

Decorah has adopted a multi-prong approach to sustainability that views **economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and community resilience** as essential ingredients to our vision for Decorah - *one that is healthy, resilient, adaptable, and safe.*

The eight interconnected systems outlined in this plan will have a tremendous impact on creating the type of community we want for our grandchildren. They will also help Decorah thrive in the face of outside threats and rapid social and environmental pressures. The City of Decorah's Sustainability Plan is intended to assist local officials and community members as they make future decisions regarding growth, management, and preservation of the community. At its most basic level, the plan does this by outlining a series of specific policies, infrastructure improvements, communication tools, and educational programs that will reduce our carbon footprint, mitigate our vulnerability to floods, strengthen our local economy, and cultivate a more connected and welcoming community.

### **A Public Process**

Over the course of 2019, the Sustainability Committee utilized a robust public input process to develop the vision statements and related actions in this 2020 Decorah Sustainability Plan. The process began in June 2019 with two community-wide input sessions as well as additional meetings with key stakeholder groups including city employees and the business community. An online community input survey was released in June and remained open for public comments throughout the summer. Following the public input sessions, the Sustainability Committee developed eight working groups that focused on the themes that emerged from the input sessions. The workgroups met throughout the months of August through September to fine-tune the initial vision statements and to generate a list of action items to accomplish them. The Sustainability Task Force reviewed the fruits of these labors in October and November. The following plan includes the vision statements and related action items from each of the working groups.

### **Initial Commitments**

To achieve the vision and actions outlined in this plan, the Sustainability Committee recommends the following initial action steps:

- 1) Establishment of a new Decorah Sustainability Commission by appointment of the Mayor and/or the City Council, with representation from city departments, area institutions, economic partners, social service providers, and the Winneshiek Energy District. Recommended size: 8 - 10 members.**
- 2) Determine capacity of current city staff to embed portions of the plan into their work. Consider job description changes as needed and fits. Consider the needs for sustainability work in any new position.**
- 3) Restructuring of tax abatement incentives to encourage green building designs, sustainable economic development, and low/moderate/workforce development projects.**

**During year one of implementation, the Decorah Sustainability Commission will work with City Administration to embed the work of the Decorah Sustainability Plan into existing job descriptions and governing documents including the city's comprehensive plan.**

## **OVERVIEW:**

### **Vision of Energy Use in Decorah:**

*Decorah is a leader in energy efficiency, renewable energy generation and use. Energy conservation is a means to save money and protect the environment. Through innovative and sustainable practices, both public and private energy users strive to make Decorah a net-zero community, by 2040.*

#### **Goals:**

- **Establish baseline data and secure carbon reduction goals towards carbon-neutrality by 2040**
- **Increase the amount of distributed generation in Decorah in the private and public sector**
- **Reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Decorah**

### **Vision of Transportation:**

*Decorah is a leader in promoting and encouraging active transportation. Our multimodal transportation systems **safely and comfortably** accommodate people of all ages, abilities, and incomes. Our city transportation infrastructure is integrated with a regional system that provides a public transportation option that is timely, safe, and cost-effective, with a robust network of **low-stress** routes for walking and bicycling. The city implements green infrastructure at every opportunity and its infrastructure and fleet vehicles utilize and promote green and energy efficient technologies.*

#### **Goals:**

- **Develop transportation systems to help connect NE Iowa region**
- **Increase the amount of walking and biking in Decorah**
- **Increase accessibility of our community**

### **A Vision of Zero-Waste:**

*Decorah is committed to reducing the amount of waste traveling to landfills by utilizing the most efficient and effective methods available to reduce, re-use, compost and recycle wastes. Decorah encourages residents and businesses to reduce, reuse, compost and recycle through incentives and policies to limit unnecessary waste and to promote the profitable reuse of materials. Decorah relies heavily on education and communication to influence behavior change towards a zero-waste community.*

#### **Goals:**

- **Develop efficiencies in waste collection to lower carbon impacts throughout the waste stream**
- **Increase waste diversion from the landfill in the Decorah**

### **Vision of Economic Development:**

*Decorah fosters a thriving and diversified economy that meets the needs of Decorah residents locally, while supporting a robust tourism industry. Our economy provides stable employment opportunities with livable-wages, while encouraging the growth of new and green markets, jobs, products and local services. We are a leader in both the local foods movement and clean energy production. The City of Decorah models the purchasing of local and sustainable goods, and encourages other Decorah businesses, residents and institutions to do the same.*

#### **Goals:**

- **Attract businesses with sustainable operations and/or green products/services**
- **Create a comprehensive vision for land use and development that addresses needs for economic vitality and environmental resiliency within the Decorah Community**
- **Support local products and services**

