

## CHAPTER 10: IMPLEMENTATION



Photo of the Upper Iowa River by Randy Uhl

### 10.1 Introduction

The purpose of the implementation element is to explain how this plan will be implemented to achieve the desired outcomes (goals, objectives, etc.) as set forth by the City of Decorah. The City of Decorah Comprehensive Plan addresses many important components critical to sustaining a healthy community while preserving the area's natural resources and history. As change is inevitable, the plan may need to be amended in the future to appropriately reflect those changes. This element includes a table of all the policies highlighted in each previous element of the plan, with a timeframe for those actions. In this way, this element serves as the master "to do" list for implementing the plan.

## **Time Frame**

This category assigns approximate timeframes for strategies to begin implementation. Some strategies will take a significant amount of time for completion, so this category only indicates start times.

- > Underway – Started as the comprehensive plan was being drafted
- > Immediately – Should start as soon as possible after plan adoption
- > 0 to 2 years
- > 2 to 5 years
- > Beyond 5 years
- > Ongoing

Decorah Planning & Zoning will be instrumental for implementing many of the strategies. However, they cannot act alone and this category lists partners who will be crucial to success. (The top agency listed in this category is the lead organization on the strategy. This is usually the Decorah Planning & Zoning.) Abbreviations used are:

DPZ- Decorah Planning & Zoning  
DA – Decorah Administration  
DPD- Decorah Police Department  
DFD- Decorah Fire Department  
DSD- Decorah Streets Department  
DED- Decorah Economic Development  
DWD- Decorah Water Department  
DWW- Decorah Waste Water  
DCM- Decorah Chamber of Commerce  
DE- Decorah Engineering  
DHP- Decorah Historical Preservation  
DCC- Decorah City Council  
DTB- Decorah Tree Board  
DMAB- Decorah Municipal Airport Board  
WC- Winneshiek County  
DPP- Decorah Parks & Recreation  
DSD- Decorah School District  
LC- Luther College  
DLB- Decorah Library Board  
COD- City of Decorah  
WCR – Winneshiek County Residents  
DCR- Decorah City Residents  
VM- Vesterheim Museum

## **Resource Needs**

The categories described below take into account both direct expenditures and staff time costs.

- “Minimum” resource needs indicate that the implementation of the strategy would likely take less than \$10,000 in direct expenditures and could be accomplished within the schedules of existing staff and/or volunteers of the responsible parties.
- “Moderate” resource needs indicate that the implementation of the strategy would take more than \$10,000 and less than \$50,000 in direct expenditures and would require some coordination between agencies and increased staff time.
- “Significant” resource needs indicate that implementation of the strategy would take more than \$50,000 in direct expenditures and would require significant coordination between agencies and significant staff time.

Strategy	Time Frame	Lead Agency/ Partner(s)	Resources
The major street plan should be maintained that is integrated with the regional street system and reflects major traffic generators and adjacent land-use patterns.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE, DSD	Minimum
Standards for major and local streets should be developed and enforced in the subdivision ordinance and city standard specifications to insure adequate right-of-way, pavement width, street access, and dedication of street right-of-way prior to development. SUDAS guidelines should be considered for planning and construction.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE	Minimum
Provision of frontage drives and limited access along Highways 9 and 52 to provide for adequate traffic control and land-use development should be encouraged.	Ongoing	DPZ,	Minimum
Residential areas and residential local service streets should be protected from the impact of industrial traffic by enforcement of truck routes in the city, to the greatest extent possible.	Ongoing	DPD	Minimum
The street improvement program priorities should generally be based on existing and future traffic volumes based on land use projections and street maintenance evaluations.	Ongoing	DPZ,	Minimum
Alternative traffic routes between the outlying areas and the city should be considered as traffic volumes warrant.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE	Moderate
Various options regarding mass transit to serve Decorah should be explored, including the development of a regional transportation center.	Ongoing	DCR, COD, DED, DE	Moderate-Significant
Continued improvements and development at the Decorah Municipal Airport should be in accordance with an updated airport master plan.	0-2 yrs	DMAB, DED, COD, DCR	Moderate

