

Land Use 5

Johnston's Vision and Guiding Principles found in Chapter 2 provide the foundation for the comprehensive plan and specifically, the Land Use Plan. The Land Use Plan provides the framework for the future use of land. It seeks to reinforce desirable land use patterns, identify places where change is needed and it guides the location and form of future growth.

The Guiding Principles call for Johnston to take a "proactive position on future growth". Proactively addressing future growth continues the approach that Johnston has taken over the past two decades. The Land Use Plan outlined in this chapter focuses on community growth over the next two decades, from now through 2030.

Johnston's Land Use Plan was shaped by a number of factors including:

- » *Vision and Guiding Principles described in Chapter 2.*
- » *Existing Community Context found in Chapter 3.*
- » *Community input gathered through community meetings, workshops and surveys.*
- » *Task force input and direction of the process.*
- » *Review and feedback from the Johnston Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board, City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission.*
- » *A careful examination and analysis of the physical landscape in and around Johnston.*

A History of Rapid Growth

Johnston's last comprehensive plan was completed in 1998. Since that time, the city has grown from a population of approximately 7,000 to almost 17,000 residents, a 243% increase, placing Johnston in the top 5 growing communities in the Des Moines Metropolitan Area. Employment growth has surged as well with the addition of new office and retail uses including the development of the John Deere Credit campus. Hometown business Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., continues to expand its operations in Johnston.

Johnston's residential growth has continued to follow parallel linear paths flanking Beaver Creek and Camp Dodge (Figure 5.1). New residential neighborhoods have been created between NW 86th Street and NW 100th Street. Within this area, new elementary and middle schools have been built to serve Johnston's new families. While the majority of new growth has occurred on the west side, growth on the east side has been significant as well. On the east, new residential neighborhoods have been created on either side of NW 62nd Avenue and flanking the intersection of Merle Hay Road and NW 70th Avenue.

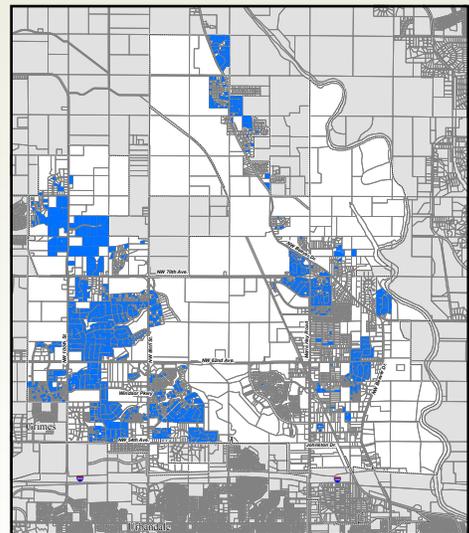


Figure 5.1 - Residential Development 1996-2008

Organization of the Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan outlined in this chapter includes the following:

- » **Existing Land Use** summarizes Johnston's land use pattern in 2010. It provides a breakdown of acreage by land use categories. It also looks at the important role of open space in Johnston and provides commentary on the challenges and opportunities created by some of Johnston's larger land users.
- » **Land Use Categories** provides general descriptions of the categories that are being used in the 2030 Future Land Use Plan.
- » **2030 Land Use Plan** shows the land uses assigned to each parcel of land. It is the basis for establishing subsequent zoning district boundaries and regulatory tools.
- » **Future Land Use Plan** discusses the characteristics of each land use type and includes corresponding Policies and Action Steps.
- » **Focus Areas** provide a more detailed discussion of the characteristics and plans for specific areas of the community. The focus areas were identified based on planning issues that have arisen since completion of the last Comprehensive Plan in 1998 as well as issues that were identified during the discovery portion of this planning process.

Existing Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agricultural	1,988	17%
Single Family Residential	2,320	20%
Multi-Family Residential	270	2%
High Density Residential	50	0%
Commercial	168	1%
Office	259	2%
Industrial	275	2%
Public	247	2%
Semi-Public	68	1%
Camp Dodge	1,494	13%
Army Corp	430	4%
Parks & Open Space	550	5%
Private Recreation	121	1%
ROW & Easements	804	7%
Open Water	1,810	15%
Vacant Land	927	8%
Total:	11,781	100%

Table 5.1 - Existing Land Use (Source: City of Johnston, Polk County, HKGi)

Residential growth has also occurred along NW Beaver Drive lying between Camp Dodge and Saylorville Lake.

Will Johnston's growth over the next twenty years match that of the past two decades? Indicators suggest that the city is likely to continue to see significant growth over the next 20 years, however, perhaps at a slightly less rapid pace. According to population projections by the Des Moines Area MPO, Johnston's population will increase by another 10,000 residents by 2030. The city's growth rate will ultimately be influenced by the economy, the desires of local land owners and developers and the city's ability to extend municipal services to accommodate future growth.

Existing Land Use

Johnston was first established in the early 1900s as a railroad and farming community. The land was primarily used for agricultural purposes prior to the community's incorporation in 1969. Since that time there has been a steady decline in agricultural uses as commercial and residential developments have become more prominent.

To some degree, Johnston is landlocked with the presence of Saylorville Lake, Interstate 35/80, Camp Dodge and the Des Moines River. These features have influenced development patterns, infrastructure and the transportation network; but they continue to serve as assets to the community. Johnston's built environment has embraced these assets and they are reflected in the development patterns that exist today.

Johnston is 11,785 acres in size (see Table 5.1). Figure 5.2 (ELU Map) is a snapshot of land uses in 2009. This map is intended to illustrate the overall land use patterns that exist today; a breakdown of which is shown in the column on the left.

Agricultural Uses

Agricultural uses still make up a significant portion of Johnston's land area. However, a large portion of the agricultural land that existed in 1998 has been developed for other uses, primarily residential. Agricultural land uses are located on the western edge of town and north of NW 62nd Avenue. Approximately 50% of what is shown as agricultural today



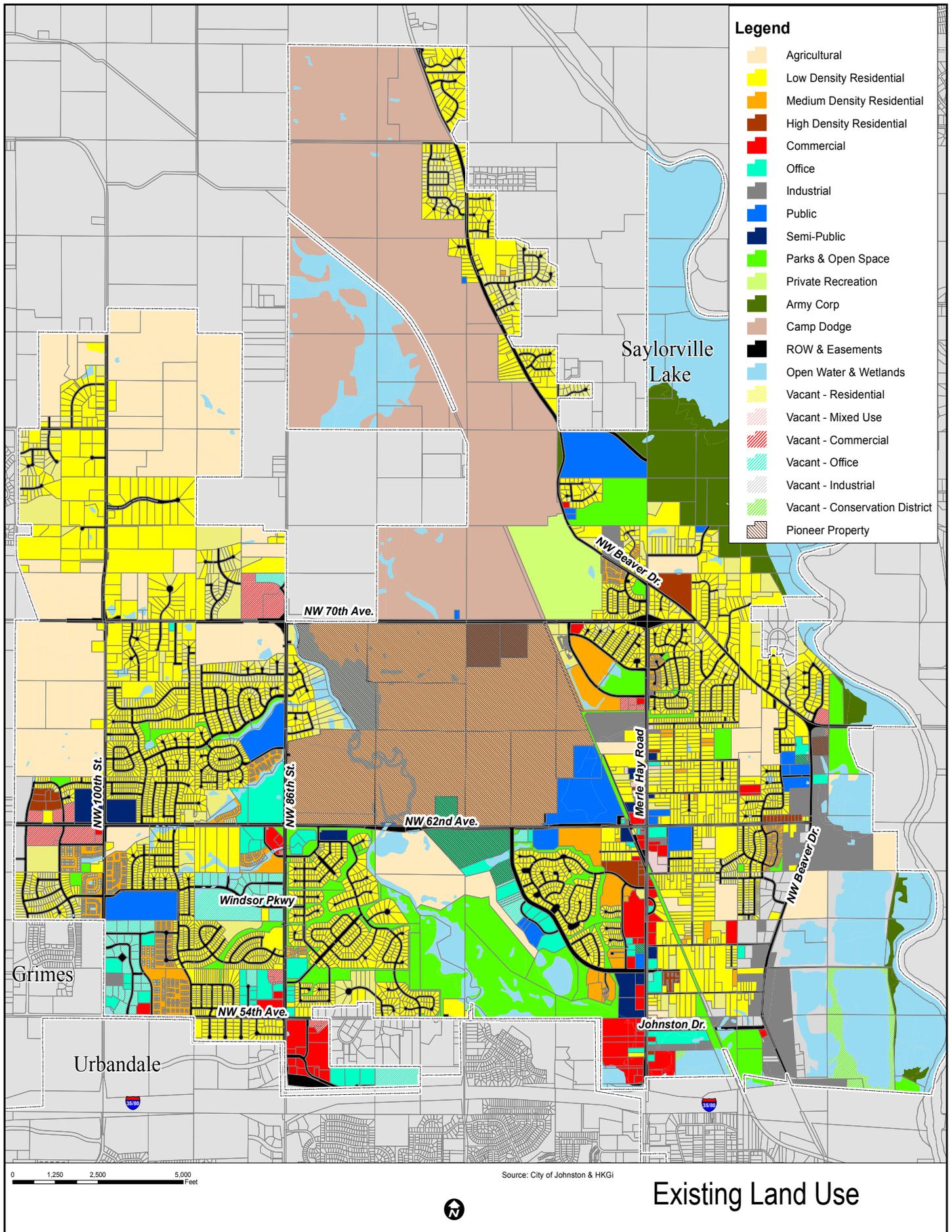


Figure 5.2 - Existing Land Use

is owned by Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., and used as part of their corporate crop research.



Residential Uses

Single-family residential uses make up the single largest land use category in Johnston (see Figure 5.3). This development pattern primarily evolved since 1980. Between 1980 and 2009, 80% of Johnston’s single-family homes were built (see Figure 5.4). The remaining housing stock was primarily built between 1940 and 1980.

Housing that was before 1980 is largely located on the eastern edge of the community along the Des Moines River and Beaver Drive. Newer housing has occurred in this area, but larger residential developments have occurred on the western edge. There is a slight disparity in estimated market value between the two sides of town (see Figure 5.5). The homes in eastern Johnston tend to be smaller in size and correspondingly, have lower market values.

