



# Red Oak

2024  
Comprehensive  
Plan





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

01. Comprehensive Planning
02. The Vision
03. Plan Development
04. Community Profile
05. Economic Development
06. Land Use
07. Public Services
08. Transportation
09. Housing
10. Recreation
11. Cultural Amenities
10. Conclusion

# Comprehensive Planning



A comprehensive plan is an official public document that sets forth the City's major policies concerning the future physical development of the community. The primary purposes of this plan are to generate goals for attaining a desirable development pattern and devise strategies and recommendations the city can follow to achieve these goals.

This comprehensive plan for Red Oak has two fundamental purposes. The first is to provide

an essential, legal basis for land use regulation such as zoning and subdivision control. And, second, to present a unified vision for a community, developed with input from citizens that establishes specific actions necessary to achieve it.

Communities undertake comprehensive planning to accomplish both specific and broad objectives. In Iowa, comprehensive plans are typically developed to perform one or more of the following functions:

01

### **Consensus Building**

The development of a sound plan necessitates broad public involvement. The very process can create new and productive links among individuals and groups. It is through these new communication channels that issues or problems can be resolved.

02

### **Goal Setting**

Based on collective goals, the plan can act as the formal documentation and direction of the public's vision for future development and change.

03

### **Decision Making Guide and Implementation**

Economic development, public investment policies, and other expenditure decisions can be guided by a comprehensive plan. The principal effort in completing the plan is to ensure the final product includes policies and methods for achieving these outcomes. In doing so, the plan becomes a dynamic vehicle for action and decision-making.

The formal comprehensive planning process in Red Oak began in the fall of 2022. Over the course of the fall and winter of 2022 SWIPCO staff gathered background information on the city, and City staff put together a planning committee to help oversee the planning process. In November 2022 the planning committee met with SWIPCO staff and developed the timeline for public participation, and laid out the schedule for public meetings. Each planning committee member was encouraged to attend the planning meetings, and personally invite other attendees. There were three planning meetings, covering a wide range of topics:

- November 28, 2022: Kick-off meeting with the planning committee
- February 20, 2022: First Public Meeting, Intro and SWOT Analysis
- July 18, 2022: Goal Setting
- October 9, 2022: Focus Groups

Meeting were held periodically with the planning committee throughout the process. This was to ensure that the plan stayed on track and all ideas were considered.

After the public engagement finished and the plan was written, the draft went before Red Oak’s planning and zoning committee to review , make revisions, and then proceed to forward the draft to the City Council for final review and approval.



# The Vision



In order to transform the comprehensive plan from just another document to a working plan for the City of Red Oak, a vision of where the city wants to be and how to get there had to be established. A vision statement, goals, and objectives are all tools established throughout the planning process by residents, steering committee members, and city officials to assist the city in becoming the city desired.

By participating in meetings, surveys, and other public outreach, residents were able to provide critical input into the development of the vision and goals of the city. The vision statement was developed first to provide a better understanding of the direction the city wanted to go. Using that statement and comments received during the planning process, the steering committee was then able to develop goals and objectives to accomplish those goals.

**Red Oak is a thriving and inviting city that acts as a beacon for southwest Iowa. It is a community boasting opportunities for residents of all ages, fiber internet to all residences, affordable housing, a robust commercial scene, and a clean environment. Red Oak is a community that residents are proud to call home and other are excited to visit.**

- 01 Improve existing infrastructure to support the current population and expand infrastructure where needed to support a growing population
- 02 Enhance recreational opportunities in Red Oak for all ages
- 03 Improve the housing stock
- 04 Improve the visual appearance of Red Oak

An implementation matrix visualizes the city's priorities and how the city can work towards completing each objective established by detailing responsible party, cost estimates, priority level, potential funding sources, and a rough timeline of

how long it would take to complete. Cost estimates are broken down by minimal, low, moderate, and high. Estimated timeline for completion is broken down into ongoing (continuous project), short-term (0-3 years), mid-term (4-6 years), and long-term (more than 7 years).

**Goal #1—Improve existing infrastructure to support the current population and expand infrastructure where needed to support a growing population**

Objective	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Priority	Funding Sources	Timeline	Status
Fiber access available to all residential properties	City	Minimal	High	Internet Company	Short-term	In process
Establish a fund to assist property owners with sidewalk repairs	City	Moderate	Medium	Franchise agreements	Short-term	Not Started
Complete wastewater facility upgrades	City	High	High	City Funds, CDBG	Short-term	Discussions Started
Review ordinance relating to ownership of service lines	City	Minimal	Medium	City Funds	Mid-term	Done after water study
Complete a water study	City	Low	High	City Funds	Short-term	FY25
Pedestrian crossing on Highway 34 at 8th Street	City	Moderate	High	City Funds, DOT, TAP	Long-term	Not Started

Levee upgrades to meet FEMA standards and reduce floodplain	City	High	High	City Funds, EDA, ACES, BIL	Mid-term	Ongoing
Complete a street project every year in order of highest need	City	Moderate	High	City Funds	Ongoing	Ongoing
Replace copper and lead water lines	City	High	High	City Budget, CDBG, USDA, SRF, EDA	Short-term then Ongoing	Start FY26
Lining of sewer lines	City	High	High	City Budget, CDBG, USDA	Short-term and ongoing	
Upgrades to the cemetery (roads, restrooms, fences)	City	Moderate	Moderate	City Funds	Short-mid term	Ongoing discussions
Electric vehicle charging on city owned lots	City/private	Low	Low	City Funds, Grants	Mid-term	
Install crosswalks on high traffic areas (Fareway, Dollar Tree, Summit and 8th)	City	Low	High	City Funds	Short-term	Started

## Goal #2—Enhance recreational opportunities in Red Oak for all ages

Objective	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Priority	Funding Sources	Timeline	Status
Update parks and rec/trails master plan (current from 1970s)	City, FOTROT	Low	Low	City, Grants	Mid-term, Ongoing	Not started
Conduct a walkability study to determine problem areas	City, Healthy Hometown	Minimal	Low	City Funds	Mid-term	Not Started
Develop park north of Highway 34	City	Moderate	Moderate	City Funds, Grants, Fundraising	Mid-term	Not Started
Install trail on the levee	City, Corp of Engineers	High	Low	City Funds, TAP, State Rec	Mid-term	Not Started
Update park equipment in all parks and include ADA equipment into each park	City	High	High	City Funds, LOST/Franchise Fees	Ongoing	Not Started
Indian Gully enhancements and possible expansion	City, County Conservation	Low	Moderate	Grants, City Funds, INFH, Donations, IDALS	Mid-term	Enhancements will be done in 2024
Indoor recreation area/youth center	City and Private	Low	Low	Private, City Incentives	Mid-term	Not Started
Expand Dutton Park and install pedestrian bridge over creek	City	Moderate	Low	City, Grants	Long-term	Not Started

Look at establishing ATV trails near Nishnabotna River	City/County	Low-Moderate	High	City, County, Private	Mid-term	Not Started
Install a splash pad	City	High	Low	City, Grants	Long-term	
Install lighting along Red Oak trails	City and FOTROT	Moderate	Low	City, Grants, MidAmerica n	Mid-Long term	

### Goal #3—Improve the housing stock

Objective	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Priority	Funding Sources	Timeline	Status
Put together housing committee to carry out recommendations from Rural Housing Readiness Assessment including new development, rehabilitation, upper story, infill development, and nuisance properties	City	Minimal	High	City Funds	Short term	In progress
Use tax abatement to encourage new housing development and rehabilitation of existing housing	City	Minimal	Medium	City Funds	Short term	In progress

Inventory of lots being underutilized, blighted, vacant, etc., categorize and prioritize. Identify if EPA or brownfield funding can be utilized	City	Minimal	High	City Funds, KSU TAB	Inventory of lots being underutilized, blighted, vacant, etc., categorize and prioritize. Identify if EPA or brownfield funding can be utilized	City
Create an investment group to create housing development	Private party	Minimal	High	Private, donations, local banks (0% interest loans)	Create an investment group to create housing development	Private party
Update current zoning and code of ordinance to accommodate more modern housing development (setbacks based on lot size)	City, Planning and Zoning	Low	High	City Funds	Update current zoning and code of ordinance to accommodate more modern housing development (setbacks based on lot size)	City, Planning and Zoning
Establish and protect historic neighborhoods	Historic Preservation Commission	Minimal	High	CLG Grant	Establish and protect historic neighborhoods	Historic Preservation Commission

Inventory upper story housing units (how many, condition)	City	Minimal	Medium	City Funds	Short term	Started
Update and enforce rental inspection program	City	Low	High	City Funds	Ongoing	In Progress
Utilize upper story housing conversion CDBG for downtown housing	City and Building Owners	Minimal	Medium	Upper Story Housing Conversion CDBG, building owners	Short-ongoing	Ongoing

**Goal #4—Improve the visual appearance of Red Oak**

Objective	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Priority	Funding Sources	Timeline	Status
Clean up of debris in Red Oak Creek	Property Owners, City	Minimal	High	Property Owners	Short Term	
Citywide Cleanup Day	City	Low	High	City	Short Term	
Update code of ordinances to promote more visually appealing neighborhoods and reduce nuisances	City	Low	High	City Funds	Short Term	In progress
Create inventory of brownfield sites for future development (Broadway and Oak)	City	Low	Medium	City Funds, Derelict Building, Brownfield funds through DNR, KSU TAB	Mid Term	

Zoning amendments for Red Oak Creek area to protect from future development	City	Low	High	City	Short Term	
Recertify urban renewal areas to continue TIF districts and update TIF map	City	Low	High	City Funds	Short Term	In progress
Implement wayfinding signage throughout town including downtown entry signage	City, Chamber, Historic Preservation Commission, Marketing and Tourism Committee	Moderate	Medium	City Funds, Hotel/Motel Tax, Community Foundation	Short Term	
Research and develop an annual small residential curb appeal program	City/Civic Groups	Low	Medium/Low	City	Mid Term	
Mandatory weekly curbside trash and recycling pick up	City, Private Carriers	Moderate	Medium	City	Mid Term	
Establish match fund for sidewalk	City	Moderate	Medium	City Funds from franchise fees	Mid Term	
Approve downtown design guidelines	City	Low	High	City Funds	Short Term	Finalizing now
Pursue Inman Trail Project and SRTS for that	City	Moderate	High	City, TAP, REAP	Short Term	

# Plan Development



This plan was developed through both public participation and careful research. The first phase of plan development involved gathering information to construct a comprehensive picture of the current conditions in Red Oak. This data was used to identify trends to better anticipate future conditions and needs.

Once data was gathered and analyzed, a community survey was launched, and a series of public meetings were held to gather feedback from citizens and develop a set of goals for the city. In addition to the regular public meetings, a focus group meeting was held and while it was open to the public, invitations were sent directly to individuals deemed by the steering committee to be uniquely knowledgeable in the various areas of interest including transportation, communication, land use, and housing. Input gathered from these meetings as well as the survey was used by the steering committee to develop a vision statement, goals, and objectives for the plan.

The first public meeting was held on February 20, 2023. At this meeting, attendees were asking to assist in the completion of a SWOT analysis to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Red Oak. While completing the SWOT analysis, attendees were asked to think about possible ways to turn responses into actionable ideas that could related to goals for the plan.

### Strengths

- Beautiful trees
- Welcoming communities
- Volunteering organizations that do a lot of good work
- Plenty of blue-collar job opportunities
- Strong city council
- Strong chamber of commerce
- Good assortment of community activities – YMCA, Wilson & movie theaters
- Good hospital and health resources
- Beautiful Victorian homes
- Historic culture/buildings/history
- County seat
- Artists
- Spanish speaking population is growing
- Newly renovated schools

- Any efforts to fundraise in community have been successful
- Great regional airport
- Small town living and safety
- Proximity to Omaha/Council Bluffs/Des Moines/Kansas City
- Locally owned Radio Station /Paper/Local Media
- STEAM/Culinary Department
- Arts Programming in Schools
- Industrial Park
  - Generational local businesses
- Locally owned Railspur
- Satellite College Campus
- Strong religious/faith community – all religions
- History and WWII museums
- Popular Events – Junction Days most popular & National Night Out
- Library
- Active committees for Economic Development
- Active Committees for Housing
- Nice assortment of parks that are spread across the town and are of various sizes
- National Guard armory
- A lot of agricultural related businesses

- County Emergency Management located in the city (EMA)
- Full time fire/rescue staff who are cross trained
- High quality abundant water
- 10G capable fiber

### Weaknesses

- Streets need improvement
- Sewer and water need improvement
- Sidewalks and crosswalks need improvement
- Have hard water
- Lack of higher paying jobs
- Lack of workforce
  - Lack of quantity of workers
  - Lack of skilled workers
  - Lack of trained workers
  - Lack of people who want to work
- Dilapidated homes – a lot of slum and blight – too many houses are not attractive
- Perception of drug issues and crime
- School – many are opting out
- Lack of entrepreneurial ecosystem
- Lack of transportation during hours when it is needed
- Housing inventory/affordability/quantity
- Overhead power lines

## Opportunities

- Trail expansion
- Mega site in Mills County
- Small Business incubator
- EverReady Site
- K-mart Site
- Murphy Building
- Community can come together
  - All people coming together and making group decisions as one
- Red Oak Creek & Nishnabotna River
  - Access
  - Water trails
  - Parks
- Accessibility to Natural Tourism
  - Agriculture
  - Lake
  - Conservation area
- City/County to discuss combining services offered to provide better services at a more affordable cost
- Population growth
- Empty downtown buildings
- Grants & Loans to finance projects especially infrastructure
- Prepare money/Save money to find matches for grants
- Remote work

## Threats

- Demographics
- Flood plain
- Empty downtown buildings
  - There is little to no valuation on these buildings
- Property tax valuation
  - They keep rolling back
  - There is less money to do/fix things
  - State government taking a lot of local control
- Municipal labor is aging
  - Are there good succession plans?
- Competition of jobs within city
- Leakage of people that shop out of town
- Leakage of people that work out of town
- Open enrollment of the school
- Leakage to online retailers
- Agricultural reliance

The survey was launched in February of 2023 and was open for approximately 5 months, gathering 159 responses. The respondents were asked a series of questions pertaining to various aspects of the city including housing, transportation, amenities, and city services as well as what they wanted to see from the city in the future. A summary of survey results can be found in Appendix A.

After public input was gathered, the planners with Southwest Iowa Planning Council combined that data with research data obtained from various locations to create the first draft of the plan. This draft was presented to the steering committee. After the draft was revised, it was then made available for public comment and presented to the planning and zoning commission for their review. After their final review, the plan was presented to the planning and zoning commission for their approval and then went before City Council for adoption

# Community Profile



## History

The first settlers came to Red Oak Junction in the early 1850s, however, the community's growth really began with the arrival of the railroad in 1869. The town was incorporated on June 28, 1869 and in 1902, the "Junction" was dropped and the city became known as Red Oak.

The population of Montgomery County tripled in size between 1870 and 1880 thanks to the railroad. Red Oak became the trade center for the area with industries such as meat-packing, a brewery, a glove factory, buggy manufacturing, a cannery, flour mills, and a brick and tile works.

Red Oak's spectacular collection of turn-of-the-century homes reflects the wealth that a wide range of commerce brought to the area from 1870 to 1916. Because of the railroad, building materials such as wood, stone, marble, and granite could be easily delivered from other parts of the county resulting in large homes with exquisite details and finishes.

Along with the rich history in industry, Red Oak has a proud military history. During World War I, Red Oak's Company M went to the front lines with a full strength of 250. They fought at Belleau Woods, the Argonne Forest, Sr. Mickel, and Swepps. In the end, the Company suffered 160 casualties with 52 killed in action.

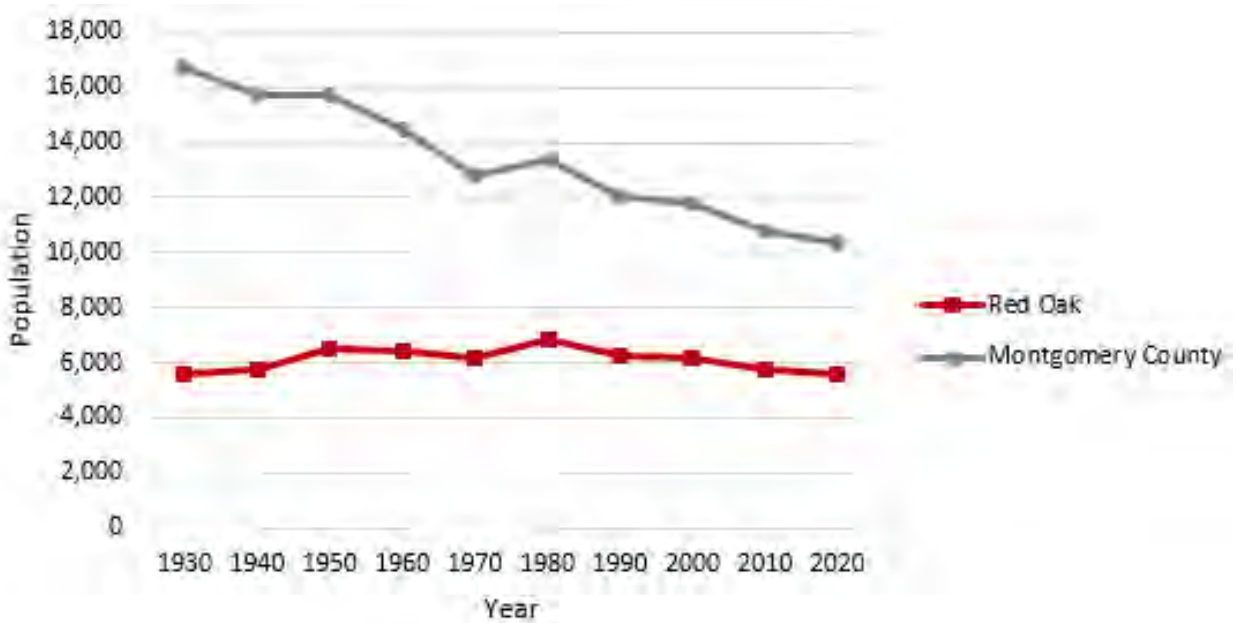
In World War II, Red Oak received national publicity for having the largest number of casualties per capita in the United States. On March 6, 1943, more than 100 telegrams arrived with the news of soldiers missing in action. In April, official reports confirmed that 27 had been taken prisoner at Kasserine Pass.



