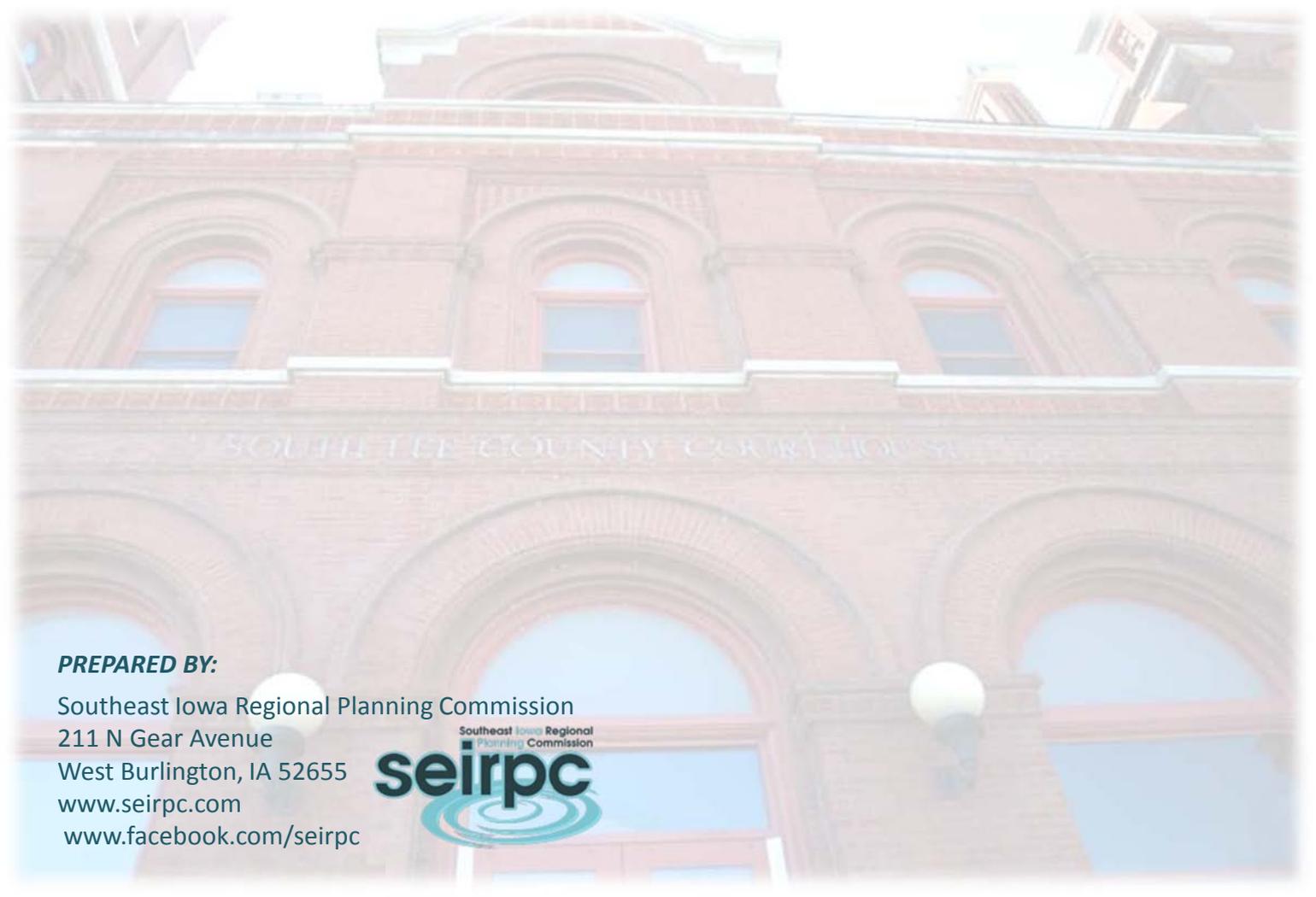


Lee County 2032 General Plan

Final Draft 6.14.2012



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

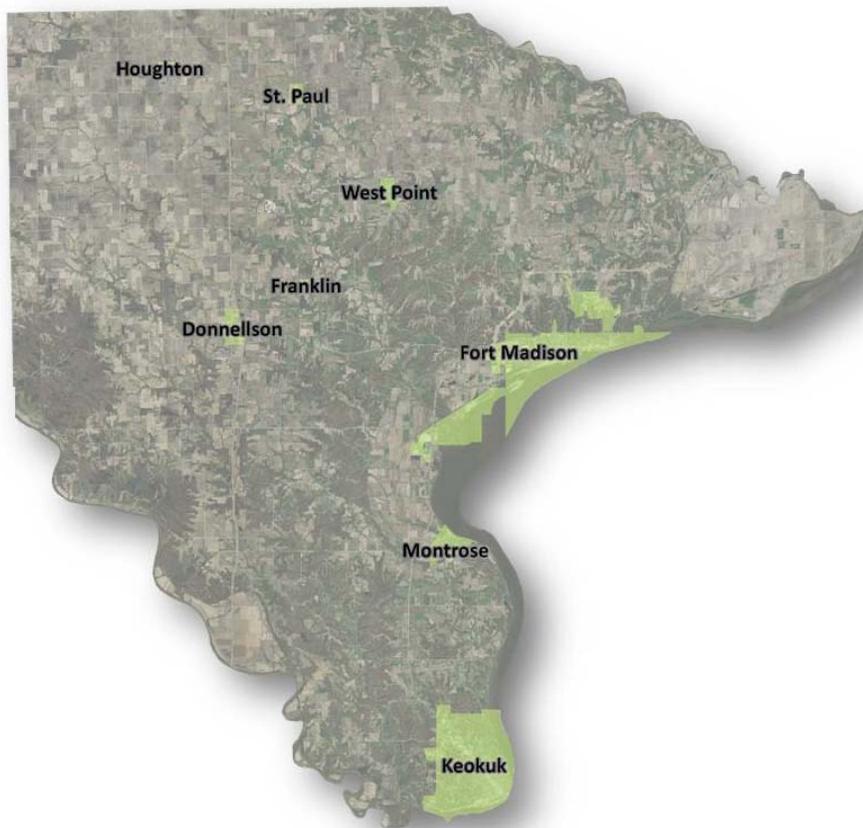


1.1 PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The purpose of the Lee County General Plan is to serve as a guide for future housing, transportation, and economic development in the county based on the vision and direction established by the residents for the next 20 years. Through the plan’s vision, goals, and action steps, it provides a framework for decision-making regarding all key elements of the county. Elected officials will rely on and use this plan when they make decisions that affect and shape the county’s future.

This plan is a “living” document and should be updated as growth and change happen in Lee County. The plan represents the best effort to address current issues and anticipate future needs regarding housing, transportation, and economic development. The plan should be revisited each year to evaluate any changes in the county and to amend the plan as warranted. If decisions are being made that are not consistent with this plan, then the plan has lost its relevance and should be amended to reflect what is happening in the county.

1.2 PLANNING AREA



The study area for this Plan includes all lands within Lee County boundaries in the Southeast corner of the State of Iowa. The county is bordered by the Des Moines River to the South, the Mississippi River to the east, and the Skunk River to the north. The County is approximately 344,960 acres (539 square miles), of which 331,520 (518 square miles) is land and 13,677 (21 square miles) is water.



1.3 THE PLANNING PROCESS

A thorough public participation process is the foundation to a successful planning document. The involvement of residents, business owners, and other stakeholders is essential to the creation and implementation of the plan. Elements of public participation for the Lee County General Plan included:

- **Public Input Meetings**

Three public input meetings were held throughout the county in Donnellson, Fort Madison, and Keokuk on March 27th and April 4th. Approximately 20 people attended to provide their input for the plan.



Attendees participate in a charette and take the survey in Donnellson.

- **Citizen survey**

Hard copies of the survey were provided at the public input meetings. The survey was set up to gain knowledge from local residents on the strengths, weakness, and needs of the county on the topics of housing, transportation, and economic development.

- **Stakeholder Interviews**

SEIRPC staff conducted approximately 25 interviews with local stakeholders from various backgrounds including the city governments, healthcare industry, housing industry, manufacturing, transportation, and economic development. The interviews helped to gain additional knowledge of the community, the current issues, and ideas for future priorities.

This input creates a framework for the General Plan that will help guide future decisions of the county supervisors that are in line with the county's vision and principles. From this framework, a better Lee County will emerge.



1.4 PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

Past planning efforts are an important component to the development of the general plan. It is imperative that we don't neglect the work that has been done in the past. Below is a list of past planning efforts in Lee County that have been incorporated into the Lee County General Plan.

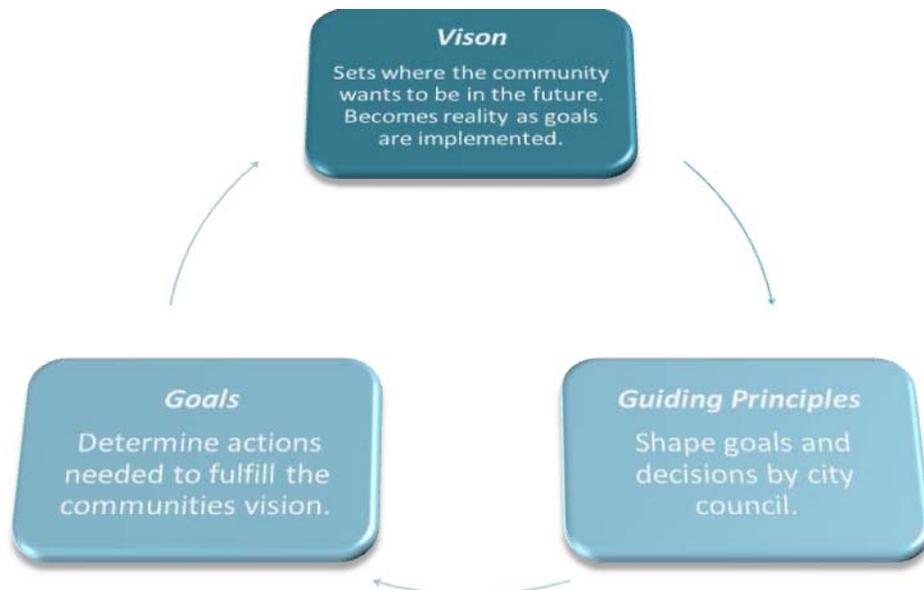
- *2002 -2012 Lee County Comprehensive Plan (never formally adopted)*
- *Southeast Iowa Regional Economic and Port Authority Master Strategic Plan*
- *Lee County Mississippi River Trail Study*
- *Lee County Pre Disaster Mitigation Plan*
- *Fort Madison Extraterritorial Zoning Study*
- *Fort Madison Annexation Study*
- *Fort Madison Comprehensive Plan*
- *Keokuk Comprehensive Plan*
- *Donnellson Comprehensive Plan*
- *Brownfield Property Environmental Assessments*

2.0 VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES



WHY A SHARED VISION

The communities shared vision statement is a description of what the community will look like 20 years from now based on what has been achieved or accomplished over time. Having a shared vision can provide the community with a clear direction, inspiration, and be the foundation for making decisions to help the community meet its goals.



