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Goals, Objectives & Strategies

This chapter presents a vision for the future of Burlington and describes goals, objectives, and strategies to achieve that vision. Housing, Mobility & Transportation, Economic Prosperity, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Community Facilities & Services, Hazards, and Collaboration & Partnerships are all addressed.

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4.1 VISION & GOALS

Burlington as we want it to be in 2032...

The City of Burlington is a vibrant community and a statewide leader in heritage, recreation, health, education and commerce.

Heritage

Historic features have been adapted to serve present needs while also connecting us to our own history.

Recreation

A wealth of public and private, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, including the Mississippi River, foster exercise and social interaction.

Health

A strong health care network, frequent physical recreation, and strong social networks promote exceptional levels of physical and mental health, making Burlington the healthiest community in Iowa.

Commerce

The City is the economic heart of the region, home to a diverse and resilient employment base.

Education

Exceptional schools attract and retain families, and postsecondary institutions are contributing innovation and a skilled workforce to the local economy.



Burlington's goals for a better future...

Housing

- H1:** Burlington will offer safe, attractive, and diverse housing options.
- H2:** Burlington neighborhoods will be attractive and safe.
- H3:** All residents will have access to quality housing, regardless of ability or socioeconomic status.
- H4:** Burlington housing stock will be resource efficient.

Mobility & Transportation

- T1:** The Burlington street network will safely balance the needs of all users.
- T2:** The efficiency and function of freight and commercial transportation systems will continue to improve.
- T3:** Alternatives to single occupancy vehicle trips will increase as a percentage of all transportation within the City.
- T4:** Biking and walking in Burlington will be safe, enjoyable and efficient.
- T5:** Local transportation systems will be well-coordinated with regional systems and investments.

Economic Prosperity

- E1:** Burlington will support business growth.
- E2:** Employment will grow in Burlington through the creation, expansion and further development of existing and new businesses.
- E3:** Burlington's economic base will be diverse and resilient.
- E4:** Costs and benefits of economic development efforts will be shared within the regional economy.
- E5:** Downtown Burlington will be preserved and enhanced as a hub of economic, social and cultural affairs.
- E6:** Burlington's tourism and destination travel industry will continue to grow.
- E7:** Burlington's retail sector will continue to expand and diversify- thereby reducing leakage, enhancing the tax base, and adding to the quality of life of the community.

Agriculture & Natural Resources

- R1:** Burlington will protect, improve and sustain its natural resources.
- R2:** Burlington will preserve its local agricultural resources and heritage.
- R3:** Burlington's water resources will be clean and healthy.

Community Facilities & Services

- FS1:** Sewer and water service will effectively meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses.
- FS2:** Burlington will maintain exceptional recreation facilities and services that support both individual and community health.
- FS3:** Burlington will continue to offer strong educational systems that attract families and support success and social interaction.
- FS4:** Burlington residents will feel safe in all parts of the City.

Community Character

- C1:** Burlington will have a thriving arts, cultural and entertainment community and identity.
- C2:** Burlington will respect its history and heritage by preserving historic resources and celebrating the past.
- C3:** Burlington will be proactive in maintaining a quality appearance that reflects pride in the community.

Hazards

- HZ1:** Burlington will mitigate the risk of impacts before a disaster.
- HZ2:** Residents and assets will be protected during a disaster.
- HZ3:** Burlington will successfully recover from disasters.

Collaboration & Partnerships

- CP1:** Burlington will maintain mutually beneficial relationships with neighboring jurisdictions, Des Moines County, and other governmental agencies.
- CP2:** Burlington will continue to collaborate with non-profits and private entities to improve the quality of life for Burlington residents.



As a city grows and changes, housing must change to meet the needs of the population. Housing is included in a comprehensive plan to provide guidance for decision-makers and developers when considering additions to and renovations of the City's housing stock. Diversity, quality and affordability are overarching themes in Burlington's housing goals.

H1: Housing Goal 1

Burlington will offer safe, attractive and diverse housing options.

Objective H1.1: Burlington will expand the variety of housing types to meet changing and diverse housing needs.

Strategies

- The City encourages a mixture of housing unit sizes, types and market-rate price points in all neighborhoods.
- The City will continue to assist Downtown Partners, Inc. with the development of downtown housing.
- The City will upgrade tax abatement programs in all areas of the City.
- The City will be aware of market demand for various housing types and will encourage development of units that respond to market demand.

Objective H1.2: Burlington homeowners will maintain their homes and properties.

Strategies

- The City will continue to promote property maintenance through programs like the Pride of the Community.
- The City will encourage owner occupied rehabilitation programs and opportunities for homeownership for low to moderate income families through grant opportunities.
- The City will actively enforce code violations related to housing standards and property maintenance.
- The City will monitor and support property maintenance at public and private low-income housing projects.
- The City encourages improvements and additions to existing homes as an option to upgrade the existing housing stock and allow stay-in-place housing.

H2: Housing Goal 2

Burlington neighborhoods will be attractive and safe.

Objective H2.1: Existing neighborhoods, and especially historic structures and districts, will be maintained, enhanced and celebrated.

Strategies

- The City encourages and supports the creation of neighborhood associations and locally-led neighborhood planning efforts.
- The City encourages the preservation and practical adaptation of historic housing whenever feasible.
- The City will establish and enforce development and design guidelines for structures in designated historic districts.
- Redevelopment should be compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- The City will work to improve walkability, lighting, streets and sidewalks in existing neighborhoods.

Objective H2.2: New development will support establishment of complete, livable neighborhoods.

Strategies

- New residential development should be connected to an existing or planned neighborhood area that incorporates traditional neighborhood design. Unplanned or unconnected residential development is strongly discouraged.
- Neighborhoods should include housing for all ages and family types.



“Traditional neighborhood design” incorporates a mix of housing types, well-connected streets, public spaces, and neighborhood-serving amenities.

Current and Existing Housing Conditions in Burlington

A comparison of household size shows that the number of persons per household in the City has been declining at rates slightly faster than the County and the State. This decline in household size is projected to continue in the future.

The shrinking household size means that the number of households in the City is expected to rise slightly (approximately 3%) over the next 20 years, despite an expected drop in total population.

Burlington’s history of population growth and decline is reflected in the age of its housing stock. Nearly 50% of residential structures in Burlington were built prior to 1940 and 67.3% were built prior to 1960.

The diversity of Burlington’s housing stock is typical of small cities in the Midwest, with 76% consisting of single family homes. Multi-family housing in the City varies in number of units per dwelling with 11.6% having two to four units, 5% having five to nine units, and almost 7% having 10 or more units.

Burlington residents that participated in the public participation process indicated that quality of housing, diversity of housing, and preservation of historic homes are all important issues when planning for housing development and growth.

H3: Housing Goal 3

All residents will have access to quality housing, regardless of ability or socioeconomic status.

Objective H3.1: Lower-income earners in the local workforce will have access to affordable housing options within the City.

Strategies

- The City will promote the development of quality housing options that meet the needs of lower-income residents, including both market-rate and subsidized or price-controlled products.
- The City will promote the geographical dispersal of affordable housing throughout the community, and encourage development of affordable housing on transit routes and corridors.
- The City will continue to implement the Neighborhood Stabilization Program until the original funding is exhausted, and new funding or new programs to enable affordable home ownership will be pursued as feasible.
- The City will continue to develop and support a local Habitat for Humanity program.
- The City will evaluate allowing construction of accessory dwelling units (i.e. “granny flats”) and small lot housing to provide market-rate affordable housing options.
- The City will continue to support opportunities for homeownership for low to moderate income families through grant opportunities.

Objective H3.2: The City will continue to play an active role in providing accessible housing to all populations.

Strategies

- The City will remain a member of the Great River Housing Trust Fund.
- The City will encourage non-profits in providing transitional and emergency housing for low-income and homeless individuals and families.
- The City will continue to support redevelopment of vacant homes by willing residential developers.
- The City will establish and maintain a Rental Landlord Program promoting improved quality of living and appearance of rentals.

Objective H3.3: Accessible housing units will be seamlessly integrated into both existing neighborhoods and new developments.

Strategies

- The City encourages the use of universal design and development of life-cycle housing to facilitate the ability of residents to age in place, either in the same home or the same neighborhood.
- The City will periodically analyze the housing needs of the special needs and elderly population and promote appropriate programs, regulations, or incentives to meet these needs.



