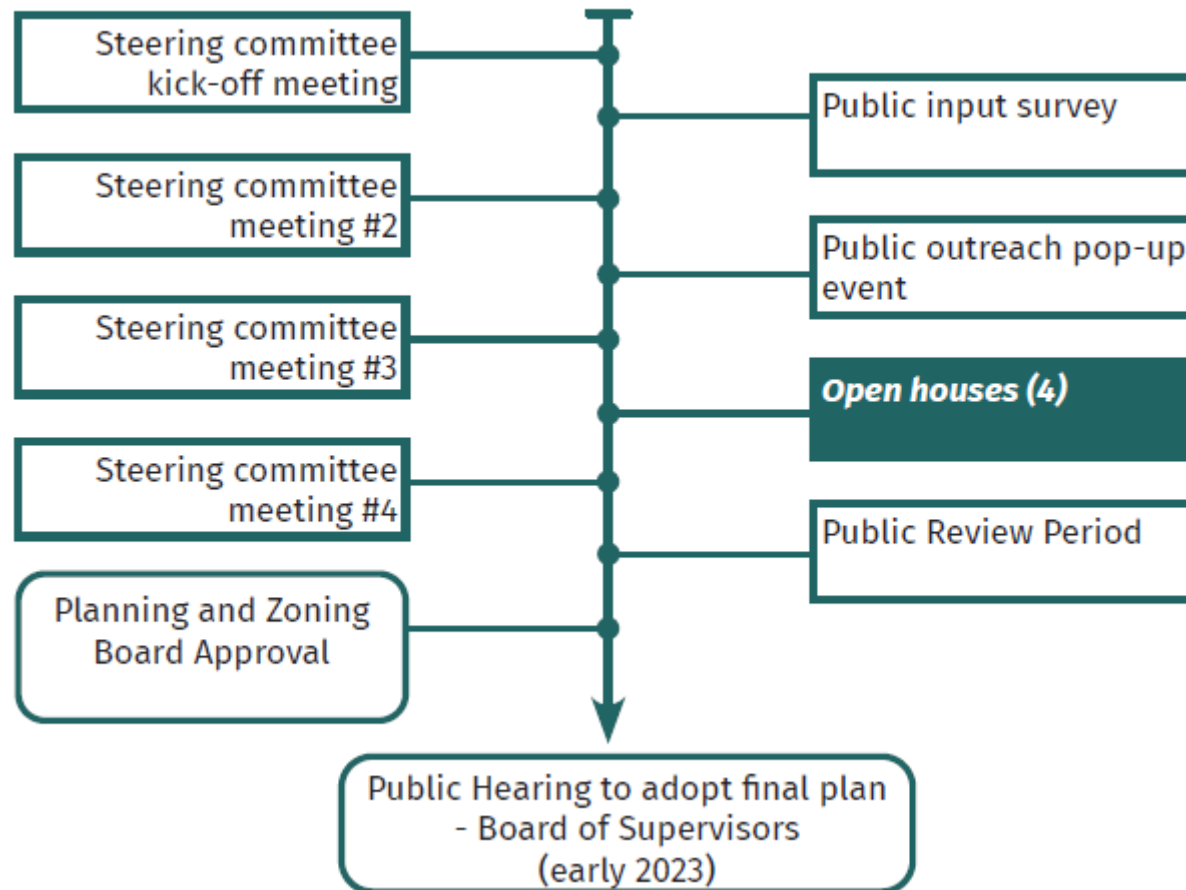


# *Woodbury County Comprehensive Plan 2040*

*Steering Committee Meeting  
October 26, 2022*

# Where We Are

## Plan Timeline



# Public Input

## Survey

- Nearly 500 responses collected

## Town Halls (4 throughout September)

- Hornick, Merville, Sergeant Bluff, Anthon

## Final Push for Comments

- Comments on the draft goals and objectives
- Short video to share with an opportunity to win a raffle prize in December for providing three constructive comments on the draft goals and objectives.

