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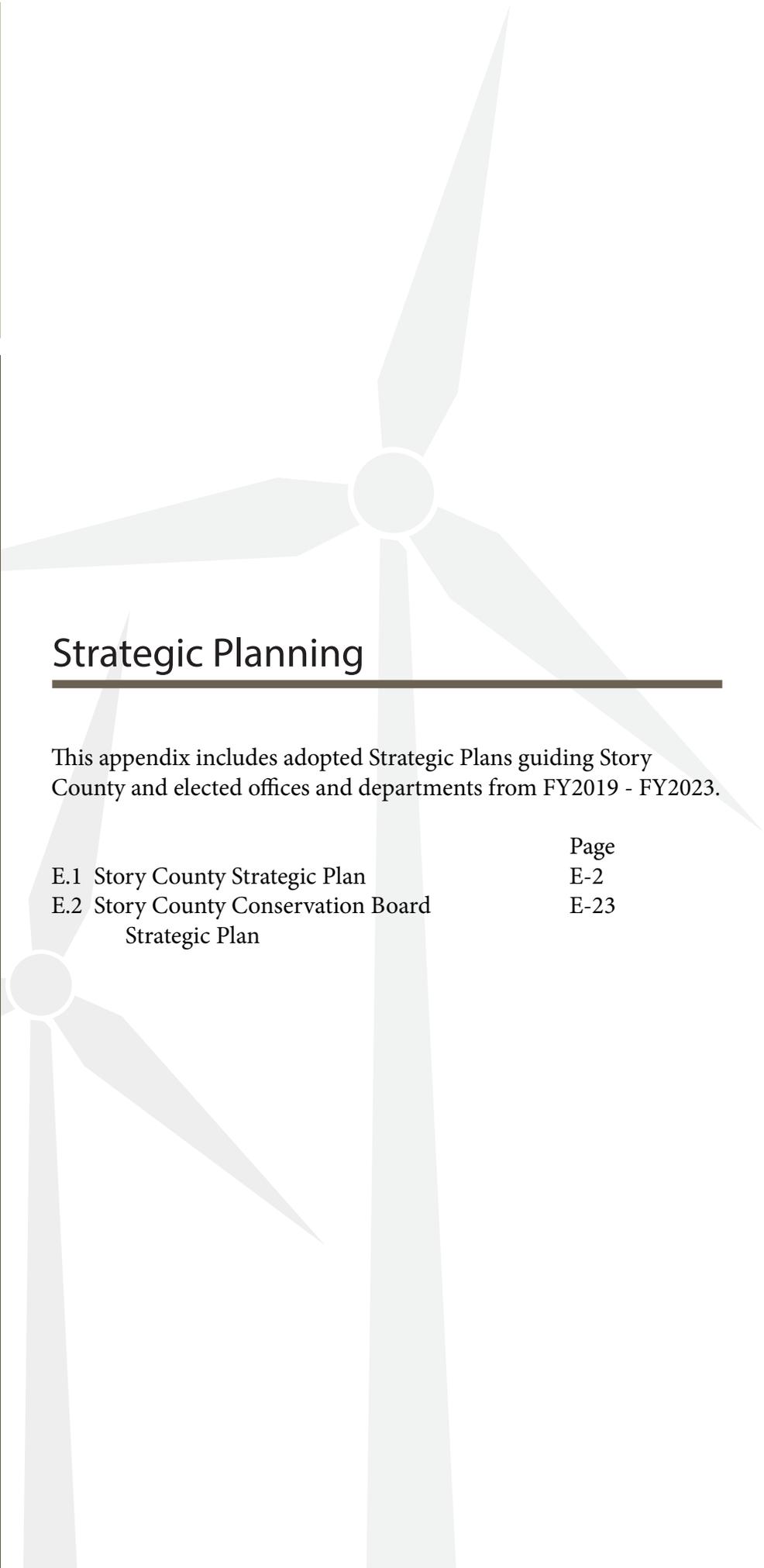
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## Strategic Planning

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This appendix includes adopted Strategic Plans guiding Story County and elected offices and departments from FY2019 - FY2023.

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# STRATEGIC PLAN

In Support of the Cornerstone to Capstone (C2C) Plan



STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

**ADOPTED**

**October 30, 2018**

**October 2018**

Story County Board of Supervisors

900 6th Street

Nevada, Iowa 50201

[www.storycountyiowa.gov](http://www.storycountyiowa.gov)

# STRATEGIC PLAN

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

## STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction 1

Challenges 2

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As a comprehensive plan prepares Story County for future growth and development, a county's Strategic Plan helps identify and prioritize the specific projects that will assist the County to reach its ultimate destination. These projects do not happen overnight, nor are they accomplished by one person. Careful planning and consideration should be given to each. The County should rely on staff, appointed officials, elected officials, community groups, and other organizations to help achieve these identified priority projects for the benefit of the entire county.

