

Implementation 10

Introduction

Implementation is defined as “putting something into effect.” Putting a comprehensive plan into effect can be as simple as adopting the plan and modifying related land use controls. Implementing the Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan calls for something more.

Each element of the comprehensive plan contains a series of policies and action steps. Implementation involves the identification of a series of community initiatives that take their cues from the policies and action steps to establish guides for decision making and public actions. This active use of the comprehensive plan makes it a critical tool for reaching Johnston’s vision.

Community Initiatives

Community initiatives are an essential component of the Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan. This section identifies how the plan is to be implemented by posing recommendations for public and private actions to achieve the community’s vision. These initiatives work collectively with the guiding principles and action steps identified throughout the plan.

Over the next ten to twenty years, Johnston will experience a number of changes, some of which are foreseen in the plan and some of which will be entirely unanticipated. Accommodating those changes will require flexibility. Since not all ideas and proposals will conform to the specific directions of the Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the vision and guiding principles identified in Section 2 serve as “yardsticks” to assess those ideas and proposals for consistency with the bigger picture. Decision makers may find a proposal to be compatible with the vision; and therefore, find changes to the comprehensive plan to be appropriate. Changes to the plan require a meaningful and transparent public process.

Community initiatives are identified to provide an ongoing dialogue regarding planning for the future of Johnston with clear and explicit directions for implementing the comprehensive plan. The initiatives should serve as a tool and direction for city council, advisory boards and staff in setting annual work programs, goals and budgets. Finally, initiatives provide a means for Johnston’s residents to continue to be engaged in the community planning process.

Organization of Implementation Initiatives

Implementation initiatives are directly related to most of the sections of the Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Prior to presenting the topic specific initiatives, general initiatives are listed.

General Community Initiatives

1. Understand Available Financial Resources

Implementation of the Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan will take a combination of public and private actions. Public actions require a public investment and some private actions will require a partnering financial effort as well. When possible, public investments should seek to leverage private investments. While finding public financing can be challenging, there are a variety of financial resources available to undertake community development projects and initiatives.

Financial Toolbox

The Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan does not contain an inventory of all of the public finance tools available for implementation. The city is experienced in the use of all primary tools available to Iowa cities. In addition, the specific details on finance powers change over time, making such an inventory outdated.

It is useful, however, to highlight key finance powers and concepts as related to implementation of the comprehensive plan. This overview of the financial toolbox is intended to be a strategic review of powers, rather than a “how to” guide.

Debt

The ability to borrow money is critical to implementation of the comprehensive plan. Many public investments related to the plan cannot be financed from annual revenues or reserves. Borrowing money gives the city greater control over the timing of projects and the management of revenues. Debt takes two basic forms – general obligation and revenue.

General obligation (G.O.) bonds pledge the “full faith and credit” of the city of Johnston. In simple terms, the City commits to levy property taxes needed to pay debt service on the bonds in the event that other pledged revenues are insufficient. The general obligation pledge creates security for the bondholder leading to the lowest cost of debt for the City.

If the ability to issue G.O. bonds was unlimited, capital planning and debt management would focus on different issues. The ability of Iowa cities to issue G.O. bonds is limited. The total outstanding G.O. debt may not exceed 5% of the actual value of all taxable property in the city. As of January 2010, the city’s debt limit was \$87,240,167 and 56% of this capacity had been used. The debt capacity of the city varies over time with growth in the tax base, issuance of bonds and repayment of existing debt.

The city can also issue revenue bonds. Revenue bonds are secured solely by revenues pledged to their repayment. Johnston has used this tool to finance improvements to municipal water and sanitary sewer systems. There are several important distinctions about revenue bonds:

- » *Revenue bonds can only be issued where the city has a defined source of revenue, such as a municipal utility.*
- » *The city must set rates at a level sufficient to produce net revenues (after operations) to pay principal and interest on outstanding debt plus a specified amount of additional revenue. This additional revenue (“coverage”) is typically 120% to 125% of annual debt service.*
- » *Revenue bonds will have higher interest rates than general obligation bonds. The higher rates reflect the investor’s perception of greater risk and the need for additional return on investment.*

Understanding debt options, matching debt with community investments and outstanding debt are important to the implementation of the comprehensive plan.

