



# 4 Vision, Goals & Objectives

The Bluffs Tomorrow 2030 Vision Statement is a retrospective narrative describing what the community looks like 15 years after the 2014 adoption of this Plan. It expresses an ideal that reflects the input from the community during the planning process, key actions that may have been completed to improve the community, and realistic opportunities identified through technical analysis.

The vision statement embodies the desired character of Council Bluffs, and provides context for more detailed recommendations in subsequent chapters of this Plan.

## Vision Statement

Since the adoption of Bluffs Tomorrow 2030 Plan fifteen years ago, Council Bluffs has become more prominent in both the Omaha region, and the Midwest. It has accomplished this through a combination of local initiatives to improve the City's neighborhoods, commercial areas, entertainment options, and employment opportunities, as well as regional initiatives that have enhanced the City's accessibility and visibility. Today, Council Bluffs serves as an example of how a community can chart its own destiny, coming together to plan for its future, build on what is has been given, and directly impact what it would like to become.

## In 2030... Council Bluffs and its neighborhoods are vibrant.

High quality and attractive neighborhoods are the foundation of the community's success. While jobs and other activities draw people to Council Bluffs, it is the variety of strong and vibrant neighborhoods that keeps them here. There is a neighborhood and a home for everyone in Council Bluffs.

Throughout all of the City's diverse neighborhoods, residents have access to quality services and shopping opportunities that ensure an attractive and convenient lifestyle. Continued investment in public schools and local parks have ensured that education and recreation are available to all, and local shopping along commercial corridors provides for the everyday needs of the community.

The character and charm of Council Bluffs is more prevalent in the City's older neighborhoods, including Old Town, Lincoln-Fairview, and Kaneshville/Tinly, all of which have been revitalized and stabilized through infill investment and rehabilitation. In addition, the West End is an attractive area for residents and young families with nearby schools, access to Playland Park and Rivers Edge Park, and the Missouri River.

### **In 2030...People can easily access all that Council Bluffs has to offer.**

The City has had an active role in planning its transportation network, and as a result has improved access and mobility within the community and throughout the region. Today, all parts of the community are accessible to the residents, workers, and visitors by all modes of travel.

The local street system has been well maintained, and expanded when necessary. The City's streets provide residents and motorists with an easy way to move within the City, and provide convenient access between different parts of the community. The interstate system has also been critical to the success of the City. The Mid America Center, casino development, and the I-80/US 6 interchange have each blossomed into regional destinations for recreation, entertainment, and industry due largely to their accessibility via the interstate network which provides connections between Council Bluffs and the larger region, including the City of Omaha.

The City's bicycle network has been expanded, providing access to all area of the City. The new path along Indian Creek/16th Street Corridor connects the south side of the community to West Broadway and the north side bike path. Additionally, the 1st Avenue corridor, has transformed from a rail line into a complete street, connecting the Missouri Riverfront with Downtown Council Bluffs. These two key improvements, along with other local connections and crossings, have created a city-wide system that connects neighborhoods to parks, schools, shopping, and other community destinations.

Transit has remained a viable option for travel within the City and beyond. Residents can take Metro buses to travel within Council Bluffs to local jobs, shopping and more, while commuters ride the Metro Blue and Yellow Lines to get to work throughout the Metro system. It is expected that the highly anticipated high-speed rail will also be opening new opportunities for the City. With a station under construction south of Downtown, the City is poised to capitalize on the high-speed rail activity, including new development that will cater to commuters, residents, and visitors.

### **In 2030...the City's economy is thriving and commercial areas are alive.**

Downtown remains the focal point of the community. The Council Bluffs Public Library and City Hall have sustained Downtown as the "civic heart" and cultural center of the community. Downtown is an active place where people work, live, shop, and come to be entertained - in a way, it is everyone's neighborhood. People who live in, or visit Downtown, enjoy a variety of cafes, restaurants, galleries, and other activities in the Haymarket and the Historic 100 Block, along with concerts and special events at Bayliss Park.