LEE COUNTY VISION FOR 2032

“In 2032, Lee County will be an attractive, dynamic, forward thinking county with residents that have a great work ethic and are friendly to one another. The county will be characterized by its hard working residents, tourism destinations, outstanding recreational choices, diverse industry, historical significance, and its vast transportation network.”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles serve as a basis of reasoning and action that direct the decisions of the plan. They should be the fundamental basis for any decision regarding the implementation of the general plan to ensure the fulfillment of the county's vision. These principles are intended to reflect the values and beliefs of the county to make sure all decisions are made in the best interest of the residents.

The following four guiding principles were developed from input from the community surveys, interviews, and public meetings to help the county supervisors and county residents in making decisions on implementing the General Plan.

HOUSING DIVERSITY

County residents frequently mentioned the need for diverse quality housing in Lee County. To ensure this happens, planning, development, and resource management decisions should:

- Encourage diversity in the types of available housing, such as condos, apartments, low income housing, high end housing, single family homes, townhomes, and so forth;
- Support the rehabilitation of existing housing and neighborhoods;
- Focus new housing development near existing infrastructure and neighborhoods; and
- Encourage housing improvements to meet local and state safety requirements.

SUSTAINABILITY

Lee County residents stated that developing a more sustainable county is important for lasting success, efficient use of energy, protecting our natural environment, and preserving historic resources. To build a sustainable county, future planning, development and resource management decisions should consider:

- Reducing waste and pollution through efficient use of land, energy, water, air, and use of materials;
- The protection, preservation, and restoration of natural resources, agricultural land, and historic landscapes;
- The reuse and reinvigoration of abandoned, idled, or demolished industrial sites
- The availability of open spaces and recreational facilities;
- Transportation options for residents of the community to maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel, improve health, and improve air quality;
- The most efficient long term use of taxpayer dollars; and
- Clean and renewable energy use and increased energy efficiency in revitalization or new construction projects.



BUSINESS DIVERSITY

Lee County has consistently had one of the highest unemployment rates in the State of Iowa. To diversify employment and business opportunities to improve the economic climate, planning, development, and resource management decisions should consider:

- The impact on local education system including access to training opportunities;
- The impact on entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial spirit;
- The establishment of businesses in locations near existing housing, infrastructure, and transportation;
- The impact on travelers and tourists to the County; and
- The impact of incentives on future development and attracting or retaining businesses.

QUALITY OF LIFESTYLE

Opportunities for improving quality of life were cited many times as a great asset and opportunity for improving Lee County. To continue to improve the quality of lifestyle in Lee County future planning, development, and resource management decisions should consider:

- The options for alternative transportation that promote walking and bicycling including recreational trail and support for sidewalk improvements in city boundaries;
- The impacts on existing open space, parks, natural areas and other recreational opportunities;
- The options for adding or preserving open space, natural areas, and greenways for outdoor relaxation and recreation;
- The safety for citizens who walk, bike, or have special needs (such as ADA requirements); and
- Maintaining the friendly small town atmosphere and low cost of living.

3.0 HOUSING



Introduction

The housing section of this plan is intended to address the housing issues in Lee County by identifying sound policies and strategies that will ensure the long term vitality and character of the existing residential stock and guide future housing developments.

We recommend several innovative approaches to help Lee County meet the housing needs over the next 20 years. These recommendations are not exhaustive and should not be considered the only options in dealing with housing related issues moving forward, but rather a starting point to help direct future housing activity in the right direction and help spur additional projects. Lee County can accommodate the need for additional housing units through a variety of means including the development of vacant lands, infill development on underutilized properties, or rehabbing an aging housing stock.

Existing Conditions

This section contains the local data and analysis to help describe, and better understand, the existing conditions and issues that are facing Lee County in regards to housing. Lee County is a well-established county within the State of Iowa, with an eclectic mix of land uses and housing opportunities. From the farmhouses that dot the countryside to the upper story apartments of the downtown areas in Fort Madison and Keokuk and everything in between, no matter what type of housing one may need Lee County can offer it.

Throughout the development of Lee County, a variety of housing types have been developed. Single family detached homes are the most prevalent in the area, existing in multiple forms from the large turn of the century estates that line the bluffs, to the smaller tract lot homes that make up most of the local communities. Figure 3.2 on the next page shows the prevalence of single family homes in Lee County.

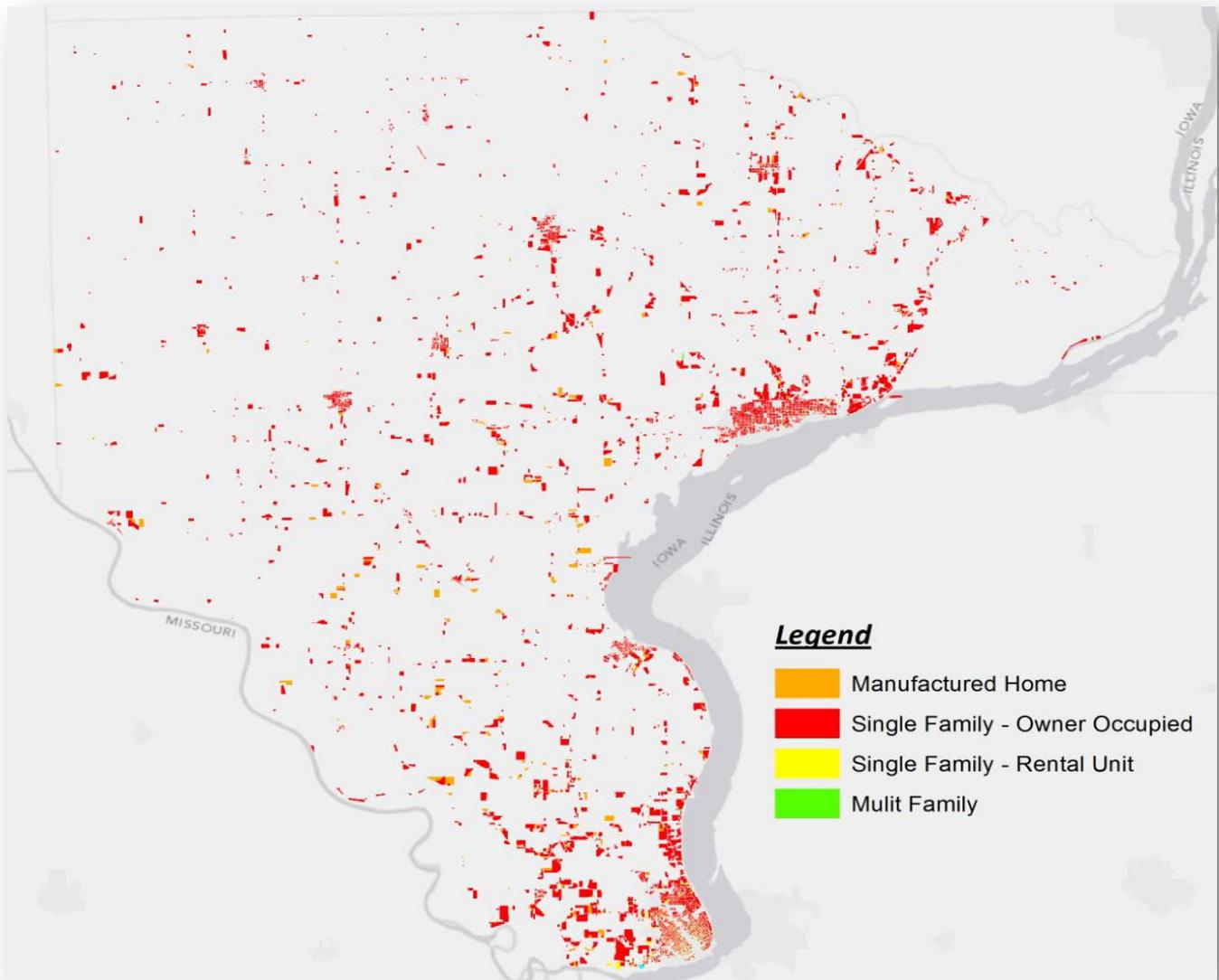
Owner-occupied homes account for 74% of the total occupied housing units in Lee County, with the remaining 26% consisting of renter-occupied homes. Figure 3.1 below provides additional details regarding occupied housing units.