Revenues

The ability to borrow money is only part of a capital funding solution. The other critical element is the management of revenues used to retire the debt and to build capital reserves.

Property Taxes

Property taxes provide a consistent and easy to administer source of revenue. As the primary source of local revenue, property taxes are used to fund capital improvements and services. The ability to levy property taxes to pay debt is not limited by State Law. The city has typically sought to cap debt service levy. Financial planning is needed to manage the tax levy and meet capital investment needs.

Utility User Revenues

The city collects revenues from customers of municipal water and sanitary sewer utilities. Utility rates can be set to build reserves for future capital projects and to support bond issues. Financial planning helps to prevent inadequate funding and large rate increases.

Connection Charges

The city uses connection charges to pay for costs of expanding municipal utility systems. These charges are paid at time of final plat. This source of revenue is difficult to forecast because of the uncertainty of development trends.

Special Assessments

Special assessments represent a portion of improvement costs assessed to benefitted property. The use of special assessments is governed by the city's policy on special assessments. The policy describes the methodology for assessing the cost of public improvements to benefitted properties.

Tax Increment

State Law allows the city to establish tax increment financing (TIF) districts. In addition to statutory requirements, the city has adopted its own Tax Increment Finance Program. The Program describes the goals, policies and procedures for the use of TIF. The city can capture and use the growth in property tax revenues from property in the TIF district. This tax increment revenue can be used for infrastructure and other community development activities. The trade off is that monies captured in a TIF district are not available to finance local government services.

2. Conduct Annual Reviews of the Comprehensive Plan

Johnston will continue to grow and change in the future. New data and information such as complete census reports will become available from time to time. The comprehensive plan and its referenced plans and community context information should be formally reviewed on a regular basis (annually or biannually) to assess progress on attaining the community's vision and to continue a dialogue about the community's future. The results of this dialogue may lead to potential modifications or amendments to the plan. The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board and the Planning and Zoning Commission should serve as the primary entities charged with this review.

3. Use the Comprehensive Plan Daily

An effective comprehensive plan is one that suffers from excessive use as demonstrated by worn edges and scribbled notes in the margins. The plan should be used on a frequent basis not only by the community's planners, but by other city staff, decision makers, advisors and developers.

The Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan can be used as a:

- » *Guide and Educational Tool for Other Community Organizations – Growth and change in Johnston is facilitated by a number of community interests, including the school district, business community, developers, and other special interest groups. The plan should be promoted to these groups, not simply as a marketing tool, but as a resource in the development of their own plans which articulate the community's vision and direction.*
- » *City Staff Resource – The plan should be used most often by city staff. The plan is a guide for staff's recommendations and responses to inquiries from the community about development. It is the responsibility of city staff to ensure that the plan is being kept current, and when inconsistencies arise, to facilitate resolution through a community forum and a public process.*
- » *Policy Guide to Decision Makers and Advisors – the city council and advisory boards including the Planning and Zoning Commission, Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board, and Park Advisory Board are charged with making recommendations and decisions about the growth and development of the community. The comprehensive plan's Vision, Guiding Principles and policies should be the "yardstick" to which new ideas are measured as to how well they achieve the community's shared Vision.*
- » *Basis for Setting Annual Goals and Work Programs – The community's advisory boards, commissions, civic groups/organizations and city council should (and in many cases already do) establish goals and work programs on an annual basis. The comprehensive plan, and particularly the community initiatives, should serve as a basis for identifying future projects and directions.*

4. Participate in State Legislative Efforts

State legislative actions often have an impact on how local communities conduct day-to-day and long-term operations. Legislative actions relative to the environment, energy, regulation of the provision of municipal services, governance, transportation, planning and zoning rules are continually being discussed and amended during legislative sessions. The City of Johnston should continue to take a proactive approach to engaging its House and Senate representatives to represent Johnston's interests in these regional issues. Cooperation with adjacent jurisdictions is also a critical component when advocating or lobbying for particular legislation.