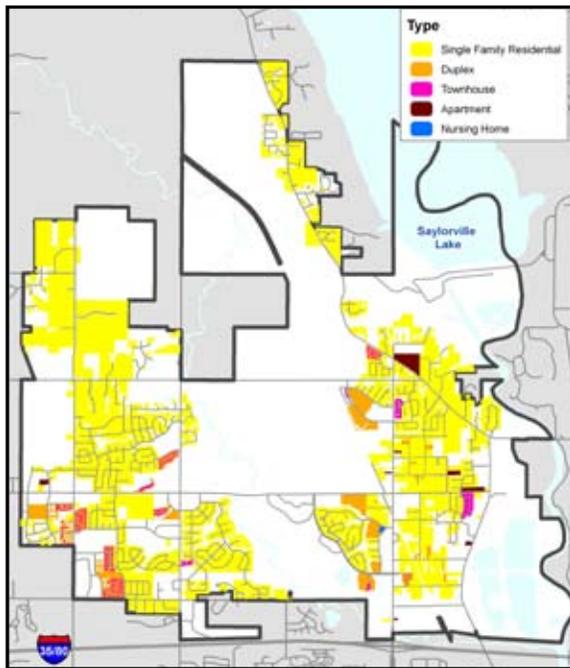


Figure 5.3 - Residential Uses

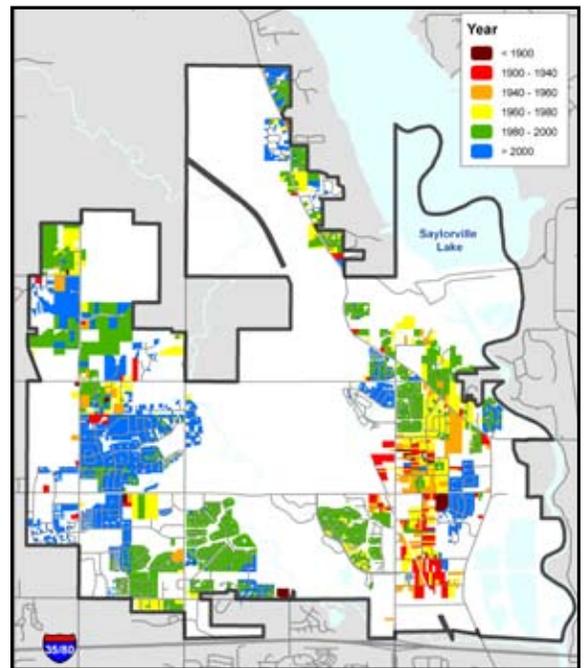


Figure 5.4 - Year Built

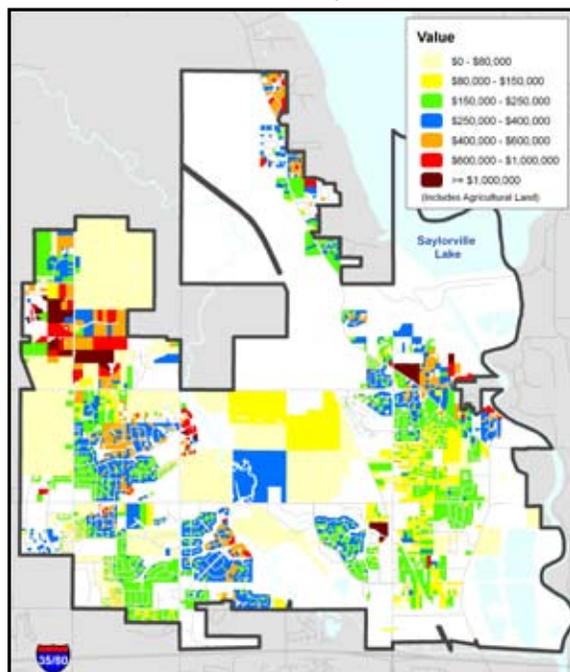


Figure 5.5 - Est. Market Value

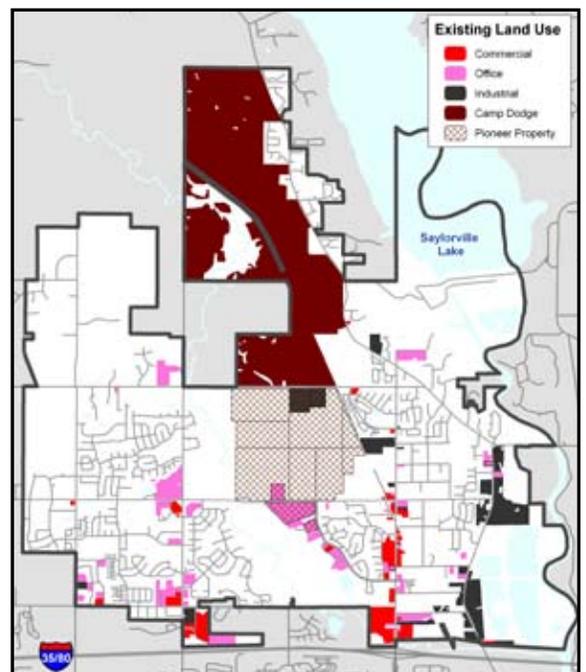


Figure 5.6 - Commercial Uses

Multi-family and high density residential uses also have a presence in Johnston and typically consist of duplexes and townhomes (see Figure 5.3). A majority of these uses were built in the last decade and are located south of NW 62nd Avenue.

Commercial, Office & Industrial Uses

Johnston offers a variety of employment opportunities and is home to Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., John Deere Credit, Camp Dodge and Iowa Public Television. These industries have a large presence in Johnston, but are not the only sources of employment. Commercial and industrial uses include shopping centers, restaurants, hotels, a movie theater, asphalt plants and warehousing (see Figure 5.6). A number of these uses are located along Merle Hay Road which serves as a commercial corridor connecting to Interstate 35/80 and Des Moines.

In recent years, land around NW 62nd Avenue and Merle Hay Road has been identified as an area for redevelopment and infill. In 2007, a redevelopment study was conducted laying the framework for redevelopment over time. In conjunction with this study, a market analysis was completed to assess development potential along the corridor. These studies triggered land use amendments to the 1998 Comprehensive Plan.

Parks, Greenways and Open Space

Johnston has embraced its natural environment. A large percentage of the land in Johnston (25%) is dedicated to open space, parks, greenways and open water bodies (see Figure 5.7). Water bodies such as Beaver Creek have been incorporated into development patterns by preserving land around the creek to form greenways and connecting open spaces. This is clearly seen in the development patterns west of the Beaver Creek Natural Resource Area.

The Des Moines River and Saylorville Lake are unique Johnston assets. Land abutting the Des Moines River has been preserved by the city or is currently owned by the Army Corps of Engineers. These natural areas offer the community recreational amenities, aesthetic value and a refuge for wildlife.

Assets and Barriers

Johnston’s land use pattern has been and will continue to be influenced by a number of factors outside of the city’s direct control. The location of Camp Dodge, Beaver Creek and large property holdings by Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc. (see Figure 5.8), have split Johnston into two parts; creating an east/west divide. The largest single barrier is Camp Dodge which encompasses approximately 13% of Johnston’s land area and extends outside the city limits totaling approximately 4,300 acres in size. The majority of the Camp Dodge property is used to train military personal and about 650 acres is leased for agricultural uses. Despite its intense use, the camp contains areas that are rich in natural amenities.

Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., owns approximately 780 acres south of Camp Dodge. Their property holdings extend from Camp Dodge to NW 62nd Avenue, and their offices and greenhouses are set among an extensive range of growing fields. Preservation of the agricultural fields is vital to Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.’s, operations since they continue to monitor long-term growing conditions as part of their research efforts.

Beaver Creek runs along the eastern side of both Camp Dodge and Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., along NW 86th Street and Foxboro Road meandering southeast through the community. The waterway and its associated floodplain areas further accentuate the east/west divide.

The combination of Beaver Creek, Camp Dodge and Pioneer’s operations establishes a permanent green swath through the city of Johnston that creates a disconnect between

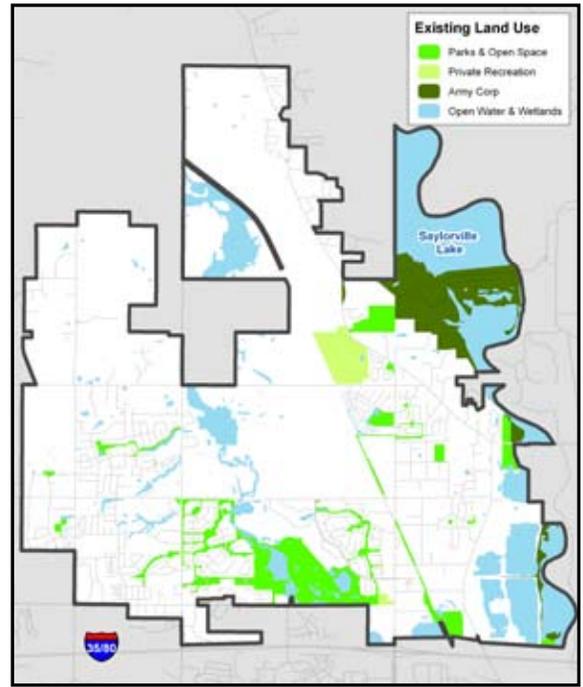


Figure 5.7 - Parks & Open Space

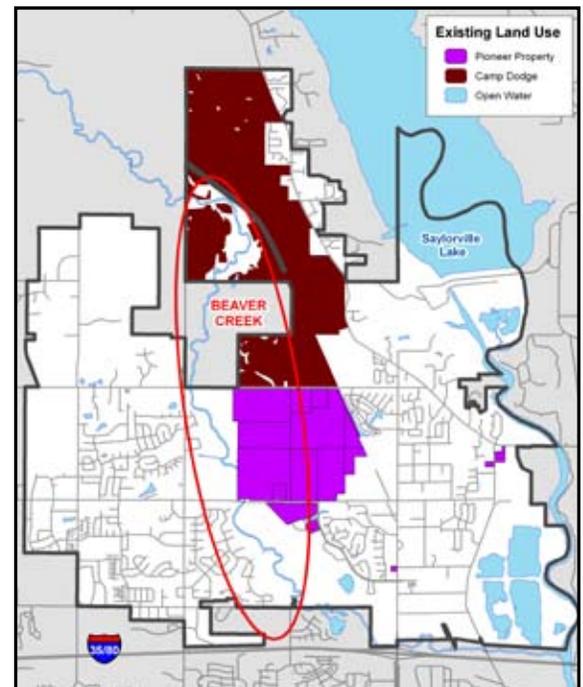


Figure 5.8 - Assets & Barriers

the eastern and western portions of the community. Three transportation corridors (NW 70th Ave., NW 62nd Ave. and Interstate 35/80) help bridge this divide.

Land Use Categories

The Land Use Plan contains a variety of categories to address the full range of land use types found in Johnston today as well as those likely to occur in the future. The categories used in this plan are similar to those used in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan with the exception that the residential categories have been expanded to reflect a wider range of densities. The land use categories include:

- » **Rural Density Residential (RDR)** includes single-family detached housing at a density not to exceed two units per acre. Neighborhoods within this area consist of large lot, estate-type housing with private on-site septic and well systems prior to the extension of municipal water and sanitary sewer. Limited agriculture and/or hobby farm uses may occur in land designated as RDR.



- » **Low Density Residential (LDR)** includes housing with densities that generally range from two to five units per acre. Neighborhood areas classified as LDR will typically be predominately single-family detached units with the potential for some doubles and other lower density attached housing products.



- » **Medium Density Residential (MDR)** includes residential uses at densities that range from five to eight units per acre. MDR accommodates a mix of housing types including single-family detached, townhomes, and lower density townhomes.



Note: Photos used are illustrative of land use types, not necessarily buildings found in Johnston.

» **High Density Residential (HDR)** includes multi-family housing at densities exceeding eight units per acre. Uses in this category include townhouses, row houses, apartments, condominium buildings and senior housing.



» **Commercial (C)** - The commercial land use category includes retail and service commercial land uses that serve neighborhood, community and regional markets. The areas are located to provide convenient access for customers. Community and regional commercial has higher demands for traffic and accessibility, and are suitable for only certain areas, because they rely upon customers from outside the community.



» **Office (O)** - The office land use category includes lots or parcels that contain professional offices and services such as medical, law, real estate and financial businesses. In the 2030 Land Use Plan, office uses are designated along Merle Hay Road and other major road corridors as well as within the Business Park classification.



» **Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU)** – Neighborhood mixed-use areas are intended to provide a smaller scale, mix of commercial, residential, public and related uses in a pedestrian friendly environment. They may include a mix of retail and service commercial, office, institutional, higher density residential, public uses and/or park and recreation uses. Uses can be integrated either vertically or horizontally.



- » **Community Mixed Use (CMU)** – Community mixed-use areas are intended to provide a unique mix of commercial, residential, public and related uses in a pedestrian friendly environment. It is envisioned that CMU areas will include a mix of retail and service commercial, office, institutional, higher density residential, public uses and/or park and recreation uses. CMU areas are expected to be integrated both vertically and horizontally.



- » **Business Park (BP)** - Business park areas include lots or parcels containing showrooms, warehousing, storage and light industrial uses with associated office functions. Business park developments are usually designed in a unified manner and feature landscaped open areas and roadway edges, consistent lighting, and entry monumentation.



- » **Industrial (I)** - The industrial category includes lots or parcels containing light manufacturing, goods movement, wholesale trade, and similar uses. Industrial land uses differ from business park uses, generally due to scale and an emphasis on individual industrial sites rather than larger scale, planned office/industrial environments.



- » **Public and Quasi-Public (P/QP)** - Public and quasi-public uses in Johnston include churches, schools, cemeteries, golf courses, local government facilities and other parcels that are owned by a public or quasi-public entity. This category does not include parks and recreation areas.



- » **Park/Open Space (P/OS)** - The park and open space category includes land owned by the City of Johnston. Parks and open space are discussed in detail in the Parks and Recreation chapter of this plan.



- » **Agriculture (AG)** - Permanent agriculture fields are a separate designation because they support agriculture research and contribute visually to the rural character of the community. Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., maintains an active research component adjacent to their corporate campus.



- » **Army Corps (AC)** - When Saylorville Lake was established, the Army Corps of Engineers acquired a substantial amount of land in and around Johnston. Property designated as Army Corps primarily includes recreational areas and open space on the periphery of Saylorville Lake.



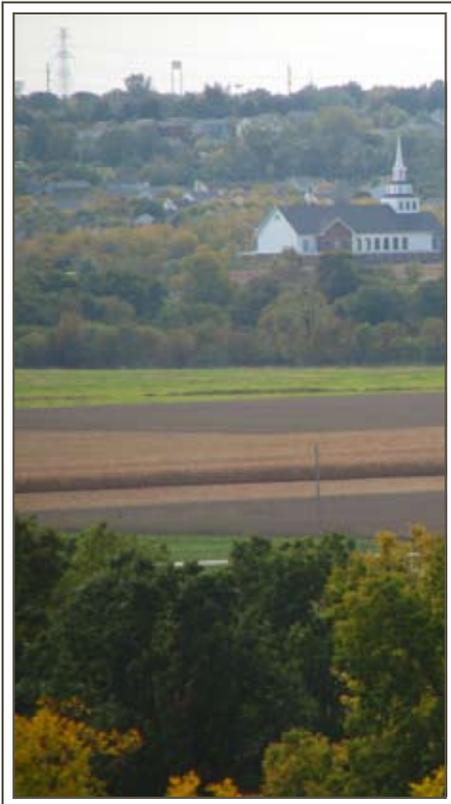
- » **Camp Dodge (CD)** - Camp Dodge is the single largest land use category on the future land use plan map. Camp Dodge has a major impact on the City of Johnston, both as a land use type and its benefits including employment opportunities and preservation of an expansive open space system with pockets of unique natural resources.



