2025

WRIGHT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Developed by the Wright County Planning and Zoning Commission

Planning Assistance Provided by
MIDAS Council of Governments

MIDAS
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Connecting People and Communities

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-13

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR WRIGHT COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors and Planning & Zoning Commission recognized the need for a new comprehensive plan for the County; and

WHEREAS, MIDAS was hired to aid in the completion of the comprehensive plan including the solicitation of public input for the plan, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing to provide the public with a final chance to provide input into the comprehensive plan update.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT BE RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors for Wright County, that the 2025 Wright County Comprehensive Plan be accepted and approved.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Board of Supervisors of Wright County, Iowa on this 6th day of April, 2026

Ashley M Bosch
Chairperson, Board of Supervisors

Attest:

Amanda Meyer
Wright County Auditor

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Executive Summary

Comprehensive plans are an essential long-term planning tool that informs current and future land use development in a city or county. These plans take a step back from the present and analyze it with the evolving nature of many factors, including a community's demographics, housing stock, economic conditions, infrastructure, public services, and land use patterns. Through a committee of stakeholders and public input, various goals & objectives are set to help guide growth and development based on its past and present conditions along with its longer-term vision for the future set in the comprehensive plans. As zoning codes, subdivisions, proposed developments, and other matters are propose d and revised, the comprehensive plan sets the framework to review the changes against to ensure it fits with the long-term plan.

The Wright County Comprehensive Plan outlines existing conditions; establishes future goals, objectives, and implementation strategies; and identifies existing and desired land uses within the unincorporated area of the county. The plan was developed using existing data, as well as community input through various committee meetings, county department meetings, and a public survey in which all residents and businesses of the unincorporated area were encouraged to complete. The initial chapters of the plan present an overview of existing conditions within the county. The latter chapters propose goals & objectives, set an action plan for implementation, and sets the future land use map.

All comprehensive plans in Iowa are required to incorporate guidance from the Smart Planning Legislation (SF 2389). This guidance includes ten *smart planning principles* and thirteen *planning elements*. These principles and elements provide a framework for ensuring that a comprehensive plan is truly comprehensive in its review and consideration of a community's growth & development. Not all of the principles and elements are implementable in each community; rather, these tools help ensure that sound, long-term decisions are made in the comprehensive planning process. The underlined text below reflects these smart planning principles and planning elements and their inclusion in the Wright County plan.

<u>Public Participation</u> was used throughout the planning process. Residents, business owners, appointed and elected officials, and other stakeholders were actively involved at multiple stages. This includes a public survey dispersed to residents and businessowners across the country and two public input meetings and an open house on the future land use map held by the Planning & Zoning Commission. These efforts ensure that the plan reflects diverse perspectives and shared values that constitute the county's *Community Character*. The public participation process consists of *Collaboration* and *Efficiency, Transparency, and Consistency* principles by encouraging inclusive, fair, and open participation.

Issues and Opportunities were discussed by the planning committee through the public focus group meetings. Each planning element was discussed at these meetings and the attendees were asked what the County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were relating to each element.

Economic Development, Agriculture, Housing, Transportation, Public Infrastructure and Utilities, Recreation and Conservation, Land Use, and Implementation are all elements of the plan that are patently displayed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Intergovernmental Collaboration was practiced particularly throughout the land use portion of the plan. Each city within the county was sent a survey regarding their land use practices. They were then invited to attend a Planning Committee meeting to review the Future Land Use Map for Wright County and recommend any suggestions they might have in relation to their cities' land use practices.

Hazards were considered through review of the county's hazard mitigation plan.

Upon consideration of the above-listed elements, the County followed a planning process that encouraged public participation, identified existing conditions, and established and evaluated future goals and objectives. Implementation of this plan will assist the county government in making informed decisions on future land use proposals.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Planning Process

A comprehensive plan is a living document developed by a group of community or county stakeholders, which presents a vision for the future of its indicated area. Also known as a master plan or land use plan, the comprehensive plan includes long-range goals and objectives for all activities that impact growth and development in a community or county; especially those activities relating to land use.

It is necessary for a county to have a comprehensive plan to assist public officials and county boards in their decision-making process. The plan provides justification for decisions relating to public and private land development proposals; expenditure of funds for infrastructure and public facilities; and it presents methods to address issues of pressing concern (Iowa State Univeristy - University Extension, 2018).

The Wright County Comprehensive Plan outlines existing conditions, establishes future goals, objectives, and implementation strategies, and identifies existing and desired land uses within the County. The plan was developed using existing data, as well as local input through various committee meetings, public input meetings and public surveys, which all residents and businesses were encouraged to complete. The Planning and Zoning Commission was involved in the entire planning process, which followed the subsequent itinerary:

1. Discussed and considered Smart Planning Principles
2. Discussed ideas for data collection
3. Obtained plans already established
4. Discussed and determined planning elements
5. Developed and dispersed separate surveys to residents and businesses of the County and to cities located within the County
6. Reviewed survey results with the Planning and Zoning Commission
7. Held public input meetings on housing, transportation, public services and infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, recreation, and conservation
8. Discussed existing conditions
9. Discussed and developed goals and objectives
10. Developed implementation strategies
11. Developed existing and future land use maps
12. Met with cities to discuss proposed future land use maps
13. Provided the public opportunity to review the proposed future land use map
14. Reviewed a draft of the Comprehensive Plan
15. Allowed the public 30 days to comment on the plan
16. Held Public Hearing on proposed plan

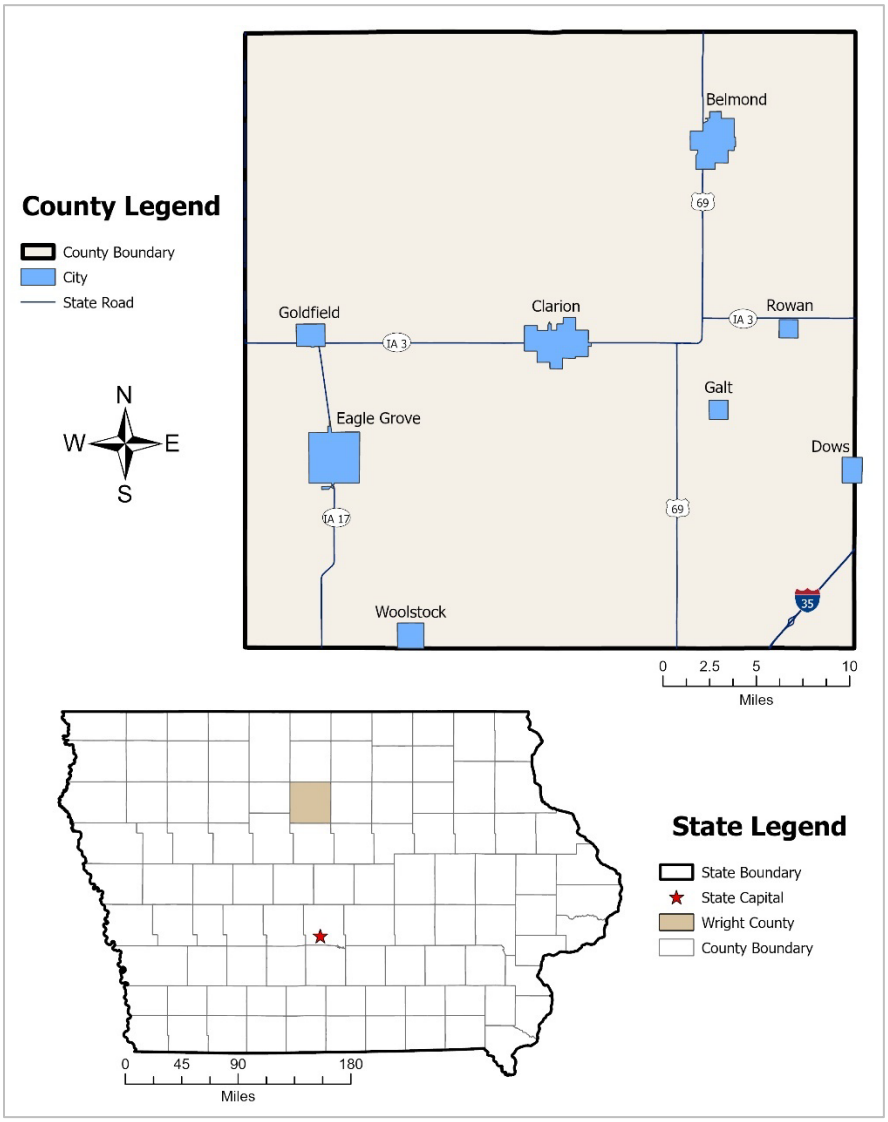
17. The Planning and Zoning Commission gave recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for adoption of the Wright County Comprehensive Plan
18. The Wright County Board of Supervisors approved and adopted the Wright County Comprehensive Plan

The Wright County Comprehensive Plan consists of the compilation of objectives and goals that address the following elements: **agriculture, economic development, housing, public services and infrastructure, recreation and conservation, transportation, and land use.** As the county changes from year-to-year, so will its residents' and businesses' needs; therefore, this plan may be amended, changed, or revised as needed.

Chapter 2: Early History of Wright County

Before its organization, Wright County was part of Delaware, Polk, Boone, and Webster counties, and was primarily inhabited by hunters and trappers. The first settlements began in 1854 with the construction of the railroads, when the area's earliest settlers, William H. Montgomery, William Stryker, and Minter Brassfield, arrived with their families within weeks of one another. Figure 1 shows the present-day location of Wright County in Iowa, along with its incorporated cities.

Figure 1: Wright County Location Map

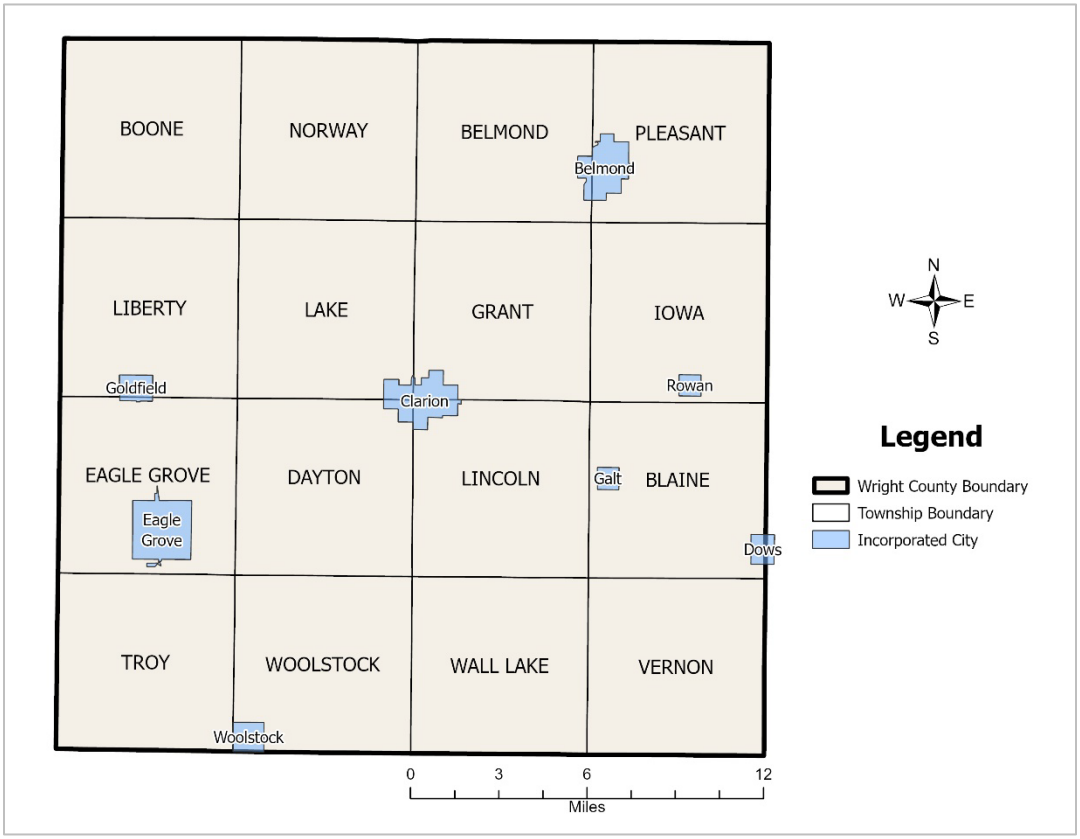


Dissatisfaction grew among the early settlers when the county seat was relocated to Webster City. In August 1855, a resolution was adopted to form Wright County, which was named after either Silas Wright, Governor of New York, or Joseph Albert Wright, Governor of Indiana. Both were influential figures from states that many of the county's early settlers had migrated from.

The first election in Wright County was held in August 1855, during which Eagleville was designated as the original county seat. Located west of present-day Eagle Grove, Eagleville was never fully developed. The courthouse in Eagleville was a log cabin owned by S.B. Hewett, Sr.

In 1858, the county seat was moved to Liberty, which is now known as Goldfield. The county seat made its final move in 1865 to Grant, chosen for its central location. In June of 1870, the City of Grant was renamed Clarion, in honor of Clarion, Pennsylvania. In recognition of the early settlement towns, several of the county's townships are named after them, including Liberty and Grant. Wright County consists of 16 townships, each divided into 36 sections.

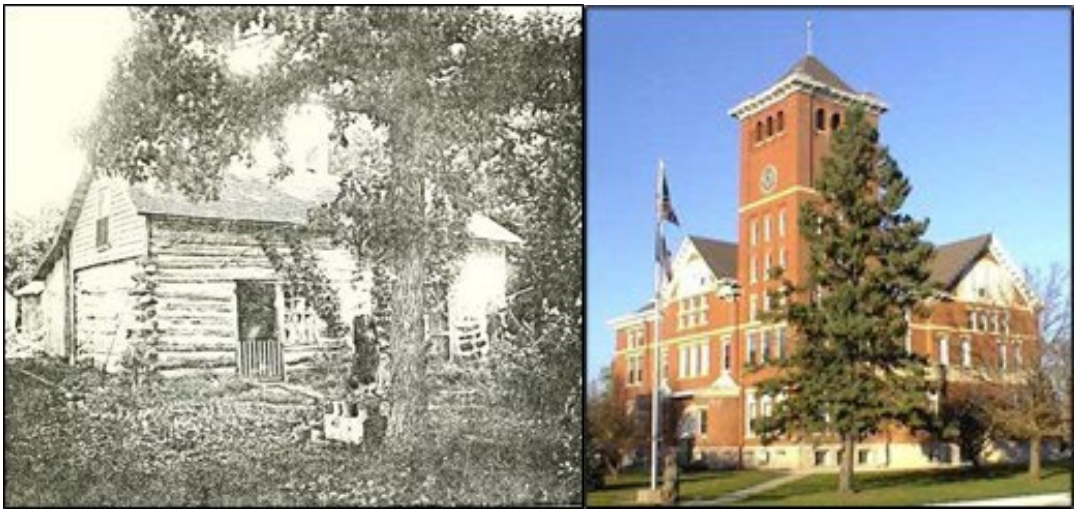
Figure 2: Wright County Township Map



After the organization of the county seat in Grant (now Clarion), a decision on whether to move the old courthouse from Liberty (Goldfield) to Grant or build a new one could not be reached. The issue was settled in November 1865 when the courthouse committee contracted Perry & Nees to build a two-story frame building for $5,600.

Nearly twenty years later, in the 1890 election, the voters approved the construction of a new courthouse and jail. The approval of the project sparked great celebration. The present-day courthouse, shown on the right in Figure 3, was fully constructed in 1892. The red brick building underwent extensive remodeling to the interior and exterior, which was finished in 1974.

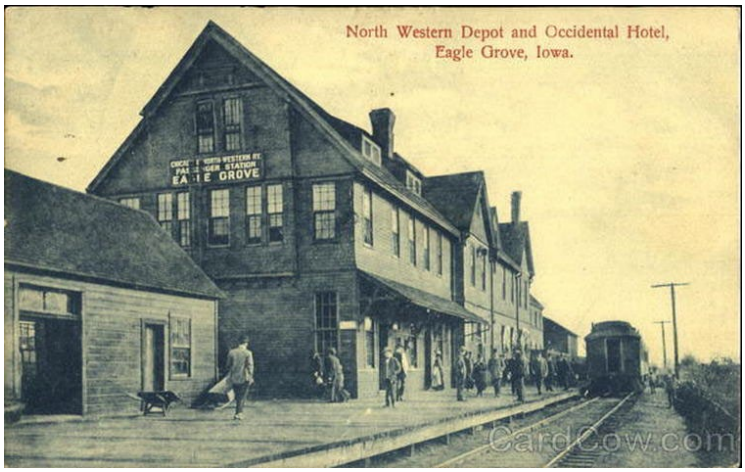
Figure 3: Courthouse - Eagle Grove, IA



http://www.iowacourts.gov/wfdata/frame1759-1464/pressrel98.asp

The first railroad completed in Wright County was the old Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern, which reached Clarion in 1881. A few months later, the Chicago and Northwestern railroad reached Goldfield, having arrived at Eagle Grove a few months before. A branch of the Iowa Central Road also extended to Belmond and reached Clarion by August of 1895. By 1915, approximately 120 miles of rail lines ran through Wright County, including lines operated by Chicago and Northwestern, Chicago and Iowa, Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, and Chicago Great Western.

Figure 4: Northwestern Depot - Eagle Grove, IA



http://herebedragons.weebly.com/orr-lore.html

The construction of railroad lines played a significant role in the settlement of Wright County, but so did the affordable land with fertile soil. In 1880, Wright County had around 785 farms, most of which were worked by their owners. By 1905, the number of farms had risen to 1,688. Since then, the county has become a major area for corn and soybean production, as discussed in Chapter 5 of this plan.

Places of Historical Significance in Wright County

National Historic Register of Historic Places

According to the National Register of Historic Places, there are eight (8) historical sites currently designated as significant within the county. The properties listed in the Register include those that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and/or culture. These sites are being preserved to ensure that the county's historic past can be reflected upon and remembered as Wright County continues to grow and develop. Below is a listing of each of the historical sites currently listed in the National Register of Historical Places and a brief background of each site (National Register of Historic Places, 2022).

Boone River Bridge: The Boone River Bridge is a historic bridge spanning the Boone River near Goldfield, with a period of significance from 1900 to 1924. The bridge was added to the register in 1998.

https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75338147

Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Passenger Depot: The Burlington, Cedar Rapids, and Northern Passenger Depot represents a "Romanesque" style of architecture. It was built in 1896 and was the first railway depot in Wright County. The Dows Historical Society purchased and restored the depot in 1988.

https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75338141

Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Passenger Station: The Clarion, IA railway station holds significance for its completion in 1898, as it marked a broader trend of railroad infrastructure improvements across the state. Interior restoration took place in the early 1980s, while the exterior has largely remained unchanged.

https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75340439

Cornelia Lake Bridge: Located northeast of Clarion and spanning an inlet of Cornelia Lake, the Cornelia Lake Bridge is Wright County's oldest steel truss bridge. The bridge, originally built in 1877 across the Iowa River in Section 24 of Grant Township, remained in its location for more than 100 years. Upon its replacement in 1986, the bridge was determined eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The main span was retired and moved to Cornelia Lake Park nearby, where it is used by pedestrians today.

https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75338145

Eagle Grove Public Library: The Eagle Grove Public Library displays an architectural style known as “Beaux Arts,” characterized by a rusticated and raised first story, along with arched windows and doors. The public library opened in Eagle Grove in 1902. It was used as a library until a new, single-story location was built in 1976. The historic building is now home to the Eagle Grove Historical Society and Museum.

https://carnegielibrariesiowa.org/library/eagle-grove/

Fillmore Block: Also known as the Dows Mercantile Store, the building was constructed in 1894 with “Victorian Romanesque” architecture and has housed a variety of businesses for over 100 years. The Dows Historical Society purchased the building in 1987.

https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75340435

Quasdorf Blacksmith and Wagon Shop: Located in Dows, IA, the Quasdorf Blacksmith and Wagon Shop displays a "Romanesque" style of architecture and now serves as a museum. Built in 1899, the shop operated continuously until 1990, when owner Frank Quasdorf willed it to the Dows Historical Society.

https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75340437

Wright County Courthouse: The courthouse was constructed in 1892 and fully remodeled in 1974. Still serving as the county's space for government operations, the Wright County Courthouse is located in Clarion. The courthouse is three stories high, except for the clock tower, which rises high above the multi-gabled roof.

https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75338139

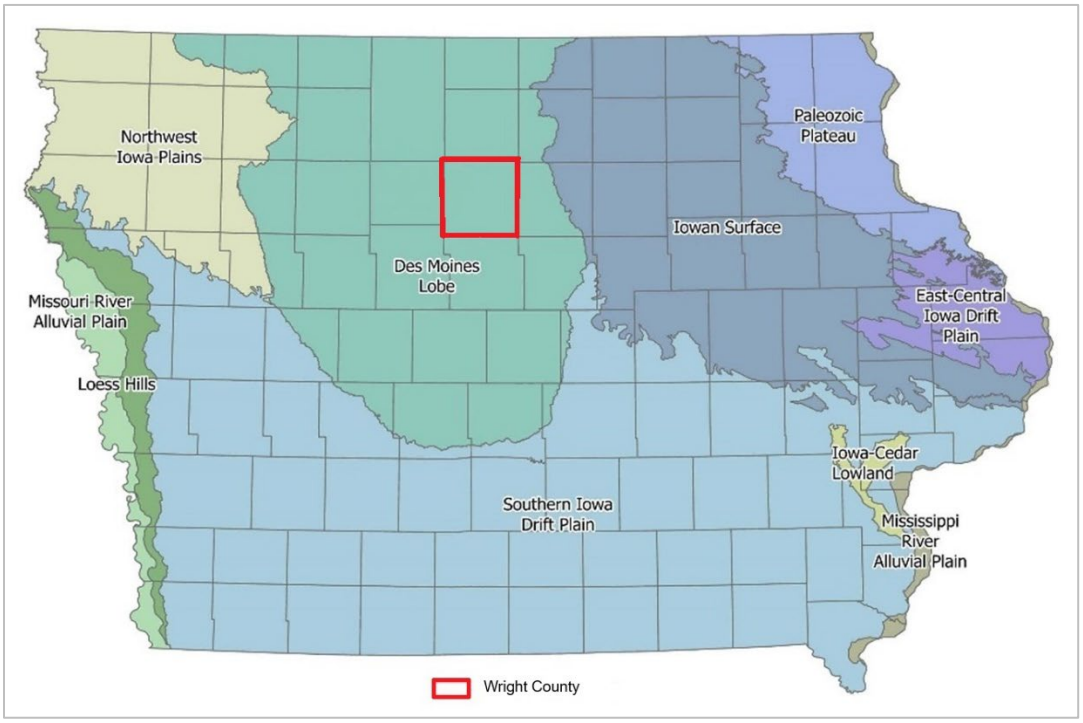
Chapter 3: Physical Description

The physical characteristics of Wright County are important in Land Use development to ensure that proper land uses are enforced in environmentally sensitive areas. This section gives a background on the physical features that are present throughout the county including topography, water features, drainage and watersheds and soils.

Topography and Landforms

Wright County is located in north-central Iowa, with Webster and Humboldt Counties to the west, Hamilton County to the south, Franklin County to the east, and Hancock County to the north. The county covers 580.4 square miles (United States Census Bureau, 2020) and is situated in the landform known as Des Moines Lobe, which is often referred to as the Prairie Pothole Region. Nearly all of Iowa's natural lakes are found in this area. Along with ponds and marshes, these lakes form prairie potholes, which are vital habitats for wildlife. The region supports 50% of America's waterfowl, which rely on the potholes for feeding and mating (Iowa Geological Survey).

Figure 5: Iowa Landforms

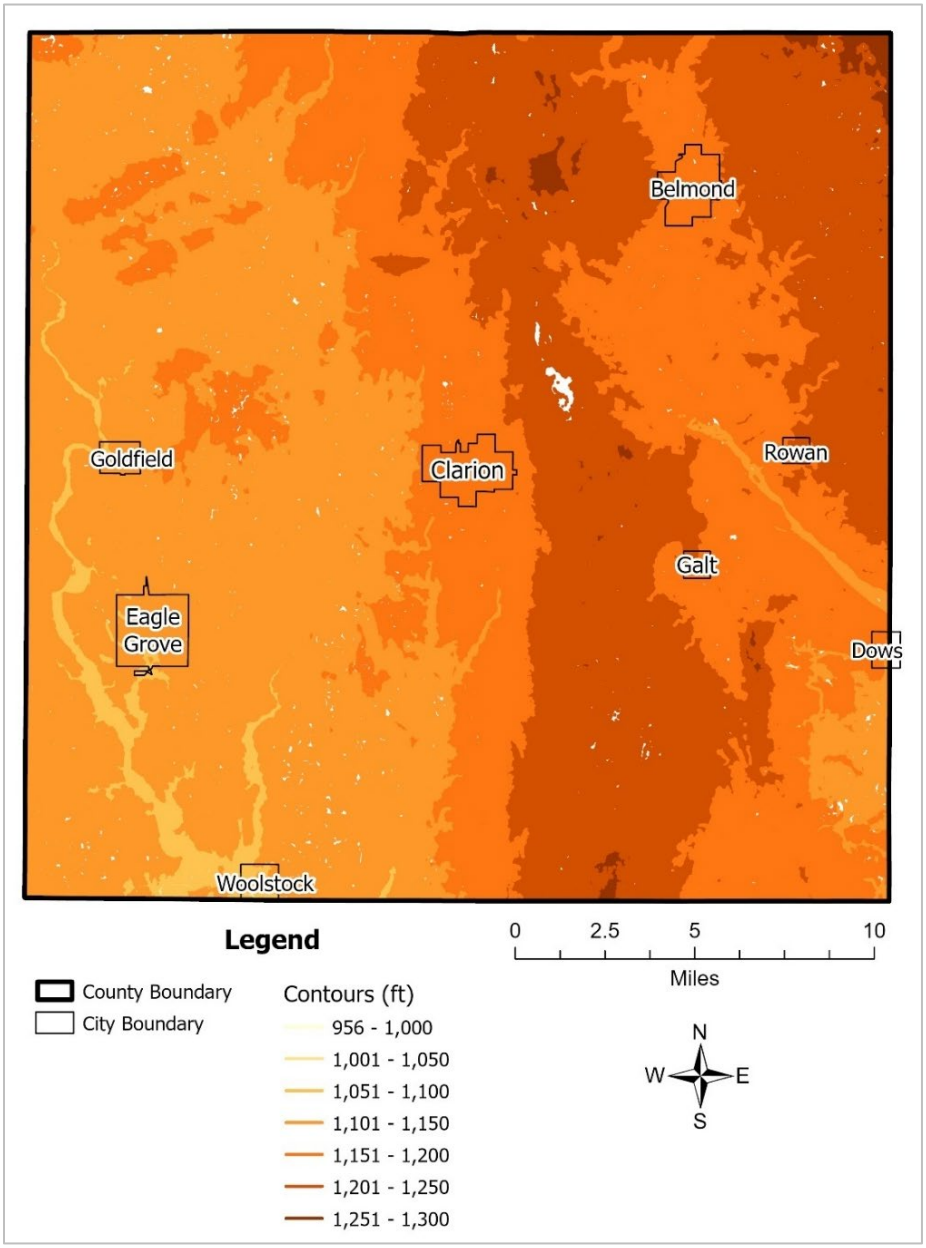


Iowa's landscape was profoundly shaped by glaciers. The Des Moines Lobe experienced the last glacier to impact Iowa, approximately 12,000 to 14,000 years ago. The Wisconsinan glacier moved southward through North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and into north-central Iowa,

stopping at present day Des Moines. Where glacial movement was rapid, a flat to gently rolling landscape formed.

The highest elevation in Wright County can be found in Pleasant Township, in the northeastern portion of the county. Here, the elevation can reach as high as 1,300 feet above sea level. The lowest elevations of 956 feet can be found along creek beds and the Boone River, which runs through the westernmost part of the county. The following map displays the elevation distribution in Wright County.

Figure 6: Wright County Contours



Water Features

Wright County has multiple water features consisting of creeks, streams, rivers, and lakes. The notable lakes of the county include Morse Lake, Lake Cornelia, Elm Lake, and Big Wall Lake.