5. Maintain and Update the Capital Improvement Plan

Another important implementation tool is the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which establishes schedules and priorities for projects generally over a five year period. Johnston currently updates its CIP on an annual basis. The city's financial resources will always be limited and there will always be competition for community resources. The CIP allows the city to provide the most critical public improvements, yet stay within budget constraints. Many of the recommendations of this comprehensive plan should be programmed into the CIP. Through the CIP, recommendations can be prioritized, budgeted and programmed into the city's decision making process.

6. Continue Economic Development Efforts

Expanding the commercial and industrial base of the city is an ongoing effort and one that will continue to build Johnston's reputation as a great place to do business. The city has a history of successful economic development having attracted key employers like Pioneer Hi-Bred International and John Deere Credit. Johnston has formed a productive partnership with the Johnston Economic Development Corporation (JEDCO), a non-profit group. Together, the City and JEDCO will continue to support the expansion of Johnston's commercial and industrial land uses consistent with the Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

7. Continue the Established Pattern of Streetscape Improvements for Key Street Corridors

Preserving community character and establishing a sense of place unique to Johnston is embodied in the guiding principles of this plan. One feature that contributes to a strong community sense of place is the appearance of transportation corridors or streetscapes along heavily traveled roadways and streets which serve as gateways into the community. Streetscape features can go a long way toward enhancing a community's image at key "gateways" into the community or into specific districts.

Johnston has included streetscape enhancements in most of its recent transportation improvement projects. As future improvements occur, the established palate of community identification signs, plantings, lighting, sidewalks and trails should be continued.



8. Continue Community Engagement Efforts

Community engagement and civic participation takes many forms: volunteering on city commissions and advisory groups, involvement with neighborhood and other nonprofit organizations, and participation in elections and other government processes. When residents are actively involved, decisions that are made are more likely to reflect and serve the needs of the community.

The preparation of this comprehensive plan benefited from active community engagement. Community engagement in the comprehensive plan doesn't stop with the plan's adoption. Retaining community involvement in the comprehensive plan can be accomplished by:

- » *Creating a clear and concise "citizen's guide" to the comprehensive plan that explains the purpose and summarizes its content.*
- » *Maintaining a comprehensive plan webpage on the City's website that includes the citizen's guide and all chapters of the plan.*
- » *Keep printed copies of the comprehensive plan available for public use at city hall and the Johnston Public Library.*
- » *Provide opportunities for public participation in studies that are undertaken to address issues raised in the comprehensive plan.*



Land Use Initiatives

1. Focus Areas

The planning process yielded a series of seven focus areas for addressing community development issues facing Johnston. The plans and policies for each focus areas are discussed in the Land Use chapter of the plan. For two of these areas (NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area and East of Merle Hay Road), providing infrastructure is a critical future implementation action. Meeting these infrastructure needs has important financial implications for the city. The following section examines financial issues connected with these two focus areas.

NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area

A key to achieving the development objectives for the NW Saylorville Drive Area is the provision of municipal utilities. The area is not currently served by municipal water or sanitary systems. Planned future development requires these services.

Trunk sanitary sewer and water lines must be built through or around Camp Dodge to reach the NW Saylorville Drive Area. This improvement requires infrastructure and financial planning. Some factors to consider in this planning include:

- » *Timing.* The timing of these improvements will be a balancing act between need and financing. Ideally, construction occurs prior to development so that delays in utility service are not a barrier to attracting development to the Area. There are several steps in providing utility service to the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area:
 - Reach agreement with Camp Dodge on the use, right-of-way and costs.
 - Design the improvements, including route and capacity.
 - Establish a finance plan for the improvements.
 - Build the improvements.

It would not be unusual for these steps to span two years from start to finish. Some of the design and financial planning can be done in advance of actual development, reducing the time needed to provide services.

- » *Finance.* The cost of construction through Camp Dodge cannot be treated like the typical utility improvement. In the typical project, a pro-rata share of the improvement costs would be assigned to Camp Dodge based on the benefits derived from the improvements. Camp Dodge will make limited use (perhaps no use) of municipal utilities, making it unlikely that improvement costs can be allocated to this land owner. As a result, the costs of extending utilities through Camp Dodge must be borne by the City and/or future development in the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area.

