Great River Region transportation & development plan 2055



THE LONG RANGE PLAN for SOUTHEAST IOWA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

Adopted July 28, 2023

Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission
211 N Gear Avenue, Suite 100
West Burlington, IA 52655

RESOLUTION OF APPROVAL

RESOLUTION #178-2023
INTRODUCED BY: SEIRPC

INTENT: ADOPT GREAT RIVER REGION TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN - 2055 SERVING AS REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES (CEDS) AND LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)

WHEREAS, the Great River Region Transportation and Development Plan 2055 is a regional long-range plan to move the Southeast Iowa Region forward on shared strategies regarding economic development, community development, and transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Great River Region Transportation and Development Plan 2055 serves as the regional LRTP, is required to be updated every 5 years to qualify for Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) planning funds, and has been developed in compliance with Iowa DOT guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the Great River Region Transportation and Development Plan 2055 serves as the regional CEDS, is required to be updated every 5 years for SEIRPC to qualify for US Economic Development Administration (EDA) planning assistance, and has been developed in compliance with EDA guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the Great River Region Transportation and Development Plan 2055 was developed in accordance with the approved Public Participation plan and included input of Southeast Iowa residents expressed through surveys, interviews, public meetings, and a public hearing; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, The Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission Board of Directors accepts and receives the Great River Region Transportation and Development Plan 2055 update on this ___ Day of July 2023.

_____
Brent Schleisman, Chairman

_____
Mike Norris, SEIRPC Executive Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CEDS STEERING COMMITTEE

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JENNY STEFFENSMEIER, *Steffensmeier Welding and Manufacturing*
RYAN NAGROCKI, *Midwest Realty Group*
MEG RICHTMAN, *Iowa Wesleyan University*
BRAD QUIGLEY, *Louisa County Board of Supervisors*
JACOB NYE, *IBEW Local 13*
JASON HUTCHESON, *Great River Health Systems*
GREG MOELLER, *Mt. Pleasant Area Chamber Alliance*
MATT MOHRFELD, *City of Fort Madison*
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A special thank you to our regional stakeholder interviewees, the near 400 individuals that participated in the CEDS-LRTP public survey, and those that attended our public meetings!!

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



"The Great River CEDs plan is a regional effort to identify strengths, weaknesses and priorities to move the region forward on shared strategies regarding economic development, community development and transportation."

Dear Southeast Iowans –

The Southeast Iowa Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy or CEDS is Southeast Iowa's regional development plan. It includes the topics of transportation, community development, and economic development priorities. The CEDS also guides and helps prioritizes SEIRPC's work in the region.

Since 1978 SEIRPC has brought the region together via a regional plan to discuss the future and how to improve it. The plan most typically identifies trends, priorities and implementation strategies.

Some highlights of the impact from 2017-2022 the CEDS has helped bring to southeast Iowa via SEIRPC activities:

- $18 million in federal transportation funds programmed
- 600,000+ public transit rides
- $78 million in water and sewer grants and loans secured and administered
- 200 jobs created or retained with assistance from revolving loan funds
- $1.8 million loaned from revolving loan funds for businesses
- 97 housing down payment assistance projects
- $9.7 million secured in housing grants
- 111 housing units rehabilitated
- $5.7 secured in transportation grants for trails, roads, transload facilities, etc.
- 10 plans completed for regional communities
- $104,000,000 total financial impact to southeast Iowa 2017-2022

The Southeast Iowa CEDS is the product of many interviews, surveys, committee meetings, and hundreds of comments from residents, workers, businesses, and government leaders. The Plan sets a clear vision and strategies and reinforces the themes within a form that is highly accessible and engaging.

The CEDS will be used to focus local and regional efforts, clearly state the region's priorities, and help secure outside funds from state, federal, and private organizations.

Our region deserves the ambitious vision and aggressive strategies in the plan. SEIRPC is committed to help regional governments, businesses, non-profits, and individuals realize the vision.

Mike Norris
Executive Director, SEIRPC

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FUTURE

Your Great River CEDs Plan



The Great River Region Transportation and Development 2055 Plan is a long-range planning document that expresses the community vision, goals, objectives, policies, and strategies for the future.

SEIRPC is required by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Southeast Iowa every five years. The regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is also required to be updated every 5 years, by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT). Both plans are regional efforts to identify strengths, weaknesses and trends; both require the development of community-based priorities and preferred outcomes for the Southeast Iowa Region.

The 2055 Plan represents the integration of those plans and other regular assessments in Southeast Iowa. It includes recommended strategies and specific action items to pursue, as well as a series of performance measures to track progress over time. This comprehensive approach has proven to be an effective way to document the overall goals and objectives of the community. It will consider and support the 10 federal planning factors outlined to the right.

Federal Planning Factors

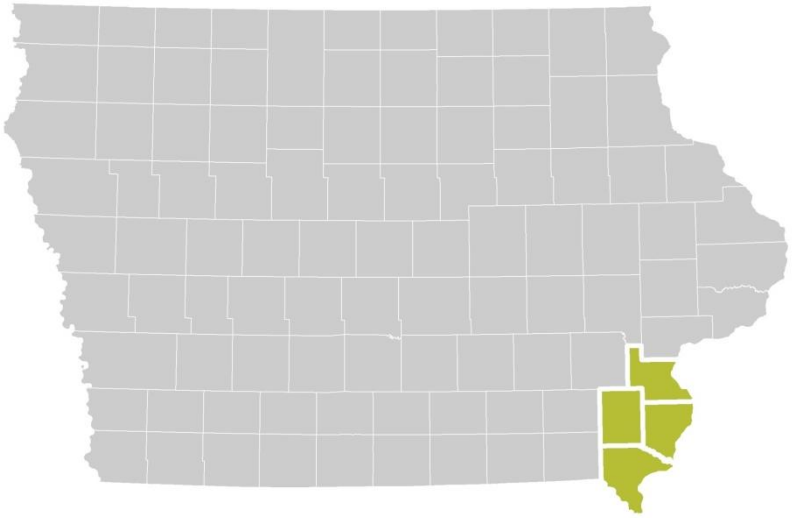
1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
4. Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
7. Promote efficient system management and operation.
8. Emphasize preservation of the existing transportation system.
9. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.
10. Enhance travel and tourism.



introduction 1



REGIONAL OVERVIEW



Lee
Louisa
Henry
Des Moines

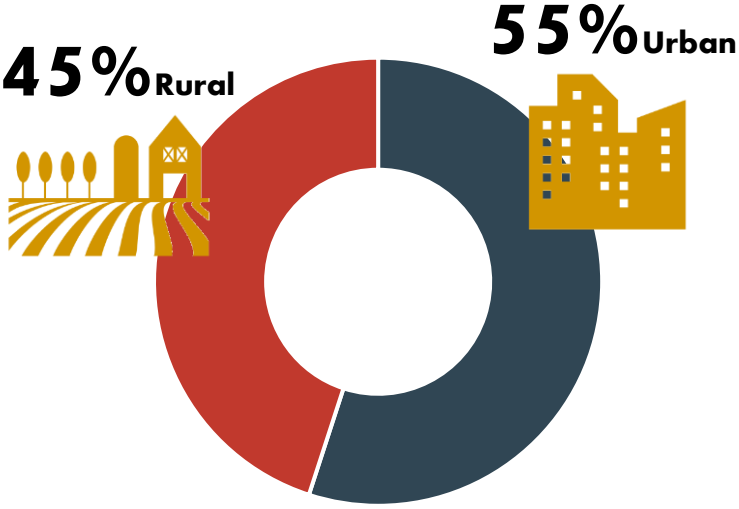
4 Counties

31 Municipalities

104,000 Population of 4 counties

24,000 Population of the largest city (Burlington)

<4,000 Population of all but four municipalities (Fort Madison, Mount Pleasant, Keokuk, Burlington)



55%

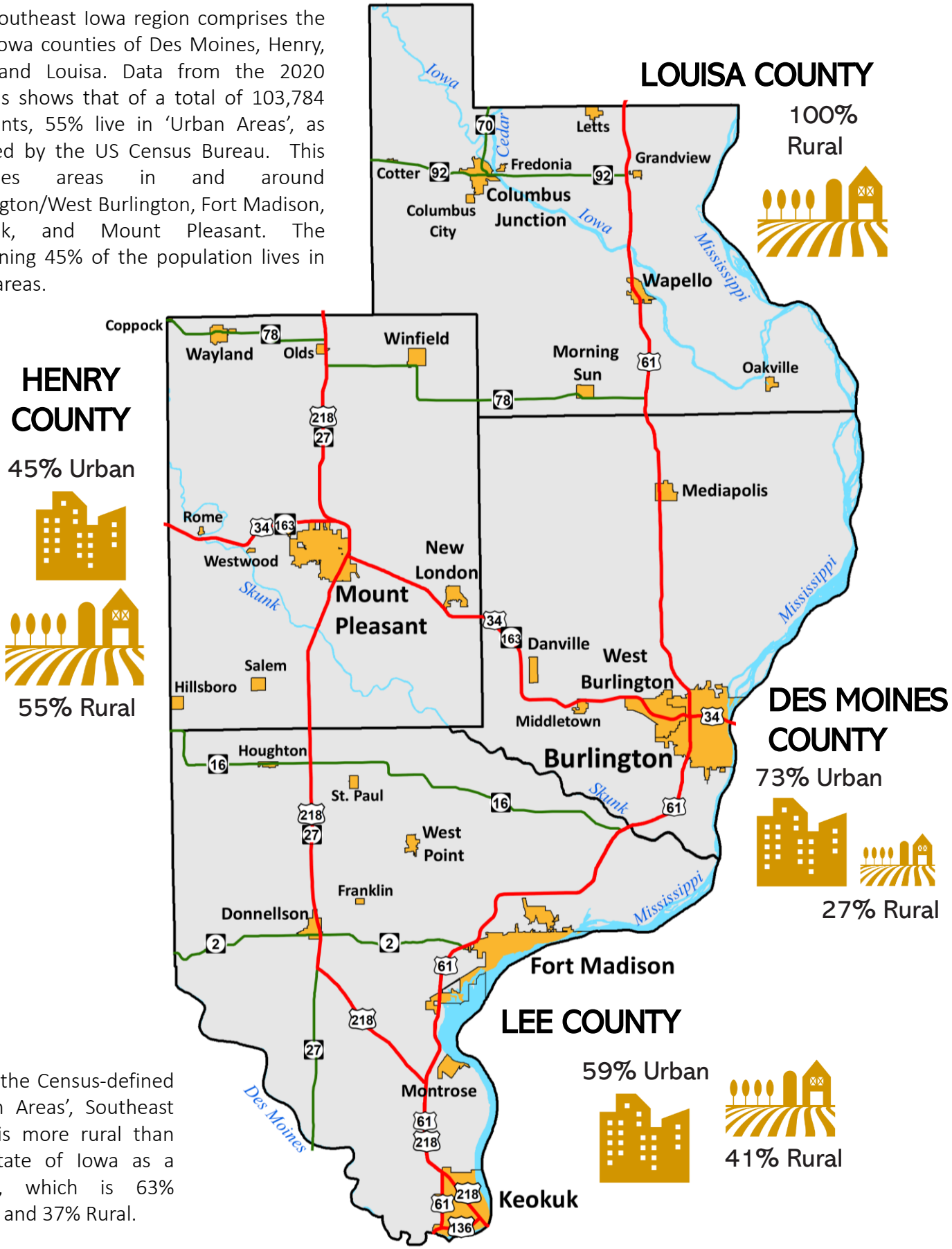
of population classified as Urban

45%

of population classified as Rural

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The Southeast Iowa region comprises the four Iowa counties of Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa. Data from the 2020 Census shows that of a total of 103,784 residents, 55% live in 'Urban Areas', as defined by the US Census Bureau. This includes areas in and around Burlington/West Burlington, Fort Madison, Keokuk, and Mount Pleasant. The remaining 45% of the population lives in rural areas.



Using the Census-defined 'Urban Areas', Southeast Iowa is more rural than the State of Iowa as a whole, which is 63% Urban and 37% Rural.

THIS IS YOUR PLAN



The Great River Region Transportation and Development 2055 Plan is a long-range planning document that expresses the community vision, goals, objectives, policies, and strategies for the future.

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The 2055 Plan represents the integration of those plans and other regular assessments in Southeast Iowa. It includes recommended strategies and specific action items to pursue, as well as a series of performance measures to track progress over time. This comprehensive approach has proven to be an effective way to document the overall goals and objectives of the community.

A successful regional plan must involve the input and participation of regional stakeholders including public entities, private companies, citizens, civic and philanthropic organizations, educational institutions, and others. Reaching out to as many stakeholders as possible, such participation creates a broad sense of ownership in the plan and fosters commitment to the implementation of the plan.

The Great River Region 2055 Plan applied a multi-pronged outreach approach to garner as much public input and consensus as possible. When we say that "this plan is your plan" we mean it literally, as the 2055 Plan strategies come directly from our previous plans, partners' planning documents, and citizen input.

The process started with the formation of the CEDS steering committee that is geographically balanced among the region's four counties and includes participation from the public sector, private sector, education institutions, labor groups, and other community leaders. This group established the foundation for the diverse public input process that included public meetings, a region wide online survey, approximately 20 interviews with local government, private businesses, manufacturers, economic development groups, schools and education, and healthcare entities throughout Southeast Iowa.

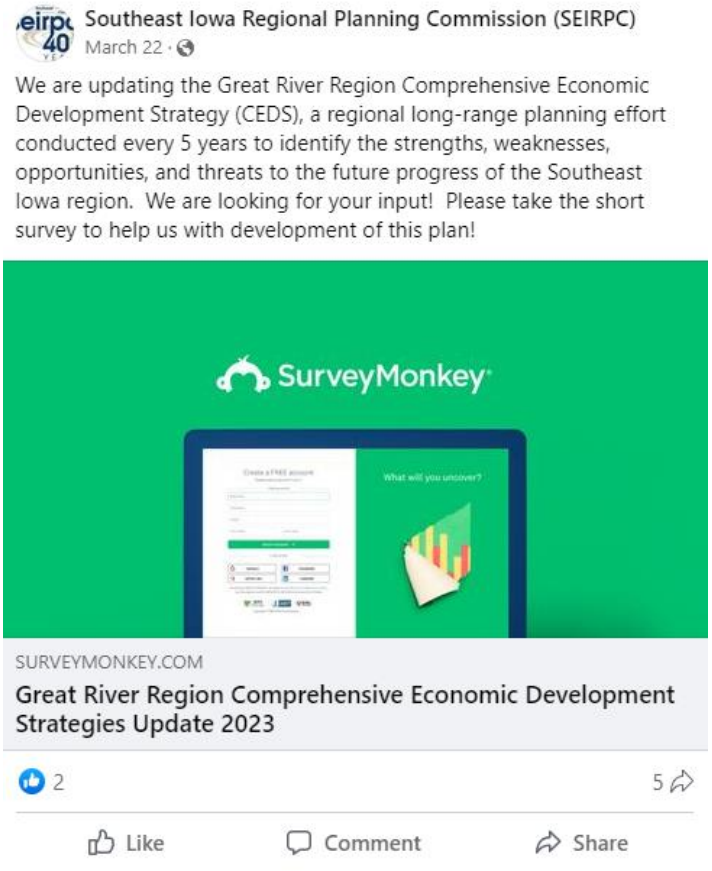
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

In today's busy world, SEIRPC looks for new ways to engage the public and generate interest. Public input details and results are included in Appendix A. In the end, a large, diverse, and wide-ranging stakeholders participated in the Great River Region Transportation and Development Plan process, expressing their thoughts, values, goals, and visions for Southeast Iowa.

1.

Social Media

In this age of technology, SEIRPC used web-based tools to reach out to many constituents. The SEIRPC Facebook page provides a live forum for updates, discussions, and opportunities to get involved in the process. Other tools such as SEIPRC monthly newsletter continued to reach a broad audience.





2.

CEDS Steering Committee

Four steering committee meetings were held throughout plan development to determine the process, review public input, highlight the key data, discuss public input, and provide feedback on key strategies and action items. The first meeting was to provide a background on the Transportation and Development Plan, its purpose, how the plan is used and how it is developed. The role of the Steering Committee was also described during this meeting. Subsequent meetings were used to review data and trends, public input and to develop strategies that will prepare the region to meet the vision outlined within.



"If we want to grow our population and fill jobs, we are going to have to be more creative in our recruitment from other areas of the US and consider immigration more strategically."

- Private Sector Rep

"Perception of our region is good. Reality is better!"

- Human Resource Professional

"We need to education towards regional job opportunities and make improvements to our communities that will keep the talent here after students graduate."

- School Reps

"Demand for quality recreation such as parks and trails and other cultural amenities is there and necessary to attract workforce."

- Healthcare

"Housing is still an issue. Availability and options are low, cost to build new is high, still have aging neighborhoods to rehab!!"

- ALL Sectors



3.

Stakeholder Interviews

SEIRPC staff conducted interviews in person, over the phone, and over Zoom from March through May 2023. Contacts, selected in advance by SEIRPC identifying stakeholders that represent a variety of sectors including city government, private sector, manufacturers, education, transportation, utilities, or health care, with an effort made to identify one or more stakeholders from each of the four counties.

In addition to new interviews, recent interview responses from other planning projects, such as comprehensive plan updates and COVID-19 Long Term Economic Recovery Plan were analyzed for key input that was valuable to this planning effort.



"A good plan is only as good as the ideas, input, and data that we use to develop it. This is why we have worked hard to set up interviews with key stakeholders in Southeast Iowa and create a survey that allows people to provide us with key needs in the region and their ideas to fix these needs."

Mike Norris,
SEIRPC Executive Director

Questions pertained to 3 topics –

Transportation | Community Development | Economic Development

Interview Organization	County	Type
Southeast Iowa Medical Center	Regional	Healthcare
Fusion Tech Integrated	Des Moines	Private Sector
City of Burlington/West Burlington	Des Moines	Local Government
Burlington and Danville Community School Districts	Des Moines	Schools
Lee County Public Health	Lee	Healthcare
Lee County Economic Development Group	Lee	Economic Development
City of Fort Madison	Lee	Local Government
Roquette, Kempker's True Value, Steffensmeier Welding, and Climax Molybdenum	Lee	Private Sector
Tyson Foods	Louisa	Private Sector
Columbus Community and Wapello School Districts	Louisa	Schools
City of Wapello/Columbus Junction	Louisa	Local Government
Mount Pleasant Area Chamber of Commerce	Henry	Economic Development
Mount Pleasant and WACO Community Schools	Henry	Schools
Wal-Mart Distribution Center	Henry	Private Sector
Iowa DOT District 5	Regional	Transportation
County Engineers – Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa	Regional	Transportation
CDM Commercial Real Estate	Regional	Private Sector
Labor Unions – Local 150 IUOE and Local 2003 IUPAT	Regional	Labor

4.

Regional Survey

The regional survey was used to identify strengths, weaknesses, priority projects in the Southeast Iowa related to transportation , economic development, and community development. The 9-question survey was made available to the public through SurveyMonkey.com in March and April 2023.

Surveys were open for any input from the general public, with advertisements made via local newspaper, Facebook, regional newsletters, and websites. Direct e-mails were also sent to regional leaders. The survey questions and statistics are in Appendix B.

392 Total Responses



Des Moines County – 157 responses (41%)

Lee County – 121 responses (32%)

Henry County – 49 responses (13%)

Louisa County – 53 responses (14%)

Outside SEIRPC region – 12 responses (3%)

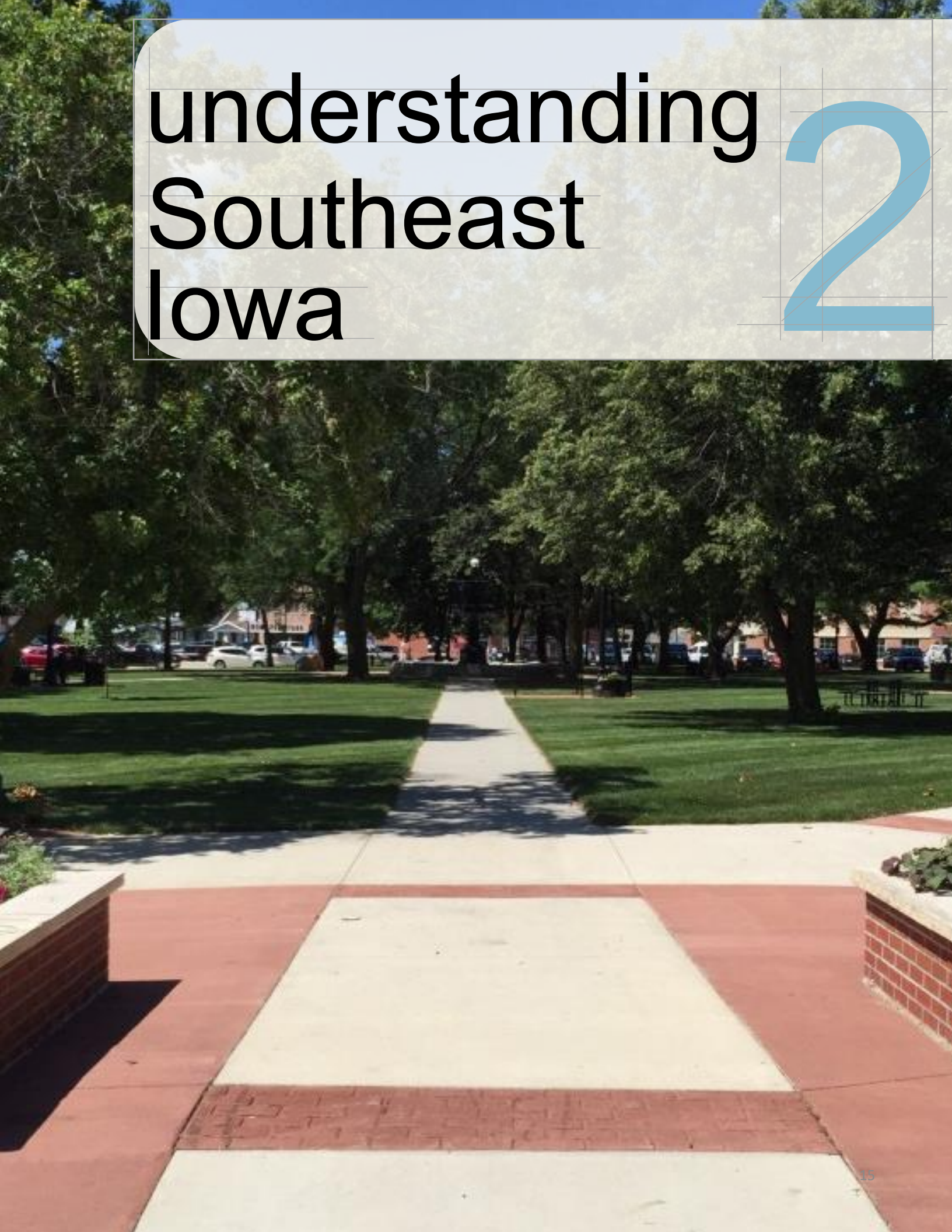
30% Increased Response Rate



From 2017 CEDs/ LRTP update

understanding Southeast Iowa

2



HISTORY OF SOUTHEAST IOWA, 1800 TO 2018

UNDERSTANDING OUR PAST, PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

Sociocultural



1812
The military post, Fort Madison, established on the site of the future city; It is soon destroyed and abandoned

1832
Black Hawk Purchase opens land west of the Mississippi River for European settlement.

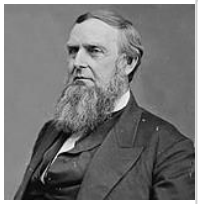
1837
Burlington becomes the first incorporated City in Southeast Iowa; also serves briefly as capital of the Iowa Territory



1842
The college now known as Iowa Wesleyan University (IWU) is established in the recently settled town of Mount Pleasant



1846
Mormon exodus from Nauvoo, Illinois begins, with many camping temporarily near Montrose; Iowa gains statehood that same year



1865
Mount Pleasant native James Harlan, then US Senator from Iowa, appointed as US Secretary of the Interior by President Lincoln, father-in-law to Harlan's daughter

1869
Burlington-born Arabella Mansfield becomes the first woman in America with a license to practice law, sworn in at Mount Pleasant's Union Block building.



1887
Renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold born in Burlington; Grandfather Charles Starker serves as a landscape architect for Snake Alley, built 7 years later

1920
One of the first Junior Colleges in Iowa is established at the new Burlington High School building.

Transportation

1805
Zebulon Pike explores the upper Mississippi River, with a group of Natives helping him cross the Des Moines Rapids (near present day Keokuk)



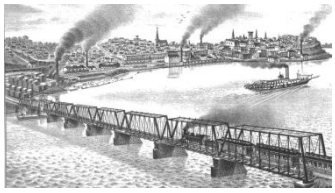
1829
John Jacob Astor established fur trading posts at present-day Burlington and Keokuk



1855
Chicago, Burlington & Quincy (CB&Q) Railroad completed through Des Moines and Henry Counties; the company is headed for many years by Charles Perkins of Burlington

1858
Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad completed through northern Louisa County; influences the later establishment of Columbus Junction, where this line met a branch of the CB&Q

1868-1871
Burlington and Keokuk Rail Bridges completed across the Mississippi River, bringing about an era of economic prosperity



1883
CB&Q Railroad Shops completed in 1883; City of West Burlington founded for CB&Q workers' housing

1887
Fort Madison Rail Bridge completed across Mississippi River, with Santa Fe Railroad establishing a new route through Lee County, along with repair shops in Fort Madison



1913
Mississippi River Lock and Dam No. 19 completed at Keokuk, eliminating the obstacle of the Des Moines Rapids



1914
'Convict Highway', early prototype paved roadway completed using State prison labor at Fredonia

Sociocultural



1940
Iowa Army Ammunition Plant (IAAAP) established by Middletown, on 20,000 acres acquired by the US government for producing war munitions



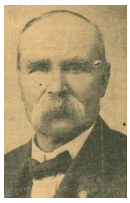
1950
The first Midwest Old Threshers Reunion is held in Mount Pleasant, the beginning of a yearly tradition that continues to this day

1961
The Rath meat packing plant (now Tyson Foods) is opened at Columbus Junction, and has since attracted a large number of immigrants from Latin America and Southeast Asia

1967
Southeastern Community College established, consolidating two junior colleges in Burlington and Keokuk.

Transportation

1928
90-year old Alex Coleman – who personally hated to drive – donates $300,000 to the public for construction of a 10-mile paved road east of Hillsboro, to improve transportation for area farmers.



1943
First established in 1929, the Burlington Municipal Airport is expanded for commercial service, with newly paved runways. Keokuk's first airport opens 3 years later.

1967
Passenger train service eliminated in Keokuk, signaling an end to the heyday of American rail transportation; Numerous low-traffic freight lines in the region are closed by 1990

1970
Construction begins on the future US 34 freeway through Burlington, the region's first limited access highway

1973

Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission initially established, encompassing the same 4-county region it represents today. SEIBUS is later established as the regional transit provider.

1980
Southeast Iowa reaches its peak population of 120,000. The subsequent Farm Crisis causes a decrease statewide.



1986
Burlington, Keokuk, and Fort Madison are among the first 5 cities in Iowa to establish a Main Street program. Mount Pleasant starts its own soon after.



1999
Former Mount Pleasant Mayor Tom Vilsack elected Governor of Iowa; later appointed US Secretary of Agriculture

2008
Serious flooding impacts the region's low-lying river communities, particularly Oakville, where SEIRPC assists with buyouts of many flood-damaged properties



2013-2015
Iowa Fertilizer Plant established near Wever in Lee County – one of the largest economic development projects in Iowa in recent years

1989
The region's first paved multi-use trail segment is completed in Mount Pleasant, near the Old Threshers Grounds



1993
Great River Bridge opens at Burlington, replacing the 2-lane MacArthur Bridge from 1917 – just months after the devastating Great Flood of 1993



2004
East-west 4-lane highway completed from Burlington to Des Moines (US 34 and Iowa 163).

2006
Completion of the Avenue of the Saints, a 4-lane highway from St. Paul to St. Louis, first envisioned 20 years earlier by Mount Pleasant businessman Ernie Hayes.

2017
First segment of 4-lane highway completed for Highway 61 between Burlington and Muscatine County

RECENT EVENTS (2019 TO 2023) SINCE THE LAST PLAN UPDATE

THAT WILL IMPACT THE FUTURE OF SOUTHEAST IOWA

Tourism

River Boats Cruise Stops

Viking Cruise Lines is now making stops in Burlington and Fort Madison, with other Mississippi Cruise ships increasing the number of stops already committed





Indoor Sports Facilities and Sports Tourism

The Turf indoor sports "bubble" opened in 2019 for indoor soccer, baseball, and softball events increasing tourism opportunities in winter months in Southeast Iowa. In 2022, a groundbreaking for The Courts was completed to create space for indoor volleyball, basketball, and pickleball events. It is anticipated that this facility will open in fall 2023, offering additional indoor sports in Southeast Iowa.



Transportation

Merger of Canadian Pacific and KC Southern

CP completed its acquisition of the KCS in late 2021. This merger will generate significantly more traffic through Louisa County due to the expanded rail network that was created by the merger.



Natural Gas Shortage, Pipeline Expansions

A recent study has shown that the existing natural gas pipeline network has reached its peak levels, limiting potential growth for businesses that need additional or new capacity. Additionally, CO2 and Ammonia pipelines will be built or expanded in the coming years through Southeast Iowa.

Highway 61 Expansion Continues

Highway 61 expansion through Des Moines County has continued with the recent completion of new highway between Burlington and Mediapolis. Continued expansion is planned from south of Mediapolis north to Iowa Highway 92.



RECENT EVENTS (2019 TO 2023) CONTINUED

Impactful Transportation and Infrastructure Projects

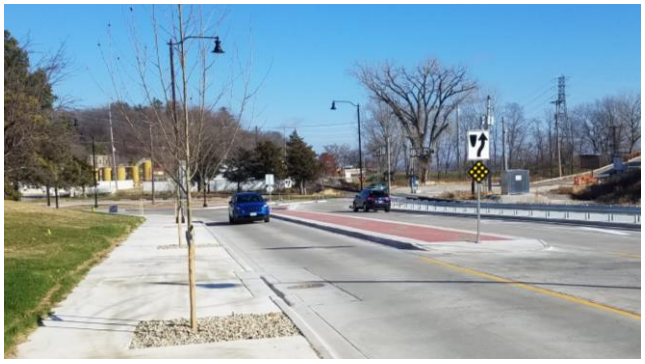
Transportation Projects

Large scale transportation projects have been completed throughout the region making a huge impact including Burlington TIGER Grant, Fort Madison Marina, new trails being built (Burlington, West Burlington, Keokuk, Mount Pleasant, Fort Madison, Columbus Junction), Highway 61 4 land expansion, Fort Madison Amtrak depot location, Burlington Amtrak depot renovations, and many other projects regionally.



Broadband Projects

Efforts are being made between public entities and private providers to expand broadband in rural areas of Southeast Iowa, in Henry and Lee Counties









Water and Sewer Projects

Efforts are being made between public entities and private providers to expand broadband in rural areas of Southeast Iowa, in Henry and Lee Counties



RECENT EVENTS (2019 TO 2023) CONTINUED

Education

Iowa Wesleyan to close after 181 years

IOWA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
1842

Iowa Wesleyan Closes Campus

Iowa Wesleyan University (IWU) was the only four-year post-secondary institution located in Southeast Iowa having been founded in 1842, four years prior to statehood. It was the oldest private post-secondary institution in Iowa prior to its announced closing in March 2023. The economic impact of its closing will be felt most directly within the Mount Pleasant and Henry County area but will have a significant across all Southeast Iowa.



SCC Increases Enrollment

SCC has continued to invest heavily over the past 5 years in upgrades to campus facilities, add new academic programs, add new athletic programs, and create new partnerships to the benefit of students. This investment has led to enrollment growth for 5 straight semesters into Fall 2022.

Housing

Homes of Iowa

Homes for Iowa, Inc. is a new 501(c)(3) organization which exists to address Iowa's housing shortage, train offenders in skilled trades and reduce recidivism by partnering with the Iowa Department of Corrections to build homes that can be delivered across the state of Iowa. SEIRPC was heavily involved in the creation or the organization and has seen several Homes for Iowa houses brought to Southeast Iowa.



Housing Studies Completed

Housing studies have been completed for Lee and Des Moines Counties in recent years. These studies have shown a need for new housing in a variety of types, value ranges, and locations throughout each county. Ultimately, it shows the continued need to invest in housing to replace existing dilapidated housing and the need for new types of housing that are not currently on the market today.

Downtown Residential Development

A variety of grants, tax credits, local incentives, and federal opportunity zones, have generated a resurgence of downtown housing options in Southeast Iowa including historic rehab of structures and new buildings on infill lots. Projects have happened in Wapello, Burlington, Fort Madison, Keokuk, and Mount Pleasant.



RECENT EVENTS (2019 TO 2023) CONTINUED

Economic Development

Regional Business Closures

In the past 5 years, several business closures have greatly impacted employment in the region and have caused a secondary impact on the local economy including closures of ADM and the hospital in Keokuk, West Liberty Foods and Iowa Wesleyan in Mount Pleasant, and GE and Dresser Rand, in Burlington.





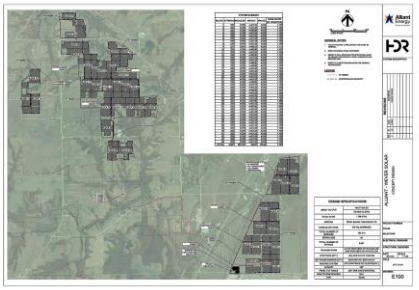




Green Energy Development

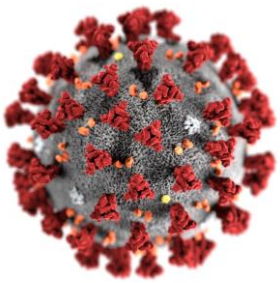
Green energy development is slowly taking shape in Southeast Iowa, with a significant number of projects to come on board over the next 5 years. In 2021, Clenera completed a solar farm project over 800 acres of land. In September 2022, Alliant Energy announced a 900-acre solar field in northern Lee County. There have been inquired from private companies in Henry and Des Moines Country regarding wind farms, leading the development of ordinances to regulation these types of developments in Des Moines County.





Regional Business Expansions/New Businesses

While there have been several business closures in recent years, there have been many exciting announcements for expansions or new business as well, including Western Smokehouse Partners, Iowa Army Ammunition Plant, and Conagra Foods.



COVID-19 Pandemic

Much like the rest of Iowa and the US, Southeast Iowa was impacted greatly by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lingering effects are still felt throughout the region, primarily in workforce shortages. Other impacts have included supply chain shortage leading to inflationary pressures, limited number of contractors for construction project, retirement of baby boomer workforce, and more focus on working from home.

Childcare Expansions

Regional employers continually mention need for childcare facilities for employees. In recent years, Keokuk and Mount Pleasant have made efforts to add new childcare facilities within their communities to help in solving this problem.

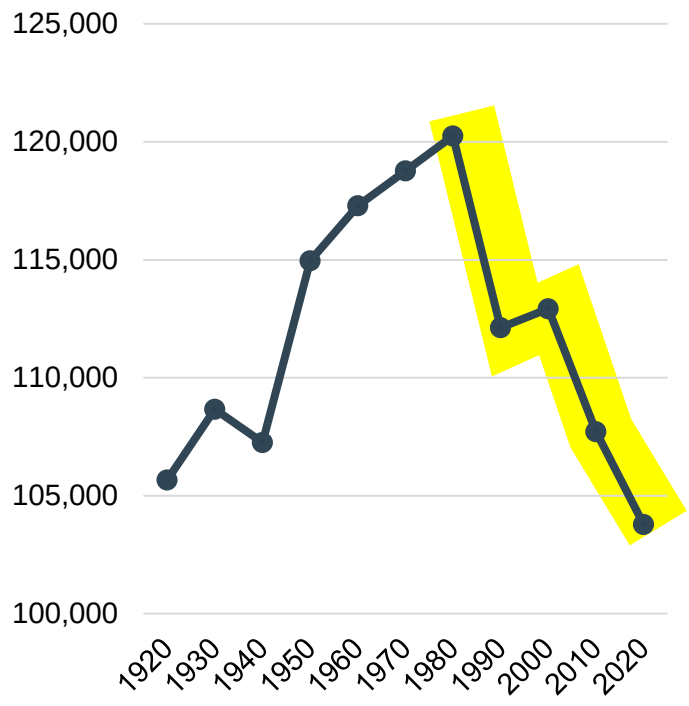


TAKE A LOOK AT SOUTHEAST IOWA!

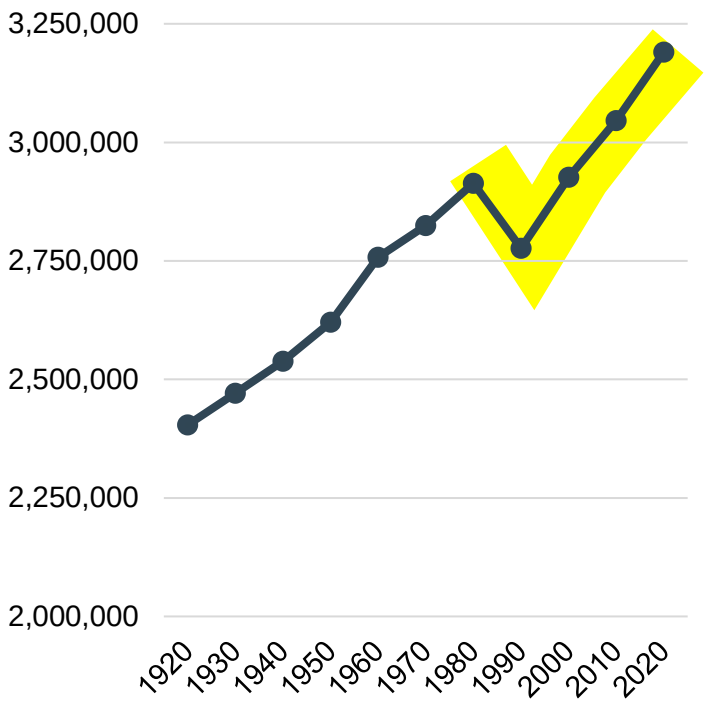
... A LOOK AT THE DATA

This chapter presents Demographic, Transportation, Housing, Economic and Community Development data. These facts help clarify assets and challenges in the 4-County Region and establish a basis for long range planning.

DEMOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS



Southeast Iowa Region



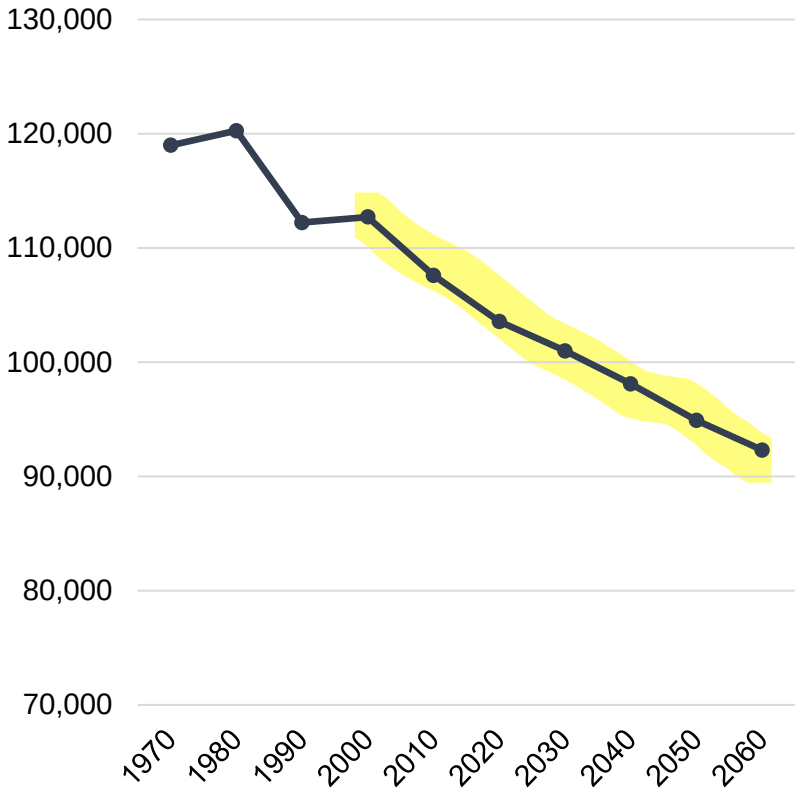
State of Iowa

Population in the State of Iowa has increased every decade, except during two periods. The first period of decline was during World War II and the second was during the 1980s recession. While not see on the chart above due to populations only shown at the start of each decade, there was a population decrease during the middle of the decade due to World War II. The recession from the Farm Crisis of the 1980s hit both Southeast Iowa and the state as a whole very hard, as both saw a significant drop in population. While the state managed to rebound successfully following that slump, Southeast Iowa has continued a downward trend.

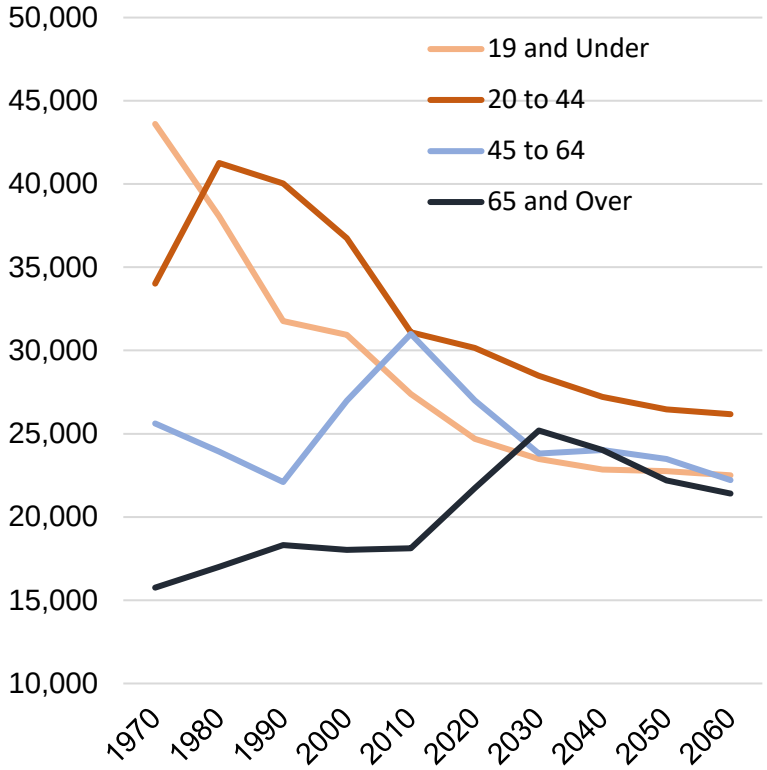
DEMOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS

The population projections below show a continual and gradual decline of population for the region through 2060 using data from Woods and Poole. This is likely caused by a variety of factors, but primarily due to out-migration and a natural population decline from age (deaths) being greater than regional in migration and reproduction rates. The downward trend in population will play a role in future transportation, economic and community development decisions moving forward, and is a major driver into key strategies outlined later in the plan.

Southeast Iowa Projected Population



Projected Population by Age Group



From Axios Des Moines article - April 2023

- Immigration and refugees have helped sustain rural areas, while domestic migration has drawn people away.
- In 2022, Iowa lost nearly 7,300 people to domestic migration, but gained nearly 7,300 international migrants, according to the census data.
- The state and U.S. need to develop policies to ease workforce immigration if they want to slow rural Iowa's bleeding population,.

However, this **TREND** is not unique to Southeast Iowa and is a statewide issue that is creating challenges across Iowa in filling employment opportunities.

"*WE HAVE A POPULATION PROBLEM IN IOWA* – more jobs than unemployed people to fill them – and the pandemic only accelerated that. That's really true across the Midwest and, to a certain degree, the country. So, we have to grow our population, and we're working on that. I would tell you we need to build communities in which people want to live. "



--Debbie Durham
Director Iowa Economic Development Authority

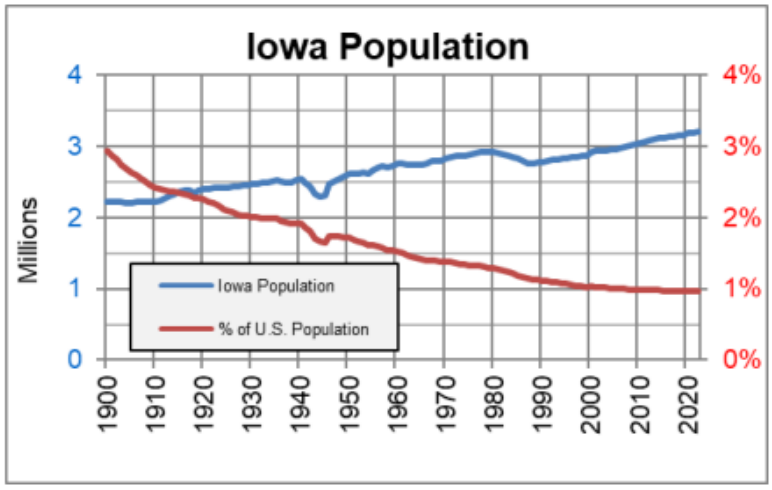
Population change from 2020 to 2022 shows a continued decline in Southeast Iowa Population. While the State of Iowa is growing, it is happening at a rate half that of the US.

Population Change (2020 to 2022)	Southeast Iowa	Iowa	United States
2020 Census Population	105,800	3,190,372	331,449,520
2022 Estimate	104,028	3,200,517	333,287,557
Net Change	-1,772	10,145	1,838,037
Percent Change	-1.7%	0.3%	0.6%

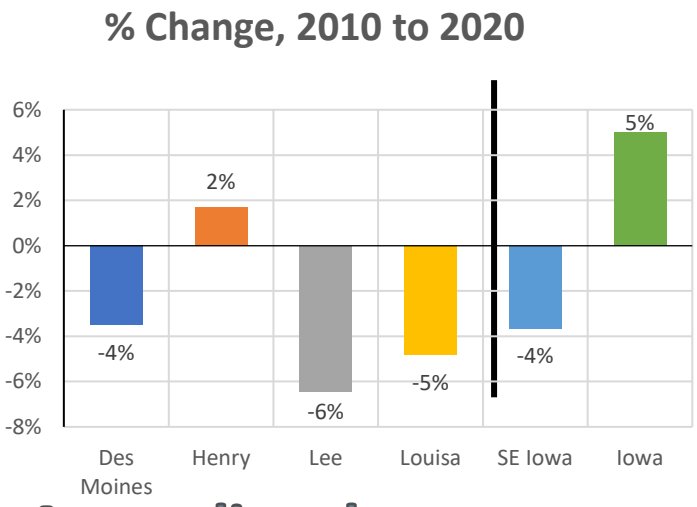
The specific components of change show domestic migration as the primary factor in people leaving both Southeast Iowa and Iowa as a whole. Birth rate also plays a large factor in this change as deaths in Southeast Iowa outpace births at a large rate. In both cases immigration is a primary factor in population stability.

Components of Change (2020 to 2022)	Southeast Iowa	Iowa	United States
Births	2,375	82,052	8,164,738
Deaths	3,193	79,003	7,733,546
Natural Change	-818	3,049	431,192
Births per death	0.74	1.04	1.06
International Migration	226	13,248	1,406,845
Domestic Migration	-1,204	-6,877	0
Net Migration	-978	6,371	1,406,845
% Migration of Net Change	55%	63%	77%
Resicual Change	24	725	0

While the population in Iowa continues to grow (specifically in urban areas) and immigration being a primary factor in this growth, the overall rate of growth is happening more slowly than that of the remainder of the US. The chart to the right highlights that while the population of Iowa is growing, it is becoming a smaller percentage of the total US population.



DEMOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS

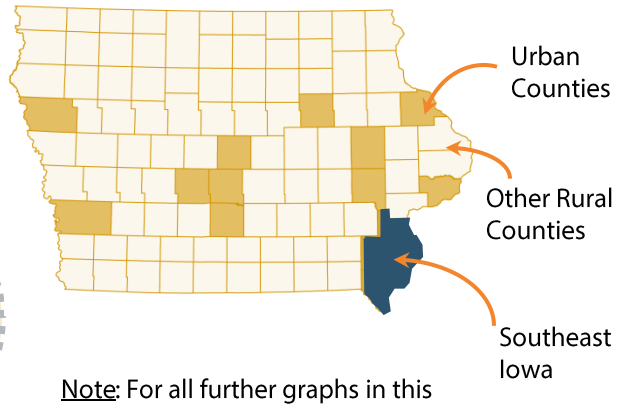


As predicted ...

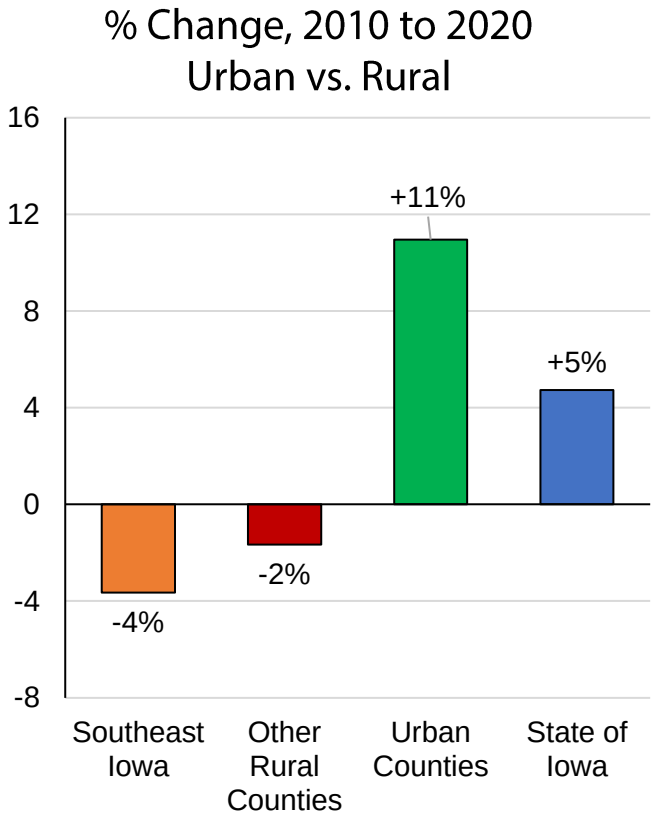
This population trend is not unique to the Southeast Iowa region. For the last 40 years, urban areas such as Des Moines and Cedar Rapids/Iowa City have consistently gained population while remainder of the state experienced a decline. However, Southeast Iowa has experienced a slightly steeper population decline since 2010, as compared to other non-urban counties in the state.

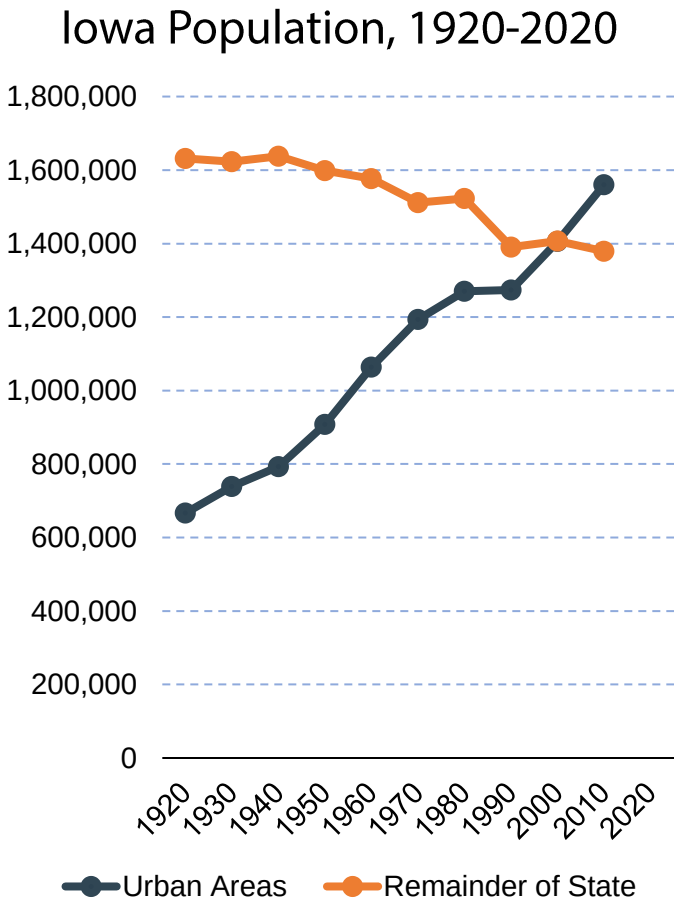
However

Southeast Iowa's population has declined by 3.7% from 2010 to 2020, after shrinking by 4.6% from 2000 to 2010, while the State grew by 4.1% and 4.7% respectively. This trend is a concern, as the state's total population is growing in nearly inverse proportion to Southeast Iowa. Henry County has grown slightly, while Lee County has decreased the fastest.



Note: For all further graphs in this document, 'Remainder of State' includes all Iowa counties minus Urban Areas AND Southeast Iowa.

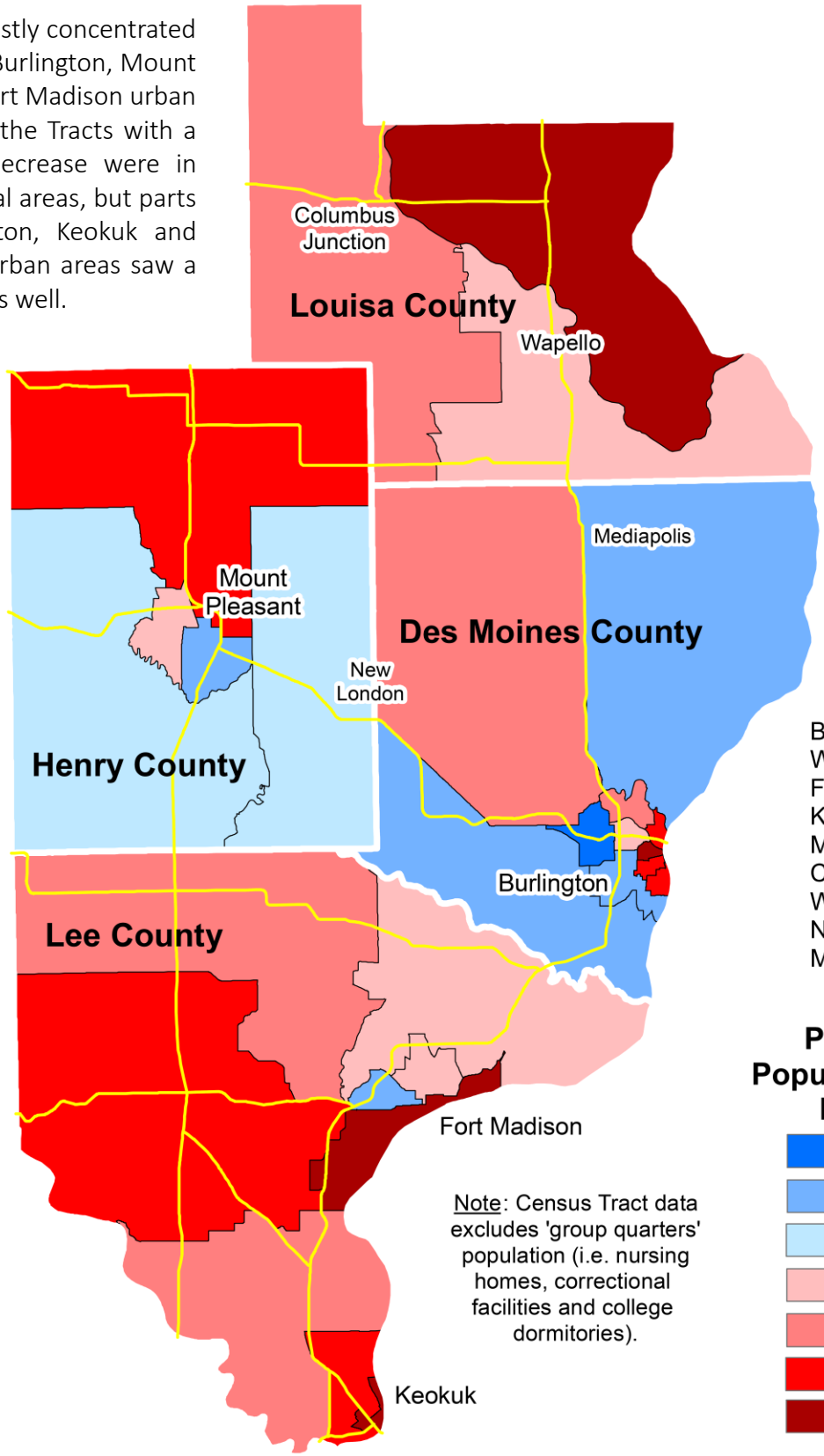




DEMOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS

When viewed at the level of Census Tracts, the rate and direction of population change varied considerably from one Tract to another between 2010 and 2020. The trend also varied from each city and County to another. However, only 8 of the 30 Tracts saw an increase in population, and only one grew by more than 5%. Of the 22 that decreased in population, 12 decreased by more than 5%.

Growth was mostly concentrated in parts of the Burlington, Mount Pleasant and Fort Madison urban areas. Most of the Tracts with a high rate of decrease were in low-density rural areas, but parts of the Burlington, Keokuk and Fort Madison urban areas saw a high decrease as well.



Full Region: -4%

Des Moines	-4%
Lee	-6%
Henry	+2%
Louisa	-5%

Burlington	-6%
West Burlington	+6%
Fort Madison	-7%
Keokuk	-8%
Mount Pleasant	+7%
Columbus Junction	-4%
Wapello	+1%
New London	+1%
Mediapolis	+8%

Percent Change in Population, 2010-2020 by Census Tracts

- Gain of 5.1 to 10%
- Gain of 2.6 to 5%
- Gain of 0.1 to 2.5%
- Loss of 0.1 to 2.5%
- Loss of 2.6 to 5%
- Loss of 5.1 to 10%
- Loss of 10.1 to 15%

Note: Census Tract data excludes 'group quarters' population (i.e. nursing homes, correctional facilities and college dormitories).

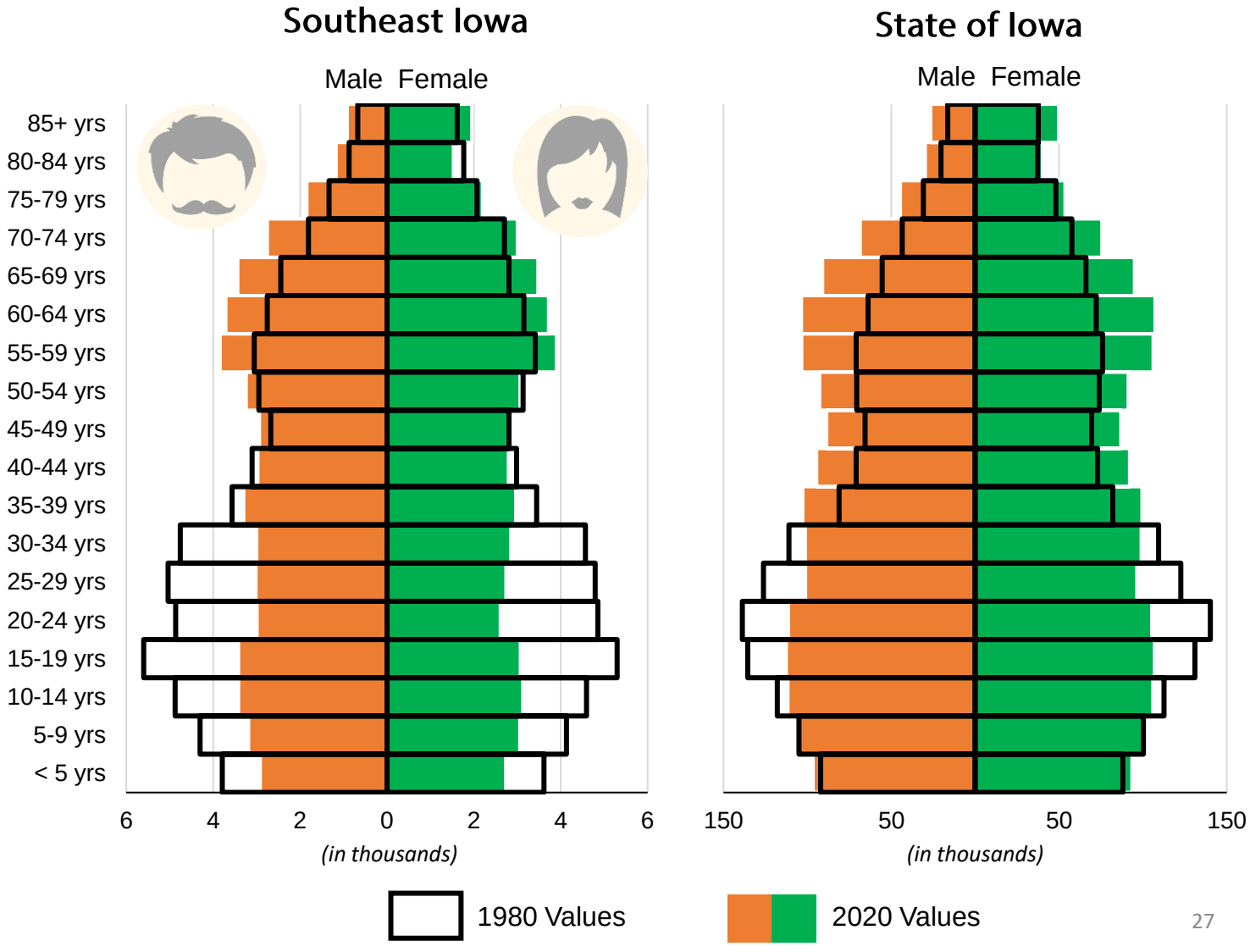
Aging Population

Typically, an overall population decrease is accompanied by an increase in median age, as many young people leave for more thriving urban/suburban areas after college, or for career advancement opportunities later on. In contrast, older people tend to stay in the same place as they reach retirement, and this trend is magnified by the larger number of people in the 'baby boom' generation, born between 1945 and 1965. Southeast Iowa's median age grew at a faster pace than Iowa as a whole over the past 40 years. As a result, its median age is now 4 years higher than that of the state, after being only 1 year higher in 1980.

