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Introduction

Mitchellville is a small town east of Des Moines that has not yet experienced the rapid growth occurring elsewhere in the metro area. The passion of the residents to keep Mitchellville's traditionally rural character while providing better services to existing residents poses some exciting challenges and opportunities as well as lays the groundwork for a case study in preserving traditional Iowan character.

Mitchellville was founded in 1856 by Thomas Mitchell under its first name "Mitchell Town" north of the current path of Interstate 80. The town grew quickly because of its location along a stagecoach route. In 1867 the town moved south to accommodate a change in the direction of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad—this is the Mitchellville that residents know today. Mitchellville has maintained its small-town character for the past 162 years and the residents of Mitchellville want to see this tradition continue.¹ However, it has become apparent that the town needs to expand its tax base to support high-quality services and infrastructure.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan serves two primary functions. The first is to establish a legal basis for future land-use decisions made by the community. The second is to offer a holistic vision for the town going forward, pulling from the hopes and recommendations of residents to inform responses to opportunities and challenges that may arise.

The Legal Basis for Land-use Regulations

The ability of localities to adopt land-use regulations is established in Chapter 414 of the Code of Iowa, assuming these regulations promote the "health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the community."² Land-use regulations recognize that people have a responsibility to coordinate and harmonize the uses of their private properties in order to be able to live cooperatively and share the community.

Challenges

Mitchellville's unique characteristics present planning challenges. According to the US Census Bureau, an incredibly large portion of the Mitchellville population commutes to work outside of the community. At the same time, the positions within Mitchellville are filled by out of towners. In a sense, there are two Mitchellvilles: a daytime population of workers from out of town, and a nighttime population of residents who work outside the community during the day. This dynamic makes public participation a challenge, as meetings must be held at times when residents are available.

Mitchellville is also home to the Iowa Correctional Institute for Women (hereafter referred to as ICIW). This state facility is positioned in such a way as to make future expansion to the west challenging. However, Mitchellville would like to grow westward to keep itself from being boxed in. Additionally, the growth of Bondurant and Altoona have positioned Mitchellville for expansion,

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but the residents would prefer to manage the growth while taking advantage of the spillover. This presents an interesting challenge for the future of Mitchellville but, if successful in executing a plan that preserves the rurality of the city, could prove to be an example for other small towns across Iowa. The ICIW population was included in the 2010 census for the first time, creating data challenges for population projections and other similar population-related data. These challenges give room for creative solutions.

Plan Structure

This plan is organized into six chapters following the introduction. The vision for each section of the plan is outlined below.

Public Participation

Public participation should be comprehensive and used to engage those residents who are currently removed from the governance process. Future public participation in Mitchellville will act as a base for community empowerment and incorporate capacity building to teach leadership skills to less engaged residents, ensuring Mitchellville has strong leaders for years to come.

Community Character

Looking toward the future, most residents would like Mitchellville to embrace and maintain its rural character. This can be done by utilizing existing community resources to their fullest potential, as well as expanding community resources in order to decrease reliance on surrounding communities and create an environment of self-sufficiency in Mitchellville.

Economic Development

Economic development in Mitchellville is focused on increasing the city's tax base by generating opportunities for new development. By analyzing the current situation of the community, this chapter outlines suggestions for how Mitchellville can meet its current and future needs.

Housing

Looking towards the future of housing in Mitchellville it is crucial that the city aims to create a more diverse and viable housing market. By encouraging the development of a mix of housing types through promoting housing-related grants, loans, and other available funding sources to homeowners and developers Mitchellville will fulfill the needs of current and future residents and become attractive to new ones.

Land Use and Infrastructure

Throughout the planning process Mitchellville residents have emphasized their desire to maintain the rural character of their community. However, it is understood that some expansion will be necessary. Thus, Mitchellville needs to be in a position to accommodate expansion and update infrastructure in a way that will best benefit the community while maintaining rurality.

Conclusion and Implementation

The plan concludes with action steps, funding sources, partner suggestions and a framework for how to implement the plan should it be adopted.

Writing This Plan

This plan was authored by seniors in the Iowa State University Community and Regional Planning program for the senior-level Community Planning Studio, assisted by Professor Timothy Borich and Eric Christianson, field specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED). After the fall 2017 semester, Christianson and Gary Taylor, CED program leader, will lead the plan implementation.

Input of the steering committee was crucial to the plan development. This committee consists of community stakeholders put together by city staff and includes:

- Dean Brand
- Tony Chamber
- Tammi Dillavou
- Dale Hoover
- LaBrent Lawler
- Kris May
- Dean McGhee
- Bill Puffett
- Amy Twohey
- Stacy Vestal
- Jon Woods

Adopting this plan will provide Mitchellville with a framework to:

1. Address planning problems presented by the “two Mitchellvilles”
2. Assess future development and land use
3. Better serve the needs of Mitchellville’s aging population
4. Build leadership capacity
5. Promote controlled growth

References

1. Spitler, Karen, comp. “Thomas Mitchell: Innkeeper, Farmer, Sheriff, Member of the County Board of Supervisors, State Representative, State Senator, Founder of Mitchellville.” Mitchellville, IA, 2017.
2. Chapter 204, Iowa Admin. Code 414.1.1, § 414 (2016).

We envision a Mitchellville in which there are a variety of opportunities available for residents to participate at every stage of the decision-making process. New residents will be encouraged to participate in civic life and participation opportunities will take into account the commute most working residents make during the week.

This chapter will cover:

- The importance of public participation
- Methods used when developing previous plans
- Methods used for this plan and their outcomes, and
- Recommendations for improving public engagement in the future.

Introduction

What is public participation?

Public participation is a collaboration between a government and the general public where both are involved in the decision-making process. Public participation is an exchange of information through which citizens can lend their knowledge and expertise.

Why is public participation important?

Citizen input, gained through the public participation process, is vital to democracy. Public participation ensures that the many different interests of the public are taken into consideration before a decision is made. When citizens and their government are actively engaged and communicating, a community will better reflect the vision of its people.

Public participation is specifically critical to the development of a comprehensive plan and is an important element in the Iowa Smart Planning Law, Iowa Code 18B.¹ Public participation builds knowledge of local issues, identifies what citizens value, improves trust in local government, and can foster a sense of ownership and support for a plan.²

Learning from Past and Current Participation Methods

The future of public participation in the city of Mitchellville is highly dependent on understanding what has gone well in the past and where we can improve. Knowing what this community does well will help us to understand how to build on our current success.³ Understanding how to accommodate the high number of commuters who work outside of Mitchellville is also an important piece of public participation for the city. Mitchellville residents will benefit from future participation events and activities while the leadership will benefit from having more ideas and more buy in from the community.

Observations

Focus groups conducted with residents revealed that they do not feel heard when they attend public meetings or come to the council. The focus-group facilitators noted that the community has a social network with considerable depth but lacks breadth. In other words, the social bonds among those in the network are strong but these bonds do not extend to the community as a whole. This was evidenced by the lack of new residents who responded to our call for focus group participants.

2. Public Participation

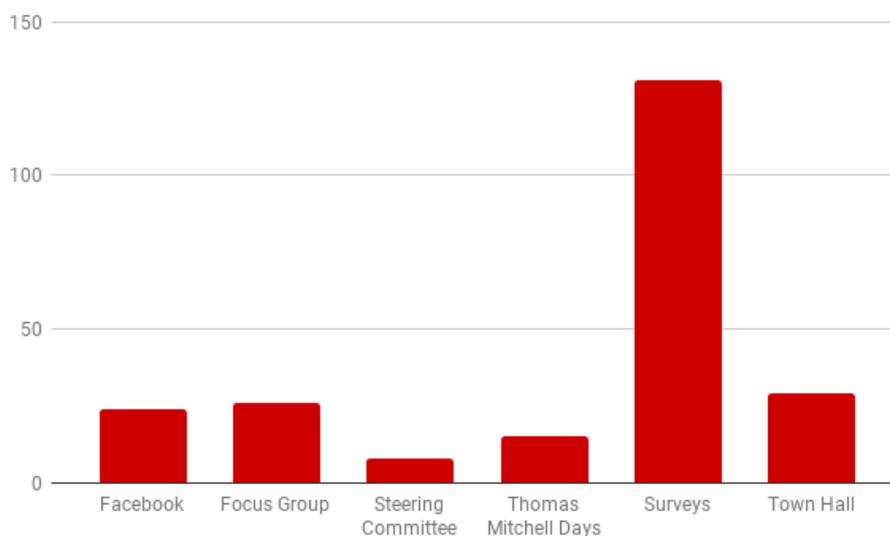
Encouraging young residents appears to be challenging using the methods tried thus far. Part of the problem could be that young residents feel they don't belong to an already tight-knit group. It could also be due to the fact that 98% of the employed population commutes out of town for work, which makes integrating them into the existing network challenging.⁴

Some strengths of Mitchellville's current public participation strategy include the addition of the electronic community message board outside the library, a community e-mail listserve, a community Facebook page, and the ability to send surveys with the water bills.

Strategies Used In This Plan

Several strategies were utilized throughout the development of this plan to provide a diverse range of opportunities through which residents could participate. Figure 2.1 shows the number of people who participated in each engagement opportunity. Given the commuting patterns in Mitchellville the participation results are not surprising and suggest a need for more strategies that provide flexibility to time-stressed families.

Figure 2.1. Number of people in each of the different participation techniques.



Steering Committee

A steering committee is a group of key community stakeholders and experts that helps guide the plan throughout its development. The steering committee for this plan met monthly in the evening so students could report progress to the committee and receive recommendations for future actions. The members of the steering committee were: Jon Woods, Tammi Dillavou, Dale Hoover, Tony Chamber, Amy Twohey, Bill Puffett, Kris May, Stacy Vestal, Dean Brand, Dean McGhee, and LaBrent Lawler. The four students of the public participation group, Professor Tim Borich, and ISU Extension and Outreach Community Development Specialist Eric Christianson also attended each committee meeting.

2. Public Participation

Thomas Mitchell Days Booth

During the annual Thomas Mitchell Days, the student team set up a booth to begin gauging the priorities of residents as they relate to the future of their community. This was the first attempt at public participation related to the writing of the town's new comprehensive plan. It was important to us to make a concerted effort to involve a greater proportion of residents. Having a booth at Thomas Mitchell Days was an attempt to go to residents rather than having residents come to the us outside their normal schedules. The festival was in danger of being discontinued a couple of years ago. The presence of part of the planning team was a way of showing support for a long-standing tradition in the town and perhaps will be a catalyst for using the event as an opportunity for public participation in the future.

Presented were two cork boards with various ideas such as “parks” or “grocery store” pinned to them that already exist in Mitchellville or could exist in the future (figure 2.4). Residents could wrap different colors of yarn around the pins of different ideas to indicate whether they liked the idea, disliked the idea, wanted to see more of the idea, or wanted to see less of the idea. The result was a multicolored web of desires indicating the overall preferences of those who participated.



Figure 2.2. ISU booth at Thomas Mitchell Days



Figures 2.3–2.4. Yarn boards used to gather public input during Thomas Mitchell Days.

Overall the event was a success in that we spread awareness about the plan and received feedback from about 25 people through the yarn activity. Sentiments toward the ideas presented on the corkboard were overwhelmingly positive with most yarn either representing things people like about Mitchellville or things of which people would like to see more. The idea of getting a grocery store, improved trails, and a farmers market in particular resonated with many people.

2. Public Participation

Fireworks were the most contentious issue by far with people expressing strong opinions as they wrapped a string around that pin. Industrial development appears to be viewed negatively, but conversations with individuals who did not participate in the activity indicate varied opinions as well.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are a participatory activity in which a small group of roughly five to eight people are led through a guided discussion about specific topics. The goal of focus groups is adding depth to data, answering why residents feel the way they do rather than simply what they feel. Focus groups can be organized based on issue area or demographic group, but there are generally universal questions that are asked in each group regardless.

During the late afternoon of September 25, 2017, residents of Mitchellville took part in one-hour focus group sessions. The planning team and steering committee were interested in gaining insight from specific demographic groups about a variety of issues rather than having different groups for specific issue areas. These demographic groups were:

- Correctional facility employees
- Retirees
- Empty nesters (residents whose children have moved out)
- High school students
- Young families
- Business owners
- New residents

Unfortunately, no high school students or new residents were able to participate in focus groups. However, there was at least one individual in each of the other groups, providing a richer base of knowledge about how various demographic groups in the town feel about a number of topics. Five general goals/themes emerged from the focus group sessions:

1. Lack of consensus on vision
2. Sustainable development
 - a. Main Street/commercial/industrial development
 - b. Environmental quality
 - c. Tax base
 - d. Infrastructure maintenance
3. Aging in place
4. Civic engagement
5. Relationship between Mitchellville and ICIW

Appendix A contains a more detailed report including the questions asked and responses of each group.

Town Hall Meeting

Another public participation strategy that the ISU team employed with the help of the steering committee was a town hall meeting. Town halls are popular formats for getting information out to a large group of people and they often give citizens a chance to discuss issues with leaders directly. This town hall meeting was used to present the comprehensive plan as it stood to the residents and receive feedback to improve the final draft of the plan.

2. Public Participation

Feedback was received both through direct comments after the presentation and a nominal group activity in which all attendees had the opportunity to share their priorities. Attendees were asked to complete the following sentence. “Given the presentation by the students on their ideas for the Mitchellville Plan, I would recommend...” Each attendee was asked to give three ideas in small groups and each idea was then recorded. Duplicate ideas were eliminated and each small group voted on their top four to six ideas. The selected ideas were reposted and duplicate ideas were eliminated. Attendees then voted on the general list with the following five suggestions receiving the most support:

1. Finish plans for development northwest of town (11)
2. No heavy industrial northwest of city (11)
3. Industrial and commercial development near I-80 (10)
4. Fix infrastructure – streets, curbs, sewage, water mains (10)
5. Senior assisted/independent living (7)

A few main themes surfaced during the nominal group activity:

1. Controversy of industrial development. In general, there seemed to be more support for industrial growth in order to create jobs and grow the tax base. However, a significant number of participants were opposed to heavy industry out of environmental and quality-of-life concerns.
2. Infrastructure repair. The need to focus on fixing roads, curbs, sewers, and water mains was a commonly-held sentiment.
3. Senior housing. There were multiple suggestions for more senior living options that received relatively high support.

Appendix B is a complete list of suggestions from the nominal group activity.

Facebook quick polls and mailed surveys

Finally, to receive input from residents in addition to some of the larger community engagement events, the student team conducted some quick one-question polls twice a week on Facebook for several weeks. We also sent some longer surveys with water bills. Several postcard surveys were also sent out to residents living on the east side of town (in Jasper County) and those living nearest the correctional facility to try and get a more focused perspective about land-use issues affecting those residents. The quick polls indicated that Mitchellville residents want to see the city grow and would like to see new development occur in the northwest corner. The residents on the Jasper County side also supported this sentiment, but the response rate from those residents was relatively low.

Residents who live near the correctional facility and responded to the postcard survey reinforced the importance of Mitchellville’s small-town feel and indicated they have few problems living near the facility. They are mostly unaware of any organized communication or coordination between the correctional facility and the city, but they feel opening a regular line of communication would be beneficial. Appendix C summarizes all the data from the surveys.

2. Public Participation

Results of Public Participation

In summary, the main themes brought up in the surveys, meetings, focus groups, and other public-participation activities were:

1. There is a desire to maintain Mitchellville's rural character.
2. There is a lack of consensus on a vision.
3. The tax base is too small to provide good quality services and thus some growth may be needed.
4. The city should repair/maintain existing infrastructure and environmental services before expanding.
5. There is controversy around commercial or industrial development.
6. Senior and aging population housing should expand.
7. Leadership and civic engagement is needed in the younger and new residents.
8. People do not always feel heard.

Goals and Recommendations

Based on the main themes from all of the feedback received, the course of action necessary for the city would be a more involved public participation strategy throughout the year. One of the council members spoke with the planning team about how difficult it was to get people to run for council, any of the boards, or even mayor. Expanding the participation process to start earlier and engage people in many different ways (other than just one public meeting) may create more commitment to a plan over which the community feels more ownership. Based on this idea the following recommendations are suggested for the future of participation in Mitchellville:

1. Leadership capacity building

As new residents move into Mitchellville, it is important that they are incorporated into civic life to ensure the community has willing leaders well into the future.

- Specific Recommendations: Partnering with ISU Extension and Outreach or other organizations to enroll new/young residents in leadership development programs.
 - Develop a program to meet the needs of the commuting population; i.e. serving meals and having childcare available at the workshops and recruiting workers from Mitchellville to participate
 - Create a seed fund to support the development of new community organizations that will host events and take on improvement projects, such as economic development and beautification efforts
 - Develop a youth advisory board to inform projects such as city beautification or economic development goals; reach out to 4-H or FFA clubs.

2. Early and consistent participation opportunities

Making sure residents have multiple opportunities to give input at every state of the decision-making process is key, especially given how the commutes of many residents may limit their availability.

- Specific Recommendations: Focus on participation methods that require the city to come to residents rather than the other way around.
 - Develop advisory committees to assist in the implementation of this plan
 - Increase opportunities for participation at community events such as the community dinners, organization meetings, or Thomas Mitchell Days.

3. Improve communication with the Iowa Women's Correctional Institution

The ICIW has an effect on how those in Mitchellville live their lives; we learned that for the most part residents do not mind the institution but would like more consistent information about its impacts on infrastructure. The city would benefit from communication in order to best plan for infrastructure upkeep, land-use changes, and any activities that may impact daily life.

- Specific Recommendations:
 - Create a liaison position between the city and the ICIW or set up a regular meeting between the mayor and the warden on a yearly or twice yearly basis
 - Maintain current opportunities for residents and inmates to interact, particularly the volunteer opportunities at the Community Center and Thomas Mitchell Days

4. Improve Information Dissemination

Ensuring residents are aware of what is happening in the community is the first step to increasing engagement.

- Specific Recommendations:
 - Continue posting information on the light board outside the library, flyers on doors, or on the back of the water bill
 - Update the Facebook page to increase followers and engagement and update the community website
 - Create a texting list to let people know about upcoming meetings and opportunities for participation
 - Consider the creation of a podcast or other small sound-bite with a review of the weekly or monthly happenings in Mitchellville that residents can listen to on their commute

Resources

Many resources are available to the officials and residents of Mitchellville to accomplish their public participation goals.

The Municipal Leadership Academy (MLA)⁵ is a partnership between the Iowa League of Cities, the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Iowa, and the Office of State and Local Government Programs at ISU Extension and Outreach. MLA offers three different training sessions, each covering a different slate of issues.

Residents, particularly those who have lived in town longer, have local knowledge of past public participation attempts and the relative success of those initiatives. An asset that has been repeatedly praised by residents is the tight-knit character of Mitchellville, an indication of strong social capital. Elected officials can draw upon these close community bonds for planning public participation events. Moreover, working to expand this social network to new residents will increase the benefits of social capital for public participation.

Local Lions and Kiwanis Clubs would be good resources as well, because they have an established presence in the community. Additionally, working with these community groups to gather more input could revive residents' interest in these organizations as they become more relevant to the community's younger population.

2. Public Participation

Conclusion

Feedback from the surveys showed a strong connection to the city's rural character and a desire for more high-quality amenities. The community has motivated individuals who have contributed to participation avenues readily and some who feel they aren't being heard. This is not to say they are not motivated, but commuting patterns make expansion of participation challenging—especially if it feels as though the suggestions they give are never carried out.

Mitchellville's tight-knit community poses some benefits and challenges for increasing community participation. Overall though, this closeness can be leveraged to draw people in through the abovementioned strategies and build a stronger community overall. That is really the purpose of participation, after all, to build community empowerment and bring people together to the benefit of their city.

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Introduction

Understanding the character of Mitchellville is an essential component to informing future decisions that shape the city. A number of factors contribute to a community's character, including its history, the lifestyles of its residents, its built environment, and its relationship to the land and surrounding area. This chapter summarizes Mitchellville's character, quality of life, and current demographics, while predicting future trends in population growth based on several population projections.

History

Aspects of Mitchellville's history are evident in the city today. In 1867, the permanent site of Mitchellville was chosen for its proximity to the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad as a crucial transportation route.¹ Today, Mitchellville is advantageously situated along an additional transportation route, Interstate 80, that connects it to the broader region. The site of the original home of Thomas Mitchell and his family is the current location of Thomas Mitchell Park, an amenity that adds to quality of life in Mitchellville. During his time in the city, Mitchell donated land for a cemetery, a park, and the Universalist Church, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. In 1872, the Universalist Seminary was founded, which was later sold to the State of Iowa and adapted into a reform school for girls. Today, that school is the Iowa Correctional Institute for Women, the only women's prison in the state. Mitchellville's history is not just a part of its past but also plays an active role in its present and future.²

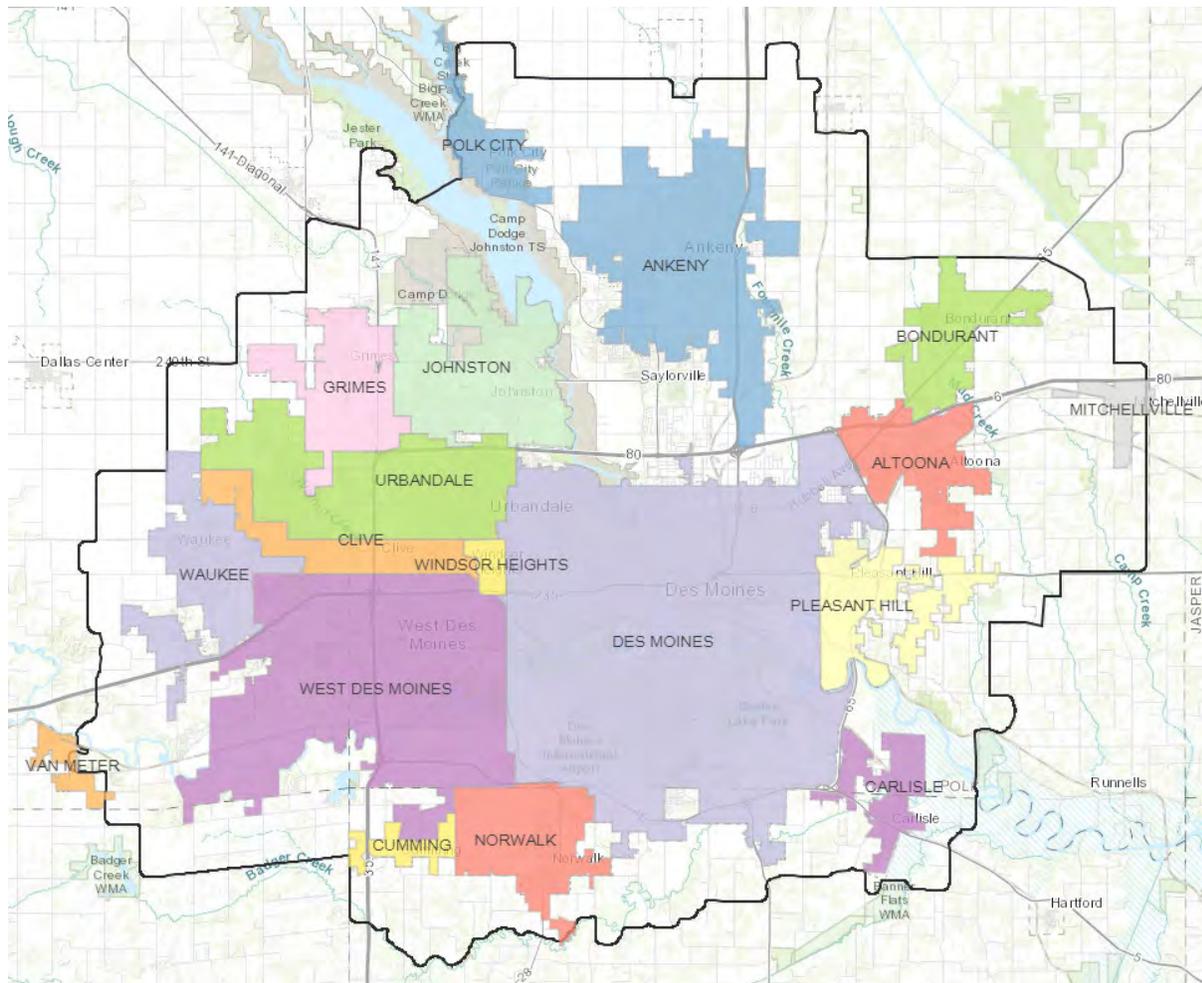


Regional Context

Mitchellville is at a crossroads: quiet, unobtrusive, rural landscape to the east and burgeoning suburban sprawl to the west. In response to the influx of people to the Des Moines Metropolitan Area, Altoona and other eastern suburbs are progressively annexing land and moving closer to Mitchellville. As indicated by focus group input, many of the amenities that once contributed to the community character of Mitchellville, such as a grocery store, retail shops, and other commercial services, have closed due to lack of economic support.³

3. Community Character

Figure 3.1. Des Moines Metropolitan Area



One reason for disinvestment could be Mitchellville's proximity to Altoona's and Bondurant's commercial sectors. Many focus-group responses indicated that residents of Mitchellville shop in Altoona or other towns further west; however, people desire more commercial opportunities in Mitchellville.

While Mitchellville is advantageously situated along a prime travel route, I-80, some residents indicated a desire for increased transportation options. Many focus-group participants expressed interest in implementing a bike trail system that connects to existing trails around the metro area. Some residents also expressed a desire for a public transit system providing service from Mitchellville to Des Moines and surrounding destinations.

Balancing further integration with the Des Moines metro area while maintaining the town's unique rural character is central to Mitchellville's identity going forward. The community's rurality is prized by many residents and ought not be disregarded.

Community Character

Focus groups revealed a number of sources of pride among Mitchellville residents. Many residents cited the close-knit, small-town feel of the community as one reason why they continue to live in Mitchellville. This same characteristic is the main reason why residents who grew up elsewhere decided to relocate to Mitchellville. This attribute of Mitchellville is clearly important to existing residents, and is a potential draw for new residents. The desire to “stay small” is even more prevalent considering the encroachment of Des Moines’ suburbs to the west of Mitchellville.

Community Resources and Maintaining Character

A community’s resources serve to support residents, organizations, and an overall sense of community. These resources range from individual residents with potential community-enhancing specialties, physical fabric (e.g., community centers, recreational areas, and other buildings or public spaces), services, organizations, and public events.⁴ These resources can help maintain and preserve a community’s unique character in the face of growth and development.

Gaps in Current Community Resources

Although most residents think highly of Mitchellville, citing rural character as one reason why they choose to stay, some of the responses identified in the public participation chapter identified changes that residents wish to see in Mitchellville. Among those desired changes are:

- Reintroducing a grocery store and other commercial services,
- Increasing accommodations and opportunities for the senior population,
- Improving communication between the public and city officials,
- Introducing a clinic or other health-care facility,
- Furthering development of the parks and trails system, and
- Forging a stronger relationship with the Iowa Correctional Institute for Women.⁵

Recommendations

Filling some of the gaps in community resources will allow Mitchellville to become more self-sufficient and retain community character by reducing reliance on nearby cities for basic services. The following are some recommendations for filling the gaps and utilizing community resources to their greatest capacity:

1. Identify and map community resources
2. Research rural health-care provider options
3. Research implementation of local retail in rural communities

Design Standards

Ensuring that the town continues to thrive as it grows means taking care of the built environment and making sure that future development maintains this same character. To accomplish this goal, design standards should be put into place, such as those in the Iowa Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS) Design Manual.

3. Community Character

Iowa Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS)

SUDAS provides common urban standards for public improvements such as sanitary sewers and water mains, streets and sidewalks, utility locations, signalization, drainage and erosion control, etc. These standard specifications were developed with the involvement of engineers and construction industry representatives from across the state. The initial division includes the specific bidding requirements, legal requirements related to public contracts in Iowa, and contractual requirements that must be met to successfully complete the project.⁶

The SUDAS Design Manual is written to guide contractors and is an excellent tool for design engineers to use as the particular aspects of a project are being addressed. This document provides design guidance through references to appropriate national standards and regulations in Iowa. It is developed and updated with the involvement of engineers from cities, counties, and state agencies and consultants from across the state. The initial chapter provides general information about project design and the remaining chapters address specific types of projects.

Each chapter starts with a general description of the elements associated with particular project types, followed by detailed information about that design. Examples are also included as a means of further clarification of the design concepts.

SUDAS will be useful to address the action steps established later in this comprehensive plan. Once ideas and goals are set in place, the city can use the guidelines to frame more concrete steps for improvement and reference sections of the guidelines when applicable.

Recommendations

1. Develop design standard guidelines.
2. Utilize the design standard guidelines for future development and to maintain current buildings and roads.

Demographics

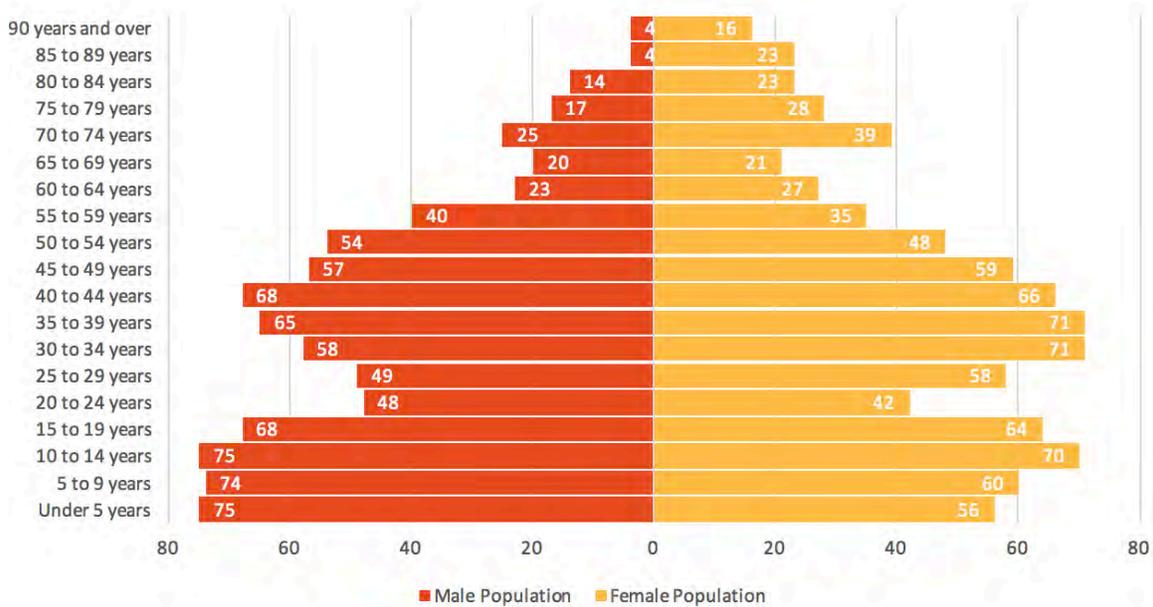
Demographics tell a story about who the community is as a whole and how it has changed over time. When looking to promote further growth in a community it is important to acknowledge its current make-up through demographic profiles. The demographics examined in this section are population age distribution; education levels; average household and family size; race and ethnicity; and population growth.

Population Age Distribution

The 2000 Decennial Census conducted by the US Census Bureau shows that 1,715 people lived in the city of Mitchellville in 2000.⁷ Of these 1,715 people, 51.14% were female and 48.86% were male. The median age for those living in Mitchellville was 34.7 in 2000 as compared to 36.6 and 35.3 for Iowa and the United States as a whole, respectively. This shows that in 2000, the overall population of Mitchellville was younger than that of the overall populations in Iowa and the United States. The population pyramid (Figure 3.2) shows the exact age breakdowns for both males and females in Mitchellville in 2000. The median age for males in Mitchellville was 32.5 in 2000 and the median age for females was 36.6.⁸

3. Community Character

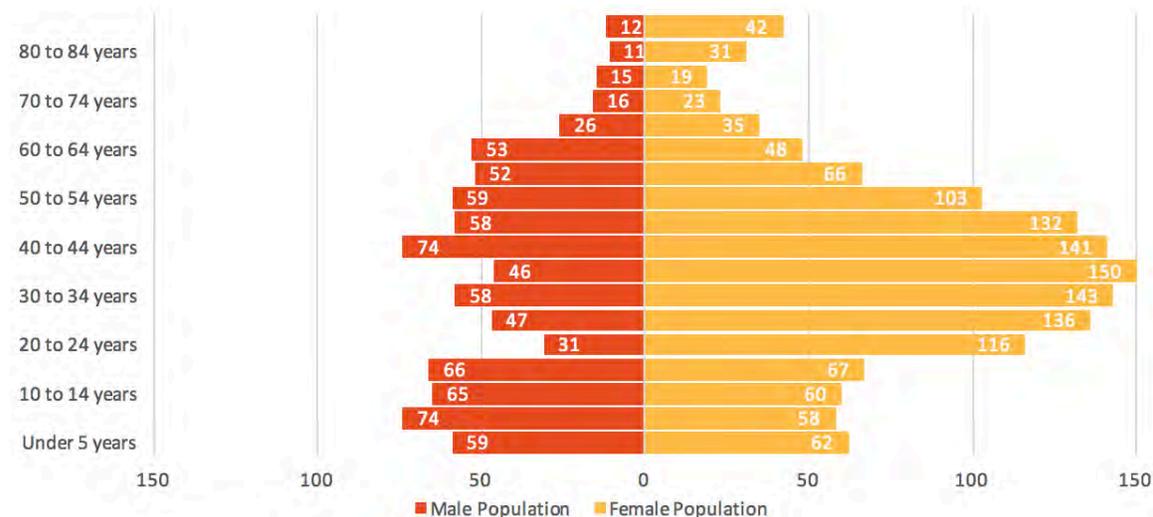
Figure 3.2. Population Pyramid, 2000 Census, Mitchellville, IA



The 2010 Decennial Census shows that a total of 2,254 people lived in the city of Mitchellville in 2010.⁹ This is a growth rate of approximately 31.43%. However, the population of the Iowa Correctional Institute for Women (ICIW) was included in the 2010 Census, but not in the 2000 Census. According to the same Census, 596 females in Mitchellville were institutionalized.¹⁰ When the ICIW population is subtracted, Mitchellville's overall population for 2010 is 1,658. This is actually a decline of about 3.23% from 2000.

Because the 2010 Census did include the women at the ICIW, the population pyramid (figure 3.3) also includes these women, creating a population that appears heavily female. The population values for the male population are correct for Mitchellville residents, but the female population values include female Mitchellville residents as well as the women in the ICIW.

