

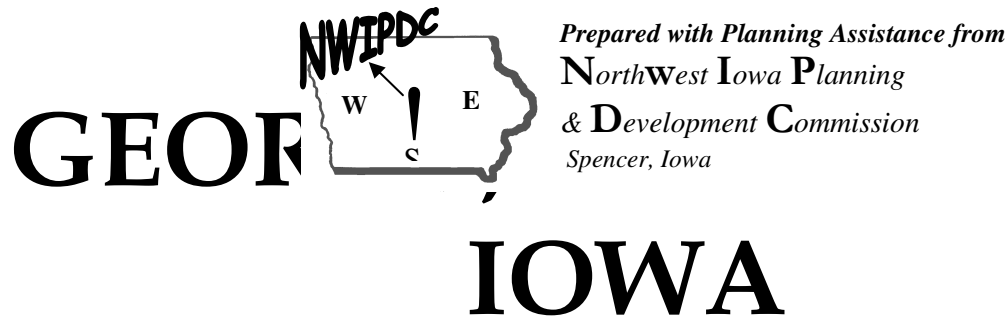
GEORGE

CITY OF



COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

2006



COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Prepared with Planning and Technical Assistance By:

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INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING ELEMENTS

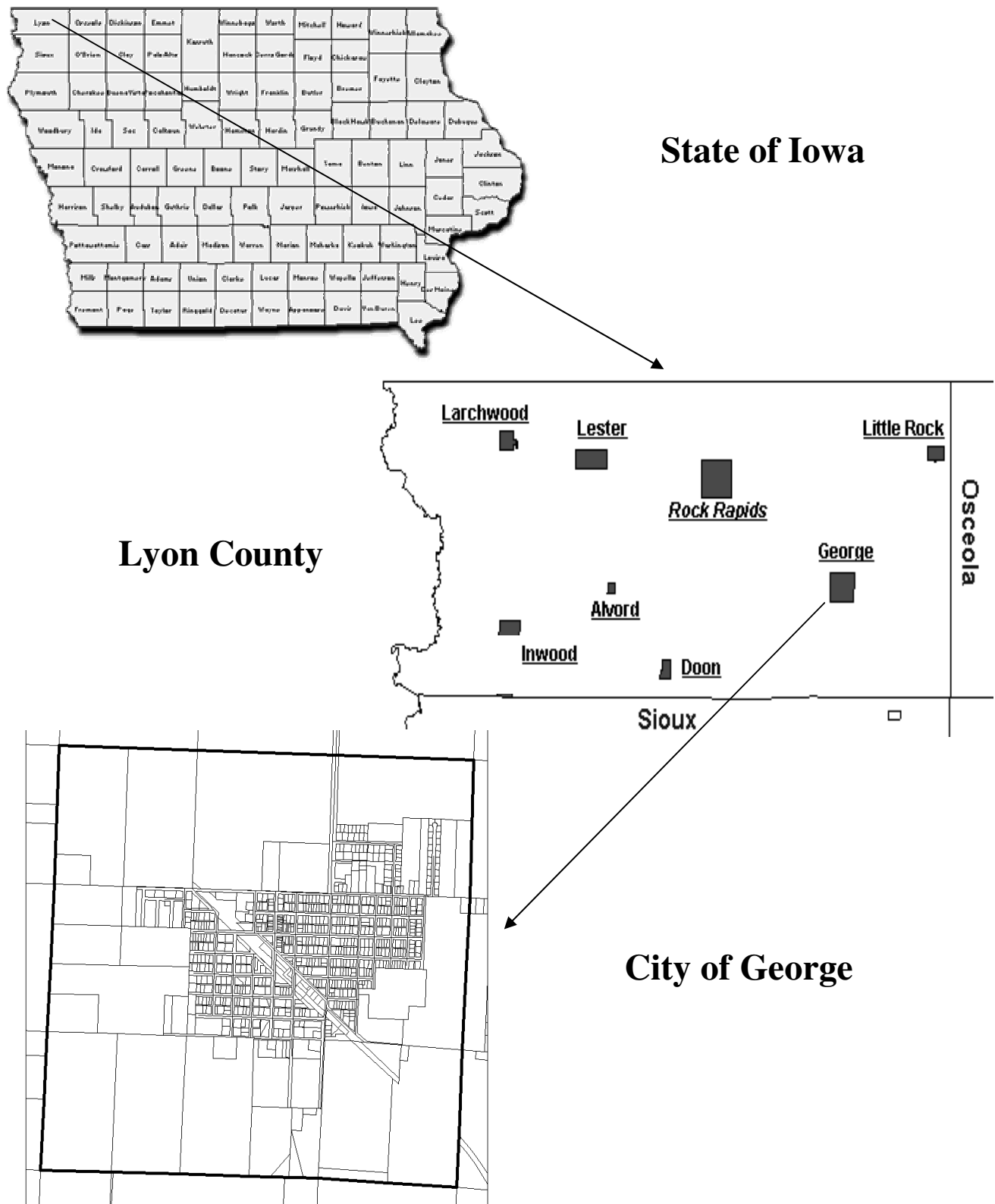
This comprehensive plan is broadly aimed at establishing a framework for public officials and the private sector to use in working toward the common goals of the community. This plan was designed with the intent for the city to grow and prosper in the future, not only physically, but also in the city's needs, values, and philosophies. This plan can easily be amended, changed, or revised in the future to meet the needs of the residents of George. Because of the flexibility of this document, the comprehensive plan will focus upon the long range goals for the city. Development of a comprehensive plan involves cooperation between diverse private interests and various levels of government. To ensure the plan functions properly, various concepts must be discussed. This framework will enable all interests to operate effectively and be treated as equitably as possible.

“Planning” is a key element in the development of any comprehensive plan. Once the working definition of planning has been internalized by those involved, steps of the process should include.

1. The primary stage of a planning program is **research and data collection**. It is from this supply of data that all decisions will be based, indicating that the more extensive and specific the data is the more accurate and functional the decisions. The following are the broad, general areas of data needed for the information base/inventory: Population, Housing, Economic Development, Physical Features, Land Use, Transportation, Public Works, Community Facilities, and Parks and Recreation.
- 2) **Analysis of the data collected** is an ongoing activity conducted at the same time the research and data collection is being pursued. Analysis involves the collection and presentation of data in written and/or graphic form to establish a complete base of existing conditions. Once this base has been established, the analysis proceeds into projection of future trends and growth. Dynamic forces are identified as well as their relative effect on the future.
- 3) All of this input in turn will facilitate the evolvement of certain **broad and general goals** for the planning area. A goal is that aim or end toward which effort is to be directed. Objectives involve bringing the goals closer to reality and specifically establishing those accomplishments that are desirable and closer to realizing established goals.
- 4) The **goals and objectives** are the framework for plan preparation. The technical personnel involved in the planning effort prepare the actual comprehensive plan document. Before submission of the plan to the legal bodies concerned, it should have been studied and commented upon all the involved sectors and altered accordingly.
- 5) Legalization of the plan involves the **plan adoption** by the local legislative body. Public hearings and wide distribution of the plan should take place before formal adoption proceedings. The plan must meet with the approval of those in the planning area to function properly.
- 6) **Implementation of the plan** is not carried out by any one department or agency, but is out of necessity a combined effort of all government, private and related entities. It cannot be emphasized enough that cooperation and coordination are the keys to an effective plan implementation.

LOCATION OF GEORGE

Figure 1 -



CHAPTER 1. PURPOSE OF THIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A comprehensive plan is a combination of stated objectives and policy recommendations integrated together and working toward a common set of goals outlining the existing land uses and future needs of the community; while at the same time looking toward the future to establish a guideline in relation to long range goals and objectives. A land use map, a policy plan, a strategic plan, and even a set of goals are all useful tools in the planning process, but they are not substitutes for a comprehensive plan. These tools should be used as part of the whole, or as components of the comprehensive plan.

The comprehensive planning process consists of utilizing past and present efforts and information provided by predecessors and integrating this information into a vision for the future. What exactly is a “vision?” A vision is an image or foresight into what and where representatives of the City of George wish to see the community directed in the future. A common vision is critical for the development of a comprehensive plan, because once a vision statement has been established it serves as a focal point for all other long range plan goals and specific policy statements to aim for.

A comprehensive plan will have a working expectancy that will vary with each individual governmental body, but averages between fifteen and twenty years. The plan is an intense study and analysis into specific components that make the city work. Another aspect that is explored in the comprehensive plan is the physical community itself. Information on land uses, infrastructure, natural characteristics, and other features are very important in determining the current condition of the community and likewise important in determining where the local governing officials should “envision” George in the future. This information is extremely useful in determining goals and policies relating to residential, commercial and industrial land uses, the built or developed environment, varying land uses, and other such activities that directly affect the physical aspects of George.

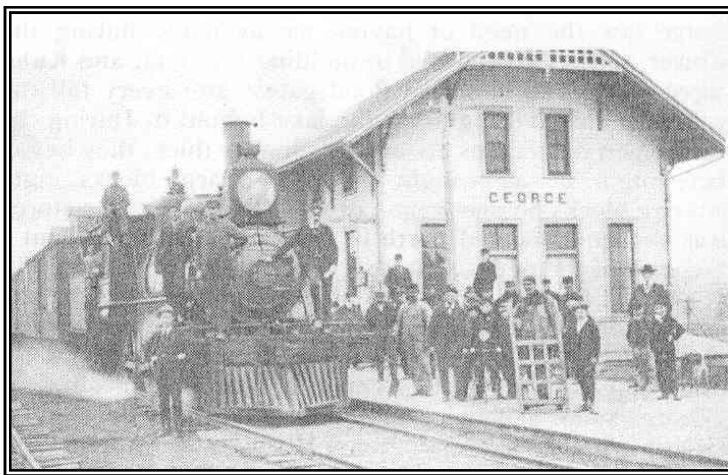
Most importantly, this comprehensive plan is not “etched in stone” per se. This document, specifically the visioning, goals, and policies section of the plan, is intended to be and should be amended as needed. As the community grows and changes from year to year, so will its needs. Therefore, the comprehensive plan should reflect new changes and possibly new goals or policies toward specific actions. Ideally, the comprehensive plan would be regularly updated on an annual basis. Actions recommended by the planning and zoning commission and taken by the City Council can amend this plan to reflect current trends or simply a change in philosophy regarding one or more of the policy statements.

CHAPTER 2. COMMUNITY HISTORY

In the beginning...A traveler, passing through Lyon County in 1890 writes, “Admit that the Garden of Eden was located on this continent, then I can trace its location, for nowhere else on the American continent are so many evidences of its probable location, as here in Lyon County.”

Although a couple of varying versions exist, the most common story about the beginning of George is based upon the tale of a railroad official who was in charge of laying the tracks in this part of Lyon County. This man had two children named George and Edna. It was his request that two towns be named after his children. In another version of the story recounted in the Lyon County News’ “George Centennial Edition” 1984, indicates that the railroad came from Cherokee to George and on to Rock Rapids. While they were building the railroad, one of the official’s sons by the name of George, was married to a girl named Edna. They were both killed in an accident and so the first town was named George and the next town Edna. Interestingly enough, it was noted in a town council book from 1894 that the town was petitioned to change the name, but nothing came of it.

Photo of historic George Railroad & Depot



When the great influx of settlers came to southeast Lyon County in 1871, they broke small patches of the prairie for gardens and fields. The early settlers were thrilled with yields they received. Then in 1873 the grasshoppers came like a cloud. The air was filled with hundreds of thousands of them and it sounded like a rushing river. The grasshoppers were so thick that they bit farmers, feeling like the sting of a bee. They found their ways into home and ruined bedding and clothes. They girdled trees, ate harnesses, and ate into pitchfork handles until they were useless. The grasshoppers devoured anything growing in the gardens and field. It was the grasshoppers from 1873 until 1879 that caused

Photo of west side of historic Main Street George



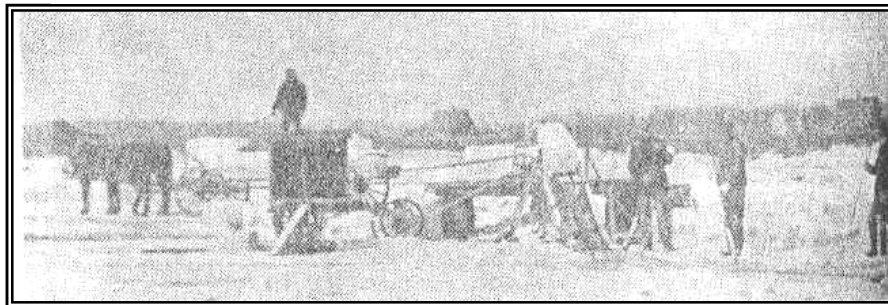
hundreds of settlers to move from the area and go elsewhere.

In a very early photo of Main Street George, one can see the first wooden sidewalks built in the community. These sidewalks were so high that the wagon tongues could rest on the sidewalk while wagons were tied up to the hitching posts. The wooden hitching posts used in the early days were often bitten and gnawed by horses while tied up, so they eventually gave way to iron horse-head hitching posts.

Early businesses sprouting up in George near the turn of the twentieth century included barbers, a livery stable, butcher shops, the lumber mill, Lew Feldman's Bowling Alley, The George Creamery, restaurants, blacksmiths, and the railroad depot. These businesses along with the pioneer era families are those credited with making George the bustling turn-of-the-century community it became.

Another one of the great hardships the pioneers endured was the number of unusually harsh blizzards during the years from 1870 and 1888. According to George Monlux, who wrote a book called "Early History" in 1908, lived in Grant Township for a while in 1871. He indicated in his book that these storms were not ordinary snow-storms. They almost always struck very suddenly, bringing with them a noise like a railroad train and extreme cold. In a matter of minutes everything was frozen hard. The wind would be so strong that one could not breathe, and the extremely fine snow penetrated clothing, got up coat sleeves, down the back of a person's neck, and blinded him.

Photo of harvesting ice near George



One interesting activity that occurred in George in the early days was ice harvesting. Along the Little Rock River, about one mile east of George, just beyond the bridge lays some large broken pieces of cement beside the river banks. This is all that remains of a dam that crossed

the river during George's early days. According to accounts from "In and Around George, Iowa 1871-1912", the dam was created to create a small lake from which ice could be harvested each winter and sold to local homesteaders and businesses.

Places of Historic Significance in George and Lyon County – National Register of Historic Places –

According to the National Register of Historic Places, there are eleven (11) buildings or sites that carry the distinction of being placed on the national register located in Lyon County. These twelve sites are of importance to the understanding and knowledge of the founding forefathers of Lyon County and George, and provides those residing and visiting George a glimpse into what life in Lyon County was like over one hundred years ago. Below is a listing of each of the nationally registered historic places with a brief background about their historical importance.

Historical sites in or near George:

Duncan-Duitsman Farm Historic District – Added to the National Register in 1994, this historical district is located at 4324 180th Street, George, Iowa. The site is based upon historical events and architecture during the periods of significance from 1875-1924. Areas of historical significance include agricultural subsistence, fields, agricultural outbuildings, and a historical single family dwelling (farmstead house).

Other historical sites in Lyon County:

- ❖ Big Sioux Prehistoric Prairie Procurement System Archeological District (Klondike)
- ❖ Blood Run Site (near Sioux Falls, SD and Larchwood)
- ❖ Burlington, Cedar Rapids, and Northern Railroad-Rock Rapids Station, Railroad Track and Bridge (a.k.a. Rock Rapids Depot, Bridge No. 2834, track and hand switch)
- ❖ First Methodist Church (a.k.a. United Methodist Church - Rock Rapids)
- ❖ Klondike Bridge (over the Big Sioux River – near Larchwood)
- ❖ Kruger Mill (a.k.a. Klondike Mill – SW of Larchwood on Sioux River)
- ❖ Lakewood Farm Historic District (Rock Rapids)
- ❖ Lyon County Courthouse (Rock Rapids)
- ❖ Melan Bridge (E of Rock Rapids in Emma Sater Park, Rock Rapids)
- ❖ Charles Reynolds Round Barn (a.k.a. Jansma, Tunis Round Barn – Doon)

CHAPTER 3. NATURAL RESOURCES & PHYSICAL FEATURES

Physical features, an important element in land use planning, have been largely ignored in the past in determining future land use. Modern emphasis on natural resource areas and the availability of advanced information on geological structure and soils have made it possible to place more emphasis on physical features analysis in land use planning. Climate, location, geologic structure, topography, drainage, surface waters, and soils each uniquely affect the types of land use that are best suited for a particular tract or parcel of land. Some of these factors, such as topography, drainage or soils, weigh more heavily when determining acceptable land use for an area. The purpose of this section is to determine those limiting factors as they relate to George, so that adequate consideration may be given to them when determining directions for future land use.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

George is located in the heart of eastern Lyon County which is the farthest northwest county in the State of Iowa. Lyon County borders South Dakota to the west and Minnesota to the north. The county is also bordered by Osceola County to the east and Sioux County to the south. Lyon County is in one of the highest elevated counties in the state as it lies near a high ridge line dividing the state's watersheds between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The northern half of George is located in Liberal Township and the southern half of the community lies in Wheeler Township. The city is divided north to south by County Highway L-14. Furthermore, the County Highway A-34 transverses the northern portion of George from east to west. The two largest cities of closest proximity to George are Rock Rapids, Lyon County Seat, approximately 15 miles northwest; and the City of Sibley, Osceola County Seat, approximately 20 miles northeast.

CLIMATE

Climate becomes a major factor in land use planning when it relates to agriculture, construction and street repair. The climate of George limits these activities to a certain part of the year. Most development, road repair or paving, along with planting and harvest will occur from April to October.

George has a humid continental climate, which is characterized by fairly large seasonal and daily variations in temperature. The summers are warm and sunny with occasional hot periods when the temperature averages a maximum temperature of 83.7 degrees F. along with a minimum average summer temperature of 58.7 degrees F. The winters are generally summarized as cold and somewhat cloudy with average daily low temperatures of 8.3 degrees F. The daily average high during the winter months in George is 29 degrees F. The prevailing wind is from the northwest from November through March and southerly winds from April through October. Average wind speed between 10-13 miles per hour and is highest during the month of April.

According to National Weather Service records, the average annual rain precipitation is 24.7 inches. Of this, 18.9 inches, or 76.5 percent, usually falls in April through September. The growing season for most crops falls within this period. On average, June is the wettest month while July is the driest during this time period. Hailstorms sometimes occur in scattered small areas during the warmer part of the year. Lyon County is one of the drier counties in Iowa. The average seasonal snowfall is 28.3 inches. The greatest one-month snow-fall occurred in February 1962 when 39.3 inches of snow fell.

On the average, 81 days of the year have at least 1 inch of snow on the ground. The number of such days varies greatly from year to year.

RIVERS AND STEAMS

Surface waters influencing the city the greatest are present in the Rio Grand Creek and Little Rock River flowing through and near George. These two waterways have also created the most natural destruction and impact on the community as well, through flooding and flash flooding.

Historical flooding events in George have resulted in flooded streets, homes, garages, and storage sheds due to storm sewers backing up and the overflowing of the Little Rock River and Rio Grand Creek. Flooding of roads and other lowlands was widespread. A road washed out and at least four bridges were damaged in George. The west side of George is more prone to flooding and usually occurs after prolonged periods of heavy rains or a torrential downpour. The most significant flooding event in George over the past 50 years occurred in June 2001 when prolonged heavy rain pushed the Little Rock River and the Rio Grand Creek out of its banks resulting in more than 4 million dollars in damage to several homes.

Figure 2 – Aerial map of George and nearby rivers/streams

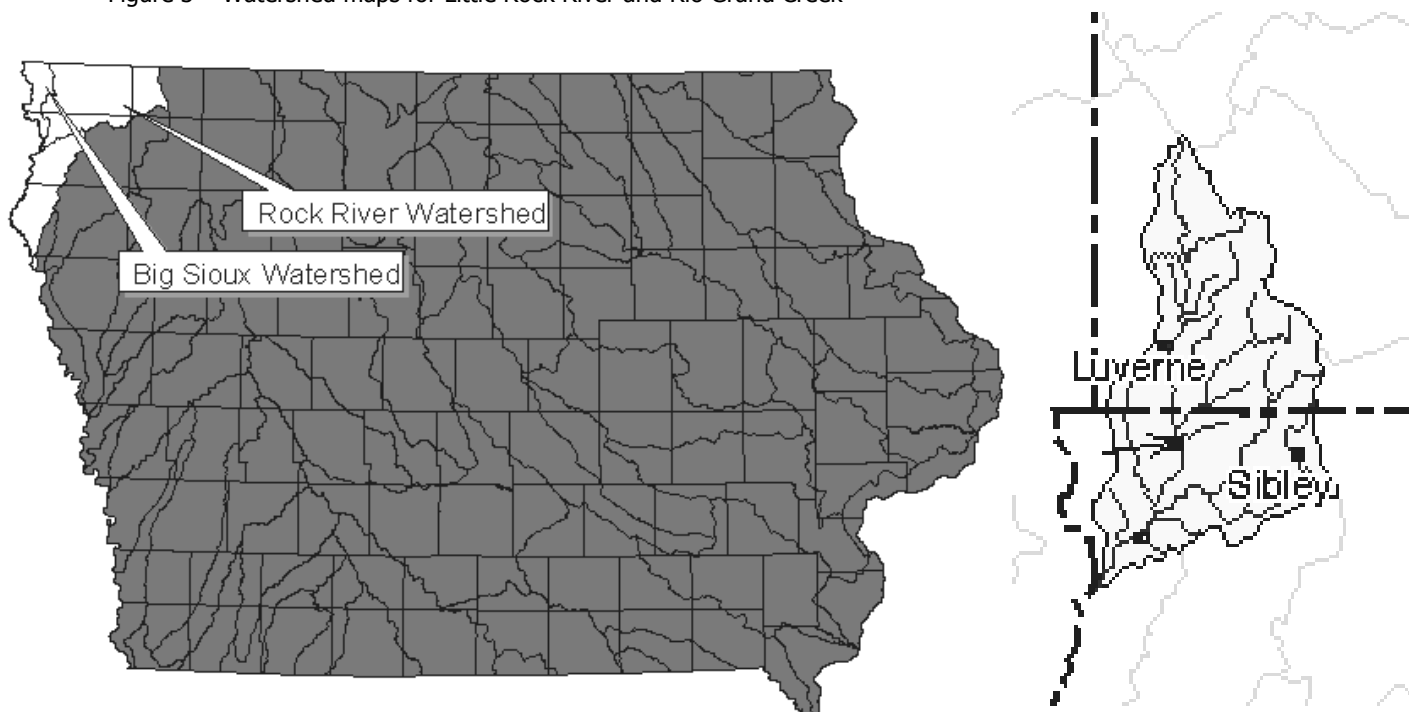


According to the National Climate Data Center, a flood is a high flow or overflow of water from a river or similar body of water, occurring over a period of time too long to be considered a flash flood. Flooding is caused in a variety of ways. Winter or spring rains, coupled with melting snows, can fill river basins too quickly. Torrential rains or repeated heavy rains from thunderstorms over a period of weeks can also contribute to river flooding and flash flooding. Occasionally, floating debris or ice can accumulate at a natural or man-made obstruction and restrict the flow of water, resulting in a flood situation. Urbanization increases runoff 2 to 6 times over what would occur on natural terrain. Streets can become instant moving rivers, especially in areas that lack curb and gutter, while basements can fill with water. Floods can be detrimental to a city, causing sewer systems to back up, damaging property, and flooding low-lying areas.

DRAINAGE/WATERSHED

Watersheds are areas in which all water, sediments, and dissolved materials flow or drain into a common river, lake or other body of water. Watersheds may vary in size from the largest river basins to just a few acres, but within their boundaries, all living things are linked by their common watercourse. The Environmental Protection Agency provides cities a number of different financial and technical resources to support local watershed protection efforts undertaken by state governments, public interest groups, industry, academic institutions, private landowners and concerned citizens. The City of George's watershed is drained by the Little Rock River and the Rio Grand Creek, which empties into the Rock River ultimately ending up in the Missouri River basin.

Figure 3 – Watershed maps for Little Rock River and Rio Grand Creek



TOPOGRAPHY/LANDFORMS

The topography around the City of George is characterized by a landform created from glacial movement known as the Northwest Iowa Plains. The majority of northwest Iowa is included in the Northwest Plains which is characterized by a gently rolling landscape. A network of streams is well established over the entire region and most valleys are broad swells that merge gradually with long

even slopes to the inter-stream divides. The dominant surface material is loess covering bedrock deposits left behind by early glacial drift. Northwest Iowa is a "jumping off place", a definite step upward to the High Plains of the Dakotas.

There are no lakes or sloughs near the City of George, yet the surrounding area has a well defined drainage system consisting of rivers, streams and minor feeder creeks that are not conspicuous enough to be placed on an ordinary map. These streams and minor feeders drain to the Rio Grand Creek, Little Rock River and Rock River, which eventually drains into the Big Sioux River south of Lyon County. The vicinity around George is mostly flat by appearance. However, over the length of the entire county, there is a large elevation drop from the highest point in the northeast corner to the lowest point in the southwest corner. Generally, the topography in and around the City of George will not adversely or negatively impact factors to consider when planning future land uses, with the exception of the changes in slope near the rivers or streams throughout the community.

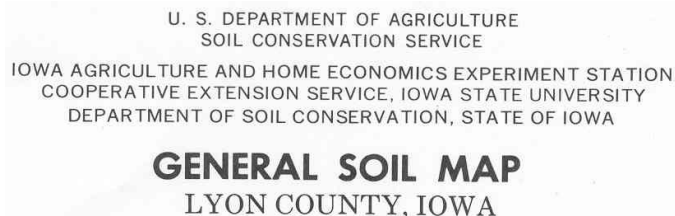
GEOLOGICAL COMPOSITION

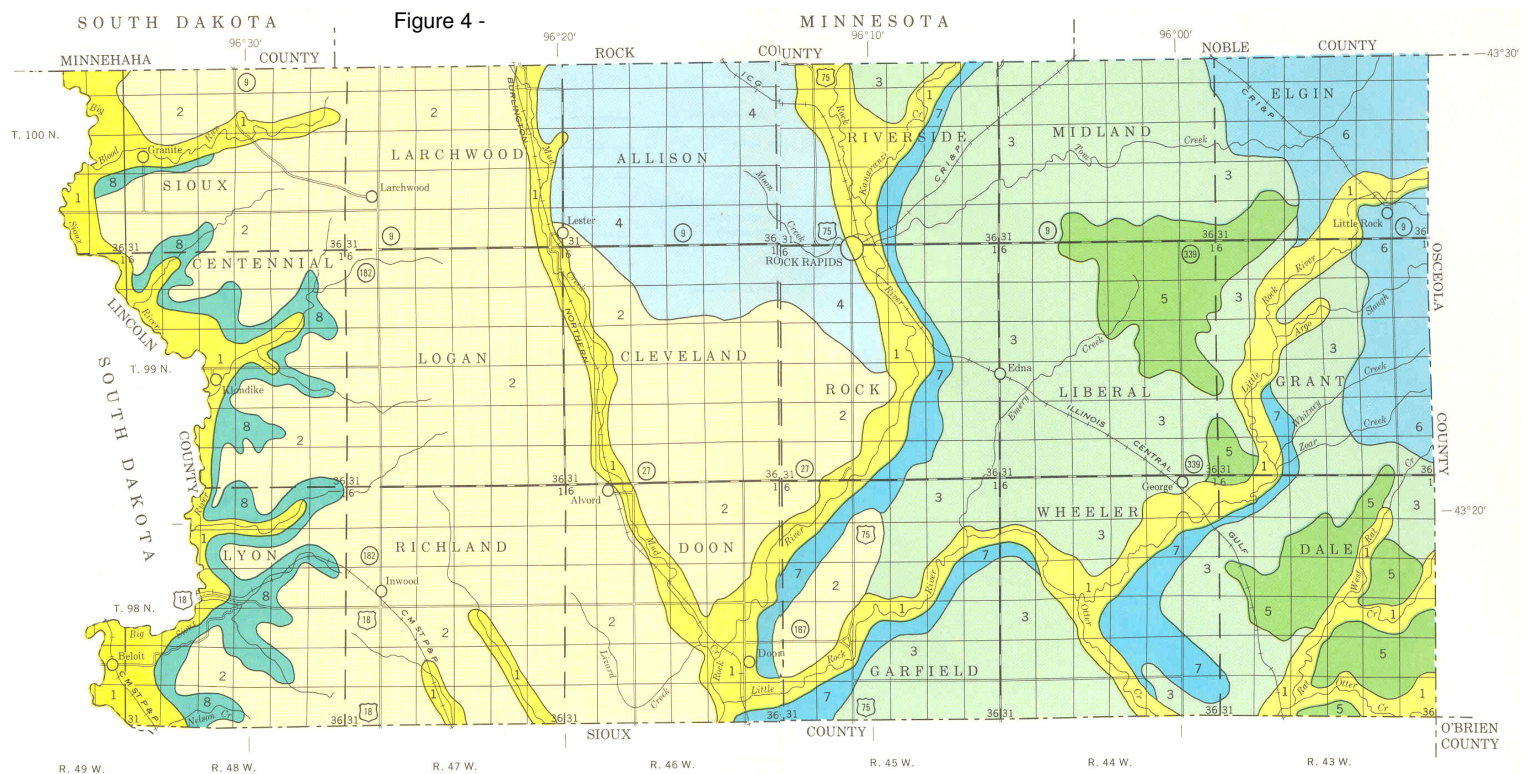
The major geological formations in and around the City of George are flood plains, stream terraces where the soils are underlain by sands and gravels, and uplands mantled by loess that is underlain by glacial drift. All these formations are underlain by bedrock, which generally is at a considerable depth. The flood plains are best suited to and are generally used for farm and recreational enterprises. The stream terraces are less limited in the present and potential uses. The stream terraces are the major source of sand and gravel. The uplands provide the best sites for development.

