

# **Lawton, Iowa Comprehensive Plan**

## **August 2020**

**Funding provided by Woodbury County**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The City of Lawton partnered with Woodbury County to facilitate the completion of this Comprehensive Plan. The process included public input sessions and meetings with elected officials and staff.

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The Lawton Comprehensive Plan has been developed to provide assistance to the City of Lawton and Woodbury County officials to gain a better understanding of the current resources, needs, and challenges facing the City as they move into the future. The data provided here is a sample size of the data available and while certainly more data could be easily obtained it was a goal of the project to not repeat a lot of information available in other formats but to rather present data that can be beneficial to City staff and leadership in understanding the perspective of their community.

Lawton has a superb location along HWY 20 within 20 minutes of the Sioux City metro area. This location has been the catalyst to rapid residential growth over the past several years; however, it has also played a role in stunting commercial and industrial growth. The expansion of HWY 20 to four lanes east of Lawton and across the State of Iowa, is expected to increase traffic and communities like Lawton should see benefits of that increased traffic.

While the location is advantageous, other challenges exist for the community including a limiting flood plain area, traffic flow issues, and limited commercial and industrial services. The elected and appointed officials understand the challenges that face them and are prepared to address them in hopes of moving the community forward.

There are objectives outlined within this plan that have a relatively low cost to implement and that the City has already started working toward. These objectives will help to create a sense of community for residents and visitors to the City. We certainly encourage open communication with citizens as well as the marketing of the community to potential visitors and residents. Marketing should incorporate a variety of methods and should target individuals and groups that can lead to tourism and new residents within the community. The City should communicate, on an annual basis, to their residents the plan, as outlined here, the achievements, setbacks, and realignment of objectives.

While Lawton is primarily a residential community, there is a general understanding that they are a bedroom community for the Sioux City metro area. As a bedroom community Lawton may want to re-evaluate their expectations and focus resources on the role that they do best, creating a destination for families to locate.

The City should conduct an annual review of this document to ensure that their objectives are still valid and prioritized correctly. During that review the City can remove objectives that are no longer valid and add new objectives that have come up over the past twelve months. Additional planning may be of benefit to the City, especially the development of a five-year capital improvement plan that is based on available resources. This would be a good secondary step after the adoption of this Plan.

The Vision for the City of Lawton is:



**Create A Destination for Commercial and Residential Development My Maximizing Location and Displaying Small Town Values**

To achieve the Vision the Community Goals are:

1. Create A Sense of Community Through Development of Recreational Amenities and Gathering Spaces.
2. Make A Commitment to Invest in Infrastructure.
3. Support and Incentivize Commercial and Housing Development.
4. Grow Community Involvement Through Enhanced Community and Community Building Activities.

The following objectives have been identified and prioritized by the Lawton City Council:

Short Term Objectives (Typically 1-4 Years)

- Apply for Community Development Block Grant for Housing Rehabilitation (Goal 3)
- Utilize the Western Iowa Community Improvement Regional Housing Trust Fund (Goal 3)
- Implement Erosion Control Measure in The Main Water Control Channel Through Town (Goal 2)
- Continue Water Tower Maintenance Program (Goal 2)
- Install Water Meters at All Service Locations (Goal 2)
- Update Hazard Mitigation Plan (Goal 2)
- Implement Projects for Maintenance of the Transfer Manhole Level Indicators at The Wastewater Treatment Plant (Goal 2)
- Implement Project for Repairing Erosion of and Control on Wastewater Lagoon Banks (Goal 2)
- Community Gardens (Goal 1)
- Build Community Meeting Room / City Hall Facility / Expand Library Services (Goal 1)
- Incentivize Reinvestment in Downtown (Goal 3)
- Bring Sidewalks Within ADA Compliance (Goal 2)
- Work with IDOT To Find A Solution to HWY 20 Intersection (Goal 2)
- Sponsor A National Night Out Event (Goal 4)
- Create A Community Clean Up Day (Goal 4)
- Develop A Mayor's Youth Commission (Goal 4)
- Investigate School/City Partnership to Distribute Information (Goal 4)
- Start Lunch and Learn Series for Residents (Wednesday Coffees) (Goal 4)

Intermediate Term Objectives (Typically 5-10 Years)

- Start A Community Betterment Award Program (Goal 4)
- Partner with Woodbury County Regarding Homebase Iowa Program (Goal 3)

- Utilize Urban Renewal to Partner with Developer for A New Housing Sub-Division (Goal 3)
- Implement GIS Mapping for All Utilities (Goal 2)
- Attract New Business to Downtown and Encourage Growth of Existing Business (Goal 3)
- Talk to Landowners About Potential Development (Goal 3)
- Install Sidewalks Through Neighborhoods to Complete Pathways (Goal 2)
- Complete A Pavement Management Plan (Goal 2)
- Reconstruct Streets with Curb and Gutter and Storm Water (Goal 2)
- Expansion of Trail System (Goal 1)

#### Long Term Objectives (Typically 11-30 Years)

- Develop A Tax Abatement Plan (Goal 3)
- Install 6" Water Main in All Locations Where the Existing Main Is Less Than 6" and Complete Looping (Goal 2)
- School Lot Development (Goal 1)
- Develop Park at Ash Street (Goal 1)
- Grocery Store (Goal 3)
- Connect Trail System to Ballfields (Goal 1)
- Develop Community Marketing Campaign (Goal 4)

It has been our pleasure to work with City staff, and the elected officials of Lawton on the development of this plan. We are happy to provide any additional feedback or information that the City may need as it considers the implementation of objectives outlined in this Plan.

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## CHAPTER 2 – INTRODUCTION & PLANNING FRAMEWORK



- 2.01 Introduction**
- 2.02 Past Plans and Studies**
- 2.03 Planning Process**
- 2.04 Comparable Communities**

- 2.05 Iowa Smart Planning Principals**
- 2.06 Concepts and Cost Projections**
- 2.07 Community History**

### **2.01 INTRODUCTION**

A comprehensive plan is a planning tool that is intended to provide perspective on the makeup of a community while providing a set of planning goals for how the community could move forward. Generally, the goals are based on input from the community and discussions amongst elected and appointed City officials. The plan should not be viewed as a stagnate document, rather as something that should be regularly updated.

The information presented within this document is based on the data available and what was determined to be of some value in considering a view of the community. Even for small communities there is typically a lot of data available from both public and private sources. Some private sources of data are not willing to provide the data for public consumption. The reader should keep in mind that the data presented here is a minor fraction of the data available.

The purpose of the comprehensive plan is to provide elected officials with guidance and direction on moving their community forward based on an intensive planning process. While it provides guidance, it should not be seen as a set of rigid guidelines but rather as a set of objectives that can change as the community and available resources change. This is why it is highly recommended that cities plan to spend time, at least annually, reviewing and updating their plan.

We have attempted to provide known resources within the various chapters of this plan in an effort to assist elected and appointed officials in researching potential ways to help achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the plan. These resources can change and may or may not have resources available at the time the City works on a project. It would be recommended that the City begin researching these resources early in the process of developing a project. It may also be advisable for a City to consult with either a private planning firm, such as the City's consulting engineer, or a firm such as Simmering-Cory or a public firm such as a council of governments to assist them in researching, applying for, and administering certain grant type programs.

## **2.02 PAST PLANS AND STUDIES**



Preceding this Plan, the City had conducted previous studies and plans used by local officials to communicate, with the public, the goals and objectives of the City for the short and long-term future of the community.

- 2016 Rural Woodbury County Economic Development Needs Assessment Survey
- Lawton City Code
- Various Urban Renewal Plans Developed by the City
- Various annual City Budgets by Mayor, Council, and Staff
- Woodbury County Hazard Mitigation Plan

## **2.03 PLANNING PROCESS**

In 2016 Woodbury County through the Woodbury County Rural Economic Development Office solicited proposals from qualified companies to assist the County and eleven rural Woodbury County cities in the development of Comprehensive Plans. Simmering-Cory was selected by Woodbury County to facilitate these plans.

In late 2018 the City of Lawton began the process of developing their Comprehensive Plan utilizing a planning process facilitated by Simmering-Cory staff with assistance from elected officials and City staff. Simmering-Cory was assisted in the development of the Plan by I&S Group.

The planning process started with a kick-off meeting with City Council members, City staff, the project engineer, and project consultant (Project Team). The Project Team interviewed City staff and elected officials to obtain information regarding the various key components of the community including public infrastructure, City ordinances and regulations, City facilities and staffing levels, and community needs.

Following the kickoff meeting the project consultant conducted a community visioning session where residents were invited to come provide input on what the City's strengths and weaknesses were as well as what they saw as goals for the future. This input was then used by the consultant to work with City staff and elected officials to develop a series of potential objectives, a future land use map, and concept drawings.

The objectives were refined by the City Council over a series of meetings and finally prioritized. Following the development of a prioritized list of objectives a second public session was held to allow residents to view concept drawings and the prioritized list of objectives while providing any additional feedback to elected officials and the consultant.

This document summarizes that process and the elements of the input received as well as the prioritized objectives for the City moving forward. This document also provides some potential

resources and tools that the City may use to implement or to help achieve the objectives prioritized within this plan.

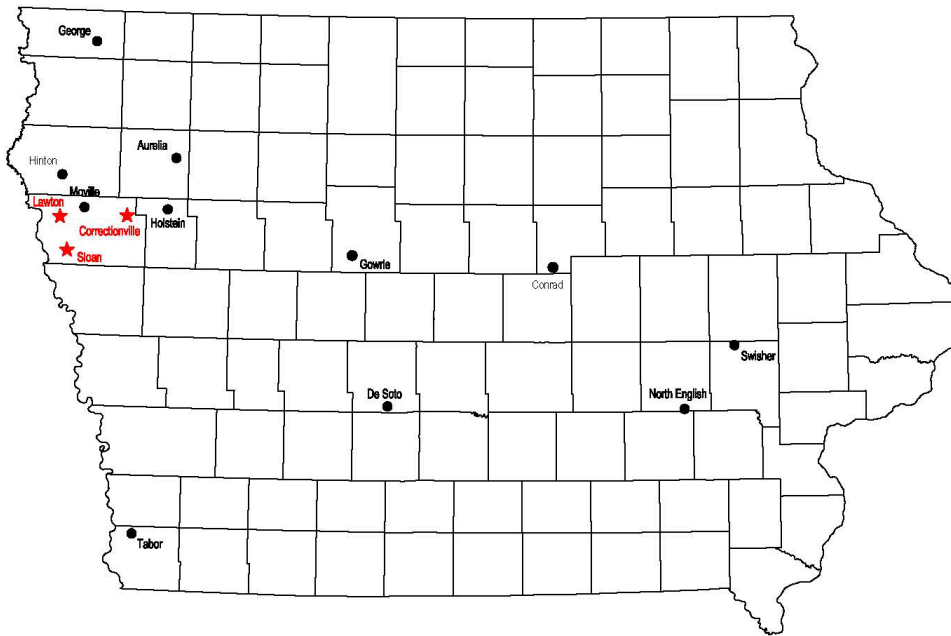
## 2.04 COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES

The desire to compare everything is human nature. Use of comparable cities, in this case, can help lead to a better understanding of the current situation and provide some assistance in finding solutions to similar challenges faced by the comparable group. For example, many times, we see communities, or members of a community, compare their current situation with that of other communities. Common examples include comparing utility rates, housing growth, tax values, and laws and regulations to solve common issues. In this way, we have provided the use of some comparison information within this Comprehensive Plan. The intent is to provide the City with further analysis of how the City of Lawton compares to cities of similar size and character.

The reader should note that no comparison is exact and that there can be many reasons to use one city as a comparable and just as many reasons to disqualify it as a comparable. For this plan, we have stayed with two comparable groups for the City of Lawton. Group one is a comparison based on geographic similarities, comparing the City of Lawton to the other cities within Woodbury County. The second comparable group is a group of cities first identified by similar population and then identified by proximity to a larger population center. The second set of comparable cities for the City of Lawton, as used in this plan are as follows:

CITY	Population	County
Aurelia	992	Cherokee
Conrad	1100	Grundy
Correctionville	821	Woodbury
De Soto	1089	Dallas
George	1055	Lyon
Gowrie	999	Webster
Hinton	938	Plymouth
Holstein	1391	Ida
Lawton	960	Woodbury
Moville	1634	Woodbury
North English	1022	Iowa/Keokuk
Sloan	979	Woodbury
Swisher	943	Johnson
Tabor	979	Fremont/Mills

Figure 1 - Comparable Cities Listing



*Figure 2 Map of Comparable Cities*

As noted above, there are many reasons to agree or disagree on the comparability of the Cities. Based on our knowledge of the communities involved we feel the selected communities can provide some level of analysis to the City of Lawton.

## **2.05 IOWA SMART PLANNING PRINCIPALS**

The Lawton Comprehensive Plan was developed utilizing the Iowa Smart Planning principals as developed in March 2011. These principals include the following:

1. Collaboration – Governmental, community, and individual stakeholders, including those outside the jurisdiction of the entity, are encouraged to be involved and provide comment during deliberation of planning, zoning, development, and resource management decisions and during implementation of such decisions. The state agency, local government and other public entity is encouraged to develop and implement a strategy to facilitate such participation.
2. Efficiency, Transparency, and Consistency – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should be undertaken to provide efficient, transparent, and consistent outcomes. Individuals, communities, regions, and governmental entities should share responsibility to promote the equitable distribution of development benefits and costs.



3. Clean, Renewable, and Efficient Energy – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should be undertaken to promote clean and renewable energy use and increased energy efficiency.
4. Occupational Diversity – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should promote increased diversity of employment and business opportunities, promote access to education and training, expand entrepreneurial opportunities and promote the establishment of businesses in locations near housing, infrastructure, and transportation.
5. Revitalization – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should facilitate the revitalization of established town centers and neighborhoods by promoting development that conserves land, protects historic resources, promotes pedestrian accessibility, and integrates different uses of property. Remediation and reuse of existing sites, structures, and infrastructure is preferred over new construction in undeveloped areas.
6. Housing Diversity – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should encourage diversity in the types of available housing, support the rehabilitation of existing housing, and promote the location of housing near transportation and employment centers.
7. Community Character – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should promote activities and development that are consistent with the character and architectural style of the community and should respond to local values regarding the physical character of the community.
8. Natural Resources & Agricultural Protection – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should emphasize protection, preservation, and restoration of natural resources, agricultural land and cultural and historic landscapes, and should increase the availability of open spaces and recreational facilities.
9. Sustainable Design – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should promote developments, buildings, and infrastructure that utilize sustainable design and construction standards and conserve natural resources by reducing waste and pollution through efficient use of land, energy, water, air, and materials.
10. Transportation Diversity – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should promote expanded transportation options for residents of the community. Consideration should be given to transportation options that maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel, and improve air quality.

The goals and objectives outlined within this plan have been built around these planning principals and efforts have been made to develop goals and objectives that adhere to the intent of these principals.

The community should strive to utilize these ten core principals as they continue to work toward the achievement of goals and objectives outlined in this plan as well as during development of future updates to their Comprehensive Plan.

## **2.06 CONCEPTS AND COST PROJECTIONS**

In an effort to provide the City and the reader with ideas for potential future concepts we have developed some conceptual drawings and preliminary cost projections. These are provided solely to provide ideas to the community and reader and are not intended to be final drawings, fully engineered, or construction ready documents. Should the City or a private developer wish to move forward with a concept provided here they should contract with a licensed engineering firm to fully vet the concept and design the project along with the development of current cost estimates based on actual designs.

Additionally, throughout this document the reader may see projections of costs, tax revenues, and other financial data. These numbers are based on the best data available to us at the time of drafting the Plan and should be recalculated and researched before making decisions. The numbers are provided to the City and the reader as examples of how the process works or how potentially the City could utilize the available tools, present at the time of drafting this document, to achieve their goals and objectives.

## **2.07 COMMUNITY HISTORY**

Similar to many communities the City of Lawton was built around a gathering of homes and the construction of a railroad line. The area originally called Truxton by the railroad company was renamed Lawton by Joseph Law who owned a large amount of land in the area. The railroad was completed in 1901.

Some of the early businesses in Lawton were the Shull Lumber Company, a grain elevator, and general store. Followed soon after by other businesses including another general store, a new post office building (the first post office was in the Smith General Store), butcher shop, and icehouse.

The first school classes were taught in the living room of Minnie Bappe. A year after she started teaching a new school was moved to Lawton and the Bappe house was converted into a dress making shop. In 1915 the first consolidated school was built.

The City has been challenged by several significant fires which destroyed critical community businesses. Additionally, the town was impacted by a significant prairie fire.

Town historians indicate that HWY 20 was built on the south edge of Lawton in 1952 and by 1960 a new town hall and fire station was constructed in Lawton.

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## 3.01 Objectives

## 3.02 Demographic Profile

## 3.03 Financial Review

## 3.04 Regional Location

### 3.01 OBJECTIVES

To plan effectively for the future, decision makers should have a good understanding of the community, its demographics, and profile. To assist decision makers in their work the following information is provided as a profile of the community along with some analysis.

### 3.02 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

It is important when doing any planning work to review and consider historic population trends and their impact on the future development and growth of the community. The overall population trend in Lawton has increased steadily over the past 100 years reaching a high in 2010 at 908.

Historic Population – Lawton, Iowa											
Year	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Population	138	243	259	263	254	324	406	447	482	697	908

Figure 3 - Lawton, Iowa Historic Population Data

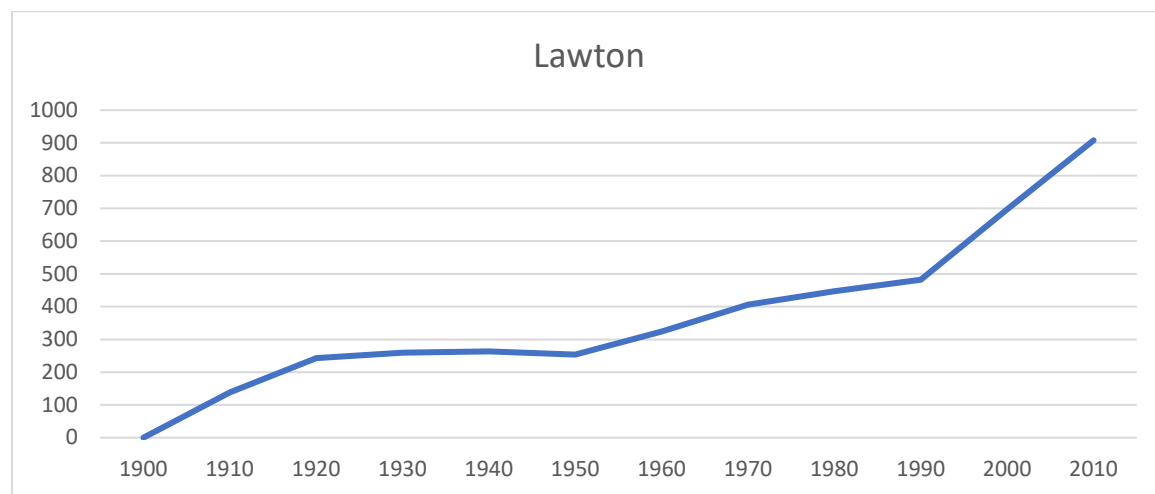
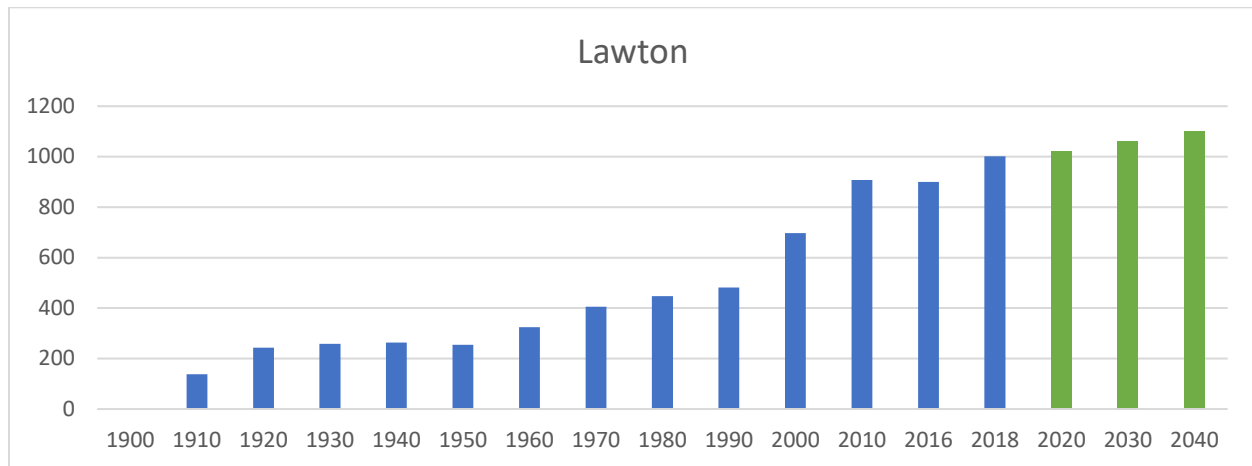


Figure 4 Lawton, Iowa Historic Population

Sources: US Census Bureau

The US Census 2018 population estimate for the City was 1,001, an estimated increase of 10.2%. A linear forecast projection shows that the population of Lawton would decrease slightly and level off over the next thirty years. However, this linear forecast would not seem accurate for Lawton based on its recent history, rather it would seem likely that the City would see a

continued small growth in population over the next thirty years. The following chart shows a forecast based on history trends for population in the City of Lawton.

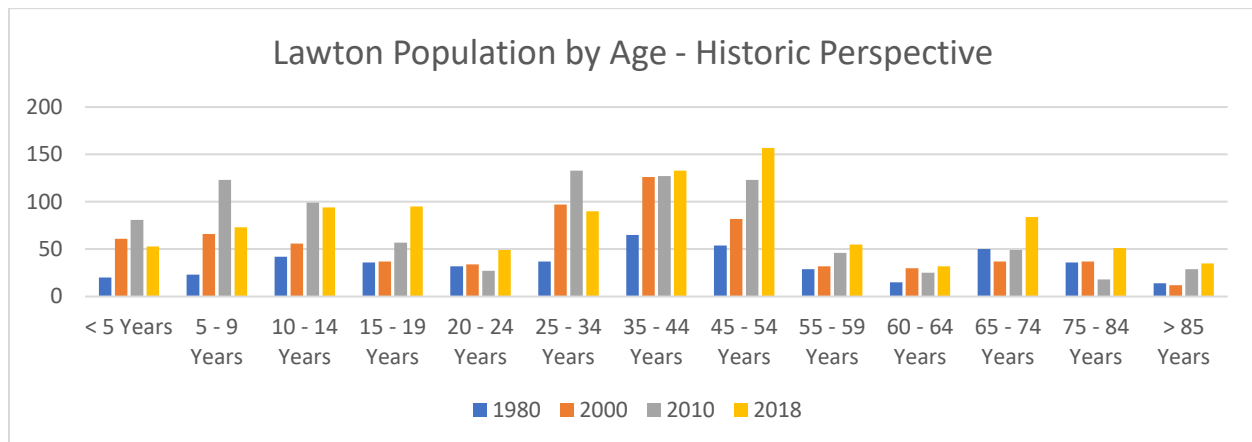


*Figure 5 - Lawton, Iowa Population Projection*

Source: US Census Bureau

As we look at the US Census data regarding the population, in more detail, we can determine more information regarding the residents of Lawton.

The following chart shows Lawton's population by age over the past 35 years to show a historical perspective.

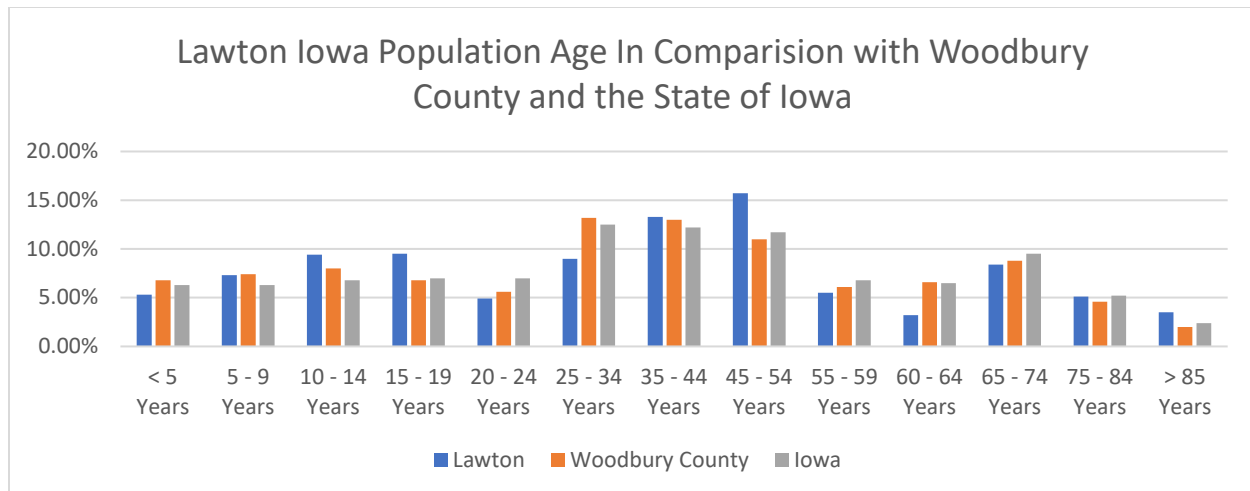


*Figure 6 - Lawton, Iowa Population by Age - Historic Perspective*

Source: US Census Bureau

Based on Figure 6, Lawton's population appears to be trending towards becoming younger over time. In 1980 18.76% of the City's population was 65 years of age or older and in the latest Census estimates 16.98% of the population was over 65 years of age. Meanwhile the population aged 14 and younger was 18.76% of the population in 1980 but 21.98% in the 2018 estimates.

The following chart compares Lawton's population age, as a percentage of the total population with that of Woodbury County and the State of Iowa based on the 2018 US Census estimates.



*Figure 7 - Lawton, Iowa Population Age in Comparison with Woodbury County and the State of Iowa*  
Source: US Census Bureau

Based on the 2018 American Community Survey data we can see that Lawton's population tends to be just slightly older than that of the county and the state. The median age data from the same data set would support that conclusion. However, the City of Lawton's population is trending toward younger while the State of Iowa population is trending to older.

