



Urbandale Comprehensive Plan



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ONE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR URBANDALE

This Comprehensive Policy Plan for Urbandale, Iowa has three general purposes:

- 1) To conserve and improve existing characteristics that make Urbandale a desirable place to live.
- 2) To encourage controlled development that will be an asset to the community.
- 3) To promote private economic development that will strengthen the city's tax base and be a source of community pride.



To be successful, this plan should be used as a guide—a reference check for specific plans and proposals to ensure that they meet the basic objectives and needs of the community. Thus, the plan should be the basis for all public decisions that affect the physical development of the Urbandale Planning Area. That area includes the City's present boundaries and prospective annexation areas in Dallas County, and the "Grimes Severance Area" identified in the Urbandale-Grimes Annexation and Planning (28E) Agreement. Figure 1 illustrates Urbandale's location in the Des Moines metropolitan area.

A comprehensive plan is first and foremost a statement of intent rather than a precise forecast of future development and public investment. Comprehensive plans are meant to set the context for specific, individual decisions that must be made. The Urbandale Comprehensive Policy Plan contains value statements expressed as goals, objectives, policies, and strategies. The plan's value lies in building consensus on major concerns facing Urbandale. It provides a policy framework for case-by-case decisions regarding capital improvements, development proposals, revitalization, and the like.

The Comprehensive Policy Plan includes land use and transportation plans that are graphical illustrations of policy. The Urbandale Future Land Use Policy Map, Figure 4 (insert in back of document), is a key element of the Plan.

It is policy-driven, and portrays one way that the city could realistically develop from a physical standpoint if the policy plan is implemented.

It should not be considered in the same vein as a zoning map, which delineates precise boundaries and promulgates legal rules for uses and densities that define how development must occur. While there is an obvious relationship between the land use plan and a zoning map, the land use plan does not regulate or control the use of property. It is, however, the result of detailed technical investigations and careful thought and evaluation by professional advisors, citizen participation, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Mayor and City Council. In many ways, it is a summary statement of how all these policies will be combined, and how one may take priority over another.

As with so many things, however, there is more than one way of accomplishing a specific purpose. That is especially true in planning, since a plan deals with a future over which no one has absolute control. It is possible to deviate from the land use plan depicted in this document and still successfully implement the City's Comprehensive Policy Plan. However, the land use plan does represent a balance between the various elements of the policy plan. It is a consistent expression of local planning and development policy that can guide the myriad decisions the community must make over a 20-year planning horizon. Therefore, if the land use plan is redrawn care must be taken to ensure the new map maintains a similar balance. The relationship between objectives and policies are not always immediately apparent. A change in one policy or land use designation may affect the ability to accomplish an objective in another section of the plan. The objectives and policies are categorized only as a point of reference and may apply equally to other categories.

POLICY PLANNING DEFINED

Policy-oriented planning first identifies the city's goals. They are expressions of widely shared community values, very general and long-term ideals. Goals are not achieved through a single decision or even a set of decisions, so they must be broken into objectives. Objectives are specific targets or conditions that, if pursued, can be achieved. Objectives are achieved by implementing the more detailed policies and strategies that relate to projects, programming, management, and legislative actions.

Policies and strategies are used to establish and implement regulations and programs, as well as coordinate the countless public and private decisions made daily. These daily decisions are immediate responses to diverse needs and desires, but the combined results affect the City's future. By guiding the

daily decisions, the policies and strategies ensure that their results are steps towards achieving the City's long-range objectives.

Urbandale's Comprehensive Policy Plan was developed through a thorough and open process. It included discussions of key issues at focus group sessions involving community participants, and public hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Two EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

A plan is a design for future action. However, a plan must reflect what currently exists to be effective. Urbandale's present conditions are the basis for this Comprehensive Policy Plan. This chapter summarizes present conditions and issues that should be addressed.



LAND USE

Urbandale exhibits the classic characteristics of an American suburb. The city has grown from east to west, initially as a residential enclave in the countryside at the end of a streetcar line, then as an auto-dominated suburb of single-family housing. The City has had strong residential growth since the 1950's. The housing stock has been more diversified since the mid-1970's, accommodating a greater range of households, but remains an upper middle income, primarily single-family suburb.

More recently, Urbandale has experienced a significant amount of commercial and light industrial growth. Urbandale's employment base could roughly equate to its labor force by the year 2020, meaning that the number of people commuting to jobs in Urbandale will match the number of Urbandale residents that work elsewhere in the metropolitan area. This will complete Urbandale's transition from a "bedroom community". Figure 2 depicts Urbandale's current developed area.

The Interstate and major street corridors are Urbandale's most prominent manmade features. North Walnut Creek and Walnut Creek provide similar natural armatures east and west of the Interstate. Urbandale's residential areas have a strong neighborhood structure. Urbandale's newer economic development areas are characterized by business parks and large warehouse-distribution facilities of institutional investment quality. There is also an area of somewhat older and much smaller industrial units along the south side of Douglas Avenue between 100th and 104th Street, and another generation north of Douglas in the same general area.

Merle Hay Mall, one of the first and the largest enclosed mall in Iowa, is prominent on Urbandale's east boundary. Most of it is in Des Moines, but the newer, western portion extends into Urbandale.

Commercial Corridors

Urbandale's community retail areas are located on Douglas Avenue, 86th Street, and 100th Street. Most highway-oriented retail is located on Hickman Road and Merle Hay Road. Most of the commercial development is relatively new, less than 15 years old.

Urbandale's oldest retail area is centered around 70th Street and Douglas Avenue, referred to as the "Downtown Urbandale Neighborhood Area" (DUNA) because it was Urbandale's original "downtown". Recent streetscape improvements and other revitalization efforts have resulted in significant redevelopment. It is very important to the surrounding neighborhood.

Newer retail centers are conveniently situated and offer a variety of retail goods and services. However, they receive stiff competition from Valley West Mall and other retail development in the University Avenue corridor in West Des Moines to the south, and Merle Hay Mall to the east. These regional shopping centers can be accessed very easily from anywhere in Urbandale. Its residents can "comparison shop" in more retail outlets than any others in the metropolitan area, contributing to quality of life in that respect. However, the position between two major regional retail centers also has a detrimental affect on local retailing, taking consumer power outside of Urbandale's borders. They reduce the amount of retail development that would otherwise be expected to locate in Urbandale.

Residential Characteristics

Urbandale has two distinct neighborhood styles. The neighborhoods east of 78th Street and south of Meredith Drive exhibit the characteristics of an older, mature suburb. Much of the area has a traditional grid street pattern. This configuration maximizes access, but some streets will carry more traffic than intended because it is easy to short cut. This can be detrimental to the neighborhood, though none of the streets presently carries excessively high traffic volumes. Property maintenance enforcement is important to keep deferred maintenance and wear from becoming major problems. These neighborhoods have limited park and open space areas. There is little vacant land available for development. There is some potential for redevelopment.

Table 2-1: Residential Construction

Year	Single Family Detached		Townhomes	Multiple Family	Total Dwellings	10-Year Average	
	Lot 70+ ft	Lot <70 ft					
2002	263	112	73	26	474	260	1991-2000
2001	177	57	65	294	593		
96-00 Ave	114	48	77	41	280		
2000	154	50	106	24	334		
1999	151	45	45	24	265		
1998	146	56	29	0	231		
1997	47	55	66	0	168		
1996	72	35	139	156	402		
91-95 Ave	162	27	24	26	240		
1995	65	24	35	24	148		
1994	62	55	8	107	232	261	1981-1990
1993	110	10	46	0	166		
1992	263	31	20	0	314		
1991	310	17	13	0	340		
86-90 Ave	178	70	27	16	291		
1990	249	41	14	0	304		
1989	158	63	10	29	260		
1988	155	92	32	53	332		
1987	181	108	22	0	311		
1986	147	45	57	0	249		
81-85 Ave	83	30	42	76	231	258	1971-1980
1985	102	59	62	104	327		
1984	145	50	127	218	540		
1983	99	27	19	0	145		
1982	47	4	0	36	87		
1981	23	10	0	22	55		
76-80 Ave	125	53	28	88	284		
1980	85	24	16	78	203		
1979	115	95	10	138	358		
1978	167	70	94	132	463		
1977	159	24	6	0	189		
1976	100	NA	16	90	206		
71-75 Ave	92	NA	34	106	232	245	1961-1970
1975	82	NA	6	0	88		
1974	63	NA	10	132	205		
1973	61	NA	24	0	85		
1972	97	NA	104	368	569		
1971	157	NA	24	30	211		
66-70 Ave	171	NA	20	103	294		
1970	137	NA	16	36	189		
1969	95	NA	20	264	379		
1968	208	NA	12	5	225		
1967	219	NA	40	152	411		
1966	197	NA	10	59	266		
61-65 Ave	148	NA	5	43	196	200	
1965	184	NA	8	160	352		
1964	107	NA	18	0	125		
1963	153	NA	0	0	153		
1962	127	NA	0	24	151		
1961	168	NA	0	32	200		
Prior to '61	1808	NA	170	18	1996		
TOTALS	7,616	1,270	1,592	2,835	13,313		

Source: City of Urbandale

The western and northern parts of the city reflect characteristics of a newer, rapidly growing suburb. Neighborhood streets show attention was given to internal continuity between housing, parks, commercial services, and community facilities. The newer residential neighborhoods are centered around community school sites or parks, and open space systems have been preserved. Rapid growth is evidenced by the amount and type of housing constructed in growth cycles.

Table 2-1 shows residential growth over the past four decades, reflecting its suburban growth period.

Office Uses

Nearly all of the office space in Urbandale has been built in the last 15 years, mostly in the form of single-story business park/research flex space in the Interstate corridor. In the last few years, office uses have also moved into a significant amount of space that was built as "high cube" office warehousing. The space is still classified as industrial since it could be converted at some point, so the actual amount of office space in Urbandale is somewhat understated. There are also small office complexes scattered through Urbandale, and two large multi-story office structures. There is one multiple-tenant building near Merle Hay Mall, and a large corporate office near the Interstate at Douglas Avenue. Table 4-1 (in Chapter 4) shows the historic growth in office development.

Industrial Uses

There is a substantial amount of new warehousing/distribution, and some light industry, in the Interstate corridor. As with office development, most has been constructed in the last 15 years. Most of it is "investment grade" quality, having been constructed with architectural controls and park landscaping.

Vacant Land

There is a substantial amount of vacant land for residential use, mostly west of the Interstate, because of annexations in the 1990's. Other annexations are anticipated as extensions of current service areas to add to the supply of residential land. The amount of land available will allow Urbandale's population to more than double, so it is very unlikely to be consumed within the time frame of this Comprehensive Plan given current policies and historic development trends. Table 3-8 (Chapter 3) contains projections for housing development. Residential growth is expected to reach 170th Street and extend north of Waterford Road over the next twenty-five years.

The amount of land available for economic development is much more limited, and cannot be increased by annexation since most potential annexations do not have the transportation armature necessary for economic development. The land that has been reserved for economic development could be substantially "built out" within the next 25 to 40 years, or less for industrial, at the current rate of construction. Table 4-1 (Chapter 4) shows historic economic development, and Table 4-2 quantifies the amount of vacant land for economic development under current planning designations.

Street System

Urbandale is served by Interstates 35/80 as well as State Highway 6 and municipal arterial streets. The north-south leg of Interstates 35/80 divides Urbandale in half. The east-west leg runs through the northern portion of Urbandale's east half. Highway 6 (Hickman Road) runs along Urbandale's south boundary. Historically, north-south access was marginal, but it has been substantially improved over the years with the construction of 100th Street/NW Urbandale Drive, 128th Street, and the 86th Street and NW Urbandale Drive/Highway 141 interchanges. East-west access has also been improved by recent road construction, including the reconstruction of Hickman Road, Merle Hay Road interchange, Interstates 35-80, and Douglas Avenue/Parkway interchange.

The planned widening/replacement of the Meredith Drive bridge; westerly extensions of Douglas Parkway and Meredith Drive; and continued development of the north-south arterial system by improving 142nd and 156th Streets are some of the important future street projects. Many arterial streets will need to be widened as growth continues, to handle increased traffic volumes.

**Three
PEOPLE and
HOUSEHOLDS**

Urbandale's population will continue to grow, to more than double its current population. Present and future population characteristics must be understood to plan for future service needs.



GROWTH HISTORY

Table 3-1 shows Urbandale's population and household growth from 1920 through 2000. The City grew at a steady rate from 1920, the first Census after its incorporation in 1917, until 1950. During the 1950's, growth began to surge in Urbandale and other suburbs throughout the nation. From 1960 to 1970, the average population gain was 861 persons annually, the highest rate over any ten-year period in the City's history.

TABLE 3-1: Population and Household Growth Rates

Year	Population	Average Annual Population Gain	Average Annual Population Growth Rate (AAGR)	Households	Average Annual Household Gain	Ave. Annual Population Gain/ Household
1920	298					
1930	596	29.8	7.2%	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
1940	1,038	44.2	5.7%	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
1950	1,777	78.9	5.5%	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
1960	5,821	404.4	12.6%	1,495	Not Available	Not Available
1970	14,434	861.3	9.5%	4,045	255.0	3.38
1975	16,410	395.2	2.6%	5,395	270.0	1.46
1980	17,869	291.8	1.7%	6,412	203.4	1.43
1985	19,443	314.8	1.7%	7,208	159.2	1.98
1990	23,500	811.4	3.8%	9,013	361.0	2.25
1996	27,565	677.5	2.7%	10,465	242.0	2.80
2000	29,072	376.8	1.4%	11,484	254.8	1.48

Sources: U.S. Census, Camiros, Ltd., City of Urbandale

The City's population growth moderated between 1970 and 1985 before surging again in the late 1980's. The population gain slowed in the 1970's because of declining household size rather than a dramatic reduction in residential construction. In the 1980's and early 1990's, declining household size was less of a factor but still had some effect, as in most maturing cities. Table 3-1 shows that housing construction has remained high (approximately 250 households per year) while the average annual population growth rate again slowed considerably during the late 1990's. Table 3-1 also illustrates that the population did not keep pace with construction during the '70's, 80's, and late '90's. New families moved into Urbandale, but that gain was offset by declines in the size of existing households as children grew up and left home.

Household growth slowed in the early 1990's because not many residential lots were available. Urbandale currently has ample land for residential development, and has experienced increased platting and construction activity in recent years. A substantial area is served by infrastructure, and will accommodate decades of significant residential growth.