This situation raises the importance of financial planning in advance of the need for building the improvements. Questions to be answered through financial planning include:

- Is it feasible to pass some or all of these costs to future development? Assigning these costs to future development would occur through connection charges. These charges are paid by developers at the time land is platted.
- When do connection charges become too high? Connection charges may provide a technical solution, but the solution only succeeds if development occurs and connection fees are paid. At some level, connection charges may make the overall cost of development in Johnston too expensive. Financial planning can be used to estimate potential connection charges and to compare the amounts with competing development areas.
- What are the financial implications for the city? Regardless of amount of the connection charge, providing utility service to the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area has financial implications for the city. The city will issue bonds to pay for these improvements. Financial planning can be used to understand the flow of funds for funding options. Connection charges only produce revenue if and when land is platted for development. Until that time, other revenue is needed to pay debt service on the bonds. City costs can be paid from utility revenues, property taxes, or a combination of both. Financial planning is needed to estimate the potential demand on revenues and to evaluate alternatives.
- How do bonds for NW Saylorville Expansion Area utilities fit with the repayment of existing debt? The reduction of existing debt may free up monies that can be used to support additional debt for these improvements.

East of Merle Hay Road

As Johnston ages, the demands of investment in existing neighborhoods will increase. A key example of this need is the focus area east of Merle Hay Road. In the future, the city may be developing plans to provide utilities and street reconstruction in this area. Financial planning is critical to the successful implementation of these plans. This planning provides a means of evaluating finance options. Among the factors to consider in planning for infrastructure investments in the East of Merle Hay Road focus area are the ability to sustain a consistent funding approach, the financial implications of assessments, and the potential for creative finance strategies.

Consistency

Infrastructure improvements for the area East of Merle Hay Road will need to be done in phases, possibly spanning an eight to ten year period of time. It is important to create and maintain a consistent approach to financing the improvements. A consistent approach ensures that all property owners are treated equitably. It also allows the city to plan for the use of limited public monies needed to support the improvements.

Assessments

The process of assessing improvement costs in existing neighborhoods is a challenging task. The properties benefit from the improvements and should pay for some portion of their cost. The challenge becomes balancing equity with affordability. Under current economic conditions, the amount of assessments must be studied carefully. Costs that are not assessed will be borne by general revenues, including property taxes and utility revenues.

Creativity

The financial challenges of these improvements may require that the city explore new financial strategies to make the improvements affordable to both property owners and the city. Some concepts to consider include:

- » *A stormwater utility creates a new source of revenue to finance the construction, operation and management of stormwater management systems. Stormwater improvements are often difficult to assess to "benefitted" property. Improvements typically serve a broad area. While all properties contribute stormwater runoff, not all parcels receive the benefit from the prevention of flooding. A utility attempts to equitably spread costs to all properties based on assumptions of related runoff. A criticism of stormwater utilities is that they are simply a substitute for property taxes. As a city-wide charge, there are similarities to a property tax. A stormwater utility charge should be a more equitable distribution of these costs than property value. In addition, this source of revenue allows the city more flexibility in managing the property tax rate.*
- » *Area-wide assessment program can be accompanied by the option to convert the assessment into a home equity loan. Immediately paying the assessment and replacing it with a home equity loan has several advantages:*
 - The combination of low interest rates and tax deductibility may achieve lower costs than the assessment.
 - The property owner can tailor the repayment schedule to fit individual needs.
 - A coordinated approach with local banks may reduce the upfront loan costs.
 - This approach may also provide an incentive to increase the loan to undertake other home improvements.

2. Update Regulatory Tools

Consistency is necessary between a community's ordinances and its comprehensive plan, particularly the zoning ordinance. Iowa Code Chapter 414 regulates city zoning. Section 414.3 reads in part, "Regulations shall be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan and designed to preserve the availability of agricultural land; to consider the protection of soil from wind and water erosion; to encourage efficient urban development patterns; to lessen congestion in the street; to secure safety from fire, flood, panic, and other dangers; to promote health and the general welfare; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to promote the conservation of energy resources; to promote reasonable access to solar energy; and to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public requirements."