Demographics

Over the years, the population of Red Oak has remained fairly consistent, peaking at 6,810 people in 1980 compared to 5,596 at the 2020 Census. Red Oak did not experience the same rate of population decline that Montgomery County has seen

over the years, especially between 1930 and 1970. In recent years, the population change in Red Oak has been on par with that of the County. Red Oak saw a decrease in population of 7.3% from 2000 to 2010 and a decrease of 2.5% from 2010 to 2020.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-year estimates

	2000	2010	2020	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2020
<b>Red Oak</b>	6,197	5,742	5,596	-7.3%	-2.5%
<b>Montgomery County</b>	11,779	10,740	10,330	-8.8%	-3.8%

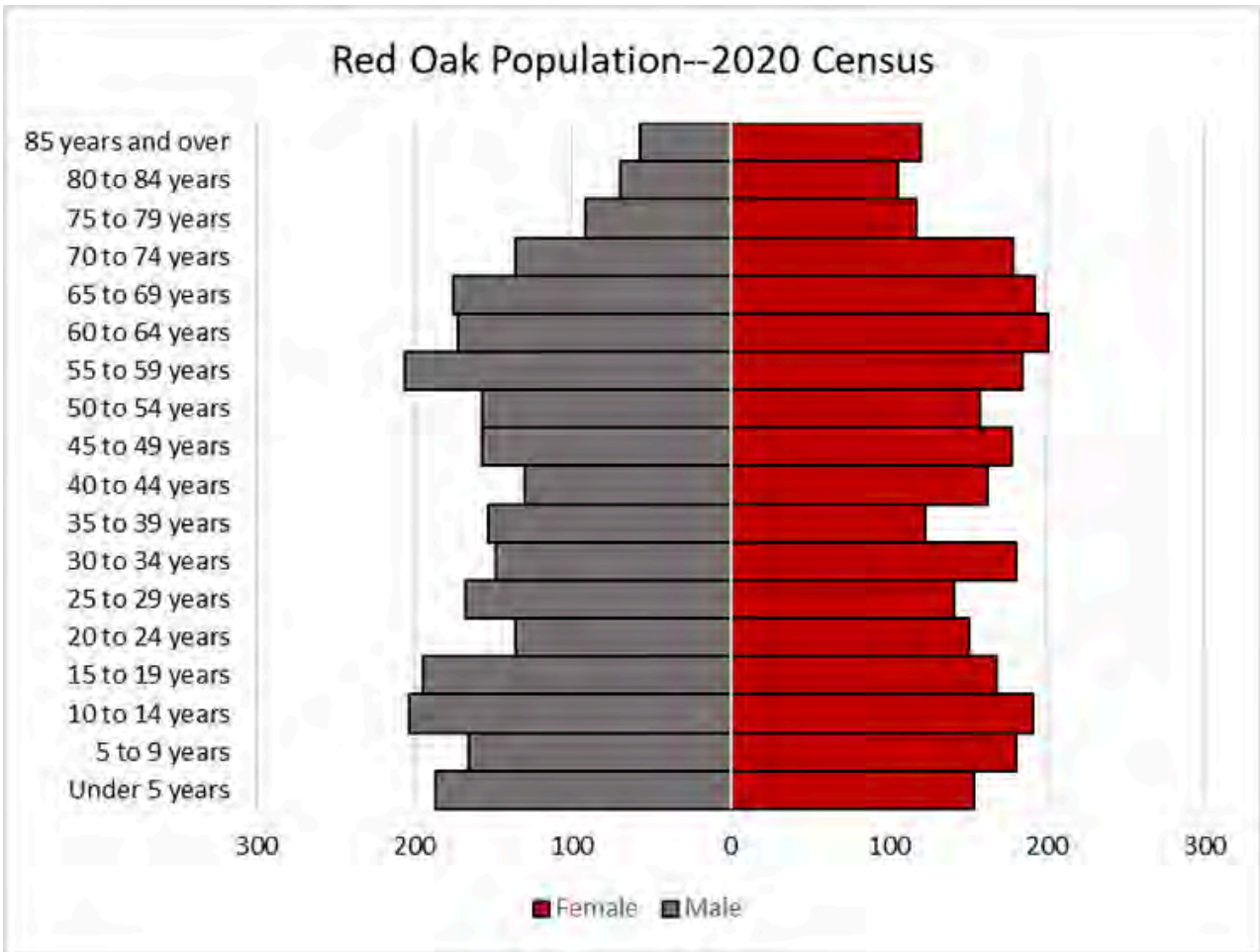
Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-year estimates

Age and gender are two of the most basic and key demographics to explore of any population. Both statistics play a key role in the mix of services necessary in a community. At the 2020 Census, Red Oak had a median age of 45.1 years, compared to the national median age of 38.8 years. Approximately 25% of the Red Oak population is 65 years old or older. This aging population can result in the increased need for accommodations for that age demographic such as more extensive health care options, retirement facilities, and amenities appealing to older populations.

Equally important to the aging population is the fact that 30% of Red Oak's population is under the age of 30 years old. People of this age would have different needs than the older population. They may be finishing high school, pursuing secondary education, starting a career, purchasing a home, or starting a family.

Having a variety of ages within a community is a sign of a healthy population. Younger and older residents can bolster the economy in different ways and can offer benefits to the other age cohorts. The population pyramid for Red Oak can be seen on the next page.

As the name states, population pyramids tend to have a pyramid shape, however, Red Oak's has more of an hourglass shape showing an outflow of residents between the ages of 20-44. This can be attributed in part to people graduating high school and moving away for work or to pursue further education. The population starts to increase after age 44 showing that people either return to or choose to move to Red Oak later in life. This would indicate the Red Oak is considered a good place for a family and raising children.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-year estimates

# Economic Development

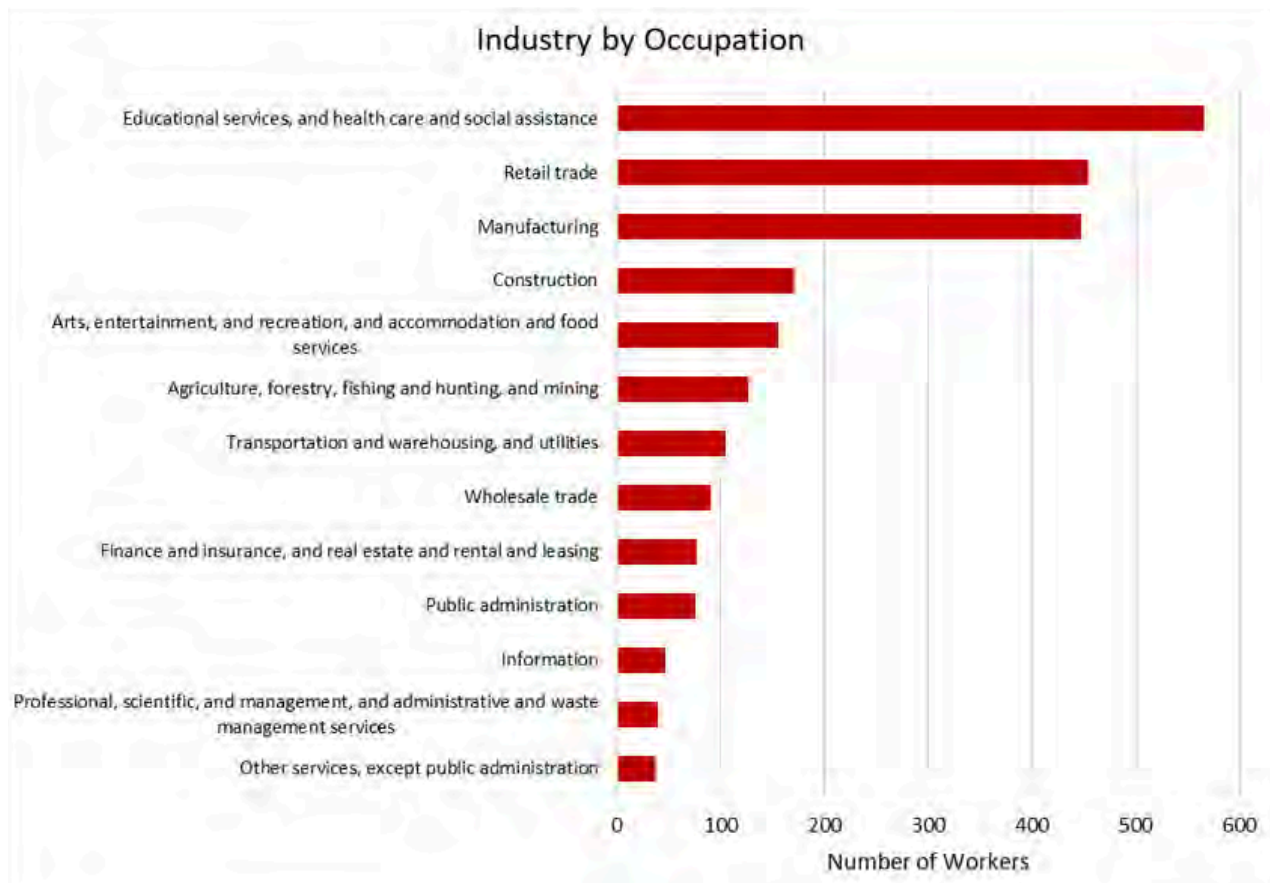


Economic development is the process by which a community organizes and then applies its energies toward creating a business climate fostering retention and expansion of existing businesses, attracting new businesses, and developing new business ventures aligned with the community’s quality-of-life goals. Success in economic development requires partnerships among government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. It is the goal of the community to maintain existing businesses and develop diverse

businesses and industries that not only provide more and/or better jobs for residents but also a greater economic choice and new opportunities for entertainment and social activities.

**Employment**

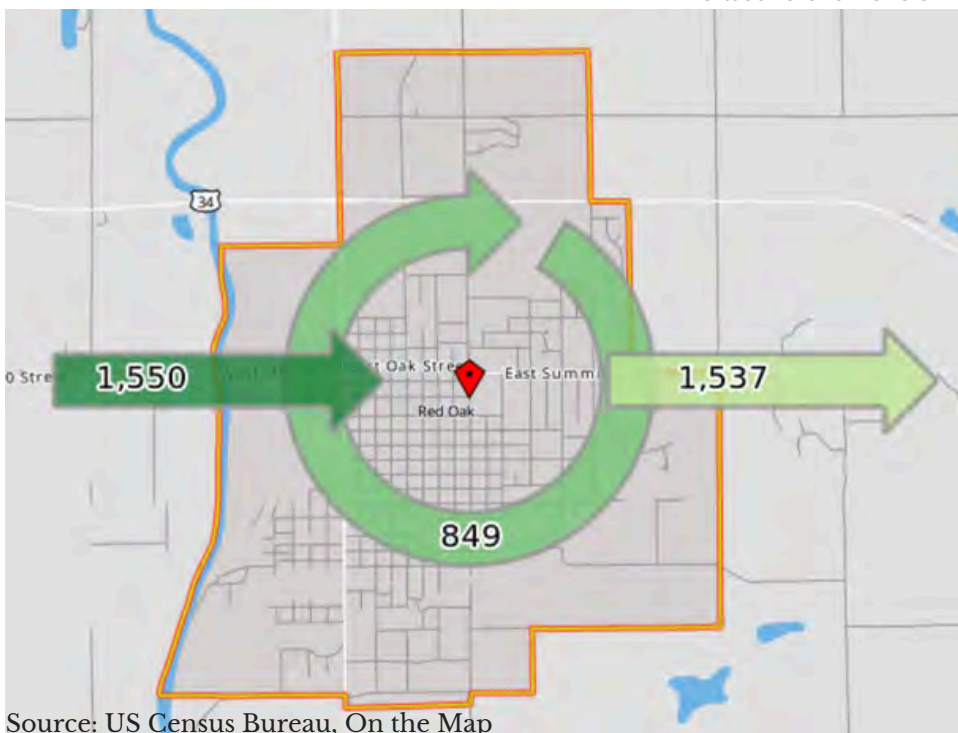
An examination of a community's labor force will provide a starting point to understanding their economic health. Red Oak’s primary employment sectors are educational services and health care and social assistance (24%, retail trade (19%), and manufacturing (19%)



Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-year estimates

In rural communities like Red Oak, the lack of local employment opportunities creates a challenging dynamic where residents frequently have to commute long distances for work. This situation can strain personal finances and time, as well as contribute to increased environmental impacts from commuting. The data indicating that 1,550 non-residents travel into Red Oak for work, while 1,537 residents commute out, highlights a near equilibrium in the flow of workers, but also underscores the dependency on external employment.

With only 849 people working within Red Oak, the community faces a substantial imbalance between local job availability and resident employment needs. For example, some businesses in the area must bus in employees or recruit employees through foreign labor programs. This imbalance between available jobs and desired jobs can contribute to economic instability, as residents spend a significant portion of their income on transportation and may face burnout from lengthy commutes. Moreover, the reliance on external jobs can make the local economy more vulnerable to broader economic shifts and employment trends outside the community.



The possibility that some residents who work elsewhere might be remote workers introduces another layer of complexity. Although remote work could mitigate some of the challenges associated with long commutes, it is not accounted for in the current data. Therefore, any analysis of the local job market and commuting patterns should consider the growing trend of remote work and its potential impact on both the local economy and the commuting statistics.

Addressing these challenges may require a multifaceted approach, including efforts to attract more businesses and industries to Red Oak, invest in local infrastructure, and enhance remote work opportunities. By creating more local job opportunities and supporting flexible work arrangements, Red Oak could foster economic growth and improve the quality of life for its residents.

The chart below reveals that nearly half of Red Oak's residents are commuting less than 10 miles for work, indicating that a significant portion of the local workforce can manage relatively short commutes. Conversely, approximately 18% of residents are traveling 50 miles or more to reach their workplaces. This longer-distance commuting suggests that many are heading towards the larger metropolitan areas of Omaha/Council Bluffs or Des Moines.

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2021



Jobs by Distance - Home Census Block to Work Census Block

	2021	
	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	2,386	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	1,163	48.7%
10 to 24 miles	244	10.2%
25 to 50 miles	553	23.2%
Greater than 50 miles	426	17.9%

Source: US Census Bureau, On the Map

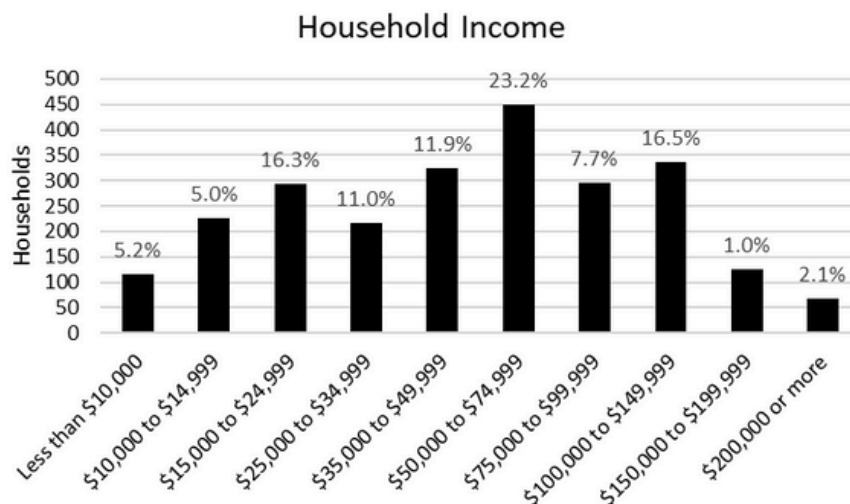
The chart further illustrates that a substantial number of commuters are heading west and northwest, aligning with the direction of the Omaha/Council Bluffs metro area. This geographic trend underscores the reliance of Red Oak’s workforce on employment opportunities outside the immediate region.

Additional details and percentages provided in the chart offer a more granular view of the commuting patterns, revealing the broader implications for local economic dynamics and transportation infrastructure. By understanding these commuting patterns, policymakers and community leaders can better address the needs of residents, potentially by advocating for improved local job creation,

enhanced transportation options, and strategies to reduce the burden of long commutes on the workforce.

**Income**

Individual and household incomes are key indicators of a community's economic health. In rural Iowa, incomes typically fall below national averages. However, the lower cost of living in these areas often means that residents can enjoy a comparable standard of living to their urban counterparts despite earning less. On the downside, rural residents frequently face longer commutes to work compared to those in metropolitan areas. Consequently, rising transportation costs can have a disproportionately negative impact on rural communities.

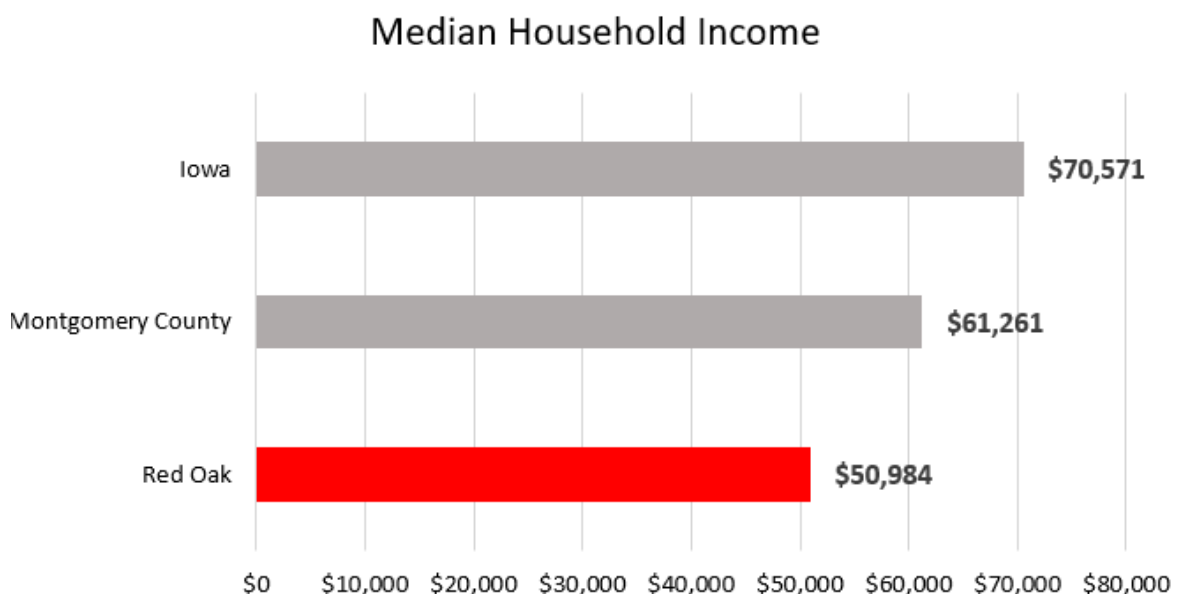


Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-year estimates

Red Oak’s median household income is lower than both Montgomery County's and the State of Iowa's. This highlights a notable economic gap, suggesting that residents of Red Oak face greater financial challenges compared to those in surrounding areas. The income disparity could be due to factors such as limited high-paying job opportunities and fewer economic development initiatives in Red Oak. Addressing this gap may require focused efforts to boost local job opportunities and economic growth.