Population Characteristics

Changes in Urbandale's household and family characteristics largely reflect America's changing household patterns. Table 3-2 shows that the average household size in Urbandale declined from 3.90 persons in 1960 to 2.51 persons in 2000. The percentage of single person households increased over the same period. In 1960, 2.8 percent of Urbandale households consisted of one person living alone, and by 2000, 24.2 percent did.

In 1990, one and two-member households made up 56.4 percent of all households and 62.2% of the households did not contain an individual under the age of 18 years. In 2000, 63.7% of the households did not contain an individual under the age of 18 years. Coupled with the increased median age, this data implies that a significant percentage of these households are "empty nesters". The average household size declined significantly in the '70's and '80's before somewhat stabilizing in the 1990's, although continuing to drop.

Table 3-2 shows not only a large increase in small households, but also an equally dramatic decrease in large households. Households with three or four persons declined from 46.4 percent of total households in 1960 to 35.6 percent in 1990, and 33 percent in 1996. An even more radical decrease was experienced within the category of households of five or more persons. Households with five or more persons declined from 32.7 percent in 1960 to 8.0 percent of the total in 1990, and after rising slightly to 8.4 % in 1996 showed a continuing decline to 7.7% in the 2000 Census.

TABLE 3-2: Urbandale Household Trends

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
HOUSEHOLDS	1,495	4,045	6,412	9,013	11,484
1 person	2.8%	7.7%	18.6%	20.6%	24.2%
2 person	18.1%	24.7%	32.6%	35.8%	35.9%
3-4 person	46.4%	40.7%	37.1%	35.6%	32.2%
5+ person	32.7%	26.9%	11.7%	8.0%	7.7%
Average HH Size	3.90	3.57	2.78	2.59	2.51

Source: U. S. Census

Smaller family sizes contributed to the decline in average household size, but most of the decline results from the increased number of empty nesters. This cycle repeated somewhat with maturation of families who moved into Urbandale in the 1980's and early '90's, but was not as pronounced since the age spectrum was broader.

Table 3-3: Age Composition

	2000	1996*	1990	1985*	1980	1975*	1970
Total	29,072	27,565	23,500	19,443	17,869	16,410	14,434
< 5	1,943	1,907	1,743	1,402	1,181	1,169	1,523
5- 9	2,144	2,038	1,911	1,256	1,408	1,652	1,852
10-14	2,207	2,192	1,623	1,411	1,694	1,877	1,796
15-19	1,996	1,859	1,422	1,661	1,758	1,553	1,209
20-24	1,393	1,554	1,487	1,675	1,534	1,388	815
25-29	1,864	1,816	1,901	1,794	1,593	1,466	1,211
30-34	2,040	2,315	2,583	1,802	1,614	1,431	1,166
35-39	2,507	2,611	2,279	1,725	1,442	1,212	1,087
40-44	2,698	2,531	1,871	1,447	1,196	1,106	1,030
45-49	2,455	2,161	1,600	1,125	1,084	1,032	851
50-54	2,090	1,651	1,246	1,104	1,060	824	640
55-59	1,500	1,243	1,129	1,007	832	595	473
60-64	1,109	1,060	932	750	555	450	291
65-69	982	922	680	489	378	274	182
70-74	798	672	472	308	235	168	133
75-79	593	472	282	210	137	100	90
80-84	408	297	194	277	95	75	48
85 +	345	264	145		73	38	37
Median Age	37.0	35.2	33.0	31.4	29.3	26.9	25.1

* Special Censuses October 7, 1975, June 10, 1985, and June 12, 1996

Age breakdowns from 1970 to 2000 are listed in Table 3-3. Urbandale's age profile is fairly consistent with the State of Iowa. It is growing steadily older, with an increase in the median age from 25.1 years in 1970 to 37.0 years in 2000. Some of the increase in median age may result from construction of nursing home and senior housing projects, and a policy limiting the total amount of multi-family housing in Urbandale may also be a factor. However, the entire population is growing older. The percentage of residents under the age of 20 has declined from 44.2 percent in 1970 to 28.5 percent in 2000. At the same time, the percent of the population between the age of 45 and 64 increased from 15.6 percent in 1970 to 24.6 percent in 2000, and the percent over 65 increased from 3.4 % to 10.75%.

Table 3-4: Urbandale Seniors (Number of Persons)

	Census Data			
Age	2000	1996	1990	1985
55+	5,735	4,930	3,834	3,041
60+	4,235	3,687	2,705	2,034
65+	3,126	2,627	1,773	1,284

Source: U.S. Census

Table 3-4 illustrates the growth in the number of seniors. The trend has several major policy implications. Among the most obvious are increased needs for adult services, and perhaps diminishing support for school facilities. The age shift may also have other affects. With more households living on fixed incomes, there may be less support for some types of capital improvements. Older households may look for more leisure services, housing that is suited to their needs, and a shorter planning horizon.

Income

Urbandale's median household income is higher than the metropolitan area median, and substantially higher than the state as a whole. It appears that the 1980 incomes of Urbandale residents, while increasing due to inflation, represent similar buying power as that experienced in 1970.

Table 3-5 shows the impact of applying the consumer price index to 1970 incomes. As indicated in this analysis, the spending power of Urbandale residents has actually decreased slightly since 1970. Only median family income increased, by \$3,873, from 1970 to 1980. The high number of two worker families can explain this increase. In 1980, 72.0 percent of Urbandale families had two or more wage or salary earners.

TABLE 3-5: Urbandale Household Income

	Income			1970 as 1985 \$'s
	1970	1980	1985	
Median Household Income	\$12,643	\$24,725	\$34,403	\$35,026
Average Household Income	\$13,543	\$27,317	\$35,141	\$37,519
Median Family Income	\$13,142	\$28,066	\$40,281	\$36,408
Average Family Income	\$14,324	\$30,815	\$40,237	\$39,683
Consumer Price Index (1967=100%)	116.3%	248.8%	322.3%	

Source: Camiros, Ltd.

Urbandale residents, on the whole, have more years of education and a higher percentage of "white collar" jobs than the remainder of the Des Moines metropolitan area (see Tables 3-6 and 3-7). Over 53 percent of Urbandale residents have college experience. Seventy-five percent of residents in the labor force hold white-collar jobs, 37 percent of which are managers, professionals, technical, or business owners.

TABLE 3-6: Education

	High School only	1-3 years college	4+ years college	Median Years
Urbandale	37.7%	25.5%	28.2%	13.4
Des Moines MSA	43.2%	17.1%	18.2%	12.7

Source: Camiros, Ltd.

TABLE 3-7: Occupation of Urbandale and Des Moines MSA Residents

Occupation	Urbandale	Des Moines MSA
TOTAL	10,250	181,810
% of White Collar	74.9	60.6
% of Blue Collar	25.1	39.4

Source: Camiros, Ltd.

Population Projections

Table 3-8 shows projected growth to the year 2025 under a growth scenario adopted by the Des Moines Metropolitan Planning Association for transportation planning. Residential growth after 2005 will almost entirely be located west of the Interstate.

When it was originally prepared the 2005 population projection appeared to be high, considering the City's historic growth rate. However, the growth rate since the 2000 Census has exceeded historic growth rates, and by the end of

2002 it appeared that the 2005 projection could be low. Likewise, the 2025 projection originally appeared to possibly be high, but the amount of construction and development activity now suggests that the 2025 projection is achievable and perhaps may be exceeded. At the end of 2002 Urbandale had land platted and zoned equivalent to a 10-year supply at the rate of growth necessary to achieve the 2025 projection, and the ability to provide sufficient infrastructure to support the necessary growth rate through the 2025 horizon, and an even faster rate of growth. Even if the projections are high, they demonstrate the magnitude of growth expected west of the Interstate. By 2025, nearly half of Urbandale's total population will live west of the Interstate, and ultimately much more than half will. Urbandale's "ultimate" population will be 72,000 to 74,000 without significant annexation to the west/northwest, with at least 42,000 living west of the Interstate.

Table 3-8: 2000-2025 Growth Distribution

YEAR		Dwelling Units			Population		
		East of I-St	West of I-St	City Total	East of I-St	West of I-St	City Total
2000	SF	8,797	557		23,875	1,130	
	MF	2,515	-		4,996	-	
	Total	11,312	557		28,871	1,130	
				11,869			29,072
2005	SF	9,524	1,902		24,020	4,797	
	MF	2,575	-		5,303	-	
	Total	12,099	1,902		29,323	4,797	
				14,001			34,120
2025	SF	9,900	8,335		24,968	21,021	
	MF	3,121	1,350		6,429	2,565	
	Total	13,021	9,685		31,397	23,586	
				22,706			54,983

Source: City of Urbandale

Four MARKETS FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Retail Market

Urbandale is bracketed by intensely developed regional shopping districts on University Avenue in West Des Moines and Clive, and Merle Hay Road in Des Moines. These areas compete strongly with Urbandale retailers due to their close proximity and easy access, and capture a large share of Urbandale residents' significant consumer expenditures. The regional shopping areas also draw consumers living outside of Urbandale who otherwise might support Urbandale retail. Urbandale's challenge is to capture more of the available sales volume.



Urbandale is bracketed by intensely developed regional shopping districts on University Avenue in West Des Moines and Clive, and Merle Hay Road in Des Moines. These areas compete strongly with Urbandale retailers due to their close proximity and easy access, and capture a large share of Urbandale residents' significant consumer expenditures. The regional shopping areas also draw consumers living outside of Urbandale who otherwise might support Urbandale retail. Urbandale's challenge is to capture more of the available sales volume.

Total consumer expenditures are increasing as Urbandale and the adjacent suburbs continue to add households and population. That growth appears to be providing new opportunities for retail development in Urbandale. New facilities must be responsive to the market, but development that provides an attractive and different kind of shopping experience will have the best chance of capturing a reasonable share of the dollars being spent. Done successfully, they could allow Urbandale to capture a higher percentage of consumer expenditures.

Office Market

The Urbandale office market area generally includes Urbandale, Johnston, portions of northwest Des Moines, and portions of northern Clive. In a 1985 study, a consultant indicated that occupied office in the Urbandale market area approximated six percent of the occupied space in the region. The consultant expected a modest but increasing portion of the suburban Des Moines office demand to be absorbed by the Urbandale market, forecasting that 500,000-600,000 square feet of office could be added by the year 2000. Actual construction in Urbandale exceeded 1.6 million square feet. Much of this space is "business park" or "flex space", which is predominately office in character. There had only been limited business park development in the Metro Area at the time of the 1985 study. The business park development that

was initiated in Urbandale in 1985 has substantially altered the metropolitan office market.

There have also been some “Class A” office developments in the market area in recent years that suggest the Urbandale market area will be able to secure an increasing portion of the total suburban office demand in future years. Urbandale has reserved most of the area along the Interstate between the 86th Street and NW Urbandale Drive interchanges for “traditional” office park development, along with other scattered sites, and also has areas set aside for business park development.

In 2000, Urbandale adopted a new tax rebate incentive program to promote office and business park development, complementing a tax abatement program for industrial development that had already been in place.

Industrial Market

The Des Moines Metropolitan Area is a strategically located regional and national distribution center. The City of Urbandale has been one of the primary forces in the Des Moines market for high-quality distribution facilities since 1980. A 1985 market forecast projected that the region would absorb approximately 4.5 million square feet of industrial space between 1987 and the year 2000. Urbandale was expected to continue as a prime market for “upper-end” development, but to experience more competition from West Des Moines, Ankeny, Des Moines, and the area northeast of Des Moines while capturing 35 to 40 percent of the regional industrial demand, or between 115,000 and 130,000 square feet annually. The following table indicates that Urbandale experienced that annual growth rate between 1985 and 1994, but substantially exceeded it from 1995-2000. A new study has not been done to determine whether this was due to increase regional growth, or increased capture by Urbandale.

Urbandale has focused on higher quality industrial park development, with architectural controls and landscaping requirements. In recent years, a significant amount of building area that was constructed as “high cube” warehouse/distribution space has been occupied by office uses.

Table 4-1: Annual Commercial/Industrial Construction

Year	Retail	Office	Industrial	Total
2002	39,227	21,898	87,700	148,825
2001	87,719	40,728	218,550	346,997
2000	261,582	581,433	249,119	1,029,134
1999	181,629	92,179	278,641	552,449
1998	270,973	95,424	646,456	1,012,853
1997	147,760	126,367	537,548	811,675
1996	52,061	140,675	125,922	318,658
1995	121,376	167,458	826,136	1,114,970
1994	64,831	64,304	199,876	329,011
1993	58,736	164,336	62,726	285,798
1992	103,049	97,112	196,384	396,545
1991	5,406	63,804	152,070	221,280
1990	57,250	87,701	0	144,951
1989	235,374	231,536	132,176	599,086
1988	260,789	17,186	92,764	370,739
1987	7,662	140,098	115,778	263,538
1986	34,278	54,008	0	88,286
1985	113,222	95,872	335,195	544,289
1984	0	31,060	36,150	67,210
1983	26,100	1,560	15,620	43,280
1982	46,667	28,210	16,000	90,877
1981	2,550	44,060	170,780	217,390
1980	18,814	4,400	100,000	123,214
1979	6,900	127,880	48,200	182,980
1978	45,000	10,250	21,800	77,050
1977	24,300	69,400	39,450	133,150
1976	344,506	9,162	19,900	373,568
1975	0	19,840	23,500	43,340
Prior to 1975	809,984	290,048	1,566,380	2,666,412
TOTAL CITY:	3,427,745	2,893,394	6,314,821	12,635,960
1995-2000 average	172,799	196,490	443,970	813,024
1985-1994 average	94,060	101,596	128,697	324,352
1975-1984 average	51,484	34,582	49,140	135,206
Maximum/year	270,973 (1998)	581,433 (2000)	826,136 (1995)	1,114,610 (1995)

Source: City of Urbandale

As a result of economic development, by 2020 the number of jobs located in Urbandale is forecast to approximately equal Urbandale's labor force. In other words, there will be as many people commuting to jobs in Urbandale as there are Urbandale residents commuting to work in other parts of the metropolitan area. Urbandale is no longer a "bedroom" community.

To maximize growth, several times the amount of land required for development should be maintained to provide a broad choice of sites. Urbandale has a finite supply of land that will be attractive for commercial and economic development, and will not be able to maintain a varied supply indefinitely. This is particularly the case for industrial development, although that is not necessarily a negative situation. In recent years some industrial property has been developed for business park uses, and as indicated above some "high cube" distribution buildings have been occupied by office or business park uses. This usually provides higher valuations and increased numbers of jobs.