	Lawton, Iowa	Woodbury County	State of Iowa
<b>Median Age</b>	39.3 Years	36.7 Years	38.10 Years

*Figure 8 - Lawton, Iowa Median Age in Comparison with Woodbury County and the State of Iowa*  
Sources: US Census Bureau

It may also be beneficial to look at the income of residents within the community. Two key elements of reviewing community income is the family income data and the median household income levels. The following chart shows the median household income for all the cities in Woodbury County based on the 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

	2000 Census	2012-2016 American Community Survey	2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates
<b>Anthon</b>	\$26,364	\$39,063	\$46,250
<b>Bronson</b>	\$52,727	\$60,938	\$62,188
<b>Correctionville</b>	\$24,615	\$39,688	\$42,063
<b>Cushing</b>	\$37,500	\$41,250	\$42,500
<b>Danbury</b>	\$33,409	\$49,250	\$50,000
<b>Hornick</b>	\$28,958	\$56,250	\$57,083
<b>Lawton</b>	\$52,917	\$68,750	\$80,125
<b>Moville</b>	\$42,222	\$60,769	\$64,792
<b>Oto</b>	\$22,857	\$36,875	N/A
<b>Pierson</b>	\$35,278	\$36,875	\$47,625
<b>Salix</b>	\$27,396	\$53,750	\$53,750
<b>Sergeant Bluff</b>	\$46,630	\$74,871	\$82,449
<b>Sioux City</b>	\$37,429	\$46,028	\$60,682
<b>Sloan</b>	\$38,026	\$54,659	\$62,656
<b>Smithland</b>	\$31,406	\$31,528	\$41,750
<b>Woodbury County</b>	\$38,509	\$49,010	\$61,516

Figure 9 Household Median Income Data Woodbury County Cities.

Source: US Census Bureau

The following chart shows the household median income levels for the group of comparable cities.

	2000 Census	2012-2016 American Community Survey	2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates
<b>Aurelia</b>	\$37,250	\$59,792	\$68,472
<b>Conrad</b>	\$42,396	\$44,063	\$45,000
<b>Correctionville</b>	\$24,615	\$39,688	\$42,063
<b>De Soto</b>	\$48,816	\$56,850	\$70,083
<b>George</b>	\$30,375	\$49,417	\$53,417
<b>Gowrie</b>	\$36,136	\$39,643	\$39,625
<b>Hinton</b>	\$49,375	\$65,000	\$66,429
<b>Holstein</b>	\$35,250	\$51,927	\$57,237
<b>Lawton</b>	\$52,917	\$68,750	\$80,125
<b>Moville</b>	\$42,222	\$60,769	\$64,792
<b>North English</b>	\$32,639	\$50,096	\$47,981
<b>Sloan</b>	\$38,026	\$54,659	\$62,656
<b>Swisher</b>	\$63,667	\$75,714	\$87,375
<b>Tabor</b>	\$36,750	\$56,389	\$57,500

Figure 10 Median Household Income for Comparable Cities.

Source: US Census Bureau



Based on the two tables above, Lawton has one of the higher median family income numbers both with Woodbury County (2<sup>nd</sup> highest) and within the comparable group (2<sup>nd</sup> highest). Between the 2000 Census and the 2018 estimates the City's median income has increased by 51.4%. The median income in Lawton also appears to be increasing at rates higher than those in the other cities in Woodbury County and the comparable group.

An additional perspective can be obtained by looking at the household incomes of residents by income range.

	% of Households in the 2000 Census	% of Households in the 2012-2016 American Community Survey	2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates
<b>Less than \$10,000</b>	2.4%	2.5%	3.2%
<b>\$10,000 to \$14,999</b>	4.4%	4.3%	4.5%
<b>\$15,000 to \$24,999</b>	10.9%	5.6%	5.5%
<b>\$25,000 to \$34,999</b>	6.5%	10.8%	7.7%
<b>\$35,000 to \$49,999</b>	20.6%	6.8%	7.4%
<b>\$50,000 to \$74,999</b>	29.8%	23.8%	18.7%
<b>\$75,000 to \$99,999</b>	17.3%	17.0%	18.7%
<b>\$100,000 to \$149,000</b>	8.1%	25.4%	25.6%
<b>\$150,000 to \$199,999</b>	0.0%	2.5%	7.7%
<b>\$200,000 or more</b>	0.0%	1.2%	1.1%

*Figure 11 Percentage of Household Income by Range*

Source: US Census Bureau

This data shows a gradual increase of income in the number of households from the 2000 Census to the 2018 American Community Survey estimates. Even with the increase in household income, just shy of 10% of the households' report income at less than \$15,000.

The 2018 American Community Survey estimate from the US Census show that of the population 25 years of age or older 3.5% of the residents in Lawton have not achieved a high school diploma or a higher degree. In 2010 the Census found that 4% of the population had not obtained a high school degree.

For the population 25 years and older the Census data shows the following educational achievements for residents of Lawton:

	2000 Census	2010 Census	2012-2016 American Community Survey Estimates
<b>Less than 9<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	2.7%	3.7%	1.6%
<b>9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade (no diploma)</b>	4.3%	0.0%	1.9%
<b>High School Graduate</b>	37.2%	34.1%	30.5%
<b>Some College, No Degree</b>	23.7%	19.9%	20.9%
<b>Associate Degree</b>	6.4%	14.6%	13.0%
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	19.9%	16.9%	24.3%
<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>	5.7%	10.9%	7.8%

Figure 12 Education Levels Population 25 Years and Older

Source: US Census Bureau

Based on the data available, the levels of educational attainment appear to increase slightly over time with the number of citizens who have not graduated high school decreasing since 2000.

Finally, a quick perspective on the housing stock within the City of Lawton is provided. A more in-depth look at housing within the City is provided in Chapter 5.

The 2018 Census estimates showed 403 housing units within the City of which 24 were identified as vacant. Of the 379 occupied units 319 were owner occupied and 60 were renter occupied. Of the owner-occupied units 201 reported that they were currently paying on a mortgage or loan while 118 were owned free and clear of any debt. The following table shows a comparison of housing data for the City of Lawton between the 2000 Census, 2010 Census, and the 2018 American Community Survey estimates.

	2000 Census	2010 Census	2018 American Community Survey Estimates
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	269	330	403
<b>Vacant Housing Units</b>	14	0	24
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	222	260	319
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	33	70	60

Figure 13 Lawton Basic Housing Data Across Three Census Surveys

Source: US Census

The following chart shows the home ownership status of the cities in Woodbury County based on the 2018 US Census Data.

	<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>Owner Occupied</b>	<b>Renter Occupied</b>	<b>Rental %</b>
<b>Anthon</b>	302	232	49	16.23%
<b>Bronson</b>	113	87	16	14.16%
<b>Correctionville</b>	411	295	38	9.25%
<b>Cushing</b>	116	75	19	16.38%
<b>Danbury</b>	176	125	31	17.61%
<b>Hornick</b>	109	96	6	5.50%
<b>Lawton</b>	403	319	60	14.89%
<b>Moville</b>	735	511	173	23.54%
<b>Oto</b>	66	27	21	31.82%
<b>Pierson</b>	184	111	40	21.74%
<b>Salix</b>	188	124	35	18.62%
<b>Sergeant Bluff</b>	1,796	1,347	432	24.05%
<b>Sioux City</b>	33,920	19,687	11,631	34.29%
<b>Sloan</b>	442	317	106	23.98%
<b>Smithland</b>	94	51	22	23.40%
<b>Woodbury County</b>	42,434	25,817	13,436	31.66%

*Figure 14 Basic Housing Data for Lawton and Woodbury County Cities*

Source: US Census Bureau

In reviewing the basic housing unit data for the City of Lawton, in comparison with the other cities within Woodbury County, they have a low percentage of rental units within the City's overall housing stock. The City also has a higher percentage of owner-occupied houses with a mortgage which is anticipated based on the strong, recent construction of new homes.

The reader may also find it helpful to see a comparison of the basic housing data for the comparable cities group. The data from the 2018 US Census for the comparable group of cities is shown in Figure 15.

	Total Housing Units	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Rental %
<b>Aurelia</b>	492	373	80	16.3%
<b>Conrad</b>	532	331	141	26.5%
<b>Correctionville</b>	411	295	38	9.25%
<b>De Soto</b>	412	320	67	16.3%
<b>George</b>	494	407	74	15.0%
<b>Gowrie</b>	443	324	111	25.1%
<b>Hinton</b>	360	277	65	18.1%
<b>Holstein</b>	771	511	123	16.0%
<b>Lawton</b>	403	319	60	14.89%
<b>Moville</b>	735	511	173	23.54%
<b>North English</b>	468	303	110	23.5%
<b>Sloan</b>	442	317	106	23.98%
<b>Swisher</b>	363	313	36	9.9%
<b>Tabor</b>	510	306	176	34.5%

Figure 15 Basic Housing Unit Data for Lawton and Comparable Group

Source: US Census Bureau

In looking at the comparable cities group, Lawton appears to have one of the lowest percentages of rental units as part of their overall housing portfolio. The lower percentage of rental units can translate into more permanent residents with a stronger vested interest in the long-term betterment of the City. Additionally, typically in those communities where rental units are a smaller portion of the City, the City experiences lower levels of nuisances and property maintenance issues than cities where the percentage of rentals is high. The lower percentage of rental units in Lawton is the third lowest in the comparable group.

### 3.03 FINANCIAL REVIEW

An important part of providing governmental services and creating a high level of quality of life within a community is based on the City's available resources including available revenues and how those revenues are used to provide services. In the limited scope of a Comprehensive Plan it is impossible to take a real in-depth review of a City's finances. However, we can review some basic data to identify some key characteristics and information to help with future planning. The comparison of data with similar communities may help identify potential avenues in which the City can make changes to help achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

#### *Tax Levy*

A major source of revenue for Iowa cities is through property taxes levied against property within their corporate limits. However, property taxes are not completely controlled by the local government. State legislation limits and controls the ability of the City to levy property taxes within their jurisdiction. These limits and controls include maximum levy limits, requirements for citizen involvement, state-controlled rollbacks, and state funded "backfill."

While taxes are an important revenue source for cities, they can also be a key metric in determining livability for a community and in the City's ability to attract new residents and businesses. Because of this it is important to look at the City's history of tax collection and consider its relationship to similar communities and its impact on current objectives and future goals of the City.

### **Property Tax System Overview**

For those readers of this document that may not have a good background understanding of the City property tax system the following brief description is provided.

Cities in Iowa have the ability to implement a number of individual tax levies including the following key levies:

**General Fund Levy** – This is the primary property tax levy utilized by all cities in Iowa. It is capped at \$8.10 per thousand dollars of taxable value by State law.

**Emergency Levy** – This levy is available to cities who have maximized the General Fund Levy at \$8.10 and can be used for General Fund expenses. This levy is capped by State law at \$0.27 per thousand dollars of taxable value.

**Ag Land Levy** – The Ag Land Levy is similar to the General Fund Levy and is used to tax agricultural land within the City's corporate limits. State law limits this levy to \$3.00375 per thousand dollars of assessed value.

**Trust and Agency Levy** – The *Code of Iowa* includes an additional levy for cities to cover the cost of employee benefits including retirement plans, FICA, and other costs related to benefits and taxes paid for employment services. This levy is not capped provided the funds are used for the authorized purpose.

For budget years beginning on or after July 1, 2020, the Council will be required to adopt a resolution establishing the total maximum property tax dollars that may be certified for levy. The maximum property tax dollars is equal to 102% of last year's budget for the general fund, emergency, and trust and agency levies. The City can exceed the 2% growth with a two-thirds majority vote of the Council. The ability to exceed the 2% is still limited by the General Fund Levy (\$8.10), the Emergency Levy (\$0.27), and any other caps identified in Chapter 384 of the *Code of Iowa*.

In addition to the above levies the State allows for a series of other levies that cities can use to achieve the desired results of the citizens within their community. Some of these levies would require a vote of the citizens in order to implement the levy. Some of the levies are specific to the way the taxes raised can be used. As an example, the *Code of Iowa* allows for a levy to support a public library (*Code of Iowa* Section 384.12(20)). Clearly, not all of the state authorized levies are reasonable for some cities to implement.

The following chart shows a history of tax levies used by the City of Lawton and the revenues generated by those levies.

	<b>FY 2012 - 2013</b>	<b>FY 2013 - 2014</b>	<b>FY 2014 - 2015</b>	<b>FY 2015 - 2016</b>	<b>FY 2016 - 2017</b>	<b>FY 2017 - 2018</b>	<b>FY 2018 - 2019</b>	<b>FY 2019 - 2020</b>
General Fund Levy	\$8.10	\$8.10	\$8.10	\$8.10	\$8.10	\$8.10	\$8.10	\$8.10
Emergency Levy	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Trust & Agency Levy	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Tax Levy</b>	<b>\$8.10</b>	<b>\$8.10</b>	<b>\$8.10</b>	<b>\$8.10</b>	<b>\$8.10</b>	<b>\$8.10</b>	<b>\$8.10</b>	<b>\$8.10</b>
Ag Land Levy	\$3.00375	\$3.00375	\$3.00375	\$3.00375	\$3.00375	\$3.00375	\$3.00375	\$3.00375
General Fund Revenue	\$176,149	\$181,076	\$182,711	\$186,672	\$197,011	\$235,983	\$266,903	\$277,667
Emergency Levy Revenue	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Trust & Agency Levy Revenue	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Ag Land Levy Revenues	\$813	\$846	\$909	\$938	\$966	\$955	\$1,074	\$1,107
<b>Total Tax Revenue</b>	<b>\$176,962</b>	<b>\$181,922</b>	<b>\$183,620</b>	<b>\$187,610</b>	<b>\$197,977</b>	<b>\$236,978</b>	<b>\$267,977</b>	<b>\$277,667</b>

*Figure 16 History of Tax Levy Use by Lawton*

\*Levy amounts are rounded to the nearest \$0.01.

While the Ag Land Levy doesn't provide the City with a significant amount of revenue it may be an important element as the City talks with prospective property owners in regard to bringing into the City limits agricultural land for future development purposes. Typically, ag land will see a slight decrease in taxes payable inside the City versus outside the City.

To provide an example take a proposed parcel near the town of Lawton that is not currently in the City limits. The example is a 40-acre parcel with a tax classification of A-Agriculture in Banner Township. The following chart shows a comparison of a piece of ag land in and outside of the corporate limits of Lawton.

	Outside of City Limits	Inside City Limits
<b>Assessed Value (2018)</b>	\$96,410	\$96,410
<b>Taxable Value (2018)</b>	\$52,493	\$52,493
<b>County Extension</b>	0.12727	0.12727
<b>Assessor</b>	0.49458	0.49458
<b>County Government</b>	9.72757	7.22786
<b>WIT</b>	0.90221	0.90221
<b>School</b>	15.54993	15.54993
<b>Township</b>	0.62456	0.00
<b>City (Ag Land Levy)</b>	0.00	3.00375
<b>State</b>	0.00280	0.00280
<b>Total Levy</b>	27.42892	27.3084
<b>Less: Ag Land Credit</b>	\$53.00	\$53.00
<b>Less: Family Farm Credit</b>	\$37.20	\$37.20
<b>Total Taxes Paid</b>	\$1,349.63	\$1,343.30

Figure 17 Comparison of Taxes for Ag Property In and Out of City limits.

Source: Woodbury County Assessor

A core component of the City's General Fund revenue source is the City's assessed and taxable values. Assessed value is the value of the property to include both a land value as well as the value added by structures (homes, out buildings, etc.) on the property. The assessed value of the property is then reduced by the "rollback" which is issued by the State of Iowa on an annual basis to get to a taxable value for the property which is the actual value on which taxes paid by the property owner are based.

House Assessed Value		\$150,000
Rollback (56.9180%)	X	0.569180
Taxable Value	=	85,377
Combined Tax Levy	32.40465	
Taxable Value Conversion	/ 1,000	
Tax Rate per Thousand of	=	0.032405
Taxable Value		
Taxes Paid	=	\$2,766.64
(before any credits)		

The following table shows a history of the City of Lawton's assessed value over the past eleven years for the major development classes of residential, commercial, industrial, and ag land. Cities also gain value through the taxation of utilities and railroads.

Fiscal Year	Ag Land	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Multi-Residential	Utilities	Total
FY 2010	225,980	37,628,790	3,990,120	0	0	464,153	42,309,043
FY 2011	365,104	38,930,580	4,065,140	0	0	467,597	43,828,421
FY 2012	358,830	39,964,210	4,049,540	0	0	475,710	44,848,290
FY 2013	470,100	41,375,700	4,039,750	0	0	486,543	46,372,093
FY 2014	470,100	42,098,850	4,155,890	0	0	498,966	47,223,806
FY 2015	697,370	43,354,450	3,552,130	0	0	417,066	48,021,016
FY 2016	698,420	44,371,630	3,803,740	0	0	475,529	49,349,319
FY 2017	697,210	50,815,220	2,068,330	0	1,994,930	493,720	56,069,410
FY 2018	697,210	51,954,030	2,019,080	0	1,995,320	497,352	57,162,992
FY 2019	656,730	52,939,400	1,943,730	0	1,995,320	494,938	58,030,118
FY 2020	656,730	53,978,690	1,935,770	0	1,995,320	484,985	59,051,495

Figure 18 Assessed Values by Tax Classification

Assessed values do not account for Military Exemptions

Source: Iowa Department of Management

Beginning in FY 2017 the State of Iowa divided out larger apartment complexes into a new classification of taxable property, multi-residential. Prior to FY 2017 those properties were classified as commercial for tax purposes.

An analysis of a history of Lawton's assessed value shows a steady valuation over the last eleven years with a significant increase between FY 2016 and FY 2017 increases.

The following table shows a history of the City of Lawton's taxable value over the past eleven years.

Fiscal Year	Ag Land	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Multi-Residential	Utilities	Total
FY 2010	241,960	18,262,098	4,065,140	0	0	342,055	22,911,253
FY 2011	241,960	18,262,098	4,065,140	0	0	342,055	22,911,253
FY 2012	247,647	19,394,602	4,049,540	0	0	355,489	24,047,278
FY 2013	270,500	20,998,904	4,039,750	0	0	353,245	25,662,399
FY 2014	281,748	22,235,186	4,155,890	0	0	349,477	27,022,301
FY 2015	302,656	23,584,899	3,374,539	0	0	337,229	27,599,323
FY 2016	312,207	24,729,858	3,423,366	0	0	339,626	28,805,057
FY 2017	331,170	29,852,141	1,817,172	0	1,646,142	297,781	33,674,406
FY 2018	321,461	28,266,414	1,861,497	0	1,720,628	322,607	32,492,607
FY 2019	357,576	29,445,371	1,749,357	0	1,571,314	295,093	33,418,711
FY 2020	368,639	30,723,597	1,742,193	0	1,496,492	266,150	34,597,071

Figure 19 Taxable Values by Tax Classification

Taxable values do not account for military exemptions

Source: Iowa Department of Management

It may also be beneficial to compare Lawton's taxable value to that of the comparable cities.



City	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Aurelia	25,168,694	28,130,760	29,005,766	28,691,453	31,967,113
Conrad	40,120,536	38,678,522	39,133,402	38,197,361	38,528,149
Correctionville	16,243,146	17,447,472	17,818,101	18,463,854	18,768,348
De Soto	30,195,538	30,435,410	32,535,864	35,844,679	43,575,879
George	25,393,437	25,465,090	26,052,040	29,154,458	29,882,707
Gowrie	24,120,995	24,994,725	26,261,915	25,915,467	26,508,467
Hinton	40,761,210	42,983,443	43,993,013	46,837,421	50,230,600
Holstein	42,962,648	47,365,402	50,950,431	54,048,476	56,603,747
Lawton	28,805,057	33,674,406	32,492,607	33,418,711	34,597,071
Moville	42,399,480	48,004,981	49,618,825	50,866,375	52,801,599
North English	22,229,897	22,775,087	23,119,787	22,569,949	24,267,850
Sloan	31,644,927	34,276,471	35,160,744	34,968,338	36,475,375
Swisher	33,217,287	36,306,888	37,999,710	40,715,098	42,885,703
Tabor	23,244,138	23,279,700	23,818,016	25,673,674	26,341,222

Figure 20 Taxable Values in Comparable Cities

Taxable values do not account for military exemptions

Source: Iowa Department of Management

The history of taxable value in Lawton is right in the middle of the comparable cities, with the eighth lowest, based on FY 2020 taxable values in the table above. A few of the cities have shown a more significant growth over the five-year period. The analysis shows that Lawton's growth in the taxable values has been steady with a little larger increase from FY 2016 to FY 2017.

The overall tax revenues for the City are also impacted by existing Urban Renewal Areas where increment is currently being captured and redirected toward eligible and approved projects within the Urban Renewal Area.

The history of taxes levied on property in Lawton as shown in Figure 16 are not uncommon in smaller communities. Typically, in smaller communities, similar to Lawton, the demand to control the property taxes plays a significant role in how the City develops their budgets and ultimately impacts the future projects that the City undertakes. Likewise, cities similar to Lawton view their tax levy rate as a driver to growth and development in comparison to larger cities within commuting distance. Because of the view of the tax levy as a driver for economic development, both housing as well as commercial, it is important to look at the City's tax levy in comparison to those cities that they may potentially be competing with for growth.

The following table shows a four-year history of the tax levy for all of the cities in Woodbury County for FYs, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020.

	<b>FY 2017 City Tax Levy*</b>	<b>FY 2018 City Tax Levy*</b>	<b>FY 2019 City Tax Levy*</b>	<b>FY 2020 City Tax Levy</b>
<b>Anthon</b>	12.28859	12.16432	12.10095	11.79554
<b>Bronson</b>	10.04590	9.45491	9.34513	9.16197
<b>Correctionville</b>	16.89206	16.87790	16.96071	16.82762
<b>Cushing</b>	14.01625	13.87949	13.91032	13.87893
<b>Danbury</b>	7.05948	6.20600	6.19750	6.18247
<b>Hornick</b>	8.10	9.81885	9.84070	9.81985
<b>Lawton</b>	<b>8.10</b>	<b>8.10</b>	<b>8.10</b>	<b>8.10</b>
<b>Moville</b>	8.79550	10.05707	9.43503	9.37031
<b>Oto</b>	13.44203	13.16232	8.10	8.10
<b>Pierson</b>	18.23155	17.90852	18.08676	18.02080
<b>Salix</b>	8.10	8.33470	8.37	8.37
<b>Sergeant Bluff</b>	12.60060	12.38638	12.38638	12.99638
<b>Sioux City</b>	16.06708	15.77081	16.07070	15.68010
<b>Sloan</b>	8.10	8.10	8.10	8.10
<b>Smithland</b>	13.05062	13.07479	16.42754	18.16746

Figure 21 Four-year History of City Tax Levies Woodbury County Cities

\*Tax rates shown as per 1,000 of taxable value

The following table compares a four-year history of tax levies for the City of Lawton to the other cities in the comparable group.

	<b>FY 2017 City Tax Levy*</b>	<b>FY 2018 City Tax Levy*</b>	<b>FY 2019 City Tax Levy*</b>	<b>FY 2020 City Tax Levy</b>
<b>Aurelia</b>	10.73567	10.53538	12.13272	12.13434
<b>Conrad</b>	11.26876	13.93561	12.95004	11.05334
<b>Correctionville</b>	16.89206	16.87790	16.96071	16.82762
<b>De Soto</b>	12.63714	12.88252	12.81933	12.70163
<b>George</b>	16.67285	15.99030	13.20229	14.85330
<b>Gowrie</b>	18.04144	14.95931	16.98503	17.71024
<b>Hinton</b>	11.57478	10.74558	11.67405	11.13341
<b>Holstein</b>	15.75796	15.65850	15.53176	15.59934
<b>Lawton</b>	<b>8.10</b>	<b>8.10</b>	<b>8.10</b>	<b>8.10</b>
<b>Moville</b>	8.79550	10.05707	9.43503	9.37031
<b>North English</b>	7.49249	7.49249	7.49249	7.49249
<b>Sloan</b>	8.10	8.10	8.10	8.10
<b>Swisher</b>	8.10	8.37053	8.59314	11.46215
<b>Tabor</b>	10.74483	14.64661	14.01684	13.99690

Figure 22 Four-year History of Tax Levy Rates Comparable Cities

\*Tax rates shown as per 1,000 of taxable value

Within both sets of comparable cities data, Lawton maintains one of the lowest rates for FY 2020.

Since the City's tax levy is only a portion of the total taxes paid on property it is also beneficial to look at the combined levy for the cities in Woodbury County. The combined levy takes into account the County, school district, and other taxing entities' levies.

FY 2020 Combined Tax Levy	
Danbury	27.03237
Sloan	27.53245
Salix	27.80245
Oto	27.86408
Hornick	29.25230
Moville	29.56628
Anthon	31.52962
Sergeant Bluff	31.64307
<b>Lawton</b>	<b>32.40465</b>
Bronson	33.46662
Cushing	34.86021
Smithland	37.59991
Correctionville	37.80890
Pierson	38.80519
Sioux City	39.91965

*Figure 23 Woodbury County Iowa Combined Tax Levy Rates*

Below is a comparable of the combined tax levy for the comparable group that includes cities outside of Woodbury County.

	FY 2020 Combined Tax Levy
Aurelia	26.90034
Sloan	27.53245
Conrad	28.42513
Moville	29.56628
Hinton	30.97830
North English	32.19083
<b>Lawton</b>	<b>32.40465</b>
Holstein	33.08193
George	34.53898
Gowrie	34.77271
Tabor	35.95559
Swisher	36.22963
De Soto	36.81614
Correctionville	37.80890

*Figure 24 Comparable Group Tax Levy Comparison*

Lawton's tax rate when comparing to the City tax levy of the comparable groups (Figures 21 and 22) is one of the lowest rates. When looking at the combined tax levy for all cities in the County, Lawton's rate is the eighth highest, in the middle of the Woodbury County cities. Within the comparable cities group that includes communities outside of Woodbury County, Lawton has the seventh highest tax rate, once again in the middle of the comparable cities. It should be noted that the City does not have control over the levies imposed by the other taxing entities.