The development of a regional airport should be considered.	Ongoing		Significant
Use of the airport by commuter aircraft should be promoted.	Ongoing	DMAB	Minimum
Streets should be planned with consideration for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. This should include new development as well as street redevelopment.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE	Moderate-Significant
Access management for major streets should be encouraged and implemented and utilize SUDAS guidelines as a reference for new and existing streets.	Immediately	DPZ, DE	Minimum
A detailed written plan should be established that will reflect development, maintenance, and orderly growth of area trails, parks, recreation activities and community facilities.	0-2 years	DPR	Minimum-Moderate
A system of neighborhood parks that serve existing and future residential areas should be developed in accordance with the parks and recreation plan.	Beyond 5 years	DPR,DPZ	Minimum-Moderate
The system of bikeways and trails that links parks, recreation areas and schools with residential areas should be further developed in the Decorah area.	Immediately	DPR,DPZ, DSD, DE	Moderate-Significant
The local trail system should be expanded and integrated with county and regional trail systems -- to enhance connectivity and multi-modal use.	2-5 years	DPZ, WC, DE, DA	Moderate-Significant
Cooperative efforts with all public entities, governmental agencies and surrounding municipalities; including schools, college, and counties including Winneshiek, regarding planning and development of recreational facilities and programs and joint use of facilities should be encouraged and continued.	Ongoing	COD, DPR, DA	Minimum
Public park dedication standards for developers should be established.	Immediately	DPZ	Minimum

**Schools**

Future needs of area school districts and colleges will be coordinated and incorporated into this plan.	Immediately	DSD, LC, DA	Minimum-Significant
<b>Community Facilities</b>			
Future needs of the Decorah Fire Department will be coordinated in accordance with the standards of the Insurance Service Office (ISO) and this plan.	Ongoing	DFD, DCC	Minimum-Moderate
Relocation and potential consolidation of city facilities should be considered during the planning period.	Ongoing	COD	Minimum-Significant
The city library should be recognized as a vital part of this community and overall maintenance and operations should be supported.	Ongoing	DCC, DLB,	Minimum-Moderate
Development of a community center should be encouraged.	Ongoing	COD	Significant
The Vesterheim Museum should be recognized as a vital part of this community and the city should participate in a cooperative and coordinated planning process in support of the Museum's integration and development in its existing downtown area.	Ongoing	DCC, DPZ, VM	Minimum
<b>Utilities</b>			
Coordination of the immediate and long range plans of the wastewater treatment and sanitary sewer system with the land-use plan and policies will be encouraged and implemented.	Ongoing	DWW, DPZ, DE	Minimum-Significant
A detailed water system plan addressing current and projected needs for production, storage, treatment, transmission and distribution should be developed. The plan should address both domestic and fire flows, and should be developed in conjunction with the land use plan.	2 to 5 years	DWD, DE,	Moderate-Significant

The water supply wells should be protected from extraneous surface contamination.	Ongoing	DWD	Moderate-Significant
City standard specifications for street and utility improvements should be developed to provide uniform design of utilities and streets.	2 to 5 years	DPZ, DE	Minimum-Moderate
Storm drainage system design criteria should be developed in accordance with the land use policies and plan to serve as a guide for developers and the city to improve storm drainage systems. The storm sewers in areas subject to future development by sub dividers should be designed to accommodate runoff from storm events of a 10-year recurrence.	Beyond 5 years	DPZ, DE, DCC	Minimum-Moderate
An ordinance should be considered that addresses development within established flood limits. This ordinance should be established using the city's accepted flood map. Full or partial prohibition should be considered for development in wetland and flood limit areas.	0 to 2 years	DPZ, DE	Minimum
Recycling of solid waste and safe methods for disposal of toxic waste should be promoted.	Ongoing	DCC, DWD	Minimum
The preservation and protection of historical and archaeological sites and environmentally sensitive areas should be continued.	Ongoing	DHP, DE	Minimum
Potential historic and archaeological areas should be identified in the development and redevelopment of publicly and privately owned land and structures. Standards should be provided in subdivision regulations and site plan regulations that require the identification of the historical or archaeological potential of sites and structures.	Ongoing	DPZ, DHP	Minimum