2030 Land Use

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent
Agricultural	799	4%
Rural Residential	492	2%
Low Density Residential	4,091	18%
Medium Density Res.	494	2%
High Density Residential	227	1%
Commercial	271	1%
Community Mixed Use	118	1%
Neighborhood Mixed Use	46	0%
Office	160	1%
Business Park	592	3%
Industrial	475	2%
Camp Dodge	3,747	17%
Public	238	1%
Quasi-Public	503	2%
Parks & Open Space	1,223	5%
Army Corps	1,888	8%
Open Water	6,006	27%
ROW & Easements	1,231	5%
Total:	22,582	100%

Table 5.2 - 2030 Land Use



2030 Land Use Plan

Figure 5.9 is Johnston's Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Plan depicts a pattern that is expected to evolve in and around the City of Johnston over the next twenty years. Future land use designations are the product of both past, present and anticipated future influences. The Future Land Use Plan is intended to serve as a guide for land use decisions and it provides the basis for establishing and modifying zoning district boundaries. Additionally, it is intended to help direct public investments in infrastructure including roads and utility system expansions. Any changes to the Future Land Use Plan map should only occur after careful analysis and examination against the broader community vision, guiding principles and policies found within all of the sections of this plan.

Future Land Use Plan

The 2030 Land Use Plan map shows the pattern of anticipated land uses in Johnston over the next twenty years. In order to provide a broad range of living and work opportunities, the plan includes a number of types of residential uses and a variety of non-residential uses. Along with public uses and park and open space areas, they create a tapestry that reflects Johnston's historical roots while embracing future development opportunities. The following is an overview of the future pattern of land use in Johnston and the policies and action steps that help guide their physical form.

Rural Density Residential (RDR)

Rural Density Residential (RDR) occurs primarily in two areas on the 2030 Plan, north of NW 70th Avenue flanking NW 100th Street and in the northwest future growth area which lies northwest of the intersection of Highway 141 and NW Saylorville Drive. Both of these areas are discussed in more detail in the Focus Areas portion of this chapter.

Property designated rural density residential is either part of an existing area of large lots and on-site services or new areas on the periphery of future areas of Johnston where abutting densities are low and/or nearby uses are agricultural. Although properties designated as RDR may have on-site sanitary systems and wells on an interim basis, long-term plans are to provide full municipal services to these areas. This fact should be considered as property is platted and developed. RDR allows densities up to two units per acre.

Rural Density Residential Policies:

- RDP.1. Maintain the rural character of existing neighborhoods and anticipate intensified development in agricultural areas.
- RDP.2. Accommodate infill development that is consistent with existing development patterns and densities where existing topography and soils are appropriate.
- RDP.3. Continue to design and fund sanitary sewer service and other capital improvements to the area. New development shall be served by municipal sanitary sewer.
- RDP.4. Create a quality living environment that is adapted to the natural environment.

Rural Density Residential Action Steps:

- RDA.1. Discourage non-residential and/or non-local traffic on local streets.
- RDA.2. Limit housing to single-family, detached homes.
- RDA.3. Encourage the placement of housing units in a manner that preserves significant natural resources through the encouragement of cluster practices and other mechanisms.
- RDA.4. Allow accessory structures consistent with rural residential and hobby farm principal uses.
- RDA.5. Prohibit commercial or industrial uses in residential areas including home occupations that involve exterior storage.

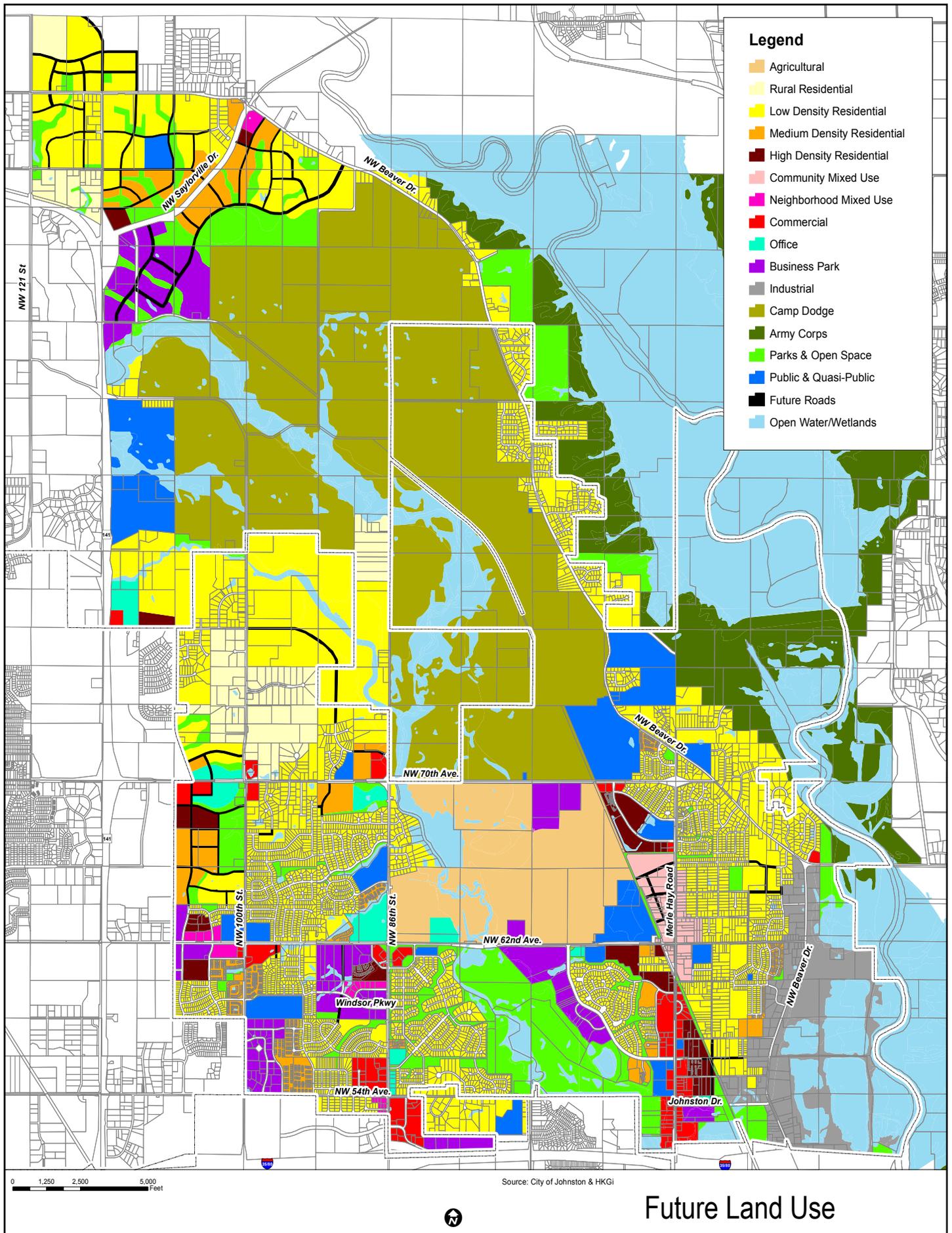


Figure 5.9 - 2030 Future Land Use Plan

RDA.6. Work with Polk County to establish periodic monitoring requirements for existing on-site sewage treatment systems.

RDA.7. Cooperate with Polk County to encourage preservation of agricultural lands surrounding the City of Johnston.

RDA.8. Cooperate with adjoining communities and Camp Dodge to encourage compatible land use development.

Note: Additional Action Steps regarding the RDR area located north of NW 70th Avenue flanking NW 100th Street are found in the Focus Area section of this chapter.

Low Density Residential (LDR) and Medium Density Residential (MDR)

Areas of Johnston earmarked for Low Density Residential (LDR) and Medium Density Residential (MDR) uses make up the vast majority Johnston's supply of residential land. Accordingly, they are discussed together and have a common set of policies and action steps.

Johnston is viewed as being primarily a detached single-family home community. Although large single-family detached neighborhoods occur throughout Johnston, the city also features a broad array of housing styles and densities. With the LDR/MDR combined density range of two to eight units per acre, Johnston has the ability to continue to offer single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, row townhomes, manor homes and future housing products that fall within the stipulated density range.

Low Density Residential and Medium Density Residential Policies:

L/MDP.1. Allow residential densities that are related to the future capacity of utility systems and physical site characteristics and limitations.

L/MDP.2. Encourage a variety of housing types to support the diverse needs of the residential population.

L/MDP.3. Allow infill development in a manner that protects the character of existing residential neighborhoods.

L/MDP.4. Maintain a circulation system that connects neighborhood areas while emphasizing a system of local and collector roadways to accommodate vehicular movements.

L/MDP.5. Create planned neighborhoods with common facilities and amenities that establish a sense of identity that helps promote long-term value stability.

Low Density Residential and Medium Density Residential Action Steps:

L/MDA.1. Insure that new development areas are compatible in size and scale with existing, adjacent neighborhoods.

L/MDA.2. Require urban services for all new low and medium density residential developments including sanitary sewer, municipal water and storm sewer systems.

L/MDA.3. Provide appropriate buffers to allow density transitions and to accommodate a range of housing types.

L/MDA.4. Promote programs and enforce codes that encourage the maintenance of the existing housing.

L/MDA.5. Encourage rehabilitation of deteriorating housing.

L/MDA.6. Improve or upgrade neighborhood infrastructure on an as-needed basis. In the established areas of Johnston, the existing development pattern may warrant the use of standards that differ from those used in the newly developing portion of the community.



L/MDA.7. Reflect the history and character of existing residential neighborhoods in future developments within those neighborhoods.

L/MDA.8. Provide commercial services that are convenient to neighborhood areas.

L/MDA.9. Provide appropriate density transitions in the area east of Merle Hay Road to ensure the integrity of existing larger lot residential developments.

L/MDA.10. Utilize natural features including floodplain areas as connecting links between neighborhood areas.

L/MDA.11. Collaborate with Polk County to establish inspection requirements for on-site sewage treatment systems.

High Density Residential (HDR)

Residential units in the High Density Residential (HDR) category will generally include apartment buildings, condominium buildings and some higher density townhouses. HDR will also accommodate senior housing. Land designated as high density occurs throughout the community with a concentrations along Merle Hay Road, at Johnston Commons, along the city's western border with Grimes and in the northwest future growth area.

High Density Residential Policies:

HDP.1. Encourage a balance of attached forms of housing as an alternative to single-family detached homes.

HDP.2. Provide sites for higher density housing in locations that are convenient to commercial services, major roadways and park and recreation areas.

High Density Residential Action Steps:

HDA.1. Provide appropriate land use transitions at the edges of high density residential areas to buffer noise and screen undesirable views from abutting roadways.

HDA.2. Require sidewalks and trails that provide pedestrian links to the community-wide trail system.

HAD.3. Require quality building materials for multi-family housing that minimizes required ongoing maintenance.

Commercial (C)

Commercial (C) land uses in Johnston provide residents with a variety of goods and services. As a land use category, commercial includes retail and service businesses. Typical commercial uses include grocery stores, gas stations, restaurants, banks, dry cleaners, daycares, and drug stores. Historically, Merle Hay Road has been Johnston's primary commercial corridor. Over time, larger scale commercial uses in nearby Urbandale and Ankeny have weakened the local market for smaller business operations. As a result, some properties along Merle Hay Road have become vacant or have seen frequent changes in use.

Responding to this situation, Johnston prepared a redevelopment plan for Merle Hay Road in 2008 that addresses the northern portion of the corridor. The Merle Hay Road redevelopment area is discussed in more detail in the Focus Area portion of this chapter. The southern stretch of Merle Hay Road from Winwood Drive to I-80 remains commercial. This area which is referred to in this plan as the Gateway Area is also addressed in the Focus Area portion of this chapter.

Because of the existing land use pattern and competition from retail in adjacent communities, Johnston is not expected to see a significant amount of new "big box" retail commercial uses in the future. Some potential for big box retail does exist in the western part of the community abutting Grimes. Grimes has big box retail uses along NW 70th Street just outside of Johnston's border.