MEDIAN AGE	1980	2020	% Change
Southeast Iowa	31.3 yrs	42.6 yrs	+36%
State of Iowa	30.0 yrs	38.6 yrs	+29%

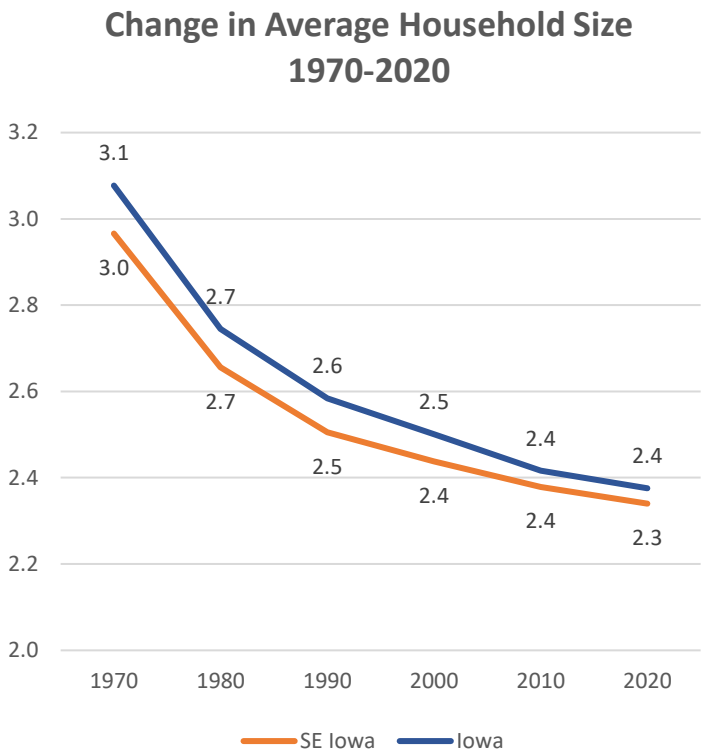
1980 is notable as the year that the region's population reached its peak of just over 120,000, before declining every decade since then. The age pyramid below shows that Southeast Iowa's overall population decline is largely the result of the age brackets below 35, which have decreased at a much faster rate than at the state level.

Age Pyramid, 1980-2020

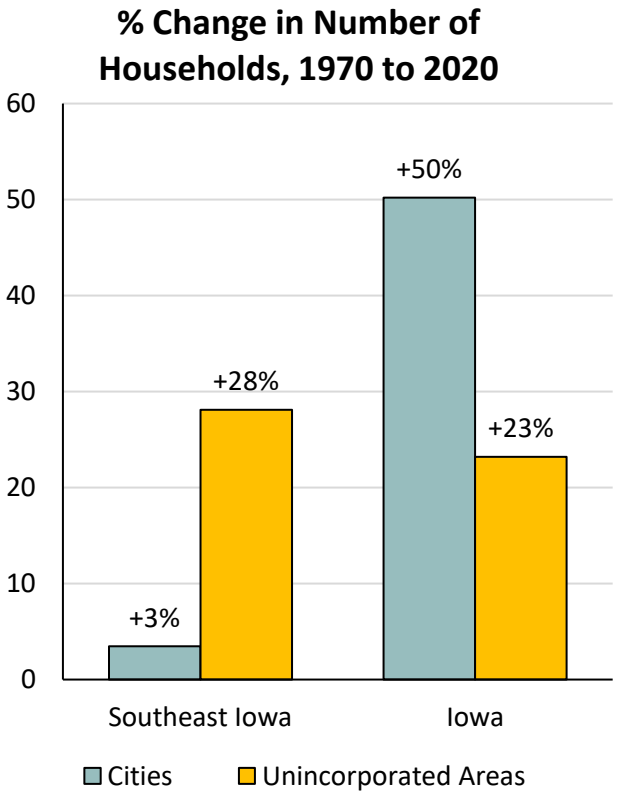


Average household size represents the total number of residents divided by the number of occupied housing units. Consistent with Iowa as a whole, the average household size in Southeast Iowa has decreased gradually over the past 50 years. The most pronounced drop occurred between 1970 and 1990, followed by a gradual levelling off in the 3 decades since then. This is the result of several factors, including fewer children per family, and young people waiting longer to marry and have children. Also, the increased life expectancy has resulted in much larger numbers of elderly people living independently well into their 80s and 90s.

A consequence of this trend is that even if the population is decreasing overall, the demand for housing remains relatively high, since a larger number of people are living alone or with just one other person.



While Southeast Iowa's population decreased by 13% between 1970 and 2020, the total number of households increased by 10% over that same period, growing from 39,019 to 42,713. While this rate of growth was much lower than the statewide growth of 44%, this discrepancy is solely due to the lack of simultaneous population growth.



Within the region, the change in number of households varied considerably between incorporated cities and the surrounding unincorporated areas. The number of households grew by only 3% within cities, but rose by nearly 30% in unincorporated areas. In addition, the rate of increase for unincorporated areas was higher in Southeast Iowa than the state as a whole during this period.

Much of this has been driven by the construction of homes in rural areas within a short driving distance from cities. Many of the breadwinners in these households work in those nearby cities, and they utilize the schools, hospitals, and retail stores in those cities as well. Therefore, a large number of the region's residents utilize city streets and other infrastructure without contributing any money to the city in property taxes. And as a result, the cities end up having fewer and fewer funds available to fund necessary repair and upgrade projects for that infrastructure.

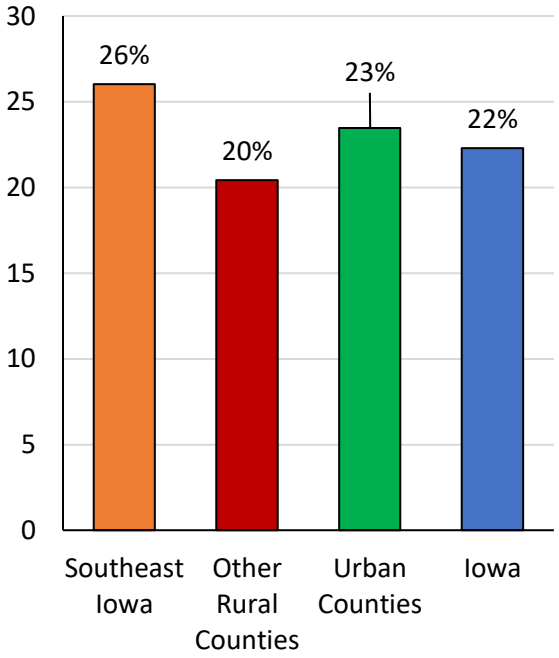
Household Dynamics

Just under 1/4 of all Southeast Iowa households include at least one person under the age of 18, living with one or both of their parents. Of these 10,290 households, 62% are headed by a married couple, 12% are headed by a cohabitating couple, and 26% are headed by a single-parent.

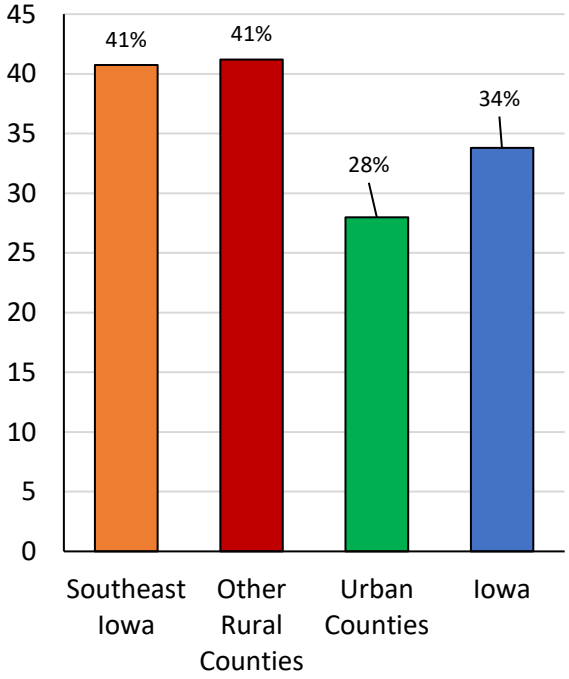
This dynamic is not consistent with the other rural counties in Iowa, where the figure is 70% married couples, and only 20% single-parent households. Southeast Iowa also exceeds the urban counties, where only 23% are single-parent households. Furthermore, Des Moines County has the #1 highest percentage of single-parent households of any county in the state, at 30% (compared to 26% for Lee County, 22% for Henry, and 18% for Louisa.

This statistic should be concerning, especially when viewed in the context of the comparatively poor socioeconomic statistics for the region, and its larger cities in particular. Taken together, these factors tend to be a reliable predictor for future negative outcomes for children raised in a community where this dynamic is commonplace.

Households with Parents and their own Children Under 18 - % Headed by a Single-Parent



% of Non Family Households Comprised of One Person Aged 65 or Over Living Alone



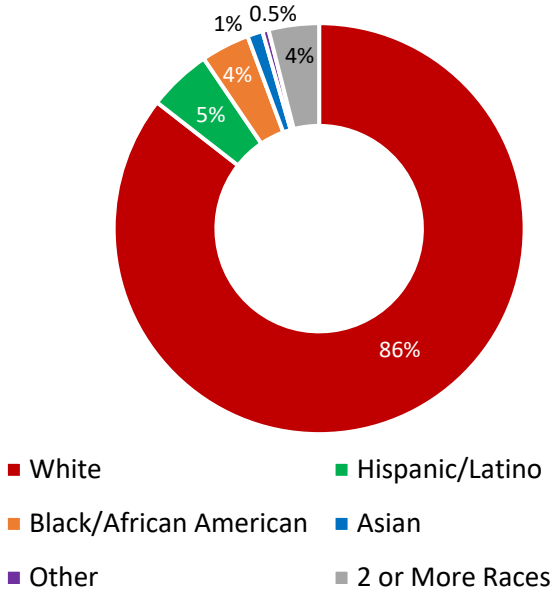
The Census Bureau defines a 'family household' as one which contains 2 or more people related by blood, marriage or adoption. All others are classified as 'non-family households'. Of all the non-family households in Southeast Iowa, 41% are comprised of a person aged 65 or older living alone.

This figure is considerably higher for Southeast Iowa than the state as a whole, where seniors living alone comprise only 34% of non-family households. However, it is entirely consistent with the other rural counties, which differ sharply from the urban counties.

While this dynamic is typical for rural areas, it is still a cause for concern, as it suggests that there will be a sharp rise in demand for space in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, once these individuals are no longer able to live as independently as they do now. It also results in challenges for the housing market – in terms of both the demand side (with many multi-bedroom homes being underutilized) and the supply side (with an anticipated surplus of homes on the market once many of these individuals pass away or move into nursing homes around the same time.

HOW DIVERSE IS SOUTHEAST IOWA?

Percentage of Population by Race/Ethnicity

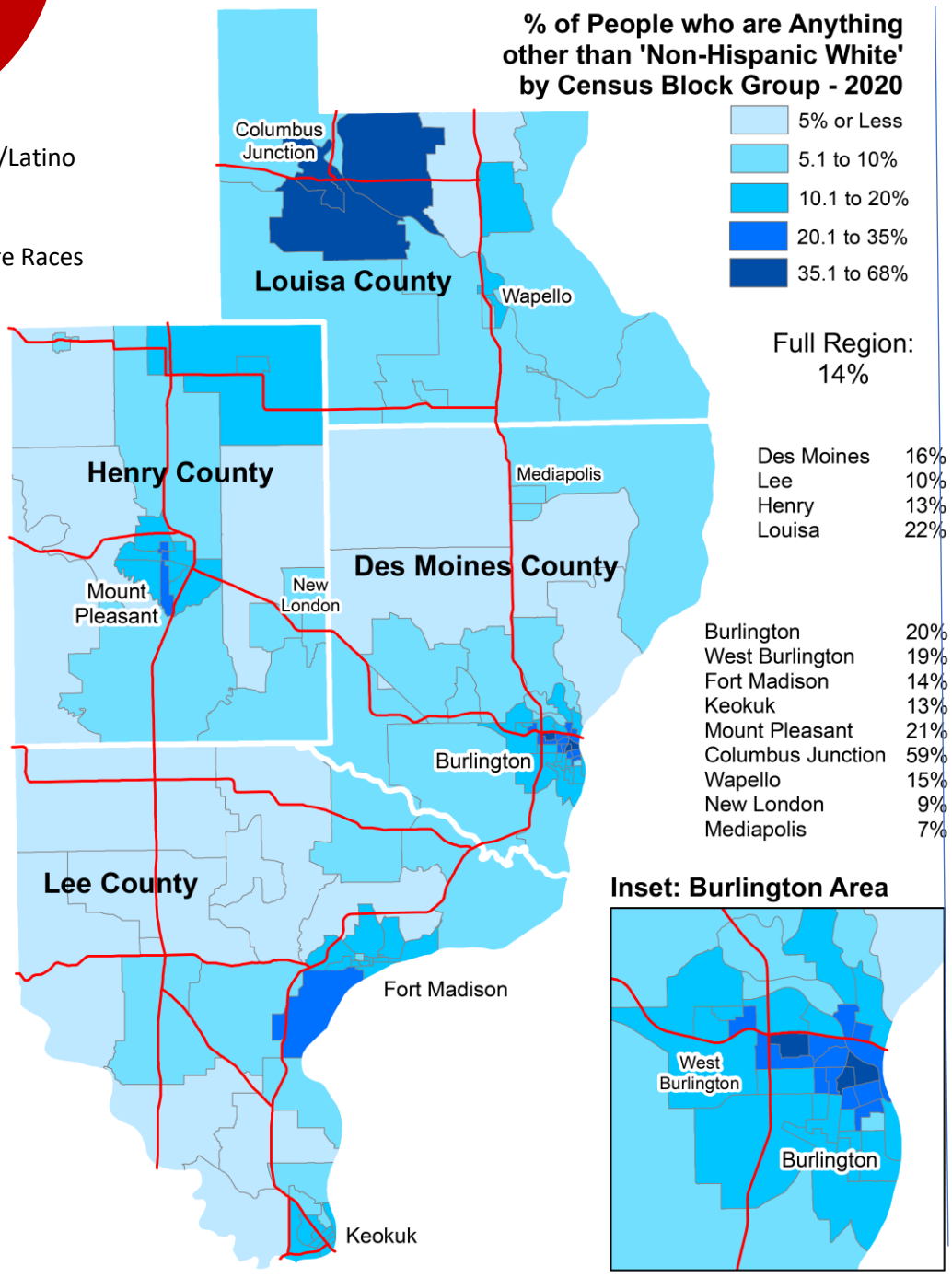


Southeast Iowa's population is 86% White, compared to 83% for Iowa as a whole. This is typical for rural areas of the state – however, Southeast Iowa is still more diverse than the other rural counties, which when combined are 89% White. In contrast, the 11 urban counties combined are 78% White.

Hispanics/Latinos represent the largest minority group in Southeast Iowa, at 5%. Much of the region's Hispanic population is concentrated in the Columbus Junction area, with secondary population centers in Fort Madison and Mount Pleasant.

African Americans are the second largest minority group in Southeast Iowa, at 4,%, which is equivalent to the value for Iowa as a whole, and considerably higher than for the other rural counties combined (1%). The Black population is significantly higher in Des Moines County, at 6%.

Asians represent 1.2% of Southeast Iowa's population, compared to 2.4% for Iowa as a whole. Similar to Hispanics, many of the region's Asian residents live in and around Columbus Junction and Mount Pleasant. In this case, it represents two important waves of refugee resettlement – the Thai Dam people to Mount Pleasant in the late 1970s, and the Chin Burmese to Columbus Junction around 2010.



HOW DIVERSE IS SOUTHEAST IOWA?

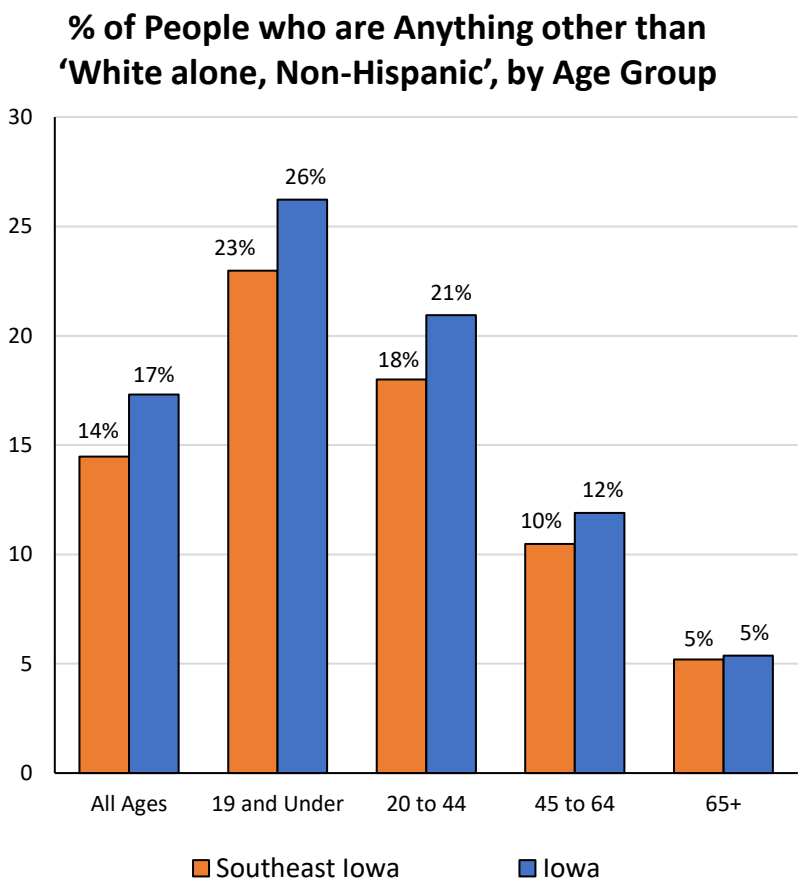
Demographic Shift

While the population of Southeast Iowa has decreased over the past 40 years, it has also become more racially and ethnically diverse over that same period. The non-White population was initially very small in the middle of the 20th century but has since grown substantially. This is consistent with state and national demographic patterns, but it is likely to have a greater impact on the region since the White population has been steadily decreasing over that period. Much of this stems from the fact that many of the new minority residents are coming to the region for job opportunities, after leaving countries with a lower standard of living. At the same time, many White residents (especially young people) are leaving for larger cities with more diversified economies, after their families have lived in Southeast Iowa for generations.

	Southeast Iowa				Iowa
	2000	2010	2020	% Change 2000-2020	% Change 2000-2020
White	104,392	96,342	88,769	-15%	-3%
Hispanic/Latino	3,435	4,695	5,166	+50%	+162%
Black/ African American	2,859	3,586	3,971	+39%	+113%
Asian	801	1,017	1,253	+56%	+106%
Native American	256	221	186	-27%	+14%
Pacific Islander	36	52	37	+3%	+531%
Some Other Race	81	51	284	+251%	+304%
Two or More Races	1,062	1,755	4,118	+288%	+327%
Total	112,922	107,719	103,784	-8%	+9%

Overall, while the region's population is only 14% non-White, the figures are substantially different when the population is broken down by age group. In general, age is generally inversely correlated with racial/ethnic diversity, as the level of diversity tends to increase as the age decreases.

The population aged 65 and over is the most racially homogenous, while the population under 20 is by far the most diverse. This reflects several factors. First, many of the non-White people that have moved here in recent decades are comprised of young families with children, with the grandparents remaining in the place of origin. Also, any child with parents of different races is classified as being of 'Two or More Races', and the number of people in that category rose dramatically at the state and national level between 2010 and 2020. Furthermore, 'Hispanic/Latino' is considered to be an ethnicity rather than a race, so any child with at least one Hispanic parent is considered to be Hispanic.



HOW DIVERSE IS SOUTHEAST IOWA?

Limited English Proficiency

At the regional level, Limited English Proficiency is not a widespread problem. However, in a few specific areas of the region, the community impact of limited English proficiency is substantial. This is especially true in the area around Columbus Junction, where around 1/4 of residents speak English less than 'well (either 'not very well' or 'not at all').



Downtown Columbus Junction, home to an extensive number of minority-owned businesses

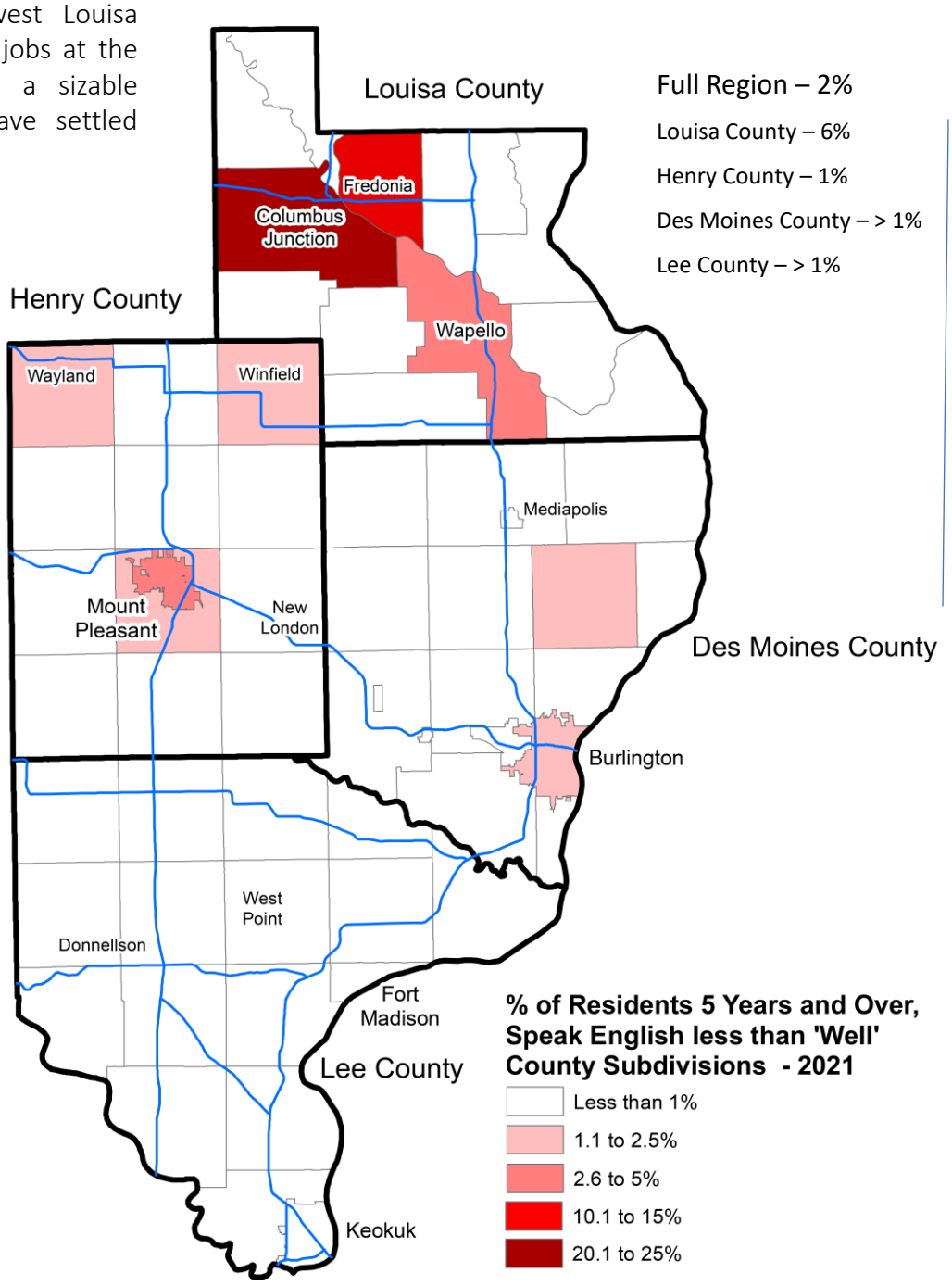
Since the 1980s, many immigrants from Latin America have settled in Northwest Louisa County, attracted by meatpacking jobs at the Tyson Foods plant. Since 2008, a sizable number of Burmese refugees have settled there as well.

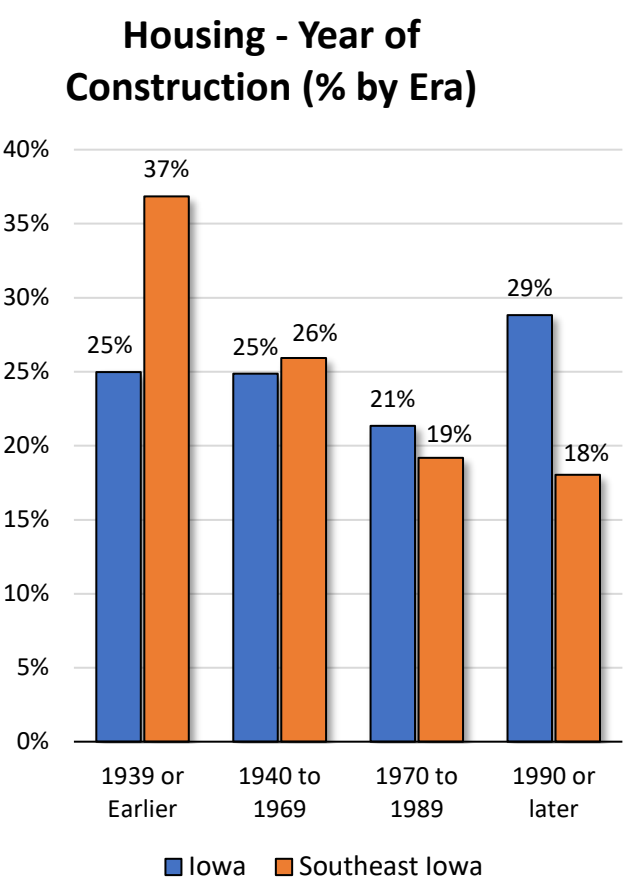


Spanish language newspaper published in Mount Pleasant.

A lack of sufficient bilingual resources can cause serious challenges for small rural communities. It is particularly challenging for the school system, but communicating with these residents on civic matters (i.e. utility payments and code enforcement) is also a recurring challenge for community officials and staff.

The issue is especially pronounced for the Burmese population, as it can be very difficult to translate for those whose language is so comparatively obscure in the United States.









Only

18%

of Southeast Iowa housing stock was built since 1990

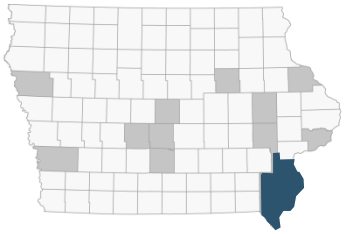
Southeast Iowa's housing stock tends to be older than that of the state as a whole. More than 1/3 of the region's housing units were built before 1940, compared to just over 1/4 for the entire state. This trend is largely driven by cities like Burlington, Fort Madison, and Keokuk, where that figure is 45 to 50%. Conversely, only 18% of Southeast Iowa's housing units were built since 1990, compared to 25% for the state.

Not so unusual …

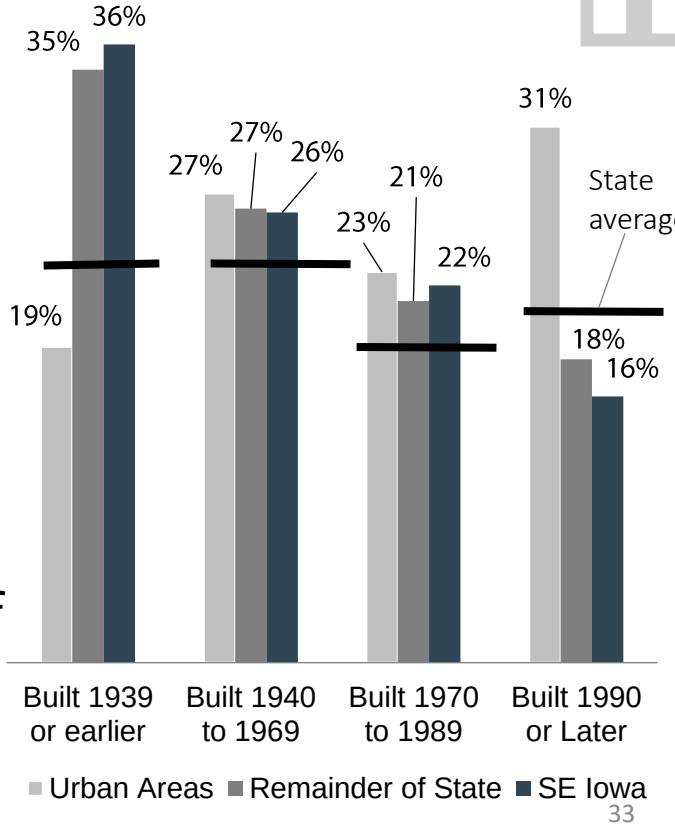
The presence of an older housing stock is typical of rural areas that have experienced a declining or stagnating population in recent decades. Most recent housing growth in Iowa has been occurring in the state's urban counties, on the periphery of larger cities.

Older homes often carry lower value. SE Iowa regional housing stock has a lower average value when compared to the State of Iowa as a whole.

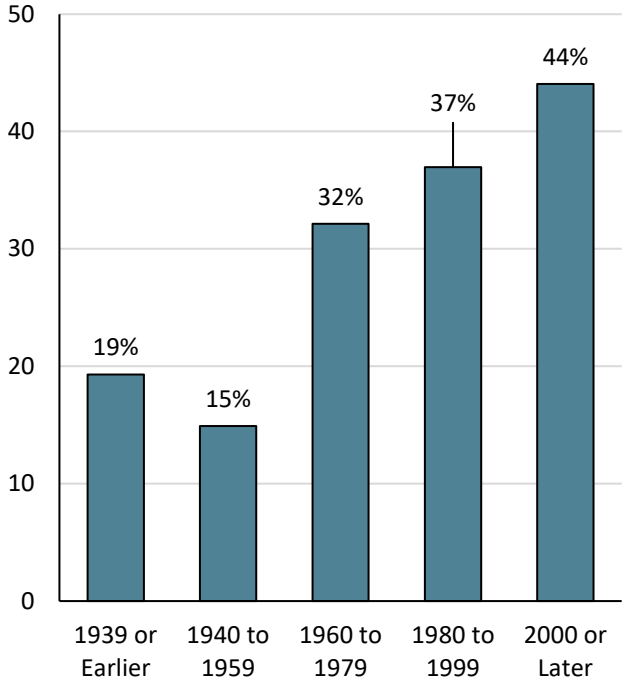
However



Housing – year of construction (% by era)



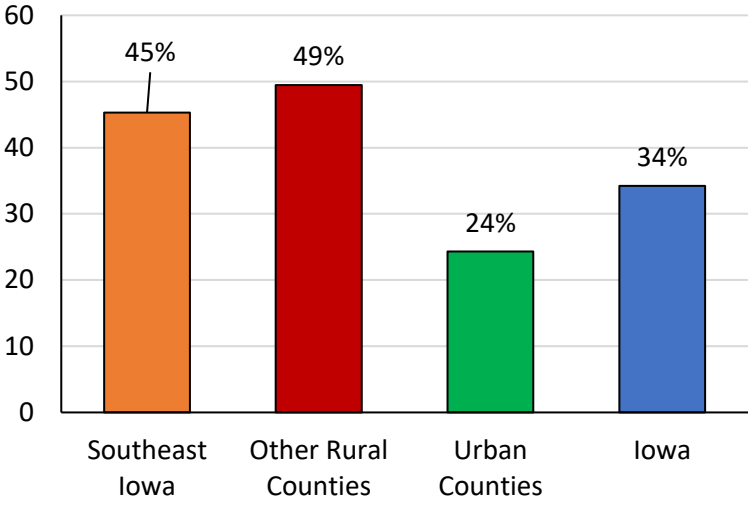
Southeast Iowa - % of Homes Located in Unincorporated Areas, by Era of Construction



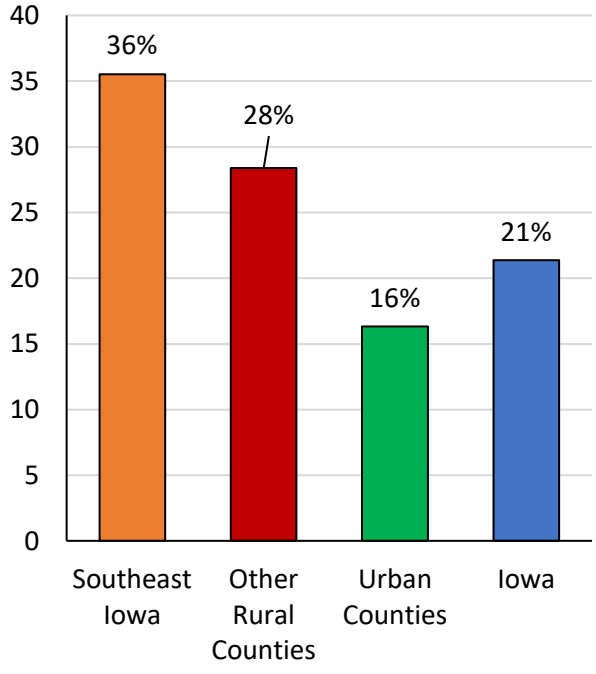
When Southeast Iowa's housing stock is broken down into 5 categories based on the age of construction, the percentage of homes located in unincorporated areas increases as the age of age decreases. While just under 1/5 of the region's pre-1940 homes are located in unincorporated areas, nearly 1/2 of the region's post-1999 homes are located in unincorporated areas.

This shows that regardless of how many how many homes are built, people are increasingly less likely to build them within city limits. Therefore, in addition to very few homes being built overall, a smaller and smaller share of those homes are being built where their future occupants can contribute to the financing of public improvements through municipal taxes.

Percentage of Renter-Occupied Units that are Single-Family Detached Homes



Percentage of Renter-Occupied Units Built Before 1940

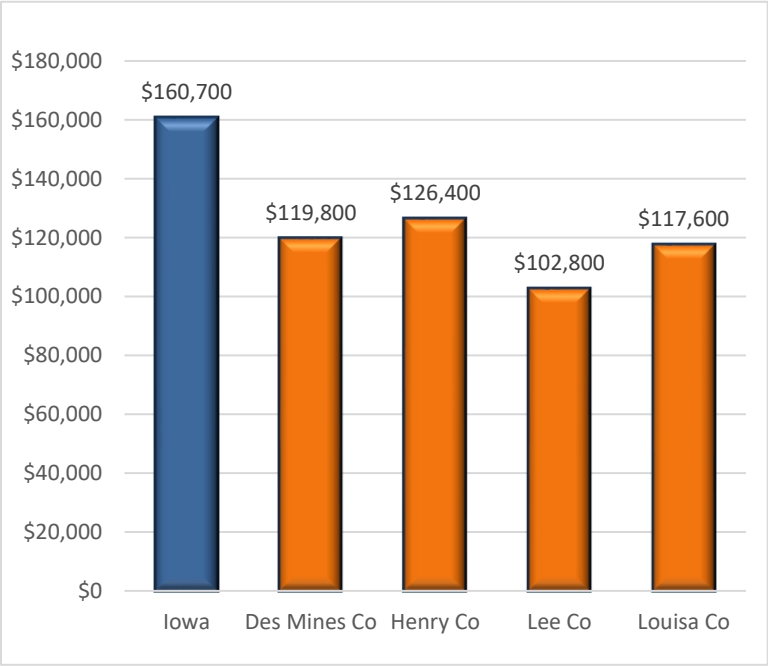


Southeast Iowa's rental housing stock tends to be significantly older than average, compared to both the urban and other rural counties in Iowa. Over 1/3 of all rental units in the region were built before 1940, compared to just over 1/5 of all rental units statewide, and 28% for the other rural counties.

Similarly, 45% of all renter-occupied units in Southeast Iowa are single-family detached homes, compared to only 34% for the state as a whole. Combined with the housing age data, and the limited amount of homebuilding during the Great Depression, it is likely that many of these single-family rentals are more than 100 or 125 years old. This presents serious concerns for the future maintenance of these very old homes, and by extension, the health and safety of their occupants.

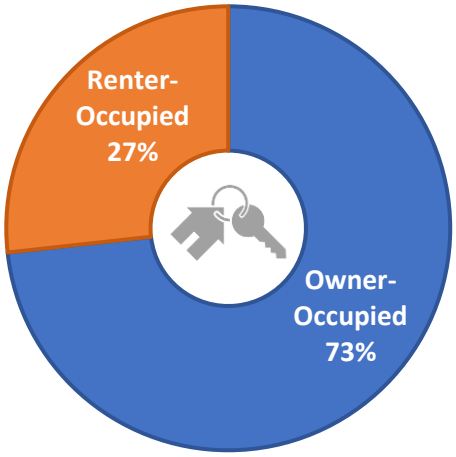
HOUSING INSIGHTS

Median Home Value



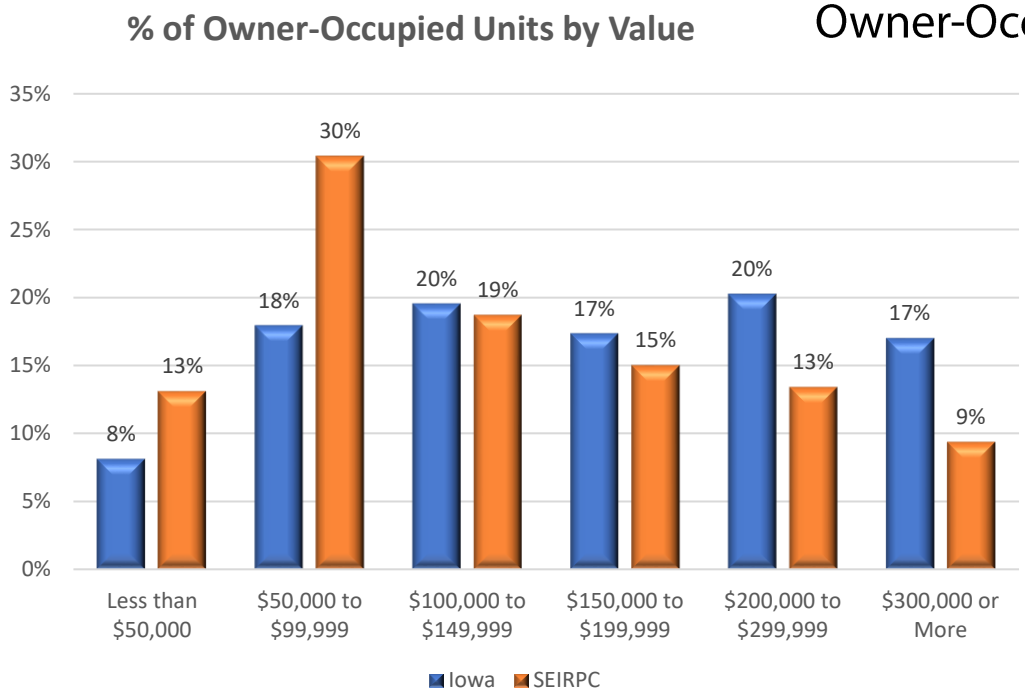
$116,650

is the average value of an owner-occupied home in Southeast Iowa



Just under 3/4 of all occupied housing units in Southeast Iowa are owner-occupied, while the remaining 1/4 are renter-occupied. The percentage renter-occupied is slightly lower than for Iowa as a whole, and slightly higher than for the other rural counties. Rental housing is much more common in the larger population centers such as Burlington and Keokuk, and Des Moines County has the highest share of rental housing among the 4 counties, at 29%.

Owner-Occupied Units by Value



Older homes often carry lower value. SE Iowa regional housing stock has a lower average value when compared to the State of Iowa as a whole. The regional median home value is $116,650; substantially lower than the state median house value of $160,700.

Owner-Occupancy and Mortgages

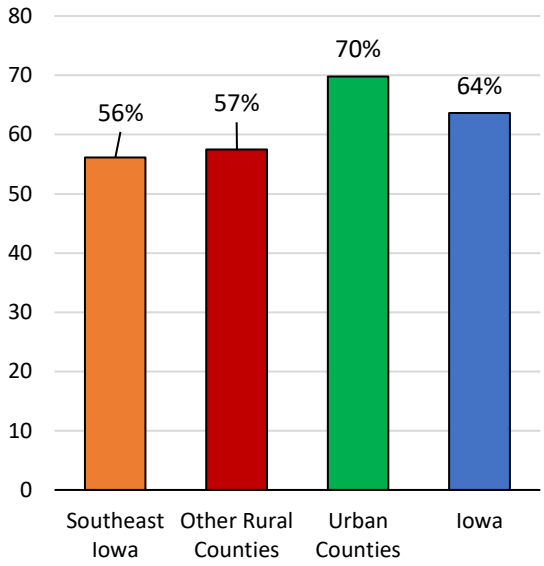
In Southeast Iowa, more people own their homes outright, with no mortgage, than homeowners in the state as a whole. Again, the discrepancy between Iowa's urban and rural counties is substantial, with mortgages more common in the urban counties. Southeast Iowa is largely consistent with the other rural areas of the state.



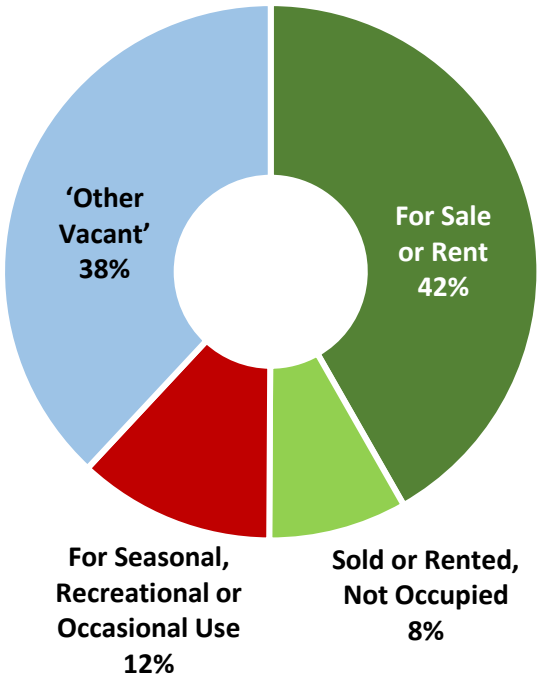
However, in contrast to the rest of the state, urbanized areas in Southeast Iowa (Burlington, Keokuk, and Fort Madison) have some of the highest rates of free-and-clear ownership, when compared to all other Iowa municipalities of a similar size.

This might seem to be an indication of financial security. But when viewed alongside the variables of housing age and value, this collectively high level of outright ownership is more often a result of an aging population and low average income. These factors, together with limited resale value, offer little hope that necessary repairs and renovation will be undertaken. While the continued use of funding assistance programs for renovation will help, it is likely that demolition and redevelopment will be the most viable option in many cases.

Percentage of Owner-Occupied Units Owned with a Mortgage or Loan



Southeast Iowa Vacant Homes



Vacant Housing Units

Of all housing units in Southeast Iowa, 11% are currently vacant, which is consistent with the other rural counties in Iowa, in contrast to urban counties where the figure is only 7%. However, Fort Madison and Keokuk have the two highest vacancy rates of all Iowa municipalities over 8,000 in population (14% and 13%, respectively), and Burlington falls just behind at 11.5%.

Just over 40% of all vacant housing units in Southeast Iowa are currently for sale or rent, while another 8% have been sold or rented, but aren't currently occupied. Another 12% are meant for temporary or seasonal use, while the remaining 38% are unclassified ('other vacant'). For Iowa as a whole, only 29% of vacant homes fit this category. It can be inferred that this includes all homes that have been abandoned, foreclosed, or condemned.

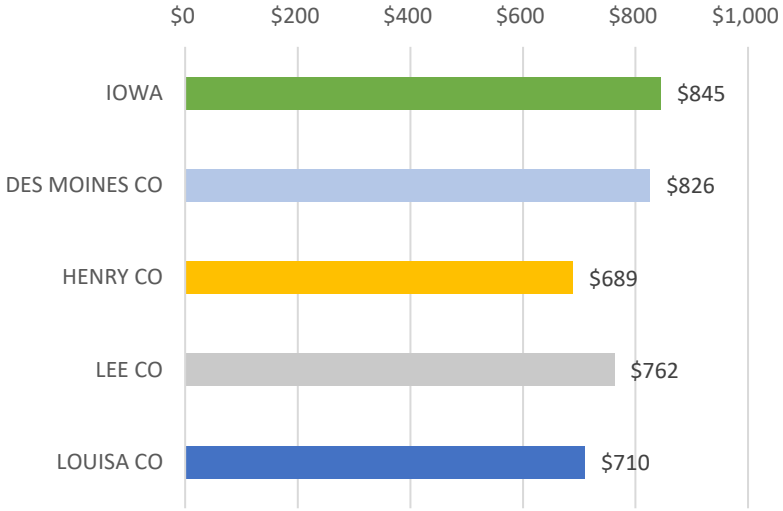
The divide between rural and urban makes a big difference for the type of vacant housing, as nearly 2/3 of all vacant homes in the urban counties are currently for sale or rent, compared to only 1/3 for the other rural counties.

How much do renters pay?

As a general rule, a household should spend no more than 35 percent of monthly income on housing. For renters, that includes utilities, and for owners, it includes other homeownership costs like mortgage interest, property taxes and maintenance. In the State of Iowa, more than a third of renters are paying over the recommended amount, virtually the same as in SE Iowa. However, a closer look reveals that in Des Moines County, almost half of renters are paying more than 35% of gross income for housing. At the same time, in Louisa County, only 22% pay that much and 40% of households are paying less than 15% of income for housing.

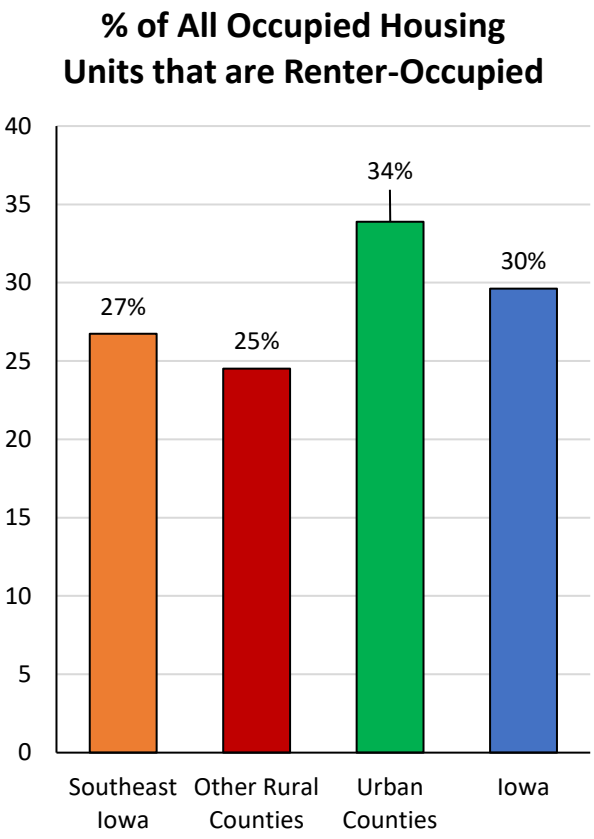
Median Gross Rent (Renter-Occupied Units)

$747 is the average market rent in Southeast Iowa



RENTAL COSTS AS A % OF HHD INCOME	Iowa	Des M Co	Henry Co	Lee Co	Louisa Co
Occupied units paying rent	334,271	4,690	1,643	3,114	756
Less than 15% of income	17.3%	11.0%	14.6%	12.5%	37.6%
Cost is 35% of income or more	34.9%	48.7%	29.9%	37.3%	22.4%

How much housing is being rented?



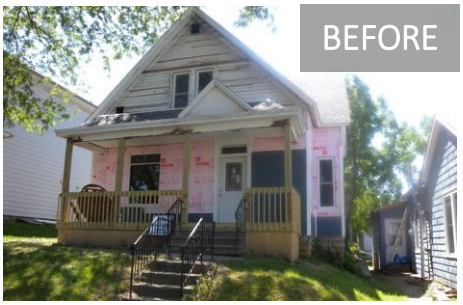


2/3 of renters in Southeast Iowa are paying less than $1000 for rent

HOUSING INITIATIVES

SEIRPC is directly involved with several housing initiatives, which tackle the region's housing issues from multiple angles, including the addition of new housing units, and the enhancement of existing housing.

Great River Housing Trust Fund





Established in 2011, the ***Great River Housing Trust Fund (GRHTF)*** works to promote affordable housing in Southeast Iowa, through a multi-pronged approach. This includes the rehabilitation of existing owner-occupied homes, down payment assistance for first time home buyers, and partnerships with private developers. Funding is targeted to individuals low-to-moderate income (as defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development).

Since 2011, GRHTF has provided over $3.4 million in assistance for over 250 individual projects. This includes 130 Home Rehabilitation projects and 111 Down Payment Assistance projects, along with 1 upper story rehabilitation project, and 11 projects with funding assistance for new construction.

To complement the State funding for this program, SEIRPC holds an annual Golf Outing as a fundraiser for GRHTF.


New SIHI home in Mount Pleasant

Southeast Iowa Housing, Inc.

In contrast to GRHTF, Southeast Iowa Housing, Inc. (SIHI) functions primarily to facilitate the construction of new homes. SIHI works with local communities to select vacant lots, primarily for infill construction in existing neighborhoods. The intent is to expand the supply high quality affordable housing in these communities. For some of these projects, SIHI has partnered with building trades programs at local schools, to give students practical experience in their own community.

Keokuk Neighborhood Initiative

The ***Keokuk Neighborhood Initiative (KNI)*** is a great example of a locally-driven effort to improve the housing stock in a specific community. KNI is a nonprofit organization that was founded in 2017, as a partnership between the City of Keokuk, the local chamber of commerce, and SEIRPC. It also involves a local real estate firm, and buy-in from prominent local businesses and industries, including Roquette America, Inc. In a city with 45% of housing units built before World War II, KNI works to enhance Keokuk's older neighborhoods through a two-step process – acquire and demolish dilapidated homes, and build new homes on these and other, existing vacant lots.



HOUSING INITIATIVES

Homes for Iowa

SEIRPC staff has been directly involved in the creation and growth of Homes for Iowa to solve housing issues in Southeast Iowa, and across the entire state. Homes for Iowa, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization which exists to address Iowa's housing shortage, train offenders in skilled trades and reduce recidivism.

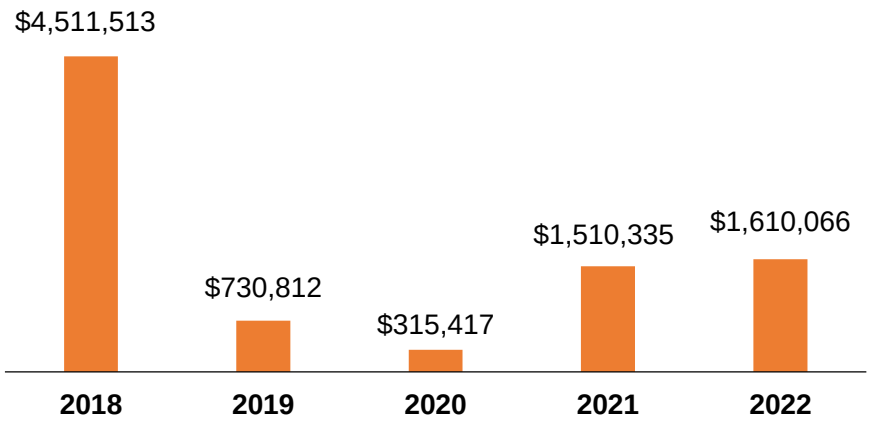




Homes for Iowa plans to build 800+ moderately priced homes over the next 10 years in collaboration with Iowa Prison Industries. Beautiful 3-bedroom, 2-bath ranch style homes will be built for individuals and families and delivered all over Iowa.

Homes for Iowa plans to implement an employer-crew member employment pipeline. The objective is to connect employers in building trades with trained and available Homes for Iowa crew members. Homes for Iowa will work closely with the Iowa Dept of Corrections to develop wrap-around services to strengthen the re-entry process for crew members.

Funding Secured for Housing (by SEIRPC)



The relation between funding secured for housing by SEIRPC and new housing projects is apparent. In recent years, SEIRPC has secured various grants from the Iowa Economic Development Authority for new multi-family projects, neighborhood rehab, and new construction projects. SEIRPC has also been a part of recruiting developers and connecting them with tax credits or local incentives for larger housing developments. Several of these involved iconic downtown buildings that had long been underutilized, such as the Churchill Drug building in Downtown Burlington and Lee County Bank building in Downtown Fort Madison(pictures below).





Efforts have been made in recent years by some counties in Southeast Iowa to better understand housing demand and housing needs. Studies completed have provided valuable data and information on current housing trends, but also future housing demand that can be used to implement new housing policies or incentives, as well as to be used to attract new housing developments to the region. The information below outlines more detail on each of these recent housing studies for Lee and Des Moines Counties.

Lee County Housing Needs Assessment

Conducted by Maxfield Research and Consulting, LLC in 2017, the Lee County Housing Needs Assessment offers insights about the present condition and the future needs of housing geared specifically for the populations of Lee County. The study found that the population in all housing submarkets is either declining or stable, with household sizes decreasing. All ages under 65 except for the 35-44 cohort were projected to lose population and households between 2017 and 2022 – the 35-44 cohort was projected to experience a minor increase of less than 1-percent with all significant growth contributed by those 65 and older. Almost three-quarters of Lee County households are owner-occupied with the highest rate of homeownership occurring in the 65-74 age group, and younger cohorts predictably renting at a much higher rate. 46-percent of renters are one-person households – however, the majority of owner households in the county (33-percent) are married couples without children under 18, followed by single-person households at 29-percent. Indicative of the declining population in the county as a whole, married couples with children experienced a staggering decline of 28-percent between 2000 to 2010, whereas single-parent and other family households saw 11.5-percent growth.

At the time of the publication, building permits had not recovered from the 2008 financial crisis, with single-family housing permits averaging 21-per-year between 2000 and 2008 more than halved to an average of 10 units from 2013 to 2016. Multifamily units have only been developed sporadically, with 112 units built in 2010 and 45 units built in 2016 – however, Fort Madison aims to have upper-story multiunit housing at multiple locations on Avenue G in the Downtown Commercial Historic District at sites like the James Block Building. When analyzing county assessor data for new constructions, the number of new units built from 2000 to 2016 is more than double the amount of building permits issued, inferring that the majority of new construction in Lee County is completed in unincorporated areas. The housing stock has a median build year of 1957 with 35.5-percent of homes built prior to 1940.



An aerial photo depicting a residential neighborhood in northwest Donnellson

HOUSING INITIATIVES

After removing outliers, Fort Madison had a 3.4-percent vacancy rate for rental housing developments with 12 units or more, lower than the typical 5-percent rate for a healthy rental market. Senior housing had an overall vacancy rate of 5.2-percent across 744 units after surveying the 17 senior housing facilities in Lee County. This vacancy rate falls within the general accepted vacancy rate of 5-percent to 7-percent. 14 properties composed of 558 affordable or subsidized senior rental developments have a vacancy rate of 5.9-percent – nearly double the typical market equilibrium. Almost half of these units are located at Mississippi Terrace in Keokuk. “Active adult living” units are available in Lee County at the Hotel Iowa and at River Hills Village and 127 assisted living units are found, mostly at the Kensington in Fort Madison (56 units). These senior housing options are important to note due to the aging population of Southeast Iowa and the challenges that aging poses to independent living both financially and physically. It must be noted that this Housing Needs Assessment did not include the Senior Lofts on Main Street in Keokuk – an age restricted active adult development that represented the sole development at the time of the HNA.

Housing affordability is a challenge in Lee County, proportional to those with lower incomes. 19-percent of owner households and 71-percent of renter households are estimated to be paying more than a third of their income for housing costs, a rate higher than the state average. 35-percent of renters with incomes below $50,000 are cost burdened. About half of the homes listed for sale were priced under $100,000 with the median list price for a single-family home at $105,127. Total projected demand for general occupancy products between 2017 and 2025 according to the Housing Needs Assessment are as follows: 225 units market rate rental; 136 units affordable rental; 53 units subsidized rental; 160 units for-sale single-family; 39 units for-sale multifamily. Total projected demand for senior housing may need to be prioritized even more given the population trends and consists of: 213 units active adult ownership; 77 units active adult market rate rental; 113 active adult affordable; 165 units congregate; 70 units assisted living; 96 units memory care.



Photo of the Keokuk Senior Lofts sourced from the Pivotal Housing Partners website

Des Moines County Housing Needs Assessment

The Greater Burlington Partnership released a Des Moines County Housing Needs Assessment in 2023, with city and county partners. Conducted by Hanna Keelan Associates, P.C., a community planning and research firm, the HNA for Des Moines County features many parallels to the Lee County HNA published six years prior. Although the population is projected to remain stable or decrease slightly, the study suggests that a Community Growth Initiative dedicated to the creation of full-time employment opportunities and the realization of commuter or remote work employees could results in increases in population. Out of 16,701 households, 11,581 (69.3-percent) are owner households compared to 5,120 (30.7%) households. Owner households are projected to decrease to 68.7-percent by 2033. The Danville, Middletown, and Mediapolis communities are projected to add both owner and renter households in that same period.

Despite this expected rise in households for the smaller cities in Des Moines County, the County has an Adjusted Housing Vacancy Rate of 3.1-percent for owner households and 3.6-percent for rental households. By 2033, an estimated housing unit target for Des Moines County would be 821 housing units including 393 owner and 428 rental units, the majority of which should be targeted for City of Burlington at 588 units with downtown Burlington as a part of emphasis at 190 units (30 owner and 160 rental households). The assessment indicates that smaller communities in the County could refresh their existing housing stock with rehabilitations to satisfy demand and predicts that 834 units county-wide could be targeted for rehabilitation. Per the HNA, 304 housing units do not satisfy a cost-benefit analysis for rehabilitation and would be slated for demolition. Solutions to meet these future demands abound in the HNA and include establishing a land bank program, maintaining local housing investment programs, establishing a county-wide housing disaster recovery program.



An aerial photo depicting homes in northeast Mediapolis including new single-family developments

HOUSING INITIATIVES

By 2028, the HNA suggests rehabilitating 100 to 125 housing units across the county at a moderate ($39,000 to $50,000) to substantial level (up to $65,000) for a strategic solution to rising household demands. The Great River Housing Trust Fund program has received a wide range of grant funding to address rehabilitation needs throughout Southeast Iowa, and the cities of Keokuk and Burlington were awarded $600,000 and $1,000,000 respectively in a targeted neighborhood rehabilitation program. Similar to the Lee County HNA, the Des Moines County HNA pinpoints senior housing as a key need. A senior affordable rental housing program would serve up to 48 units countywide – 40 serving Burlington and West Burlington and be composed of independent living senior duplex and triplex, townhomes, and apartments that provide standard amenities and low maintenance for those at 0-to-80-percent AMI. The HNA suggests up to 64 rental units to be built for seniors at market rate, whereas ownership focused new constructions are estimated at 12 affordable housing and 70 units at market rate.

The HNA suggests the development 70 one-, two- or three-bedroom affordable housing rental units (60 in Burlington and West Burlington) alongside 96 two- or three-bedroom units at market rate (80 in Burlington and West Burlington). Additionally, an affordable home ownership development initiative would see 120 two- or more-bedroom units added in greater Burlington featuring townhomes, universally accessible homes, and single-family homes. Whereas the HNA projects the demand for new market rate ownership housing units at 130 units county-wide. Ongoing developments in downtown Burlington like the Merge apartment development (rental), Tama Too (affordable and market rate rental), Churchill and Blaul Lofts (rental), and McConnell Lofts (ownership) seek to meet the increased demand for housing options in the County, but obvious needs persist.





An example of a rehabilitation project before-and-after for a senior couple in Burlington

UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

For most of the larger communities in Southeast Iowa, *water* and *sewer* service is provided by the municipality, or a separate entity under direct contract with the city. In most rural areas of Des Moines, Henry, and Lee Counties, rural water service is available from the Rathbun Regional Water Association, with water sourced from Rathbun Reservoir in Appanoose County. Many properties are served instead by private wells, and rural sewer service is typically accounted for by private septic systems.

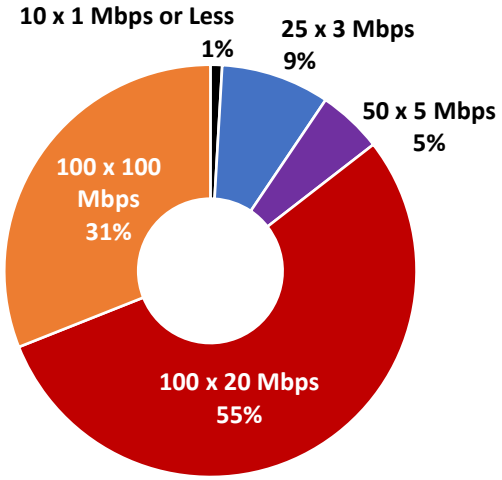
Most *electric* service is provided by the Interstate Power and Light Company (Alliant Energy), Access Energy, or Eastern Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative (REC). There are also four municipal electric providers within the region, in Danville, Mount Pleasant, New London, West Point. *Natural gas* is provided by either MidAmerican Energy, Interstate Power and Light Company, or Liberty Utilities.



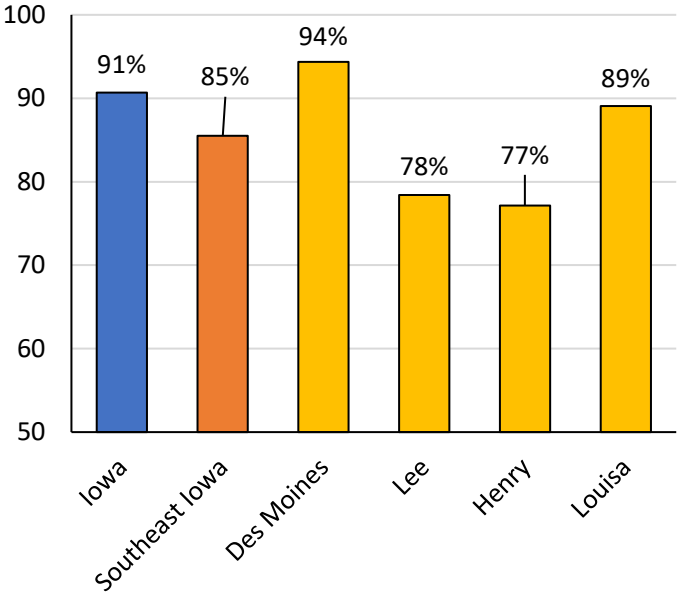
Construction of a new water tower for the City of West Burlington in 2021, which received $3.6 million from the State Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

Several telecommunications companies provide *fiber/internet* service for portions of the region, including Mediacom, CenturyLink, and locally-based Danville Telecom. Substantial progress has been made over the past 5 years, in increasing access to high-speed broadband service in Southeast Iowa. According to 2022 data from Connect Iowa, 99% of the region's households have access to high-speed broadband, which is defined to include anything with a download speed of 25 Mbps or greater, and an upload speed of 3 Mbps or greater. The graph at right breaks this down further to show the highest download/upload speed for individual households.

Highest Download x Upload Speed Available by Household

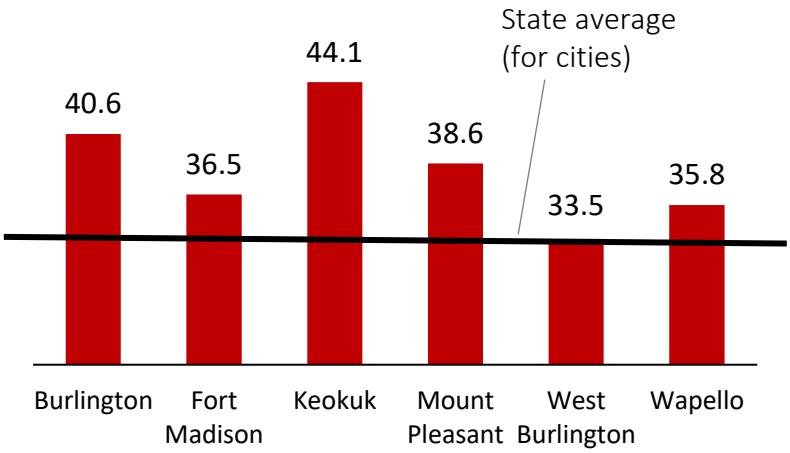


% of Households with Access to Download Speed of 100 Mbps



While 25 x 3 Mbps remains the minimum standard for 'high speed broadband', the COVID-19 pandemic helped illustrate how this can still be comparatively insufficient for people working from home, and children learning from home. Even faster download/upload speeds can be necessary to adequately serve these residents. The graph at left shows that access to the highest download speed (100 Mbps) is lower in the region than the state as a whole, and two of the four counties fall below 80%. Also, access to 100 Mbps upload speed is even more limited, as only 31% of the region's residents have such access to it, compared to 45% statewide.