### **A Vision for Communication and Educational Outreach**

*Decorah supports a vibrant and well-informed community through diverse communication outlets. We promote innovative learning through private and public partnerships. education, communication and engagement are the means to achieve economic prosperity, environmental integrity and community resilience.*

**Goals:**

- **Align and coordinate communications from the city to the public for ease of access, clarity and safety**
- **Collaborate with community partners to engage and educate the public on improving efficiencies, promoting well-being and accessing community resources**
- **Engage more citizens in city programs, events and governance**

**A Vision for Social Sustainability:**

*Decorah is a community where all residents have safe, affordable, and equitable choices to live, work and play. Our city policies and practices promote a welcoming community for all ages, abilities and identities. Our robust infrastructure and community programs work to connect our residents together. Decorah promotes access to quality health care, child care and housing as a means to promote basic wellbeing, foster an engaged community and develop a stable workforce.*

**Goals:**

- **Centralize community information for new residents, homeowners, and renters on programs and community resources that can help them find and maintain housing and child care.**
- **Collaborate with developers, homeowners, and NGO's to develop new homes and home improvements that can save money and lower environmental impacts**
- **Initiate programs and incentives for developers to create more workforce and LMI housing**
- **Create a more connected, inclusive and welcoming community**

**A Vision for Land Use**

*Decorah is a community designed to connect people and place. The built environment (buildings and structures) encourage sustainable living and limit environmental impacts. The city preserves land within city limits in order to deepen the connection between nature and people, preserve biodiversity and promote outdoor activities for all ages and abilities.*

**Goals:**

- **Adopt and Implement a building code supportive of sustainable building practices.**
- **Incentivize green building practices above and beyond code requirements.**
- **Utilize zoning and infrastructure improvements to make Decorah more flood resilient.**
- **Develop practices to maintain and improve Decorah's natural areas for the enjoyment of all residents of Decorah.**

**Vision Statement for Air and Water**

*Clean water and fresh air are essential for the Decorah community. We are vigilant in our efforts to protect our air and water quality. With regard to flood protection, we maximize the absorption of flood waters in floodplains while also investing in the best available technologies to protect our assets from flooding. Our zoning and city codes protect our community and ensure that developments are not vulnerable to flooding nor increase the risk of flooding for others.*

**Goals:**

- **Invest in stormwater management with retention and infrastructure**
- **Increase capacity of stormwater system**
- **Improve flood mitigation infrastructure and communication**
- **Monitor and reduce air quality contaminants**

## Energy: E

### Vision Statement

*Decorah is viewed statewide as a leader due to local investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy. These investments will help energy users in Decorah reduce energy costs, protect the environment, and strengthen the local economy. These innovative and sustainable practices by public and private energy users will increase the amount of renewable energy produced and consumed locally and are essential to Decorah achieving its goal of becoming a carbon net-zero community by 2040.*

### Goals:

- Establish baseline data and secure carbon reduction goals towards carbon-neutrality by 2040
- Increase the amount of distributed generation in Decorah in the private and public sector
- Reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Decorah

### Specific Actions

<b>E.1 ACTION:</b> Adopt and enforce <a href="#">Iowa's Building Energy Code</a> (Current Residential and Commercial Building Code)		
TYPE: Policy	PARTNERS: City of Decorah, Decorah Sustainability Commission (additional partners, local contractors and developers)	TIMELINE: 2020
INDICATORS: Decreased energy consumption in new buildings and remodels, 25% by 2025, 50% by 2030 and carbon-neutral by 2040.		
<b>E.2 ACTION:</b> Require properties receiving tax abatement to make investments in energy efficiency and/or renewables that meet or exceed requirements in <a href="#">Iowa's Building Energy Code</a> (IBEC). Allow for abatement properties that meet the IBEC. Provide a higher level of abatement for those that exceed IBEC from an approved checklist of actions.		
TYPE: Policy	PARTNERS: City	TIMELINE: 2020
INDICATORS: Increase in residential energy efficiency		
<b>E.3 ACTION:</b> Establish a Municipal Electric Utility (MEU) task force and commission a MEU Feasibility Study to be completed by fall 2021 (potential update of previous plan).		
TYPE: Infrastructure	PARTNERS: City	TIMELINE: 2020
INDICATORS: Creation of committee and complete feasibility study		

**E.4 ACTION:** Require each city department by December 31, 2020 to conduct analyses of all possible investments in energy efficiency (electrical, heating, and transportation fuels) as well as renewable energy systems (wind, solar, geothermal), and to implement those with a 10-year payback or less via internal financing or third party power purchase or lease agreements; repeat every five years.