The scale of Johnston's commercial uses in the future will likely relate to its customer orientation. Neighborhood scale uses will appeal to nearby residents. Community scale commercial will appeal primarily to Johnston residents and regional scale commercial will attract customers from a broader geographic area.

Commercial Policies:

CAP.1. Provide neighborhood commercial areas to supply convenience goods and services principally for residents of Johnston neighborhoods.

CAP.2. Provide community commercial areas to supply goods and services that appeal to the community at-large.

CAP.3. Provide convenience shopping nodes that offer goods and services for visitors to the community including recreational traffic associated with Saylorville Lake.

CAP.4. Encourage commercial developments to locate along major collector and arterial streets.

CAP.5. Encourage clustering of commercial uses as opposed to strip commercial development lining major roadways.

Commercial Action Steps:

CAA.1. Require appropriate land use transitions at the edges of residential neighborhoods through the regulation of setbacks and the placement of screening, buffering and fencing.

CAA.2. Enact and enforce land use controls that limit the scale of commercial development in residential neighborhoods.

CAA.3. In neighborhood commercial areas, place strict limitations on lighting, vehicular access and other site planning elements in order to alleviate conflicts with abutting residential uses.

CAA.4. Facilitate development and redevelopment in areas along Merle Hay Road consistent with the Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Plan.

CAA.5. Encourage convenient parking locations that are buffered with landscaping to soften their appearance from abutting roadways.

CAA.6. Provide safe and convenient pedestrian access within and connecting to commercial areas.

CAA.7. Require high quality building materials in commercial areas.

CAA.8. Adopt and enforce landscaping standards for commercial businesses that are compatible with existing and planned landscaping improvements along abutting roadways.

Office (O)

The Office (O) land use category includes parcels that contain professional offices and services such as medical, law, real estate and financial businesses. The 2030 Future Land Use Plan includes office uses along Merle Hay Road and at other locations throughout Johnston. A planned node of office use is located just west of the intersection of NW 70th Avenue and NW 100th Street.

Johnston is also the home of two major corporate campuses, Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., and John Deere Credit. The majority of the Pioneer campus south of NW 62nd Avenue is categorized as Business Park due to the varied nature of both office and research facilities. Pioneer has offices on the north side of NW 62nd Avenue in buildings that are leased from a private owner. All of the John Deere Credit facility is categorized as office. The plan also includes one new corporate campus site shown as office in the southwest quadrant of the intersection of NW 70th Avenue and NW 86th Street.



Office Policies:

OAP.1. Create areas of office development to provide employment opportunities in the community and high quality commercial land uses.

OAP.2. Create distinct office areas with direct access to the transportation network to minimize impacts on existing and future residential areas.

Office Action Steps:

OAA.1. Reserve land designated as office for office uses. In some cases, the designation of property as office may prolong the absorption rate compared to other possible land use designations.

OAA.2. Connect office areas to the community-wide trail network to encourage pedestrian movement from residential areas to employment locations.

Community Mixed Use (CMU) and Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU)

The 2030 Land Use Plan includes two categories of mixed use, one with a community-wide focus and the other a tighter, neighborhood focus. The Merle Hay Road redevelopment area is the only Community Mixed Use (CMU) shown on the plan. It has the potential to be the commercial focal point of Johnston, a place where people can come together to work, shop and live. A Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) area is located at the corner of NW 54th Avenue and NW 86th Street. Given the location of this site on a busy street, commercial uses in the area may include a mix of those that appeal to area residents as well as those that appeal to more regional traffic that uses NW 86th Street.

Community and Neighborhood Mixed Use Policies:

MUP.1. Provide a unique mix of commercial, residential, public and related uses in a pedestrian friendly environment.

MUP.2. Separate schools and commercial uses with adequate buffer areas.

Mixed Use Action Steps:

MUA.1. Enact zoning modifications necessary to facilitate a mixed use development pattern.

MUA.2. Provide walkway and trail linkages to other public recreational facilities in the area.

MUA.3. Encourage consistent design standards that serve as a framework for both public and private improvements addressing streets, lighting, landscaping, building materials and building placement

MUA.4. Limit commercial uses to those that provide goods and services at a community or neighborhood scale.

Business Park (BP)

The 2030 Land Use Plan identifies Business Park (BP) uses in four primary locations. As was noted previously, the Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., campus is predominately identified as business park. The Windsor Office Park area located southwest of the intersection of NW 62nd Avenue and NW 86th Street and Johnston Commerce Park located northeast of the intersection of NW 54th Avenue and NW 100th Street are two existing business parks with land to accommodate new buildings. A substantial new business park area is located in the northwest growth area, just southeast of the intersection of Highway 141 and NW Saylorville Drive. This new site is further discussed in the Focus Area section of this chapter.

Business Park Policies:

BPP.1. Provide opportunities for new industrial development and expanded employment opportunities in Johnston.



BPP.2. Provide attractive, planned environments as means to induce employers to locate within the City.

Business Park Action Steps:

BPA.1. Enact standards for industrial developments to establish and maintain a high level of appearance and character.

BPA.2. Provide public services and infrastructure to encourage expansion and support the needs of existing and prospective employers.

BPA.3. Require that all storage be enclosed within buildings or screened from view from roadways.

BPA.4. Adopt design guidelines addressing signage, landscaping, lighting, building materials and other site improvements.

BPA.5. Work with Johnston Economic Development Corporation (JEDCO) to attract businesses to Johnston's business park areas.

Industrial (I)

The 2030 Land Use Plan does not show any substantial new industrial areas in Johnston. All industrial property is located on the east side of the community abutting NW Beaver Drive and Johnston Drive. Some expansion and infill of industrial is shown on the plan along the northern portion of Beaver Drive. As classified in the plan, industrial land uses include light manufacturing, storage, wholesale trade and similar uses on individual parcels, rather than as part of a larger scale planned industrial (business) park.

Industrial Policies:

IAP.1. Provide opportunities for new industrial development, expansion of existing uses and the redevelopment of existing industrial uses to expand employment opportunities and to serve existing businesses in the community.

IAP.2. Continue to improve the appearance of existing industrial areas thereby improving the community's image and development potential.

Industrial Action Steps:

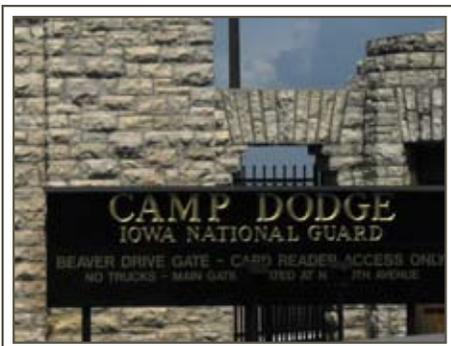
IAA.1. Promote the improvement of existing industrial areas over time using redevelopment tools and applicable financial incentives.

IAA.2. Enact standards for new industrial developments that are in keeping with the need to improve the overall appearance of the community.

IAA.3. Require landscaped buffers between dissimilar land uses to enhance compatibility.

IAA.4. Work with property owners and other governmental jurisdictions in formulating and implementing a plan for the re-use of the gravel pit areas in eastern Johnston along the Des Moines River.

Camp Dodge (CD)



Camp Dodge (CD) is the single largest land use category on the 2030 Land Use Plan. Correspondingly, it has a major impact on the City of Johnston, both as a land use type and as a draw for the community. Camp Dodge has acquired substantial amounts of property since Johnston completed its 1998 Comprehensive Plan. It is believed that the camp would be interested in acquiring even more property in the future as buffer if the right parcels become available.

The location of the camp impacts the future orderly development of land lying northwest of the current city limits. Although it presents challenges in long-term utility extensions, the camp provides a wide range of benefits to the community. Benefits include employment opportunities, public use of recreational facilities and preservation of an expansive open

space system with pockets of unique natural resources. The public's ability to overlook the camp along NW Beaver Drive also plays a substantial role in the impression that Johnston makes on visitors passing through the community.

Camp Dodge Policies:

CDP.1. Support continued operations at Camp Dodge within the existing boundaries of the property.

Camp Dodge Action Steps:

CDA.1. Maintain land use and zoning practices on surrounding land parcels that recognizes the uses of the Camp Dodge property.

CDA.2. Cooperate with Camp Dodge in coordinating required infrastructure to serve Camp operations including the roadway network and utility systems.

CDA.3. Cooperate with Camp Dodge to ensure that adequate buffer areas exist around the Camp without federal acquisition of property slated for future residential and business park development.

Army Corps (AC)

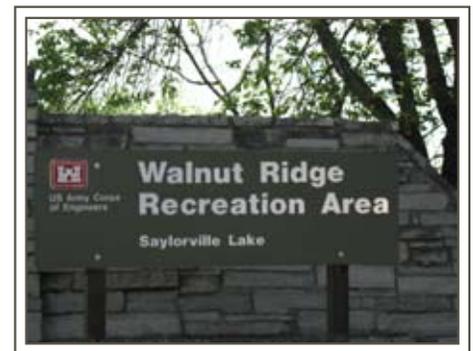
The Army Corps of Engineers owns a significant amount of land around Saylorville Lake. The Corps' land holdings include open space and developed recreation areas. These areas provide camping, fishing and water access to Johnston residents as well as most of central Iowa.

Army Corps Policies:

ACP.1. Collaborate with the Army Corps to ensure that existing recreational resources are operated in perpetuity.

Army Corps Action Steps:

ACA.1. Collaborate with the Army Corps on infrastructure improvements that benefit both parties.



Public and Quasi-Public (P/QP)

Public and Quasi-Public (P/QP) uses in Johnston include churches, buildings, land adjacent to schools, cemeteries, local government facilities, golf courses and other parcels that are owned by a public or semi-public entity. The public & quasi-public category does not include parks and recreation areas. They are classified separately under this plan and discussed in the Parks and Recreation section.

The most prominent public and quasi-public land uses in Johnston include schools, golf courses and local government facilities. Schools include elementary, middle and the high school operated by the Johnston Community School District. Local government facilities include city hall, the public works complex, fire station, library and Crown Point Community Center. Johnston is the home of two golf courses, one public course and the Hyperion Club which is a private facility.

Public and Quasi-Public Area Policies:

PQ/PP.1. Provide needed public facilities and services for existing and future Johnston residents.

PQ/PP.2. Interconnect the city's most important public facilities including schools via open space corridors.

Public and Quasi-Public Action Steps:

PQ/PA.1. Continue to cooperate with the local school district in the joint use of facilities.

PQ/PA.2. Provide sufficient land to meet the public service needs of the community.

Park and Open Space (P/OS)

Park and open space areas are addressed in the Parks and Recreation section of this plan.

Focus Areas

The 2030 Land Use Plan covers all of Johnston's 18+ square miles as well as areas that are intended to be annexed in the future. To better understand the unique characteristics of some of the areas addressed in the 2030 Plan, a number of focus areas were identified. These areas are being specifically called out to allow a more detailed presentation and discussion of future plans and policies. Of the seven focus areas identified below, three of them resulted from planning efforts that took place after adoption of Johnston's 1998 Comprehensive Plan and prior to this comprehensive plan update. The remaining four focus areas were identified as part of this planning process.



Figure 5.10 Roughwood

Roughwood

The Roughwood neighborhood which is generally located around the intersection of NW 54th Avenue and NW 86th Street was developed in unincorporated Polk County on septic systems and with a private water supply. It encompasses approximately 33 acres and contains 62 single family lots. In 1995, the City of Johnston annexed the area. The opening of the NW 86th Street interchange at I-35/80 significantly changed the dynamics of the NW 86th Street corridor and added traffic and congestion around the Roughwood neighborhood.

In response to the change in conditions, the city undertook a study of the area in 2009. That study included an analysis of extending utilities to the area to replace the on-site treatment systems. Public water and sanitary sewer are available immediately adjacent to the Roughwood subdivision. The neighborhood is served by private water service through Thorpe Water Development Company, which does not provide fire protection or hydrants internal to the subdivision. All of the homes in the area currently have on-site septic systems. Sanitary sewer can be extended into the neighborhood via an extension from the NW 86th Street/NW 54th Avenue intersection area. The city completed a feasibility study addressing the extension of sanitary sewer service in 2004 but to date, the required 60% support for the project has not been achieved within the neighborhood so the improvements have not been completed.

In 2009, the city amended the comprehensive plan to reflect the land use pattern shown on Figure 5.11. The plan creates a Neighborhood Mixed Use area at the corner of NW 54th Avenue and NW 86th Street. The amendment also established the following specific policies and action steps for the Roughwood area.

Roughwood Area Policies:

RWP.1. Facilitate the extension of municipal utilities (water and sanitary sewer) to the Roughwood subdivision, both to the potential redevelopment areas and the existing single family residential areas.