Urbandale's land supply will support continued commercial and industrial growth for some time. Exactly how long will depend on the future rate of growth. Table 4-2 shows the land supply (net acres, excluding existing and future streets) for each type of development, and the annual growth rate for previous ten and twenty-year periods (trend line). If the land supply is developed with typical Floor Area Ratios (F.A.R., the ratio of building area to site area), the "full development" column shows how many years the land supply would sustain development at the various historic growth rates.

Urbandale's future growth rate may be higher than past growth rates due to a higher capture rate of Metro Area growth, IF the Metro Area grows as fast or faster than it has over the historic periods included in the table, until the land supply becomes more limited. Additional study would be necessary to determine a reasonable rate of future Metro Area growth and to evaluate the impact of existing and potential competitive locations.

As the available land supply diminishes, a city's growth rate generally declines due to unavailability of appropriate sites or because available sites are less attractive. Therefore, vacant sites may remain beyond the time frames shown in Table 4-2. The land supply also may be absorbed more rapidly if the land is developed at lower Floor Area Ratios (F.A.R.) than were used in the table. Owner-occupied development often has a lower initial F.A.R. since the companies usually plan for some growth and accordingly acquire additional site area for their initial construction. Competitive space is likely to be at or near typical Floor Area Ratios, due to a desire to maximize investment return. During the time frames used in Table 4-2, the majority of the development in Urbandale has been competitive space.

Table 4-2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

December 31, 2002

Development Type & Trend Line		Land Supply (Net Acres)	Annual Growth Rate (Building Area per Year, in Square Feet)	Full Development (years)
Retail		434.52		
	1991-2000		126,740	37
	1981-1990		78,389	60
	1981-2000 (20 yr)		98,577	48
Office-Business Park		539.81		
	1991-2000		156,850	37
	1981-1990		73,129	80
	1981-2000 (20 yr)		109,723	54
Industrial		289.79		
	1991-2000		327,488	12
	1981-1990		91,446	44
	1981-2000 (20 yr)		204,254	20

Source: City of Urbandale

Five GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Urbandale's primary goals are to provide a high-quality, family-oriented residential environment, and a stable and profitable business environment.

Many cities have similar goals, but each city becomes unique by adopting different policies and strategies. The policies and strategies are the basis for daily decisions and take each city down a different path. Each city also has unique characteristics and opportunities that affect its development.



In some cities, commercial or industrial development may be excluded or strictly controlled because they create traffic or other activity. Those characteristics may be viewed as harmful to the quality of life of its residents. Some communities want the highest possible level of services, with little consideration for cost. Some emphasize fiscal conservancy for the short term, and do not consider life cycle costing, maintenance needs, or infrastructure planning that can produce substantial savings in the long term. Still others promote growth with little regard for associated costs. For others, the costs of growth have created a desire or need for strong growth management.

Urbandale advocates a balanced approach, and feels that its business and residential communities are equally important to its future health and vitality. Its residents want to maintain the City's traditionally high quality of life. At the same time, economic development is necessary to expand the tax base to support the high level of city services at an affordable cost. It will also expand employment opportunities in the City and improve community stability.

The residential and business communities have many common needs and desires. Both want fiscal stability and efficient service delivery. Other interests may diverge. Residential neighborhoods prefer quiet, while most businesses need lots of activity to bring customers to their doors. Where interests diverge, the City will promote compromise. It will accommodate attractive, high-quality economic development that enhances the City as a whole, while mitigating impacts that could have an adverse affect on residents' quality of life.

The City has adopted the following goals to provide overall direction.

GOALS

Residential Character: Maintain a single-family residential character while encouraging a heterogeneous population and housing stock.

Economic Development: Expand the City's role in the Des Moines metropolitan area as a center for economic development to increase the City's tax base and provide additional employment opportunities for area residents.

Stability: Promote fiscal stability by diversifying the City's tax base; control City expenditures by optimizing physical, economic, and social assets; and moderate the potentially adverse affects of change to the extent possible.

Adaptability: Be responsive to proven innovations and constructive changes that deliver public services more efficiently, reduce City expenditures, or provide new opportunities.

Community Character: Provide high-quality residential, business, and industrial environments with suburban character; excellent public services, park and recreation programming, and educational opportunities; and equal access to opportunity, service, and facilities for all residents.

The objectives, policies, and strategies adopted to implement these goals are organized into eight chapters. They are:

- Land Use
- City Growth and Expansion
- Transportation
- Preservation and Revitalization
- Economic Development
- Residential Living
- Public Services and Facilities
- Community Character

The City Council resolves to emphasize sound fiscal management as it carries out this Plan. Otherwise, no objective, policy, or strategy is to be given more weight or importance than any other unless specifically stated. Certain terms and intentions are defined as follows:

Goals are value expressions, abstract and long-term visions reflecting the City's desires. As such, their achievement cannot be directly measured.

Objectives expand upon a particular aspect of a goal or state a vision more precisely. They are also long-term in nature. Their arrangement in the eight categories or chapters of this Plan only provides a frame of reference. An objective in one category may also relate to other categories, and this Plan does not intend to limit the application of any objective.

Policies are relatively short-term and state a consistent course of action. Being short-term, they may become out-dated or otherwise inappropriate due to changing conditions or consensus. They must be periodically reviewed and revised to reflect such changes.

Strategies explain and define specific steps to be taken or rules to be followed to achieve a policy. They provide a measure of how successfully the policies, and ultimately the goals are being implemented. Strategies may propose detailed studies, specific programming, construction of specific public improvements, or may outline triggers for new strategies or adjustments. Since strategies have immediate application, they should be assessed biennially in a continuing planning process. Strategies that have been achieved will be removed; some may be modified to take another necessary step; and some will be added to address new needs and opportunities.

Some objectives, policies, and strategies pertain to physical development. They guide land use, placement of major streets and major public facilities, or other visible results. The Comprehensive Policy Plan map portrays one possible outcome of those objectives and policies. However, it is only one interpretation of successful implementation of the City's objectives and policies, and not intended to be exclusive. Successful implementation of the policies and strategies could produce a different portrait of the future city, and be an equally successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

The City Council, through its Planning and Zoning Commission and citizen input, analyzed the community and the realities of the regional and local economy to provide the basis for this Plan. Urbandale is building on a strong foundation. It has high quality living environments and a good business climate. The City Council intends to maintain those assets by adopting this Comprehensive Plan to set a course for the next 20 years. The City Council wants the Planning and Zoning Commission to review the Comprehensive Plan at least bi-annually to keep it current and viable. It will then be a useful and valuable asset.

Six LAND USE

Land use is a primary planning concern. The relationships between different uses, and size, location, and density, are paramount concerns. They are often the most important influences on other major planning objectives and policies.



OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that the intensity/density of development does not exceed the capacity of utility systems, streets, and services
- Utilize Douglas' physical position to facilitate a sense of community and foster neighborhood interaction
- Concentrate major cultural facilities and commercial services in City Center Districts along Douglas Parkway/Avenue
- Maintain the City's neighborhood pattern of residential development
- Extend parks and open spaces into new neighborhoods in accordance with the City's Parks and Open Space Plan
- Promote efficient development patterns
- Encourage a mix of land uses that serves the community's long-term fiscal and social needs
- Provide transitions between different and conflicting land uses
- Encourage and maintain stable land use conditions

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

1. Reserve appropriate areas for economic development and maximize economic development opportunities.

Urbandale has a finite supply of land for economic development that will produce quality jobs and tax base. Residential development will not be allowed on parcels that have potential for economic development. Retail uses will also be considered carefully, to ensure that they will not be detrimental to job-oriented economic development. Retail uses should be complementary or at least neutral in their impact on economic development, and not allowed to consume prime space or change perceptions of the overall area. Careful consideration is also necessary to ensure that retail development in the Interstate corridor does not cannibalize existing commercial areas, or inhibit establishment of commercial developments within new neighborhoods because of size or undue capture of market share.

Highway services and some entertainment uses will be restricted or carefully controlled to ensure that they do not have negative affects. Truck traffic greatly increases congestion and noise, so uses or services that unnecessarily increase truck traffic should be avoided. Budget-oriented retail services will be limited if they may have an adverse affect on other business's investment decisions, especially if proposed in a "gateway" location. Site design of retail development will be carefully controlled to draw traffic into the development and increase the visibility of interior parcels so they will not be impacted negatively. Design considerations include facing the development onto the intersecting street; placing magnet uses on interior parcels; and placing major accesses on the intersecting street.

Economic development markets are strongly linked to the transportation system, that being the Interstates and the major streets connecting to the Interstates. Key economic development areas include the corridor along Interstates 35/80. The east-west portion of the corridor generally lies between 54th Avenue and a line 1,000 feet south of the Interstate: the area north of the Interstate is often referred to locally as the Northpark Drive corridor, and the area south of the Interstate is referred to as the Plum Drive corridor. Other key economic development parcels include those fronting on NW Urbandale Drive; along 121st Street; properties north of Meredith Drive to the west of the Crossroads Pointe development; and the scattered vacant parcels scattered through the area west of the railroad and 100th Street. All are contained within the Northwest Market Center Urban Renewal Area that was established in 2000. These economic development opportunities cannot be created elsewhere in Urbandale, or obtained through annexation or redevelopment.

The City has a significant supply of land for residential development that could be further expanded by annexation. Where the choice between economic development and residential use is debatable, the parcel should be reserved for economic development because of the limited supply of this resource. If the parcel remains undeveloped due to a limited market for economic development on the property, the decision can usually be reversed later since there will be a continued market for residential development. Once development is allowed, the decision cannot be reversed for decades or longer, and perhaps redevelopment for uses with higher value will never be possible. Accordingly, opportunities for economic development may be lost.

Requests may be made because the residential market can provide investors an attractive return in a shorter time frame. Economic development may eventually provide a higher return, but the time frame could be too long for some landowners. In addition, the development industry is becoming more concentrated. Consequently, industry members may want to diversify their holdings or market appeal in the Metropolitan market, to the possible detriment of the City's economic development goals. Requests for land use changes should also be critically evaluated for this possibility.

2. Continue to develop a "village center" around the 86th and Douglas intersection, maintain viability of the 70th and Douglas center, and establish a second "village center" at 142nd and Douglas.

In the future it will become increasingly necessary to develop facilities and programming that promote and maintain a sense of community. Walker Johnston Park, the municipal complex, and the commercial centers were established at the 86th and Douglas intersection in an attempt to draw residents from all neighborhoods to a common point. This intersection is the approximate geographic center of the established neighborhoods east of the Interstate, and the 142nd and Douglas area has a similar geographic position for the developing neighborhoods west of the Interstate. 70th and Douglas was the original town center, and continues to be an important tradition. Douglas Avenue/Parkway is geographically the City's east-west spine, and is the City's traditional "main" street.

The City has increased the draw to the 86th and Douglas "village center" by continuing development of the municipal complex, and maintaining the viability of the commercial developments in the area. The City will create a physical framework that provides a similar focal point in the 142nd and Douglas area. That village center will also provide most of the commercial goods and services needed or desired by the surrounding neighborhoods. Magnet or anchor stores, or other attractions that draw consumers from areas outside the City are highly desirable if they maintain an up-scale image. Although a desirable service, neither village center may be a major source of

"durable goods" and merchandise because they will primarily serve a local market due to their scale and position. Such retail services are expected to be supplied by the regional malls and "big box" retailers for the foreseeable future. Direct marketing may hold the greatest probability of displacing the regional malls and large "category killer" retailers, at least for price-sensitive consumers. Local retailers may be able to compete more successfully in the future within some sectors by offering a high degree of customer service.

The City will develop Douglas Avenue/Parkway as a "signature" street, and link as many primary community facilities to it as possible so it will continue to serve its traditional role as Urbandale's main street.

The City's major municipal, park, and cultural facilities will be closely associated with the village centers. Walker Johnston Park is integrated into the 86th Street village center, and the proposed Walnut Creek regional park will be tied into the 142nd Street village center as much as possible. This will enhance the commercial services by drawing more neighborhood patrons to the village centers. Festival markets and community celebrations, cultural facilities, community centers, libraries, recreational facilities, and significant natural areas/parks are among the appropriate uses and attractions that should be in the village centers, because of their broad appeal to residents of the entire City.

The village centers and park system can help bridge barriers, both physical and cultural, to maintain a continued sense of community. The City's increasing size could make it feel less personal, if residents cannot relate to far-away neighborhoods. There are more jurisdictional separations. There have always been multiple school districts in the City, but most residents were in the Urbandale School District with the West Des Moines District being next in prominence. Now the Johnston School District holds a substantial number of Urbandale residents. The portion of Urbandale in the Waukee District will also experience rapid growth in future years. Eventually, the greatest number of Urbandale residents will be in the Waukee District, even though Urbandale residents may be a minority within that District.

The population is also becoming more diverse, primarily in terms of age and related socio-economic characteristics. Only about 50% of all households now have school-age children. That factor also diminishes the traditional community ties provided by schools. At one time most households were in the same generation, but now there is full range of generations. Households from different generations have different perspectives, so more effort may be necessary to obtain consensus.

The City lies in two counties, Polk and Dallas Counties, and in time the City's population will be about equally distributed between them. In the 1990

redistricting, the City was divided into two State Senate Districts and three House Districts. With the 2000 redistricting the City was placed in one Senate and two House Districts. The State districting was not a divisive factor in the 1990's, but it could become significant if the City is again divided into multiple Districts in the future and the Districts grow more partisan. The Interstate and the associated economic development corridor is a very significant physical barrier in terms of maintaining a sense of community.

All of the City's new neighborhoods are outside of the Interstate, primarily to the west. The population west of the Interstate will eventually exceed the population inside of the Interstate. This new/old characteristic will emphasize the "Interstate split". The new neighborhoods are in "new" school districts, will house a younger population for several decades, are physically separated from the "original" City by the Interstate, and may have different political representation. The new neighborhoods need new facilities to serve their growing population, and may not feel like they are receiving a "fair share" if needs are not met. The mature neighborhoods will need revitalization and replacements and feel overlooked if there is too much focus on new development. They may be reluctant to fund improvements that are not seen to be of benefit to them.