**TYPE:** Data Collection

**PARTNERS:** City Department Heads, City of Decorah

**TIMELINE:** Departments currently do this work

**INDICATORS:** Increase in department energy savings and efficiencies

**E.5 ACTION:** Commission a professional study to establish a 2020 baseline of installed renewable energy generating capacity per capita (kW/per capita) within the City of Decorah limits; update every three years.

**TYPE:** Data Collection

**PARTNERS:** Decorah Sustainability Commission, City of Decorah, Winneshiek Energy District (WED), Center for Energy Education and Environment (CEEE), Luther College Center for Sustainable Communities (CSC)

**TIMELINE:** as opportunity arises

**INDICATORS:** Completed baseline study; metrics and methods established to measure installed renewable energy capacity per capita in the future.

**E.6 ACTION:** Commission a professional study to establish a 2020 baseline for Decorah of all forms of primary energy consumption in dollars spent and quantities consumed by city residents, businesses, and institutions for transportation fuels, heating fuels, and electricity. (Invite County to participate); update every three years

**TYPE:** Data Collection

**PARTNERS:** City, CEEE, CSC, and WED

**TIMELINE:** Continue to work with CEEE on this project

**INDICATORS:** Completed baseline study; metrics and methods established to measure efficiency improvements and progress toward carbon neutrality.

**E.7 ACTION:** Commission a professional study to establish a 2020 baseline of greenhouse gas emissions a) associated with facilities and equipment owned and operated by the City of Decorah and b) citywide emissions in the residential, commercial, industrial, wastewater, and solid waste sectors; update every three years

TYPE: Data Collection

PARTNERS: City,  
Sustainability Commission,  
CEEE, CSC, and WED

TIMELINE: 2022

INDICATORS: Completed study; metrics and methods established to measure progress toward carbon neutrality.

**E.8 ACTION:** Install EV charging stations in city parking lots and on streets in the commercial district

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: as opportunity  
arises, grants, etc

INDICATORS: Increase energy revenue to the city and electric vehicle utilization in the city

**E.9 ACTION:** Create a Resiliency Investment Fund with money saved by efficiencies for Sustainability. Efficiency savings go into resiliency fund, department fund, and general fund to be utilized as both incentives for efficiencies and to provide funding for more efficiencies (50/25/25%?)

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS: Increase revenue for efficiencies to the city

# Transportation: T

## Vision Statement

Decorah is a leader in promoting and encouraging active transportation. Our multimodal transportation system *safely and comfortably* accommodate people of all ages, abilities, and incomes. Our city transportation infrastructure is integrated with a regional system that provides a public transportation option that is timely, safe, and cost-effective, with a robust network of *low-stress* routes for walking and bicycling. The city implements green infrastructure at every opportunity and its infrastructure and fleet vehicles utilize and promote green and energy efficient technologies.

### Goals:

- Develop transportation systems to help connect NE Iowa region
- Increase the amount of walking and biking in Decorah
- Increase accessibility of our community

## Specific Actions

<b>T.1 ACTION:</b> Educate the general public on the options for public transportation (website, etc)		
TYPE: Collaboration, Education	PARTNERS: City, EARL, Taxis	TIMELINE: on-going
INDICATORS: Increase in use of public transportation		
<b>T.2 ACTION:</b> Develop a county/regional transportation plan for workforce and economic development		
TYPE: Collaboration, Data collection	PARTNERS: City, County, Other City governments, EARL, economic development	TIMELINE: 2021
INDICATORS: Reduced job vacancies within the Decorah business community (% reductions??)		
<b>T.3 ACTION:</b> Complete a transition plan identifying the necessary steps to meet accessibility requirements for all pedestrian access routes under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).		
TYPE: Infrastructure and Policy	PARTNERS: City	TIMELINE: currently underway
INDICATORS: Increased accessibility for members of the Decorah community		
<b>T.4 ACTION:</b> Designate employee/employer parking areas downtown to increase customer parking and potential bike parking spots.		
TYPE: Infrastructure	PARTNERS: City, SSMID, DDBA	TIMELINE: 2022
INDICATORS: Increase walking and biking to work		

**T.5 ACTION:** Evaluate speed limits in town and consider speed reductions in areas where appropriate, especially at dangerous streets/intersections.