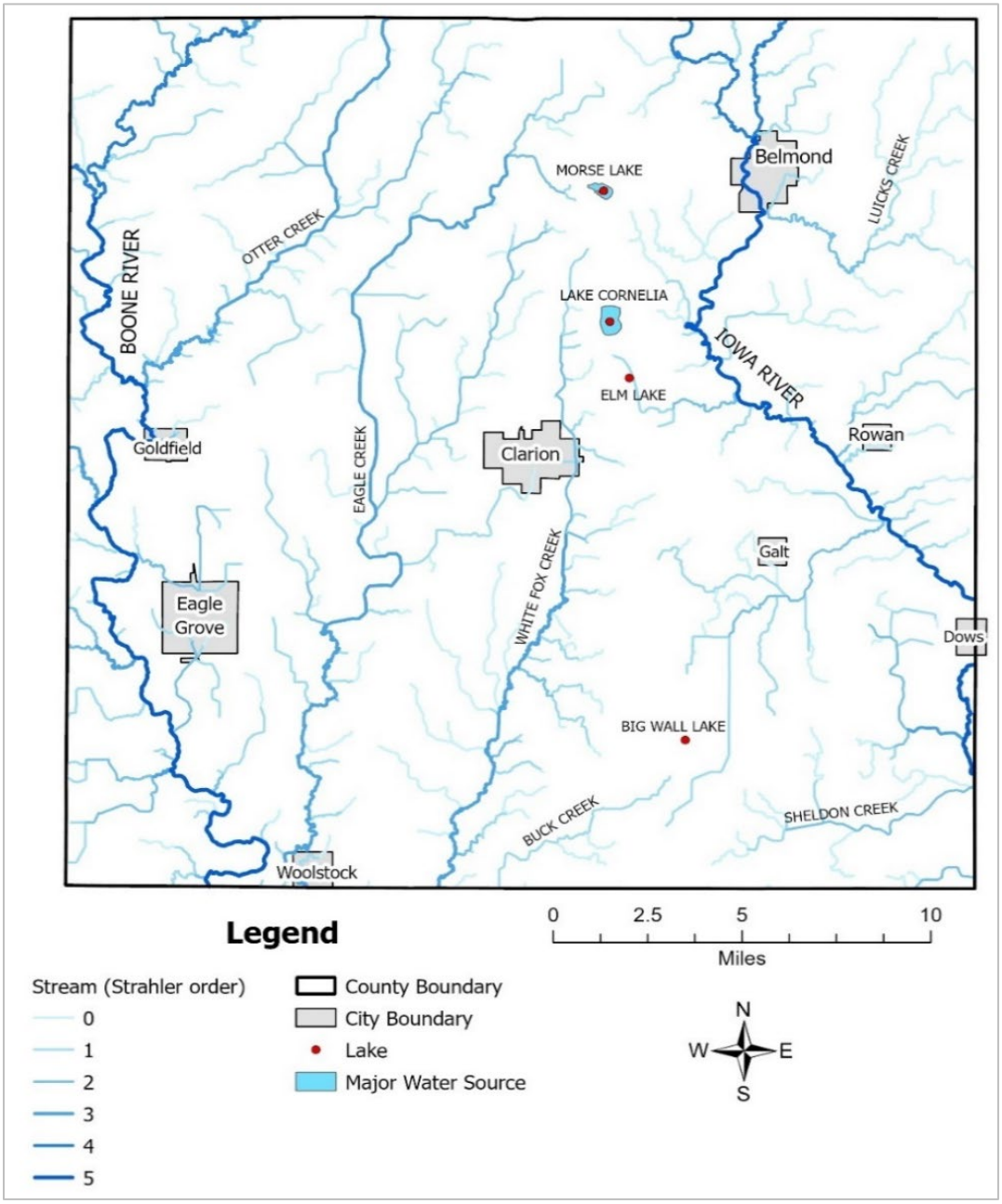
Morse Lake, located near Belmond, is a natural lake featuring grassland and bird conservation on the southern edge. To the southwest is Lake Cornelia, which is lined with residential property and camping areas; the land surrounding the Lake continues to develop due to the variety of recreational attractions available. Immediately south of Lake Cornelia is Elm Lake, which is surrounded by sloping hills and winding shores, and is known for its natural vegetation. Some development has occurred along the eastern shores.

Further south in Wall Lake Township is Big Wall Lake. Named for its wall of boulders that once surrounded the shores, the lake is now simply a “kettle hole” amid the plane. The wall of the lake has since disappeared, hauled away to make foundation stones (Macbride, 1909).

Along with lakes, many streams trickle throughout the county and drain into two major tributaries of the Mississippi: the Boone River and the Iowa River. The Boone River runs along the western edge of the county and the Iowa River runs along the eastern edge, both making up the two major watersheds that the county’s surface waters drain into.

Figure 7 on the following page shows the rivers and streams in Wright County, shaded according to the Strahler stream order. This classification system describes the branching structure of stream networks by assigning a numeric order to stream tributaries. The lighter the stream branch is on the map, the higher the number in the Strahler order, and the further away that branch is from the main river. The map also includes four significant lakes in the county: Morse Lake, Lake Cornelia, Elm Lake, and Big Wall Lake.

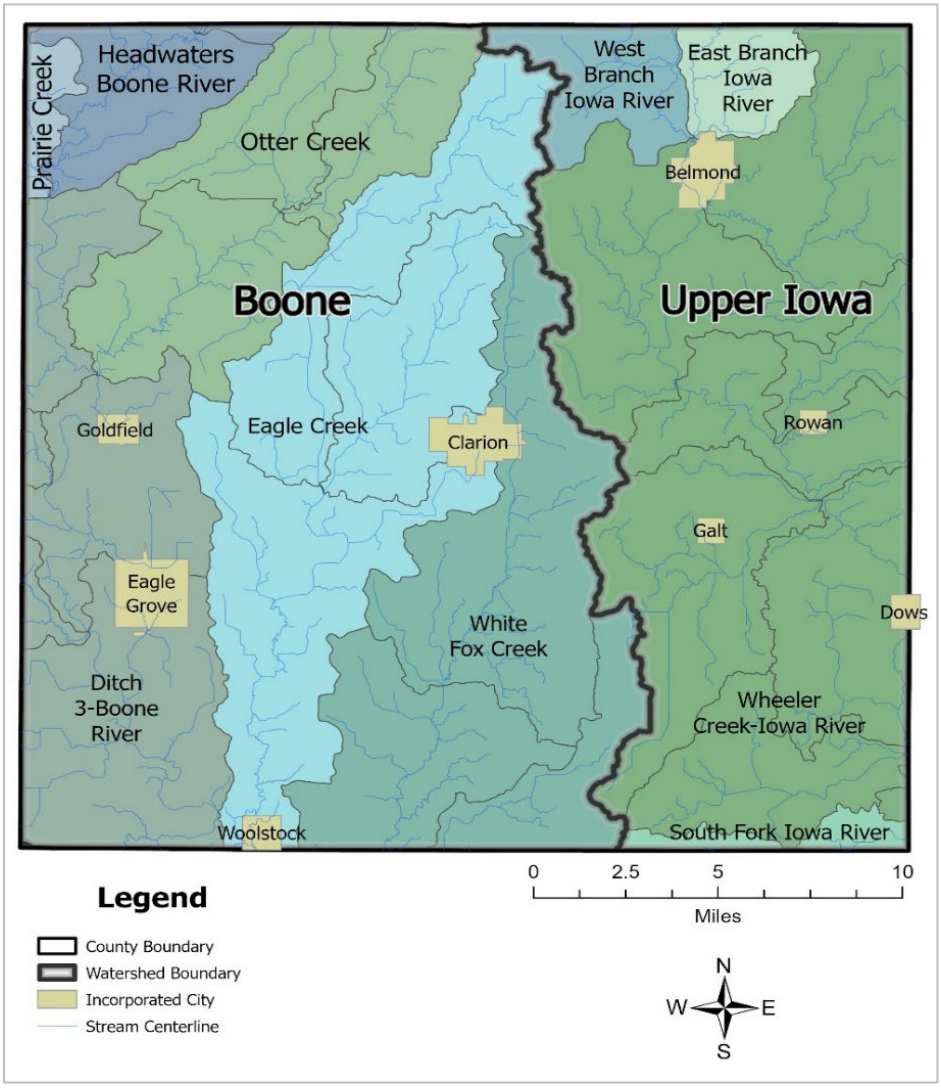
Figure 7: Wright County Rivers



Watersheds

There are two major drainage systems for Wright County: the Boone River, and the upper portion of the Iowa River (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2023). Wright County consists of two watersheds: the Boone Watershed and the Upper Iowa River Watershed. Figure 8 on the following page displays the watershed boundaries of Wright County.

Figure 8: Wright County Waterways & Watersheds



Boone Watershed

The Boone Watershed spans 581,350 acres across six counties in Iowa, including the entire western and central portion of Wright County. It is an area of gently flat to rolling hills (USDA/NRCS, 2008). Before subsurface drainage, this region had abundant wetlands, many of which were interconnected prairie potholes. Today, much of the area is artificially drained to support row crop agriculture, which makes up nearly 86% of the land use in the watershed (Boone River WMA). Agricultural drainage, typically through subsurface or artificial methods, can lead to excess nutrients and pollutants entering streams, as the water is poorly filtered (USDA/NRCS, 2008).

Upper Iowa River Watershed

The Upper Iowa River Watershed covers the eastern side of Wright County, spanning 641,000 acres. The landscape is characterized by nearly level to gently rolling hills with short slopes (USDA/NRCS, 2008). Most of the region's wet soils have been artificially drained to maximize crop production. Approximately 38% of the soil in the watershed is poorly drained, of this, nearly 84% percent is in row crop agriculture. Subsurface drainage is utilized to lower the water table and convert wetland or wet meadow areas into drier, more productive farmland (USDA/NRCS, 2008).

Soils

Wright County contains six soil associations: Canisteo-Nicollet-Webster, Brownton-Ottosen-Bode, Canisteo-Clarion-Nicollet, Clarion-Storden-Webster, Wadena-Coland, Hayden-Storden-Hanlon Associations (United States Department of Agriculture, 2024). These soil associations have similar characteristics in that they are silty, loamy soils formed in glacial sediments/till and are all located on uplands. Associations are "broad areas that have a distinctive pattern of soils, relief, and drainage." Each association consists of one or more major soils and some minor soils.

Table 1: Wright County Soil Associations

Soil Association	% of County	Composition
Canisteo-Nicollet-Webster	41%	Canisteo Soils – 30% Nicollet Soils – 25% Webster Soils– 25% Minor Soils – 20%
Brownton-Ottosen-Bode	27%	Brownton Soils – 25% Ottosen Soils – 25% Bode Soils – 20% Minor Soils – 30%
Canisteo-Clarion-Nicollet	16%	Canisteo Soils – 30% Clarion Soils – 25% Nicollet Soils – 15% Minor Soils – 30%
Clarion-Storden-Webster	9%	Clarion Soils – 35% Storden Soils – 15% Webster Soils – 15% Minor Soils – 35%
Wadena-Coland	5%	Wadena Soils – 40% Coland Soils – 25% Minor Soils – 35%

Hayden-Storden-Hanlon	2%	Hayden Soils – 25% Storden Soils – 20% Hanlon Soils – 10% Minor Soils – 45%

Table 2 shows the different soils that are found in Wright County and the soil description. The Canisteo Clay Loam is the most common soil in the county, accounting for 15.6% of the total soil. Cropland, hayland, and pasture are the most common uses for this soil type (Wright County Soil Survey, 2024).

Table 2: Wright County Soils

Soil	% of County	Description
Canisteo Clay Loam	15.6%	Nearly level to low sloping, poorly drained, loamy wet prairies
Clarion Loam	12.6%	Moderate sloping, well drained, loamy upland prairies
Nicollet Clay Loam	12.2%	Low to moderate sloping, somewhat poorly drained, loamy upland prairies
Webster Clay Loam	10.4%	Nearly level to low sloping, poorly drained, loamy wet prairies
Harps Clay Loam	6.8%	Nearly level to low sloping, poorly drained, calcareous rim prairies
Okoboji Silty Clay Loam	5.7%	Nearly level to low sloping, very poorly drained, depressional marsh
Bode Clay Loam	5.6%	Low to moderate sloping, well drained, loamy upland prairies
Kossuth Silty Clay Loam	5.2%	Nearly level to low sloping, poorly drained, loamy wet prairies
Wadena Loam	2.9%	Nearly level to low sloping, well drained, sandy upland prairies
Storden Loam	2%	Moderate to high sloping, well drained, calcareous upland prairies

Source: Web Soil Survey

Soil is an important factor in the unincorporated area of the county, as agriculture is the most significant economic driver for the area. The soil classification (association), slope, and erosion class are each used to determine the Corn Suitability Rating 2 (CSR2), which is an index of productivity for row-crop production. Land Use patterns are often shaped around CSR2, especially in unincorporated areas of Iowa where agriculture is a common use. See the "Agriculture" section of this plan for more information on CSR2 and how it is used in land use planning in Wright County.

Hazards

A hazard is any source of danger that threatens humans, property, and the environment (FEMA 385-2/August 2001, Page iii). Wright County adopted its most recent Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2013, which all hazard-related information in this section is based on.

A Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies, prepares for, and minimizes the impact of potential hazards that may affect jurisdictions based on the risk each potential hazard poses to the jurisdiction. The Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies hazards, profiles hazard events, inventories assets, assesses vulnerability, and then identifies goals and strategies for each participating incorporated city and the unincorporated county.

In the context of hazard mitigation planning, there are two classifications of hazards. The first is natural hazards, which are caused by a meteorological, environmental, or geological phenomena (Iowa 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan). The second category includes biological and human-caused hazards, which originate from human activity or biological threats. Table 3 lists both categories of hazards as identified in the 2007 Iowa Hazard Mitigation Plan.

In developing the 2013 plan, the committee analyzed potential hazards in Wright County using data from the 2007 Iowa Hazard Mitigation Plan, historical events, disaster declarations, the National Centers for Environmental Information, Wright County Emergency Management, and local knowledge.

Some hazards were determined to generally impact Wright County countywide. To reflect this, an asterisk (*) is used in Table 3 to indicate hazards that tend to have a broad impact. Addressing these shared risks at a larger scale helps reduce redundancy in the planning process. Hazards determined by the Hazard Mitigation Committee to have no significant impact on the county are shaded in gray in Table 3 and were removed from the plan. Please note that the County chose to incorporate an additional hazard, *Watershed Pollution*, that was addressed as a hazard that results in countywide impacts.

Table 3: Wright County Hazard Mitigation – 2013 Hazards

Hazards	
Agro-terrorism	Highway Transportation Incident
Air Transportation Event	Human Disease Incident*
Animal/Plant/Crop Disease	Human Disease Pandemic*
Biological Terrorism	Landslide
Chemical Terrorism	Levee Failure
Communications Failure	Pipeline Transportation Incident
Conventional Terrorism	Public Disorder
Cyber Terrorism	Radiological Incident – Fixed

Dam Failure	Radiological Incident - Transportation
Drought*	Radiological Terrorism
Earthquake*	Railway Transportation Event
Enemy Attack	River Flood
Energy Failure	Severe Winter Storm*
Expansive Soils	Sink Holes
Extreme Heat*	Structural Failure
Flash Flooding	Structural Fire
Grass or Wild-land Fire	Thunderstorm and Lightning*
Hailstorm*	Tornado*
Hazardous Materials Incident - Fixed	Waterway Incident
Hazardous Materials Incident – Transportation	Windstorm*

*Hazard considered to generally have countywide impacts.
Gray boxes were deleted from the Wright County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

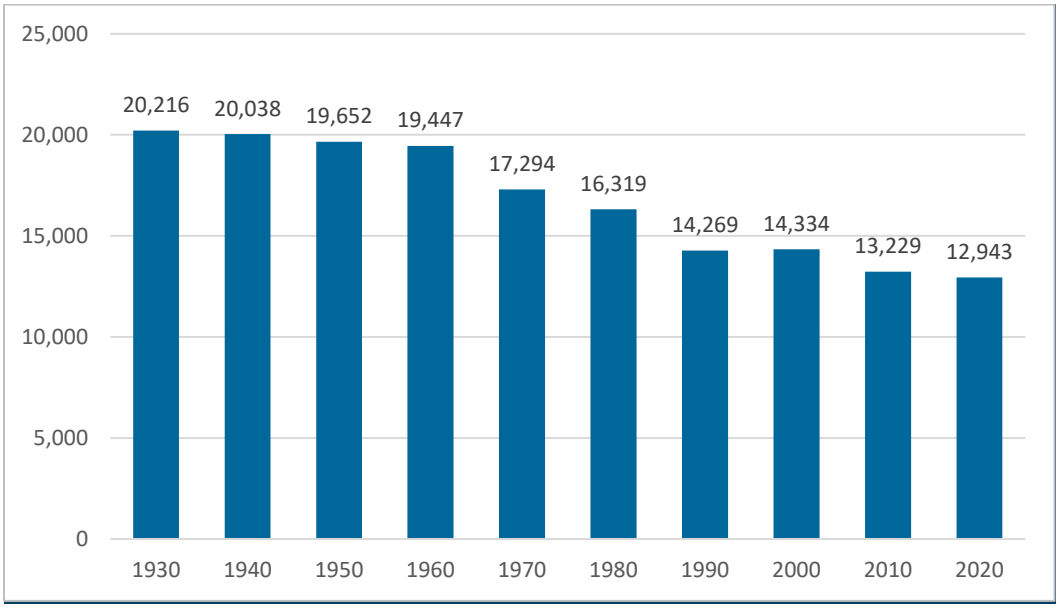
The Hazard Mitigation Committee evaluated the threat of each hazard using a risk assessment based on historical occurrence, probability, vulnerability, maximum threat, severity, and speed of onset. This assessment identified that the major countywide risks are Severe Winter Storms, Thunderstorms and Lightning, Tornadoes, Windstorms, and Hailstorms.

For more detailed information about hazards and mitigation strategies, please refer to the Wright County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2013.

Chapter 4: Demographics

As of 2020, the population of Wright County is 12,943 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Wright County saw an increase in population from 1870 to 1920. Since this time, the population has slowly decreased, with a significant drop from 1980 to 1990, primarily due to the Farm Crisis of the 1980s. The Farm Crisis negatively impacted the State of Iowa's population, especially the rural areas. From 2010 to 2020, Wright County's population decreased by 1,391 people, or -9%. Planning for these changes in population is critical in discussing the future of Wright County.

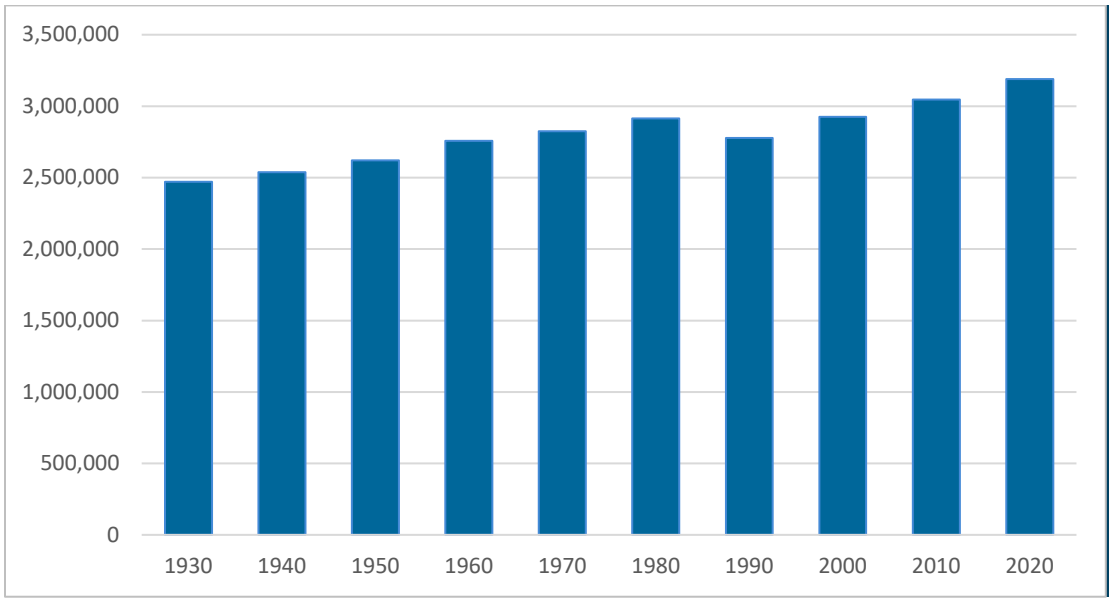
Figure 9: Population of Wright County 1930-2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As displayed in Figure 10, the State of Iowa's population change is quite different from Wright County's population shift shown in Figure 9. The State of Iowa has only lost population once since 1930, during the 1980s Farm Crisis, yet Wright County has experienced nearly continuous decline. The population decrease in Wright County is a common trend occurring throughout many rural areas in Iowa. Younger populations are migrating towards larger, metropolitan areas such as Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, and their surrounding communities.

Figure 10: Population of Iowa 1930-2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Future population trends are projected to keep heading in the same direction. Table 4 shows the State of Iowa continuing to increase in population, while Wright County continues to decrease in population. It is important to note that these projections are based on past trends. The projected population numbers are assuming economic and demographic factors will remain constant. If there's a large enough shift in economic and/or demographic factors, the projections may change significantly.

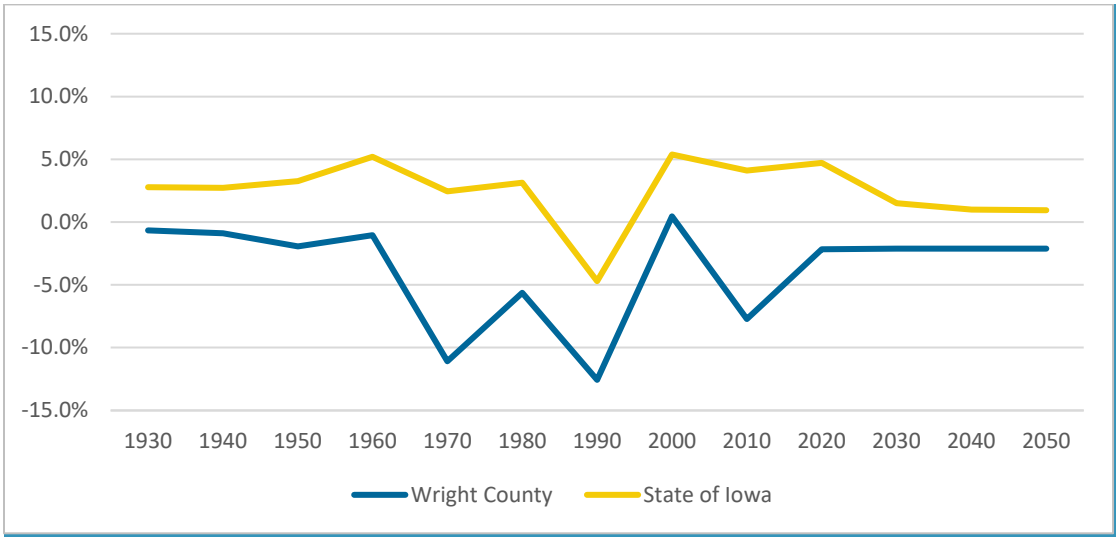
Table 4: Projected Population

	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
State of Iowa	3,232,185	3,280,468	3,321,953	3,355,125	3,384,857	3,417,136
Wright County	12,519	12,254	11,995	11,742	11,493	11,249

Source: Woods and Poole (2023)

Since 1940, Wright County has experienced an average population decline of 3.8% per decade. Between 1960 and 1970, the county had an 11.1% drop in population, with a substantial 12.6% decrease during the Farm Crisis. Population change by decade for both the State of Iowa and Wright County are illustrated in Figure 11 on the following page.

Figure 11: Population Change by Decade



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

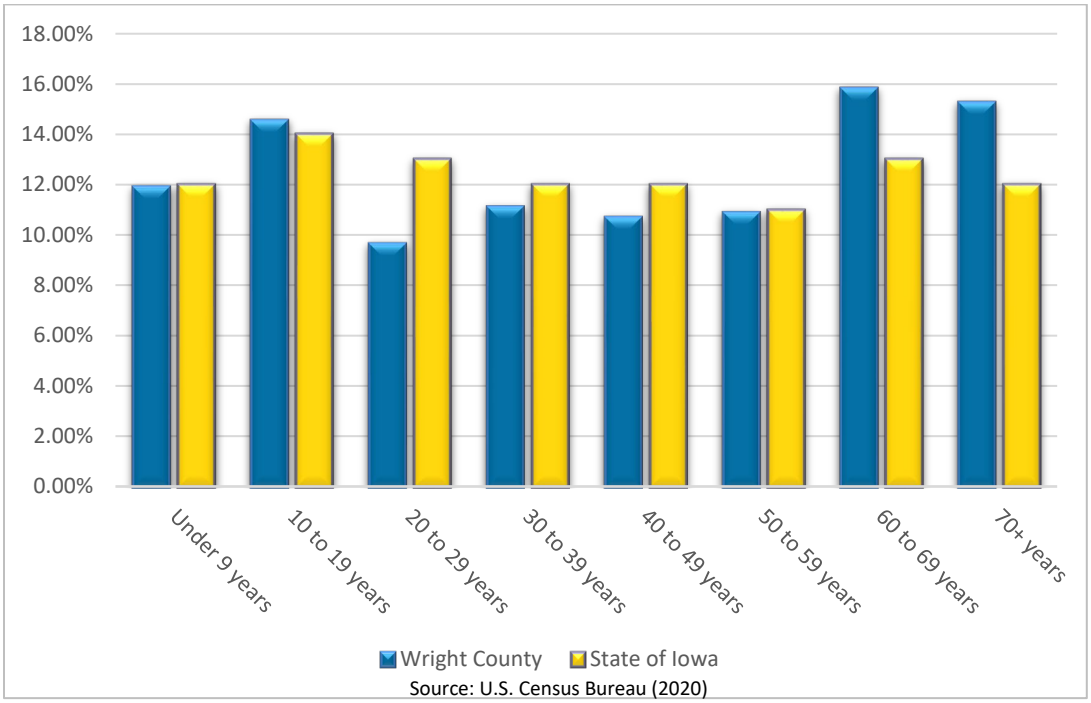
Like many counties in Iowa that are primarily rural, Wright County has an age distribution that deviates from the ideal population balance. The largest age cohort in Wright County is the 60 to 69 cohort, making up 15.8% of the population, followed closely by the 70-and-above cohort at 15.3%. Additionally, the 10- to 19-year-old group represents a significant portion of the population, accounting for 14.6%.

Many rural counties have an issue retaining the young adult population (20-29 years old) compared to the rest of the population. This is also the case for Wright County, as this cohort makes up the smallest share of the population at 9.7%.

When comparing Wright County's population distribution to the state of Iowa, the county is generally close to the state average for most age groups, with a few notable exceptions. Wright County is almost 4% below the state average in the 20- to 29-year-old age group. Finding a way to encourage the younger population to stay in Wright County will be key to its long-term success.

In contrast, Wright County has nearly 3% more residents in both the 60- to 69-year-old and 70+ age groups compared to the state. This means these age cohorts make up a significantly larger portion of Wright County's population than they do at the state level. This uneven age distribution suggests that, as the population continues to age, more services for seniors will be needed.

Figure 12: Percentage of Population by Age Range

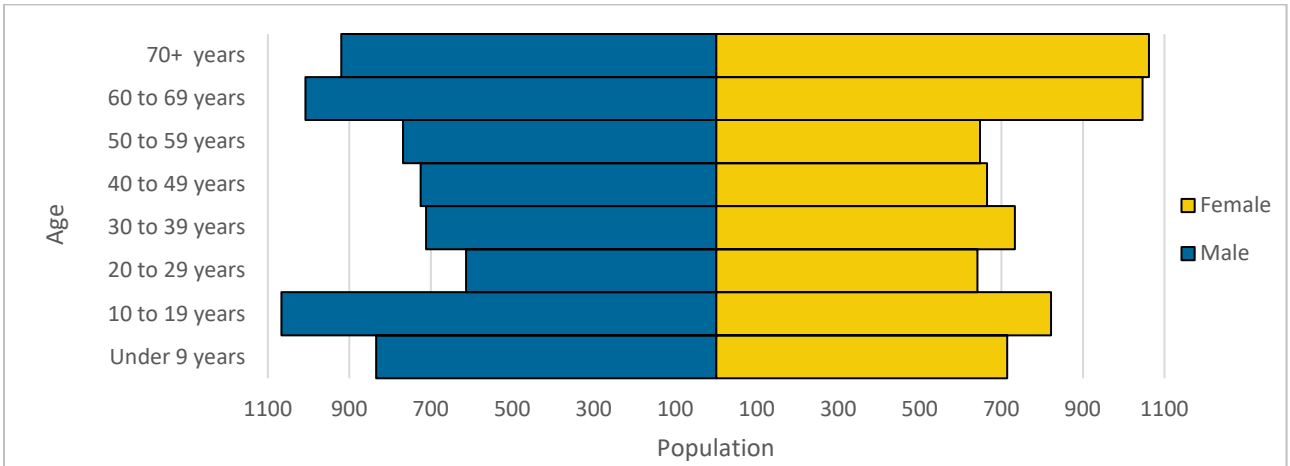


Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2020)

The age dependency ratio is another tool to use when describing the population makeup of an area. The age dependency ratio describes the ratio of the dependent-age population (under 18 or over 65) to the working-age population (18-64). The higher the ratio, the more burden there will be on the working population to support the dependent population. The dependency ratio for Wright County, the State of Iowa, and the United States increased from 2010 to 2020. Wright County's dependency ratio increased from 79 in 2010 to 86 in 2020. Iowa's ratio increased from 63 in 2010 to 70 in 2020, and the United States increased from 59 in 2010 to 64 in 2020.

Figure 13 on the following page shows the distribution of age by sex in Wright County as of 2020. The male-to-female ratio of the county is relatively equal with 49.7% or 6,575 males and 50.3% or 6,654 females.

Figure 13: Wright County Age Cohorts by Sex



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2020)

Wright County is seeing a trend of younger residents moving away; this is reflected in the increasing median age of its population. The median age of residents in Wright County is 42.3, which is higher than both the State of Iowa (38.6) and the national average (38.8) according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020). To prevent the age distribution from becoming even more skewed, it will be crucial for the county to offer the lifestyle options that younger generations seek.

Table 5: Median Age by Sex --- 2010 vs 2020

	2010			2020		
Sex	**Both**	**Male**	**Female**	**Both**	**Male**	**Female**
United States	37.2	35.8	38.5	38.8	37.5	39.9
Iowa	38.1	36.6	39.5	38.6	37.6	39.8
Wright Co	44	42.3	46	42.3	42.3	42.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2020)

The demographics of Wright County are like that of many other rural counties in Iowa. As displayed in Table 3, 81.4% of Wright County's population is White alone. The county also includes smaller populations of African Americans, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Asians, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders. Of the total population, 2,394 persons are Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Over the past 20 years, both Iowa and Wright County have become more diverse. In 2000, just 6.1% of the population in Iowa and 4.3% of the population in Wright County self-identified as something other than White alone. By 2020, these figures increased to 15.5% in Iowa and 18.6% for Wright County.

