



CITY OF DONNELSON

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040

Adopted on: November 13, 2023

Prepared by:  Southeast Iowa Regional
Planning Commission

Acknowledgements

Without the support of many dedicated individuals and organizations, this plan would not be possible. We thank them for their hard work, engagement, expertise and encouragement throughout the Comprehensive Planning process.

CITY OFFICIALS AND STAFF

Rebecca Schau, *City Clerk*
David Ellingboe, *Mayor*
Brian Moeller, *City Council/Mayor Pro-Tem*
Jennifer Estrada, *City Council*
Jeremy Marshall, *City Council*
David Newton, *City Council*
Selissa Weber, *City Council*

STEERING COMMITTEE

Emily Benjamin, *Lee County Economic Development Group*
Andy Crozier, *Central Lee Community School District*
Jeanne Doyle, *Arista Appraisals*
Brent Koller, *Donnellson Ag Land Owner*
David Newton, *City of Donnellson*
Brian Schmitz, *Schmitz Funeral Home*
Justin Schau, *Building Trades Instructor, Central Lee Community School District*
Kate Wells, *Pilot Grove Savings Bank*

SEIRPC STAFF

Zach James, *Assistant Director*
Jarred Lassiter, *Senior Planner*
Kansha Tiwari, *Regional Plans Administrator*
Jordan Frahm, *Regional Planner*

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A low-angle photograph of a large, grey, cylindrical water tower against a cloudy sky. The tower is supported by a lattice of metal beams. The word "DONNELSON" is partially visible in green letters on the side of the tower. A white rectangular box with a thin border is positioned at the top of the page, containing the word "INTRODUCTION" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

INTRODUCTION

A white square box containing the number "01" in a large, light blue, sans-serif font.

01

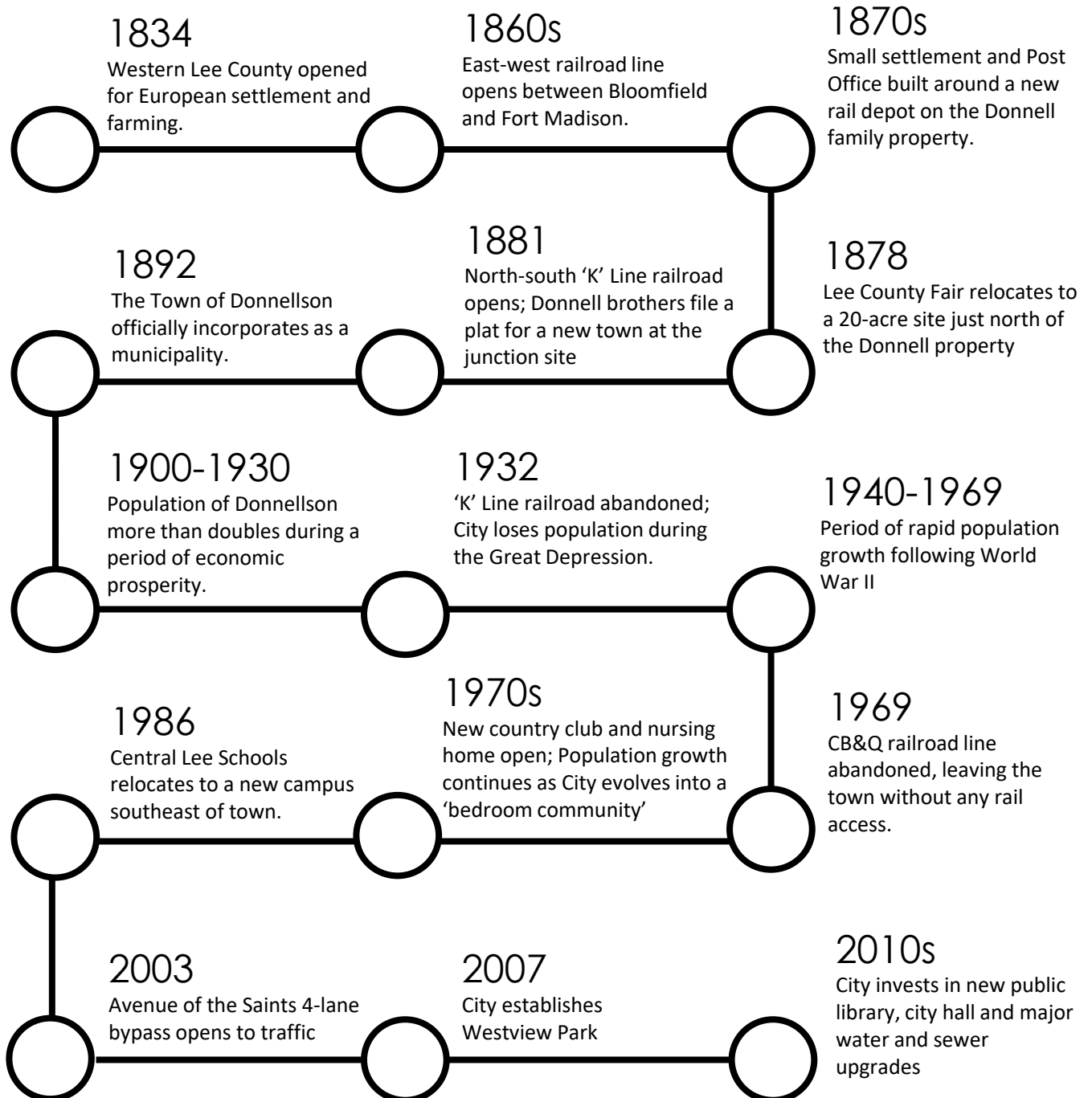
This section summarizes a year long planning process by providing details on community engagement and outreach. This section also discusses the historic development of the City and delivers background context relating to Donnellson's demographics and projections needed for recommendations of future growth.

DONNELSON THEN, NOW & BEYOND



DONNELLSON THEN, NOW, AND BEYOND

This timeline highlights notable events, trends and milestones for Donnellson over the past two centuries, as it evolved from a simple railroad water supply station to a thriving rural community at a major highway crossroads.



DONNELLSON THEN, NOW, AND BEYOND

EARLY HISTORY

European settlement in the Southeast Iowa region dates back to the 1700s, with the arrival of fur trappers and traders, many of whom were French. In the early decades of the 19th Century, the Midwest gradually opened up to permanent settlement by Americans arriving from New England. In 1824, the Half-Breed Tract was established by treaty to cover the triangular area between the Des Moines and Mississippi Rivers near their confluence. It was intended to be reserved for the mixed-race children of Native Americans and European trappers and traders, and the slightly angled north boundary of the Tract passed just 1 mile south of present-day Donnellson (near the current US 218 interchange). The treaty was repealed in 1834, opening up all of Lee County for European settlement.

The 1993 book, *Lee County, Iowa: A Pictorial History* refers to Donnellson as 'the Newcomer', as it was founded much later than the County's other cities. Keokuk, Fort Madison, West Point and Montrose had all been founded in the 1830s, with Franklin and St. Paul soon to follow. The western part of the county was largely settled by farmers, and land ownership remained in the form of large tracts of 40 acres or more. In 1846, Mormon pioneers from nearby Nauvoo, Illinois, passed through the area on their way to form a new colony in Utah.



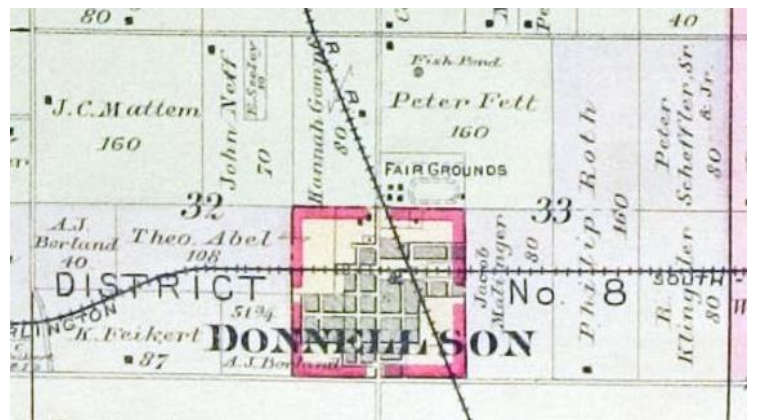
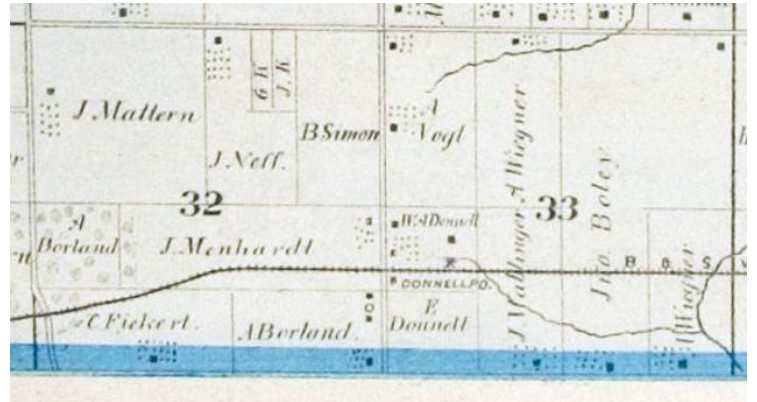
In the 1860s, the Burlington and Southwestern Railroad (later to become the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, or CB&Q) began planning a new east-west railroad line between Bloomfield and Fort Madison. While 3 prospective routes were considered, early speculation favored the middle route in far southern Franklin Township, and a local farmer named William Donnell (1816-1899) strategically purchased 40 acres of land where the proposed route would cross the ridge that forms a drainage divide between the Des Moines and Mississippi Rivers. His speculative purchase paid off, and out of necessity, the Railroad built a depot to supply fuel and water at this high elevation point. An early commercial district sprouted up around the depot, and the 1874 plat map of Lee County shows a Post Office labeled as 'Donnell P.O.' at this location, with adjacent 40-acre tracts owned by William Donnell and his brother Eston.

In 1878, the Lee County Fair relocated to a 20-acre site just north of the Donnell property, after previously using sites in West Point and Fort Madison for its fairgrounds. The site was selected due to its central location within the county, and helped contribute to Donnellson's reputation as the 'Heart of Lee County'.

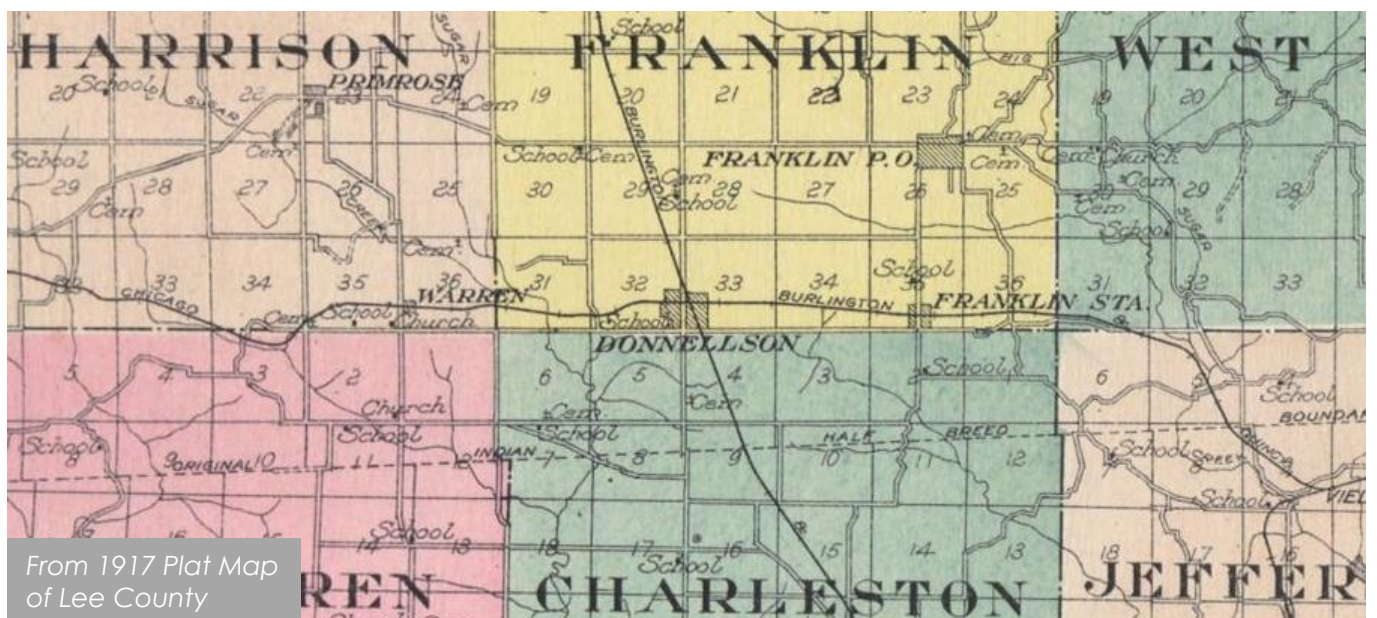
DONNELSON THEN, NOW, AND BEYOND

In 1881, a new north-south rail line was established by the St. Louis and Southwestern Railroad between Mount Pleasant and Keokuk. Later absorbed by the CB&Q Railroad, and often known informally as the 'K-Line', it was intentionally built at an angle to follow the gentle terrain along the aforementioned drainage divide. Accordingly, it crossed the existing east-west railroad line on the Donnell property, forming a junction between the two.

Sensing the great economic opportunity this offered, the Donnell brothers platted a new town called Donnellson adjacent to the new junction on May 21, 1881. The plat covered 50 acres of land, which formed an inverted 'L' shape, and included all of present-day downtown business district, the residential blocks immediately surrounding it, and the present-day site of the grain elevator. square-shaped area covering 160 acres at the south end of Franklin Township, with half on either side of Main Street.

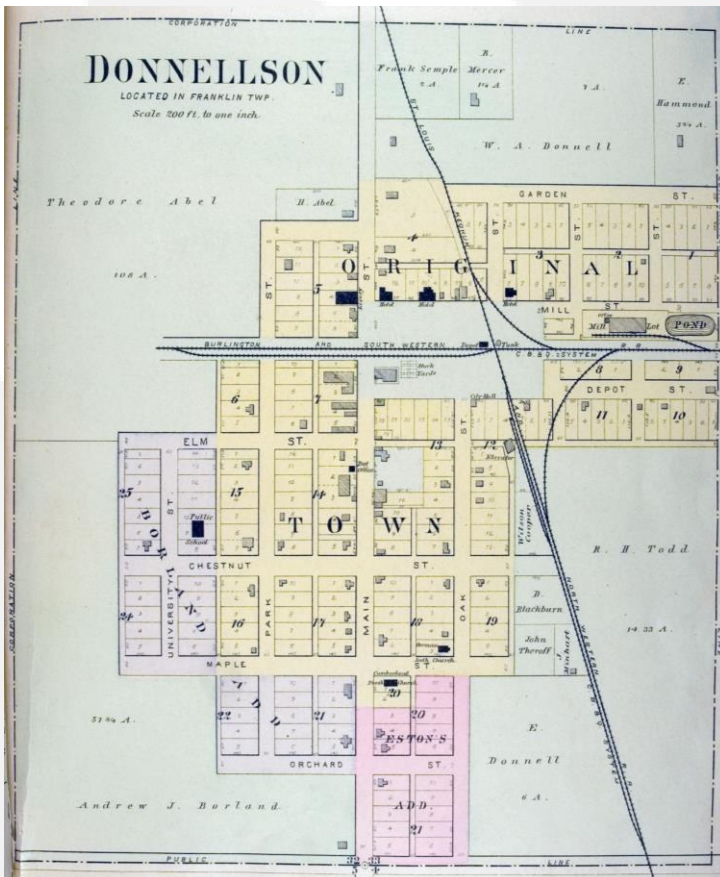


Comparison between the 1874 and 1897 plat maps of Lee County (before and after the founding and incorporation of Donnellson)

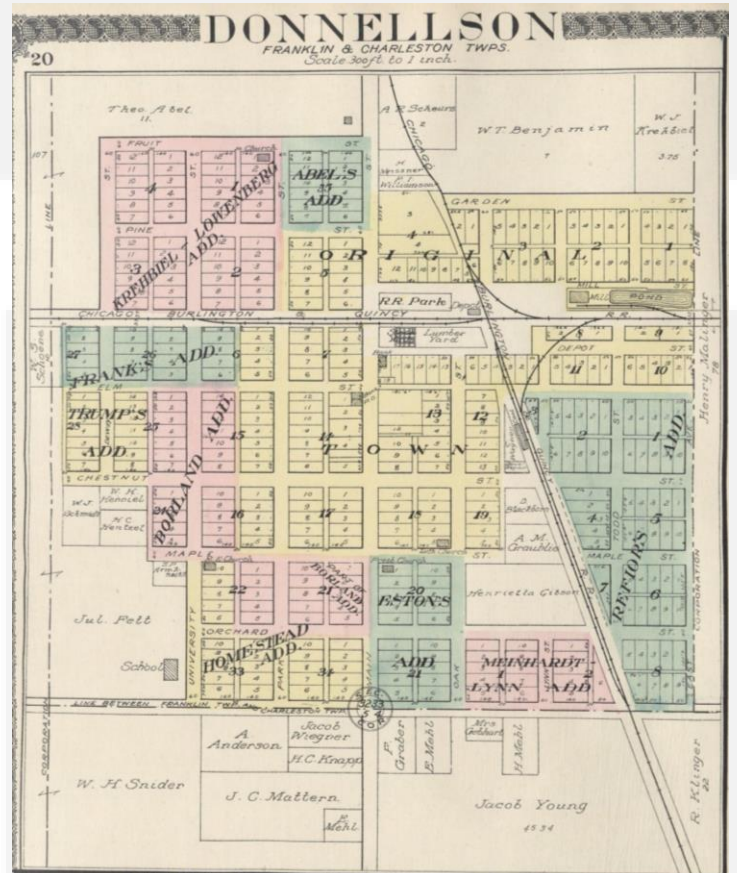


From 1917 Plat Map of Lee County

DONNELSON THEN, NOW, AND BEYOND



1897 plat map



1917 plat map

The new town grew quickly through the 1880s, but initially lacked its own formal government structure. All that changed when it was officially incorporated as the Town of Donnellson on October 25, 1892. At the time of incorporation, the Town comprised a square-shaped area covering 160 acres at the south end of Franklin Township, with

Over the next two decades, various public services were introduced, including streetlights, telephone service, and a public water system. Early plat maps there were 3 hotels along Mill Street, along with a depot, mill, grain elevator, stockyards, lumber yard and livery. In 1900, the first US Census taken after incorporation showed that Donnellson had a population of 270.

DONNELSON THEN, NOW, AND BEYOND

20TH CENTURY PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

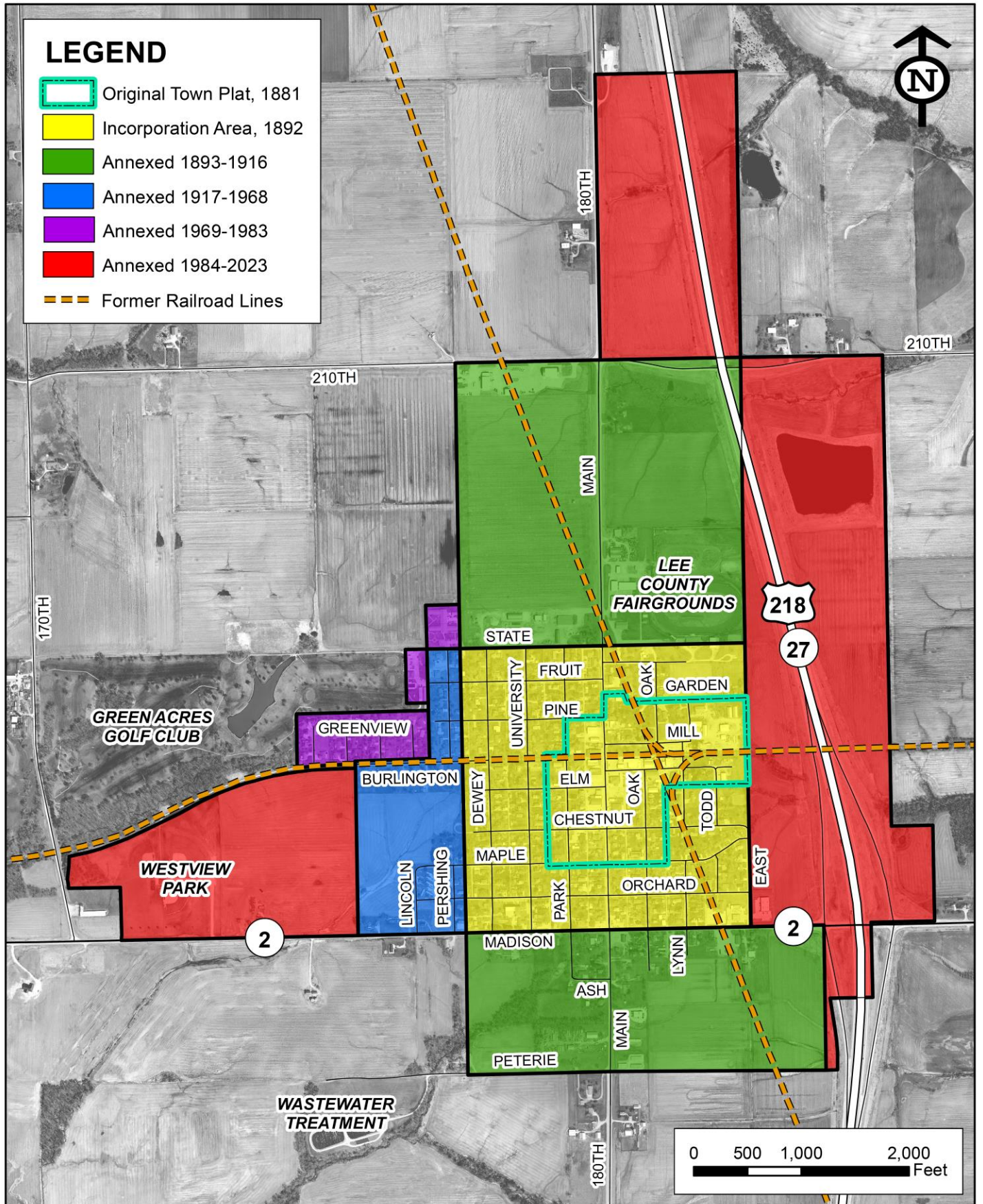
Donnellson's economy boomed in the early decades of the 20th Century, as the presence of the two railroad lines attracted further industry, and local businesses and public services were needed to support the workers and their families. Accordingly, the town's population more than doubled between 1900 and 1930, going from 270 people to 581. It also had the highest rate of growth of any Lee County municipality in the 1900s, and the second fastest rate in the 1910s and 1920s. For each of those decades, it grew by over 20%, while Lee County never exceeded 10%. Home and business construction was aided in no small part by the Donnellson Lumber Company, a materials supplier that continues to serve the region over a century later.

Civic amenities also continued to expand during this period. In 1915, a combined elementary and high school building was constructed at University and Orchard Streets, two blocks south of the original, smaller school. There were also 4 churches established in the town, representing the Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations.



In the early 1900s, two large annexations were made to the north and south of the original town boundary, increasing its size from 1/4 of a square mile to 2/3 of a square mile. The land to the north involved the existing Lee County Fairgrounds property, while the land to the south was the city's first extension into Charleston Township (with Madison Street serving as the township boundary). Despite this large increase in total size, the vast majority of residential and commercial development over the next 5 decades was contained within the town's original 1892 footprint, and proceeded gradually outward from the center. A subsequent annexation pushed the town's boundaries westward, and involved the World War I-influenced Pershing Avenue and Victory Park Addition. The map on the following page illustrates how the city has physically expanded over time.

CITY EXPANSION OVER TIME (1892-2023)



DONNELSON THEN, NOW, AND BEYOND

In 1932, the town was dealt a serious blow when the 'K-Line' railroad between Mount Pleasant and Keokuk was abandoned, leaving only the original east-west CB&Q line. This, plus the national impact of the Great Depression caused the town to lose population for the first time in the 1930s, by a total of 74 people (about 10% of the total from 1930).



The town's fortunes improved in the years following World War II, as the population resumed its upward climb in the 1940s, and continued in the same direction through 1980. Donnellsion was once again the fastest growing town in the county in the 1950s, rising from 589 to 709 (an increase of 20%). This also made Donnellsion the county's 4th largest municipality, as it had surpassed Montrose for the first time. A surviving placard from 1959 pronounced Donnellsion as a 'Planned Progress Town'. While details of this designation are sketchy today, it still serves as a reliable assessment of the town's fortunes during this period.

Much of this growth can be attributed to the emergence of 'bedroom communities' in the rural areas surrounding the much larger cities of Fort Madison and Keokuk. As the manufacturing-based economies of those cities began to decline with the loss or relocation of jobs, many residents chose to relocate to small towns nearby, such as Donnellsion, West Point and Montrose.

1969 presented another serious challenge to the town, when the remaining CB&Q railroad line was abandoned, leaving Donnellsion without any rail access less than a century after its founding as a direct result of their presence. This occurred only 6 years after the present grain elevator was constructed (in place of an older, smaller structure). While this had a negative impact on the town's commercial and industrial prospects, residential growth continued unabated.

After a slight dip in the 1960s, the town saw its largest numerical increase of any decade in the 1970s, up by 174 people from 798 to 972. Much of this was accounted for by the development of many new homes in three new subdivisions – the Buena Vista Addition on the northwest side, and the Hennie's Addition on the southeast side. Another important factor was the opening of the Donnellsion Care Center nursing home, and two apartment complexes for senior citizens, Southview and Fairview. The nursing home also provided the town with one of its largest employers, with the skilled nursing staff employed to care for the elderly residents.

On July 1, 1975, as a result of a statewide policy change on the classification of municipalities with under 2,000 people, the Town of Donnellsion became the City of Donnellsion.

DONNELSON THEN, NOW, AND BEYOND

The Green Acres Country Club opened in 1971. This complex includes an 80-acre golf course, clubhouse with restaurant, and swimming pool. It also spurred the development of the adjacent Greenview Terrace residential subdivision, built in phases from 1976 to 2008. This development was served by the town's first sewer lift station and a new street built along the path of the old CB&Q railroad line, appropriately named Burlington Street.



The problems faced by the region's larger cities quickly expanded to their smaller neighbors and rural areas in the 1980s, as a result of the Farm Crisis that impacted all of Iowa, and caused the state to lose 5% of its population – the largest single decade loss, and one of only two decades in its history to see a negative trend. Donnellson remained comparatively resilient, with its 1980s population loss of 3% being smaller than the other four Lee County cities above 500 people.

In 1986, the Central Lee School District closed the existing schools in Donnellson and Montrose, and relocated all facilities to a new complex on Highway 218, midway between the two cities. Since then, the old Donnellson school has been purchased and rehabilitated by a local resident, and now serves as the home of a law office, preschool, and athletic center.

In the 1990s, Donnellson was one of only 2 cities in Lee County to see a growth in population (2.4%), and up until now, this was the last decade to see an increase in population. This coincided with the westward expansion of Greenview Terrace, with construction continuing into the 2000s.

In 2003, the City witnessed its most important non-railroad transportation development, when a bypass of US Highway 218 was constructed around the east side of the city, and the 4-lane Avenue of the Saints was soon after open to traffic between the Twin Cities and St. Louis. Around this time, the City annexed a sizable amount of acreage along the path of the new highway. Since then, a new gas station/convenience store, funeral home, and dollar store have opened in the vicinity of the Highway 2 interchange with 218. Then in 2007, the City purchased nearly 30 acres of farmland to the west of town, which was then developed into Westview Park, with multiple athletic fields and a trail connection to nearby neighborhoods.

The early 21st Century brought several noticeable changes to Downtown Donnellson. One was the closure of the last remaining grocery store in town, which has since been converted to a dance studio. Then in 2015, the City's public library relocated to a newly constructed building on Main Street, which includes a new museum dedicated to Richard Proenneke, a well-known naturalist and writer who grew up in nearby Primrose. Soon after, the City Hall and Police Station were relocated from downtown to an office building on Pershing Avenue. Also in the 2010s, the City undertook two major utility system upgrades – the modernization of its existing wastewater treatment plant, and a switch in water source from a local well to Rathbun Rural Water.

What is Comprehensive Plan?

Donnellson Comprehensive Plan 2040 is an update to the Comprehensive Plan that was adopted over 20 years ago. The plan provides direction for the City and local officials to set policies, complete needed projects, and make land use decisions. Essentially, this plan will serve as a road map for future development in the community and provide a vision for community priorities and public investments for the next 15 to 20 years.

LEGAL BASIS

The legal basis for a comprehensive plan is found in Section 414 of the Code of Iowa. This section allows cities to adopt land use regulations to promote the “health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the community”. A comprehensive plan provides a framework and basis for existing and future land use regulations which help balance uses of private property with the welfare of the community.

IOWA SMART PLANNING

In April 2010, the Iowa State Legislature passed the Iowa Smart Planning Act which articulates ten Iowa Smart Planning Principles for application in the development of a local comprehensive plan. This plan has been created with these ten principles in mind as it applies to Louisa County. The ten principles are as follows:

- Collaboration
- Clean Renewable Energy
- Efficiency, Transparency and Consistency
- Occupational Diversity
- Community Character
- Natural Resources and Agricultural Protection
- Sustainable Design
- Transportation Diversity



Plan Organization

Donnellson Comprehensive Plan 2040 is structured into five distinct parts that synthesize the major findings and recommendations. Throughout the two-year planning process, technical presentations were generated to provide baseline information related to demographics, economic development, housing, education, quality of life etc.

01 INTRODUCTION	<p>This section summarizes a year long planning process by providing details on community engagement and outreach. This section discusses the historic development of the Community and delivers background context relating to Donnellson's demographics and projections needed for recommendations of future growth.</p>
02 VISION AND VALUES	<p>This chapter establishes overarching direction for City Plan and highlights 'big ideas' that underpin other parts of the plan.</p>
03 COMMUNITY ELEMENTS	<p>In order to develop a viable plan for a community's future, it is essential to understand how it functions today. This chapter explores and outlines various topics, to give a detailed 'snapshot' of Donnellson in 2022. These are based on the recommended set of 'planning factors' outlined by the Iowa Smart Planning Act.</p>
04 COMMUNITY THEMESE: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	<p>Through the feedback from the community through the development of the Comprehensive Plan, several key community themes were identified as important areas to focus on in moving towards the vision of City of Donnellson. This section explores these five themes and includes specific goals and objectives to focus on to make the City of Donnellson what you want it to be in the future. If the plan is to be successfully implemented, it requires the support and contributions of many different people and entities – the individual parts that comprise the whole community.</p>
05 FUTURE LAND USE	<p>Defining future land use is an important component of a Comprehensive Plan. The objective of this section of the Plan is to provide a working outline for future development in Donnellson. This section and its vision are intended to be used by Planning & Zoning Commission, City Councils, County and City Staff when making decisions and recommendations regarding land use in the City. The vision and plans found in this section are not a mandate for what will happen but rather a guide to ensure that responsible and effective land use patterns help the City of Donnellson be the best community it can be.</p>

About this Plan

In 2021, the City of Donnellson decided that it needed to update its Comprehensive Plan. The last Comprehensive Plan was completed almost 20 years ago in 2002. It was time for Donnellson to re-envision the Community's goals and provides a road map for development and improvement. The City partnered with the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (SEIRPC) to create its 'first 21st Century Comprehensive Plan'. Under the leadership of City's elected officials, residents, leaders, and stakeholders, this plan developed ambitious, but realistic strategies for improvement. The distinctive benefit of a comprehensive plan is that it provides a guide to tackle major issues identified through research, trends, and conversations with stakeholders and residents. In 2023, Donnellson entered with an updated plan for growth, development, and prosperity. Donnellson Comprehensive Plan 2040 is a comprehensive plan that aims to transform the county into a more prosperous and inclusive county by guiding growth and policy for next 20 years.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. A future growth strategy presented in a future land use map that predicts where investments like housing, infrastructure, and transportation should be made;
2. A future land use planning framework aligning development types with neighborhood context, investment potential, and county/ community desires;
3. A strategic framework to meet aspirational goals with actions to achieve those goals;
4. A guiding framework for investment in infrastructure, public transit, and civic space that supports efforts to attract and guide growth and investment;
5. A guide for City divisions, and public agencies, and nongovernmental partners to focus resources and effort in coordination to achieve the plan's vision.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

A priority of the Donnellson Comprehensive 2040 planning process was to reflect the needs and desires of its residents by seeking contributions from as much of the community as possible, transparently and authentically. The multi-phase participatory process included multiple avenues for the residents to share opinions and make recommendations on county and city-level strategic actions. Planners worked with local organization partners, county staff, elected officials, key employers, public/ quasi public entities and nonprofits to identify and understand the assets and issues of Donnellson from the people who interact with the community members daily, shaping the plan's guiding principles and leading to the City's vision to retain and expand its population.



Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The success of the Donnellson Comprehensive plan 2040 comes from community-wide adoption, use, and support from county departments. Stakeholder groups that help create and inform the plan include elected officials, city departments and agencies, developers and investors, community-based organizations, and the public. Continued support and use of the plan by these stakeholder groups is essential to the plan's impact on the future of Donnellson.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Donnellson Government leadership should continue to demonstrate commitment to the plan's principles and recommended actions. Legislative bodies of the City should adopt the plan and ensure consistency in applying the plan to land use decisions.

DEPARTMENT & AGENCIES

City Division and Agency directors should familiarize themselves with the plan recommendations. Policy and investment decisions should be guided by the plan, and implementation should be carried out through systems planning or participation in small area planning.

DEVELOPERS & INVESTORS

For-profit and non-profit developers should consult the plan regarding recommendations for land, connectivity, and opportunity. The plan provides guidance on desired forms, uses, and character of development in and around anchors, in addition to other areas of the City.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Community organizations can use the plan to adopt the recommendations in the plan framework, including the land use plan, the plan elements, and the district priorities. Community organizations will be key partners in implementing many of the recommendations in the city priorities.

PUBLIC

Our greatest asset, over 300 Donnellson residents contributed to the creation of the Donnellson Comprehensive Plan 2040. The residents of Donnellson are the local experts and should continue to shape implementation through their advocacy, actions, and partnership with the City.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

PHASE 1: COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY

Public input is a vital component of a comprehensive plan and several methods were utilized to obtain public input. One of these methods was a public survey. From July 2022 through September 2022, the engagement efforts of Phase One were aimed at understanding what the public considered as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, values, vision, and themes.

Questions covered topics such as: quality of life, community services, housing, transportation, economic development, natural environment, and recreation. The survey was made available in both hard copy and online versions. The link for the survey was posted on the City's social media pages. The online link was also distributed to community group members and city staff, advertised on radio and local newspaper.

Around 400 surveys were mailed to door in two different phases. The City's mailing list was used to access addresses. Hard copies of the survey were also made available at the City Hall. In total, 102 residents completed the survey.

PHASE 2: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Phase II was a two part effort to engage the public. The first piece was one-on-one stakeholder interviews of city staff/ elected officials, public/ quasi-public officials, non-profit or community groups, as well private sector representatives. The interview questions gauged the interview subject's experience living in the city and the improvements the major goals that the city should be striving towards. The questions for city staff and elected officials were more specific and asked about their staff organization, working relationships with the public, major plans for future capital projects etc.

2040 CITY OF DONNELLSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Take this survey online at the link below before September 30th, 2022
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Donnellson-Comprehensive-Plan>



DROP OFF COMPLETED SURVEYS AT:

Donnellson City Hall
802 Pershing St., Donnellson, IA

FOR ASSISTANCE PLEASE CONTACT:

Kansha Tiwari, Regional Plans Administrator, SEIRPC at atiwari@seirpc.com or (319)753-4312

Chance to win a \$25 Gift Card!

If you would like to enter in the lucky draw, please provide your phone or email below:

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

PHASE 3: CITY EVENTS

SEIRPC staff conducted several innovative public outreach events to hear from members of the public. To address the challenges of documenting a dispersed community whose residents often lack the leisure time to attend community meetings, SEIRPC team attended local community events such as Lee County Fair. Central Lee School District assisted the team by distributing surveys to their staff. All these efforts allowed the planners to meet community members where they are, ensuring that a broad cross-section of residents had an opportunity to be heard and involved in the planning process.

PHASE 4: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

From start to finish, Donnellson Comprehensive Plan 2040 process valued the involvement of citizens. All the City Council meetings were open to public to attend and learn about the plan. In addition to all the different ways of involving the public through surveys, attending community events, interviews and online meetings, the City made a draft of the plan available to the public for a 30-day period. Contacts of SEIRPC staff were listed clearly so the members of the public could reach out to them directly with any comments. The plan was also mailed directly to all the stakeholders, city staff, elected officials for comments so they can be addressed before going to the City Council for approval.



“The leaders of tomorrow
will have to establish a real
vision and a sense of values
for the organizations they
wish to lead”

- Dale Carnegie

VISION AND VALUES

02

This chapter highlights the big ideas that emerged from community input over the course of a year and serves as a foundation for this City Plan.

Community Vision

DONNELSON WILL BE A SMALL RURAL TOWN THAT IS SAFE, FRIENDLY, VIBRANT, ATTRACTIVE, SUSTAINABLE, WELCOMING TO NEW RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

THE CITY WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND INVEST IN QUALITY HOUSING, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, EDUCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, RECREATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY THAT ENABLE AN ENHANCED QUALITY OF RURAL LIFE FOR ITS RESIDENTS, IN A PLACE THAT RESIDENTS CAN PROUDLY CALL THEIR HOME.

CORE VALUES

Based on public input, a number of 'values' were identified as being important to the community. These values are highlighted in the graphic below. Using these values, a community vision was created. This community vision is to become a thriving community in Iowa that provides a safe and inviting setting for everyone. All the goals and objectives listed in the Plan have been designed to help the City of Donnellson achieve its community vision to be a safe, well-connected, scenic community in Iowa.



friendly people everyone knows
Quiet safe clean Ball Park place live
parks community pool friendly people
safe **Small town** good feel safe
living
small town feel Nice small quiet town
Donnellson little residents golf course
atmosphere Dollar General school district

COMMUNITY ELEMENTS

03

In order to develop a viable plan for a community's future, it is essential to understand how it functions today. This chapter explores and outlines various topics, to give a detailed 'snapshot' of Donnellson in 2020. These are based on the recommended set of 'planning factors' outlined by the Iowa Smart Planning Act.

Current Land Use

The Current Land Use map identifies the primary type of use for all properties within the City of Donnellson, as well as selected unincorporated areas that are adjacent to or within 1 mile of the City's current corporate boundaries. Combined together, these constitute the 'Land Use Planning Area', and are referred to as such throughout this section, as well as Chapter 5. It is intended to provide a snapshot of the way that Donnellson looks and functions in 2023. It also provides a tool for determining which areas of the community would be appropriate for certain types of new development or redevelopment, based on whether they would be compatible with existing uses in the vicinity.

All of the land within this area has been placed into one of 7 general land use categories – Agricultural, Single-Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Civic/Institutional, and Parks, Recreation and Open Space. These same categories are described in detail on the following pages, and were also used in developing the Future Land Use Map in Chapter '05 – Future Land Use.'

AGRICULTURAL

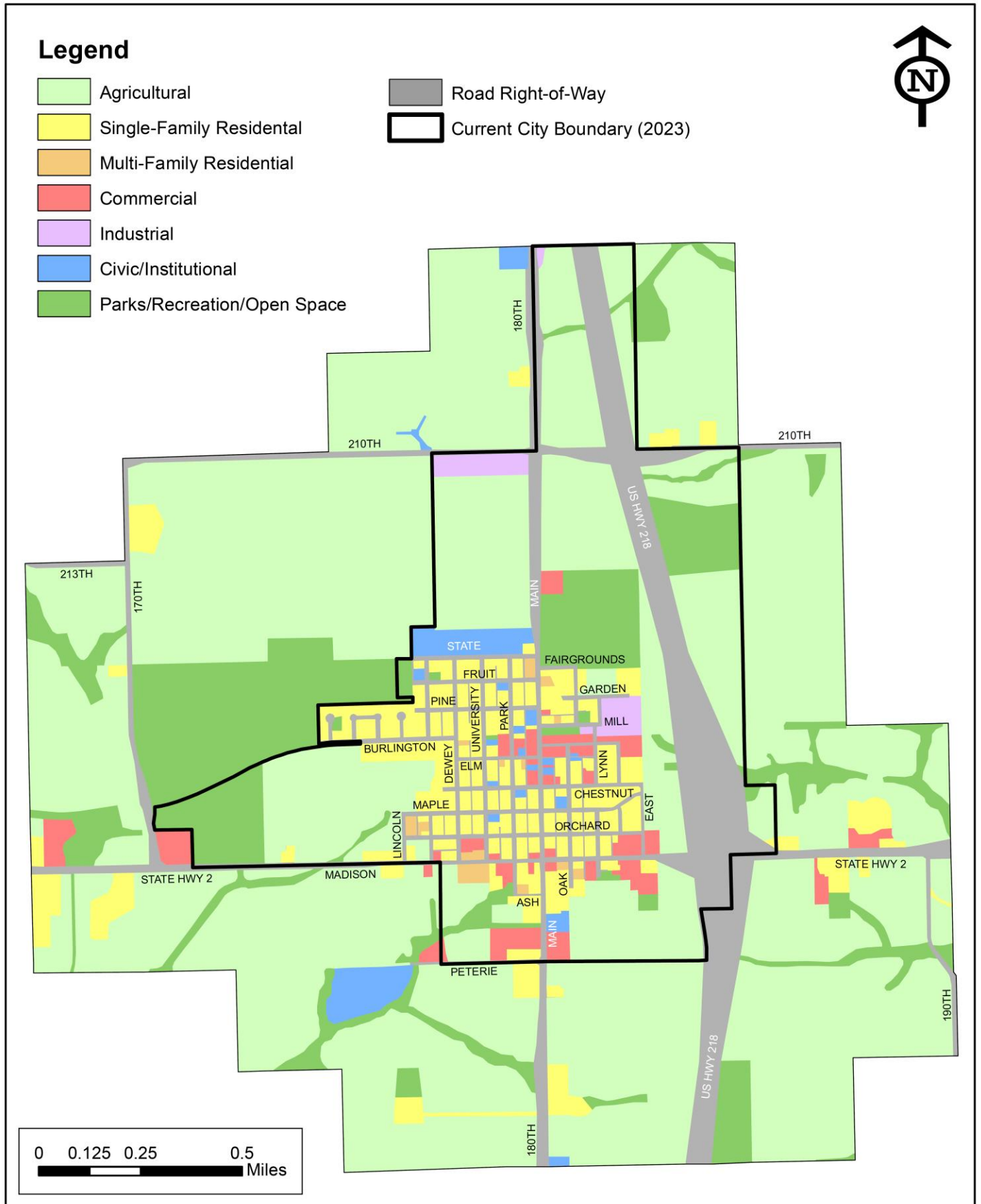
The land use category of 'Agricultural' includes all land that is presently utilized for agricultural operations, including row crops, livestock pasture and pens, and barns and similar accessory buildings typically associated with private farm operations.

Within the city's existing boundaries, there are several large tracts of farmland that remain operational, and this comprises just over 50% of the city's total land area. These are situated around the perimeter of the city's fully developed neighborhoods. A large farm property is situated between Dewey Street and Westview Park on the city's southwest side, bordered by Burlington and Madison Streets on the north and south. Two other areas exist to the south of Madison, on either side of Main Street. Historically, the portion of the city within Charleston Township was limited to rows of homes directly along Highway 2 and Main Street, with very limited development of a street grid extending outward from those primary thoroughfares.

The northern half of the city contains several large farming tracts surrounding Main Street and 210th Street. For those unfamiliar with where the city's boundaries are located, it appears as though the town extends no further north than the County Fairgrounds and the DOT Maintenance Garage. This is because all of the land further north is occupied by large open farm fields and a handful of ag-oriented businesses. Finally, all of the incorporated land east of Highway 218 is occupied by farmland, although the highway runs through this area at an angle, resulting in long, narrow, irregularly shaped properties. Another strip of farmland exists between the highway and East Avenue, and this represents land that was severed from the remainder of the original properties when the highway was built two decades ago.

Naturally, most of the unincorporated land in the Land Use Planning Area is agricultural as well. The exceptions include a scattering of properties located directly along Main Street/180th Avenue or Highway 2.

DONNELLSON CURRENT LAND USE MAP (2023)





Current Land Use

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

The category of 'Single-Family Residential' includes all properties that are occupied by either one single-family residence (detached), or a building that contains two separate residential dwelling units (attached), often referred to as a duplex. It also includes farmsteads where homes are situated on properties that also contain active farming operations (although the farmland itself is placed in the 'Agricultural' category).

Apart from Agricultural, the Single-Family Residential category accounts for the largest percentage of the city's total land area (just under 20%). It also accounts, by far, for the largest number of individual properties. For the most part, single-family homes are situated in large contiguous neighborhoods that form a ring around the central business district. However, the Madison Street/Highway 2 corridor represents a more irregular pattern of homes mixed with commercial businesses. Also, there are a handful of homes mixed in with businesses in and around the downtown core.

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

The category of 'Multi-Family Residential' includes all properties that contain either A) one or more buildings with at least 3 dwelling units, or B) multiple single-family attached or detached homes, including mobile homes. Presently in Donnellson, this includes just over dozen properties that are scattered throughout the community. The highest concentration is on the south side of town, within two blocks of Madison Street. This includes a large apartment complex for senior citizens (Southview) and two small mobile home parks. There are also several multi-family properties along north Main Street, including another senior apartment complex (Fairview). Finally, there are several properties on the blocks immediately west of downtown.

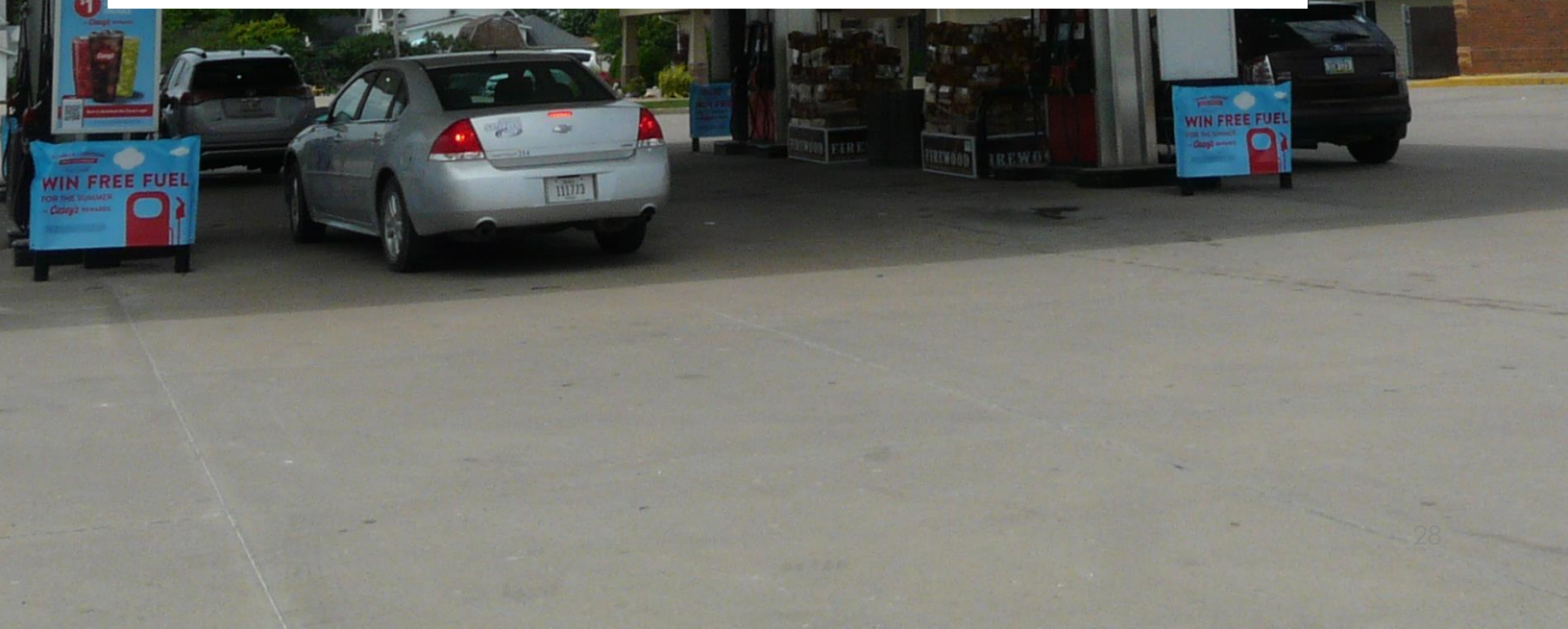
Current Land Use

COMMERCIAL

This category includes all properties occupied by a private business or service enterprise, excluding those that involve the manufacturing, processing, or mass storage of raw materials on-site. While not likely to present the same kinds of negative impacts as Industrial uses, they do have a tendency to generate substantial vehicular traffic, in terms of customers, employees and suppliers. Thus, it is most appropriate for them to be located along higher-traffic arterial and collector roadways, to minimize wear-and-tear to minor streets, as well as the visual and noise impact of vehicle traffic on those streets.

For the most part, all commercial uses within Donnellson are situated along Main Street or State Highway 2, reflecting their status as the two principal thoroughfares within the community. The most prominent concentration of commercial uses is the downtown area on Main Street, between Pine and Chestnut Streets. Another cluster exists at the intersection of Main and Madison (Highway 2), which served for many decades as a major highway crossroads, prior to the opening of the US 218 bypass. Another strip of businesses is located further east on Madison, between Lynn Street and the highway bypass. Most of these were established within the past 2 decades, due to the close proximity of the highway interchange. This includes a Dollar General store and a Casey's gas station. The latter replaced an older gas station at Main and Madison, where the building has been repurposed as a restaurant.

Another noticeable concentration of Commercial (and Industrial) uses is apparent in the eastern half of the city, in between Mill and Chestnut Streets. This pattern reflects the historic presence of the two CB&Q Railroad lines that intersected in this area, and helped spur numerous manufacturing, shipping and warehousing operations on the properties adjoining the tracks. This includes the Donnellson Lumber Company facilities and the Dahms Chevrolet car dealership. Finally, a handful of commercial businesses are present along Highway 2 at the rural fringe just west and east of city limits. This includes the building that formerly housed the Tyson/IBP Hog Buying Station at the northeast corner of Highway 2 and 170th Avenue.



Current Land Use

INDUSTRIAL

The category of 'Industrial' is used for the specific subset of commercial business operations where the active manufacturing or processing of raw materials occurs on-site. It also includes mineral/resource extraction operations (such as quarries and mining), as well as the transload or storage of large quantities of potentially hazardous materials such as grain or chemicals.

At present, there are very few properties in the Land Use Planning Area that fall into the Industrial category. The most prominent is the Donnellson Elevator, a large grain shipping facility at the east end of the city. As with several of the commercial uses nearby, its location is a reflection of the historic presence of a railroad in this part of the city. As such, it is no longer ideally situated in terms of transportation access, as it relies on minor residential streets to obtain access to Main Street and State Highway 2. Elsewhere is the West Central FS facility on the far north side along 210th Street, where large quantities of agricultural chemicals are stored on site. The only other industrial uses nearby are located outside the Land Use Planning Area – the B&B Propane facility just to the north, and the Cessford Construction gravel quarry just to the south, both along 180th Avenue.

CIVIC/ INSTITUTIONAL

This broad category includes all properties owned by a government entity (apart from parks and recreation facilities), as well as those used for the facilities of a church, fraternal organization, or private utility provider. It also includes hospitals and skilled nursing facilities, as well as cemeteries.

In Donnellson, this category includes a mix of city, county, state and federal government properties. For the City, it includes City Hall, the Public Library, the Fire Station, a water tower, a downtown parking lot, and the Wastewater Treatment Plant (located outside city limits). There are also two county facilities – the Fairgrounds and the EMS ambulance station, along with the Iowa DOT Maintenance Garage for Lee County, and the US Post Office.

Donnellson is home to 3 active churches, as well as the office of a fraternal organization (Masonic Lodge), and an American Legion Post. In terms of private utilities, there is a telecommunications office, and an electric substation, both at the outer fringe of downtown. Just outside city limits, there are two cemeteries and a telecommunications tower.

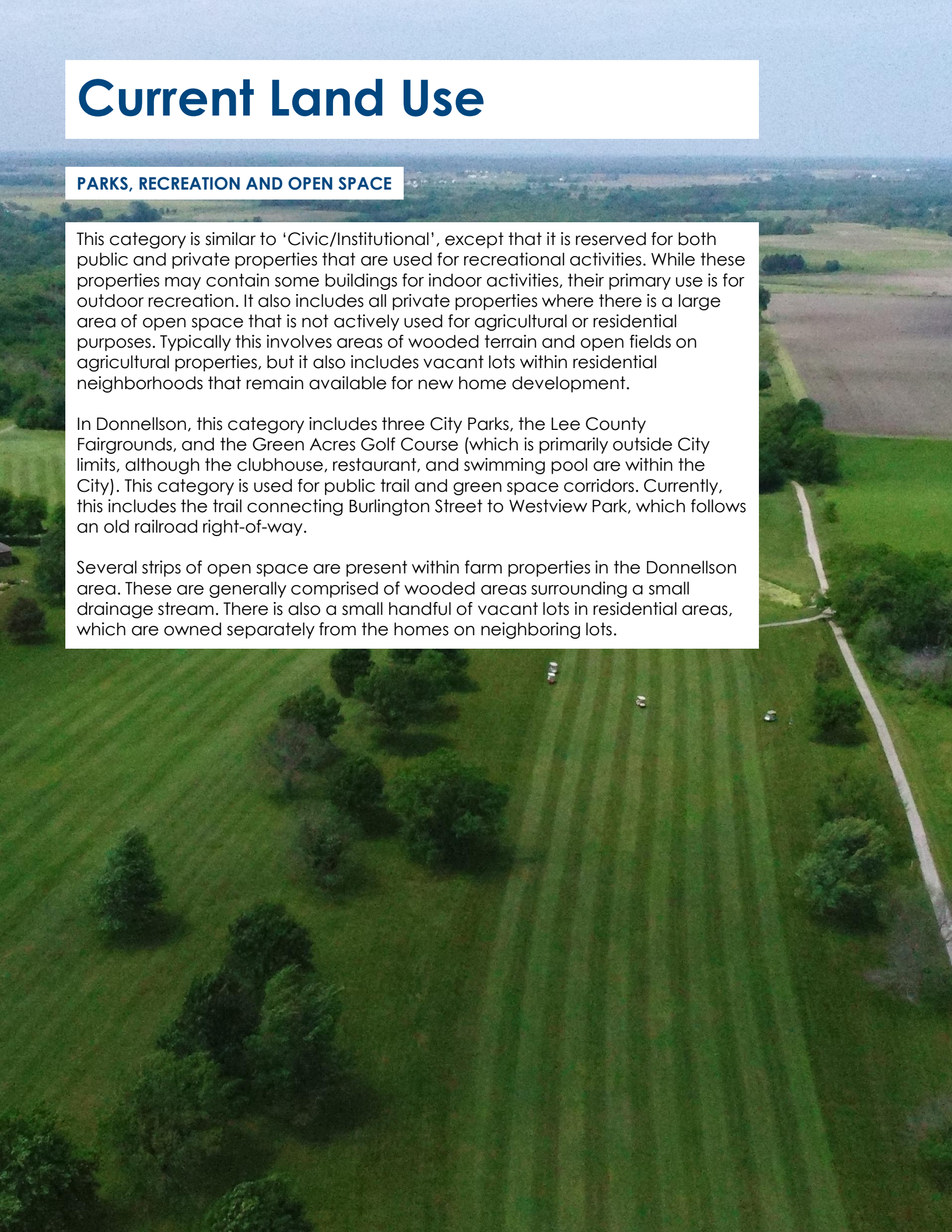
Current Land Use

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

This category is similar to 'Civic/Institutional', except that it is reserved for both public and private properties that are used for recreational activities. While these properties may contain some buildings for indoor activities, their primary use is for outdoor recreation. It also includes all private properties where there is a large area of open space that is not actively used for agricultural or residential purposes. Typically this involves areas of wooded terrain and open fields on agricultural properties, but it also includes vacant lots within residential neighborhoods that remain available for new home development.

In Donnellson, this category includes three City Parks, the Lee County Fairgrounds, and the Green Acres Golf Course (which is primarily outside City limits, although the clubhouse, restaurant, and swimming pool are within the City). This category is used for public trail and green space corridors. Currently, this includes the trail connecting Burlington Street to Westview Park, which follows an old railroad right-of-way.

Several strips of open space are present within farm properties in the Donnellson area. These are generally comprised of wooded areas surrounding a small drainage stream. There is also a small handful of vacant lots in residential areas, which are owned separately from the homes on neighboring lots.

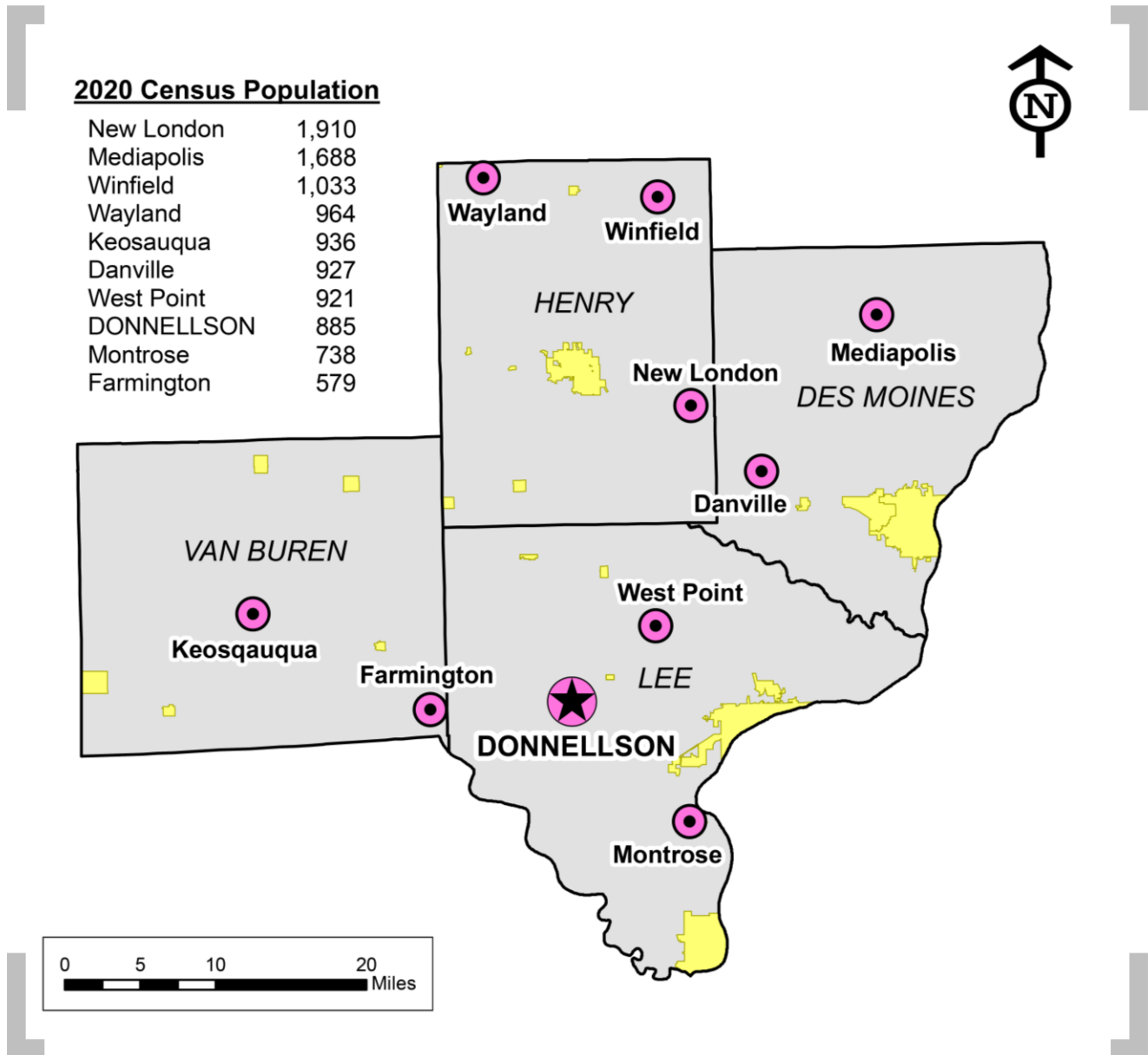


DONNELLSON AND ITS COMPARABLE CITIES..

While it can often be helpful to compare a city with the county, state, or nation as a whole, such comparisons can sometimes lead to misleading conclusions, due to the influence of larger cities. At the state level, Des Moines and Iowa City can disproportionately skew the statewide data trends, due to their large share of the population. At the county level, a similar thing tends to occur for Fort Madison and Keokuk.

In order to provide additional context, a set of 9 'comparable cities' were identified in Lee and the neighboring counties of Des Moines, Henry, and Van Buren. Like Donnellson, each of these cities has a population between 500 and 2,000, and none of them are immediately adjacent to a larger city like Burlington or Keokuk.

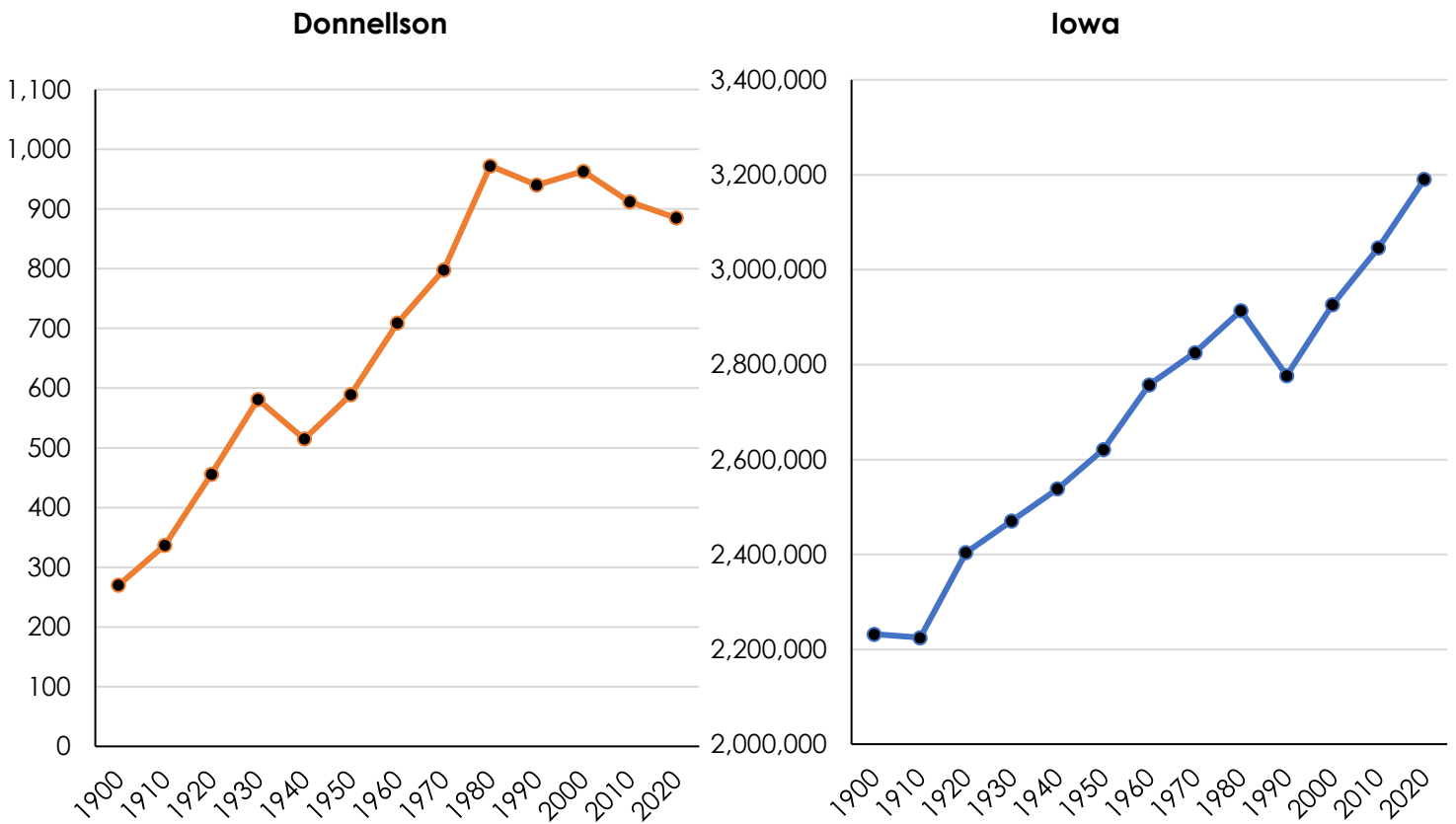
When Donnellson is compared with these other 9 cities, it is easy to see when it is performing especially well or especially poorly, in terms of specific statistics, such as median income or population change by decade.



Demographics

HISTORIC POPULATION

Largely consistent with Iowa as a whole, the population of Donnellson increased steadily from 1900 through 1980, with the sole exception being a drop during the 1930s, coinciding with the Great Depression. Both the city and the state saw a sudden drop in the 1980s, coinciding with the Farm Crisis and other nationwide economic challenges during that decade. However, while the state was able to successfully rebound in the subsequent decades, Donnellson only slightly increased in the 1990s, followed by two decades of small to moderate decline.



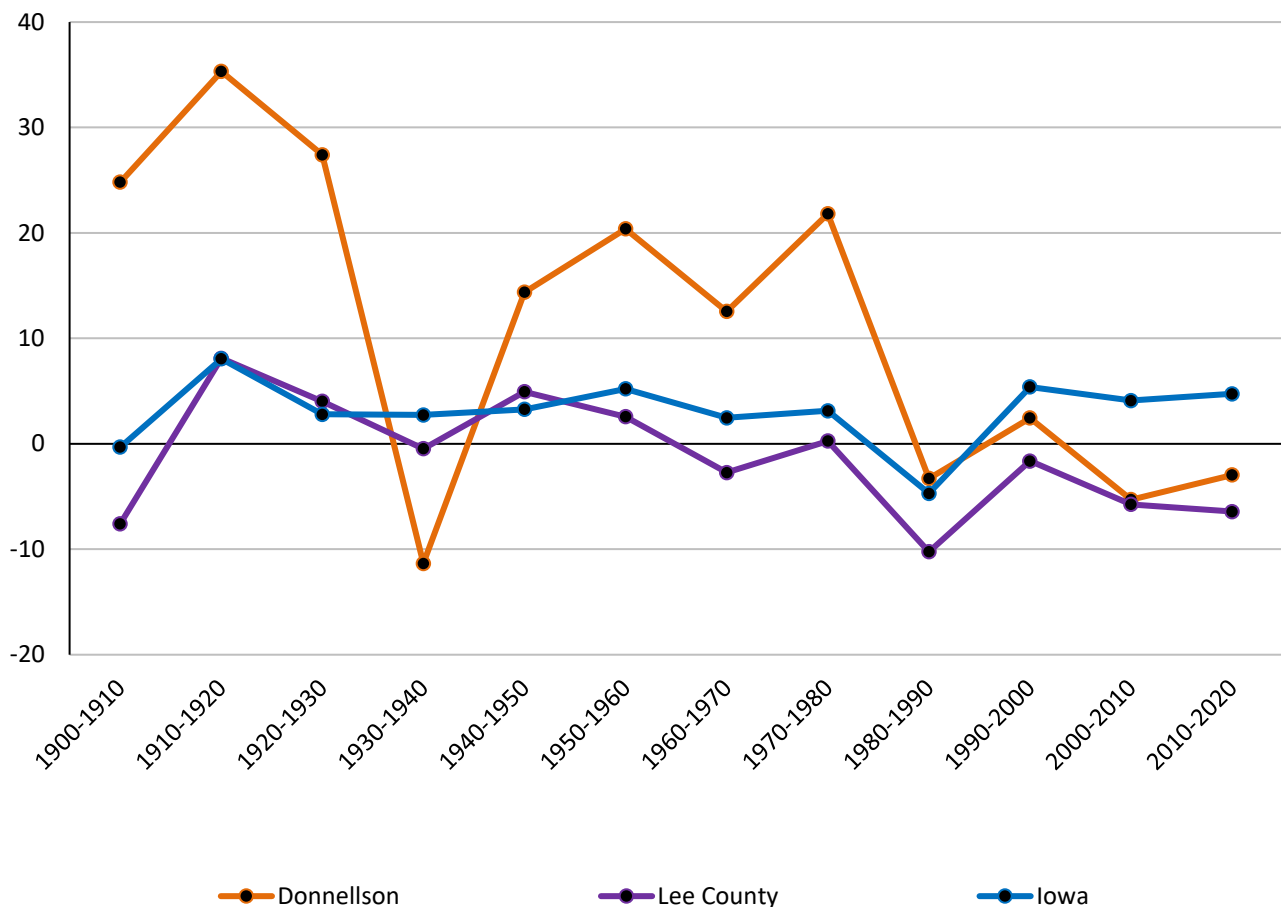
Source: US Census Bureau

Demographics

Between 1890 and 1930, Donnellson was the 5th largest municipality in Lee County. It was initially a very distant 5th, but the gap quickly closed, and it briefly ranked at 4th (ahead of West Point) in 1930, before the two inverted again. Between 1950 and 2000, Donnellson and Montrose traded places as the 4th largest, while Donnellson has retained that position ever since, and is now only slightly behind West Point, which is the 3rd largest.