The Story County Strategic Plan identifies the top five (5) goals of the County and list objectives, tasks or action steps, timelines, responsible groups/agencies, potential resources, and measurable outputs for each goal. The intent of the projects or goals is to maintain and further enhance the quality of life and economic vitality for Story County residents. This Strategic Plan, adopted by the Story County Board of Supervisors in October 2018, guides decisions through Fiscal Year 2023 (ending June 30, 2023.)

This Strategic Plan identifies specific programs and policies towards which staff time and resources will be dedicated to achieve their successful implementation. The Plan serves as a communication tool between citizens and county government. Reviewed annually, the Plan is edited as needed in response to changing priorities, new funding opportunities, and highlighting project accomplishments.

The Strategic Plan is guided by the foundational principle that decisions are carried out in a sound budgetary and fiscally-prudent manner. Story County is committed to high standards of quality service, respectful engagement, and responsible resource management. Every aspect of the Story County Strategic Plan serves to fulfill these standards.



October 2018

Approved by the Story County Board of Supervisors

# STRATEGIC PLAN

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

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### PLANNING PROCESS

JEO Consulting Group facilitated the planning process with assistance from Story County staff members. The first round of input was solicited through an internal survey of key staff members, elected officials, and County Board and Commission members. These stakeholders were asked to complete this survey via Survey Monkey to share thoughts on their office or department as well as County operations overall. A total of 19 staff members, elected officials, and Board and Commission members completed this survey.

The survey findings were then categorized by topic area and reviewed by the Board of Supervisors as well as the Director of Internal Operations and Human Resources and the Director of External Operations and County Services. Each hour-long interview with these individuals helped clarify the context of the survey feedback while offering an opportunity to share their own strategic priorities for Story County.

From these interviews, JEO was able to consolidate the many priorities identified and establish action steps for each one. Further refining of these issues was performed through an internal review process with Story County staff. The final plan as presented in this document was the result of further refinement by the consultant team, Story County staff, elected officials, and the Board of Supervisors.



October 2018

Approved by the Story County Board of Supervisors

# STRATEGIC PLAN

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

## STRATEGIC PLAN

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This Strategic Plan is intended to guide and strengthen the County's ability to address public investments in economic development, workforce, quality of life amenities, county services, and community needs. The following challenges were identified through the Strategic Planning process.

### INTERNAL CHALLENGES

- Sustain a competitive wage and benefit package for current and future employees.
- Implement security and safety measures for public County buildings.
- Continue to update technology.
- Continue to make all public data available on the County website and the Beacon website, an online portal to access maps, real estate data, and tax information.

### EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

- Influences on water quality and addressing the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, conservation practices on agricultural land, watershed education, and septic systems.
- Stagnant transportation funding with higher costs.
- Changes in State/Federal funding.
- Recreational opportunity demand.
- Sustainable funding for conservation (IWILL).

By identifying these challenges—both internal and external— County stakeholders can develop projects and initiatives that allow decision-makers to focus energies and resources for maximum public benefit. These help frame the objectives that logically carry forth into identified projects.



October 2018

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# STRATEGIC PLAN

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

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The Cornerstone to Capstone (C2C) Plan – Story County’s comprehensive, long-range plan, sets forth a foundation guiding the County through 2036. Within it, the vision establishes a framework for how the County moves forward based on the following shared values.

- Sense of community, volunteering, individual philanthropy, dedication to family, a safe environment, and social gatherings/connections.
- Natural environment, protecting resources and recreational opportunities, and the ongoing contributions of agriculture to the County’s shared heritage and future, self-reliance, partnerships, strong work ethic, and economy.
- Planned growth with policies, infrastructure, and other resources that strengthen the County’s strong, shared values for the future.
- Excellent educational opportunities and cultural, social, outdoor recreational and entertainment opportunities for all ages.
- Collaborative and transparent government, fiscal responsibility, the recognition of individual rights, taking responsibility through participation, self-reliance, involvement, and participation in decision-making and action.
- Economic opportunities for businesses, innovation, agribusiness and technology.

These values serve as the guiding principles, setting the foundation for all future planning endeavors such as the Capital Improvements Plan, this Strategic Plan, and more.



October 2018

Approved by the Story County Board of Supervisors

# STRATEGIC PLAN

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

The focus of the Story County Strategic Plan is to provide services efficiently and effectively that continually meet the needs of Story County citizens. This Strategic Plan embraces these values, establishing goals and related objectives towards which County stakeholders will collectively work over the next five years. This Plan complements the C2C Implementation Matrix, both working in concert to highlight directions and steps to achieve the C2C Plan vision.