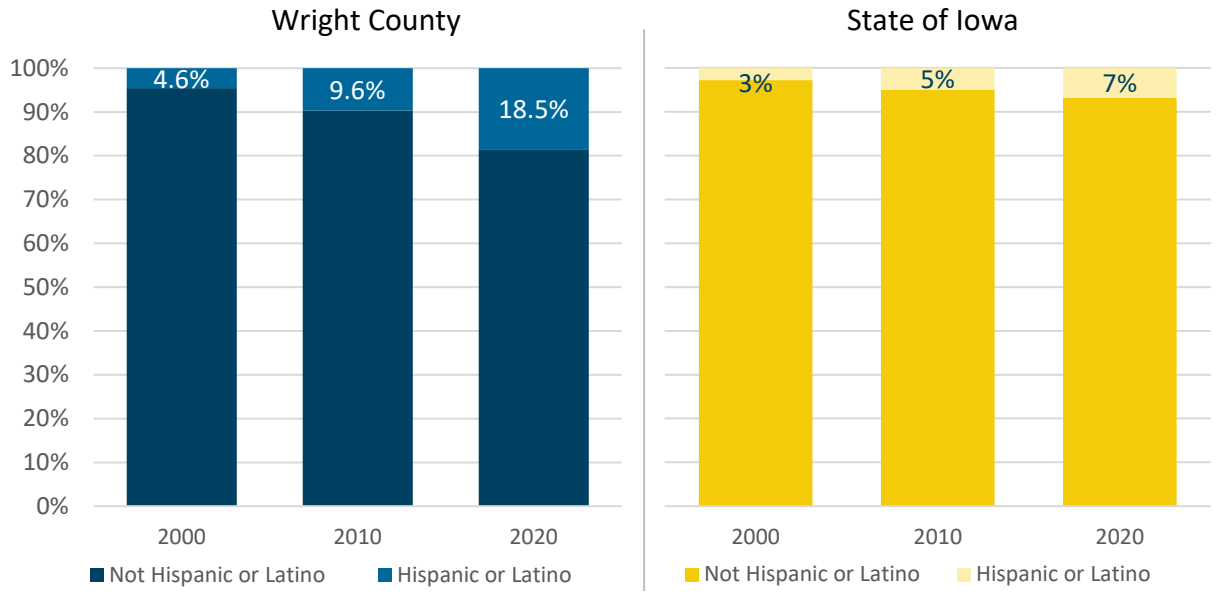
Table 6: Race, 2020

Population Makeup by Race	Wright Co	Iowa
Population of 1 Race	93.5%	94.4%
White	81.4%	84.5%
Black or African American Alone	0.6%	4.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.7%	0.5%
Asian	0.5%	2.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.2%
Some Other Race	10.2%	2.8%
Population of 2(+) Races	6.5%	5.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2020)

The percentage of the population identifying themselves as Hispanic or Latino is also increasing. In 2000, only 2.8% of Iowan residents identified as Hispanic or Latino, increasing to 6.8% by 2020. In comparison, Wright County has seen an even larger growth in its Hispanic or Latino population, with an increase from 4.6% in 2000 to 18.5% in 2020.

Figure 14: Hispanic or Latino Population



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Chapter 5: Planning Elements

The following section outlines the existing conditions, goals, objectives, and implementation strategies for the plan's key elements. These include economic development, agriculture, housing, transportation, public services and infrastructure, recreation and conservation, and land use.

An analysis of existing conditions establishes the foundation for anticipating future needs related to growth, housing, employment, land use, and other critical components of the County's development. The goals and objectives reflect the County's vision for its physical, social, and economic future. Goals articulate the desired quality of life and guide long-term development decisions, while objectives provide measurable, actionable steps toward achieving those goals.

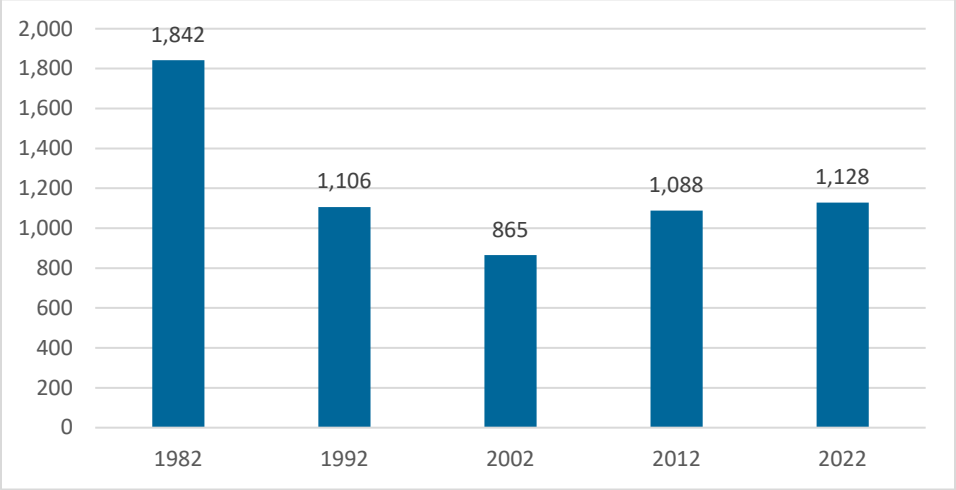
Agriculture

Existing Conditions

Agricultural Economy

Agriculture is the historic foundation of Wright County's economy and continues play an important role in the county's employment, income, and product outputs. Figure 15 shows Farm Employment in Wright County for full-time and part-time employees by agricultural census year. Farm employment for Wright County dropped sharply during the Farm Crisis of the 1980s, with a decrease from 1982 to 2002 before slightly recovering over the next two decades (USDA Census of Agriculture, 2022).

Figure 15: Wright County Farm Employment – 1980-2014



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture (2022)

The county's agricultural sector is primarily driven by two key sectors: livestock and cropland. Among livestock, poultry & eggs (with egg-laying chickens being the most sizable subsector) provide the largest output while hogs & pigs rank second in output. Wright County is a leader in Iowa for poultry with it ranking 2nd in the state. The state is still in the upper third for hogs & pigs with it ranking 27th out of the 99 counties.

95% of land in farms throughout the County are used as cropland. The County's top two crop productions are corn for grain and soybeans for beans (USDA, 2022). Since 2007, the average number of farms has been declining, while the average acreage of farms has steadily increased. This trend toward farm consolidation is expected to continue, largely driven by economies of scale. As consolidation increases, it has the potential to raise the barrier of entry to new farmers, increase the amount of farmland that is rented out, decrease crop diversity, and limit opportunities for local investment as fewer small- and medium-sized farms exist within the county. This may impact the number of residents, homes, and businesses operating in unincorporated areas of the county as farm consolidation continues.

Table 7: Wright County Agriculture Data – 1987-2022

	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	2022
Number of Farms	882	812	759	752	771	775	735	734
Total Farmland (acres)	344,010	353,683	366,111	345,490	327,728	359,713	356,303	369,835
Average Size of Farm (acres)	390	436	482	459	425	464	485	504

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture (2022)

Agricultural Land Values

Land use decisions in the county have prioritized protecting prime farmland. Prime farmland is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as farmland having an adequate supply of moisture, favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable levels of acidity, few or no rocks, permeability to water and air, is not excessively erodible or saturated with water, is not frequently flooded and has a slope that ranges between 0 to 6 percent (Dideriksen, 1992).

According to the Soil Survey of Wright County (1992), nearly 82% of the total acreage in Wright County met the soil requirements for prime farmland. Land that is not prime farmland can still contribute to the agricultural sector. 88% of the county's total land area was farmed as of 2007.

With most of the county being prime farmland, agricultural land values are much higher for Wright County compared to the rest of the state. Table 9 shows the value of farmland in Wright County and the State of Iowa from 1987 to 2022. Farmland value per acre has increased dramatically from $1,224 per acre during the farming crisis in the 1980s to $13,720 per acre in 2022.

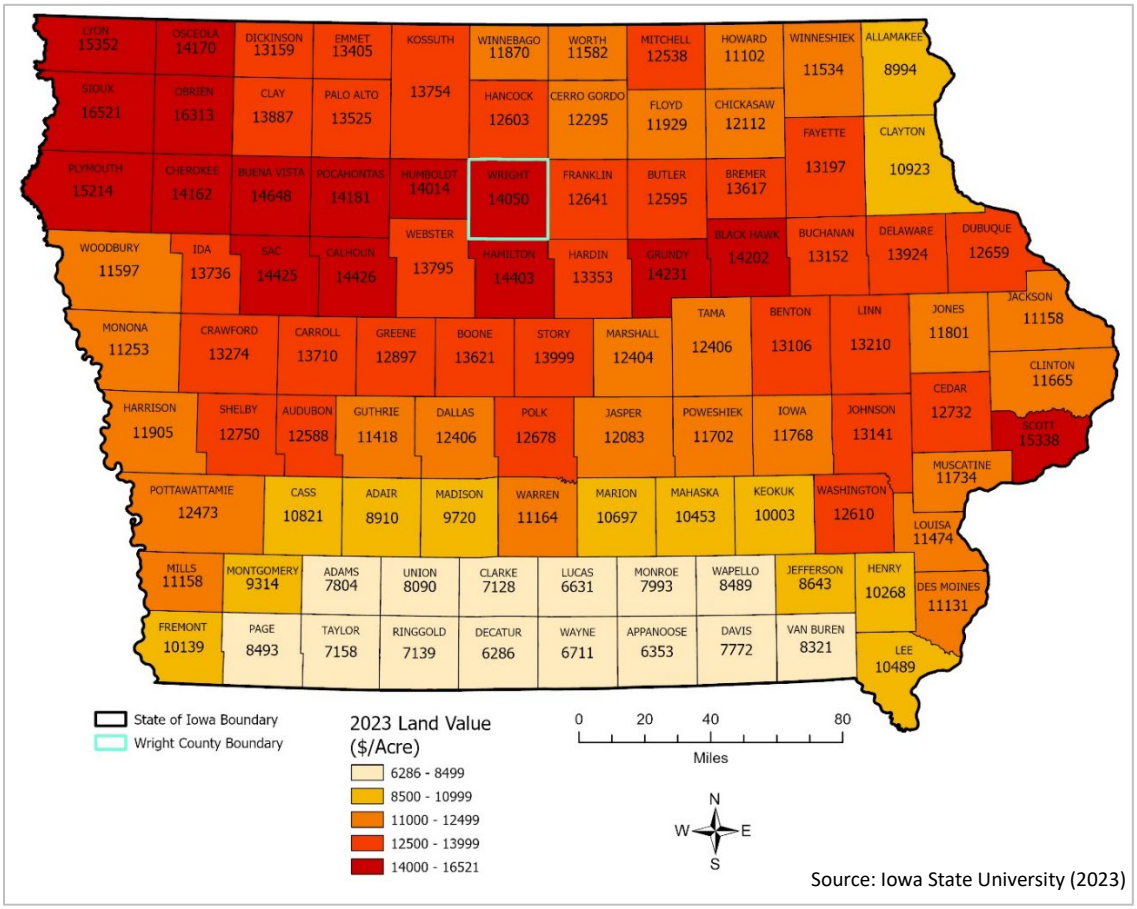
Table 8: Average Farmland Value – 1987-2022

	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	2022
Wright County	$1,224	$1,714	$2,604	$2,565	$4,807	$10,659	$8,645	$13,720
State of Iowa	$875	$1,249	$1,837	$2,083	$3,908	$8,296	$7,326	$11,411

Source: Iowa State University (2023)

The map displayed in Figure 16 depicts average land values across Iowa as of November 2023. As indicated on the map, it is evident that Wright County is situated amongst some of the richest, prime agricultural soils. North central to northwest Iowa offers the highest land values found across the state.

Figure 16: Average Farmland Value ($/Acre) – 2023



Source: Iowa State University (2023)

Corn Suitability Rating

The Corn Suitability Rating (CSR) is an index which evaluates different types of soil based on their potential for row crop productivity. Factors that impact the CSR include soil profile properties, weather conditions, and slope characteristics (Miller, 2005). The higher the CSR, the better the soil's potential for row-crop productivity.

In 2013, Iowa State University introduced an updated system known as CSR2 (Corn Suitability Rating 2). This revised method offers a more uniform and transparent approach to evaluating soil productivity. Unlike the original CSR, CSR2 does not factor in weather conditions. This has led to higher ratings in some Iowa counties, particularly in north-central and western Iowa. For example, Wright County's CSR2 weighted mean is 78.6, a notable increase from its original CSR score of 73.2. CSR2 weighted mean values across the state are illustrated in Figure 16.

Figure 17: CSR2 Weighted Means by County

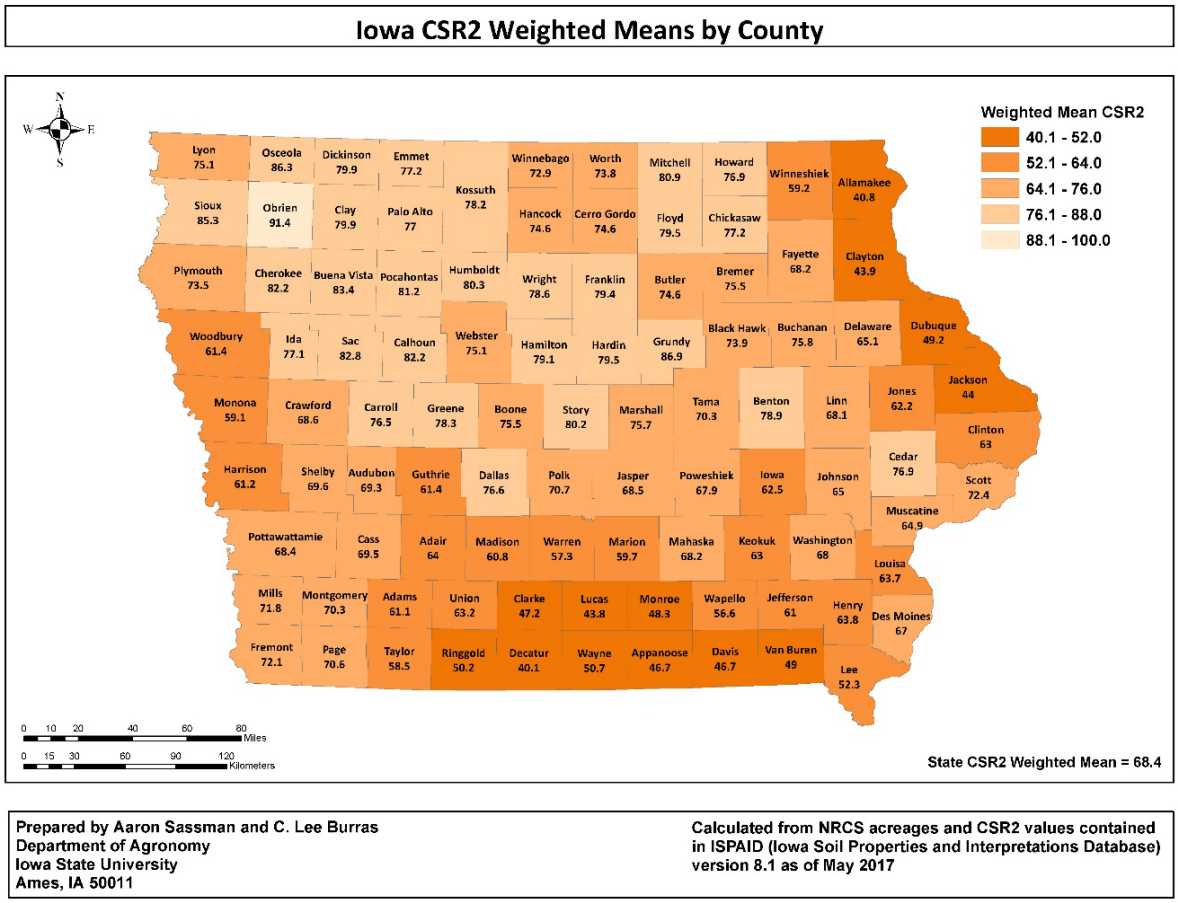
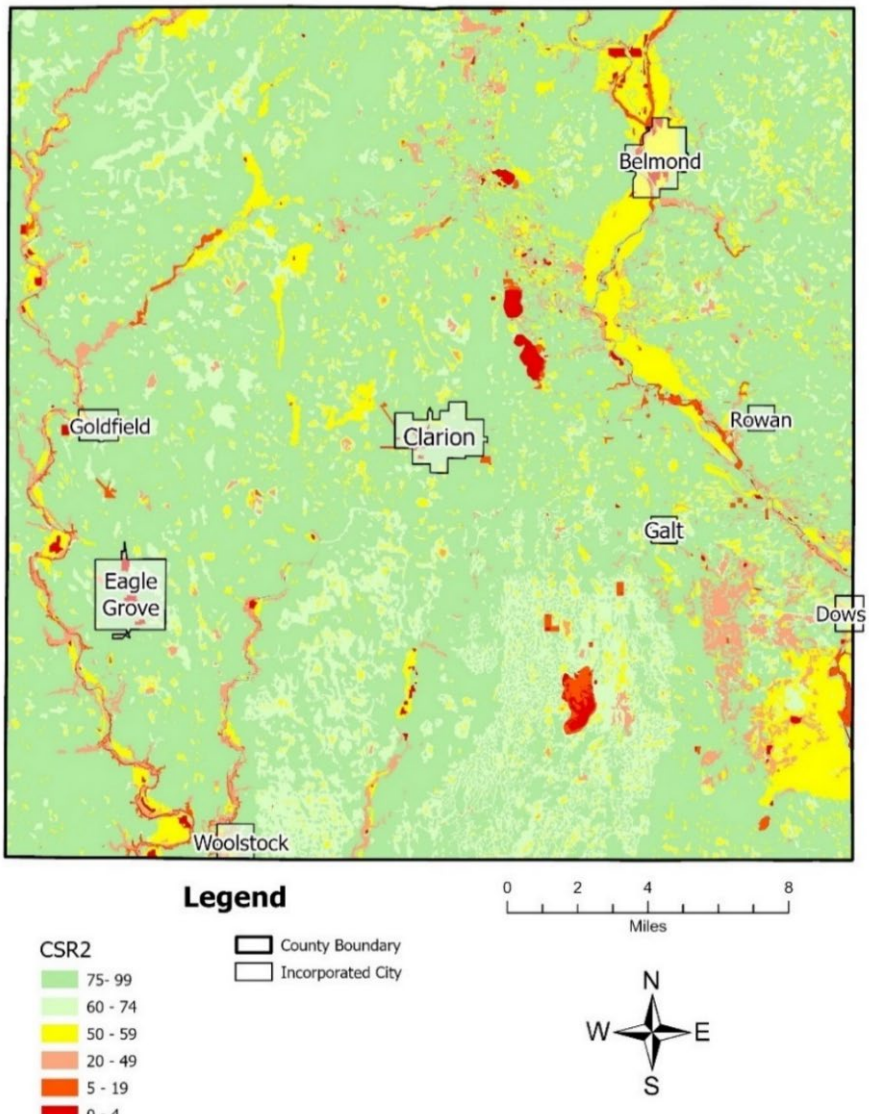


Figure 18 shows localized patterns in CSR2 values within Wright County. Productivity is generally highest in the central and upland areas, where well-drained soils, moderate slopes, and stable moisture conditions create ideal conditions for row-crop farming. Conversely, CSR2 values drop noticeably along natural drainageways and flood-prone areas. These lower ratings are typically associated with factors such as poor drainage, elevated water tables, or frequent soil saturation. These circumstances limit row-crop viability by negatively impacting the planting process, crop yields, and limiting the types of crops that can be grown. The variation in CSR2 values within Wright County exhibits how, even within a county known for its strong agricultural base, land use potential can shift significantly over short distances due to underlying soil and landscape characteristics.

Figure 18: Wright County Corn Suitability Rating (CSR2)



Source: USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey

Goals and Implementation Actions (Agriculture)

Goal: Preserve and protect Agricultural land with emphasis on prime agricultural areas

Agricultural land is a valuable resource and a major economic driver within Wright County. Preserving and protecting prime agriculture land from prospective development and urban sprawl will ensure that agricultural products and farming will continue to have a strong presence within Wright County.

In Iowa, county comprehensive plans generally address eminent domain by aligning with state statutes that define "public use" (roads, utilities, public infrastructure). While plans guide land use, the authority for eminent domain is governed by state law (Iowa Code chapters 6A, 6B, 476A) which allows condemnation for public improvements but requires fair market compensation, often determined by a county compensation commission.

Iowa law limits eminent domain to projects serving a strict "public use" or "public purpose" or "public improvement". "Public use" or "public purpose" or "public improvement" does not include the authority to condemn agricultural land for private development purposes unless the owner of the agricultural land consents to the condemnation.

Objective A.1 Direct development away from agriculture lands, where possible.

Implementation Strategies

A.1.1 Prioritize agricultural land development using the Corn Suitability Rating (CSR)

The corn suitability rating is an index rating of each different kind of soil based on its potential row-crop productivity. Factors that impact the CSR include soil profile properties, weather conditions and slope characteristics (Miller, 2005). Agricultural lands identified to have a high CSR should be protected to ensure the most successful row-crop production within Wright County; and those areas with a low CSR, should be recognized as areas where future development could potentially be located, if necessary.

A.1.2 Encourage development within and adjacent to incorporated areas

In association with prioritizing agricultural land development based on the CSR, the County should direct residential, commercial, industrial, and other forms of development toward areas where such development currently exists. Establishing development contiguous to existing land uses will discourage urban sprawl and pocket development throughout the unincorporated area of the County, while protecting the existing prime agricultural land.

Objective A.2 Encourage growth in agricultural economy.

Implementation Strategies

A.2.1 Provide financial incentives to agricultural related development with priority given to agri-business

Agriculture lands and agriculture-related businesses in the unincorporated area of Wright County have historically been, and currently are, a major economic driver within the County. Encouraging agricultural-related development will ensure that

agriculture has a strong existence within the County's economy. Providing financial incentives to agricultural-related development will establish an additional backbone for the County to use to encourage such development. Financial incentives include but are not limited to: Wright County Economic Development resources (such as Revolving Loan Funds, Tax Increment Financing, Tax Abatement) and State and Federal incentive programs (such as Iowa Capital Access Fund, Iowa Micro Loan, USDA Rural Development Grant/Loan).

A.2.2 Promote best practices for agricultural preservation and sustainability

Promotion of sustainable farming techniques, such as crop rotation, water conservation, and soil health management results in reduced costs, increased yields, and maintained productivity from the land. These practices help preserve the environment while improving the economic resilience of the agricultural sector. By ensuring that land remains productive, sustainable practices will contribute to the stability and growth of the agricultural economy, opening new market opportunities and supporting long-term profitability for farmers.

Objective A.3 Locate commercial and industrial development adjacent to areas with the necessary services and infrastructure.

Implementation Strategies

A.3.1 Monitor agriculture designations to ensure appropriate use

Agriculture properties should be monitored to ensure that they are being used as an agriculture use and not for any other land use such as commercial or industrial. Monitoring and enforcing prohibited uses will ensure proper taxing and maintain the County's vision and identity for the unincorporated area.

Economic Development

Economic development is a long-term planning element that works toward sustaining and/or increasing the population while providing a high standard of living for individuals through employment opportunities, robust local industries, and the availability of local goods and services. Many rural areas of Iowa have faced significant economic challenges to their local economy due to changes in mobility patterns, retail development trends, and changes in commercial activity. Now more than ever, rural communities must leverage their unique assets to drive meaningful and sustainable economic development.

Existing Conditions

Employment Trends

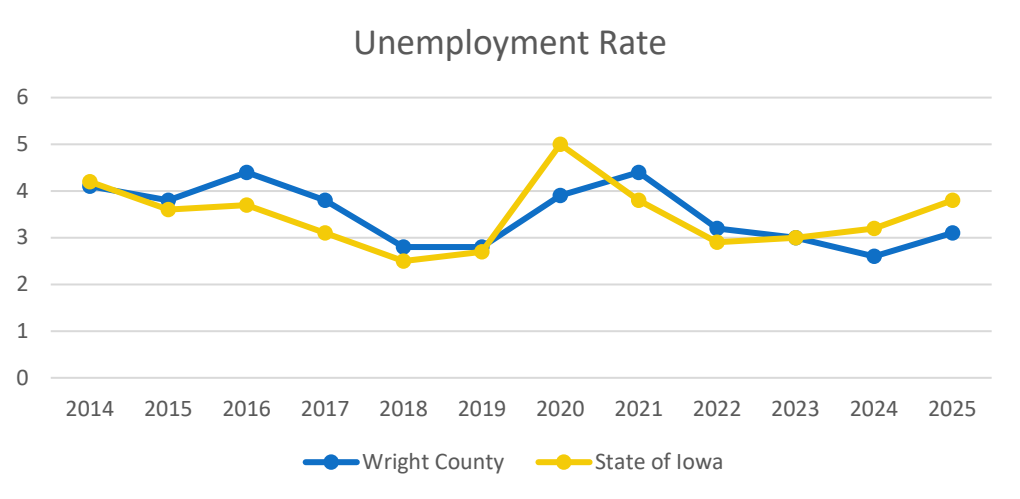
The unemployment rate is often used as an indicator of the health of the local economy. As shown in Table 9 and Figure 19, unemployment has trended downwards in Wright County over the past decade with exception of the COVID-19 pandemic spike amid national shutdowns in 2020.

Table 9: Wright County & State of Iowa Unemployment Rate by Year – 2014 to 2023

Unemployment Rates	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Wright County	4.10%	3.80%	4.40%	3.80%	2.80%	2.80%	3.90%	4.40%	3.20%	3.00%	2.60%	3.10%
State of Iowa	4.20%	3.60%	3.70%	3.10%	2.50%	2.70%	5.00%	3.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.20%	3.80%

Source: Iowa Workforce Development

Figure 19: Unemployment Rates for Wright County and Iowa, 2014-2025



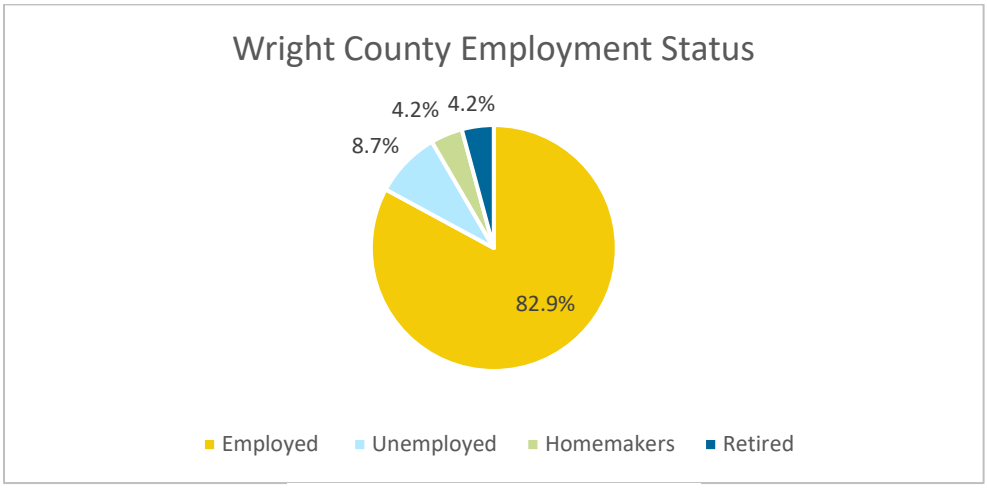
Source: Iowa Workforce Development

The County's unemployment rate as of August 2025 is lower than the state average at 3.8% and lower than the nation at 4.3%. While low unemployment shows a healthy job market for current residents, it can also mean that there are not enough workers in the area to fill all the available jobs and deter businesses from investing in new facilities and operations.

Employment Sectors

According to the 2022 Clarion Laborshed Analysis (which includes all of Wright County and commuters coming into and out of the county), 82.9% of respondents were employed and part of Wright County's civilian labor force. Laborshed studies were not recently produced for any other communities in the county. See Figure 20 for the breakdown of employment statuses within this laborshed.

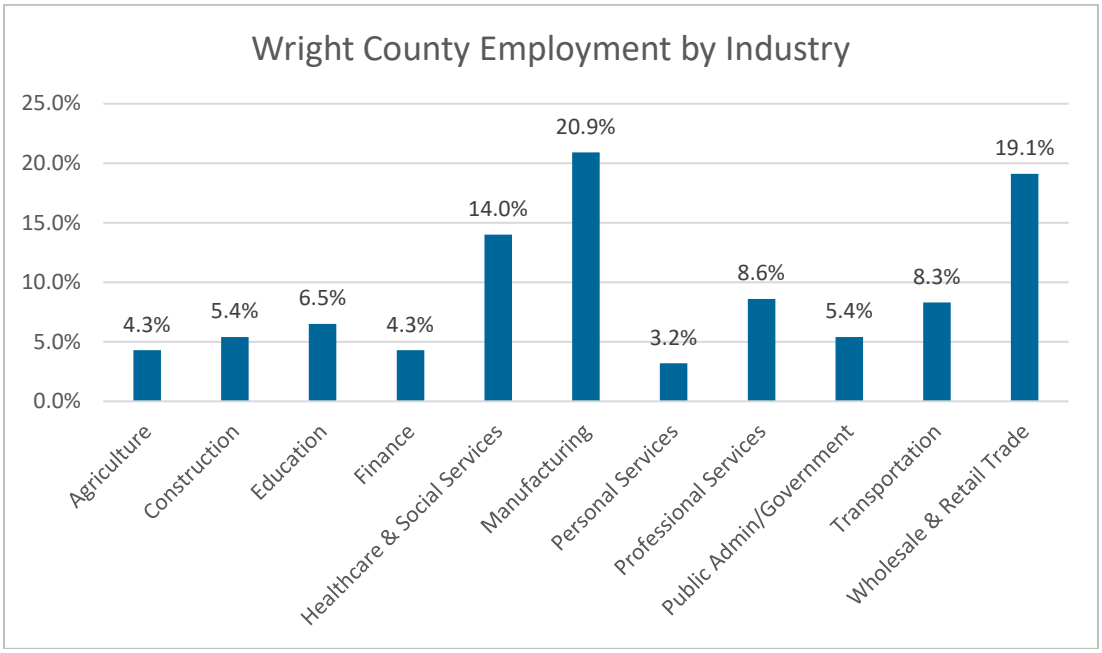
Figure 20: Employment Status – Wright – 2025



Source: Iowa Workforce Development (2025)

As displayed in Figure 21, the largest industries within the Clarion laborshed include healthcare, manufacturing, agriculture, and wholesale & retail trade. Some of Wright County's largest employers included Prestage Foods of Iowa, Iowa Specialty Hospital, Hagie Manufacturing, Gold-Eagle Cooperative, Clarion-Goldfield-Dows School District, Daybreak Foods Inc., Belmond-Klemme Community School District, Ag Processing Inc., Cascades Moulded Pulp, LP Printing Services Inc., Eagle Grove School District, Advanced Drainage Systems, Corn LP, Printing Services Inc, Bayer Crop Science, and Syngenta Seeds (Wright County Economic Development, 2022).