# Updated Vision Statement

## Updated 2040 Draft Vision Statement:

Woodbury County is a place where:

- **rural character** and a **strong sense of community** are shared;
- **land development** is managed in a way that complements and **enhances the County's character** and **upholds residents' ideals**;
- economic development is rooted in a **diverse, agriculture-based economy**, focused on opportunities to grow and **enhance existing businesses and industry**, provide a supportive environment for **new enterprises**, and develop a **robust workforce**;
- conservation and **stewardship of natural resources** is a matter of pride and shared ownership;
- demand for a **quality and affordable standard of living** is met;
- government exists to **serve people and to protect the public health, safety, and welfare to ensure a prosperous and resilient future.**

## Previous 2005 Plan Vision Statement:

“Where, sharing a strong **sense of community**, good people **live freely without fear or want**;  
Where all **people and businesses prosper**, rooted in a diverse **agriculturally-based economy**;  
Where **stewardship of natural resources** is a matter of individual and community pride and ownership;  
Where government exists to **serve people and to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.**”

# Goals and Objectives

## Housing

### Quality

- **Goal: Improve the condition of existing housing stock to ensure homes are safe, efficient, and resilient structures.**
  - o Provide rehabilitation assistance resources for homeowners living in historic or outdated structures.
  - o Target outreach to minority and under-resourced communities to ensure that information and resources are equitably distributed.
  - o Target outreach to homeowners that may be impacted by disasters, in need of septic system updates, lead abatement, or other immediate safety concerns.

### Affordability

- **Goal: Increase the variety of housing options to maximize affordability and availability for residents of all income levels.**
  - o Encourage flexibility in residential zoning to allow residents to meet housing needs with the construction of accessory dwelling units or home additions that can provide additional rental units and supplemental income, housing for extended family, or homecare arrangements for caretakers.
  - o Increase the quantity of high quality, affordable rental units by encouraging the development of a variety of multi-family housing options within incorporated cities that meet the diverse needs of residents of all ages.
  - o Increase the number of affordable housing units in Woodbury County.
  - o Encourage the development of upper story units above downtown store fronts to introduce additional housing variety in small towns.

# Goals and Objectives

## Rural character

- **Goal: Preserve the rural character of the county.**
  - o Limit density in rural areas outside of incorporated cities.
  - o Protect agricultural land, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreational land.
  - o Prioritize new development to locate adjacent to existing town limits, and prioritize the rehabilitation of existing structures, infill development, and brownfield redevelopment.

## Access to housing

- **Goal: Expand access to safe, high-quality housing for all residents of Woodbury County.**
  - o Direct funding toward the provision of high-quality, affordable housing options for vulnerable populations: low-income residents, seniors, and residents with disabilities.
  - o Direct funding toward emergency shelters, housing, and social work services for homeless individuals living in the county.
  - o Connect residents with funding opportunities that provide financial assistance for housing rehab.

## Homeownership

- **Goal: Assist residents in the path from renting to becoming homeowners.**
  - o Connect residents with information and resources that aid in the purchase of homes, such as down payment assistance grants for first time or low-income residents, and low-cost financial counseling. Particular care should be taken to reach out to residents of color and immigrant communities with these opportunities; providing resources, information, and support in residents' native language when applicable.

# Goals and Objectives

## Economic Development

- **Goal:** Coordinate economic development initiatives with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee and refer to the CEDS document to ensure alignment with the goals and strategies therein.

### Industry & Workforce

- **Goal:** Maintain core industries that are the backbone of Woodbury County's economy by marketing Siouxland as a regional center for food production and related agricultural industries.
  - Maintain Woodbury County's ACT® Work Ready Community status.
  - Continually communicate with industry leaders to identify emerging in-demand skills and qualifications.
  - Work with local colleges and high schools to continually improve training opportunities for students to learn in-demand skills necessary to support the region's industry clusters.
  - Coordinate across jurisdictions to assist in the marketing and promotion of the county's Certified Sites.
- **Goal:** Encourage the diversification of Woodbury County's economy, in support of small businesses which generate nearly half of all economic activity nationwide, as well as larger enterprises.
  - Coordinate with city jurisdictions of Woodbury County to offer access to supportive resources, networking opportunities, and financial information for residents interested in starting a small business.
  - Maintain partnership with Iowa's West Coast Initiative to develop economic opportunities in the Siouxland region.
  - Consider the development of alternative energy industry partnerships.
  - Provide language supports for non-English speaking business owners, prospective business owners and employees where necessary.

