

# Executive Summary

This Comprehensive Plan serves as the blueprint for Jasper's Bright Future. Each chapter in this plan provides valuable details and insight relevant to Jasper County as it prepares for the next 20 years. Public Feedback and Planning Best Practices are also included in each chapter to provide rationale for the content and goals and objectives listed at the end of the chapter.

Due to the timeframe and multitude of subjects, a comprehensive, 20-year-long plan is necessarily filled with numerous goals, objectives, and action statements.

To manage the bulk of information, County leaders should keep in mind the overall vision statement and 9 goal statements. The objectives specify ideas that can lead to achieving the goals. The action statements can be thought of as a “tool box” for achieving each objective.

The Vision Statement: ***Jasper County will combine prosperity and preservation and be a community where people can put down roots to grow towards a brighter future.***

The public feedback across focus groups and the online survey showed a few subject areas rising to the top (not necessarily in this order):

1. Transportation
2. Economic Development
3. Conservation, Parks and Recreation
4. Public Health and Safety

To achieve the goals and objectives that fall within these categories, some of the other goals and objectives also play a role. For example, economic development tends to follow residential development, so housing is also an important factor.

An assessment of the “most important take-away” for each of the goals are summarized below to help Jasper County focus its short-term efforts. These recommendations should be vetted with local leaders and partners and re-evaluated on an annual basis.



# Overall Take-Aways

## Marketing and Communication:

Throughout the planning process, the need for marketing and communication was discussed along with many of the other subjects. This was needed to let the public know what great things the county has to offer, spread the word about the various special events, establish a positive agricultural image, promote economic development, address public safety issues, and let people know of the numerous programs and resources available to address a variety of needs (e.g. farming, housing, economic development, and conservation).

Fulfillment of these marketing and communication efforts would need to come from different sources with expertise in each subject area. This leads us to the second overall take-away.

## Collaboration:

Iowa's first Smart Planning Principle is Collaboration. The county's comprehensive plan is not limited to issues that are solely addressed by the county government alone. While this may seem to complicate implementation, it simplifies the overall vision. The vision for the county encompasses many aspects of life. To address this broad vision, numerous entities need to be used as resources and partners.



The Introduction describes the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan: Guide for Decision Makers, Legal Basis for Land Use Regulations, and the Community's Vision for the Future.

The Introduction also summarizes Iowa's Smart Planning Principles and the public engagement and planning process.



The Community Profile chapter summarizes the regional context and demographics of the county. The population projections indicate a change in population from 37,147 per the 2018 Census Bureau estimate to between 34,525 and 40,148 in 2040.



# Chapter 3 Land Use

**Land Use Goal: Preserve the rural atmosphere while promoting responsible growth.**

Land Use Objectives:

- ☀ LU-1: Improve communication between the county and cities regarding land use decisions
- ☀ LU-2: Promote the efficient layout and highest and best use of land

Most important take-away – Improve communication and collaboration between the cities and county. By working together, many of the other goals in this plan can be achieved.



# Chapter 4 Transportation

**Transportation Network Goal: Develop and maintain a complete transportation system to benefit residential, agricultural, and economic purposes.**

Transportation Network Objectives:

- ☀ TN-1: Ensure that the transportation network is safe and efficient
- ☀ TN-2: Use the street design to establish a character for the county, villages, and cities

Most important take-away – Establish a protocol to determine when a gravel road should be paved or other improvements are necessary. Gravel road maintenance was a recurring issue during the planning process. Rural residents are dependent upon this network being safe and functional for their daily transportation needs and farm operations.

**Mobility Goal: Provide mobility options for all ages and abilities.**

Mobility Objectives:

- ☀ MO-1: Develop non-motorized connectivity for transportation purposes
- ☀ MO-2: Support motorized travel without individual motorized vehicle ownership

Most important take-away – These issues are likely to become more significant in the future as the population continues to age and as the trail system expands. In the meantime, support DART's programs for vanpool and HIRTA. When roads are paved, also pave the shoulder for people biking since this improves safety and provides connections between towns and the developing trail system. Paved shoulders also improve pavement edge durability.



**Housing Goal: Provide a variety of attractive housing options, accommodating all income levels in all stages of life.**

**Housing Objectives:**

- ☀ HS-1: Allow innovative and creative housing designs that accommodate the public's changing needs and preferences, while maintaining the county's character
- ☀ HS-2: Increase the availability of housing targeted toward households earning more than the County's median income
- ☀ HS-3: Ensure the housing stock is safe and attractive
- ☀ HS-4: Promote, incentivize, and facilitate housing development opportunities

Most important take-away – The development of the Jasper County Local Housing Trust Fund (LHTF) can lead many of the actions that fall under these objectives. The County and cities should collaborate with the LHTF to help achieve those actions.

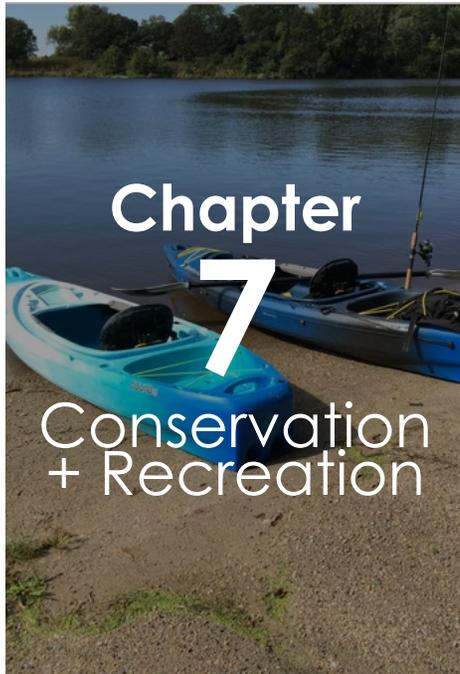


**Agricultural Goal: Ensure the future of agriculture as a vibrant part of Jasper County's identity and economy.**

**Agricultural Objectives:**

- ☀ AG-1: Support agricultural prosperity through educational, infrastructure, and marketing resources
- ☀ AG-2: Improve the public image and understanding of the role of agriculture in the county
- ☀ AG-3: Protect Jasper County's natural resources through environmentally sensitive farming methods