Figure 3.3. Population Pyramid, 2010 Census, Mitchellville, IA



3. Community Character

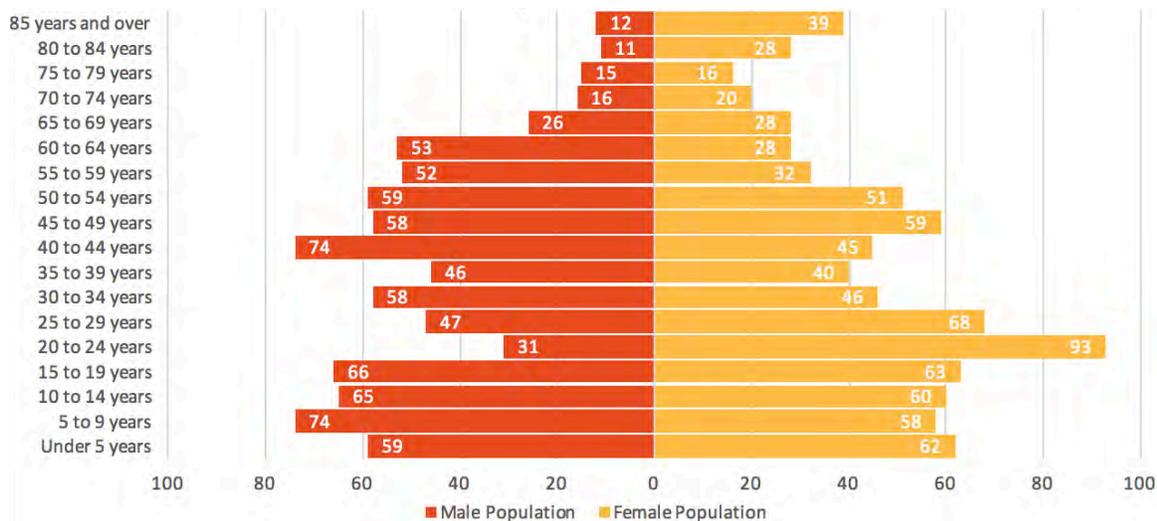
The median age in 2010 for Mitchellville was 37.2, according to the US Census Bureau's Decennial Census. This is a significant increase from 2000 median age, which was only 34.7. The median age in Iowa in 2010 was 38.1 and the median age in the United States as a whole was 37.2 in 2010. This shows that the population of not only Mitchellville, but Iowa and the US as a whole is an aging population. The median age of males in Mitchellville was 36.5 in 2010 and the median age for females was 37.4.¹¹

Using the average age statistics from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the estimated number of institutionalized females in each age bracket was subtracted, as shown in Table 3.1, to get an estimated number of non-institutionalized females in Mitchellville for each age bracket.¹² Using these estimated values, the approximate population pyramid for 2010 without the prison population can be created, as shown in figure 3.4. This pyramid is much more symmetrical, so it is the one that should be more closely compared to the 2000 population pyramid when comparing populations.

Table 3.1. Adjusted Female Population, Mitchellville, IA

Age Brackets	Percent of Prisoners in Age Bracket	Number of the 596 Institutionalized Females based on Percentages	Female Population	Adjusted Female Population without Prisoners
Under 5 years	0.00%	0	62	62
5 to 9 years	0.00%	0	58	58
10 to 14 years	0.00%	0	60	60
15 to 19 years	0.60%	4	67	63
20 to 24 years	3.84%	23	116	93
25 to 29 years	11.32%	68	136	68
30 to 34 years	16.08%	97	143	46
35 to 39 years	18.34%	110	150	40
40 to 44 years	15.98%	96	141	45
45 to 49 years	12.06%	73	132	59
50 to 54 years	8.66%	52	103	51
55 to 59 years	5.76%	34	66	32
60 to 64 years	3.36%	20	48	28
65 to 69 years	1.10%	7	35	28
70 to 74 years	0.52%	3	23	20
75 to 79 years	0.52%	3	19	16
80-84 years	0.52%	3	31	28
85 years and over	0.52%	3	42	39

Figure 3.4. Population Pyramid, 2010 Census, Mitchellville, IA, without ICIW Population

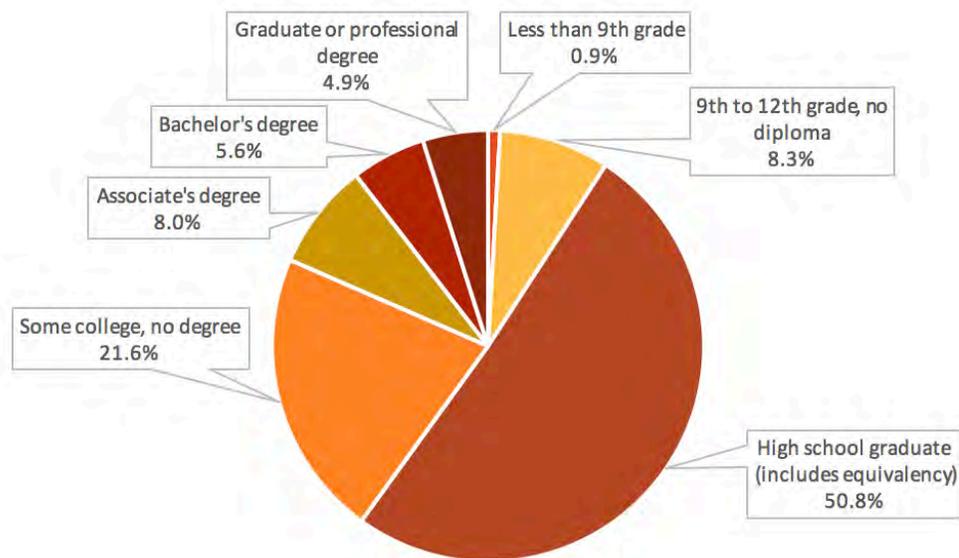


Education Levels

The Global Partnership for Education believes that education is a “vital human right” and that the “restriction of access to education is one of the surest ways of transmitting poverty from generation to generation.”¹³ Hence, understanding a community’s education levels helps us to understand the community as a whole. When looking at Mitchellville’s education level breakdown, it is important to note that the following data do include the ICIW population, which could potentially be different from that of the resident population, therefore causing some data to not be fully representative of the community.

According to the 2015 American Community Survey, and as shown in figure 3.5, 0.9% of the population aged 25 and older have received less than a 9th grade education.¹⁴ This is considerably better than the 5.7% of all Americans and 3.3% of all Iowans who have only received the same amount of education.^{15,16} The next educational attainment level is somewhere between 9th and 12th grade, with no high school diploma, which accounts for 8.3% of the population of Mitchellville. More than half (50.8%) of all Mitchellville residents have graduated from high school or achieved some equivalency to that. Beyond that, another 21.6% have obtained some college education but have not received a degree. A total of 18.5% of the population have at least one type of college degree (associate’s = 8.0%, bachelor’s = 5.6%, graduate or professional = 4.9%).

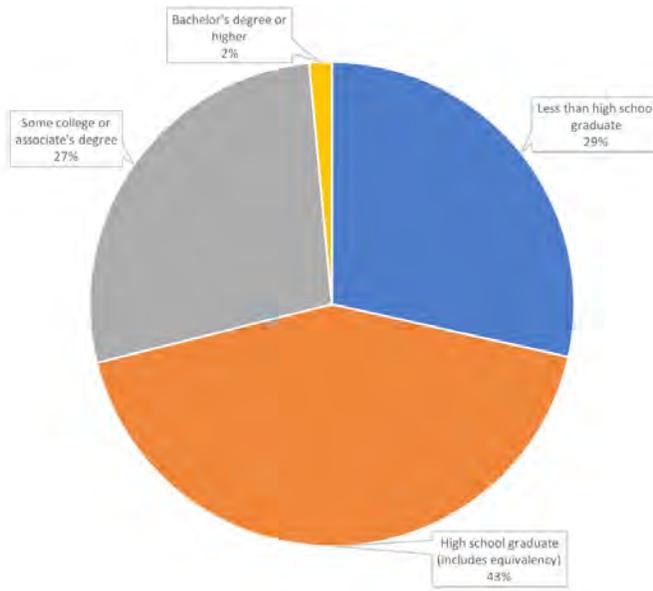
Figure 3.5. Education Level of Population 25 Years Old and Above, Mitchellville, IA



As shown in figure 3.6, of Mitchellville’s population aged 18 to 24, 28.5% have obtained less than a high school diploma, compared to 11.1% of Iowans and 14.4% of all Americans in the same age bracket. Mitchellville has nearly twice the proportion of people without high school diplomas as America as a whole and nearly three times that of Iowa’s, which could potentially be caused by the ICIW. More than 42% of Mitchellville residents aged 18 to 24 have received a high school education (or equivalent) compared to Iowans (25.8%) and Americans (29.7%), showing that where Mitchellville is behind in the previous educational attainment statistic, it is ahead in those who have graduated high school. Finally, 24.7% of the population has obtained some college or associate’s degree and only 1.5% have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher.

3. Community Character

Figure 3.6. Education Level of Population 18–24 Years Old, Mitchellville, IA



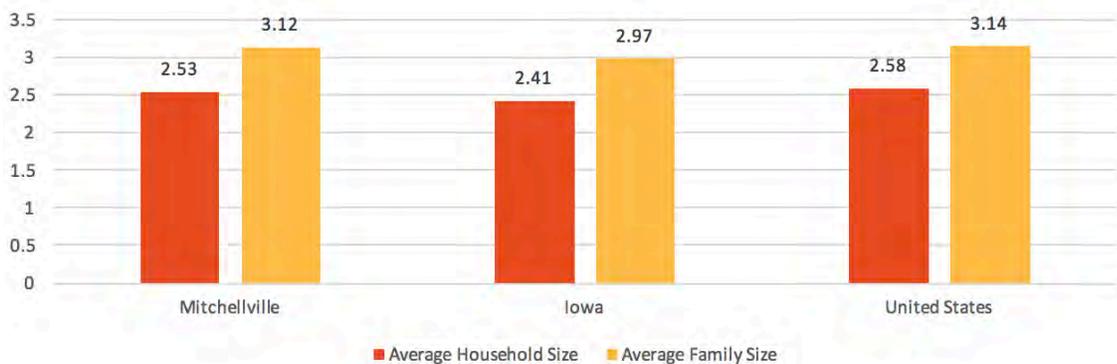
With the population aged 18 to 24 years old, it is important to note that many Americans turn 18 before they complete high school, so the high proportion of this age bracket who have not completed high school yet is justified.

As a whole, of Mitchellville's residents and those at the ICIW, a majority of the population aged 18 and older has received at least a high school education and the population over 25 includes 40% of people with at least some post-secondary education.

Average Household and Family Size

The average household size in Mitchellville according to the 2010 Decennial Census was 2.53 people and the average family size was 3.12 people.¹⁷ Figure 3.7 shows Mitchellville's average household and family size as compared to those of Iowa and the United States.^{18,19} Generally, Mitchellville's average household and family sizes are characteristic of Iowa and the United States.

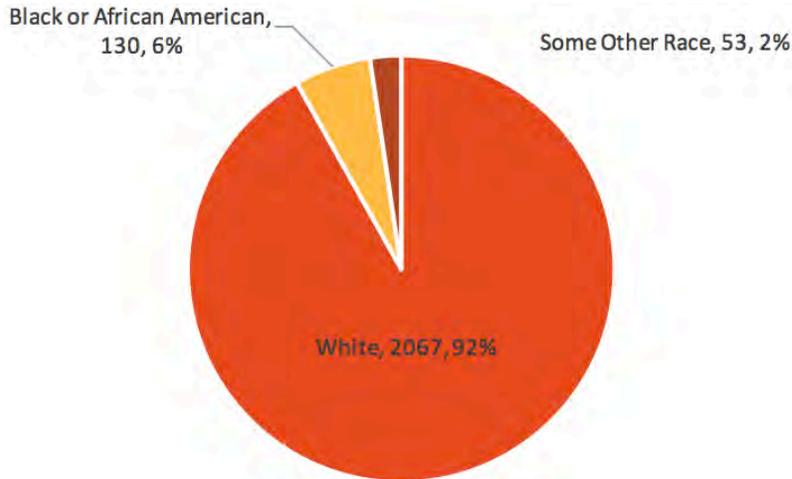
Figure 3.7. Average Household and Family Size, Mitchellville, IA



Race and Ethnicity

From the same 2010 Census, figure 3.8 shows that a total of 2,067 (92%) of Mitchellville’s residents were “White,” 130 (6%) were “Black or African American,” and the remaining 53 (2%) were some other race including: “American Indian or Alaska Native,” “American Indian,” “Asian,” “Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander,” and “Some Other Race.”²⁰ In Iowa, 91.3% of residents are “White” and 2.9% are “Black or African American.”²¹ Mitchellville, much like Iowa as a whole, is a very homogeneous population with more than 90% of residents being white. However, in the United States, only 72.4% of residents are “White” and 12.6% of residents are “Black or African American.”²²

Figure 3.8. Population by Race, Mitchellville, IA



Population Growth

In 1900, the city of Mitchellville had a total of 768 residents and by 2010 the population of the city had grown to 2,254 according to the US Census Bureau. During this time, however, the population did not always increase. Between 1910 and 1930 the population shrank by approximately 150 people before finally making an increase again during the 1940 Census.^{23,24}

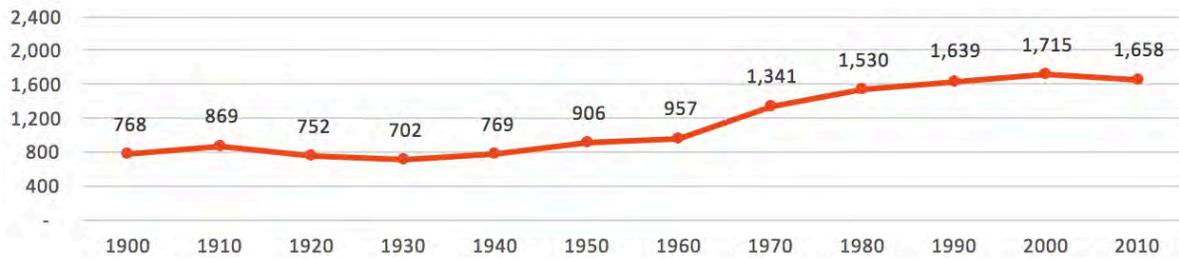
Figure 3.9. Mitchellville, IA, Population: 1900–2010



However, the fact that the 2010 Census also includes the ICIW means that the total population needs to be adjusted. As noted earlier, once the 596 institutionalized females are subtracted, the population of Mitchellville is 1,658, a decrease in number from the 1,715 people during the 2000 Census.²⁵ This is the first time the city has seen a decrease in population since the 1920 Census.

3. Community Character

Figure 3.10. Mitchellville, IA, Population without the ICIW Population: 1900–2010

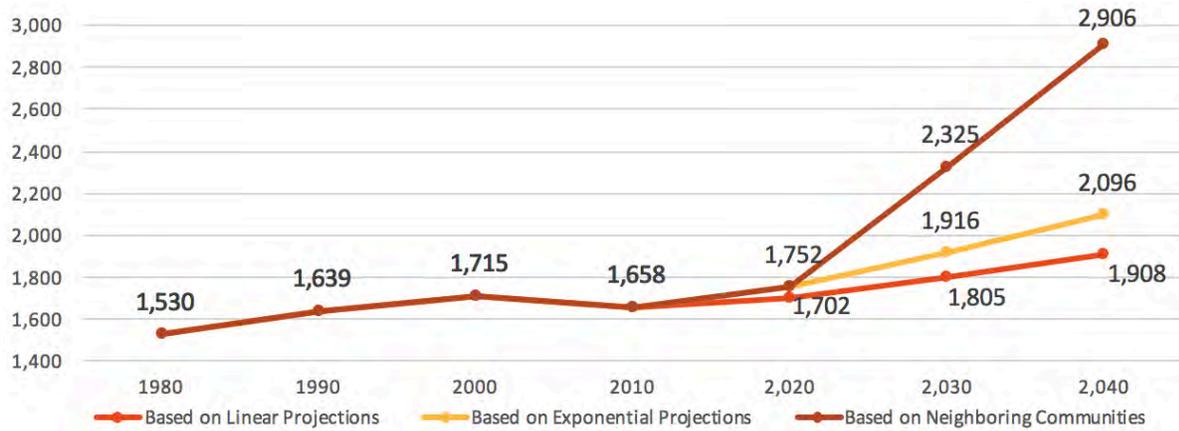


In conclusion, the city has seen growth overall since 1900 but it has not always come easily. Between 1900 and 2000, Mitchellville saw an average growth rate of about 9.2%, which is less than the national population growth rate of 14.1% during that same time period. Between 1960 and 2000 Mitchellville saw significant growth, almost doubling in size, yet since then there has been a decline in population.

Population Projections

It is impossible to know how a community will grow over time; however, there are ways to possibly predict how growth will happen. For the purposes of Mitchellville, a number of different population projection methods have applied to provide an idea of how growth will happen between now and the year 2040. From these projections (all detailed in Appendix D), three population projections were selected as the most likely scenarios for population growth (figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11. Population Projections to 2040, Mitchellville, IA



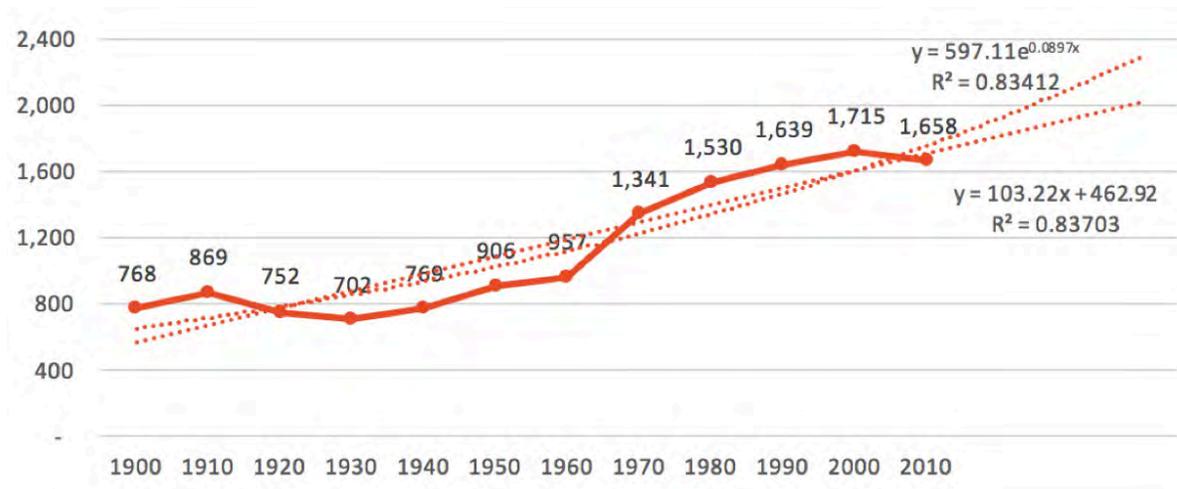
Projections Based on Neighboring Communities

Neighboring communities to the west of Mitchellville have seen tremendous growth over the past several decades. Between 1990 and 2010, Altoona doubled in size and it anticipates doubling in size again by 2035. Bondurant’s population more than doubled between 2000 and 2010. Because Mitchellville is still several miles outside of the outer bounds of the metropolitan area, and the fact that there are some significant topography challenges between Altoona and Mitchellville, it is not anticipated that Mitchellville will see quite the level of growth as its neighbors. For the population projection based on neighboring communities, the 2010 population of Mitchellville was projected to increase by 50% by 2040, growing from a population of 1,658 in 2010 to a population of 2,906 by 2040.

Linear Projections

The next population projection method uses a linear trend-line for historic populations 1900-2010 and projects out to 2040 (figure 3.12). The population growth was not always linear, but the R-Squared value for the trend line is 0.83703, meaning that the line explains 84% of the variability around the average, indicating that it is fairly useful at determining the correct population values. This method predicts a population of 1,702 by 2020, 1,805 by 2030, and 1,908 by 2040.

Figure 3.12. Linear Population Projection without ICIW Population, Mitchellville, IA



Exponential projections

The last projection method uses an exponential trend-line for historic populations 1900–2010 and projects out to 2040. The R-Squared value for this method is 0.84933, which is slightly better than that of the linear projections. This method predicts a population of 1,918 by 2020, 2,123 by 2030, and 2,349 by 2040.

Quality of Life

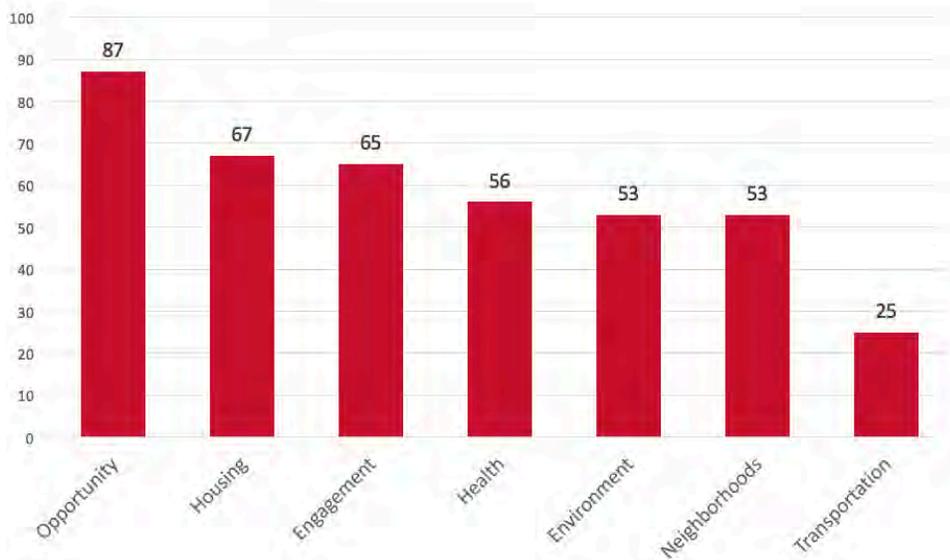
Introduction

Measuring the quality of life in an area means understanding how well residents live on a day-to-day basis. In Mitchellville, it is important to understand quality of life because it can show what aspects of life in the community are working and what aspects need improvement. One way to measure quality of life by using the AARP Livability Index. AARP defines a livable community as, “one that is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and has supportive community features and services. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence; allow residents to age in place; and foster residents’ engagement in the community’s civic, economic, and social life.”²⁶

The AARP Livability Index uses the following broad categories to measure quality of life: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health of residents, civic engagement, and employment and educational opportunity.²⁷ The AARP Livability Score rates the livability of an area on a scale from 0 to 100. Mitchellville has a total Livability Score of 58, which is one point above the state average. Additionally, all but one of the seven categories scored above average.

3. Community Character

Figure 3.13. Mitchellville Livability Scores



Metrics from each category are measured against metrics from other places, and each metric shows Mitchellville's ranking (top third, middle third, or bottom third) in comparison to other neighborhoods across the country.²⁸ All metrics are measured at the neighborhood scale unless otherwise noted. The following details the highest score as well as some of the lowest scores. This will show what aspects of life are working in Mitchellville and which aspects need improvement.

Opportunity: Inclusion and Possibilities

The first category, opportunity, was given a score of 87, and had the highest score among all seven categories. This score was based on four metrics: income inequality,** jobs per worker,* high school graduation rate (measured at the school district scale), and age diversity in communities. All of these metrics ranked in the top third percentile nationally. These data suggest that Mitchellville and the surrounding area are relatively inclusive and offer many opportunities for success.

Neighborhood: Access to Life, Work, and Play

When it comes to neighborhood quality, AARP gives Mitchellville a score of 53. Neighborhood quality metrics include nine subcategories: access to grocery stores and farmers markets, access to parks, access to libraries, access to jobs by transit, diversity of destinations, activity density, crime rate,** and vacancy rate. Only access to jobs by transit ranked in the bottom third percentile nationally, because there is currently no public transit system in Mitchellville.

Environment: Clean Air and Water

The next category covers environmental quality, in which AARP has given Mitchellville a score of 53. This score is based on four metrics: drinking water quality,** regional air quality,** near-roadway pollution, and local industrial pollution. The regional air quality and local industrial pollution metrics ranked in the top third percentile nationwide, while drinking water quality and near-roadway pollution metrics ranked in the bottom third. The percentage of people exposed to health-based violations regarding drinking water countywide is 5.13%, whereas the median US value stands at .5%. In Mitchellville, the percentage of the population living within 200 meters of a high-traffic road where more than 25,000 vehicles pass per day is .82%, whereas the median neighborhood values

nationwide are roughly 0%. This has a great impact on air quality and may cause concern for future air quality issues in Mitchellville.

Transportation: Safe and Convenient Options

Transportation is the lowest scoring category, with a total score of 28. This score is based on seven metrics: frequency of local transit service, walk trips per household per day, congestion,* household transportation costs, speed limits, crash rate, and ADA-accessible stations and vehicles.* There are two main reasons for the low total transportation score. Two metrics for Mitchellville transportation, frequency of local transit service and crash rate, are in the bottom third percentile nationally. As mentioned above, Mitchellville lacks public transit options, which brings down the frequency of local transit service metric. The crash rate metric is most likely skewed because of Mitchellville's proximity to I-80.

Mitchellville vs. County and State Scale Metrics

While this data from AARP might not always give the best interpretation of current conditions within Mitchellville in most metrics, it does well enough when considering the relationship that the city has with the rest of the Des Moines metropolitan area. Mitchellville is a very commuter-based community; the majority of goods and services (as well as jobs) are found outside of the Mitchellville area. Residents of Mitchellville are used to visiting neighboring towns for their day-to-day errands and appointments.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the community character of Mitchellville is made up of a multitude of different factors. The vibrant history of the city is still celebrated today with the annual Thomas Mitchell Days, and the historic Universalist Church is still celebrated as a cherished community feature. Mitchellville's future is closely tied to that of the surrounding communities in the Des Moines metro. The quality of life is an important feature of community character and overall Mitchellville scores well on AARP's Livability Index; however, developing design standards with the SUDAS manual will continue to improve the community as it grows. Lastly, the demographics of Mitchellville are fairly representative of the region, which includes indication of substantial growth within the near future.

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4. Economic Development

This chapter will cover the economic development of Mitchellville by examining the existing circumstances, which include data and analytics for different sectors of the community as well as feedback that the public had regarding economic development. This chapter will also cover the alternatives that were explored in order to meet the immediate and future needs of the community. Goals for the community will be outlined and include smaller steps to take towards implementation and recommendations pertaining to economic development will also be provided. The goal of this chapter is to discuss possible methods of attracting businesses and revenue to better the community of Mitchellville.

Introduction

A city's economic development relies on an understanding of a its business environment and workforce. Sustained economic growth is important because it provides income, business opportunities, and tax revenues for the city. There are many initiatives a community can support to encourage investments to improve the workforce or support businesses. This chapter will provide a background of the community's workforce and current business structure, while also setting goals for furthering the community's economic development.

When the goals laid out in this chapter are accomplished, Mitchellville will be a thriving, yet comfortable city. There will be a lively downtown with local shops to serve residents and generate revenue for the city for improvement projects. The city will create movement to and throughout the community by attracting travelers from the highway with signs and a highway kiosk. The city's amenities will be greatly improved so people of all ages can enjoy the recreational opportunities that Mitchellville has to offer. The town will be inclusive to children who are growing up in the community and accommodating to seniors who want to stay involved. There will be a trend of people wanting to both work and live in Mitchellville because it will offer good jobs and a variety of housing options to sustain its residents. Mitchellville will capitalize on the populations surrounding it and will attract people from all over the Des Moines metro area

Existing Circumstances

Mitchellville is currently presented with a unique situation: the need to grow the economic base but the desire to stay small. With neighboring cities rapidly growing, Mitchellville has an opportunity to draw similar economic success to its own community. Moreover, Mitchellville will need to find solutions to generate more revenue, as the city's property taxes are within the state's top quartile. Growing the city's economic base while maintaining the small-town feel will be a challenge—but one that Mitchellville will be able to accomplish.

Educational Attainment

In Mitchellville, 92.8% of residents age 25 and older are high school graduates and 10.4% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Comparatively, 91.8% of Polk County residents are high school graduates and 35.9% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. This indicates that in terms of high school graduates, Mitchellville is on par with the county, but has a smaller percentage of citizens that hold Bachelor's degree or higher.¹

4. Economic Development

Table 4.1. Educational Attainment, Mitchellville Compared to Polk County

Educational Attainment	Mitchellville	Percent	Polk County	Percent
Population 25 years and over	1,600	--	297,135	--
Less than 9th grade	14	0.90%	9,233	3.10%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	132	8.30%	15,087	5.10%
High school graduate (or equivalent)	814	50.90%	75,177	25.30%
Some college, no degree	345	21.60%	60,881	20.50%
Associate's degree	128	8.00%	30,434	10.20%
Bachelor's degree	89	5.60%	74,557	25.10%
Graduate or professional degree	78	4.90%	31,766	10.70%
Overall Attainment, 25 years and over	--	--	--	--
Percent high school graduate or higher	92.80%	--	91.80%	--
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	10.40%	--	35.90%	--

The educational attainment of a city is crucial, because it is typically tied to the community's income and labor force needs. From these data, it can be inferred that Mitchellville does not present the same type of workforce demands as other cities in the greater Des Moines metropolitan area and therefore will likely hold a disproportionate part of the county's income. In terms of economic development, Mitchellville's residents have attained a high enough level of education to support new business development, especially in the sectors where a bachelor's degree is not required. This is important because companies want a labor force that is skilled and live within a close proximity to the business, ensuring that the business' needs will be met.

Labor Force by Industry

Labor force is an indicator of a community's socioeconomic structure. The size of the labor force and its participation rate speak to the health of an economy, but the percentage of capable employees in each market speak to the quality of jobs in the region. Labor force can be broken down into five main industries:

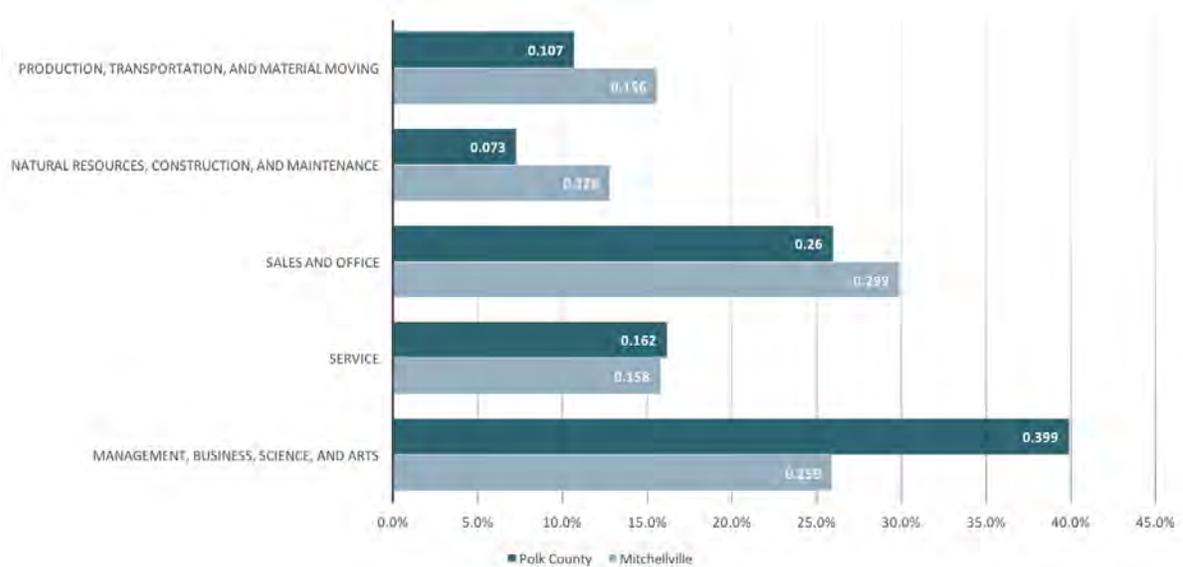
1. Production, transportation, and material moving
2. Natural resources, construction, and maintenance
3. Sales and office
4. Service
5. Management, business, science, and arts

The largest percent of workers from Mitchellville are employed in the sales and office sector, compared to the management, business, science, and arts sector for Polk County. The smallest percentage of workers, for Mitchellville and Polk County alike, are employed in the natural resources, construction, and maintenance sector (see figure 4.1).²

Mitchellville has a diverse workforce, which makes for a more resilient economy. Since a diversified workforce is less prone to be affected by economic downturn, such as the loss of an industry, it is attractive to new businesses and new residents.

4. Economic Development

Figure 4.1. Labor Force by Industry, Mitchellville Compared to Polk County



Source: US Census Bureau.

Unemployment

In order to financially sustain the city, Mitchellville needs to further diversify and expand its economic base. In 2015, less than 50% of Mitchellville's population aged 16 and above were active participants in the workforce (Table 2).³ This number is extremely low, and can most likely be attributed to the members of the women's prison being calculated into the data. This was a leading factor to the city's 7.1% unemployment rate. However, the city's unemployment rate has dropped to 3.1% since 2015. Seventy-three percent of Polk County's population is active in the workforce, and the county has a 5.8% unemployment rate. The Des Moines metropolitan area provides many opportunities for economic success on which Mitchellville has the ability to capitalize.

Cities with extremely low unemployment rates have difficulty attracting manufacturing businesses for fear that there will be a shortage of workers. Though it is economically beneficial to have a low unemployment rate, it also has the potential to be harmful for companies seeking new plant locations. Mitchellville's next step, which will be addressed in the following section, needs to be focused on drawing in and retaining businesses within city boundaries. Citizens want to work, but are forced to search elsewhere for jobs because of the lack of opportunity within Mitchellville.

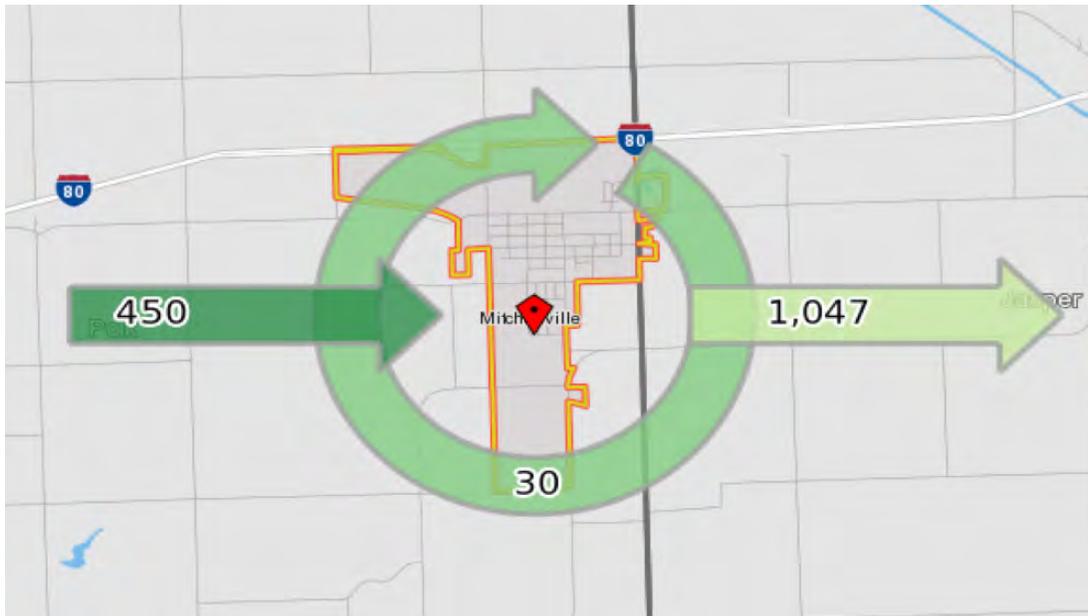
Commuting

The lack of jobs available in Mitchellville forces residents who live within the city's boundaries to find employment elsewhere. Only 30 Mitchellville residents live and work in the city, whereas 1,047 leave to work in another city (see figure 4.2).⁴ There are about 450 people who come into Mitchellville for work, many of whom are employed by the Iowa Women's Correctional Facility and Diamond Crystal.