If the village centers succeed in attracting residents across the Interstate to utilize services and opportunities on the opposite side, they will help maintain a sense of community and minimize "isolationism". Services will be duplicated in the two village centers to a certain extent. The population will more than double, so the service/facility needs will also double, and commercial services in particular will be divided between the two centers rather than concentrated in one. There could be twice as many grocery stores, for example, but they won't all concentrate in just one of the centers.

Many City facilities will tend to be located in only one of the two centers, making each unique. Where possible, "duplicate services" should be provided in a different form, so "cultural exchange" across the Interstate will be promoted. A water park at 142nd may attract users from the entire City in the summer, while the existing indoor pool similarly may attract the entire population in the winter. The library on 86th Street will not be duplicated at 142nd Street. The Walnut Creek regional park is a facility that is unique to 142nd Street.

The recent exchange of territory between the Urbandale and Dallas Center/Grimes School District has been a positive step in terms bridging the barrier represented by the Interstate. Previously, the Interstate was the division between the two school districts. The Urbandale District now contains all of the residential area west of the Interstate in Polk County that was formerly in the Dallas Center-Grime District (the south half-mile, to 142nd

Street, remains in the West Des Moines District). As a result of this change, the Urbandale School District will help bridge the Interstate barrier and connect the existing and new residential neighborhoods. The Urbandale District will also remain the dominant District within the City of Urbandale for a considerable number of years, although Waukee will still eventually become the largest District in Urbandale barring further boundary changes.

3. Promote stable retail districts, and restrict new retail developments that may "cannibalize" existing businesses.

The City will limit the amount of retail zoning to maintain a balance between supply and demand to the extent possible, to support existing businesses and to maintain stability in new developments. Growth creates new business opportunities, adding employment, goods, and services not previously enjoyed and making Urbandale more independent and self-sustaining. However, the size and location of new retail developments must be carefully controlled and planned to ensure that they do not cannibalize existing retail areas, and then possibly suffer the same fate with the next wave of development.

New retail developments at the interstate interchanges will be controlled in size and type since most of the residential market areas they serve are already substantially developed and served by existing retail areas. They must complement, not duplicate, the community retail provided in the 86th Street village center and other existing retail areas to the extent possible. If duplicative, the existing areas will lose market share and could decline. This is likely to be a net loss in tax base for the City, and will compromise other City objectives. Excess competition is undesirable because businesses may become unprofitable, resulting in deferred maintenance that leads to blight, reduced quality, and loss of services to some areas, generally older neighborhoods. It is very difficult to revitalize older retail areas in such cases, because the service area has shrunk and has less purchasing power.

At the same time, Urbandale will encourage competition to maintain quality service and fair prices. Regulations will be flexible to accommodate change, recognizing trends towards larger corporate operations, on-line and catalog shopping, and similar trends. Attempts to maintain the status quo, however desirable, are likely to fail if they do not recognize the realities of current trends and practices, and limitations of regulatory controls. Urbandale will provide infrastructure improvements to maintain the viability of existing retail areas and enhance their image.

4. Create transitions between areas with different and conflicting land uses.

Appropriate transitions will be provided between business and residential areas to minimize conflicts and actual or perceived reductions in quality of life. Urbandale will employ traditional land planning to generally separate uses and control density and character. Traditional practices are the best means of controlling uses that are inherently nuisances because of operations. However, Urbandale will primarily use performance and design standards to mitigate potential land use conflicts, in lieu of layers of transitional land uses.

Urbandale wants to continue as a primarily single-family community with a high percentage of home-ownership, and is sensitive to how it is viewed from the major streets. This is contrary to most traditional land planning techniques, which locate the most-intense uses along major street corridors and place intermediate land uses between intense uses and single-family development or other sensitive uses. Urbandale wants its nicest neighborhoods to be visible from the thoroughfares, to provide an accurate representation to visitors. It does not want a high percentage of multi-family rental units, and single-family neighborhoods frequently prefer commercial or light industrial uses as a neighbor instead of multiple family.

Proper design governed by performance and design standards usually mitigates objectionable characteristics more effectively than land use transitions. Buffer



yards provide separation and reduce unsightly views, noise, and other intrusions. Access controls reduce traffic congestion and accidents. Design controls for loading areas, window locations, building scale, architecture, parking design, and drainage help control noise, protect privacy and property values, separate activity generators, and optimize infrastructure capacity.

Urbandale will usually place zoning boundaries along rear lot lines rather than streets. This development pattern maximizes separation between residential and business areas. Buffers are more effective along the rear. It is easier to control traffic and other objectionable activity if dramatically different uses are not opposite each other on the same street. However, zoning boundaries may

be located on limited-access major streets, if developments face onto interior streets and are substantially buffered from the major street.

5. Continue to create residential neighborhoods.

Urbandale will create residential neighborhoods that are generally bounded by major streets, approximate one square mile in area containing at least one thousand and usually about two thousand households. Low-density estate residential will not be allowed, except on a limited basis as a lifestyle alternative or where public infrastructure will never support neighborhood densities. Low-density estate development usually is significantly more expensive to serve while generating less revenue.

Street patterns will be designed to discourage traffic from passing through neighborhoods; with connections to facilitate circulation within the neighborhood; and to keep commercial or industrial traffic out of neighborhoods. "Gateways" will be encouraged to promote neighborhood identity. Neighborhood parks and trail systems will be provided to promote social interaction between neighborhood residents.

A variety of housing types will be encouraged in each neighborhood to promote neighborhood stability. Each type of housing appeals to different age groups in particular, allowing families to remain in the same neighborhood as housing needs change. A heterogeneous neighborhood may also reduce the burden on municipal services. If there are different age groups in the neighborhood, the population will be less prone to peaks and valleys. When all of the families are young, more playgrounds are needed in the neighborhood, for example. When the families all become "empty-nesters" at the same time, the playgrounds may not be used at all. There are also sociological benefits to mixing age groups.

Urbandale will not have an equal balance of housing types or styles in each neighborhood, since each neighborhood has different characteristics. One neighborhood may adjoin intensive uses, and have higher densities because transitional residential developments are incorporated into the neighborhood. Other neighborhoods may have lower than average densities because of infrastructure limitations.

6. Adapt to changing conditions.

There are some single-family residences on thoroughfares or adjacent to retail developments that are not expected to remain as single-family residences in the long term because conditions have changed. Traffic volumes or retail activity may have increased, or buffers may be lacking.

Urbandale will allow those residences to be converted to moderately higher residential densities, carefully regulated nonresidential uses, or redeveloped into such uses, while maintaining the residential character of the area. Urbandale will control the conversions through urban design controls and regulation of use and density so adjoining single-family residences will not be adversely affected and also forced to convert. Residences that chose to remain will be protected. Urbandale will also encourage assembly of small parcels into larger tracts to create more efficient development patterns.

The homes in this category include those adjoining Douglas Avenue between 71st Street and Dennis Drive; some of the homes a block north or south of Douglas on 66th through 69th Streets that are zoned for retail; and the homes east of 60th Street and north of Meredith Drive.

7. Ensure that infrastructure has adequate capacity.

When Urbandale improves or extends its infrastructure, it will provide for the long-term needs of the service area. It will plan for the ultimate needs, unless it will be cost-effective to add capacity later.

Land uses will be planned according to the capacity of the infrastructure. The planning will ensure that service objectives are maintained, and that additional needs for infrastructure investments are not generated. It should be noted, however, that when infrastructure is sized for an ultimate service area it would have excess capacity until the service area is fully developed. A new arterial street may initially provide an "A" level of service, for example, and drop to the planned "C" or "D" level of service as development occurs and utilizes the capacity that was provided for it. That is not considered degradation of service, but rather the realization of planned growth.

If there is limited capacity in any infrastructure, capacity will be allocated on an equitable basis, with exceptions for economic developments or revitalization projects that provide extraordinary public benefits.

Seven ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development provides revenue for high quality facilities and services, and employment opportunities that could create a greater sense of community. Urbandale is fortunate to possess an advantageous location, with Interstate highway access. The City is experiencing record amounts of economic growth.



OBJECTIVES

- Diversify and expand the tax base
- Increase opportunities for office and clean industrial employment
- Protect and improve the viability of commercial and industrial areas
- Ensure that economic development provides sufficient revenues to cover the costs of City services it requires, or provides other substantial benefits
- Participate in Metropolitan and regional programs that promote economic development in the Metropolitan Area and Iowa
- Provide capital improvements that stimulate and support desired development
- Encourage appropriate retail development
- Encourage revitalization of mature commercial areas

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

1. Reserve and protect areas suited for large-scale office development

Urbandale will preserve most of the land in the Interstate corridor between 86th Street and NW Urbandale Drive for office/business park development, other than the areas currently zoned for retail development. The corridor is expected to take decades to develop fully, and the land should be recognized as a long-term resource rather than an oversupply for this use. This resource cannot be replaced by annexation or redevelopment. Office parks in other cities, including West Des Moines, have also taken decades to develop. Although development may take decades, the supply of land for economic development will be exhausted well before all residential areas in Urbandale are fully developed, even without further annexation.

Urbandale will resist requests for other development, other than supportive retail of a limited extent, in the corridor unless and until independent market analysis shows no demand exists, or that other, more successful markets have been established. The rate of development will depend on economic conditions and market response. Significant residential or nontaxable development would be particularly detrimental to the City's future economic condition because of lost tax base and employment opportunities. It would require more reliance on the residential tax base to finance municipal services.

Urbandale will continue to control development around the corridor to ensure that the environs for office park development will not be compromised, since corporate office developments demand a quality, upscale setting.

Historically, the Urbandale office market was slowed by the availability of prime parcels elsewhere in the Metropolitan area. However, the accessibility created by the 86th Street and NW Urbandale Drive interchanges has substantially improved the market for office development, as evidenced by recent development.

It should be recognized that the primary development pattern may be low-rise offices or business parks, rather than multi-story construction, because of present rent structures and comparatively low land costs.

2. Invest in capital improvements that will stimulate desired economic development.

Generally, Urbandale will only construct infrastructure it has traditionally been responsible for and that provides an area-wide benefit. It does not intend to assume costs that have customarily been development responsibilities, and would become a development subsidy.

Urbandale may participate in construction of the initial lanes of Plum Drive and Northpark Drive through tax increment financing or other means if it is necessary to provide continuity and facilitate or accelerate office development. In such case the City will require the developer to install subsequent lanes, essentially exchanging the order of improvement obligations, and will withhold incentives that would otherwise be available. Alternatively, the City's investment could be recouped through assessments, impact fees, or similar measures. In any case, the intent will be to maintain equity with other developments that have fully financed such improvements.

Urbandale will continue its participation in the reconstruction of the Douglas Parkway/Avenue interchange.

Urbandale will actively pursue replacement of the Meredith Drive bridge over the Interstate to increase roadway capacity and address deficiencies. The bridge is a State facility, but Urbandale and the private sector may need to participate financially to leverage State and Federal funds.

Urbandale will facilitate the extension of sanitary sewer service to the 111th Street corridor upon completion of the Douglas interchange reconstruction. Current traffic conditions have restricted development, but could not be corrected until the interchange construction occurred.

Urbandale may assemble land parcels to assist redevelopment in the Downtown Urbandale Neighborhood (DUN) urban renewal area.

3. Continue development of the 86th Street and Douglas Avenue village center, and establish a second village center at 142nd Street and Douglas Parkway.

Urbandale will continue to emphasize the two village centers as the primary commercial areas for grocery shopping and other traditional community retail service for the surrounding neighborhoods. It will promote specialty appeal shopping or entertainment uses, and locate community facilities in the village centers to give the centers distinctive identities. Architectural quality, unique uses, and cultural and recreational facilities and activities will be required or encouraged in order to provide a competitive edge that would draw people to the village centers. Retail demand will be supplied by the village centers to the greatest possible extent. Urbandale will not allow large or numerous neighborhood commercial areas in close proximity to the village centers that might dilute their market draw.

4. Create stable retail developments that could capture a larger percentage of Urbandale's consumer power and appeal to nonresidents.

Urbandale will provide zoning for fewer, but larger neighborhood retail centers. By having fewer, each will have a larger market area that should be less susceptible to the population cycles that neighborhoods customarily experience, so the retail centers should be more stable. The larger market area may also attract more services and choices than otherwise would be located in a neighborhood center. Urbandale will usually provide zoning for high-quality neighborhood retail developments on major intersections at two-mile intervals, but there will be some exceptions to ensure that services are available at all "entry points", the major commuter routes into the City. There will also be exceptions for areas serving employment centers, and for specialty businesses with a Metro-wide consumer appeal.

Urbandale does not intend to place commercial areas at each major intersection. The two-mile spacing will place almost all households within less than one mile from a neighborhood service area, and within 1.5 miles of two. Combined with strategic locations on commuter routes, the locations and spacing will preserve adequate competition and choice.

The size of each neighborhood retail area will be larger than "typical" neighborhood centers. However, the larger, concentrated developments have a smaller boundary or "edge", and have fewer residential neighbors and therefore less potential for conflict. The larger areas offer more opportunities for transition and buffering, and potential for less regulation, than is the case for smaller, elongated strip developments.

Urbandale will also accommodate specialty market areas because their uniqueness creates broad appeal. However, it is recognized that they are difficult to stimulate or create from a public perspective. The 70th Street and Douglas Avenue area could transition into a specialty market because it contains some older structures with lower rents. It is close to the regional draw of Merle Hay Mall, and revitalization has enhanced the area's image. Continued redevelopment and revitalization to improve the area's appearance and perception, together with improved convenience resulting from the elimination of traffic congestion and "functional obsolescence" of properties, will help attract the up-scale market such businesses require.

5. Promote planned commercial centers, and carefully control freestanding retail strip development to minimize traffic congestion and similar concerns.

Urbandale will control access to provide proper spacing, and require turn lanes and shared accesses wherever possible to minimize traffic congestion. In addition, the shared access can assist businesses by improving convenience and overcoming negative aspects of strip development. Urbandale will generally zone for development of commercial nodes rather than elongated strip development. The more compact development form promotes City objectives for community character, is a more efficient use of land, reduces traffic congestion and conflicts with the residential community, and promotes stability.

6. Maximize industrial and business park development in the 100th Street/NW Urbandale Drive corridor.

Urbandale will allow consumer retail in this corridor to satisfy needs that cannot be accommodated in the village centers and do not compete with them. It will also allow such development for image purposes, since 100th Street/NW Urbandale Drive is a commuter route and the community does not want to be perceived as an industrial city.