West Broadway has become a true gateway for both the City of Council Bluffs and the State of Iowa. Traveling east over the Missouri river, monumental gateway sculptures transition into attractive streetscaping and redevelopment. New development along the corridor is attractive and reflects positively on Council Bluffs. Hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, small offices, and new housing along the corridor have fostered an active environment where residents can comfortably access day-to-day needs.

The Mid America Center has also come to realize its potential. Today the area is a regional destination, hosting high quality hotels, restaurants and shopping that present a welcoming front door for the community. New development has helped create an attractive environment, with fun things to do, places to eat and shop, and public spaces that give this area a unique sense of place.

Council Bluffs has taken advantage of available land, strong neighborhoods, and a quality education system to attract and retain local jobs. The most notable improvement can be seen around the I-80/US 6 interchange where significant investment in office and industrial development has occurred. Large areas of available land have been used to attract manufacturing and distribution businesses. The close proximity to the Iowa Western Community College has been the foundation of research development that advances the role of Council Bluffs in emerging industries and provides an opportunity for students to gain practical, cutting-edge experience.

All this growth in commerce and industry has provided new jobs to a local employment base. A variety of manufacturing businesses and service providers support the needs of the City, region, and Midwest. Investment in new businesses and partnerships with local institutions are driving a growth in local innovation. Young professionals from other cities are looking to Council Bluffs as a community that provides both opportunities for professional success and a high quality of life for their families.

### **...People are in touch with nature and the environment.**

Council Bluffs continues to be well served by parks and recreation. In addition to larger, significant open spaces and natural features, smaller neighborhood parks, such as a Kirn Park and Roberts Park, provide "close-to-home" recreation. On a nice day, nearly all of the City's parks and open spaces are alive with playing children, which has also helped strengthen the City's neighborhoods.

Still, Council Bluffs remains uniquely defined and influenced by its natural environment, including the Missouri River, Loess Hills, and Lake Manawa. Access to the Missouri River and riverfront area has improved with the installation of bike paths, Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park, and other recreational amenities. Today, the City continues to protect this asset and minimize the impacts from nearby activities.

Loess Hills, another defining natural feature of Council Bluffs, provides scenic views to Omaha, the Missouri River and the surrounding countryside. To ensure this valuable resource is not lost, the City has taken a proactive role in monitoring development to control erosion, stabilize the hillsides, maintain ecosystems, and preserve important views of, and from, Loess Hills.

Lake Manawa and Lake Manawa State Park have also been protected and enhanced. While some residents enjoy exclusive waterfront property, North Shore Park and Lake Manawa State Park continue to provide opportunities for the public to enjoy this natural amenities. Recent improvements, including interpretive signage and walking trails make these park popular field trip destinations for local schools.

## Goals & Objectives

Bluffs Tomorrow 2030 is an expression of what the community wants to become in the future. The Plan includes statements of goals and objectives, which provide the framework for planning recommendations, policies, and future projects and actions.

- » **Goals-** End situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range, and represent an end to be sought, although they may never be fully attained.
- » **Objectives-** More specific actions that should be undertaken in order to advance toward the overall goals, providing specific and measurable guidelines for planning action.

Together, the goals and objectives establish a direction for what the Council Bluffs community wants to accomplish with the Bluffs Tomorrow 2030 Comprehensive Plan and policies and regulations designed to implement the Plan. They provide direction and serve as a guide for evaluating specific projects and land use alternatives.

The goals and objectives presented in this section are based on 1) input from the project Steering Committee, 2) workshops held with residents and the business community, 3) key person interviews, and 4) technical analysis by the consulting team.

The goals and objectives are presented based on the following categories:

- » Growth and Annexation
- » Neighborhoods and Housing
- » Commercial Areas
- » Industrial Areas
- » Transportation
- » Community Services and Infrastructure
- » Parks and Recreation
- » Environment
- » Stormwater and Flood Management
- » History and Identity
- » Local Government

## Growth & Annexation

### Goal:

Ensure that Council Bluffs grows in a responsible and sustainable manner, protects important natural features, takes advantage of unique local assets, and maximizes the effectiveness of municipal infrastructure and services.