Consolidated Tax Rate - Selected Cities



The graph at left highlights the consolidated tax rate for Southeast Iowa's six largest cities. This is the sum of all levying authorities (in addition to the city's own rate), that levy taxes on property in that city. For all municipalities in Iowa, the average rate is 33.5. The region's three largest cities are well above this level, with Keokuk being the third highest in the state, for cities with over 5,000 residents. This places a considerable burden on individual taxpayers in these older communities with historically manufacturing-dominated economies.

A number of challenges help explain why the cost of providing these services can be so high, including:

Effects of Sprawl Development – When sprawl development patterns occur simultaneously with population loss, utility systems (along with streets and sidewalks) cost more to build and maintain. At the same time, when substantial housing construction occurs outside city limits, homeowners typically pay sizable amounts to install their own individual septic systems and wells. This mismatch in tax base puts significant strain on the city's ability to finance needed utility improvements.

Sewer Separation – Under federal requirements from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), larger communities like Burlington and Keokuk have been forced to undergo the extensive, costly process of separating their combined sanitary and storm sewer systems. While these actions have a clear environmental benefit, cities with comparatively low incomes and a declining population must struggle to accommodate these mandated projects into their already strained municipal budgets.



In some cases, older rural residential areas struggle with poorly designed sanitary systems, which can have serious health and environmental consequences. In 1960, the Lenox Park subdivision was annexed into the City of Burlington, in order to access city water and sewer services. Recently, the Mooar/Powdertown area near Keokuk faced a similar dilemma, but its distant location made the connection to city services cost prohibitive.





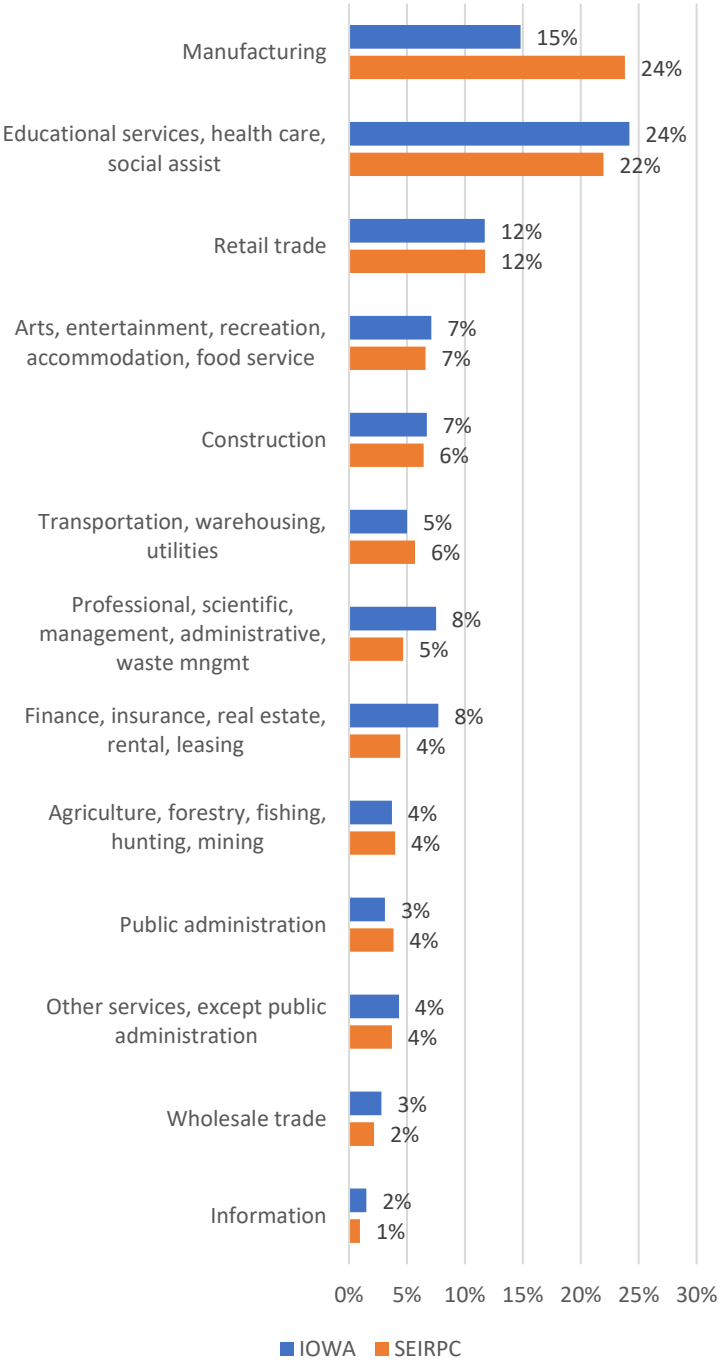
Small Cities and the Provision of Services – Small Cities and the Provision of Services – Like most of the state, Southeast Iowa has numerous small municipalities with less than 1,000 residents, more than half of which have less than 500. As these towns continue to lose population, and economic development prospects are minimal, the cost of providing quality services to their residents becomes a serious challenge. This is true even when the city contracts with an outside entity for providing these services. In 2017, residents of the City of Mount Union (in Henry County) voted in favor of disincorporation, largely to avoid debts incurred with a sewer service provider.

EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTHEAST IOWA

Where Residents are Employed

To classify the profession of each respondent, the US Census Bureau breaks down jobs into 13 industry categories. Industry employment for Southeast Iowa is outlined in the graph below. This shows that the largest employment industry in the region is ***manufacturing***, followed by ***educational services, and health care and social assistance***, and then ***retail trade***, which are either similar to or exceed state employment trends.

Employment by Industry







Manufacturing



Education/Health Care



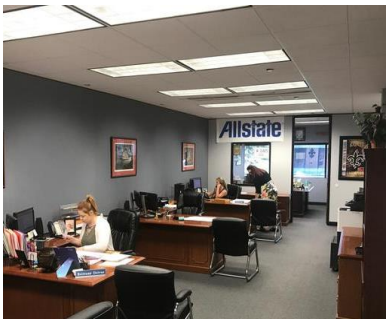
Retail Trade

***Note**: This data refers to workers who reside in Southeast Iowa, NOT jobs based in Southeast Iowa.





Finance/Insurance/Real Estate

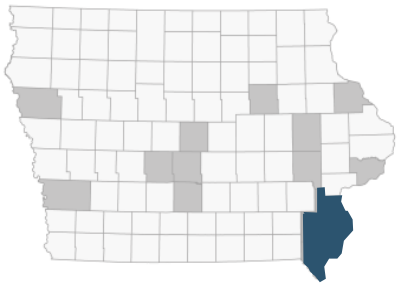


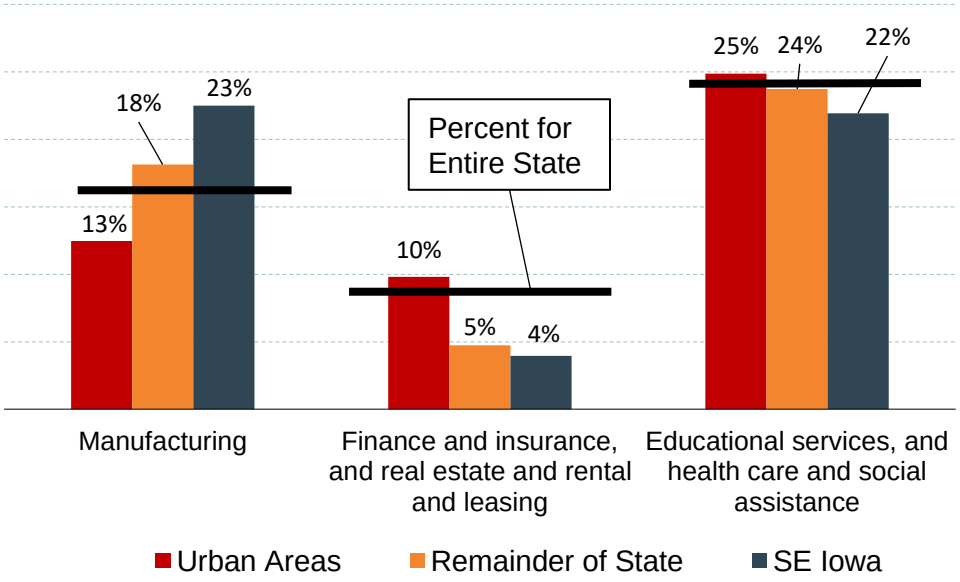
Information

EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTHEAST IOWA

Southeast Iowa has a strong economic reliance on manufacturing jobs; manufacturing is noticeably higher than in the other rural counties in the state. Low numbers for the "information," and "finance/insurance/real estate" fields may indicate that the region's economy needs to be further diversified, to become more resilient to both local and national employment trends in any one particular sector.

With the exception that manufacturing in SE Iowa is higher, the situation is similar to other rural areas of the state, in contrast to urban counties.





Top Employment Clusters in Southeast Iowa

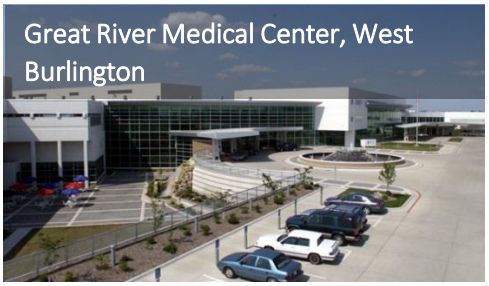
A cluster is a regional concentration of related industries. According to the Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, at Harvard Business School, the following specific industry clusters have the largest employment figures in Southeast Iowa. ***Traded Clusters*** serve markets beyond the region they are located in, while ***Local Clusters*** serve the local market. Despite their high regional ranking, some of these clusters have lost a significant number of jobs in the past twenty years, particularly those involved in manufacturing.

	Cluster	# Jobs - 2016	Change 1998-2016
Traded Clusters	Livestock Processing *(i.e. Meat Processing)*	3,080	Added Jobs (+42%)
	Production Technology and Heavy Machinery	2,710	Added Jobs (+37%)
	Business Services *(i.e. Engineering)*	2,455	Lost Jobs (-26%)
	Distribution and Electronic Commerce	2,292	Added Jobs (+61%)
	Food Processing and Manufacturing	1,661	Lost Jobs (-15%)
	Downstream Metal Products *(i.e. Ammunition)*	1,370	Lost Jobs (-11%)
	Vulcanized and Fired Materials *(i.e. Rubber)*	1,125	Lost Jobs (-43%)
Local Clusters	**Cluster**	**# Jobs - 2016**	**Change 1998-2016**
	Local Health Services	7,843	Added Jobs (+26%)
	Local Hospitality Establishments	3,719	Lost Jobs (-7%)
	Local Real Estate, Construction, and Development	3,634	Added Jobs (+6%)
	Local Motor Vehicle Products and Services	2,329	Lost Jobs (-0.1%)
	Local Commercial Services	2,279	Added Jobs (43%)

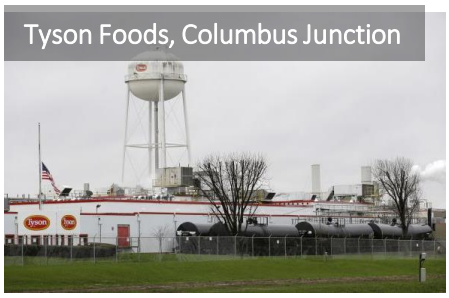
EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTHEAST IOWA

Largest Employers

The list below highlights the 15 largest employers in the region, based on the most recently available data from Iowa Workforce Development. These same employers are highlighted on the map on the following page, which also includes a number of slightly smaller employers, and concentrated areas of employment such as Downtown business districts and retail shopping areas. Each of the four counties, and all of the five largest cities are represented in the top 15. Many of the largest are manufacturing firms, along with a hospital and casino/entertainment complex, both in the Greater Burlington area.


Great River Medical Center, West Burlington


Henniges Automotive, Keokuk


Tyson Foods, Columbus Junction


Walmart Distribution, Mount Pleasant


Siemens Wind Energy, Fort Madison

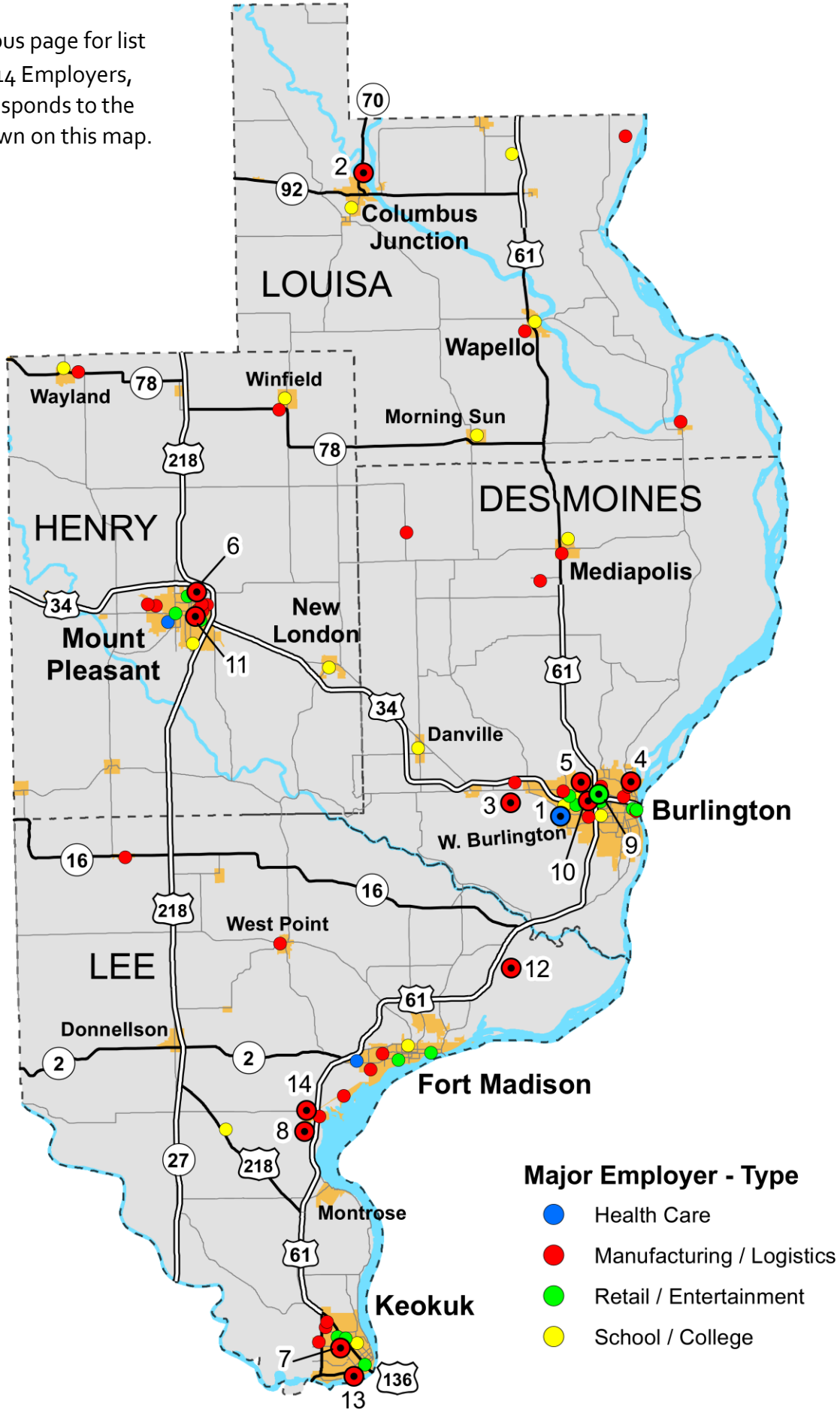

CNH America, Burlington

Top 15 Largest Employers in Southeast Iowa

#	Name	County	Type	Employees
1	Great River Medical Center/Klein Center	Des Moines	Hospital/Nursing Home	1,000 +
2	Tyson Foods Inc.	Louisa	Food Processing – Meat Products	1,000 +
3	American Ordnance LLC	Des Moines	Manufacturing - Small Arms Ammunition	750 - 1,000
4	CNH America (Case New Holland)	Des Moines	Manufacturing – Farm Equipment	500 - 750
5	Shearer's Snacks	Des Moines	Food Processing – Snack Foods	500 - 750
6	Walmart Distribution Center	Henry	Distribution/Logistics – Retail Goods	500 - 750
7	Henniges Automotive	Lee	Manufacturing - Auto Parts & Supplies	500 - 750
8	Conagra Brands Inc.	Lee	Food Processing - Canned Meat Products	500 - 750
9	Catfish Bend Casino/Pzazz	Des Moines	Casino/Amusement Complex	250 - 500
10	Federal Mogul Corp. (Champion)	Des Moines	Manufacturing - Auto Parts & Supplies	250 - 500
11	Innovairre	Henry	Manufacturing - Printers/Marketing Services	250 - 500
12	OCI Iowa Fertilizer	Lee	Manufacturing - Fertilizer	250 - 500
13	Roquette America	Lee	Food Processing - Grain Drying	250 - 500
14	Siemens Wind Energy	Lee	Manufacturing - Wind Turbine Blades	250 - 500

MAJOR EMPLOYERS OF SOUTHEAST IOWA

* See previous page for list of Largest 14 Employers, which corresponds to the numbers shown on this map.

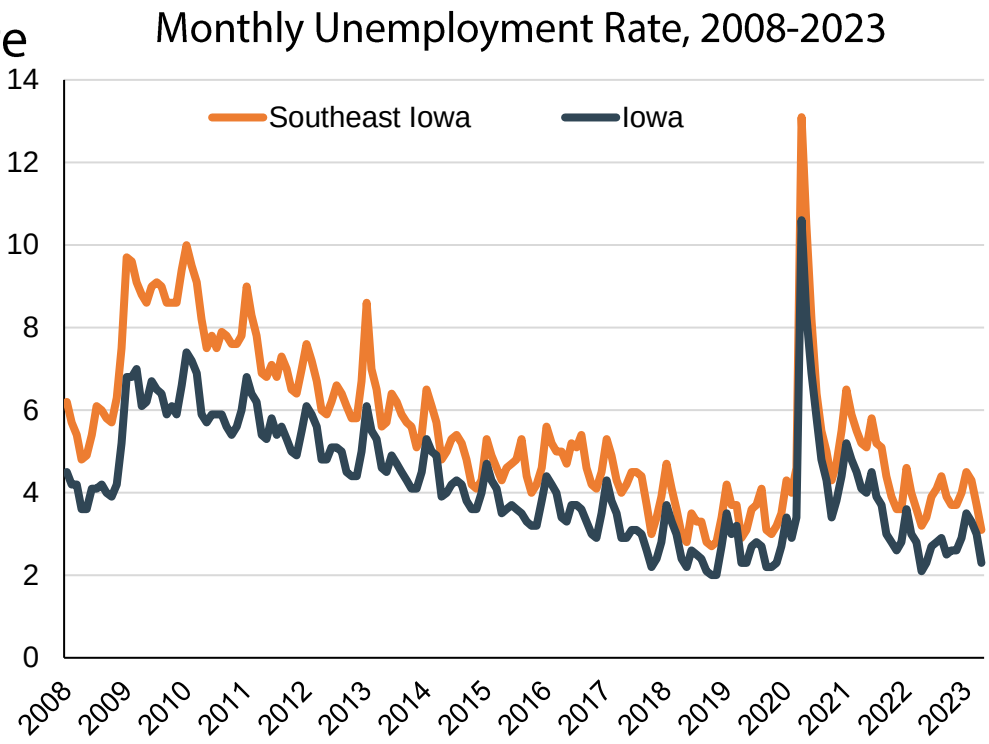


EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTHEAST IOWA

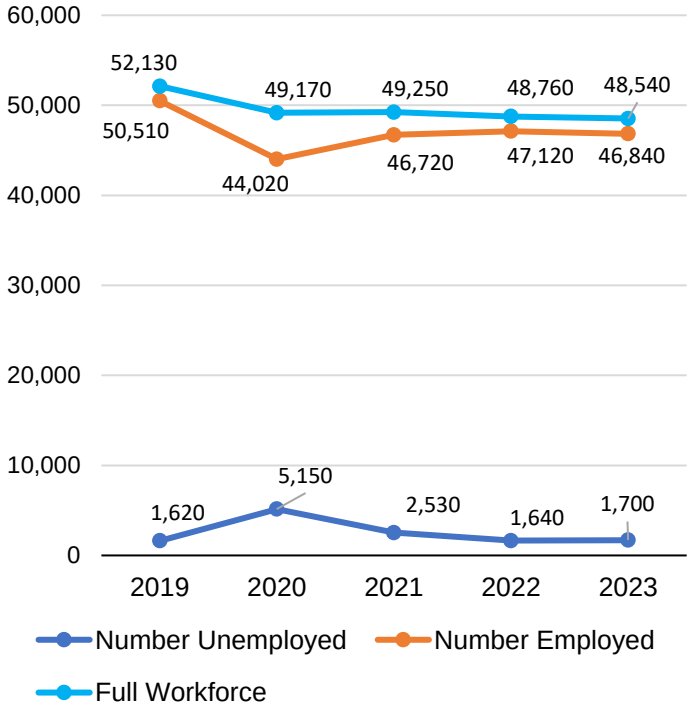
Unemployment Rate

In general, Southeast Iowa tends to consistently have a higher unemployment rate than the state as a whole, but its trendline clearly mirrors that of the state.

From month to month, the unemployment rate steadily decreased from 2011 to 2017, following the Great Recession of 2008-2010. A sudden spike occurred in 2021-2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the numbers the impact was relatively brief.



Regional Employment, 2019-2023

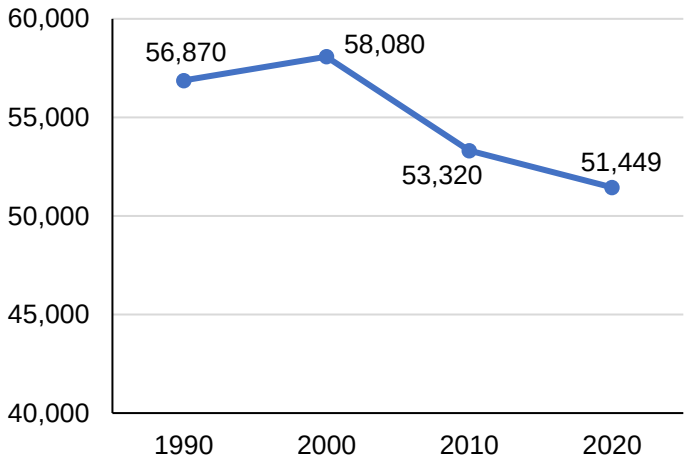


Regional employment highlights the recovering workforce from the COVID-19 pandemic. The base workforce tends to fluctuate from year to year; however, there is a positive trend in employment for nearly every year following the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.

Southeast Iowa's unemployment rate in 2022 was

3.9%

Civilian Labor Force



Over the long term, the region has seen the size of its labor force shrink, in contrast to the state as a whole. This appears to be a natural consequence of the decline in overall population during that same period.

Southeast Iowa Employment Projection

Insert chart on Woods and Pool Employment projections
and description of what this mean to the region.

HOW MUCH ARE SOUTHEAST IOWANS EARNING?

Median Household Income

Average household income in Southeast Iowa is less than that for the state as a whole. Within the region, rural areas tend to have higher incomes than urban areas. Of the four larger cities in the region, Mount Pleasant has the highest at $46,804. This is followed by Fort Madison ($42,448), Burlington ($40,381), and Keokuk ($34,847).

% of Households by Income Range

When broken down by income range, Southeast Iowa exceeds the State as a whole for the two brackets under $50,000. Those earning between $50,000 and $100,000 are roughly the same for both, while Southeast Iowa lags behind the State for the brackets over $100,000.

These statistics are similar to the other rural areas of the state, although slightly more pronounced in each direction. Iowa's urban counties record a much larger share of higher-earning households.

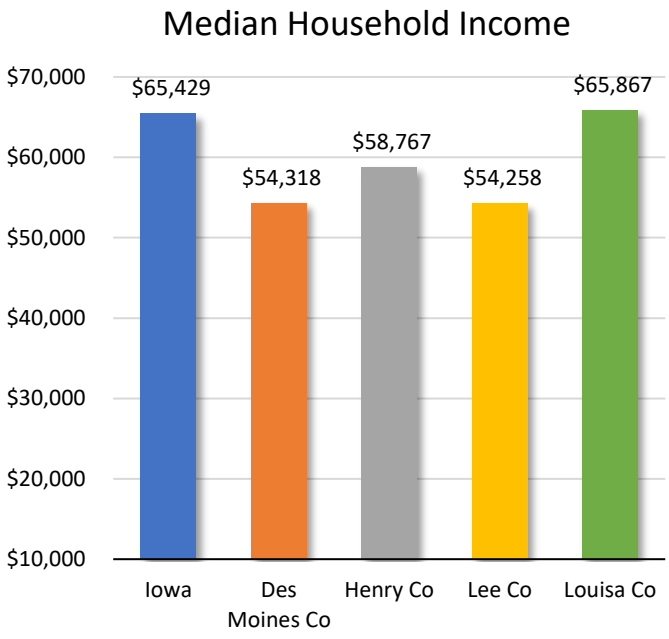
Median household income in Southeast Iowa is

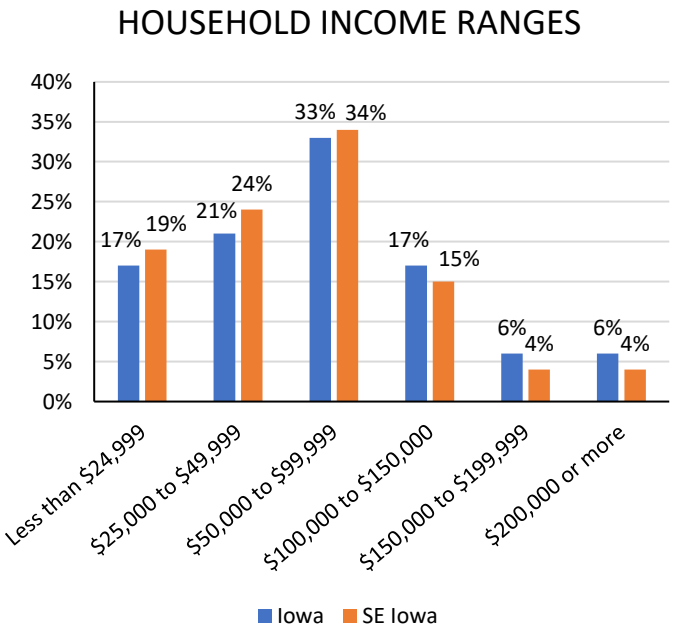
$58,303

Family vs. Non-Family Households

The US Census counts two kinds of households, Households and Family Households. For most purposes, the general term "Households" is used to represent conditions in a community. For purposes of earnings and income, it is helpful to look at Family households as well. When income ranges are grouped into lower income, medium, and higher income categories, a somewhat higher percentage of people in Southeast Iowa are in the lower income category and proportionally fewer are in groups earning over $100,000 a year.

Median income	Household	Family
SE Iowa	$ 58,303	$ 74,205
Iowa	$ 65,429	$ 83,979





United States Census Bureau

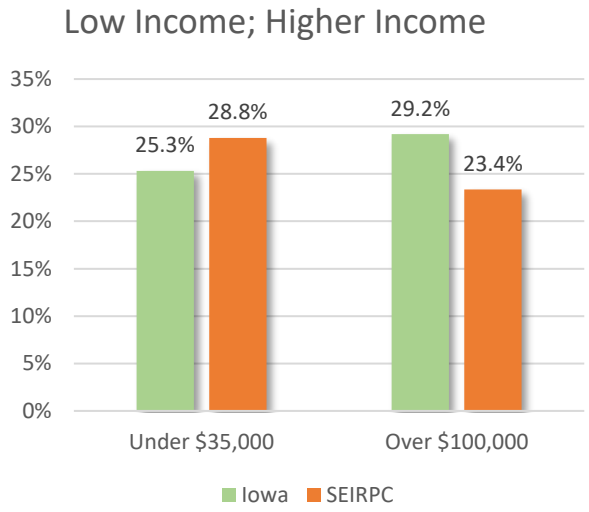
DEFINITIONS

The term "Household" refers to the people living in each dwelling unit, without regard to the number of people or whether they may be related. "Family Household" is defined as: A group of two or more people related by birth, marriage or adoption, and residing together.

HOW MUCH ARE SOUTHEAST IOWANS EARNING?

Poverty in Southeast Iowa

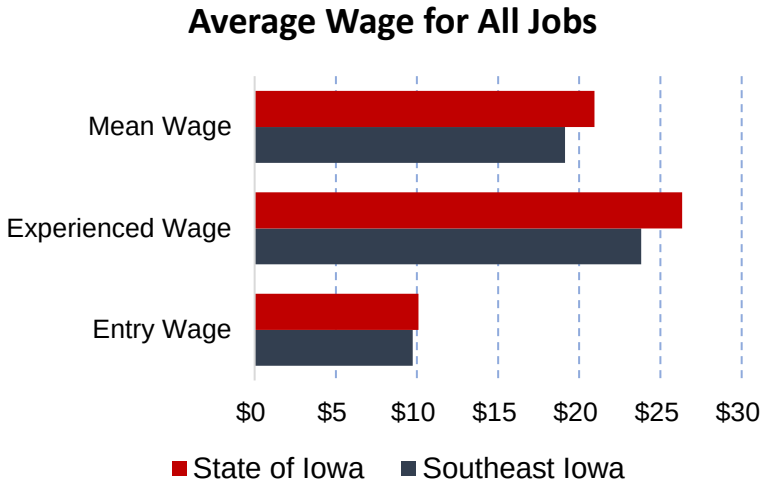
In the Southeast Iowa Region, 4,272 (10.1%) of families and people live on less than $15,000 a year. These people face a challenge with all tasks of daily living, including transportation, participation in the economy and civic affairs. According to Census estimates, approximately 12% of Southeast Iowa families and people had an income classified as below the defined poverty level, with higher rates in Des Moines County (14%) and Lee County (13%). The comparable poverty rate for the State of Iowa as a whole is 11%.



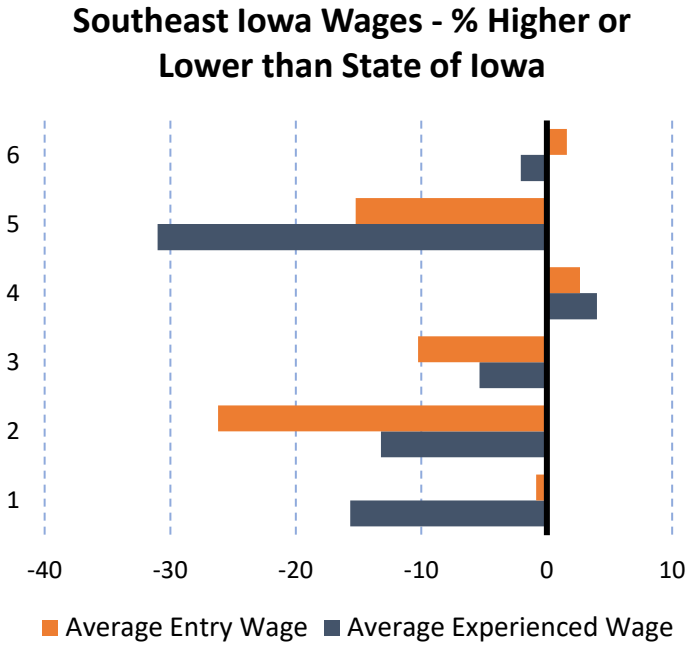
Wage Rates

According to Iowa Workforce Development, the mean hourly wage for all jobs in Southeast Iowa is $19.12. This is $1.81 less than the mean hourly wage for the State of Iowa as a whole.

When broken further by job experience level, the average entry wage in Southeast in Iowa is $9.74, while the average experienced age is $23.81. The former is 4% lower than that of the State of Iowa, while the latter is 11% higher than that of the State. This suggests **that it may become more difficult for Southeast Iowa employers to retain workers as they gain experience, due to the presence of comparatively higher wages elsewhere in the state.**



A minimum wage job pays about **$15,000** a year



When broken down into individual professional categories, Southeast Iowa wages are consistently lower than those of the State as a whole, and only exceed the State for two major categories. One of these is entry-level jobs in the 'Production' category, which has the highest number of workers out of all the categories, and thus shows that the high concentration of manufacturers in the region is able to keep wages reasonably competitive.

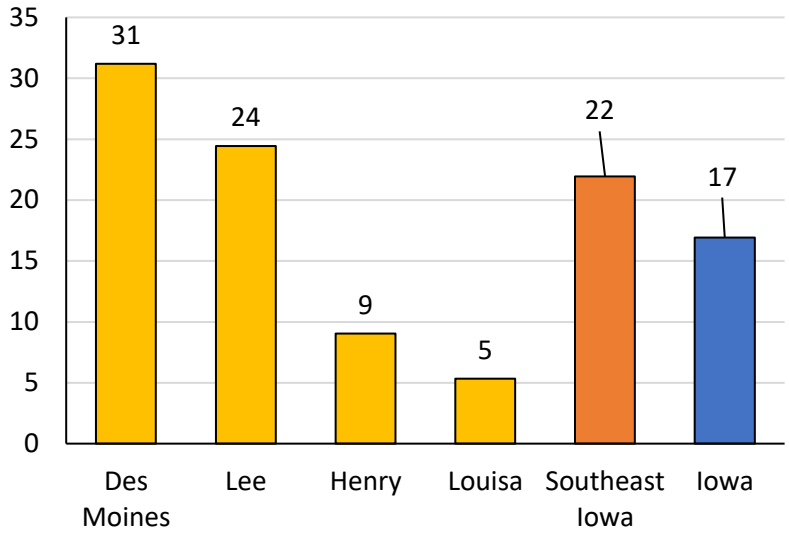
Conversely, 'Management' and 'Education/ Library' jobs in Southeast Iowa (both entry and experienced) have an hourly wage that is more of at least 10% lower than the State as a whole. The situation is similar for experienced 'Healthcare Support' jobs.

CRIME RATE

According to data compiled by the FBI (and obtained through local law enforcement agencies), 2,196 crimes were reported in Southeast Iowa in 2021, with 421 violent crimes (i.e. robbery and aggravated assault), and 1,843 property crimes (i.e. burglary and motor vehicle theft). The overall crime rate exceeded that of Iowa as a whole, with 22 crimes for every 1,000 residents. The crime rate both Southeast Iowa and the state as a whole declined substantially during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in each case, the total number of crimes decreased at roughly the same pace (by around 25 to 33%). Therefore, Southeast Iowa continues to exceed the statewide crime rate.

Total Crime Rate – 2021

Number of Crimes per 1,000 Residents



NUMBER OF CRIMES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS			
Geographic Area	Total Crimes	Violent Crimes	Property Crimes
State of Iowa	16.9	2.6	14.2
Southeast Iowa	21.9	4.1	17.8
Des Moines County	31.2	4.4	26.6
Lee County	24.4	5.5	18.7
Henry County	9.0	1.9	7.1
Mount Pleasant	11.6	2.4	9.3

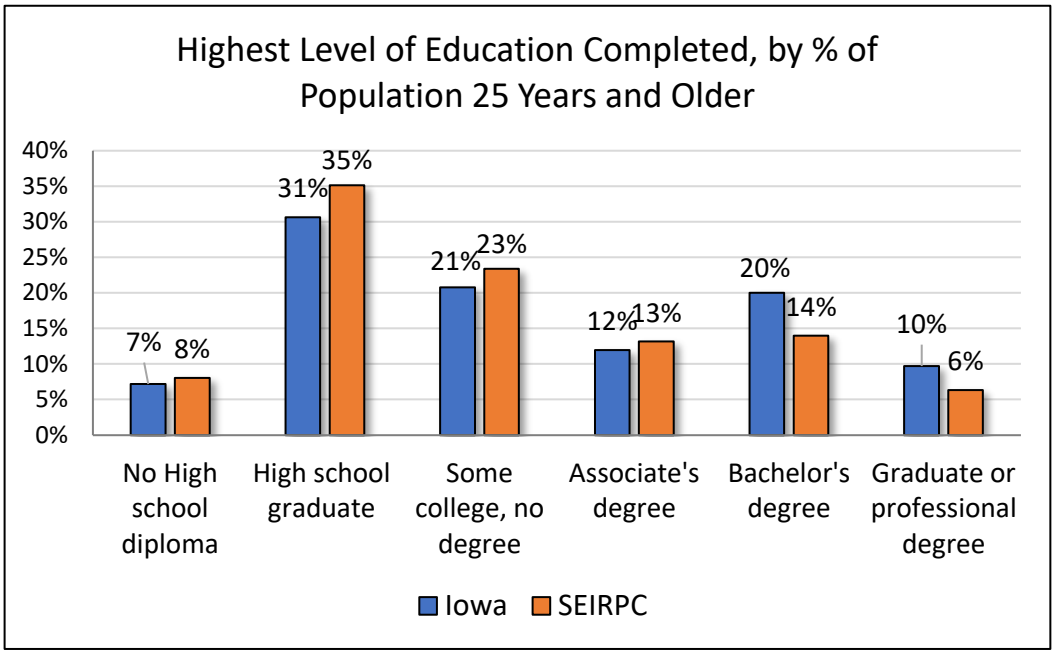
County and city-level crime statistics show that much the region's overall crime rate is influenced by its 3 largest cities, all within Des Moines and Lee Counties. For Burlington, Keokuk and Fort Madison, there were around 35 crimes for every 1,000 residents in 2021. This caused all three to rank among the top 15% of Iowa municipalities with a population over 5,000. In addition, among that same group of 70 cities, Keokuk and Fort Madison had the 2nd and 3rd highest violent crime rates, and Burlington ranked 8th.

The Socioeconomic Context

While active law enforcement measures can be an effective tool in deterring crime, this must be accompanied by other community strategies to address the underlying socioeconomic factors that cause crime. Communities with a high crime rate also tend to have a high degree of poverty and limited job/career prospects. In addition to crime, a number of other factors feed into this continual cycle of socioeconomic distress, such as young people dropping out of high school, a large number of single parent households, and high rates of substance abuse, homelessness, and untreated mental illness.

Unfortunately, as the nature of mental health treatment has changed significantly in recent decades, supply of mental health services is often not enough to meet demand. In Southeast Iowa, this problem was greatly exacerbated by the 2015 closure of the State Mental Health Institute in Mount Pleasant. Health care providers, counselors, and social service organizations have been forced to fill the void at the local level, with limited resources available to combat such a widespread and complex problem.

HOW EDUCATED ARE SOUTHEAST IOWANS?



Educational Attainment

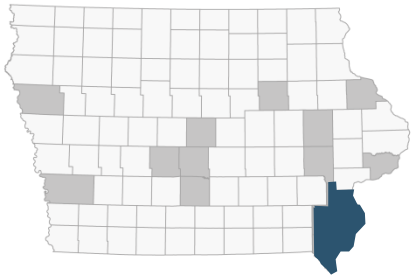
The percentage of SE Iowa adults with a high school diploma or associate degree tends to be greater than the state average.

Attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher level is less common in Southeast Iowa. This may reflect the strong role that manufacturing has played in the regional economy.

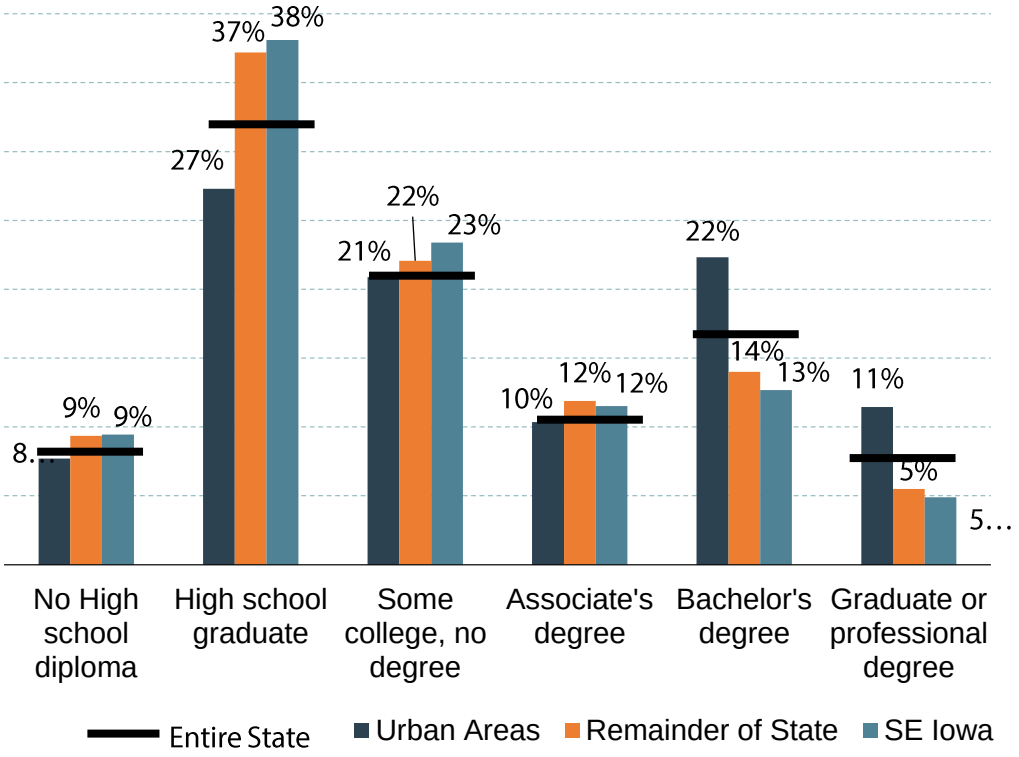
20%

of Southeast Iowa's adults have a Bachelor's Degree or Higher





However



The statewide statistic for bachelor's degree or higher is skewed by the state's larger urban areas, including those containing a large postsecondary institution, such as Iowa City and Ames. Southeast Iowa is largely consistent with the other rural areas of the state, in terms of educational attainment.

CHALLENGES FACING LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Graduation Rate

For the Class of 2022, the graduation rate for Southeast Iowa's public high school students was 85%, compared to 90% for the State of Iowa as a whole. The rate varies considerably from one school district to another. By far the lowest is Burlington, at 74%, while Keokuk, Mount Pleasant and West Burlington are all at 84%. New London and Wapello are the highest, both at 95%.

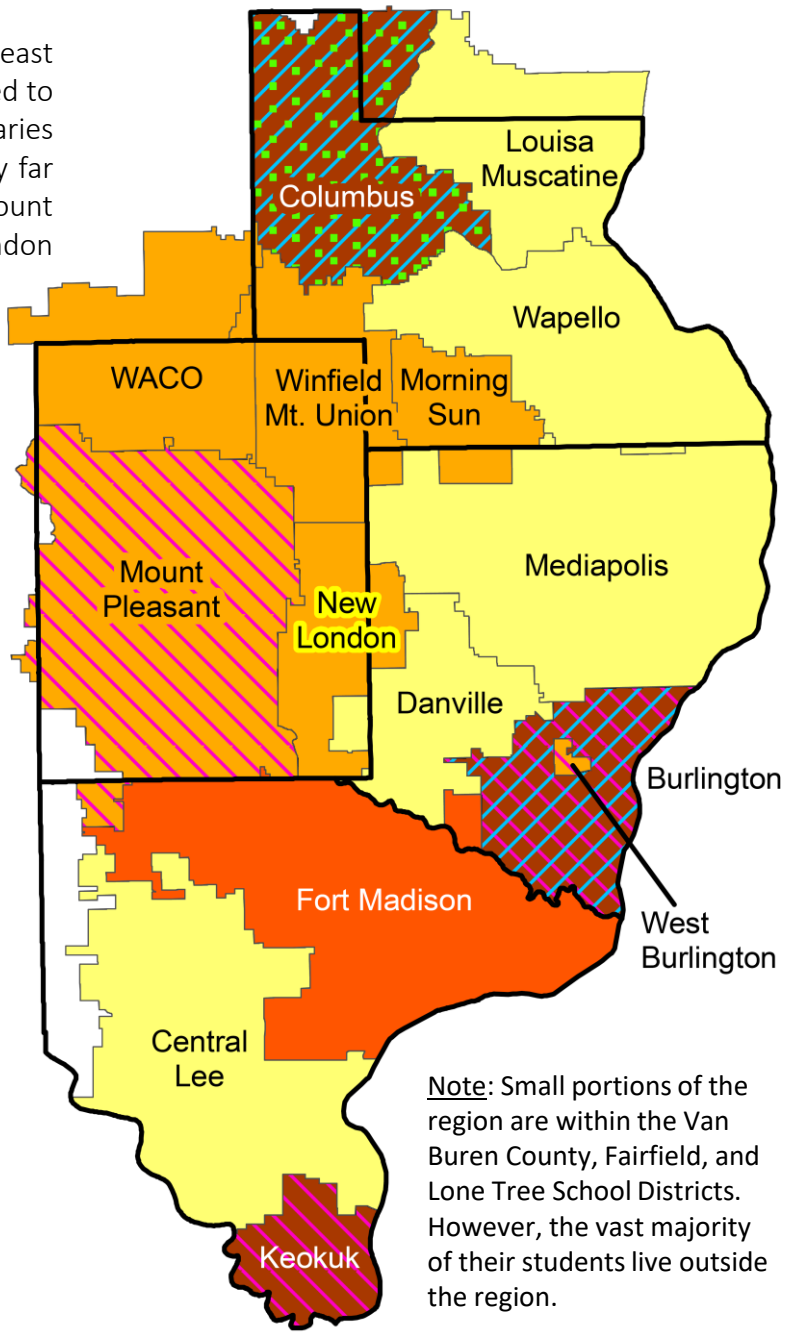


Free/Reduced Lunch

50% of all students attending public school in Southeast Iowa are eligible for a Free or Reduced Price Lunch. For the State of Iowa as whole, only 42% of students fall into this category. Four of the 15 Districts in the region exceed the 50% threshold, with Columbus, Burlington, and Keokuk, all between 60 and 70%. Mediapolis is the lowest, at 31%.

50%

of Southeast Iowa's public school students are eligible for a Free or Reduced Price Lunch



Note: Small portions of the region are within the Van Buren County, Fairfield, and Lone Tree School Districts. However, the vast majority of their students live outside the region.

Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch

- 30.1 to 40%
- 40.1 to 50%
- 50.1 to 60%
- 60.1 to 70%
- Graduation Rate Below 85%
- More than 25% of Students anything other then 'Non-Hispanic White'
- More than 10% Limited English Profiency (LEP)

Having both a low graduation rate and high Free and Reduced Price Lunch eligibility suggests serious performance and budgetary obstacles for a school district, as is the case for Burlington and Keokuk. For Burlington, the high percentage of minority students makes this outcome even more concerning. While the Columbus School District has a large percentage of racial minority students and those with Limited English Proficiency, its graduation rate has improved considerably over the past decade.

Community Colleges

The Southeastern Community College District includes all Des Moines, Henry, and Lee Counties, along with the southern half of Louisa County (including Wapello). The main campus of Southeastern Community College (SCC) is located in West Burlington, and there is also a satellite campus in Keokuk.

Academic programs at Southeastern Community College include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Accounting
- Administrative Professional
- Advanced Automation and Robotics
- Advanced Manufacturing Technology
- Animation for TV/Film/New Media
- Associate of Arts
- Associate of Science
- Automotive Technology
- Collision Repair and Restoration
- Construction Technology
- Electronics Technology
- Emergency Medical Services
- Entrepreneurship
- Food Production and Agriculture
- Industrial Maintenance Technology
- Information Technology
- Nursing
- Welding



In 2015, SCC began implementing a major capital improvement campaign called Building the Dream. This both modernized its facilities and improved its appeal to prospective students looking for a quality 2-year college experience close to home. A significant focus of this campaign is on career preparation for existing and prospective employers, including those in manufacturing and health care.

Since this time, SCC has continued to evolve with a variety of academic partnerships and major campus renovations. In March 2022, Great River Health announced it would provide the college with a $10 million grant from the Great River Health Foundation over the next five years, with the aims of helping SCC hire more nursing program faculty, enhancing nursing student recruitment resources, providing more student support, including the hiring of student success advocates to help students navigate the college process, as well as providing nursing students with tutors and other academic support. As part of the deal between the college and the hospital, part-time job opportunities will be available to students at Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center (SEIRMC) in West Burlington.

Starting in 2022, SCC has moved forward with a number of major construction and renovation projects at the West Burlington Campus including improvements to the cafeteria, bookstore, athletics office, student affairs office, a student recreation center, outdoor training facility, and soon to be a multipurpose tornado safe room. Together, these improvements have led to enrollment increases five semesters in a row, with Fall 2022 enrollment, in all categories of students, up nearly 9%.

Northern Louisa County is part of the Eastern Iowa Community College District. The cities of Columbus City, Columbus Junction, Cotter, Fredonia, Grandview, and Letts are located in this area. Students attend *Muscatine Community College*, which is 15 to 20 miles away, on the northeast side of the City of Muscatine.

HIGHER EDUCATION OPTIONS, CLOSE TO HOME

Iowa Wesleyan University – CLOSED IN MAY 2023

Iowa Wesleyan University (IWU) was the only four-year post-secondary institution located in Southeast Iowa having been founded in 1842, four years prior to statehood. It was the oldest private post-secondary institution in Iowa prior to its announced closing in March 2023. A private institution affiliated with the United Methodist Church, IWU was situated on a 4-acre campus on the north side of Mount Pleasant. It offered 30 individual academic programs, with an emphasis on Liberal Arts and Sciences. In terms of athletics, it had 10 intercollegiate teams in NCAA Division III. IWU featured three on-campus residence halls. Enrollment had risen to 800 in-person and online students in 2023 from less than 400 students in 2014. IWU implemented a major rebranding effort, major fundraising effort, debt re-financing through USDA Rural Development, and doubled enrollment, but it was not enough to keep the school solvent. Other small colleges across the county are facing similar financial straits due to enrollment and cost challenges.



Impact to Community

An economic impact study commissioned by IWU in 2018 found the university had a $55 million total economic impact to the southeast Iowa region. The number includes direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts. The university employed 100 full-time staff and faculty. Businesses will feel the absence of nearly 800 in-person students, and some of the faculty and staff.

Efforts to Transition Campus

USDA Rural Development and a core community team began efforts in late May, 2023, to solicit ideas and offers for new campus uses. Several suitors have submitted varying degrees of interest up to proposals, but no action has been taken. There exists a fine balance between finding future use and owner quickly, while finding the right use and owner for the community as a whole. The right use will be impossible to know until time shows the campus to be productive, maintained, and once again a compliment to the community.

Other Nearby Institutions

Several other institutions of higher learning are located are within 50 miles of Southeast Iowa. These include two large public universities, the University of Iowa (Iowa City), and Western Illinois University (Macomb). Private institutions include the Maharishi University of Management (Fairfield), Culver-Stockton College (Canton, Missouri), Monmouth College (Monmouth, Illinois), and Knox College (Galesburg, Illinois).

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

MAHARISHI UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT
ENGAGE THE MANAGING INTELLIGENCE OF NATURAL LAW

CULVER-STOCKTON

ENROLLMENT CLIFF

What is the Enrollment Cliff?

The enrollment cliff refers to the upcoming anticipated drop in high school graduates and college age population beginning in approximately 2025. This is largely due to a sharp decline in birthrates during the 2008 Great Recession due to economic stress and uncertainty.

NEWS HEADLINES ABOUT ENROLLMENT CLIFF

"U.S. Birthrate Drops 4th Year in a Row, Possibly Echoing the Great Recession"

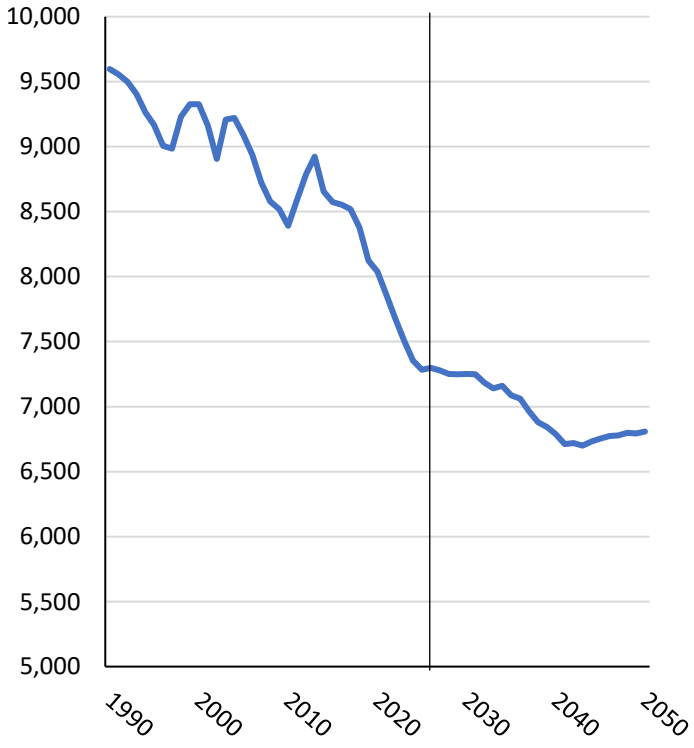
"U.S. Births Fell to a 32-Year Low in 2018; CDC Says Birthrate Is in Record Slump"

"The U.S. Birthrate Is Still Falling"

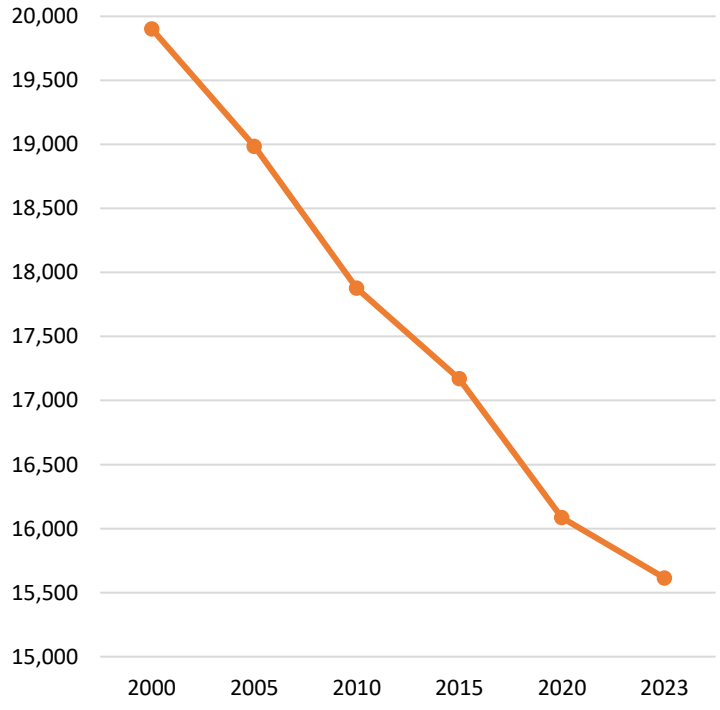
"College Students Predicted to Fall by More Than 15 Percent After the Year 2025"

This cliff could have an impact in Southeast Iowa, with enrollment at Southeastern Community College. The graphs below highlight the projected population of college age students through 2050 and current Southeast Iowa School enrollment trends. From this we can see a leveling off of college age population in Southeast Iowa, while the school enrollments continue to decline. This leveling off may help SCC to maintain student enrollments moving forward, along with other efforts they have made to increase enrollments in recent years including adding several new athletic programs and international recruitment of students..

Southeast Iowa - Population Projection, People Aged 18-24



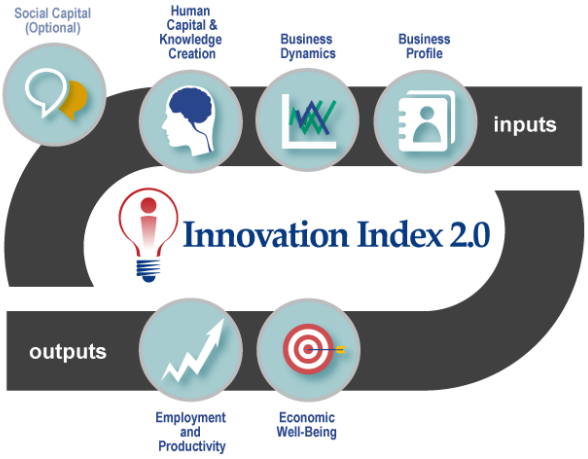
Southeast Iowa School Districts Certified Enrollment



LET'S INNOVATE!

The *Innovation Index* is a cumulative measure of several economic factors, which provides perspective on a county or region's competitive strengths, weaknesses, and potential. It is compiled by *Stats America*, a service of the Indiana Business Research Center (IBRC), supported by the US Economic Development Administration.

Each county or region in the United States is ranked in terms of its relative capacity for innovation, on a scale from Very Low to Very High. Southeast Iowa ranks 276th of all 384 Economic Development Districts, which means that it has *Moderate Relative Capacity* for innovation. It deviates only slightly from the average index value for all EDDs (100.4).



Southeast Iowa has
MODERATE
Relative Capacity for Innovation

AND

All Southeast Iowa Counties have
MODERATE
Relative Capacity for Innovation

Taken at the county level all four counties rank at a level of *Moderate Relative Capacity* for innovation, while previously two of the four counties (Des Moines and Henry) were rated at High for Relative Capacity for Innovation.

In addition, the Southeast Iowa region fares equally or slightly better compared to most neighboring EDDs in the Tri-State area, with only the larger urban areas of Iowa City-Cedar Rapids, Quad Cities, and Dubuque having a higher ranking. The proximity of these innovative knowledge centers also offers peripheral benefits to Southeast Iowa.

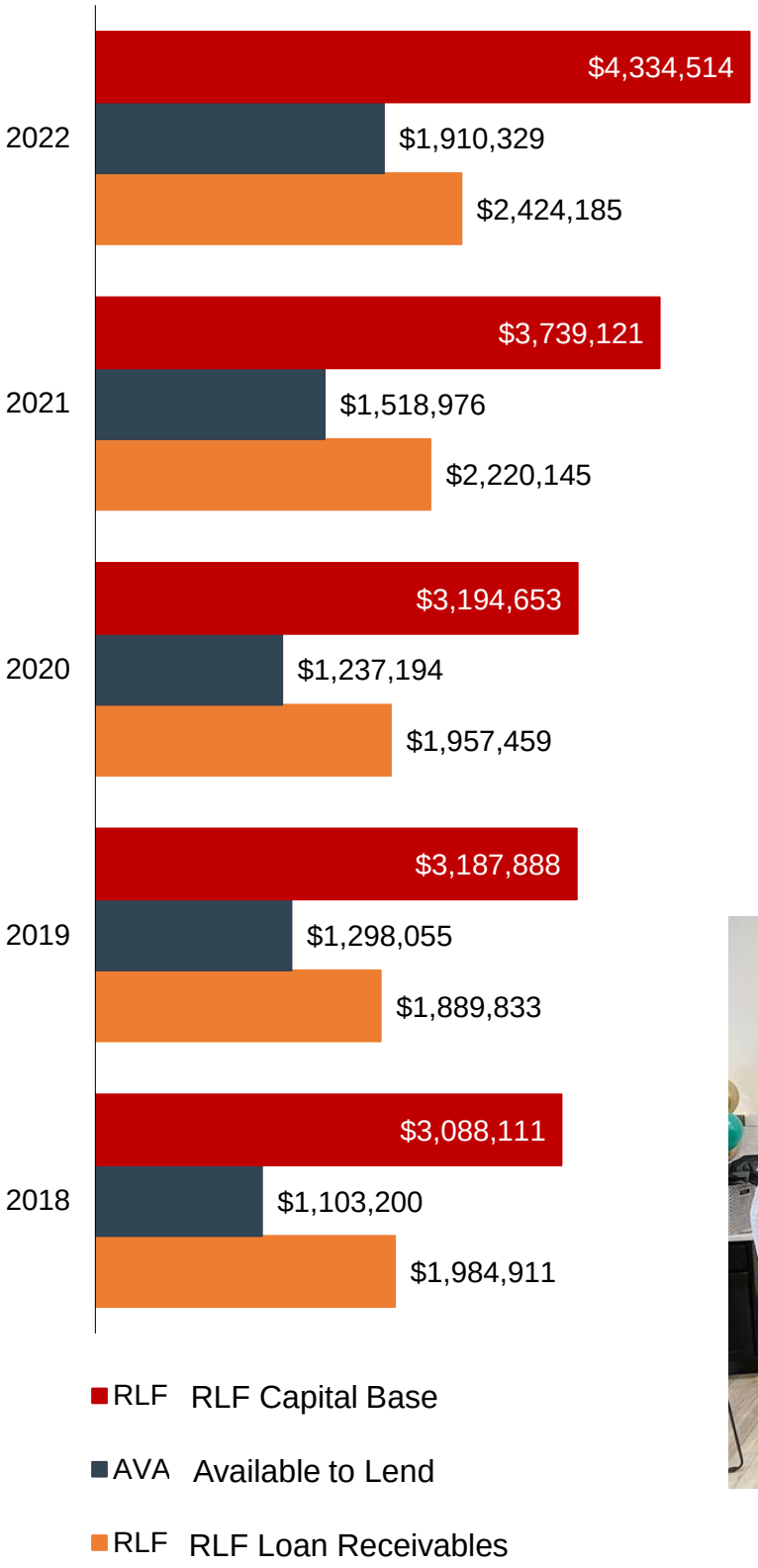
Among the individual factors that comprise the Innovation Index, Southeast Iowa fares particularly well on the following:

- ***Economic Well-Being Index (moderate)*** – economic well-being and standard of living for *residents (SE Iowa value of 122.1)*
- ***Business Profile Index (moderate)*** – local business conditions and resources available to entrepreneurs *(SE Iowa value of 92.0)*

Conversely, Southeast Iowa falls below the national average for these two factors:

- ***Employment and Productivity Index (moderate)*** – economic improvement and the direct outcomes of innovation *(SE Iowa value of 111.8)*
- ***Business Dynamics Index (low)*** – entry and exit of individual firms, as a measure of the region's competitiveness *(SE Iowa value of 78.6)*
- ***Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Index*** (moderate) – the population and labor force's ability to innovate *(SE Iowa value of 97.5)*

Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)



SEIRPC assists with business development by administering a *Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)*, a source of money from which loans are made for business development and expansion projects.

In FY2021, loans totaling $577,500 were made through RLF funding pools. This included a $500,000 loan for J & M Displays, a $47,500 loan for High Rivers Enterprises, and $30,000 loan for Wake and Bake Breakfast Co. These loans were made from the CARES Act RLF funds that were available July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2022, which offered these businesses 0% interest in year one, 1% interest in year two, then 75% of the published prime rate in the Wall Street Journal for the remainder of the term.