The Decorah Historic Preservation Commission should be consulted for consideration and integration of historic preservation opportunities in Decorah.	Ongoing	DPZ, DHP	Minimum
Abatement of air and noise pollution will be encouraged in residential areas.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
Solar access rights and energy conservation are encouraged in the review process of subdivision plats and site plans.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
Appropriate buffering should be provided between residential and other land uses.	Ongoing	DPZ, DA	Minimum
Preservation of wetlands in accordance with state and federal regulations will be implemented in the review process of subdivision plats and site plans.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE	Minimum
Tree replacement and preservation guidelines should be improved and incorporated in the subdivision and site plan ordinances.	Ongoing	DPZ, DTB	Minimum
The coordination of urban development in the immediate planning area adjoining the city limits with Winneshiek County should be encouraged and supported.	Ongoing	DPZ, WC, DA	Minimum
The protection of the floodplains of the Upper Iowa River, Dry Run, Trout Run Creek and other tributary stream channels, and embankments from incompatible development will be given high priority.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
The steep rock land, limestone outcroppings, and other scenic landscapes should continue to be preserved through acquisition, of easements and other methods.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum-Significant
Dry Run, the principal drainage channel through the developed part of Decorah should be improved and maintained as open space through residentially developed areas and enclosed only where necessary due to extension of streets and commercial and industrial development in the central business district.	Immediately	DPZ, DE	Minimum

Storm drainage easements for Dry Run and other drainage channels and storm sewers should be established.	Ongoing	DPZ, DE	Moderate
<b>Urban Growth</b>			
Future land use needs will be developed based on a population estimate of 15,000 by the year 2020.	Immediately	DPZ	Minimum
Controlled urban development will be encouraged to extend outward from developed area to insure the orderly growth of Decorah.	Immediately	DPZ,DCC,	Minimum
Coordination and cooperative efforts will be maintained with Winneshiek County to control development outside and encourage it to occur in the city.	Ongoing	DPZ, DCC, WC	Minimum
Development of vacant land within the existing and future corporate limits will have a high priority in meeting future land-use demand.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
<b>Residential Land Use</b>			
Density of residential development should be related to the physical characteristics of the area, including topography and soils, and the availability of municipal utilities. See principles for further guidance.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
A variety in the type of housing construction should be encouraged and supported to meet the housing needs of the population. The housing mix should reflect anticipated trends to higher density development, and demands for affordable housing, while being compatible with existing residential density and development. Housing types may include apartments, townhouses, and single family dwellings, including manufactured housing and mobile homes.	Ongoing	DPZ, DCC	Minimum

Residential development, such as a planned unit development (PUD), should be encouraged to provide flexibility and better utilization and preservation of land; particularly in areas where soils, topography and tree cover are limiting factors.	Ongoing	DPZ, DCC	Minimum
Coordination and cooperative efforts should be maintained with Winneshiek County, to control and encourage preservation of agricultural land not needed for urban development.	Ongoing	DPZ, DCC	Minimum
Any development in and around areas of the city meeting the criteria as a historically significant area should recognize and preserve the historic setting, architecture character and architectural design characteristics of the buildings and area of the city.	Ongoing	DPZ, DHP	Minimum
The committee should encourage the definition and identification for criteria of “ <i>historically significant areas</i> ” and define “ <i>and around</i> ” with community’s input.	Immediately	DHP, DCC	
<b>Commercial Land Use</b>			
Continued efforts to maintain and improve the central business district and contiguous business districts as the principal retail center of the city will be encouraged and supported.	Ongoing	DPZ, DED,	Minimum-Moderate
Consider the extension of the C3 design standard to other business district, continued revitalization, development, and expansion of the central business district, including building front improvement programs, provisions for off-street parking, and improvements to the appearances of buildings, traffic circulation, and landscaping.	2 to 5 years	DPZ, DCC	Minimum

