



1 Introduction & Background

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Bluffs Tomorrow 2030 Comprehensive Plan describes a community vision and provides a road map for guiding future neighborhood, commercial and industrial development, investment in transportation and utilities, provisions of community services, and the preservation of parks, open spaces, and environmental areas. Over the next 10-15 years, Bluffs

Tomorrow 2030 will serve as a guide for policy makers, developers, residents, and business owners in implementing physical improvements, enhanced mobility, and new development within the City. The Plan incorporates goals, objectives, and actions for a number of areas including land use, infrastructure improvements, disaster resiliency, natural resources and open space, transportation, and community character. By addressing a wide-range of issues, the Plan provides a holistic guide for shaping the future of Council Bluffs.

The Plan sets a framework for the future based on what exists now and what the community would like to become. Public involvement was critical in formulating the policies, goals and objectives included in the plan. The ultimate vision for Bluffs Tomorrow 2030 is to sustain the City's distinctive natural resources, strengthen its neighborhoods, support local business, stimulate job growth, and promote economic vitality, a sense of place, and a healthy environment.



Structure of the Plan Document

The Bluff Tomorrow 2030 Plan is divided into the following chapters:

1. **Introduction & Background** - A description of the purpose of the plan, process, and context.
2. **Community Outreach** - A summary of the public engagement activities that took place during the comprehensive planning process and the outcomes they produce.
3. **Community Profile** - A snapshot of Council Bluffs as it is today; that establishing the basis for recommendations in subsequent chapters.
4. **Vision, Goals, & Objectives** - An articulation of the shared vision for Council Bluffs and how the quality of life will improve for all over the next 10-15 years, and a description of the goals and objectives for achieving the community's vision.
5. **Land Use Plan** - A future land use map for Council Bluffs and a description of the different types of land uses, including policies related to residential, commercial, and industrial development.
6. **Transportation Plan** - Recommendations related to roadways, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian mobility, and airports.
7. **Parks, Open Space & Environmental Features Plan** - Recommendations for enhancing the benefits of parks, open space, and environmental features which help define the community's unique character.
8. **Community Facilities & Infrastructure Plan** - Recommendations related to the maintenance of existing infrastructure as well as the future expansion of community facilities and infrastructure.
9. **Hazard Mitigation & Sustainability Plan** - Strategies for preparing the Council Bluffs community for potential hazards, and policies aimed at achieving the long-term sustainability of the community.
10. **Community Character Plan** - Recommendations related to the character and location of gateways, signage, streetscaping, and private development in order to enhance the aesthetic appeal and unique sense of place of the community.
11. **Subarea Plans** - A more detailed planning recommendations and concepts for land use, transportation and urban design in four key areas of Council Bluffs; the West Broadway corridor, Kanesville-Tinley neighborhood, South Main area, and the I-80/US Highway 6 interchange.
12. **Implementation** - Recommendations related to supporting policies, programs and initiatives that can be used to achieve goals related to job growth, commercial development, and fiscal stability.

Planning Process

The planning process aims to answer three critical questions. The first is, “Where are we now?” Answers to this question emerge through a detailed analysis of existing conditions within the community, which is included in Chapters 1-3 of this document. The second question is, “Where would we like to be?” This is answered through the vision, goals, objectives, and plan recommendations included in Chapters 4-11. The final question is, “How will we get there?” This question is answered in Chapter 12, describing key implementation steps necessary to attain the community’s vision for Council Bluffs.

Public outreach was integrated throughout the process in order to establish issues and opportunities, test planning concepts and recommendations, and determine priorities for future actions.

Planning Principles

By incorporating smart growth principles, Council Bluffs will promote future development that is environmentally conscious, enhances economic development, strengthens community identity, and encourages inter-agency implementation efforts. Also, by planning for an area beyond its boundaries and into unincorporated Pottawattamie County, the Plan addresses the potential impacts of places outside of the City as well as possible benefits of growth and annexation. Ten principles were used in the development of the Plan. These include:

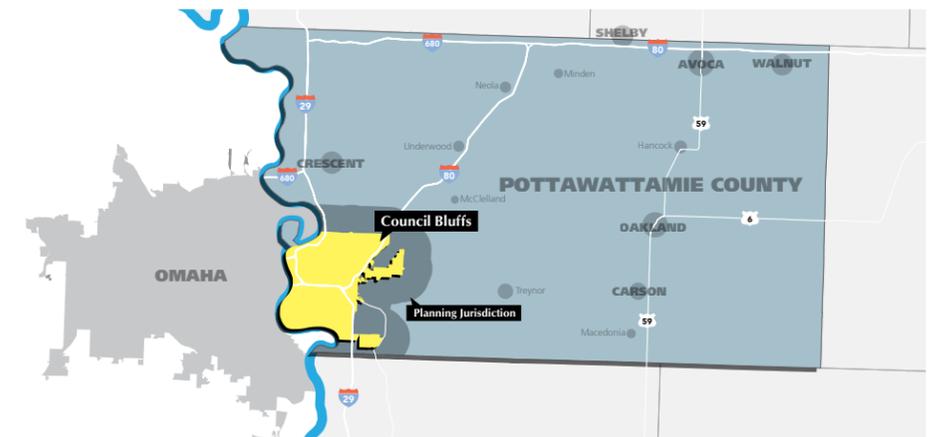
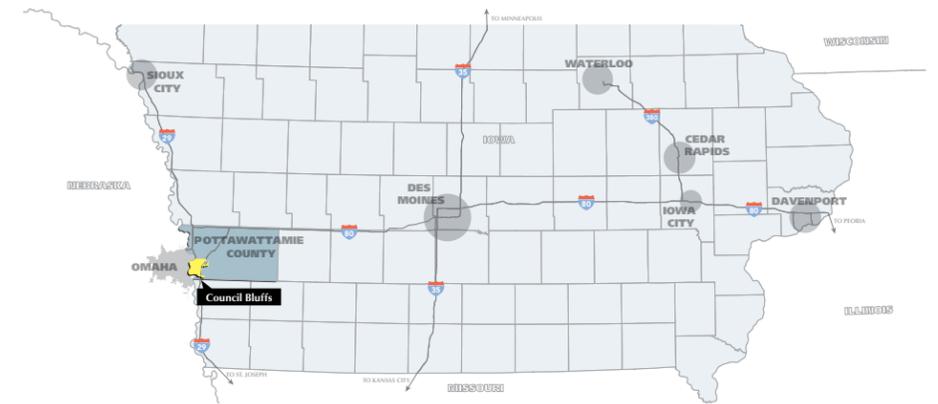
1. Ensure stakeholder, community, and regional collaboration in development decisions
2. Advance equity: predictable, fair, and cost effective development decisions

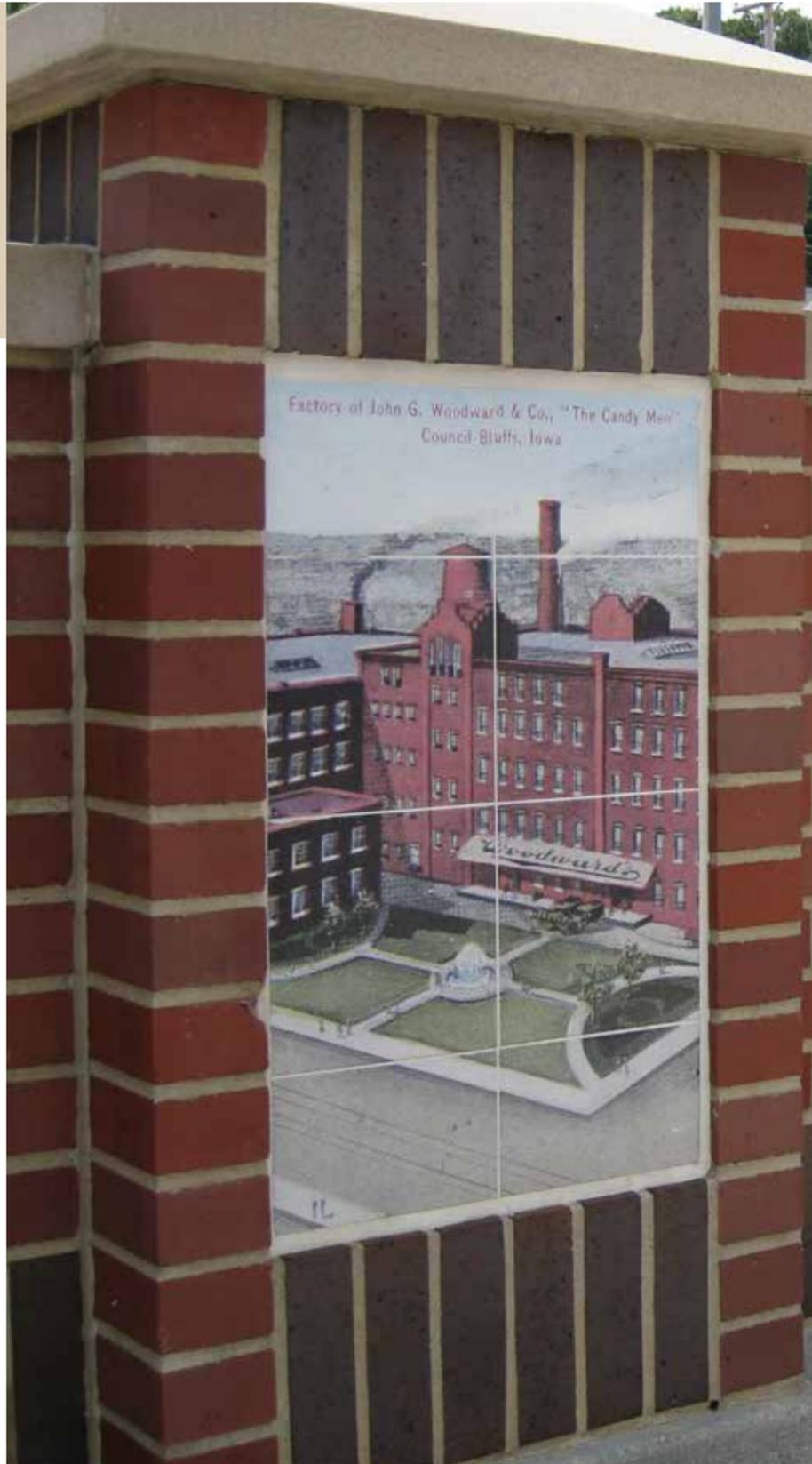
3. Promote clean energy production and increase energy efficiency
4. Increase diversity of job and business opportunities
5. Concentrate development and mix land uses
6. Expand diversity in housing opportunities and choices
7. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
8. Protect, preserve and wisely utilize natural resources and working lands
9. Incorporate green building and infrastructure design
10. Provide for a variety of transportation choices