**TYPE:** Policy

**PARTNERS:** Public Safety, City Engineer

**TIMELINE:** currently on-going

**INDICATORS:** Increase walking and biking, lower risk in intersections

# Waste: W

## Vision Statement

*Decorah is committed to reducing the amount of waste buried in the Winneshiek County Landfill by utilizing the most efficient and effective methods available to reduce, re-use, compost, and recycle waste. The City of Decorah encourages residents and businesses through incentives and policies to limit unnecessary waste and to promote the profitable reuse of materials. Decorah relies heavily on education and communication to influence behavior change to achieve its goal of becoming a zero-waste community by 2040.*

### Goals:

- Develop efficiencies in waste collection to lower carbon impacts throughout the waste stream
- Increase waste diversion from the landfill in the Decorah

## Specific Actions

<b>W.1 ACTION:</b> Work with local providers on creating new efficiencies in our waste systems. Explore volume-based billing and redundancy in pick-up routes. Determine if mandatory curb-side pick up would benefit residents.		
TYPE: Infrastructure	PARTNERS: City, Waste Haulers, County Landfill	TIMELINE: 2020
INDICATORS: Create a more efficient waste stream collection system with less overlap of services and lower fuel usage and total costs.		
<b>W.2 ACTION:</b> Coordinate and implement a waste reduction strategy to help residents and businesses reduce landfilled waste 40% from 2020 levels by 2025.		
TYPE: Collaboration, Data Collection, Education	PARTNERS: County, City, CSC	TIMELINE: 2021
INDICATORS: Reduction in landfill tonnage, tipping fees, and extension of the life of the county landfill		
<b>W.3 ACTION:</b> Install public recycling facilities in downtown business area paired with trash receptacles		
TYPE: Infrastructure	PARTNERS: City	TIMELINE: 2020-21
INDICATORS: Reduction in landfill tonnage, tipping fees, and increased volume and weight of recycled materials		

**W.4 ACTION:** Research and develop a city-sponsored compost facility pilot program

**TYPE:** Infrastructure

**PARTNERS:** City, Local  
Restaurants

**TIMELINE:** 2022

**INDICATORS:** Decrease the amount of organic matter buried in the landfill.

## Economic Development: ED

### Vision Statement

*Decorah fosters a thriving and diversified economy that meets the local needs of Decorah residents while supporting a robust tourism industry. Our economy provides stable employment opportunities with livable-wages, encourages the growth of new and green markets, jobs, products, and local services. We are a leader in both the local foods movement and clean energy production. The City of Decorah models the purchasing of local and sustainable goods, and encourages other Decorah businesses, residents and institutions to do the same.*

### Goals:

- Attract businesses with sustainable operations and/or green products/services
- Create a comprehensive vision for land use and development that addresses needs for economic vitality and environmental resiliency within the Decorah Community
- Support local products and services

### Specific Actions

<b>ED.1 ACTION:</b> City-hosted, quarterly community visioning sessions with City, Luther, Banks, Museums, Hospital, and Industry leaders to share needs and opportunities.		
TYPE: Collaboration	PARTNERS: City of Decorah, institutions and Economic Partners	TIMELINE: 2020
INDICATORS: Increased communication and collaboration		
<b>ED.2 ACTION:</b> Make more efficient use of staff/board resources to support existing economic development groups to attract more sustainable business both in operations and products		
TYPE: Collaboration	PARTNERS: (City, Chamber/Jobs/DDBA/SSMID/ Main Street/Luther) Economic Development Partners	TIMELINE: 2020
INDICATORS: Attract more sustainable business both in operations and products		
<b>ED.3 ACTION:</b> Develop land use plan with recommended use for housing, childcare, education, industry, and recreation with pre-approved economic development incentives tied to sustainable development		
TYPE: Data Collection, policy	PARTNERS: City Council and Economic Development Partners	TIMELINE: 2020
INDICATORS: Attract more sustainable business both in operations and products		

**ED.4 ACTION:** Implement a Vacant Building Ordinance to ensure appropriate use of existing residential and commercial properties so that they are appropriately maintained as to not negatively affect adjacent properties and businesses.

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City Council and Administration Realtors and business owner groups / chamber?

TIMELINE: 2020

INDICATORS: Sales tax receipts, Water/Sewer activity, Inspection permits

**ED.5 ACTION:** Develop and implement City of Decorah purchasing guidelines for supporting locally-owned and sustainably produced goods and services.

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City Council

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS: Adopted resolution by the City Council, memo to department heads – written city policy

**ED.6 ACTION:** Support economic development that encourages locally sourced and/or sustainable products and services, or that contributes to a sustainable value (e.g.: mitigates environmental impacts, encourages local food consumption, reduces waste and/or energy, produces a value added product )

TYPE: Policy/Collaboration

PARTNERS: City of Decorah and Economic Development Partners

TIMELINE:

INDICATORS: Grant writing activity, workshops, targeting marketing efforts by Decorah Jobs reviewed in quarterly activity reports.