Accessory dwelling unit above garage. Source: radworld (creative commons)

“Granny flats” are secondary dwelling units on a single family parcel, often located over the garage or in a standalone guesthouse. They can be used by a grandparent or college-age child, or simply rented out as an apartment.

“Universal design” refers to a broad spectrum of design construction techniques meant to create housing that is accessible and comfortable for people with or without disabilities

“Life-cycle housing” aims to create housing options that meet people’s needs and circumstances at all of life’s stages, from family to old age

H4: Housing Goal 4

Burlington housing stock will be resource efficient.

Objective H4.1: The energy efficiency of Burlington’s housing stock will continue to improve.

Strategies

- The City will ensure that all applicable construction or rehabilitation projects meet the International Energy Conservation Code.

- The City will consider the development of rebate programs and other financial incentives, in conjunction with public and private partners, for homeowners undertaking energy efficient rehabilitation efforts. Priority will be given to elderly, disabled and low-income homeowners.

Housing Action Items

- ✓ Update zoning and subdivision ordinances to remove barriers to affordable housing, including allowing dwelling accessory structures and small lot housing and increasing allowed maximum lot coverages.
- ✓ Consider ordinances and programs that encourage the development of affordable and workforce housing integrated with market-rate housing. Inclusionary housing ordinances can provide incentives to development with certain percentages of affordable housing units (e.g. a density bonus allowing for more total units than otherwise permitted, or waiving taxes on affordable percentages of development).
- ✓ Maintain and promote existing Housing Enterprise Zones, particularly for redevelopment projects.
- ✓ Evaluate the use of density bonuses for mixed price-points or affordable housing units.
- ✓ Update land development ordinances to require or at least allow components of traditional neighborhood design and consideration of existing neighborhood context. Design features to require/allow include the inclusion of compact, mixed-use components, small lots, narrow front setbacks, deeper garage setbacks, walkable street patterns, narrower streets and pedestrian amenities.
- ✓ Train and educate City staff to ensure proficiency in International Energy Conservation Code requirements.
- ✓ Create guidance for developers on requirements of the International Energy Conservation Code.
- ✓ Ensure compliance with energy codes.

- ✓ Plan for continued and expanded support of the Great River Housing Trust Fund and non-profits offering transitional and emergency housing.
- ✓ Develop and maintain affordable homeownership programs.
- ✓ Allow for a reduction in multifamily parking requirements when projects are located near transit lines.
- ✓ Evaluate future needs for downtown parking structures and be open to supporting partnerships for development of such.
- ✓ Develop a sustainable funding source to address the residential tear-down and acquisition of abandoned properties (e.g. a percentage of code violation fees).
- ✓ Explore incentives to promote rehabilitation of existing housing, beyond current incentives.
- ✓ Continue to evaluate tax abatement and other incentives for new housing and redevelopment of existing housing to ensure they remain effective in promoting residential development.
- ✓ Support homeless shelter and other local agencies that provide shelter for those experiencing homelessness or in need of special housing options.
- ✓ Evaluate surrounding communities’ incentive programs for residential development to ensure Burlington remains competitive in housing development.



Transportation is an essential aspect of life. It is about the ability to readily and safely gain access to work, school, shopping, recreation, medical care and social gatherings. It is also an essential component of most economic activity. The City of Burlington's overarching transportation themes are safety, efficiency and diversity of transportation options.

T1: Mobility & Transportation Goal 1

The Burlington street network will safely balance the needs of all users.

Objective T1.1: Traffic growth will be managed in balance with cost and neighborhood impact considerations.

Strategies

- The City will maintain an updated Major Streets Plan
- The City will develop corridor plans before significant development or growth occurs to seek the appropriate balance among competing issues, including efficiency, safety for all users, property access and impacts on adjoining land uses and neighborhoods.
- The City encourages a connected, flexible street grid.
- The City will consider land acquisition to widen existing collector and arterials only after all other alternatives have been explored, and then with a high level of scrutiny.
- The City encourages context sensitive design to minimize impacts to historic districts and existing neighborhoods and to preserve natural features.

Objective T1.2: Preserve the quality of existing facilities.

Strategies

- The City will maintain a Capital Improvement Plan to plan for maintenance of roads and other transportation facilities to maintain a high level of service based on road classification.
- The City may require property owners, or their agent, to fund the preparation of a traffic impact analysis by an independent professional prior to approving new development.



T2: Mobility & Transportation Goal 2

The efficiency and function of freight and commercial transportation systems will continue to improve.

Objective T2.1: Burlington’s collector and arterial streets will continue to meet the needs of commercial trucking.

Strategies

- The City encourages trucking-intensive businesses to locate as close as possible to the highway system, and also to seek co-location opportunities with related businesses that reduce shipping time and costs.
- The City will work to improve signage and signalization along truck routes.
- The City will consider freight accessibility and movement in transportation corridor studies.
- The City may designate weight restrictions and truck routes to protect local streets.
- The City supports continued improvements to USH 34 and USH 61 that reduce travel times to regional economic centers (e.g. Davenport, Peoria, Des Moines) and the interstate highway system.

Objective T2.2: Burlington will maintain and enhance access to other modes of commercial transportation, including rail, river and air facilities.

Strategies

- The City will seek opportunities to provide grade separated street connections across rail corridors where feasible.
- The City will support infrastructure improvements that facilitate efficient intermodal transfer of goods.
- The City will promote rail and barge infrastructure improvements that enable local business growth.
- The City supports a potential relocation of the Southeast Iowa Regional Airport to the west of the current airport property as part of an effort to increase commercial flight activities and develop business park facilities.

Transportation in Burlington

Nearly 80% of all commuting trips in Burlington are in single-occupancy vehicles. Many factors contribute to a lack of diversity in transportation modes including sprawling, segregated land uses, limited transit service, and limited biking infrastructure. These are interconnected issues that can only be resolved through coordination of land use and development, transportation systems and programs, and community education.

This plan attempts to address these issues and offer guidance on creating a more diversified and accessible system. An environmentally sustainable and socially equitable transportation system is necessary to maintain a high quality of life.

Transportation Issues and Opportunities

The Burlington community has identified several opportunities for improving the transportation system, including:

- Creating a connected system of off-road bicycle/pedestrian trails
- Maintaining sidewalks
- Providing more bicycle infrastructure (e.g. bike racks)
- Improve safety on Roosevelt Avenue (e.g. addressing red light running)
- Improving safety near schools
- Improving pedestrian safety at Downtown intersections
- Building a north-south overpass over the railroad
- Creating better accessibility on the Riverwalk between Crapo Park and Riverside Gazebo
- Increasing transit ridership

4.3 MOBILITY & TRANSPORTATION

T3: Mobility & Transportation Goal 3

Alternatives to single occupancy vehicle trips will increase as a percentage of all transportation within the City.

Objective T3.1: Transit trips will increase.

Strategies

- The City will continue to promote the growth of B.U.S. transit system ridership.
- The City will ensure all transit vehicles and facilities continue to be ADA compliant.
- B.U.S. routes will provide convenient service to areas with a high concentration of residential units.
- The City will evaluate efficiencies of B.U.S. and other public transit systems to ensure costs and services are appropriate.

Objective T3.2: The City will actively promote and encourage alternative transportation options.

Strategies

- The City will develop and maintain programs to incentivize use of alternative transportation modes.
- In collaboration with local and regional organizations, the City will host events that encourage and celebrate alternative transportation.
- The City will lead by example through employee ridership programs, accessible public facilities, and commuter encouragement.
- The City will encourage the use of rideshare programs.

What's wrong with single occupancy vehicles?

Single occupancy vehicles are inefficient. They waste 75-80% of available passenger capacity. If the percentage of single occupancy vehicles on Burlington roadways can be reduced, increases in transportation demand due to population and employment growth will be offset by increased efficiency, and the space and spending that would otherwise go to additional lanes and traffic control devices can instead be used to further enhance bike paths, bus service, and other modes of travel. This then enhances mobility for residents unable to drive and improves quality of life. As an added benefit, a more efficient transportation system will result in lesser CO² emissions per person.

T4: Mobility & Transportation Goal 4

Biking and walking in Burlington will be safe, enjoyable and efficient.

Objective T4.1: Bike and pedestrian infrastructure will be safe and well-connected.