RWP.2. Accommodate redevelopment that is consistent with the existing development and traffic patterns along NW 54th Avenue/NW 86th Street but that also maintains and protects the adjacent single family residential uses.

RWP.3. Ensure adequate traffic patterns and movements are maintained along NW 54th Avenue and NW 86th Street.

Roughwood Area Action Steps:

RWA.1. Consider the rezoning of properties within the Roughwood subdivision that would facilitate redevelopment to commercial, office or high density residential uses as depicted

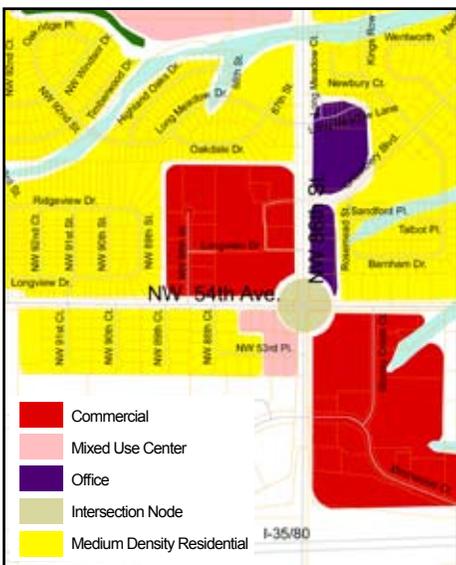


Figure 5.11 Roughwood Sub Area Scenario Adopted Planned Land Use, April 2009

in the 2030 Land Use Plan. Due to the likely phased redevelopment of the Roughwood areas, such rezonings should be sufficiently sized so as to provide sufficient developable area to meet all zoning ordinance bulk requirements, including adequate buffering, traffic access and open space.

RWA.2. As part of the rezoning of any parcels, the following items should be addressed:

- a. Specific buffer and screening standards shall be required between commercial and existing residential uses, even if such residential units are identified as commercial or office uses in the future.
- b. Commercial uses that are less compatible with residential neighbors, such as convenience stores, car washes and fast food restaurants with drive through windows shall not be permitted.
- c. Sites shall be designed in a manner which orients the active portions of the site away from the adjacent single family residential uses. As such traffic movements, parking lots, lighting and other active uses should be oriented to NW 86th Street or NW 54th Avenue while open spaces and landscaping are oriented to the boundary with existing residential uses. This type of site design may require flexibility in setbacks and other bulk requirements.
- d. A traffic study shall be conducted that analyzes the development impact on NW 54th Avenue/NW 86th Street and the overall transportation system in the area. This study should also address the appropriate locations and restrictions on any proposed driveways or street connections.
- e. The city will continue to monitor the Roughwood area in the future to determine if the impacts of traffic and other factors make it appropriate to expand the boundaries of the portion of the neighborhood currently designated as Mixed Use.

RWA.3. Any development or redevelopment within the Roughwood area shall extend and connect to the city's sanitary sewer and water systems, including fire protection.

RWA.4. Upon majority request of the property owners or other regulatory mandate, city sanitary sewer and water service, including fire protection, shall be extended into the single family residential areas. These services would be funded through traditional funding methods including property assessments or connection fees.

Northwest Area

The Northwest Area lies southwest of Camp Dodge, west of NW 86th Street and north of NW 70th Avenue. A comprehensive plan amendment in 2006 addressed the area as follows:

Background

In 1990, Polk County initiated efforts to apply new zoning within the Northwest Area. At the time, 1-acre parcels were being created which complied with the zoning then in place. The zoning was subsequently amended to a minimum of 3-acre lot size to slow growth. The result was the establishment of numerous 3-acre lots in the area. In the mid 1990s, the physical boundaries of Camp Dodge were expanded.

In 1995, Johnston and Grimes reached agreement on an annexation moratorium agreement that established NW 107th Street as the future boundary between the communities south of NW 78th Avenue and Highway 141 as the boundary north of NW 78th Avenue. The agreement specified that neither city would voluntarily or involuntarily annex on the opposite side of the dividing line.

In 1997, the city established the NW Expansion Area Water District. Establishment of the



Figure 5.12 Northwest Planning Area

district was precipitated by several proposed subdivisions desiring to develop on private wells. In lieu of wells, the city created a plan to extend a water mains into the area with developers agreeing to finance the early indebtedness of the project. The subdivisions included Candleridge Estates in Johnston, and Pinecrest Estates and Myra Lynn Estates in Polk County.

Irrevocable Petitions for Annexation were put in place in as part of the agreement to provide municipal water service. The properties would have been annexed except that they were not contiguous to the city at the time. The petitions constituted an agreement that initiated annexation when the properties became contiguous. A water connection district was created to provide collections for retiring the remainder of the debt for the installed water main. A per-acre fee was established based on the minimum parcel size allowed by the zoning. This was done to permit larger acreages to pay a minimum fee based upon the usage, and not the total parcel area. However, the agreement stipulated that if a property subdivided into additional parcels, the payment of the connection fee would also be due. The water service was subsequently extended to NW 78th Avenue, and west along NW 78th Avenue. A large portion of the Northwest Area was annexed, including the existing residential areas, in 2008.

During the update of the Johnston Comprehensive Plan in 1996 - 1998, the Northwest Area was the subject of a special meeting to address the particular needs of the area. The 1998 Plan took the position that rural lots may be the future direction of the area. This conclusion was influenced by the desire by residents to maintain that minimum lot size, and what appeared to be a high cost of extending sanitary sewer to the area.

In 2004, the City Council authorized completion of the Northwest Area Utility Service Master Plan. The master plan addressed water supply, sanitary sewer service, and storm drainage. However, the primary focus was on sanitary sewer. The City Council also adopted the Northwest Sanitary Sewer District.

Factors Influencing Future Development Patterns

The predominant land use in the Northwest Area has historically been agriculture with increasing amounts of large-lot residential. Development in the northwest area has focused along NW 100th Street which bisects the area. Camp Dodge lies immediately north and east of the Northwest Area. Abutting Camp Dodge on the east is the Beaver Creek Golf Course. The other business area is the commercial development in the southwest quadrant of NW 70th Avenue and Highway 141 in Grimes. Much of the existing residential development flanking NW 100th Street is low intensity development and the area has a rural character.

Natural features can also influence the extent and character of development. They can represent constraints to development or opportunities for future development. Both exist within the northwest area. The existing 1998 Johnston Comprehensive Plan included an examination of natural features for the entire city and its environs. A more site-specific look at natural resources occurred as part of the Northwest Area study.

Land Use Plan (2006) and 2030 Land Use Plan

In 2006, Johnston amended its comprehensive plan by incorporating the 2006 Land Use Plan shown as Figure 5.13. That plan included the following land use categories:

LDR2 – The Low Density Residential 2 category included single-family detached homes at a density of .34 du/ac (3-acre lots). LDR2 areas were to be assigned the Estates District classification when incorporated into the city.

LDR – The Low Density Residential category included housing with a lot size of one acre or larger.

MDR – The Medium Density Residential category accommodated residential uses at a density ranging from one to six units per acre.

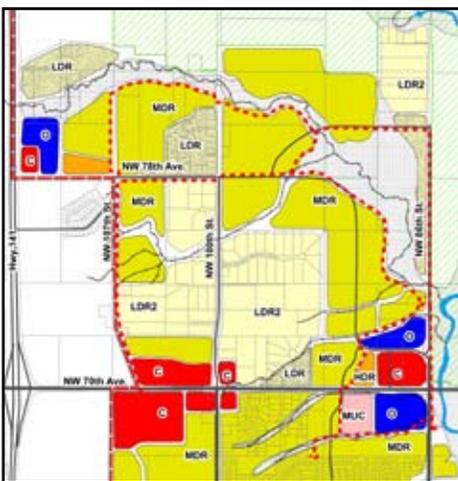


Figure 5.13 - 2006 Johnston Land Use Plan

HDR – The High Density Residential category accommodated multi-family housing at densities exceeding six units per acre. High density uses were further limited to eight units per acre per the plan amendment that was put into place in 2006.

Commercial – This category included retail and service commercial uses that serve neighborhood, community and regional markets.

Office – This category includes professional offices and services such as medical, law, real estate and financial businesses.

The 2030 Land Use Plan which is shown in Figure 5.14 retains the general land use directions adopted by the city in 2006 with some minor changes. One of those changes is the land use categories. A detailed breakdown of the land use categories associated with the 2030 Land Use Plan can be found in Table 5.2. The following is a brief summary of those categories applicable to the Northwest Area.

RDR - Rural Density Residential includes single-family detached housing at a density not to exceed two units per acre. The previous LDR2 category used in the 2006 plan is consistent with the new RDR category.

LDR - Low Density Residential includes housing with densities that generally range from two to five units per acre. The MDR category used in the 2006 plan is largely consistent with the new LDR category (1 to 6 units per acre compared to 2 to 5 units per acre).

MDR - Medium Density Residential includes residential uses at densities that range from five to eight units per acre. The new MDR category largely incorporates the previous MDR category (5 to 8 units per acre compared to 1 to 6 units per acre). The new MDR category was refined to better define densities for attached housing products.

HDR - High Density Residential includes multi-family housing at densities exceeding eight units per acre. The 2006 HDR category limited development at 8 units per acre.

Commercial - The commercial land use category includes retail and service commercial land uses that serve neighborhood, community and regional markets. This category remains unchanged from the 2006 amendment.

Office - The office land use category includes lots or parcels that contain professional offices and services such as medical, law, real estate and financial businesses. This category remains unchanged from the 2006 amendment.

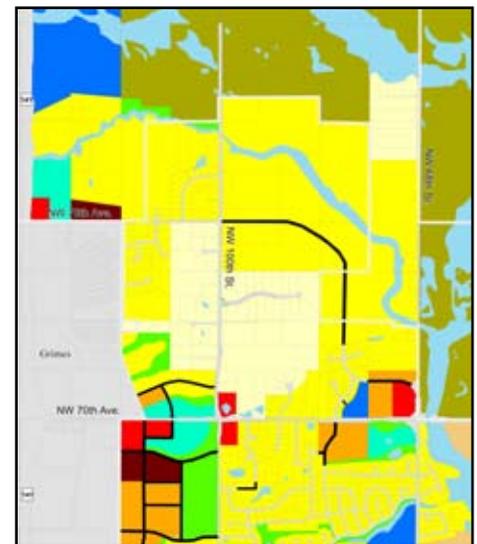
Public and Quasi-Public (P/QP)- Public and quasi-public uses include churches, schools, cemeteries, golf courses, local government facilities and other parcels that are owned by a public or quasi-public entity.

Park/Open Space (P/OS) - The park and open space category includes land owned by the City of Johnston. Parks and open space are discussed in detail in the Parks and Recreation chapter of this plan.

The primary changes included in the 2030 Land Use Plan as compared to the Land Use Plan prepared in 2006 involve the areas immediately north of NW 70th Avenue at NW 100th Street and immediately northwest of the intersection of NW 70th Avenue and NW 86th Street. The 2030 Land Use Plan retains the direction established in 2006 for residential properties.

North of NW 70th Avenue at NW 100th Street, the new plan refines the former commercial area by breaking it down into a tier of office use abutting NW 70th and a small area of medium density housing and park/open space to the north. Further east along NW 70th Avenue at NW 86th Street, the plan refines the area in the northwest and southwest quadrants of the intersection as shown.

The policies and action steps below are in addition to or to supplement those contained in



- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Office
- Parks & Open Space
- Public & Quasi-Public
- Camp Dodge

Figure 5.14 - 2030 Johnston Land Use Plan



this Plan. They are unique to the Northwest Area.

Northwest Policies

NWAP.1. Maintain rural neighborhoods and anticipate intensified development in agricultural areas.

NWAP.2. Accommodate infill development that is consistent with existing development patterns and density where existing topography and soils are appropriate.

NWAP.3. Continue to design and fund sanitary sewer service and other capital improvements to the area. New development shall be served by sanitary sewer service.

NWAP.4. Create a quality living environment that is adapted to the natural environment.



Northwest Action Steps

NWA.1. The 2030 Land Use Plan shall direct the future development of the area. LDR generally follows the sanitary sewer corridor. The density in LDR is variable (2 to 5 du/ac) and affected by the proximity of existing rural development that requires feathering of lot sizes (see transitions below-item e.), and the Little Beaver Creek floodplain that is the dominant feature in the area. It is therefore impractical to assign a maximum density to these areas.

The 2030 Land Use Plan is further refined to direct future growth in the Northwest Area, including the LDR designation as follows:

a. Along Little Beaver Creek a buffer of 100 feet on either side of the streambed of plant material specifically designed to remove stormwater pollutants before the surface water flow enters the creek. Along lesser tributaries to Little Beaver Creek and Beaver Creek, a buffer of 50 feet should be provided.

b. RDR in the Northwest area shall have a density of 0.34 du/acre (equivalent to a 3-acre lot).