# Goals and Objectives

## Quality of Life

- **Goal: Work to enhance Woodbury County's quality of life to draw and retain families, employees, and residents of all ages in the region.**
  - Continue to invest in innovative improvements such as recreation and entertainment opportunities.
  - Build upon unique assets of the county, such as natural features and historical resources to create enriching cultural experiences for residents.
  - Improve access to internet connectivity by investing in broadband infrastructure.
- **Goal: Encourage healthy lifestyles to maximize residents' quality of life.**
  - Support the expansion of health services such as clinics and exercise facilities in rural areas.
  - Consider the health and wellness impacts of all county activities, programs, and policies and support education for regular wellness exams to increase early detection of serious illness.

## Equity

- **Goal: Ensure that educational and economic opportunities are accessible to all residents, regardless of race, age, sex, religion, or ability.**
  - Continue to identify and facilitate access to appropriate supports and resources for residents struggling with poverty.
  - Work across jurisdictions and with underrepresented populations, such as people of color, low-income residents, and those with disabilities, to identify barriers to educational access and provide appropriate services and support.
  - Actively market educational and job opportunities to communities of color and low-income communities.



# Goals and Objectives

## Transportation

### Safety

- **Goal: Prioritize user safety across all transportation modes in Woodbury County.**
- Continually seek to improve safety for all transportation users.
- Continue to rehabilitate or replace poorly-rated bridges.
- Continue to work with Iowa DOT and the public to identify areas of the state and county highway system in need of maintenance or resurfacing.
- Work with municipal and state jurisdictions to address sources of frequent traffic incidents.
- Provide safety-enhancing infrastructure dedicated to bicyclists and pedestrians to reduce conflicts between these users and vehicles.
- Seek funding for railroad crossing safety improvements.
- Incorporate principles of the Federal Highway Administration's Safe System Approach into roadway design to reduce crash frequency and severity.
- Support safety improvements to Sioux Gateway Airport facilities to maintain adequate, essential air services to the region.

### Accessibility

- **Goal: Ensure equitable access to Woodbury County's transportation system for all residents.**
- Promote the Siouxland Regional Transit System throughout the county.
- Consider the needs of all transportation users, especially those who have mobility limitations due to physical, intellectual, or developmental disability; age; income; or language barriers.
- Support the use of alternative modes of transportation with the installation of infrastructure such as bicycle facilities, sidewalks, trails, and greenways.

# Goals and Objectives

## Environment

- **Goal: Mitigate the environmental impacts of transportation projects while proactively seeking opportunities for long-term transportation sustainability investments.**
  - Take advantage of federal and state funding to expand infrastructure for electric vehicles throughout the county, including rural areas.
  - Preserve scenic views, open space, and historic or cultural features along the Loess Hills National Scenic Byway.
  - Refer to the Environmental Mitigation Activities of the SRTPA Long Range Transportation Plan before and throughout all transportation planning and development activities.
  - Collaborate with the Woodbury County Conservation Board, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Environmental Protection Agency, and other environmental stewardship organizations to determine the potential consequences of transportation projects to water, air, habitat, land use, cultural and historical resources, other natural resources, and residents' health. Care should be taken to avoid or minimize these impacts.
  - Work with the Siouxland Regional Transit System to promote public and shared transit opportunities to employers, such as vanpooling.
  - Partner with municipalities to develop carpooling lots where residents can leave vehicles during work hours.
  
- **Goal: Expand the network of multi-use trails in Woodbury County.**
  - Collaborate with the Woodbury County Conservation Board to maintain and expand the county trail system.
  - Strive to make regional trail connections between the trail systems of county and municipal parks.
  - Align county trail plans with the vision, goals, strategies, and recommendations of the Iowa Department of Transportation's Bicycle and Pedestrian Long Range Plan.