Strategies

- The City will continue to develop a connected network of on-street and off-street bike routes to make bike transit a viable, safe transportation option.
- The City will continue to work with regional and state organizations to create a well-connected regional trail system.
- The City will establish and use a Complete Streets ordinance, requiring consideration and provision for bike and pedestrian users whenever a street is constructed or reconstructed, including meeting ADA requirements.
- The City will actively enforce sidewalk maintenance requirements and will continue to encourage sidewalk installation where gaps are present.



Complete Street intersection in Charlotte, NC.
Source: National Complete Streets Coalition

“Complete streets” are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Designs can include bike lanes, accessible transit stops, frequent and/or signaled crosswalks, narrower travel lanes, and traffic calming devices.

T5: Mobility & Transportation Goal 5

Local transportation systems will be well-coordinated with regional systems and investments.

Objective T5.1: The City will maximize the cost-effectiveness of the regional transportation system by coordinating planning, design and funding with regional and state agencies, as well as neighboring jurisdictions.

Strategies

- The City will actively participate in Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission's (SEIRPC) transportation planning process.
- The City will work with neighboring jurisdictions and SEIRPC to coordinate mobility goals and a vision for the future.

- The City will inform the community about regional and state transportation projects, and will encourage public involvement.
- The City will work with the Iowa DOT to improve access to and efficiency of major transportation routes through joint planning and policy initiatives.
- The City will work with neighboring jurisdictions to plan, construct and maintain those roadways that cross jurisdictions.
- When appropriate, the City may require intergovernmental agreements that define the responsibilities of the City, the partner jurisdiction and the developer (if applicable) regarding any required improvements to streets and the funding of those improvements.

Mobility & Transportation Action Items

- ✓ Require a multimodal transportation impact analysis for proposed development on a case-by-case basis as determined by the City. Impacts on traffic and street infrastructure, transit access and utilization, and bike and pedestrian connectivity should all be considered.
- ✓ Actively participate in state-led highway improvement projects within the City to advocate for context sensitive design - streetscaping improvements should be designed with local input and should be unique to Burlington.
- ✓ Develop a City-wide Bike and Pedestrian Plan to establish a contiguous, safe network of on-street and off-street bike and pedestrian routes.
- ✓ Prioritize sections of the City for sidewalk maintenance and installation and proactively react to needed improvements.
- ✓ Ensure annual funding for the Sidewalk Reimbursement Program.
- ✓ Conduct a transit study to identify barriers to bus ridership and make recommendations to increase effectiveness.
- ✓ Increase enforcement of sidewalk maintenance and safety violations.
- ✓ Evaluate transit rider needs for non-running times (nights/weekends).
- ✓ Analyze future road extensions and connections for future development areas to maintain proper street connections.
- ✓ Require sidewalks for all new development and major redevelopment projects, whether sidewalks currently exist adjacent or not (especially near and west of Roosevelt Avenue). Encourage neighboring properties to install sidewalks.
- ✓ Work with DOT to ensure safe and proper crossings at Roosevelt Ave and adjacent streets (particularly Highway 34).
- ✓ Assess need for bike racks throughout the community.
- ✓ Continue to develop trail systems and interconnectivity of parks, including Flint River Trail and RecPlex.
- ✓ Increase accessibility throughout the community by increased installation of ADA curb ramps.



Economic prosperity is realized through the growth and retention of jobs, a diversity of businesses types, an increase in buying power, investment in the built environment, and a general improvement in the community's quality of life. Creating economic prosperity requires the collaborative efforts of public and private entities, and the support of the community overall. Burlington's prosperity themes are education, diversity and growth from within.

The City recognizes that economic success requires extensive collaboration with other public and private entities - the City will be an active partner in these efforts and will avoid duplication of services. City "support" for these efforts may include staff time, funding, policies, or simply endorsement.

E1: Economic Prosperity Goal 1

Burlington will support business growth.

Objective E1.1: Workforce development efforts will be continuous and focus on the needs of local employers.

Strategies

- The City will support collaborations with the Greater Burlington Partnership and Southeastern Community College, and local school districts to identify and meet workforce education and training needs that support local businesses.
- The City will work with the Greater Burlington Partnership and Southeastern Community College to develop and support internship programs to encourage businesses to hire and train area youth.
- The City will work with local school districts to encourage students to pursue local careers to retain workforce.

Objective E1.2: Burlington will be an attractive, health-conscious community.

Strategies

- The City and its partners will prioritize workforce recruitment through efforts to make and promote Burlington as a great place to live. (Making Burlington a great place to live will make employee attraction and retention easier, and this will facilitate employment growth.)
- The City will support the creative arts, including live performance, public art installations, art galleries, etc., as an important element of workforce attraction and economic development.
- The City will support live/work spaces.
- The City will promote healthy living practices and initiatives to increase community appeal and reduce health care costs.

Reliance on manufacturing, retention of young professionals, and lack of diversity in job opportunities were all identified as issues that Burlington must overcome to ensure economic prosperity



E2: Economic Prosperity Goal 2

Employment will grow in Burlington through the creation, expansion and further development of existing and new businesses.

Objective E2.1: Existing Burlington businesses will retain and expand employment.

Strategies

- The City will support the needs of growing businesses and will work with local partners to provide programs, space and infrastructure necessary to support an expanding workforce.
- The City will collaborate with Greater Burlington Partnership to ensure that primary sector employers are contacted frequently, at least once every two years, to identify any changes or challenges with which the City or its partners may be able to assist.

Objective E2.2: The City will have both space and incentive tools to support business creation, growth and expansion.

Strategies

- The City will update the future land use map from time to time as necessary to ensure an adequate supply of land for commercial and industrial development.
- The City will continue to use development tools such as tax incremental financing districts and enterprise zones to offer incentives that support employment growth, and will target those incentives toward primary sector employers or businesses that have a direct impact on quality of life in the region.

Objective E2.3: Entrepreneurism and small business growth will be enthusiastically and continuously supported in Burlington.

Strategies

- The City will support collaborations among Greater Burlington Partnership, the Southeastern Small Business Development Center, and the Iowa State University Center for Entrepreneurship to provide local entrepreneurship training and encouragement, including creation of an Inventor and Entrepreneurs Club.
- The City will support low-impact home-based businesses.
- The City will support and promote minority- and women-owned businesses.

Burlington's Workforce

Like communities across the nation, Burlington is struggling to rebound from the recession. Over the last decade, the unemployment rate has doubled in Des Moines County (from 3.7% in 2000 to 7.5% in 2010). In addition, the County as a whole as lost 5.5% of its labor force. Burlington will need to implement a multi-faceted approach to ensure future economic prosperity including educational programming, diversification of business and industry, and retention of workers and businesses.

“Primary sector employers” are those that produce more goods or services than can be consumed by the local economy, and therefore export a portion of their output, bringing outside dollars into the local economy

Burlington's Economy

Traditionally, Burlington's economy has relied heavily on manufacturing with over 20% of the County's workforce in manufacturing jobs. Other industries have taken root in Burlington in recent years including the medical and human services fields. According to the Iowa Workforce Development, the fastest growing occupations in the region are pharmacy technicians, accountants, registered nurses, and computer and mechanical operations.

Tourism as Industry

Burlington has a rich cultural, historical and natural heritage providing an abundance of sites and events to attract tourists. The most notable attractions include Snake Alley and historic Downtown Burlington, the Mississippi River, eagle watching, Catfish Bend Casino, Pzazz/Fun City, Burlington Bee's Baseball, Memorial Auditorium, the RecPlex and the plethora of local and state parks.

E3: Economic Prosperity Goal 3

Burlington's economic base will be diverse and resilient.

Objective E3.1: Attract new jobs to the community in varied sectors.

Strategies

- The City will encourage and support efforts to recruit businesses in growth industries not currently prevalent in the City, including information technology, energy technology, and health-related products and services.
- The City will work with key stakeholders to establish a base of creative industries (e.g. arts, sciences, research, architecture) to enhance quality of life and expand the professional workforce.

Objective E3.2: Encourage and promote the development of environmentally sustainable industries.

Strategies

- Emphasis will be placed on attracting businesses and industries that operate in a sustainable manner, contribute to the sustainability of the community as a whole, and are responsible environmental stewards.
- The City will continue to support sustainable business education programs and initiatives.

E4: Economic Prosperity Goal 4

Costs and benefits of economic development efforts will be shared within the regional economy.

Objective E4.1: Most economic development activities will be collaborative efforts with multiple public and private partners across the region.