Not only is there a lack of jobs, but there are a lack of amenities in Mitchellville. Residents have to leave the city to buy groceries and seek entertainment. This is revenue that Mitchellville is losing. The city needs to attract businesses, to both retain more revenue and to attract future residents. Providing a better quality of life and more job opportunities will help create a city in which people can live and work.

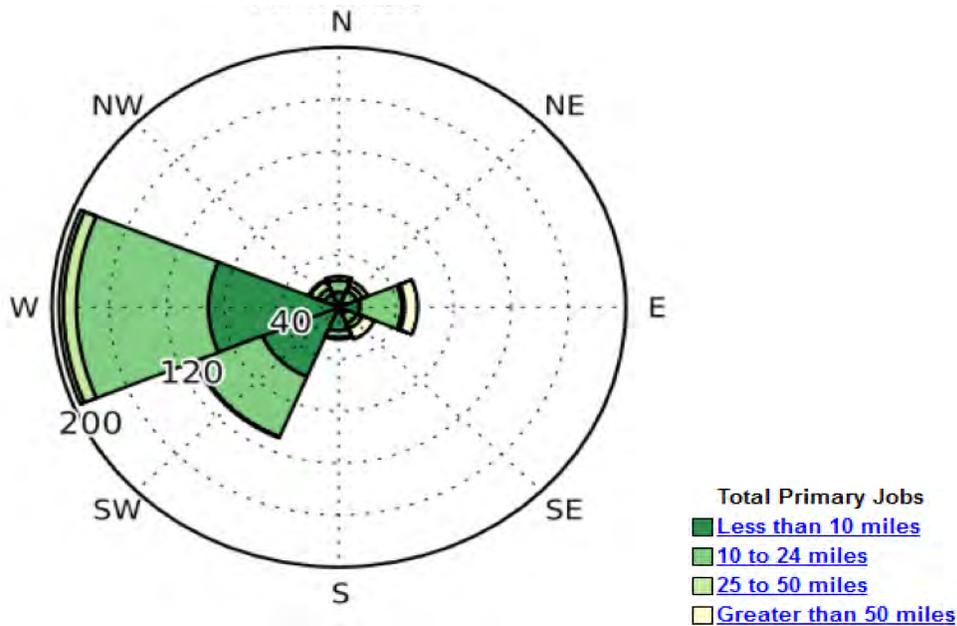
4. Economic Development

Figure 4.2. Inflow/Outflow Job Counts, 2015, Mitchellville, IA



Source: US Census Bureau's On The Map <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

Figure 4.3. Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2015, All Workers



Source: US Census Bureau's On The Map <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

For those residents who do leave the city for work, a majority head west toward the cities of Altoona, Ankeny, Urbandale, and Des Moines. Most who head east are employed in the city of Colfax (Figure 4.3).² Of all Mitchellville's commuters, 45% travel less than 10 miles to reach their place of employment, 43% travel 10–24 miles, 5% travel 25–50 miles, and 7% travel more than 50 miles. In Polk County, 59% travel less than 10 miles, 19% travel between 10–24 miles, 8% travel 25–50 miles, and 15% travel more than 50 miles.⁵ The average travel time to work for a Mitchellville

4. Economic Development

resident is about 25 minutes compared to 19 minutes for Polk County residents overall, meaning that Mitchellville residents have to travel farther, on average, than residents of Polk County as a whole. However, by creating jobs within the city, the average commute time will decrease, making Mitchellville an even more desirable place to live.

Table 4.2. Unemployment Rate, 2015, Mitchellville Compared to Polk County

Unemployment	Mitchellville	Polk County
Persons 16+	1,955	349,332
Population in Labor Force	891	253,964
% of Population in Labor Force	45.60%	72.70%
Unemployment Rate	7.10%	5.80%

Source: US Census Bureau.

When looking at how residents of both Mitchellville and Polk County get to work, there are few options. As soon as one leaves downtown Des Moines, there is little opportunity to utilize public transportation. Mitchellville's location, lack of bike paths, and harsh winters make biking the least popular option for commuting (table 4.3).⁶ Driving a personal vehicle is the most popular option. The more people who commute into Mitchellville for work, the more likely they are going to spend money on gas or lunch, again boosting Mitchellville's economy.

Table 4.3. Modes of Transportation to Work, Mitchellville Compared to Polk County

	Mitchellville	Polk County
Car, truck, or van	94.8%	92.5%
Public transportation (excluding taxi)	0.5%	1.3%
Walk	1.3%	1.6%
Bike	0.0%	0.3%
Taxicab, motorcycle, etc.	0.4%	0.7%
Work at home	3.0%	3.7%

Source: US Census Bureau.

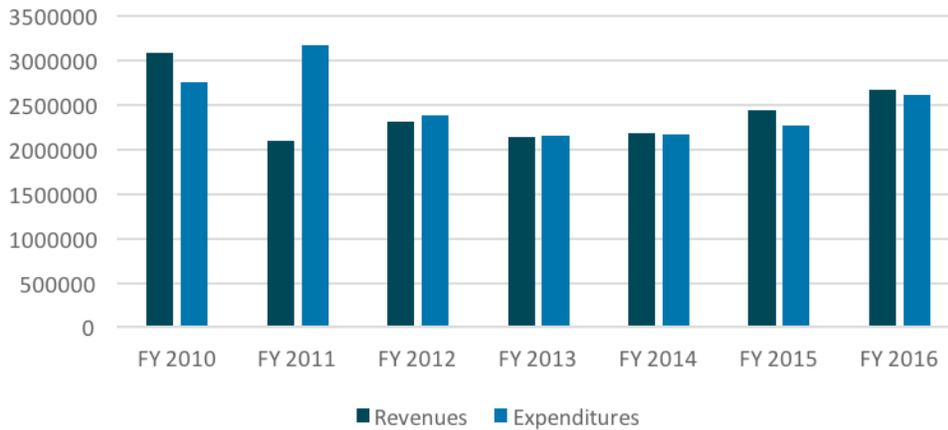
City Financials

Understanding Mitchellville's financial situation will aid the community in planning for the future by allowing it to allocate resources toward future projects and better determine what is possible with the given budget. Figure 4.4 shows Mitchellville's revenues and expenditures over the previous seven fiscal years. Mitchellville saw greater revenues than expenditures in fiscal years 2015 and 2016, but saw the greatest difference in 2010. The years when expenditures surpassed the revenues were 2011 and 2012. The years 2013 and 2014 saw equal revenues and expenditures (figure 4.4).⁷

The overview of revenues and expenditures can be used to identify areas in which savings can be made and other areas that may need additional funding in order to meet the city's goals. Figure 4.5 and figure 4.6 illustrate the city's revenues and expenditures for fiscal year 2016. The majority of Mitchellville's revenue came from two sources: charges for services and property taxes (figure 4.5).⁸ While the city's expenditures were dominated by business-type enterprises, revenues and expenditures can fluctuate from year to year as different projects are undertaken (figure 4.6).⁹

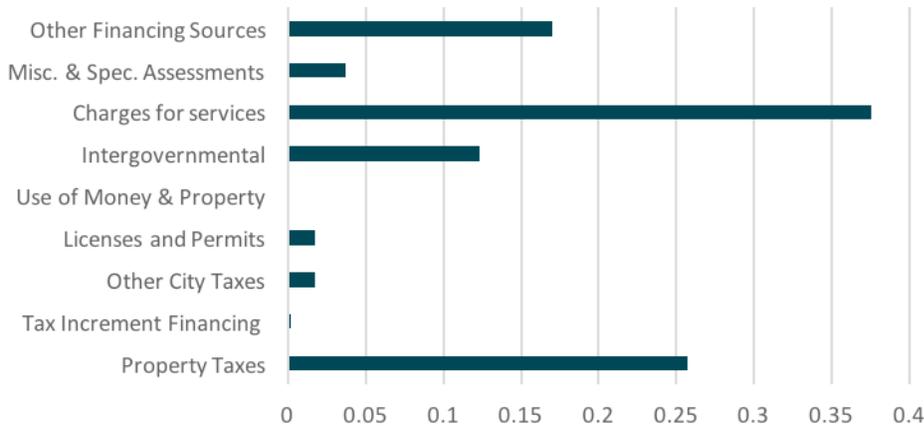
4. Economic Development

Figure 4.4. Total Revenues and Expenditures for the City of Mitchellville



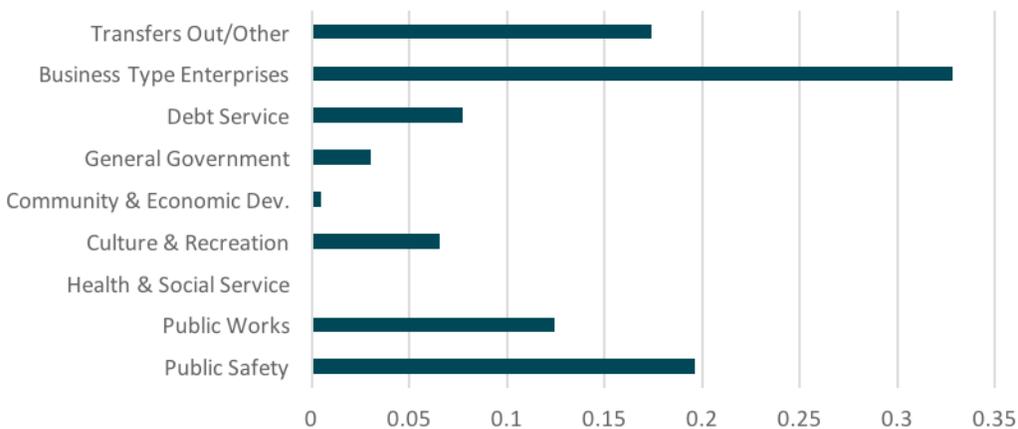
Source: Iowa Department of Management, FY 2016 Budget

Figure 4.5. Revenues and Other Financing Sources in Mitchellville, FY 2016



Source: Iowa Department of Management, FY 2016 Budget

Figure 4.6. Expenditures by Government Activity in Mitchellville, FY 2016

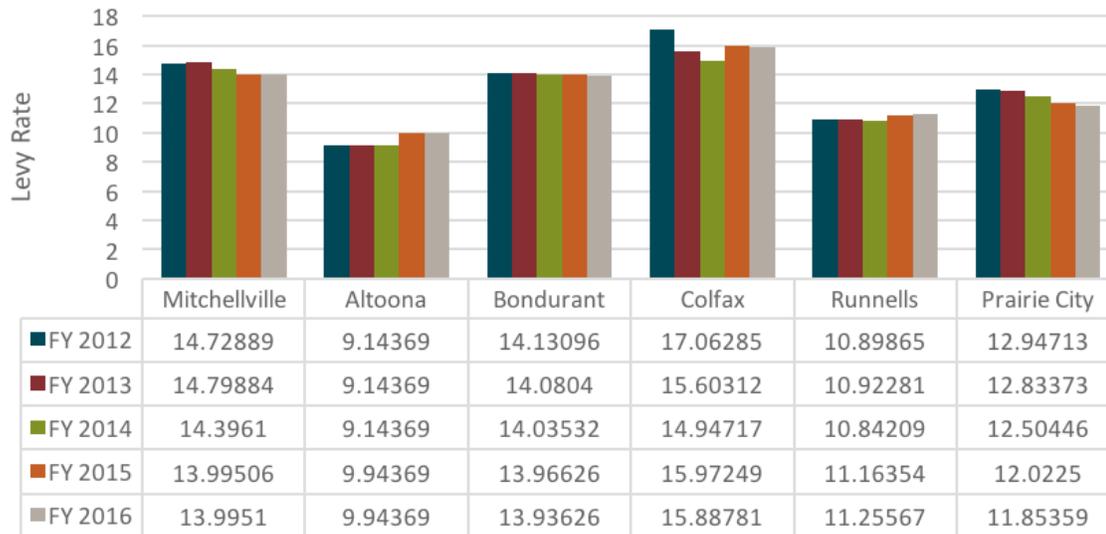


Source: Iowa Department of Management, FY 2016 Budget

4. Economic Development

Figure 4.7 compares Mitchellville’s property-tax levy rate against the surrounding communities. Mitchellville’s rates have stayed fairly level over the past five years with a slight decline in the more recently (Figure 8).¹⁰ Of property taxes in Iowa’s 945 cities, Mitchellville’s was among the top quartile. This high tax rate is a burden to the residents and would likely decrease with more commercial and/or industrial development.

Figure 4.7. City Property Tax Levy Rate Comparison, FY 2012–2016



Source: Iowa Department of Management, FY 2016 Budget

Economic Base

A strong and diverse economic base is crucial for the success and longevity of a community. Mitchellville currently faces disproportionately high property taxes, and could benefit from a diversification in the tax base to allow residents a reduction in property taxes. A better understanding of the city’s economics will allow for better decision making, which will benefit the city both in the short and long terms.

Retail

In fiscal year 2016, the Mitchellville had total taxable sales of \$6,624,388 (Table 4.4).¹¹ These sales were distributed among Mitchellville’s 47 reporting firms and are not adjusted for the correctional facility and those whom it houses. Although the city’s population slightly decreased, the sales increased—which is an encouraging takeaway.

Table 4.4. Key Retail Indicators for Mitchellville

Retail Indicators	FY2015	FY2016	% Change
Real total taxable sales (\$)	5,941,659	6,624,388	11.50%
Number of reporting firms (annualized)	47	47	0.00%
Population	2,301	2,287	-0.60%
Average sales per capita (\$)	2,582	2,897	12.20%
Average sales per firm (\$)	126,418	142,460	12.70%

Source: Retail Trade Analysis Report Fiscal Year 2016 – Mitchellville (Ames, IA: Iowa State University – Department of Economics, 2016)

4. Economic Development

To keep the city's retail sales moving in a positive direction, Mitchellville needs to capitalize on the comparatively cheap storefronts and the ability to market the town for smaller commercial uses, especially those businesses that are just beginning. Working with startups and online businesses that want to utilize the cheap storefronts will not only help the businesses get on their feet but will also help promote commercial growth in the city. Mitchellville needs to be aware of the different commercial businesses currently in surrounding cities, as it will be competing with these bigger cities with larger populations.

Pull factors help cities gauge where they stand compared to other cities in terms of how much money is generated and spent within the city. They are graphed on a scale from zero to one; a pull factor of one signifies that for every dollar generated in a city, a dollar is spent in the same city. Cities aim to have pull factors as close to one as possible, because that means money is staying in the community rather than being spent elsewhere. Mitchellville has a very low pull factor compared to surrounding cities; however, it is not adjusted for the population that resides in the correctional facility (table 4.5).¹² Mitchellville has a pull factor of 0.24, which means that for each dollar generated, only 24 cents is staying in the community. Mitchellville's close proximity to Altoona and the greater Des Moines area, the lack of diversity of businesses, and majority of the labor force commuting elsewhere for work all contribute to this low pull factor.

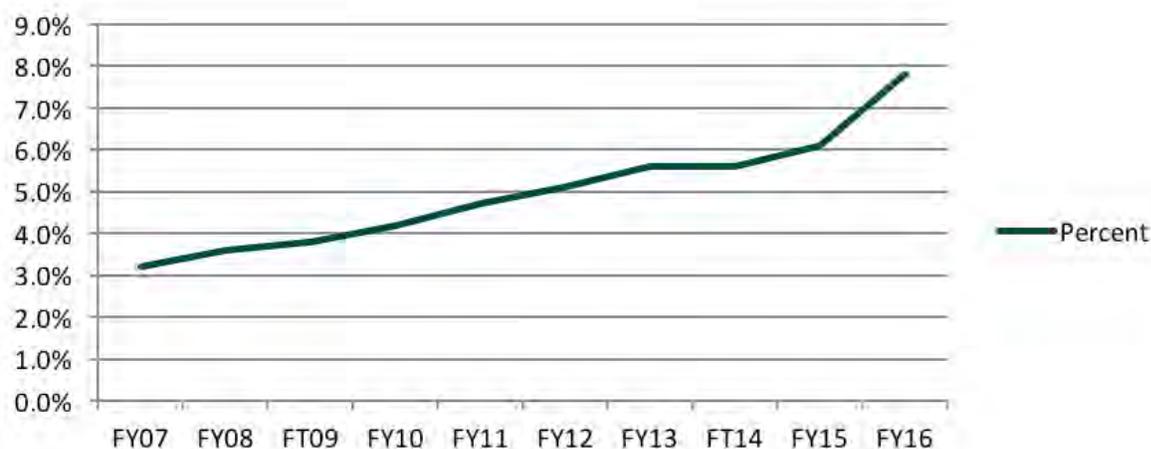
Table 4.5. Pull Factor Comparison with Peer Group

	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY010	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	Average
Peer Median	0.55	0.53	0.53	0.55	0.53	0.52	0.52	0.54	0.54	0.55	0.54
Mitchellville	0.15	0.16	0.14	0.15	0.16	0.19	0.21	0.22	0.22	0.24	0.18

Source: Retail Trade Analysis Report Fiscal Year 2016 – Mitchellville (Ames, IA: Iowa State University – Department of Economics, 2016)

Figure 4.8 shows how the Internet is influencing the way in which commerce is being done in the United States. In fiscal year 2016, the United States saw about 8% of its total retail sales being done through e-commerce (Figure 10).¹³ E-commerce includes Internet and catalog sales, where an order is placed and/or price and terms of sale are negotiated over the Internet or other online system.

Figure 4.8. E-Commerce Sales in the US (As a Percentage of Total Retail Sales)



Source: Retail Trade Analysis Report Fiscal Year 2016 – Mitchellville (Ames, IA: Iowa State University – Department of Economics, 2016)

4. Economic Development

The increasingly important role that the Internet is playing in how people shop for goods could have a negative effect on small and/or local businesses if cities do not plan accordingly. When discussing this topic with Mitchellville residents, many of them mentioned how often they shop online for items ranging from clothes to groceries. This reliance on the Internet makes it harder for businesses to succeed, especially in small towns such as Mitchellville. However, if Mitchellville can tap into the e-commerce that is going on around it, the commercial business sector of the city could grow. Because of its proximity to a large metropolitan area, I-80, and I-35, Mitchellville could support a warehouse for one of these large online companies.

Business Retention and Growth

Mitchellville's residents indicated that increasing their commercial base needs to be a top priority. Attracting new businesses that will offer basic necessities, such as a grocery store, bakery, or an ice cream shop, and revive the downtown would be a beneficial first step. It is also important to think about how one business could potentially affect another and work on creating positive relationships between the two. For example, if residents from a surrounding community came to Mitchellville for a baseball tournament, they might want to eat lunch after the game and then go get ice cream—benefiting multiple businesses. Residents have also placed a high priority on supporting their existing businesses and identifying strategies to draw in additional customers to keep these businesses viable moving forward.

Residents have also made it known that commercial growth north of the city near the interchange and along NE 112th Street is greatly needed and could be used for a truck stop, restaurants, or other services. This commercial development would be an extension of the city by utilizing the land directly north of Center Ave N and would call for rezoning the area to commercial. This would provide a buffer between the interchange and the residential area that could be developed to the east and northeast, provide more jobs within the city, increase the tax base, and decrease the property taxes.

Residential Development

Mitchellville residents have expressed a desire for more residential housing done in a strategic and thoughtful manner. Expected growth in the greater Des Moines area will flow into Mitchellville and there will be a heightened need for more than just single-family housing. A population growth, if steady and natural, will economically benefit the city through continued investments. Residential development is contingent upon the increase in commercial and industrial development—more jobs means more people, which means there will be a greater demand for housing. Different housing developments have been expressed by residents with specific locations and intentions in mind. There is a desire to build senior housing east of the city center in Jasper County, as well as a hope for multifamily housing north and east of Center Ave N.

Incentives

Mitchellville should develop incentives to attract new businesses and assist entrepreneurial startups. Ideas for the city to consider when incentivizing business growth include tax increment programs (TIFs), water and sewer payment relief for businesses willing to occupy a vacant building, start-up assistance loans, or facade improvement grants. Creating a TIF district along the interchange corridor leading into the city and in downtown will help the city to redevelop the area and bring in new businesses, thus increasing the tax base of the city after the program ends.

4. Economic Development

Natural and City Resources

Parks and Recreation

Mitchellville prides itself on caring for the environment and helping residents enjoy nature by creating accessible parks. Mitchellville has two parks and one county park, each having different uses and qualities. City Park has baseball fields, playground equipment, two large pavilions, and open space. Killinger Park is a small piece of land that provides a green space in the business district. Thomas Mitchell Park (operated by Polk County and located 2.5 miles southwest of Mitchellville) is a larger, 179-acre park with many recreational opportunities such as a campground, picnic shelters, play area, fishing pond, and the Devotie Trail.¹⁴

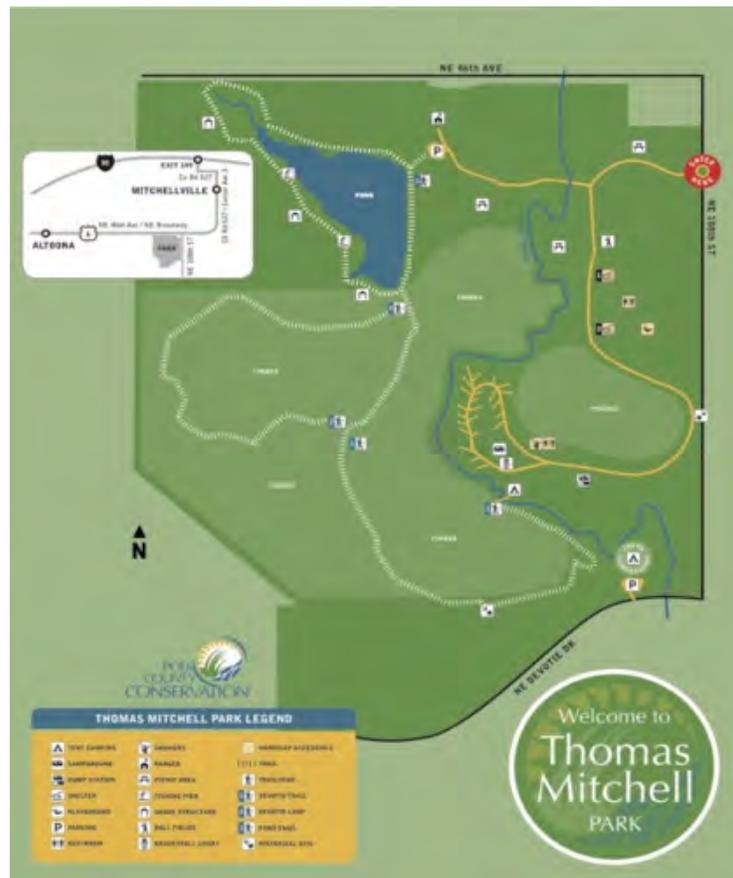
Parks and green space provide numerous economic benefits to cities, such as enhancing property values, increasing municipal revenue, and attracting home buyers, workers, and retirees to a city. Recreational activities such as sports can bring in people from out of town to attend these events and can cause a spillover effect—benefiting local businesses. The quality and appearance of parks, reasonable property values, and livability of the city will help create a name for Mitchellville, thus attracting new residents. Creating and maintaining useful park space is imperative for Mitchellville when planning for the city's sustained economic development. Keeping the parks alive also benefits the community and helps keep the small-town, friendly feeling by providing a place for people to interact.

Figure 4.9. Thomas Mitchell Park



Source: <https://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/conservation/parks-trails/18-thomas-mitchell-park/>

Figure 4.10. Map of Thomas Mitchell Park



Source: <http://www.mitchellvillechamber.com/>

4. Economic Development

Trails

Trails have numerous economic benefits: they increase property values, make communities a more attractive place to live, increase tax revenues, and improve citizens' quality of life. Trails bring an influx of visitors who help boost the local economy by spending money in local businesses. There are no trails in the city, but there are many trails in the surrounding area to which Mitchellville could connect in order to help reap the benefits. One opportunity for Mitchellville is to brand itself as a stop on the annual RAGBRAI bike ride across Iowa.

Trails are economically, socially, and environmentally beneficial. Economically, they provide jobs for those who will create, maintain, and oversee the trails, their spillover effect will help support local businesses, and they enhance property value. Socially, trails promote a healthy city and give community members a place to interact. Environmentally, they provide the residents with additional recreational activities, the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, and educational experiences for the youth.

Agricultural Land

The city of Mitchellville is surrounded on all sides by agricultural land—which residents have said they do not want to lose. The Corn Suitability Rate (CSR) ranks the soils in Iowa based on their potential to be used for row-crop production. The CSR in Mitchellville is strong in the southern area of the city but weaker near the western area. Therefore, the agricultural land in the southern part of the city is the best area for producing corn because it will yield the most production and therefore has a higher economic value.

Marketing and Signage

Mitchellville could draw in more visitors and businesses by improving the marketing and signage on and around I-80. Mitchellville's Main Street (Center Ave) is about one mile southeast of the I-80 exit, which is why improving signage—way-finding and marketing—is so important. There needs to be something that draws people to Mitchellville and grabs their attention from the interstate. Increasing signage throughout the city will help direct people coming off the interstate to the commercial area of the city. Without directions, the city center is challenging to find and may result in people turning around and not spending money in the city.

Beautification

The City of Mitchellville has completed projects around the city to increase its aesthetics, such as adding planters around the downtown area, improving the general landscape, and updating light fixtures. The Mitchellville Chamber of Commerce, a nonprofit membership organization supported by the business community, hosts an annual Flavor of Mitchellville event every April.¹⁵ This event works on projects for the beautification of the city streets, as well as various other activities such as the Thomas Mitchell Days. With available funding, the city would like to continue these beautification projects. Thomas Mitchell had an ideal design for Mitchellville which included lining the city with trees and landscaping. By focusing on beautifying the economic corridor, the city can attract more businesses and visitors.

4. Economic Development

Citizen Feedback

Outlined below are a few suggestions from residents on how Mitchellville can meet its current and future needs, followed by recommendations on how to best diversify Mitchellville's economic base.

Suggestion 1 - Bring in a chain grocery store

The idea has been mentioned by residents to bring a chain grocery store to Mitchellville. It should be cautioned that because many residents shop online, or stop in a larger city for groceries on their way home from work, it is possible that the grocery store would not bring in enough profit to sustain itself. Many residents did not support this idea because it would not be fully utilized by all residents, and there are other types of businesses that would be more useful to a broader range of citizens.

Suggestion 2 - No alterations to Mitchellville's current state

Many residents would like for Mitchellville to remain the same because they are worried that growth will change the small-town atmosphere of the city. If there was no change to the current state of Mitchellville (such as no beautification projects, no industrial growth) the economic base of the city would not grow. Without this growth, it is very likely that the property taxes would remain exceptionally high—which is why the city's economic base and employment opportunities should be increased.

Suggestion 3 - Commercial and industrial growth

The possibility of increasing commercial and industrial growth throughout Mitchellville has been brought up. However, because the city wants to stay relatively small, only small amounts of light and heavy industrial growth on the northwestern side of the city and commercial growth downtown and north of Center Street are recommended. The Corn Suitability Rating shows that the southern side of Mitchellville is ideal for row-crop production, which is why this land will not be used for industrial or commercial development. Although some residents called for no industrial growth, it is still advisable to bring in small amounts in order to expand the tax base.

It is suggested that the city grow its commercial and industrial base in a way that is sustainable and environmentally responsible. This growth does not need to be substantial, but some development is needed to sustain the community.

Goals

1. Provide and promote an atmosphere that would encourage business expansion and development throughout the city, especially the downtown corridor

- Plan for, market, and support new development and existing businesses.
- Encourage infill of vacant commercial structures by identifying or establishing specific incentives.

To bring new businesses (and therefore new jobs) into Mitchellville, vacant lots should be filled and incentives should be established in order to make the area attractive to new business owners. Along with attracting new businesses, Mitchellville should also be supporting existing businesses, and encouraging growth and expansion through a business retention and expansion (BRE) program.

4. Economic Development

Mitchellville should plan for necessary infrastructure needed to attract and support economic development.

By collaborating with and supporting Polk County Business and Tourism on issues such as marketing and employment growth, Mitchellville could experience a significant increase in jobs, thus expanding the city's tax base. One way to make Mitchellville more attractive to new businesses would be to improve street maintenance to provide adequate access to local businesses, allowing for multiple modes of transportation. Mitchellville should also consider a feasibility study for a grocery store or look for unique ways to obtain basic groceries through delivery options, local business collaborations, or farmers markets.

2. Market the assets and businesses of Mitchellville

- Utilize the traffic generated from Interstate 80 to market businesses.
- Capitalize on the Des Moines area trails tourism and other recreational assets.

Mitchellville should establish signage or a kiosk near I-80 in order to inform travelers about the businesses and services available in the city. In addition to increased signage, the gateway entrance off I-80 onto Cotton Ave NW should also be improved through beautification projects. These projects would make Mitchellville a more attractive stop for travelers.

Another technique would be to market businesses through improved tourism. To do this, Mitchellville should identify ways to link current businesses to the recreational assets of the area of the area to promote new businesses that cater to these opportunities.

3. Maintain and improve parks within the community

- Improve Mitchellville's baseball fields.
- Distinguish the city parks.

To improve the baseball field, the city could repaint the field and maintain the grass. The stands could also be improved so that it is more comfortable for watching games and other prospective community activities. Signage should be increased in order to promote the field. New activities or events could be implemented to increase public interest in the fields.

In order to promote the city parks, signage should be increased around the city. Adding new infrastructure that draws people to city parks could make them more appealing to a broader range of people. Mitchellville should also create trails, specifically connecting parks to some local businesses in order to increase human traffic to the trails and businesses.

4. Increase Mitchellville's quality of life and economic growth

- Increase the employment opportunities within the city limits.
- Increase the number of residents who both live and work within the city.

The city should consider rezoning for more commercial and industrial land. This would grow the tax base, which will positively affect the high property taxes in the area. Lowering the property taxes would be very beneficial to Mitchellville residents. Mitchellville could also create TIFs to draw in new businesses, again, growing the city's tax base.

4. Economic Development

These economic incentives could attract new businesses and well-paying jobs to Mitchellville, which would create a more diversified market, create a greater range of employment sectors, and give more job opportunities to Mitchellville residents.

Recommendations

1. Create an economic attraction in Mitchellville that draws people to town

The community should focus on investing in the quality of life for its residents and giving them a feature to feel proud of within their community. Providing a combination of amenities, good housing, and retail will be key to becoming and maintaining the community vision that Mitchellville has for itself. These features will make Mitchellville more economically attractive to residents and retailers.

- Specific Recommendations: Build on Mitchellville's rural character and strong connections to agriculture to develop an economic attraction.
 - Recruit businesses based on agricultural services or food systems. Working with the Iowa State University Startup factory could be a chance to connect with new young businesses in the ag or food systems field who need a small space in which to start.¹⁶
 - Use empty storefronts as small office spaces for new startups in the agricultural or food systems field. Having several in one building could help these businesses grow and learn from peers.

2. Recognize that a little growth is good

While many residents want Mitchellville to keep its small-town feel, some understand that in order to maintain their community they need to draw in revenue from additional industry. Finding the balance to encourage sustainable growth at a comfortable pace will keep the community content yet thriving. Growth will be the first step toward providing a tax base for other improvement projects, and until that tax base is substantial, the community may see little changes.

3. Support both sustainable commercial and industrial growth within the community

Commercial growth in the downtown area will provide amenities that residents have been requesting, while industrial growth on the outskirts will provide a tax base for the community to use for improvements. Mitchellville must recognize that both sectors are needed to grow to address its small tax base for immediate and future uses; thus, planning for expansion in these sectors will be vital to providing a stable financial future for the community.

- Specific Recommendations: Attract development in areas that provide the best amenities and space for new growth type
 - Direct infrastructure development to the west parcel to support new industrial and/or commercial uses near the interstate.
 - Focus residential development in the north central area of the community to maintain physical closeness to other residents, supporting a centralized community. Housing stock should be updated with this development.

4. Economic Development

4. Take advantage of federal and state financial support options

TIFs will make it easier for the community to draw in businesses from both the commercial and industrial sectors. Specifically, Mitchellville should create TIF districts in the northwestern corner and the downtown corridor. Creating these districts will be a smarter financial decision because the taxes on these districts will bring in more money than a residential sector would.

5. Maintain flexibility with the economic development plans

Regardless of the choices the community makes to achieve its economic goals, it needs to constantly evaluate time lines for these plans and adjust to the community's growing needs. The industrial and commercial developments may take longer than expected and the community should be sure that it is financially stable before proceeding with other elements of the plan.

6. Beautify Main Street and the downtown corridor

An attractive downtown area will attract growth by showing potential business owners that Mitchellville residents take pride in their city. Beautification can enhance property values as well as creating a town that is appealing to visitors and residents.

- Specific Recommendations: Build on existing efforts for beautification by using current assets.
 - Consider tree plantings along the corridor in varieties that are best for street tree use. The ISU Forestry Club could be a good partner because it has some students who specialize in urban forestry and could find the best species for limited impact on urban services.
 - Work with local organizations to host regular downtown beautification volunteer projects. Clubs such as local 4-H or FFA could be a good way to involve youth and could be helpful for upkeep of current beautification efforts.

7. Understand that many economic development projects will not see immediate results

The financial benefits that the city will gain from industrial and commercial development will not be accessible to the community until the TIFs are paid off. The community needs to realize that they may have to bear the cost until its economy becomes robust enough. Industrial development will be the quickest economically viable option to increase the tax base, so focusing on development in that sector will be the best use of the community's time and resources.

Conclusion

Mitchellville remains in a unique situation in relation to the rest of the Des Moines metro area because it is being encroached upon by surrounding communities. It is a small town that holds land in two counties and a large feature of the community is the Iowa Women's Correctional Facility. In order to best serve the community's immediate needs and future desires, Mitchellville needs to invest in land for future developments to increase the tax base. When a tax base is secured, Mitchellville needs to improve its amenities which will then lead to attracting businesses, which will bring both new residents and a growing local economy.