Donnellson grew at a faster rate than Lee County as a whole for every decade except the 1930s. While this shows that the Great Depression hit the community hard, it also shows that Donnellson has been the most consistently resilient town in the county overall. In addition, for 4 out of those 12 decades, Donnellson was the fastest growing municipality in the county (the 1900s, 1950s, 1990s, and 2010s), and for 2 others, it was a close second (1910s and 1920s). Typical of the surrounding region, however, Donnellson's rate of growth has fallen behind that of Iowa as a whole since 1990, after exceeding it for every decade except the 1930s.

Percent Population Change by Decade



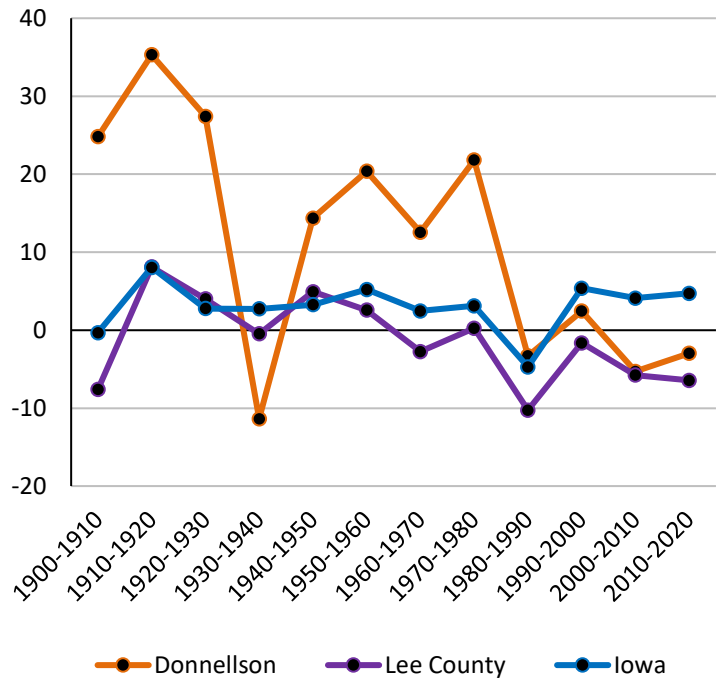
Source: US Census Bureau

Demographics

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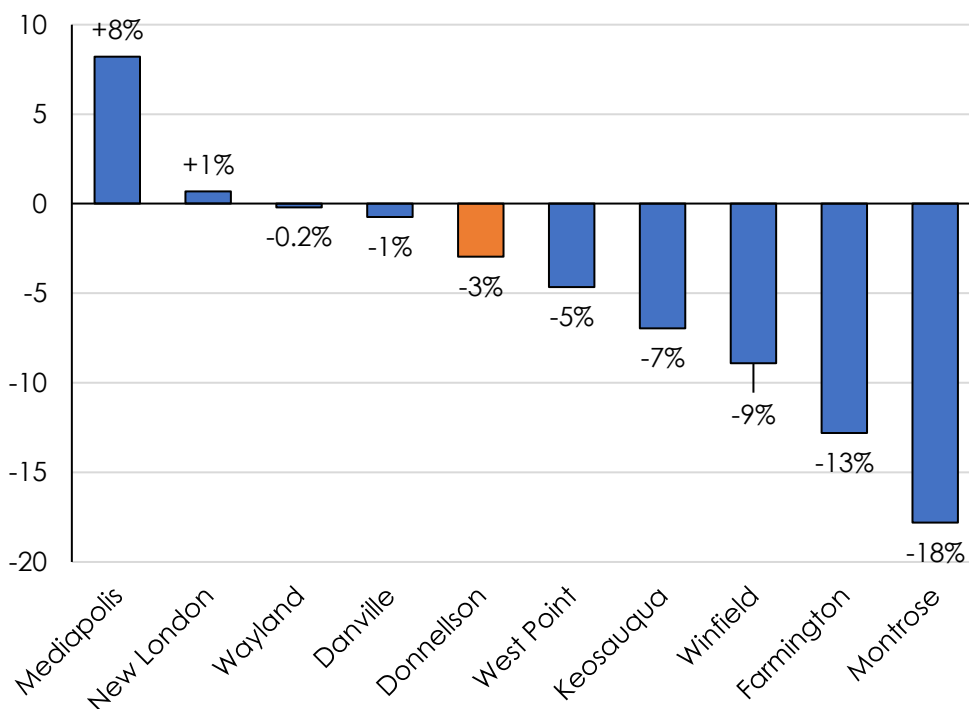
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Percent Population Change by Decade



Source: US Census Bureau

Percent Population Change, 2010-2020



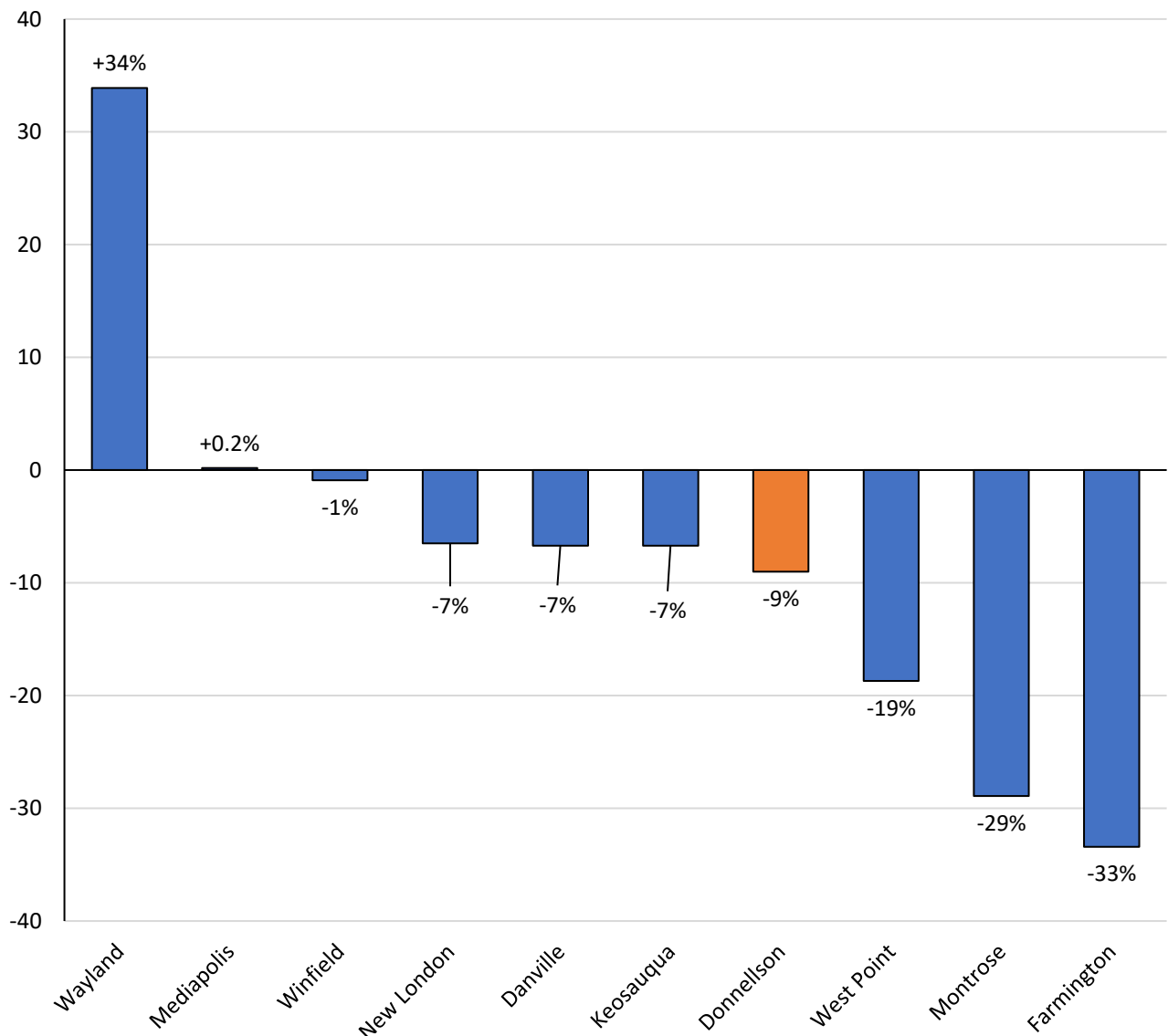
Source: US Census Bureau

Between 2010 and 2020, Donnellson's population decreased, but at a lower rate than Lee County as a whole. Such decline was typical among the comparable cities, as all but 2 of them decreased in population over that decade. Furthermore, 5 of them declined at a faster rate than Donnellson. This mirrors the trend for the past 40 years overall, as most of these cities peaked in population in 1980 and declined or stagnated since then. Only Wayland grew substantially over that 40-year period.

Demographics

The rate of change for the most recent decade largely mirrors the trend for the past 40 years overall, as most of these cities peaked in population in 1980 and declined or stagnated since then. Only Wayland grew substantially over that 40-year period. The population of Mediapolis rose sharply in the 2010s, but only after a steady decline over the previous decades, resulting in it essentially 'breaking even' with where it was in 1980. Donnellson only performed better than 3 of the comparable cities, but it is notable that those same 3 cities are the closest ones to Donnellson, all within 12 miles. Plus, each of them declined at more than twice the rate that Donnellson did.

Percent Population Change, 1980-2020



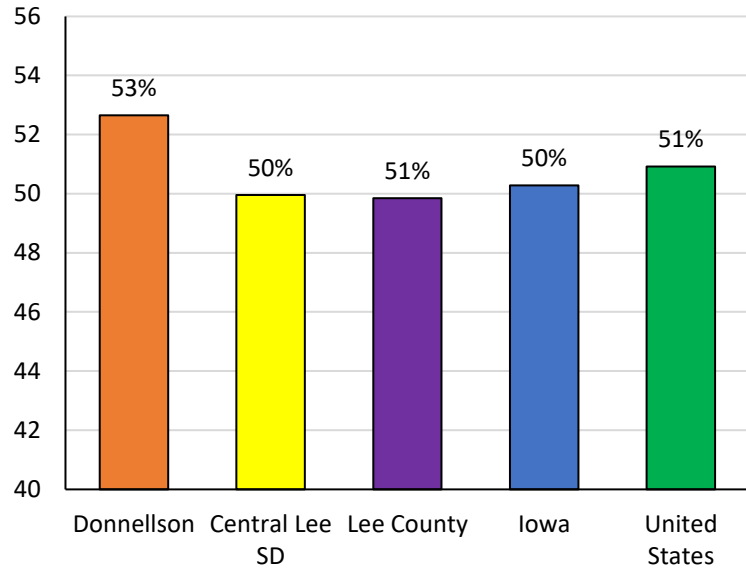
Source: US Census Bureau

Demographics

SEX

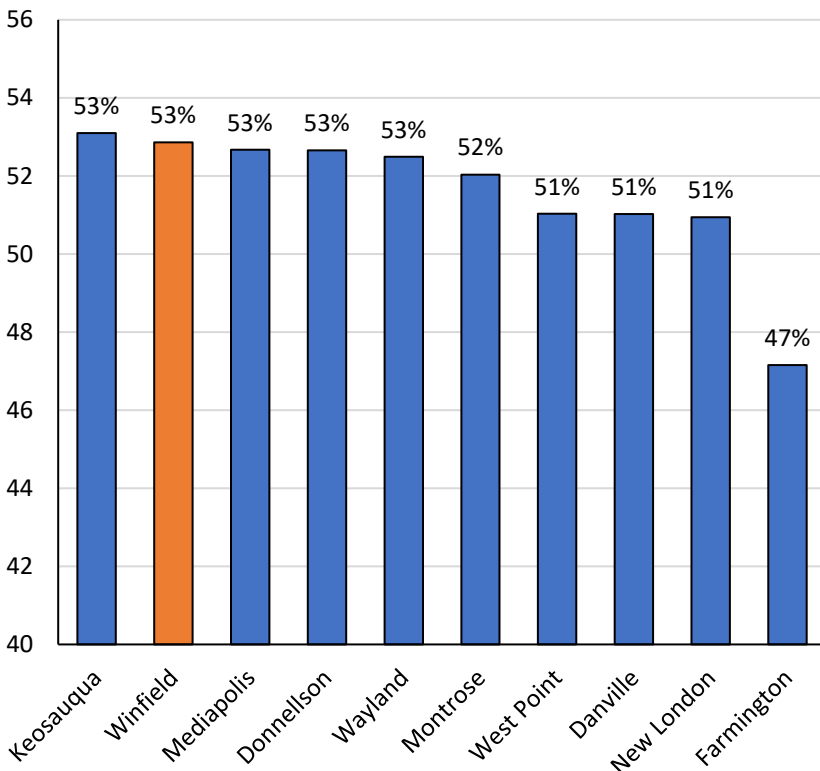
Nationally, the population is 50.9% female, and 49.1% male, and this discrepancy largely owes to the higher life expectancy for women. Compared to the nation, state, county, and school district, Donnellson has a considerably higher percentage of residents that are female (52.7%).

Percentage of Population that is Female



Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Percent of Population that is Female



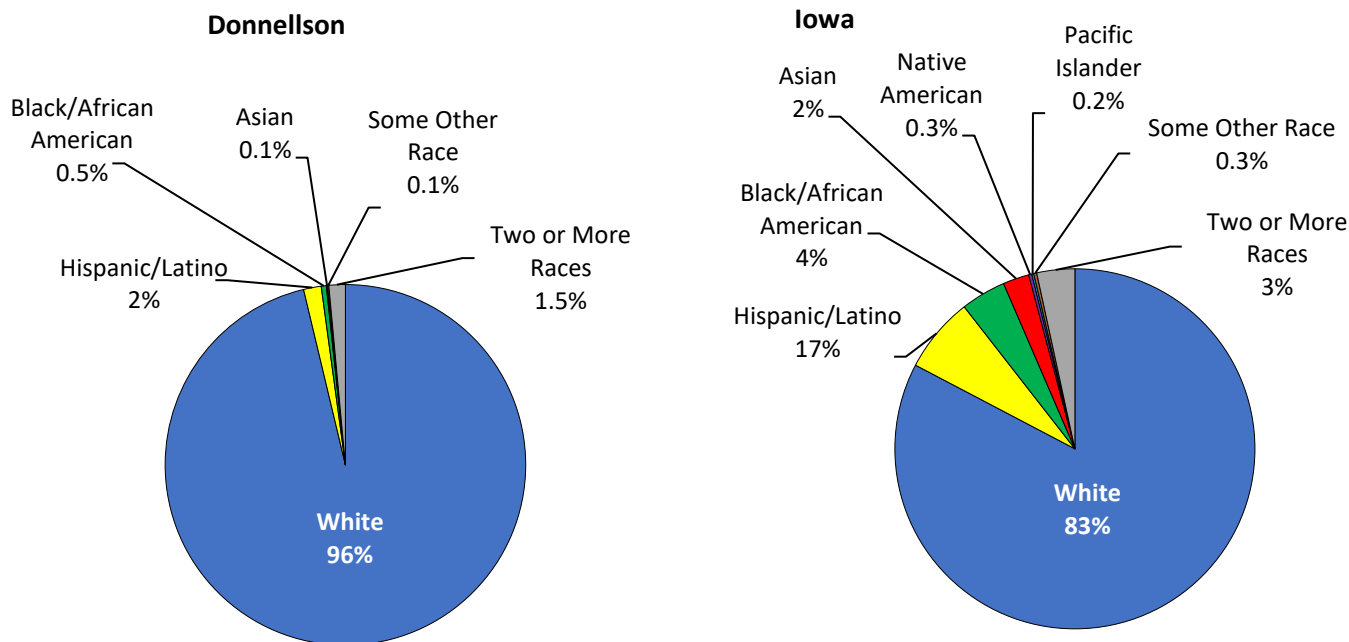
Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Donnellson also ranks second highest among the 10 comparable cities. However, all but two of those cities exceed the nationwide figure, and this is significant since almost all of them (including Donnellson) contain a nursing home within city limits. As a result, the higher life expectancy for women results in nursing homes having a large majority female population, and because of the small population size of these cities overall, the nursing homes tend to skew the overall percentages for each of those cities. Notably, Farmington does not contain a nursing home, which helps explain how it sharply contrasts with the other 9 cities.

Demographics

RACE AND ETHNICITY

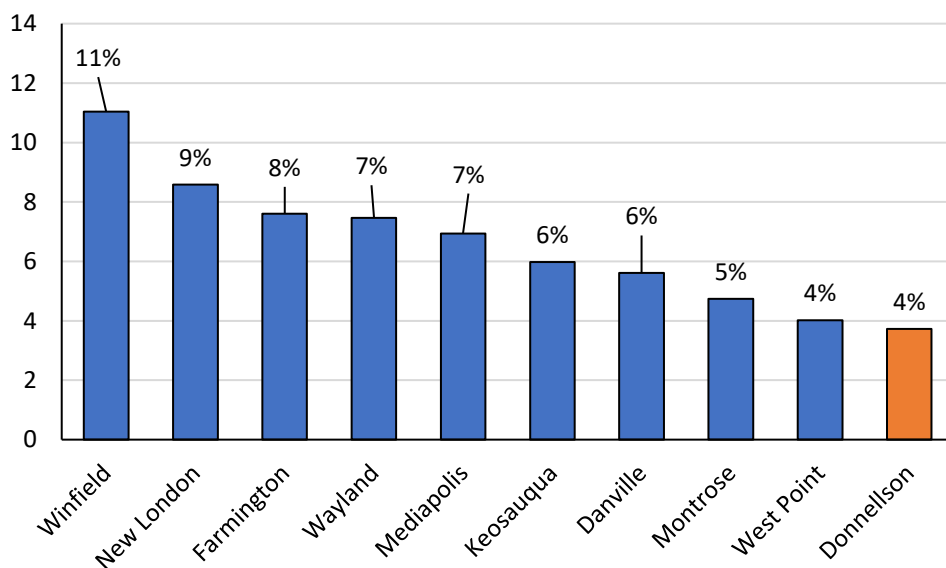
In terms of race and ethnicity, Donnellson is substantially less diverse than Iowa as a whole. The 2020 Census showed that 96.3% of Donnellson residents identified as ‘White Alone (Non-Hispanic)’, compared to 82.7% for Iowa as a whole. Donnellson also falls well below the figure of 89% for Lee County, and is even slightly lower than the figure for the Central Lee School District overall (95.3%). Of the 33 total residents identifying as anything other than ‘White Alone’, the vast majority identified as either Hispanic/Latino or of ‘Two or More Races’.



Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

While it is typical for small rural towns to have a less racially diverse population than larger cities, Donnellson has exceptionally low diversity compared to other similarly sized towns in Southeast Iowa. Among the 10 comparable cities, it has the lowest share of its population accounted for by people identifying as anything other than ‘White Alone, Non-Hispanic’. However, it is also notable that the other similarly sized Lee County cities of Montrose and West Point rank just above it, at #8 and 9.

Percent of Population Identifying as Anything other than ‘White Alone, Non-Hispanic’



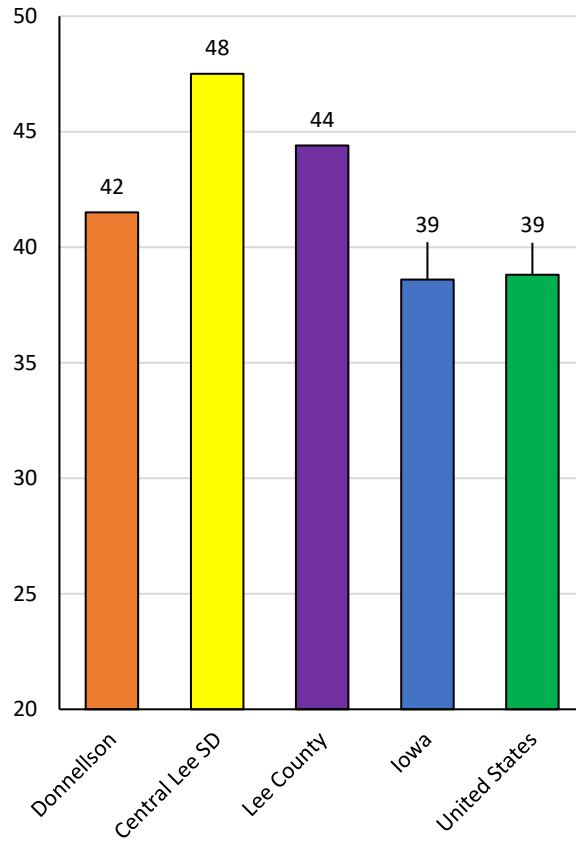
Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Demographics

MEDIAN AGE

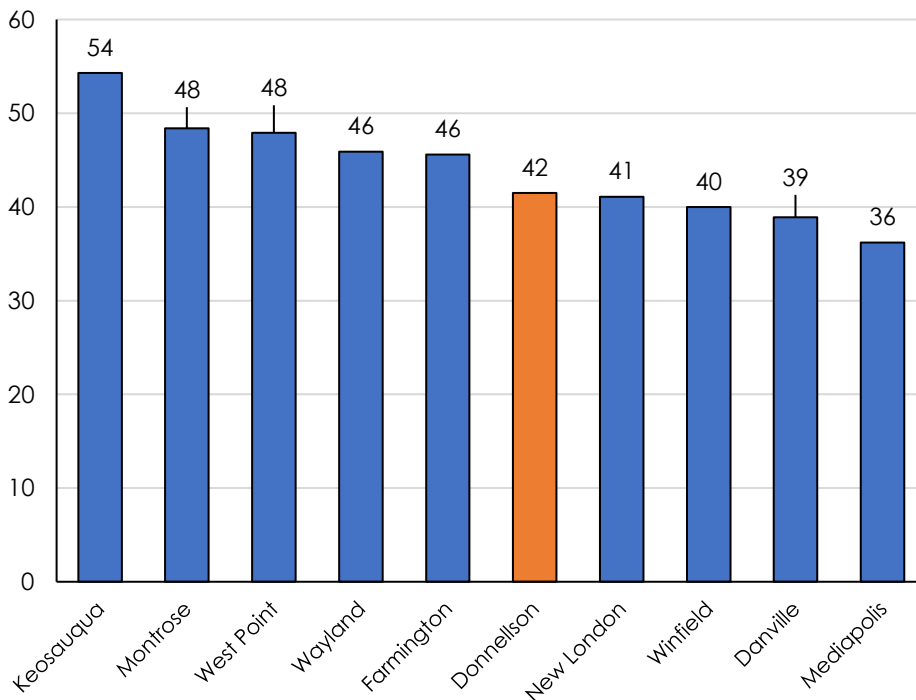
The median age in Donnellson is 41.5 years, and this falls midway between the figures for Iowa as a whole (38.6 years) and Lee County (44.4 years). The median age tends to be higher in small towns than the larger cities, so it is not surprising that 9 of the 10 comparable cities have a median age above that of Iowa as a whole. Donnellson is one of 5 such cities whose median age is below 45. It also has a lower median age than the similar sized Lee County cities of Montrose and West Point, both of which have a median age around 48 years. Therefore, despite having a high number of senior citizens overall, this portion of the population is counterbalanced by a similarly high number of young people, which is not consistent with those other two cities.

Median Age



Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Median Age

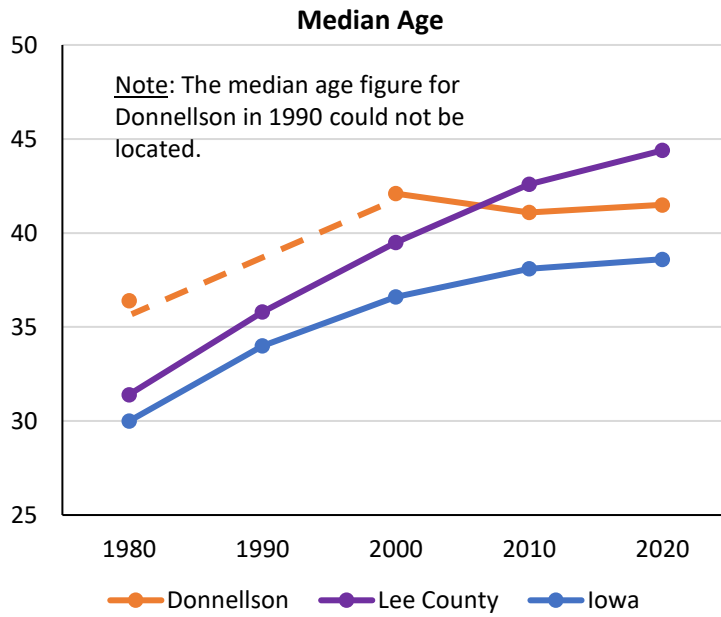


Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Demographics

MEDIAN AGE

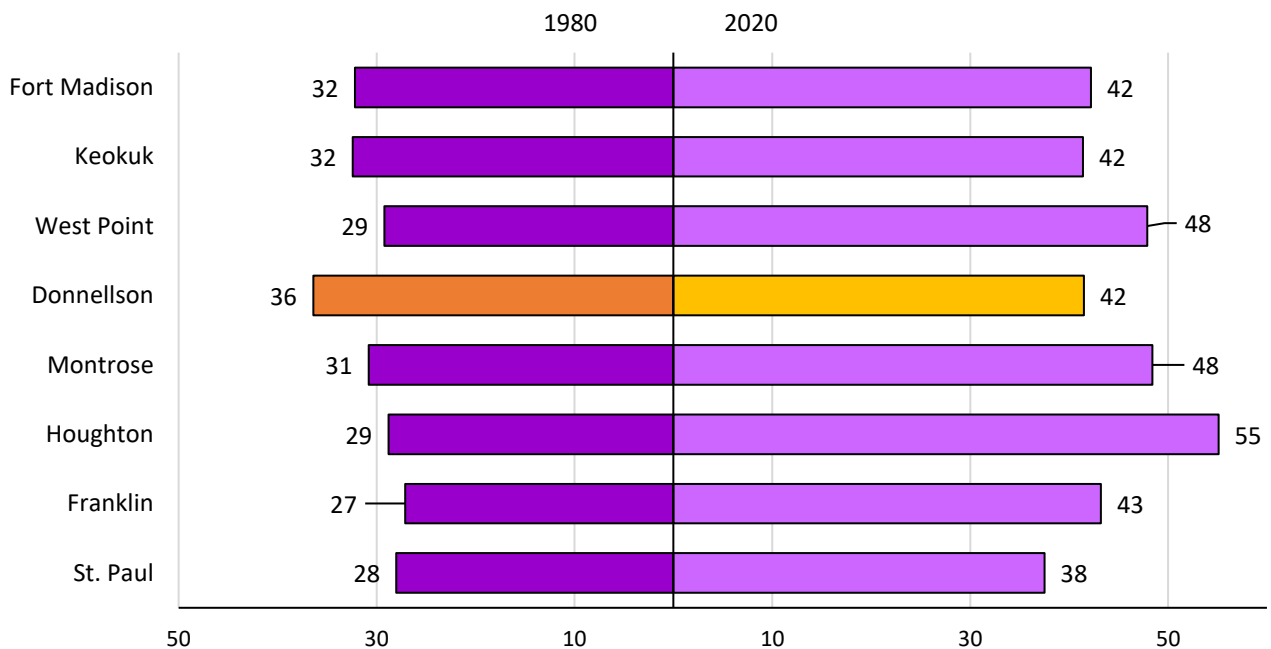
The median age for Donnellson increased by 14% from 1980 to 2020. While the median age also increased for Lee County and Iowa over that period, the rate of increase was 2 to 3 times higher. Furthermore, for the first 3 decades, the median age for Donnellson was higher than that of Lee County. Then between 2000 and 2010, Donnellson's median age briefly dropped, and this shift resulted in its median age falling below the County's, where it has stayed ever since.



Source: US Census Bureau

It is worth noting that while Donnellson now has a lower median age than Lee County as a whole, in 1980 it had the oldest median age of any city in Lee County, which was 4 years higher than the second-ranked Keokuk. The graph below shows how the median age changed for each of the incorporated cities in the county, displayed from in descending order based on total population. It is interesting to note that compared to Donnellson, the inverse trend occurred for similar-sized West Point and Montrose, which both started with a comparatively young median age, but are now at the other end of the spectrum.

Median Age of Lee County Cities, 1980 v. 2020



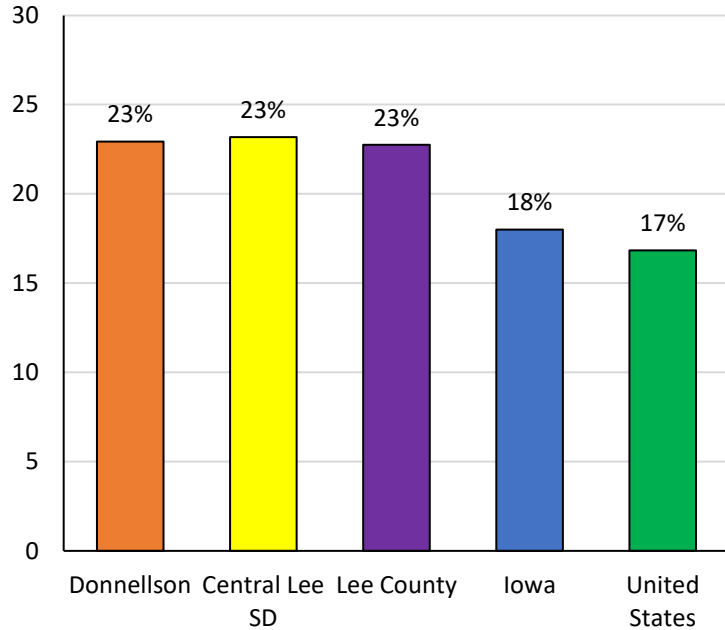
Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Demographics

SENIOR POPULATION

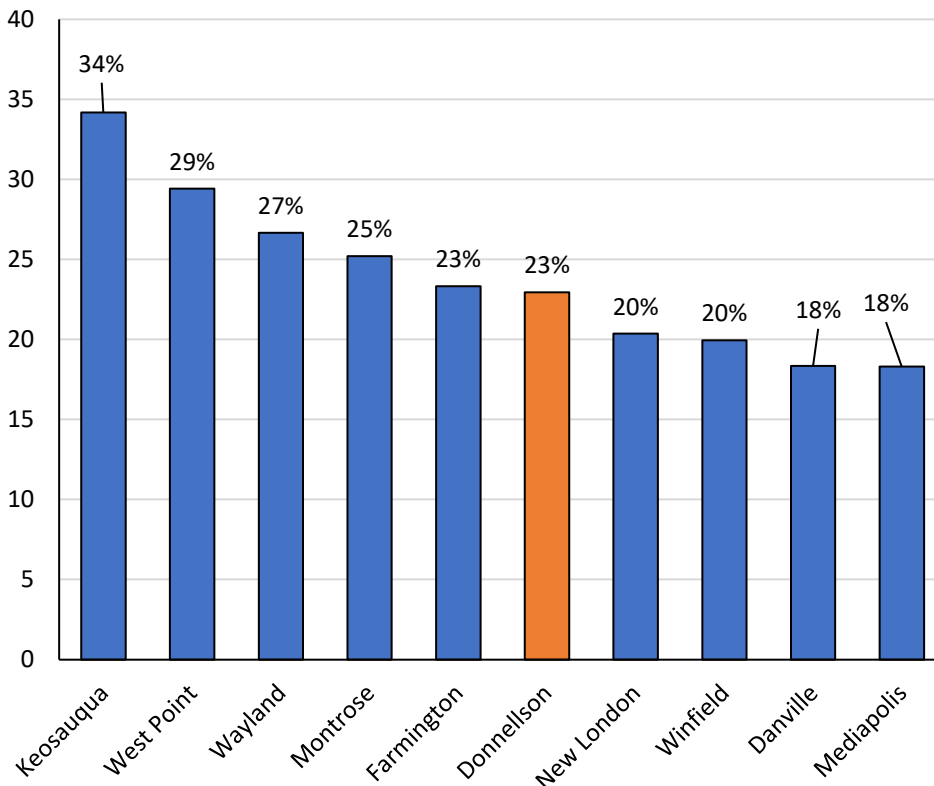
Just under 1/4 of Donnellson residents are aged 65 and over. This is entirely consistent with the figures for the school district and county as a whole, but substantially higher than that of the state and nation as a whole. However, it is typical for small towns to have a higher figure than the state, and this is true for all 10 of the comparable cities (though 2 of them are less than a percentage point ahead). Donnellson ranks near the middle, well behind the other Lee County cities of West Point and Montrose. This is a substantial change from several decades prior, as Donnellson ranked near the top among the comparable cities in 1980 and 1990.

Percent of Population Aged 65 and Over



Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Percent of Population Aged 65 and Over



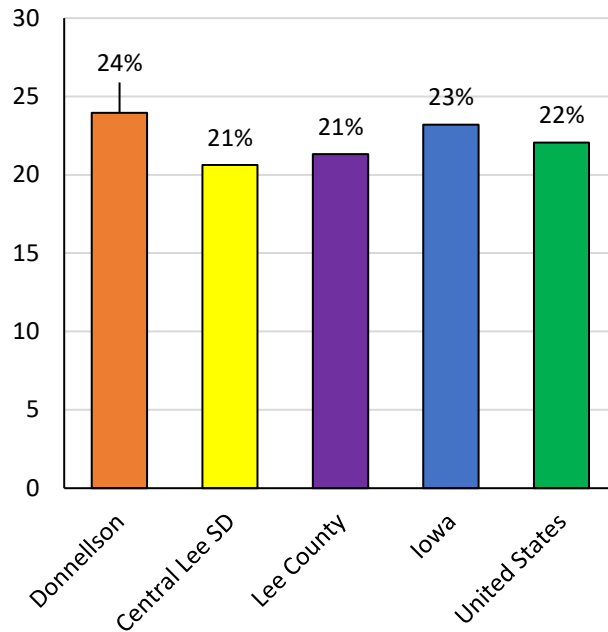
Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Demographics

YOUTH POPULATION

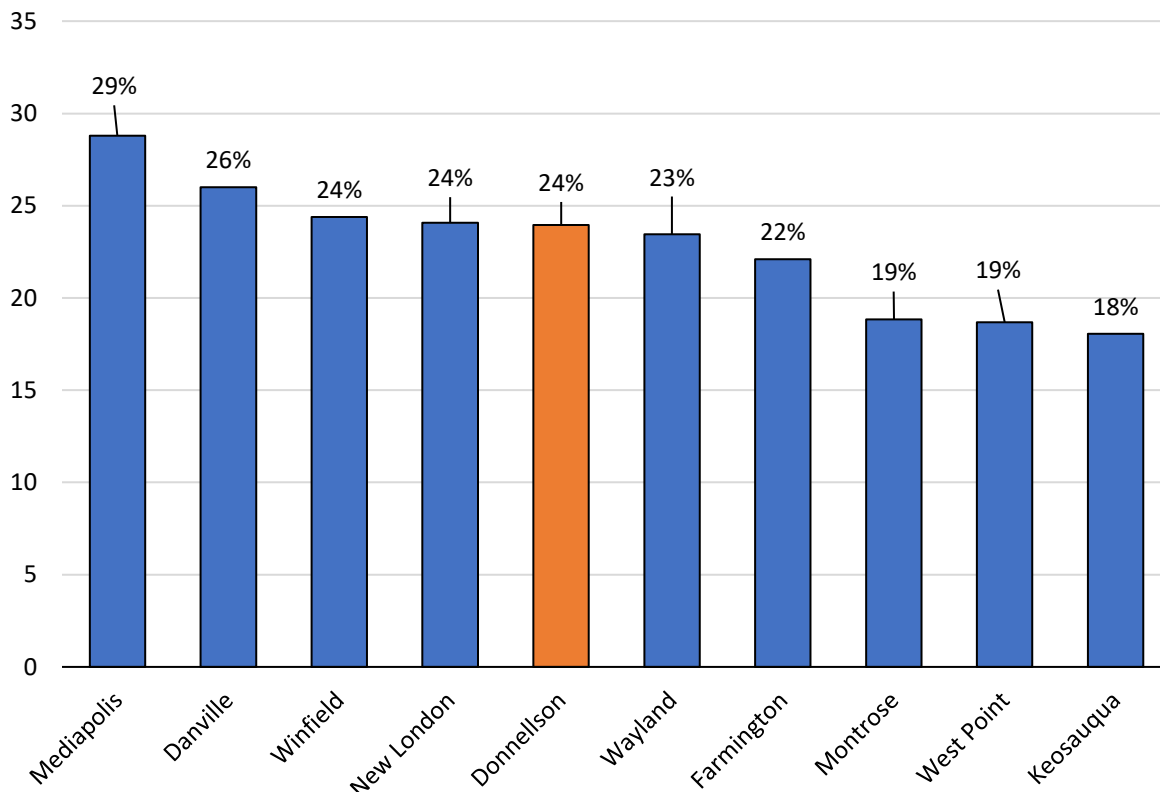
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Percent of Population Aged 17 and Under



Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Percent of Population Aged 17 and Under



Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

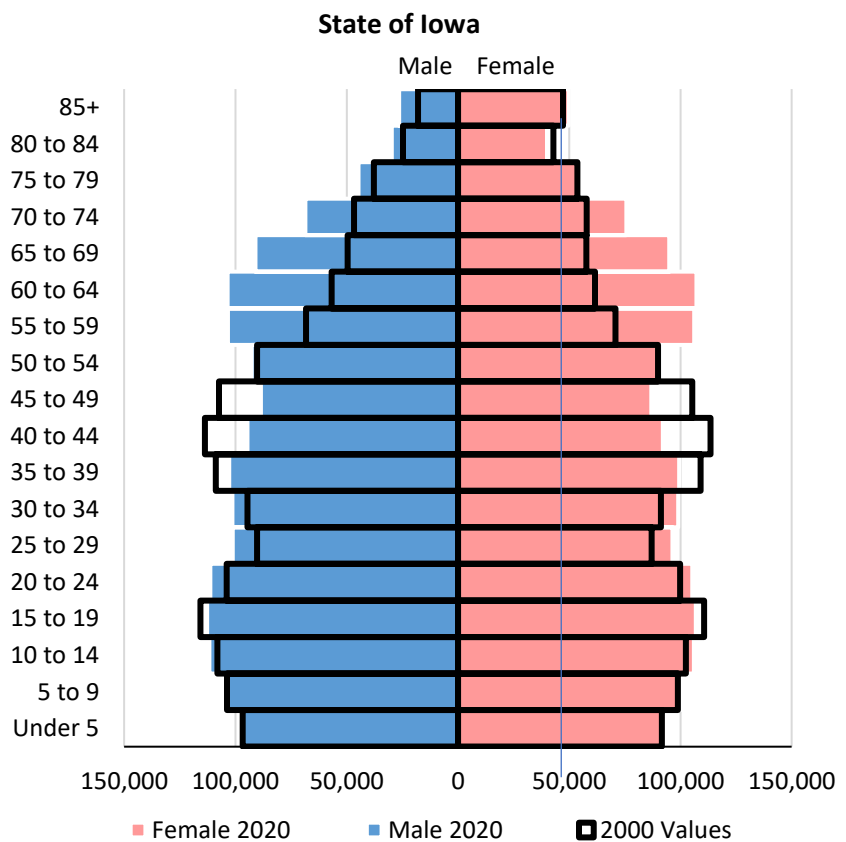
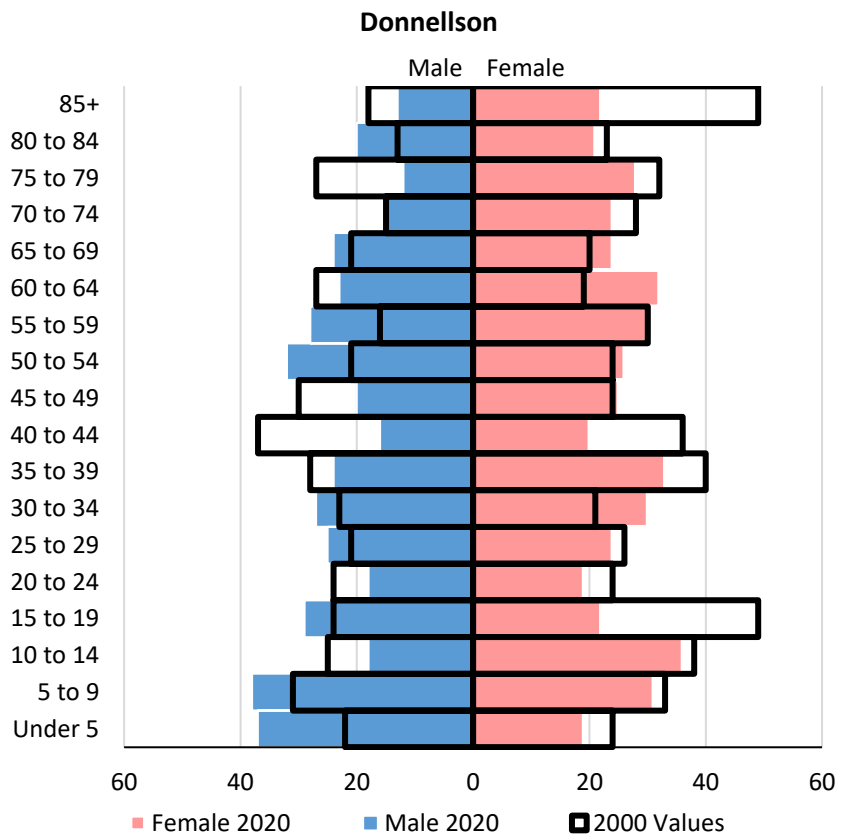
Demographics

AGE PYRAMID

An 'age pyramid' is a type of graph which splits the population into 5-year age brackets, with males on one side of the graph, and females on the other. On the graphs below, the solid-colored bars represent the numbers from 2020, while the black-bounded bars represent the numbers from two decades earlier in 2000.

On the graph for Iowa as a whole, a clear pattern is visible, as the 'baby boom' generation has ascended from the 35-55 range to the 55-75 range. Apart from that, the numbers for each age bracket remain largely the same as they were in 2000. For Donnellson, however, the pattern is decidedly different, and the graph has a much more 'random' looking appearance, which is common for smaller towns.

It is notable that the population aged 85 and over has gone down sharply over the past 20 years – especially for females. The number of people in the 40-44 and 75-79 ranges have also gone down sharply. There is also a substantial gender imbalance in the brackets under age 20, as that segment of the population has shifted decidedly from majority-female to majority-male over the past 20 years.

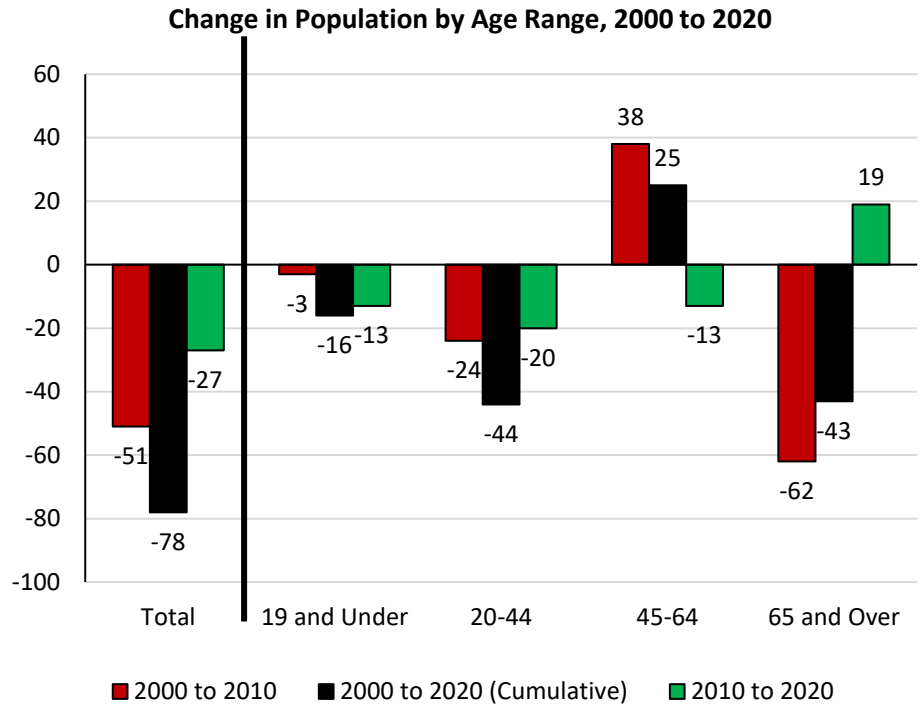


Source: US Census Bureau

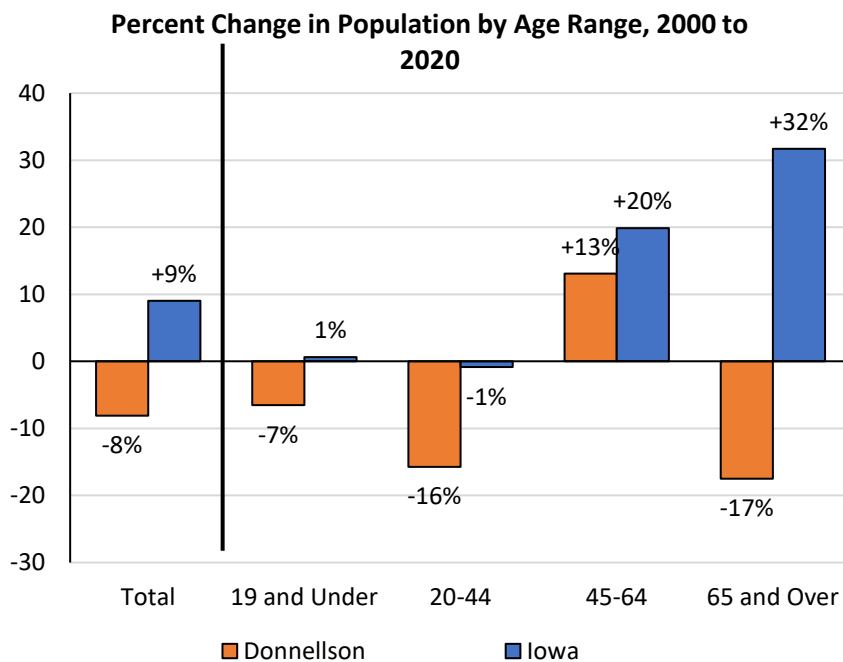
Demographics

CHANGE IN POPULATION

When Donnellson's population is broken up into 4 broader age cohorts (of roughly equivalent total population), the pattern of change over the last 2 decades has been substantially different for each of those 4. The number of people under age 20 has largely remained stable, though it decreased slightly in the 2010s. The number of people aged 20 to 44 went down gradually but consistently over both decades. The number of people aged 45 to 64 went up sharply in the 2000s, but decreased slightly in the 2010s. Finally, the inverse dynamic occurred for senior citizens, as their number went down sharply in the 2000s, but increased slightly in the 2010s. Combined together, this resulted in a cumulative loss of 78 people over the 20-year period.



Source: US Census Bureau



Source: US Census Bureau

The total number of Donnellson residents in 3 of the 4 age cohorts went down by between 5 and 20% between 2000 and 2020. The only cohort to see an increase was 45 to 64, whose numbers went up by 13%. For that category alone, Donnellson was consistent with Iowa as a whole over that period. Conversely, while the number of senior citizens in Iowa increased by 32% over that period, the number in Donnellson decreased by 17%. Also, while Iowa saw its numbers of people under 20 and 20 to 44 stay relatively stable over this period, Donnellson saw substantial decreases for both of these age groups.

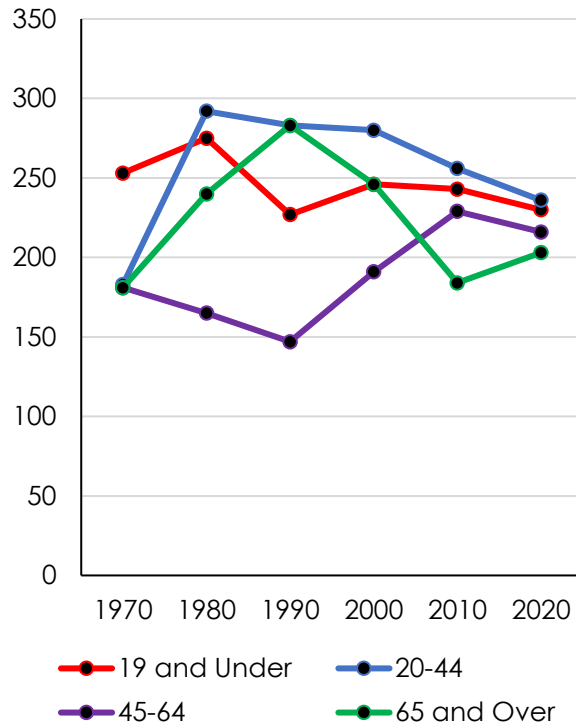
Demographics

POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS

Over the past 50 years, the rate of population change has varied considerably between the 4 age cohorts. The cohort with the most stable number over this period is those aged 19 and under, though the total has decreased overall. In 1970, this cohort greatly outnumbered the other 3, which each had roughly the same number of people. Its share of the total population quickly diminished following the overall population influx of the 1970s, which saw a steep rise in the '20 to 44' and '65 and over' cohorts.

Since then, the 20 to 44 cohort generally leveled off, before beginning a gradual descent in the 2000s. The 45 to 64 cohort rose steadily between 1990 to 2000, as the 'baby boom' generation entered this cohort. The number of senior citizens peaked in 1990, followed by a 2-decade drop that largely mirrored the rise over the previous two decades.

Donnellson Population by Age Groups, 1970-2020



Source: US Census Bureau

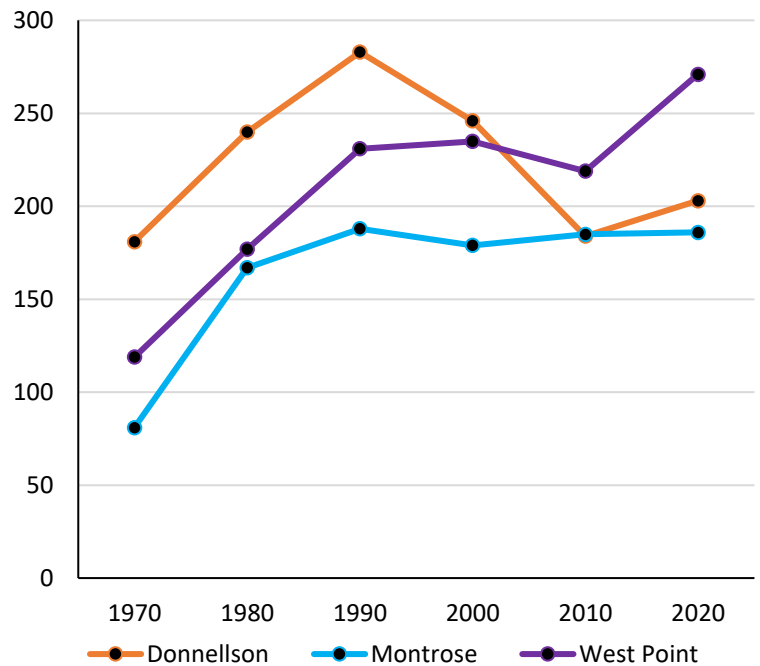


Demographics

CHANGE IN SENIOR POPULATION

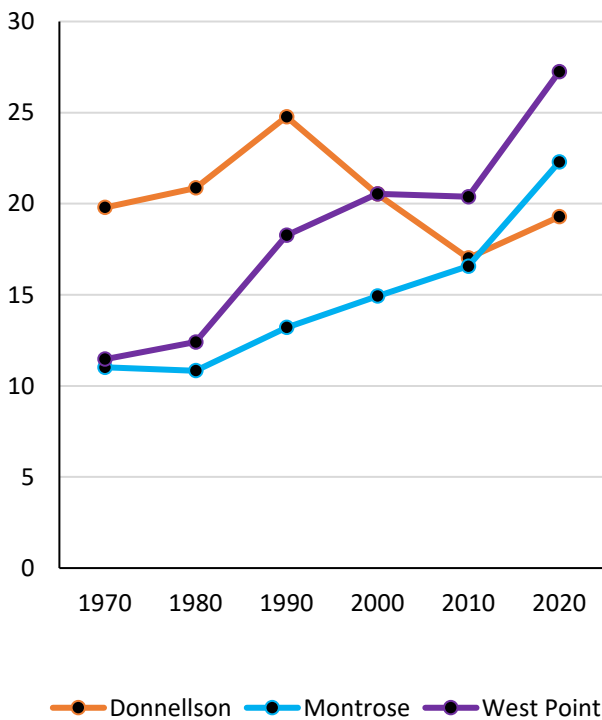
In order to gain additional perspective on how Donnellson's age cohorts have shifted over time, it was compared with the similar-sized Lee County cities of West Point and Montrose. While the overall trajectory of the other 3 cohorts was largely the same between the 3 cities, the pattern for people aged 65 and over was substantially different for Donnellson. While all 3 cities saw a pronounced rise between 1970 and 1990, only Donnellson saw an equally dramatic drop between 1990 and 2010. This likely resulted from its population of seniors being significantly higher than the other two in 1970. When the wave of residents moving to Donnellson from elsewhere ceased in the early 1990s, there was no longer a steady supply of new seniors to replace the existing residents as they passed away.

Total Number of Residents Aged 65 and Over



Source: US Census Bureau

Percent of Population Living 'In Households', Aged 65 and Over (excludes nursing homes)



Source: US Census Bureau

The Census Bureau classifies residents of nursing homes as living 'in group quarters' – a group living facility, similar to a college dormitory, prison or military barracks. People living in 'group quarters' can be subtracted from a city's total population, in order to get a better understanding of a city's general population. This can be helpful since nursing homes in small towns often bring in many of their patients from surrounding rural farming areas.

The graph to the right results from all nursing home residents being excluded from the total population for Donnellson and two similar-sized cities in Lee County. It shows that the nursing home itself does not explain why Donnellson had a comparatively larger percentage of senior citizens living in town in 1970. Even with the nursing home excluded, seniors represented 20% of the general population that year – nearly double the percentages for the other two cities. This trend only changed after Donnellson's elderly population dropped dramatically between 1990 and 2010, resulting in Donnellson now being very similar to the other two cities.

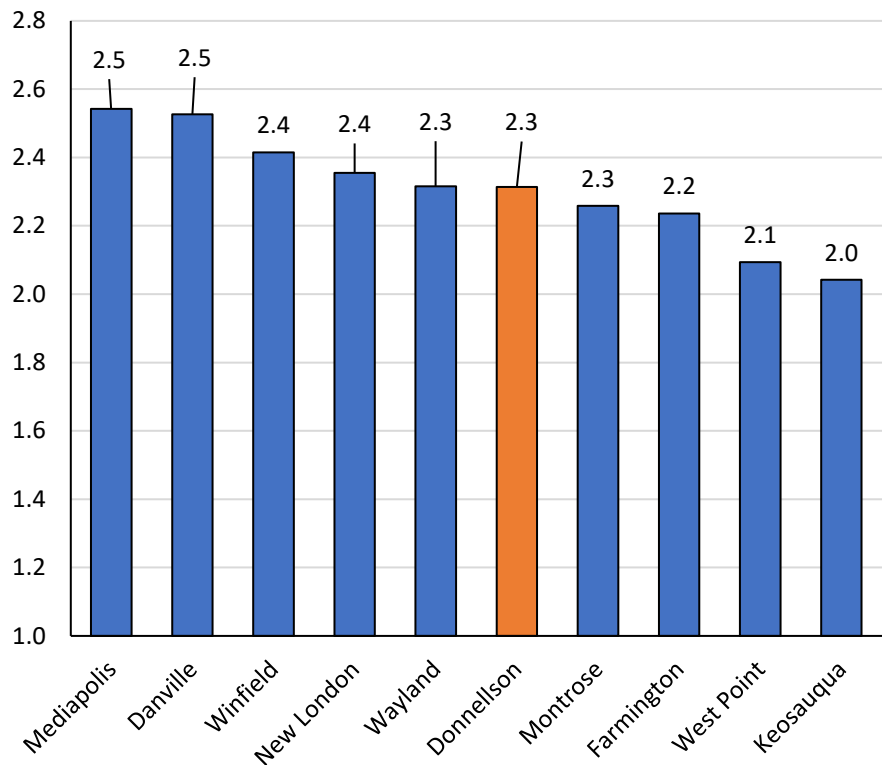
Despite the fact that Donnellson's age demographics are typical of small towns today, its unique history can still have ramifications for the city today. This is especially true in the area of housing, as many 2-bedroom ranch homes were built in Donnellson during an era when the elderly population was much higher. It can also explain why many local businesses closed in the early 21st century, including the grocery store. Many of these businesses would have come to depend on the older population to sustain their sales, since that demographic is especially likely to 'shop local'.

Demographics

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

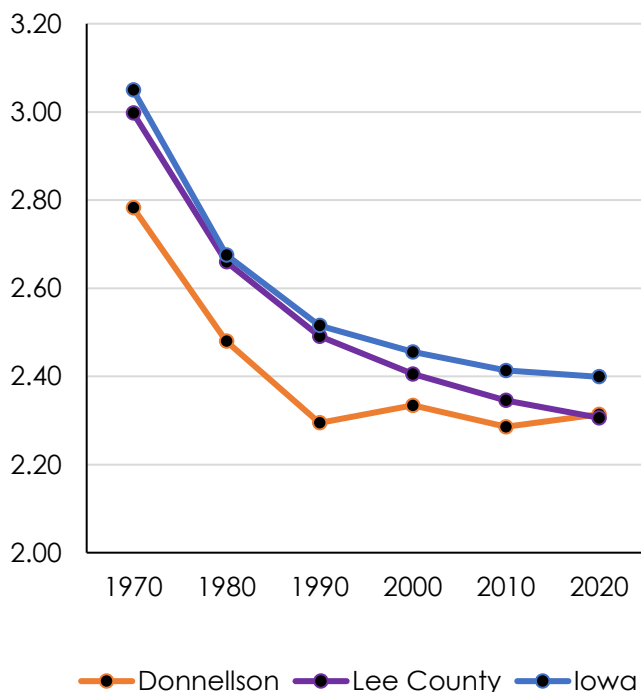
The average household size of a community is taken by dividing the total number of households by the total number of people living in households (which excludes people residing in 'group quarters' facilities such as nursing homes, prisons, and college dormitories). For Donnellson, the average size is 2.31 people per household, which is equal to that of Lee County, but considerably lower than that of Iowa as a whole (2.40). Among the comparable cities, Donnellson is one of 7 that falls below the statewide average, but ranks highest among the 3 such cities located in Lee County.

Average Household Size



Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Average Household Size, 1970-2020



Source: US Census Bureau

Consistent with Iowa as a whole, the average household size for Donnellson has decreased over the past 50 years, with an especially steep drop between 1970 and 1990. This corresponds with several important nationwide trends – 1) parents having fewer children on average, 2) the average life expectancy increasing, and 3) more senior citizens living in their own homes – either alone or with just their spouse, often well into their 70s and 80s.

Though the shape of the trendlines is the same, Donnellson's average household size has remained slightly lower than Iowa as a whole over the past half century. However, the two lines have steadily grown closer together over that period, as Donnellson's average increased from 91 to 96% of the statewide average. In addition, the average for Donnellson was lower than that of Lee County for every decade from 1970 to 2010, before rising very slightly ahead of it for the first time in 2020.

Demographics

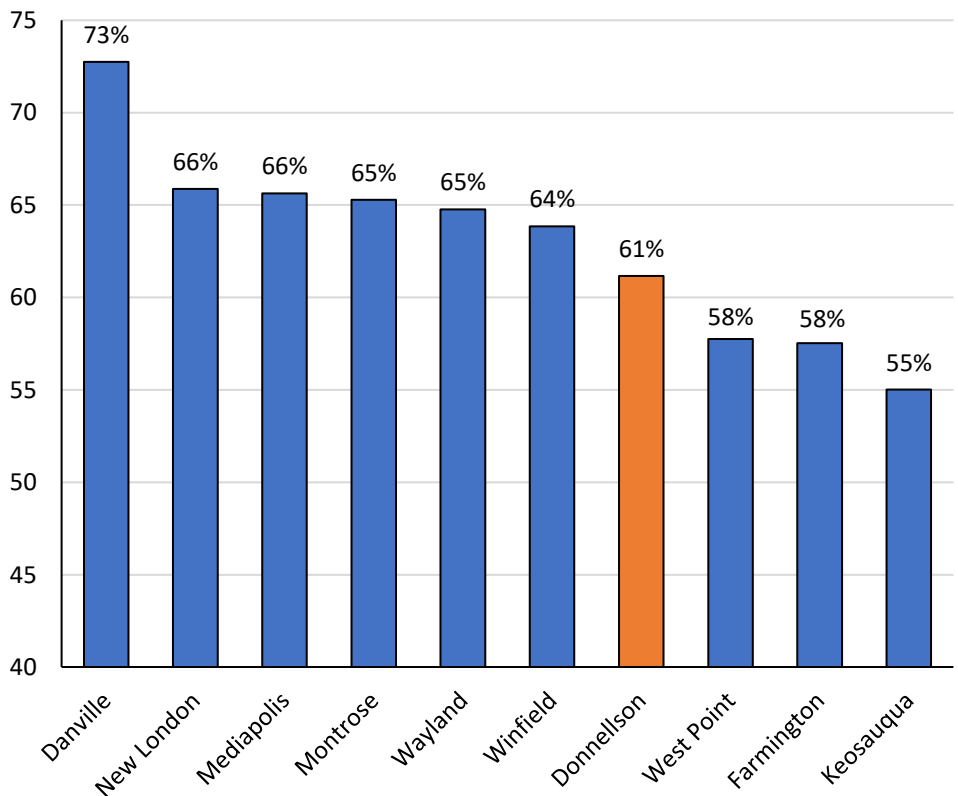


HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES

The Census Bureau defines a 'Family' as any household that contains 2 or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption. All households not fitting this definition are classified as 'Non-Family Households'. That category includes any instance where an individual is living alone, as well as any where 2 or more unrelated people are living together in the same housing unit.

For Donnellson, just under just over 60% of its 363 households are classified as 'families', and this is only slightly below the figures for Lee County and Iowa as a whole (both 63%). Among the comparable cities, however, it falls near the low end, one of only 4 to fall below the statewide figure.

Percent of Households Classified as 'Families'



Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Demographics

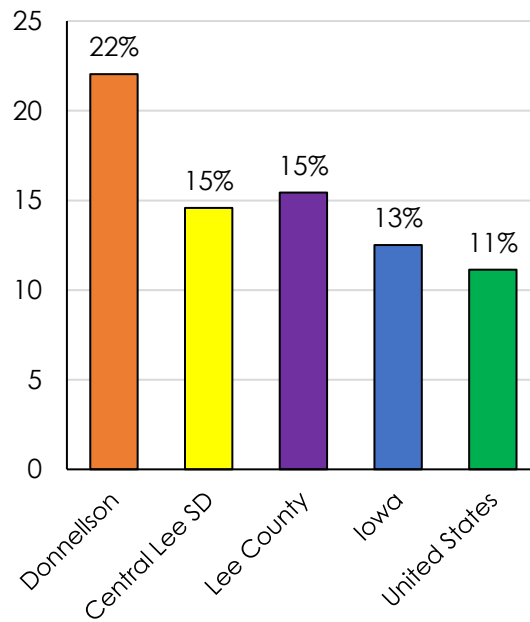
SENIORS LIVING ALONE

Of all households in Donnellson, nearly 1/4 are comprised of a person aged 65 or older living alone. Notably, this does not include the Aspire nursing home, as those residents are classified as living 'in group quarters', instead of 'in households'. The 22% figure includes both of senior apartment complexes in Donnellson (Fairview and Southview). However, since those comprise only 28 units combined, this represents only 1/3 of the 80 total units occupied by a senior citizen living alone.

For this statistic, Donnellson greatly exceeds the figures for the county, state, and even the school district, which suggests that many seniors from surrounding rural areas have moved to Donnellson after their spouse passed away. Donnellson also ranks at #2 among the 10 comparable cities, behind only Keosauqua, which is also the one of those cities to have a median age above 50 (much higher than that of Donnellson).

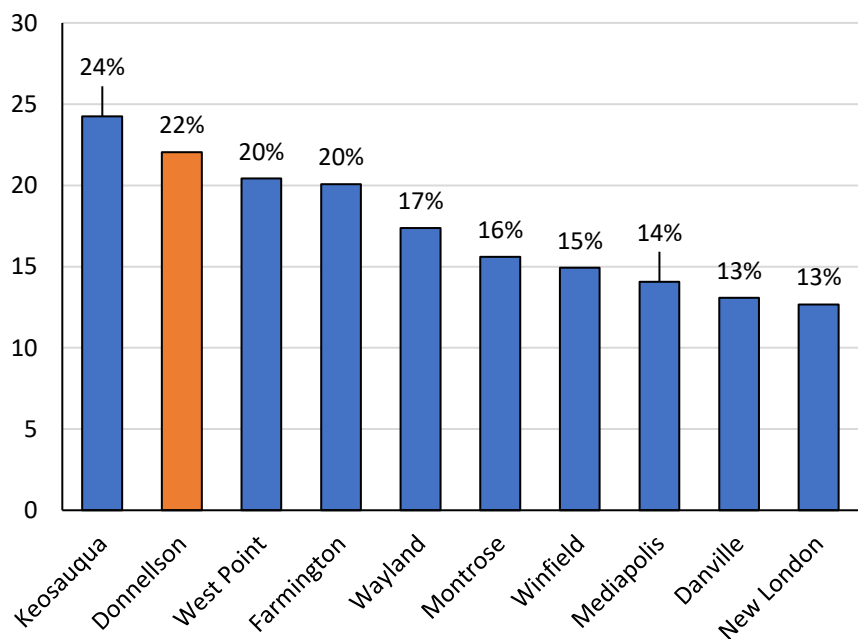
This statistic has considerable ramifications for the housing stock of Donnellson. It is likely that quite a few of these single seniors have moved into one of the many 1970s-era 2-bedroom ranch homes, which tend to get passed over by younger families with multiple children. Therefore, one of the most members of the 'baby boom' generation have passed away, these homes are likely to shift to rentals, due to the low demand from young families, as well as the smaller number of senior citizens overall.

Percent of Households comprised of a Person Aged 65 and Over Living Alone



Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Percent of Households comprised of a Person Aged 65 and Over Living Alone



Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Demographics

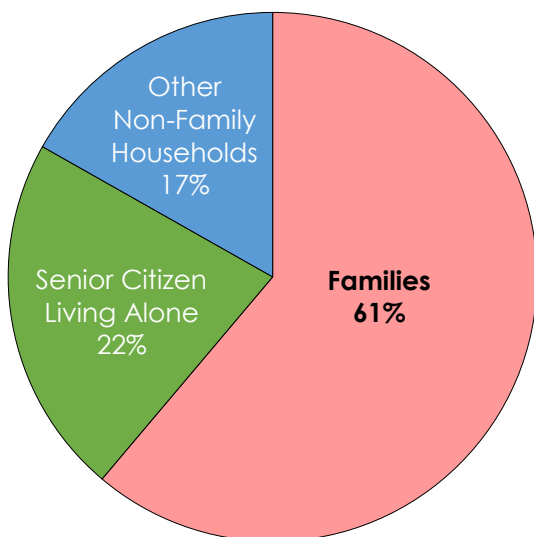
HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE

Taken as a whole, while Donnellson's percentage of 'Non-Family Households' is largely the same as the state, the type of households fitting that definition is substantially different between the two, as the majority of Donnellson's non-family households are comprised of a senior citizen living alone, while the majority of Iowa's non-family households do not fall into that same sub-category.

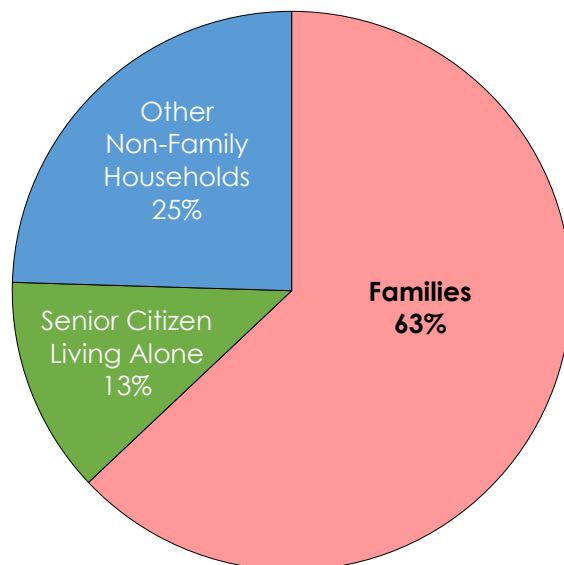
Other examples of non-family households include single people below age 65, unmarried couples, and friends/roommates living together.