### Objectives:

1. Identify areas that contain prime farmland, sensitive ecosystems, rough terrain, and important environmental features that should be considered poorly suited for future development.
2. Prioritize the maintenance and/or replacement of infrastructure in already developed areas or in areas easily served by logical extensions to existing services, and avoid development or investment in infrastructure that requires extraneous extensions through unserved areas.
3. Identify priority annexation areas based on the viability of extending existing infrastructure and the likelihood that revenues from resultant development will offset public investment in infrastructure and services.
4. Assess the impacts of growth and potential annexation on the provision of all municipal services.
5. Strategically invest in infrastructure to guide development to priority areas.
6. Maintain on-going coordination with the Council Bluffs Water Works to ensure that investment in various infrastructure systems is properly coordinated.
7. Develop memorandum of understanding with CBWW regarding water extensions in the 2-mile limit area.
8. Support subdivision approvals for developments that can be served through existing infrastructure or logical and efficient extensions.
9. Minimize the amount of public investment that is required in funding infrastructure improvements necessary to accommodate new development.
10. Work with County and State agencies to minimize the impacts of development in areas beyond the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction and increase the City's powers in areas beyond the 2-mile planning area.
11. Require the annexation of properties served by new municipal infrastructure and service.



## Neighborhoods & Housing

### Goal:

Enhance and maintain the City's neighborhoods to provide the housing, character, and supporting amenities to retain and attract residents to Council Bluffs.

### Objectives:

1. Recognize and preserve the character of Council Bluffs' individual neighborhoods through contextually appropriate infill development and the maintenance of streets, trees, and other public areas.
2. Prioritize completion of partially constructed subdivisions with infrastructure already in place, rather than housing development in unserved areas of the community.
3. Encourage or incentivize the upkeep and maintenance of historic housing in neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown.
4. Provide quality senior housing or support services to allow senior citizens to remain in the community.
5. Minimize the impacts of the conversion of single-family structures to multi-family housing.
6. Minimize the encroachment of and impacts from commercial areas, industrial uses and rail corridors on adjacent neighborhoods through land use planning, screening and buffering.
7. Encourage new housing in the Downtown through the rehabilitation of historic buildings.
8. Encourage the development of multi-family, townhome, and small-lot single-family housing along existing bus transit lines on Broadway, 23rd Avenue, and in Downtown.
9. Where appropriate, permit local community gardens and urban agriculture in neighborhoods with vacant properties.
10. Identify appropriate uses for former schools and other public buildings, taking into consideration the impacts of increased activity on established neighborhoods, transportation systems, schools, and other municipal services.
11. Require developers to provide local amenities (i.e. open space, trails, detention, etc.) that benefit residents.
12. Require new development to be compatible with the character and transportation network of adjacent neighborhoods.

## Commercial Areas

### Goal:

Strengthen the City's commercial areas to better meet the daily needs of Council Bluffs residents, attract patrons from beyond Council Bluffs, and create a positive image.

### Objectives

1. Renovate or redevelop the Mall of the Bluffs, West Broadway retail areas, Bluffs Northway Shopping Center, and other aging shopping centers to maximize their benefits to residents.
2. Concentrate commercial land uses in areas that meet the demands of tenants in terms of access, lot size, surrounding land uses, etc.
3. Identify areas where existing commercial development is not viable due to access, site constraints, or other factors, and transition them to land uses that are better integrated into the surrounding context.
4. Continue the revitalization of downtown as guided by the *2003 Downtown Plan* and the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan.
5. Utilize public and private investment to strengthen Downtown through rehabilitation, redevelopment, and the transformation of peripheral areas.
6. Enhance the function of the City's commercial corridors and districts through wayfinding and access management.
7. Establish and implement a clear and coordinated vision for future development and public improvements along the West Broadway corridor.
8. Require large commercial developments to create a "sense of place" through building location, parking management, streetscaping, urban design, and other techniques.
9. Require commercial development to be fully accessible for all users, including motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders.
10. Update the vision for the Mid-America Center to reflect current development potential and maximize the use of remaining properties.
11. Encourage commercial development in areas served by public transit that is easily accessed by pedestrians and cyclists from surrounding neighborhoods.
12. Improve the overall appearance of prominent commercial areas, especially the West Broadway corridor and commercial nodes near I-80 interchanges.
13. Focus commercial development on key nodes and, where appropriate, allow transitions to multi-family housing on arterials or major collectors in areas where commercial development is likely to be less successful.