4. Economic Development

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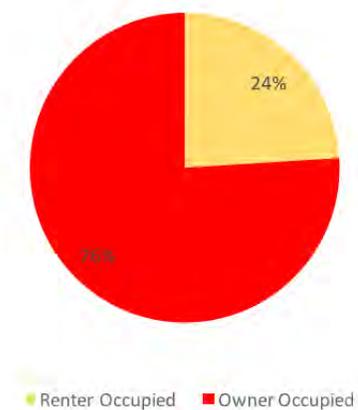
Introduction

Housing in Mitchellville is at the core of maintaining the city's character and preparing for future growth. A focus on diversifying housing types will create a more accommodating city in which residents live and work. Additionally, as identified by focus-group and nominal-group input, the aging residents desire increased housing options. In order to maintain the rural character of the community, a controlled growth approach should be utilized in the development of housing. By encouraging a mix of housing types, increasing the provision of senior and affordable housing options, and utilizing housing-related grants, loans, and other funding sources available to homeowners and developers, Mitchellville will fulfill the needs of current and future residents.

Summary of Current Conditions

The total population of Mitchellville experienced a slight decline of 3.3% in between 2000 and 2010. In line with this population decline, Mitchellville saw very few new houses built, with the total number of housing units increasing by only 2.5% during the same time period.^{1,2} Only 108 housing units have been built since 1980, meaning that the housing that is available is aging. During the same time period, the vacancy rate for the city rose from 3.7% to 6.1%.³ In terms of housing tenure, the city is largely composed of owner-occupied housing units, with only 24.1% of units being renter-occupied.⁴ Figure 5.1 shows 2015 ACS Renter v. Occupied housing units.

Figure 5.1. 2015 ACS Renter vs. Owner Occupied



Source: 2011–2015 American Community Survey.

Although there has been a slight decrease in population from 2000 to 2010, a growth spurt in the population is expected between 2020 and 2040 based on the growth of surrounding cities. To accommodate this increase, additional housing units are needed in Mitchellville. Table 5.1 shows the housing projections for 2020, 2030, and 2040 based on the population projections discussed in Chapter 3: Community Character.

5. Housing

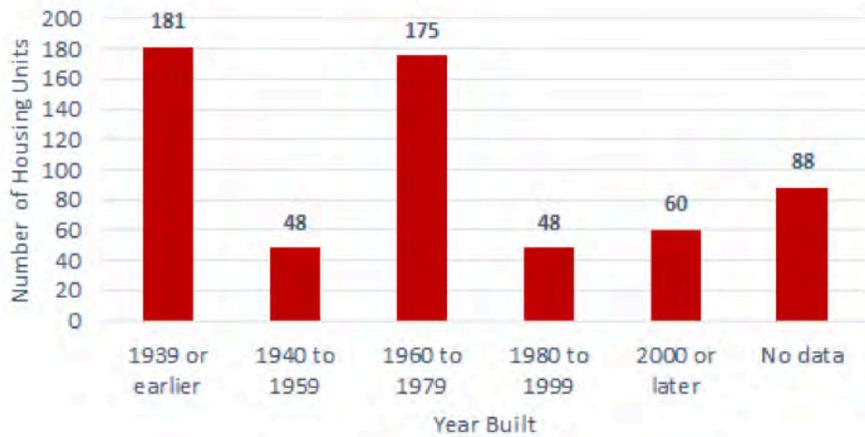
Table 5.1. Housing Projections for 200, 2030, and 2040, Mitchellville, IA

	2020	2030	2040
Population projection	1,752 (based on exponential projection)	2,325 (based on neighboring communities)	2,906 (based on neighboring communities)
Number of additional households needed to accommodate population	+20	+206	+436

Age of the Housing Stock

The decades prior to 1939 represent a significant period of residential growth with 181 units built for Mitchellville. An additional 175 homes were built between the years 1960 and 1979, which is the second highest growth period in the housing stock. Since the year 2000, a total of 60 homes were built, 27 of which were after the year 2014.⁵ A significant portion of homes in Mitchellville were built in the early 20th century, suggesting that the housing stock will be in need of repair in the coming years. It is a good sign that development has continued into the 2000s as the population has also grown. Since 2014, 17 housing permits have been issued. The majority of these units are located in the subdivision Deer Run, which will continue to be a prominent area of development in the coming years. The breakdown of the age of housing units is shown in Figure 5.2. To accommodate the growing population calculated residential growth must continue to be a reality.

Figure 5.2. Age of Housing Stock, Mitchellville, IA

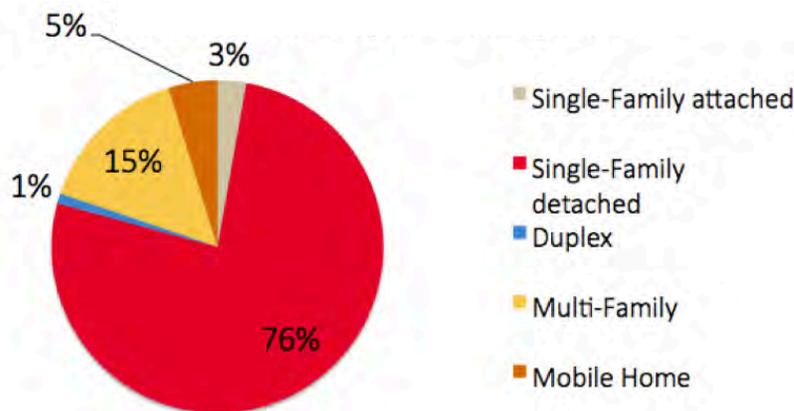


Source: Polk County Assessor.

Housing Types

Mitchellville has 76% single-family detached housing, 14% apartments, 5% mobile homes, 3% single-family attached housing, and 1% duplex housing.⁶ A manufactured home community is also located just outside city limits to northeast. These numbers reflect a lack of variety in the housing stock and show that single-family housing makes up a majority of the housing stock, much like other communities in the Des Moines Metro. Figure 5.3 shows the makeup of housing units.

Figure 5.3. 2015 ACS Make-up of Housing Units

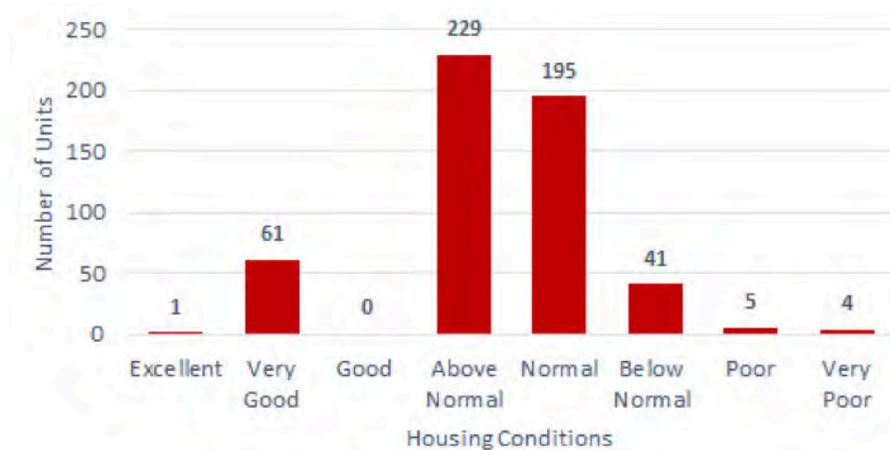


Source: 2011–2015 American Community Survey.

Housing Conditions

The majority of homes in Mitchellville were rated “normal” or better by the Polk County Assessor. Homes in average or above-average condition make up 90.6% of the housing stock in the city. There were, however, 41 homes that received “below normal” ratings, five receiving “poor,” and four receiving “very poor.”⁷ Although these only make up about 9.4% of the housing stock in Mitchellville, these homes should be the focus of improvement programs. Figure 5.4 shows the conditions of assessed housing. It is important for Mitchellville to maintain the quality of its housing for current and future residents to enjoy, increase property values, and maintain a quality built character. Increasing the amount of housing considered to be “above normal” or “excellent” will be beneficial to both the city and its residents.

Figure 5.4. Mitchellville Housing Assessment



Source: Polk County Assessor.

Senior Housing

The increase in the median age from 34.7 in 2000 to 37.2 in 2010 indicates that Mitchellville’s population is aging.⁸ More than 11% of Mitchellville’s population is 65 or older. Nearly 19% of

5. Housing

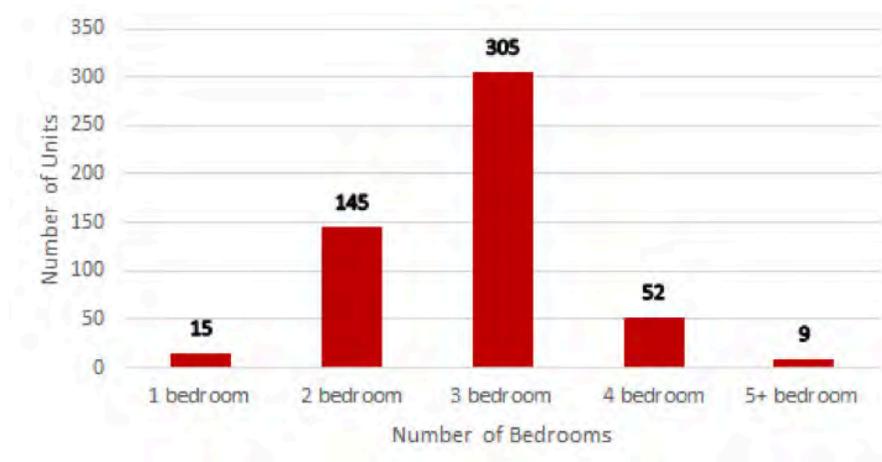
the population was between 50 and 64 years of age in 2010 and will have evolving housing needs predictably in the next 10 years, if not already.⁹ Despite this evident need for housing that caters to the aging population, only 5.7% of housing units in Mitchellville have “basic passage,” defined as the percentage of housing units with extra-wide doors or hallways, floors with no steps between rooms, and an entry-level bedroom and bathroom. These data suggest that the city would benefit from more age-transitional or senior-friendly housing such as townhomes or assisted living units.¹⁰

There is currently one nursing home in Mitchellville, located at 114 Carter Street, which provides 65 beds for individuals in need of long-term care. Supply of townhomes and downsized housing options are minimal for the population. There are eight apartment buildings, the majority of which contain one to eight units and one building containing 21 units.¹¹ Seventy-six percent of all housing units in Mitchellville are one-unit detached.¹²

The aging population of the city requires more diverse housing options to comfortably age in place. Currently, there is a small retirement community just outside city limits, Lakeview Homes, that caters to some Mitchellville residents. It is located at 2368 W. 148th St South. However, its limited capacity does not cater to the increasing demand for more senior options. The addition of more senior housing to the current community would benefit the aging population and free up existing housing in the city for others.

Most housing units consist of three bedrooms or more. According to Polk County Assessor’s data, 2.8% of units have one bedroom, 27.56% of units have 2 bedrooms, 57.98% of units have 3 bedrooms, 9.88% have 4 bedrooms and the additional 1.7% have 5 or more bedrooms.¹³ Figure 5.5 shows the breakdown of bedroom types. As community input has indicated, smaller housing options are needed for the aging residents.

Figure 5.5. Number of Bedroom per Household, Mitchellville, IA



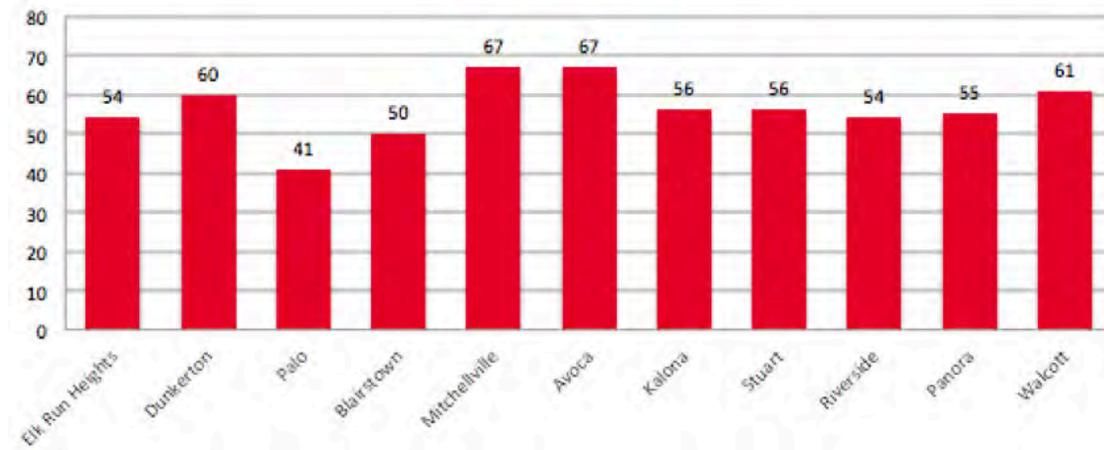
Source: Polk County Assessor.

Housing Affordability and Financial Tools for Housing Improvement and Development

Numerous data sources indicate that housing is affordable in Mitchellville overall. In order to determine affordability, peer cities throughout Iowa were identified to serve as points of comparison to Mitchellville.

As previously discussed in Chapter 3: Community Character, the AARP Livability Index provides an overall housing score. Mitchellville received a housing score of 67, which tied for highest with Avoca, Iowa, amongst the ten peer cities.¹⁴ Figure 5.6 compares Mitchellville's AARP overall housing score to peer cities.

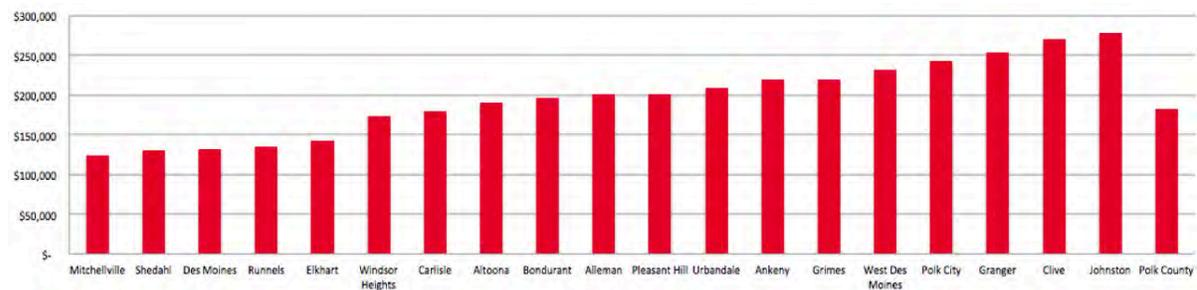
Figure 5.6. AARP Livability Index Housing Scores, Mitchellville and Peer Communities



Source: AARP Livability Index.

The median value of owner-occupied units in Mitchellville is \$124,500, which is slightly below that of its peers. Median rent in Mitchellville is \$604, which is slightly below the group's average median rent of \$646.¹⁵ When compared against Polk County cities, Mitchellville has the lowest average value of all residence types.¹⁶ Figure 5.7 shows the comparison of the average value of all residence types of all cities in Polk County.

Figure 5.7. Average Values of All Residence Types, Polk County and Polk County Cities



Source: Polk County Assessor.

Despite having affordable owner-occupied housing units and rent rates, Mitchellville falls within the top quartile of consolidated levy rates in the state.¹⁷ In line with this ranking, Mitchellville has higher median selected monthly owner costs for housing units with a mortgage at \$1,223 compared to the average median of \$1,112 of the peer cities.¹⁸

Mitchellville's housing market would become more equitable through the increased provision of affordable housing opportunities. According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, households allocating 30% or more of their household income toward housing costs

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are facing a housing burden. In Mitchellville, nearly a quarter of occupied housing units are renter-occupied and 33.6% of those renters are facing a housing burden. Additionally, 27% of homeowners with a mortgage are facing a housing burden. Moreover, 10.6% of the population is below the poverty line. The largest age group of the population in poverty is 5–17 year olds and the second largest age group is 18–34 year olds.¹⁹ This indicates that it is primarily families in poverty.

Analysis

Projection of Housing Needs

Mitchellville's future housing needs are a reflection of trends identified in an analysis of US Census Bureau and Polk County Assessor data as well as community input from focus groups. The following are the four main components crucial to strengthening Mitchellville's housing market to meet projected housing needs: the provision of a mixture of housing types, greater senior housing options, greater affordable housing options, and increased resources to improve the current housing stock.

As single-family detached housing is the dominant housing type in Mitchellville, a diversification of housing types to include a greater presence of townhomes, apartments, and single-family attached units would not only strengthen the housing market but also meet the needs of the city's residents.

Senior Housing

Mitchellville residents would like to create a housing market that caters to those aged 55 and older looking for independent or assisted-living units. Both the number of housing units and the vacancy rate have increased since 2000, indicating that the type of housing available does not meet the housing needs of the population. Focus-group input indicated that once residents reach an age where they no longer desire large homes or wish to maintain large yards, they are forced to look for a senior housing options outside of Mitchellville. While some senior housing options exist, they do not accommodate the growing need of the aging population.

Senior housing tends to be more dense than single-family homes, as the units are closer together and take up less square footage. In a town that prioritizes agricultural land, the production of dense housing for residents will help maintain the community character. Additionally, the retention of the aging population in Mitchellville will contribute to the preservation of the tight-knit character of the community.

As the senior population moves from Mitchellville to take advantage of retirement communities elsewhere, so does their tax base and contributions to the community. It was indicated through focus-group input that because of a lack of options, the aging population is living in homes that do not meet their current needs. Before, these households accommodated larger families but no longer need to serve that purpose. Some options that would further diversify the housing market and cater to the aging population include townhomes, independent living apartments, and other multifamily units. The city can place age restrictions on the units to assist in maintaining the integrity of these homes for the senior population.

Affordable Housing

After analyzing American Community Survey data and focus-group responses, it is evident that Mitchellville would be aided by the presence of increased affordable housing options and housing

assistance programs. Additionally, a significant portion of the city's renter population is facing a housing burden and a significant portion of those in poverty are families; an increase in more affordable housing options would directly benefit these families and other low-income residents.

A theme that emerged during the focus group sessions was the relationship between those residents in poverty and the lack of property upkeep or maintenance. Federal, state, and local programs are available that offer a number of home-related incentives and financial assistance that are of aid to low-income people. Table 5.2 identifies incentives available to Mitchellville and its residents.

Table 5.2. Housing Incentives Available to Mitchellville

Program	Entity	Benefits
Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program in Iowa ²⁰	US Department of Agricultural Rural Development	Provides low- and moderate-income households opportunity to own adequate, modest, decent, safe and sanitary dwellings as their primary residence in eligible rural areas. Eligible applicants may build, rehabilitate, improve or relocate a dwelling in an eligible rural area.
Single Family Housing Direct Home Loans in Iowa ²¹	US Department of Agricultural Rural Development	Also known as the Section 502 Direct Loan Program, this program assists low- and very-low-income applicants obtain decent, safe and sanitary housing in eligible rural areas by providing payment assistance to increase an applicant's repayment ability.
Multi-Family Housing Direct Loans in Iowa ²²	US Department of Agricultural Rural Development	Provides competitive financing for affordable multi-family rental housing for low-income, elderly, or disabled individuals and families in eligible rural areas.
Single Family Housing Repaid Loans & Grants in Iowa ²³	US Department of Agricultural Rural Development	Also known as the Section 504 Home Repair program, this provides loans to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their homes or grants to elderly very-low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards.
First Home Program ²⁴	Iowa Finance Authority	Interest rates are typically lower than the market rate, 30 year terms and have fewer mortgage fees.
Military Homeownership Assistance Program ²⁵	Iowa Finance Authority	\$5,000 grant for downpayment and closing costs on a qualifying home purchase.
Housing Tax Credit Program ²⁶	Iowa Finance Authority	Incentive for Housing Tax Credit project owners to invest in the development of rental housing for individuals and families with fixed or limited incomes. The Housing Tax Credit, rather than a direct federal subsidy, provides a dollar for dollar reduction (or credit) to offset an owner's federal tax liability on ordinary income for a 10-year period.
Home & Community-Based Services Revolving Loan Fund ²⁷	Iowa Finance Authority	Assists in the development and expansion of facilities and infrastructure that provide adult day services, respite services and congregate meals for low-income Iowans.
Multifamily Housing Loan Program ²⁸	Iowa Finance Authority	Provides a variety of affordable financing options to multifamily property owners and developers to assist in the preservation of existing affordable rental units and to foster the production of new affordable units in Iowa.
Home Energy Savers Program ²⁹	Iowa Community Action Association	Helps put energy efficiency upgrades within reach for Iowa families with a limited income.
Variety of Applications for Housing Funding ³⁰	Polk County Housing Trust Fund	Allocates funds to local developers and service providers. Guided by community data and measured against progress toward specific goals of closing gaps in affordable housing inventory and services

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The future land-use map designates a Manufactured Park Zone just outside the northeast corner of the city. This zone ensures that quality, affordable housing options remain an integrated part of the community.

Strengths

- Sound housing stock. Ninety-one percent of assessed housing was rated “normal,” “above normal,” “very good,” or “excellent.”
- Available land supply for future housing developments. There is a supply of available land within city limits that is sufficient and has been identified by residents as desirable for future housing developments.

Weaknesses

- Lack of variety in housing types. Seventy-six percent of all housing units in Mitchellville are single-family units.
- Senior housing needs. There is a severe lack of housing options for independent seniors who wish to remain a part of the Mitchellville community.
- Limited options for low ends of housing spectrum. A significant portion of the community is below the poverty line and faces a housing burden; these people would benefit from affordable housing units.
- Subnormal portion of housing stock. While a large majority of Mitchellville’s housing stock was rated “normal,” “above normal,” “very good” or “excellent,” there still exists 9% of assessed housing that was rated “below normal,” “poor,” or “very poor.” This percentage may seem insignificant but these houses negatively contribute to the aesthetics and character of Mitchellville’s neighborhoods as well as lower surrounding property values.

Goals and Recommendations

The following are the goals and their corresponding action steps, related resources, and responsible persons in order to target the city’s housing-related weaknesses and turn them into strengths. The recommendations should be utilized in conjunction with each other to create a more diverse and viable housing market for Mitchellville:

1. Encourage the development of a mix of housing types

A further diversification of housing types would create more housing options for current and future residents.

- Specific Recommendations
 - Amending zoning code and zoning map to allow for greater flexibility for housing types in current and future R-2 zones.
 - Prioritize housing types other than single-family while adhering to community character.

2. Encourage the development of more senior housing options

The development of more senior housing options is key to accommodating Mitchellville’s aging population.

- Specific Recommendations
 - Create financial package marketed toward developers that incentivizes the development of townhomes and single-family attached homes.
 - Work with health-care providers to establish a single-story, independent-assisted living complex for residents 65 and older with a modest number of units.

3. Increase use of housing related grants, loans, and other funding available to homeowners and developers

Housing-related funding would aid a significant portion of the population wanting to make home improvements or looking for affordable housing options.

- Specific Recommendations
 - Consider creating a housing consultant position within city government that acts as a helping point for residents seeking advice or information relating to housing resources.
 - Continuously research available incentives and financial tools available to low-income persons for obtaining a home and home rehabilitation in order to serve as a resource for applicable residents.
 - Continuously research available incentives and financial tools available to developers and nonprofits so that building affordable housing developments is feasible and to serve as a resource for developers and residents.

Time Line

It is critical for Mitchellville to achieve these goals in a timely manner. There are specific tasks that should be prioritized in the next five years if possible. The production of senior housing should take priority as financial incentives are most prevalent in the coming years. As Iowa has established a new category in property classes called multiresidential, it has redefined the levy tax rates for residential units and consequently the revenue stream for cities. Previously multifamily residential units such as apartments and townhomes were taxed at 90% of their assessed valuation. With the new property class distinction, these units will transition into being taxed at the same rate as residential units, which is only 55% of their valuation. As a result, the levy tax rate goes down incrementally by 7% per year until 2023. Therefore, it is crucial for Mitchellville to take advantage of the higher taxes until 2023. The reducing rate can incentivize developers to build multifamily residential units in the area. At the same time, the city will benefit from the increased tax revenue generated before 2023. Mitchellville needs to increase senior housing options, as well as diversify its housing types. The timely achievement of these goals will benefit developers as well as the city and its residents.

Before development can occur however, the zoning map must be amended to accommodate the desires of the city. The establishment of higher density residential zones will signal to developers areas of the city optimal for affordable and senior housing. The next step in this process is creating a financial package to incentivize developers. The creation of this package ahead of time will allow the city to be prepared when development becomes an option. When property becomes available, the next step toward the creation of senior housing is reaching out to Care Initiatives. This nonprofit organization provides senior services across Iowa and as established locations in cities smaller than Mitchellville. They can provide services that Mitchellville currently desires.

Utilizing financial incentives in the production of senior and affordable housing can be revisited annually. As federal and state incentives vary due to funding allocations, the city should continuously

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research tax incentives. This research should start as soon as possible to take advantage of available programs and continue throughout the duration of this comprehensive plan. The appointment of a housing consultant should be done in conjunction with new development. As affordable and senior options become available, the community may desire assistance in understanding the realities of the new opportunities.

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Introduction

This chapter provides insight and recommendations for land use, annexation, utilities, transportation, and parks and trails. Some areas highlighted in this portion of the comprehensive plan are the updates to the future land use map, the community's split stance on an annexation approach, updating of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and the current City Park master plan.

Existing Circumstances

Land Use

Located just a few miles east of Altoona, Mitchellville is a bedroom community at a crossroads concerning its future growth. The land use plan for a city is integral when establishing a vision for future growth and planning to accommodate future uses. Currently the land usage in Mitchellville is lacking in commercial and industrial uses, one of the city's biggest setbacks. The majority of the city is low-density residential and open agricultural land. An area that is unique to Mitchellville is the Iowa Correctional Institute for Women (ICIW), currently zoned as industrial, which takes up a large portion of the southwest corner of the city.¹ With freshly annexed land to the west, the city is ready to consider expansion. (Figure 6.1 is the current Mitchellville zoning map.)

Land has recently been annexed for development and there is support from the community to expand, but growth should be carefully planned out.² The biggest challenge for Mitchellville is to decide how the city wants to grow for the future and what types of uses are needed.

The Iowa State team has developed a future land use map to guide decisions for future development in the city (See figure 6.2). The following map provides a visual of the potential expansion that the city can expect in the future. Some of the major areas of potential expansion include: commercial development and low-density residential in the northern portion of the city, limited and heavy industrial in the northwest portion of the city, and another section of low-density residential to the east of the city. Some areas of interest on the map have been elaborated below.

Low-density Residential

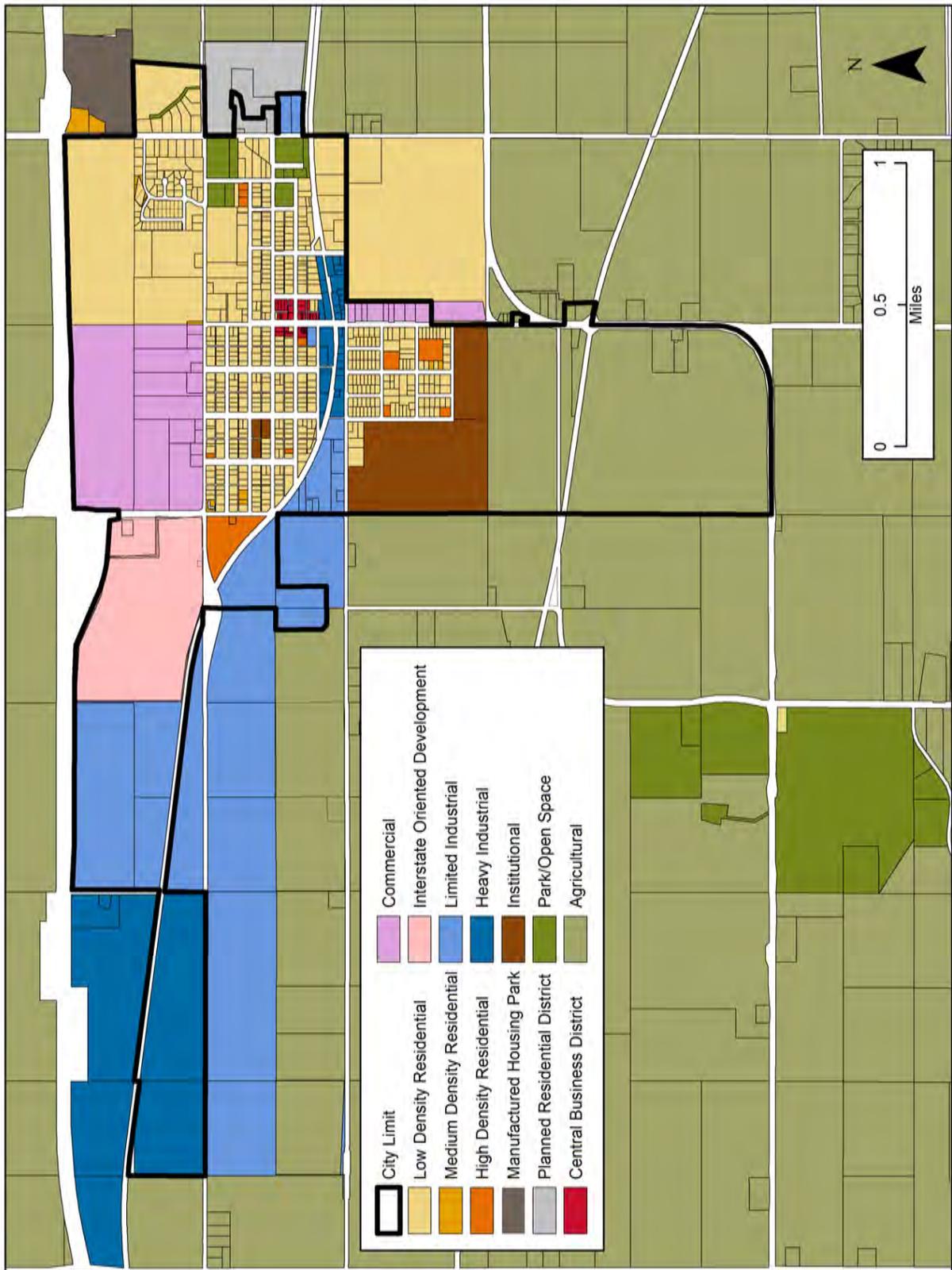
As the city grows, more space will be needed for low-density residential development. The areas that will work best for this expanded housing are to the north of the city as well as to the south. The north, between the Deer Run subdivision and the intended commercial zone by the interstate, is favorable because of its proximity to main entry points from the north and the planned retail and commercial area. The southeast corner of the city is also favorable because of its proximity to the central business district downtown and the existing commercial along Center Street.

Interstate-oriented Development

The section of land west of 112th Street has been identified as an area of multiple potential uses. Originally the land was considered for limited industrial, but some residents noted that they would like to see more areas for commercial development around the I-80 interchange. Having this area sectioned as "Interstate-Oriented Development" is less specific and allows for different types of light industry, retail, or commercial uses. This flexibility of zoning allows the city to control what type of

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Figure 6.2. Mitchellville Future Land Use Map



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growth happens there, helps maintain the appearance of town as people enter from the interstate, and balances commercial growth with preservation of rural character.

Manufactured Housing Park

The existing area with manufactured housing is currently outside the city limits. If the land is annexed, the ISU team recommends that the city should have a specific use zone for manufactured housing to help specifically outline the intention for how the land should be used and give the city more flexibility in how this type of housing is regulated. Any other manufactured housing that is added in the future will also fall under these guidelines and will be held to the same standards.

Planned Residential Development

The light gray area to the east on the future land use map is designated as an area of senior (55 and older) housing. To keep this housing strictly for this age group, the ISU team designated this area as a Planned Residential District. Among other restrictions, this allows the city to restrict new residents based on age.

Light and Heavy Industrial

Some residents have expressed concern about industrial growth to the northwest of the city. While this concern is valid in most respects, we wanted to show how industrial use could look and identify regulations the city can enact to keep certain types of unwanted uses out. Limited Industrial usually refers to uses such as warehouses and small, contained factories with little impact on the surrounding community. Heavy Industrial refers to larger factories that are also self contained but may emit larger portions of light, sound, dust, or other small nuisances. The city can adopt regulations restricting the types of uses and the nuisances that heavy industrial brings, such as noise, smoke, odor, dust and dirt, noxious gases, glare and heat, fire hazards, industrial wastes, transportation and traffic, aesthetics, and psychological effects.³

Annexation

Annexation in a community can lay the groundwork for future growth and development. Annexation in Mitchellville in the past decade has been limited. The only notable piece of land to be annexed into the city since the last comprehensive plan in 2006 is on the northwest side of the city, which was annexed in 2017. Growth in Mitchellville is expected, but the community must be prepared. To address the concerns about future growth in the city, Mitchellville should have a vision to help guide them through annexation process.

Looking at future annexation for the community, Mitchellville has both strengths and weaknesses. An obvious strength would be that Mitchellville has no immediate concern of being landlocked in the near future. In addition, Mitchellville has the ability to annex land to both the east and west of its current city limits. The biggest weakness for annexation going forward is a lack of infrastructure in the areas the community wants to annex. This could prove to be costly for the city when extending infrastructure to newly annexed areas.

Feedback from the community about annexation has been split. Many residents see a need for annexation to attract development and increase the tax base, while others would rather slow annexation and focus the city's resources in the current city limits.⁴ Fulfilling both desires can be complicated, but through a phased annexation approach Mitchellville can appease both sides. Phasing

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annexation (short- and long-term) will allow the city to grow at a slower pace. This approach will help the city grow while using its resources in a prudent manner.

Annexation is needed for many reasons, but the two most important reasons are to accommodate for population growth and to increase the tax base. As mentioned in Chapter Three: Community Character, Mitchellville's population could see a substantial increase by 2040. Land will be needed to accommodate new residents, and only through annexation can the community ensure that there will be room for new residents in Mitchellville. In addition to annexing land for future population needs, annexing land for potential industrial and commercial development is the best way the community can put itself in position to increase its tax base in the future.

Utilities

The City of Mitchellville is in a unique position in that it provides all of its own utilities with the exception of electricity, which is serviced by MidAmerican Energy Corporation.⁵ The city distributes all its own potable water and treats the resulting waste water with customer fees and local tax dollars. Mitchellville also maintains a small storm sewer network, and performs maintenance and operation of each system with city personnel. This section provides an overview of the condition of the community's utilities infrastructure and recommendations on improving and maintaining these systems.

The existing potable water system in Mitchellville is comprised of both pressurized and unpressurized water mains consisting of different materials, including cast iron, ductile iron, and PVC (C900). The system's lines range from more than 10 to just two inches in diameter.⁶ Water is fed into the system from wells sourcing the alluvial aquifer and then travels into a modern water treatment facility located in southern Mitchellville. The water treatment facility was constructed in 2005 and began service on September 1, 2006.