## STRATEGIC PLAN

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### QUALITY OF LIFE

Story County has unique attributes when it comes to quality of life. It has excellent educational opportunities; access to natural amenities; rich, productive soil supporting Story County's agricultural heritage; diverse and engaged citizens; strong economic foundation; recreational opportunities and geographic proximity to other economic opportunities found in the metropolitan area. In terms of pride and marketing, these features can be of almost immeasurable value to the County. However, Story County is not without challenges. To enhance the quality of life for all residents, Story County will continue to need to recognize those challenges and turn them into opportunities. Story County will continue to invest in quality of life amenities for continued prosperity and success.

### COUNTY OPERATIONS

Story County exists to serve its citizens. For this reason, all County operations – whether internal or external, present or future – must function as effective and efficient as possible. The objectives in this section strive to enhance the delivery of County services.

### FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Story County residents benefit from having an efficient transportation network and bridges with appropriate roadways for traffic patterns and behaviors. Not only is it how residents move about Story County, it is how the County attracts economic development opportunities to build and maintain a strong economy. Furthermore, Story County is committed to ongoing investment in its facilities and infrastructure systems to better serve the public and provide a sense a pride for staff and citizens. Story County must continue to be fiscally-responsible while financially supporting the ongoing needs to maintain and improve public facilities and infrastructure systems.



October 2018

Approved by the Story County Board of Supervisors

# STRATEGIC PLAN

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

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### TECHNOLOGY

Technology is the heart of how Story County efficiently serves its citizens. As technology changes rapidly, the expectations on how the County delivers services must change accordingly. Story County will continue to plan its technological and related infrastructure needs over the next five years.

### POLICY & REGULATIONS

Story County has long been a leader in looking towards regulations and policies that actively promote alternate ways of accomplishing goals - not just writing static black and white words on a page, but instead enforcing ordinances that accomplish the goal. Story County will continue that practice to address valid concerns as they arise. Over the next five years, Story County will comprehensively audit regulations and policies to ensure the values defined in the C2C Plan are achievable and not at odds with what is currently being implemented.



October 2018

Approved by the Story County Board of Supervisors

# STRATEGIC PLAN

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

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Over the next few pages, specific action steps are identified that serve to guide progress towards the goals and increase efficiency and accountability within Story County.

The Action Plan is organized by a "Targeted Goal" followed by "Objectives" to achieve that goal. "Action Steps" for each Objective, are outlined. In addition, all Offices and Departments involved are identified, and priorities are assigned to the Action Step. If "Additional Partners" (beyond Story County offices and departments) are identified, those are listed as well.

As outlined in the Code of Iowa, the Board of Supervisors:

- Serves as the executive branch of county government.
- Are the policy makers for the county and administer the various county programs, including reviewing budget requests, appropriating funds, establishing county tax levies, enacting ordinances, filling employee vacancies, and hearing reports from county officers.

While the Board plays this unique role and they are the entity to officially adopt this Strategic Plan, the overall success of this Plan requires the continual involvement of all elected officials and departments in the process. The steps to achieve success only begin with this Plan's adoption. It is imperative that projects are brought forth through the budgeting and capital improvements planning processes.



October 2018

Approved by the Story County Board of Supervisors

## Quality of Life



### TARGETED GOAL

Over the next five years, Story County will continue to invest in quality of life amenities for continued prosperity and success.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** To increase community engagement and expand public education and outreach programs to raise awareness of resources, opportunities, programs, and services provided by Story County and its non-profit partners.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Identify organizations and other key stakeholders that can help expand public education and raise awareness of Story County programs and offerings.	All	Medium
2	Identify key topic areas to update or create new resource materials and training.	All	Medium
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Outside consultants as necessary.		

**OBJECTIVE 2:** To continue collaborating with public/private partners to facilitate housing opportunities attainable across all income levels.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Identify best practices to promote and incentivize affordable housing.	Board of Supervisors, Community Services, Veterans Affairs, Planning and Development	Medium
2	Identify barriers to public and private affordable housing development in Story County.		Medium
3	Identify resources and tools to help leverage the Story County Housing Trust Fund.		Medium
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Story County Housing Trust Fund; Story County Economic Development Group; Ames Economic Development Commission; ASSET; Elected leaders and staff of municipalities, non-profit agencies, and other local governments.		

