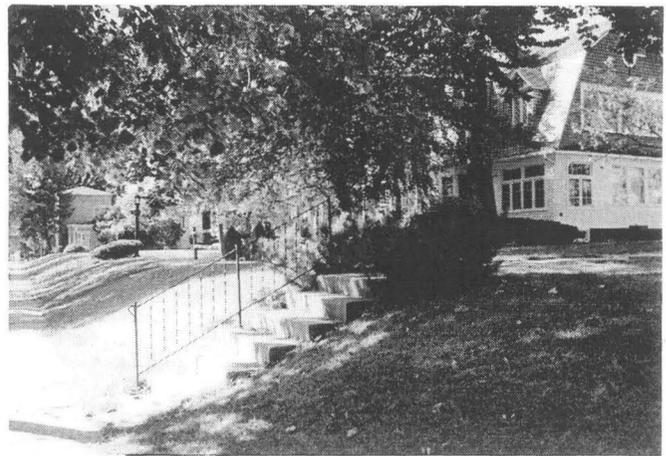
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**L**and use policies, including provision of adequate land and supporting public facilities for residential development, are important components of a housing policy. This section considers additional issues for Oskaloosa's housing market.

The city's primary housing challenges include:

- A increasing shortfall of available housing to meet growth demands, resulting in limited choice and a relative inability to meet the needs of new residents.
- Conservation of the city's existing housing supply.
- Development of moderately-priced housing,



Policies which address these issues include:

- **A HOUSING PARTNERSHIP**
- **PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT FINANCING**
- **SENIOR LIVING**
- **NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION**

## HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

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### **OSKALOOSA SHOULD CONSIDER THE CREATION OF A HOUSING PARTNERSHIP, ORGANIZED TO DEVELOP AFFORDABLE HOUSING WITHIN GROWTH AREAS.**

Oskaloosa should consider the creation of a Housing Partnership, a lenders consortium oriented toward the development of affordable single- and multi-family housing on sites integrated within growth areas.

The partnership has two basic roles to play in housing development:

- It should provide short-term financing for development of affordable single-family housing; and more flexible financing for specific project types such as downtown housing conversions.
- It should act as a financier of developments of Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO's).

### THE PARTNERSHIP AS A FINANCIER OF PRIVATE AFFORDABLE DEVELOPMENTS

In its capacity as a catalyst for private development, the partnership should:

- Develop a second mortgage loan program to provide reductions in principal to qualified home buyers. Under this program, loan funds from

sources such as CDBG are blended with private loans to produce reduced effective interest rates or decreased borrowing requirements.

- Help spread the risk of financing specific development projects that respond to market requirements and community development objectives, but are perceived as risky developments. Downtown housing development may fall within this category of projects. The Partnership may also be a lender of Tax Increment Financing funds for rehabilitation or affordable multi-family developments using TIF for acquisition or development.

- Utilize existing external programs, such as the Federal Home Loan Bank affordable housing program, special subsidy programs of the Iowa Finance Authority, state CDBG funds, or the Community Investment Program of the Federal National Mortgage Administration. These programs provide low-interest loans for first-time home buyers; second deferred payment mortgages to lower housing payments; and relaxation of downpayment requirements for mortgage loans purchased by the Federal National Mortgage Association.

- Capitalize a construction financing pool with loaned funds from local lenders and businesses. Pool provides revolving front-end financing for builders and developers at lower than market interest rates. After a specified period, funds are returned to original contributors.

These programs are designed to lower the cost of monthly payments to home buyers, ultimately making housing more affordable to moderate income people.

### THE PARTNERSHIP AS A PARTNER WITH CHDO'S

The Partnership may act as a partner with a CHDO in major development projects by:

- Helping to organize low-income tax credits to create limited partnerships to inject equity into

## HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

rental housing development.

- Provide low-interest, blended second mortgage financing through state-administered HOME program. Second mortgages should put city or redevelopment authority in an equity position.

- Arranging debt financing to match other sources and administer project development.