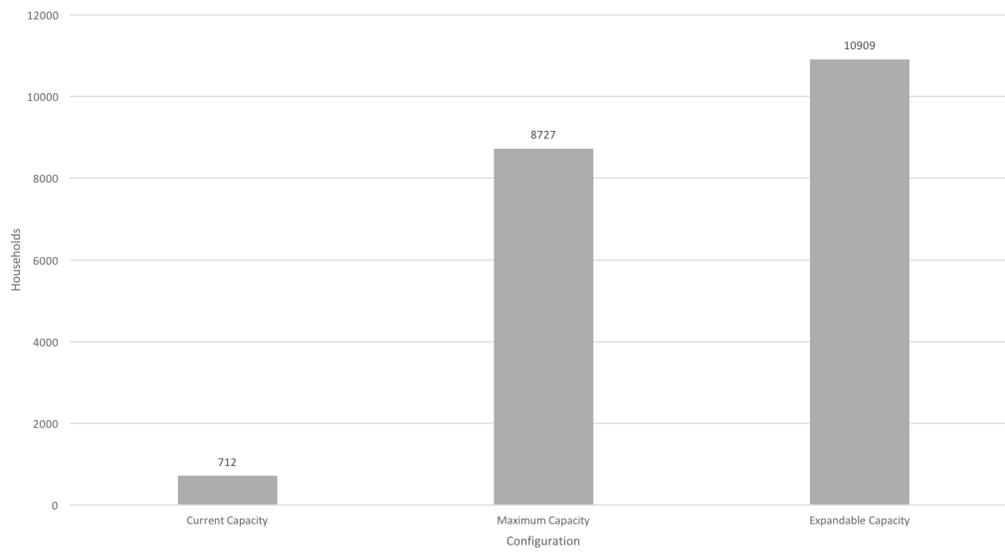
Mitchellville's water treatment facility treats on average 220,000 to 260,000 gallons of water per day, depending on the time of year (lawn watering and other high volume uses, such as swimming pool filling) with the capability of treating 1,200,000 gallons of water per day. The facility also has the potential to be expanded by 300,000 additional gallons per day if another filter were added, bringing the total capacity to 1,500,000 million gallons per day.⁷

That being said, Mitchellville's water utilities are well oversized and poised for future growth. Given that the average Iowan uses 55 gallons of water per day⁸ and the average household in Mitchellville is comprised of 2.5 individuals; as Mitchellville's water treatment facility currently stands, not factoring in any commercial or industrial uses, it has the ability to serve 8,727 households. If the water treatment facility is expanded to a capacity of 1.5 million gallons per day, the expanded capacity could serve 10,909 households.

Once the well water is completely treated, it is transferred to a 300,000 gallon elevated storage tank (water tower) where it awaits usage by customers within the municipality. The Iowa Correctional Institute for Women (ICIW) has a variation of its own potable water system, with a 50,000-gallon elevated storage unit on site and an auxiliary 40-gallon-per-minute direct ground well; however, it purchases most of its water from the city supply.⁹

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Figure 6.3. Households Served-by Configuration



Mitchellville's sanitary sewer system complements the city's potable water system with similar capacity ratios. The sewer system as it stands is comprised of gravity and forced main trunks. All properties within city limits utilize this system on similar gravity-carried piping, including the ICIW. The newer residential development to the northeast, Deer Run, is devised to have each parcel on individual forced mains that outfall to a gravity line that is force-pumped beneath Jasper Street.

The City of Mitchellville's wastewater treatment facility processes on average 300,000 gallons of sewage per day.¹⁰ This facility, built in 2003 and put into operation in 2004, is a four-pool, at-grade system capable of treating 1.5 million gallons of sewage per day.¹¹ The facility is located in a remote location immediately northwest of the ICIW, at the termination of 3rd Street NW and Cotton Avenue NW. Its location on the western boundary of the municipality poses a potential land-use conflict if the city experiences infill and expansion nearby. On the other hand, its proximity to developable land may reduce construction expenses if sewer service is extended into this area.

There is a small storm sewer network at the south end of the municipality, beginning at Carter Street and terminating at Mill Street. The storm sewer is made up of one 15-inch pipe and has a 54-inch outfall into Camp Creek. This system was implemented to satisfy the drainage needs caused by the complication of the different soil compositions in that area. Expansion of this network has been proposed, but the city's lack of curb and gutter systems would require complete reconstruction of existing streets.

Although water utilities improvements have been made in the past decade and the treatment facility is in very good condition, serious issues have been raised within recent years. The city's galvanized cast iron pipes are in poor condition and are seriously deteriorating. Evidence of extensive rusting has been identified by citizens residing in all different parts of the municipality.

The municipality's aged galvanized cast-iron mains have significant amounts of settled rust and mineral deposits, but average residential water use does not pull enough water to disturb these deposits. However, commercial and industrial uses can pull high rates of water through the system

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at once, lifting the settled rust deposits and suspending them. These particles remain in the flowing water for some time after the test terminates until they settle again. During this time, citizens will experience impaired water quality.

It is for these reasons that repairs and replacement of the city's fresh-water distribution system should be prioritized. The community's existing fresh-water treatment facility is a major asset and key factor to future population expansion and it is recommended that the community's distribution network follow suit. These desires have been further expressed by residents and identified as essential parts of future capital improvement plans.

Transportation

A city is both defined and constrained by the network of roads and sidewalks that facilitate the movement of its residents and goods throughout the community. A comprehensive and well-planned transportation system is essential to Mitchellville's long-term growth and vitality, and the ability to move goods and people is fundamental to maintaining a healthy community. Like most small towns in Iowa, Mitchellville's roadways and sidewalks are set up using a paved grid system. This allows for easy navigation with appropriate access to both homes and businesses. Although Mitchellville's transportation infrastructure has a solid base, specific areas are in need of improvement. Moving toward the future, Mitchellville's transportation goals should focus on repairing inadequate roadways along with expanding sidewalk and curb infrastructure. If proper steps are taken, Mitchellville's transportation infrastructure will help represent the town's great community character.

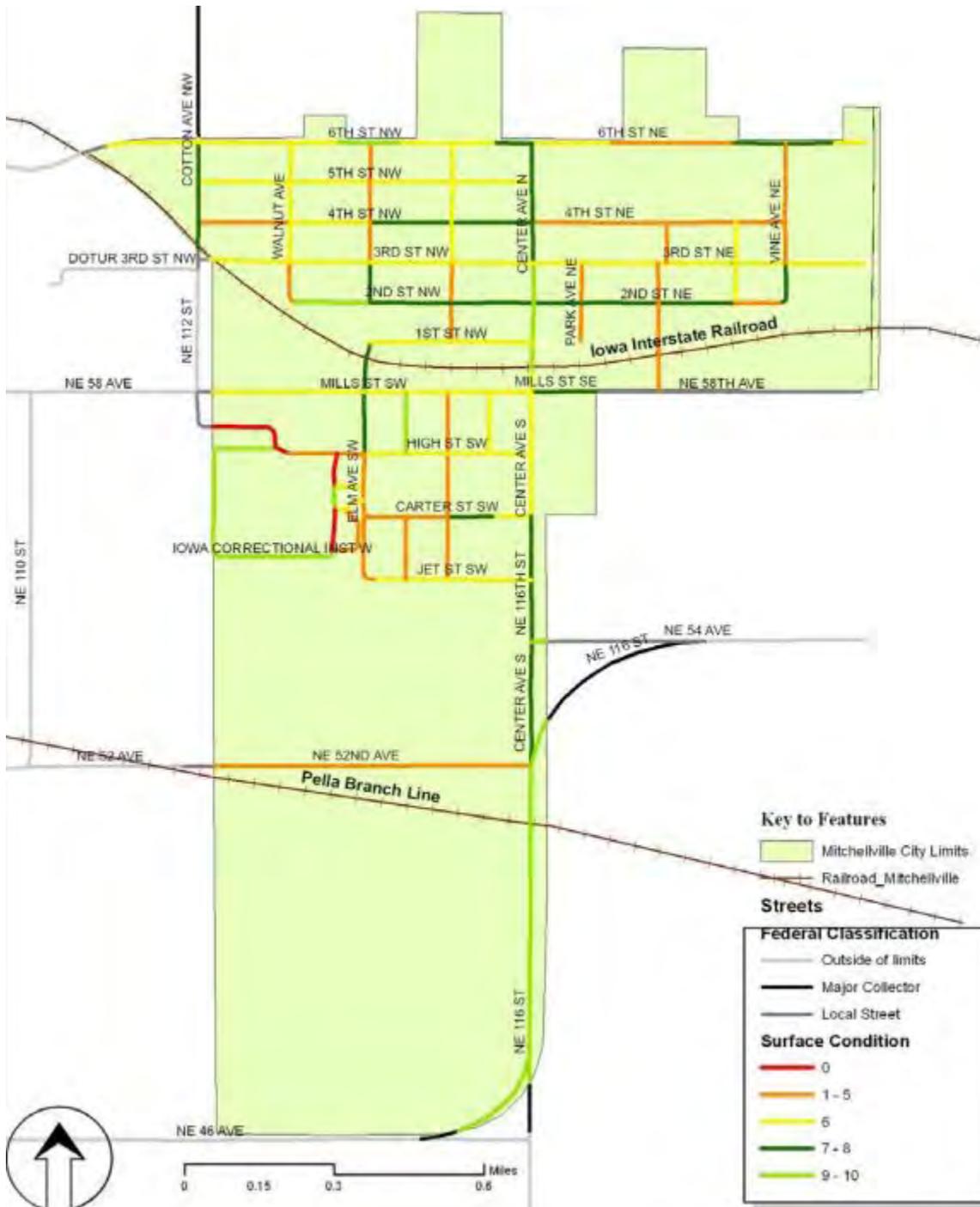
The city of Mitchellville contains about 15 miles of roadway made up of 35 streets.¹² All of these streets are surfaced with either concrete or asphalt but have minimal curbing. Sidewalks are present but are not consistent throughout the entirety of Mitchellville. Surface conditions related to roadways and sidewalks vary throughout Mitchellville but improvements can be made in both areas. Mitchellville also has a railway that runs northwest to southeast through the community.

The Iowa State team created questions for the residents of Mitchellville about current transportation infrastructure conditions. Many residents expressed their concern about deteriorating roadways and potholes.¹³ An inadequate roadway not only impacts Mitchellville's community character negatively but also poses a safety concern. The streets that were mentioned as the least suitable were 4th Street, 5th Street, 6th Street, Market Ave SW and Cotton Ave. These streets have been patched and coated over time but still show aging through cracks, chips, and crumbling shoulders. Residents of Mitchellville agreed that the existing infrastructure should be improved before moving outward for potential future growth. (Figure 6.4 is a road conditions map for Mitchellville from December 2006.)

The residents of Mitchellville also voiced their concerns on the lack of sidewalks and the surface condition of these sidewalks.¹⁴ Sidewalks are crucial to the safety of walkers and bikers. Without consistent sidewalks, residents are forced to walk in the street, creating unwanted danger. With the presence of the elementary school, it is also important to have a safe place for kids to walk to and from school. Most of the sidewalks are located in the northern part of the city north of Mills Street. These sidewalks are fairly consistent but are missing in scattered parcels. Some of the streets incorporate sidewalks on both sides, whereas some streets only have sidewalks on one side or none at all. As for the streets south of Mills Street, sidewalks are rarely present.

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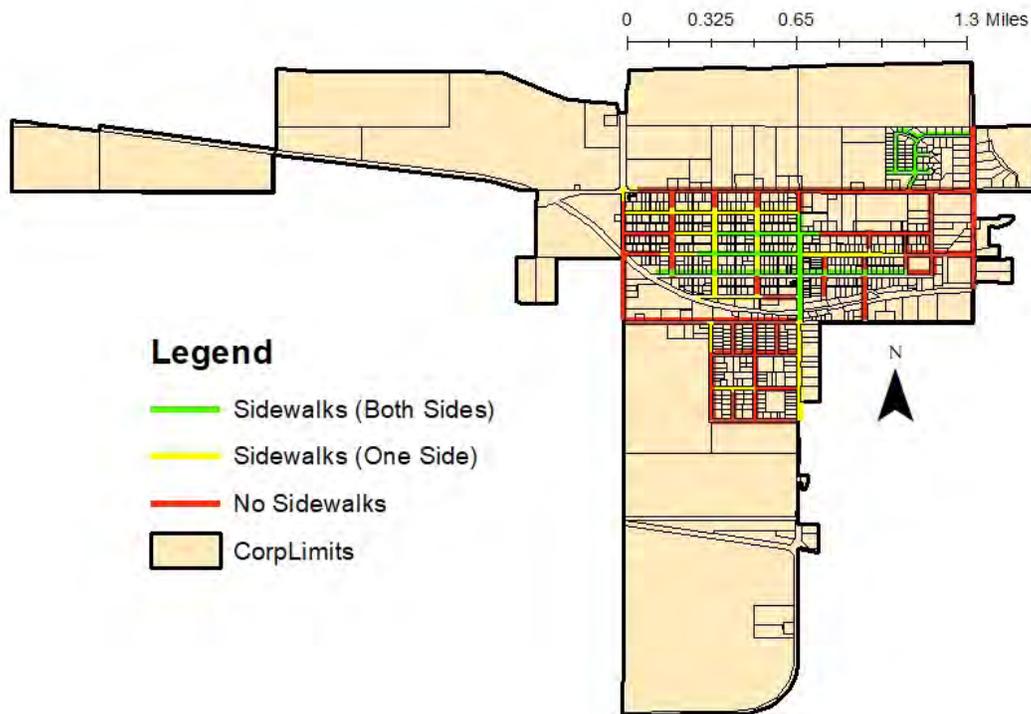
Figure 6.4. Mitchellville Road Conditions Map, December 2006



Source: 2006 Mitchellville Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

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Figure 6.5. Mitchellville Sidewalk Inventory



Lastly, the residents of Mitchellville expressed their concern about the absence of curbs. Some residents mentioned that snowplows tear up their yards because of the lack of curbs.¹⁵ Curbs are important because they set boundaries that distinguish where the road ends, helping people feel safe while driving and preventing them from driving off the road. Curbs are also vital for storm drains and water runoff. Curbs are scarce in Mitchellville. The only streets with curbing are Center Ave, 4th North Street, Mitchell Avenue, 2nd Street East, and Space Avenue.

Along with the street infrastructure, it is important to recognize the railway that travels through Mitchellville. In reference to the land use map, future industrial use is proposed for the northwest side of town. The railway could potentially draw industrial use to this specific area. The section of land along with the railway is also close to I-80, making it accessible by both truck and train. For these reasons, this location is a good candidate for industrial use.

Parks and Trails

Mitchellville currently has two parks: City Park and Killinger Park. City Park is the largest park and is located on the eastern edge of town. It has many attractions, such as baseball diamonds, a tennis court, a sand volleyball court, a basketball court, a disc golf course, a playground, pavilions, and restrooms. Killinger Park is a small open space with covered seating areas along Center Avenue. Residents also have the opportunity to use Thomas Mitchell Park, located just southwest of Mitchellville in Polk County. Mitchellville does not have any trails, but the city is located just outside the Des Moines area trail network.

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Figure 6.6. City Park, Mitchellville, IA



Figure 6.7. Killinger Park, Mitchellville, IA



During the public engagement process, residents expressed interest in making improvements to the park facilities and connecting Mitchellville to the nearby trail network.¹⁶ Some efforts have already been made to address these needs. The City of Mitchellville currently has a six-phase master plan and budgetary estimate for making improvements to City Park, and the abandoned railway between Mitchellville and Prairie City is currently in the process of becoming a trail.

The City Park master plan focuses on improving what is already existing within the park as well as adding other amenities, including a dog park. The plan is highly focused on organized activities (e.g., sports fields) and outdoor space for an active population.¹⁷ There is little leisure space for outdoor relaxation in City Park. Mitchellville should plan to create other alternatives. Killinger Park, which is not included in the master plan, has potential for improvement as an enhanced outdoor leisure space. Because Mitchellville is so close to the Des Moines area trail network, there is the opportunity for the city to create trails and connect to the vastly traveled trail system. Creating trails that connect Mitchellville to the trail network and trail-user community can increase amenities within the town as well as bring in visitors.

Goals and Recommendations

Land Use

1. Plan for a mix of uses between the north and northwestern edges of the city and I-80.

Mitchellville can take advantage of the proximity to I-80 and the rail line by planning for a variety of uses in this area.

- Specific Recommendations
 - Set aside space for a mix of heavy and light industrial in the northwest.
 - Allow flexibility of development west of 112th Street and south of I-80 for commercial, industrial, or retail.

2. Revise the city zoning code to limit specific uses that are allowed in certain use zones.

Zoning codes can allow a city to become more selective with what types of commercial and industrial uses are allowed.

- Specific Recommendation
 - Create ordinances restricting certain types of unwanted industrial uses. The city can enact ordinances that prevent development of different types of industrial that is unwanted in certain areas. City residents have expressed their concerns over industrial uses in the northwest of the city. The potential effects from industrial uses are generally minimal, but some effects may be extremely undesirable. A full list of potential effects is located in the land use section above.

3. Create special use zones for senior housing and manufactured housing.

The city can better regulate these uses to provide living areas for people 55 years old or older and to hold manufactured housing to a higher standard.

- Specific Recommendations
 - Create a special use zone for manufactured housing that sets standards to maintain high-quality areas for low-income housing.
 - Place senior housing in a Planned Residential District.

4. Provide space for residential development to accommodate future population growth.

Mitchellville has the potential to grow in the future and follow the trend of the surrounding communities.

- Specific Recommendations
 - Plan for expanded residential space in the north between I-80 and northeast 6th Street.
 - Expand low-density residential south of Mill Street.

Annexation

1. Outline an approach for future annexation.

Approving a strategy for future annexation will better position the community going forward while striving to attain its goals.

- Specific Recommendations
 - Approve a future annexation map.
 - Adopt a phased annexation approach. Phased annexation will allow the city to manage growth and prioritize certain parcels so growth occurs in the most efficient way possible.
 - Consider a 28E agreement with surrounding communities to halt annexation in specific areas. If annexation is not something with which Mitchellville is ready to move forward

6. Land Use and Infrastructure

in the near future, a 28E agreement should be considered. A 28E agreement is a legal approach communities employ to restrict annexation in certain areas.⁵ Benefits include the giving communities the ability to focus on infill development rather than expansion, and the time to form plans for annexation at a later time.

2. Use annexation as a way to accommodate for future growth.

As highlighted in the Chapter Three, Community Character, Mitchellville could see a substantial population increase by 2040, so planning for this growth will be key.

- Specific Recommendations (see figure 6.8)
 - Annex land to provide space for a potential influx of new residents. Annexing land for residential use near existing residential zones is recommended.
 - Annex land to accommodate a potential push to increase the tax base. Increasing the tax base has been a topic mentioned repeatedly; having available land for commercial and industrial uses will be a necessity.

Utilities and Transportation

1. Update the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

The CIP will create a time line and budget to plan future infrastructure projects.

- Specific Recommendations
 - Replace, reconfigure, and repair the city's existing potable water distribution network to improve water quality and better situate Mitchellville to accommodate future growth.
 - Identify and plan for the implementation of a citywide storm sewer network. Mitchellville should anticipate expanding the storm sewer network within the next several decades to control large weather events, mitigate property damage, and displace increased runoff from future development.
 - Identify streets that are in the most need of repair.
 - Pair a water main replacement plan with each major road replacement project.
 - Improve and maintain railway quality for potential future industrial use in the northwest side of town.

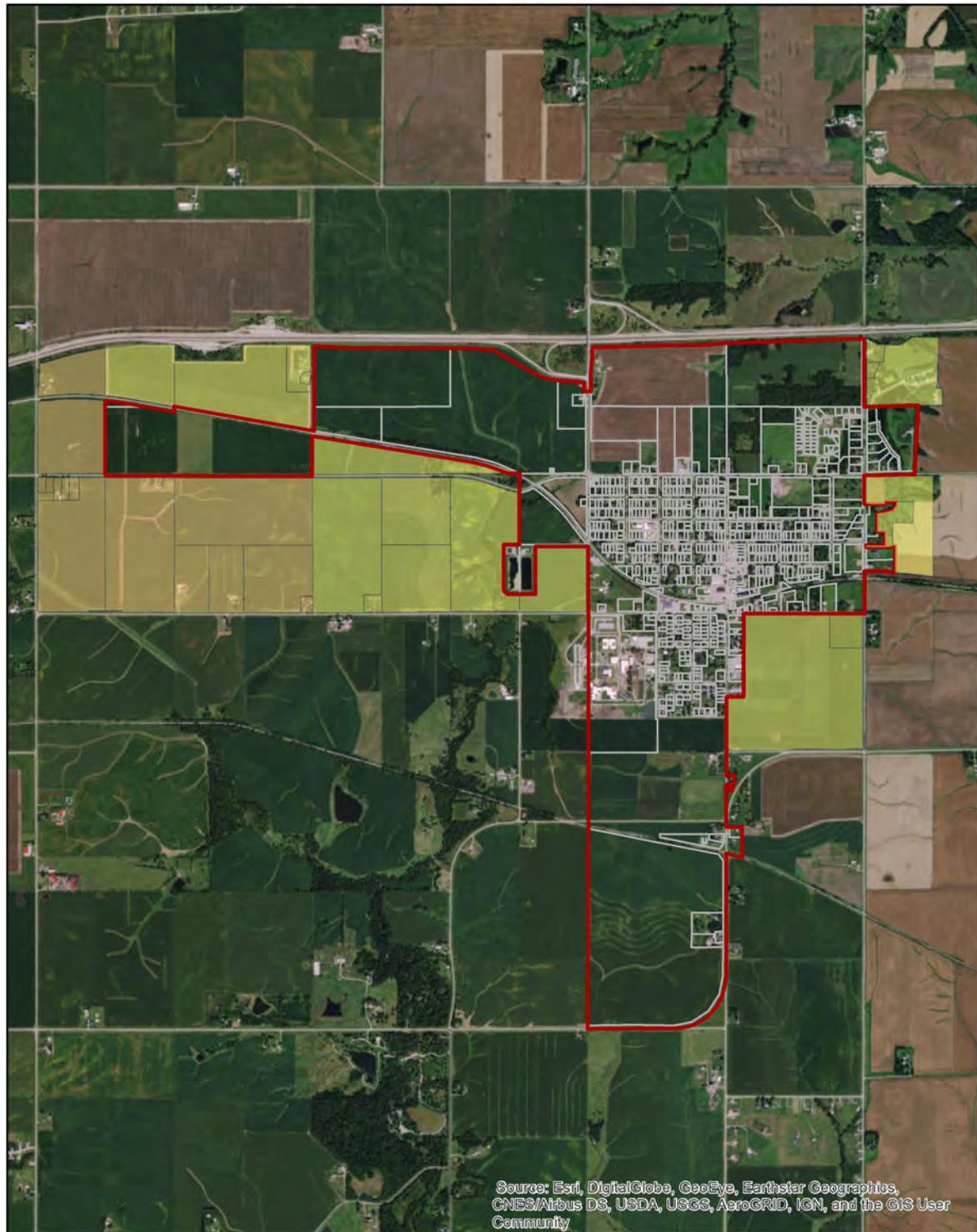
2. Improve existing transportation infrastructure using the Complete Streets Model.

Including sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide-paved shoulders), frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and so on will create safe streets for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.¹⁸

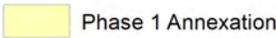
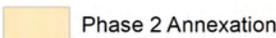
- Specific Recommendations
 - Implement streets with well-marked pedestrian crossings, adequate street paint, signs, medians, etc.
 - Establish sidewalks on both sides of the street.
 - Establish a curb system that is in line with the water management infrastructure.

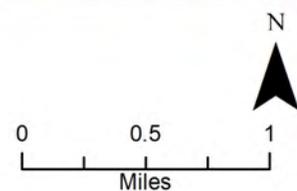
6. Land Use and Infrastructure

Figure 6.8. Mitchellville Future Annexation Map



Legend

-  Phase 1 Annexation
-  Phase 2 Annexation
-  Current Mitchellville Parcels
-  Current City Limits



6. Land Use and Infrastructure

Parks and Trails

1. Create a variety of park spaces that appeal to a wide range of ages.

Mitchellville should provide outdoor spaces for different lifestyles and activities, and create outdoor destinations through beautification.

- Specific Recommendations
 - Provide space for organized activity (e.g. sports fields and play areas) and space for outdoor leisure (sitting areas).
 - Use the City Park Master Plan to guide park improvements.
 - Plan new parks with new residential development.
 - Incorporate low-maintenance landscaping in the parks for increased visual appeal and easy upkeep.

Figure 6.9. Example of Leisure Space



Source: Homesfeed.com.

2. Increase Mitchellville's connectivity to the existing trails and parks system in the area.

Connecting Mitchellville to the trail network would allow residents to easily use the nearby trails and would attract trail users from the surrounding communities, sparking economic development and tourism.

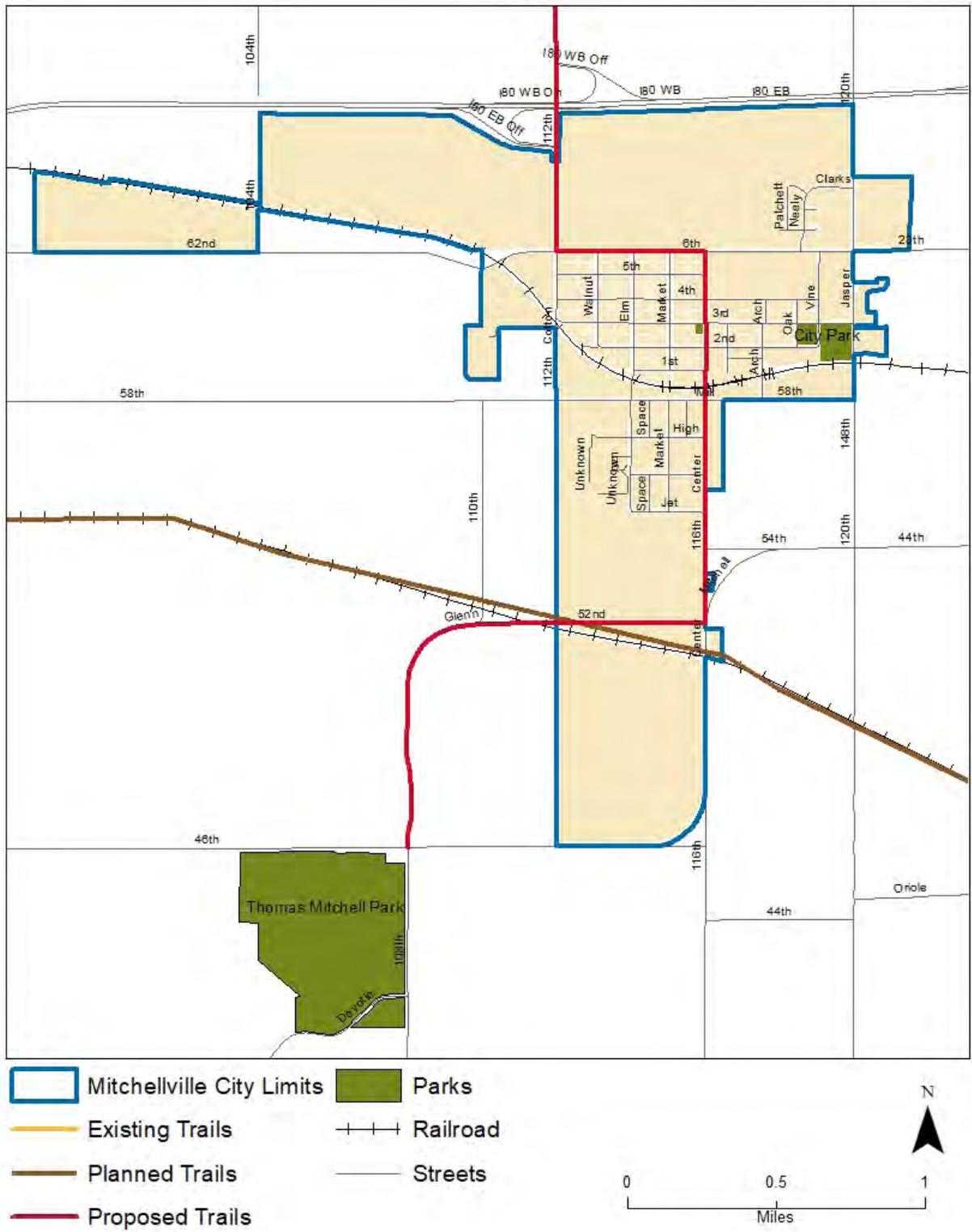
- Specific Recommendations (see figures 6.10 and 6.11)
 - Build new trails that connect to the Chichaqua Valley Trail and Thomas Mitchell Park.
 - Create trails through Mitchellville to increase trail connections and attract visitors.
 - Apply for the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning program to help build, brand, and landscape trails.

Conclusion

Mitchellville is in a unique situation in terms of future development. The city wants to maintain its rural character but also grow to increase the tax base and increase amenities within the city. In order to do both, Mitchellville needs to grow at a controlled pace. Creating a phased annexation plan can help achieve this goal. From there, Mitchellville should focus on increasing commercial and industrial uses, and later residential areas to accommodate for the expected population growth. The city should update the CIP to plan for utilities and transportation infrastructure to improve quality, and plan for future growth and expansion. Improving recreational infrastructure by creating parks for all ages and connecting Mitchellville to the trail network will improve quality of life for residents and create attractions for visitors from the surrounding communities.

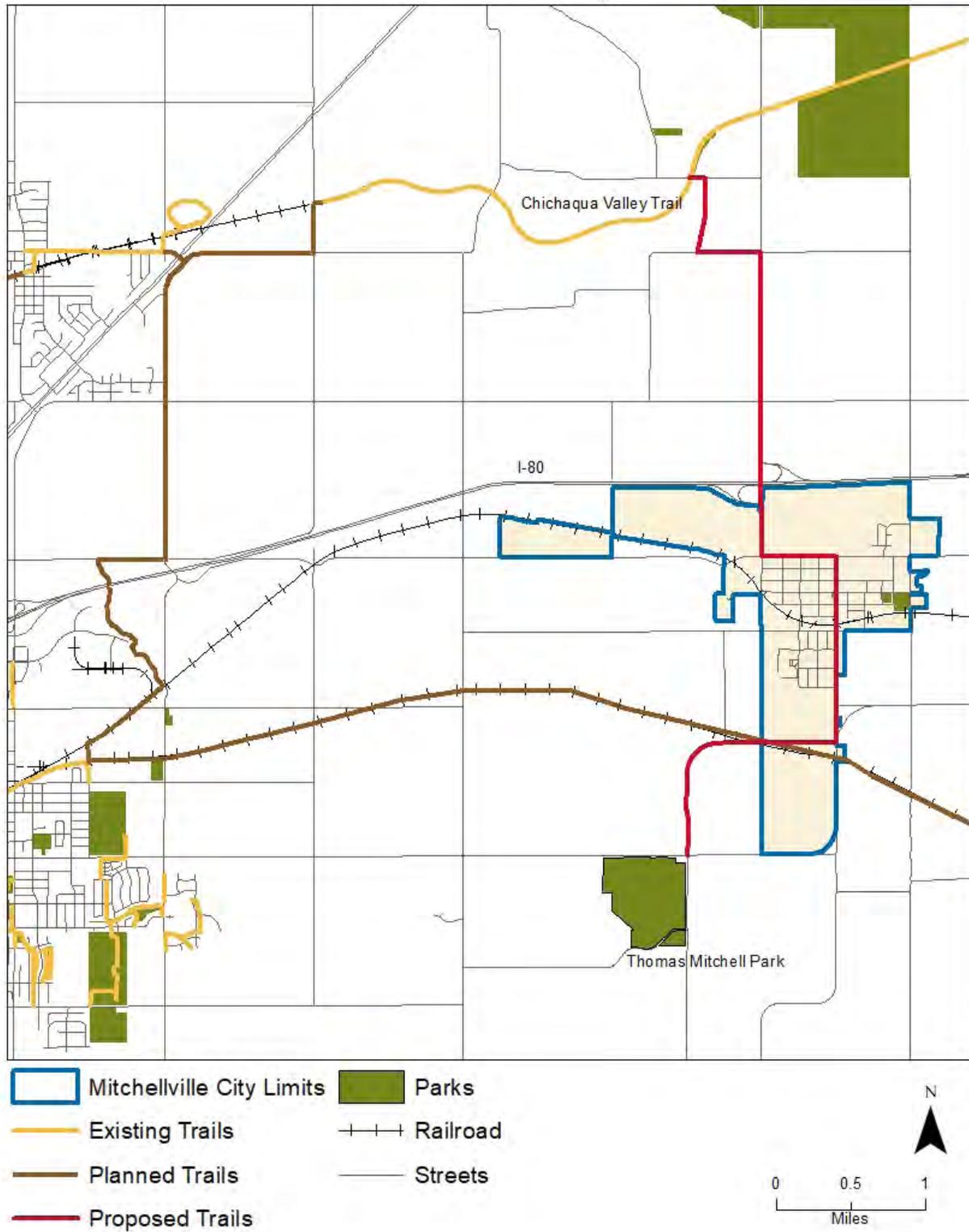
6. Land Use and Infrastructure

Figure 6.10. Mitchellville Proposed Trail Map



6. Land Use and Infrastructure

Figure 6.11. Mitchellville and Surrounding Parks and Trails



References

1. City of Mitchellville Zoning Map. August, 31 2017.
2. Focus group with residents from Mitchellville, IA, September 25, 2017.
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4. See note 2 above
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6. Land Use and Infrastructure

Conclusion

The purpose of the Mitchellville Comprehensive Plan is to promote the orderly growth and development of the city and to ensure the future reflects the vision of the community. The success of the Mitchellville Comprehensive Plan will be dependent upon strong leadership among city staff and the Mitchellville community. Buy in and support from Mitchellville citizens is necessary to accomplishing the goals set forth in this chapter.

The implementation portion of this comprehensive plan will act as a guide for executing the vision presented in the previous five chapters. This chapter will provide a schedule of implementation and a framework for evaluating the success of the plan.

- Evaluation of Implementation: This section will establish a process to evaluate the progress of the plan and ensure that the goals set forth in the schedule of implementation are being met.
- Updating of the Plan: This section will discuss a time frame for updating the plan to allow for adjustments.
- Schedule of Implementation: This section will summarize the proposed programs, policies, and capital projects, as well as a time frame for their implementation.

Implementation

Evaluation of Implementation

The Mitchellville Comprehensive Plan is a long-range effort, spanning over the course of 20 years. It is important to maintain awareness of the plan so that the City of Mitchellville is meeting its goals. The best way to evaluate the progress of implementation is to undergo yearly evaluations. Annual Evaluations should be conducted by the city staff at the end of each year in the form of a written report. The report should include:

- A summary of the year's land use decisions and developments and how, or if, they relate to the comprehensive plan.
- A review of the city's progress toward implementation and confirmation that the city is staying on schedule within the time frame.
- Challenges faced in the process of implementation.
- Any changes in conditions that call for an amendment to the plan.

Changes to the Plan

The comprehensive plan is a living document and should be responsive to changes in circumstances that present issues or new opportunities. The Mitchellville Comprehensive Plan reflects the vision of its citizens, so any changes to it should undergo a public participation process before an official decision is made. All changes to the plan should be in the spirit of the plan and in the interest of the community.

7. Conclusion and Implementation

Updating the Plan

Once every five years, a more intensive evaluation of the plan should be conducted. This should be a formal review that amends out-of-date or irrelevant sections and policies. The Mitchellville City Council should allow for recommendations from city staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission. Changes should not be undertaken without undergoing a public participation process.