## Quality of Life



### TARGETED GOAL

Over the next five years, Story County will continue to invest in quality of life amenities for continued prosperity and success.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** To evaluate partnerships to provide services, planning, and growth to all of Story County.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Identify partnership opportunities through State and Federally mandated improvements.	Board of Supervisors, Conservation	Medium
2	Research and identify infrastructure funding opportunities to help aid municipalities and unincorporated communities.	Board of Supervisors, Secondary Roads, Planning and Development	Medium
3	Continue involvement in the ASSET funding process to help determine human service gaps.	Board of Supervisors, Community Services	Medium
4	Assess broadband connectivity needs throughout Story County.	Board of Supervisors, Planning and Development, Conservation	High
5	Continue offering technical assistance to smaller communities to support growth opportunities.	Board of Supervisors, Planning and Development	High
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Elected leaders and staff of municipalities, non-profit agencies, and other local governments.		

## County Operations



### TARGETED GOAL

Over the next five years, Story County will strive to improve all County operations – whether internal or external, present or future – so that each office, department, board, or commission can function with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency to the constituents they serve.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** To establish succession plans to ensure the smooth transition of leadership positions and continued success of Story County.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Work to identify key, top level positions that may become available within the next five years.	Board of Supervisors	Medium
2	Explore training and mentor opportunities to allow staff members to develop and prepare for advancement.	Board of Supervisors	Medium
<b>Additional Partners</b>	All offices/departments will be involved.		

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Purposefully promote Story County's value and vision. Use the work already completed as a starting point to develop a comprehensive mission statement for Story County.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Create task force of key staff members to create an overall central mission (statement) for Story County.	All	High
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Outside consultants (if necessary)		

## County Operations



### TARGETED GOAL

Over the next five years, Story County will strive to improve all County operations – whether internal or external, present or future – so that each office, department, board, or commission can function with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency to the constituents they serve.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** To continue monitoring compensation and benefit strategies to attract and retain highly qualified employees.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Conduct annual review of compensation and benefits.	Board of Supervisors	Low
2	Conduct formal salary survey/comparisons on five-year cycle.	Board of Supervisors	Low
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Outside consultants (if necessary)		

**OBJECTIVE 4:** To continue to offer professional development opportunities to unleash the full potential of County employees and increase employee engagement to continue to create efficiencies among services and willingness to accept unforeseen circumstances.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Identify opportunities to train staff members to improve interactions with customers.	Board of Supervisors	High
2	Assess and develop opportunities to train staff to adapt to new situations and change.	Board of Supervisors	High
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Outside consultants (if necessary)		

## County Operations



### TARGETED GOAL

Over the next five years, Story County will strive to improve all County operations – whether internal or external, present or future – so that each office, department, board, or commission can function with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency to the constituents they serve.

**OBJECTIVE 5:** To continue seeking public/private partnerships whenever possible and where mutually beneficial.

Step #	Action	Lead Office or Department	Priority
1	Explore new opportunities to establish formalized partnerships such as 28E Agreements to enhance ways to provide existing services efficiently and effectively.	All	High
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Elected leaders and staff of municipalities, non-profit agencies, and other local governments.		

**OBJECTIVE 6:** To assess ways to engage, inform, and serve the public through online opportunities.

Step #	Action	Lead Office or Department	Priority
1	Assess the means and effectiveness of existing online tools and services.	All	Medium
2	As a component of the annual Communications Plan, develop targeted media strategies.	Board of Supervisors	Medium
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Outside consultants (if necessary)		

## Facilities & Infrastructure



### TARGETED GOAL

Over the next five years, Story County will continue to be fiscally-responsible while financially supporting the ongoing needs to maintain and improve public facilities and infrastructure systems.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** To continue to enhance park facilities throughout Story County.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Review and prioritize capital improvement projects outlined in the Story County Conservation Board's Current Strategic Plan report.	Conservation	High
2	Continue to research and seek a variety of funding sources including contracts, gifts, grants, and other outside resources to leverage Story County Conservation funds.	Conservation	High
<b>Additional Partners</b>	To be determined by the Story County Conservation Board.		

**OBJECTIVE 2:** To assess and provide for the ongoing operation and maintenance of existing facilities throughout Story County.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Evaluate the long-term mechanical equipment needs for all Story County facilities.	Facilities Management	Medium
2	Assess existing and future space needs of Story County Offices and Departments.	Facilities Management	Medium
<b>Additional Partners</b>			

**Facilities & Infrastructure**



**TARGETED GOAL**

Over the next five years, Story County will continue to be fiscally-responsible while financially supporting the ongoing needs to maintain and improve public facilities and infrastructure systems.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** To continue to review facility access points and security for all Story County buildings.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Conduct study to assess needs for enhanced security, both personnel and facility improvements.	All	High
<b>Additional Partners</b>			

**OBJECTIVE 4:** To properly maintain a safe and reliable road network by identifying ongoing funding streams, and assessing policies, procedures, and effectiveness of road maintenance programs on an annual basis.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Review current processes to achieve efficiencies of 5-Year Secondary Road Construction Program.	Secondary Roads	High
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); Iowa Department of Transportation		

## Facilities & Infrastructure



### TARGETED GOAL

Over the next five years, Story County will continue to be fiscally-responsible while financially supporting the ongoing needs to maintain and improve public facilities and infrastructure systems.