**Poverty**

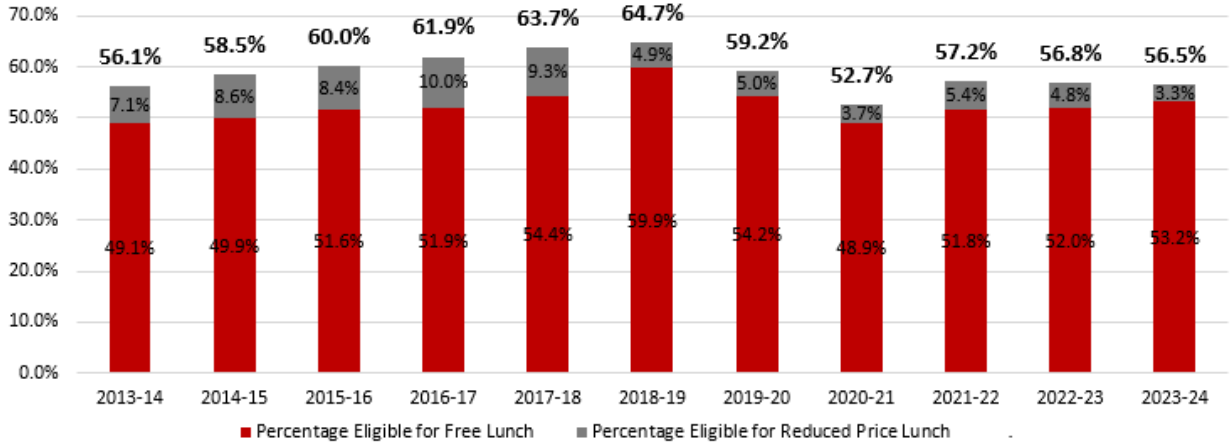
According to the 2022 American Community Survey, 18.6% of Red Oak residents are living in poverty compared to the State of Iowa’s 11.1%. The graph below shows poverty broken out by age groups. A staggering 25% of residents of Red Oak under the age of 18 are living in poverty while the same age group for the state of Iowa is roughly half of that at 13%. When examining data regarding free and reduced lunch eligibility at Red Oak Community School District, it can be seen that Red Oak CSD has 56.5% of the students eligible for this program while the state average is 41.8%



Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-year estimates

## Red Oak

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch

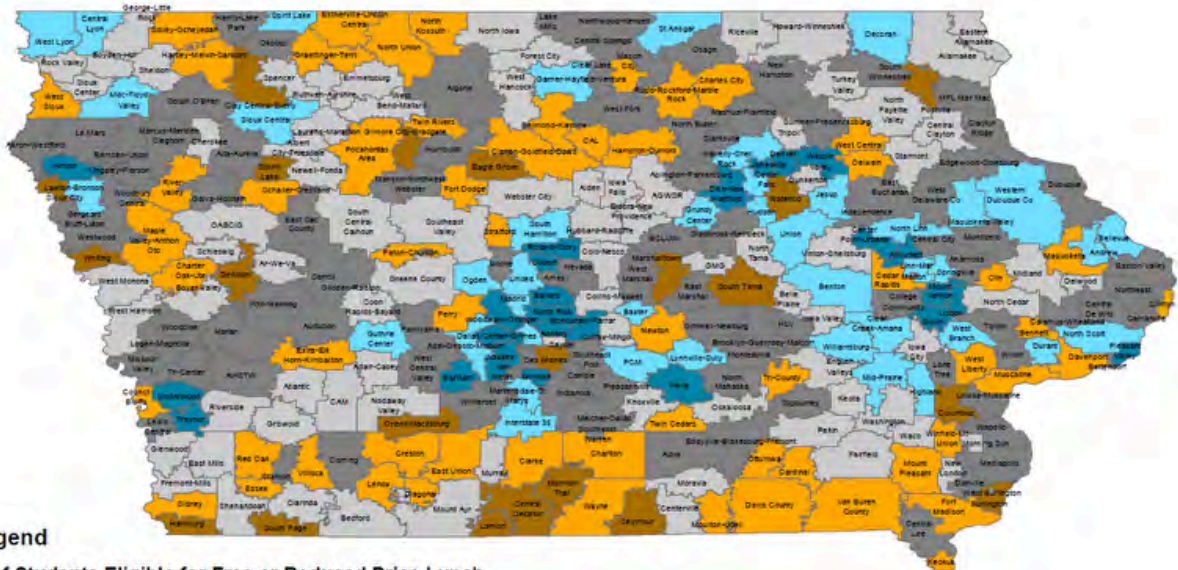


Source: Iowa Association of School Boards, 2024



### Iowa Association of School Boards 2023-2024 Free and Reduced Price Lunch Percentages by School District

[Click Here for District Specific and Historic Data](#)



**Legend**

**% of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch**

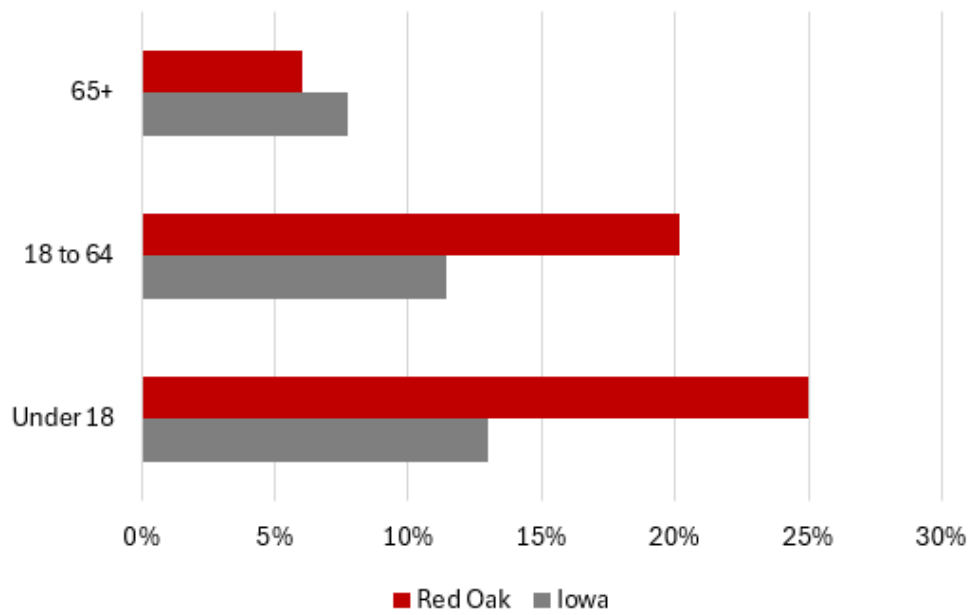
- 10.0% to 19.9% (26 Districts)
- 20.0% to 29.9% (42 Districts)
- 30.0% to 39.9% (95 Districts)
- 40.0% to 49.9% (82 Districts)
- 50.0% to 59.9% (59 Districts)
- 60.0% and above (21 Districts)

State Average =	41.8%
State Median =	39.9%

Sources:  
Iowa Department of Education, Free/Reduced Price Lunch file  
IASB analysis and calculations

Source: Iowa Association of School Boards, 2024

## Residents Living in Poverty



Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-year estimates

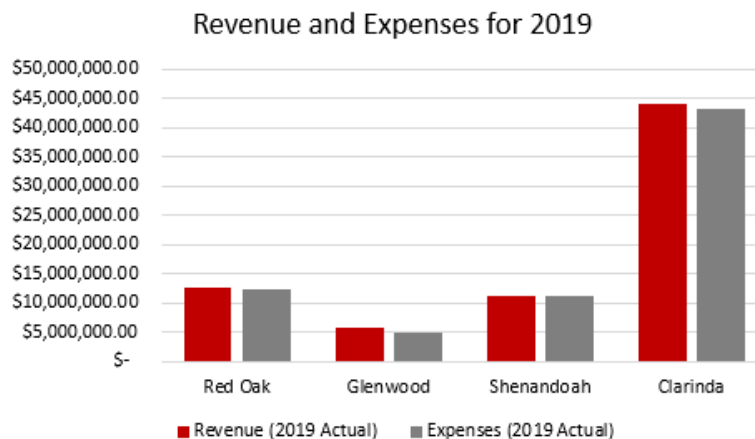
Poverty is a complex, multifaceted issue that goes far beyond low income. It intertwines with various social determinants such as education, employment opportunities, and healthcare access. For many individuals and families living in poverty, insufficient access to quality education can limit job prospects, perpetuating a cycle of low income and financial instability. Additionally, poverty often correlates with poorer health outcomes due to limited access to healthcare and nutritious food, further compounding the struggle to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Addressing poverty requires a comprehensive approach that includes improving educational systems, creating better job opportunities, enhancing access to healthcare, and ensuring fair treatment and opportunities for all individuals. Effective solutions must also involve community engagement and support systems that address the unique needs of different populations, ensuring that efforts to alleviate poverty are both inclusive and sustainable.

## City Finances

Comparing the City of Red Oak’s finances with cities of similar size and location gives an important insight into how money is earned and spent for city resources. To best do this, numbers for the most recently completed and adjusted budget for the fiscal year 2019 will be examined. When these numbers for peer cities of comparable size in southwest Iowa are compared, it is noted that the City of Red Oak is slightly higher than the City of Shenandoah, making it the second highest among the peer cities.

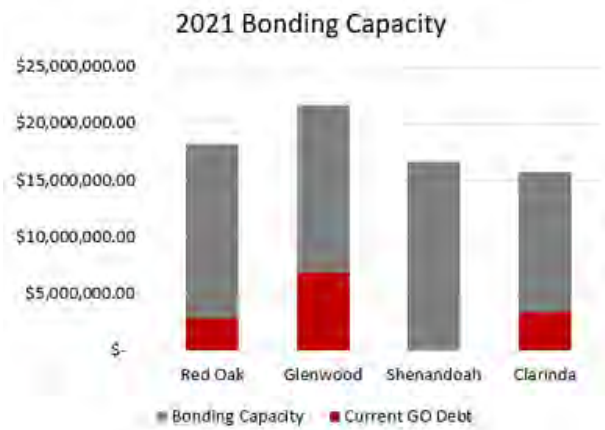
For the Fiscal Year 2019, the City of Red Oak had a revenue of \$12,678,204 and expenses of \$12,322,905. 27% of the revenue for the city was from “other financing sources” which includes proceeds from debt service and TIF loan transfers. The second highest source of revenue was fees and services at 22% which includes fees from water and sewer. Public safety was the city’s biggest expense at 30%. This is largely due to the fact that Red Oak pays their firefighters rather than them being volunteers. Debt service was the second highest expense at 17%.



2019 Revenues		2019 Expenses	
Property Tax	\$ 2,500,570.00	Public Safety	\$3,718,035.00
TIF	\$ -	Public Works	\$ 938,192.00
Local Taxes	\$ 747,366.00	Health & Social Services	\$ 2,200.00
Permits	\$ 66,116.00	Culture & Rec	\$ 938,164.00
Intergovernmental	\$ 1,186,269.00	Community & Economic Dev.	\$ 136,692.00
Fees & Services	\$ 2,797,063.00	General Government	\$ 158,834.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,582,093.00	Debt Service	\$2,120,532.00
Other	\$ 3,450,382.00	Water	\$ 908,073.00
Use of Money & Property	\$ 42,530.00	Sewer	\$ 809,487.00
		Landfill/Garbage	\$ 16,911.00
		Other	\$ 1,475.00

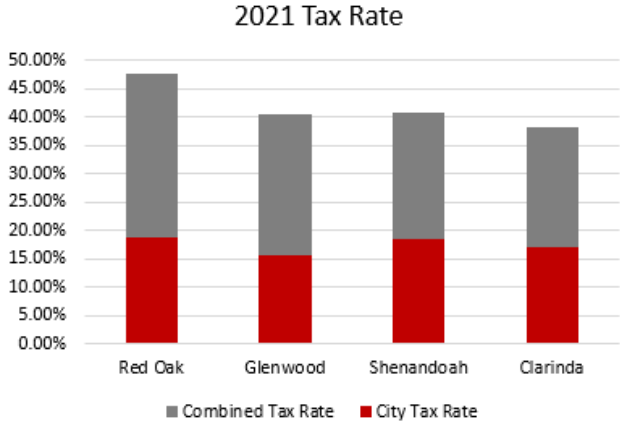
Source: Iowa Department of Management

In order to properly plan for the future, the most recent estimates from the fiscal year 2021 budget must be examined in order to account for any recent financial changes. Comparing city and combined tax rates (city, county, and school taxes) between the peer cities shows that Red Oak is the highest in both categories. City tax rates cover expenses related to city employee benefits, street repair, insurance, and more. Although the rates are higher, there is less property to tax compared to other places meaning this source of revenue makes up a smaller portion of the total.



Source: Iowa Department of Management

large projects such as road repair or utility improvements. This debt would be spread out over several years, allowing for current and future users of the service to pay for the improvement through increased taxes. As seen in the graph above, Red Oak has utilized General Obligation bonds in recent years to complete city projects and is bonded at approximately 16% of their capacity.



Source: Iowa Department of Management

General Obligation bonds allow for a city to bond for up to 5% of their total property valuation which would be approximately \$18,209,000 for Red Oak. This would provide the city with the funds necessary to complete

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is another tool the city has at its disposal. Through an Urban Renewal Plan, the city can create TIF districts. Properties within a TIF district pay taxes as usual, but a portion of the tax revenue goes towards the TIF fund that can then be used to fund a project determined as a high need by the city, usually in a blighted area.

# Land Use

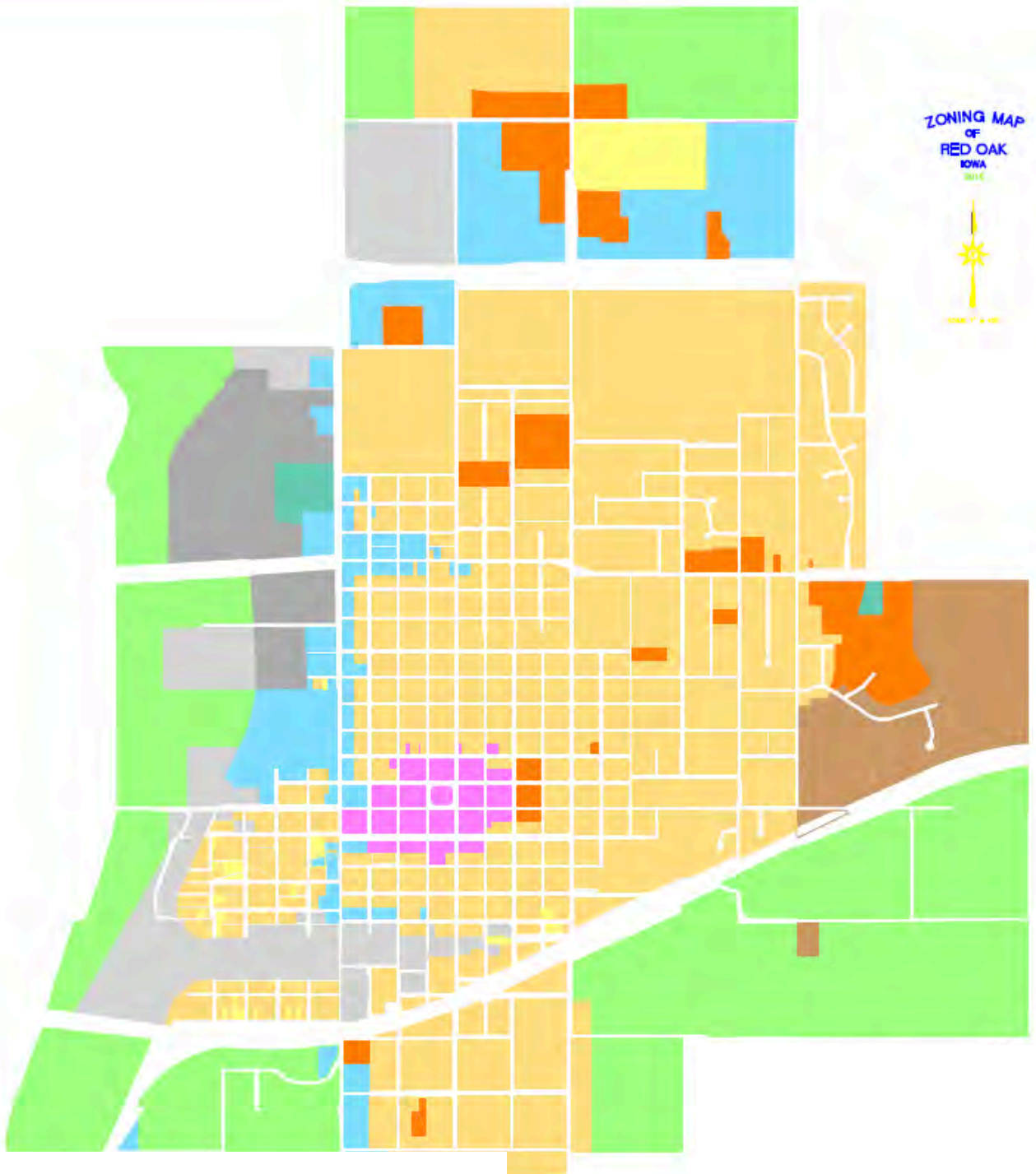


Comprehensive plans are first and foremost concerned with land use. Land is the basic input necessary for almost any development decision and its use can be readily regulated by zoning. Zoning establishes areas within a community where certain land uses are permitted and others not. The appropriate application of zoning helps to ensure incompatible land uses are not placed next to each other, thereby increasing the usefulness of the land, property values, and the overall health and welfare of the community.

This comprehensive plan is not a zoning ordinance, nor is it a zoning map. The zoning ordinance is a separate public document adopted by a separate procedure. However, under Iowa law, zoning must be done in accordance with a comprehensive plan. To that end, this plan designates certain areas within the community for specific future land uses. These designations in no way commit the community to acquiring or developing any property. They

do not guarantee that any particular property will eventually be developed. These designations are merely suggestions that if at some point, the zoning map is adjusted or land acquired, it be done in the general spirit and goals of the comprehensive plan.

This section will examine the current zoning of Red Oak and future land use patterns desired to help achieve the goals of the city. Establishing a future land use map will help city officials in land use-related decision making processes such as locating potential businesses, residential developments, or manufacturing companies.



**LEGEND**

- A-1 LIMITED AGRICULTURAL
- R-1 RESIDENTIAL
- R-2 RESIDENTIAL
- R-3 RESIDENTIAL
- R-4 MOBILE HOME PARK
- C-1 HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL
- C-2 PLANNED COMMERCIAL
- C-3 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
- M-1 LIMITED INDUSTRIAL
- M-2 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL

The current zoning map classifies parcels of land in Red Oak according to their desired use. The land use categories are described below.

### **A-1 Limited Agricultural District**

The intent of the A-1 District is to accommodate and protect agricultural and other rural use land uses near or adjacent to urban development from encroachment by incompatible uses. It is further the intent of this district to protect urban development from encroachment by incompatible agricultural uses.



### **R-1 Residential District**

This district is intended to provide areas for medium density, single-family residential development together with necessary and incidental accessory uses.

### **R-2 Residential District**

This district is intended to provide area for a medium density residential development of one-family and two-family residences together with other incidental uses typically found in residential areas such as schools, parks, and churches.

### **R-3 Residential District**

The R-3 Residential District is intended to provide areas for the development of one-family, two-family, and multi-family dwellings, together with various accessory and institutional uses similar in character.

### **R-4 Mobile Home Park District**

The intent of this district is to permit the development of mobile homes parks where such use will be compatible with surrounding development.

### **C-1 Highway Commercial District**

The C-1 Highway Commercial District is intended to accommodate commercial development which primarily serves the traveling public and to accommodate certain other uses which ordinarily require access to a major street or highway, or which have substantial land area requirements.

### **C-2 Planned Commercial District**

The C-2 Planned Commercial District is intended to accommodate certain general retail and personal service uses which would generally be inappropriate outside the Central

Business District except when developed as part of a shopping center complex and developed in accordance with high standards. It is further the intent of this district to accommodate various professional office uses at locations where other commercial classifications and the uses permitted therein would be inappropriate.

### **C-3 Central Business District**

This district is intended to accommodate various retail, governmental and service uses in a compact, centralized location that is convenient to users and where such uses benefit from being in close proximity to one another.



### **M-1 Limited Industrial District**

The M-1 Limited Industrial District is intended principally for manufacturing, processing, storage, wholesaling, distribution and related uses that are primarily contained within a building in order to minimize potential adverse effects on the human and natural environment.

### **M-2 General Industrial District**

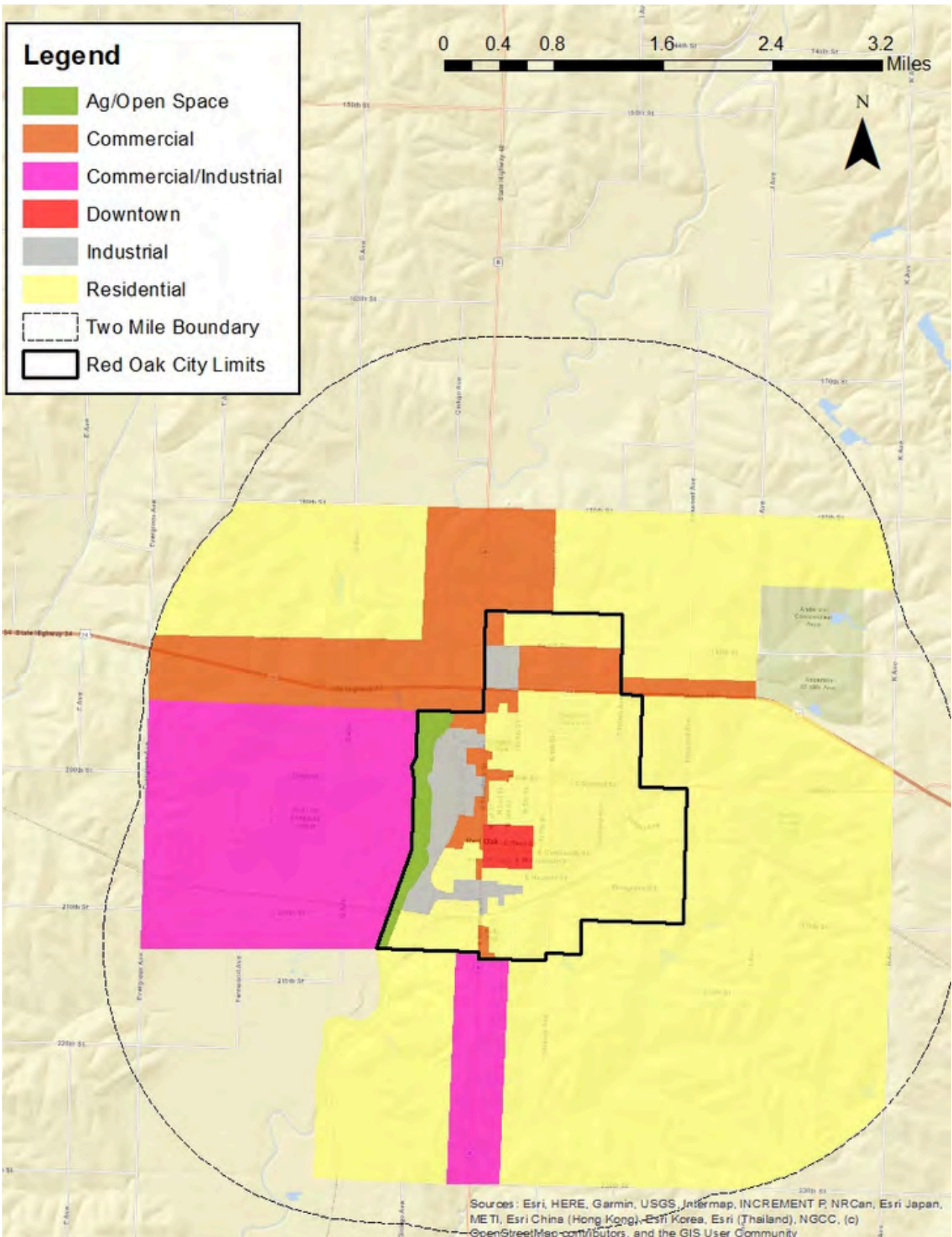
This district is intended primarily for heavy manufacturing and closely related uses while providing protection against harmful effects to existing and future uses in other districts.