Figure 3.1 Housing Occupancy (Source: 2010 Census)

	Estimate	Percent
Occupied Housing Units	14,234	100.0%
Owner-Occupied	10,542	74.1%
Renter-Occupied	3,692	25.9%
Average Household Size of Owner-Occupied Unit	2.48	X
Average Household Size of Renter-Occupied Unit	2.03	X



Figure 3.2 Map of Housing Types (Source: Lee County Assessor)



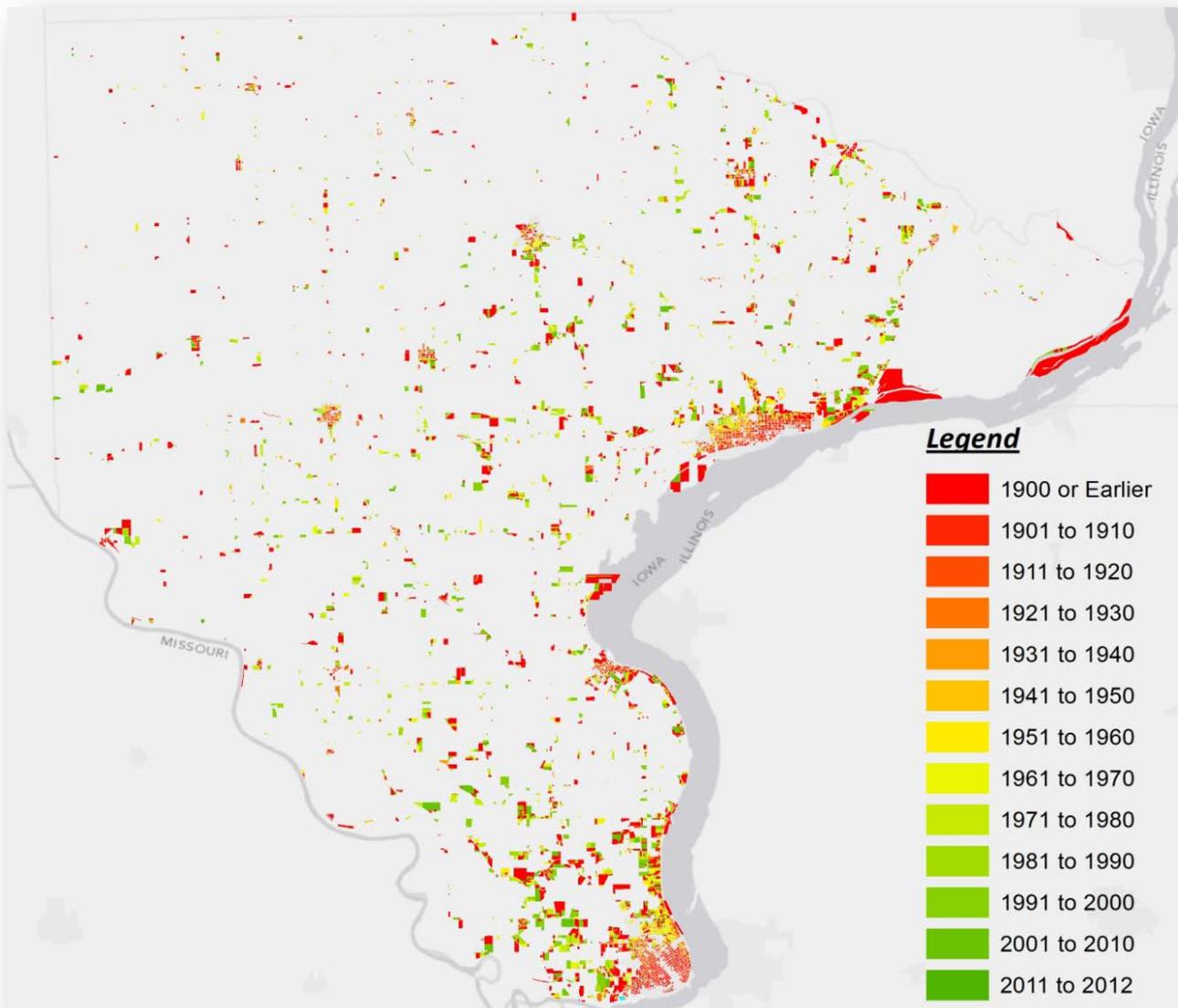


Of the 16,338 total housing units found in Lee County, 55% of them were built in 1959 or earlier and only 10% are 20 years old or less. Figures 3.3 and 3.4 provide additional information regarding the ages of housing in Lee County.

Figure 3.3 Housing Age (Source: 2010 Census)

	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	16,338	100.0%
2005 or Later	193	1.2%
2000-2004	511	3.1%
1990-1999	1,036	6.3%
1980-1989	1,344	8.2%
1970-1979	2,586	15.8%
1960-1969	1,739	10.6%
1950-1959	1,522	9.3%
1940-1949	1,107	6.8%
1939 or earlier	6,300	38.6%

Figure 3.4 Map of Housing Age (Source: Lee County Assessor)



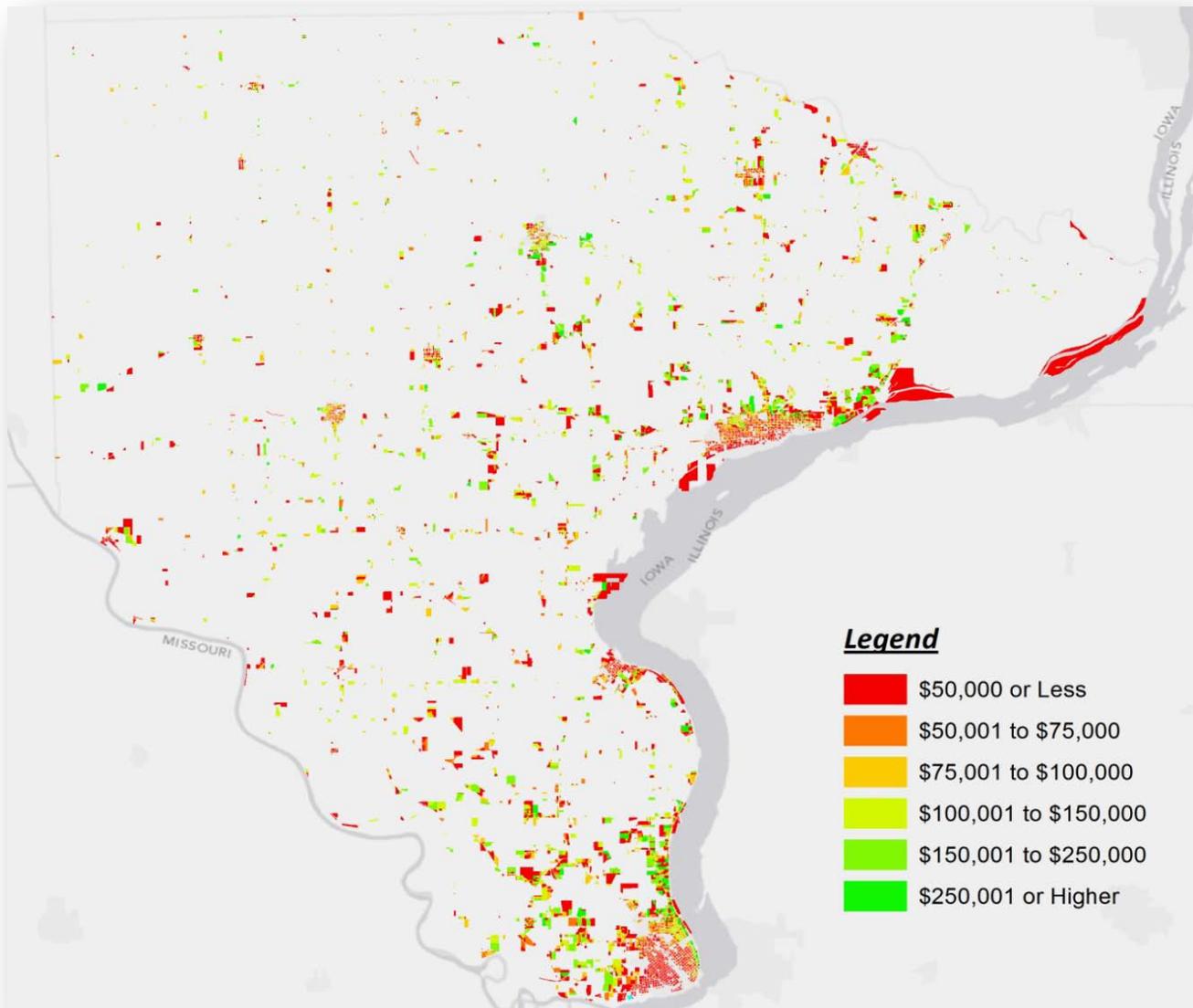


The average value of owner-occupied homes is \$78,900, 55% of them are valued under \$99,999 and only 9% are valued over \$200,000. Figures 3.5 and 3.6 provide additional information regarding housing values in Lee County.

Figure 3.5 Housing Values (Source: 2010 Census)

	Estimate	Percent
Owner-Occupied Units	10,542	100.0%
Less than \$50,000	2,842	27.0%
\$50,000-\$99,999	4,029	38.2%
\$100,000-\$149,999	1,557	14.8%
\$150,000-\$199,999	1,129	10.7%
\$200,000-\$299,999	526	5.0%
\$300,000-\$499,999	316	3.0%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	127	1.2%
\$1,000,000 or more	19	0.2%
Median (dollars)	\$78,900	X

Figure 3.6 Map of Housing Values (Source: Lee County Assessor)





The monthly costs as a percentage of household income for units with a mortgage shown in Figure 3.7 explain to us that 64% of homeowners spend 25% or less of their monthly income on their housing, while 18% of households spend 35% or more of their monthly income on housing. The latter may cause some concern for potential foreclosure of homes.

Figure 3.7 Percentage of Income Spent on Mortgage (Source: 2010 Census)

	Number	Percent
Housing Units With a Mortgage	5,294	100.0%
Less than 20%	2,752	52.0%
20.0-24.9%	660	12.5%
25.0-29.9%	560	10.6%
30.0-34.9%	375	7.1%
35% or more	947	17.9%

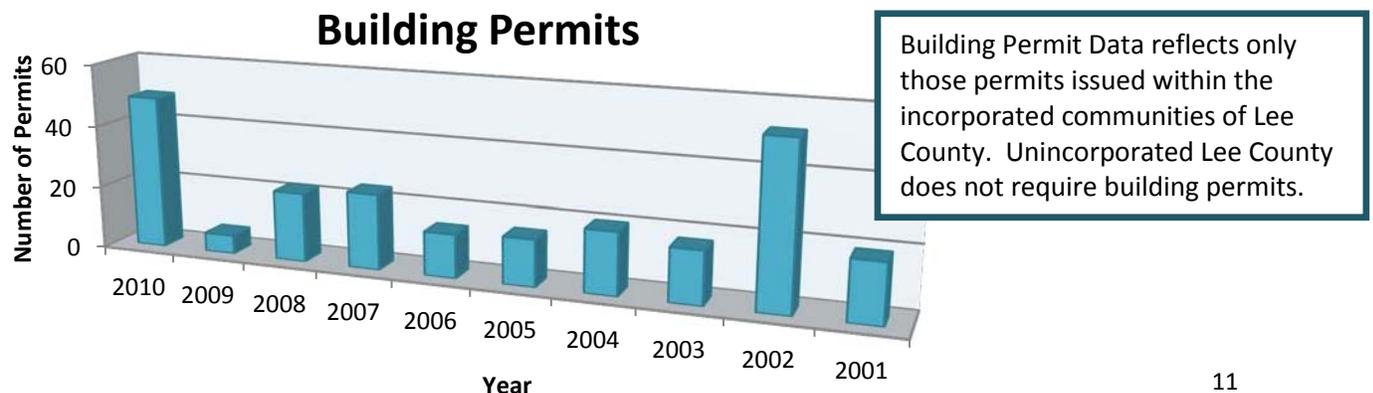
The average rent for Lee County is \$507 a month, with 70% of renters paying between \$300-\$750 a month as seen in Figure 3.8 below.