### CREATION OF A COMMUNITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

The housing partnership concept should include creation of a Community Housing Development Corporation (CHDO) or Community Development Corporation (CDC) to leverage private resources toward the development of affordable housing. CHDO's may work in concert with private equity partners and the city toward the development of affordable housing. Key approaches should include development of low and moderate-income rental housing using the Section 42 tax credit program, and development of affordable single-family housing. Rental housing should be designed to have a single-family appearance, using an attached or rowhouse design configuration. These units may transition to home ownership following use of tax credits.



## PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT FINANCING

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### OSKALOOSA SHOULD WORK TO REDUCE THE COST OF LAND ACQUISITION AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT BORNE BY HOUSING UNITS IN AFFORDABLE DEVELOPMENT.

Oskaloosa should use tools to provide financing assistance for public improvements such as sewer extensions, intersections, major streets, and other necessary facilities. The cost of providing infrastructure and site improvements typically accounts for \$10,000 to \$15,000 of a house's cost. Financing tools can help to lower this initial cost to a buyer, or lessen the initial financing burden to a developer.

Potential financing tools include:

- *Tax Increment Financing.* Within a TIF district, the tax basis of a site is frozen at pre-development levels. The added taxes created by development are then used to repay publicly-issued revenue bonds that financed public improvements. Thus, the future taxes created by a residential development pay for improvements, allowing a pass-through of the savings directly to homeowners or indirectly to renters.
- *Direct Public Financing.* The Iowa Local Housing Assistance Program (LHAP) provides competitive grants to complete subdivision developments. This recent program is most applicable to affordable housing development.
- *Shared Risk/ Front-End Financing.* A shared risk approach is most appropriate for situations that do not require a subsidy, but do need risk-cushioning for the developer. When this is not feasible in subsidized projects, improvements may be publicly funded.

With this technique, the city finances infrastructure through the sale of bonds or the use of appropriated public funds. The city is then repaid by a specific charge for each lot, paid at the time of issuance of a building permit. The device shares the risk of development by lessening the initial risk of

financing for the private developer. Yet, it provides a payback to the city. The tool is particularly effective in Oskaloosa's potentially high demand housing market.

A variation of this technique involves the use of Real Estate Investment Districts (REID), a new development financing tool recently established in Iowa. REID's can issue bonds for public improvements, which are then retired by special assessments on property in the districts. The REID technique avoids placing a direct, general obligation risk on the city, while permitting the developer a means of providing public financing for improvements.

- *Public Funding.* In some situations, direct public financing of infrastructure and improvements will be required or desirable. This device will be necessary in projects that require significant subsidy, but in which the use of TIF is either unacceptable or unfeasible; or when the benefit of a public improvement flows to the general community rather than to a specific development.

Public funding tools include general obligation bonds or appropriations of general funds; Community Development Block Grants, targeted to benefit projects that have a direct benefit to low and moderate income families; and the use of various state grant programs.

- *Private Financing.* Private financing will continue to be a staple of infrastructure development in Oskaloosa. The economics of private development and city policies will help to assure that projects require relatively short, incremental extensions of sewers, streets, and utility services. This, in turn, will help produce a compact development pattern and long-term economies to the city as it provides public services.

## SENIOR LIVING

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### **OSKALOOSA SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE CONSTRUCTION OF INDEPENDENT LIVING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SENIORS.**

Oskaloosa, as a regional center, provides a superior environment for senior citizens. In 1996, about 16% of the city's residents were over the age of 65. The city's amenities, such as the hospital, commercial services, environment, and community resources attract retirement age residents from the surrounding region. This increases the demand for housing, which is already pronounced among young family households and low-income households. The city should encourage more new market-rate senior housing developments, within the constraints of the market.

Senior housing environments can also provide alternative accommodations for seniors to single-family houses, including a continuum of services from independent to assisted living. Senior housing also indirectly provides affordable housing by freeing up existing housing resources. The city should continue to encourage private development of senior housing, consistent with market demands. It should provide regulatory flexibility to promote the development of such facilities such as continuing care retirement centers, which incorporate a continuum of care.

## NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION

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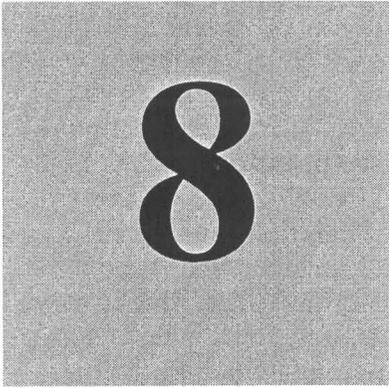
### **OSKALOOSA SHOULD CONTINUE ITS NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AND INSTITUTE AN EFFORT TO REHABILITATE HOUSES IN NEED OF REPAIR.**

The preservation of existing neighborhoods and housing stock become especially important when housing shortages exist. Most of Oskaloosa's affordable housing stock is already in place. Indeed, its rehabilitation or preventive maintenance is the city's most cost-effective way of assuring a continued supply of good housing. The city should institute measures to repair its large number of existing housing units in poor and fair condition and continue its past successful efforts at housing rehabilitation.

Oskaloosa should continue zoning and land use policies which protect the integrity of its neighborhoods. In addition, it should develop rehabilitation programs (including the use of private loans leveraged by CDBG or HOME funds) to promote the rehabilitation of the portion of its housing stock that is in need of significant rehabilitation. These programs should emphasize the leveraging of private funds to extend the use of scarce public resources.

In some cases, a neighborhood conservation strategy includes the redevelopment and construction of new housing where reinvestment in existing development is unfeasible. The Westside Village concept is an example of significant redevelopment which can address housing conservation issues. In addition, such a project adds value to surrounding residential areas, indirectly increasing investment in them. Appropriate policies at this site and other available sites throughout the city may include:

- Gradual acquisition and landbanking of deteriorated houses as they become available.
- Packaging of sites into significantly sized redevelopment parcels.
- Development through the Housing Partnership of new, moderate-income housing forms, including expandable small houses on standard-sized lots, providing room for growth over time; single-family attached development; and townhouses.
- Support with complementary amenities, such as beautification of the railroad corridor.
- Continuation of the Demolition Assistance Program.



# A RENEWED ECONOMY:

## Development Strategies for the Next Century



**O**skaloosa enters its next five-year planning period with a renewed economic development organization and a newly focused group of development priorities. The Oskaloosa Area Chamber and Development Group combines the city's major economic development functions under one strong organization. As such, the community is in the process of developing a coordinated economic development strategy. This section is designed to address directions for that program.

### EXISTING EMPLOYMENT

At present, Oskaloosa employs near full-employment from a statistical perspective. Mahaska County's unemployment rate averaged 3.7% during 1996. The largest segment of county residents are employed in service industries (28.0%), followed by retail trade (23.0%), manufacturing (15.5%), and government (15.0%). Manufacturing jobs in the county have risen slightly since 1996, but dropped as a percentage of total employment. Despite its low unemployment rate, wages in Mahaska County falls somewhat below Iowa averages in most wage categories. Average hourly wages in Mahaska County are \$8.32, generally lower than surrounding counties.



Oskaloosa residents gain employment from industries in the city and around the region. Pella Corporation and Vermeer Manufacturing in Marion County remain significant employment forces. In addition, Monroe County's Eddyville Industrial Complex, located nine miles south of the city, is another large employment center with an emphasis on agricultural industry.

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

During 1996 and 1997, the city has established a foundation for future economic development programming by completing the following actions:

- Organization of the Oskaloosa Area Chamber and Development Group (OACDG). OACDG represents a consolidation of several previous development organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce, Mahaska Development Corporation, Mahaska FutureView, and Main Street. The city has increased its financial commitment to this unified economic development group.
- Completion of the Mahaska County Target Industry Analysis. This document, completed in October, 1996 by the Institute for Decision Making of the University of Northern Iowa, matches industrial classifications to the features and profiles of Oskaloosa and Mahaska County in order to define those industries most likely to locate in the

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS

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area. The study also presents an overall economic development strategy to guide OACDG policy.