## Industrial Areas

### Goal:

Sustain a healthy local economy and provide jobs to residents of Council Bluffs by enhancing industrial development throughout the City.

### Objectives:

1. Establish a clear local vision for Council Bluffs that defines the kinds of industries the City hopes to attract and what amenities or services are required to attract businesses and employees.
2. Partner with Iowa Western Community College, Pottawattamie County Growth Alliance, and Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce to establish a business incubator.
3. Continue to work closely with the Omaha Chamber of Commerce to market economic development opportunities from a regional perspective in order to provide local opportunities for investment.
4. Utilize municipal incentives, tax credits, grant programs, local districts, and other tools in order to improve existing businesses and attract new investment.
5. Develop and implement a comprehensive tourism strategy that builds on Council Bluffs' unique history and geography.
6. Actively recruit new businesses that expand the diversity of the local marketplace.
7. Leverage publicly-owned properties (such as the former Bunge grain elevator site), grants, and incentives to encourage economic development.
8. Align education and mentorship programs to meet the needs of the local industry.
9. Prioritize the infill development of the northern portion of the Mid-America Center, area south of the Highway 192/I-80 interchange, and other industrial properties benefiting from infrastructure, multi-modal interstate access, and existing industrial development.
10. Identify and invest in areas of potential new industrial growth that benefit from immediate interstate access and available land.
11. Collaborate with Iowa Western Community College, Pottawattamie County Growth Alliance, and other local entities in attracting new industry.
12. Collaborate with Iowa Western Community College and Pottawattamie County Growth Alliance in providing programs that result in a highly-skilled local labor force.
13. Seek funding to mitigate the impacts of brownfield sites in order to minimize their environmental impacts on surrounding areas and maximize the likelihood of redevelopment.
14. Mitigate the impacts of industrial uses on nearby neighborhoods, especially on 9th Avenue (between 28th Street and 3rd Street), 3rd Street (between 9th Avenue and 16th Avenue), and 8th Street/10th Street (between West Broadway and Mynster Springs Road), through the use of buffers, screening, and other restrictions.
15. Ensure that industrial areas are adequately served by designated truck routes that efficiently connect to arterials and interstates.



## Transportation

### Goal:

Maintain a comprehensive system of highways and roads, trails and sidewalks, transit service, and rail corridors that supports business investment and enhances local and regional mobility.

### Objectives:

1. Work with MAPA, Nebraska Department of Roads, and Iowa Department of Transportation to develop and implement the Metro Area Travel Improvement Study and its recommendations.
2. Continue to work with the City of Omaha, MAPA, Iowa Department of Transportation and others on the implementation of the Council Bluffs Interstate System improvements.
3. Preserve the right-of-way necessary to implement improvements identified in this Comprehensive Plan and regional transportation plans.
4. Work with Metro to provide regional and local transit access to jobs, commercial goods and services, recreation, and other destinations and amenities within the community.
5. Continue to coordinate with local and state agencies, railroad owners and operators, and other entities to accommodate high-speed rail infrastructure, facilities, and development near Downtown Council Bluffs.
6. Enhance mobility by identifying and implementing opportunities for removing rail lines, and providing additional grade-separated crossings where impacts to surrounding uses are minimal.
7. Provide residents with travel options and information in the event of flooding that makes portions of the network unavailable.
8. Where possible, realign “jogged” or offset intersections to enhance traffic flow and safety.
9. Extend streets to connect “near misses” in the roadway network by logically connecting existence to enhance circulation and emergency responsiveness.
10. Convert one-way streets to two-way flow in order to enhance local circulation and mobility where appropriate.
11. Manage access to private lots on arterial streets by removing or consolidating excess curb cuts, encouraging cross-access easements between adjacent lots, and by encouraging access from alleys, side streets, and internal roadway networks.
12. Require large commercial developments to provide an internal circulation network that provides access to local uses and connects to the public transportation network.
13. Create a comprehensive public pedestrian network, prioritizing improvements in areas served by transit and commercial, recreation, or educational uses.
14. Install safe pedestrian crossings along high-traffic corridors such as West Broadway, Kanesville Boulevard, 16th Street, and 35th Street.
15. Provide additional bike and pedestrian connections to the trail network along the Missouri Riverfront.
16. Require appropriate pedestrian and bicycle amenities in both private and public development projects.
17. Expand and connect the existing bike trail network through the use of rails-to-trails conversions, dedicated paths, on-street bike lanes, shared lanes, or regional open spaces.
18. Assess the viability of and implement a bike sharing program in Council Bluffs and/or in conjunction with the City of Omaha.
19. Establish a comprehensive downtown parking strategy that addresses capacity, policies and restrictions, and pricing.
20. Continue rail consolidation efforts and crossing safety improvements.