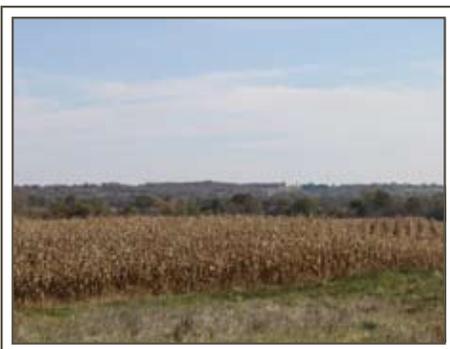
c. HDR shall be limited to a density of 8 du/acre.

d. The LDR designation in the Northwest Area is unique due to the many design influences that exist. The overall average density is envisioned to be approximately 2.0 DU/AC. Exceptions may be made provided that the transitions noted in paragraph e. are met. The exceptions may be made based on exemplary efforts to incorporate the following:

- » *The addition of neighborhood focal point central to the Little Beaver Creek valley, such as a lake or park land provided.*
- » *The preservation of natural features and conservation design techniques, or*
- » *The incorporation of high quality design through amenities provided or alternative lifestyle opportunities.*

e. Transitions shall be provided when development is proposed adjacent to the two LDR areas that were formerly classified as LDR (Figure 5.13 compared to Figure 5.14). The transitions shall be implemented as part of annexation agreements, development agreements, planned unit development ordinances, or any subdivision plat contiguous to an area designated LDR in the 2006 Land Use Plan. The transition would be accomplished either through the use of natural buffers such as changes in topography or natural vegetation or the following performance measures to cause lot sizes to change gradually:

- » *New lots created contiguous to an existing area within a 3-acre lot designation (RDR) shall be no less than 1.5-acres in size. The minimum setback adjacent to an RDR designated area shall be 120 feet.*
- » *New lots created contiguous to an existing 1-acre lot designation (LDR in the 2006 Land Use Plan – Figure 5.13) shall be no less than 20,000 sq. ft. in size.*



» *New lots created opposite a public street from existing 3-acre lots designated RRD shall be no less than 1.5 acres in size and shall provide the same front yard setback as the opposing district requires.*

NWA.2. Future development shall reflect the policies and recommendations found in the Watershed Assessment and Stormwater Management Plan, December 2009.

NWA.3. Consider amending the zoning ordinance to provide a clustering provision in Districts in addition to District RE (3-acre minimum) to allow flexibility in lot design.

NWA.4. Natural resources in the Northwest Area shall be preserved. The wooded areas and steep slopes on the west should be retained. New development shall preserve significant natural resources through the use of cluster and other mechanisms. The city shall obtain conservation easements or accept dedication of environmentally sensitive areas where its disturbance may adversely affect water quality or the scenic quality of the area.

Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Area

The Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Study was completed by RDG Planning and Design in 2007. Text in this section of the comprehensive plan is largely taken directly from the study and is intended to endorse the study's recommendations as part of this comprehensive plan.

The redevelopment study contained an analysis of existing conditions and specifically, existing land uses along Merle Hay Road. Figure 5.16 depicts the current usage in the corridor. Many of the Merle Hay Road frontage parcels north of 62nd Avenue remain in

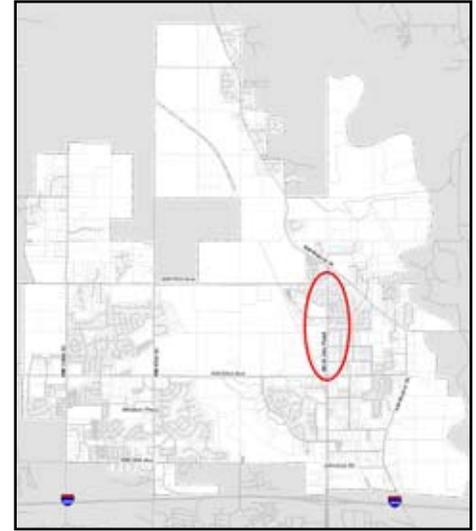


Figure 5.15 Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Area

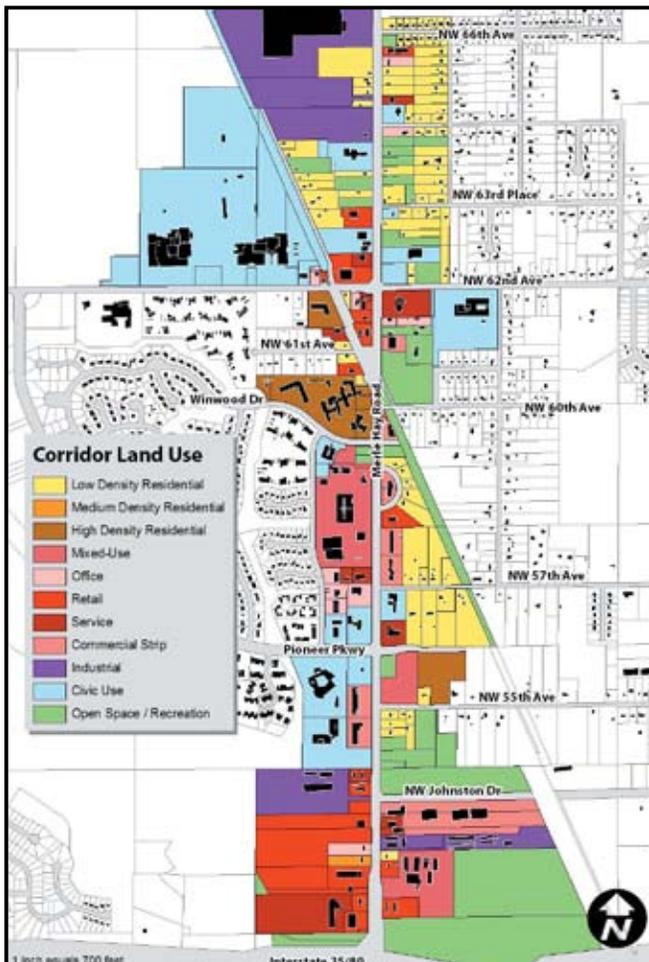


Figure 5.16 Merle Hay Road Existing Land Use 2007

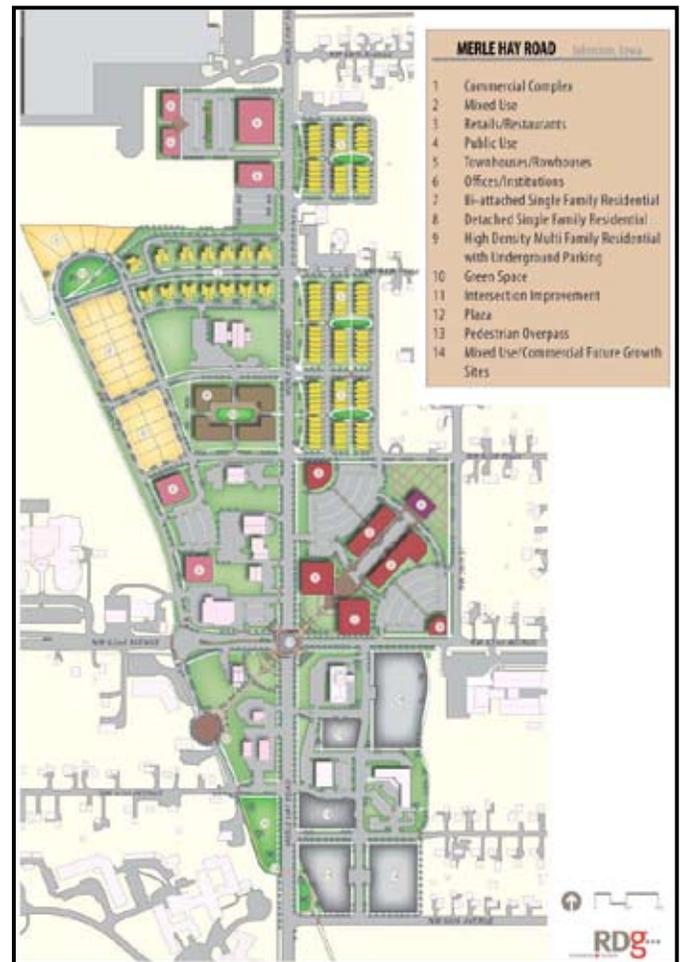


Figure 5.17 - Merle Hay Road Mixed Use Center Plan Components



vacant or single-family use, while south of 62nd Avenue, few such uses remain. Single-family uses typically represent an under-utilization of land along an arterial corridor such as Merle Hay Road and, over time, these uses south of 62nd have converted to a variety of higher intensity uses.

South of 62nd Avenue, this conversion process has resulted in a mixed use land use pattern including commercial, office, and high density residential uses. Typical of most contemporary development, these uses have been predominantly auto-oriented. Maurice's warehouse, at the far northwest corner of the project area, stands out as a seemingly out of place light industrial warehouse use in a predominantly residential area. The area to the north was also zoned industrial, but was rezoned when the Johnston Commons project was approved.

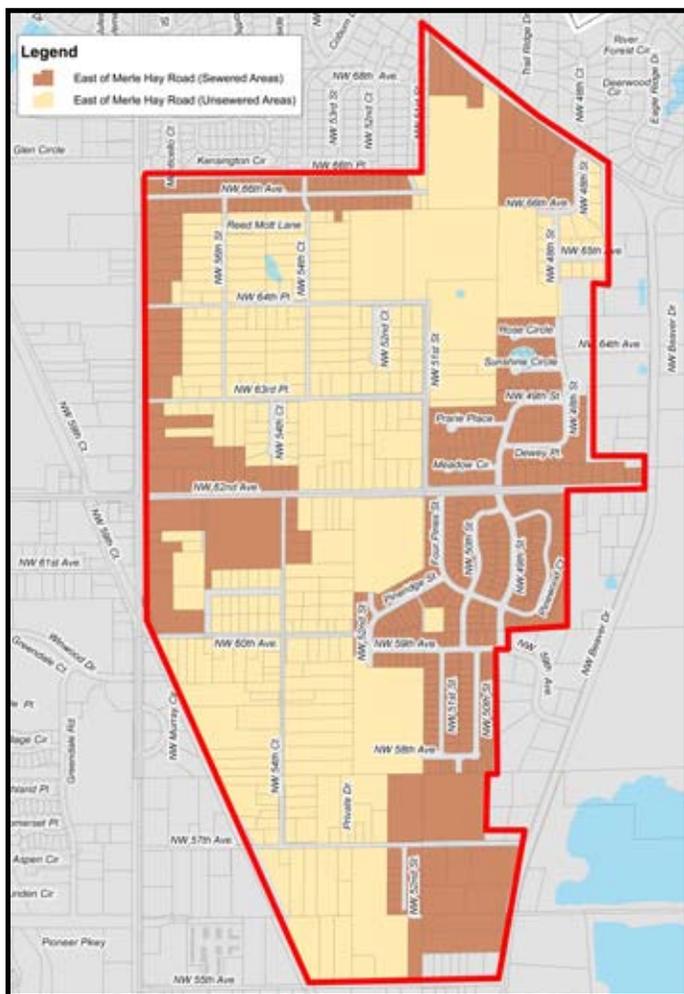


In order to inform the process of preparing a redevelopment plan for the area, existing building conditions, property ownership, and potential redevelopment sites were analyzed. The resulting plan calls for redevelopment of the area into a mixed use center containing a vertical and horizontal mix of various business, civic and residential uses. Components of the redevelopment plan are shown on Figure 5.17.

The Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Study addressed implementation of the plan over time. It addresses:

- » *Property ownership and level of city involvement*
- » *Regulatory revisions*
- » *Development incentives*
- » *Streetscape and trail improvements*
- » *Infrastructure improvements*

Figure 5.18 East of Merle Hay Road Neighborhood Boundary and Unsewered Area



Development of the new mixed use center consistent with the plan will provide Johnston with an exciting new focal point for the community. It is wholly consistent with the Vision and Guiding Principles that serve as a framework for this comprehensive plan and it will further reinforce the uniqueness of the Johnston community.

The 2030 Land Use Plan classifies the Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Study area as Community Mixed Use (CMU).

East of Merle Hay Road

Some of Johnston's early housing was built in the area referred to as East of Merle Hay Road. The area generally stretches from Johnston Drive on the south to approximately NW 66th Avenue on the north with Merle Hay Road forming the western boundary and NW Beaver Drive defining the eastern edge. East of Merle Hay Road is approximately 560 acres in size. The neighborhood boundary is shown on Figure 5.18. Housing in the area has been constructed at various times over the past 100 years (Figure 5.19).