**OBJECTIVE 5:** To maximize funding for Story County's bridge replacement program, and reduce the number of load posted and inadequate bridges throughout Story County.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Review and update metrics to determine when to make repairs or recommend full replacement of county-owned bridges.	Secondary Roads	High
2	Research alternative funding streams to leverage bridge replacement funding.	Secondary Roads	High
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); Iowa Department of Transportation		

**OBJECTIVE 6:** To expand the paved road network to encourage economic development opportunities and enhance transportation corridors.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Identify key corridors of unpaved roads with economic development opportunities.	Secondary Roads, Board of Supervisors	High
2	Develop metrics to determine which roads get improved and which ones remain unpaved.	Secondary Roads, Planning and Development	High
3	Seek out public-private partnerships to improve transportation networks, where possible.	Secondary Roads, Board of Supervisors, Planning and Development	High
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Story County Economic Development Group; Ames Economic Development Commission, Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); Iowa Department of Transportation		

## Technology



### TARGETED GOAL

Over the next five years, Story County will continue to make strategic investments in critical Information Technology (IT) infrastructure to enhance the delivery of County services and programs to its constituents.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** To conduct a needs assessment evaluating hardware, software and IT infrastructure opportunities and challenges.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Assess and create a plan to address internal technology needs and upgrades.	All	High
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Outside consultants (if necessary)		

**OBJECTIVE 2:** To examine the comprehensive multi-media/communications technology needs and outreach strategies for Story County, including deployment within courtrooms and public meeting rooms.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Conduct internal multi-media technology needs assessments of the Story County facilities.	All	Low
2	Continue planning for the new 911 system.	Sheriff, Board of Supervisors, Emergency Management Agency	High
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Elected leaders and staff of municipalities, non-profit agencies, and other local governments. Outside consultants (if necessary)		

**Technology**



**TARGETED GOAL**

*Over the next five years, Story County will continue to make strategic investments in critical Information Technology (IT) infrastructure to enhance the delivery of County services and programs to its constituents.*

**OBJECTIVE 3:** *To identify necessary steps to complete network connectivity to all Story County facilities.*

Step #	Action	Lead Office or Department	Priority
1	Estimate costs to extend network service to unserved departments/facilities.	Information Technology	Low
2	Determine alternatives to accomplish similar goals of network connectivity.	Information Technology	Low
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Elected leaders and staff of municipalities, non-profit agencies, and other local governments. Private service providers.		

## Policy & Regulations



### TARGETED GOAL

Over the next five years, Story County will comprehensively audit regulations and policies to ensure the values defined in the C2C Plan are achievable and not at odds with what is currently being implemented.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** To continue to address water quality issues throughout Story County and consider strengthened regulations for stormwater and wastewater management.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Develop, implement, and monitor strategies and partnerships to build upon the county-wide watershed assessments.	Board of Supervisors, Conservation, Planning and Development	High
2	Under the guidance of the Board of Health, review and consider regulatory and programmatic changes regarding aging and unlicensed on-site septic systems.	Environmental Health, Board of Supervisors	Medium
3	Acting as the Drainage District Trustees, pro-actively seek out innovative solutions to develop realistic and sustainable drainage solutions that positively affect water quality while acknowledging and operating under the antiquated drainage district law and practices.	Board of Supervisors	Low
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS); Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR); Prairie Rivers of Iowa.		

**OBJECTIVE 2:** To review land use regulations to address conflicts and encourage the creation of new public and private services and businesses to benefit Story County's citizens.

Step #	Action	Office or Department	Priority
1	Review, and amend as necessary, current regulations including non-conforming uses, home businesses, and mobile home parks.	Board of Supervisors, Planning and Development	Medium
2	Continue to coordinate planning and land development decisions between Story County and incorporated communities.	Board of Supervisors, Planning and Development	Low
<b>Additional Partners</b>	Elected leaders and staff of municipalities, non-profit agencies, and other local governments.		

# STRATEGIC PLAN

STORY COUNTY, IOWA FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

## Board of Supervisors



**Rick Sanders**



**Marty Chitty**



**Lauris Olson**

We are committed to supporting our Strategic Plan. It defines our priorities for the future of Story County and increases our accountability, transparency and performance.

We will continually track our progress towards the goals and projects identified in this Strategic Plan and update and revise as necessary.