### **Future Land Use**

The future land use map is intended to be a tool to be utilized by the planning and zoning commission as well as the City of Red Oak when it comes to future development within or

around the City of Red Oak. While it is in the city's best interest to utilize available land within the current city limits, it should also be noted that there is ample room surrounding the city for annexation.

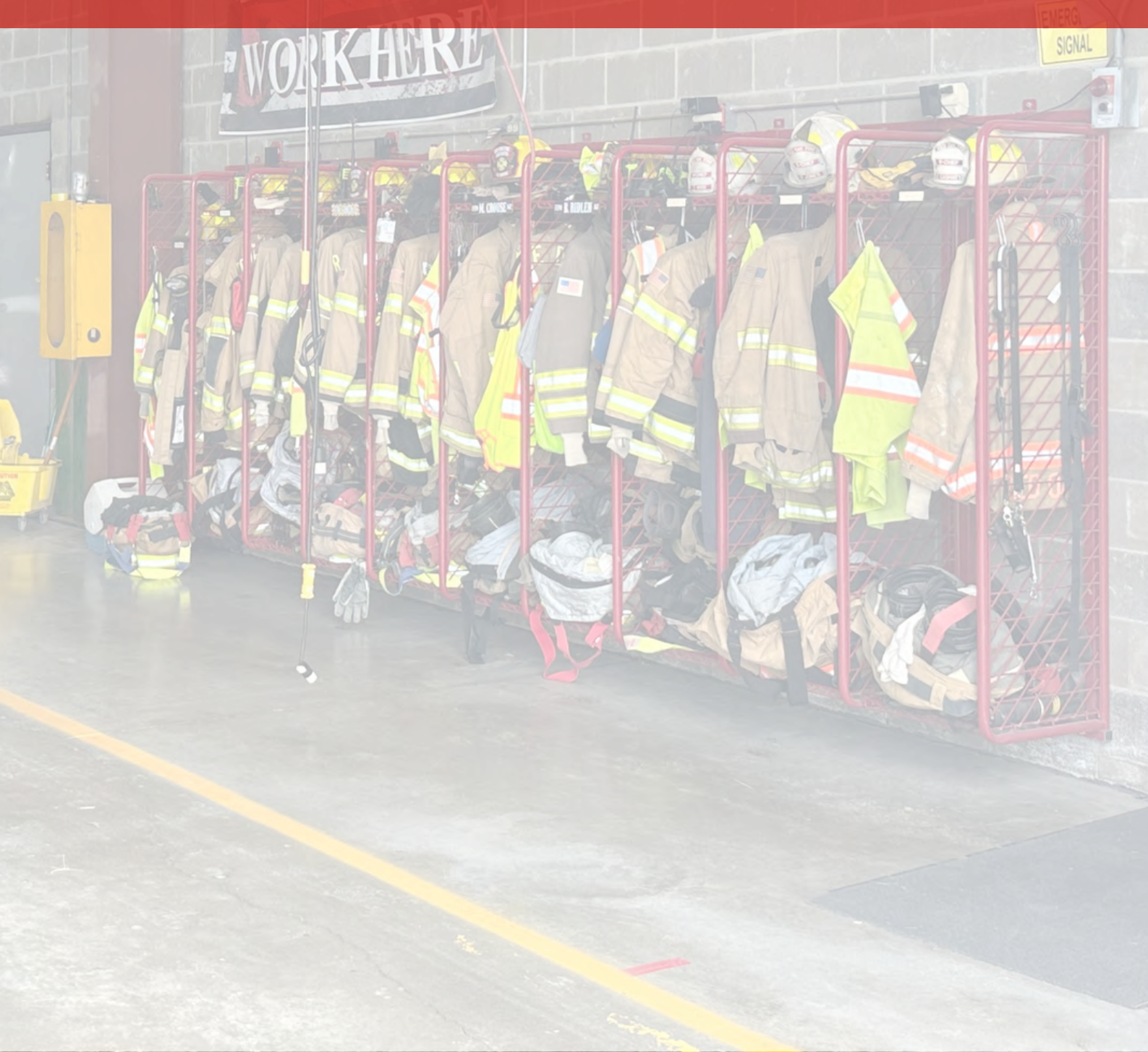


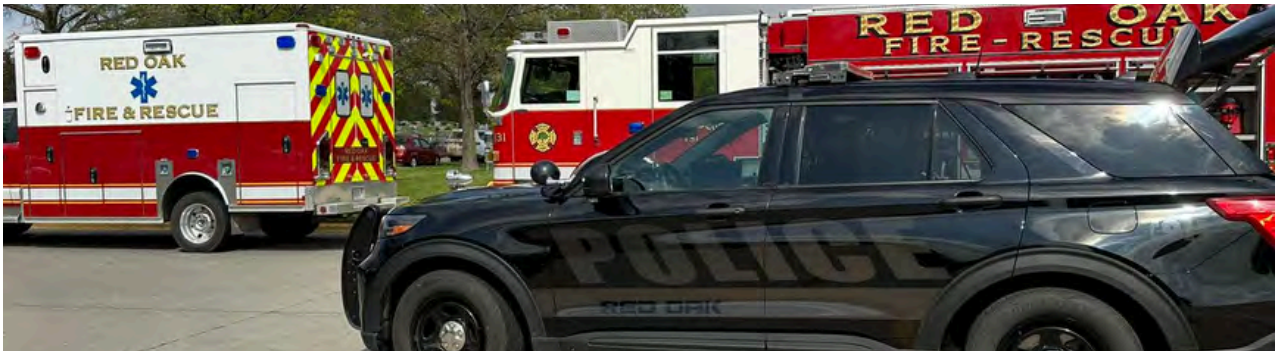
When looking at the future land use of Red Oak, it is important to consider options within the city for infill development. Infill development promotes a more compact design and is often much cheaper as utilities are usually already in place. Many sites that could be used for infill development are considered brownfield sites. Brownfields are parcels of land that are currently abandoned or underutilized due to the possible presence of environmental contamination. Examples of brownfield sites could include spots previously used for gas stations, laundromats, or factories.

While the future land use map identifies land suitable for future annexation and development, it is in the city's best interest to examine land already within city limits that would be appropriate for redevelopment. Redevelopment of these brownfield sites would not only eliminate potential hazards to the environment and to the residents, but also ensure that the city is getting the maximum usage out of their existing resources. Redeveloping underutilized properties helps to create a more compact, cohesive, and better functioning community.



# Public Services





### **Law Enforcement**

The Red Oak Police Department employs eleven officers and operates seven patrol cars. The department also operates various specialty units including basic intelligence analysis, surveillance, certified crime scene investigation, finger print technician, photographer, active shooter/tactical operations and reserve peace officers.

### **Fire Protection**

The Red Oak Fire Department has 12 full-time career staff that include EMTs, paramedics, and fire fighters, plus an additional 16 part-time/volunteer staff. The department covers 141 square

miles for fire protection and approximately 477 square miles for EMS services. The department currently operates four ambulances, two grass fire trucks, two fire engines, two auxiliary fire response vehicles, two rescue boats, a tanker truck, an aerial, a command vehicle, a fire/EMS UTV, a dive team trailer and a special fire/rescue operations trailer.

### **Emergency Management**

The Montgomery County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is the chief county agency responsible for disaster planning and preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. The



Montgomery County EMA has one full time coordinator, eight emergency dispatchers and about 75 first responders that serve as trained weather spotters. Each first responder is equipped with two-way radios, a pager, and identification materials. Each spotter receives training annually in severe weather spotting and safety.

Montgomery County EMA is equipped with or has access to a number of items to respond to and help citizens in the event of an emergency or disaster. The EMA has a fully equipped mobile command trailer for long term and critical incidents requiring on site command and collaboration between first responders and local officials. A four person John Deere gator and a 3 person Polaris Ranger and trailer(s) which are available to assist in areas of limited access or otherwise inaccessible areas. A mobile command vehicle is equipped with a computer, weather radar capabilities and multiple radios to assist with

coordination and tracking of resources at an incident. A dedicated 1-ton crew cab pickup to haul equipment and personnel to and from emergency and disaster scenes. The EMA has 1 fully functioning Unmanned Aerial System Vehicles (sUAS or drone) with FLIR/Thermal capability to search for missing/wanted subjects as well as being able to assist at large fires. The EMA also has a host of other specialty equipment ranging from portable lighting to portable generators.



## Water

Water for the City of Red Oak is provided through seven wells. The water does not go through treatment, but rather chlorination prior to distribution. The system serves 2,375 metered users with an average daily usage of 1.2 MGD (million gallons per day) and a maximum pumping capacity of 2.2 MGD. The city is able to store 2.5 million gallons of water between the water tower, underground storage, and an above ground tank. Currently, the city is dealing with aging infrastructure, especially with the distribution system. Many of the lines are copper and lead pipes that need to be replaced. Currently, the city's work is focused on addressing aging infrastructure. The distribution system experiences high pressures and is susceptible to main breaks and leakage. In addition, work is ongoing to replace lead service lines. On the supply side, the city is working to identify projects to maintain the city wells and well buildings and provide backup power to critical infrastructure.

## Sanitary Sewer

The City of Red Oaks owns and operates a wastewater treatment system that consists of gravity sewer mains, two lift stations, and a treatment plant. The bulk of the current system was installed in the 1960s with upgrades to the system happening sporadically, typically as road work is completed. The city will be looking to do upgrades system in the near future. There are currently 2,600 users on the system averaging a daily usage of 715,000 gallons. The systems current capacity is 4,000,000 gallons which is only reached during high rain events.

Unlike other services mentioned in this chapter, residents are billed directly for water and sewer services. Costs for water and sewer services should be at a rate that is high enough to provide for general upkeep of the system while also being able to put money aside for future projects. If rates are not covering these costs, the city may be burden with costly repairs that they can't afford, causing them to take out large loans. On the other hand, a city doesn't want their rates so high that it causes a burden on their residents.

Below, water and sewer rates are compared for Red Oak and three other towns of similar size and location. This comparison looks at the water and sewer rates, as well as the bill a family of four using an average of 6,000 gallons might receive in each community.

As shown in the tables below, Red Oak has significantly lower rates and average bills than all of the other communities. This can look like a positive on the surface, but it may also indicate a future problem when it comes time to make system repairs.

<b>Water and Sewer Rates</b>			
<b>Water</b>			
	<b>Base</b>	<b>Per 1,000 Gallons</b>	
<b>Red Oak</b>	\$ 7.45	\$2.55/100 CF 4,000+ gal	\$1.95/100 CF
<b>Shenandoah</b>	>135 CF 21.64, <135 CF \$15.46	\$11.74/100 CF over 135	
<b>Clarinda</b>	\$ 21.00	\$ 11.50	
<b>Glenwood</b>	\$ 20.00	\$ 5.50	
<b>Sewer</b>			
<b>Red Oak</b>	\$ 8.60	\$3.12/100CF	
<b>Shenandoah</b>	\$ 14.01	\$5.56/100CF over 135	
<b>Clarinda</b>	\$ 26.00	11.5	
<b>Glenwood</b>	\$ 31.15	\$ 10.00	

<b>Average Bill For 4 Person Household (6,000 gal.)</b>			
	<b>Water</b>	<b>Sewer</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Red Oak</b>	\$ 26.31	\$ 33.62	\$ 59.93
<b>Shenandoah</b>	\$ 100.09	\$ 51.16	\$ 151.25
<b>Clarinda</b>	\$ 78.50	\$ 83.50	\$ 162.00
<b>Glenwood</b>	\$ 42.00	\$ 71.15	\$ 113.15

Source: City Code of Ordinances for the cities of Red Oak, Shenandoah, Clarinda, and Glenwood, as of May, 2024

## Telecommunications

The City of Red Oak currently receives internet services from Farmer's Mutual Telephone Company (FMTC), Mediacom, and Century Link. FMTC offers fiber internet to all locations within Red Oak including the industrial park, downtown, major business corridors, and Woodland Hills and Woodland Hills II subdivisions. They are currently working to install fiber internet directly to all residences within the city. Between these providers, Red Oak is covered with speeds up to 10G.

## Electricity

Electricity to the City of Red Oak is supplied through MidAmerican Energy. In 2023, MidAmerican served 4,940 residential meters, 10 industrial, and 695 commercial customers in Red Oak for a total of 47,840,267 kWh. Based on 2022 numbers, MidAmerican Energy generates 61% of its electricity from wind power, 23% from coal, 11% from natural gas, 1% from solar, and 4% from nuclear and other sources.

## Healthcare

The Montgomery County Memorial Hospital + Clinics, located on US HWY 34 in Red Oak, has been serving Red Oak and surrounding communities for over 100 years. The hospital is a county public hospital governed by a board of elected trustees. MCMH + Clinics operates a variety of service lines including family medicine, internal medicine and geriatrics, oncology and hematology, imaging, lab, surgery, inpatient and emergency, among many others. In addition to the main campus, MCMH + Clinics also operates two satellite clinics in Malvern and Villisca, and a retail pharmacy in Red Oak. They have an outpatient specialty clinic, located at the main campus, with a variety of visiting specialists covering more than 20 specialties, including orthopedics, dermatology and cardiology. MCMH + Clinics also recognizes that social determinants of health are an important factor in the success of a patient's healthcare.

The organization has placed a focus on learning more about the socioeconomic factors patients may face, including food insecurity, lack of transportation, inability to purchase medications and other similar struggles, and the impact these factors have on a patient's health outcome.

To further aid in the socioeconomic factors that play into a patient's health, MCMH + Clinics is directly involved in Live Well Montgomery County, a 501 (c)(3) organization aimed at educating people on health and wellness.

Live Well Montgomery County's vision is for all residents of Montgomery County to have equal access to resources necessary to achieve optimal wellness. To do this, they help facilitate several

projects throughout the county including community gardens in three communities, monthly farmers markets at the MCMH + Clinic campus in Red Oak, as well as working with local food pantries.

MCMH + Clinics understands the importance of maintaining access to healthcare in rural areas. The organization continually invests in new technology, looks to improve access to health and healthcare services, and remains open to new ideas that would benefit those in the communities it serves. With around 350 employees, MCMH + Clinics is the largest employer in Montgomery County. In the future, the organization looks to expand its physical footprint on the main campus to continue to grow their services lines.



## Education

The Red Oak Community School District provides public education for over 1,000 students from pre-k through 12th grade. This district serves the City of Red Oak and the immediately surrounding area and has all facilities located within Red Oak.

The mission of the district is to provide the best opportunities for all students to academically, socially, and ethically prepare themselves for global citizenship. The school strives to meet this mission in a number of ways including providing laptops for students that include important software, information on home schooling or dual enrollment, and partnering with SWCC for high school students to earn college credits.

## Childcare

Childcare is a necessary service that's supply is oftentimes outweighed by the demand. The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light the importance of this service, and resulted in a further reduced supply as in-home providers began permanently closing. As parents began staying home to care for their children who didn't have daycare anymore, the effects were felt in the economy. This domino effect solidified the crucial role that childcare providers play in the economy.

Childcare in Red Oak is currently served with one childcare center, one in home provider and two pre-school programs for 3-4 year old children. Red Oak Child Development Center is a State licensed center with a total capacity of 145 children.



## Public Library

The Red Oak Public Library strives to provide its 12,000+ users with diverse material in various formats for self-directed learning, informational and recreational reading, listening, and viewing at no cost. To achieve this, the library has a vast collection of materials including approximately 43,600 books, 12,000 movies, and nearly 200,000 e-books through a larger e-book platform that the library is a member of. In addition to their collection of materials, the library provides numerous activities and services such as weekly story times and crafts for kids, backpacks filled with literacy and learning materials, and adult classes. There are seven computers available for public use and users are also able to print and fax.

A new program added in 2024 allows people age 18 years and older to rent tools to Montgomery County residents. This program works to aid residents in completing home improvement projects to maintain their homes and keep the area in good condition.

The library's budget fluctuates annually and must be stretched to cover all expenses.

Year	Budget
2018-2019	\$204,617
2019-2020	\$209,461
2020-2021	\$219,063
2021-2022	\$228,718
2022-2023	\$228,718



# Transportation



Offering a variety of transportation options—safe, convenient, and comfortable mobility for people walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving—is vital to ensuring high quality of life and economic health for any town. Not only does transportation play an active role in residents’ physical and mental wellbeing, but also in ensuring residents’ economic well-being by providing access to jobs, attracting new businesses, and bringing tourism dollars into the community.

### Streets

Highway 34 is a United States highway that runs from Colorado to Chicago. This highway travels through the northern portion of Red Oak, providing a continuous route across Iowa as it traverses from Colorado to Chicago. Within Red Oak, Highway 34 is being widened to four lanes to accommodate higher traffic levels. This project should be completed by the end of 2024.

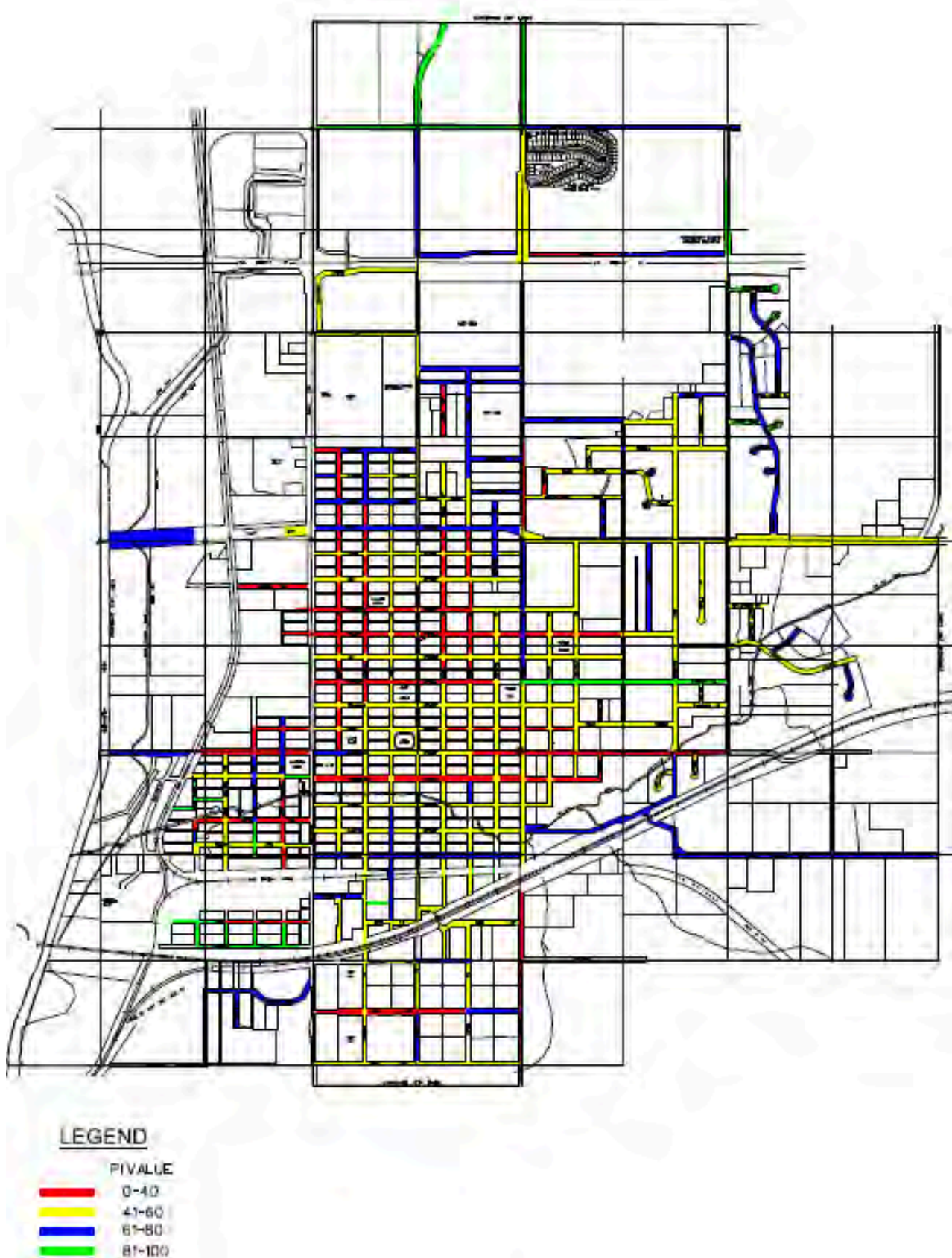
Iowa Highway 48 traverses 48 miles in southwest Iowa starting north of Shenandoah and ending near Lewis. This highway was originally started as a route to connect Shenandoah and Red Oak and grew to its current route, connecting the towns of Shenandoah, Essex, Red Oak, Elliott and Griswold.