The following chart shows the impact of that combined levy on a couple of sample properties in the Woodbury comparable group and what the property owner would pay, in taxes for each City.

	<b>Fiscal Year 2020 Estimated Taxes Before Any Credits</b>		
	<b>Residential Property</b>	<b>Residential Property</b>	<b>Commercial Property</b>
<b>Assessed Value</b>	100,000.00	175,000.00	150,000.00
<b>Rollback</b>	56.9180%	56.9180%	90.00%
<b>Taxable Value</b>	56,918	99,607	\$135,000
Anthon	\$1,794.60	\$3,140.57	\$4,256.50
Bronson	\$1,904.83	\$3,333.47	\$4,517.94
Correctionville	\$2,152.01	\$3,766.03	\$5,104.20
Cushing	\$1,984.17	\$3,472.32	\$4,706.13
Danbury	\$1,538.63	\$2,692.61	\$3,649.37
Hornick	\$1,664.98	\$2,913.73	\$3,949.06
<b>Lawton</b>	<b>\$1,844.41</b>	<b>\$3,227.73</b>	<b>\$4,374.63</b>
Moville	\$1,682.85	\$2,945.01	\$3,991.45
Oto	\$1,585.97	\$2,775.46	\$3,761.65
Pierson	\$2,208.71	\$3,865.27	\$5,238.70
Salix	\$1,582.46	\$2,769.32	\$3,756.33
Sergeant Bluff	\$1,801.06	\$3,151.87	\$4,271.81
Sioux City	\$2,272.15	\$3,976.28	\$5,389.15
Sloan	\$1,567.09	\$2,742.42	\$3,716.88
Smithland	\$2,140.11	\$3,745.21	\$5,075.99

Figure 25 Comparable Taxes Paid by City

Similarly, the City can look at the combined tax levy rates and taxes due on sample properties within the other comparable Iowa cities.

	<b>Fiscal Year 2020 Estimated Taxes Before Any Credits</b>		
	<b>Residential Property</b>	<b>Residential Property</b>	<b>Commercial Property</b>
<b>Assessed Value</b>	100,000.00	175,000.00	150,000.00
<b>Rollback</b>	56.9180%	56.9180%	90.00%
<b>Taxable Value</b>	\$56,918	\$99,607	\$135,000
Aurelia	\$1,531.11	\$2,681.16	\$3,631.55
Conrad	\$1,617.90	\$2,831.34	\$3,837.39
Correctionville	\$2,152.01	\$3,766.03	\$5,104.20
De Soto	\$2,095.50	\$3,667.15	\$4,970.18
George	\$1,965.89	\$3,440.32	\$4,662.76
Gowrie	\$1,979.19	\$3,463.61	\$4,694.32
Hinton	\$1,763.22	\$3,085.66	\$4,182.07
Holstein	\$1,882.96	\$3,295.19	\$4,466.06
<b>Lawton</b>	<b>\$1,844.41</b>	<b>\$3,227.73</b>	<b>\$4,374.63</b>
Moville	\$1,682.85	\$2,945.01	\$3,991.45
North English	\$1,832.24	\$3,206.43	\$4,345.76
Sloan	\$1,567.09	\$2,742.42	\$3,716.88
Swisher	\$2,062.12	\$3,608.72	\$4,891.00
Tabor	\$2,046.52	\$3,581.43	\$4,854.00

Figure 26 Sample Property Taxes in Comparable Group

A City's tax rates can affect the growth of a community. Community tax rates could be the difference for some companies and developers deciding if they want to invest in a community. As an example, an individual looking to develop a new home assessed at \$200,000 in comparable communities could see taxes as follows:

	<b>Lawton</b>	<b>Bronson</b>	<b>Correctionville</b>
<b>Assessed Value</b>	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
<b>Rollback (Residential)</b>	56.9180%	56.9180%	56.9180%
<b>Taxable Value</b>	\$113,836	\$113,836	\$113,836
<b>Combined Levy</b>	\$32.40465/1,000	\$33.46662/1,000	\$37.80890/1,000
<b>Taxes Paid</b>	\$3,689	\$3,810	\$4,304

Figure 27 Impact of Tax Levy on New Home

Based on Figure 27 someone looking to develop a new home within a smaller City in Woodbury County could see an annual savings of a little over \$100 per year on property taxes by developing in Lawton instead of Bronson and approximately \$600 in annual savings by developing in Lawton instead of Correctionville.

## Utility Rates

One financial component that can be used in a quality of life analysis is the cost of utilities such as water, sanitary sewer, and garbage costs (combined utility costs). These costs are often used to compare communities as part of a quality of life component.

The City of Lawton provides residents with municipal services for water and sanitary sewer, and contracts with an outside provider for garbage service.

Comparing utility rates can provide some perspective on how the City is doing when compared to other groups. For comparable purposes we provide the current rates with other cities in Woodbury County as well as rates compared to those in the comparable groups. Certainly, the circumstances including type of treatment, age of treatment system, and any needs for regulatory compliance impact the overall rates. As an example, the State of Iowa is currently working through new regulations on the discharge water from wastewater treatment plants across the state. Rates for sanitary sewer can be impacted greatly for those communities that have received new limitations and are mandated to make improvements versus those cities who have not yet received their new permit requirements.

### Water Utility

Figure 28 shows the City's water rates in comparison with the rates for the other Woodbury County cities based on an average home usage of 5,000 gallons per month. Some cities bill on a quarterly basis. In those cases, the rates have been converted to monthly rates to provide for a good comparison.

	Base Rate	Per 1,000 Gallons Rate	Minimum Bill	Cost for Avg. Household*
<b>Anthon</b>	\$25.12	\$9.27	\$25.12	\$61.20
<b>Bronson</b>	\$48.00	\$1.68	\$48.00	\$49.68
<b>Correctionville</b>	\$7.51	\$3.57	\$7.51	\$25.36
<b>Cushing</b>	\$18.00	\$3.50	\$18.00	\$35.50
<b>Danbury</b>	\$15.00	\$7.00	\$15.00	\$50.00
<b>Hornick</b>	\$40.00	\$3.00	\$40.00	\$43.00
<b>Lawton</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>	<b>\$2.65</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>	<b>\$30.60</b>
<b>Moville</b>	\$11.00	\$3.25	\$11.00	\$24.00
<b>Oto</b>	\$40.00	\$2.50	\$40.00	\$45.00
<b>Pierson</b>	\$21.00	\$2.50	\$21.00	\$33.50
<b>Salix</b>	\$31.00	\$4.50	\$31.00	\$63.50
<b>Sergeant Bluff</b>	\$18.15	\$6.05	\$18.15	\$42.35
<b>Sioux City</b>	\$13.48	\$4.12	\$13.48	\$34.08
<b>Sloan</b>	\$6.50	\$2.00	\$6.50	\$14.50
<b>Smithland</b>	\$20.43	\$3.00	\$20.43	\$20.43

Figure 28 Water Rates in Comparison to Other Woodbury County Cities.

\*Average Household figured based on 5,000 gallons monthly usage.

## Sewer Utility

The following table shows the City's sanitary sewer rates in comparison with the other Woodbury County cities based on an average water usage of 5,000 gallons per home per month. As noted above some cities bill for utility services on a quarterly basis. In those cases, the rates have been converted to monthly rates to provide for a good comparison.

	Base Rate	Per 1,000 Gallon Rate	Minimum Bill	Cost for Avg. Household*
<b>Anthon</b>	\$13.60	\$5.01	\$13.60	\$33.68
<b>Bronson</b>	N/A	N/A	\$13.00	\$13.00
<b>Correctionville</b>	\$19.51	\$4.32	\$19.51	\$41.11
<b>Cushing</b>	\$18.00	\$0.00	\$18.00	\$18.00
<b>Danbury</b>	\$3.50	\$3.50	\$17.50	\$21.00
<b>Hornick</b>	\$14.00	\$0.00	\$14.00	\$14.00
<b>Lawton</b>	<b>\$15.00</b>	<b>\$1.85</b>	<b>\$15.00</b>	<b>\$22.40</b>
<b>Moville</b>	\$19.50	\$2.10	\$19.50	\$27.90
<b>Oto</b>	\$21.50	\$0.00	\$21.50	\$21.50
<b>Pierson</b>	\$23.50	\$2.50	\$23.50	\$36.00
<b>Salix</b>	\$7.00	\$2.85	\$7.00	\$21.25
<b>Sergeant Bluff</b>	\$7.50	\$7.75	\$7.50	\$46.25
<b>Sioux City</b>	\$10.95	\$5.49	\$10.95	\$31.48
<b>Sloan</b>	\$26.00	\$5.00	\$26.00	\$46.00
<b>Smithland</b>	\$53.00	\$3.00	\$53.00	\$53.00

*Figure 29 Sewer Rates in Comparison with Other Woodbury County Cities.*

\*Average Household figured based on 5,000 gallons monthly water usage.



## Average Monthly Combined Utility Cost

The combined cost of municipal utilities can impact the quality of life aspects and be a factor in families and individuals determining where to purchase a home. The following chart shows the combined costs of municipal utilities within Woodbury County. Utility rates, figured based on usage, are calculated at an average home usage of 5,000 gallons.

	Water Service	Sewer Service	Garbage	Storm Water Utility	Total Average Monthly Cost
<b>Anthon</b>	\$62.20	\$33.68	\$19.33	\$0.00	\$115.21
<b>Bronson</b>	\$49.68	\$13.00	\$12.00	\$0.00	\$74.68
<b>Correctionville</b>	\$25.36	\$41.11	\$20.25	\$0.00	\$86.72
<b>Cushing</b>	\$35.50	\$18.00	\$21.25	\$0.00	\$74.75
<b>Danbury</b>	\$50.00	\$21.00	\$21.50	\$0	\$92.51
<b>Hornick</b>	\$43.00	\$14.00	\$20.00	\$0.00	\$77.00
<b>Lawton</b>	<b>\$30.60</b>	<b>\$22.40</b>	<b>\$18.05*</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$71.05</b>
<b>Moville</b>	\$24.00	\$27.90	\$11.00	\$1.50	\$64.40
<b>Oto</b>	\$45.00	\$21.50	\$20.35	\$0.00	\$86.85
<b>Pierson</b>	\$33.50	\$36.00	\$20.75	\$0.00	\$90.25
<b>Salix</b>	\$63.50	\$21.25	\$16.55	\$0.00	\$101.30
<b>Sergeant Bluff</b>	\$42.35	\$46.25	\$15.00	\$2.15	\$111.80
<b>Sloan</b>	\$14.50	\$46.00	\$16.00	\$0.00	\$76.50
<b>Sioux City</b>	\$34.08	\$30.19	\$16.63	\$1.25	\$82.15
<b>Smithland</b>	\$20.43	\$53.00	\$12.36	\$0.00	\$85.79

*Figure 30 Combined utility rates in comparison to other Woodbury County cities.*

Costs based on an average water usage of 5,000 gallons per month for residential customers.

\*Garbage fee includes the seasonal yard waste prorated across all twelve months.

Based on the combined utility rates within the Woodbury County cities comparable group, Lawton has the second lowest utility rates.

Reviewing rates within the immediate area provides one sample; however, it may also be beneficial to use a wider sample size for comparisons. The following chart shows the average utility rates for the City compared with the other cities in our comparable group.

	Water Service	Sewer Service	Garbage	Storm Water Utility	Total Average Monthly Cost
<b>Aurelia</b>	\$38.19	\$39.97	\$22.16 <sup>1</sup>	\$1.00	\$100.32
<b>Conrad</b>	\$41.37	\$37.28	\$0.00 <sup>2</sup>	\$4.00	\$82.65
<b>Correctionville</b>	\$25.36	\$41.11	\$15.50	\$0.00	\$86.72
<b>De Soto</b>	\$67.73	\$77.33	\$15.00	\$0.00	\$160.06
<b>George</b>	\$22.00	\$29.50	N/A	\$0.00	\$51.50
<b>Gowrie</b>	\$35.25	\$35.25	\$21.25	\$0.00	\$91.75
<b>Hinton</b>	\$20.50	\$18.00	\$12.00	\$0.00	\$50.50
<b>Holstein</b>	\$37.64	\$33.04	\$18.75 <sup>3</sup>	\$2.00	\$91.43
<b>Lawton</b>	\$30.60	\$22.40	\$18.05*	\$0.00	\$71.05
<b>Moville</b>	\$24.00	\$27.90	\$11.00	\$1.50	\$64.40
<b>North English</b>	\$64.25	\$23.00	\$14.00	\$0.00	\$101.25
<b>Sloan</b>	\$14.50	\$46.00	\$16.00	\$0.00	\$76.50
<b>Swisher</b>	N/A <sup>4</sup>	\$50.50	\$12.50	\$5.00	\$68.00
<b>Tabor</b>	\$29.75	\$20.75	\$2.50 <sup>5</sup>	\$0.00	\$53.00

*Figure 31 Combined utility rates compared with comparable cities group.*

Costs based on an average water usage of 5,000 gallons per month for residential customers.

\*Garbage fee includes the seasonal yard waste prorated across all twelve months.

Based on a look at the comparable group from around the State, the City of Lawton's rates are the sixth lowest rate.

### *Bonding and Debt Service*

Cities have the ability under Iowa law to issue public debt to finance public improvements. Many larger cities will effectively manage a number of debt instruments to fund a variety of capital improvement projects related to infrastructure improvements as well as quality of life improvements. Smaller cities in Iowa tend to be more geared toward not using debt except when they are faced with circumstances where they have no other choice. The smaller cities cherish lower tax levies and debt tends to have an immediate impact on the City's tax levy.

Cities have a couple of general options for issuing debt. They can issue General Obligation Bonds that are backed by the general taxable value of the City. While these bonds can be abated by other revenue sources, such as local option sales tax, hotel/motel tax, or utility revenues, they are still backed by the City's ability to levy taxes on the property owners within

<sup>1</sup> Aurelia only charges for a landfill fee, collection of garbage is done by separate contract.

<sup>2</sup> Conrad garbage collection is done by private service.

<sup>3</sup> Plus, fuel charge changes monthly. Paid to private contractor, collected by the City.

<sup>4</sup> Swisher residents are on private wells.

<sup>5</sup> Tabor fee is only the landfill cost, does not include collection of garbage which is done by private contractor.

the City. These General Obligation debt instruments are limited by Iowa Code to a statutory debt limit which is limited to 5% of the City's total assessed value. The debt limit is typically recalculated on an annual basis based on the beginning of the City's fiscal year.

In addition, to bonds issued by the city for improvements within the City, any debt certified within an Urban Renewal Area, including tax rebates, are counted toward the City's outstanding debt and taken into consideration when determining the amount of debt capacity available at a given time.

The following chart shows the July 1, 2019 debt limit and amount of outstanding General Obligation Debt for the cities included in the comparable group which is based on each city's assessed value.

City	July 1, 2019 Debt Limit	Outstanding Debt (% of Debt Limit)
<i>Aurelia</i>	\$2,495,545	\$0.00 (0%)
<i>Conrad</i>	\$3,467,443	\$826,624 (23.84%)
<i>Correctionville</i>	\$1,464,705	\$480,000 (32.77%)
<i>De Soto</i>	\$3,261,389	\$615,000 (10.58%)
<i>George</i>	\$2,625,950	\$395,000 (15.04%)
<i>Gowrie</i>	\$2,047,909	\$1,051,449 (51.34%)
<i>Hinton</i>	\$3,916,821	\$1,345,000 (34.34%)
<i>Holstein</i>	\$4,173,286	\$1,849,000 (44.31%)
<i>Lawton</i>	\$2,948,315	\$55,000 (1.9%)
<i>Moville</i>	\$4,400,110	\$1,406,190 (31.96%)
<i>North English</i>	\$2,072,799	\$30,450 (1.47%)
<i>Sloan</i>	\$2,859,074	\$0.00 (0%)
<i>Swisher</i>	\$3,690,139	\$0.00 (0%)
<i>Tabor</i>	\$2,211,938	\$85,902 (3.88%)

*Figure 32 Debt Limit Status Comparison of Comparable Cities*

Source: Annual Financial Report and Outstanding Obligation Report

As shown above the City of Lawton has utilized a very small portion of their General Obligation debt capacity to fund infrastructure in the new housing subdivision. The final payment on this debt was made on June 1, 2020.

A second type of debt that cities can utilize is revenue bonds. These bonds would be backed, not by the general obligation or taxes of the City, but rather by the revenues of the utility fund for which they are issued. Obviously, these bonds can only be used for improvements to those specific utilities. Typically, these bonds are used for water and sanitary sewer projects. Use of revenue bonds will typically require a City to fund and hold a reserve account which when combined with the payback of the annual principal and interest payments results in a significant rate increase. This can leave a City with a decision between issuing revenue bonds which require a rate increase or issuing General Obligation bonds which impact the City's tax levy.

At the time of this report, Lawton does not have any outstanding revenue bonds.

### *Other Revenues*

The City also utilizes other revenues including Road Use Tax funds, Local Option Sales Tax funds, and Tax Increment Financing funds.

Road Use Tax funds are specifically allocated by the *Code of Iowa* for use on the City's streets including street maintenance and repairs. The City receives about \$110,000 annually in Road Use Tax funds.

The City receives about \$115,000 annually in Local Option Sales Tax revenues. Twenty percent of these funds are required to go to property tax relief and the other 80% can be used on any projects the City Council deems necessary.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds allocated to the City must be used for authorized projects within the City's Urban Renewal Plan(s). Projects in general are typically used to help encourage and promote development within the City.

Urban Renewal or TIF can be a helpful tool, yet some communities may not want to utilize the tool for philosophical reasons. Urban Renewal and TIF is a tool that allows a City to capture a large portion of the taxes paid on new valuation or growth in valuation generated by new development or redevelopment within an Urban Renewal Area. Collected incremental taxes can only be used for projects that are identified within the Urban Renewal Plan or amendments to the Plan.

The City of Lawton has utilized Urban Renewal as a tool for community growth with the development of Urban Renewal Areas. The City has two Urban Renewal Areas – Char Mac Addition Lawton Urban Renewal Area and West Creek Development Urban Renewal Area.

The Char Mac Addition Urban Renewal Area was created in 1999 to assist the City in promoting economic development through commercial and residential development, including multifamily house and assisted living.

The Lawton West Creek Development Urban Renewal Plan was created in 2007 to assist in the development of the West Creek development, a residential housing subdivision. There have been no amendments to the plan. The plan includes a specific subdivision on the City's west

side. A number of homes have been built in the area but there are still lots available for development. The Urban Renewal Plan allowed for the use of increment funds to help with the cost of public infrastructure as well as a set aside to improve low-to-moderate income housing within the entire City of Lawton.

Balancing the use of these other revenues with general fund revenue and receipts from the City's enterprise funds to accomplish the goals of the City can be a challenge at times but is critical with the increased costs of operating a City and the limited resources available to cities.

### **3.04 REGIONAL LOCATION**

Lawton is located in Woodbury County, Iowa along HWY 20 about 17 minutes outside of the Sioux City metro area. The recent improvements to HWY 20 to make it a four-lane highway from Sioux City to Dubuque have increased traffic along the route, enhancing the potential for long term growth within the City. Regionally, Lawton is within 12 miles of the Sioux City metro area including Sergeant Bluff, Iowa, South Sioux City, Nebraska, and North Sioux City, South Dakota. Additionally, Lawton is 34.2 miles west of Holstein, Iowa and 44.7 miles from Cherokee, Iowa via HWYs 20 and 31.

Lawton offers residents a minimal number of commercial services including a convenience store, a couple of local niche shops, and a restaurant. Many of the residents travel to Sioux City for shopping and commercial services.

#### **Air Travel**

The City has access to a regional airport with commercial service available at Sioux Gateway Airport in Sioux City, Iowa. In addition to commercial aviation services, the airport also provides general aviation services including fueling, hangar rentals, aircraft maintenance, and avionics sales and service.

Additionally, Lawton is within an hour and forty-five-minute drive of Eppley Airfield, a medium-hub airport providing commercial air service, in Omaha, Nebraska.

#### **Regional Transit / Bus Service**

The City is serviced by a regional transit service provided through Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO) and the Siouxland Regional Transit System (SRTS). The SRTS service provides transportation both within the City of Lawton and also between cities within their service district which includes all of Woodbury County and the City of Sioux City.

#### **Railroad**

Lawton's history shows that the City was built around a railroad line. As the railroads moved toward more efficiency several towns, including Lawton, lost their railroad access. Currently there is no railroad access within the community.

## Regional Trails

While the Comprehensive Plan process was underway the City was working on the development of a trail within the community. In addition, residents may travel to Sioux City where trails are available or to Correctionville where a shorter trail runs between the City and Woodbury County's Little Sioux Park.

Regionally, the connection of a local trail within the City of Lawton with trails in neighboring communities (Correctionville, Merville, Sioux City, or Bronson) may be difficult achievements, especially without the partnership of the County and the Iowa Department of Transportation.

**4.01 Overview****4.02 Community Visioning Data****4.02 Community Vision Statement & Goals****4.01 OVERVIEW**

Community participation is an important part of the Comprehensive Plan process. Public participation can be difficult to obtain especially in today's connected but busy world. For this reason, the City was consulted on what methods would work best for them and a discussion was held with City staff and elected officials on ways to market the event to the community in order to achieve a better turnout.

To gather public input on the future of the community the City surveyed the community utilizing a written survey distributed via the City utility bills and then held a public visioning session at the beginning of the process. In addition, information was gathered from a 2016 Rural Woodbury County Economic Development Needs Assessment Survey conducted by Woodbury County.

At the end of the project the City held a second public visioning session to allow the public the opportunity to see concepts developed during the plan and review objectives prioritized by the City Council. The City had a good response to the written survey but low attendance at both the initial visioning session and the second visioning session.

**4.02 COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT & GOALS**

A community vision statement is intended to be a guiding statement for the community that then encompasses a set of goals which include specific objectives that the Council prioritized into short, intermediate, and long-term timeframes. We recommend to cities that they prioritize in terms of timeframes by which they would like to work toward completion rather than prioritizing 1-10, etc. as many times objectives are dynamic and may only impact one of the many functions of City government.

The Community Vision, Goals, and Objectives were developed after hearing input from community members and looking at various data points, many of which are presented within this plan. The City Council then prioritized the objectives.

The Vision for the City of Lawton is:

**Create A Destination for Commercial and Residential Development My Maximizing Location and Displaying Small Town Values**

To achieve the Vision the Community Goals are:

1. Create A Sense of Community Through Development of Recreational Amenities and Gathering Spaces.
2. Make A Commitment to Invest in Infrastructure.
3. Support and Incentivize Commercial and Housing Development.
4. Grow Community Involvement Through Enhanced Community and Community Building Activities.