SOILS

The material in this section is primarily accessed from the Soil Survey of Lyon County, Iowa. This survey was made cooperatively by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service); the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station, the Cooperative Extension Service; Iowa State University; and the Department of Soil Conservation, State of Iowa. Major fieldwork for this soil survey was completed in 1967-1971. Soil names and descriptions were approved in 1973. Although the document is several years old, the soil information will remain accurate because soil types do not change drastically over the course of several years.

Lyon County, as a whole, is characterized by eight major soil classifications. They include Calco-Spillico-Dempster; Moody; Galva-Primghar; Egan-Trent-Moody; Primghar-Marcus-Galva; Sac-Galva-Primghar; Ocheyedan-Bolon-Dickman; and Steinauer-Moody associations. As with topography, the county's soil associations are a product of the intrusion of glacial ice. Soils in the Galva-Primghar (GP) and Calco-Spillico-Dempster (CSD) associations predominate in the George area. The GP association features nearly level to moderately sloping, moderately fine textured, well drained to somewhat poorly drained soils. These soils were formed in the glacial till on uplands. The CSD association is classified by nearly level to gently sloping, moderately fine textured and medium textured soils in poorly drained to well drained areas.

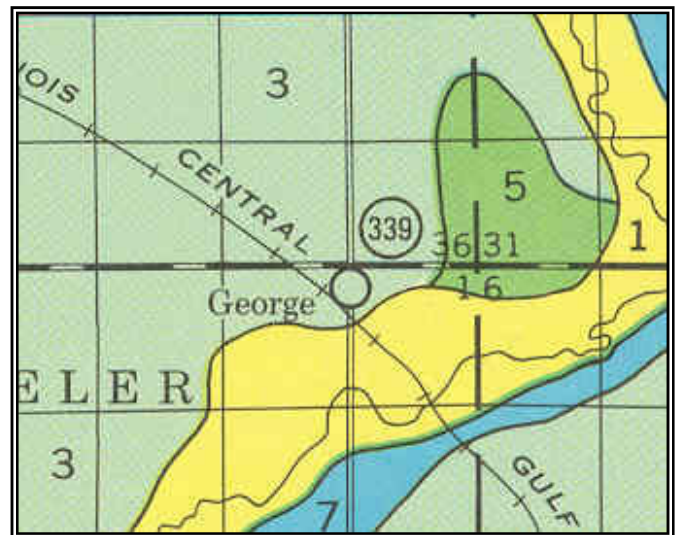




SOIL ASSOCIATIONS *

- 1 Calco-Spillco-Dempster association: Nearly level to moderately sloping, moderately fine textured and medium textured, poorly drained to well drained soils
- 2 Moody association: Nearly level to strongly sloping, moderately fine textured, well drained soils
- 3 Galva-Primghar association: Nearly level to moderately sloping, moderately fine textured, well drained and somewhat poorly drained soils
- 4 Egan-Trent-Moody association: Nearly level to strongly sloping, moderately fine textured, well drained and moderately well drained soils
- 5 Primghar-Marcus-Galva association: Nearly level to moderately sloping, moderately fine textured, poorly drained to well drained soils
- 6 Sac-Galva-Primghar association: Nearly level to strongly sloping, moderately fine textured, well drained and somewhat poorly drained soils
- 7 Ocheyedan-Bolan-Dickman association: Nearly level to strongly sloping, medium textured and moderately coarse textured, well drained and somewhat excessively drained soils
- 8 Steinauer-Moody association: Gently sloping to very steep, moderately fine textured, well drained soils

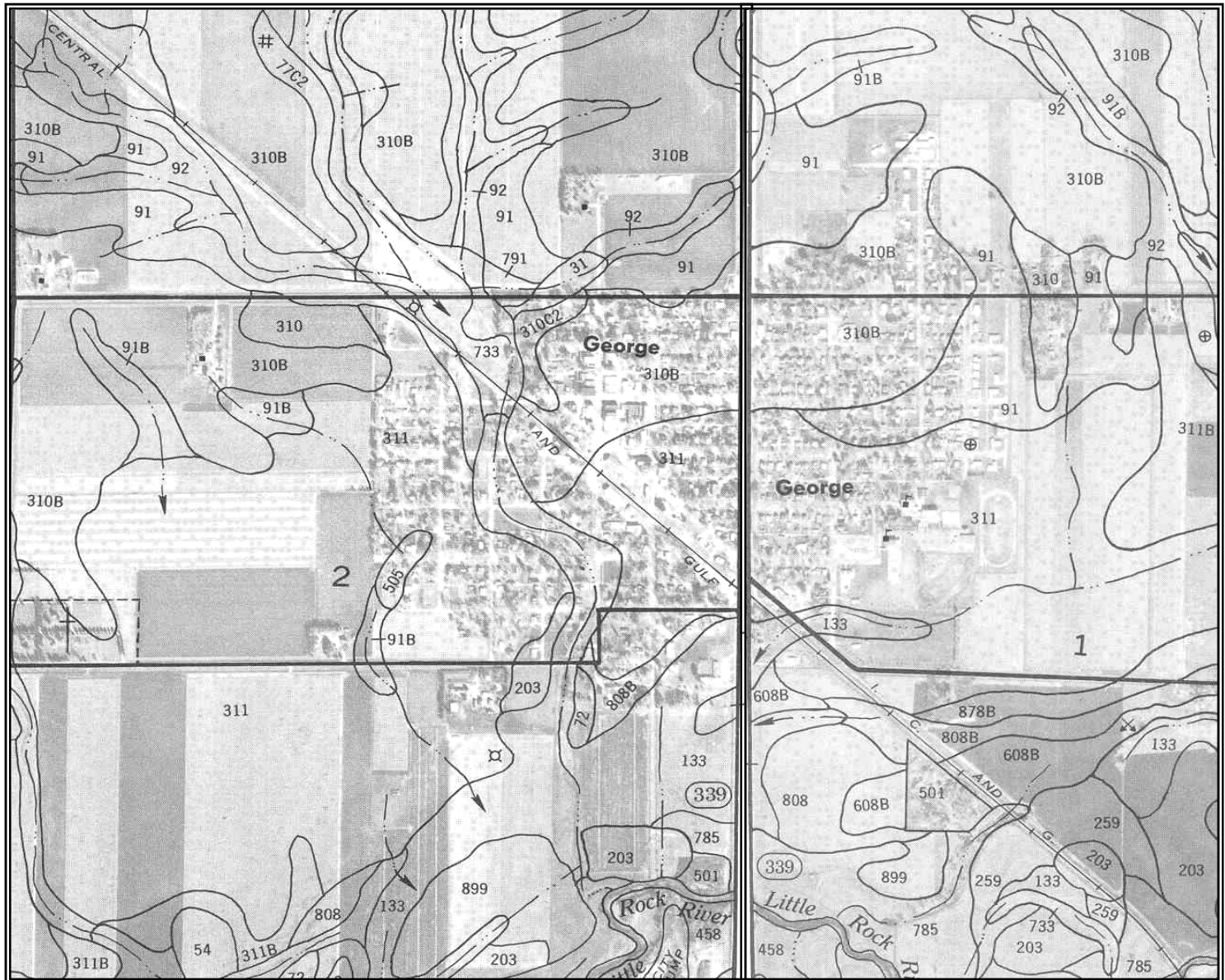
*Texture terms apply to the surface layer of the major soils.



The figures above represent the general soil map for George, as developed by the United States Department of Agriculture and Soil Conservation Service (NRCS). Soil conditions determine several important land use decisions when planning where future growth and development will occur. Where growth and development occurs between two significant waterways in the community, the types of soils and their suitability or lack thereof to development becomes of great importance. Factors such as structure suitability, percolation rate, water holding capacity, productivity, slope, and nutrient composition are all important in determining future growth patterns. These factors all have various effects on placement of public utilities, residential and commercial development, construction or

placement of recreational areas, as well as local agricultural usage. The following figure shows a very detailed soil map with data regarding specific soil types located in and surrounding George.

Figure 5 - NRCS soil map of George



Soils predominate in the City of George include: Galva “moderate slope” (310B), Galva (311), Primghar (91), Primghar “moderate slope” (91B), and Marcus (92). Along the Rio Grand and Little Rock River corridors, there are many more soils types due to the changes in slope and percolation. One soil which is predominating in the flood plains is Colo (133) which is characterized as severe wet; floods.

Assistance in identifying the soil series on which a proposed development will be locating can be obtained from the Soil Conservation Service's regional office in Spirit Lake, Iowa. The following figure shows a very detailed soil map with information regarding specific soil types located in and

surrounding George. Further detailed explanations of the primary soils types found in George are listed below:

91 – Primghar silty clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes

This nearly level soil is on broad flats on uplands and on lower side slopes of hills. Most areas are large; a few are more than 640 acres. The soil is well suited to row crops. It remains wet longer than the adjoining Galva soils.

91B – Primghar silty clay loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes

This gently sloping soil is found in slightly concave swales. Areas are often long and narrow bands, 5 to 15 acres in size, with a few more than 20 acres. The soil is suited for crops, but poor drainage can make cultivation difficult.

92 – Marcus silty clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes

This nearly level soil is on plane positions and in drainageways on uplands. Most areas are 10 to 30 acres, with some place areas larger than 30 acres. Excessive wetness is the main limitation to this use. Soil blowing is a limitation if large areas are disturbed.

133 – Colo silty clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes

This nearly level soil is often found in flood plains and in drainageways on uplands. Individual areas are irregular in shape on flood plains and are long and narrow in drainageways. Most areas are 10 to 40 acres in size. In most places, this soil is susceptible to flooding and wetness is a limitation to development.

310B – Galva silty clay loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes

This gently sloping soil is on convex ridge tops and hillsides on uplands. Most areas are 50 to 200 acres or more in size. The soil is susceptible to erosion, especially where slopes are long, which is common for this soil.

311 – Galva silty clay loam, stratified substratum, 0 to 2 percent slopes

This nearly level soil is on plane uplands or stream benches. Most areas are large; some are more than 300 acres. This soil is well suited for development or row crops.

Other soils present in George:

203 – Cylinder silty clay loam, deep, 0 to 2 percent slopes

458 – Millington loam, somewhat poorly drained, 0 to 2 percent slopes

505 – Sperry silt loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes

785 – Spillco loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes

608B – Dempster silt loam, moderately deep, 2 to 5 percent slopes

808 – Dempster silt loam, deep, 0 to 2 percent slopes

808B – Dempster silt loam, deep, 2 to 5 percent slopes

899 – Davis silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes

The above listed soils do not represent all of the soil classifications found in George, rather a sample of the larger, more prominent soil types found throughout the community. A listing of all the soil

types with detailed information may be obtained in the Soil Survey of Lyon County, Iowa. Attached as Appendix 1 to this plan, is a copy of detailed schedules of soil suitability depending upon types of use. There is a “Windbreaks and Environmental Plantings” schedule detailing which trees are best suited for planting in soils found in George. Also included in Appendix 1 are a “Recreational Development” schedule, a “Wildlife Habitat” planting outline, and a “Building Site Development” table that outlines which building types are better suited for construction in the types of soils found in George.

AQUIFERS AND GROUND WATER

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources published an analysis of Iowa's underground water supply titled The Iowa Statewide Rural Well-Water Survey. This study takes a comprehensive look into the water quality of rural water supplies throughout the state. In the study, the City of George is included in the Northwestern Iowa Hydrogeologic Region, which is described as follows:

“Moderate to high relief, high relief along major river valleys, generally thick glacial deposits and deep (to very deep) to bedrock, Dakota sandstone aquifer and related Cretaceous bedrock units are important groundwater sources, along with alluvial aquifers.”

Wells in the region are an average of 40 feet in depth and have the highest level of nitrates of any other hydrogeologic regions in the state. The region is dominated by shallow wells because regional aquifers are often quite deep; thus, drilling may be prohibitively expensive. The water in deeper aquifers also can be undependable, particularly because natural water quality may be poor (e.g., high sulfates, high dissolved iron, etc.) However, the higher percentage of nitrates found in the water indicates a degree of pollution related to agricultural practices, fertilizer use, manure, septic tank wastes, sewage sludge, or other sources.

A city's land use pattern reflects its personality. This is because use of the land is a product of all the factors and resources affecting the community's development, including the city's heritage, economic base, lay of the land, availability of utilities, transportation network, local investment, and industrial base, as well as many intangible factors related to the very nature of the people in the area. Land use patterns can be studied to reveal what influenced their development, what trends have been prevalent, and what the land in and surrounding the City of George is likely to be used for in the future. Once this information has been analyzed and quantified, it can be coupled with future land use goals and objectives suited for future growth areas and various types of development.

ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS OF CONCERN

The rivers, streams, and creeks; as well as the surrounding prime agricultural land adjacent to the City of George pose some special concerns with regard to future land use planning. The protection and preservation of the environment and natural ecosystem is of primary importance to city, county and state officials. Areas of interest regarding environmentally sensitive or natural resource areas in George should be identified and prioritized. Most of these areas either in or near the City of George are under private ownership and should be considered for county or city sponsored protection. State-owned land located throughout the county is not a serious consideration in local planning because state controls will eliminate most adverse impacts. Flood hazard areas are another area of concern in land use planning, since development in these areas is subject to damage through flooding.

Consideration should be given to restricting development in designated flood hazard areas through zoning ordinance provisions.

CHAPTER 4. POPULATION & HOUSING

The City of George, located in Lyon County, the farthest northwest county in the State of Iowa is unique in regards to population, housing, and economic trends. Lyon County brings with it people, income, successes, and challenges that all affect the population, housing, and economy of the area as explored in this next section of this plan. Shifts and growth in population play a critical role in the planning process. Analysis of past trends and current population structure is important in making future population projections. Those projections, along with information about population characteristics such as age and household size, are fundamental in considering the need for future infrastructure improvements and the need for the development of residential, commercial and industrial areas.

PAST POPULATION TRENDS

In George, Iowa residents and city officials alike have experienced a small rural agricultural town develop over the course of the past 100 years into the community it has become today. Since 1900, the first decade in which the city was counted in a recorded census, George has seen overall growth. The trend in Iowa shows a decline in rural population and the population is gravitating towards cities and urban centers. This trend is very pronounced in central and eastern Iowa. In western Iowa, the growth has not been as pronounced or magnitudinal, but yet there are still areas of growth. The growth areas in western Iowa are associated with communities that are considered industry, retail and recreation centers. This is why Spencer, Storm Lake, Spirit Lake, Sioux Center, Orange City, and Milford were the only cities in northwestern Iowa with population increases of 250 persons or more from 1990 to 2000. Each of these Cities has either a major employer(s) and/or a major retail center.

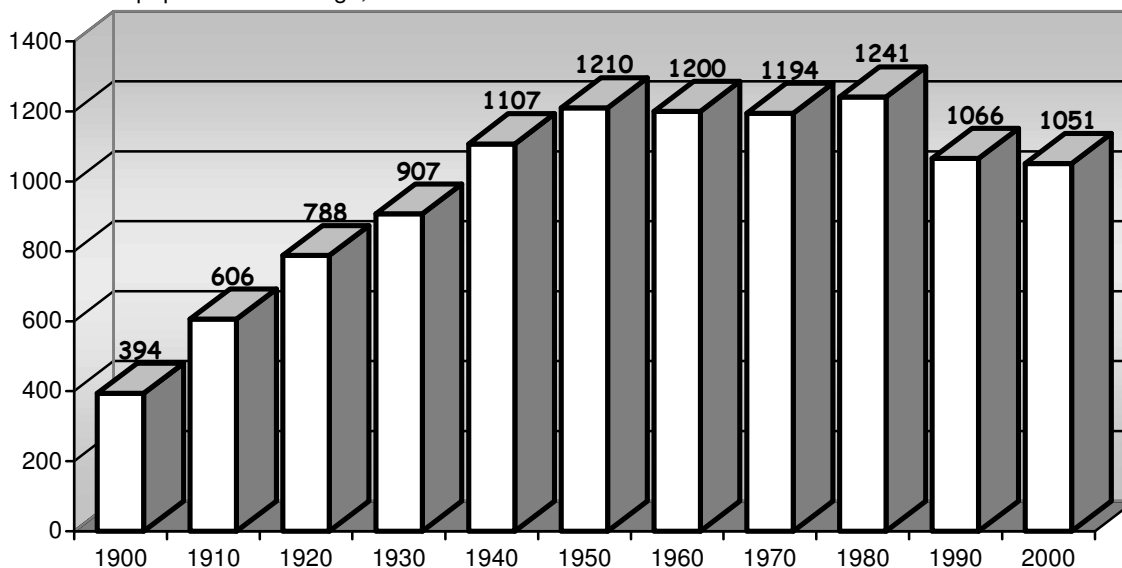
Table 1 – Historical population trends in George, 1890-2000

YEAR	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940
POPULATION	-	394	606	788	907	1,107
YEAR	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
POPULATION	1,210	1,200	1,194	1,241	1,066	1,051
<i>Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000 Census</i>						

George experienced steady incremental growth from 1900 to 1950 from 394 persons to 1,210 persons. Then from 1950 to 1960, the City lost 10 people. By 1980, George had its largest population yet of 1,241. The sluggish economy of the 1980's took its toll on George, causing George to lose 175 persons or 14.1% of its population by 1990. The city has shown steady growth over the decades, but

has plateaued in recent years. (See Table 1). Family farming and local industries have kept citizens living in and around George.

Figure 6 – Historic population of George, 1900-2000



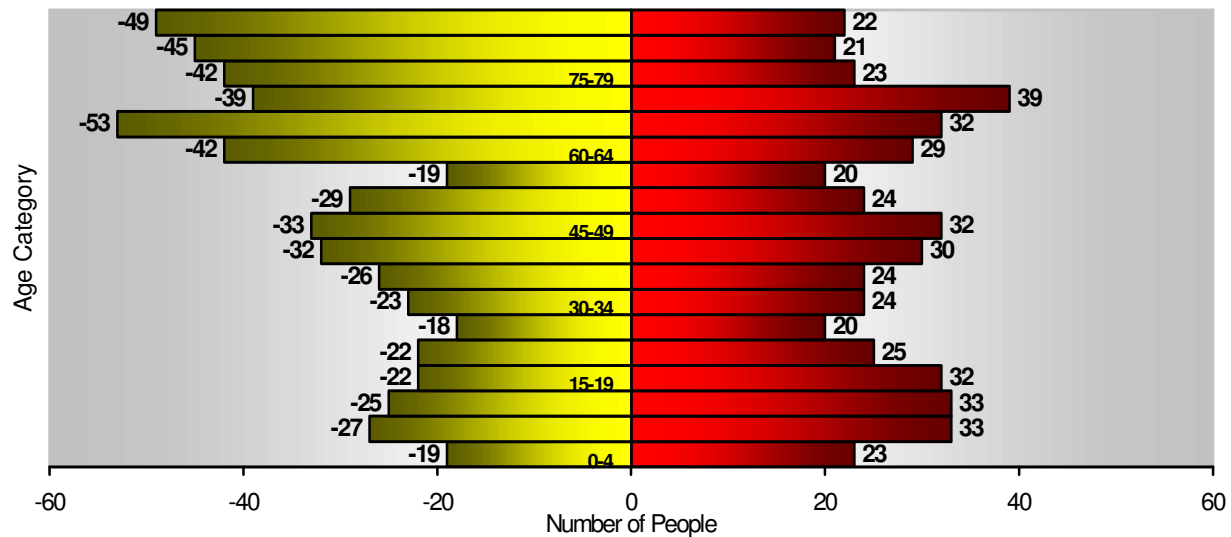
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000 Census

CURRENT POPULATION STRUCTURE

As of the 2000 Census, George had a total population of 1,051 persons. Of the total population in 2000, 46.2 percent, or 486, were male, while 53.8 percent, or 565, were female. This proportion of males to females is typical due to the longer life expectancy of females. The median age of 50.6 years for George is higher than both Lyon County's of 38.1 years of age and the State of Iowa being 36.6 years. The median age has been increasing over time for the city, county and state, all a result of an aging population. Approximately 34.7 percent of the city's 2000 population or persons meet the U.S. Census definition of elderly, which includes person's age 65 and older. This is much higher compared to the State, which came in at 14.9% in 2000. This demonstrates that George has a high elderly population compared to the other age groups, which will need special consideration when it comes to providing a wide range of services in the future.

Figure 7 -

Age Distribution of Population



As seen in the age distribution figure, there appears to be a slightly stronger presence of males between the ages of 5 to 20. The proportion of males to females in the community is relative even between the ages of 30 to 50. However, the age distribution figure becomes skewed heavily to favor the presence of females in George in the 60 and older age brackets. This trend would go to support the statistic of women having the longer life expectancy.

The median age of 50.6 years for George residents is substantially higher than that of Lyon County at 38.1 years, as well as the State of Iowa which is at 36.6. Median age in George has been increasing since the 1970 Census. Approximately 35 percent of the city's 2000 population or 365 persons meet the U.S. Census' definition of elderly, which includes persons aged 65 and older.

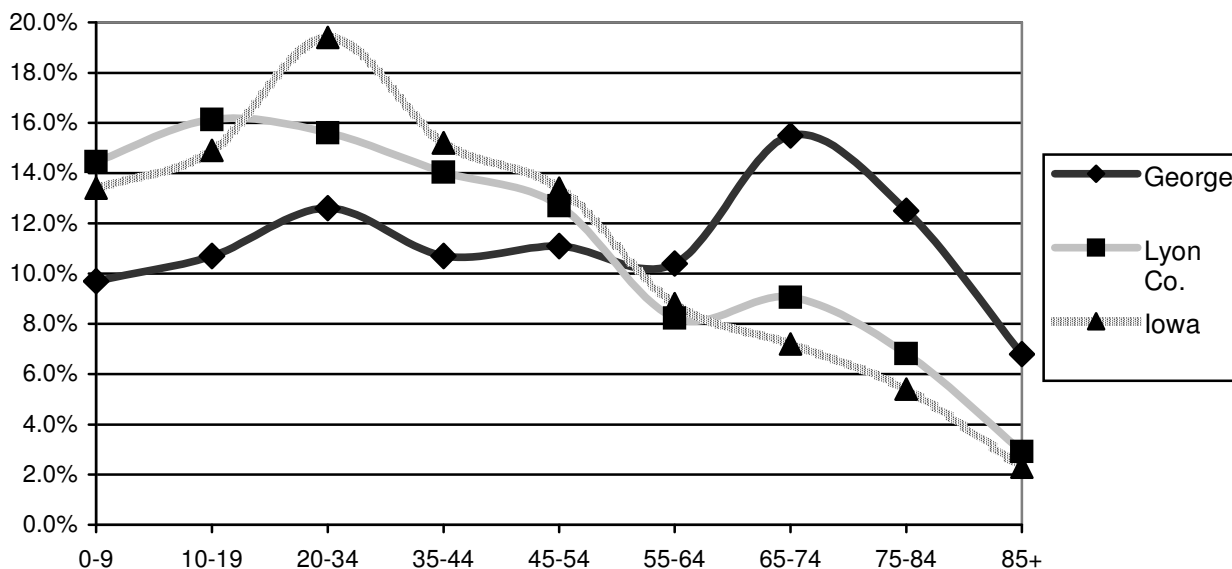
Table 2 - Age distribution of population, 2000 (George, Lyon County and Iowa)

Age Cohort	George	Percent	Lyon County	Percent	State of Iowa	Percent
0-9	102	9.7%	1,702	14.47%	391,016	13.4%
10-19	112	10.7%	1,898	16.13%	436,967	14.9%
20-34	132	12.6%	1,836	15.61%	566,723	19.4%
35-44	112	10.7%	1,653	14.05%	445,199	15.2%
45-54	118	11.1%	1,495	12.71%	392,794	13.4%
55-64	110	10.4%	968	8.23%	257,412	8.8%
65-74	163	15.5%	1,067	9.07%	211,935	7.2%

75-84	131	12.5%	801	6.81%	159,160	5.4%
85+	71	6.8%	343	2.92%	65,118	2.3%
Total	1,051	100.00%	11,763	100.00%	2,926,324	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

Figure 8 - Age distribution comparison, George, Lyon County and Iowa, 2000



POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Accurate projections of population are important factors in determining future need for mitigation projects and infrastructure. Analysis of these population projections can provide some insight into the type and quantity of future development and allows local officials to set land use policies to guide expected development. Several entities, including the Iowa Department of Transportation, the State Demographer's office, and the private consulting firm *Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.* develop projections at the county level. Unfortunately, none of these entities generate projections for cities.

For purposes of identifying the future population projections for the City of George, the data and figures presented by *Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.* will be used. *Woods & Poole, Inc.* population projections are limited to the county level. Therefore, population for George will be extrapolated from the population projections of Lyon County. By using *Woods and Poole*, population projections the ratio or proportion of population of George is being calculated in proportion to Lyon County. Using *Woods & Poole* data is perceived to be more accurate than other sources or methods of calculating population projections.

Woods and Poole data predicts Lyon County's population will decrease through the year 2025, unlike experienced from 1900 until 1960. From 1950 to 2000, the City of George has increased in its percentage of population presence in Lyon County from 8.23% to 8.93% of the total county population. Therefore, it is projected that George will incrementally continue to increase in population composition of the county. For purposes of the population projections, George's

population projections will be based on the assumption that the composition of the city's population will gradually decrease each decade to the county's base population. For instance, it is projected that the decade of 2000 to 2010 will have the effect on the City of George by dropping its population by 0.06%. The decade of 2010 to 2020 will also hold dropping number in population but less than the previous decade. It is projected to drop from 1,041 to 1,034 or by 0.04%. Although, the relationship George has with Lyon County when dealing with population is projected to actually rise over the next few decades.

Table 3 - Projected population

Year	Lyon County Population	George Population	% of Total County Population
1950	14,697	1,210	8.23
1960	14,468	1,200	8.29
1970	13,340	1,194	8.95
1980	12,896	1,241	9.62
1990	11,952	1,066	8.92
2000	11,763	1,051	8.93
2005*	11,703	1,048	8.95
2010*	11,599	1,041	8.97
2015*	11,517	1,036	8.99
2020*	11,472	1,034	9.01
2025*	11,442	1,034	9.03

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of 1980, 1990, 2000; 2005-2025 are projections by Woods & Poole, Inc. 2003.

When considering these population projections, one must remember these projections do not factor any potential socioeconomic variables. The projections are based on the city's and county's past population trends. The projections do not consider economic and sociological forces. These variables alone are quite difficult to project and forecast and then to apply them to population projections is even more difficult. A number of assumptions would have to be made and the margin of error at each level of application increases. However, the one assumption made here is that with all other factors held constant, the population for George is expected to decrease. Factors that may affect population estimates include business expansions, the availability of affordable housing units, new subdivisions, or a rise or decrease in the cost of living. If a new business that employs 100 persons would look at locating in or near George, the population could be greatly effected. In some cases, a lack of services will drive prospective homeowners to other areas where services are more readily available.

HOUSING ANALYSIS

According to 2000 Census data, 37.5 percent of the housing units in George were built prior to 1939. This figure falls in between the Lyon County figure of houses built before 1939, about 43 percent; and the state of Iowa figure, about 32 percent. This statistic alone signifies a fairly healthy community and more vibrant local and regional economy, simply due to the number of newer housing units versus aging and deteriorated housing units as experienced elsewhere across northwest Iowa. The largest period of housing development other than prior to 1939 within George occurred during the 1970's when 87 housing units, or almost 17 percent of the city's housing stock was constructed. Construction of housing slowed considerable during the 1980's, when only 14 housing units were built over the course of these ten years comprising 2.7 percent of the total. However, the

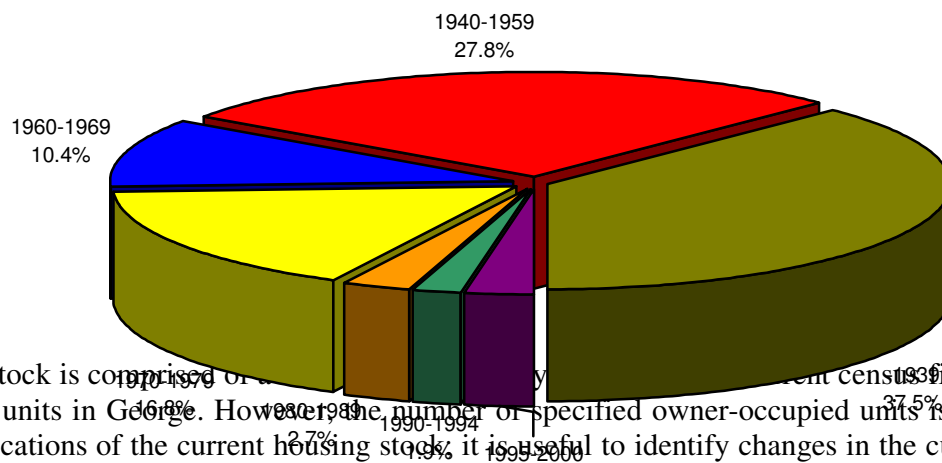
past decade has shown improvement and turn-around, with 15 units built during the first half of the decade. These two trends follow closely with the Lyon County figures for the 70's and 80's decades.