## Community Services & Infrastructure

### Goal:

Ensure the effective and reliable services and infrastructure, including schools, libraries, police and fire protection, roadway maintenance, data technologies, and health and social services, for all residents and businesses in Council Bluffs.

### Objectives:

1. Budget for the regular maintenance of the community's existing infrastructure.
2. Monitor the condition and capacity of the Water Pollution Control Plant and ensure it can accommodate future growth and development.
3. Coordinate infrastructure improvement projects undertaken by different agencies or departments to minimize the total cost of improvements.
4. Limit the commitment of municipal resources for infrastructure that serves private development.
5. Work closely with the Council Bluffs Water Works to monitor the condition of water mains throughout the City and ensure maintenance is part of their Capital Improvement Program.
6. Minimize the required capacity and quality of stormwater infrastructure through on-site detention and management.
7. Ensure that all neighborhoods have basic infrastructure, including stormwater management, sidewalks, and street lighting.
8. Focus infrastructure investment and expansion in areas with coordinated planning that benefit from other unique advantages that provide the opportunity for economic development.
9. Work with Council Bluffs Community Schools and the Lewis Central School Districts to implement district master plans.
10. Coordinate with the Iowa School for the Deaf regarding implementation of its Strategic Plan.
11. Continuously monitor local population and crime trends and prioritize services and programs in the most at-risk neighborhoods.
12. Expand telecommunication and data infrastructure to retain and attract businesses.
13. Expand the City's free Wi-Fi service to include all commercial areas and public spaces.
14. Work with local and regional health care providers to continue to develop a robust system of regional health care facilities, specialized services, and community-based clinics.
15. Utilize local churches as a network for reaching out to residents regarding social services and programs.
16. Coordinate efforts among local government services, not-for-profit groups, and social service providers.
17. Encourage the shared use of facilities among various community facility providers in order to support public activities and civic events.



## Parks & Recreation

### Goal:

Provide an array of passive and active recreational amenities through local and regional open spaces to meet the needs of the community.

### Objectives:

1. Continue to implement and update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Recreation Trails Master Plan.
2. Enhance access to high-quality indoor recreation facilities.
3. Continue to ensure that adequate funding is allocated in the City's annual budget for park maintenance.
4. Coordinate investment in parks with other development and services.

5. Coordinate with the City of Omaha, Pottawattamie County, Douglas County, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources to strengthen regional parks and recreation facilities.
6. Continue and complete implementation of the planned development at Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park.
7. Continue the on-going implementation of planned development along the Missouri Riverfront.
8. Require large developments, including commercial and residential, to provide trails and usable parkland that connect to the larger open space network.

9. Ensure that recreational amenities and equipment are installed in the first phase of development and that long-term maintenance is accounted for by the developer or neighborhood association.
10. Continue to cooperate with schools for the provision of open spaces and recreational services in areas not well served by parks.
11. Utilize vacated rail and roadway rights-of-way, flood plains, preserved greenbelts, and other opportunities to link together the City's open space network and connect schools, commercial areas, neighborhoods, and other destinations.