Donnellson



Iowa



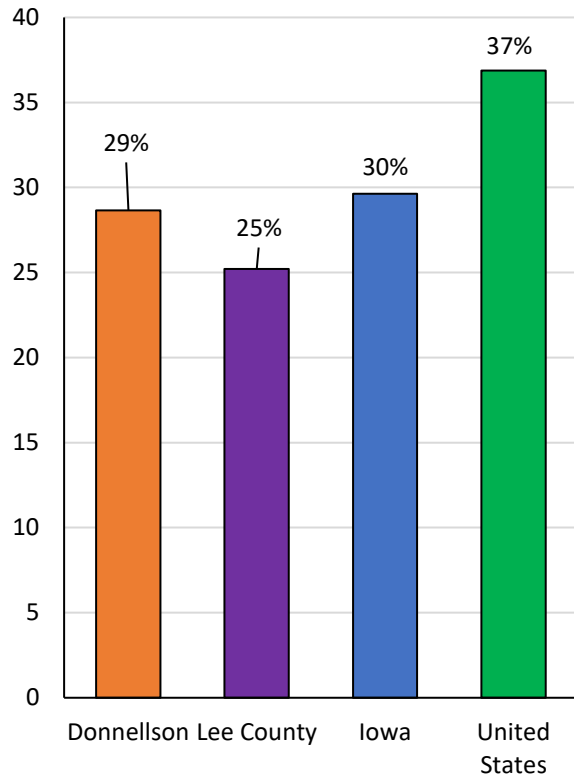
Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Housing

RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING

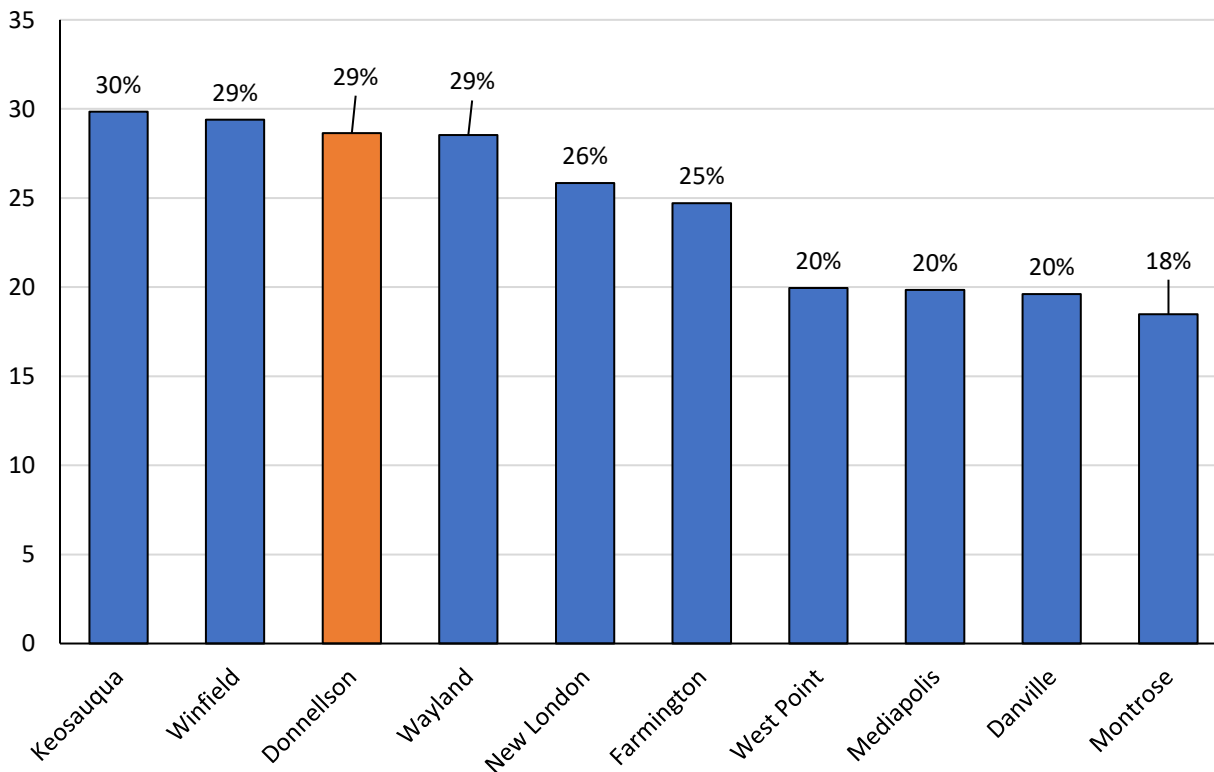
Out of all housing units in Donnellson, 71% are owner-occupied, and the remaining 29% are renter-occupied. This is largely consistent with the statewide rate of renter-occupancy, but noticeably higher than that for Lee County as a whole. It also ranks the third highest for renter-occupancy among the 10 comparable cities, and is one of 5 such cities to exceed 25%. While Donnellson is home to several apartment complexes, including two specifically for senior citizens, this alone (along with the two small mobile home parks) is insufficient to explain why the percentage is higher than most of the other 9 cities, many of which have a similar number of apartment units. This suggests that a significant number of the rental units are single-family homes, not originally constructed to serve as rentals.

Percent of Housing Units that are Renter-Occupied



Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Percent of Housing Units that are Renter-Occupied



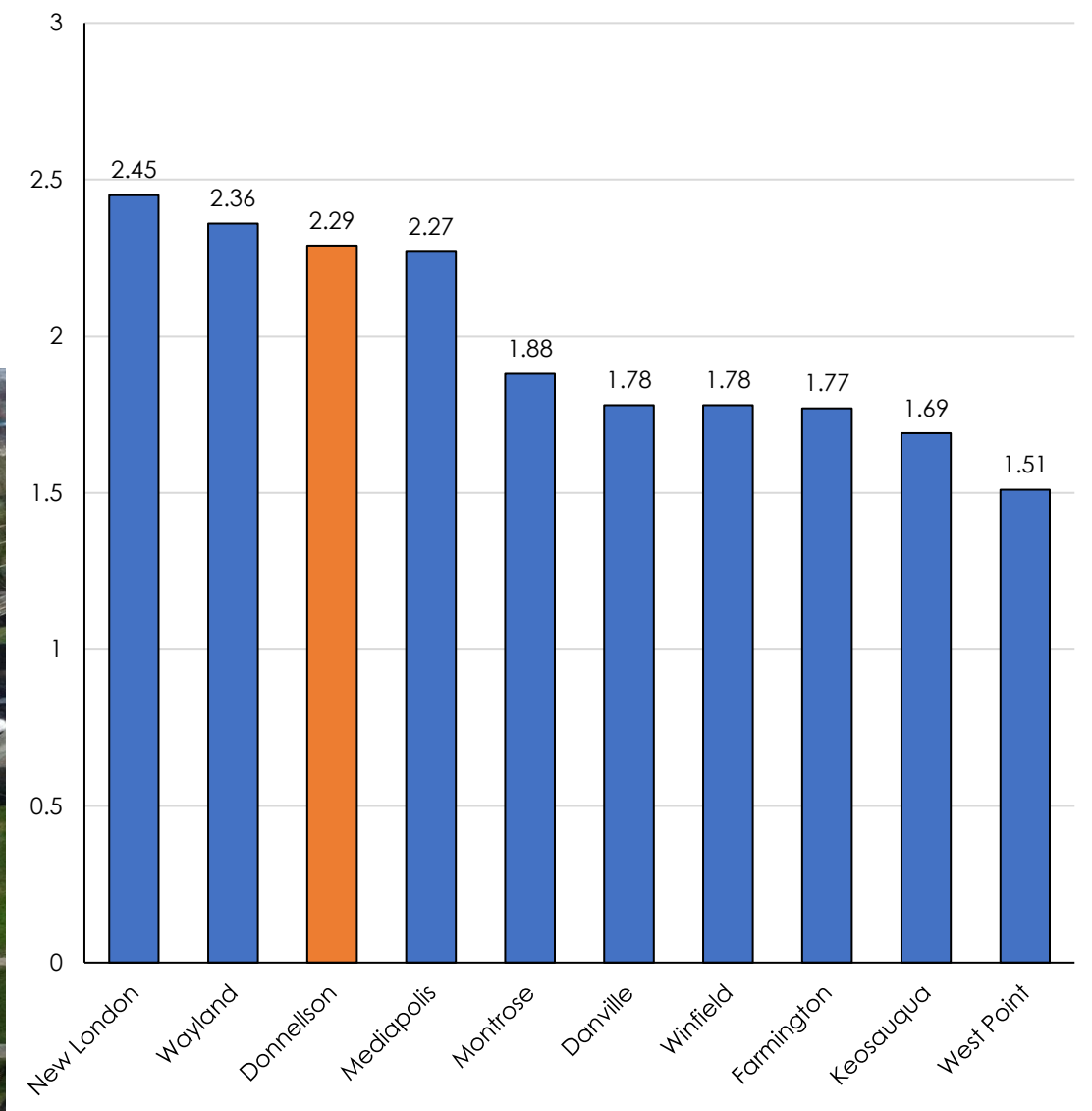
Source: Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 2020

Housing

RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING

The average household size is almost always smaller for renter-occupied units than it is for owner-occupied units, given that young adults and senior citizens are more likely to rent than people in the 30-65 age range. Four of the 10 comparable cities have an average household size that exceeds the statewide figure for renter-occupied units (2.14). Donnellson is one of those four, and this is likely correlated to the City's high percentage of homes that are rentals. It suggests that a substantial number of multi-bedroom single-family homes are being used as rentals, in addition to the apartment complexes that were originally designed for that purpose.

Average Household Size for Renter-Occupied Units



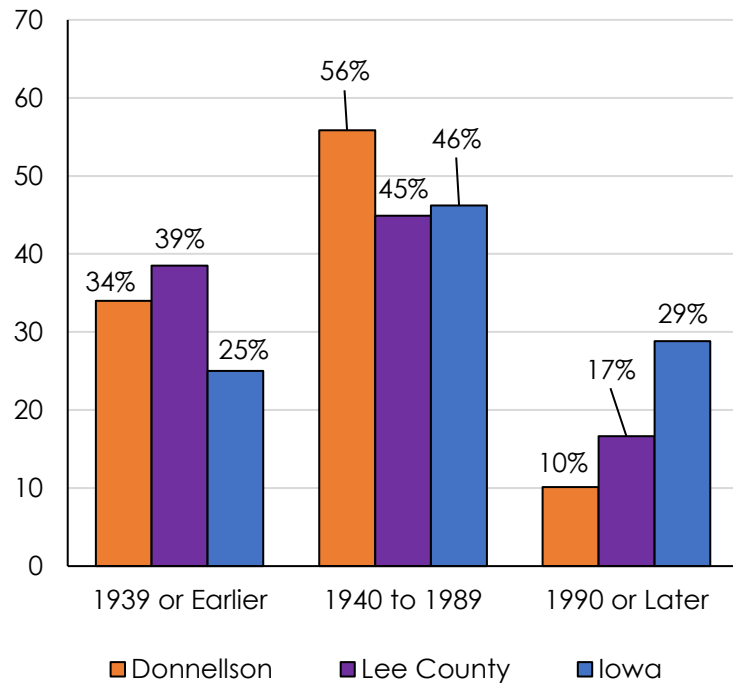
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Housing

HOUSING AGE

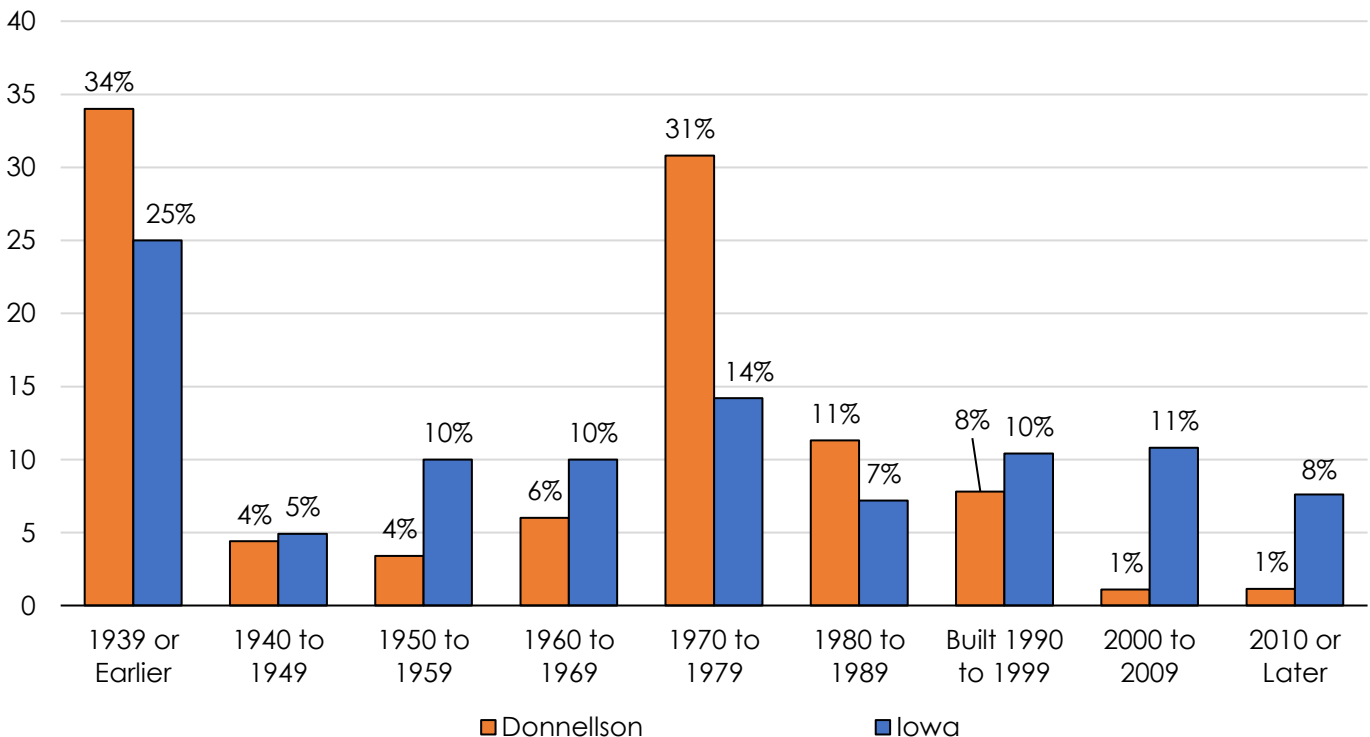
The age of the local housing stock is an important factor to consider, as age often correlates inversely with the value, structural condition, and desirability of a home – especially in communities of low-to-moderate average income. Compared to Iowa as a whole, Donnellson has a very large share of homes that were built either before 1940, or sometime in the 1970s. But while it contrasts with the state as a whole, the high share of pre-1940 homes is typical of Lee County and the rural parts of Iowa. Similarly, the state's urban areas such as Des Moines and Iowa City serve to substantially inflate the percentage of homes built in Iowa since 1990.

Percent of Housing Units by Era of Construction



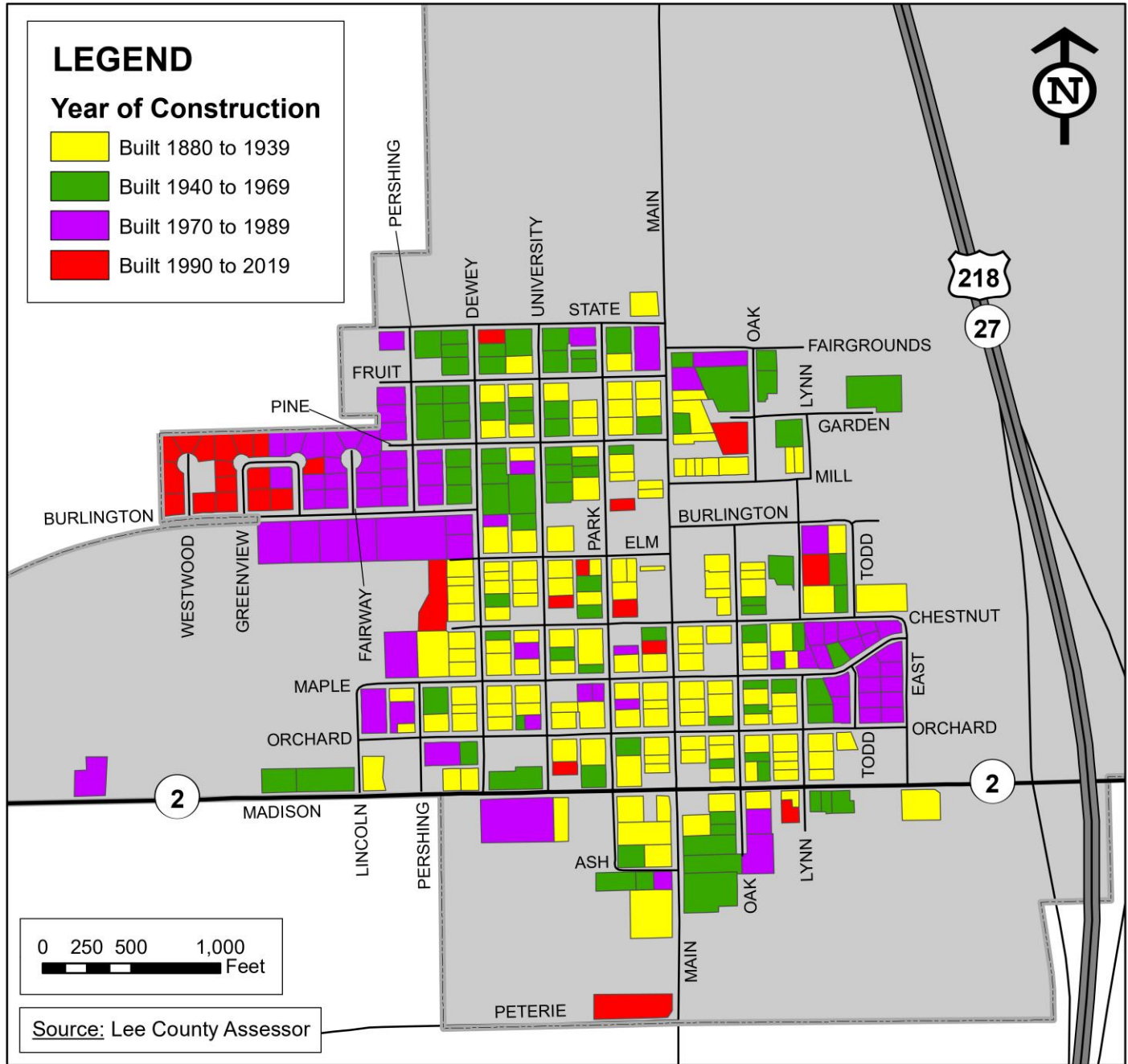
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Percent of Housing Units by Era of Construction



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION



The age of homes in Donnellson has a clear geographic pattern, from one part of town to the other. The oldest homes tend to be concentrated near the geographic center of town, while newer homes are spread around the periphery. The majority of homes built between 1940 and 1970 are found on the northwest side of town, within the blocks bounded by State, Park, Elm and Pershing Streets. Most homes from the 1970s and 1980s are found in two distinct clusters – on the northwest side, to the west of Dewey Street, and on the southeast side, in the area bounded by Chestnut, Lynn, Orchard and East Streets. Homes built after 1989 are generally scattered throughout the city, but there is a strong concentration of them at the northwest corner of the city, in the Greenview Terrace subdivision.

Housing

Even compared to Lee County and the 9 comparable cities, Donnellson has a uniquely high share of homes built in the 1970s and 1980s (over 40%), and a uniquely low share of homes built after the turn of the 21st Century (at only 2%).

As a result, it leads the other nine cities in its share of 35 to 55-year old homes, and falls behind them all in its share of homes that are less than 35 years old.

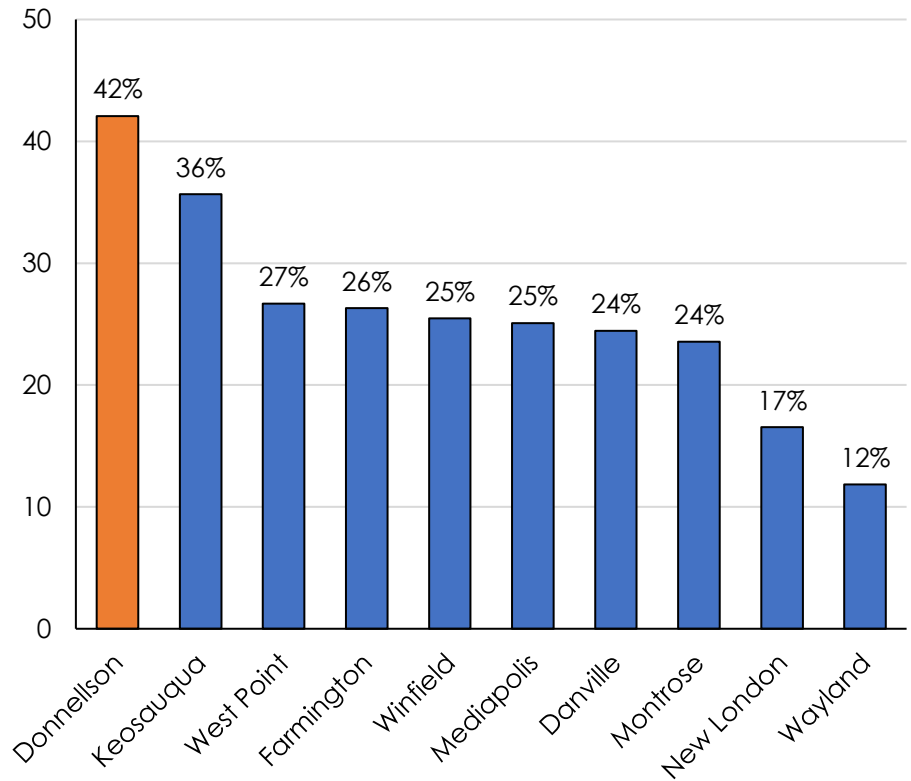


50-year old home (1973)



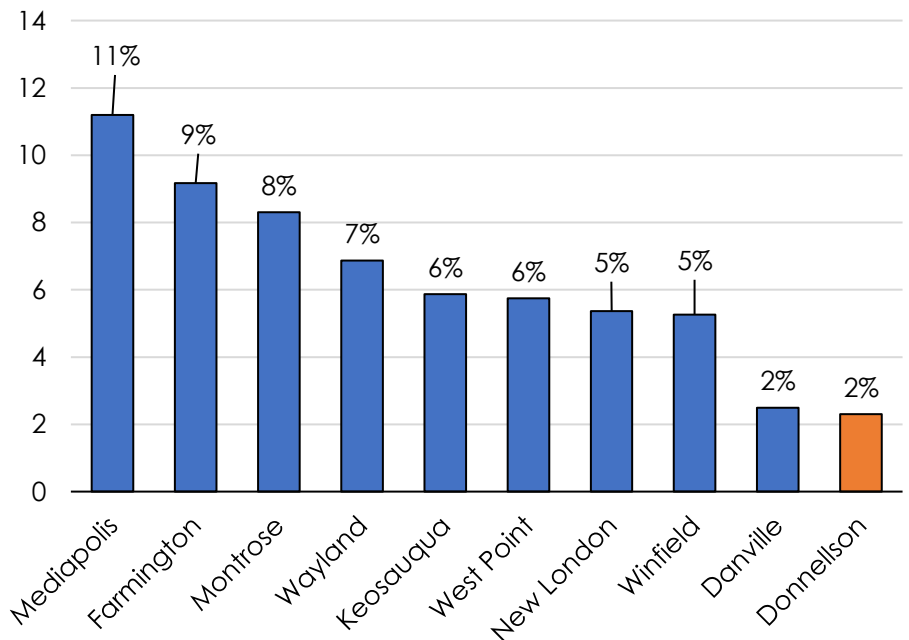
15-year old home (2008)

Percent of Housing Units Built 1970 to 1989



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Percentage of Housing Units Built 2000 or Later



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

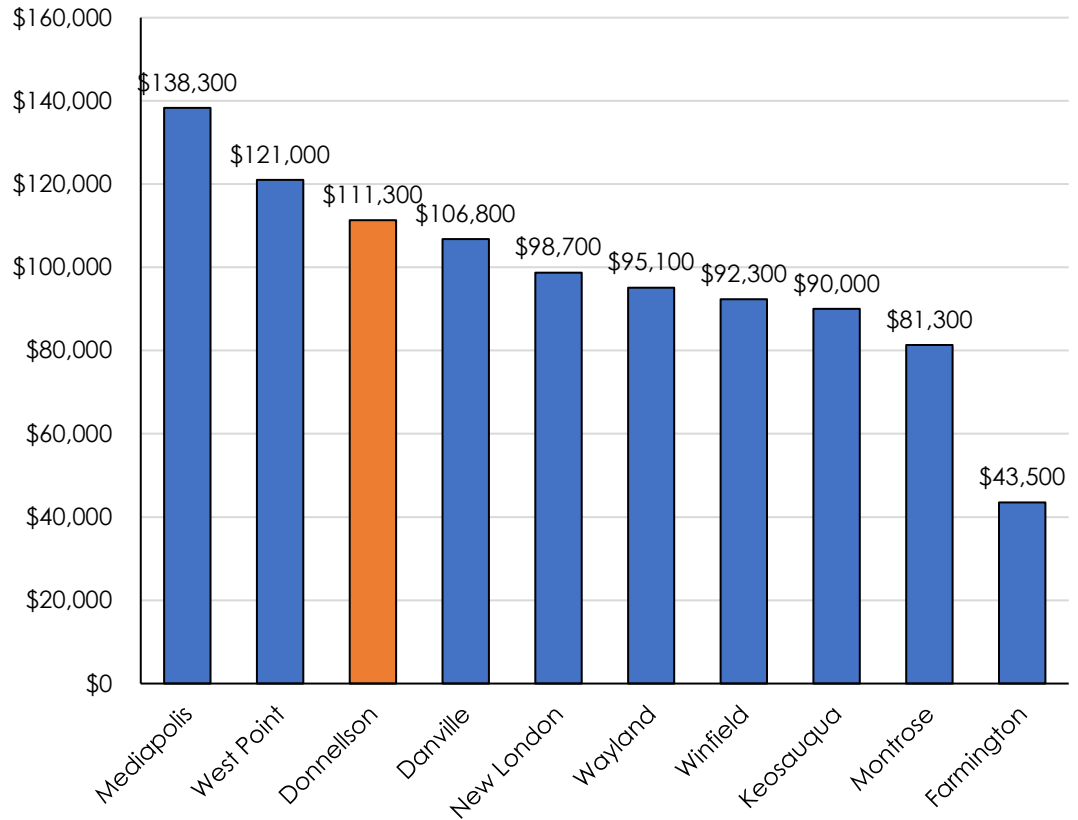
Housing

HOME VALUE

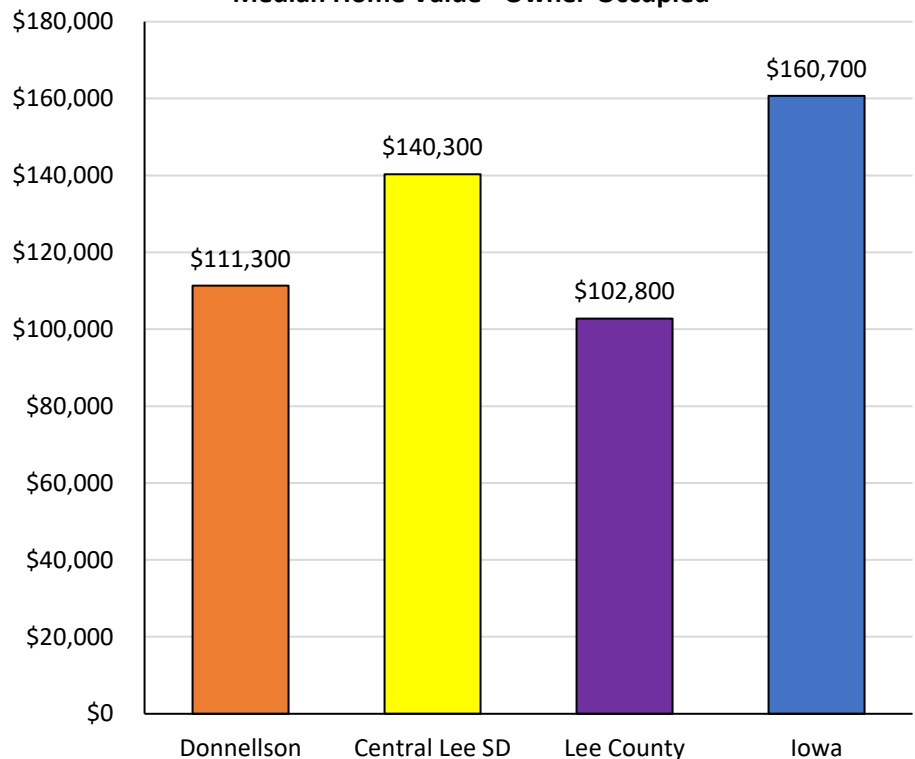
The median value for an owner-occupied home in Donnellson is just over \$110,000, which is only 70% of Iowa's statewide median value of \$140,000. However, Donnellson's median value exceeds that of Lee County as a whole, it ranks 3rd out of the 10 comparable cities in Southeast Iowa, behind only Mediapolis and West Point. While this ranking contrasts with that of median household income, it is likely correlated with the high percentage of homes built between 1960 and 2000, compared to those built before 1940.

Accordingly, unless a substantial number of new homes are constructed to balance out the housing stock overall, Donnellson's ranking is likely to gradually decrease in the future, as the many 1970s-era homes enter their 5th and 6th decades of occupation.

Median Home Value - Owner-Occupied

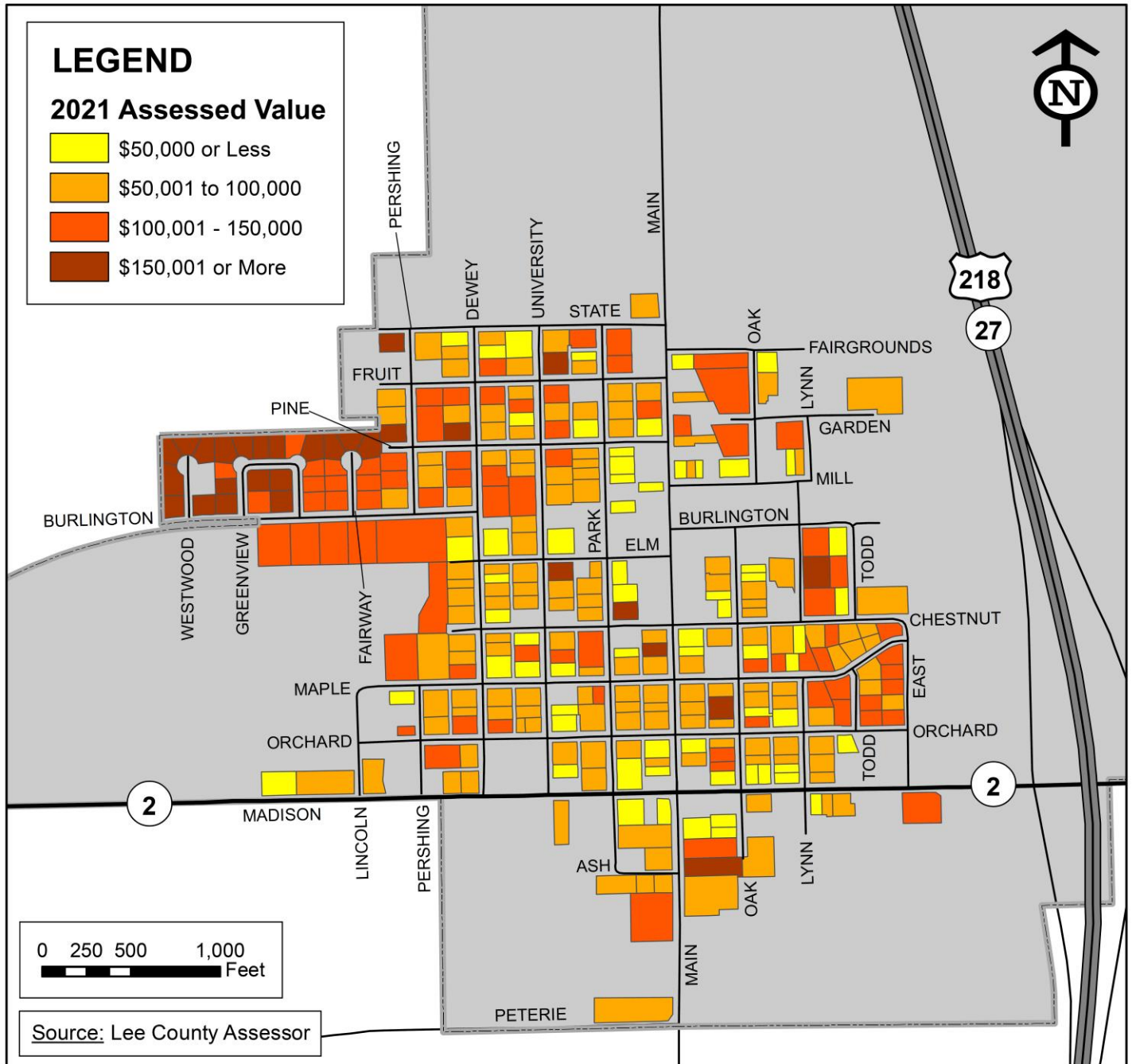


Median Home Value - Owner-Occupied



Source: American Community Survey
5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

HOME VALUE - SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLINGS



Similar to the age of homes, there is a noticeable geographic pattern in the distribution of homes by assessed value. The strongest concentration of homes valued over \$100,000 is found in the Greenview Terrace subdivision at the northwest corner of the city. In addition to these homes tending to have a comparatively large floor area, they are also some of the youngest homes in the city, and the age of a home tends to be inversely proportional to its value. Accordingly, home values tend to be in the \$100,000 – 150,000 range for the two areas with a large number of homes built in the 1970s and 1980s. These are located just east Greenview Terrace and on the southeast side of town, between Lynn and East Streets.

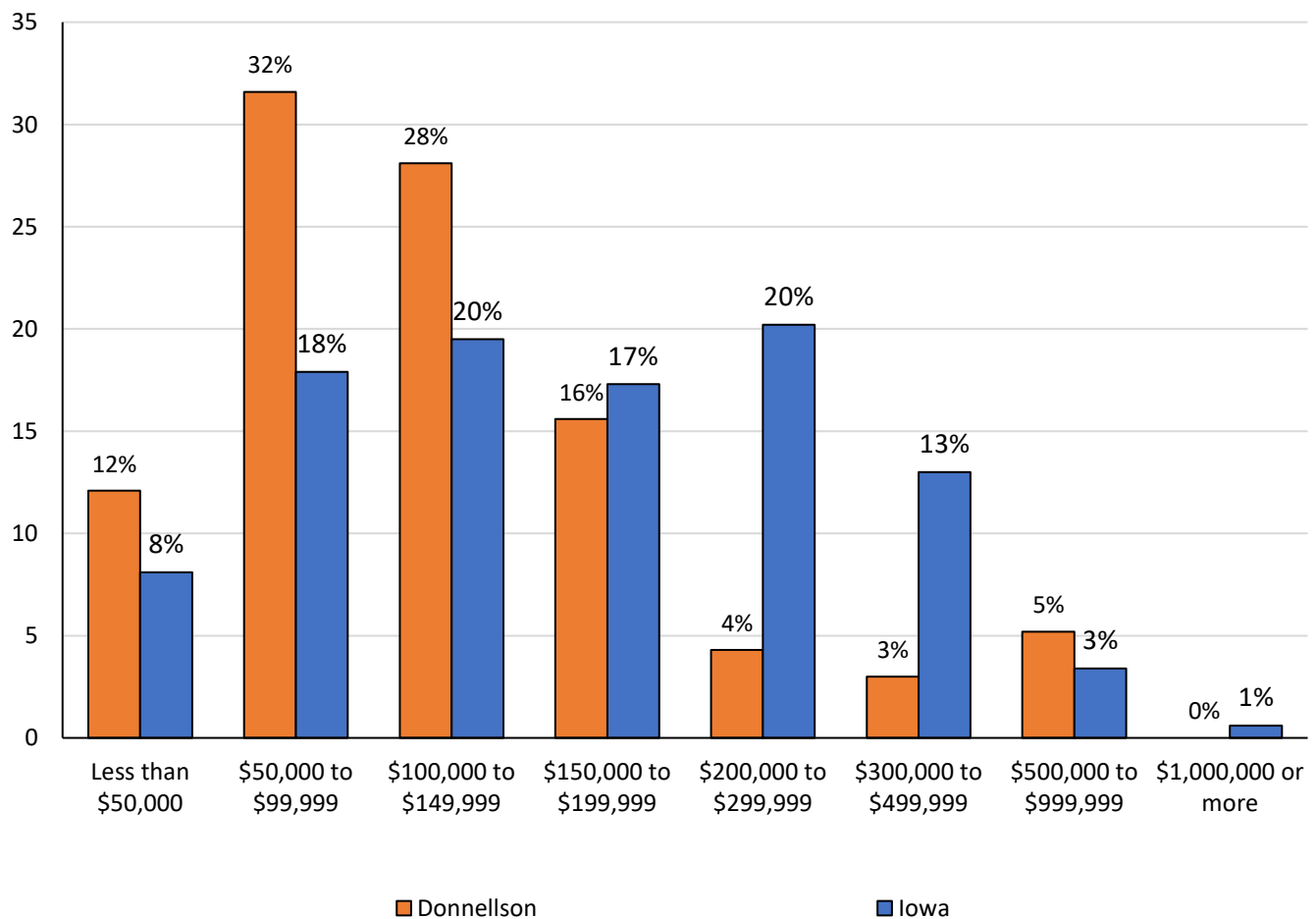
For the most part, homes valued below \$50,000 tend to be evenly scattered throughout the city, though primarily in the older neighborhoods in the center of town. The highest concentration of them is found on the blocks immediately surrounding the downtown business district.

Housing

When broken down by value ranges of roughly \$50 to \$100 thousand, Donnellson's housing stock greatly exceeds the state as a whole in the two ranges extending between \$50 and \$150 thousand. Combined, this represents 60% of all housing units in Donnellson. While the City is largely consistent with the State for the range from \$150 to \$200 thousand, it falls well below the State for the two ranges extending from \$200 to \$500 thousand, with 1/3 of the State's housing falling into those two ranges, compared to only 7% for Donnellson.

For the percentage of all homes valued at \$200 or higher, Donnellson ranks in the middle of the 10 comparable cities (at 13%), and none of these cities exceeds 16%. Therefore, this is a common trend for small towns in rural regions – in contrast to growing metro regions like Des Moines or Cedar Rapids. However, when zeroed in to the \$200 to \$300 thousand range alone, Donnellson ranks last out of the 10 comparable cities – one of four where only 6% of homes fell into that range, and the only one of those four located in Lee County. This figure would be likely to increase substantially if additional subdivisions like Greenview Terrace were to be developed in Donnellson.

Percent of Owner-Occupied Homes by Value Range

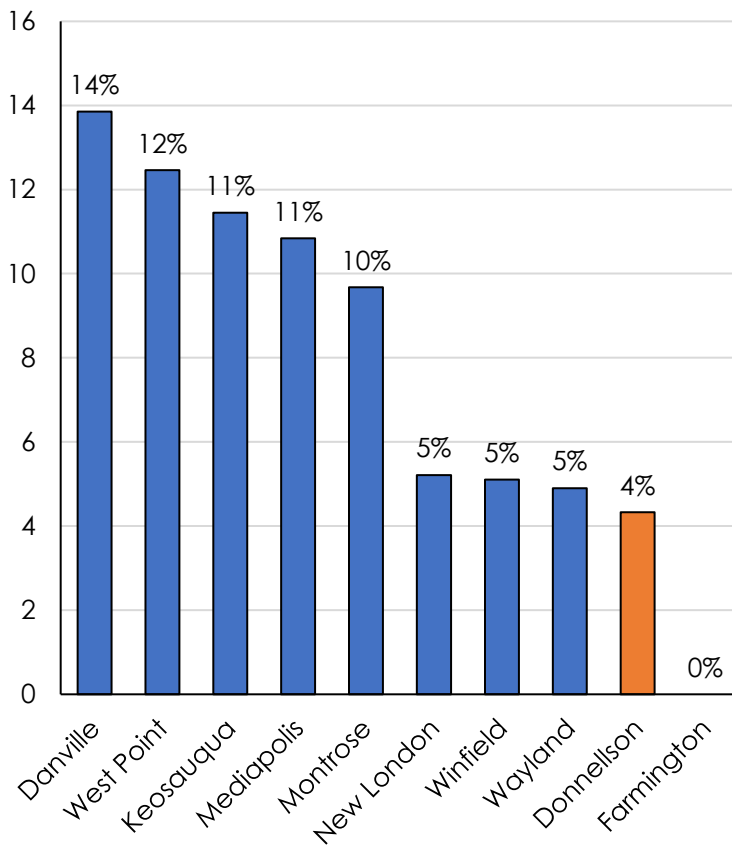


Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

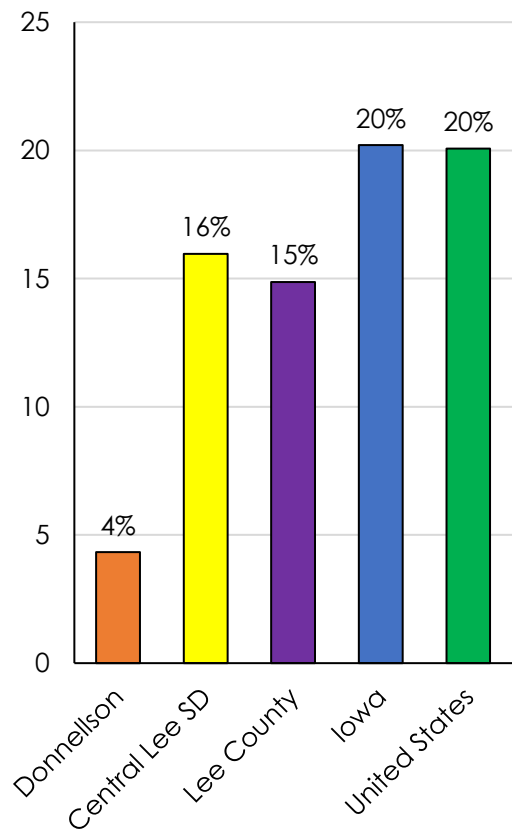
Housing

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Percentage of Owner-Occupied Homes Valued at \$200,000 to \$300,000



Percentage of Owner-Occupied Homes Valued at \$200,000 to \$300,000



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Housing

PERCENT OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL

An alarming share of families in Donnellson have an income that falls below the poverty level. ACS estimates suggest that 15% of Donnellson families fit that category, compared to only 9% for Lee County and 7% for Iowa as a whole. It also ranks highest among the 10 comparable cities, one of only two such cities to exceed 10% (the other being nearby Farmington). This likely correlates directly with the large percentage of families whose annual income falls between \$35 and \$50 thousand.

When viewed in terms of all individual people, instead of families, 21% of all Donnellson residents fall below the poverty level. For those below the age of 18, the figure is 23%, and for those above the age of 65, the figure is 12%. In each of these 3 cases, Donnellson ranks highest or second-highest among the 10 comparable cities.

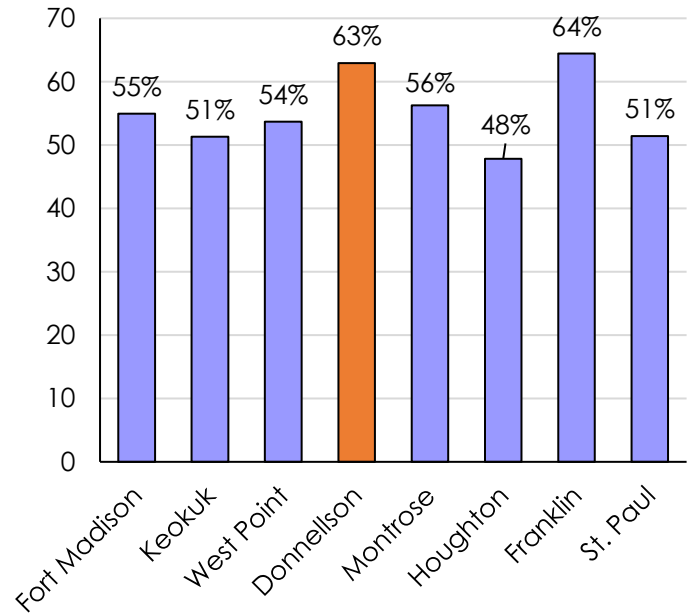
PER CAPITA INCOME

Per Capita Income residents the total income earned in a year for a certain area, divided by that area's total number of residents. For Donnellson, the per capita income is \$22,710, which is only 80% of the per capita income for Lee County, and 65% of the per capita income for Iowa as a whole.

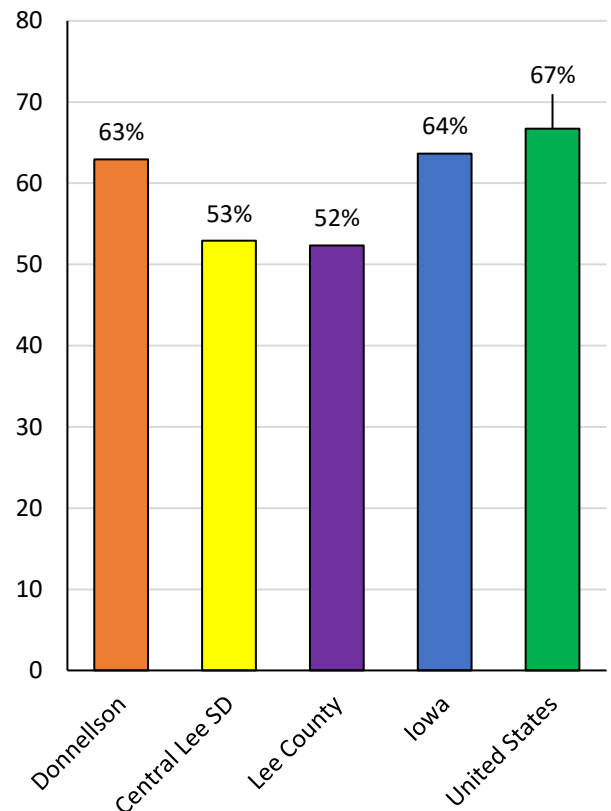
In addition, Donnellson has the lowest per capita income for the comparable cities, and is one of only 4 such cities with a figure below \$25,000. Whereas the low figure for 'median household income' is especially concerning for the individual residents of the community, the 'per capita' figure is even more concerning for the City itself, as it suggests that the City has insufficient tax base potential to support quality city services and infrastructure maintenance.

The comparatively high per capita figure for the entire Central Lee school district shows that the failure to build a sufficient number of new homes is causing the tax base potential to leak into the surrounding rural areas, where such extra income cannot be used to support services within the City.

Percent of Owner-Occupied Housing Units Owned with a Mortgage or Loan – Lee County Cities



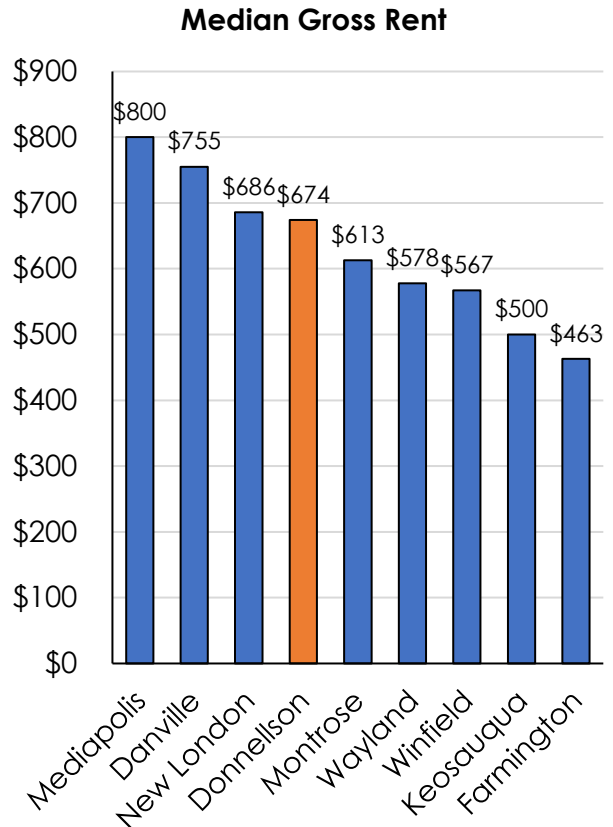
Percentage of Owner-Occupied Homes with a Mortgage or Loan



Housing

MEDIAN GROSS RENT

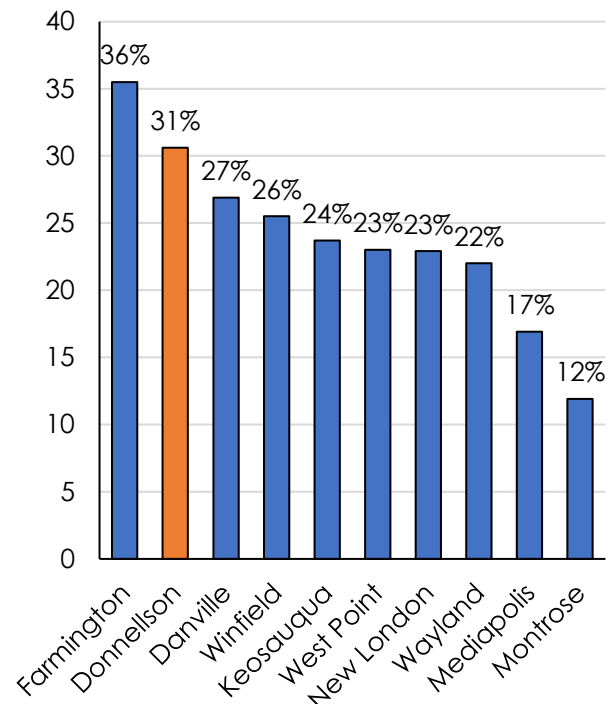
The median gross rent for rental units in Donnellson is \$674 per month, which is 88% of the median rent for Lee County (\$762), and 80% of the median rent for all of Iowa. However, this is typical for communities of under 2,000 residents, as Donnellson had the 4th highest gross rent of the 10 comparable cities.



HOUSING TYPE

Just over 2/3 of all housing units in Donnellson are single-family detached homes, and this figure is noticeably lower than Lee County (80%), and slightly higher than Iowa as a whole (73%). Of the 10 comparable cities, Donnellson has the second highest percentage of homes that are anything other than single-family detached. That group includes duplexes, two-family conversions, condominiums, townhomes, apartments, and mobile homes. For Donnellson, just over half of these are buildings with 3 or more units, nearly 1/3 are mobile homes, and the remaining 20% are duplexes.

Percentage of Housing Units - Anything other than 'Single-Family Detached'



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

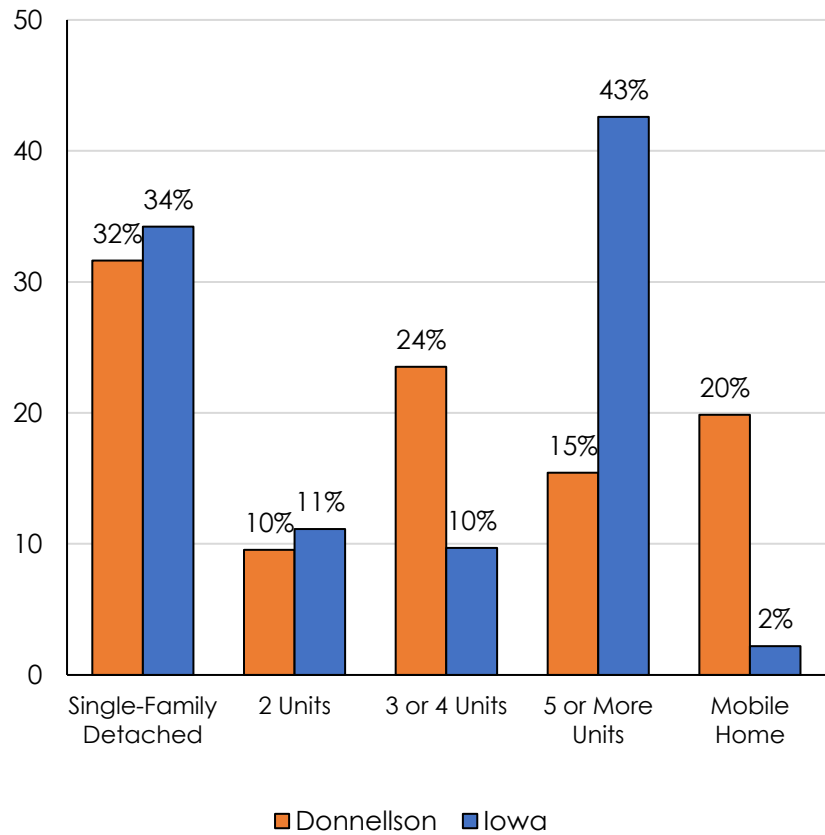
Housing

RENTER-OCCUPIED HOMES

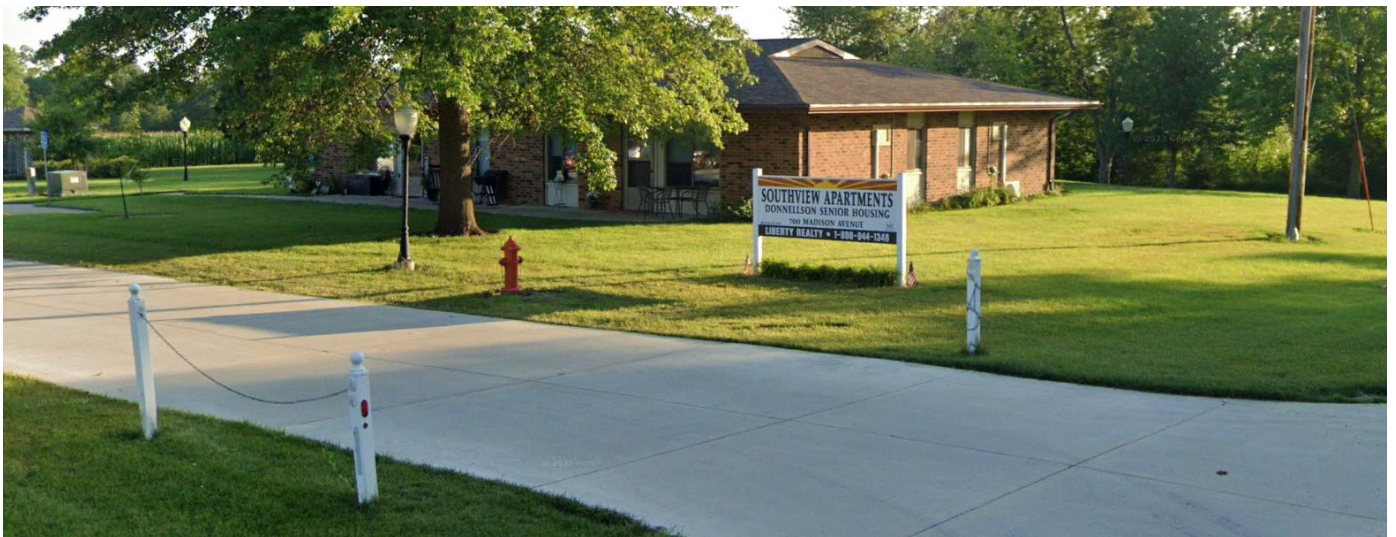
Of all renter-occupied housing units in Donnellson, 1/3 are single-family detached homes, while another 1/4 are in a building with 3 or 4 units, and 1/5 are mobile homes. Donnellson greatly exceeds the State of Iowa as a whole, in terms of the share of rental units comprised of 3-to-4 unit buildings and mobile homes. Conversely, it falls well behind the State in terms of its share of rental units contained in buildings of 5 units or more, and is largely consistent with the State its share of rental units that are single-family homes or duplexes.

The prevalence of 3-to-4 unit buildings may be less common at the state level, but for rural communities like Donnellson, this is actually quite common. In fact, Donnellson ranks 9th out of the 10 comparable cities, as most of them have between 25 and 50% of their rental units accounted for by 3-to-unit buildings.

Percentage of Renter-Occupied Homes by Number of Units in Structure



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

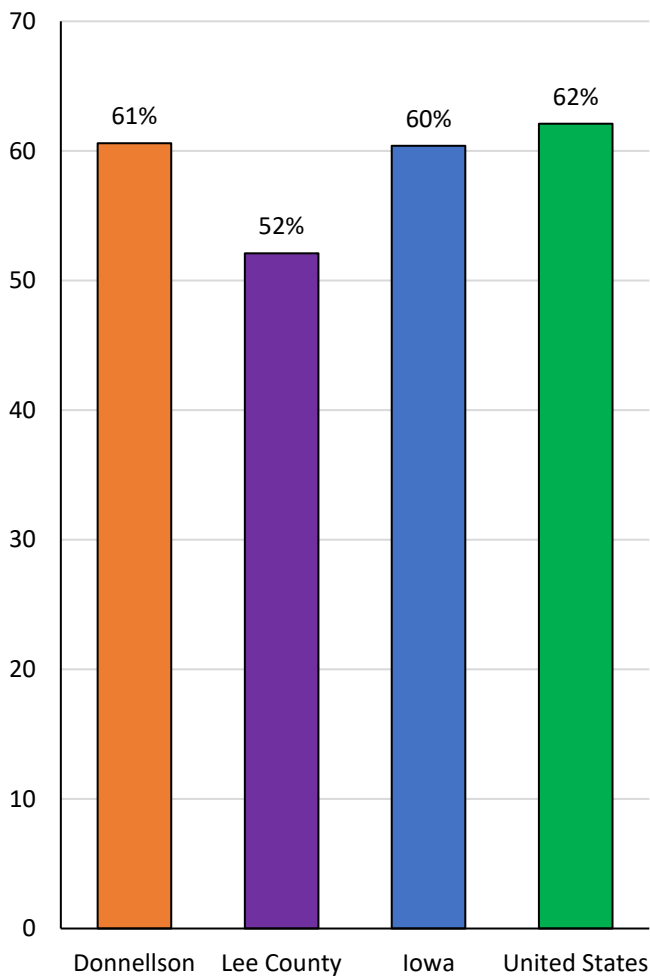


Housing

OWNER-OCCUPIED HOMES

Three out of every five owner-occupied homes in Donnellson currently have a mortgage, while the remaining 40% are owned free and clear. This figure is largely identical to the figures for Iowa and the United States as a whole, and it ranks in the middle of the 10 comparable cities.

Percent of Owner-Occupied Housing Units with a Mortgage



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

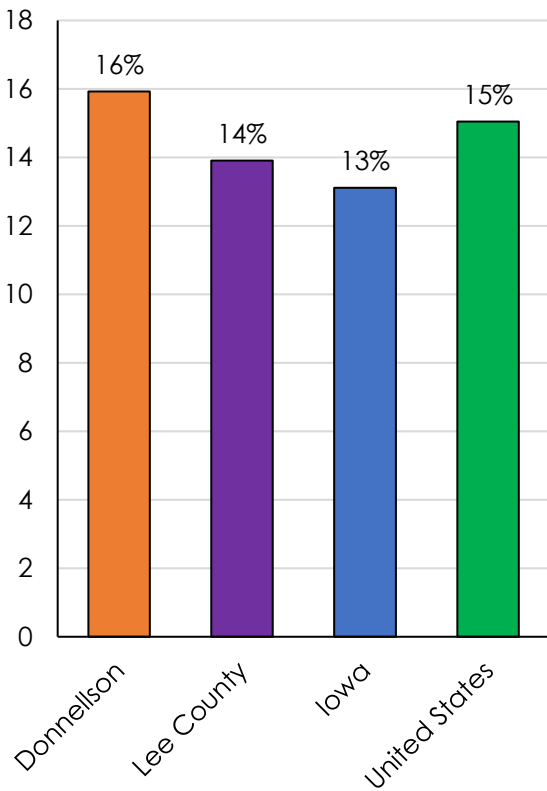


Housing

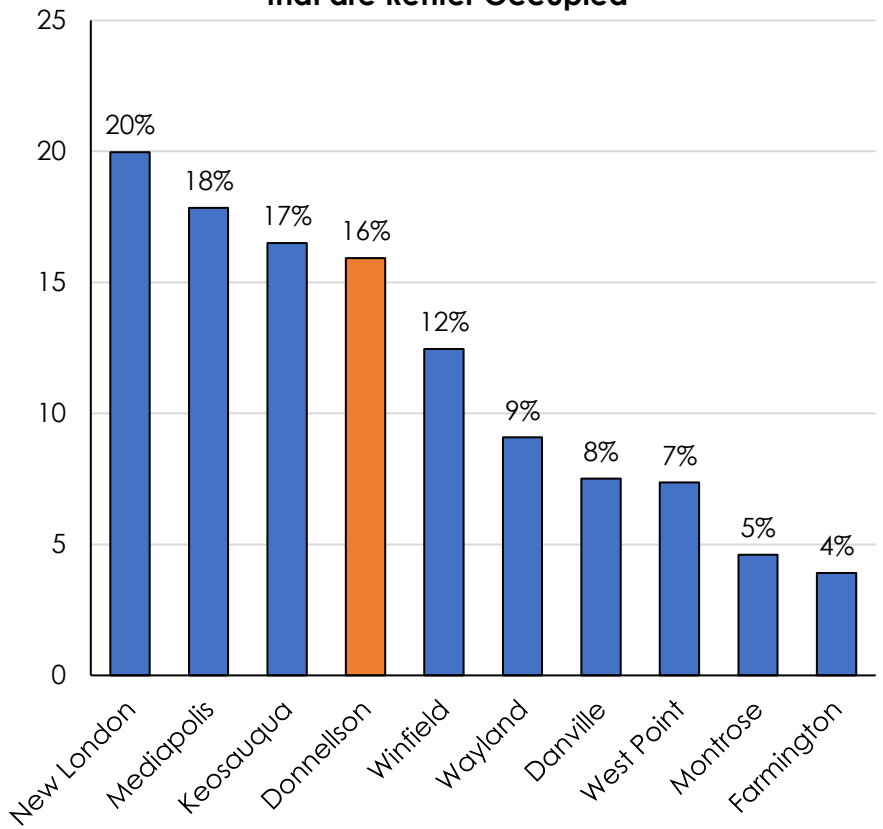
RENTER-OCCUPIED HOMES

Of all single-family detached homes in Donnellson, 84% of them are owner-occupied, while the remaining 16% are renter-occupied. This exceeds the same figure for Lee County, the State of Iowa, and the nation as a whole. Among the 10 comparable cities, it ranks 4th – one of 4 cities to exceed the statewide figure of 13%. This suggests two possible explanations, both of which may contribute to that outcome. First, on the demand side, people may be converting older homes to rentals to account for a lack of available apartments or duplexes that are designed specifically for rental housing. Second, on the supply side, landlords may be buying up old homes that stay on the market for a long time, due to their inability to meet the needs and preferences of the average family. This is especially likely when considering Donnellson’s large supply of 2-bedroom, 1-story ranch homes from the 1970s.

Percentage of Single-Family Homes that are Renter-Occupied

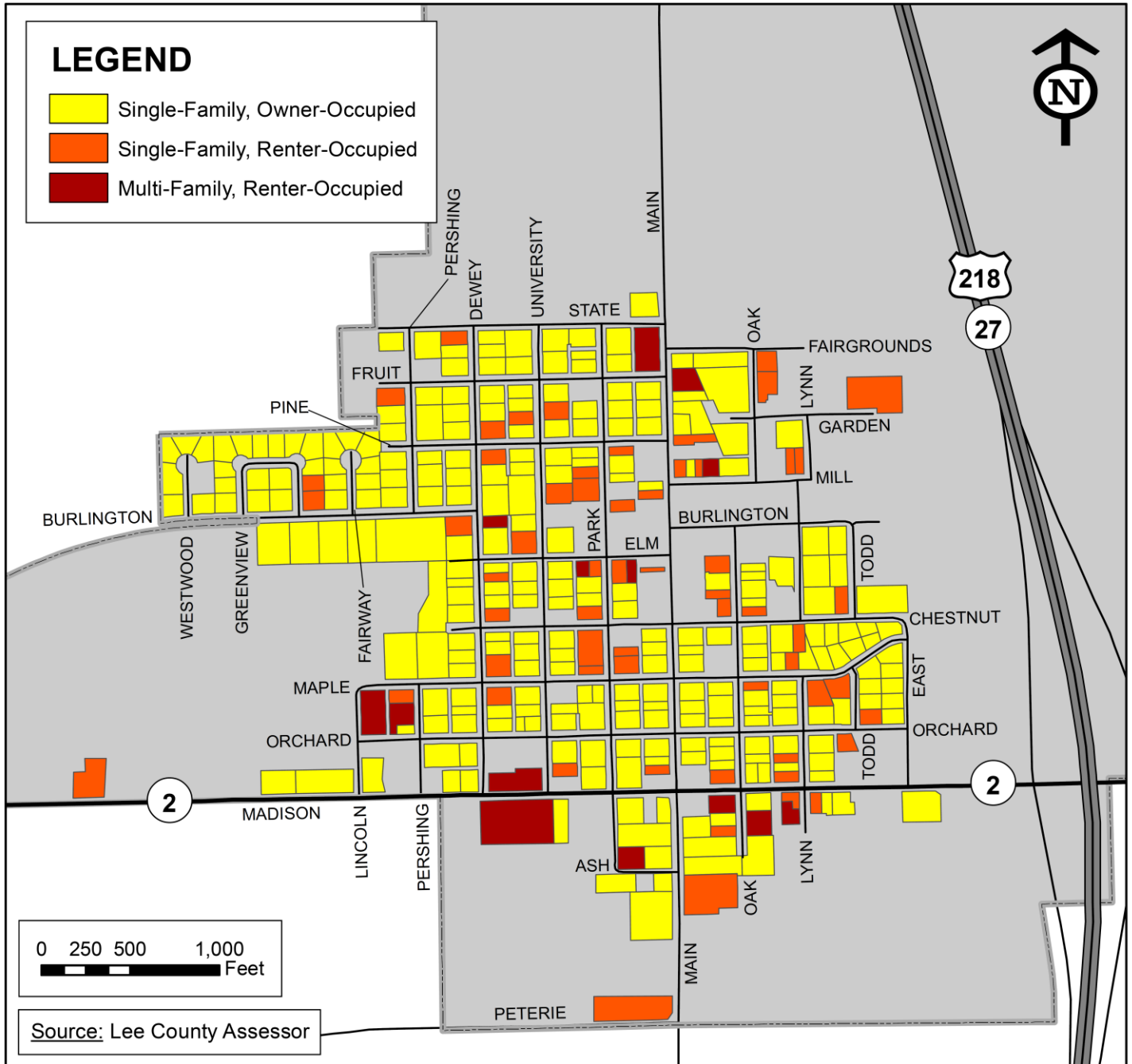


Percentage of Single-Family Detached Homes that are Renter Occupied



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES BY TENURE



Renter-occupied homes tend to be evenly distributed around the city. Those that are also single-family homes tend to be more common in the older neighborhoods surrounding downtown. They are least common on the northwest and southeast sides of town, where most of the housing stock is under 50 years old. This shows that the likelihood of a single-family home becoming a rental unit tends to increase with age.

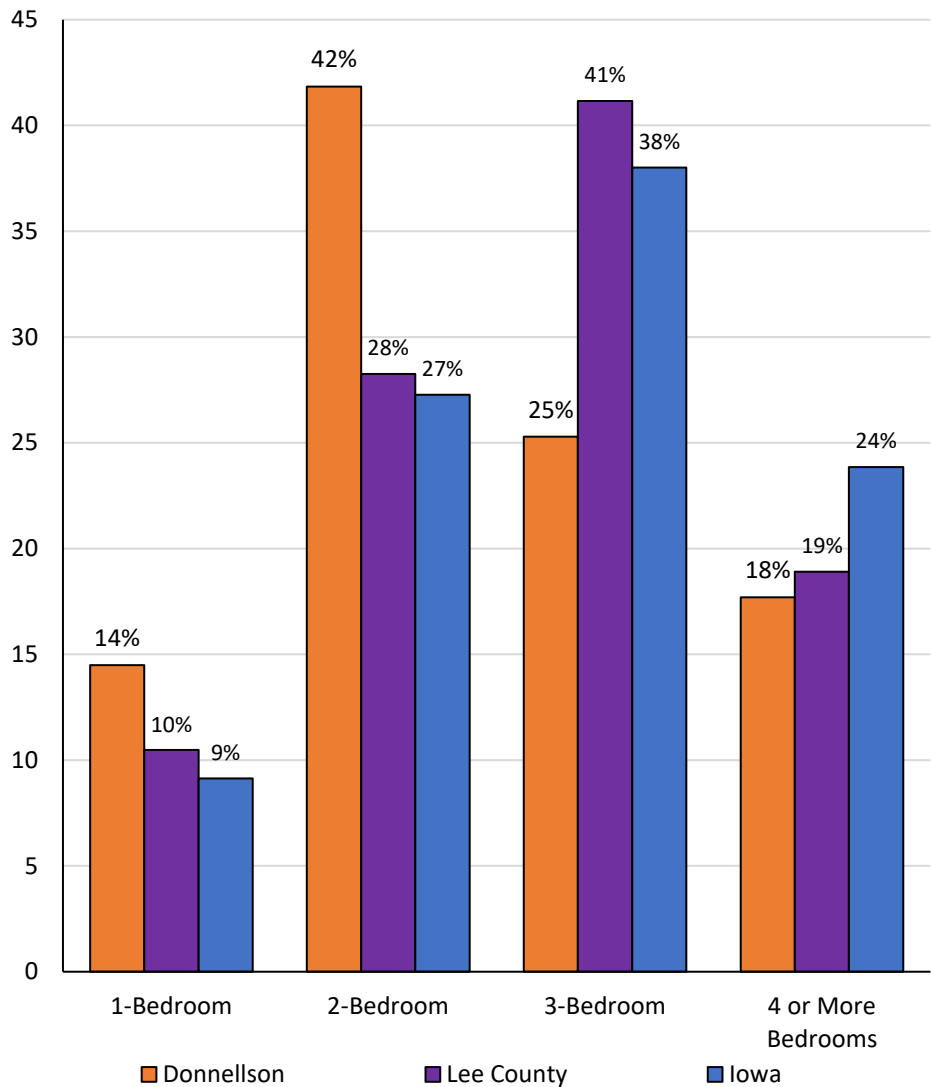
Housing

HOMES BY NUMBER OF BEDROOMS

In order to ensure that a community is attractive to new transplants from elsewhere, it is important to ensure that a variety of housing types are provided. This includes not only the rent/own status and number of units per building, but the physical characteristics of an individual unit itself. Perhaps most important of all is the number of bedrooms, as larger families depend on the availability of multiple bedrooms for the children.