**ED.7 ACTION:** Actively recruit new businesses and industries that implement sustainable business operations (e.g. zero-waste goals, carbon-neutrality goals, etc.)

TYPE: Collaboration

PARTNERS: City of Decorah, Economic Development Partners

TIMELINE:

INDICATORS: New business licenses, examples of targeted marketing materials, contact lists, attending Sustainability conferences, Favorable tax abatement and permit fee forgiveness

**ED.8 ACTION:** Develop Ice Cave Road into an area that aligns tourism/recreation and sustainability

TYPE: Collaboration

PARTNERS: City of Decorah,  
Park Board, Local Breweries,  
Historic Preservation  
Commission, Winneshiek  
County

TIMELINE: 2022

INDICATORS:

**ED.9 ACTION:** Develop business incubator grants to encourage entrepreneurship; special focus on fostering and retaining student-initiated businesses.

TYPE: Collaboration

PARTNERS: City of Decorah,  
Economic Development  
Partners, Luther College

TIMELINE: 2021 grant  
opportunity

INDICATORS: Promotional materials, determining stakeholder representation, grants offered, businesses started, businesses retained after two years.

## Communication and Educational Outreach: CO

### Vision Statement

*Decorah supports a vibrant and well-informed community through diverse communication outlets. We promote innovative learning through public-private partnerships. Education, communication, and engagement are the means to achieve economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and community resilience.*

### Goals:

- Align and coordinate communications from the city to the public for ease of access
- Collaborate with community partners to engage and educate the public on improving efficiencies, promoting well-being and accessing community resources
- Engage more citizens in city programs, events and governance.

### Specific Actions

<b>CO.1 ACTION:</b> Develop a comprehensive communication plan for the City of Decorah: Evaluate and coordinate social media, website, and app-based communication, and print notifications.		
TYPE: policy	PARTNERS: City, local media	TIMELINE: grant (?)
INDICATORS: Increased communication and community involvement		

<b>CO.2 ACTION:</b> Update the City’s website to improve links regarding recycling and waste, workshops, meeting notes from boards and commissions, etc.		
TYPE: infrastructure	PARTNERS: City and sustainability commission	TIMELINE: grant (?)
INDICATORS: Increased communication and community involvement		

<b>CO.3 ACTION:</b> Development of a City App for push notifications, city information, and emergency management communications		
TYPE: infrastructure	PARTNERS: City, Chamber (grant?)	TIMELINE: 2020 (grant)
INDICATORS: Increased communication and community involvement		

<b>CO.4 ACTION:</b> Develop skilled volunteer pool for city projects		
TYPE: Data collection, infrastructure	PARTNERS: RSVP, City, others	TIMELINE:
INDICATORS: Increased participation in city endeavors		

**CO.5 ACTION:** Incorporate sustainability into all event applications - part of permit application

**TYPE:** policy

**PARTNERS:** City

**TIMELINE:** 2020 (change form add question)

**INDICATORS:** Decrease in resource use for events (waste, energy, etc), Increase in sustainable practices

**CO.6 ACTION:** Work with partners to provide education programming on sustainability initiatives: workshops, events, coordinated calendars

**TYPE:** Collaboration

**PARTNERS:** Winn. Energy District, Luther, County Recycling, Private Businesses, Library Staff, ISUEO

**TIMELINE:** 2021

**INDICATORS:** Increased attendance at City Events.

## Social Sustainability: Equity and Well-Being: S

### Vision Statement

*Decorah is a community where all residents have safe, affordable, and equitable choices to live, work, and play. Our city policies and practices promote a welcoming community for all ages, abilities, and identities. Our robust infrastructure and community programs connect our residents and build community. Decorah promotes access to quality health care, child care and housing as a means to promote basic human rights, foster an engaged community and develop a stable workforce.*

### Goals:

- Centralize community information for new residents, homeowners, and renters on programs and community resources that can help them find and maintain housing and child care.
- Collaborate with developers, homeowners, and NGO’s to develop new homes and home improvements that can save money and lower environmental impacts
- Initiate programs and incentives for developers to create more workforce and LMI housing
- Create a more connected, inclusive and welcoming community

### Specific Actions

<b>S.1 ACTION:</b> Adopt equitable community vision statement and values		
TYPE: Policy	PARTNERS: City	TIMELINE: 2021
INDICATORS: Align city practices with vision and values		
<b>S.2 ACTION:</b> Provide a revolving loan program to address specific housing issues taking into consideration shortages at all income levels. (Work with Housing Trust Fund)		
TYPE: collaboration	PARTNERS: County and State Programs already in existence, the city could provide more information to residents on these programs	TIMELINE: this is an on-going program, need to make more available to community
INDICATORS: These programs currently exist – better communication. The residential tax abatement program could be modified to improve the amount of housing available to low- and moderate income (LMI) households.		