Table 4 - Year housing units were built in George and Lyon County

	George		Lyon County	
Time Period	# of Units	% of Units	# of Units	% of Units
1995-2000	15	2.9%	230	4.9%
1990-1994	10	1.9%	158	3.3%
1980-1989	14	2.7%	261	5.5%
1970-1979	87	16.8%	702	14.8%
1960-1969	54	10.4%	382	8.0%
1940-1959	144	27.8%	1,005	21.1%
1939 or prior	194	37.5%	2,020	42.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

Figure 9 -
Age of Housing
Units in George



George's housing stock is comprised of a variety of ages. The 2000 census figures show 518 housing units in George. However, the number of specified owner-occupied units is 351. In order to get indications of the current housing stock, it is useful to identify changes in the current housing market and vacancy rates. George is currently experiencing a stable housing market. According to the table below, from 2000 Census data, the largest category of home values was in the under \$50,000 price range.

Table 5 -

Valuations of 351 Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units –George, 2000								
Value in 2000	<\$50,000	\$50,000-\$99,999	\$100,000-\$149,999	\$150,000-\$199,999	\$200,000-\$299,999	\$300,000-\$499,999	\$500,000-\$999,999	\$1 million or more
# of Homes	176	161	12	2	0	0	0	0
% of Homes	50.1%	45.9%	3.4%	0.6%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

Table 6 -

Valuations of 2,730 Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units – Lyon County, 2000								
Value in 2000	<\$50,000	\$50,000-\$99,999	\$100,000-\$149,999	\$150,000-\$199,999	\$200,000-\$299,999	\$300,000-\$499,999	\$500,000-\$999,999	\$1 million or more

# of Homes	918	1,333	334	93	36	4	12	0
% of Homes	33.6%	48.8%	12.2%	3.4%	1.3%	0.1%	0.4%	0%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census								

EXTERIOR HOUSING CONDITION

A windshield survey was conducted in July 2005 to better understand a depiction of the physical condition of housing units within the community. The windshield survey consisted of driving every street in the community and performing an exterior inspection of all housing structures. The housing condition ratings for housing units in George are as follows:

1. **GOOD:** A structure that is recently built and meets all codes. If the housing unit is older, it has had careful and proper maintenance of both structure and grounds. No surface wear is apparent and repairs are not needed.
2. **FAIR:** A sound overall structure, but in need of surface and/or property maintenance. The structure may be beginning to show signs of wear; pavement or accessory buildings may need some repairs.
3. **POOR:** Significant surface wear is noticeable. The structure itself is may have cracks, holes or breaks evident in walls, foundation, and the roof. Painting or siding is needed and windows, steps, etc., may need to be replaced.
4. **DETERIORATED:** There is little possibility for rehabilitation and the structure is unsound and totally substandard. The foundation, roof and bearing elements have substantial defects. The property may already be vacated.

Approximately 22.9% of all housing units in George are determined to be good condition while an additional 71.43% are categorized as fair. Conversely, there is also a small proportion of the housing stock in George that is considered to be in poor condition 4.83%, and yet a smaller proportion is considered deteriorated or beyond repair 0.84%. Although less than one percent of the housing structures surveyed were reported in deteriorated or beyond rehabilitative condition, this low percentage equates into only 4 housing structures throughout the entire community.

The overall appearance of housing structures within the City of George shows a vibrant community where most of its residents show pride and care in maintaining their housing units. It was noted by Northwest Iowa Planning and Development, the agency conducting the windshield survey, that many of the homes rated as "good" where not necessarily newer homes but rather older properties that have been properly cared for and maintained over the years. There were, however, easily identifiable areas within the city where new housing units are clearly being developed. On the other hand, there were also easily identified older areas in George where concentrations of housing have been maintained or rehabilitated by homeowners over the years.

For purposes of the windshield survey, the City of George was divided and surveyed in four quadrants: the northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest. The city was divided by Virginia Street (L14) from north to south and by Minnesota Avenue from east to west.

Table 7 – Housing condition survey data

Section of City	Number Evaluated	# and % GOOD	# and % FAIR	# and % POOR	# and % Deteriorated	Total
Northeast	182	57 31.32%	119 65.38%	6 3.3%	0 0.0%	100%
Northwest	103	23 22.33%	74 71.85%	4 3.88%	2 1.94%	100%
Southeast	67	9 13.43%	51 76.12%	6 8.96%	1 1.49%	100%
Southwest	124	20 16.13%	96 77.42%	7 5.65%	1 0.8%	100%
Total	476	109 22.9%	340 71.43%	23 4.83%	4 0.84%	100%

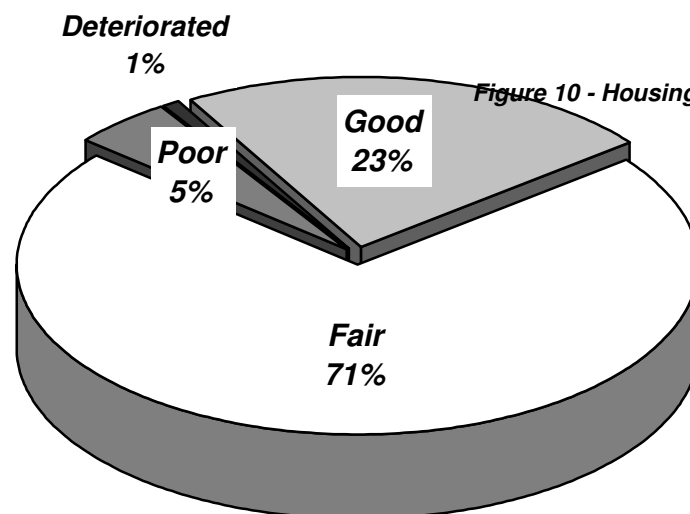


Figure 10 - Housing condition survey

OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS

The table below indicates vacancy rates in George, as compared to Lyon County and the State of Iowa. As the number of total housing units has increased so has the vacancy rate also increased. In 1990, there were a total of 511 housing units in George. This figure increased to 518 housing units by 2000. However, in 1990, there were a recorded 478 occupied housing units resulting in a vacancy rate of 6.46% or 33 vacant units. This compares to a slightly reduced number of 473 occupied housing units in 2000 resulting in a net number of 45 vacant units or 8.7 percent. Furthermore, George also has increased its owner occupancy rate during the past ten years from 81 to 82 percent. This means that there are more people living in homes owned by the resident and fewer families renting. The city has a higher percentage of families owning their residence than both the county and state.

Table 8 -

<i>Vacancy Status – 2000</i>						
	<i>Total Housing Units</i>	<i>Occupied Housing Units</i>	<i>Vacant Housing Units</i>		<i>Owner Occupancy Rate</i>	<i>Renter Occupancy Rate</i>
			<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>		
<i>City of George</i>	<i>518</i>	<i>473</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>8.7%</i>	<i>5.8%</i>	<i>14.9%</i>
					<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>Vacancy</i>
					<i>391</i>	<i>86</i>
					<i>82.0%</i>	<i>18.0%</i>
<i>Lyon County</i>	<i>4,758</i>	<i>4,428</i>	<i>330</i>	<i>6.9%</i>	<i>3,622</i>	<i>806</i>
					<i>81.8%</i>	<i>18.2%</i>
<i>State of Iowa</i>	<i>1,232,511</i>	<i>1,149,276</i>	<i>83,235</i>	<i>6.8%</i>	<i>831,419</i>	<i>317,857</i>
					<i>72.3%</i>	<i>27.7%</i>
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census						

SELECTIVE LISTING OF HOUSING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

This section addresses potential state and federal programs offering housing assistance that may be available for the community, businesses, lenders, builders, and residents to access or utilize in order to offer or improve moderately priced housing within the community.

- Tax Increment Financing
- (local government)
- Tax Abatement (local government)
- Iowa Housing Fund (IDED)
- Local Housing Assistance Program (IDED)
- Affordable Housing Tax Credits
- (Iowa Finance Authority)
- Housing Assistance Fund
- (Iowa Finance Authority)
- Affordable Housing Program
- (Federal Home Loan Bank)
- Community Investment Loan Program (Federal Home Loan Bank)
- Ownership Loans (USDA)
- Rural Rental Housing Loans (USDA)
- Housing Preservation Grant Program (USDA)

Furthermore, the Iowa Department of Economic Development offers the service of a Housing Assistance Review Team. A group of five major funding agencies (IDED, FHLB, USDA, HUD & IFA) reviews proposed housing projects for eligibility to the above mentioned programs.

An adequate supply of affordable and safe housing is often in high demand. The housing market's supply and demand for types and prices of housing will vary over time with. Generally, if a market does not have a type and/or preference in choice of housing and a household has the means to construct a new house, then they often will construct one. However, if a household does not have the means or the capacity to construct and/or live in and maintain single family housing on the market, then they will often seek multifamily housing in another community. If there is a shortage in adequate and affordable multifamily housing then it leaves household(s) with little choice, but to accept substandard housing or to move to another community that has an adequate and affordable supply. Below is a list of the advantageous benefits of multifamily housing communities should consider when planning. This list is assembled of selected excerpts from, *"The Case for Multifamily,"* from the Urban Land Institute.

Multifamily housing is a key component of smart growth

- Well-planned, higher density housing in areas designated for growth has always been an integral component of smart growth.
- By housing more people on less land, multifamily housing developments make it possible to preserve more open space and natural features than do single family housing.
- Multiple housing reduces development pressure on the remaining undeveloped land in a region.
- Multiple housing usually requires less public infrastructure, including roads, sewer and water pipes, and electricity and gas lines.
- Multifamily housing makes it financially feasible to integrate commercial and retail uses into a neighborhood.
- Multifamily housing has a smaller per-housing-unit fiscal impact on local governments because it has a smaller impact on local schools.

Multifamily housing enables communities to provide housing that is affordable to a wider range of incomes.

- Households depending on a single salary such as that of a teacher or police officer cannot afford to buy a median-priced home in two-thirds of the metropolitan areas in America.
- Working families with a critical housing need, defined as having to spend more than half their income on housing or living in substandard housing, increased by 60 percent.
- Under financial pressures, households typically are forced to move farther out from their jobs, enduring long commutes that aggravate existing traffic problems, or to double up and endure crowded housing conditions.
- Apartments and condominiums play an important role in housing the workforce. They have been providing "workforce housing" for decades, long before the term was coined.

Well-designed multifamily housing can be an attractive and compatible addition to the community.

- Multifamily housing has come a long way from the plain boxes of the past; the design of today's apartments and condominiums is much more creative and sensitive to neighborhood context.
- Multifamily structures allow greater flexibility in siting buildings, which makes it possible to preserve open space and distinctive natural features of the site such as hillsides, streams, or strands of trees.
- Visual preference surveys have demonstrated that consumers, when shown well-designed visual images of high-density communities and

low-density communities, often prefer high-density communities.

- Many multifamily housing communities were constructed using principles consistent with the new urbanism movement. Multifamily housing

has an important role to play in the new urbanism communities of the future.

- There is no discernible difference in price appreciation of single family housing located near multifamily buildings and that of homes not located close to multifamily housing.

HOUSING UNIT PROJECTIONS

The average household size in George during 1990 was 2.13 persons per household, and decreased to 2.10 pph by 2000, according to census figures. During this same period, population declined by fifteen persons from 1,066 to 1,051. The fact that household size is decreasing in George is a trend taking place throughout the region, state, and nation. Using average household size and population projections one can predict future housing needs. Between 1990 and 2000 the City of George's total housing units increased from 511 to 518 (+1.36%). The economic boom of the late 1990's decade afforded many people the opportunity to build new or second houses with declining interest rates and a generous lending market.

Table 9 - Projected housing units needed in 2015, 2020 and 2025

Year	2015	2020	2025
<i>Projected Population</i>	<i>1,036</i>	<i>1,034</i>	<i>1,034</i>
<i>Projected Household Size</i>	<i>2.12</i>	<i>2.11</i>	<i>2.10</i>
<i>Units Needed For Population</i>	<i>489</i>	<i>491</i>	<i>493</i>
<i>Plus an est. vacancy of 6% (current is near 9%)</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Average Demolition of 2 Houses per Five Years</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Total Housing Units Needed</i>	<i>523</i>	<i>527</i>	<i>531</i>
<i>Minus the current households in George</i>	<i>518</i>	<i>518</i>	<i>518</i>
<i>Increase of NEW housing units from 2000</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>If include remaining vacant housing units add</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Increase of TOTAL housing units from 2000</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>28</i>

According to the housing projections presented above, there appears to be a need for new housing units constructed in George over the course of the next 20 years. The third line from the bottom of

the table represents the net gain in only new housing units constructed. The total housing units needed is making the assumption that the vacancy rate in George will not decline to 6 percent as predicted in the table. Therefore, if the housing vacancy rate remains at 9 percent in George, due to older housing stock or deteriorating housing units, then an additional number of new housing units will need to be constructed in order to satisfy the needs of the projected population of George.

SUMMARY

Land use policies must take into account the expected decrease in population and shift in age. Demands for certain types of services are population and age-oriented. There are two different age groups that the county must take into consideration when planning for future needs. The youth and the working class sectors will increase the demand for daycare, educational facility expansion, housing, and recreational facilities. Periodic reevaluations of the projections in this section with current census data, as it becomes available, will provide more accurate information.

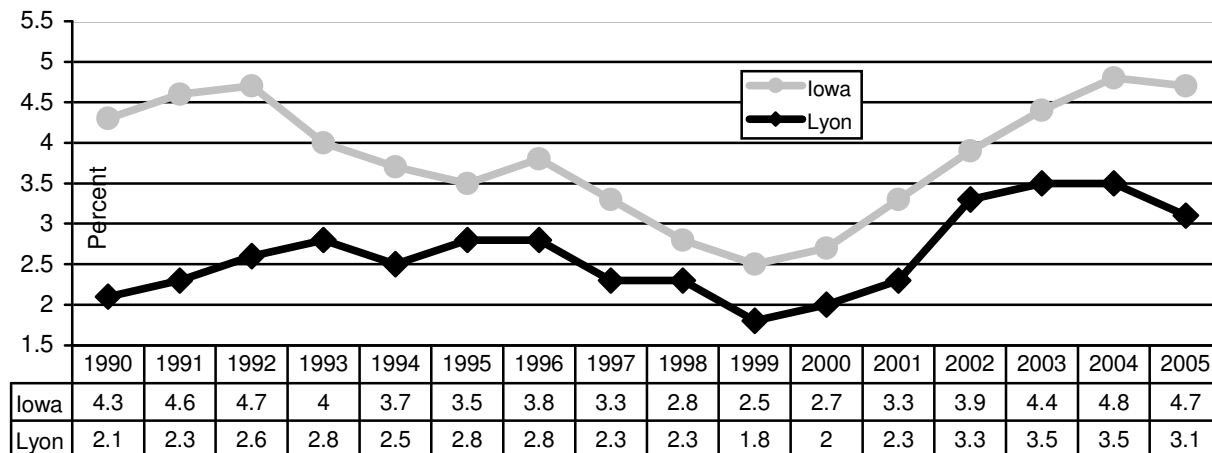
CHAPTER 5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development has become synonymous with community development in Iowa. Many communities in Iowa consider economic development one of the most critical aspects to community development. The economic base of any community is comprised of three primary components, employment/labor force, retail trade and income trends. In this section, George's employment, income and trends in retail trade are examined and compared to those of Lyon County and the State of Iowa. Economic analysis provides important indicators as to the relative health of the community and potential growth in each of the land use categories.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The fifteen year trends in unemployment for Lyon County and the State of Iowa show similar trends in peaks and valleys. However, Lyon County appears to maintain an overall lower unemployment rate than the State by an estimated half to full percentage point over the past 15 years. An overall trend appears to indicate about a ten year cycle of high and low unemployment periods. The number of unemployed persons in Lyon County from 1990 to 2005 has been extremely low, especially considering other regional and national trends. One can easily see how unemployment reached a peak from 1993 to 1995 and then dipped to an all-time low rate by 1999. However, once again in 2003 and 2004, unemployment climbed to reach another spike in unemployment. It appears as if the unemployment cycle reached its high in 2004 and is appearing to be declining again in 2005.

Figure 11 - Unemployment rates for Lyon County and Iowa, 1990-2005.



Source: Iowa Workforce Development, Labor Market Information, 2005

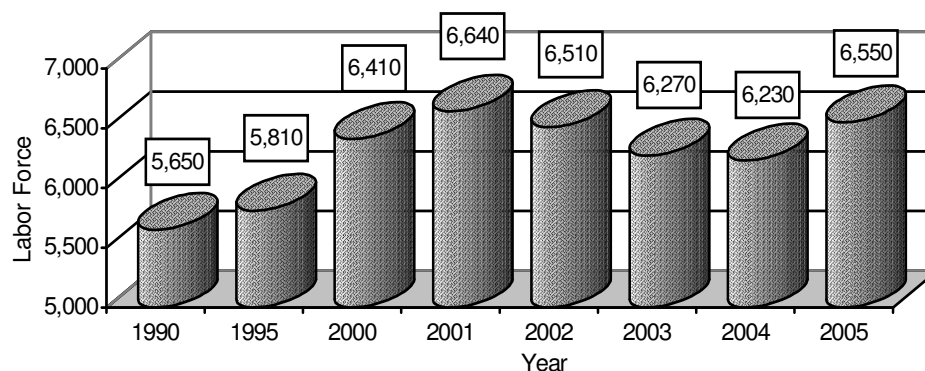
Looking at monthly unemployment rates for Lyon County in 2005 shows the seasonal fluctuations in unemployment of the county.

2005 Lyon County	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Unemployment	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.1	3.2	3.3	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.7	3.1	2.9

In January, unemployment was at 3.8 percent. This is most likely due to a combination of winter or seasonal layoffs in the construction, agriculture and other outdoor trades. Unemployment continued to be near 4 percent in February and March, but then declines to a low of 2.7 percent in July and August. Again, these seasonal fluctuations are generally caused by weather or seasonal related employment. By November, unemployment rates can be seen going back up to 3.1 percent.

According to Iowa Workforce Development, Lyon County's total labor force stands at 6,550 persons, compared to 5,650 in 1990 and 6,410 persons by 2000. Obviously the overall workforce is continuing to increase in Lyon County which is a good indicator of new and increasing jobs providing opportunities for employment and residency. The above labor force figures are based on the yearly average. The recent rising trend in labor force numbers seems to bode well for Lyon County and George in comparison to three straight years of a declining labor force from 2001 to 2004.

Figure 12 - Labor force trends in Lyon County, 1990-2005

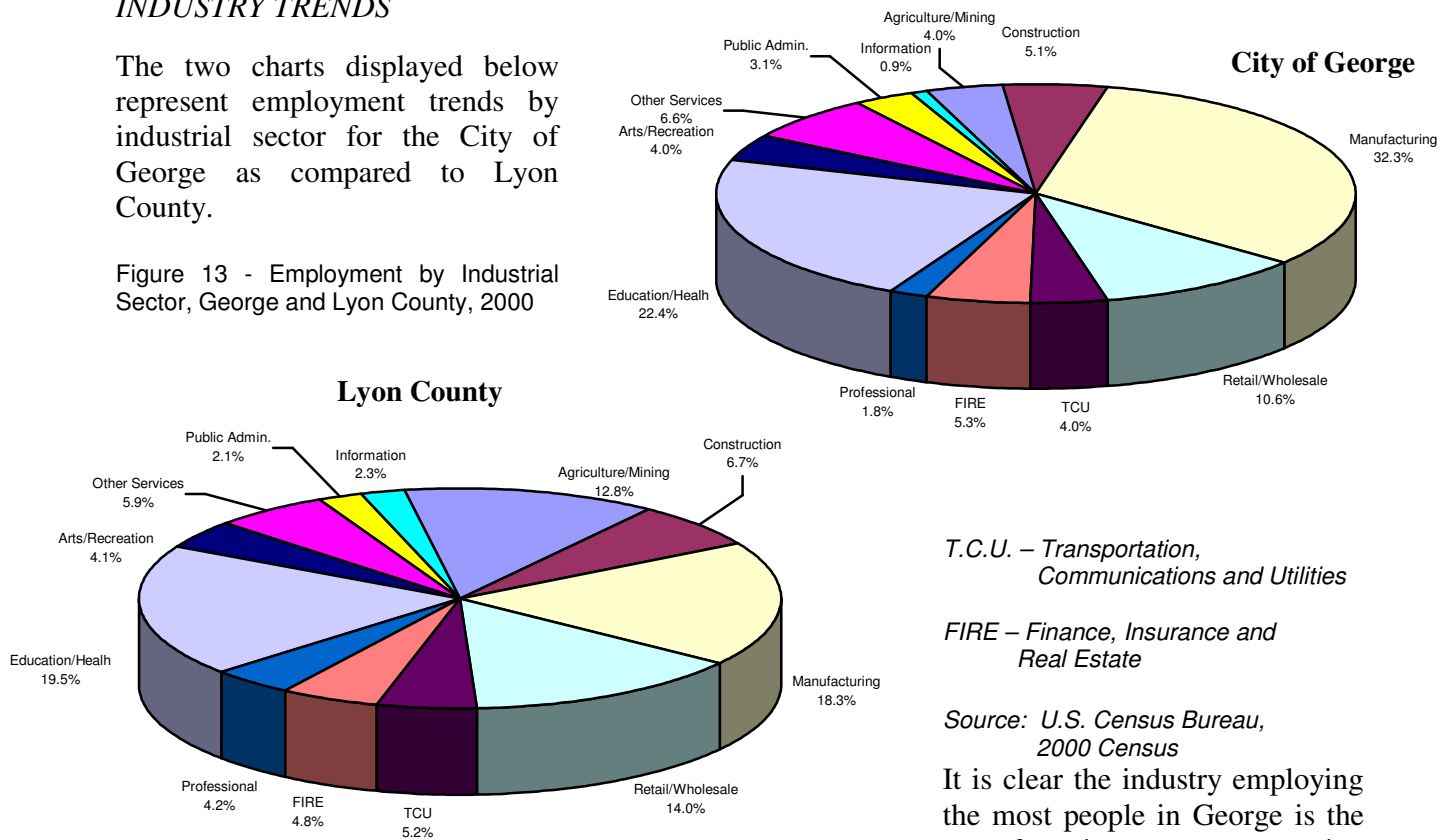


Source: Iowa Workforce Development, Labor Market Information, 2006

INDUSTRY TRENDS

The two charts displayed below represent employment trends by industrial sector for the City of George as compared to Lyon County.

Figure 13 - Employment by Industrial Sector, George and Lyon County, 2000



It is clear the industry employing the most people in George is the manufacturing sector, capturing more than 32% of the workforce.

The second highest employing industry is the education, health and social services fields. These trends are very similar to the most popular employment trends in other communities the size of George in Lyon County and throughout Northwest Iowa. These trends are also repeated in Lyon County's workforce analysis. However, in the county, education, health and social services are rated the most popular employment fields, followed secondly by the manufacturing industries. Industry sectors which vary the greatest from the county's employment trends are in the retail/wholesale trades, along with agricultural employees. The number of agricultural employees would be expected to be higher in the county than in George, but the number of employees in the information technologies, professional fields, and the arts and entertainment are also higher, on average, in the county versus George.

The table shown below displays Iowa Workforce Development data comparing employment changes between 1990 and 2000 in George. This data indicates, to some degree, how industry trends have varied within the community over the past 10 to 15 years. The most drastic change from 1990 to 2000 in any of the industrial sectors occurs in the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry that experienced a 500% increase in employment. However, these figures are skewed due to new definitions and classifications used during the 2000 census versus 1990 census classifications. Aside from this anomaly, the largest numeric growth change occurred in the manufacturing sector, which experienced a net increase of 50 jobs or 51.5 percent. However, considering the largest percentage increase, the public administration industry increased the most by experiencing a 133 percent

increase in employment. The sector that experienced the largest decline in numbers of employed is in the agricultural fields, where a loss of 27 jobs or a decrease of 60 percent occurred.

Table 10 - Employment trends by Industrial Sector, George, 1990-2000

	1990	2000	% change
Agriculture and Mining	45	18	-60.0%
Construction	18	23	27.8%
Manufacturing	97	147	51.5%
TCU*	25	18	-28.0%
Retail Trade	59	40	-32.2%
Wholesale Trade	7	8	14.3%
Information	NA	4	NA
FIRE**	22	24	9.1%
Professional/Management	15	8	-46.7%
Education/Health/Social Services	84	102	21.4%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	3	18	500.0%
Other Services	19	30	57.9%
Public Administration	6	14	133.3%
TOTAL	400	454	13.5%

*Transportation, Communications, Utilities **Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, 1990 Census

These numbers indicate an increasing number of employment opportunities exist in George and the overall labor force is experiencing growth in nearly all of the industrial sectors.

Below is a brief analysis of labor force trends occurring in each of the individual employment sectors.

Agriculture and Mining – One of the historically largest employment sectors in rural agricultural counties, this category continues to see a decline in the number of employees, a decrease of 60% between 1990 and 2000. It should be noted however, that this category does not take into account farmers. This industry sector includes hired farm hands, those who work for large scale industrial farming operations, cooperatives, or industrial confinement operations, and any mining industries.

Construction – This industry segment is typically symbolic of growth and vitality in a given community or county, particularly the housing market. George's construction industry showed a growth of nearly 5 employees, an increase of nearly 28 percent.

Manufacturing – Although located in a heavily agricultural based county, George has positioned itself to become a small hub for manufacturing employees in Lyon County. The trends in this industry sector also support this through a 51.5% increase in manufacturing jobs between 1990 and 2000.

TCU – Transportation, Communication and Utilities has not traditionally been considered a growth sector for industrial development, and George seems to follow this trend with a slight decline of 28 percent in this industrial sector.

Retail/Wholesale Trade – Whereas the city experienced a net gain of one job in the wholesale trade sector, this was offset by the decline of 19 retail trade jobs for a loss of more than 32% in this employment sector.

Information – This industry sector is a new classification in the 2000 census and therefore cannot be compared to previous data. Those working in the information sector are those working within the computer, internet, or programming fields. In 2000, four persons reported employed in this sector.

FIRE – Finance, Insurance and Real Estate, similar to the TCU category, has not historically been a large industrial sector. However, a gain of 2 employees accounting for a 9 percent increase shows that this segment of employment is still growing in George.

Professional/Management – Similar to the agricultural and retail trade employment sectors, this industry segment experienced a decline of 7 persons representing a 46 percent decline.

Education/Health – One of the historically larger industry sectors in George, this group consisting of educators, healthcare workers, and social service employees increased by nearly 20 persons, an increase of more than 46 percent, to now become the second largest employment sector in George.

Arts/Entertainment/Recreation – Changes in definitions and classification of employment and industry between 1990 and 2000 explain the anomaly created by the 500 percent increase.

Other Services – As part of a larger classification previously listed as “Services” prior to 1990, a reclassification of employment definitions results in an increase of nearly 58 percent.

Public Administration – Historically, the segment of employment that groups together government employees and other public sector employees; this industry classification reported a 133 percent increase resulting in 8 additional persons.

RETAIL TRADE ANALYSIS

A look into the community’s retail trade trends translates into how successful the city’s retail businesses are. The informative retail data and trends for retail trade is made available from *Iowa State University’s Office of Social and Economic Trend Analysis*. This data may help explain retail employment gains and losses over the last decade. Moreover, characteristics of retail activity are often indicative of the overall economic vitality of a county. The table and figure below compares the total retail sales in George to the number of retail firms and the amount of sales per capita (per person).