Of all housing units in Donnellson, 42% have exactly 2 bedrooms, while only 25% have exactly 3 bedrooms. This is especially alarming considering that these are both a dramatic inverse of the figures for Lee County and Iowa as a whole. Furthermore, it ranks last out of the 10 comparable cities for the percentage of units with 3 bedrooms, and there is a sizable gap between it and the second-to-last ranked city.

Percentage of Homes by Number of Bedrooms



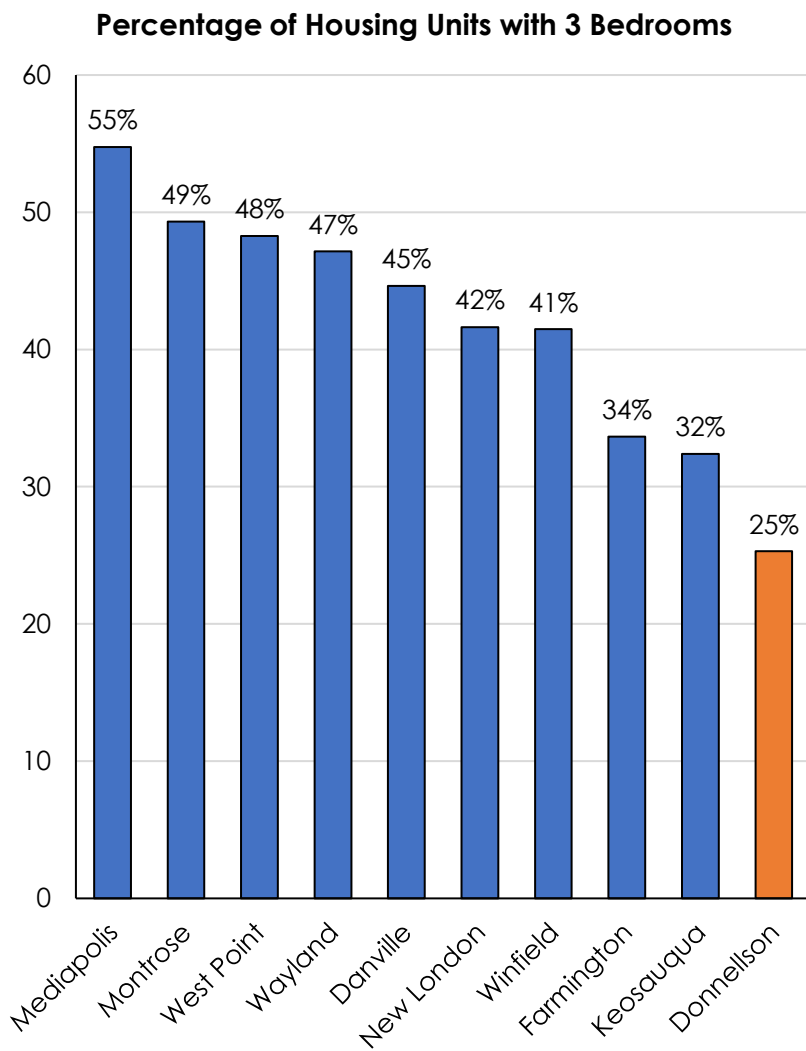
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

A likely explanation for this alarming statistics is the large supply of single-story ranch homes built in the 1970s, many of which were built with only 2 bedrooms. At the time, it was more common for families with two children to have both children share a bedroom. However, modern day preferences ensure that the future sale of so many of these homes will be challenging, and they will also be especially likely to transition to rentals.

Another key explanation is the extremely low number of new homes constructed in Donnellson since the early 1990s, as 3 and 4-bedroom homes have largely become a standard practice for homebuilding in the subsequent decades. Therefore, even without the proliferation of 1970s-era ranch homes, other similar-sized communities have managed to attain a sufficient share of 3-bedroom homes through new home construction.

Housing

HOMES BY NUMBER OF BEDROOMS



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021



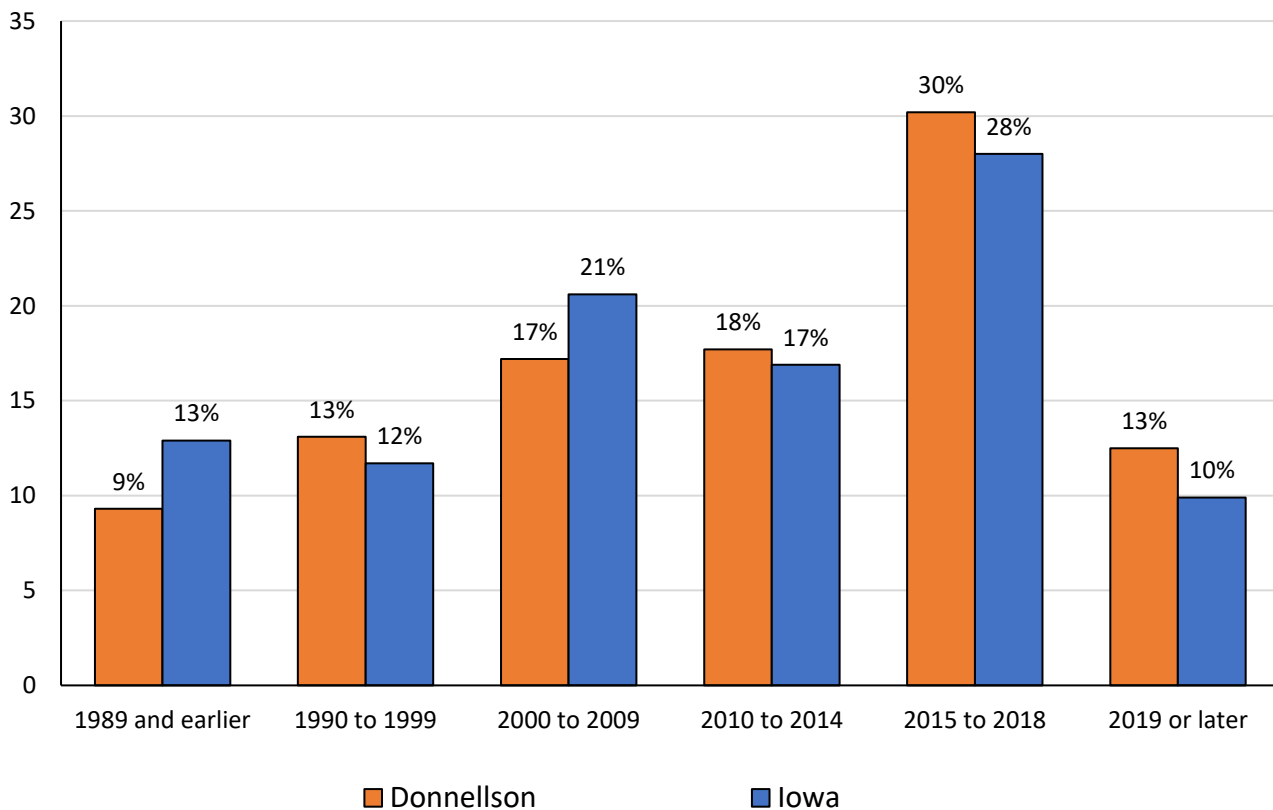
Housing

HOME OCCUPANCY TIMELINE

When looking at the population and housing stock of a community, it is important to consider amount of time that each house has been occupied by the same person or family. If very few of the homes have changed hands in recent years, this suggests that the overall population is very stable and consistent over time. However, it can also show that there are limited housing options available, and/or poor economic prospects to attract new people to the community. Conversely, a high rate of turnover could indicate good economic prospects and plentiful housing options. But it could also be a cause for concern, if the occupants are changing often enough that the homes aren't being adequately maintained over time.

Compared to Iowa as a whole, Donnellson has had a higher rate of turnover in home occupancy over the past 15 years. It also has a comparatively smaller share of homes that have been occupied by the same person or family since 2009 or earlier.

Percent of Households by Year the Current Occupant Moved In



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Housing

HOUSING UNITS TURNOVER

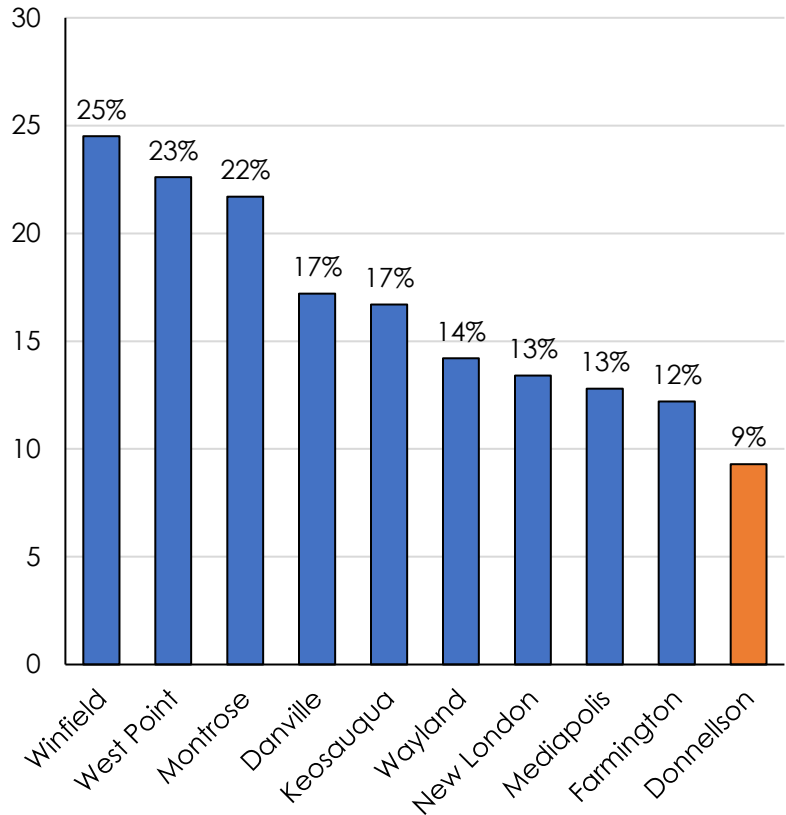
Among the 10 comparable cities, Donnellson ranks at a distant last place, in terms of its percentage of homes occupied by the same person or family since the 1980s or earlier. Conversely, among those same 10 cities, Donnellson has the highest percentage (by far) of homes where the current occupant(s) moved in after 2009.

This shows that Donnellson has had a much higher rate of turnover than the average small town in Southeast Iowa. This is especially significant considering how few new homes have been constructed since the mid-1990s. While Mediapolis and Keosauqua also rank high on the list, those towns have seen quite a few new homes constructed over the past two decades, which would naturally account for why the current occupant hasn't lived there for more than 20 years.

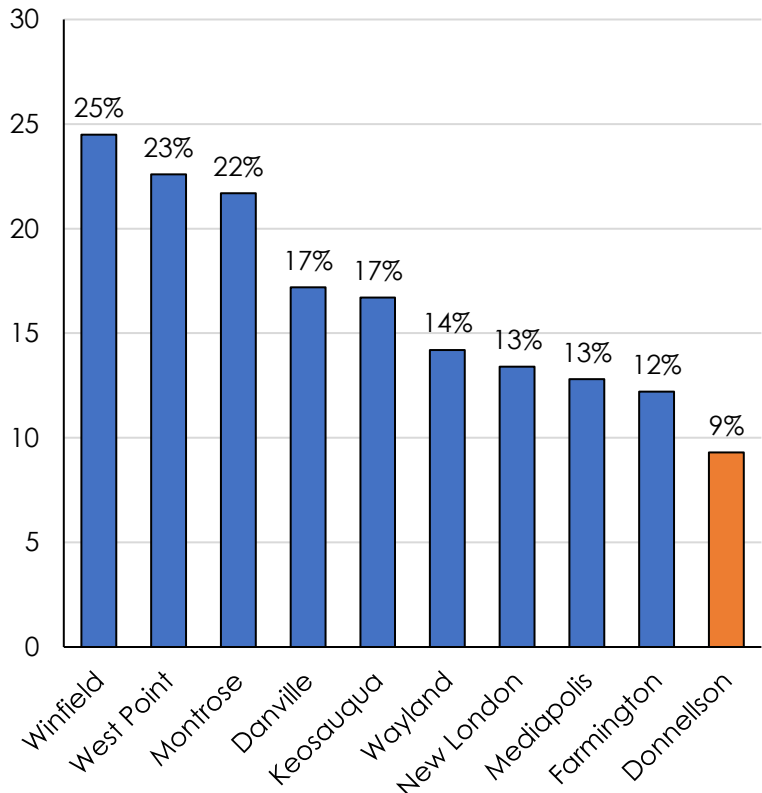
For Donnellson, a high rate of turnover combined with a stagnant housing stock suggests that many of these homes are not getting the long-term care and maintenance they need. It also suggests a low level of satisfaction with the housing stock among the local population, likely related to key preferences for young families such as the number of bedrooms or size of yards. It is likely that many such families initially compromise by buying a home that doesn't meet all their preferences, and then move soon after when a better one comes on the market.

This lack of stability also tends to influence the high rate of renter-occupancy, as landlords are especially likely to purchase homes that have changed hands frequently in recent years.

Percent of Housing Units where the Current Occupant(s) Moved in Prior to 1990



Percent of Housing Units where the Current Occupant(s) Moved in Prior to 1990



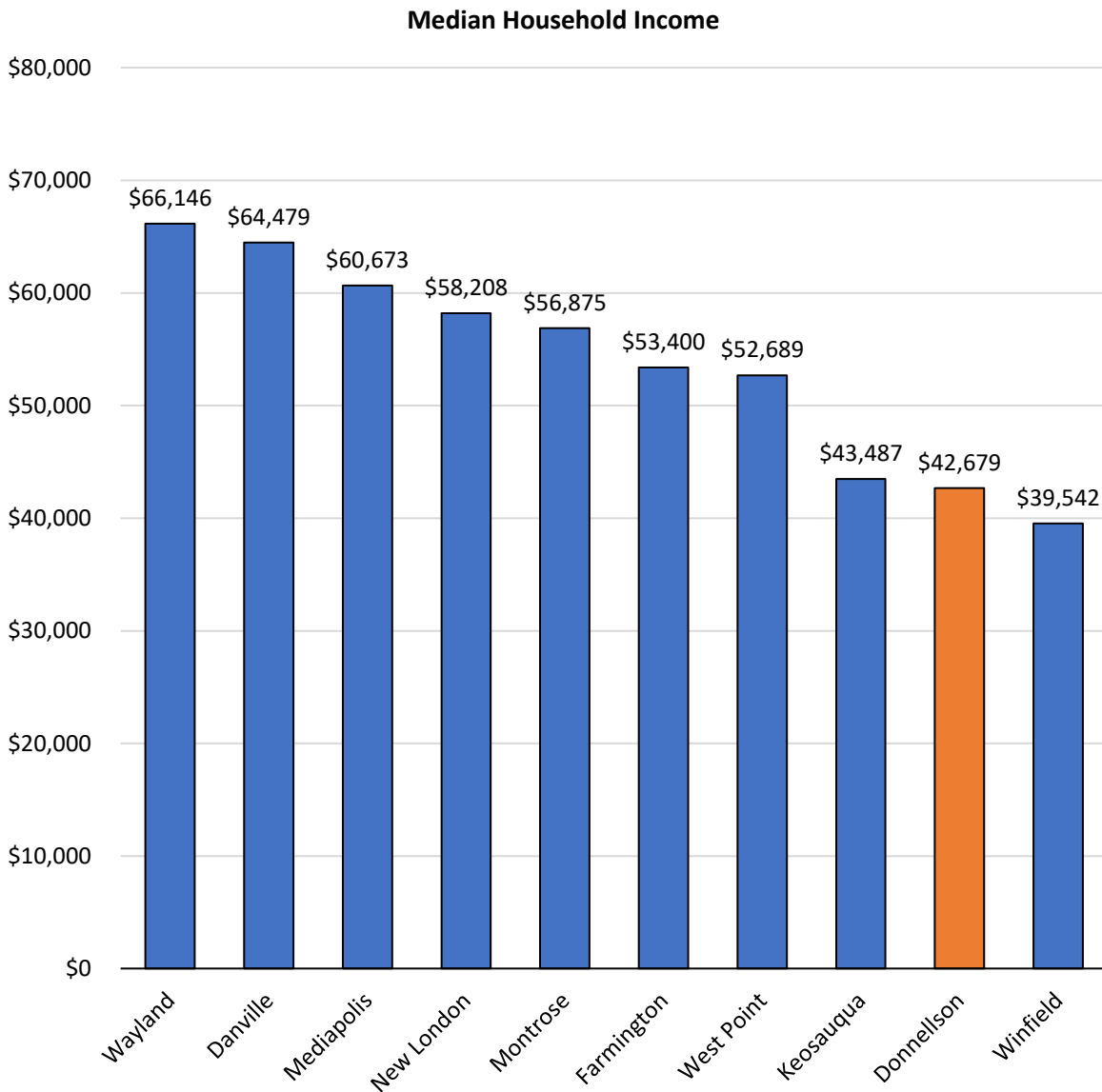
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Economic Development

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household income for Donnellson is \$42,679, which represents 80% of the median income for Lee County (\$54,258), and 65% of the median income for Iowa as a whole (\$65,429). The gap between Donnellson and the other two decreases when non-family households are excluded from the total, but even when only 'families' are considered, Donnellson represents 90% of the County figure, and only 73% of the statewide figure.

Among the 10 comparable cities, Donnellson has the 2nd lowest median income, ahead of only Winfield, and one of only 3 such cities whose median falls below \$50,000. This suggests that the City needs to be proactive in attracting more higher-income residents to the community, as well as improving employment opportunities for those already living in there.



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

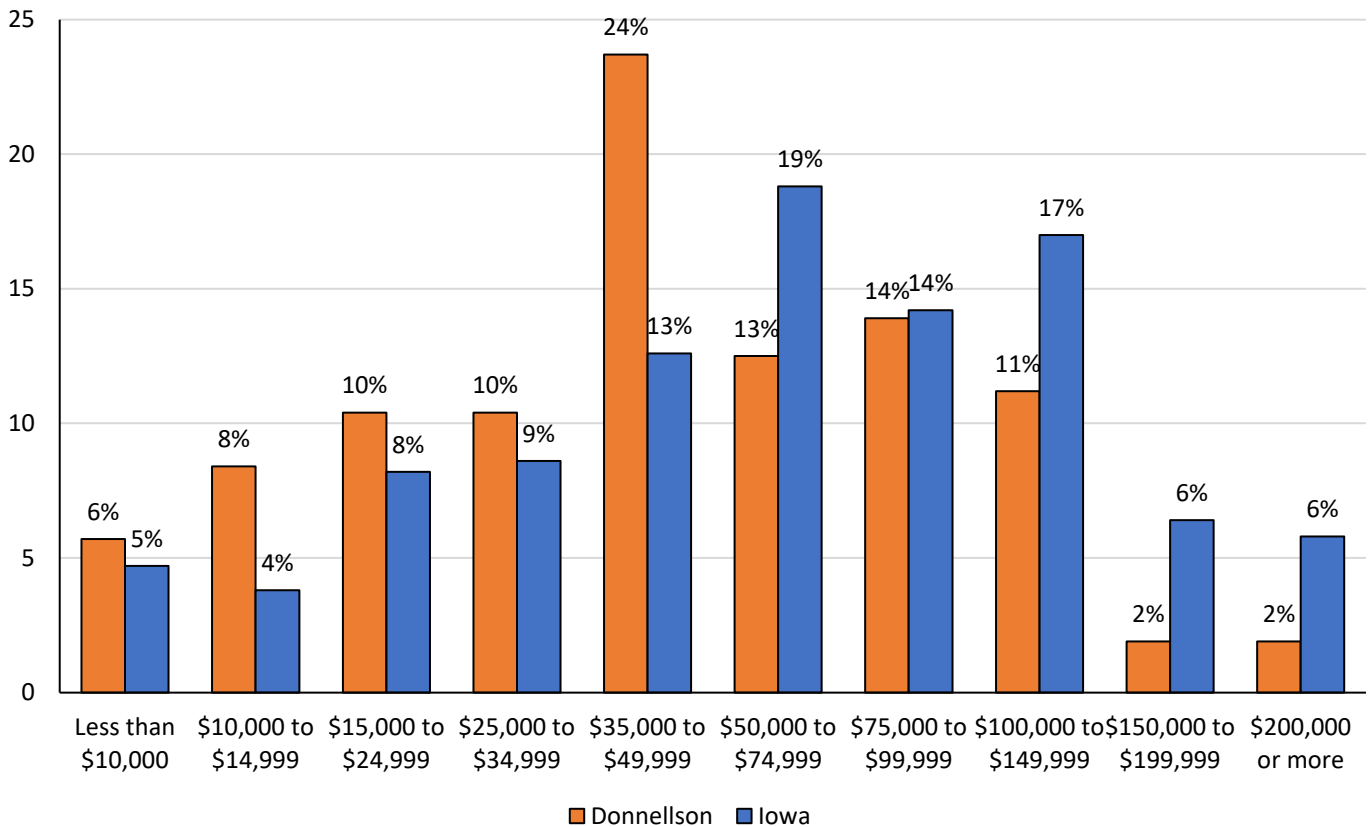
Economic Development

PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS BY ANNUAL INCOME RANGE

When all households are broken down into 10 income brackets, Donnellson exceeds Iowa as a whole for each of the 5 brackets below \$50,000, and falls below the State for each of the 5 brackets above \$50,000. The gap is most pronounced for the bracket from \$35 to \$50 thousand, where the percentage for Donnellson is nearly twice that of the State as a whole. Conversely, Donnellson falls well below the state for the brackets ranging from \$50 to \$75 thousand, and from \$100 to 150 thousand.

Notably, for the total number of Donnellson households with an income below \$35,000, nearly 3/4 of them are classified as 'non-family households', which are most likely to be comprised of one person living alone (including senior citizens). But for the total number of households in the \$35 to \$50 thousand range, 80% are classified as 'family households', which shows that this already modest income must be shared by 2 or more people in most instances.

Percent of Households by Annual Income Range



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Economic Development

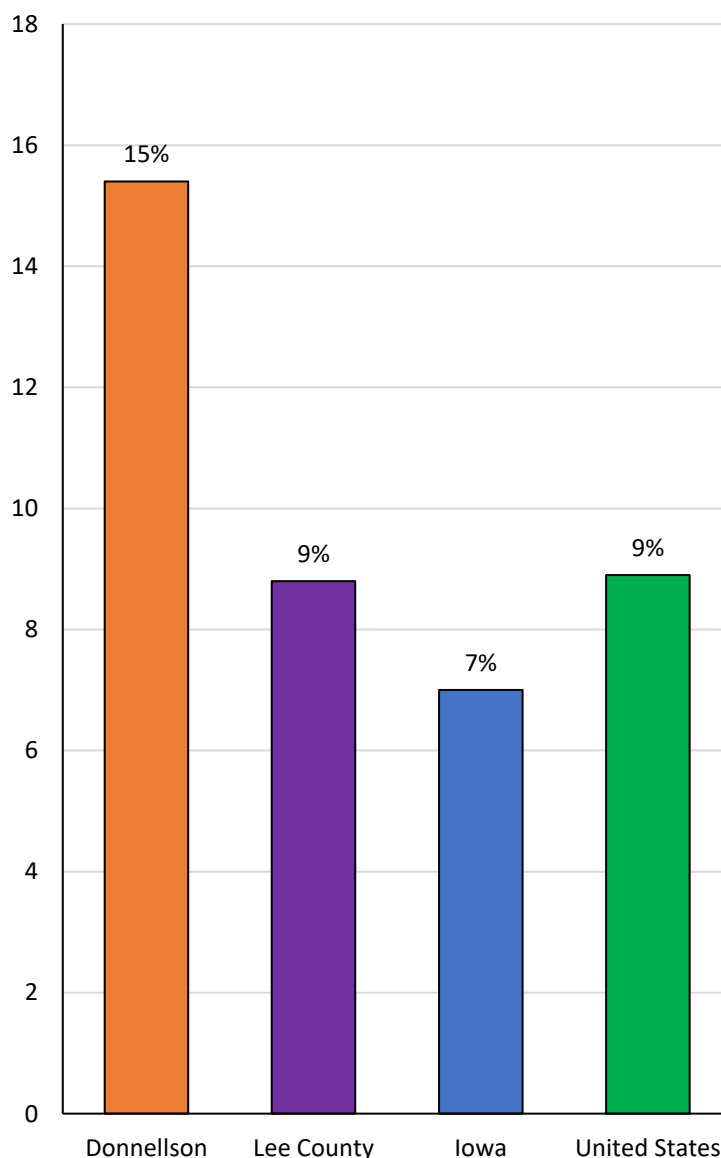


POVERTY RATE

An alarming share of families in Donnellson have an income that falls below the poverty level. ACS estimates suggest that 15% of Donnellson families fit that category, compared to only 9% for Lee County and 7% for Iowa as a whole. It also ranks highest among the 10 comparable cities, one of only two such cities to exceed 10% (the other being nearby Farmington). This likely correlates directly with the large percentage of families whose annual income falls between \$35 and \$50 thousand.

When viewed in terms of all individual people, instead of families, 21% of all Donnellson residents fall below the poverty level. For those below the age of 18, the figure is 23%, and for those above the age of 65, the figure is 12%. In each of these 3 cases, Donnellson ranks highest or second-highest among the 10 comparable cities.

Percentage of All Families whose Income in the Past 12 Months is Below the Poverty Level



Source: American Community Survey
5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Economic Development

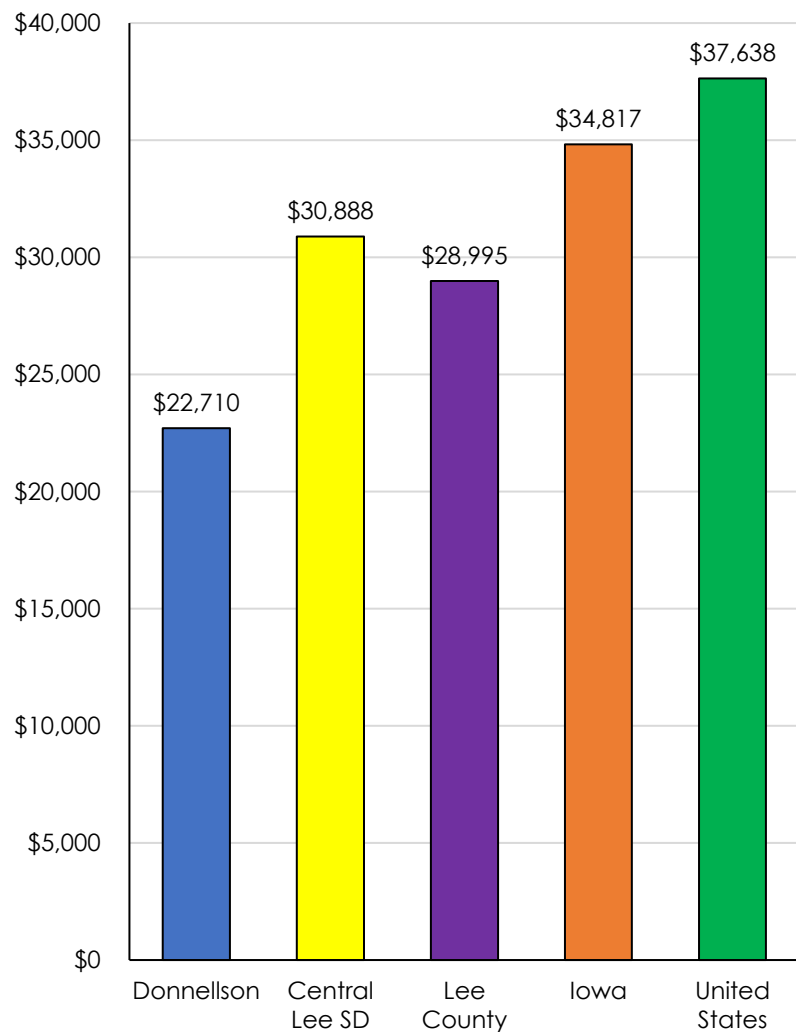
PER CAPITA INCOME

Per Capita Income residents the total income earned in a year for a certain area, divided by that area's total number of residents. For Donnellson, the per capita income is \$22,710, which is only 80% of the per capita income for Lee County, and 65% of the per capita income for Iowa as a whole.

In addition, Donnellson has the lowest per capita income for the comparable cities, and is one of only 4 such cities with a figure below \$25,000. Whereas the low figure for 'median household income' is especially concerning for the individual residents of the community, the 'per capita' figure is even more concerning for the City itself, as it suggests that the City has insufficient tax base potential to support quality city services and infrastructure maintenance.

The comparatively high per capita figure for the entire Central Lee school district shows that the failure to build a sufficient number of new homes is causing the tax base potential to leak into the surrounding rural areas, where such extra income cannot be used to support services within the City.

Per Capita Income



Source: American Community Survey
5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

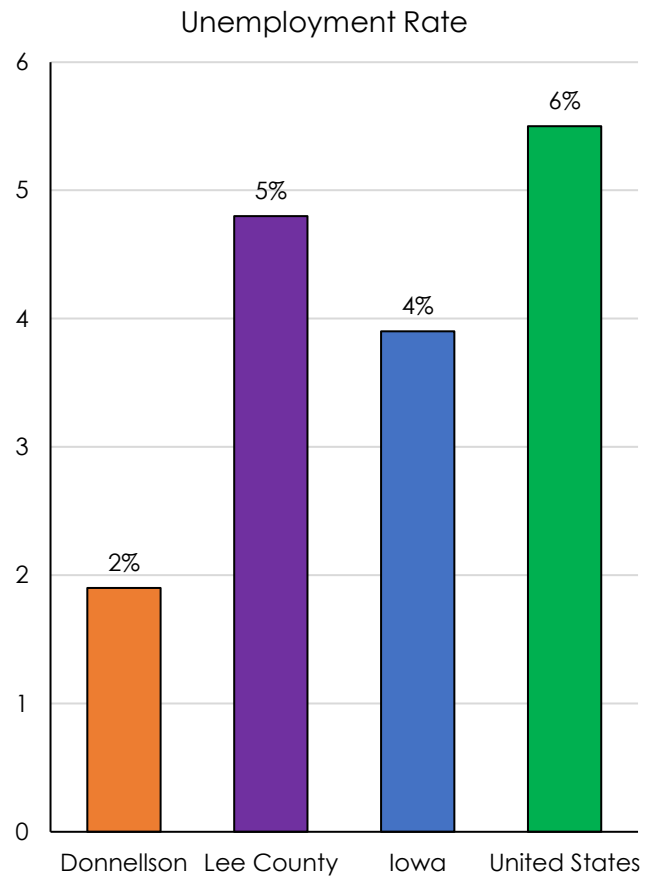
Economic Development

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

While Iowa Workforce Development supplies monthly unemployment data, this data applies only to individual counties and the state as a whole. ACS estimates from the Census Bureau provide a yearly average unemployment rate, which applies to all levels of government.

This data indicates that Donnellson has a substantially lower unemployment rate than Lee County, the State of Iowa, and the nation as a whole. It also has the 2nd lowest unemployment rate among the 10 comparable cities, and was one of only 4 such cities to fall below the statewide rate of 4%.

This shows that while income statistics may reflect poorly on Donnellson, residents in the work force have not had difficulty finding work. However, when combined with those poor income figures, plus the high rate of educational attainment, this suggests that many of the city's working residents are *underemployed* – taking jobs that either pay less and/or are less challenging than what they are trained for. It is likely that there are few jobs in their chosen field that are available locally, so they are compromising in order to reliably provide for their families and avoid the need to move elsewhere.



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021



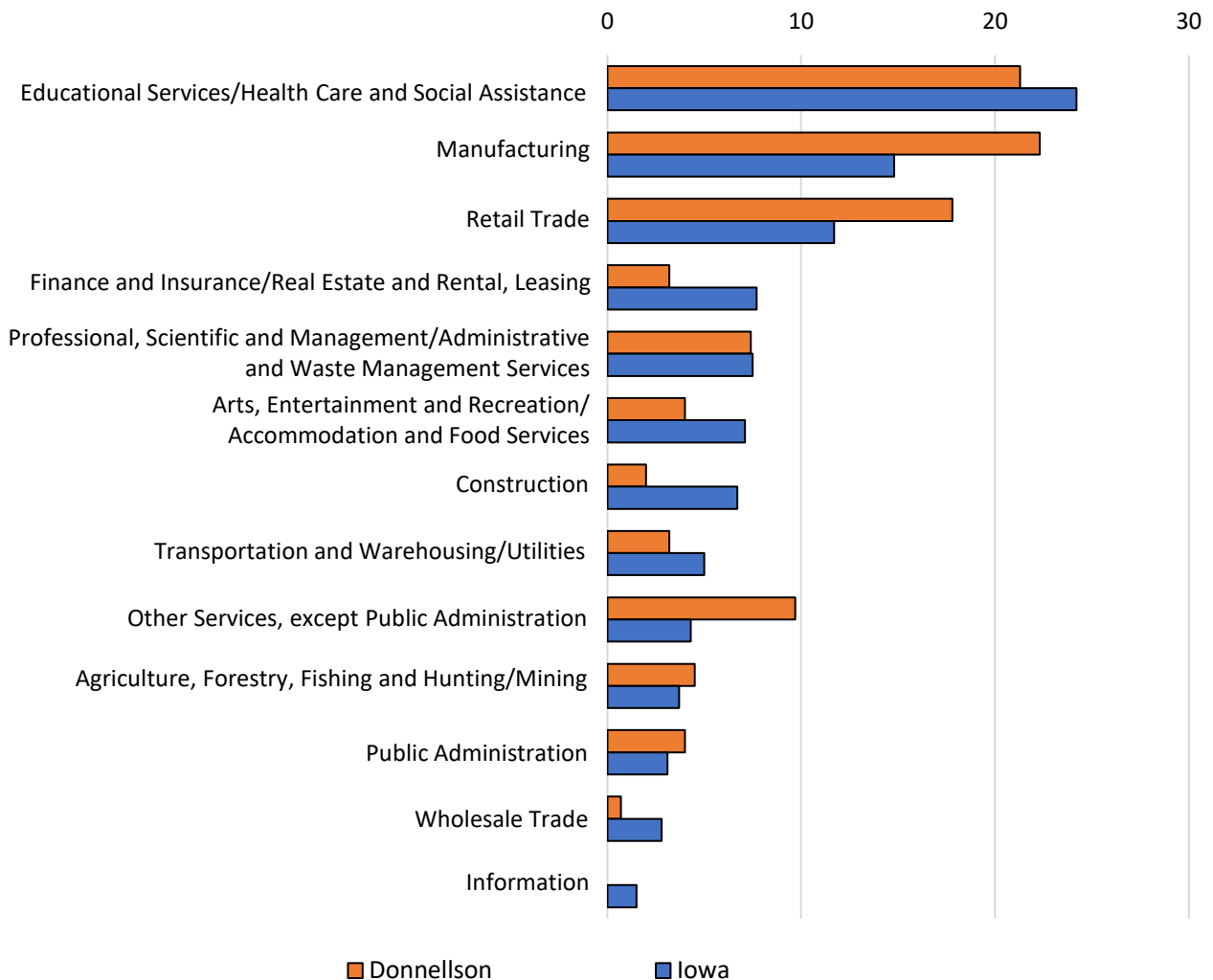
Economic Development

EMPLOYED RESIDENTS BY INDUSTRY TYPE

When broken down into categories of industry type, nearly 2/3 of Donnellson's working residents are employed in one of 3 industry types. The largest share, at 22%, is employed in a 'Manufacturing' field. The second largest, at 21% is employed in the related fields of 'Educational Services' and 'Health Care/Social Assistance'. Finally, the third largest, at 18%, is employed in 'Retail Trade'. These same three also represent the top three categories for Iowa as a whole, however the order is different (with 'Education/Health Care' being the highest), and the percentage employed in 'Manufacturing' and 'Retail Trade' is substantially smaller – both between 10 and 15%.

The graph below has the industry types in descending rank order for Iowa as a whole. This helps draw attention to the types where Donnellson's figure is substantially different than the State's.

Percent of Employed Residents by Industry Type



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Economic Development

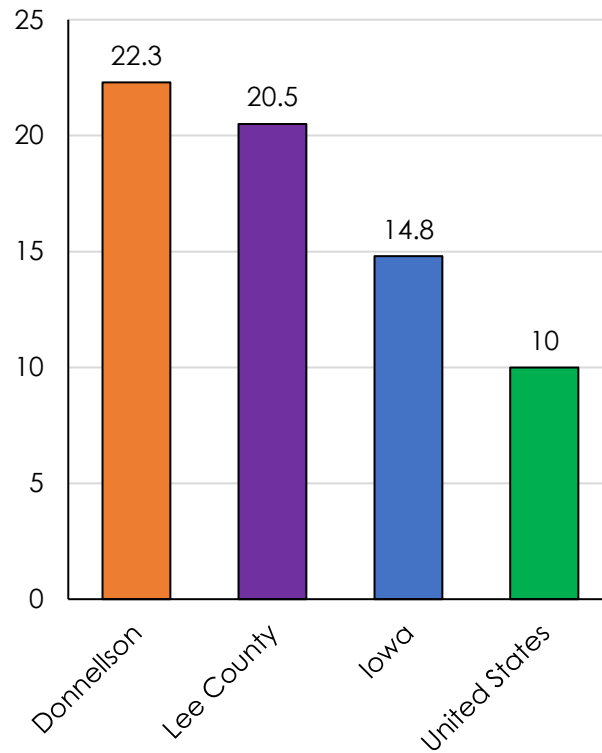
EMPLOYED RESIDENTS IN MANUFACTURING AND RETAIL INDUSTRY

While Donnellson has a high percentage of residents working in 'manufacturing' compared to Iowa as a whole, it is largely consistent with the employment dynamics of Lee County and Southeast Iowa. It exceeds the countywide percentage by 2%, and it is one of all but 2 of the 10 comparable cities whose percentage falls in the narrow range between 19 and 23%.

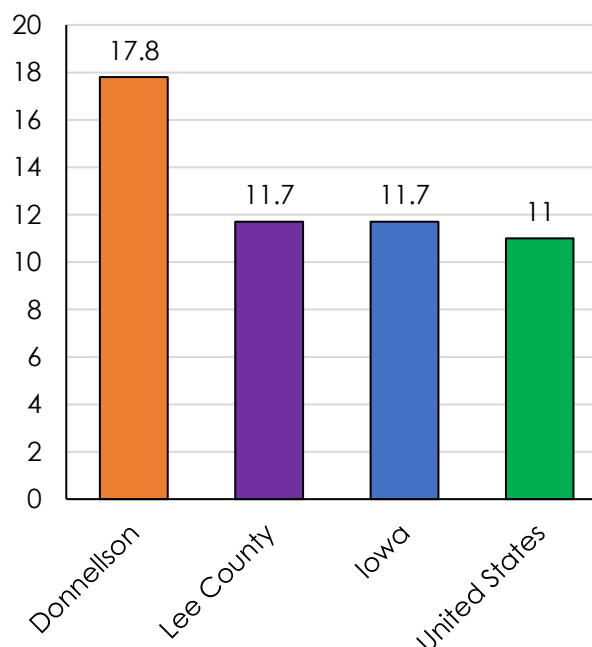
For 'Education/Health Care/Social Assistance', Donnellson is largely consistent with the figures for Lee County, Iowa and the nation as a whole, as all 4 of these fall between 20 and 25%. In addition, half of the 10 comparable cities fall within that same range, and all but one of them fall between 19 and 27%.

More unique for Donnellson is its large share of residents working in 'retail trade'. Its figure of 18% is substantially higher than the County, State and national figures, all of which fall around 11 to 12%. It also ties for 3rd place among the 10 comparable cities, and is one of only 5 such cities to exceed 15%. This helps emphasize the issue of 'underemployment', as the excess number of people employed in the retail sector are likely qualified for other fields, but there are very few jobs available locally in those other fields.

Percent of Employed Residents Working in 'Manufacturing' Industry



Percent of Employed Residents Working in 'Retail Trade' Industry

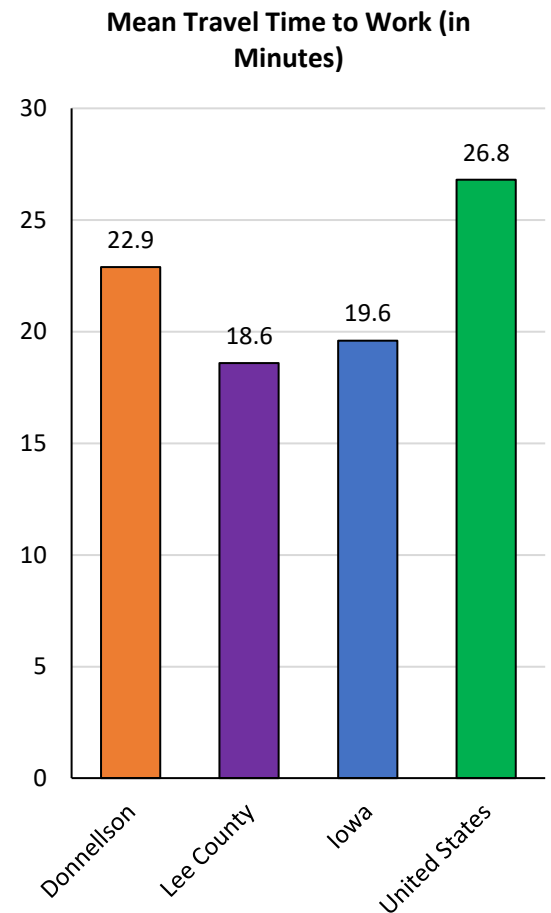
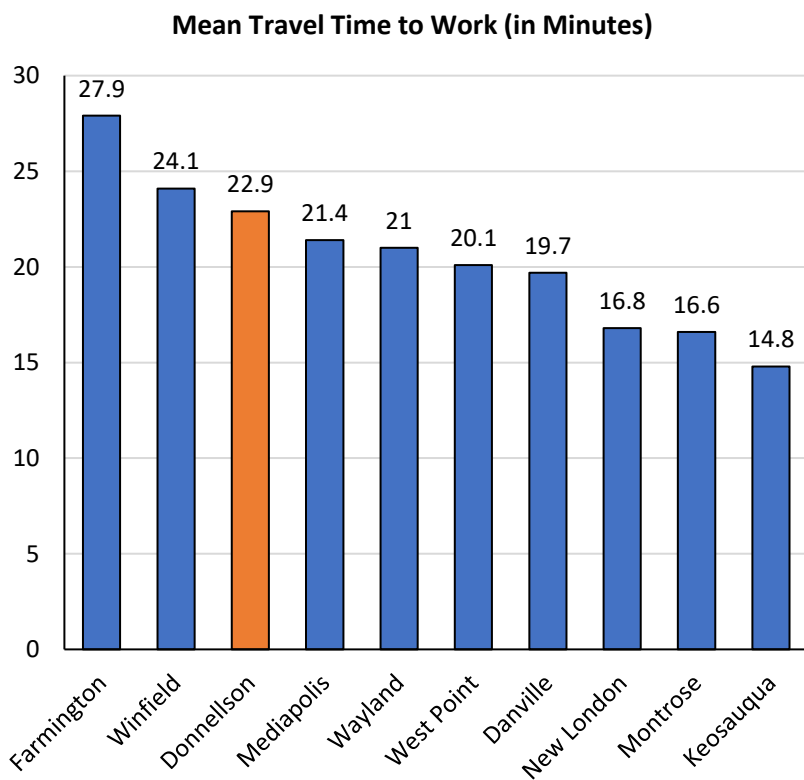


Source: American Community Survey
5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Economic Development

COMMUTE TIME

For all of Donnellson's residents that are currently employed, the average commute time is 23 minutes. This is over 3 minutes longer than the average commute time for Iowa as a whole, and over 4 minutes longer than the average for Lee County. Donnellson also ranks 3rd among the 10 comparable cities – one of only 3 that exceed 22 minutes. This emphasizes both the comparative lack of jobs available locally, and the level of geographic isolation, with Fort Madison being the only major job center within 15 miles.



Source: American Community Survey
5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021



Economic Development

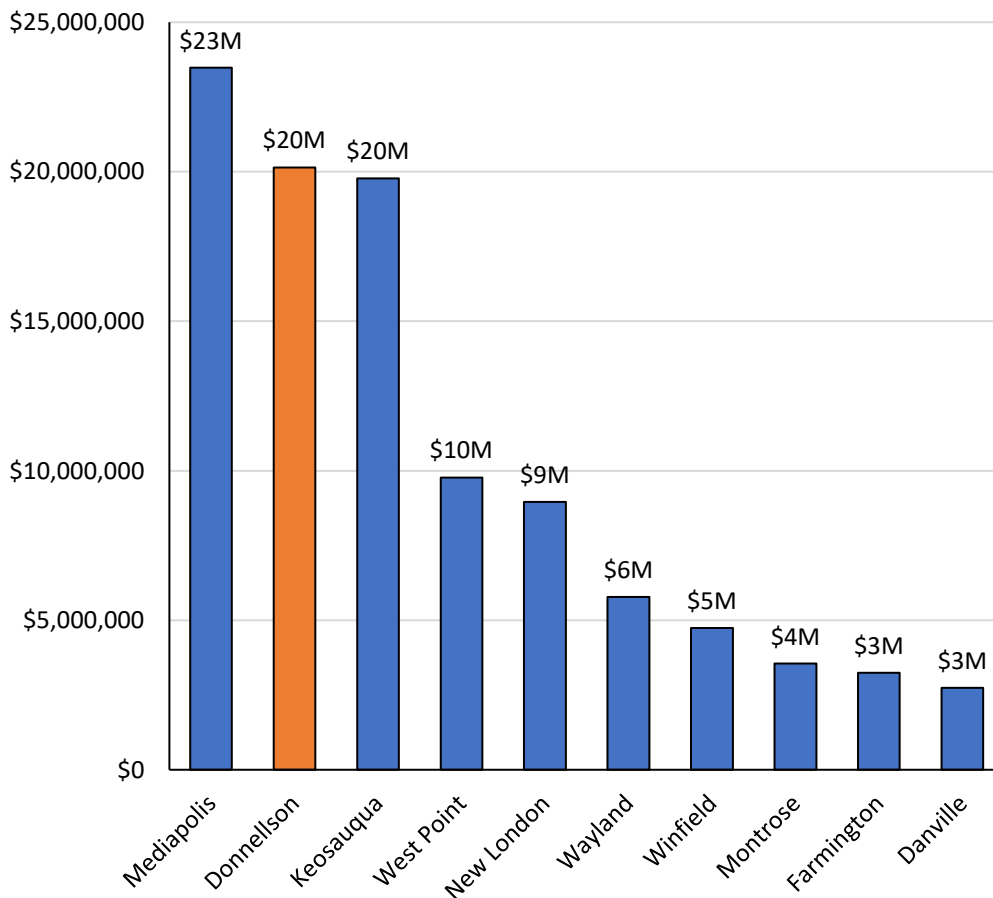
TAXABLE RETAIL SALES – FY2022

Retail sales data from the Iowa Department of Revenue shows that businesses in Donnellson have yielded a consistently high amount of profit in recent decades. In Fiscal Year 2022 alone, a total of \$20 million in retail sales was generated in Donnellson. As a result, it had the second highest amount of retail sales that year, among the ten comparable cities. It was also one of only 3 cities to generate more than \$10 million in retail sales, with the others being Mediapolis and Keosauqua.

This is especially impressive considering how Donnellson's total population is just over half that of Mediapolis. As a result, when the total sales figure is divided by the number of residents, Donnellson has the highest per capita retail sales of the 10 comparable cities, at just under \$23,000 per person. Furthermore, only Donnellson and Keosauqua exceeded the statewide figure of just under \$15,000 per person.

While it isn't immediately clear whether certain businesses are responsible for disproportionately high share of the sales, it is likely that the City's highest earners include the Donnellson Lumber Company, the Dahms car dealership, and the Casey's gas station/convenience store, which is recognized as one of the chain's busiest locations.

Taxable Retail Sales - Fiscal Year 2022



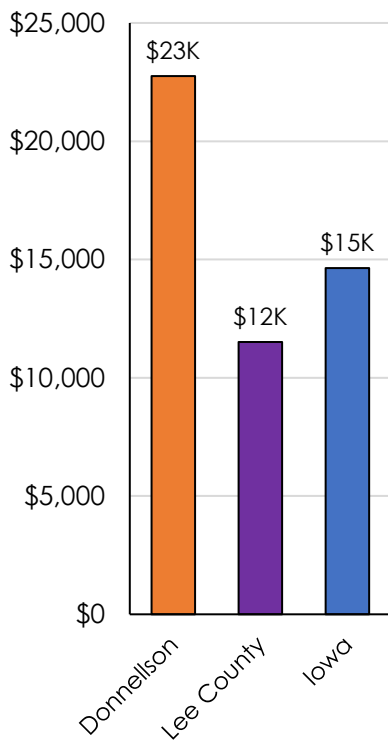
Source: Retail Sales and Use Tax Annual Report Fiscal Year 2021. Iowa Department of Revenue.

Economic Development

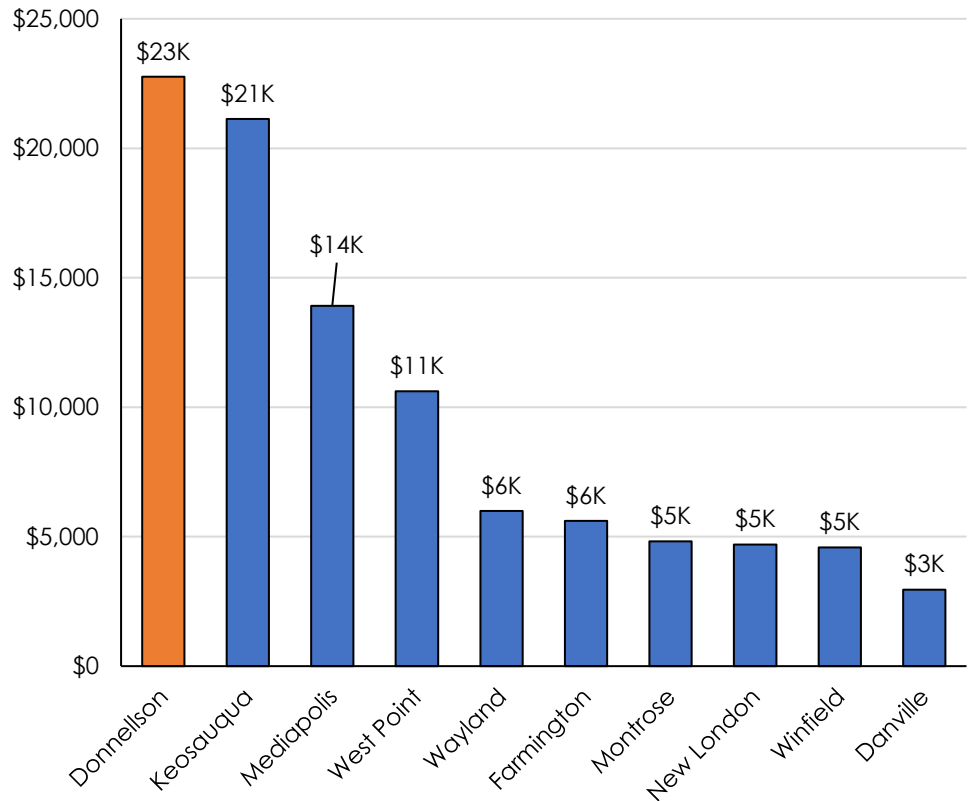
TAXABLE RETAIL SALES – FY2022



Per Capita Taxable Retail Sales - FY2022



Per Capita Taxable Retail Sales - FY2022

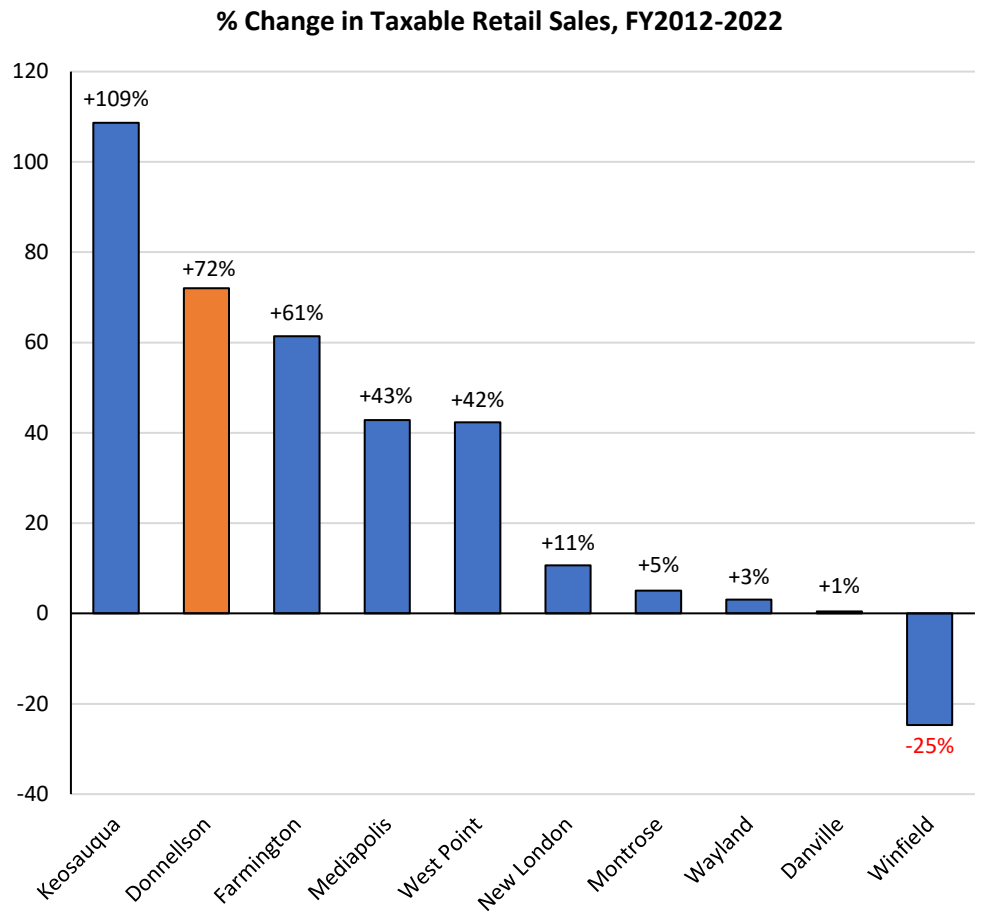
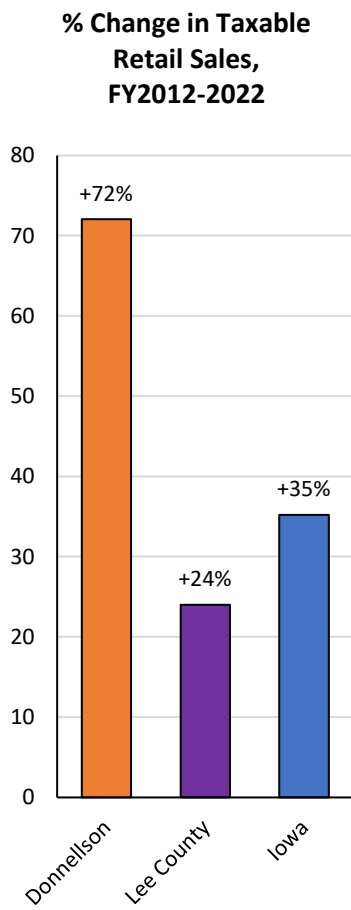


Source: Retail Sales and Use Tax Annual Report Fiscal Year 2021. Iowa Department of Revenue.

Economic Development

TAXABLE RETAIL SALES – FY2022

In addition to having comparatively high retail sales in FY2022, Donnellson had the second highest percentage increase in total sales between FY2012 and FY2022, among the 10 comparable cities. Sales rose by 72% over that period, going from \$12 million per year to \$20 million. While inflation plays a key role in the rise in overall sales during that period, Donnellson's rate of growth was substantially higher than that of Iowa as a whole, and most of the comparable cities. Statewide retail sales only increased by 35%, which was even higher than that of Lee County, at only 24%.



Source: Retail Sales and Use Tax Annual Report Fiscal Year 2021. Iowa Department of Revenue.

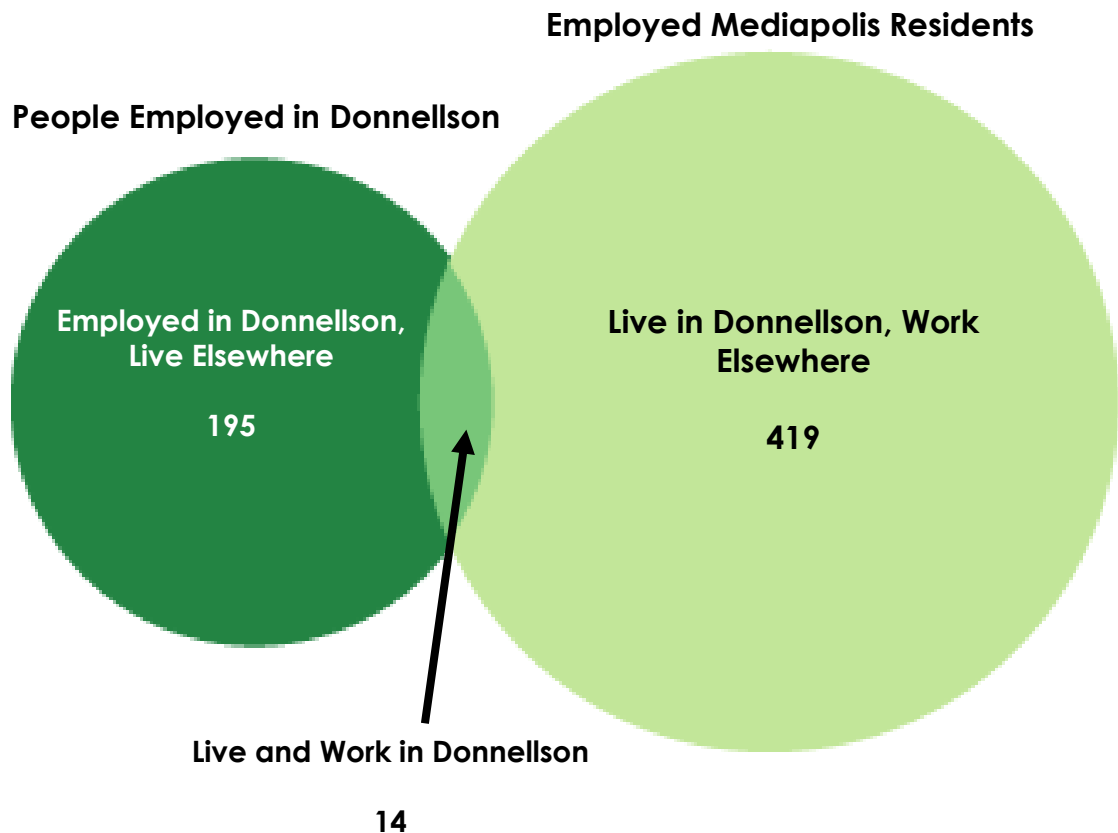
Economic Development

COMMUTE PATTERN

According to 2020 estimates from the Census Bureau, the number of people commuting out of Donnellson for work is more than double the number of people commuting into Donnellson for work (419 compared to 195). In addition, the number of people who both live and work in Donnellson is estimated to be very small, at only 14 people.

This shows that Donnellson is heavily dependent on other communities for employment opportunities for the City's own residents. It also shows that while the number of local jobs is comparatively small, the City is still dependent on workers from elsewhere to fill those jobs.

Another conclusion to draw from this is that Donnellson's 'daytime population' is substantially different than its 'nighttime population', given that many of the City's own residents are somewhere else when its businesses are open during the day. This is magnified even more by the fact that the School District campus is located several miles outside city limits, so that the school-age population is absent from town during the day as well (at least for the majority of the calendar year).

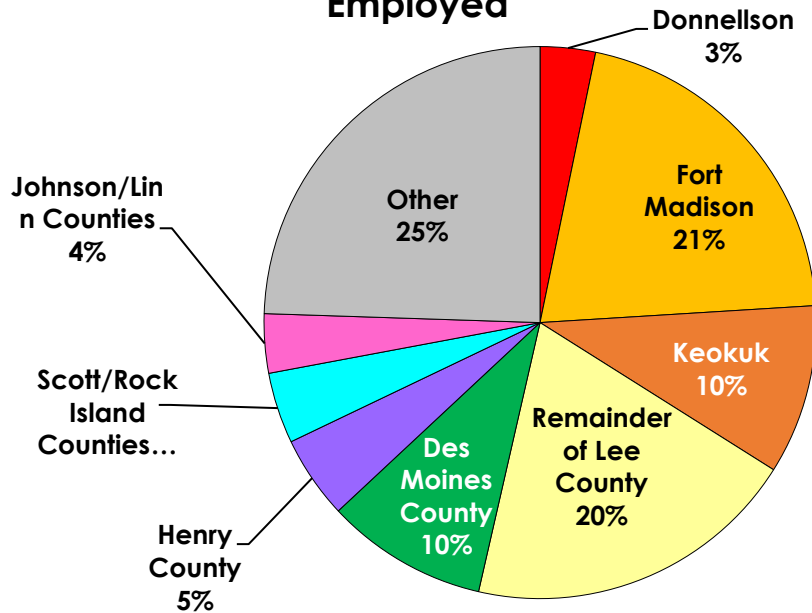


Economic Development

COMMUTE PATTERN AND EMPLOYMENT

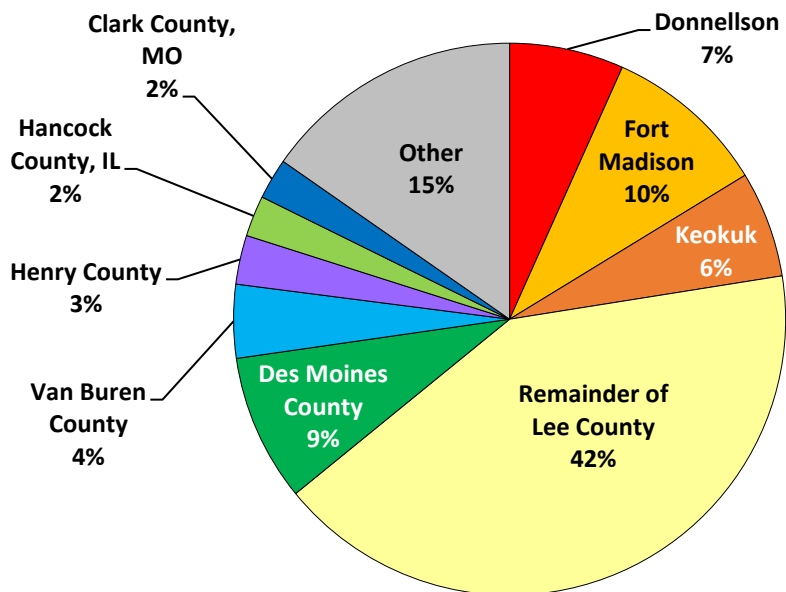
Of the 433 Donnellson residents that are currently employed, just over half of them work somewhere in Lee County. Fort Madison alone accounts for just over 1/5 of the total, while Keokuk accounts for about half that amount. Only 3% is accounted for by Donnellson itself, while over 80 Donnellson residents are employed somewhere else in Lee County (including West Point, Montrose, and all unincorporated areas). Of those residents leaving Lee County for work, the most common destination is Burlington/West Burlington, while other common destinations include Mount Pleasant, Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and the Quad Cities.

Where Donnellson Residents are Employed



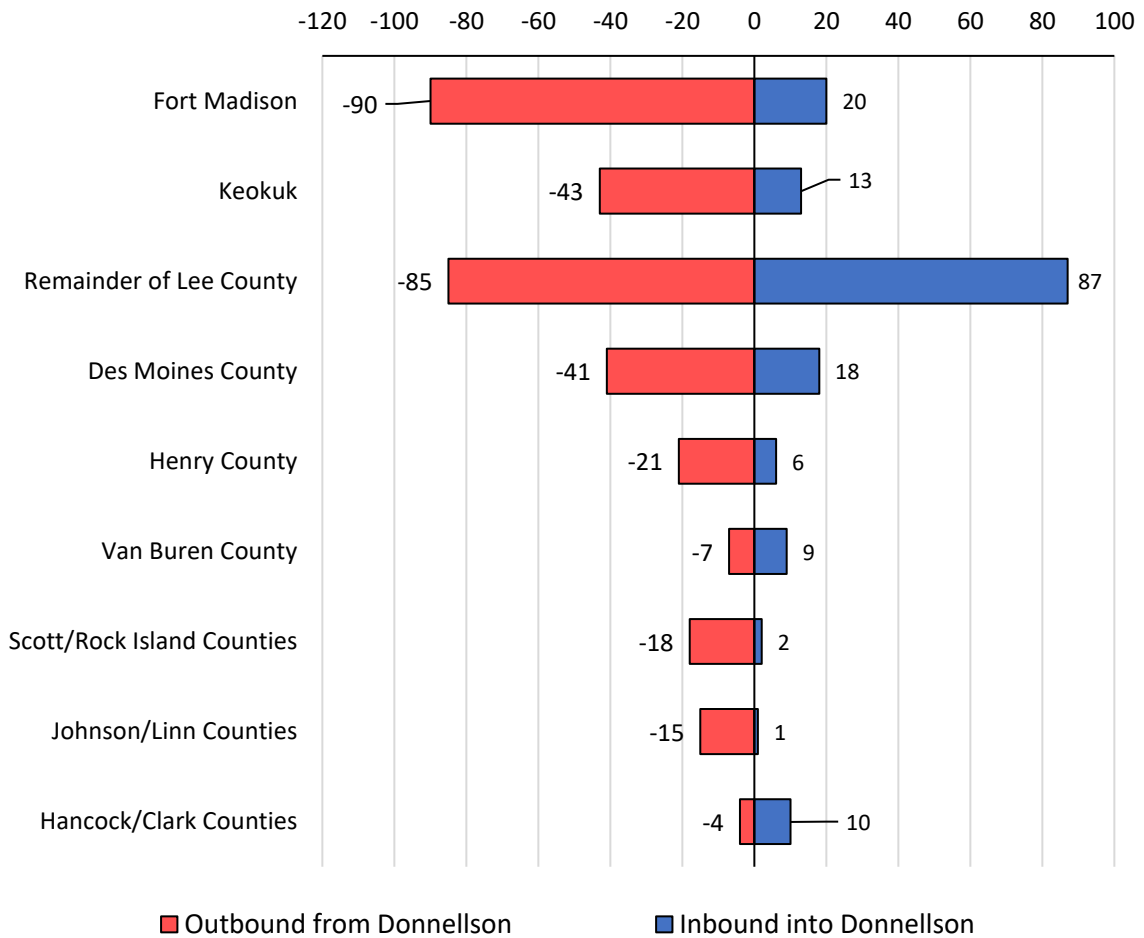
Of the 209 people employed in Donnellson, nearly 2/3 live in Lee County. The vast majority of those individuals live somewhere outside of Donnellson, Fort Madison, and Keokuk. A sizable number of Donnellson workers also live in the neighboring counties of Van Buren, Hancock (IL) and Clark (MO). In contrast, only a small share of Donnellson workers live in larger communities like Fort Madison, Keokuk, Burlington and Mount Pleasant.

Where Donnellson Workers Live



Economic Development

Donnellson Commuters - Outbound v. Inbound



COMMUTERS – OUTBOUND VS. INBOUND

For most of the cities and counties in the surrounding region, the number of Donnellson residents working there exceeds the number of their own residents working in Donnellson – often by several orders of magnitude.