At the same time, this development corridor is one of Urbandale's primary opportunities for non-retail employment and the tax base accompanying such development. Urbandale has a finite supply of vacant land suited to industrial development, so the land that does not front on the arterial will be preserved for clean industrial development while also allowing business park and office development without limit.

7. Work closely with groups involved in marketing and attracting business development.

Urbandale will support metropolitan and state efforts to promote economic development in Iowa and the Des Moines metropolitan area as long as they continue to market all of the individual jurisdictions in the Metro Area equitably. Urbandale will make marketing materials available to businesses that are considering the metropolitan area.

8. Avoid incentives to new businesses that are detrimental to existing businesses.

Urbandale will take care not to place existing businesses at a competitive disadvantage when development incentives are necessary. Urbandale will generally limit incentives to capital improvements that benefit an area as a

whole, and tax rebates to the extent necessary to attract new office and business park development and remain competitive in the Metropolitan market. It will use tax increments created by the development for tax rebates, and will use tax increment financing and other legal means for capital improvements promoting economic development.

Where direct financial incentives in addition to tax rebates are utilized, they will be predominately in the form of loans that can be "recycled" to provide further assistance to other new businesses in the future. Exceptions will be made for individual businesses or developments that will have a "catalyst" effect, and for significant redevelopment projects.

9. Promote regulatory flexibility while maintaining Urbandale's high-quality image.

Urbandale will maintain regulations, fees, taxes, and service levels that approximate those of its major rivals in the metropolitan area, to maintain a competitive position. Urbandale will not lower its standards or compromise its up-scale, quality image. It will not compete based on price, since strong demand creates a premium for Urbandale property and makes that an ineffective strategy. The types of businesses that are attracted to Urbandale are not influenced by minor deviations above or below the norm, whether tax rates, financial incentives, or other factors. Controls and management that promote stability and reduce investment risk have a positive impact.

Urbandale's regulations will emphasize nuisance mitigation, use of durable building materials that promote an image of high quality, and optimization of health and safety. Outdoor storage will usually be prohibited, or where that is not practical it will be screened from view. Concrete and masonry construction will be favored over less durable materials; signage regulated to create a high-quality, esthetic environment free from excessive competition for attention; and landscaping will be required to mitigate the effects of intensive site development, large buildings and parking areas, and to buffer residential areas. Pollutants will be controlled to the greatest extent possible, and industries that create non-food odors will be strictly controlled. Manufacturing processes requiring or producing significant quantities of toxic, radioactive, or very hazardous materials will be strictly regulated, as will storage of such materials.

With the exception of businesses that create significant nuisances or other negative perceptions, and locations adjoining residential development, the use of property is generally less important than its design. However, use must be regulated to the extent that property is reserved for its best or intended use (e.g., employment areas that are not consumed by retail development or office by industrial, etc.)

10. Immediately reevaluate economic development policies if changes affect revenue generation.

Urbandale will reevaluate its objectives and policies if there are changes in the tax structure or other paradigm shifts affecting the basic assumptions and analysis. Tax-base sharing, for example, could greatly reduce the benefits of local economic development. It may be advantageous to have other jurisdictions bear the traffic congestion and other costs of servicing such development. If new revenue sources are created, such as a local sales tax distributed by point of sale, it will be appropriate to change the emphasis of various policies.

Eight CITY GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Substantial areas were annexed in the 1990's and in 1999. Annexations were planned as extensions of service areas so they would be cost-effective. Annexation provided additional economic vitality and many opportunities for residential growth.



OBJECTIVES

- Manage growth to ensure orderly, responsible development
- Annex areas that can be easily serviced and will enhance the efficiency of service delivery, or provide other positive contributions
- Plan boundary areas with adjoining jurisdictions
- Annex areas for new residential neighborhoods.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

1. Limit development on the urban fringe.

Development will not be allowed in outlying areas within the City until the infrastructure can support Urbandale's typical neighborhood densities. Development must have sufficient density and taxable value to provide revenue for required services.

The zoning in outlying areas will require large parcel sizes and setbacks to be maintained to facilitate future neighborhood redevelopment if land divisions do occur on the urban fringe. Subdivisions must provide sufficient street rights-of-way with capacity for ultimate traffic volumes and the utilities serving the developments. Existing "section line roads" will become high-volume arterials in the future, so access must be controlled.

2. Seek annexation, planning, and shared service agreements, and promote intergovernmental harmony.

Urbandale will coordinate planning, zoning, and capital improvements along its borders with other jurisdictions. It will share services and facilities where such arrangements are mutually beneficial. It will minimize intergovernmental conflicts. Urbandale will provide information to and participate in metropolitan and regional agencies.

As existing agreements expire, the City will extend or renew such agreements if they are still beneficial. New terms will be negotiated if necessary to reflect current conditions or protect Urbandale's interests.

3. Actively pursue the Grimes territory severance/annexation.

Urbandale has a unique annexation/planning agreement with Grimes that allows territory along Meredith Drive in the City of Grimes to voluntarily sever and annex into Urbandale. The north boundary of the territory approximates a ridgeline to the extent it matches ownership lines, so all of the area drains south to Urbandale's sanitary sewer system.

Urbandale will actively pursue the severance and annexation of the remaining severance area. Sewer and water system exist at or near the borders of many properties. Meredith Drive is an important arterial street and utility corridor, being one of just three connections between the eastern and western halves of Urbandale. Meredith provides access to the NW Urbandale Drive interchange and is an increasingly important commuter route. Urbandale will not be able to improve Meredith to carry the anticipated traffic volumes until it is annexed. Urbandale also cannot "loop" the water system by connecting the mains along Meredith Drive, until at least half of the Meredith right-of-way has been annexed. A significant portion of the territory (730 acres) that had been part of Grimes has been severed and annexed by Urbandale, mostly in 1999 and 2002. 510 acres remained in the severance area at the end of 2002.

4. Monitor annexation opportunities.

Annexation of a half-mile wide strip of territory along the County Line between Urbandale and Grimes will also be a priority for many of the same reasons that make the Severance Area important. Urbandale had not been able to annex this territory until 2000, when Urbandale and Grimes negotiated a new annexation agreement.

For the most part, Urbandale is adjoined by other cities, except for territory northwest of the City in Dallas County. It would not be practical to annex

much of that Dallas County area at this time, until some development occurs or a larger area can be annexed to facilitate service delivery. There are two small areas of unincorporated territory that Urbandale is not able to annex at this time due to annexation agreements, including a small area south of Meredith Drive between 170th and 184th Streets, and an island in Polk County between Urbandale and Johnston. If the agreements expire without annexation of those territories, Urbandale may consider annexation of those areas to the extent that they complement current service areas.

Current State law does not include mechanisms to mediate situations where jurisdictions cannot reach voluntary agreements. If Urbandale wants to renew existing agreements and cannot reach agreement, it may annex additional territory as a protective measure. Urbandale will also monitor possible changes to State law that could severely limit annexations, and may take protective measures in such cases.

If State law is modified to promote and facilitate annexation agreements, new/extended agreements may be preferred to annexation.

5. Exercise extra-territorial controls.

State law does not allow Urbandale to impose extra-territorial zoning controls outside of its boundaries, since Dallas County has its own zoning regulations (there is no unincorporated territory adjoining the City within Polk County).

However, the City can require review of subdivisions within the



County up to a distance of two miles from its boundaries. The City can require that subdivisions within the territory of review conform to the same standards and conditions required for subdivisions within its boundaries, or could establish alternative standards and conditions through a Chapter 28E agreement with the County.

The City will adopt an area of extra-territorial review for subdivisions of the maximum size allowed, and will require that all infrastructure be installed within the subdivision in accordance with all of City's standard specifications to the greatest extent possible. The City will require installation of "dry" sanitary sewers and water mains where practical, to facilitate future provision

of these essential urban services by connection to the City infrastructure after annexation. The City will also require provisions for parks and other urban services, so the subdivisions will not become an undue burden on the public infrastructure. Such provisions may be waived or alternative measures allowed if the density is exceptionally low and the parcels resulting from the subdivision are likely to be redeveloped at some future date after annexation; if annexation is inherently unlikely to occur; or connection to the City infrastructure is not deemed likely within the life expectancy for such sewers or water mains.

Nine RESIDENTIAL LIVING AREAS

Urbandale's residential neighborhoods are the focus of its most highly cherished value—quality living environments for families. These objectives and policies are intended to preserve the integrity of existing neighborhoods and their housing, and to guide the formation of new, high quality neighborhoods.



OBJECTIVES

- Provide housing opportunities for a broad range of households, to encourage a heterogeneous population mix
- Maintain the viability of the City's mature neighborhoods
- Provide and maintain a supply of quality housing suitable for young families with children
- Meet the housing needs of Urbandale's senior residents
- Promote up-scale, executive housing

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

1. Preserve the existing housing stock.

Existing residential neighborhoods and the associated infrastructure serving them represent substantial public and private investments. The housing stock must remain in sound condition to attract new families to invest and live in the neighborhoods. New investment will maintain a revenue base that will pay for the neighborhood services, which is very important to the City's fiscal stability. Equally important, it will help provide a heterogeneous population, particularly with respect to age, that promotes social stability. Existing homes can satisfy the housing needs of a broad range of households. They are and will be the

City's primary source of housing that is affordable for mean-income family households, given the inherently higher costs of new construction and development. For the same reasons, existing neighborhoods often offer the best housing value for all family households.

Urbandale will preserve its mature neighborhoods by maintaining and improving the public infrastructure, and ensuring that it is a positive attribute. It will enforce its housing and property maintenance codes to eliminate potentially blighting influences at an early stage. Code enforcement will be intended to preserve the positive characteristics of the neighborhood, to maintain image and property values. Accordingly, property maintenance codes will be directed towards owner-occupied properties as well as rental housing. If maintenance has been deferred because of an owner's economic situation, the City will seek discrete assistance for the household. Housing codes will continue to be directed primarily at rental housing.

Urbandale will not directly staff or fund housing assistance or rehabilitation programs, but has established a partnership with other western suburbs called WestHelp to provide assistance to disadvantaged households. It will assist households with referrals to agencies that can provide assistance and to the Caring Corps. It will monitor the level of need and changing conditions to determine if increased involvement may be appropriate.

If Urbandale finds that some housing units or a neighborhood is not competing successfully in the marketplace, it will consider incentive programs to generate private investment that will eliminate the inhibiting conditions. Urbandale will take care to ensure that any such programs do not indirectly "reward" individuals who do not properly maintain their properties, or discourage personal investment by creating expectations for future subsidies. Programs could require a pattern of long-term investment; "leveraging" a high ratio of other funds; or other measures to minimize negative outcomes.

2. Encourage the community pride, involvement, and stability associated with home ownership, length of residency, and personal investment in the community.

Urbandale will maintain a ratio of 75 percent single-family housing to 25 percent multi-family housing except to accommodate elderly housing. Urbandale intends to retain its existing character as a predominately single-family community and to prevent the City's infrastructure from becoming overloaded. Urbandale intends to provide a variety of housing so residents will remain in the City as their housing needs change. Single-family housing remains the preferred choice for home ownership in Iowa, so the majority of the housing stock will be single family to attract homeowners. Multi-family housing has traditionally been a rental market for new households. Long-term

demographic and socio-economic data indicate that this market is about 25 percent of the total number of households. Therefore, a ratio of 25 percent of the total housing stock will adequately meet the needs of these households, and the small number of households who have chosen not to purchase housing or prefer a multi-family lifestyle.

However, senior households share certain characteristics with new households. They are smaller and do not need large living quarters. The oldest may need specialized housekeeping, recreation, social, nutrition, and transportation services requiring a congregate, multi-family setting. Urbandale wants to allow senior households to remain in the community, and will allow construction of additional multi-family housing that is specifically oriented to the senior market, up to a maximum ratio of 35 percent of the total housing stock.

Urbandale will locate new multi-family housing in proximity to major streets and more intense uses, where the infrastructure will most easily accommodate higher density. Multi-family housing will also be used in the traditional manner as a buffer for single-family residences. However, Urbandale wants to ensure that multi-family housing also provides a quality living environment, and is incorporated into the residential neighborhood pattern. Multi-family housing that does not provide a quality environment will not promote neighborhood or community stability, because its residents will view it as an undesirable "residence of last resort" and act accordingly.

Usually, density will be limited to not more than 14 units per acre, and buildings limited in size to not more than 24 units. Central corridor plans will be discouraged in favor of designs that provide a more intimate, neighborhood sense. Again, exceptions will be made for senior housing because the specialized services usually can only be provided in larger buildings with higher densities, and because senior households place less demand on the primary infrastructure.

Urbandale will not provide an equal percentage of multi-family housing in each neighborhood, since infrastructure and other characteristics are not uniform.

3. Promote opportunities for new single-family housing that is affordable for mean-income family households.

Urbandale intends to provide a variety of housing styles that will be suitable for families at different stages of life, so families will move to Urbandale and be able to remain.

Affordable single-family housing is needed for young families who are purchasing their first or second home. However, Urbandale does not intend to become a primary supplier of new starter housing. The supply of "starter

housing" must be kept in balance with the supply of up-scale housing to maintain community stability, so "starters" will not move out of the community as their families grow. A substantial amount of smaller homes was built in 1970's and 1980's to accommodate the "baby boom" generation. Also, there is greater diversity in the age of Urbandale's existing housing, and existing housing offers better value than new housing and can satisfy the price sensitivity of "starter housing". The existing housing stock is expected to supply most of this need in the future, unless future conditions prevent the neighborhoods from "turning over" demographically.

It should be recognized that "starter housing" is likely to become a significant segment of the residential market in the early 21st Century, and that there may be significant pressures to allow new construction aimed at this market. The strong demand for "starter housing" will typically decline after a period of five to ten years, as the new households mature and develop the buying power to afford larger, traditional homes that meet the needs of the growing families. Therefore, it will be necessary to resist such pressures for a period of years, until this demographic group matures and enters the "move-up" market that has been Urbandale's mainstay in recent decades.

It will be difficult for new housing that is similar to traditional Urbandale housing to compete in this price-sensitive market, because of the inherently higher cost and strong demand for Urbandale housing. Urbandale will not reduce construction standards or total floor area to reduce the cost of new starter housing, since that would not foster healthy, long-term occupancy by a growing family and will adversely affect the tax base. Urbandale will require new affordable housing to include most of the amenities associated with up-scale housing (i.e., attached garages etc.) that cannot easily be added later.