RLF ASSISTANCE HELPED CREATE AND RETAIN 49 JOBS IN FY2021



Midwest Realty Group
$200,000

MORE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROJECTS



J and M Displays
$500,000



Capitol Theater
$150,000

Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Revolving Loan Funds are only one tool available to assist in expansion of existing businesses or starting a new business in Southeast Iowa. The *Southeastern Iowa Small Business Development Center,* located in downtown Burlington at RiverPark Place, offers loan packaging, financial projections, and feasibility and business plan writing assistance.

AMERICA'S SBDC IOWA



SBDC assists local business such as the Beancounter in Downtown Burlington, which was recently awarded $7,500 through the IEDA Open 4 Business Competition.

In addition to this, counselors are available to coach a new or existing business with all aspects of managing a business, from setting up and managing a record keeping system, to marketing and sales. The SBDC offers a wide variety of business classes including Basic Business Accounting, Writing a Winning Business Plan, and QuickBooks.

SCC

The SBDC program started at Southeastern Community College in November 1987 as a branch office of Indian Hills Community College. In 1989, it became an independent entity for serving the four-county region of Des Moines, Henry, Lee and Louisa counties.

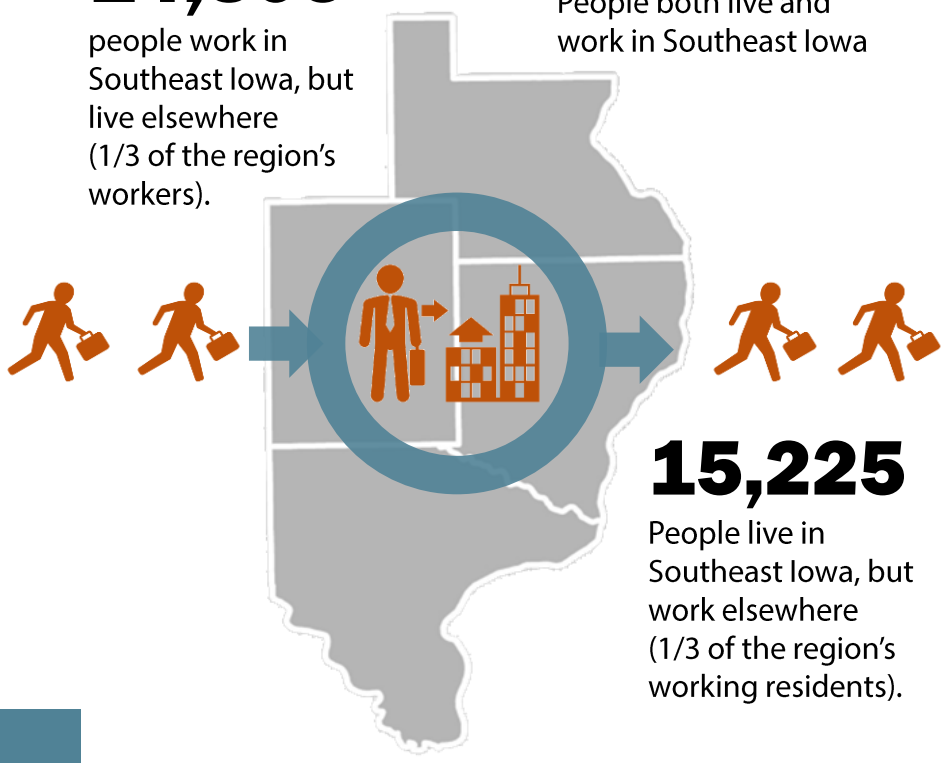
COMMUTING PATTERNS IN SOUTHEAST IOWA

Estimates from 2020 show that over 14,000 people work in the region, but reside elsewhere. Conversely, over 15,000 people live in the region, but work elsewhere. This indicates that Southeast Iowa is a net exporter of workers, but to a fairly minimal degree (at a ratio of 1.1 outbound workers for every 1 inbound worker).

However, 2/3 of the region's working residents both live and work in the region (just over 32,000 people). This suggests that despite the number of outbound commuters exceeding inbound, the region is still largely self-sufficient, and not overly dependent on other areas for its own economic well being.

14,305
people work in Southeast Iowa, but live elsewhere (1/3 of the region's workers).

31,576
People both live and work in Southeast Iowa



15,225
People live in Southeast Iowa, but work elsewhere (1/3 of the region's working residents).

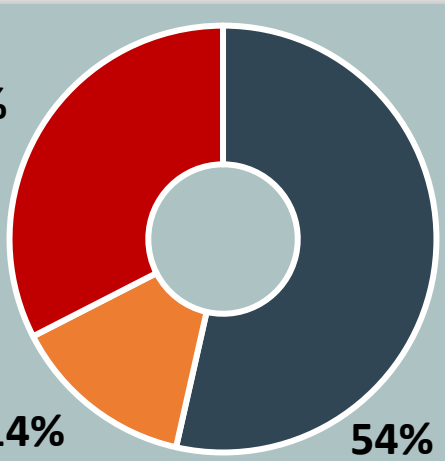
The average commute time for an employed resident of Southeast Iowa is

19.6

minutes everyday



As is to be expected, counties with larger cities and numerous industries (like Des Moines) tend to have a higher share of residents who stay in the county for work. In contrast, rural counties (like Louisa) tend to have a larger share of their residents commuting to a larger neighboring county like Des Moines or Muscatine.



33%
Work outside Southeast Iowa

14%
Live in one Southeast Iowa county, but work in another

54%
Live and Work in the Same County

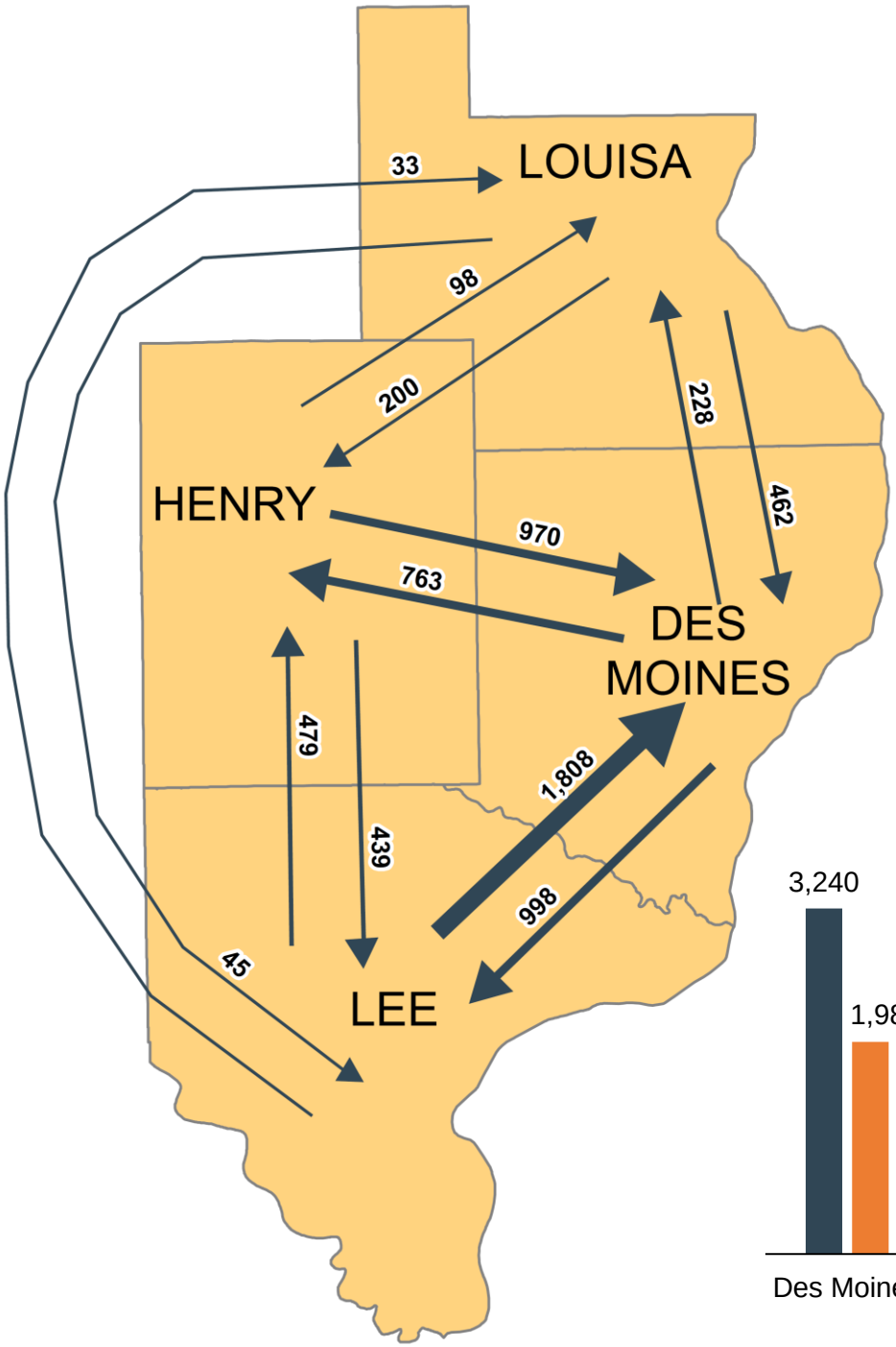
Where do Southeast Iowans work?

A majority of Southeast Iowa's working residents are employed in the same county in which they live, while 14% work in one of the region's other three counties. The remaining residents travel outside Southeast Iowa for work, many in nearby urban areas like Muscatine, the Quad Cities, Iowa City/Cedar Rapids, Fairfield, and Quincy, Illinois.

The average commute time for Southeast Iowa's working residents is 19.6 minutes, consistent with the State as a whole. Of the four counties, Louisa County's average commute time is the highest (22.7 minutes), while Des Moines County's is the lowest (at 16.6 minutes). The other two fall right around the regional average.

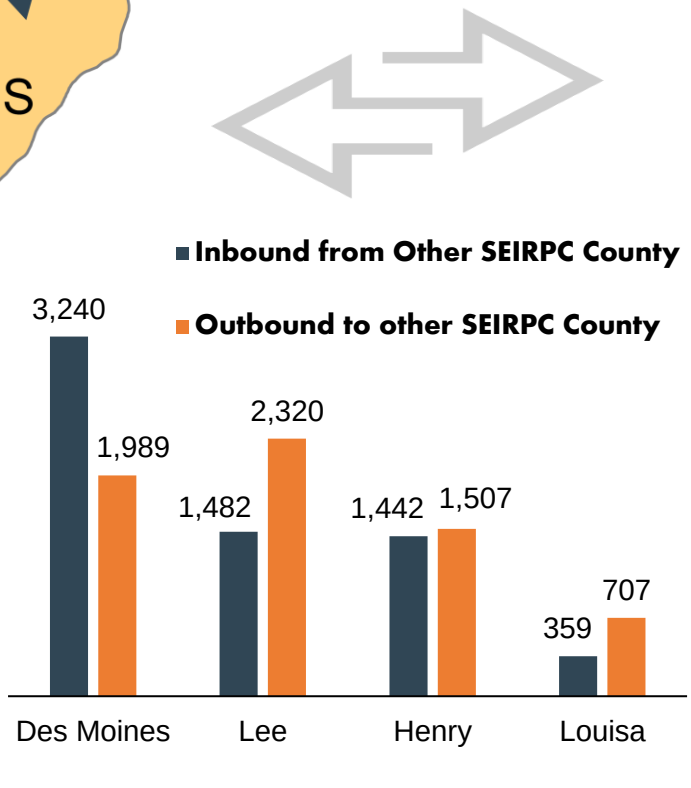
COMMUTING PATTERNS IN SOUTHEAST IOWA





Intraregional Commuting

Many people live in one of the four counties of Southeast Iowa, and work in another. Des Moines County receives the largest number of inbound workers from the other three counties. It also receives more workers from the other counties than it loses to them. Conversely for the other three, their outbound exceeds their inbound. The flow of workers is particularly heavy between Des Moines and Lee Counties, and between Des Moines and Henry Counties.

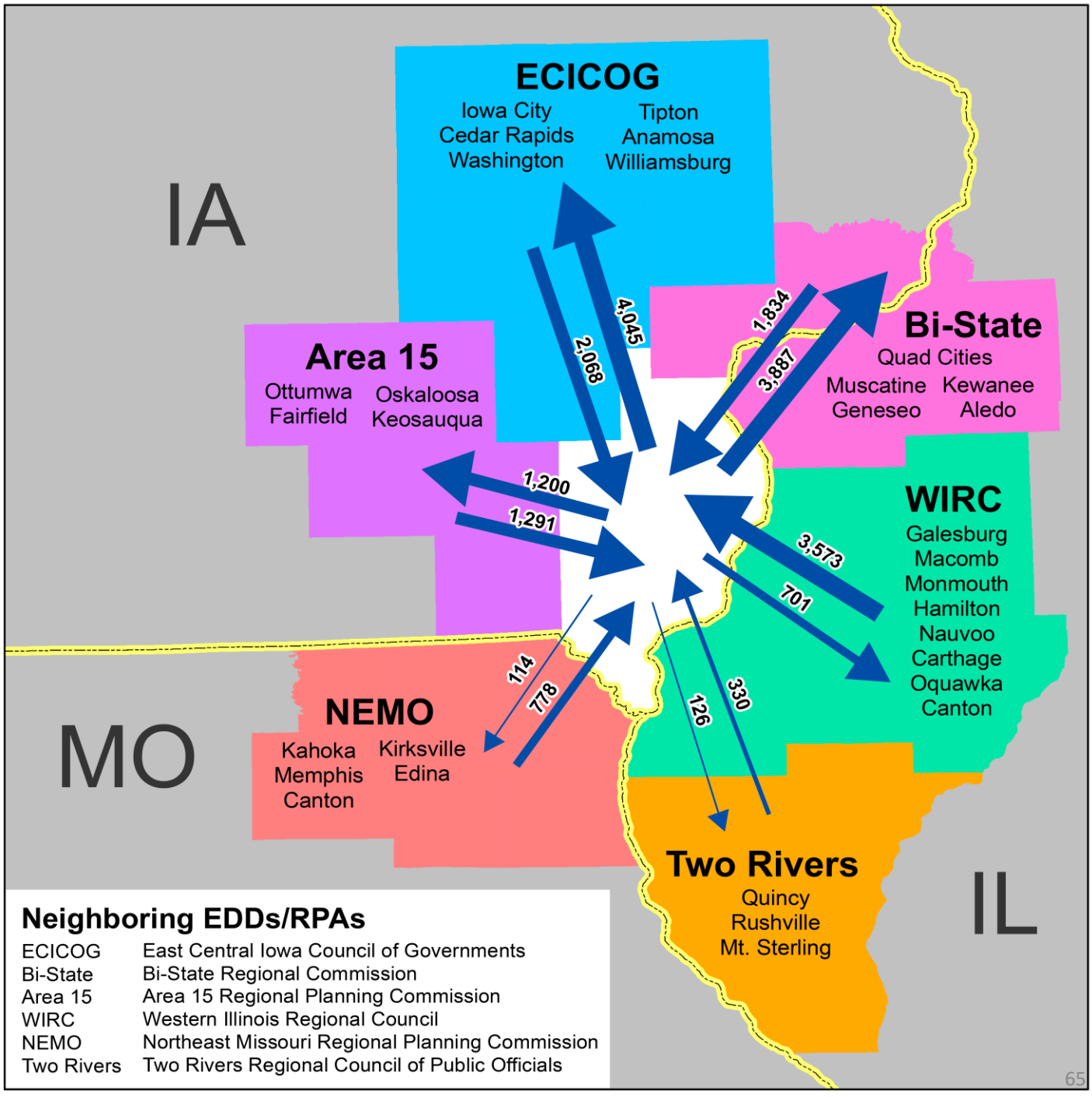


COMMUTING PATTERNS IN SOUTHEAST IOWA

Interregional Commuting

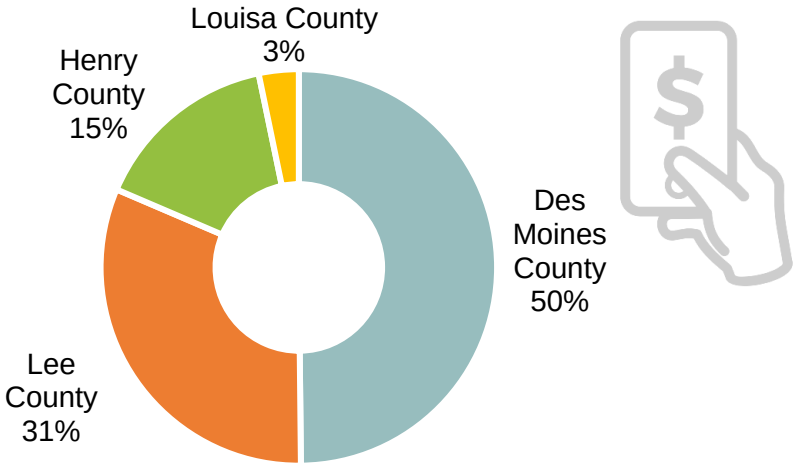
Southeast Iowa attracts a sizable number of workers from Western Illinois and Northeast Missouri, due to their close proximity and the comparative lack of jobs available in these largely rural counties. Conversely, a sizable number of Southeast Iowa residents commute to the larger urban population centers to the north, including the Quad Cities, Iowa City, and Cedar Rapids. Muscatine in particular attracts a large number of residents from neighboring Louisa County, given its very close proximity. However, the reverse is also true, as many Muscatine County residents (primarily from Muscatine and Conesville) work at the Tyson Foods plant in Columbus Junction.

The map below displays commuting patterns at the level of Economic Development Districts (or alternatively, Regional Planning Affiliations).



REGIONAL SALES

Where do People Shop in Southeast Iowa?



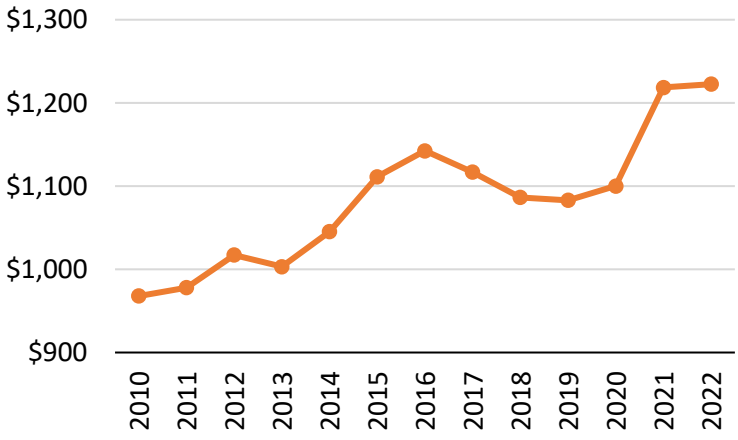


In FY2022, Southeast Iowa yielded retail sales of

$1.2 billion

Half of the region's sales occur in Des Moines County, as Greater Burlington serves as a regional shopping hub, in addition to having the largest population. However, it only accounts for 37% of the region's population (compared to 32% for Lee, 20% for Henry, and 10% for Louisa).

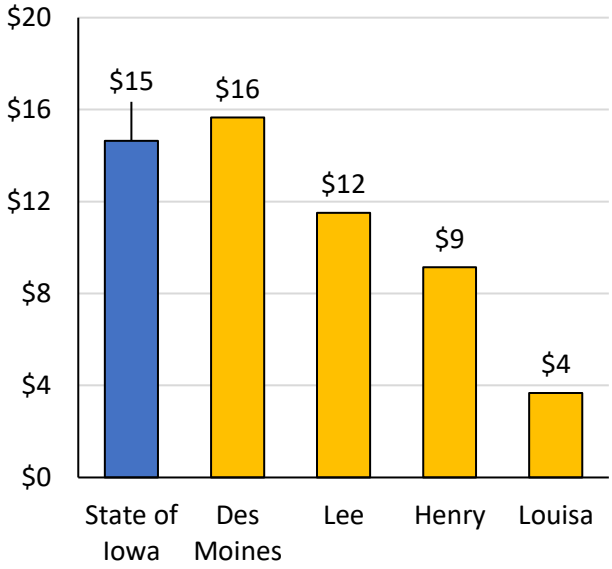
Southeast Iowa Taxable Retail Sales (in Millions)



While Southeast Iowa largely followed the same general trendline as the state between 2010 and 2020, it was unique in terms of the pronounced 'hump' visible on the graph between 2013 to 2019. This is likely the result of the construction of the Iowa Fertilizer Plant, when thousands of temporary construction workers were present in the region. The subsequent jump from 2020 to 2021 is the result of inflation following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Per capita retail sales comprise an area's retail sales divided by its population. Places with high per capita sales bring in a significant amount of revenue from consumers living elsewhere. Of the 4 counties in Southeast Iowa, Des Moines is the only one whose per capita sales exceed that of Iowa as a whole, and it ranks 12th out of all 99 counties. At the same time, Louisa County has the lowest per capita sales of all Iowa counties.

Per Capita Retail Sales - FY2022 (in Thousands)

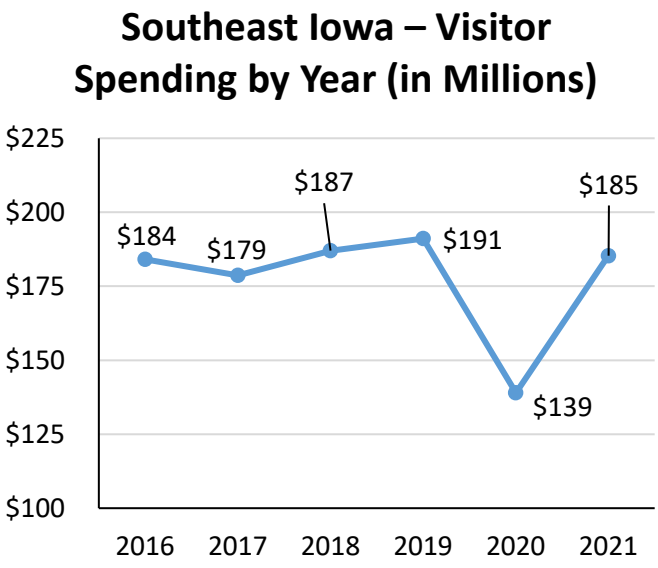


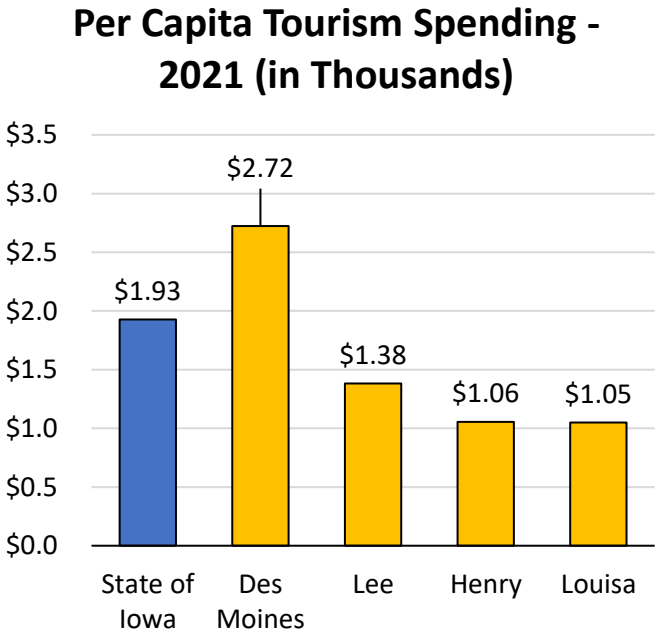
Des Moines County has the **12th highest** Per Capita Retail Sales of all counties in Iowa.

TOURISM



Sweet Corn Festival, West Point





The Iowa Economic Development Authority works with the private consultant Tourism Economics to collect and analyze data on the impact of visitor spending on the state's overall economy. This data shows that total visitor spending in Southeast Iowa was $185 million in 2021, with just under 60% of that amount accounted for by Des Moines County, 25% by Lee County, 12% by Henry, and 6% by Louisa.

Consistent with the statewide trend, visitor spending dropped dramatically in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, before rebounding to near its pre-pandemic levels in 2021. While Iowa as a whole, the other rural counties, and the urban counties all saw an increase of around 3% in visitor spending from 2016 to 2017, Southeast Iowa saw a 3% decrease. Once again, this is likely the result of the many temporary construction workers leaving after the construction of the Iowa Fertilizer Plant.

On a per capita basis, Southeast Iowa had $1,786 in visitor spending for each one of its residents in 2021. As in prior years, the region fell below the per capita rate for Iowa as a whole, but comfortably ahead of the other rural counties. Des Moines County had the 4th highest per capita value of all 99 counties, and was the only county in the region to exceed the statewide value. Notably, despite having the state's lowest per capita retail sales overall, Louisa County ranks near the middle of the state's 99 counties in terms of per capita visitor spending – only slightly lower than neighboring Henry.

TOURISM

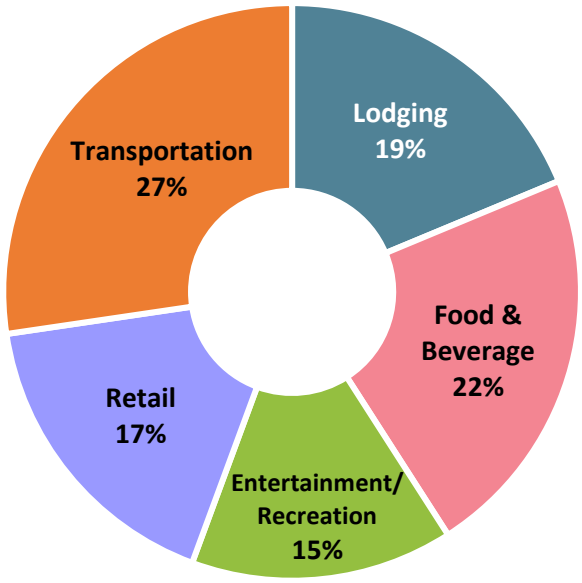


FunCity Turf at Burlington Regional RecPlex

Of the total visitor spending generated in Southeast Iowa in 2021, 27% was accounted for by 'Transportation', which includes all costs pertaining to auto, rail and air transportation, including vehicle fueling. This sector comprised a noticeably larger share of the total (nearly 35%) in Henry and Louisa Counties. Another 22% fell into the category of 'food and beverage', which had the highest percentage in Lee County (23%) and the lowest in Louisa (18%).

Lodging accounted for 19% of the regional total, and it was highest in Louisa County (20%) and lowest in Henry (17%). Retail accounted for 17%, and was largely consistent between the counties, though Des Moines County had the highest (17.4%). Entertainment and Recreation comprised 15%, with Des Moines County leading well above the others at 16%. The percentage in each sector for Southeast Iowa was largely the same as for Iowa as a whole.

Southeast Iowa - % of Visitor Spending by Industry Sector, 2021



The following page includes a map (and corresponding list) that highlights the most prominent tourist destinations in the region. This includes outdoor recreation facilities, other standalone destinations that are typically accessible year-round, and major recurring events that tend to draw large crowds. It also highlights three signed routes to guide motorists along a scenic corridor with historic or cultural significance. In Lee County, two of these overlap along Highway 2 west of Donnellson.

Tourist Destinations of Southeast Iowa

Standalone Destinations

1. Aspen Grove Cemetery *(Burlington)*
2. Catfish Bend Casino/Pzazz *(Burlington)*
3. Fairview Zoo *(Louisa County)*
4. Harlan-Lincoln House *(Mt. Pleasant)*
5. Harvestville Farm *(Donnellson)*
6. Iowa State Penitentiary *(Ft. Madison)*
7. Lewelling Quaker Museum *(Salem)*
8. Lock and Dam No. 19 *(Keokuk)*
9. Keokuk National Cemetery
10. Old Fort Madison
11. Snake Alley *(Burlington)*
12. Swedish American Museum *(Swedesburg)*
13. Swinging Bridge *(Columbus Junction)*
14. Toolesboro Mounds *(Louisa County)*

Outdoor Recreation

15. Baxter Sports Complex *(Ft. Madison)*
16. Big Hollow Recr. Area *(Des Moines Co.)*
17. Burlington Regional RecPlex
18. Crapo Park *(Burlington)*
19. Geode State Park *(Henry County)*
20. Lake Wilderness Campground *(Lee Co.)*
21. North Gorge *(Burlington)*
22. Oakland Mills Park *(Henry County)*
23. Pollmiller Park *(West point)*
24. Port Louisa Nat'l Wildlife Refuge *(Louisa)*
25. Rand Park *(Keokuk)*
26. Shimek State Forest *(Lee County)*
27. Spirit Hollow Golf Course *(Burlington)*
28. Starr's Cave Park & Preserve *(Burlington)*
29. Wilson Lake Park *(Lee County)*

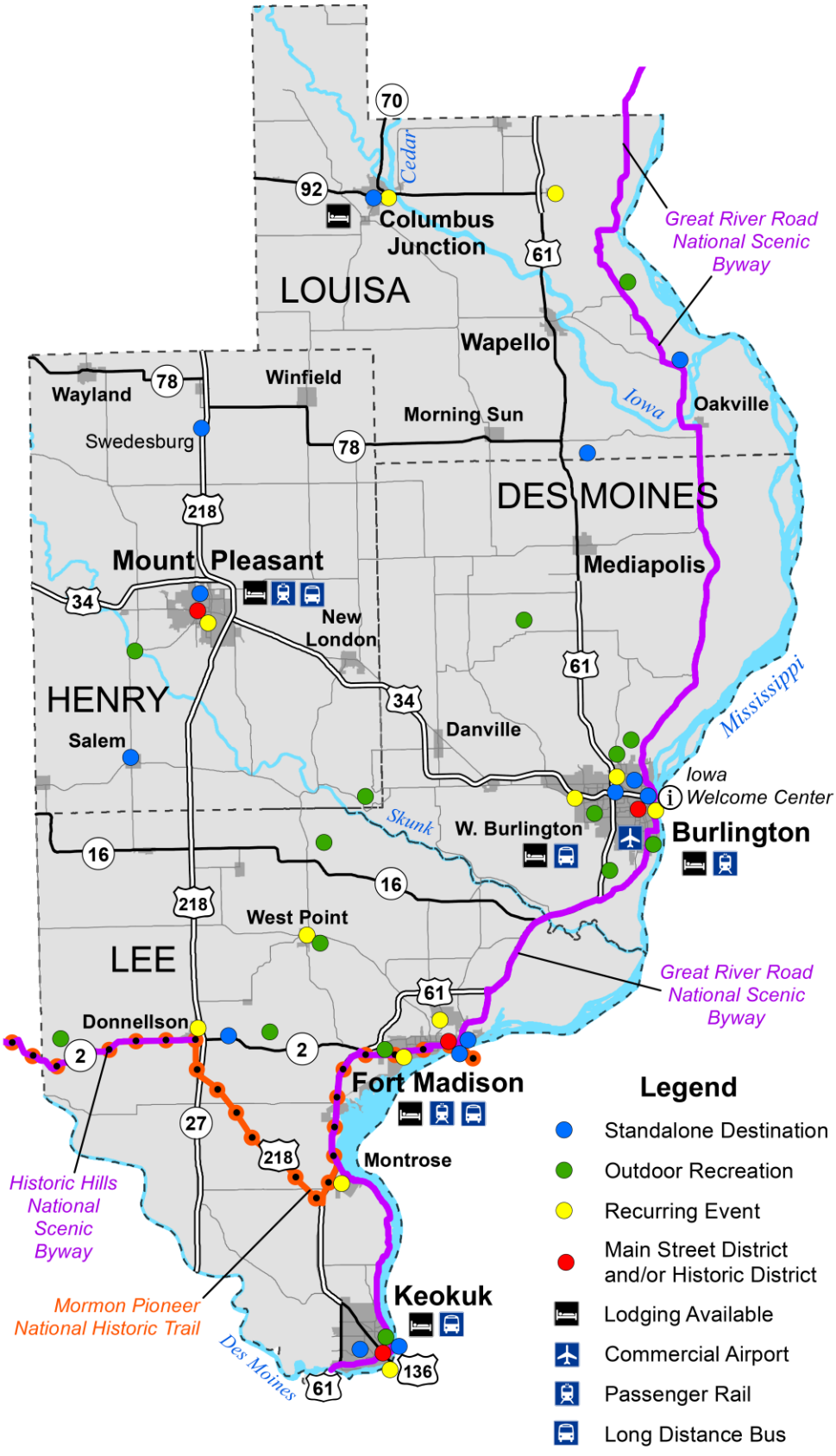
Recurring Events

30. Burlington Bees Baseball *(Burlington)*
31. Des Moines County Fair *(W. Burlington)*
32. Farm Life Festival *(Grandview)*
33. Lee County Fair *(Donnellson)*
34. Louisa County Fair *(Columbus Junction)*
35. Mexican Fiesta *(Ft. Madison)*
36. Midwest Old Threshers' Reunion and Henry County Fair *(Mt. Pleasant)*

35. Montrose Watermelon Festival
36. Rollin' On The River Bluesfest *(Keokuk)*
37. Steamboat Days Carnival *(Burlington)*
38. Tri-State Rodeo *(Ft. Madison)*
39. West Point Sweet Corn Festival

Main Street/Historic Districts

40. Downtown Burlington (Main/Historic)
41. Downtown Fort Madison (Historic)
41. Main Street Keokuk (Main)
42. Main Street Mount Pleasant (Main)



HOW HEALTHY ARE SOUTHEAST IOWANS?



County Health Rankings

According to *County Health Rankings*, compiled by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, counties in Southeast Iowa fare comparatively poorly with the remainder of the State. This is especially true for Des Moines and Lee, which are usually toward the very bottom. Henry County has usually ranked the highest of the four.

Health Factors

Using a variety of statistics, Health Factors focuses on the conditional elements that influence the health of a county:

- Health Behaviors
- Clinical Care
- Social & Economic Factors
- Physical Environment

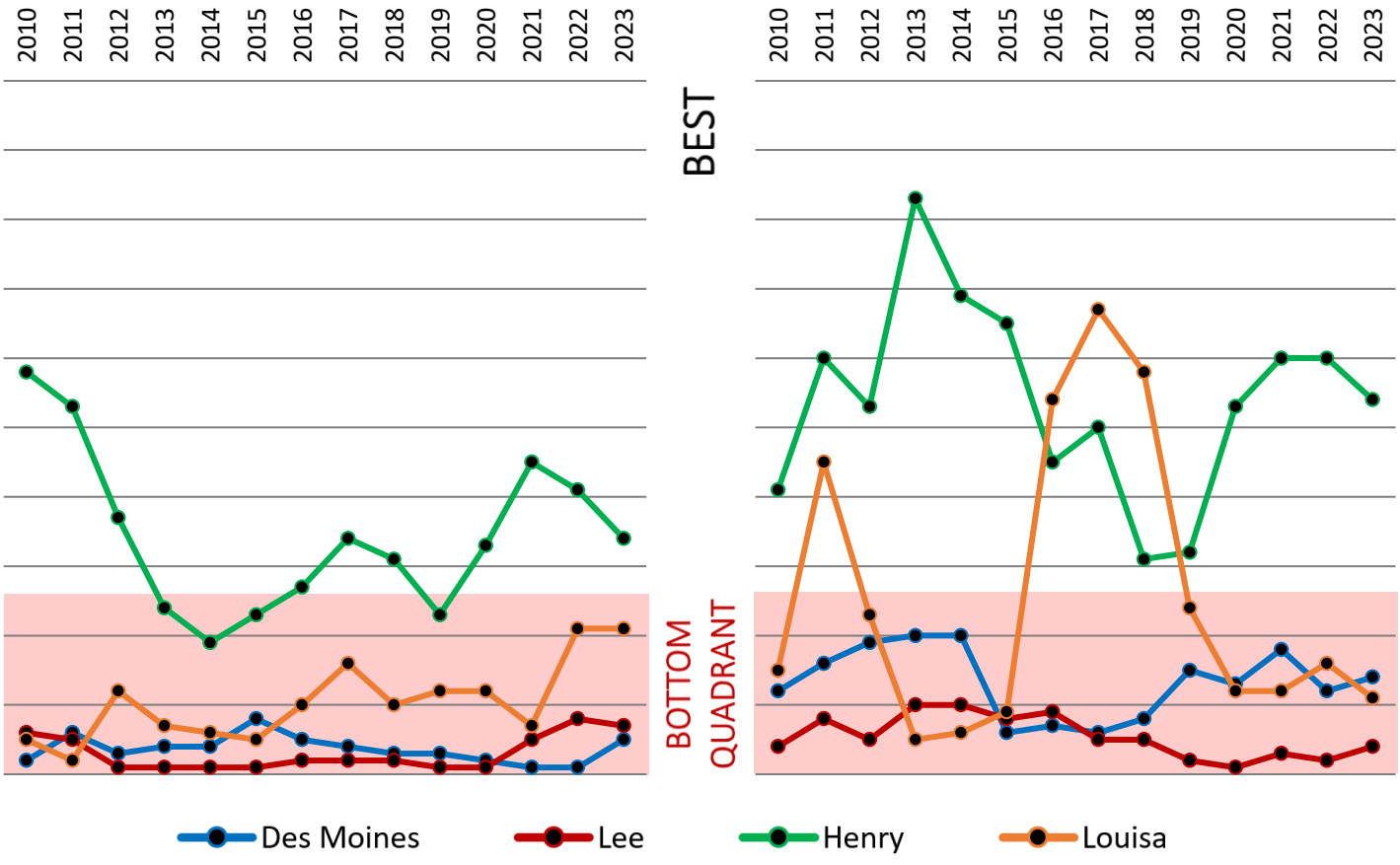
Des Moines and Lee Counties have consistently ranked in the bottom 10 each year.

Health Outcomes

Health Outcomes is based on statistics for two types of measures, which reflect how long people live and how healthy people feel:

- Length of Life
- Quality of Life

Counties with a smaller overall population tend to be subject to wild fluctuations in this category, as is the case with Louisa, and to a lesser extent Henry.

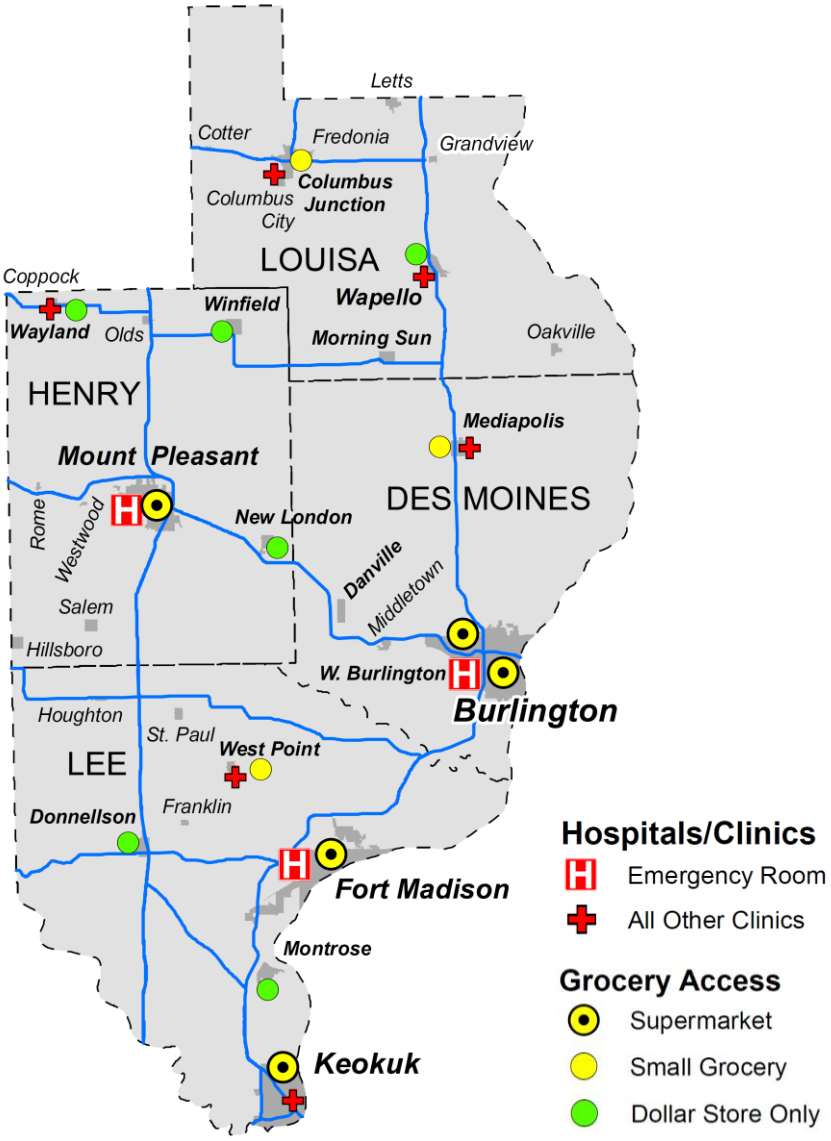


HOW HEALTHY ARE SOUTHEAST IOWANS?

The two broad categories of 'Health Factors' and 'Health Outcomes' are each comprised of several sub-categories, whose individual scores are weighted to produce the total score. For these six sub-categories, the rankings for each county in Southeast Iowa are displayed in the table below. Those that fall in the State's bottom quadrant (75 to 99) are shown in red.

	Health Factors				Health Outcomes	
	Health Behaviors	Clinical Care	Social & Economic Factors	Physical Environment	Length of Life	Quality of Life
Des Moines	95	45	97	86	76	89
Lee	96	48	95	76	95	95
Henry	49	43	67	66	20	83
Louisa	44	95	76	88	82	88

Health Care and Grocery Access



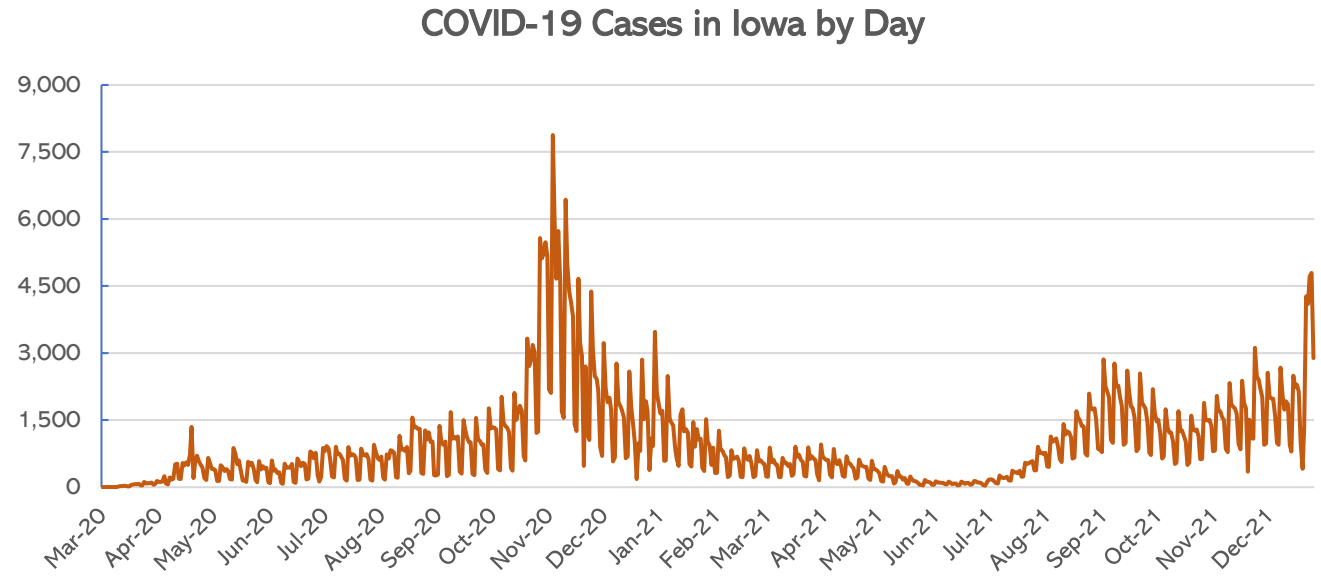
The region's two largest counties fare poorly in the category of Health Behaviors, which includes statistics for obesity, smoking, physical inactivity, access to exercise opportunities and healthy food choices, excessive drinking, and sexually transmitted infections. All 4 counties rank in the bottom half for Physical Environment, a broader category that encompasses air pollution levels, drinking water safety, severe housing problems, and the tendency for individuals to spend many hours commuting to work alone.

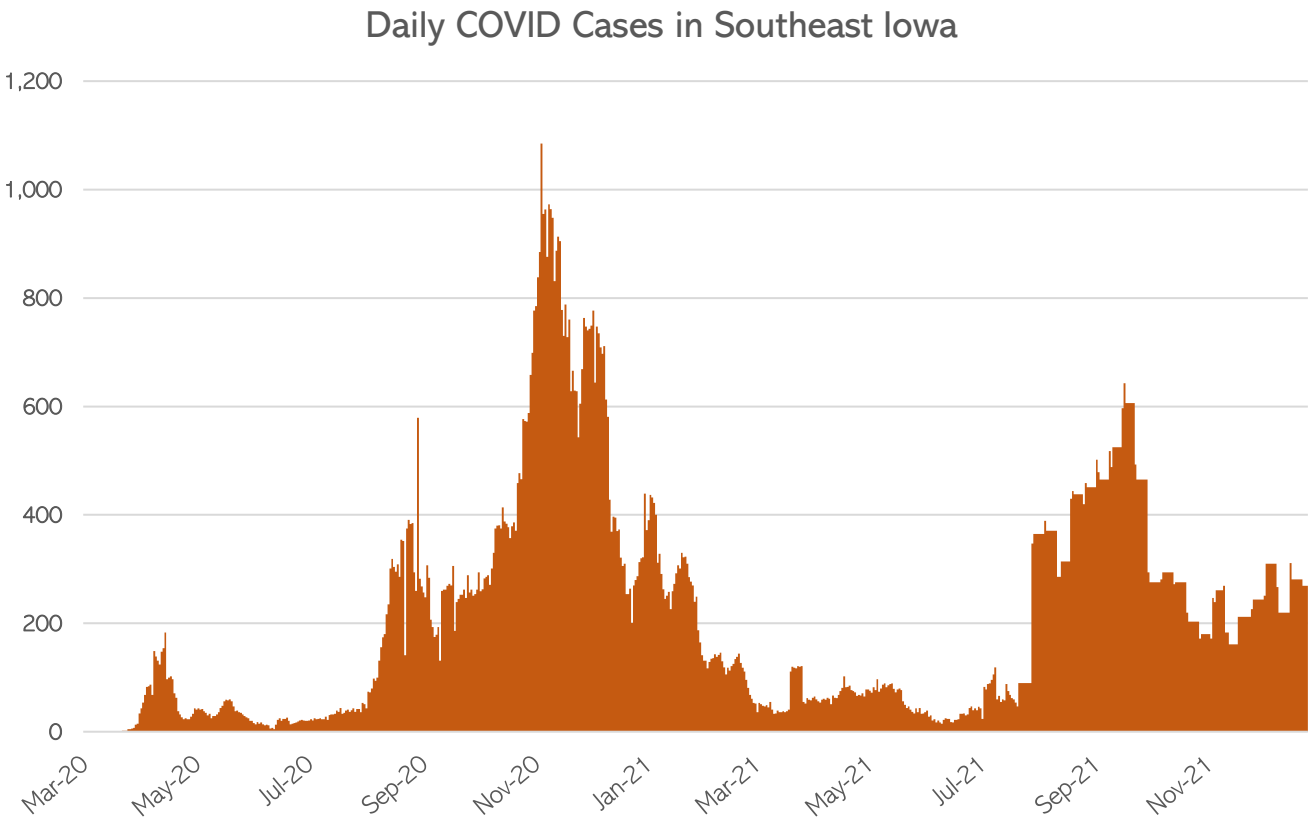
The category of Social & Economic Factors reflects a number of statistics included elsewhere in this document, including income levels and poverty, unemployment, prevalence of single-parent households, crime rate, and educational attainment. The two largest counties fare especially poorly, while the other two rank higher, but still in the bottom half of Iowa counties.

Clinical Care focuses primarily on the availability of comprehensive health care resources in the community, including primary care physicians, dentists, and mental health providers. Southeast Iowa fares much better in this category, with the exception of Louisa County, which does not have its own full service hospital – only a few small clinics.

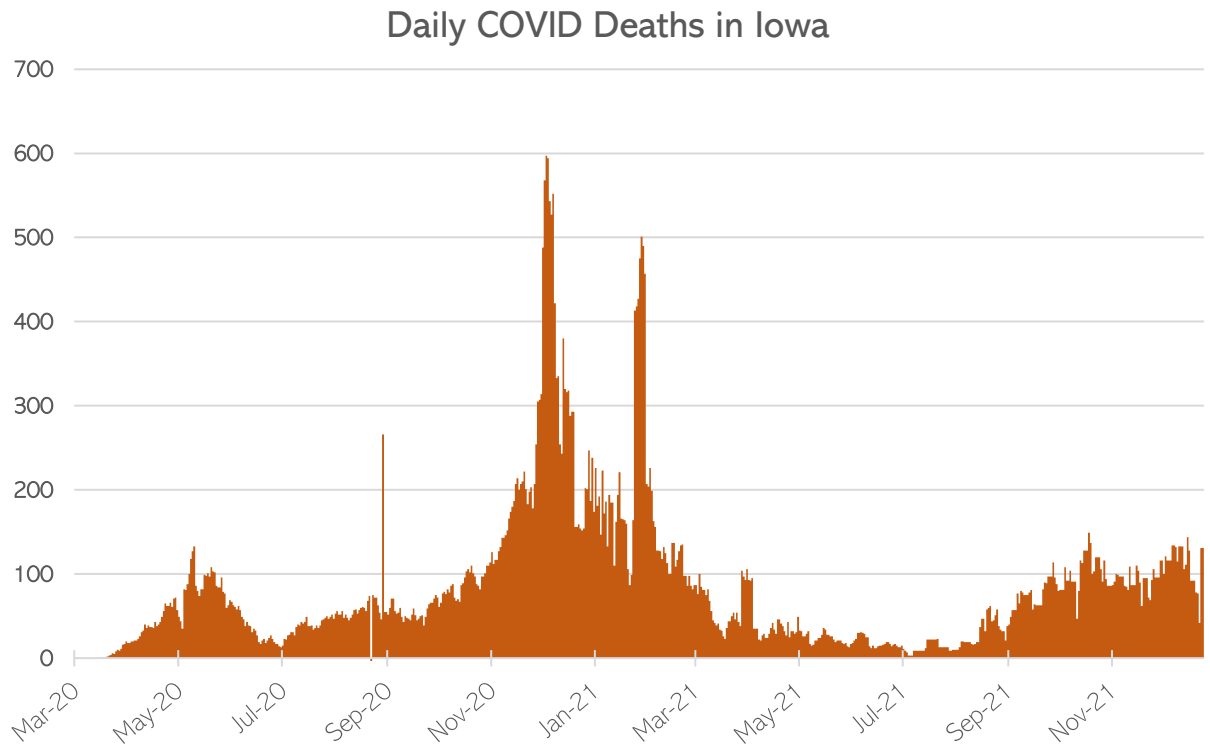
COVID-19 PANDEMIC

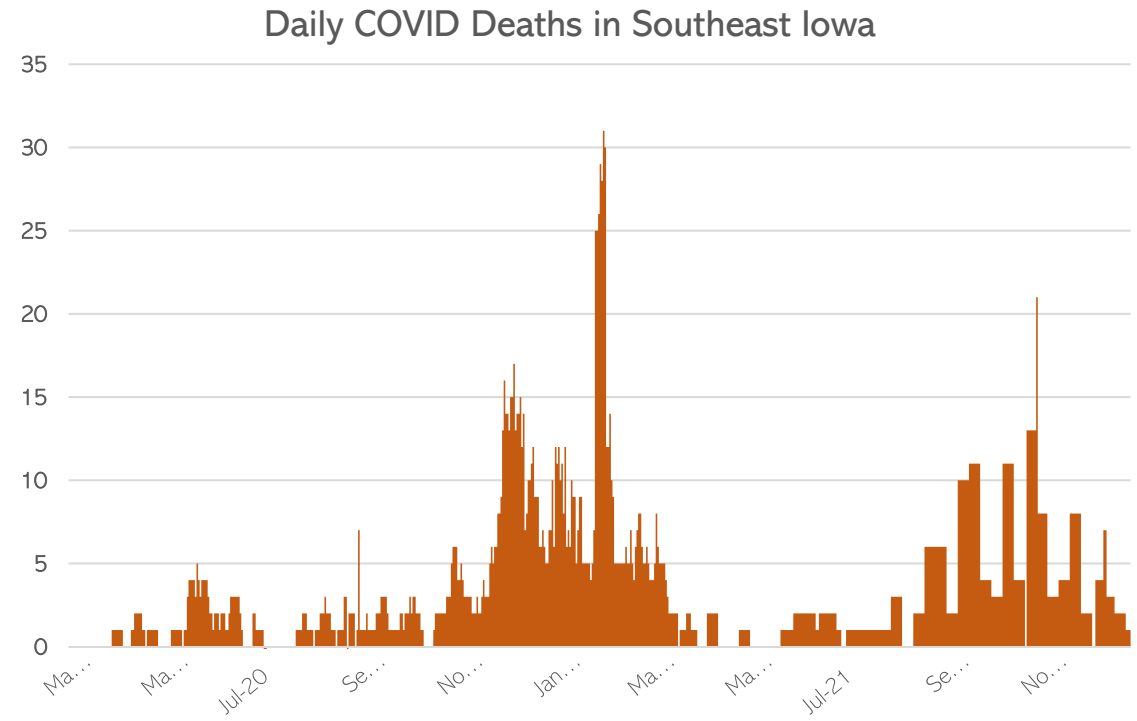
In September 2022, SEIRPC completed the Southeast Iowa COVID-19 Long Term Economic Recovery Plan. The following pages includes key data and information from this plan that highlight the impact of the pandemic on the Southeast Iowa region. The COVID-19 pandemic in Southeast Iowa largely mirrored the statewide impact of the disease as the virus spread throughout our State's communities. The shape of the pandemic takes a bi-modal shape with the major peak occurring in November and December 2020 prior to the widespread availability of vaccines, and before the emergence of highly contagious variants like the Delta and Omicron strains. The spread of the Delta strain led to a less severe peak in the Fall and Winter of 2021, with the virus most prominent in Southeast Iowa in September 2021. The coronavirus was spread proportionally throughout Southeast Iowa with more cases in the population centers of Des Moines and Lee Counties compared to Henry and Louisa Counties.

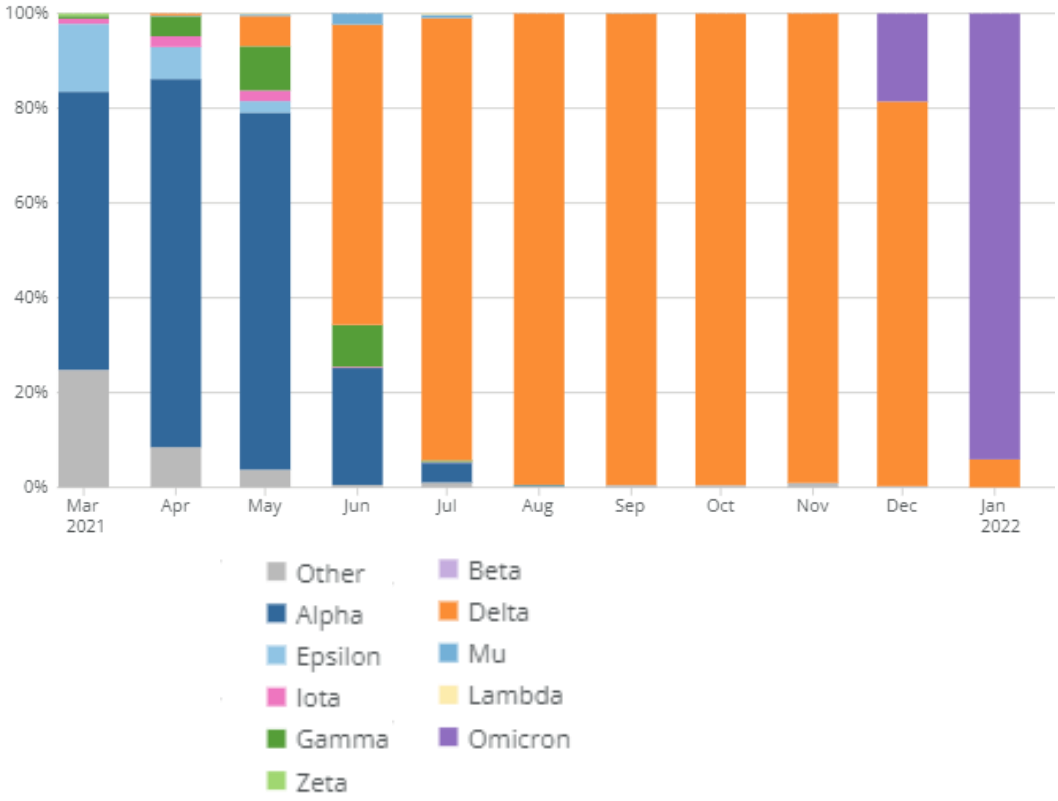




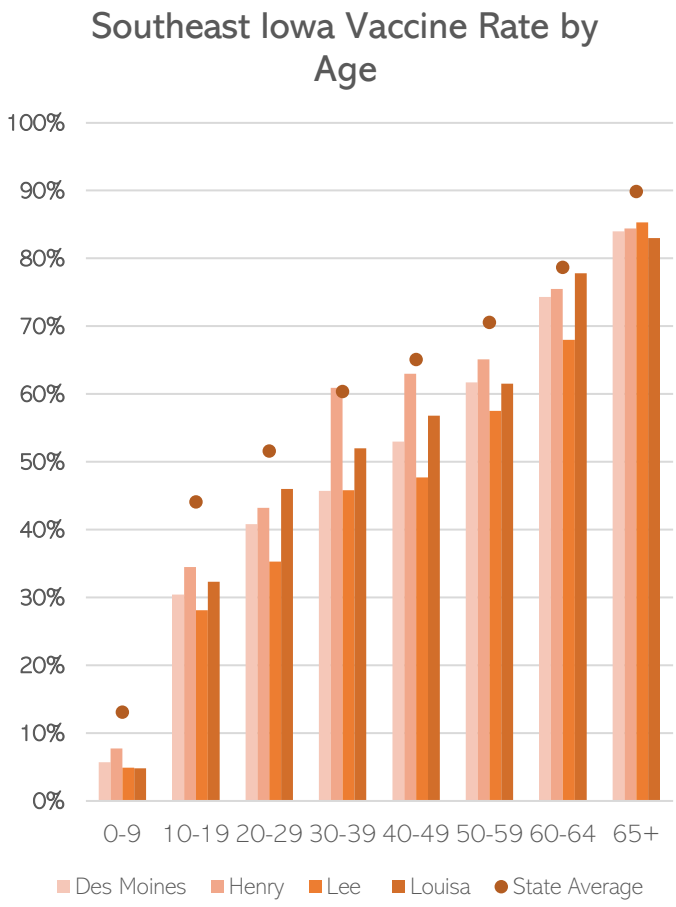
Tragically, Covid-19 deaths in Southeast Iowa mirrored trends of deaths statewide, with a similar peak in the Winter of 2020/2021 and again in the Fall and Winter of 2021/2022. By the end of 2021, cumulative combined cases in Southeast Iowa surpassed 20,000 and confirmed deaths exceeded 300.

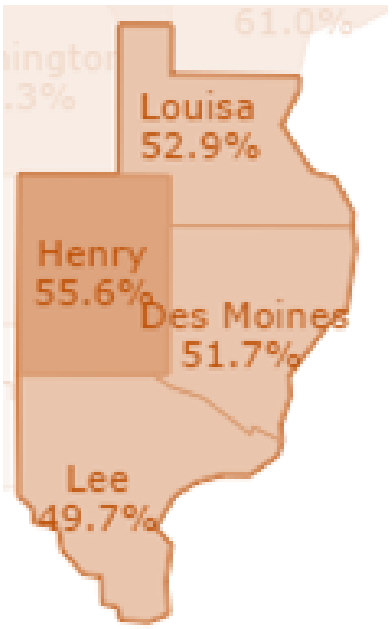


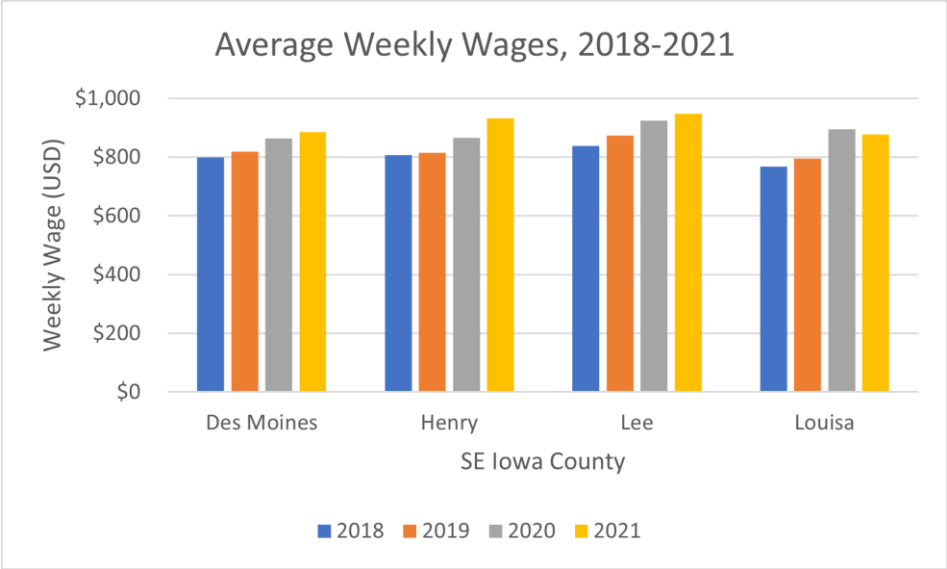




As Covid-19 strains emerged (with Omicron becoming the predominant form of the disease in early 2022) there was a decline in morbidity rates, and after the introduction of vaccines, deaths never returned to the level of the Alpha strain in late 2020. However, Southeast Iowa lagged slightly behind statewide vaccination rates which could possibly explain a spike in deaths in Fall 2021 that slightly exceeded the statewide spike in deaths during the same point in the pandemic. The 59.4-percent rate of immunization for the State of Iowa outpaced the immunization rate of all four counties in Southeast Iowa: 55.6-percent in Henry; 52.9-percent in Louisa; 51.7-percent in Des Moines; and 49.7-percent in Lee County. This was consistent across all age categories. Prioritization of education – the efficacy and risks associated with vaccine adoption – may need to be bolstered in future public health crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic.