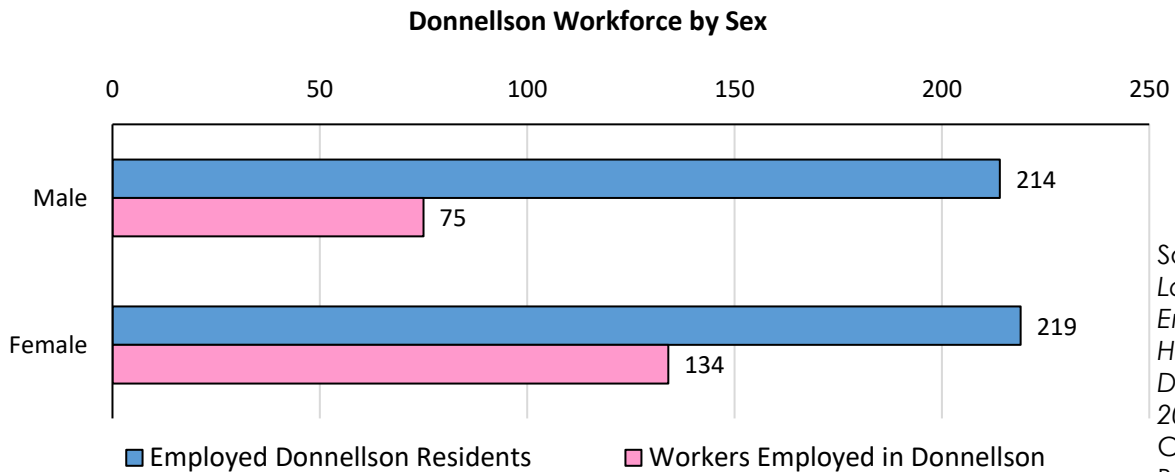
For example, more than 4 times as many Donnellson residents commute to Fort Madison as Fort Madison residents commuting to Donnellson. And while the total number involved is much smaller, only a handful of Quad Cities and Iowa City/Cedar Rapids residents commute to Donnellson, while nearly 3 dozen Donnellson residents commute to one of those distant cities.

Furthermore, while residents of rural Lee County represent a very large share of the people employed in Donnellson, the actual number of people involved is essentially equal to the number of Donnellson residents employed in rural Lee County (87 vs. 85). The only instances where the number of inbound commuters substantially exceeds the number of outbound commuters are Van Buren, Hancock (IL), and Clark (MO) Counties.

Economic Development

WORKFORCE BY SEX

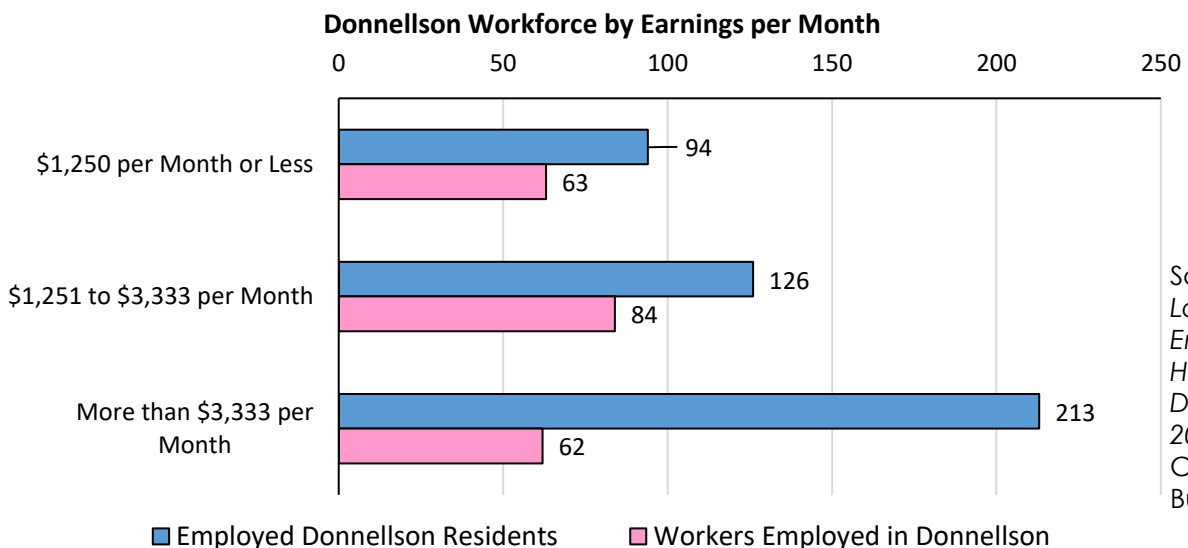
As to be expected, for the total number of employed residents in Donnellson, it is an approximate 50/50 split between male and female. However, for the total number of workers employed in Donnellson, nearly 2/3 of them are female. This shows that male residents are more dependent than females on jobs based outside the community. It also shows that local employers do not appear to be offering the kinds of jobs that male residents are interested in, or which match their specific professional training (i.e. manufacturing). It is likely that Aspire Nursing and Rehabilitation has a large impact here, given its large staff size comprised primarily of full or part-time nurses.



Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2020. US Census Bureau.

WORKFORCE BY EARNINGS

When broken down by earnings, just under 50% of Donnellson's employed residents earn more than \$3,333 per month, but only 30% of workers employed in Donnellson earn more than \$3,333 per month. Thus, it is likely that many residents commute elsewhere out of necessity, as the local jobs do not pay enough to adequately support them and their families. This also indicates that local jobs are dominated by lower-skill and/or part-time jobs that are likely to pay less than full-time jobs and those in more specialized, higher-skill occupations.

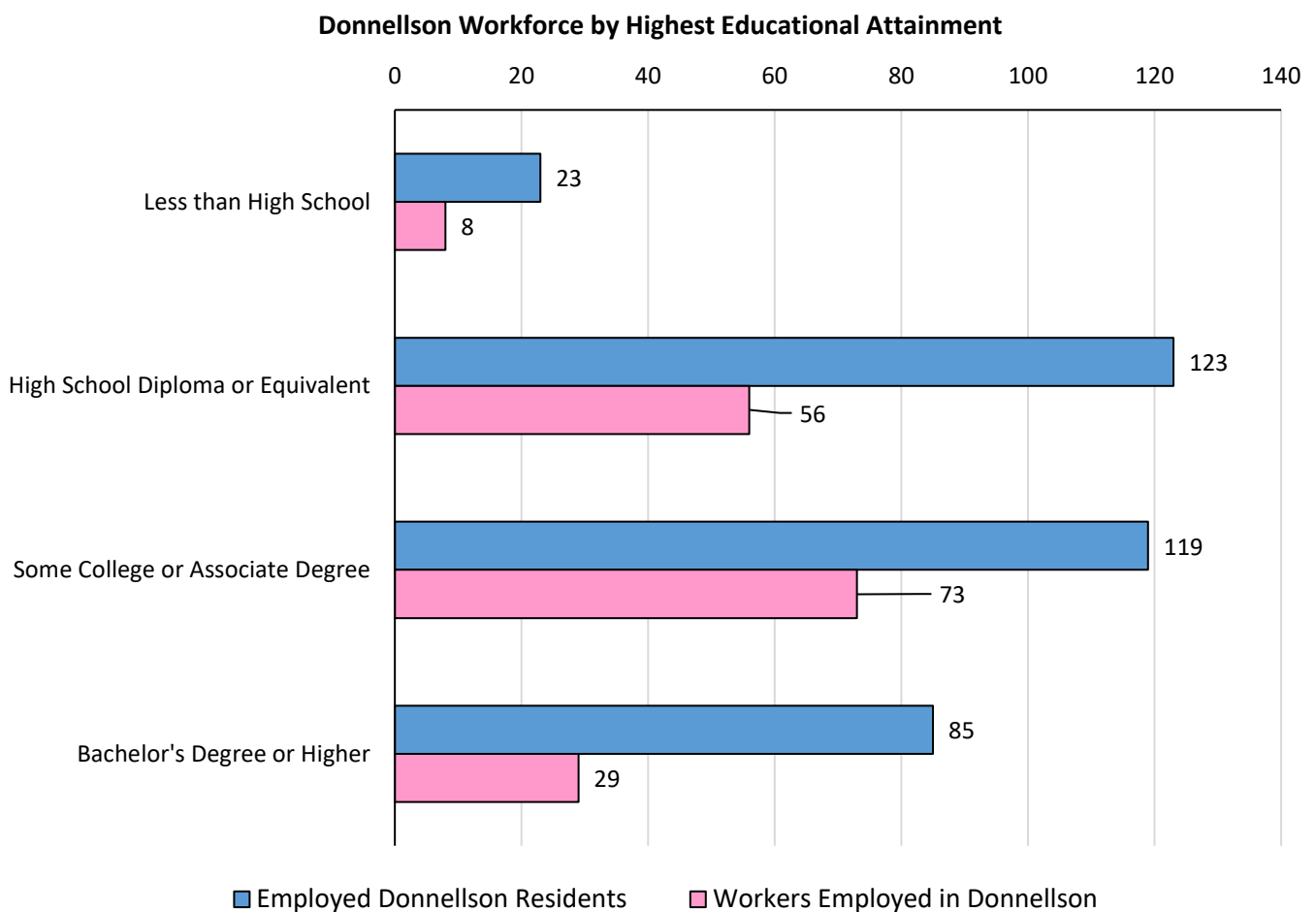


Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2020. US Census Bureau.

Economic Development

WORKFORCE BY HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The number of Donnellson residents with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher is 3 times the number of workers employed in Donnellson with the same level of educational attainment. The gap is much lower for people with 'some college or an Associate's Degree'. This is likely a result of the large staff of nurses with an associate's degree at Aspire Nursing and Rehabilitation. It should be noted that for both employed residents and workers employed in Donnellson, information on educational attainment was not available for about 20% of the people involved.



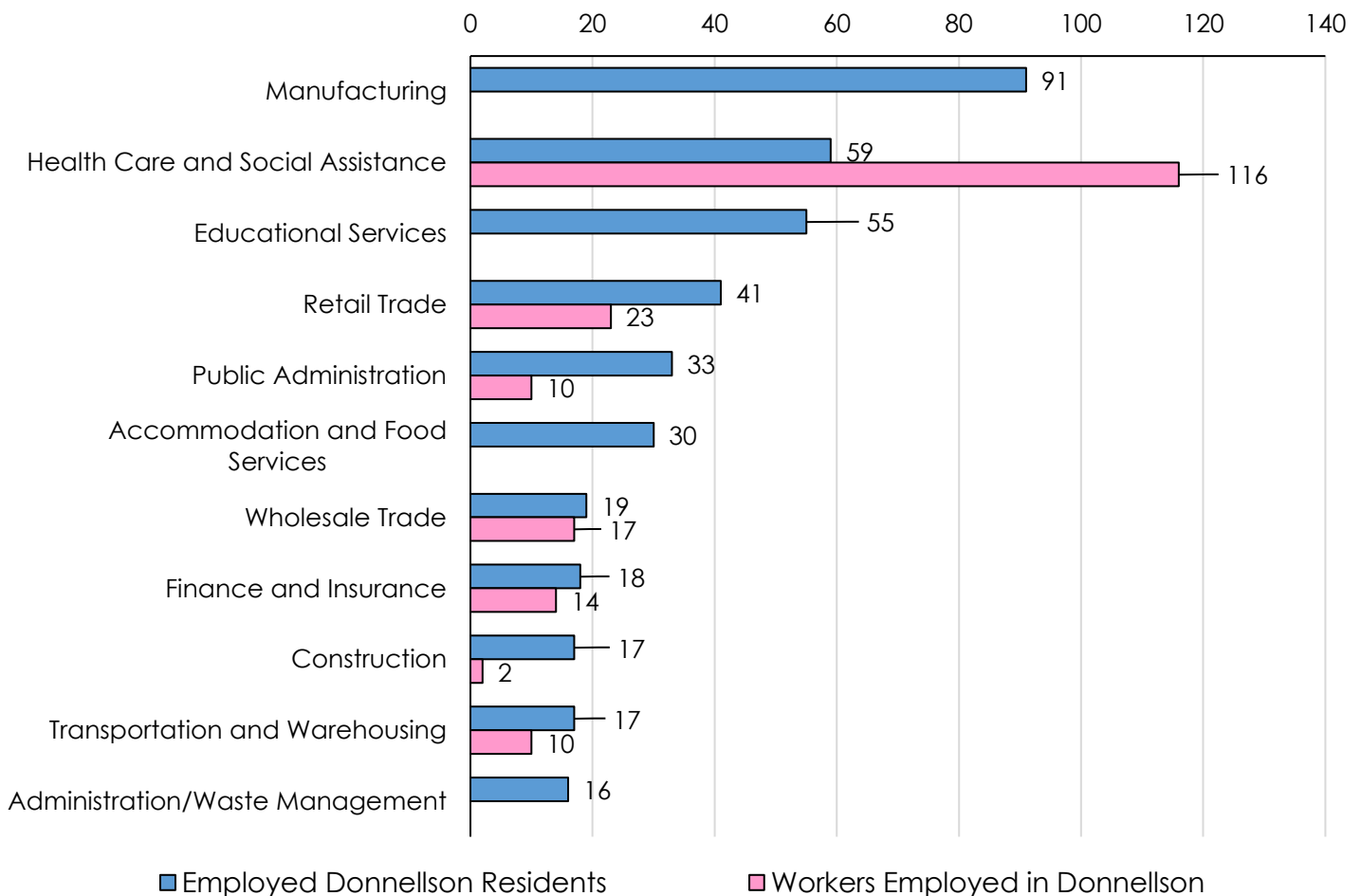
Source: *Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2020*. US Census Bureau.

Economic Development

WORKFORCE BY INDUSTRY TYPE

The sharp contrast between Donnellson's employed residents and workers employed within the City is drawn into sharp focus when the industry type of the workers in each category is compared. While over 20% of employed residents work in a 'manufacturing' industry, none of the workers employed in Donnellson work in that type of industry. This helps explain why such a large share of residents (especially men) commute elsewhere for work. A similar situation occurs for 'Educational Services', as 13% of the City's employed residents work in that field, but no such jobs are available in the City. This is largely a result of the School District's campus being several miles outside city limits. Conversely, over half of the workers employed in Donnellson work in the 'Health Care and Social Assistance' field, compared to only 14% for the City's employed residents. This is surely the result of Aspire Nursing and Rehabilitation.

Donnellson Workforce by Industry Type



Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2020. US Census Bureau.

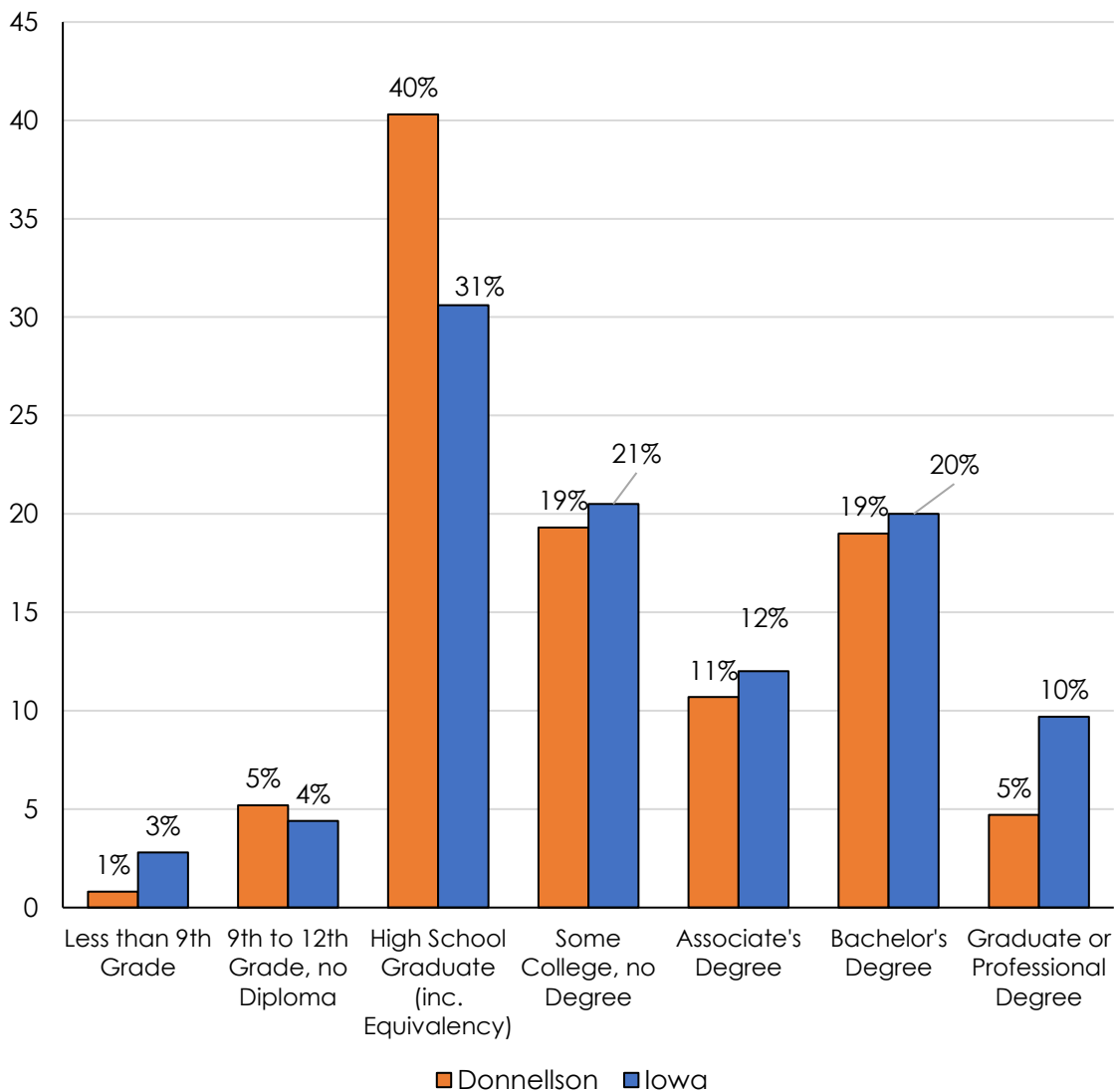
Education

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Compared to Iowa as a whole, Donnellson has an especially high share of residents (aged 25 and over) whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school diploma. However, the City is also largest consistent with the State, in terms of its percentage of residents whose highest level of education is an Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, or some college but no degree.

It falls noticeably behind the state in terms of the share of residents at the high and low end of the spectrum – those without a high school diploma, and those with a Graduate or Professional Degree.

Percentage of Residents Aged 25 and Over by Highest Educational Attainment



Source: American Community Survey
5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Education

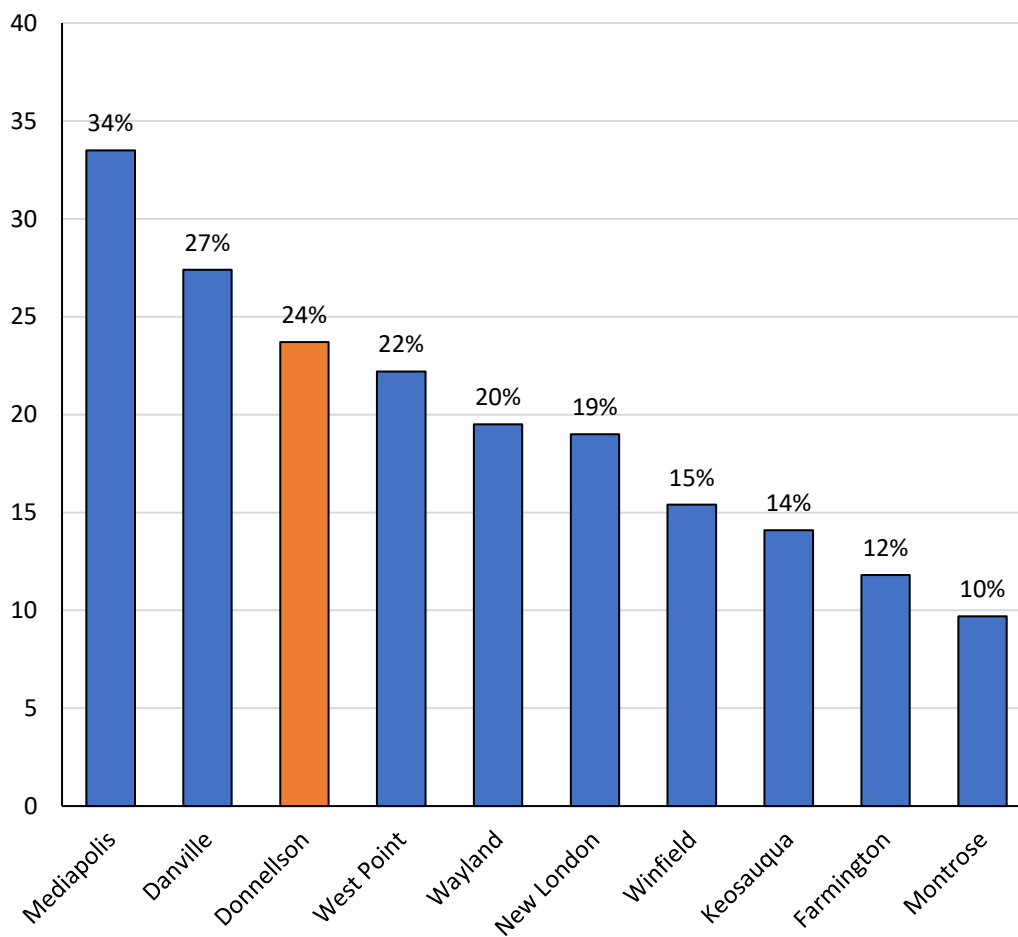
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Among the 10 comparable cities, Donnellson has the third highest percentage of residents that have earned a Bachelor's Degree. This represents nearly 1/4 of all residents aged 25 and above.

Nearly 1/4 of all Donnellson residents aged 25 and over have earned a Bachelor's Degree. While this is lower than the figure of 30% for Iowa as a whole, it exceeds that of Lee County as a whole (19%). It also ranks third among the 10 comparable cities.

However, among those who have obtained a Bachelor's Degree, only 1 out of 5 have also obtained a Graduate or Professional Degree. As a result, Donnellson ranks 2nd among the 10 cities in terms of its percentage of residents whose highest level of education is a Bachelor's Degree (at 19%).

Percentage of Residents Aged 25 and Over with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher



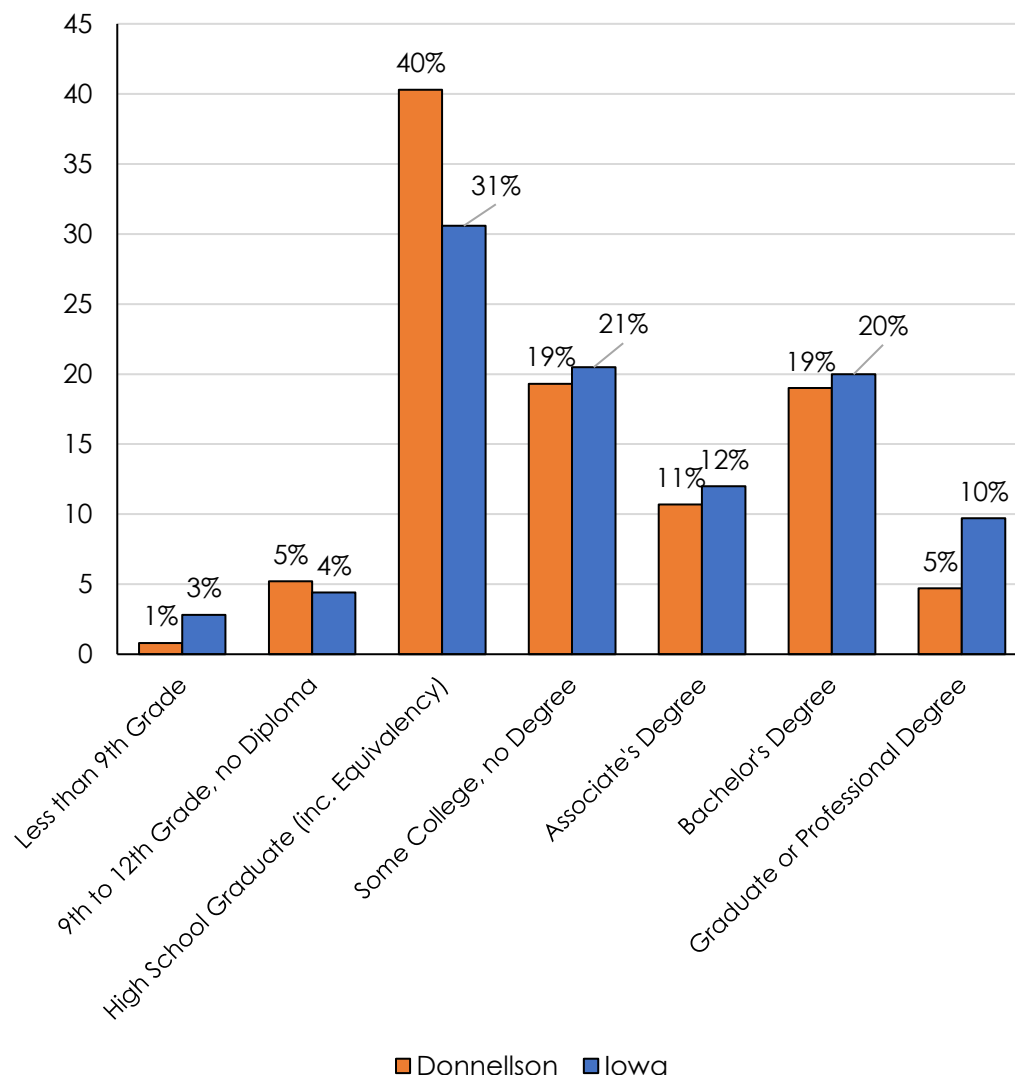
Source: American Community Survey
5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021

Education

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Education is a touchstone in a community, especially in Iowa, where pride in one's community school system is notable. This is evident in survey responses where many residents cited the strength of the Central Lee School District as a positive trait of the community. Although the school district is well regarded, education has its challenges in Donnellson and southeast Iowa as a whole – whether that is retaining young people after graduation in order to make a positive impact on the local community, achieving higher levels of educational attainment, or members of immigrant communities not obtaining high school equivalent diplomas. This section will touch on trends in the local public school district – especially pertaining to the statewide implementation of open enrollment, and discuss educational opportunities and barriers.

Percentage of Residents Aged 25 and Over by Highest Educational Attainment



Source:
American
Community
Survey 5-Year
Estimates,
2017-2021

Education

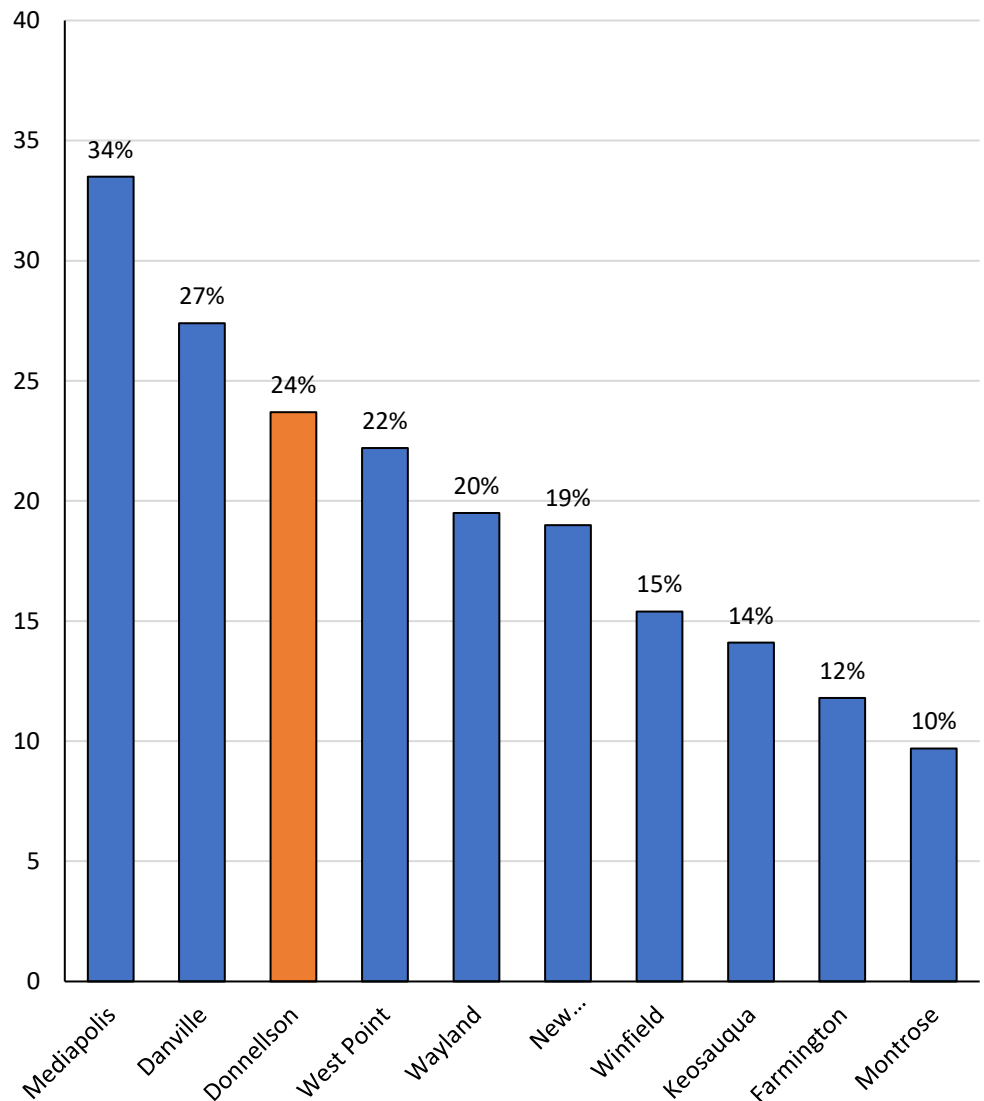
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Percentage of Residents Aged 25 and Over with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021



Education

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The demographic makeup of Central Lee School District is well within the expected distribution of Donnellson or Lee County as a whole. Central Lee's student body in the past school year was 94.2-percent White, 2.2-percent Hispanic/Latino, 1.1-percent Black, 0.2-percent Asian, 0.1-percent Indigenous American, 0.2-percent Pacific Islander, and 2.1-percent identifying as more than one race or ethnicity. Donnellson's racial and ethnic makeup is 96.3-percent White, 1.6-percent Hispanic/Latino, 0.5-percent Black, 0.1-percent Asian, and 1.6-percent identifying as some other race or multiracial. Lee County as a whole is 89.1-percent White, 3.3-percent Hispanic/Latino, 2.7-percent Black, 0.4-percent Asian, 0.1-percent Indigenous American, 0.0-percent Pacific Islander, and 4.4-percent identifying as some other race or multiracial.

Of the 1,187 students enrolled from Kindergarten to 12th grade in Central Lee Schools, 396 students are eligible for the free lunch program and 54 student are eligible for the reduced price lunch program. 37.9-percent of the student body is eligible for either program compared to 54.7-percent of the students in Fort Madison schools or 60.5-percent of students in Keokuk. Across the Southeast Iowa region only Danville (36.5-percent) and Mediapolis (31.1-percent) have a smaller proportion of students on free or reduced-price lunch.

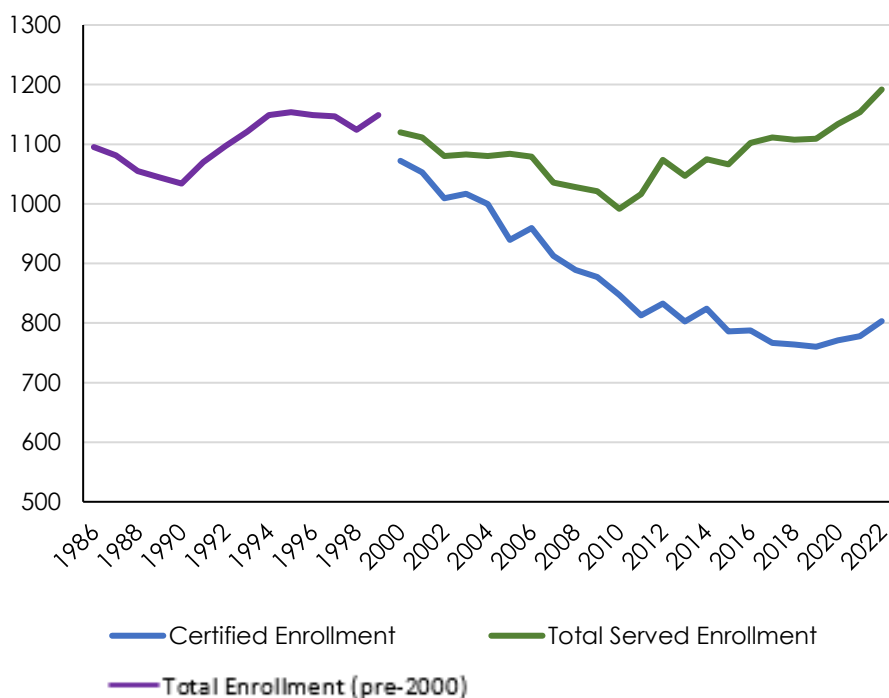
Educational Attainment in Population	Donnellson	Donn. %	Lee County	Lee Co. %	Iowa	Iowa %
Population 25 and older	615		24,161		2,104,864	
High School graduate (or equivalency) 25+	218	35.4%	9,229	38.2%	647,371	30.8%
Some College, no degree 25+	149	24.2%	5,573	23.1%	433,481	20.6%
Associate degree 25+	60	9.8%	3,225	13.3%	248,496	11.8%
Bachelor's Degree 25+	133	21.6%	3,275	13.6%	415,048	19.7%
Professional/Graduate Degree 25+	26	4.2%	1,185	4.9%	202,067	9.6%
Bachelor's Degree or higher 25+	159	25.9%	4,460	18.5%	617,115	29.3%
High School Degree or higher 25+	586	95.3%	22,487	93.1%	1,946,463	92.5%
No High School degree 25+	29	4.7%	1,674	6.9%	158,401	7.5%

Education

CENTRAL LEE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Central Lee Schools campus lies 5.6 miles southeast of Donnellson on two plots approximately 42 acres in size. Facilities include the high school, a K-8 school, various sports fields, and bus storage located just off US Highway 218. The campus features 21st century amenities, which exemplify how it has been so successful in a 21st century Iowa education initiative: open enrollment. Beginning in 2000, Iowa students were provided with the ability to attend school outside of their home district. Declining population in southeast Iowa can often effect the certified enrollment in a school district (certified enrollment represents the students that live within a school district). However, although Central Lee has experienced a 3.5-percent decline in certified enrollment in the last 10-years, the decline is half that of other Lee County school districts Fort Madison (7.3-percent) and Keokuk (7.4-percent), and markedly lower than the largest school district in the region Burlington (17.1-percent).

Central Lee School District - Enrollment, 1986-2021



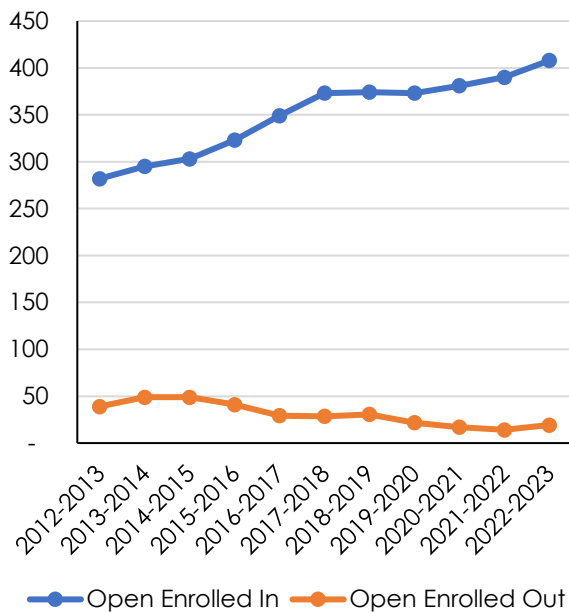
Education

CENTRAL LEE SCHOOL DISTRICT

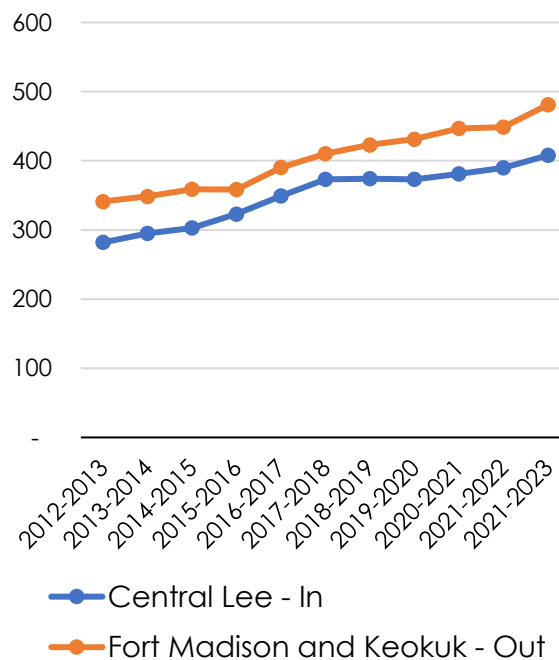
While certified enrollment has experienced a drop almost across the board in the region, Central Lee's Total Served Enrollment has increased 11-percent in the last 10 years – from 1,074 students in the 2012-2013 school year to 1,192 students in the 2022-2023 school year. Compare this gain to the decline in area schools: 13.8-percent less students served in Fort Madison and 10.8-percent less students served in Keokuk; Burlington enrolls 1,000 less students in 2022-2023 than in 2012-2013, a 23.7-percent decline. Driving this increase in total enrollment is an increase in open enrollment into the district: in the past school year, 784 students lived in the district (66-percent), while 408 students open enrolled in (34-percent). Only 19 students open enrolled out of the school district in 2022-2023.

Compare this to Fort Madison where 29 students open enrolled in and 342 students open enrolled out, and Keokuk where 7 students open enrolled in and 139 students open enrolled out. In the past 10 years, there is a direct correlation between students open enrolling out from Fort Madison and Keokuk and open enrolling into the Central Lee school district. Iowa's open enrollment initiative was able to stabilize the district after total enrollment was declining between 2000 and 2010 from pre-open enrollment. Now with steady gains in open enrollment from surrounding districts Central Lee is once again on an upward trajectory.

Central Lee School District
- Open Enrollment, 2012-2023



Open Enrollment - In vs. Out



Education

PROXIMITY TO EDUCATIONAL CENTERS

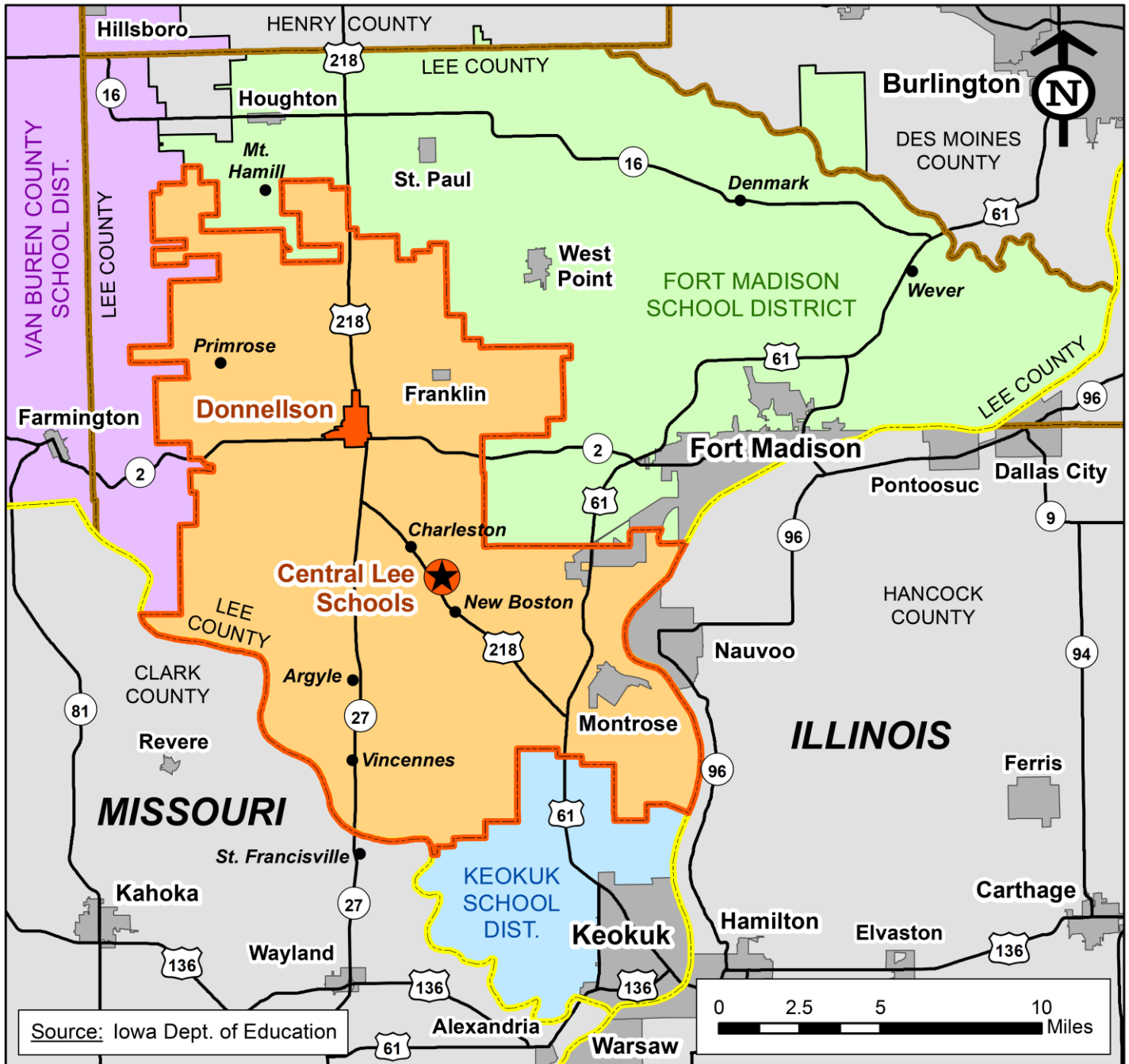
Donnellson is located within the Community College district Area XVI, and just over 33-miles from Southeastern Community College while also relatively close to Ottumwa's Indian Hills Community College. Donnellson has a higher percentage of residents with bachelor's degrees than both Lee County and the State of Iowa as a whole – perhaps an impact of being located under 100 miles from at least six different 4-year colleges across Iowa, Illinois and Missouri and approximately 110 miles from universities in the Quad Cities. Concerning major state schools Donnellson is 73 miles from University of Iowa, 159 miles from University of Northern Iowa, and 181 miles from Iowa State University.

School	Distance (Road Miles)
Southeastern Community College (Burlington - Area XVI)	33.5 miles
Southeastern Community College (Keokuk Campus)	19.1 miles
University of Iowa (Iowa City, IA)	72.8 miles
University of Northern Iowa (Waterloo, IA)	159 miles
Iowa State University (Ames, IA)	181 miles
St. Ambrose University (Davenport, IA)	110 miles
Augustana College (Rock Island, IL)	111 miles
Western Illinois University (Macomb, IL)	61.2 miles
Truman State University (Kirksville, MO)	91.2 miles
Culver-Stockton College (Canton, MO)	38.5 miles
Quincy University (Quincy, IL)	58.7 miles
Coe College (Cedar Rapids, IA)	98.0 miles

CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Issues facing Central Lee Schools and education generally are similar to many rural communities. Logistics of having a centrally located school outside of city limits means a heavy reliance on bussing which adds to overhead costs or creates a burden on families that must coordinate pick-ups and drop-offs often in addition to a parents own out-of-town commute. Due to a relatively homogenous student body of native English speakers, Central Lee School may not have many resources for English as a Second Language students. "Brain Drain" or educated young professionals leaving a community is a common problem in rural areas, however, Donnellson has a higher percentage of bachelor's degree holders than the county and State at-large. To retain residents with a higher educational attainment there must be economic growth that produces employment opportunities that necessitate 4-year degrees and advanced degrees. "Brain Drain" is evident in the rate of professional and graduate degrees, where Iowa outpaces Donnellson with over twice the rate of advanced degrees.

CENTRAL LEE SCHOOL DISTRICT MAP



Central Lee School district encompasses 199.4 square miles in central Lee County. Van Buren County School district lies to the northwest; whereas other Lee County school districts Fort Madison is to the north and east and Keokuk School district to the south. Notably, Central Lee School district has only three municipalities, all under a population of 1,000, that are completely within its borders (although a small industrially-zoned section of Fort Madison falls into this boundary). Central Lee also serves unincorporated communities Argyle, Charleston, New Boston, Primrose, and Vincennes.

Transportation

HIGHWAYS - TODAY

Donnellson is situated at the crossroads of US Highway 218 and State Highway 2 in western Lee County. Highway 218 is a 4-lane divided highway which travels north to south and bypasses the city on its eastern edge. Highway 2 is a two-lane road which travels east-to-west in the southern half of the city, which is locally known as Madison Street, and is lined with homes and businesses through town. Main Street previously served as Highway 218, prior to the 4-lane bypass being opened in 2003.

The 4-lane highway is also designated as the Avenue of the Saints, a 563-mile 4-lane highway corridor extending between St. Paul, Minnesota, and St. Louis, Missouri. The portion of the Avenue within Iowa is also signed as State Highway 27. There are 3 access points for Donnellson from this highway, with the primary one being a grade-separate interchange with Highway 2 that is located within city limits.

A second grade-separate interchange is located 1.5 miles south of the city, which serves as the point where US Highway 218 diverts from the Avenue of the Saints and follows a 2-lane alignment to the southeast (toward Keokuk and the 4-lane US Highway 61). South from this interchange to the state line, the Avenue of the Saints is numbered solely as State Highway 27.

This same interchange provides access to the business route of Highway 218 through town, signed as 180th Street outside the city, and Main Street within the city. This business route can also be accessed at the other end from County Road J56/Primrose Road, 0.5 miles north of Donnellson. This is 4-way at-grade intersection with an east-west County Road, with 180th Street splitting off to the south just 200 feet to the west. Midway between this intersection and the Highway 2 interchange, 210th Street, an east-west gravel-surfaced County road, extends over the highway on an overpass, with traffic forced to access 210th Street via J56 or Highway 2.

The intersection between US 218 and County Road J56 (pictured below) has tended to have high accident rate, which can be attributed to its at-grade configuration, combined with its frequent usage by traffic traveling northbound from Donnellson, which must yield to southbound highway traffic with a 65-mph speed limit. It is also complicated by the short jog along J56 between US 218 and 180th Street, as the two-north roads are offset by only 200 feet.

An analysis of 2016-2020 data from the Iowa DOT found that its accident rate ranked within the top 7% of all intersections statewide. Specific to intersections along high-speed divided highways, it ranked among the top 11% statewide, and the 3rd highest within Lee County alone (behind US 61 & US 218, and US 61 & County Road J62, both near Montrose).



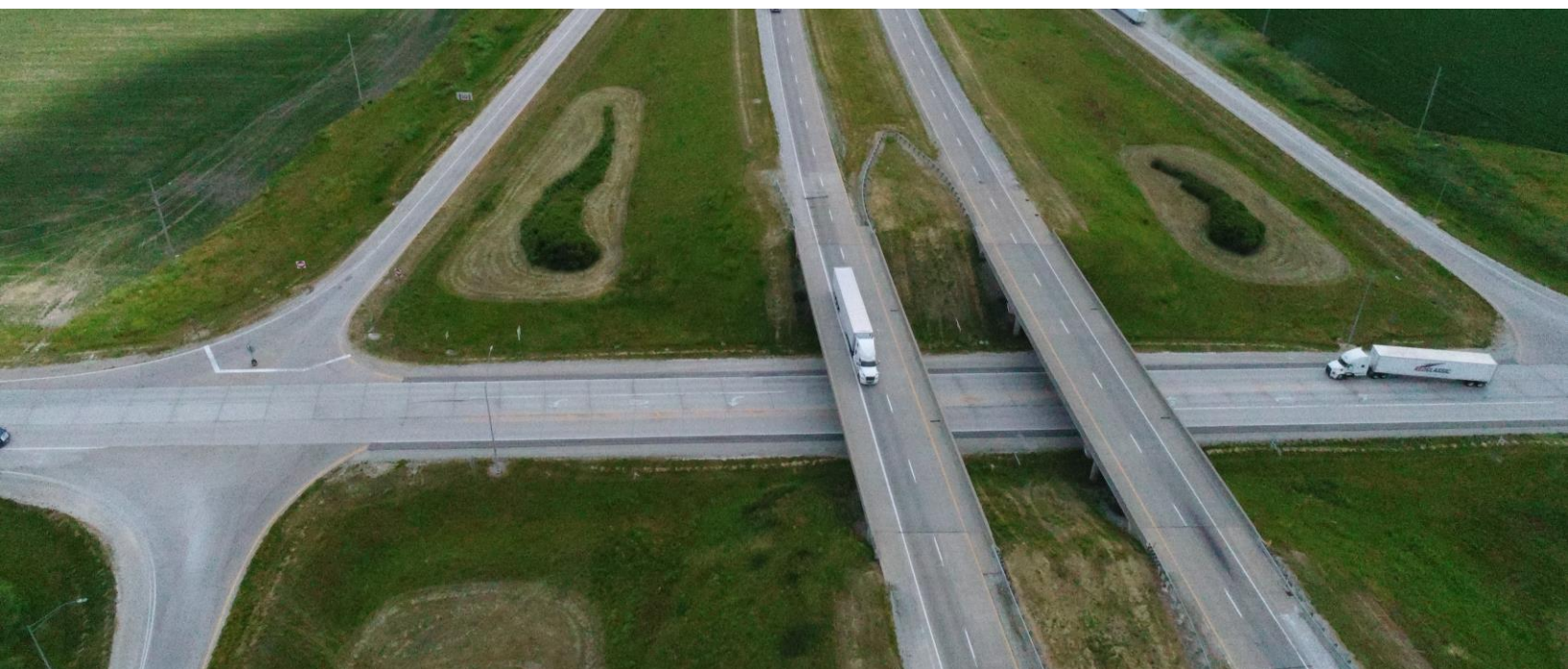
Transportation

HIGHWAYS - TODAY

According to 2021 data from the Iowa DOT, the Avenue of the Saints has an average annual daily traffic (AADT) volume of 7,300 vehicles per day at Donnellson. To the north, the volume increases to nearly 8,000 at the north end of Lee County, 9,000 just south of Mount Pleasant, and 12,000 at the north end of Henry County (past US Highway 34). To the south, the volume decreases to 6,500 at the Missouri border. Missouri DOT data shows that the volume increase to 9,000 to the south of the merger with southbound US Highway 61 from Keokuk. The dip in traffic between Highways 34 and 61 shows that this section of the highway has a lower volume of through traffic, since motorists from the larger river cities to the east (Burlington, Fort Madison and Keokuk) can feed into it from those other highways when traveling northbound (to Iowa City and Cedar Rapids) and southbound (to St. Louis).

For the diagonal section of Highway 218 between Donnellson and Keokuk, the AADT is 2,700 vehicles per day. The influx of northbound traffic from Keokuk helps explain why the volume on the Avenue of the Saints increases substantially following the merger with 218.

Highway 2 extends east-to-west across Iowa, from the Missouri river crossing at Nebraska City, Nebraska to Fort Madison on the Mississippi River. For almost all of this route, it is two-lanes wide, and has traffic volumes that are minimal in comparison to the parallel routes of US Highway 34 in Iowa and US Highway 36 in Missouri. Within Lee County, the busiest portion of Highway 2 is the section between Donnellson and Fort Madison, as it carries a sizable amount of commuter traffic, and also serves as a prominent crossover point between Highway 61 and the Avenue of the Saints. This section has an AADT of 3,300 vehicles per day, in comparison to the section between Donnellson and Farmington, which ranges from 1,400 to 2,100 per day. It is also one of the most heavily traveled sections of Highway 2 statewide, exceeded only by short segments close to population centers (i.e. Centerville), and where it is co-signed with a north-south highway that jogs (i.e. Clarinda and Bloomfield).



Transportation

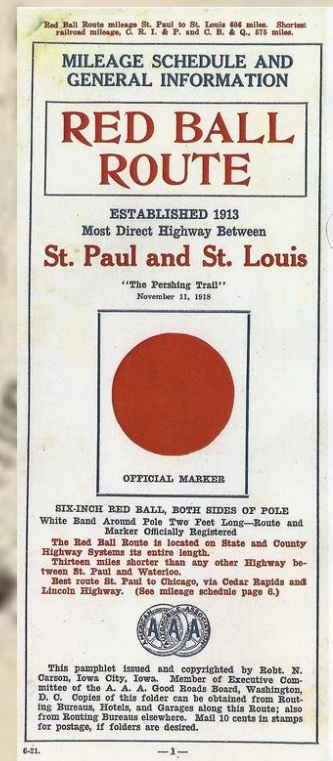
Highways – History and Changing Role over Time

The primary highway network serving Donnellson and western Lee County has evolved substantially over the past century. One common thread is that the town has almost always held a prominent position along Iowa's highway network in some form.

In the early 1900s, even before the concept of highway numbering system existed, Donnellson was situated along the route of two named highway routes, the Red Ball Route and the Waubonsie Trail, established in 1913 and 1916. Both followed present-day US Highway 218 between Keokuk and Donnellson, and then continued up present-day Main/180th Street to Primrose Road. The routes diverged near the town of Primrose, with the Waubonsie Trail heading west to Farmington and Bloomfield, and the Red Ball Route heading north to Mount Pleasant and Iowa City. These were both spearheaded as part of the 'good roads movement', when few roads in Iowa had yet been upgraded to a paved or gravel surface. The Red Ball Route extended north-to-south between St. Paul, Minnesota and St. Louis, Missouri, and served as an early precursor to today's Avenue of the Saints. The Waubonsie Trail extended nearly 300 miles east-to-west across Iowa, between Keokuk and the Missouri River at Nebraska City, Nebraska. It was promoted under the slogan, 'The Short Way Back to the Farm'.

When the Iowa Highway Commission (precursor to today's Department of Transportation) first established a Primary Road System with numbered highways in 1919, Donnellson was positioned at the junction of State Highways 3 and 40. Highway 40 largely followed the old Red Ball Route between Cedar Rapids and Keokuk, while Highway 3 (later renumbered to 2) followed the old Waubonsie Trail, with an eastward extension to Fort Madison, and a southward reroute between Donnellson and Farmington. When the US Highway System was established in 1926 (with routes that cross state lines), State Highway 40 was upgraded to US Highway 161, which was intended as an 'inland' alternative to Highway 61 between Montrose and Dubuque, traveling through Iowa City and Cedar Rapids. In 1937, the Highway 161 designation was eliminated, and the portion between Cedar Rapids and Montrose became a southward extension of US Highway 218.

The highway dynamic in the Donnellson area remained largely consistent throughout the second half of the 20th century. During this period, there was no signed highway route extending south from Donnellson into Missouri, and a private toll bridge over the Des Moines River offered the only shortcut to traveling around an angle through Keokuk on Highways 218 and 61.



Transportation

Highways – History and Changing Role over Time

In the 1980s, Mount Pleasant businessman E.A. Hayes coordinated with civic leaders in Southeast Iowa to plan the concept of the Avenue of the Saints, a new 4-lane divided highway that would substitute for the lack of a direct Interstate Highway route between St. Paul, Minnesota and St. Louis, Missouri. The Interstate system had been planned and developed 2 to 3 decades earlier, and the regions of southeast Iowa, northeast Missouri, and west-central Illinois had been left off the system entirely. While intended to substitute for an Interstate, much of it was built as an expressway rather than a freeway, with at-grade intersections in rural areas, and full interchanges reserved for densely populated areas and junction points with other major highways.

The Avenue of the Saints was completed in phases between 1995 and 2008, with the bypass of Donnellson opened in 2003. At this point, the original alignment of the highway (Main Street) was transferred to local jurisdiction (city and county), and it assumed the function of a business route that complements and runs parallel with the main highway.



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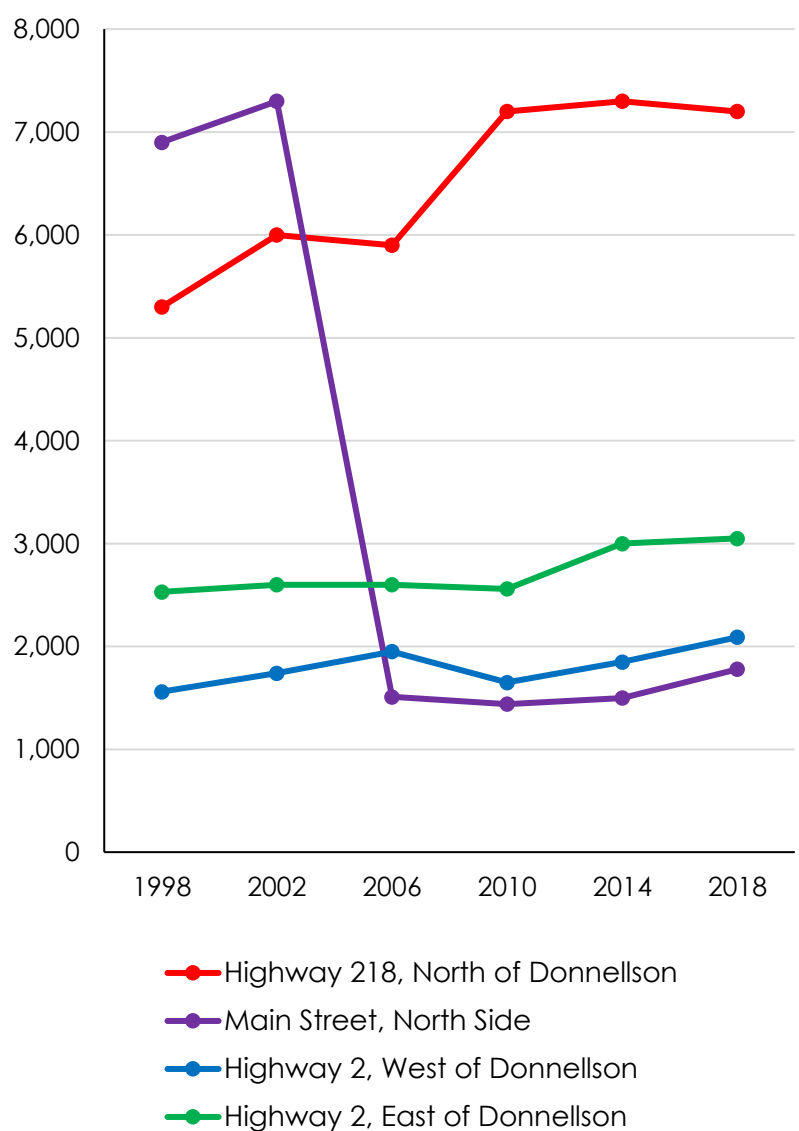
Transportation

Highways – History and Changing Role over Time

Between 1998 and 2018, the AADT for US Highway 218 just north of Donnellson increased by 36%, going from 5,300 vehicles per day to 7,200 per day. This indicates that the construction of the 4-lane highway, as well as the establishment of a signed, un-tolled roadway between Donnellson and Wayland, Missouri, has resulted in a sizable increase in thru-traffic traveling north and south past Donnellson every day. Over this same period, the traffic volume on North Main Street decreased by 74%, going from 6,900 vehicles to 1,780. This naturally reflects the changing role of this road from the highway mainline to its business route. However, following the initial massive drop in volume when the bypass opened, the volume of traffic on North Main increased by 18% from 2006 to 2018.

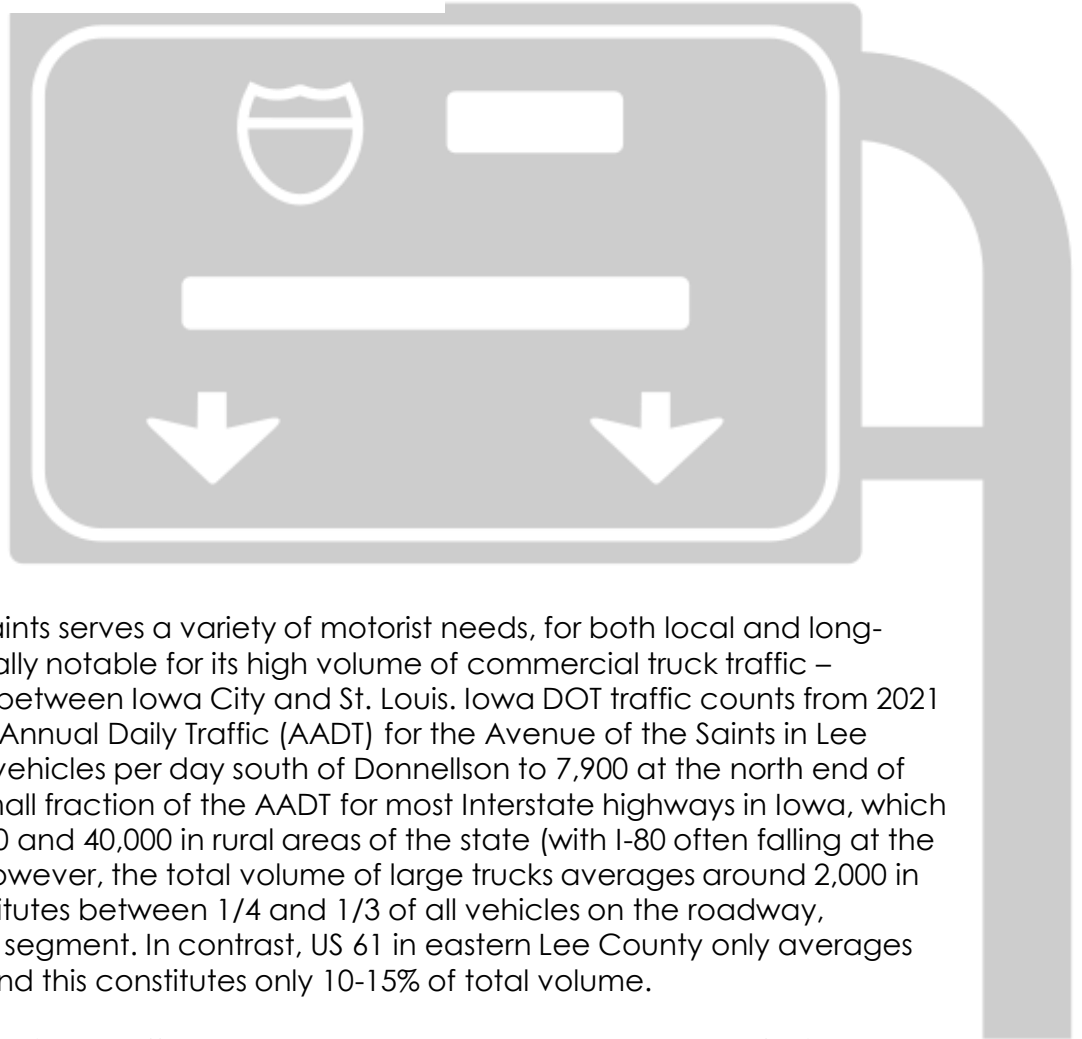
For Highway 2, traffic volume has also increased over the past 20 years. From 1998 to 2018, the AADT increased by 34% for the segment just west of Donnellson, and 21% for the segment east of Donnellson. The east segment already had 60% higher volume than the west segment in 1998, so the total surplus in additional vehicles was largely the same on each side (about +525 vehicles), though the percentage impact was greater for the west segment. The volume between East Street and the 4-lane highway has generally had about 300 more vehicles per day than the segment of Highway 2 to the east of the 4-lane. The presence of a Casey's gas station and Dollar General store helps explain this discrepancy, as these businesses tend to draw in a sizable amount of customers from the 4-lane.

Change in Average Annual Daily Traffic Volume - Selected Locations



Transportation

Avenue of the Saints - Profile



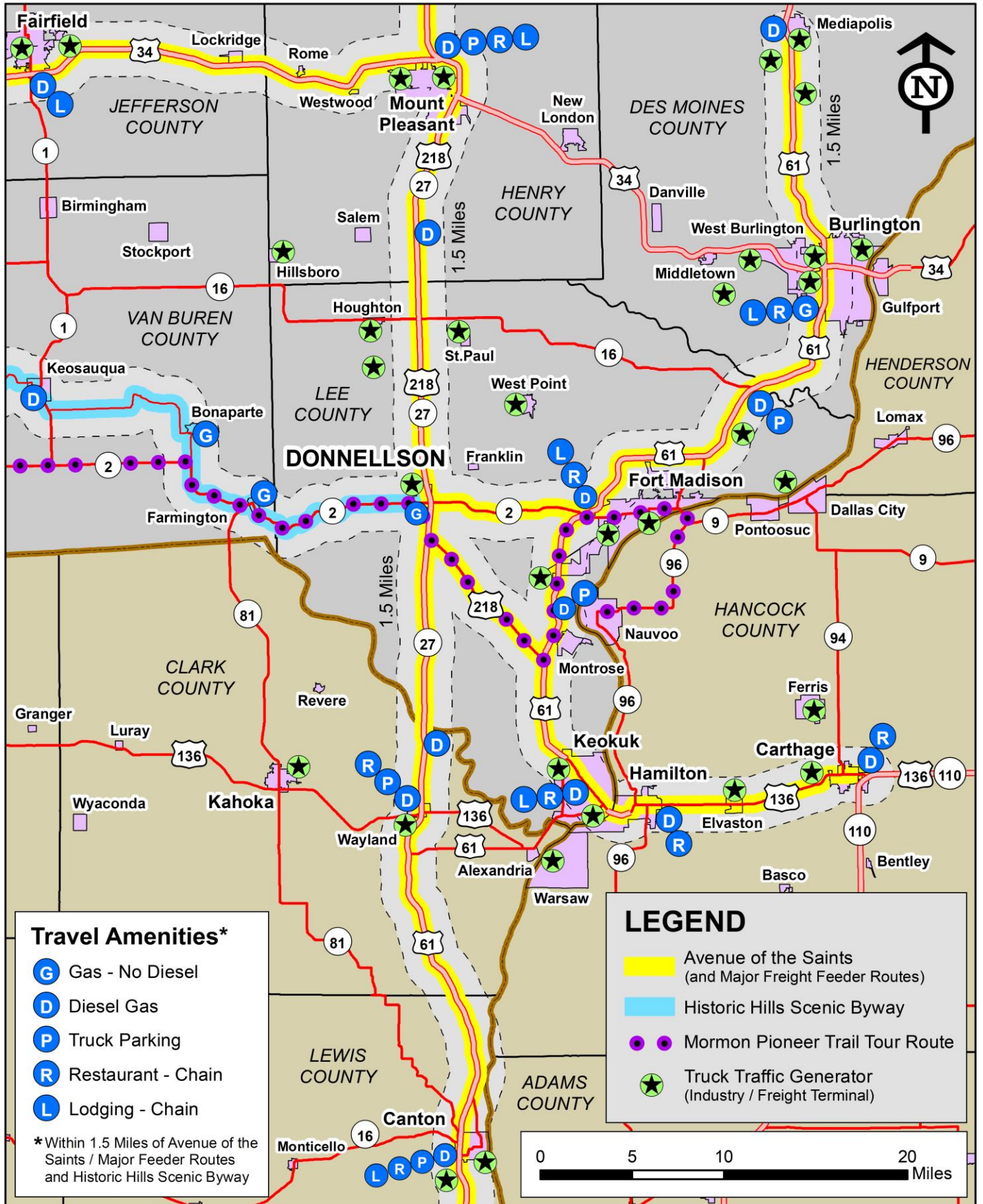
While the Avenue of the Saints serves a variety of motorist needs, for both local and long-distance travel, it is especially notable for its high volume of commercial truck traffic – particularly for the portion between Iowa City and St. Louis. Iowa DOT traffic counts from 2021 indicate that the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) for the Avenue of the Saints in Lee County ranges from 6,500 vehicles per day south of Donnellson to 7,900 at the north end of the county. This is only a small fraction of the AADT for most Interstate highways in Iowa, which usually falls between 15,000 and 40,000 in rural areas of the state (with I-80 often falling at the high end of that range). However, the total volume of large trucks averages around 2,000 in Lee County, and this constitutes between 1/4 and 1/3 of all vehicles on the roadway, depending on the specific segment. In contrast, US 61 in eastern Lee County only averages 900-1,000 trucks per day, and this constitutes only 10-15% of total volume.

One conclusion to be drawn is that efforts must be made to spread awareness of this highway to the general population, in order to redirect some of the passenger traffic from more congested Interstate highways in the region, such as I-80 and I-55. The other conclusion is that attention must be paid to the needs of the many long-haul truckers that regularly utilize this highway, through amenities such as gas, dining and lodging establishments.

Donnellson currently has one gas station in close proximity to the Avenue of the Saints. However, this Casey's location does not offer diesel gas or a dedicated area for commercial truck parking. Along this highway, the closest gas station that offers both diesel and truck parking is 17 miles to the south, in Wayland, Missouri. This is a large travel plaza operated by Flying J, which includes several on-site dining options. To the north, the closest gas station is 14 miles away, near Salem at the south end of Henry County. This facility offers diesel, but there is no formal truck parking provided, and no amenities apart from a small convenience store. Continuing northward, the closest facility with truck parking is a Pilot travel plaza in Mount Pleasant, which is 25 miles north of Donnellson.

The presence of dining establishments – particularly well-known chain restaurants – is very sparse along the Avenue of the Saints corridor between Iowa City and Hannibal. Apart from a cluster of fast food restaurants in Mount Pleasant, the only chain dining options along this 140-mile corridor are found in the Missouri cities of Wayland (1), Canton (2), and Palmyra (3). Lodging options are even less prevalent, as Mount Pleasant and Canton offer the only roadside hotels between Iowa City and Hannibal.