The following objectives have been identified and prioritized by the Lawton City Council:

#### Short Term Objectives (Typically 1-4 Years)

- Apply for Community Development Block Grant for Housing Rehabilitation (Goal 3)
- Utilize the Western Iowa Community Improvement Regional Housing Trust Fund (Goal 3)
- Implement Erosion Control Measure in The Main Water Control Channel Through Town (Goal 2)
- Continue Water Tower Maintenance Program (Goal 2)
- Install Water Meters at All Service Locations (Goal 2)
- Update Hazard Mitigation Plan (Goal 2)
- Implement Projects for Maintenance of the Transfer Manhole Level Indicators at The Wastewater Treatment Plant (Goal 2)
- Implement Project for Repairing Erosion of and Control on Wastewater Lagoon Banks (Goal 2)
- Community Gardens (Goal 1)
- Build Community Meeting Room / City Hall Facility / Expand Library Services (Goal 1)
- Incentivize Reinvestment in Downtown (Goal 3)
- Bring Sidewalks Within ADA Compliance (Goal 2)
- Work with IDOT To Find A Solution to HWY 20 Intersection (Goal 2)
- Sponsor A National Night Out Event (Goal 4)
- Create A Community Clean Up Day (Goal 4)
- Develop A Mayor's Youth Commission (Goal 4)
- Investigate School/City Partnership to Distribute Information (Goal 4)
- Start Lunch and Learn Series for Residents (Wednesday Coffees) (Goal 4)

#### Intermediate Term Objectives (Typically 5-10 Years)

- Start A Community Betterment Award Program (Goal 4)
- Partner with Woodbury County Regarding Homebase Iowa Program (Goal 3)
- Utilize Urban Renewal to Partner with Developer for A New Housing Sub-Division (Goal 3)
- Implement GIS Mapping for All Utilities (Goal 2)
- Attract New Business to Downtown and Encourage Growth of Existing Business (Goal 3)



- Talk to Landowners About Potential Development (Goal 3)
- Install Sidewalks Through Neighborhoods to Complete Pathways (Goal 2)
- Complete A Pavement Management Plan (Goal 2)
- Reconstruct Streets with Curb and Gutter and Storm Water (Goal 2)
- Expansion of Trail System (Goal 1)

#### Long Term Objectives (Typically 11-30 Years)

- Develop A Tax Abatement Plan (Goal 3)
- Install 6" Water Main in All Location Where the Existing Main Is Less Than 6" and Complete Looping (Goal 2)
- School Lot Development (Goal 1)
- Develop Park at Ash Street (Goal 1)
- Grocery Store (Goal 3)
- Connect Trail System to Ballfields (Goal 1)
- Develop Community Marketing Campaign (Goal 4)

### 4.03 COMMUNITY VISIONING DATA

Input received from the visioning tools used in Lawton included the following information:

#### MY COMMUNITY IS GREAT BECAUSE . . .

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Friendly People (19)                    | • Quiet (14)                                 |
| • Great Mayor                             | • Supportive to New Comers                   |
| • Small Community (15)                    | • Streets Maintained Well (2)                |
| • Great town                              | • Honest Caring Council (2)                  |
| • Desire from Young Families to Live Here | • Limited Access from Highway (Safer)        |
| • Opportunity for Small Town Feel         | • Plenty of Police Presence (2)              |
| • Close to A Large City (10)              | • Close to Sioux City but Not Sioux City (5) |
| • Schools Continuously Improving          | • Able to Dispose of Grass and Lawn Waste    |
| • Good People Live Here                   | • Safe (12)                                  |
| • Parks                                   | • Lawton Exchange                            |
| • Bank (2)                                | • Neighborhoods Look After Each Other (7)    |
| • Upholstery Shop                         | • Mostly Military and Police Families        |
| • Post Office (3)                         | • Clean & Well Maintained (6)                |
| • City Hall                               | • Walk to Downtown Needs                     |
| • Pronto (2)                              | • Country Feel                               |
| • Wiatel                                  | • No Cops                                    |
| • Fire Department (2)                     | • Very Few Businesses – Less People          |
| • CharMac                                 |  |
| • Good People Backing the School          |  |

- Cheaper Taxes than Sioux City (2)
- Residents Take Pride in their Property (3)
- Don't Worry About Neighbors
- Small Good School (11)
- Good Churches
- Wonderful Friends
- Sense of Community (2)
- No Sidewalks
- Positive Community Members
- ATVs & Golf Carts Allowed
- Low Traffic
- New Fiber has Helped (2)
- Family Oriented Activities
- Good Highway between Sioux City
- No Apartments
- Low Taxes

### CHALLENGES FOR LAWTON ARE . . .

- Residents Not Stopping at Linden and Oak Stop Sign (2)
- Night Walkers Dressed in Black
- Water
- No Place for Kids to Play in Cold Weather
- Downtown Area Needs Update
- Landlocked – No Area for Growth (5)
- No Grocery Store (7)
- Lacks Public Transportation
- Handicap Facilities Need Improvement
- No Pizza or Chinese Food Delivery
- Vacant Buildings on Main Street
- Nice to Park Trailers on Street
- Street Lighting
- Entering HWY 20 Going East (3)
- Water Bill is Higher than Other Cities
- Late Fee is Unreasonable
- Snow Removal
- Snow Removal Downtown Area
- Communication Needs or Concerns to Public Works
- A Council that is in it for Themselves and Friends (2)
- Lack of Maintenance
- Lots of Garbage – Dirty City
- Must Travel for Most Needs (5)
- High Taxes (5)
- Lack of Community Activities (3)
- No Gathering Space
- Fair Implementation of Enforcement
- Long Time for Council to Act
- Tight Budget
- Limited Shopping
- No Brake Ordinance for Semi's
- Businesses Don't Support Com. Coffee
- Something for Kids (3)
- Storm Water
- New Business (2)
- High Prices at Pronto
- Keep Businesses In Lawton
- Be Vigilant About Negative Activity
- No Pool (2)
- No Golf Course (2)
- Small Town Politics Seem Unfair
- Parking on Main Drag
- Lack of Walking Paths
- Walking on HWY N. of Town
- HWY 20 in the Winter (2)
- Internet Not the Best
- Get and Keep City Workers
- Council Take Responsibility
- Maintain Infrastructure
- Lack of Daycare Options

- Lack of Amenities
- No Bar
- No Elementary School
- No Dollar General
- Lack of City Support for Fire Dept.
- Lack of Sidewalks (3)
- No Medical Facilities (2)
- No Stores
- Not Welcoming
- Mail Delivery to Homes
- Bedroom Community – Involvement
- Relative High Cost
- No Decent Convenience Store
- Community Unity
- Groups Need to Fundraise vs. Ask City
- Lack of Basic Service Providers
- No Library
- Stop Sign N. End of Cedar
- No Community Center
- No Family Oriented Places
- No Police Service
- No Retail Exchange

### **MY VISION FOR MY COMMUNITY IS . . .**

- Updating Fire and Rescue Services
- More Street Lights (3)
- Recreation Center (3)
- Pool (10)
- Community Centric Events
- Update Downtown Area (6)
- Expansion of Housing (9)
- Expansion of Business (11)
- Handicapped Facilities
- Grocery Store (2)
- Positive Attitude Toward New Businesses (2)
- Public Transportation
- Senior Citizens and the Very Young
- Golf Course (2)
- Lower Taxes (2)
- Dog Park
- Tennis Courts (3)
- Zoning (2)
- Green Energy
- Apply Regulations to All Areas
- Entrance In and Out of Lawton
- Turning Lane on HWY 20
- A Nature Park on Both Sides of Elliot Creek
- More Accountable System of Communication for Public Works
- Better Storm Water Management (2)
- Better Street Maintenance Downtown
- Sidewalks to School (2)
- Cleaner Streets
- Reasonable Utility Prices
- Infrastructure (4)
- Town to Include Residents and Their Opinions
- Improve Streets (4)
- Affordable Community Center (3)
- Library
- Park Space (7)
- Need Office Space in Downtown
- Assist Owners with Sidewalk Repairs
- Senior Independent Living Apts.
- Affordable Housing (2)
- Traffic Control
- City Maintenance
- Beautification (3)

- Expand City
- Industrial Area (2)
- Trails and Sidewalk (6)
- Lower Taxes (3)
- Keep Separation from Sioux City
- Develop to the North and South (3)
- Stay Focused on the Citizens
- Fire/EMS/Comm Hall/City Hall
- Splash Pad (5)
- Keep Up the Good Work
- Keep Town Drug Free
- Keep Gang Free
- Adult Activities
- Businesses Help Build Community
- Update Friendship Center (3)
- Sports Complex (2)
- Benches
- Shopping
- Place for Young People to Hang Out
- Council Think Outside the Box
- Movie Night Downtown
- Incentivize Business (TIF) (2)
- Encourage Resident Participation
- Schools – High School Upgrade
- Annex Houses Across HWY
- City Support on Bldg Project (Fire Station)
- Older Kids Activities (3)
- Annexation
- Medical Facilities
- Be More Welcoming
- Purchasing a Street Cleaner
- Fire Dept. Expansion
- Curbs on Streets Without Them
- More Visible Law Enforcement
- Enclosed Shelter House (2)
- Maintaining School Enrollment
- Noise Abatement on HWY 20
- Retain Post Office
- Repurpose Cedar St. Bldg.
- Bring the Community Together
- Stop the Non-Sense (Pet Fee Tax; Sidewalk to Nowhere; Exercise Path)
- Walking Bridge Over HWY 20
- Connecting Bike Trail to Sioux City, Merville, Bronson
- Ordinances for Property Maintenance
- Eliminate Vacant Buildings
- Things for Families
- Prevent City from Being Landlocked
- Attract a Garage
- Ag Equestrian Center
- Farmer's Market
- Update Basketball Court (3)
- Restaurant (3)
- Condo's
- Council Meetings Later
- Signs to Promote Business (2)
- Homemade Craft Store
- HWY By-Pass
- Electronic Sign on HWY
- Long Term Plan

The 2016 Rural Woodbury County Economic Development Needs Assessment Survey mirrored many of the comments that were heard during the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

The 2016 Assessment identified that Lawton's positives included a good school district, proximity to Sioux City, and the significant growth in residential development in the past few years.

The respondents to the survey identified the following challenges for the City of Lawton including, affordable housing, limited area for future growth, small business district, the conversion of commercial buildings to residential units, and that it is hard to retain businesses.

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**5.01 Objectives**  
**5.02 Housing Profile**  
**5.03 Windshield Survey Findings**  
**5.04 Data Summary**

**5.05 Strategies for Preservation of Existing Housing Stock**  
**5.06 Strategies for New Housing Development**

## 5.01 OBJECTIVES

Following public input and review of potential objectives, related to housing, the City Council prioritized the following objectives for improving and expanding housing within the City of Lawton:

Short Term Objectives (Typically 1-4 Years)

- Apply for Community Development Block Grant for Housing Rehabilitation (Goal 3)
- Utilize Western Iowa Community Improvement Regional Housing Trust Fund (Goal 3)

Intermediate Term Objectives (Typically 5-10 Years)

- Start a Community Betterment Award (Goal 4)
- Partner with Woodbury County Regarding Homebase Iowa Program (Goal 3)
- Utilize Urban Renewal to Partner with Developer for New Housing Sub-Division (Goal 3)

Long Term Objectives (Typically 11-30 Years)

- Develop A Tax Abatement Plan (Goal 3)

## 5.02 HOUSING PROFILE

According to the 2018 American Community Survey the City of Lawton has 403 housing units; however, the 2018 windshield survey that was conducted as a part of this Comprehensive Plan identified 327 housing units. The reader should note that the number of housing units may vary depending on source throughout this report. For example, the number of units identified by the 2018 American Community Survey are an estimate and the numbers for the windshield survey are based on buildings and not units, so an eight-unit apartment would be counted as one building during the windshield survey. Based on the US Census numbers, the City of Lawton has 403 housing units which is slightly lower than the average number of total housing units for cities in the comparable group (469).

The following chart shows the age of housing units in Lawton, Iowa based on the 2018 American Community Survey Data.

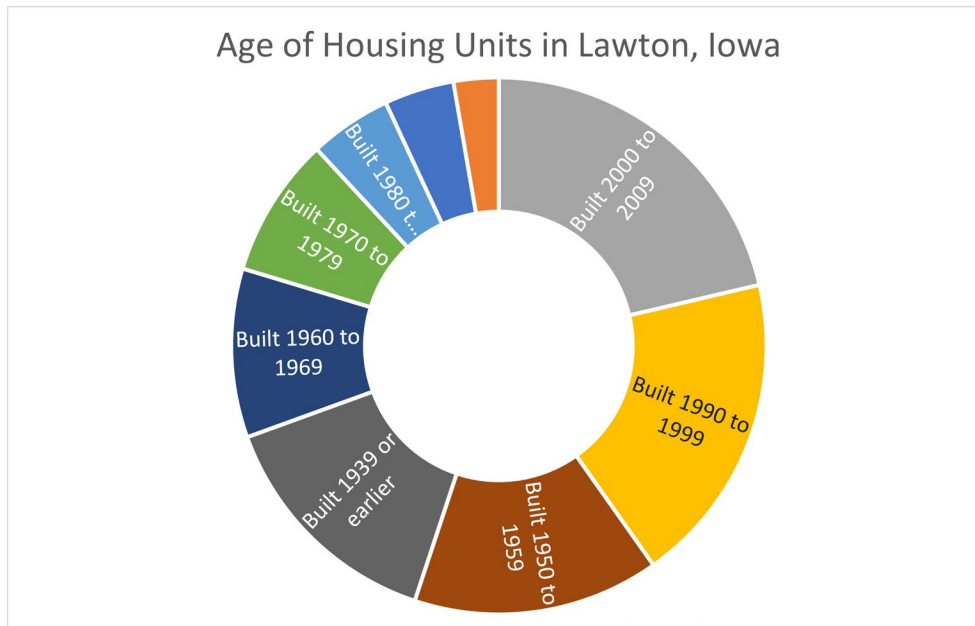


Figure 33 Age of Housing Units in Lawton, Iowa

Source: 2018 American Community Survey

The data in the 2018 American Community Survey shows that a majority of the homes in Lawton were built after 1970 (60%). The census data shows 28 new homes were built after 2010. The following chart shows the age of Lawton's housing units in comparison to the comparable cities.

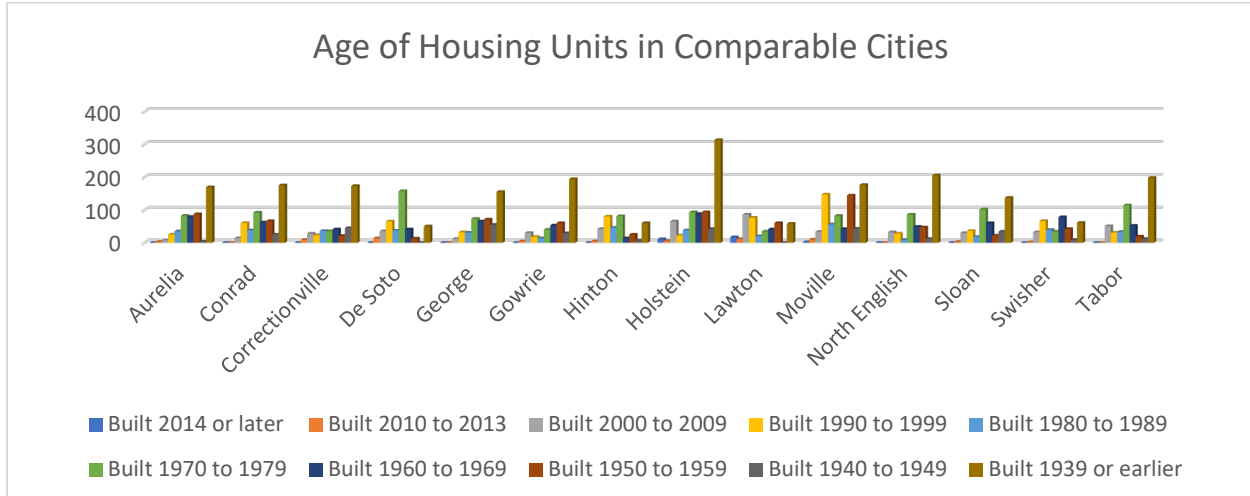


Figure 34 Age of Lawton's Housing Units in Comparison to the Comparable Cities.

Source: 2018 American Community Survey

The Census data is not current or very accurate for recent housing developments and as such we may also want to consider data from the State of Iowa, reported by individual communities based on their building permit data. This data shows that there is a continuation of slow housing growth within the City of Lawton. The following chart shows the number of new residential building permits issued by the City per year and the total value of the permits for the City of Lawton.



	Number of Units Permitted	Value of Units
<b>2018</b>	3	\$450,000
<b>2017</b>	2	\$528,500
<b>2016</b>	3	\$795,000
<b>2015</b>	5	\$975,000
<b>2014</b>	4	\$795,000
<b>2013</b>	6	\$1,045,000

Figure 35 Lawton Six Year History of Housing Building Permits

Source: Iowa Data Center

The City does have an active subdivision on the west side of town with primarily larger, higher value homes being developed. Lot sales in this subdivision have slowed down some from the original construction of the subdivision; however, the City is still experiencing growth in this area. Within the past couple of years, a commercial structure was constructed within this new subdivision generating discussion regarding the need for implementing a zoning code.

The following chart shows the number of housing units built for each City and the related value of the housing units between 2015 and 2018 for each of the cities in the comparable group.

	Housing Units Permitted Between 2015 and 2018		
	Number of Units	Value of Units	Average Value
<b>Aurelia</b>	3	\$675,000	\$225,000
<b>Conrad</b>	2	\$420,000	\$210,000
<b>Correctionville</b>	5	\$1,275,000	\$255,000
<b>De Soto</b>	2	\$397,969	\$198,985
<b>George</b>	3	\$325,000	\$108,333
<b>Gowrie</b>	1	\$318,754	\$318,754
<b>Hinton</b>	8	\$1,923,000	\$240,375
<b>Holstein</b>	11	\$2,545,000	\$231,364
<b>Lawton</b>	13	\$2,748,500	\$211,423
<b>Moville</b>	13	\$2,230,000	171,538
<b>North English</b>	No Data Available		
<b>Sloan</b>	14	\$2,386,000	\$170,428
<b>Swisher</b>	No Data Available		
<b>Tabor</b>	2	\$340,000	\$170,000

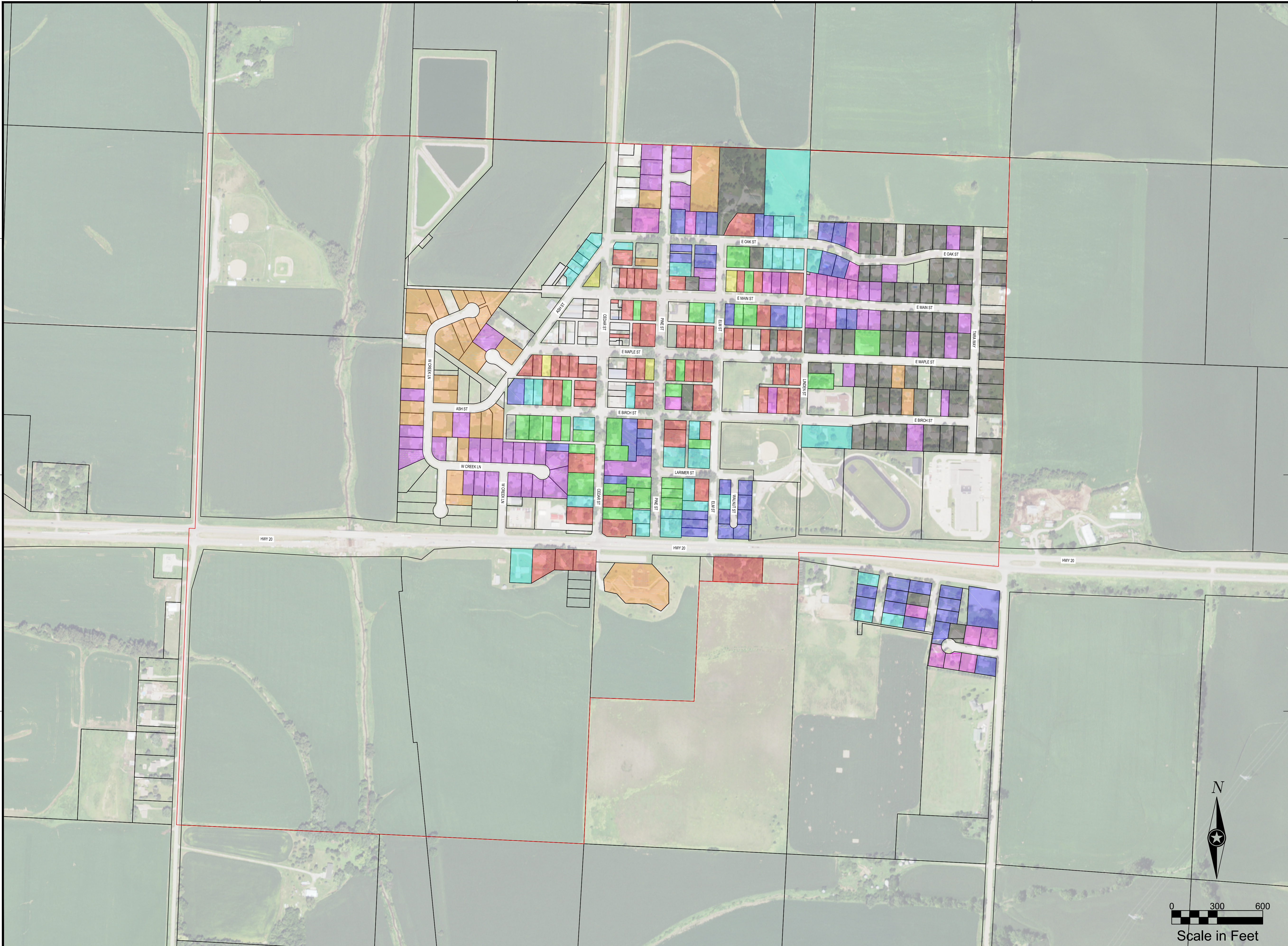
Figure 36 Three-Year History of Housing Development in Comparable Cities Group

Source: Iowa Data Center

Housing growth has occurred in a majority of the cities within the comparable group including Lawton over the four-year analysis period. In that period of time Lawton and Sloan, both cities in Woodbury County, have seen the highest number of new units constructed. The average unit value in Lawton ranks in the middle of the other cities in the grouping.

The map on the following page shows the age of structures based on the year constructed as recorded in the Woodbury County Assessor's database.







As the data in Figure 33 shows, housing growth has been stable in most of the comparable cities. Lawton has a generally newer housing stock as indicated by the Census data shown in Figure 34 and under 40% of the City's housing units are over 50 years old which puts their housing stock as some of the newest in the comparable group. The following table compares the percentage of housing units that are over 50 years old in the comparable groups.

	Aurelia	Conrad	Correctionville	De Soto	George	Gowrie	Hinton	Holstein	Lawton	Moville	North English	Sloan	Swisher	Tabor
% of Homes 50 Years or Older	68	69	62	25	70	76	29	70	39	55	67	57	52	55

Figure 37 Percentage of Homes 50 Years and Older in Comparable Cities

Many communities will also look at the value of their current housing stock. The 2018 American Community Survey provides data on the value of Lawton's owner-occupied housing stock as shown in the following chart.

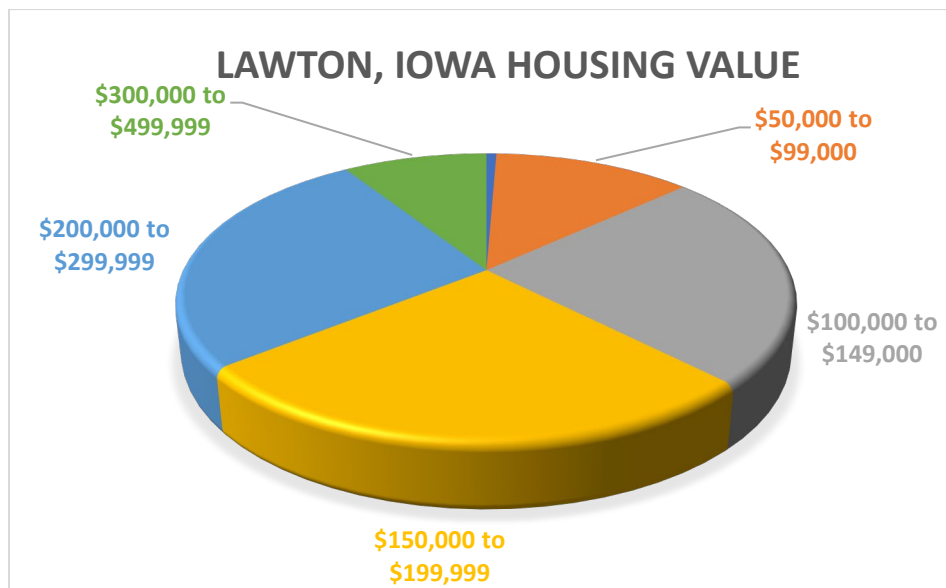


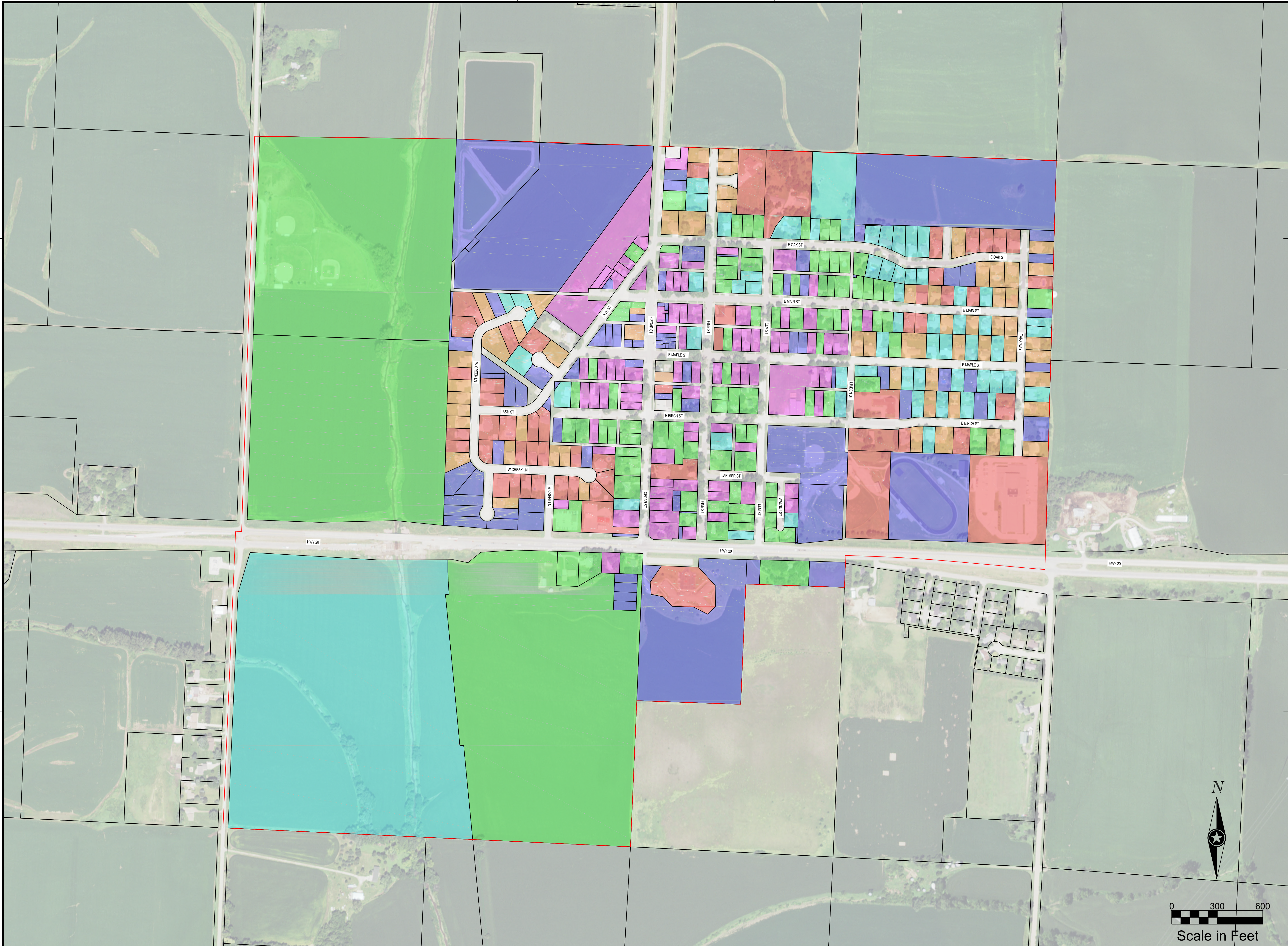
Figure 38 Lawton Housing Value

Source: 2018 American Community Survey

The following map shows property values within the City of Lawton based on data from the Woodbury County Assessor.

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LEGEND

	CORPORATE BOUNDARY
	PARCELS
	\$0 - \$50K
	\$50K - \$100K
	\$100K - \$150K
	\$150K - \$200K
	\$200K - \$250K
	\$250K - ABOVE

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PROJECT

CITY OF LAWTON

LAWTON IOWA

REVISION SCHEDULE		
DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY

PROJECT NO.	17-20943
CAD FILE NAME	LAWTON MAPS
DRAWN BY	
DESIGNED BY	
REVIEWED BY	
ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE	
CLIENT PROJECT NO.	

PROPERTY VALUE MAP



Housing value is another area where we can look at the comparable cities group and potentially gather some insight into how Lawton compares with other cities of a similar demographic and size. In the following table we can see that Lawton's homes are spread fairly evenly across the spectrum of values and that there is not a large concentration of homes at the lower values.