Schedule of Implementation

Table 7.1 provides a comprehensive list of this plan's recommendations along with the time frame and partners.

Each recommendation is labeled under its chapter. This table includes several types of recommendations:

- Policy indicates the regulations for the control of location, aesthetics, and form of a private project.
- Program is an effort that is led by community leaders, both on city staff and in the community.
- Capital Projects are efforts that are funded, built, and maintained by the city.

Each recommendation includes a time frame for implementation:

- Ongoing: Programs that should be continuously carried out during the course of the plan.
- Short term: Projects that should be completed first and will lay the groundwork for longer-term goals and can be started now.
- Medium term: Projects that are larger scale and will take more preparation to accomplish.
- Long term: Projects that may not happen within the 20-year scope of this plan, but could be enacted if Mitchellville experiences as much growth as projected.

Partners are also associated with each recommendations. These are city entities or outside groups that will execute these goals. Table 7.2 is a list of funding sources available to assist in completion of the comprehensive plan.

Chapter 2: Planning Process	Type	Time frame	Partners
2.1 Leadership Development/ Capacity Building			
Develop a unique program to meet the needs of the commuting population	Program	On-going	ISU Extension and Outreach and City Council
Create a seed fund to support the development of new community organizations	Capital	Medium	City Council and local organizations
Develop a youth advisory board to inform city projects	Program	Medium	Local FFA and 4H clubs
2.2 Early and consistent participation opportunities			
Adopt participation guidelines	Policy	Short	City Hall and City Council
Develop community advisory committees to aid in the implementation of this plan	Program	Short	ISU Extension and Outreach

7. Conclusion and Implementation

Table 7.1 Implementation Schedule			
Increase opportunities for participation at community events such as the community dinners, organization meetings, or Thomas Mitchell Days.	Program	Ongoing	City Hall and City Council
2.3 Improve Communication with ICIW			
Create a liaison position between the city and the ICIW or set up a regular meeting between the mayor and the warden on a yearly or twice yearly basis	Program	Short	City Council
Maintain current opportunities for residents and inmates to interact	Program	Ongoing	Community Center operation staff
2.4 Improve Dissemination of Information			
Continue posting information on the light board outside the library, flyers on doors, or on the back of the water bill	Program	Medium	City Hall staff, ISU marketing class
Work with an ISU marketing class to update the Facebook page and website	Program	Short	City Hall staff
Creating a texting list to let people know about upcoming meetings and opportunities for participation	Program	Short	City Hall staff
Create a podcast or other small sound-bite with a review of the weekly or monthly happenings in Mitchellville that residents can listen to on their commute	Program	Medium	City Hall staff, community volunteers
Chapter 3: Community Character	Type	Time frame	Partners
3.1 Fill in Gaps in Community Resources			
Identify and map community resources	Program	Short	ISU Extension and Outreach
Research rural health care provider options	Capital	Medium	City Council or community group
3.2 Adopt Design Standards			
Develop design standard guidelines	Policy	Medium	City Council, Planning & Zoning Commission
Utilize the design standard guidelines to use for future development and to maintain current buildings and roads	Capital	Long	City Council

7. Conclusion and Implementation

Table 7.1 Implementation Schedule			
Chapter 4: Economic Development	Type	Time frame	Partners
4.1 Create an Economic Attraction to Mitchellville			
Recruit businesses who specialize in agricultural services or food systems.	Program	Medium	ISU Startup Factory and Chamber of Commerce
Use empty storefronts as small office spaces for new startups in the agricultural or food systems field.	Capital or Program	Long	Chamber of Commerce
4.2 Support both sustainable commercial and industrial growth			
Direct infrastructure development out to the west to support new industrial and/or commercial uses near the interstate	Capital/ Policy	Medium	Planning and Zoning Commission
Focus residential development in the north central area of the community	Capital/ Policy	Medium	City Council
4.3 Take advantage of federal and state financial support options			
Explore the possibility of using urban renewal including the creation of one or more TIF districts to support new residential and business development.	Policy	Medium	Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council
4.4 Beautify Main Street and the downtown corridor			
Consider tree plantings along the corridor in varieties that are best for street tree use	Capital	Long	ISU Forestry Club or Urban Forestry Class
Work with local organizations to host regular downtown beautification volunteer projects	Program	Medium	Lions Club, Kiwanis, 4-H, FFA
Chapter 5: Housing	Type	Time frame	Partners
5.1 Encourage the development of a mix of housing types			
Allow for greater flexibility for housing types in current and future residential zones.	Policy	Medium	Planning and Zoning Commission
5.2 Encourage the development of more senior housing options			
Create financial package marketed towards developers that incentivizes the development of senior-friendly housing.	Capital	Medium	Chamber of Commerce or City Council
Support the establishment of an independent-assisted living complex for residents 65 and older with a modest number of units	Program	Medium	Housing Consultant and City Council

7. Conclusion and Implementation

Table 7.1 Implementation Schedule			
5.3 Encourage the use of housing related grants, loans, and other funding sources available to homeowners and developers			
Consider creating a housing consultant position within city government that acts as a helping point for community members seeking advice or information relating to housing resources	Program	Medium	City Council
Continuously research available incentives and financial tools available to persons of low-income for obtaining a home and home rehabilitation	Program	Medium	Housing Consultant
5.4 Encourage the use of housing related grants, loans, and other funding sources available to homeowners and developers cont.			
Continuously research available incentives and financial tools available to developers and nonprofits so that building affordable housing developments is feasible	Program	Medium	Housing Consultant
Chapter 6: Land Use and Infrastructure	Type	Time frame	Partners
6.1.a. Land Use - Plan for a mix of uses between the northern/northwestern edges of the city and I-80			
Set aside space to the northwest for a mix of Heavy and Light Industrial.	Policy	Short	Planning and Zoning Commission
Allow flexibility for the parcel of land directly west of 112th street and south of I-80 for commercial or industrial.	Policy	Short	Planning and Zoning Commission
6.1.b. Land Use - Revise city zoning code to account for specific uses allowed in different zones			
Create ordinances restricting certain types of unwanted industrial uses	Policy	Short	Planning & Zoning Commission
6.1.c. Land Use - Create special use zones for senior housing and manufactured housing			
Create a special use zone for manufactured housing that sets standards to maintain high quality areas for affordable housing	Policy	Medium	Housing Consultant
Place senior housing in a Planned Residential District	Policy	Medium	Housing Consultant
6.1.d. Land Use - Provide space for residential development to accommodate future population growth			
Plan for expanded residential space in the north between I-80 and northeast 6th Street.	Policy	Medium	Planning and Zoning Commission
Expand Low Density Residential south of Mill Street.	Policy	Medium	Housing Consultant

7. Conclusion and Implementation

Table 7.1 Implementation Schedule			
6.2.a. Annexation - Outline an approach for future annexation			
Approve a future annexation map	Policy	Short	City Council
Adopt a phased annexation approach	Policy	Short	City Council
Consider a 28E agreement with surrounding communities to halt annexation in specific areas.	Program	Medium	City Council
6.2.b. Annexation - Outline an approach for future annexation			
Annex land to provide space for a potential influx of new residents	Policy	Medium	City Council
Annex land to accommodate an increase in the tax base	Policy	Medium	City Council
6.3.a. Utilities and Transportation - Update the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)			
Replace, reconfigure, and repair the city's existing potable water distribution network	Capital	Medium	City staff
Identify and plan for the implementation of a city-wide storm sewer network	Capital	Long	City staff
Identify streets that are in the most need of repair	Capital	Medium	City staff
Pair a water main replacement plan with each major road replacement project	Capital	Medium	City staff
Improve and maintain railway quality for potential future industrial use in the northwest side of town	Capital	Medium	City staff
6.3.b. Utilities and Transportation - Improve existing transportation infrastructure using the Complete Streets Model			
Implement streets with well marked pedestrian crossings, adequate street paint, signs, medians, etc.	Capital	Long	City staff, local community organizations
Establish sidewalks on both sides of the street	Capital	Medium	City staff
Establish a curb system that is in line with the water management infrastructure	Capital	Medium	City staff
6.4.a. Parks and Trails - Create a variety of park spaces that appeal to a wide range of ages			
Provide space for organized activity and space for outdoor leisure	Capital	Short	Community groups
Use the City Park Master Plan to guide park improvements	Capital	Short	City staff
Plan new parks with new residential development	Program	Medium	Planning and Zoning Commission
Incorporate low-maintenance landscaping in the parks for increased visual appeal and easy upkeep	Capital	Short	City staff

7. Conclusion and Implementation

6.4.b. Parks and Trails - Increase Mitchellville's connectivity to the existing parks and trails system in the area			
Build new trails that connect to the Chichaqua Valley Trail and Thomas Mitchell Park	Capital	Short	City staff, community volunteers
Create trails passing through Mitchellville to attract visitors	Capital	Medium	Community groups
Apply for the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning program to help build, brand, and landscape trails	Capital	Short	City Council

Program	Entity	Benefits
Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program in Iowa ¹	US Department of Agricultural Rural Development	Provides low- and moderate-income households opportunity to own adequate, modest, decent, safe and sanitary dwellings as their primary residence in eligible rural areas. Eligible applicants may build, rehabilitate, improve or relocate a dwelling in an eligible rural area
Single Family Housing Direct Home Loans in Iowa ²	US Department of Agricultural Rural Development	Also known as the Section 502 Direct Loan Program, this program assists low- and very-low-income applicants obtain decent, safe and sanitary housing in eligible rural areas by providing payment assistance to increase an applicant's repayment ability
Multi-Family Housing Direct Loans in Iowa ³	US Department of Agricultural Rural Development	Provides competitive financing for affordable multi-family rental housing for low-income, elderly, or disabled individuals and families in eligible rural areas
Program	Entity	Benefits
Single Family Housing Repaid Loans & Grants in Iowa ⁴	US Department of Agricultural Rural Development	Also known as the Section 504 Home Repair program, this provides loans to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their homes or grants to elderly very-low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards
First Home Program ⁵	Iowa Finance Authority	Interest rates are typically lower than the market rate, 30 year terms and have fewer mortgage fees.
Military Homeownership Assistance Program ⁶	Iowa Finance Authority	\$5,000 grant for downpayment and closing costs on a qualifying home purchase

7. Conclusion and Implementation

Program	Entity	Benefits
Housing Tax Credit Program ⁷	Iowa Finance Authority	<p>Incentive for Housing Tax Credit project owners to invest in the development of rental housing for individuals and families with fixed or limited incomes</p> <p>The Housing Tax Credit, rather than a direct federal subsidy, provides a dollar for dollar reduction (or credit) to offset an owner's federal tax liability on ordinary income for a 10-year period</p>
Home & Community-Based Services Revolving Loan Fund ⁸	Iowa Finance Authority	Assists in the development and expansion of facilities and infrastructure that provide adult day services, respite services and congregate meals for low-income Iowans
Multifamily Housing Loan Program ⁹	Iowa Finance Authority	Provides a variety of affordable financing options to multifamily property owners and developers to assist in the preservation of existing affordable rental units and to foster the production of new affordable units in Iowa
Home Energy Savers Program ¹⁰	Iowa Community Action Association	Helps put energy efficiency upgrades within reach for Iowa families with a limited income
Variety of Applications for Housing Funding ¹¹	Polk County Housing Trust Fund	Allocates funds to local developers and service providers. Guided by community data and measured against progress toward specific goals of closing gaps in affordable housing inventory and services
Community Landscaping Program ¹²	Iowa's Living Roadway Trust Fund	Helps Iowa communities accomplish public projects, such as building trails.

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Mitchellville Comprehensive Plan
Focus Groups Report
September 2017



Conducted by students from the Iowa State University
Department of Community and Regional Planning

Sponsored by:
City of Mitchellville
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
Institute for Design Research and Outreach
Community and Regional Planning

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Foreword: Thank You Mitchellville

On September 25, 2017, a group of undergraduate and graduate students from Iowa State University conducted a series of focus groups in Mitchellville, Iowa. The focus groups were formed to garner input on the issues and opportunities for Mitchellville's future development. Students in the Community and Regional Planning Public Participation class acted as facilitators and reporters for each of the groups.

These students represented multiple personal backgrounds and histories. A few are from rural Iowa, but many more are from urban centers around the Midwest, and a variety of countries around the world. For many, this was their first trip to rural American community.

Universally, the students were impressed with Mitchellville and its residents. It was clear that both pride in their community and concern for the future was expressed in the focus groups. A clear picture of a great sense of community emerged.

Sometimes the best college education is achieved outside the classroom. What the students of CRP 432 experienced and learned that evening was something they can take with them well after graduation. They learned community. The hospitality shown by the Mitchellville community was appreciated and the students asked that a "thank you" to Mitchellville be incorporated into this report.

Executive Summary

Focus group participants' responses centered around Mitchellville residents' pride in their city. Residents who have spent their entire lives in the city, as well as residents who moved there later in life, cherish the "rurality" or small-town character that is so well preserved in Mitchellville. Residents believe that the city provides the feel of a small-town community, but is close enough to the Des Moines metro area to have access to big-city amenities. Despite these positive attributes, participants also identified areas of concern in regard to future growth, accommodating for the aging population, the lack of everyday amenities, and maintaining rural character amidst Des Moines metro growth.

Older and younger residents had differing outlooks on the future of the city. Younger residents indicated a strong desire to stay small and focus on the improvement of current homes, infrastructure, and facilities before expanding. Younger residents also desire greater day-care options and parks and recreation opportunities. Older residents emphasized the need for the city to grow in order to sustain itself. Older residents also expressed a need for local medical services, because currently they have to travel to the Des Moines Metro for any health-care related need. Both groups expressed a need to provide greater housing opportunities for the aging members of the population. Another area of focus centered around improvements to city infrastructure. Many participants brought up the need for improved storm sewer facilities, road surface improvements, and water quality issues.

The Iowa Correctional Institute for Women (ICIW) was an additional point of consensus amongst the groups' responses. Most believe that the relationship between the city and the ICIW is not a negative one, but could be strengthened. Some mentioned that the ICIW has helped with funding infrastructure improvements in the past. Residents would like to see this support continue when considering future civic improvements.

What is a Focus Group?

Focus group methodologies have been used for decades as a means of market and product research and for political research as well. Today these methodologies are used for many purposes, including program development, evaluation, planning and needs assessment (Krueger and Casey, 2000). According to Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (Larson, et. al, 2004:1), focus groups share the following features:

1. A clear plan for controlled process and environment in which interactions among participants take place,
2. Use of a structured process to collect and interpret data, and
3. Participants selected based on characteristics they share, as opposed to differences among them.

Conducting focus groups typically involves a facilitator asking questions to solicit discussion among the group's members. Usually a focus group will consist of 6–10 people who are homogeneous through a shared characteristic. While focus groups are based upon shared characteristics (e.g., age, gender, occupation, shared interest, geography, etc.), their comments cannot be generalized or quantified to a larger population.

Appendix A

While facilitators come with prepared questions for focus groups, there is merit in allowing a free flowing discussion as well. While there is a need to be on task to address key concerns or questions, the freedom of focus-group discussion can allow for opinions or topics to arise that may not have been considered beforehand (Franz, 2011). Therefore, focus groups can be of great value in helping to define issues and concerns about a community, because the recorded discussion can richly expand upon the initial questions asked.

The use of focus groups as a method for gathering qualitative data has become a widespread practice within the realm of community development. Whereas one-on-one interviews with local residents are time-consuming and yield detailed data regarding individual opinions and experiences, the use of the focus-group method aims to more efficiently gather a large amount of data on broad themes and the general consensus of residents. These data may then be compared to quantitative data collected through surveys in order to generate a holistic picture of the direction of planning and development within the community.

The Mitchellville Methodology

As stated earlier, focus groups are configured in a way that highlights a shared characteristic. In the case of Mitchellville, community leaders requested that five groups be formed:

1. Retired residents
2. Empty nesters
3. Young families
4. Business owners, and
5. Correctional facility employees

Twenty-six local residents participated in the focus groups. Size of the groups ranged from one to eight participants. The length of the sessions ranged from 45 minutes to one hour. Students facilitated and recorded the conversations.

The following guidelines and instructions were given to each of the five focus groups by student facilitators and reporters prior to asking questions:

We will be using a focus group method today to gain your input on some issues and opportunities affecting Mitchellville. A student facilitator will be asking the group a series of questions about your community. There are no wrong or right answers to these questions. They have been designed to encourage discussion within the group.

Let's go over some rules. First, let's all turn off our cell phones so we are not interrupted. So we can keep track of what people are saying, remember that we have one person talking at a time. Please do not interrupt someone when they are talking. We will summarize the things you tell us and combine it with other focus groups we are giving. One of my jobs today as the moderator is to make sure we discuss all of the issues we planned to discuss. If I ask you questions while you are talking, I'm not being rude; I'm just making sure everyone has a chance to talk and that we discuss all of the issues.

Please be advised that although the researchers will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of focus groups prevents the researchers from guaranteeing confidentiality. The researchers

would like to remind participants to respect the privacy of your fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.

- Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study.
- Any identifying information noted during the discussion will be deleted.
- Handwritten notes will be made of the focus group and an audio recording may be made. Both will be placed in a secure location upon completion of the class project and destroyed by the end of this spring semester.
- All electronic documents created from the notes will be password protected and destroyed upon completion of the class.

After the guidelines for discussion were reviewed, students facilitated each group with prepared questions. Follow-up questions were utilized to further spur discussion. In most groups, two students took notes and compared their recording with each other and the facilitator prior to submitting their reports.

Keep in mind that this report has been produced through the work of undergraduate students as part of their course work. The work reflects a variability depending upon the student's knowledge of focus-group methods and community planning in general. The subsequent sections in this report contain the notes and findings of the students for each of the five Mitchellville focus groups.

Focus Group Formation and Results

Retired Residents Focus Group

Facilitated by: Madalyn Smith, Haley Weber, and Kyle Napel

Group Description

A total of eight retirees took part in a 60-minute focus group as part of a comprehensive plan visioning process for the city of Mitchellville. The retirees represented in this group included pairs of spouses and also two brothers who have lived in Mitchellville their whole lives.

Questions and Discussion

What do you treasure about Mitchellville? What do you see as Mitchellville's greatest asset? Which aspects of Mitchellville's history are you most proud of? Why do you enjoy living and working in Mitchellville?

People treasured their memories of Mitchellville. Most were acquainted with each other, if not good friends, and had lived there for decades. They all agreed it was a really good community and was a great place to raise children. Only one member was a newer resident and said that this was the one place that felt like home. They all liked that it was safe. There was also some sadness. They had seen the town at its peak and had witnessed the decline in business and overall character. They were also proud of their town history, especially the founder, Thomas Mitchell.

Do you feel involved in local community decision making? What inhibits or promotes your involvement?

There are meetings at City Hall, but the environment is not super welcoming. Leaders in the town all have very strong opinions—most people in the group felt that their opinion was not welcome.

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There is also a lack of good communication between Mitchellville and its citizens. They have the town e-mail, but not everyone, especially the older generation, gets these. Mitchellville also does not have its own newspaper; residents rely on the Altoona Herald.

Is there a need for smaller or more age-friendly housing in Mitchellville? Why and what type?

Yes! There was a very clear consensus on this. All agree that independent-living apartments, similar to the Prairie Vista developments, should come to Mitchellville. There are several in Altoona and Ankeny, but they all have long waiting lists. All agreed that they needed not just townhomes, but a place that would provide some more services such as buses to take them to the store, to activities, and to the doctor. Many retirees are active in the community and want to stay, but they have no options that allow them to stay in Mitchellville.

What makes Mitchellville a good retirement community and /or what would make Mitchellville a better retirement community?

All agreed that Mitchellville would be a great retirement community, because all their friends were there. They are also active in community organizations, but if they move they can't participate anymore. Most grew up with each other and were close and said it's hard to start over. They said that there are not really any options for them to retire there comfortably. The main barrier is housing and transportation. They also recognized that those in need of retirement services currently will not benefit from this plan, but still saw it as important.

What keeps you attracted to Mitchellville?

We did not ask this question specifically, but it is clear that the community, churches, organizations, and friends and family keep participants attracted to Mitchellville.

How would you describe access to health care?

Most of the retirees indicated that they would like to see more health-care facilities in Mitchellville. Many respondents said that they had to drive to clinics in Altoona or West Des Moines for their medical care.

What would describe your ideal Mitchellville today, and what would an ideal Mitchellville look like in 20 years?

In general, the retirees want growth as well as more shopping, food, services, and entertainment facilities. Respondents mentioned a grocery store, fast-food restaurants, a bank, and a citywide Wi-Fi network. It was important for them to maintain their identity and not be absorbed by Altoona or other surrounding communities. They support the recent talk of adding industrial development and think that many in their community were not informed on what this type of development would mean for Mitchellville. In general, they wanted to use Mitchellville's existing assets such as its close proximity to rail and the interstate as well as its sense of community to grow. Respondents mentioned that other growing communities, unlike Mitchellville, have taken chances that have helped them grow.

What kinds of community resources or amenities would you like to see in the future? Are the current parks and trails adequate?

In terms of community resources, retirees stressed that there needs to be greater resources for those residents who are struggling financially or are in poverty. The Lion's Club's Yard of the Month event

was discussed and it was mentioned that through that event it was evident that many do not care about the appearance of their homes. This lack of care or maintenance was attributed to the number of residents in poverty. More positive aspects mentioned were the parks, talks of implementing more bike trails, the senior lunch, and Habitat for Humanity's involvement with the prison. They did mention that the tennis court is in need of major repairs and upkeep.

Are there transportation issues that affect driving, walking, or biking in Mitchellville? If so can you provide some details?

Yes, there are a few issues and concerns involving transportation. Most of the roads in Mitchellville contain cracks and potholes. There is not a consistent sidewalk system throughout the town and the sidewalks located around Main Street are in need of repair. Improvements need to be made to the transportation system but there seems to be no budget. There was also a brief discussion about a need for a bus route that takes residents into Altoona/Des Moines.

The current population of Mitchellville is around 2,000 people; how do you see the population changing in the future? Do you see this change having a positive or negative effect on your community?

As Mitchellville grows older, so does its population. The older/senior community is eventually going to be gone, leaving the younger families with young kids. The older community seems to think that younger families are less involved with Mitchellville because of their busier lifestyle. Retirees once saw Mitchellville as an independent town with grocery and hardware stores and want Mitchellville to regain its independence; however, they are unsure of the community's opinions of expansion.

What types of businesses would you like to see in Mitchellville and on its Main Street?

Retirees would like to see more businesses when it comes to Main Street. They want things such as ice cream shops and other little stores to bring life to the commercial district. They briefly mentioned that Mitchellville's taxes rely too heavy on residential taxes and would like to see help from commercial.

Where do you do your shopping? For groceries? How often do shop online?

When it comes to shopping in Mitchellville, options are very limited. When it comes to groceries, the only businesses available are Casey's and Dollar General. These options are fine when it comes to little things such as milk and bread but residents have to drive to Altoona for a full grocery store. There was no discussion of online shopping.

Describe this community's relationship with the Iowa Correctional Institute for Women.

The correctional facility and Mitchellville have a minor relationship but retirees would like to see a stronger relationship. The prison has helped with minor city infrastructure improvements and has had prisoners come and help serve senior lunches. Also, Mitchellville gets more state attention because of the prison.

What priorities should drive Mitchellville's future land use?

Mitchellville's retirees feel like a stronger commercial district should be a priority. There are a few businesses, including Diamond Crystal, Dollar General, and Casey's, but there needs to be more. There was talk of possibly building a local swimming pool. Most of Mitchellville's residents commute to Altoona and Des Moines for commercial needs. The retirees want to see more of those businesses in Mitchellville to keep the money local.

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Summary

Overall, retirees have a positive view of Mitchellville. Participants said that the community is friendly and a good place to raise a family. However, they recognized the decline in services over the years and expressed a desire for change in terms of better local retail services and a grocery store. Participants also think that more services are needed for the senior population and impoverished residents, including housing to suit those residents as well as access to health-care facilities in town. They cited transportation issues, including poor road conditions and lack of public transportation around Mitchellville. Additionally, retirees would like to see an expansion and maintenance of recreational facilities in Mitchellville. Participants expressed a desire for a stronger relationship between the Iowa Women's Correctional Facility and the city and residents.

Empty Nesters Focus Group

Facilitated by: Megan Koppenhafer, Devin Kamperschroer, and Bryan Morrissey

Group Description

A total of eight empty nesters took part in a 60-minute focus group as part of a comprehensive plan visioning process for the city of Mitchellville. The empty nesters represented in this group included pairs of spouses who have lived in Mitchellville for many years.

Questions and Discussion

What would describe your ideal Mitchellville today, and what would an ideal Mitchellville look like in 20 years?

The empty nesters group collectively has a lot of history in the town of Mitchellville, as several of them have lived there most of their lives. The general response to the question about the positives about Mitchellville today included comments about the current character of the town, especially the overall feel of community. The front-porch mentality came up as well; the group members enjoy being able to see their neighbors outside and converse with them. They would also like to encourage more of this among newer members of the community.

Several of the comments about things the group members would like to see in Mitchellville came from things Mitchellville has had in the past but lost. For example, the group would like to see a grocery store return to the neighborhood, as well as a laundromat, a car wash, and more restaurants. The group likes the current housing stock, and would like to see the current houses refurbished along with the construction of new housing, within reason. In addition to features the town had at one time, the group would like to see more child-friendly amenities, such as an expanded parks system. Also mentioned was a connection to the extensive bike trail system surrounding Mitchellville.

What do you treasure about Mitchellville? What do you see as Mitchellville's greatest asset? Which aspects of Mitchellville's history are you most proud of? Why do you enjoy living and working in Mitchellville?

This group in particular believes that there is plenty to treasure in Mitchellville, feeling that the town is one of the best kept secrets in the Des Moines area. The empty nesters truly feel that their neighbors are a positive to the community because they can always be counted on if something goes wrong. In addition, the empty nester group believes that the condition of the houses in the community is an asset because homeowners keep their property in good condition. Residents also voiced their pleasure

in the town's proximity to the interstate and the ability to travel to surrounding cities such as Altoona and Des Moines with ease. Some residents also expressed how proud they are of Mitchellville's history, including some of the older churches in the community.

What kinds of community resources or amenities would you like to see in the future? Are the current parks and trails adequate?

The empty nesters focus group had plenty of opinions in terms of what resources are needed in Mitchellville, but one of the more strongly voiced opinions was that their needs to be more trees in the community. Residents would like to see a variety of trees line the streets of the city. In addition, participants desire more “mom and pop” stores, along with a grocery store. Lastly, residents did mention the need for more trails that could accommodate more walking and biking. There is also an interest in connecting possible future trails to trails from other surrounding communities.

Are there transportation issues that affect driving, walking, or biking in Mitchellville? If so can you provide some details?

The main issues surrounding transportation brought up by the group are pedestrian safety issues; at the same time, participants said they enjoy the sidewalk system around Mitchellville. Some residents carpool together to visit amenities in other towns such as the doctor or the grocery store. As the town grows it would be possible to connect it to the DART system. The majority of the group does commute, and they all live in Mitchellville

If there were jobs in Mitchellville would you work here?

When asked if the group would work in Mitchellville, the response was yes, as long as it was the right job.

The current population of Mitchellville is around 2000 people; how do you see the population changing? Do you see this change as being positive or negative?

Many in the empty nesters group expect the population of Mitchellville to increase eventually, based on the fact that many surrounding communities have seen a population surge recently. The empty nesters were unsure if the possible population surge would be a positive or negative, since it would depend on decisions being made in the future to address the possible changes. The group did voice its concerns about the aging population and the town's ability to house them, especially those aging residents who have lower incomes. Growth in relationship to light pollution was brought up as a concern and several participants agreed that the current lights were directed into people's homes, which they thought deserved attention. The group understands that Mitchellville is going to have to be creative to be able to adapt to future problems.

What do we need for Mitchellville to be a better retirement community?

The group mentioned how many of them have moved back to Mitchellville specifically for this reason. One individual moved here for a large lot in a small town. The group would like a grocery store for convenience that could possibly deliver to the senior community. Other suggestions included affordable retirement housing. The Eden Crest senior living facility was mentioned; a senior living facility with multi-stage living would be beneficial to the community. Other things mentioned that relate to the question but came up at different times during the discussion include the need for varying housing sizes and prices.

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Do you see this as being a place you will be in 10–20 years?

When asked if they would still be living in Mitchellville in 10 to 20 years, the group response was tentative. The majority of the group said they would stay as long as the community's character does not change too much. Although said as somewhat of a joke, one member of the group mentioned that as soon as there was a stoplight, they would leave.

Would you foresee yourselves having to change housing/downsize from the current home?

When asked if they might need to downsize their housing in the near future, the empty nesters group was split. Some did not think they would need to downsize, while others recognized that they need to look into smaller housing options in the near future.

What types of businesses would you like to see in Mitchellville on its Main Street or in other parts of town?

The members of the focus group were really attached to the idea of a grocery store coming to Mitchellville and this was mentioned many times throughout the discussion. This seemed to be the most important thing for empty nesters, especially as they considered retirement and their access to food. A few people mentioned restaurants being important. A few other businesses mentioned were: an office park or some other large employer to cushion the tax base, a fabric store, a variety of locally-owned businesses, and a farmers market. One thing the members mentioned was that they were sensitive to was how difficult having small businesses is and they said that Bondurant would be a good example of how to do it.

Where do you currently shop for necessities and groceries?

The members of the empty nesters focus group said they mainly shopped for their necessities and groceries in Altoona and Des Moines.

How often do you shop online?

The focus group participants were split on their online shopping habits. About half of them do and half of them do not. The ones who do said it was just really convenient because goods come right to their door and almost as quickly as going to the store.

Describe the relationship with the Iowa Women's Correctional Institute.

The members of the focus group thought that the town used to have really good relationship in which they could volunteer at the institute relatively easily. This has become more difficult in the past few years. The inmates volunteer in the community and with Habitat for Humanity, about which the community seemed to feel positively. Participants suggested they needed to connect with the new warden to bring back the volunteering opportunities. A council member who was present stepped in and mentioned that the current communication was based on whether or not the town had a problem with the institute at the time, but he said they were working to improve communication. The focus group members seemed to have a pretty positive view of the relationship overall, but they feel that the communication in recent years has been difficult.

What priorities should drive Mitchellville's future land use?

Participants focused on three concepts that they think should drive the future land use of Mitchellville. The one everyone seemed to agree on was growing and zoning in such a way that is sensitive to the needs of families. Half of the group is interested in growing in an environmentally

friendly way and half of the group is interested in growing in a way that supported businesses. Neither was opposed to the other's view but there was some debate over whether air quality should be compromised. Some people thought it was less of an issue than others.

Summary

The empty nesters focus group had much to say about the town's character. Participants believe that the small-town feel and neighborly relations is what makes Mitchellville a great place to live. A grocery store, other retail services such as small businesses and restaurants, and opportunities for a business park or large employer are among the things that participants think should come to Mitchellville. They also expressed a need for affordable age-friendly housing, preferably a facility with multistage living that allowed for downsizing among the senior population. They would also like to see current houses refurbished, along with the construction of new housing, and cited a need for different housing types. In terms of Mitchellville's growth, participants were split on whether growth should be environmentally friendly or whether it should support businesses. Participants agreed that any growth should proceed with awareness for the needs of families and the community. They also expressed a need for greater child-friendly amenities, such as the expansion of the current park system and connection to the extensive bike trail system outside of Mitchellville. Participants brought up transportation issues such as the lack of public transportation as well as sidewalk problems that cause pedestrian safety issues. Finally, the group expressed a desire for a greater bond with the Iowa Women's Correctional Facility, which used to have a greater role in the community than it does today.

Young Families Focus Group

Facilitated by: Conner Debben, Evann Martin, and Kelly Naumann

Group Description

A total of five members from young families took part in a 60-minute focus group as part of a comprehensive plan visioning process for the city of Mitchellville. The young families represented in this group included parents of children who attend Mitchellville's elementary school.

Questions and Discussion

What would describe your ideal Mitchellville today, and what would an ideal Mitchellville look like in 20 years.

The overall consensus for the ideal Mitchellville resembled its current state. The individuals like the small-town feeling of Mitchellville, where they know their neighbors and enjoy a sense of safety. They appreciate the size and character of the town; however, they would like to see some improvements in parks, sidewalks, and the infrastructure downtown. More family-oriented activities were cited as an ideal addition to the town as well. This included activities for "tweens" and teens, or a location for them to spend their time. Ideally, the population increase would be minimal and it was explicitly stated that doubling in size was not attractive to the group.

What do you treasure about Mitchellville? What do you see as Mitchellville's greatest asset? Which aspects of Mitchellville's history are you most proud of? Why do you enjoy living and working in Mitchellville?

All of the participants agreed that they enjoy the tight-knit community of Mitchellville, how most residents know each other, and the sense of family. They like that there are church activities to be

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involved in, especially for children. The general consensus was that everyone feels safe within the community and that there are no real concerns of danger, especially regarding children. They agreed that Thomas Mitchell Days is a really great event where people get to show off and see the community, and that it is a way to bring people together and to learn more about the history of the town. They also really like the library and said that their kids utilize the services often.

The current population of Mitchellville is around 2,000 people, how do you see the population changing in the future? Do you see this change having a positive or negative effect on your community?

The focus group would like to see the population of Mitchellville stay relatively the same in the coming years. They were adamantly against growth of the population by a couple thousand people, stating that to double in size would not be positive for the community. Because many of them chose to live in Mitchellville because of the small population and ability to know their neighbors, they do not want to see that change. One individual stated that they do not want to follow in the steps of Altoona or Ankeny with their population and residential growth. However, they recognize that improvements must be made to Mitchellville and commercial expansion would be more beneficial than residential growth.

What kinds of community resources or amenities would you like to see in the future? Are the current parks and trails adequate?

There were several different amenities and services that the focus group stated they would like to see in the community. A farmers market with fresh produce would be ideal, along with a local grocery store. They also agreed that an ice cream/sandwich shop would be a great addition to the downtown area. This desire supports the group's wish to see commercial growth, rather than residential growth. Participants also said that they would like to see more activities for kids of the "tween" age such as a bimonthly game night at the community center or other similar activities. They want activities that can keep kids entertained during the winter months. It was decided that a swimming pool or splash pad would be a great asset to the community in the summer. Updates to the community park were also discussed, especially the addition of more playground equipment for toddlers and some type of restroom facility. Respondents also said that they would love to see some walking and biking trails in and around the community.

Talk about the day-care options. What is available? Are there any issues?

There are five in-home day cares currently in Mitchellville that provide most of the services for the town. There is no formal day-care center; however the preschool offers a full-day option that provides flexibility for parents. Another form of child care is in the form of Kids Club provided by Altoona. This service is only available to elementary school children before and after school. A representative from Altoona comes to Mitchellville Elementary to provide Kids Club services on days when school is in session. One issue with this service is that on days with no school, the kids have to be brought to Altoona to be watched. They are brought to Altoona on a bus and brought back at the end of the session. This focus group would like a formal day-care center in town and would use it if available.

Why is Mitchellville a good place to raise a family?