East of Merle Hay is a unique Johnston neighborhood with qualities not found in areas that have been constructed more recently. Housing in the area includes a mix of styles with many of the units being more affordable. Some locations within this neighborhood have an almost pastoral setting due to larger lots and open spaces. The area remains one of the few locations in the City that property owners can still have horses. The Interurban trail provides excellent connectivity for

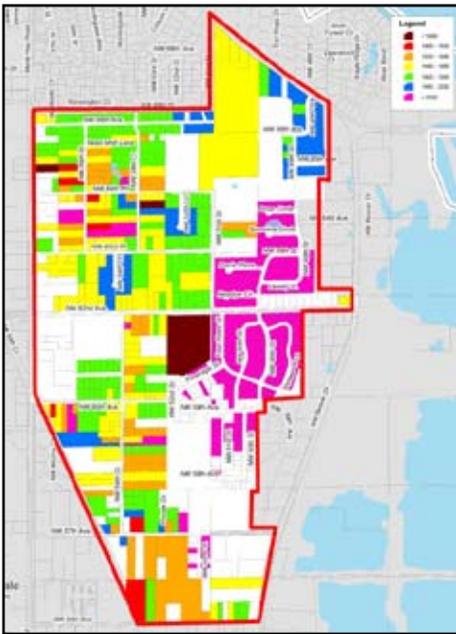


Figure 5.19 Housing Construction Dates

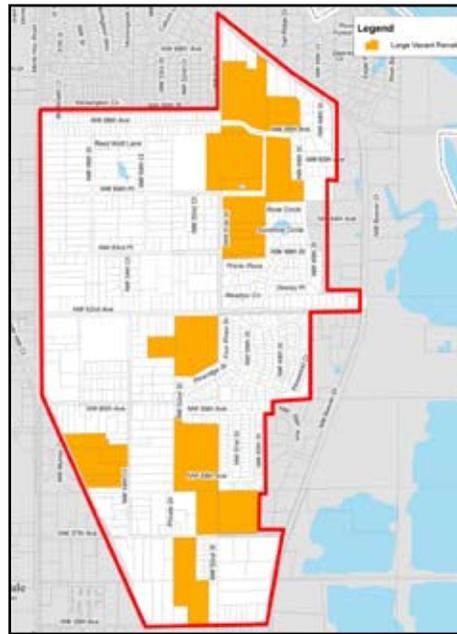


Figure 5.20 Map of Large Vacant Parcels



Figure 5.21 Land Use Plan Map

the southern portion of the neighborhood.

Much of the East of Merle Hay Road area lacks sanitary and storm sewer and some of the local streets are in need of major repair or reconstruction. Given the size of the currently unsewered portion of the neighborhood (Figure 5.18), any future upgrading of the infrastructure is likely to occur over an extended period of time. At the present time, there are no definitive plans to provide infrastructure improvements in the area. Plans for infrastructure improvements will be completed either when the neighborhood desires city services or if on-site systems fail causing environmental and/or health concerns.

Given the wide range of lot sizes and existing lot configurations, future infill development in the area may occur in two ways. First, some of the neighborhood's larger vacant parcels may be developed. These areas which generally are five acres in size or larger lend themselves to logical lot patterns and streets that in many cases; connect to adjacent existing streets.

The second type of development that may be seen in the East of Merle Hay neighborhood involves smaller parcels. Smaller parcels generally five acres in size or less will pose more development challenges. The dimensions of existing lots and the placement of existing homes will require more creativity and flexibility in the subdivision design process. Johnston's current City Code has two important provisions that accommodate this needed flexibility. The Code allows flag lots and through lots in addition to traditional side by side lot configurations. Additionally, the Code allows lots to be served by private easements and private streets rather than a publicly dedicated right-of-way and public streets. While these tools can be used effectively to accommodate local subdivision interests, the issue of private streets can pose problems. In order to ensure the long-term integrity of private streets, they should be constructed to public street standards, at least with regard to base preparations and pavement sections. The width of private streets should correspond to the number of residences served while ensuring proper access for emergency vehicles.

Large vacant parcels within the neighborhood (Figure 5.21) total approximately 118 acres. Based on the Low Density Residential designation in the 2030 Land Use Plan (Figure 5.22), these parcels could account for an additional 236 to 590 units of new housing in the future. Future smaller lot subdivisions are more difficult to estimate due to parcel configurations and the personal choice of property owners. Further subdivision of smaller lots will be at the sole discretion of the property owners. In the long-term, some may elect to subdivide



Horses are allowed in portions of the neighborhood.



Some residential buildings are in disrepair.



Sidewalk connections are incomplete.



Larger vacant parcels will likely see future development.



Streets in the neighborhood are in need of reconstruction.

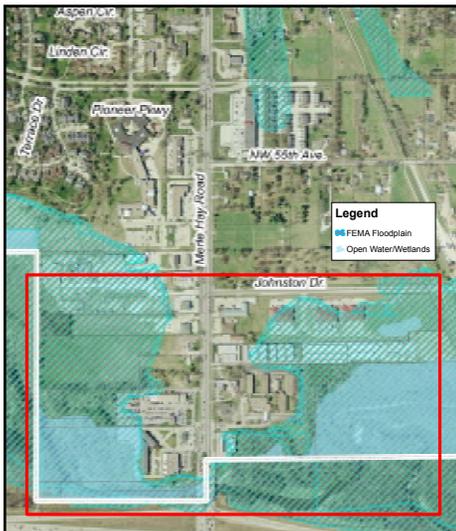


Figure 5.22 Merle Hay Road Gateway Boundary map



Buildings on the west sit below Merle Hay Road.

while others elect to remain on larger lots. Based on an analysis of smaller parcels, future subdivisions could create an additional 220 housing units. Again, the actual number of units is likely to be less due to the interests of the individual property owners.

The East of Merle Hay Road neighborhood had its origins in the platting and creation of the Fruitland Brennan Neighborhood Association in 1915. In the decades ahead, this neighborhood area will continue to evolve and see opportunities for infill housing. The rate of change in the area will be determined by the desires and interests of the current property owners. The actions of those owners may be influenced by the future implementation of the Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Plan.

East of Merle Hay Policies:

EMHP.1. The city will support improving the East of Merle Hay Road neighborhood by providing utility and street improvements throughout the area when desired by neighborhood residents or when prompted by on-site treatment system failures.

EMHP.2. The city recognizes that the East of Merle Hay Road neighborhood has existing conditions and issues that warrant special considerations as property is subdivided in the future.

East of Merle Hay Action Steps:

EMHA.1. Street connections should be made throughout the neighborhood as new streets are designed and constructed in larger vacant parcels.

EMHA.2. The city will use flexible design techniques in the current City Code and consider additional measures as might be necessary in the future to accommodate the subdivision of smaller parcels in a creative manner while retaining the open space character of the area.

EMHA.3. Private streets constructed on private easements should be built to city standards to ensure their long-term integrity.

EMHA.4. Sidewalks should be installed throughout the neighborhood as appropriate to provide connections to Lawson Elementary School, Dewey Park, the Interurban Trail and other area destinations.

EMHA.5. The city will seek out and promote loan and grant programs that help facilitate the improvement and long-term maintenance of the neighborhood's housing stock.

Merle Hay Road Gateway

Merle Hay Road is a significant north/south corridor in the Des Moines Metropolitan Area. It passes through the southern half of Johnston from Interstate 80 to NW Beaver Drive. The central portion of Johnston's frontage along Merle Hay Road is the subject of a redevelopment plan that is summarized in Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Area focus area. The extreme southern end of the corridor lying just north of Interstate 80 is referred to as Johnston's Merle Hay Road gateway. The boundaries of the area are shown on Figure 5.22.

The 1999 Comprehensive Plan addressed the physical appearance of the roadway as it enters Johnston. Roadway, bridge, entry signage and landscaping improvements completed since that time have created an attractive entrance to the community and one which accommodates large volumes of traffic exiting Interstate 80. Beyond the road improvements, however, the presence of the vacant, deteriorating motel/restaurant building and the general scattered nature of businesses in the area creates a less than desirable "front door" entrance into Johnston.

The 2030 Land Use Plan seeks to guide change in the area over the next decade (Figure 5.23). The hotel/restaurant building has outlived its useful life and needs to be demolished.

The complex of metal storage and service/warehouse buildings on the west side of Merle Hay Road, just below the tier of frontage businesses is also not viewed as a long-term land use. The complex of metal, self-storage buildings on the east side of the area is viewed similarly. Small older commercial buildings, some former houses, need to be replaced over time by larger, more permanent commercial uses.

Redevelopment of the Merle Hay Road Gateway area is complicated due to a number of factors including multiple property ownerships, the designated floodplain that largely surrounds the area, periodic flooding, and market conditions. Flood-prone areas greatly impact the land use pattern and the viability of certain parcels to see significant future real estate investments. The city should consider the construction of a loop road off of Merle Hay Road. A similar approach should be investigated for the east side of Merle Hay Road. New loop roads could be constructed at an elevation that would actually establish a levee that creates a hard edge between the developed property and the flood prone areas. A new loop road on the west could actually create lots along Merle Hay Road with more depth thereby supporting larger new commercial uses. The loop road concept is shown on Figure 5.24.

The market for additional commercial businesses in Johnston is not unlimited. In order to meet overall community goals, development in the Merle Hay Road Gateway should not overly compete with redevelopment planned for the area around the intersection of NW 62nd Avenue and Merle Hay Road. The Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Area is more oriented to pedestrian scale development. The Merle Hay Road Gateway will always have more of an auto orientation and may see larger scale users in the future.

Merle Hay Road Gateway Policies:

MHRGP.1. Actively promote and support redevelopment efforts in the Merle Hay Road Gateway that improve the function and appearance of the area consistent with the 2030 Land Use Plan.

Merle Hay Road Action Steps:

MHRGA.1. Support immediate demolition of the vacant hotel/restaurant building and redevelop with office and other high traffic commercial uses.

MHRGA.2. Encourage and support the consolidation of small parcels to create larger scale development opportunities.

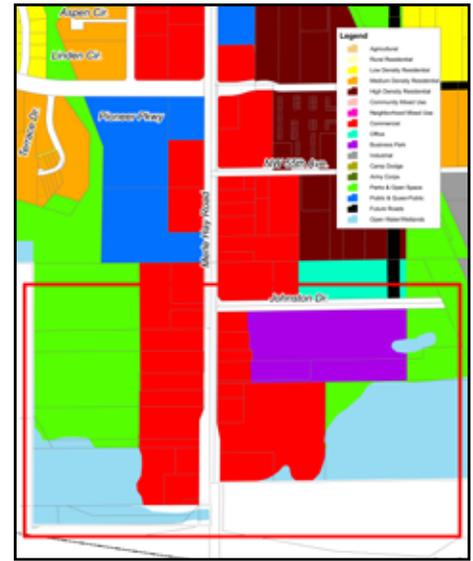


Figure 5.23 2030 Land Use Plan Map



Newer development on east side



Storage facility east of Merle Hay Road.

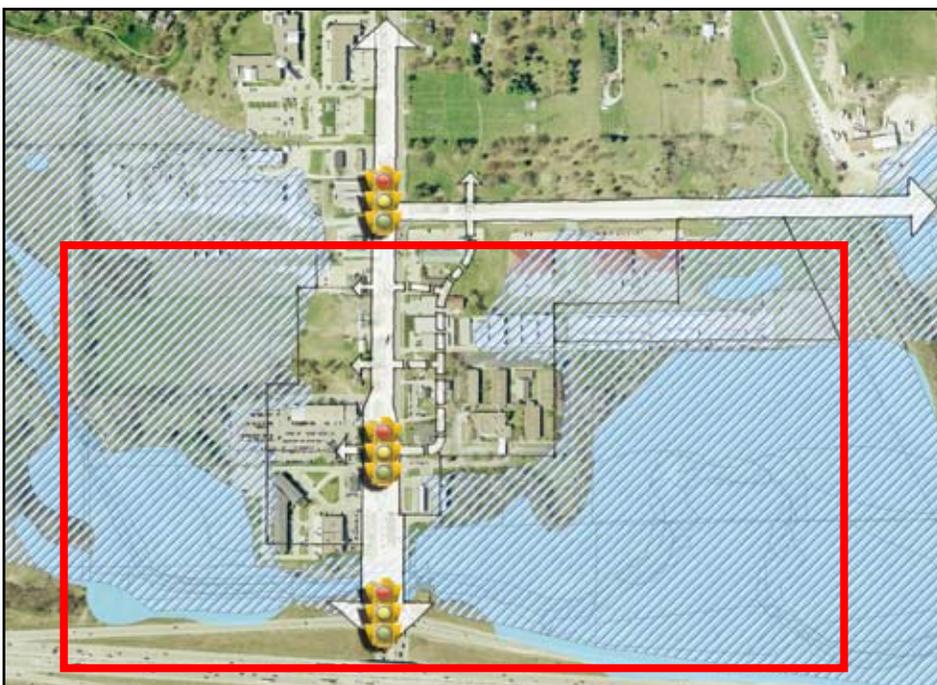


Figure 5.24 Loop Road Concept



Open storage on west side

Figure 5.25 ZoningMap



Zoning (1-02-2009)

- CD: Conservation District
- R-1A: Modified Single Family Residential District
- R-1 (75): Single Family Residential District
- R-2: One and Two Family Residential District
- R-4: High Density Multiple Family Residential District
- C-2: Community Retail Commercial District
- PUD: Planned Unit Development
- M-1: Light Industrial District
- M-2: General Industrial District

MHRGA.3. Investigate the long-term construction of new loop roads on either side of Merle Hay Road to clearly define and separate redevelopment areas from the floodplain area.