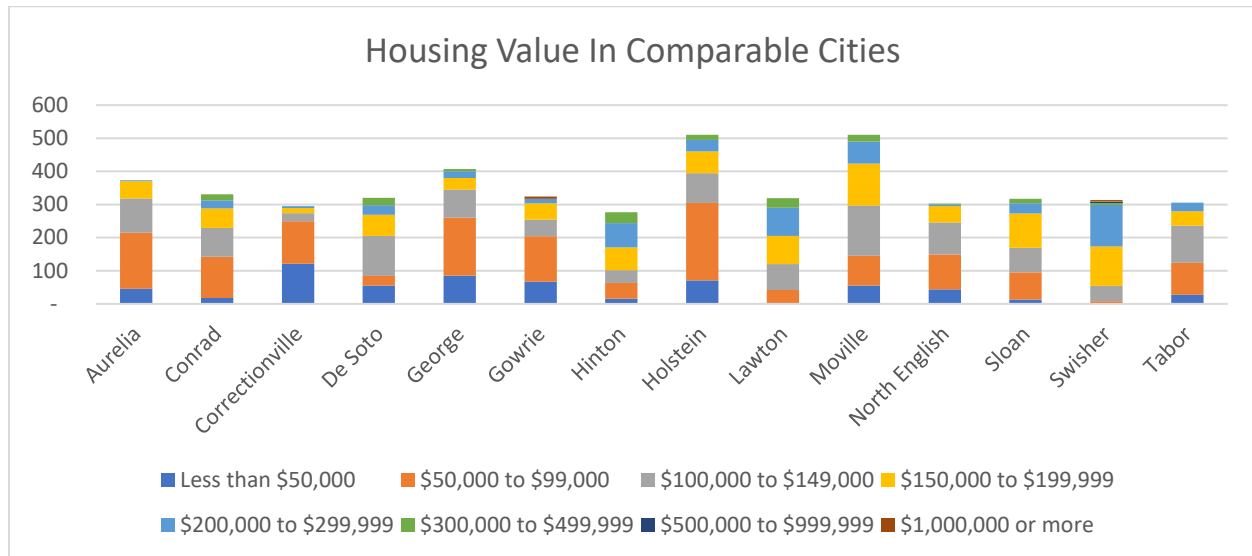


Figure 39 Housing Value in Comparable Cities

Source: 2018 American Community Survey

Another tool in determining where the City falls within a comparable group is by looking at the median value of homes within the community. The median value takes into consideration the total number of homes and their individual values to determine the middle value. The 2018 American Community Survey provides the following median housing values for the comparable group:

City	Median Value	City	Median Value
Aurelia	\$89,900	Holstein	\$94,500
Conrad	\$115,900	Lawton	\$172,400
Correctionville	\$58,800	Merville	\$137,500
De Soto	\$131,900	North English	\$101,000
George	\$81,000	Sloan	\$136,200
Gowrie	\$85,000	Swisher	\$194,000
Hinton	\$170,700	Tabor	\$109,300

Figure 40 Median Housing Values for Comparable Cities

Source: 2018 American Community Survey

To provide additional perspective, Woodbury County's median value is \$128,100. Lawton has the second highest median housing value of the cities included in the comparable group and is significantly above the median value of the County. The median values of the cities in the

comparable group is higher in those communities where significant housing growth has occurred since 2015.

Looking at the US Census data from 2010 and 2018 for the City of Lawton, it shows that a shift in property values has occurred in the past several years. The data shows a decrease in homes in the lower values and an increase in the number of properties in the mid-levels, especially in the \$200,000 to \$299,999 level. A significant factor on this change is the addition of a large number of new homes with significant values. Ultimately the median property value of owner-occupied homes in Lawton between 2010 and 2018 increased by over 34%

	<b>Lawton 2010</b>	<b>Lawton 2018</b>	<b>% Increase (Decrease)</b>
<b>Less than \$50,000</b>	3.1%	0.6%	(2.5%)
<b>\$50,000 to \$99,999</b>	20.8%	12.5%	(8.3%)
<b>\$100,000 to \$149,999</b>	33.5%	24.5%	(9.0%)
<b>\$150,000 to \$199,999</b>	22.3%	26.6%	4.3%
<b>\$200,000 to \$299,999</b>	15.4%	26.6%	11.2%
<b>\$300,000 to \$499,999</b>	5.0%	9.1%	4.1%
<b>\$500,000 to \$999,999</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>\$1,000,000 or more</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Median</b>	\$128,400	\$172,400	34.3%

*Figure 41 Property Value Comparison Lawton, IA*

Source: U.S. Census Data

Some additional perspective on housing within the community is provided in the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data compiled by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Specifically, data is available that provides a look at the number of households that claim to have problems with at least one or more of HUD's four key housing problems, which are defined as follows:

- Incomplete kitchen facilities
- Incomplete plumbing facilities
- More than one person per room
- Cost burden greater than 30%

The CHAS data shows that 7.7% of the households' report having at least one of the four key housing problems as shown in the following chart.



	Owners	Renters	All Households	% of Households
<i>Household Reports At Least 1 Of 4 Housing Problems</i>	10	15	25	7.7%
<i>Household Has None of 4 Housing Problems</i>	265	30	295	90.8%
<i>Cost Burden Not Available, No Other Problems</i>	4	0	4	1.2%

Figure 42 Housing Issue Estimates

Source: HUD CHAS Data

As with the other data provided in this plan it may be helpful to the reader to review the City's percentage of households reporting housing problems with the other cities in the comparable group. The following table shows the data for total households within the comparable group.

	Household Reports At Least 1 of 4 Housing Problems	Household Has None of 4 Housing Problems	Cost Burden Not Available, No Other Problems	% of Households Reporting At Least 1 of 4 Housing Problems
<b>Aurelia</b>	60	370	10	13.6%
<b>Conrad</b>	130	335	0	28.3%
<b>Correctionville</b>	75	270	0	21.7%
<b>De Soto</b>	80	320	0	19.8%
<b>George</b>	70	360	4	16.1%
<b>Gowrie</b>	90	350	8	20.0%
<b>Hinton</b>	55	270	0	16.9%
<b>Holstein</b>	75	530	0	12.4%
<b>Lawton</b>	25	295	4	7.7%
<b>Moville</b>	85	545	4	13.4%
<b>North English</b>	75	355	8	17.2%
<b>Sloan</b>	60	390	8	13.2%
<b>Swisher</b>	44	285	4	13.3%
<b>Tabor</b>	80	350	0	18.6%

Figure 43 Households with Housing Problems In Comparable Group

Source: HUD CHAS Data

Based on the data available Lawton's percentage of homes reporting at least one of the four housing problems is at the bottom of the comparable group.

Using the HUD CHAS data, we can also get an idea on the household income levels of the residents who make up the data. Household income is shown as compared to the HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) which is HUDs calculation of median income to determine fair market rents and income limits for HUD programs. It should be noted that the HAMFI is

different than the median income calculations contained in the US Census data and used in other areas of this report, due to adjustments made by HUD.

	Owner Occupied Households	Renter Occupied Households	Totals
<b>Household Income less than or = 30% HAMFI</b>	10	4	14
<b>Household Income &gt;30% to less than or = 50% HAMFI</b>	10	15	25
<b>Household Income &gt;50% to less than or = 80% HAMFI</b>	45	0	45
<b>Household Income &gt;80% to less than or = 100% HAMFI</b>	20	4	24
<b>Household Income 100% HAMFI</b>	195	15	210

*Figure 44 Lawton Households by HAMFI Levels*

SOURCE: HUD CHAS Data.

By looking at the current housing market for the City we can get a feel for the present market conditions. The windshield survey observations did show that there were a couple of homes for sale within the community. The observations also showed a few vacant lots which may be available for new home builds. The majority of vacant lots were located in the City's newest subdivision on the City's west side. It was also noted that lot sizes in the older part of town tend to be on the smaller side and in some cases property owners may have purchased adjacent lots to increase spacing between homes and to provide larger yards.

Woodbury County Assessor records show that there have been 48 residential sales within the City of Lawton between June 2018 and February 2020 including vacant lots. A few of those sales are a no value transaction potentially indicating a transfer of title within the family or to a trust (20 of the sales). Five units sold during that time were sold at a price below their assessed value.

The following figure shows the location of the residential sales over the two-year time frame.

*Figure 45 Residential Home and Lot Sales in Two-Year Timeframe.*  
Source: Woodbury County Assessor Data.

A search of the area multiple listing service shows three homes currently (June 2020) on the market. One of the homes was listed as pending and two other properties were listed as new listings.

General comments by residents throughout the process indicated that the housing market in Lawton is strong and that homes sell fairly rapidly. Presently there are no lots within the developed area of the City that are impacted by the FEMA Floodplain; however future residential subdivisions may start to encroach on those areas.

The 2018 US Census data shows that the City has a low vacancy rate of 0% for owner occupied units and potentially up to 9.1% of rental units. This is another indicator that the housing market is strong. Additionally, US Census data shows that of the occupied units within the community 15.8% of the homes are occupied by renters. The following table shows occupied units, vacant units, and percentage of renters for each of the comparable communities.

	<b>Total Units</b>	<b>Occupied Units</b>	<b>Vacant Units (%)</b>	<b>% of Rental Units</b>
<i>Aurelia</i>	492	453	39 (7.9%)	16.3%
<i>Conrad</i>	532	472	60 (11.3%)	26.5%
<i>Correctionville</i>	411	333	78 (19.0%)	9.2%
<i>De Soto</i>	412	387	25 (6.1%)	16.3%
<i>George</i>	494	481	13 (2.6%)	15.0%
<i>Gowrie</i>	443	435	8 (1.8%)	25.1%
<i>Hinton</i>	360	342	18 (5.0%)	18.1%
<i>Holstein</i>	771	634	137 (17.8%)	16.0%
<i>Lawton</i>	403	379	24 (6.0%)	15.8%
<i>North English</i>	468	413	55 (11.8%)	23.5%
<i>Sloan</i>	442	423	19 (4.3%)	24.0%
<i>Swisher</i>	363	349	14 (3.9%)	9.9%
<i>Tabor</i>	510	482	28 (5.5%)	34.5%

Figure 46 Comparable Cities Housing Unit Snapshot

Source: US Census 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Lawton's vacancy and rental rates are in the middle of the group of comparable cities based on the 2018 US Census estimates.

### 5.03 WINDSHEILD SURVEY FINDINGS

As part of the process for development of the City's comprehensive plan LGPS conducted a windshield survey of the housing properties within the City of Lawton. The survey conducted included a street review of each residential property to determine a general condition of the home on a scale of one to five individually defined as follows:

- 1 **Deteriorated Condition** – The housing unit is beyond repair and maintenance and is in need of repair to several major components of the building or an excessive buildup of trash, junk, and debris on and around the premises of the property. There are substantial defects to the foundation, roof, and other elements of the building.
- 2 **Poor Condition** – The housing unit is not structurally sound and is in need of significant repairs and maintenance. Structural issues could include failure or problems with the foundation, roof, or other key elements of the building. The property could also be determined to be in "Poor Condition" based on an abundance of visual blight including junk vehicles, buildup of trash, tall grass, weeds, and other overgrowth or general lack of maintenance to the property as a whole.
- 3 **Average Condition** – The housing unit is structurally sound but there are obvious maintenance needs. The housing unit appears safe and is not a deterrent to the neighborhood.

4 **Good Condition** – The housing unit is of sound build but may be in need of maintenance or showing signs of wear. Repairs may be needed to the secondary buildings on site, such as garages and sheds or paving.

5 **Excellent Condition** – Housing unit that has been recently constructed and meets current codes. Potentially an older housing unit where the structure and the grounds have been well maintained. No obvious wear or repairs are needed.

The results of the windshield survey correlate with a number of newer homes in the community in that a majority of the homes are considered in good or excellent condition and only 7.9% were in poor to deteriorated condition. While the City has seen new development the high numbers of homes in good or excellent condition are an indication that even in the older housing stock the City has a good base of housing. The windshield data corresponds to the other housing data reviewed as part of the assessment.

Classification	Entire Town	% of Total
Excellent Condition (5)	61	18.7%
Good Condition (4)	143	43.7%
Average Condition (3)	97	29.7%
Poor Condition (2)	23	7.0%
Deteriorated Condition (1)	3	0.9%

Figure 47 Windshield Survey Results

#### 5.04 DATA SUMMARY

In looking at the available data the City of Lawton appears to have a good base of housing in which to move forward. The condition of existing units, new and older homes, is good and the values of the homes provide for a good tax base for the City. While every City has some vacant units and some rentals, the number of each in Lawton is not substantial to the degree that they could potentially impact the overall housing of the City.

#### 5.05 STRATEGIES FOR PRESERVATION OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK.

Based on the windshield survey results the City may want to consider encouraging the rehabilitation and maintenance of the existing older housing stock to ensure that average condition homes do not slip into poor or deteriorated condition. Potential solutions for ensuring the sustainability of existing housing stock include the following potential objectives:

- **Participation in Housing Rehabilitation Grant Program.** Grant funding is available for communities who meet low and moderate income (LMI) guidelines (either in whole or in a designated portion of the community) to provide grants to LMI home owners to rehabilitate their homes to meet minimum housing standards. Forgivable loans (100% forgiven if they live in the home for five years following the work) up to \$24,999 per home can assist homeowners with replacing windows, doors, electrical systems, roofs,



and other key elements of the home. Funding is provided via HUD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) administered in Iowa by the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

- **Implement a Stringent Property Maintenance Ordinance.** Some communities have combined a carrot and stick approach to rehabilitation and cleaning up of residential properties. The stick portion of the plan often revolves around a stringent property maintenance code (ordinance) that sets forth minimum standards for property maintenance. These codes can deal with typical nuisance issues such as grass height, junk vehicles, and garbage. They can also go a step further to legislate the portion of a surface that is allowed to be unpainted and mandating that broken windows be replaced, and other openings be sealed up.
- **Implement an Urban Revitalization Plan.** Urban Revitalization Plans, often called Tax Abatement Plans, can provide an abatement of taxes over time for property owners. Tax Abatement Plans can be beneficial for both current owners who want to rehabilitate older homes but also for individuals who want to build new homes. An Urban Revitalization Plan can be set for a specific area of the community or community wide.

The *Code of Iowa* Chapter 404 sets the approved schedules for tax abatement plans of which the City can be less aggressive but not more aggressive. For those communities that have a slum and blight finding within the targeted area or community wide there is a more aggressive schedule provided in the *Code of Iowa*.

- **Participation and Promotion of Regional Housing Trust Fund.** Woodbury County is a member of the Western Iowa Community Improvement Regional Housing Trust Fund which is run by Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO).

Each housing trust fund is required to outline their program objectives annually in a Housing Assistance Plan (HAP). The 2017/2018 HAP indicates the following program priorities:

- Owner-Occupied Repair/Rehabilitation – Funding provided to owner occupied homes to make needed repairs and rehab to their homes. The funds are used in the form of conditional grants as a 0% interest receding forgivable loan. The program does require the homeowner to remain the owner occupier of the property for a period of five years.
- Housing for Special Needs Populations – Funding provided to enhance the safety, welfare, and accessibility of residential housing units for persons with disabilities.
- Renter-Occupied Repair/Rehabilitation – Funding provided to repair/rehabilitate renter-occupied multi-family residential housing units for low-to-moderate

income (LMI) persons. Funding is provided to nonprofit entities that operate these types of facilities.

The City can obtain information on this program from the program administrators and promote the program to local residents through the City's web page, newsletter, utility bills, and social media sites.

- **Promote the Availability of Outside Programs to Improve Housing Stock.** There are a few outside resources that can assist local property owners with elements of rehabilitation of their properties. These programs include the following:

Program	Potential Benefits
MidAmerican Energy	<p>As the local provider of energy services in town they will provide home owners with free energy audits to help identify ways to reduce energy costs.</p> <p>They also provide a number of energy efficiency rebates to property owners based on improvements made to the property.</p> <p>More information is available at:  <a href="https://www.midamericanenergy.com/rebates-energy.aspx">https://www.midamericanenergy.com/rebates-energy.aspx</a></p>
Keep Iowa Beautiful	<p>The Keep Iowa Beautiful program has a grant program available to communities and community groups where they can purchase paint to improve the appearance of buildings and facilities in the community. Applications are typically due in February.</p> <p>More information is available at:  <a href="https://www.KeepIowaBeautiful.com/grants-awards/paint-iowa-grant/">https://www.KeepIowaBeautiful.com/grants-awards/paint-iowa-grant/</a></p>
Community Action Agency of Siouxland	<p>Community Action Agency of Siouxland can assist with energy conservation projects and weatherization projects for homeowners. These programs may have income limit requirements for participation.</p> <p>More information is available at:  <a href="http://www.caasiouxland.org/energy.html">http://www.caasiouxland.org/energy.html</a></p>
Siouxland Habitat for Humanity	<p>Some Habitat affiliates do rehab work for partner families. Habitat International also has a program that will assist partner families with home preservation.</p>

	<p>The “Brush with Kindness Program” may be something that Siouxland Habitat for Humanity might consider working with the City on.</p> <p>More information is available at:  <a href="https://www.habitat.org/volunteer/near-you/home-preservation">https://www.habitat.org/volunteer/near-you/home-preservation</a></p>
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## 5.06 STRATEGIES FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

Growth of housing stock through new development is a key factor for Lawton. New housing growth means new families, which support local small businesses and the community school system. While housing growth has been good over the past several years, the City’s main niche is that of a bedroom community and will continue to need new growth into the future. The City has some of the key elements for quality of life, including a good community school system, good community parks, and easy access to major transportation systems.

Typically, small scale housing subdivisions are difficult to finance due to the high cost of infrastructure that is needed to support the development. If the City can identify ways to assist developers with the cost of infrastructure it may be the key to getting a smaller subdivision going. Some ways that cities have assisted in getting subdivisions developed include the following:

- **Urban Renewal.** Many cities have utilized Urban Renewal as a tool to help developers with the cost of infrastructure development for new subdivisions. By law, the City can only rebate tax revenues back to a developer in a non-low-moderate income development for the cost of infrastructure. Urban renewal allows the City to capture a large portion of the taxes paid on new development within the Urban Renewal Area and to use that to rebate or install public infrastructure for the benefit of the area.
- **Relaxation of Requirements.** A City may consider relaxing infrastructure requirements within a new subdivision to lower the costs for a developer. Cities should strongly consider the benefits and the potentially negative impacts of changing standards for infrastructure including the long-term potential impacts. Examples of changes that might reduce costs for a developer include:
  - Allowing the use of a rural road section with ditches instead of curb and gutter for streets.
  - Requiring vs. not requiring the installation of sidewalks within a new subdivision.
- **Urban Revitalization.** Implementation of an Urban Revitalization program may be beneficial to a developer in helping them market and sell lots/homes in the subdivision since the purchaser of the home will have lower taxes to pay in the first years of ownership.



- **Acquisition of Dangerous Buildings.** The City could consider utilizing its authority under the *Code of Iowa* to acquire lots with dangerous buildings and where the property owner is not able to be found. Acquired lots would be cleaned up and then could be used as part of a partnership with a private developer or organization to construct a new home.
- **Partner with Habitat for Humanity.** The City may want to consider a partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Siouxland to build a new home in the community. A partnership could yield a new home within the community for a qualifying family; however, it could be more difficult for Habitat to find a partner family and volunteers in small communities that are away from typical job centers where families who would qualify for income-based programs are located. Because of these challenges it could be beneficial to work through local employers and religious organizations to see if a partner family might be in the community and if those organizations would be willing to support a build with volunteers and donations.
- **City as a Developer.** The City could become a developer and acquire land or use land already owned to build a subdivision. Under a scenario like this the City would work with an engineering firm to design the sub-division and then install the needed infrastructure (streets, water, sanitary sewer, storm water) for the area and then make lots available to private individuals to build homes.

It may be that the City would want to consider the use of Urban Renewal to capture the taxes on the growth of new units to help pay for the cost of infrastructure. In doing this it would be important to have a quick build out of the development and the City may want to do an analysis of the long-term benefits of occupied housing units vs. the quick benefits of immediate revenue received from the sale of lots.

### CONCEPT IDEA

We have found that creating concept ideas for development can spur discussion and debate, potentially leading to actual development. In that light, during the development of this plan we considered a potential residential development on ag land just outside the current City limits.

The concept was to develop a significant future development on the south side of HWY 20 that could fuel housing growth of both middle-income residential units and high end residential units with a variety of lot sizes. Either a developer or the City would have to purchase the land which would then provide for a projected 95 lot subdivision which could be expanded to the east and south should lots sell, and additional land acquired. In addition to the development, the area would provide additional access to and from HWY 20 for a few new commercial lots on the south side of HWY 20 with an access road. A concept drawing is provided on Page 73.

Of the 95 lots shown, the lots would range from a half acre to 1.96 acres. A rough estimate of costs for infrastructure were projected at \$8,635,553. This includes water, sanitary sewer, and a concrete street. The individual infrastructure elements could be broken out into the following costs:

Paving (7" PCC Road)	\$4,914,524
Sanitary Sewer	\$1,571,225
Water Service	\$1,188,018
Storm Water	\$1,062,145

\*Note: Costs of individual components will be higher than as a total project due to costs savings realized from doing the entire infrastructure as a single project.

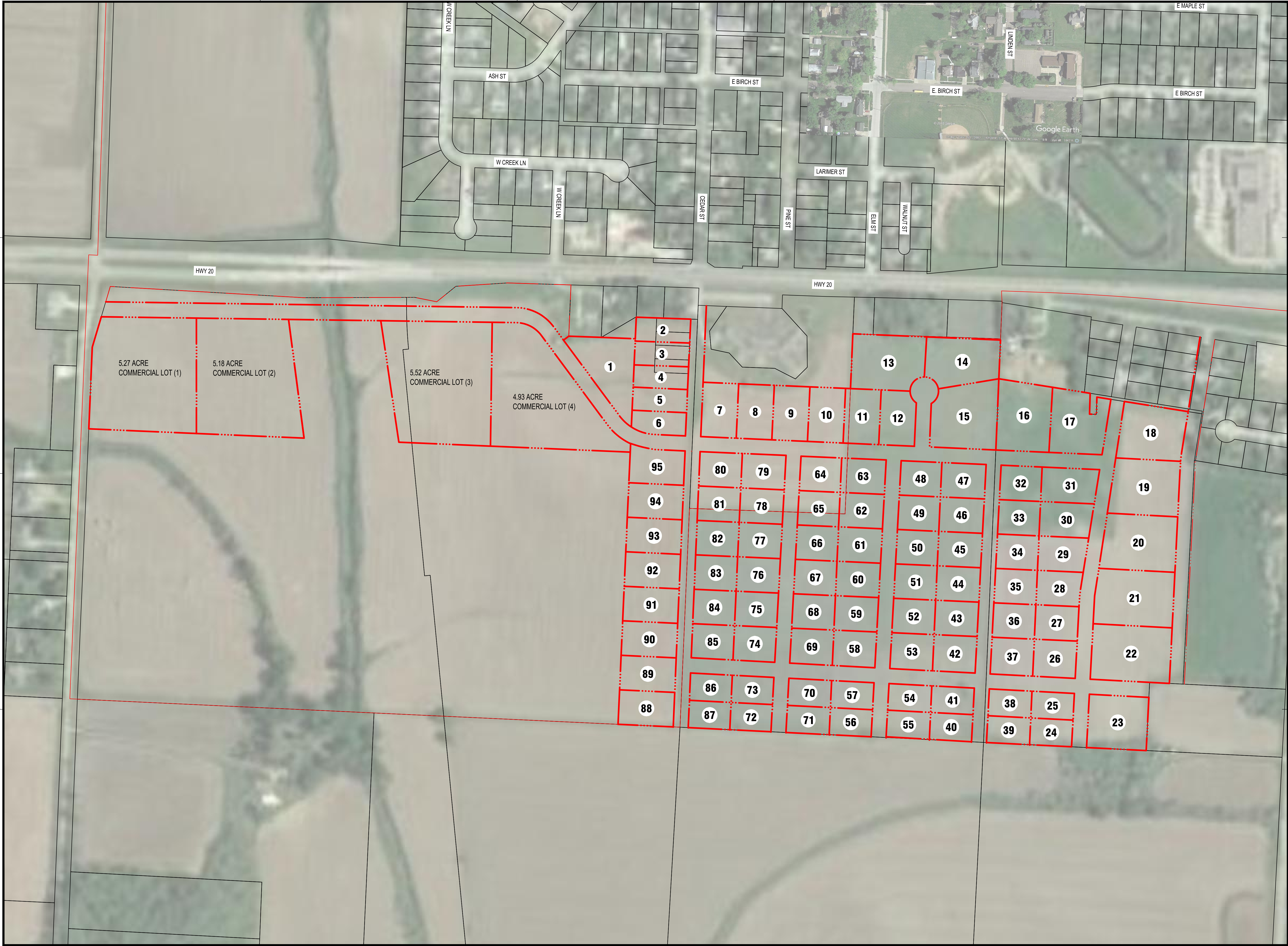
In designing the layout for this concept, the idea was to look at creating a sub-division that could be phased to help manage the development costs. This area would need substantial storm water infrastructure to handle potential future flooding and run off issues which increases the costs of the development. Additionally, the cost for the commercial lots are calculated into the above numbers but they would typically obtain a higher sale value than residential. Assuming all infrastructure was constructed at one time and using the estimates above the cost per lot may be around \$90,900 which may be higher than what could be financially feasible for individuals looking to purchase lots in Lawton, especially for mid-level housing. Therefore, the City would want to look at ways to reduce the cost of development. Some potential solutions might include some of the following options; utilizing a sealcoat road (the original estimate assumed concrete), changing the width or length of the street, and utilization of Urban Renewal to help pay for the cost of infrastructure. Because this is an urban development allowing this development to occur without City water and sewer would not be a benefit to the development and would require larger lots to comply with current standards for onsite wastewater systems.

This is simply a concept and a very rough cost estimate, a developer working with a professional engineer may come up with a better concept that could be developed with less costs or less need for local assistance. The City should encourage discussion regarding development concepts and remain open to alternatives that may reduce the cost of infrastructure while maintaining the integrity and long-term life of the public infrastructure that will be built as part of any development. Because of the City's potential for negative impacts from flooding the City should insist on the inclusion of storm water infrastructure as a part of any new subdivision development.