In 2019, the City of Red Oak conducted a comprehensive street study evaluating the condition of every street within the city limits. Each street was assigned a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) score, which reflects factors such as the severity of distress and the percentage of the area affected by deterioration.

To determine which streets required the most urgent attention, the PCI scores were combined with other considerations, including the street's functional classification and its importance as a truck or bus route. This analysis resulted in the creation of a Priority Index (PI), which ranks streets based on their need for repair. Streets with higher PI scores (which

correspond to lower numerical values) are deemed higher priority for repairs and should be addressed sooner.

A map illustrating these PI rankings is below, providing a visual representation of the repair priorities across the city.





### **Public Transit**

Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) provides various public transportation services to the Red Oak and surrounding areas. Transportation services are available to students to and from school or preschool along with a taxi service within city limits of Red Oak Monday-Friday. SWITA provides non-emergency medical transportation and transportation for Nishna Productions both in and outside of Red Oak. There are services available for elderly riders, age 60 and above, which include a weekly shopping trip. Other special trips are scheduled by calling the SWITA office. The cost for each service varies, and most route-specific details can be found on the SWITA website. SWITA can provide services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, depending on driver availability. Transportation needs are constantly changing, and SWITA strives to adapt with them and reduce transportation barriers. All SWITA routes and services are open to the public.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Network**

The City of Red Oak has approximately 2 miles of dedicated trails. The Red Oak Trail runs between N 4th Street and Eastern Avenue traveling through the apple orchard, the southern edge of the historic cemetery, past the high school and past the YMCA. While this trail is mainly used for recreation, it does serve as an important connection for transportation as well.

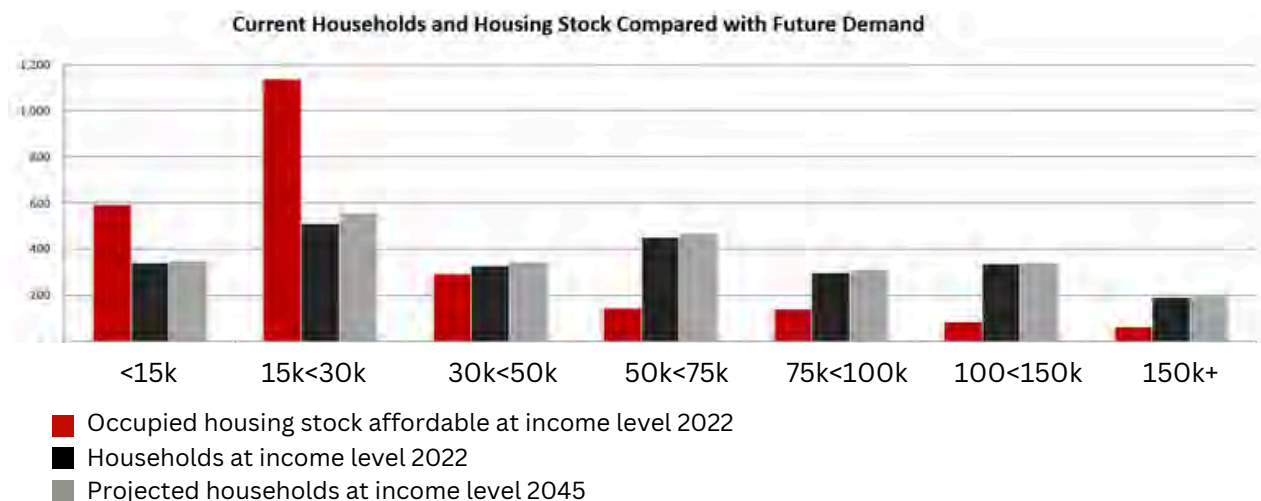
# Housing



One of the key drivers of community growth is the quality and diversity of its housing stock. As populations from nearby metropolitan areas expand into surrounding rural regions, Red Oak stands poised to capitalize on this trend. To foster growth, it is essential for Red Oak's housing market to offer a broad range of options—varying in style, price, location, and size. This diversity ensures that the community can accommodate residents at different life stages and attract those considering relocation. By providing appealing choices for everyone, Red Oak can position itself as a prime destination for new residents.

The graph below illustrates the current housing stock in Red Oak relative to various income levels,

both now and in the future. It shows a significant surplus of affordable housing for households earning \$35,000 or less annually, compared to the number of such households. In contrast, there is a shortage of housing options for those earning \$35,000 or more. This imbalance highlights that while there is an abundance of low-income housing, higher-income residents face a scarcity of suitable options. Consequently, those with higher incomes may be forced to choose from the limited high-value housing available or settle for less desirable options, impacting their overall quality of life while those who have a limited income, may not have any options for housing within their budget.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-year estimates

Income-based housing is designed to provide affordable living options aligned with residents' financial capacities. This approach ensures that individuals and families at various income levels have access to suitable housing without being burdened by excessive costs. A good rule of thumb is that people should not be spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Currently, 22.6% of homeowners and 35.6% of renters are spending 30%+ of their income on housing. This is burdensome to the residents and can have a negative impact on their quality of life and to economy of the city. By linking housing affordability to income, communities can support a diverse population, prevent economic segregation, and promote equitable access to housing. Effective income-based housing programs balance supply and demand across income brackets, aiming to reduce the strain on low-income households while addressing the needs of moderate and higher-income

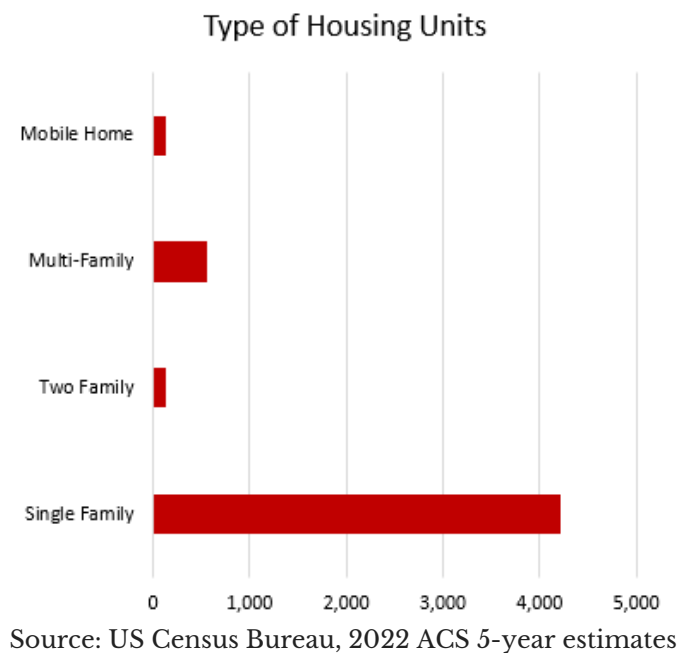
groups. This strategy fosters economic diversity and stability within communities, making housing more accessible and inclusive for all residents.

Currently, Red Oak has 178 housing units deemed affordable through income limits and Section 8 vouchers, according to [affordablehousingonline.com](http://affordablehousingonline.com).

These units are distributed across various developments including Acorn Acres , Acorn Acres Phase II, City View Apartments, 1917 Lofts, Oak Creek and Woodland Park. However, all of these low-income housing options face extensive waiting lists, with some taking years to clear. This high demand underscores the need for increased affordable housing to better serve the community.



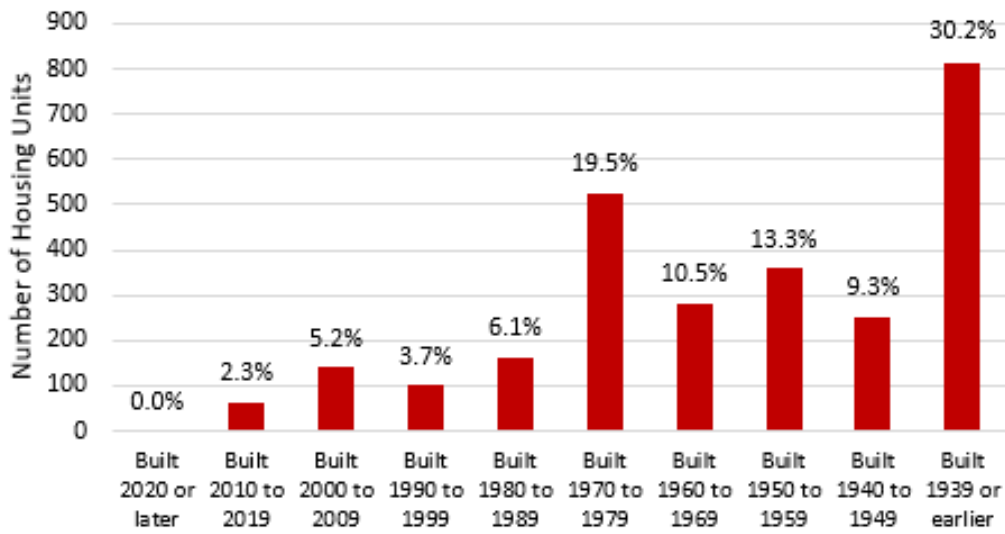
In Red Oak, single-family units constitute the predominant type of housing, reflecting a strong preference among residents for this style of living. Single-family homes offer a range of benefits, including privacy, more space, and the ability to customize one's living environment. They are often seen as an ideal choice for families seeking stability and personal space.



While single-family are favored by many, they may not suit everyone's needs. Some residents might find the maintenance demands associated with these properties to be a drawback. For individuals or families who prefer less maintenance and lower utility costs, alternative housing options such as apartments, townhouses, or condominiums might be more appealing. These options typically require less upkeep and can offer more predictable utility expenses, making them a practical choice for those seeking a more manageable living situation.

One of the primary reasons for the prevalence of affordable housing in Red Oak, particularly at lower income levels, is the advanced age of the city's housing stock. According to estimates from the American Community Survey, of the nearly 2,700 housing units in Red Oak, approximately two-thirds of the were constructed before 1969, with about half of these homes built before 1939. This leaves roughly 36% of the housing inventory as more recent constructions, built since 1970 and currently less than 54 years old.

## Housing Age



Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-year estimates

While older homes are often more affordable, they come with their own set of challenges. The aging housing stock frequently requires higher maintenance and repair costs to keep them in good condition. Without proper upkeep, these homes can quickly fall into disrepair, leading to further complications and expenses.

In addition to older housing units, Red Oak also has a high percentage of rental units, making up nearly 33% of the housing units. As a large portion of the rental housing stock is likely composed of these older units, the challenges of

maintaining them are equally relevant for landlords and tenants. Addressing the maintenance needs of rental properties is essential to ensuring safe, affordable, and quality living conditions for renters. Thus, it is important for the city to focus on both preserving its aging housing stock and supporting the rental market to meet the diverse needs of its residents. To accomplish this, the city has implemented and is enforcing a rental inspection program. Owners of rental units must register their units with the city and then be inspected by a licensed building inspector every three years. These inspections ensure units are up to code and are safe for the occupants.

# Recreation



Recreational amenities work to increase the quality of life a community can offer residents. These amenities work to enhance the overall aesthetics of a community while fostering a sense of civic pride and appreciation for the outdoors. Recreational amenities can promote an increase in physical and mental health, safety, and economic viability of a community. Ensuring a community has an adequate and equitable supply of recreational areas can act as a tool to draw in new residents while working to retain existing residents. Red Oak is fortunate in that it has multiple recreational opportunities for residents to enjoy.

### **Parks**

There are 19 park spaces for outdoor recreation within the City of Red Oak. These range from parks with full playground equipment such as College and Legion Parks, green space at Wilson Park, hiking trails and Indian Gully, a skate park, dog park, and ball fields. This variety of park amenities helps to appeal

to a wide range of residents. While there are many parks with varying amenities, there is one park in particular that has a deeply rooted history in the community. The Chautauqua park land was purchased in 1908 and work on the park began. In 1921, the city purchased the park from the Chautauqua Association. Chautauquas are educational or recreational gatherings for adults that including lectures, concerts, and speeches. They were widely popular in the late 19th-century and early 20th-century with the first being held in 1874 in New York.

The Chautauqua pavilion was in poor condition by the 1960s and was in danger of being torn down. The community rallied together and had the pavilion listed on the National Register of Historic Places and using restoration funds available through the Historic Preservation Fund along with local donations, the pavilion was restored for future generations to continue to enjoy.



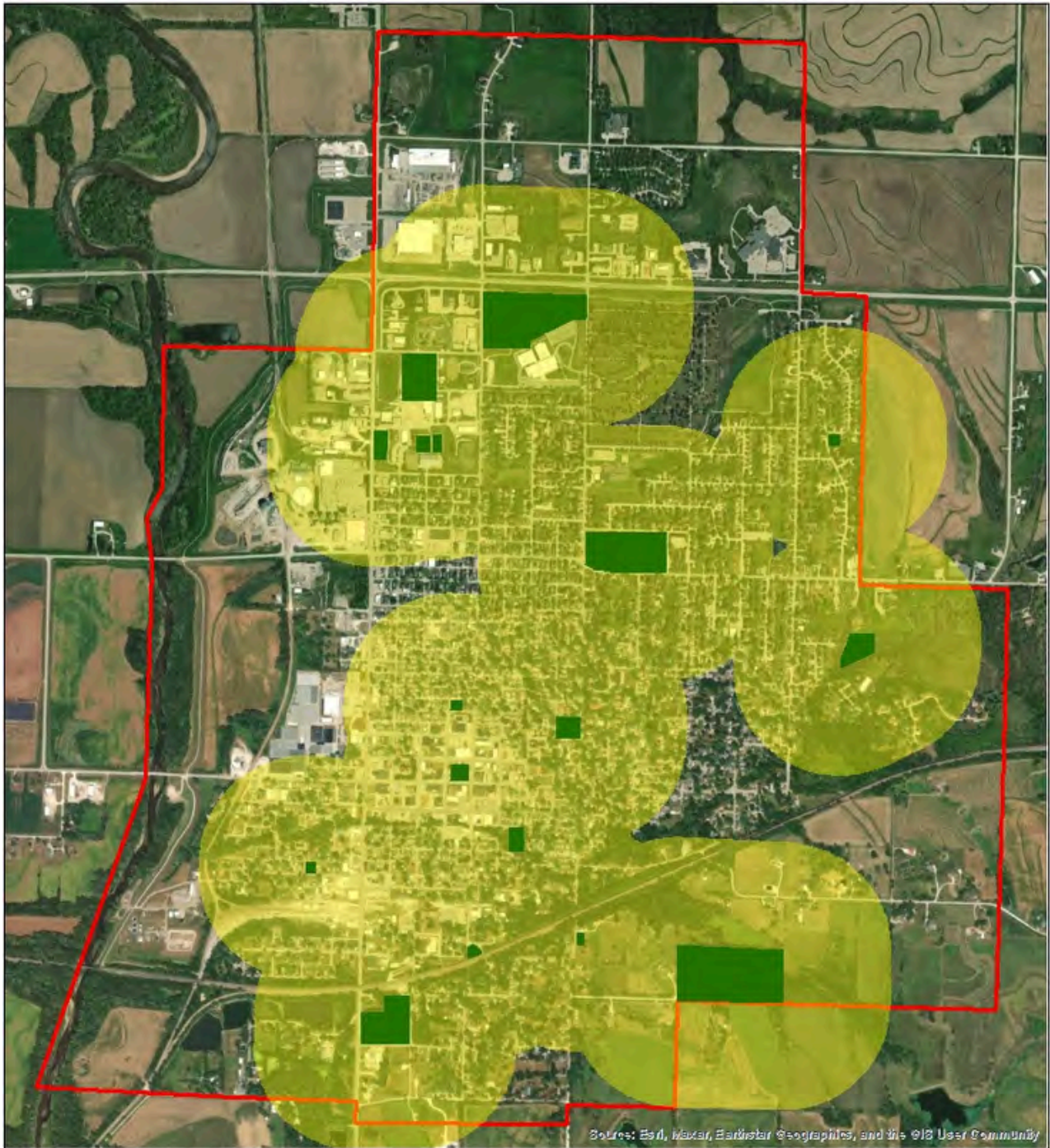
Chautauqua Pavilion in 1915 (top) and 2024 (bottom)



Evenly dispersed access to parks throughout the town allows for outdoor recreation to be enjoyed by all residents, especially in instances where communities don't have walking paths connecting residential areas to their park systems. When discussing the proximity to parks and the willingness of people to walk to them rather than drive, a standard quarter-mile distance, or a five-minute walk, is often used. When this distance is exceeded, oftentimes people are more inclined to drive to the

destination. Driving isn't an option for everyone and some may consider driving more of a hassle and decide to stay home.

As shown in the map on the next page, Red Oak's parks are fairly dispersed throughout the city. The vast majority of residents live within a quarter mile of a park. Having parks in close proximity to many residents increases their quality of life and promotes the use of parks, increasing their physical and mental wellbeing.



**Legend**

- Red Oak Parks
- 1/4 Mile Park Buffer
- Red Oak Boundary

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 Miles



## Trails

Red Oak has a robust trails system composed of roughly 2 miles of dedicated trail, on-street bicycle routes, various sidewalk connections throughout town, as well as hiking trails throughout Indian Gully. There is also a lot of potential for future expansion of trails, like incorporating the City's levee into the trail system among much more. Current trail heads can be found along Eastern Avenue, Legion Park, and Indian Gully. The Red Oak Trails are supported by a non-profit organization called Friends of the Red Oak Trails, aka FOTROT. FOTROT is operated by a diverse group of volunteers who are dedicated to preserving our community's natural resources and providing trails for public use. The continued success of FOTROT depends entirely on the support of community members and donors who share this goal.

Trail users will experience many different parts of Red Oak including an apple orchard; the historic cemetery and historic downtown; wooded wilderness; flat and hilly terrain; and more. Along the trail, users will find amenities including dog waste stations, restrooms, benches, water fountains, information stations, and other hidden treasures.



# FRIENDS OF THE RED OAK TRAILS



## MAP LEGEND

- ★ YOU ARE HERE
- P Parking
- D Dog Waste Station
- 💧 Water
- Dedicated Trail
- On Street Trail
- ♿ Restrooms



## Other Recreation

Along with outdoor recreation, Red Oak is home to the Montgomery County Family YMCA. This facility offers several indoor recreational opportunities including tennis, racquet ball, and basketball courts, exercise equipment, pool and walking track. Near the YMCA is the Red Oak public pool. This 12,375 square foot pool features a zero depth entry, diving tower, volleyball, basketball, climbing wall, and water slides.