**Story County Board of Supervisors**



**October 2018**

Approved by the Story County Board of Supervisors



McFarland Park  
56461 180<sup>th</sup> Street, Ames, Iowa 50010  
Phone: (515) 232-2516  
Web: [www.storycountyconservation.org](http://www.storycountyconservation.org)

*Connecting people with nature and  
improving natural resources –  
making Story County a great place to  
live, work, and recreate*

# **Strategic Plan**

# **2018-2020**

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During the last five years, our landscape has changed both literally and figuratively. These changes, combined with a very hopeful outlook for our future, shape a new vision for Story County Conservation (SCC) for the next three years. Our vision includes capacity building--community members broadly engaging with nature as a means of self and community improvement that collaboratively works to steward the nature they know--a vision of a healthier environment and a richer community.

Several factors helped formulate this plan:

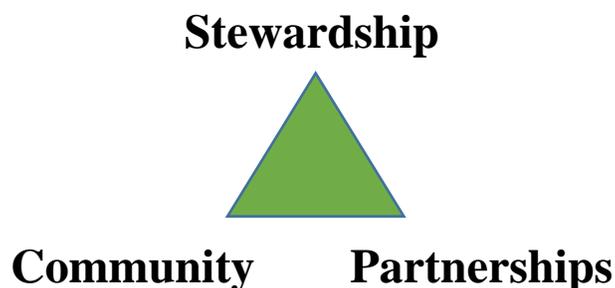
- completion of the Cornerstone to Capstone (C2C) Plan in 2016;
- lack of sustainable statewide funding for natural resources;
- recent successes in water quality awareness;
- expansion of Dakins Lake;
- improvements in the Hickory Grove Lake watershed;
- development of the Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor;
- new efforts in drainage ditch maintenance, resource management, community engagement, facility improvements, and environmental education programming;
- improvements in awareness of the importance of soil health and water quality;
- need for greater awareness of the role of nature in community betterment; the proliferation of invasive threats to our natural environment; and,
- increasing disconnect between society and nature.

This plan was developed through a series of board, staff, and stakeholder work sessions. SCC has carefully examined where we have been, what we have accomplished, and how we can achieve our vision. Just like the last five years, we expect numerous changes in the next three years. This is a living plan. It will be reviewed annually by the SCC Board and will guide conservation efforts through 2020.

Join us in connecting people with nature and improving natural resources to make Story County a great place to live, work, and recreate.

*Michael Cox, SCC Director*

*Nancy Franz, SCCB Chair*





# At A Glance

## Education

- 30,000+ contacts annually
- 1,100+ public and school programs
- Programs for tots to seniors
- In all Story County school districts
- Named **Best Environmental Education Program in the State** (with more than three Naturalists)

## Recreation/Parks

- 3,000 acres under management
- 1,900 acres public hunting
- 89 miles of trails including new Skunk River Water Trail
- Campgrounds, lakes, picnic areas, meeting spaces, playgrounds

## Recently Completed Projects

- Hickory Grove Park storm shelter and shower building
- Dakins Lake vault toilet
- McFarland Park Discovery Nature Playscape
- Hickory Grove Lake Watershed Project Phase #1 (streambank stabilization and buffer, livestock exclusion, septic replacement)
- Sensitive Areas Inventory Phase #1 (County-wide)
- Comprehensive Natural Resources and Recreation Plan (a component of the Story County Comprehensive Plan 2036: Cornerstone to Capstone (C2C))
- County-wide Trails Plan (a component of the C2C)
- Pollinator Gardens at 3 elementary schools
- Dakins Lake Expansion
- Skunk River Greenbelt Expansion
- River Access improvements at Lekwa and 265<sup>th</sup> Street Accesses

## IRVM

### *(Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management)*

- Rights of way and drainage ditch maintenance *with a conservation emphasis*
- 63 miles of drainage ditch management
- Roadway park and prairie management
- 5,700 acres under management

## Current Projects

- Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor – *Phase #1 in progress*
- Praeri Rail Trail extension to Dakins Lake – *in design*
- Hickory Grove Lake Watershed Project Phases #2-#3 (shoreline and gully stabilization through dredging and access improvements) – *in design*
- Sensitive Areas Inventory Phase #2 (County-wide) – *in progress*
- Watershed Water Quality Assessments (County-wide) – *in progress*
- “Designate the Skunk” – South Skunk River was designated as a state water trail. Designation spring 2018
- Ronald “Dick” Jordan Family Wildlife Area acquisition

## Upcoming Projects

- Hickory Grove Park sewer replacement
- Army Corps of Engineers land acquisition
- Carroll Prairie acquisition – only \$57,000 remaining
- Heart of Iowa Nature Trail Paving Phase #1 – design in FY18
- Petersen Access improvement – spring 2018
- Askew Access improvement – spring 2018

# Mission, Vision, and Values

## Mission

*Connecting people with nature and improving natural resources -  
making Story County a great place to live, work, and recreate*

## Vision

Partner with others to wisely manage natural resources, provide recreational opportunities, and engage individuals, businesses, and communities to be responsible stewards of our natural environment--creating environmental, economic, and social benefits.