Most important take-away – Maintain a database of programs and resources (listed in the plan) that are designed to assist farmers and make this list available on the county's website. There are several existing programs from both private and public sources that can help to address several of the issues that were identified through the public engagement process. Also, the agricultural sector will need to be resilient and adaptable to withstand unpredictable and potentially disruptive changes in regional, national, and global forces.



**Conservation + Recreation Goal: Maintain and enhance natural resources and conservation land.**

Conservation + Recreation Objectives:

- ☀ CR-1: Protect wetlands, prairies, stream corridors, and other wildlife habitat
- ☀ CR-2: Foster community connection, access and awareness of natural resources through wildlife parks, trails, and programs

Most important take-away – Invest in county conservation and recreation, including parks, greenspace, and trails. A conservation system master plan should be a next step to guide funding toward the most important improvements. Since these amenities are provided at no or low cost to residents, this is one of the most important factors for improving quality of life for all residents, plus it attracts visitors, providing an economic boost.

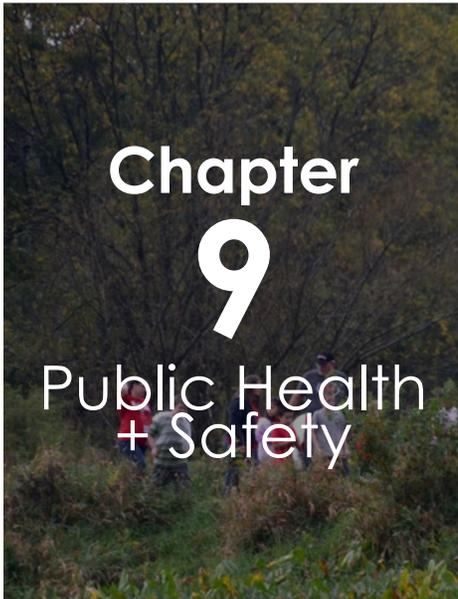


**Economic Goal: Attract, retain, and expand a variety of businesses.**

Economic Objectives:

- ☀ EC-1: Create and attract an educated and skilled workforce
- ☀ EC-2: Establish a business friendly environment
- ☀ EC-3: Use county-wide marketing to promote tourism and local businesses
- ☀ EC-4: Seek new businesses that will diversify and strengthen the local economy
- ☀ EC-5: Encourage entrepreneurship and support of local businesses development

Most important take-away – JEDCO can be a leader for many of these objectives and actions. The County and cities should collaborate with JEDCO and provide support as needed.

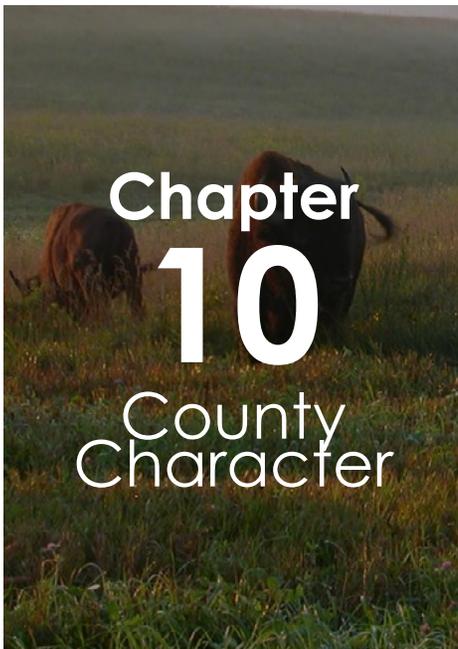


**Public Health and Safety Goal: Maintain high level of service for public health and safety.**

Public Health + Safety Objectives:

- ☀ PH-1: Ensure adequate and effective sheriff patrol and public outreach
- ☀ PH-2: Minimize injuries and loss of life and property due to impacts of natural hazards (JCEMP)
- ☀ PH-3: Maintain a high level of communication with residents
- ☀ PH-4: Ensure that the health needs, both physical and mental, of all residents are being met

Most important take-away – In addition to ongoing compliance with the Jasper County Emergency Management Plan, effective communication with the public due to hazards and emergencies will be the most important aspect of this element. The Jasper County Health Department should also be enabled to continue to fulfill their mission.



**County Character Goal: Establish a county character that is family friendly, evokes a rural feel, and celebrates the unique attributes of the county.**

County Character Objectives:

- ☀ CC-1: Support and expand special events and festivals showcasing locations throughout the county
- ☀ CC-2: Create a unique identity for the county and its towns and villages
- ☀ CC-3: Be an environmentally-conscious leader

Most important take-away – To attract and retain residents, special events, historic sites, and public art can establish a positive character for the county. The parks and recreation system also plays a role in this effort, and is addressed in the conservation and recreation element of the plan.



The Implementation Plan will serve as the guide to decision-making and initiatives in the county. It lists partners and resources that may be available to help implement the plan. Partnerships and collaboration will be the key to implementing the plan goals.

Each year, the Planning and Zoning Commission should develop a work plan for actions to prioritize that year and assess accomplishments of the prior year.



The appendix documents all of the public engagement details, including presentations and the full responses to the MetroQuest online survey. It also summarizes the relevant plans and provides the detailed population projections.