# Cultural Amenities

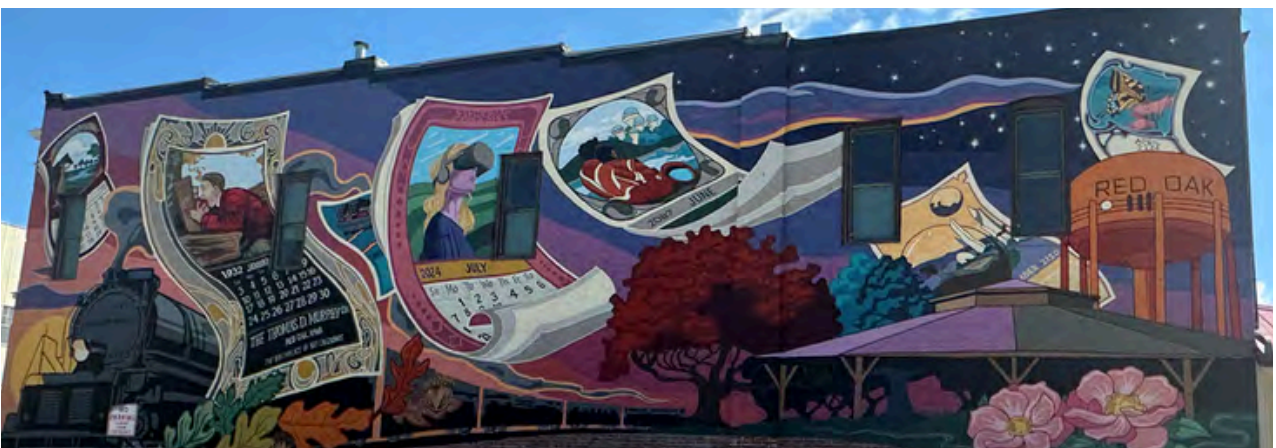




## Performing Arts

The Wilson Performing Arts Center was constructed in 2009. This center specializes in providing a space for creative minded people throughout southwest Iowa to engage in performing arts such as dance, theater, and singing. Additionally, The Wilson provides several summer camp options for children to learn and engage in various art forms. The Wilson serves as an important recreational and cultural amenity for not only Red Oak, but all of Southwest Iowa.

## Art



## Heritage Hill Tour

Red Oak has a robust history and is home to numerous historic buildings. The Heritage Hill tour allows people to easily meander through the city and get a history lesson on some of these historic locations. The tour showcases various buildings including commercial ones such as the Montgomery County Courthouse, the Red Oak Library, and the original fire station. The tour continues east up the hill the view numerous turn of the century homes or varying styles including Queen Anne Victorian, Brick Italianate, and Richardsonian Romanesque, displaying the wide range of influences on the city.

## Museums

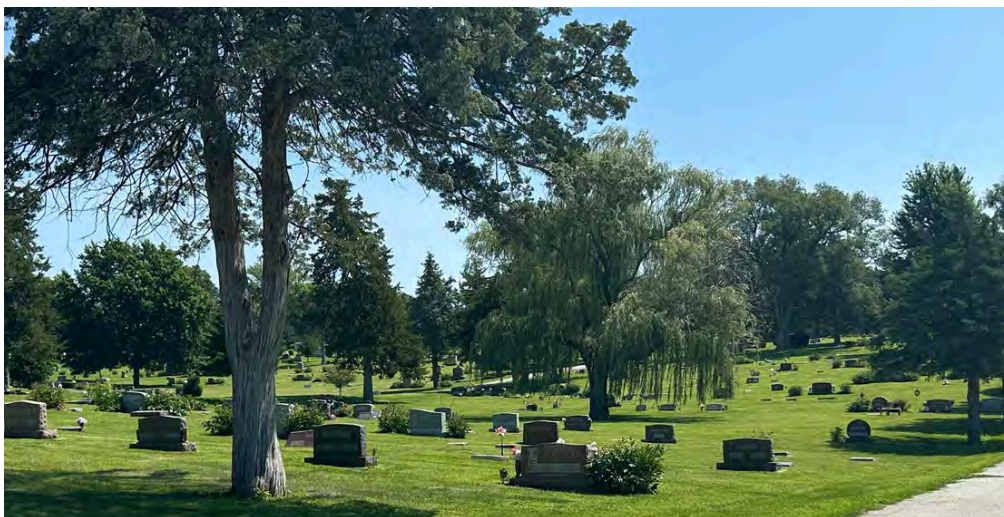
Red Oak is home to two museums, the Montgomery County History Center and the Restored Burlington Northern Depot and WWII Memorial Museum. The Montgomery County History Center started in 2006 and underwent revitalization efforts in 2010 to transform the space into an experience for the visitors.



This museum holds a robust selection of exhibits detailing the history of Montgomery County from connections to the Titanic, the Villisca Ax Murder House, EverReady batteries created in Red Oak, and prehistoric and Native American artifacts from the area. As the name states, the Restored Burlington Northern Depot and WWII Memorial Museum focus heavily on the influence the railroad had on Red Oak and WWII history of the county. The depot was originally constructed in 1903 and faced the threat of demolition in the 1990s. Thanks to a dedicated group and grant funds, the depot was restored and transformed into a museum in 2003.

### Evergreen Cemetery

The Evergreen Cemetery consists of approximately 85 acres and currently has over 13,000 individuals buried there with approximately 1,500 of those people being veterans. Of those veterans 114 are Civil War soldiers. The cemetery honors these fallen soldiers each year for Memorial Day with 1,600 flags. The cemetery partners with the Red Oak Chapter of Questers to host annual an annual Cemetery Walk and Story in the Stones event where actors recreate the past life of selected individuals buried in the cemetery. Additionally, the cemetery partners with Live Well Montgomery County to host the sites for their community garden and orchard.



# Conclusion



A comprehensive plan is designed to evolve in response to the changing needs of the city, which makes regular reviews and updates crucial for its ongoing success. After the plan is adopted, it's important to create opportunities to identify any changes in conditions that might affect its elements or policies. This includes integrating updated information on population and economic shifts and reassessing the relevance of recommended policies to the city's long-term growth. To ensure the plan remains effective, it should be reviewed annually, allowing for adjustments and corrections as necessary.

When changes to the plan are proposed, a public hearing must be conducted. This hearing should:

- Provide citizens or developers an opportunity to present possible changes to the plan;
- Identify any changes in the status of projects called for in the plan; and

- Bring forth any issues or identify any changes in conditions, which may impact the validity of the plan.

The comprehensive plan should undergo a formal update every five years. This update process should involve forecasting a new target year, analyzing alternative land use plans, and considering potential new formats for the plan. In addition to this five-year update, the annual review process, as mentioned earlier, will address any interim adjustments needed in the years leading up to the next major update.

As covered in the beginning of the comprehensive plan, various action items were developed by the steering committee as steps to be taken in order to achieve the goals of the plan. These objectives were developed using public input gathered through meetings and survey, along with the steering committee's knowledge and expertise involving the City of Red Oak. Action items were classified as ongoing, short-term, mid-term, and long term.

## Monitoring

Following the initial implementation of the comprehensive plan, it is crucial to monitor and evaluate the progress of the action items established by the steering committee. This ongoing assessment will help ensure that the objectives are being met and that any necessary adjustments are made in a timely manner. Some assessment tools that can be used by the City of Red Oak are noted below.

- **Progress Reports:** Regular progress reports should be compiled to track the status of each action item. These reports should detail achievements, challenges, and any deviations from the original timeline.
- **Quarterly Reviews:** Conduct quarterly reviews to assess the progress of short-term and mid-term action items. This will allow for prompt adjustments and ensure that the goals remain on track.

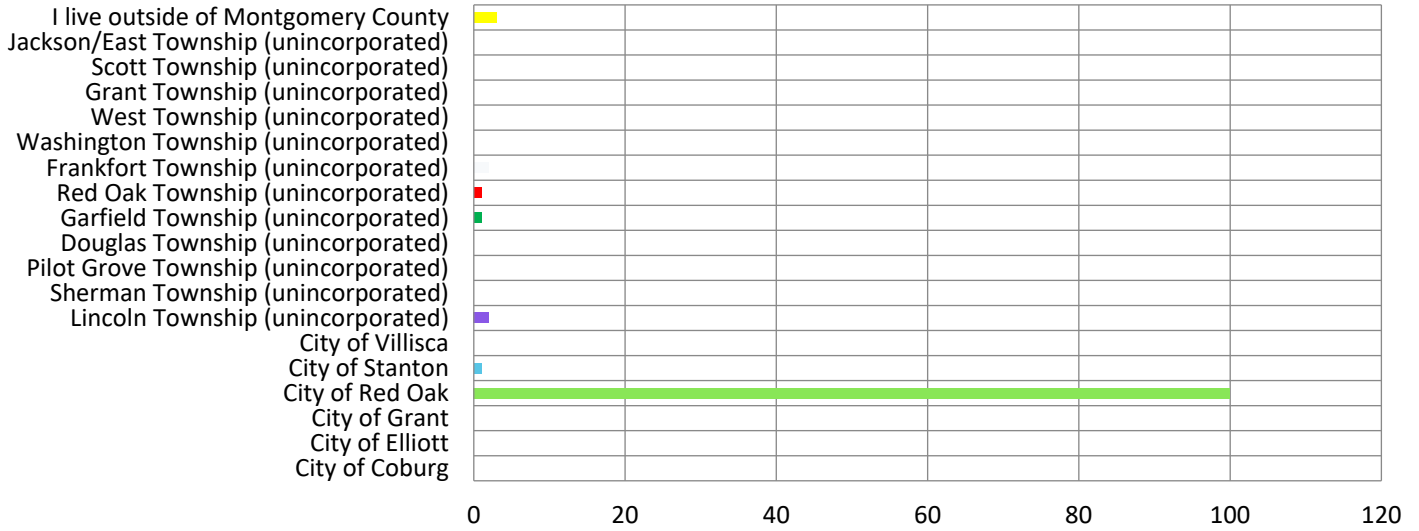
- **Annual Assessments:** Perform a comprehensive assessment of all ongoing, short-term, mid-term, and long-term action items annually. This will provide a broader perspective on overall progress and effectiveness.
- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Gather feedback from stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and community organizations, to gauge the impact of the action items and make necessary refinements.
- **Public Reporting:** Share the outcomes of the progress reports and assessments with the public to maintain transparency and engage the community in the ongoing planning process.

By implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, the City of Red Oak can ensure that the comprehensive plan remains relevant and effective in achieving its goals.

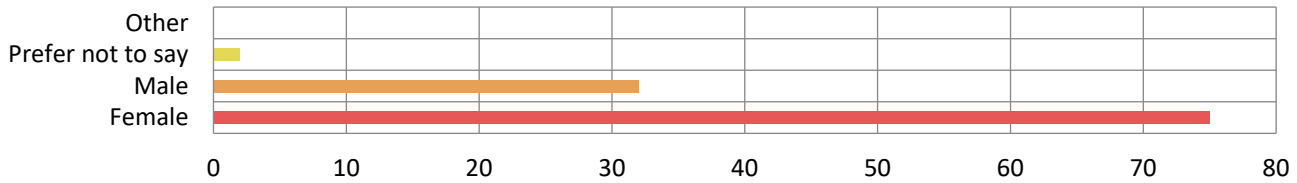
# Appendix A: Survey Results



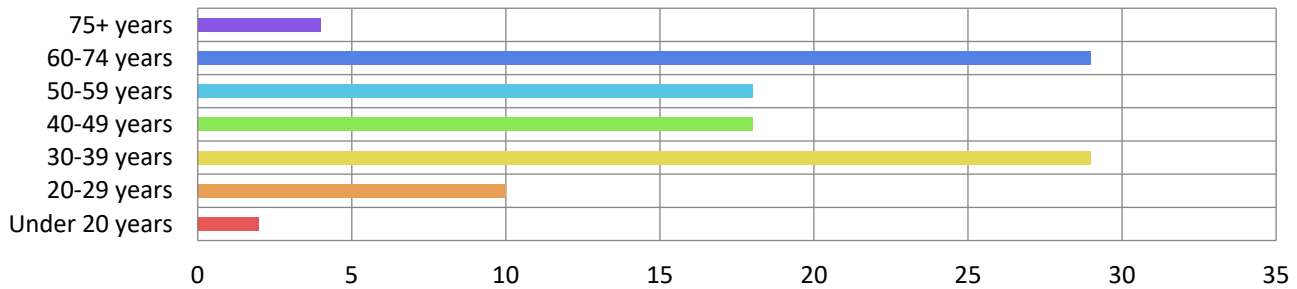
### Where do you live?



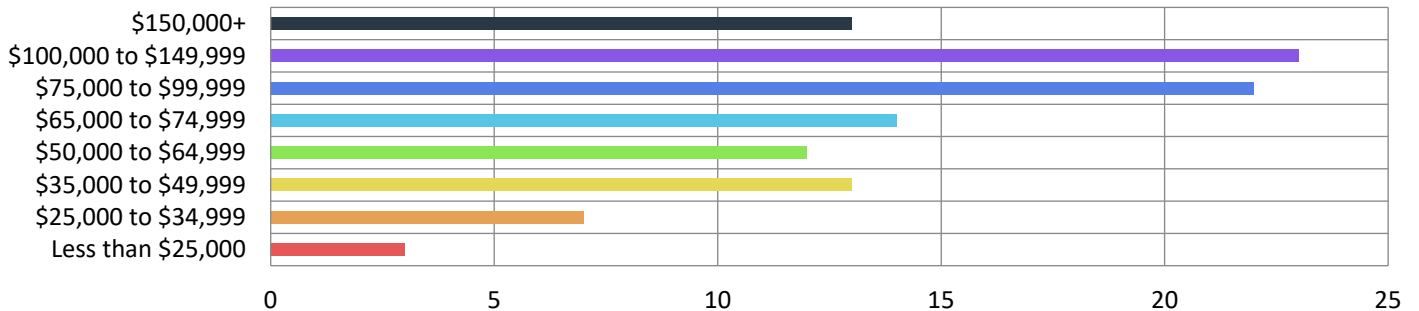
### Select your gender



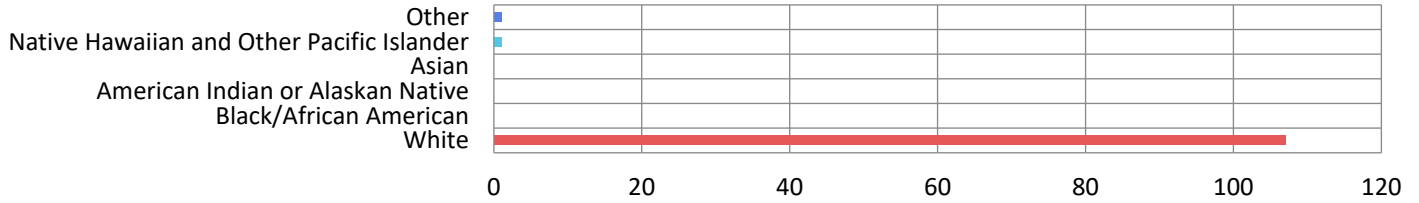
### Select your age range



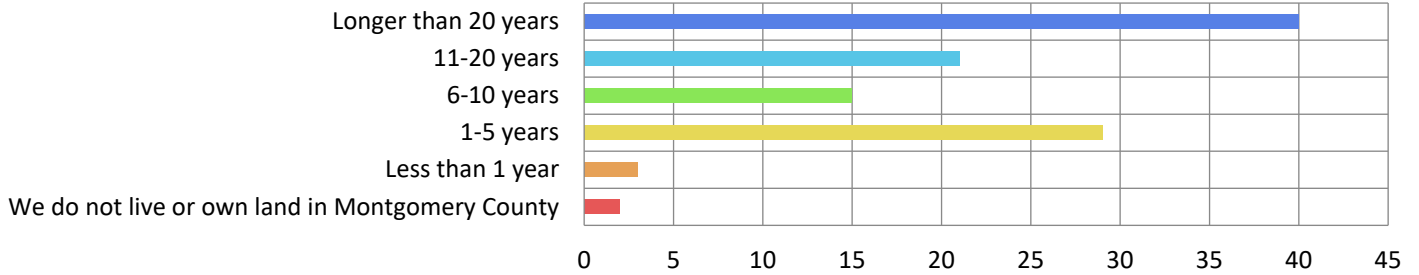
### Select your household income range



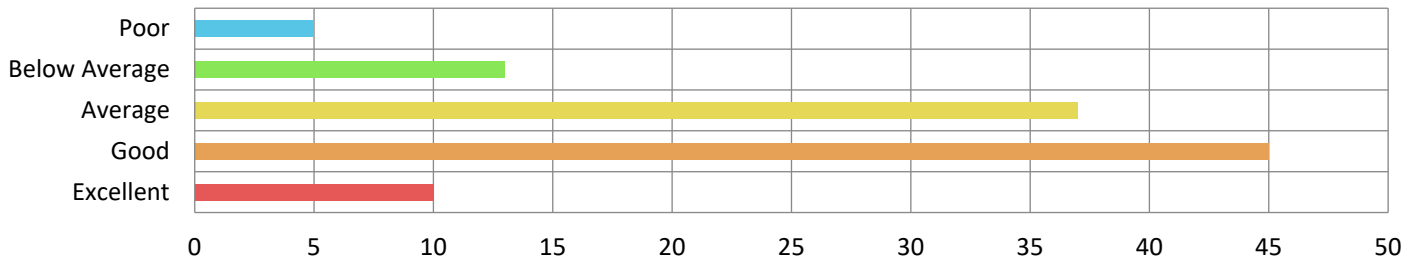
### What is your race?



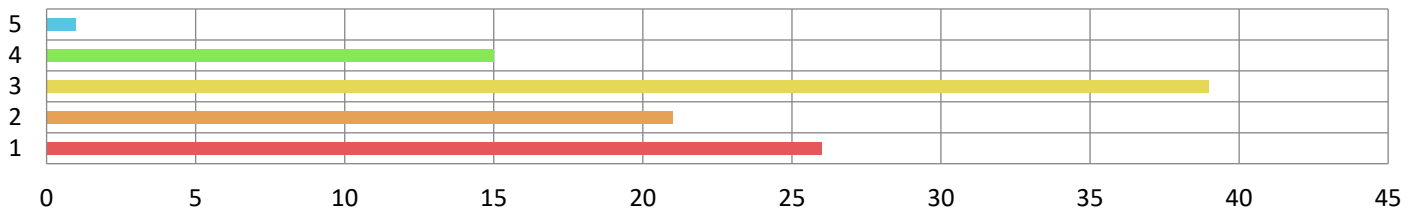
### How long have you lived or owned property in Montgomery County?



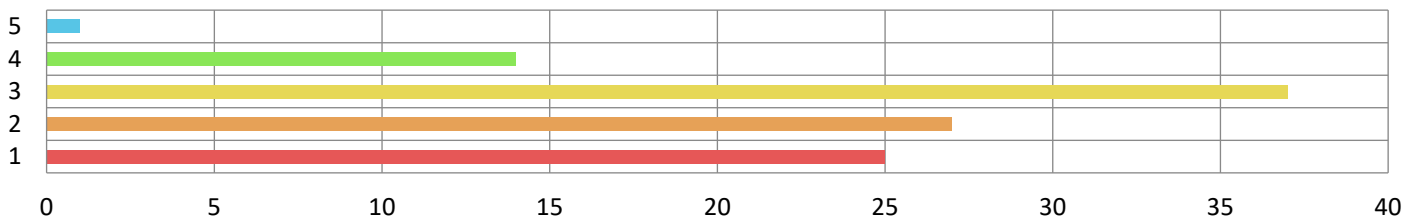
### Overall, how would you rate the quality of life in Red Oak?