Strategies

- The City will create partnerships within the region to support economic development in the region. These partnerships may include pooled funding for incentive programs and revenue sharing agreements to reduce local competition for business expansion investments.

E5: Economic Prosperity Goal 5

Downtown Burlington will be preserved and enhanced as a hub of economic, social and cultural affairs

Objective E5.1: Downtown Burlington will be economically robust.

Strategies

- The City will utilize its existing economic development tools, and establish new tools as feasible and appropriate, to attract more retail and professional employers to Downtown.
- The City will continue to work with Downtown Partners, Inc. and other entities to actively market Downtown as an ideal business site.

Objective E5.2: Downtown Burlington will be a unique and attractive place that invites pedestrian exploration.

Strategies

- The City will work to develop a cohesive and attractive “feel” to the Downtown through unique streetscaping, signage, and other public infrastructure.
- Key locations in downtown will be easy to locate through the appropriate use of wayfinding and signage.
- The City will work to create a pedestrian-oriented Downtown through streetscape improvements.
- The City will work to create attractive, memorable and safe public spaces where citizens and visitors can gather.
- The City encourages and will invest in public art installations and cultural amenities Downtown.
- The City will preserve and celebrate landmark buildings.
- Adaptation and reuse of existing structures that have historic architectural character is strongly encouraged, and the City will review and guide adaptations through the design review process.

E6: Economic Prosperity Goal 6

Burlington's tourism and destination travel industry will continue to grow.

Objective E6.1: Burlington will continue to be the preferred convention and tourism destination in the region.

Strategies

- The City will work with the Burlington Area Convention and Visitors Bureau to secure additional conventions for the Burlington area and actively market area attractions.
- The City will work with developers and the Greater Burlington Partnership to plan and provide diverse lodging and accommodations.
- The City will work to improve riverfront amenities, utilization, and access to make the most of the Mississippi River.

Objective E6.2: Heritage sites and outdoor and indoor recreation will become major tourism draws in Burlington.

Strategies

- The City and its partners will emphasize historical sites and events in promotional materials.
- The City and its partners will identify, encourage, and promote outdoor recreation opportunities in promotional materials, especially related to river-oriented recreation.
- The City and its partners will encourage the development of public and private indoor recreation facilities that provide both casual recreation activities and organized sport tournaments and events.

E7: Economic Prosperity Goal 7

Burlington's retail sector will continue to expand and diversify- thereby reducing leakage, enhancing the tax base, and adding to the quality of life of the community.

Objective E7.1: Private developers will take the lead on the development of new retail projects.

Strategies

- The City will enthusiastically support private retail development with financial tools such as tax abatement, tax increment financing, and other innovative means.
- When appropriate, financial incentives should generally take the form of property tax relief as opposed to a cash incentive from the general fund.
- Except under special circumstances, financial incentives should not play a major role in development projects that relocate retail businesses from neighboring communities.

Objective E7.2: The City will actively monitor policies to ensure that Burlington is a development-friendly community.

Strategies

- The City will look for creative ways to redevelop underutilized or vacant retail properties through rezoning, financial incentives, or other means.
- The City will undergo a continual process to ensure zoning regulations, transportation accesses, and necessary infrastructure support the advancement of the retail sector.

E8: Economic Prosperity Goal 8

Burlington will establish and maintain financial practices that allow the most efficient use of tax dollars.

Objective E8.1: The City will optimize its bond rating.

Strategies

- The City will manage the ratio of general obligation debt to overall revenues at an appropriate level.
- The City will maintain a reserve of 20% of unused, undesignated funds in the general budget to enable flexibility to respond to unforeseen needs.
- The City will maintain a consistent tax rate over time.

Objective E8.2: The City will maintain balance between tax base and municipal budget.

Strategies

- The City will track, from time to time, its costs to provide services to various development types, and will encourage and prioritize development types and formats that have a lower cost/revenue ratio.
- The City will use development incentive programs to support projects with a low cost/revenue ratio.

Economic Prosperity Action Items

✓ Adopt a Vacant Building Ordinance to better manage and maintain the City's vacant building stock. The program should support the costs of inspections and maintenance enforcement, and it should both prevent and help pay for emergency actions to protect public safety, including demolition.

✓ Identify and plan for infrastructure investments required to make priority development/redevelopment sites viable for economic development, especially those that serve large areas and/or multiple parcels such as a major sewer line.

✓ Identify funding sources and mechanisms for public realm and capital improvements to support economic development

✓ Identify target industries/business types and offer tax incentives to businesses in those sectors to locate or expand in Burlington.

✓ Work with Burlington area schools, Southeastern Community College, Greater Burlington Partnership and local businesses to develop and implement an internship and summer job programs.

✓ Update development regulations to remove barriers to home-based businesses that are compatible and suitable for residential areas.

✓ Coordinate with the Greater Burlington Partnership and local educational institutions to plan for workforce transitions from manufacturing to knowledge-based and creative industries.

✓ Target downtown locations for major public cultural investments.

✓ Coordinate with Des Moines County to develop a rural and eco-tourism plan that promotes recreation and tourism outside the City as well as hotel stays inside the City.

✓ Upgrade the City website to emphasize the assets of Burlington as a vibrant, modern community with a rich history and an exceptional quality of life, and evaluate the use of mobile and social media digital tools to improve access to City information and marketing materials.

✓ Work with the Greater Burlington Partnership to prepare and maintain online and print promotional materials for prospective residents that shares the City's recent progress and visions for the future as identified in this plan.

✓ Develop an easy to understand "one-stop-shop" for economic development on the City website, with links to partner resources.

Economic Prosperity Action Items

- ✓ Aggressively pursue grants and resources to improve infrastructure.
- ✓ Evaluate potential public/private partnerships for community benefit.
- ✓ Participate in monthly communications with key stakeholders (e.g. Greater Burlington Partnership, West Burlington, Des Moines County, SEIRPC, SCC, and BHS) to discuss the future of the area and maintain an open dialogue among entities.
- ✓ Adopt a design overlay area in Downtown Burlington to promote and protect the character of the area.
- ✓ Promote vocational education/training to fill the needs of local employers.
- ✓ Create and enhance entry features to the community and to the downtown (e.g. landscaping, signage, banners, etc.).
- ✓ Construct and maintain interpretive signage at key attraction locations to further promote the assets of the community.
- ✓ Evaluate and plan for venues and attractions (e.g. indoor sports complex, riverfront amenities, boutique hotel with riverview rooms) to further Burlington as a year-round destination- resulting in increased year-round occupancy of local hotels.
- ✓ Continue to evaluate properties for listing on the National Register of Historic Places to further solidify Burlington as a historic community and to enable properties to access historic tax credits.
- ✓ Complete periodic review of “business friendliness” as compared to comparable cities, including tax rate, utility rates, and regulatory processes.
- ✓ Promote growth of tax base in all areas of the community, including infill, redevelopment and improvements in existing developed areas and continued growth in planned new development areas.
- ✓ The City will evaluate its property tax levels/rates to be competitive with other communities in Iowa and region and to support infrastructure/services in the community.
- ✓ The City will develop programs and policies to be competitive (top 25% in Iowa) with other similar sized communities in tax and utility rates.



“Green infrastructure” is a network of open spaces and natural features woven into the built environment that provides natural stormwater management and essential ecosystem connections



The abundance and health of our agricultural and natural resources are vital to the well being of our community, the prosperity of our economy and the health of our regional ecological systems. This section outlines the objectives and strategies for preserving, protecting, and restoring our natural and agricultural resources. As our most visible natural resource, the Mississippi River is considered a priority resource for protection, in balance with its transportation and recreation functions. Because all systems are interconnected, these strategies address water, land, wildlife, air, vegetation, food systems, and the welfare of our citizens.

R1: Agriculture & Natural Resources Goal 1

Burlington will protect, improve and sustain its natural resources.

Objective R1.1: Burlington will protect and restore “green infrastructure” to improve surface water quality, reduce localized flood risk, and enhance development character and value.

Strategies

- The City will seek opportunities to conserve open space networks, mature trees, floodplains, wetlands, and other significant natural features, especially in ways that connect to and enhance the value of adjacent development.
- The City will require conservation or comparable restoration of natural features during the development process, including conservation of natural waterways and protection or replacement of mature trees.
- The City will promote the conservation of urban forests and wildlands and linkages among these areas.