Figure 3.8 Average Rents (Source: 2010 Census)

Rent	Number	Percent
Less than \$200	203	6.0%
\$200-\$299	309	9.1%
\$300-\$499	1,135	33.6%
\$500-\$749	1,272	37.6%
\$750-\$999	382	11.3%
\$1,000-\$1,499	39	1.2%
\$1,500 or more	41	1.2%
Median (dollars)	\$507	X

Since 2001, 238 building permits totaling 352 housing units have been processed in Lee County. This is a total construction cost of \$33.14 million. Figure 3.9 below provides a year by year look at the number of building permits distributed.

Figure 3.9 Building Permits in Lee County (Source: 2010 Census)

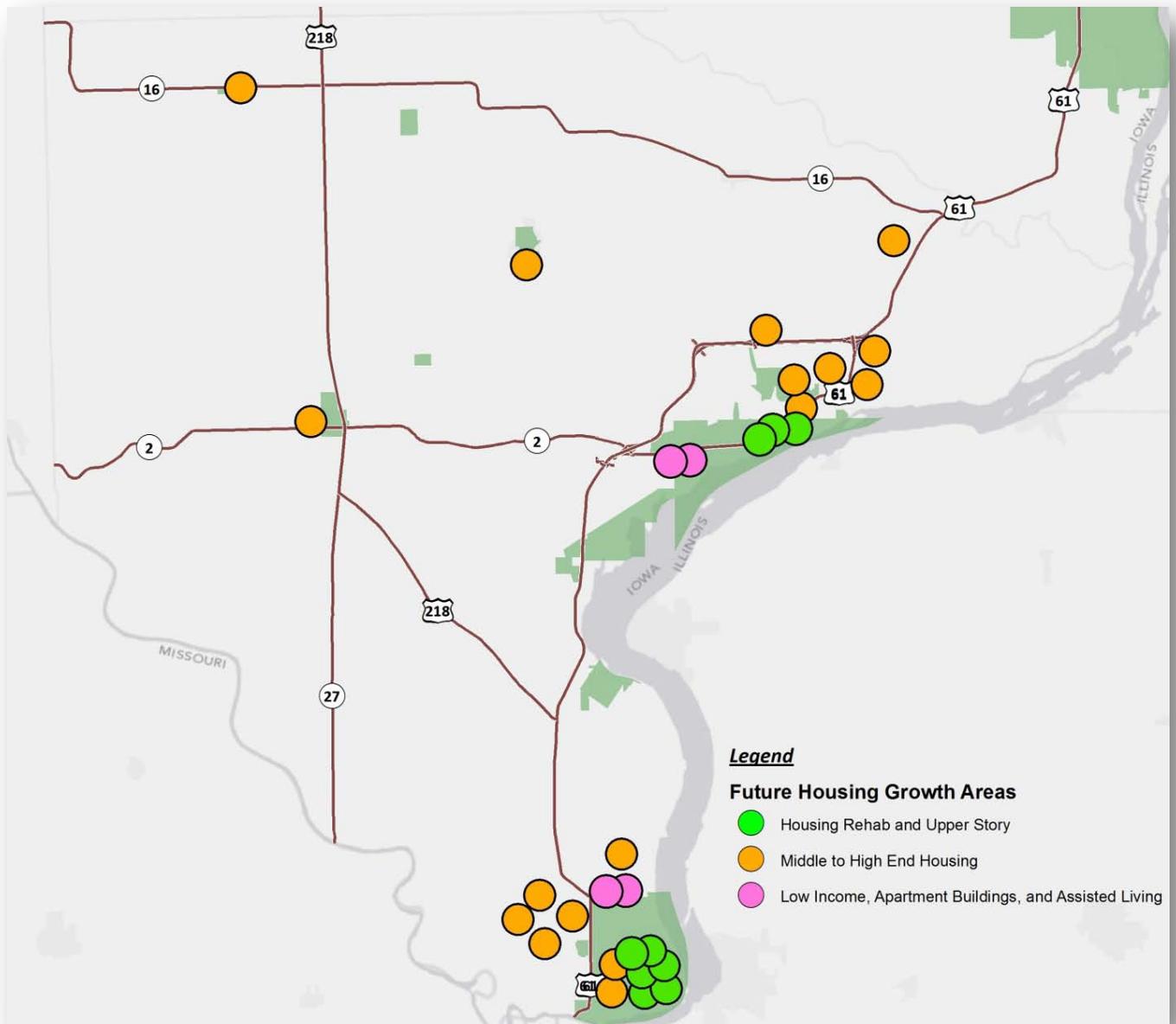




Future Growth Areas

Areas have been identified for potential future housing growth in the community based on public input and known areas where development is happening or being encouraged. Figure 3.10 below shows places where housing growth should be targeted, but not limited to, for different types of housing including housing rehabilitation, upper story development, new middle to high end housing, low income housing, apartment buildings, and assisted living centers.

Figure 3.10 Future Housing Growth Areas





Housing Strengths, Weaknesses, and Priorities

After review of existing conditions and public input from citizens of Lee County, the following strengths, weaknesses, and priorities have been identified:

STRENGTHS

- Large housing stock
- Large number of historically and architecturally significant homes
- Average home value is affordable for large segment of population
- Number of new homes built in recent years is positive
- Amount of land to develop new homes - Potential for new subdivisions
- Great River Housing Trust fund and other grant programs that have assisted in rehabilitation of home

WEAKNESSES

- Deterioration of older housing stock
- Lack of Diversity in new housing stock
- Increasing price of homes
- Declining homeownership rates
- Community in transition
- Quality of development
- Availability of adequate housing
- High amount of dilapidated houses
- Age of housing
- Number of vacant housing properties/High vacancy rates
- High unemployment and low income levels
- Affordable quality housing for all income levels
- Lack of incentives for new homes or redevelopment of older homes, infill development
- Increase in elderly population
- Energy efficiency of homes

PRIORITIES

- Preserve and improve existing housing structures in Lee County
- Promote infill development for severely dilapidated and vacant housing structures
- Improve energy efficiency of homes in Lee County to be more sustainable
- Encourage a range of housing opportunities throughout the county that meet the need of the county's residents, including single family homes, condos, duplexes, apartments, elderly living, and so forth
- Continue to provide and build upon housing options available to supply access to quality affordable housing, regardless of ability, socioeconomic status, or income level
- Work with Federal, State, and Local public and private agencies to maximize funding to address housing needs in the county



Housing Goals and Action Plan

After review of existing conditions, public input from citizens of Lee County, the following goals and recommended actions have been identified.

Goal # 1

Preserve and improve existing housing structures in Lee County.

Recommended Actions

- Maintain, update, and enforce local building codes
- Encourage the removal of lead paint through local programs
- Identify local, state, or federal funding sources to assist homeowners with rehabilitation of homes

Goal #2

Promote infill development for severely dilapidated and vacant housing structures.

Recommended Actions

- Identify funding opportunities for assistance for housing rehabilitation or new home construction
- Support the donation of vacant or underutilized lots for appropriate infill housing projects

Goal #3

Improve energy efficiency of homes in Lee County to be more sustainable.

Recommended Actions

- Support local weatherization programs
- Educate citizens on the benefits of weatherization
- Identify local, state, or federal funding sources to assist homeowners with energy efficiency projects



Goal #4

Encourage a range of housing opportunities throughout the county that meet the need of the county’s residents, including single family homes, condos, duplexes, apartments, elderly living, and so forth

Recommended Actions

- Complete housing needs assessments to determine the need for types of housing and where they should be located
- Encourage needed housing types through plans and policies
- Create incentives to promote the development of needed housing types

Goal #5

Continue to provide and build upon housing options available to supply access to quality affordable housing, regardless of ability, socioeconomic status, or income level.

Recommended Actions

- Consider local assistance programs for renters and first time home buyers who are at or below poverty
- Encourage local Habitat for Humanity Chapter to be more involved in constructing affordable homes

Goal #6

Work with Federal, State, and Local public and private agencies to maximize funding to address housing needs in the county.

Recommended Actions

- Work with SEIRPC to identify funding opportunities to improve housing in Lee County.
- Work with state and federal legislators to discuss current or future funding opportunities that would assist in improving housing conditions in Lee County

4.0 TRANSPORTATION



Introduction

The transportation section is designed to summarize existing facilities and help identify weaknesses and gaps in service, and guide future development for the transportation network including potential funding opportunities. The transportation network will always be based on safe and efficient street design meant to effectively carry pedestrian, bicycle, vehicle, and commercial vehicles. This section will also take a look at regional transportation investments and their relationship to Lee County, and provide a prioritized outlook for future regional investments and adjacent transportation facilities.