Figure 21: Employment by Industry – Wright County – 2022



Source: Iowa Workforce Development (2025)

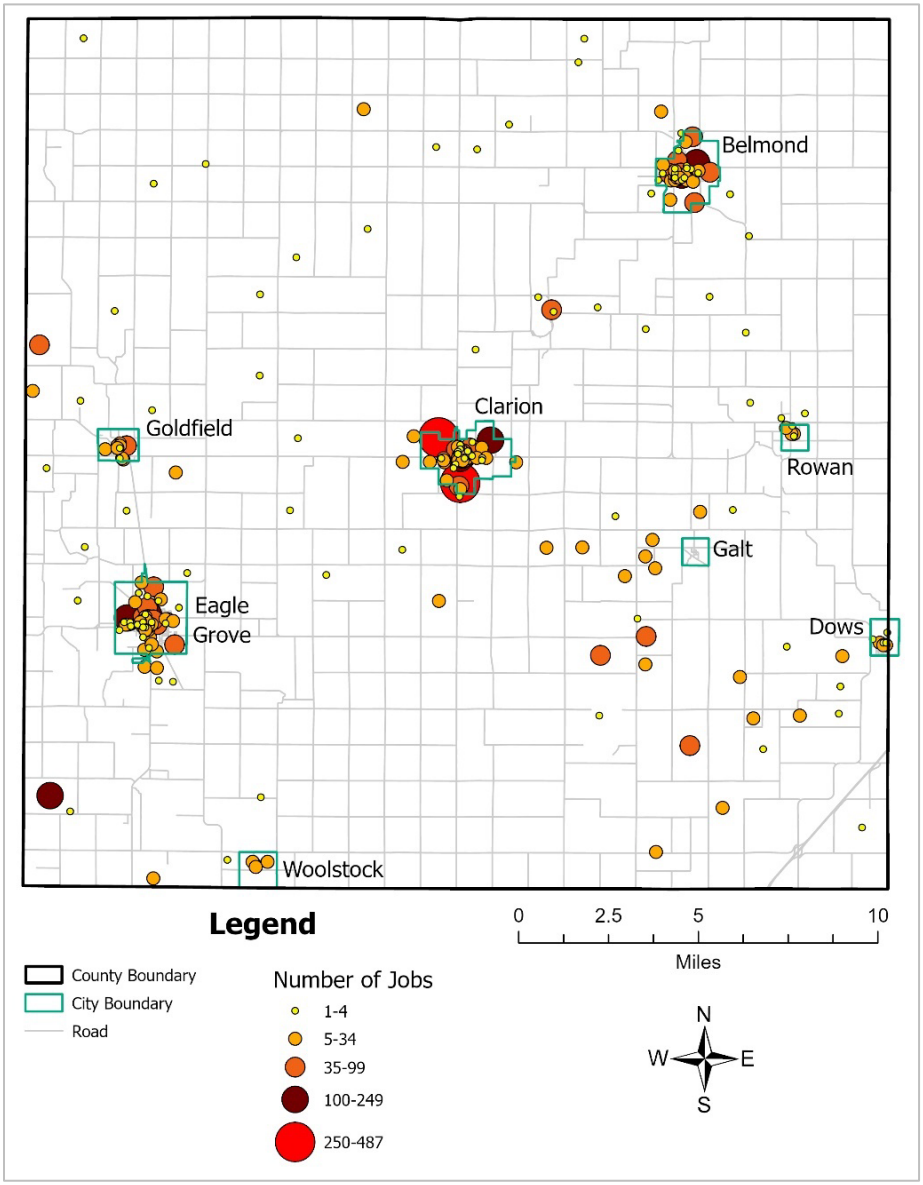
Table 10 displays Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) data comparing employment by industry between 2013 and 2022. This data indicates, to some degree, how industry trends have varied within the past 10 years. There was an increase of workers within the Clarion laborshed. The most significant growth occurred in manufacturing, construction, and professional services. The most significant declines occurred in education; professional services; and in agriculture, forestry, mining.

Table 10: Employment trends by Industrial Sector – Clarion Laborshed– 2013-2022

Industry	2013	2022	% change
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	5,012	2,760	-44.9%
Construction	1,671	3,467	107.5%
Education	8,743	4,173	-52.3%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	2,283	2,760	20.9%
Healthcare & Social Services	7,908	8,988	13.7%
Manufacturing	6,460	13,417	107.7%
Personal Services	4,177	2,054	-50.8%
Professional Services	2,673	5,521	106.5%
Public Administration & Government	3,508	3,467	-1.2%
Transportation, Communication, Utilities	2,673	5,328	99.3%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	10,191	12,262	20.3%
TOTAL	**55,299**	**64,197**	**16.1%**

Source: Iowa Workforce Development (2013 and 2022)

Figure 22: Wright County Job Distribution Map



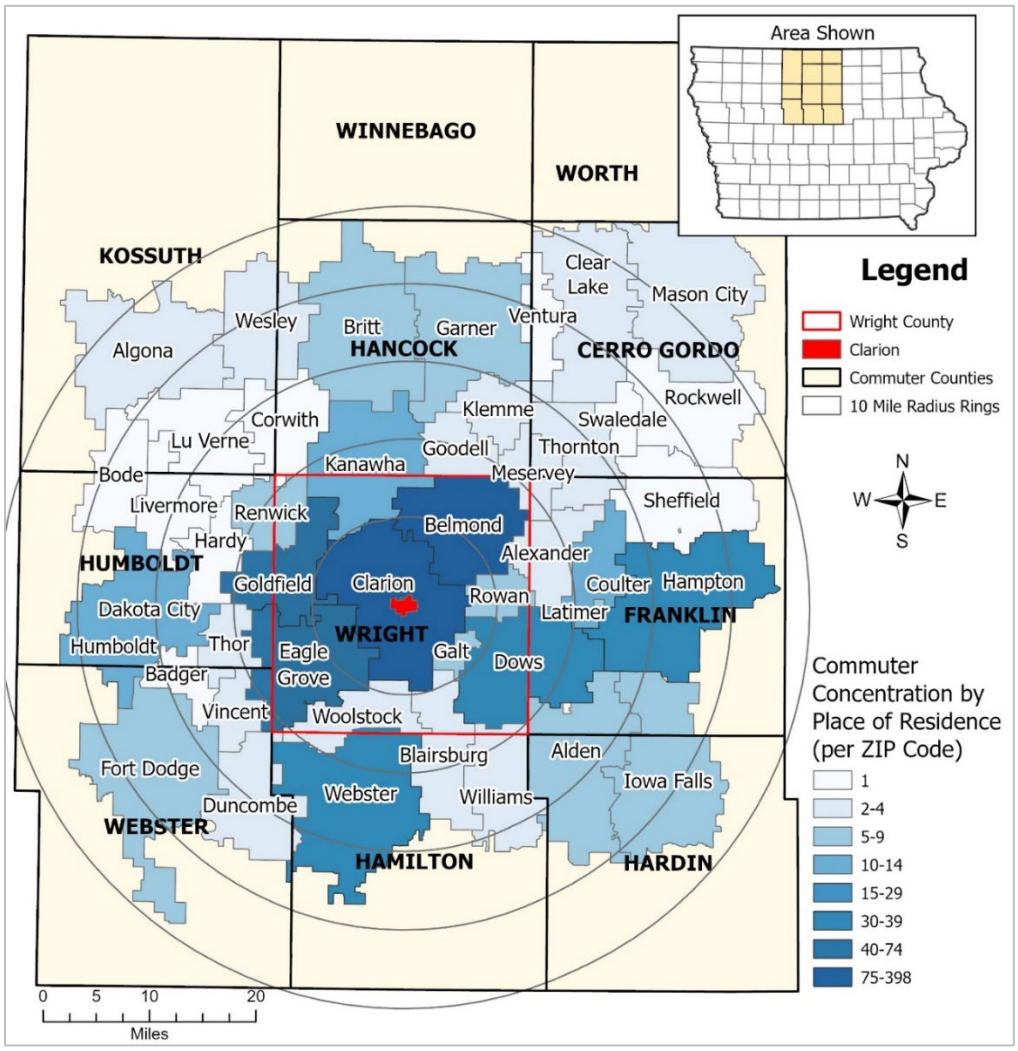
Source: Iowa Workforce Development (2022)

Commuting Patterns

According to the 2022 U.S. Census the American Community Survey 5-year estimates, among those employed in Wright County, approximately 82.6% drove alone, 4.6% carpooled, 0.2% used public transportation, 3% walked, 2.3% used other means, and 7.4% worked from home. IWD's Laborshed Analysis found that the average employed commuter in the Clarion Laborshed travels 16 minutes and 12 miles one-way to work. Employed respondents who would be likely to change their employment situation for an opportunity in the region indicated they would be willing to commute an average of 38 minutes or 31 miles one-way to work.

Figure 23 displays commuting patterns within Wright County, showing that the majority of people employed in Clarion live within Wright County, while others commute from the eight neighboring counties.

Figure 23: Commuter Patterns for Clarion, Iowa



Source: Iowa Workforce Development (2022)

26% of the population (or nearly 367 people) living in Clarion commute out into other communities for employment. Most people who are out commuting are employed in Eagle Grove and Fort Dodge. These numbers show that a majority of people who live in Clarion work within Clarion or tend to work in larger nearby communities.

Wright County Economic Development

Economic development is assisted by Wright County Economic Development (WCED). Its mission is to stimulate economic growth throughout the county with the continued support of both existing and prospective businesses. It strives to attract high quality jobs, community growth, and enriched quality of life for residents. WCED provides resources and information for businesses and housing. The WCED Revolving Loan Fund aids existing businesses and potential businesses that are looking to locate in the area or expand their existing operation. The First-Time Homeowners Loan Program helps Wright County families acquire single-family residences through low-interest loans, down payment assistance, or repair assistance. Other programs and resources are available on the County's website or by contacting WCED.

Goals and Implementation Actions (Economic Development)

Goal: Promote countywide economic development

Economic indicators such as gains or decline in labor force, employment or unemployment rates and increases or decreases in industry help the County to understand their economic standing and future economic opportunities. By encouraging the expansion of existing contributors and attracting future contributors, the County will continue to promote countywide economic development efforts.

Objective E.1 Promote Agricultural Development in current Agricultural areas.

Implementation Strategies

E.1.1 Provide incentives for agri-business

Agriculture has been a major economic attribute for Wright County. Encouraging agriculture related businesses such as food production, seed supply, agrichemicals, machinery, wholesale, distribution, etc., will help to maintain the County's existing agriculture economy and build upon this economy by encouraging different types of agri-businesses. Some incentives that can be used to encourage the industry include Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Value-Added Agricultural Products and Processes Financial Assistance Program (VAAPFAP).

E.1.2 Encourage economic development projects which expand upon and, at the very least, do not conflict with the agricultural character of the County

Development will be directed in a way that respects and supports the agricultural landscape of the county, helping to preserve farmland and preventing incompatible land use that could negatively affect agriculture.

Objective E.2 Identify areas for commercial and industrial uses.

Implementation Strategies

E.2.1 Encourage commercial and industrial development along corridors identified in the Future Land Use map

Wright County should promote commercial and industrial development in spaces adequate for such uses. As identified in the future land use map, the County has designated specific commercial/industrial corridors where it aims to encourage such development. Doing so will eliminate conflicting land uses in other, undesired portions of the County and will promote safety and convenience, improve traffic safety, and flow, and enhance economic viability.

E.2.2 Coordinate economic development initiatives with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee and refer to the CEDS document to ensure alignment with the goals and strategies therein

CEDS will guide economic development efforts to align with regional plans and strategies, ensuring that commercial and industrial growth supports long-term sustainability and meets the County's overall objectives.

E.2.3 Use resources such as TIF, Tax Abatement, low interest revolving loan funds, state/federal funds, new market tax credits, and others to encourage commercial/industrial development

Utilizing financial tools will help attract and support commercial and industrial development in designated areas, promoting economic growth while minimizing financial barriers.

E.2.4 Encourage language supports for non-English speaking business owners, prospective business owners, and employees where necessary

Efforts should be made to encourage language support for non-English speaking individuals, ensuring they have equal access to economic opportunities in business development.

Housing

Housing is an important issue as it is one of humanity's basic needs. While some people are concerned with the increase in non-farm dwellings locating in the unincorporated area, others see it as an indicator that people want the better quality of life provided in the rural area of the County. The following portion of this plan concentrates on housing data for the County including the number of housing units, type of housing units, age of housing structures, and other data relating to housing. Where available, 2010 and 2020 census data are used to identify how the community is changing. The 2022 ACS 5-year estimates fill in gaps where census data is not available.

Existing Conditions

Total and Vacant Housing Units

Table 11 displays the number of occupied and vacant housing units in the entirety of Wright County, the unincorporated area of the County, and across Iowa for the years 2010 and 2020. Between this decade, the number of housing units in the state increased by 5.7%, across the county decreased by 3.9%, and in the unincorporated area of the county decreased by 7%. This could indicate that the unincorporated county is removing older, dilapidated housing while few new homes are being built throughout the County to account for this loss. The number of vacant units increased in all three regions over the past ten years; however, the unincorporated area of Wright County had the smallest vacancy rate increase of 1.56%. The entire county and the state vacancy rates increased by 3.8% and 8.2%, respectively. These trends are indicative of both population decline in rural areas and newly-constructed units in metropolitan areas awaiting occupants—both of which Iowa is experiencing.

Table 11: Occupancy Status

	2010			2020		
OCCUPANCY STATUS	Wright County Total	Unincorporated Area of Wright County	Iowa	Wright County Total	Unincorporated Area of Wright County	Iowa
Total housing units	5,625 (100%)	1,507 (100%)	1,336,417 (100%)	5,404 (100%)	1,400 (100%)	1,412,789 (100%)
Occupied housing units	4,134 (73.5%)	1,186 (78.7%)	1,221,576 (91.4%)	3,857 (71.4%)	1,074 (76.7%)	1,288,560 (91.2%)
Vacant housing units	1,491 (26.5%)	321 (21.3%)	114,841 (8.6%)	1,547 (28.6%)	326 (23.3%)	124,229 (8.8%)

Source: U.S. Census (2010 & 2020)

From 2010 to 2020, the total number of occupied housing units in Wright County has declined, while the proportion of renter-occupied units has grown from 26.5% to 28.6% of the County's housing stock. This overall growth in rental housing is largely driven by an increase in renter-occupied units within the incorporated cities, which has more than offset the 27.97% decline seen in the unincorporated areas in the last decade. As a result, rental housing is becoming less common in the unincorporated parts of the county, while the incorporated areas are experiencing enough growth to push the county's overall rental percentage higher. This also suggests that people in the unincorporated areas are more likely to own their homes than rent.

Table 12: Tenure

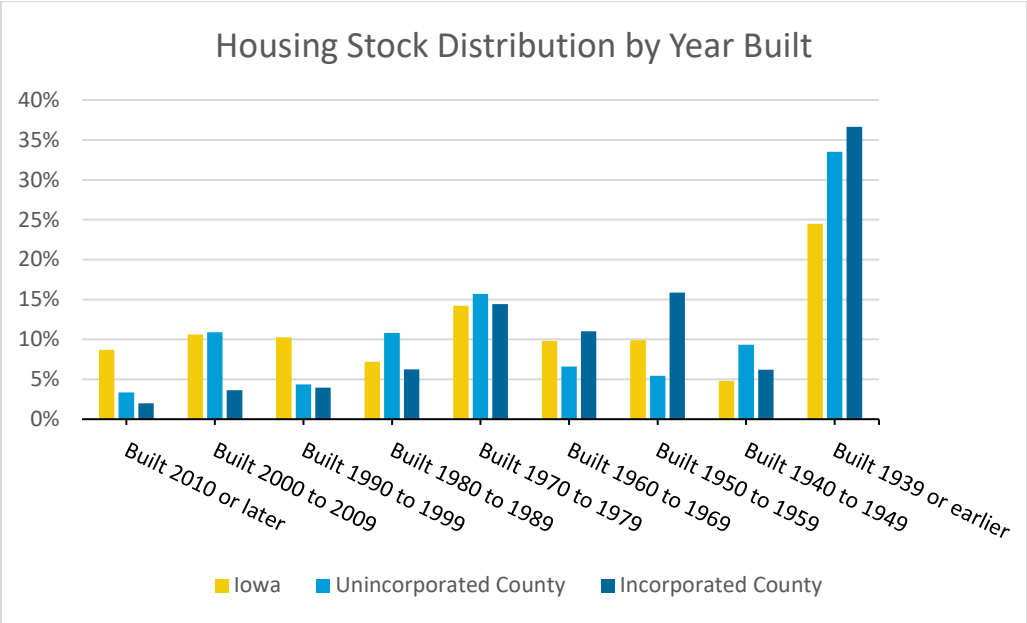
	2010			2020		
TENURE	Wright County Total	Unincorporated Area of Wright County	Iowa	Wright County Total	Unincorporated Area of Wright County	Iowa
Occupied housing units	5,625 (100%)	1,186 (100%)	1,221,576 (100%)	5,404 (100%)	1,074 (100%)	1,288,560 (100.0%)
Owner-occupied housing units	4,134 (73.5%)	975 (82.2%)	880,635 (72.1%)	3,857 (71.4%)	922 (85.8%)	906,967 (70.4%)
Renter-occupied housing units	1,491 (26.5%)	211 (17.8%)	340,941 (27.9%)	1,547 (28.6%)	152 (14.2%)	381,763 (29.6%)

Source: U.S. Census (2010 & 2020)

Age of Housing Structures

Figure 24 compares the age of housing units in the incorporated area of Wright County, the unincorporated area, and Iowa according to the 2022 ACS 5-year Estimates. Approximately 34% of Wright County's unincorporated units were constructed prior to 1939. From 2010 to 2020, only 47 structures were built in the unincorporated area of the County (3% of the unincorporated county's housing stock), 97 structures were built in the incorporated areas of the County (2%) and 150,588 structures were built in the State of Iowa (8.2%). Since 1990, the State has exceeded both the incorporated and unincorporated area of Wright County in the percentage of housing units developed.

Figure 24: Age of Structures – Unincorporated and Incorporated area of Wright County, State of Iowa



Source: ACS 5 Year Estimates (2022)

Home Values

Table 13 depicts the median housing values for each of the incorporated cities, the county overall, and the state overall. Housing values are lower in all areas of the county than the state. For instance, 14.1% of Iowa homes are valued below $50,000 but 33.2% of Wright County homes are valued within this range. 39.3% of Iowa homes are valued between $150-299,000 while only 22.9% of Wright Count homes fall in the same range. The sticker price of housing is lower in Wright County but attracting residents and promoting economic opportunities will be essential to ensuring there are buyers who can afford to purchase and maintain the homes.

Table 13: Housing Value

Median Housing Value - 2022	
Belmond	$103,300
Clarion	$108,500
Dows	$42,000
Eagle Grove	$95,200
Galt	$43,300
Goldfield	$77,900
Rowan	$29,100
Woolstock	$85,500
Wright County	$105,400
Iowa	$181,600

Source: ACS 5 Year Estimates (2022)

Wright County has experienced housing trends like many other rural communities throughout the State of Iowa. The County has vacant housing that is affordable for residents; however, very little development is occurring within the county.

Goals and Implementation Actions (Housing)

Goal: Direct residential growth toward areas with existing infrastructure

To make the most efficient use of existing or readily expandable utilities, it is essential that future residential growth first occurs within existing developed areas of the County. It is anticipated that growth that occurs outside these areas follow the guidelines discussed in each of the following objectives.

Objective H.1 Promote residential growth in suitable areas for such development.

Implementation Strategies

H.1.1 Encourage and/or enforce when applicable, residential development outside of floodplain

To ensure the safety and well-being of Wright County residents, the County should direct residential development outside of the floodplain. This will protect residents and structures from preventable flood risks.

H.1.2 Prioritize new development to locate adjacent to existing city limits

This approach takes advantage of established infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and public services, which can be more efficiently implemented near existing city limits compared to initiating development in remote, undeveloped areas. Concentrating growth near incorporated cities helps reduce urban sprawl and preserves valuable agricultural land.

H.1.3 Prioritize the rehabilitation of existing structures, infill development, and brownfield redevelopment

This strategy makes optimal use of land, reducing the need for new development to expand outward, resulting in more sustainable growth. Rehabilitating existing buildings and redeveloping brownfield sites helps revitalize neighborhoods, attracting new residents while minimizing the environmental impact of greenfield development.

H.1.4 Establish minimum lot sizes to encourage non-farm growth in the appropriate locations

Establishing minimum lot sizes will promote balanced expansion by reducing pressure on rural landscapes, curtailing sprawl, and steering non-farm growth from agricultural land.

Objective H.2 Encourage quality housing.

Implementation Strategies

H.2.1 Research and develop strategies for nuisance abatement

Nuisance abatement may relate to specific violations of building, fire, zoning, animals, noise, juveniles, and health. By researching development strategies and applying those that the County will enforce will promote safety, welfare, and well-being for all of the County's residents.

H.2.2 Promote housing rehabilitation to support the preservation of the existing housing stock

Promoting housing rehabilitation contributes to improving the condition of older or deteriorating housing without relying on new construction. Focusing on revitalizing homes rather than replacing them will help maintain affordable housing options and prevent blight.

Public Services and Infrastructure

Good public services and solid infrastructure are essential to the wellbeing of residents in the county. This section focuses on what services are currently offered in the county alongside its infrastructure that underpins the community.

Existing Services

Wright County provides many services to its residents. See the listing of its main services in the subsections below:

Government Structure: The Board of Supervisors (BOS) is the decision-making body of county government. It discusses and makes decisions relating to funding, ordinances, projects, and other issues that require county support or cooperation. The BOS includes 5 members elected by district within the county. Board meetings are held each Monday.

Fire Protection Services: Wright County is served by municipal fire departments and mutual aid agreements when necessary. Belmond, Clarion, Dows, Eagle Grove, Goldfield, and Woolstock maintain active fire protection services.

Health Care Service: The Wright County Health Department provides health services & informational campaigns, early childhood services, and seasonal vaccinations to residents. Public Health is housed in Clarion at 120 First Avenue NW.

Wright County is served by two hospitals. Wright Medical Center in Clarion provides services including cardiopulmonary, obstetrics/gynecology, orthopedics, maternity, radiology, and

rehabilitation. Belmond Medical Center in Belmond provides services in acute care, cardiac rehabilitation, cardiopulmonary rehabilitation, occupational therapy, radiology, and many additional specialized areas.

Law Enforcement: The Wright County Sheriff and Sheriff's Deputies are the police force for residents of the unincorporated areas of the county. The Sheriff's Office handles all routine and emergency calls for these areas and regularly patrols all areas of the County. Located at 719 2nd Street Southwest in Clarion, the Sheriff's Office is comprised of the Civil Division, Patrol Division, Records Division, Jail Division and Emergency Management.

Emergency Management Services: The Wright County Emergency Management Agency plans for, responds to, organizes the recovery from, and mitigates from disasters. The Emergency Management Agency works with fire departments, law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services, hospitals, public health, public works, utilities, and many other local agencies. The agency also works with State and Federal agencies including Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (IHSEM), Federal Emergency Agency (FEMA), and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Existing Infrastructure

Electricity & Natural Gas: Wright County receives most of its electricity and natural gas from Alliant and MidAmerican. Some customers in rural areas are served by Prairie Energy Cooperative.

Communication (Phone/Internet): Telephone and internet providers in Wright County include Airband Communications; CenturyLink; Communications 1 Network, Inc; DISH Network Corporation, Frontier Communications of Iowa, Inc; Goldfield access Network, LC; Goldfield Telephone Company; Greenway Communications, LLC; Hughes Network Systems, LLC; Mediacom; SpeedNet; ViaSat, Inc; Webster-Calhoun Cooperative Telephone Association; Windstream; and Woolstock Mutual Telephone Association. Mobile internet providers include AT&T Mobility, LLC, U.S. Cellular and Verizon Wireless.

Water Utility: While some municipal water companies may have extended their drinking water services outside of their city limits, it is common for residents of the unincorporated area to use their own personal wells for drinking water. Wells are most suitable for this area because of the significant cost it would take to connect all the houses that are scattered throughout the rural areas.

Storm Sewer System: Storm sewers are not common in the unincorporated areas except for where municipal services may have been extended shortly outside of city limits. Stormwater is managed through natural landscape drainage and tiles under agricultural fields. Drainage Districts maintain much of the stormwater tiling systems.

Wastewater Treatment: Most homes in the unincorporated area use a septic system. In limited cases near municipalities, some properties are connected to city utilities where service extensions have been made. However, extending these systems more broadly across rural areas would be cost-prohibitive due to the dispersed nature of rural housing. An exception exists around Lake Cornelia, where the Lake Cornelia Sanitary Sewer District operates a centralized sewer system and a 3-cell controlled discharge lagoon for its customers.

Goals and Implementation Actions (Public Services & Infrastructure)

Goal: Provide quality infrastructure and services in Wright County

Objective P.1 Develop and maintain well, sewer and drainage well requirements.

Implementation Strategies

P.1.1 Follow and enforce IDNR regulations relating to well, sewer and drainage well requirements

The IDNR sets guidelines for private wells, private septic systems, and drainage wells that the County is to inspect, permit, and enforce. By managing these requirements at the County level, groundwater and environmental protection will be upheld, preventing water contamination.

Objective P.2 Ensure that new developments are in appropriate places so that current infrastructure systems do not become overwhelmed.

Implementation Strategies

P.2.1 Use the Future Land Use Map to guide development in areas with adequate infrastructure and proximity to roads capable of handling heavy traffic.

Targeting growth in these areas helps prevent strain on existing infrastructure systems and limits the need for costly upgrades. It also supports safer, more efficient traffic flow by directing development to locations already served by roads built to handle higher volumes. This approach promotes orderly growth and protects public investment in infrastructure.

Objective P.3 Ensure that Emergency Services remain a high priority.

Implementation Strategies

P.3.1 Encourage training opportunities for all emergency service providers

Ongoing training ensures that personnel are well-prepared to handle a wide range of emergency situations, improving their effectiveness and response times. By prioritizing training, communities can maintain a highly capable, responsive, and efficient emergency service workforce, ultimately ensuring that emergency services continue to meet the needs of the public.

Objective P.4 Regulate renewable energy.

Implementation Strategies

P.4.1 Update policies that regulate renewable energy infrastructure to ensure that it does not present safety hazards and to minimize disruptions to surrounding land uses

Wright County will update policies that regulate renewable energy infrastructure, allowing the County to encourage the growth of renewable energy while protecting public safety and maintaining the compatibility of renewable energy projects with surrounding land uses, with a focus on farmland preservation.

Objective P.5 Expand broadband in rural areas.

Implementation Strategies

P.5.1 Improve access to internet connectivity by investing in broadband infrastructure

Wright County will focus on expanding broadband infrastructure to improve internet connectivity in rural areas, ensuring that all residents and businesses have access to reliable, high-speed internet. Strengthened broadband networks will support a more resilient local economy and encourage business opportunities and growth.