Objective R1.2: Burlington will protect and restore wildlife habitats and corridors.

Strategies

- The City will plan for a greenway system in which parks and open spaces are linked and offer connected ecological habitats.
- Emphasis will be placed on preserving and, in some cases, reconstructing natural waterways and riparian buffers.
- The City will support and encourage educational programming targeted at preservation and appreciation of the environment.

Objective R1.3: Burlington will utilize natural resources in the most efficient way possible.

Strategies

- The City will utilize physical resources in public projects and operations in the most efficient way possible and will purchase recycled-content materials whenever possible.
- The City will consider instituting mandatory recycling and landfill diversion policies for construction projects.

R2: Agriculture & Natural Resources Goal 2

Burlington will preserve its local agricultural resources and heritage.

Objective R2.1: Burlington will promote local food systems and responsible agriculture.

Strategies

- The City will consider changes to city ordinances to explicitly allow small-scale agriculture in all zoning districts, either as a permitted or conditional use. Specific uses to be considered include gardens and greenhouses.
- The City will explore ways of creating and supporting community gardens, farmers' markets, food pantries, and other similar community-based food projects.
- The City will encourage efforts by local institutions with large food service responsibilities, such as schools, restaurants, hotels, and convention facilities, to seek local food procurement options. These organizations are encouraged to collaborate in such efforts.

Burlington's Agricultural and Natural Resources

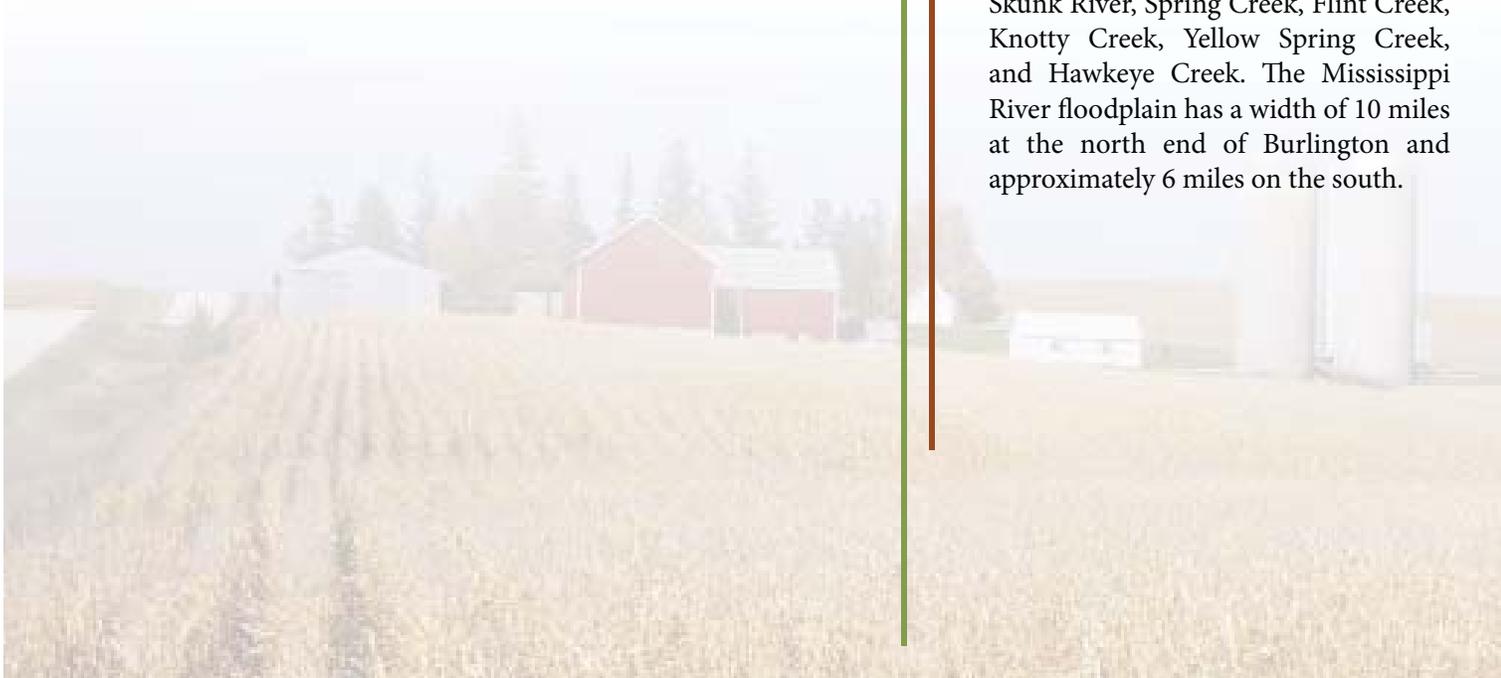
Burlington has rich and varied natural and agricultural resources. Twenty percent of all land in Burlington is agriculture and open space. This land is a mix of farms (mostly corn and soybeans), woodlands, wetlands, floodplains, streams, and streambanks.

Des Moines County's natural communities include Oak-Hickory Forests, Northern Hardwoods, and Bottom-ground Timbers; Dry, Mesic and Wet Prairie; and Palustrine, Lacustrine and Riverine Wetlands.

Burlington's Water Resources

The City is located in the Flint-Henderson Sub-Basin and is part of the Lower Duck Creek, Mississippi River-Duck Creek, and Crow Creek-Mississippi River Watersheds.

The Mississippi River serves as the eastern border and major waterway in Burlington and Des Moines County. Other major waterways include the Skunk River, Spring Creek, Flint Creek, Knotty Creek, Yellow Spring Creek, and Hawkeye Creek. The Mississippi River floodplain has a width of 10 miles at the north end of Burlington and approximately 6 miles on the south.



R3: Agriculture & Natural Resources Goal 3

Burlington's water resources will be clean and healthy.

Objective R3.1: Burlington will plan for healthy watersheds.

Strategies

- The City will work with neighboring communities, Des Moines County, SEIRPC, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to effectively plan for protection and conservation of the Flint-Henderson Subbasin, including consideration of the water quality impacts of all urban and rural land uses.
- The City will preserve the natural character of water bodies and drainage ways through green space acquisition, floodplain regulations, and drainage corridor and buffer protection.
- The City will continue to support and encourage participation in the Wetland Reserve Program.
- The City will support and encourage sustainable agricultural practices to protect watershed and water resource health.

Objective R3.2: Burlington will efficiently manage stormwater.

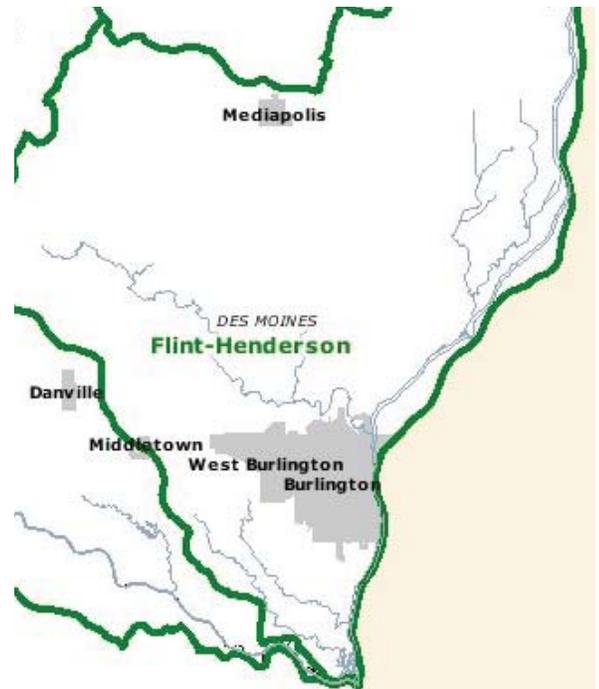
Strategies

- The City will work to promote the use of stormwater as a resource and not a waste product.
- Runoff volume and quality improvements beyond state requirements are encouraged where economically feasible through best management practices like permeable pavement and filtration swales.
- New development will continue to meet state requirements for stormwater management.

Objective R3.3: Surface water quality will be improved and maintained.

Strategies

- The City will seek to reduce point and non-point pollution to local streams and rivers through best management practices.
- Emphasis will be placed on working with local, regional and state agencies to improve the water quality of the Mississippi.
- The City will strictly enforce erosion control and Clean Water standards.