## Environment

### Goal:

Preserve and enhance the topography, water resources, wooded areas, scenic vistas, and other natural features that help to define the character of Council Bluffs.

### Objectives:

1. Protect local and regional natural areas, including Loess Hills, Lake Manawa, the Missouri River, Big Lake, Indian Creek, Mosquito Creek, and others, from erosion, pollution, and habitat destruction.
2. Identify significant environmental corridors that pass through the community, and protect them from encroachment of surrounding development.
3. Require development to provide appropriate buffers from critical natural areas.

4. Encourage permeable surfaces that protect groundwater recharge areas.
5. Where possible, restore natural habitats that have been compromised through development.
6. Continue to implement and update the Loess Hills Preservation Plan through development regulation, infrastructure investment, and ecological restoration.
7. Require new development to consider impacts to critical view sheds, especially views from, or to, Loess Hills.
8. Require new development to "cluster" so that wetlands, wooded areas, or floodplains remain undisturbed.
9. Encourage the use of flood prone land for public open space, recreation, wildlife habitats, and/or trails.

10. Ensure that all areas of the community are adequately served by recycling services.
11. Divert used building materials and waste away from landfills through material harvesting and recycling.
12. Clean up contaminated industrial and commercial brownfields.
13. Explore the viability of local alternative energy sources, including wind, solar and geothermal energy.
14. Use public development projects to demonstrate viable applications of sustainable design principles.
15. Provide information to residents regarding the reduced use of water, consumption of energy, and generation of refuse.

## Stormwater & Flood Management

### Goal:

Create a coordinated system of infrastructure, development regulations, and responsive programs designed to protect residents, businesses, and the natural environment from the impacts of flooding.

### Objectives:

1. Implement the comprehensive set of recommendations of the Flood Management Plan.
2. Require on-site detention and filtration of stormwater for new development or redevelopment.
3. Work with FEMA and the US Army Corps of Engineers to implement levee improvements required for certification.
4. Implement supporting levee improvements (unrelated to certification) that will ensure protection from future flooding.
5. Ensure the control of land adjacent to levees and access required for maintenance by exploring opportunities to purchase properties or establish easements.
6. Install native landscaping in floodzones to filter stormwater and reduce erosion.
7. Enhance the function of Indian Creek as a key piece of stormwater infrastructure.
8. Pursue grant funding for infrastructure improvement projects, especially those that will lead to levee accreditation or upgrade aging components of the water, stormwater, and wastewater systems.