Table 11 - Retail Trade Analysis – 1980-2004

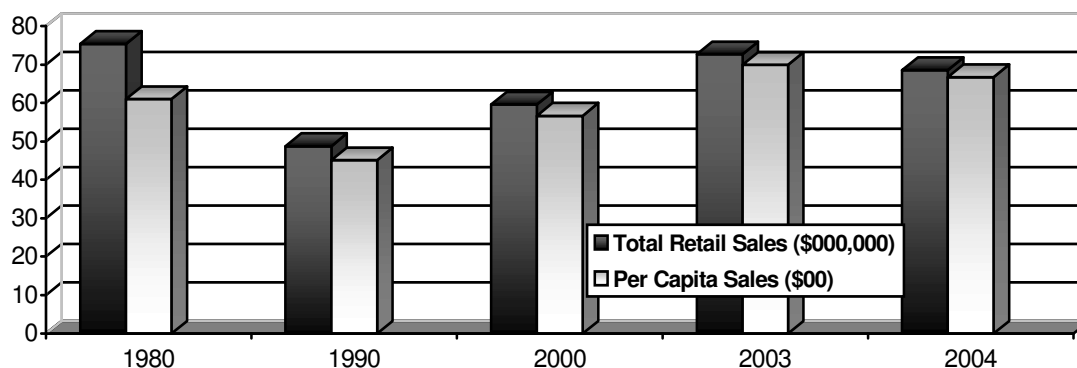
Fiscal Year	Total Retail Sales	Number of Firms	Per Capita Sales	Pull Factor
2004	\$6,860,000	60	\$6,676	0.68
2003	\$7,270,000	62	\$6,994	0.72
2000	\$5,960,000	63	\$5,671	0.59

1990	\$4,880,000	54	\$4,510	0.70
1980	\$7,540,000	66	\$ 6,101	1.36

Source: Office of Social and Economic Trend Analysis, Iowa State University, 2006

Data Source: Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance

Figure 14 - Retail Sales and Per Capita Sales for George, 1980-2004



According to the 2005 retail trade analysis provided by Iowa State University, *SETA (Social and Economic Trend Analysis)*, the City of George experienced retail sales of nearly \$6.9 million during 2004. This figure has decreased slightly from the 2003 figure of slightly more than \$7.2 million. The most retail sales generated in George during any given year during the past 25 years came in 1980 when George has retail sales of \$7.54 million. Recent changes in retail sales are fully understood when examining the long term trends in retail sales for George. Retail figures declined dramatically between 1980 and 1990 dropping close to \$3 million from \$7.54 million in 1980 down to a low of \$4.88 million in 1990. However, the City of George has fought back in terms of reviving its local economy and by 2000 the retail sales had climbed back to \$6.54 million, followed by a strong retail year in 2003 with \$7.27 million in sales. This shows a strong level of perseverance and “can-do” attitude on behalf of the retail and total business community in George.

Below is a comparative listing of retail trade figures for George and the remaining cities in Lyon County.

	2004 Total Retail Sales	Sales Per Firm	Sales Per Capita
George	\$ 6,860,000	\$114,272	\$6,676
Alvord	\$ 410,000	\$ 37,559	\$2,209
Doon	\$ 4,820,000	\$126,879	\$9,046
Inwood	\$ 6,530,000	\$126,887	\$7,503
Larchwood	\$ 6,330,000	\$143,030	\$7,892
Lester	\$ 1,520,000	\$ 91,839	\$6,037
Little Rock	\$ 2,140,000	\$119,000	\$4,462
Rock Rapids	\$23,430,000	\$187,105	\$8,807

Source: Office of Social and Economic Trend Analysis, Iowa State University, 2006

A good indicator of the strength of a county’s retail economy is to look at the “pull factor.” The pull factor is a numerical indicator of the amount of retail activity taking place within or out of a jurisdiction. The number “1” indicates that the appropriate amount of retail sales is taking place for the size of jurisdiction and population residing within a given area. Any number below a “1” indicates that fewer people are shopping in the county than is expected indicating a retail “leakage”.

Whereas any number above a “1” indicates the county is drawing in more retail sales that the local population should be able to sustain, indicating a retail “surplus”. In 1980, the city’s pull factor was 1.36 indicating that retail sales were approximately 36% higher than expected based on population. However, by 1990, the pull factor decreased to a low of 0.59, showing the city was losing retail sales to other nearby cities. By 2003, George once again rebounded and the city’s pull factor had reached 0.72 indicating substantial growth since 1990 but yet the city was not producing retail sales as projected for the community. In all likelihood, the residents of George are likely shopping and spending retail dollars in larger communities such as Rock Rapids (County Seat), Sioux Center, Worthington, MN or Sioux Falls, SD which are also vying for the business of George’s residents.

The retail and business sectors that constitute the commercial districts in George are vital to community development and growth. Commercial activity is primarily concentrated to two areas in George, the central business district (CBD) and the Virginia Street or County Hwy. L14 corridor through town. The central business district is the heart of the business community in George. It is comprised of an approximately 6 square block district stretching from Iowa Avenue on the north to the grain elevators on the south; and from Sidney Street to Baldwin Street along Michigan Avenue. Additional retail and service businesses located along Virginia Street are those which typically require considerable floor space, large amounts of parking, or quick and easy access into and out of the place of business. Businesses such as convenience stores, gas stations, a bowling alley, or those businesses wanting more drive by traffic are located within this arterial commercial area.

The competition and amount of resources needed to attract businesses and industries have become increasingly more competitive in the State of Iowa. Companies require substantial support and investments from cities, often times in the form of financial incentives. This competitive climate makes the support and continuation of organizations such as the George Chamber of Commerce, the Betterment Club, and the Development Corp. necessary for the City of George to compete with other cities.

TRADE AREA CAPTURE

Another method for determining the amount of business activity occurring within George is to calculate the city’s trade area capture. The purpose of the "Trade Area Capture" formula is to examine how many customers or potential purchasers are drawn to George to shop for any type of product at any given time. The trade area capture estimates the portion of customers the city actually draws from within and outside its boundaries. The trade area capture analysis is also used by retail sectors to understand trade growth or decline. The trade area capture is figured as follows:

Table 12 -

TRADE AREA CAPTURE FORMULA	
$A / [B \times (C / D)]$	
A =	Total Retail Sales for George
B =	Per Capita Sales for the State of Iowa
C =	George Per Capita Income

When comparing the trade capture area for the years 1990 and 2000, the trend indicates a stable to slightly declining trade capture area. In other words, the community is losing a certain percentage of sales to other areas outside of George.

George's trade area capture for the year **2000** is as follows:

A (George Total Retail Sales)	= \$5,960,000
B (State Per Capita Sales)	= \$9,427
C (George Per Capita Income)	= \$16,733
D (State Per Capita Income)	= \$26,554

Trade Area Capture for George (2000) = 1,004 customers (2000 pop. 1,051)

This means that businesses captured the sales of 1,004 customers from its population base of 1,051 or 96% of its expected customers. In this case, the county theoretically captured nearly all of its projected sales from customers within the community.

George's trade area capture for the year **1990** is as follows:

A (George Total Retail Sales)	= \$4,880,000
B (State Per Capita Sales)	= \$6,480
C (George Per Capita Income)	= \$9,820
D (State Per Capita Income)	= \$17,389

Trade Area Capture for the George (1990) = 1,345 customers (1990 pop. 1,066)

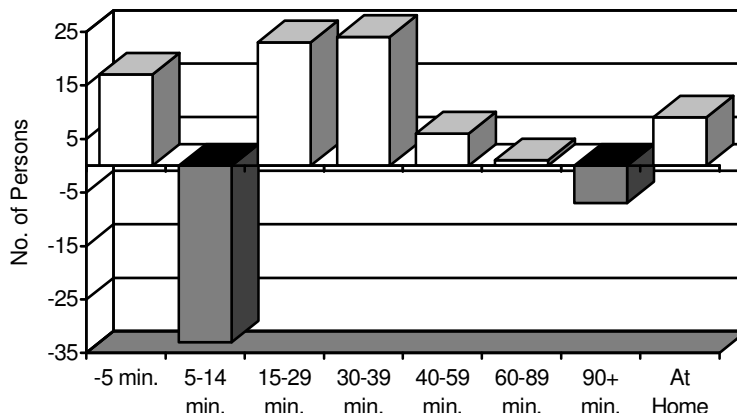
This means that businesses captured the sales of 1,345 customers from its 1990 population base of 1,066 or 126% of its customers. In 1990 the city theoretically captured all of its sales from all potential customers within the city limits plus an additional 26% of its customer sales from outside the community.

One of the reasons speculated about the difference, or declining trade capture area for George between 1990 and 2000 may be that the community has not maintained the growth in per capita income and total retail sales in comparison to other cities in the region and the state average.

COMMUTING PATTERNS

According to the 2000 census data, the average commute time for George residents was 14.5 minutes. While 71 percent of residents drove themselves back and forth to work, there were nearly 17 percent who carpoolled, another 4 percent that worked at home, and 7.6 percent that walked to work. The changes in commuting patterns suggest two trends. First, more people are working in George and those that are commuting are driving farther than 10 years ago. Contrary to the previous statement, residents that drove less than 5 minutes to work increased by 25 percent. This would suggest that more residents of George are finding employment locally. However, those residents that drive between 5-14 minutes to work decreased by 33

Figure 15 - Change in Commuting Times, 1990-2000



persons or 17 percent. Those persons that commute between 30 to 39 minutes increased by 184 percent. Furthermore, persons driving between 40 minutes to 1 hour to work increased by nearly 55 percent. The exception to increases in long distance commuting was experienced by those driving more than 90 miles. These statistics seem to indicate that residents of George experience a quality of life in this community shown by the willingness to drive long distances to work. Conversely, these figures also show that there is an available workforce that may be willing to work locally if the type of jobs and pay is adequate to make them change from their current place of employment.

Table 13 - Travel Time to Work for Workers in George, 2000

Year	1990	2000	# change 1990-2000	% change 1990-2000
Total Workers, 16 & Over	392	449	57	14.5%
Less than 5 minutes	66	83	17	25.8%
5 to 14 minutes	193	160	-33	-17.1%
15 to 29 minutes	98	121	23	23.5%
30 to 39 minutes	13	37	24	184.6%
40 to 59 minutes	11	17	6	54.5%
60 to 89 minutes	12	13	1	8.3%
90 or more minutes	7	0	-7	-100.0%
<i>Worked at home</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Source: Office of Social and Economic Trend Analysis, Iowa State University, 2006

GEORGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The George Chamber of Commerce is an integral part of the success and continued growth of the George business community. The Chamber of Commerce is located at 213 E. Minnesota Avenue and its primary source of marketing for the community is promoted through the city's excellent website: www.georgeiowa.com/. As marketed by the Chamber of Commerce, **"George is a great place to do business!"** For a small community in a rural Iowa county, many visitors and guests of George will be surprised with how many products, services and goods are available in George. The Chamber of Commerce also assists with many community events conducted annually in George. A few of the community events sponsored by the Chamber include the 4th of July Celebration, Christmas Open House, Variety Show, George Farm & Home Show, Downtown Trick-or-Treating (for the elementary students), and the Teachers Welcome Back Breakfast.

By joining and supporting the George Chamber of Commerce, local businesses are entitled to their "1st Dollar" presentation to new members, opportunities to serve on various chamber and community committees, discounted rates for the Farm & Home Show, the monthly newsletter, and perhaps the greatest benefit is the visibility received through the Business Directory on the community website. Following is a listing of all businesses in the community from the George Chamber of Commerce's Business Directory.

- Alliant Energy
- Back Door Upholstery
- Bolin Funeral Service
- Carol's Complete Beauty & Tanning Salon
- Casey's Carry Out Pizza
- Casey's General Store
- Cathy's PL Candles & Gifts
- City of George
- Deanos
- Dr. Lane G. Stille, Dentist

- Dirk's Repair
- Dur-A-Lift
- Dykstra Chiropractic Clinic
- Eben/Riemersma Construction
- Frontier Communications
- George-Little Rock Community School
- George Elevator Company
- George Locker
- George Office Products
- George State Bank
- George Veterinary Clinic
- Good Samaritan Center
- Hair Hut
- Harms Ag Service
- Heatwave Waste Oil Heaters
- Hillbrands (Lee) Trucking
- Hometown Flowers
- Investments Planner
- Jurrens Construction
- Just Du'In Hair
- K D Design
- Kay's Beauty Shop
- Kruger Realty
- Lewis Family Drug
- Lichtenberg Hardware & Plumbing
- Lyon County News
- Mom & Pop's Bar & Grill
- Northwest Consultants
- Oehmsen Midwest Inc.
- Otter Valley Electric
- Otter Valley Golf Course
- Otter Valley Insurance Agency & Real Estate
- Personal Touch Hairstyling
- Pioneer Medical Clinic
- Pizza Ranch
- Post Office
- R & M Service & Repair
- Ranger All Season Corp.
- Roste Funeral Home
- Shaffer Construction
- Siebring Cable & Internet
- Siebring Manufacturing Co.
- Steenhoven Trucking
- Strike Zone
- Sudenga Industries Inc.
- Tastefully Simple Consultant
- Total Shop Food Store
- Tots 'N Toddlers
- United Farmers Coop
- United Farmers Cooperative Lumber
- United Farmers Cooperative Service Station
- Visser Appliance
- Warntjes Paint & Body
- WebClimber Services
- Wiersma Construction
- Winkel Carpet Care

Source: <http://www.georgeiowa.com/business.asp>, City of George Chamber of Commerce Business Directory, 2006

Recent additions to the George business community include the construction of the new Pioneer Medical Center in 2003, along with the construction of a new funeral home in 2003. Also, in 2004, one of the paint rooms at Diversified Technologies burned down. As a testament to this company's growth in its work load and labor force, the company replaced the damaged paint facility with a much larger building. Identified below is a listing of major employers located in or near George, along with major employers in other cities that several George residents commute to.

2005 Major Industries and Employers (in or near the City of George)

Industry/Employer	Est. # of Employees
➤ Diversified Technologies	220
➤ George-Little Rock Schools	150
➤ George Good Samaritan Center	76
➤ United Farmer's Coop	42
➤ City of George (w/ summer help)	30
➤ Siebring Manufacturing	15

Other Major Employers in the region (where George residents work)

Industry/Employer	Est. # of George Employees
➤ George State Bank	11
➤ DEMCO (Boyden)	20
➤ Pella (Sioux Center)	12
➤ Sioux Falls hospitals	10
➤ Rosenboom (Sheldon)	8

➤ Alpha Omega (Rock Rapids) 8

GEORGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The George Development Corp. was founded with the original purpose of expanding and creating an industrial and business job base for the community. Today, the Development Corp. remains a viable economic development tool for enticing and creating new jobs in George, however, the group has shifted its focus to also concentrate on retail, housing, and general community development. Now the primary goal of the George Development Corp. is to promote city growth in housing development and commercial businesses. The Development Corp. is available to assist businesses with their needs.

George has a solid manufacturing base to build on. Opportunities exist for new and existing businesses to build or expand. There are a few open buildings suitable for retail or service businesses. The workforce in the George is strong and reliable. The changing farm economy continues to provide additional workers that have good job skills and an excellent work ethic. Startup assistance including financial planning and financing options are available. The Development Corp. will loan up to \$10,000 for 4 years interest free to any new business or existing business for expansion or improvement purposes.

**Take a Look at George!
We'd Like You to
"Make it Home"**

Housing costs in George are a fraction of what people will find in other parts of the country. A house payment in George would be less than property taxes alone in many urban areas. New lot prices are very attractive and George has an excellent home builder in the community. One of the programs that the Development Corp. is promoting is a home building incentive program; ½ price Lot Sale. The Development Corp. is selling five lots located within the Sunset Addition at a reduced cost with the construction of a new home. Rebates are issued to the homeowner after construction is completed. This program is offered as another incentive to relocate or build in George. Lot prices range from \$8,000 to \$11,000. The offer is if construction begins within 12 months of purchasing a lot, then the homeowner will receive a 50% rebate upon completion. Similarly, if construction has commenced within 24 months of purchase, the homeowner will be entitled to a 35% rebate and finally if construction starts within 3 years of purchase of the lot, homeowners will still be eligible for a 20% rebate on the lot purchase price.

A recent project that the George Development Corp. is very excited about is the promotion of a new 22 acre business park on the city's north end. The city is cooperatively working with the Development Corp. in purchasing, platting, and promoting this development. The city and Development Corp. hired

Figure 16 - George Business Park right



the engineering firm of Howard R. Green of Sioux Falls, SD to design the property layout. As seen to the right, the design incorporates an estimated nine (9) lots for businesses and industries north and west of a natural drainage way flanked by the proposed George Recreational Trail (phase 2). In the southwest corner of the site is a proposed water retention design feature. Also, land located south of the natural drainage way is being proposed as three commercial/retail lots based upon their high traffic visibility and ease of access to traffic. The purchase and design of this project occurred in 2005. Development of the site including creating access to the property and marketing the lots will take place in 2006. The Development Corporation is anxious to see the business park's first tenant begin building soon.

INCOME DISTRIBUTION

As employment and new business opportunities continue, the city will realize benefits including a greater tax base, increased revenues, and potentially leading to an increase in population. Studying the income distribution of a city compared to other communities can indicate overall wealth and subsequent purchasing power, providing some insight into the relative economic health of George.

One way of analyzing incomes for a city is to examine median income levels. The 2000 median income for households was \$30,375 for households and \$40,250 for families. The mean retirement income earned by those retired persons was \$11,023 in 2000. When George's median income figures are compared to those of Lyon County and the State of Iowa as a whole, the numbers are fairly close, but the county and state median figures are slightly higher. The median income for all households in Lyon County is \$36,878 and for Iowa the figure is \$39,469. Similarly, the average family income in Lyon County during 2000 is \$45,144 and \$48,005 for the State of Iowa. While George's median income was slightly lower than the county's and state's in 2000, income growth in the community over the last ten years has increased substantially, even faster than the State's growth. George experienced a 69 percent increase from the 1990 median income figure of \$18,000. This is compared to the state's 51 percent growth between 1990 and 2000. Similarly, George's median family income increased more than 63% from the 1990 figure of \$24,722, as compared to a 52 percent increase for the State of Iowa. Below is a comparative listing of median household and family incomes for George and the remaining cities in Lyon County.

	2000 Median Household Income	2000 Median Family Income	2000 Mean Retirement Income
George	\$ 30,375	\$ 40,250	\$ 11,023
Alvord	\$ 38,750	\$ 41,786	\$ 6,240
Doon	\$ 33,281	\$ 39,773	\$ 6,770
Inwood	\$ 33,889	\$ 41,667	\$ 13,473
Larchwood	\$ 42,250	\$ 48,125	\$ 56,419
Lester	\$ 38,750	\$ 47,083	\$ 11,586
Little Rock	\$ 31,667	\$ 38,571	\$ 7,403
Rock Rapids	\$ 35,135	\$ 47,687	\$ 11,070
Lyon County	\$ 36,878	\$ 45,144	\$ 14,686

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

It is important to look at income distribution to examine what the residents of George are earning in wages and salaries. This information will help determine the amount that residents can afford for current and future housing, living and spending expenses; in addition to future purchasing power.

The following table shows household income for George, according to 2000 Census figures. It should be noted that between 1990 and 2000 families in the two lowest income levels actually increased, along with a decline in the number of households earning \$25,000 to \$34,999. However, on a positive note, all other income categories (\$35,000 to \$150,000+) have increased. The fact that higher income levels are increasing is a positive indicator of household and family income earnings in George. On the other hand, there does appear to be an increasing disparity and continued separation between the higher income and lower income brackets.

Table 14 – George Household and Family Income Distribution, 2000

\$ In Income	# of Households	% of Total Households	# of Families	% of Total Families
Less than \$10,000	55	11.5%	16	5.3%
\$10,000-14,999	55	11.5%	17	5.6%
\$15,000-24,999	99	20.6%	40	13.2%
\$25,000-34,999	67	14.0%	46	15.2%
\$35,000-49,999	102	21.3%	85	28.1%
\$50,000-74,999	75	15.6%	72	23.8%
\$75,000-99,999	17	3.5%	17	5.6%
\$100,000-149,999	10	2.1%	10	3.3%
\$150,000-\$199,999	NA	0.0%	NA	0.0%
\$200,000 or more	NA	0.0%	NA	0.0%
Total Households	480	100.0%	303	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

OCCUPATION WAGES IN LYON COUNTY

The Iowa Workforce Development compiles data on current wage levels for several occupations and industries. Unfortunately, this wage and salary data is only reported for countywide averages in Lyon County, and does not report at the city level. However, the county data should provide a good indication of typical wages and earnings experienced in George as well.

Table 15 - Iowa Workforce Development Wage Survey for Lyon County, 2005

Occupation Description	2005 Est. Employment	2005 Mean Wage	2005 Entry Wage	2005 Median Wage
Management Occupations	60	\$26.98	\$11.93	\$23.16
Business & Financial Operations	80	\$23.65	\$14.32	\$17.38
Life, Physical & Social Science	30	\$21.27	\$18.45	\$20.52
Building & Grounds Maintenance	30	\$10.48	\$7.72	\$9.03
Sales and Related Occupations	150	NA	NA	NA
Office and Administrative Support	250	\$12.54	\$9.01	\$11.76

Farming, Fishing & Forestry	NA	\$16.43	\$12.73	\$15.58
Construction and Extraction	70	\$16.75	\$10.52	\$16.43
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	130	\$18.05	\$14.55	\$18.78
Production Occupations	460	\$12.41	\$9.71	\$11.72
Machinists	30	\$12.31	\$9.35	\$12.28
Welders, Cutters, Brazers	NA	\$13.09	\$11.43	\$13.15
Coating, Painting, Spraying	20	\$11.83	\$10.47	\$11.82
Transportation and Material Moving	260	\$11.43	\$9.40	\$10.85
Truck Drivers, Tractor-Trailer	100	\$10.95	\$10.33	\$10.90

Source: Labor Market and Economic Research Bureau, Iowa Workforce Development

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SUMMARY

To this point, the economic analysis of George has been more statistical than analytical. It is difficult to quantify economic development in order to allocate land for future development. However, there are certain trends that should be noted in order to guide future land use development decisions regarding future land use development. Total employment and labor force in George has remained relatively stable, but recently experienced an increasing trend this past year. However, the shifts in employment distribution between job sectors have been more noticeable. It appears as if future employment trends will continue to see more job opportunities become available within the services, manufacturing and construction industries, or what are typically termed “blue collar” jobs. The exception to the trend in increasing manufacturing and production employment is in the education and healthcare fields where a stronger employment base is also projected to strengthen. The trend also shows continuing fewer job possibilities for the sales and professional occupations. A projected continuing decline and shift from agricultural employment may be one reason for the increase and availability in production and manufacturing type employment.

The retail, services, and manufacturing economic sectors are rather well developed and should be provided with adequate opportunities for future expansion and continued encouraged development in the future. Future direction should lean toward the encouragement of continued industrial and manufacturing development and expansion with emphasis on planned and orderly development within targeted industrial parks, rather than spotty and haphazard developments. Due to the complicated nature of the economic system and the large number of variables which cannot be controlled locally, it is very difficult to determine the economic future of a community.

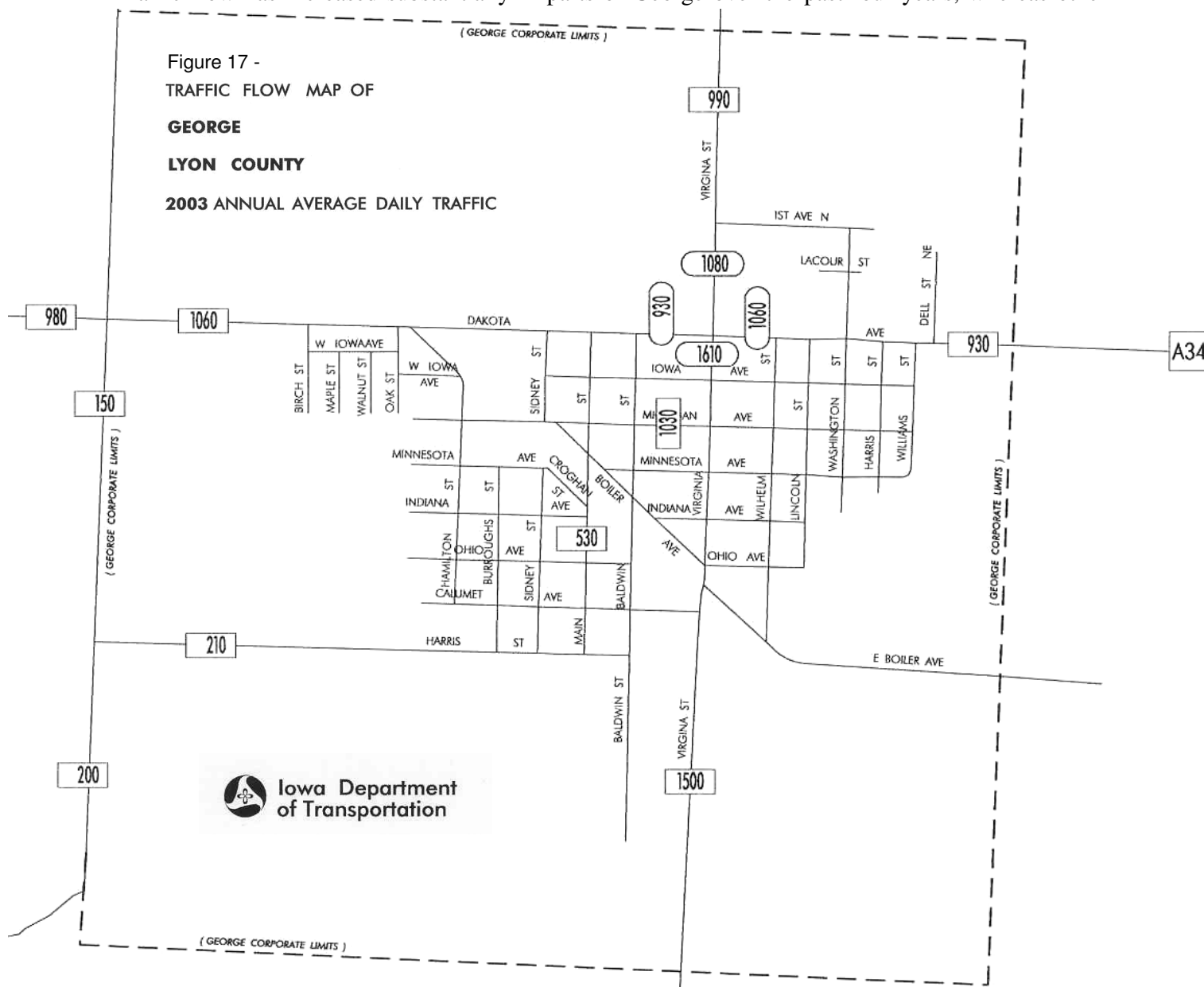
CHAPTER 6. TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Adequate transportation facilities are an asset to any community and are vital to the movement of persons, goods and services. The components which make up the transportation element of this plan include traffic flow, streets, pedestrian movement, air service, transit service, water facilities, wastewater services, storm sewer system, and utilities.

TRAFFIC FLOW

How extensively a city desires to develop its road transportation system is a very subjective decision; one that is heavily based on financial abilities and priorities. The city should re-evaluate its citizens' interest in and commitment to improving its road system, and develop a prioritized street improvement program, which will be included in the city's capital improvement plan. As a whole, the streets in George are in good shape, with some areas in need of routine repair or resurfacing.

Traffic flow has increased substantially in parts of George over the past four years, whereas other



areas of the city have seen declines in traffic flow. In 1999, County Highway A-34 (Dakota Street) was experiencing traffic rates of 1000 vehicles per day (average daily traffic- ADT) on the east side of Virginia Street and 910 ADT to the west of Virginia Street. Over four years, these numbers increased to 1,060 and 930 respectively by 2003, resulting in a 6 percent increase west of Virginia and a 2.2 percent increase east of Virginia. Traffic counts along County Hwy. L-14 (Virginia Street), decreased from 1,670 to 1,610 on the south side of Dakota Ave., but interestingly enough increased from 1,010 to 1,080 between Dakota Ave. and 1st Avenue N. The largest decrease in traffic volume

from 1999 to 2003 occurred along County Hwy. A-34 on the far eastern and western edges of the city. To the east, traffic along A-34 decreased from 1,090 to 930 ADT for a 17% decline. On the western side of the community, traffic decreased from 1,060 to 980 ADT for a 7.1% decline. Average daily traffic decreased slightly on the southern edge of the community, and stayed the same near the cemetery along Harris Street.

STREET DESIGN FACTORS

The streets of a community are indispensable; few other elements so drastically affect the town development. Therefore, the section shall devote more attention to the street transportation system. Local traffic systems have evolved from a constantly changing set of determinants. A few of these determinants governing current and future roadway design are:

Psychological Factors

1. The population masses using the traffic system tend to follow the fastest course.
2. When a properly designed traffic system is not provided, the driving public establishes one by finding the routes, regardless of adjacent land uses and other planning considerations.
3. The driving public tends to drive according to environmental conditions of the roadway.

Economic Factors

1. Streets, alleys and other roadways comprise a large percentage of land acreage within the community. Consequently, a substantial capital asset of the community is tied up in the total land value of the roadways.
2. Current capital expenditures for roadway improvements, maintenance costs, construction costs, etc., are a substantial portion of the municipal, county, state, and federal expenditures.

Physical Factors

1. Street grades and grades of abutting properties may severely restrict driver sight distances. This is a particular serious condition at street intersections or driveway entrances to streets.
2. Street intersections can have severely restricted sight clearances as a result of private/public signs, trees, or shrubs; vehicles in proximity to intersections; or utility poles restricting views.
3. Intersection design can prohibit proper legal turns by forcing the vehicle to use a portion of the opposite direction traffic lane in executing turns. Aside from the proposed hazards, these conditions also severely reduce traffic flow capacities.