## Values

These values guide SCC's mission and vision:

- Creativity/innovation – achieving success in new ways
- Efficiency – achieving objectives with minimum waste or unnecessary effort
- Legacy – achieving positive results which transcend generations
- Passion – achieving vision with personal and organizational commitment and excitement
- Teamwork – achieving solutions collaboratively

# Stewardship of Natural Resources

## Issue

Story County is being altered in ways that threaten or eliminate natural ecosystems

## Rationale

Increased population and agricultural land in Story County have reduced and changed natural and cultural resources, decreasing people's connections with nature and their past. Current SCC properties need enhanced natural resource restoration and preservation. New land needs to be secured for natural and cultural resource stewardship, providing improved social, economic, and environmental conditions. Sustainability of Story County's natural resources also depends on the actions of private landowners who may lack incentives, education, or motivation to steward their natural resources.

Story County Conservation is positioned to model and facilitate stewardship of our natural resources.

## Goal

1. Promote and practice stewardship of natural resources
2. Improve Story County's water quality

## Outcomes and Strategies

### 1a. Improve our natural resources

- Create and share a summary of the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the first five years of the expanded SCC Natural Resource Program
- Create a plan of the inputs, outputs, and outcomes for the next three years of the SCC Natural Resource Program
- Create a more holistic, organized, and effective approach to improving natural resources across SCC units, Story County departments, and SCC stakeholders
- Align with and leverage partners inputs/resources dedicated to natural resource management to match the three-year vision
- Increase community and volunteer involvement in stewardship of natural resources

### 1b. Permanently protect and effectively manage 10% of priority lands identified in the sensitive areas inventory

- Develop a consistently used definition of "permanent protection"

- Increase engagement and education of partners and private landowners in active stewardship and permanent protection of priority lands
- Continue to inventory and assess the county's sensitive areas, prairies, habitats, and other natural resources

#### 1c. Reduce pressure of invasive species in Story County

- Educate the public and SCC stakeholders to prevent and reduce invasive species pressure
- Provide training and resources for volunteers to remove invasive species
- Provide opportunities for the public and SCC stakeholders to get involved with invasive species reduction
- Create a more holistic and organized approach across SCC units, Story County departments, and SCC stakeholders for invasive species control

#### 1. Preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the quality of Story County's ground water and surface water

- Provide coordinated educational resources and activities to improve water quality
- Continue the Hickory Grove Lake watershed restoration project
- Complete development of the Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor (TELC)
- Demonstrate water quality improvement and best practices in stewardship and education at TELC
- Engage volunteers in water quality assessment and improvement projects
- Complete and use the Story County watershed assessments
- Expand the Skunk River Greenbelt
- Encourage landowners along open drainage ditches and water bodies to adopt water quality improvement strategies
- Encourage water quality improvement strategies in drainage districts, SCC properties, and other land in Story County

#### Ways to Help

- Volunteer to help remove invasive species or become a water steward on SCC properties
- Help others learn about the SCC Natural Resource Management Program
- Donate to help SCC acquire sensitive areas
- Test the water quality on your land

# Community Engagement

## Issue

Stewardship of natural resources is an integral part of how we can view the livability of our communities--affecting community economics, quality of life, health, and environmental sustainability.

## Rationale

The more people engage with the outdoors, the more inclined they are to care for and conserve our natural resources. Time in nature also improves social and economic wellbeing at the individual, family, business, and community levels. All people in Story County should have equal and full access to SCC projects, programs, and properties.

## Goal

Increase the reach of SCC in Story County to enhance environmental awareness, responsibility, and stewardship

## Outcomes and Strategies

1. Increase opportunities to connect people with SCC and nature
  - Select, orient, and use volunteers to share SCC programs, projects, and properties with others
  - Create and use strategic messages for staff and volunteers
  - Continue to communicate in multiple ways to engage and educate the public
  - Continue to integrate more SCC parks and properties into programming
  - Continue to research and use emerging practices for programs, projects, and properties
  
2. Increase the scope and depth of SCC partnerships and volunteers to leverage impact
  - Engage more groups, businesses, families, and individuals in achieving the SCC vision
  - Establish more partnerships with non-conservation organizations
  - Strengthen the ability to attain SCC's vision through current and new partnerships
  - Expand recruitment and use of skills-based volunteers
  - Involve partners and volunteers in promoting SCC programs, projects, and properties