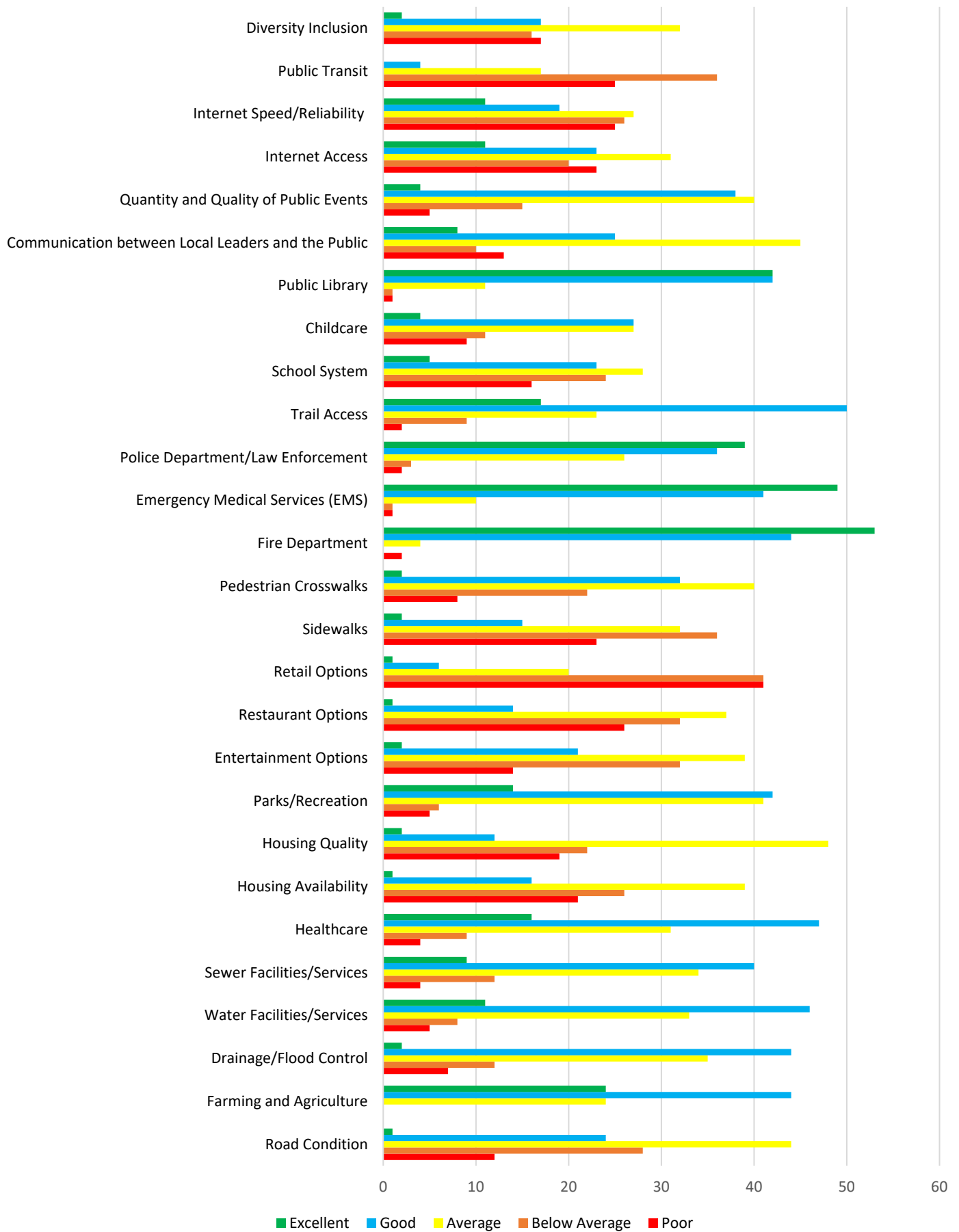
### How well does your community's current housing stock meet the needs of home buyers?



### How well does your community's current housing stock meet the needs of renters?



## Think about your community and rate the following:



## What do you think is the best aspect of quality of life in Red Oak?

Low crime/safe	14
Small town vibe (simple, peaceful, historic)	14
The people (helpful, friendly)	9
Good amenities	6
Cost of living	6
Familiar people	5
Quiet	5
Necessities available	4
Trees/natural beauty	4
Community pride	4
The size	3
Healthcare	3
Values	3
Trails	3
Downtown	2
Laid back	2
Boutiques	2
Town events	2

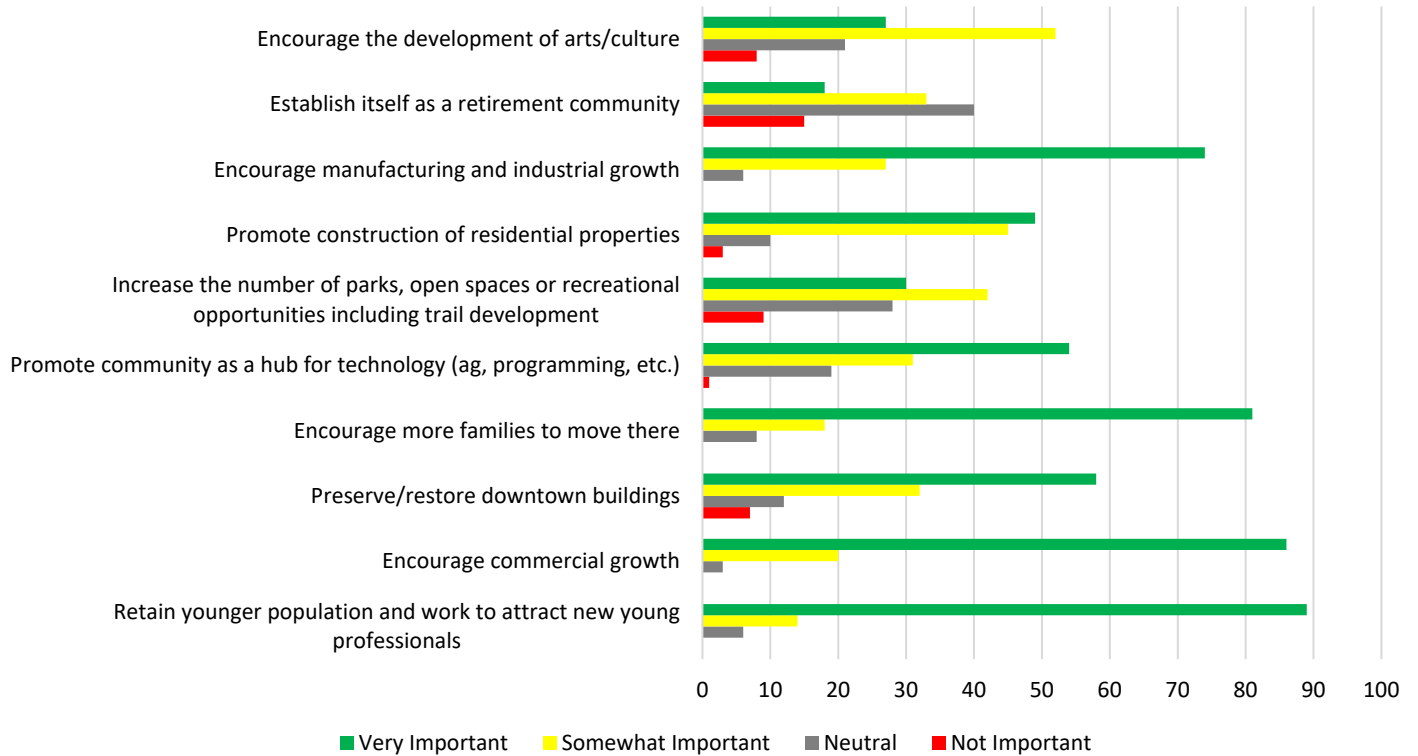
Aesthetically pleasing, clean	2
Job opportunities	1
Easily accessible	1
Chamber	1
Small business opportunities	1
Small business owners	1
Church	1
School	1
Fareway	1
Restaurants	1
Leaders	1
Low traffic	1
Welcoming	1
Parks	1
It's home	1
Location to metro	1
Volunteer opportunities	1
Clean water and air	1

## What do you think is the worst aspect of quality of life in Red Oak?

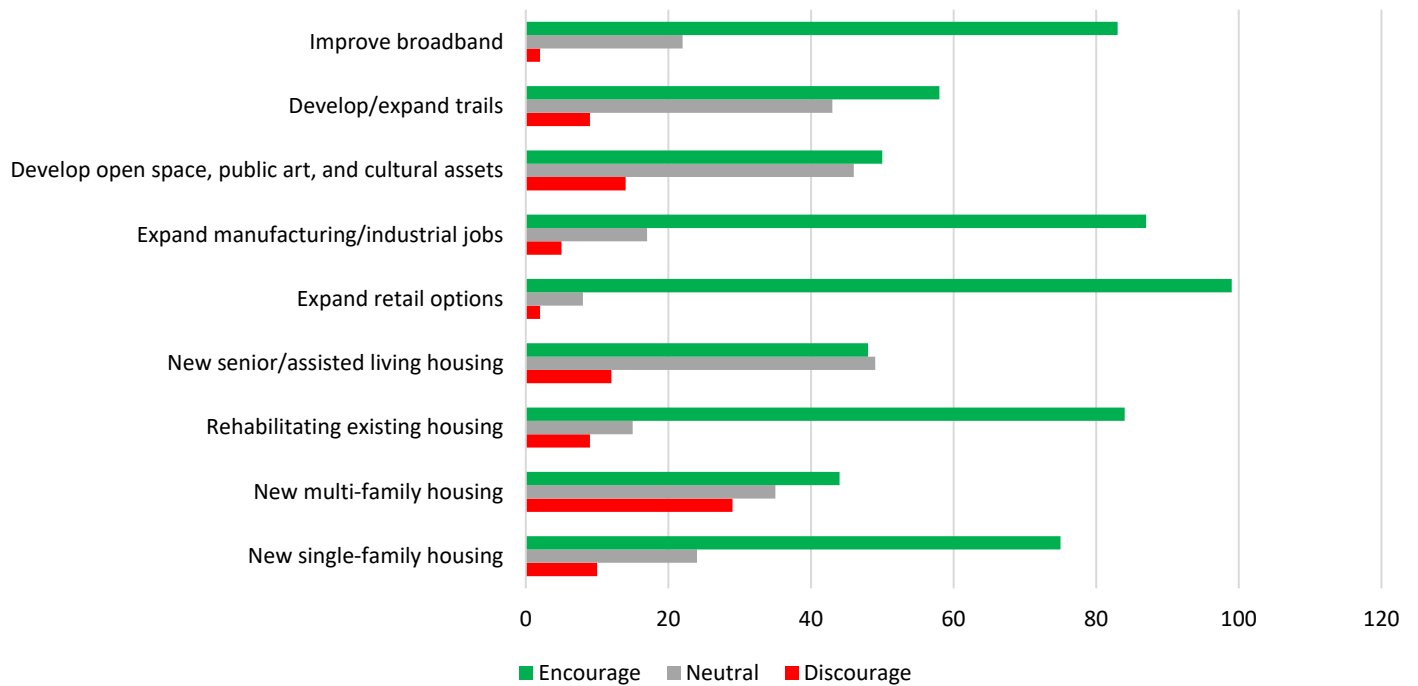
Infrastructure (roads, sewer, water)	12
Limited retail	11
Rundown housing	8
Housing availability/options/affordable	6
Limited dining options	6
Drugs	5
Landlords/poor rentals	5
Limited good paying job opportunities	5
School (poor education, bullying)	4
Socioeconomic divide	3
Sidewalks	3
Lack of code enforcement	3
Leaders (close minded, unwilling to change)	3
Garbage on properties	3
No attraction for young families	2
Cliquey/favoritism	2
Lack of public assistance services (victim services, poverty services)	2
Lack of diversity and inclusion	2
Lack of affordable events	2
Lack of entertainment for teens	2
Poor planning (new roads over bad mains)	2
Negative attitudes/judgemental	2
Lack of options	2
Limited entertainment	2
Daycare	2
Mental illness resources	2
No fiber for residents	2
Overall community upkeep	2
Crime	2

Low income	1
Lack of new construction homes (single story)	1
Limited transportation options	1
Afraid of change	1
Water quality	1
Litter	1
High property taxes	1
Loitering in parks	1
Unavailability of some necessities	1
Police officers	1
Higher cost for goods	1
Homelessness	1
Property tax hikes	1
Lack of street signs (speed limit, one way/one lane, snow routes)	1
Ambulance services for transfers out	1
One lane traffic Broadway	1
Releasing drug offenders as informants	1
Park playground old	1
Pool staffing	1
Air quality from industrial uses on Broadway	1
Prioritize saving historic buildings	1
Lack of pride	1
Recycling	1
Lack of amenities	1
Neighborhood characteristics not being preserved by zoning	1
Floodplain	1
Lack of succession planning	1
Need more entrepreneurial resources	1

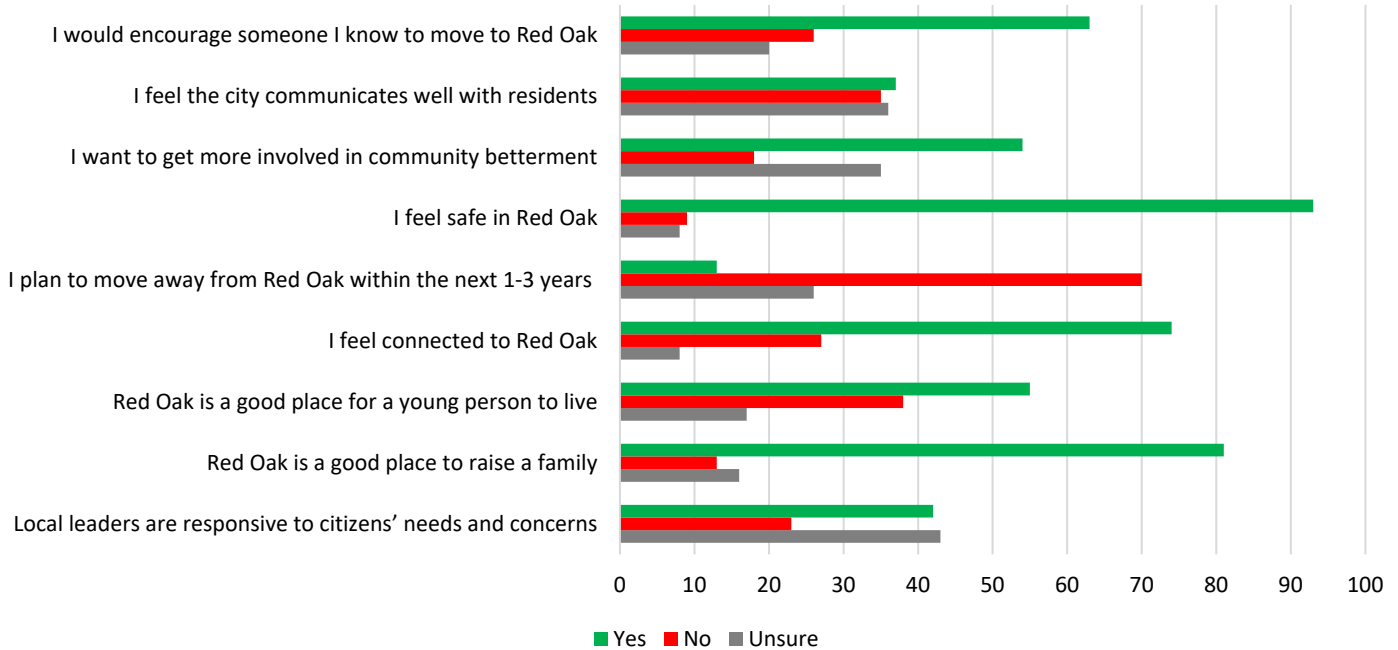
## Thinking about your community, how important are the following for it to thrive?



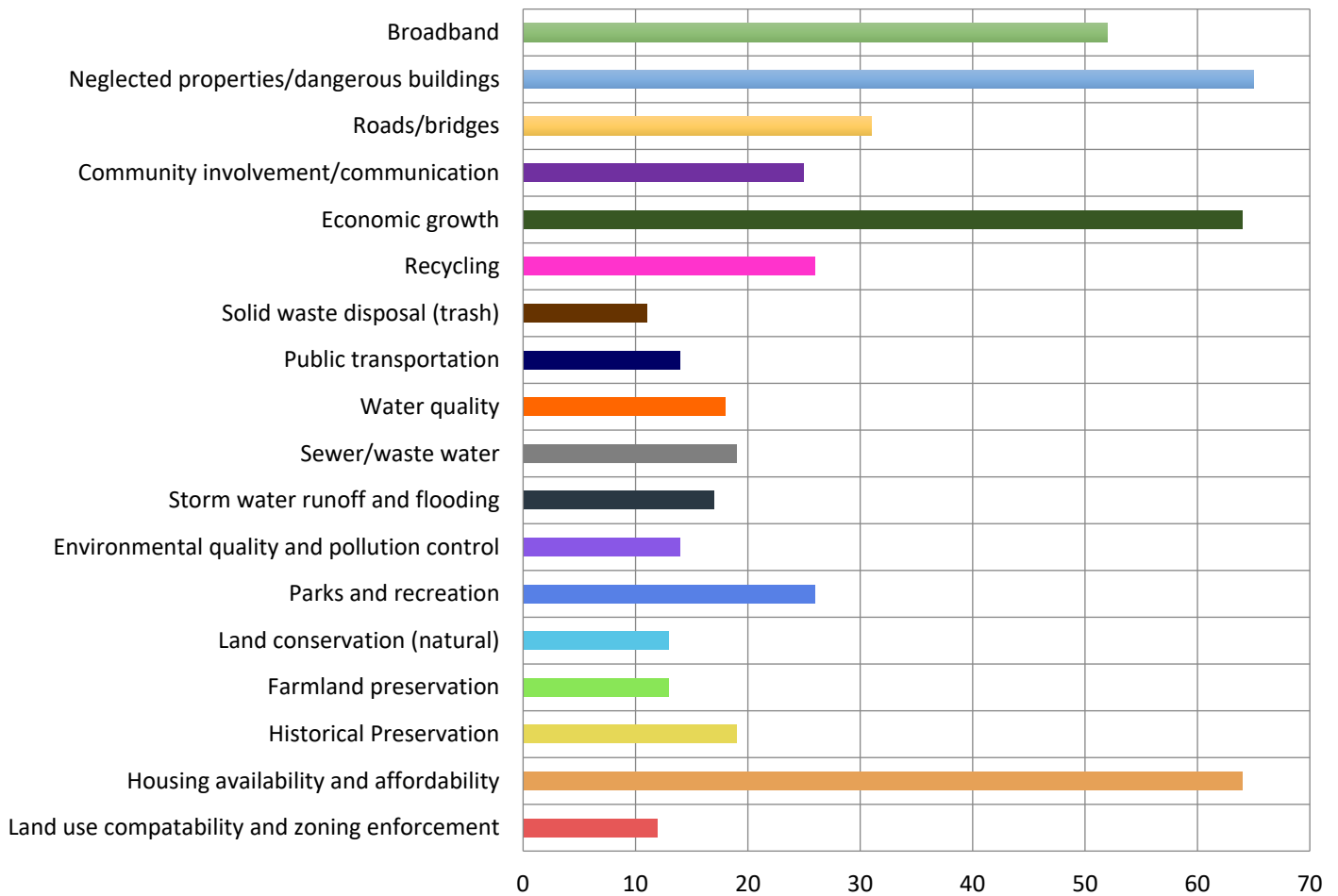
## Would you encourage or discourage the use of public resources to promote/fund the following?