“Permeable paving” utilizes porous materials and laying techniques to allow water to percolate and infiltrate the soil beneath the paving, instead of running off as with impervious paving.



Agriculture & Natural Resource Action Items

- ✓ Evaluate the need for and benefit of a Watershed Management Plan with neighboring jurisdictions and begin implementing projects.
- ✓ Develop a “GreenPrint” for creating an interconnected greenway system of parks and open spaces.
- ✓ Consider the adoption of best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater management and low-impact development.
- ✓ Consider the adoption of regulations for conservation and restoration of natural features during development.
- ✓ Consider the adoption of stormwater and low-impact BMP requirements for City facilities and operations.
- ✓ Update erosion control regulations and increase enforcement.
- ✓ Work to identify local point and non-point source pollution and implement steps for remediation.
- ✓ Develop a stormwater education program to inform citizens of BMPs including the use of rain barrels, rain gardens, green roofs, permeable paving, etc.
- ✓ Identify and remove barriers to local food production.
- ✓ Consider the adoption of local food procurement policies for City events and facilities.
- ✓ Develop procedures for increasing the ability to use electronic and government assistance forms of payment at local farmers markets.
- ✓ Encourage responsible agriculture region-wide with awareness of FSA office guidelines for agricultural practices for Des Moines County.



Local government is responsible for a broad array of essential services, from sewer and water service to park and recreation facilities, fire and police protection and public schools. The quality, efficacy and efficiency of these services have a direct relationship to quality of life for residents. While each of these services is individually managed and monitored, they are considered in the comprehensive plan to ensure that investment in these services serves the overall vision for the City. The overarching themes of the plan for these services are quality, efficiency, and equity.

FS1: Community Facilities & Services Goal 1

Sewer and water service will effectively meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses.

Objective FS1.1: Sewer and water service will be safe.

Strategies

- Water quality standards will be strictly adhered to, including both drinking water standards and standards for quality of treated wastewater returned to waterways.

Objective FS1.2: Sewer and water service capacity will not be a constraint on economic or population growth.

Strategies

- The wastewater treatment plant will have adequate capacity to support the growth anticipated during next 20 years.
- The City and its economic development partners will have regular communication with large commercial users of water or wastewater services, and will ensure that their needs are being met as efficiently as possible.

Objective FS1.3: Development will support the efficiency and fiscal sustainability of sewer and water systems.

Strategies

- The City will encourage infill development and other practices that efficiently and cost effectively utilize existing infrastructure.
- The City will avoid lift stations and extra pumps whenever possible to control the long-term cost burden of the water and sewer systems
- The City will continue to make investments that allow for long-term cost control, such as the separation of sanitary sewer and storm sewer pipes to reduce the amount of stormwater that is mixed with wastewater and treated.

FS2: Community Facilities & Services Goal 2

Burlington will maintain exceptional recreation facilities and services that support both individual and community health.

Objective FS2.1: The City’s recreation facilities will be managed with an understanding of the diverse outdoor recreational needs and desires of the community.

Strategies

- The City will work to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities.
- The City will continue to develop recreational opportunities on the riverfront, including boating infrastructure.
- The City will coordinate recreational planning with other public and private entities to maximize resources.
- The City will continue to coordinate with regional and state entities to create an interconnected regional trail system.
- The City will continue to improve existing park and recreation facilities and services to meet the needs of the community, while improving safety and efficiency of the facilities provided.

Objective FS2.3: The City will offer increased indoor recreational opportunities.

Strategies

- The City will continue to explore options for increasing indoor recreational facilities in an energy- and cost-efficient manner.
- As new facilities and programs are developed, the needs of youth and elderly residents will be specifically considered and addressed.
- Work with other local agencies to increase indoor recreation opportunities within the community.

Burlington: A City of Parks

Burlington is a city of parks, with almost 200 acres of designated park land. The City also has an additional 2600 acres of agricultural land and open space. This accounts for nearly 22% of the City’s land.

Burlington’s parks range from 85 acres to 0.3 acres and consist of six mini (or “pocket”) parks, four neighborhood parks, and two community parks. The largest of these parks are Crapo and Dankwardt, which share a common border and are located on the southeast side of Burlington.

While the City is currently meeting its needs on a pure acre to population basis, there are several other considerations that will shape the future of Burlington’s parks; the most important of which are access and interconnection.

A state park, increased parkland on the north side, a dog park, increased indoor recreational facilities and improved landscaping were all identified as possible improvements to the current park system in Burlington.

FS3: Community Facilities & Services Goal 3

Burlington will continue to offer strong educational systems that attract families and support success and social interaction.

Objective FS3.1: Burlington area schools investments will keep pace with changes to the population it serves.

Strategies

- The City will collaborate with Burlington area schools to anticipate and plan for changes in the size or makeup of the City's school-age population.
- The City will make adequate financial and resource investment to ensure the success of Burlington's youth.
- The City will work with the area schools and regional economic development agencies to attract and retain high quality educators and staff.
- The City will support the renovation of schools to incorporate innovative and sustainable technology and systems, and will aid the district in seeking funding to do so.
- The City will collaborate with Burlington area schools to plan for the adaptive reuse of decommissioned school properties before sale to private owners.

Objective FS3.2: Burlington area schools will be an integral part of community life, much more than simply a primary and secondary education service.

Strategies

- The City will collaborate with area schools to maximize the community's capital investment in school facilities by making those facilities readily available, as feasible, for other uses that support social interaction and health within the community, such as community meetings, neighborhood festivals, and adult sports.
- The City will collaborate with area schools to promote and make available to all residents certain services and events, such as student athletics and music and drama performances.

- The City will support area schools' efforts to engage residents in the education process through tutoring, mentoring, and guest speaker initiatives.
- The City will support and encourage area schools' efforts to teach students about local history and instill civic pride through knowledge of the community.

Objective FS3.3: Burlington will encourage lifelong learning through public and private programs.

Strategies

- The City will support Southeastern Community College and other higher education institutions to provide continuing education, professional development, personal enrichment and summer programs for Burlington residents.
- The City will work with cultural and historical institutions (including the Burlington Library and Historical Society) to develop free and low-cost educational and cultural programs for residents of all ages.

FS4: Community Facilities & Services Goal 4

Burlington residents will feel safe in all parts of the City.

Objective FS4.1: Police and fire protection services will maintain high performance standards as the City grows and changes.

Strategies

- The City will continue to meet accreditation standards for police and fire personnel and will encourage continued education to enable proactive approaches to new changes and trends.

- The police department will pursue innovative responses to problems that threaten public safety perceptions, and City Council will encourage and fund such innovation.
- The City will continually explore options to provide public safety services as efficiently as possible and will implement cost saving mechanisms including retention and maintenance of existing equipment and shared services when feasible.

Community Facilities & Services Action Items

- ✓ Collaborate with the Greater Burlington Partnership and West Burlington to study long-term wastewater treatment options to enable growth, especially to the southwest.
- ✓ Continue to facilitate and improve park and recreation facilities, programs, amenities and special events.
- ✓ Study feasibility of a public indoor recreation facility, opportunities for partnerships, and possibility of other public or private entities constructing such a facility.
- ✓ Improve supply of information (interpretive signage, websites, online forms, maps, etc.) at and for community facilities and key attractions.
- ✓ Evaluate the need for park space in the North and Southwest areas of the community as opportunities become available.
- ✓ Provide resources to form neighborhood associations to address community issues, including housing, safety and appearance.

- ✓ Pursue grants to update community facilities.
- ✓ Continue to expand local and regional trail systems.
- ✓ Conduct regular review of sewer/water capacities to serve future growth and development.
- ✓ Pursue shared services among governmental agencies as opportunities arise.
- ✓ Evaluate parks for compliance with ADA II standards and prepare a transition plan to make necessary changes over time.
- ✓ Create Wi-Fi spots at key community facilities, including parks.
- ✓ Promote shared usage of public facilities (e.g. school playgrounds for public use).



Community character is about identity – characteristics that define Burlington in the minds of residents and visitors. Burlington has been known, historically, for its river setting, its downtown streets and architecture, and its manufacturing employers. Looking forward, the City is working to enhance the downtown and riverfront areas, build on strengths in recreation amenities, and develop a thriving arts community. Some of these objectives are addressed elsewhere in the plan (see Land Use, Economic Prosperity and Community Facilities & Services). This element addresses objectives not otherwise fully addressed, including support for the arts and historic preservation.