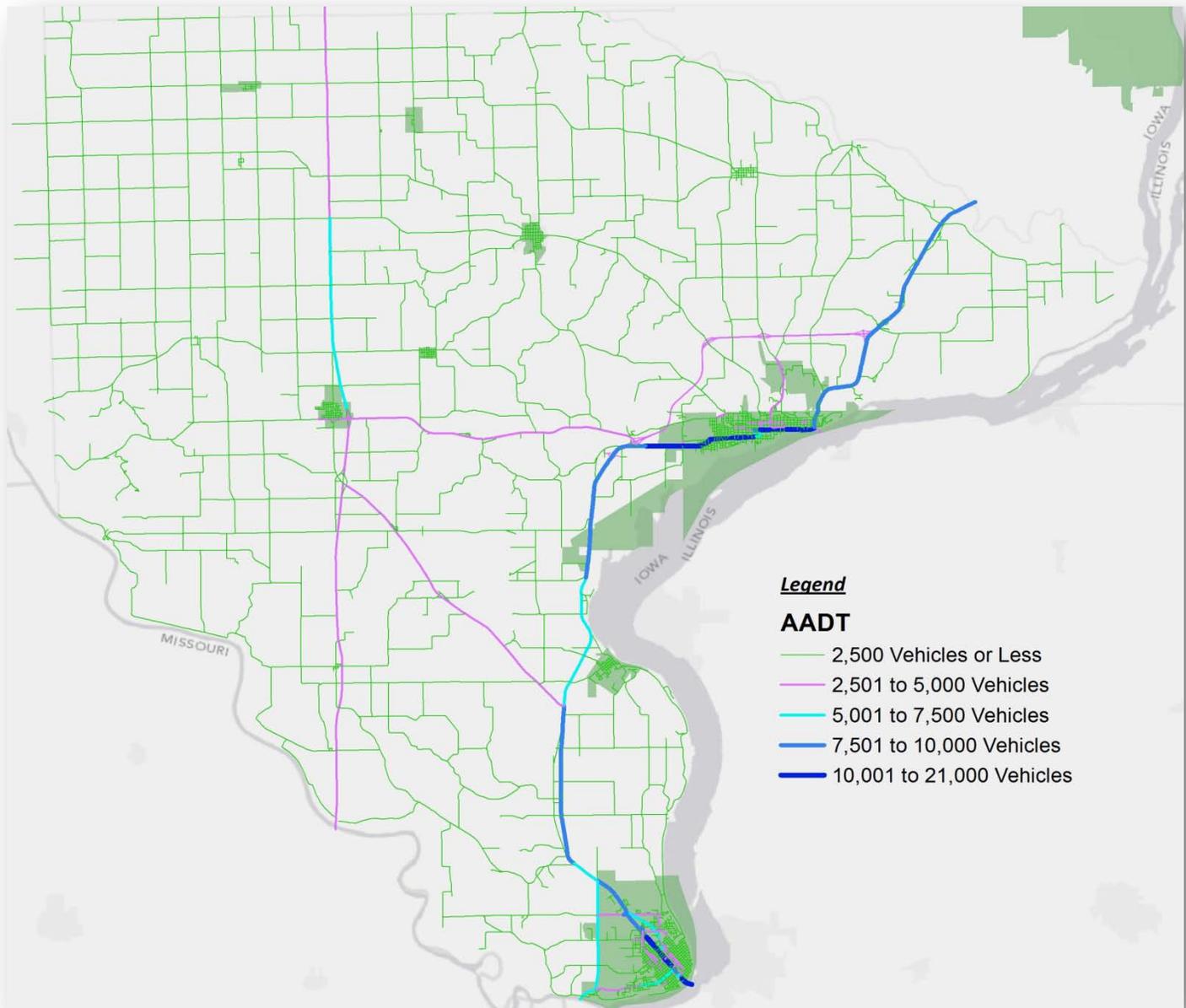
Lee County is home to a uniquely diverse transportation system including major 4-lane highways, freight and passenger rail, barge traffic, regional public transit, bike trails, and airports among others. This diversity is what drives interest in the region from an economic standpoint as potential businesses have endless options in moving products in and out of the area safely and efficiently. That same diversity can also be problematic without proper planning and coordination. While the current inventory of transportation options in Lee County is quite good, there are several policies and strategies that we will recommend to better coordinate different transportation facilities and opportunities in an attempt to capitalize on the strengths of each of them to form the strongest, safest, and most efficient overall network as possible for the movement of people and goods.

Existing Conditions

Lee County has a substantial amount of roadway constructed with different materials and in varying conditions. This includes gravel roads that crisscross the rural areas of the county, concrete 4 lane highways, and asphalt and brick city streets. There is not expected to be any large scale growth that would result in significant traffic congestion concerns; however there have been increasing regional traffic volumes that are affecting areas in Lee County.

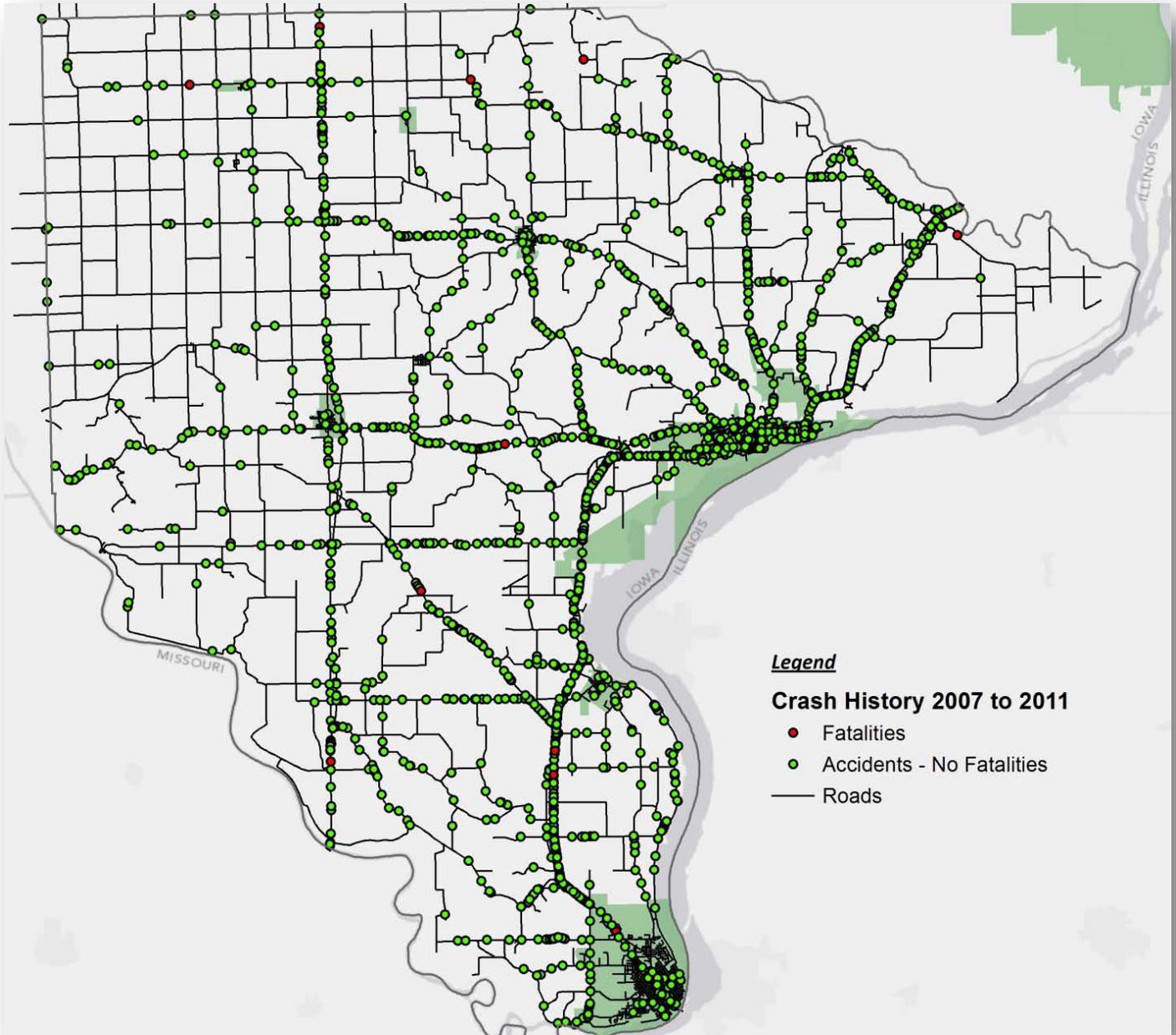
Lee County is hugely impacted by State and U.S. Highways. U.S. 61 and U.S. 218 are both major 4 lane highways that see about 15,000 vehicles per day between the two of them. Each of these routes are critical for efficient travel in and around Lee County for both citizens and freight haulers. U.S. 61 also serves as part of the Avenue of Saints, a route connecting St. Paul, Minnesota with St. Louis, Missouri, and as part of the Great River Road Scenic Byway. Figure 4.1 on the next page shows the average annual daily traffic along all routes in Lee County.

Figure 4.1 Map of Average Annual Daily Traffic (Source: Iowa Department of Transportation)



From 2007 to 2011, there were a total of 2,619 traffic accidents along roadways in Lee County. Of these 24 accidents involved a fatality of 1 or more individuals. Safety of individuals traveling the roadways is a major priority for Lee County officials. Specific consideration will be given to areas that appear to have safety issues that can be enhanced in the future to reduce injuries and fatalities. Figure 4.2 on the following page shows all traffic accidents from 2007 to 2011.