The cost of infrastructure is a major factor in the viability of new subdivisions and developers are constantly looking for ways to lower the costs or get incentives such as tax rebates to help finance the cost of building a subdivision.

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RESIDENTIAL LOTS RANGE IN SIZE FROM 1/2 ACRE TO 1.96 ACRE



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PROJECT

**CITY OF LAWTON  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN**

LAWTON

IOWA

REVISION SCHEDULE		
DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY

PROJECT NO.	20943
CAD FILE NAME	20943 - LAWTON SOUTH DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT 2
DRAWN BY	-
DESIGNED BY	-
REVIEWED BY	-
ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE	--/--
CLIENT PROJECT NO.	-

TITLE

**SOUTH  
DEVELOPMENT  
CONCEPT**

SHEET

### **6.01 Objectives**

### **6.02 Water System**

### **6.03 Wastewater System**

### **6.04 Storm Water System**

### **6.05 Non-Public Utilities**

### **6.06 Strategies for Infrastructure Improvements**

## **6.01 OBJECTIVES**

After receiving input from the public and the Council, the City Council developed a set of objectives by which they can try to work toward the achievement of various goals. The Council then prioritized these objectives into short, intermediate, and long-term time frames. A full version of these objectives is shown in Chapter 1 of this Plan. The objectives shown here are related to the City's public infrastructure and utility systems.

### **Short Term Objectives (Typically 1-4 Years)**

- Implement Erosion Control Measure in the Water Main Control Channel Through Town (Goal 2)
- Continue Water Tower Maintenance Program (Goal 2)
- Install Water Meters at All Service Locations (Goal 2)
- Update Hazard Mitigation Plan (Goal 2)
- Implement Projects for Maintenance of the Transfer Manhole Level Indicators at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (Goal 2)
- Implement Project for Repairing Erosion of and Control on Wastewater Lagoon Banks (Goal 2)

### **Intermediate Term Objectives (Typically 5-10 Years)**

- Implement GIS Mapping for All Utilities (Goal 2)

### **Long Term Objectives (Typically 11-30 Years)**

- Install 6" Water Main in All Locations Where the Existing Main is Less than 6" and Complete Looping (Goal 2)

## **6.02 WATER SYSTEM**

The City of Lawton provides residents and businesses with water pumped from two deep wells which are rotated each time the plant calls for water. Both wells were constructed in 2006 to a depth of 216 and 217 feet. Treatment is provided using forced draft aeration, detention, and sodium permanganate addition for the oxidation of iron and manganese, gravity filtration for iron and manganese removal, and liquid chlorination for disinfection. The City currently flushes hydrants annually.



On average the City has 377 service connections and serves a population of 966 with 58 users being outside corporate limits. Water provided to citizens is metered but the City parks and maintenance shed are not metered. It is recommended that all service connections be metered so that accurate water loss reconciliation can be performed. The City's average consumption is 86,000 gallons per day with a peak of 212,000 gallons per day.

Lawton's storage is limited to one elevated storage tank which has a capacity of 200,000 gallons. The City does have a maintenance agreement for routine maintenance and inspection of the storage tank which occurs on an annual basis.

Water is distributed through the community via the City's water distribution systems consisting of a combination of 10% cast iron and 90% plastic mains. For future projects, an average block (330') of water line replacement is estimated to cost \$68,250.

Based on the analysis completed for this Plan the City's water capacity is sufficient for potential growth of residential and commercial uses within the community. The treatment plant is permitted for 49 million gallons per year (MGY) and based on operating records it uses approximately 31.39 MGY. This leaves the capacity to increase production by 48,000 GPD or 17.6MGY. However, consistent operations at that level would put additional stress on the water treatment plant and would put additional burden on the well pumps.

### **6.03 WASTEWATER SYSTEM**

The City provides for collection and treatment of wastewater from within the City utilizing a three-cell controlled discharge system. The collection system includes primarily 8" clay piping. The clay pipe collection system is typical for that construction period. However, many of these clay pipe systems are showing signs of age and requiring higher levels of maintenance. As the clay pipe ages, cities experience additional issues with inflow and infiltration (I&I) into the system as a pipe becomes broken, cracked, and intruded by tree roots. This storm water infiltration increases wastewater flows during high rain events potentially resulting in violations of the City's wastewater permit and discharges from lagoon treatment systems out of permitted time frames. I&I can be especially prevalent in areas where the water table is high or where flooding is common. The cost of replacing an average block of sanitary sewer main (330 feet) is estimated to be \$104,700. The average cost for a block of sewer main lining is estimated at \$14,400. Because of this the City currently budgets money each year for inspection, jetting, and cleaning of the sanitary sewer system.

The City's current wastewater treatment plant was permitted with limits for average wet weather flow (AWW) of 0.0725 MGD. The City's operating report shows that in 2019 the 180 day AWW flow was approximately 0.0539 MGD. The plant does have issues with the transfer manhole, specifically the level indicators for each pond. The City plans to complete maintenance on the lagoon banks where a small amount of erosion has occurred.

Based on the classification of the system, as a controlled discharge facility, the City must store wastewater for approximately 180 days prior to discharging to the stream. The City has not had issues, historically, with discharging outside of their permits.

Based on the analysis completed for this Plan the City appears to have sufficient capacity for the current volume of wastewater flow from its current customers and potentially some limited room for growth in the future.

## 6.04 STORM WATER SYSTEM

The City of Lawton's storm water system is fairly minimal with the main outfall for storm water being on the west side of town and draining into Elliott Creek. A large drainage channel travels east to west through town. Erosion within the main channel has been noted as an issue. The City should consider installing erosion control matting, geogrid, and other erosion control measures to prevent this channel from scouring.

A small portion of the City is in a FEMA National Flood Hazard Area as shown on the following map. The City constructed a drainage channel in the flood hazard area to alleviate the impact of flooding on the few residential properties in the floodplain.

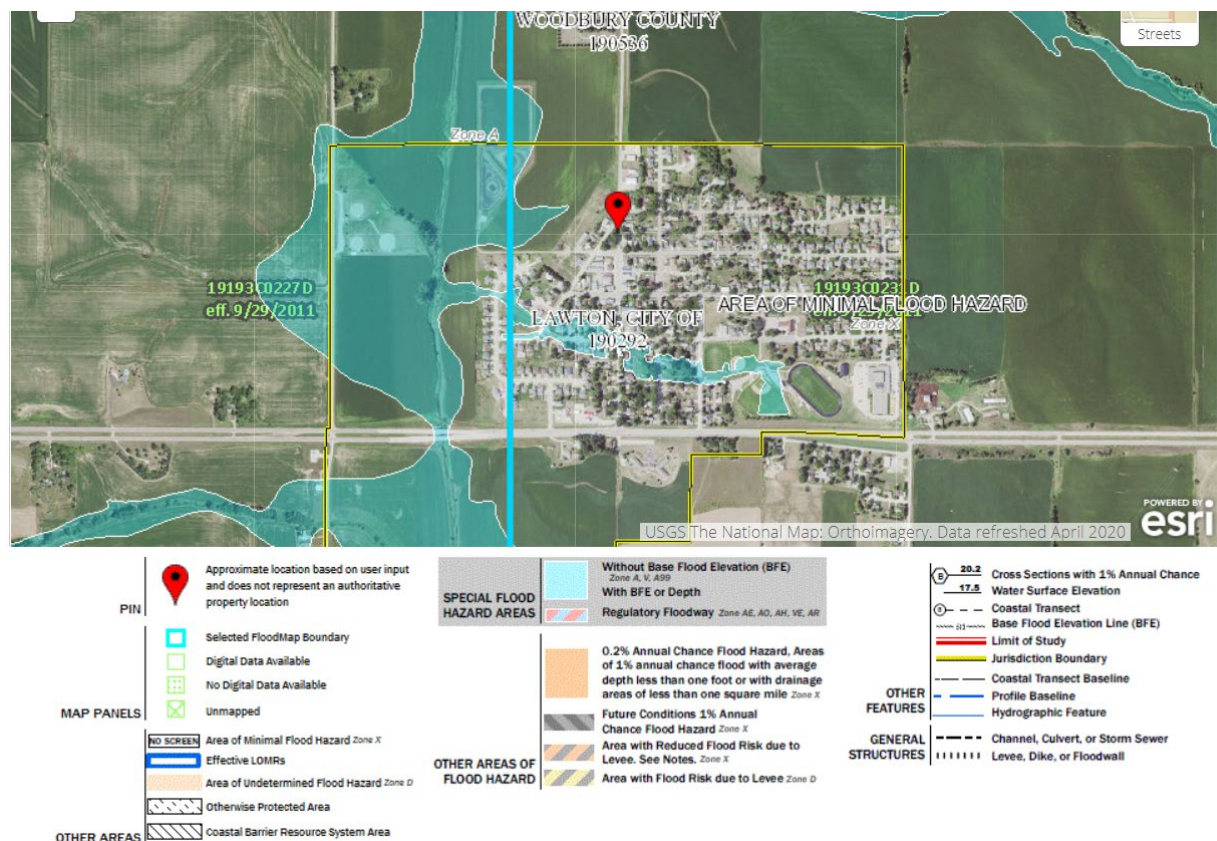


Figure 48 FEMA Floodplain Map for Lawton, IA



Future development on the west side of the community should take into consideration flooding issues and the floodplain. New developments should be required to include storm water systems including use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for filtering, retaining, and allowing for infiltration of storm water within the development.

The cost of installing an average block of storm water collection system (330 feet) is estimated at \$64,000.

## 6.05 NON-PUBLIC UTILITIES

In addition to the City owned public utilities the citizens and businesses of Lawton are served by other non-public utility companies.

Natural Gas and electric utility service are provided by Mid-American Energy.

Telephone, internet, and cable TV service in Lawton is provided by WiaTel.

## 6.06 STRATEGIES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Considering the data available and the current condition of the City's main infrastructure the City may want to consider the development of a five-year capital improvement plan that would prioritize future improvements and help in identifying available revenues for funding, including the strategic use of competitive grant programs. The following potential strategies and programs may be of interest to the City in planning these future improvements.

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.** The Iowa Department of Economic Development administers the CDBG program which utilizes federal dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to fund projects benefiting low-moderate income persons and slum and blight. One of the key areas of this program is for water and sanitary sewer infrastructure. The program is highly competitive but currently funding has been relatively stable. Lawton would be eligible for a maximum of \$300,000 per project based on the current census. Grant cycles for the water and sewer program are quarterly.

The CDBG Program will also consider funding for storm water projects under their Community Facilities component of the program. These applications are on an annual basis.

More information on the CDBG Program is available online at <https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/Community>.

- **SRF Sponsored Project Program.** The State of Iowa SRF program has a sponsored project program with it that allows communities who are doing a wastewater project with SRF funds to take advantage of an overall interest rate reduction when they do a wastewater project and a water quality project. The project must be within the

watershed in which the City's wastewater treatment plant is located. More information on the SRF Sponsored Project Program is available online at [http://www.iowasrf.com/about\\_srf/sponsored\\_projects\\_home\\_page.cfm](http://www.iowasrf.com/about_srf/sponsored_projects_home_page.cfm).

- **FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.** Iowa Homeland Security administers a program for communities that will provide funding for projects that mitigate future damage from natural disasters. Funding for the program is dependent upon natural disaster declarations in the state and can be competitive. The program also requires that the City have an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan and that the proposed project be listed within that plan. More information is available online at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/31598?id=7209>.
- **WIRB Grants.** The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship handles a program called the Watershed Improvement Review Board which funds water quality and flood mitigation projects through their WIRB Grants. Funding in this program can be sporadic. More information on the program is available online at <https://www.iowaagriculture.gov/TWIRB.asp>.
- **Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program (USDA).** The United States Department of Agriculture has a program that is available to rural Iowa communities to help fund improvements in their water and wastewater systems. Several factors impact the amount of loan awarded vs grant awarded including the City's Median Household Income as a percentage of the State of Iowa's Median Household Income, available grant funds in the program, and the City's water and sewer rates in terms of affordability. Loans are varying interest rates and typically for a term of 40 years. More information on the program is available online at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program>.

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<b>7.01 Introduction</b>
<b>7.02 Objectives</b>
<b>7.03 Future Land Use</b>

<b>7.04 Zoning</b>
<b>7.05 Annexation</b>

### 7.01 INTRODUCTION

The City of Lawton is a rural primarily residential community and a bedroom community to the Sioux City metro area. There is limited commercial and industrial within the City. Downtown is about a two-block area of Cedar Street and West Maple Street. Additional commercial development occurs along HWY 20.

As part of the comprehensive planning process we looked at future land uses and growth patterns to assist the City in determining a future for how they would like to see the community grow and develop. Utilizing public input from the visioning session along with discussions with City staff and elected officials, and reviewing previous land use maps, the City Council developed the Future Land Use Map presented in this chapter.

### 7.02 OBJECTIVES

After receiving public input, reviewing the council's objectives and citizen's input, the City Council developed a set of objectives by which they can try to work toward achieving. The Council then prioritized these objectives into short, intermediate, and long-term time frames. A full version of these objectives is shown in Chapter 1 of this Plan. The objectives shown here are related to the City's current and future land uses.

Short Term Objectives (Typically 1-4 Years)

- None

Intermediate Term Objectives (Typically 5-10 Years)

- None

Long Term Objectives (Typically 11-30 Years)

- None

While there are no specific objectives for this chapter objectives contained in other chapters of this Plan are dependent on the Future Land Use and Zoning principals of the City.

### 7.03 FUTURE LAND USE

As part of the planning process the City looked at where future development would best be located, based on the type of development (residential, commercial, industrial, and green space/parks). This discussion resulted in the development of a Future Land Use Map.

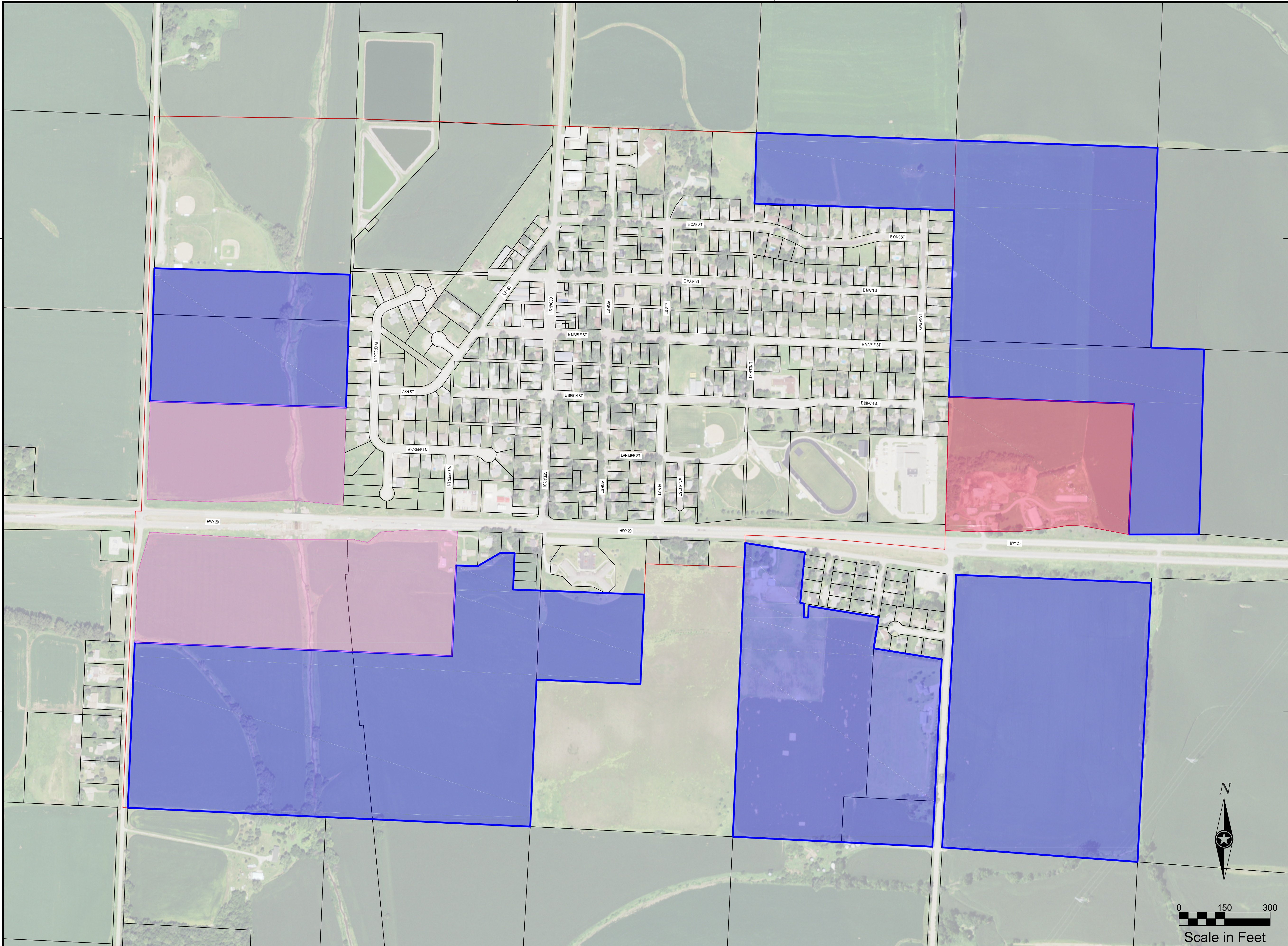
The proposed Future Land Use map should be seen as a guide as to how the City should grow in the future and as a guide to ensure that compatible land uses border each other and allow for the peaceful enjoyment of property by all property owners. It shows the current plan for use of land and is subject to revisions over time.

The next page is the Future Land Use Map developed as part of this process for the City of Lawton

While the Future Land Use Map is a guide for future development it is not a concrete plan and does not impact the current property owner in their enjoyment of the property today. It does provide the Council with history on how those involved in the development of this Plan projected the use of the land around the City moving forward, and as such should be considered as the City grows.

The City should also consider revisiting the future land use plan on a regular basis and make updates, as needed, to the map to keep it current and relevant.





LEGEND

- CORPORATE BOUNDARY
- PARCELS
- COMMERCIAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- SCHOOL EXPANSION

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PROJECT

CITY OF LAWTON

LAWTON IOWA

REVISION SCHEDULE		
DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY

PROJECT NO.	17-20943
CAD FILE NAME	LAWTON MAPS
DRAWN BY	
DESIGNED BY	
REVIEWED BY	
ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE	
CLIENT PROJECT NO.	

FUTURE LAND USE MAP



## 7.04 ZONING

The City of Lawton does not utilize a Zoning Code currently. Nor do they utilize the small city version of zoning, a restricted residential use code.

The City did have some discussion about the need for a full Zoning Code within the City to help ensure that residential properties are valued and safe from encroachment of commercial business. Right before the Comprehensive Planning process was started an individual purchased a couple of lots in the City's new subdivision right off Highway 20 for a feed and grain dealership. This commercial development in the midst of the new residential had obvious concerns from neighboring property owners as to the impact of the commercial development on their residential properties. While Zoning could resolve the issue the *Code of Iowa* allows for a small city version of zoning in the form of a Restricted Residence District which would have been sufficient to protect those residents from the commercial infringement had the City had that in their Code of Ordinances.

## 7.05 ANNEXATION

Annexation can be a politically fraught topic in communities and certainly the use of involuntary annexation should not be used without great thought or before attempts have been made to seek a voluntary annexation. Annexation can be a proactive development tool for communities and a way for cities to protect and develop their community gateways. Annexation must be considered from multiple aspects including the City's ability to serve the area in the future should development occur.

Cities are encouraged to have a discussion and to take into consideration the need to control development on their borders, to have adequate land within the City limits for development of all types, and to determine the ability of the City to supply utilities to the annexed areas.

The City's current policies on annexation are limited to those City provisions for serving users outside the City limits with water and sewer service, outlined in the City Code. Development of additional guiding policies may be beneficial to the City and would help lay additional elements of a general framework for future discussions. Some additional policy topics might include the following:

- Policy on time frame for serving newly annexed areas with City infrastructure. This policy may include a requirement for development within the annexation area.
- Enhance the current policy on serving areas outside of the City limits with public utilities (water and sanitary sewer). The current policy provides for a requirement that in order to provide service, the owners agree to abide by City ordinances for the services provided at a higher rate than those who are provided service within the City limits. An additional requirement that the City may consider is a requirement that the property owner voluntarily annex once they become contiguous to the City limits.

The current City limits are somewhat limited to land on the west side of the City which is prone to flooding and may be costly to develop. Land to the south of HWY20 could be potentially developable but is not in the City limits currently and similar to the northern area is prone to flooding. Generally, land for future development within the City that is developable without major infrastructure costs is somewhat limited. However, the City could be in a good position to grow in the immediate future with their prime location along HWY 20, which has been expanded to a four-lane highway across the State of Iowa. That growth could cause a need for the City to consider additional annexation in the future.

The City may want to consider annexation on the south, north, and west sides of the existing City limits to open up additional areas for residential, commercial, and industrial development.



### **8.01 Objectives**

### **8.02 Community Facilities**

### **8.03 Parks and Open Spaces**

### **8.04 Other Community Services**

### **8.05 Other Community Assets**

### **8.06 Strategies for Community Facilities Objectives**

## **8.01 OBJECTIVES**

After receiving public input, and reviewing council goals and input, the City Council developed a set of objectives by which they can try to work toward achieving. The Council then prioritized these objectives into short, intermediate, and long-term time frames. A full version of these objectives is shown in Chapter 1 of this Plan. The objectives shown here are related to the City's public community facilities and services.

### Short Term Objectives (Typically 1-4 Years)

- Community Gardens (Goal 1)
- Build Community Meeting Room / City Hall Facility / Expand Library Services

### Intermediate Term Objectives (Typically 5-10 Years)

- None

### Long Term Objectives (Typically 11-30 Years)

- School Lot Development (Goal 1)
- Develop Park at Ash Street (Goal 1)

## **8.02 COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

The City maintains the following community facilities:

- City Hall / Community Building / Library
- Fire Station
- City Maintenance Facility
- Water Treatment Plant

These facilities are used for everyday City operations as well as space that is available for the public to use through rentals and community events. The facilities are in good condition, are all handicapped accessible, and appear appropriate for their current uses. Due to the age of the buildings the City will continue to have maintenance needs on the buildings over time.

The City also has the Lawton Public Library which is located in community room in the same building as City Hall. Library services are run by the Woodbury County Library. A library is an

essential part of how a community can build quality of life, which is a key element to attracting and retaining citizens.



The City's maintenance building is located on W. Main Street on the west side of the community. The facility does have some outside storage of materials and equipment. Outside storage can become unsightly and potentially dangerous especially when near a residential neighborhood. Piles of equipment and materials can be inviting to younger kids. Lack of maintenance around the building including the allowance of weeds to grow and extra materials to be stored outside can have a negative impact on residential values in the neighborhood. The City should consider doing a regular cleanup of the site and potentially install a privacy fence and/or screening to block the view of the maintenance equipment and materials from the neighborhood.

Keeping the public facilities in good order and of good visual appearance will help the City with promoting positive property maintenance practices with private property owners.

### **8.03 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

The City has three parks. One park, Veterans Park, is across the street from City Hall, one is on the west side near the new subdivision, and the larger park, Tara Way Park, is on the east side of town near the school. The parks have several features including:

Playground Equipment  
Shelter House  
Benches

Basketball Court  
Open Picnic Shelter

There are ball fields located on the northwest side of the community that are not owned by the City but the City does mow the fields and provides some upkeep.

City parks are quality of life components and as such should be a part of any major future development. Cities should strive for parks that are easily accessible for their residents and located where extensive travel is not required. Lawton's parks are spread around the community and are easily accessible to residents with the exception of those residents who live south of HWY 20.

Typically, planners prefer to see park coverage to be within a quarter mile (1,320 feet) to a half mile (2,640 feet) of residential properties provided there isn't a need to cross a major non-residential road or highway. The following graphic is a park coverage map that shows a radius of distance from the park of 250, 500, 1,000 and 1,500 feet.



Figure 49 Park Coverage Map

As the map shows, a majority of the existing housing is within the 1,000-foot to 1,500 foot radius of the parks and all the existing residential homes are within the quarter to half mile preferred distance of the City's parks.

Any future development within Lawton should include consideration of proximity to the City's existing parks or include the development of additional park space. Should additional housing development occur in the south portion of the community it would be a good practice to include, in that development, new park space to allow residents access to recreational space.

The existing parks provide a good mix of uses and space for residents to play and congregate; however, common park elements are not available in all of the City's open spaces. Additionally, while the three parks can be accessed by most of the residents without conflicts with major roadways, except those living south of HWY 20, many of the pedestrian routes to the parks are in need of maintenance or missing, creating potential access issues for residents, especially youth who desire to attend the open space.

There are some simple things that can be done to keep the park fresh as well as major improvements. Simple improvements could be the addition of trees, benches, native plant areas, garbage cans, or small pieces of park equipment. More major improvements might include a complete replacement of park equipment or addition of park equipment in an open space that currently doesn't have any, or development of additional space for more features. Skate parks have been one of the new larger park components being added by cities in recent years. Examples of simple improvements could be small pieces of play equipment such as diggers, bouncers, swings, or concrete tables for ping pong, chess and checkers. Private companies and some communities are also making large scale versions of family friendly board games such a Connect Four and Jenga.



*Figure 50 Lawn or Park Version of Connect Four*



*Figure 51 Park Pong Table*

Park improvements are often good projects to bring to local foundations and grant programs. The City may also work with local community youth groups and volunteers to help achieve enhancements to the park. The City should involve the community's youth in additional planning for park and open space improvements.

Parks are also great places for cities to encourage physical activity for their residents and visitors. Incorporating equipment that targets physical fitness including equipment that is specifically designed for adults and children to do common fitness exercises. This type of equipment could

be a good addition along a trail route or in a larger park where residents and visitors can combine a walk or run with other physical fitness elements.

In addition to the City's park, residents and visitors have the ability to utilize Woodbury County parks within the area. Woodbury County maintains 16 county parks including several relatively close to the City of Lawton. The majority of these parks are geared toward natural environments, trails, and outdoor recreation (camping, boating, fishing, and hunting) and some combine kid friendly activities with those natural environments.