Programs that require flexibility and innovation, regarding renewal and redevelopment of existing poorly developed commercial areas in the central business district and other areas in the city, will receive favorable consideration and support through establishment of urban renewal districts, tax increment financing (TIF), and other development programs and standards.	Ongoing	DPZ, DED, DCC	Minimum-Moderate
Large bulk commercial uses, and general highway related service uses, should be encouraged to locate along Highway 9, in the Decorah Business Park, and in Freeport in areas suitable for that type of development. Unless planned, commercial and industrial development along Highway 52 should be discouraged to protect conservation of open spaces and retain the visual aesthetics of this gateway entrance and corridor into the community.	Immediately	DPZ, DCC	Minimum
Additional site plan standards and regulations should be adopted and enforced, as part of the zoning, including a defined gateway ordinance, to improve visual quality of commercial development and redevelopment, traffic circulation, and compatibility with adjoining land uses.	Immediately	DPZ, DCC	Minimum
Preservation of <i>historically significant</i> buildings and structures <i>in all commercial areas of the city</i> will be encouraged and supported.	Immediately	DPZ, DHP, DCR, DCC	Minimum
The committee should encourage the definition and identification for criteria of historically significant areas and consider community's input.	Immediately	DPZ, DHP, DCR	Minimum
To minimize congestion and improve traffic movements, cluster commercial development should be encouraged, in lieu of strip development, along major streets.	Ongoing	DPZ, DA, DE	Minimum

<b>Industrial Land Use</b>			
Development of light industrial uses within planned industrial parks should be encouraged and promoted.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
All residential and certain commercial land uses should be prohibited from areas that are set aside for future industrial development.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
Development of planned industrial parks should be encouraged in areas suitable for industrial development.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
Buffers in the form of natural barriers of streams and wooded areas, landscaping and screening should be provided when industrial uses adjoin residential and other incompatible uses.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum
An ordinance defining mixed use and sustainable development should be encouraged.	0 to 2 years	DPZ	Minimum
<b>Annexation</b>			
The voluntary annexation process should be encouraged to the extent possible. Consideration should be given to involuntary annexation of certain areas with potential for development, and to enhance orderly development and compatible land use as expressed through the policies and land-use plan.	Ongoing	DPZ, WCR	Minimum-Significant
Areas within the two-mile limit with potential for urban development should be considered for annexation to the city during the planning period.	Ongoing	DPZ, WC	Minimum-Significant
City-owned land such should be considered for annexation to the city.	Ongoing	DPZ	Minimum-Significant
Coordination and cooperative efforts should be maintained with Winneshiek County regarding annexation of areas required for controlled development and growth of the city.	Ongoing	DPZ, WC	Minimum

## **10.2 Plan Adoption**

The City of Decorah's Comprehensive Smart Plan was reviewed by the public on December 18th, 2011. The City Council reviewed the plan and voted to adopt Decorah's Comprehensive Smart Plan on February 6th, 2012.

## **10.3 Integration and Consistency**

It is important that all elements of the plan be integrated and made consistent. As a result of the comprehensive plan being developed in a coordinated and simultaneous effort, the planning process has ensured that the development and review of each element is consistent with the others; and based on that analysis, there are no known inconsistencies between the planning elements. Furthermore, Decorah has and will continue to work with Winneshiek county in updating its Comprehensive Plan which will help guide the entire County in its future planning needs.

## **10.4 Measurement of Plan Progress**

As part of the comprehensive planning process, a number of goals, objectives and actions were developed that when implemented are intended to build stronger relationships and give direction to the city board and its residents. Many of the objectives are long term, while some can be accomplished in the next couple of years.