AVENUE OF THE SAINTS TRAVEL AMENITIES



The background of the page is a photograph. In the upper left, a large, oval-shaped sign for 'Center Point Travel Plaza' is visible, with 'Center Point' in white on a dark blue background and 'Travel Plaza' in white on a red background. To the right and slightly lower, a McDonald's sign with its iconic golden arches is visible against a clear sky. The overall scene is outdoors during the day.

Transportation

Detailed Profile on Avenue of the Saints

The number of amenities on other highways feeding into the Avenue of the Saints in Southeast Iowa also tends to be very minimal. For those traveling to the southeast of Donnellson on US 218, the nearest gas, dining, and lodging options are 18 miles away in Keokuk. When Highway 2 is used to access northbound US 61 from the Avenue of the Saints, there are no gas stations or dining establishments within 1 mile of the highway at Fort Madison, and only 1 hotel. The nearest gas station with diesel and truck parking is at Wever – 21 miles away from Donnellson. There are also no such amenities along a 23-mile stretch of US 34 between Fairfield and Mount Pleasant, for traffic accessing the Avenue of the Saints from Des Moines.

Finally, while many trucks pass by Donnellson on a long-distance route between origin and destination points that are several hundred miles away, there a substantial number of traffic generators within 30 miles of the highway in Southeast Iowa. This includes numerous large industrial facilities in Fort Madison, Keokuk, Burlington and Mount Pleasant, as well as multiple grain elevators in the surrounding rural areas, and several intermodal barge terminals along the Mississippi River.

As a result, with the substantial amount of truck traffic that uses this highway, plus the limited amount of travel amenities currently available, there is very likely a sizable unmet demand that could be captured through the development of a travel plaza at Donnellson. Another prospect would be the development of a private 'logistics center' that could directly serve the needs of commercial freight shippers serving the industries of Lee County and Southeast Iowa.

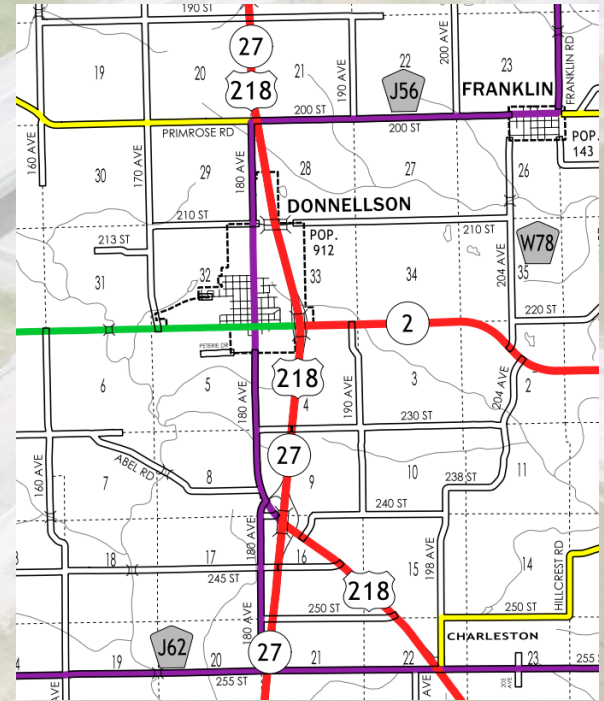
Transportation

Federal Functional Classification

Federal Functional Classification (FFC) is a system used by the federal government to classify all public roads into a hierarchy of significance, based on their typical traffic volume, and their predominant function in transporting motorists from one place to another. Arterials are high capacity roads which primarily serve to deliver traffic from Collectors to the Interstate Highway system. Collectors are low to moderate capacity roads which connect traffic from local roads to Arterials. The classification of 'Local Road' applies to all public roads apart from Arterials and Collectors, which primarily serve local traffic only. Both Arterials and Collectors are eligible for federal aid funding, while Local Roads are not. Arterials and Collectors are split into two sub-categories – Principal and Minor for Arterials, and Major and Minor for Collectors. Most Minor Collectors are located in rural, unincorporated areas, while most Major Collectors feed from rural areas into incorporated cities.

Donnellson has 3 miles of roadway classified as an Arterial. Of these, 1.7 miles constitute a Principal Arterial, and this is comprised of the 4-lane US Highway 218 and Highway 2 to the east of 218. The remaining 1.3 miles constitute a Minor Arterial, and this is comprised solely of Highway 2 (Madison Street) to the west of 218. Donnellson has 1.8 miles of roadway classified as a Major Collector, and this is comprised solely of Main Street. The remaining 8.4 miles of roadway are classified as a Local Road, and these are not eligible for federal aid funding. Taken as a percentage of the total roadway mileage in Donnellson, Arterials represent 23%, Collectors represent 13%, and Local Roads represent 64%.

From a countywide perspective, Highway 61 and the Avenue of the Saints are entirely classified as Primary Arterials, whereas this distinction is also shared by the generally east-west sections of Highways 2 and 218 that serve as 'crossover' routes between those two north-south routes. Highway 2 between Donnellson and Fort Madison is the only instance of a 2-lane State Highway classified as a Principal Arterial in Lee County, or any of the neighboring counties. The entirety of the business route for Highway 218 through Donnellson (Main Street/180th Avenue) is classified as a Major Collector, and this designation continues eastward on County Road J56 to Franklin and West Point. The westward portion of J56 (Primrose Road) is a Minor Collector.



RURAL FEDERAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

INTERSTATE	
OTHER PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL	
MINOR ARTERIAL	
MAJOR COLLECTOR	
MINOR COLLECTOR	
LOCAL	

The image above is from the Iowa DOT's official Federal Functional Classification Map of Lee County. Each roadway segment is color-coded based on its type of FFC classification.

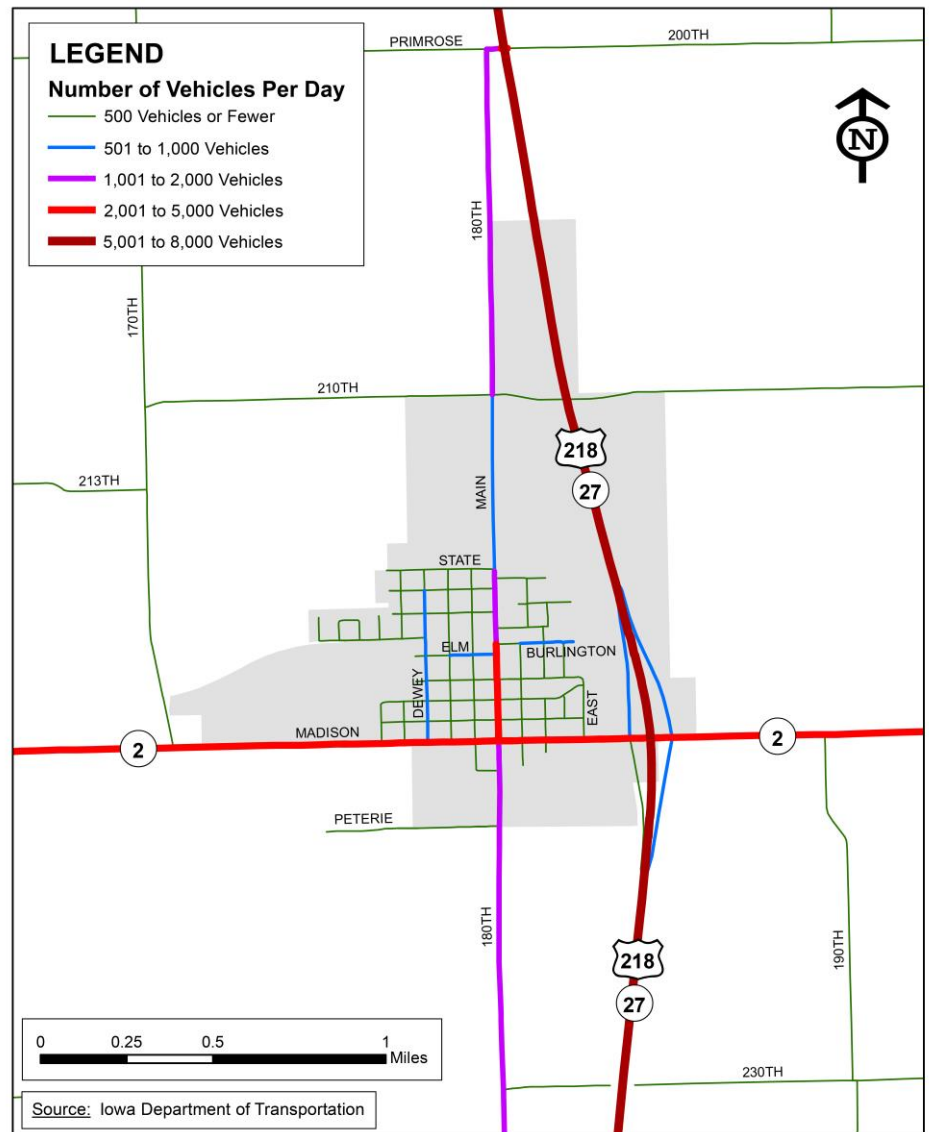
Transportation

Traffic Volume

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) is a measure of the average number of vehicles traveling on a specific roadway segment (in either direction) on any given day. The map to the right displays the latest AADT figures for all roadway segments in and around Donnellson. In general, traffic counts are taken less frequently for minor residential streets than for state highways and other arterials and collectors. Therefore, the figures for some of Donnellson's residential streets are 1 to 2 decades old.

Highway 218 naturally falls at the top of the AADT hierarchy, with over 5,000 vehicles per day. This is closely followed by Highway 2, in the range between 2,000 and 3,000 vehicles per day. Among all the City and County road segments, only the section of Main Street between Highway 2 and Main Street exceeds 2,000 vehicles per day. The two adjoining segments of Main (south of Highway 2, and between downtown and the fairgrounds) both fall between 1,000 and 2,000 vehicles per day. This shows that for the highway's business route (Main/180th), more motorists enter the city from the south than the from the north. Most of the remaining street segments have an AADT under 500. The exceptions are Dewey Avenue, Elm Street, and Burlington Avenue (east of Main), which fall between 500 and 1,000, as they serve to funnel local traffic onto Main Street and Highway 2. It is noteworthy that the figure for State Street (just under 300) was obtained prior to the relocation of City Hall to the northwest part of the City. The present day figure is likely in the range of 500 to 1,000.

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)



Transportation

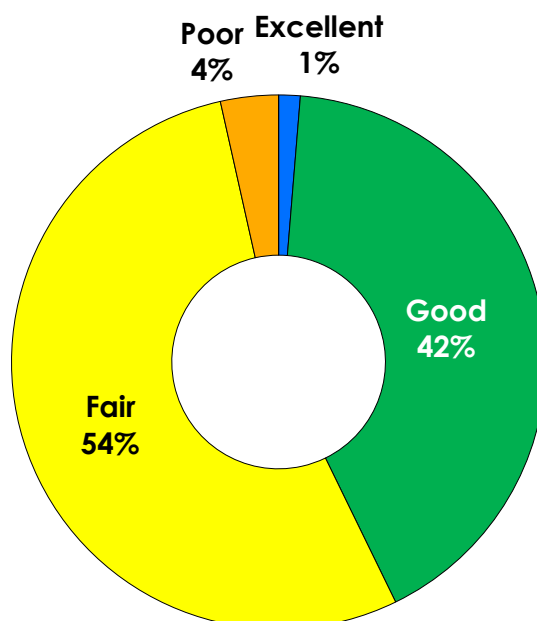
Local Streets and Pavement Condition Index

The Iowa State University Institute for Transportation (INTRANS) collects statewide data on the pavement condition of county roads and city streets. These roadways are thoroughly analyzed at both the surface and subbase level, and given a numerical score anywhere from 0 to 100, representing the Pavement Condition Index (PCI). Lower scores indicate poor condition, while higher scores indicate good condition. Scores are split into brackets of 20 points each, representing 'Very Poor', 'Poor', 'Fair', 'Good' and 'Excellent'.

In addition to the standard PCI measurement, INTRANS also provides an alternate version called 'City PCI', which is used solely for city streets. The scores for City PCI tend to reflect more favorably on individual street segments than the standard PCI. This is because the standard PCI is more conducive to the functionality of county roads, since both the speed limit and traffic volume tend to be higher than in cities. As a result, city streets are expected to be more resilient, due to the comparatively minimal use and lower speeds.

The map below shows the City PCI values for all paved streets within the City of Donnellson from the most recent analysis in 2020. State and US Highways are excluded from this analysis. The graph at right shows the total percentage of street segments that fall into each of the 5 brackets. The vast majority of Donnellson's street mileage falls into the 'good' and 'fair' categories, with a score ranging from 41 to 80. Just over 1% is rated as 'excellent', while 4% is rated as 'poor', and none of the segments are rated as 'very poor' (with a score of 20 or less).

Percentage of Roadway Mileage by City Pavement Condition Index (PCI) Score



Transportation

Park-and-Ride: Commuter Ride Sharing

When US Highway 218 was upgraded from 2 to 4 lanes in 2003, the alignment was shifted slightly to the east between County Road J40 and 150th Street, in order to avoid a cluster of homes on the west side of the old highway. In the process, a section of the old 2-lane highway pavement just north of J40 was retained by the Iowa DOT to serve as a Park-and-Ride facility, for area residents to use in carpooling to work elsewhere in the region. A similar Park-and-Ride facility was established 4 miles further north at State Highway 16 (east of Houghton).



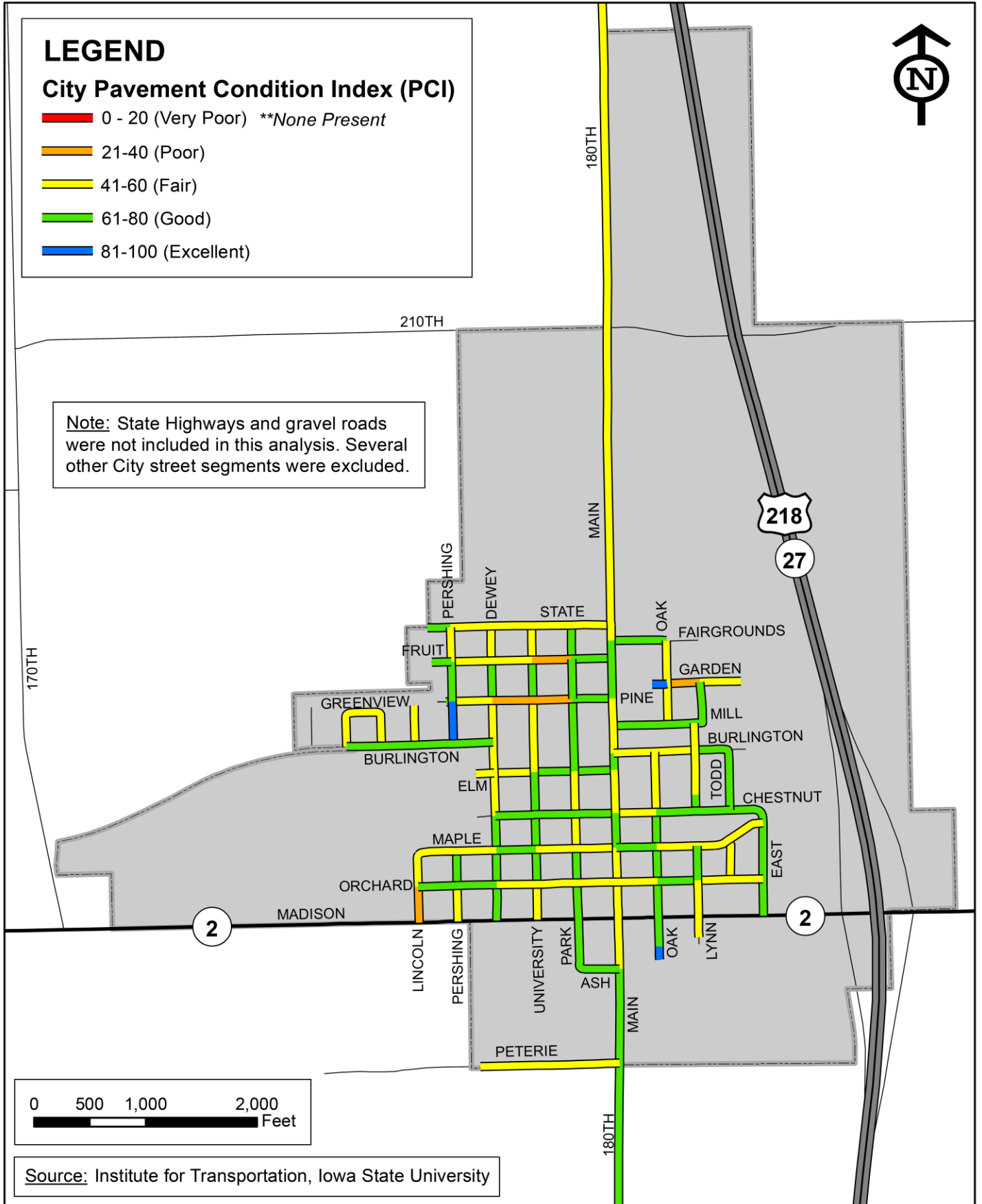
Pictured below and in the aerial image at right, the park-and-ride on J40 is 5 miles north of Donnellson and 6 miles west of West Point. It is convenient for Donnellson residents who commute northward to Mount Pleasant and Iowa City. However, it is not conducive to carpooling activities for employers in Fort Madison and Keokuk, which account for a much larger share of Donnellson's working residents.



Therefore, the establishment of a future park-and-ride facility near the Highway 2 interchange would help encourage more Donnellson residents to carpool, rather than having multiple people drive alone for 40-50 minutes a day, round trip.



PAVEMENT CONDITION INDEX (PCI)



Transportation

Railroads

Donnellson's early history was closely connected to railroads, as it was founded at the junction of two lines operated by the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. These lines offered both freight and passenger service. The north-south line between Mount Pleasant and Keokuk ceased operations in the 1920s and was abandoned. The east-west line between Bloomfield and Fort Madison remained operational through the 1960s.

As a result, there presently are no railroad lines operating in Donnellson or any part of northwestern Lee County. The nearest railroad line is the BNSF mainline between Chicago and Kansas City, which passes through the unincorporated town of Argyle, about 15 miles south of Donnellson, and then extends eastward at an angle through Fort Madison, where it crosses the Mississippi River into Illinois. A separate BNSF freight railroad line follows the Mississippi River between north to south, between Burlington and St. Louis, and parallels the other east-west mainline through Fort Madison, before extending south through Montrose and Keokuk.

While the east-west BNSF mainline is one of the busiest freight railroad lines in Iowa, it also carries passenger traffic, as part of Amtrak's Southwest Chief route between Chicago and Los Angeles, which passes through Kansas City. The Fort Madison Amtrak station is 13 miles east of Donnellson, in downtown Fort Madison. Donnellson also has convenient access to Amtrak's California Zephyr route, through two stations in Mount Pleasant (23 miles away) and Burlington (32 miles away). That route extends between Chicago and San Francisco, and passes through Omaha, Denver and Salt Lake City.



Transportation

Airports

The two closest airports to Donnellson are the Fort Madison Municipal Airport (12 miles away) and the Keokuk Municipal Airport (14 miles away), both of which are General Aviation facilities that do not carry commercial service aircraft. The nearest Commercial Service Airport is the Southeast Iowa Regional Airport in Burlington, located 25 miles northeast of Donnellson, which provides direct flights to Chicago and St. Louis. There are 4 other Commercial Service Airports within 100 miles of Donnellson – the Quincy Regional Airport in Quincy, Illinois (52 miles), Quad City International Airport, in Moline, Illinois (78 miles), Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids (87 miles), and General Downing-Peoria International Airport in Peoria, Illinois (99 miles).



Bus and Transit

Public transit service in Lee County is provided by SEIBUS (Southeast Iowa BUS), a regional provider which serves the counties of Des Moines, Henry, Lee and Louisa, and has a central hub and office in West Burlington. Rides are available to the general public on an on-demand basis, with different schedules for each of the cities where the buses are regularly stationed. One-way and round-trip fares are offered, along with the option of a monthly pass. Rides are also offered to medical appointments at the hospitals in Iowa City.



Transportation

Bike and Pedestrian



Donnellson has just under 7 miles of paved sidewalks (35,000 linear feet). These are all situated alongside city streets, and are approximately 4 to 5 feet wide. Of the total roadway mileage in the city, only 45% has a sidewalk on at least one side of the street. It should be noted that, when calculating this figure, US Highway 218 was excluded from the total mileage, along with Highway 2 east of the interchange, 180th Avenue north of the fairgrounds, and all of 210th Street.

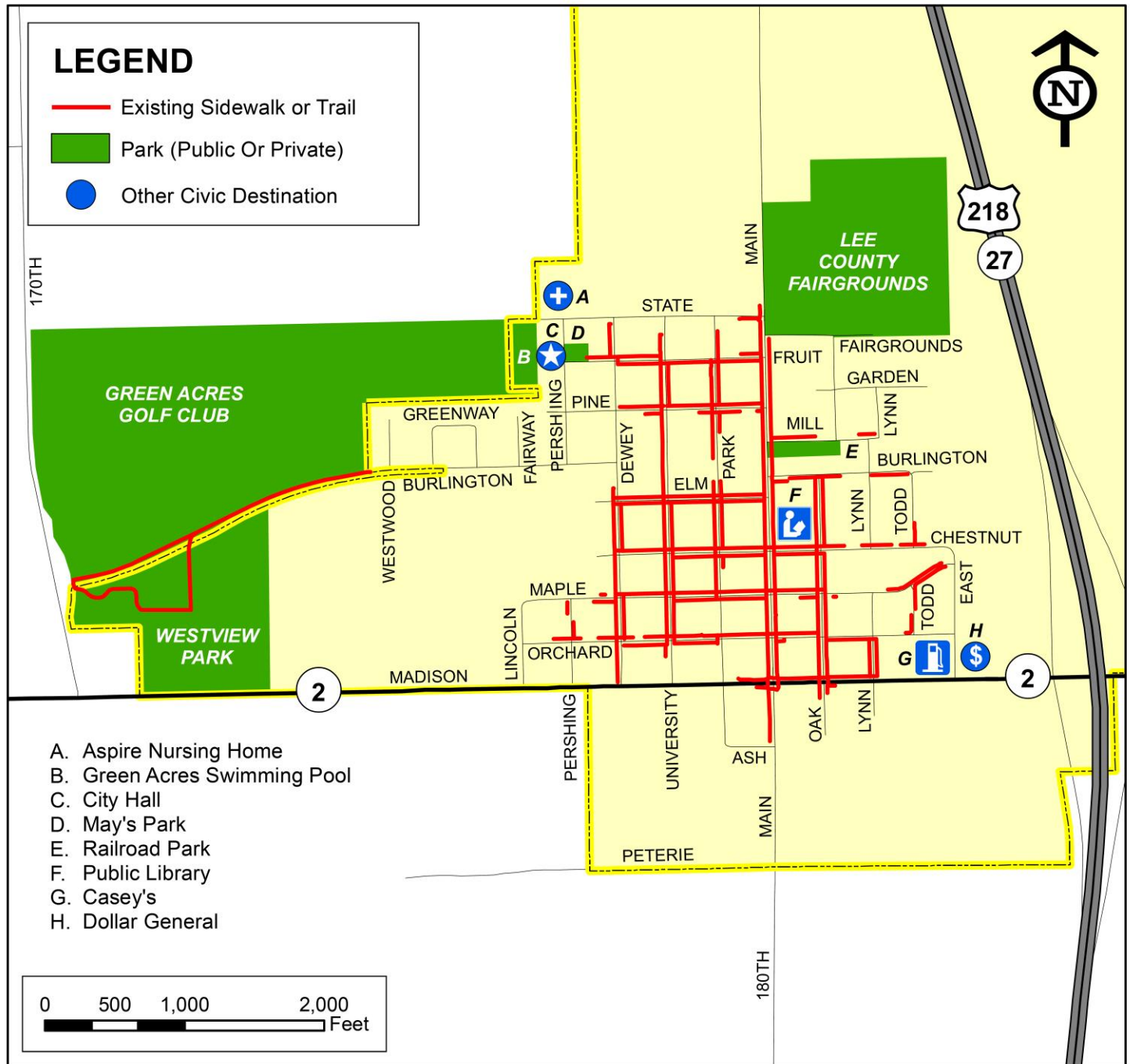
In addition to the sidewalks, there is also a 10-foot wide trail for bicyclists and pedestrians, which connects the west end of Burlington Street to Westview Park. About half of this trail is paved, and was established concurrently with the park itself in 2007. The remainder is surfaced with limestone, and was constructed in 2023 to provide a scenic outer loop around the west side of the park.

Several areas of the city are especially underserved by sidewalks, and this includes many of the neighborhoods that were initially developed in the latter half of the 20th century, when sidewalks were not required by the city. This includes all of the Greenview Terrace subdivision on the west side, along with much of the southeast side. Several important civic and retail outlets are inaccessible by sidewalk, including City Hall, Aspire nursing home, the fairgrounds, Dollar General, and the Casey's gas station. In addition, the senior apartments at Southview have no sidewalk access, and there is no sidewalk along Burlington Street in between the Westview Park Trail and Dewey Street. Therefore, people walking to the park from their house must walk in the street (or in the grass) for at least a portion of their journey.

Furthermore, a significant number of streets have a sidewalk on only one side, many strategic gaps exist between sidewalk segments, and many sidewalk segments are in poor condition, with cracked pavement and uneven surfaces. In a number of instances, aging sidewalk panels have been compromised by tree root systems and excess moisture exposure. Also, there are many instances where the sidewalk doesn't extend to the curb at an intersection, even though sidewalks are present on both sides of it.

To assist in the maintenance and repair of deteriorated sidewalks, the City offers a program where private property owners apply to have their sidewalks replaced, and 4 owners per year are selected to receive funding assistance from the city. However, given the total number of properties with adjacent sidewalks, it is difficult for the City to keep up with the demand, given the minimal resources available.

DONNELLSON PEDESTRIAN NETWORK



Quality of Life

Quality public parks and recreational facilities are an essential component of a healthy community. Their benefits are numerous –physical fitness, access to nature, a place for children to play, and much more. It is important that these resources are safely and comfortably accessible to the local population, or else they will go underutilized and underappreciated.

Recreation Opportunities

WESTVIEW PARK

Located 1 mile west of Donnellson on Hwy 2, Westview Park has are three baseball fields, soccer fields, a playground, and shelter houses with bathroom and concession facilities.



RAILROAD PARK

Located at Main & Mill St., Railroad Park provides a playground and shelter house.



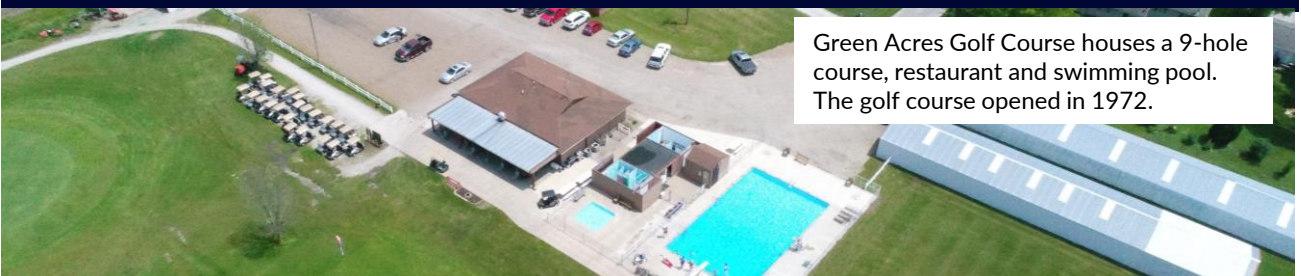
MAYS PARK

Located at Pershing & Fruit St., Mays Park offers a playground with a basketball court and tetherball.



GREEN ACRES GOLF COURSE

Green Acres Golf Course houses a 9-hole course, restaurant and swimming pool. The golf course opened in 1972.



Quality of Life

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL DESTINATIONS

RICHARD L. PROENNEKE MUSEUM



The Richard L. Proenneke Museum opened to the public in 2017. It is located at the Donnellson Public Library. The museum exhibits several artifacts, journals and books.

LEE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Donnellson hosted its first Lee County Fair in 1878. The Fair was reorganized on a 20 acres site acquired from a Donnellson resident. More ground was purchased in 1996 and several new buildings were added to the grounds. The Fairgrounds also hosts Lee County Speedway events.



HARVESTVILLE FARMS



Harvestville Farm is part of a fifth-generation family farm located in Southeast Iowa. It provide a fun, safe, and educationally based rural experience for families by offering unique hands-on agricultural related activities. Although the farm is located 1.2 miles east of Donnellson, it attracts a number of tourists from Lee County and southeast Iowa.

Quality of Life

SHIMEK STATE FOREST

Donnellson is very close to the Shimek State Forest. Named after Iowa conservationist Dr. Bohumil Shimek (1861-1937), it includes 9,448 acres of land, split between 5 separate units in Lee and Van Buren Counties.

Most of this land area is comprised of a thick forest of hardwood and conifer trees, but there are also 4 small lakes of around 6 acres each. As a State Forest rather than a State Park, its main purpose is for conservation and wildlife/forest management. Therefore, most of the recreational facilities in the forest are maintained in a relatively primitive setting, in order to avoid the encroachment of incompatible uses and activities.

Three of the 5 forest units are adjacent to one another, forming an area of 6,403 acres, located just over 4 miles west of Donnellson. The Donnellson and Lick Creek Units are on the north side of State Highway 2, and they include an extensive network of hiking trails. The Farmington Unit is on the south side of the highway, and it includes an equally large trail network, but this one is primarily used for horseback riding.

The forest also offers opportunities for hunting and fishing, and includes several campgrounds, including two for the overnight stabling of horses. However, in keeping with the general purpose of a State Forest, the campgrounds do not include full utility hookups (i.e. electric, running water).



Quality of Life

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL DESTINATIONS

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is a federal inventory of districts, sites, buildings, and objects deemed worthy of preservation due to historical significance. They derive their significance based on their connections to important historic people and events, as well as construction and design characteristics. Properties are eligible if they retain a sufficient amount of historic integrity, and have not been substantially altered over time. In addition to the various criteria for determining individual significance, a building or resource must be at least 50 years old to be eligible for the Register.



Donnellson currently does not have any properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. That being said, as of the time this plan is being prepared, the City is in the process of nominating the city's former Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Depot for listing in the NRHP. As a means of quality control, the nomination process involves a substantial amount of background research on the property, and must go through a rigorous evaluation process by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service.

However, obtaining an NRHP listing can offer substantial benefits to communities and property owners. First, it can help with tourism and economic development, as information on NRHP properties is readily available for viewing online. People who come to town to view these resources can generate tourism expenditures at local retail businesses. Another major benefit is the potential for financial assistance in the rehabilitation of old, deteriorated buildings. This can take the form of certain grants or tax credits for which NRHP properties are uniquely eligible for.

Contingent on further research in each case, other possible candidates for the NRHP in Donnellson include the following:

- The former school building at Orchard and University
- The two-story Dickey Building, along with several other older downtown buildings
- The Entertainment Pavilion at the Lee County Fairgrounds
- The Lustron house on University Street at the north end of town (c. 1949-1950)
- Any individual homes from the early 20th century with architectural significance, including those built by the Donnellson Lumber Company.



Quality of Life

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL DESTINATIONS



HISTORIC HILLS SCENIC BYWAY

Explorers will find themselves sharing the road with horses and buggies on the Historic Hills Scenic Byway. It's just one way of feeling that they have stepped back in time on this 105-mile route winding through rolling hills, extensive forests and 20 towns with no fast-food restaurants to be found. Donnellsen is one of such quaint towns!

Historic Hills is one of 14 designated Scenic Byways in the state of Iowa, and the only one in the southeast quadrant of the state, apart from the multi-state Great River Road, which follows the Mississippi River. It is one of the four Byways established when the program was created by the Iowa Department of Transportation in 1993. The program is meant to encourage tourism in areas where there is a high density of destinations such as historic sites and landmarks, local businesses and dining establishments, outdoor recreation facilities, public art, and unique natural scenery. Oversight of byway promotion and projects is handled by the byway coordinator, who works with a volunteer committee made up of local historians and economic development officials.

The Heritage Hills Byway extends for just over 100 miles through portions of Lee, Van Buren, Davis, Appanoose and Wapello Counties. There is an especially dense cluster of tourist destinations in the eastern half of Van Buren County, along the Des Moines River from Farmington to Keosauqua. There is a non-profit called Villages of Van Buren that serves to promote and market activities in this specific region, which was one of the first parts of Iowa to be densely settled by people of European descent.

Through its position at the intersection of Highways 2 and 218, Donnellsen serves as a strategic gateway to the Villages of Van Buren, along with the nearby Shimek State Forest at the western edge of Lee County. Several horseback riding facilities are located in the area around Shimek and the City of Farmington. All of these destinations are within 25 miles of Donnellsen. Accordingly, Donnellsen has the potential to derive a substantial economic benefit from its position at the Byway's starting point. This could involve supplementary business activities geared toward travelers, such as fuel, dining, and lodging. It could also involve more active tourism-oriented activities that embrace the city's own heritage and cultural resources, such as historic sites, interpretive signage, parks and recreation, and the promotion of entrepreneurial retail activities.

Quality of Life

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL DESTINATIONS



MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

The story of the Mormon Trail is rooted in the beginnings of a unique American religion. In 1830, in western New York, he organized a legal entity that would become The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His followers, who regarded Smith as a prophet, became known as Mormons.

Thousands of converts flocked to Nauvoo, soon making it the largest town in Illinois. After the death of Smith, Brigham Young stepped up his successor and began planning an orderly, spring 1846 evacuation of some 15,000 faithful to the Great Basin, Mexican-held territory beyond the Rocky Mountains. On February 4, 1846, the first wagons ferried across the Mississippi to Iowa. This group halted after five miles and set up camp at Sugar Creek for a lengthy wait as Young and his associates concluded business at Nauvoo. Meanwhile others, anxious not to be left behind, drifted over to join the Sugar Creek camp. Young's vanguard company unexpectedly swelled from his intended 1,800 emigrants to around 3,000—many without their own wagons and provisions. In 1846, some 500 Mormon wagons lurched northwesterly across the winter-bare Iowa prairie toward the Missouri River. Their route is the Mormon Trail.

Today, the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail is a 1,300-mile route that wraps across five states. The route was traveled by 70,000 Mormons from 1846 to 1847 who fled Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Great Salt Lake Valley. The Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail was designated to preserve the story and routes of this nationally significant trail and to support the associated sites that preserve its history.

The Trail extends through portions of 5 states, and an 'Auto Tour Route' was designed to follow the actual trail as closely as possible using the established state highway and local road networks. The Auto Tour Route begins in Nauvoo, but due to the lack of a roadway bridge crossing between Nauvoo and Montrose, Iowa, it diverts to cross the river at Fort Madison, before following the river southward to Montrose. From there, it follows the diagonal two-lane portion of Highway 218 between Montrose and the Avenue of the Saints, before continuing northward into Donnellson on Main Street. It then turns to follow Highway 2, where it follows the same alignment as the Historic Hills Scenic Byway for 16 miles into eastern Van Buren County.

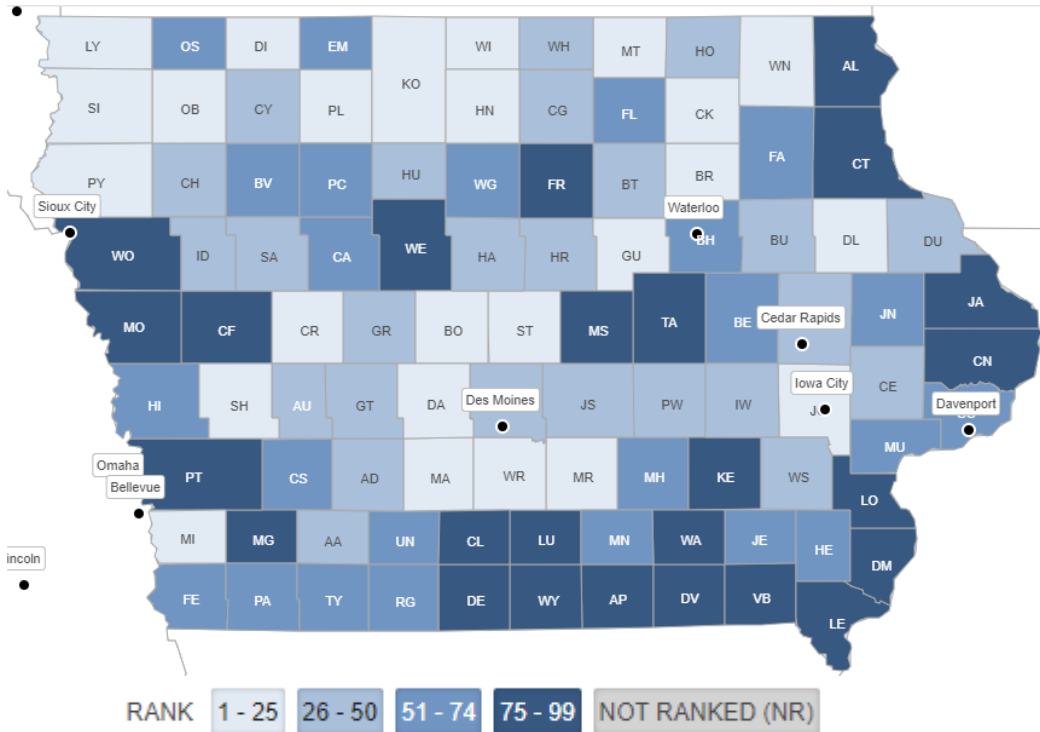
HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Health Analysis

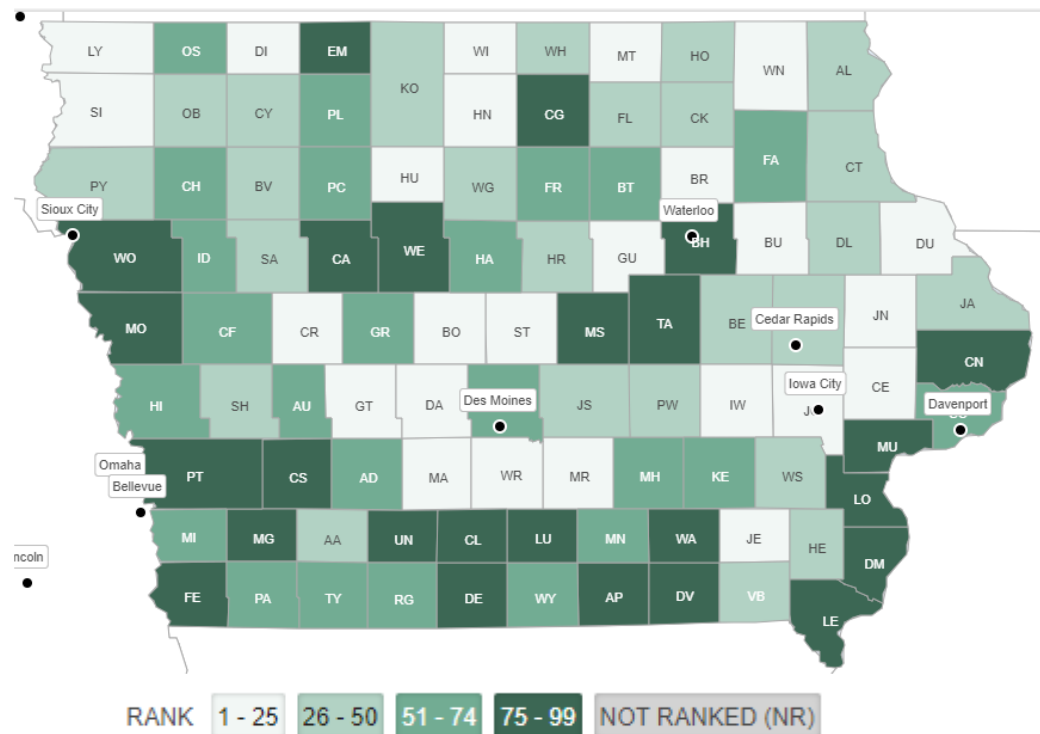
The health of the state of Iowa and each of the counties are analyzed through several factors which are broken up into two categories: health outcomes and health factors. Out of the 99 counties in Iowa, Lee ranks 96th in health outcomes and 93rd in health factors. Based on these numbers, Lee is one of the least healthy counties in Iowa. There are several factors that contributed to this ranking. Health outcomes: 96th in Iowa

Compared to the average in the state of Iowa, Lee has 2,300 more premature deaths and 1% more of the population in poor or fair health. In addition, Lee county has .3 more poor physical health days and same poor mental health days than the state average. Health factors: 93rd in Iowa

Lee county has more of the following health factors than the average county in Iowa: smoking, adult obesity, physical inactivity, excessive drinking, alcohol impaired driving deaths, and air pollution. There are factors that Lee county does better in than the state average. Overall, Lee county has less sexually transmitted diseases. Social and economic health of the county shows that there is good high school completion and income inequality than the state average.



County Health Factors. Source: County Health Rankings 2023



County Health Outcomes. Source: County Health Rankings 2023

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Skilled Nursing and Medical Care

Aspire Nursing and Rehabilitation is a skilled nursing facility located on the northwest side of Donnellson, at 901 State Street. It has a total capacity of 55 patients at any given time, and offers specialized services including therapy and memory care. The current building was first constructed in 1975, and included 16,000 SF of space. An addition in 1983 increased the total size to nearly 25,000 SF, and increased the total capacity to its present amount.



The nearest full-service hospital is the Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center (SEIRMC), Fort Madison Campus, which is 9.5 miles to the east of Donnellson, located at the far west end of Fort Madison, and accessed from State Highway 2. The SEIRMC is a 50-bed hospital, classified as a Level IV Trauma Center, with emergency care provided. Lee County EMS provides emergency medical transport services for the Donnellson area, and operates an ambulance service and call center on the south side at 315 S. Main St.

The Donnellson Chiropractic Clinic is located at 616 Madison Avenue, and the nearest dental clinic is several miles northeast of the city near Franklin, with the second-closest being 10 miles away in Fort Madison. Small animal care is provided by the Shannon Veterinary Clinic at 608 Madison Avenue.

Community Challenge: Access to Fresh, Healthy Food Choices

Access to fresh produce remains a challenge for the residents of Donnellson, after the last full-service grocery store closed over a decade ago. Dollar General sells some grocery items, but the selection of food offerings is limited, especially for fresh produce, meat and dairy. The Casey's convenience store is also limited largely to pre-packaged snacks and beverages. Residents must travel at least 10-20 miles to shop at the nearest full-service grocery stores in Fort Madison, West Point and Keokuk.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Community Challenge: Access to Childcare

At the time that work initially began on developing this plan, there were 3 operational early childhood facilities with daycare and preschool services in Donnellson. However, by the time of its completion, only one of these facilities continues to operate. That is Miss Janet's Preschool at 118 University Street, within the city's original school building from 1915.

The other facilities were originally known as Raisin 'Em Up, and included a daycare at 607 Park Street, and a preschool at the corner of Main and Madison Streets. In February 2020, they were both purchased by the Fort Madison YMCA, and subsequently operated as the Family YMCA Learning Center, and Early Learning Center.



In August 2023, the Fort Madison YMCA informed families of children under their care that the Donnellson facilities would be closing indefinitely due to staffing limitations.

Data from the Center for American Progress shows that Donnellson is within a 'childcare desert', defined as an area that contains either no child care providers, or so few options that the number of children is more than 3 times the number of available slots. On its own, Miss Janet's Preschool only has a capacity for 13 children at any given time.



UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure and utilities are the backbone of any community, and future growth in the community will need to be supported by adequate infrastructure. In order to plan for the infrastructure that is necessary to support future growth, it is necessary to understand the presence, extent, and capacity of that which already exists, as well as what entities (public or private) supply each of these valuable resources.

Electric

Electric service is divided into two categories – transmission and distribution. Transmission lines supply the energy from power plants to local substations, while distribution lines carry it from substations to local homes and businesses. ITC Midwest operates a transmission line which runs westward into Donnellson along Highway 2, before turning to the north to follow Highway 218. Within the city, it diverts to follow several side streets and alleys, where it feeds into a substation just west of downtown.

Within Donnellson, all electric distribution service is provided by the Interstate Power and Light Company, based in Cedar Rapids, and operating under the name Alliant Energy. Alliant operates all distribution lines within the City, along with some outlying unincorporated areas – primarily along the US 218 corridor. Areas further to the west and east are served by the Access Energy Cooperative, based in Mount Pleasant.



DONNELSON CITY PLAN



Telecommunication

Donnellson residents and business owners have access to a variety of different telecommunications and internet service providers. Windstream offers varying transmission types – from fiber to copper cable to DSL – whereas Earthlink provides Fiber and DSL internet. HughesNet and ViaSat are satellite companies that provide satellite internet and phone services, while Windstream offers phone service as well.

Natural Gas

Natural gas service for Donnellson is provided by MidAmerican Energy, which operates a transmission pipeline that follows Highway 2 westward from Fort Madison, and terminates just east of Donnellson city limits.

Other Pipelines

Several pipelines extend through central Lee County. Running north to south about 1 mile east of Donnellson, the Dakota Access Pipeline is operated by Energy Transfer LP, and is used for the for the transfer of crude oil. Also, NuStar Energy operates an anhydrous ammonia pipeline that runs north to south just west of the city, near 170th Avenue. As of the summer of 2023, an additional pipeline is proposed that would follow a similar route to Dakota Access Pipeline. If approved as proposed, it would function as a 'carbon capture' pipeline, collecting liquid carbon dioxide from several industrial facilities throughout Iowa.

Utilities and Infrastructure

WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS



Water service in Donnellson is provided by Donnellson Municipal Water Works, and the water is sourced from Rathbun Regional Water Association, whose water source is Rathbun Lake, a man-made reservoir near Centerville, Iowa. Previously, water was sourced directly from a well within city limits, which tapped into the Cambrian-Ordovician aquifer. The most recent inspection report from the Iowa DNR shows no major or minor deficiencies with the City's water, and public feedback has greatly improved since the water source was changed in 2019.

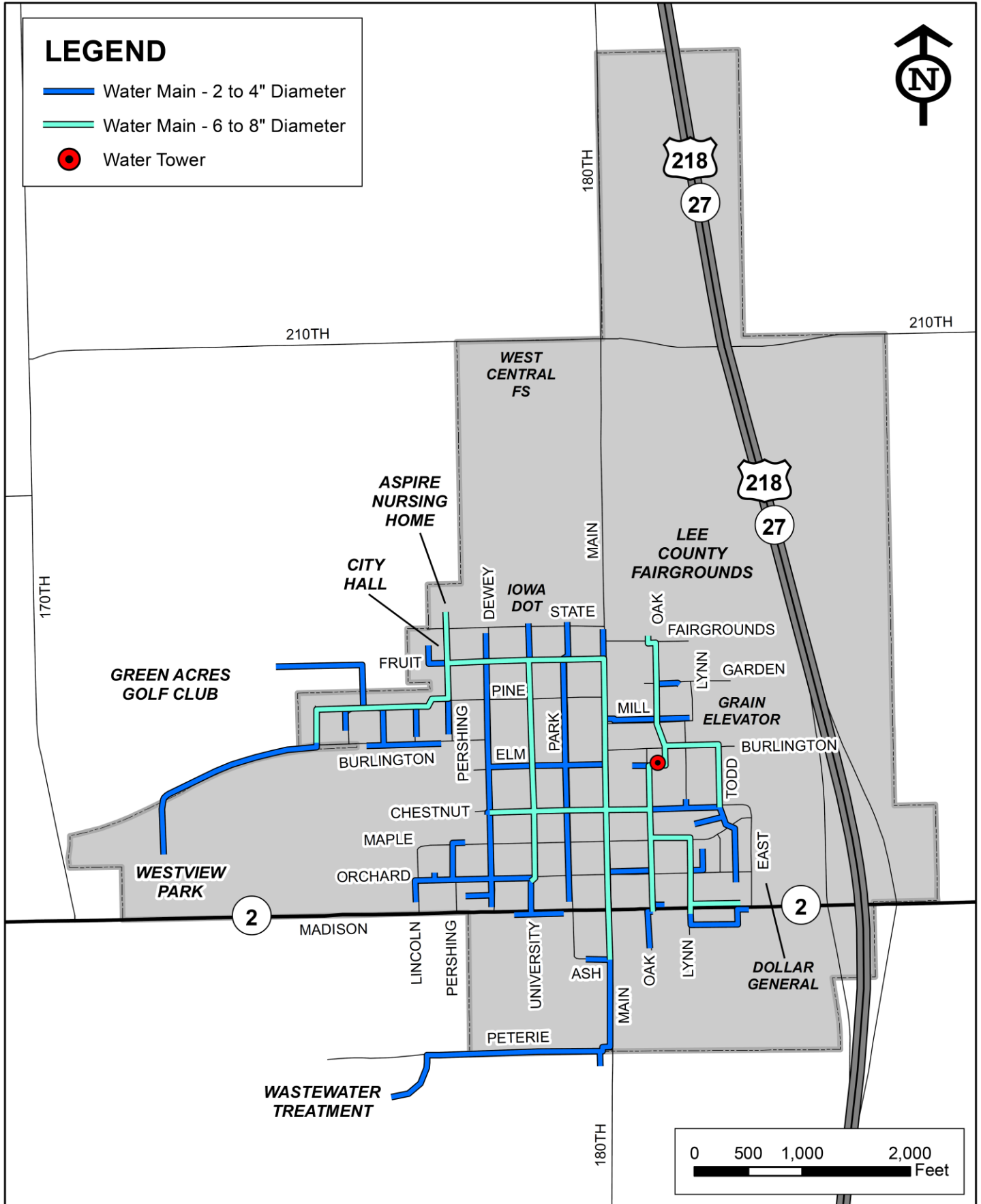
Water is stored in 55,000-gallon elevated storage tank, located near the center of town near Oak and Burlington Streets. There is also a 2,000 SF maintenance building immediately to the west along Oak Street. From here, water is distributed to homes and business through a system of nearly 3,300 feet of water mains. The map on the following page depicts the City's full water main network. The larger mains of 6 to 8 feet are designed to carry larger volumes of water into individual neighborhoods, while the smaller lines of 2 to 4 inches feed into those larger lines, and serve mostly to provide water to adjoining properties.

The City's wastewater treatment facility is located just outside city limits to the southwest, comprising about 9 acres of land. It includes large lagoon, each about 1 acre in size. This facility was recently upgraded in order to comply with new EPA standards. An upgraded aeration system provides more oxygen to wastewater during the treatment process, and an insulated cover was added to the lagoons, allowing for better year-round performance from bacteria used in the treatment. Ultraviolet technology was also added to the facility, and with all of these upgrades combined, the amount of ammonia nitrogen discharged into a nearby stream was reduced by 94%.

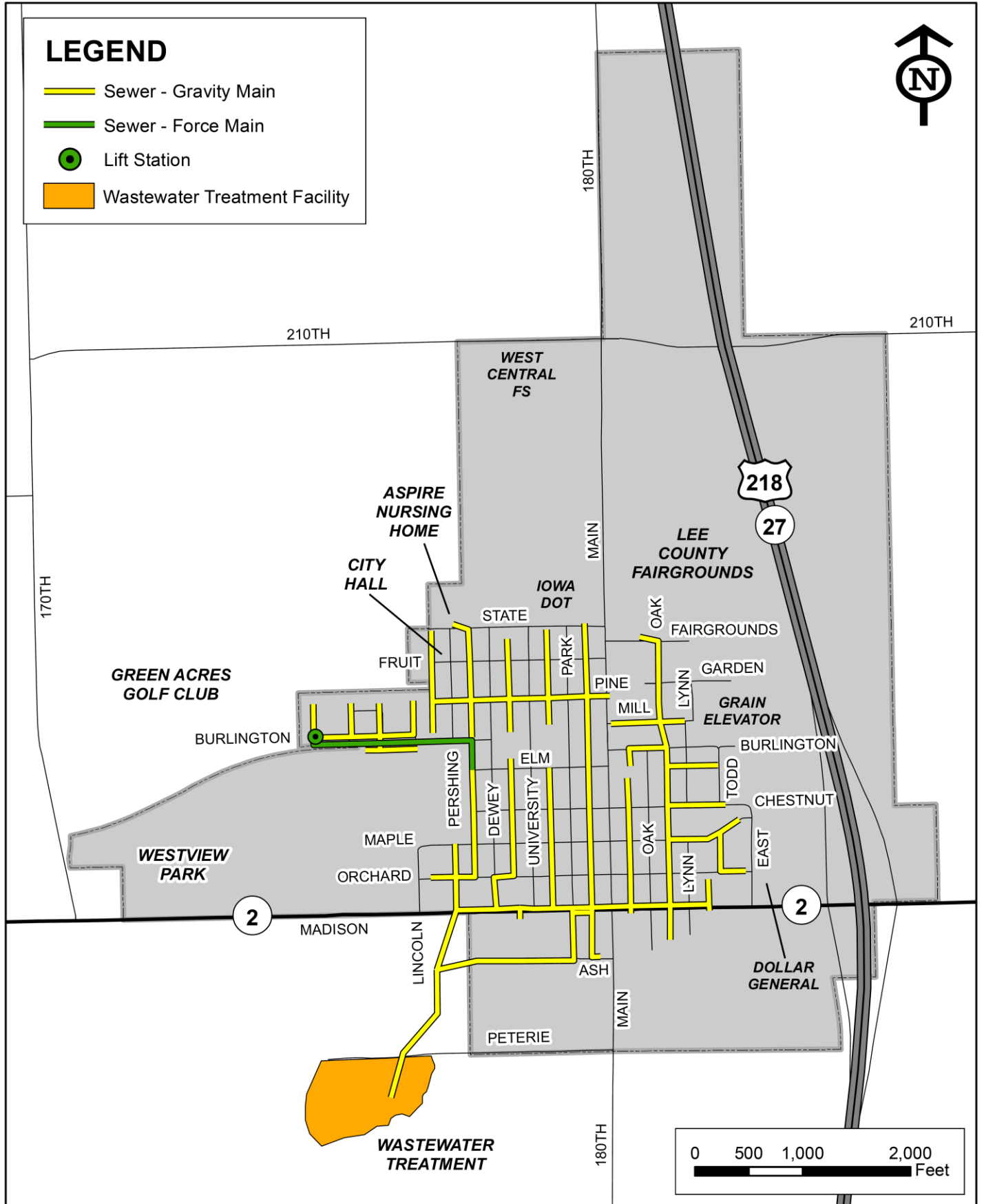
The 'Donnellson City Sewer System' depicts the City's full sewer main network, which includes just over 2,700 feet of mains. The vast majority of these are gravity mains, which use gravity to move raw wastewater to the treatment plant. On the west side of town, the Greenview Terrace subdivision is served by a force main and lift station, where electric pumps are used to move the wastewater along Burlington Street toward Dewey, where it feeds into a gravity main. Page 125 includes a map of the City's sewer system.



DONNELSON CITY WATER SYSTEM



DONNELLSON CITY SEWER SYSTEM

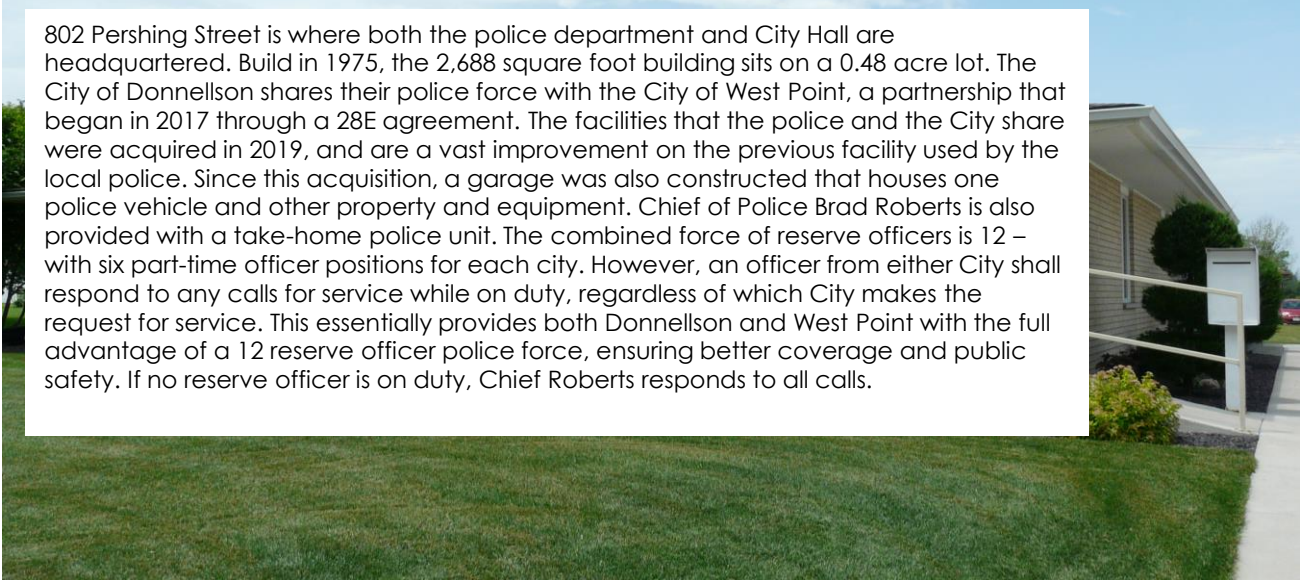


Community Facilities

Donnellson residents have a number of quality civic facilities to serve various areas of public need. Community facilities demonstrate the commitment to provide services and amenities necessary for having a functional and thriving community. A handful of State and Federal facilities are also housed in the community. Each of these facilities is highlighted in this chapter.

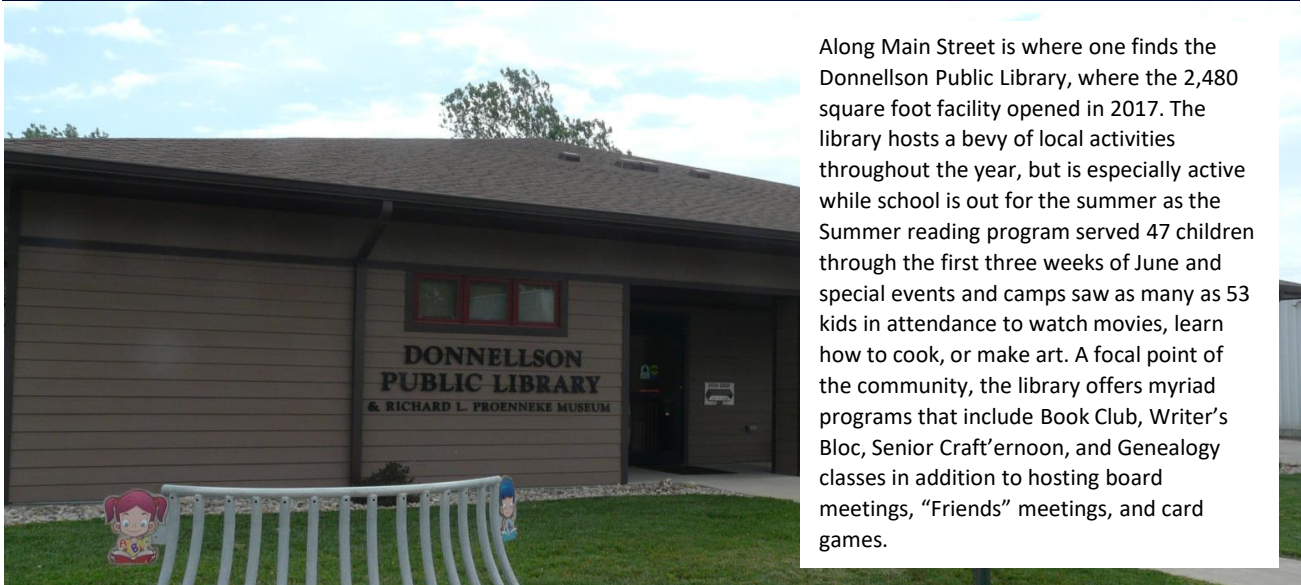
CITY HALL AND POLICE DEPARTMENT

802 Pershing Street is where both the police department and City Hall are headquartered. Built in 1975, the 2,688 square foot building sits on a 0.48 acre lot. The City of Donnellson shares their police force with the City of West Point, a partnership that began in 2017 through a 28E agreement. The facilities that the police and the City share were acquired in 2019, and are a vast improvement on the previous facility used by the local police. Since this acquisition, a garage was also constructed that houses one police vehicle and other property and equipment. Chief of Police Brad Roberts is also provided with a take-home police unit. The combined force of reserve officers is 12 – with six part-time officer positions for each city. However, an officer from either City shall respond to any calls for service while on duty, regardless of which City makes the request for service. This essentially provides both Donnellson and West Point with the full advantage of a 12 reserve officer police force, ensuring better coverage and public safety. If no reserve officer is on duty, Chief Roberts responds to all calls.



PUBLIC LIBRARY

Along Main Street is where one finds the Donnellson Public Library, where the 2,480 square foot facility opened in 2017. The library hosts a bevy of local activities throughout the year, but is especially active while school is out for the summer as the Summer reading program served 47 children through the first three weeks of June and special events and camps saw as many as 53 kids in attendance to watch movies, learn how to cook, or make art. A focal point of the community, the library offers myriad programs that include Book Club, Writer's Bloc, Senior Craft'ernoon, and Genealogy classes in addition to hosting board meetings, "Friends" meetings, and card games.



Community Facilities

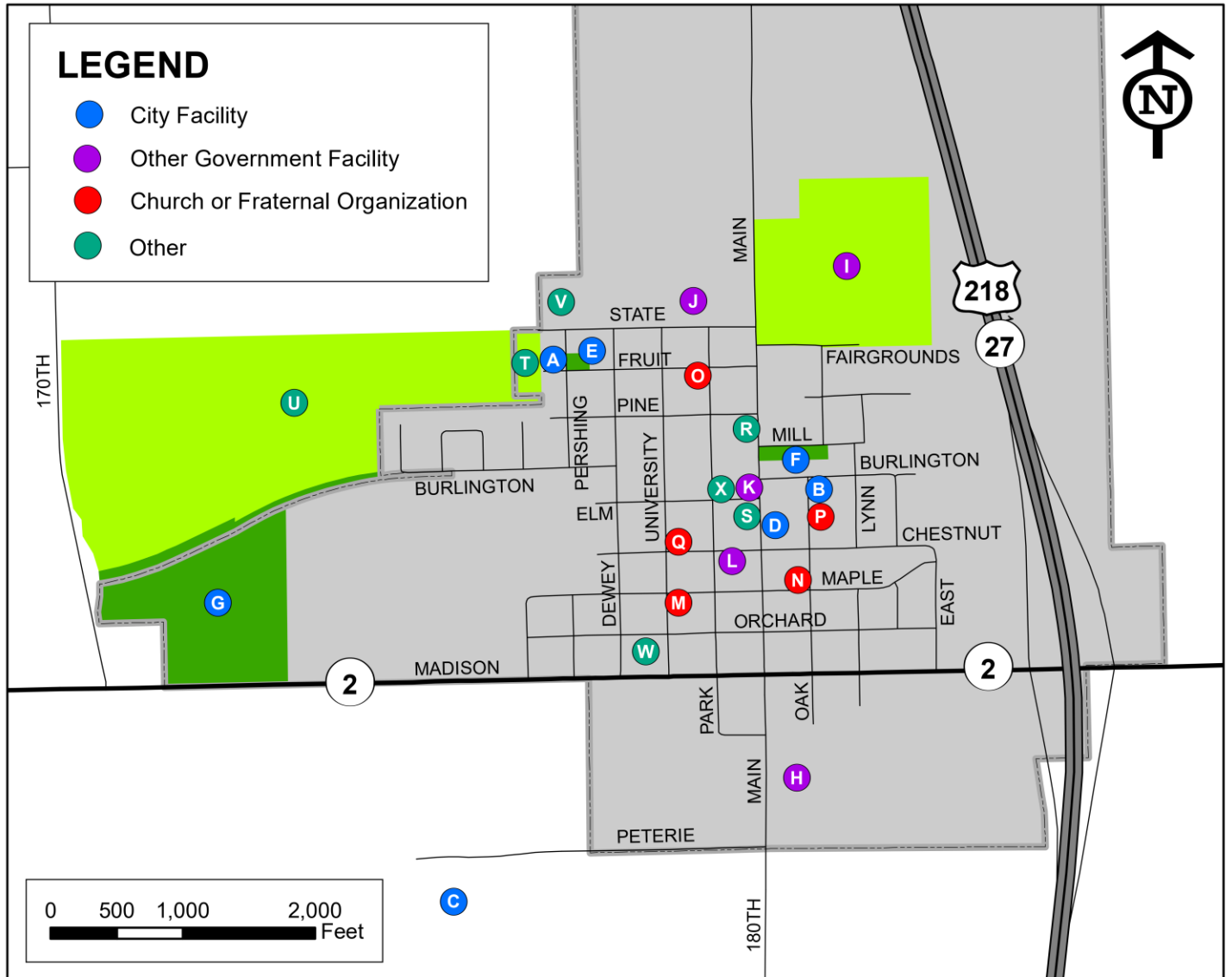
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CIVIC DESTINATIONS OF DONNELLSON



City Facilities ●

- A. City Hall / Police Station
- B. Water Treatment Facility
- C. Wastewater Treatment Facility
- D. Public Library
- E. May's Park
- F. Railroad Park
- G. Westview Park

Other Government Facilities ●

- H. Lee County Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- I. Lee County Fairgrounds
- J. DOT Maintenance Garage
- K. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- L. US Post Office

Church or Fraternal Organization ●

- M. Donnellson United Methodist Church
- N. St. Paul's United Church of Christ
- O. Zion Mennonite Church
- P. American Legion - Gillaspey Moodie Post
- Q. George Washington Masonic Lodge

Other ●

- R. Donnellson Fire Department (Volunteer)
- S. ISU Agricultural Extension
- T. Green Acres Clubhouse/Pool
- U. Green Acres Golf Course
- V. Aspire of Donnellson (Nursing Home)
- W. Miss Janet's Preschool / University Athletic Center
- X. CSL Iowa (Telecommunications)

Community Facilities

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CITY HALL AND POLICE DEPARTMENT



Lee County Emergency Medical Services



Lee County Emergency Medical Services (LCEMS) assumed operation of the ambulance service in July 2021 and operates four staffed 911 ambulances ready to respond 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In Donnellson specifically, there are 4 vehicles housed in the LCEMS facility: three ambulances and a command SUV. One ambulance located at the facility is staffed around the clock, and LCEMS has a two-person ambulance crew and one shift captain that are dispatched out of this location. Additionally, that facility serves as LCEMS's administrative office. During business hours there are typically three to four staff members on site. In total LCEMS is made up of 45 employees including part-time staff and has additional facilities in Fort Madison and Keokuk. In 2022 LCEMS responded to nearly 5,900 emergency calls and offers stand-by support for Lee County Raceway, Fort Madison Rodeo, local festivals and high school sporting events.

Community Facilities

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



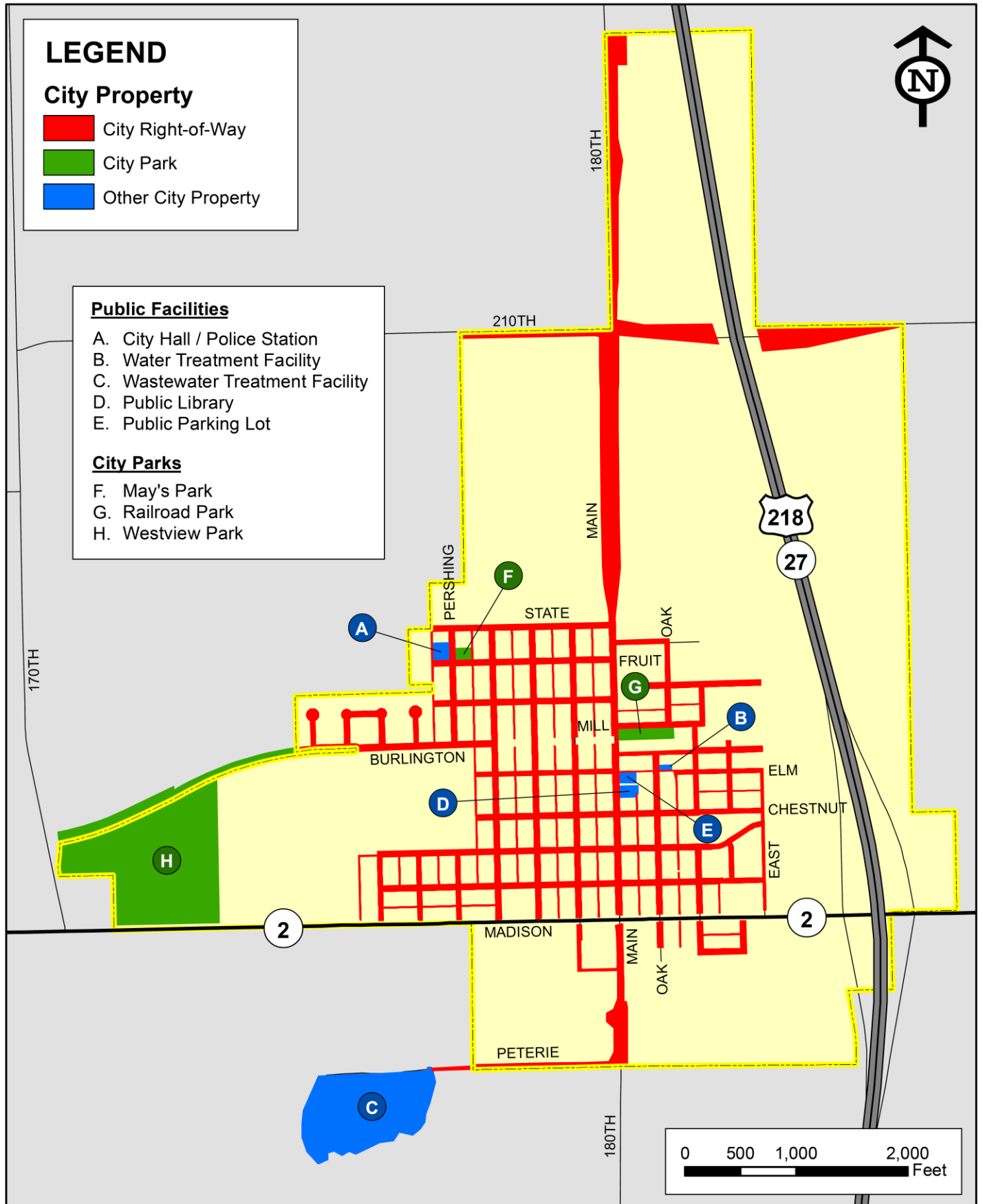
The Donnellsen Fire Department is staffed by a volunteer force of 25 members headed by Chief Fred Hoyer. The fire station 616 N. Main Street houses two brush trucks, two pump trucks, one reserve or equipment truck, one tanker truck and one side-by-side off-road vehicle. These brave volunteers serve a 166 square mile area responding to an average of 170 calls per year. Anyone living in the district is eligible to apply to participate in this vital community service.