STREET DEFINITIONS/CLASSIFICATIONS

An understanding of the following standard thoroughfare definitions is necessary for the proper understanding of a city's streets plan or capital improvements plan. The following street classification definitions are in accordance with the 2004 Iowa Statewide Urban Design Standards for public improvements. Streets and highways are functionally classified according to the character of service they are intended to provide. This classification recognizes that individual roads and streets do not serve travel independently. Rather, most travel involves movements through networks of roads and can be categorized relative to such networks in a logical and efficient manner. Thus,

functional classifications of roads and streets are also consistent with categorization of travel. The three major functional classifications for urbanized areas are arterials, collectors, and local streets and are consistent with American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

ARTERIAL STREETS

1. Major/Principal Arterial (Primary Highway Extensions) - The major/principal arterials serves the center of activities of urbanized areas, the highest traffic volume corridors, the longest trip, and carries a high proportion of a total urban travel on a minimum of mileage. The system should be integrated both internally and between major rural connectors. The major/principal arterial system carries most of the trips entering and leaving the area as well as most of the movements throughout the city. In urbanized areas, this system provides continuity for all rural arterials. Access to the principal arterial is specifically limited in order to provide maximum capacity and through movement mobility. Although, no firm spacing rule applies in all or even in most circumstances, the spacing between principal arterials may vary from less than one mile in highly developed central areas to five miles or more in developed urban fringes.

2. Minor Arterial (Primary and Non-Primary) - The non-primary arterial interconnects with and augments the principal arterial system. Minor arterials account for moderate length vehicle trips at lower levels of through-movement versus principal arterials. This system places more emphasis on land access but still has specific limits on access points. A minor arterial may carry local bus route and provide inter-community continuity but ideally does not penetrate identifiable neighborhoods. This system includes urban connections to rural collector roads where such connections have not been classified as urban principal arterials. The spacing of minor arterials may vary from 1/8 to 1/2 mile in highly developed areas to 2 miles in suburban fringes but is not normally more than 1 mile in fully developed areas.

COLLECTOR STREETS

1. Major Collector - This type of street provides for movement of traffic between arterial routes and minor collectors and may at moderately lower speeds collect traffic from local streets and residential and commercial areas. A major collector has control of access to abutting properties with a majority of access at local street connections. Normally, a slightly higher emphasis is placed on through movements than direct land access.

2. Minor Collector - This type of street provides movement of traffic between major collector routes and residential and commercial local streets as well as providing access to abutting property at moderate low speeds. Considerations for through movements and direct land access are normally equal.

LOCAL STREETS

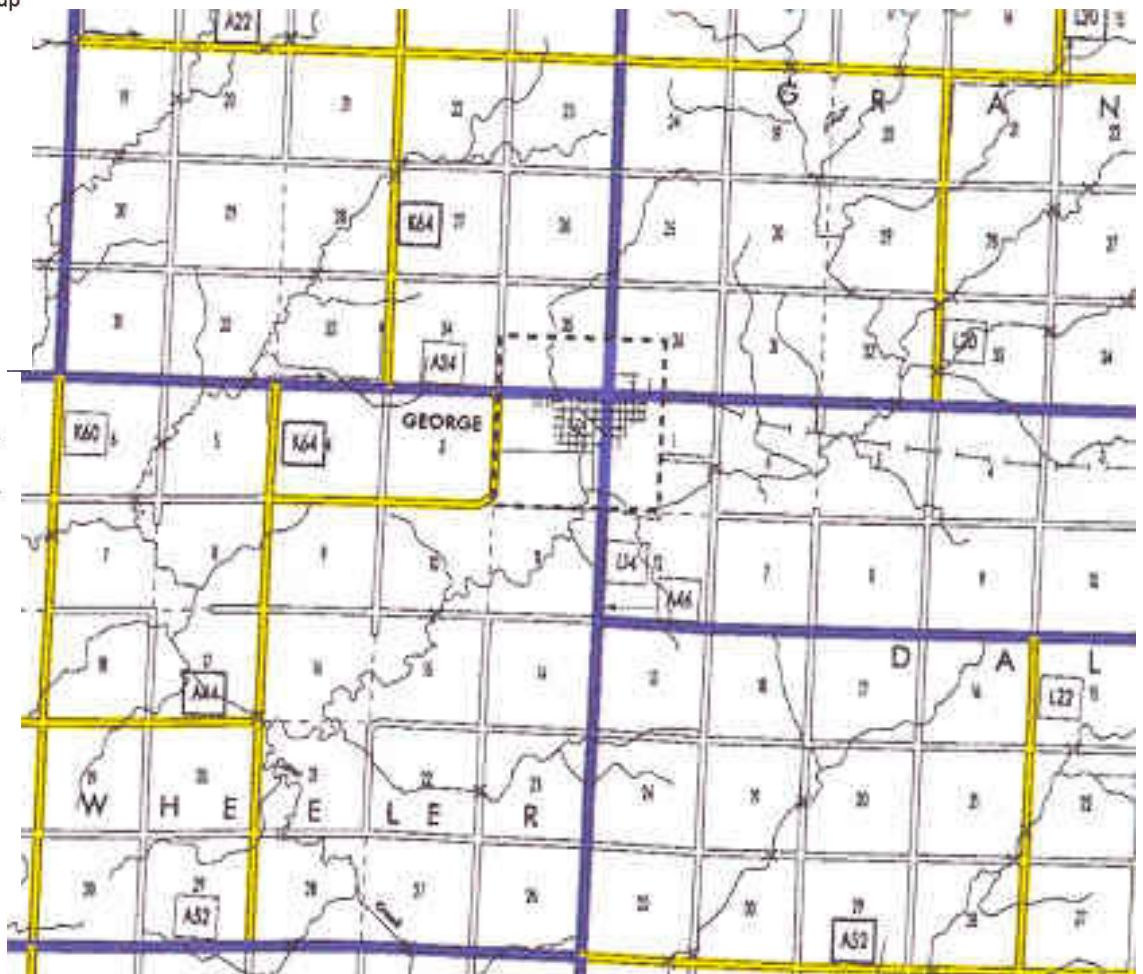
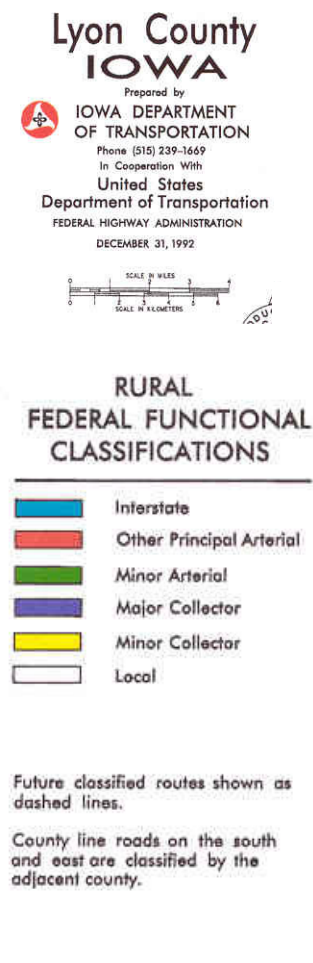
The local street provides for the movement of traffic between collectors and residential and commercial areas. Local streets provide the direct access to abutting residential and commercial property and carries low traffic volumes at low speeds on relatively short trips. Certain Jurisdictions allow private streets in specific situations. Private streets are similar to the local streets but generally are located on dead-end roads less than 250 foot in length, short loop streets less than 600 feet in length or frontage roads parallel to public streets.

FEDERAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF ROADS

The Iowa DOT's 2003 Federal Functional Classification map depicts major transportation routes throughout Lyon County. The Iowa Department of Transportation only recognizes counties and communities in excess of 5,000 population as small urban centers, and therefore mapped with designated federal functional classification routes. However, below is a detailed portion of the Lyon County Federal Functional Classification Map depicting the major and minor traffic routes around the vicinity of George.

Figure 18 - Federal Functional Classification Map

Federal Functional Classification Map



TRAFFIC SIGNS

The proper assignment of speed limits and an adequate use of traffic signals are essential for an efficient traffic system. Traffic flow may be effectively guided by the regulations imposed. For example, the use of frequent stop signs tends to direct traffic to higher classified streets which have less frequent stops.

Traffic signals and stop signs are recommended according to the following guidelines:

1. Primary streets are through streets yielding to highways, while other intersecting streets are signed to stop traffic prior to entering the primary thoroughfare.
2. Highways are through streets without stop signs. All streets intersecting a highway should be signed to stop traffic before entering the highway. Highways intersecting each other should be controlled by traffic signals, unless traffic volumes are extremely light or different in value, indicating flashing signals.
3. Secondary streets are through streets yielding to highways and primary thoroughfares, while all other intersecting streets are signed to stop traffic prior to entering the secondary thoroughfare.
4. Collectors are through streets yielding to highways, primary thoroughfares and secondary thoroughfares, while all other intersecting streets are signed to stop traffic prior to entering the collector.
5. Local streets yield to all intersecting streets except other local streets.

In addition to the above guidelines, proper marking of traffic lanes along with adequate intersection sight distances are of importance to the improvement of traffic conditions in the community.

GEORGE INFRASTRUCTURE & STREET CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The City of George has an estimated 13 miles of streets and roadways to maintain and improve. In recent years the city has invested a large sum into the improvement of the local street network. In 1999 a \$255,000 street surface overlay project, and again in 2002 another \$172,000 street surface overlay were completed to improve the quality of infrastructure in community. Furthermore, the bridge on South Virginia was rebuilt in 2003.

George's Street Supt. has generated a capital improvement plan to identify and prioritize future infrastructure and street projects for the City Council's consideration. Each year, the road use plan for George is modified and ultimately decided by the amount of financial resources allocated from City Council. Below is an itemized list of the city's proposed street and infrastructure projects.

- 1) The diagonal road of Croghan needs to be resurfaced (the northwest corner of George)
- 2) The 400 block of Baldwin (in front of the city shops) needs repairs and resurfacing
- 3) Lincoln Street between Minnesota Avenue and Michigan Avenue - resurfacing
- 4) The 200 block of South Main Street in front of the elevator - resurfacing
- 5) LaCour Street resurfacing (once the developer installs new curb & gutter)
- 6) Continued surface patching to maintain existing streets
- 7) Three (3) bridge replacements projected over the next three to five years. The bridges will need to be replaced once they no longer pass inspections. The bridge inspectors are estimating this timeframe to be within three years.

Bridges to be replaced include:

- Calumet Avenue
- Sidney Street
- Dakota Avenue (possibly needs reconstruction or replacement, depending upon condition)

AIRPORT FACILITIES

A well designed airport facility situated at a prime location can become a vital tool for economic development. At this time there are no direct air travel or airport services available within George. However, residents and businesses in George are served by municipal airports in both Rock Rapids, located 15 miles to the northwest and in Sheldon, located almost 20 miles to the southeast. The Rock Rapids airport is considered a basic utility airport and is open to the public and capable of handling general aviation and basic utility aircraft. There are 12 single-engine aircraft based out of the Rock Rapids airport with average weekly operations of 21 flights divided evenly between transient general aviation and local general aviation. The nearest commercial air travel available to residents of George is accommodated through the Sioux Falls, SD or Minneapolis, MN international airports.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The Regional Transit Authority (R.T.A.) dba “RIDES” is a private non-profit organization offering public transportation to a nine county northwest Iowa region. The operations RIDES are governed by a 15 member policy board comprised of regional representation. Regional transit services are provided for elderly, handicapped and HeadStart programs in the region, including service to the city. Transit services to congregate meal sites, demand response routes, fixed-route services on rotating schedules, and special trips constitute the majority of services which are provided. Currently, there is no taxi or other public transportation services available within George.

UTILITIES/CITY SERVICES

The following utilities are made available in George by these service providers:

Electric:	Alliant Energy
Natural Gas:	Alliant Energy
Telephone:	Frontier Communications
Cable:	Internet and cable services are provided by Frontier, Siebring, and EarthLink
Solid Waste:	Altman Sanitation contracts with the City for collection and disposal of solid waste Solid waste is collected once weekly with maximum of 2 containers or 4 bags.
Recycling:	Altman Sanitation collects recycled items twice monthly Recycling services accepts glass, plastics (#1 & #2), newspaper, and cardboard

WATER

The city operates its own municipal water system, which draws its water supply from three deep wells. The distribution system consists of one 150,000 gallon elevated storage tower. The current average consumption is 120,000 gallons per day with peak consumption of 240,000 gallons per day. According to city officials, this plant has adequate capacity to meet the current and future needs of its patrons. Although, the capacity and water source appears to be adequately met in George, the residents of the community have other opinions regarding the quality of the water supply. As

indicated in the public forum conducted in George, many residents are concerned over the levels of nitrates, other natural minerals, or other man-made substances being found in George's water supply.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Sanitary sewer service is provided by George. The city owns and maintains all service lines and mains within the corporate limits. The city is responsible for program, planning, maintenance, and improvements to the treatment plant and its many sewer lines, mains, and outfall lines. The collection design is a gravity flow design with two lift stations and a two-cell lagoon discharge. The sanitary sewer system is designed to gather the wastewater from residential, commercial, industrial, and other human activities resulting in wastewater, which require treatment. The current average flow is 90,000 gallons per day with average peak loads at 150,000 gallons per day and the design capacity is 120,000 gallons per day.

In response to a "Notice of Violation" issued in 2004 from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the City of George applied for and was awarded a \$500,000 federal Community Development Block Grant from the Iowa Department of Economic Development to aid in the construction of a third cell for the city's wastewater treatment process. The total project cost is estimated to be more than \$1,500,000. The third cell, approximately 20 acres in size, will become the city's new primary cell with the current two cells serving as secondary treatment. The project will take place on approximately 30 acres of land situated adjacent to the northeast side of the current treatment cells next to the Little Rock River south of George.

STORM SEWER SYSTEM

Storm water run-off is dispersed by either natural drainage, or the city's storm water collection and sewer system. The storm sewers are primarily used to control water drainage in areas where natural drainage patterns are inadequate for development needs. The city currently has 15% of their public streets serviced by curb and gutter. The City requires future development to include curb and gutter on a case by case basis.

CHAPTER 7. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities are vital to the overall attractiveness and efficiency in operating a city. Community facilities can also become a determining factor in a person's choice of the community they choose to live in. The overall quality and availability of facilities is often viewed as a proportional city growth factor. For the purposes of this plan, those facilities which offer a direct service to the local residents will be reviewed. It must be remembered that many private facilities are

not subject to municipal control or policy and thus are subject only to advisory recommendations. The community facilities of recreation and transportation are of considerable importance to the planning process, but dealt with in separate chapters of this plan.

CITY HALL

The George City Hall is located in a two-story brick building at 120 S. Main Street. Due to accessibility reasons, the city uses only the first story for municipal functions. This building houses the City Clerks office, council chambers, and office space for street and water/wastewater employees. City Council meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. The meetings are always open to the public and can accommodate anyone wishing to attend. Current staff for the city includes a City Clerk, City Janitor, Street Supt., Water/Wastewater Supt., and Cemetery Custodian.



Photo courtesy of: www.georgeiowa.com/city.html

PUBLIC LIBRARY



Photo courtesy of: www.georgeiowa.com/city.html

The municipal library is located directly across the street from City Hall at 119 S. Main Street. The library is open from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday; from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday; from 10:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. on Friday; and from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on Saturday. Currently, the Librarian is the only paid employee on staff. However, the operation and function of the George Library is made possible through the countless volunteer hours and support provided by the large number of dedicated volunteers.

The library has three computers with internet service available to its patrons. Also available to the general public are thousands of volumes of books, magazines, videos, DVD's, newspaper publications from area local, regional and national sources, and additional reference materials available to be checked out. Unique to the Public Library is its extensive collection of genealogy materials, especially related to and utilized by the Ostfriesen Genealogical Society; a group of local individuals interested in their family lineage and history of ancestors from Ostfriesland, Germany. Finally, the public library also offers a summer reading program for children and a conservation program during the summer months.

COMMUNITY ROOM

Situated across the street from City Hall and next door to the public library, the George Community Room can be found at 115 and 117 S. Main Street. This large open space is perfect for large group meetings, small conferences or luncheons, or parties of all kinds. The Community Room is equipped with kitchen facilities and is often rented to residents of George for birthdays, anniversaries, wedding receptions, and many other family and community events. The community room is divided by an according room divider, and each side is rented for a nominal fee. The entire facility, when both sides

are opened, can accommodate up to 200 people and is available for rental by contacting City Hall for arrangements.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement services for the city are contracted with and provided by the Lyon County Sheriffs Department. The Lyon County Sheriff's Office provides investigation, protection, and prevention of crime in George and Lyon County. Some of the means to provide law enforcement and safety services in George include a SWAT Team, Narcotics Investigation, Jail Services, Reserve Officer Program, Canine Units, and the 911 Communication Center. The Lyon County Sheriff's Office also provides a number of community programs including D.A.R.E., Project Safe Return (armband program used on Alzheimer's patients), Project Lifesaver (tracking device program used for persons who tend to wander off), and Project Kid Care (free photo registration program to assist in locating missing children).

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

The George Volunteer Fire Department was started in 1894. Currently, the Fire Department has one fire station in operation with 22 volunteer fire fighters. Their area of service includes all of the following Townships: Dale, Wheeler, Liberal and parts of Grant and Garfield. The Fire Department's services include:

- Fire Protection
- Extraction unit (Jaws of life)
- 750 gallon pumper truck
- Thermal Imaging Camera
- Fire Prevention
- Grass Truck
- 1,250 gallon pumper truck



Photo of the George Emergency Center – Fire & Rescue

Firefighters today do more than just fight fires. They train regularly in multiple fields of response and are responsible for hazardous material spills, storm spotting, confined space rescue, and vehicle extrication. Several members of the Fire Department are also trained First Responders with the GEMS. The firefighters enjoy giving rides on fire trucks, answering questions, and teaching kids about fire safety. In 1993 the City of George built a new Emergency Center. The building houses both the Fire Department and the George EMS. This is one of the finest Emergency Centers in Lyon County as well as in all of Northwest Iowa, especially for a town the size of George.

The rescue department has 16 volunteers with a

- 5 volunteer fire fighters trained at the Awareness level.
- 17 volunteer fire fighters trained at the Operations level.

- 19 volunteer fire fighters trained at the Fire Fighter One level.
- 10 volunteer fire fighters trained at the Fire Fighter Two level.
- 5 volunteer rescue first responders.
- 11 EMTs and 5 ERTs

GEORGE BICENTENNIAL MUSEUM

The community's local historical museum was once located on the second floor of the City Hall building. However, when a local church closed its doors, the museum purchased the property and moved into its current building located at 204 E. Michigan Ave. This move allowed the museum greater access to show its displays to the general public and also more space in which to display its local historical artifacts.



Display of military uniforms from all major wars at the George Bicentennial Museum

Photo courtesy of: www.george-iowa.com/george_museum_tour.htm

Some of the displays included in the George Bicentennial Museum include pioneer tools and farm items, household displays, musical instruments, military uniforms, local history information. One interesting display involves a young bald eagle that was mistakenly shot northeast of George in the 1930's. The young eagle does not have any white feathers yet, and was thought to be a chicken hawk.

Additional historical displays and artifacts include bottles and hardware display, ladies clothing display, historical local advertising items, ladies hat display, license plate display, early days of George mural, pioneer days mural, nativity mural, antique pump organ, school bell display, antique foot pedal sewing machine, Victrola phonograph, and a Red Wing water cooler. Interestingly, the water cooler was used in the Grant Township School.

OSTFRIESEN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY



The Ostfriesen Genealogical Society of George was organized in March, 1985 to support the genealogical research of people with ancestors from Ostfriesland, Germany. Ostfriesland is an area that covers the northwest corner of Germany. The group informally meets in the Public Library on the third Saturday of each month. Current membership in the society is comprised of people from the local area, across the United States, Canada and Germany. Each month following the meeting a newsletter is sent to the members. The newsletter covers topics that were discussed at the meeting and any additional information which might be of interest or special help in research. The society is supported by annual membership dues of \$15 for 2006 for North American members and \$20 per

year for German members. This covers such items as postage and the expansion of resources for the Genealogical searches.

The Ostfriesen genealogical society was formed as an interactive way for those ancestors from Ostfriesland to communicate with each other and to learn about their family lineage. The George society was one of the first of several groups to



form in the United States for the express purpose of supporting Ostfriesen genealogical research. Therefore, anyone within North America and Germany with ancestors from Ostfriesland or an interest in Ostfriesland is welcome to join. The purposes of the Ostfriesen Genealogical Society is educational, and specifically to foster an interest in Ostfriesen genealogy, exchange knowledge about Ostfriesland, encourage the establishment of Ostfriesen genealogical resources, collect and publish genealogical biographical and historical material. It also works with other similar societies to preserve and protect Ostfriesen genealogy and heritage. Those interested in further researching and discovering genealogy records in George and Lyon County can access data from [www.RootsWeb-Lyon County](http://www.RootsWeb-LyonCounty.com). Located in the George Public Library, the Ostfriesen Genealogical Society has one of the more extensive research collections in the country, comprised of general reference books, a complete set of Germans to America books, many Ortsippenbuchs, family history books, and other related books and periodicals.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

The City of George and surrounding rural “community” is primarily served by the following places of worship:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) First Baptist Church
4102 190 th Street | 5) Immanuel Lutheran Church
400 East Iowa Avenue |
| 2) Central Baptist Church
206 E. Minnesota Avenue | 6) Lyon County First Presbyterian Church
4142 230 th Street |
| 3) Ebenezer Presbyterian Church
300 East Iowa Avenue | 7) Tabernacle Baptist Church
206 East Indianola Avenue |
| 4) Hope Reformed Church
2251 Jay Avenue | 8) Zoar Presbyterian Church
2002 Log Avenue |

COMMUNITY CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

In addition to the above referenced religious institutions in George, there are also many service organizations, clubs, social groups, youth organizations, fraternal clubs, athletic groups, and volunteer organizations that contribute in a large part to the quality of life discovered by many that have come to live in George. Listed below is a brief summary of community clubs and organizations in George.

The American Legion - The Jack Sauter Post 404 of the American Legion in George is a service organization with ties to the national organization of 2.7 million members and most importantly the local community. The veterans of this organization dedicate themselves to God and Country; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; and the wholesome development of our nation’s youth.

The American Legion Auxiliary - The establishment of an Auxiliary to the American Legion was provided for in 1919. The American Legion Auxiliary has one great purpose, "to contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purpose of the American Legion. Programs exist for the rehabilitation of disabled veterans, children and youth activities, and serving the community.

Facts ‘n Fun Club - The Facts 'n Fun Club meets the 2nd Monday of the month, October through May, in the Community Building. The club, organized in 1948, is intended to serve the home,

community, state, and nation. Annual projects include planting flowers in the city parks, holding a used book sale for the local library, and providing for families in need.

Senior Women's Club - The George Senior Women's Club was organized in October 1924, when a group of women felt the need of an organization to promote the betterment of life. This group immediately became a part of the state and national General Federation of Women's Clubs. The primary objective was "to gain knowledge to mutually benefit ourselves and the city."

Wheelchair Repair Shop – This is a satellite location of Hope Haven International Ministries. The George location got its start in November 1998 in the back shop of a Main Street store. To date, volunteers have refurbished over 4000 wheelchairs. The finished chairs are distributed primarily through mission efforts to over 94 countries around the world.

Girl Scouts - The mission of the Girl Scouts organization is to inspire girls to the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism and service so that they may become happy and resourceful citizens. George girl scouts are part of the Minn-Ia-Kota Girl Scout Council.

George Betterment Club – The George Betterment Club is a nonprofit organization designed to enhance the community. There are no age limitations and men & women are encouraged to join. The Betterment Club organizes the Run, Pass, and Punt and Super Shooters contests, and supports Little League, the sandbox project, and raises money for the Fire Department.

Kiwanis - The George Kiwanis meet at the Pizza Ranch every Thursday at noon. Their purpose is to provide service to youth and the elderly, to the community and the nation. They support local projects such as sponsoring a family at Christmas, donating to summer recreation programs, Adopt-A-Highway program, donating to the Fire Department, and the 4th of July celebration.

George Trees Forever – A volunteer organization since 1992 in which members have planted hundreds of trees and shrubs throughout the community. The City of George has been named a Tree City USA since 1995. The mission of Trees Forever is to facilitate the planting of trees through programs that empower people, build community and promote the environment.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Medical care and services available to residents of George are provided through the staff and facilities of the Pioneer Medical Center located at 101 N. Main Street. This healthcare facility is regularly staffed and open to the public Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to Noon. After hour care or emergencies are addressed at the Merrill Pioneer Community Hospital in Rock Rapids, Iowa approximately 14 miles northwest of George.



The Pioneer Medical Center is an affiliated clinic *Photo courtesy of: <http://merrillpioneer.org/clinics/george.php>* of the Merrill Pioneer Community Hospital in Rock Rapids, which in turn is affiliated with the Sioux Valley Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Additional medical related services and facilities in George include the office of Dr. Lane Stille, Dentist, along with the George Veterinary Clinic.

GEORGE GOOD SAMARITAN CENTER

George Community Good Samaritan Center, a 48-bed skilled nursing facility in northwest Iowa, offers the services of a top-rated care facility to the residents of George and the surrounding communities. Nine (9) of the 48 beds are designated for the Alzheimer's Unit.



Photo courtesy of: <http://www.good-sam.com/facilities>

The center's philosophy, in the words of our founder, the Rev. Hoeger, is to care for the whole person, body and soul. The staff and management of the George Good Samaritan Center are committed to meeting the physical, social and spiritual needs of the elderly in George and surrounding communities.

Services provided by the George God Samaritan Center to its residents and clients include:

- Alzheimer's Care Units
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Language Therapy
- Hospice Care
- Adult Day Care
- Skilled Nursing Care
- Skilled Nursing with Medicare
- Senior Living Housing

SENIOR ACTIVITIES AND DAYCARE

Every Thursday, the Dinner Date program offers meals to any senior in the community wishing to participate. Additionally, senior card games are spotted on a daily basis at the bowling alley. Finally, many seniors in George participate at the Wheelchair Repair Shop by volunteering to repair wheelchairs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.

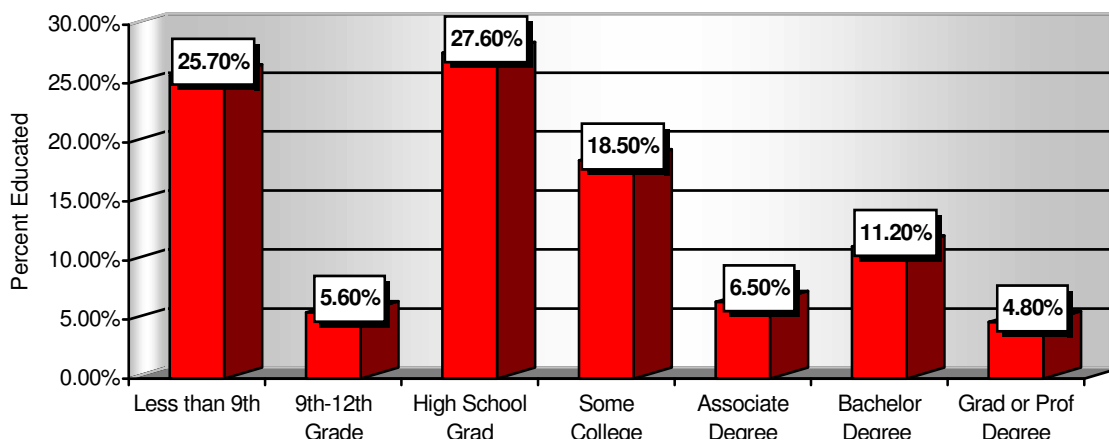
Child care services are provided by four in-home daycare providers within the city limits. At this time, there is no community or privately operated daycare center in George.

EDUCATION

According to 2000 Census information 192 persons over the age of 3 were enrolled in school in George. Of these persons, 10 or 5.2% were enrolled in preschool and another 13 children or 6.8% attended Kindergarten. The largest group of persons in George attending a school are the 92 Elementary age students (grades 1-8) comprising 47.9 percent of the total enrollment along with an additional 44 or 22.9% attending High School. In George, 33 students or 17.2% of the total persons enrolled in educational classes are attending college or graduate school.

Furthermore, the following chart shows the percentage of educational attainment obtained by residents of George. Of the 1,051 residents of George, 785 are over the age of 25. Of these individuals, 202 persons accounting for slightly more than 25 percent have not obtained a high school education. The largest group of educated persons in George is those persons who have obtained their high school degree at nearly 28 percent. This group is followed secondly by the 145 residents (18.5%) who have attended some college courses, but not obtained a degree. Census data shows that 88 residents have obtained their Bachelor's Degree (11.2%) and another 38 residents or nearly 5 percent have obtained some graduate or professional degree. This percentage is higher than average for most other communities in Lyon County and the county as a whole.

Figure 19 - Educational Attainment of George Residents, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

George-Little Rock Community School District

The George Little Rock High School was selected as one of the 100 best school districts in the nation in 2000, by "Offspring" magazine. The school board, administration, and staff are dedicated to see every student succeed. The mission of the George-Little Rock School District is to provide quality education by promoting life long learning. The district's administration and staff believe all people can learn, have worth, and that education plays a vital role in developing a well rounded individual.

The George-Little Rock Community School District was formed to provide education for residents of the cities of George and Little Rock, and much of the surrounding rural townships in eastern Lyon County. Grade schools are located in each town. The Middle School is located in Little Rock and the High School (pictured here) is located in George. All indications are that the current facilities are sufficient to meet the future needs of the school district.