MHRGA.4. Examine the potential of creating access to the Beaver Creek Natural Area from the Merle Hay Road Gateway.

NW 55th Avenue

An area along NW 55th Avenue has been designated as a focus area to more closely examine the current and long-term relationships between industrial and residential uses. The area generally is bounded by Johnston Drive on the south, NW Beaver Drive on the east, land lying just north of NW 55th Avenue on the north and the Interurban trail on the west.

Figure 5.25 shows the existing zoning in the area which includes a mix of low density residential (R-1 and R-1A), light industrial (M-1) and general industrial (M-2). Current land uses closely parallel the current zoning designations. Acco Unlimited Corporation is the

most prominent industrial use in the area. The owner of Acco also owns additional property along NW 55th Avenue. Access to the Acco site occurs off of Johnston Drive as well as off of NW 55th Avenue to the north. The Acco access on NW 55th Avenue is the only industrial site in the area that is currently accessed off of the otherwise residential street. Industrial uses on the east side have access exclusively off of NW Beaver Drive.

The Future Land Use map in Johnston's 1999 Comprehensive Plan called for the area to contain a mix of medium density residential and industrial (see Figure 5.26). These designations recognized the area's adjacency to existing industrial property, the fact that parcels south of NW 55th Avenue are large in size and the fact that these same parcels overlook the Acco site as well as industrial sites along NW Beaver Drive, south of Johnston Drive.

As future land use was being considered for this plan update, neighborhood residents supported the continuation of the existing low density, residential housing pattern. After review, the current pattern of low density residential development has been shown on the Future Land Use Plan in the Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan with the exception of the properties on the south side of NW 55th Avenue which are generally under common ownership. This land use pattern recognizes that much of the land is currently used for residential purposes.



Figure 5.26 Planned Land Use Map (1999 Comp Plan)



- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Office
- Business Park
- Industrial
- Parks & Open Space
- Future ROW
- Open Water

Figure 5.27 New Future Land Use Map

NW 55th Avenue Policies:

NW55P.1. The city of Johnston will continue to support the existing low density, single-family residential pattern along NW 55th Avenue.

NW55P.2. Like the remainder of the area East of Merle Hay Road, the city recognizes that the NW 55th Avenue area has existing conditions and issues that may warrant special considerations based on the unique characteristics of the area.

NW 55th Avenue Action Steps:

NW55A.1. No additional access to industrial properties will be allowed along NW 55th Avenue until such time as the Future Land Use Plan and zoning designations are changed and improvements are made to NW 55th Avenue.

NW55A.2. Future land use changes will be considered when proposed by property owners in the area.

NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area

As growth over the next decade begins to absorb Johnston’s current supply of developable land, the community will need to expand its boundaries. The area identified as the next logical step in the growth of Johnston is the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area. Expansion in this direction is consistent with the policies and recommendations that were contained within the 1999 Comprehensive Plan.

As shown on Figure 5.28, the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area encompasses approximately 1,616 acres. Located around the intersection of Iowa 141 and NW Saylorville Drive, it is separated from the remainder of Johnston by Camp Dodge. Future land uses envisioned for the area include a mix of residential densities, limited commercial and/or mixed use at the intersection of NW Beaver Drive and NW Saylorville Drive and a large business park along the east side of the Iowa 141 frontage. Interspersed among this pattern of uses are park and open space areas. A future elementary school is also likely in the area. A tabulation of anticipated acreages of each use is shown on Table 5.3.

One of the most prominent new uses in this area is the planned business park. Given the development pattern within Johnston’s current boundaries, the city has limited opportunities for new business park uses. The NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area business park is envisioned as a location for office, research, warehouse, distribution and light assembly uses within a high amenity, landscaped, park-like environment. It has the potential to be the home of a significant number of future jobs in Johnston. The business park is shown in concept reflecting a number of significant natural drainageways that connect to Beaver Creek. These areas can be functional in the treatment and conveyance of stormwater but can also serve as an amenity for the workforce population as well as habitat for wildlife.

The 2030 Land Use Plan also calls for additional open space abutting Camp Dodge. This location was selected primarily due to topography and due to the presence of natural depressions that retain and treat stormwater. The open space will provide an additional buffer between Camp Dodge and the future uses to the north.

The timing of Johnston’s expansion into the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area will be determined by the pace of development in the existing parts of Johnston. In order not to unduly influence the supply and cost of land in the city, annexation efforts will need to occur prior to the time that Johnston’s current supply of vacant land is fully absorbed. It is generally felt that annexation of all or portions of the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area will begin within the next decade.

NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Policies:

NAP.1. Johnston will expand its city limits into the NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area as growth begins to absorb the current supply of vacant, developable land.

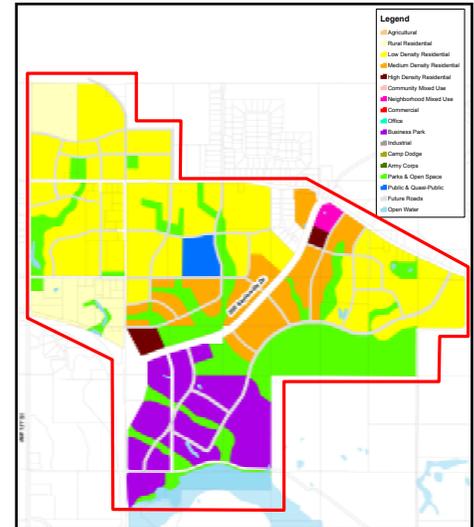


Figure 5.28 2030 Land Use Plan Map

NW Saylorville Dr Area

Land Use Category	Acres
Rural Residential	71
LDR	554
MDR	163
HDR	16
Commercial	0
Neighborhood Mixed Use	9
Office	0
Business Park	191
Industrial	0
Camp Dodge	0
Public	0
Quasi-Public	24
Parks & Open Space	313
Army Corps	0
Open Water	47
Existing ROW & Easements	228
Total:	1,616

Table 5.3 NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Area Land Use Acreages

NAP.2. The city will proactively plan for utilities and improvements needed to support future development in the Northwest Area.

NAP.3. Create a quality living environment that reflects the area's natural resources as well as the character elements that define the existing City of Johnston.

NW Saylorville Drive Expansion Action Steps:

NAA.1. New development should preserve significant natural resources.

NAA.2. Conduct more detailed feasibility studies to examine the routing, cost and financing mechanisms for the extension of utilities to the area and the construction of future roads.

NAA.3. Future annexation areas should have the zoning established consistent with the adopted 2030 Land Use Plan or be designated as Agricultural Reserve (AR) until such time as the property develops.

NAA.4. Johnston should use its extraterritorial review authority to help ensure that new developments conform to the city's long-term vision for the area.



Portions of the area are owned by developers.

River East

When Johnston examined potential future growth areas, the area east of the Des Moines River was considered in addition to the Northwest Area previously discussed. During the planning process, this area was referred to as River East. The area considered as a possible future addition to Johnston is shown on Figure 5.29. Encompassed within this area is a total of over 3,500 acres of land, of which, as little as 280 acres are actually developable. Figure 5.30 identifies the portion of the study area that is encumbered by either flood restrictions or under the ownership of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Because so much of this area is largely undevelopable, River East did not emerge as a high priority for Johnston's future growth.

Despite the fact that only a fraction of the River East area is suitable for future development, the concept plan shown on Figure 5.31 illustrates that the area can contain a mix of low density residential and business park uses as well as park and open space areas. Based on the concept plan, the residential portion of the area could add approximately 280 new homes and a significant amount of new business and industrial uses.

Policies and action steps addressing the River East area are not included in this plan since expansion into the area is addressed only as a future concept. Growth to the east should be addressed in a more definitive manner when Johnston next updates its comprehensive plan.

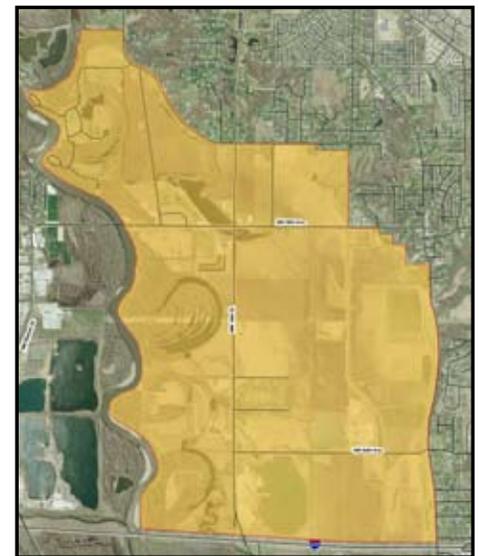


Figure 5.29 River East Boundary Area

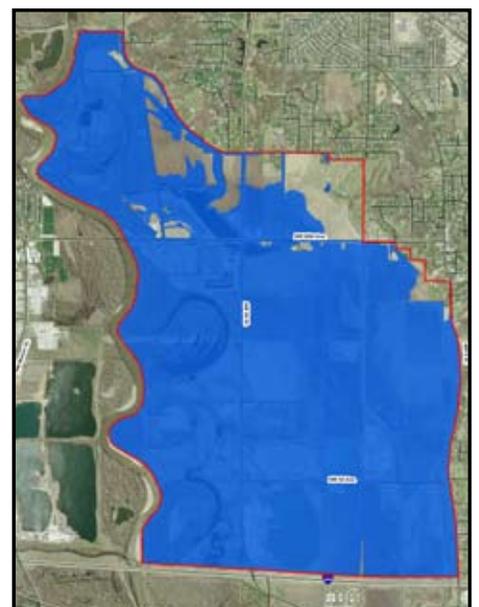


Figure 5.30 Map showing boundaries of flooding and Corps ownership

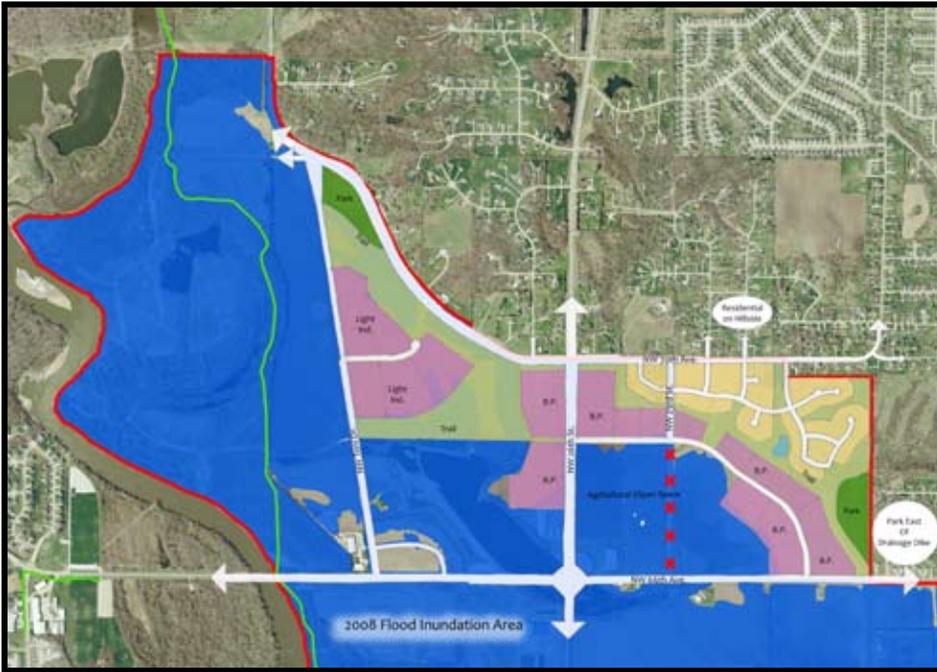


Figure 5.31 Concept development plan



Mining is active in portions of the River East area.