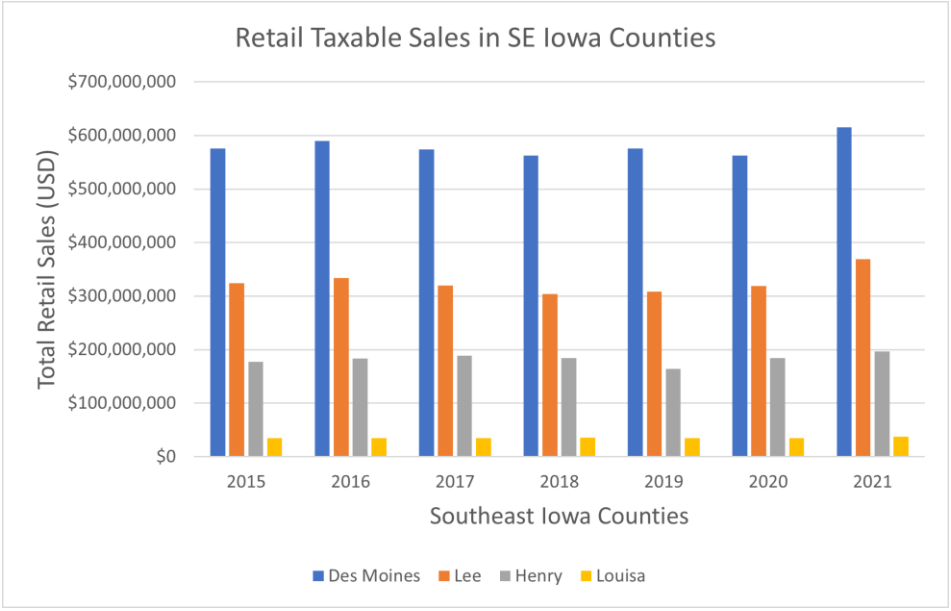


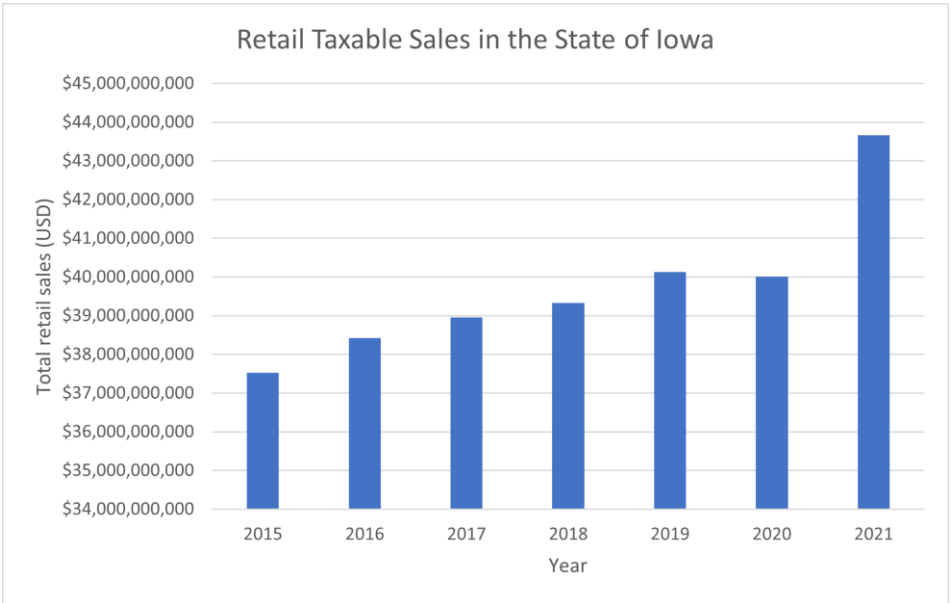


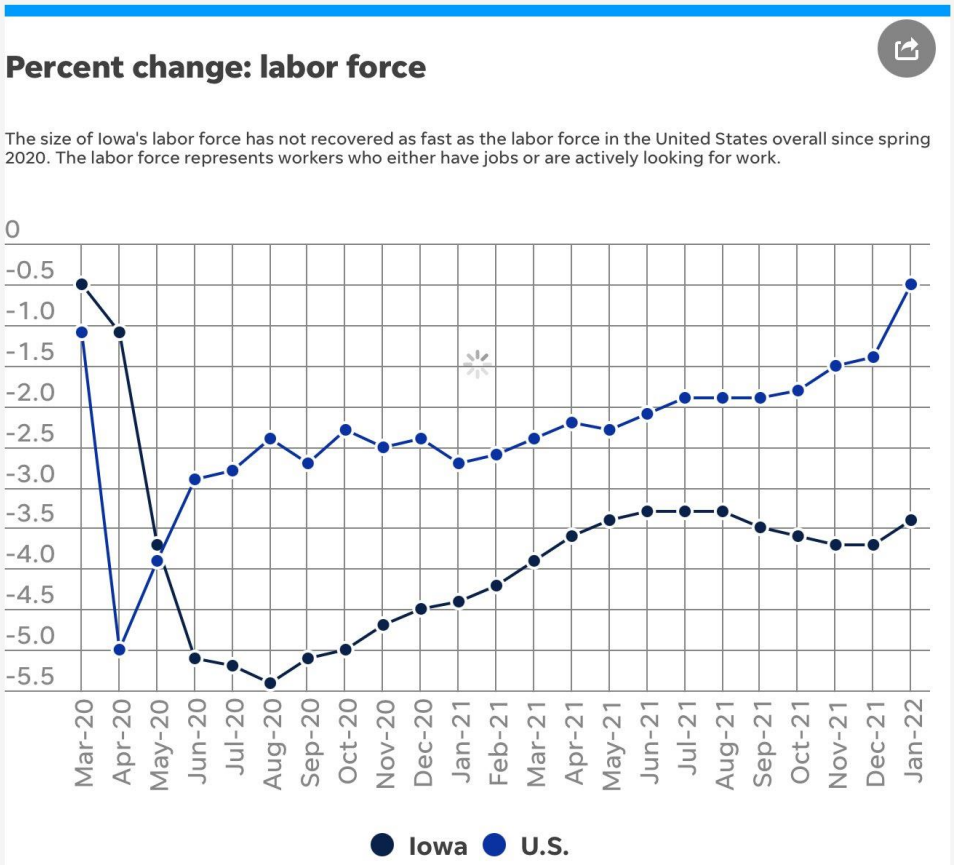
Governor Kim Reynolds championed a policy of economic resilience and reopening the economy soon after the peak unemployment levels in April 2020. This emphasis on a return to work was effective in not only maintaining average weekly wages, as every county in Southeast Iowa saw year-to-year gains between 2018 and 2021 (save for Louisa County which saw a slight decline between 2020 and 2021.

Year-to-year spending as measured by retail taxable sails in Southeast Iowa sales mirrored the statewide patterns as well. After a small decline between 2019 and 2020 (explained by the period in the Spring while retail outlets were largely not in operation), retail taxable sales across the State exploded in 2021 in comparison to 2020 with near 10-percent gains. Southeast Iowa did not experience quite a drastic increase in these figures but saw incremental increases or maintained using this economic marker during the first two years of the pandemic.

Regardless of conjecture about whether reopening the economy may have exposed individuals to the novel coronavirus, the economic rebound in terms of spending is evident and is a useful case study if the region were to experience a public health crisis that required a similar initial approach of closing schools and businesses.



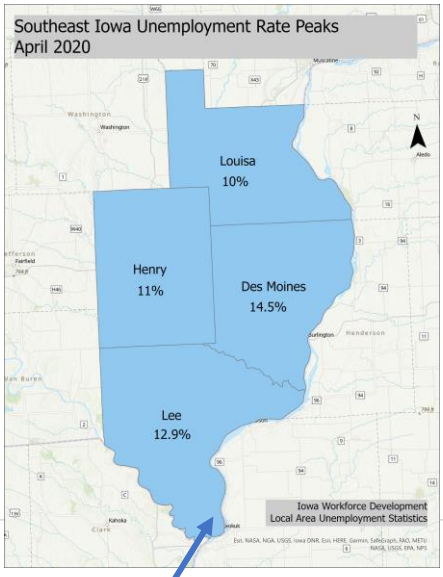


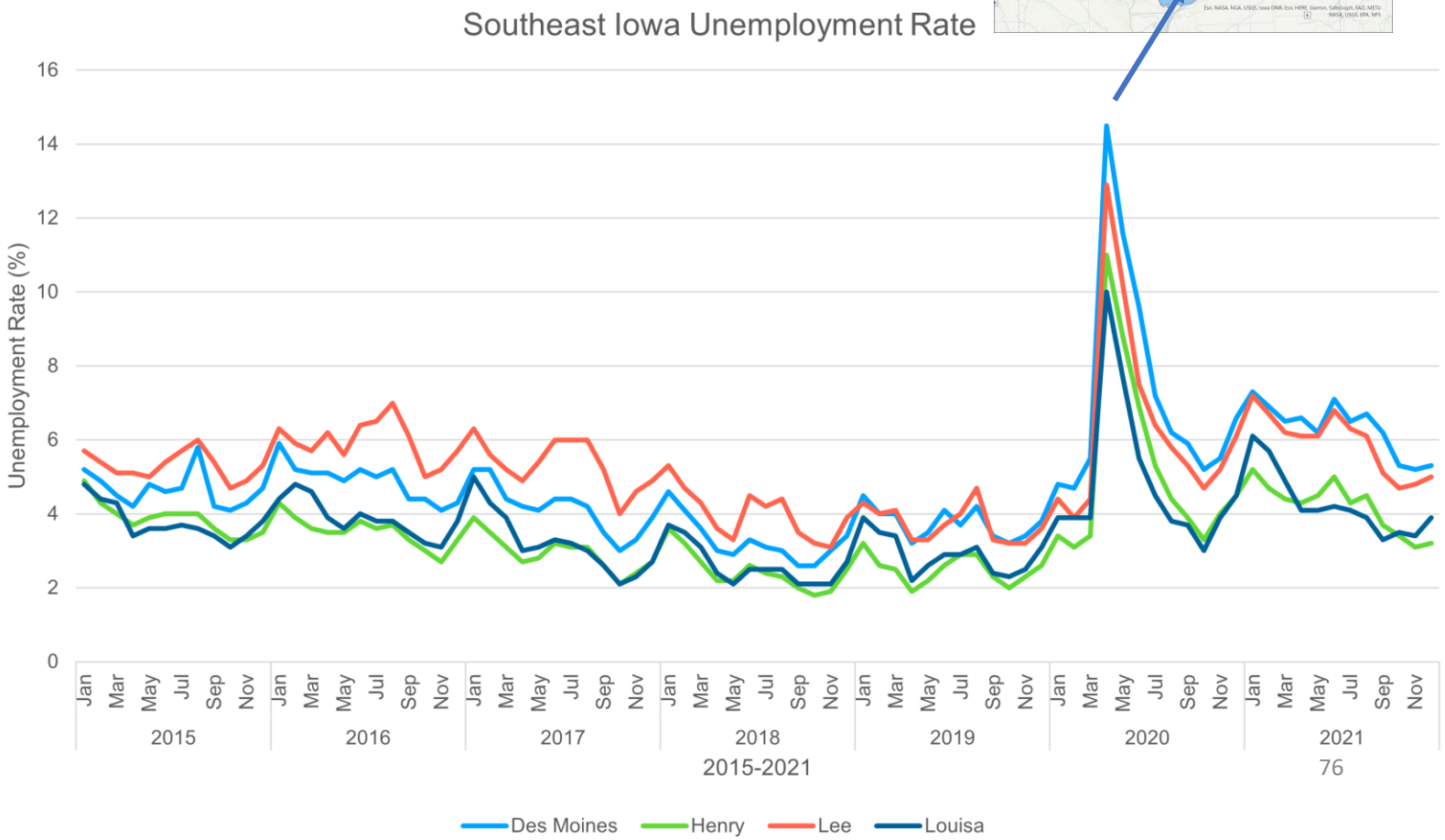


SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' monthly current population surveys, February 2020 to January 2022

Note: Percent changes indexed to February 2020, the last pre-pandemic month

Although Iowa emphasized a return to work, the labor force had not returned to pre-pandemic level by the end of 2021. In fact, Iowa's rate of change in the labor force trails the country at large and this gap was widening in late 2021. Though there are other economic factors at play, labor recovery remains an aspect of the total economic recovery that could require more longitudinal research and an in-depth analysis of all expounding factors.





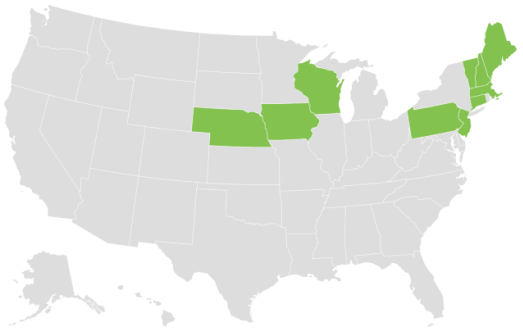
Impact of Inflation on Southeast Iowa

Much like the rest of the US, inflation from the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on Southeast Iowa. While it has been an issue, it has generally not caused as significant of an impact on the general population compared to other parts of the US. However, an area that has been impacted greatly is in construction and infrastructure costs for local governments and developers.

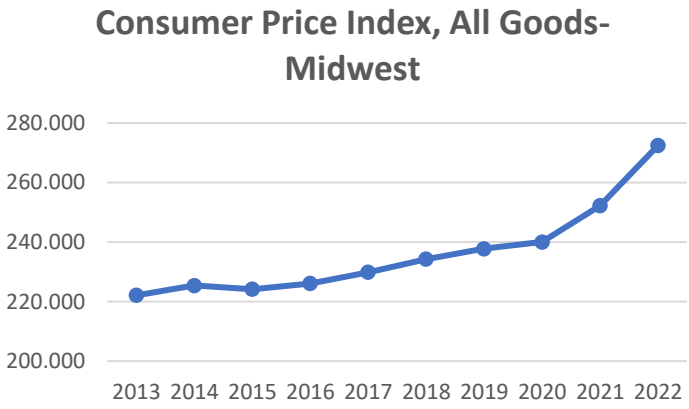
According to Bureau of Economic Analysis Regional price parities (RPPs, which measure the differences in price levels across states for a given year and are expressed as a percentage of the overall national price level, Iowa has been one of the state least impacted by inflation.

While Iowa has been impacted less than other states, it has not been immune to inflation. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) represents changes in prices of all goods and services purchased for consumption by urban households. User fees (such as water and sewer service) and sales and excise taxes paid by the consumer are also included. Income taxes and investment items (like stocks, bonds, and life insurance) are not included. The chart below highlights the changes in the CPI for Midwest states only, with a gradual increase from 2013 to 2020 and a significant increase since this time.

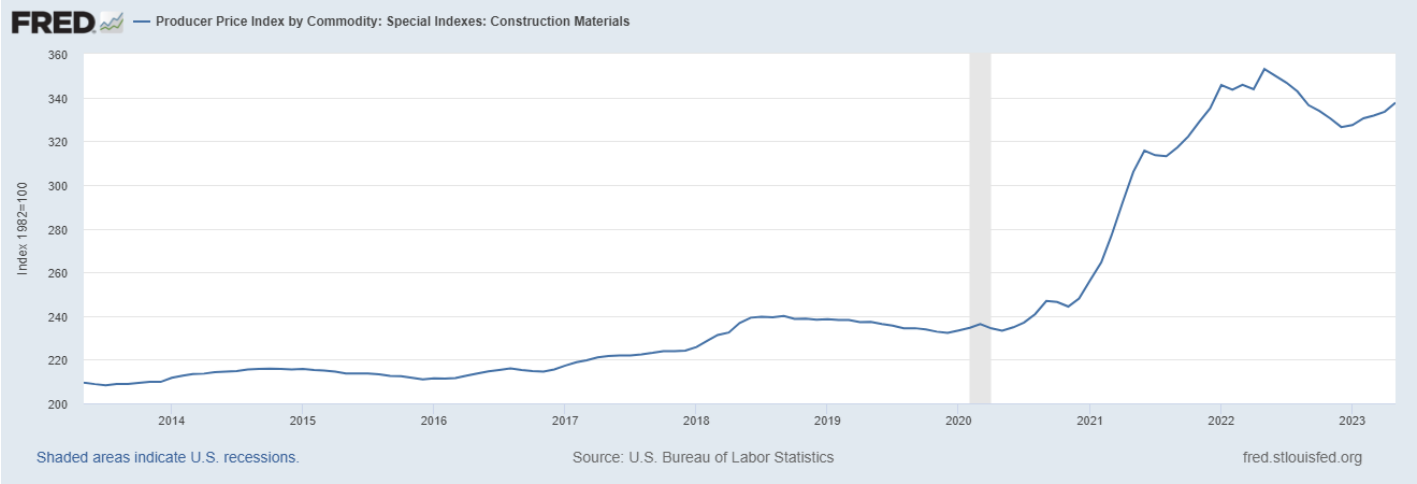
THE 10 STATES LEAST IMPACTED BY INFLATION



43. Iowa (70.6): Another midwestern state that's been relatively insulated from inflation, Iowa has great regional price parity (6th best nationwide) alongside solidly average sales taxes and household incomes.



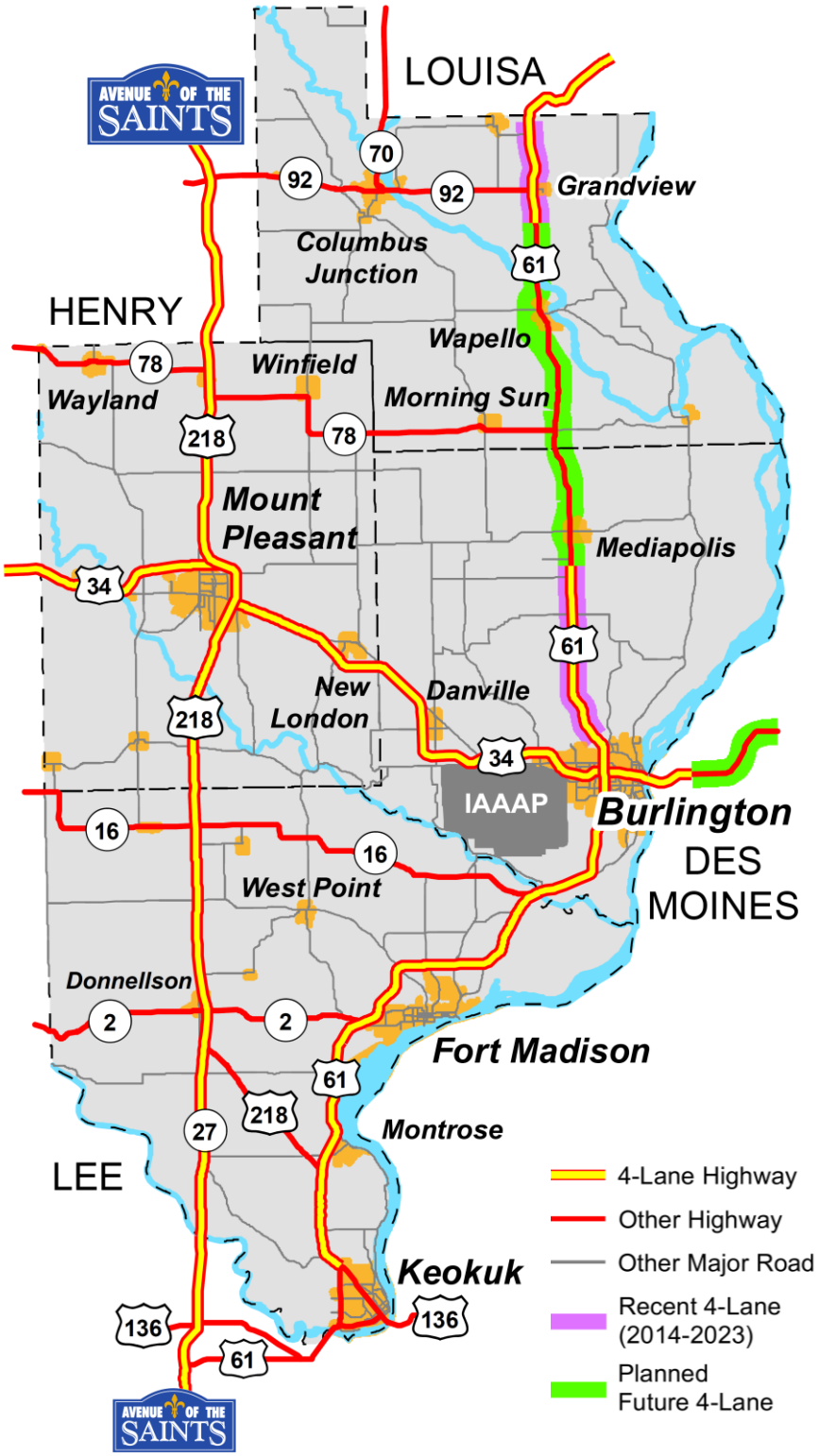
The area that has likely seen the biggest impact on Southeast Iowa communities is within the construction industry. The graph below from the St. Louis Federal Reserve highlights the Producer Price Index specifically for construction materials. There had been a very stable market price from 2013 through 2020, at which point there was a drastic increase which has continued into 2023, making it challenging for local governments to complete imperative infrastructure projects.

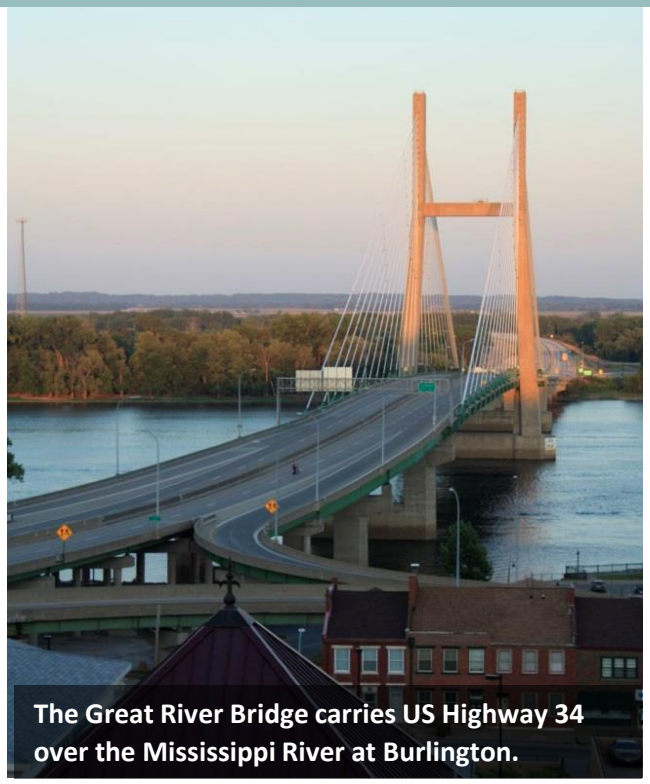


ROAD AND HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION

The transportation system of Southeast Iowa is exceptionally diverse for its comparatively small, largely rural population.

Highway System





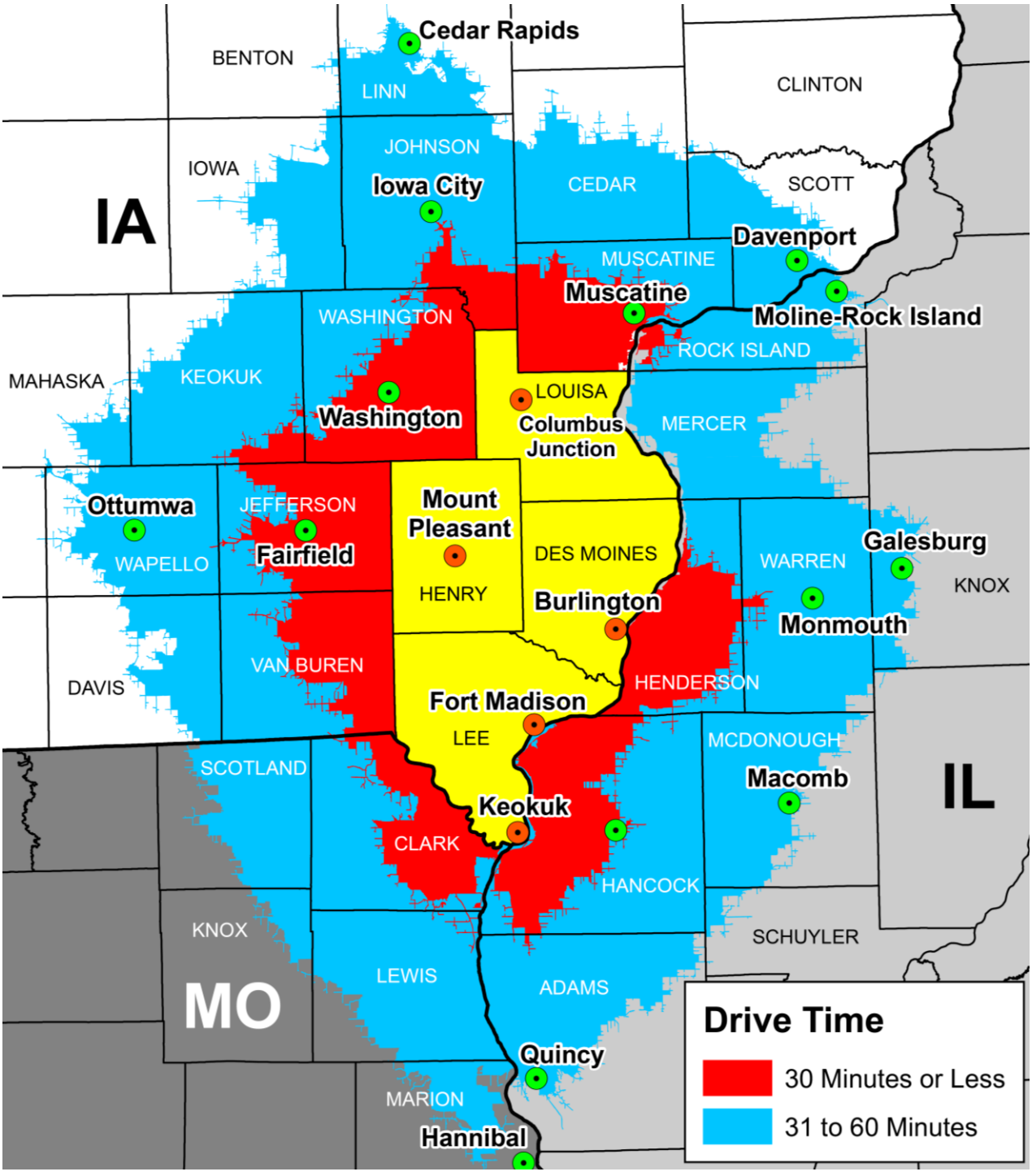
The Great River Bridge carries US Highway 34 over the Mississippi River at Burlington.

Southeast Iowa is crossed by four US Highways – 34, 61, 136, and 218, along with six State Highways – 2, 16, 27, 70, 78, and 92. The Avenue of the Saints is a north-south 4-lane highway passing through the western half of the region connecting Saint Paul MN to St Louis Mo. Co-signed with US 218 and IA 27, the Iowa Department of Transportation designated the Avenue of the Saints as Iowa 27, in 2001.

Highway 34 is 4-lanes from Burlington westward but drops to 2 lanes shortly after entering Illinois to the east. The Illinois DOT is planning to upgrade the roadway to 4 lanes between Burlington and Monmouth, Illinois.

Highway 61 is a 4-lane highway through most of the region, and there are plans in place to complete the remaining 7-mile segment from Grandview to Mediapolis. Progress has recently been made to upgrade the section between Mediapolis and Burlington, and the section from Grandview north to the Louisa County line.

HOW FAR IS IT FROM SOUTHEAST IOWA TO ..... ?



The map above was calculated using the 'Drive Time' feature in the ArcMap GIS software. Areas in red are within 30 minutes of one or more municipalities in Southeast Iowa. Areas between 30 and 60 minutes from the region are shown in blue. Several larger urban areas are less than an hour from at least part of the region, including the Quad Cities, Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and Quincy.

Short drive times make commuting, shopping, and commercial shipping readily accessible for the residents and businesses of Southeast Iowa. The presence or lack of 4-lane highways helps explain travel time around the region in certain areas. The absence of any bridges over the Mississippi River between Burlington and Muscatine is evident by the increased travel time between Southeast Iowa and Mercer County, Illinois.

Expanding the 4-Lane Highway Network

Enormous strides have been made in the last three decades, to upgrade Southeast Iowa's busiest routes to 4-lane divided highways. One of the most prominent examples is the Avenue of the Saints, which connects Saint Paul Minnesota to Saint Louis Missouri, and while providing an efficient regional route from Southeast Iowa to cities like Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, and Hannibal, Missouri. Also completed during the 2000s, State Highway 163 is 4-lanes from Burlington to Des Moines, co-signed as US 34 from Burlington to Ottumwa. In 2011, the 4-lane Highway 61 bypass of Fort Madison greatly enhanced regional transportation, through establishing a more direct connection between Burlington and Keokuk.

Several critical gaps remain along the Highway 61 corridor between Dubuque and St. Louis. Most notable is the section between Burlington and Muscatine, while another shorter gap exists between Keokuk and the Avenue of the Saints, requiring collaboration with the Missouri Department of Transportation.

Progress is being made on the Burlington to Muscatine section, starting with the 2017 completion of a 5.8 segment from the Muscatine County line to just south of Grandview. Then in 2023, work concluded on a 10.6-mile section between Burlington and Mediapolis. Work has also begun on a bypass of Mediapolis, and right-of-way acquisition and grading work will soon commence on a section extending north into Louisa County, just past State Highway 78.



Construction on a recently completed 4-lane segment of Highway 61 north of Burlington

The remaining 10-mile segment in central Louisa County will be the last to completed, although funding has been secured to begin the process over the next 5 years. This will include a bypass of Wapello, as well as a new crossing over the Iowa River and through its surrounding wetland areas, which creates significant environmental challenges.

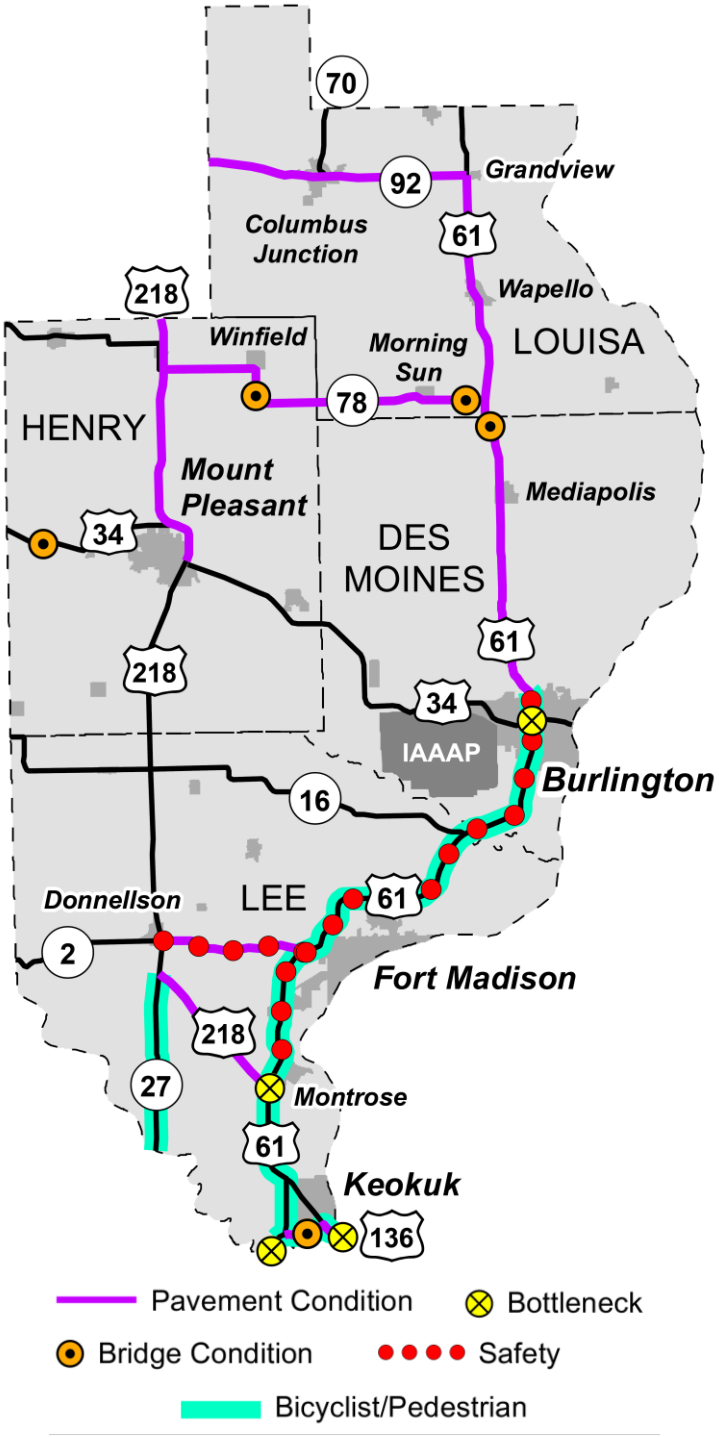
While all of Highway 34 in Southeast Iowa is now 4 lanes, the crucial eastward connection into Illinois is compromised by two remaining 2-lane sections between Gulfport and Monmouth – a total of 20 miles. This includes areas with no shoulders and deep ditches, where fatal crashes have been common. In 2015, a 6-mile bypass was completed around the town of Biggsville, thanks in large part to the support of State representatives, along with aggressive lobbying by a local group called *34 Voices*, composed of students at a high school along the highway. While the Illinois DOT has made recent progress in initiating planning efforts for the remaining sections, funding challenges remain, and a firm timetable has yet to be established.

Two regional coalitions have worked for several decades to pursue upgrades to the 61 and 34 highway corridors. The *Highway 61 Coalition* and *Highway 34 Coalition* are each comprised of many stakeholders in Southeast Iowa, including civic leaders, economic development professionals, and private citizens.

Regional Highway Needs

In 2022, the Iowa DOT released a statewide long-range transportation plan, *Iowa in Motion 2050*. In developing this plan, an analysis of highway improvement needs was conducted. Highway segments were analyzed in terms of several different types of needs, such as pavement condition, safety and capacity. The map below displays the needs of highway segments in the Southeast Iowa region. Three types of needs were not present on any routes in this region – *operations*, *mobility*, and *capacity*.





The *pavement condition* analysis identified highway segments in comparatively poor structural condition, based on factors such as PCI and AADT. In Southeast Iowa, this includes four east-west routes between Highway 61 and the Avenue of the Saints. Similarly, the *bridge condition* analysis identified highway bridges that rated in the bottom 5% of all bridges statewide. This includes two bridges along State Highway 78, and one each on US 34, US 61 and US 136.

The *safety* analysis identified highway segments with the greatest potential for crash reduction (PCR). These segments have certain characteristics that are likely to result in a high crash rate. This includes the sections of Highway 61 between Burlington and Montrose, and Highway 2 between Donnellson and Fort Madison. The *Bicyclist and Pedestrian* analysis was similar, but it focused specifically on the risk of crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians. This identified Highway 61 from Burlington to Keokuk, along with portions of Highways 27 and 136 in southern Lee County.

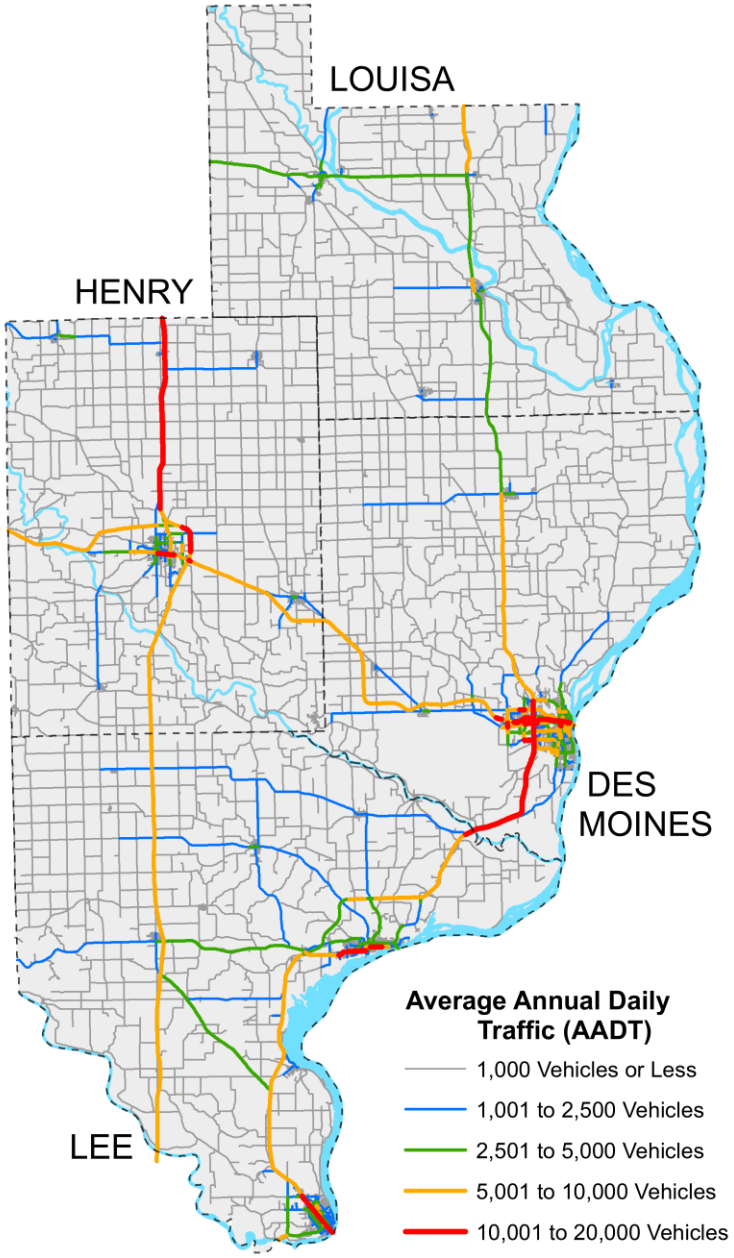
The *bottlenecks* analysis identified specific locations along highway corridors where recurring traffic slow-downs have been observed. These can be especially detrimental to freight movement, and improvements to facilitate more efficient movement should be considered. Examples include the at-grade intersection between Highways 61 and 218 near Montrose, and the section of Highway 61 with numerous stoplights in Burlington.

It should be noted that efforts are already underway to address some of the identified issues, including the 4-lane expansion of Highway 61 between Burlington and Grandview, and the reconstruction of Highway 92 from Columbus Junction westward into Washington County.

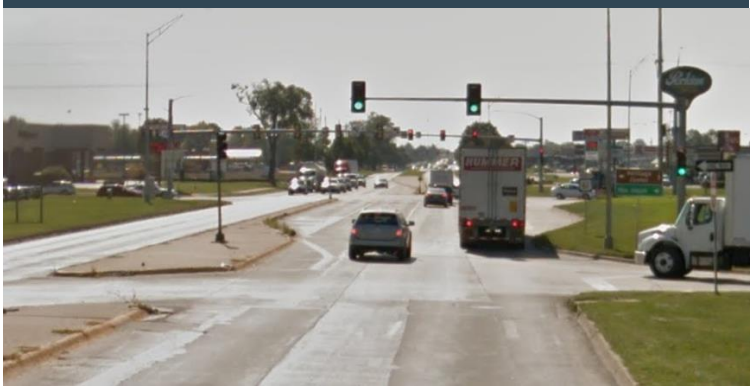
ROAD AND HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) is a measure of the average number of vehicles that travel a given roadway segment on any given day (within a specific year). This includes traffic moving in both directions.

Only a few road segments in Southeast Iowa average more than 10,000 vehicles per day, most of which are part of major highway routes (such as US 61 between Burlington and Fort Madison, and US 218 north of Mount Pleasant). The vast majority of roads in the region see no more than 5,000 vehicles per day. In rural areas, most roads (outside of major highways) see no more than 1,000 vehicles per day.



In 2022, the highest AADT in Southeast Iowa was on Roosevelt Avenue (Highway 61) between Highway 34 and Agency Street (19,700 vehicles per day).

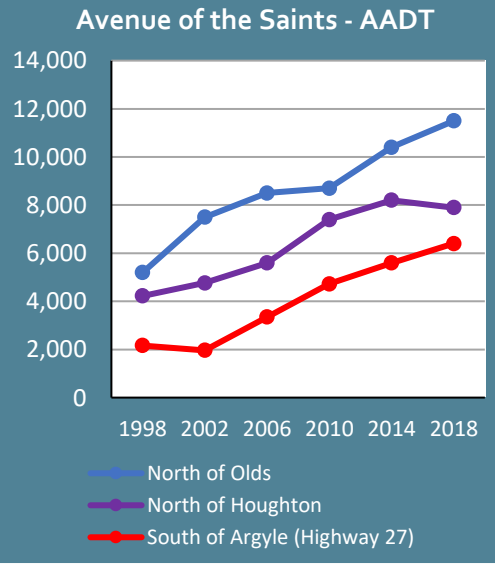


A NEW HIGHWAY CHANGES TRAFFIC PATTERNS

The establishment of the 4-lane Avenue of the Saints has yielded a significant increase in traffic volume along the US 218 corridor. Some locations saw the volume double or even triple over the 20-year period from 1998 to 2018. It is clear that many more vehicles (particularly trucks) are now using this as an alternative to other highway corridors, including some Interstates.



The highway has also heavily influenced commuting patterns, as travel time to employment hubs like Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and Quincy has been reduced. Several ***park-and-ride*** facilities have been established to assist carpooling commuters. One of these (pictured at left) is in the City of Olds.



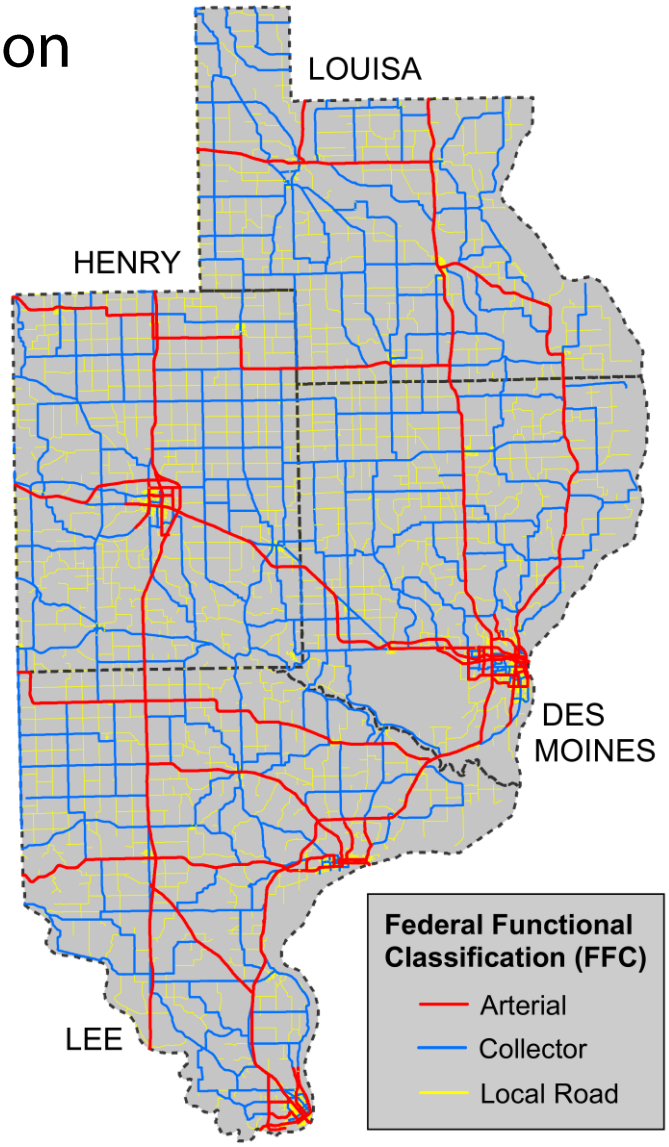
ROAD AND HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION

Federal Functional Classification

Different roadways provide different functions within the local community. Federal Functional Classification (FFC) is a system of categorizing all public roads according to a hierarchy of significance. It is also used to determine which roads are eligible for Federal funding.

With no Interstate Highways in Southeast Iowa, Arterials are at the high end of the regional hierarchy, and are the most likely to serve long-distance travel. Collectors serve primarily to funnel traffic between Arterials and Local Roads. Their traffic volume is typically lower than Arterials, and often the heaviest when residents travel to and from work. Local Roads are those that are not eligible for Federal funding, and largely serve only residents within a particular neighborhood, or workers/patrons within a particular commercial area.

	SE Iowa Mileage	SE Iowa Percentage	Iowa Percentage
Interstate	0	0%	1%
Arterial	417	12%	9%
Collector	1,119	31%	28%
Local Road	2,056	57%	63%
Total	**3,593**		

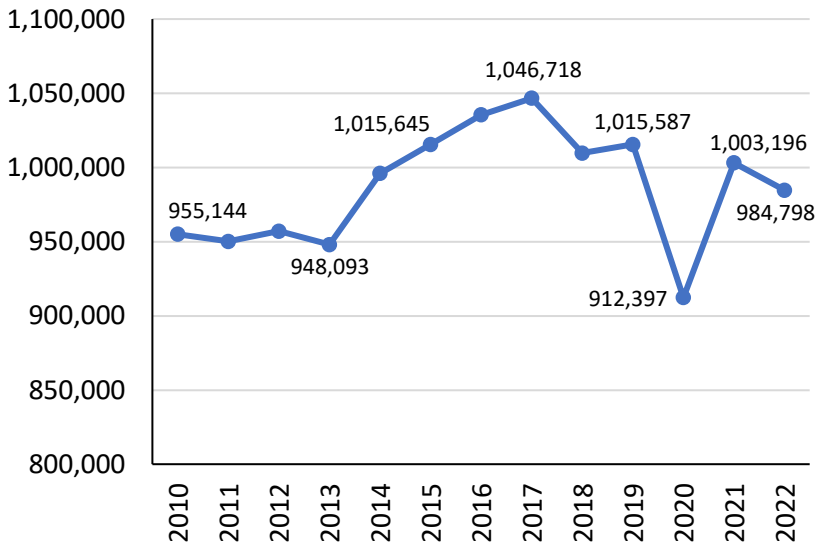


Vehicle Miles Traveled

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is the total mileage of all vehicles on public roads in a given year. Southeast Iowa's VMT in 2022 was just under 1 million vehicles.

For both the region and Iowa as a whole, the VMT figures increased by 7% from 2013 to 2019. However, the regional figures were likely amplified by the construction of the Iowa Fertilizer plant in Lee County, which caused a sharp rise from 2013 to 2014, and a corresponding drop from 2017 to 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a pronounced drop in 2020, and a subsequent rebound the following year.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Per Year – Southeast Iowa



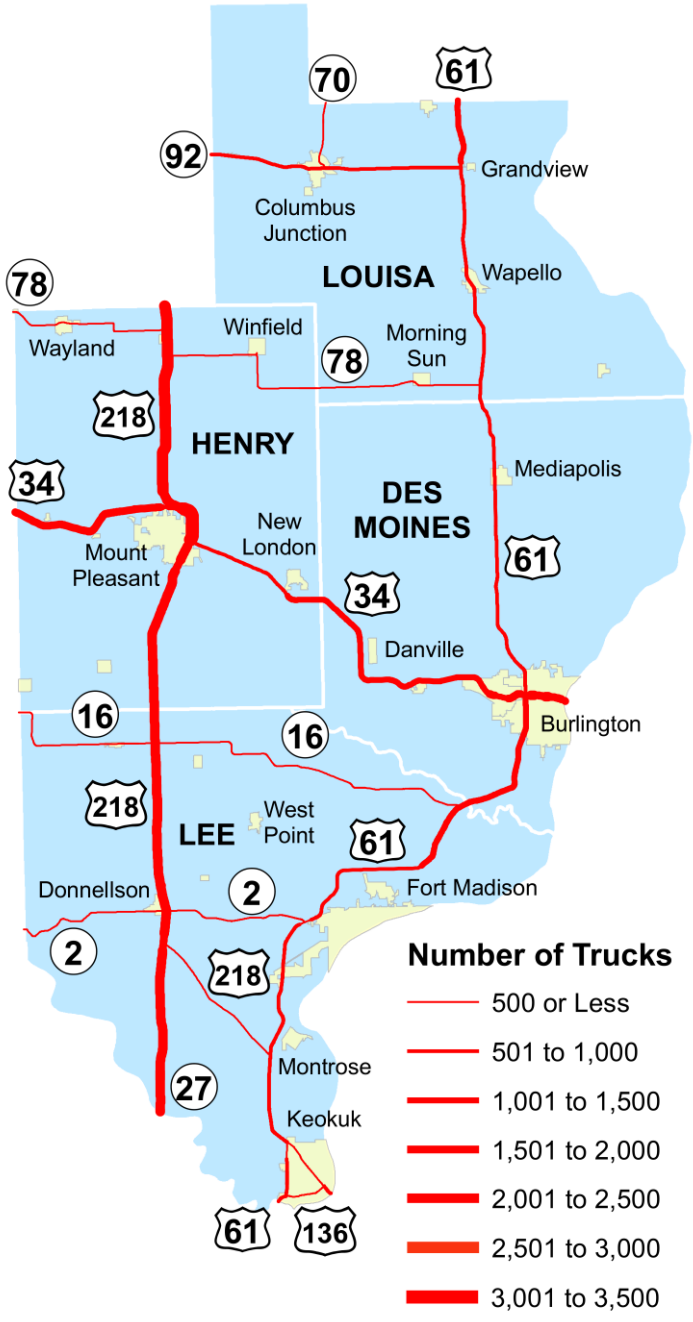
TRUCK TRAFFIC IN SOUTHEAST IOWA

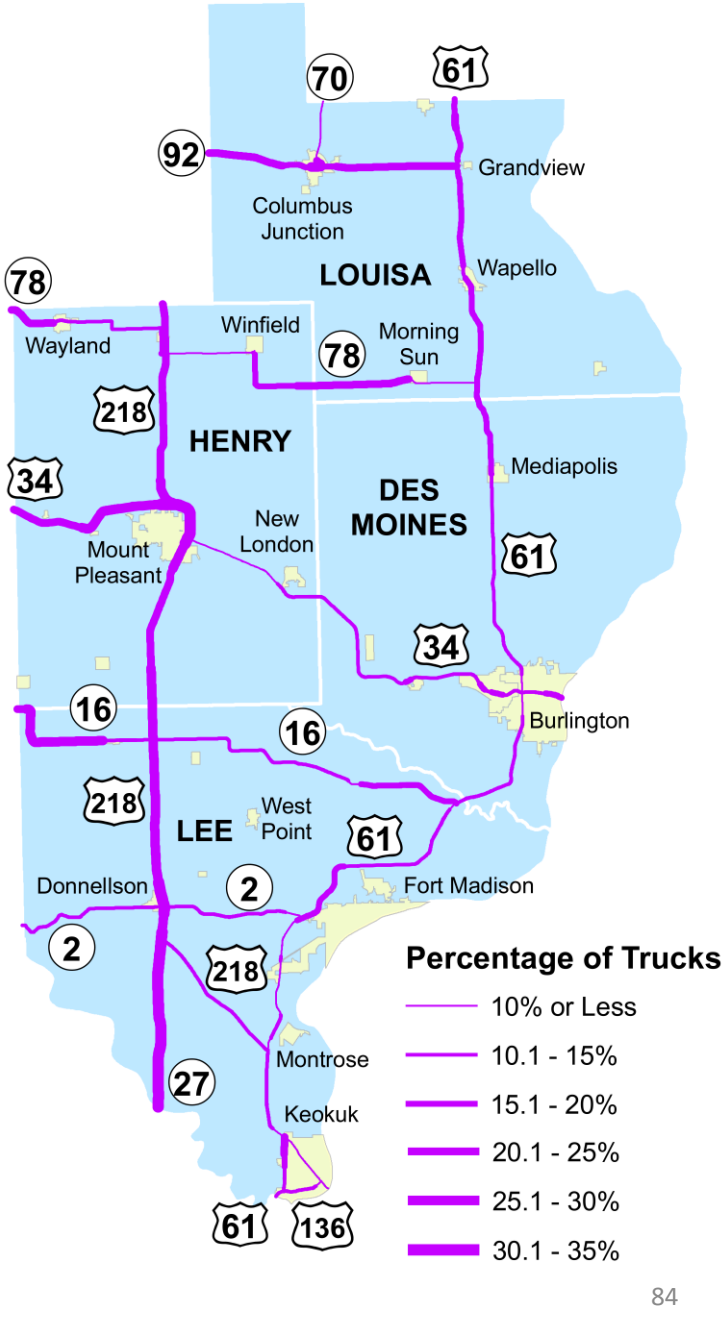
Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) provides a measure of all traffic on a given roadway, including personal automobiles, passenger vehicles, and commercial trucks. For US and State Highway routes, statistics are available on the volume of truck traffic – on its own, and as a percentage of the total AADT.

In Southeast Iowa, some of the heaviest truck traffic is found on the Avenue of the Saints. For the portion south of Donnellson, over 30% of AADT is accounted for by trucks. Total volume is highest around the east side of Mount Pleasant where US 218 is co-signed with US 34. Several industrial/logistics facilities help explain locally concentrated areas of truck traffic on the maps below. This includes Tyson Foods at Columbus Junction, and Shelman Trucking in Winfield.



Pilot Travel Center opened in Mount Pleasant in 2014, serving traffic on the Avenue of the Saints and US 34





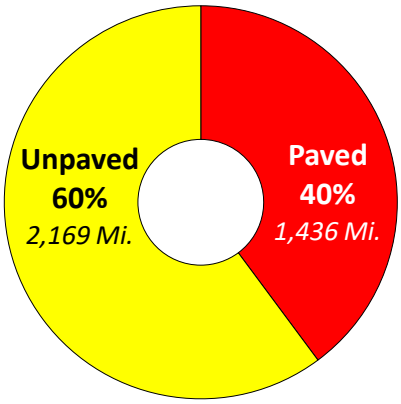
ROAD AND HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION

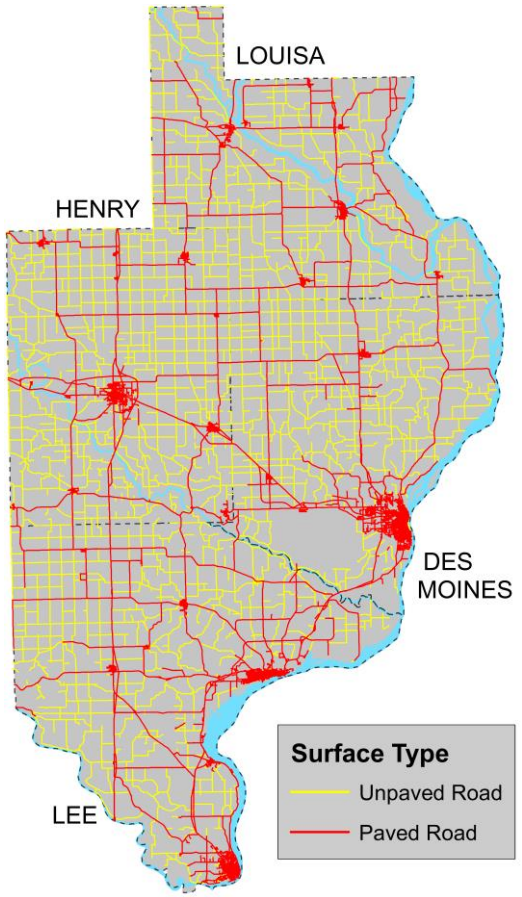
Surface Type

As is typical in the State of Iowa, many of Southeast Iowa's rural roads have a gravel surface. Roads chosen for paving typically have a higher traffic volume or are part of the Farm-to-Market system.

Because much of Southeast Iowa's land area is rural and agricultural, 60% of the region's road mileage is gravel. The presence of 4 densely populated urban areas helps balance out the total, with nearly 1,500 miles of paved roads.

Southeast Iowa Total Road Mileage





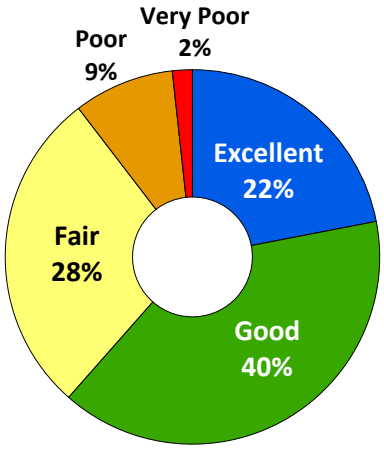
Pavement Condition Index (PCI)

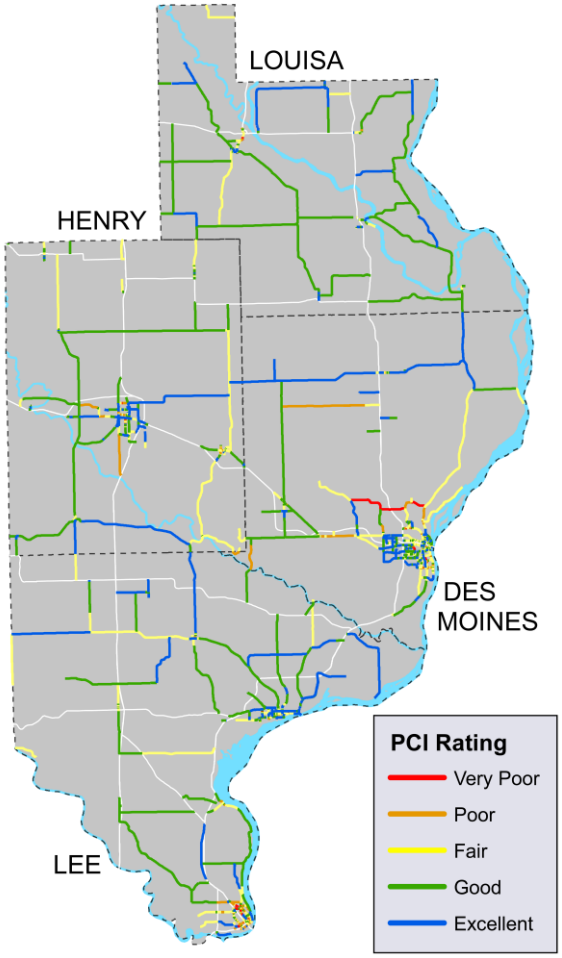
The Pavement Condition Index (PCI) is a reliable means of comparing the condition of paved roads, both at the surface and subbase level. Accordingly, some roads may be rated poorly, yet feel smooth to drive on. Others may rate well, despite having a bumpy or potholed surface. This analysis is specific to city and county roadways, and does not involve State Highways.

In Southeast Iowa, 62% of all paved city and county roadway mileage is in Good or Excellent condition. The corresponding figure for county roads alone is 72%, while that for city streets is 50%. Conversely, 10% of all paved city and county roadway milage is in Poor or Very Poor condition, which breaks down to 6% of county roads and 15% of city streets. The map at right shows the PCI for city and county roads that are classified as Arterials and Collectors.

Pavement condition tends to vary significantly between city and county road systems. Because most county roads aren't paved, the paved roads are rehabbed more often, due to their strategic importance to the overall network. In cities, there are many low-traffic residential streets, and the cost of routine maintenance is often prohibitive.

PCI Rating - City and County Roadways



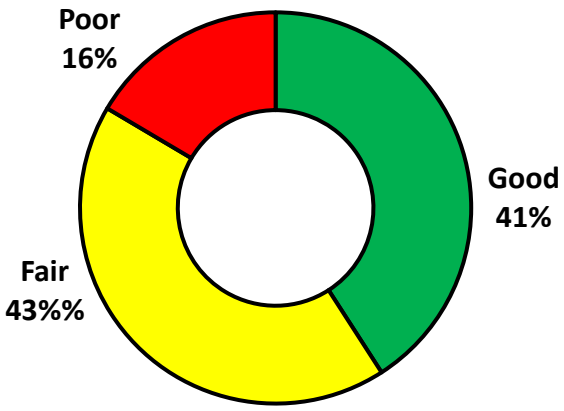


ROADWAY BRIDGES AND STRUCTURAL CONDITION

As of 2023, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) reports that there are a total of 697 roadway bridges in Southeast Iowa. One quarter of these are owned by the Iowa DOT, while 2/3 are County-owned, 5% are City-owned, and less than 1% are privately owned. Many bridges are used to cross waterways, but most of these cross minor streams and tributaries, and there are only 20 bridges across the Mississippi, Iowa, Des Moines and Skunk Rivers. Other bridges are used to cross railroad lines or other roadways, as in the case of freeways and other limited-access highways.


Keokuk-Hamilton Bridge over Mississippi River

Percentage of Southeast Iowa Bridges by Bridge Condition (FHWA)



Bridge Condition is calculated by evaluating the overall structural condition of a bridge, including the deck, superstructure, substructure, and culverts. Each bridge is rated as 'Good', 'Fair', or 'Poor'. In accordance with FHWA guidelines established in 2017, all bridges that fall into the 'Poor' category are also classified as 'Structurally Deficient'.

Of all bridges in Southeast Iowa, 41% are rated as Good, while 43% are Fair, and 16% are Poor/Structurally Deficient. This is slightly better than Iowa as a whole, where 19% of bridges are Structurally Deficient. However, when DOT bridges are removed from the total, the percentage of Structurally Deficient bridges is largely the same between the region and statewide (22% vs. 23%).

Within Southeast Iowa, 95 of the 697 roadway bridges (14%) currently have some sort of restriction in place, regarding the types of traffic that are allowed to use it. In many of these cases, a Structurally Deficient bridge has a vehicle weight limit in place. In other instances, the bridge itself is structurally sound, but has design flaws such as narrow width or low load carrying capacity. There are also 6 bridges in the region that have been closed to traffic entirely. While most of these are located in remote rural areas, it also includes the Main Street bridge over the Cascade Ravine in Burlington.



Cascade Bridge – Main Street, Burlington


New Highway 99 bridge at Wapello (2020)

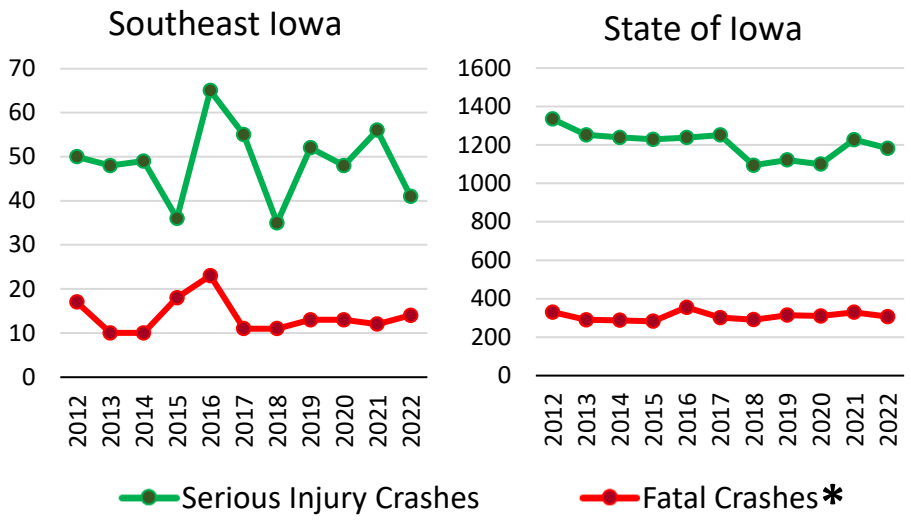
Over the past decade, significant progress has been made in replacing Structurally Deficient bridges, thereby preventing the need for additional closures. This includes 3 major bridges along the former State Highway 99 in Des Moines and Louisa Counties. It also includes several city bridges over French and Dry Creeks in Fort Madison, and the Mount Pleasant Street viaduct over the BNSF railroad in Burlington. However, the replacement of bridges often fails to keep pace with the structural decline of other bridges, and the list of bridges needing replacement often tends to 'break even' over time.