To help the city in measuring progress of the comprehensive plan, a table of action statements has been created that identify the action, key parties, timeframes, and possible funding requirements to accomplish those actions. The identified actions will provide guidance to the plan commission which can measure the progress of achieving implementation of the comprehensive plan. It is recommended that the plan be continually reviewed by the city boards as copies will be available at each meeting location.

## **10.5 Plan Monitoring, Amendments, and Updates**

The City of Decorah Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a living document. Over time, social and economic conditions and values tend to change. The comprehensive plan should be updated periodically to reflect these changes. Systematic, periodic updates will ensure that not only the statistical data is current but also the plan's goals, policies, and action reflect the current situation and modern needs. It is recommended the plan be reviewed for consistency every five years, with a major update planned every 20 years.

# **CHAPTER 11: SMART PLANNING PRINCIPLES**

## **11.1 Introduction**

The smart planning principles outlined in this chapter apply to the entire comprehensive planning process as a whole. The use of the following ten smart planning principles is intended to produce greater economic opportunity, enhance environmental integrity, improve public health outcomes, and safeguard Decorah's quality of life. The principles also address the need for fair and equitable decision-making processes.

## **11.2 Collaboration**

Everyone is encouraged to be involved and provide comment during the decision making process and during implementation of such decisions. This includes governments, communities and individuals, both residing in the community and those from outside the community. Decorah will strive to develop and implement a strategy to facilitate such participation. In cases where jurisdictions overlap, Decorah will work together with those entities to reach their common goals.

## **11.3 Efficiency, Transparency and Consistency**

The City of Decorah strives to be efficient in all aspects of its operations, promoting good stewardship of the community's resources and the taxpayers' money. The city promotes transparency to make the governing of the community accessible to the general public with consistent outcomes that seek to put into action the equitable distribution of development benefits and costs.

## **11.4 Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy**

The City of Decorah encourages clean and renewable energy use and increased energy efficiency wherever possible in both public and private development.

## **11.5 Occupational Diversity**

Decorah should promote increased diversity of employment and business opportunities, promote access to education and training, expand entrepreneurial opportunities, and promote the establishment of businesses in locations near existing housing, infrastructure, and transportation.

## **11.6 Revitalization**

Decorah encourages the revitalization of established town centers and neighborhoods by promoting development that conserves land, protects historic resources, promotes pedestrian accessibility, and integrates different uses of property. Infill development is preferred over new construction in undeveloped and outlying areas. (See 9.6 Land Use Policies)

## **11.7 Housing Diversity**

Decorah should encourage diversity in the types of available housing, support the rehabilitation of existing housing, and promote the location of housing near employment centers, colleges and any future public transportation systems.

## **11.8 Community Character**

Decorah should promote activities and development that are consistent with the character and architectural style of the community and should respond to local values regarding the physical character of the community. (See 9.6 Land Use Policies)

## **11.9 Natural Resources and Agricultural Protection**

The City of Decorah places a high priority on natural resources and agricultural protection, recognizing that they are a primary component of its community character. Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should emphasize protection, preservation, and restoration of natural resources, agricultural land, and cultural and historic landscapes, and should increase the availability of open spaces and recreational facilities.

## **11.10 Sustainable Design**

The City of Decorah promotes sustainable design and construction standards in developments, buildings and infrastructure. Every effort should be made to conserve natural resources by reducing waste and pollution through efficient use of land, energy, water, air, and materials. These principles are evident in the land use policies (see 9.6) promoting solar access rights and energy conservation.

## **11.11 Transportation Diversity**

The City of Decorah encourages transportation options that maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel, and improve air quality. The city enjoys many benefits from the extensive system of recreational trails already in place. Transportation policy (see section 3.9) encourages expanded use of the airport, directs the exploration of mass transit options, and encourages accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian traffic.