The participants agreed that a huge reason Mitchellville is a good place to raise a family is the excellent school. Many kids attend the elementary school and some families have even moved their kids there specifically. The school offers flexible-seating classrooms, which is a new system to help

kids learn and has implemented the 1-1 program, giving each child has access to a laptop or iPad. Full-day preschool is also an option for parents who want the option for their children. Participants also said they like the small community feel.

Are there transportation issues that affect driving, walking, or biking in Mitchellville If so can you provide some details? How do your kids get to school?

The group did not cite any areas of concern regarding the roadways and said that overall traffic was pretty safe and speeding was not an issue. Their transportation suggestions are to widen and improve to the sidewalks for walking to school and other activities. They said that the sidewalk is only wide enough for one individual and they would like to see it widened to walk alongside their kids. Widening would also allow kids to be able to bike safely to school. Most of their kids are driven to school, but some of them walk.

The group also discussed the desire for paved roads in their town. They recognized that this is an expensive endeavor, however, and said that better maintenance of the gravel roads in lieu of pavement would have a significant impact. One concern that was raised was the condition of alleyways. Although these are technically the responsibility of the adjacent property owner, one individual pointed out that they fall into severe disrepair. The alleyways are not always suitable for driving on and are often avoided.

How would you improve the housing situation in Mitchellville? Which areas of town would you like to see the development of new housing?

One individual made the comment that the city should purchase the vacant houses and potentially demolish the more dilapidated properties. Other individuals disagreed and said they should be fixed up. Most of the participants agreed that they did not want to see anymore apartment complexes put in and they did not want to see townhouses either, mainly because it reminded them of Altoona sprawl. A couple individuals did say that they would like to see a retirement home/assisted-living facility in addition to the existing one. Otherwise most of them said they agree with building more single-family housing, even making some of them rentals.

What types of businesses would you like to see in Mitchellville and on its Main Street? Where do you do your shopping? For groceries? How often do you shop online?

As stated previously, most of the participants agreed that an ice cream/malt shop, a sandwich shop, and a grocery store would be great assets to the community, as well as having a formal day-care center, rather than in-home day cares. The group emphasized that improvements to the community center, including bean bags, a TV, and games would be great for teenagers. They really want indoor activities or facilities for children and teens in the wintertime. As for shopping habits, most said that they travel to Altoona for most of their needs and to stores such as Walmart, Hy-Vee, and Aldi. A couple individuals also stated that they use Amazon quite often for online shopping, mostly for the convenience.

What priorities should drive Mitchellville's future land use?

The participants want to create a buffer between Altoona and Mitchellville and build out on Mitchellville's terms rather than being boxed in by Altoona. They want to preserve the farmland around the town. They feel comfortable with expanding commercial and some industrial uses to the west and north, but do not want to increase residential uses or see more subdivisions. They were

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also concerned that having commercial uses to the north behind the existing housing would be unattractive. The young families wanted new developments that would attract people to visit or work in Mitchellville, but they did not want more people to live there.

Describe this community's relationship with the Iowa Correctional Institute for Women.

The young families believe that the prison does not have an overpowering presence in the community. They feel that the prison is there to help out in the community whenever asked. The offenders will sometimes help with landscaping and serving dinners in the community center and the residents do not feel unsafe. Outsiders attach a stigma to Mitchellville for being the prison town, but the residents said they do not really notice the prison. They expressed that they like the prison-town stigma because it is a deterrent to people wanting to live there.

Do you feel involved in local community decision making? What inhibits or promotes your involvement?

Some of the young families said that they are too busy with taking care of their children to participate in community decision making, but they feel that once their kids get a little bit older it would be easier to participate. Some people think that the city council meetings are a good way to stay informed and that it is really easy to get your name on the agenda. There is an e-mail list and a Facebook page that has information about the community and the council meeting agendas. It was noted that if you cannot attend a meeting, it is likely that you know someone who is that could fill you in later. The participants do not think that Mitchellville has the capacity to do online participation methods.

Summary

The families that participated in this group were adamantly against residential growth, but open to commercial growth. They treasure the fact that their community is small, close-knit, and safe, and they don't want to attract more people to jeopardize that. They did say that they would like to improve the attractiveness of Mitchellville by demolishing any old houses or fixing them up to attract a select few new families. They do not want to see any residential expansion that reminds them of larger towns in the area (so no townhouses or apartments), but would like to see the senior living facility expanded. Many of them have remained in or moved to the community because of the excellent school district, and they are very attached to the size and feel of the town as it is. They did express that they wanted more recreational facilities and opportunities for their families such as expanded day-care options and biking and walking paths. In addition, they would like better infrastructure in the downtown, such as improved sidewalks for the kids to walk to school. They would like to see more businesses that cater to Mitchellville specifically, such as shops in the downtown area or a local grocery store.

Business Owners Focus Group

Facilitated by: Kestra Peterson and Peder Brevig

Group Description

A total of four business owners took part in a 60-minute focus group as part of a comprehensive plan visioning process for the city of Mitchellville. The business owners represented in this group included owners of a real estate business, insurance businesses, and more.

Questions and Discussion

What would describe your ideal Mitchellville today, and what would an ideal Mitchellville look like in 20 years?

The responses to this question differed drastically. The conversation quickly shifted to a discussion on annexation. Those who support annexation think that if Mitchellville doesn't annex, it will get sucked up by Altoona. In order to prevent this, the land behind Casey's to the east should be developed. Development would also need to occur away from the interstate so there's no noise and people will want to buy the houses there. As house prices increase, tax revenue will also increase. Those that opposed annexation argued that the city can grow within its limits. It was also mentioned that there was an immediate need to focus on small businesses, including adding a truck stop on I-80, because the city doesn't receive anything from the prison.

What kinds of community resources or amenities would you like to see in the future? Are the current parks and trails adequate?

Everyone seemed to agree for the most part on this question. Nobody thinks it's a good idea to drain money into the city park because of the proximity of Altoona's good quality parks. It was agreed upon, however, that improving Mitchellville's baseball fields and facilities would be beneficial because then little league games could be played there. All agreed that the proposed bike trail won't benefit the city.

Are there transportation issues that affect driving, walking, or biking in Mitchellville? If so can you provide some details?

Everyone agreed that Mitchellville's roads are terrible. An immediate plan is needed to fix, not just patch, the roads. The roads are hardly wide enough for two cars to pass each other. Curb and gutter work is also an immediate concern.

The current population of Mitchellville is around 2000 people, how do you see the population changing in the future? Do you see this change having a positive or negative effect on your community?

All want to see Mitchellville prosper economically, and to do so the population needs to increase. However, tax abatements are hurting the town. The town used to be busy, but is now dead because competition prevented companies from making money. Young families are needed to keep businesses alive. They want people to come live here because of a good quality of life, a good place to raise kids, and a good school system.

How would you improve the housing situation in Mitchellville? Which areas of town would you like to see the development of new housing?

All agree the housing situation needs to improve. There needs to be more single-family housing (because it's better for tax revenue), as well as more 50+ housing options such as condos, townhouses, and duplexes. Lots of people will buy a house for their kids, then leave and go back to renting after their kids graduate. There are only five houses on the market in the city right now, which hurts the ability to get new families. Abandoned homes need to be taken care of because they're an eyesore.

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What types of businesses would you like to see in Mitchellville and on its Main Street? Where do you do your shopping? For groceries? How often do shop online?

Everyone likes the idea of having a Main Street with actual stores in the window fronts.

Some things they would like to see include a bakery, a vineyard, a brewery, and a vintage/rehab business, as well as business that would attract other businesses. All like the idea of a shooting range in town. There's a gun store on Main Street but nowhere to shoot. Nobody wants a grocery store because people stop in Altoona on their way home from work anyway. Dollar General is used for the few things they forgot to grab at the store. The main places participants said they shop include Fareway, Hy-Vee, Amazon Prime, Altoona, and supply houses in Des Moines.

What are the demographics of your consumers?

Some customers are from in town, some from out of town. Some residents have never been to the stores in Mitchellville. Advertising outside of Mitchellville is crucial for business survival. All would like to see more locals utilizing their business.

Summary

The businesses owners were very supportive of attracting more businesses into town. They offered many ideas for new businesses they'd like to attract, which did not include a grocery store. They would like to see their community grow through the attraction of new businesses, and because of this they'd like to see more options for housing within the town. Housing is lacking in Mitchellville, and there needs to be more houses on the market to attract new families, but also low-maintenance options for the aging population; both of these are crucial to sustainable economic development. They would like to see updated recreation facilities and road and storm-water systems. This group wants to steer away from creating new recreation options such as bike paths or city parks. They acknowledge that Altoona and Des Moines receive a majority of the business, but they believe that Mitchellville can still thrive on small businesses.

Correctional Facility Employees Focus Group

Facilitated by: Kayla Beck, Kellen Gorman and Tim Kerkhove

Group Description

A total of one correctional facility employee took part in a 60-minute focus group as part of a comprehensive plan visioning process for the city of Mitchellville. The correctional facility employee has worked there for four years, was once the mayor of Mitchellville, and is currently running for city council.

Questions and Discussion

What would describe your ideal Mitchellville today, and what would an ideal Mitchellville look like in 20 years?

The participant noted that the city has been in a period of stagnation and that unless it makes an effort to grow then it will likely stay the same. He found it particularly interesting that although there has been an increase in housing there has not been a corresponding increase in population. Ultimately, he hopes to see a larger Mitchellville with expansion to the west since there is always a road network to support this growth and it would keep most of the city in Polk County.

What are the challenges of having the correctional facility located in Mitchellville? What do the city and the prison do well together? How can your community and prison work better together?

The participant mentioned that the prison is a challenge to some extent for attracting people to the city and that when he tells people that he is from Mitchellville they immediately draw the connection with the prison before anything else. He characterized the correctional facility as a customer of the city, given it uses the city's water, sewer, and to some extent emergency services. Overall, he feels both entities could benefit from increased communication and cooperation.

What do you treasure about Mitchellville? What do you see as Mitchellville's greatest asset? Which aspects of Mitchellville's history are you most proud of? Why do you enjoy living and working in Mitchellville?

The participant's favorite part about Mitchellville is the small-town feel of the community. He is active in his church group and always sees at least two people he knows on his bike commute to work every morning. Although he is beginning to see newer, and particularly younger, faces that he does not recognize, he still believes this small-town feel can be preserved.

What kinds of community resources or amenities would you like to see in the future? Are the current parks and trails adequate?

The final remark the participant made in the conversation was that he would not live in Mitchellville if he did not like it, which demonstrates that overall he is fairly satisfied with community resources. He highlighted that church groups are well-attended, speaking to the role churches play in maintaining social capital in the community. However, he noted that current local parks and trails are inadequate and that access to the broader Polk County system of bike trails is dangerous, because it requires driving on a road with little room for bikes over the Interstate.

Are there transportation issues that affect driving, walking, or biking in Mitchellville? If so can you provide some details?

The first thing the participant mentioned was the lack of sidewalks within the town and that sidewalks that do exist are not well-maintained, especially in the winter. He also pointed out that many roads in the city lack curbs or gutters, making the division of walking, cycling, and driving less clear for people. Finally, he mentioned that although nobody uses DART within the city, people sometimes drive to the Hy-Vee in Altoona to take the bus into Des Moines.

How involved are you in local activities in Mitchellville?

The participant is likely more involved than the average resident of the town. He is an ex-mayor, currently campaigning for city council, highly involved in his church, and a member of the volunteer fire department.

The current population of Mitchellville is around 2,000 people, how do you see the population changing in the future? Do you see this change having a positive or negative effect on your community?

The participant touched on this question earlier, but continued by noting that an individual could go to the city and be heard, but that he's unsure of how effective it is. The participant explained that regardless of whether the city council or other governing officials were to do anything, all the citizens have vested interest in the community. That being said, he finds it frustrating that the community wants nicer things, but the general feeling is that no one wants increased taxes to be able to afford them.

Appendix A

The participant thinks the best way for the city to grow would be to the west because roads are already built that way. He also explained that the correctional facility anticipates growth. There is room for 888 inmates and they only have approximately 700. They had an issue with lack of employees when the union was killed and had to triple inmates into cells. If prison grows then they will have to hire more employees.

Do you feel involved in local community decision making? What inhibits or promotes your involvement?

The participant explained that he feels that some individuals who are heavily involved with this decision-making process are either unfair or are only concerned about their personal agenda. An example he gave was that the citizens used to burn a lot of things such as leaves whenever they wanted, but one person complained. As a result, residents are allowed to burn at one time during a certain week. He noted that this seems unfair, because it only really applies to people within the “urban” boundaries. People who are still within the city of Mitchellville boundaries but are on much larger farmland can still burn whenever they want. It is because of this and other disparities that the participant wants the elected officials to represent those who elected them.

What was your first impression of Mitchellville?

When the participant first moved to town there were many small businesses, and a nice small-town feel with mostly unpaved roads and rural inhabitants. He expressed disappointment that most of those businesses he remembered are closed or repurposed. He used to frequently visit the city’s two hardware stores. He explained that there was a grocery store in the town that did pretty well throughout the years, but didn’t survive a change in ownership, and was subsequently converted to the library.

How would you improve the housing situation in Mitchellville? Which areas of town would you like to see the development of new housing?

The participant explained that he would start with improving the sewer system. He thinks that the current system is not up to par, particularly in the new housing development. He cited the DNR for changing the development plan of Deer Run, which was originally supposed to run off septic systems, but got changed to sewage grinding. The original sewer system was in place prior to the 1950s and the new systems in the new housing developments aren’t helping the problem.

The participant also mentioned that his property taxes are very high for his property, noting that if there was any reason he would move, it would be because of those taxes. The participant also feels that the retiree housing is inadequate; as an example, he mentioned a woman who lost her husband and couldn’t live in her house alone had to move to Bondurant because there weren’t any small houses or houses equipped for retirees in Mitchellville.

Do you live in Mitchellville? Why or why not?

The participant does live in Mitchellville, and says that he plans to stay there indefinitely. The participant moved to Mitchellville right after his college graduation in 1980 for a number of different reasons, but also because he could build a house relatively inexpensively. He said that he has stayed put in Mitchellville because of the community and the niceness of the people, as well as his six-minute commute to work.

What types of businesses would you like to see in Mitchellville and on its Main Street? Where do you do your shopping? For groceries? How often do shop on line?

Among other things, the participant specifically mentioned wanting a Subway. He believes that the city would benefit from development along the interstate, suggesting maybe a truck stop or convenience store, or maybe a hotel.

The participant shops at the city's new Dollar General store, which he sees as a huge asset to the city, but gets his groceries from Fareway in Altoona. The participant also mentioned that he disapproves of the once commercially-purposed buildings and storefronts in the CBD being turned into residential housing. He noted that he thought the zoning enforcement is very poor. He also mentioned that they are in need of a new fire station and they pay for all of their equipment through fund-raising. He also said that in order for a grocery store to come to Mitchellville, the town will need to grow to support it.

What priorities should drive Mitchellville's future land use?

The participant believes that there should be a healthy combination of both industry and commercial, noting that industry could bring more people into town—people who would want to live close to where they work. He also mentioned that he sided with those who are opting to preserve agricultural land that surrounds the community. Additionally, he expressed urgency to expand westward since he is worried that Altoona and surrounding communities may expand east toward Mitchellville and essentially box the city in.

Summary

The participant overall wanted to see growth while maintaining the agricultural land and small-town feel. He values the community that Mitchellville has created and wants to see that reach more people and maintain the strong church presence that the town currently has. The main issue he has is that there is a lack of sidewalks, trails, and storm-water systems, and that these need to be added or updated. He is frustrated because residents aren't willing to pay for these improvements. He would like to see better relations with the prison and a fairer public process with community leaders. He would also like to see small businesses or a chain restaurant come to town to create some revenue. He believes that expanding westward is the best option and believes expanding is necessary to grow.

Focus Groups Conclusion

There were many commonalities and a few differences among the various focus groups. The groups all agreed that the small-town feeling of the community was the number one thing to preserve at all costs; many people have either stayed in or moved to the town for that reason. Therefore, individuals urged that, regardless of the expansion, the town should feel comfortable in this respect.

They all agreed that the town needed more amenities for both present residents and to attract new ones. Ideas for what businesses they'd like to see come to town varied a bit, but some common answers were the idea of small, local businesses: ice cream shop, sandwich shop, farmers market or stand, and small restaurants. Many residents also wanted a grocery store; however, there were some strong opinions that a grocery store wouldn't be feasible.

Most residents would like to see an expansion in housing options for the elderly and new families moving in, and put an emphasis on wanting homeowners to take pride in their home. Many believe

Appendix A

that current houses are not being kept up and the overall look of the town is lacking in pride and character. Our groups wanted to see the downtown storefronts filled, more walkability around the town, and an inviting atmosphere created by planting trees and fixing the roads. Some contentious issues included where to expand and how much, since people could not agree if it was possible to grow in population and gain economic revenue while maintaining the small-town community they have. There were also people who had seen many public officials push personal agendas, and they would like to see the public process become more fair and get the community involved instead of pushing changes that aren't in line with what residents want.

Overall, the groups seemed very vested in their community and gave great feedback with which our students could work. Across all of the focus groups, participants seemed very dedicated to their community's future and want to see the town flourish like it once did.

Mitchellville Town Hall Meeting

November 30, 2017

Iowa State University

Community and Regional Planning 432

Nominal Group Notes

The students of the undergraduate planning studio at Iowa State University are working with the City of Mitchellville, Iowa, to develop a comprehensive plan. To receive feedback on progress toward that development, a town hall meeting was held on the evening of November 30, 2017 at the Community Center. Approximately 25 local residents attended. The students presented their initial findings and goals at the meeting. Attendees were then asked to provide input through a nominal group process conducted by the students.

Attendees were asked to complete the following sentence. “Given the presentation by the students on their ideas for the Mitchellville Plan, I would recommend...” Each attendee was asked to give three ideas in small groups. Each idea was then recorded. Duplicate ideas were eliminated and then voted upon by each group. The 55 following ideas were recorded through the small group sessions.

1. Utilize railroad
2. Sustainable energy in new development
3. Senior assisted and independent living
4. Repair infrastructure
5. Improve and enforce code
6. Recruit man. Housing (soft frontage)
7. Market and promote resource availability to industrial/commercial
8. Market trailer park as a “tiny home village”
9. More blacktop less seal coat
10. Next step taken for industrial development
11. Welcoming entrance off I-80 exit
12. Commercial development take place along I-80 exit
13. Improve water distribution system, need drinkable water
14. Aim higher for new residents
15. Look for a method to get more senior housing built
16. That the comp plan not show heavy industry NW of city
17. Controlled growth to not over extended city’s financial state
18. Review efficiency of city services, outsource sewer and water
19. Full transparency of future plans for community to grow trust in community leaders
20. Retain rurality, build on history, i.e. Universalist church
21. Subsidized housing can be in mix – but not primary focus
22. What is the 50-year history of a town with small lots
23. Street and sewer maintenance

Appendix B

24. Find niche developers committed to the area – not someone who builds and fills it
25. Comp plan can't be ignored
26. More industrial, more jobs
27. More senior housing
28. Industrial by railroad
29. Annexation in northeast quadrant
30. Rebuilding downtown
31. Work earnestly on infrastructure and water quality
32. Expand future land use further SW of present city limits
33. Drainage and road repair and sidewalks
34. Recommend finished plans for development west of town
35. More housing and commercial development
36. Concentrate on parks and rec (for young families and kids)
37. Fix infrastructure streets, curbs, sewage and water mains
38. Boulevard 2 blocks length of main street for traffic control
39. More communication – through different mediums – reach those who aren't being reached
40. Increase housing, especially aging and elderly
41. Obtain 40 acres of SE section of Mitchellville for development
42. Plan to expand sewer collection system
43. Industrial and commercial development near I-80
44. Truck stop/industrial on I-80
45. Brand Mitchellville how we want to be branded/sold
46. Water quality
47. Diverse housing solution (affordable, controlled, small houses)
48. Businesses to lower taxes
49. Offer other business besides ag
50. Feed city with community gardens and farmers market
51. Fix water and sewer
52. Fix streets at same time as other infrastructure
53. More aging in place housing
54. Food truck night
55. Senior and handicapped housing

Each small group voted on their top four to six ideas. The selected ideas were reposted and duplicate ideas were eliminated. Attendees voted on the general list. That list and vote total was as follows:

Final Idea List and Vote Tally

1. Recommend finished plans for development northwest of town (11)
2. No heavy industrial NW of city (11)
3. Industrial and commercial development near I-80 (10)
4. Fix infrastructure – streets, curbs, sewage, water mains (10)
5. Senior assisted/independent living (7)
6. Heavy industrial on railroad (3)
7. Concentrate on Parks and Rec – especially for young families and children (3)
8. Retain rurality – build on history (2)
9. More housing and commercial development (2)

10. More industrial, more jobs (2)
11. Blvd. 2 blocks length of main street (2)
12. Businesses to lower taxes (1)
13. Improve code enforcement (1)
14. Subsidized housing can be in mix but not a priority (1)
15. More blacktop less seal coat (1)
16. Market and promote available utilities to industrial and commercial uses (0)
17. Annexation in NE quadrant (0)
18. Increase housing. Especially for aging and elderly (0)
19. Obtain 40 acres of SE section of Mitchellville for development (0)

Mitchellville Survey Data Summary

October 2017

Iowa State University

Community and Regional Planning 432

Facebook Group Summary

The public participation group sent out six quick surveys over Facebook in the month of October. The questions were meant to gauge public feeling about various topics. The answers were summarized in the figures below. Figure AC.1. shows where Mitchellville residents on Facebook voted they would like to see development according to the map in figure AC.2.

Figure AC.1. Desired Development (n=25)

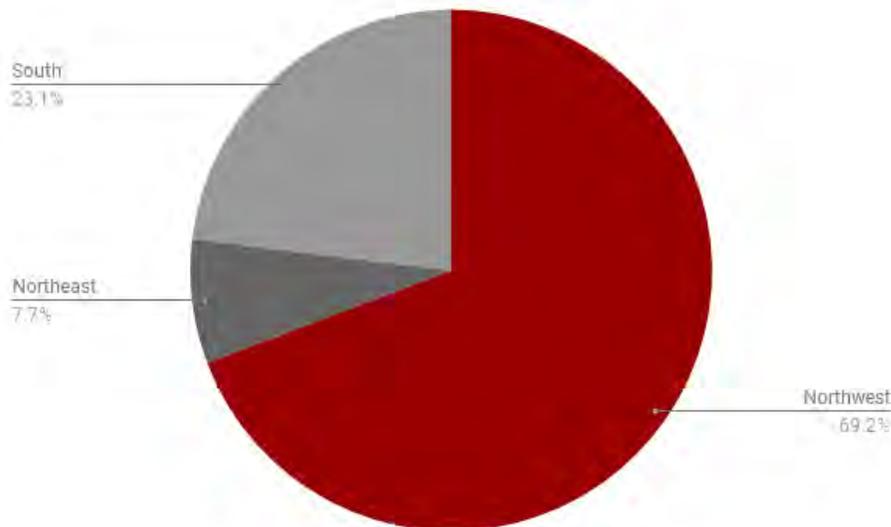


Table AC.1. summarizes the suggestions for what to put in each development area. This question was asked in relation to the same areas as shown in figure 1 (n=13).

Table AC.1. Summarized Suggestions for Development (n=13)

Northwest Mitchellville (orange)	Commercial (gas station, restaurants: Jimmy John's or other delivery service food place), stores, light or heavy industrial, hotel, city pool, fitness center, childcare facility
Northeast Mitchellville (purple)	Residential, assisted living, no development, extension of business development in orange
South Mitchellville (red)	Soccer fields, farmland, large lot homes, multifamily residential, park trails, implement or car dealer

Appendix C

Figure AC.2. Mitchellville Zoning Map

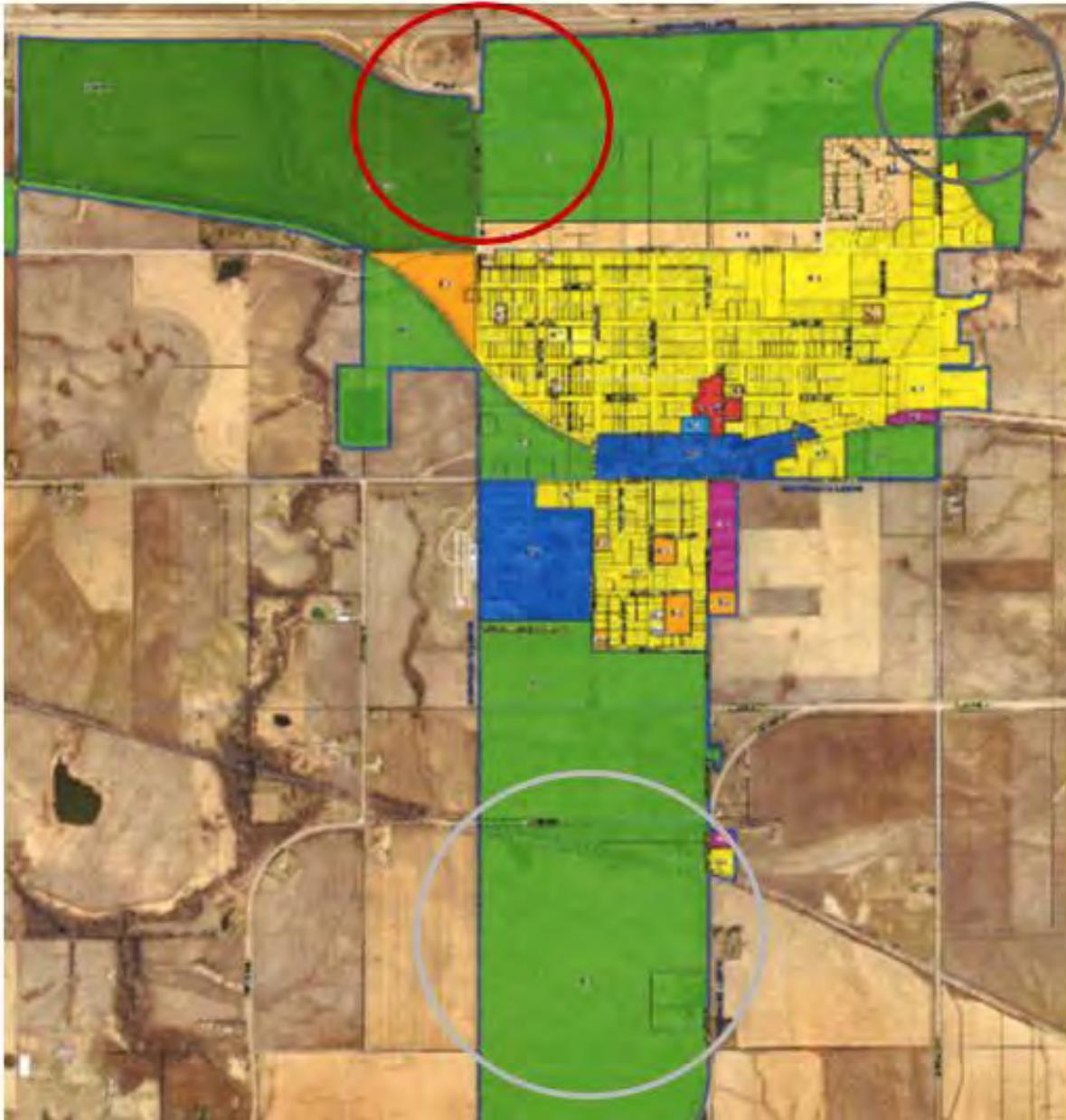


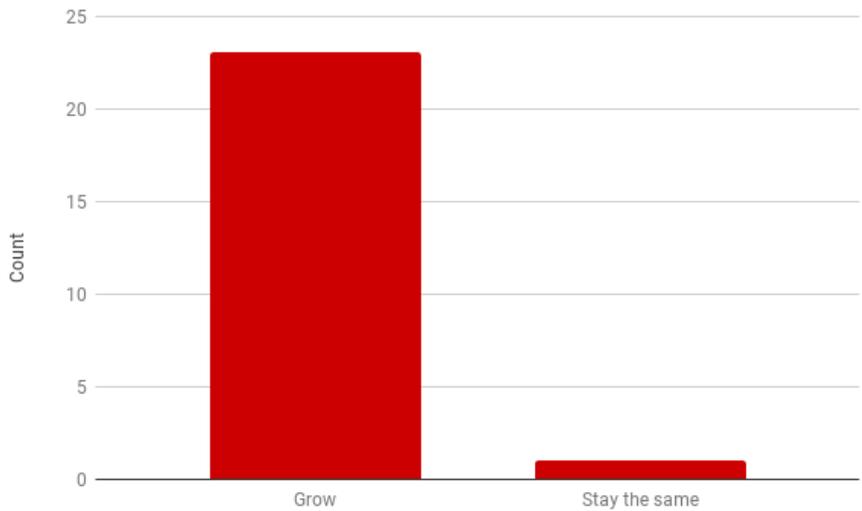
Table AC.2. Summary of feedback from “What should the focus of the comprehensive plan be” posted to Facebook.

Table AC.2. Summary of Facebook Feedback (n-posting=7, n-interacting=16)

New businesses - including storefronts on Main Street, city growth (support from 7), sewer and water upkeep/water quality (echoed 4 times, liked by 16), meet amenity needs while maintaining small-town feel (liked by 5), sentiment of a network of people who all have control, annexation

Figure AC.3. Shows the response to “how should Mitchellville’s population change?” given three choices (grow, shrink, and stay the same).

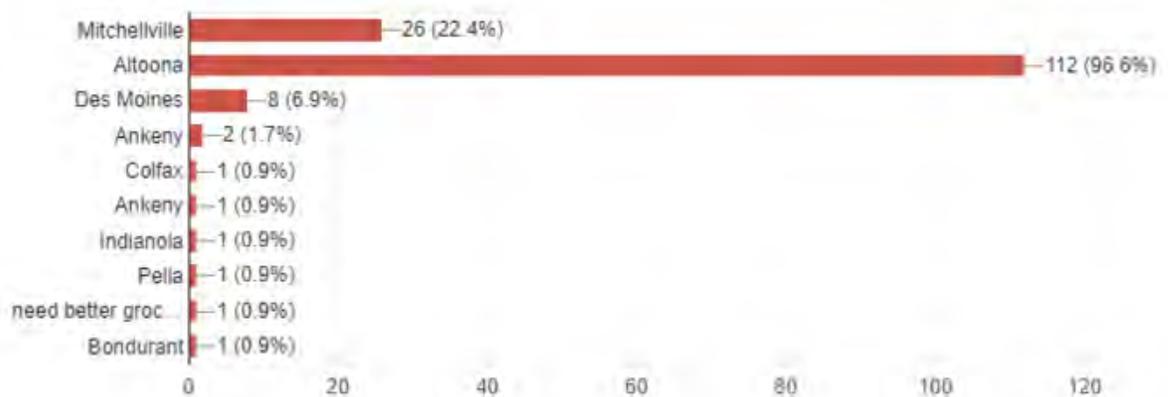
Figure AC.3. “How Should Mitchellville’s Population Change?” (n=24)



Water Bill Surveys

On October 15, the water bills sent out to the citizens of Mitchellville included a short survey on the back. The answers provided to us are summarized in the following figures.

Figure AC.4. “Where Do You Shop for Groceries and Daily Use Items?” (n=116)



Appendix C

Figure AC.5. Age Demographics of Survey Participants

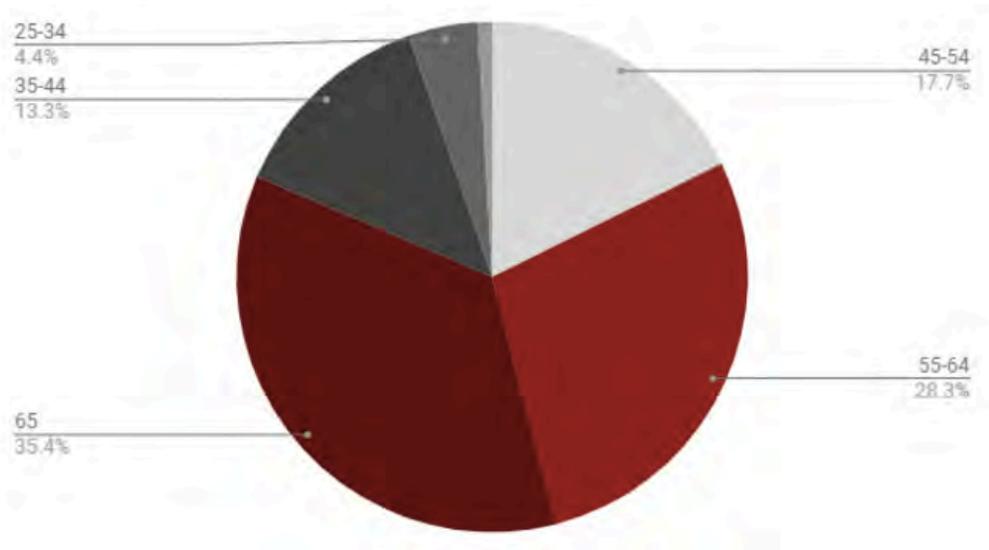


Figure AC.6. “What Day(s)/Time(s) Are You Most Available for Future Community Meetings?”