US POST OFFICE



The Donnellsen Post Office branch was first established in 1871 and headed by postmaster WR Donnell, son of Donnellsen founder Eston Donnell. This mid-century modern office now standing at Chestnut and Park was dedicated in 1962 and serves as the administrative office for rural Lee County in addition to parts of Henry and Van Buren Counties. Eight rural routes in total are managed by the Donnellsen office, while two full time routes and one part-time route are dispatched directly from the City serving Donnellsen, Croton, Primrose, New Boston, Vincennes, and Charleston.

DONNELLSON CITY-OWNED PROPERTY



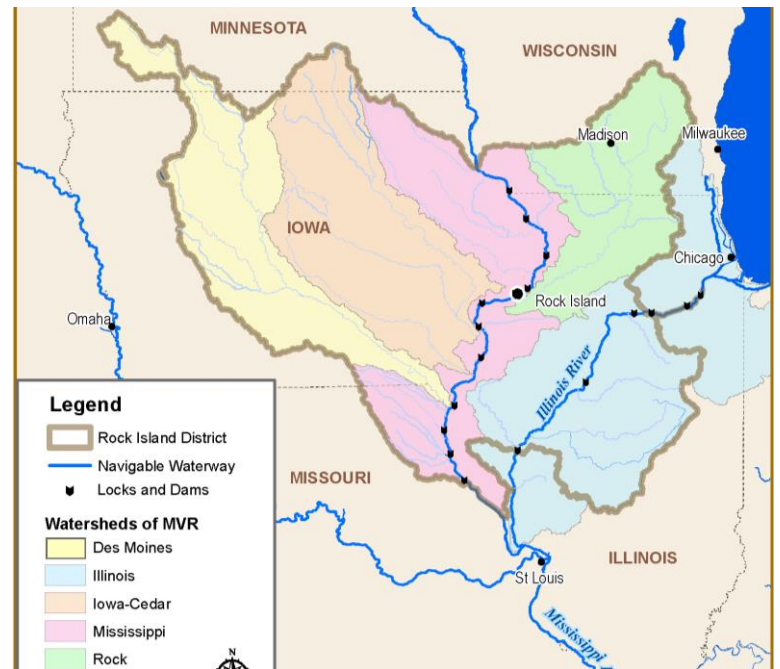
Natural Environment

Watersheds and Drainage

The City of Donnellson is situated along a flat ridge that forms the boundary between two drainage basins – the Flint-Henderson Sub-Basin, which drains directly to the Mississippi River, and the Lower Des Moines Sub-Basin, which drains first to the Des Moines River, just upstream of its confluence with the Mississippi. The drainage divide extends through the city at a southeasterly angle from north to south – passing through the Iowa DOT property at the north end of the city, then crossing Main Street in the downtown area, before crossing Highway 2 near Lynn Street.

The presence of the drainage divide had a direct influence on the founding of Donnellson, as the CB&Q Railroad intentionally planned for its north-south line to follow it between Houghton and Keokuk, thereby allowing for the smoothest grade transition possible. Within Donnellson, the divide runs parallel to the original path of the railroad, about 500 feet to the west.

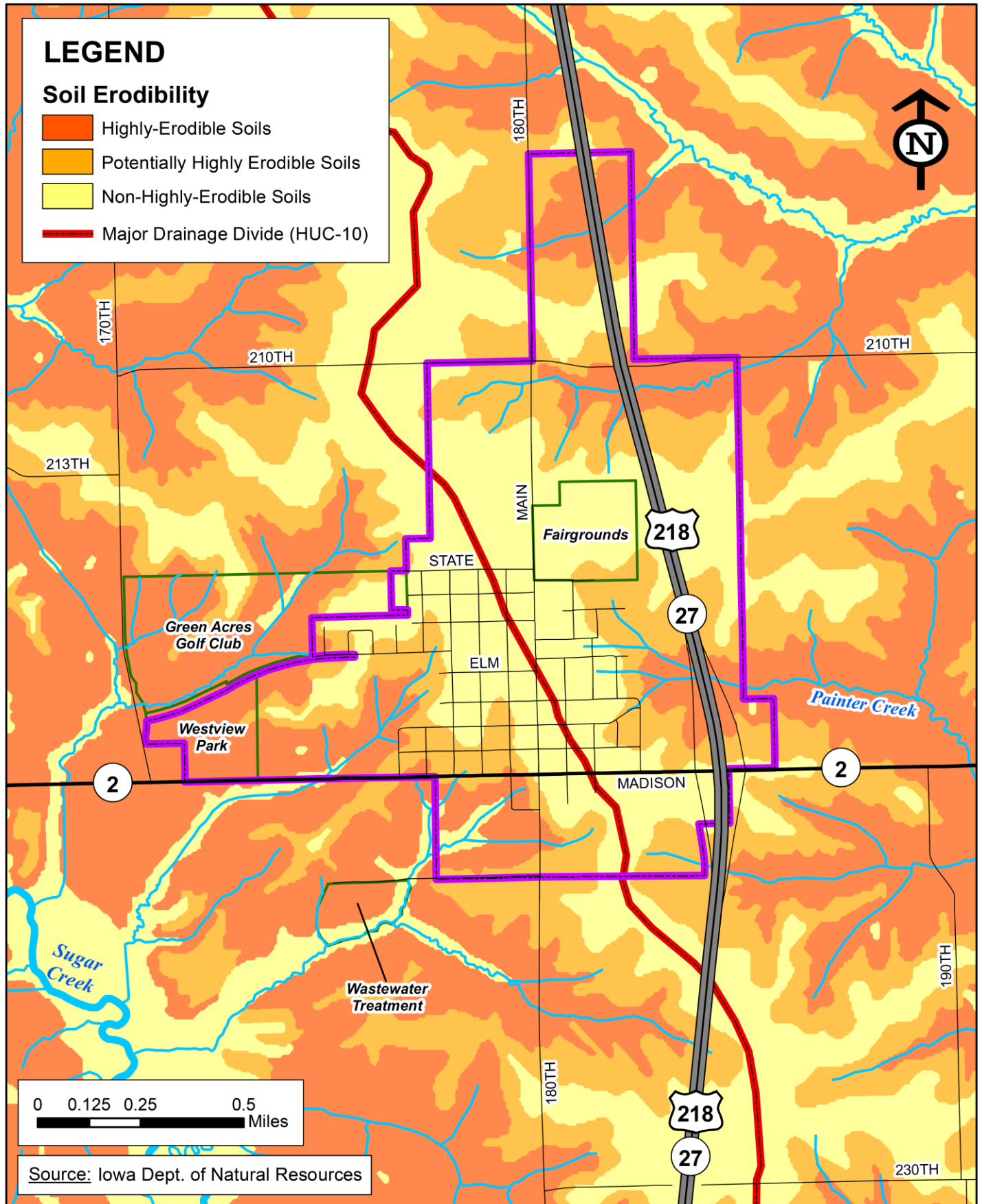
About 37% of Donnellson's land area lies within the Des Moines River Watershed. This includes most of the land to the west of Main Street, including Westview Park, the Green Acres Country Club, and the City's wastewater treatment plant. Three small, unnamed streams originate on the west side of Donnellson and all of the stormwater runoff in this streams drains to Sugar Creek, about 1 mile to the west. Sugar Creek is a major tributary of the Des Moines River, draining about 112 square miles of land in the western half of Lee County, and feeding into the Des Moines about 6 miles north of its confluence with the Mississippi River at Keokuk. Donnellson is about 20 miles upstream from where Sugar Creek empties into the Des Moines.



The remaining 63% of Donnellson's land area lies within the Mississippi River Watershed. This includes most of the land to the east of Main Street, including the County Fairgrounds, the grain elevator, and the path of US Highway 218 within the City. Four small streams originate on the east side of Donnellson, with all eventually feeding into Sugar Creek – an identically named waterway that is completely unrelated to the Sugar Creek to the west of the City. This Sugar Creek (E) eventually empties into Devil's Creek, which in turn feeds into the Mississippi River midway between Fort Madison and Montrose.

The portion of Donnellson within the Mississippi River Watershed is split between two separate sub-watersheds, each feeding into a separate major tributary of Sugar Creek (E). The southern half (about 1/3 of the City's land area) drains to Painter Creek, which originates at the east end of town, and flows east/southeasterly for 9 miles before emptying into Sugar Creek about 1 mile upstream of its confluence with Devil's Creek. The remaining 1/3 of the City's land area feeds into an unnamed tributary of Sugar Creek (E), which originates just north of Donnellson, and extends eastward for 7 miles, passing south of Franklin, and then emptying into Sugar Creek. The portion of the City within this sub-watershed is almost entirely occupied by farmland, apart from Agriland FS and the northern half of the County fairgrounds.

DRAINAGE PATTERNS AND SOIL EROSION



Natural Environment

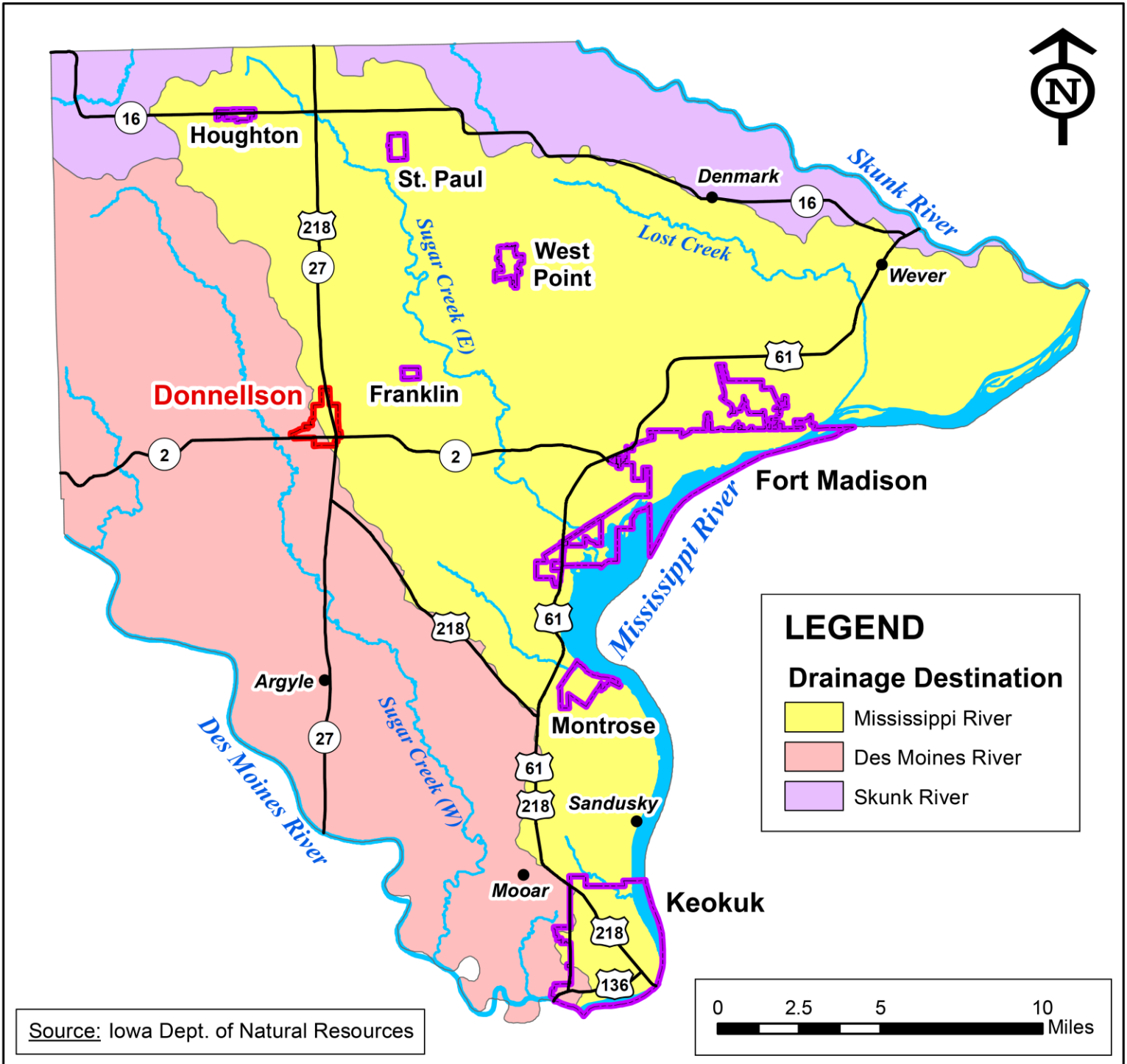
Watersheds and Drainage

The presence of flat terrain along a major drainage divide made Donnellson ideally suited to gradual outward expansion with minimal complications due to the natural terrain. However, while early annexations resulted in a rectangular shape from north to south, the outward expansion of residential neighborhoods eventually shifted more to the west, and ceased to extend any further north past State Street. As a result, future development in these areas must contend with a multitude of small streams, which are essential to keeping the town drained of excess moisture. In order to ensure that such development does not adversely impact existing drainage patterns, it will be important to ensure that the paths of these streams are not directly impeded any further by manmade obstructions, including paved surfaces, buildings, and fill/excavation activities that alter their natural flow pattern.

In addition, the flat terrain in the City's older neighborhoods has also presented significant challenges in recent years, as heavy rainfall events tend to cause ponding in the ditches along city streets, and this has sometimes contributed to water infiltration in basements. To address this problem, the City installed a series of bio-retention cells along the ditches of several city streets on the northwest side of town in 2013. This was part of a multi-faceted project undertaken through a partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the Lee County Soil and Water Conservation District, and French-Reneker-Associates, an Iowa-based engineering firm. Other aspects of that project included a streambank stabilization/erosion control project by Westview Park, and the creation of terraces and sediment control basins in a nearby farm field.



Donnellson and Lee County Drainage Patterns



Natural Environment

Soils and Topography

While the characteristics of soil are primarily important in relation to agricultural operations, they are also valuable for the purpose of planning future urban development (residential, commercial, and industrial). Certain types of soil are more easily susceptible to erosion, especially due to the flow of stormwater runoff. Highly erodible soils tend to be present along the paths of stream courses, which are often surrounded by steep slopes that carry runoff into the streams.

Within Donnellson, highly erodible soils are present along 6 different stream systems that originate immediate west or east of the original town core. This includes much of Westview Park, as well as a cluster of homes at the south end of town. However, most of these areas are presently occupied by either farmland or open space with wooded terrain surrounding the stream. These are also, not surprisingly, the areas of sharpest topographic relief within the city.

Thus, planning for the future growth of housing and industry in Donnellson will have to involve careful consideration of the impact of soil quality, to ensure that new development doesn't increase the amount of eroded soil being carried away through stormwater runoff. This doesn't mean that development should be prohibited outright in these areas – rather, it simply means that accommodations should be made to preserve the stability of the soil once development occurs, such as setting aside a strip of dedicated green space along streams and especially steep hillslopes.



Hazard Mitigation

Hazard mitigation is defined as “any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from natural hazards and their effects”. When a community plans for possible hazards and incorporates mitigation strategies into their policies, it is more resilient and better able to recover if prepared for when a major disaster occurs.

Lee County Hazard Mitigation Plan

In 2014, Lee County prepared a countywide Hazard Mitigation plan. The purpose of this plan, the Lee County, Iowa Multi Jurisdictional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is to ‘reduc[e] risks from disasters and serve as a guide for local officials, decision-makers and the entire Lee County community in their efforts to reduce the negative effects of natural and man-made hazards.’ By preparing such a plan, the county is eligible for grant funding assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through its Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). It is further required by FEMA that the plan be reviewed, updated (as necessary), and submitted for re-approval every 5 years, in order to remain eligible for this funding.

To meet this requirement, Lee County updated the 2014 Hazard Mitigation Plan which is currently in review with FEMA.

The plan provides a comprehensive risk assessment and analyses of potential hazard. This helps identify the hazards that are most likely to impact Lee County, and their potential monetary impact. This information serves as a foundation for the mitigation strategies outlined in the plan, as a means of reducing risk and protecting financial investment. The chart below provides a historical summary of the occurrence of specific natural hazards, with the data obtained from the National Climatic Data Center Storm Events Database.

Hazard	Time Period earliest event on record to 12/2013	# Events	Events/Year (average)	# years with an event	% years with an event	Total Damages	Major Events
Drought	08/2003 – 12/2013 (10.3 years)	16	1.55	6	58%	\$24,860,000 (crops)	2003, 2005
Frost/Freeze	05/2005 – 12/2013 (8.6 years)	5	0.58	4	47%	\$2,020,000 (crops)	2005
Flash Flood	08/1993 – 12/2013 (20.3 years)	26	1.28	10	49%	\$3,064,000 (property) \$100,000 (crops)	1993, 2010, 2011
River Flood	03/1993 – 12/2013 (20.8 years)	65	3.13	17	82%	\$143,411,000 (property) \$23,67,0000 (crops)	1993, 2008
Hail	08/1959 – 12/2013 (54.3 years)	102	1.88	30	55%	\$24,687,000 (property) \$16,000 (crops)	2003
Thunderstorms, Wind, Lightning	08/1958 – 12/2013 (55.3 years)	1,558	28.16	43	78%*	\$3,038,700 (property) \$1,116,000 (crops)	2000, 2003, 2011
Severe Winter Weather	1/1993 – 12/2013 (20.9 years)	110	5.26	20	96%	\$247,000 (property)	2007
Tornado**	04/1954 – 12/2013 (59.7 years)	29	.49	19	32%	\$2,904,500 (property) \$500 (crops)	2003
Grass or Wildland Fire	01/2005-12/2013 (9 years)	38	4.2	7	78%	n/a	2011, 2012

Hazard Mitigation

The figure below represents the results of an analyses from the Lee County Hazard Mitigation Plan, where the level of risk for 17 individual hazards was determined and compared with one another. The hazards are listed in rank order, based on its likelihood of affecting Lee County in any given year. Several individual factors are taken into account, including probability of occurrence (based on historical incidence and natural vulnerability), its potential magnitude and severity, possible warning time in advance of its occurrence, and how long it lasts (duration). The final score represents a weighted average of each of these factors. Group 1 represents those hazards that are most likely to occur in Lee County in any given year, and should thus receive the most attention in terms of active mitigation efforts within Lee County.

HAZARD RANKINGS FOR LEE COUNTY							
RANK	HAZARD TYPE	Probability	Magnitude/ Severity	Warning Time	Duration	Total Score	
1	Tornado	4.00	3.24	3.94	1.47	3.51	GROUP I
2	River Flood	4.00	2.47	1.26	3.79	3.11	
3	Drought	4.00	2.00	1.18	3.76	2.95	
4	Grass or Wildland Fire	4.00	1.47	3.47	1.88	2.95	
5	Flash Flood	4.00	1.88	2.29	2.29	2.94	
6	Tstorms/Lightning/Hail/Wind	4.00	1.76	2.65	1.53	2.88	
7	Severe Winter Storms	4.00	1.76	1.53	3.06	2.86	
8	HazMat/Radiological	2.59	2.41	3.59	2.82	2.71	
9	Transportation Incident	2.76	1.94	4.00	2.18	2.64	GROUP II
10	Infrastructure Failure	2.29	2.18	3.82	3.18	2.58	
11	Extreme Heat	3.18	1.59	1.29	3.71	2.47	
12	Landslide	2.41	1.65	3.71	1.82	2.32	
13	Animal/Plant/Crop Disease	2.00	2.00	2.29	3.47	2.19	GROUP III
14	Earthquakes	1.19	2.56	4.00	2.25	2.13	
15	Human Disease	1.44	2.31	1.75	3.69	1.97	
16	Dam/Levee Failure	1.47	2.24	2.24	2.53	1.92	
17	Terrorism	1.06	1.82	3.82	2.00	1.80	

The results of this analysis indicate that most of the more likely hazards facing Lee County are weather-related natural disasters, while human and animal-caused incidents generally fall much lower on the list. Tornadoes are the most likely hazard to impact the county, while floods, fires, drought, and other severe (non-tornadic) storms have a strong to moderate likelihood of occurring.

Hazard Mitigation

Flood Risk and FEMA Floodplains

With river floods identified as a significant hazard for Lee County, it is important to understand the degree of impact that flooding could be expected to have on the City of Donnellson. FEMA produces Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS), to support the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). These maps indicate the likelihood of flooding in a given area. Donnellson has no structures in the floodplain. Similar analysis of unincorporated Lee County is time-prohibitive but, based on visual analysis of small samples, it is estimated that that 1-3% of structures in unincorporated Lee County are vulnerable to river flooding.

The following page presents a map to show 100-year floodplain and National Wetlands Inventory.

Lee County, Iowa Multi-Jurisdictional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan

September 2014

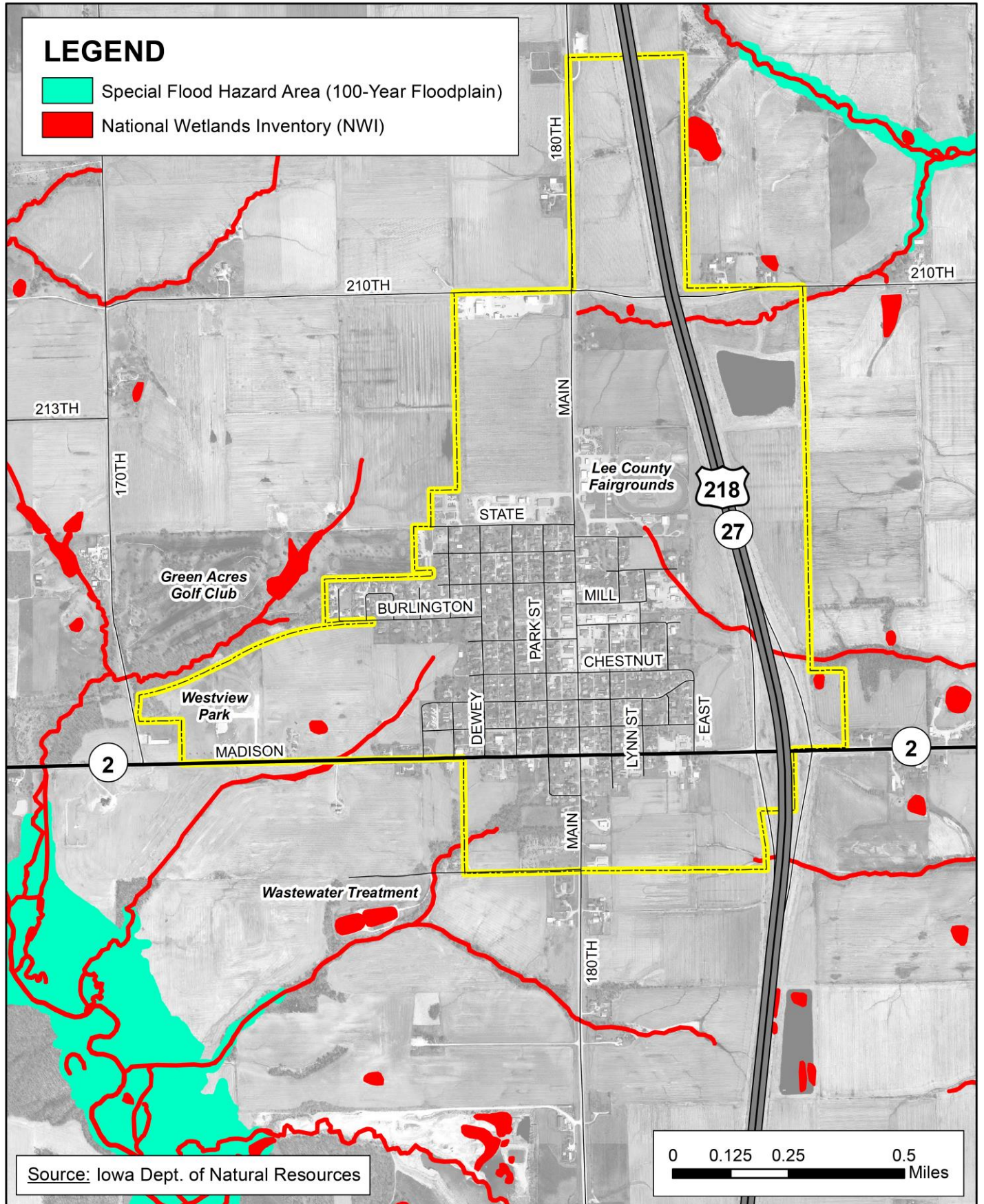


Prepared by:

**Southeast Iowa Regional
Planning Commission**
211 N Gear Ave, West
Burlington, IA, 52655
<http://www.seirpc.com>



FLOODPLAINS AND WETLANDS



COMMUNITY THEMES: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

04

Through the feedback from the community throughout the development of the Comprehensive Plan, several key community themes were identified as important areas to focus on in moving towards the vision of Donnellson. This section explores these five themes and includes specific goals and objectives to focus on to make Donnellson what you want it to be in the future. If the plan is to be successfully implemented, it requires the support and contributions of many different people and entities – the individual parts that comprise the whole community.



THEME 1: COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Goal 1: Leveraging Cultural Assets

- Objective 1: Expand the working relationship between the City and the Heritage Hills Scenic Byway Commission and explore cross-promotional efforts that will mutually benefit both entities.
- Objective 2: Complete the process of nominating the CB&Q Railroad Depot to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and identify additional properties for potential nomination to the NRHP.
- Objective 3: Work with the Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources to promote additional environmental tourism and public utilization of Shimek State Forest.
- Objective 4: Complete a multi-use trail loop around the perimeter Westview Park, and provide linkages to it from any future adjacent residential subdivisions.
- Objective 5: Enhance existing City Parks through the provision of additional recreation amenities, interpretive signage, and improved linkages.
- Objective 6: Pursue and facilitate partnerships in order to resume and sustain childcare services in Donnellson.

Goal 2: Downtown Revitalization

- Objective 1: Develop a streetscaping strategy for Main Street, involving features such as attractive lighting, benches, planters, and painted/colored crosswalks with bump-outs at the corners.
- Objective 2: Encourage the reuse of vacant or underutilized upper-story retail space for housing or office units.
- Objective 3: Pursue infill development on vacant or underutilized downtown lots, including two-story, mixed-use buildings.
- Objective 4: Create a themed marketing strategy for downtown, including the use of banners and signs with consistent messaging, colors and imagery.



THEME 1: COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Goal 3: Foster Civic Pride and Engagement

Objective 1: Organize an annual promotional event for local small businesses, with prize giveaways and other incentives for public participation.

Objective 2: Facilitate the development of neighborhood associations for neighbors to volunteer to improve aesthetics and maintain properties and public infrastructure.

Objective 3: Hold an annual contest to publicly recognize and reward a local homeowner for 'home renovation of the year' or a similar reward.

Objective 4: Offer home buyer incentives to increase the rate of owner occupancy for existing single-family homes to ensure that all homes are regularly occupied and adequately maintained. These incentives could be monetary or include a 'Get to know Donnellson' welcome package that includes coupons or discounts to local businesses.

Objective 5: Develop a new community logo, brand and website for the city.

Goal 4: Community Gateways

Objective 1: Prioritize general aesthetic improvements at the 4 main community gateways on Main Street and Highway 2.

Objective 2: Create themed welcome signs for placement at all 4 main community gateways, which include a pleasant mix of colors, attractive landscaping, and a unique branding/slogan for the community.

Objective 3: Target the removal and replacement of undesirable uses near gateways, such as vacant/dilapidated buildings and junkyards.

Objective 4: Pursue traveler-oriented commercial development at the Highway 2 interchange with Highway 218, to draw in visitors to the remainder of the community.



THEME 2: HOUSING SUPPLY

Goal 1: Neighborhood Revitalization

Objective 1: Continue to facilitate the rehabilitation of homes in older neighborhoods.

Objective 2: Pursue targeted demolition and redevelopment of vacant, dilapidated homes.

Objective 3: Continue to actively enforce nuisance violations, and offer positive incentives for compliance by first time violators.

Objective 4: Encourage infill housing development on vacant or underutilized lots in existing neighborhoods.

Objective 5: Evaluate the possibility of a rental inspection program.

Goal 2: New Development and Expansion

Objective 1: Coordinate with agricultural property owners within city limits to pursue residential development adjacent to existing neighborhoods.

Objective 2: Pursue strategic annexation of contiguous properties for the development of new housing subdivisions.

Goal 3: Housing Options

Objective 1: Provide new quality multi-family housing options with convenient access to regional job opportunities, via the arterial road and highway network.

Objective 2: Allow for a mix of single-family and condominium/townhome development adjacent to the Green Acres Golf Course.

Objective 3: Pursue housing types that cater to young families, with an emphasis on those with 3-4 bedrooms, 2-3 car garages, and spacious yards for pets and recreational use.

Objective 3: Ensure that all forms of housing, including multi-family, have ready access to local parks, trails/sidewalks and other civic amenities.

Objective 4: Pursue development of a modern, well-designed manufactured home park, as a low-maintenance option for lower income residents.



THEME 2: HOUSING SUPPLY

Goal 4: Community Partnerships

Objective 1: Establish a local housing committee, tasked specifically with addressing the community's current housing needs, and pursuing solutions and strategies.

Objective 2: Coordinate with other cities, developers and contractors that have recent/ongoing experience with new housing development.

Objective 3: Continue to work with the Great River Housing Trust Fund, Southeast Iowa Housing Inc, and Homes for Iowa to pursue development of new homes.

Objective 4: Utilize the building trades program at Central Lee Schools, to provide new housing options as well as professional skill-building opportunities for local young people.

Objective 5: Develop local incentives, including tax abatement and tax increment financing, to promote new/ future housing development.



THEME 3: TRANSPORTATION LINKAGES

Goal 1: Avenue and Saints

- Objective 1: Pursue the development of a travel plaza with diesel gas, ample commercial truck parking, and a convenience store with one or more attached dining establishments.
- Objective 2: Develop a 'logistics park' near the Highway 2 interchange, with a mix of truck/trailer storage, warehousing, and light industrial operations that cater to long-haul trucking operations on the Avenue of the Saints.
- Objective 3: Coordinate with the Iowa DOT and Historic Hills Scenic Byway to use signage and other methods to promote Donnellson as a strategic gateway to the Byway and Villages of Van Buren.
- Objective 4: Emphasize Donnellson as a 'gateway to Iowa' in tourism/promotional efforts for the community as first stop from the south along Highway 218.

Goal 2: Multi-Modal Options

- Objective 1: Seek to expand the existing network of bike and pedestrian trails to cover the remainder of the city, and provide access to multiple civic, business, and service destinations.
- Objective 2: Facilitate the repair and replacement of existing sidewalks, including ADA-compliant crossings at intersections.
- Objective 3: Set aside land near the Avenue of the Saints for a 'park-and-ride' facility for local residents who work for the same employers in nearby cities.
- Objective 4: Work with SEIBUS or other area transit providers to coordinate group recreational trips for local senior citizens.



THEME 4: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Goal 1: Job Opportunities and Tax Base

Objective 1: Work with the Lee County Economic Development Group and commercial real estate firms to pursue development of one or more sites for light-to-moderate industrial manufacturing operations.

Objective 2: Replace the current Restricted Residence zoning ordinance with a more traditional ordinance that allows for more efficient regulation of new commercial and industrial development.

Objective 3: Develop local incentives, including tax abatement and tax increment financing, to promote future commercial or industrial development.

Objective 4: Work on targeted recruitment efforts for a grocery store and childcare facilities to attract new and retain current workforce.

Goal 2: Cost Sharing Opportunities

Objective 1: Pursue strategies that would enable lower service fees for sewer and water customers, while not compromising the quality of service.

Objective 2: When seeking outside funding for local infrastructure projects, aggressively pursue funding from multiple sources – state, federal and private, so that each can be used to leverage the contribution of the others.

Objective 3: Utilize tools such as urban renewal, tax increment financing (TIF), and revolving loan funds (RLF) to incentivize local residential and commercial development.

Objective 4: Pursue and facilitate partnerships in order to resume and sustain childcare services in Donnellson.



THEME 5: SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES

Goal 1: Surface Drainage Enhancements

Objective 1: Conduct a detailed study of drainage patterns prior to new large-scale residential or commercial development, to allow for a thorough understanding of existing conditions and necessary accommodations.

Objective 2: Set aside a 'greenway' buffer along existing stream channels and ravines, to be left undisturbed when the adjoining land is developed.

Objective 3: Coordinate drainage preservation efforts with the development of parks and trails, to provide a passive means for the general public to utilize dedicated green space.

Objective 4: Establish additional bio-retention cells for absorbing stormwater in the ditches along city streets.

Objective 5: Consider the use of permeable pavers and other drainage improvements in public parking areas or streets.

Goal 2: Maintenance and Longevity of Streets

Objective 1: Reconstruct Main Street through town, and work with regional partners to obtain outside funding assistance for this effort.

Objective 2: Pursue pavement upgrades for the portions of Mill, Lynn, and Burlington Streets that serve truck traffic accessing the grain elevator.

Objective 3: Study the feasibility of establishing curb-and-gutter drainage along some city streets, to replace the existing ditches.

Goal 3: Utility Upgrades

Objective 1: Identify specific sewer and water upgrades that will be necessary for developing certain properties at the fringe of the city for residential, commercial and industrial uses.

Objective 2: Pursue strategies that would enable lower service fees for sewer and water customers, while not compromising the quality of service.

Objective 3: Work with regional partners to increase the availability of broadband service options and improve the speed and quality of internet service overall. This would attract new population and open up opportunities for those looking to work remotely.











FUTURE LAND USE

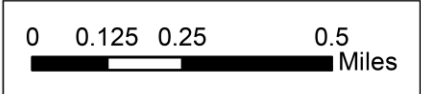
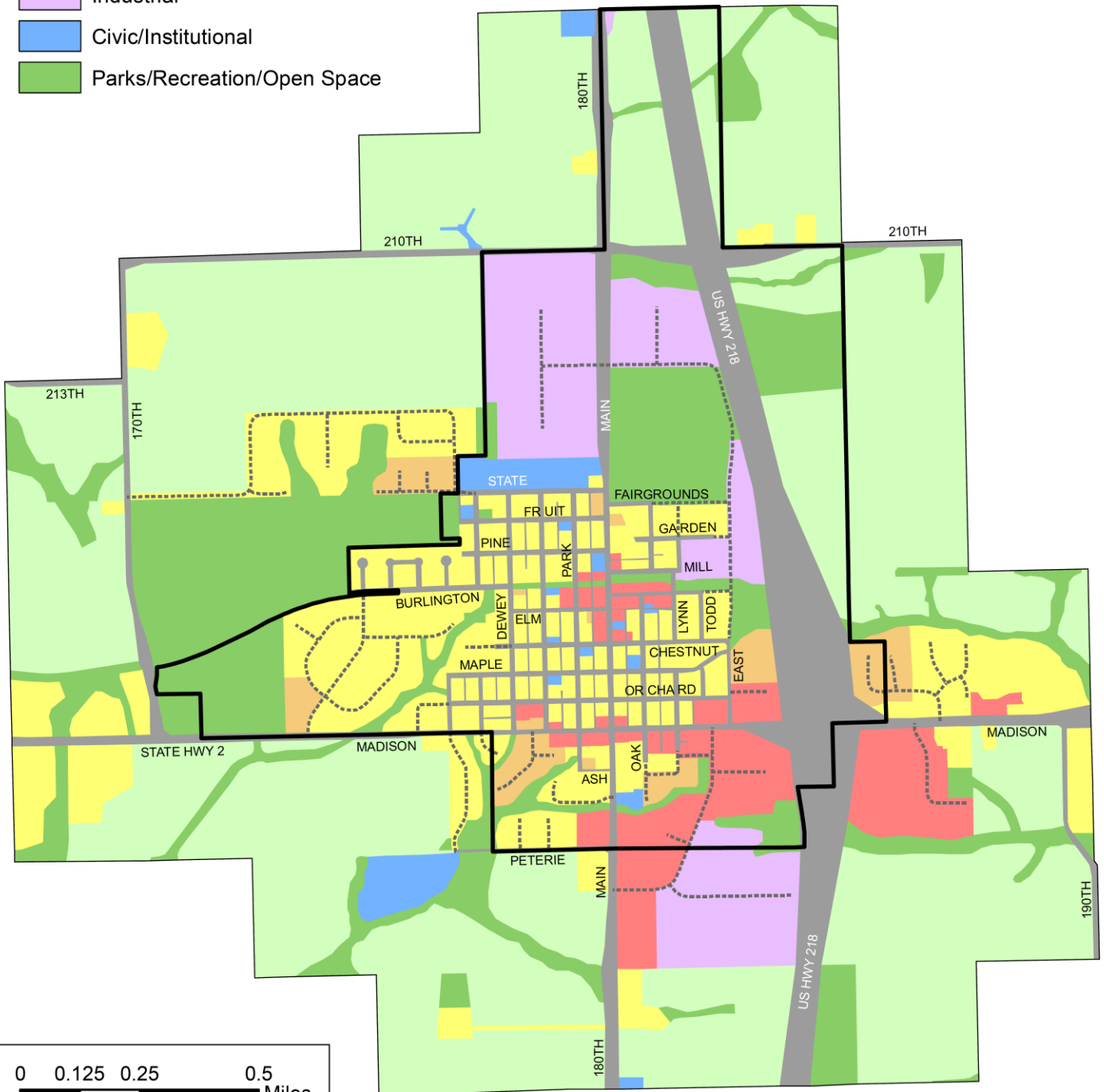
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Defining future land use is an important component of a Comprehensive Plan. The objective of this section of the Plan is to provide a working outline for future development in Donnellson. This section and its vision are intended to be used by City Council, and City Staff when making decisions and recommendations regarding land use in the City. The vision and plans found in this section are not a mandate for what will happen but rather a guide to ensure that responsible and effective land use patterns help Donnellson be the best community it can be.

DONNELSON FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Legend

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Agricultural |  Road Right-of-Way |
|  Single-Family Residential |  Possible Future Street Extensions |
|  Multi-Family Residential |  Current City Boundary (2023) |
|  Commercial | |
|  Industrial | |
|  Civic/Institutional | |
|  Parks/Recreation/Open Space | |



Future Land Use

The Future Land Use map shows the desired future vision of how land will be used in and around Donnellson in 2040. The exact layout of uses on this map should not be seen as an objective in and of itself, to be accomplished in its entirety in only 20 years. Instead, it should be used to guide the local decision-making process, when individual development prospects materialize for a specific property in the Donnellson area. This would include factors of consideration such as zoning and infrastructure extensions (roads and utilities).

AGRICULTURAL

In general, agricultural land within city limits should be targeted for new residential, commercial or industrial development, as these would represent more profitable forms of tax base for the City.

On the Future Land Use Map, only one area of Agricultural land remains within the existing city limits. This is the area north of 210th Street, and east of 180th Avenue. This area was initially annexed in preparation for the construction of the 4-lane Avenue of the Saints. However, without direct access between the highway and 210th Street, this area is no longer a preferable location for commercial and industrial development. In addition, an influx of additional truck traffic could aggravate existing safety concerns for the awkward intersection with Primrose Road, 0.5 miles to the north.

For the portion of the Land Use Planning Area that is outside the city's current corporate boundaries, the vast majority of land remains as Agricultural. However, several specific properties in this area have been identified as ideal locations for residential, commercial, or industrial development. These are discussed further in the respective sections of this chapter.

An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood. The image shows several houses with different colored roofs (red, grey, blue), green lawns, and trees with some autumn-colored leaves. A paved road or driveway runs through the scene. The overall scene is a typical suburban residential area.

Future Land Use

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

New single-family development is naturally desired within existing residential neighborhoods where a number of vacant lots still exist. However, only a few vacant lots remain within these areas, including two lots along Westwood Court, and several small open areas on the northeast side of town, which could be subdivided into multiple lots.

Apart from these limited infill opportunities, new residential development should be pursued in a natural pattern of outgrowth from the center of the community, to ensure that new streets and utilities can be used efficiently to support the expanded tax base. New streets should have adequate connectivity to the existing street grid, but the historic pattern of small square blocks should be modified to a more rectangular/curvilinear pattern, to avoid the creation of redundant streets that serve very little traffic. The density of single-family home development should also be carefully considered in areas of irregular topography and natural drainageways that currently pass through open farm fields. Dedicated green space should be set aside to preserve the drainage pattern, and larger lot sizes may be preferred in these areas as well.

On the west side of town, the large open area between Dewey Street and Westview Park represents the most logical place to pursue a large scale single-family residential development. Another good prospect is the area immediately north of the Country Club. Several smaller areas at the south and west ends of town would be conducive to this type of development as well. These are all outlined in further detail in the section on Future Development Focus Areas.

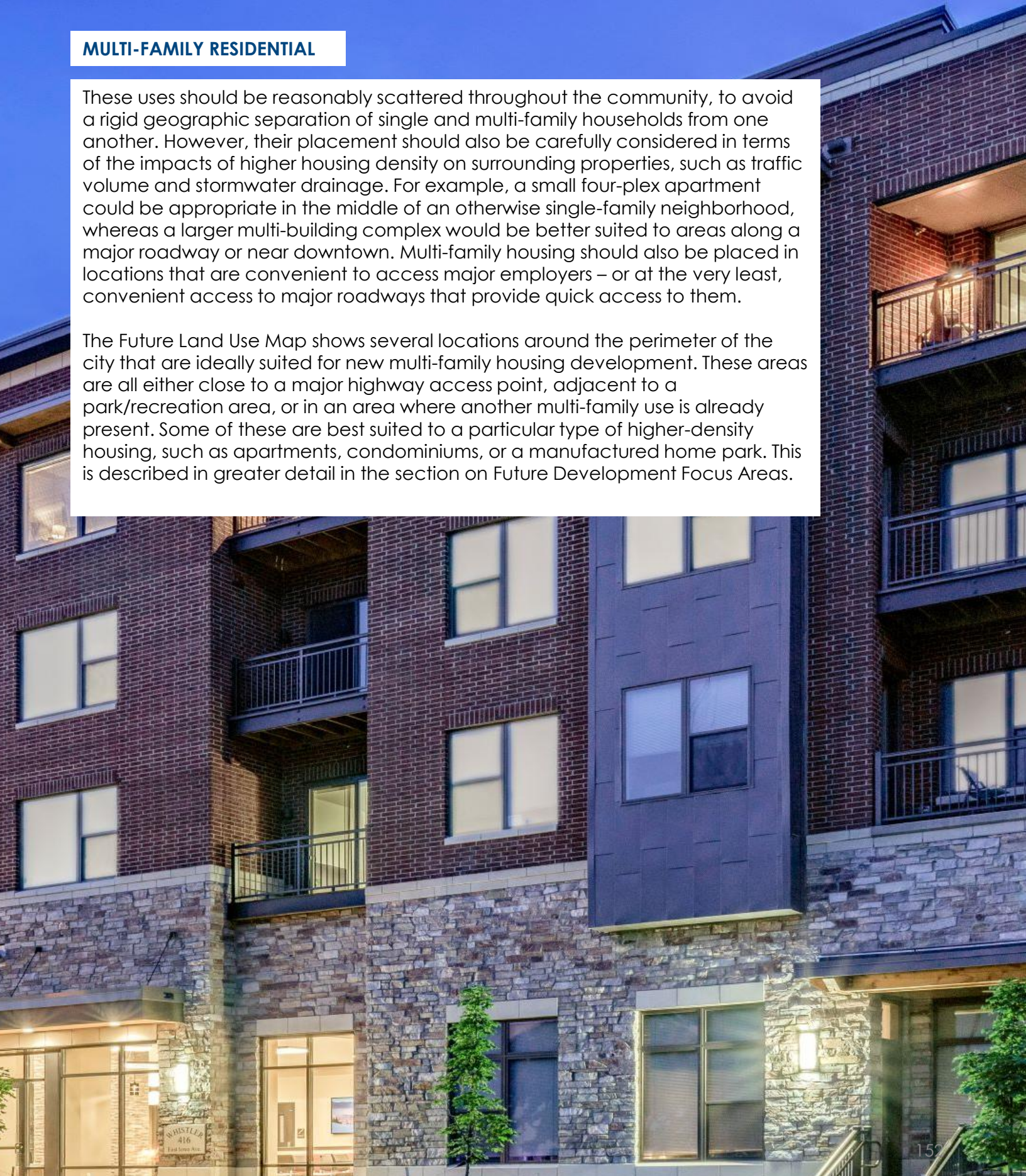
In most of these cases, annexation would be necessary in order to provide the necessary level of public services for new residential development. However, in some outlying areas, single family homes could be developed on larger lots, and utilize rural water service and on-site septic systems. This includes two areas on the Future Land Use Map, both along Highway 2. One is just to the west of 170th Avenue, while the other is to the east of Highway 218, by 190th Avenue.

Future Land Use

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

These uses should be reasonably scattered throughout the community, to avoid a rigid geographic separation of single and multi-family households from one another. However, their placement should also be carefully considered in terms of the impacts of higher housing density on surrounding properties, such as traffic volume and stormwater drainage. For example, a small four-plex apartment could be appropriate in the middle of an otherwise single-family neighborhood, whereas a larger multi-building complex would be better suited to areas along a major roadway or near downtown. Multi-family housing should also be placed in locations that are convenient to access major employers – or at the very least, convenient access to major roadways that provide quick access to them.

The Future Land Use Map shows several locations around the perimeter of the city that are ideally suited for new multi-family housing development. These areas are all either close to a major highway access point, adjacent to a park/recreation area, or in an area where another multi-family use is already present. Some of these are best suited to a particular type of higher-density housing, such as apartments, condominiums, or a manufactured home park. This is described in greater detail in the section on Future Development Focus Areas.



Future Land Use

COMMERCIAL

Compared to industrial uses, commercial uses are less likely to have adverse impacts on adjoining or nearby residential properties, such as noise, odors, dust, or pollutants. However, they do have a tendency to generate substantial vehicular traffic, in terms of customers, employees and suppliers. Thus, it is most appropriate for them to be located along higher-traffic arterial and collector roadways, to minimize wear-and-tear to minor streets, as well as the visual and noise impact of vehicle traffic on those streets.

On the Future Land Use Map, commercial uses are concentrated in two distinct areas – the downtown business district, and along Madison and Main Streets at the south end of town. Most of these areas already have a noticeably commercial character – especially Main and Burlington Streets downtown, and the Madison Street corridor between University Street and Highway 218. In a few instances, there are 1 or 2 homes that are almost or entirely surrounded by existing commercial properties. Given the primarily commercial character of the corridor, those properties would be better suited to a commercial use in the long-term.

Commercial use would also be ideal for several presently undeveloped areas surrounding the Highway 2 interchange. These are described in further detail in the section on Future Development Focus Areas.



Future Land Use

INDUSTRIAL

As previously noted, there are presently very few industrial uses present in the Land Use Planning Area. While such uses could be very beneficial to the City, in terms of employment and tax base, they can also have negative impacts on adjacent residential areas, such as noise, odors, dust, or pollutants. Therefore, the location of future industrial development should be carefully coordinated, to ensure that there is a sufficient buffer between them and any nearby homes and neighborhoods. Also, similar to commercial uses, they should be targeted to areas where the road network is designed to handle a higher volume of traffic. This is especially important since industrial uses tend to generate a substantial amount of heavy truck traffic.

The map identifies 3 separate locations for industrial use within the Land Use Planning Area. One of these involves the existing grain elevator and a narrow strip of land between it and Highway 218. The remaining 2 locations are almost entirely undeveloped.

On the north side of town, the land on both sides of Main Street presents an ideal location for an industrial park, as the DOT and Fairgrounds properties would both serve as a buffer for neighborhoods to the south. However, there would need to be sufficient screening between the industrial park and land to the southwest, where the Aspire nursing home is located, and where future homes could be developed near the Country Club. To accomplish this objective, a wide strip of open space could be dedicated, with several rows of trees planted to serve as a natural screen between the two uses.

Another possibility of an industrial park exists in the southern part of the Land Use Planning Area, between Main Street and Highway 218, and immediately south of the current city limits. The land to the north and west is also presently undeveloped, and commercial development could be used to create a buffer between the industrial park and existing residential areas nearby. This is described in more detail in the section on Future Development Focus Areas – specifically the Southeast Transitional Focus Area.

Future Land Use



CIVIC/ INSTITUTIONAL

The Future Land Use Map is largely identical to the Current Land Use Map in its depiction of Civic/Institutional properties. However, it is acknowledged that additional similar uses may be appropriate in areas that are depicted as a different type of use on this map. Because these uses are developed by public and non-profit entities, the Future Land Use Map should not be used to strictly regulate where new Civic and Institutional Uses should (and should NOT) be developed in the future, in instances where a needed expansion or relocation is proposed. Instead, such developments should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with consideration to specific impacts such as traffic volume, utility usage, and stormwater drainage.

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

This category is similar to 'Civic/Institutional', except that it is reserved for both public and private properties that are used for recreational activities. While these properties may contain some buildings for indoor activities, their primary use is for outdoor recreation. It also includes all private properties where there is a large area of open space that is not actively used for agricultural or residential purposes. Typically, this involves areas of wooded terrain and open fields on agricultural properties, but it also includes vacant lots within residential neighborhoods that remain available for new home development.

In Donnellson, this category includes three City Parks, the Lee County Fairgrounds, and the Green Acres Golf Course (which is primarily outside City limits, although the clubhouse, restaurant, and swimming pool are within the City). This category is used for public trail and green space corridors. Currently, this includes the trail connecting Burlington Street to Westview Park, which follows an old railroad right-of-way.

Several strips of open space are present within farm properties in the Donnellson area. These are generally comprised of wooded areas surrounding a small drainage stream. There is also a small handful of vacant lots in residential areas, which are owned separately from the homes on neighboring lots.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS AREAS

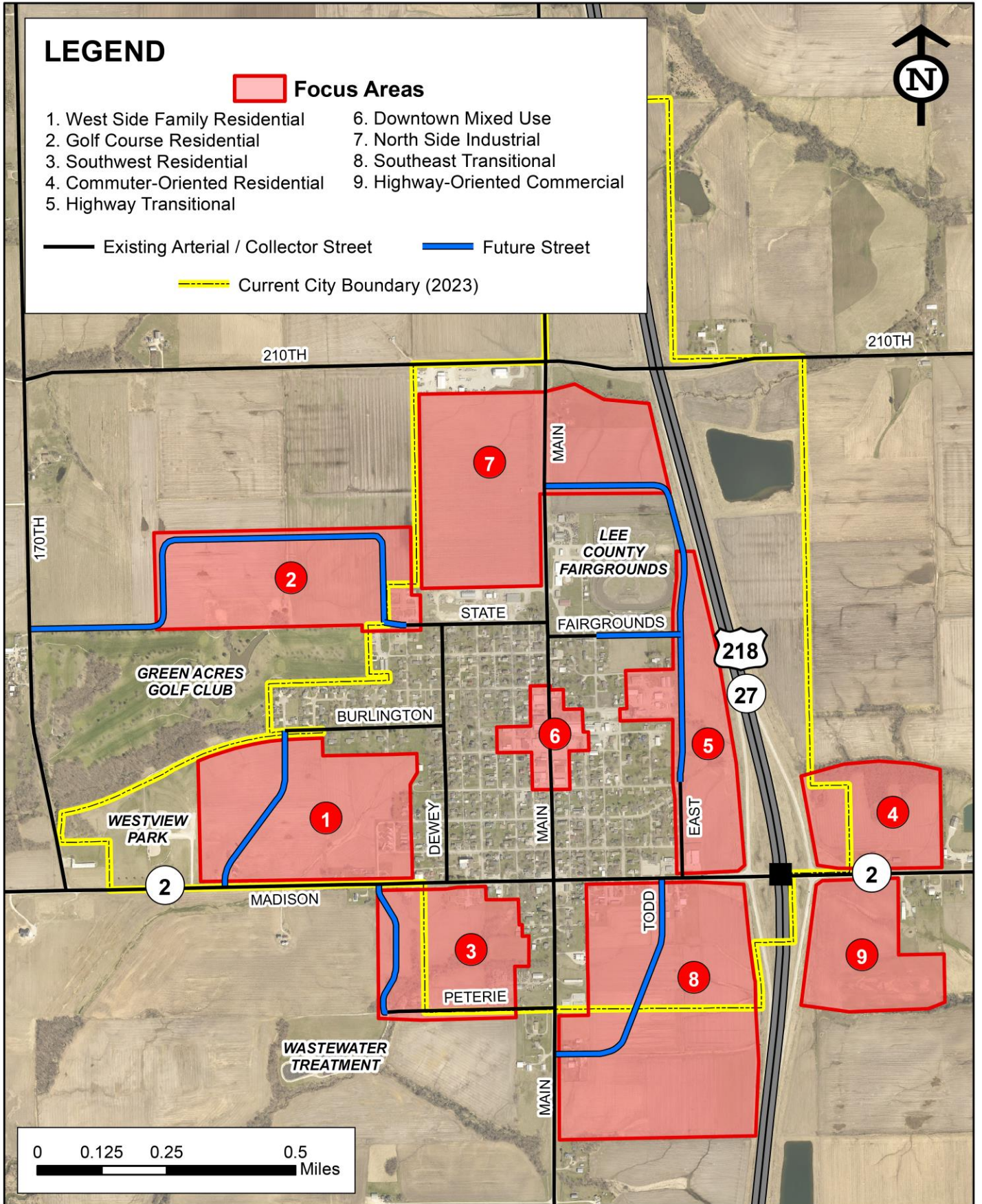
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To provide additional guidance beyond the basic categorization of uses shown on the Future Land Use Map, the map on the following page identifies nine individual focus areas for future development (or redevelopment) within the Land Use Planning Area. For each one of these focus areas, a detailed yet flexible description is provided for the individual development types desired for that particular area. These descriptions are based on multiple factors, including local preferences identified by the Steering Committee and other local stakeholders, existing infrastructure such as highway and utility access, and natural constraints such as drainage and topography.

Within each of these focus areas, the Future Land Use Map should not be viewed as a rigid requirement for what exact types of development should and should not be allowed, especially when the exact configuration of streets and utilities is subject to change. Instead, focus area descriptions should complement the Future Land Use Map and provide a certain degree in flexibility, based specific uses are and are not compatible with the overall vision for that particular focus area.

In a number of instances, development prospects in these focus areas are contingent upon roadway upgrades and extensions. Therefore, the map also includes a set of planned roadways that would be necessary for circulating traffic between existing collector and arterial streets.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS AREAS





WEST SIDE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL FOCUS AREA

The West Side Family Residential Focus Area covers 70 acres of land between Westview Park and older neighborhoods to the east – bounded on the north and south by Burlington Street and Madison Avenue/State Highway 2. Much of this area covers large farm property that was annexed into the City over the past two decades, when Westview Park was first established. Based on its position adjacent to both existing neighborhoods and a city park, it represents the most logical place for the City to pursue a large-scale residential development, comprised largely of market rate single-family homes. New streets could be built to extend off of the existing street grid, with connections to Burlington and Madison.

One notable challenge in this area is the rolling topography, combined with the presence of a prominent drainageway running through at an angle near the southeast corner. The topography could be modified slightly in areas of higher ground, but to a certain extent would still need to be accommodated into the layout of streets and homes. More importantly, it is essential to preserve the existing drainageway, in order to avoid drainage problems for new or existing homes in the surrounding area. The land alongside the stream should be preserved as open space, lined with native riparian vegetation. This also presents a logical opportunity to extend a trail or pedestrian path alongside the stream, to serve as a recreational amenity for surrounding neighborhoods.

At its southeast corner, this Focus Area also includes several blocks that have already been platted for lots, streets and alleys. But to date, only handful of homes have been developed here. There is also an old, outdated mobile home park occupying one of these blocks, and to facilitate the development of the adjoining undeveloped land east of the stream, this block should be redeveloped for single-family home lots, with another space provided for a modern manufactured home park elsewhere in the city (as referenced in the Commuter Oriented Residential Focus Area). There is also a logical place for a small pocket of multi-family housing at the southwest corner of this Focus Area, which would provide direct access to Westview Park for its residents, as well as a direct outlet onto Highway 2.



GOLF COURSE RESIDENTIAL FOCUS AREA

The Golf Course Residential Focus Area covers a tract of approximately 50 acres directly north of the Green Acres Golf Course, which abuts the Aspire nursing home property on two sides. This area represents an opportunity to expand off of the prior success of the Greenview Terrace subdivision to the south of the golf course. With that subdivision almost entirely built out, there is currently nothing else available to accommodate residential growth adjacent to the golf course. Pursuing such development on the north side will allow the City to tap into existing demand for such recreation-oriented housing. Numerous examples of such development now exist in the surrounding region, such as Oak Hills at the Spirit Hollow Golf Course near Burlington. The latter development also includes a sizable condominium community, and the Golf Course Residential represents a great opportunity to provide similar shared-maintenance owner-occupied housing in Donnellson, as no such options are currently available in town.

Overall, development of this Focus Area should include a mix of single and multi-family development, with the latter taking the form of condominiums or townhomes near the entrance from State Street, which then transition into single-family homes to the north and west, similar to those found in Greenview Terrace. Drainage accommodations will be necessary in this area, as the adjoining farm fields all drain into the stream on which the golf course's lake was established. However, the establishment of preserved wetland corridors (and possibly an additional pond) will add to the marketability of lots that back up to these natural amenities. An additional strip of open space should be established at the east end of this Focus Area, to provide a buffer between it and the desired Industrial Park development to the east.

The primary challenge for this Focus Area is that the entire area currently falls outside City limits, making it necessary for an annexation to occur before development of homes and infrastructure could begin. It also presents a potential safety concern regarding roadway access, as it would be entirely dependent on a 'one-way in/one-way out' entrance from the current terminus of State Street. To provide for adequate circulation and an alternative outlet, the road serving this development should be extended westward to feed into 170th Avenue just north of the golf course.

CONCEPTUAL RENDERING - GOLF COURSE RESIDENTIAL FOCUS AREA
Townhomes near the entrance from State Street, which then transition into single-family homes to west shown in the back.





SOUTHWEST RESIDENTIAL FOCUS AREA

The Southwest Residential Focus Area comprises an area of just under 40 acres to the south of Highway 2 and west of Main Street. About 2/3rds of this area is currently within City limits, while the remaining 3rd (on the west side) would need to be annexed. This area presents several major challenges for development, with the primary issue being topography and drainage, as several small streams converge within it. This greatly limits the amount of viable development land, as nearly 1/4th of the land area will need to be conserved as open green space, in order to prevent adverse drainage impacts for surrounding properties. Furthermore, the wide, angled paths of the streams contrast sharply with the city's primary street grid, which would require numerous accommodations to ensure that all developable land can be accessed by public streets. This would require the use of several cul-de-sacs and the construction of 1 or more bridges or culverts.

This area presents good opportunities for new residential development that is still close to downtown and the Highway 2 commercial corridor. The area south of the existing Southview senior apartments is ideally suited to similar multi-family development, such as apartments, condominiums, or an assisted living community. In addition, a cul-de-sac street could be extended southward from the Southview parking lot, to give this area a sense of shelter and seclusion.

Other patches of developable land in this Focus Area would be appropriate for the development of single-family homes. Within the current City limits, this includes an area to the south of Ash Street, a lengthy stretch along the north side of Peterie Drive, and a small area south of Highway 2 and west of Southview Apartments. A westward annexation would allow for a north-south road between Highway 2 and Peterie. This would open up a sizable area of contiguous land for homes on either side of this north-south street. This could be signed as a southward extension of Lincoln Avenue, and hook up to the existing intersection with Highway 2.

One likely detriment of selling homes in this area is the close proximity of the wastewater treatment plant. Therefore, it should be considered a lower development priority than the West Side Family Residential Focus Area. However, the existing wooded area near the convergence of the three streams would serve as a convenient visual buffer from the wastewater facility.



COMMUTER-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL FOCUS AREA

Occupying the northeast quadrant of land adjacent to the US 218/State Highway 2 interchange, the Commuter-Oriented Residential Focus Area represents the most logical place for building homes that are catered to people working in nearby cities such as Fort Madison, Keokuk, and Mount Pleasant.

This also represents the ideal location for a new modern manufactured home park, to replace the aging and deteriorated mobile home parks current present in town. A good model for the design and layout of such a park is the Robin Run manufactured home community in Mount Pleasant, which was recently developed at a very similar location adjacent to the 4-lane Avenue of the Saints. With this park similarly positioned adjacent to the highway, the land between it and existing low-density homes to the east could be developed for market-rate single-family homes, also intended for long-distance commuters.

Development of this Focus Area would largely be contingent on the prior development of the Highway-Oriented Commercial Focus Area, as the latter's commercial tax base would be needed to justify an extension of public utilities to the east of the 4-lane highway. Another constraint is the fact that only a small portion of this Focus Area is currently within City limits, and that piece is essentially landlocked due to DOT restrictions on access to Highway 2 in close proximity to the interchange.



HIGHWAY TRANSITIONAL FOCUS AREA

The Highway Transitional Focus Area comprises a narrow strip of land between the original eastern City limits (parallel with East Street) and the 4-lane Avenue of the Saints. This area offers numerous challenges for development, but it's position between the highway and existing neighborhoods makes it highly illogical for this land to be indefinitely used for row crop farming.

This area represents the most diverse mix of uses. First, the property adjacent to Dollar General on the north and east represents an ideal location for a roadside hotel. Unlike other highway-oriented uses, hotels are typically not negatively impacted by the lack of an immediate access point from the nearest arterial roadway, so long as they and their signs are readily visible to passing motorists. Thus, even though the DOT has prohibited the establishment of another driveway access to the east of East Street, the adjoining property could still be accessed from a driveway off East Street to the north of Dollar General – near or coinciding with the intersection of East and Orchard.

Continuing north, the property between Orchard and Chestnut Street represents a good location for multi-family housing catered to long-distance commuters, based on the close proximity of the highway interchange. Such a use would also form a logical buffer between existing single-family neighborhoods and the highway (along with the commercial cluster of hotel and dollar store). This could take the form of apartments, townhomes, and/or a manufactured home park, in the event that a similar prospect fails to take shape for the Commuter-Oriented Residential Focus Area on the opposite side of the highway.

Development of the remainder of this focus area would be entirely contingent on the establishment of a new collector street between Highway 2 and Main Street at the north end of town. Such a road would not only improve development prospects for the adjoining farmland, but improve overall circulation for homes and businesses on the east side of town.

For the grain elevator, this east side outlet would shorten travel times for truckers, and reduce the burden of truck traffic on Mill Street to the east of Main, where all such traffic currently accesses the elevator. It would also present an opportunity to open up additional land for their use to the existing grain elevator property.



DOWNTOWN MIXED USE FOCUS AREA

Among the Focus Areas highlighted, this one is unique as it represents an area that has already been fully developed. However, as the original commercial and civic core of the community, it represents an important resource for future investment, and in many cases, re-investment. While a number of successful businesses are already present in this area, there are also a number of vacant and underutilized buildings and lots, which offer substantial infill or reuse opportunities. This includes upper-story housing, for the handful of existing two-story commercial buildings in this area, as well as any new 2-story buildings to be built on currently vacant lots. The photo above shows the 2-story Dickey building, which is adjacent to a vacant lot on the south side.

A key component of downtown redevelopment is the condition of infrastructure and streetscaping. In order to ensure that the area remains viable for new investment, efforts should be made to enhance the aesthetics of the downtown area, through the use of common imagery and branding, which create a distinct sense of identity that visitors can associate the city with.

Streetscaping upgrades should include bicycle and pedestrian features such as wide sidewalks, painted bike lanes, and bump-outs at street crossings. It should also include aesthetic enhancements such as vegetative plantings, interpretive signage, banner signs, decorative lighting, and public art.



NORTH SIDE INDUSTRIAL FOCUS AREA

This Focus Area represents one of two places in and around Donnellson that are conducive to the development of light-to-moderate industrial uses, including the active manufacture or processing materials on-site. No such uses are currently present in Donnellson, and their introduction would greatly add in the expansion of tax base and creation of jobs for the community.

This Focus Area includes two separate tracts of land, one on either side of Main Street at the north end of town. The 55-acre tract to the west of Main Street is ideally suited to industrial activities, due to the presence of the Iowa DOT maintenance garage directly to the south, which would serve as a buffer between the industrial activities and nearby residential neighborhoods. In addition, the land on this property is exceptionally flat, and would thus not require any levelling of the land.

The flat terrain also presents some challenges – one being the need for lift station for extending existing sewer lines to the north. Another is the likely need to establish retention ponds and/or deep ditches along the roadway network. The 30-acre tract to the east of Main Street has slightly more rugged terrain than its counterpart to the west, but is directly visible from the adjacent Avenue of the Saints highway, as well as the Fairgrounds to the south.

One major deficiency impacting the entirety of this focus area is the lack of direct access from US Highway 218, as 210th Street passes over the highway on a grade-separate bridge without an interchange. The nearest access points both offer deficiencies.

The ideal solution to this challenge is to build a new collector street that would wrap around the east side of existing neighborhoods, and to the north of the fairgrounds, before feeding directly into the 55-acre tract on the west side of Main Street. In order for the road to enter the west-side tract at roughly its midway point, this would leave a narrow strip of land between the road and the Fairgrounds on the east side, which could be 'swapped' for the corner piece and given to the Fairgrounds. While the cost of building such a road would be substantial, it offers an opportunity to obtain outside funding, if it can enable the development of industrial uses with substantial job creation. An ideal funding source for this purpose is the Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) program from the Iowa DOT.



SOUTHEAST TRANSITIONAL FOCUS AREA

The Southeast Transitional Focus Area represents over 100 acres of land at the southeast corner of the city, east of Main Street and south of Madison. Just over half of that area is located outside the present city limits, and would require annexation for commercial or industrial development.

With the predominantly flat topography of this area, and its close proximity to both existing neighborhoods and arterial streets, it offers the greatest amount of flexibility for future development types. While it is adjacent to the 4-lane US Highway 218, access restrictions near the Highway 2 interchange reduce the overall viability of traveler-oriented commercial business such as restaurants and gas stations. A portion of this area along the south side of Madison would be appropriate for any of the commercial uses listed for the Highway Oriented Commercial Focus Area, particularly if annexation and/or extension of utilities past the highway proved to be unfeasible. This could include a redevelopment of the existing residential properties to the east of Oak Street, along with an outdated motel and mobile home park.

An existing challenge for this area is the lack of street infrastructure south of Madison, as several streets dead-end just one block south of Madison. However, there are several platted rights-of-way that the City can use for initiating street extensions. The most important of these is the 1-block section of Todd Street, which could be used as the start of a new collector road that would provide access to the large undeveloped acreage to the south, before turning toward the west to provide a secondary outlet onto Main Street.

The general objective should be to create a series of 'buffers' radiating outward from the single-family residential area near Main and Madison. The area furthest from that residential area – and closest to the 4-lane highway – should be targeted for light-to-moderate intensity industrial activities. This should in turn be buffered by an area of commercial uses – ideally the type of logistics-oriented businesses that would serve truck traffic along the Avenue of the Saints. Finally, a small pocket of multi-family housing (apartments or townhomes) could be built adjacent to the existing single-family homes, with a strip of open space between it and the commercial area, to both buffer the two uses and preserve drainage patterns.



HIGHWAY-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL FOCUS AREA

The Highway-Oriented Commercial Focus Area represents the ideal location for a travel plaza serving traffic on the Avenue of the Saints. Covering the southeast quadrant of the US 218/State Highway 2 interchange, it comprises a sizable yet compact tract of land that is highway visible to highway traffic. It also offers the only opportunity for a new, direct entrance from Highway 2, which would not require traffic to pass by any existing uses before reaching the travel plaza. All other quadrants of the interchange are constricted by access management restrictions by the DOT in close proximity to the on/off-ramp entrances.