**S.3 ACTION:** Utilize tax abatement incentive and TIF-LMI funds to increase the amount of LMI and workforce housing and to encourage mixed-use development

TYPE: Policy and collaboration

PARTNERS: Decorah JOBS,  
City Administration, City  
Council

TIMELINE: 2020

INDICATORS: Greater access to housing for LMI and Workforce

**S.4 ACTION:** Revise building and zoning codes to allow for more housing density in Decorah, and allow for “Accessory Dwelling Units” on existing lots.

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City, P&Z

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS:

**S.5 ACTION:** Assist with registration and licensing process to maintain and increase quality child care through a “mixed delivery system” approach, including registered in-home child care providers as well as licensed child care centers. (lower barriers to becoming a registered provider)

TYPE: Collaboration, policy  
(Lower barriers for registering as  
a provider)

PARTNERS: Decorah Jobs,  
Public Safety, City Council

TIMELINE: 2021, new bill with  
grant \$\$

INDICATORS: Greater access to child care in Decorah area.

**S.6 ACTION:** Utilize and compile existing community resources to create a resource “library” with a focus on information about moving and relocating to Decorah as well as living well and sustainably in Decorah. (e.g. Housing, LMI programs, Homeowner efficiencies, childcare, mental health, wellbeing, etc)

TYPE: infrastructure,  
collaboration/education

PARTNERS: Decorah Public  
Library, Decorah Chamber,  
Decorah Jobs, Local realtors.

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS: How can local realtors “push” more information about Decorah in their listings and websites?

**S.7 ACTION:** Evaluate ordinances on an on-going basis to make sure they don’t have a negative effect on active and non-motorized transportation

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City Engineer

TIMELINE: on-going

INDICATORS:

**S.8 ACTION:** Encourage and seek representation of minorities and people with disabilities on city commissions and committees

TYPE: collaboration/policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE:2020

INDICATORS: Greater diversity within government

**S.9 ACTION:** Attend Community Social Services planning meetings to facilitate and support coordination with Public Safety and the City of Decorah

TYPE: Collaboration

PARTNERS: Public Safety

TIMELINE: 2020

INDICATORS: Greater collaboration between CSS and Public Safety. Create cohesive structures for intervention.

**S.10 ACTION:** Establish an equity training protocol for all city employees

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS: Identify and list classes and programs to add to the current Compensation pay policy

## Land Use: L

### Vision Statement

*Decorah is a community designed to connect people and place. The built environment (buildings and structures) encourage sustainable living and reduce negative environmental impacts. The city preserves land within city limits to deepen the connection between nature and people, preserve biodiversity, and promote outdoor activities for people of all ages and abilities.*

#### Goals:

- Adopt and Implement a building code supportive of sustainable building practices.
- Incentivize green building practices above and beyond code requirements.
- Utilize zoning and infrastructure improvements to make Decorah more flood resilient.
- Develop practices to maintain and improve Decorah’s natural areas for the enjoyment of all residents of Decorah.

### Specific Actions

<b>L.1 ACTION:</b> Adopt and enforce <a href="#">Iowa’s Building Energy Code</a> (Current Residential and Commercial Building Code) ( <i>SAME AS WITHIN ENERGY SECTION</i> )		
TYPE: Policy	PARTNERS: City of Decorah, Decorah Sustainability Commission (additional partners, local contractors and developers)	TIMELINE: 2020
INDICATORS: Increase sustainable building practices, safety and efficiency.		
<b>L.2 ACTION:</b> Develop abatements and rebates to align with and encourage sustainable building practices above and beyond the code.		
TYPE: Policy	PARTNERS: City sustainability commission	TIMELINE: 2020
INDICATORS: Increase sustainable building practices.		
<b>L.3 ACTION:</b> Require city remodeling projects and new building projects to follow LEED Silver certification protocols, certification not required.		
TYPE: Policy	PARTNERS: City	TIMELINE: 2021
INDICATORS: Increase sustainable building practices.		

**L.4 ACTION:** Increase the amount of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents by offering incentives for the development and rehabilitation of apartments

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City, P&Z  
sustainability commission

TIMELINE: 2023

INDICATORS: Increase access to LMI housing and workforce housing.