VEHICLE CRASHES AND TRAFFIC SAFETY

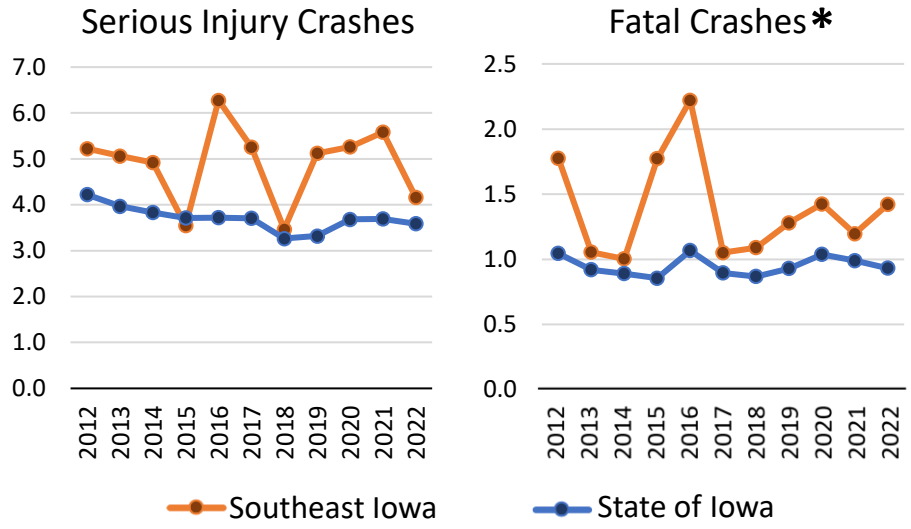
The number of vehicle crashes in Southeast Iowa has remained relatively stable over the past decade, with an average of 1,992 total crashes per year. Crashes involving serious injuries or fatalities typically account for 3% of the region's total crashes, and on average over the past decade, there have been 49 serious injury crashes and 14 fatal crashes per year. This is largely consistent with the statewide trend, but there has been greater fluctuation from year to year, owing to the smaller population size.

Knowing the total number of crashes doesn't always tell the full story, since the overall amount of vehicle traffic can vary from year to year. To determine the relative frequency at which crashes have been occurring in a given year, the number of crashes is divided by the vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and then multiplied by 100,000. The results show that crashes have been occurring more frequently in Southeast Iowa than statewide. This is true for all crashes, as well as those involving fatalities and serious injuries. The rates for serious injury and fatal crashes have tended to be around 30-50% higher, compared to 20% for all crashes.

Number of Serious Crashes by Year



Relative Frequency of Serious Crashes by Year



* *A crash is considered a 'fatality' when death occurs within 30 days of the crash.*

Strategic Highway Safety Plan

The Iowa DOT regularly prepares a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), a statewide planning document with a framework for reducing fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. Some of the key strategies outlined in the current SHSP include:

- Enhance driver education, develop a multimedia education campaign
- Deploy high-visibility enforcement, involving advanced technology
- Expand impaired driving enforcement programs
- Use roadway engineering to prevent lane departures and improve intersections
- Enhance multiagency collaborative efforts
- Improve the quality and accessibility of safety data



VEHICLE CRASHES AND TRAFFIC SAFETY

Several methods have been actively utilized to implement the strategies of the SHSP within in Southeast Iowa. These include local actions such as the use of traffic speed indicators by local law enforcement agencies, as well as statewide initiatives with local participation, such as the development of Local Road Safety Plans.

Traffic Speed Indicators

These specialized devices can be used to both visually display the speeds of traveling motorists, and record data that indicates the percentage and frequency of speed violations. In Southeast Iowa, several law enforcement agencies and school districts have purchased their own equipment to utilize for speed enforcement. In addition, since 2012, SEIRPC has offered a Speed Indicator Sharing Program, where a set of devices are shared between numerous local communities, who use them on an as-requested basis.



Local Road Safety Plans

Beginning in 2016, the Iowa DOT embarked on an extensive project to better identify dangerous rural road segments and intersections on a county-by-county basis. The DOT used these findings to consult with county engineers and other local stakeholders about strategies for reducing the incidence of serious crashes in that county.

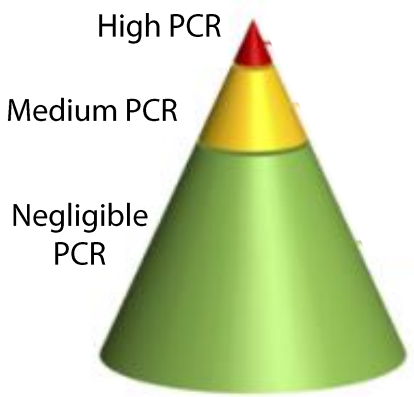
This addressed not only the conditions of the road itself ('engineering'), but several other 'E' factors, such as 'education' to reduce the influence of human error on crashes. Lee County, which has the highest crash rate in Southeast Iowa, has begun actively pursuing safety upgrades along its more dangerous roads, typically found in areas of hilly terrain.



Potential for Crash Reduction (PCR)

The Potential for Crash Reduction (PCR) is a new formula introduced by the Iowa DOT in 2022, which is used to determine the likelihood of crashes occurring at an individual intersection in any given year. This analysis is specific to intersections between 2 paved roadways. Each intersection obtains a score which allows it to be ranked alongside the thousands of other intersections throughout the state. This allows the DOT and local governments to prioritize which intersections are most deserving of investment in safety improvements.

PCR scores are calculated using multiple data variables, including traffic volume (AADT), the number and frequency of crashes reported in prior years, roadway configuration (divided or undivided), and the type of traffic control at an intersection (i.e. signals or stop signs). In addition, there are two separate measures of PCR – All Crashes (KABCO) and Severe Crashes (KAB). In each case, all intersections are split into three categories based on the final scores – High, Medium, and Negligible, with the first two categories accounting for less than 3% of all intersections that were analyzed. The results tend to vary significantly between KABCO and KAB, since the former category involves a large number of minor crashes on lower-speed roads, which are much less likely to result in death or serious injury.

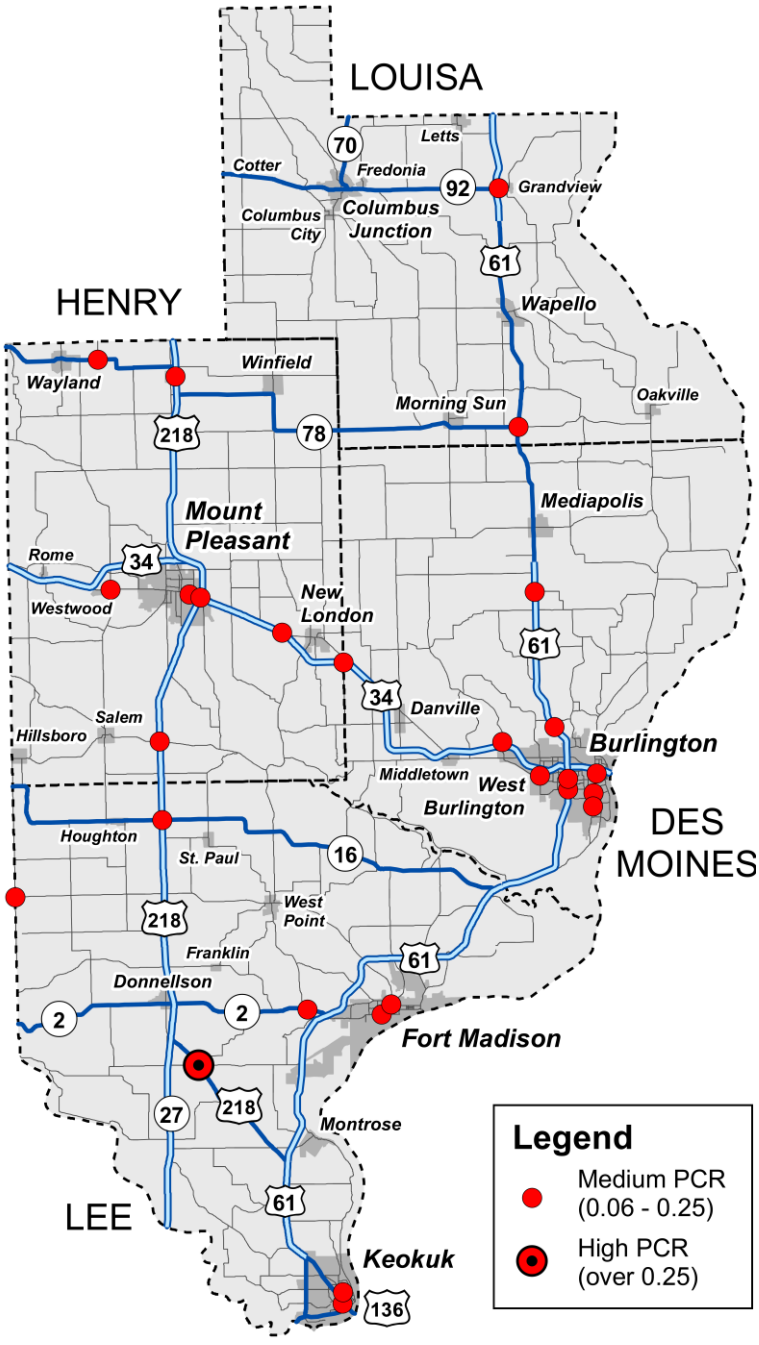


VEHICLE CRASHES AND TRAFFIC SAFETY

In Southeast Iowa, a total of 27 intersections scored high enough to fall into the 'High' and 'Medium' PCR categories for Severe Crashes (KAB). These are depicted on the map below. Only one of these falls into the 'High' category. Pictured at right, this is the intersection of US 218 and County Road J62 in central Lee County. It involves a diagonal highway crossing at an awkward angle by the town of Charleston.



Medium / High PCR Intersections
Severe Crashes (KABCO)



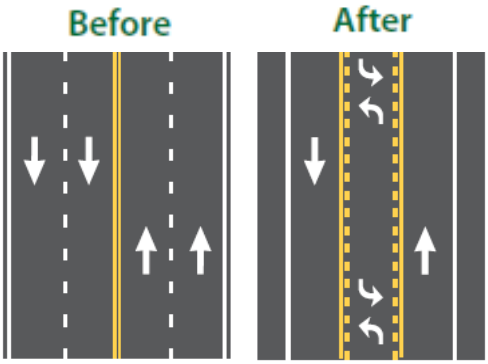
The highest ranked Medium PCR intersection in the region is that between Gear Avenue and Agency Road in West Burlington, by a hospital and community college. Following that is the intersection of Central Avenue and Washington Street in downtown Burlington. Pictured below, it is situated above a mainline railroad, with steep approaches that limit visibility. It is also the region's highest ranked intersection for All Crashes (KABCO).



Another dangerous intersection in Burlington is that between Roosevelt Avenue (US 61) and West Avenue, which ranks at #3 for all crashes, but slightly lower at #14 for Severe Crashes.

Several of the high-ranking intersections are located in remote rural areas, and involve an intersection between two highways, or between a highway and County road. Also, there are several instances where a local road feeds into a major highway near a small town. This includes two access points for US 34 on either side of New London, one of which has undergone several safety improvements over the past decade, including the paving of an 800-foot dedicated turn lane, and the installation of signals that flash when oncoming traffic is approaching the highway. There is also an intersection along US 218 at Olds, which is used to access a large gas station/truck stop.

Four-to-Three-Lane Conversions



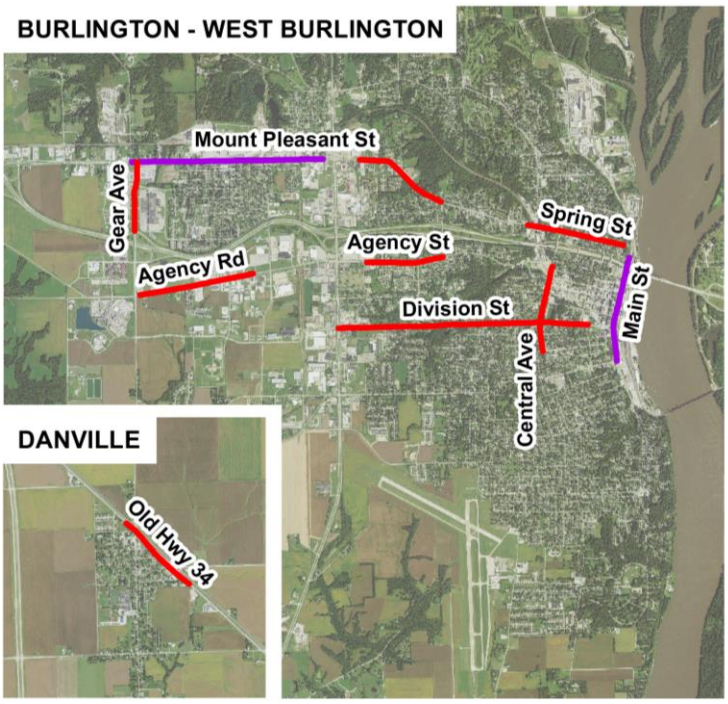
A 4 to 3-lane conversion, commonly called a 'road diet', occurs when a 4-lane undivided roadways is reconfigured to one lane in each direction, plus a reversible middle turn lane. The benefits of this change are numerous and include:

- Reduced left turn conflicts at intersections
- Reduced rates of speeding
- Improved pedestrian safety and comfort
- Room to accommodate bike lanes, widened sidewalks, on-street parking, and/or landscaping expansion





Quite a few roadway segments in Southeast Iowa are good candidates for a 4-to-3 lane conversion, based on characteristics such as traffic volume and crash rate. Most of these were identified through the 2017 Iowa DOT study, 'Statewide Screening for Potential Lane Configuration', while 2 additional segments were identified by SEIRPC , based on similar characteristics. On the maps below, the segments shown in red remain 4 lanes today, while those shown in purple have recently undergone a 4-to-3-lane conversion, such as Avenue H in Fort Madison, pictured above.









Many of these roadways were widened between 1960 and 1980, based on what were often wildly inaccurate traffic projections, made before the region's population began to gradually decline. In other instances, a street functioning as a US highway was widened to 4 lanes, but a bypass was later constructed around the city, causing that street's traffic volume to drop below level justifying the use of 4 lanes. This applies to Fort Madison (US 61), as well as Mount Pleasant and Danville (US 34).

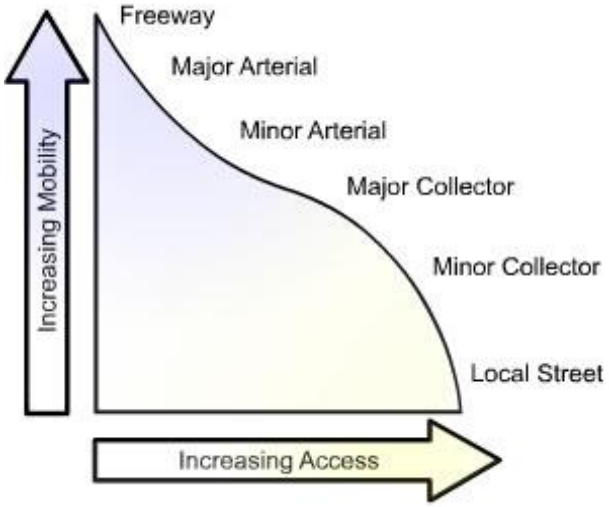
Four-to-three-lane conversions also present great opportunities for complete streets enhancements, as there is usually sufficient space for a bike lane in one or both directions. Illustrated here is a before-and after comparison, proposed as part of the *Keokuk Comprehensive Plan* (2018).





Access Management

Without proper coordination, development patterns can have an adverse affect on traffic flow and safety. The Federal Highway Administration defines *Access Management* as 'the process that provides access to land development while simultaneously preserving the flow of traffic on the surrounding road system in terms of safety, capacity and speed'. The functional class of the roadway is used to determine the appropriate balance between mobility of traffic and access to individual properties. Local communities are encouraged to implement access management policies for controlling the number and configuration of access points on high traffic arterial streets.





At right are images of two separate commercial corridors in the Burlington-West Burlington area. The roadway in the top image had frontage roads installed to access all of the businesses along it, with the only direct access points being at signalized intersections with major streets. In contrast, the corridor in the bottom image is cluttered with numerous access driveways for individual businesses, having been developed without a coordinated access plan. In other areas of this same corridor, more recent developments have taken access management into account.



ITS ROUNDABOUT THAT TIME!

Roundabouts are becoming an increasingly popular choice for reengineering intersections in Iowa, among many other states.

Roundabouts offer many significant benefits, including:

- Prevents deadly T-bone and head-on collisions (common at intersections with right angle turns)
- Improved traffic flow, particularly during peak hours
- Reduced crossing width for pedestrians
- Eliminates maintenance costs for stoplights



Roundabout in Coralville, Iowa

In 2017, Southeast Iowa saw the development of its first roundabout on a public road system. This roundabout sits at the intersection of West Avenue and West Burlington Avenue on the southwest side of Burlington. This busy intersection had been served by a stoplight for many years, with a significant amount of traffic funneling through to destinations such as the Burlington Regional RecPlex, the Great River Medical Center, Southeastern Community College, and Walmart. Traffic also tended to back up at the end of work shifts for several employers in the Flint Ridge Business Park.

The roundabout was partly funded through a RISE grant from the Iowa DOT, as a condition of Silgan Containers choosing to open a new manufacturing facility nearby.



Burlington Roundabout – Before



Burlington Roundabout – After

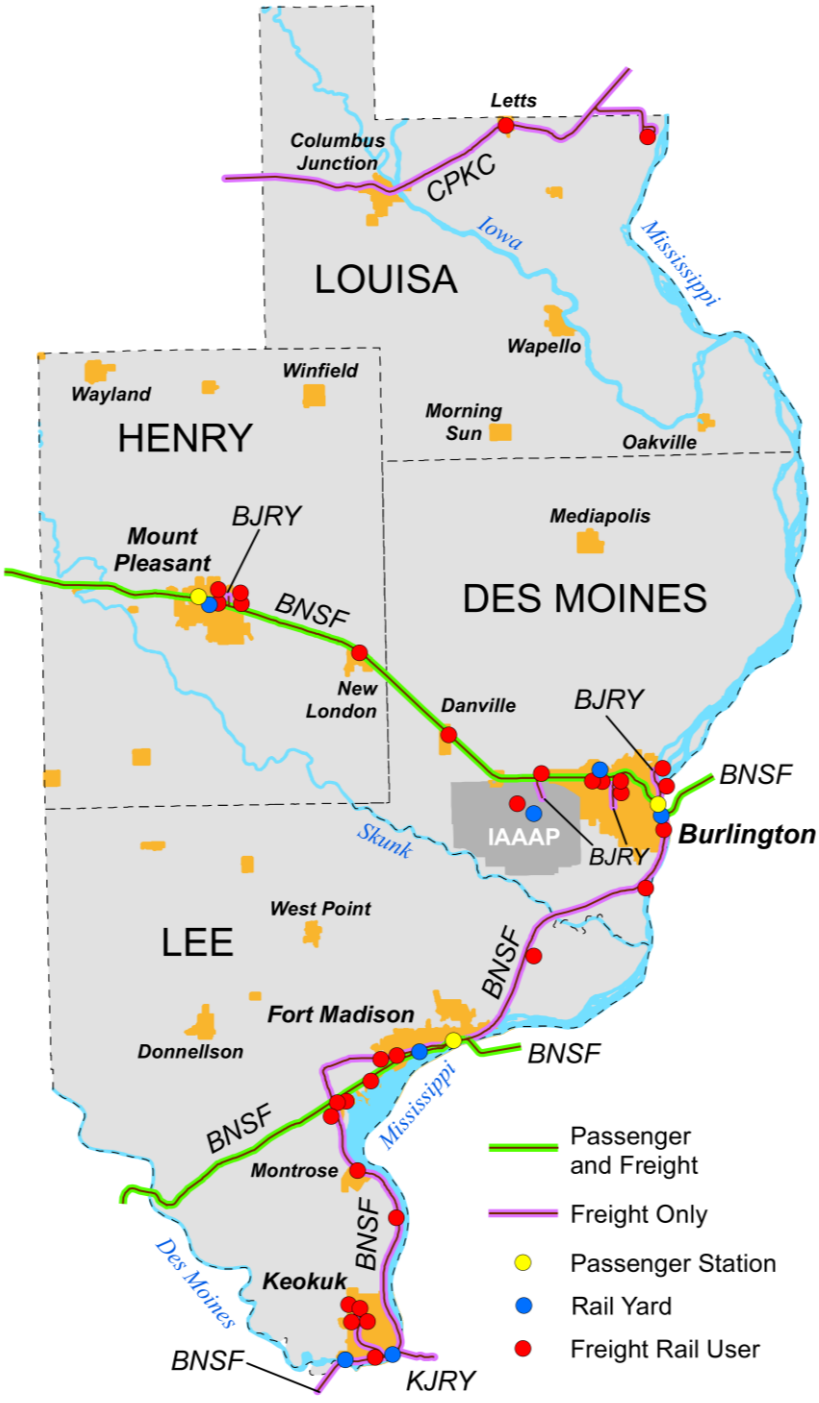
Freight Rail

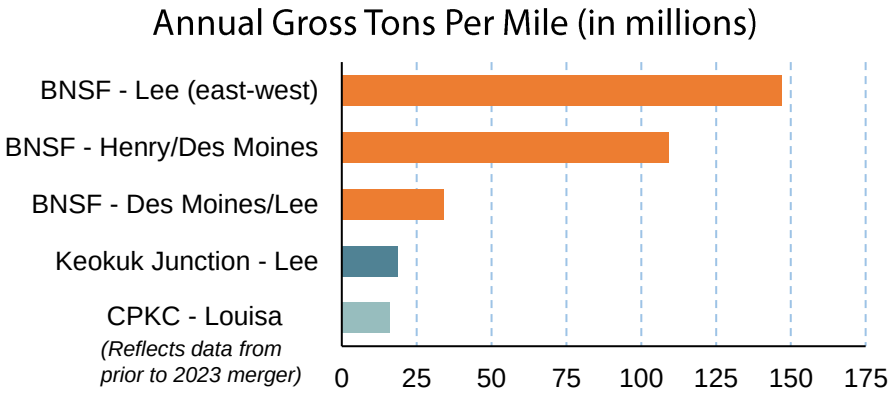


The history of Southeast Iowa is closely linked with the development of rail transportation in the mid to late 1800s. Burlington and Fort Madison were major hubs for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy (CB&Q) and Santa Fe railroads, with repair shops providing many family-supporting jobs.

The mid-20th Century saw a pronounced shift to auto transportation, and as a result, several lower traffic rail lines in the region were eliminated entirely, while others retained freight service, but not passenger service.

Today, freight rail continues to play an important role in the region's transportation system. *BNSF Railway* operates two busy east-west mainline routes through the region, along with a north-south line from Burlington southward into Missouri. *Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC)* operates a line through northern Louisa County, which is expected to see a substantial increase in freight volume following a recent company merger. There are also two prominent shortline railroads. *Burlington Junction Railway (BJRY)* supports several local industries through linkages to the mainlines, and also offers transloading services. *Keokuk Junction Railway (KJRY)* provides a connection between Keokuk and Peoria, Illinois, and supports a large grain processing facility.





Within Southeast Iowa, the two east-west BNSF rail lines carry over

100 million

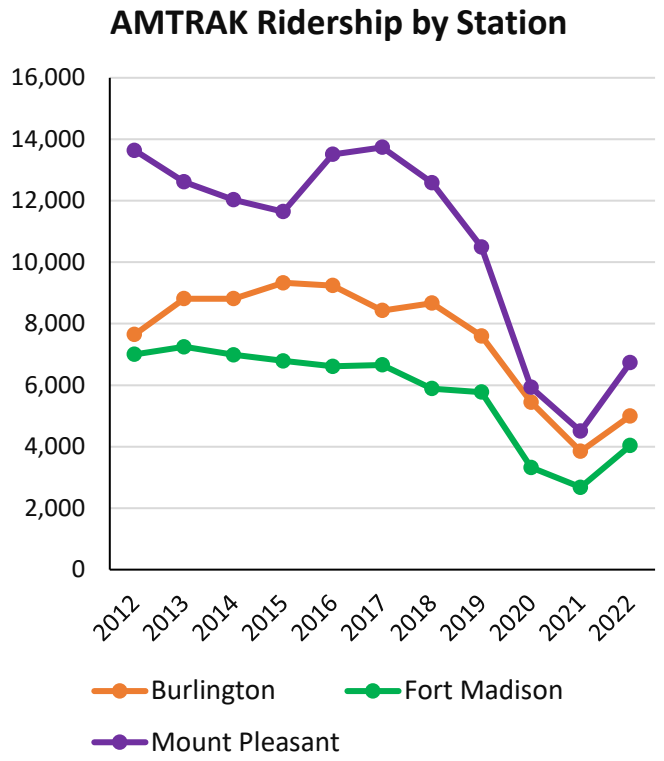
gross tons of freight per mile, each year. These are among the busiest rail lines in the entire state of Iowa.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Passenger Rail



Southeast Iowa also retains a uniquely strong presence for passenger rail, with two Amtrak lines (*California Zephyr* and *Southwest Chief*) passing through the region. There are also three Amtrak stations – two for the California Zephyr (Burlington and Mount Pleasant), and one for the Southwest Chief (Fort Madison). The Zephyr travels from Chicago to San Francisco, while the Chief travels from Chicago to Los Angeles. As shown in the graph at right, the pandemic caused a massive temporary drop in ridership, with a rebound evident starting in 2022.



Rail Issues and Concerns

Intermodal Freight Facility – One notable issue is the limited availability of sites for building an intermodal freight facility. Several undeveloped sites have previously been considered for such a facility in Southeast Iowa, but the size and physical dimensions of these sites have proven to be insufficient for the purpose. In order to compete with other Midwestern locations, such as metro Chicago, it would be necessary for such a facility to match its physical size and scale. One possibility is the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant, which has a large amount of underutilized land, plus plenty of existing storage capacity.





Railroad Quiet Zones – In 2009, the City of Burlington worked with BNSF Railway to establish a Quiet Zone in the Downtown area. Within these zones, trains are not required to blow their horns at crossings, except in emergencies. An early adopter of this strategy in the Midwest, Burlington's success has influenced other cities like Fairfield, Ottumwa, and Galesburg, IL, to pursue it as well. With the significant quality of life benefits this offers, many residents and business owners in Southeast Iowa have expressed interest in having a Quiet Zone established in their towns, specifically in Mt. Pleasant and Fort Madison, where some planning efforts have been made to start the process of establishing a quiet zone.. However, because this often requires one or more crossings to be closed, local leaders are often apprehensive.

Continued Amtrak Service – In recent years, the continued availability of Amtrak Service in the rural Midwest has regularly come into question. With a greater share of investment going to larger population centers on the east and west coasts, passenger train advocates have expressed concerns that long distance routes through the heart of the country (like the California Zephyr and Southwest Chief) will soon go on the chopping block. The substantial drop in ridership due to the COVID-19 pandemic has magnified these concerns, though the figures have started to gradually return toward pre-pandemic levels.

Mississippi River Rail Bridges – Future Improvements

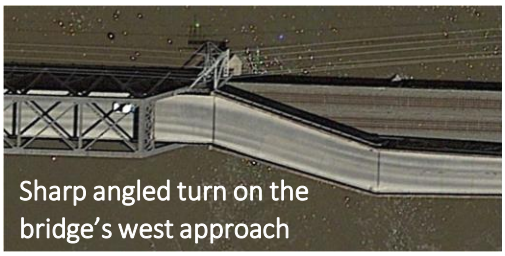
There are three operational rail bridges that cross the Mississippi River from Southeast Iowa to Illinois. Considering the immense economic and logistical impact they have on the region, the future maintenance and functional performance of these bridges should be seen as major regional priorities.



Burlington Rail Bridge – A bridge has crossed the river at this site since 1867. In 2010, the existing swing span bridge was replaced with a new vertical-lift structure, where the track is raised for barge traffic to pass under. With this substantial investment recently completed, there aren't any major concerns about the bridge's structural condition. However, following recent river floods, there has been concern from the agricultural sector about the bridge's impact on the flow of floodwaters in the surrounding area.

Fort Madison Toll Bridge – This bridge is the only remaining combined road and rail bridge on the Mississippi River between Davenport and St. Louis. Cars travel on the upper deck, while the lower deck is for trains. A swing span opens for barge traffic, which temporarily blocks all road and rail crossings. Since its construction in 1927 (when it replaced the original 1887 structure), this bridge has served as the sole means of crossing the river between Burlington and Keokuk. It is privately owned and operated by BNSF Railway, and motorists are charged a one-way toll for traveling from Iowa to Illinois.





Sharp angled turn on the bridge's west approach

A major logistical challenge is presented by the antiquated design of the roadway approaches to the bridge, which present a safety hazard for large trucks. As a result, there is currently an embargo that prevents trucks beyond a certain weight and length limit from using this bridge. Naturally, this is an economic disadvantage for industries in Fort Madison and Illinois.

A feasibility study was recent prepared, to assess the various options for improvements to this crossing, for which could allow the embargo to be removed.



Keokuk Rail Bridge – This swing span bridge is currently the oldest of the three, built in 1916 on piers from the original 1869 bridge. Designed by renowned civil engineer Ralph Modjeski, it has been owned and maintained by the City of Keokuk since 1947. It serves a rail line operated by Keokuk Junction Railway, connecting Keokuk with Peoria, Illinois. A recent structural assessment indicates that the bridge is in need of several structural repairs, primarily to address decaying river piers and loss of paint on the main structure.

Fort Madison Bridge Study

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To address geometric challenges that necessitated an embargo on truck traffic in 2008, the 'Fort Madison Toll Bridge Feasibility Study' was completed in 2021 that evaluated alternatives to allow the transport of goods by truck across the Mississippi River. The high-level feasibility study helped achieve consensus on the next stage of potential improvements made to the multimodal Mississippi River crossing.

A series of alternatives were assessed based on technical, financial, and institutional criteria. Overall, two alternatives for the Iowa Approach and a single alternative for the Illinois Approach were identified as viable options. However, the optimal proposed concept is a new bridge structure separated from the rail bridge.

The proposed roadway bridge follows a curved, offset alignment south of the existing Fort Madison Toll Bridge. The Iowa roadway approach ties into 1st Street to avoid congestion at the Avenue H & 2nd Street intersection as well as to provide a grade-separated crossing of the railroad. The Illinois approach ties into the existing causeway at Highway 9 to minimize bridge length and associated costs. The proposed bridge would consist of a two-lane roadway with 12-foot lanes, 3-foot shoulders on both sides, and a 10-foot multi-use path protected by a concrete barrier for bicyclists and pedestrians. Design speed for the corridor is 40 mph, which is 15 mph above the posted speed on the existing bridge.

A new roadway bridge would simplify construction, minimize closures, and extend the lifespan of the existing bridge for rail use. The proposed bridge provides a context-sensitive solution to accommodate all modes of transportation while supporting growth of the Fort Madison area. Estimated construction cost is approximately $70.4 million. Preliminary engineering and NEPA generally costs about 10-15% of project construction cost. Map below shows the proposed alignment of the new bridge structure.

Next steps to advance the bridge concept includes bi-state regional coordination, economic development study, benefit cost analysis, environmental clearance and permitting, conceptual design, funding strategies and partnerships. Bi- state regional coordination has already kicked off and SEIRPC led several discussions with Iowa DOT about the possibility of funding opportunities through the new infrastructure bill to apply for funds for final bridge design and NEPA process.



PIPELINES

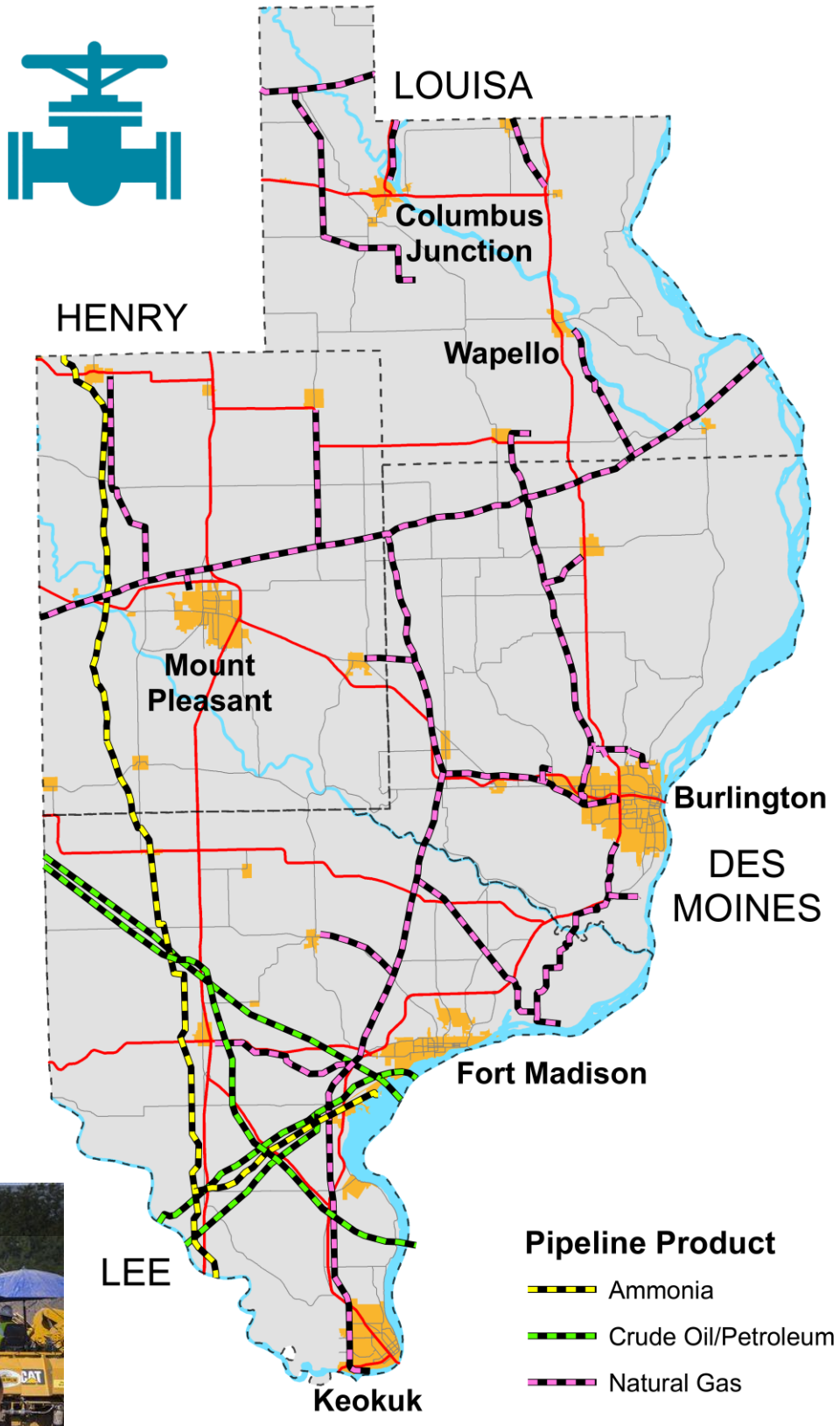
Several pipelines crisscross Southeast Iowa, carrying natural resources such as crude oil, natural gas, and ammonia. Natural gas is the most common, as many of these pipelines serve as distribution lines for local providers such as Alliant Energy and Liberty Utilities.



Many of these pipelines have been in place for a decade or more. The most recently developed was the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), put in place in 2017. The DAPL carries shale oil from North Dakota to an oil storage hub in southern Illinois. It passes diagonally through Lee County, and under the Mississippi River to the south of Montrose.

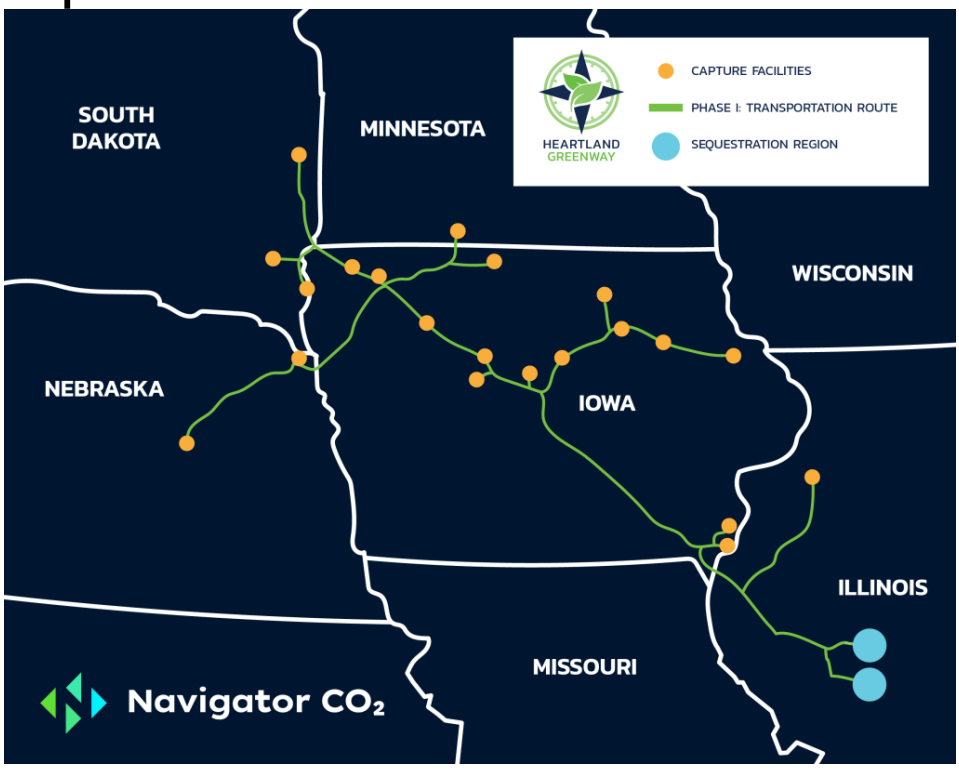
Knowledge of these pipelines (and their precise location) is critical in making decisions regarding land use, including transportation projects such as new roads and rail lines.


Installation of Dakota Access Pipeline, 2017



Heartland Greenway Pipeline

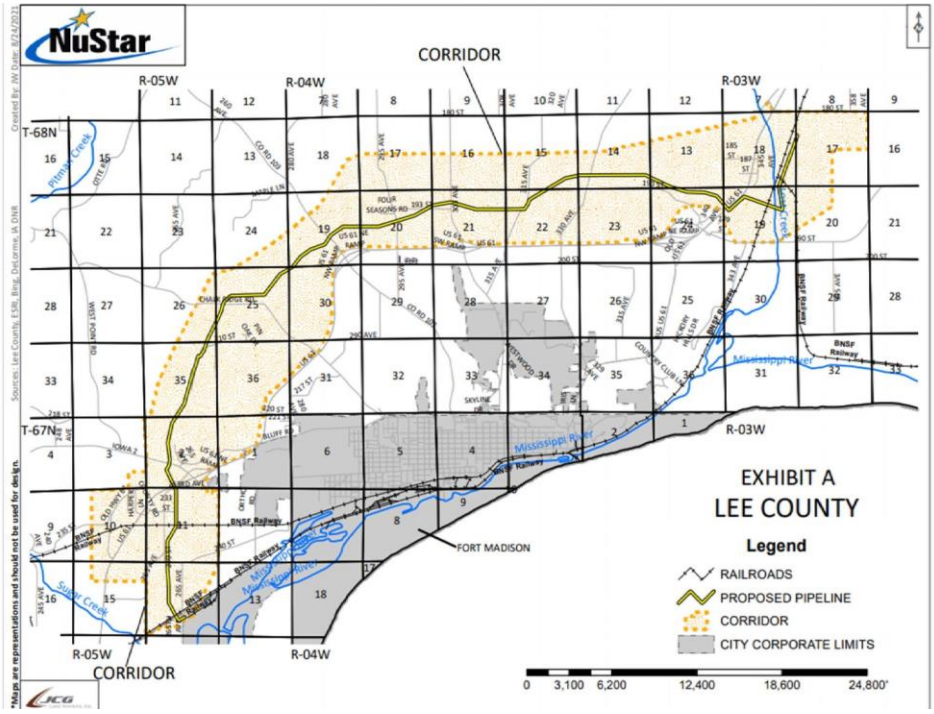
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NuStar Anhydrous Ammonia Pipeline

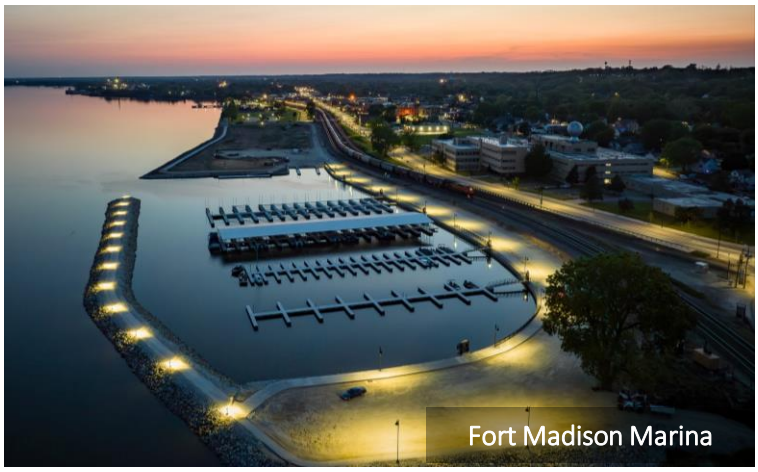
Several pipelines crisscross Southeast Iowa, carrying natural resources such as crude oil, natural gas, and ammonia. Natural gas is the most common, as many of these pipelines serve as distribution lines for local providers such as Alliant Energy and Liberty Utilities.



RIVER TRANSPORTATION

The Mississippi River is easily Southeast Iowa's most underappreciated transportation asset. While it was one of the biggest influences in the early settlement of the region, rail and vehicular travel now largely obscures the river as a viable transportation artery.

For recreational boating activities, numerous public access points are present along the 90-mile stretch of river from Muscatine to Keokuk, while Burlington, Fort Madison and Keokuk all have marina docking facilities. The Fort Madison Marina went through a massive $12 million renovation and expansion in 2022. There are also several companies that operate excursion/cruise lines up and down the river, such as Viking and American Queen.

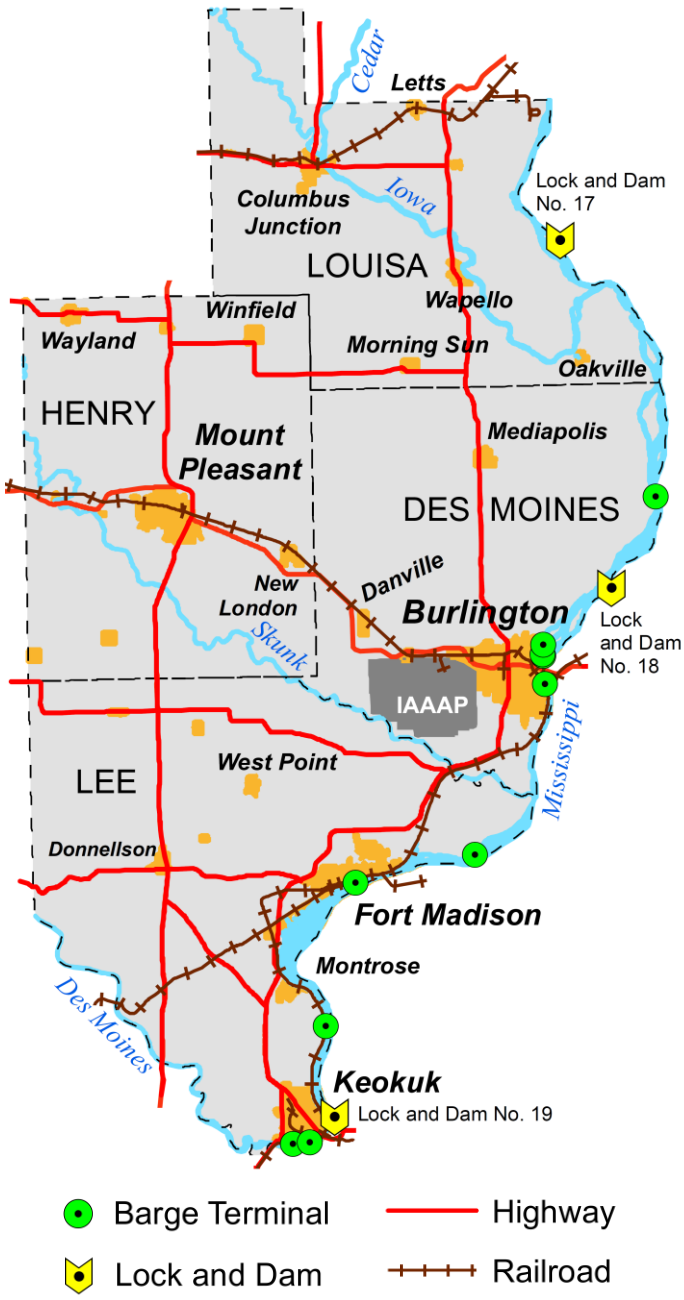


Fort Madison Marina

The bulk of river travel, however, is accounted for by commercial freight shipping, through the use of barge and tow fleets. There are 10 active barge terminals along the Mississippi River in Southeast Iowa – 5 each in Des Moines and Lee Counties. Two of these offer their own towing service, while the others are solely used for transferring and storing individual commodities on land. The tow service providers are Matteson Marine Service, Inc. in Burlington, and Hall Towing, Inc. in Fort Madison.



Hendricks River Logistics Terminal



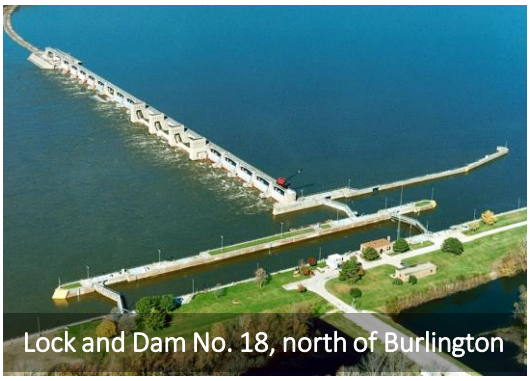
Many of Southeast Iowa's barge terminals are used for transferring agricultural products, such as corn, soybeans, grain, fertilizer, and other byproducts. Several others are used solely for the transport of coal, such as Hendricks River Logistics, LLC, which operates a major rail-to-barge transload facility for coal, located between Montrose and Keokuk. Most of the terminals are transfer points within a longer overall journey, while others serve as the origin or destination point for commodities, such as Roquette America, Inc. in Keokuk, and the Alliant Energy-Burlington Generating Station.

RIVER TRANSPORTATION

Lock and Dam System

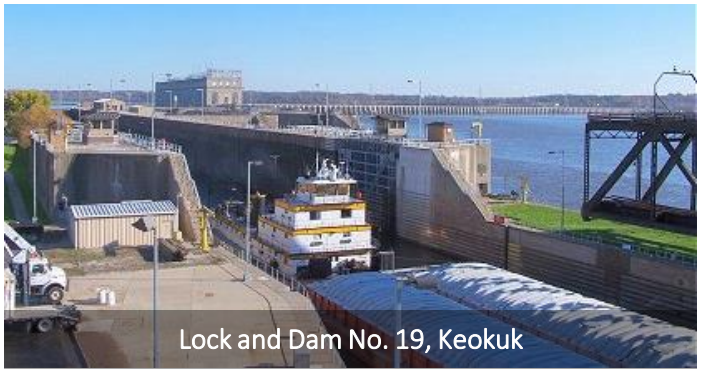
Long distance trips along the Upper Mississippi River require passage through an extensive lock and dam system, which is maintained by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Three of these are located along the portion of the river that borders Southeast Iowa. Lock and Dam No. 17 is located in Central Louisa County, while No. 18 is just north of Burlington, and No. 19 (pictured at right) is directly between Keokuk and Hamilton, Illinois.

Roughly
20 million tons
of cargo passes through each of the three Southeast Iowa locks over the course of a year


Lock and Dam No. 18, north of Burlington

The aging infrastructure of the lock and dam system is a matter of significant concern, at both the national and regional level. Like many of the Upper Mississippi locks & dams, two of those in Southeast Iowa are between 20 and 30 years past their design life. Therefore, in addition to being in regular need of structural repairs, they've become technologically outdated and inefficient. Both of these locks opened to traffic in the late 1930s, and very little has been done to upgrade these facilities to improve traffic flow. With chambers of 110 by 600 feet, a typical 15-barge tow must be split into two trips through the lock, which takes about 90 minutes.

The situation is not as dire for Lock and Dam No. 19 (at Keokuk). While a lock and dam at this location predates all others on the Upper Mississippi (first developed in 1913), the lock went through a massive expansion project in the 1950s, and with a length of 1,200 feet, it can accommodate an entire 15-barge tow in one trip, which significantly reduces locking time. It is also the northernmost Mississippi River lock that is open to barge traffic throughout the winter. At the same time, it is still 10 to 20 years past its design life.

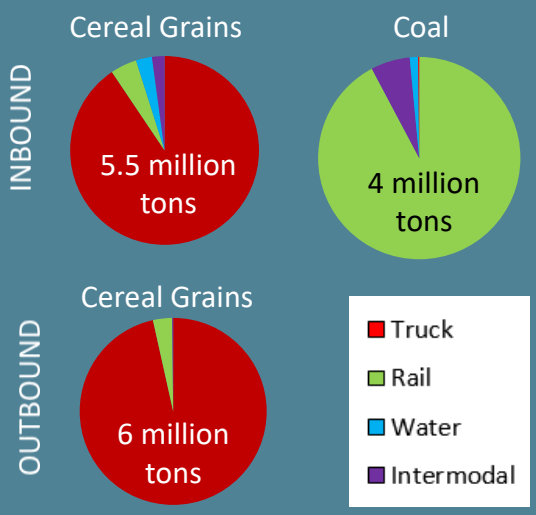

Lock and Dam No. 19, Keokuk

FOCUS ON FREIGHT

In terms of freight cargo, tens of millions of tons pass through Southeast Iowa each year, by truck, rail, and barge combined. A significant amount of this cargo switches from one mode to another while it is in the region. Barge-to-truck and barge-to-rail are particularly common for intermodal transport.

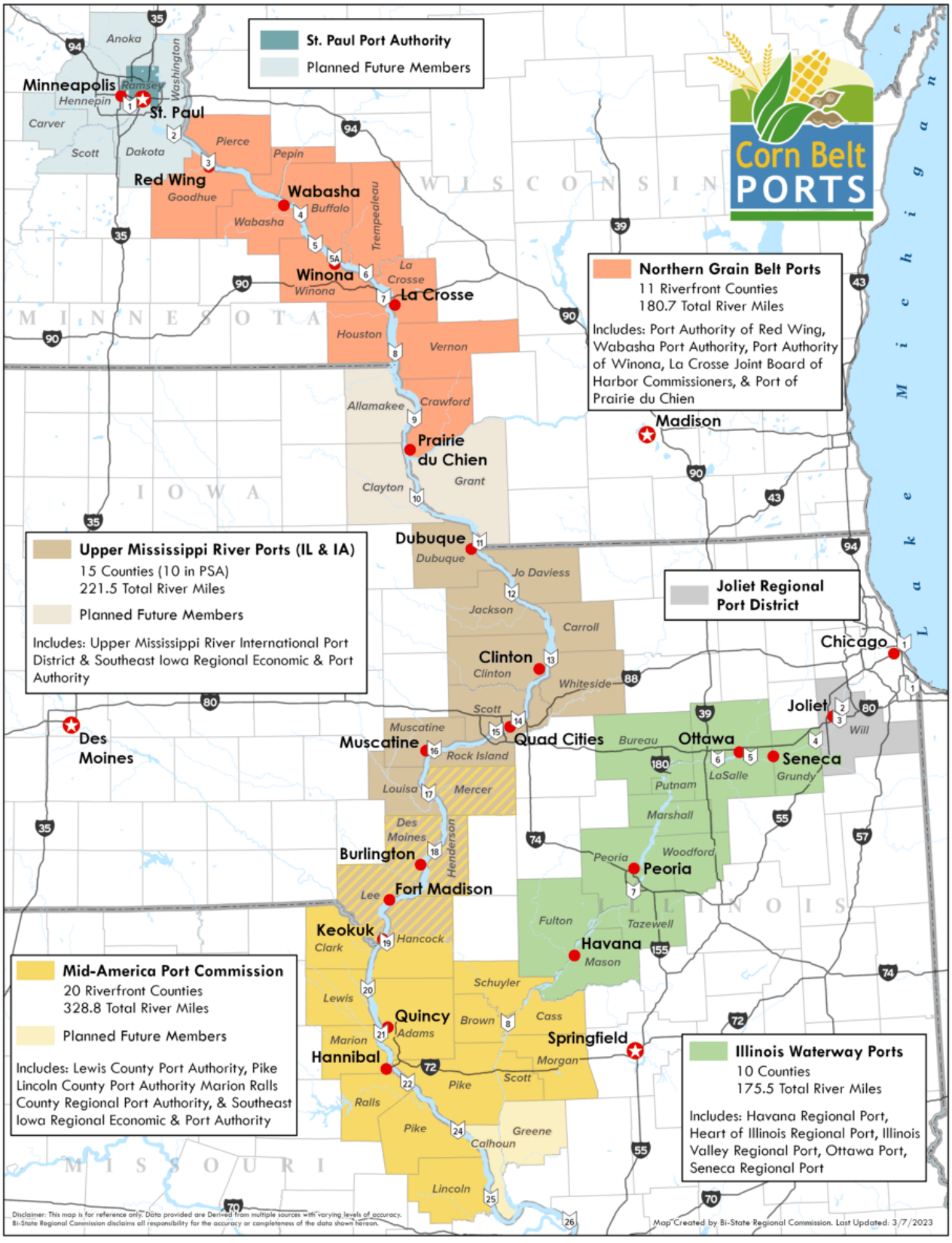
Consistent with the influence of agriculture on the region's economy, products classed as 'cereal grains' account for a large share of both inbound and outbound freight, particularly by truck. For rail transport, 'coal' accounts for a especially high share. Also, in Lee County, Hendricks River Logistics brings in a significant among of coal by rail, which is then offloaded onto barges.

Top Commodities by Transport Mode



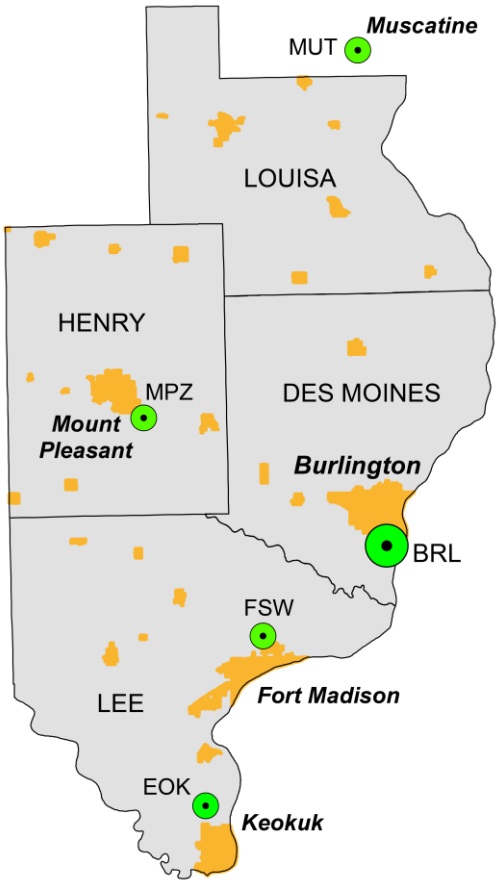
Corn Belt Ports

The Illinois Waterway (ILWW) Ports and Terminals, the Mid-America Port Commission (MAPC), and the Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois (MRPEIWI) port statistical areas are referred to collectively as the Corn Belt Ports. Together the three ports include the core of the largest grain-producing and exporting region in the U.S.



AIR TRANSPORTATION

Southeast Iowa is home to one non-primary commercial service airport, in Burlington. There are also 3 general aviation airports, serving Fort Madison, Keokuk, and Mount Pleasant, respectively. In addition, the *Muscatine Municipal Airport (MUT),* a general aviation airport, is located 2 miles north of the Louisa County line.

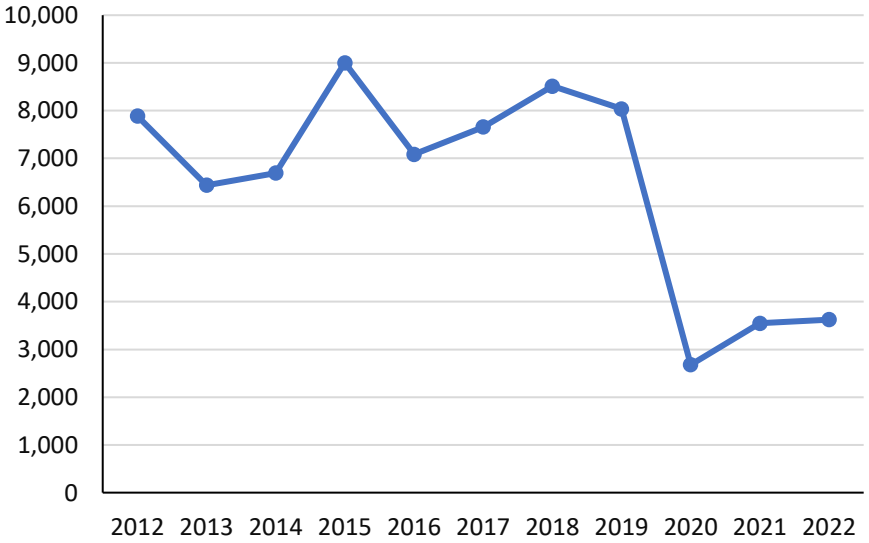


Burlington is home to the *Southeast Iowa Regional Airport (BRL)*, the region's only Commercial Service airport. It has a primary runway of 6,100 feet, a secondary runway of 5,350 feet, and has 52 aircraft based on the field. Passenger service for the Southeast Iowa Regional Airport is provided by Southern Airways Express, and daily flights are available to Chicago (O'Hare) and St. Louis (Lambert). However, the bulk of the airport's operations are general aviation flights.

Funding for its commercial service operations is provided through Essential Air Service, a federal government program designed to keep commercial air service in smaller cities with comparatively low passenger volume.



Southeast Iowa Regional Airport
Annual Enplanements



The Southeast Iowa Regional Airport successfully rebounded from a significant and prolonged slump in passenger usage, between 2006 and 2011, when total enplanements barely exceeded 2,000 a year. Thanks to a switch in service providers, and an aggressive new marketing campaign, the number of passengers returned to prior levels, generally around 7,500 to 8,000 per year. In 2020, passenger numbers plummeted to just over 2,600 during the COVID-19 Pandemic, with a 32% recovery to 3,5000 in 2021.

The *Keokuk Municipal Airport (EOK)*, positioned one mile north of the City, is classified as an Enhanced Service airport. This means that it has a runway longer than 5,000 feet (in this case, 5,500 feet), along with facilities and services that can accommodate a full range of general aviation activity, including most business jets. It attained this status following a major expansion in 1986. The airport has its own on-site maintenance shop, which is unique within the region. It also has one precision runway, and 25 based aircraft.

SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL AIRPORT

KEOKUK MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

AIR TRANSPORTATION

The *Mount Pleasant Municipal Airport (MPZ)*, is a General Service airport located at the east end of the city, near the US 34/218 interchange. Its single paved, nonprecision runway is 4,000 feet long, and it has an inventory of 21 based aircraft. In addition to its use as a general aviation facility, it has its own 'ag aviation' fleet for spraying crops on farms throughout the county. Plans are currently in place to extend the runway by 800 feet. This follows concerns that its minimal length could hamper local economic development efforts, by being unable to accommodate large corporate jets.





The youngest airport in the region is the *Fort Madison Municipal Airport (FSW)*, a Basic Service Airport established in 1959. Located at the northern edge of the city, it has a 4,000-foot paved, nonprecision runway, and 8 based aircraft. Similar to Mount Pleasant's airport, its operations are limited by the short length of its runway. In addition, it has very limited hangar space available. However, the City of Fort Madison is conveniently close to both the Burlington and Keokuk airports, which are each within 15 miles of the City, and have lengthy runways with precision guidance technology available.

Residents of Southeast Iowa have convenient access to multiple primary airports in the surrounding Tri-State region of Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. There are 4 primary airports within 100 miles of the region, with direct connections to places as far away as Atlanta, Tampa, Washington, DC, and Las Vegas. In addition, the Chicago and St. Louis Airports are less than 200 miles away.

Nearest Primary Airports to Southeast Iowa

Airport	Location	Distance
Quincy Regional Airport	Quincy, IL	50-75 mi.
Quad City International Airport	Moline, IL	50-75 mi.
The Eastern Iowa Airport	Cedar Rapids, IA	75-100 mi.
Peoria International Airport	Peoria, IL	75-100 mi.
Des Moines International Airport	Des Moines, IA	100-150 mi.
St. Louis Lambert Int'l Airport	St. Louis, MO	100-150 mi.
Chicago O'Hare International Airport	Chicago, IL	150-200 mi.

Future Needs

The Iowa DOT's *Aviation System Plan 2020-2040* provides guidance for needed improvements and upgrades on a statewide basis, as well as for each of Iowa's individual airports. The following are the improvements needed for the region's four airports, based on their classification (Commercial, Enhanced, General or Basic Service):

	Burlington	Fort Madison	Keokuk	Mount Pleasant
Airside Facilities	none	none	none	Update Turnarounds to Meet Standards
Landside Facilities	none	none	none	none
Services	none	Add Flight Instruction Service	Add 24/7 Access for Fuel; Add Aircraft Charter	none
Planning	none	Implement Land Use Code	none	none

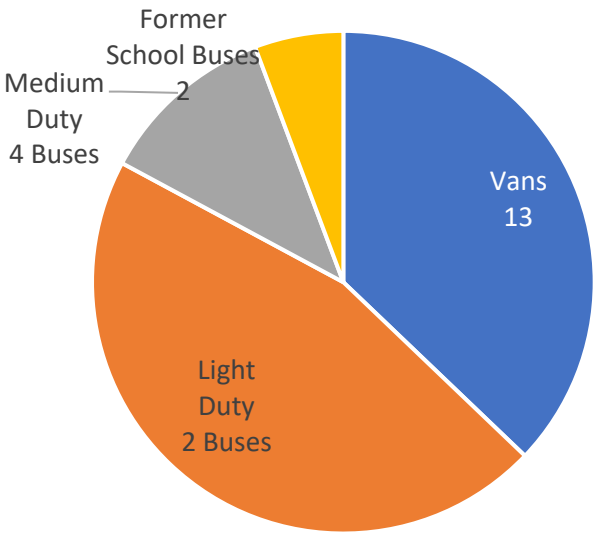
SEIBUS

SEIBUS (Southeast Iowa BUS) is the regional transit provider for Southeast Iowa, with service provided throughout Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa Counties, Monday through Friday. Rides are also offered to medical appointments in Iowa City. It is operated by the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission, with scheduling and management operated out of the SEIRPC office in West Burlington.

SEIBUS does not have fixed routes. Instead, rides are available to the general public on an on-demand basis, with different schedules for the cities in which buses are stationed. One-way and round-trip fares are offered, along with a monthly pass within individual counties. It also provides a shuttle service for major annual events like the Midwest Old Thresher's Reunion and Tri-State Rodeo.