### 3. Increase the diversity of SCC users and supporters

- Engage the ISU community more deeply
- Identify and engage targeted potential users and supporters
- Continue to form partnerships and collaborations to reach more diverse users and supporters
- Include underserved users and supporters in attaining SCC's vision
- Educate underserved users and supporters in how to access and enjoy outdoor experiences
- Identify and reduce barriers to participation/use

### Ways to Help

- Sign groups up for SCC public programs
- Visit every SCC property and tell others about them
- Volunteer with SCC and bring a friend

# Partnerships

## Issue

Growth, resilience, and sustainability of conservation work in Story County can be maximized through infrastructure and funding partnerships.

## Rationale

Conservation work has become increasingly complex, requiring enhanced collaboration with a wide variety of partners to successfully accomplish goals. SCC needs to engage more widely and deeply with partners to improve facilities and infrastructure as well as secure funding for those improvements. SCC is not currently funded to optimize its capacity to address critical conservation needs in the county. While partnerships are the norm for SCC's stewardship of natural resources and community engagement, they are less commonly used for enhancing SCC's infrastructure and funding.

## Goals

1. Provide improved, exceptional facilities to support SCC's vision
2. Identify diverse and sustainable funding sources to support growth, resilience, and sustainability

## Outcomes and Strategies

- 1a. Ensure that new facilities meet building standards, provide room for growth, and minimize resource consumption
  - Conduct a facility condition inventory to determine and prioritize future needs
  - Design facilities to include green technology and room for growth
  - Include priority facilities and facility upgrades in the capital improvement plan
- 1b. Determine the feasibility of creating a destination conservation/nature center to meet the needs of diverse users
  - Conduct an analysis of the current center and the desired state
  - Identify potential resources to fill the gap
- 1c. Provide new and improved facilities to fully support user traffic and needs
  - Build at least one sustainable energy cabin at Dakins Lake or Hickory Grove Park
  - Replace the Bear Creek bridge
  - Improve Skunk River Water Trail accesses

- Begin paving the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail
- Designate a SCC signature park each year to improve and increase public use
- Implement the SCC Capital Improvement Plan
- Analyze facility use and make appropriate adjustments to best serve the needs of the community and our natural resources

2a. Retain satisfied, passionate, and dedicated staff and board members

- Continue to provide SCC employees and board members with conservation incentives/benefits (free camping, free facility use)
- Support recognition programs and events
- Designate funds for continuing education for staff and volunteers

2b. Continue to effectively and efficiently use limited resources

- Explore options for increasing revenue by charging fair market value for services
- Continue to provide opportunities for all income levels
- Look for new ways to be cost effective when making purchases, utilizing staff time, and conserving resources
- Enhance partnerships with businesses, corporate groups, and other government entities
- Provide training and resources for volunteers to lead projects

2c. Identify and secure new, creative, and leveraged funding sources

- Secure professional services and support
- Increase gifts, donations, and land acquisition from supporters
- Advocate for IWILL passage by the Iowa Legislature
- Secure more funding through partnerships
- Explore passage of SCC bond (fall 2020)

## Ways to Help

- Join SCC “Partners” membership program
- Sponsor the 2020 IACCB conference in Ames showcasing SCC accomplishments
- Donate money to acquire Carroll Prairie in honor/in memory of a friend or loved one

## Appendix: Cross Walk of the SCC Strategic Plan and the Story County Comprehensive Plan 2036: Cornerstone to Capstone (C2C)

SCC Strategic Plan Outcome	C2C Objectives
Reduce pressure of invasive species in Story County	1.1, 1.5, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 6.1, 6.2, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4
Permanently protect and effectively manage 10% of the high priority lands identified in the sensitive areas inventory	1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4
Improve visibility and resourcing of the SCC Natural Resource Program	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 4.7, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4
Preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the quality of Story County’s ground water and surface water	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.2, 3.6, 4.7, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4
Increase opportunities to connect people to SCC	All
Increase the scope and depth of SCC partnerships and volunteers to leverage support	All
Increase the diversity of SCC users and supporters	1.5, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 6.1, 6.2
Ensure that new facilities meet building standards, provide room for growth, and minimize resource consumption	1.3, 3.7, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 7.3
Determine the feasibility of creating a destination conservation/nature center to meet the needs of diverse users	1.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.8, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.3
Provide new and improved facilities to fully support user traffic and needs	3.7, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.3
Retain satisfied, passionate, and dedicated staff and board members	4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.7
Continue to effectively and efficiently use limited resources	All
Identify and secure new, creative, and leveraged funding sources	All