# Goals and Objectives

## Economy

- **Goal: Maintain the quality and efficiency of high priority roadways, railways, water, and air services that are essential to the regional economy.**
  - Prioritize higher-volume roadways and those that are used to transport goods, such as farm to market routes, roadways along industrial and commercial corridors, and roadways connecting to intermodal facilities for rehabilitation and repair.
  - Encourage projects that increase efficiency, minimize congestion, and reduce energy expenditure.
  - Consider life cycle costs in decision-making, taking into account the cost of maintaining infrastructure in the long-term.
  - Where possible, prioritize improvement of existing systems over expansion of new infrastructure.
  - Support the maintenance and expansion of commercial airline service in Sioux Gateway Airport.
  - Support the establishment of additional barge terminals on the Missouri River where river conditions allow.

# Goals and Objectives

## Public Infrastructure and Utilities

- **Goal: Expand upon publicly-available information on the Woodbury County website.**
  - o Electronically publish up-to-date planning documents, meeting information, and maps for all county departments.
  - o Share county data in a downloadable, practical format.

## Energy

- **Goal: Encourage energy efficiency for residential, commercial, and industrial consumers in Woodbury County.**
  - o Bring awareness to energy efficiency incentive and assessment programs available through MidAmerican Energy and Woodbury County REC.
- **Goal: Support the use of renewable energy throughout Woodbury County.**
  - o Work with energy providers to establish targets for increases in the percentage of energy derived from renewable sources.
  - o Incentivize commercial and residential participation in renewable energy programs.

## Water and Sewer

- **Goal: Ensure safe drinking water for all rural Woodbury County residents**
  - o Provide educational materials about the importance of regular well inspections and bring awareness to free well inspections offered by the county
  - o Maintain compliance with state and federal standards for community water systems

# Goals and Objectives

## Water and Sewer, cont.

### Goal: Protect ground and surface water from contamination.

- Seal and inspect sealed wellheads that are no longer in use
- Provide resources and information to rural residents about septic system maintenance
- Connect farmers and ranchers with technical assistance and resources for preventing fertilizer and animal waste runoff
- Encourage the use of green infrastructure for storm water management where water carrying concentrated contaminants is likely to be intercepted.
- Align County Conservation Board actions with the goals and strategies outlined in Iowa's Nonpoint Source Management Plan and collaborate with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to mitigate nonpoint source water pollution.

### Goal: Encourage practices that increase water efficiency amongst county residents, commercial establishments, institutions, and municipal utilities.

- Encourage the use of strategies and best practices outlined in the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities' efficiency planning and conservation workbook, WaterWise.
- Adopt water saving practices in county buildings.

## Broadband and Cellular Service

### Goal: Improve internet access for rural Woodbury County residents.

- Take advantage of federal and state sources of funding to improve broadband infrastructure in rural areas.

### Goal: Expand cellular service in rural Woodbury County.

- Coordinate with telecommunications companies to address areas of the county where cellular service is poor.

# Goals and Objectives

## Waste Management

- **Goal: Promote waste reduction and recycling practices.**
  - Encourage innovative initiatives such as community composting, yard waste disposal, institution-level waste reduction plans (government, schools, prisons, festivals, event spaces), and repurposing/repairing/borrowing/trading used items.
  - Sponsor waste-related community education events in coordination with the Woodbury County Conservation Board.
  - Coordinate across jurisdictions to address waste management gaps identified in the 2020 Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Satisfaction Survey that was distributed in development of the Woodbury County Area Solid Waste Agency's Comprehensive Plan.
  - Participate in the State of Iowa's Solid Waste Environmental Management Systems (EMS) program.
  - Coordinate across regional jurisdictions to improve access to recycling services in rural areas.
  - Implement and encourage the utilization of programs and best practices provided by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Financial and Business Assistance department.
  - Consider results of the Iowa Statewide Waste Characterization Study in goal setting and when planning the creation or expansion of waste management services and programs.

## Electric Vehicles

- **Goal: Expand the network of public electric vehicle charging stations to rural Woodbury County.**
  - Continue work with other local, regional, and state leaders to develop an electric vehicle infrastructure plan.
  - Apply for federal and state funding sources set aside for rural electric vehicle infrastructure.