Photo courtesy of: <http://www.georgeiowa.com/education.html>

Certified school enrollment for the 2004-2005 school year indicate a total of 302 students enrolled in the school district, with 9 students open enrolling into the district and 27 students open enrolling out. Statistics show another 4 students attending private school and 10 students home schooled.

Certified Enrollment 2004-2005

Enrollment	George Little Rock			
Kindergarten	23	15	6th grade	37
1st grade	19	15	7th grade	32
2nd grade	18	16	8th grade	41
3rd grade	20	15		110
4th grade	21	9	9th grade	

5th grade	$\begin{array}{r} 44 \\ 36 \text{ —} \\ \hline 137 \end{array}$	70	49	10th grade	35
				11th grade	
				12th grade	$\begin{array}{r} 37 \\ \hline 165 \end{array}$
					
Total Enrollment: 302 in George <u>180 in Little Rock</u> 482 Total					

The George-Little Rock Community School District has a teaching staff of 41.3 employees which contributes to the K-12 average pupil to teacher ratio of 12 to 1. The graduation rate is the percentage of students who register as seniors at the beginning of the year and complete requirements for graduation in the spring. The graduation rate for George-Little Rock Community School District for 2003-2004 was 95.35%. This is above the state average of 89.78%. Extracurricular activities are an important part of our school's educational program. 81.7% of the students in grades 9-12 and 98.5% of students in grades 7-8 participated in extracurricular programs.

According to data obtained from the George-Little Rock Community School District 2004-2005 Annual Progress Report, the School Board has established 5 long term goals for the future growth and development of the school and its students. **Locally Determined Long Term Goals:**

"Quality Education
for Lifelong Learning"

No. 1: All K-12 students will achieve at high levels in reading comprehension, prepared for success beyond high school.

Reading Annual Goal: By the fall testing date, the percentage of scores at or above proficiency for grade 4 will increase by one percent as measured by ITBS/ITED tests.

No. 2: All K-12 students will achieve at high levels in mathematics, prepared for success beyond high school.

Math Annual Goal: By the fall testing date, the percentage of scores at or above proficiency for grade 4 will increase by one percent as measured by ITBS/ITED tests.

No. 3: All K-12 students will achieve at high levels in science, prepared for success beyond high school.

Science Annual Goal: By the fall testing date, the percentage of scores at or above proficiency for grade 5 will establish baseline data as measured by ITBS/ITED tests.

No. 4: Technology will continue to be an integral strategy in all aspects of student learning with emphasis on systems, problem solving, and connections to global systems.

No. 5: All students will feel safe and connected to school. Students will decrease targeted negative at-risk behaviors that interfere with learning thereby making things better for themselves and others.

George-Little Rock Community Educational Foundation

The George-Little Rock education foundation is a legal nonprofit entity founded in 2003 to combine the successful foundations of George and Little Rock. The purpose of the foundation is to maintain,

develop and extend the facilities, services and resources of the George-Little Rock School District. It is also the intent of the foundation to provide educational service opportunities to the students, staff, faculty, and residents living within the district's geographic boundary.

The assets, earnings, and income sources of the Community Educational Foundation is to be used exclusively to maintain and enhance both academic and co-curricular programs. The following three areas are where foundation funds may be used:

- 1) Improvements in technology
- 2) Improvements in fine arts (music & theater)
- 3) Scholarships

Individuals may also designate gifts for specific uses as well, if they so desire. Alumni and friends of the George-Little Rock Community School District can make a variety of tax deductible gifts to the foundation including cash, securities, real estate, life insurance, matching gifts from a company or employer, memorials and bequests.

COMMUNITY FACILITY AND SERVICES POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To guide the operation and development of community facilities, the following land use policy recommendations have been established.

1. *Provide efficient and effective utility services to the residents of George.*
2. *Develop a maintenance, repair or replacement schedule of utility resources. (water mains, sewer lines, lift stations, etc.)*
3. *Seek outside financial sources (i.e. grant or low-interest loans) to provide capital to implement the maintenance, repair or replacement schedule.*
4. *Continue testing the city's water supply in an effort to monitor the levels of nitrates infiltrating the city's water supply.*
5. *Consider creating and implementing flood mitigation plans for properties, homes, and businesses located within the designated floodplains of the Rio Grande Creek and the Little Rock River.*

CHAPTER 8. PARKS & RECREATION

Parks and recreational activities, both passive and active provide many benefits and amenities to a city's quality of life factor. For a city to present an attractive setting for residents to live in and guests to visit, it must have a sound system of parks and a variety of recreational programs. The City of George maintains a strong parks and recreation system. However, these "green" amenities cannot

"Recreation" as defined in Merriam-Webster® Online Dictionary, ©2005-2006, is ***"to create anew, restore, refresh; or a refreshment of strength and spirits after work."***

afford to remain static. As the composition of the community changes over time, so must the parks and recreation system change to meet new demands.

The notion of recreational activity, and cities having to provide recreational amenities to residents of the community has become of increasing importance

because a larger sector of the work force is experiencing shorter working hours due to increased technology, more holidays, longer vacations and earlier retirements. Recreation is an active forum through which this increase in leisure time can be utilized. Thus, existing facilities must be designed to serve the population profile of the community as well as to allow for a wide variety of recreation types.

CITY PARKS SYSTEM

There are many types of parks, trails and recreation based activities which occur throughout George. In this section, an inventory and explanation of the city's parks system will be addressed.

Sudenga Park

This city park is located approximately 4 blocks south of downtown on Main Street. The park is situated at 100 East Calumet Avenue, between Main Street and Baldwin Street. Sudenga Park is adequately equipped with a shelter house with kitchenette, picnic tables, barbeque grill, basketball court, public restroom facilities and a superb playground system including slides, swings, merry-go-round, see-saw, wooden train, and sandbox. This park is specifically designed for the enjoyment of children of all ages. Sudenga Park meets the needs of a neighborhood park for the southern and western portions of the community. However, because of the popularity of the park, it is being utilized by residents of the entire community. The city rents out the shelter house for a small fee of \$15 per day.



Photo of the Wooden Train in Sudenga Park

Siebring Park

This city park located on the southeast corner of E. Ohio Avenue and Wilhelm Street is next to the north end of the city campground and adjacent to the elementary schools grounds as well. As one of the most popular parks in George, Siebring Park contains the city's swimming pool, shelter house with picnic tables, public restrooms, horseshoe pit, softball diamond, sand volleyball court, and a second shelter house with picnic tables and nearby playground equipment. Children from all parts of the community often utilize the swimming pool, playground equipment, and other facilities at Siebring Park.

Bev & Gary Park

This park is located at 315 North Washington Street, in the far northeastern corner of the city. Bev & Gary Park is a



perfect example of a quaint neighborhood park meeting the needs of neighboring residences. There is a shelter, tables, barbeque grill, playground equipment and sandbox located within this small park. The facilities and layout are perfectly suited for neighborhood parties, family reunions, or a simple party amongst friends.

Photo of Bev & Gary Neighborhood Park

Veterans Memorial

The Veterans Memorial is a proud and significant monument dedicated to the service and memory of the veterans from George as well as all of those who have served in this Nation's previous wars. The Veterans Memorial is a beautifully landscaped plaza with a central flagpole arrangement with several memorial monuments lined in front of the flagpoles.

GEORGE RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

City Campground

The City of George has eight campsites available in the city campground in the southeast part of George. The campground is in an ideal location; quiet and close to the swimming pool, horseshoes, volleyball, playground and recreational trail. To further entice campers to George, the city offers the first three nights of camping free of charge, after which the fee is only \$7.00 per night. All eight sites come with electrical hookup and water is available in the shelter house. There is an RV dump located near the bathrooms. The campground is open from May through September. Plans for adding additional campsites are being considered.

Swimming Pool

One of the busiest places in town all summer long is the George swimming pool. The swimming pool, at 317 East Ohio Avenue, is conveniently located in Siebring Park close to the campground and elementary and high schools. Open from Memorial Day through Labor Day, the pool offers a variety of activities including swimming lessons, aquasize, open swimming and special events.



Photo of George Swimming Pool

Summer Recreation Programs

The City of George maintains and promotes an active and successful summer recreation program for the youth of the community and surrounding rural areas. The summer recreation program, including soccer is geared for the younger children from Kindergarten through the 6th grade. For the older aged children and high school youth, summer T-ball, softball, and baseball leagues are organized for children in grades 2nd through 12th. Summer recreation programs are not just targeted toward the youth in George. The Betterment Club organizes an annual slow pitch softball league for adult couples. Also, sand volleyball leagues at Siebring Park are offered as well.

Otter Valley Golf Course

Those wishing to participate in a slower pace recreational activity can stroll the fairways on Otter Valley Golf Course located a mere 6 miles south of George at 2669 Kennedy Ave (County Highway L14). Otter Valley is a 9-hole semi-private course which offers memberships, but yet is open to the general public during certain times. Otter Valley also offers league play and tournaments throughout the season. Otter Valley is a challenging, yet fun golf course with rolling hills and scenic vistas experienced throughout the nine hole layout. In 2001, the Iowa Golf Association recognized the Otter Valley Golf Course as the best 9-hole golf course of the year in the State of Iowa.

4th of July Celebration

This annual event is the epitome of small town community celebrations. Friends, family, and neighbors gather to celebrate this nation's independence with an all out community party. The celebration starts with "duck races" in the Little Rock River followed with a community hog roast. The celebration also consists of carnival style games on the school grounds and a "Little Miss George" and "Miss George" contests, a pie auction, and evening entertainment for the adults. This annual community celebration is topped off with a festive parade and a spectacular fireworks display.

Outdoor Recreational Activities

George is located in close proximity to many areas that excel in deer and pheasant hunting opportunities. There are also numerous bird watching locations near George, especially along the Little Rock and Rock River corridors. Local birdwatchers often spot the majestic bald eagle and numerous species of hawks, songbirds, and other migratory waterfowl and birds. Also, a number of good fishing locations are close to George including Lake Pahoja in Lyon County, the Rock River system, and the Iowa Great Lakes region of Dickinson County.

PROPOSED GEORGE TRAILS PLAN

The George Recreational Trail has been in the planning stages for several years until progress was seen when construction took place on phase 1 of the trail during 2005. When finished the trail will be approximately 3.1 miles and encircle the town with a hard surfaced (concrete) trail suitable for walking, rollerblading, bicycling or even cross-country skiing during the winter.



Photo source: <http://www.georgeiowa.com/recreation>

The hard work from a trails committee comprised of eleven dedicated community members along with the financial generosity of people from around the country have helped to make the dream of a recreational trail around George a reality. Fundraising efforts are underway for phase 2 of the trail. The long term goal for the completion of the George Recreational Trail is have all three phases (the entire trail) finished and functional by 2008. To encourage the completion of the trail within the identified timeframe, the City of George applied for and was awarded a "Harkin Wellness Grant" in the amount of \$63,750 in September 2005 to help support the construction costs for phases 2 and 3. Below is a brief description of each of the three trail phases or segments.

- 1) *George Recreational Trail: Phase 1 (completed 2005)* – Phase 1 of the trail begins at the southeast corner of the city campground and heads north along the backside of the George-Little Rock High School property. The trail continued north until Dakota Avenue where it heads west toward Washington Street. At Washington Street the trail once again heads north until it reaches the back side of the Good Samaritan Center property. The trail follows west along the most northern developed edge of the community until it reaches County Hwy. L14.
- 2) *George Recreational Trail: Phase 2 (2006-2007)* – That portion of the trail which becomes a connecting link from the north end of the community along the west side of George back to the southern trail segment. Phase 2 meanders throughout a newly proposed commercial/business

park development north of Dakota Avenue, then heads west to Rio Grande Creek where it follows the creek corridor throughout much of the community until it ends at Sudenga Park on Calumet Ave.

- 3) *George Recreational Trail: Phase 3 (2007-2008)* – The southern link of the trail, phase 3 is probably the most scenic segment of the entire trail. Most of phase 3 will transverse across natural or undeveloped areas in the southern part of George. Phase 3 begins at Sudenga Park where it heads south along Baldwin Street (along the backside of the bowling alley) until it reaches the Little Rock River. The trail will then head east following the river for several hundred yards until it loops back north across open fields and natural areas where it reconnects with the city campground.

In addition to identifying the current and proposed George Recreational Trail, the following “Future Trails and Parks Plan” also identifies one proposed future long term trail connector along with two new proposed park areas in George. Proposed future trail links and future parks areas include:

- 1) *“Long Term Trail Connector”* – This proposed trail would connect the George Recreational Trail with an existing Iowa DNR wildlife area along County Hwy. L14 a couple of hundred yards south of the proposed phase 3 segment. Furthermore, the future trail connector could continue further south to an arboretum and wildlife area, along with eventually connecting to the Otter Valley Golf Course approximately six miles south of George on County Hwy. L14.
- 2) *“Future Northeast Park”* – With the addition of new housing in the northeast part of George along with the potential for additional housing on existing lots and areas suited for future residential development, demand is projected for additional park amenities in this part of the community. Granted, the Bev & Gary neighborhood park is located not far from this proposed park but the proposed park will have much more open space. Additionally, the proposed location next to the Good Samaritan Center also provides an excellent opportunity for senior residents of the care center to utilize the park facilities with relative ease.
- 3) *“Future Community Ball field/Soccer Complex”* – This proposed future recreational complex was designed to be constructed with little infrastructure and primarily open space uses in a designated floodplain and low-lying open space next to the Rio Grand Creek. This area is currently open space and is not suited for residential or other construction because of the floodplain limitations. However, an open soccer field with removable goals or a baseball field with simple chain link fencing that could withstand the impacts of rising water would be a suitable use of this otherwise limited area.

In order for future trail development to become a reality in George, the city and/or private, public, or non-profit entities must take the initiative to work with property owners to secure the use of easements or outright property purchase in order to have the rights for future trail utilization.

Insert George Future Trails and Parks Plan Map

COUNTY AND REGIONAL RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Lyon County invites each and every person to relax and enjoy in one of the county's 1,400 recreational acres of rolling hills, natural lakes, wetland marshes, lush woodlands, and wild prairies.

Area Lakes

- *Lake Pahoja Recreation Area*

Located north of Inwood western Lyon County, approximately 20 miles west of George, this 282 acre highly developed multi-use recreation area provides a wide variety of outdoor activities for the public. The 72 acre lake has excellent angling opportunities for large-mouth bass, bluegill, crappie, and channel catfish. A boat ramp and dock are located on the north side of the

lake. Boating is allowed on Lake Pahoja with electric trolling motors.

Figure 20 - Map of Lake Pahoja Recreation Area



Map courtesy of: <http://www.lyoncountyiowa.com>



Photo source: http://www.lyoncountyiowa.com/lake_pahoja.htm

For those who would rather swim with the fish, there is a designated 100' by 300' beach and swimming area. A few of the features at Lake Pahoja include: six open picnic shelters with modern restroom facilities and drinking water available, three playgrounds, two volleyball courts, a basketball court, and horseshoe pits. Two enclosed lodges are also available, each containing four to six picnic tables, a fireplace, and outdoor grills. This recreation spot is a great location for families to spend quality time together by walking the nature trails, camping, picnicking or just enjoying the scenery. In 1998, three cabins were built by Lyon County Conservation at Lake Pahoja. These rustic getaways were designed to

provide a unique and fun camping experience. The cabins, designed for accessibility to persons with disabilities, are one room, 14' x 14' with a 9' x 18' deck. In fact, the entire park area has been made handicapped accessible with the construction of 1 1/3 mile asphalt hiking/biking trail along the north shore. Another 3 2/3 mile hiking trail encircles the lake for the nature and exercise enthusiasts.

- *Rush Lake* (Osceola County) – This 336 acre recreational area is located 2 miles east and one mile north of Ocheyedan, along Iowa Highway 9. This lake provides an array of hunting opportunities and some interesting canoeing or kayaking experiences.
- *Fairview Pond* (Sioux County) – This 10 acre pond is 5 miles south and 3 miles west of Inwood. Fairview Pond provides fishing opportunities either from shore or on the water via a boat access.
- *Douma Park Pond* (O'Brien County) – Located within this county park approximately 2 miles west and 1 mile south of Sanborn, the Douma Park Pond is 10 acres in size. Camping, fishing, and an accessible pier or jetty is available for public use at this recreational area.

Parks and Wildlife Areas near George (in Lyon County)

Below are depictions of wildlife areas or county recreational areas, as described by the Lyon County Conservation Board.

1. *Blood Run/Rock Island National Landmark* - Located eight miles west of Larchwood, this 178 acre area is owned by the State Historical Society of Iowa and managed by the LCCB. This site has significant historical value for the Oneota Native American Tribe, including several burial mounds, a pitted boulder, and an original homestead.
2. *Little Rock River Wildlife Area (Central)* - This 180 acre area is located two miles east of George. The area offers fishing, picnicking, and a boat landing for access to the Little Rock River.
3. *Little Rock River Wildlife Area (North)* – This wildlife area is three miles west and two miles south of Little Rock. Included in this 133 acre area is a food plot, hillside, prairie and shelter belt.
4. *River of Red Rock Park*- This 9 acre park is located on the south edge of Little Rock. This area offers electrical camping sites, a playground, picnic table, pedestal grills, and fire rings.
5. *Boon Ranch Wildlife Area* - This 215 acres area is located 4.5 miles north of Rack Rapids. The Rock River flows through this area and provides for fishing and lots of different wildlife.
6. *Lakewood Corner Wildlife Area* - This area is six miles south of Rock Rapids on Hwy. 75. With access to the Rock River, the 4 acre area provides for bird watching, fishing and enjoying nature.
7. *Hidden Bridge Wildlife Area* - Located 6 miles west and 2 miles south of Larchwood on the Big Sioux River, this 154 acre area offers a scenic view of natural prairie grasses, flowers and wildlife.
8. *Roemen-Stettinchs Nature Area* - Located two miles west of Larchwood, this 5 acre area is managed as a wildlife habitat and provides hunting opportunities.
9. *Klondike Area* - Located four miles south and five miles west of Larchwood, this one acre area is adjacent to the Big Sioux River.
10. *Doon Wildlife Area* - This 55 acre area is located two miles north of Doon. The area provides the outdoors person a nice fishing stream and good hunting opportunities.
11. *Blankespoor Wildlife Area* – This wildlife area is located two miles south and five miles west of Inwood. The 160 acre area offers an abundance of timber, prairie, and fish ponds.

Regional Recreational Amenities

Iowa Great Lakes Region (Okoboji Lakes and Spirit Lake) – Found within the heart of Dickinson County, Iowa’s number one tourism destination in the state is approximately 45 miles east of George. Offering nearly 13,000 acres of surface water on 6 lakes, the “Iowa Great Lakes” region has something fun to offer everyone year around.

PARK AND RECREATION RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility to provide certain park and recreational amenities involves the private sector and all levels of government. It is essential that each sector and government level understand its responsibilities. In terms of government levels, the federal government has little power affecting direct recreational based activities in George. However, funding policies of federal agencies do influence the community. The primary concern of the federal government is resources for and protection of areas which attract national attention.

At the state level, those agencies in Iowa which are responsible for provisions of recreational facilities at a regional level include the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, which is the state agency directly tied to outdoor recreation. The Iowa Department of Transportation, Iowa Department of Economic Development, The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, State Archeologists, and the State Historical Society are other state agencies which also exert direct and indirect influence on state recreational programs. Of particular interest to the City of George is the State's, and specifically the Department of Natural Resource's influence and impact upon the five natural lakes that border the city, since public lakes in Iowa fall under the IDNR's jurisdiction.

The principal agency involved with providing recreational opportunities at the county level is the Lyon County Conservation Board. This Board and the county conservation staff are responsible for countywide recreation plans, implementation of these plans, and the general obligation to provide outdoor recreation to the county's population. Currently, the Conservation Commission oversees the county parks, wildlife and recreation areas mentioned in the previous section.

Within the City of George, the City Council is ultimately responsible for the provision of outdoor recreation activities. The park system consists of those areas previously identified in this chapter such as city parks, trail, swimming pool, etc. Provisions of urban active and passive recreational activities will be the city's primary responsibility. The George City Council oversees maintenance, development, and future planning of the city's park system.

Aside from publicly provided recreational amenities, the private sector continues to have an increasing role in providing future recreation amenities. Generally speaking, the private sector typically provides various types of for-profit recreational based businesses such as miniature golf and other various recreational based activities.

PARK PLANNING AND STANDARDS

One standard that is often used for park planning purposes is 14 acres of parks and recreation space per one thousand residents. Based upon 14 acres per 1,000 persons, and the city having a year 2000 population of 1,051 persons, the City of George would need about 14.7 acres of parks and recreation areas to meet the standard. However, the 14 acres can be adjusted upward or downward depending on the needs of individual communities. While level of service standards exists for law enforcement, health care, roads, and administration, no widely applicable parks service standards exist, and certainly none that address the distinctive needs of small communities.

The National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) developed planning standards over 20 years ago these were based on urban level models and in many cases neither recognized nor usable by small communities. Moreover NPRA standards reflected only loosely defined park types rather than actual demand for parks and recreation facilities. RPI Consulting Inc. produced a report for the State of Colorado called State of Colorado, Small Community Park & Recreation Planning Standards 2003. This report corrects these issues and is based on an empirically sound methodology sanctioned by NPRA. For the purposes of this report, small communities are those that are roughly at, or less than, 10,000 in population. It is important to note the standards presented in this report indicate the demand for recreation facility types specific to actual use patterns and desires of small community residents, rather than simply presenting acreages for various park categories. Calculating demand for parks facilities is an important departure from the generic and subjective method of requiring arbitrary quantities of parks by loosely defined types (e.g. neighborhood vs. community park).

The following table presents a land acreage requirement per 1000 residents for five recreation categories. The acreage requirement reflects both citizen demand and capacity of facility types. This table is the simplest presentation of the accumulated data, the numbers may be customized.

Finally, if a community prefers, it may simply adopt a single land dedication standard of 14 acres per 1000 residents. This standard represents the land needed to house the facilities listed above using a few of the facilities not always appropriate, possible, or necessary in many towns including swimming pools and other water features. The total recommended, general land planning and dedication standard for small communities is:

Table 16 - Facility Category	Total acres required per 1000 Residents
Sports Fields (soccer, multi-use, baseball/softball)	4.4
Courts (tennis, basketball, volleyball)	.3
Outdoor Recreation (skatepark, BMX, paved & dirt trails, fishing access, river put-ins)	8.5
Leisure (playgrounds, picnic, general park land)	.8
Other Recreational Facilities (swimming pool, hockey, outdoor events venue)	1.5

Future Park Planning & Dedication Standards

(14 acres per 1,000 residents)

Park planning and dedication standards can serve as a target number for future community parks and is appropriate for adoption by local governments as a dedication standard for all new development. The worksheet below may be used and/or adopted into municipal ordinance to govern all new subdivision requests and annexation proposals.

Future Park Dedication Formula:

housing units proposed in subdivision x average household size = projected population
 (projected population/1000) x 14 = Land Dedication Requirement

Example:

A 25-unit residential subdivision is proposed. Multiply 25 times 2.0 (average number of residents per unit) to get 50 new residents. 50 divided by 1000 equals .05. Take .05 times 14 acres (land dedication standard per 1000 capita). The result is .7 acres of required dedicated land.

As land costs become increasingly expensive, acquisition of parks can become challenging, requiring not only that local governments have plans in place to keep up with new resident demands, but also have funding mechanisms precisely related to desired service levels. A parks planning standard is simply a ratio expressing the quantity of parks and recreation facilities compared to population.

The planning standards established in the “Small Community Park & Recreation Planning Standards” report by RPI Consulting Inc. are closely tailored to the needs of smaller communities. These standards are based on actual measured small community citizen demand for various recreation facilities. That is, how much use are softball fields and skate parks receiving and how many of these facilities does George need to meet citizen demand? The standards presented below reflect actual demand for parks systems, which in turn allows prioritization of resources and confidence in the land dedication standards. The parks standards presented below are meant to replace those standards established by National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA). NPRA standards are based on urban and metropolitan models and are largely inappropriate for smaller

communities. Parks and recreation standards for small communities are established through the following method.

- 1) What is the citizen demand for various parks and recreation resources? That is, how much or how often are small community residents using softball fields, bike trails, playgrounds, etc?
- 2) What is the capacity for various recreation resources? That is, how many citizens can a softball field or playground accommodate? Or put another way, if there is demand for softball fields, how many will our community need to meet that demand?
- 3) Given demand and capacity for certain facilities, how much land will be needed to accommodate those facilities? This is typically expressed in acreage per capita, or more specifically acreage per 1000 residents.

Once demand for parks facilities has been established the next logical question is: how many people can that facility accommodate? Whether a park bench or a baseball field the capacity numbers reflect the total number of participants and activities that a facility can accommodate in a given period of time. The methodology for obtaining capacity information requires a multi-step approach including key-informant interviews, case studies, and consulting with nationally recognized parks planning professionals.

Table 17 - *Park Land Standards*

Facility Category	Parks System Facility Types	Number of Facilities Needed per 1000 Residents (demand)	Acres required to accommodate 1 facility	Total acres required per 1000 Residents (park land standard)
Sports Fields	Soccer/Multi-Use Field	0.95	2.21	2.10
	Ball Field (Baseball/Softball)	0.61	3.77	2.30
Courts	Tennis Court	0.97	0.17	0.17
	Basketball Court	0.91	0.16	0.15
	Volleyball Court	0.13	0.10	0.01
Outdoor Recreation	Small Skatepark (7000 sq. ft. footprint)	0.16	0.18	0.03
	Full-Sized Skatepark (17,000+ sq. ft. footprint)	0.06	0.50	0.03
	BMX Track (Standard ABA Certified)	0.16	3.12	0.50
	Paved Multi-Use Trail (per mile)	1.04	2.43	2.53
	Dirt/Gravel Multi-Use Trail (per mile)	2.33	1.83	4.25
	Fishing Accessible Shoreline (per mile)	0.32	3.64	1.16
	River Pkwy/Take-Out with Boat Ramp (per acre)	0.07	1.00	0.07
Leisure	Playground (per 3200 sq. ft. of fully developed area)	0.16	0.14	0.02
	Family Picnic Area	6.25	0.01	0.08
	Group Picnic Area (with shelter)	0.36	2.06	0.74
	Park Bench	7.69	0.00	0.00
Other Recreational Facilities	Swimming Pool (outdoor)	0.12	0.34	0.04
	Ice Hockey Rink (full-sized, refrigerated, covered)	0.1	0.90	0.09
	Outdoor Events Venue (per acre)	0.42	3.19	1.34

Of course, all parks facilities need to be sited on land. The land requirements (e.g. a baseball field) include not only the actual playing field space requirements but also some buffer area around the facility and parking. Land standards are simply the multiplication of acres required for each facility type by the facility per 1000 residents standard.

Table 18 -

Feature Category	Parks System Feature	Units Needed per 1000 Residents	Sq. Ft. per Unit	Off-Street Parking per Unit	Acres per Unit	Acres per 1000 Residents
Sports Fields	Soccer/Multi-Use Field	0.95	93,100	3,000	2.21	2.10
	Ball Field (Baseball/Softball)	0.61	160,000	4,050	3.77	2.30
Courts	Tennis Court	0.97	7,200	300	0.17	0.17
	Basketball Court	0.91	6,600	450	0.16	0.15
	Volleyball Court	0.13	4,000	450	0.10	0.01
Outdoor Recreation	Small Skatepark (7000 sq. ft. footprint)	0.16	7,000	1,050	0.18	0.03
	Full-Sized Skatepark (17,000+ sq. ft. footprint)	0.06	17,000	4,950	0.50	0.03
	BMX Track (Standard ABA Certified)	0.16	130,700	5,250	3.12	0.50
	Paved Multi-Use Trail (per mile)	1.04	105,600	450	2.43	2.53
	Dirt/Gravel Multi-Use Trail (per mile)	2.33	79,200	300	1.83	4.25
	Fishing Accessible Shoreline (per mile)	0.32	158,400		3.64	1.16
	River Put-In/Take-Out with Boat Ramp (per acre)	0.07	43,560		1.00	0.07
Leisure	Playground (per 3200 sq. ft. of fully developed area)	0.16	3,200	3,000	0.14	0.02
	Family Picnic Area	6.25	225	300	0.01	0.08
	Group Picnic Area (with shelter)	0.36	87,120	2,550	2.06	0.74
	Park Bench	7.69	12		0.00	0.00
Other Recreational Facilities	Swimming Pool (outdoor)	0.12	6,200	8,700	0.34	0.04
	Ice Hockey Rink (full-sized, refrigerated, covered)	0.10		9,000	0.90	0.09
	Outdoor Events Venue (per acre)	0.42	43,560	95,200	3.19	1.34

General Considerations of Park Standards

- Sports fields require a substantial amount of land due to their size and parking requirements
- Events venues create large land requirements because one acre of venue area requires approximately 2 acres of off-street parking.
- Open space is considered separate from other parks and recreation facilities due to diversity of needs, uses, forms, and understanding of this concept. Open space is defined as broad term for land largely free of residential, commercial, and industrial development that can provide wildlife habitat, access to recreation, scenic views, passive recreation, compatible parks and recreation facilities. Open space is not considered part of the demand/capacity standards because

open space serves purposes beyond accommodating recreational needs, and in many cases is a component of community planning with values that lay outside of typical parks and recreation demands. Benefits that can accrue solely from open space include:

- Economic benefits – open space can enhance the quality of life which in turn attracts business and improves property values
- Protecting river corridors keeps construction out of floodplains and prevents losses to property.
- Environmental and aesthetic benefits
- Fiscal benefits- in some cases, it costs the local government less to purchase property and conserve it than to pay for infrastructure and services required for development, similarly in some cases the purchase of watersheds can lead to decreased treatment costs.