Recreation & Conservation

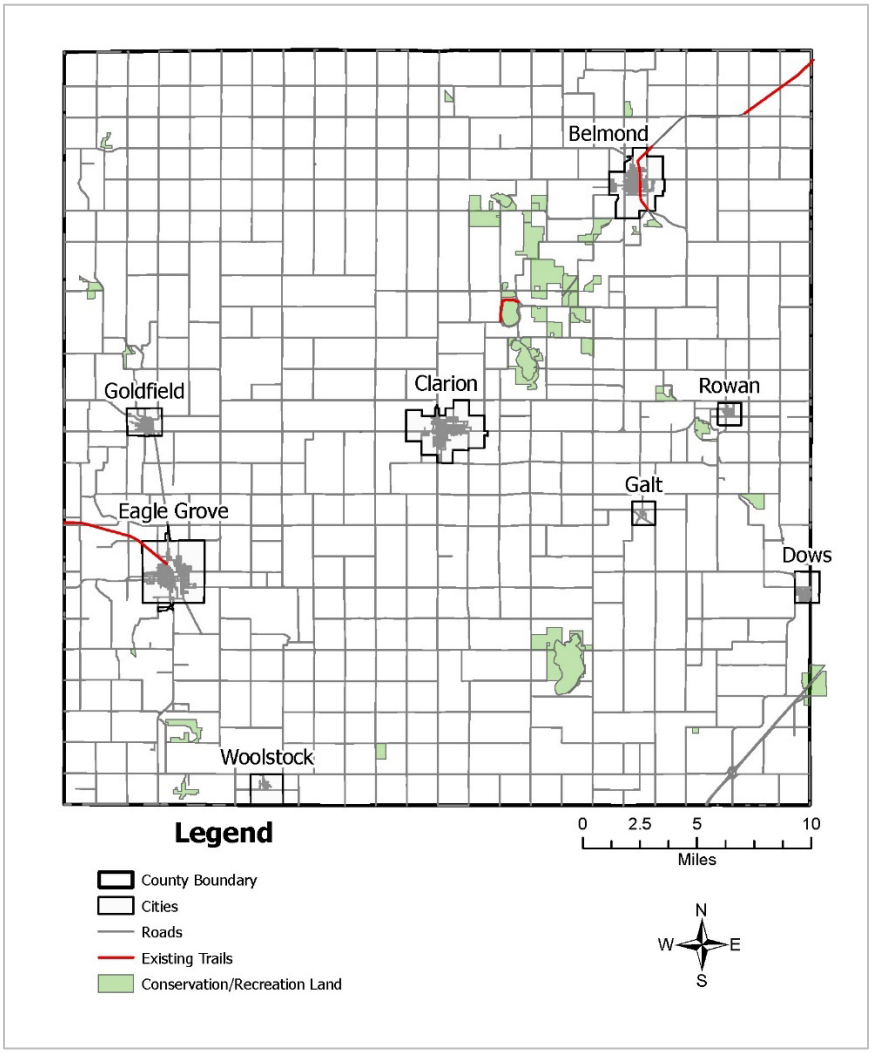
Recreation and conservation improve the quality of life of Wright County residents by providing opportunities for health, leisure, and entertainment. Access to natural amenities is becoming an increasingly important factor in where people choose to live, work, and visit. This aspect of the plan will look at the existing recreational and conservation opportunities and identify additional opportunities reflect public interest.

Most of the recreation and conservation areas in the county are operated and maintained by the Wright County Conservation Board. This board was established to acquire and develop county parks, preserves, forests, and wildlife and conservation areas. Since its development in 1958, the Wright County Conservation Board has acquired over 1,900 acres of wildlife habitat and planted over 600,000 trees and shrubs through purchases and donations (Board, 01-06).

Existing Conditions

The following map displays the Wright County Conservation Board's trails, parks, and wildlife areas. These spaces are used by many of the residents in the county and support recreation by hunters, fishers, photographers, walkers, bikers, paddlers, and other outdoor adventurists.

Figure 25: Trails and Recreation Map



<u>HOMESTEAD RIDGE AREA:</u> 108-acre site of upland and bottomland forest along the Boone River, three miles west of Woolstock, offering opportunities for hunting, trapping, and wildlife observation. Deer, wild turkey, squirrels, and raccoons are common in this area, and about ½ mile of the river provides fishing for smallmouth bass, catfish, and northern pike. The area was purchased with Wildlife Habitat Stamp Funds and is open to public use.

BOONE RIVER GREENBELT, MIDDLETON: 278-acre site, located four miles south of Eagle Grove and ½ mile east of the Troy Rest Area, featuring oak-hickory forest, floodplain forest, open grassland, and newly seeded prairie. The area offers opportunities for hunting, trapping, and wildlife observation throughout the site, with fishing and canoeing available along two miles of the river. The site was purchased with Wildlife Habitat Stamp Funds and is open to public use.

TROY ROADSIDE PARK: One-acre site at the Troy Rest Area on the Boone River, three miles south of Eagle Grove on Highway 17, providing opportunities for fishing and canoeing. The area is open to public use.

SPORTSMAN WILDLIFE AREA: 7-acre wooded site along the Boone River, located one mile south and 1½ miles west of Eagle Grove. The area is managed to maintain a natural state and is open to hunting.

THREE RIVERS TRAIL: Part of a 40-mile trail built on abandoned railroad right-of-way, running from two miles west of Eagle Grove through Humboldt to Rolfe in Pocahontas County, with a six-mile spur south of Dakota City to Gotch Park. The trail is surfaced with crushed limestone and includes rest areas in Thor, Dakota City, Bradgate, Rutland, and Rolfe. Wright County manages the portion within county boundaries.

OTTER CREEK AREA: 77-acre upland-woodland site on Otter Creek, located 1½ miles north of Goldfield. The area includes four small fields planted with trees and native grasses. The area was purchased with Wildlife Habitat Stamp Funding and is open to hunting and trapping.

OAKDALE PARK: 127-acre site along the Boone River, located one mile east and 1½ miles south of Renwick. The area features timbered woodlands with a variety of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. Amenities include two shelter houses, modern restrooms, picnic tables, barbecue grills, water, and electricity. The Izaak Walton League maintains a clubhouse and trap shooting range on the site. Recently purchased adjacent areas, funded with Wildlife Habitat Stamp Funds, provide additional wildlife and fishing access and are open to hunting as posted.

BENSON ROADSIDE PARK: One-acre roadside park located 3 miles west of Clarion on Highway 3. An artesian well, shelter house, and picnic tables are available on site.

PRAIRIE SMOKE WILDLIFE AREA: Site consisting of three railroad rights-of-way along the old Clarion to Coulter line. Several tracts contain native grasses and flowers typical of Iowa's original landscape. The area is open to hunting.

PIKES TIMBER: 46-acre heavily timbered park and wildlife area, located 1½ miles east and ½ mile south of Lake Cornelia. The site includes three shelter houses, toilets, electricity, water, and playground equipment. The Iowa River flows along the length of the park.

LAKE CORNELIA PARK: 122-acre recreation area, jointly owned by the State of Iowa and Wright County and managed by the Wright County Conservation Board. Located on the north end of 243-acre Lake Cornelia, the site offers camping with 50-amp electrical outlets, boat ramps, picnicking facilities, playgrounds, open fields, water, showers, and modern and pit latrines. The Wright County Conservation Board headquarters and Park Ranger are on-site. Lake Cornelia provides fishing for walleye, channel catfish, perch, crappie, bluegill, and largemouth bass. Hunting is permitted on 25 acres north of C25.

ELDRIDGE PARK: One-acre park located on the southwest side of Lake Cornelia with picnic tables available. The land was donated by the Eldridge Estate.

CAMBIER RIVER BEND AREA: 92-acre wildlife management area, located three miles southwest of Belmond along the Iowa River. The site includes mostly grassland with some second-growth woodlands and protects over ½ mile of the Iowa River and several river oxbows. The Conservation Board is reconstructing prairie areas, planting food patches, and developing river/canoe access. The area is open to hunting and was acquired through a donation from the Cambier Family and Wildlife Habitat Stamp Funds.

FOUR SEASONS WILDLIFE AREA: 218-acre grassland site, located east of Lake Cornelia at the northwest corner of Quincy Avenue and C25. The area provides access to over ½ mile of the Iowa River and is open to hunting, fishing, and trapping. Planned development includes native grass plantings and wetland restoration. The site was purchased with Wildlife Habitat Stamp Funds and donations from Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

ROLLING ACRES POTHOLES: 80-acre prairie pothole site, located east of Morse Lake on 150th Street (west of Page Avenue). The area includes several prairie potholes, upland, and crop fields planted with native grasses and food patches. Jointly owned by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Wright County, it is managed by the Wright County Conservation Board and is open to hunting.

ST. JOHNS CHURCH AREA: One-acre wildlife habitat site, located on Ida Avenue between 130th and 140th Streets in rural Wright County. The area, formerly the site of Saint John's Lutheran

Church, was donated to the Wright County Conservation Board in 1993. Trees were planted in 1994, and a marker denotes the historic site.

GUN CLUB CORNER: 3½-acre wildlife habitat site, located ½ mile north of Dows on County Road C54. Donated by the Iowa River Conservation Club, the area is open to hunting.

DOWS COMMUNITY PARK: 3-acre park, located one mile northwest of Dows. The heavily timbered site includes hickory trees, a shelter house, water, toilets, and picnic tables.

GROOM-DECOSTER WILDLIFE AREA: 158-acre site, located south of Rowan along the Iowa River. The area consists mostly of native grass plantings, with several restored wetlands and tree plantings for cover. Thirty-eight acres were donated by A.J. Decoster, and the remainder was purchased with Wildlife Habitat Stamp Funds. The site is open to hunting and trapping.

BINGHAM PARK: 18-acre timbered site, located southwest of Rowan along the west side of Victor Avenue and the Iowa River. The area includes shelter houses, toilets, water, and picnic tables. Donated by the Bingham family, the site provides opportunities for wildlife observation and outdoor recreation.

HORSE GROVE-RIETZ FOREST AREA: 135-acre site of woodland and open areas along the Iowa River southwest of Rowan. The area contains both upland and bottomland forests and several small fields planted with trees or native grasses. Fifteen acres, donated by the Ihm family, are closed to hunting and used as an outdoor classroom and natural preserve. The remaining 120 acres, purchased with Wildlife Habitat Stamp Funds, are open to hunting and trapping, offering opportunities for wildlife observation, photography, and nature exploration.

SNARL STREET WETLANDS: 116-acre site, located two miles west of Rowan on Highway 3. The area includes restored upland grasslands, river bottom timber, and wetlands, with the Iowa River flowing along the southern third. Purchased with Wildlife Habitat Stamp Funds and donations from Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever, the site is open to fishing, hunting, and trapping.

GEORGE ELDER WOODS: 21-acre upland forest site, located one mile south of Belmond on the east side of the Iowa River. Donated by the family of George Elder, the area is to remain undeveloped as forest and wildlife habitat.

FINN PRAIRIE PRESERVE: One-acre site located 3 miles east of Belmond on County Road C20. The area is the former site of a country schoolhouse and contains a variety of native prairie

grasses and flowers. The preserve, donated by the James Finn family and the Pleasant 4-H clubs, is open for exploring wildflowers and experiencing an Iowa prairie.

SULLIVAN WILDLIFE HABITAT AREA: 64-acre site located 2 miles north of Belmond, purchased with Wildlife Habitat Stamp Funds. The area includes seeded fields, tree plantings, parking facilities, and fishing and canoe access. The site is open to hunting and trapping.

EDWIN J. McCLENAHAN WILDLIFE AREA: 60-acre site of upland and floodplain forest located east of Elm Lake along the Iowa River. Thirty acres were donated as a memorial to the donors' son, with the remainder purchased using Wildlife Habitat Stamp Funds and donations from Pheasants Forever and the Wild Turkey Federation. The area provides access to the Iowa River for fishing and canoeing and is open to hunting and trapping. The Edwin J. McClenahan Wildlife Area is located at the corner of 190th Street and Reed Avenue in Wright County.

ELM LAKE ACCESS: 58-acre site of wetlands and upland wildlife habitat divided into two tracts on Elm Lake. The north tract provides lake access and parking. The area is open to hunting and trapping.

STATE AREAS

BIG WALL LAKE: 980-acre site located 5 miles east and 7 miles south of Clarion, including a 907-acre marsh and 73 acres of timber and upland habitat. The state maintains three access areas to the lake. The area is open to hunting and trapping.

ELM LAKE: 619-acre site located 2 miles east and 2 miles north of Clarion, containing 466 acres of shallow glacial lake-marsh and 150 acres of upland habitat on the south and west sides of the lake. Public access is provided on the east side of the lake. The area is open to hunting and trapping.

HELMKE WILDLIFE AREA: 52-acre wildlife management and river access site owned by the DNR and managed by the Wright County Conservation Board. Located in northwest Wright County, north of 130th Street between Buchanan Avenue and Calhoun Avenue, the area provides access to over 1/2 mile of the Boone River. It contains ponds, grasslands, upland oak timber, and bottomland timber. The area is open to hunting, trapping, and fishing. Planned developments include canoe access and parking areas.

LOWER MORSE LAKE WATERFOWL PRODUCTION AREA: Over 1,900-acre upland-wetland habitat area owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Iowa, managed by the Iowa DNR. The area includes open grasslands, reconstructed prairies, and restored wetlands,

with wetland sizes ranging from one acre to over 80 acres. The site is open to hunting and trapping.

MORSE LAKE: 108-acre shallow lake-marsh located 5 miles west of Belmond, containing 64 acres of upland habitat and marshlands. A concrete boat ramp is provided for users. The area is open to hunting and trapping.

OLAF WATERFOWL PRODUCTION AREA: 38-acre site of wetland and grassland habitat in northern Wright County on Nelson Avenue, between 110th Street and 120th Street. Purchased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and managed as a waterfowl production area by the Iowa DNR, it is open to hunting and trapping.

WHITETAIL FLATS AREA: 391-acre site located 3 miles south of Dows in Wright and Franklin counties. The area contains river bottom timber, upland habitat, and marsh, with the Iowa River running through it. The state maintains two access points, and the site is open to hunting and trapping.

Recreation and Conservation Responsibilities

Wright County has the responsibility of maintaining and developing new opportunities for outdoor entertainment, recreation, and conservation throughout the area. The task of maintenance often comes to the minds of many of the residents when surveyed about the condition of the area. The following summary highlights how Wright County residents feel the County should allocate funding (more, less, or the same) for various recreation and conservation services over the next 5 to 10 years. For the full survey results, see Appendix C.

RECREATION SERVICES:

- **Less Important** – Sand Volleyball Courts, Equestrian Trails
- **Neutral** – Off-Road/ATV Areas, Tent Camping Areas, RV (full hookup) Areas, Motor and Non-Motor Boating
- **More Important –** Recreation/Parks, Lake/River Access, Hiking/Walking Trails, Target Shooting, Biking Trails

CONSERVATION SERVICES:

- **Neutral** – Bird Sanctuaries
- **More Important** – Fishing Areas, Hunting Areas

Goals and Implementation Actions (Recreation and Conservation)

Goal (1): Protect environmental features such as floodplains, wetlands, and other sensitive areas.

Development occurring within designated natural resources or environmentally sensitive areas should be preceded with caution, if at all. That which is allowed should be minimal in its impact to the environment and should consider watershed impact, drainage, and utilities.

Objective R.1 Direct development away from floodplains/wetlands

Implementation Strategies

R.1.1 Enforce the floodplain ordinance

The goal of a floodplain ordinance is to discourage development within a floodplain to protect both the natural environment, and to protect people and structures from unnecessary damage due to flooding. A floodplain ordinance provides certain requirements for development within a floodplain ranging from allowing development based on certain met requirements or restricting any development at all. The County will ensure enforcement of the County's floodplain ordinance

Objective R.2 Protect soil from eroding by improving waterways and embankments using resources planning and management measures.

Implementation Strategies

R.2.1 Encourage landowners to improve embankments and waterways to prevent soil erosion through public awareness campaigns. including distributing informational flyers and posting educational content online

These campaigns aim to inform landowners about practical ways to prevent soil erosion, such as stabilizing stream banks, planting native vegetation, and managing stormwater. Sharing information through printed flyers and online content helps reach a wider audience. Increased landowner involvement can lead to better soil conservation outcomes, reduce sediment in local waterways, and support long-term environmental resilience across the region.

Goal (2): Maintain and improve citizens' quality of life.

The quality of life in Wright County is a very important factor in the effort to continue the County's growth and prosperity. Among the features that contribute to quality of life are traffic, crime, job opportunities and parks (Myers, 1988). To present an attractive and beautiful setting for residents to live in and guests to visit, the County must concentrate on improving all features that contribute to the quality of life, including those related to parks and recreation. Recreation and natural resources provide many benefits and amenities to the quality of life in Wright County.

Objective R.3 Develop additional recreational opportunities.

Implementation Strategies

R.3.1 Develop trails within and around recreational areas

Trails are a desired recreational amenity that bikers, runners, horseback riders and many other recreational seekers use. Connecting the recreational areas via a trail network will expand the use of parks and other recreational facilities and encourage active living within the County.

R.3.2 Research funding for maintenance/expansion of recreational opportunities

A major obstacle when developing plans for maintenance and expansion of recreational facilities is identifying where funds will come from for implementation. Sources the County may look into for future funding options include: State and Federal funding, the County's Economic Development resources, and private investors.

R.3.3 Update County Recreation Plan as needed

The County has a Trails Plan and will continue to update the County Recreation Plan as needed, providing guidance for maintaining and expanding recreational areas, preserving natural spaces, and offering diverse recreational opportunities to the public. The plan will be updated as needed to reflect changing community needs, trends in outdoor recreation, and opportunities for development or improvement. This ongoing process will help the County continue to provide valuable recreational resources for residents and visitors alike.

R.3.4 Improve the functionality and visibility of county-owned river access points

The County will be able to offer more user-friendly and accessible locations for outdoor recreation by improving the functionality of these river access points. Increasing visibility ensures that these locations are better known and utilized by residents and visitors, expanding opportunities for recreational engagement. This strategy helps expand the County's recreational options, encouraging more people to visit and enjoy the river and its amenities.

Transportation

Transportation has a major influence on land use. The transportation element of the plan evaluates and expands upon transportation options within the County.

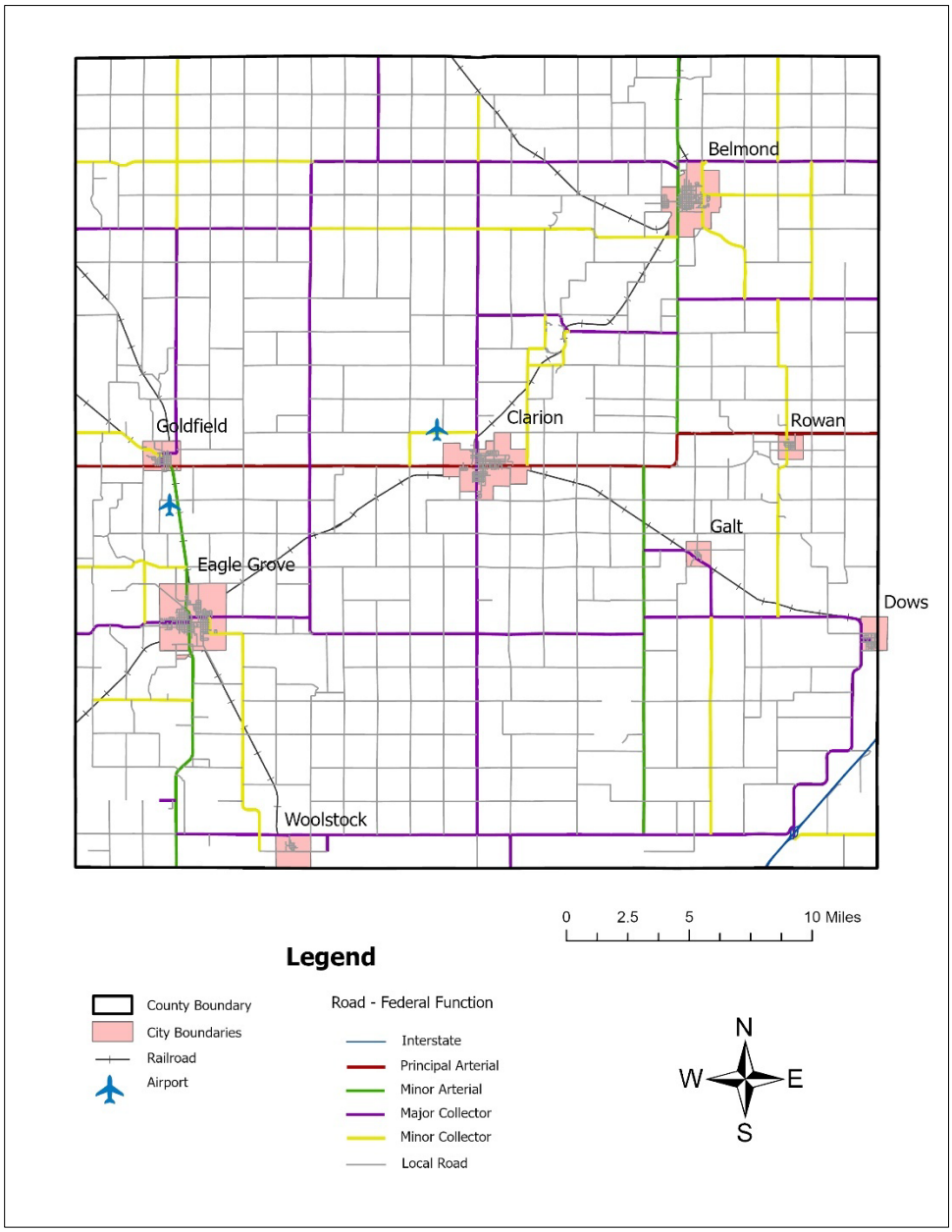
Existing Conditions

Transportation options in the County include air, personal vehicle, public transit, walking, biking, and train. The most common mode of transportation used within the county is the motor vehicle. Figure 26 shows County and State Roads within the County's boundaries, classified by their federal function. Wright County has access to the interstate with I-35 running through the southeastern portion of the county. State Highway 3 is a principal arterial road that crosses the county east-west, while State Highway 17 and US Highway 69 serve as north-south minor arterials.

Wright County has public transit service provided by the MIDAS Regional Transit Authority (RTA). MIDAS RTA primarily operates as a demand-response service, with options for

contracted transportation. Services are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Figure 26: Wright County Roads FFC

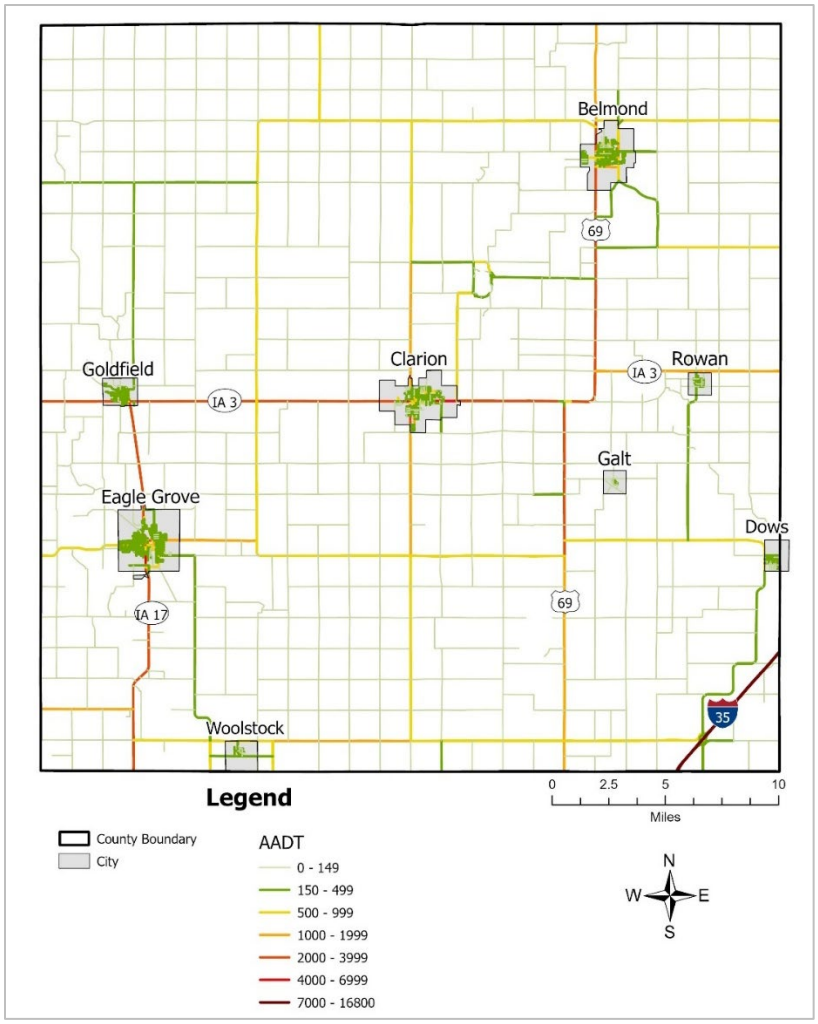


Limited air service is available through the Clarion and Eagle Grove airports. The closest commercial regional airport is Fort Dodge.

The Union Pacific Railroad and the Iowa Northern Railway run through the County. These railroads haul only freight which includes automobiles and parts, chemicals/fertilizer, coal, ethanol, food and food products, forest products, grain, machinery, metals, and minerals.

The average annual daily traffic (AADT) measures the volume of vehicles traveling on a specific segment of roadway over the course of the year, averaged by day. Tracking AADT allows the County to monitor trends in traffic patterns and roadway usage over time. The County utilizes these trends to reprioritize infrastructure investments as certain road segments incur more traffic, and to continually reassess the maintenance, safety, and capacity needs of the entire roadway network.

Figure 27: AADT Map



Goals and Implementation Actions (Transportation)

Goal: Develop a transportation system that will promote the safe, efficient, and economic movement of people and goods

Improvements to the County's transportation infrastructure systems is one of the primary vital components to developing a sound economic base. To ensure the best use of County funds and proper movement, all roads should be regularly maintained, and future development should be located where suitable road access is available.

Objective T.1 Regularly maintain and improve existing roads and bridges.

Implementation Strategies

T.1.1 Provide regular funding sources for maintenance

Maintaining quality roads is a shared goal for counties throughout Iowa, but securing consistent funding for roadway upkeep remains a significant challenge. Establishing a reliable funding source for regular maintenance would enable the County to plan for necessary repairs, prevent further deterioration, and invest in infrastructure upgrades, ultimately improving transportation and benefiting residents. Potential funding may be sourced from State and Federal funds, the County's Economic Development resources, and private investors.

Objective T.2 Encourage infill development to eliminate wear on rural roads not suitable for heavy traffic.

Implementation Strategies

T.2.1 Revise existing zoning ordinance to encourage infill development

New commercial and industrial development should be focused on infill in existing developed areas and toward cities. This will reduce traffic congestion on the County's major highways and lower infrastructure costs by utilizing already established utilities and services.

T.2.2 Work in conjunction with Cities on proposed development projects and/or zoning

Ensuring that proposed developments are placed in an adequate space requires communication between the unincorporated area and cities to ensure that necessary infrastructure is available to the degree necessary for the proposed development. This communication is particularly important within the 1-mile buffer of incorporated Cities with zoning.

Objective T.3 Locate developments with high truck traffic along roads suitable for such traffic.

Implementation Strategies

T.3.1 Continued identification of preferred roads for development options

Identifying roadways suitable for certain traffic will help the County to determine where future commercial and industrial development might locate. Ensuring that proper transportation networks are available will require less maintenance on low-grade roads and encourage use of capable roadways.

T.3.2 Establish weight limits for established "low use" roads

Like strategy T.3.1, identifying roadways not suitable for certain traffic will help the County to determine which roads should have weight limits. Enforcement of such limits will result in less required maintenance for such roads.

T.3.3 Review and update the existing Road Performance Standards to consider factors such as safety, volume, speed, traffic type, and other national standards

Reviewing and updating Road Performance Standards will ensure that high truck traffic is directed to roads that are already capable of handling such vehicles. By considering factors like safety, volume, speed, and traffic type, the strategy helps shift heavy traffic away from unsuitable roads. This will prevent congestion, reduce the risks of accidents, and optimize traffic flow.

Land Use

Zoning policy and land use strategies are important tools that the Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Supervisors use to make informed decisions on proposed re-zonings, variances, and other land use requests. The evaluation of existing and future land uses is a process that requires public input and participation. The following portion of the plan includes a discussion of the County's current zoning ordinance, existing land uses, and proposed future land uses, all of which were developed through comprehensive plan committee meetings and public input meetings.

Existing Conditions

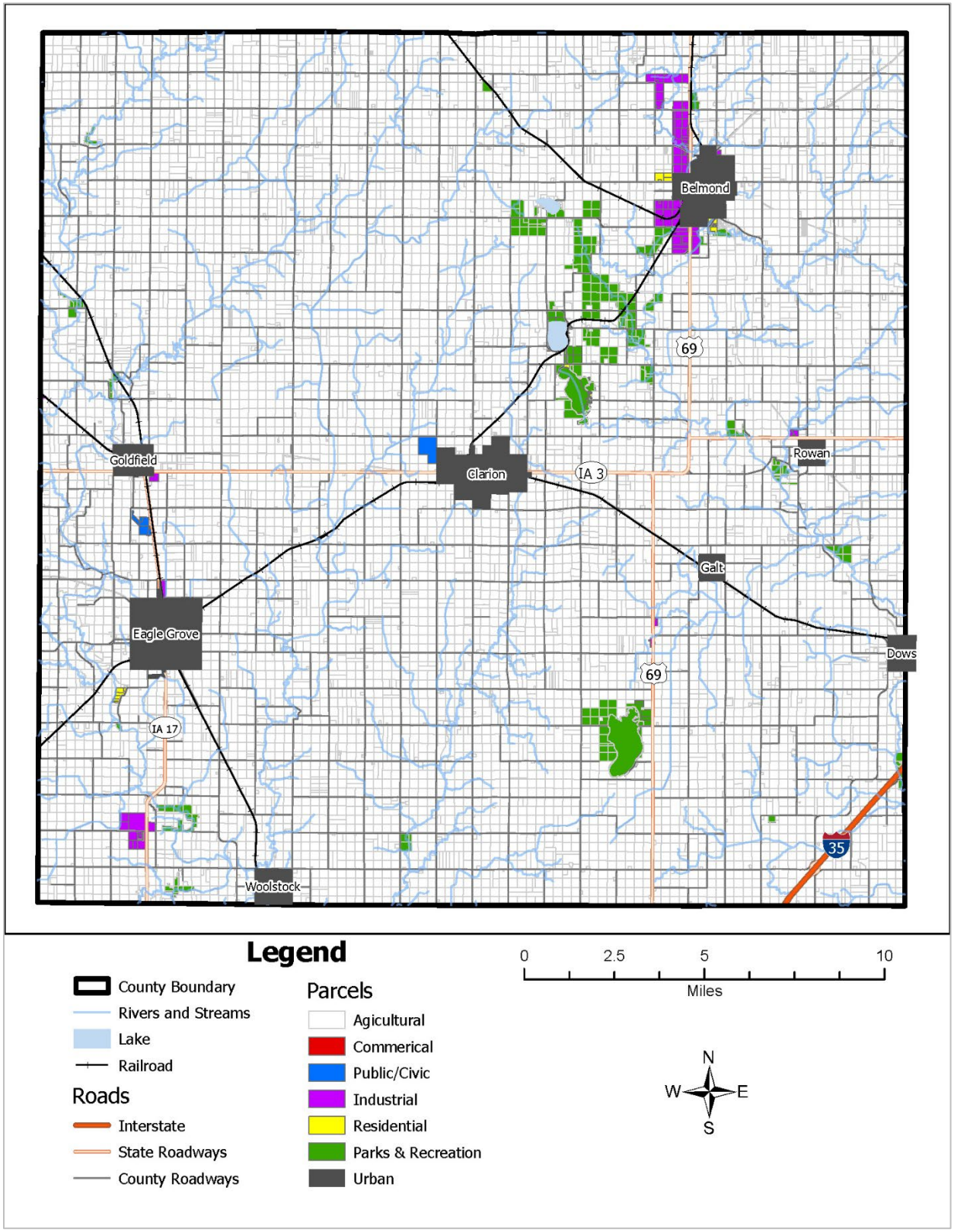
Existing Land Use

To understand the nature of the county's physical land use patterns, an existing land use map was developed using an aerial view of the county and multiple land use discussions with the comprehensive planning committee. The Existing Land Use Map is illustrated on page 64. This map does not fully reflect the existing zoning map or ordinance, but instead identifies the specific land uses that each area is currently being used as. For example, a lot that, based on the aerial view and committee input, is being used for crop production would be considered

agricultural use. An overview of each individual existing land use classification is discussed below.