If necessary to enhance affordability, Urbandale may allow part of a house to be left unfinished, or may allow reduced size if the house is pre-designed for future additions. Urbandale may allow lot sizes to be reduced if attached garages are provided to minimize the area consumed by driveways, to preserve adequate rear yard area for outdoor uses. These measures will promote neighborhood stability by increasing owner-satisfaction and reducing the desire to "move up" in a short time. It also facilitates the acceptance of such housing by owners of more expensive homes.

Mean income is defined to be the average income of married-couple families with two wage earners. Affordability is defined to be prevailing practices by private mortgage lenders as to maximum percentage of income spent on housing, assuming a 5 percent down payment and interest rate of 11 percent or less. Urbandale will not require "inclusory zoning" or provide locally funded subsidies. Such measures would require the City to regulate subsequent sales to prevent excessive profit and ensure that the price reflected the cost savings

from the programs, because of strong demand in Urbandale. Instead, Urbandale would encourage financial structuring, energy-efficient design, or other measures that could reduce monthly housing costs.

4. Reserve and protect areas for up-scale single-family housing that is attractive to executive and professional households.

Urbandale will encourage development of high-end residential neighborhoods to increase the diversity of its housing stock, and because they provide a strongly positive image that is beneficial to the entire community. Many executives select business locations based on proximity to up-scale housing, so this policy also supports economic development objectives. It will be predominately large single-family homes on large, high-amenity lots, but may also include up-scale townhomes and perhaps some multi-family condominiums.

There are several new neighborhoods west of the Interstate with high levels of natural amenities, which are conducive to development of such housing. These include the "Timberline" development; other properties near "Timberline" and the "Deer Creek" developments; and properties adjoining the proposed Walnut Creek Regional Park. Not all of these areas will be high-end housing; substantial portions are expected to be executive or "move-up" housing of a scale that is more customary to Urbandale and the other western suburbs.

In addition, while no change is advocated, if the Urbandale Golf and Country Club were relocated in the future the property it presently occupies would provide an excellent site for executive housing.

5. Regulate expansion or development of manufactured housing parks and gradually eliminate mobile homes.

Urbandale will require manufactured housing developments to meet the same lot size, density, setbacks, and site improvement standards as developments for site-built housing. They must be integrated into the neighborhood. Iowa law requires that manufactured housing, constructed under Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards rather than local building codes, be considered the equivalent to site-built housing in most respects, and allowed in any residential district. Since they are considered the same, there is no justification for reduced development standards and reduced setbacks, lot sizes, etc. for manufactured housing.

Mobile homes are defined as factory-built dwellings that were built prior to implementation of HUD standards, have been installed on a previous site or otherwise altered, and can no longer be assured of HUD compliance. Such dwellings have a history of serious safety defects and much higher rate of

safety related deaths. Existing mobile homes in mobile homes parks are legal non-conformities and shall be gradually eliminated as such. No additional mobile homes shall be brought into Urbandale.

6. Encourage the private sector to supply the housing needs of mature adult residents.

Urbandale will monitor the needs of its senior households and respond favorably to proposals for housing or services that match the community's needs. Smaller single-family homes and lots would be justified for senior markets since population and traffic generation is substantially less. The same characteristics justify allowing additional multi-family development up to a 65-35 ratio, particularly for the eldest members who may require congregate services. Senior housing for independent living should be placed as near as possible to shopping and other service facilities. Other types of senior facilities are not particularly dependent on location, since residents may not be able to travel independently, or all services may be provided internally.

The number of Urbandale seniors will continue to increase substantially, echoing State and National demographic trends. They will have spent most of their lives in single-family housing and are expected prefer such housing for as long as they can live independently. The role that new housing will play in serving their needs remains uncertain. Seniors are attaining independent living for a longer period than they have historically, but many may choose to remain in the home where they raised their families rather than moving to adult communities. The service industry has responded by providing more home care services, replacing support traditionally provided by family members that today may live in distant cities or states.

Ten **TRANSPORTATION**

Land use and transportation policies are closely tied. The transportation network plays a major role in determining property values, the suitability of one land use or another, and growth potential. At the same time, inadequate controls or planning can be detrimental to both the transportation network and the development it serves.



OBJECTIVES

- Improve transportation access to expand or support economic development
- Improve access to downtown Des Moines, the West Des Moines office park, and other metropolitan employment or retail centers, and into Urbandale's economic development areas
- Develop Urbandale's employment and retail bases
- Provide safe traffic flow with minimal congestion
- Provide cost-effective access to essential transportation services

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

1. Promote construction that enables or facilitates economic development.

Urbandale's top priority is the reconstruction of the Douglas Avenue/Parkway Interstate interchange, which is undergoing reconstruction and will be completed in 2003. Reconstruction was necessary to provide additional capacity in the bridge and to correct deficiencies in the bridge and interstate ramps. Levels of service in the interchange and nearby intersections were below the acceptable standard, so the improvements were necessary to accommodate continued economic development in the area. Reconstruction of the interchange is also eliminating congestion at the 111th/114th Street and Douglas Avenue intersection. Economic development previously could not be

allowed in the 111th Street corridor because the Douglas intersection could not accommodate additional traffic.

The two east-west streets serving the Interstate corridor, Plum Drive and Northpark Drive are high priorities because of their importance to economic development. The initial two lanes of Plum and Northpark Drives are to be constructed as a customary development obligation, with the City to provide two additional traffic lanes for additional traffic capacity. However, there are multiple property owners along the paths of these streets, so Urbandale may need to be proactive. The Tax Increment Finance District and Urban Renewal Plan enacted in 2000 allow the City to initiate the construction. If Urbandale participates in this nontraditional manner, it will require the developer to finance the two additional lanes and will prohibit financial incentives for the adjoining development, pay impact fees, or use other means to maintain equity with other developments that have paid all customary street development costs.

Meredith Drive will need to be paved from 114th Street to 128th Street, and the existing paved section widened to four lanes, at least from NW Urbandale Drive to a point beyond 121st Street and eventually to 128th Street, to carry traffic generated by economic development. The capacity of the section from NW Urbandale Drive to 86th Street may also need to be increased because of commuter traffic generated by the employment areas. The Meredith Drive bridge over the Interstate will need to be replaced, to widen it to four lanes for additional capacity in conjunction with the street widening. The bridge also needs to be replaced to address deficiencies relating to Interstate clearance.

A portion of 114th Street needs to be reconstructed south of Meredith because the bridge replacement will affect the intersection. 100th Street must be paved from Plum Drive to 54th Avenue (Waterford Road).

Safe, convenient access is a major factor in attracting business development. A number of significant access enhancements have been completed in recent years, leading to record amounts of economic development. Economic development generates significant traffic volumes, necessitating continuing investment in the street infrastructure.

2. Optimize arterial and collector streets.

Urbandale will acquire and preserve adequate street right-of-way width to enable traffic capacity and a corridor for utilities to be provided for new developments. The costs for the utilities and additional capacity will be the responsibility of the new developments, to mitigate the impacts they create. Urbandale's intent in preserving the rights-of-way is to enable the development impacts on the public infrastructure to be mitigated for less cost, and to do so without adverse future effects on adjoining properties. An increasing number of public utilities are locating in the public rights-of-way, in addition to the sewer and water utilities provided by Urbandale, and additional width is also needed to accommodate all of the installations with a minimum number of conflicts. This planning reduces the costs for the new developments and the general public. The wider rights-of-way also enhance pedestrian safety by providing more separation from traffic, and automotive safety by reducing congestion and improving traffic flow.

Urbandale will acquire right-of-way to mitigate development impacts at the time adjoining properties are developed whenever practical. The right-of-way will be acquired through dedication or with traffic impact fees from developments. Urbandale does not intend to subsidize development by absorbing the costs of impact mitigation, whether to acquire additional right-of-way, add roadway capacity, or construct the infrastructure needed by developments. A 120-foot minimum right-of-way width will be acquired for all major arterials, except where this minimum width must be reduced to avoid significant impacts on existing structures or public infrastructure. Minor arterials/major collectors will have 100-foot rights-of-way in nonresidential areas and a minimum of 80 feet in residential areas. Collector streets in residential areas must have 70-foot rights-of-way at intersections with arterials to accommodate turn lanes on the collector, and a minimum width of 60 feet in all other situations. Wider rights-of-way may be required for arterial and collector streets if traffic studies or utility needs show additional width to be warranted.

If additional right-of-way is needed in an established area, Urbandale will be reserve and acquire right-of-way when opportunities arise, such as during redevelopment, and "land bank" it for future use to minimize impacts on adjoining properties, reduce future costs, and preserve options. Compromises may be necessary in some developed areas because of high costs or the complete impracticality of acquiring necessary right-of-way, and development restricted or a reduced Level of Service accepted.

Urbandale will control access and plan land uses to optimize available roadway capacity and promote public safety. Urbandale will design the infrastructure to facilitate future expansion (usually widening a street), to lower the long-term

costs even though the initial cost may be higher. Left-turn lanes will generally be included in initial construction.

Douglas Parkway and 142nd Street will have 28-foot median widths to create a parkway design and emphasize their prominence within the City. Other streets will have "standard" cross-sections except at intersections where additional turn lanes are necessary to provide an acceptable level of service.

3. Reduce accidents and minimize congestion on major streets.

Urbandale will seek to maintain a Level of Service "C" (volume/capacity ratio of 1.0 that creates minimal congestion) where possible, but a Level of Service "D" will be accepted where it is not possible to maintain a LOS C because of cost or other limitations. Urbandale will construct new arterial and collector streets and add capacity to existing streets by widening and/or adding turn lanes to achieve and maintain this level of service. These improvements will be needed as a result of growth from new developments, and Urbandale will obtain right-of-way dedications or impact fees from the new developments to mitigate the traffic impacts they create.

Urbandale will control access, restrict on-street parking, coordinate traffic signals, and improve intersections with turn lanes to reduce congestion and maximize capacity streets. Urbandale will also plan land uses and subdivision design to help manage traffic, and to reduce auto-dependency to the extent practical while recognizing that automobiles will continue to be the primary method of transportation within the foreseeable future.

Urbandale will monitor accident rates and congestion at intersections, and include corrective measures in the Capital Improvements Program if appropriate. It appears that 100th Street and Hickman merits the most attention at this time, excluding the Douglas interchange, followed by 86th and Hickman. The 70th and Meredith intersection will be signalized, and the 75th and Douglas intersection will be evaluated to determine whether improvements would be appropriate.

Urbandale will periodically evaluate arterial streets with significant numbers of traffic signals to determine whether improvements to signal interlock systems will improve traffic movement and reduce delays. Its objectives will be to reduce congestion, pollution, and accidents. By increasing the average speed on the major thoroughfares, the amount of traffic utilizing neighborhood streets to avoid congestion may also be reduced a side benefit.

Urbandale will not restrict turning movements at major intersections or use unbalanced traffic flows to increase roadway capacity unless conventional techniques are not cost-effective. Urbandale will not utilize one-way streets to

increase roadway capacity. Ride-sharing and mass transit may be promoted, and transportation system management actions may be pursued in the future, if they are found effective in reducing costs and improving accessibility.

4. Establish controls and standards to minimize traffic impacts of adjoining development.

Urbandale will require access drives and street intersections to be aligned on major streets, and require accesses on arterial streets to be spaced at least 600 feet apart wherever possible and never less than 300 feet apart. Major traffic generators will be required to mitigate its impacts on street capacity by improving intersections to maintain traffic flow, including left and right-hand turn lanes and traffic signals as appropriate.

If existing developments are substantially renovated or reconstructed, Urbandale will require accesses to be brought as close to these standards as possible by eliminating nonconforming accesses and encouraging consolidation with adjoining properties.

5. Provide alternatives to the automobile for seniors and other groups with limited transportation access.

Urbandale will work with other jurisdictions and transportation providers if transportation access becomes a significant problem in the future. However, all Urbandale households have an average of 1.57 vehicles, and nearly twenty-five percent have three or more vehicles.

Urbandale will encourage and support the Metropolitan Transit Association (MTA) para-transit service and similar services for the few households that need transportation assistance if they continue to provide cost-effective service. Housing for seniors and physically challenged individuals that is dependent upon public transportation will be placed as closely as possible to shopping and services, and concentrated to a certain extent to facilitate mass transit.

Urbandale's population densities limit the efficiency of mass transit, so it is important to avoid service duplication, maximize available resources, and use innovative approaches. Car or vanpooling may be more efficient and attractive than buses for certain trips and destinations, if future conditions warrant reductions in the number of single-occupancy vehicles. Such conditions may include increased private or public costs for personal transportation, or a need to reduce traffic volume to improve Level of Service on major thoroughfares.

6. Improve parking and circulation conditions along Douglas Avenue between 64th and 72nd Streets.

Urbandale has improved the 70th and 72nd Street intersections as part of the streetscape project to eliminate the most-significant points of congestion and accidents. It will continue to reduce the numbers of private accesses on Douglas Avenue whenever possible as redevelopment occurs, to get closer to current standards for access spacing and increase traffic capacity.

Urbandale will continue to control land use, particularly between 71st and 72nd Streets, to minimize traffic generation. It is almost impossible to add roadway capacity because of right-of-way constraints. Not more than 80 feet of right-of-way can be obtained along most of this part of Douglas Avenue. That is not adequate for arterial streets unless traffic volumes or turn movements are controlled, or a reduced Level of Service is accepted. A continuous left-turn lane is not possible because the number of access points would result in continuous conflicts between opposing traffic in the turn lane, and medians to control turning movements generally are not possible or practical.

Urbandale may acquire property for off-street parking in conjunction with other revitalization, to implement a public parking area. This parking would be intended to replace the remaining on street parking in the area, and to increase the overall supply of parking for area businesses.

7. Pave all streets.

Urbandale will pave the arterial streets in developing areas as soon as practical, primarily using assessments or fees paid by the developments that create the need for the paving. The paving will be safer and have more traffic capacity than the temporary surfacing that has been installed on most arterials, which is not designed or constructed to bear the traffic volumes created by development.

All existing local and collector streets within Urbandale are paved with the exception of two blocks, which will be scheduled for paving now that adjoining parcels are being developed.

8. Provide for pedestrians

Urbandale will continue to install sidewalks where they are lacking. Urbandale will continue periodic sidewalk inspections to ensure that rough or broken sidewalks are repaired. Walking is increasingly popular for wellness and recreation. Sidewalks can also influence the perceived "friendliness" of a neighborhood, by increasing contact between neighborhood residents.