Council Bluffs History & Context

The Planning Area

Council Bluffs is located in Pottawattamie County at the western border of Iowa, and serves as the county seat. The community is on the eastern bank of the Missouri River, directly across from Omaha, Nebraska. Its landscape varies from prairie and savanna in the Loess Hills, to wetland and deciduous forest near the Missouri River. This diversity combined with significant elevation changes contribute to dramatic scenic views and an abundance of natural amenities. Multiple transportation options are available, as the City is served by two major interstates, five active railroads, two airports, and a robust system of trails.





History

Council Bluffs has a rich history deeply embedded in the legacy of great Native American nations and the 19th century westward expansion of the United States. It served as a key pass-through point along the Mormon, California, and Oregon Trails. The name Council Bluffs originates from the meeting between Lewis and Clark and the Otoe Native American tribes in 1804 in the bluffs, just 10 miles north of Omaha.

After the U.S. bought most of Iowa in 1832 as part of the Black Hawk Purchase, a formal settlement was founded by a group of Pottawattamie Native Americans from the Chicago area in 1838. During the mid-19th century, the City experienced an influx of 30,000 Mormons traveling to the Great Salt Lake Valley. The town would later become known as Kanessville, named after Thomas Kane, a member of the Union Army and sympathizer to the Mormon migration.

Renamed as Council Bluffs in 1853, the City would continue to grow as a transportation hub for the Midwest. By the late 1860s, the newly built Chicago and North Western Railway had transformed Council Bluffs into a key railroad hub that would eventually have access to seven railroads. In 1886, it was the second city in the nation to have an electric trolley and in 1869, Abraham Lincoln chose Council Bluffs as the eastern terminus for the Union Pacific Railroad. Civil War General Grenville M. Dodge, whose Council Bluffs home is a National Historic Landmark, played a pivotal role in the construction of the transcontinental railroad. By the 1930s, Council Bluffs had become the fifth largest rail center in the United States.

The railroad industry helped to make Council Bluffs the premier transfer location for shipping products to the West. The City became a hub for grain storage and the manufacture and distribution of agricultural implements. Through this, Council Bluffs played a large role in the mechanization of the agriculture industry.

After World War II, deindustrialization across the nation contributed to the declining economy and population in Council Bluffs. A number of manufacturing plants still exist today, however the economy has changed dramatically since the mid-20th century.

A recent emphasis on attracting new businesses to the area has inspired Council Bluff's slogan: "Iowa's Leading Edge." Today, Council Bluffs is home to major attractions like the MidAmerica Center and cutting-edge industries and employers like Google. Beginning in the 1990s, Council Bluffs emerged as a retail service and entertainment center. The liberation of Iowa gaming laws resulted in the opening of Bluffs Run greyhound park in 1986, which is now Horseshoe Casino. the Ameristar Casino Hotel and Harrah's Council Bluffs developed in the mid-1990s.