# Goals and Objectives

## Community Facilities and Services

### Goals & Objectives

- **Goal: Expand access to health services throughout rural Woodbury County.**
  - o Work with the Siouxland District Health Department to expand access to preventative health care services in rural communities.
  - o Continue to market the services of the Siouxland District Health Department widely across rural Woodbury County.
  - o Evaluate emergency medical response times and outcomes for rural residents to identify how these services can be improved.
  - o Continue partnering with the Rolling Hills Community Services Region for mental health, disabilities, and crisis care services.
  - o Refer to the Siouxland District Health Department's Health Needs Assessment and Health Improvement Plan for guidance.
- **Goal: Provide more opportunities for outdoor recreation activities.**
  - o Maintain the current activities of the Woodbury County Conservation Board and support the expansion of their programming and scope of work.
  - o Improve the functionality and visibility of county-owned river access points.
  - o Prioritize water quality and river restoration initiatives.
  - o Pursue opportunities to develop water trails throughout the county.
  - o Develop a countywide trail program connecting communities with one another and the county park network.
  - o Evaluate the condition and availability of county-owned cabins and park shelters.

# Goals and Objectives

- **Goal: Increase access to family-friendly activities and cultural opportunities in rural Woodbury County.**
  - Encourage cooperation and resource sharing between nearby towns to create and expand upon parks and recreation opportunities for rural residents.
  - Expand community education opportunities for residents of rural Woodbury County that celebrate the region's historical, cultural, and natural resources.
- **Goal: Strive to offer the most efficient, cost-effective, and user-friendly community services as possible.**
  - Improve digital operations to maximize accessibility, and the availability of public information and data.
  - Streamline service delivery and operations.
- **Goal: Provide adequate police, fire, and emergency management services for all Woodbury County residents.**
  - Maintain cooperative agreements (28E) for emergency and public safety services.
  - Encourage frequent training opportunities for all emergency service providers.
  - Ensure adequate funding for emergency response activities.



# Goals and Objectives

## Land Use & Natural Resources Sustainable Agriculture

- **Goal: Support sustainable agricultural practices.**
  - Ensure compliance with Iowa state code provisions for agriculturally-zoned property.
  - Promote the use of agricultural best management practices to reduce soil and fertilizer runoff, protect water quality, and manage animal waste.
  - Encourage participation in federal incentive programs that pay farmers and ranchers for the implementation of conservation best practices.
  - Consider the use of sliding scale zoning to prevent the fragmentation of large tracts of farmland.
  - Advocate for the preservation of agriculture in urban fringe areas not identified in the future land use map for urban growth.
  - Connect small and mid-sized farm businesses with succession planning resources and technical assistance.
  - Create a roundtable of farmers and local agricultural businesses to voice concerns and needed resources to maintain sustainable business operations.

# Goals and Objectives

## Habitat Conservation

- **Goal: Preserve environmentally sensitive lands.**
  - Consider the manner in which environmentally sensitive lands are developed, including wetlands, floodplains, prime agriculture, wildlife habitat, and open space for recreation.
  - Encourage communication and cooperation between environmental advocates and landowners related to the development of sensitive lands.
  - Strengthen erosion control policies and grade and excavation limitations for development in the Loess Hills.
  - Encourage landowner participation in federal conservation easement programs that provide financial incentives for safeguarding natural resources on their property.
  - Continue adding to the county's network of parks, trails, and campgrounds.
  - Coordinate across jurisdictions to address litter and the dumping of waste.
- **Goal: Limit urban sprawl and maintain the rural character of Woodbury County.**
  - Prioritize the rehabilitation of existing housing stock and infill development before building on previously-undeveloped land. Consider the lifetime costs of new infrastructure development.
  - Limit interstate development to interchanges or within city limits to preserve agricultural land and maintain scenic views of the Loess Hills
  - Discourage leap-frog development outside of incorporated cities and limit density in unincorporated areas.
  - Guide future development of non-agricultural uses to a compact pattern by efficient and economical expansion of public infrastructure.

# Goals and Objectives

## Water Resource Protection

- **Goal: Reduce contaminants in surface water runoff.**
  - Provide resources for farmers to adopt BMPs such as no-till methods, cover crops, crop rotation, vegetated buffers, and constructed wetlands to reduce nutrient loads entering waterways as non-point source pollution. Refer to the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, and programs of the USDA's National Resources Conservation Service for farmers in need of assistance.
  - Adopt sensible salting policies, training & certification
  - Limit the density of properties requiring individual septic systems, maintain stringent standards for system inspections, and provide resources for homeowners to assist in maintaining these systems.
  - Discourage the location of septic systems in floodplains and enforce setback requirements between septic systems and surface water bodies.
- **Goal: Safeguard groundwater by identifying and limiting sources of pollution.**
  - Encourage landowners to take advantage of the Iowa DNR's wellhead protection program that provides cost-sharing and assistance for sealing unused wells, and planting nitrate-remediating plants near active wellheads.