Urbandale will require sidewalks along both sides of all streets in residential neighborhoods, and on local streets in nonresidential areas if they are likely to be used by pedestrians. Sidewalks will usually be required on both sides of major streets, whether they are in residential or nonresidential areas.

Urbandale will continue to expand its open space system and associated trails, and develop connections to trail systems in adjoining communities. On-street bike routes will be revised to improve connections between trail systems and to create walking/riding loops. The trails and on-street routes will connect neighborhoods, commercial areas, parks, and schools. If lacking, sidewalks will be installed along on-street bicycle routes for pedestrians, and bicyclists who may not be comfortable riding in the street. Urbandale's pedestrian system makes the community unique and builds the sense of community. Sidewalks and walkways provide recreational opportunities for all age groups; are popular for wellness activity; are an alternate means of transportation; and provide important opportunities for socialization and interaction between community residents who might otherwise not come in contact.

Urbandale will participate in construction of an 8-foot pedestrian/bicycle trail along Douglas Parkway/Avenue so the street will be a travel corridor for more than just automobiles. Douglas Avenue/Parkway is a particularly important link, the "spine" through the community connecting most of the major commercial and cultural centers, parks, and trail systems.

Safe crossings will be encouraged by providing grade separations where practical, such as by incorporating them into drainage structures, or by providing pedestrian phases at signalized intersections. At-grade crossings will be monitored, and a grade-separated crossing or other safety enhancement will be considered where pedestrian volumes or safety conditions warrant.

Maps will be produced for "self-guided tours" to promote historical or unique aspects of Urbandale and build the sense of community and identity. Signs will be installed to delineate on-street bike routes, and signage or other marking provided to denote "tour" routes.

Eleven **PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

Top-quality municipal public utility services are a definitive element of Urbandale's quality of life. Cost-effective delivery of top-quality services requires constant analysis and evolution.



OBJECTIVES

- Optimize City facilities and services and ensure that capacities are adequate
- Provide equal municipal service levels in all areas of the community
- Match municipal service levels to resident desires
- Continue sound management of municipal finances

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

1. Phase municipal services and infrastructure extensions to coincide with the needs of new development.

Urbandale will continuously plan capital investments so appropriate infrastructure will be supplied to desired growth in a timely manner. Initial construction of arterial streets will consist of two lanes, except for Douglas Parkway and similar situations where construction of the full roadway section is warranted by short-term need for higher capacity. Major intersections will also be fully improved in many cases to minimize the traffic disruptions of future widening.

It will take a number of years to get the initial arterial street framework in place in the western area, since there is a significant amount of mileage involved to establish the framework. Once a two-lane framework is in place, emphasis will

begin to shift back towards expanding capacity by widening streets. While this is a recurring cycle to a certain extent, once the framework is in place a more “normal” cycle will be in effect, of extending infrastructure on the fringe and adding capacity on the interior to mitigate the increased traffic and other impacts caused by development on the fringe. As noted elsewhere, the acquisition of adequate rights-of-way will facilitate infrastructure expansion to mitigate growth impacts, and reduce both public and private sector costs of such mitigation.

Urbandale will prohibit "leapfrog" development to minimize premature demands for infrastructure and service expansion. This will defer some capital investments to extend services to new developments on the outer fringe, and will save operational expenses by reducing service vehicles' nonproductive travel through closer vacant areas.

2. Maintain regulations that maximize fire resistance in new construction and reconstruction, and strictly regulate development or uses that create special hazards.

Urbandale will retain current Building and Fire Code requirements for building structures and sprinkler systems to reduce demands for fire protection and protect life and property, even though construction costs may be higher in some cases. Compartmentalization of large buildings, alarm systems, and fire sprinklers are proven methods of fire protection that reduce the demand for fire extinguishment services. Urbandale will strictly regulate special hazards (whether explosive, toxic, flammable, or otherwise uniquely dangerous), large assembly occupancies, and facilities for persons that are more vulnerable. Urbandale will conduct regular code-maintenance inspections of nonresidential buildings and rental housing to ensure continued Code compliance and protect public safety buildings.

The need for emergency medical services will be managed to the extent possible by supporting public education programs to increase awareness of hazards and accident risks, wellness, CPR training, and so on. Urbandale will continue to provide top-quality equipment and trained personnel, and to optimize prompt response.

3. Continually seek ways to deliver public services more efficiently, to optimize city expenditures.

Urbandale will not employ "state-of-the-art" technology or procedures because of the greater cost and risk involved. It will seek proven innovations and new technologies that improve quality or reduce costs, and will particularly stress continual investment in technology.

Urbandale will not reduce levels of service unless dictated by significant fiscal considerations. It will reduce costs by sharing equipment and manpower with other governmental agencies or service providers when possible, and privatize when it will be cost-effective for the long term.



Consultants and other temporary help will be used to satisfy specialized needs or peak demands in lieu of additional staff. New facilities will be provided when existing facilities are no longer adequate or cost-effective to renovate or expand, or new service needs have been created. New facilities will be located in the village centers whenever practical. Capital investments will be made to reduce operating costs when a reasonable payback is possible.

4. Update the City's Capital Improvements Program periodically.

Urbandale will attempt to update its Capital Improvements Program (C.I.P.) at least biennially, with an annual update considered to be optimal. It takes two years or more to implement many projects because of design, acquisition, procedural requirements, funding, etc. Multi-jurisdictional projects usually require more time because of additional coordination and extended decision-making. The C.I.P. will be prepared by the City Manager's office and City departments, and reviewed and prioritized by ad hoc citizens' committee following public participation. The citizens' committee will make a recommendation to the City Council. The Capital Improvements Program (C.I.P.) will cover a 5-year time frame, and also list projects that address needs that are evolving or cannot be funded within the 5-year timeframe. The C.I.P. will include design concepts, justification, funding sources, cost estimates, a brief evaluation of operating expenditures, and implementation schedule.

5. Maintain sound fiscal goals and budgeting procedures.

Urbandale will review its fiscal performance goals periodically so they provide stable guidance to the City's annual operating and capital budgets. They will be reviewed outside of the annual budgeting process to provide adequate opportunity for discussion and evaluation.

6. Plan services and facilities to meet future demand and needs.

Urbandale will continually invest in capital improvements at a rate enabled by a reasonably stable tax levy for debt service, as well as equipment funding, so the desired level of services can be maintained while the tax levy will also remain as stable as practical. If capital investment is deferred in the short-term, higher taxation will be needed in the long term to catch up with replacement needs of existing infrastructure and service demands created by new growth. The increased taxes and inadequate capital investment may create a situation where a reduced level of service is being provided, but at a higher perceived cost. Continuous investment may temporarily provide excess facility capacity.

Where capacity cannot be easily added, such as in sewer and water lines, Urbandale will construct facilities with sufficient capacity to satisfy long-range needs and will coordinate land use planning with such capacities. Where it is usually possible to add capacity later, such as by widening a street when traffic volumes increase, the initial construction will be designed to facilitate future expansion. Such provisions may increase initial costs, but long-term costs will be significantly lower. Left-turn lanes will be included in the initial street construction where possible to provide additional roadway capacity and delay the need for widening. Urbandale will locate and design new facilities to provide optimal service to future growth as well as to satisfy existing and short-term needs.

Future capital investments will emphasize paving of major streets and bridge replacements, as well as continued development of parks, major equipment addition/replacement, drainage and water improvements, and facilities to meet needs identified in the space-needs study. The Police Department must be expanded to meet needs created by growth. Additional public works facilities are needed, and a new administration facility. Land is being acquired for the Walnut Creek Regional Park, which emphasizes preservation of natural areas along Walnut Creek. New neighborhood parks are being established by land dedications under the Parkland Ordinance.

Urbandale recognizes that its population has matured. The 2000 Census showed that a majority of families do not include children under the age of 18, reflecting a sustained trend that is expected to continue for at least the next

decade. The number of senior households will increase faster than the number of younger households. While families with children will always be a major influence in Urbandale, that suburban stereotype is no longer accurate for the community as a whole. Urbandale recognizes that there may be more demand for cultural and recreational facilities and programming that are less age-specific or are oriented towards older age groups. Urbandale will carefully evaluate this probability when planning and constructing new facilities, so it will not fall behind and need to expend more to catch up with the demand.

With the aging of the population, active sports and other programs oriented towards younger age groups are expected to remain relatively static or possibly even experience a decline in participation for a period of time. However, Urbandale's future population and household count will eventually more than double, so it will necessary to nearly double the capacity of active sports facilities and programming. Urbandale will acquire land for this future need in the immediate future to obtain an optimal location at a reasonable cost.

The City has been able to "share" school facilities for indoor sports programming and adult education, improving efficiency, but there may be proportionally fewer opportunities for sharing in the future. Most growth will occur in "new" school attendance areas that will have fewer, more centralized facilities because new school facilities are usually designed to serve larger geographic areas rather than the "neighborhood" model followed in the Urbandale School District. At this time the only new school facility planned in Urbandale is an elementary school the Waukee School District has acquired a site for on 156th Street. The boundaries between the Urbandale and Dallas Center-Grimes Districts have also recently been changed, with the residential area between the Interstate and County Line having been switched from the Dallas Center-Grimes District to the Urbandale District. The demographic projections for this area suggest that an elementary school will be needed in this area as well, providing an additional opportunity for shared programming. However, even with these additional facilities Urbandale's programming will experience more competition for space with other jurisdictions as well as with school programming than has historically been the case.

While the possibilities for new facilities provide new opportunities for cooperation, the relative lack of facilities to serve the significant population growth will create more need for a community center west of the Interstate. Preferred westerly locations for a community center would be the Walnut Creek Regional Park or in the 142nd and Douglas village center. There is limited site area in the 86th and Douglas municipal complex, as an alternative choice.

Twelve **PRESERVATION AND REVITALIZATION**

Most of Urbandale is in good shape and fairly new, and there are no blighted areas. However, some areas were poorly planned, or showed signs of wear and deferred



maintenance that could lead to larger problems. Sound neighborhoods need to be preserved, and re-energized by revitalization.

OBJECTIVES

- Rejuvenate older residential areas and structures
- Improve the vitality and appeal of older commercial areas
- Correct infrastructure deficiencies
- Eliminate conditions that impair economic development
- Downzone residences with inappropriate commercial zoning to reflect current conditions and potential, and create transitions between commercial and residential areas
- Improve visual character and promote neighborhood identity
- Improve and expand pedestrian/bicycle circulation in some older neighborhoods
- Create and expand parks and open space in some older neighborhoods

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

1. Revitalize the "Downtown Urbandale Neighborhood" commercial district.

Revitalization of the Downtown Urbandale Neighborhood (DUN) will continue to focus on expanding neighborhood services. There appear to be additional opportunities for neighborhood retail without major redevelopment.

Neighborhood retail could replace other businesses that have chosen the area because of inexpensive, available space, rather than the location. Retailers may pay higher rents. Therefore, the number of neighborhood businesses may increase, and there may be some building expansion. Redevelopment and expansion will be contained within the existing retail zoning. If Urbandale participates directly in redevelopment, it will encourage a more compact retail development that will function more in the manner of a shopping center instead of free-standing strip development.

The amount of paving will be reduced and landscaping increased as recommended by the DUN Master Plan as redevelopment occurs. To accelerate change, the City may provide financial assistance or construct alterations with the business' permission. Much of the development in the DUN area preceded requirements for landscaping and buffering. Deliveries, trash, storage, etc. may not be properly located to mitigate the activity and noise. Legally nonconforming conditions will be eliminated when properties are redeveloped.

Merle Hay Mall will be encouraged to increase its orientation to Douglas Avenue, so it will become a more positive influence for satellite development along Douglas Avenue. The area has been "downstream" from the Mall, with the Douglas entrance being somewhat of a "backdoor" entry, and it has detrimental to other retail in the vicinity along Douglas. The renovation of the anchor space now occupied by Famous Barr has been a positive step, since it orients towards Douglas and has primary exterior entries that encourage use of the Douglas entrance. Redevelopment of the former Montgomery Ward auto center, including a restaurant and other undetermined reconstruction, is also expected to have a positive effect. Greater utilization of the Douglas access provides an opportunity to draw Mall shoppers to the DUN retail, which could make the Mall a very positive influence on the commercial development in the area, as well as providing additional services to the DUN residents.

A study will be prepared to define the market feasibility before the City initiates any significant property redevelopment. It will seek private investors to be partners in the redevelopment with the objective of limiting public participation to being a catalyst.

The successful new businesses in the DUN demonstrate the economic power of the surrounding neighborhoods. However, the neighborhoods are mature so the market is likely to remain stable rather than experiencing substantial growth. If continued growth of the DUN commercial area becomes a future policy, it must attract purchasing power from beyond the immediate neighborhoods. Consideration could be given to specialty retail. Entertainment uses (especially theaters and restaurants) have served as "anchors" for specialty developments in other cities and could be a means of

expanding the DUN market area beyond the immediate neighborhood, but this strategy will not be pursued.

The commercial development along Douglas between 64th and 71st Streets, and along 70th Street between Oliver Smith Drive and Madison Avenue, was the City's primary commercial area until the 1970's. It now provides primarily neighborhood services, but there are still some businesses with a broader market. City revitalization efforts have stimulated private redevelopment and revitalization since this policy was adopted in the 1988 Comprehensive Plan, particularly new construction around 70th Street and Douglas Avenue. There has also been other new construction along Douglas Avenue, and retailers filling vacant storefronts or replacing other tenants.

2. Improve the 70th and Douglas commercial area.

Urbandale may acquire property and construct off-street parking to increase the amount of parking in the area. Some properties are too small to provide sufficient parking. 69th Street, and possibly other streets, may be closed to create additional off-street parking and other redevelopment opportunities. Street closures may also reduce "cut-through" traffic on the neighborhood's grid streets.

Facade improvements, consolidation of access, on-site landscaping, and other improvements will be promoted through regulation of redevelopment, and perhaps with public incentives. The City may offer incentives for improvements to older, existing commercial buildings in the DUN by partnering with private investors. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is one possible funding source: it is currently used to rebate taxes on improvements.

The 70th Street vicinity appears to be the best location for additional neighborhood retail. To provide additional opportunities for smaller businesses, City may need to assemble individual lots into a larger parcel for redevelopment into a retail center. Otherwise, smaller retailers may not be able to locate or expand in the area, except to replace other tenants. It costs more to redevelop existing properties that retain at least some economic viability. Corporate enterprises may absorb the higher costs, but smaller retailers may not be able to.