The city of Johnston has adopted a number of ordinance amendments in order to achieve the objectives of past comprehensive plans. Maintaining compatibility between the Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan and regulatory tools will require additional changes, primarily involving the eventual rezoning of properties at specific locations. Locations requiring rezonings are those which are undeveloped today but likely to see development in the future. Such locations occur both within and outside of current municipal boundaries.

Additionally, petitions for rezonings will be received from property owners. All rezoning petitions should be reviewed for compatibility with the Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

3. Continue Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Efforts

The Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Study completed in 2007 lays the foundation for long-term redevelopment along Merle Hay Road generally from NW 62nd Avenue on the south to NW 66th Avenue on the north. The study calls for the establishment of a mixed-use center in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Merle Hay Road and NW 62nd Avenue and a horizontal mix of additional residential uses and commercial uses to the north. In 2010, the City of Johnston initiated the purchase of several land parcels in the study area that became available on the open market. These parcels are being land banked until such time as additional parcels become available or there is developer interest in land owned by the city. The acquisition of these parcels was a significant step in the implementation of the plan for the Merle Hay Road Mixed Use Center. Additional land acquisitions should be made as funds become available.

The development of the Merle Hay Road Mixed Use Center will create a number of new opportunities for Johnston beyond the obvious land use changes. It may provide opportunities for new public/private partnerships in the development of open space and plaza areas that will create more urban-like gathering spaces and focal points currently unavailable in Johnston. New open space areas may also be likely candidates for public art. As the Mixed Use Center develops, the city should investigate eligible sources of funds for public art, including grant requests to government, foundation, corporation, and other appropriate entities, as well as private fundraising activities (such as allowing citizens to make gifts dedicated to memorials or new art projects). Public art sites should be selected based on their public access (visual or actual) and their ability to enhance the aesthetics of the redevelopment area.



The Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan also addresses redevelopment in the Merle Hay Road Gateway Area, the entry into Johnston along Interstate 80. Redevelopment in this area is likely to occur over a long period of time given the diversity of property ownership in the area. One of the first opportunities for redevelopment in the area is the vacant hotel site which has fallen into a state of disrepair. The city should work cooperatively with the property owner and JEDCO to initiate redevelopment of the hotel site. Given the visual impact of the vacant, deteriorated hotel building, redevelopment efforts would be enhanced by the timely demolition of the current structure.

4. Work Cooperatively with Camp Dodge

Johnston and Camp Dodge have a long history of cooperative efforts. As Johnston continues to grow, it will become increasingly important to maintain good communication with Camp officials and cooperate on projects and initiatives that benefit both parties. The eventual extension of utilities to serve the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area will likely require the placement of utilities across Camp property. The Future Land Use Plan specifically identifies expanded open space and the preservation of natural drainageways in the southern portion of the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area, abutting Camp Dodge. The open space use and preservation of the resources in this area benefits future land development to the north as well as strengthening the buffer between future development and the Camp. On the east side of Camp Dodge, Camp officials have indicated that they are willing to collaborate with the City to secure the alignment of a new trail connecting the NW Beaver Drive area to the remainder of Johnston.



Transportation Initiatives

The city of Johnston will reconstruct or widen existing streets and build new roads to connect existing streets within the community and to connect roadways in neighboring jurisdictions. A greater emphasis on modal choices, route connectivity, and sustainable construction and maintenance techniques will become key components of Johnston's future transportation system.

1. Preserve, Protect and Maintain the Existing Roadway System

The City of Johnston should continue to monitor existing pavement conditions in the community and consider developing a five-year pavement management system to order improvement priorities and facilitate capital investment programming. The city should also continue to cooperatively work with the Iowa DOT and neighboring communities on regional or joint transportation facility improvement projects that affect the community's roadway system. Cooperation can be in the form of meaningful and constructive project comments, and operations and maintenance agreements with the Iowa DOT and neighboring communities for shared facilities such as intersection safety modifications and traffic control improvements.