C1: Community Character Goal 1

Burlington will have a thriving arts, cultural and entertainment community and identity.

Objective C1.1: Cultural facilities, activities, and events will be supported in Burlington, with attention to the interests of all age groups, especially including young families and young professionals.

Strategies

- The City will seek innovative and sustainable ways of supporting cultural facilities, local cultural events, and local artists.
- The City will prepare a Burlington Cultural Plan to establish a more diverse and vibrant arts and culture environment.
- The City will engage artists in the planning and development process to integrate culture and art into the fabric of the community.
- The City will work with artists and community organizations to identify appropriate sites and venues for cultural events, including non-traditional venues.

Objective C1.2: Public art will enhance a unique local identity.

Strategies

- The City will identify and remove unnecessary barriers to public art installations.
- The City will encourage and facilitate the installation of art in public spaces, including art integrated with public infrastructure.
- The City encourages the use of public art in private (re)development.
- The City will support neighborhood initiatives to enhance neighborhood identity through public art.

Objective C1.3: The Burlington community will attract and support artists.

Strategies

- The City supports the development of more active arts and culture organizations that actively promote and seek funding for the creative arts in Burlington.
- The City will consider the use of public dollars and powers to fund the arts, such as the Historic Preservation and Cultural and Entertainment District Tax Credit program.

Objective C1.4: Burlington will seek to expand its role as a regional center of cultural activities (see also Economic Development Goal E6)

Strategies

- The City supports the development of entertainment venues that can accommodate larger touring shows and events.
- The City will support and encourage public festivals and events that incorporate art and music and draw participants from throughout the region.

C2: Community Character Goal 2

Burlington will respect its history and heritage by preserving historic resources and celebrating the past.

Objective C2.1: Burlington will safeguard the City’s architectural, historic, aesthetic and cultural heritage.

Strategies

- The City will continue to support the Historic Preservation Commission and the local designation of historic landmarks and districts.
- The City will develop and maintain design guidelines for (re)development in historic districts.
- The City will promote and safeguard the historical landscape in addition to structures and districts.
- The City will apply criteria for Capital Projects that require evaluation and mitigation of negative impacts to historic assets.
- The City encourages (adaptive) reuse and rehabilitation of historic structures.

Objective C2.2: Burlington will foster pride in the legacy of beauty and achievements of the past.

Strategies

- The City will collaborate with the Burlington Public School District and other educational institutions to facilitate local history tours, projects and lesson plans.
- The City will support and recognize private historic rehabilitation.
- The City will continue to incorporate historical heritage considerations in the development of neighborhood plans.

Burlington’s Rich History

The City of Burlington’s history dates back to 1673 as part of Pere Marquette and Louis Joliet’s exploration, eventually becoming part of the Louisiana Purchase. The hamlet was named “Burlington” in 1833 after trader John Gray’s Vermont home. The City was chartered by Congress in 1836 as the seat of one of two counties of the Iowa District in the Wisconsin Territory, and remained the capital when the Iowa Territory was established in 1838. Burlington remained a small trading hub until 1868 when the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy railroad bridge was completed. Since 1868, Burlington has grown into the manufacturing center of southeast Iowa.

The City of Burlington is designated as a Historic Preservation Certified Local Government (CLG) with over 1500 sites submitted to the Iowa Site Inventory for evaluation. There are currently 25 sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad Passenger Station, Cascade Bridge, Snake Alley, Church of St. John the Baptist, Heritage Hill Historic District, Flint River Bridge, the Schramm Building, and the Capital Theater, among others.

Objective C2.3: Burlington will utilize its historic assets for economic development.

Strategies

- The City will work with the Greater Burlington Partnership to promote its cultural and historical resources as amenities for prospective businesses and industries.
- The City will continue to market its historic and cultural assets as tourist attractions, and will develop/improve infrastructure and amenities to increase tourism.

C3: Community Character Goal 3

Burlington will be proactive in maintaining a quality appearance that reflects pride in the community.

Objective C3.1: Burlington will promote high quality site and building designs within the community, and help mitigate any private nuisances that would negatively affect a neighborhood or the City.

Strategies

- The City will continue to monitor the rental housing stock through the rental permit process.
- The City will promote and sponsor community clean-up activities on an annual basis.
- The City will use nuisance abatement practices to improve the quality of life and resolve life safety issues within neighborhoods.
- The City will encourage and promote home exterior improvements to help maintain the community's old and new housing stock.

Objective C3.2: Burlington will maintain and update the public realm to present a positive public image.

Strategies

- The City will properly maintain streets, curbs, signs and light fixtures, and plan for replacement of any that have passed their productive lifespan.
- The City will work with property owners to ensure maintenance of sidewalks and street trees to provide safe, walkable neighborhoods and districts.

Community Character Action Items

- ✓ Establish an Arts Commission.
- ✓ Prepare a Burlington Cultural Plan.
- ✓ Explore the designation of Cultural and Entertainment Districts.
 - ✓ Include a public arts component in development Requests for Proposal for City-owned sites.
 - ✓ Update regulations to remove barriers to live-work studios and non-traditional venues.
 - ✓ Continue to support the Historic Preservation Commission and aid in the development of a Historic Preservation Action Plan.
 - ✓ Develop and maintain guidelines for development in historic districts.
 - ✓ Develop cohesive historic wayfinding signage.
- ✓ Lead the drive for encouraging positive outcomes and attitudes.
 - ✓ Encourage use of public spaces/streets for outside festivals and events.
 - ✓ Consider adding National Register properties to Local Historic Register.
 - ✓ Evaluate public activities and services that are friendly or attractive to the young professionals and families.
 - ✓ Preserve and enhance the downtown skyline as a defining feature of the community.
 - ✓ Sponsor an annual community-wide, or neighborhood specific, clean-up day.



The City of Burlington is committed to protecting people and property from natural and man-made disasters. A community must first identify potential hazards and mitigate the risk of impacts pre-disaster, then respond efficiently during a disaster, and plan for a comprehensive recovery post-disaster. The Des Moines County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan identifies potential hazards and recommends mitigation efforts for the City of Burlington. This section supplements the County Plan by defining for the City overarching goals and strategies for all phases of a disaster.

HZ1: Hazards Goal 1

Burlington will mitigate the risk of impacts before a disaster.

Objective HZ1.1: Burlington residents and businesses will be prepared for potential disasters.

Strategies

- When forewarning is possible, as with rising river levels, the City will strive to keep citizens accurately apprised of the situation and possible outcomes.
- The City will collaborate with local agencies and organizations to inform the community about disaster preparedness, especially including evacuation procedures in flood-prone areas and the location of public shelters.
- The City encourages private disaster preparedness, including resilient building practices and materials, establishment of disaster response and recovery plans by families and businesses, and maintenance of emergency kits and supplies as recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- The City encourages and will implement programs to support participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and hazard proofing of residences and businesses.

Objective HZ1.2: The City's use of smart development practices will effectively limit disaster impacts to new development due to flooding.

Strategies

- The City discourages new private development in flood-prone areas and will work to restore the natural floodplain of the Mississippi River and associated tributaries, where feasible and appropriate.
- The City will collaborate with the Army Corp of Engineers to design and implement flood protection strategies for existing development while preserving physical and visual access to the river.
- The City will commit to the safe development of public facilities, and will evaluate the feasibility of re-siting and upgrading facilities to mitigate potential hazards.



Objective HZ1.3: The City will be prepared for the worst case scenario.

Strategies

- The City will plan for the effective delivery of emergency services and basic human needs in the event of a worst case scenario, such as catastrophic flooding, tornadoes and winter storms.
- The City recognizes the potential for a disaster causing impacts beyond the City’s capacity to respond, and will develop procedures to request timely assistance from neighboring communities, and County and State government.

HZ2: Hazards Goal 2

Residents and assets will be protected during a disaster.

Objective HZ2.1: Residents’ basic human needs will be met during a disaster.

Strategies

- The City will work with non-profits, human services agencies, and emergency management agencies to plan for efficient disaster response that meets the needs of all in the community. This plan will be tested regularly with exercises.
- The City will call upon partners if unable to handle immediate needs in the event of a disaster, and will respond in-kind when asked.
- The City will collaborate with all engaged entities, including other government agencies and non-profit organizations, to meet residents’ immediate needs.

Objective HZ2.2: Assets and infrastructure will be protected during a disaster.