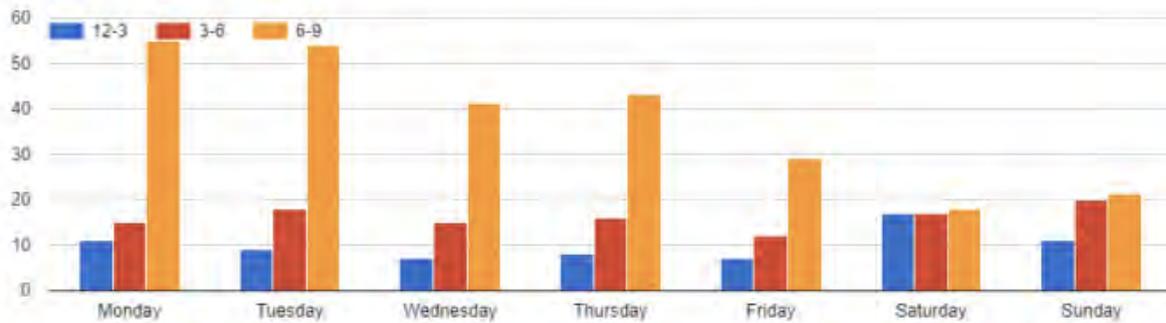


Figure AC.7. “Would You Like to See Mitchellville Population...” (n=112)

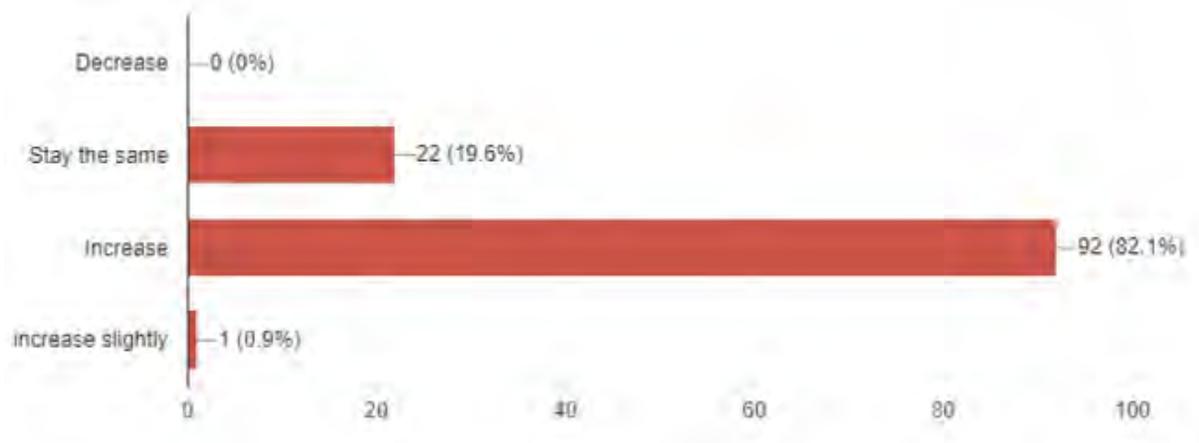


Figure AC.8. “What Type of Land Would You Most Like to be Expanded?” (n=114)

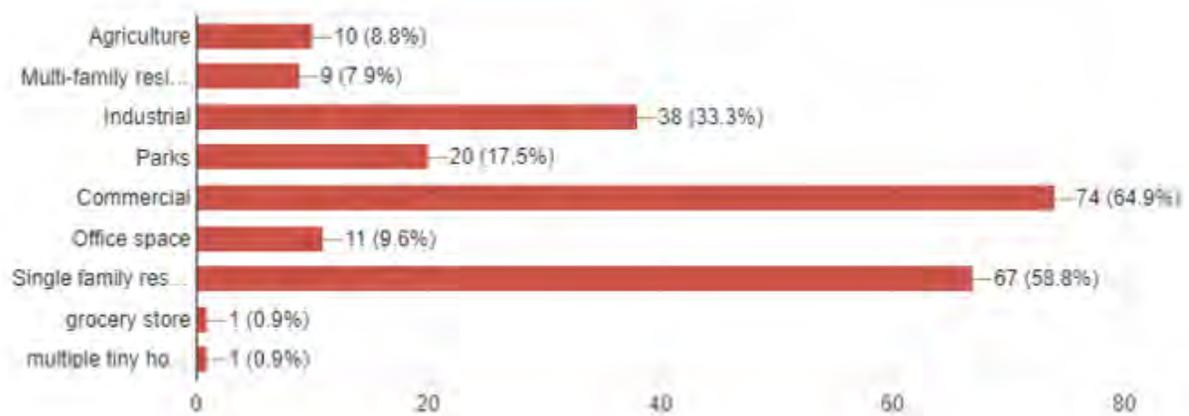


Figure AC.9. “If Annexation Were to Occur, in Which Area Would You Most Like to See Expansion?” (n=108)

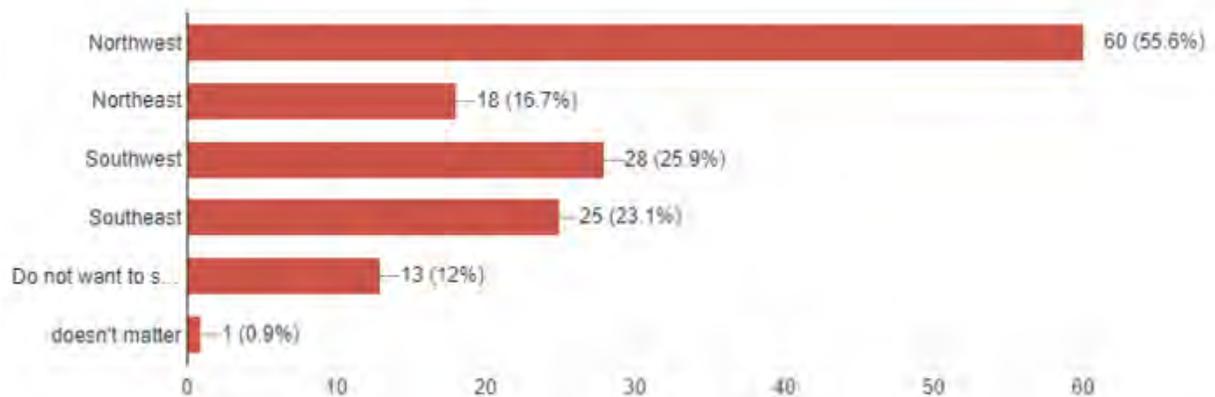
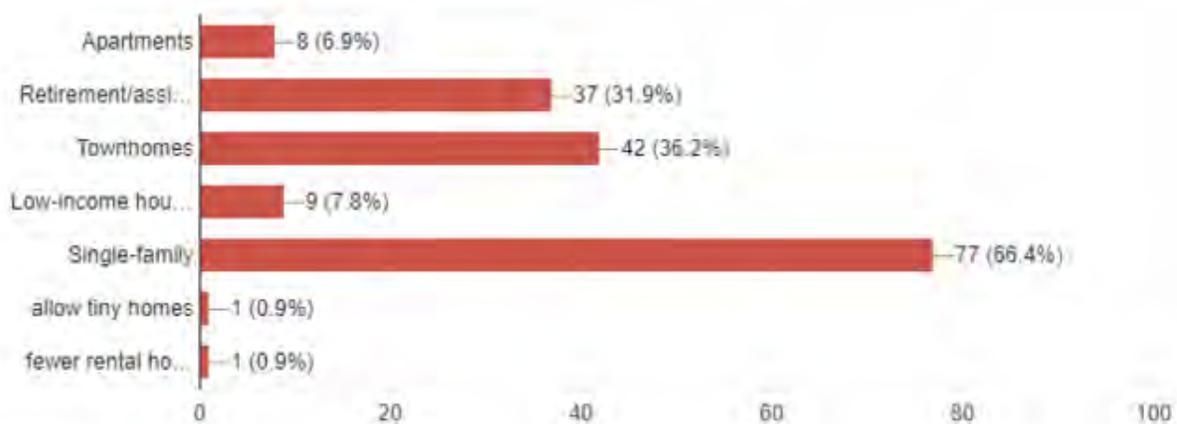
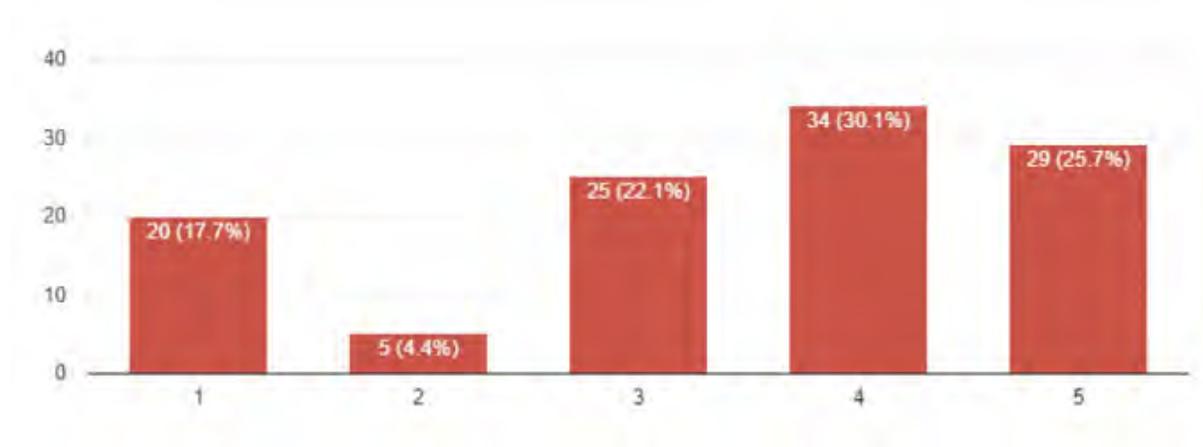


Figure AC.10. “What Types of Housing Would You Like to See In Your Community?” (n=116)



Appendix C

Figure AC.11. “How Likely Are You To Use Potential Funding or Incentive Programs to Make Necessary Improvements to Your Home?” (n=113)



Population Projections

Based on 2010 Population including ICIW

It is impossible to know how a community will grow over time, however, there are ways to possibly predict how growth will happen. For the purposes of Mitchellville, six different population projection methods have applied to provide an idea of how growth will happen between now and the year 2040. All of these predictions are shown in figure AD.1 and table AD.1.

Based on Historic Growth 1900 to 2010

The first method applied the average growth between the years 1900 and 2010 to each following decade.¹ This method predicts a population of 2,507 by 2020, 2,788 by 2030, and 3,101 by 2040.

Based on Historic Growth 1960 to 2010

The next method used to predict the future population of Mitchellville used the average growth over the past five decades, 1960 to 2010.² This method predicts a population of 2,693 by 2020, 3,218 by 2030, and 3,845 by the year 2040.

Based on Historic Growth 2000 to 2010

Then the growth rate for the most recent decades of growth (2000 to 2010) was used.^{3,4} This method predicts a population of 2,962 by 2020, 3,893 by 2030, and 5,117 by 2040. This method predicts the most growth of any other method so it is the highest bound of the predicted populations for 2020 to 2040.

Based on Polk County Projections

This method employed Iowa Data Center projected growth rates to estimate growth for Polk County over the next several decades, and was used because most of Mitchellville is within Polk County's boundaries.⁵ This method predicts a population of 2,513 by 2020, 2,647 by 2030, and 3,053 by 2040.

Based on Jasper County Projections

This method employed Iowa Data Center projected growth rates to estimate growth for Jasper County over the next several decades, and was used because some of Mitchellville falls within Jasper County and there is likely to be more growth into Jasper County in the future.⁶ This method predicts a population of 2,281 by 2020, 2,298 by 2030, and 2,354 by 2040.

Based on Linear Projections

The last method is shown in figure AD.2 and uses a linear trend line for historic populations 1900–2010 and projects out to 2040. The population growth was not always linear, but the R-Squared value for the trend line is 0.82126, which indicates that the line explains 82% of the variability around the average, meaning that it is fairly useful at determining the correct population values. This method predicts a population of 1,877 by 2020, 2,003 by 2030, and 2,130 by 2040. This method provides the lowest population estimate and will be used as the lowest bound for the projected populations for 2020 to 2040.

Appendix D

Based on Exponential Projections

The last method that was used is also shown in figure AD.2 and uses an exponential trend line for historic populations 1900–2010 and projects out to 2040. The R-Squared value for this method is 0.83412, making it approximately as accurate as the linear projections. This method predicts a population of 1,752 by 2020, 1,916 by 2030, and 2,096 by 2040.

Figure AD.1. Population Projections

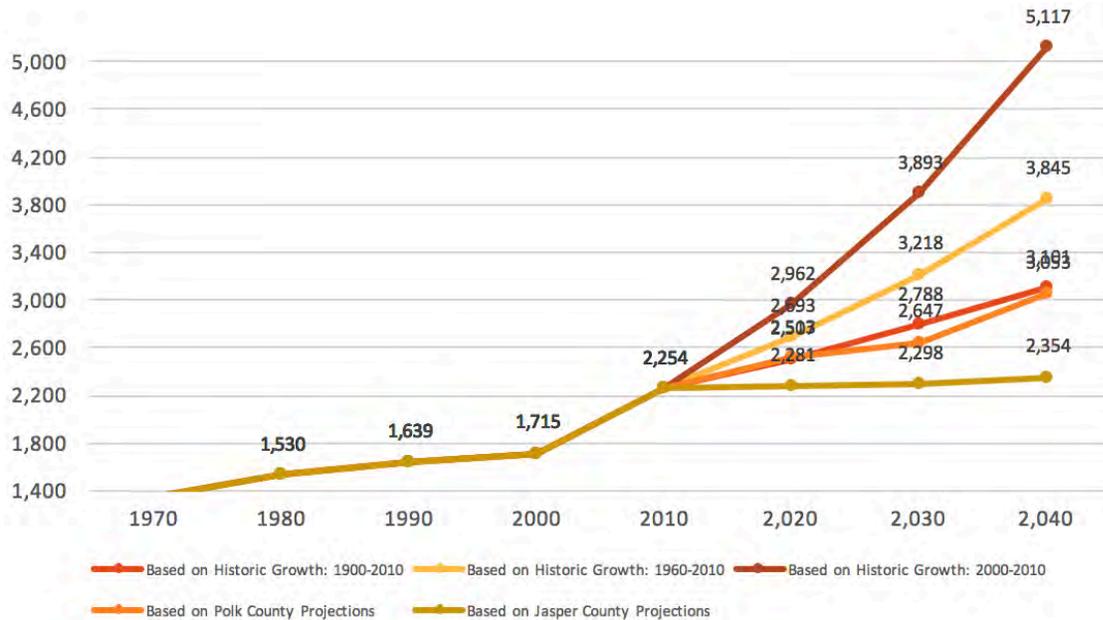
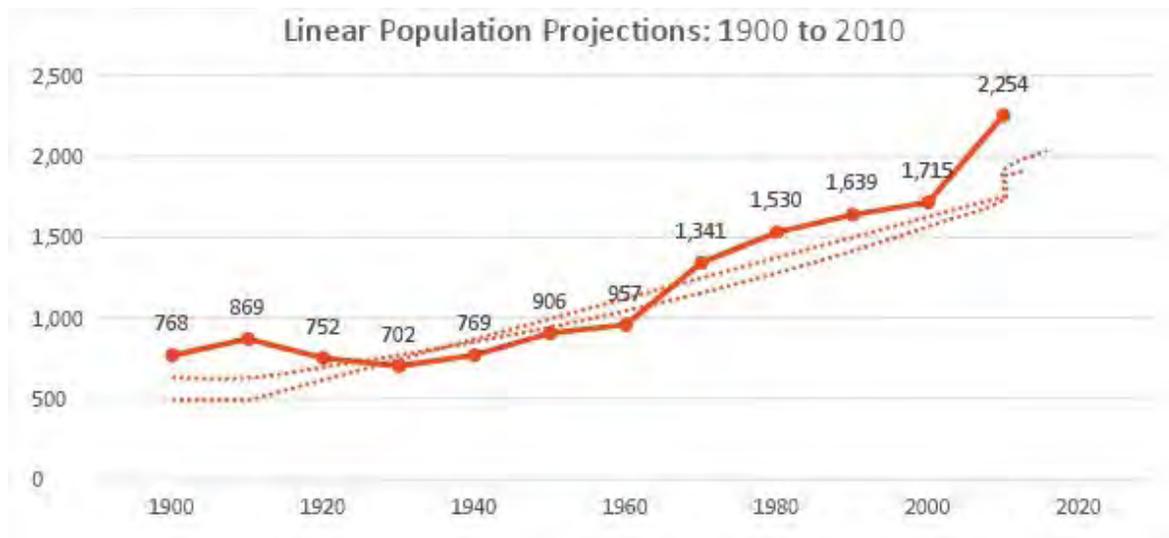


Table AD.1. Population Projections

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040
Based on Historic Growth: 1900-2010	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	2254	2507	2788	3101
Based on Historic Growth: 1960-2010	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	2254	2693	3218	3845
Based on Historic Growth: 2000-2010	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	2254	2962	3893	5117
Based on Polk County Projections	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	2254	2513	2647	3053
Based on Jasper County Projections	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	2254	2281	2298	2354
Based on Linear Projections	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	2254	1877	2003	2130
Based on Exponential Projections	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	2254	1918	2123	2349

Figure AD.2. Linear Population Projections: 1900 to 2010



Population Projections without ICIW Population

The projections made so far have used the populations given by the US Census Bureau's Decennial Censuses from 1900 to 2010. However, there is one key issue with these data: 2010 is the only census that includes the population of the ICIW. In order to make more accurate population projections, it is necessary to look at the population for 2010 without the institutionalized females.⁷ The same projection methods were used; the only change was that of the population for 2010. These predictions are shown in figure AD.3 and table AD.2.

Based on Historic Growth 1900 to 2010

The first method applied the average growth between the years 1900 and 2010 to each following decade.⁸ This method predicts a population of 1,792 by 2020, 1,936 by 2030, and 2,040 by 2040.

Based on Historic Growth 1960 to 2010

The next method used to predict the future population of Mitchellville was using the average growth over the past five decades, 1960 to 2010.⁹ This method predicts a population of 1,866 by 2020, 2,100 by 2030, and 2,363 by the year 2040. This method predicts the most growth of any other method so it is the highest bound of the predicted populations for 2020 to 2040.

Based on Historic Growth 2000 to 2010

Then the growth rate just for the most recent decades of growth (2000 to 2010) was used.^{10,11} This method predicts a population of 1,603 by 2020, 1,550 by 2030, and 1,498 by 2040. This method provides the lowest population estimate and will be used as the lowest bound for the projected populations for 2020 to 2040.

Based on Polk County Projections

This method used Iowa Data Center projected growth rates to estimate growth for Polk County over the next several decades, and was used because most of Mitchellville is within Polk County's boundaries.¹² This method predicts a population of 1,848 by 2020, 2,046 by 2030, and 2,246 by 2040.

Appendix D

Based on Jasper County Projections

This method used Iowa Data Center projected growth rates to estimate growth for Jasper County over the next several decades, and was used because some of Mitchellville falls within Jasper County and there is likely to be more growth into Jasper County in the future.¹³ This method predicts a population of 1,678 by 2020, 1,704 by 2030, and 1,732 by 2040.

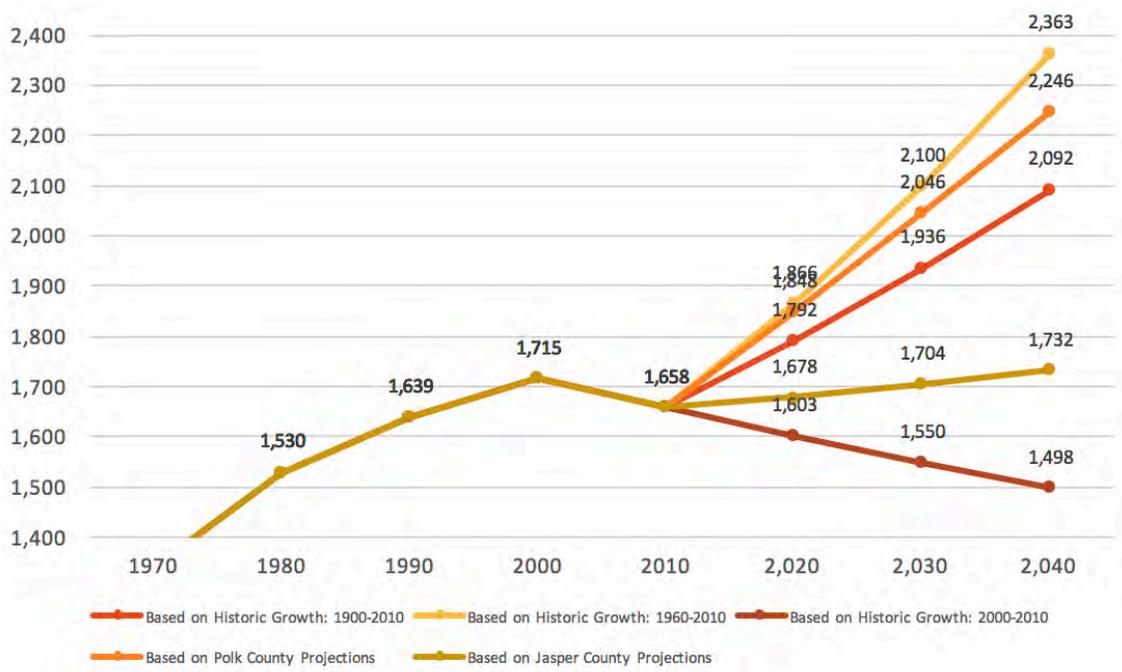
Based on Linear Projections

The next method that was used is shown in figure AD.4 and uses a linear trend line for historic populations 1900–2010 and projects out to 2040. The population growth was not always linear, but the R-Squared value for the trend-line is 0.83703, which indicates that the line explains 84% of the variability around the average, meaning that it is fairly useful at determining the correct population values. This method predicts a population of 1,702 by 2020, 1,805 by 2030, and 1,908 by 2040.

Based on Exponential Projections

The last method that was used is also shown in figure AD.4 and uses an exponential trend line for historic populations 1900–2010 and projects out to 2040. The R-Squared value for this method is 0.84933, which is slightly better than that of the linear projections. This method predicts a population of 1,918 by 2020, 2,123 by 2030, and 2,349 by 2040.

Figure AD.3. Population Projections without ICIW Population

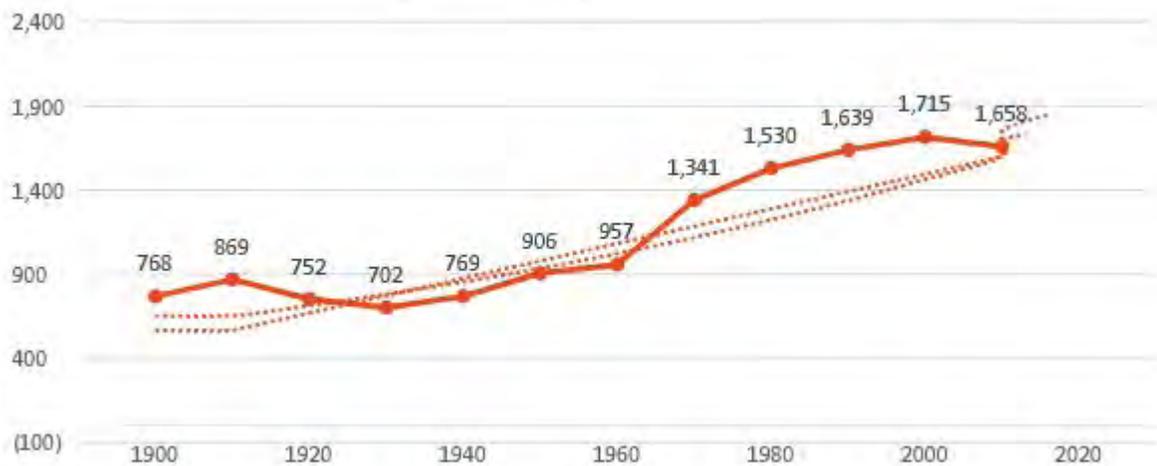


Based on all of these different projections, it can be predicted that Mitchellville’s population will be between 1,603 and 2,962 by 2020, between 1,550 and 3,893 by 2030, and between 1,498 and 5,117 by 2040. However, since it is more accurate to look at just the projections with the 2010 population without the ICIW, the actual populations will most likely be as follows: between 1,603 and 1,866 by 2020, between 1,550 and 2,100 by 2030, and between 1,498 and 2,363 by 2040.

Table AD.2. Population Projections without ICIW Population

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040
<i>Based on Historic Growth: 1900-2010</i>	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	1658	1792	1936	2040
<i>Based on Historic Growth: 1960-2010</i>	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	1658	1866	2100	2363
<i>Based on Historic Growth: 2000-2010</i>	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	1658	1603	1550	1498
<i>Based on Polk County Projections</i>	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	1658	1848	2046	2246
<i>Based on Jasper County Projections</i>	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	1658	1678	1704	1732
<i>Based on Linear Projections</i>	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	1658	1702	1805	1908
<i>Based on Exponential Projections</i>	768	869	752	702	769	906	957	1341	1530	1639	1715	1658	1752	1916	2096

Figure AD.4. Linear Population Projections without ICIW Population



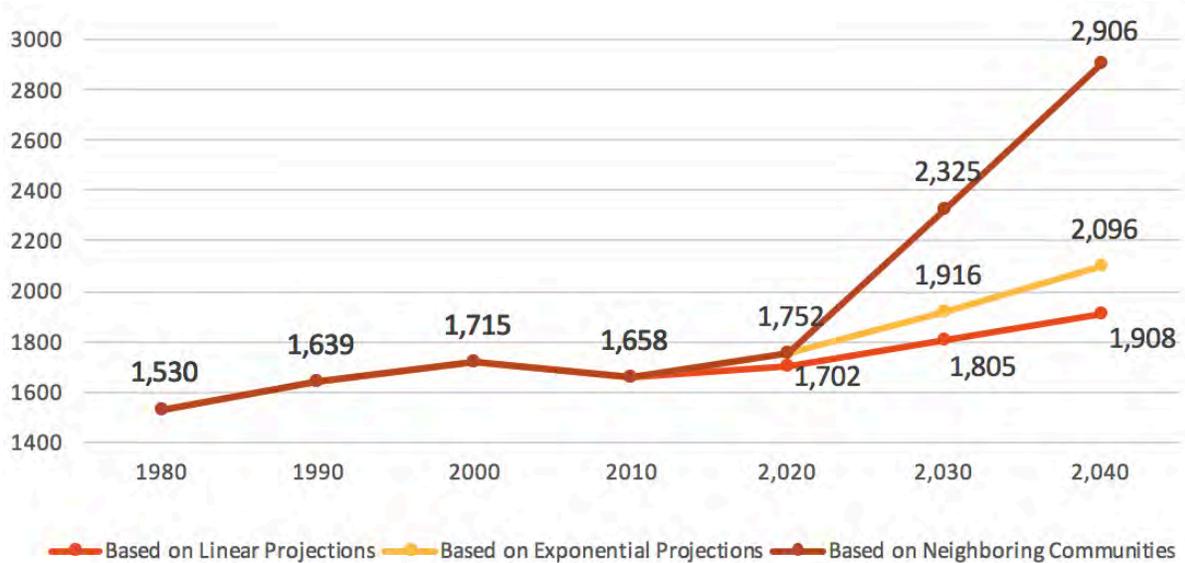
Based on Neighboring Communities

Neighboring communities to the west of Mitchellville have seen tremendous growth over the past several decades, and as they continue to grow closer toward Mitchellville, the question becomes when this growth will reach the city. Between 1990 and 2010, Altoona (which is only several miles to the west of Mitchellville) doubled in size and it anticipates doubling in size again by 2035. Bondurant’s (another Des Moines Metro city near Mitchellville) population more than doubled between 2000 and 2010.

Appendix D

Because Mitchellville is still several miles outside of the outer bounds of the metropolitan area and there are some significant topography challenges between Altoona and Mitchellville, it is not anticipated that Mitchellville will see quite the level of growth as its neighbors. For the population projection based on neighboring communities, the 2010 population of Mitchellville was projected to increase by 50% by 2040, growing from a population of 1,658 in 2010 to a population of 2,906 by 2040.

Figure AD.5. Population Projections Based on Linear, Exponential, and Neighboring Communities Projections



References

1. "Population.us." Mitchellville, IA population. Accessed November 01, 2017. <http://population.us/ia/mitchellville/>.
2. See note 1 above.
3. US Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF-1) 100-Percent Data, DP-1 – Profile of Demographic Characteristics: 2000, Mitchellville City, Iowa.
4. US Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1 (SF-1) 100-Percent Data, DP-1 – Profile of Demographic Characteristics: 2010, Mitchellville City, Iowa.
5. <http://www.iowadatatcenter.org/datatables/CountyAll/co2010populationprojections20002040.pdf>
6. See note 5 above.
7. "Federal Bureau of Prisons." BOP Statistics: Average Inmate Age. Accessed November 01, 2017. https://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_age.jsp. See note 27 above.
8. See note 1 above.
9. See note 1 above.
10. See note 3 above.
11. See note 4 above.
12. See note 5 above.
13. See note 5 above.

AARP Livability Scores for Mitchellville, IA

Housing Metric Data

Metric Title	Description	Median US	Mitchellville or Vicinity	Rank
Basic Passage	<i>Percentage of housing units with extra-wide doors or hallways, floors with no steps between rooms, and an entry-level bedroom and bathroom: measured at the metro area scale, higher values are better</i>	2.6%	5.7%	Top Third
Availability of Multi-Family Housing	<i>Percentage of housing units that are not single-family, detached homes: measured at the neighborhood scale, higher values are better</i>	18.8%	20.1%	Middle Third
Housing Costs	<i>Monthly housing costs: measured at the neighborhood scale, lower values are better. Monthly costs are capped at \$4,000.</i>	\$999	\$1,024	Middle Third
Housing Cost Burden	<i>Percentage of income devoted to monthly housing costs: measured at the neighborhood scale, lower values are better</i>	18.4%	16.5%	Middle Third
Availability of Subsidized Housing	<i>Number of subsidized housing units per 10,000 people: measured at the county scale, higher values are better</i>	124	159	Top Third

Appendix E

Neighborhood Metric Data

Metric Title	Description	Median US	Mitchellville or Vicinity	Rank
Access to Grocery Stores and Farmers' Markets	<i>Number of grocery stores and farmers' markets within a half-mile: measured at the neighborhood scale, higher values are better</i>	0.0	0.0	Bottom Third
Access to Parks	<i>Number of parks within a half-mile: measured at the neighborhood scale, higher values are better</i>	0.0	1.0	Middle Third
Access to Libraries	<i>Number of libraries located within a half-mile: measured at the neighborhood scale, higher values are better</i>	0.0	1.0	Middle Third
Access to Jobs by Transit	<i>Number of jobs accessible within a 45-minute transit commute: measured at the neighborhood scale, higher values are better</i>	0	0	Bottom Third
Access to Jobs by Auto	<i>Number of jobs accessible within a 45-minute automobile commute: measured at the neighborhood scale, higher values are better</i>	55,312	30,138	Middle Third
Diversity of Destinations	<i>Mix of jobs within a mile: measured at the neighborhood scale, higher values are better</i>	0.81	0.89	Top Third
Activity Density	<i>Combined number of jobs and people per square mile: measured at the neighborhood scale, higher values are better</i>	3,567	1,045	Bottom Third
Crime Rate	<i>Combined violent and property crimes per 10,000 people: measured at the county scale, lower values are better</i>	304	374	Middle Third
Vacancy Rate	<i>Percentage of vacant housing units: measured at the neighborhood scale, lower values are better</i>	8.8%	13.2%	Bottom Third

Transportation Metric Data

Metric Title	Description	Median US	Mitchellville or Vicinity	Rank
Frequency of Local Transit Service	Total number of buses and trains per hour in both directions for all stops within a quarter-mile: measured at the neighborhood scale, higher values are better	0	0	Bottom Third
Walk Trips	Estimated walk trips per household per day: measured at the neighborhood scale, higher values are better	0.73	0.71	Middle Third
Congestion	Estimated total hours that the average commuter spends in traffic each year: measured at the metro area scale, lower values are better	17.4	0.0	Top Third
Household Transportation Costs	Estimated household transportation costs: measured at the neighborhood scale, lower values are better	\$10,791	\$12,459	Bottom Third
Speed Limits	Average speed limit (MPH) on streets and highways: measured at the neighborhood scale, lower values are better	28.0	32.4	Bottom Third
Crash Rate	Annual average number of fatal crashes per 100,000 people: measured at the neighborhood scale, lower values are better	7.6	59.1	Bottom Third
ADA-Accessible Stations and Vehicles	Percentage of transit stations and vehicles that are ADA-accessible: measured at the metro area scale, higher values are better	81.7%	54.7%	Bottom Third

Environment Metric Data

Metric Title	Description	Median US	Mitchellville or Vicinity	Rank
Drinking Water Quality	Percentage of the population getting water from public water systems with at least one health-based violation during the past year: measured at the county scale, lower values are better	0.50%	5.13%	Bottom Third
Regional Air Quality	Number of days per year when regional air quality is unhealthy for sensitive populations: measured at the county scale, lower values are better	8.0	1.0	Top Third
Near-Roadway Pollution	Percentage of the population living within 200 meters of a high-traffic road with more than 25,000 vehicles per day: measured at the neighborhood scale, lower values are better	0.00%	0.82%	Bottom Third
Local Industrial Pollution	Toxicity of airborne chemicals released from nearby industrial facilities: measured at the neighborhood scale from 0 to 311,000, lower values are better	0.00	0.00	Top Third

Appendix E

Health Metric Data

Metric Title	Description	Median US	Mitchellville or Vicinity	Rank
Smoking Prevalence	<i>Estimated smoking rate: measured at the county scale, lower values are better</i>	20.3%	18.6%	Middle Third
Obesity Prevalence	<i>Estimated obesity rate: measured at the county scale, lower values are better</i>	27.8%	28.0%	Middle Third
Access to Exercise Opportunities	<i>Percentage of people who live within a half-mile of parks and within 1 mile of recreational facilities (3 miles for rural areas): measured at the county scale, higher values are better</i>	83.2%	83.3%	Middle Third
Health Care Professional Shortage Areas	<i>Severity of clinician shortage: measured at the health professional shortage area scale from 0 to 25, lower values are better</i>	0	0	Middle Third
Preventable Hospitalization Rate	<i>Number of hospital admissions for conditions that could be effectively treated through outpatient care per 1,000 patients: measured at the hospital service area scale, lower values are better</i>	62.1	54.8	Top Third
Patient Satisfaction	<i>Percentage of patients who give area hospitals a rating of 9 or 10, with 10 indicating the highest level of satisfaction: measured at the hospital service area scale, higher values are better</i>	67.3%	63.3%	Bottom Third

Engagement Metric Data

Metric Title	Description	Median US	Mitchellville or Vicinity	Rank
Broadband Cost and Speed	<i>Percentage of residents who have access to three or more wireline Internet service providers, and two or more providers that offer maximum advertised download speeds of 50 megabits per second: measured at the neighborhood scale, higher values are better</i>	0.0%	0.0%	Middle Third
Opportunity for Civic Involvement	<i>Number of civic, social, religious, political, and business organizations per 10,000 people: measured at the county scale, higher values are better</i>	7.3	10.2	Top Third
Voting Rate	<i>Percentage of people ages 18 years or older who voted in the last presidential election: measured at the county scale, higher values are better. Voting rates are bounded at 30% and 85%.</i>	55.6%	71.5%	Top Third
Social Involvement Index	<i>Extent to which residents eat dinner with household members, see or hear from friends and family, talk with neighbors, and do favors for neighbors: measured at the metro area scale from 0 to 2, higher values are better</i>	.98	1.01	Top Third
Cultural, Arts, and Entertainment Institutions	<i>Number of performing arts companies, museums, concert venues, sports stadiums, and movie theaters per 10,000 people: measured at the county scale, higher values are better</i>	.6	.7	Middle Third

Opportunity Metric Data

Metric Title	Description	Median US	Mitchellville or Vicinity	Rank
Income Inequality	<i>Gini coefficient (the gap between rich and poor): measured at the county scale from 0 to 1, lower values are better</i>	0.46	0.44	Top Third
Jobs Per Worker	<i>Number of jobs per person in the workforce: measured at the metro area scale, higher values are better. Jobs are capped at 1.0 job per person.</i>	0.75	0.90	Top Third
High School Graduation Rate	<i>Adjusted 4-year high school cohort graduation rate: measured at the school district scale, higher values are better</i>	81.3%	90.0%	Top Third
Age Diversity	<i>Age-group diversity of local population compared to the national population: measured at the neighborhood scale from 0 to 1, higher values are better</i>	0.87	0.91	Top Third