2. Expand the Roadway Network According to Capital Improvement Plan (five, ten, and greater than ten year prioritized increments)

As the community grows, its land uses evolve, and traffic volumes increase, the city of Johnston will expand the existing transportation network to include vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements in targeted areas of the community. Priorities can be established by a pavement management system, anticipated land use changes, updated travel demand modeling, and the connections provided by updated transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

3. Monitor Roadway Functional Classification (based on system needs and changes associated with future land uses and roadway connections made within the community and surrounding areas)

As streets are connected, and community and neighboring jurisdiction land uses or regional projects change to accelerate growth in traffic volumes on the community's local streets, the city of Johnston should monitor roadway functional classifications. This effort will help ensure that the community's collector and minor arterial roadways are properly classified, accurately mapped, and eligible for Federal and State improvement funds.

4. Continue to Provide Multimodal Transportation Choices (including trails and pathway connections to encourage pedestrian and bicycle use in the community)

To conform to Iowa's Smart Planning principles, the city of Johnston should work with regional agencies (Polk County, DART and the Des Moines Area MPO) in support of planned or programmed regional trails, transit system and facility improvements, and ridesharing programs to reduce fuel consumption, improve air quality, and provide a full range of travel mode options to accommodate the various user needs in the community. This includes cooperation in planning modifications to existing transit service routes and frequencies, expanding new services with consumer needs or demands, and providing appropriate locations for park and ride lots, transit stops, bus shelters/bike racks or lockers, and connections with pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

5. Construct New Street and Trail Improvements (using SUDAS specifications for capacity and safety standards as a guide, but also with flexibility to accommodate cost-effective solutions (such as intersection roundabouts) and multimodal facility designs where appropriate)

The City of Johnston should construct (or reconstruct) streets according to adopted state standards, but also incorporate multimodal improvements such as bike lanes and pedestrian safety improvements where appropriate to (i.e. intersection bump-outs and crosswalk features). The city should also explore methods to preserve mature boulevard trees while integrating the appropriate modes in the typical design section.

6. Incorporate Sustainable Techniques to Improve Street Drainage, Contaminant Collection, and Lower-maintenance Median Landscaping

The City of Johnston should explore sustainable techniques in the construction (or reconstruction) of streets as appropriate, including transportation system stormwater in settlement areas consistent with the city's Watershed Assessment and Stormwater Management Plan, construction of self-watering median landscaping, and installation of porous pavement to reduce costs associated with storm water runoff and conveyance demands.

Housing Initiatives

Housing is heavily influenced by national, state and local policies and conditions as well as the stability and policies of private lenders. Over the next 10 years, Johnston will focus on ensuring maintenance of the current housing stock and the expansion of housing opportunities throughout the community.

1. Ensure that Local Actions and Regulations Support a Range of Housing Types

Johnston should continually strive to ensure that its ordinances are designed to achieve local housing goals without unduly increasing the cost of housing. Codes should maintain flexibility to provide housing opportunities in free-standing and mixed-use projects that contain a variety of housing types to serve the growing and aging population.

2. Serve as a Source of Housing Information for Local Builders, Developers and Residents

The city of Johnston should promote available housing programs that can help ensure the availability of a variety of housing types in the community. Programs are continually offered through the Iowa Finance Authority, the Polk County Housing Trust Fund and the Department of Housing and Urban Development as well as other governmental entities. The City should serve as a clearinghouse for information on current programs and make materials readily available to builders, developers and homeowners.

3. Encourage Long-term Maintenance of Existing Housing

As Johnston's housing supply continues to age, long-term maintenance will become more of a community concern. To help ensure adequate maintenance and to protect the investments of neighboring property owners, the city of Johnston should establish a property maintenance code stipulating minimum standards for the upkeep of structures and properties.



Park and Open Space Initiatives

Parks and open space are important components of the land use pattern in the City. The Parks and Recreation section of the comprehensive plan identifies needs for future park facilities. Assigning priorities to the identified needs will occur as part of the capital improvement planning process.