3. Change the zoning to reflect current conditions and potential, and provide appropriate transitions.

Some residences on 64th, 66th, 67th, 68th, and 69th Streets just north or south of Douglas, and on 60th north of Meredith, are zoned "C-N" for retail commercial. A residence is a legally nonconforming use under commercial zoning, which may impair sales or discourage reinvestment. These single-family residences properties should be downzoned to residential zoning or the "O-R" Transitional district, although the City will not initiate such downzoning in the immediate future unless there is support from at least some of the affected property owners. The "O-R" District is a transitional zoning allowing a mix of compatible commercial and residential uses.

The existing apartments northeast of 64th and Douglas are legally non-conforming because they are zoned "C-N". They should be downzoned to a multi-family classification. It would be beneficial to downzone some of the commercial areas along Douglas Avenue, to concentrate the retail into the 70th and Douglas area and strengthen its attraction by facilitating cross marketing between the individual businesses.

The retail zoning was set about 300 feet north and south of Douglas Avenue about forty years ago without considering ownership or land use. Much of the retail zoning is inappropriate because of the ownership pattern and established residential uses. The fact that decades have passed since the zoning was established is a strong indication that there is no market for commercial development on those properties, particularly given the fact that the area primarily serves the mature neighborhoods rather than a larger, expanding market area.

However, many commercial properties on Douglas Avenue are comparatively shallow. Urbandale will rezone residential parcels fronting on the side streets for commercial use if they can be incorporated into development fronting on Douglas Avenue, proper buffering is provided, and traffic is controlled.

4. Investigate and monitor the need for an incentive or assistance program within the mature neighborhoods.

Household surveys or pilot programs will be used to determine the demand or need for incentive or assistance programs. Such programs will emphasize loans instead of grants and be directed towards upgrading electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems, insulation, exterior weatherproofing, and structural and other significant repairs to preserve the housing stock and eliminate "functional obsolescence" over cosmetic interior remodeling or expansion. Upgrades would make older residences more appealing and competitive with new housing if they have similar amenities, since existing housing is less costly

per square-foot than new construction. In some cases safety could be improved, such as by eliminating wiring/service inadequacies and adding Ground Fault Interrupter (GFI) protection.

Incentives can encourage targeted reinvestment. Some concerns can be resolved more quickly than is possible with a regulatory approach. Incentives will be limited to low-interest loans, interest buy down, and tax abatement. Loans may be arranged through local financial institutions, with public participation to buy down the interest rate. Most Urbandale households do not qualify for State and Federal funds, if any are available. Programs will be administered by a partnership or contract with another governmental jurisdiction/agency, or financial institutions or other arrangement with limited public sector participation, in lieu of City staff or new City agency to handle contractor registration/management, design assistance, project eligibility determination, etc.

Sidewalk installation may be a condition of program participation.

5. Emphasize property maintenance to prevent blight and serious deterioration.

The Property Maintenance Code was adopted to implement this policy from the 1988 Comprehensive Plan. Urbandale will continue to enforce the Code for exterior maintenance of owner-occupied residences as well as rental properties on a complaint basis, as long as more proactive measures do not become necessary. Enforcement will continue throughout the City.

Urbandale will inform the Caring Corps regarding assistance for homeowners who demonstrate inability to provide adequate property maintenance due to significant financial hardship, and may assist in seeking discrete financial aid.

6. Evaluate and correct problems relating to street patterns or traffic.

The DUN Master Plan recommended that unnecessary curb cuts and street accesses be eliminated along Douglas Avenue and 70th Street. Urbandale will continue to eliminate accesses as redevelopment occurs, to implement current access spacing standards to the extent possible. However, exceptions will be allowed on a case-by-case basis because of parcel sizes and shape, and constraints created by existing improvements.

The offset in the 64th Street and Douglas Avenue intersection will not be aligned as recommended by the DUN Master Plan unless redevelopment provides an opportunity that minimize expense and disruption of businesses and residences. The costs to realign the existing intersection are not justified

now. All or part of three or four properties would have to be acquired, in addition to reconstructing the street and some utilities.

If the conditions at 64th and Douglas become unacceptable, alternatives to realignment will be considered. There are numerous driveways near the 64th Street intersection, and Douglas carries a significant volume of traffic relative to its capacity in this area. This combination may lead to "weaving" problems and conflicts between vehicles competing for gaps in the traffic stream. Therefore, some problems may be resolved by closing or consolidating accesses. The Douglas Avenue median and left-turn lane could be extended, increasing its capacity and reducing conflicts by controlling driveway access. Other options may include closing part of 64th Street between Douglas and Madison, traffic diverters, or speed reduction measures to address cut-through traffic on 64th Street from Douglas to Aurora.

The grid street pattern in some areas may allow traffic to cut through neighborhoods. Urbandale will minimize congestion on major streets to reduce the temptation to use local streets. Where desired by neighborhood residents, Urbandale will consider traffic diversion or calming measures. Medians or other measures along the major streets can limit access to the neighborhood street, traffic diverters can be installed in local street intersections, or various speed reduction measures can be employed.

7. Create and expand parks and improve pedestrian circulation.

Murphy Park will not be expanded to east/southeast to the extent shown by the DUN Master Plan. It will be extended some to the east if possible through dedication or negotiated acquisition. An open space corridor will be acquired along Rocklyn Creek for a pedestrian trail from 64th Street to Murphy and Rocklyn Parks if possible through negotiated acquisition, but acquisition will not be actively pursued. Multiple owners, flooding, and topographic conditions limit the potential expansion.

An option to acquisition is to strategically install landscaping or other visual barriers to limit and control views, dividing a park area into smaller segments as is done in amusement parks and some urban parks. This could create the impression that Murphy Park, and any other small park, is larger than it actually is. Plantings can also increase wildlife habitat.

In the area east of 70th Street and between Douglas and Aurora, the Parks and Open Space Plan recommends that one or more residential properties be acquired through negotiated purchase to create a small park. In the long term, Lions Park may be expanded east to 70th and Aurora, to create a major community park in this part of Urbandale. Lions Park is heavily used. However, the expansion will not be practical for a long time because the homes

between 70th and 71st Streets are in very good condition, unless they are acquired and relocated elsewhere in the vicinity to replace homes that are older and may not be suited to revitalization.

Sidewalks will be installed under the citywide sidewalk program. Some of the street rights-of-way in DUN are narrow, and some properties have "side slopes" that may not be conducive to sidewalk installation. However, construction would usually be possible on at least one side of every street, perhaps with some deviations from standard specifications.

8. Maintain adequate infrastructure in mature neighborhoods.

Major infrastructure upgrades have been completed in recent years. Several sewer trunks have been reconstructed, new water mains installed to improve water pressure and fire protection, and intersections have been improved.

No additional sanitary sewer or water main rehabilitation or replacements are planned now. However, some sites may require significant infrastructure improvements to support redevelopment with higher housing density or more intense commercial use. Those expenditures might not be necessary in other locations or at a lesser scope, so redevelopment proposals should be carefully evaluated to ensure the infrastructure is adequate.

The storm sewer system in the DUN is limited, so any significant increase in impervious surface must be carefully evaluated.

9. Promote new housing construction in existing neighborhoods, particularly DUN.

The mixed-use development (commercial first floor, residential above) suggested by the DUN Master Plan will be allowed if it becomes feasible, but not required. Zoning regulations will be modified if necessary to remove regulatory barriers. However, there does not appear to be any current demand for mixed-use developments since land is comparatively cheap, there are many housing alternatives with broader market appeal, and commuting is comparatively easy.

New single-family housing will be accommodated to diversify the age of the housing stock and increase neighborhood stability, but Urbandale will not participate financially. There are limited opportunities for infill on "double lots" that can be divided, and may be a few opportunities where the land value is a high percentage of the total property value. Generally, replacement on a one-for-one basis is not financially viable now.

The DUN Plan also suggested that multi-family housing be added to provide alternatives to single-family housing. It will be allowed at a moderate density and on a limited basis as a transitional use if adequate infrastructure capacity is available, but will not be encouraged unless it is senior housing. Urbandale may participate in redevelopment for senior housing to provide alternatives for DUN residents, since a significant percentage of the households are seniors.

10. Improve the major streetscapes and gateways in the DUN.

The Douglas Avenue, 70th Street, and Urbandale Avenue streetscapes were improved with distinctive lighting, sidewalk treatment, banners, and street furniture; street trees and other landscaping to visually distinguish the area. Most of the streetscape improvements are public investments on public property. Landscaping will continue to be added in landscaped setbacks on private property as redevelopment occurs, because there is not room in the rights-of-way. Overhead wires will be eliminated to the extent possible, but burial of existing lines has not been a major public investment objective, in part because the Douglas corridor includes a high-voltage line that is very expensive to bury or relocate.

A "gateway" will be created on Douglas Avenue, to define Urbandale's edge and "passage" into the City. The gateway will repeat the streetscape elements, and will probably include concrete pavers and banner poles within the median as well as a fountain on the north side of the street. Lighting intensity, along with banner poles to provide vertical definition, and the entry feature, can be used to emphasize the edge and draw attention to the streetscape elements beyond the gateway. Gateways may be placed on Urbandale and Aurora Avenues as recommended by the DUN Plan at some future date, but are not programmed at this time.

The streetscape improvements created an image for the neighborhood, since many people pass through the neighborhood on these streets. The Olmsted-Urban house; 70th and Douglas intersection; Trolley Park; and Lion's Park are important elements that will be promoted to reinforce the historic importance of the DUN.

Thirteen COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Urbandale strives to be a community in every sense of the word. People become involved in school functions, recreational programs, service organizations, and government. Urbandale wants its residents to be proud of living in Urbandale.

OBJECTIVES

- Enhance Urbandale's visual appeal since it contributes to community pride, identity, and value
- Continue to promote citizen involvement in and enhance access to community programs



POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

1. Provide attractive major streetscapes.

Douglas Avenue/Parkway is Urbandale's "main street". Douglas Parkway will be constructed as a parkway in new areas, with a 28-foot wide median and intensive landscaping. In the developed community, the "rural" cross-section will be eliminated by filling the ditches and berming the median, constructing curbs and storm sewers, and landscaping the medians and "parking" to convert it to a parkway design. In the Downtown Urbandale Neighborhood (DUN), the Douglas right-of-way was too narrow for a landscaped median. However, the streetscape was still redeveloped to give Douglas a unique identity, with a "period" theme reflecting the DUN's historic significance to Urbandale. The "candy cane" shape of the street light fixtures in the DUN will be repeated in modern fixtures along the rest of Douglas Avenue/Parkway to provide continuity along Urbandale's "main street".

Residents support economic development, but do not want Urbandale to look like an industrial city. Retail development was allowed along 100th Street and NW Urbandale Drive for this reason. Economic development is strongly associated with the Interstate and major streets, so high levels of site and architectural design criteria will be required for all economic development to create and maintain a suburban park-like or campus character.

Roadways will continue to be mowed regularly, and debris picked up at least semi-annually. Street trees are being planted along major streets where allowed by utility locations and right-of-way width. Additional right-of-way will be required along the first block of new collector streets, and improvements required to create entries that provide a sense of neighborhood identity.

Travelers and visitors get their initial and perhaps only impression of the City from the major streets. They may only see Urbandale from the Interstate and the arterial streets. Residents may not be familiar with the intimate qualities of every neighborhood, only what they see from the main streets. The perceptions derived from the major streetscapes may determine whether a business or family decides to invest in Urbandale.

2. Continue to require a high level of site and landscape design for development and revitalization.

Site development standards will remain high to produce quality environs that are in demand and maintain their value. The standards can attract and retain quality investment by reducing risk elements.

Urbandale will continue to require landscaping, limit outdoor storage and control outdoor activity. The City will require site designs that minimize traffic congestion, respect infrastructure capacities, and consider adjoining properties. The Zoning Ordinance will be amended to establish citywide architectural criteria for nonresidential construction, with the primary focus on materials rather than architectural style. Monument signage will also be required Citywide, with case-by-case exceptions for circumstances that may not adapt to such signage.

Residential building setbacks have been increased to minimums of 30 feet on local streets; 35 feet on collector streets; and 50 feet on arterial streets. Greater lot depths and buffers have been required along arterial streets, to provide a better living environment by mitigating impacts from traffic and other activity, and fencing limited within the street setbacks in new areas to provide a more attractive streetscape.



Monument signs and architectural standards currently apply to a significant percentage of the City because of planned unit development or conditional zoning. Landscaped setbacks for parking were increased to implement a strategy from the 1988 Comprehensive Plan, and landscaped open space requirements structured to require a majority of the open space along the street where it has a significant affect on the streetscape, softening the hard surfaces of buildings and paving and instilling a park quality.

3. Provide facilities and programs that foster community spirit.

Schools have always played a major role in suburbs because most households included children. Now, more and more "empty nester" households do not have this traditional connection to the community. Therefore, adult education and recreation facilities and programs must help fill the void and encourage citizens to participate and identify with the community.

Urbandale will expand its open space and trails system into new neighborhoods, and connect it to regional trail facilities in Central Iowa. The trails are an example of a recreational facility that transcends age and neighborhood boundaries, and can be used to promote community pride. Recreational programming will continue to make strong use of volunteers, and may be able to draw more upon the talents of seniors to compensate for busy households that have increasingly less leisure time.

Developers could be encouraged to limit fence height through covenants and to use development designs that enhance neighborhood socialization.

4. Attempt to match school district boundaries to the City boundaries, and promote facility sharing.

Schools are important centers for families with school-age children, and primary sources of community pride and stability that continue for "empty-nester" households. Optimally, school district boundaries would match City boundaries for this reason, but the City does not have any influence over school matters and is not likely to achieve this policy in full. If there are opportunities for boundary adjustments, they will be supported. District boundaries may be less significant in the future because of open enrollment.

To help bridge school district boundaries, Urbandale will continue to promote facility sharing.

5. Promote unique developments.

Urbandale will encourage the village centers to have unique architecture and site design to promote community identity, and may provide incentives to

obtain especially unique, high-quality development. At the same time, the architectural style and building materials must be traditional and not "trendy". Materials should create an image of quality, durability, and tradition that is conducive to high-end retail marketing. Restaurant uses could be clustered, particularly "fast-food", in the manner of a food court rather than a typical commercial strip, although scattering is currently promoted to reduce adverse traffic impacts. Pedestrian systems should be strongly integrated into the village centers to connect them to nearby neighborhoods and the open space/trail systems.