- Preparation of the Oskaloosa Retail Market Analysis. OACDG retained Marketech, Inc. of Atlanta, Georgia to complete a retail assessment and strategy plan to guide commercial and downtown development strategies. This study was completed during 1997.
- The Oskaloosa Comprehensive Plan. This comprehensive plan includes a commercial development programs which incorporate the findings of other recent studies into an overall program of city policy.

### POLICY DIRECTIONS

The Target Industry Analysis will provide an important guide for OACDG policy during the plan-

ning period. Major recommendations of this study include:

- Placing highest priority on taking care of existing business and industry. This strategy includes conducting an annual business visitation program and recognizing the efforts of local industry through special events.
- Implementing a focused recruitment program toward industries whose characteristics match those of the Oskaloosa area. Industrial targets for recruitment identified in the analysis include:
  - Food Preparations
  - Paperboard Containers and Boxes
  - Miscellaneous Fabricated Metal Products
  - Computer Peripheral Equipment
  - Radio and TV Communications Equipment

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS

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- Characteristics of this program should include:
  - Extensive communications with existing industries to allay fears of competition for the labor pool.
  - Focus on smaller companies and divisions of larger corporations, rather than attempts to attract large employers.
  - Long-term, consistent marketing efforts.
  - Direction of a marketing initiative toward residents and OACDG members to prevent unreasonable expectations and maintain an inclusive process.
  - Scaling of the marketing program toward available staff and volunteer resources.
- Development of a speculative building with an available floor area of about 20,000 square feet in one of Oskaloosa's industrial parks.
- Initiation of a business start-up program, using existing services available through the Small Business Development Center and the Entrepreneurial Centers of Drake University or the University of Iowa. Primary start-up targets include:
  - Wood Products
  - Commercial printing
  - Miscellaneous Plastics
  - Dies, Tools, and Machine Tool Accessories
  - Business Services
- Development of a regional approach to economic development, creating partnerships with regional communities such as Pella.
- Increasing the physical visibility of OACDG.

Other policy directions for the five-year planning period include:

- Initiation of a significant downtown revitalization effort, based on recommendations of the retail

development study and the comprehensive plan. The downtown development plan should address the improvement of the business environment and marketing programs of Downtown, Penn Central Mall, and the A Avenue commercial corridor to the Highway 163/92 interchange.

- Implementation of development strategies for Oskaloosa's more automobile-oriented commercial districts, including the Highway 92/163 interchange and the Heartland Shopping Center area.
- Formation of strong partnerships with the local school systems, William Penn College, and the community college emphasizing business technical assistance and skill training.
- Development of a comprehensive tourism development strategy, including an emphasis on local and regional attractions, expansion of the city's role as a regional destination, and expansion of tourism support services. Regionalism is a fundamental part of this strategy, encouraging cooperation with area communities such as Pella and Knoxville to attract and retain multi-day visitors to the area.
- Support for development of regional recreation facilities such as the Mahaska Heritage Trail along the Des Moines River, and linkage of these facilities to Oskaloosa and its support facilities.
- Through land use and development policies, development of industrial and business park sites which take full advantage of the new transportation access provided by the four-lane Highway 163. The proposed land use plan calls for expanded industrial and business park development in the following locations:
  - Expanded industrial development in the old Highway 63 corridor in the southeastern part of the city.
  - Development of a quality business park in the southeastern part of the city, between FoxRun

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS

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and the current Highway 63 industrial corridor.

- Mixed use business park development near the Highway 92/163 interchange on the west side of the city.

- Relocation and redevelopment of obsolete industrial areas in the Central Oskaloosa Redevelopment Area between High and 6th Avenues from D to H Streets.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS

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## ABOUT THIS PLAN

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Project manager and principal author of the Oskaloosa Plan was Martin H. Shukert, AICP. Other contributors included Douglas Bisson, AICP and Gayatri Anoo. Report design was by Martin H. Shukert and photography was by Mark Stursma and Martin H. Shukert. Illustrative sketches were prepared by Travis Rice and Map graphics were developed by Nate Bettini. Photo processing was by PhotoGraphics, Omaha, Nebraska. Printing was by Frog's Copy and Graphics, Omaha, Nebraska.

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