1. Continue to Seek Outside Funding Sources

Although securing outside funding sources is always challenging, the City should continue to aggressively pursue outside grant funds for park and open space acquisition and improvements. Additionally, the City should work closely with private recreation groups to meet overall community needs.

2. Develop a Strategy for Open Space Preservation

The preservation of open spaces and environmental corridors throughout the community are key elements to preserving and enhancing Johnston's community character. Open space areas enhance sustainability by balancing urban development and the natural ecosystem. Open spaces can be preserved through a combination of public and private efforts including required park dedication, the purchasing of lands by public entities, conservation easements, foundation contributions, grants, private donations, and transference of development rights. The Future Land Use Plan (Figure 5.9) and the Future Parks and Trail System Plan (Figure 8.5) establish directions and a foundation for the preservation of key open space areas that reflect high quality natural environments.



3. Seek Funding for a New Community Park

The Park and Open Space Analysis identifies the need for a new community park. An unsuccessful referendum effort in 2009 would have provided funding for one large community park complex. Absent the level of funding that would have been provided by the referendum, the city will need to work to meet its overall community park needs in a smaller, more incremental manner. As future development occurs and property becomes available, Johnston will need to look for innovative ways to acquire conveniently located parcels of land that can accommodate community park uses. Having community park uses scattered among a few sites will result in maintenance costs that are slightly higher than placing such uses within one park site.

4. Continue to Collaborate with Johnston Community School District

Johnston Community School District has been an excellent partner in helping to meet overall community recreation needs. As the school district continues to grow and add new facilities, the city should work to integrate park and recreation needs on common sites where appropriate.

5. Continue to Expand Johnston's Trail System

Johnston's trail system is extremely popular with residents. The city should continue to expand trails to address current gaps in the system and to provide connections to both internal community trails and external regional trails as well as trails of adjacent municipalities.

6. Continue Involving Neighborhood Residents in the Planning for New Parks

In recent years, Johnston has integrally involved residents in the planning of new neighborhood parks. This practice has allowed the community to build parks that directly meet resident needs while creating a heightened sense of ownership among neighbors. This practice should continue and be expanded to include community parks as future community park sites are acquired.

Utilities Initiatives

Johnston's planned growth will require the expansion of municipal utilities and replacement of existing collection and distribution systems in mature or isolated parts of the community. The community will need to balance utility expansion needs with utility replacement projects and explore alternative sources of revenue to pay for construction costs.

1. Coordinate the City's Resources Related to the Extension of New Utilities and the Replacement of Obsolete Utilities

As the city grows, and as existing municipal systems become obsolete due to capacity, distribution or maintenance issues in the case of on-site systems, the City of Johnston will need to monitor system performance requirements with costs and timing of construction. Utility staging should also occur in direct relationship to land development and not result in speculative installations. Greater use of on-site stormwater management techniques combined with traditional conveyance methods will lead to more sustainable water resource management practices.

2. Cooperation with Other Jurisdictions

The City of Johnston will work with neighboring jurisdictions and regional utility providers, including Des Moines Water Works and Des Moines Metropolitan Wastewater Reclamation Authority to plan utilities to areas that will be annexed to the community over the 20-year planning horizon. Johnston should discuss plans to annex land from Polk County in the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area with local and regional agencies to review capacity and distribution requirements needed for water, sewer, and storm drainage. The city of Johnston should continue discussions with Camp Dodge officials to extend utilities through Camp Dodge property to provide a cost-effective service connection to the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area. Coincident with future utility planning and design, the city's stormwater management planning and watershed assessment should also be updated to include the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area.

3. Implement the Johnston Watershed Assessment and Stormwater Management Plan

Storm water management systems are a key component to reducing the rate of runoff, improving water quality and recycling water back into the groundwater systems. The Watershed Assessment and Stormwater Management Plan approved in 2009 includes initiatives that seek to better manage and reduce storm water runoff which contributes to the city's overall goals of preserving sensitive environmental amenities. Johnston should continue to move forward on the projects and programs identified in the Watershed Assessment and Stormwater Management Plan.





Johnston

2030

Comprehensive Plan

City of Johnston, Iowa

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