The centerpiece of such a development would be a travel plaza comprised of a gas station/convenience store with diesel provided, an attached drive-thru restaurant, and a large area for dedicated commercial truck parking. However, with additional space available to the rear (south and east), this also represents an opportunity for the development of additional logistics-oriented commercial businesses that would be directly compatible with the highway access and travel plaza.

This Focus Area has two major obstacles to development. First, it is presently located outside City limits, and would require an annexation in order to provide city services. Second, the provision of such services is complicated by the fact that this would be the first City development to the east of the 4-lane highway, and a travel plaza would require that new utilities of a substantial service capacity be extended through DOT right-of-way from the opposite side of the highway.

PROPOSED CITY TRAIL SYSTEM

As noted in the Transportation section (Chapter 3- Community Elements) of this plan under 'bike and pedestrian', Donnellson's existing bicycle and pedestrian network is lacking in a number of crucial ways. This general observation was echoed by many participants in the public survey for developing this Plan. Many of the existing sidewalks are in poor condition, and there are many areas of the community that are underserved by sidewalks, or not served at all.

Conversely, substantial progress has been made in developing a trail system on the west side of the city. A trail now connects the park with nearby neighborhoods, and there is also a full trail loop within the park itself. This can serve as the foundation of a much larger trail system that serves to connect individual neighborhoods, community facilities and shopping destinations throughout the city.

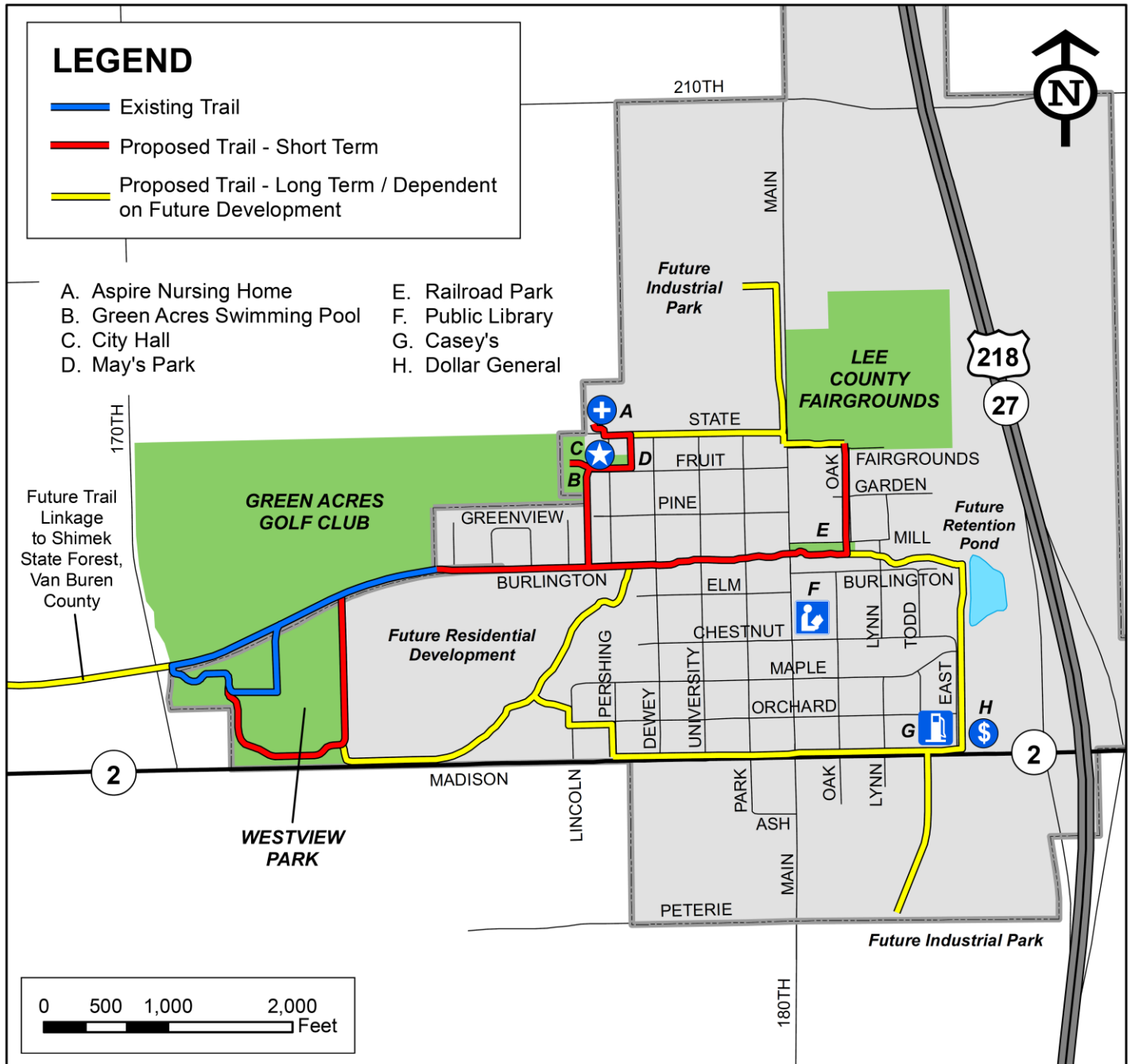
The map on the following page provides a vision for what this trail system could look like once completed. It is divided into three separate components – existing trails (blue), those to be pursued in the short term (red), and those to be pursued in the long term (yellow).

The red segments are those that should be prioritized over the next 5 to 10 years, as they would have the most substantial and immediate impact for members of the community. This includes an outer loop around the south side of Westview Park, which would provide an alternative to the shorter loop on the northwest side of the park.

The other short-term segments would all serve to connect each of the city's parks and outdoor recreation areas with one another. First, the former right-of-way for the CB&Q railroad could be used to connect Westview Park with Railroad Park and the downtown area. This would extend off of the existing trail connecting Westview Park to Burlington Street. Next, a short segment along Oak Street could connect Railroad Park with the Lee County Fairgrounds. Finally, a platted alley between Pershing Street and Fairway Court could be used to build a trail to connect Burlington Street with the Green Acres Pool, May's Park, City Hall, and the Aspire Nursing Home.

The long-term trail segments would serve to create several functional 'loops' around different area of the city, which would ensure that residents of each neighborhood have convenient access to the trail system. Also, in the event that industrial parks are developed at the north and/or south ends of the city, a trail could be extended to provide employees with an alternative to driving to work.

PROPOSED CITY TRAIL SYSTEM



Trails could also be used to complement investments in stormwater drainage infrastructure. For instance, when the farm field at the west end of town is developed for housing, a strip of open space should be preserved along the angled stream between Madison and Burlington Streets. Part of that open space could still be enjoyed as a recreational use by the community, if a trail were built alongside the stream. Similarly, if a retention pond is built at the entrance to Painter Creek on the east side of town, the trail loop could pass by the pond and offer wildlife viewing opportunities.

APPENDICES

07

Survey results

Southeast Iowa Regional
■ Planning Commission

seirpc



Q1 What do you envision Donnellson to be like in 2040?

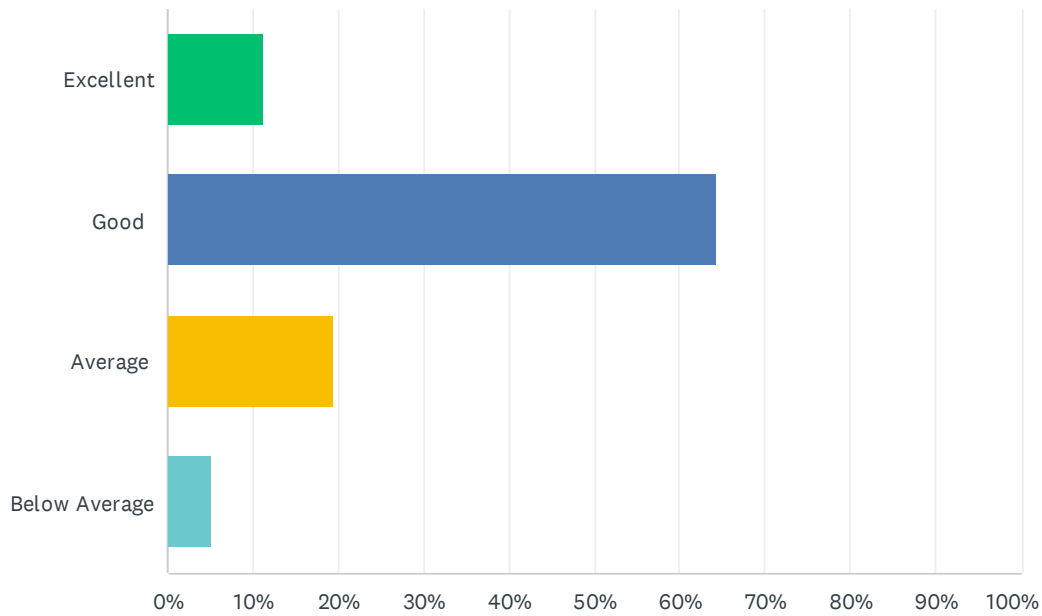
Answered: 78 Skipped: 24

Q2 What do you like about Donnellson?

Answered: 86 Skipped: 16

Q3 Overall, how would you rate the quality of life in Donnellson?

Answered: 98 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Excellent	11.22% 11
Good	64.29% 63
Average	19.39% 19
Below Average	5.10% 5
TOTAL	98

Q4 Explain your rating of the quality of life in Donnellson -- What could improve the quality of life in Donnellson?

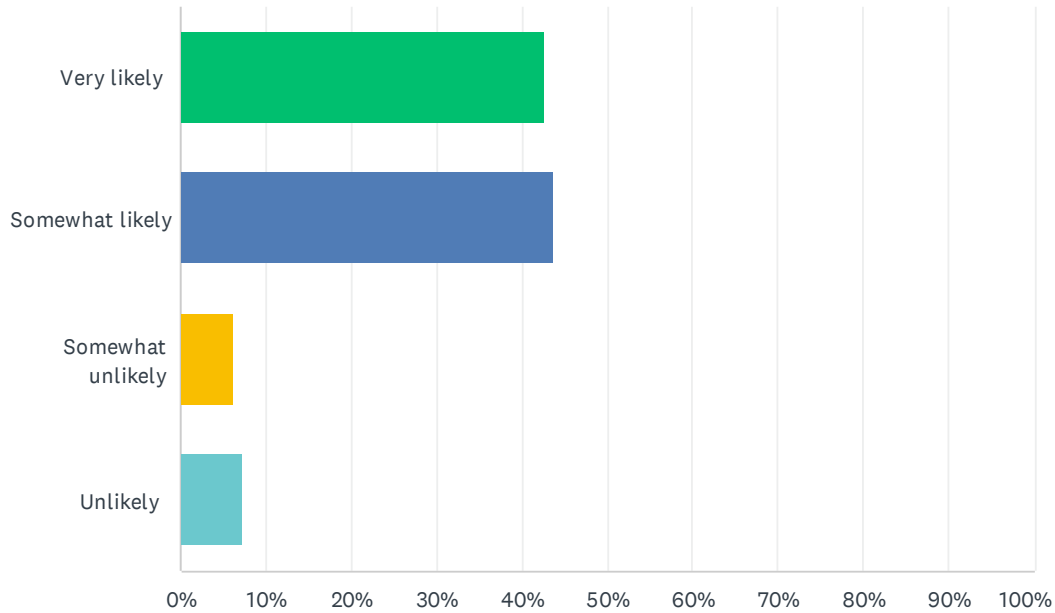
Answered: 80 Skipped: 22

Q5 If you could make one major change or improvement in Donnellson that would have a long term impact on the city and its residents, what would it be?

Answered: 80 Skipped: 22

Q6 Would you recommend living in Donnellson, Iowa to someone currently living elsewhere?

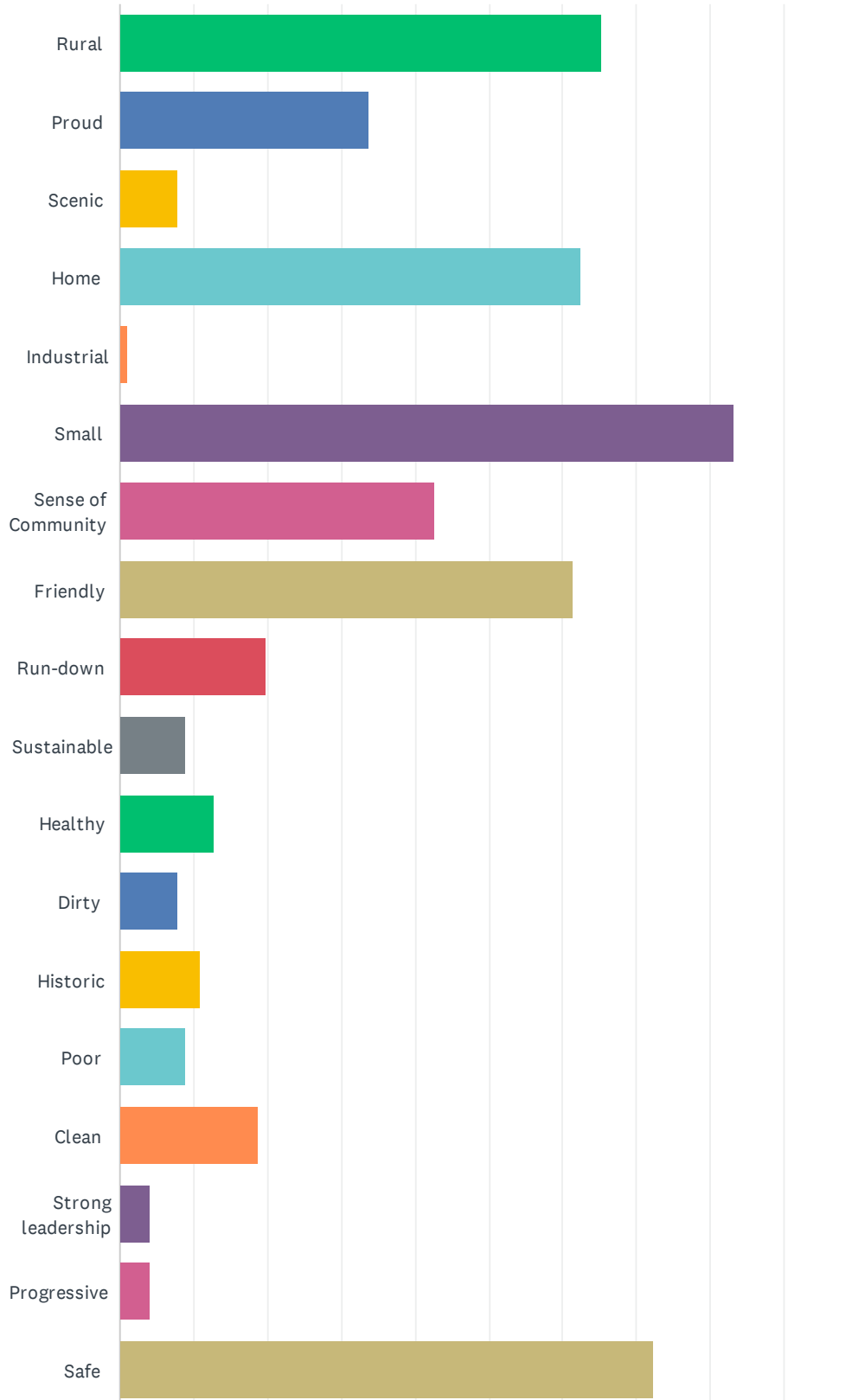
Answered: 96 Skipped: 6

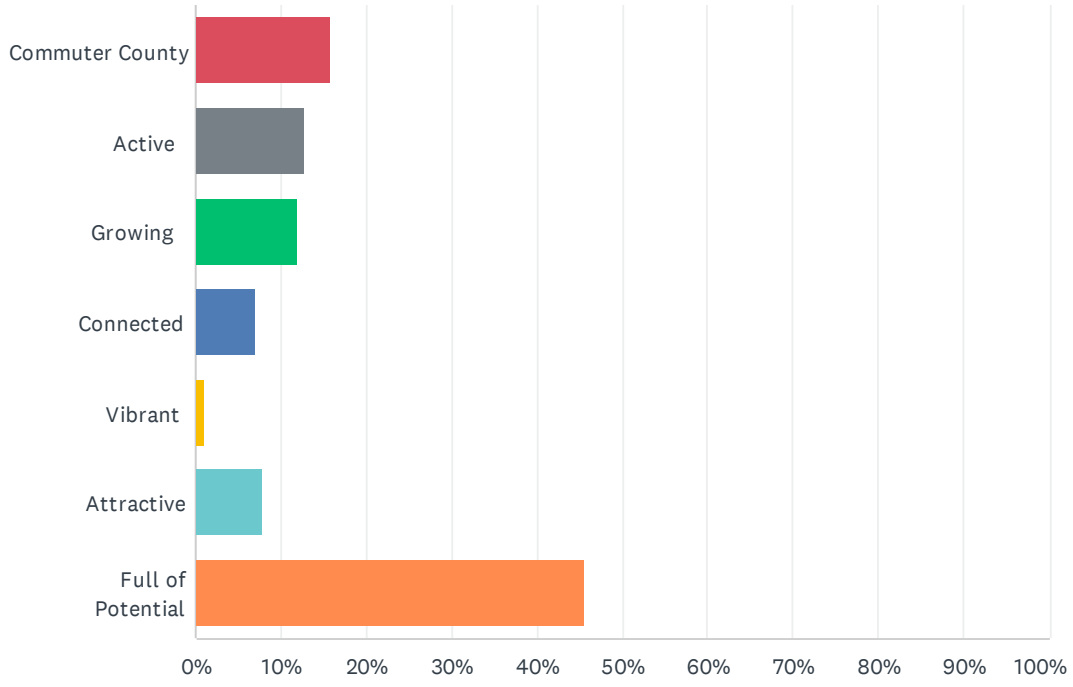


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very likely	42.71%	41
Somewhat likely	43.75%	42
Somewhat unlikely	6.25%	6
Unlikely	7.29%	7
TOTAL		96

Q7 Which of the following qualities do you associate with Donnellson? Feel free to add your own!

Answered: 101 Skipped: 1





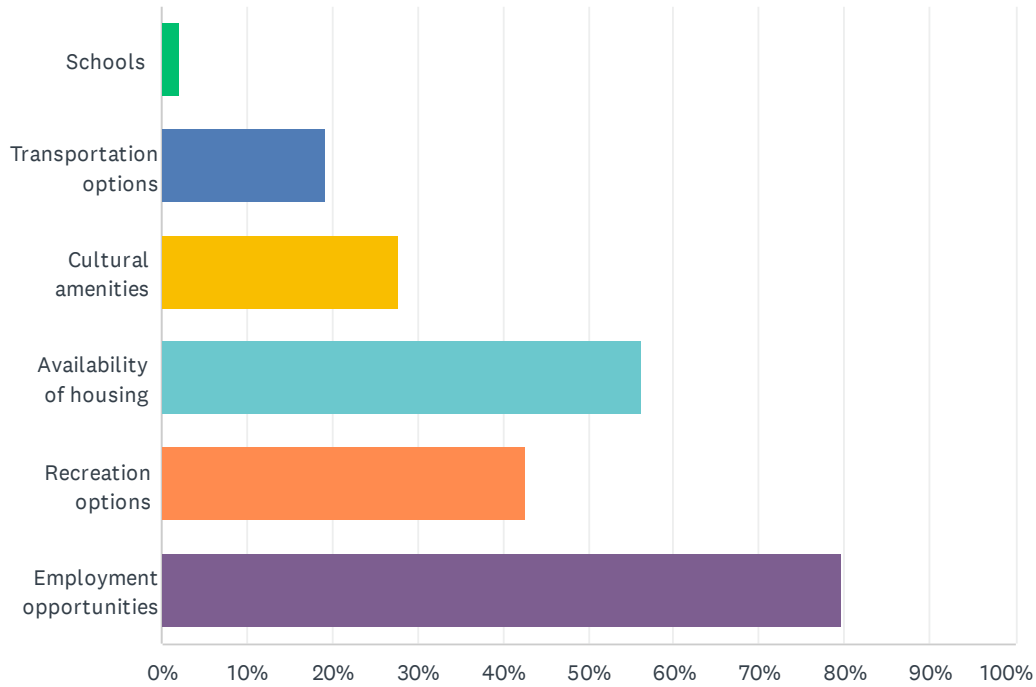
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rural	65.35%	66
Proud	33.66%	34
Scenic	7.92%	8
Home	62.38%	63
Industrial	0.99%	1
Small	83.17%	84
Sense of Community	42.57%	43
Friendly	61.39%	62
Run-down	19.80%	20
Sustainable	8.91%	9
Healthy	12.87%	13
Dirty	7.92%	8
Historic	10.89%	11
Poor	8.91%	9
Clean	18.81%	19
Strong leadership	3.96%	4
Progressive	3.96%	4
Safe	72.28%	73
Commuter County	15.84%	16
Active	12.87%	13
Growing	11.88%	12
Connected	6.93%	7
Vibrant	0.99%	1
Attractive	7.92%	8
Full of Potential	45.54%	46
Total Respondents: 101		

Q8 Please explain why you chose these qualities.

Answered: 52 Skipped: 50

Q9 What are some of the barriers preventing a younger workforce from moving to or succeeding in Donnellson?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Schools	2.13%	2
Transportation options	19.15%	18
Cultural amenities	27.66%	26
Availability of housing	56.38%	53
Recreation options	42.55%	40
Employment opportunities	79.79%	75
Total Respondents: 94		

Q10 What is one specific economic challenge you think the City faces?

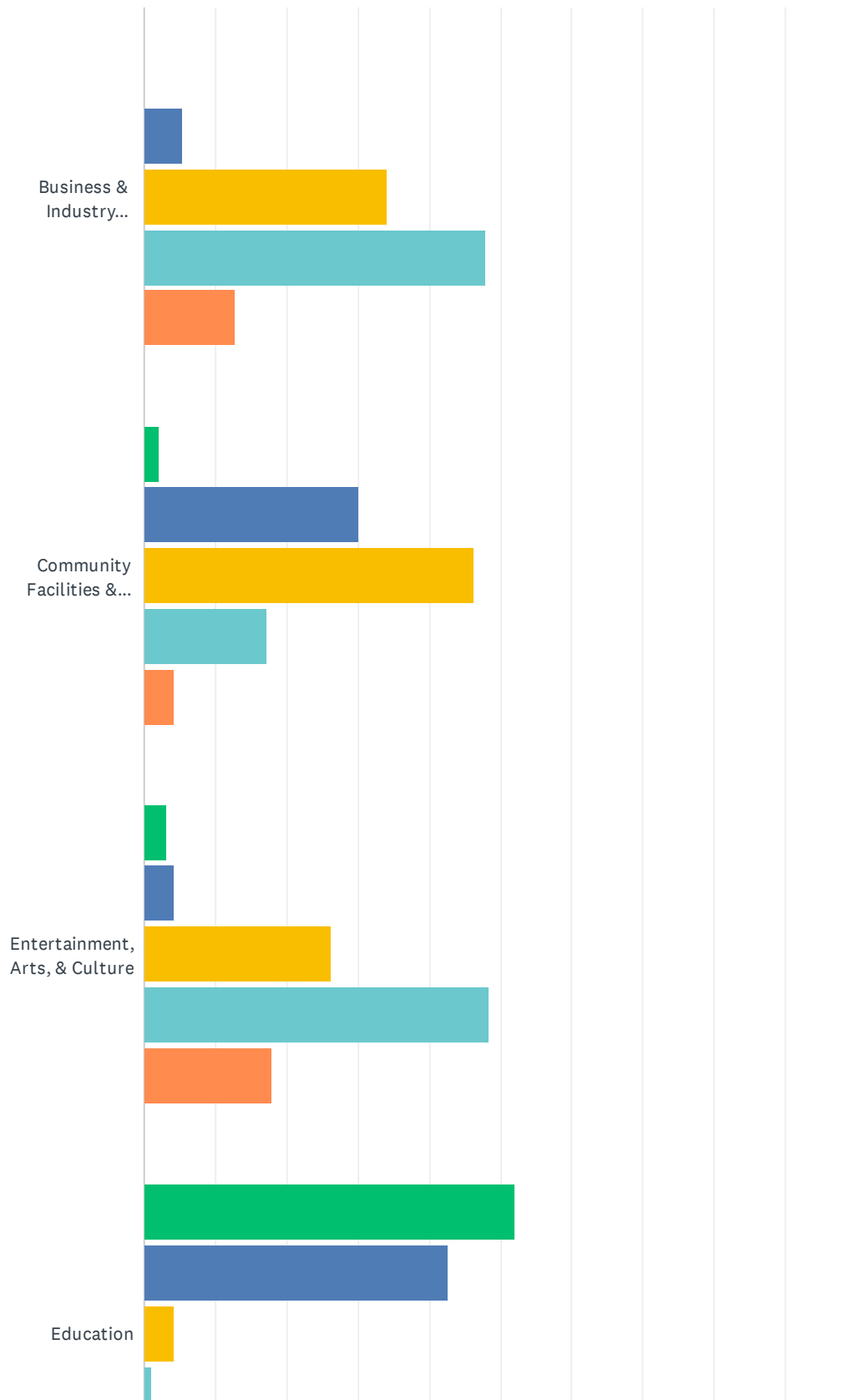
Answered: 69 Skipped: 33

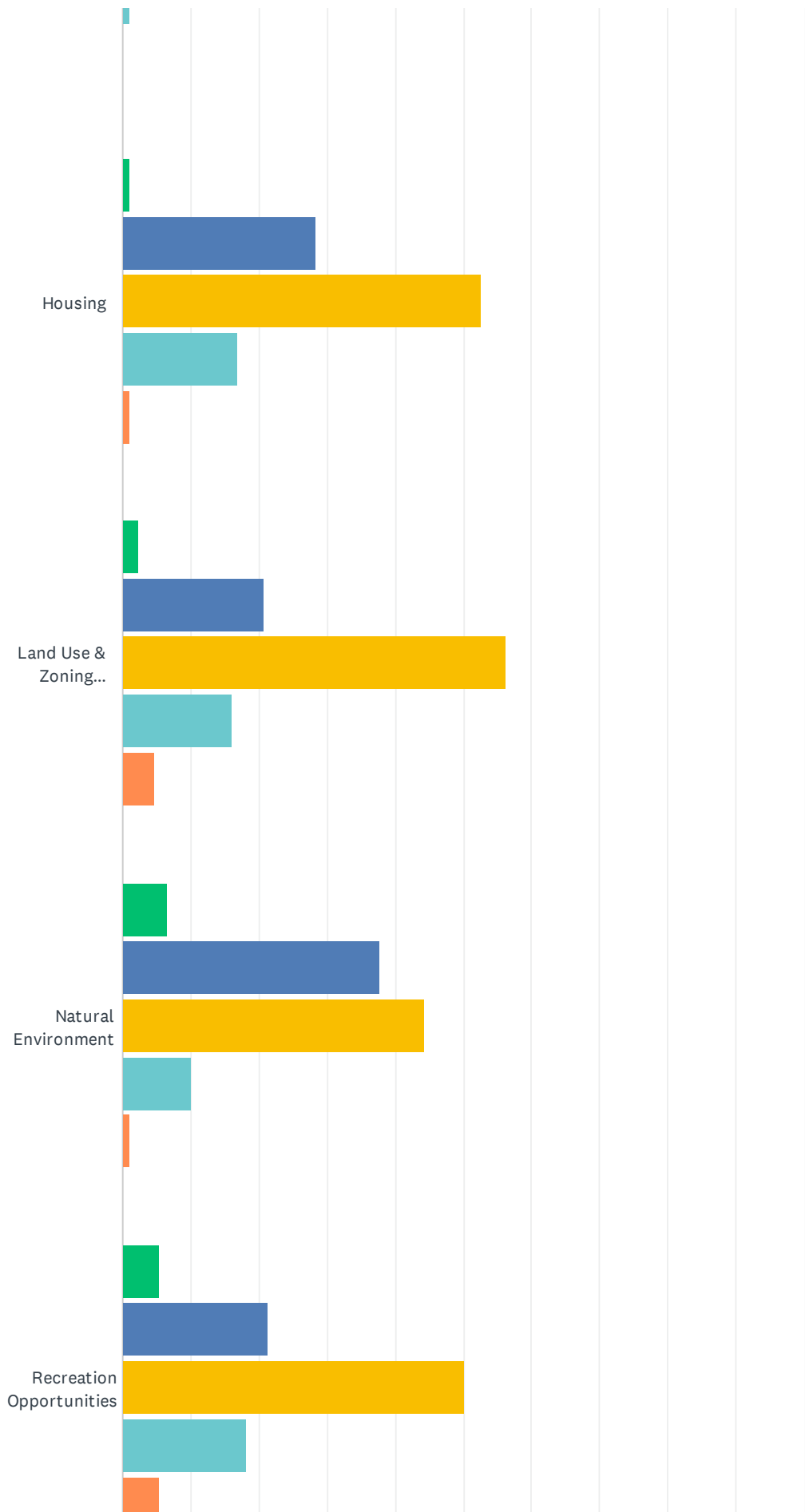
Q11 Please provide your recommendations or thoughts on how the City can overcome these challenges?

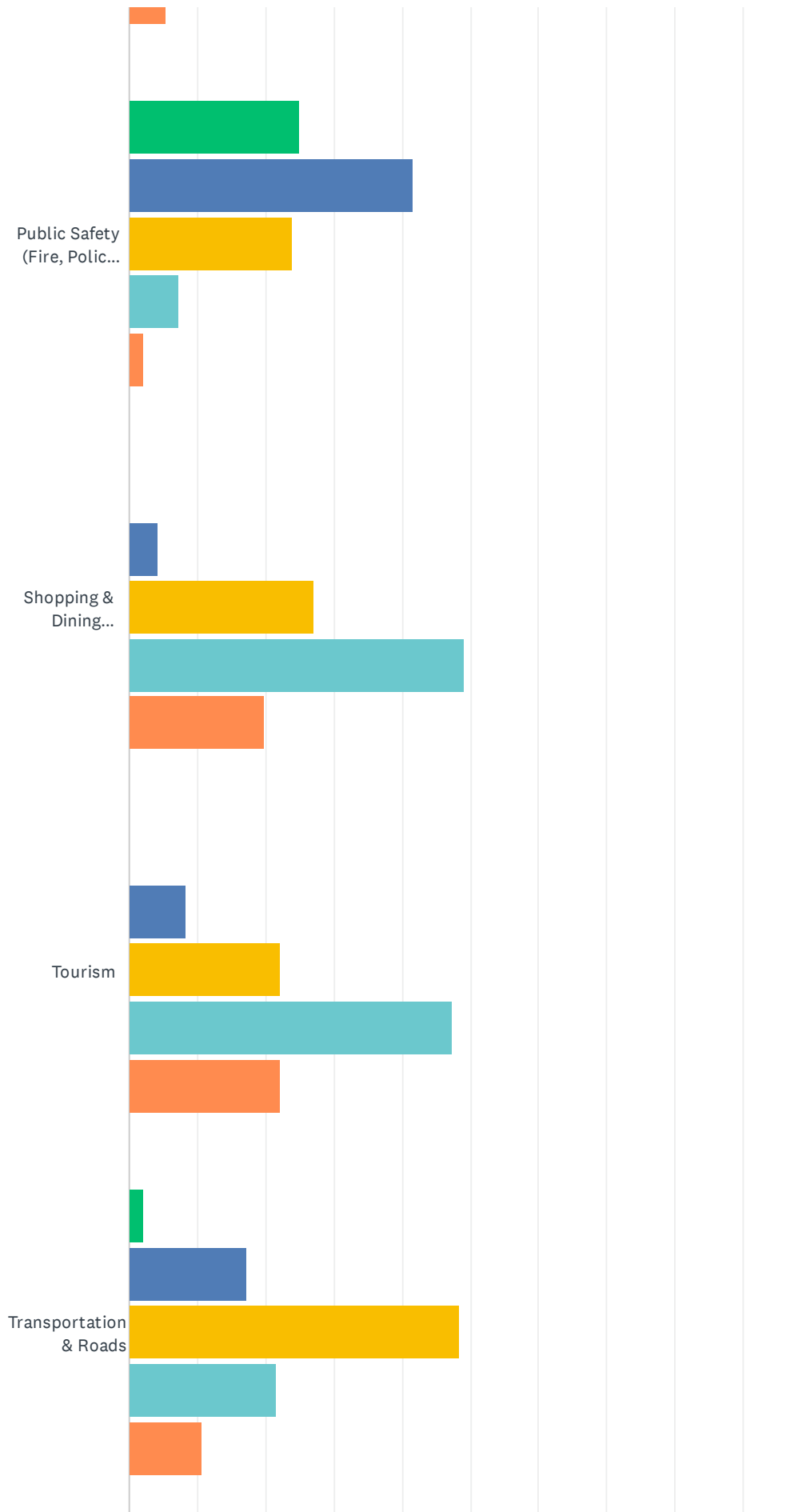
Answered: 55 Skipped: 47

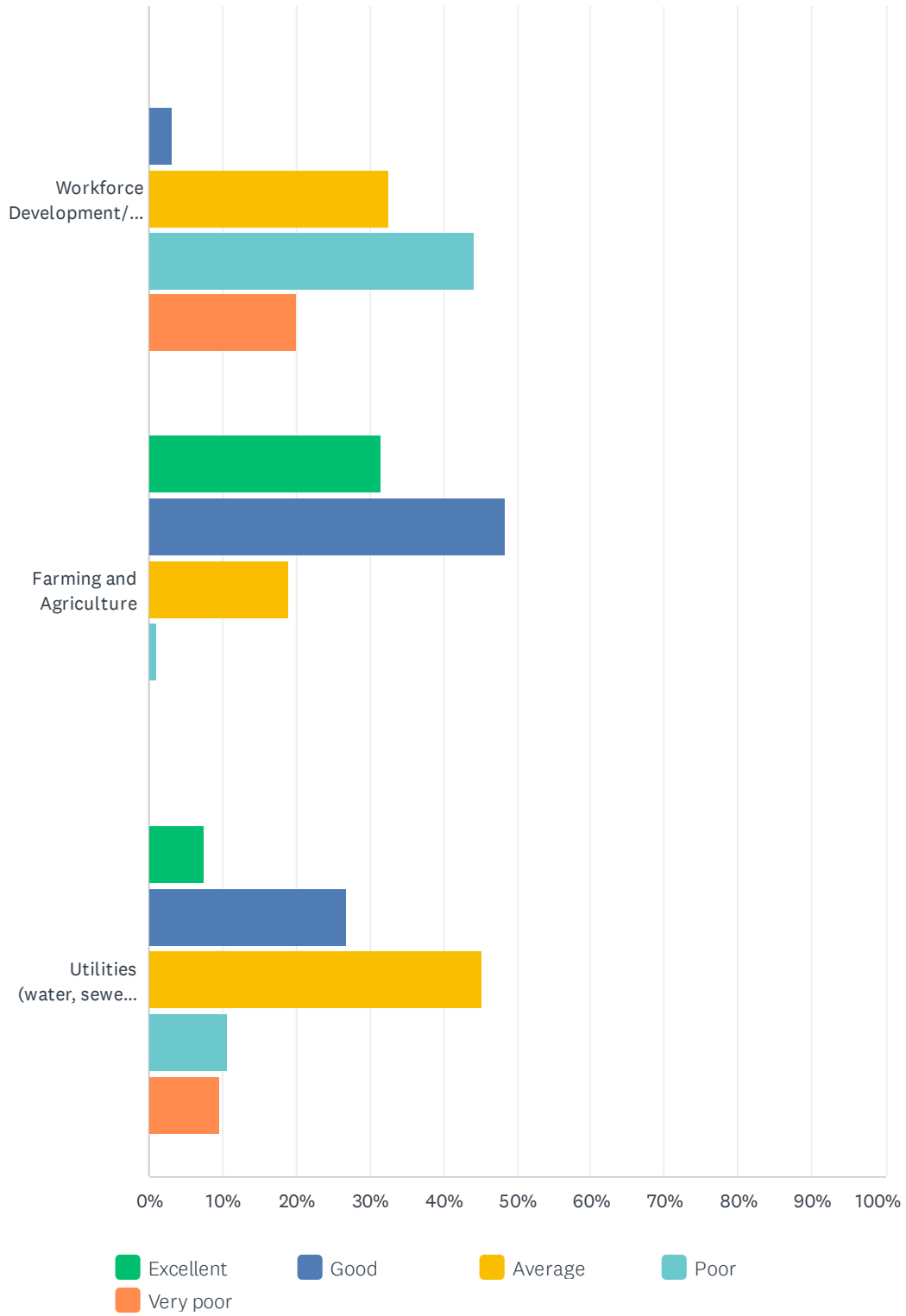
Q12 How would you rate the following aspects of Donnellson.

Answered: 96 Skipped: 6









	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	VERY POOR	TOTAL
Business & Industry Development	0.00% 0	5.32% 5	34.04% 32	47.87% 45	12.77% 12	94
Community Facilities & Infrastructure	2.15% 2	30.11% 28	46.24% 43	17.20% 16	4.30% 4	93
Entertainment, Arts, & Culture	3.16% 3	4.21% 4	26.32% 25	48.42% 46	17.89% 17	95
Education	52.13% 49	42.55% 40	4.26% 4	1.06% 1	0.00% 0	94
Housing	1.05% 1	28.42% 27	52.63% 50	16.84% 16	1.05% 1	95
Land Use & Zoning Enforcement	2.30% 2	20.69% 18	56.32% 49	16.09% 14	4.60% 4	87
Natural Environment	6.67% 6	37.78% 34	44.44% 40	10.00% 9	1.11% 1	90
Recreation Opportunities	5.32% 5	21.28% 20	50.00% 47	18.09% 17	5.32% 5	94
Public Safety (Fire, Police, Ambulance)	25.00% 24	41.67% 40	23.96% 23	7.29% 7	2.08% 2	96
Shopping & Dining Opportunities	0.00% 0	4.17% 4	27.08% 26	48.96% 47	19.79% 19	96
Tourism	0.00% 0	8.42% 8	22.11% 21	47.37% 45	22.11% 21	95
Transportation & Roads	2.15% 2	17.20% 16	48.39% 45	21.51% 20	10.75% 10	93
Workforce Development/Employment Opportunities	0.00% 0	3.16% 3	32.63% 31	44.21% 42	20.00% 19	95
Farming and Agriculture	31.58% 30	48.42% 46	18.95% 18	1.05% 1	0.00% 0	95
Utilities (water, sewer, telecommunications/internet, cell, garbage/recycling, etc.)	7.53% 7	26.88% 25	45.16% 42	10.75% 10	9.68% 9	93

**Q13 Are you satisfied with the utilities services listed in the table above?
Explain why or why not.**

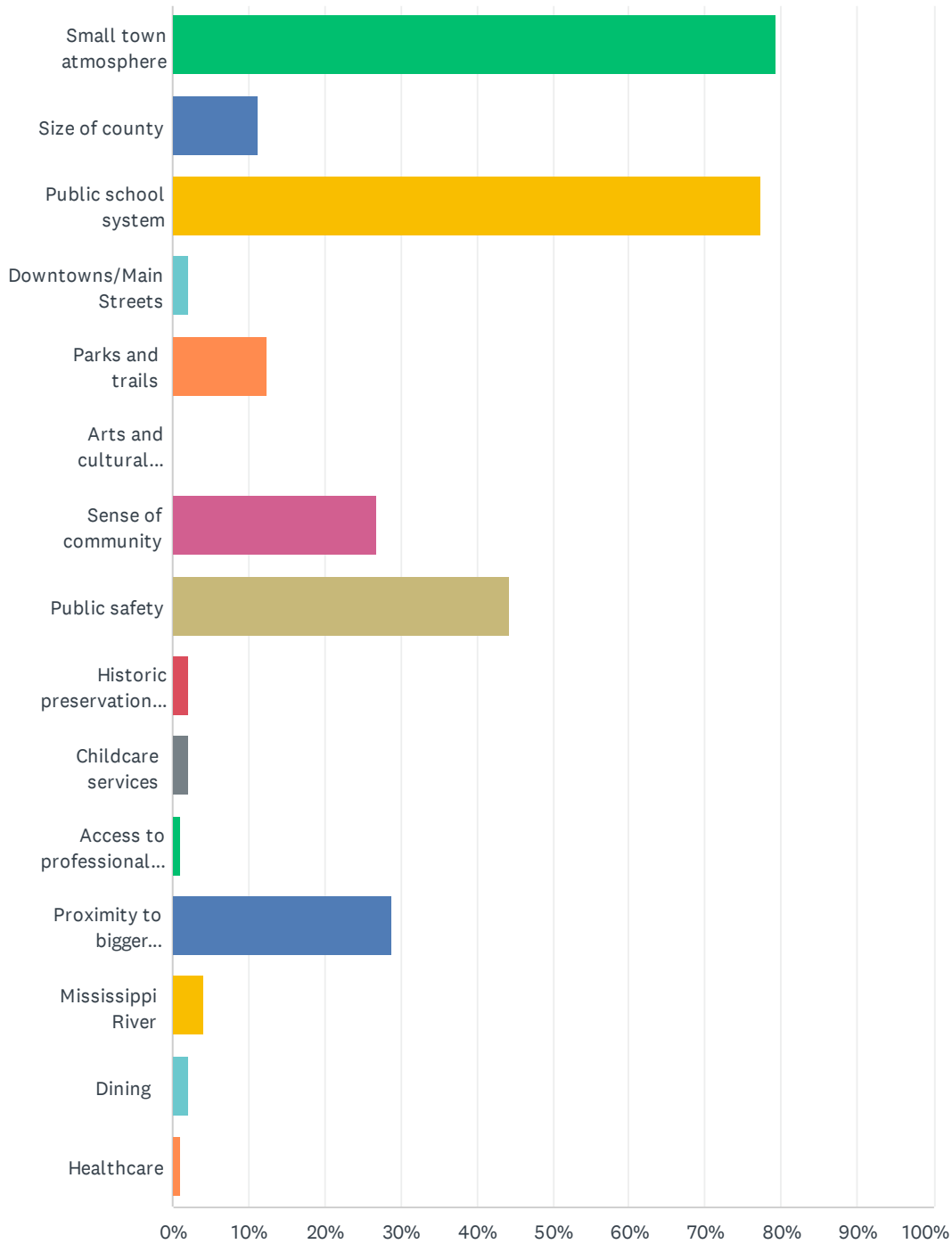
Answered: 71 Skipped: 31

Q14 What, if any, changes or improvements would you like to see to any of the community aspects listed in the table above?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 60

Q15 What do you value about Donnellson? Please mark the three qualities you value most about the community.

Answered: 97 Skipped: 5



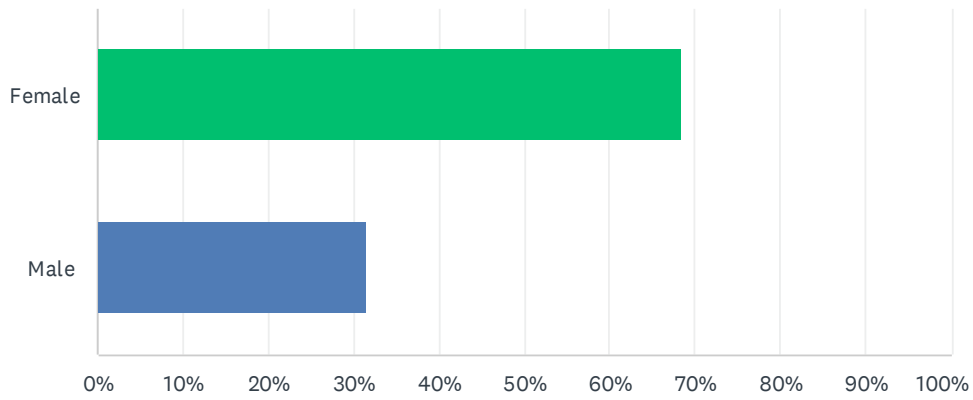
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Small town atmosphere	79.38%	77
Size of county	11.34%	11
Public school system	77.32%	75
Downtowns/Main Streets	2.06%	2
Parks and trails	12.37%	12
Arts and cultural opportunities	0.00%	0
Sense of community	26.80%	26
Public safety	44.33%	43
Historic preservation/Architecture	2.06%	2
Childcare services	2.06%	2
Access to professional/Career opportunities	1.03%	1
Proximity to bigger communities/counties	28.87%	28
Mississippi River	4.12%	4
Dining	2.06%	2
Healthcare	1.03%	1
Total Respondents: 97		

Q16 What economic opportunities/barriers do you think Donnellson is facing?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 40

Q17 What is your gender?

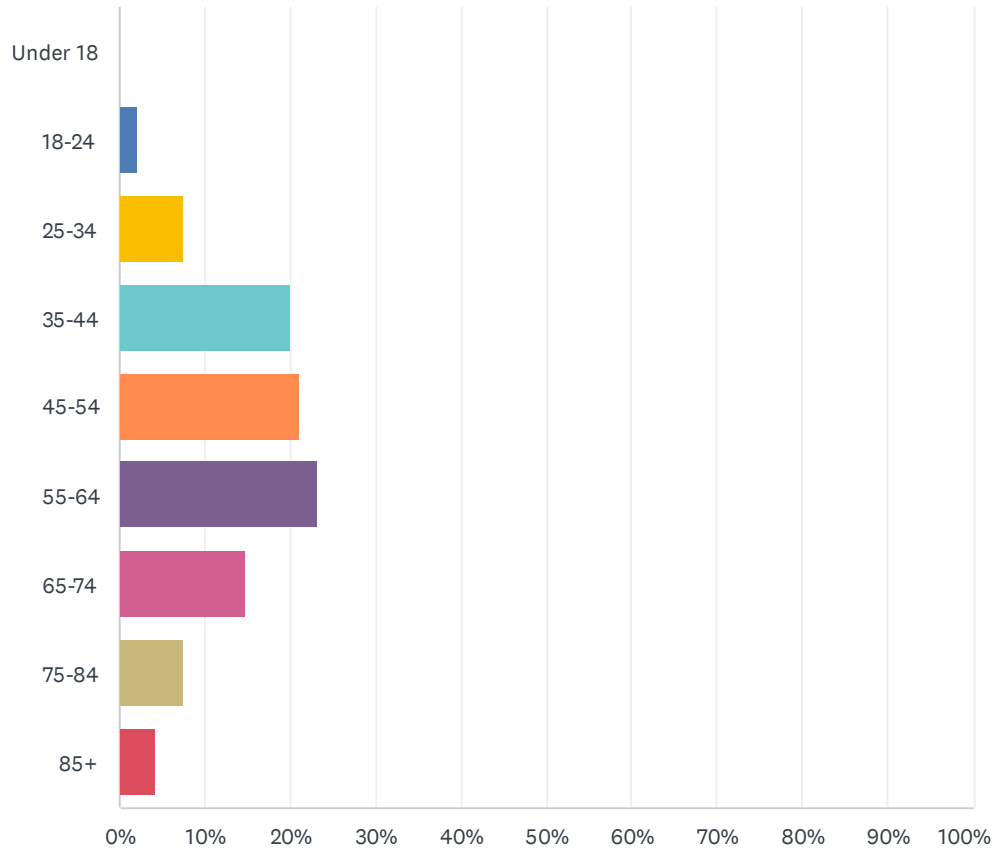
Answered: 95 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Female	68.42%	65
Male	31.58%	30
TOTAL		95

Q18 What is your age?

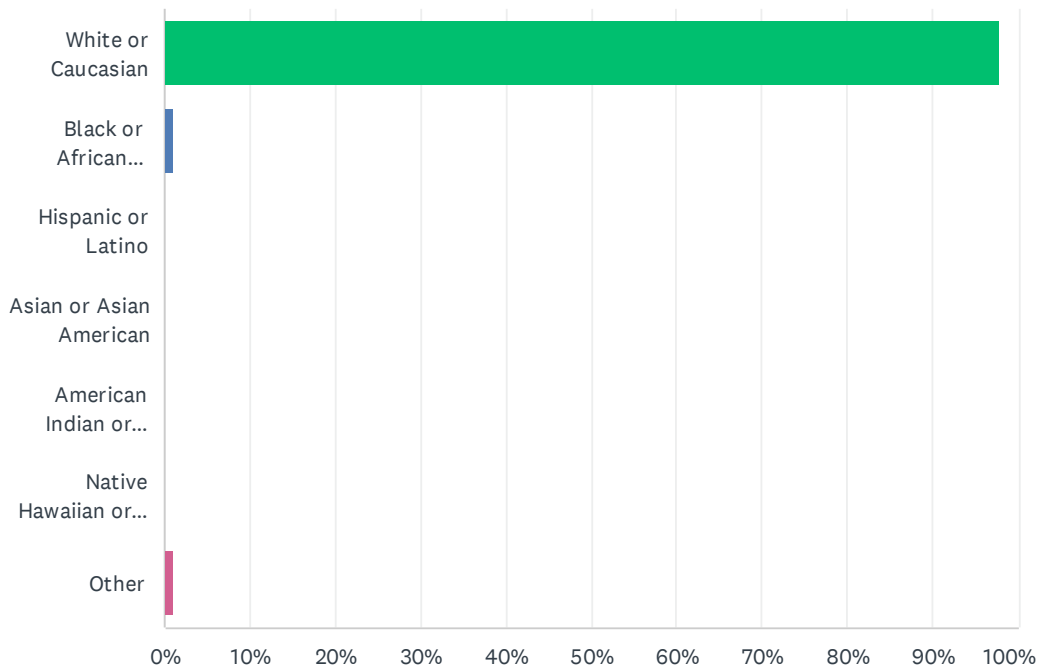
Answered: 95 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.00%	0
18-24	2.11%	2
25-34	7.37%	7
35-44	20.00%	19
45-54	21.05%	20
55-64	23.16%	22
65-74	14.74%	14
75-84	7.37%	7
85+	4.21%	4
TOTAL		95

Q19 What best describes your race or ethnicity?

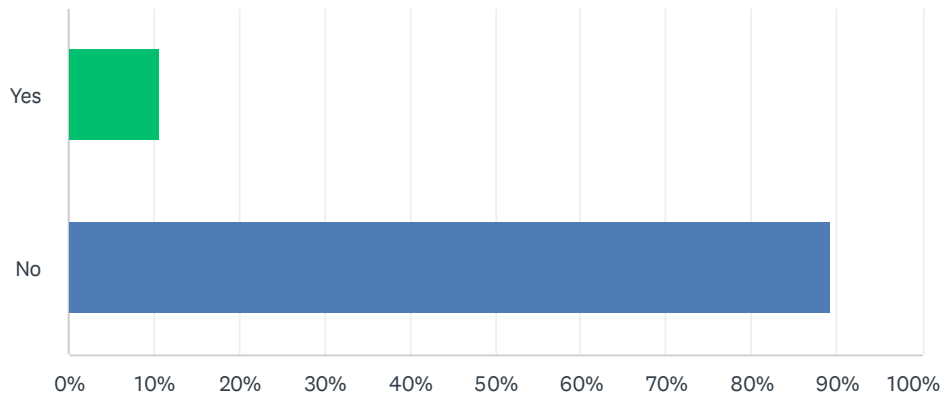
Answered: 90 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White or Caucasian	97.78%	88
Black or African American	1.11%	1
Hispanic or Latino	0.00%	0
Asian or Asian American	0.00%	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.00%	0
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.00%	0
Other	1.11%	1
TOTAL		90

Q20 Are you a veteran of the United States Armed Forces?

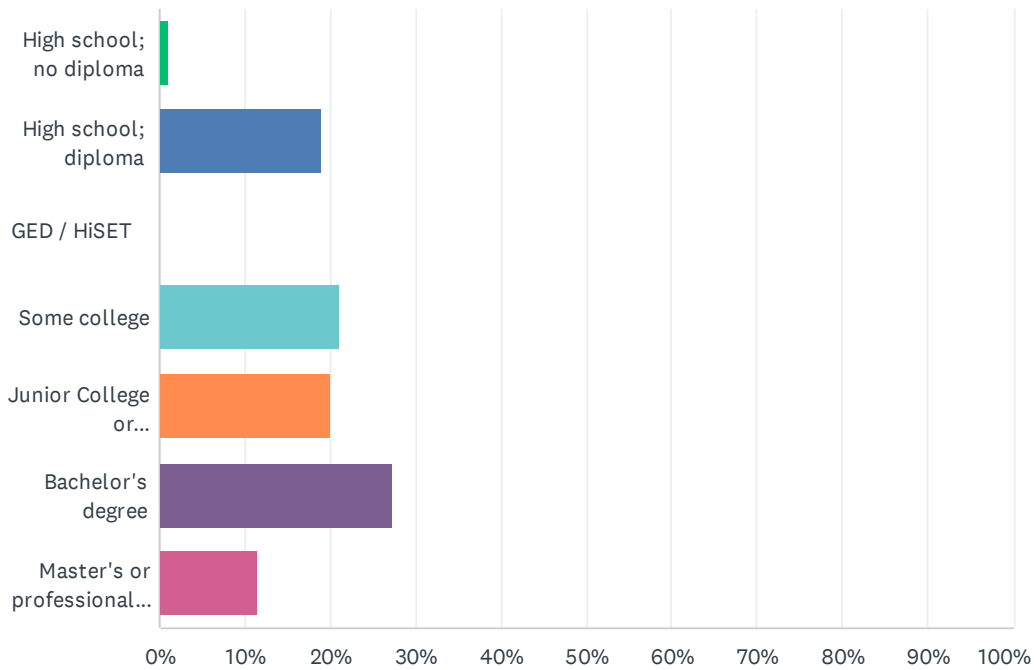
Answered: 93 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	10.75%	10
No	89.25%	83
TOTAL		93

Q21 Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?

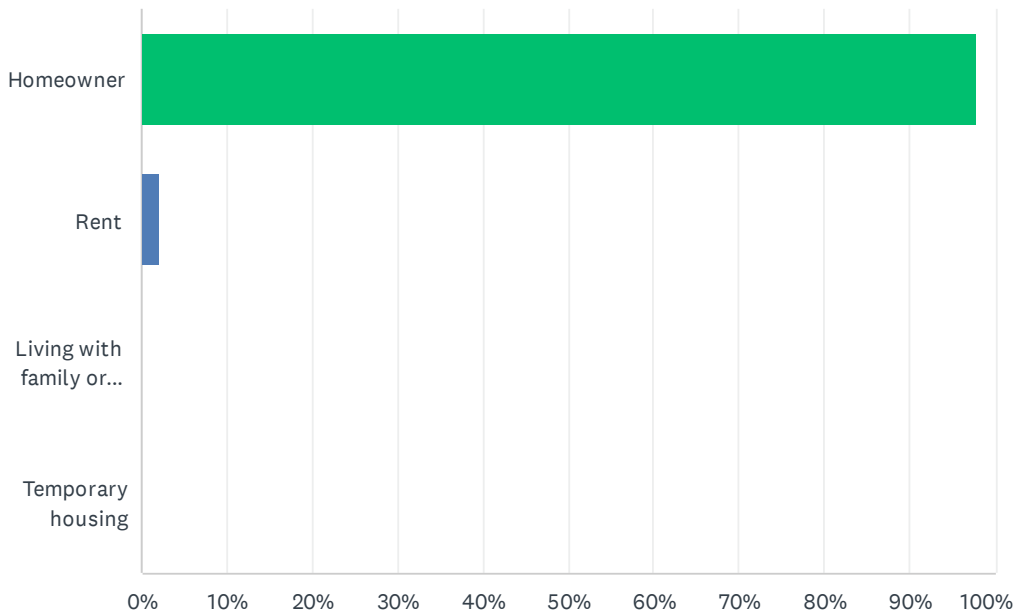
Answered: 95 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
High school; no diploma	1.05%	1
High school; diploma	18.95%	18
GED / HiSET	0.00%	0
Some college	21.05%	20
Junior College or Vocational/Technical School, Associate's degree	20.00%	19
Bachelor's degree	27.37%	26
Master's or professional degree	11.58%	11
TOTAL		95

Q22 Which of the following best describes your housing situation?

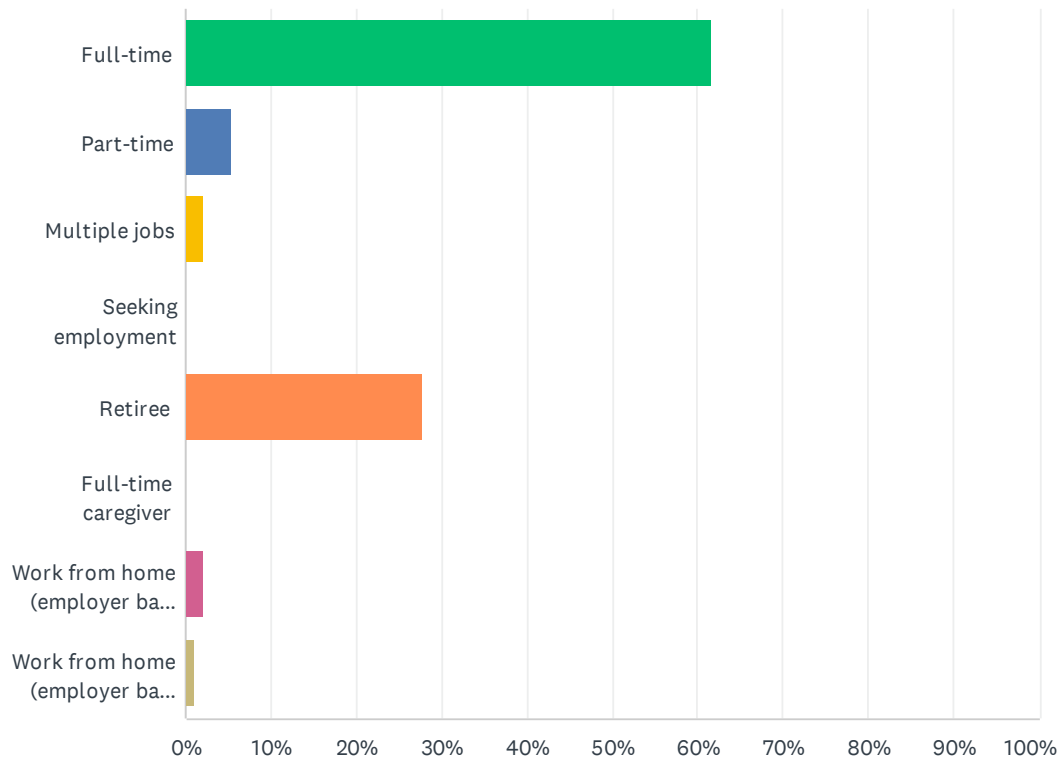
Answered: 93 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Homeowner	97.85%	91
Rent	2.15%	2
Living with family or friends	0.00%	0
Temporary housing	0.00%	0
TOTAL		93

Q23 Which of the following best describes your employment situation?

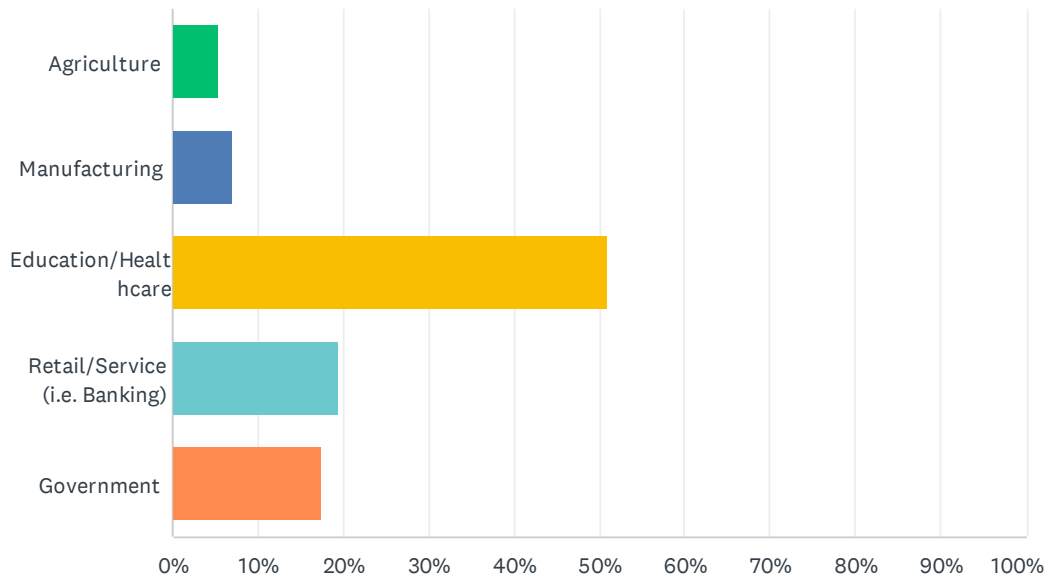
Answered: 94 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Full-time	61.70%	58
Part-time	5.32%	5
Multiple jobs	2.13%	2
Seeking employment	0.00%	0
Retiree	27.66%	26
Full-time caregiver	0.00%	0
Work from home (employer based within Lee County)	2.13%	2
Work from home (employer based outside Lee County)	1.06%	1
TOTAL		94

Q24 How would you classify your current primary job?

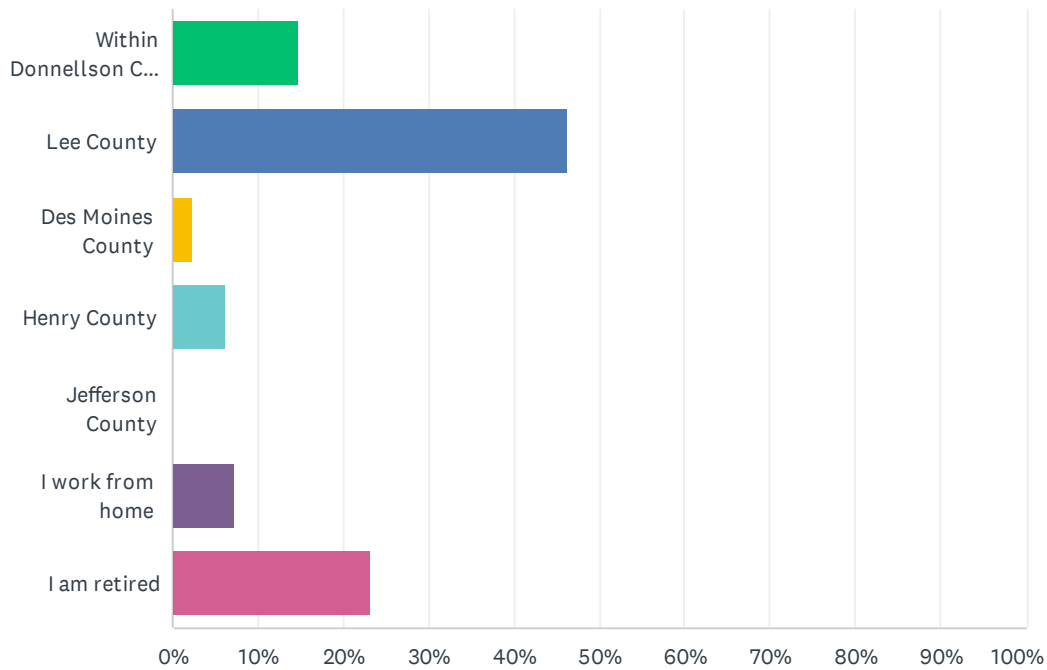
Answered: 57 Skipped: 45



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agriculture	5.26%	3
Manufacturing	7.02%	4
Education/Healthcare	50.88%	29
Retail/Service (i.e. Banking)	19.30%	11
Government	17.54%	10
TOTAL		57

Q25 Where do you work?

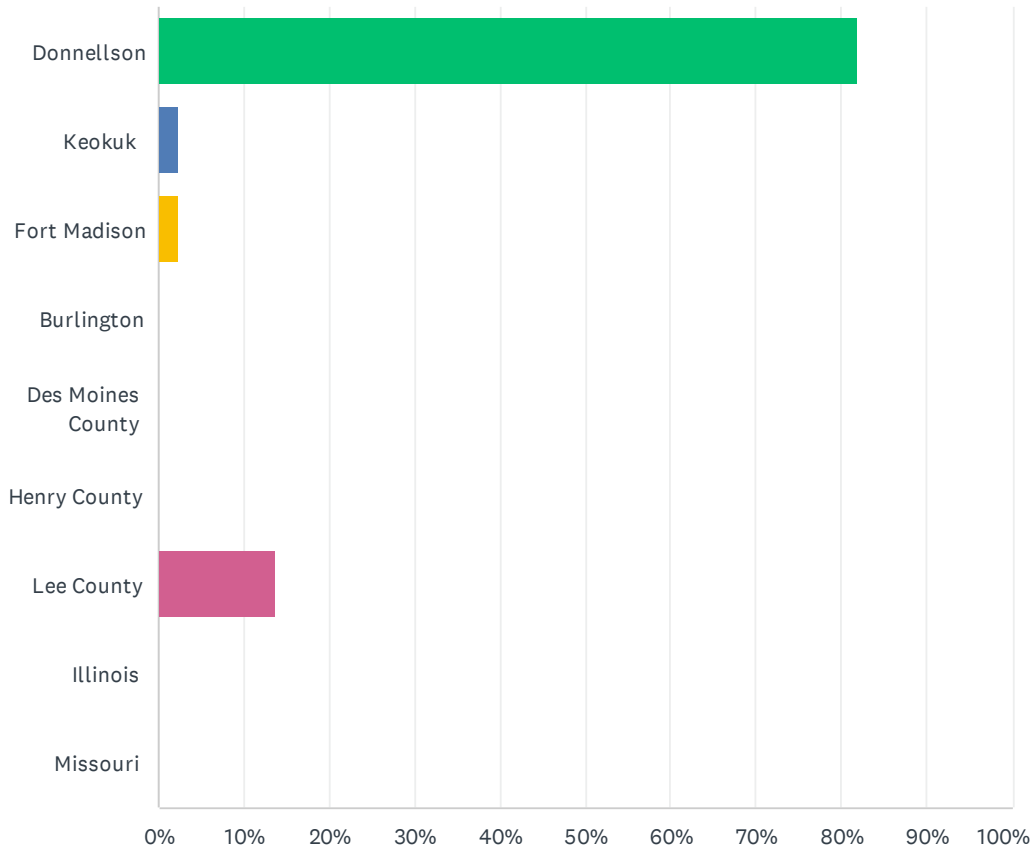
Answered: 82 Skipped: 20



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Within Donnellson City limits	14.63%	12
Lee County	46.34%	38
Des Moines County	2.44%	2
Henry County	6.10%	5
Jefferson County	0.00%	0
I work from home	7.32%	6
I am retired	23.17%	19
TOTAL		82

Q26 Where do you live?

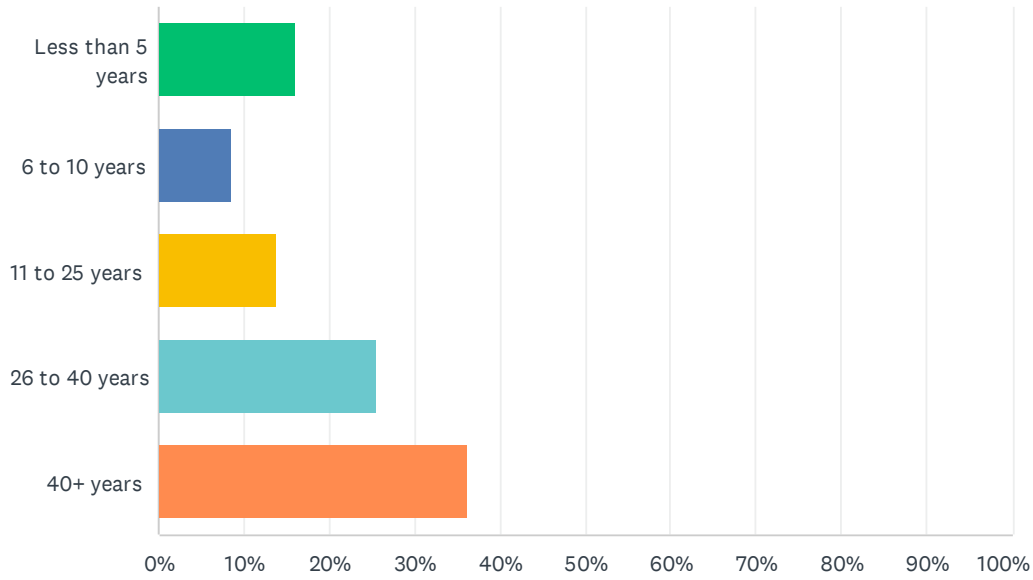
Answered: 88 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Donnellson	81.82%	72
Keokuk	2.27%	2
Fort Madison	2.27%	2
Burlington	0.00%	0
Des Moines County	0.00%	0
Henry County	0.00%	0
Lee County	13.64%	12
Illinois	0.00%	0
Missouri	0.00%	0
TOTAL		88

Q27 How long have you lived or worked in the Donnellson area?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 5 years	15.96%	15
6 to 10 years	8.51%	8
11 to 25 years	13.83%	13
26 to 40 years	25.53%	24
40+ years	36.17%	34
TOTAL		94

Q28 Thank you for taking the survey. If you would like to enter a drawing to win a chance at a \$25 Casey's gift card, please provide your phone or email below:

Answered: 40 Skipped: 62

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Name	0.00%	0
Company	0.00%	0
Address	0.00%	0
Address 2	0.00%	0
City/Town	0.00%	0
State/Province	0.00%	0
ZIP/Postal Code	0.00%	0
Country	0.00%	0
Email Address	85.00%	34
Phone Number	90.00%	36