Figure 4.2 Map of Traffic Accidents from 2007 to 2011 (Source: Iowa Department of Transportation)

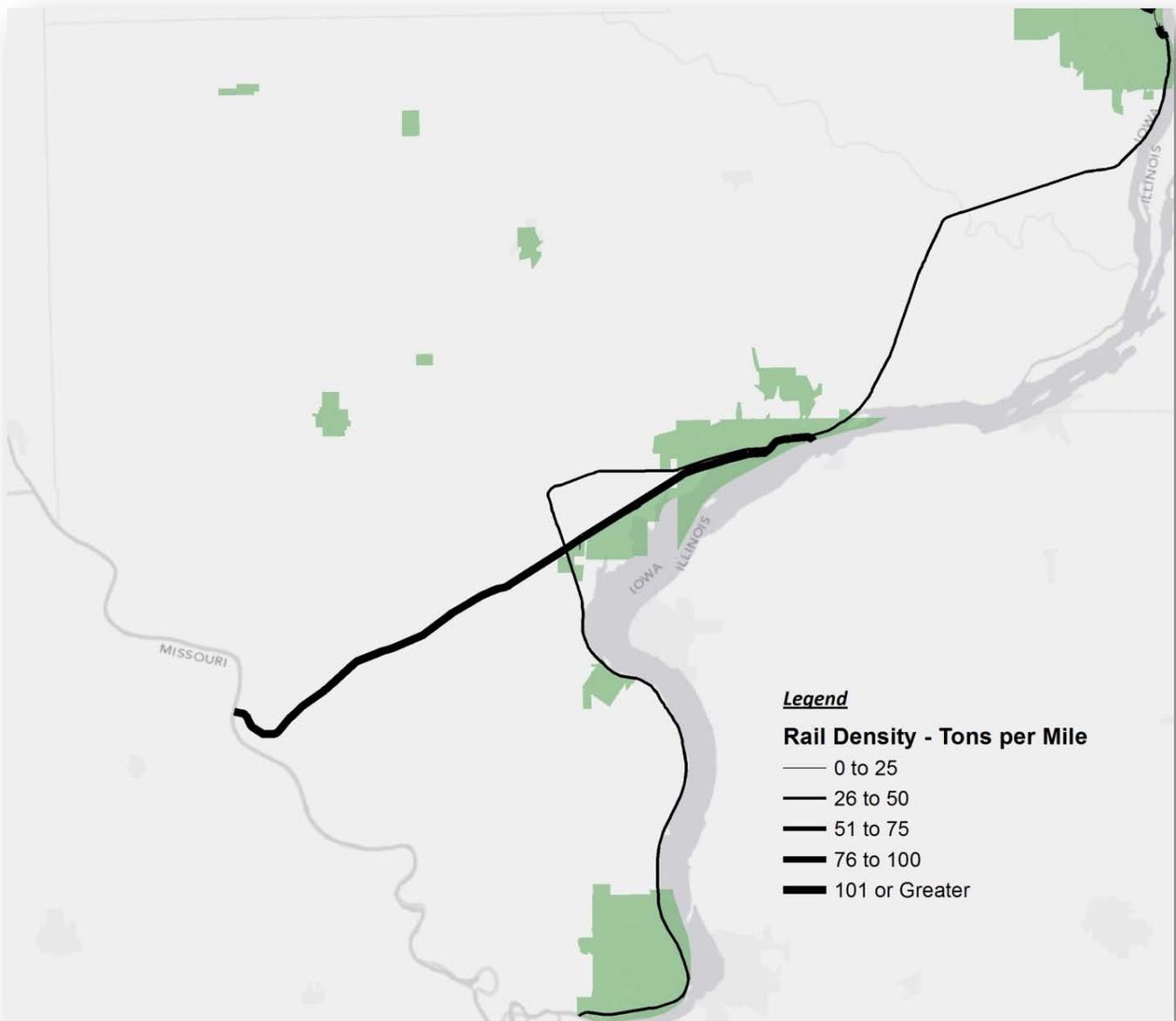


Citizens are most routinely concerned with the lack of adequate sidewalks and other alternative means of transportation like trails or transit opportunities. The county does not currently control a transit system, as well as either of the two main cities (Keokuk and Fort Madison). Service is provided through the regional Southeast Iowa Bus (SEIBUS) program. Many areas lack sidewalks, trails, and curb and gutter, decreasing safety for both motorists and alternative transportation users (pedestrians and bikers).



Lee County has two Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) lines running through it, and also has portions of the Keokuk Junction Railway. The BNSF mainline that runs through the heart of Lee County, and the City of Fort Madison, sees more than 40 million tons per mile of freight traffic each year while the secondary BNSF line that runs north and south carries an additional 20-39 million tons per mile each year. Add those two totals to the 1 million tons or less that the Keokuk Junction line hauls and Lee County sees more than 80M tons of freight per mile moved down its tracks each year. Figure 4.3 below shows tons per mile of rail lines running through Lee County. Amtrak also uses the two BNSF lines and has a terminal in the City of Fort Madison, offering passenger service to a number of locations throughout the country.

Figure 4.3 Map of Rail Tons per Mile (Source: Iowa Department of Transportation)





With several separate barge terminals providing access to one of America’s largest shipping lanes, Lee County has tremendous potential when it comes to river transportation opportunities. In addition to the barge facilities, Lee County also has a public marina located in Fort Madison and a host of other boat friendly facilities located throughout the County. Figure 4.4 below shows all barge terminals in Lee County.

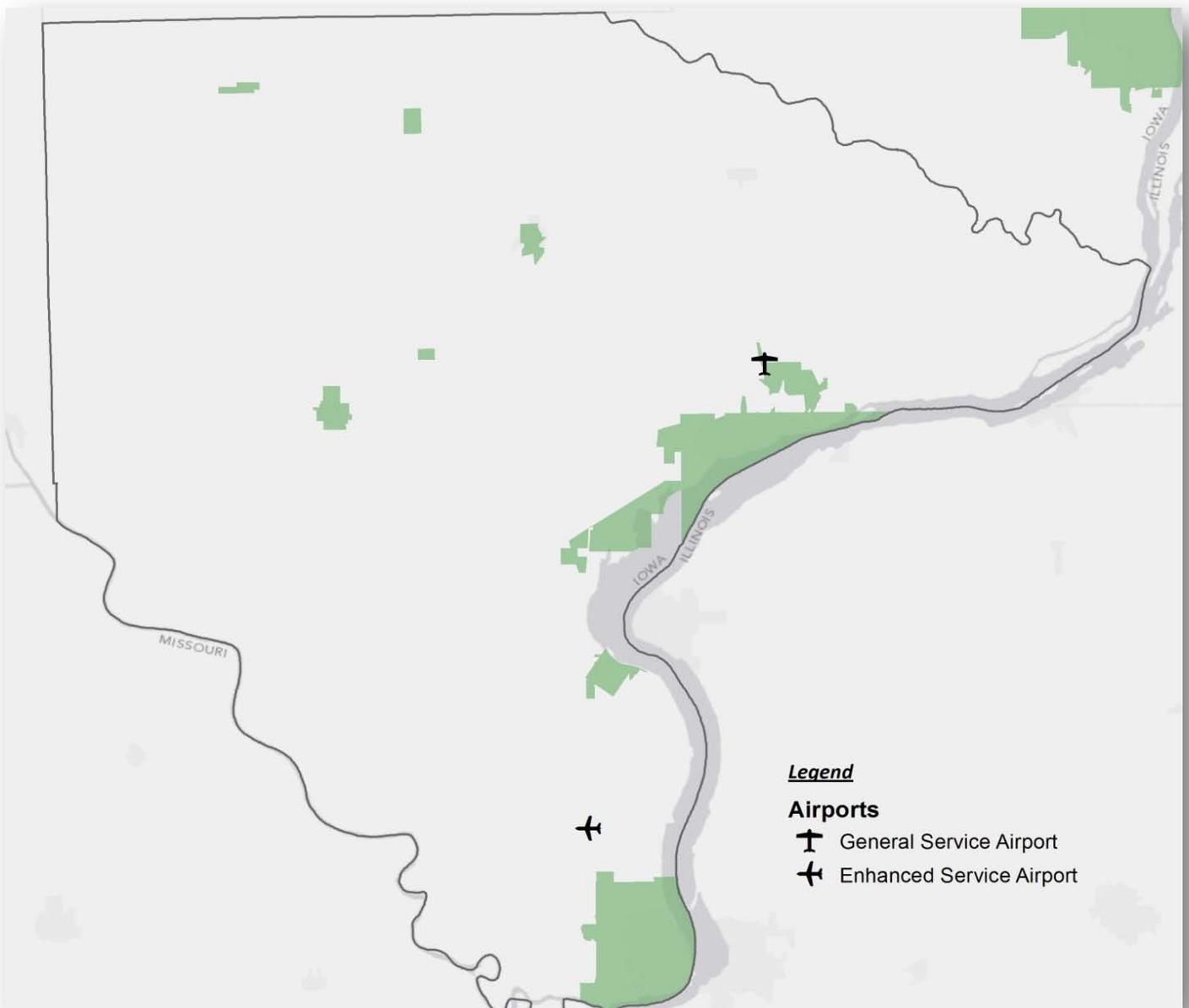
Figure 4.4 Map of Barge Terminals (Iowa Department of Natural Resources)





Lee County does not offer commercial air service, but does have general aviation airports located in Fort Madison and an enhanced service airport located in Keokuk. The proximity of Lee County to adjacent commercial services reduces the need to offer any local commercial flights, as the Southeast Iowa Regional Airport in Burlington is just 10 miles to the north of Lee County, and international airports in Peoria and the Quad Cities are within 1.5 hours drive. Figure 4.5 below shows all public airports located in Lee County.

Figure 4.5 Map of Airports (Iowa Department of Transportation)





Transportation Strengths, Weaknesses, and Priorities

After review of existing conditions and public input from citizens of Lee County, the following strengths, weaknesses, and priorities have been identified:

Strengths

- Diversity of transportation options
- Major 4 lane highways
- BNSF mainline railroad, Keokuk Junction Shortline
- Amtrak
- Mississippi River access
- Airports
- Fort Madison Highway 61 Bypass
- Avenue of the Saints
- 4 Lane Highway Bridges (Fort Madison and Keokuk)
- Port Authority
- Public Marina - Fort Madison
- Proximity to major regional destinations (short travel times)

Weaknesses

- Public transportation options
- Amtrak facilities
- Sidewalk and trail condition and accessibility
- Lack of intermodal facilities
- Trail system/alternative transportation
- Fort Madison swing span bridge and Keokuk rail bridge over Mississippi River
- Commercial air availability
- Dredge Mississippi River
- Maintenance of local roads and bridges

Priorities

- Develop a countywide trail network/Improve local sidewalk accessibility
- Increase public transportation options
- Maximize intermodal opportunities (Rail, Barge, Truck)
- Improve service levels for all modes of transportation in the County
- Minimize adverse impacts of the county's transportation system on the local environment
- Coordinate and advocate for replacement of the swing span bridge in Fort Madison and rail bridge in Keokuk
- Encourage planned transportation employment/economic development centers which provide opportunities that enhance the functional marketability of adjacent lands for their intended use
- Explore and promote innovative mechanisms of funding transportation system improvements
- Promote and coordinate with area local governments, regional agencies, IDOT, and the private sector on transportation issues and the development of new facilities



Transportation Goals and Action Plan

After review of existing conditions, public input from citizens of Lee County, the following goals and recommended actions have been identified.