**L.5 ACTION:** Monitor the spread of invasive species and increase the number of volunteers who currently work to remove invasive species from city parks

TYPE: Data Collection

PARTNERS: Park and Rec

TIMELINE: on-going

INDICATORS: Limit spread of invasive species

**L.6 ACTION:** Ensure open areas of designated floodplains remain undeveloped

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: P&Z, City  
Sustainability Commission

TIMELINE: 2020

INDICATORS: Increased water absorption and flood control for Decorah and Freeport

**L.7 ACTION:** Develop a comprehensive stormwater management plan

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City Engineer and  
City sustainability commission,  
and P&Z

TIMELINE: Already in  
development

INDICATORS: Increase water absorption and flood control, less pooling in areas.

**L.8 ACTION:** Develop a deer management plan to protect vegetation in city parks and reduce damage to private property

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City and Park and  
Rec, Luther College

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS: Decrease in vegetative destruction.

**L.9 ACTION:** Invest in infrastructure that removes access barriers to parks and activities for people of all ages and abilities.

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City/Park Rec

TIMELINE: on-going

INDICATORS: Increase access to Parks for all ages and abilities.

# Clean Air and Fresh Water: AW

## Vision Statement

*Clean water and fresh air are essential for the Decorah community. We are vigilant in our efforts to protect our air and water quality. With regard to flood protection, we maximize the absorption of flood waters in floodplains while also investing in the best available technologies to protect our assets from flooding. Our zoning and city codes protect our community and ensure that developments are not vulnerable to flooding nor increase the risk of flooding for others.*

## Goals:

- Invest in stormwater management with retention and infrastructure
- Increase capacity of stormwater system
- Improve flood mitigation infrastructure and communication
- Monitor and reduce air quality contaminants

## Specific Actions

**AW.1 ACTION:** Adopt a stormwater ordinance which requires, at a minimum, that any new development larger than TWO acres detains runoff onsite for specific rain events.

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City, COG?, P&Z

TIMELINE: in-development

INDICATORS: Reduce flood impacts.

**AW.2 ACTION:** Using the flood overlay district within the city, create a buffer zone around the flood district where land use practices are geared towards minimizing runoff, increasing stormwater management, and mitigating potential flooding.

TYPE: Data Collection

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE:

INDICATORS: Reduce flood impacts

**AW.3 ACTION:** Establish standards to manage residential run-off during the construction period for sites under 1 acre (Could this part of the building code?)

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS:

**AW.4 ACTION:** Increase monthly stormwater utility fee with the help of a consultant to use service unit approach. *Fee dependant on impacts.*

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS: Reduce flood impacts.

**AW.5 ACTION:** Use stormwater fees to install new or repair existing projects on city property to help raise awareness of the benefits of stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs)

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: on-going

INDICATORS: doing this – might suggest a sign that would bring awareness to projects.

**AW.6 ACTION:** Use stormwater utility funds to provide incentives to homeowners and businesses to implement onsite stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs)

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: 2022

INDICATORS: Notes: Cost-Sharing Programs? Raingarden lottery?

**AW.7 ACTION:** Evaluate whether there are flood-prone areas where property acquisition could be a solution

TYPE: Data Collection

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE:

INDICATORS:

**AW.8 ACTION:** Establish a pilot program to acquire land along Dry Run creek. Review options for daylighting portions of the creek (based on precedence of Bee Branch Watershed in Dubuque, IA).

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: New Park  
underway

INDICATORS: New Park? Phase one – land acquisition

**AW.9 ACTION:** Distribute information about water level data (e.g. Iowa Flood Information System (IFIS) website) on Decorah APP (see communications plan)

TYPE: Education,  
Communication

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: 2022

INDICATORS:

**AW.10 ACTION:** Develop a video to promote river safety and awareness, encourage river visitors, and reduce the need for river rescue responses

TYPE: Education

PARTNERS: City, Chamber, RC&D  
Fire dept and County Sheriff – possibly emergency management commission

TIMELINE:

INDICATORS:

**AW.11 ACTION:** Implement community-wide survey to understand flood impacts to citizens and businesses. Consider basing on flood survey implemented by Luther College students, and at a minimum address economic impacts and vulnerable/repeated flooded properties. This could be part of a larger community-wide survey with other sustainability related questions.

TYPE: Data Collection

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: grant opportunity

INDICATORS: Could be part of the community survey

**AW.12 ACTION:** Partner with Winneshiek County Conservation to examine opportunities for the planned Dry Run Trail to provide better stormwater management and to mitigate downstream flooding. Consider financial assistance options for dike bridges along trail.