Agricultural (A)	Land being used for crop production, the raising and/or production of livestock, and or/other agricultural-based commodities. This may also include land for agriculture dwellings or privately-owned lands devoted to the protection, preservation or sustainability of natural resources and native land uses.
Residential (R) -	Structures occupied for dwelling purposes.
Commercial (C) -	Structures and/or land used for the sale, rental, service, trade, commerce and distribution of goods such as retail, entertainment, food, and other businesses providing the sale of goods, products, and services, excluding wholesale and manufacturing. Commercial activities do not include extraction of natural resources or production for non-agricultural purposes.
Industrial (I) -	Structures and/or land used primarily for the manufacturing, packaging, warehousing, or distribution of natural or man-made products, and on-site extraction of natural resources.
Public/Civic (P) -	Structures and/or land available for use by the general public for non-commercial purposes such as educational, cultural, medical, protective, cemeteries, social clubs, and government uses which are strongly vested with public or social importance.
Parks & Recreation (RC) -	Public areas devoted to active or passive recreation activities for use by the general public. This includes city, county and state parks, playgrounds and similar uses.
Urban (U) -	Land located in the incorporated area of a City.

Figure 28: Wright County Existing Land Use Map



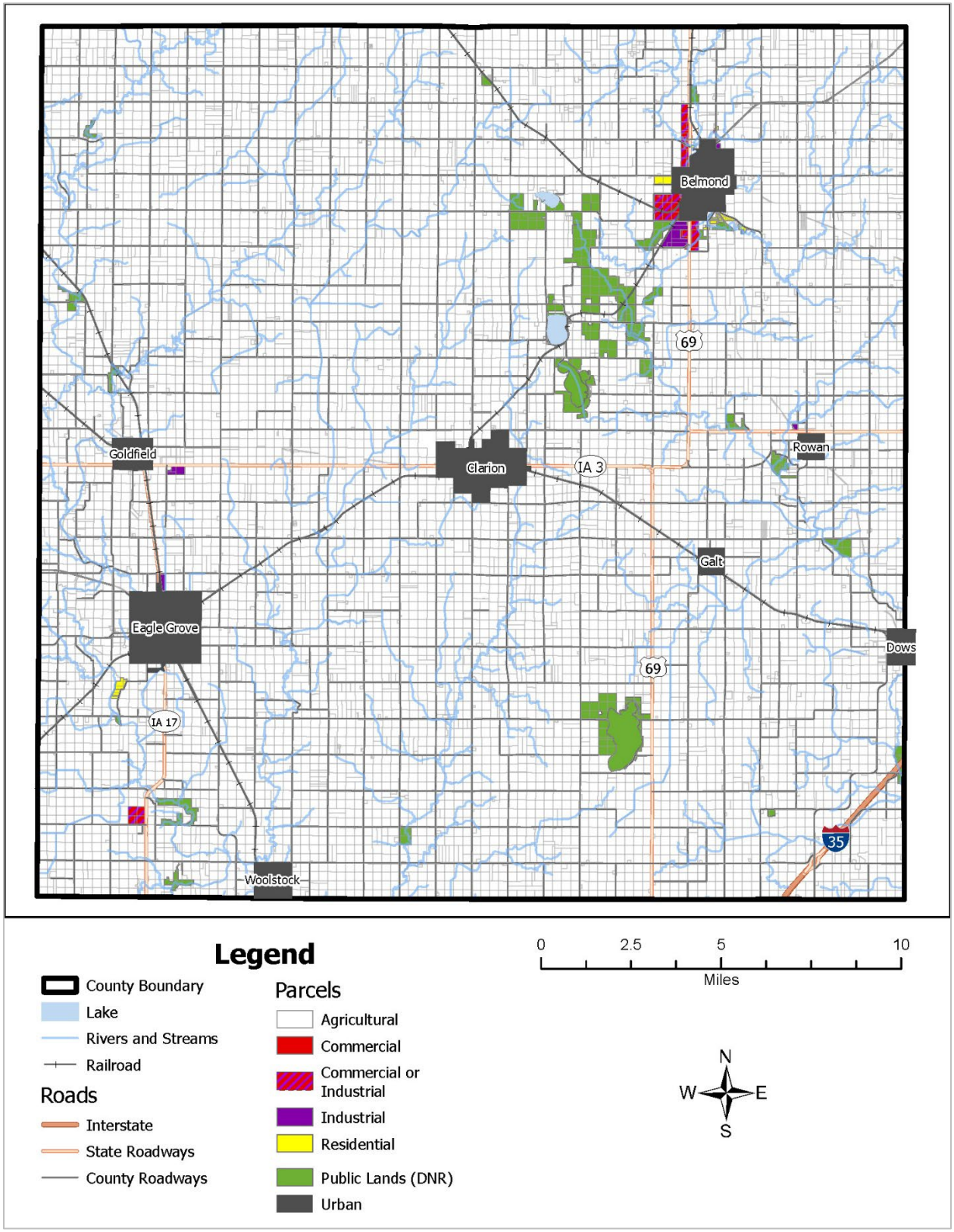
Zoning

The County's current zoning ordinance includes four (4) zoning classes: Agricultural District (A-1), Fishery Lake Residence District – Lake Cornelia (R-1), Wildlife Lake Residence District – Elm Lake, Morse Lake, Wall Lake (R-2), and Commercial District and/or Industrial District (C-1 and/or I-1, respectively). As portrayed in the Zoning Map on page 63, much of the county has been zoned for agriculture, with small sections zoned for Commercial, Industrial, and Residential, primarily around urban centers.

Zoning divides the county into districts and establishes regulations governing the use, placement, spacing, and size of land and buildings. The Zoning Administrator is responsible for administering the zoning ordinance and is usually the first point of contact for residents needing a permit. The Planning and Zoning Commission studies issues, oversees the preparation of plans and ordinances, and reviews and advises on development proposals. Iowa Code lists two specific responsibilities for the Planning and Zoning Commission 1) prepare the zoning ordinance and 2) review and recommend zoning amendments and updates.

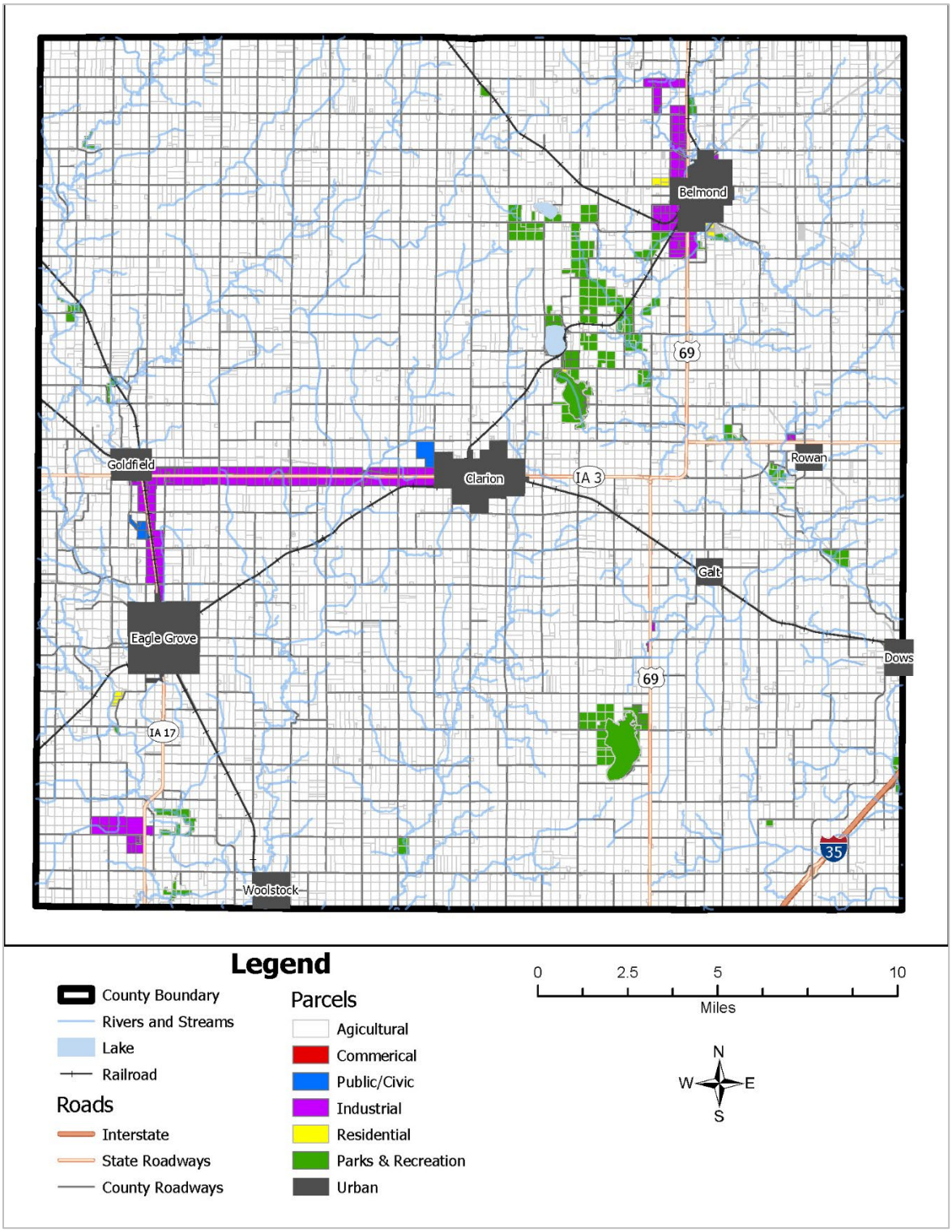
The Zoning Board of Adjustment governs interpretation and implementation of the zoning code. They hear appeals, grant or deny special exceptions, and grant or deny variances.

Figure 29: Wright County Existing Zoning Map



The future land use map provides a guide for the county to follow when approached with future zoning questions or changes. All future land use suggestions were taken into consideration before Board of Supervisors Approval.

Figure 30: Wright County Future Land Use Map



Chapter 6: Implementation

Goal: Implement County Comprehensive Plan

The Wright County Comprehensive Plan has been prepared as a representation of the interests of all County residents within the unincorporated area and should be referred to when considering future land use proposals and when executing the County's long-term goals and objectives. The plan provides a framework for achieving desired tasks relating to agriculture, economic development, housing, transportation, public facilities, recreation, and conservation. Both the public and private sectors can use this plan to make informed decisions on ordinance development, rezonings, variances and other land use projects or proposals.

Objective I.1 Adopt/amend county comprehensive plan when appropriate.

Implementation Strategies

I.1.1 Review comprehensive plan annually

- Along with implementing the Wright County Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission should evaluate the Plan on an annual basis to account for development changes that may occur in any given year. Reviewing the plan ensures that planning goals, objectives and implementation strategies are updated. The implementation strategies may be benchmarked or "checked off" as each strategy is completed.

The local and surrounding governments shall use the plan as a guide in making land use decisions. The plan has been prepared as a representation of the interest of all county residents. Any activities that impact land uses within the unincorporated area of Wright County should follow the comprehensive plan.

The private sector, including developers and landowners, will use this document to educate themselves on the official positions of the County regarding land use and policy issues. The plan will act as an outline for land investments, purchases, or development decisions. With such knowledge, the public and governing bodies will be able to make informed decisions, complimentary to the comprehensive plan, on rezonings, variances, ordinance development, and other land use projects or proposals.

Collaboration

For successful comprehensive plan implementation, cities, counties, and other agencies/ organizations need to work together to achieve the plan's vision and goals. Formal municipal agreements are generally referred to as 28E agreements and they are permitted under Iowa Code Chapter 28E: Joint Exercise of Governmental Powers. Iowa Code states the purpose of 28E agreements "is to permit state and local governments in Iowa to make efficient use of their powers by enabling them to provide joint services and facilities with other agencies and to

cooperate in other ways of mutual advantage." Each 28E agreement will set forth the purpose, powers, rights, objectives, and responsibilities of the contracting parties.

Many Wright County departments use 28E agreements. The Wright County Sheriff's Office has 28E agreements with many of the communities in the County to provide law enforcement and emergency services. Wright County along with 14 other counties are members of a 28E agreement to form Central Iowa Community Services to provide mental health and disability services. The Iowa Secretary of State maintains an online database of 28E agreements at: https://filings.sos.iowa.gov/28E/Search.

Wright County and its cities also collaborate with a variety of nonprofit organizations, community organizations, and private organizations. They belong to economic development/chambers of commerce groups, regional planning and transportation agencies, and other organizations.

Plan Updates

The plan should be used and reviewed on a regular basis. As the county changes from year to year, so will its needs; therefore, this plan may be amended, changed, or revised as needed. It is suggested that the Planning and Zoning Commission review the plan on an annual basis and recommend any necessary actions or amendments to the Board of Supervisors in a legal and orderly manner. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall pay special attention to the planning goals, objectives, and implementation strategies within each planning element. The implementation strategies may be benchmarked as each strategy is completed.

Implementation Tool

The Implementation Tool serves as a tracking resource for the County to benchmark and "check off" plan goals. This table should be reviewed and updated regularly. These goals and actions strategies should stay in accordance with the Future Land Use Map, or vice versa.

The Committee utilized this tool for the same goals, objectives, and action strategies that were presented in Chapter 5, assigning each strategy the following components:

- Priority: Categorized as low, medium, or high, based on overall importance, urgency, and resource availability
- Responsible Party: The agency or organization expected to lead implementation
- Partners: Additional entities that may support or collaborate on implementation
- Timeframe: The estimated duration needed to administer or complete each action.

Timeframes reflect the anticipated window for strategy implementation based on staff capacity, available or projected funding, and the technical complexity of each strategy. While

these estimates provide planning guidance, the actual timeframe may vary for any one strategy. The Committee determined the four timeframes to be defined as:

- Short-term: 1-5 years
- Middle: 6-10 years
- Long-term: 11+ years
- Ongoing: Strategies that are expected to continue indefinitely or on a recurring basis

Comprehensive Action Plan Overview				
Mitigation Strategies	**Priority**	**Responsible Party**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**
AGRICULTURE				
Goal: Preserve and protect Agricultural land with emphasis on prime agricultural areas				
Objective A.1 Direct development away from agriculture lands, where possible				
A.1.1 Prioritize agricultural land development using the Corn Suitability Rating 2 (CSR2)	High	Planning and Zoning	Board of Adjustments, Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	Short
A.1.2 Encourage development within and adjacent to incorporated areas	High	Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	Board of Adjustments, Board of Supervisors	Short
Objective A.2 Encourage growth in agricultural economy				
A.2.1 Provide financial incentives to agricultural related development with priority given to agri-business	High	Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	Board of Supervisors, USDA	Short
A.2.2 Promote best practices for agricultural preservation and sustainability	Med	Soil & Water Conservation District, farmers	USDA, NRCS, IDALS, farmers	Middle
Objective A.3 Locate commercial and industrial development adjacent to areas with the necessary services and infrastructure				
A.3.1 Monitor agriculture designations to ensure appropriate use	Med	Planning and Zoning	BOA, BOS	Middle

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
Goal: Promote countywide economic development				
Objective E.1 Promote Agricultural Development in current Agricultural areas				
E.1.1 Provide incentives for agri-business	High	Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	WCED, Board of Supervisors	Short
E.1.2 Encourage economic development projects which expand upon and, at the very least, do not conflict with the agricultural character of the County	Medium	Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	WCED Commission, Board of Supervisors	Short
Objective E.2 Identify areas for commercial and industrial uses				

E.2.1 Encourage commercial and industrial development along corridors identified in the Future Land Use map	High	Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	WCED, Board of Supervisors	Short
E.2.2 Coordinate economic development initiatives with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee and refer to the CEDS document to ensure alignment with the goals and strategies therein	High	Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	WCED, Board of Supervisors	Short
E.2.3 Use resources such as TIF, Tax Abatement, low interest revolving loan funds, state/federal funds, new market tax credits, and others to encourage commercial/industrial development	High	Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	WCED, Board of Supervisors, law firm, MIDAS	Short
E.2.4 Encourage language supports for non-English speaking business owners, prospective business owners, and employees where necessary	High	Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	WCED, Board of Supervisors	Short

HOUSING				
Goal: Direct residential growth toward areas with existing infrastructure				
Objective H.1 Promote residential growth in suitable areas for such development				
H.1.1 Encourage and/or enforce when applicable, residential development outside of floodplain	High	Zoning Administrator	Board of Adjustments	Short
H.1.2 Prioritize new development to locate adjacent to existing city limits	Medium	Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	Short
H.1.3 Prioritize the rehabilitation of existing structures, infill development, and brownfield redevelopment	Low	Cities	Cities, MIDAS	Long
H.1.4 Establish minimum lot sizes to encourage non-farm growth in the appropriate locations	High	Zoning Administrator, Planning and Zoning, Board of Supervisors	Zoning Administrator, Planning and Zoning, Board of Supervisors	Short
Objective H.2 Encourage quality housing				
H.2.1 Research and develop strategies for nuisance abatement	Low	Board of Supervisors	MIDAS	Middle
H.2.2 Promote housing rehabilitation to support the preservation of the existing housing stock	Medium	Wright County Economic Development (WCED)	Heart of Iowa, MIDAS, IFA	Short

PUBLIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE				
Goal: Provide quality infrastructure and services in Wright County				
Objective P.1 Develop and maintain well, sewer and drainage well requirement				
P.1.1 Follow and enforce IDNR regulations relating to well, sewer and drainage well requirements	High	Sanitarian	IDALS	Short
Objective P.2 Ensure that new developments are in appropriate places so that current infrastructure systems do not become overwhelmed.				
P.2.1 Use the Future Land Use Map to guide development in areas with adequate infrastructure and proximity to roads capable of handling heavy traffic.	High	WCED, Engineer/Wright County Secondary Roads, Zoning Administrator, Planning and Zoning	Board of Adjustments, Board of Supervisors	Short
Objective P.3 Ensure that Emergency Services remain a high priority				
P.3.1 Encourage training opportunities for all emergency service providers	High	Emergency Management Coordinator, Wright County Emergency Management Commission	Local utility providers	Short
Objective P.4 Regulate renewable energy				
P.4.1 Update policies that regulate renewable energy infrastructure to ensure that it does not present safety hazards and to minimize disruptions to surrounding land uses	Med	Planning and Zoning	IDNR, DNR	Short
Objective P.5 Expand broadband in rural areas				
P.5.1 Improve access to internet connectivity by investing in broadband infrastructure	High	Local communication companies / internet service providers	Local communication companies / internet service providers	Short

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION				
Goal (1): Protect environmental features such as floodplains, wetlands, and other sensitive areas				
Objective R.1 Direct development away from floodplains/wetlands				
R.1.1 Enforce the floodplain ordinance	High	Zoning Administrator	Board of Adjustments	Short
Objective R.2 Protect soil from eroding by improving waterways and embankments using resources planning and management measures				
R.2.1 Encourage landowners to improve embankments and waterways to prevent soil erosion through public awareness campaigns, including distributing informational flyers and posting educational content online.	Medium	NRCS, SWCD	IDALS, farmers/landowners, cities, Drainage Districts	Ongoing
Goal (2): Maintain/improve citizens' quality of life				
Objective R.3 Develop additional recreational opportunities				

R.3.1 Develop trails within and around recreational areas	High	Trail Committee, Board of Supervisors, Wright County Conservation	MIDAS	Short
R.3.2 Research funding for maintenance/expansion of recreational opportunities	Medium	Wright County Conservation	Board of Supervisors, Wright County Conservation	Ongoing
R.3.3 Update County Recreation Plan as needed	Low	Wright County Trails Committee assigned by Board of Supervisors	City of Clarion, Wright County Conservation	Long vision: 73 miles of trails; Short for connecting Belmond to Mason City via railroad corridor
R.3.4 Improve the functionality and visibility of county-owned river access points	Low	Wright County Conservation Board	IDNR	Middle

TRANSPORTATION				
Goal: Develop a transportation system that will promote the safe, efficient, and economic movement of people and goods				
Objective T.1 Regularly maintain and improve existing roads and bridges				
T.1.1 Provide regular funding sources for maintenance.	High	WC Engineer/Secondary Roads	IDOT, FHWA, FTA, MIDAS	Short
Objective T.2 Encourage infill development to eliminate wear on rural roads not suitable for heavy traffic				
T.2.1 Revise existing zoning ordinance to encourage infill development	Low	Planning and Zoning	Board of Supervisors	Long
T.2.2 Work in conjunction with Cities on proposed development projects and/or zoning	High	Zoning Administrator, Board of Adjustments	WCED	Short
Objective T.3 Locate developments with high truck traffic along roads suitable for such traffic				
T.3.1 Continued identification of preferred roads for development options	High	Road Superintendent, WC Engineer/Secondary Roads	IDOT	Ongoing
T.3.2 Establish weight restrictions on embargoed roads	High	WC Engineer/Secondary Roads	WC Engineer/Secondary Roads	Short
T.3.3 Review and update the existing Road Performance Standards to consider factors such as safety, volume, speed, traffic type, and other national standards	High	WC Engineer/Secondary Roads	WC Engineer/Secondary Roads	Short
IMPLEMENTATION				
Goal: Implement County Comprehensive Plan				
Objective 7.1 Adopt/amend county comprehensive plan when appropriate				
I.1.1 Provide regular funding sources for maintenance.	High	WC Engineer/Secondary Roads	IDOT, FHWA, FTA, MIDAS	Short

Appendix A: Meeting Summaries

Wright County Comprehensive Plan Meeting #1
Wright County Engineer's Office
416 5th Ave SW, Clarion, IA
Tuesday, March 21, 2023
5:00 PM

- Meeting began at 5:00 PM with 4 people in attendance representing Wright County: Stu Swanson, Shirley Stevens, Leann Sebert, Jeremy Abbas. MIDAS facilitated the meeting.
- Introductions of MIDAS and those in attendance.
- MIDAS explained the purpose of a Comprehensive Plan.
- Overview of Committee's responsibilities and role throughout the planning process, as well as a review of the timeline.
- MIDAS gathered existing plans, documents, and data.
- The Committee discussed how public input within the plan would be handled. The Committee determined there would be surveys for City, Business, and Citizen, with surveys being accessible for 3 weeks. The goal publish date for the survey was set for April 10th, with an April 30th close.
- Next Committee meeting set for May 15th, 2023, at 5:00 PM.
- Meeting ended at 6:00 PM.

Wright County Comprehensive Plan Meeting #2
Wright County Engineer's Office
416 5th Ave SW, Clarion, IA
Monday, May 15, 2023
5:00 PM

- Meeting began at 5:00 PM with 5 people in attendance representing Wright County: Stu Swanson, Shirley Stevens, Leann Sebert, Jeremy Abbas. MIDAS led the meeting.
- Introductions of MIDAS and those in attendance.
- Reviewed public input survey results.
- Discussed SWOT Analysis, including topics that need to be covered (agriculture, economic development, recreation and conservation, transportation, housing, public services, and infrastructure), as well as how to complete the analysis. The County decided to have focus groups with experts on each topic through in-person and virtual meetings, and deliberated having a public input session, as well as a Steering Committee that would be formed after the Focus Groups or Public Input session.
- Next Committee meeting set for after the Public Input SWOT Analysis.
- Meeting ended at 6:30 PM.

Wright County Comprehensive Plan Meeting #3
Wright County Engineer's Office
416 5th Ave SW, Clarion, IA
Tuesday, November 14, 2023
5:00 PM

- Meeting began at 5:00 PM with 4 people in attendance representing Wright County: James Pauk, Shirley Stevens, Leann Sebert, Jeremy Abbas. MIDAS facilitated the meeting.
- Public input SWOT Analysis review and recap.
- The Committee then performed their own SWOT Analysis by adding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for each of the 6 plan topics. The Committee then highlighted which SWOT items (brainstormed by the public input and Committee SWOT) were most important.
- Discussed next steps of determining Goals and Objectives based off results of the SWOT analyses.
- Discussed Existing Land Use and Future Land Use maps.
- Date of next Committee meeting to be discussed via email.
- Meeting ended at 6:00 PM.

Wright County Comprehensive Plan Meeting #4
Wright County Engineer's Office
416 5th Ave SW, Clarion, IA
Tuesday, April 15, 2023
5:00 PM

- Meeting began at 5:00 PM with 6 people in attendance representing Wright County: James Pauk, Shirley Stevens, Leann Sebert, Jeremy Abbas, Sabrina Beck, and Stu Swanson. MIDAS facilitated the meeting.
- The Committee chose Plan's Goals and Objectives.
- Reviewed the Existing Land Use Map and made adjustments as needed.
- Discussed next steps of identifying the Plan's Implementation Strategies and reviewing and revising the Future Land Use Map
- Date of next Committee meeting to be discussed via email.
- Meeting ended at 6:00 PM.

Wright County Comprehensive Plan Meeting #5
Wright County Engineer's Office
416 5th Ave SW, Clarion, IA
Wednesday, September 10, 2024
5:00 PM

- Meeting began at 5:00 PM with 5 people in attendance representing Wright County: James Pauk, Shirley Stevens, Leann Sebert, Jeremy Abbas, and Stu Swanson. MIDAS facilitated the meeting.
- The Committee reviewed the second version of the Existing Land Use Map and made revisions as necessary.
- Revisited the Plan Goals and Objectives and decided on mild changes for items that needed to be addressed, such as having a focus on bridges within the county.
- Identified the Plan's Implementation Strategies, which are directly based on the Goals and Objectives.
- Began the mapping for Future Land Use.
- Discussed timeline for completion.
- Next Committee meeting to be scheduled as needed via email correspondence.
- Meeting ended at 6:30 PM.

Wright County Comprehensive Plan Meeting #6
Wright County Engineer's Office
416 5th Ave SW, Clarion, IA
Wednesday, April 2, 2025
5:00 PM

- Meeting began at 5:00 PM with 6 people in attendance representing Wright County: James Pauk (virtual), Shirley Stevens, Leann Sebert, Jeremy Abbas, Stu Swanson, and Darrel Steven Carlyle (Economic Development). MIDAS facilitated the meeting.
- The Committee reviewed the Goals, Objectives, and Strategies.
- Completed the Implementation Tool, which consists of determining the priority (low, medium, high), responsible party, partners, and timeframe (short, middle, long) for each Strategy.
- Determined the location of the Land Use Maps would be located within the body of the plan and a link provided by MIDAS would lead to a digital or PDF map.
- Decided Hazards would be included as a brief subsection.
- Discussed timeline for completion and remaining questions.
- No next Committee meeting unless deemed necessary.
- Meeting ended at 6:00 PM.

Public Input Meeting
Wright County Board of Supervisors Room;
115 North Main Street Clarion, IA
Tuesday, September 26, 2023
3:30 PM

AND

Public Input Meeting
Memorial Hall
200 S Park Ave, Eagle Grove, IA
Tuesday, September 26, 2023
6:30 PM

- Both meetings began at their respective scheduled times.
- Overview of Comprehensive Plan.
- Reviewed data such as population trend, number and size of farms, unemployment and job trends, housing availability, public services and infrastructure, recreation and conservation, as well as transportation in the region.
- Discussed how to perform SWOT – identifying the County's strengths, weaknesses and possible improvements relating to Agriculture, Economic Development, Housing, Public Services and Infrastructure, Recreation and Conservation and Transportation in the unincorporated areas of the county.
- Groups broke out and completed the SWOT analysis.
- Meetings concluded nearly one hour after they commenced.

Appendix B: Works Cited

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Appendix C: Survey Results (May 2023)

Three surveys were created to gather input for the plan. The Land Use Survey was created for the incorporated cities to answer questions pertaining to future annexation expectations to provide a collaborative discourse between the Cities and County. All residents and businesses of the unincorporated area were encouraged to complete the surveys. The surveys were distributed from April-May 2023. The public input survey addressed 6 areas of focus for the plan (Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure, Public Services, Recreation and Conservation, and Transportation) as. The business survey focused on Agriculture, Economic Development, Infrastructure, and Land Use.