Because there is a vacant lot near the center of town, (between East Maple Street and E. Birch Street) near the high school ball fields, there is potential for the community to invest in or work with the Lawton-Bronson Community School District to develop a "community park" that could be a draw for residents and visitors alike. The lot is vacant except for the school district's bus barn.

A concept for this area would be to install a splash pad, playground, a multi-use sport court (tennis, basketball, badminton, and volleyball), an open air picnic shelter and patio, and an additional sport court that could be turned into an ice skating rink in the winter.

As part of the development of this Plan we developed a concept drawing for the City to consider as a starting point for the future development. The concept follows on the next page. Should the City desire to move forward with development of this type of facility they should begin with further community involvement in the planning process.

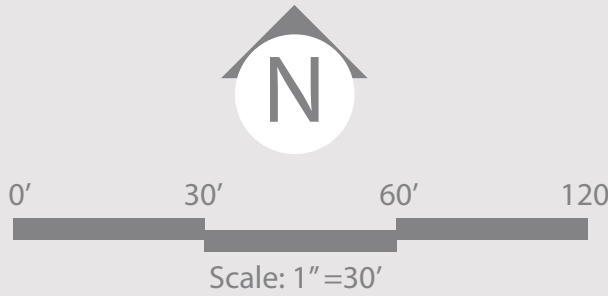
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Map Key:

- (A) Open-air Picnic Shelter + Patio
- (B) Splash Pad + Themed Spray Features w/ seating areas
- (C) Playground + Play Surfacing
- (D) Multi-Use Sport Court / Tennis, Basketball, Badminton + Volleyball
- (E) Additional Sport Court / Ice Skating
- (F) Parking
- (G) Open Space
- (H) Existing Sports Complex

--- Project Boundary





Community gardens are also a great quality of life feature while promoting a healthy lifestyle. Typically, urban lots do not provide sufficient ground for a garden to sustain a family. To assist residents, some communities develop and make space for individual gardens within a City park or on other vacant land.



*Figure 52 Community garden concept*

The City of Lawton has had a community garden near the water tower for the past several years. It is sponsored by the F.A.M.I.L.Y. group in Lawton and has been a successful project in the community.

Expanding on the concept of sharing extra produce within the community, the City or a community group may explore the idea of installing a “little community pantry” in town. This idea is becoming more popular and provides an opportunity for community members to share food and pantry items with those in the community who might be less fortunate. This concept is similar to the little free library concept that has been very popular across the nation.





Figure 53 Little Free Pantry Concept Pictures

## 8.04 OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community is much more than just the City and the roads, water lines, and other infrastructure that provide for some components of livability. Community also involves the education, cultural resources, and protective services.

### Community Protective Services

The City has signed a 28E Agreement with the Woodbury County Sheriff's Office for protective services within the City. Via the agreement, which was signed in 2013, the County provides services related to the enforcement of State statutes and municipal ordinances as well as patrol coverage. The agreement does not specify a minimum number of patrol hours per month but it does state that the County may bill the City at the rate of \$35.00 per hour for service performed at the request of the City's designated representative.

The 28E Agreement automatically renews and the City has the option of terminating services provided they do so at least 60 days prior to the expiration of the contract.

Fire protection is provided by the Lawton Volunteer Fire Department and is a common form of fire protection services within rural Iowa cities. The City is also a member of a 28E Agreement for fire protection services with all the cities within Woodbury County. Additionally, separate 28E Agreements are in place for fire protection service with the rural townships around Lawton.

The department does identify that it is becoming more and more difficult to find volunteers within the community to join the department. Younger families have more demands of their time and especially within small towns those demands often mean traveling outside of the City for several minutes reducing their availability to serve. The department may want to consider more outreach to the community including program and events that help to provide

opportunities to build community and make residents aware of their services and needs for volunteers.

In addition to the challenges of finding volunteers within small communities and younger families, during our work in the City, there were several occasions where there were conflicts between the City and the Volunteer Fire Department or portions of the Fire Department. Conflict can create a negative perception of the department and the City and decrease the likelihood of the public wanting to participate either in terms of volunteering or in terms of participating in fundraisers. While the department has had some good success with fundraising it may be beneficial for the City and the department to work on resolving conflicts between the two agencies for the betterment of the community.

Programs such as a youth fire camp or fire explorer program can introduce youth in the community to fire safety as well as the department and educate them in the need to become a volunteer when they get older. These camps are usually non-emergency related and can range from one day camps to camps that have several sessions over a couple of months or several weeks. More information on these types of camps can be found here: <https://juniors.nvfc.org/>. As an example, information on a West Virginia camp, run through the WVU Fire Extension Service, can be found here: <https://extension.wvu.edu/community-business-safety/fire-service/junior-firefighter-camp>.

## **Education**

Lawton lies within the Lawton-Bronson Community School District with two main facilities, an elementary school, located in Bronson, covering grades preschool thru fifth grade and a middle school and high school with grades from sixth thru twelfth, located in Lawton. The middle school and high school provide recreational amenities as well as jobs to the community. The School District covers the towns of Lawton and Bronson.

Regional access to both community colleges and four-year college institutions is readily available including a community college and two four-year private universities within a 40-minute drive.

## **Arts and Culture**

Arts and culture within the City of Lawton is somewhat limited, however, the City does have a small public library that is part of the Woodbury County Library system.

Other cultural community events within the community are put on by the local volunteer fire department and the other local organizations both of which are active community partners.

## **Historic Preservation**

The City does not have historical or culturally significant buildings within the City limits. It is possible that some of the buildings in the downtown area may be eligible for listing on the

national register of historic places. The City does not have a historical society or museum, but they do have a memorial for veterans in the park on Maple Street.

### 8.05 OTHER COMMUNITY ASSETS

Many times, quality of life within a community is enhanced by non-government services. The Lawton Bronson F.A.M.I.L.Y. Group and other local organizations are actively working to hold community events, such as Lawton-Bronson Days”, and bring people to Lawton.

Lawton also has two active churches, Bethel Lutheran Church and Community Presbyterian Church. As the City looks to continue improving the quality of life within the community, they should look for ways to incorporate these other community groups and assets into the mix and partner with them to enhance the City’s efforts.

As an example, as the City considers the development of a community park it should look to incorporate historic elements into the park and involve local groups in further planning and design of that park. Working with church groups, 4H clubs, or scout groups can help in providing volunteer labor for improvements within the City’s parks or to help achieve an annual park clean-up event.

### 8.06 STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES OBJECTIVES

As the City works toward the completion of the objectives outlined in this plan the City may want to consider some of the following potential programs, tools, and strategies for accomplishing the objectives.

- **Trees.** Trees can be an effective visual buffer between commercial and industrial facilities and residential neighborhoods. Additionally, trees can provide for a more welcoming entrance to a community and provide natural shade within City parks and open spaces. The City may want to consider the use of a few tree grant programs to help facilitate the cleanup and buffering of visually unappealing properties including the following:
  - **Trees Please** – The Trees Please program is sponsored by MidAmerican Energy and awards grants to cities and counties for purchasing trees for planting within their community. Typical awards are \$1,000 and up. More information on the program is available online at <https://www.midamericanenergy.com/ia-res-trees>.
  - **Trees for Kids Program** – The Trees for Kids program is run by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and awards grants between \$1,000 and \$4,000 for tree planting projects organized and run by youth. These programs can be a great match for school, youth groups, or scouting programs. The application cycle is twice a year. More information is available by contacting the IDNR at 515-725-8455 or online at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Forestry/Educational-Opportunities>.

- **Build with Bags Grant.** The Build with Bags Grant is a program run by Keep Iowa Beautiful and allows cities to purchase products made of recycled plastic bags for their parks. As the City considers enhancements to their current parks and the future development of trails they may want to consider applying for funding through this program. The program could provide funding for garbage or recycle receptacles, benches, or picnic tables. More information is available online at <https://www.KeepIowaBeautiful.com/grants-awards/build-with-bags-grant/>.
- **Wellmark Small Match Grant.** The Wellmark foundation offers a matching grant program for communities that build projects that promote community wellness. This can include the development of recreational assets within the community. More information is available online at <https://www.wellmark.com/foundation/documents/Wellmark-Foundation-MATCH-RFP.pdf>.
- **MHRD Grant Program.** Funded with revenues from the Hard Rock Casino in Sioux City, this program provides two grant cycles per year which are available to all non-profits, and government bodies in Woodbury County and adjacent counties. Grants range from \$25,000 to \$250,000 and require a 25% match. Grant cycles are typically opened in February and July. More information is available online at <https://mrhdiowa.org/applyforgrants/>.
- **CAT Grant Program.** The Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) program administered by the Iowa Economic Development Authority provides funding for projects that provide recreational, cultural, entertainment, and educational attractions as well as sports tourism. More information on the project is available online at <https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/asp/Tools/ProgramDetails.aspx?pid=99&ppid=17>.
- **KaBOOM.** KaBOOM and their corporate partners provide competitive funding for community playgrounds. More information on the KaBOOM program is available online at <https://kaboom.org/grants>.
- **REAP City Parks and Open Spaces Program.** The REAP program administered by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources provides competitive funding for parks and trails in the State of Iowa. The City Parks and Open Spaces program provides grants up to 100% for projects that typically include parkland expansion and multi-purpose recreational developments. More information on the REAP City Parks and Open Spaces Program is available online at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/REAP/REAP-Funding-at-Work/City-Parks-Open-Spaces>.
- **REAP Historical Resources Program.** Another REAP program is their Historical Resources program which provides funding for historic preservation, library and archives, and museums. More information on this program is available online at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/REAP/REAP-Funding-at-Work/Historical-Resources>.

- **US Gardens Grant Program.** Whole Kids Foundation provides competitive grants for non-profit groups and K-12 schools for the development of community gardens. More information is available online at <https://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/index.php/schools/programs/school-garden-grant-program>.

### 9.01 Objectives

### 9.02 Economic Data

### 9.03 Key Economic Development Objectives

### 9.04 Urban Renewal and Urban Revitalization

### 9.05 Strategies for Economic Development

## 9.01 OBJECTIVES

Following public input and review of potential objectives, related to economic development, the City Council prioritized the following objectives for encouraging the growth and economic development of the community.

Short Term Objectives (Typically 1-4 Years)

- Incentivize Reinvestment in Downtown (Goal 3)

Intermediate Term Objectives (Typically 5-10 Years)

- Attract New Business to Downtown and Encourage Growth of Existing Business (Goal 3)
- Talk to Landowners About Potential Development (Goal 3)

Long Term Objectives (Typically 11-30 Years)

- Grocery Store (Goal 3)

## 9.02 ECONOMIC DATA

Economic growth within Lawton has been slow with the exception of renewed interest in a restaurant and the development of a new seed dealership. Commercial and industrial development growth is in stark contrast to the residential development seen within the City over the past several years.

Residents of Lawton are employed in a variety of industries in the area. The US Census provides some insight into how citizens are employed, and the following chart shows the last three sets of Census data available.

Industry	Workers 2000 Census	Workers 2010 Census	Workers 2018 Census Estimates
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0	0	6
Construction	35	50	35
Manufacturing	75	57	72
Wholesale trade	20	13	23
Retail trade	32	76	60
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	19	6	6
Information	12	7	8
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	20	32	25
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	15	28	39
Educational, health and social services	108	120	135
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	9	9	33
Other services (except public administration)	20	12	26
Public administration	14	37	56

*Figure 54 Resident industry of employment*

Source: US Census

Outside of the school, jobs are very limited within the City of Lawton forcing many residents to commute to jobs outside of the City. Data from the US Census's data group Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data set (2017) shows that 154 respondents were employed in Lawton and that 134 were coming into the City to work while 396 of the residents were commuting out to jobs outside of the City, creating an inflow/outflow job chart as follows (note: the arrows do not indicate direction of where the employees are coming from or where they were commuting to):



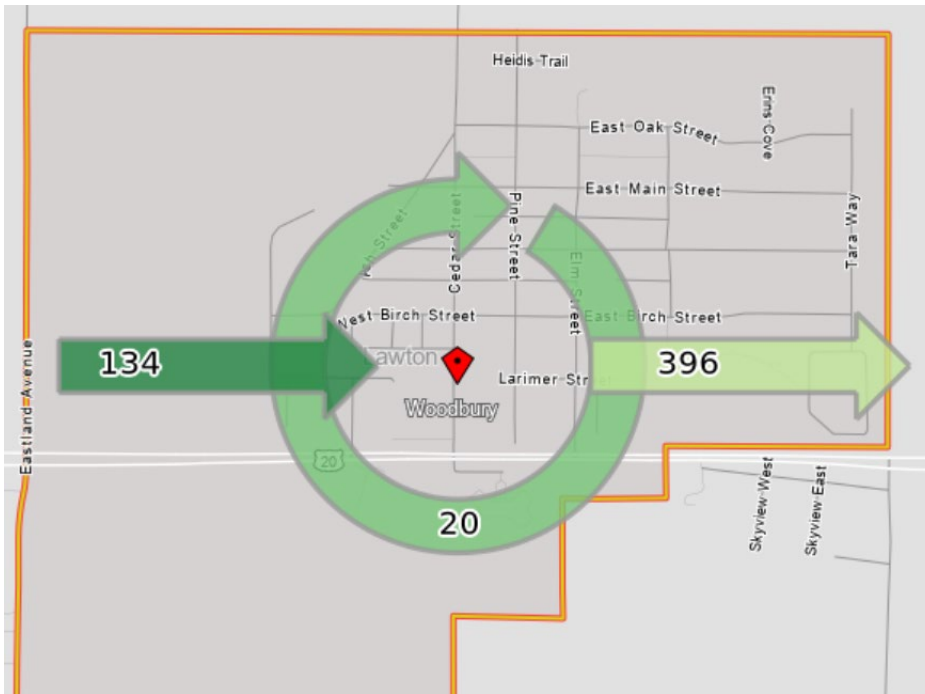


Figure 55 Worker Inflow/Outflow Diagram

Source: LEHD Data

The US Census data also provides data on commuting for residents of the City. The following chart provides a comparison of commuting trends for Lawton residents in 2010 and 2018 based on time of travel.

Travel Time to Work	2010	2018 Estimate
Less than 10 minutes	10.5%	12.1%
10 to 14 minutes	9.3%	9.1%
15 to 19 minutes	15.9%	22.8%
20 to 24 minutes	31.8%	30.3%
25 to 29 minutes	14.3%	13.9%
30 to 34 minutes	13.1%	6.1%
35 to 44 minutes	1.2%	1.4%
45 to 59 minutes	0.5%	0.6%
60 or more minutes	3.5%	3.8%
Mean travel time to work (in minutes)	21.5 Minutes	20.3 Minutes

Figure 56 Resident Commuting Time to Work

Source: US Census

The available data from the US Census shows that residents are commuting to work between 15 and 24 minutes (53.1% in the 2018 data). This short commute time would most likely represent individuals working in the Sioux City metro area. The shorter commute times are potentially residents working in Bronson, Merville, and Correctionville. Based on the data, the majority of



residents work in jobs that require a commute which would target the Sioux City and Sergeant Bluff area. This data matches what was heard from residents during the public visioning process.

Additional data from the LEHD data set provides another view of where jobs are within the community, who is filling them, and where residents of Lawton are employed.

Based on the data, and 416 workers living in Lawton in 2017, those employees were working in the locations away from Lawton by the following distances:

	Number of Workers	% of Workers
<i>Less than 10 Miles</i> <i>(dark green)</i>	142	34.1%
<i>10-24 Miles</i> <i>(green)</i>	204	49.0%
<i>25 to 50 Miles</i> <i>(lime green)</i>	6	1.4%
<i>Greater Than 50 Miles</i> <i>(yellow)</i>	64	15.4%

Figure 57 Lawton Workers Commute Distance  
Source: LEHD Data

The following graphic shows the same data along with the direction in which they traveled those distances. The colors referenced in the above table correlate to the colors on the graphic below.

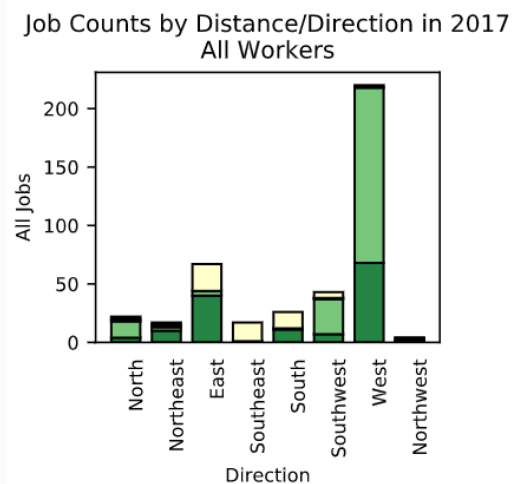


Figure 58 Lawton Residents Commute by Distance  
Source: LEHD Data

The LEHD data clearly shows a number of the Lawton residents commute to the Sioux City metro area for jobs. Additional US Census data shows that residents are primarily employed within Woodbury County.

Place of Work	2010	2018 Estimates
Work in Iowa	88.7%	88.6%
Worked in Woodbury Co.	80.4%	83.7%
Worked outside of Woodbury Co.	8.2%	4.8%
Worked outside of Iowa	11.3%	11.4%

*Figure 59 Place of Work Data*

Source: US Census

Using the LEHD data set we get a little more detail on the location of jobs that Lawton residents travel to as shown in the following chart:

	Number of Lawton Residents Commuting to Location	% of Residents
<b>Sioux City</b>	192	46.2%
<b>Moville</b>	36	8.7%
<b>South Sioux City</b>	22	5.3%
<b>Lawton</b>	20	4.8%
<b>Le Mars</b>	12	2.9%
<b>Sergeant Bluff</b>	11	2.6%
<b>Dakota City, NE</b>	7	1.7%
<b>Council Bluffs</b>	6	1.4%
<b>Omaha, NE</b>	6	1.4%
<b>Bronson</b>	5	1.2%

*Figure 60 Location of Jobs for Lawton Residents*

Source: LEHD Data

Another factor of economic conditions within the community can be seen by looking at the income of families within the community.

Family Income	2000	2010	2018
Less than \$10,000	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.4%	2.4%	0.7%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	5.2%	1.6%	3.3%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6.2%	1.2%	6.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	21.8%	16.0%	5.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	32.7%	36.0%	16.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	21.3%	28.0%	20.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	8.5%	12.4%	33.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0.0%	1.2%	10.8%
\$200,000 and above	0.0%	1.2%	1.5%
Median family income	\$58,750	\$67,500	\$94,844
Mean household income	N/A	\$73,656	\$95,629

*Figure 61 Lawton Family Income Data Historic Perspective.*

Source: US Census

Lawton families have seen a steadily increasing family income over the last 20 years. Looking at family income data across the comparable cities may provide some additional information for analyzing the community profile in terms of economic elements. The following chart shows the 2018 US Census estimates for number of families in each income category for all Woodbury County cities.

Family Income	Anthon	Bronson	Correctionville	Cushing	Danbury	Hornick	Lawton	Moville	Oto	Pierson	Salix	Sergeant Bluff	Sloan	Sioux City	Smithland
<b>Less than \$10,000</b>	6	0	10	2	1	0	0	0	3	5	1	108	10	854	3
<b>\$10,000 to \$14,999</b>	7	2	8	0	13	1	2	4	6	1	3	61	0	622	4
<b>\$15,000 to \$24,999</b>	13	0	16	14	7	5	7	25	2	5	16	71	7	1,815	0
<b>\$25,000 to \$34,999</b>	23	5	29	4	8	5	23	14	1	25	9	29	27	2,587	6
<b>\$35,000 to \$49,999</b>	23	14	67	17	19	22	14	55	1	24	12	67	51	3,115	9
<b>\$50,000 to \$74,999</b>	52	19	43	16	26	20	50	105	4	17	25	290	98	4,523	12
<b>\$75,000 to \$99,999</b>	25	11	24	7	18	16	46	99	9	12	16	158	30	3,073	13
<b>\$100,000 to \$149,999</b>	13	24	6	4	10	15	79	86	1	12	16	285	71	2,510	2
<b>\$150,000 to \$199,999</b>	5	0	7	1	4	0	8	30	0	2	0	132	17	556	0
<b>\$200,000 and above</b>	9	2	0	0	2	3	2	13	0	4	4	41	5	517	0

Figure 62 Woodbury County Cities Family Income Data.

Source: US Census

The following table shows family income data for the Woodbury County cities showing median and mean family incomes. The data is sorted by median family income.

City	Median Family Income	Mean Family Income
Oto	N/A	49,625
<b>Lawton</b>	<b>94,844</b>	<b>95,629</b>
<b>Sergeant Bluff</b>	82,158	106,609
<b>Moville</b>	80,893	91,586
<b>Sloan</b>	77,708	84,541
<b>Sioux City</b>	76,401	103,185
<b>Bronson</b>	75,417	83,179
<b>Salix</b>	75,208	80,852
<b>Smithland</b>	71,250	62,236
<b>Hornick</b>	69,167	88,187
<b>Anthon</b>	65,795	78,093
<b>Cushing</b>	53,750	61,603
<b>Danbury</b>	52,000	75,801
<b>Pierson</b>	50,938	68,687
<b>Correctionville</b>	47,917	59,396

Figure 63 Woodbury County Cities Median and Mean Family Incomes.

Source: US Census

Lawton has the highest median family income of all the cities in Woodbury County. Additionally, the median income for families in Lawton is above the Woodbury County family median income of \$69,161. Similarly, we can compare Lawton's family income data to that of the comparable cities group.

City	Median Family Income	Mean Family Income
<b>Aurelia</b>	75,431	79,3030
<b>Conrad</b>	68,594	76,945
<b>Correctionville</b>	47,917	59,396
<b>De Soto</b>	78,393	95,353
<b>George</b>	60,179	64,641
<b>Gowrie</b>	56,705	67,067
<b>Hinton</b>	92,750	96,211
<b>Holstein</b>	76,458	94,758
<b>Lawton</b>	<b>94,844</b>	<b>95,629</b>
<b>Moville</b>	80,893	91,586
<b>North English</b>	59,219	77,459
<b>Sloan</b>	77,708	84,541
<b>Swisher</b>	97,031	113,165
<b>Tabor</b>	70,694	75,990

Figure 64 Comparable Cities Median and Mean Family Income.

Source: US Census

The data in Figure 64 shows that the City of Lawton's median family income is in the top group of all the comparable cities. This higher median family income can be supportive of local businesses but the short commute to Sioux City may be prohibiting the development of local businesses. Additionally, communities with higher family incomes may be good places to see higher levels of community support for well supported community projects in terms of financial donations.

### 9.03 KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES.

During the visioning process and throughout the process of developing objectives for the City a couple of economic development initiatives became key items for residents and community leaders. These included the following:

**Grocery Store.** City leaders and residents identified a strong desire for the development of a grocery store within the City, however, it could be a challenge with the short 20 minute drive to Sioux City where lower prices and a wider selection would be available to residents. We see the struggles that other neighboring communities who are farther from the metro area have with sustaining grocery stores and while the family and household incomes in Lawton are higher it could still be a struggle to make it financially feasible for a grocery store to thrive in the community. A successful operation may need to combine other needed elements and find a unique perspective to offer the needed services. City leaders should work with private developers while keeping an open mind on how to find a way to make a project successful.

**Preservation of Downtown.** In the past several years many of the buildings in the downtown area have been purchased and converted to rental units or housing. The City leaders indicated a desire to preserve the downtown area for commercial purposes. The key in small towns for downtown success is in being open to creative use of the buildings and driving traffic to the area. The City will need to be a partner in these efforts, either through economic incentives (urban renewal) or through the creation of events and activities that pull people into the community to support the local businesses.

**Commercial and Industrial Development.** The major limiting factor for Lawton in terms of commercial and industrial development is the limited space for new development without encroachment upon the strong residential base. As was noted during the past few years the development of a seed dealership caused concerns with neighboring residential uses. The development of a Restricted Residential District (or Zoning Code) and the opening up of land for future commercial and industrial land would be big elements in helping to recruit future growth of these markets within the City.

The City has limited commercial services including a convenience store, restaurant, some niche shops, a seed dealership, retirement home, a used car dealership, to name a few. Ultimately any



long-term solution here will require incentives and assistance from the local government as well as an ability to draw people from other nearby communities who have some of the same needs, to regularly support these local businesses. Lawton has to find a way to compete with locating a business in the Sioux City metro area where a lot more traffic is available. This could mean focusing on commercial and industrial endeavors that are not strictly relying on the element of traffic but which need access to a four-lane highway.

#### **9.04 URBAN RENEWAL & URBAN REVITALIZATION**

The City has previously deployed some key economic development strategies already, including Urban Renewal programs as authorized by the *Code of Iowa*.

##### **Urban Revitalization**

The City has not to this point utilized an Urban Revitalization Plan but it could be beneficial in helping to maintain and upgrade existing residential properties and provide incentives to existing commercial properties to expand.

Urban revitalization results in a direct benefit to the property owner by a reduction in the assessed value of improvements or new development that is undertaken during the term of the plan. An Urban Revitalization Plan can be a positive factor in the growth and redevelopment of housing in communities and could be a benefit to the City in their efforts to encourage redevelopment, reinvestment, and new growth outside of Urban Renewal Areas.

The *Code of Iowa* allows for a more aggressive abatement schedule for communities that can show that the area covered by the Urban Revitalization Plan is blighted. Based on the windshield survey of the City's residential properties we believe that it may be beneficial for the City to conduct a full blight assessment and to consider the development of an Urban Revitalization Plan based on a potential blight finding.

##### **Urban Renewal**

The City has utilized the Urban Renewal tool provided in the *Code of Iowa*. Currently the City has three Urban Renewal Plans on file. Char-Mac was developed in 1999 to facilitate the development of the Char-Mac Addition on the south side of HWY 20 and which included the construction of a nursing home and related improvements. The plan was amended in 2015. A second Char-Mac Plan for Phase 2 improvements was also adopted in 2015. Finally, the City adopted the West Creek Development Phases 1 and 2 Urban Renewal Plan in 2007 to facilitate the development of a residential subdivision. Refer to page 38 for additional information on the Urban Renewal Plans.