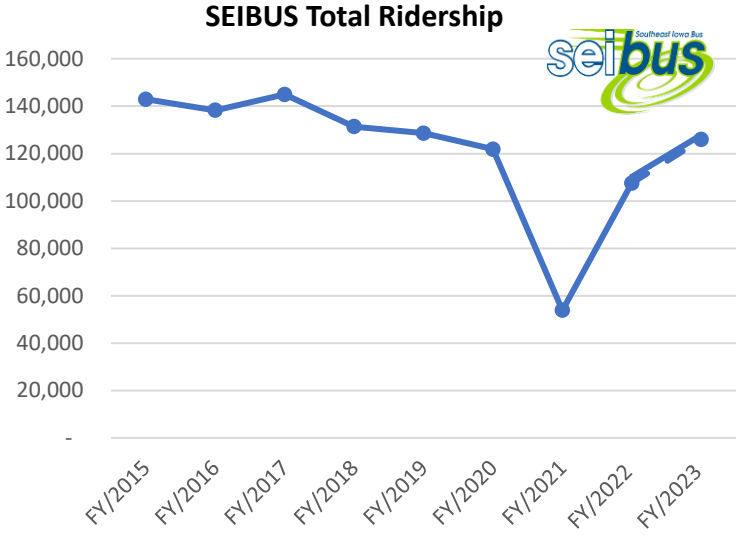
The graph on the right provides a snapshot of SEIBUS ridership since 2015. Overall, the ridership between 2015 and 2019 was fairly consistent. Ridership saw a modest rise in 2017. However, the number of rides saw a slight decline again in 2018, dropping by 10.3% from 2019. SEIBUS experienced an overall reduction of 6,740 rides in fiscal 2020 compared to fiscal 2019. The major cause of this ridership decline was due to COVID-19 pandemic and limited travel needs of the riders.

SEIBUS Fleet Size by Type





SEIBUS Total Ridership



SEIBUS rides picked up in 2021 once the vaccinations became more accessible and the riders felt more secure riding public transportation. The ridership trend has been upward since 2021 and the ridership numbers are estimated to reach the pre-pandemic numbers by the end of FY24.

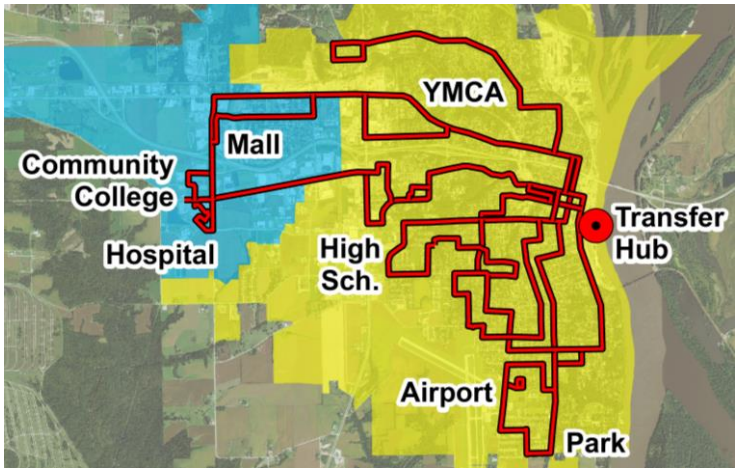
SEIBUS provides services through the use of their vehicle fleets. The graph on the left provide some details on SEIBUS fleet including the size and types of vehicles. SEIBUS runs a number of vans, light duty, medium duty, vans and heavy duty or school buses. In the recent years, SEIBUS has added several new vans that are handicap accessible to help with their growing needs for their special medical transportation.

126,005
rides provided to passengers through SEIBUS in Fiscal Year 2023

Burlington Urban Service

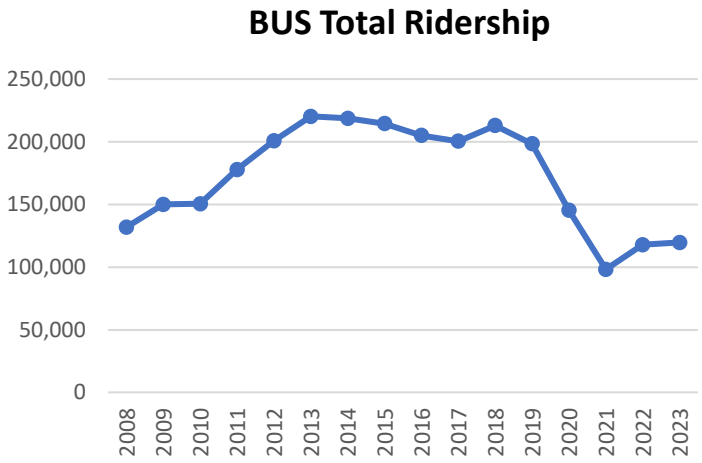
Burlington Urban Service (BUS) is the transit provider for the Burlington urban area, which includes the Cities of Burlington and West Burlington. It is operated by the City of Burlington Public Works Department. Services are available to the general public 6 days a week during the morning and afternoon, with Saturday rides required to be scheduled in advance, during the work week. Fares are calculated on a per-ride basis, and monthly, 6-month, and annual rates are also available.



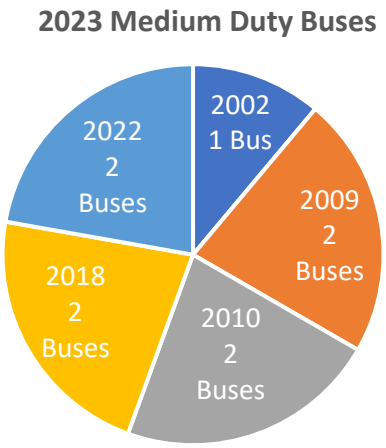


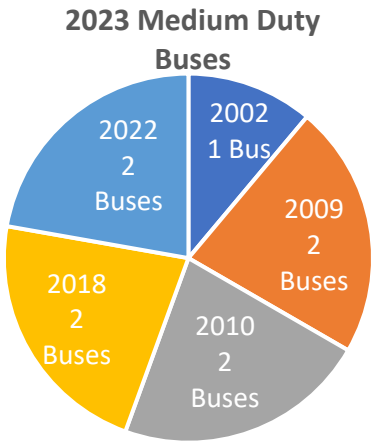
BUS has a series of six fixed routes, operating at certain times of day, along with two shuttles and a para transit vehicle, for on-demand response. The fixed routes radiate outward from the main transfer hub, centrally located at the Amtrak Depot, just south of Downtown. Major destinations include medical facilities, schools, and shopping areas.

The graph on the right provides a snapshot of BUS ridership since 2008. Overall, between 2008 and 2013, ridership increased by an impressive 67%, trending gradually upward over that period. However, ridership has seen a modest decline since then, decreasing by 10% from 2013 to 2017. BUS saw an intense drop in riderships in 2019/ 2020 during COVID-19 pandemic but is slowly picked up in 2022, although the current ridership is not close to the pre-pandemic numbers.



119,723
rides provided to passengers through BUS in Fiscal Year 2023





As of 2023, the BUS fleet includes 14 buses, all of which are ADA compliant. This includes a mix of 5 light duty and 9 medium duty buses. 4 of the 9 medium duty bus fleet is between 5 and 10 years old, while the remaining 5 are just over 13 years old. 3 out of the 5 light duty buses are between 5 and 10 years old, while 2 buses are older.

Burlington Trailways

Intercity passenger bus service is provided by *Burlington Trailways*, a private company whose corporate headquarters and regional bus hub are both located in West Burlington. Additional stops are located in Mount Pleasant, Fort Madison, and Keokuk, and its full network extends throughout Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois, along with direct connections to Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Omaha, and Denver. As part of the larger, national Trailways network, Burlington Trailways provides connections to other bus systems in different regions. Passengers can transfer directly to Greyhound Lines, Barons Bus Lines, and Jefferson Lines.



Burlington Trailways has direct roots in our region. It was founded in Burlington in 1929, as a subsidiary of the CB&Q railroad. Not long after, it was one of the charter members of what is today known as the Trailways Transportation System.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding for BUS and SEIBUS

Since COVID-19 pandemic, many transportation service providers were forced to face a multitude of challenges. The challenges include decrease in ridership, change in operation, cleaning and disinfecting transit vehicles and facilities to ensure safety of drivers and riders, and cost of the applied measures to maintain safety of the transit operation. Service providers in southeast Iowa like SEIBUS and BUS were not an exception.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was introduced in March 2020 to provide emergency assistance and health care response for individuals, families and businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. CARES Act also provides support for public transportation. Federal Transit Administration allocated $25 billion to recipients of urbanized area and rural area formula funds, with $22.7 billion to large and small urban areas and $2.2 billion to rural areas. Since the ridership dropped during the pandemic, the City of Burlington anticipated to see fewer dollars from the state due to anticipated decrease in road use tax. BUS received about $1.3 million in grant funding that came from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as CARES Act. The CARES funding was to help make up for the loss in state and federal dollars that the City usually receives. In FY22, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA) will provide BUS with another $602,517 to cover their operating costs and transit salaries. SEIBUS also received about $900,000 through CARES Act as part of COVID-19 relief fund.



Passenger Transportation Plan

Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (SEIRPC) updated and adopted its FY2021 Passenger Transportation Plan in March, 2021. SEIRPC serves as Southeast Iowa's transportation planning body and is the organization responsible for the creation of Region 16 Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP), which is updated every 5 years. The last PTP was completed in 2014. The Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) was created by the Iowa Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Public Transit Bureau to promote joint, coordinated passenger transportation planning programs that further the development of the local and regional public transportation systems. The plan provides needs-based justification for passenger transportation projects as well as to incorporate federal requirements for coordinated planning. The outcomes of the plan are to:

- Provide a better understanding of passenger transportation services in Region 16;
- Facilitate coordinated transportation services within the region;
- Provide options to address service gaps, fleet needs, and facility needs;
- Assist in creating a better passenger transportation system in Region 16; and
- Provide justification for state and federal funding.



The FY2021 Passenger Transportation Plan was developed through a comprehensive and robust public involvement process. A variety of traditional and innovative techniques were used to gather input from the transit users, transportation providers, and other stakeholders. Major engagement techniques included regional surveys, interviews with transit providers, and Regional Passenger Transportation Coordination Workshops. Upon completion of the draft plan, it was made available for public comments. Specifically , the document was sent to Iowa DOT for review, Transit Advisory Committee members, and attendees of the regional Passenger Transportation Coordination Workshop to provide input. The final step of the process was an approval and adoption of the plan by SEIRPC Full Board.

TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRAC)

The purpose of the ***Transit Advisory Committee (TRAC)*** is to provide input and review for the development and implementation of the Region 16 Passenger Transportation Plan. The TRAC monitors the progress of the PTP throughout the year, offers general guidance, and recommends the final version of the PTP to the SEIRPC Board of Directors for approval. The main tasks performed by the Transit Advisory Committee are to identify passenger transportation needs, identify projects to address theses needs, prioritize projects, and work to implement priority projects/improve coordination amongst different agencies.

BICYLING AND MULTI-PURPOSE TRAILS

Over the past two decades, Southeast Iowa has made great strides in expanding opportunities for bicyclists, both for recreational and personal transportation purposes. Cities like Burlington and Mount Pleasant were some of the first to dedicate off-road multi-purpose trails, while others have taken on the task more recently. These trails go beyond the typical enclosed loops found within individual parks and recreation areas, extending outward to connect multiple neighborhoods with recreation areas and employment destinations.

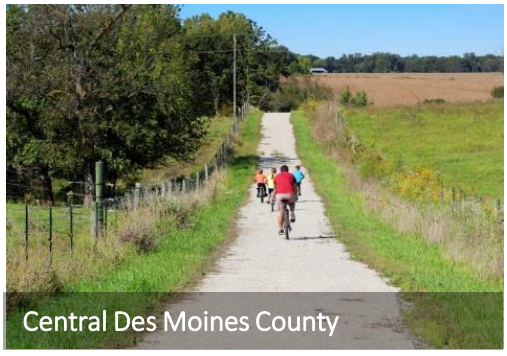


Existing efforts to promote trail construction are strongly encouraged. Recently established non-profit entities such as *PORT of Fort Madison* and the *Louisa County Trails Council* have proven indispensable to their communities' ambition for developing functional trails systems. PORT alone was able to develop three segments of trail within a 5-year period, following a strategy outlined in the Fort Madison Comprehensive Plan from 2013.

Over the course of 30 years, Mount Pleasant has developed a continuous trail that forms an arc around the south and east sides of the city. Efforts to complete a full trail loop around the city are strongly encouraged – for Mount Pleasant itself, as well as other regional communities that can learn from and follow their example. Trail systems, no matter how small, can have a major positive impact on the quality of life in smaller communities that have suffered ongoing population loss.

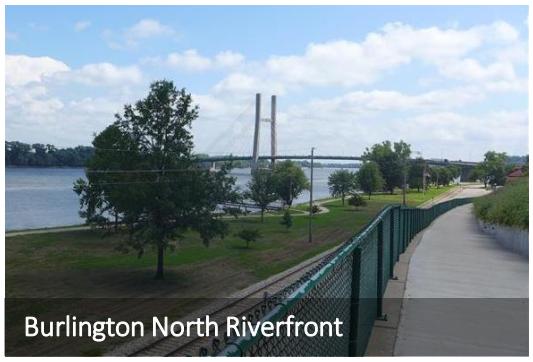


Progress on longer-distance trails that connect multiple communities has been slower, as support for their construction and funding has not been as pronounced in rural areas where agriculture is predominant. One major success story has been the *Flint River Trail* (pictured below), which now extends over 9 miles to connect the Greater Burlington area with Des Moines County's Big Hollow Recreation Area. Another segment of this trail exists in Burlington near the Mississippi River, and plans are already in place to connect the two together.



Central Des Moines County

Flint River Trail



Burlington North Riverfront

Another option is on-road signed bike routes, including both 'share-the road' segments (signage only) and dedicated paved shoulders or marked bike lanes. The most prominent of these is the *Mississippi River Trail (MRT)*, a planned 10-state corridor that follows the river on both sides. In recent years, a paved shoulder was added along 13-mile segment in east-central Louisa County. At the same time, significant gaps remain in the official signed corridor, in the rural areas in between Burlington, Fort Madison, and Keokuk.

BICYCLING AND MULTI-PURPOSE TRAILS

The map at right displays an inventory of all existing bike routes in Southeast Iowa, including both off-road and on-road facilities, as of 2023. These are depicted by yellow lines.

As of 2012, there were 113 miles of dedicated bike paths in Southeast Iowa. Another 18 miles were added from 2013 to 2018, followed by 17 more miles from 2019 to 2023, which puts the total at 148 miles. This represents a cumulative 31% increase in mileage from 2012 to 2023.

As of 2023, there are now

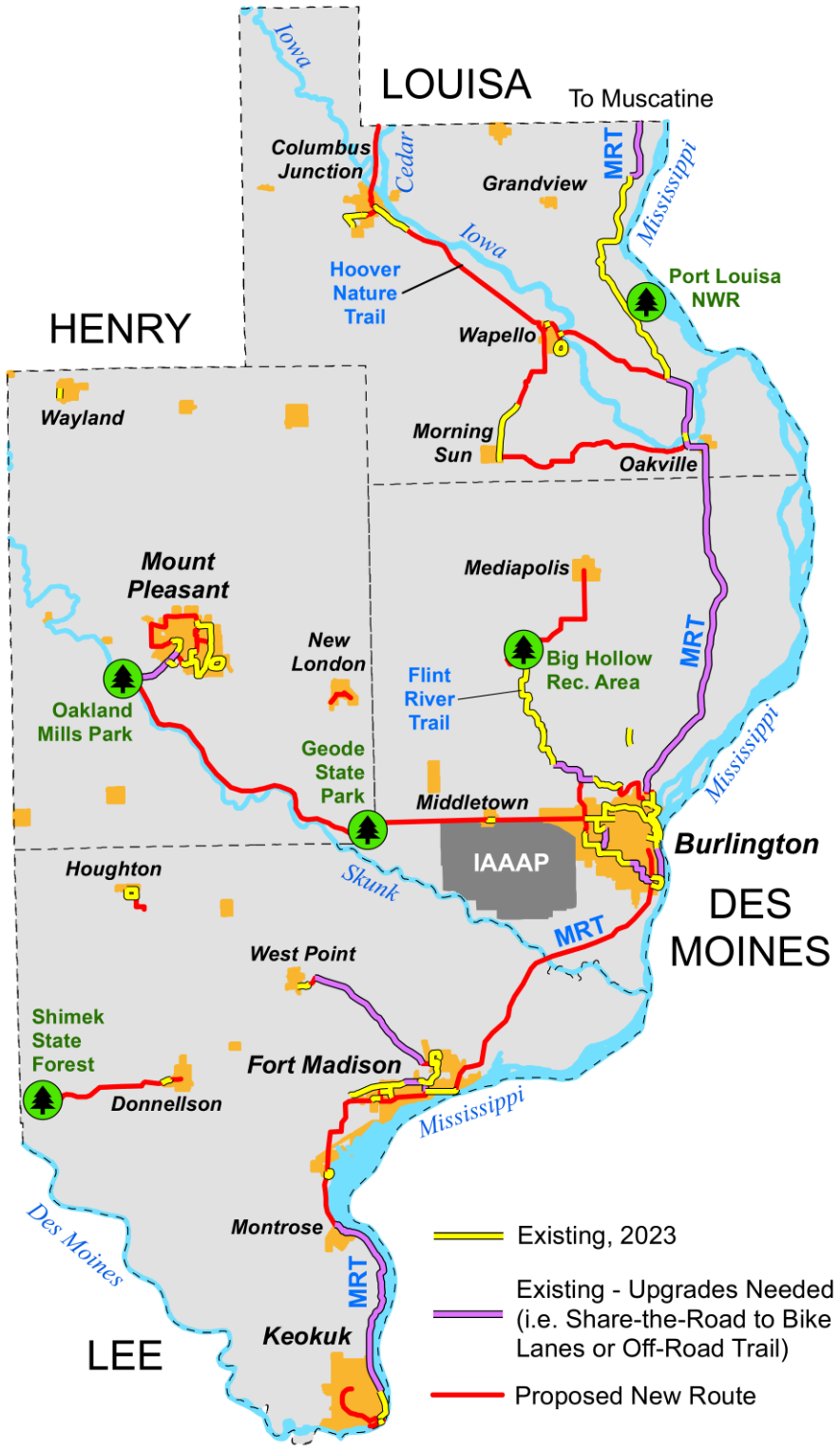
148 miles

of bike trails and on-road bike routes in Southeast Iowa

Of the total inventory of 148 miles, just over 1/3 of these (52 miles) are off-road, while the remaining 96 miles are on-road, including bike lanes, paved shoulders, and signed share-the-road routes.

The purple lines depict on-road facilities where safety upgrades are needed, in order to make them accessible to more users. Such upgrades could include the establishment of dedicated bike lanes, a paved shoulder, or a separate off-road, multi-use trail. This includes sizable segments of the signed Mississippi River Trail (MRT) route.

Southeast Iowa Bike Routes



Shown in red, the map also displays 130 miles of additional planned bike routes, which are either programmed for upcoming construction, shown in a local planning document, or are otherwise being actively pursued by the community. Much of that mileage is made up of long-distance trails that would connect multiple communities to one another, and to major recreational destinations. There are also several sections of the planned MRT route which aren't yet signed, due to the lack of an alternative route for the 4-lane Highway 61.

SIDEWALKS AND THE PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

The status of pedestrian connectivity varies considerably from one community to another, and from one part of town to another. Older neighborhoods and Downtown areas typically have a fully developed and interconnected sidewalk grid. More recently developed areas tend to have missing pieces within the sidewalk grid, or sidewalks are absent entirely.



In some instances, deficiencies are readily apparent to the untrained eye, such as the well-worn 'goat path' pictured at left, which employees of a Keokuk manufacturing plant have used to reach nearby shopping and dining destinations. In other cases, the issue remains hidden to those without a direct stake in the matter. For this reason, it is recommended that community planners conduct an inventory of their pedestrian network, to identify strategic gaps, and prioritize areas for new sidewalk (or trail) construction.

RETROFITTING THE SYSTEM

In the mid to late 20th Century, many communities neglected to accommodate the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in new development projects. In addition, older, narrow sidewalks weren't upgraded to modern standards, and many have decayed or even disappeared entirely in some places. In recent years, this trend has reversed, with local governments recognizing the need to retrofit these areas with functional pedestrian and bike connections. A popular source of funding assistance historically has been the Safe Routes to School program, which allows communities to prioritize sidewalk construction in the vicinity of schools. However, this is no longer a stand alone funding source. Other programs have been used such as transportation safety funds, TAP funds, and local government funds.



New sidewalk in Burlington, along Agency Street funding through the Transportation Safety Improvement Program (TSIP)



The condition of sidewalks also varies considerably, and may create just as much of an impediment to pedestrian mobility as having no sidewalks at all. Small towns often have limited budgets, and sidewalk repair and upgrades have not been considered a priority in recent decades. As such, their sidewalks tend to be too narrow, as well as cracked and uneven in many places. This creates challenges for some users, including the elderly, as well as wheelchair users and parents with children in strollers.

Accessibility for disabled individuals has also become a major concern, in particular due to Southeast Iowa's aging population. Cities are now proactively taking this into account when new sidewalks are constructed, or old ones are replaced. To ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), pedestrian crossings are fitted with wide curb cuts and detectable warnings. Challenges still exist, particularly in areas of hilly terrain, such as the north side of Downtown Burlington. In numerous places, stairs exist as part of the sidewalk, to account for the steep grade.



Existing crossing made ADA compliant with curb cuts and detectable warnings, Burlington

Transportation Projects and Environmental Regulations

When planning for an upcoming transportation infrastructure project, it is crucial to consider the impact that this project will have on the natural environment. This encompasses multiple areas of consideration, including wildlife habitat, storm water drainage patterns, and sites of historic or archaeological significance.

In recent decades, an extensive regulatory system has been developed to address these sensitive features, which may be impacted by transportation projects such as the development of a new highway, or the expansion of an existing highway. In Iowa, this involves multiple regulatory agencies such as the *Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO),* and *the Iowa Archaeological Society.* It also involves Federal entities such as the *Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)* and *Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)*.

Enforcement Tools and Legislative Foundation

Much of the foundation for regulations enforced by the aforementioned agencies is found in State and Federal legislation. A few particularly important examples are listed below.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – This legislation was created as a means to protect and enhance the environment. For transportation infrastructure projects using federal funding, NEPA requires that an environmental review be conducted and documented as part of the project development. Depending on the nature of the project, required documents can include a *Categorical Exclusion (CE)*, *Environmental Assessment (EA)*, and/or an *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)*. The process involves consideration of multiple alternatives for the project, and how each would impact the environment.

Other Federal Environmental Legislation – The *Clean Water Act (CWA)* is used to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters, by preventing pollution from entering these water environments. Permits must be obtained for a transportation project if dredged or fill materials are to be discharged into navigable waters. The *Endangered Species Act* is meant to ensure that transportation and other development projects do not have the potential to negatively impact endangered or threatened species of animals and plants.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) – In protecting historic and prehistoric resources, the NHPA requires that a detailed assessment be made on a transportation project's potential impact on these resources.

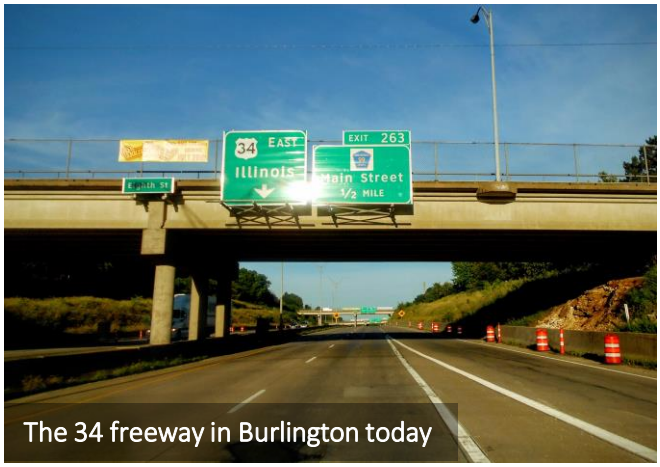
Iowa State Code Requirements – A number of legislative mandates have been established at the State level, which create further regulatory requirements for transportation projects. This includes the *Sovereign Lands Construction Project* (for any development on State-owned land), *Flood Plain Development Permit*, and additional legislation concerning endangered species, air quality monitoring, disposal of soil and other construction waste material, and the avoidance of prime agricultural lands.

Consequences of Insufficient Regulations

Before this regulatory system was firmly established, the integrity of environmental and historical resources was often taken for granted until it was too late. In Southeast Iowa, a prominent local example was the construction of the US 34 freeway in Burlington, in the early 1970s. In the North Hill neighborhood, ten square blocks of land were acquired, and over one hundred historic homes and other buildings were demolished to make way for the new highway. Other projects have brought about unforeseen liabilities in the form of flood risk, such as the construction of rail yards by the riverfront, as in Burlington, Fort Madison, and Keokuk.



Blocks being cleared for US 34 freeway in Burlington., c. 1970



The 34 freeway in Burlington today

The Process In Action Today

Today, transportation projects with similar environmental ramifications are required to go through an extensive regulatory process, to minimize the potential for negative environmental impact. Certain measures can be undertaken, in order to allow the project to proceed without compromising its intended purpose. In the example depicted at right, a planned 4-lane highway is being routed slightly away from the current 2-lane alignment, in order to avoid two historic structures that lie in close proximity to the road on either side.





Creation of Trumpeter Marsh as wetland mitigation project, Lee County

Another commonly encountered issue is the impact on wetland environments. If the alignment of a new road causes a natural wetland area to be disturbed, then action must be taken to mitigate this loss, by establishing a new wetland at a strategic location nearby. An example of this is Trumpeter Marsh in central Lee County, which was created to mitigate wetland loss from widening Highway 61 from two to four lanes.

Archaeological and Historic Sites

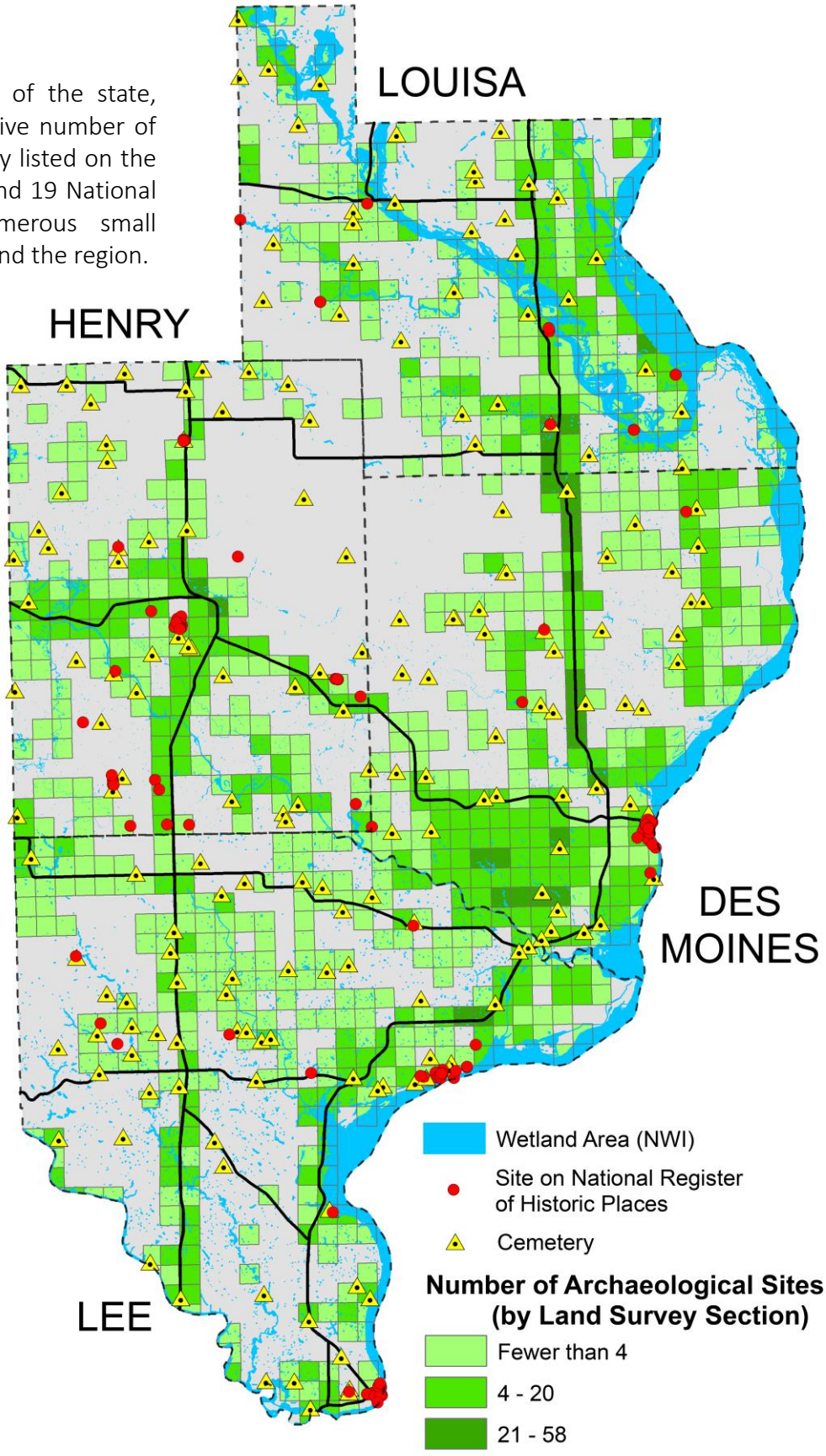
As one of the earliest settled parts of the state, Southeast Iowa is home to an extensive number of historic sites, including 114 individually listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*, and 19 National Historic Districts. In addition, numerous small pioneer cemeteries are scattered around the region.

There are also many recorded archaeological sites in the region, with the heaviest concentrations found along waterways and in areas of hilly terrain, where settlements and hunting grounds were common, due to plentiful resources being available. They are also common where highway construction projects have been undertaken in recent decades.

Wetlands

The *National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)* is a nationwide inventory of wetland areas prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. According to the NWI, Southeast Iowa includes 128 square miles of wetlands. In all, this encompasses permanent waterways such as lakes and rivers, as well as marshes and swamps that are sometimes only saturated on a seasonal basis.

Extensive wetland areas are found within the floodplains of major rivers such as the Mississippi, Iowa, and Cedar. The Iowa River wetlands present regulatory challenges for the planned four-lane upgrade of Highway 61 north of Wapello.

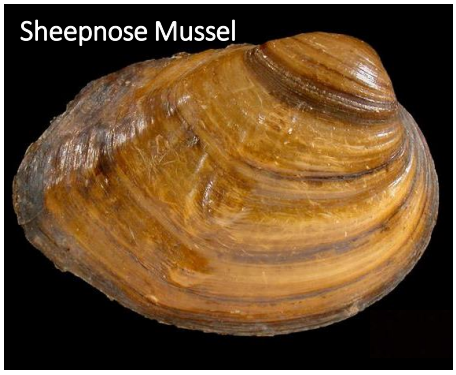


THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

There are seven animal and plant species that are Federally classified as 'threatened', 'endangered', or proposed endangered in all or part of Southeast Iowa. Six of these are endangered, meaning that they are in danger of extinction throughout all or of a significant portion of their current range of habitat. The one other is threatened, meaning that they are likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future.

Many of the species on this list are threatened or endangered throughout the Midwestern United States. The endangered status of the Indiana Bat is particularly important for regulatory purposes, regarding transportation and development projects. In the Starr's Cave Park and Preserve, in Des Moines County, the cave itself is currently off-limits to the general public, as the bat is known to make its home there.


Indiana Bat


Sheepnose Mussel


Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid

Threatened and Endangered Species in Southeast Iowa *(Federal Classification)*

Species	Class	Location	Federal Status
Indiana Bat	Mammals	Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa	Endangered
Northern Long-Eared Bat	Mammals	Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa	Endangered
Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid	Flowering Plant	Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa	Threatened
Tricolored Bat	Mammals	Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa	Proposed Endangered
Higgin's-Eye Pearly Mussel	Freshwater Mussels	Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa	Endangered
Spectaclecase	Freshwater Mussels	Des Moines, Lee, and Louisa	Endangered
Sheepnose	Freshwater Mussels	Des Moines, Lee, and Louisa	Endangered

Numerous other plant and animal species are classified as endangered or threatened at the State level, but not the Federal level. In Southeast Iowa, this includes several bird, fish, insect, and plant species, in addition to mammals, reptiles, and mussels. In addition to 'threatened' and 'endangered', the State assigns a third category called 'special concern'. Those in this category are not fully protected by the State's Endangered Plants and Wildlife law, but restrictions are in place for matters like hunting, fishing and harvesting. Information on the status of each species (by county) is available online through an interactive website called the Iowa Natural Areas Inventory (INAI), maintained by the Iowa DNR.

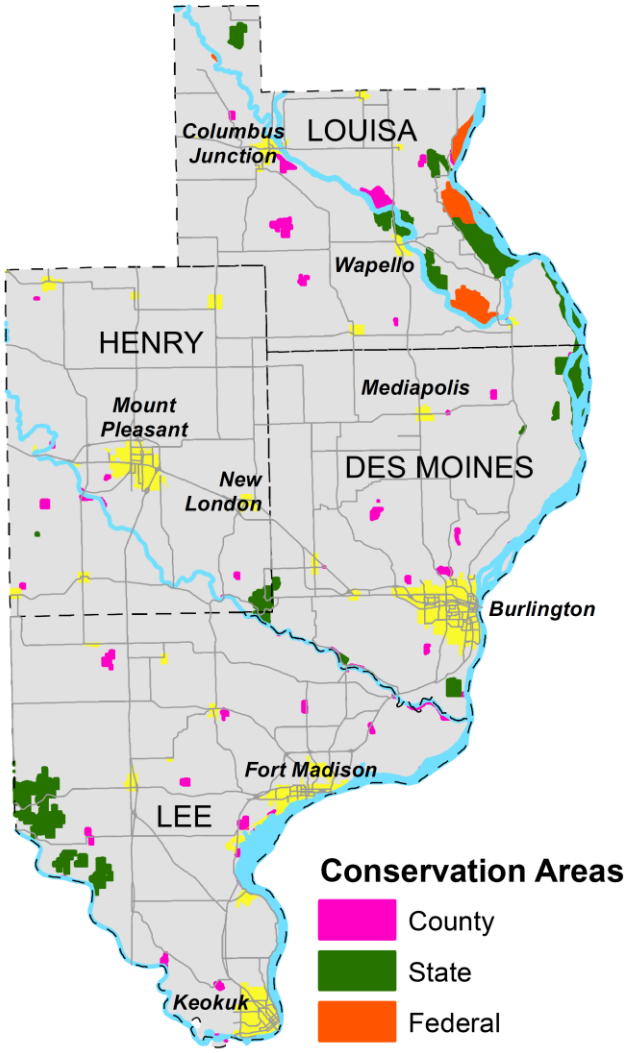
A common explanation for threatened or endangered status is the loss of natural habitat through man-made alterations, such as tree and woodland removal or filling in wetlands. Accidental fatalities (through vehicle impact or mowing) are also common. It is notable that four of the seven species are freshwater mussels, mostly in counties along the Mississippi River. This is largely the result of their depletion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, for the locally prominent pearl button industry.

Conservation Areas

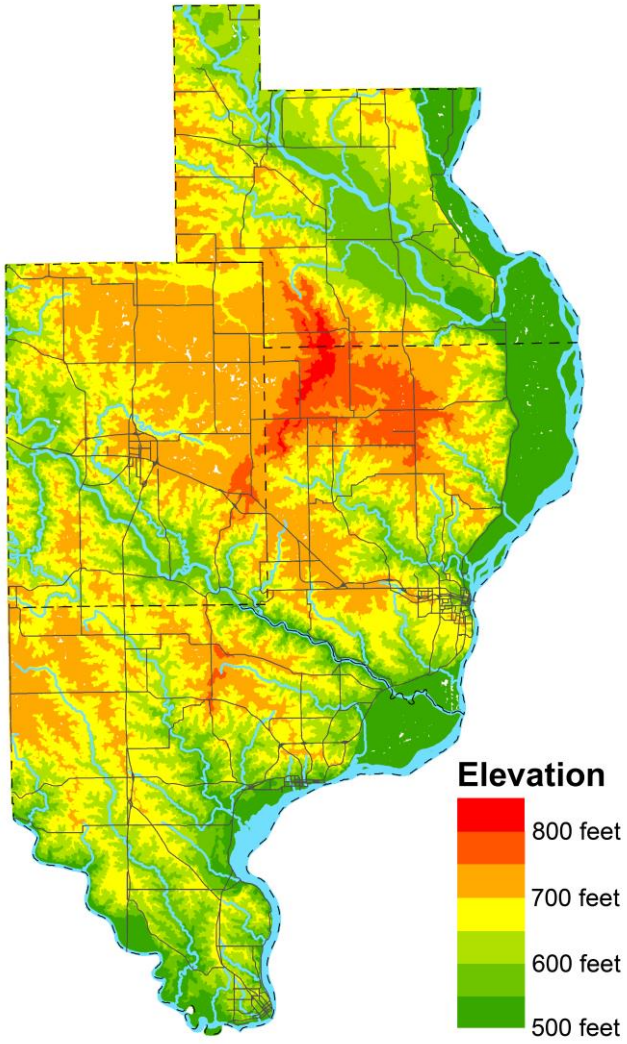
Southeast Iowa is home to numerous protected conservation areas, including those under County, State, and Federal jurisdiction. Among the State facilities are Geode State Park (Henry and Des Moines Counties), and Shimek State Forest (Lee County).

The Federal lands comprise several separate areas of the Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge (pictured below), found along the Mississippi and Iowa Rivers in Louisa County.

Conservation areas are most prevalent in Louisa County, as it has many sensitive low-lying wetland areas, found near the confluence of the Iowa River with the Mississippi River.



Landforms and Hydrology



The landscape of Southeast Iowa is heavily influenced by rivers and waterways. While the Mississippi River comprises its eastern border, several interior rivers drain into it within the region, carrying with them the waters of numerous upstate watersheds.

Areas of sharp geographic relief extend along the numerous creeks, tributaries, and minor streams that cross through the region, largely at a northwest-to-southeast angle. This has considerable ramifications for transportation, as roads must often take the least direct path to avoid steep gradients. Also, the many angled streams have required the installation of numerous bridges, for roads that conform to the N-S-E-W grid of the Public Land Survey System.

Along the Mississippi River, there are several large areas of flat bottomland, which are extensively cultivated for farming, due to the presence of highly fertile soils.

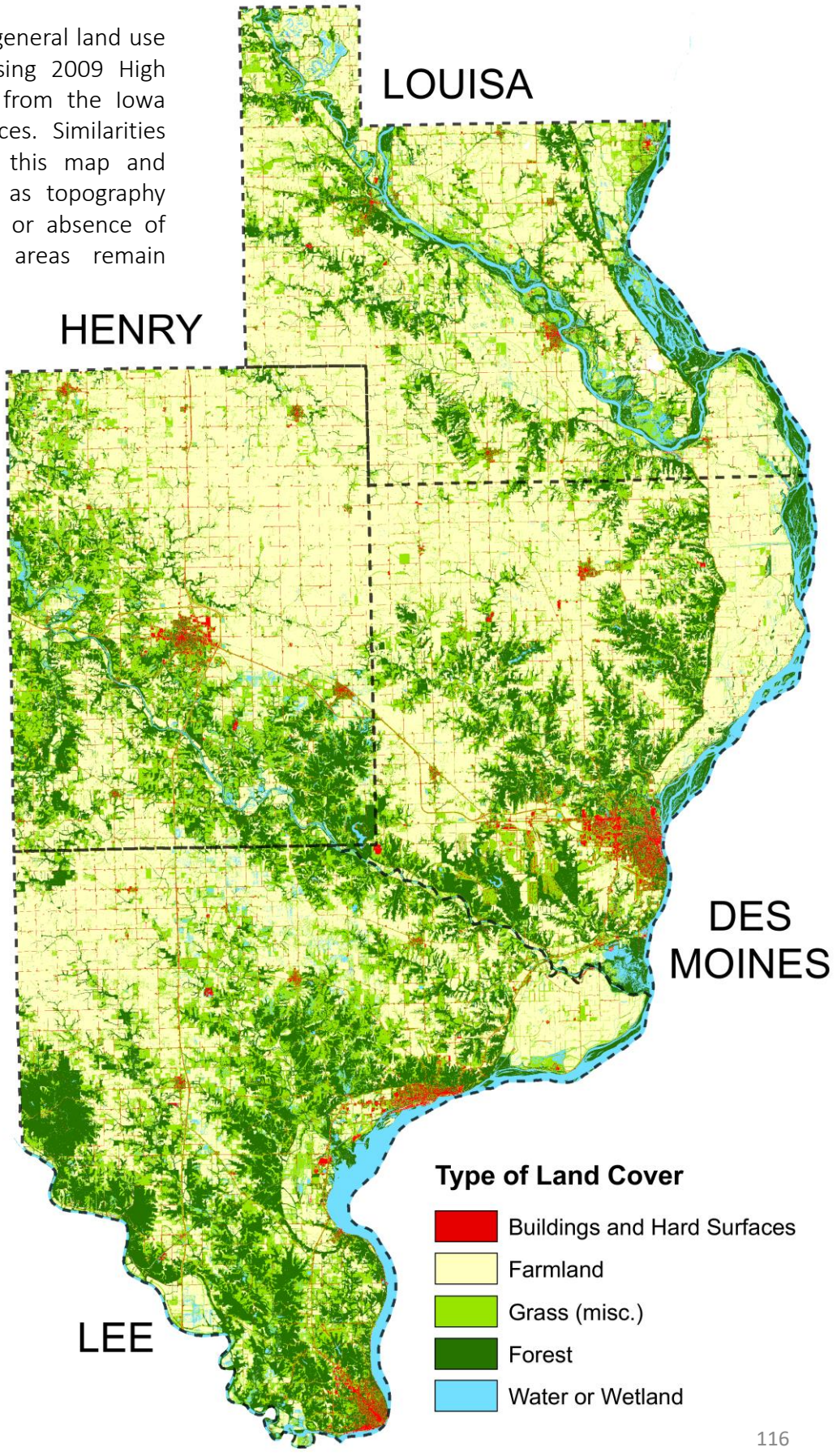
Land Use Patterns

The map at right highlights the general land use patterns of Southeast Iowa, using 2009 High Resolution Land Cover images from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Similarities are readily apparent between this map and those on the preceding page, as topography heavily influences the presence or absence of agriculture, and conservation areas remain largely undeveloped.

As to be expected, farmland is the dominant use of land in Southeast Iowa, although its prevalence varies from one part of the region to another. It is most common in areas of flat terrain, such as the high plateau in northeast Henry County, or the low valleys along the Mississippi River.

Forests cover the areas of hilly terrain around streams and drainage ravines. A few conservation areas also stand out, such as Shimek State Forest in western Lee County.

Buildings and hard surfaces are primarily found in dense clusters within the region's cities, with rural dwellings and farm buildings barely noticeable when scattered among the farmland. The 'grass' land cover largely represents transition areas between farmland and forest, or buildings and farmland. This is usually composed of imported species, as opposed to native prairie grasses.

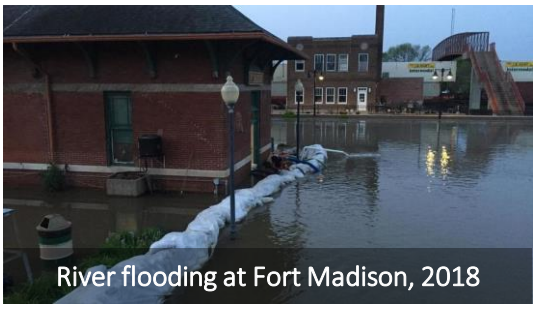


Floodplains

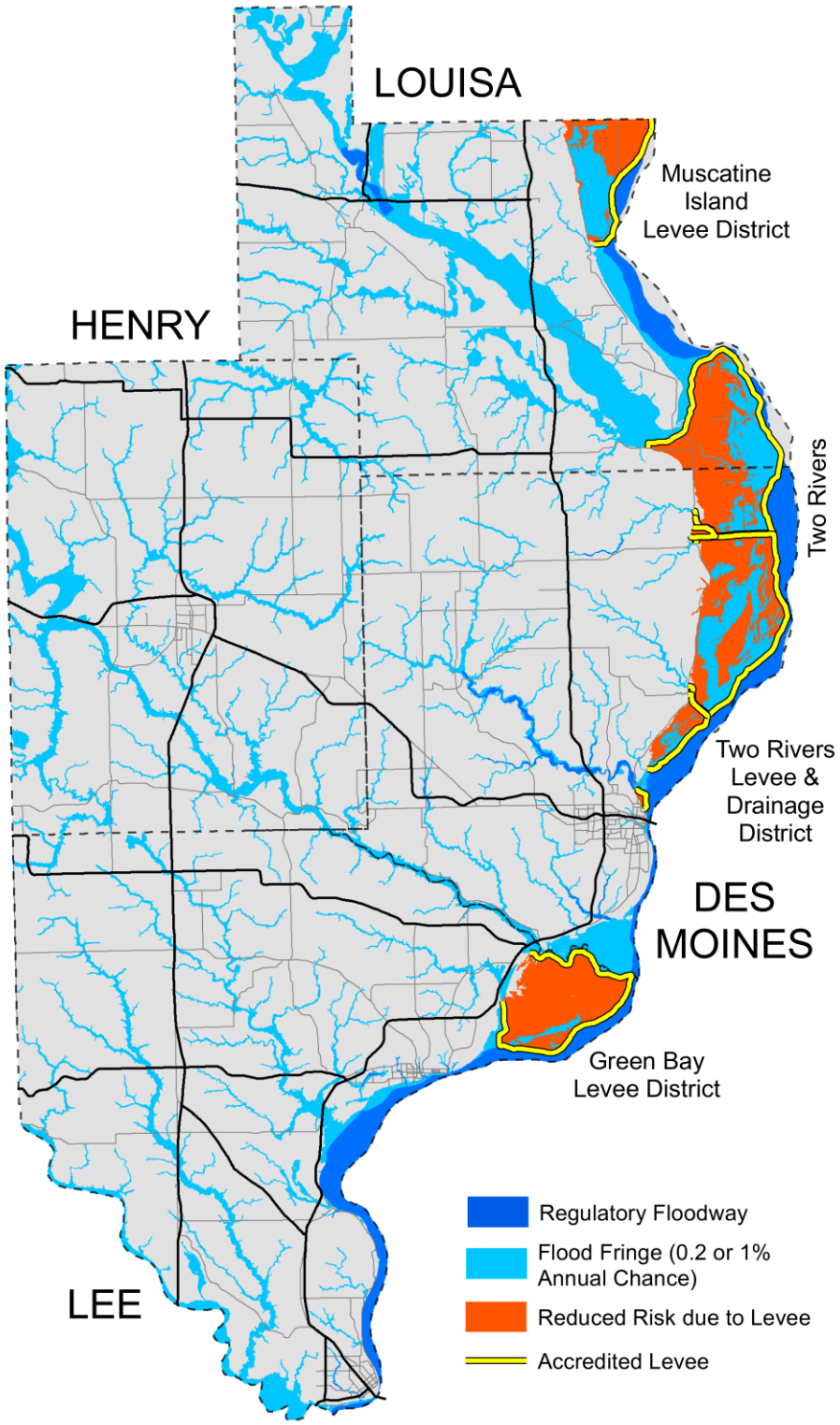
Each of the region's four counties participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), through FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency). Prior to 2018, Henry County did not participate, and it first set of maps became effective in 2021.

Areas designated as a 'flood fringe' have a 0.2 or 1% annual chance of experiencing flooding. Some of these along the Mississippi River are shown as having a 'reduced risk', due to the presence of an accredited levee. The Regulatory Floodway encompasses active stream channels and immediately adjacent areas, which should be kept unobstructed from development, to allow the natural discharge of floodwaters.

Most of these bottomland areas along the Mississippi River are protected by levees, along with accompanying drainage systems to regulate surface water flow. The three largest of these are maintained by organized levee districts – Green Bay, Two Rivers, and Muscatine Island.



River flooding at Fort Madison, 2018



Transportation projects within a mapped floodplain will require a floodplain development permit, in addition to other applicable environmental permits. This is especially critical when a new road or rail alignment will be established, as the surface must be elevated about the 100-year flood elevation. Across the river in Illinois, this is one of several factors that has delayed construction of a 4-lane upgrade for Highway 34, as the levees protecting the bottomland have not been fully re-accredited, following the 2008 flood. As such, fill must be utilized to raise the roadbed above the natural elevation of the surrounding landscape.

SECURITY MEASURES AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Protecting the transportation network from natural disasters and human-caused threats is always a matter of concern for federal, state, and local governments. Of all forms of infrastructure that are impacted by these incidents, transportation has an especially broad impact, as it serves as the means in which people to evacuate to safety from the affected area. It is also used for emergency transport (i.e. ambulances).

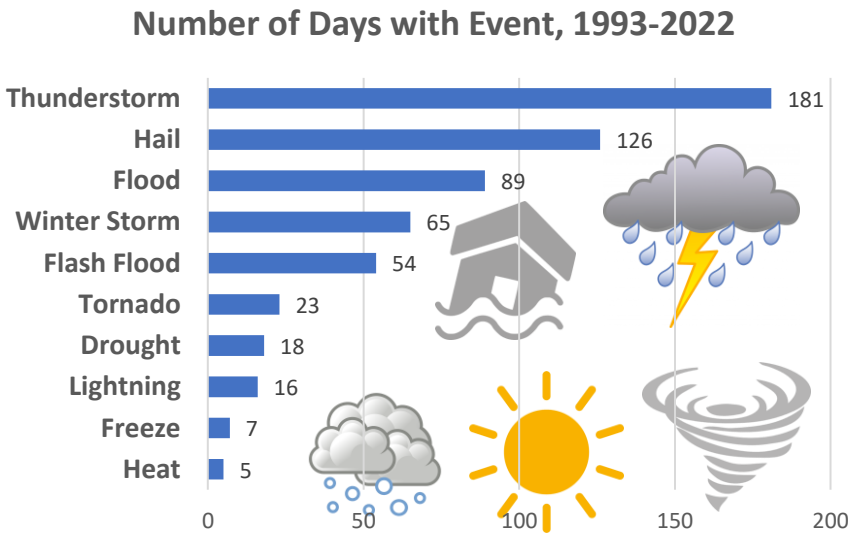




Images of clogged freeways in hurricane-prone areas may seem like a challenge far removed from the rural Midwest, but a number of other threats are likely to present themselves, some being far more prevalent than others, depending on the season or physical location.

Natural Disasters in Southeast Iowa

The chart at right highlights the occurrence of various weather events over the 30 year period from 1993 to 2023. It represents the number of days in which an event of each type was recorded somewhere in the region. This historical data comes from the *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA),* through its *National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI)*. Typical of the Midwestern US, the most common damaging storm events in Southeast Iowa are wind from severe thunderstorms, hail, floods, winter storms, and tornadoes. Naturally, the individual events over that period vary in terms of severity and amount of damage caused.



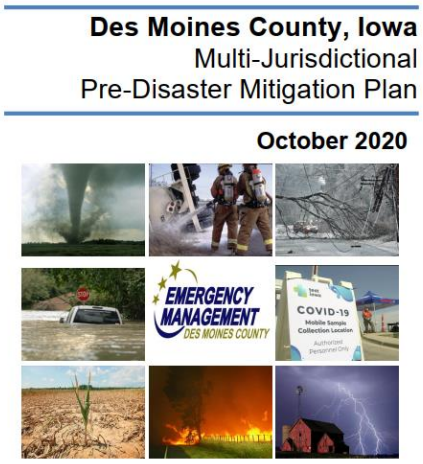


Tornado near Salem, May 2017 *(photo: Jesse Risley)*



Highway 92 during 2008 flood in Columbus Junction

Planning and Monitoring Efforts



At the local level, each county has an Emergency Management Agency (EMA) to oversee emergency management activities. These revolve around four general concepts: preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. The latter refers to efforts taken to reduce or eliminate future risk from hazards.

One important mitigation activity is the development of a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), which outlines the potential for natural and manmade disasters, along with the potential impact that these may have. These plans must be routinely updated, and SEIRPC has assisted in the preparation of the most recent HMPs for three of the region's four counties.



Dynamic message signs used for education and notification

At the state level, a number of intelligent transportation systems (ITS) activities are available to assist the public during emergency events. This includes the 511 Traveler Information System, which provides real-time information on roadway travel conditions and construction activity. The Iowa DOT also utilizes dynamic message signs (DMS), large overhead signs for communicating information on weather, detours, and promotion of safe driving practices.

At the federal level, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) operates a multifaceted program called *Emergency Transportation Operations (ETO)*, which addresses events through different approaches based on their probability of occurrence, the severity of impact, and the complexity of response necessary.

Within ETO, high probability-low severity events are addressed through the *Traffic Incident Management (TIM)* program. TIM is a planned and coordinated process to detect, respond to, and clear traffic incidents, so that traffic flow may be restored as safely and quickly as possible.


Serious crash on Highway 61 in Lee County, 2018

In contrast, low probability-high impact events are covered through the *Disaster/ETO program*, in which FHWA works with local, state, and federal officials to handle the coordination of traffic movement. Hurricane evacuation falls into this category, in which local governments need a greater level of state and federal support.

Another federal program, this time overseen by the Department of Homeland Security, is the *National Response Framework (NRF)*. Established in 2008, it enables all response partners to prepare for and provide a unified response to disasters and emergencies. NRF provides the structure for a national incident management policy, while the *National Incident Management System (NIMS)* offers a template for managing individual incidents. It involves scalable concepts, terminology, and organizational processes for addressing all types of hazards.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES IDENTIFY AND OUTLINE A SET OF

STRENGTHS

CONTINUING

CHALLENGES

AND FUTURE

PRIORITIES

FOR THE SOUTHEAST IOWA REGION.


STARRS CAVE, DES MOINES COUNTY

THESE ARE EACH SPLIT INTO THREE GENERAL CATEGORIES:

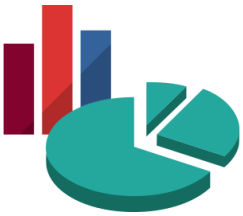
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

A LIST OF COMMONLY ENCOUNTERED OBSERVATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC SURVEY AND STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS IS LISTED. IN SOME CASES, INCONSISTENCIES ARE APPARENT, REFLECTING THE DIFFERING OF PERSPECTIVES AND OPINIONS OF INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS.





THEN, THERE IS A LIST OF DATA FINDINGS FROM EARLIER IN THIS PLAN, SUMMARIZED AS THEY PERTAIN TO REGIONAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.

THIS INFORMATION WAS USED TO IDENTIFY REGIONAL PRIORITOES AND WAS THE GUIDE FOR KEY STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS THAT COMPRISE THE ACTION PLAN.

WHAT ARE OUR STRENGTHS?



The people say:

"It's the Lifestyle!"

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Survey respondents like the people they encounter in daily life. They love the SE Iowa environment, rivers and parks. Clean communities and good schools make SE Iowa a great place to raise kids.

- Friendly people, good neighbors
- Small town feel with lots of amenities and things to do
- The beauty of the rivers, small town community, less traffic
- Educational Opportunities
- Historic, small-town atmosphere
- Size of downtown area
- Nature opportunities Crapo, Dankwardt Park, Geode, River access points
- Small town life with nearby cities
- Great place to live and raise a family
- Opportunity to participate in local government
- Outdoor recreational activities
- Areas to hunt and fish
- More educational and career opportunities for students due to collaboration of schools and community resources.
- Arts opportunities continue to expand and improve in Southeast Iowa.

TRANSPORTATION

Respondents say that life is convenient, especially the lack of traffic, easy commutes and access to bigger cities by Highway, Rail or Air.

- Short commute time; easy to get around to everything
- Proximity to many large metro areas in all directions
- Mississippi River is a major freight asset
- Good highway conditions
- SEIBUS and BUS – local and regional transit available
- Growing trails network
- Highways make it easy to ship goods into and out of region
- Multiple barge facilities and locks and dams support river transportation
- Available rail infrastructure for shipping goods
- Several short line rail services to support local businesses
- Air travel and Amtrak available
- Completion of new roadway, curbing, lighting on main thoroughfare through FM

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

They like the small town feel of our communities with proximity to goods and services in a friendly business environment.

- The Riverfront attracts tourists
- Good business climate for small local businesses
- Downtown revitalization
- Active downtown, not a lot of traffic, small town feel
- Mid west culture and work ethic
- Cost of living is low
- Regional draw for retail shopping
- Good job opportunities
- Businesses incentives available for new industry
- Opportunities for workforce training at local community colleges
- Communities are working towards retaining and attracting businesses and jobs
- Downtown warehouse redevelopment to multiuse facilities

"Small town feeling with big city events. The area is beautiful. Wonderful change of seasons"
"It's a safe, affordable community that isn't too far from anything we want to do."

WHAT ARE OUR STRENGTHS?

The DATA says:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Significant investments have recently been made in Downtown upper story housing and neighborhood rehab throughout the region.
- SEIRPC secured over $8.5 million for housing projects between 2018 and 2022.
- Nearly 3/4 of the region's households have access to high-speed broadband service.
- SCC has grown enrollment and has made substantial investments in new programs and facility upgrades, with a strong emphasis on workforce training.
- In addition to those within the region itself, there are numerous institutions of higher learning are within 50 miles of the region.
- Most of the region's residents have convenient local access to quality clinical care services.

TRANSPORTATION

- Southeast Iowa is well served by a network of modern four-lane highways, both internally and externally.
- More through traffic is utilizing the Avenue of the Saints and Highway 34, which can expand the region's travel oriented economy.
- There is a diverse range of transportation options available, including auto, rail, barge, air, bike/pedestrian, and transit.
- Traffic congestion is not a significant issue for the region.
- Overall, Southeast Iowa's bridges are in better condition than those of the State as a whole.
- Amtrak and transit ridership rates have remained steady.
- After a recent slump, enplanements at the Southeast Iowa Regional Airport have rebounded, and since remained steady.
- A substantial amount of new trails and on-road bike facilities have been established in recent years.
- Local Road Safety Plans have been developed for all four of the region's counties.
- Several local advocacy groups are active in promoting trail construction, highway upgrades, and other transportation improvements.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The region's unemployment rate has decreased proportionally to the Statewide rate over the past 10 years and at or near an all time low.
- More people commute into Southeast Iowa for work, than leave for employment in another region.
- The average commute time is comparatively low, which enables individual communities to benefit from job growth in other towns in the region.
- Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) assistance from SEIRPC helped create and retain over 49 jobs in Fiscal Year 2021
- The region's population loss is not unique, as it is largely consistent with other rural regions of Iowa.
- Regional retail sales and tourism expenditures have been steadily increasing over time.
- The region's population is becoming more diverse, with immigrant and refugee groups helping to expand the local talent pool.



WHAT ARE OUR CHALLENGES?



The PEOPLE say:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A common response to this question and others was a need for cleanup of dilapidated homes, buildings and neighborhoods. Crime, drug abuse, poverty, homelessness and a need for mental health care were named as problems for SE Iowa.

- Lack of affordable housing
- Crime, Drugs
- Not enough low cost or free family activities
- City is not proactive in making changes for the better
- Buildings or structures fall into complete disrepair
- Physical condition of housing stock is very poor
- Lack of forward thinking by community leaders and other negative people
- We need better access to mental health care
- The heart of the residential neighborhoods are in rough shape
- Improve student safety in local schools
- Lack of collaborative efforts to effectively address substance abuse, mental health issues plaguing the area
- Squatters in abandoned homes

TRANSPORTATION

In addition to concerns about road and street repairs, a need for transportation alternatives were frequently mentioned, such as more public transportation, bike safety and trail connectivity.

- Road systems are in dire need of repair and/or replacement
- The streets and sidewalks are in terrible shape.
- Better strategy for road work - the community must pay to repair the same roads every year
- Not enough safe biking areas
- Bike trails need to have better connectivity in towns and between towns and recreational destinations
- Expanded Bus routes and schedules
- More public transportation
- Insufficient bike and hiking trails
- Bridges need better maintenance
- Antiquated Mississippi River Rail Bridge
- Antiquated lock and dam system
- Make the city a more multimodal community by making everywhere more walkable; build streets designed for people

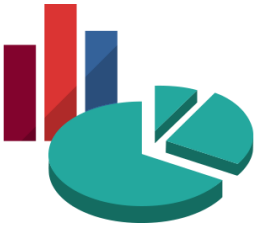
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

After top comments about the need for more restaurants and entertainment, people say that high quality employment opportunities and career training are necessary to attract and retain a local workforce.

- Lack of restaurant variety
- Need more entertainment options Event center, sports
- Need more low-cost or free activities for families
- Limited employment opportunities for young people
- Wages are insufficient to support homeownership, pay for daycare and provide reliable transportation to work
- Mid range shopping is limited
- People who are working at our schools and social workers are overworked. We need more people in those jobs
- Lack of quality, high paying jobs
- Expand medical services for maternity and mental health
- Need a facility for mentally disabled and homeless
- Pedestrians need safe access to Business destinations on busy streets

"Homelessness - I never knew it was so bad!"
"Dilapidated, abandoned houses and businesses pollute the landscape."
"Expand bus services for the workforce"

WHAT ARE OUR CHALLENGES?



The DATA says:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- More than 1/3 of the region's housing stock is at least 80 years old, while less than 1/5 is fewer than 30 years old.
- The region's average home value is significantly lower the State average.
- Housing growth in unincorporated areas is outpacing growth in municipalities, which impacts the municipal tax base.
- The consolidated tax rates of the region's larger cities are much higher than the State average.
- Specific areas of the region (mostly rural) still have little to no access to high-speed broadband service.
- Certain communities such as Columbus Junction have a high percentage of low English proficiency.
- Southeast Iowa Counties fare poorly on the County Health Rankings for the State of Iowa.
- **Half of the region's public-school students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.**
- More than 1/3 of the region's families with children are headed by a single parent.
- Within the State of Iowa, the region has a comparatively high crime rate.
- Access to mental health services is a challenge, particularly following the 2015 closure of the Mount Pleasant Mental Health Institute.
- Regional school enrollments are decreasing (following population declines) and may impact SCC enrollment, in addition to the enrollment cliff.

TRANSPORTATION

- In the region's cities, many lower-traffic local roads are in very poor condition.
- The timeframe for upgrading Highway 34 to four lanes in neighboring Illinois is still unclear
- While funding is allocated, gaps remain in upgrading Highway 61 to four lanes throughout the region.
- Despite multiple options available, most freight movement in Southeast Iowa is accounted for by trucks.
- Traveling from one community to another or within communities by walking and biking is a challenge, as there are few dedicated spaces for pedestrian transportation.
- The plentiful presence of wetlands, floodplains, and archaeological/historical sites creates regulatory challenges for transportation and economic development projects.
- The region is home to several of the most crash-prone intersections in the State.
- Two of the three locks on the Mississippi River are over 20 years past their design life and tend to cause significant delays in barge movement.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The population of Southeast Iowa is gradually shrinking.
- The region is experiencing an aging population/workforce, with a lower share of younger residents than the historic norm.
- A disproportionately high share of the region's workers are employed in a 'manufacturing' field.
- A disproportionately small share of the region's workers are employed in high-tech or white-collar occupations.
- Southeast Iowa has lower average wages and annual income than the State of Iowa as a whole.
- Compared to the State, Southeast Iowa has a significantly smaller share of residents with advanced degrees.
- The recent trend of increased retail sales and tourist expenditures may be difficult to maintain, post COVID-19.
- All the four counties in Southeast Iowa have a moderate relative capacity for economic innovation, a reduction from the previous CEDS.