A summary of the survey results can be found below. After the summary, each question from the land use survey, business survey, and public input survey has been broken down into charts and graphs.

Agriculture

Business Survey

- Majority of respondents are an agricultural business; those that are, consist of livestock, poultry livestock, and hay farms.
- All ag-business respondents said there were drainage issues on their farmland.
- Majority of respondents do not believe that Wright County should be allowed to regulate non-residential agricultural property.
- Respondents were equally divided on whether the County should look into programs to preserve agricultural lands.

Public Input Survey

- 11.8% of respondents have an Agriculture-related occupation, including Cooperative and Crop Farm.
- Majority of respondents said there are drainage issues on their farmland.

Economic Development

Business Survey

- Majority of respondents owned/managed businesses in Agriculture.
- Majority of respondents said the County as a whole should focus on attracting the Manufacturing industry.
- Respondents were evenly divided on whether the unincorporated area of the County should work to establish more non-agriculture business or industries.

Public Input Survey

- Majority of respondents (92.6%) are satisfied with their current internet speed.

Business Survey Results

Land Use

Business Survey

- Majority of respondents said commercial livestock facilities should be allowed to locate 2-4 miles away from residential uses.
- Majority of respondents believe wind power generators should be allowed to locate 2-4 miles from residential uses and 1-2 miles from lakes, waterways, county/state/federal public lands.

Public Input Survey

- No questions pertaining to land use were asked on the public input survey.

Recreation/Conservation

Business Survey

- No questions pertaining to recreation/conservation were asked on the business survey.

Public Input Survey

- 96% of respondents said their household visits parks and public use areas in the unincorporated area of the County a few times per year or more often.
- The majority of respondents find out about events at parks and public areas in the unincorporated area of the County through websites and social media.
- The majority of respondents rated the parks and public use areas in the unincorporated area of the County as Good.
- Half of the respondents believe there should be More parks and public use areas in the unincorporated area of the County, while half of the respondents believe there should be the Same number. No respondents answered Less.
    - When asked which recreation services Wright County should spend MORE, LESS, or the SAME amount of money on in the next 5 to 10 years, the most responses for MORE were allocated to Hiking/Walking Trails, followed by a tie of Lake/River Access, Hunting and Fishing Areas, and Recreation/Parks.

Housing

Business Survey

- Majority of respondents said their business's employees live in an incorporated City within Wright County.
- Respondents' employees travel anywhere from 2-20+ miles to work.
- All agricultural business respondents said their employees cannot find the type or size of housing they want in the area; the cost of housing has not been a barrier.
- Majority of respondents said the County should not discourage residential development on agricultural land.

Business Survey Results

Public Input Survey

- Majority of respondents indicated that they live within an incorporated city in Wright County.
- Majority of respondents own their residence.
- Majority of respondents said they are satisfied with their current housing.
- Majority of respondents have lived at their current address for more than 5 years.
- 53.1% of respondents have a $0-$499 monthly rent/house payment.
- Majority of respondents said they will not be looking for different housing within the next two years.
- The most likely reason respondents would consider different housing is for new location, with 29.6% of respondents selecting this option.
- Over half of respondents (56.5%) said that they would choose to live in the unincorporated area of the county instead of within an incorporated city because the quality of life is better, with the second most common reason being that there are no neighbors (39.1%).
- Most respondents (92.6%) believe there should be specific regulations to build a subdivision.

Transportation

Business Survey

- Majority of respondents stated transportation infrastructure was somewhat important when selecting where to locate their business; majority stated it is necessary to very important for customers to have good access to their business.
- Respondents were equally split between the following on what the most important transportation issue is for their business: maintenance of highways/roads, maintenance of bridges, wider/paved shoulders on highways.
- Half of respondents said that they think road maintenance/improvements should be paid for through a gas tax.

Public Input Survey

- When asked which services Wright County should spend MORE, LESS, or the SAME amount of money on in the next 5 to 10 years, the most responses for MORE were allocated to Maintain Existing Road Network.

Business Survey Results

1. **Is your business located within the unincorporated area of Wright County?**
   (5 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Yes	4	80%
No	1	20%

2. **What is your zip code?**
   (5 responses)

	50525	50533	50101
Number	2	2	1
Percentage	40%	40%	20%

3. **What type of business do you have?**
   (5 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Agriculture (crop or livestock farming, cooperatives, ethanol, biodiesel, or poultry factories, etc.)	4	80%
High Tech/IT Industries (technical equipment production, medical production, pharmaceuticals, etc.)	0	0%
Manufacturing (product assembly, product disassembly, production, etc.)	0	0%
Medical (hospital, assisted living, rehabilitation, clinics, etc.)	0	0%
Retail (Convenience stores/gas stations, grocery stores, niche shops, etc.)	0	0%
Services (salons, law offices, insurance agencies, etc.)	0	0%
Tourism (museums, historical attractions, etc.)		
Other (please specify)	1	20%

*"Other" responses: Realty

4. Where would you like to see commercial/industrial development occur in Wright County?
(5 responses)

	In the unincorporated area	In cities
Number	3	2
Percentage	60%	40%

5. Which industry should the county focus on attracting?
(5 responses)

	Manufacturing	Industrial Agriculture	Medical	Commercial	Tourism	Other (please specify)
Number	4	1	0	0	0	0
Percentage	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%

6. How many employees does your business have?
(4 responses)

	< 5	5-19	20-50	> 50
Number	3	0	0	1
Percentage	75%	0%	0%	25%

7. Where do most of your business' employees live?
(4 responses)

	In a city in Wright County	In the unincorporated county	Outside of Wright County
Number	3	0	1
Percentage	75%	0%	25%

8. What is the average distance your employees travel to work?
(4 responses)

	Less than 1 mile	2-5 miles	6-10 miles	11-20 miles	More than 20 miles
Number	0	1	1	1	1
Percentage	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%

9. Have you encountered any problems in hiring or retaining employees due to housing?
(4 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	3	1
Percentage	75%	25%

10. Would having increased public transit available in the county benefit your employees?
(4 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	1	3
Percentage	25%	75%

11. What type of agriculture business are you? (Check all that apply)
(3 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Livestock farm (cattle, hogs, sheep, etc.)	1	33.33%
Poultry livestock farm (chicken, turkeys, eggs, etc.)	1	33.33%
Dairy farm	0	0%
Crop farm (corn, soybeans, wheat, etc.)	2	66.67%
Hay farm	1	33.33%
Cooperative	0	0%
Seed sales	0	0%
Ethanol/Biodiesel	0	0%
Other (please specify)	0	0%

12. What entities or types of entities do you sell your product(s) to? (Please list)
(2 responses)

- Coops and individuals
- Commercial food processors, Restaurants

13. Do you supply your products to any of the following events or resources in Wright County?
(3 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Fairs/Farm Festivals	2	66.67%
Farmers Market	0	0%
Specialty Farms (corn mazes, orchards, wineries, organic farms, etc.)	0	0%
N/A – Do not supply	1	33.33%
Other (Please specify)	0	0%

14. If your business is a family-owned farm, how long has it been in your family?
(3 responses)

	Less than 2 years	2-9 years	10-19 years	20-29 years	30-49 years	50-99 years	100 years or more	Don't own
Number	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Percentage	0%	0%	0%	0%	33.33%	33.33%	0%	33.33%

15. Would an irrigation system be helpful in improving the crop yield on the land you farm?
(3 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	1	2
Percentage	33.33%	66.67%

16. Are there drainage issues on the land you farm?
(3 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	3	0
Percentage	100%	0%

17. Is natural gas something your business needs, or will need, in the future?
(3 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	2	1
Percentage	66.67%	33.33%

18. Which of the following problems have the employees encountered in obtaining housing?
(3 responses)

	Employees cannot afford the housing that is available in the area	Employees cannot find the type or size of housing they want in the area	Other (please specify)
Number	0	3	0
Percentage	0%	100%	0%

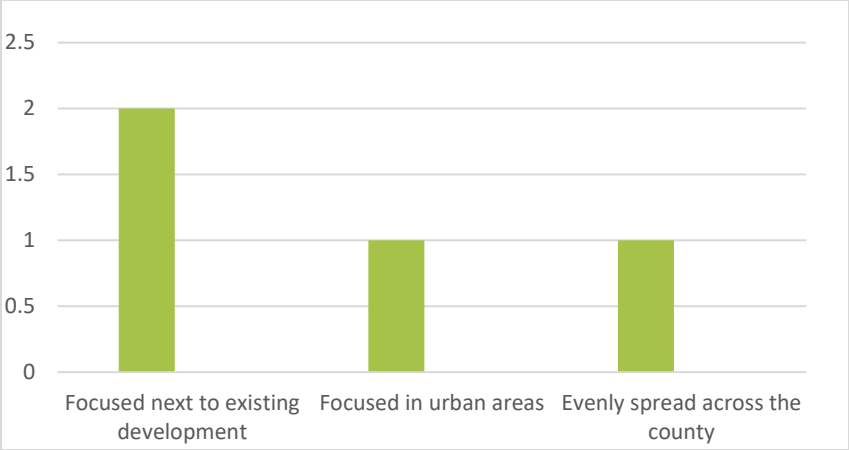
19. Have the above issues occurred more significantly with employees at a particular wage level?
(3 responses)

	Yes (what wage level?)	No
Number	0	3
Percentage	0%	100%

20. Where should future development be focused in Wright County? (this includes residential, commercial, industrial development)
(4 responses)

	Focused next to existing development	Focused in urban areas	Evenly spread across the county
Number	2	1	1
Percentage	50%	25%	25%

Business Survey Results



21. Should the county discourage residential development on agricultural land?

(4 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	1	3
Percentage	25%	75%

22. Should the unincorporated area of Wright County work to establish more non-agriculture businesses or industries?

(4 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	2	2
Percentage	50%	50%

23. How close should commercial livestock facilities be allowed to locate near residential uses?

(4 responses)

	Less than 1 mile	1-2 miles	2-4 miles	5 or more miles
Number	1	0	3	0
Percentage	25%	0%	75%	0%

24. How close should commercial livestock facilities be allowed to locate near lakes, waterways, county, state, and federal public lands?

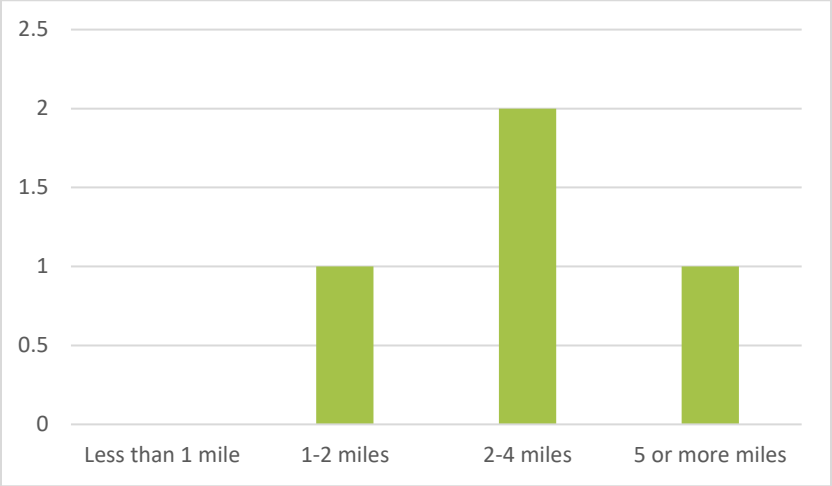
(4 responses)

	Less than 1 mile	1-2 miles	2-4 miles	5 or more miles
Number	0	2	2	0
Percentage	0%	50%	50%	0%

25. How close should wind power generators be allowed to locate near residential uses?

(4 responses)

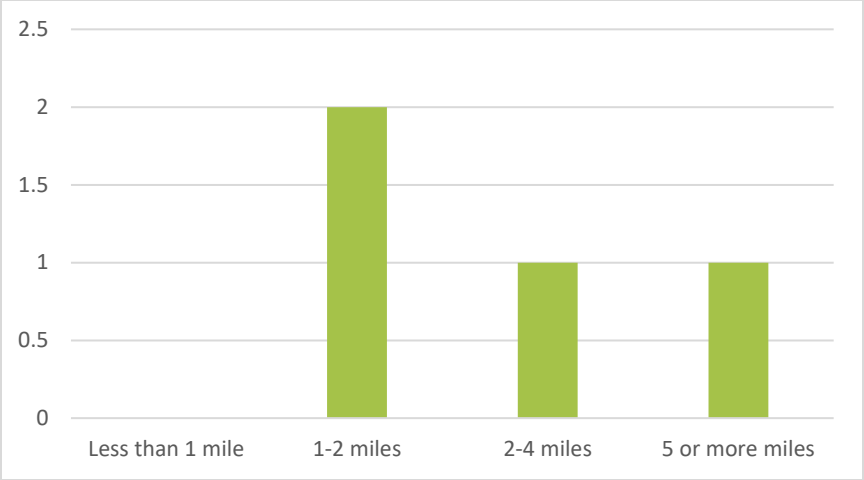
	Less than 1 mile	1-2 miles	2-4 miles	5 or more miles
Number	0	1	2	1
Percentage	0%	25%	50%	25%



26. How close should wind power generators be allowed to locate near lakes, waterways county, state and federal public lands?

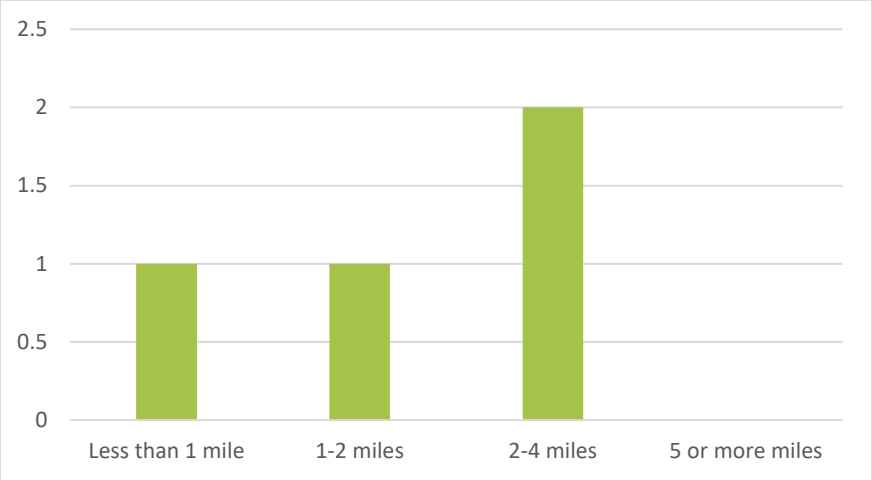
(4 responses)

	Less than 1 mile	1-2 miles	2-4 miles	5 or more miles
Number	0	2	1	1
Percentage	0%	50%	25%	25%



27. How close should solar power generators be allowed to locate near residential uses?
(4 responses)

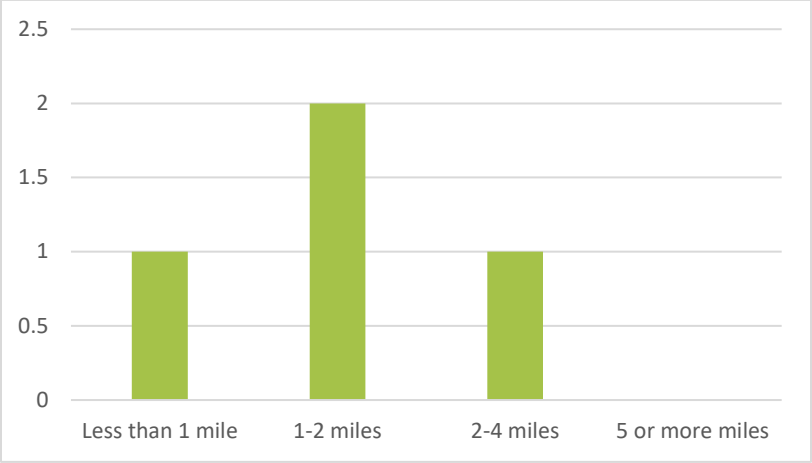
	Less than 1 mile	1-2 miles	2-4 miles	5 or more miles
Number	1	1	2	0
Percentage	25%	25%	50%	0%



28. How close should solar power generators be allowed to locate near lakes, waterways county, state and federal public lands?

(4 responses)

	Less than 1 mile	1-2 miles	2-4 miles	5 or more miles
Number	1	2	1	0
Percentage	25%	50%	25%	0%



29. How important was transportation infrastructure in selecting where to locate your business?

(4 responses)

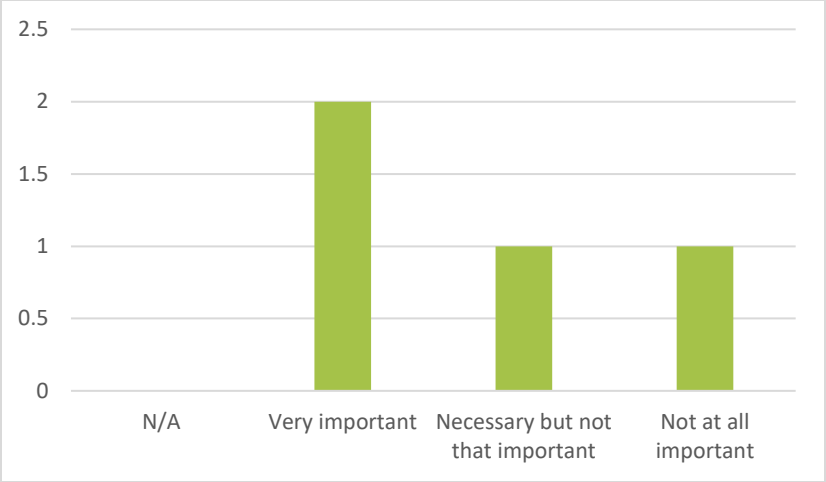
	Most important factor	Important but not the most significant factor	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important
Number	**0**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**1**
Percentage	**0%**	**0%**	**75%**	**0%**	**25%**

30. How important is it for customers to have good access to your place of business?

(4 responses)

	N/A	Very important	Necessary but not that important	Not at all important
Number	0	2	1	1
Percentage	0%	50%	25%	25%

Business Survey Results



31. What is the most important issue for your business when it comes to roads in Wright County?

(4 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Maintenance of highways/roads	1	25%
Maintenance of bridges	1	25%
Lower speed limits	0	0%
Wider/paved shoulders on highways	1	25%
Closing of low usage roads	0	0%
Other (please specify)	1	25%

32. How do you think road maintenance/improvements should be paid for?

(4 responses)

	Assessments	Gas Tax	Miles Driven	Vehicle Registration	Other (please specify)
Number	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**2**
Percentage	**0%**	**50%**	**0%**	**0%**	**50%**

*"Other" responses: Federal grants, Cut back on the counties reckless speeding on passenger trucks

33. Should there be routes for farm equipment like there are for trucks?
(4 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	0	4
Percentage	0%	100%

34. Should businesses/industries that bring in large truck traffic be allowed to locate on gravel or secondary roads which are not adequate for such traffic?
(4 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	3	1
Percentage	75%	25%

35. Do you feel that Wright County should be allowed to regulate non-residential agricultural property?
(4 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	1	3
Percentage	25%	75%

36. Should more initiatives related to organic farming be encouraged throughout the County?
(4 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	1	3
Percentage	25%	75%

37. Should the County look into programs to preserve agricultural lands?
(4 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	2	2
Percentage	50%	50%

38. What programs to preserve agricultural lands would you suggest?
(2 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Farmland Development Rights Agreement	1	50%
Easements (Conservation, Open Space, etc.)	0	0%
Purchase of Development Rights	0	0%
Transfer of Development Rights	0	0%
I don't know	1	50%
Other (please specify)	0	0%

39. Please provide any additional comments you may have on these topics within Wright County or on anything you believe should be considered when developing a comprehensive plan for the unincorporated area of Wright County:
(1 response)

- Eagle Grove needs more average people's housing

Public Input Survey Results

1. **What is your zip-code?**
   (34 responses)

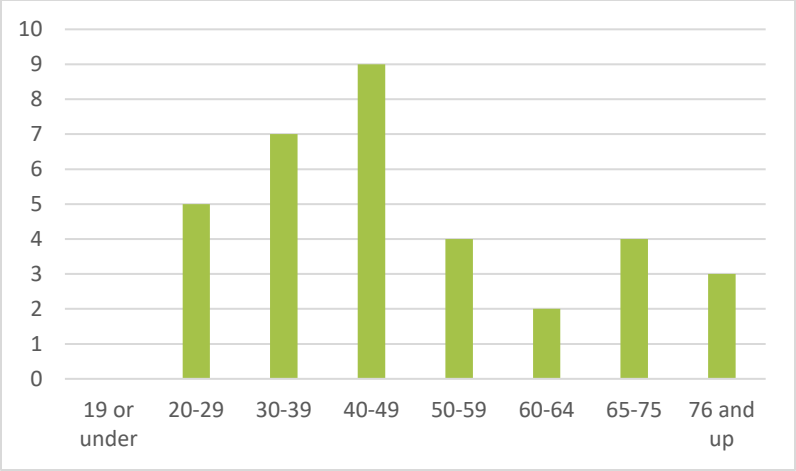
	Number	Percentage
50525	18	52.9%
50533	4	11.9%
50421	5	14.8%
50101	2	5.9%
50447	1	2.9%
50470	1	2.9%
50071	1	2.9%
50542	1	2.9%
50401	1	2.9%

2. **Do you live in the unincorporated area of Wright County (outside city limits)?**
   (34 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	14	20
Percentage	41.2%	58.8%

3. **What is your age?**
   (34 responses)

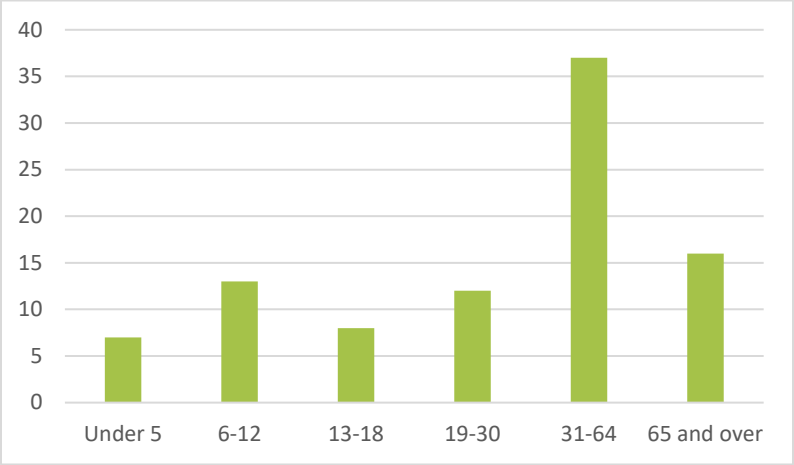
	Number	Percentage
19 or under	0	0%
20-29	5	14.7%
30-39	7	20.6%
40-49	9	26.5%
50-59	4	11.8%
60-64	2	5.8%
65-75	4	11.8%
76 and up	3	8.8%



4. Please indicate the number of persons in your household, including yourself, by age (i.e. 2, 6-12 years).

(34 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Under 5	7	7.5%
6-12	13	13.9%
13-18	8	8.7%
19-30	12	12.9%
31-64	37	39.8%
65 and over	16	17.2%

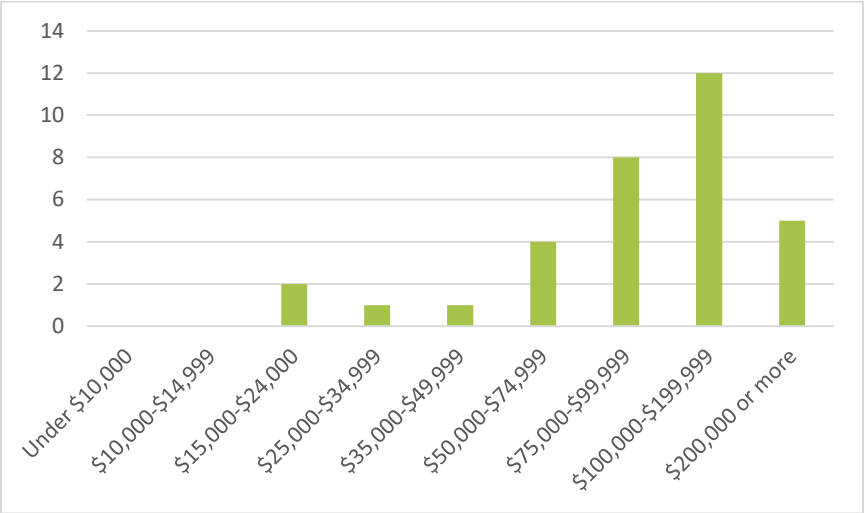


5. **What is your household's Racial/Ethnic group?**
   (34 responses)

	Number
White	34
African American/Black	1
Asian	0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0
Other/Multi-Racial (please specify):	0

6. **What was your household's total taxable income from all sources in 2022 (for everyone over 18)?**
   (33 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Under $10,000	0	0%
$10,000-$14,999	0	0%
$15,000-$24,000	2	6.1%
$25,000-$34,999	1	3.0%
$35,000-$49,999	1	3.0%
$50,000-$74,999	4	12.1%
$75,000-$99,999	8	24.2%
$100,000-$199,999	12	36.4%
$200,000 or more	5	15.2%



7. **What is your occupation?**
(34 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Agriculture (crop or livestock farming, cooperatives, ethanol, biodiesel, or poultry factories, etc.)	4	11.8%
High Tech/IT Industries (technical equipment production, medical production, pharmaceuticals, etc.)	2	5.9%
Manufacturing (product assembly, product disassembly, production, etc.)	1	2.9%
Medical (hospital, assisted living, rehabilitation, clinics, etc.)	3	8.8%
Retail (Convenience stores/gas stations, grocery stores, niche shops, etc.)	1	2.9%
Services (salons, law offices, insurance agencies, etc.)	7	20.6%
Tourism (museums, historical attractions, etc.)	0	0%
Other (please specify)	16	47.1%

*"Other" responses: Retired (7), Energy, Scientist and Director for university extension, Government (2), Church, Education, School transportation, Accounting, Services and Agriculture

8. **What type of agriculture business are you employed in?**
(4 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Livestock (cattle, hogs, sheep, etc.)	0	0%
Poultry Livestock (chickens, turkeys, eggs, etc.)	0	0%
Dairy Farm	0	0%
Crop Farm (corn, soybeans, wheat, etc.)	2	50%
Hay Farm	0	0%
Cooperative	2	50%
Seed Sales	0	0%
Ethanol/Biodiesel	0	0%
Other (please specify):	0	0%

9. **If you are the owner of the business, how long have you owned it?**
(4 responses)

	Less than 1 year	1-9 years	10-29 years	30 or more years	Don't own
Number	0	1	0	1	2
Percentage	0%	25%	0%	25%	50%

10. Would an irrigation system be helpful in improving crop yield on the land you farm?
(4 responses)

	Yes	No	Not sure
Number	1	1	2
Percentage	25%	25%	50%

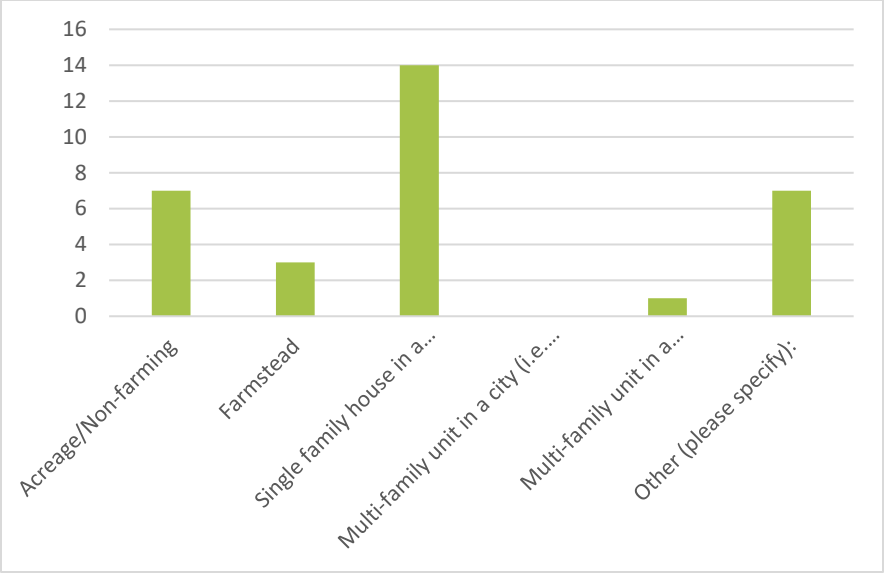
11. Are there drainage issues on the land you farm?
(4 responses)

	Yes	No	Not sure
Number	3	0	1
Percentage	75%	0%	25%

12. How many employees does your business have?
(32 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Acreage/Non-farming	7	21.9%
Farmstead	3	9.4%
Single family house in a subdivision/unincorporated area	14	43.8%
Multi-family unit in a city (i.e. apartment)	0	0%
Multi-family unit in a subdivision/unincorporated area	1	3.1%
Other (please specify):	7	21.9%

*"Other" responses: Single family home, House, City house, House within town, Single family home in city limits, Single family home in town (2)