Current Iowa law for Urban Renewal Plans requires that projects be included in a plan and that the plan authorizes a not-to-exceed amount for each project prior to any incremental funds being used for the project. The City needs to monitor their proposed projects and the amount

of funds authorized by the plan for the project to ensure that they remain in compliance with current Iowa regulations. This could mean that the City will have to make additional amendments to the plans. Additionally, the City should ensure that all projects that are undertaken are done within the defined Urban Renewal Area.

## 9.05 STRATEGIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The following strategies may be utilized by the City to help further the growth and economic development of the City.

- **Urban Renewal.** Many cities have utilized Urban Renewal as a tool to encourage new commercial and economic development within their communities. Use of Urban Renewal (also called Tax Increment Financing – TIF) for commercial and industrial development can be used to provide incentives for new construction and the retention and creation of jobs.
- **Urban Revitalization.** An Urban Revitalization program may be beneficial in encouraging the redevelopment of existing commercial and industrial facilities within the community or the construction of new commercial and industrial facilities.
- **RISE Grant Program.** The Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) grant program is funded through the Iowa Department of Transportation and is broken up into two general programs:
  - Immediate Opportunity Program. This program is available for immediate opportunities related to the creation of non-speculative opportunities for permanent job creation or retention. Jobs created must be value-adding in nature (manufacturing, industrial, nonretail) and cannot involve the relocation of jobs from another part of the state. Funding is provided to construct public roads to support the development of the jobs. Minimum local match under this program is 20%.
  - Local Development Program. This program is competitive and provides funds to construct public roads to support the future development of jobs but where there is not an immediate opportunity. Local match under this program is traditionally 50%.

More information on this program is available online at

[https://iowadot.gov/systems\\_planning/grant-programs/revitalize-iowa-s-sound-economy-rise-program](https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/grant-programs/revitalize-iowa-s-sound-economy-rise-program).

- **IDNR Derelict Building Program.** This program, run by the Department of Natural Resources can assist communities of less than 5,000 people to address neglected commercial or public structures that are vacant. Assistance includes help with conducting asbestos inspections and abatement, structural engineering analysis, and phase 1 and phase 2 site assessment, as well as building deconstruction and building renovation. More information on this program is available at

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Land-Quality/Waste-Planning-Recycling/Derelict-Building-Program>.

- **IEDA Community Catalyst Grant Program.** The intent of this program is to provide grant funds to a city/private partnership for the redevelopment, rehabilitation or deconstruction of buildings that will stimulate economic growth or reinvestment in the community. The program is fairly new and is very competitive. More information on this program is available at <https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/Catalyst>.

### 10.01 Objectives

### 10.02 Streets and Motor Vehicle System

### 10.03 Sidewalks

### 10.04 Trails

### 10.05 Community Gateways

### 10.06 Strategies for Infrastructure Improvements

## 10.01 OBJECTIVES

After receiving public input and reviewing council objectives and input the City Council developed a set of objectives by which they can try to work toward achieving. The Council then prioritized these objectives into short, intermediate, and long-term time frames. A full version of these objectives is shown in Chapter 1 of this Plan. The objectives shown here are related to the City's transportation systems.

### Short Term Objectives (Typically 1-4 Years)

- Bring Sidewalks Within ADA Compliance (Goal 2)
- Work with IDOT To Find A Solution to HWY 20 Intersection (Goal 2)

### Intermediate Term Objectives (Typically 5-10 Years)

- Install Sidewalks Through Neighborhoods and To Complete Pathways (Goal 2)
- Complete A Pavement Management Plan (Goal 2)
- Reconstruct Streets with Curb and Gutter and Storm Water Systems (Goal 2)
- Expansion of Trail System (Goal 1)

### Long Term Objectives (Typically 11-30 Years)

- Connect Trail System to Ballfields (Goal 1)

## 10.02 STREETS AND MOTOR VEHICLE SYSTEM

The City has 5.88 miles of roadways, all of which are paved, within the corporate limits. The majority of roads in town are constructed using asphalt and concrete. As is typical in smaller rural communities many of the roads do not have curb and gutter systems and rather rely on ditches for storm water runoff, especially within the older part of town.

A review of the City's existing roads based on the Institute of Transportation at Iowa State University's, reports shows that a majority of the roads in Lawton are in Fair to Poor condition. The Institute of Transportation at Iowa State University provides for local evaluation of streets within the state on a three-year basis. The following map shows the data for the City of Lawton's road based on the 2018 survey.

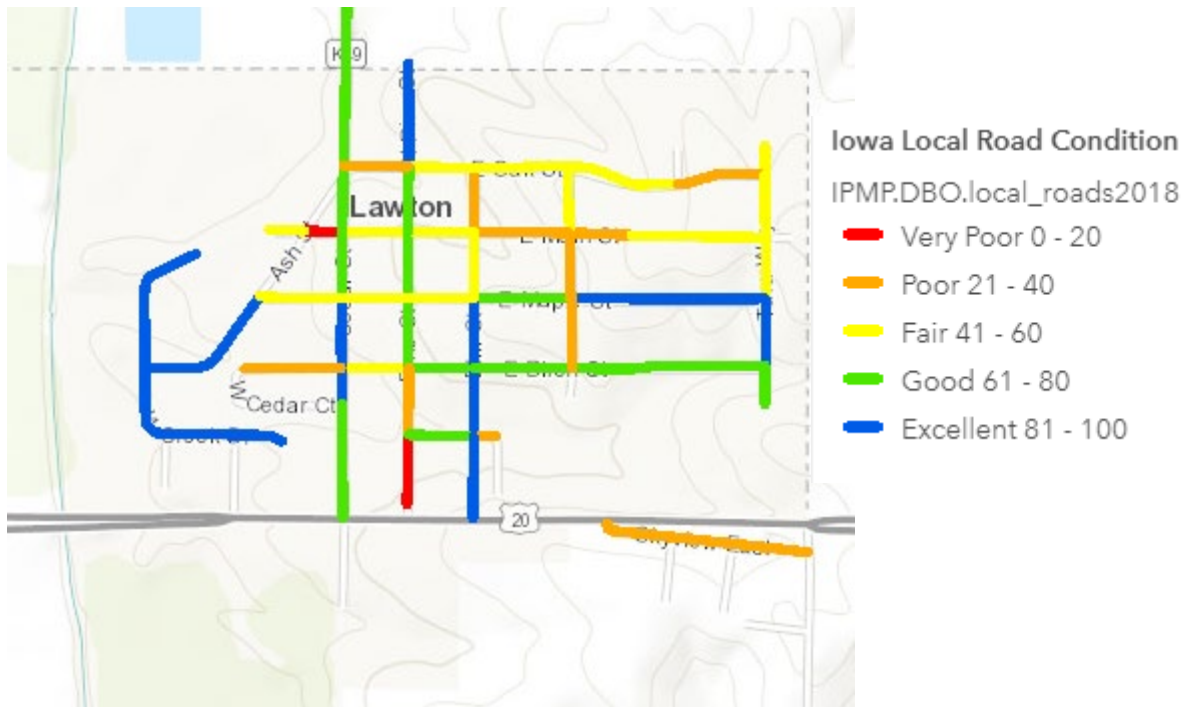


Figure 65 Road Condition Report Findings Map

Source: Institute of Transportation at Iowa State University

The City lies on the north and south side of Highway 20 with a majority of the developed area to the north and a small residential area on the south side including a senior home facility. A topic of considerable discussion during the planning process was access to the south and the ability to cross traffic on Highway 20. Highway 20 is through traffic within Lawton and depending on the time and day of the week it can be difficult to cross the highway to get to the properties on the south or the north. This access raised concerns about future development on the south side in terms of being able to provide emergency access to those residents with the Fire Department on the north side of the road. Additionally, of the three access routes to HWY 20 one is further hindered by lack of good sight of traffic from the east due to the elevated terrain.

The following chart shows Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) data for Annual Average Daily Traffic counts on roads in Lawton, Iowa over the past 15 years:

Street Section	1999	2003	2007	2011	2015
<b>HWY 20 west of Cedar St</b>	9,900	8,800	8,700	9,000	9,500
<b>HWY 20 east of Cedar St</b>	8,700	7,500	7,600	7,900	8,400
<b>Cedar St. south of HWY 20</b>	20	90	70		160
<b>Cedar St. north of HWY 20</b>	2,290	2,280	2,030	2,080	1,890
<b>Elm St. North of HWY 20</b>	560	610	530	520	
<b>Maple St. east of Elm St.</b>	350	440			
<b>Maple St. west of Elm St.</b>	410	430		540	
<b>Cedar St. north of Oak St.</b>	1,150	940	640	580	650

Figure 66 IDOT Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts

\*Location varies by year.

Data Source: IDOT Traffic Flow Maps

IDOT data provides additional details for the intersection of HWY 20 and Cedar Street, including turning movements.

Direction of Travel	Turning Direction	2011 Count	2015 Count
<b>West on HWY 20</b>	North	242	203
	Continue West	3,709	3,974
	South		39
<b>South on Cedar St.</b>	West	887	793
	Continue South		21
	East	214	163
<b>East on HWY 20</b>	North	739	693
	Continue East	3,705	4,034
	South		26
<b>North Cedar Street</b>	West		26
	Continue North		13
	East		32

Figure 67 IDOT Turning Movement on HWY 20

Source: IDOT Turning Movement Traffic County Data 2011 and 2015.

The traffic data, while a single point in time, shows the traffic running east west on HWY 20 increasing over time which is primarily due to the conversion of a four-lane HWY 20 across the state of Iowa. This increases the potential marketing targets for community events, businesses, and other events. However, it also puts more stress on the existing problem of crossing HWY 20 and access (especially emergency access) to the properties on the south side of the highway. The City may want to monitor future traffic data from the State to gauge the impact of the improvements to HWY 20 over the past few years.

An objective of this plan and one that requires multijurisdictional support is the effort to provide a controlled intersection at Cedar Street and Highway 20. City leaders have had discussions with IDOT staff but those discussions to this point have not resulted in more than preliminary discussions.



Potential improvements to City streets can be a costly endeavor for small towns. The following estimates of costs are provided as a guide for projecting costs related to street improvements. Costs are based on standard block, about 330 feet of driving surface.

PCC Reconstruction (w/ Curb and Gutter)	\$93,100
PCC Reconstruction (w/o Curb and Gutter)	\$89,900
HMA Reconstruction (w/ Curb and Gutter)	\$93,900
HMA Reconstruction (w/o Curb and Gutter)	\$72,700
Sealcoat	\$17,400

### 10.03 SIDEWALKS

Sidewalks are an integral part of a good transportation system. A look at the existing sidewalks within the City indicated several areas where sidewalks were non-existent or in need of major rehabilitation. Specifically, the older part of town appears to have a good pedestrian system, however, the condition of the sidewalks may not comply with current standards. The newer subdivisions are lacking adequate pedestrian sidewalks. While the newest subdivision, on the City's west side did construct sidewalks with the development, the areas where lots have not been built upon do not have sidewalks creating gaps. Additionally, during the windshield survey it was noted that some of the sidewalks in this subdivision were undersized potentially three or four feet wide. Current ADA specifications are for five to six feet wide sidewalks.

Routes with stretches of missing sidewalk or where existing sidewalk is in a condition that is unsafe can defeat the purpose of sidewalks and cause pedestrians to use the street instead. The following map shows the City's pedestrian routes as identified by aerial photography and where sidewalks are missing.

Figure 68 Existing Sidewalk Location Map

Based on a view of aerial photography it appears that there is approximately 17,989 square yards of missing sidewalk (note that we did not analyze the condition of existing sidewalks). Using a rough cost of \$65.00 per square yard for replacement of sidewalk the cost to add sidewalks in all the areas where sidewalk is currently missing would be estimated at around \$1,169,285.

To encourage pedestrian transportation and to provide safe routes for kids to move through town the City may want to consider an aggressive sidewalk repair and replacement program either through use of City funds or through the use of assessments to property owners. Assessment programs are not a popular option for cities as it's a direct tax on its citizens, but it can be effective to achieve desired public works projects. An average cost for sidewalk installation on a standard block would be \$21,200.

As an alternative to trying to rehabilitate the public sidewalk system the City can also consider a Complete Street Concept which would mix pedestrian and bike traffic with vehicular traffic on the paved portion of the road. While there are a variety of ways to make this happen the cheapest option, especially on low traffic roads could be through the use of painting the street and designating no parking on one side of the street. The following graphic is a drawing of a complete street concept.



*Figure 69 Graphic Showing Complete Street Concept*

There are a number of things to consider when weighing the positives and negatives of the complete street concept in small rural communities; however, a pedestrian friendly community is a quality of life issue that promotes interactions between residents, community pride, and a healthy lifestyle.

#### **10.04 TRAILS.**

During the planning process the City was in the development stages of building a hiking/biking trail.





Figure 70 Lawton Bike/Hike Trail Plan

This concept takes advantage of the City's existing sidewalk system and combines with new trail sections. The City will need to make sure that they maintain condition long term to ensure maintenance of the trail and the private sidewalk systems that are a part of the route to provide continued use and safety for pedestrians using the route.

The City would like to extend the trail in the future to other areas of the community including the ball fields and the school system. Additionally, there was some discussion of figuring out a way to extend the trail to the south should development continue to grow in that area.

Extending the trail would add valuable length to the trail and enhance the users experience and could provide an area where the City could consider adding fitness stations for an additional wellness component and use. An example of a fitness station is provided below.



*Figure 71 Example of a Fitness Station Along a Trail.*

## 10.05 COMMUNITY GATEWAYS

One of the first things visitors notice when arriving in a community is a welcoming community entrance or gateway. The main entrance to town is off HWY 20 where the City currently only has a sign at the main intersection. The City may want to consider looking further outside of town along HWY 20 to install welcome signs and enhancing the current sign so that it can be more welcoming and encourage visitors to stop within the community.

Traditionally, cities didn't see the need to compete but now as the world becomes more mobile and many jobs are able to be done from any location, where internet is available, it has become critical for cities to value their image and market themselves to draw people to their community. That holds true for Lawton and the other rural cities within Woodbury County. All are within a relatively easy drive of the major metropolitan area of Sioux City. As such they can all be seen as bedroom communities and places to live where life is slower, people know each other, and crime is low. With so many options it becomes critical that a City like Lawton know how to



market itself to people and highlight its strengths through various marketing pieces, community events, and social media sites.

As noted above, for those passing through the area the starting point is the community sign. From there it is points of contact on social media and through community events and finally direct marketing that you are open for business (small business opportunities and residential growth) and why your community is better than the other options. In addition, the City may want to consider a full marketing campaign to help recruit families and individuals to relocate to Lawton.

With HWY 20 anticipated to have increased traffic there are opportunities to pull people off of the highway and into the community for experiences such as shopping participating in unique community events, and eventually as new residents in the community.

## 10.06 STRATEGIES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Considering the data available and the current condition of the City's transportation system the City may want to consider the development of a five-year capital improvement plan that would prioritize future improvements and help in identifying available revenues for funding, including the strategic use of competitive grant programs. The following potential strategies and programs may be of interest to the City in planning these future improvements.

- **IDOT Sign Grant Program.** The City may have a need to replace street signs and posts, including stop, yield, no parking, and other regulatory signs in the future to comply with new signage standards. The IDOT does provide a grant program for cities and counties that can assist cities with the cost of purchasing the signs and posts. The maximum award for cities is \$5,000 annually but cities can apply in multiple years. More information on the program is available online at <https://iowadot.gov/traffic/traffic-and-safety-programs/sign-replacement-program>.
- **Iowa Living Roadways Grant.** Trees Forever has a program that provides grants to communities who are looking to fund enhancements of transportation corridors such as community entrances and trails with native plantings. The Iowa Living Roadways Grant is available annually and Trees Forever will provide the City with a regional field coordinator to provide guidance. More information is available at [http://www.treesforever.org/ILR\\_Projects](http://www.treesforever.org/ILR_Projects).
- **IDOT Trail Grant Programs.** The State of Iowa's Department of Transportation has a number of programs available to help cities and counties to fund trails including the following:
  - Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP)
  - Recreational Trails Program (State)
  - Recreational Trails Program (Federal)

- Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund – More information is available online at <https://www.iowadot.gov/lrtf/grants>.

More information on all of these programs is available online in the Iowa DOT Funding Guide at [https://iowadot.gov/pol\\_leg\\_services/Funding-Guide.pdf](https://iowadot.gov/pol_leg_services/Funding-Guide.pdf).

- **MHRD Grant Program.** Funded with revenues from the Hard Rock Casino in Sioux City this program provides two grant cycles per year which are available to all non-profits, and government bodies in Woodbury County and adjacent counties. Grants range from \$25,000 to \$250,000 and require a 25% match. Grants cycles are typically opened in February and July. More information is available online at <https://mrhdiowa.org/applyforgrants/>.
- **RISE Grant Program.** The Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) grant program is funded through the Iowa Department of Transportation and is broken up into two general programs:
  - Immediate Opportunity Program. This program is available for immediate opportunities related to the creation of non-speculative opportunities for permanent job creation or retention. Jobs created must be value-adding in nature (manufacturing, industrial, nonretail) and cannot involve the relocation of jobs from another part of the state. Funding is provided to construct public roads to support the development of the jobs. Minimum local match under this program is 20%.
  - Local Development Program. This program is competitive and provides funds to construct public roads to support the future development of jobs but where there is not an immediate opportunity. Local match under this program is traditionally 50%.

More information on this program is available online at [https://iowadot.gov/systems\\_planning/grant-programs/revitalize-iowa-s-sound-economy-rise-program](https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/grant-programs/revitalize-iowa-s-sound-economy-rise-program).

- **Iowa Department of Transportation TAP Grant Program.** The Iowa Department of Transportation provides funding through their Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for smaller-scale transportation programs including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, among others. More information on the program is available online at [https://iowadot.gov/systems\\_planning/grant-programs/transportation-alternatives](https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/grant-programs/transportation-alternatives).

### 11.01 Objectives

### 11.02 Strengths and Weaknesses

### 11.03 Strategies for Community Involvement and Communication

### 11.04 Strategies for Community Image and Marketing

## 11.01 OBJECTIVES

Following public input and review of potential objectives related to the community image and marketing of the City, the City Council prioritized the following objectives:

Short Term Objectives (Typically 1-4 Years)

- Sponsor A National Night Out Event (Goal 4)
- Create A Community Clean Up Day (Goal 4)
- Develop A Mayor's Youth Commission (Goal 4)
- Investigate School and City Partnership to Distribute Information (Goal 4)
- Start Lunch and Learn Series for Residents (Wednesday Coffees) (Goal 4)

Intermediate Term Objectives (Typically 5-10 Years)

- None

Long Term Objectives (Typically 11-30 Years)

- Develop Community Marketing Campaign (Goal 4)

## 11.02 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Based on the various public input sessions that the City held, the following strengths and weaknesses for the City became evident.

### Strengths

The following community traits were identified through the comprehensive plan process as strengths for the City:

- Key Location for Growth – Lawton's location along Highway 20 and their proximity to Sioux City are both key elements that have led to growth and can be the foundation for additional growth.
- Good Housing Stock – Lawton has a good strong housing stock. Older units are in generally good condition and there is a good spread of housing construction that has occurred over the history of the community and continues to be developed.

- Strong School District – It was clear through the process that the school district is one that is revered within the community and a big community asset. A good school district can help to recruit new residents and through events will bring people to the community. A good partnership between the City and the School can also be a key method to reach residents and encourage engagement in City functions.

These strengths are a great foundation on which the City can generate motivation to move forward on the specific goals and objectives outlined in this plan as well as those that come forward in the future.

### **Weaknesses**

Throughout the process the following weaknesses were identified that could provide a challenge to the community in implementing the various goals and objectives outlined in this plan.

- Impact of Flood Hazard Area – The impact of the FEMA Flood Hazard Area on the City's west side limits the growth potential of the community by making it difficult and very costly to grow the City to the west and southwest.
- Community Involvement – With the proximity to Sioux City many residents do not spend considerable periods of time in Lawton, it's easy to "run to Sioux City" for groceries, food, entertainment. This creates a challenge for the community who is looking to attract people, visitors, and create opportunities to support local businesses.
- HWY 20 – Highway 20 is definitely an asset; however, currently it is also hindering growth due to the considerable hazard it creates in trying to access the south part of the community. The best potential for future growth, outside of the floodplain area is to the south, but access and getting across HWY 20 for emergency vehicles can create a separation that will decrease the demand for development in that location.

### **11.03 STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION.**

Community involvement is closely related to how the City communicates with its citizens. Community involvement in rural communities like Lawton can be difficult when a majority of the residents spend a large part of their day working in another community. However, the development of strong community pride and involvement can be a key element in successful community growth. While many of today's families are busy, there is also a desire to be involved. Communities that foster an open atmosphere and communicate effectively to their residents can capitalize on those efforts to encourage growth.

In our work with the City, community involvement was weak and many community members we talked with mentioned the need to get more people involved in the community from volunteers on the fire or ambulance staff to helping develop community events and activities. Improving community involvement should be a priority of the City. The following strategies and programs may be beneficial in helping to develop that needed involvement:



- **National Night Out Event.** The City may want to host a National Night Out event in Veterans Park or the park area by the school. The National Night Out program is geared as a night to build neighborhoods and promote the concept of community policing. While Lawton has law enforcement through Woodbury County they could still participate in a National Night Out event to build community support. It would be good to include the volunteer fire department and Woodbury County Sheriff in the event as well.
- **JR Firefighter Program.** The City's volunteer fire department may want to consider a Jr. Firefighter Program for middle school and high school aged kids in the summer. This program would offer an opportunity to educate youth on fire safety as well as start to build within the youth a desire to become part of the volunteer department later in their life. The program may include education components as well as some physical elements of being a firefighter. The program would not include Jr. Firefighters going on fire calls with the department.
- **Social Media.** The City has not utilized Facebook to this point but should consider the use of social media to help get information out. The younger population within the City is more likely to utilize social media to get information and could be a great way to help communicate with residents. To help generate more traffic to the City 's webpage the City should promote the use of the webpage on their social media platform and within the newsletter. Additionally, they should promote the social media site in their newsletter to help increase followers.

It is advisable to limit the number of City social media sites (for example you don't want to have one for the Fire Station, Library, and City) and to post often (at least 3-4 times per week). Encourage residents to share Facebook information and include pictures whenever possible as it draws attention to the post. The City may want to develop a communication calendar in which they outline the events, topics, and information they want to promote through their communication pieces throughout the year.

- **City Webpage.** The City has a good webpage which is kept current. Expanded use of the page and keeping the page up-to-date will help to make the page useful and a good entry point for people within and outside of the City to learn more about the community. Some ways to enhance the community utilizing the web page would be to promote buildings available for new businesses, lots for sale, and community events or the need for citizens to be involved.

#### 11.04 STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY IMAGE AND MARKETING

As the City works toward the achievement of the objectives in this section the following resources may be of assistance to them.

- **Iowa Living Roadways Grant.** Trees Forever has a program that provides grants to communities who are looking to fund enhancements of transportation corridors such as

community entrances and trails with native plantings. The program could be partnered with other programs or the City could look to combine native landscaping with a community entrance sign. The Iowa Living Roadways Grant is available annually and Trees Forever will provide the City with a regional field coordinator to provide guidance. More information is available at [http://www.treesforever.org/ILR\\_Projects](http://www.treesforever.org/ILR_Projects).

- **Alert Iowa.** Alert Iowa is a public safety based public alert system that provides information to residents and specific groups via email, text message, and telephone. Currently 87 of the 99 Iowa counties participate in the program. The system does rely on citizens to sign up for these alerts and they can elect which way they want to receive the information (email, text, phone, or some combination of the three). Messages are required to be public safety based but can include water shut off notices, boil orders, street closures, snow parking notifications, and others. The system is paid for by the State of Iowa and provided to all counties and cities in the state to use, free of charge. The system will also provide, to those who sign up, weather notifications and Amber Alerts sent out by State authorities and the National Weather Service.

The City would need to work with the County Emergency Management Coordinator to get access to the administration side of the system so that they can input and issue the alerts. Additionally, the City should promote the use of the system to its citizens and help build up membership in the system.

More information on the Alert Iowa system is available online at [https://www.homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/about\\_HSEMD/alert\\_iowa.html](https://www.homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/about_HSEMD/alert_iowa.html). The specific signup location for citizens is located at [https://entry.inspironlogistics.com/woodbury\\_ia/wens.cfm](https://entry.inspironlogistics.com/woodbury_ia/wens.cfm).

- **MHRD Grant Program.** Funded with revenues from the Hard Rock Casino in Sioux City, the program provides two grant cycles per year which are available to all non-profits, and government bodies in Woodbury County and adjacent counties. Grants range from \$25,000 to \$250,000 and require a 25% match. Grants cycles are typically opened in February and July. More information is available online at <https://mrhdiowa.org/applyforgrants/>.
- **Community Event.** The City may want to consider creating a community event that could be marketed regionally to draw people to the community for a day. Potentially this event could partner with an existing regional event or be a separate event. Ideas might be a large antique show or farmer's market where Main Street might be closed for vendors to set up. The event could potentially provide youth activities in the City's park area to create a more family friendly event.
- **Iowa Tourism Grants.** The state of Iowa provides grants to various groups, including cities within the State to promote tourism by conducting tourism-related marketing initiatives, meetings, and events. Grant awards range from \$500 to \$5,000 and require a

minimum 25% cash match. More information on the program is available here  
<https://www.traveliowa.com/industry-partners/grants/iowa-tourism-grants/>.

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Upon the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan the City has a tool that they can use to begin working toward the accomplishment of the various objectives outlined within this plan. It is common that over time the priority of the City may shift, new objectives may become available, and current goals will be completed. The Comprehensive Plan is a fluid guide toward the future and the reader should understand that over time priorities and objectives may change.

Because the Plan is fluid, it is critical for the City Council to revisit the Plan on a regular schedule, typically it is recommended to review and update the plan on an annual basis. An annual review could take various forms but at a minimum it should include a review of the objectives for the current term, discussion on new objectives and/or challenges encountered by the City, and reprioritization of objectives if needed. Chapter 13 of this plan is left blank for future updates to the Plan over time.

To help the City work toward the achievement of the objectives, outlined in this Plan, we have provided, within each chapter, some potential sources of assistance that the City can investigate on their own or work with a consultant who has expertise in those programs.

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