STATE OF IOWA PROJECTED RECREATION TRENDS

According to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' 2001 "SCORP" Plan, or State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the State of Iowa believes there are several factors, including a growing minority population, a shifting population from rural to urban, and a continued aging population which will all have significant impacts on the projected needs and trends of future recreational activities in Iowa.

When planning for future outdoor recreation, it becomes necessary to identify issues and priorities facing outdoor recreation in Iowa. Considering the wide array of interests in outdoor recreation, what is an issue or priority to one group may be of little concern to another. The SCORP Committee was formed with the intention of bringing together into one group, a very diverse committee of persons with a strong interest in outdoor recreation, representing every spectrum of outdoor recreation possible. The following is a list of specific outdoor recreation issues that should be given special attention as developed by the SCORP Committee.

- Better marketing of outdoor recreational opportunities using the latest technologies.
- Develop partnerships between various agencies, special interest groups and government organizations, state and local, to best preserve and promote outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Educate all ages, with an emphasis on the young, in outdoor skills and stewardship ethics.
- Educate public and policy makers on the importance of outdoor recreation.
- Acquire more lands and waters representative of various ecological communities and landforms throughout the state, and manage these areas carefully to be left in their present state.
- Recreational developments should be appropriate uses of the particular land area and should incorporate the needs of protecting sensitive natural areas.
- Need to renovate and maintain existing facilities to ensure there is equal access for all users.

Iowans have a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities to choose from in the state, and several general surveys have been conducted to determine what outdoor recreation activities Iowans prefer and how often they participate in them. Other, more specific surveys have been undertaken to gather detailed information regarding specific outdoor recreation activities. These surveys serve as a vital source in understanding attitudes and opinions toward outdoor recreation issues in Iowa. This information can be used for a variety of purposes including future outdoor recreation development and funding. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources commissioned the Center for Social and

Behavioral Research (CSBR) at the University of Northern Iowa to conduct a survey to assess Iowans' participation in outdoor recreational activities and their opinions about the protection and management of Iowa's natural resources. The outdoor recreational activities with the highest participation rates were:

- Picnicking (72.9%)
- Hiking or nature walks (61.1%)
- Swimming in a pool (48.4%)
- Fishing (45.3%)
- Nature studies such as bird watching (41.3%)

With the exception of picnicking, participation rates varied across age groups. Generally, participation was lower among those aged 65 or older, but nature studies such as bird watching were more common among older respondents. One-fifth (21.3%) of those surveyed reported outdoor recreational activities were inhibited by limited or unsuitable recreational areas or facilities in Iowa. Commonly mentioned inhibited activities were: biking on paved trails, power boating or water skiing, hiking or nature walks, and fishing.

Approximately one-third of those surveyed were unsure of the fishing quality in Iowa's state parks and recreational areas. A similar percentage was unsure of how present fishing quality compares with that of 5 years ago.

The five features survey respondents gave the highest importance to:

- Picnic areas
- Hiking or nature trails
- Playgrounds
- Fishing
- Beaches with open water swimming

Iowans report open spaces are important to their quality of life, and they support public ownership of these spaces. Generally, the public's opinion is that spending more money to manage and protect Iowa's natural resources is important.

CHAPTER 9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

George combines small-town charm and friendliness. Residents are very proud of their community and wish to continue to offer the small town, charming atmosphere known by the locals and experienced by visitors. George's quality of life has made the community a very desirable place.

During the summer of 2005, the citizens of George were invited to attend a public forum to discuss land use and community issues important to the city with regards to the comprehensive plan. With input and participation from the thirty-nine residents of George attending the meeting at the Community Center, planning staff from Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission facilitated the meeting. After explaining the comprehensive planning process, staff asked guests to openly share their thoughts about the strengths the community, some of the challenges facing the community today and an insight into the future vision of what residents would like to see George become in 15 to 20 years. The following summary is a combination of public verbal comments received during the meeting and written comments received by the George Planning Commission.

Local residents were asked to identify **STRENGTHS** of the community:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ❖ Religious community with many churches | ❖ Friendly people |
| ❖ Safe, minimal crime | ❖ Great nursing home |
| ❖ Low cost of living | ❖ Fiber Optics at school, great internet, and other communications |
| ❖ Easy communication to outside world (good telecommunications, internet, cable television) | ❖ Clean city |
| ❖ Good education in schools and a decent library | ❖ Good park with camping area |
| ❖ Large number of industrial jobs | ❖ Decent swimming pool |
| ❖ Centrally located with towns offering good jobs | ❖ Grocery store and bank |
| ❖ Easy to Commute, good streets and roads | ❖ Two funeral homes |
| ❖ Big elevator is good employer | ❖ Restaurants |
| ❖ Great Fire & Rescue team | ❖ Good town loyalty and pride |
| ❖ Excellent medical facilities | ❖ Updated bowling alley |
| ❖ Specialized medical services not far away (Sioux City & Sioux Falls) | ❖ Strong agricultural base |
| ❖ County roads well-kept around George | ❖ Good butcher shop |
| ❖ Proximity to I-90 | ❖ Two gas stations |
| ❖ Good central, downtown business district | ❖ Several building contractors |

Local residents were next asked to identify those **CHALLENGES** facing the community:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ❖ Keeping youth around, after high-school | ❖ More childcare and daycare services |
| ❖ Bringing back college graduates | ❖ Need to update swimming pool |
| ❖ Acquiring new families | ❖ Low taxes, keep high quality of living |
| ❖ Community image | ❖ Need for a wellness center |
| ❖ Drug Enforcement | ❖ Explore idea of Municipal Utilities, especially electricity |
| ❖ Keeping elders with new assisted living center | ❖ Marketing new housing lots |
| ❖ Water quality | ❖ Keeping historical properties |
| ❖ Recruiting decent families | |

- ❖ Urban renewal of houses Expand
- ❖ Summer youth and teen possibilities

Participants were finally asked what they would like to see the **FUTURE VISION** of GEORGE be in 15 to 20 years:

- ❖ Need for additional senior-assisted living
- ❖ Industrial Park equals more jobs
- ❖ Clean-up water quality
- ❖ High-tech park equals more jobs
- ❖ Tax break for new families with housing
- ❖ Diversify employment
- ❖ Location for travelers to stay, lodging & restaurant etc.

A unique question George residents participating were eager to answer was what projects they were excited about and possibly in progress on currently:

- ❖ School Bond passed for new high school gymnasium
- ❖ New biking and walking trail around George
- ❖ Sewer project, updating the system
- ❖ Future residential areas and incentives
- ❖ Larger industrial park coming
- ❖ Keeping water quality at safe level

In addition to the public input received from the public meeting, the residents of George were also given the opportunity to submit their thoughts, concerns, and compliments regarding the current and future opportunities presented to them in George through a community survey. The community survey was mailed to each household and resident living in George during June 2005, in an effort to attract as much public participation as possible. On the following page is a sample copy of the community survey mailed to each household in addition to a public meeting notice for the community visioning meeting.

“COMMUNITY VISIONING MEETING”

City of George Planning Commission George City Hall

Please take a moment to complete the following community visioning survey that will provide the Planning Commission valuable input to assist them in creating future land use policy. Please consider the following questions and think about how city officials and community leaders can strive to make George a greater community than it already is. Are the community's needs being adequately met and what types of improvements do you foresee in the future? Is current capacity adequate for future growth, or will the city need to expand its boundaries and/or services in the future to adequately serve the population?

STRENGTHS: WHAT ARE THE CURRENT SUCCESSES OR STRENGTHS THAT MAKE GEORGE A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

CHALLENGES: WHAT CHALLENGES FACE THE CITY OF GEORGE OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS? WHAT CAN BE IMPROVED IN GEORGE?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

FUTURE VISION: WHAT SUGGESTIONS OR ACTIVITIES CAN GEORGE IMPLEMENT OVER THE NEXT 15-20 YEARS TO MAKE THE CITY A BETTER “COMMUNITY” TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Below is a verbatim compilation of the written comments received from the returned surveys.

STRENGTHS *(listed in order of priority)*

What are the Current successes or strengths that make George a great place to live?

1st Priority

- Good Law Enforcement (incl. Drug Task Force)
- Low cost of living
- Cost of Living is low
- Our many churches
- School system strong (but going downhill fast)
- Excellent medical facilities
- (M.D.) (Chiropractic) (Dental)
- Plenty parks and a nice campground

2nd Priority

- Low Cost of Living
- Good school system
- Low crime/good law enforcement
- I feel safe living here
- Cost of living
- Reasonable cost of living
- Bike trail in progress

3rd Priority

- Strong Identity with School
- Strong business with longevity & diversity
- Strong business district with diversity & longevity
- Thankful we have a good grocery store
- Good law enforcement
- Clinic
- Excellent grocery store, drug store, hardware

4th Priority

- Wide Range of Housing Options
- Low Crime
- Strong School System
- We have enough parks
- Good emergency services
- School is very strong
- Nice, open-minded Mayor willing to listen

5th Priority

- Good diversity of Main Street Business
- Good location to nearby towns for jobs & good medical care nearby
- Great location – close proximity for commutes for jobs & best medical care in country – Sioux Falls, Minneapolis, Rochester
- Location
- Good Fire Dept. & GEMS
- Nice grocery store
- Sudengas & Siebrings provide employment for many

CHALLENGES *(listed in order of priority)*

What challenges will the City of George need to address? What can be improved in George?

1st Priority

- Clean drinking water
- Visual Image
- Run down housing & building including downtown
- 1st impression upon coming to town
- Out of town people hear about water warnings with nitrates, drug busts, environmental cleanup of contaminated properties
- Things to do for all ages
- lack of participation from poor advertising
- Limited Child Care
- Our water purification is important to us

- New families would have child care as a priority in considering moving-look for good community childcare, not in-home.
- Informing citizens & community involvement
- Events, welcoming families, services available, post quarterly community in businesses, paper, website
- Really need a new restaurant or steak house!!
- Bring more business to George

2nd Priority

- Image – out of town people hear nitrate warning on Radio
- No sense of community – no events to “come together” for all ages & not preplanned or advertised early enough – two months in advance for people to plan around
- Too focused on new families – although its important we also need to look at keeping families we have
- Need to overhaul or get a new swimming pool
- Better leadership who listens, actively follow thru, & takes control with more diversification of career, age, & background
- Need for assisted living facility
- Work with County Gov. to get better road maintenance in winter on roads in & out of George
- Contaminated Properties MUST BE CLEANED UP!
- Loss of history
- Maintain & restore historical homes & buildings instead of always focusing on new, offer incentives to use & improve these
- Quality Family Dining, closest is 30 minutes away
- Too focused on building new homes, current housing needing improvements & cleaning up to avoid attracting “negative” image & residents
- Aging community with young families leaving or looking to leave
- Water quality improvement
- To change some people’s opinion about putting self interest ahead of the city’s interest

3rd Priority

- Lack of Participation in Community Groups
- Attract new & maintain current facilities to build stronger town & school
- Numerous families considering moving due to “attitude” of community & treatment of citizens
- We need senior housing or assisted living building
- Better, more diverse jobs with better pay
- New swimming pool
- City government to listen to citizens’ problems open minded & not be defensive and down grading!

4th Priority

FUTURE VISION *(listed in order of priority)*

What suggestions or activities can George implement over the next 15-20 years to make the City a better “Community” to residents and visitors?

1st Priority

- Need a Brochure to Inform about Services (Who, Phone #, & Website) i.e.: Phone, Propane, Electricity, Garbage, Internet
- Community activities to come together & bring sense of community & pride with advanced two month minimum notice for people to plan around – three month community calendar listing everything
- Come together as a community with more social events for all ages
- Need to create strong sense of community & stand together.
- I would hope this wouldn’t be too far into the future. Clean up some resident home areas. Especially the west end of town.
- Create sense of community by involving everyone with activities
- Industrial park development

5th Priority

- Extremely Limited Child Care Options
- Banking not competitive or confidential with the times (internet)
- Community daycare for attracting new families & providing a need to current families
- Lack of proactive approach to cleaning up & preventing poor quality of life & health concerns – i.e. drinking water & contaminated property.
- Open houses get run down while attracting to build new homes.
- Poor sense of community!
- Nice sit down restaurant to go to eat in
- To feel welcome to come to city council meetings (public)

- Needs senior retirement home under local control with reasonable prices to keep elderly in George.

2nd Priority

- Activities to Build “Community” with all age group of city residents – will create ownership of city
- Use new auditorium for community events – create event committee to plan diverse activities for all ages & income levels
- Community Quarterly Calendar listing all activities, meetings, school functions posted in paper & on website more than one month in advance – include recycling & open invites
- We need a good eating place, just an all around restaurant.
- Proactive to making it safe – water quality, cleanup contaminated property, law enforcement, no tolerance to drugs
- Tax breaks for people interested in industrial park
- Need programs to encourage improvement in property instead of destroying houses & business places.

3rd Priority

- Expand Business District with Jobs for College Graduates
- Listen to & respect citizens – their rights & safety & health – to take proactive approaches.
- Diversify job opportunities for more backgrounds & college graduates.
- Support citizens, businesses on main street & off, show respect too
- Zoning is necessary for both residential & business development

4th Priority

- Restore and Maintain Historic Properties
- Bring more diverse & better paying jobs for college graduates to come back.
- Offer incentives for new families & returning citizens as some who have returned have been poorly treated & looked at as failures simply by coming back; no support
- Offer more choices of activities for all ages
- Update present sewer system

5th Priority

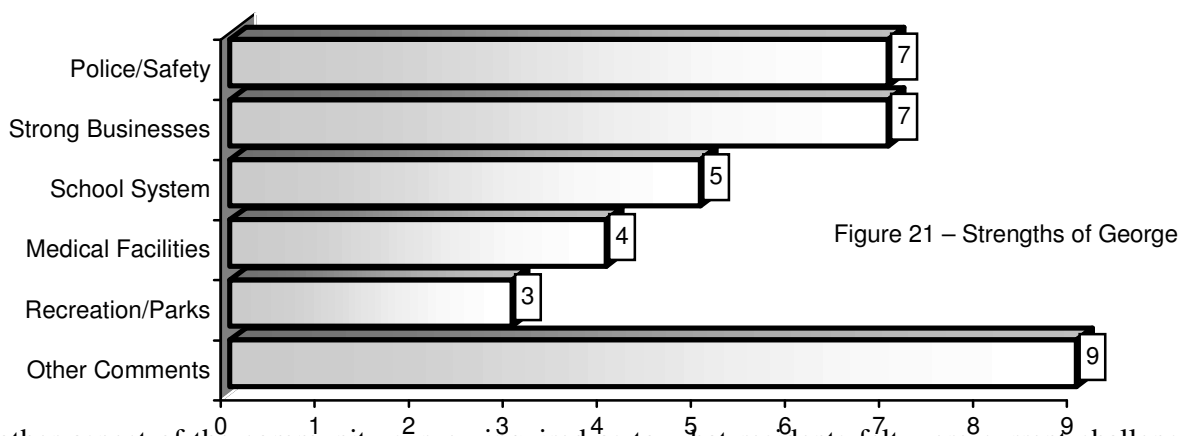
- BEST ADVERTISING is Word of Mouth: Improve Customer Service for Current Residents, Improve and Expand Services to create “BUZZ” (get people talking about how great George is)
- Support local businesses better & citizens – so focused on new that we will lose current families, businesses, & homes.
- Be open to ideas & changes to improve town & community that’s going downhill fast
- Treat citizens with more respect – especially council & city hall. Better leadership is needed to take control & be proactive.
- Be open & aware to what other communities & citizens say & feel about our “community”
- Too focused on “what our last name is,” poor leadership, too political with lack of concerns for safety & health of citizens
- Appearance of religious community – but watch out when the rear isn’t in the church pew for many who think they are religious.

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS

The George Community Visioning Survey resulted in thirty-five (35) responses pertaining to the question inquiring about the strengths of the community. These responses have been grouped into one of six larger themed categories. The six main areas of interest or “themes” that appeared to catch the attention of George’s residents include: Law Enforcement/Safety, Businesses, Schools, Medical facilities, Recreation system, and the final group is simply other comments. The “other comments” group includes those responses that generally didn’t fit into one of the other five themed areas of community strengths.

The following chart shows what residents of George believe are the greatest strengths of their community.

<i>George’s greatest strengths</i>	<i># of Responses</i>	<i>% of Responses</i>
1. Positive Law Enforcement, Safety and Low Crime	7	20.0%
2. Strong Businesses in the Community	7	20.0%
3. Good School System and School Identity	5	14.3%
4. Access to Medical Facilities in George	4	11.4%
5. Good Recreational System and Parks	3	8.6%
6. Other comments	9	25.7%



Another aspect of the community survey inquired as to what residents felt were current challenges facing the community today. What issues are important to George that need to be addressed in the future? Again, survey respondents offered a total of a forty-three (43) responses, which were generalized into seven larger themes and plotted into the chart on the following page.

<i>Challenges facing George</i>	<i># of Responses</i>	<i>% of Responses</i>
1. Community “Feeling” and Participation	9	20.9%
2. Need for new Housing, Buildings, and Businesses	8	18.6%
3. Need for Childcare and elderly care	7	16.3%
4. Improve Water Quality	5	11.6%
5. Issues with City Government	4	9.3%
6. Address Drug Prevention	1	2.3%
7. Other comments	9	20.9%

The following chart shows what residents of George believe are the greatest needs for improvement within their community.

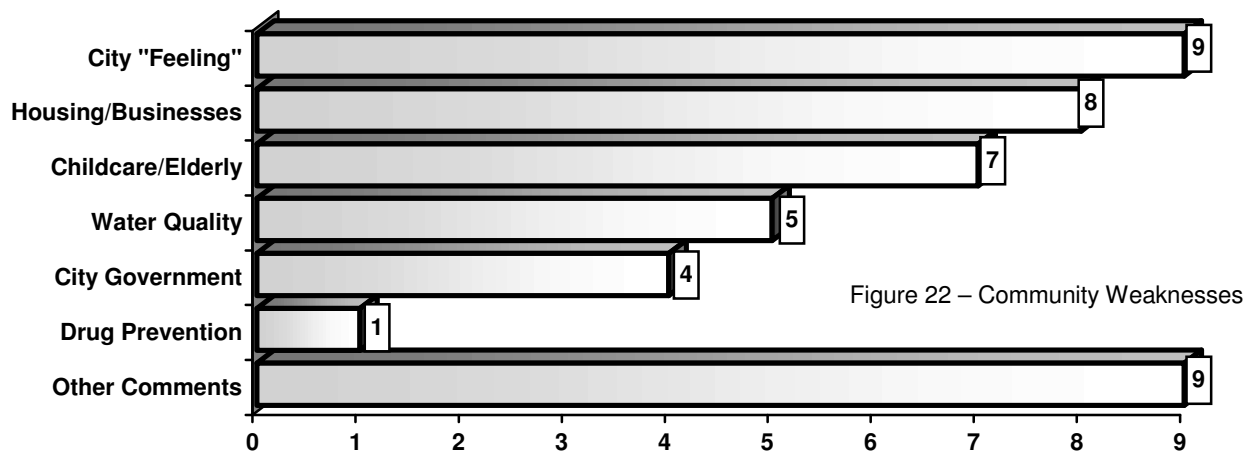


Figure 22 – Community Weaknesses

The last component of the George Community Visioning Survey, and also addressed in a community meeting, is creating a future vision for the community. This category summarizes what residents of George believe are future ideas, projects, or visions they have to make the city a better community in 20 years. Again, there were thirty-two (32) responses from the community surveys which have been grouped together in six encompassing themes.

Future visions for the City of George

1. Create and promote a sense of "Community Betterment"
2. Create ways to keep existing families and encourage new families into the city
3. Encourage the expansion and development of new businesses
4. Create and develop areas for industrial uses; a new "Industrial Park"
5. Promote housing improvements through rehabilitation efforts and new housing
6. Other comments

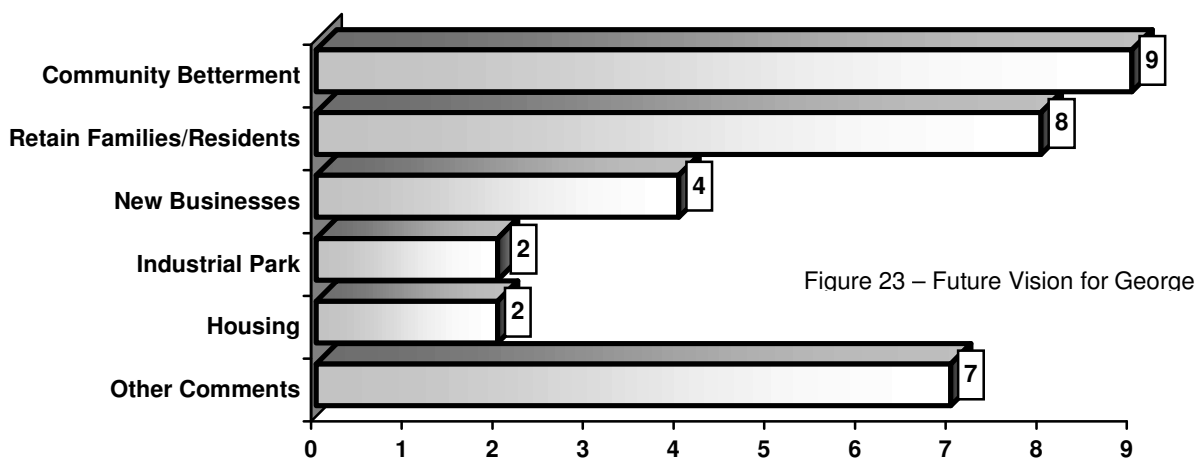


Figure 23 – Future Vision for George

CHAPTER 10. OVERALL GOALS AND GENERAL TRENDS

The comprehensive planning and visioning process provides tools for directing change in cities. The vision that has been created will only happen if local leaders are willing to consider new or non-traditional planning methods and techniques, and address problems that may arise.

There are several items that need to be remembered to make this a successful comprehensive plan. The first and foremost is that all participants must realize there is a large commitment and effort required to make the planning process and this document successful. The commitment of the George Planning Committee to work with city leaders to guide the implementation of this plan and other development issues is essential. Excluding segments of the community may result in the loss of productive and interesting ideas. This plan is not a "quick fix" to the economic challenges that face George; however, this plan can serve as a guide to future community and economic development. A comprehensive land use plan does need to be modified and updated over time in order to maintain current plan and control ordinances. The extent of growth experienced by the city will play a major role in determining how often and what types of adjustments will be required. This land use plan must be maintained as the principal guide for future decision-making.

The following terms should be defined for this plan. Goals are broad statements of intent or priority covering a long period of time. Objectives are specific land use decisions and a means by which the goal is reached. Policies delineate definite courses of action that will be used to meet the objectives.

Take a Look at George, Iowa
We'd Like You to Make it Home

OVERALL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- 1. The City of George will strive to provide long term guidance and managed growth; which together with land use controls, will minimize the number of conflicting land uses.*
- 2. The City of George will recognize and achieve a progressive balance between land uses that facilitates economic and community development growth while considering and respecting the rights of individual property owners.*
- 3. The City of George will strive to facilitate the provision of required and necessary infrastructure and municipal services to the residents of George in a reasonable, efficient, and responsible manner*

GENERAL LAND USE TRENDS AND OBJECTIVES

General development goals guide the comprehensive planning process and are summarized as follows:

1. George is experiencing the trend of a stabilizing population base. The city should continue to promote the community and increase its population over the next 15 to 20 years.

GENERAL LAND USE TRENDS AND OBJECTIVES (continued)

2. Recognizing and promoting George as a “regional” home to many manufacturing and production employees should continue as a focal point of the city’s leaders.
3. The City of George contains a healthy mix of land uses, however, minimizing the number of conflicting land uses and promoting the delineation or separation of existing and potential conflicting land uses will promote a healthier, safer, and cleaner community.
4. Development of the city must not become stagnant. Existing businesses and housing should be maintained and encouraged to expand.
5. Community development should focus on expanding the city’s existing tax base through the promotion of new opportunities.
6. Adequate space for future residential development must be maintained if the city is going to continue to grow and prosper. Housing growth should be controlled through land use management and zoning measures to avoid haphazard development.
7. Continued promotion and growth of commercial and industrial development is essential to the economic well being and future of George.
8. Future commercial/retail businesses development should be encouraged within the Central Business District and other designated areas.
9. Recreation areas and green spaces enhance the quality of life for all those who have access to them. Protecting the integrity and enjoyment of public lands designated for recreational or green spaces should be encouraged.
10. Develop a transportation and infrastructure system that will provide for the safe, convenient and economical movement of people and goods.
11. To ensure the best use of municipal funds, all city roads should be regularly maintained but critical routes such as collector and arterial streets should be monitored, maintained and replaced as necessary.
12. Necessary services, such as fire, water, sewer, electric, streets, and gas, greatly enhance the living environment and economic potential of the community. Because of the cost associated with providing such services, new development should be encouraged to locate where adequate infrastructure is present.
13. Citizen input is one of the most vital planning assets the city has. Thus, with citizen input available, every effort should be made to implement the ideas contained in this plan.

CHAPTER 11. LAND USE ANALYSIS AND PLAN

A study of various types of land uses existing within a community is critical for determining the greatest strengths and weaknesses of historical and projected future development patterns. The land use configuration of a city identifies and reflects the personality of the city, because the use of the land is related to factors including past trends, socioeconomic characteristics, soil suitability, topography, availability of utilities, transportation network and the local beliefs of the residents. Upon determination of the prevailing land use patterns, analysis may be conducted showing prevalent trends of the past, influential factors and likely use of the land in the future. Once this information has been gathered, analyzed and quantified, it can be linked with future land use goals and objectives and the suitability of future growth areas for the various types of development to facilitate the evolution of realistic, attainable and viable land use plan.

In some cases, it becomes clear that land use issues of concern today are not the same problems that merit concern from city officials 10 or 20 years ago. This study of planning in George will include the analysis of seven different existing land uses found within the city's corporate limits. The analysis' will assess current conditions, highlight areas of development or change, and make recommendations for future land use policy.

Land use considerations are probably the most important aspect of community planning, as far as shaping the future growth and development of a city. Decisions made today tend to be long term in that they will affect future growth decisions for many years. The ideal land use pattern is to have a separation of land use types so one use is offered the same zoning protection experienced by all of the other types. By allowing the location of a given land use type in a general area today, one also commits that area to land use types of the same kind in the future. Making sound land use choices requires input from landowners as well as other affected parties in order to preserve the rights of all involved.

LAND USE DEFINITIONS

Comprehensive Plan - A master plan prepared by the City providing a vision and general idea of how land should be used to assure public health, safety, and welfare.

Growth Management - The pacing of the rate or controlling of the location of development via law enactment to manage a community's growth.

Agricultural - Those uses primarily used for grazing or pasture land, producing row crops, raising livestock, or other agricultural commodities.

Single Family Residential - Structures occupied for dwelling purposes by a single-family or two families living in separate dwelling units under a common roof.

Multi-Family Residential - Structures occupied for dwelling purposes by three (3) or more families or containing three (3) or more dwelling units.

Commercial - Structures and/or land used primarily for retail trade and services such as retail, grocery, entertainment, food service, and other related businesses providing for the sale of goods, products, and services.

Industrial - Structures and/or land used primarily for light and heavy industrial uses including manufacturing, warehousing, production, or distribution of natural or man-made goods, along with resource extraction.

Public/Civic - Structures and/or land available for use by the general public for non-commercial purposes such as schools, churches, cemeteries, fraternal or social clubs, and all government buildings.

Parks & Recreation - Those public areas devoted to open air active or passive recreation activities

Vacant - Land having no impact, improvements, or any obvious current land use

COMMUNITY GROWTH TRENDS

Historical growth of the community has developed around the two land use components, natural resources and transportation. One can see that the community developed around the now abandoned railroad track through the community where the grain elevator and eventually the downtown business district was developed. Secondly, the community is also clearly built around and near the convergence of the Rio Grande Creek with the Little Rock River. With the onset of modern transportation and paved roads, the City of George further developed around two primary collector routes through the community. Today, these main transportation routes are County Hwy. L-14 (Virginia Street) and County Hwy. B-34 (Dakota Avenue). Recent development expansions to the community include arterial commercial uses along the previously mentioned routes, fringe residential development and scattered civic and public type uses.

The general growth of the community over the last twenty years has been to the west, north and northeast. The following information presented throughout the rest of this section should provide a sound basis from which the city's land use goals, objectives, and policies can be developed. Then, coupled with the realities of the political atmosphere and sound framework of the city, these concepts and statements can lead to implementation of a realistic and viable land use plan.