# Goals and Objectives

## Air Quality

- **Goal:** Identify potential sources of air quality hazards in Woodbury County.
  - o Maintain a network of low-cost air quality monitors throughout rural Woodbury County.
- **Goal:** Maintain safe distances between industrial land use activities and residential, commercial, recreational, and institutional land uses.
  - o Ensure that no residential communities are impacted or harmed by off-site industrial activities, such as trucking routes or railyard air hazards.

## Renewable Energy Infrastructure

- **Goal:** Plan for the creation and use of alternative and renewable energy sources in Woodbury County.
  - o Prepare policies to regulate renewable energy infrastructure, to ensure that wind farms are able to develop safely, with minimal disruption to surrounding land uses.
  - o Remove barriers to the installation and use of alternative, and renewable energy technologies, such as solar, wind, and geothermal.
  - o Seek federal and state funding for the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

# Goals and Objectives

## Disaster Response, Recovery, and Resiliency

**Goal:** Ensure residents' access to safe, healthy, and efficient homes that are prepared to withstand increasingly frequent severe and unpredictable weather.

- Promote the use of healthy and safe building materials, high indoor air quality, and environments free of pests, radon, mold, and other health hazards.
- Encourage energy- and water- efficiency in home retrofit projects and new construction and the use of onsite renewable energy systems.
- Provide information about how to protect homes from flooding in preparation for increasingly frequent heavy rain events.

**Goal:** *Coordinate disaster response, recovery and resiliency efforts among jurisdictions, county, state, and federal agencies.*

- Foster interagency agreements to bolster response and recovery to emergency and disaster events and encourage resource sharing
- Keep open lines of communication between County departments and surrounding jurisdictions and counties
- Work with State and Federal officials in preparation of and response to disaster declarations and subsequent disaster relief efforts

# Goals and Objectives

## **Goal: Encourage passive development within 100-yr floodplain areas**

- Work to ensure that developed areas within floodplains are safe and secure
- Take advantage of state and federal programs designed to aid, relocate, or demolish properties within high-risk flood areas when necessary.
- Consider site plan design, best building practices, and federal standards when development within a floodplain occurs

## **Goal: Support the County Emergency Management and Emergency Services Departments' missions to provide the most efficient services to Woodbury County and to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from all disasters.**

- Work to complete the Woodbury County action items identified in the 2020 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and future approved plans
- Coordinate and participate in training exercises within the region to strengthen response to and recovery from emergencies
- Work to educate the public on disaster preparedness, recovery, and resiliency
- Continue participation in the Local Emergency Management Commission for the region
- Employ and update the Woodbury County Joint Emergency Operations Basic Plan as required by Iowa State Code 29c.
- Ensure adequate funding to maintain a high level of emergency operations within the County.

# Goals and Objectives

**Goal: Continue supporting the Siouxland District Health Department in their mission to lead a “collaborative effort to build a healthier community through improved access to health services, education and disease prevention.”**

- Continue Woodbury County Emergency Management and Emergency Services Departments’ partnership and participation in the Service Area 3 Healthcare coalition
- Support the implementation of the Siouxland District Health Department’s Community Health Improvement Plan for the Siouxland Community developed from the three-year Community Health Needs Assessment for the Siouxland Community
- Coordinate with and support the Siouxland Community Health Department in responses to public health emergencies

**Goal: Support the recovery and resiliency of industries, businesses, and homes in the event of a natural or public health disaster.**

- Ensure reliable internet and telecommunications services to keep physical and home-based businesses’ web operations in place in disaster natural or public health disaster situations
- Prioritize funding any economic relief programs put in place after disaster situations for entities with the highest need
- Promote available local, state, and federal resources for economic recovery from disasters
- Allow for flexibility in ordinances to encourage the continuity of business operations which may be disrupted due to public health directives during public health emergencies.