GOAL #1

Preserve the existing transportation infrastructure to maintain system.

Recommended Actions

- Coordinate and cooperate with Iowa DOT, SEIRPC, and local communities in regards to transportation planning and investments for projects
- Maintain and update 5 year capital improvement plan
- Promote infill development along major existing transportation corridors

GOAL #2

Improve transportation system in Lee County to make it a safe place to travel for all users.

Recommended Actions

- Complete a traffic safety study to identify areas of needed safety improvements
- Incorporate appropriate safety improvements and design for all transportation projects to increase safety for all users

GOAL #3

To make Lee County a better place to travel, live, work, and operate business by offering multiple transportation choices that are safe, accessible, and convenient.

Recommended Actions

- Develop a county-wide trails plan
- Encourage the use of alternative transportation options (Amtrak, Bicycle, Public Transit)

GOAL #4

Preserve, improve, and expand the regional transportation system for the efficient movement of goods and services.

Recommended Actions

- Encourage the development of intermodal freight facilities
- Work with local businesses identify and fix gaps in existing transportation network



GOAL #5

Maximize the use of available financial resources and identify new opportunities for funding transportation improvements in Southeast Iowa.

Recommended Actions

- Coordinate with state and federal legislators to identify best opportunities for increasing transportation funding opportunities
- Work with SEIRPC and other partners to identify and access all funding opportunities available to fund transportation projects in Lee County

5.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Introduction

The economic development section of this plan is intended to encourage local growth through the development and retention of thriving businesses. These businesses in return create employment opportunities and provide quality services to local residents, therefore increasing their quality of life. Lee County has consistently ranked in the bottom of the state with some of the highest countywide unemployment rates. Perhaps more important than any other aspect of this plan, the economic development section is a critical driver for the remaining sections (housing & transportation), as it is here where the policies and projects implemented will create the demand for more and better housing and transportation options. Lee County has been a regionally competitive location to live and work in years past when the manufacturing sector dominated the riverfronts of cities like Fort Madison and Keokuk, and has the potential to once again provide a unique quality of life that only Mississippi River communities can boast.

There are few communities in today’s economy that are not seeking greater economic growth, and that fact makes attracting potential businesses and residents very difficult as a result of the intense competition between two communities trying to land the same development. As is the case with most every aspect of life, those that are more prepared usually come out ahead. That is what this portion of the Lee County General Plan will look to achieve: Putting Lee County in a competitive advantage through sound planning, and local policy implementation, that make Lee County an attractive county for new and expanding businesses.

Existing Conditions

Lee County has a total population of 35,991 people according to the 2010 US Census data. Of those citizens, 77% are over the age of 18 and 20% are over the age of 62. 52% are between the ages of 20 and 59 years old. The median age for a Lee County resident is 41.9 years old. For those individuals 25 years and over (24,989), 86.3% have obtained at least a high school degree while only 14.7% have a bachelor’s degree or higher. 41% of people 25 and over in Lee County have just a high school diploma, while 13.6% never completed high school and have no diploma. More detail is provided in Figure 4.1.

Figure 5.1 Educational Attainments (Source: 2010 Census)

	Number	Percentage
Population 25 years and over	24,989	100.0%
Less than 9th grade	937	3.7%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	2,483	9.9%
High School Graduate	10,225	40.9%
Some college, no degree	5,565	22.3%
Associate's degree	2,074	8.3%
Bachelor's degree	2,452	9.8%
Graduate or Professional degree	1,253	5.0%
Percent high school degree or higher	X	86.3%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	X	14.7%



The population of people 16 years and older in Lee County consists of 28,857 people, of which 17,456 are in the labor force (65%). According to the January statistics released by the Iowa Workforce Development Agency Lee County had an unemployment rate of 9.2%, nearly double the statewide rate of 5.4% for that same time period and over 2% higher than 2 years earlier as seen in the 2010 Census. Figure 4.2 below provides more detail regarding workforce and unemployment.

Figure 5.2 Labor Force and Unemployment (Source: 2010 Census and Iowa Workforce Development)

	Number	Percentage
Population 16 years and older	28,857	100.0%
In labor force	17,456	64.5%
Not in labor force	11,401	39.5%
Percent unemployed (2010 Census)	X	7.1%
Percent unemployed (January 2012)	X	9.2%

Manufacturing has helped shape Lee County more than any other industry throughout history, and is still the largest employer by total percentage of workforce for the county, supporting 22.4% of the total jobs. The next largest industry in Lee County supports 20.6% of the working adults, and that is the educational services, health care, and social assistance sector. The remaining workers are fairly evenly split between the remaining industries as seen in Figure 4.3 below. 78.3% of all Lee County workers are private wage and salary workers, while 14.1% are government workers, and 7.1% are self-employed workers.

Figure 5.3 Workforce by Industry (Source: 2010 Census)

	Number	Percentage
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	16,190	100.0%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining	459	2.8%
Construction	1,115	6.9%
Manufacturing	3,632	22.4%
Wholesale trade	364	2.2%
Retail trade	1,650	10.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and Utilities	924	5.7%
Information	297	1.8%
Finance and insurance, real estate and rental	600	3.7%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management	961	5.9%
Educational services, health care, social assistance	3,330	20.6%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	1,298	8.0%
Other services, except Public Administration	702	4.3%
Public administration	858	5.3%



The average household income in 2010 was \$42,444 and the average family income was \$50,630. 59.1% of households in Lee County made less than \$50,000 in 2010 while 9.7% made \$100,000 or more. Figure 4.4 below shows more details regarding household incomes in Lee County.

Figure 5.4 Household Incomes (Source: 2010 Census)

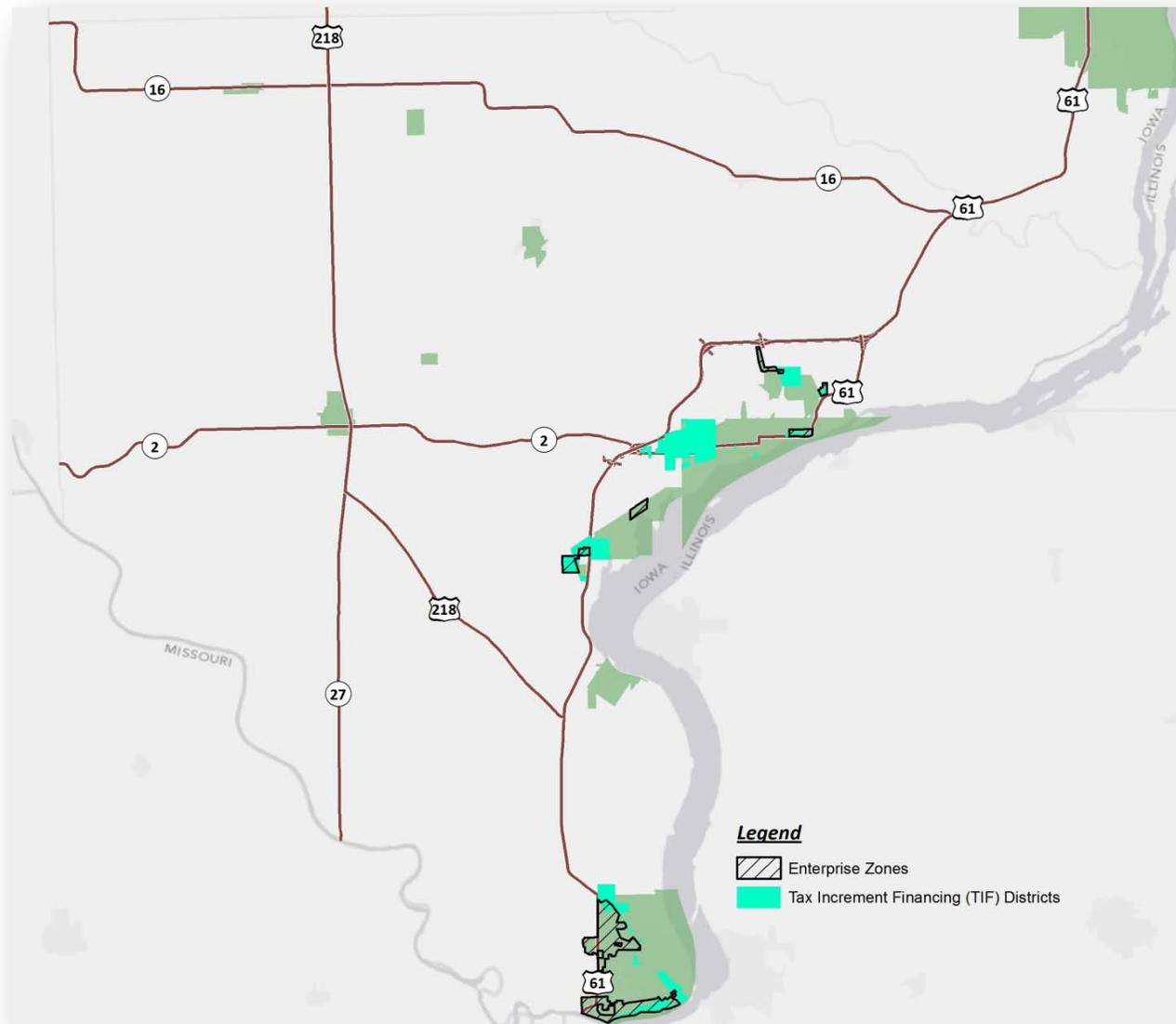
	Number	Percentage
Total Households	14,234	100.0%
less than \$10,000	1,045	7.3%
\$10,000-\$14,999	983	6.9%
\$15,000-\$24,999	2,037	14.3%
\$25,000-\$34,999	1,783	12.5%
\$35,000-\$49,999	2,571	18.1%
\$50,000-\$74,999	2,906	20.4%
\$75,000-\$99,999	1,527	10.7%
\$100,000-\$149,999	979	6.9%
\$150,000-\$199,999	234	1.6%
\$200,000 or more	169	1.2%
Median Household Income (dollars)	\$42,444	X
Median Family Income (dollars)	\$50,630	X

Tax rates and utility rates are a huge component of attracting new development to Lee County. Currently, Lee County has very high tax rates and utility rates compared to the rest of the State of Iowa. Lee County currently has the 4th highest urban tax rate and the 24th highest rural tax rate in the State of Iowa. Electric rates are approximately \$.02 to \$.04 higher per kilowatt hour than the State average in Iowa. This creates a huge challenge when competing with other parts of Iowa for attracting economic development.