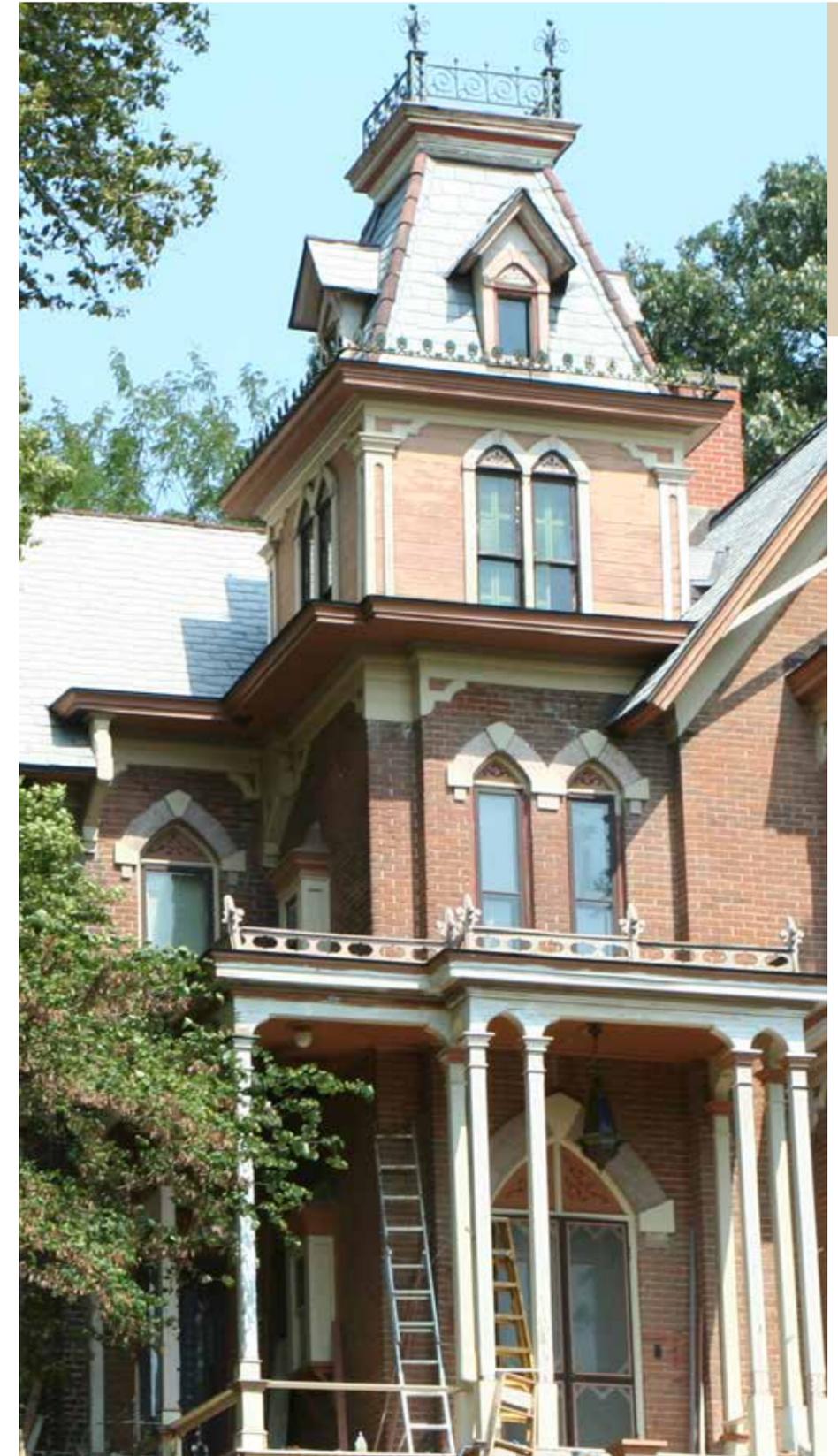
## History & Identity

### Goal:

Recognize, preserve and build upon Council Bluffs' unique history and character by instilling local community pride and defining the way the community is perceived throughout the region, state and country.

### Objectives:

1. Encourage participation in Council Bluffs local landmark designation program.
2. Promote awareness of Council Bluffs history through local exhibits, events, public art and monuments, and education.
3. Continue to implement the City's Streetscape Master Plan in conjunction with the Iowa West Foundation.
4. Implement the City's Public Art Master Plan in conjunction with the Iowa West Foundation.
5. Continue to implement design enhancements to bridges and overpasses.
6. Prioritize and celebrate local artists when commissioning public projects.
7. Strengthen the relationship between the community and Council Bluffs' collection of museums.
8. Provide local education that instills pride in Council Bluffs.
9. Undertake a marketing campaign that projects a clear and positive image for Council Bluffs to potential visitors and businesses.





## Local Government

### Goal:

Create a consistent and “customer-friendly” government that is built on collaboration with residents, businesses, developers, and agencies through local regulations, communication, and responsiveness.

### Objectives:

1. Amend the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Public Works standards to assist accomplishing the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Ensure that zoning and property maintenance standards are enforced for all properties.
3. Provide expedited review for development that accomplishes broader community goals beyond basic zoning requirements.
4. Create an on-line clearinghouse for City programs and policies.
5. Establish a web-based application and permitting process.
6. Continue to implement the recommendations included in the Council Bluffs Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, and complete periodic reviews and updates to ensure the plan considers recommendations, resources, and coordination with FEMA, MAPA, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department and Pottawattamie County Emergency Management Agency.
7. Conduct regular periodic reviews of all codes and ordinances to ensure that they are clear and adequately address existing and emerging development issues.
8. Maintain open communication with residents and businesses through traditional and web-based public engagement.