AGRICULTURE/VACANT

There are several areas within the existing city limits of George which are still utilized for agricultural purposes. Based upon the developed portion of the community in relation to the city's corporate limits, agricultural land can be found in each direction to the south, west, east, and north of the city. In terms of number of acres, agricultural land is actually the largest land use category within the City of George. It is expected that future development will occur on certain tracts of agricultural ground, especially as the city grows and housing developments expand. This land should be reserved for one of the adjacent land uses when it is developed in the future. For example, most of the agricultural land in George today is bordered by residential properties. It is logical to assume that the future use for that agricultural land will most likely become residential. The exception to this is where future commercial/industrial uses are proposed along Virginia Street on both the north and south ends of George. Furthermore, large tracts of agricultural lands are included within the floodplain of the Rio Grande Creek and the Little Rock River. These agricultural areas would be best suited to remain agricultural in nature or designated as open space/natural resource areas.

Vacant land uses are those properties classified as having no current land use associated with the property. This may include a series of vacant parcels in a newly platted residential subdivision that have not yet been built on, or vacant lots located within a business park or along the highway for commercial development. Vacant uses are also considered those businesses or civic buildings that no longer have an occupied tenant. There are actually very few vacant properties identified in George,

especially when considering commercial, industrial or civic land uses. Most of the land classified as vacant in George is subdivided residential properties that have yet to be developed upon.

SINGLE FAMILY AND MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

The second largest land use category in number of acres, behind agricultural land, is single family residential development. A single family dwelling unit is described as, “A detached building that is arranged, designed or intended to be occupied as the primary residence of a family and having no party wall in common with an adjacent house or houses.” As may be expected, single family dwelling units are located throughout every part of George. At this time, most of the new single family residential development is occurring within the northwest and northeast corners of the community. It should be noted that for the purposes of this plan there is no distinction made between rental single family housing units properties and permanent residences. Currently, there is a fairly clear distinction between separation of residential and other land use. However, the city should continue to monitor and protect single family neighborhoods from being imposed upon by more intensive, incompatible land uses of a commercial or industrial nature. Any existing conflicts with adjacent land uses can be attributed to scattered or haphazard building prior to the creation and enforcement of land use controls such as subdivision or zoning measures.



Photo of a single family residence in George

Photo of multiple family use – apartment complex



Multi-family dwellings comprise a very small percentage of the total residential land uses and an even smaller percentage of total land area within the community. There are three (3) identified apartment buildings in George that would meet the definition of a typical multi-family dwelling, “An apartment house or dwelling used or intended to be used or occupied as the residence of three or more families or housekeeping units living independently of each other.” It should also be noted that for the purposes of this plan, temporary multi-family dwellings such as

hotels, motels and resorts have been classified as commercial developments and though they may appear to meet the definition of a multifamily dwelling they have not been categorized as such.

There are two additional large tracts of property classified as multiple family residential in George. The first is the Good Samaritan Center located at First Avenue N. in the northeast corner of the city. This property is a large senior home for the care of the elderly. The other property classified as multifamily is the mobile home park located at the corner of Calumet Avenue and Virginia Street. A mobile home park is defined as, “Any site, lot, field or tract of land upon which two or more occupied mobile homes are harbored, either free of charge or for revenue purposes; the park shall include any building, structure, tent, vehicle or enclosure used or intended for use as part of the equipment of such park.” This mobile home park is bordered by commercial uses to the south and is

relatively benign in nature to the surrounding single family uses to the north. Actually, the multiple family mobile home park serves as a good land use buffer between the single family uses and nearby more intensive commercial land uses.

The existing residential community, especially single family residential developments, is expected to see continued growth with the city promoting new housing along with the trends of smaller households and retiring agricultural families moving into rural communities. Furthermore, the City of George should also expect and plan to address a continuation of older and deteriorating housing units. The City should plan to participate in a housing rehabilitation program to address the number of problem housing units and rehabilitate older housing units without building new. Finally, new or enhanced recreational amenities such as new parks, the George Recreational Trail, or new school facilities may dictate which direction future housing will be built. It is essential to make the most efficient use of existing public utilities and facilities. This can be accomplished through future residential growth occurring within existing developed areas of the city. However, this may not always be the most practical solution because newly platted subdivisions often market highly desirable and spacious lots versus smaller infill lots.

To further guide residential land uses and future development the following ***residential land use policy recommendations*** have been adopted.

1. *Gradually increase the number of available housing units to facilitate the changes in the population structure.*
2. *Promote compact development patterns by encouraging new housing to be built in existing and new subdivisions and on vacant lots throughout the residential areas in town.*
3. *Encourage the removal/rehabilitation of substandard houses in the community.*
6. *Explore alternatives for improving or modifying the community housing base including obtaining federal/state funds for low and moderate income housing.*
7. *Investigate the feasibility of developing or enticing the development of retirement housing complex, specifically independent senior housing or assisted living.*
8. *Explore and promote opportunities for low cost housing, especially for first time homebuyers, younger homebuyers, or new families to the community.*
9. *Promote and market the city's clean, safe, and friendly community in addition to tax incentive programs to entice new and younger families to locate in George.*
10. *Continue efforts, such as the lot purchase rebate program, to market new housing opportunities in George.*
11. *While constructing new housing is important, the City should not forget its older and/or historical residential properties and should encourage means to catalogue and protect these landmarks.*
12. *The City, along with assistance from the George Development Corp and other clubs or organizations, should promote and market new areas for future residential subdivisions.*

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Commercial and retail activity in George is prominent in two areas of the community. The first is commercial district is the downtown or central business district of George. This area's boundaries are delineated by Iowa Avenue to the North and the elevator to the south along Main Street; and from Sidney Street to Baldwin Street along Michigan Avenue. The central business district is the primary

location for government buildings, public service businesses, professional, medical, and many retail type businesses. The second area of commercial development is in the form of scattered arterial commercial developments along Virginia Street (County Hwy. L14) through George.

In all respects, commercial uses should receive the same protections from incompatible land uses as one would expect for a residential district. Commercial development within the central business district should be limited to those uses that do not require large expanses of land for parking or display. On the other hand, those commercial uses classified as highway or arterial commercial which rely upon large expanses of open space or visibility to high traffic volume routes should be encouraged to locate along the Virginia Street commercial corridor. Where possible, special parking and access considerations should be made in order to prevent traffic congestion and safety issues.



Photo of downtown George
Photo courtesy of: <http://www.georgeiowa.com/>

In regards to George's downtown district, efforts should be initiated to maintain and preserve the attractiveness and historic nature of this business district. The appearance of the city's business district makes a major, and lasting impression on anyone looking to either relocate or build a new business or residence. To keep the downtown district looking active and thriving, vacant lots should be properly maintained, while both empty and occupied buildings should be properly maintained. Furthermore, occupied buildings can maintain an attractive appearance with well-designed and easily visible signage. Although each business is able to maintain a sign, they should be well taken care of. Also, proper maintenance assures a sign poses no safety hazard to pedestrian or vehicular traffic. The following **commercial land use policies** are recommended to guide future commercial developments:

1. *Encourage the revitalization and maintenance of the Central Business District.*
2. *Develop a sign ordinance to guarantee the maintenance of signs in the commercial districts.*
3. *Improve the traffic circulation and available parking space in the downtown district.*
4. *Encourage local businesses to cooperate in the promotional activities and to hold special events in conjunction with one another.*
5. *Continue to support existing large employers within and near George for their benefit and contribution to overall community development.*
6. *Promote and preserve the city's historic and lively central business district.*
7. *The City, with assistance from the Chamber of Commerce and the Development Corp., need to encourage new employers to the community in an effort to diversify local employment opportunities for residents of George.*
8. *Recruitment and development of lodging facility and additional eating establishments are both necessary and desired in order to assist with the continued growth of George.*

9. *With many efforts concentrated on job attraction, it is important to not lose focus on the existing businesses in George and also concentrate on job retention.*
10. *Support the efforts of and cooperatively work with the local chamber of commerce.*
11. *Support the efforts of and cooperatively work with the George Economic Development Corporation.*

INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

Photo of United Farmers Coop – Industrial Land Use



Industrial land uses prove to be a difficult variable to plan for due to the many factors governing its location, including available land, transportation access, availability of labor force, availability of utilities and infrastructure, etc. The success of George in recruiting new industry will depend heavily upon the factors previously mentioned. Industrial development is a most important variable for the future of George since overall community growth and employment is extensively dependent upon it. Thus George must anticipate and plan for the expansion of the city's industrial base and space must be made available to accommodate future growth.

Future industrial growth will be guided toward planned areas in the northern and far southeastern sections of George. The primary areas of existing industrial uses are located near the southern boundary of the central business district and surrounded by adjacent residential uses. It is not practical to expand industrial uses within this area. As a result of limited industrial properties, the George Economic Development Corporation has partnered with the City to develop a new industrial/business park on the city's north end, on the northwest corner of the Dakota Avenue and Virginia Street intersection. Also, with special consideration given to proximity and effect of the Little Rock River floodplain, a secondary proposed industrial development area is identified south of the city's campground, east of the existing county shed.

To further guide industrial land uses and future development the following ***industrial land use policy recommendations*** have been adopted.

1. *Increase the number and quality jobs available to residents of George who are qualified and desire industrial or manufacturing employment.*
2. *Support the county's and neighboring cities' efforts to attract and retain regional industrial or manufacturing businesses.*
3. *Continue to expand and develop the newly created George Business/Industrial Park.*
4. *Seek financial resources through government grants or low-interest loans to aid in the placement of infrastructure, streets, and required services to George Business/Industrial Park.*
5. *Promote the installation of fiber optics and other technological telecommunication utilities to enhance in the recruitment of new and expanding industrial related businesses.*

6. *Along with promoting new industrial resources in George, it is important for the city and the local workforce to continue to support existing industries and their commitment to the community.*

CIVIC/PUBLIC LAND USE

Civic and public land uses include those properties including utility, educational, daycare, religious, cultural, medical, protective, governmental, and other uses that are strongly vested with social importance.

Civic and public land uses usually bring a relatively light intensity to neighboring properties, and have the flexibility to be scattered primarily throughout residential and commercial sectors. These uses are largely benign in their impact on surrounding properties; thus, the scattered pattern of public uses is appropriate. However, increased traffic and congestion at predictable times is often associated with uses such as school, churches, community centers, and facilities housing civic groups. While periodic increases in traffic are often acceptable adjacent to many other land uses, congestion and safety issues should be addressed in the development of future land use policies regarding public or civic uses.

Photo of George City Hall – Public Land Use



Photo of George-Little Rock High School – Public Land Use



These land use concentrations in George are clustered in and around the central business district, including City Hall, the post office, library, community room, and other civic organizations. Less intensive uses such as churches, parking lots, or public/non-profit organizations are found randomly scattered throughout

residential neighborhoods across the entire city. Two remaining large tracts of public/civic use are located on the far eastern and western edges of the community. On the east side of the community is a large tract of public use containing the George-Little Rock High School and Elementary School facilities. Located to the south of the school property is the Lyon County maintenance shed, also a public facility. The primary public use on the far west side of George is the community's cemetery. To further guide industrial land uses and future development the following **public/civic land use policy recommendations** have been adopted.

1. *Support and promote expansion of the school district's services, facilities, and educational programs*
2. *Use the new auditorium for community events; create an event committee to plan diverse activities for all residents of George to enjoy.*
3. *Come together as a community with new and more social events and community celebrations for the people of all ages.*

4. *Efficiently and fairly offer quality municipal services to all residents of the community, including new families and businesses.*
5. *Continue to support and promote the city's Bicentennial Museum.*
6. *Continue to support the unique and resourceful Ostfriesen Genealogical Society which promotes and preserves the historical genealogy and background of George's early history.*
7. *Create and promote activities to build a sense of "Community" for all age groups in George. This will help the residents to create a sense of ownership and roots with the community.*
8. *The City should work with the Chamber of Commerce to develop a quarterly community calendar listing all activities, meetings, school functions, and other municipal services on both paper and the internet.*
9. *Explore the potential and economic feasibility to creating a community daycare center offering an alternative to "in-home" daycare services.*
10. *Explore the concept of a municipal utility in George, especially concerning electricity service.*
11. *Continue to support and promote the excellent level of medical and other professional healthcare related services available in George.*

RECREATIONAL/OPEN SPACE LAND USE

Photo of playground equipment in Sudenga Park



Recreation and open space land uses include parks, swimming pools, golf course, tennis courts, and other city, county or state owned recreational land. This land use does not include privately held vacant lots or subdivisions slated for development. City leaders and local decision-makers should bear in mind that the quality of life in George is a most important factor in a role in economic development efforts to continue the growth and prosperity of the community. Recreation and open space considerations not only play an integral part in the quality of life composition, but are also reflected in the decision of local businesses and housing

developers to locate or expand in George. The appeal of recreation/open space opportunities, especially for the youth of the community, is often overlooked as an important factor in economic and community development.

Recreation and open space land uses comprise the smallest percentage of land area in George, especially if multiple family residential land uses are considered a part of residential use as a whole. However, upon consideration of the number of acres, types of facilities present, and number of parks and recreational programs offered within the City of George in relation to the city's population base, there appears to be an adequate amount of land dedicated to this use classification.

The percentage of recreational land use to person ratio increases even more substantially if the recreational value and use of the Otter Valley Golf Course, arboretum, and state-owned public land along the Little Rock River are factored into the equation of uses and facilities utilized by



the residents of George. The reason why future parks and recreation areas have been planned in George is to target neighborhood uses and accommodate existing recreational programs. For instance, utilizing the existing open fields along the Rio Grand Creek for purposes of soccer or baseball fields would simply enhance the summer youth programs already in place.

Another recreational project, currently underway which many residents of the community are very excited about is the development of the George Recreational Trail. This 3.2 mile paved trail route will encompass the entire community and connect many of the city's existing park facilities. The George Recreational Trail will surely become a valuable asset and wonderful addition to the quality of life already experience in George.

To guide the use and development of recreational facilities in the City of George, the following **parks and recreation land use policy recommendations** have been identified.

1. *Maintain the quality of recreational facilities in George.*
2. *Appearance often leaves a first impression when utilizing public facilities; continue to maintain and keep a neat and orderly appearance to the city's parks and public spaces.*
2. *Develop, fund, and implement an annual maintenance program aimed at enhancing city parks.*
3. *Explore the potential need and usage of a community wellness center; consider retaining the services to conduct a feasibility study or community survey regarding this type of facility.*
4. *Need to update and upgrade the community swimming pool. Either the city keeps spending resources on maintenance, or takes a look at the feasibility of replacement of the city's pool.*
5. *Continue to support and expand upon the summer youth recreation programs*
6. *Create a task force including local youth to explore potential recreational resources for teens and the youth of George.*
7. *Continue to seek financial resources and assistance to complete all three phases of the George Recreational Trail.*
8. *Utilize state and federal funding programs such as REAP and LAWCON through the Iowa Department of Natural Resources when considering funding for future parks and recreation improvements.*

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

It has been pointed out that determining proper land uses for a specific area is a product of many factors and determinants. Land use determinants include such things as public interest, social values, human behavior, economy, convenience, physical characteristics, and the local political climate. The unpredictability of how various interrelated land use determinants will affect each other, combined with an effort to control and plan future development based on these very factors, necessitates a combination of objectivity and subjectivity.

To deal with the future land use planning process most effectively, the city has generated a framework of goals and objectives upon which land use decisions are based. Furthermore, other variables, including planned or possible expansion of services, environmental or natural conditions, or potential economic recruitment also provides insight into future land use patterns. Finally, when creating the future land use map, the city has followed existing land use patterns to also guide and

predict future development. The exact amount of land to be devoted to each land use in 2025 is not known and cannot be accurately estimated because of unknown variables; rather, a realistic estimate of land areas will be made relative to the following methodology. First the increase in projected population from 2000 to 2025 will be examined and analyzed to determine the impact on existing and future planned land uses. Secondly, additional land area (future growth areas) of expansion will be indicated on the future land use map. It must be kept in mind that the future land use plan is a valuable tool in which development decisions and land use controls can and should be based.

The new land use maps for George have been created with the assistance of the Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission staff. The land use map was created by completing a “windshield” survey of the entire community and surrounding area. The survey information was then transferred to the map and checked by city officials and members of the George Planning Committee prior to adoption of the map. The information presented on the land use map has been color coded according to standard land use procedures indicating the following general categories of land use; single-family residential, multiple-family residential, commercial, industrial, parks and recreation, public/civic, agriculture and vacant. For purposes of mapping the lots were coded with regards to the primary use of the land. For instance, a retail business with an apartment located above it would be coded as a commercial use because the residence is secondary in nature and does not directly influence the parcel of land to the extent of the primary use. The land use map is also mapped according to and area of land or an entire parcel, rather than a specific building footprint where the activity is taking place.

Insert George Existing Land Use Map

Insert George Future Land Use Map

CHAPTER 12. ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

ANNEXATION

Annexation is the process through which contiguous fringe territory is added to an existing municipality. Laws that regulate annexation and corporate growth vary greatly from state to state, necessitating a brief narrative of the annexation procedures as they relate to Iowa municipalities. Annexation usually is not a simple process, but rather one that requires considerable thought and consideration as to benefits and cost requirements prior to an official act by a city. Once a city has

annexed a parcel of land, the resulting economic, physical, and cultural results will be evident for many years. Annexation may become further complicated by recommendations developed by the legislature based upon input by land use preservation groups and those opposing urban sprawl trends occurring in other parts of Iowa. The city must be kept abreast of current legislative proposals as they relate to annexation. The purpose of this section will be to provide a general overview of the steps involved in an annexation, and to indicate general areas adjacent to the present city limits that may be considered for future annexations.

Growing communities often find themselves in situations where annexation of adjacent land into the city's limits must be considered in order to provide adequate space for growth; and sometimes to protect the city's interests when the pattern of development outside the city's boundary threatens to have a negative impact on the community in the future. In Iowa, a city may annex land by one of five (5) different methods:

1. Voluntary annexation not in an Urbanized Area
2. Voluntary annexation in an Urbanized Area
3. "80/20" voluntary annexation not in an Urbanized Area
4. "80/20" voluntary annexation in an Urbanized Area
5. Involuntary annexation.

The annexation process in Iowa is overseen by the City Development Board. The City Development Board is comprised of community officials and representatives from across Iowa operating under the direction of the Iowa Department of Economic Development. This board has been granted authority by the State of Iowa to review and make recommendation on annexation proposals.

Voluntary Annexations

Voluntary annexation is a relatively simple process that is handled at the local level between the city and property owner(s) requesting annexation. These annexations are classified as either being in an urbanized area or not. An "urbanized area" is that land which is adjoining or located within two miles of another city. For those voluntary annexations in an urbanized area, state involvement is limited to a review by the City Development Board as to the completeness of the annexation and petition in satisfying the requirements of the Code of Iowa. If the voluntary annexation is not located within an urbanized area, the annexation may be directly filed and recorded with the Secretary of State. As the name would imply, voluntary annexations have 100% support from the landowners requesting annexation into the city. Voluntary annexations, when in the best interest of the city and in keeping with the land use policies established herein, should be welcomed by the city. The resulting increase of tax base and future development potential generally translates to positive outcomes for communities.

Voluntary Annexation Procedures Table 19

VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION NOT IN AN URBANIZED AREA

- a) Submit application for voluntary annexation
- b) The city shall provide a copy of the application to the Board of Supervisors.
- c) The city provides published notice in an official newspaper.
- d) The city council approves the annexation by resolution.
- e) The city files a copy of the resolution, map and legal description of the annexed territory with the Secretary of State, Board of Supervisors, public utility, Iowa DOT
- f) Records a copy of the legal description, map, and resolution with the County Recorder.
- g) The annexation is complete upon acknowledgement by the Secretary of State that the legal description, map and resolution have been received.

VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION IN AN URBANIZED AREA (within 2 miles of another city)

In addition to the above activities for a voluntary annexation, those voluntary annexations which adjoin or are within two miles of another city must.

- Provide notice of the application to cities whose boundary adjoins the territory or that are within two miles of the territory, each affected public utility, the Board of Supervisors, and the regional planning authority.
- Upon city council approving the annexation by resolution, the city forwards the annexation proposal to the City Development Board

"80/20" Voluntary Annexations

The primary difference between a voluntary annexation and an "80/20" annexation is that a city may include up to 20% of the total land area to be annexed containing land owners not wanting to annex into the community, as long as the remaining 80% voluntarily agree to the annexation. Also, public land may be included in 80/20 annexations regardless of written consent. If a public land owner does not consent, the public land does not affect the 80/20 ratio calculation. The City Development Board may request how much land being annexed is vacant or undeveloped, and whether municipal services are provided to residents in the annexed area.

"80/20" Voluntary Annexation Procedures Table 20**80/20 VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION INCLUDING LAND WITHOUT THE OWNERS CONSENT
BOTH IN AND NOT IN AN URBANIZED AREA**

- a) City receives an application and includes up to 20% of territory without the consent of the owner to avoid creating islands or to square up the city's boundaries.
- b) The city holds a consultation with the County Board of Supervisors and Township Trustees at least fourteen business days prior to mailing of application.
- c) At least fourteen business days prior to any action, the City shall by Certified Mail provide a copy of the application to the non-consenting property owners and each affected public utility.
- d) The City must hold a public hearing on the application before taking official action.
- e) At least fourteen days prior to any action, the City shall provide written notice of the application and the time and place of the public hearing to the County Board of Supervisors, each non-consenting owner, each owner of property that adjoins the territory, and each public utility that serves the territory.
- f) The City Development Board considers the annexation proposal. The Board hears input on whether the proposal is complete and properly filed. If the application is accepted, a date for public hearing is set.
- g) The City Development Board holds a public hearing for the County and property owners. After hearing all evidence the Board decides whether to approve or deny the annexation.
- h) If the annexation is approved, the Board notifies the parties and thirty days following the notification the Board files and records documents to complete the annexation if no appeal is filed.
- i) If the annexation is denied the Board notifies the parties.

Involuntary Annexations

Involuntary annexations are initiated by a city and opposed by the majority of landowners in the proposed annexation areas. Before a city attempts such a process, they should review Chapter 368 Code of Iowa, as amended and the most recent City Development Board Administrative Rules appearing in the Iowa Administrative Code. Furthermore, contacting the City Development Board to review and provide necessary coordination and advice on proceeding with the annexation should be also considered. Involuntary annexations can easily become a complex legal matter; thus, care should be given to assure that all requirements of the City Development Board are met. The city must be prepared to defend its actions by indicating how and when community facilities, services, and utilities can be extended into the proposed annexation. Once approved by the board, involuntary annexations must also be approved by a simple majority of the residents of the proposed annexation area and the residents of the city in a referendum vote. The city should explore annexation where necessary in the public's best interest to assure that development directly adjacent to the city limits does not continue unabated in a fashion that conflicts with the city's current or future land use policies. The city may be able to justify involuntary annexations based on the best interest of the public when, for example, adequate land area for a particular land use is not immediately available within the current city limits potentially causing the city to miss out on the creation of jobs or provision of expanded services for the residents of the community.

Petitions requesting involuntary annexations must indicate how municipal services will be provided by the city to the annexed area within three years of July 1 of the fiscal year in which the city taxes are collected against property in the annexed territory. At the end of the third year, the city must submit a report to the City Development Board describing the status of the provision of services within the annexed territory. If the city fails to provide services or fails to show progress in providing services, the City Development Board has the power to cut ties between the city and all or part of the annexed territory. If good cause is shown, the city may request an additional three years to provide municipal services.

"80/20" Voluntary Annexation Procedures Table 21

INVOLUNTARY ANNEXATION

- a) Notice of intent
- b) Prior to filing a petition with the Board, the petitioner must send a letter of intent by certified mail to each city whose urbanized area contains a portion of the territory, the regional planning authority, affected public utilities, property owners listed in the petition, and the Board of Supervisors.
- c) Prior to filing, the City must hold a public meeting on the petition, of which a notice is to be published.
- d) The City files a petition with the City Development Board
- e) Board Review of Petition for completeness and proper filing. If accepted as complete, a committee is formed.
- f) A Committee holds a public hearing to hear evidence for and against the petition.
- g) The Committee holds a decision meeting to approve or deny the petition for annexation.
- h) The Board works with the county to set an election date. After the election the county reports the results of the election to the Board. The Board publishes the election results.
- i) If the petition is approved at election, and no appeal is filed within thirty days of the publication of the election results, the Board files and records the documents necessary to complete the election.
- j) Three years following the completion of involuntary annexation of territory the Board reviews the status of the provision of services provided by the City to the annexed territory, and determines if further action is required.

Future growth in George is expected to occur within the existing corporate city limits. Thus, the city is not anticipating future annexations, especially involuntary annexations. George

does not foresee the need for future annexations, but should be open to accepting voluntary annexations in certain cases that would provide a benefit to the city through an increase in taxation revenues, new jobs, housing or other new construction. In all cases proposed annexations will result in both benefits and disadvantages; thus, the city must look at both sides and make a value judgement.

EXTRATERRITORIAL ZONING AND LAND USE

Cities in Iowa may extend zoning and land use policies to affect the area inside the radius of two miles from the community's existing limits. Two restrictions apply, however, that limit George's ability to apply this in Lyon County. Agricultural land uses in the State of Iowa are immune to zoning of any type regardless of proximity to city boundaries. Additionally, exclusive jurisdiction over the non-agricultural land uses in the two-mile buffer is not available to cities within zoned counties. This is the case with George as Lyon County practices and enforces zoning and subdivision regulations.

Nonetheless, cities and counties may establish 28E agreements authorizing a city to have specific levels of input into county land use matters. These 28E provisions may range from granting complete zoning control of the two-mile radius to the city, to allowing the city to occupy a non-voting seat on the county's planning and zoning commission, to simply requiring that the city and county planning and zoning commissions meet jointly on occasion to discuss upcoming land use issues.

CHAPTER 13. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Because the scope of the George Comprehensive Plan is long term in nature, its policy recommendations and the idea of implementing such policies may seem daunting. It is for this reason that city officials and specifically the George Planning Committee should utilize this plan to assist in developing annual or short term improvement programs such as a trails plan, capital improvements plan, financial budgeting, or other examples. Additionally, the Planning Committee should evaluate the comprehensive plan on an annual basis for consideration of changing development patterns which may occur in any given year. The George Comprehensive Plan is to be used by both public and private sectors in land use decision-making processes.

The private sector, including developers, investors, industry, and businesses will use this document to become informed of the official positions of the city regarding land use and policy issues. The plan will provide the general public with an outline to make individual land investments, purchases, or development decisions. The public will become more informed as to the city's policies in regards to those land uses that are permitted, encouraged, prohibited, and protected. With this knowledge in advance, the public will be able to make informed and knowledgeable decisions complimentary to the comprehensive plan.

The public or governmental sector, including but not limited to the City of George, Lyon County, State of Iowa and Federal governments shall use the comprehensive plan as a guide in land use decision-making processes. While this working and usable document is the result of the efforts of the city, it has been prepared representing the interests of all community residents. Any activities affecting land uses by the city, State of Iowa or the United States Federal Government should follow the comprehensive plan.

The George Comprehensive Plan is prepared exclusively for the city with the technical assistance of the Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission. This document may be amended as deemed necessary by the George Planning Committee for recommended action by the City Council in a legal and orderly manner. While actual or individual enforcement of many of the provisions of the plan may be difficult, this plan is a policy document once the City of George has approved it. Enforcement may be enacted by the city to prevent a violation or to ensure compliance with the policies as outlined in this plan. All governmental bodies, businesses, individuals, and corporations are strongly encouraged to comply with the spirit and intent set forth in the goals and policies outlined in the comprehensive plan.

In completing reviews of this comprehensive plan, the land use objectives and policy recommendations should be thoroughly reviewed to determine whether or not changes are needed for the "enforcement" controls or ordinances that are prepared by the city to achieve compliance with this plan. This may include incorporating or preparing municipal zoning and subdivision regulations to establish land use and development standards. Changes recommended for "enforcement" controls should be in compliance with and consistent with the comprehensive plan's future land use map.

The preceding chapters form the core of the George Comprehensive Plan with narratives, maps, charts, tables, and statistics concerning desirable future development patterns. This chapter will address possible means of implementing the objectives and policy recommendations, and identify those actions needed to implement the land use policies identified in this comprehensive plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

George is a strong and surviving community. Change often times conjures up thoughts of having to give up something. This is why people often try to cling to the past. Most people like things the way they are, even though they know change is inevitable. Some people resist change simply out of fear of the future; they are more comfortable with the past. Community leaders are charged with the task of identifying, leading, and being the first to accept and embrace the bright future that George has ahead.

1. Create a three (3) to five (5) year action plan addressing city growth, and annexation policies if necessary.
2. Establish an annual comprehensive plan review by the George Planning Committee.
3. Create and annually update an inventory of parks and recreation amenities, identifying completed and proposed short term and long term trail development.
4. The City of George must exhibit an open and welcoming character to new residents and visitors to the community.
5. In establishing any new policy, remembering to protect the rights and interests of property owners in George; consistency and fairness is a must.

Establishing planning or performance benchmarks is one method used in determining accountability to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. A benchmark system permits the city to develop general descriptions of what it hopes to achieve by implementing the land use objectives and policy recommendations outlined in the plan. After identifying desired outcomes, the city can then set thresholds or goals for the achievement of the desired outcomes. Periodically, the city should track and review the achievement of desired outcomes from implementing this comprehensive plan.

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