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City, County Conservation

TIMELINE: current practice

INDICATORS:

**AW.13 ACTION:** Support/partner with the Upper Iowa Watershed Management Authority on implementing objectives in the Upper Iowa River Watershed Plan

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE:

INDICATORS:

**AW.14 ACTION:** Support/partner with Winneshiek County in implementing flood mitigation actions in the Winneshiek County Hazard Mitigation Plan

TYPE: Collaboration

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: currently on-going

INDICATORS: ongoing and implemented in current plan update.

**AW.15 ACTION:** Work with partners in applying for a grant and creating a program to assist vulnerable residential properties in preparing for potential flood impacts

TYPE: Collaboration

PARTNERS: City, County

TIMELINE:

INDICATORS:

**AW.16 ACTION:** Pursue Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) pre-disaster mitigation funds to assist with the purchase of pumps.

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: On-going

INDICATORS: initiative is already in the county wide hazard mitigation plan.

**AW.17 ACTION:** Improve communication regarding road closures, river flow levels, and general flood risk during flooding events through use of a citywide cell phone notification system via website or City APP

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City, emergency management commission - WENS

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS:

**AW.18 ACTION:** Acquire additional Iowa Flood Center (or other) river gauges to monitor flooding along Trout Run and Dry Run creeks

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City/County  
Fire dept and EMC

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS:

**AW.19 ACTION:** Work with emergency management to increase trained volunteer pool from various organizations to assist during flood/disaster recovery efforts.

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS: Being done by RSVP, County Health Coalition and /or EMC

**AW.20 ACTION:** Limit the use of lawn fertilizers/pesticides on city properties and consider low impact lawn applications when treatment is deemed absolutely essential

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: on-going

INDICATORS:

**AW.21 ACTION:** Reduce mowed areas on city property by increasing the use of no-mow or low-mow lawn, native plantings, conservation plantings, tree stands, etc.

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: on-going

INDICATORS:

**AW.22 ACTION:** Create a policy to minimize use of sand and salt on roadways and/or look for alternative

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE:

INDICATORS: Less sand and salt run-off into storm water system.

**AW.23 ACTION:** Add visual education - decals, painted pavement - to stormwater drains, to help residents form connections between land use, runoff, and water quality

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS:

**AW.24 ACTION:** Increase educational programing to minimize grass clippings and other yard waste from storm water drains

TYPE: Education,  
Communication

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE:

INDICATORS: This needs education – current city code already prohibits this. City has a postcard that is mailed when violations are noticed.

**AW.25 ACTION:** Review maintenance practices along waterways, to improve flood mitigation and stormwater management, and protect wildlife habitat in those zones

TYPE: Data Collection

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS:

**AW.26 ACTION:** Establish a baseline of how many unlawful connections occur to the sanitary system (e.g. sump-pumps, downspouts)

TYPE: Data Collection

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: currently working on a plan

INDICATORS: Just need a revised and enforced storm water ordinance.

**AW.27 ACTION:** Improve or update the city code regarding connections to the sanitary system (Section 13.0402 definition update needed regarding sump pumps)

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: on-going

INDICATORS: More inspections of these systems

**AW.28 ACTION:** Increase the size of undersized mains as development of road/infrastructure projects emerge.

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: on-going

INDICATORS: This is already an on-going project

**AW.29 ACTION:** Establish incentives for replacement of lead or asbestos pipes for residential service connection

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: as projects arise

INDICATORS:

**AW.30 ACTION:** Identify priorities for looping the pipe system, to increase resiliency and ensure access in the case of localized pipe failure. Establish plan and funding mechanisms for implementing looping priorities.

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: on-going

INDICATORS: This aligns with the city policy and is done with utility and street improvement projects.

**AW.31 ACTION:** Purchase at least two air quality sensors to be placed in city limits to gather air quality data. Review location of existing sensors (owner privately), on Purpleair.com, to determine gaps in air sensor coverage. Register city air sensors at Purpleair.com, to be able to share and analyze collected air quality data over the long term

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: 2021

INDICATORS:

**AW.32 ACTION:** Adopt and enforce anti-idling regulations to help lower emissions

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE:

INDICATORS: Increased air quality within the city.

**AW.33 ACTION:** Review status of city noise ordinance. If non-existent, consider creation and adoption

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: 2022

INDICATORS: Creation of a noise ordinance.

**AW.34 ACTION:** Create or enhance public forest and prairie planting programs to increase carbon sequestration and minimize emissions from mowing.

TYPE: Infrastructure

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE:

INDICATORS:

**AW.35 ACTION:** Review city code sections and identify updates to permit boulevard prairie plantings/edible landscapes

TYPE: Policy

PARTNERS: City

TIMELINE: part of code review process

INDICATORS: currently allowed