Strategies

- The City will develop and maintain a plan for protecting community facilities, including emergency supplies acquisition, volunteer management, and prioritization of municipal sites to be protected.

- Protection emphasis will be placed on public and private utility infrastructure, including water, sewer, roads, gas, and electricity.
- The City will recruit and safely utilize volunteers to protect public assets when necessary.
- The City will ensure alternatives/backups are in place for necessary utility infrastructure.

Objective HZ2.3: The City will be able to communicate and manage its available resources during a disaster.

Strategies

- The City will work with Des Moines County Emergency Management to set up an efficient and effective Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- The City will utilize the FEMA Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) effectively to ensure the safety of residents and to reduce loss and damage.

HZ3: Hazards Goal 3

Burlington will successfully recover from disasters.

Objective HZ3.1: Disaster victims will have prompt access to recovery resources throughout the recovery process.

Strategies

- The City will advocate for quick and equitable disbursement of individual and business assistance funds.
- The City will actively participate in the Des Moines County Disaster Recovery Organization (DRO), the local long term recovery committee (LTRC).
- The City will work with the Des Moines DRO and other local organizations and agencies to plan for assisting those impacted by a disaster in smaller-scale events (i.e. those not declared by the state or federal government).
- The City will work with recovery partners to create a “one-stop shop” for individual and business recovery assistance.

Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) coordinate recovery resources for volunteer case management agencies and offer guidance and referral for disaster victims.

Objective HZ3.2: Reconstruction and recovery will be quick, safe, and collaborative.

Strategies

- The City will work with the City of West Burlington, Des Moines County, the Chamber of Commerce and Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission to develop a Disaster Recovery Plan, modeled on FEMA’s Disaster Recovery Framework, that includes lines of authority, interagency coordination, processes for expedited review and inspection/repair/reconstruction of structures and infrastructure.
- The City will develop and adopt an appropriate Recovery and Reconstruction Ordinance.
- The City will implement temporary regulations when necessary to facilitate safe and expedited recovery.

A Disaster Recovery Plan outlines the responsibilities of partners and actions to be taken after a disaster. Disaster Recovery Plans supplement Pre-Hazard Mitigation Plans and recognize that recovery is long-term.

A Recovery and Reconstruction Ordinance establishes a recovery organization and authorizes a variety of pre- and post- disaster planning and regulatory powers. Model sections include:

- Recovery Organization Formation and Duties
- Implementation of Disaster Recovery Plan
- Temporary Regulations
- Temporary and Permanent Housing
- Recovery and Reconstruction Strategy

Hazards Action Items

- ✓ Develop a Disaster Recovery Plan.
- ✓ Develop and adopt a Recovery and Reconstruction Ordinance.
- ✓ Conduct Disaster Recovery Plan table-top exercises.
- ✓ Implement NFIP Community Rating System (CRS) credited activities and explore application to CRS designation.
- ✓ Develop interagency agreements for aid during and after a disaster and actively participate in the Iowa Mutual Aid Assistance Compact.
- ✓ Coordinate with the Des Moines County Emergency Manager to develop a sustainable Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD) to build a framework for meeting disaster victims' needs.
- ✓ Identify a Disaster Victim Assistance Officer (as part of the recovery organization established by the Recovery and Reconstruction Ordinance) to partner with the County EMA in advocating for quick disbursement of Other Needs Assistance and Disaster Case Management Funds.
- ✓ Actively participate in Flood Awareness Month, National Preparedness Month and Iowa Severe Weather Awareness Week activities.
- ✓ Work with the Des Moines County Emergency Management Agency to continue to update and disseminate free disaster preparedness materials for individuals and businesses.
- ✓ Conduct a public facilities audit for potential disaster impacts and implement mitigation strategies.
- ✓ Implement mitigation strategies outlined in the Des Moines County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan.
- ✓ Purchase land or easements to preserve the natural floodway where feasible and appropriate.
- ✓ Evaluate redundant capabilities of water, sewer, electric, gas and other utility systems to reduce or eliminate outages in the event of a disaster.
- ✓ Encourage placement of utilities underground for redevelopment and as opportunities arise.
- ✓ Identify areas to be protected (existing development) versus areas to be preserved (natural/open space opportunities).
- ✓ Examine alternative back-up strategies for necessary systems, if there are none already in place.
- ✓ Collaborate with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to identify and implement the most appropriate flood mitigation strategies for the Downtown, while preserving physical and visual access to the river.



Successful and vibrant communities rely upon collaborative efforts among city businesses and organizations and benefit from partnerships with regional organizations and state and federal agencies. The City of Burlington has a strong history of intergovernmental collaboration and multi-partner projects. This section defines the City's strategies on collaboration and provides guidance on reaching out to new partners and maintaining existing relationships.

CP1: Collaboration & Partnerships Goal 1

Burlington will maintain mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions, Des Moines County, and other governmental agencies.

Objective CP1.1: Burlington will think regionally while acting locally.

Strategies

- The City acknowledges the importance of regional systems and connections, especially for transportation, economic development, and natural resources protection, and will make a conscious effort to include neighboring jurisdictions, Des Moines County, and entities within the Burlington region in major policy and planning related initiatives.
- The City will continue to work with the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission to develop, fund, and implement regional planning and mobility efforts.
- The City will make efforts to establish regional partnerships for special projects and issues, such as trail and recreation improvements, local foods systems, and sustainability.

Objective CP1.2: Burlington will reduce costs and improve quality of municipal service through partnerships.

Strategies

- The City will continue to seek cost efficiencies through shared services with neighboring communities.
- When considering the addition or expansion of services and facilities, the City will consider the costs and benefits of developing partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions to meet local service demands.



Objective CP1.3: Burlington will reduce competition for local business and development investments and encourage efficient land use patterns.

Strategies

- The City will seek a collaborative approach to economic development with the City of West Burlington that includes agreements to share costs and revenues.
- The City will work with SEIRPC and Des Moines County to more effectively promote smart growth strategies while preserving local government planning autonomy.

CP2: Collaboration & Partnerships Goal 2

Burlington will continue to collaborate with non-profit and private entities to improve the quality of life for Burlington residents.

Objective CP2.1: Burlington will encourage more and better development through public-private partnerships.

Strategies

- The City will consider creative uses of its powers, borrowing capacity, and taxpayer funds to support private development projects that further public interests, especially for well-paying job growth, downtown investment, multimodal transportation, and enhancement of arts and culture.
- The City will be a responsible steward of taxpayer funds when considering partnerships with private entities.

Objective CP2.2: Burlington will partner with non-profits to ensure adequate social services for all residents.

Strategies

- The City will collaborate with local non-profits and social service agencies to ensure there are adequate resources for all residents and that service is fair and equitable.
- The City will partner with agencies like United Way, American Red Cross and food pantries to expand access to and awareness of emergency social services and sustenance programs.

Partners for a Better Future

The City of Burlington collaborates extensively with neighboring jurisdictions, regional and state agencies, non-profits, and private entities in order to create and maintain a better way of life in the greater Burlington area. For example, the City of Burlington shares a Safety Director, E911 Communication Center, Drug Task Forces, and police public relations with Des Moines County and the City of West Burlington. Other existing examples include:

- Partnering with Greater Burlington Partnership on economic development initiatives
- Supplying the City of West Burlington, Iowa Army Ammunition Plant, Danville, and Middletown with potable water via Burlington Waterworks
- Collaborating with Des Moines County and West Burlington on snowing plowing, public works equipment, and services
- Providing backup law enforcement to neighboring jurisdictions when needed
- Assisting City Township Ambulance Association with paramedic ambulance response
- Providing library services to neighboring jurisdictions



Collaboration & Partnerships Action Items

- ✓ Work with SEIRPC and neighboring communities to study the feasibility of an expanded regional bus system.
- ✓ Explore options for obtaining four-year programs/degrees through existing facilities or satellites with regional universities/colleges in Burlington.
- ✓ Assemble a joint task force with West Burlington to explore the concept of shared economic development investments coupled with shared tax revenues.
- ✓ Develop an official City policy on the use of public incentives to support private development.
- ✓ Host regular meetings with regional partners to explore ways in which collaboration on programs or services can improve quality, access, and efficiency.
- ✓ Communicate with other jurisdictions whenever service contracts or major capital improvements are up for consideration, to identify cost savings opportunities through partnerships and shared service arrangements.
- ✓ Seek cost efficiencies through shared services with neighboring communities.