WHAT ARE OUR PRIORITIES?

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Improve communications infrastructure with broadband/ fiber, cellular 4g/ 5g capabilities, wireless hot spots
- Continue affordable housing programs, incentivize new single-family construction, rehabilitate older homes in neighborhoods--particularly rentals, and continue upper story housing development in downtown areas
- Promote new housing development of all kinds – primarily infill development in older neighborhoods
- Reduce crime levels
- Enforce ordinances and nuisance regulations to improve curb appeal and appearance within communities
- Water and sewer maintenance, replacement, and expansion to improve existing infrastructure and encourage future growth
- Improve and enhance existing recreational facilities (parks and trails), develop more indoor recreation spaces to keep up with demand
- Communities need to provide 'college town' amenities to bring local young people back after college
- Cooperation between cities and school districts
- Maintain population and workforce
- Maintain school and college enrollments

TRANSPORTATION

- Four lane highways – Highway 61 North and Highway 34 East
- Highway and local road maintenance
- Bridge maintenance and replacement
- Lobby for more money for bridge replacement and road maintenance grants
- Utilize the Mississippi River for tourism and recreational services
- Maintain Amtrak services and improve depots
- Mississippi River bridges provide connections to adjacent states
- On-demand ride services
- Uber and taxi services with a reliable time schedule and technology assistance
- Need more ADA compliant vehicles that are patient-friendly
- Employee busing system for smaller communities
- Secure additional funding for trail connectivity
- Develop a regionally-connected trails system connecting communities and regional amenities, such as Big Hollow and Lake Geode
- Work with communities to create local trail systems connecting residential areas with amenities and employment
- Assist with local communities in applying for transportation funding

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Job creation and retention including business attraction, expansion, entrepreneurship, and regional marketing to attract employees
- Create vibrant downtowns and communities where young people want to live
- Create similar local incentives throughout the region
- Train workforce to fill current openings and improve skills
- Attract sustainable businesses
- Encourage all types of businesses including commercial, office, manufacturing, technology, etc.
- Focus on expanding the high-skilled manufacturing workforce
- Improve communication and collaboration between different agencies/organizations in the community
- Get SCC involved in community and economic development initiatives – direct cooperation with municipal entities (includes things like staffing for SCC programs, daycare, transportation options)
- Asset mapping at the regional level to highlight what is most important
- Focus on housing, recreation and other amenities (i.e. daycare) – these have a 'domino effect' on economic development
- Strengthen technical education through collaboration between different school districts in the region
- Downtown revitalization efforts and restoring old commercial buildings
- Develop reuse strategy for closed public facilities including Iowa Wesleyan campus and Iowa State Penitentiary

The top priority named by the public was Housing: Affordable Housing, Senior Housing, Housing for Homeless and Dilapidated Housing.

Career education, job specific training for the workforce together with public transportation, daycare and pre-school are all seen as needed for economic stability in SE Iowa.

WHAT ARE OUR PRIORITIES?

The previous page highlights several regional priorities based on public input and analysis of regional data trends. However, there are a few specific areas that are clearly the top priorities above all other that should be the primary focus regionally over the next 5 to 10 years, with all of them having a connection with each other. Icons shown next to the priorities below will be shown next to goals and action items on the following pages to highlight specific strategies that will be important to implementing these regional priorities.



Housing

Housing has been a high priority regionally for several years due to several factors including smaller household sizes, high number of older homes regionally, need to diversify the price of housing (high end vs. affordable), and the type of housing (rental vs. owner, apartments vs. single family vs. condo). Much progress has been made in 5 to 10 years, but more work needs to be done to offer all types of housing needed to support the community, while also playing a role in providing safe and attractive neighborhoods.



Safe and Attractive Communities

Through the data and public input, it was clear that the overall condition of our neighborhoods and associated neighborhood problems that can persist (crime, poor appearance, dilapidated infrastructure, lack of maintenance, lack of pride) was a priority. We need to focus on projects regionally that will invest in our neighborhoods (housing, infrastructure) and create policies (nuisance) that require conditions to keep neighborhoods attractive, while investing in programs that will keep communities safe.



Population Stability

Regional population has been on a steady decline since 1980 due to a variety of factors including large loss of manufacturing jobs, out migration, and negative natural change (deaths outpacing births). To be a successful region in the future, efforts must be made to stabilize the population with efforts made to increase migration and immigration, while exploring ways to increase the regional birth rate in the face of an aging population.



Parks, Recreation, and Tourism

As an effort to stabilize or grow as a region, a major component of this is to have quality amenities for those living in Southeast Iowa. While we cannot offer all that is available in larger urban areas, we must invest in existing parks, recreation, and other facilities to provide a high level of service, while identifying new opportunities to provide services or even bring people from outside of Southeast Iowa to the region as a tourist destination.



Quality Jobs

Unemployment rates in Southeast Iowa have historically been higher than the state average, while in recent years been closer. Wages have also been lower than state or national averages. A key part to moving the regional forward on all of the other priorities listed above is to increase not just the number of jobs, but quality jobs that have good wages and benefits that allow residents to support regional communities and business.



growing forward 3

CREATING OUR FUTURE

Comments received on each of these three key areas of the plan: community development, economic development, and transportation, are all related back to one theme that represents the vision for the future of the Great River Region.

Your regional vision

Southeast Iowa will be a growing region with safe and attractive communities offering plentiful economic, cultural, and recreational amenities that provide residents with opportunities to thrive.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Planning and Code Enforcement
- Infrastructure Maintenance
- Community Amenities
- Livable Communities
- Housing Investment
- Sustainability

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Workforce Development
- Workforce Recruitment
- Regional Marketing
- Local Cooperation
- Quality Education
- Investment
- Tourism

TRANSPORTATION

- System Preservation
- Funding Opportunity
- Freight Movement
- Mode Choice
- Connectivity
- Safety



Key strategies and action items have been identified for each of the focus areas, to help us fulfill the region's vision for the future. These strategies and action items were determined based on regional data trends, and from public comments listed in the strengths, weaknesses, and priorities. Action items are split into three categories, based on their timeline. The first two categories are generally comprised of more targeted objectives that can be fully accomplished over a short period (***5 YEARS OR LESS*** and ***6 YEARS OR MORE***). The third (***ONGOING***) includes those that, by their very nature, must be continually implemented in order to be effective.

Transportation

Strategy A: Maintain, improve, and expand the regional transportation system for the efficient movement of people, goods, and services.

5 Years or Less.

- **(A1)** Work closely with Iowa DOT and the Highway 61 Coalition to complete the 4-lane upgrade of US Highway 61 from Burlington to Muscatine; seek improvements for the Roosevelt Avenue segment through Burlington (pavement condition, safety, pedestrian) and from south of Keokuk into Missouri.
- **(A2)** Work closely with Highway 34 Coalition, state/federal legislators, and Illinois DOT to upgrade US Highway 34 to four lanes from Burlington to Monmouth
- **(A3)** Work with Keokuk and Fort Madison to identify ways to upgrade, improve, or replace the rail bridges over the Mississippi River.

6 Years or More.

- **(A4)** Facilitate studies of supplemental highway corridors that would be impacted by the 4-lane upgrade of Highway 61 (State Highways 92 and 78 in Louisa County, US Highway 218 diagonal portion in Lee County)
- **(A5)** Coordinate with local communities and private industries, to establish or update formal regional truck routes for the routine shipment of goods
- **(A6)** Form a regional committee and develop a regional freight plan for rail, barge, roadway and intermodal improvements that are needed to assist existing businesses and support future business investment.

Ongoing.

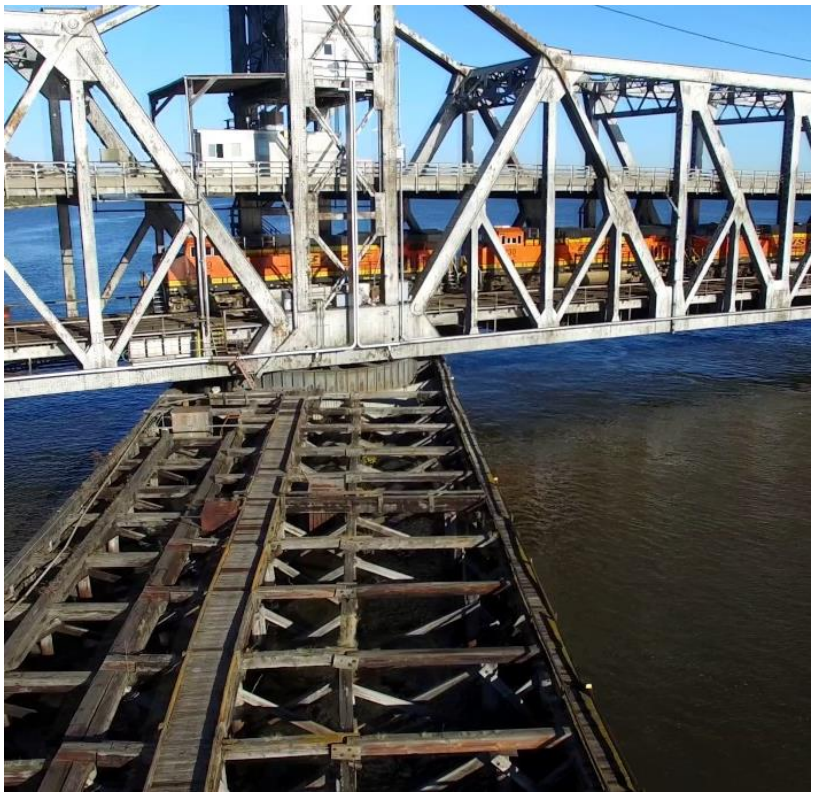
- **(A7)** Utilize the region's existing assets and connections (rail, barge, and intermodal) to reduce the share of regional freight movement that occurs by truck alone.
- **(A8)** Work with regional partners, including, but not limited to the Southeast Iowa Regional Economic Development and Port Authority, to develop multi-modal freight facilities.

SIREPA
SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY

- **(A9)** Meet with state legislators, federal legislators, Army Corps of Engineers, etc. to encourage and plan for improvements to the lock & dam system.

Transportation

Strategy B: Improve existing transportation infrastructure and ensure adequate maintenance of the transportation system.



5 Years or Less.

- **(B1)** Work with regional partners to incorporate storm water best management practices into transportation projects, including curb and gutter rehab or installation, storm sewers installation, strategic placement of bioswales/rain gardens, and retention ponds.
- **(B2)** Facilitate collaboration between municipal and county governments, for projects that would cross jurisdictional boundaries and mutually benefit each.

Ongoing.

- **(B3)** Work with local governments and other entities to pursue eligible federal, state, local, and private funding sources for transportation projects.
- **(B4)** Educate regional partners on current best practices for transportation maintenance, including cost-saving opportunities and the incorporation of elements that make their projects better candidates for grant funding.
- **(B5) Work with regional partners to facilitate the replacement of functionally obsolete or structurally deficient bridges, and secure additional funding for these projects**
- **(B6)** Coordinate needed transportation and utility improvements at the local level, to yield greater cost savings on construction work.
- **(B7)** Encourage regional partners to preserve, replace, or upgrade existing infrastructure before building new – and likely redundant and unnecessary – transportation infrastructure.
- **(B8)** Prioritize the functionality of individual roads within the regional network, so that regional highways are enhanced for more efficient movement between places, while the negative impacts of city arterial and collector streets are minimized through traffic calming measures, streetscape enhancements, and greater speed enforcement.

Transportation

Strategy C: Develop a safe transportation system for users of all modes.

5 Years or Less.

- **(C1)** Assist in the implementation of each county's Local Road Safety Plan and identify funding opportunities for recommended projects.
- **(C2)** Promote the use of intersection safety improvements, including roundabouts, 4 to 3 lane conversions, and separated turn lanes, wherever applicable.
- **(C3)** Develop a regional Safe Streets 4 All planning document that cover the region's city streets, evaluate county road Safe Streets 4 All plan and work on implementing identified projects/strategies regionally.

Ongoing.

- **(C4)** Work with regional partners and Iowa DOT to implement safety improvements in locations where improvements are most needed, including pedestrian and bicycle improvements, reducing roadway width, or the addition of lighting, signage, colored pavement, or speed control devices.
- **(C5)** Identify and secure funding sources to implement traffic safety projects.
- **(C6)** Work with local entities whenever a major new public facility is proposed, such as a school or medical clinic, to ensure that pedestrian needs are adequately considered.





Strategy D: Increase public awareness of transportation issues/funding in the region and actively seek public involvement when implementing solutions.

Ongoing.

- **(D1)** Gather direct data and feedback that can be used to support transportation improvements, including traffic and trail counts, and input from targeted groups such as large employers and transit users.
- **(D2)** Hold additional public information meetings and workshops when projects are in the early development stage, to promote increased awareness and improved perceptions.
- **(D3)** Work to coordinate and streamline the efforts of local biking and trails organizations, to facilitate projects with a significant cross-jurisdictional impact.
- **(D4)** Use various outlets, including social media and print publications, to inform the public when transportation improvement projects are implemented, such as new trail segments, and the repair of roads segments and bridges.
- **(D5)** Emphasize the direct economic and quality of life benefits that the average Southeast Iowa resident will obtain from transportation investments, illustrating why they are worthy of their personal investment.

Transportation

Strategy E: Offer multiple transportation choices that are safe, accessible, connected, and convenient, to make Southeast Iowa a better place to live, work, travel, and operate a business.

5 Years or Less.

- **(E1)** Complete the Flint River Trail as an off-road trail route, as a model for future long-distance regional trail projects.
- **(E3)** Coordinate the development of additional, strategically located park-and-ride facilities in Southeast Iowa, to encourage carpooling for long distance commuters.
- **(E5)** Work with state and federal legislators to keep Amtrak services at the three stations in Southeast Iowa and make improvements to passenger platforms/depots.

6 Years or More.

- **(E6)** Complete designation and construction of Mississippi River Trail through the entire region.
- **(E7)** Complete a regional trail study connecting communities and parks throughout the region with destinations such as Big Hollow Lake or Lake Geode State Park and work on implementation of regional trails plan.
- **(E4)** Work with companies such as Uber and Lyft to make ride-sharing services available in the region to offer on demand transportation services.

Ongoing.

- **(E8)** Work with regional partners to create and implement local trails plans, as well as coordinate those between neighboring jurisdictions.
- **(E9)** Work to keep and expand commercial air service at Southeast Iowa Regional Airport.
- **(E10)** Enhance the aesthetics of, and amenities offered, at rail, air, and bus facilities, so that these can serve as memorable, welcoming gateways to the community, just as highway entrances already do.
- **(E11)** Work to improve the coordination of regional transit services to increase the efficiency of each system and better serve the day-to-day transportation needs of area residents.
- **(E2)** Educate regional partners and the general public on transportation best practices that enhance quality of life, such as Complete Streets, traffic calming, non-vehicular greenways, and railroad quiet zones.





Community Development



Strategy F: Improve the region's quality of life to attract and retain residents.

5 Years or Less.

- **(F1)** Enhance the supply and quality of child-friendly recreational amenities, to attract families in the region.
- **(F2)** Promote coordinated efforts between school districts and community parks departments to enhance the availability and quality of recreational facilities that serve regional communities.
- **(F3)** Facilitate coordination between law enforcement, social service organizations, neighborhood groups, and public health entities to reduce crime by addressing the root socioeconomic causes.
- **(F4)** Work with regional partners to create and implement local trails and park plans.
- **(F5)** Assist with the development new county public health facilities to enhance services and to improve County Health Rankings.

Ongoing.

- **(F6)** Work with local partners to plan and secure funding for enhanced recreational amenities in the region, such as fully functional trails systems, parks, water recreation, natural areas, and indoor sports facilities.
- **(F7)** Assist in the efforts of public health organizations and initiatives in the region (i.e. Healthy Henry County Communities), to improve the region's performance in the County Health Rankings.
- **(F8)** Assist economic development groups and real estate professionals in efforts to recruit targeted commercial development in areas of high local demand, such as restaurants, grocery stores, and retail.
- **(F9)** Work to expand cultural enrichment opportunities, such as arts programs, entertainment facilities, and historic preservation and interpretation.
- **(F10)** Work with communities to implement and enforce city codes and nuisance ordinances.

Strategy G: Improve regional utility and broadband infrastructure for current and future needs.

5 Years or Less.

- **(G1)** Encourage efforts to minimize the impact of drainage on sewer systems, such as regulations or incentives to reduce impervious surfaces, and more widespread use of stormwater best management practices such as permeable pavers, bioswales, and rain barrels.

6 Years or More.

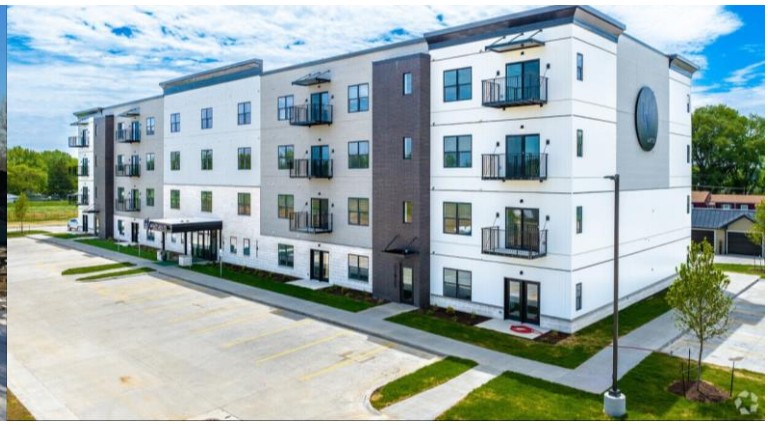
- **(G2)** Periodically update and distribute a regional utility rate analysis.
- **(G3)** Encourage GIS mapping of all regional utilities, including all relevant attributes such as sewer and water main width and electrical voltage capacity.

Ongoing.

- **(G4)** Assist in planning for water and sewer projects, and secure funding for them through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), the State Revolving Fund (SRF), and other sources such as the USDA.
- **(G5)** Identify resources, partnerships, and other opportunities to quickly and efficiently expand broadband access and reliable cell phone service throughout the region.

Community Development





Strategy H: Provide enough quality housing for all ages, household types, and income levels.

5 Years or Less.

- **(H1)** Incentivize infill housing development (including new construction and conversion of existing buildings), to take advantage of existing roads, sidewalks, and utility connections.
- **(H2)** Encourage aggressive enforcement of rental housing and nuisance ordinances, to ensure that all rental properties are safe and clean for occupation, and do not foster criminal activity or contribute to a sense of visual and economic blight in neighborhoods or cities.
- **(H3)** Work directly with large employers to identify strategies for pursuing and coordinating workforce housing development.
- **(H4)** Develop policies and incentives that encourage housing construction within incorporated municipalities to take advantage of existing infrastructure and nearby services, jobs and schools.
- **(H5)** Push for developing statewide land bank legislation and establish a regional land bank to stabilize, rehabilitate and redevelop properties.

Ongoing.

- **(H6)** Assist local governments and private developers with funding incentives for new home construction, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Tax Abatements, Workforce Housing Tax Credits, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, grants, loans and other sources.
- **(H7)** Utilize Great River Housing, Inc. and Southeast Iowa Housing, Inc. to assist low to moderate income residents with funding assistance for home rehabilitation, new home construction, and down payment assistance.
- **(H8)** Pursue extensive development of housing types that are favorable to young professionals and baby boomers in the 'empty nester' life stage, including townhomes, condominiums, and Downtown upper-story units.
- **(H9)** Assist communities in prioritizing specific types of housing projects, through studies and assessments that identify the biggest housing needs in each community, and assisting in attraction of developers for housing projects..





Community Development

Strategy I: Work with regional partners to coordinate planning efforts, implement plan priorities, and communicate accomplishments and successes.

5 Years or Less.

- **(I1)** Use social media, newsletters, and other forms of communication to provide regional awareness of local plans currently being developed.
- **(I2)** Engage in regular communication with local civic groups, fraternal organizations, and young professionals groups, to spread awareness of planning initiatives and projects.
- **(I3)** Coordinate with local institutions of higher learning whenever possible, to facilitate local and regional planning efforts.

5 Years or Less.

- **(I4)** Actively encourage the involvement of local young people – including high school and college students – in planning efforts and community improvement projects.
- **(I5)** Update all county multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

6 Years or More.

- **(I6)** Create a regional clearinghouse for planning documents that is accessible to the general public.

Ongoing.

- **(I7)** Encourage communities to regularly prepare and update comprehensive plans, emphasizing the importance as a frequent criterion for evaluating grant applications.
- **(I8)** Provide resources for regional partners on land use and zoning policies and best practices.
- **(I9)** Actively track the progress of plan implementation and encourage periodic reevaluation to maximize the potential positive impact.

Economic Development

Strategy J: To assist the tourism industry by enhancing and/or expanding recreation/tourism destinations and encouraging people to visit, live, and work in Southeast Iowa.

5 Years or Less.

- **(J1)** Work with regional governments, businesses, and non-profits to grow regional recreation and tourism destinations. (Examples: Fort Madison Marina, Mount Pleasant Lee Town Park, Capitol Theater, Dankwardt Park Playground, Big Hollow Recreation Area, Flint River Trail).
- **(J2)** Work with regional governments to coordinate and streamline the efforts of local parks, biking and trails organizations, to facilitate projects with a significant tourism impact.

5 Years or Less.

- **(J3)** Work with regional partners to complete hotel/motel supply, need, and demand studies to better understand the need for additional occupancy for overnight visits.

Ongoing

- **(J4)** Work with local partners to secure funding for enhanced recreational and tourism amenities in the region, such as fully functional trails systems, parks, water recreation, natural areas, theaters, indoor sports facilities, museums, and other community attractions.

Economic Development

Strategy K: Increase regional cooperation in economic development through mutual marketing, fundraising and policy efforts.

5 Years or Less.

- **(K1)** Work with the Southeast Iowa Regional and Economic Port Authority (SIREPA), and utilize its unique status and powers to facilitate catalytic development projects in Lee County.
- **(K2)** Ensure that several additional Southeast Iowa development sites are designated as 'shovel ready' through the IEDA and BNSF Certified Site programs.
- **(K3)** Continue to provide support and assistance for the cooperative marketing agreement between Des Moines, Henry, and Lee Counties.

Ongoing.

- **(K4)** Improve regional marketing efforts through social media, web, print and trade show formats.
- **(K5)** Assist in marketing and development preparation efforts for targeted commercial/industrial development sites of regional significance.
- **(K6)** Prioritize marketing and development of commercial/industrial sites along existing roads and utility lines, to avoid costly and unnecessary infrastructure extensions.



Strategy L: Grow the regional economy through workforce attraction (domestic migration and immigration), workforce retention, and entrepreneurial development activities.

5 Years or Less.

- **(L1)** Encourage regular, recurring outreach to established local companies, to promote long-term job retention.
- **(L2)** Create entrepreneurial pitch, idea sharing, and/or assistance programs to encourage creation of small businesses.
- **(L3)** Pursue brownfield redevelopment opportunities that can serve as an economic catalyst for the community.
- **(L4)** Pursue the establishment of business co-lab/co-working spaces, construction co-lab spaces and incorporate these into downtown building rehabilitation efforts.
- **(L5)** Engage in targeted job recruitment efforts for specific groups, such as skilled immigrant workers and former regional residents/students.

6 Years or More.

- **(L6)** Pursue regional opportunities for cluster development, with compatible businesses in proximity (agglomeration economies).
- **(L7)** Evaluate regional programs that would assist regional companies in navigating immigration process for recruiting employees.
- **(L8)** Offer entrepreneurial assistance efforts to immigrant and refugee populations in the region.

Ongoing.

- **(L9)** Seek to diversify the regional economy and build capacity to attract future growth industries and emerging technology fields.
- **(L10)** Pursue funding to improve regional infrastructure, including transportation, sewer, water and broadband.
- **(L11)** Maintain and expand available regional loan funds.

Economic Development

Strategy M: Improve regional workforce skills, wages, and employment through education, training and communication.

5 Years or Less.

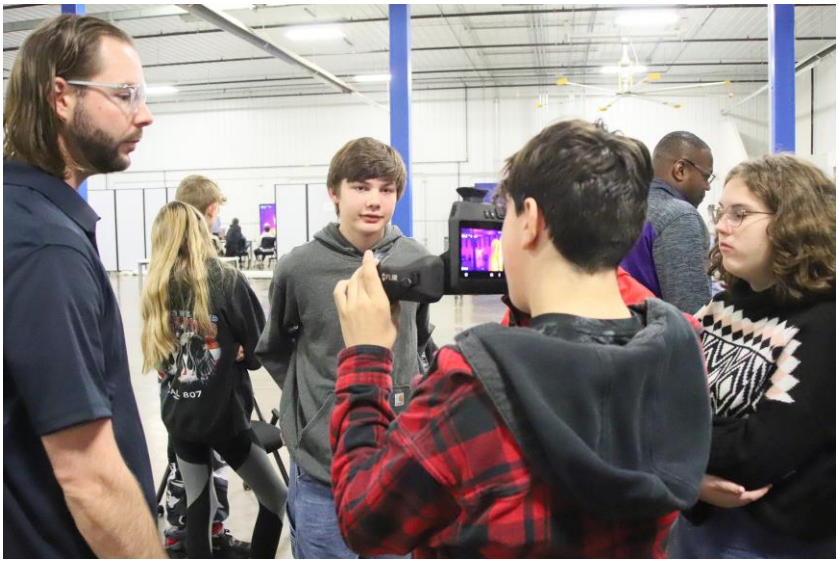
- **(M1)** Facilitate a means to more efficiently share educational/ training resources between neighboring school districts and community colleges.
- **(M2)** Seek additional opportunities for one-on-one training between students and professionals, such as apprenticeship and internship programs.
- **(M3)** Implement programs and incentives to keep the talent pool grounded within the region.

6 Years or More.

- **(M4)** Identify opportunities for local schools to implement technology training programs for students, such as computer programming and coding.

Ongoing.

- **(M5)** Increase communication and collaboration between schools, workforce developers and private business and industry, in joint workforce planning and development ventures.
- **(M6)** Work with area schools and colleges to increase the educational and skills attainment of the local workforce, to ensure compatibility with the demands of both existing industries and future prospects in additional sectors.



Strategy N: Make Southeast Iowa a more desirable place for young people to live and raise families.

5 Years or Less.

- **(N1)** Enhance community lifestyle amenities – recreation, shopping, social events, housing, and childcare services, that can attract higher-skilled workers from elsewhere, and retain local young people after college.
- **(N2)** Collect and distribute input from other rural regions and communities (in Iowa and elsewhere) that have attained success with attracting and retaining young professionals.

6 Years or More.

- **(N3)** Facilitate the development of renewable energy and high-tech businesses, to tap into the talent pool of college graduates in these emerging fields.

Ongoing.

- **(N4)** Continue to facilitate Downtown redevelopment efforts, including new business start-ups and upper-story housing, to make these areas more socially dynamic places to live, work, and play.
- **(N5)** Seek direct input from local young people, including high school and college students, about the specific amenities and job opportunities they desire to see in their community.
- **(N6)** Encourage young residents to become more involved in local government and school district activities, so they may have a greater influence on development decisions that affect future generations.

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS



To gauge how successful we are in reaching the regional vision, performance measures have been identified to understand the impact of implemented key strategies and action items. Measures listed on the following pages are those that are most practical to be able to collect data to support the vision and strategies identified within. However, not all of these are tracked on an annual basis. SEIRPC will work to create an annual "scorecard" with the most relevant data that is updated on an annual basis to track progress. After a 5-year period, a full progress report will be compiled with a more detailed overview of measures to give a complete look at how successful we have been at meeting the regional vision and priorities.

TRANSPORTATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES



Maintain, improve, and expand the regional transportation system for the efficient movement of people, goods, and services.

- Amount of freight movements by mode
- Truck traffic volumes
- Creation of regional freight plan
- Number of SIREPA meetings held
- Grant funding secured for regional freight projects

Improve existing transportation infrastructure and ensure adequate maintenance of the transportation system.

- Percentage of all bridges classified as in Good and Poor condition
- Percentage of roads with PCI rating of Fair, Good, or Excellent
- Grant funding secured for transportation system maintenance

Develop a safe transportation system for users of all modes.

- Number and rate of fatalities
- Number and rate of serious injuries
- Number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries
- Percentage of pavements of all Federally Classified roads in Poor condition
- Crash rates, including fatalities per VMT and serious injuries per VMT

Increase public awareness of transportation issues/funding in the region and actively seek public involvement when implementing solutions.

- Amount of grant funding secured for the region
- Number of education efforts and meetings held or attended on available transportation issues or funding opportunities

Offer multiple transportation choices that are safe, accessible, connected, and convenient to make Southeast Iowa a better place to live, work, travel, and operate a business.

- Miles of off-road trails/sidewalks and on road bicycle facilities
- Amount of funding secured for trails, transit, depots, airports, and rail
- Pedestrian counts along regional trails, sidewalks, and downtown areas
- Transit ridership, mileage, and hours
- Commercial air service enplanements
- Ridership at regional passenger rail depots
- Regional commuting patterns



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES



Work with regional partners to coordinate planning efforts, implement plan priorities, and communicate accomplishments and success.

- Number of comprehensive plan and other planning documents completed
- Number of efforts made to communication success and accomplishments of planning.

Provide enough quality housing for all ages, household types, and income levels.

- Age and value of housing
- Number of new housing starts
- Grant funds secured for housing projects
- Housing projects initiated by Great River Housing Trust Fund, Southeast Iowa Housing, Inc., and Keokuk Neighborhood Initiative or other community housing groups
- Regional Land Bank started

Improve the region's quality of life to attract and retain residents.

- County health rankings
- Amount of tourism expenditures and sales tax
- Grant funds secured for parks, trails, and recreation areas
- Crime rate
- Worker wage rates
- Household and family incomes
- Per Capita incomes

Improve regional utility and broadband infrastructure for current and future needs.

- Grant funds and local investments undertaken in the region for sewer, water, and broadband.
- Number of broadband services available

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES



Improve regional workforce skills workforce skills, wages, and employment through education, training, and communication.

- Educational attainment levels and graduation rates
- Worker wage rates
- Enrollment at regional schools and colleges
- Number of and enrollment in workforce training programs offered by schools, colleges, and apprenticeship programs

Grow the regional economy through workforce attraction (domestic migration and immigration), workforce retention, and entrepreneurial development activities.

- Businesses assisted by Small Business Development Center
- Evaluate number of RLF loans made and available capital base
- Number of jobs created and retained in the region
- Number of new business starts in the region
- Business plan competitions held in the region
- Unemployment rate
- Population change by age cohort
- Amount of private sector investment in region
- Evaluation of efforts to attract new people to the region

Increase regional cooperation in economic development through mutual marketing, fundraising, and policy efforts.

- Regional memorandum of understanding agreed to by regional economic development agencies
- Evaluation of regional marketing efforts completed
- Number of joint meetings held by regional economic development agencies

Make Southeast Iowa a more desirable place for young people to live and raise families.

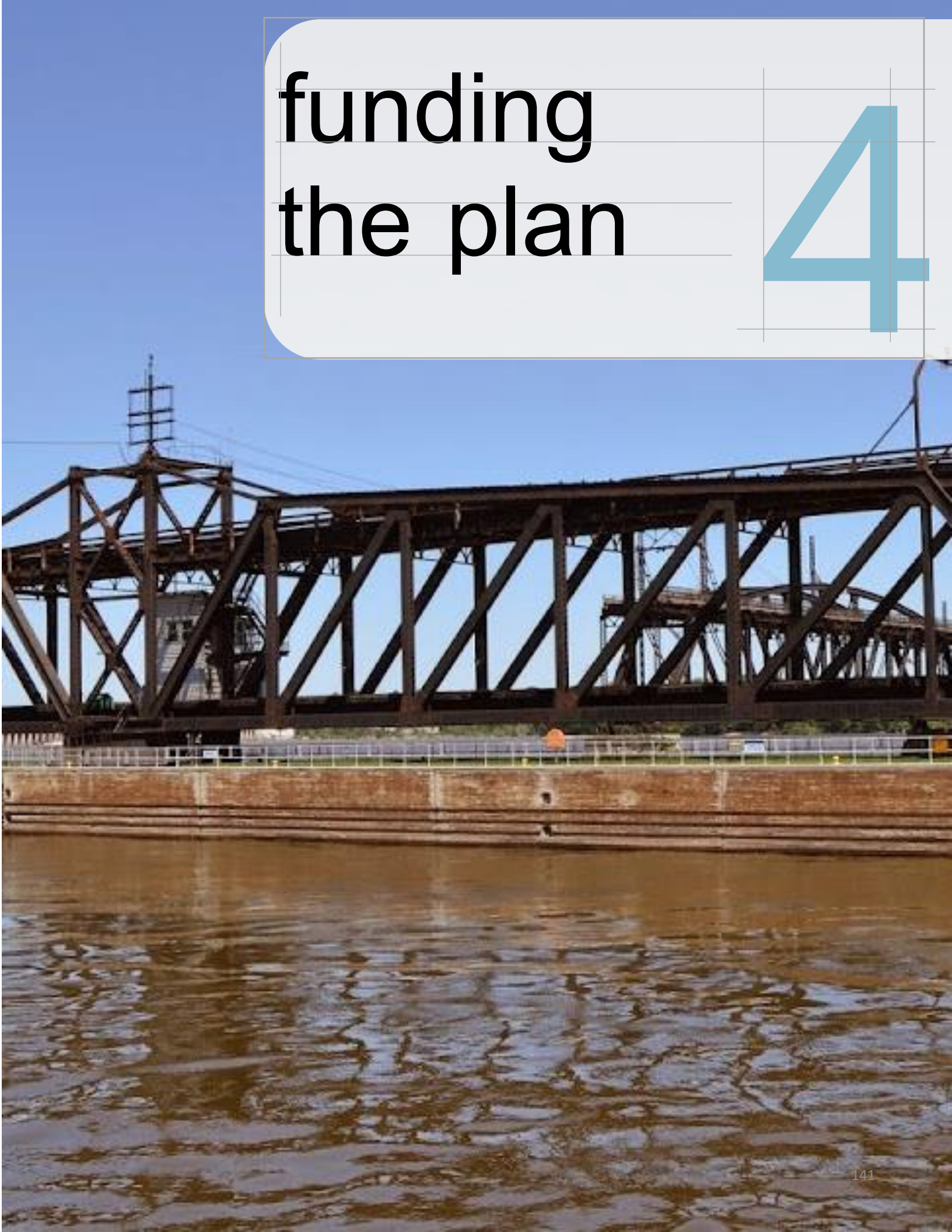
- Population by age cohort
- Downtown investment and business starts
- Elected officials 40 and under

To assist the tourism industry by enhancing and/or expanding recreation/tourism destinations and encouraging people to visit, live, and work in Southeast Iowa.

- Visitor spending by sector
- Visitor spending per year
- Per capita tourism spending
- Retail sales

funding the plan

4



FUNDING THE PLAN!

A key component in the implementation of this plan is making sure funding is in place to support community development, economic development, and transportation projects. To fund these efforts, a variety of local, state, and federal funding will be critical. Below is a list of the most notable current funding resources available related to community development, economic development, and transportation projects.

more of THIS

1. transportation

FEDERAL
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)
- Federal Recreational Trails Program (FRT)
- Bridge Formula Program/Bridge Investment Program
- Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost Saving Transportation (PROTECT)
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity(RAISE)
- Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program
- Safe Streets and Roads for All
- Federal Transit Administration 5303. 5304, 5307, 5310, 5311, and 5339

STATE
- State Transit Assistance Formula Program, Fellowship Program, and Special Projects
- Public Transit Infrastructure Grant (PTIG)
- Capital Match Loan Program (AMOCO Loans)
- Transportation Safety Improvement Program (TSIP)
- Small Town Sign Replacement Program
- Traffic Engineering Assistance Program (TEAP)
- City and County Highway Bridge Program
- Revitalize Iowa Sound Economy (RISE)
- State Recreational Trails Program
- Rail Revolving Loan and Grant Program
- Linking Iowa's Freight Transportation System (LIFTS)
- Airport Vertical Infrastructure Program
- Iowa DOT/DNR Fund
- Living Roadway Trust Fund
- Iowa Road Use Tax Fund (RUTF)

LOCAL
- Private Foundations
- Local Option Sales Tax (LOST)
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Bonds
- Property Tax

2. community development

FEDERAL
- Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)
- Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB)
- Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)
- HOME Funds
- Land Water and Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- Federal Historic Tax Credits
- Affordable Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)
- EPA Brownfields Grant
- Opportunity Zones
- Community Funded Projects
- State Revolving Fund (SRF)

STATE
- Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP)
- Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT)
- Destination Iowa
- Derelict Building Grant Program
- Iowa Brownfields Program
- Workforce Housing Tax Credits
- Redevelopment Tax Credits Program for Brownfield and Grayfield Sites
- State Historic Tax Credits
- Solid Waste Alternatives Program (SWAP)

LOCAL
- Great River Housing Trust Fund
- Private Foundations
- Local Option Sales Tax (LOST)
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Bonds
- Property Tax

3. economic development

FEDERAL
- EDA and USDA Revolving Loan Funds - federal
- EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance Program
- EDA Planning and Local Technical Assistance Program
- EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Program
- SBA Loans – federal
- USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG)
- Opportunity Zones

LOCAL
- Local Option Sales Tax (LOST)
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Tax Abatement or Exemption
- Property Tax

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING OUTLOOK



While it is difficult to predict future revenues and expenditures in all of these areas, some general forecasting can be made for transportation funding due to the history of funding and annual funding allocations provided to the Southeast Iowa region. From this review, we can also see if the region will have a reasonable amount of transportation funding resources compared to the costs of anticipated transportation projects. The following pages will provide some clarity on the proposed key strategies, action items, already identified transportation projects, and their feasibility over the next 20 to 30 years.

The financial outlook (on the following pages) will examine transportation funding by looking at local, state, and federal funding sources that are available. This includes a simple process of evaluating current and past federal aid and nonfederal aid for transportation funding in Southeast Iowa including:

- State Road Use tax revenues to cities and counties
- Farm to Market and Secondary Road Fund revenues to counties
- Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Transportation Enhancement funding distributed through SEIRPC
- Local, State, and Federal transit revenues for SEIBUS and BUS

Local Funding for Projects

As shown on previous pages, local revenues for transportation comes from a variety of sources including, but not limited to Iowa Road Use Tax Fund (RUTF), property taxes, general obligation bonds, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and local option sales taxes (LOST). To get a better idea of future revenues and expenditures, projections of local revenues available for transportation were calculated. The City Street Finance Report was used for cities projections in the region, and County Farm to Market Receipts and Secondary Road Fund Receipts were used for the county's projections. Secondary Road Fund Receipts include local revenues from property taxes, LOST, and the RUTF.

The table below shows the history and projections for local non-federal aid revenues, operation expenditures, and maintenance expenditures. The most recent fiscal years available, 2018-2022, were used for the analysis. The total revenue listed on the reports was used as the jurisdictions' revenue available for transportation expenditures. To calculate the total local revenue available for transportation expenditures, the revenue for each jurisdiction was added together. During this time, there were wide fluctuations in revenue available to regional jurisdictions. Thus, revenue was conservatively projected to increase two percent per year over the life of this plan.

Before constructing or reconstructing roads or non-motorized accommodations, an expense that must be factored into the local side of funding is the operation and maintenance of the existing system. To calculate this, operations and maintenance reports from the Iowa DOT were utilized. Operations and maintenance expenses were determined for each jurisdiction for 2018-2022. Similar to revenues, there were significant variations during the five-year time period. To be consistent with the inflation rate used for project costs, operation and maintenance costs were increased by two percent per year over the life of this plan.

The table below does not account for all costs needed to bring the road and bridge network to a state of good condition. The projected funding deficiency for federal aid eligible roads and bridges as well as non-motorized projects is shown under funding deficiencies below.

Non-Federal Aid Revenues and Expenditures

	Fiscal Year	Non-Federal Aid Revenues [1]	Operation Cost on Total Roadway System [2]	Maintenance Cost on Total Roadway System [2]	Other Local Projects and Debt Payments for non-roadway projects[3]
History	2018	$ 56,682,932	$ 8,183,348	$ 18,203,053	$ 30,296,531
	2019	$ 49,851,741	$ 8,973,166	$ 19,537,956	$ 21,340,619
	2020	$ 50,873,039	$ 8,996,144	$ 19,857,890	$ 22,019,006
	2021	$ 57,235,444	$ 8,697,061	$ 22,316,402	$ 26,221,981
	2022	$ 54,754,670	$ 9,676,446	$ 23,029,395	$ 22,048,829
Projections	2023-2032	$ 640,920,444	$ 101,639,015	$ 242,678,912	$ 296,602,517
	2033-2042	$ 781,278,445	$ 124,506,073	$ 297,277,562	$ 359,494,810
	2043-2055	$ 1,276,851,438	$ 204,643,136	$ 488,617,230	$ 583,591,072
	Total (2023 - 2055)	**$ 2,699,050,327**	**$ 430,788,224**	**$ 1,028,573,704**	**$ 1,239,688,398**

1. Revenues are forecast to increase at a conservative two percent per year.
2. Expenditures for operations and maintenance are forecast to increase at two percent per year.
3. The majority of this funding will go to other local projects and debt payments. This funding should not be assumed to be available for road, bridge, or non-motorized projects.

State and Federal Funding for Projects

A number of funding programs are available to local governments for transportation projects, including road, rail, or bike/pedestrian infrastructure. Some of these utilize state money, while others involve federal money that is allocated to the State. Unless otherwise indicated, each program is administered by the Iowa DOT. Future funding projections for these funding sources is provided on the following page, along with projections for STBG and TAP funding. A listing and basic description of some of the most popular State and Federal programs is provided below:

State Funding Programs

Traffic Safety Improvement Program (TSIP)

The TSIP program provides funding for a variety of roadway safety improvement projects. It includes three categories that each have a set amount of funding available statewide each year. The first is site-specific projects, where improvements are made at a site or corridor with a notable history of crashes. The second is the purchase or replacement of traffic control devices (such as signs, signals, and pavement markings). The final category involves research, studies or public information initiatives related to driver education, work zone safety, and/or crash data analysis.

Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) Program

RISE is used to fund the construction/improvement of roads and streets that would directly promote economic development activities. There are two separate categories within the program – Immediate Opportunity, where the road directly relates to a specific opportunity for job creation or retention, and Local Development, where development prospects are enhanced, but the road is not tied to a specific job creation/retention project. Two rounds of competitive funding are available each year.

State Recreational Trails Program (SRT)

This program is intended to establish recreational trails for the use, enjoyment, and participation of the public. Funds are awarded on an annual basis, with all applicants competing in one statewide funding pool.

Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP)

The REAP program is administered by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Broadly, it is intended for the enhancement and protection of Iowa's natural and cultural resources. While this encompasses a broad range of activities, a commonly funded activity is recreational trails construction or improvements. In the context of this program, trails should be located in an area that allows the user with direct exposure to the natural environment (open space scenery, wildlife, etc.).

Federal Funding Programs

Highway Bridge Program (STBG-HBP)

This program involves funds set aside by the DOT from the Surface Transportation Block Grant program (STBG). It is used for the replacement or rehabilitation of structurally deficient or functionally obsolete bridges on public roadways. A set amount of the total funding is available for counties, while the remainder is for cities. Counties select bridges based on county-level funding allocations. They prioritize bridges based on a set of criteria such as bridge rating, estimated cost, and expected benefit. No more than $1 million can go to a single bridge, and no City can receive funding for more than one bridge each year.

Iowa's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The TAP program includes two components – a statewide program where applicants from around the state compete together, and a Local program where applicants from within a region (like SEIRPC) compete together (as detailed on the following page). For the statewide program, funds are available on an annual basis. Funding can be used for a variety of projects, including bike/pedestrian facilities, safe routes to school projects, and certain environmental mitigation activities.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

HSIP is used to fund low-cost, corridor-length safety improvements on rural roads that have certain at-risk safety characteristics. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-awarded basis.

Federal Recreational Trails Program (FRT)

This program is similar to the SRT program, except that it utilizes Federal funds, instead of State funds. Like SRT, funds are awarded annually, with all applicants competing in one statewide funding pool.

	Fiscal Year	STBG	TAP	City Bridge Program	LIFTS/ICAAP /CDBG Transportation	Federal/State Rec Trails, REAP, Wellmark	RISE	TSIP/HSIP
History	2018	$2,663,171	$265,780	$2,012,000	$0	$293,500	$0	$0
	2019	$2,880,019	$269,604	$0	$1,296,587	$248,185	$418,634	$385,000
	2020	$2,972,531	$264,686		$0	$200,000	$0	$167,000
	2021	$2,883,132	$267,058	$870,000	$91,196	$256,196	$0	$0
	2022	$2,809,634	$261,426	$1,870,000	$0	$726,595	$261,842	$0
Projections	2023	$3,338,770	$340,754	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2024	$3,291,626	$331,979	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2025	$3,355,000	$343,000	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2026	$3,418,000	$354,000	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2027	$3,484,000	$366,000	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2028	$3,575,203	$377,136	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2029	$3,666,406	$388,271	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2030	$3,757,610	$399,407	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2031	$3,848,813	$410,542	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2032	$3,940,016	$421,678	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2033	$4,031,219	$432,813	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2034	$4,122,423	$443,949	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2035	$4,213,626	$455,084	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2036	$4,304,829	$466,220	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2037	$4,396,032	$477,356	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2038	$4,487,235	$488,491	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2039	$4,578,439	$499,627	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2040	$4,669,642	$510,762	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2041	$4,760,845	$521,898	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2042	$4,852,048	$533,033	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2043	$4,943,252	$544,169	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2044	$5,034,455	$555,304	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2045	$5,125,658	$566,440	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2046	$5,216,861	$577,576	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2047	$5,308,064	$588,711	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2048	$5,399,268	$599,847	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2049	$5,490,471	$610,982	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2050	$5,581,674	$622,118	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2051	$5,672,877	$633,253	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2052	$5,764,081	$644,389	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2053	$5,855,284	$655,524	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2054	$5,946,487	$666,660	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
	2055	$6,037,690	$677,796	$1,188,000	$277,557	$344,895	$136,095	$110,400
Total 2023-2055		**$151,467,904**	**$16,504,769**	**$39,204,000**	**$9,159,368**	**$11,381,542**	**$4,491,142**	**$3,643,200**

1. STBG projections are based on the average year-to-year change for the past 10 years, which equals $91,203. This average is added to the target each year starting in FY 2028. FY 2023-2027 is consistent with the targets provided by the Iowa DOT.
2. TAP projections are based on the average year-to-year change for the past 9 years, which equals $11,136. This average is added to the target each year starting in FY 2028. FY 2023-2027 is consistent with the targets provided by the Iowa DOT.
3. City funding is projected at the regional 5-year average of $1,188,000 per year.
4. LIFTS, ICAAP, CDBG funding is projected at the regional 5-year average of $277.557 per year.
5. Trail grants are projected at the 5-year average of $344,895.
6. RISE grants are projected at the 5-year average of $136,095.
7. Safety grants are projected at the 5-year average of $110,400.

State and Federal Funding for Projects

There are two federal funding programs that are competitive at the regional level – the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). STBG is used for funding roadway improvements, while TAP is primarily used for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure such as multi-purpose trails, sidewalks, and paved shoulders. For each of these programs, the Iowa DOT provides a yearly allocation of Federal funds to RPAs such as SEIRPC, with the amount allocated being proportional to each RPA's comparative population size, amount of federally classified roadways, and other criteria. SEIRPC then awards this funding to local projects through a competitive application process. Individual applications are evaluated partially by SEIRPC staff, and partially by a committee of diverse local representatives known as the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

In the evaluation process, each application is scored based on a set of specific criteria, with the resulting ranking of projects used to determine which applications are able to receive funding. Starting from the top ranked application, each subsequent application is able to receive funding until all of the region's allocated funds are accounted for. A summary of the scoring criteria used to evaluate submitted applications to the SEIRPC for each program is included below. Applicable strategies and action Items from this plan (along with other passages as indicated by a page number) are referenced next to each item.

STBG Funding Allocation

Economic Vitality: Does the project promote economic development and enhance tourism, access to jobs, and the movement of freight and workers?
[Strategy A; Action Item K8]

System Preservation: For the roadway in question, what is the current and future surface type, pavement condition, traffic volume, and number of lanes?
[Action Item B8; pg. 63, 65]

Safety: What is the roadway's accident rate, and how much of the funding will go to safety-specific improvements?
[Strategy C; pg. 67-72]

Accessibility and Mobility: How does the current traffic volume compare with available capacity, and how are these anticipated to change in the next 10 years?
[Action Item B8; pg. 63]

Integration and Connectivity: Does the project involve multiple modes of transportation, and/or improve connectivity to highways and non-auto transportation facilities (multi-modal enhancement)?
[Actions Items A8, E2; pg. 64, 78]

Local and Regional Factors: Is the project supported by local/regional planning documents? Does it involve a local match greater than the required minimum, or include more than one sponsor?
[the plan as a whole; Action Items B2, D3]

TAP Funding Allocation

Transportation Alternative Relationship: How many categories of eligible TAP categories does the project qualify for, and what is its relationship with other modes of transportation? Overall, how does it enhance the region's transportation system?
[Strategy E; Action Items C4, C5]

Local and Regional Factors: How is the project supported by local/regional planning documents?
[the plan as a whole; Action Items D3, E8, I7]

Economic Development and Tourism: What is the regional economic and tourism impact of the project?
[Action Item F1, F4, L7]

Project Status: Is it part of a multi-phase project where other phases have already been completed? If not, has any engineering work for the project been completed, or have other funding sources already been secured?
[Action Items B3, E1, E8; pg. 85-86]

Facility Need: What is the local/regional need for the project? How does it improve existing conditions in the community, and how does it compliment similar efforts across the region or state?
[Action Items C4, D1, D3, E1, E7, E8; pg. 85, 87]

SHORT-TERM TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS 2024 - 2027

The table below and on the following 2 pages provides a list of planned transportation projects from FY2024-2027. This includes projects funded through the:

- Highway Bridge Program (HBP);
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP);
- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP);
- State of Iowa Primary Road Fund (PRF);
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG);
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP); and
- Earmarks, Grant Applications, and Illustrative Projects

Federal Source	Fiscal Year	Sponsor	Description	Federal Funding (1,000s)	Total Cost (1,000s)
HBP	2024-26	Burlington	S MAIN ST, over DRAINAGE	$2,072	$10,909
HBP	2024	Des Moines Co.	North Gear Avenue, Over Flint Creek	$900	$900
HBP	2024	Des Moines Co.	Danville Road Bridge, Over Flint Creek	$1,000	$1,000
HBP	2024	Fort Madison	3RD ST, Over FORK CREEK	$650	$650
HBP	2024	Henry Co.	NEBRASKA AVE, Over S. BR. BIG CREEK,	$1,000	$1,010
HBP	2024	Lee Co.	265TH AVE, Over tributary to Devil's Creek, from Chalk Ridge Rd N approx. 500 Feet	$350	$351
HBP	2024	Lee Co.	BELFAST RD, Over MONK CREEK, from 140th Ave east approx.0.8 miles	$550	$551
HBP	2025	Lee Co.	115TH ST, Over HELL HOLLOW CREEK, from 280th Ave W approx. 0.7 miles	$500	$501
HBP	2026	Henry Co.	LEXINGTON AVE, Over small creek	$600	$610
HBP	2026	Lee Co.	Chalk Ridge Rd, Over Devil's Creek, from 265th Ave east approx. 220 Feet	$1,400	$1,401
HBP	2026	Lee Co.	145TH ST, Over West Branch Sugar Creek, from 175th Ave W approx. 0.3 miles	$400	$401
HBP	2027	Des Moines Co.	X40, Over FLINT RIVER	$1,000	$1,000
HBP	2027	Des Moines Co.	BEAVERDALE RD, Over FLINT RIVER	$1,000	$1,000
HBP	2027	Henry Co.	X23, Over SKUNK RIVER	$310	$310
HBP	2027	Lee Co.	270TH AVE, Over LAMALEES CREEK, from J82 N approx. 0.6 miles;	$300	$301
HSIP	2024	Iowa DOT	US 218: Approx 0.1 mi S of the Henry Co Line to N of the Big Creek Bridge	$2,227	$2,474
NHPP	2024-27	Iowa DOT	US 61: N of Mediapolis to 0.5 mi N of IA 78	$46,127	$58,033
NHPP	2025-26	Iowa DOT	US 61: 0.5 mi N of IA 78 to 2.0 mi S of IA 92	$53,953	$67,441
NHPP	2025-26	Iowa DOT	US 61: S of 210th St to N of Mediapolis	$22,385	$27,981
PRF	2024-27	Iowa DOT	US 34: Mississippi River in Burlington	$0	$200

SHORT-TERM TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS (cont'd)

Federal Source	Fiscal Year	Sponsor	Description	Federal Funding (1,000s)	Total Cost (1,000s)
PRF	2024-27	Iowa DOT	IA 136: Mississippi River in Keokuk	$0	$80
PRF	2024	Iowa DOT	US 34: WB Ramp to US 34 0.4 mi W of IL in Burlington	$0	$2,751
PRF	2024	Iowa DOT	IA 136: Soap Creek and BNSF RR 1.8 mi E of US 61 in Keokuk	$0	$1,157
PRF	2024	Iowa DOT	US 34: Curran St 0.8 mi E of US 61 in Burlington	$0	$677
PRF	2024	Iowa DOT	IA 70: N of IA 92 to IA 22	$0	$2,033
PRF	2024	Iowa DOT	US 218: Weigh Station S of Co Rd J38/130th St	$0	$248
PRF	2024	Iowa DOT	US 61: Mitigation for Memorial Park Rd in Burlington to 1 mi N of IA 78	$0	$1,440
PRF	2024	Iowa DOT	US 34: 8th St 1.8 mi E of US 61 in Burlington	$0	$568
PRF	2025	Iowa DOT	IA 78: Stream 0.3 mi W of E Jct Co Rd W66	$0	$1,011
PRF	2025	Iowa DOT	US 61: US 34 in Burlington	$0	$1,937
PRF	2025	Iowa DOT	US 218: North Fish Creek 1.1 mi N of J20 (NB)	$0	$4,899
PRF	2025	Iowa DOT	US 34: W Burlington Ave 0.5 mi W of US 61 (EB)	$0	$766
PRF	2025	Iowa DOT	US 34: W Burlington Ave 0.5 mi W of US 61 (WB)	$0	$228
PRF	2026	Iowa DOT	US 61: DME RR 3.4 mi N of W Jct IA 92 (NB)	$0	$418
PRF	2026	Iowa DOT	IA 16: Little Cedar Creek 1.7 mi E of Co Rd W46	$0	$596
PRF	2026	Iowa DOT	US 218: BNSF RR 4.4 mi S of US 61	$0	$807
PRF	2026	Iowa DOT	IA 92: Main St and Collins Rd 0.3 mi W of IA 70 in Columbus Jct	$0	$614
STBG	2024-27	RPA 16 / SEIRPC	RPA 16 TRANSPORTATION PLANNING	$605	$757
STBG	2024	Henry Co.	W55 from Skunk River bridge S to J20 in Salem	$1,700	$3,950
STBG	2024	Iowa DOT	IA 78: WCL Wayland to Olds	$2,478	$3,098
STBG	2024	Iowa DOT	IA 136: Mississippi River in Keokuk (State Share)	$4,000	$5,000
STBG	2024	Lee Co.	On J40, from US 218 E 5.9 miles to West Point	$1,700	$2,701
STBG	2024	RPA 16 / SEIBUS	Purchase of two Conversion Vans	$108	$135
STBG	2024	Burlington	WASHINGTON ST, from Front Street W to approximately 100 feet east of Hawkeye Street	$867	$4,500
STBG	2024	Burlington	AGENCY ST, from Melrose Ct E to Curran St	$1,545	$1,598
STBG	2024	Burlington	SUMMER ST, from Harrison Ave S to Koestner St	$1,415	$2,912
STBG	2024	Burlington	9TH ST, from Angular St S to South St, and MADISON AVE, from South St S to Sunset Ave	$420	$2,162
STBG	2024	Fort Madison	AVE L, from 20th St. W to 30th St.	$780	$1,560
STBG	2025-26	Iowa DOT	US 61: Branch Smith Creek 1.0 mi S of Louisa Co	$706	$883

SHORT-TERM TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS (cont'd)

Federal Source	Fiscal Year	Sponsor	Description	Federal Funding (1,000s)	Total Cost (1,000s)
STBG	2025	Iowa DOT	US 218: South Fish Creek 0.7 mi N of J20 (NB)	$1,808	$2,260
STBG	2025	Des Moines Co.	X99, from Burlington CL to Meeker's Landing Road	$1,815	$4,500
STBG	2025	Fort Madison	AVE L, from 30th St W to 35th St, and on AVE O from 36th St W to 41st St	$1,529	$1,998
STBG	2026	Iowa DOT	IA 2: Big Sugar Creek 3.4 mi W of W Jct US 61	$822	$1,028
STBG	2026	Louisa Co.	On X 99, FROM COUNTY LINE TO E AVENUE	$1,797	$2,800
STBG	2026	Mount Pleasant	On Winfield Ave, from Broadway St E to Grand Ave	$1,470	$2,945
STBG	2027	Iowa DOT	US 61: Lost Creek 2.4 mi S of IA 16 (NB)	$2,606	$3,257
STBG	2027	Iowa DOT	IA 16: Sugar Creek 0.3 mi W of US 218	$2,502	$3,128
STBG	2027	Iowa DOT	US 34: BNSF RR and City Streets 1.5 mi E of US 61 in Burlington (EB/WB)	$1,256	$1,570
STBG	2027	Iowa DOT	US 34: Broadway Ave 1.0 mi W of US 61 in Burlington (WB)	$379	$474
STBG	2027	Iowa DOT	US 61: Skunk River 0.5 mi N of IA 16 (SB)	$1,270	$1,588
STBG	2027	Iowa DOT	US 34: BNSF RR and City Streets 1.4 mi E of US 61 in Burlington (EB Ramp)	$628	$785
STBG	2027	Lee Co.	W62, from Hwy 27 E approx. 9.5 miles to Hwy 61	$1,833	$4,125
STBG	2027	Burlington	SUNNYSIDE AVE, from Roosevelt Ave to Osborn	$1,500	$2,230
TAP	2024	Fort Madison	Trail along 48th St from Avenue L north to River Valley Rd	$375	$525
TAP	2024	Keokuk	Trail along Mississippi River from Victory Park S 1.0 mi. to boat launch	$348	$1,182
TAP	2024	West Burlington	Trail along S Gear Ave south 0.6 mi. from W Huston St to US 34 SE Ramp	$548	$912
Earmark	2024	Burlington	Trail extending 2 mi from Mason Rd and Haskell St to Madison Ave 360 ft N of Shoquoquon Dr	$4,000	$5,184
Grant App.	2025	Henry Co.	235TH ST, Over BIG CREEK,	$4,000	$5,000
Grant App.	2025	Lee Co.	X32 over Lost Creek, from 165th St N 0.4 miles	$1,520	$1,901
Grant App.	2025	Fort Madison	AVE H and AVE L from 18TH ST to 20TH ST, and on 18TH ST and 20TH ST from AVE H to AVE L	$9,760	$12,200
Grant App.	2025	Keokuk	Keokuk Rail Bridge over Mississippi River	$1,294	$1,715
Illust.	2024	Henry Co.	W55, Skunk River bridge to Old Hwy 34	$1,760	$2,200
Illust.	2024	Henry Co.	OLD HWY 34, from Franklin Ave E 1 mi. to Bridge	$960	$1,200
Illust.	2027	Henry Co.	Salem Road (J20), from the Intersection of J20 & W55 E to Intersection of HWY 218 & J20	$4,500	$4,500
Illust.	2027	Henry Co.	Racine Avenue (X23), from the intersection of X23 & H28 S to intersection of X23 & 260th St.	$6,000	$6,000

Funding Deficiencies

The table below provides an assessment that was conducted to estimate funding levels required to improve the region's existing federal aid eligible road and bridge network to a state of good condition, and to implement regional bicycle and multi purpose trail routes. As shown in the table, it is anticipated that the region will experience a significant transportation funding deficiency of over $130 million for federal-aid eligible transportation projects over the life of this plan. Unless additional funding sources are identified, the region will struggle to successfully maintain the transportation network at a level that is safe, accommodating to all transportation modes, and not a significant impediment to economic development prospects.



Expenses	
Federal Aid Eligible Road Network (State of Good Condition)[1]	$ 398,267,000
Federal Aid Eligible Bridge Network (State of Good Condition) [2]	$ 60,220,800
Bicycle and Multi Purpose Trail Implementation[3]	$ 49,595,000
Total Projected Expenses	**$ 508,082,800**
Revenues[4]	
Surface Transportation Block Grant Program	$151,467,904
Iowa DOT RISE	$4,491,142
Traffic Safety and Highway Safety Improvement Program	$3,643,200
Total Revenues for Federal Aid Eligible Road Network	**$198,806,246**
City and County Highway Bridge Program	$39,204,000
Total Revenues Federal Aid Eligible Bridge Network	**$39,204,000**
Transportation Alternatives Program	$16,504,769
Federal and State Recreational Trails, REAP	$11,381,542
Total Revenues for Bicycle Accommodation Implementation	**$27,886,311**
Funding Deficiencies (Expense – Revenues)	
Federal Aid Eligible Road Network (State of Good Condition)	$199,460,754
Federal Aid Eligible Bridge Network (State of Good Condition)	$21,016,800
Bicycle and Multi Purpose Trail Implementation	$21,708,689
TOTAL FUNDING DEFICIENCY	**$242,186,243**

1. *The cost estimates used in this assessment are based on regional averages of recent federal aid road projects with $1.5 million per centerline mile for a reconstruction project and $400,000 per centerline mile for resurfacing. As shown on page 85, the Pavement Condition Index was utilized to evaluate approximately 560 centerline miles of roadways had rating of fair, poor or very poor. It was assumed that roads in poor or very poor condition (11%) would require full reconstruction, while roads considered to be in fair condition (28%) could be resurfaced. These figures do not factor in future maintenance costs for construction projects for roads presently in good condition.*

2. *The cost estimates used in this assessment are based on regional averages of recent federal aid bridge projects with average replacement cost of $750,000. As shown on page 86, there are 16% of bridges in the region with a sufficiency rating of poor. These figures do not factor in future maintenance costs for construction projects for bridges presently in good condition.*

3. *The cost estimates used in this assessment are based on regional averages of recent federal aid trail project with centerline mile cost estimates of $300,000 for paved shoulders and $750,000 for off-road multi purpose trails. as shown on page 109, future bicycle and multi purpose trail projects include 103 miles of bike routes and multipurpose trails. This figure does not factor in future maintenance costs for existing bicycle and multi purpose trail accommodations.*

4. *Revenues came from the table of future state and federal-aid funding shown on page 146.*