Incentives play a key role in attracting development to any community. Lee County currently has the entire unincorporated area of Lee County designated as an Urban Revitalization Area. This allows them to offer tax abatements to companies looking to locate in Lee County. Fort Madison and Keokuk currently offer tax abatements as well, but also have Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts and Enterprise Zones. These areas allow the cities to offer financial incentives, infrastructure improvements, or tax credits for certain types of development. Figure 4.5 on the next page shows existing TIF districts and Enterprise Zones in Lee County.



Figure 5.5 Map of Existing TIF Districts and Enterprise Zones (Source: Lee County Assessor)



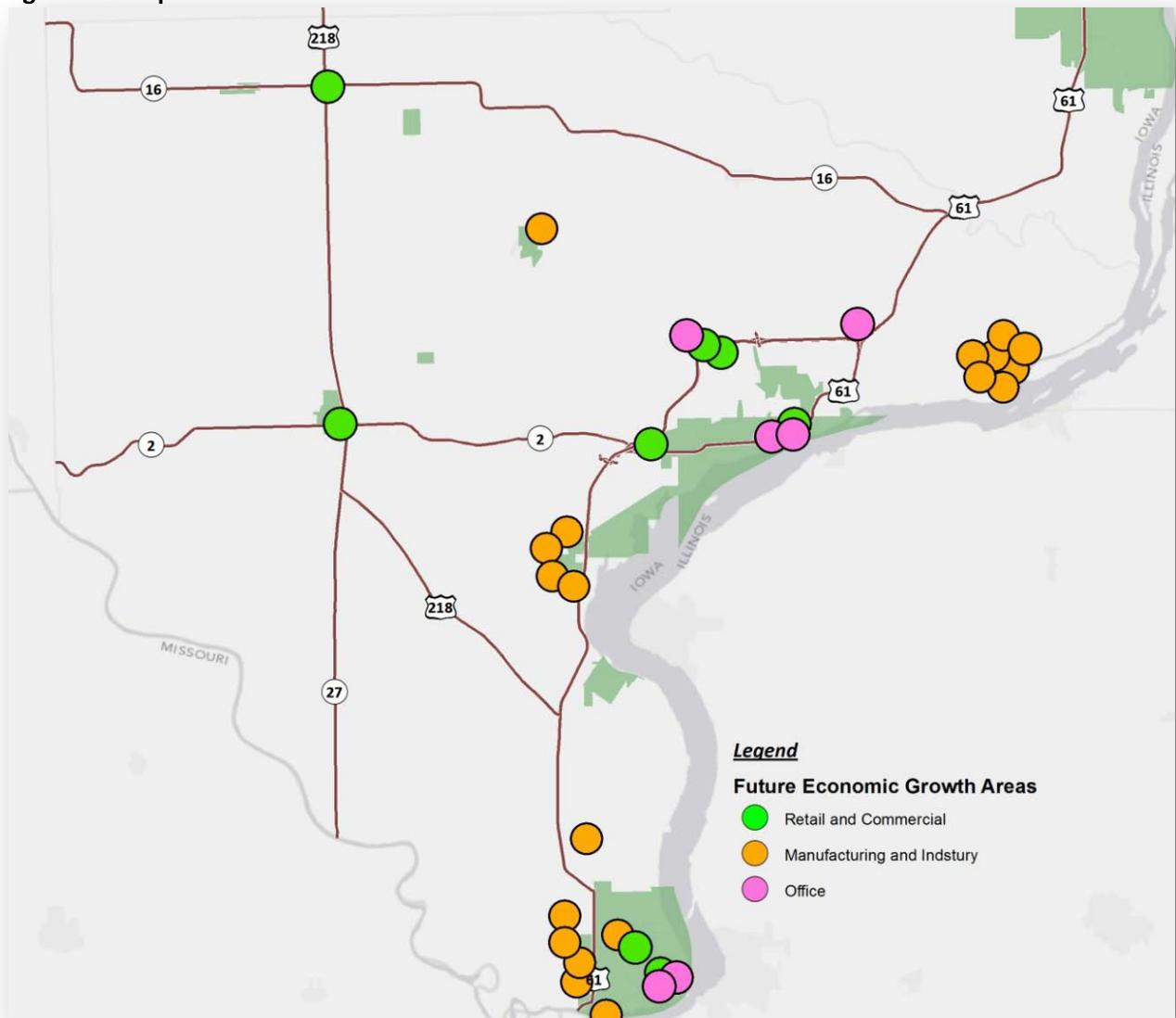
Lee County is currently in negotiations with a based fertilizer manufacturing company who is looking to invest roughly \$1.3 billion, making it the largest economic development project in the history of the State of Iowa if it is completed. While creating this plan is a critical piece of securing this development by allowing the County to create an Urban Renewal Area, it should not be the sole focus of future planning efforts in Lee County. All other aspects of economic development should not be set aside for this one project. This plan will strive to not only provide the guidance needed for the fertilizer plant project, but also provide the direction needed to help steer local policies and projects in a way that is most favorable for long term economic health of Lee County.



Future Growth Areas

Areas have been identified for potential future economic growth in the county based on public input and known areas where development is happening or being encouraged. Figure 4.6 below shows places where economic growth should be concentrated, but not limited to, for different economic sectors including manufacturing and industry, office space, and retail or other commercial.

Figure 5.6 Map of Future Economic Growth Areas





Transportation Strengths, Weaknesses, and Priorities

After review of existing conditions and public input from citizens of Lee County, the following strengths, weaknesses, and priorities have been identified:

Strengths

- Tax increment financing, enterprise zones, tax abatements, and other incentive tools are available in certain parts of the county
- Large hard working workforce
- Strong school districts and community college
- Great transportation network including highways, roads, river, trail, and air.
- Lots of land to develop
- Strong manufacturing base and workforce to fill this industry
- Potential fertilizer plant development
- Many successful festivals, fairs, rodeos, or reenactments, as well as great recreation opportunities that draw tourism to the county

Weaknesses

- Not enough incentives available in areas where development is needed
- Additional employment training opportunities are needed
- Not enough tourism promotion
- High unemployment rates
- Maintaining a younger competitive workforce
- High tax and utility rates
- Inadequate access to broadband technology

Priorities

- To create opportunities for value added industry in Lee County
- Improve economic development marketing efforts
- Identify sites for industrial, retail, and other commercial development
- Identify and provide incentives that support the expansion and retention of existing local businesses and also provide incentives that will assist in attracting new development to Lee County
- Promote tourism opportunities in Lee County
- Maximize funding spent on economic development by creating partnerships and securing funding from local, state, and federal agencies.



Economic Development Goals and Action Plan

After review of existing conditions, public input from citizens of Lee County, the following goals and recommended actions have been identified.

Goal #1

To create opportunities for value added industry in Lee County.

Recommended Actions

- Review and update economic development strategies, policies, and programs to respond to changing conditions
- Support broadband expansion throughout Lee County
- Support investments that increase local quality of life, which in turn will draw more highly qualified workforce and potential development

Goal #2

Improve economic development marketing efforts.

Recommended Actions

- Working closely with the Lee County Economic Development Group, Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce, Keokuk Economic Development Corporation, Great River Region, and other economic development agencies in Lee County on a coordinated region wide marketing campaign

Goal #3

Identify sites for industrial, retail, and other commercial development.

Recommended Actions

- Create inventory of available economic sites in Lee County
- Identify and prepare specific sites to be considered Certified Sites by the Iowa Economic Development Association
- Actively identify and rectify area Brownfield sites for future redevelopment



Goal #4

Identify and provide incentives that support the expansion and retention of existing local businesses and also provide incentives that will assist in attracting new development to Lee County.

Recommended Actions

- Review existing incentives available for existing companies and for new companies looking to locate in Lee County
- Provide support to local employers to help train or retrain workers
- Research incentives being offered by other entities throughout Iowa and the United States.

Goal #5

Promote tourism opportunities in Lee County.

Recommended Actions

- Work with local and regional tourism officials to enhance marketing efforts of Lee County attractions and events
- Provide support for existing attractions and events to maximize the amount of tourists coming to Lee County

Goal #6

Maximize funding spent on economic development by creating partnerships and securing funding from local, state, and federal agencies.

Recommended Actions

- Work with local economic development groups, SEIRPC, state and federal legislators, as well as other groups to identify funding to assist in retention and attraction of local businesses
- Focus new developments near existing infrastructure to reduce costs and increase density in commercial or industrial areas



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6.0 IMPLEMENTATION



Introduction

This section will focus on how to implement the goals identified within the general plan. In order to utilize the General Plan and use it as a valuable tool, implementation by the County Board of Supervisors is critical to achieve the goals of the Plan. To assist in the implementation process, an advisory committee will be created to help prioritize the goals identified in the plan and to assist in carrying out the necessary actions to implement the goals.

Purpose of the Advisory Committee

The Lee County General Plan was developed to help guide the next 20 years of development within the county. Because of the uncertainties inherent in long range planning, the implementation of the Lee County General Plan will be assisted by the creation of the Advisory Committee through the coordination of all communities involved. The committee will be responsible for prioritizing the goals for the County, creating specific objectives, determining responsible parties for implementing goals and objectives, and also monitor the changing environment of Lee County over time so that the action plan set forth in the planning document can be amended to reflect any changes.

Committee Composition

The Advisory Committee structure should be approved by the Lee County Board of Supervisors and include representatives from multiple sectors of the county including government officials, private businesses, tourism and economic development agencies, and concerned citizens, as well as others. The following list contains suggested members for this committee and should be altered as needed to best fit the purpose of the group:

- 1 appointed representative from each incorporated community
- 1 appointed representative from the county
- 1 appointee each from LCEDG, Keokuk EDC, Fort Madison EDC
- A minimum of 2 private industry representatives
- 1 citizen representative
- 1 representative from SEIRPC
- 1 representative from a local school district or community college