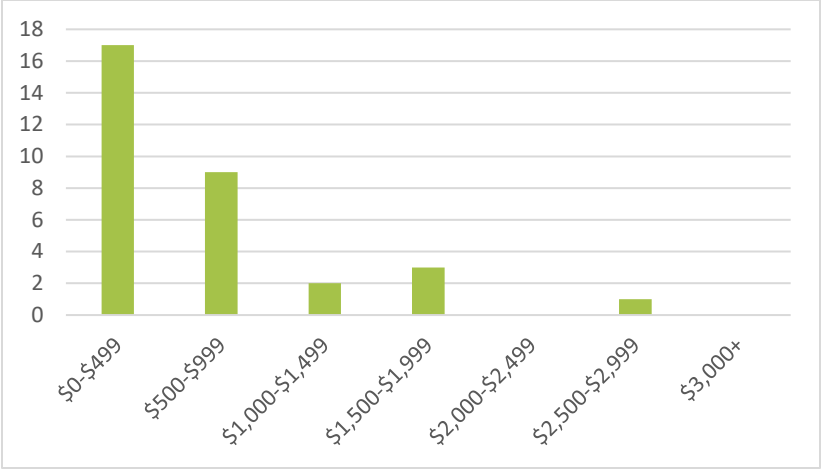


13. How long have you lived at your current address?
(32 responses)

	Less than 6 months	6 months-less than a year	1-5 years	More than 5 years
Number	0	1	11	20
Percentage	0%	3.1%	34.4%	62.5%

14. What is your current monthly rent or house payment?
(32 responses)

	Number	Percentage
$0-$499	17	53.1%
$500-$999	9	28.1%
$1,000-$1,499	2	6.3%
$1,500-$1,999	3	9.4%
$2,000-$2,499	0	0%
$2,500-$2,999	1	3.1%
$3,000+	0	0%

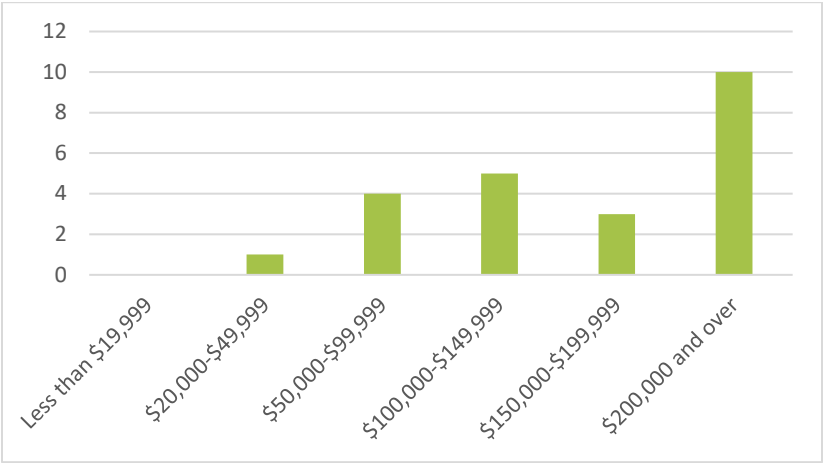


15. Do you rent or own your residence?
(32 responses)

	Rent	Own
Number	5	27
Percentage	15.6%	84.4%

16. What is the actual value of your home?
(23 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Less than $19,999	0	0%
$20,000-$49,999	1	4.4%
$50,000-$99,999	4	17.4%
$100,000-$149,999	5	21.7%
$150,000-$199,999	3	13.0%
$200,000 and over	10	43.5%

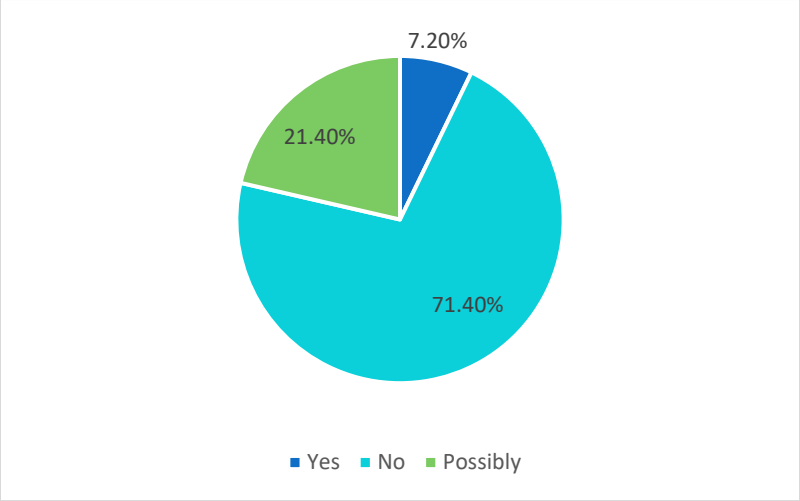


17. Are you satisfied with your current housing?
(28 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	23	5
Percentage	82.1%	17.9%

18. Will you be looking for different housing within the next two years?
(28 responses)

	Yes	No	Possibly
Number	2	20	6
Percentage	7.2%	71.4%	21.4%



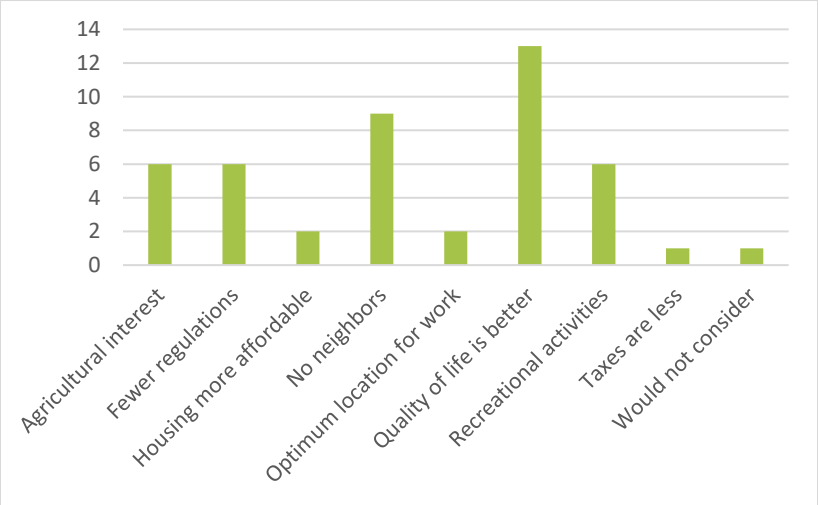
19. Why would you consider different housing? (Check all that apply)
(27 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Larger home	4	14.8%
Smaller home	0	0%
Closer to work	1	3.7%
Renting, want to own	2	7.4%
New location	8	29.6%
Retiring	2	7.4%
Want to live in a city	0	0%
Want to live near a lake	2	7.4%
None of the above	14	51.9%

20. Why do you choose to live in the unincorporated area of the county instead of in a city? (Check all that apply)

(23 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Agricultural interest	6	26.1%
Fewer regulations	6	26.1%
Housing more affordable	2	8.7%
No neighbors	9	39.1%
Optimum location for work	2	8.7%
Quality of life is better	13	56.5%
Recreational activities	6	26.1%
Taxes are less	1	4.4%
Would not consider	1	4.4%
Other (please specify):	2	8.7%



21. Should residential subdivisions be allowed to be built in the unincorporated county? ("Subdivision" means the accumulative effect of dividing an original lot, tract, or parcel of land, into multiple lots for the purpose of immediate or future sale or transfer for development purposes.)

(25 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	13	12
Percentage	52%	48%

22. **Should there be specific regulations to build a subdivision (i.e. well depth, septic regulations, road requirements)**
(27 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	25	2
Percentage	92.6%	7.4%

23. **Should residential subdivisions be allowed to be built in the county near recreation/conservation areas?**
(27 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	12	15
Percentage	44.4%	55.6%

24. **Do you feel Counties should be allowed to regulate residential agricultural property?**
(27 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	12	15
Percentage	44.4%	55.6%

25. **Do you have a well water system or are you hooked to a city water system?**
(27 responses)

	Well	City Water
Number	13	14
Percentage	48.2%	51.9%

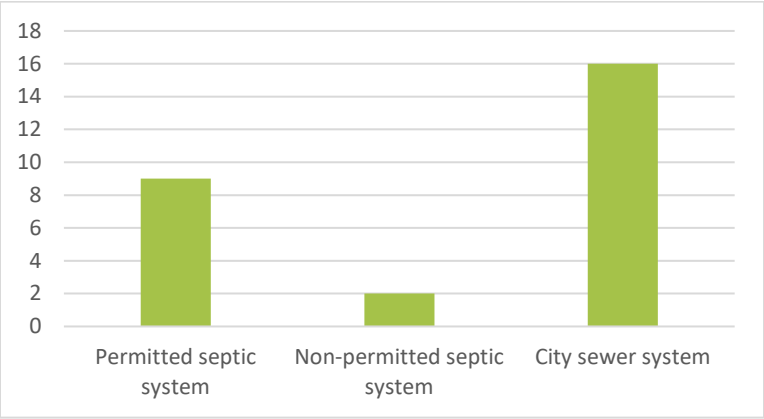
26. **Would you like to see rural water provided to Wright County in the future?**
(25 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	10	15
Percentage	40%	60%

27. Do you have a septic system with a leach bed system or are you hooked to a city sewer system?

(27 responses)

	Permitted septic system	Non-permitted septic system	City sewer system
Number	**9**	**2**	**16**
Percentage	**33.3%**	**7.4%**	**59.3%**



28. Do you currently have an Internet Provider?

(27 responses)

	Yes (please list the provider):	No
Number	26	1
Percentage	96.3%	3.7%

*"Other" responses: Wmtel (9), Comm 1/Goldfield Access (8), Windstream (1), Mediacom (3), LTD Wireless (1), Century Link (2), Rise Broadband (1), None of your business (1)

29. Are you satisfied with your current internet speed?

(27 responses)

	Yes	No (why?):
Number	25	2
Percentage	92.6%	7.4%

*"Other" responses: Would like faster internet speed, wish it was faster but I can upgrade and pay more.

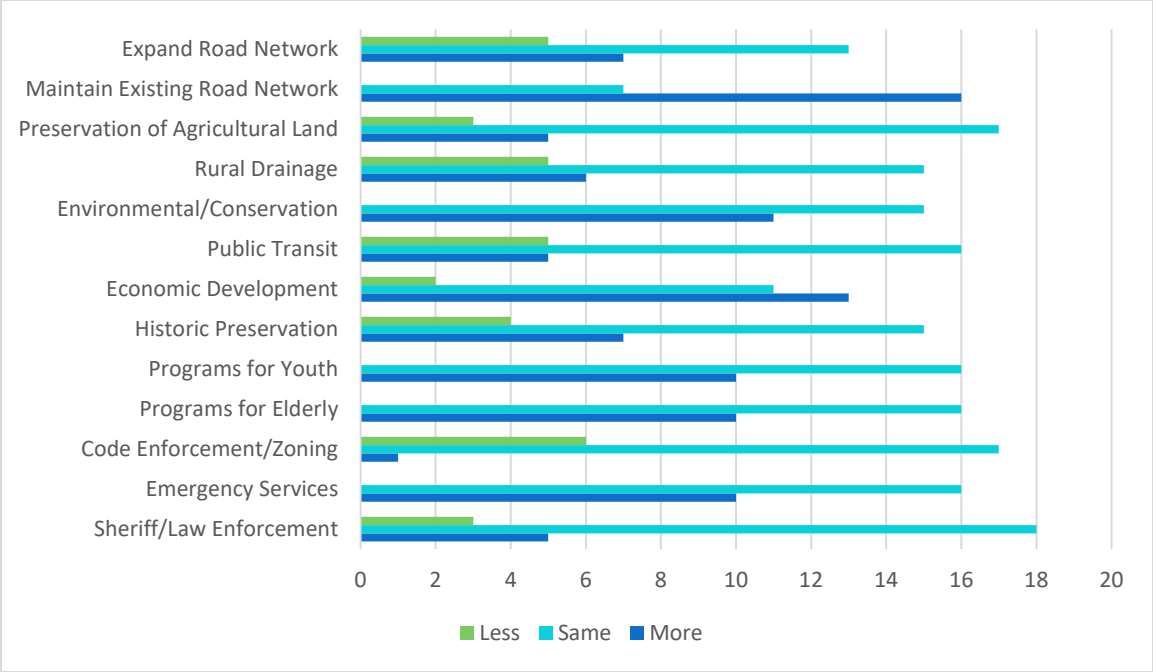
30. Are you satisfied with your current internet cost?
(27 responses)

	Yes	No (why?):
Number	22	5
Percentage	81.5%	18.5%

*"Other" responses: Too expensive (4), Costs more than DSM metro area

31. Of the following services, where would you like to see Wright County Spend MORE, LESS, or the SAME amount of money in the next 5 to 10 years?
(26 responses)

	More	Same	Less
Sheriff/Law Enforcement	**5**	**18**	**3**
Emergency Services	**10**	**16**	**0**
Code Enforcement/Zoning	**1**	**17**	**6**
Programs for Elderly	**10**	**16**	**0**
Programs for Youth	**10**	**16**	**0**
Historic Preservation	**7**	**15**	**4**
Economic Development	**13**	**11**	**2**
Public Transit	**5**	**16**	**5**
Environmental/Conservation	**11**	**15**	**0**
Rural Drainage	**6**	**15**	**5**
Preservation of Agricultural Land	**5**	**17**	**3**
Maintain Existing Road Network	**16**	**7**	**0**
Expand Road Network	**7**	**13**	**5**



32. How often does your household visit parks and public use areas in the unincorporated area of Wright County?

(25 responses)

	Weekly	Monthly	A few times per year	Never
Number	9	6	9	1
Percentage	36%	24%	36%	4%

33. How do you find out about events at parks and public use areas in the unincorporated area of Wright County?

(24 responses)

	Websites/Social media	Newspapers/ Publications	Radio and Television	Other (please specify):
Number	**22**	**9**	**0**	**1**
Percentage	**91.7%**	**37.5%**	**0%**	**4.2%**

*"Other" responses: Word of mouth

34. How would you rate the parks and public use areas in the unincorporated area of Wright County?
(24 responses)

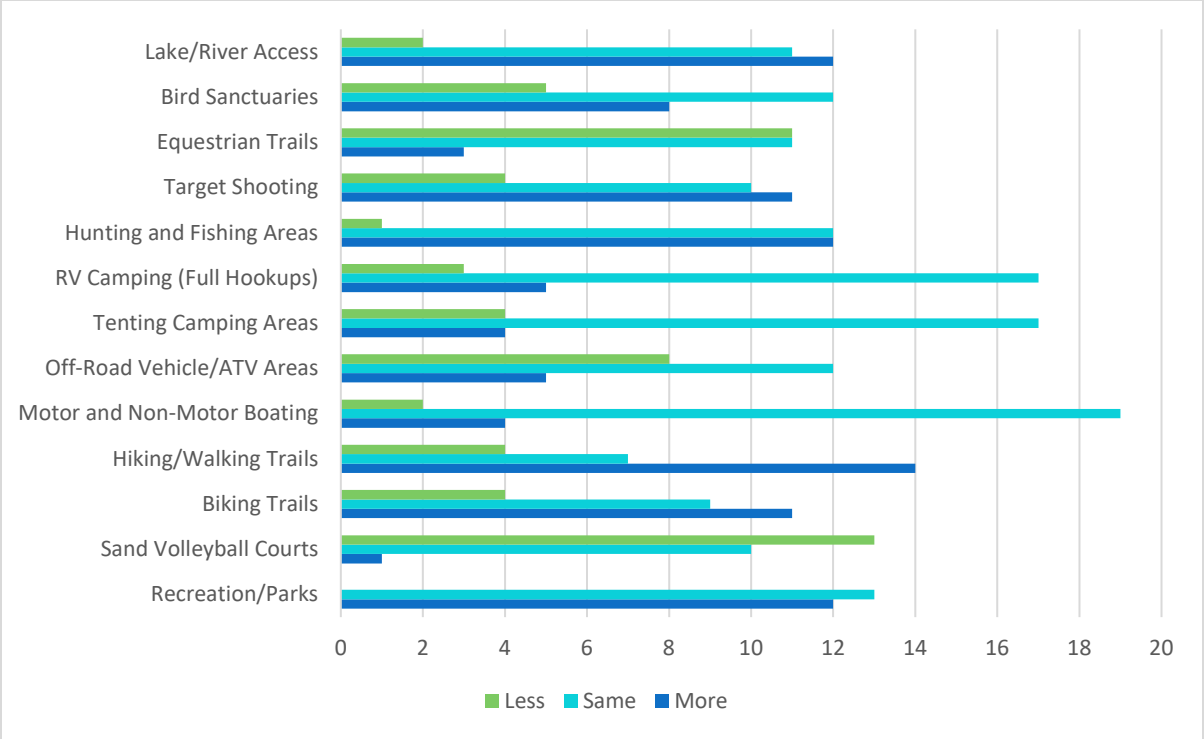
	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Poor
Number	5	14	5	0
Percentage	20.8%	58.4%	20.8%	0%

35. Should there be more or less parks and public use areas in the unincorporated area of Wright County?
(24 responses)

	More	Less	Same
Number	12	0	12
Percentage	50%	0%	50%

36. Of the following services, where would you like to see Wright County spend MORE, LESS, or the SAME amount of money in the next 5 to 10 years?
(25 responses)

	More	Same	Less
Recreation/Parks	12	13	0
Sand Volleyball Courts	1	10	13
Biking Trails	11	9	4
Hiking/Walking Trails	14	7	4
Motor and Non-Motor Boating	4	19	2
Off-Road Vehicle/ATV Areas	5	12	8
Tenting Camping Areas	4	17	4
RV Camping (Full Hookups)	5	17	3
Hunting and Fishing Areas	12	12	1
Target Shooting	11	10	4
Equestrian Trails	3	11	11
Bird Sanctuaries	8	12	5
Lake/River Access	12	11	2



37. What type of vehicles does your household have (check all that apply)?
(25 responses)

	Number
Car	23
Farm Equipment	6
Moped/Scooter	0
Motorcycle	4
Pickup Truck	19
RV	2
Semi-trucks	2
Other (please specify):	1
None of the above	0

*"Other" responses: ATV

38. What type of road is your home located on?
(25 responses)

	Gravel	Paved Road	State Road (Hwy 3, Hwy 17, Hwy 69)	Other (please specify):
Number	**5**	**20**	**0**	**0**
Percentage	**20%**	**80%**	**0%**	**0%**

39. What is the most important issue for you when it comes to roads in Wright County?
(25 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Maintenance of highways/roads	22	88%
Maintenance of bridges	1	4%
Lower speed limits	0	0%
Wider/paved shoulders on highways	1	4%
Closing of low usage roads	1	4%
Other (please specify):	0	0%

40. How do you think road maintenance/improvements should be paid for?
(24 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Gas Tax	17	70.8%
Taxed by miles driven	2	8.3%
Vehicle Registration Fees	13	54.2%
Property Assessments	2	8.3%
Other (please specify):	0	0%

41. If public transit was more readily available in the county, would you use it?
(25 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	3	22
Percentage	12%	88%

42. Where do you see commercial/industrial development most likely occurring in the county?
(24 responses)

	Outside boundaries/limits of incorporated cities	Within cities' boundaries in the county
Number	11	13
Percentage	45.8%	54.2%

43. Which industry should the county try to attract within the unincorporated area?
(25 responses)

	Number	Percentage
Manufacturing	10	40%
Industrial Agriculture	8	32%
Commercial	3	12%
Medical	1	4%
Tourism	1	4%
Other (please specify):	2	8%

*"Other" responses: No more pigs/chickens/slaughter plants!!, None

44. Should the county discourage residential development on agricultural land?
(25 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	11	14
Percentage	44%	56%

45. Should the county discourage commercial/industrial development on agricultural land?
(25 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	13	12
Percentage	52%	48%

46. How close should commercial livestock facilities be allowed to locate near?
(25 responses)

	Less than 1 mile	1-2 miles	2-4 miles	4+ miles
Residential uses	3	4	9	9
Public uses	4	5	4	12
Lakes/waterways/State and Federal public land	2	4	3	16

47. How close should wind power generators be allowed to locate near?
(25 responses)

	Less than 1 mile	1-2 miles	2-4 miles	4+ miles
Residential uses	4	6	8	10
Public uses	4	5	7	9
Lakes/waterways/State and Federal public land	2	3	10	10

48. How close should solar power generators be allowed to locate near?
(25 responses)

	Less than 1 mile	1-2 miles	2-4 miles	4+ miles
Residential uses	8	4	5	8
Public uses	6	8	4	7
Lakes/waterways/State and Federal public land	6	7	3	9

49. Should Wright County work to establish more non-agricultural businesses or industries?
(25 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	22	3
Percentage	88%	12%

50. Should development be allowed in the floodplain?
(24 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	4	20
Percentage	16.7%	83.3%

51. Do you feel Wright County should be allowed to regulate non-residential agricultural property?
(24 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	10	14
Percentage	41.7%	58.3%

52. Should the county look into programs that work to preserve agricultural lands?
(24 responses)

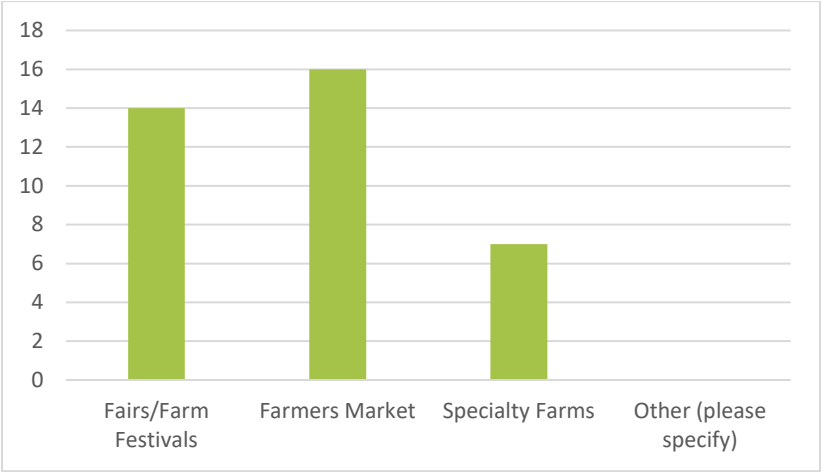
	Yes	No
Number	17	7
Percentage	70.3%	29.7%

53. Should more initiatives related to organic farming be encouraged throughout the county?
(24 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	9	15
Percentage	37.5%	62.5%

54. What agricultural events do you regularly attend within Wright County? (Select all that apply)
(23 responses)

	Fairs/Farm Festivals	Farmers Market	Specialty Farms (i.e. corn mazes, orchards, winery/vineyard, organic farms, etc.)	Other (please specify):
Number	**14**	**16**	**7**	**0**
Percentage	**60.9%**	**69.6%**	**30.43%**	**0%**



55. Please provide any comments you may have on development within Wright County: (6 responses)

- I did not grow up in rural Iowa but I do enjoy living in rural Iowa and have been here for over 7 years now. In this time I have seen that Clarion specifically has not been able to be improved upon much which saddens me. I think our city and county government really needs to take a look at upcoming and popular agricultural cities around the state and see what they are doing and try to improve our towns. We don't want to see the town dwindle away. We also need to really focus on maintaining our current roadways and sidewalks. Many people have to walk on the street because sidewalks are so poorly taken care of or do not exist. There are multiple roads including the one to the high school and county K, North and South, that need total facelifts. I understand this costs money but as a member of the community it makes me feel like our officials do not care about current infrastructure and don't have the public in mind. I know this is felt from many people and is talked about frequently. When are we going to start caring for our community more? I hope our city and county officials really take this survey to heart and start putting their words into actions and I hope we see improvements soon. Other small towns are doing these things… why can't we?
- Would like to see new industries use existing, vacant facility locations before developing new sites on undeveloped/agricultural lands.

- Don't allow any more wind turbines, solar fields, poultry buildings or livestock processing in the county.

- No more Prestage type industry! It has ruined the area!!!!
- I think the development (adding businesses) outside of city limits defeats the purpose of rural living. Unless the development ADDS to or keeps the surrounding area the same (winery, pumpkin patch, etc.). And they stay within the aesthetic (no brick building in the middle of a field, make it look like a barn, etc.)

Land Use Survey Results

1. **City Name**
   (5 responses)

   - Rowan
   - Goldfield
   - Belmond
   - Woolstock
   - Dows

2. **Does your city have zoning?**
   (5 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	3	2
Percentage	60%	40%

3. **Please share the name and contract information for your zoning administrator. This information will be shared with the county zoning administrator so he can direct residents to the correct person when he receives inquiries.**
   (3 responses)

   - We do not have a Zoning Administrator.
   - Justin Fournier 641-444-3386
   - Jeanette Wenzel

4. **If your city has zoning, would you be interested in working with the county to zone the 2-mile buffer around the city?**
   (3 responses)

	Yes	No
Number	2	1
Percentage	66.7%	33.3%

5. **In what direction do you plan on annexing?**
   (0 responses)

   - North
   - East
   - South
   - West

6. **Does your city anticipate annexing land within the following years?**
   (5 responses)

	Within 5 years	5-10 years	11-20 years	Not Anticipated
Number	**0**	**0**	**0**	**5**
Percentage	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**	**100%**

Appendix D: SWOT Analysis Results (09/26/2023 and 11/14/2023)

Public Input Meetings and SWOT Results

SWOT input was provided from three meetings: the two Public Input meetings held on 9/26/23, and the Comprehensive Plan Committee meeting on 11/14/23. Items in **bold** were determined by the Committee as most important.

Agriculture

Strengths:

- New Coop expanding opportunities to process locally.
- **Quality of Land is excellent- high yields.**
- Agriculture is a major employer in the area.
- Diverse, expanding industry (row crops, livestock, etc.)
- Farms stay locally owned and keep people in the area.

Weaknesses:

- Industry is market dependent (market is low, effects all aspects of industry)
- **High startup costs- land values are high, equipment is expensive.**
- **Drainage tiles are old, outdated and at capacity.**

Opportunities:

- **The ability to process crops locally.**
- New Programs becoming available to expand operations.
- **Modernize tile system to improve water quality.**
- Alternate energy (windmills and solar panels

Threats:

- Ability to transport large agricultural shipments is limited due to regulations and aging transportation systems (railways)
- **Aging Drainage systems**
- Alternative Energy programs (wind and solar)
- Outdated Master Matrix
- Abundance of flies and insects due to current agriculture businesses in the county.

- Poor water quality.

Economic Development

Strengths:

- Low unemployment rate
- **Space for new businesses is ready (industrial parks are designated already)**
- Strong Economic Development Department
- Variety of Restaurants

Weaknesses:

- **Lack of affordable housing**
- Size of communities are very similar, where do new businesses choose to locate?
- Remote Workers are not relocating to the area.
- Lack of variety in entertainment options
- Lack of young professions

Opportunities:

- **Business owners have been coming to the area to potentially locate in the county.**
- Increase tourism with recreation areas.
- Potential Rec Centers in Eagle Grove and Clarion
- Potential partnerships between multiple organizations to bring amenities to the area.
- Grocery stores and gas stations to increase local shopping.

Threats

- Businesses do not want to come in because it is a rural area.
- The younger population is moving away to larger cities.
- **Job openings with no one to fill them.**
- Competing priorities

Public Services and Infrastructure

Strengths:

- Updated electrical grid.
- EMS response times are fast.
- **High Quality school systems**
- Good local law enforcement
- **EMS levy passed.**
- Old bridges are being replaced.

Weaknesses:

- **Finding qualified workforce (EMS, law enforcement, hospital staff, etc.)**
- Aging Water/Sewer systems
- Large industries potentially use up available resources (electric grid, sewer capacity, etc.)
- Old bridges

Opportunities:

- **Expansion of internet/fiber services**
- Expansion of Board of Supervisors (increased representation)
- Alternative energy sources (windmills)

Threats:

- Increasing rates to pay for improvements (ex. Water rates going up)
- **Utilities are at capacity.**
- Windmills and other new technologies require increased training and can potentially affect neighbors and land values.

Recreation and Conservation

Strengths:

- **Lots of well-maintained recreation areas**
- A good mix of parks, trails, and river activities.
- Lake Cornelia Park is highly utilized.
- Campgrounds are highly utilized.
- Increased public awareness of recreation opportunities.

Weaknesses:

- **Lack of water trail access**
- **Lack of diversity of activities**
- Limited funding in local budgets
- Federally owned properties

Opportunities:

- Grant funding opportunities for different kinds of projects
- **More trails connecting the different areas of the county.**
- Expanding public campgrounds

Threats

- **Recreational access- sometimes crossing onto private property.**
- **Poor Water quality**
- Landowner cooperation for expansion projects
- Cost to maintain areas.
- Lack of rain/changing climates- low water levels

Housing

Strengths:

- **High property values**
- New housing units are being built.
- Homeowners are renovating older homes.
- Heart of Iowa Trust Fund and other housing grants are helping homeowners.

Weaknesses:

- **Lack of affordable housing.**
- Shortage of available housing
- Increased property taxes

Opportunities

- Homes for Iowa program
- More apartment/townhomes would increase housing stock.
- Changing demographics in the area

Threats:

- **Lack of Contractors and laborers to build/renovate homes.**
- Rental prices are increasing.
- State property taxes are increasing.
- Not sure if new housing units will be affordable or who the target audience is for them.

Transportation

Strengths:

- Local agencies help provide transportation for medical appointments.
- **County is making repairs to roads and future planning for repairs is happening.**
- **There are many county roads providing access to most of the county.**
- Roads are well maintained.

Weaknesses:

- **Increased costs to maintain roads.**
- Not many options for public transport other than MIDAS
- Lots of county roads to maintain.

Opportunities:

- Grant funding for road improvements
- Alternative public transportation methods like Uber or Lyft

Threats:

- Finding bus drivers for MIDAS
- Budget management from outside sources
- Large, heavy farm machinery using roads.
- Grid pattern for gravel roads.
- **Railways being abandoned causing larger shipments to use roads.**