**Please answer the following:**



**Please select your top five priorities that you feel the local government needs to improve upon first.**



## Are there other amenities that would be beneficial for your community to have or improve on?

- Feeling loss of Maley's for reliable car services/care
- More restaurants and recreational activity - like expanding the YMCA.
- Public WiFi in downtown
- Parking lot and sidewalk for Inman. Parking and the pick up situation are a nightmare for parents.
- A good discount store, but a level up from the dollar stores.
- Learn how to spell "Comprehensive" on the brochures you leave at the restaurant. That is embarrassing and unprofessional.
- Large Dept Store.
- retail businesses
- Public restroom on the square, splash pad, drive in theater, roller skating rink, overnight summer camp options, public art center- offer classes but open to kids/teens with hobbies.
- When we have a road torn up fix all of the issues beneath it instead of putting a bandaid on it making it a problem later on.
- It would be great to have a place of entertainment for youth that would be open all year. The Y in Atlantic makes it a point to create all kinds of activities for youth all year so that they can have a safe, fun space to go. I've always thought that when kids are bored, that's when trouble starts. Some towns have mini golf, skating rinks, laser tag, etc. Something for all ages to give our youth an option for entertainment. Also, not an amenity, but other towns have "yard of the month" contests. This awakens the natural competitiveness that most people having creating a healthy competition between neighbors and community. As an incentive is needed in some cases, a sign is out in the winning yard and we could ever ask for donations of gift cards from local businesses. I believe this would help with the blight problem Red Oak has and encourage residents to take pride in their yards.
- I've basically said all I have to say. You can't expect ppl to want to move here or invest here if you can't even provide the basics to those who pay the city taxes. We pay a lot here between the business and property tax.... Kind of hard to make ppl want to come here when your roads are crap and the water mains are crap as well.
- I would like to see the pool environment improved, such as more neutral/lyricless music. I would like to see the parks cleaned and safer.
- More retail options, social gathering options for young adults, and bathroom and trash can availabilities in the parks.
- A restaurant that serves breakfast on Sunday mornings that isn't a bar/restaurant.
- Sidewalks need improvement as well as streets. Lifeguards would work at the pool if it paid more.
- Splash pad
- Broadband internet
- More food and drink establishments and delivery services
- We have to have more events than junction days...Malvern and Stanton are rocking it
- Community bldg
- Splash pad for kids
- Music
- Restaurants
- CURBSIDE RECYCLING
- More state certified child care options to choose from. Possibly a before and after school care program that is run at the elementary school or a Boys and Girls Club.
- Youth/boys/girls club
- Park upgrades, especially to the park by the YMCA. Retail store similar to what we lost with K-Mart. Pool house needs renovation, it's in rough shape.
- More sidewalks, splash pad

- Don't care of (Whom or Which) Provides service's. But need to make Garbage pick up MANADTORY..I can offer Example and send pictures. People taking advantage of no Garbage pick up. If I put it outside Oh!! it will go away on it own.
- City clean up
- We have outstanding amenities. Wilson, YMCA, parks, trails, car club to name a few.
- would like to see spec buildings made for business application if you build it they will come. large enough buildings for multiple uses if one bus does not make it. buildings like 40x60 or close to that. but need to find the land to commit.
- Fiber optic internet for residents!
- Centers for children to get out of the house, roller skating, bowling , arcades, miniature golf, you know, physical things.
- Entertainment venues for youth
- Expanded use of/reduced limitations on the Wilson Performing Arts Center; restore further/expand use of the Chautauqua Pavilion; better senior services facility located in center of city.
- An indoor golf place would be a suggestion or something VR related could be an idea or an escape room
- Expanded / improved green spaces. Expanded trails that circle the community. Hipster coffee shop with GOOD food. Improved park equipment. Enhanced farmers market
- Things like trampoline parks, axe throwing, other quality of life amenities to reduce the travel to Omaha/Des Moines for entertainment and recreation.
- I think another sit down restaurant is important. I think we also need to look at a joint venture of some sort that brings buying ability to the local economy.
- Crosswalks by Fareway and Dollar Tree on Broadway/Highway 48, at Summit and 8th, Oak and 4th, Eastern and Summit, and Highway 34 and 8th Street for kids/visitors; green streets program for stop lights - to decrease carbon; solar array for city; solar ordinances; trail on levee; annex northwest corner near highway 34/48 for growth north as well as east of Woodfield Drive east to new highway 34/old highway intersection for housing/rezone; outdoor activities such as dirt bike track, zipline/tree climb retreat area; utilize the river for tourism/recreation with kayaks; Sports Complex/EVENT Center for mixed use of internal and external sports with concessions - connect current YMCA, Aquatic Center, Tennis, baseball and football field/track - build on current fairground area to offer city opportunity to host youth and high school/commissioned tournaments for volleyball, soccer, football, softball/baseball, hitting cages, indoor track, swimming meets, tennis, pickleball, etc. (economic impact of hosting youth and high school tournaments would create opportunity for additional hotel and restaurants, and increase sales tax/promote business growth; expand Cubby's area to include truck parking and bath house/restaurants/expanded retail center; Roads in cemetery need fixed and resurfaced; trail expansion; county trail expansion from Mills Co. to Red Oak and Red Oak to Stanton; downtown grocery store; reconsider alcohol ordinance to allow alcohol in parks to allow for music/entertainment and events; need a regional animal shelter; expand library to include makerspace/technology use area for attracting youth (drone technology, commuter/Ai technology, esports tournaments, etc.); maximize SWICC campus; expand housing by 300 units including multi-family, on slab independent living condo's/townhouses, single family homes; expand parks to include multi-generational equipment so young children, to teens, to young adults/adults, to seniors; memorial park with animal cemetery; Demo dilapidated housing and buildings; stop allowing so many garages to go on properties; build a storage unit rental space; off-loading area in industrial park; transportation - uber/Lift or cabs for short trips and consider a transportation plan to identify opportunity to enhance roads for high traffic and truck traffic;

## **Are there certain social activities you would like to participate in or see offered in your community?**

- Adult educational programs, learn trades post educational
- Maybe more town square events like with music and food trucks to get people together.

- Longer pool hours
- Splash pad, outdoor movie theater, other ways to get young kids involved without them destroying property.
- More DIVERSITY! Nothing wrong with a drag show... Not everyone thumps the bible, not everyone follows that BS. Some people like to see diversity in their community and like to see more inclusion for our younger generations.
- Junction Days, the fair, etc. need new and exciting events. For adults. Not just kids. Tired of the same old stuff every year.
- sports activities other than thru the Y
- A way to bring more money back to Red Oak rather than spending it all in Omaha or Shenandoah.
- League sports for adults
- Red Oak has the "Hallmark Movie" vibe. It would be amazing to incorporate some of those aspects into this town like having more festivals, holiday celebrations, and community volunteering events.
- We need retail and other employment opportunities other than just manufacturing. We need to attract the people and businesses we want/ need to grow but to keep our community tight knit and safe
- Summer concerts
- Drag shows, craft/vendor shows, concerts in the square
- Festivals to celebrate heritage or harvest or Oktoberfest or really anything at. For a small town, I don't feel much sense of community here.
- Activity's for 18- 29 year olds
- More dog friendly events. More live music events.
- More family events like Junction Days.
- Bigger farmers market.
- Free activities in the downtown park.
- More activities utilizing Fountain Square and Chatacqua Park.
- An annual art/educational festival (a la the old Chautauqua festivals) that would draw talent/people from a multi-state area.
- more music in the park, use of new fountain square park stage; more outside family activities year-round; coordination between city/chamber and realtors for strong welcome initiative for newcomers with events; create and nourish an entrepreneurial/innovation ecosystem; city should adopt an equity, diversity and inclusion statement; initiative to promote and educate on being more inclusive of multi-cultural residents; young professionals club; build the youth mentoring program into something even stronger; create a committee and initiative to help ex-offenders, single mom's, juvenile youth and outsiders to acclimate to community and positive influencing groups for better success;

### **If you could do anything, what do you want Villisca to be like in 2045?**

- Still thriving and working FOR the people and not leaders agendas
- More businesses. This does not mean local. It needs to be affordable. Less rentals and affordable homes based off of income made from local businesses. Need more retail as well. If you want people to come, make it a town worth coming to. Low cost of living, options for businesses and stores to shop in that do not cost a life savings to shop at.
- More business and job opportunities, more housing, and more community events for younger populations.
- Affordable housing
- A great place to live, work, & play. Fast affordable internet services & destination places including a local brewery & several sit down restaurants with many retail stores. Newer and historic housing options to own or rent.
- Lots of retail options, more green space.
- Not just a bedroom community
- Cleaner, prosperous

- FIBER INTERNET!
- growth with retail sales
- Clean up our river and creeks. Add a nature trail along the Nishnabotna and encourage safe but social float trips with floats, rafts, kayaks & canoes. Build cabins for summer camps along the River for kids and teens. Creek access near schools and daycare to encourage nature play, science and sensory activities.
- A place that that people will leave the town they reside in to come here for activities and shopping.
- I would like sidewalks in the neighborhoods around the schools so kids can safely walk to school since there is no transportation for them. I would like a department-type store to actually buy affordable, quality clothing and home goods at. No more dollar stores with cheap items.
- Thriving
- If you don't cater to multiple generations there will be no one new that comes to red oak. Fixing up old houses is key for more affordable housing and to relieve the eye sore in so many areas. Also if there is nothing to do or places to get what is needed, people will continue to go to the city. (Retail)
- At this point I have no opinion because the lack of fixing the important things makes me not want to even be here anymore. I'd rather move somewhere that they take pride in their community. The roads are drivable and the residents don't have to worry about back up and broken water mains because everything is old and garbage. If you want to encourage more manufacturers and retailers to invest here... you may want to make the community have the basics. Fixed water mains and sewages, updated roads. Pretty simple.
- It would be nice if we had somewhere to shop other than more dollar stores and junk bin stores. We need something like a Target store or Jc penny's. I grew up in this town in the 70s and we actually had a thriving town with places to shop. The square was full of stores other than insurance companies and lawyers. There is nothing in this town to keep people from moving away.
- Have lower property taxes
- A God-honoring society.
- More young people, more retail options, more activities to be involved in, cheaper cost of goods locally
- A safe community that is more prosperous and enjoyable for people of all ages. Having shops fill the downtown square with new shopping and entertainment would be amazing. It's so sad to see so many vacant shops/windows in the downtown area.
- Thriving town for all ages!
- Cleaner, more options for shopping for gifts, improvements to schools.
- More robust shopping, dining and entertainment options with a good business base, adequate affordable housing and an excellent school system with well paid staff.
- Economically thriving, small community with minimal issues with crime. Friendly small town vibe.
- Representative of Proud Americans and not individualists that come together as a community to meet the needs of our community with respect, faith, loyalty and commitment to goals that make us better for all. Not just a few.
- Thriving
- A united city who welcomed all. Good education, with prosperous industry and low unemployment.
- Neighborhoods cleaned up. New housing options
- I still would like for RO to be a nice quiet town. I town to raise your kids. We need to bring retail in both downtown and along Broadway. The stores should be stores of affordability. We need clothing stores. We miss Kmart and ShopKo/Pamida stores that offered retail varieties. It is nice that we have some more store fronts downtown don't get me wrong but the prices are out of my league. This town is not Omaha, it is not Glenwood or Treynor. We need affordable living. If you want us to shop local you have got to figure out how to keep us local. Get the prices of food and merchandise down where people don't feel compelled to going to the city every weekend or every other because it is cheaper even with gas to go that far.

- A place to remember, somewhere that my children will not regret growing up in and I will not regret raising my children in. Less bullying in the school district and more control of out of hand children running around neighborhoods bad mouthing everyone.
- Continued growth of population with younger families
- A fun, family friendly town where we don't have to shop for most necessities online or out of town.
- Thriving and meeting the needs of all citizens
- Population growth
- All main (Roads,, Main Arteries) like 3rd street and 4th street example!! need to be held to higher standard. If there is Garbage it needs to be removed. If you can see garbage it need to be removed. Mandatory Garbage pick up in Red Oak
- A growing community that is pleasant to live in.
- Clean, safe, and welcoming
- Progressive. Population is on an upward curve. School is meeting the needs of all students and their families. Teachers are not leaving due to lack of support. Unemployment is significantly lower.
- A Beacon to the surrounding Counties. Be a Leader not a follower
- Events in community and a few more box stores to bring people to Red Oak.
- I would like Red Oak to be a destination spot for our local Historical Preservation and arts/ cultural activities, drawing people from Council Bluffs, Omaha and Lincoln. The downtown buildings look great! But we need to do more. The Murphy Calendar Building is deteriorating. We need to preserve this. We need to offer homeowners grants to fix and preserve their older, historic homes, and establish a historic district in order to save these homes, and have guidelines in this neighborhood. There are a couple "burned out" houses that are still standing and need to be demolished. These are a deterrent for any families looking to move to Red Oak.
- Two or three additional big employers-tech companies, marketing companies, etc-something that employs 100ish people and those they employ are college educated. This would require more middle class level housing to be developed, a few small businesses around clothing (adult and child), and maybe a "hometown" version of an Aldi, Target, or something similar. Upgraded playground equipment to a few more parks, and/or a splash pad would be good too.
- Thriving small town where my children want to live and their children want to come back to live
- Fair place for all people to live, not just the wealthier.
- A thriving small town community that encourages tourism, ie more shopping, restaurants, public art.
- A progressive, thriving community of entrepreneurial & small businesses with strong community involvement & pride among all its residents.
- Honestly just to keep growing and keep the small town feel. Red Oak is already a lovely place and happy to be here even though my commute to work is longer but prefer it to living in Omaha or Bellevue
- A model rural community for the rest of the nation. To promote, enhance, and value our access to nature. To lead and not fall behind on our digital connections and innovations with the outside world. To maintain a high standard for our public infrastructure. To promote and encourage a clean and well kept community.
- A higher than current median household income, with more young families and a larger variety of amenities.
- A community that offers affordable shopping for most needed items. Going to the City is a get away, not a needed run for supplies.
- Red Oak will truly be the Heart of Southwest Iowa...we will be the hub, attracting, retaining and growing our own talent who are starting and operating their own businesses; outdoor activities for all ages; a place where families and all generations thrive together; highly accepting to adopting any and all advanced technologies for operations with city, to businesses, school, signage, communications, etc.; population 8,000; 1-3 new tech-based industrial companies, totally redeveloped downtown/buildings with upper story units filled, all office/business spaces filled; redeveloped Murphy Building and Middle School is filled with housing; webster and bancroft lots filled with housing, parks modernized and improved; redeveloped south/southwest Red Oak; trail on levee and connecting to Mills Co. and Stanton; cleaned up and useable river/water use; 200-500 new residential units;

feeder and bedroom community to the Mills Co. Crossing; upgraded wastewater plant, new service lines and water system upgrades, new streets with sidewalks and crosswalks, Red Oak trail is completed; modernized and trendy community that is friendly, welcoming and attractive.

# Appendix B: Implementation Timeline



	Legend	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority	Ongoing		
Action Items	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Update and enforce rental inspection program							
Complete a street project every year in order of highest need							
Update park equipment in all parks and include ADA equipment into each park							
Put together housing committee to carry out recommendations from Rural Housing Readiness Assessment including new development, rehabilitation, upper story, infill development, and nuisance properties							
Inventory of lots being underutilized, blighted, vacant, etc., categorize and prioritize. Identify if EPA or brownfield funding can be utilized							
Create an investment group to create housing development							
Establish and protect historic neighborhoods							
Clean up of debris in Red Oak Creek							
Fiber access available to all residential properties							
Update current zoning and code of ordinance to accommodate more modern housing development (setbacks based on lot size)							
Citywide Cleanup Day							
Update code of ordinances to promote more visually appealing neighborhoods and reduce nuisances							
Zoning amendments for Red Oak Creek area to protect from future development							
Complete a water study							
Install crosswalks on high traffic areas (Fareway, Dollar Tree, Summit and 8 <sup>th</sup> )							
Recertify urban renewal areas to continue TIF districts and update TIF map							
Approve downtown design guidelines							
Complete wastewater facility upgrades							
Lining of sewer lines							
Replace copper and lead water lines							

Pursue Inman Trail Project and SRTS for that								
Use tax abatement to encourage new housing development and rehabilitation								
Inventory upper story housing units (how many, condition)								
Utilize upper story housing conversion CDBG for downtown housing								
Implement wayfinding signage throughout town including downtown entry signage								
Upgrades to the cemetery (roads, restrooms, fences)								
Establish a fund to assist property owners with sidewalk repairs								
Look at establishing ATV trails near Nishnabotna River								
Levee upgrades to meet FEMA standards and reduce floodplain								
Review ordinance relating to ownership of service lines								
Create inventory of brownfield sites for future development (Broadway and Oak)								
Research and develop an annual small residential curb appeal program								
Indian Gully enhancements and possible expansion								
Mandatory weekly curbside trash and recycling pick up								
Establish match fund for sidewalk								
Develop park north of Highway 34								
Conduct a walkability study to determine problem areas								
Electric vehicle charging on city owned lots								
Indoor recreation area/youth center								
Update parks and rec/trails master plan (current from 1970s)								
Install lighting along Red Oak trails								
Install trail on the levee								
Pedestrian crossing on Highway 34 at 8 <sup>th</sup> Street								
Expand Dutton Park and install pedestrian bridge over creek								
Install a splash pad								

# Appendix C: Sign-in Sheets



Red Oak Sign-In Sheet

2/20/2023

Name

Frick Speck

Tim Fridolph

Randall Wilson

Shawna Silvia

Karen Blue

Sharon Bradley

Jay Nettles

Bill Wombacher

Boyer Waffner

Jennifer Horner

Sheena Davis

Barry County

Alvacanti

Brian Bills

Corrine Jenkins

Rusty Meinke

Steve Adams

Beau Boeye

Ked car

Sign In sheet 4/20/23

Name

Andre Rainey  
Kim Robinson

Jeff Giggstad  
Lally & Foye - Shands to Tiet

Ryan Beeson

Elaine Carlson

**Communication**

Name	Email	Do you want emailed about this plan?
<del>Dan Crouse</del>		
Shauna Bozwell		YES
Elaine Carlson		YES
Samantha Williams		
<del>Matt St. Lezin</del>		

*Charla Schmid* [redacted] *you*

*Tim Fridolph*

### Housing

Name	Email	Do you want emailed about this plan?
✓ Joey Norris		yes
✓ Mike O'Neal		yes
✓ Shirley Billings		yes
✓ Dwayne Adams		mail.com yes
✓ Sherry Beethen's son		yes
✓ Brent Davis		other table
✓ Cynthia Bangston		↓
✓ Tim Fridolph?		
✓ Austin Bailey		
✓ Larry Shalters		
✓ Anthony DiMasi		scupia.com
✓ Marty Barnett		yes
✓ Karen Blue		yes
✓ Josh Wiig		

Kyle Bowen  
 Bryant Bay  
 Brett Bourton

org yes  
 org yes  
 yes

yes

# Infrastructure

Name	Email	Do you want emailed about this plan?
<del>Peter Crawford</del>		
NDOT Rep - Scott Schram		
USACE Rep (Corp of Engineers)		
Brian Bills		
Nate Epperson (IDOT)		
Doug Grooms		
Steve Adams		
<del>Bo Harris</del>		
Bill Rogers		
Ken Rech		
John Rider (BNSF - KC, Econ Dev)		
Karen Albert (Mo Co Engineer)		
<del>Charles Schmidt</del>		

Harry Bransdletter

Auska Bailey

DAVE STURM

yes  
yes. em

**Land Use**

Name	Email	Do you want emailed about this plan?
Ron DeMarce		
Bryan Knaus		
Josh Willig		
Sharon Bradley		
Larry Brandstetter		

Bill Waverly  
Brent Davis  
Bo Harris  
John Batty  
Cynthia Baugston  
Anne Stewart

Recreation		
Name	Email	Do you want emailed about this plan?
Carrie Shalters		
Kerry Schaffer		yes
Anna Boeys		yes
Bennett Johnson (youth?)		
Baz Clear (youth?)		
Mark Benda		
Jenn Batten-Johnson		
Allison Adams		
Rusty Menke		
Denise Goddard		

KORONDA PILLER

[Redacted]

yes

MYLE ECHTERNACH

[Redacted]

yes

Chloe DeVito

[Redacted]

yes

Jasmine Grizzard

[Redacted]

yes

Marek Romas

[Redacted]

yes

Lisa Jenkins

[Redacted]

yes please

Macy Reeves

[Redacted]

yes

Samantha Williams

[Redacted]

yes

Usual appearance

Name	Address	Email	Phone Number
Ellen Griffen			
Kesandra Pullen			
<u>Donna Grooms</u>			
Elaine Hollen ✓			
Tracy Lamb			
Lisa Adams-Jenkins			
CeCe Locke ✓			
Dave & Laurie Doty			
Diana Evans ✓			
celeb person			
Mylee Echterman			

Chloe Devito

Diana Evans

Makayla LeBette 14

Jasmine Grizzard

Marek Ramos

Lisa Jenkins